

Glory of Architecture of Hindu Temples in Andhra Desa

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Abstract- *India's Hindu temple architecture is developed from the creativity of Sthapathis, Shilpis and provides a deep insight into the spiritual and social aspects of the Hindu religion with the larger community of craftsmen and artisans called Vishwakarma (caste). The locals and the migrants seem to prefer to be in close contact with their culture and establish their place of worship wherever they are at the turn of the first millennium CE two major types of temples existed, the northern are Nagara style and the southern are Dravida type of temple.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The glory of Indian Art and Architecture, which is evident in all the Hindu temples and their wonderful structures of various styles reflect the imperialistic glory of Indian cultural heritage and the creative genius and peerless artistic skill of the Indian sculptures¹. Their architectural glory had continued without break from the earliest to the latest historical times. All the old Hindu temples seem to be indigenous, originating from wooden or bamboo structures with brick as an intermediate stage².

In India the different types of structures adorn the country forming so many tributes to the worship of God, according to the modus of several cults. Each style is taken up and dealt with fairly exhaustively in its monuments³. The Dravidian style which obtains throughout South India is considered to be the most ancient in origin and is also extensively represented. The affinity of this style with the old Egyptian and Babylonian types interests every scholar.

In Andhra Pradesh, the pre and proto historic cultures provide a glimpse into the early tradition of dwelling types and art from the medieval period the incidence of various temple forms of “Nagara, Vesara and Dravida” is noticed in Andhra Pradesh. Andhra desa formed part of Dravida cultural matrix though it was not isolated from the northern regions. The Vasta-texts also record that the building tradition of northern India called Nagara extends upto the rivers Krishna – Tungabhadra. The Vesara, another building tradition, is prevailing in the Deccan region. During the period from A.D. 600 to 900 Andhra Desa witnessed the erection of large

number of shrines dedicated to Siva⁴. The early phase of temple architectural style, especially of Dravida style covers the period from A.D. 624 – 892 in Vengi desa and till A.D. 750 in the Western Andhra. In the history of Andhra desa ninth and tenth centuries witnessed the emergence of Kalamukha sect of Saivism. The supremacy of Saivism over the heterodox sects the major temples were built in Coast and Andhra at Amaravathi, Draksharama, Kumararama – Samrlakot, Somarama – Bhimavaram and Chebrolu. Vaisnavism also flourished and the temples at Tirupati and Tiruchanur, Bapatla became the centres of Vaisnavas from tenth century onward. Buddhism continued to flourish as evidenced by the epigraphs and sculpture at Amaravathi, Guntupalli, Salihundam etc., Jainism received royal patronage. At Vemulavada, the Subhadhama jinalaya was built by Beddega. The Jain remains at Kurkyala on Bommalagutta hillock, Jainalaya at Repaka in the Karimnagar district are datable to 10th century B.C. The remains of the Jain temple at Alvanipalli and Gangapur are also of the same date. In the Vengi country the erection of Katakabarana Jinalaya at Dharmavaram, the Sarvalokasraya Jinabhavana at Kanchumarru and two Jinalayas at Vijayawada are referred to in the records of Amma II⁵. The Jaina establishment at Danavaripadu received patronage from India III (914-17). The Gnaga prince Rachamalla founded a Jain establishment at Vallimalai hills in A.D. 820. The Nolambavadi region had its famous Jain centres at Konakondla, Amarapuram, Kambadur etc.,

The products of Brahmanical art-tradition is as old as the Buddhist art-tradition in Andhra desa. The Gudimallam Siva Linga is dated to 2nd century B.C. for its art is comparable to Bharhut and Sanchi. Among the stone sculptures that survived the ravages of time, mostly belong to the Ikshavaku period, mostly Saivaite, the stone images include Kartikeya, Devasena, Linga, Nandi and Trisula from Nagarunakonda. Partaking the same idiom and style of the Buddhist art of this place, the Saivaite sculptures reveal preference to oval faces, hour-glass torso and slim and tall limbs⁶. The two examples of Kartikeya, are noble and elegant. This is quite evident in the standing picture of Kartikeya, despite the fact its frontal portion of the head is mutilated and the right arm is completely lost. The elongated slim hour-glass shaped torso

with high chest region, firm waist and long and firm legs form into an imposing figure. The face of Karttikeya (20 cm) is charming and his headdress consists of a peacock feathered bun in the centre of the forehead. These provide a refreshing contrast to the Karttikeya images of Mathura. The figure of Devasena time of Ehuvala Chamtamula. In the iconographic context also the spear and kukkuta and peacock feathers in headdress in the images of Karttikeya are similar to the earlier examples recovered from Mathura⁷.

The art of metal workers is best represented by a bronze statue of prince Siddhartha, now preserved in the Museum at Nagarjunakonda. The prince Sidhartha (ht. 8.5 cm) Museum at Nagarjunakonda⁸. The prince Sidhartha (ht.8.5 cm) stands in abhanga pose, leaning to his right places his right foot turned away while the left foot is planted firmly. Modeling is much akin to the stone figures although in delineating the features an elongation is noticed. The right arm is held akimbo with an arrow and the left outstretched hand holds a bow.

Early centuries of the Christian era witnessed production of terracottas which met the demand of common folk and the urban people consequent to the growth of mercantile and craft guilds and urban centres. Among the Satavahana sites Kondapur is known for its terracotta bead industry. Other known sites that yielded terracottas are Yeleswaram, Nagarjunakonda, Chebrolu, Amaravathi, Dharanikota, Panigiri, Peddabankur, Ghantasala, etc.,

The cult of Mother Goddess of great antiquity is represented by a nude goddess sitting with legs apart; the figurines are reported from Yeleswaram, Nagarjuna konda and Kondapur. It had great popularity among the urban as well as rural populace. In the urban context the Nagarjunakonda inscription provides a queen and her family devoted to worship of this type of figure.



Figure 1 – Yakshi



Figure 2 - Yaksas

From the figure 1 Yakshi and figure 2 Yaksas are found at Kondapur. The same site also yielded the figures of Bodhisattvas and Hariti. Peddabankur, an early Satavahana site, yielded terracotta objects. Among these a bowl has a lid with a human head on the top and the domical portion is fashioned into petals. A torso with bun shaped headdress has an expressive face. Another noteworthy figure is that of Yakshi seated in ardhaparyankasana. She holds a bunch of fruits in right hand and a parrot in the left hand. This site also yielded a large number of terracotta beads. Another early Satavahana site, Dulikatta has yielded large number of terracottas.

II. CONCLUSION

From Nagarjunakonda the terracotta figurines include Karttikeya, Hariti, Vaisravana. Mother Goddess and auspicious symbols. Secular figures represent mithunas, figures with upraised hands, horses, elephants, monkeys, bulls, toy-carts, ornaments, lotuses, etc. Bull, papal-leaf, syastika, dagger-shaped makara pendants and armlets are also reported from Kondapur, Nagarjunakonda, etc. Kaolin, a fine material is used for making the terracottas. Their architectural glory had continued without break from the earliest to the latest historical times. All the old Hindu temples seem to be indigenous, originating from wooden or bamboo structures with brick as an intermediate stage.

Different types of Hindu Temple Architectures that flourished in Andhra Desa and also the scholars who pre-founded and propagated Hindu Temple Architecture are mentioned.

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