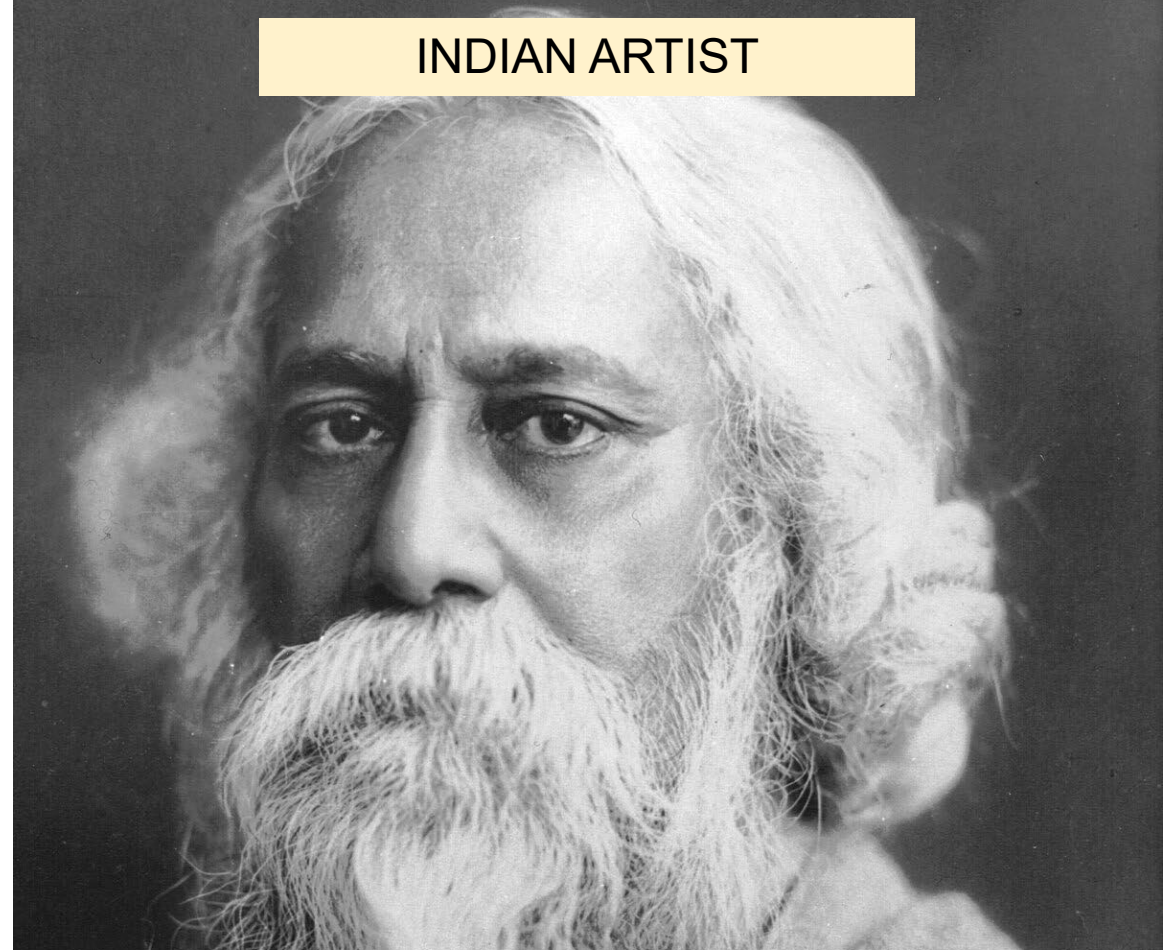


EUROPEAN ARTIST



INDIAN ARTIST



Their creative

INSPIRATION

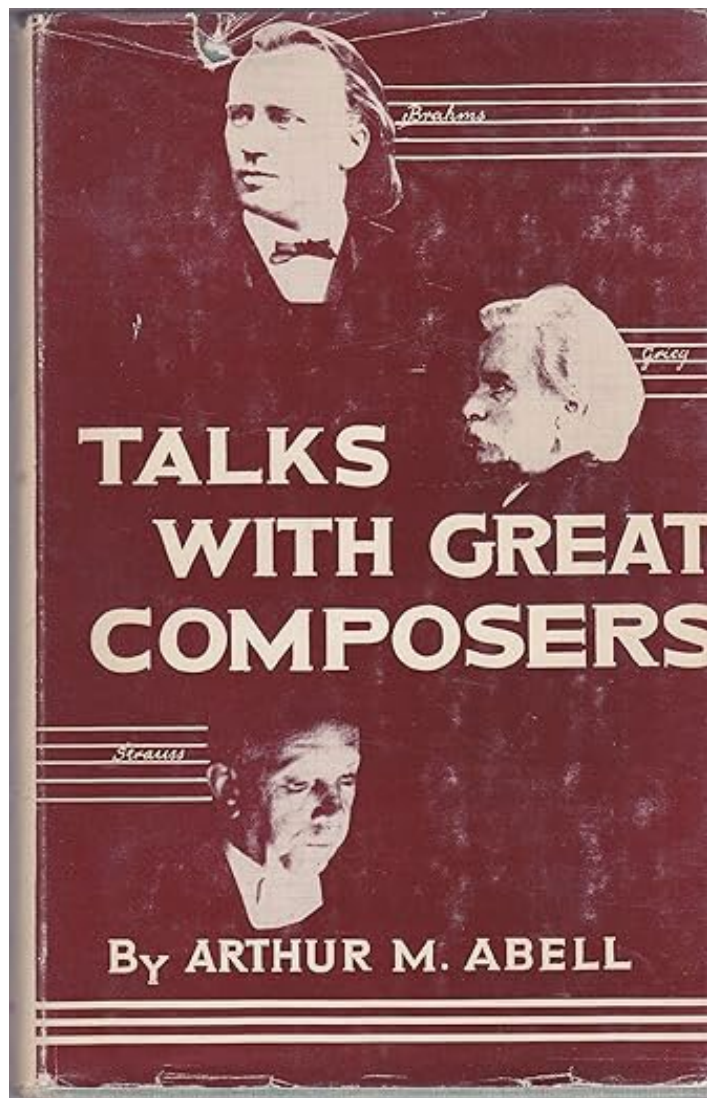
Giacomo Puccini
(1858-1924)

