

# INDIAN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

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# THE HINDU TEMPLE

- A **Hindu temple** is a symbolic house, seat and body of God
- Reflects synthesis of arts, the ideals of dharma, beliefs, values, and the way of life cherished under Hinduism.
- structural rules are described in various ancient Sanskrit treatises on architecture (Brhat Samhita, Vastu Sastras)
- Underlying principle in a Hindu temple is built around the belief that all things are one, everything is connected.

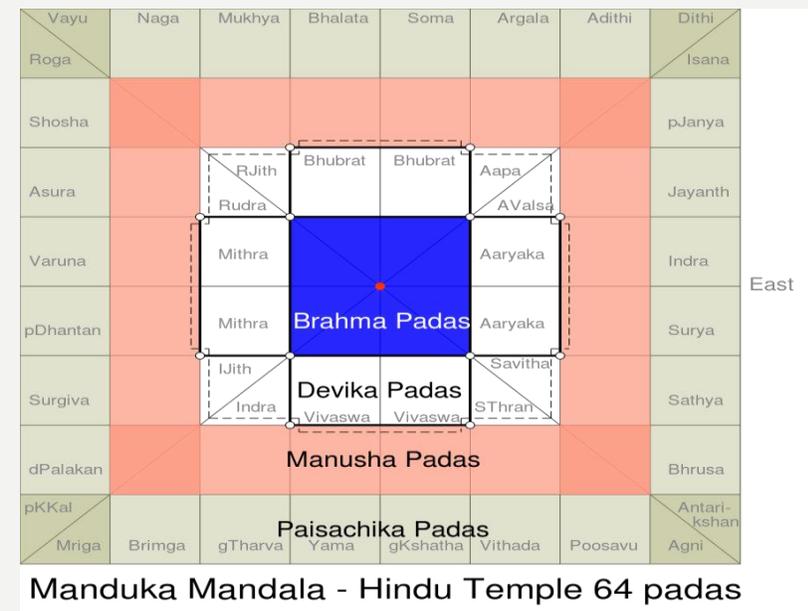
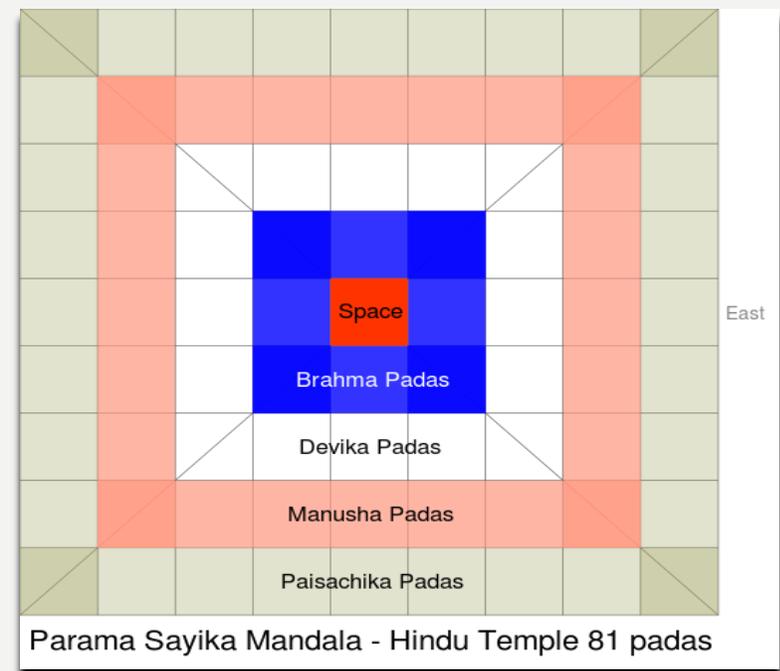


- The Hindu temple architecture is developed over thousands of years.
- The architectural evolution of the Indian temples took place within the rigid frameworks derived entirely from religious thoughtfulness.
- Therefore the architect was bound to keep to the ancient primary dimensions and strict configurations, which remained unaltered over the period of time.



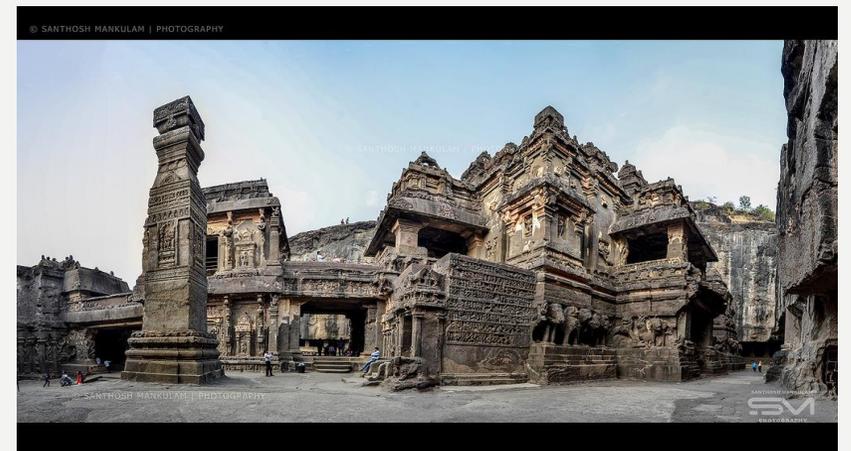
Brihadisvara Temple, Thanjavur

- Hindu temples take two forms: a house or a palace.
- **Site:** Near water and gardens, where lotus and flowers bloom , where animals rest without fear of injury or harm.
- A Hindu temple design follows a geometrical design called *vastu-purusha-mandala*
- The 9x9 (81) grid “Parama Sayika” layout plan found in large ceremonial Hindu Temples. It is one of many grids used to build Hindu temples.
- The design lays out a Hindu temple in a symmetrical, self-repeating structure derived from central beliefs, myths, cardinality and mathematical principles.



