

THE LOST TEMPLES
OF
KHAJURAHO

B. A. (Hons.) History 3rd Year

Introduction

Through this report we are going to give an overlook of the temples of Khajuraho and an introduction to the town and culture. We will also talk about the notion around the erotic sculptures of the Khajuraho. We will also delve into the economy, culture and connectivity of the town of Khajuraho.

In this report we had emphasized over some temples which are not given that amount of importance and consideration as they should get and for the same reason this report has been named “THE LOST TEMPLES OF KHAJURAHO”.

Acknowledgement

The completion of this project could not have been possible without the participation of a lot of individuals, and we would take this opportunity to express special gratitude to Prof. Gyantosh Kumar Jha, Principal, ARSD College. We would also like to thank Mr. Ajeet Kumar, Associate Professor, Department of History and Mr. Deepankar, Assistant Professor, Department of History who gave us this opportunity to behold the site and add this unforgettable experience to our lives.

This opportunity has enabled us to research more about the place and helped us in boosting our research and writing skills and understanding of the temples and culture over there (Khajuraho). We deeply feel grateful to all the people around who helped us in the experience and the completion of this project. Last but not the least we would like to thank our friends and family too for their never ending support to us.

KHAJURAHO

The Land of Great Antiquity

Khajuraho, a UNESCO world heritage site, is located in Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh. It is located on the banks of river Khudar-nala, a tributary of the Ken river. Its surrounded by scenic waterfalls and the low lying hills of the Vindhya range, locally called Datla and Lavania Pahad.

Khajuraho is believed to be the religious capital of Chandellas. Chandella rulers had tried to discriminate politics from religious & cultural activities, so they established their political capital in Mahoba which is about 60km. away from Khajuraho and religious/cultural capital in Khajuraho. Whole Khajuraho was enclosed by a wall with about 8 gates used for entry/exit. It is believed that each gate is flanked by two date/palm trees. Due to these date trees present Khajuraho get its name Khajura-vahika. In hindi language, “Khajura” means ‘Date’ and “Vahika” means ‘Bearing’. In history Khajuraho is also described with the name of Jejakkbhukti.





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KHAJURAHO GROUP OF MONUMENTS

