

VERMANA

SOURCES

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Introduction

Following is a very brief overview of the sources, which are often cited, to support the existence of Vermanas.

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Vedas



The Ananta Vasudeva Temple

The predecessors of the flying *vimanas* of the Sanskrit epics are the flying chariots employed by various gods in the Vedas: the Sun (see Sun chariot) and Indra and several other Vedic deities are transported by flying wheeled chariots depicted to be pulled by animals, usually horses.

The Rigveda does not mention *Vimanas*; however, the verses RV 1.164.47-48 have been taken as evidence for the idea of "mechanical birds":

47. *kṛṣṇāṃ niyānaṃ hārayaḥ suparṇā / apó vāsānā divam út patanti*

tá āvavṛtran sádanād ṛtásyād / íd ghr̥tēna pṛthivī vy ùdyate

48. *dvādaśa pradhāyaś cakrām ékaṃ / tr̥ṇi nábhyāni ká u tác ciketa*

tásmin sākám trisatâ ná śaṅkavo / 'rpitâḥ ṣaṣṭír ná calācalāsaḥ

"Dark the descent: the birds are golden-coloured; up to the heaven they fly robed in the waters.

Again descend they from the seat of Order, and all the earth is moistened with their fatness."

"Twelve are the fellies, and the wheel is single; three are the naves. What man hath understood it?

Therein are set together spokes three hundred and sixty, which in nowise can be loosened."
("trans." Griffith)

In Swami Dayananda Saraswati's "translation", these verses become:

"jumping into space speedily with a craft using fire and water ... containing twelve stamghas (pillars), one wheel, three machines, 300 pivots, and 60 instruments."

although the 'wheel' is likeliest a metaphorical description of the yearly cycle, and '12' and the '360' are likeliest its months and days.

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Ramayana



Ravana seizes the chariot Puspaka from Kuvera

In the Ramayana, the *pushpaka* ("flowery") vimana of Ravana is described as follows:

"The Pushpaka chariot that resembles the Sun and belongs to my brother was brought by the powerful Ravana; that aerial and excellent chariot going everywhere at will that chariot resembling a bright cloud in the sky ... and the King [Rama] got in, and the excellent chariot at the command of the Raghira, rose up into the higher atmosphere."

It is the first flying vimana mentioned in Hindu mythology (as distinct from the gods' flying horse-drawn chariots).

Pushpaka was originally made by Vishwakarma for Brahma the Hindu god of creation, later Brahma gifted it to Kubera, the God of wealth, but was later stolen, along with Lanka, by his half-brother, the demon king Ravana.

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Mahabharata

One example in the Mahabharata is that the Asura Maya had a Vimana measuring twelve cubits in circumference, with four strong wheels.

The Mahabharata compliments "the all-knowing Yavanas" (*sarvajnaa yavanaa*), as the creators of the vimanas: *The Yavanas, O king, are all-knowing; the Suras are particularly so (sarvajnā yavanā rajan shurāz caiva vishesatah).*

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Jaina literature

Vimāna-vāsin ('dweller in vimāna') is a class of deities who served the tīrthaṅkara Mahā-vīra. These Vaimānika deities dwell in the Ūrdhva Loka heavens.

According to the *Kalpa Sūtra* of Bhadra-bāhu, the 24th tīrthaṅkara Mahā-vīra himself emerged out of the great vimāna Puṣpa-uttara; whereas the 22nd tīrthaṅkara Ariṣṭa-nemi emerged out of the great vimāna Aparijita] The tīrthaṅkara-s Abhinandana (4th) and Sumati-nātha (5th) both traveled through the sky in the "Jayanta-vimāna", namely the great vimāna Sarva-artha-siddhi, which was owned by the Jayanta deities; whereas the tīrthaṅkara Dharma-nātha (15th) traveled through the sky in the "Vijaya-vimāna".

A vimāna may be seen in a dream, such as the nalinī-gulma.

Vimanas and the Vaimanika Shastra

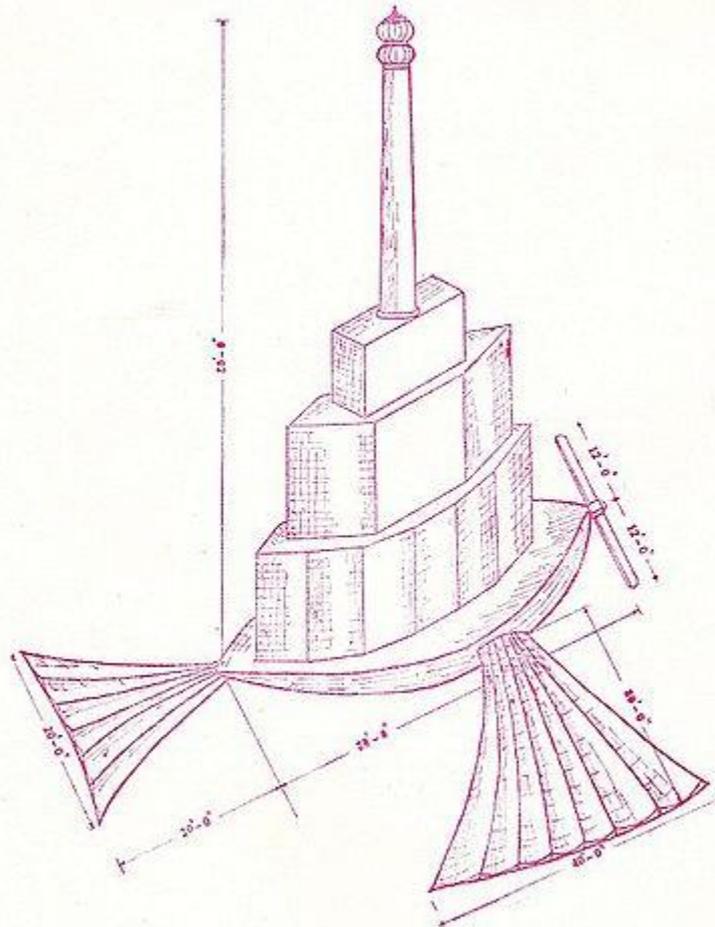
The Vaimānika Shāstra is an early 20th-century Sanskrit text on aeronautics, obtained allegedly by mental channeling, about the construction of *vimānas*, the "chariots of the Gods".

The existence of the text was revealed in 1952 by G. R. Josyer, according to whom it is due to one Pandit Subbaraya Shastry, who dictated it in 1918-1923. A Hindi translation was published in 1959, the Sanskrit text with an English translation in 1973. It has 3000 shlokas in 8 chapters and was attributed by Shastry to Maharishi Bharadvaja, which makes it of purportedly "ancient" origin, and hence it has a certain notability in ancient astronaut theories.

A study by aeronautical and mechanical engineering at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore in 1974 concluded that the aircraft described in the text were "poor concoctions" and that the author showed complete lack of understanding of aeronautics.

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SHAKUNA VIMANA



PERSPECTIVE VIEW

Drawn by
T. K. ELLAPPA,
Bangalore.
2-12-1923.

Prepared under instruction of
Pandit SUBBARAYA SASTRY,
of Anekal, Bangalore.

*An illustration of the Shakuna Vimana
that is supposed to fly like a bird
with hinged wings and tail*

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