# EARLY TEMPLES

- The early temple was a small square room, called the Garbhagriha, with a single doorway for the worshipper to enter and offer worship to the image. Gradually, a tall structure, known as the Shikhara, was built over the central .
- One of the unique features of early temples was that some of these were hollowed out of huge rocks, as artificial caves. The tradition of building artificial caves was an old one.
- Some of the earliest of these were constructed in the third century BCE on the orders of Asoka .
- This tradition evolved through various stages and culminated much later – in the eighth century – in the carving out of an entire temple, that of Kailashnatha .



# DIFFERENT STYLES OF TEMPLE ARCHITECTURES

According to the various architectural text written in early medieval times, temple architecture can be broadly classified as:

1. Nagara or Indo-Aryan or Northern style
2. Dravida or the Southern style and
3. Vesara or Mixed style of temple architecture

**Nagara**



**Dravida**



**Vesara**



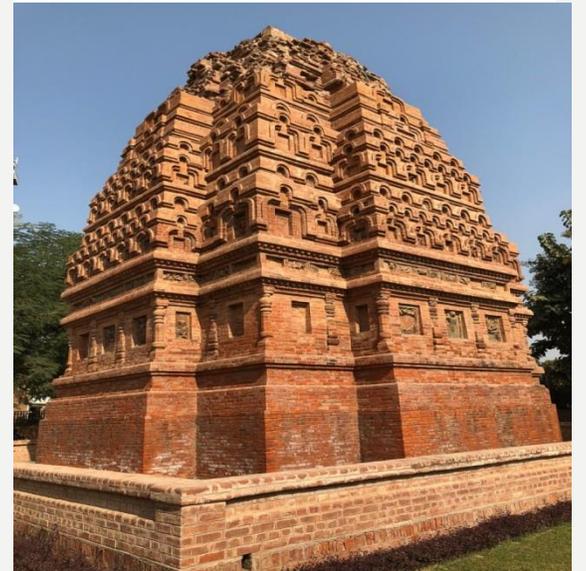
**Different Styles of Temple Architecture**

# NAGARA STYLE

- Nagara style is associated with the land between the Himalayas and Vindhyas.
- The Nagara style has its origin in the structural temples of the Guptas period.
- Dashavtara temple of Deogarh and brick temple of Bhitargaon are examples of this style
- Two distinct features of the Nagara style are plan and elevation



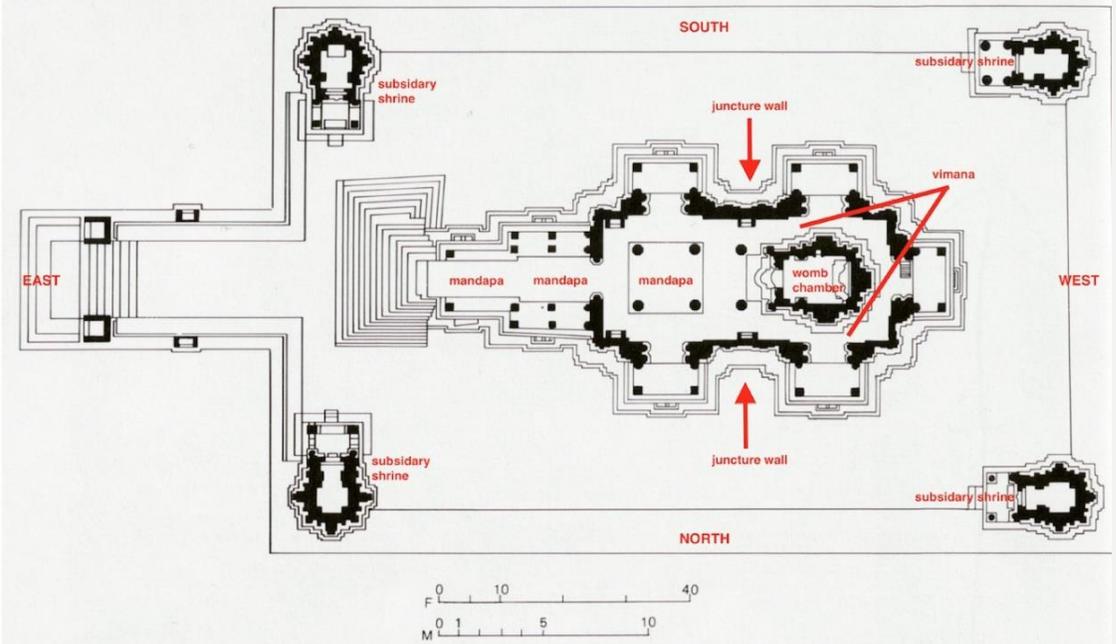
Dasavtara Temple at Devgarh (Gupta Era)



