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The Temple Architecture of India

Author: Adam Hardy
Publisher: John Wiley & Sons
Edition: First
Year: 2007
Dimension: 23 x 28 cm
Weight: 1300 gm
ISBN: 9780470028278
Binding: Hardcover
Territory: World
Price: Rs 70

About the Book

Indian temples represent one of the great architectural traditions of the world. Built for Hindu, Buddhist and Jain worship, they are without parallel in the way that they combine direct sensuous appeal with a highly complex formal structure. This volume explains the principles and processes underlying the designs of these monuments, providing essential historical background and placing the architecture in its cultural and religious context. It traces the origins and formation of the two classical architectural 'languages' of India – the northern Nagara and southern Dravida – and their extraordinarily varied development during the great age of temple construction between the 6th and 13th centuries. The book surveys the continuing vitality of these systems up to the present, and explores the lessons that can be learned from them by architects and artists today.

By giving a coherent explanation of how to look at this architecture, as a whole and in detail, the book is able to convey a lucid and comprehensive understanding of the design concepts followed by the temple architects, and of the development of temple forms. The starting point of the analysis is the realisation that the principal elements of temple designs are themselves images of temples. Once this is recognised, the complex architectural compositions become clear. It can then be seen that a perennial concern of this architecture is the expression of movement. Recurrent perceptions of the cosmos and the divine in Indian religion and philosophy are shown to have close parallels in patterns of emanation and centrifugal growth embodied in architectural form. The book is lavishly illustrated with colour photographs and analytical drawings, which are integral to the ideas and arguments put forward in the text.

Review

'His new book offers the most thought provoking thesis on temple architecture since Stella Kramrisch's enduringly famous study *The Hindu Temple* (1946)'

(Giles Tillotson: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*)

'Adam Hardy, one of Europe's prominent researchers of South Asian architecture, stands apart from his contemporaries on account of his willingness to convey historical and stylistic analyses in innovative and engaging formats'

(Daniel Ryecroft: *Newsletter, Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain*)

'[Hardy] presents a unified view of the nature of architectural developments based on an underlying design principle in tune with a basic Indian mythopoeic world view'

(Doris Srinivasan: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*)

'Son ouvrage fait vraiment date dans l'histoire des travaux sur le temple indien'

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