

# Dasavatara Temple, Deogarh



- Time Period-5<sup>th</sup> to 6th century
- Dynasty- Gupta Period (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> AD)
- Medium- Rock Cut- Dressed Stone (A stone that has been worked to a desired shape)
- Location- Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh

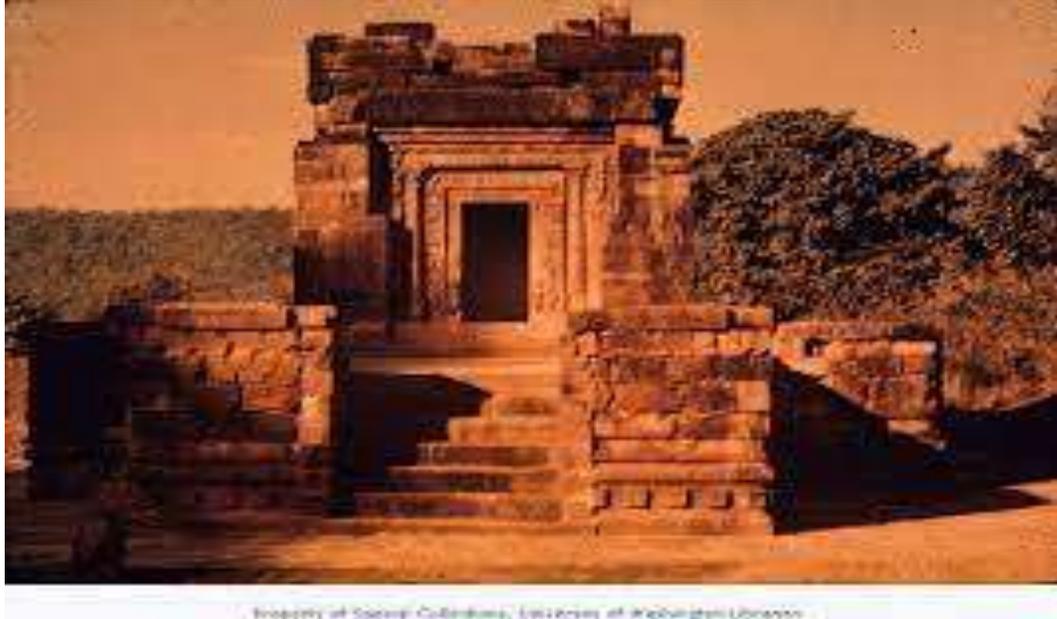
# Gupta Dynasty

- The Gupta Emperors were great patrons of art and literature. The regular buildings and temple structures in brick and dressed stone in the reign of Imperial Gupta, who by the first quarter of 4<sup>th</sup> C has established their sovereignty over almost- the whole northern India.
- The golden age of Guptas begins with the founder Sri Gupta. Samudragupta's son Chandragupta II has a wonderful coin shown him seated on a couch with a lotus in his hand, the *Lilakamala*, suggesting he was a prince charming with an aesthetic temperament.
- Being Brahmanical in faith, they gave impetus to the renaissance of Hinduism. Under the patronage of Guptas, the Indian art reached its zenith, and deserves the name, '**The Golden Age of Indian art and Literature.**'

# Gupta Temples

- Gupta temples may be classified into 3 groups:-
- The first square and flat roofed with a shallow porch in front – like temple No. 17 at Sanchi.





The Second, with a covered ambulatory all around the cella, a very good example being the Parvati temple at Nachna Kuthara.

