



*“The water of the place is tirtha (holy). When a yatra (dramatic performance) takes place at a holy location, all the gods with Indra, the great omniscient Rishis and ancient Rajarishis: ... come to witness the great festival of the god. The man who witnesses this great festival undoubtedly attains kalyana (prosperity)”*

# Rani-ki-Vav

## A Subterranean Temple of Mother Goddess

– Sabyasachi Mukherjee –



Early texts, including the *Puranas*, have always considered *jala* (water) as a giver of *prana* (life). The *Vishnudharmottara-Purana*, a fourth century text, in its third *khanda* (volume) writes more explicitly about the importance of water and its religious significance in human life. The text states “The water of the place is *tirtha* (holy). When a *yatra* (dramatic performance) takes place at a holy location, all the gods with Indra, the great omniscient *Rishis* and ancient *Rajarishis*: i.e. holy kings with their followers who reside in heaven and whose exploits are like those of Indra, Gandharvas, Apsaras and the benevolent Bhutaganas in bodily forms come to witness the great festival of the god. The man who witnesses this great festival undoubtedly attains *kalyana* (prosperity)”<sup>1</sup>. It is interesting to observe that the vivid description of the ancient text has been echoed at the Rani step-well, Patan.

The massive ornamental subterranean water monument at Patan in northern Gujarat is said to have been built by queen Udayamati in memory of her husband King Bhimadeva I (CE 1022–64) of the Chalukya Dynasty. Rani-ki-Vav, the local name of the renowned step-well, “the Queen’s Step well” derives its name from its patron queen. Located to the north-west of the ancient city of Patan, formerly called Anahilwada or Anahilpura, in northern Gujarat, western part of India, it combines the advantages of having proximity to the city as well as a favourable arrangement of the natural and physical features of the area. The famous Sahasralinga *talao*, a man-made lake with thousand *lingas* (phallic shaped stones representing Shiva) is situated very close to the Rani-ki-Vav step-well.



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The extensive sculptural scheme of this step-well encompasses a very wide range of classical iconographical depictions of the major gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon as also Puranic forms. The sculptures conspectus at the Rani-ki-Vav does not conform to the *Aparajitapreccha*<sup>2</sup> (a 12<sup>th</sup> century text which devotes a full chapter to the discussion of step-wells, wells, ponds etc.)

in its entirety. In fact, it presents a considerably greater variety than that mentioned in the text. The architecture and the depiction of over six hundred religious and secular sculptures, and several symbols and floral motifs indicate that the water monument had assumed a wide religious significance in society in addition to its utilitarian function (Figs. 1 and 2).

