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## History, Architecture and Tourism Prospects of the Sharda Temple in Neelum Valley, Pakistan: An Appraisal

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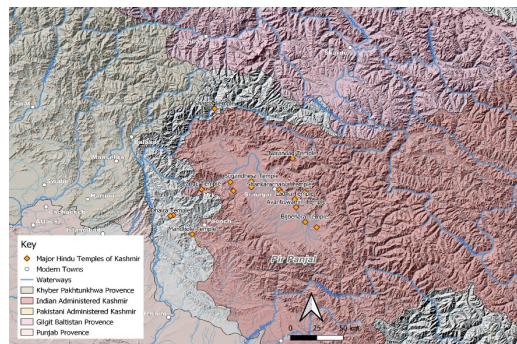
**Abstract:** *The Sharda Village in remote retreats of Neelum Valley, or initially, the Valley of Kishan Ganga, has a ruined structure. Though it is locally known as an old educational centre (a University), according to scholars, it is a Kashmir-style stone temple dedicated to the Sharda goddess. Such temples have been in style from the 5th to 10th century CE. The current study is aimed to assign the date to the temple through a comparative analysis of its structural remains and highlight some of the tourism prospects associated with this monument. Data for this research was collected through field surveys, group discussions with the local community and secondary sources.*

**Key Words:** Hindu Temple, Stone Temples of Kashmir, Sharda, Ancient Architecture, Neelum Valley, Tourism

### Introduction

Sharda is a small village in a relatively isolated valley of the Neelum River (Kishan Ganga) in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan. It lies on a small alluvial plain on the river's left bank. A small stream cuts through the village, and to the right bank of this stream, the remains of the temple of the Hindu goddess, Sharada, can be seen (Khan & Rahman, 2020; Ahmad and Samad, 2017; Ahmad & Samad, 2016). Locally, there are several mythical stories about the identity of this structure (Ghani 2008; Junaid and Samad 2015). This paper follows a devil's advocate approach to reiterate the possible identities as argued locally and to find the answer in due course. Unfortunately, these local perceptions, traditions and myths have been largely unacknowledged despite their potential to

help understand the community's involvement with the monument in the past. Alternatively, these myths are a vital resource in the local cultural potential for the emerging tourism industry of the area.



**Map 1:** Map of Kashmir Highlighting Temple Sites

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The structure is not only one of its kind, having massively large stone block masonry. Temples with similar architectural styles and construction materials can be found in and around the Kashmir valley, including Neelum Valley (Cunningham 1848; Cowie 1867; Stien 1900; Fisher 1983; Mitra 1993; Ahmad and Samad 2015). There are also many temples of the same style in the surrounding valleys of Kashmir, like Poonch Valley (Khan et al. 2017; Khan and Aslam 2016; Khan and Rahman 2016). But locals' views on the structure made of huge blocks of stone are generally vague and have inculcated credence, thereby linking them with *deos* and spirits. This clearly explains the lack of connectedness toward the heritage within the village. Usually, it is connected with the partition of 1947. It is known, however, that there were not many Shaivites in the area long before the 20<sup>th</sup> century in this valley of Kashmir. Hindu rule from Kashmir was lost even earlier. This would have directly influenced the far-flung temples like this one. Without the very community visiting the temple, it possibly would have become an unrelated carry of the past. Current myths are testimonials on this issue, and a careful guess can be made that this issue is far older than the partition. These myths seemingly need much time to develop into their current state. They can be seen when the locals fail to find any conventional way of constructing this structure and transporting such huge stones. Cunningham also considers these;

*"The great size of most of the blocks of limestone and the enormous massiveness of others, which have been used in the construction of the Kashmirian temples, perhaps first led the people to ascribe their foundation to the race of Pandu: for even now, they gravely assert that none but giants could have raised such ponderous masses. When I assured them that I had seen blocks of twice the size of the largest drawn upon carts in England, they politely shrugged their shoulders and seemingly assented, saying, "It may be so" (hoga), but they evidently did not believe it. I am convinced, however, that none of them knew the exact size of these blocks of limestone and that they have only a vague impression of their magnitude being much too great for the weakened powers of man in*

*this Iron Age to move" (Cunningham 1848 246).*

This perception of the local population, though fluid, yet not much changed—the temples are not men's work. The identity of these monuments is far removed from the local community's views. General perceptions among locals are discussed with their potential possible linkages below.