Rabindranath Tagore
1861-1941

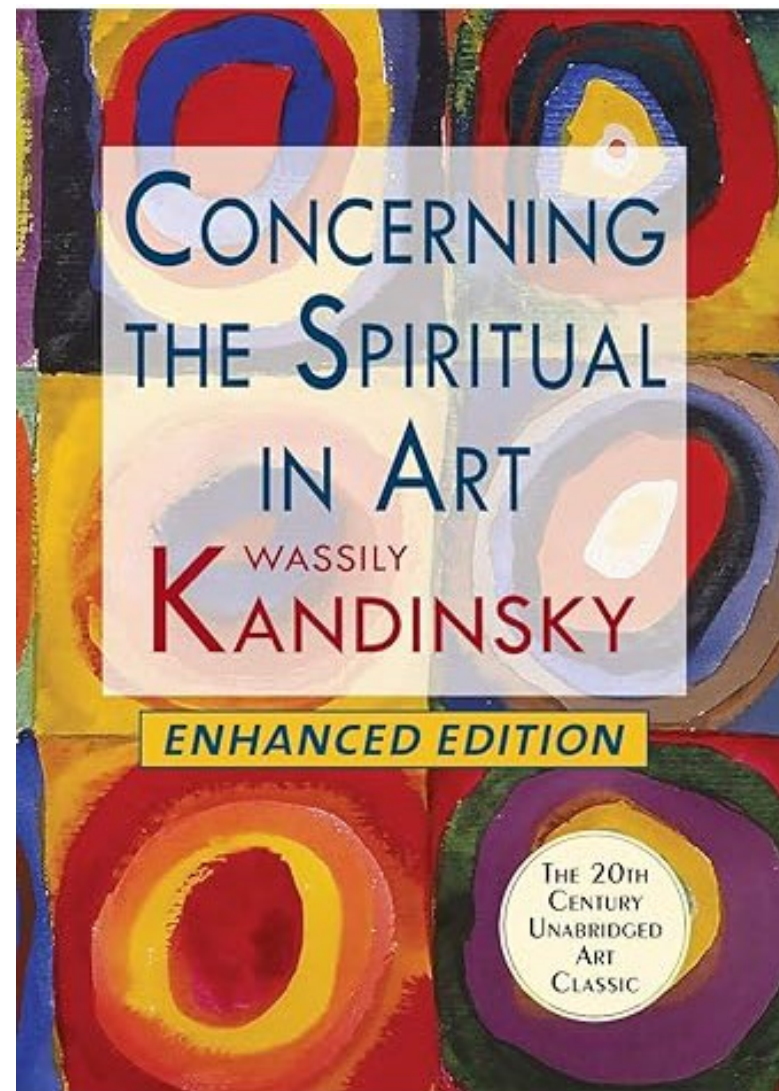


Giacomo Puccini
(1858-1924)

Puccini described his inspiration coming from a superconscious state, allowing him to channel the beauty of Madame Butterfly and La Bohème.



