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Influence of dance and music in the architectural style of ancient Indian temple

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Abstract

The work of creation is the nature of a human being inbred. Art of creation is an important part of a culture, which is been carried out from one generation to the next one. Also, music and dance both are the major segments in Indian culture and society. A person or an artist whatever they like to do they flourish their imagination through creativity which helps to move forward the culture. Architecture is a crucial part of our culture, from the beginning of our civilization. Harappa-Mohenjodaro and few other sides of Indus valley have disclosed the presence of well-planned and excellent skill of architecture. On the other hand, Vedic alters are an important example of architecture. Latterly, the architecture got space in temple walls, pillars, this is where the music and dance have been reflected as a sculptural part of ancient India.

Keyword: Indian temple, nagara style temple, Dravidian or southern style temple, rock-cut architecture, music and dance sculpture in ancient Indian temple

Introduction

The culture of India is one of the oldest and unique. The history of India is abbreviated by the constant assimilation of migrating people with the various cultures which had developed in different countries and regions of the world. From the beginning of civilization, this country proves the fact of oneness in differences that means 'Unity in Diversity.' Many great cultures had developed in different countries and religions of the world. Many of them have been replaced by other cultures but Indian culture has an enduring character. The composite nature of our culture is reflected in our dance, music, dance forms, drama, painting, sculpture, and architecture as well. India is the land of rich culture and heritage. Music is the soul of Indian culture. Classical dance in India also has a rich and vital tradition since the beginning of our civilization. Indian Architecture is not a contemporary circumstance. Indian Architecture grows several times in various parts and geographical territories in this country. After the archaeological excavations, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro and a few other sites of Indus Valley disclosed the presence of well-planned civilization and excellent skill of modern construction. In fact, in the Vedic age, the Sacrificial Alter (*Vedī*) is an exemplification of Architecture. The next important part of Indian Architecture has been started in the Mauryan period (322-182 BC). The Sanchi Stupa and Sarnath are the most important figure of Mauryan Architecture. After the Mauryans, in the North, the Sungas and Kushans have come and in the South, the Satavahans have come and they started to contribute to the construction and carving of stones and also symbolism and introduced the idea of temples, monastery.

There are three kinds of architectural style has seen in an Indian temple, they are as follows

- Nagaras style
- Dravida style
- Vesara style

Nagara-style architecture is also known as Indo-Aryan or North Indian-style architecture. The mostly entire temple is situated on a high stone platform with a staircase and no wide area or a

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particular passageway. Nagar-style temples had one Sikhara and the garvagriha is situated exactly beneath the Sikhara. But nowadays, multiple Sikhara can be seen in temples.

Mandapa (a big hall where devotees gather for prayer) is an important part of Nagara style temple. Additionally, there is another structural part like kalasa (pot-shaped and topmost part of Nagara style temple); Amlaka (stone made round shaped part of under kalasa); Antarala(it is a conversion area between garvagriha and mandapa); Jagati(it is raised platform for prayer); Vahana(the main deity's vehicles along with temple's pillar). The Dravidian Architecture mainly developed dynastically. This Architecture was developed by Satavahanas and then Pallavas and continued by the Chola dynasty. The characteristic features of Dravidian temples are a vast entrance or gate inside the temple which is known as "Gopuram". It has pyramidal in shape. There is a single tower in central called "Vimana" and the boundary is elaborated. Except that, the Vesara style of Architecture was also found in a different pattern, a combination of the Nagar and the Dravidian Architecture. This Vesara style of Architecture became admired after the mid of 7th Century in Deccan Architecture. On the other hand, Cave Architecture and Rock-cut Architecture play a vital role in the Ancient history of Indian Temple Architecture. Cave Architecture is usually known as Rock-cut Architecture. This Rock-cut Architecture stands for the most magnificent piece of Ancient Indian art. In many cases, the form of those Rock-cut Architecture has been found which nearly interlinked with various religions and their activities. Mainly, Rock-cut Architecture is defined as creating the structure by carving out of solid natural rocks. The Architecture of Rock-cut temples particularly the Rathas became a version of the South Indian temple structure. The oldest Rock-cut temple Architecture is found in Barabar Caves, near Bihar. In Northern India, the pattern of Rock-cut temple Architecture can be seen during the time of king Ashoka (3rd BC). But in the time of the Pallava dynasty (610-690 AD) and Chola dynasty (600BC-300AD). The temples of Mahabalipuram were the greatest creation of Rock-cut Architecture. In the Ancient time, when the temples were made, the Architect creates various types of idols of an ancient deity or sometimes they draw some story of epics and Puranas in the pillars or the walls of the temples. In fact, the most important part of our culture like dance and music and also various poses of dance and dancers were reflected in the walls of temples. Sometimes the pillars of the temples were standing as musical pillars by it-self.

Several exemplars of music and dance sculpture in Ancient Indian temple

Here are some examples of music and dance sculpture in temple architecture to be mentioned;

- The Chidambaram Nataraja temple in Tamil Nadu is one of the most important examples, where the art form and temple architecture exist together. In this architecture, the Bharatanatyam (Indian Classical Dance) dance posture is carved. There is 108 transition (Karanas) is mentioned in the sculpture of the temples.
- Chola temple of Thirumalpur is an important example where the combination of architecture and form of culture can be seen.
- Kanchi Kailasanath temple was built in the Pallava dynasty. The 'Ganas' was found in the temple's wall, pillars, and elsewhere. They were shown with musical instruments, sometimes they were singing and dancing

happily in a different pose with their leader Ganapathy, sometimes they dressed up like pranksters.

- Ravanphadi Cave temple in Aihole was made in the 6th century AD and it is dedicated to Lord Shiva. Here the Nataraja Shiva performing 'Tandava' along with 'Sapata matrka', Parvati, Ganesha, Kartikeya and sage Bhiringi.
- Another Shiva Tandava Nrtya sculpture can be seen inside Ellora cave (cave no.21) also known as Rameshwara cave temple. It was built between the 5th century AD to 11th century AD.
- Another different sculpture was seen in 'Dashavatar temple (Gupta era)'. There the idol 'Nara-Narayan' was carving with closed eyes. They were sitting 'Lalitasana mudra (pose)'. The Apsara (Celestial woman) flying above with cusped hands, and they were holding flower petals to shower on Nara-Narayana.
- Bhaja caves (2nd century AD) were built in the city of Pune. It was a Rock-cut temple. These caves have several stupas. The special features of this cave (mainly cave no. Xii) is that it has a vaulted horseshoe ceiling. In another cave (mainly cave no. Xviii) the usage of wooden architecture could be emphasized. The sculpture of this cave proved that percussion instruments (Tabla) were used for a long time and also it is shown that a woman playing tabla and another woman dancing as well. Indian architecture contains millions of expressions over space and time, continuously assimilating new thoughts and objects.

Socio-cultural outlook and Conclusion

Temple is the most religious place. The sculpture of the temple's pillars and walls clearly had shown us which deity was worshipped in the temple or about the follower of a particular religion. Some temple tells us the story of epic. Behind the sculpture of temple architecture, it has been demonstrated the cultural effect like the practice of music, dancing, playing musical instruments as well. Besides, we know about the king and his empire during that particular era during the construction of the temple. That is why we can gain a clear idea about the cultured development of that particular social state of affairs.

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