Chapter VIII

Conclusion

The history of the Chandella dynasty is reflected in the archaeological context through inscription found at the temples of Khajuraho, as well as, through the sculptural elements of temples themselves. An inscription dated V.S. 1011/954 A.D. near the Lakshmana temple and now built into the wall of the porch, engraved with 28 lines (49 verses in Sanskrit) gives genealogy of the Chandella dynasty from the rulers Nannuka to Dhanga who was ruler at the inscription date. Inscription of Dhanga dated V.S. 1059/1002 A.D. and V.S. 1173/1116 A.D., which is now built into Vishvanath temple also confirms the genealogy given in the previous inscription dated V.S. 1011/954 A.D. Particularly it means their earlier ancestors viz Atri, his son Chandratreya, the progenitor of distinguished race called after him. But according to a legend, the earliest Chandella chief was Chandravarman but there is no mention of this name in Chandella dynasty. But inscription mentions the name as Chandratreya. Hence it may be said that Chandratreya or Chandravarman was the original ancestor of Chandella dynasty.

Chandella dynasty came into power in 740 A.D. Nothing is known about other rulers except that the first historical king was Nannuka, this local chief, found the opportunity to establish a militant force and with the help of which they established an empire that ruled for more than four centuries, ending in A.D. 1309. The earlier Chandellas were the feudal lords of the Partihara rulers and gained paramount in north India. Nannuka’s successor Vekapati extended the border of his kingdom and Vekapati’s successor, Jayashkati or Jeja even conferred his name on the region over which he ruled so that it came to be known as Jaijakbhukti. His son Rahila was also a great warrior. He got temples constructed and also dug up some ponds and lakes. An old lake near Mahoba is named after him as Rahil Sagar. The first notable Chandella prince was Rahil’s son
Harsha, who reinstalled his overload Kshitipala on the throne of Kannuaj which was shaken by Rashtrakutas. This achievement was probably commemorated by him by the construction of most famous Shiva temple known as Matangeshvara temple and which was the earlier sandstone temple to be constructed at Khajuraho in c. 900-925 A.D. His son and successor, Yashovarman alias Lakshvarman was even more powerful. He attained supremacy over the Pratiharas, the Kalachuris, the Palas and Parmaras etc. He built the Lakshmana temple, the magnificent temple of Lord Vishnu in 930 A.D. Yashovarman’s successor Dhanga (c. 950 - 1002 A.D.) seems to have finally repudiated the overlord ship of Kannuaj and extended his territories from Bhilsa to Gwalior and from Banaras to Narmada and included a major part of the central India and a substantial portion of Madhya Desa. During his regime, the king himself got constructed the Shiva temple known as Vishvanatha and another temple constructed was of Jina Nath probably identifiable with Parshvanath which was built by Pahila a person honored by king Dhanga. Inscription found on the Mahamandapa door-jambs of the of the Parshvanath temple testimony it. The third temple which was constructed during his rule was Vaidyanath. It was built by Kokkala of Grahapati family of the Padmavati in the year 1001 A.D. It is mentioned in the inscription of Kokkala dated V.S. 1058/1001 A.D. which is now built in the porch of the Vishvanatha temple. However this temple is not identified with any present temple.

Ganda succeeded Dhanga (c. 1002 to 1015 A.D.). He got constructed the temple of Devi Jagadambi and Chitragupta. Ganda was succeeded by his son Vidyadhara (c. 1018 to 1036 A.D.), who was most powerful ruler of his time and the Chandella dynasty reached the zenith of prosperity. He defeated the Kalachuris and the Paramaras the two contemporary rival rulers in central India and also organized an active and strong resistance against the foreign Muslim invader Mahmud of Ghazni. He continued the building activities and got constructed the largest and grandest temple of Khajuraho i.e. Kandariya Mahadeva. After Vidyadhara, the dynasty continued down to Vijaypala Deo (c. 1036-1050 A.D.), Devavarman (c. 1050-1060 A.D.), Kiritivarman (c. 1060-1100
A.D.), Sallakshanvarman (c. 1100–1110 A.D.), Jayavarman (c.1110-1120 A.D.), Prithivivarman (c. 1120-1128 A.D.) and Madanvarman (c. 128-1165 A.D.). Madanvarman was a very powerful ruler and he defeated the ruler of Gujarat and Malwa as well as the Chedi royal family. Madanvarman was succeeded by his grandson Paramardindeva (c. 1165-1203 A.D.), who was the last notable Chandella prince with a long and eventful reign. He had conflicts with Prithviraj Chauhan and Katubuddin Aibak. He had a defeat from Katubuddin and lost many parts of his kingdom including the hill fort of Kalinjar. His successor Trailokyavarman (c. 1203-1245 A.D.), recovered Kalinjar and lost some territory. But the successors of Trailokyavarman became very weak and the glory of the Chandella diminished. In spite of loss of political importance of Chandellas, the Khajuraho temples continued to shine in all their glory till A.D.1335.

The temple at Khajuraho belonged to the Hindu and Jaina faiths. The three important religious i.e. Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism were in vague during that period. However the largest followers were of various Brahmanical sects. Chandella inscription and monumental remains reveal a dominance of Puranic religions with its idea of Trinity i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Most of the Chandella rulers including Dhanga were strong devotees of Shiva. Majority of temples at Khajuraho i.e. Matangeshwara, Kandariya Mahadeva, Vishvanath, Lalguan and Duladeva etc. are dedicated to Shiva. The temple of Brahma is actually not of Brahma, one of the Hindu trinity but dedicated to Shiva. The early kings of Chandella dynasty including Yashovarman were vaishnavites. Kiritivarman also had leanings towards vaishnavism. The most popular temples dedicated to Vishnu and his different incarnations are Lakshmana, Varaha, Vanama, Javari and Chaturbhuja. It is also presumed that the temples of Devi Jagadambi and the ruined temple now called Khakra Math was dedicated to Vishnu. Sauras was another sect in vague at Khajuraho. The followers of this sect worship the sun Surya as the Supreme Being. Chitragupta temple was dedicated to Him. The sculptures of Surya are depicted in many temples. Shaktas and Ganpatyas sects of Hinduism also existed at Khajuraho at that time. Jainism was also quite popular; therefore a few temples which exist at present are of
Jainism i.e. Shantinath, Parshvanath and several other temples which now no longer exist probably were of Jain Tirthankaras. This fact is supported from a large number of images of Tirthankaras kept in the courtyards of Jain temples and housed in the museum. Some of the Jain images belonging to the Jain group of temples at Khajuraho bear inscription of Madanvarman dated V.S. 1205 and 1215 (1148 and 1158 A.D.), it may be conjectured that he was a Jain and as such he fostered Jainism in the region. Among the 24 Tirthankaras, the first Tirthankara Rishabhanatha or Adinath was given highest place of esteem and reverence. Parshvanatha temple is also dedicated to first Tirthankara.

In the modern temple of Shantinath also a colossal image of Adinath is enshrined. The Digambara Jain monks also lived at Khajuraho. This is evident from the fact that on the architrave above the sanctum doorways the 16-dreams of the mother of Mahavira are depicted. Buddhism was on decline at that time in north India. Though there is no temple in Khajuraho which is dedicated to this religion but Huien-Tsang reports to have seen many Buddhist monasteries here in 641 A.D. when he visited this place. Alexander Cunningham is also of the opinion that several mounds existed to the north and east of the Khajuraho Village are chief of the ruins of Buddhist monasteries. This is evident from the fact that the solitary image of Buddha which is also in a badly damaged condition has been found at Khajuraho. So the scholars are of the opinion that Buddhism was not completely absent in this region.

