



MINIATURE SCULPTURES IN PUSHPAGIRI TEMPLE COMPLEX

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Abstract : This article describes the sculptural heritage of the Pushpagiri Temple Complex. It mainly focused on miniature sculptures on the outer wall of the sanctum and Adistana. Stone sculptures measuring about one inch to twelve inches can be seen on the walls of this temple. Most of the sculptures are high relief in granite stone. Themes are the story of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavatah, the incarnation of Vishnu, Vishnu Purana, Shiva Purana, and war scenes. The friezes of Adhistana are embellished mostly with elephants, horses, lions, rare-found camels, and swans and have decorative motifs. In the hall, one can witness the skills of this sculpture for this temple. Most of the sculptures carved during Vijayanagara times are in a temple that underwent many changes and repairs over a period. Kalyana Chalukyas to Vijayanagara.

IndexTerms - Pushpagiri, Chennakeswasa , Kalyana Chalukyas, Hoyasila, Vijayanagara, Ramayana, Mahabharata.

INTRODUCTION

This temple is located on the eastern bank of the Penna River near Chennur village, about fifteen kilometers from Kadapa. The temple complex consists of the temples of “*Chennakesav Swamy*”, *Santanamalleswara Swamy*, and *Umamalleswara Swamy*. It is noteworthy that Shiva Kesava is housed in the same courtyard. It is also known as Dakshina Kashi due to the confluence of the five rivers here. The “*Chennakesava*” temple complex consists of three temples with a rectangular mandapa built with eight pillars. Of these three temples, one is dedicated to Vishnu in the form of “*Chennakesava*,” and the other is dedicated to Shiva, called *Santanamalleswara*, which are located next to each other and face west towards the east of the *mandapa* and open into a rectangular *mandapa*. The third is called the *Umamaheswara temple*, which is situated on the north side of the *mandapa* facing south and at right angles to the *Santanamalleswara* temple. All three temples display similar architectural features. The inscriptions found there indicate that the gopuram structures of these three temples were in ruins by the end of the 15th century. The lower walls of these temples are said to have been repaired by Aghorashivacharya in the year 1423¹ (A.D. 1501).



figure 1 chennakesava temple east side wall

The “*Chennakesava*” temple complex holds a special place in the art of temple sculpture. Stone idols measuring about one inch to 12 inches can be seen on the walls of this temple. The sculptures here are carved with “*Hoysala*”-like“ decorations in its style. The worship of “*Chennakesava*” in Karnataka was very popular

under the patronage of the *Kalyana Chalukyas* and the *Hoysalas*⁶. The expansion of the later Chalukyas in the Kadapa region and the influence of the *Hoysalas* led to the spread of “*Chennakesava*” worship in this region, and thus many “*Chennakesava*” temples were built later.².

The floral arrangements and other decorations on the outer walls are typical of the style of the Vijayanagara period. It is built on a richly carved *adhistanam*, in which, from bottom to top, the sub-base (*Upana*, *Galapadha*, *Kapota*, and *Padma*) and *Adistana* (*Upana*, *Kumuda*, *Kanta*, *Galapada*, and *Pattika*) are seen. In the sub-base, the *upana* and *galapada*³ are plain. The *kapota* was carved with lotuses with creepers, and here and there are swans. Similarly, in the *upana* on the *adhistanam*, horses, elephants, and camels with soldiers are seen, resembling battle scenes, and here and there are figures of deities. Some of