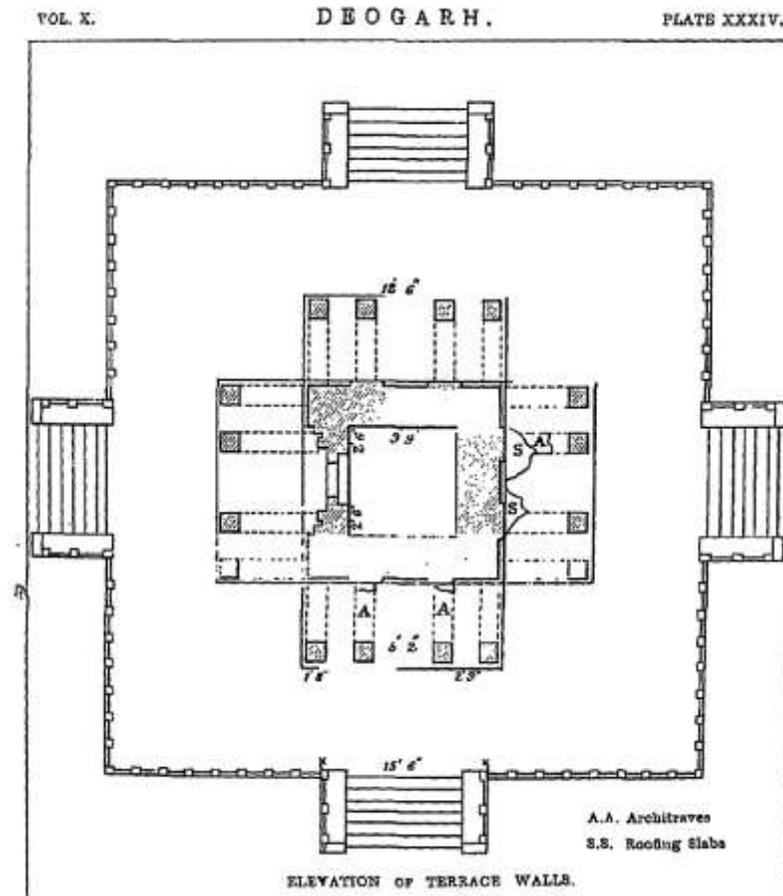
The Third, with a short – sikhara above the Garbha geriha, such as brick temple at Bhitargaon and Dasvatara at Deogarh.



# Dasavtara Temple

- The Dasavatara temple at Deogarh in Jhansi , dating from 5<sup>th</sup> C or early 6<sup>th</sup> C A.D., exemplified the final form of the basic Hindu temple, reached towards the end of Gupta period.
- It is the earliest example of Sikhara over the garbhagriha, further elevated by a square terrace 105 m high, with steps in middle of each side, giving majestic of whole structure.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> flat roofed porticos projecting from each side give a stage effect to the high relief sculptured panels on the three sides of the cella. Beside it, so many decorations have been given on the doorway that they almost obscure the characteristic projecting lintel.

# Architecture plan of Dasavtara Temple, Deogarh



# Features

- The Dashavatara temple has a high plinth (*jagati*) and is set with a basement porch. The temple provides steps in the center of all sides of the platform to let the pilgrim enter the temple from all four directions.
- The temple faces west, with slight deviation to the south that enables the setting sun's rays to fall on the main idol in the temple. The plinth is square with a 55.5 feet (16.9 m) side, about 9 feet (2.7 m) above the bottom step (called the moon stone) of the shrine.<sup>[24]</sup> Each corner of the platform has an 11 feet (3.4 m) square projection with remnants of a shrine.
- Above the four moldings, rectangular panels separated by pilasters ran all along the plinth with friezes narrating Hindu texts such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.<sup>[25][26]</sup> Some of these friezes are now in museums such as the [National Museum in Delhi](#). These show, for example, the narratives from the Krishna legend.<sup>[17]</sup>

Its doorway is intricately carved with reliefs. The doorway consist of Lintel and Jambs which are highly decorated with relief sculptures. It is framed by the pilasters of varying shaft designs and an elaborately carved architrave, displaying Chaitya motifs, leafy scrolls, lion heads etc. The lintel are highly decorated with guardian figures, flora motifs and maithuna's on the right side of the doorway. The standing figure of Ganga is carved out on the left side, the figure of Yamuna with tortoise is made on the other side.

The images on the top of the lintel of the sanctum and walls show Vishnu and [Lakshmi](#), flanked by [Shiva](#), [Parvati](#), [Indra](#), [Kartikeya](#), [Ganesha](#), [Brahma](#) and others. The outer wall of the sanctum on three sides have niches with sculptures of Vishnu legends: [Gajendra-moksha](#) flying in with [Garuda](#), [Nara-Narayana](#) seated in [lalitasana](#) position, and Anantasayi Vishnu in reclining position.<sup>[4]</sup>