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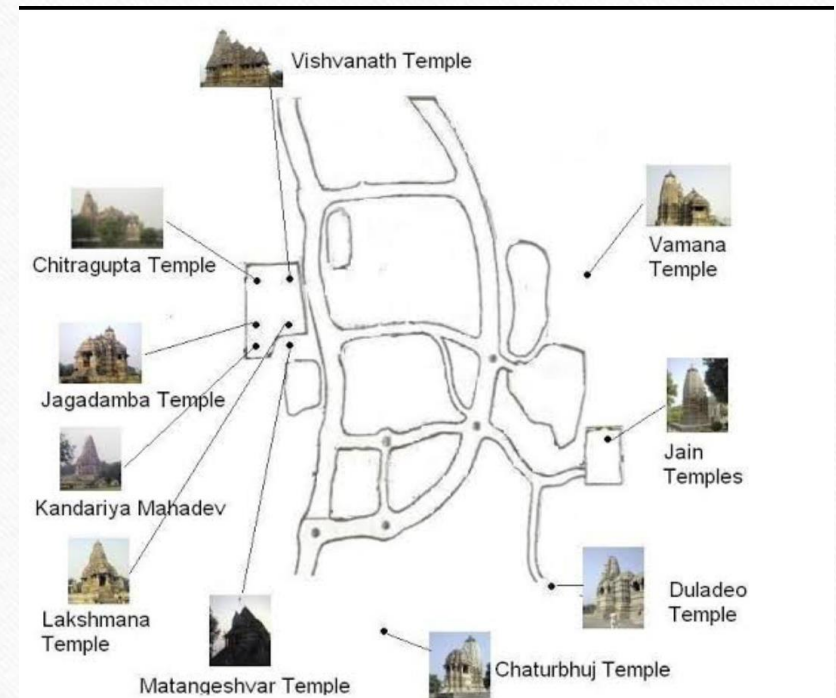
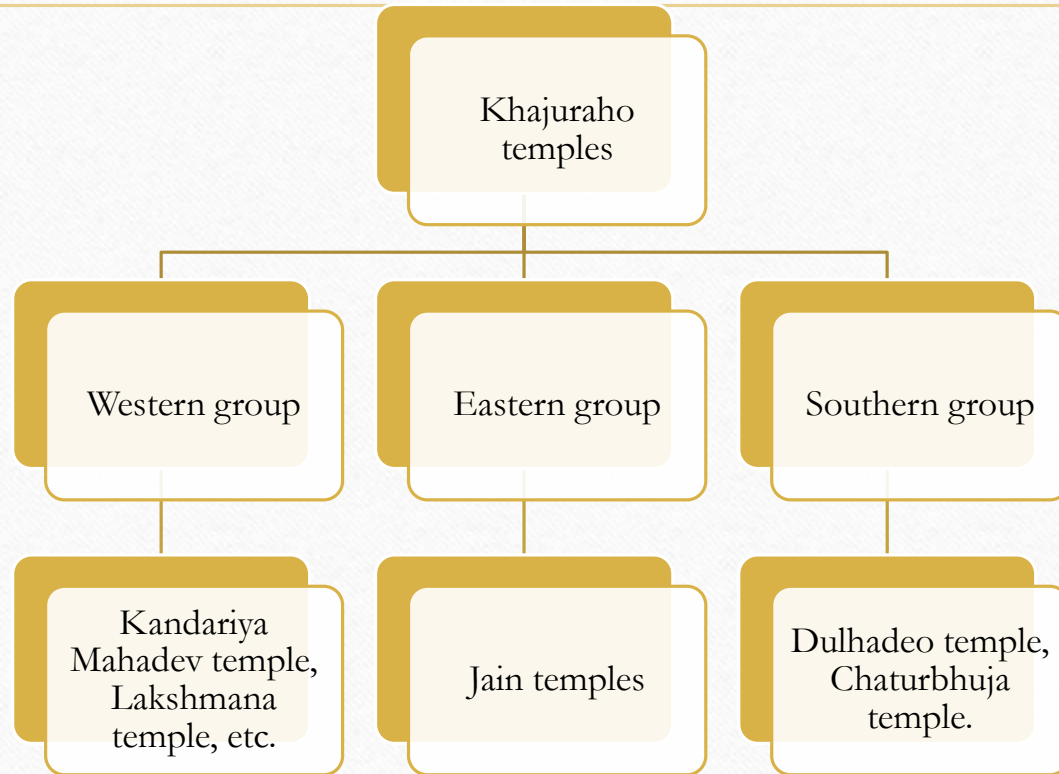
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Khajuraho group of temples



Religious Affiliation of Khajuraho Temples

- 10 temples dedicated to lord Vishnu (Vamana, Varaha, Vaikuntha)
- 8 temples dedicated to Lord Shiva
- 1 temple dedicated to Surya
- 1 temple dedicated to Sixty-four Yoginis
- 5 Jain Digambara temples

Temple Architecture and Distinctive Features

- The Khajuraho temples are built in the central Indian Nagara style of architecture. In this style, the shikhara is curvilinear in form. The temples are unified structures consisting of four or five units: a sanctum (garbagriha), a vestibule (antarala), a large hall (maha-mandapa), another hall (mandapa) and a porch (mukha-mandapa). Most of the Khajuraho temples are erected on east-west axis and therefore face the direct rays of rising sun. The Indian temple is built according to the canons laid down in texts called the Vastushastra. The Khajuraho architects followed a particular Vastushastra tradition – that of the Vishvakarma school. This can be said on basis of inscriptional evidence. Khajuraho temples are like almost all Hindu temple designs; follow a grid geometrical design called vastu-purusha-mandala.