Brick Temple of Bhitargaon

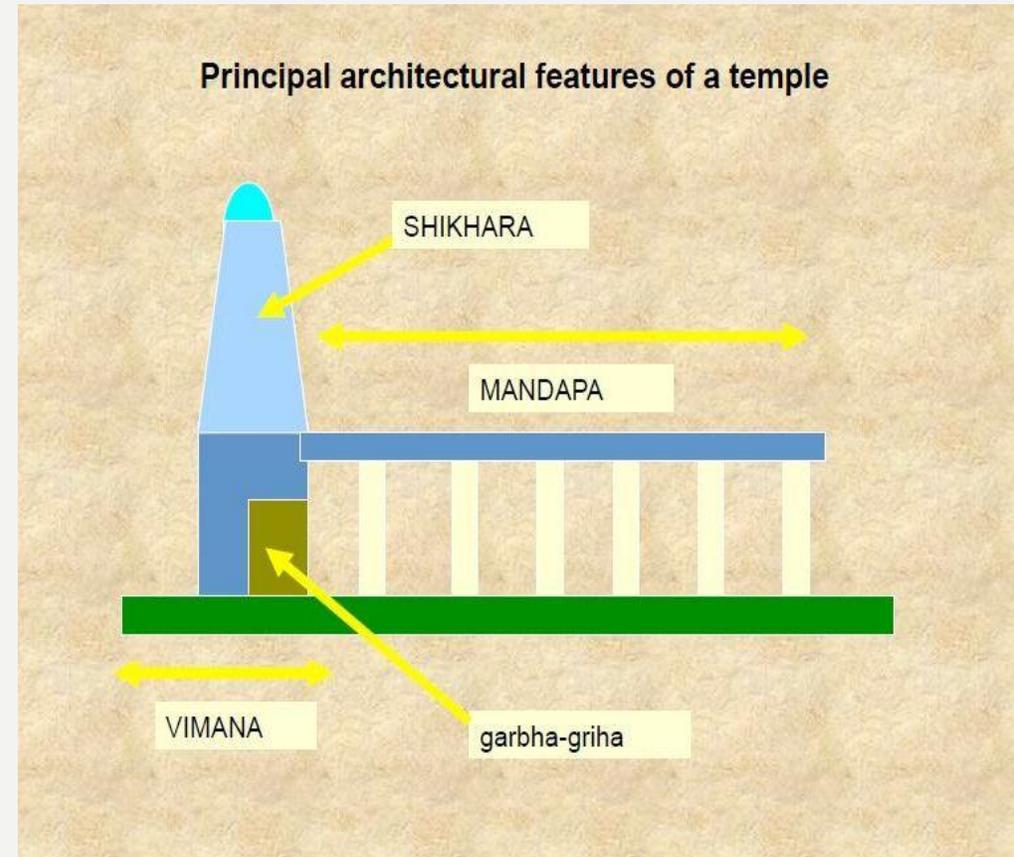
# NAGARA STYLE

- The Plan Is Square With A Number Of Gradual Projections In The Middle Of Each Side Which Imparts It A Cruciform Shape.
- These Projections Can Occur Throughout The Height Of The Structure.
- In Elevation It Exhibits A Tower (Shikhara) Gradually Inclining Towards In Convex Curve.
- The Projections In The Plan Are Also Carried Upwards To The Top Of The Shikhara And Is Called The Rekha Shikhara.



# PRINCIPAL ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

- The sanctuary as whole is known as the **VIMANA** that consists of two parts
- The upper part of VIMANA is called as **SHIKHARA**
- The lower portion inside the VIMANA is called as the **Garbha-Griha** (cella or inner chamber)
- **MANADAPA**, is the pillared hall in front of the *garbha-griha*, for the assembly of the devotees.



1. **'Sikhara'** meaning the tower or the spire

- It is the pyramidal or tapering portion of the temple which represents the mythological 'Meru' or the highest mountain peak.
- The shape and the size of the tower vary from region to region.