### **A Buddhist Monastic Establishment?**

Locals vaguely introduce this site as Buddha University. This assumption might have developed due to the close contact of ancient Kashmir with the Gandhara region, which had remained the second holy land of the Buddhist Dharma until the emergence of the Hindu Shahi dynasty, followed by the invasions of the Ghaznavids and Ghorids (Cunningham 1848: 241-327; Cowie 1867: 91-123; Samad, 2020). The Buddhist monuments in Kashmir and in its surrounding regions, including Gandhara, have been extensively explored and studied by earlier scholars (Sharma & Ghosal 2004: 24-34; Olivieri 2011: 313-354; Jansen 2010: 27-37; Kakar 2010: 38-43). It is also assumed that after the Muslim invasions of India, Buddhist monks and artists migrated to Kashmir, where they got adopted into the local Brahmanic society under the patronage of Karkota kings (Roy 2004: 164).

There are references of this subsidiary valley of Kashmir to have been more critical to ancient Kashmir than it is now. The Muslims' dominance in Gandhāra would have made it critical for the onward designs on Kashmir. After the discovery of many Buddhist sites in Gandhāra region, the local people became familiar with the Buddhist remains. The inhabitants of the Hazara region nearly associate generally regards every archaeological remain to be a Buddhist site. It is quite possible that the people of the Neelum Valley also follow the same trajectory (*Personal discussions*).

Buddhist architecture of India is a well-elaborated field of Indology. Comprehensive studies undertaken on the Buddhist establishment have made it easy to differentiate them from other contemporary religious edifices, including the Hindu temples.

The basic elements of a Buddhist Monastic Complex are a Stupa and *Sangharāma*, i.e. abode of the pupils (Brown 1959: 46). Other than the design and constructional materials, the rest of the architectural elements of the Buddhist establishments remained the same in the south Asian subcontinent, including Kashmir (Kak RC 1933: 52).

Percy Brown (1959) asserts that the temples in the Kashmir valley follow the plan of the stupa courts of Gandhāra. The general pattern of the stupa courts in Gandhāra is a stupa placed in a quadrangle surrounded by chapels (Grünwedel 1901: 230; Dani 1986: 308; Dani 1999: 78). Therefore, all the earlier researchers never considered Buddhist identity.

As mentioned earlier, a Buddhist establishment generally comprises *Sangharāma and stupas*. But no traces of such structures have yet been reported in and around the Sharda Temple.

The temples of Kashmir are discussed as built around or above the sacred waters and confluences of streams. These waters commonly took the form of springs in the Kashmir case. Therefore, its identity as a Hindu temple is more fitting as Qadir (1996:17) would say that it had its spring or "watered with *Amara Kund*". Alternatively, the spring where the goddess jumped in as per Māhātmya (Stein 1900: 185). This study's enquiry about the water sources provided evidence of three different springs around the site. Therefore, this is also an indicator of the claim for a Hindu Temple.

On the other hand, the area's topography also does not support the possibility of any different structure. The only other option can be that the complex was initially built as a Buddhist monastery and later converted into a Hindu Temple like many other Buddhist establishments in the region. However, it cannot be a credible argument because it can only be valid if a monastery in the area has its remains. Though parts of the compound are disturbed, for that side has been flooded repeatedly, the chances of another structure are still slim.

## **An Ancient Learning Centre? A University?**

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The structural remains do not support the perception of associating the complex with an ancient University by some local community. On the contrary, they claim that this is where Śāradā, the script of pre-medieval India, was introduced (Dani 1986: 311). Similarly, Albīrūnī has mentioned the complex as a great learning centre in his chronicle. Of course, Albīrūnī praises its being a learning centre, but his point is also clear that there is a Hindu Deity as the epicentre of the activities (Albīrūnī 1030: 89; Sachau 1888: 117, 303, Ahmad and Samad 2015: 111), a case of Hindu Temple. The word university associated with this site is again the same standard error among the public as with any remains by identifying them as Buddhist.

## **A Fort?**

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Based on the material (i.e. huge blocks of stone) used in the construction of this complex, some people consider the complex to have been a fort, which is visible on the signboards. The famous design of fort architecture is always producing a robust image. This building bears similar features of large stones and a high structure.

There are two superstructures like guard towers of later addition on the corners of its eastern wall (Ahmad and Samad 2016). They were possibly used for safeguarding the site or the besieged army at some crucial time. Some local traditions confirm that it was used as a fortress by the army of *Dogra* Sikh rulers of Kashmir.

## **A Hindu Temple?**

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It is necessary to discuss the other identities associated with this structure. Despite our consideration of the case, there is evidence of scholarly identification of the same Hindu Temple. But our search is in place to consider every aspect of the site in this regard. Another reason is that there may have been the possibility of its being a Buddhist site before it got converted into a temple for the new creed. However, no such remains and findings came out of this study to pose so.