1890 - 1917



1911

EUROPEAN ART



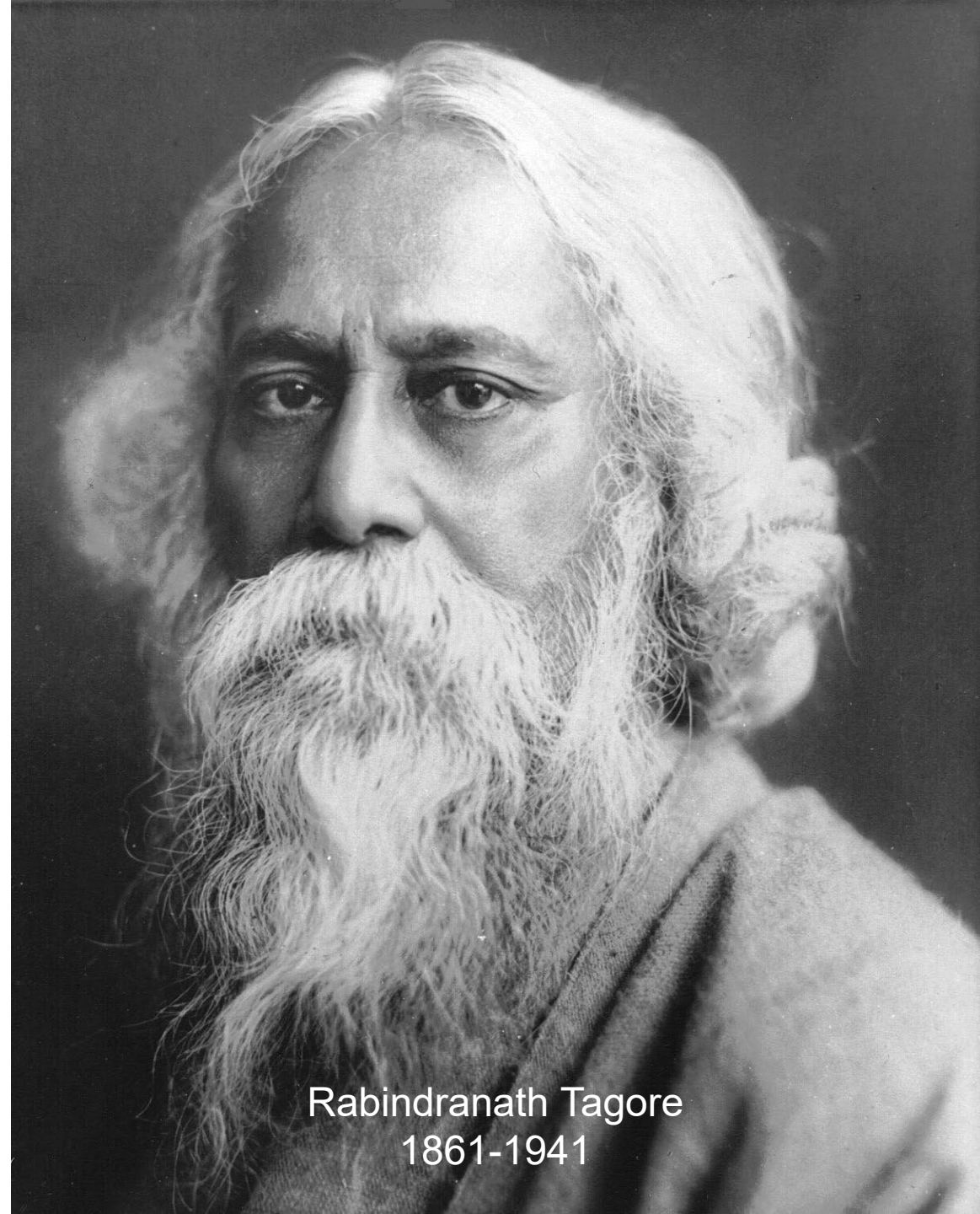
More importance to the material form

INDIAN ART

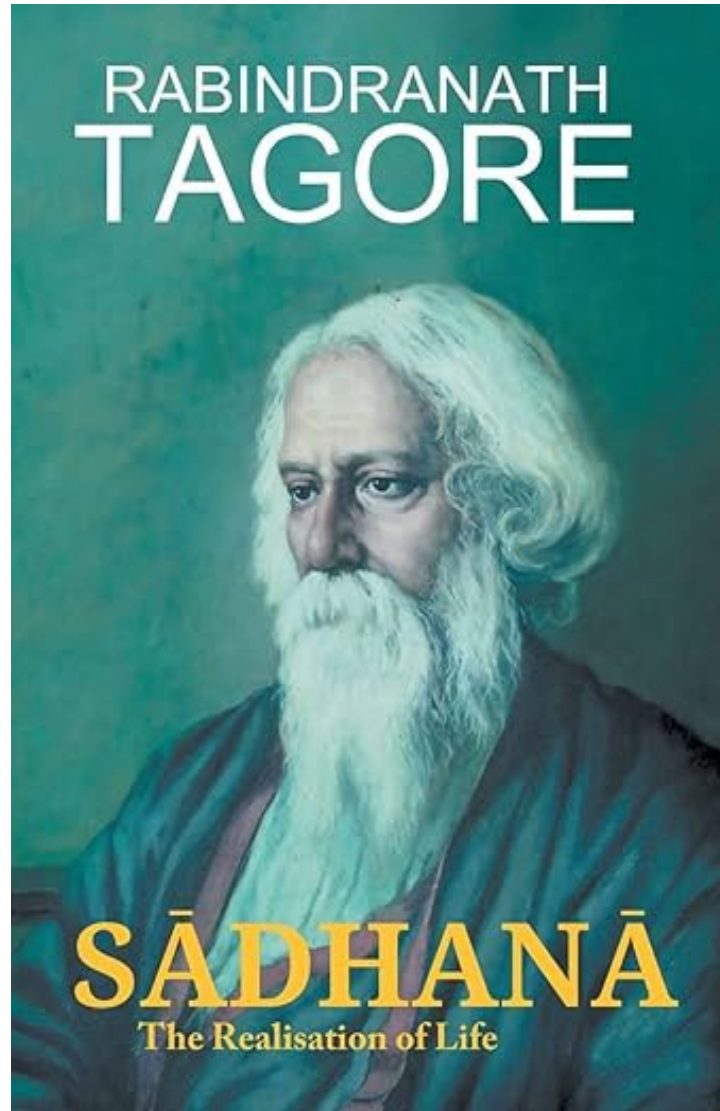


More importance to the spirit behind the form

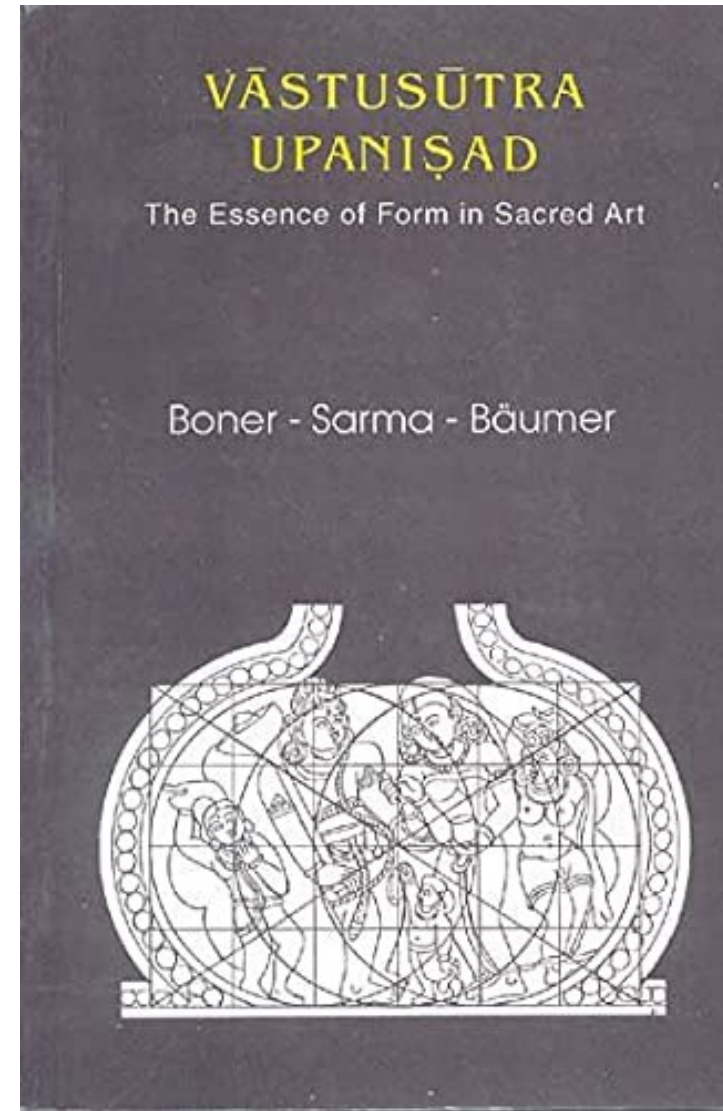
"The true artist does not create for the sake of creation itself, but because through his work, he realizes his unity with the eternal"



Rabindranath Tagore
1861-1941



1913



?

The threat of...

AI

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE





***How can we embrace technology
while protecting the sacred essence
of creative inspiration?***



DOCTORATE IN SACRED ARCHITECTURE:

Vāstu-śāstra for Christian Spiritual Well-being

A practice-based doctorate in sacred architecture

Dr Julia Dalalba, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies & Middlesex University
 E-mail: jvidal@ocms.ac.uk / info@dalalba.com

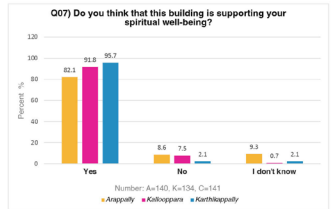
BACKGROUND

I investigate whether the application of Vedic Vāstu-śāstra (ancient architectural wisdom of India) could enhance spiritual well-being in Christian architecture. I examine the application of Vāstu principles in three pre-colonial churches of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church, located in the Malabar Coast (Southwest India). I also engage with the broader discourse on Christian inculturation for church architecture.

Main Research Question:
 To what extent can Vāstu-śāstra contribute to spiritual well-being, where inculturation is needed, based on the example of three St Thomas churches in South India?

2. Compatibility with Christianity: Vāstu-śāstra principles are universal, they align with church architecture and facilitate spiritual well-being.