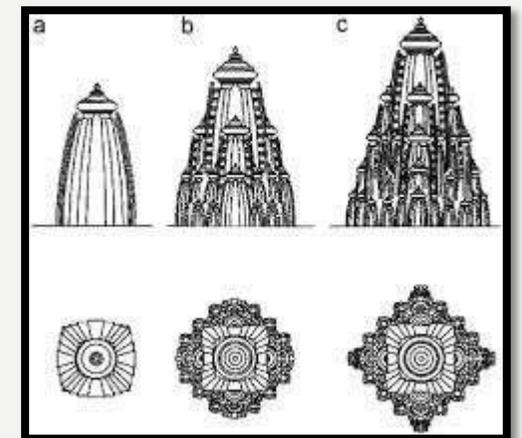
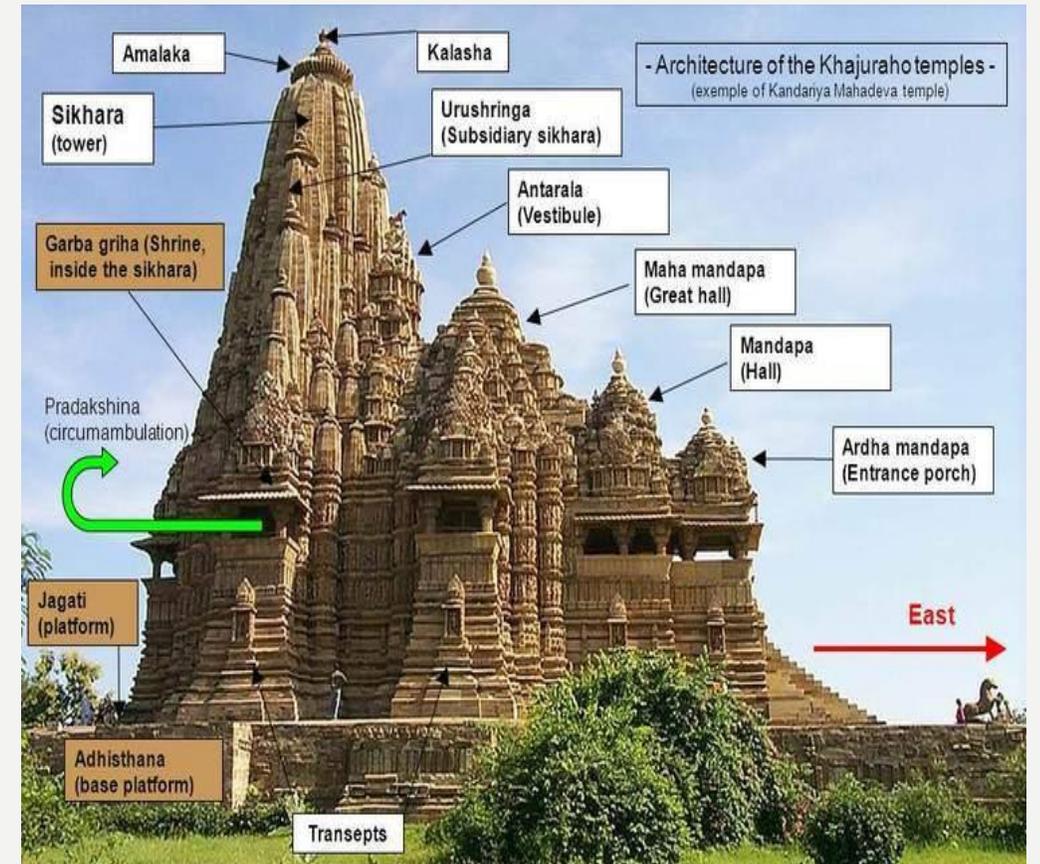
2. **'Garbhagriha'** meaning the womb chamber.

- It is nucleus and the innermost chamber of the temple where the image or idol of the deity is placed.
- The chamber is mostly square in plan and is entered by a doorway on its eastern side.

3. **'Mandapa'** is the pillared hall in front of the *garbhagriha*, for the assembly of the devotees

- It is used by the devotees to sit, pray, chant, meditate and watch the priests performing the rituals.

- Originally in Nagara style there were no pillar.
- By the eighth century the Nagara style emerges in its characteristic form.
- The Nagara style exhibits Distinct varieties in Elaboration.
- This style is seen from the Himalaya to the north of Bijapur district in the South, from the Punjab in the west to Bengal to the east.
- Therefore, there are local variations and ramifications in the formal development of the style in the different regions.
- However, the cruciform plan and the curvilinear tower are common.