Albīrūnī (1030) explains this site as a learning centre with a deity, and Kalhaṇa in the 1140s endorses the same (Stein 1900: 201; [Dutt 1887](#): 290). Similarly, *Ain-i-Akbari* mentions it as a *Durga* Temple ([Blochmann 1873](#)). Stein (1900) gave a detailed note on this structure. He compared it with other temples of Kashmir.

Apart from these references, the style of this structure is in itself evidence of the Kashmir style of Hindu temples. The central shrine or cella (generally *Garbhagariha*) is the focal point of a Hindu temple ([Brown 1959](#): 62; [Hardy 1995](#): 16-33; [Havell 2004](#): 33-45). In the light of the basic features of a Hindu temple, we were to look for the other temples in the region. The details provided by Alexander [Cunningham 1848](#), Ram Chandra Kak (1933), [Percy Brown \(1959\)](#) and [Mitra \(1993\)](#) are sufficient to prove it as a Hindu temple.

### Period and Style of Architecture

The construction period for our declared temple is crucial to place our structure in the proper context. Given the scenario, it should be earlier than the 5<sup>th</sup> century. What are these scenarios? In this regard, we see that there are two potential sources to proceed with; one is historical chronicles, and the other is an architectural style.

### Historic Texts

There are not much historical data found about this site. However, there are some references from religious scriptures well known for Kashmir, i.e. The *Nilamata Purana* and *Māhātmyas* (Stein 1900: 279-289). Both confirm that there is a *Tirth* in this area (Ahmad & Samad 2015). Furthermore, these religious scriptures outlined the attributes and importance of the site. Accordingly, it is a Hindu temple dedicated to the goddess *Śāradā*. The temple's recognition by this *Puraṇam* makes it earlier in contrast. The date of *Nilamata Purana* by Kalhaṇa Pandita refers to that in the reign of Abhimanyo I, the successor of Gonanda III, Buddhists, under the lead of Nāgārjuna defeated the learned Kashmiris. This brought a breakdown in the ceremonies expounded by the Sage Nīla.

With the help of Nāgas, Chandra Deva restored the

Brahmanical Traditions (Stein 1900: 31-33).

Hence, we can attribute the date given by Kalhaṇa for this event, i.e. 1894 anno Laukika or 1182 BCE, which is impossible as even Buddhism had not yet emerged during this time ([Kanjiyal & Zadoo 1924](#): 6-7). Mentions of Buddha as Viṣṇu is also limiting it before the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE and setting its roots in a period of Buddhist dominance. Another clue comes from the absence of the term *avatāra*, *Kalki* incarnation, Kṛṣṇa's consort Rādhā and the sacred leaf of Tulasī pushing it further back in time ([Kumari 1988](#): 13, 14). Giving a detailed account of comparative studies in religion and linguistics, she sets its date in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century CE.

Now, on comparing the *Māhātmya* text and Nilamata of Kashmir with *Śāradā*, we can assume that this place had been a focal Hindu *Yatra* Site as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It ultimately confirms that this place might have been established as a sanctuary.

### Material Remains

There are enough archaeological remains of the Stone Temples of Kashmir. Poet historian, Kalhaṇa has enlightened us with a huge list of temples built by different monarchs. Among them, the most famous is the Karkota King, Lalitaditya Muktapida (CE 724-760). He patronised a new Hindu temple architecture style in Kashmir ([Brown 1959](#):157; [Fisher 1982](#): 45-56; [Kak RC 1933](#): 55-56; Ray 1969: 220). [Fisher \(1982\)](#) described it as *pañj-yatna* style of Hindu temples prevalent in most parts of India, for being four-cornered shrines around a central cella. Ram Chandra Kack (1933) gave a stepwise development also recognised by [Percy Brown \(1959\)](#).

From the design of these medieval temples of Kashmir, it is clear that the creed of that country differed in ceremonial from that in most parts of India. The temple of the valley included in its scheme no assembly hall but consisted of the main shrine or sanctuary, and to this, with the divinity in its cella, the devout paid their homage. This main building was isolated within a rectangular courtyard surrounded by a cellular peristyle, with a large



gateway giving access to the sacred enclosure on its front side. It will be seen, therefore, that the composition is a whole, appertains more to a central tabernacle, or sanctuary for the accommodation of the deity, than a place for congregational worship. In this respect and others, the conception of the Brahmanical temple in Kashmir seems to have taken some of its characters and arrangements from the stupa-courts of the Buddhist monasteries of Gandhāra. Moreover, in its architectural treatment, it appears to have derived little from the significant development of temple buildings which at that time were taking place in India. There is no sign of the Indo-Aryan mode in its structure, nothing of the *sikhara* nor of the columned hall; the Kashmir temple is a manifestation of an independent ideal.

