



## Divine Syncretism in Stone at Chittorgarh: Horse-riding Chandra, Syncretic Indra-Vishnu, and the Goddess Vidhatri

Vikram Jha, Dr. Jayveer Singh

Research Scholar, Department of History, NIILM University, Kaithal, Haryana.

[vikram.jha3@gmail.com](mailto:vikram.jha3@gmail.com)

\*Corresponding author Dr. Jayveer Singh

Article Received on: 18/12/25; Revised on: 25/12/25; Approved for publication: 07/01/26

### Keywords

Chittorgarh,  
Archaeological sites,  
Bhagwanpura,  
Haziakheri, Nimbahera,

### Abstract

Chittorgarh district, located in southern Rajasthan, boasts a rich archaeological and cultural heritage spanning from the Palaeolithic period to the medieval and modern ages. Archaeological sites such as Bhagwanpura, Haziakheri, Nimbahera, and others reveal continuous human activity through various historic phases. The iconic Chittorgarh Fort, a symbol of medieval Indian art and sculpture, showcases temple architecture, palaces and baodies predominantly from the 7th century onward, including notable structures like the Kumbha-Shyam Temple, Kalika Mata Temple, Meera Temple, Satbees Devri Temple, Chitrang Talab, Pratap Palace etc. The fort's monuments, built over 500 years, reveal a unique amalgamation of regional styles marked by boldness and aesthetic beauty. Sculptures from the 6th century A.D. are preserved under the Archaeological Survey of India and displayed in local museums. The fort's structures highlight the flourishing of art and architecture during the 8th century and underscore Chittorgarh's significance as a cultural and architectural hub in Rajasthan. This blend of archaeological depth and artistic richness makes Chittorgarh a critical study area for medieval Indian heritage. This paper aims to explore and study some remarkable sculptures on this fort and highlight their significance in Indian art.

### How to Cite this Article:

Vikram Jha, Jayveer Singh  
Divine Syncretism in Stone  
at Chittorgarh: Horse-  
riding Chandra, Syncretic  
Indra-Vishnu, and the  
Goddess Vidhatri  
Int. J. Sci. Info. 2026; 3(10): 112-118

## Introduction

Many scholars have written about the archaeological heritage of Chittorgarh Fort. The history of temple architecture and sculpture in the fort shows evidence of its emergence from the 6th century CE, based on archaeological evidence. A fragmentary stone slab<sup>1</sup> obtained from the fort has two inscriptions carved at different times. Based on the script, both these inscriptions are dated to the first half of the 6th century CE. The seventh line of

the second inscription on the stone slab mentions the Manorath Swami temple<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, this evidence proves that the construction of temples had begun on Chittorgarh Fort in the 6th century CE. The Archaeological Survey of India has displayed some sculptures in the open courtyard in front of their office (Topkhana) at the fort. Among these open sculptures in the courtyard, one sculpture that was originally used for worship shows the portion below the knee, and this sculptural fragment clearly belongs to the 6th century CE. Another Kubera sculpture from this period is also displayed in this courtyard. Therefore, based on archaeological evidence, it is clear that the construction of divine temples had commenced on the fort in the sixth century CE.

### **Chitrang Talab**

Chitrang Talab is located in the southern part of the fort. The eminent scholar Shri Gauri Shankar Ojha, in his History of Udaipur State, mentions that there is a tank constructed by Chitrangad Maurya in the southern direction of the fort, near the road on the western side, which is called Chitrang. The learned archaeologist mentions in his aforementioned work that this fort was built by King Chitrangad of the Maurya dynasty, hence it is called Chitrakoot (Chittorgarh)<sup>3</sup>. Bapa of the Gohil dynasty took control of the fort from King Maan of the Maurya dynasty.

Nagari (Madhyamika) was under the Aulikaras of Mandsaur (Daspur) in the first half of the 6th century CE. Based on the place of discovery of the aforementioned inscription, it can be said that the establishment of the Rajasthani kingdom remained on Chittorgarh Fort itself. Regarding which dynasty ruled the fort from the middle of the 6th century CE to the ninth decade of the 7th century CE, no concrete archaeological evidence has come to light so far. The emergence of King Maan on the fort can be considered in the last decade of the 7th century because, based on King Maan's inscription of Vikram Samvat 770, it is proven that it was under his control until 713 CE. Colonel Tod considered that Bapa<sup>4</sup> took control of Chittorgarh in Vikram Samvat 784 (727 CE).