# EXAMPLES OF NAGARA STYLE TEMPLES



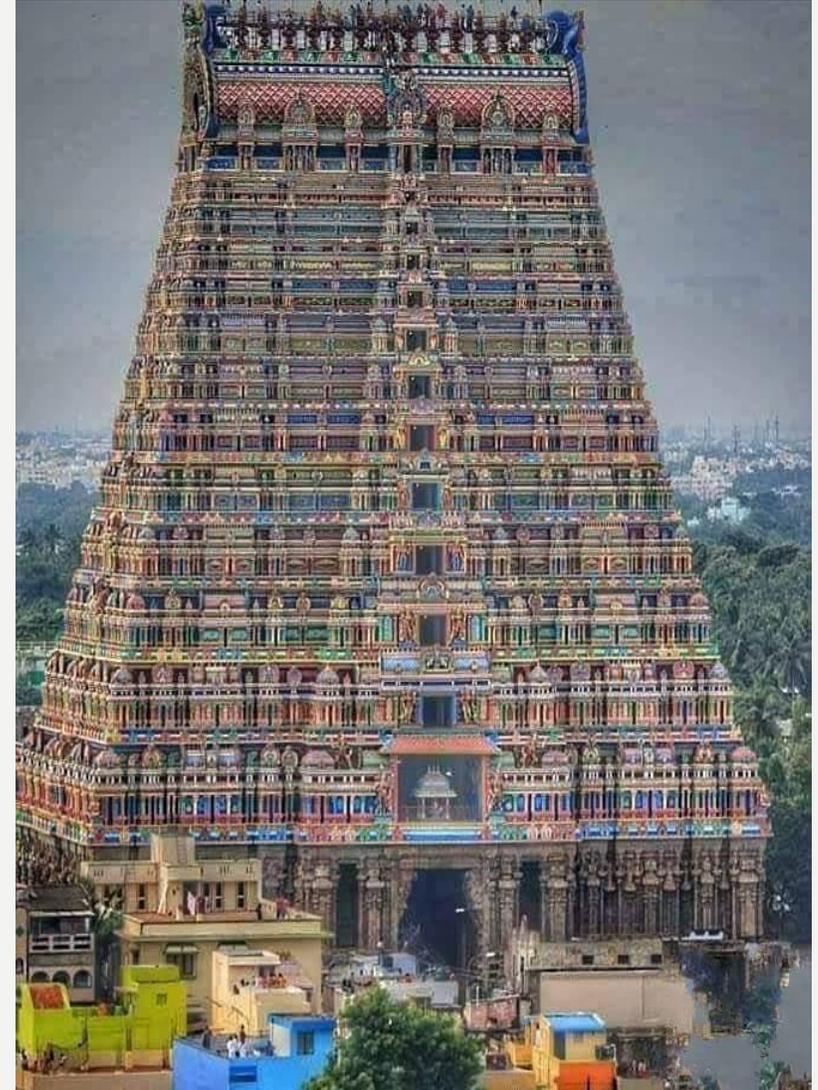
Sun Temple, Konark, Odisha



Kandariya Mahadev Temple, Khajuraho, M.P.

# DRAVIDIAN STYLE

- Dravidian architectural style is associated with the temples of southern India or Deccan.
- Common characteristics of the Dravida style is the pyramidal elevation of the tower (Vimari or Vimana).
- Vimari consists multiplication of storey after storey slightly reduced than one below ending in a domical member technically known as the Stupi or Stupica ( Shikhara).
- Vimana is crowned by a chakra in a Lord Vishnu temple and a trident in a lord Shiva temple.