Temple Architecture and Distinctive Features

This design plan has three important components - Mandala means circle, Purusha is universal essence at the core of Hindu tradition, while Vastu means the dwelling structure. The circle of mandala circumscribes the square. The square is considered divine for its perfection and as a symbolic product of knowledge and human thought, while circle is considered earthly, human and observed in everyday life (moon, sun, horizon, water drop, and rainbow). Each supports the other. The square is divided into perfect 64 sub-squares called padas.

Temple Architecture and Distinctive Features

Most Khajuraho temples deploy the 8x8 (64) padas grid Manduka Vastupurushamandala, with pitha mandala the square grid incorporated in the design of the spires. The primary deity or lingas are located in the grid's Brahma padas or in the Garbha Griha. Khajuraho temples use the 8x8 (64) Vastupurusamandala Manduka grid layout plan (left) found in almost all the Hindu Temples. Above the temple's brahma padas is a Sikhara (Vimana or Spire) that rises symmetrically above the Garbh Griha, typically in a circles and turning-squares concentric layering design (right) that flows from one to the other as it rises towards the sky. Of the original 85 temples only 20 have survived destruction and ravages of time

Brief introduction to Sculptures

The most attractive feature of the Khajuraho temples are the sculptures made of finely grained stone ranging from pale buff to pink, yellow, and brown. The sculptures can be classified into eight categories:

1. The cult icons installed in sanctum, the best example of which is the idol in garbagriha of Chaturbhuja temple.
2. The attendant and surrounding divinities like that of the ashta-dikpalas
3. The demi-gods such as vidhyadharas, gandharvas, ganas, etc.
4. Celestial women called apsaras or surasundaris
5. Amorous couples or mithunas, and erotic groups
6. Secular scenes depicting royal hunt, king at court, teacher and pupils, domestic scenes, etc.
7. Animal Figures, both real and mythical
8. Geometric and floral designs carved on ceilings, on borders of panels and walls, on pillars and elsewhere

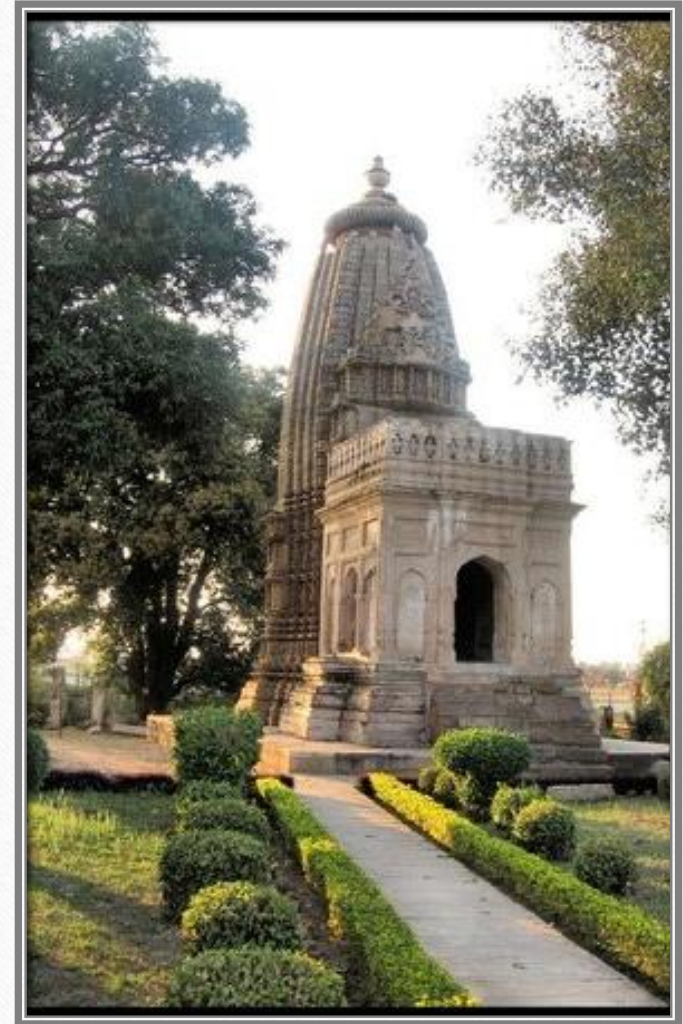


TEMPLES IN FOCUS

❖ Adinatha temple:

- Adinatha temple is a Jain temple located at Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, India. It is dedicated to the Jain tirthankara Adinatha, although its exterior walls also feature Hindu deities. This temple is part of UNESCO World Heritage Site along with other temples in Khajuraho Group of Monuments.
- History: The Adinatha temple is dated to the late 11th century CE. It was probably constructed slightly later than the Vamana temple. In the garbhagriha, there is a black schist (or basalt) statue of Lord Adinath with a three line inscription. It gives the date around 1158 AD. It gives the name of the donor as Kumarnandi and the sculptor as Ramaveva. The inscription includes 3 shardulavikridita verses in literary Sanskrit.

Adinatha temple



TEMPLES IN FOCUS

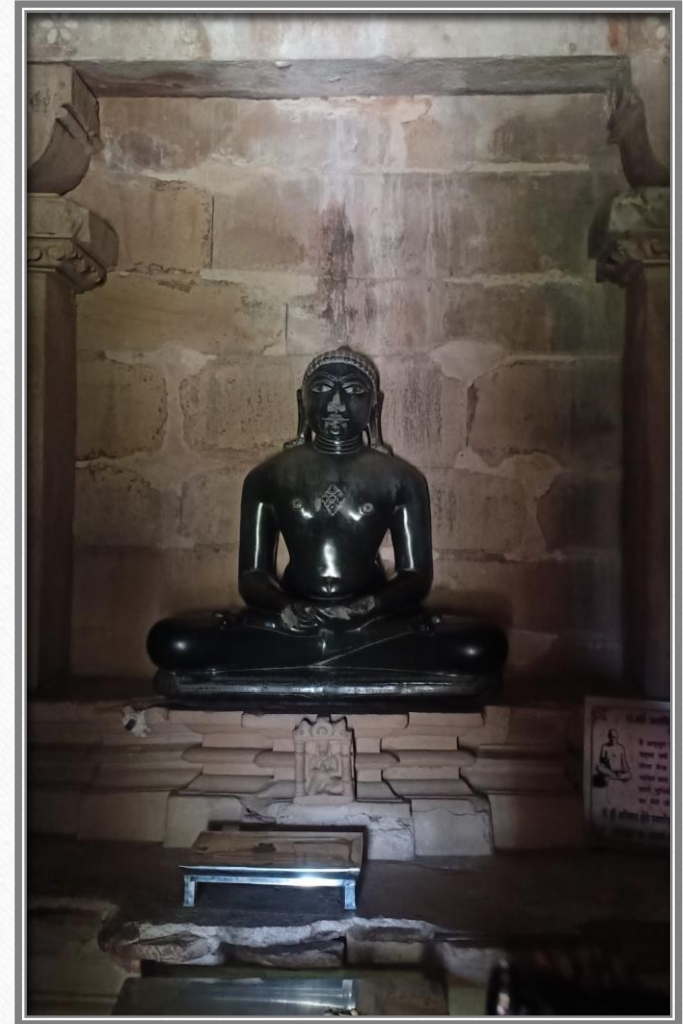
- **Architecture:** The plan and design of the Adinatha temple is similar to that of the Vamana temple. There are only a few differences between the two temples. For example, the top row of the outer wall of the Adinatha temple depicts a flying vidyadhara, while that of the Vamana temple shows diamond-shaped decorations. The curvilinear tower of the Adinatha temple is of better proportions than that of the Vamana temple. This, combined with a somewhat more evolved sculptural style, suggests that the Adinatha temple was constructed after the Vamana temple. The lintel to the entrance is carved with 16 depictions on the dreams that the mother of Adinath saw at the time of his conception. The walls of the temple too are adorned with beautifully carved panels of Apsaras (celestial maidens), Yakshines (fairies), Shasan Devi (Goddess Padmavati), and Vidyadevis. Only two major parts of the temple now survive: the vestibule and the sanctum.

