



SCULPTURAL BACKGROUND OF KODUMUDI TEMPLE IN THIRUPUR DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

Art is the inner feeling of the heart. Likewise, the word “Chilai” is derived from the root word namely “chil”. Since the statue is made from the stone the word statue came into existence. Due to evolution among the artistic arts, the art namely architecture became famous. In the art of sculpturing, there are many divisions. They are Maurya statues. Gandara statues, Amaravathi statues Gupta Statues and Dravida statues. The system of architecture followed in Tamilnadu is known as Dravida architecture. The sculpturing that developed in Tamilnadu has a close link with both the Saiva and Vainava religious of the time. Present research about the Magudeeswara Temple bears all the features of the Saiva and Vainava sculptures.

Keywords: *Thiritala, Dolahastha, Abhaya, Varatha, Arthapadmasana, Suhasana, Sangha, Chakra, Virasana, Utharabandha, Padasara, Sarappali, Kandihai...*

Introduction

Among the three dimensional arts, sculpture holds the pride of place and like painting and unlike architecture, it has to resemble an external object. In architecture it is the artistic imagination which plays a great role in designing the model. But in sculpture, the artist must conform to a model outside of him and independent of his free imagination. The Tamilian sculpture in the “Sangam” age was perhaps confined either to the terracotta or plaster medium. Since they were easily perishable and so none of the sculptures of those days have survived. Literature however refers to the sculpture of those times.

Methodology

Art History based present research follows the Descriptive Method. But whenever it is necessary both Analytical and Comparative Methods have been used. The sangam age was surely a tall figure made of plaster, lime or similar materials. There was such a figure in the cross roads in Pukar and it was worshipped. There can be no doubt it was a three dimensional figure. Since all the temples and idols in them were made of perishable material they have all perished unable to withstand the ravages of the equatorial climate.

Excellent sculpture of this early period of Pallava art may be seen at Thiruchirapalli, Thirukalukundram, Mamallapuram and other places. The temples and the palaces of the Cholas were decorated with sculpture made up of stone, iron, bronze and gold. The sculptures of this period were religious oriented. Most of the sculptures in Pullamangai temple and the Nataraja sculpture in the Chidamparam temple were noteworthy. Numerous sculptures in the Tanjore Temple were decorative in nature. The sculpture of Koranganatha temple, the Durga sculpture in Pullamangai temple, sculptures of both Dharsuram and Thirupuvanam were aesthetically carved.

The temple of Kalugumalai is perhaps the first in Tamilnadu to show a number iconographic distribution of deities in the Sala and Griva. A Nandi with human body is found at Thiruparankundram.

The Pillaiyarpatti cave has a two armed Ganesa. He has a trunk curled to his proper right. At Kalugumalai, the unfinished monolithic temple chiseled from the top of the bottom, called Vettuvankoil is a jewel of Pandya sculpture. The Pandya structural temples had various ‘Devakoshta’ sculpture on their ‘Vimanas’ and ‘Mandapa’ walls.

Vijayanagar and Nayaks, a number of huge images were carved in this period and the famous Narasimha and Ganesa at Hambli are justly famous. The Vijayanagar period of art marks the last phase of Andhra art after which decadence set in the final flicker of this, however is seen in the amazingly virile sculpture in titanic proportions carved by the sculptor of Thirumalai nayak in Pudumandapa, the large ‘Gopura’ and the courts of Meenakshi’s temple at Madurai.

The Sculptures of Sri Ganapathy and Nayanmars

This temple is located near river Kaveri of Kodumudi town of Thirupur District, Tamil Nadu. In the south Prahara the Mahaganapathy sculpture is engraved in the seated posture as the first of its kind in his ‘Vahana’. Among the four who are called as Saiva Kuravas, Thirugnanasambanthar’s sculpture is carved in the standing posture. It is nearly a feet tall with the ‘maguda’ on his head and “Kundalas’ in his ears.



Following the Thirugnanasambanthar sculpture one can see the sculpture of Thirunavakarasar in the Anjali Muthura with the “Kundalas” in his ears and the “Udhraksa” garland around his neck. Following the Thirugnanasambanthar sculpture, the statue of Sundaramurthy Nayanar is seen in the ‘Samabanga’ posture with ‘Anjali muthra’. The sculpture of Manickavasahar is engraved with the palm leaves in one hand, and on the other the “Sin Muthra”. He also has the holy thread across his chest. In addition, he has the “Kundalas” in his ears, the ‘Aaram’ around his neck, the bangles around his hands and bangles around his shoulders also. Apart from these sculptures there are also the sculptures of the other Nayanmars.