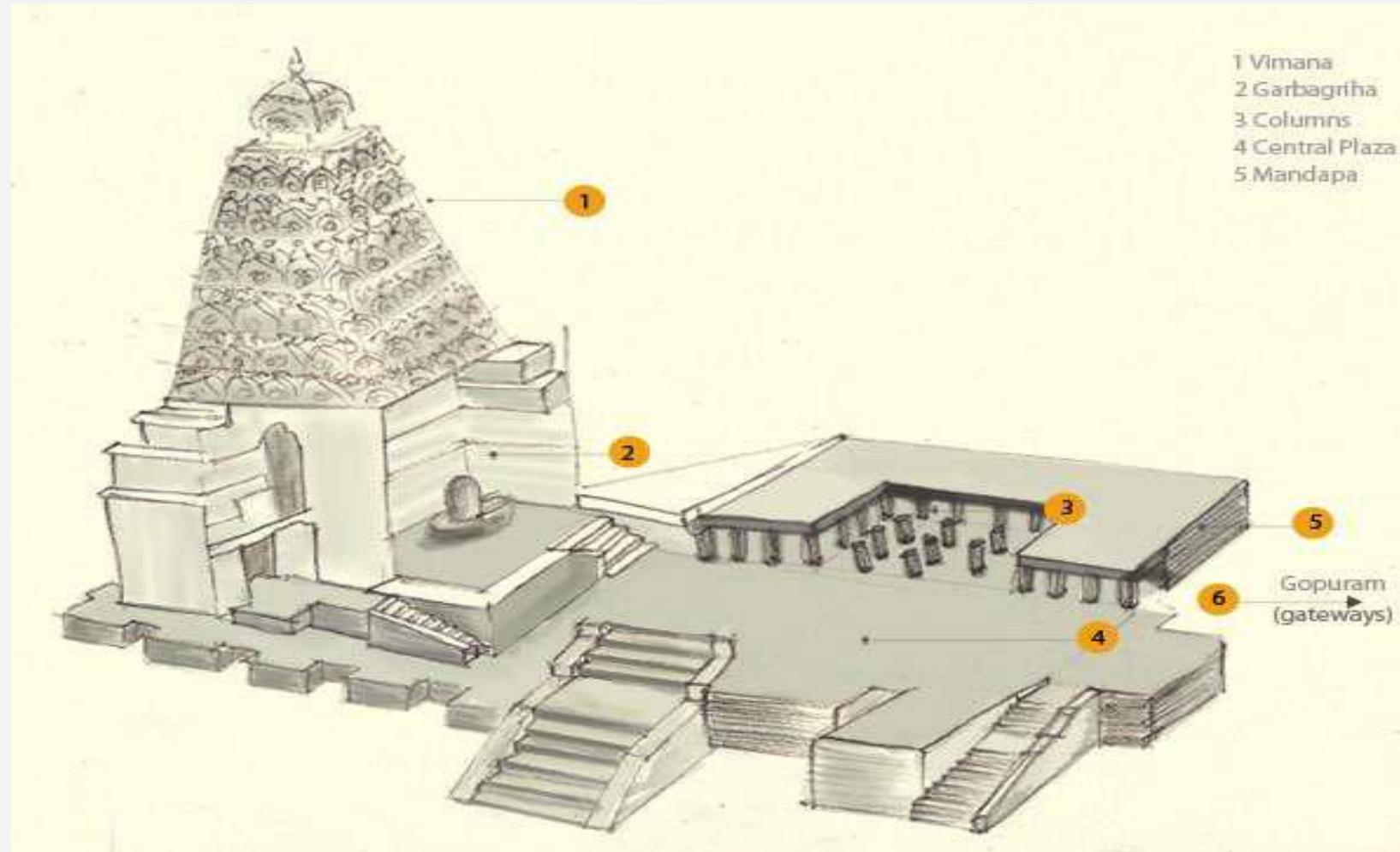


# DRAVIDIAN STYLE

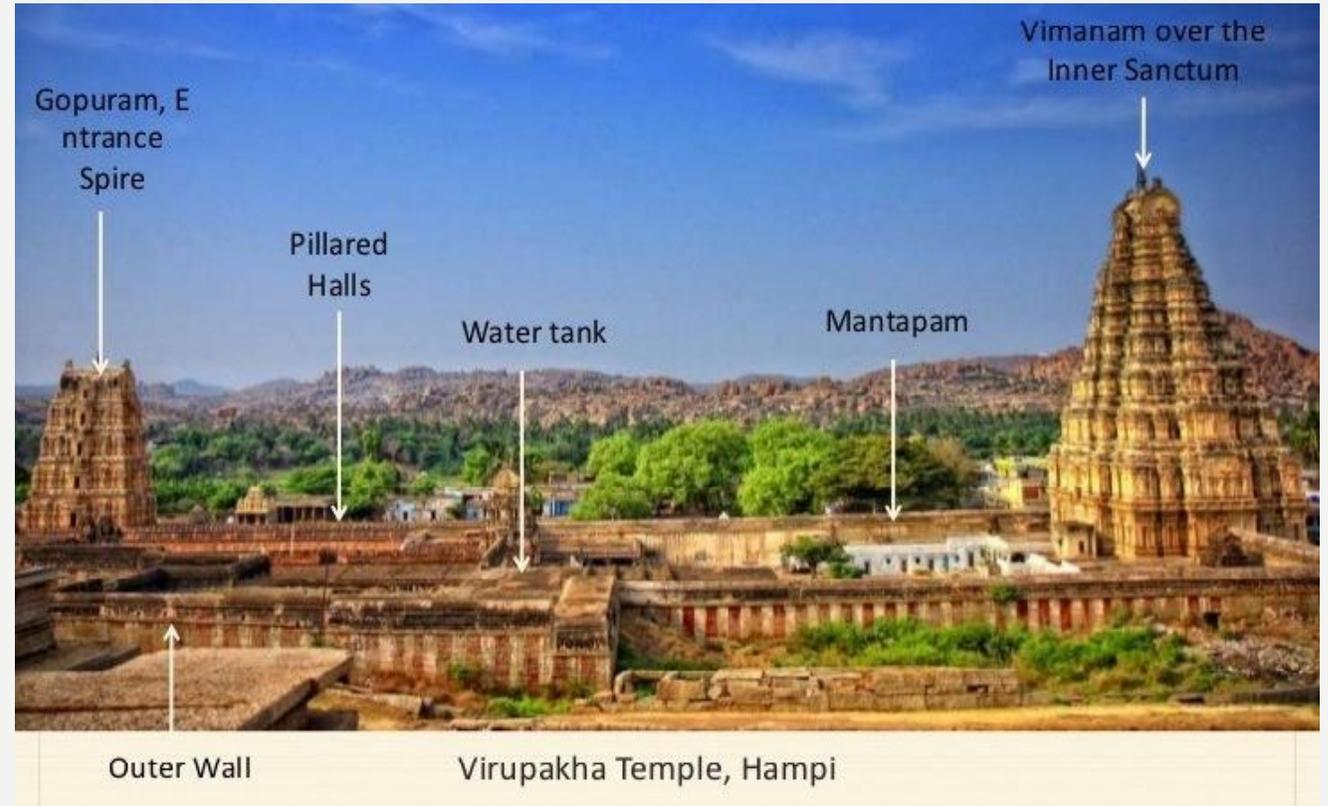
- The Pallavas were instrumental in the transition from rock-cut architecture to stone temples.
- The earliest examples of Pallava constructions are rock-cut temples dating from 610–690 CE and structural temples between 690–900 CE.
- The greatest accomplishments of the Pallava architecture are the rock-cut temples at Mahabalipuram.