TEMPLES IN FOCUS

- **Sculptures:** The exterior walls of the temple have three bands of sculptures featuring surasundaris (graceful women), flying vidyadhara couples, vyalas (mythical lion-like being), and a dancer with musicians. Despite being a Jain shrine, the external walls also feature carvings of the Hindu deities. One sculpture found at the temple shows a sitting Adinatha with an ushnisha on his head. It features a dharma chakra with a small bull figure. The right side of the seat has the figure of a pot-bellied yaksha with a cup and a moneybag in his hands. The left side has the figure of the yakshini Chakreshvari sitting on a Garuda. She has four arms; each of the two upper arms hold a chakra. Another sculpture with similar iconography also features a yaksha, a yakshini, and a bull with a dharma chakra. The Adinatha is shown sitting in padmasana pose on a cushioned seat with lotuses and diamond motifs. The temple has been classified as a Monument of National Importance by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Adinath idol

Inside Garbh Griha



TEMPLES IN FOCUS

❖ **PARSHVANATHA TEMPLE:**

- The largest and best amongst the old Jain temples of Khajuraho has individual features of plan and design. The temple even example of Sandhara architecture with an inner ambulatory and an oblong ground plan. Unlike other Khajuraho temples, this temple has no balconied openings but only perforated windows for diffused light in the ambulatory passage. Another feature of particular interest is the shrine attached to the back of sanctum.
- The temple was built between AD 950 and AD 970, in the time of King Dhangadeva. It has an inscription mentioning a certain Pahila, who was respected by Dhangadeva. The temple was originally dedicated to Adinatha, the first Tirthankara, but the present image of Parshvanatha , the twenty third Tirthankara was installed in 1860, when some renovation work was done.

Parshvanatha temple



TEMPLES IN FOCUS

- The temple shares the characteristics of the evolved Khajuraho style including the exquisite finish and grace of the sculptures. The Parsvanath temple is famous in the world as it contains some of the most excellent sculptures of Khajuraho e.g. figures of Lakshmi- Narain, Balram-Reoti, eight Dikpalas (i.e. Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirriti, Varuna, Vayu, Kuber and Isan), Ambika, Kamdev-Rati, Ram-Sita along with Hanuman. This temple is also privileged to possess the best art pieces of Sura-Sundaris (Divine Nymphs) in various attractive postures.
- Many fascinating figures of apsaras are found on the exterior wall of this temple. They are caught in the act of wearing an anklet, applying eye makeup , writing a letter etc. The temple has a rich variety of vyalas with faces of parrots , lions , elephants and other creatures. Lively flying figures animate the upper zone of the wall.

PARSHVANATHA IDOL



TEMPLES IN FOCUS

- However, it is unclear why this Jain temple contains images of Krishna, Rama , Balarama , Vishnu and Shiva on its exterior wall. The kirita-mukuta-wearing gatekeepers on the doorway represent the Jain Indra and Upendra and are not to be misunderstood as figures on Vishnu . The Jain goddesses are seen in the niches of the juncture wall. A sculpture of the Parents of Jina is placed in the mahamandapa . The door lintel of the sanctum has figures of the Jinas , while that of the main hall contains the Yakshi Chakreshvari and the guardian Yakshi of Adinatha.