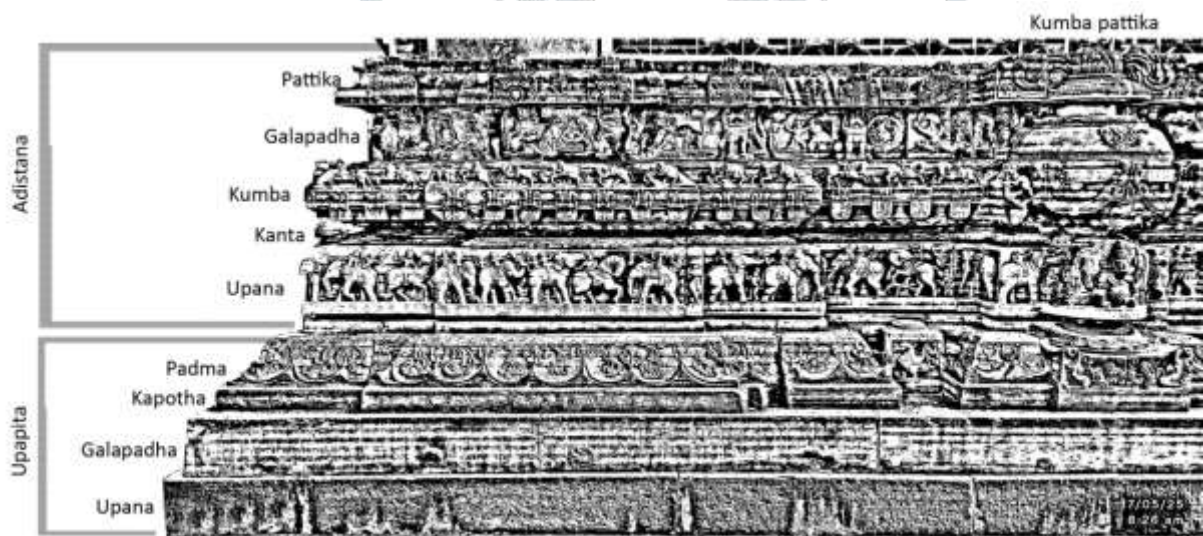


figure 2 figure 2 temple hall outer wall structure

these elephants and horses are arranged in a clockwise direction (from left to right), and some in an anticlockwise direction (from right to left). Above these, the *kumuda* is decorated with lions' horns, and on them are depicted soldiers riding on horses. Above them is a belt with a *kuntha* and a *galapada*. Epic scenes are seen on the *Kanta*. Each *kanta* is divided by a *galapada* with lions. The belt above these is filled with “*Simhanaluka*” (*kudu*), and between them is filled with *devaghanas*. Above them is a row of lions that was carved. In the middle, two *kumbhparijaras* are decorated.

The outer walls of the garbhagriha of the “*Chennakesava*” *Swamy*, *Santana Malleswara Swamy*, and *Umameswara* temples have almost the same structure. The *Upapita*, *Adistana*, and wall pillars have *kapota*. But the *Umamaheswara Swamy* temple looks a little different in



figure 3- 3 inches hight sculpture on the south wall of temple

decoration. Although the wall decoration of the *Umameswara Swamy* temple is on the west side, similar to the wall decoration and the hall wall decoration, the *upana* at the top of the *adhithanam* has horses, elephants, and camels with soldiers on them, resembling war scenes. Figures of deities are also seen. On the *upana* on the north side wall, miniature relief figures of 3 inches in height are seen, depicting stories from *Shiva Purana* and, in some places, stories from *Ramayana*. The walls on the eastern side again show battle scenes similar to the hall wall. The walls of these three temples are divided into three sections by two *Kumbha Panjiras*, each section being divided by "*Kudya Stambas*." The walls of the "*Chennakesava*" temple are filled with stories from the *Vishnu Purana* and the *Ramayana*. The walls of the *Santanamalleshwara* temple are decorated with stories from the *Shiva Purana*. The "*Chennakesava*" temple complex contains 260 elephants, 280 horses, 2 camels, 700 lions, 800 soldiers and men, 350 deities and *devaganas* such as *Ganesh*, *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Shiva*, *Narasimha*, *Varaha Vamana*, *Krishna*, *Rama*, *Lakshmana Hanuma Parvathi*, *Lakshmi*, *Seetha*, *Arjuna*, *Chenchulakshmi*, *Nataraja*, *Muragan*, *Vali Sugriva*, *Dikpalakas* (*Indra*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Yama*, *Kubera*, *Nairuthi*, *Varuna*, *Ishana*), and *Dasdaratha*, along with 8 miniature sculptures of rabbits, monkeys, dogs, mongooses, parrots, etc.

