The Making of the Mughal Temple

GOVINDA DEVA 1590

VRINDAVAN
A HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION

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Govind Dev Temple is one of the most sought after Holy Places in Vrindavan. The temple is a specimen of advanced archeology. It was constructed in 1590 by Raja Man Singh of Amber. It was sacked during the Mughal era by Aurangzeb who in one of his demolition spree destroyed the upper four floors. Now the temple lies empty and without any embellishment as such.
Vraj Bhoomi

The emerging cultural landscape of the Political and religious context

Vraja Bhoomi located between the Mughal capital of Delhi and Agra

land where the Lord Krishna was born and spent his childhood and youth

the river Yamuna and other natural features and the settlements became the authentic setting of this Indian Sacred Cultural Landscape

“Regeneration” of the entire countryside into the sacred cultural region

one of the most remarkable collective enterprise to ever occur in Indian history.
THE PERIOD...
AKBAR THE GREAT

The emperor Akbar (1556–1605) built largely, and the style developed vigorously during his reign. As in the Gujarat and other styles, there is a combination of Muslim and Hindu features in his works. Akbar constructed the royal city of Fatehpur Sikri, located 26 miles (42 km) west of Agra, in the late 16th century. The numerous structures at Fatehpur Sikri best illustrate the style of his works - the southern gateway of the mosque, which is known as Buland Darwaza, is the largest of its kind in India. The Mughals also built tombs, which include the tomb of Akbar's father Humayun, and the Tomb of Akbar the Great at Sikandra, near Agra, and 1936.
THE PERIOD
ARCHITECTURE...

building style that developed in India under the patronage of the Mughal emperor Akbar (reigned 1556–1605). The architecture of the Akbar period is characterized by a strength made elegant and graceful by its rich decorative work, which reflects many traditional Hindu elements. The style is best exemplified by the fort at Agra (built 1565–74) and the magnificent town of Fatehpur Sikri (1569–74), but fine examples are also found in the gateway to the Arab Sarāī (guesthouse at Humāyūn’s tomb), Delhi (1560–61),
The capital town of Fatehpur Sikri (named a World Heritage site in 1986) is one of the most notable achievements of Islamic architecture in India. The town, which was deserted only a few years after it was built, is a great complex of palaces and lesser residences and religious and official buildings, all erected on top of a rocky ridge 26 miles (42 km) west of Agra. The Hall of Private Audience (Diwan-i-Khas) is arresting in its interior arrangement, which has a single massive column encircled by brackets supporting a stone throne platform, from which radiate four railed balconies. The palace of Jodha Bai, Akbar’s wife, and the residence of Mahesh Das (commonly known as Bīrbal, Akbar’s friend and confidant) again show—in their niches and brackets—features adopted from the religious and secular architecture of the Hindus.
THE PERIOD ARCHITECTURE...

The most imposing of the buildings at Fatehpur Sikri is the Great Mosque, the Jāmiʿ Masjid, which served as a model for later congregational mosques built by the Mughals. The mosque’s southern entrance, a massive gateway called the Buland Darwaza (Victory Gate), gives a feeling of immense strength and height, an impression emphasized by the steepness of the flight of steps by which it is approached.
The Hindu temples commonly known as Mandir in Hindi and derived from the Sanskrit word Mandira. The character of Hindu temples reflected local architecture styles and the material and skills to which they related. The main forms and styles of the Hindu temple were established during 600-800 AD.

The cell or shrine, the garbhagriha (usually square in plan), housed the image and was approached through a columniated porch or mandapa. The shrine was roofed with a pyramidal spire or vertically attenuated dome like structure known as sikhara. The temple as a whole was raised on a massive plinth and was often surrounded by subsidiary shrines and by an enclosing wall pierced by one or more gigantic gateway towers or gopurams. It is the outline and detailing of the sikhara and other roof-forms which determine the character of monumental Hindu architecture and give a formal as opposed to historical basis for it classification.

