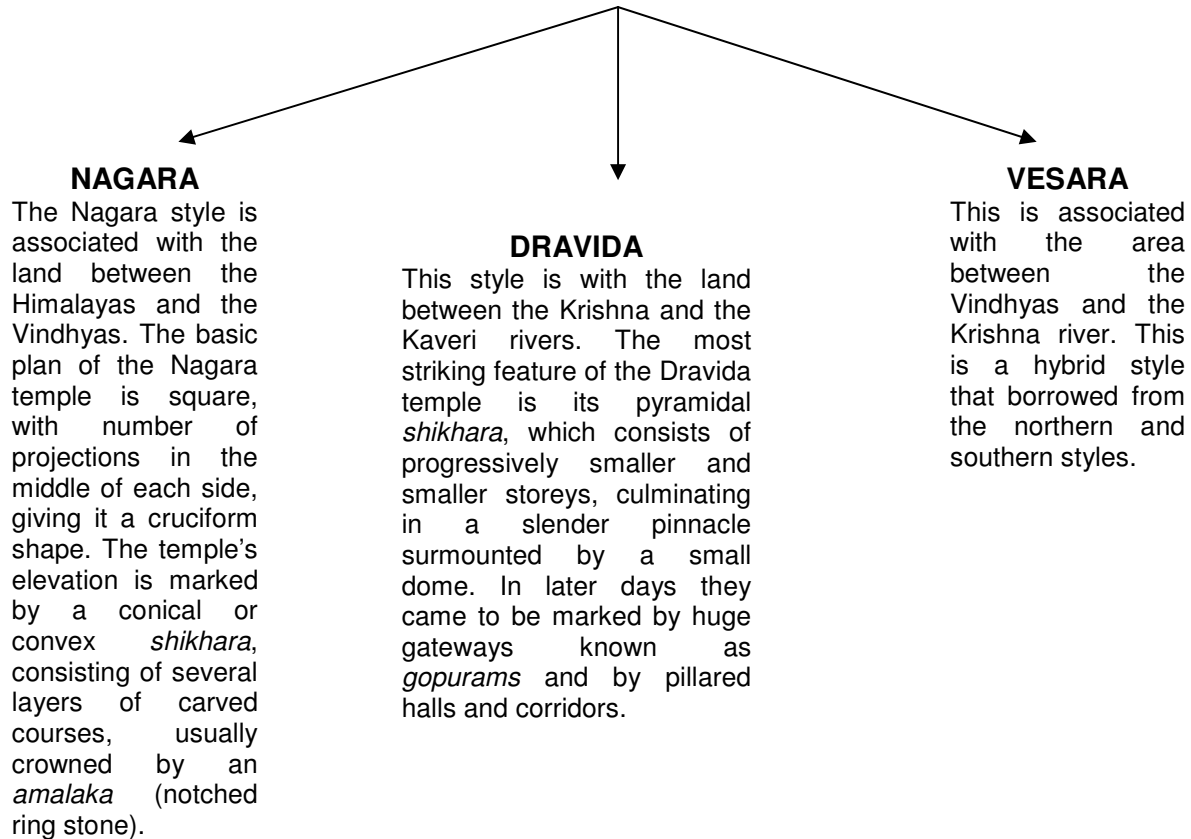


**SEMESTER IV
SEC – B(2)
Module III**

ARCHITECTURE



SCULPTURE

One salient feature of early medieval sculpture is the predominant use of the sculpture as the decoration of the temple wall, whether in the Nagara or the Dravida temples. They were created by strictly following iconographic prescriptions laid down in technical treatise. Distinct regional features were observed during this time. Thus, the tall, lithe and slim figures with a clear preference of linearism and dramatic movements and tightly packed compositions are typical features of South Indian sculptures. The figures of Buddha and Vishnu with a high statura, and shown in remarkably high relief belongs to the eastern Indian tradition. The exuberance of the female form, with many flexions in the body, often looking at mirror or plucking out a thorn from an upraised foot is a signature theme and style in north and central India. Octo-alloy images are typically associated with eastern India, while the superb free-standing bronze figures bear the stamp of south Indian artist.

Here is a description of some outstanding pieces of this time. The gigantic stone sculpture of Mahabalipuram can be referred in this connection. Made out of a single boulder, the scene depicts a fascinating world of flora and fauna along with the figures of ascetics and the scene of cascading stream. The scene is identified either as *Gangavatarana* or Arjuna's penance.

The robustness of composition, the predilection for larger than life forms and the love for action are all throbbing with life in sculptures at Kailasa temple (Ellora). An excellent example of this shows Ravana shaking the mount Kailasa, the abode of Shiva and Parvati.

In eastern India, especially in the Pala-Sena realms, emerged a distinctive sculptural style combining the classical sculptural style with a regional idiom. A late Tibetan account of Lama Taranath tells us about two master artists of the Pala realm – Dhiman and Vitpalo. Many images, whether of the Buddha or Vishnu, are shown in a straight and erect posture without any flexion, portrayed in high relief with a stupa forming its background. However, late eleventh century onwards, images began to have a rather angular treatment with break in the erstwhile flowing linear rhythm of the body contour.

No overview of the visual art of the early medieval times can be complete without referring to the bronze sculptures in south India, belonging largely to the Chola times. Royal figures, images of Parvati were carved out in stone. The outstanding image is however of Siva Nataraja, the Lord of the Cosmic dance. In spite of its immense and dramatic movement; the entire composition is a statement on balanced rhythm.

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