In the conception of this architectural style, some structural forms of such a prominent nature have gone a long way toward shaping its character. These forms are:

- A plan of prominent sanctuary in the centre of a quadrangle
- A recess or niche composed of a trefoil arch within a high-pitched triangular pediment
- The pyramidal roof

The employment of a variety of fluted pillars, with capital and entablature complete, resembles the Doric order of the classical model (Brown 1959:159).

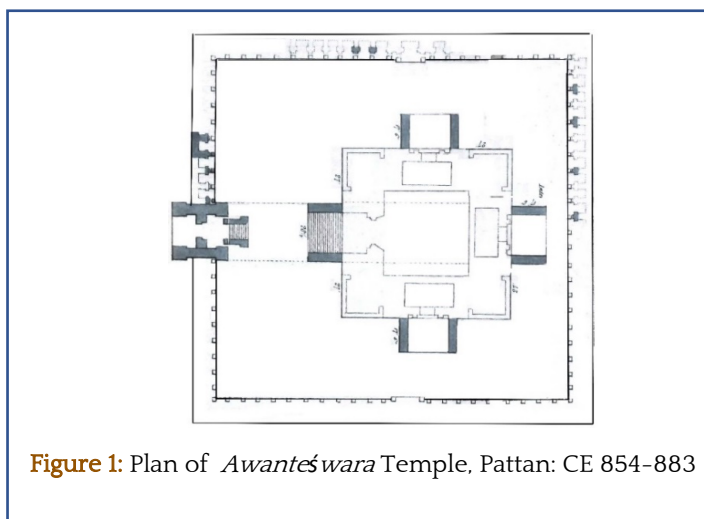
### Plan of the Structure

The plan is an essential element of any building, particularly in the study of architectural history. The plan of this temple is rectangular (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Similar plans were followed in the Buddhist architecture of Kashmir ([Kak RC 1933: 10](#)) as well as Taxila ([Dani 1999: 7](#)) and Gandhāra ([Brown 1959: 62, 159](#)).

However, it is essential for the Buddhist settlements, the *Sangharamas*, to have a stupa. There are cells provided around the water tank in the Buddhist *Sangharamas*. In the case of Kashmir, the Hindu temples are also provided with these cells. However, the place stupa with some differences is replaced with a cella for a Hindu temple.

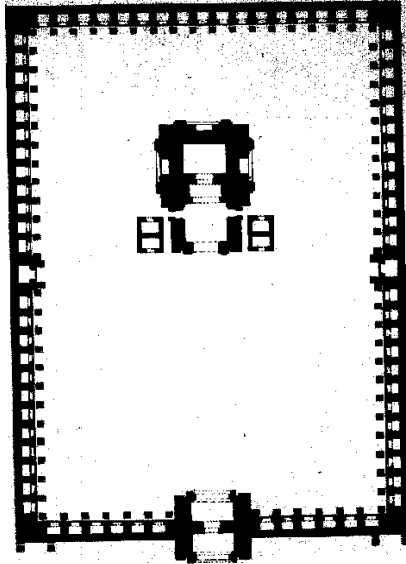
The temple architecture of Kashmir was studied by [Cunningham in 1848](#). He has a detailed account of the major temple in Kashmir. They represent a distinguished style. This style is better known as Kashmirian Temple Architecture. In contrast with such an elaborate architectural style, the temple can be compared to a sanctuary in a quadrangle. The plan of general style is discussed in detail by [Cunningham 1848](#) and [Cowie \(1867\)](#) (Figure. 1-5).

The general code of a Hindu temple is elaborated in the religious text. Most temples in North India from the seventh to the eleventh century AD are square-based and, to relate walls and sanctum, use a constructive grid that also has ritual significance associated with the ancient construction of brick altars ([Meister 1981-82: 302](#)).