Pillared Sculptures of Magudeeswara Temple

On the pillars of the “Mahamandapa” many ‘relief sculptures’ are found. The ‘Pasupatheeswara’ relief sculpture is excellently carved with exquisite artistic skill. The elephant that does the “abisekha” for Linga is also found here. One can see the Nandhikeshwara sculpture in the standing posture. Next is the Bairava sculpture facing the Moolavar and along with it the ‘Rishi’ sculpture. Finally the Subramanya sculpture in the posture of the deity is seated on the ‘Vahana’ is also engraved. Apart from these sculptures there are the designs of “Kodikarukku” and flowers, that are being carved so dexterously. There are also the sculpture of elephants and the “Purushamiruha.”

Swami Dakshinamurthy sculpture has been engraved in the “Virasana” posture. This sculpture has in its two hands the ‘Pasa’ and the ‘Angusa’ with the ‘Sin Muthra’ and the palm leaves in the lower hands are engraved. Under him is engraved the ‘Muyalahan statue’. On the other part of the pillar are seen the sculptures of ladies playing Kolattam, the men bearing the ‘Kavadi’ and men engaged in wrestling. The above said ones are engraved as relief sculptures. Further more there are many engraved peculiar types of sculptures. Man’s body has been engraved along with the two-headed peacock bearing the Sivalinga is a wonderful sculpture. Researchers call this as Mayuranathar. On the pillar that are to the left side of the “Maha Mandapa” are seen many sculptures that are nearly two feet tall. Among them is the Annai Devi with the ‘Maguda’ in the ‘Thiribhanga’ posture. She has the “padma” in her right hand. The Naradha statue has been engraved with the Veena in his hands. From their research it has been understood, that the Agasthiyar statue has been engraved with the ‘Jadamaguda’ on his head and the ‘Abaya, Vartha Muthira’ in his hand.

The Deva Koshta Sculptures

Arulmigu Dakshinamurthy with the face facing towards the south is nearly four feet tall with the ‘Jada’ on his head in the ‘Veerasana’ posture. The Guru Dakshinamurthy is seated with the ‘Pasa’ and ‘Angusa’ in his two upper hands and palm leaves in his lower hand and the ‘Sin Muthra’ in his two lower hands as Dakshinamurthy. He also bears the bangles around his shoulders and wrists and also “Kandamala” and “Aaram” around his neck and the “Thandi” around his ankles. He is seen with eyes in his forehead which is a unique feature found here. To the southern side of the “Devakoshta” the Dancing Narthana Ganapathy sculpture has been engraved.

To the western side of the “Devakoshta” the Mahavishnu is seen in this “Samabhanga” with four hands. His upper two hands bear the “Sangu” and ther “Chakra” while the lower two hands bears the “Abaya Muthra” in a very restricted manner. To the northern side of the “Devakoshta” the Brahman sculpture is seen in the “Samabhanga” posture with four faces and four hands. The upper four hands bear the “Akshamala” and the “Padma” while the two lower hands bear the “Abaya Varatha Muthra”. Besides he has the dress to the heels with full decoration. In the “Artha Mandapa Deva Koshta” the Annai Durgai sculpture has been engraved with the shining “Maguda” facing towards the north.

Sculptures of Venkatesa Perumal Sannathi

Here Mahavishnu in the “Sayana” posture has been engraved. Usually the Vishnu sculpture will be engraved in the lying manner but is found in the “Sayana”. Posture near him are Sridevi, Boodevi, Garudazhevar, Sakkarathazhvar and Aanjaneya as moolawars in the sitting posture. Besides Mahavishnu along with Sridevi and Boothevi is seen in the Urchavas. In the eastern side of the “Prahara” of this “Sannathi”, the figures of the 12 Alwars are being carved. The Thirumangai Aalwar figure is of three feet tall with two hands. She bears the “Kedayutha” in her left hand and the sword in her right hand. The Garudazhlvar sculpture is of two feet in height facing the Moolavar. Besides in the seated posture are the Thondaradi Podiyalwar and Thirumazhisai Aalwar sculptures are engraved in an exquisite manner. The sculptures of Kulasekara Aalwar and Poigai Aalwar, Poothathalwar, Periyazhlvar, Madurahaviyazhlvar with the lofts of hair, Periyazhlvar and Nammazhlvar are engraved. Udayavar is seen in the Anjali Muthra, Paramapatha Nathar, is in the Suhasana posture with the Sanga, the ‘Chakra’ and ‘Abhaya Varatha Muthra’.