The number of temples now extant at Khajuraho is 25. But according to local belief about 85 temples were constructed in about 13 sq. km of land in Khajuraho between 950-1050 A.D. This myth of 85 temples is not directly referred to any historical documents of medieval India and there is no sound proof supporting the myth. However, in 1980 the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) commenced a study of 10 km area along Khajuraho and located 18 mounds in the area. These mounds do not immediately prove that 85 temples were built by Chandella. There are 36 temples (or remnants of temples) that have been identified by the archaeologists and this 36 is very far away from 85, but it
does bring some truth to the myth. This substantial number indicates that Khajuraho was a religious capital. The temples of Khajuraho were built over a period of 100 years and at that time the power of the Chandella rulers was at its zenith. S.K. Saraswati affirms that the original temples referred in the Khajuraho inscriptions dating from A.D. 954-1002 were all destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni and the temples that now stand there dated from the middle of the 11th century onward. Krishna Deva mentions that the earliest temple at Khajuraho cannot be much later than 850 and the latest after 1100 A.D. The chronology of the Khajuraho temples is controversial. There are some differences in versions of the archeologist who have excavated in this area. S.K. Saraswati is indeed the first scholar to critically study the relative chronology of Khaju raho temples on the scientific principle of art evolution. He has postulated that the temples without the transepts around the sanctum cellar and without the anga-shikhara, precede those that posses these significant characteristics. The nirandhara temple is earlier than the sandhara. When these temples are studied on the comparative method, they resolve themselves into two broad groups i) the earlier one consisting of the Chaunsath Yogini, Lalguan Mahadeva, Brahma, Matangeshwara and Vamana temples and ii) the later group comprising of remaining temples of Khajuraho. These Khajuraho temples can be divided into three geographical groups- eastern, western and southern.

The temples in the architectural plans are primarily of two broad groups. The first group is the sandhara prasada where there is a built in circumambulation path around the garbhagariha. These temples are Lakshmana, Vishvanatha, Kandariya Mahadeva and Parshvanath temple. The remaining temples all belong to the nirandhara prasada group where the ambulatory is absent. These temples are built in Nagara style of architecture. In this style, the spire or shikhara is curvilinear in form and often have panchayatana plan or layout. The temples at Khajuraho begin with a very simple construction of mandapa and cella with a pyramidal structure roof. The temple constructed of just a mandapa is typical until the mid 10th century A.D. the earlier group consisting of Chaunsath Yogini, Lalguan Mahadeva, Matangeshwara and Varaha constructed in between 850 to 925 A.D. are
unpretentious structures. These temples consist of only a sanctum and a porch. The four and five compartmental temples were not present until the Lakshmana temple was built between c. 930-950 A.D. The essential elements of plan i.e. mukhmandapa or porch, mandapa, antarala and grabhagariha are present in all remaining temples while in the larger temple lateral transepts with balconyed windows are added to mandapa turning it into a mahamandapa. This mahamandapa is a hypostyle hall of considerable height and size, closed except for the balconyed window on the lateral transepts, the mukhmandapa and the mandapa are low hypostyle compartments, open on three sides and provided with a continuous stretch of balconyed opening of the kakshana design. The inner ambulatory around the sanctum was also introduced in the larger temples in which another pair of lateral and rear transepts was added. With two pairs of transepts cutting across the axis, the sandhara temples, therefore, resemble on plan a Latin cross with two principal arms, while the nirandhara one show only one cross-arm. Table 9.00 shows temple plans and also depicts the change from a simple temple to a more complex or multi-compartmental plan during Chandellas reign. The temples that were built during the mid 10th century A.D. consisted of mukhmandapa, mandapa, mahamandapa, antrala and cella. Some of the larger temples e.g. Lakshmana, Kandariya Mahadeva and Vishvanatha also have subsidiary shrines at each corner, rendering the structure a complete panchayatana. All the subsidiary of Lakshmana Temple is still preserved while the subsidiary shrines of Kandariya Mahadeva temple are vanished and there exist only two in Vishvanatha temple.

The earliest temple, Chaunsath Yogini, c. 850-900 was the only temple made entirely of granite. Every other temple at Khajuraho is primarily constructed of sandstone. The first set of temples including Lalguan Mahadeva and Brahma constructed c. 900-925A.D. are made of granite at base and sandstone at the upper levels. Over the time as the larger temples including Lakshmana, Parshvanatha and Ghantai are made with even less granite at the base and large quantities of sandstone above.
All the temples are built on high platform and are approached by a flight of steps like the Orissan temples, the plan exhibits projections on the outer wall and these projections form an integral part of entire scheme of the temple. Vertically, the Khajuraho temples have three main divisions on its elevation; the base (pitha), the wall (jangha) and the roof or tower or spire (shikhara). This is addition to the platform (Jagati) on which in the temple stands. The base or vedibandha is made of a series of ornamental mouldings sloping out. Over this rests the temple wall or jangha forming the central part, which consists of solid walls. The wall portion of the temples is interrupted by balconied window which admit light into the interior. The solid wall-spaces in between them are studded with two or more horizontal bands of exquisitely graceful and charming sculptures. The temples have a plan of alternate projections and recesses of intended structure. Curvilinear spires rise out of the wall portions of the four principal units of the temple. The roof over the entrance porch is lowest while on the sanctum it is highest. The roof of the sanctum culminated in the tallest spire or shikhara which is curvilinear in design and has lyrical outlines. The superstructure over the mukhmandapa, mandapa and mahamandapa are of pyramidal shape. Each shikhara has an amalaka and kalash which are not only ornamental but are of symbolic significance.

Some of the salient features of Khajuraho temple architecture can be summarized as:-

1. A unique feature of the Khajuraho temples is that contrary to custom, they are built without enclosures.

2. The temples are erected on a lofty jagati-terrace with the stairs.

3. The essential elements of plan- the mukhmandapa, mandapa, antarala and sanctum are present in all the temples and every part of the temple are connected with each other and arranged in the manner of cross.

4. Pradaksina path- ambulatory passage around the sanctum is being constructed in some of the developed temples. In this way mahamandapa is connected with this
5. Sanctum is built slightly raised higher than the mukhmandapa.

6. The sanctum has seven projection i.e. saptha-ratha both on plan and elevation.

7. Over the sanctum there is a tall shikhara which is curvilinear. Below the shikhara, there are seven segments saptanga-badha.

8. Around the shikhara urusingas of various sizes are being constructed like the shikhara in some temples.

9. In the same way below the shikhara amga-shikhara are constructed up to the urusringa. The amga-shikhara is the main characteristic feature of Khajuraho temple architecture.

10. Amalaka and kalasha are constructed in every shikhara.

11. The entrance doors of most of temples have been built towards east. Ornate makara-torana on the entrance of mukhmandapa is presented only in three temples viz. the Lakshmana, Kandariya Mahadeva and Javeri.

12. Mandapa open on three sides and enclosed by sloping balustrades (kakhasna). Its roof is usually carried on dwarf pillars and pilasters.

13. The mahamandapa is supported on four tall pillars carrying a square framework of architrave which is first turned into an octagon and then into a circle supporting a ceiling of overlapping concentric courses (geometrical and floral designs).

14. The bracket capital figures are of apsaras, salbhanjikas (women with trees) and kumaras (atlas-like figures) which are constructed in sensuous and charming postures.