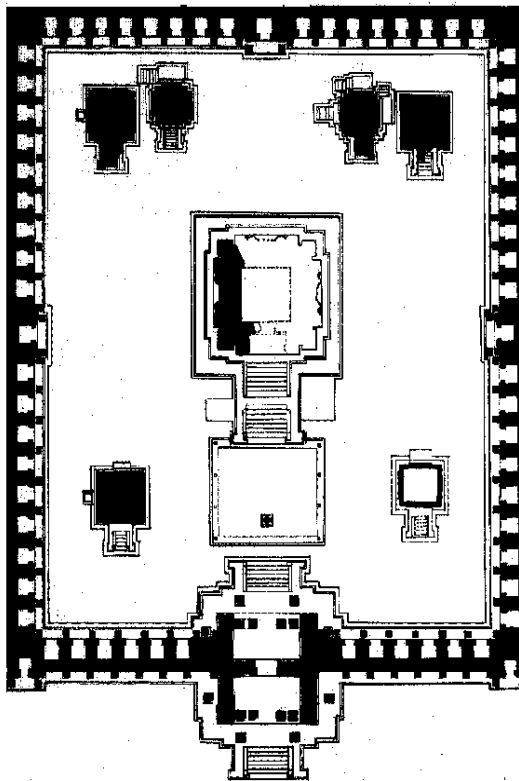


**Figure 1:** Plan of *Awanteswara* Temple, Pattan: CE 854-883

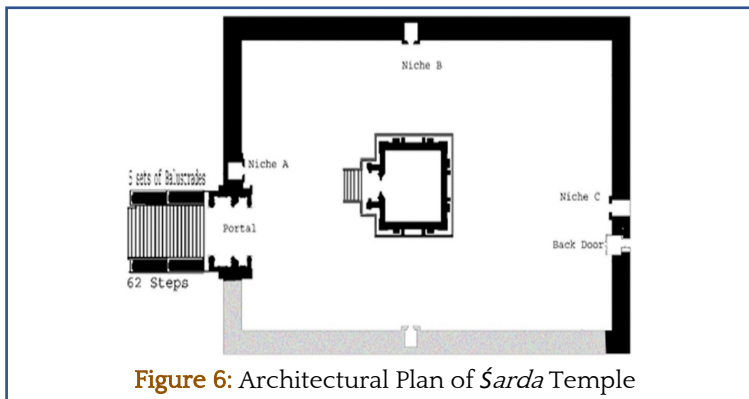
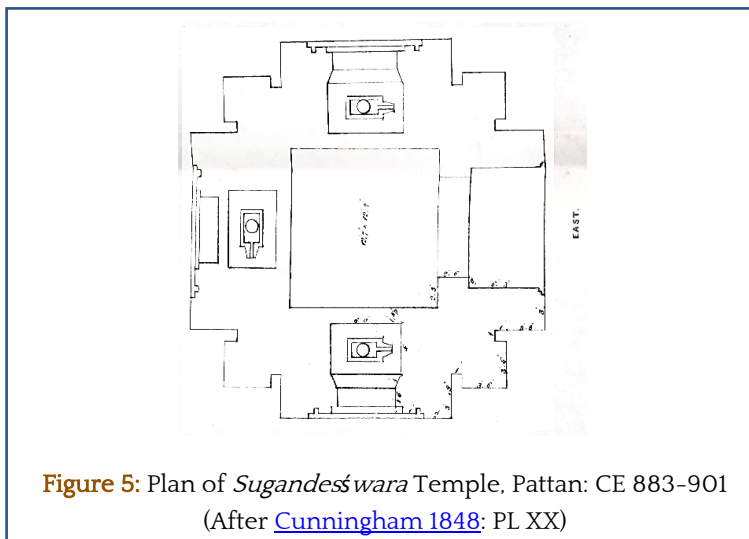
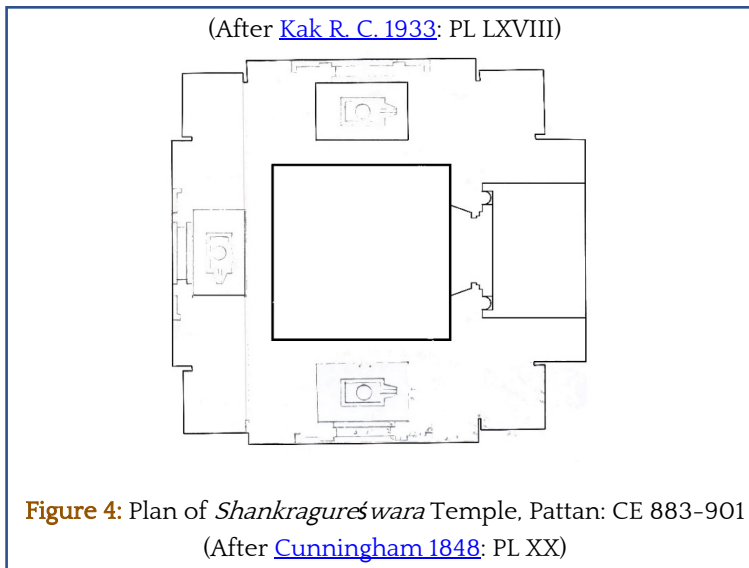
(After [Cunningham 1848](#): Pl XVII)



**Figure 2:** Plan of *Martand* (Sun) Temple: Temple CE 490-55, Colonnade CE 693-729  
(After [Kak R. C. 1933](#): Pl LXXIII)