Colonel Tod was the first to mention the word 'Mauri'<sup>5</sup> along with King Maan's name. Subsequently, scholars have continued to write the word Mauri along with the names of Maan and Chitrang. The inscription of King Maan obtained from near Mansarovar Lake mentions the 'Takshak'<sup>6</sup> dynasty. Colonel Tod has not provided any evidence for writing the word Mauri along with Maan's name. We respectfully request scholars to reconsider the use of this name.

An inscription dated Samvat 1334 has been obtained from Chitrang Talab. This inscription is registered against serial number 32 in the antiquities register of the Government Museum Udaipur and is currently displayed in the inscription gallery of the museum. The museum handbook mentions the word Mauri along with Chitrang's name. The inscription mentions the construction of a temple named Vaidyanath in the middle of the tank. The inscription does not mention the word Mauri. The learned archaeologist R. Nath has associated the temple described as 'Tadag Madhye'<sup>7</sup> in the inscription with the ruined temple currently present on the western boundary of the tank, which is on the shore of the tank and not in the middle of the tank. Based on the solid evidence of the inscription, this can be called his mistake. It is noteworthy that there are two water bodies on the fort named after Bhima, the famous character from Mahabharata - Bhim Gaudi and Bhimlat. In this tradition, why can't Chitrang Talab be considered named after Chitrang, son of King Shantanu from Mahabharata? Although he died in his youth. No archaeological evidence of any king named Chitrang before King Maan is found on the fort.

### **The Tank Structure and Sculptures**

The embankment structure of the tank's water is towards the south direction. On the western shore of this tank, there is a ruined temple, and in the embankment of the tank, sculptures from the 15th century CE are continuously installed in niches from east to west. There are a total of 42 niches, of which three currently do not contain sculptures. Among the existing sculptures, three sculptures are extremely important from the perspective of subject matter, which are presented as follows:

## **1) Combined Sculpture of Indra and Vishnu**

This sculpture, located in a niche west of the bathing ghat of Chitrang Talab, depicts the combined form of Indra and Vishnu. We find examples of the combined representation of Vishnu and Indra in literary sources as well. The Samba Purana<sup>8</sup> mentions that Indra should be known as Vishnu. In literature, Indra is also addressed by the name Jayant<sup>9</sup>. In the Skanda Purana, the narrator says that the current Indra's name is Jayant. In sculpture, on the interior southern-facing part of the third floor of Kumbha's Kirti Stambha, there is a depiction of Jayant Narayan murti, which can be called a combined sculpture of Indra and Vishnu. But unfortunately, all the weapons of the Jayant Narayan sculpture are broken.

In the Mahabharata (Shanti Parva), Bhishma Pitamah tells Yudhishtira that King Mandhata placed his head on the earth and prostrated to the feet of Lord Vishnu. Lord Hari appeared to him by taking the form of Devraj<sup>10</sup> Indra. In the Vishnu Dharamottara Purana, Vasudeva is called Indra<sup>11</sup>. Thus, we find many examples of the combined form of Indra and Vishnu in literature.

The combined four-armed sculpture of Indra and Vishnu at Chitrang Talab is situated on a three-ratha pedestal. The right hands hold weapons - mace, discus, thunderbolt, and water pot respectively. The depiction of discus and thunderbolt in the sculpture shows the combined form of Vishnu and Indra. The elephant vehicle is carved in a peculiar manner. Apart from Chittorgarh Fort, no combined sculpture of Indra and Vishnu has come to light anywhere else in Rajasthan so far.

## **2) Horse-riding Chandra**

In a niche near the western end of the bathing ghat of Chitrang Talab, a stone sculpture of Chandra (Moon) riding a horse from Kumbha's contemporary period (15th century CE) is carved on a three-ratha pedestal. The four-armed Chandra holds weapons in his right hands in order - (1) mace, (2) lotus, (3) lotus, and (4) water pot. On the stone slab of the niche's lintel, near the southern corner, the word 'Chandra' is carved. At the origin of the niche, the

name of the architect 'Hita' is carved, whose name also appears with the sculptural work of other sculptures in the tank.