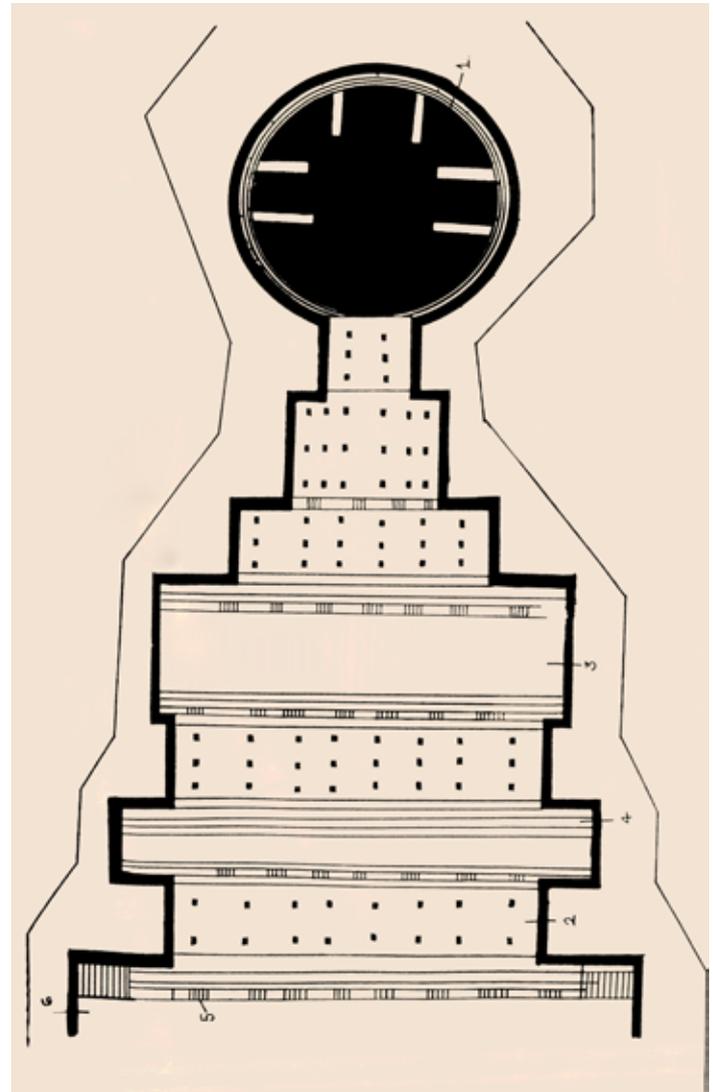
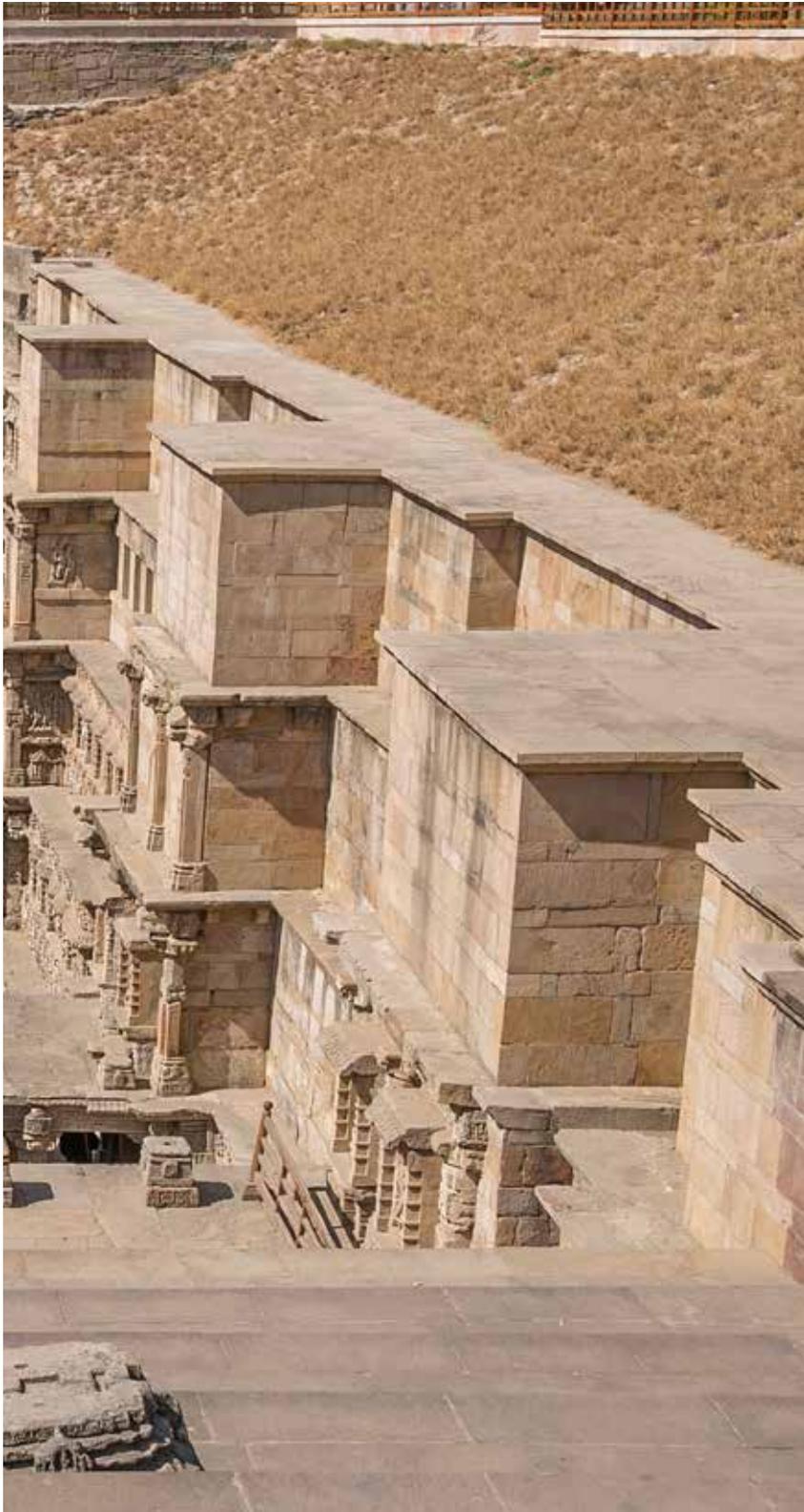


Fig. 1

A general view of the Rani stepwell from top

Fig. 2

The plan of Rani stepwell

based on references in early texts and commentaries on architectural types prescribed for water monuments, but more importantly, on the placement of some religious sculptures in the pavilion as well as in the apsidal well.

### - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND -

The ancient city of Anahilwada or Anahilpura is believed to have been founded by Vanaraja, the first ruler of the Chavada dynasty, in the middle of the eighth century. The Chavadas continued to rule over a vast area of northern Gujarat till the end of the tenth century. In the year CE

Though there are many available theories and interpretations on water monuments, more particularly the Rani-ki-Vav water monument in Patan, here, an attempt is made to suggest an alternative view: that the Rani step-well was actually designed as the subterranean temple of life sustaining and nourishing energy – the Matri Shakti (Mother Goddess). This interpretation is

946, the royal seat of power passed on to King Mularaja, the founder of the Chaulukya (more popularly known in the region as Solanki) dynasty. After consolidating his supremacy, he extended support to the activity of temple building which ultimately evolved into a new architectural idiom termed as the Solanki Style, and is now known in the region as *Maru-Gurjara* Style<sup>3</sup>. Mularaja was succeeded by his son Chamundaraja, who later abdicated his throne in favour of his son Vallabharaja and after Vallabharaja's untimely death, to his second son Durlabharaja. During the later period of his reign, Durlabharaja bequeathed the throne to his nephew Bhimadeva I.