**Figure 3:** Plan of *Avantiswamin* Temple, Avantipur: CE 883-901



Based on the plan of *Śarda* Temple, it is safe to proclaim that it was a Hindu temple. The general difference from the other temple of Kashmir in these plans is that of the peristyle. Here the design is comparatively dull and lacks cellular peristyle and transepts. This resets its date of construction further back to the initial times of developing this style which later flourished mainly under Karkota and Loharas. However, it is a reality that this part of Kashmir has been in continuous raids by the Dards and other inroads from outside. Therefore the lack of fine masonry and decorations cannot solely be accounted for in the earlier period. It could instead be the temple being across the geographical boundaries, the *Darangas*, of the central vale of Kashmir. Hence, based on the plan, it is not necessary that this temple was earlier than the peak period of the style under Lalitaditya and Avantivarman.

### Pillars

The application of pillar is not used much favoured in this style. [Percy Brown \(1959: 158\)](#) finds it very much resembles a classical model, which is significant. On the contrary, the temple in *Śarda* is relatively rough or built out in soft stone (sandstone), which is now decayed.

Here we are lacking with peristyle, but the similar case of fluted pillars is made by the nook shaft like attached circular pillars. Other pillars are square in plan and, in most cases, the pilasters. There might have been two squares, detached pillars to support the canopy of the main sanctuary. At present, only one on the northern side exists. In the course of some later repairs, small pebbles have been filled, and it is now attached.

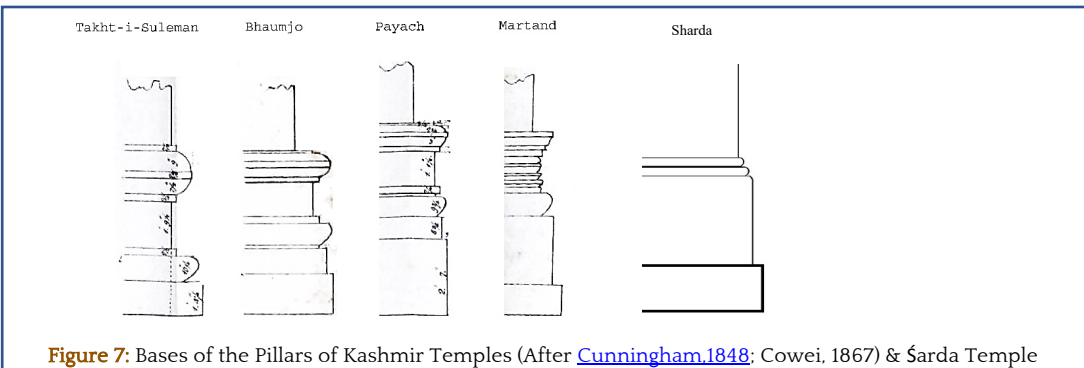
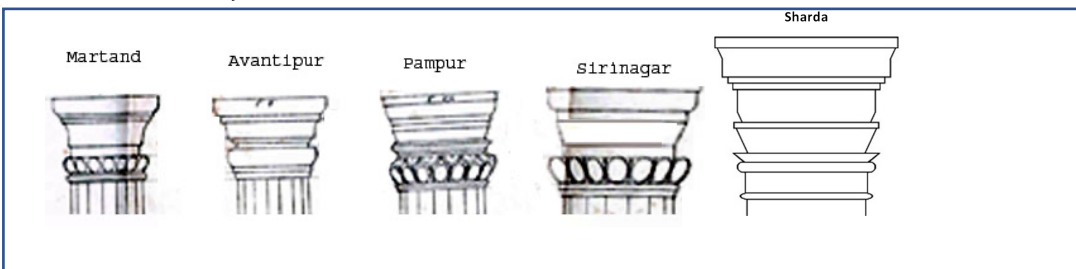


Figure 7: Bases of the Pillars of Kashmir Temples (After [Cunningham 1848](#); Cowei, 1867) & *Śarda* Temple

The pillars are not taken from the unique place, but a set of bases of pillars are taken above (Figure 7) from different temples. The places of the installation of pillars are also not unique. The major difference that can be noticed is the lack of fine design. Most of the pillars of this style are provided with decorated shafts. Generally, they are fluted, but instantaneously spiral designs are also discernible. Presently, no traces of the fluted

designs be discerned. Yet other basic designs of the style are cared for, like humble tapering of the shaft.

Figure 8 explains that the capital of the *Śarda* Temple is simpler than others. This might again push its date to the earlier period of the style.