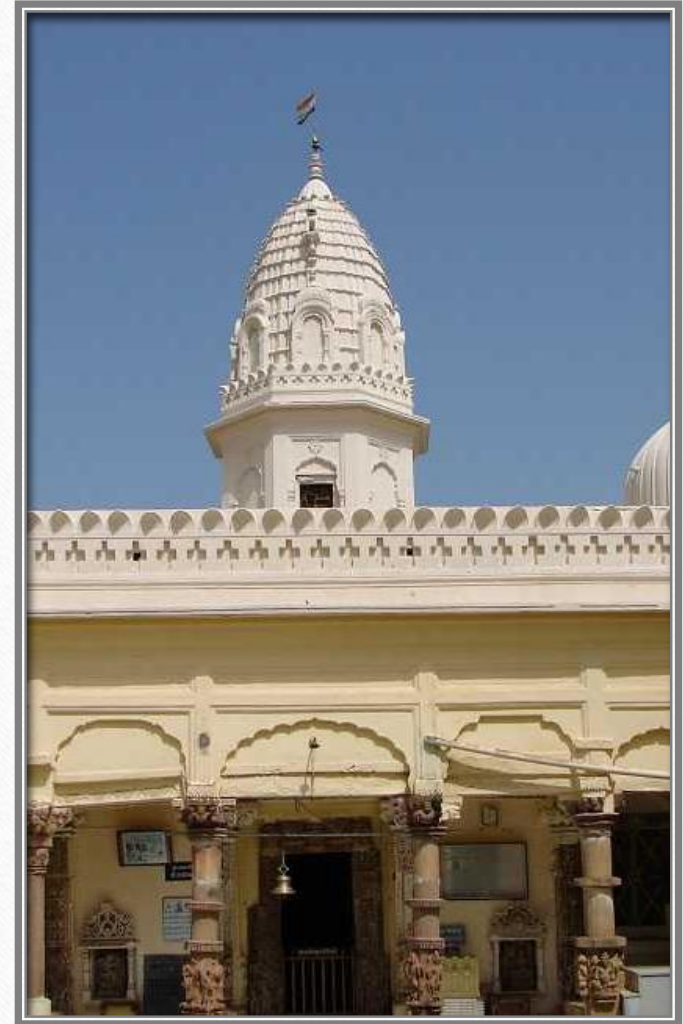
TEMPLES IN FOCUS

❖ **Santinatha temple complex:**

- This is a principal site of Jain worship at Khajuraho. It is consisted of small shrines, consisted of components from older temples and sculptures from 1027 and earlier. These were built into a composite structure about a hundred years ago. The main sanctuary houses a 14 ft. polished icon of a standing Shantinatha bearing a dedicatory inscription of AD 1027. An interesting 12th century sculpture of a dancing Kshetrapala is present at entrance to the sanctuary.
- There is a marvellous sculpture of Yaksha couple on the right as one enters the complex. Statistically it can be dated back to early 10th century, but it has been placed here only within past 80 years.

Santinatha temple

Use of old pillar can be seen





TEMPLES IN FOCUS

❖ **Dulhadeo temple:**

- Dulhadeo temple is also known as Kunwar Math. This Shiva temple stands near the Khuddar rivulet. This temple faces East and is dedicated to god Shiva in form of a linga, which is deified in the sanctum. Chronologically, this is the last of the Khajuraho's great temples. This temple was built in 1100-1150 AD. It was possibly constructed by the powerful Chandella king Madanavarman, in about AD 1130. The temple is built on the Nirandhara style which is without circumambulatory path. The layout of the temple does not have a circumambulatory passage which is probably due to the fact that it was the last of the temples built in the 12th century during the reign of Chandellas, when the peak period of their construction phase had already passed. This temple has sanctum-sanctorum, antarala, mukha-mandapa, maha-mandapa, huge shikhara, etc.
- Some influence of Deccan and West Indian temple art are seen in this temple. Its sanctum was built as if by rotating a square round a central axis. Such a plan is not found in any of the earlier temples of Khajuraho.

Duladeo temple





New marking installations

TEMPLES IN FOCUS

- This shikhara has been built with three row chariots of miniature shikhar. Its maha-mandapa is large, very ornate and octagonal, with a corbelled circular ceiling. It originally had 20 apsara brackets, grouped in bunches of two or three. Now some of these are kept in museum. Although these apsaras and the celestial musicians on the upper row of the wall are shown in dynamic movement, the iconic sculptures of this temple stand in stereotyped attitudes. There are many such decorations in the Dulhadeo temple that differentiate this temple from other temples of Khajuraho. The Gandharvas, Apsaras and other idols have been made in general in the same way. The river-goddesses have been marked on the sanctum sanctorum. The other statues, the marking of goddesses, deities, gatekeepers, etc. is also seen in the temple. There are few erotic sculptures too.
- This temple displays a marked change from the earlier temples in its architectural and sculptural style in that its figures have sharp features and angular postures, and wear typical trefoil crowns and leg ornaments. The figures are also heavily ornamented.