Vinayaka: In the Chennakeshava group of temples, Vinayaka miniature high-relief idols are found at 5 places. **1.** On the north wall of the enclosure, on the second Kumbha Panjara, there is a 6-inch-tall image of Vinayaka with four arms. However, the trunk of this idol has been destroyed. **2.** On the west wall of the enclosure, in the middle, there is a 3-inch-wide image of four arms in the Adistana galapada, holding "Undrallu" in the right hand and a rope in the second hand, and a tusk and a name in the left hands. **3.** On the north wall of the Umamaheswara Swamy temple, on the Upana, there is a 5-inch-wide image of a rat sitting on a rat and walking with four arms. This is carved as part of the Vrushabarunamurti scene in the *Shiva Purana*. **4.** In the north wall of the temple, on the Nandi, Shiva and Parvathi are mounted on a rat (5 inches). **5.** On the north wall of the Santanamalleshwara Swami Temple, on the second dome, the Ganesha is 5 inches in height and has four arms, riding on a rat, his vehicle. Every shape of the Ganesha is unique, and there is no similarity found.

Ramayana Story: In the Chennakeshava Temple complex premises, miniature sculptures from *Balakanda*,



figure 4 Rama hanuma and lakshmana miniature sculptures at south wall of chennakeseshava temple



figure 5 on the wall to the south of the verandah is a scene from the kishkinda chapter of the ramayana depicting the battle of vali with sugriva

Aranyakanda, Kishkindakanda, and Sundarakanda have been carved. All these were carved on the outer southern walls of the hall, the northern and western walls of Uma maheswara Swamy Temple, the eastern and southern walls of Chennakesava Swamy Temple, and the eastern and southern walls of Santanamalleswara Swamy Temple. Characters like *Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Dasharatha, Hanuman, Vali, Sugriva, Tara, Vibhishana, Ravana, Surpanaka, and Jatayu* have been carved in 3 to 8 inches in height. On the southern wall of the hall, 8-inch miniature sculptures of the battle scene of Vali and Sugriva in the Kumbha Panjara have been carved. In this scene, Vali, Sugriva, Rama, Lakshmana, and Tara are shown. On the surface of Kumbha Panjara, a wrestling scene of Vali and Sugriva is carved. From left to right, scenes like Lakshmana cutting off Surpanaka's nose and ears, then Rama hunting the golden deer, then Jatayu stopping Ravana from abducting Sita, Rama and Lakshmana meeting Valli and Sugriva in search of Sita, wrestling between Valli and Sugriva, and Rama hitting Valli with an arrow from the shade of a tree are all beautifully rendered in a size of 4 inches in height. Regarding the Ramayana, there are 23 sculptures of 4 inches in height on the "Galapada" in the "Adhistana" and 12 sculptures of 8 inches on the "Upana". Scenes like Rama giving the ring to Hanuman and Hanuman showing it to Sita in Lanka, as a continuation of the previous scenes, were carved on "Galapada," from left to right on the west adhistana. These 4 sculptures were carved to 4 inches in height. Similarly, in the western adhistana of the Umamaheswara Swamy temple, the scene of Lord Rama hunting the golden deer is repeated on the "Upana" and "Galapada." The story of Sravana Kumara, who was accidentally killed by Dasharatha, is carved with 3 characters: Sravana Kumara and Dasharatha sculptures are 4 inches in height. And the remaining two characters are 2 inches in height. In the middle of the "Upana" and "Galapadam" on the northern face of the Umamaheshwara Swamy Temple, there is a scene where *Rama and Lakshmana kill "Tataka"* on the orders of *Vishwamitra*. All these 4 characters are 4 inches in size.

Shiva Puranam: The Chenna Kesava temple complex also includes the temples of *Santanamalleswara* and *Umamaheswara*. Therefore, there are scenes related to *Shiva Puranam* on the walls of the temple, which are mainly miniature sculptures. In *Shiva Puranam, Kalyana Sundara Murthy, Girija Kalyanam, Vrushabarunamurti, Kiratarjunyam, Bhikshatuna Murthy, Bhakta Kannappa Charitra, Ananda Tandavam, Gajasamhara Murthy, manmade* stories, and various types of *Shiva Tandava* (annanda, urdva bangimas) 4 are found here. A scene on the north wall of the Umamaheshwara temple, where Goddess Parvati, in the



figure 6 umamaheswara temple north wall upana kalyana sundaramurthi and 2 inches sculpture

form of Katyayani, is hugging a Shivalinga. Sage Katyayana is also shown here. Next, on the same temple's west wall, there is a scene of Kannappa, a great devotee of Shiva, donating his eyes to Shiva by piercing them with an arrow. These scenes are all 4 inches tall and have high-relief sculptures.