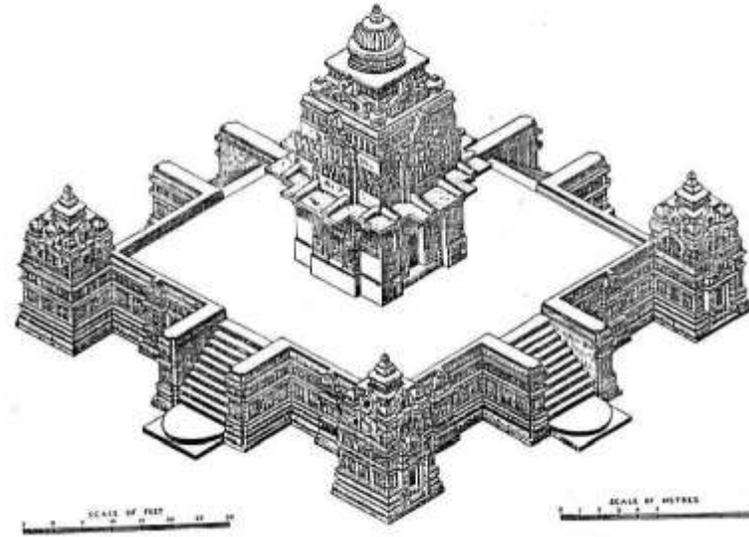


# SIKHARA

- In Dasavatara temple, the sikhara plan is 'Triratha'. The Sikhara may have reached a height of 12 meters. Its original appearance is largely conjectural because of its ruined condition. The contours were perhaps straight edges, with diminishing tiers of the stone courses continuing the wall projections right up to the top. Besides, there have been Amalakas at the corners, But no trace of Finial remains.



Fig. 2. The Saravabhojini reconstruction by Vase (1952), pl. VI.



The "Saravabhojini" temple and the Viman temple





Vishnu in sitting posture under the serpent's hood.

The relief on the doorway lintel of the sanctum shows Vishnu.<sup>[30]</sup> He is four-armed, holds his iconic conch shell in his rear left hand, the iconic chakra in his rear right, front right hand is in *abhaya* mudra while the left front is on his thigh.

Below him, to his right, is a female figure presumably Lakshmi but her iconic details are missing. To the right, he is flanked by standing [Narasimha](#) (the man-lion avatar of Vishnu) in [namaste](#) posture, while on left is a dwarf who has been interpreted as [Vamana](#) (the dwarf avatar),<sup>[31]</sup> or more often *Gana* as he lacks the iconic details of Vamana.



Sheshashayi [Vishnu](#) reclining on the serpent-bed of Shesha,

In the south side niche is the Anantasayi Vishnu legend as he rests after creating a new cosmic cycle. He sleeps on [Sesha](#) whose 7-headed hood shades him. Lakshmi is sitting near Vishnu's feet and shown caressing his right leg. Vishnu is wearing an elaborate crown ([kiritamukuta](#)) and neck, ear, arm and body jewelry. A miniature four headed Brahma is above in center, but he does not emerge from Vishnu navel (a version found in later-dated Puranas). Brahma also has only two hands, with one holding his iconic kamandalu (water pot). Others flanking Brahma are Indra and Kartikeya (Skanda) on one side, Siva and Parvati on Nandi, and a person with a garland. Below the reclining Vishnu is a panel depicting the five males ([Pandavas](#)) and one female ([Draupadi](#)) of the *Mahabharata* legend.



On the north side is the [Gajendra Moksha](#) in a niche that is 3.25 feet by 5 feet (0.65:1 ratio). A symbolic elephant is praying for help with his leg inside a pond and lotus flower in his trunk, where he is being strangled. Vishnu is shown flying in on Garuda to liberate the elephant from evil strangulation.

On the north side is  
the [Gajendra Moksha](#)



On the east side is the [Nara Narayana](#) alto-relievo. Nara and Narayana are seated in meditation in lalitasana. Both of them hold a rosary in hand, are shown to be with closed eyes and calm, as if lost in their meditation. [Apsaras](#) are shown flying above with cusped hands as if showering flowers. Below Nara and Narayana sit lion and deer in peace and without anxiety. The panel also has four headed Brahma seated on lotus and in lotus asana.

[Nara Narayana](#) panel on the eastern wall of the Vishnu temple

# CONCLUSION

- The Gupta temples display a wide variety of architectural set up, and creative experimentation. The sculpture decoration gives strong impression in the mind of devotee before he reached the cella. For these reasons, this period is also known for the Golden period of Art.