The Pillared Sculptures

In the front row pillars of the Maha Mandapa Prahara Lord Perumal has been carved with the “Sanga”, “Chakra” and “Abaya Varatha Muthra”. In the “Anjali Muthra” are the sculptures of the donors. One can also see the sculptures of the ladies with



Samara, Agasthiar, Kalinganarthana, Garudazhlwar and Bhutagana sculptures that have been well wrought. There are imaginative sculptures like the peculiar head of Vinayaga a part of Purushamiruham and also the Figure of a lady. In addition there are the sculptures of yogi in “Egapada” posture, Naganatha, Patteswara, Subramaniya, Suriya Chandra and Samhara Narasima.

One can see the “Mohini Avatar” of Vishnu and also sculptures related to Vaishnavism. Apart from these there are also the Sivan Parvathi, Kalinga Narthana, Vinayaga and Garudazhlwar sculptures. In the “Utthara” and in the “Vithana” portions also there are the sculptures of Aanjaneya and Gajalakshmi. The sculptures related to “Dasavathara” are also elegantly designed.

Sculptures of Mahalakshmi Thayar Sannathi

Mahalakshmi Thayar has been engraved as the Moolavar in the “suhasana” posture. She has the “Greetamaguda” on her head and is endowed with 4 hands. Her upper two hands bear the “Padmas” while the two lower hands bear the “Abaya vartha Muthra”. She has the “Kundalas” in her ears and around the neck the “Kandigai” and the “aaram” with other ornaments. On examination it can be found that the artistic designs and art belong to the traditional pattern of the Nayak of later days.

The Sculptures Maha Mandapa

In the Thayar “Sannathi’s” pillar, there is a relief sculpture of a hunter in the action of hunting a deer. It is a chief sculpture. On the other side of the same pillar a small rabbit has been engraved hiding in an ambush. It is engraved so skillfully, that it gives an impression of the rabbit, that it may be hunted like the deer.

On the four sides of the wall are found Dudhiyal in the gailing posture and there are also novel “Kodikkarukku” and flowers being engraved on the pillar. Gaja Samharamoorthi is engraved as relief sculptures. One can also see Subramaniya in his “Vahana” with four hands the two upper hands bearing the “vajraayutha” and the knife, while the two lower hands bearing the “Abaya Varatha Muthra.” On the other sides of the pillar there are the sculptures of the “Buthaganas”, “Kalinga Narthana, Purushamiruha, Sun, Stars, the lady playing the musical instrument like “Mathala” and the “Rishi” playing the musical instrument. These are all in the form of relief sculptures.

Annai Vadivudai Nayaki

On the Thiribanga stage Annai Vadivudai Nayaki is seen. She has the “Gritamaguda” in her upper and lower hands the “Abaya and Varada Muthira”. Annai has the “Kundala” in her ears, around the neck the “Kandikai” and “Sarapali”. In addition there are other ornaments adorned on her namely the bangles around the shoulders, the hand bangles and the “Padasara” around her legs. If one goes to examine the sculptural art followed in the sculpture of Annai Vadivudai Nayaki its evident that it belongs to the days before the Nayaks. The structure of the Annai is well designed and the features of the traditional art is followed.

The Prahara Sculptures

To the backside of Annai Vadivudai Nayaki sculpture in the south western corner is the sculpture of Ganesa being engraved. Vallapa Ganesa has the demon and human being features and is, seated with the “Maguda” on his head. He has the “pasa” the “angusa” in his upper hands and the “Mothaga” and the writing nail in his lower hands. Annai is seated on the lap of Ganesa. In the line of Vadivudai nayaki “Prahara” sculpture and the “Choleswara” sculpture is found next to the sculpture of Ganesa. Arulmigu Choleswara is seen in the “Linga” form Sivaperuman supreme God stands as an identity with the Siva “Linga”. Linga is a symbol known as description otherwise “Ling” means beauty while “Kam” means appearance. By this it means that the world started here and also ended here. The word Linga also means brightness. The identity of the “Brahma” object is the structure of the Linga. The Linga has three parts about itself. The base part is the Brahma portion, the “Vishnu part is found in the “Aavudai” or the “Peeda”. The portion on the western side is known as the Ruthra part. The Brahma portion which has the proprietorship of the water bears the “Abisekha” water. The Siva portion which is the proprietorship of the fire stands a loft with the incandescent fire light. Hence “Linga” means the form of the three Moorthies. Here the holy form of Choleswara has been engraved in the Linga form of three Moorthies.