Bhimadeva I (1022 - 64 CE) was, perhaps, the first powerful overlord of the Chalukya dynasty in whose reign building activity flourished. His wife, Queen Udayamati, was the patroness of the Rani step-well. Bhima I had to face the devastating invasion of Mahmud, the ruler of Ghazni, during 1024 - 1027 CE. After Mahmud's departure, Bhima I restored and restructured the Chalukya rule in central and northern Gujarat. His successors – Karnadeva, Jayasinha (who had taken the title of Siddharaja), Kumarapala and Bhimadeva II – continued the dynastic art tradition and construction activities till middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

#### – ANTIQUITY OF RANI-KI-VAV –

From time to time, references to this 11<sup>th</sup> century step-well are found in the writings of British Archaeologists, Administrators and travellers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4</sup>. For some unknown reason, the site remained buried in sand for centuries. Most likely, the subterranean step-well was deliberately covered up with sand and mud during the attack of Alaudin Khilji in 1299 by the Vaghela king Karna (a descendant of the Solanki dynasty) with the intention of protecting the water monument from desecration during Khilji's attacks in the region. It was de-silted in 1986 by the Archaeological Survey of India. Fortunately, a major part of the structure and the well were securely preserved at the time of the excavation and now serve as testimony of its past

grandeur as can be witnessed on the rear wall of the well, as also the fact that its four pairs of projecting struts – two of which are noticeably prominent – are completely covered with beautifully sculptured panels. Step-well structures are fairly common in the semi-arid regions of western India.

The Rani step-well is rectangular in plan and laid out on an east-west orientation with the entrance in the east and the well being located in the west. Its entrance is on the ground level. From it descends a straight stairway to the lowest water level of the well. The stairway has, additionally, a small flight of stairs situated laterally (fig. 2). There are three open *angana* (courtyards) separated from each other by four major *kutas* (pavilions). An apsidal-shaped well is situated at its extreme end. The walls of the stepped corridor are embellished in the same way with niches, pillars, plasters and projections. Even the projections that join the pavilions are ornamented with sculptures. The overall length is about 65 metres from the entrance to the rear wall of the well. The apsidal well is more than 29 metres in depth (fig. 3).

#### – WATER MONUMENT – UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE

The term 'step-well' typifies the inherent architectural features and the functions of the kind of well monument it represents. It is, probably, more appropriate to call it a 'Stepped well'. Actually, the term refers neither to a step nor to a flight of steps, but to a long corridor with steps leading down to five or six levels below the ground which is, undoubtedly, the major architectural element in such water monuments. This type of step-wells are generally found in western India, but they received extraordinary monumentality and elaboration only in Gujarat.

In the local Gujarati language, a number of terms like *Vav*, *Vavdi* or *Vai* are used for these wells. The Sanskrit term appearing in the classical '*Silpa*' texts and early inscriptions is *vapi* or *vapika*. It is also called '*kupa*' in Sanskrit and '*kud*' in Hindi.