Rupamandana mentions a ten-horse chariot<sup>12</sup> for Chandra. Rupamandana describes a seven-horse chariot for Surya, but the Samba Purana describes Surya as horse-riding. However, no literary reference to Chandra being horse-riding has been seen yet. This independent horse-riding sculpture of Chandra is noteworthy because no such unique depiction has come to light in Rajasthan sculpture.

### 3) Vidhatri (Vidhata) Sculpture

In a niche in the central-western part from the bathing ghat of the tank, an extraordinary sculpture of a goddess (15th century CE) can be seen. The goddess is seated in *lalitasana* on a three-ratha pedestal. On the front slab of the base stone of this pedestal, the name of the goddess Vidhatri is carved. Two hands are visible on the southern side of the goddess. One hand is placed on the thigh region and the other appears broken from the elbow. On the left side, there is one hand placed on the shin part of the leg and carved with a basket. Near the basket, a swan-like figure appears to be eating something. The depiction of the goddess with three hands is extraordinary and unusual.

In literature, we see that the words Dhata-Vidhata come together. In the Adi Parva of Mahabharata, Dhata-Vidhata<sup>13</sup> are said to be sons of Brahma. In Rupamandana, Dhata-Vidhata are described as attendants on the *pedya*<sup>14</sup> part of the door frame of Vishnu's west-facing temple.

It seems appropriate to present here the description of another Vidhata sculpture from the 14th century CE Ratneshwar Tank Temple on the fort, along with the feminine Vidhata sculpture of Chitrang Talab. The masculine sculpture of Ratneshwar Temple is carved on the southern-facing platform part of the temple's ardha mandapa. The four-armed Vidhata sculpture shows varadaksha, ladle, lotus, and water pot in right order. The name of the

deity Vidhata is carved on the front part of the pedestal. The sculpture has a sacred thread and *jata mukuta*.

The Vidhatri (Vidhata) sculpture of Chitrang Talab is feminine while the Vidhata sculpture of Ratneshwar Temple with the same name is masculine. Possibly, the name Vidhata was carved instead of Dhata for the Ratneshwar Temple sculpture, and no difference was understood between the words Dhata and Vidhata. However, regarding both sculptures, it can certainly be said that no sculpture carved with the name Vidhata has come to light so far. Therefore, this is an important heritage of sculpture.

### **Conclusion**

Undoubtedly, the extraordinary sculptures of the fort described above are valuable contributions to the sculpture of Rajasthan.

### **References**

1. *Epigraphia Indica*. (1960-61). Volume-34. p. 53
2. *Epigraphia Indica*. (1960-61). Volume-34. p. 55, 58
3. Ojha. Gaurishankar Hirachand. (2015). *History of Udaipur State*. First Volume. Publisher Rajasthani Granthalaya. p. 65
4. Ojha. Gaurishankar Hirachand. (2015). *History of Udaipur State*. First Volume. Publisher Rajasthani Granthalaya. p. 115-116
5. Colonel Tod. (1995). *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. First Volume. Appendix No. III. M.N. Publications. p. 605
6. Colonel Tod. (1995). *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. First Volume. Appendix No. III. M.N. Publications. p. 605-06
7. R. Nath. (1984). *Antiquities of Chittorgarh*. p. 7
8. Khandelwal. S.N. (Translator). (2012). *Samba Purana*. Publisher Chaukhamba Surabharati. p. 90

9. Khandelwal. S.N. (Translator). (2016). *Skandapuram Shashth Nagar Khandam Uttarardham*. Publisher Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series. Chapter 273. p. 700
10. Pandey. Ramnarayan Shastri (Translator). (2015). *Mahabharata Shanti*. Chapter 64. Publisher Gita Press Gorakhpur. p. 205-06
11. Narayan. Kapildev (Translator). (2015). *Vishnudharmottara Puranam*. Third Volume, Chapter 50, Publisher Chaukhamba Series, 2015, p. 141
12. Srivastava. Balram (Editor). (1964). *Rupamandana*. Chapter 2. Publisher Motilal Banarsidass. p. 127
13. Pandey. Ramnarayan Shastri (Translator). (2015). *Mahabharata Adi Parva*. Chapter 66. Publisher Gita Press Gorakhpur. p. 230
14. Srivastava. Balram (Editor). (1964). *Rupamandana*. Chapter 3. Publisher Motilal Banarsidass. p. 151