In par with the Choleswara and Visvesa forms is the Kasi Vishwanatha sculpture in the seated posture. Here too he is put up in the “Linga” form. Opposite to the deity, the Vahana of it namely the Nandi has been carved.

Sri Visalakshi Sculpture

Annai Sakthi is seen in the seated posture to the left side of Kasi Viswanatha. She is facing towards the east with the “Padma”



in the right hand. She has the “Maguda” on her head and the “Kundalas” in her ears. Besides these ornaments she has the “Kandigai” and “Sarapali” around her neck, the bangles around her wrists and “Padachara” around her legs. However the decorative as well as ornamental work has been done aesthetically. Annai Saraswathi Sculpture, Kalaimagal the patroness for education in the northern language is worshipped as Saraswathi. She is the possessor of the four dimensions. Hence she is called as Namahal and Sahalalakavalli.

Shi is an epitome of knowledge and education. In Tamilnadu for this deity a beautiful temple has been built in Koothanur. She is engraved in the Vadivudai Nayaki Sannathi “prahara” in kodumudi. She is in the row of sculptures seated on the lotus flower bearing the “Suhasana” with the “gritamakuta” on her head. She has the “Akshamala” and the book in her upper hands and the “veena” and Angusa in her back hands.

The Saphmathrikas Sculptures

The Saptha “Mathrikas” namely Gowmari, Vaishnavi, Chamundi are seated facing towards the east in the north western side of the “Prahara”. Here Abirami ranks as the first goddess among the “Sapthamatrikas”. She is in the “Suhasana” posture with four hands. The Goddess has the “Krita Maguda” on her head with the “Sangu, Chakra” in her two front hands and in her back hands the “Sula” and the “Padma”. Gowmari has been engraved with two hands. She is with the “Vajra” and the “Padma”. Vaishnavi with the 4 hands bears in her two upper hands the “Sangu” and “Chakra” and the “Abayavaratha Muthra” in her two lower hands. Varahi is shaped with the face of a pig. She shows in her hands the “Sangu” “Chakra” and the “Abaya Muthra”. She is seated in the “Arthapadmasana posture” with the “Varada Muthra”. Usually Chamundi will be seen with the skull garland and the trident. She is always found with the “Jatabhanda”. But here the Annai is seen with the shining ‘Maguda’ on her head and the ‘Abaya Muthra’ in her hands and the ‘Sula’.

There are many sculptured pillars in the western side of the ‘Prahara’ of Annai Vadivudai Nayaki Sannathi. In the form of relief sculptures, the sculpture of Garuda is engraved in the ‘Anjali Muthra’. Here on the four sides of the pillars the 6 divisions of Hinduism like ‘Saiva’, ‘Vainava’, ‘Saktha’, ‘Kaumara’, ‘Sowra’ and ‘Ganapathya’ related to the religions are engraved. Rama statue in the form of relief sculpture has been carved at a height of nearly two feet with the bow in the left hand and the arrow in the right hand. On the same pillar to the east side of it, the sculpture of Dhandayuthapani has been carved. It bears the beautiful “Mahuta” on the head and the “Kundala” in its ears. The left hand is folded while the right hand bears the “Thanda”. On the same pillar but on another side a man’s sculpture has been sculptured in the dancing posture with the musical instruments in his hands in all the elegance of the dancing posture. On the west side of the pillar things like ‘Hamsa’ and elephant are engraved in the “Bhuthagana” sculpture while Siva has been carved in the ‘Linga’ form. One can see the ‘Linga’ being sculptured at a height of nearly one feet in another pillar. On the same part of the pillar, the “Bhuthagana sculptures, the elephant and erotic sculptures are carved. In a very small form Vinayaga sculpture has been carved in the relief sculpture. There is another relief sculpture of Kalinganarthana performing dance on the snake. On this pillar a statue of a donor has also been engraved. The ‘Buthagana’ and elephants sculpture have also been engraved on the other parts of the pillars.