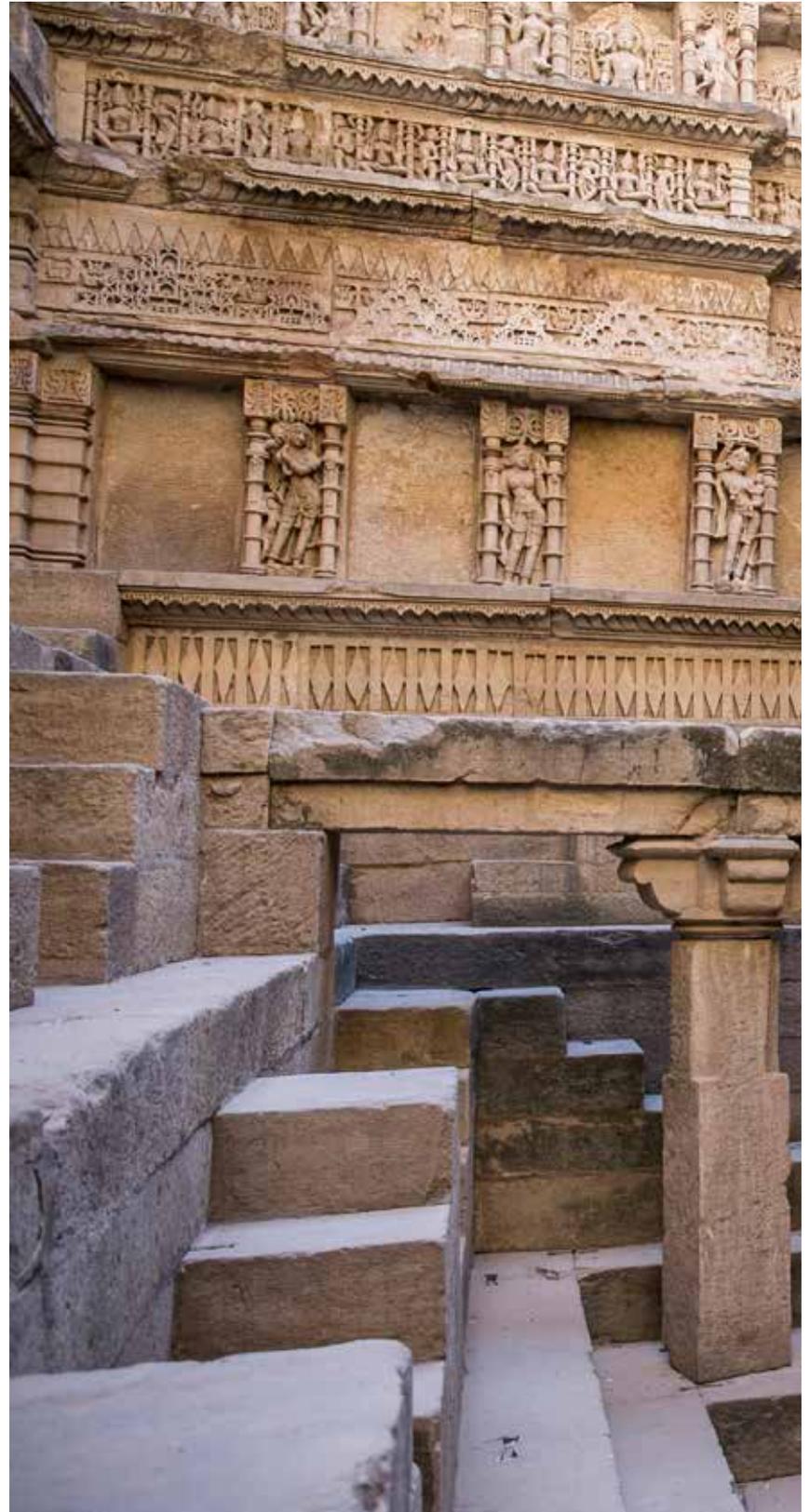
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Fig. 3  
Back wall of the apsidal well

Step-wells occur mostly in Gujarat, also in Rajasthan and less so in Maharashtra and Karnataka. In Gujarat, nearly every village and town has, at least, one step well of its own, and many of them have interesting architectural settings and artistic embellishments. These days most of the step-wells are in a dilapidated condition and have lost their inherent functions of supplying and storing water due to ecological condition as well as human negligence. In southern and south-eastern Gujarat, the number of step-wells is relatively less, and the existing step-wells are simply utilitarian in character, completely devoid of decorative architectural elements or sculptural embellishments. However, from the art and architectural point of view, important step-wells are found in northern and central Gujarat as well as in northern and southern Saurashtra. Some step-wells, such as Mata Bhavani Vav in Ahmedabad, Sindhvai Mata Vav at Patan, Ankal Mata Vav in Davad, and the step-well of Adalaj village (near Ahmedabad) are renowned for their art historical and religious significance. Apart from these step-wells, many more were also built elsewhere by the Muslims for storage and irrigation purposes.

Rajasthan can claim to have some of the earliest types of step-wells. These are altogether different structures from those popular in Gujarat. They are more like pond (man-made lake) type of monuments having stepped passages for reaching the water level. They combine steps with the architectural form of a *kunda* (structural pond) known as *Vapi*. They have often been described as *kunda-vapi* or are locally known *kund-vav*, meaning a step-well-cum-pond. The step-wells of Rajasthan date between the early 8<sup>th</sup> - late 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as those at Osian (early 8<sup>th</sup> century), Abaneri (late 8<sup>th</sup> century), Vasantgarh (10<sup>th</sup> century), Nadol (10<sup>th</sup> century) and Sevasi (probably 12<sup>th</sup> century). In Karnataka, and elsewhere, step-wells also exist, although a majority of them belong to the *kunda-vapi* type of well monuments. For example, a step-well in Aihole in the compound of Huchchapayyagudi temple has a square, relatively large well which closely resembles a *kunda* (pond), and is contemporary with the earliest structural step-well at Dhanak in western Saurashtra.

According to *Aparajitaprccha of Bhubhanadeva*, there are four types of step-wells, namely, *nanda*, *bhadra*, *jaya* and *vijaya*<sup>5</sup>. The Rani-ki-Vav step-well at Patan belongs to the *nanda*<sup>6</sup> type of *vapi* with straight and additional lateral



stairs. Its main architectural components are the stepped corridors, *mandapas* (pavilions), rear wall of the well, lateral walls, and the outstanding plastered walls of the bays. (fig. 4).