15. The ornate doorway of the sanctum has one or more Chandra sila (moon-stone).
16. The outer sides of the temples are well decorated with two or three bands of sculptures around outside sanctum following the alternate projection (ratha) and recess. Figures of Gods and Goddesses, Dikpalas, surasundaries, nayikas, nagins, mithunas vidyadharas and sardulas are constructed in all round and relief

17. Gavaksha nets (jalas) are frequently being constructed on the remaining outer wall

The Khajuraho monuments are not as large and imposing as the Orissan temples, but they achieve their architectural effect by their graceful proportions and superb surface decoration. The Khajuraho temple is unique in showing a saptaratha sanctum with a saptanga-bada while the Orissan temple generally has a pancharatha sanctum with a pachnga-bada and that of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Kathiawad, a pancharatha sanctum with normally a trianga-bada and only rarely a panchanga-bada. In Orissa, the shikhara over the sanctum is unencumbered by subsidiary towers and shows a characteristic vertical outline with a pronounced curve only near the top. The lower and upper part of tower (deul) is called bada but above it is made up of three parts consisting of the tall middle part (chappra), the flat disc at summit (amla) and finial or holy vase (kalasha). The four principal compartments of the developed Orissan temple viz. sanctum, mandapa and the two separate ancillary halls, respectively known as rekha-deul, jagmohana, nata-mandira and bhoga-mandapa, are disposed axially and combined become inordinately long and inorganic, in contrast to the compact and integrated complex of Khajuraho and an enclosure wall usually exist around the temple in Orissa. From the point of view of erotic composition and contents there is not much to distinguish between Khajuraho and Orissan temples. Percy Brown has very aptly written that the Khajuraho temples can only be compared with those of Orissan types and after comparison it is evident that the beauty of Khajuraho temples with their flourishing profiles is superb. The world of art of Khajuraho was built on principles of rhythm and balance.

The developed temples at Khajuraho have fixed and almost uniform elevation proportion. Thus each temple was erected on elevated platform measuring 2.74 m to 3.34
m which was almost equal in height to the adhisthana comprising upapitha, pitha and vedibandha. Again the jangha up to the ceiling level approximated in proportion to the adhisthana. The main shikhara (measuring 18.24 m to 27.36 m height above the platform terrace) was 2 to 3 times the height of jangha and adhisthana. As regards the ground plan, the total length of the temple (15.2 m to 25.84 m) minus the flight of steps was about the same as the maximum width of the structure. The sanctum (2.44 m to 3.04 m square) which was practically cubical was three times the width of its doorway, while the height of the doorway was twice of its own width. The image of the main deity of the temple is placed in the centre of sanctum. Each part of the edifice and its sub part down to the minutest moulding had certain set measures and proportions which were fixed either canonically or traditionally. But Ananya Gandotra (2011) who used computer generated documentation material in her study has found some problems with the Archaeological Survey of India manual drawings of Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, which are as follows:

1. The Shiva-linga is not exactly in the centre, there may be a few minute errors during construction.

2. The diagonals are not passing through all edges of the mulaprasada properly.

3. The distance from the ardhacandra of the sanctum to the mahamandapa is more than what has been shown in ASI drawings.

4. The total length is lesser than shown.

5. The width of mandapa and mukhamandapa is more than as shown in the ASI drawings.

A close study of two most representative temples of Khajuraho namely, the Lakshmana and Kandariya Mahadeva reveals that both the temples are planned on one axis. Both the temples are sandhara. The main structures consist of central shrine with a processional passage around a big audience hall i.e. mahamandapa, an assembly hall i.e. mandapa and an entrance porch or mukhmandapa. The ornate makara-torana i.e. the
profusely carved arched entrance is preserved in both the temples. Lakshmana temple shows a makara-torana of two loops, flanked by a pair of large spirited figures of gladiators forcing open the mouth of each makara while Kandariya Mahadeva temple have makara-torana of four loops without the flanking figure. Both are panchatayana temple. All the subsidiary shrines of Lakshmana temple are still preserved while the all subsidiary shrines of Kandariya Mahadeva temple are vanished. Lakshmana temple is the earliest organised and well-planned temple of Khajuraho which was constructed by king Yashovarman in about A.D. 950 while Kandariya Mahadeva is more magnificent and has mature plan and designs and is the largest and longest monument of Khajuraho. It was built by king Vidhyadhara in about A.D. 1030. This temple was built after Vishvanatha temple, so it has similarities with Vishvanatha temple while the Lakshmana temple has similarities with Brahma temple in roof form.

Overall dimensions of Lakshmana temple is 29.87 x 13.79 m and its height is 80' (above its own floor) while the dimension of Kandariya Mahadeva temple is 30.5 x 20 m and height is 88'(above its own floor) and both the temples are made of sandstone. Both the temples stand on 3 m high jagati or platform. Only a bit of the original façade of the platform seems to have survived in Kandariya Mahadeva temple at the south-eastern corner on the flank of the imposing flight of steps leading to its terrace while the jagati of the Lakshmana temple is decorated with the usual medieval mouldings i.e. bhitta, jayad-kumbha, projecting pattika, khura, kumbha, kalasha including a recessed course with a frieze showing hunting and battle scenes, processions of horses, elephants and soldiers and other miscellaneous representations including domestic and erotic scenes.

A reconstructed flight of eleven steps leads to the terrace of Lakshmana temple while Kandariya Mahadeva has 16 steps with one chandrasila. Lakshmana temple has an intact parapet in the form of setback which is largely located in the northeast but little bit is still in the southwest side as well but Kandariya has no parapet. The Kandariya Mahadeva is the only temple of Khajuraho where the platform shows projections on the
lateral sides and the rear, corresponding to the projections of the transepts. Both the temples has the loftiest adhisthana with the most numerous and elegantly-ornamented mouldings.

The adhisthana of Lakshmana temple comprises of a pitha and a vedibandha. The main components of pitha are- (i) a plain bhitta (ii) ornamental bhitta decorated with stenciled scrolls (iii) karnika (iv) bhitta decorated with lotus petals with a beaded band below (v) jayda-kumbh carved with stencilled tamala-patras below and thakarikas above (vi) minor recess or antara-patta decorated with kunjaraksha design (vii) grasa-patti (viii) broad gaja-pitha showing projecting foreparts of seated elephants carved in round, flanked by mahouts or couples (ix) kapotapali decorated with thakarikas above and gagarakas emanating from the lotus petals below.

The main components of vedibandha are (i) khura (ii) kumbha with a central projecting band of grasa-pattika (iii) kalasa (iv) a recessed course showing a procession of elephants and devotees and miscellaneous representation including domestic and erotic scenes (v) a pair of minor pattikas decorated respectively with a frill of triangles and gagarkas (vi) kapota decorated with thakarikas (vii) projecting pattika decorated with processional frieze, disposed in compartments.

In the same way the mouldings of adhisthana of Kandariya Mahadeva temple are also bhitta above these comprise of ornate course decorated with stencilled scrolls and lotus petals, chippika, karnika and projecting pattika with circular rosettes. But only the difference that broad gaja-pitha showing projecting foreparts of seated elephants one in carved around the Lakshmana temple is not shown in Kandariya Mahadeva. The vidibandha moulding is also same and shows nine principal niches framed by pilasters and chhadya canopy. The niches crowed by an elegant udagama contains important images of Gods and Goddesses. The jangha shows walls studded with statuary or balconied windows with ornate balustrades in both the temples. The solid wall spaces are decorated with two rows of sculptures in Lakshmana temples while there are three rows
of sculptures in Kandariya Mahadeva temple. The sculptures contain the figures of divinities, celestial beauty, nagins, couples and erotic scenes. These rows of sculptures are demarcated by series of mouldings.

In the Lakshmana temple these rows are separated by a pair of two pattika, the lower carved with a frieze of Vidyadharas carrying garlands or playing on musical instruments, the upper with a projecting band of kirritimukhas and upper row of sculptures is topped by a projecting pattika decorated with heart-shaped foliage while lower one of Kandariya Mahadeva temple consists of a projecting band of kirritimukhas with a frieze rosettes below. The upper one consist of a projecting pattika decorated with stencilled scrolls with a frill of triangular design below and first series of moulding is repeated above the third row of sculptures. The two-tiered eave-cornice of Lakshmana temple comprises a pair of kapotas with intervening recesses, decorated with diamonds and kunjaraksha motif. The eave-cornice of Kandariya Mahadeva Temple also comprise a pair of kapota intervened by a broad recess showing diamonds in niches and upper kapota is again surmounted by a recess. The windows of Lakshmana temple have a balustrade showing decorative mattavarana having elements like rajasena, vedika, asanapatta and kaksana. The roof of balconies displays tilakas, ghanadhravas and udgamas and in the same ways the Kandariya Mahadeva temple has these basic elements and the corners of the eaves support figures of elephants carved in the round as on the Visvanatha temple.