The Sculptures on the Pillars of Vadivudai Nayaki Temple

On the pillars of the ‘Mahamandapa’ many relief sculptures are engraved. The figure of Agasthiyar in the yoga posture is based on the ‘Purana’ in the relief sculpture. There are also sculpture of Rama with the bow and arrow and Vinayaka. Besides in the “Anjali Muthra” the sculpture of the Rishies have been carved. The Lord Siva is in the “Samabhanga” posture facing towards the east. He has the “Abaya Varatha Muthra” in his upper hands and the deer his lower hands Likewise on another part of the same pillar Mahavishnu has been engraved with four hands. He has the Kathayutha and the conch in his left hands and the “Chakra” and the “Abaya Varatha Muthra” in his right hands. Further more Annai Mahalakshmi is also engraved in the “Padmasana” posture. She is seen with four hands. She has the “padma” in her upper hands and the ‘Abaya Varatha Muthra’ in her lower hands.

To the north eastern direction Saneeswara is seated in a separate ‘Sannathi’ of the temple. He bears the “Maguda” and is designed with two hands. He has the ‘Naga’ And Sulam in his upper hands and the ‘Abaya Varatha Muthra’ in his lower in hands. He also has ‘Kundalas’ in his ears and also bangles around the shoulders and wrists. Bairava is seated in his ‘Vahana’ at a height of 5 feet in the ‘Samabhanga’ posture. In his hands are engraved the trident, ‘Udukkai’ and ‘Amuthu’. He has ‘Kundalas’ in his ears, ornaments around his neck and a broad holy thread his chest. Among the ancient sculptures, the sculpture of Bairava is very remarkable. Among the ancient sculptures found here Chandra sculpture is very significant. It is about 3 feet height, has the ‘Maguda’ on his head and the ‘padmas’ in his two hands. It is engraved with the holy thread across it’s chest, ‘Aaram’ around his neck, bangles, bangles around its shoulders and ornaments around its waist.



Surya has been engraved at a height of more than three with the 'Maguda' on his head. He has the 'padmas' in his two hands and the holy thread across his chest. It represents ancient artistic features but has the greatness about it. The penchant attitude for artistic elegance can be visualized in the Pallava art.

The Sculptures of the Anjaneya

The Anjaneya sculpture that have stood the test of time have been engraved as the Moolavar and the 'Dvara Anjaneya' sculptures of this kind are found here in abundance. Another sculpture to the left of the 'Sannathi' is at a height of 4 feet in the "Samabhanga" posture and being engraved in the "Anjali Muthra". It has the "Maguda" on his head and the "Kundalas" in its ears. To the left of this sculpture is another Hanuman sculpture which bears the same artistic elegance. There are plenty of sculptures being carved in the pillars of the Moolavar like the swan, elephant and Rama with bow and arrow.

Conclusion

Finally the manuscript presents the suggestions and remarks. The Devakosthas in Sri Magudeeswara temple along with Sculptures are aesthetically beautiful. The best relief sculptures are the sculpture of the dancers in dancing postures, Rishi, "Bhuthagana" sculpture, Vinayaga, Anjaneya Surya, Chandran, Kalinganarthana and Hanuman in the seated posture. There are also imaginative animals being engraved. They are the figures of Dhandayuthapani, Nandhi, Krishna robbing the butter and Venugopala playing the flute. Other sculpture found here are the Rishi sculpture seated on the 'Ehapada' posture, 'Kurma Avatar' of Vishnu and a lady artist in the dancing posture with the musical instruments the 'Mathala'. The Gods and Goddesses like Nataraja and Umair are plated in copper. There are the other figures of Gods and Goddesses like Bairava, Uma Maheswara, Bikshadana, Chandrasekara, Thiripurasundari and Tiripurasamhara.

In the Panchathala Gopura there are many stucco sculptures. In addition there are sculpture of Subramanya, Bikshadana, Perumal in Iying posture, Devi, Kannappanyanar, Krishna, Dvarabalagas, Indira, Brahma, Sridevi and Boodevi. In Annai Vadivudainayaki Sannathi Gopura, there are many relief sculptures. They are like Dwarabalaga, Kudiraiveeran, Meenakchi Sundareshwarar Kalyanam, Mahavishnu, Naratha, Dakshinamurthi and Yoha Dakshinamurthi. These are all engraved in stucco sculptures.

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