Fig. 4

The lateral wall and the stepped corridor



4



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– RANI-KI-VAV –  
RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR ART TRADITIONS

Rani-ki-Vav is one of the best preserved step-wells in the western part of India from the point of view of architecture, sculpture and iconographic variety. A magnificent part of the wall of the apsidal well is decorated with horizontal rows of differing heights, the major ones having niches featuring sculptures of gods with their consorts, like

Brahma and Brahamani, Shiva and Parvati, Bhairava and Bhairavi, Vishnu and Lakshmi. Other horizontal registers display images of the *Saptamartrikas* (the seven mother-goddesses) with Ganesha and Bhairava in niches and the *Ashtadikpalas* (the guardians of the eight directions) in a row. Interestingly, portrayals of *Sheshashayi* Vishnu (Vishnu reclining on a serpent) occur in the central niche in many of these horizontal rows. The sculptures found on this wall of the well are unique in their representation.



Fig. 5  
Sculptures  
framed within the  
plastered niches



Fig. 6  
Nagakanya  
(apsara)

Not only is the wall of the well decorated with religious sculptures, but both the side walls of the courtyards and projections which join the pavilions with side walls are also decorated with sculptures on their outer surface. Today, a number of them, especially in the levels immediately below the ground, are partly lost, broken or destroyed.

The main architectural components of the Rani step-well are the stepped corridors, *mandapas*, the rear wall of the

well, lateral wall or walls and bays with plastered surfaces. The plaster sharply divides the wall into several niches containing sculptural representations of deities. Sculptures framed within the plastered niches can be seen every level of each storey (fig. 5). The sculptures found in the niches are usually flanked by *apsaras* (celestial maidens). It may not be out of place to mention here that most of the *apsara* figures have extraordinary expressions on their faces, delicately arched eyebrows, and dimples in their cheeks. The influence of Gupta art traditions is very much evident in the architectural ornamentation as well as in the image-making process. They appear as alive as the day they were sculpted (fig. 6).



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Fig. 7

Vamana flanked by apsaras

Fig. 8

Panel showing different forms of Vishnu flanked by apsaras

Fig. 9

One-legged Panchagnitapa Parvati



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The main row of sculptures on the walls of the apsidal well and pavilion comprise standing or seated figures of the main deities of the Hindu pantheon: Vishnu in his various forms as well as aspects of Shiva, Parvati, Kalki, Lakulisha (?), Surya, Brahma, Bhairava, Mahihsasuramardini, Ganesha, and various forms of *dikpalas* (the guardians of directions). The lower most level has numerous figures of *apsaras* (water nymphs), and *surasundaris* (celestial beauties), in various poses of dance, or in the act of beautifying themselves, or as *yakshis* holding a leafy branch of a tree. The sculptures found in the step-well can be classified into two major groups, i.e. religious and secular.

– RELIGIOUS SCULPTURES –  
VAISHNAVITE IMAGES

The images of Vishnu occur in the major horizontal niches of the corridor walls and also in the rear wall of the well. He appears in his *Chaturvimsati* and *Dasavataras* forms and

also in some of his characteristic aspects such as *Visvarupa*, as *Lakshmi-Narayan* (*alinganamurti*) and *Harihara*. It is significant that all the Vishnu figures are found below the ground level emphasising, perhaps, his association with water because Vishnu is represented as a god of water in different texts (figs. 7, 8)

– FORMS OF SHAKTI (FEMININE POWER) –

The niches in the side walls of the stepped corridor show numerous manifestations of the goddess Parvati and the *matrikas* (mother goddesses) (fig. 9). Of these, the figures performing the *panchagnitapas* (a severe act of penance and meditation wherein the figure performing the penance is in the centre of four fire altars each of which faces a cardinal direction while the fifth source of heat is the Sun-God himself) are often seen in the niches framed in the horizontal registers. The *panchagnitapas* is regarded as the highest form of yogic practices for earning the greatest spiritual merit.





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Fig. 10

Panel showing Brahma-Brahmani, Shiva-Parvati, Lakshmi-Narayana – all in alingana posture

Fig. 10a, detail

There is one particular image in a niche where the goddess is portrayed standing firmly on her left leg on the back of a *godha* (alligator) while her right leg is folded and resting on the thigh of the left leg. Her lower right hand is in *varadamudra* (boon giving gesture) while her lower left hand holds a *kamandalu* (sacrificial water pot). In her upper right hand she holds an *akshamala* (rosary) and in her upper left hand is a sacrificial ladle. She has elongated ears and over her head she has a long *jatajuta* (hair piled in matted-locks). She wears a round neck ornament, a long *yajnapavita* (sacred thread) and a tight-fitting lower garment. She is shown with a number of female attendants, the *ashtamatrikas* (the eight mother goddesses) in the *parikara* (decorative arched shaped panel) above, and a *navagraha* (the nine planets) panel at the top of the *parikara*.



10a

## – ALINGANAMURTIS –

The depiction of various deities standing in the *alinganamurtis* posture in the upper horizontal tier indicates the concept of union of *prakriti* (the mother earth) and *purusha* (the universe). It contains images of Shiva-Parvati, Brahma-Brahmani, Lakshmi-Narayana, Bhairava-Bhairavi, Shakti, Ganesha and several others holding usual attributes and accompanied by their respective vehicles, all as per the texts mentioned in *Aparajitapraccha* and the *Rupamandana* (fig. 10).