TEMPLES IN FOCUS

- The Hindi name 'Dulhadeo'; Holy bridegroom, refers to local tribal myth of Dulhadeo who, like the corn spirit, is wedded and slain amidst marriage celebrations, as part of fertility rituals. The name must have been given to this temple in the post-Chandella period. There is a very interesting local legend that explains how the Shiva temple came to be known as the Dulhadeo temple. In past, this Shiva temple was a place where pilgrims took shelter and rested. Once it so happened that a group of people returning to their village after a wedding camped here for the night. The newly married bridegroom suddenly fall ill and fainted. All efforts to revive him were in vain as he lay unconscious. It was then that the locals advised them to pray to the Shiva linga inside the temple. They did so and the bridegroom miraculously regained consciousness. From that day, the temple came to be called as the Dulhadeo temple in local parlance.

TEMPLES IN FOCUS

❖ **Chaturbhuja temple:**

- The temple was built by Yasovarman of the Chandela Dynasty in century 1100 CE. The Chaturbhuj Temple is also known as the Jatakari Temple and is counted amongst the Southern Group of Temples in Khajuraho. The shrine stands 3 kilometres away from the Eastern Group in the Jatakari Village and is popular for its impressive architecture. This stands off the main Khajuraho Airport or Bamitha road. The temple stands lonely and serene on a high platform against the backdrop of the Lavanya hills. This is the only important temple in Khajuraho that faces west and it is worth saving your sunset to visit this little shrine. The temple is similar to Javari of the eastern group of temples but like all temples in Khajuraho, it is too unique. This is the only temple in Khajuraho which lacks erotic sculptures.

Chaturbhuj idol

Chaturbhuj temple



Chaturbhuj temple



TEMPLES IN FOCUS

- It has an entrance porch, sanctum without ambulatory, mandapa and vestibule. The temple has a shallow porch, a little mandap surmounted by a peaked roof and a small square Garbha Griha above which rises a tall, slim shikhara. The outer walls of the temple are organized into three bands of sculpture and there are a number of unusual niche figures, including the consort of Narasimha, on the north side.
- Entering the temple one is overpowered by the ornamental doorway and the enormous image within the sanctum. Nowhere in Khajuraho is there a more elegant statue of a deity. Some day the image is a form of combination of these two major Hindu deities, as Hari - Hara.
- The image is carved out of a single stone and stands 2.75 meters high. The figure stands of the magnificent male torso, slim but firm limbs, the calm expression of the face, dominant chin, large meditative eyes and full lips are breath-taking. At sunset the sun comes streaming in and falls on the figure, lighting it in such a way that it appears to be pulsating with life.

Breaking the myth of Erotica

- As mentioned on the website of Madhya Pradesh tourism, the famous erotic sculptures of Khajuraho account for only 10% of all sculptures, or if we hear the tour guides they claim these sculptures to be only 4 to 5 % of the total sculpture but most of the time Khajuraho is referred for a place with erotic sculptures only and the other magnificent sculptures are neglected by the notion makers.
- Most of the time people see these erotic sculptures with disgust and sometimes tourists are disappointed by them. But if we hear local people their depiction of these temples are quite different from the ones who see these temples with disgust. According to locals the erotic sculptures are only around the exterior of the temples and no erotic structure can be found on the inside. Their explanation for the cause is that these sculptures symbolize that you must get rid of your worldly desires to achieve that connect to the god, while some other says the sculpture on the outside depicts every aspect of life so these are consisted of these erotic sculptures too. Another theory by guides revolve around the tantric activities. According to them these sculptures are symbolic and symbolize the tantric poses.

