



## Heritage of India

A series of explorations of the World Heritage sites of India as adjudged by the World Heritage Committee of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).



Pattadakal lies on the banks of the Malaprabha River in Karnataka. The town displays both Dravidian (Southern) and the Nagara (Northern, Indo-Aryan) styles of temple architecture. There are ten temples including a Jain sanctuary surrounded by numerous small shrines and plinths. Four temples were built in Dravidian style, four in Nagara style of Northern India and the Papanatha temple in mixed style. UNESCO in 1987 included Pattadakal in its list of World Heritage sites.

### PATTADAKAL

*This article is a researched article and borrows heavily from printed and electronic encyclopedias as well as material provided by our panel of research scholars, astrologers, academics and pundits.*

According to the World Heritage Convention's website, the group of monuments at Pattadakal was chosen for inclusion in the list of World Heritage Sites because "Pattadakal, in Karnataka, represents the high point of an eclectic art which, in the 7th and 8th centuries under the Chalukya dynasty, achieved a harmonious blend of architectural forms from northern and southern India. An impressive series of nine Hindu temples, as well as a Jain sanctuary, can be seen there. One masterpiece of the group stands out – the Temple of Virupaksha, built c. 740 by Queen

Lokamahadevi to commemorate her husband's victory over the kings from the South."

To this the Archeological Survey of India adds the following: "Chalukyan rulers were not only empire builders, but great patrons of art whose encouragement prompted the artists and craftsmen to experiment and innovate in different architectural styles, giving it a new dimension. It is during their period that transition from rock-cut medium to structural temples took place.



Pattadakal located in Bijapur district of Karnataka was not only popular for Chalukyan architectural activities but was also a holy place for royal coronations, 'Pattadakisuvala'. Temples constructed here mark the blending of the Rekha, Nagara, Prasada and the Dravida Vimana styles of temple building."

The famous Australian architect and author George Michell who did his doctoral thesis on Pattadakal writes in his book on Pattadakal that, "Pattadakal, Badami and Aihole as well as several lesser sites in the vicinity, such as Mahakuta midway between Pattadakal and Badami, are famous for their richly embellished temples. To these should be added the Hindu religious monuments at several localities in Andhra Pradesh, notably Alampur on the Tungabhadra river, some 265 kms east of Pattadakal. The



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temple architecture and art at all these sites bear witness to the inspired patronage of the early Chalukya kings and their queens over a period of almost two hundred years.”

### Brief History

The tiny village of Pattadakal is situated on the banks of the Malaprabhariver. Referred to as Petrigal by Ptolemy, Pattadakal was later known variously as Raktapura (Red Town) and PattadakalKisuvola . This place reached its pinnacle of glory under the Chalukyas from the 7th to the 9th centuries, functioning as a royal commemorative site. The group of about ten temples, surrounded by numerous minor shrines and plinths, represents the climax of early western Chalukyan architecture. King Vikramaditya II (734 - 745 AD) and his art-loving queens Lokmahadevi and Trilokyamahadevi, brought sculptors from Kanchipuram to create fantasies in stone in Pattadakal. Groups of Monuments

### Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal

The best known is the Virupaksha temple, built by Queen Lokamahadevi



Papanatha Temple At Pattadakal

(Trilokyamahadevi) in 745 to commemorate her husband's victory (Vikramaditya II) over the Pallavas of Kanchi. The Virupaksha temple is rich in sculptures like those of Lingodbhava, Nataraja, Ravananugraha and Ugranarasimha. Virupaksha is the earliest dated temple with the sukanasika, closely followed by the Mallikarjuna temple.

An inscription on the porch says that the architect Sutradhari Gunda constructed the temple in 740 AD.

### Sangameshwara Temple at Pattadakal 725 CE

Sangameshwara temple (called Vijayeshwara) is the oldest temple in Pattadakal, built by the Chalukya King Vijayaditya Satyashraya (696-733 AD), it has no sukanasika. The temple is in Dravidian style and it consists of a Sanctum, Inner passage and a Hall. On the outer wall there are sculptures of Ugranarasimha and Nataraja. Both the Sangameshwara and the Virupaksha temples are similar to each other in being square on plan from the base to shikhara. The main vimana is of three storeys. The lowest storey is surrounded by two walls, the second storey being an upward projection of the inner wall, while the outer wall encloses the covered circumambulatory around the sanctum.

### Mallikarjuna and Kasiviswanatha Temples at Pattadakal, 740 CE

The Mallikarjuna temple is a smaller version of the Virupaksha temple and was built by Vikramaditya's second queen Trilokyamahadevi in 745. This temple too was constructed by Rani Trilokyamahadevi to celebrate the victory of Vikramaditya II over the Pallavas. The Mallikarjuna temple was built immediately after and close to the Virupaksha temple and carries a similar plan, with a 4 storeyed vimana with a circular griva and shikhara. The Mallikarjuna temple was built in the Dravidian style.



Group of monuments At Pattadakal



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**In few sites in India are we likely to find history complemented by art and architecture as in Pattadakal. The amazing accomplishments of the bygone era of the Early Chalukyas evoking tranquility stand testimony to the wonder that India was.**

### **Kasivishwanatha Temple at Pattadakal**

Kasivisvesvara temple was the last to be built in the early Chalukya style. This temple was built by the Rashtrakutas in the 8th century. The Kasivishwanatha temple was built in the Nagara style.

### **Kadasiddheswara and Jambulingeswara Temples**

Both the Kadasiddheswara and the Jambulingeswara temples are attributed to the 7th century A.D. The Kadasiddheswara temple which has a sculpture of Shiva holding a Trident or Trishul in his hand and its twin temple, the Jambulinga temple were all built in the Nagara style and resemble the HuchimalliGuddi at Aihole.

### **Galaganatha Temple**

Galaganatha temple was built a century later in the architecture style of Rekha Nagara Prasada. The temple contains a sculpture of Lord Shiva killing the demon Andhakasura.



Mallikarjuna and Kashivishwanatha Temples at Pattadakal



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1. Pattadakal Temple Mahabharata 2. Pattadakal Basavanna  
3. Panoramic View of the Group of Monuments at Pattadakal

### **Jain Temple**

The Jain temple located on the Pattadakal-Badami Road was built in the Dravidian style by the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta. It has beautiful sculptures and probably dates from the 9th century and was built either by King Amoghavarsha I or his son Krishna II.

We are likely to find very few sites in India like Pattadakal where art and architecture complement history. The amazing accomplishments of the bygone era of the early Chalukyas evoking tranquility stand testimony to the wonder that India was. ■