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Fig. 11  
Nayika Karpuramanjiri (apsara)

## – APSARAS –

Interestingly, a large number of *apsara* (water nymphs) have been found flanking the deities in all the horizontal tiers. The term *ap-saras* or *apsara* means “going in the waters or between the waters of the clouds”<sup>7</sup> and describes a class of female divinities usually found frolicking around water places. They are depicted in the graceful *tribhanga* (three bends) postures holding various attributes, objects including mirrors or musical instruments and in various poses of dance including scenes in which they are beautifying themselves. Figures of *apsaras* – standing under a mango tree and holding her left breast – represent fertility, ripeness and abundance (fig. 11).

The depictions of over four hundred images of religious figures indicate that it served as a place of worship, perhaps the temple of water – one of the aspects of *Matri Shakti* (mother goddess). Most importantly the sculptures serve as an album of Hindu iconography.

## – SECULAR SCULPTURES –

Apart from these religious sculptures, secular sculptures also occur in the Rani step-well, such as erotic scenes, battle scenes, guardians, ordinary female figures and ornate friezes and string courses with floral, geometrical and animal motifs including aquatic species and bracket figures featuring natural elements and scenes from day-to-day lives of the common people.

## – STYLISTIC AFFILIATIONS –

As far as style is concerned it may be noted that some of the sculptures very closely resemble the images seen in the Sun temple at Modhera as also the Vimal Vasahi temple at Mt. Abu, both datable to first quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. However, the portraits of several multi-armed deities and *apsaras* are stylistically very similar to the images on the fort gate of Dabhoi (third quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> century). A comparative art historical study among these monuments gives enough indication that the construction activity of Rani-ki-Vav step-well originally started during the time of

Bhimadeva I (1022 - 64 CE) under the supervision of his queen Udayamati and was probably completed during the early years of Karnadeva's reign (1064 - 94CE).

– A SUBTERRANEAN SHRINE OF  
MOTHER GODDESS –

Water places and water monuments have played an important role in the development of ancient and medieval architecture of north-western part of India, more particularly in Gujarat. These water monuments, be it a *kunda* (pond) as natural lake bound by architectural construction or an artificial lake, or a *vapi* (a step-well) were often connected with places of worship. The sacredness of the water places is emphasised by the various types of rituals performed on the banks of ponds or inside the step-wells.

Dr. Jutta Jain Neubauer writes in her book titled 'The Stepwells of Gujarat – an Art Historical Perspective, "A stepwell combines a utilitarian (being a source of water) and social functioning (being a meeting-place for communication for men while resting and for women while drawing water) with satisfying the spiritual needs of the people. Even today, stepwells are not only edifices of domestic and social use, but are believed to be abodes of various spirits of life-giving powers. Just as any other godlings, ghosts or spirits, the stepwell dwellers are believed to give progeny, fertility, growth and wealth if propitiated and worshipped in the prescribed manner"<sup>8</sup>. The Rani step-well belongs to the subterranean genre of architecture and serves as source of life. Water, which, when caught inside a closed structure like the *vav*, simulates a mother's womb.

The water deities that supposedly dwell in it are worshipped and propitiated with offerings of coconut, grains, flowers, milk and betel leaves for progeny. The numerous myths and traditions connected with water show that from ancient times water was considered to be the prime source of life, and a step-well, in its function of supplying water, encourages also growth and fertility. Therefore, it is not surprising to note that a large number of step-wells are