The architecture of temples varies across India, however while the basic elements of the temple are the same, the form and scale varied. For example as in the case of the architectural elements like Sikhara (pyramidal roofs) and Gopurams (the gateways).
THE NAGRA OR NORTHERN STYLE

A distinct architectural style developed in the temples of Orissa (7th to 11th century). The elliptic curve of *sikhara from the earlier periods* were modified as a perpendicular prismatic tower and converged near the peak. For the first time in history special attention was given to the construction of *mandapa; the roof of the mandapa was now pyramidal with tapering at the top and lower than the sikhara. The finest examples of this period are the Ling raja temple, Bhubaneswar, the Jaganath temple Puri and the Sun temple Konark with there *sikhara height ranging from 43 m to 57 m high.*
THE NAGRA OR NORTHEN STYLE

A parallel development to the Orissa temple, took place in the central India during the 9th to 11th century. The temples of Khajuraho are famous for their conical tower made of piles of stone with an arrangement of miniature towers called sikhara (Grover, 1980). Each of these temples has portico, entrance hall and the sanctum. The roofs of various sections of the temple have distinct form. Each and every facade, wall, ceiling of these temples have carved figures from the mythology and history. The finest examples are the Kandariya Mahadev temple, and Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho.
RAJPUT ARCHITECTURE: BEGINNING OF A NATIONAL IDENTITY

**Time: The 14th and 15th Centuries**

A political vacuum exists in India. From this vacuum come the kingdoms of Vijayanagara, Golconda and Bijapur in the south. In the north, in Rajasthan and Gujarat, the proud fighting clans of the Rajputs too seize this opportunity. This will be the time of chivalry, of great forts under the hot sun, of pomp and splendor, the making of a warrior tradition which will provide eventual stiff resistance to the Mughal onslaught.

However, a break in building tradition – caused by the Delhi Sultanate in the preceding years – means that the science of architecture is no longer the same – the ancient texts which were followed in early temple building have either been lost, or forgotten, or need to be modified in response to changing needs. The craftsmen, too, have now practiced on Islamic buildings, and bring with them the tradition of Islam.

The current of cultural exchange now flows both ways – earlier it was Islam which had to forcibly borrow indigenous craftsmen for its architecture – and now it is these very same guilds who return to the service of Hindu kings. Architecture will now be truly a fusion, and will be one of the first, and among the most prominent, tools of a sub-continental identity, a true Indo-Islamic culture.
THE GOVIND DEVA : HISTORY

The Gobind Dev temple at Vrindavan, Mathura, is indeed massive; its plinth is 105 feet by 117 feet. It is estimated that the original height was about 110 feet without which it would not have been possible to see the *mashaal* or torch either from Agra or from Delhi. The temple was built in 1590 AD by Maharaja Mansingh of Jaipur.

The Gobind Dev temple is also unique for two other reasons but we shall come to these a little later. For the satisfaction of its desecrators, the celia, or the sanctum sanctorum, was destroyed. Fortunately, the idol of Sri Krishna or Gobind had been removed to Jaipur by the *pujaris* in anticipation of Aurangzeb's proposed visit in 1670 AD, the emperor was already notorious as an iconoclast. The roof of the truncated edifice was to be reserved for *namaaz*. No sooner had the mehrab been constructed, as illustrated in the photograph in History of Indian and Eastern Architecture by James Fergusson, Aurangzeb inaugurated it himself by offering prayers.
All except two statuettes were defaced, including the one at the door of what is now the temple, after crossing the foyer hall. The destruction was not confined to the upper floors. It extended to the hundreds of statuettes that even today adorn the temple walls outside as well as inside, the ceilings or doors. The iconoclasts overlooked two small statuettes, one of Sri Krishna and the other of Radha, on the outside of the left wall as one faces the temple.