The shikhara of the Lakshmana temple is of 29 andakas, comprising 4 urah-sringas and 24 smaller sringas clustered around the mulamanjiri and is completely carved with a mesh of chaitya-arches. It is Shekhari Type-I with a central cluster which is developed form of a Proto-Shekhari Type-I. The mulamanjiri or core-spire has three angas viz. ratha, pratratha and karna and is of seven bhumis (storeys) marked by six bhumi-amalakas, each of a semi-circular section while Kandariya Mahadeva Temple is a shekhari Type-V, have components- 1 mulamanjiri, 12 urahsringas, 12 nashta
urahsringas (quarter urahsringas), 28 karnasringas, 8 kutasringas and 24 quarter nashta sringas. The main stem of the mulamanjiri is of the chaturanga or sapta-ratha variety comprising ratha, nandika, pratiratha and karna. The main shikhara is of 12 bhumis indicated by 11 bhumi amalakas of semi-circular section. All the rathas of shikhara are covered with a mesh of chaitya-arches (thakarikas). The crowing members of the mulamanjiri above the griva comprise amalasaraka, three chandrikas, smaller amalaka, chandrika, kalasha and vijapuraka in both the temples. The central ratha of shikhara projects like a tongue beyond the shoulder course, which constitutes a distinguishing feature of the central Indian temple architecture.

The curvilinear form of primary tower is repeated in the roofs of the mandapas viz. mahamandapa, mandapa and mukhmandapa in both the temples. This compares versus temples of Orrissa in which vimana tower above the sanctuary is the only vertical component, the mandapa’s roof maintains a tiered pyramid shape with strong horizontal mouldings that detract from its overall upward thrust. Further, the mandapas create a smooth rise from the entrance way to the dramatic summit over the sanctuary. The architect has clearly emphasized the progressive ascent and descent of the superstructures converging to the higher pinnacle and has created a semblance of a mountain i.e. Mount Meru the holy mount of Shiva.

As far as interior of the temple is concerned, the temples of Khajuraho are also lavishly carved in its interior and have distinct interior architecture. The porch of both the temples rests on four bhadraka type (square section with cardinal projections) pillars and mandapa is carried on eight similar pillars and four pilasters. The upper pillars of mukhmandapa and those of the inner row of the mandapa of Lakshmana temple are carved in upper half with designs of kirrimukhas, lotus scrolls and nagins flanked by vyala in relief. All of them bear a design of vase and foliage on the tops section of the shaft. In the same way the shafts of Kandariya Mahadeva temples are decorated with stencilled scrolls and pot and foliage on upper one third parts. The brackets support a
beam decorated with stencilled scrolls, a band of kirritimukha enclosed within garland loops and rosettes. Their capitals are square surmounted by brackets representing atlantean figures. There are four pillars in mahamandapa in both the temples. These central pillars have a plain shaft and heavy base with usual khura, kumbha, kalasha and kapota mouldings. The capitals of usual design surmounted by brackets carry four layer kumaras (atlantean) in Lakshmana temple while there are eight atlas figures in Kandariya Mahadeva temple.

The design and the execution of the ceilings in temples of Khajuraho boast an unrivalled design of artistic skill. The ceilings of all chambers are decorated and the shallow dome over the mandapa is most elaborate. The ceiling of mukhmandapa of Lakshmana temple consists of four concentric circles of coffered cups i.e. kola course with a long padmakesara, issuing from the centre. Each kola represents a complete section of flower including the central seed pod which is clearly delineated. The ceiling of mandapa has five concentric flowers, each of three tiers of coffered cups, the central one is deeper than the remaining and ceiling of mahamandapa consists of three cusped course marked with ribs, each terminating in miniature figure of an adoring naga, just like of mukhmandapa. Above the corbelled courses the ceiling is flat and ceiling of compartment between mahamandapa and vestibule is also flat decorated with three lotuses in relief. While the ceiling of mukhmandapa of Kandariya Mahadeva temple shows five cusped flowers of three tiers of coffered cusps each, design just like of ceiling of mandapa of Lakshmana Temple. The ceiling of mandapa shows a circular design of eight flowers, each of two tiers of coffered cusps, with a large void, diameter 1½′ in the centre, representing the seed pod while the ceiling of mahamandapa comprises five concentric circular flowers, each of three cusped courses with a central pod and ceiling of compartment between mahamandapa and vestibule consists nine concentric circular flowers, each of three cusped courses with a central pod. The central flower is deeper than the other.
The sanctum of Lakshmana temple can be approached by pair of chander sila (moon-stones) and sanctum of Kandariya Mahadeva temple have four stepped moon-stones. The doorway of sanctum of Lakshmana temple is of sapta-sakha variety i.e. seven ornate bands while the doorway of Kandariya is of nine bands. These bands or sakhas contains different conventional auspicious motifs; mithunas, creepers, dwarfs. It is guarded by dvarpalas and purified by the river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna. The plan of the sanctum, with its inner ambulatory resembles a three dimensional yantra in both the temples, with the eight corners guarded by the dikpalas and Vasus. It is the modest chamber having four pilasters of bhadraka type whereas the pair of eastern one of entrance of Kandariya Mahadeva temple, is quite plain. These bhadrka type pilasters have usual base, decorated shafts, usual ornate capitals and brackets. The Kandariya Mahadeva temple has kumara brackets. These brackets carry a beam of three offsets decorated with stencilled scrolls, grass-pattika and a frill of triangles. The beam corners a cornice decorated with lotus petals. The cornice supports the ceiling made up of two interesting square in both the temples. The Lakshmana temple is the only temple at Khajuraho to show on the sanctum ceiling figural friezes and a padma-sila and is inspired by the contempory Rajasthan architecture while the ceiling of Kandariya is decorated with lotus flower in relief and its corner with kirritimukhas and scrolls. The interior walls of sanctum are plain in both the temples except a niche in the south wall and bracket shaft in the north wall. The image of standing Vaikuntha, the main deity of Lakshmana temple surrounded by a large prabhaivali, is enshrined on an elaborate pedestal while a and stone pattika supporting a marble Shiva-linga is enshrined in the middle of sanctum of Kandariya Mahadeva temple. The pattika is 1.06 m high and shows the mouldings of jadya-kumbha, kalasha and pattika with recesses in between.

Lakshmana temple still has all the four subsidiary shrines at the four corners of the platform. All the four shrines are trianga (pancha-ratha) on plan as well as in elevation and are alike in design. These shrines are in different stages of preservation, shrines at south east and north-west corners are being better preserved than the remaining
two. These small shrines consist of a sanctum with an ekandaka shikhara, a constricted kapili of one ratha and a porch carried on a chatushki of two pillars and two pilasters. The pillars have a square base and a capital carved with a design of a vase-and-foliage in bold relief. Their jangha carries only one row of sculptures showing gods and goddess in the niches bhadras, dikpalas and apsaras on other rathas and vyalas in recesses. South-western shrine also shows a second row of sculptures. The basement shows usual mouldings and doorway of sanctum is of tri-shakhas variety. The sanctum comprises of two chaturshkis made of six pilasters of bhadraka type. The ceiling of these shrines are decorated with kirritimukhas in the corners, tamala patras on edges of the slabs and with a lotus flower in relief on the soffit to the square while the ceiling of north western shrine is of different type.