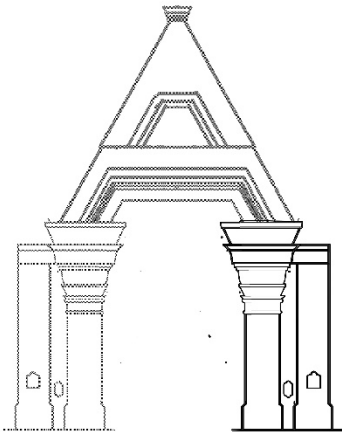


**Figure 8:** Capitals of Kashmiri Temples (After [Cunningham 1848](#): Plate VIII) and capital in *Śarda* Temple

This comparison places the temple's capital of the main gate as belonging to some extent near to the Avantivarman's style ( [Figure 8](#)). However, such is the case for capitals. On the other hand, we can see its base as of earlier period.

### Gateway

The only round pillars are used in the portal at this site ([Figure 9](#)). In all cases of Kashmirian temple architecture, portals are designed similar to the design of the main shrine. The gateway is equally designed here too. Even though it is half fallen into ruins, the remaining half can make a counter case of study with the exception of the topping element. A similar style of the gateway can be seen in the plans of the temples of Kashmir.



**Figure 9:** A Reconstruction of the Portal from Inside the Court

Figure 9 can explain that a reconstruction of the remaining part over the existing pillar of the portal can make a sensible doorway comparable with other temples of the style.

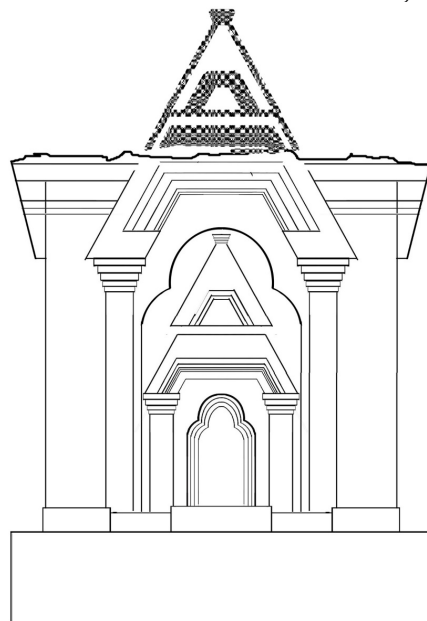
### Pyramidal Roof

The roof is the main characteristic of the form in this design of the Kashmir temples. The pyramidal roof feature was probably derived from a wooden expedient. Such a structure composed of overlapping planks of wood is most suitable for the climate, where a heavy fall of snow in the winter months is not unusual ([Brown 1959: 158](#)). The connection of

this class of superstructure with the gabled and pyramidal roofs of India has been already dealt with. Although these stone roofs of the larger temples of Kashmir have fallen, their general character may be assumed from some of the smaller shrines, which are exact copies and are intact.

In the light of the above discussion, the pattern found on the sides of the main shrine at Sharda (

[Figure 10](#)) is similar to every aspect of Kashmirian temple architecture. And it can be seen that if we make the roof higher, it will violate the design's continuation and vice versa. This infers that it was not constructed as late as in the 10<sup>th</sup> century; *the*



*Avantivarman* temple's style of having a deity in the elaborate niche in the roof is similar to the *Meruvaradhanaswamin* at Pandrethan.

**Figure 10:** Visual Reconstruction of the Roof

### Decorations

[Brown \(1959\)](#) emphasises the trefoil arch and pediment as the most distinctive of these elementary features. It is introduced into the scheme as a leitmotif or a theme which can be disposed of or manipulated at will and

around which others motifs can be added as required.

The origins of both arch and pediment are fairly clear. The former was derived from the trefoiled cell of the Gandhara stupa court, as used, for instance, in the monastery of Takht-i-Bhai. At the same time, the pediment had its prototype in buildings of the same school, an illustration of which may be seen in a niche on the Shrine of the Double Eagle at Sirkap, Taxila (Brown 1959: 30). This temple is not lacking in any of the elements of style that existed in Kashmir. For instance, niches are provided with a similar leitmotif of a two-level pyramidal shape. The designs of niches and gateways are also designed in the same way.

It will again support the idea that it was not built in the early period of the style. And the decorations are mostly gone because of the softness of the stone used. Alternatively, the temple has been under frequent repairs.

### Water Spring Around the Temple

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The springs and the Puranic history of Kashmir are famous for the water, gods and man's relation myths. Kumari (1988) explained that a water source is crucial for a Kashmirian Temple. Verinag Spring is the most celebrated in this connection.

*Śāradā* Māhātmya explains that after conjuring herself to Shandaliya, goddess *Śāradā* jumped into the *Śāradā Kunḍa*, a holy spring (Stein 1900: 184). According to Qadir (1996), there was a water channel resourcing the temple with bathing water.

