

penance. The mutilated female figures at the bases of the jambs are the river goddesses Ganges (Ganga) and Jumna (Yamuna) accompanied by their respective vehicles, the crocodile and the tortoise. Inside the sanctum, which is a plain square chamber, stands a marble *linga*, the symbol of Siva, the third member of the Hindu triad. *Linga* or phallic worship has been practised in India, as in other parts of the world, from time immemorial, but when it came to be identified with Siva is not known. The earliest Siva *linga* known dates from about the second century A.D.

The outside wall of the sanctum within the ambulatory passage has an elaborately moulded plinth decorated with two continuous rows of figures. The eight figures in the lower row—namely, two at each of the four corners—portray the eight regents or presiding deities of the cardinal points (Dikpalas). Starting in the east and moving clock-wise, they are in succession :—Indra (the god of the aerial region), Agni (Fire), Yama (Death), Nairrita, Varuna, the god of the ocean, Vayu, the god of wind, Kubera, the god of riches, and Isana. The pillared niches in the middle of the walls are reserved for statues of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva under their various forms or incarnations.

The plinth of the temple on the outside rises in a succession of bold, deep mouldings similar to those around the sanctum. The nine niches at the central points contain figures of Siva and his son Ganesa, the god of Luck and the seven Mother Goddesses (*sapta-matarah*), the female counterparts (*Sakti*) of the principal Hindu deities. Above the plinth on the walls of the temple, are three broad belts of figures running round the sanctum and the transept. These figures represent the principal Hindu gods and goddesses, the Dikpalas, and male and female serpent deities. There are also numerous reliefs of *apsaras* or nymphs in all sorts of indelicate postures, as if to tempt the ascetics seated by them. Above these, again, are several tiers of mouldings which in their turn are succeeded by further bands of sculptures and miniature spires (*sikhara*) repeated again and again up to the summit of the spire. This latter is