Breaking the myth of Erotica

- Problem does not lie in the matter that how one interpret these sculptures and set a notion for the magnificent Khajuraho just around its erotic sculptures but how some locals present it to the visitors. Where there are some locals who advocate the ill representation of Khajuraho, there is another set of locals who add more to the erotic notion around the Khajuraho just for sake of their own pockets. Vendors and shop owners around the temple complex would sell playing cards with pictures of only erotic sculptures on them, they sell little metal earrings of erotic sculpture and push tourist and visitors to think of Khajuraho in that specific notion of eroticism.

A sculpture dedicated to unknown sculptor of Khajuraho stating, 'oh mighty artisan of Khajuraho these immortal stones sing songs of your name'

Installed by: owners of a hotel in Khajuraho



BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE TOWN

- Khajuraho is a beautiful place with almost empty connecting roads to the station and the airport, with mahua tree on the both sides, locals would collect mahua from the roads with help of brooms made of shrubs to make a living out of it. As it is a tourist attraction it has multiple hotels, economy there mostly depends on the tourism. The town houses beautiful sceneries, some water bodies gives an aesthetic touch to the place. There are narrow roads in the inside of the town and some mud houses can be seen as well, Khajuraho host 2 types of festivals- the tourist festival by MP government and village festival of Shivratri. There is an evening program of light and sound show. There is also an active Shiva temple and devi temple in the town, a great cult can be seen in Khajuraho on the occasion of Navratri when people keep mud pot and sprout as offering to devi and beholding all these might be sight for the life a never forgettable divine experience. We can also visit the Matangeshwar Mahadev mandir which is still active temple and people do religious activities there. This temple houses 9ft Shivalinga and has a local myth around it regarding a 'mani'. Overall Khajuraho is a place with very pleasant sites to behold like little hills, waterfall, temples and whole different religious feeling around it.

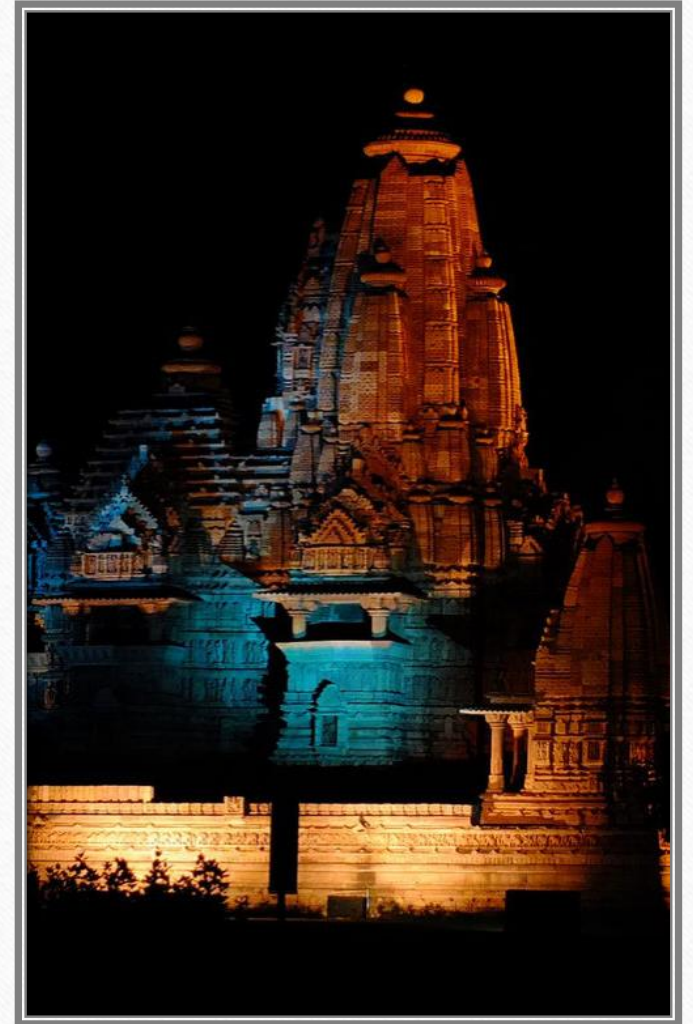


Mud house in khajuraho

Temple complex



Light and sound show



People collecting mahua fruits



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Photographs



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