3. Impact on worshippers: The sacred atmosphere of these churches fosters spiritual well-being (personal, communal, environmental and transcendental) helping devotees experience God in multiple ways, as evidenced by surveys results and participant observations.



METHODOLOGY

I adopt the transpersonal research method of Intuitive Inquiry, supported by a hermeneutical cycle. I use a triangulation with a mixed-method design approach, incorporating:

- Six in-depth interviews with local priests and Vāstu experts.
- Architectural analysis of the three selected churches (Arappally, Kolloppara Pally and Karthikappally Cathedral), along with participant observation in their spaces.
- 482 surveys using the SHALOM SWBQ tool to assess spiritual well-being.

IMPLICATIONS & APPLICATIONS

In this research, I highlight the role of Vāstu-śāstra contributing to Christian spiritual well-being and its potential application in sacred architecture. Based on my findings, I suggest teaching Vāstu principles in seminary education to equip clergy and architects with a deeper understanding of sacred space. The selected churches demonstrate how Vāstu can be harmoniously applied without syncretism, offering a model for future church designs. Additionally, I clarify misconceptions about Vāstu-śāstra, which arise from its fragmented and distorted use in contemporary Indian practice. I also present a universal formula for applying Vāstu principles in sacred architecture to create sacred spaces worldwide that foster spiritual well-being.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Evidence of Vāstu-śāstra application in pre-colonial churches of South India: I observed that the three selected churches successfully integrate Vāstu principles while preserving the vernacular architectural style.


*Dr Julia Dalalba: architect specialised in interior design for health and spiritual well-being, merging the Indian knowledge of Vāstu-śāstra with Yoga philosophy.

Keywords: Vāstu-śāstra, Christian Architecture, Spiritual Well-being, Sacred Space, Intuitive Inquiry, Inculturation, Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church.


9th International Conference on Professional & Practice-Based Doctorates, 07 — 08 Apr 2025
 Royal College of Arts, London

Vāstu-śāstra

'the highest art, according to traditional Indian thinking'

 *Vastu* (formless spirit)

(PHILOSOPHY OF MANIFESTATION)

 *Vaastu* (material form)

***How do we move in Vāstu architecture
from spirit to material form?***



By practicing

CONTEMPLATION

***How did I move as a Vāstu practitioner
from spirit to material form
in my doctoral research?***



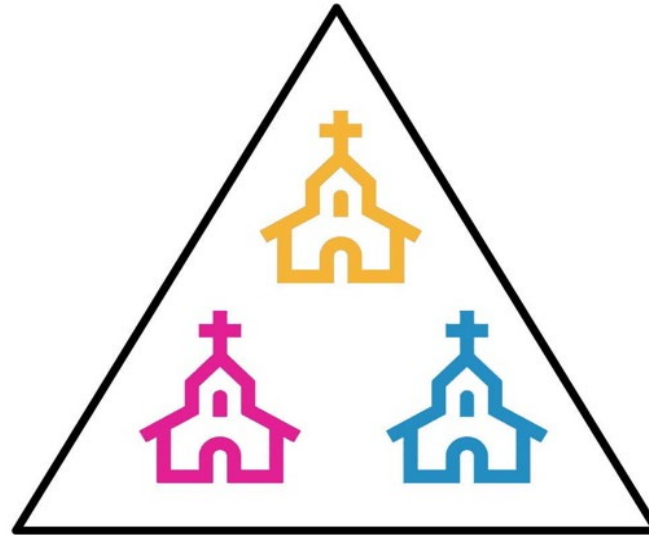
INTUITIVE INQUIRY

A transpersonal research method that integrates intuition and intellectual precision in a hermeneutical process.