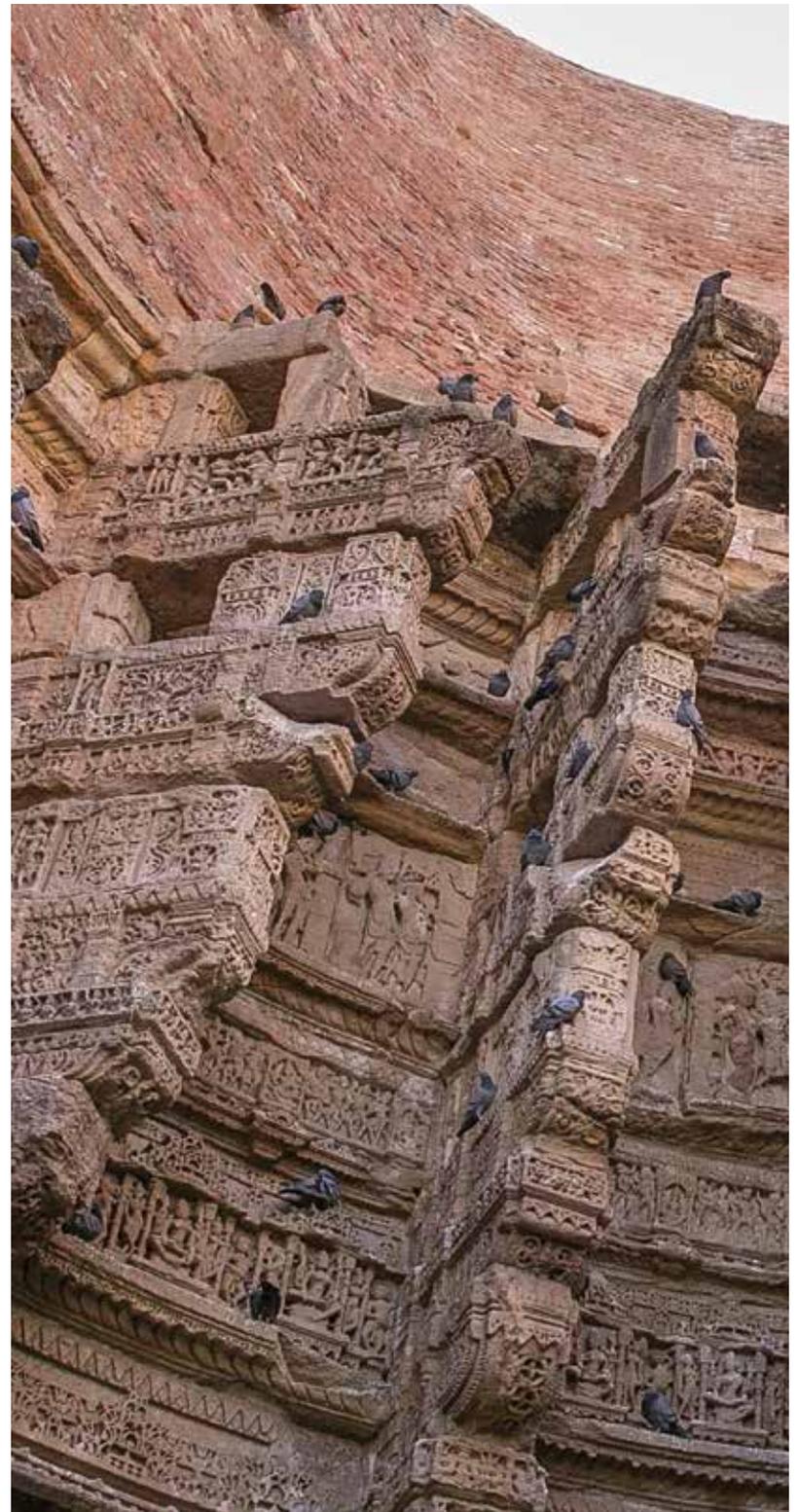


Fig. 12. i

Shiva (?) in lalitasana on his vehicle Nandi

Fig. 12. ii

Lakulisa (?)

Both the images are located in between two heavily decorated projecting struts (centre)



12i, ii

connected with the cult of the mother goddess such as Mata Bhavani, Sikotari Mata, Sindhavani and Ankol Mata. The Rigveda<sup>9</sup> has used the metaphor of water swelling like a pregnant cow and often refers to cows and water as bestows of wealth, fertility and prosperity.

The most remarkable aspect of this well is the apsidal wall, which is also decorated with sculptures of deities

in horizontal layers, from the water level up to its brim. The placement of the images of Sheshashayi Vishnu, Ekadasa-Rudras, Shiva in *lalitasana*, and *alinganamurtis* of various deities shown on the apsidal wall of the well can be interpreted as representing the personification of the divine union of the great mother *Mahakundalinī*<sup>10</sup> (i.e. Brahma *granthin*, Vishnu *granthin* and Shiva *granthin*). Brahma *granthin* is shown here in the form of water, Vishnu

*granthin* is represented here in the form of Sheshashayi Vishnu images and finally Shiva (?) in *lalitasana* on his vehicle Nandi at the top (an extremely weathered seated image found in the central niche on the 6<sup>th</sup> level in the apsidal well). (fig. 12 - i). Just above the 6<sup>th</sup> level, a small abraded image was recently noticed in between two heavily decorated projecting struts. It strongly indicates a seated image of Lakulisa (?) (fig. 12 - ii). As the well is described as *Rudra Kup* in the Vastushastra, it depicts the presence of *Rudra*. However, it can be presumed that the

concept of the union of *Prakriti* and *Purusa* is represented here in the sculptures of the *alinganamurti* images on the top layer of the well. And the panel of *Matrikas*, the giver of progeny, depicted here at the lower level, goes well with the concept.

The predominance of images of the mother goddess in the Rani step-well indicates its association with water and perhaps forms an intrinsic feature of the mother goddess cult. Since ancient times the association of mother goddess in the form of a female nude figure with a water animal, i.e. alligator, seems to have been conceived. This connection of the mother goddess with water could be traced back to some passages in the Rigveda wherein water is praised as a goddess in its anthropomorphic form. Here, the Rani step-well can be conceived as a *punaghata* (the full vase) with its ritual significance. Different parts of the *kalasha* (pot) are described as regions of different divinities. The mouth represents the place of Vishnu, the neck Rudra, the base Brahma, while the stomach portion should be remembered as the place of motherly divinities. It is evident from a detached sculpture found in an open storage of Archaeological Survey of India near Sahastralinga Talav, identified as sage Agastya seated on a decorative *kalasha* (pot) and described in the Mahabharata, "He who was born from a pitcher or whose womb is a pitcher"<sup>11</sup> (fig.13). The detached sculpture is probably one of the several missing sculptures from the wall of the apsidal well. The belief in the purifying and protective powers of water is related to the domestic ritual according to which water is placed near a woman during child birth. This practice continues to the present times. The step-well was regarded as the temple of Shakti (life sustaining and nourishing energy) in western parts of India. Therefore, it is little wonder that the images of the mother goddess are found installed in step-wells.