The sculptural art of Khajuraho temples is unique as well as superb. The foremost feature of Khajuraho temple is unique harmonization of architecture and sculpture. In Khajuraho temples architecture and sculpture went hand in hand and it seems that sculptures have surpassed architecture. These temples present a rich and varied iconography of pantheon belonging to Brahmanical faith as well as the Jaina faiths. These temples are dedicated to principal Hindu deities. Different Hindu icons viz. Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesha, Surya, Ganesha and Devi are represented invariably with their consorts in the tune with the prevalent religious atmosphere. Besides these, Hanumana, different incarnation of Vishnu, the Dikpalas and Adityas, Devi in various forms, Navagrahahas are shown in the temples of Khajuraho. The synergetic trend among different religious sects of Hinduism is reflected in such figures as Hariharapitamah. A hearty understanding was reached between the followers of Hinduism and Jainism is evident from the Jaina temples of Khajuraho. The walls of the Jaina temples team with the gods of the Brahmanical faith. The sculptor at Khajuraho filled the temples inside and outside with numerous form. His sculpture, however, grew out of a fused with the architecture. They have carved and painted even the images of deities with the colours of their own mind. The dresses, ornaments, hair style and cosmetics of gods and goddesses and other
sculpture are noteworthy. The sculptures are set on panels of different sizes ranging from 2.5-3 feet in height and others are slim 2-3 inches. The sculptures are made out of sandstone found in Vindhya hills around the village. The sculptures depict the finest details and give the temple wall an almost three dimensional appearance.

The hundred of divinities carved on the walls and niches of inner halls are conceptually integrated with the central divinity enshrined in the sanctum. The Lakshmana temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The 42 verse of inscription of the temple mentions that Yasovarman built this splendid temple of Daityarat-vaikuntha as Daityatri, the enemy of demons that is why Lord Vishnu and its incarnations are carved mostly in the temple. The Kandariya Mahadeva temple is dedicated to Shiva, so we find a highly structured metaphysical to order of the Saiva tantric system in its images and their placement in the scheme of the temple. We can note the iconic expression of the unfolding of Super Being in different form of Sadasiva, Mahesa, Rudra, Vishnu, Brahma, Vidyasvaras and other subordinate beings in the images of Kandariya Mahadeva temple.

Contrasting with the excessively plain treatment of the Orissan interiors, the halls of the Khajuraho temples are richly decorated with sculptures. Lakshmana and Kandariya Mahadeva temples are of sandhara type, which means space specially designed for the circumbulation around the sanctum. It is the walls of this unit on which ample room is provided to receive figural sculptures. There are 8 Vasus, 8 Dikpalas 12 Krishna-Lila scenes, 12 Vyala and 24 surasundaries along with Vishnu’s incarnations on the three sides of the sanctum of the Lakshmana temple. Being the Vaikuntha temple, incarnations of Vishnu are represented in the cardinal niches of the sanctum. In the southern niche four-armed Nri-Vahana is shown standing in Pratyalidhasana under a canopy of lotus leaf. In this incarnation Lord Vishnu liberated the earth from the clutches of the demon Hiranyaksha after killing him and brought out the earth from the under of the ocean, using its two tusks. While the earth goddess is shown sited on the elbow of upper left hand of the God and God is looking at her and not smiling her as Bhu-vahara should.
The western bhadra niche shows the incarnation of Vishnu twelve-armed Narsimha, having upper portion of his body of lion, killing of Hiranyakasapu the demon, ripping open his belly in the evening light, neither day nor night. In the northern cardinal niche Ghana-dvara four-armed horse-necked Hayagriva is standing in sambhanga as padmasana. Lord Vishnu took the incarnation of Hayagriva to kill the demon Hayagriva. Lakshmana temple is a Vaikuntha temple and Vaikuntha image has three faces, the central face is of human and Lion i.e. Narasimha on the right and a boar i.e. varaha on the left. The varaha and Narasimha incarnations may be represented on the sanctum wall on this principal. But in the temple varaha image is on the southern cardinal niche. All living beings should observe Pasupata vrata worship the Linga and obtain release. The main aim of placing the Mahesha’s lila-murti in the cardinal niches of the lower jangha of sanctum of Kandariya Mahadeva temple is to teach the greatness of Pasupata system. All the Puranas are specific about this point. A sixteen-armed the Andhakasurasamharmurti crushing the demon Andhaka in the south, a sixteen-armed Shiva as Tripurantaka destroying the tripuras, the three cities of demon with an arrow is shown in the north and sixteen-armed Nataraja Shiva dancing in the evening depicted in the western cardinal niche. The upper cardinal niches of sanctum of Lakshmana temple are unique representation of Matsya and Kurma incarnation of Vishnu in the human form. These incarnations are generally portrayed in their natural form of fish and tortoise or as Nri-Matsya and Nri-Kurma form. But in this temple Yogasana Vishnu with kurma marked on his seat as indicating his identity as Kurma-Narayana in human form is placed in the upper cardinal niche in the south. Matsya Narayana is represented in the northern upper cardinal niche. This is an unusual form of Kurma amid Narada and the seven Rishis to whom he gave a discourse on ultimate knowledge. On the occasion of charming of the ocean like kurma, in the form of Matsya, Vishnu gave discourse to vaivasvat Manu and the seven Rishis. According to Hindu myths, Matsya avatar was taken by Mahavishnu at the end of Satyuga, when the world was destroyed by great flood. Lord Matsya appeared twice in this kalpa. First, during the Svayambhuva-manvantara he killed the demon
Hayagriva and received the Vedic literature. Later at the end of the Laksusa-manvantara, he appeared and bestowed his mercy on king satyvarta (Manu). Yogasanavishnu-Matsya and Hayagriva incarnations are placed in upper and lower cardinal niches of the same wall as both are associated with the restoration of the Vedas. The story of Matsya Avtara has been described in chapter 24 of the eighth canto of Srimad-bhagavatam.

The cardinal niche of west shows the Vishnu-Narayana in dhayana-mudra surrounded by ekantin devotee of Sveta dvipa. This sculptural panel takes us into the heart of the Pancharata. The Pancharatha is a mysterious knowledge which is taught to a person who is entirely devoted to Lord Vishnu with a singleness of mind and strict discipline. The upper bhadra niches of sanctum of Kandariya Mahadeva temple show the images of Vishnu above the Shiva-lila murti except the western wall which contains eight armed dancing Shiva playing on Vina. This image perhaps represents Shiva as Vinadhara Dakshinamurti and suggests the temple’s affiliation to Urdhva-sawa sub sect of Saiva Siddhanta as this image is placed above the Natraja Shiva. Four-armed Vishnu seated in lalitasana on his Garuda vahana is shown in the south and seated Lakshmi-Narayana in the northern upper cardinal niche. Originally, Vaishnavism was known as Ekantika Dharma. Subsequently with minor difference it came to be known As the Pancharratrika dharama, the Narayaniya dharma and soon after the beginning of the Christian era, the abhiras added the worship of Vishnu in the form of Vasudeva Krishna. So Krishna-lila scenes/episodes are also included in the sculptural programming of sanctum wall with 4 lila scenes in small niches in each side of the wall. Here the episodes of infancy, childhood, boyhood and adolescence of Krishna are mixed up in their placement in the temple these scenes are not arranged according to the story sequence. The sanctum wall of south shows (i) Trinavarta vadha- Krishna slaying the storm demon in Gokula. Here agitated Krishna is shown as boy instead of child (ii) Balarama slays Suta Ramaharshana in Naimasaranya. Balarama is shown striding towards the Suta and striking him with the plough held in his right hand (iii) Four-armed Krishna vanquishes a powerful wrestler Chanura in Mathura (iv) Four-armed Krishna killing the gigantic elephant of Kansa in
Mathura. The western wall of the sanctum contains the- (i) four-armed Krishna subjugates Kaliya Sarpa in the river of Yamuna at Varindavana. Kaliya is shown as human faced serpent looking up top Krishna in helpless submission with his threaded mouth and hands in anjali-mudra. (ii) Two-armed Krishna defeats the wrestler sala in Mathura. Krishna has raised the gada in his right hand to strike the sala’s hand that defends his head against the blow of gada with his appraised right hand. (iii) The hunch-backed kubja turna into beautiful women by the grace of Krishna and the god is offering scented paste to Krishna and the god is mirthfully (iv) Four-armed curly haired child Krishna overturning the cart in Gokula.