Prof R Nath introduces the subject of the Gobind Dev temple by quoting Aurangzeb's decree of April, 1669. It said,... eager to establish Islam, (Aurangzeb) issued orders to the governors of all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels and with the utmost urgency put down the teaching and the public practice of the religion of these disbelievers. The great temple of Gobind Dev fell a victim to iconoclastic vandalism within a year of the decree. Its inner sanctum and its superstructure were almost entirely destroyed. The main hall was also damaged. Sculpted figures on the dvarasakha were literally defaced.
The temple has yet another unique feature. According to an article in the Calcutta Review quoted by Growse: Aurangzeb had often remarked about a very bright light shining in the far distant south east horizon and in reply to his enquiries regarding it, was told that it was a light burning in a temple of great wealth and magnificence at Vrindavan. He accordingly resolved that it should be put out and soon after sent some troops to the place who plundered and threw down as much of the temple as they could and then erected on the top of the ruins a mosque wall where, in order to complete the desecration, the emperor is said to have offered his prayers. Incidentally, the canopy standing on four pillars, which must have acted as a shed for the burning torch or mashaal, is lying on the ground at the back of the present sanctum sanctorum. It was so fixed, presumably by Growse in the 1870s. It has no relevance to the temple's architecture. This reinforces the belief that this canopy belonged to the top of the once towering temple.
The temple today is 55 feet tall. Before its upper part was destroyed on Aurangzeb's orders in anticipation of his visit to Vrindavan in 1670 AD, the mandir was reputed to be twice that height. On its roof, after the destruction, a mehrab or prayer wall was erected and the iconoclastic emperor offered namaaz. Almost two centuries later, F.S. Growse, who belonged to the Bengal Civil Service and was Collector of Mathura District, had the mehrab removed. First, because it was an eyesore, and second, in an endeavour to redeem whatever character was left of the temple. Although the original idol remained at Jaipur, another set of deities was installed by the pujarlis or priests. Since then, the temple has a flat roof. Probably, no other desecrated temple had been the subject of so much repair and refurbishment by British rulers. Of supreme importance was the fact of the mandir being restituted to Hindu devotees. It was the greatest act of shuddhi or purification although performed before Swami Dayanand Saraswati reintroduced Vedic Shuddhi. F.S. Growse therefore, deserves a place in the hall of Hindutva.
The idyllic city of Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh is one of the most important pilgrim centers for the Hindus. Supposedly Lord Krishna spent the best moments of his life with his gopis and Radha here. A number of temples, big and small, elaborate and non descript abounds the city. It is located 90 kilometers from Delhi and only 15 kilometers from Mathura.
LOCATION..TEMPLE
ALMOST CENTRE OF THE VRINDAVAN.
AT THE HIGHEST ALTITUDE OF CITY.
ALONG EAST-WEST AXIS.
AROUND 3 MT. ABOVE FROM THE PRESENT ROAD.
100 MT AXIS ROAD FROM THE MAIN ROAD.
Krishnadasa Kaviraja, a seventeenth-century Vaishnava poet, describes the architectural beauty and devotional significance of this temple in his following shloka:

"On the beautiful banks of the Yamuna, on a raised mount with slopes on all four sides, like a turtleback, stands the temple of Govinda. On that meeting place of Radha and Krishna, the yogapitha, stands the beautiful stone temple like a pericarp, surrounded by groves of trees like petals and rows of golden plantain-like pistles. On the beautiful banks of the Yamuna is the thousand-petalled lotus, the Vrindavan."

The site of Govindadeva is a mound on which an image of Yogamaya had been found. Here Rupa Goswami discovered the image of Govindadeva, and shortly afterwards, a simple temple was built to house it.

The mound itself has been visualised as the site of vraja yogapitha—the meeting place of Radha and Krishna, and the pericarp of the lotus mapped onto the land of Vraja has also been conceived as a turtle's back.
The site of Govindadeva is a mound on which an image of Yogamaya had been found. Here Rupa Goswami discovered the image of Govindadeva, and shortly afterwards, a simple temple was built to house it.

The spacious and very comfortable priests' quarters, toilets, and a well. In the north-west corner stood the original temple built for Govindadeva.

On the south side of Govindadeva temple stood two chhatris (pavilions) and a kund (tank); there was plenty of space for gardens all around.
PLAN

garbhagriha  jagamohana  mandapa

Vrinda Devi

Yogamaya.
The main building faces east, its length running from east to west. There is a small, basically square, shrine on either side, surrounding the garbhagriha and dedicated to Vrinda Devi, and the southern one to Yogamaya. A wall along the northern side surrounds it has three aligned spaces: garbhagriha (the new sanctum sanctorum), jagamohana (platform) and mandapa (hall), but in no case have all the three sections survived destruction.
THE RUINED TERRACE
NORTH SIDE ELEVATION
SOUTH SIDE STILLS
A SECTIONAL SKETCH
RESEARCH : STYLES

COMBINATON OF MUGHAL AND RAJPUT STYLE

EXTERIOR : BACK SIDE (GIRBHGRHIHA) TYPICALLY AS NAGRA STYLE
TEMPLE. EXAMPLE: KANDARIYA MAHADEV TEMPLE KHAJURAHO

Kandariya Mahadev temple
RESEARCH : STYLES

COMBINATON OF MUGHAL AND RAJPUT STYLE

EXTERIOR : FRONT SIDE COMBINATION OF MUGHAL AND RAJPUT STYLES. LIKE FATEHPUR SIKRI. AND RAJPUT Temples

SAAS BAHU TEMPLE GWALIOR
RESEARCH : STYLES

COMBINATON OF MUGHAL AND RAJPUT STYLE

INTERIOR : DIFFERENT FROM NAGRA TEMPLES. TYPICAL MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE LIKE HUMAYUN TOMB, JODHABAI PALACE FATEHPURSIKRI