On the north wall of the Umamaheshwara Swamy temple, on the left side of the "Adhithana" "Upana," a 6-inch, 8-armed "Gajasamhara Murthi"⁴ sculpture is carved. In the front two hands, he is seen tearing open the belly of an elephant; Shiva is seen holding weapons like a trident, a spear, a tooth, a bell, and a snake and is performing a Tandava on the head of an elephant. On the left side, Parvati is standing, and on the right side, the sages are standing.

On the "Upana" next to it, the "Kalyanasundhara Murti" scene is beautifully carved in the miniature style. These are only 6 inches in height. The total width of this Kalyanasundaram Murti panel is 34 inches. There are a total of 9 sculptures here; out of the nine, eight sculptures are 6 inches tall, and the remaining one is 2 inches tall. It is surprising that there are relief sculptures next to it. There is a Vrushabharuda sculpture, surrounded by the Dikpalakas⁵ (Indra, Vayu, Agni, Varuna, Yama, Kubera, Nirbati, Ishan) in an arch shape carved with beautiful decoration, and all dikpalas are 2 inches in height. The scenes of Kalyanasundara Murthy and Vrushabada Murthy have been combined on the Upana belt. There are a total of 32 sculptures, most of which are 6 inches in height. On the next panel, Shiva is wearing a turban. On the next panel, a scene of Manmada and Rati Devi hitting Shiva with a flower bow. On the north wall of the Uma Maheshwara Swamy temple, there are a total of 83 miniature sculptures on the Upana. Most of the sculptures are 5 to 6 inches in height, and some are 2 to 3 inches in height.

On the eastern wall of the same temple, on the top of the "Upana," there is a sculpture of Nataraja, along with Brahma and Vishnu. On the north wall of the Santana Malleswara Swamy temple, there is a miniature sculpture of a begging woman on the Kumbha Panjaram. On the eastern wall, on the first Kumbha Pattika, there is a sculpture of Kalyanasundara murti, and on the second Kumbha Pattika, there are miniature sculptures of Vrushabadha murthi along with Lord Ganesh and Murugan. On the southern wall, beside the first Kumbha Panjara of the Santana Malleshwara Temple, there is a 6-inch-tall Gauri Kalyana scene. Here, Vishnu is offering Gauri Devi as a "Kanyadanam" to Shiva. In this scene, Brahma is seen in a 3-inch size. On the left side of the Kumbha Panjar on the same wall, there is a sculpture of Vrishabadha murthi. On the 5-inch Nandi, Shiva and Parvati are seen in a 2-inch height. Tiny



figure 7 varaha avatara and bhudevi miniature sculpture

decorations and 2-inch-high rabbits and monkeys are carved along with elephants on the south wall of the Santhana Malleswara Swamy temple.

On the eastern wall of the Chennakesava temple, the dasha avatars—Kurma, Matsya, Varaha, Vamana, Narasimha, Rama, Krishna, and Kalki—and on the southern wall, the scene of gods and demons churning the ocean of milk are also carved in miniature sculptures. In addition, the miniature decorative sculptures in the Chennakesava temple complex are carved in the Hoysala style. The 6-inch-tall Dashavataras are beautifully carved and are mostly seen on the north and south walls of the Chennakesava temple. Scenes related to Kiratarajunyam are also found here. More than 2500 miniature sculptures can be seen in this temple complex. But many of these sculptures have been partially damaged.



figure 9- 3 in miniature sculpture



figure 8 vrisbhadaramurthi with dikpalakas



figure10- 4 in miniature sculpture with decoration



figure 11 sagaramadhanam miniature sculptures

Conclusion : Chennakesava temple complex at pushpagiri it has as know as dakshina kasi and stood as the greatest contribution from kings of Klayana chalukya to Vijayanagara,. It is understood the temple was devolved by vijayanagara kings mostly with beautiful carvings in miniature scale which recollect us Hoysala style. Now a days number of pilgrims are visiting this temple and performing

poojas . Every year temple festival was celebrating with grand scale with a support of local people and organizations .

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