While the north wall of the sanctum shows- (i) Two-armed Krishna killing the bull demon Arishtasura in Vraja. He is violently wrenching the right horn and muzzle of the bull with his right hand and crushes the bull under his right leg (ii) Yamalarjuna episode in Vraja. Krishna uproots the twin Arjuna trees shown with human heads of two Yaksha brothers Nalakubera and Mangriva, who well turned into trees by the curse of Narada (iii) Demoness Putana’s deliverance in Gokula Krishna is represented as a nude standing baby sucking the left breast of Putana who is seated in lalitasana with both her hands raised in mortal agony by the fierce sucking (iv) Four-armed Krishna killing the calf demon Vatsasura in Varindavan. Young Krishna pounces upon the calf demon by pressing its down with his right leg and aggressively twists the tail and muzzle of calf with his lower right and left hands.

So it is significant to note that in sculptural depicts of Krishna lilas, Krishna is represented as Daityari who vanquishes enemies like Vaikuttha-Vishnu Lakshmana temple represent Krishna heroic and miraculous encounters rather than his childhood pranks.

Dikpalas are guardian deities who guard against evils or vighnas from the direction. The consecrated sacred space should be guarded in its eight corners by dikpalas and vasus. Dikpalas who assist in the affairs of universal management and are an
important part of vasti, Indra, Agni, Yama, Nriti, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Isana reviles in the east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, north and north-east respectively. Dikpalas, Vasus, devanagas is and vyala are also included in sculptural plan of sanctum of both the temples. In the Lakshmana temple, subsequent to the figure of devangana is placed a vyala followed by devangana and yet another vyala. At the end of the sequence is placed a male deity i.e. dikpala. The programming can be summarised as Vishnu incarnations in main cardinal niches, Krishna lila episodes in synoptic form squeezed into recesses while devanganas are placed in alternate sequences besides male deities. The lower row of sculptural panel of south face of sanctum shows Gajalakshmi, Indra, Agni, surasundari, vyala, surasundari, vyala, surasundari, Varaha, surasundari, vyala, surasundari, vyala and Yama and upper tier includes Parvati, Vasu, Vasu, surasundari, Krishna-lila, surasundari, Krishna-lila, surasundari, Yagesvara Vishnu-Kurma, surasundari, Krishna-lila, surasundari, Krishna-lila and Vasu. So, the image of goddess is topped by goddess, Dikpala by Vasu, surasundari by surasundari, vyala by Krishna-lila and main cardinal niche of Vishnu incarnation by another incarnation in all the sides of walls. Dikpalas on the west face are Nirriti and Varuna and on north face are Vayu, Kubera and Isana.

In Kandariya Mahadeva temple also surasundari figures are shown one above the other, Dikpala is topped by Vasu just alike Lakshmana temple. But vyala are topped by mithunas and Brahma in podium niche under the main bhadra niche. Couples intertwined in creeper-like embrace flank the manifestations of Mahesha in the bhadra niche and image of Vishnu on the upper row. Representation of mithuna can be interpreted as auspicious alankara or fertility motif to protect the womb-house from evil influence and another philosophy behind representation of mithunas and surasundaries, they could be interpreted as representing kama, desire necessary for creation of universe. The Kapili niche of the sanctum represents Vaikuntha-Vishnu on the south wall in the Kandariya Mahadeva temple. Vaikuntha is paired with Gaja-Lakshmi in the north and these niches are topped by image of Kubera-Kuberi and Uma-Mahesvara respectively while the Kapili
niches of the Lakshmana temple represents Gaja-Lakshmi in the lower niche in the south
topped by image of Parvati and Vidyadevi Sarasvati in the lower niche in the north and
topped by four-armed Kali. In the Shiva temple, Vaikuntha is an avarana deity and
according to the Shiva-Purana, He should be worshipped in the north but here in the
Kandariya Mahadeva temple, the image faces the south. But vyahas of Vishnu are placed
in the rathikas of superstructure in the north.

Encircling the sanctum there are 14 avarana deities in the mahamandapa and
pradakshina-patha of Lakshmana temple. Starting clock-wise from the east in the
pradakshina-patha, there is a sculpture of three-headed and four-armed Karttikeya on
south-east corner which is according to recommendation of Nilamata Purana and Padma
Samhita. Shiva’s image can be seen next to that of Karttikeya on the south façade. The
third image of the avarana circuit is ten-armed goddess Chandika in an upper niche and
the next niche of antrala contains four-armed standing Parvati. The another upper niche
of the south shows four armed Bhuvanesari and a beautiful mother goddess Ambika
seated gracefully holding a child in her hands is placed next to it. A four-armed standing
Balarama under the canopy of nine snake snake-hoods happens to be in the north-west
corner of this pradakshina-patha, this image is paired with a ten-armed Durga
Mahishasuramardini at same corner but facing north. In some Vaishnava texts
Mahishasuramardini is regarded Vaishnava, a manifestation of Lakshmi.

Four-armed Gaja-Lakshami and four-armed Sarasvati are paired on the two upper
niches in the north side flanking the antarala niche which contains Shiva-Parvati as
Kalyanasundramurti depicting their marriage ceremony. The placement of marriage
ceremony exactly opposite the sculpture of scene of Parvati in penance grove is
noteworthy. Towards the end of the avarana circuit, the image of four-armed Vamana,
incarnation of Vishnu is placed at the north-east corner which is paired with the twelve-
headed and twelve-armed form of Vishnu, the cosmic Visvarupa. While the pradakshina-
patha of the Kandariya Mahadeva temple contains 26 niches out of which 5 are missing
now. The niche of the east shows image of Uma-Mahesvara and another niche depicts the marriage scene of Shiva-Parvati as Kalyanasundramurti while on the east-south corner standing Shiva-Parvati or Uma-Mahesvara is placed. The niche of south shows four-armed Brahma-Brahmani, the next image is also same. Four-armed Vishnu seated on an anthropomorphic Garuda and four-armed Narasimha ripping open the belly of Hiranyakansipu are also depicted on same facade.

An image of four-armed Harihara, the composite figure of Vishnu and Shiva is placed on south-west corner. His right half shows the attributes of Shiva while Vishnu in the left. After the development of the Puranic form of religion Vishnu and Shiva become the two most popular deities. Their worshippers came to be known as the Vaisnavas and Saivas. Each of these sects considered its god to be superior to that of the other and to allay the bitterness among the both, the form of Harihara was conceived off. One more image of Ardhanarishvara is paired on the same corner. This is composite image of Shiva and Sakti which attempted to abolish sex distinctions among the divinities and could be worshipped both by Saktas and Saivas. Another image on the west face is of eight-armed standing Shiva whose all the arms are broken now. The north face shows the images of Brahma and his consort standing in tribhanga posture, Shiva-Parvati as Uma-Mahesvara seated in Lalitasana, seated bearded and potbellied Bhairva, Devi with her mount Lion, Uma-Mahesavara, Indra and his consort, standing eight-armed Bhairva. Last two images in this pradakshina patha are of Sadashiva and Shiva as Sadyojata with his Sakti which are related to Saiva siddhanta system. Six-headed, four-legged and twelve-armed image of Sadashiva also have same characteristics as of Hariharpitamaha. According to the Saiva siddhanta, when Para-Shiva wills for creation a thousand part of his self emerges out of him as Para-Sakti. From her emerge Adi-sakti, Ichcha-sakti, Jnana-sakti and then Kriya-sakti. From these five Saktis emerge the five aspects of Sadashiva. From the thousandth part of the fifth aspect of Sadasiva emanates Mahesha and from the thousandth part of Mahesha emanates Rudra, from the core part Rudra emanates Vishnu and from Vishnu similarly Brahma. The composite figure of Sadashiva shows the
attributes of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. Sadyojata is an aspect of Shiva born in the Saveta-Lohita kalpa when Brahma meditated with the desire for a son. Sadyojata is called saveta-lohita kumar, the first avtara of Shiva born as son of Brahma having characteristics of both Brahma and Karttikeya. It is also significant to note that Sadashiva image is flanked on its left by Sadyojata, the creative aspect of Shiva and on its right by Bharaiva, the Aghora aspect with dissolution of the universe. So, the interior of these temples have an extremely graceful artistic atmosphere with its spiritual aspect.