SAAS BAHU TEMPLE

JODHABAI PALACE

HUMAYUN TOMB
The Govind Dev temple is undoubtedly the finest example of his patronage. The shrine is entered through an eastern gateway and is nearly 80 meters in length, making it the largest temple constructed in north India since the 13th century. Another striking feature of the temple is the use of the Khurasanian vault design often used in Mughal buildings. The use of vaulted and domed interior corridors flanked by elaborately bracketed pillars is another feature that is 'very Mughal' in nature. Even the decorative motifs created on red sandstone are not unlike those in the building known as Birbal's house in Fatehpur Sikri.
Excellent example of joinery of sandstone member like beam, lintel, bracket columns etc.
A sculptured lotus flower weighing several tons decorates the main hall, like Jami masjid Sikri.
It was built according to the Mughal system of masonry construction. The load-bearing piers and walls were built of sandstone slabs that penetrated into or even all the way through the pier or wall, alternating with carefully packed rubble and mortar, faced with sandstone blocks. The pattern of these layers forms the external string courses that create the chief decorative motif of this great temple.

The great hall was defined by eight massive piers, and the space between the piers was held in filled, non-load-bearing walls. The temple stands on a plinth about five feet (1.5 meters) high. Its various courses of sandstone are accentuated by distinctions between each level of stone, as to how far it projects from the building face, and the way its edge is molded.
The amazing visual impact the Mughal use of red sandstone had would have acted in concert with the liberal religious policy practiced by emperor Akbar to enable the making of this temple.
The Madan Mohan temple an isolated example. The most significant temple built by using a mix of architectural techniques — including Mughal ones — is the Govind Dev temple. If today's temples have large business houses as their patrons, those of an earlier era had royals. In the case of the Govind Dev temple, it was the Kachhwaha ruler of Jaipur Raja Man Singh, a leading nobleman at Akbar's court. Man Singh was an enthusiastic patron of architecture, his buildings combining Raj put traditions and Mughal elegance.
Its plan, which consists of the main temple and the two subsidiary shrines of Vrindadevi and Yogamaya, reflects the need for a new type of ritual space, particularly for the newly adopted Rasalila performances. As in other temples of the Vrindavan group, there are three distinct sections to the main shrine. The most striking is the large hall laid out in the form of a sarvatobhadra, or Greek cross, about 35½ meters long and 8 meters wide, with a transverse arm of nearly the same dimensions. The.
RESEARCH: INFLUENCE OF CULTURE

AT THE TIME OF AKBAR RULE THE ENVIRONMENT WAS VERY SECULAR. THE IMPACT OF SECULARISM IS CLEARLY SHOWN IN TEMPLE STRUCTURE. AS IT IS A COMBINATION OF HINDU MUSLIM CULTURE.

From Akbar's time (reign: 1556-1605) forward, Mughal rulers treated temples lying within their sovereign domain as state property; accordingly, they undertook to protect both the physical structures and their Brahmin functionaries. At the same time, by appropriating Hindu religious institutions to serve imperial ends - a process involving complex overlapping of political and religious codes of power - the Mughals became deeply implicated in institutionalized Indian religions, in dramatic contrast to their British successors, who professed a hands-off policy in this respect.
DEMOLISHED & CONSERVED ELEMENTS:

MUGHAL RULERS DELIBERATELY DEMOLISH THE SCULPTURE ELEMENTS SO THAT THEY CAN NOT BE IDENTIFIED.
• To provide privacy and security some of the elements were added to the existing structure, which is done with good intention but the outcome was not perfect.

• It was not matching exactly with the existing form and it even effecting its originality.
• The terraces were ruined during the Mughal Era, many floors of the temple were demolished.
• About two decades later it was conserved by the collector of Mathura.
• But similar to the addition it also did not give good results. The conservation done was not of proper form and original excellence.
• It was not matching exactly with the existing form and it even affected its originality.
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<th>Height Of Temple (m)</th>
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RADHEY ... RADHEY