There are three water sources around the temple in the form of springs. Two of them are located toward the *Madhumafī* and have surface flow. At the same time, the other one is towards the northeast of the temple and is a non-surface flow spring all the year. One of these might prove the one needed to be looked for. This will ultimately be declared the existence of that temple.

### Tourism Prospects

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Being a historical and religious monument, the Sharda temple can be used for a number of tourism purposes to educate the visitors

and develop the local community. Some of the prospects are as under:

#### Religious Tourism

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This temple can be used as a religious destination. It is sacred to the Hindu community, and being one of the most sacred temples, a large number of Hindu communities can be attracted to this temple not only from Pakistan but around the globe. The local community has a very good impression of this temple, so there is no hurdle to promoting this site and using it for the development of the region.

#### Educational Tourism

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This site is a masterpiece of art and architecture of ancient times and has the potential to attract students and scholars of Art, Architecture, Archaeology, History etc. It can satisfy the varying needs of the researchers of these disciplines. Further, this site is located in a very beautiful natural area, so it is also a cultural attraction for all the visitors to that area and provides an opportunity to see something historic in that region and come to know about the past.

Neelum valley is one of the emerging destinations in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and tourists' number is increasing every year. A very good number of tourists can be attracted to this site after conserving and promoting it properly. Sharda temple can be a turning point for the socio-cultural and economic development of the local community if properly managed.

#### Conclusion

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On account of the findings and analysis in this study, some of our research problems are elaborated and answered, while some only got narrowed to the answer and raised new questions. The study got situational boundaries at some points. The site is located outside the core area of the associated architectural style. Therefore, the material culture has different compositions and standards. Making logical assumptions got a little trickier here because of the uncertain authority of the core area of the style in this part of Kashmir. The deterioration rate is also

more severe than in the other examples of the style. This left us with a relatively less finished product of the style. In turn, it raises new questions about whether it can be compared to other examples or how the location and distance can affect the architectural style of this structure.

The identity of the site as Hindu, as we had taken it less possible for Buddhists, was not a painstaking job. Historical chronicles and other literary sources do not support its association with the Buddhists but rather justify it to be an indubitable Hindu temple. On the contrary, the local name of Buddha University is not confirmed by the existence of a Buddhist monastic complex. So, the Buddhist origin of the site can evidently be declined. Hence it is admissible to call it '*Sarda Temple*'.

The period and style of architecture of the site, as the Hindu temple, are to be considered with similar examples in the whole of Kashmir. There are scores of Hindu temples in Kashmir, constructed in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. The style is known as the Kashmirian Temple Architecture ([Cunningham 1848](#): 241-327; [Fisher 1982](#): 46-53). This temple is outside the core area of the style. But there are historical references suggesting taking the case on board. Material remains also suggest the temple as the product of the same style.

The major features of the style, as identified by [Cunningham 1848](#), Kack R.C. (1933) and [Brown \(1959\)](#), are the plan, pillar, pyramidal or pedimented roof, gateway, peristyle and a leitmotif in the pyramidal style used in the niches. It is qualified for many of them, yet differences occurred in some instances. These are the absence of *peristyle* and the missing pyramidal roofs of the gateway and the *cella*, as well as other

decorations. At the same time, the other necessities are provided with a little difference in the designs. These might be the case for pillars, decoration and designs around the *cella*. The absence of some of the elements may be due to the remote location, uneven topography and the continuous unrest in this part of contemporary Kashmir. Missing pyramidal mountings of the main *cella* and gateway are the most probable cause of natural deterioration. For such a situation, it can be declined that only these reasons can push its history back to the initial phase of the style.

The precise period cannot be reconstructed due to the absence of inscription found on the site. But based on the structural remains and other literary pieces of evidence, it can be assigned to the reign of Lalitaditya or Avantivarman. There are references to this temple by Kalhana (the 1140s: Book 4, Verse 325) (Stein 1900: 152), that during the reign of Lalitaditya for which, people came to visit from Bengal. This is yet not a reference to the construction of the site but one for making sure that this place was famous even before the eighth century. Ultimately, we can nudge its construction date earlier than Lalitaditya. However, if that is the case, then we have to look at it in the light of the deterioration caused by the floods and devastating Himalayan earthquake ([Bilham & Bali 2013](#): 10). [Bilham \(2010\)](#): 107-117) confirmed a set of devastating historical earthquakes casting decisive blow to the temples of Kashmir. The earthquake before or at the time of Avantivarman ([Bilham et al. 2013](#): 13) may have been the major cause of the destruction of the Kashmirian Temples. This temple can be used as a religious and educational tourism destination if properly managed and promoted.

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