The exterior of Lakshmana and Kandariya Mahadeva temple have numerous projections and recesses which are rhythmically carried up on the elevation. Harmoniously integrated with architecture, the sculptured images enhance the rhythmic movement of the temples. Numbers of sculptures have been carved on pitha, adhishthana, jangha and shikhara. The massive platforms on which Lakshmana temple is built ornately carved with depictions of contemporary life in small frieze while the sculptural friezes of platform of Kandariya Mahadeva temple is completely vanished by the time. There is an interesting group of images in the nine principal niches of the vedibandha in both the temples. The vedibandha niches encircling the Lakshmana temple contains navagraha. Paradikshina-wise, starting with an image of dancing Ganesha in the southern side and ending on the northern niche representing Durga-Kshemankari with two Lions. The central seven niches contain navagrahas namely Sani, Brihaspati, Soma, Surya, Mangala, Budha and Sukra, while nine principle niches of vedibandha of Kandariya Mahadeva temple contains seven Matrikas in between Ganesha and Virabhadhra.

In Hindu religion and mythology these Navagraha are considered as transmitters of universal, archetypal energy. The qualities of each graha help to maintain the overall balance of polarities in both the macrocosmic and microcosmic universe. Therefore a Hindu adorns these planets as deities. The placement of grahas on the Lakshmana temple suggests some Yantra like formation but not strictly according to textual tradition. It is believed that the images of planets are set up in temple- in a order in which they were in
the zodiacal at the time of the construction of the temple. Seven Matrikas are directional divinities and replace the image of planets of the earlier Lakshmana temple in the Kandariya Mahadeva temple. The image of seven mothers are placed in the order-Chamunda, Indrani, Varahi, Vaishnavi, Kumari, Mahesvari and Brahmani. The standard karma of the Matrikas is reversed in this temple but it agrees with that given in the Isanasivagurudeva-Paddhati. According to Matsya Purana, Shiva had created seven Matrikas to combat the demon Andhaka, who had the ability to duplicate from each drop of his blood that falls from him when he is wounded. The Matrikas drink up his blood and help Shiva to defeat the demon. After the battle, the Matrikas begin a rampage of destruction by starting to devour other gods, demons and peoples of the world. They come to play a protective role in later mythology. This placement of Matrikas could be explained on this ground. Moreover there are twenty six miniature niches in the grasa-pattika row of basement of Lakshmana temple which contain the images of Ganesha, Kubera, Lakshami, Vaishnavi, Sarasvati, Parvati, Aradhanarisava, Brahmani, Shiva and other divinities.

The images on the jangha are also systematically arranged in horizontal rows in both the temples. The Lakshmana temple has mainly two tiers of sculptures of equal height on its jangha. The upper row carries the images of different forms of Vishnu, surasundaries or devanganas and vyala. The lower row represents images of Shiva, surasundaries, nagins and mithunas. Images of Vishnu and Shiva occupy a position of buttresses and surasundaries, nagins, vyala and mithunas couples in the recesses. However the sculptures on the tiers of its jangha are uniformly symmetrical, that is the same sequence horizontally as the same types are placed in vertical arrangement namely vyala above vyala, male icon above another male icon and similarly with the motif of the embracing couples. While at the antarala conjoint, the mithuna is shown at the lower tier. Royal couple i.e. Vishnu with Lakshmi in the second and the third tier is adorned with only a single figure of Brahma and this is repeated on the south and north sides of the antarala. Another significant feature of the sculptural programming of this temple is the
additional third tier of figures in smaller size, almost half in proportion to the other two tiers and here are placed alternating panels of couples and group of three figures corresponding to the vyala, surasundari and male icon below. The sculptural programming of jangha of Lakshmana Temple can be shown with the help of figure 8.1.

Here,

C= Couple  D= Devangana  I= Icon  V= Vyala  FMF= Male-Female-Male

- Two tiers of equal height
- Tiers one-half in height
- With Devangana introduced
- Sculptural placement consistent
- In both including vyala and devanganas
- Devangana juxtaposed with vyala at corner

Fig. 8.1 System of human figures on the jangha of Lakshmana Temples
Observing the figure 8.1 we can note that in one section of the jangha, starting with vyala in the deepest salilantatara the sequence protruding upward comprise of surasundari, couple and surasundari. At this protruding corner the surasundari occur on the both facets. In the opposite direction after vyala follow male icon, vyala and again male icon. At this meeting of two protruding facets, the male icon occurs on the both sides. In this

Here,

I= Icon                      D= Devangana                         V= Vyala
M= Mithuna                   E= Erotic                                N= Nagin

Fig. 8.2 Antarala wall of Lakshmana Temple
section the numbers of surasundaries are more i.e. five in a series of sixteen figures, as the number of vyala is four and couples are two in number. In another section of a series of ten figures the number of vyala are more i.e. three and there is only one surasundari and one couple. While on the antrala wall, the sequence is as surasundari, male icon and surasundari covered by vyala on both rows (Figure 8.2). In the Kandariya Mahadeva temples there are three tiers of figures of equal height between its balconies. Alexander Cunningham counted 646 sculptures on its exterior most of which are on the jangha. The

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Here,

V = Vyala        D = Devangana        M/I = Male Icon

Fig. 8.3 Placement deities of on antarala wall of Kandariya Mahadeva Temple
projections and recesses of the wall display nagins, surasundaries, dikpalas, and different aspects of Shiva, Karttikeya and Vishnu. The complete programme of three rows of figures of equal height was first adopted in Vishvanatha temple built in 1002 A.D. during the reign of Dhanga and about a half a century after Lakshmana temple and same continued in Kandariya Mahadeva temple also in 1025-1050 A.D. In the Kandariya Mahadeva temple nagin (surasundari with snake hood) is placed in the innermost recess from where the sequence of sculptures horizontally precedes with on the either side respectively vyala, surasundari, male icon and surasundari. The grouping of three figures, surasundari on each side of the male icon is repeated systematically in all the three rows of sculptures. In the next facet the sequence begins with again a surasundari and thus surasundaries are placed at both the sides of outer corners. In vertical arrangement same sculpture is placed one above the other. On the antrala conjoint (Fig. 8.3), the amorous groups are placed on all the three tiers accompanied by surasundari figures in single on either side, male icon and surasundari in regular scheme one above the other, similarly are incorporated vyala figures at the both ends of three rows. There are no couple pairs at two ends of the lower row like the Lakshmana temple. Unlike this temple the antrala wall of Kandariya Mahadeva temple has four surasundaries and two vyalas on each of three rows, thus twelve surasundaries and six vyalas. In this way sculptural programming of Kandariya Mahadeva temple varies from that of Lakshmana temple. The detailed programming can be seen in figure 8.4. Kandariya Mahadeva temple has Several buttresses on jangha leading to multiple urushringas, on the shikhara, its rathika projection having series of zigzag facets at right angles to each other which contain groups of three figures male deity flanked by surasundari consistently one above the other. This each tier has six surasundaries making up a total of eighteen in each buttress. In between each buttress there is recess filled with vyala and as already written Innermost recesses are filled up with nagins. The temples of Khajuraho are an enigma for art historians. The Khajuraho’s sculptural programme seems to be greatly influenced by Sanskrit literature with extensive infection of sringara rasa also. Sanskrit kavya writer is
vivid, full of similes through which he builds up an amazing and incredible image of the archetypal female. Women has been profusely depicted on the temples of Khajuraho,