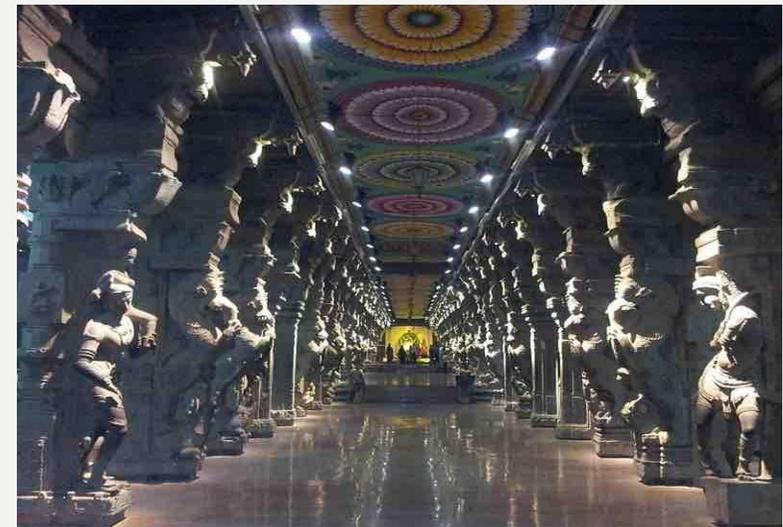
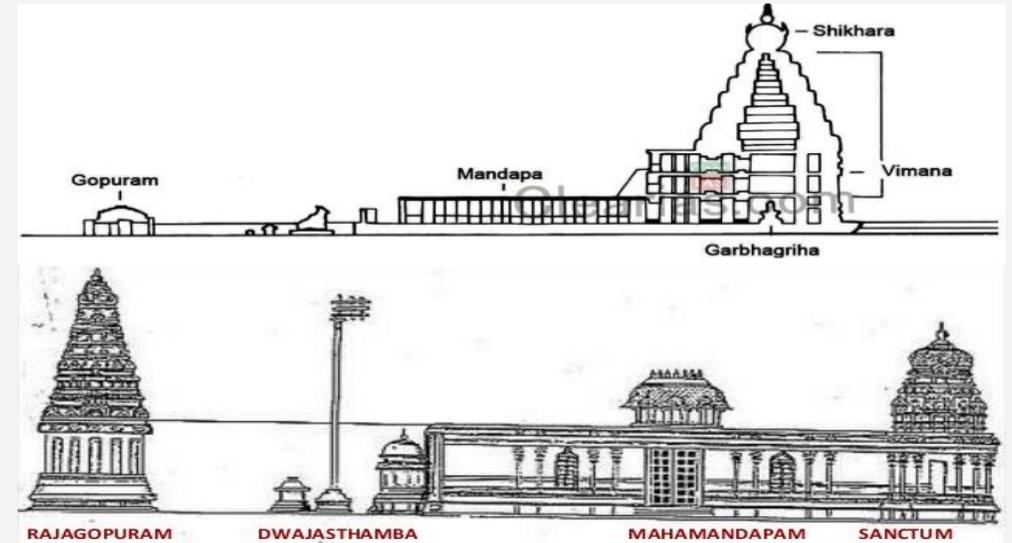
# ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF DRAVIDIAN STYLE TEMPLES



- In this style there are more than 4 sides in the sanctum
- Pillars and pilasters are vastly used in this architectural style
- They also have dedicated pavilions, for example, Shiva temples have dedicated Mandapa of Nandi or Vishnu temples have Garuda Mandapa



- In Dravidian style temples, the square inner sanctum is set within a large covered enclosure and external walls were plasters.
- Dravidian temples have boundary walls.
- In later period, storeys in Vimana become more and more compressed, pillared halls and corridors and the immense Gopurams were added.



# EXAMPLES OF DRAVIDIAN STYLE TEMPLES



Brihadeshwar Temple, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu



Mahabalipuram Temple, Tamil Nadu

# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NAGARA & DRAVIDIAN STYLES

## NAGARA STYLE

## DRAVIDIAN STYLE

### PLAN

❖ THE PLAN IS SQUARE WITH A NUMBER OF A GRADUAL PROJECTIONS IN THE MIDDLE OF EACH SIDE WHICH IMPARTS IT A CRUCIFORM SHAPE.

❖ IN THE PLAN THE TEMPLE REPRESENTS A SQUARE CHAMBER AS A SANCTUM CELL WITHIN THE SQUARE ENCLOSURE SERVING AS PRADAKSHINA .

### SIZE

DRAVIDIAN (SOUTHERN) TEMPLES ARE MUCH LARGER IN COMPARISON TO NAGARA(NORTHERN) TEMPLES

## SHIKHARA SHAPE

❖ THE NAGARA STYLE HAVE A MADE UP OF LAYER UPON LAYER OF ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS SUCH AS KAPOTAS AND GAVAKSAS, ALL TOPPED BY A LARGE ROUND CUSHION LIKE ELEMENT CALLED ANAMALAKA

❖ DRAVIDA OR SOUTHERN STYLE HAS A PYRAMID SHAPED TOWER CONSISTING OF PROGRESSIVELY SMALLER STOREYS OF SMALL PAVILIONS, A NARROW THROAT, AND A DOME ON THE TOP CALLED A SHIKHARA

## GOPURAM

DRAVIDIAN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE USUALLY HAS A RAJA GOPURAM (BIGGEST TOWER) AT THE MAIN GATE

## NAGARA STYLE



Kandariya Mahadev Temple  
Khajuraho, M.P.