The conclusions drawn from a comparison of the sculptures mentioned in *shilpa* texts for the step-wells do not tally with those appearing in the Rani-ki-Vav. On the other hand, it displays a greater variety than those described in the texts. This variety reflects the entire range of classical



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Fig. 13

Agastya seated on a kalasha (detached sculpture)

iconography from the major gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon to *Puranic* forms. Some figures, which do not find mention in the texts but play an important role in the sculptural scheme of the Rani-ki-Vav, are groups like the Dasavatara and Navagraha, as well as individual gods and goddesses like Lakulisha (?) and *Panchagnitapas* Parvati. *Apsaras* and narrative panels are also present. The arrangement, however, shows multiple misplacements and repetition of sculptures. Probably such errors could have occurred at the time of the rearrangement of sculptures and the conservation of the step-well structure in 1987.

While assessing the sculptures of the Rani step-well at Patan, it can be presumed that the predominance of images of the mother goddesses and those of Vishnu indicates their association with water. Perhaps, the very concept of *Mahakundalini* is represented here in the placement of certain deities. The large number of *apsaras* flanking the deities in the horizontal tiers of this step-well represents fertility, ripeness and abundance. Moreover, the portrayals of hundreds of deities in the step well of Rani-ki-Vav certainly justify that it was envisaged as a subterranean temple of the mother goddess (the giver of progeny and sustenance of life).

#### END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Priyabala Shah, *Viṣṇudharmottarapurana: 3rd Khanda, vol. II (A study on a Sanskrit of Ancient Indian Arts)*, 1961, Oriental Institute, Baroda, pp. 214.

<sup>2</sup> *Aparajitaprccha* of Bhuvanadeva, the most valuable text on the mediaeval architecture of Gujarat, has been conclusively assigned to latter half of 12th century by M.P. Vora in M.A. Dhaky, "The Influence of Samarangana Sutradhara on *Aparajitaprccha*", *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Vol. X, No. 3, March 1961, Oriental Institute, Baroda, pp. 226.

<sup>3</sup> "He (Dhaky) detected in the two prominent styles of Maru (meaning Mewar, now Rajasthan) and Gurjara (meaning Gujarata) the element that came together from the early years of the 11th century to establish a single, mature third architectural style. This magnificent hybrid style is found not only in the temples of the period but also in other religious and secular buildings, including stepwells and step tanks," in M. A. Dhaky, "The Genesis and Development of Maru-Gurjara Temple Architecture," in *Studies in Indian Temple Architecture*, Ed. Pramod Chandra, 1975, American Institute of Indian Studies, New Delhi, pp. 430.

<sup>4</sup> "Thus, for example, the traveller Arthur Mallet in the first half of the nineteenth century visited Patan and prepared a drawing of the Queens stepwell itself; Colonel James Tod in his travels in Western India noted the stepwell. In the latter half

of the nineteenth century Alexander Kinloch Forbes, British administrator recorded the Queen's stepwell," in Kirit Mankodi, *The Queens Stepwell at Patan*, 1991, Bombay, Project for Indian Cultural Studies, Bombay, Publication III, Franco Indian Research Pvt. Ltd, Mumbai, pp. 29.

<sup>5</sup> The information given in Chapter-74 (*Aparajitaprccha*) is the classification into four types of stepwells, namely, nanda, bhadra, jaya, Vijaya, in Jutta Jain-Neubauer, *The Stepwells of Gujarat: An Art Historical Perspective*, 1981, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, pp. 15.

<sup>6</sup> *Aparajitaprccha of Bhuvanadeva*, Ed. Mankod P. A., No. CXV, 1950, Oriental Institute, Baroda.

<sup>7</sup> *Water Design*, Ed. Jutta Jain-Neubauer, 2016, The Marg Foundation, Mumbai, pp.10.

<sup>8</sup> Neubauer, *The Stepwells of Gujarat in Art-Historical Perspective*, pp. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Rigveda, V, 53, 7, where rivers, crossing the atmosphere, are compared to cows as well as mares, cp. also Rigveda I, 32.2; 61.10; 130.5.

<sup>10</sup> "In the process of self actualization, the highest goal identified with the arousal of the Kundalini is recognised as a microcosmic version of the feminine power of Sakti," in Ajit Mookerjee and Madhu Khanna, *The Tantric Way*, 2003, Thames and Hudson, London, pp. 16.

<sup>11</sup> Kirit Mankodi, *Rani ki Vav, Patan*, 2012, Director General Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, pp. 31.

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2. *Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Institute*, M.A. Dhaky, Vol. 6.
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