Key,

- D = Devangana, N = Nagini, I = Icon (Male), V = Vyala
- Frequency of Devangana is more.
- The three tiers of sculpture are of equal height.
- The set of three viz. Devangana-Icon-Devangana is consistent on all the tiers

Fig. 8.4 Sculptural Programming of jangha of Kandariya Mahadeva Temple
therefore, it is called a World of Female Beauty. The sculptures of women of Khajuraho can be categorised as belonging to three worlds- Patal Lok, as nagins or nagkanya, Mrityu Lok as nayika and devdasi and Swarg Lok as apsara and surasundari. As nagkanya, the beauty of divine nature is simply a form of procreation to prove that a woman has developed as a force from darkness to the eternal consciousness and to the concept of Shiva- Shakti or cosmic egg in the tantras. These nagins are shown in hidden recess of the temple. The earthly woman was created for the delight and strength of man and to fill for him the void. The Khajuraho sculptors have been inspired by exuberant fancies which transcend visionary ideals of beauty ever created and express love of like and joys of existence. The concept of union developed in the conception of the opposite to produce bliss and ultimately into beatitude. Khajuraho woman is only varied in her details but her moods, expressions and posture have been depicted in exquisite detail. These heavenly nymphs are elegantly beautiful, full of sexual charm and vigour. As apsaras, they are shown as dancing in various postures. As attendant of higher divinities, they are carved with folded hands or carrying lotus flowers, mirror, water jars, raiment and ornaments etc. as offerings to the deities. But more frequently the surasundaries are portrayed as expressing common human moods, emotions and activities. They are thus shown yawning, stretching, scratching their backs, touching their breasts, rising water from their wet hair plaits, removing thorns from their feet, founding babies, playing with pets like parrots and monkeys, writing letters, playing on flutes or the vina, painting designs on walls or bedecking themselves in various ways by painting their feet with henna, applying collyrium to their eyes, applying vermillion in their partings or bindis on the forehead etc. The Chandella artist turned stone into flesh, as at times the carving of the breasts and lips is characterised by the soft-flesh like effect and bulk.

The sculptors of the Khajuraho did not prefer the slim proportions as one expects with the feminine beauty. Female figures in Lakshmana temple show fullness of flashy effect but they are also remarkable for the tight volumes of their ample breasts and hips. The arms and legs have been elongated slightly to make the limbs elegant and expressive.
Lakshmana temple figure has long legs due to high-waist. The legs of female figures of Kandariya Mahadeva temple are sometimes relatively rickety while as their heads are longer. The eyes are long and tapering as suggested in poetry, like lotus buds, the nose straight or hooked like a parrot’s beak, the lips serious or in a smile. The sensuousness of the figure is created by the languid posture specially back-view, the curls of figures and inclination of the head. In the female figures of Kandariya Mahadeva temple, there is a peculiar blend of stylization and fleshiness particularly seen in the long lotus petal like eyes and arched eyebrows. The female bust is definitely less heavy than on the Lakshmana temple. Many devaganas are depicted from the back view or with twisted torsos in the both the temples. These graceful nymphs are shown in wearing finely designed ornaments around their neck, waist, wrist, arms and legs. If we observe carefully we can also find their lining in designed pattern, around their waists and legs. So the sculptures of Khajuraho attain its maturity in Kandariya Mahadeva temple which displays human figures with distinctive physiognomy. The sculptures are conspicuously slender and taller and show richest variety of apsaras/ surasundaries figure. These sculptures represent the highest watermark of characteristic art diction of Khajuraho.

Erotic sculpture represented in Khajuraho owned to influence of age-old traditions of erotic motif depiction and was recurring theme in all the ages. Mithuna has been depicted in the whole geographical vastness of India from Kashmir to Kerala and Gujarat to Assam without any example of any region and religion of the country in which its depiction was rejected. Observance and performance of mithuna has been prescribed as a religious rite also in several texts of the Gratiya-Sutras, Srauta-Sutras, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanisadas. Khajuraho temples are the juxtaposition of religion and sex. These temples at Khajuraho are famous for their erotic imagery in different variety – Lavanyamaya or characterises god and his consort as a graceful couple and is applicable to ordinary human couples as well, Asakta characterises the amorous couples in embracing or kissing action, Maithunarata devotees couples in copulation with or without helpers including coitus inverts and Bharasta refers as singles or couples in perverted or
unnatural sexual acts. The erotic figures occur on the kapili or portion of the junction wall joining the sanctum and the hall but these are only one-tenth of its imagery. The temple walls are a living, seething mass of life and vitality celebrating youth and beauty; they are the sanctuary of lovers, both divine and human. Erotic figures first appear at Khajuraho in 950 A.D. on Lakshmana Temple. It is in this Vaishnavite temple that the entire repertoire of female figures and amorous postures are enfolded and repeated in subsequent temples. The temple walls are a living, seething mass of life and vitality celebrating youth and beauty; they are the sanctuary of lovers, both divine and human. Erotic figures first appear at Khajuraho in 950 A.D. on Lakshmana Temple. It is in this Vaishnavite temple that the entire repertoire of female figures and amorous postures are enfolded and repeated in subsequent temples.

The range of lavanyamaya, askta and mainthuratha posture in Lakshmana temple is so wide, almost the whole index of all possible typology of single postures and couple posture is found on its wall and recessed parts. In the Lakshmana temple orgiastic scenes are depicted in which royal persons, ascetics and female attendant are shown. On the platform of this temple, group sex is also depicted in which several persons are engaged orgy and animal coitus is also shown in this temple.

Kandariya Mahadeva temple has also volumes of erotic figures of all types mentioned. From exterior to the interior, the temple has depiction of full art of eroticism just next to what vatsyayana has described in kamasutra. The erotic scenes of both pre-coital and coital variables are depicted in this temple on the jangha in the niches of roof and on the processional frieze of the basement on the exterior and on pillars, architraves, ceilings, doorjambs and basement friezes of the sanctum in the interior. It is interesting to note that the images of gods are found on the same wall in their appropriate niches with the erotic groups in their chosen spots in both the temples but never has any divine or semi divine figure has been included or integrated in the latter. Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, Agni etc. are depicted with their consort in both the temples but not in erotic posture. There are also celestials around them bearing garland and offering only.

The Khajuraho artist is a representative of his age and he faithfully records its philosophy and way of life. The magnificent sculptures of Khajuraho also provide a great wealth of information about the social, economic and religious life of rulers, peoples and artisans of Khajuraho. The artisan, sculptors, architects, dancing group, army, military
parades and processions, hunting, wrestling, elephant fights, music, drinking and acrobatic scenes are depicted on friezes in both the temple. On the Khajuraho temples are depicted many aspects of Indian life together with gods and goddesses, warriors, musician, animals etc. But the most common and popular depiction which have been carved are women and sex. All carvings at Khajuraho are very lively and express pride, valour, sorrow, emotions, delight, joy, despair, grace, lust and ecstasy. They mean that Khajuraho is a place where one feels that ‘Truth is Beauty and Beauty is Truth’. Khajuraho is certainly known for its architecture and art.