Research triangulation:

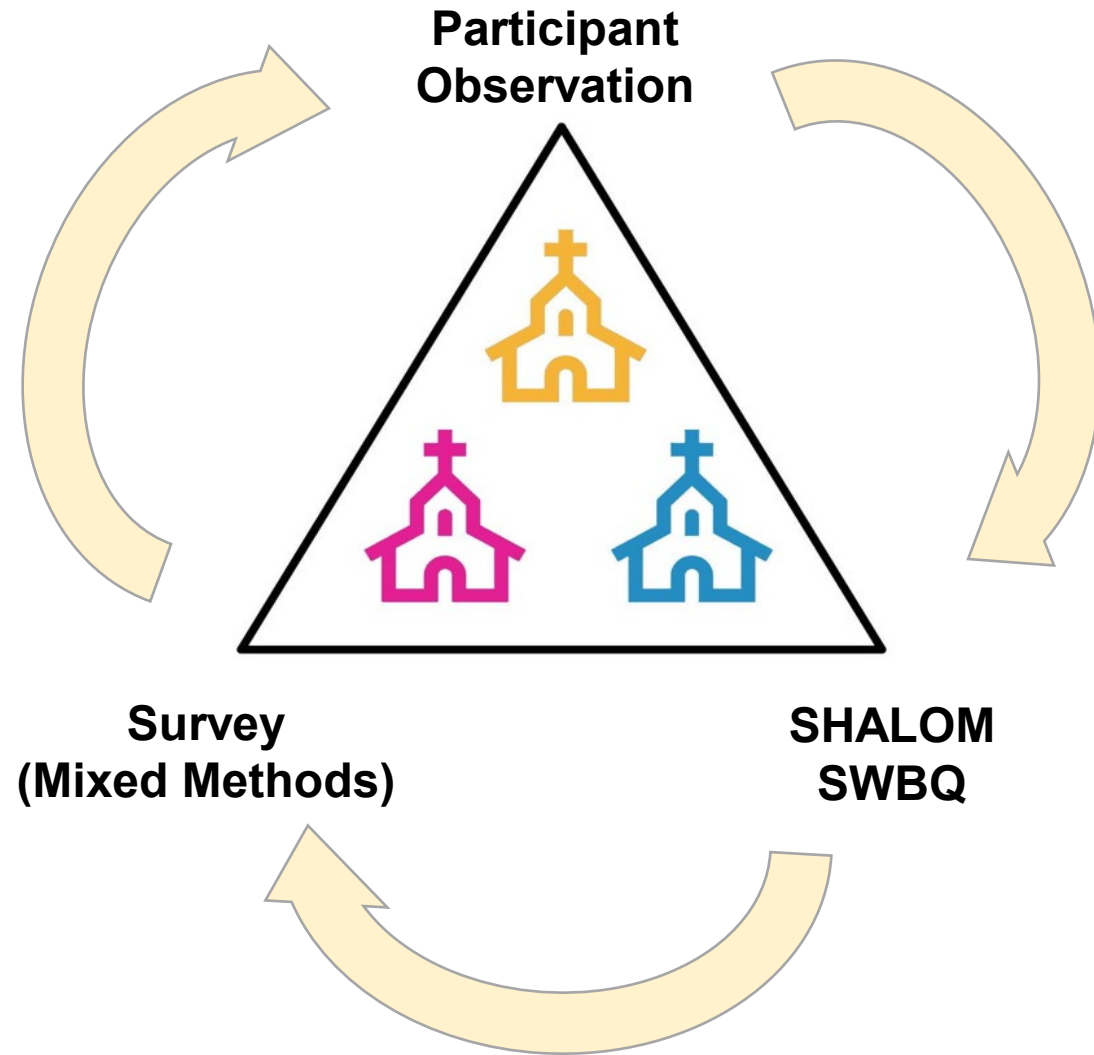
6 INTERVIEWS WITH EXPERTS



ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

482 SURVEYS

Spiritual Well-being triangulation:





HOW DID I USE AI IN MY THESIS?

Only for formatting!

I used it as a tool, not as a creative force.



A woman in a white sari is meditating in a golden temple. In the background, a temple structure is visible against a starry sky with golden geometric patterns. A laptop in the foreground shows a glowing brain-like structure on its screen.

THE INNER TRANSFORMATION OF THE ARTIST