## DRAVIDIAN STYLE



Mahabalipuram Temple  
Tamil Nadu

# VESARA STYLE

- It is the fusion of above two styles of temple architecture.
- This style of temple architecture have become popular after mid-seventh century at the time of Chalukyas.
- In this style presence of pillars are prominent but Gopuram are absent.
- This style is famous in Karnataka region.



Lad Khan Temple in Aihole  
Karnataka

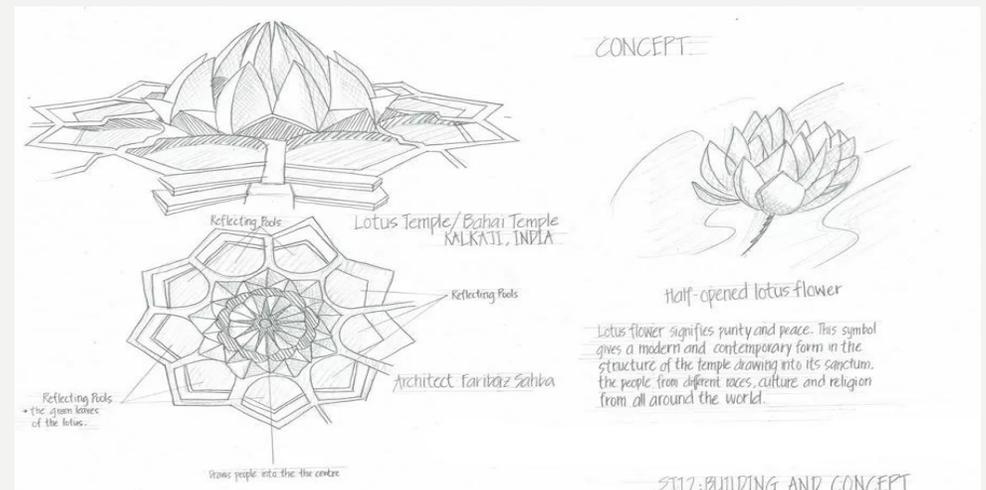
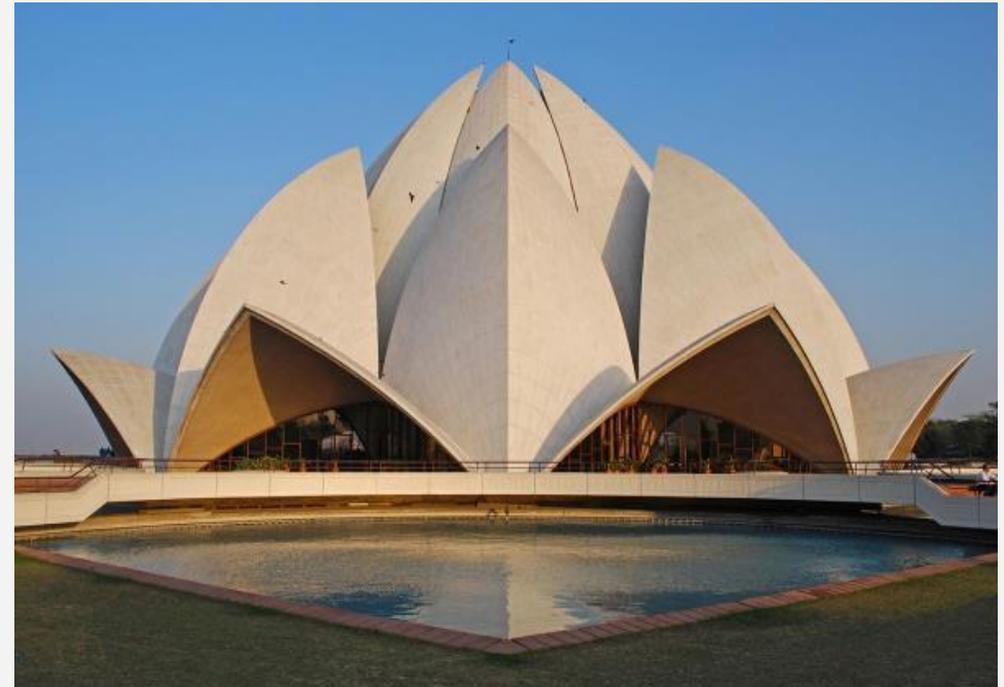
# OTHER IMPORTANT TEMPLES

- **Temples in West Bengal:** Bengali terra cotta temple architecture, lack of suitable stone. Navaratna (nine-towered) or Pancharatna (five-towered). An example of Navaratna style is the Dakshineswar Kali Temple.
- **Temples in Odisha:** Kalinga architecture  
It includes three styles: *Rekha Deula*, *Pidha Deula* and *Khakhara Deula*. Eg Rajarani Temple, Bhubaneswar
- **Temples in Kerala:** Different architectural style (keeping the same essence of Vastu), especially due to climatic differences ,larger rainfall.
- **Khmer architecture:** The classic style of Angkorian temple is demonstrated by the 12th century Angkor Wat



# MODERN TEMPLES

- Hindu temples across the globe form the cynosure of India's cultural tradition and spiritual succour.
- Uses new technology for construction and new form of architecture which is more complicated yet follows the *vaastu* of old.



**THANK YOU**