

Architectural Style and Historical Perspectives of Amrutha Linga Manikeshwara Temple – A Study

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Abstract

This paper attempts to hoysalas adapted the Vesara and Dravidian styles and developed a new style of architecture. So, it is nothing but the culmination of the Chalukyan architecture and is called 'The Hoysala style' of architecture. The great sculptors who built most of the Hoysala temples were Dasoja, Chavana, Kedaraja, Nagoja, Jakkanna, Mallitamma, Byroja and others. Nandi Tavare is a small Village/hamlet in Harihara Taluk in Davangere District of Karnataka State, India. It comes under Nandi Tavare Panchayath. It belongs to Bangalore Division . It is located 17 KM towards west from District head quarters Davanagere. 4 KM from Harihara. 295 KM from State capital Bangalore Nandi Tavare Pin code is 577601 and postal head office is Yantrapura-Harihara . Bannikodu (5 KM) , Kumbalur (5 KM) , Devarabelakere (6 KM) , Jigali (6 KM) , Malebennur (9 KM) are the nearby Villages to Nandi Tavare. Nandi Tavare is surrounded by Davanagere Taluk towards East , Ranebennur Taluk towards North , Honnali Taluk towards South , Hirekerur Taluk towards west . Davanagere , Ranibennur , Shikapur , Shimoga are the near by Cities to Nandi Tavare. This Place is in the border of the Davangere District and Haveri District. Haveri District Ranebennur is North towards this place . The village is an historic place where you can find 900 years old Hoysala Temple named Sri. Amruthalinga Manikkeshwara Temple, which is also called as Sri. Basaveshwara temple. The Hoysala Empire was a prominent South Indian Kannadiga empire that ruled most of the modern day state of Karnataka between the 10th and the 14th centuries.

Key words: Amrutha linga Manikeshwara Temple , temple architecture, Hoysala

Introduction

The Hoysalas usually dedicated their temples to Lord Shiva or to Lord Vishnu (two of the major Hindu gods), but they occasionally chose a different deity. While King Vishnuvardhana and his descendants were Vaishnava by faith, records show that the Hoysalas maintained religious harmony by building as many temples dedicated to Shiva as they did to Vishnu. Most of these temples have secular features with broad themes depicted their sculptures. The Kesava temple at Somanathapura is different in that its ornamentation is strictly Vaishnava. A Hindu temple is a place of contact between the gods or deities and man. The focus of a temple is the centre or sanctum sanctorum (garbhagriha) where the image of the deity resides, so temple architecture is designed to move the devotee from outside to the garbhagriha through ambulatory

passageways for circumambulation and halls or chambers (mantapas) that become increasingly sacred as the deity is approached. Most Hoysala temples have a plain covered entrance porch supported by lathe turned (circular or bell-shaped) pillars which were sometimes further carved with deep fluting and moulded with decorative motifs. The temples may be built upon a platform raised by about a metre called a "jagati". Such temples will have an additional set of steps leading to an open mantapa (open hall) with parapet walls.

The jagati which is in unity with the rest of the temple follows a star-shaped design and the walls of the temple follow a zig-zag pattern, a Hoysala innovation.

Objective:

This paper intends to explore and analyze **historical perspective of Amrutha linga manikeshwara** Temple at NandiTavare through understanding of the social, cultural, intellectual, and emotional settings that shaped people's lives and actions in the past with traditional **historical** narratives .

Amrutha linga Manikeshwara, temple features

Kannada folklore tells of a young man Sala, who saved his Jain guru Sudatta by striking dead a tiger he encountered near the temple of the Goddess Vasantika at DSC00755Sosevur. The word "strike" literally translates to "hoy" in Hale Kannada (Old Kannada), hence the name "Hoy-sala". This killing of the tiger by Sala has become the royal emblem of the kingdom as you see in this picture. This legend first appeared in the Belur inscription of Vishnuvardhana (1117), but owing to several inconsistencies in the Sala story it remains in the realm of folklore. Now we will talk about the architecture in general.

The main characteristics (Salient features) of the Hoysala temples : 1. Hoysala temples are star-shaped. The temples have a tower (sikhara) above the sanctum (Garbhagriha). This tower is in the form of a pyramid. 2. Hoysala temples are constructed on a, raised platform (jagati) of 4 to 5 feet. The walls of the basement are covered with stone carvings. 3. Just above the platform, space is left all around the temple, to do pradakshana of the temple, which is called Pradhakshinapatha. 4. The temples have carved stone windows with apertures and the walls are covered with ornamental sculptures. 5. The outer walls of the temples have stone carvings, The bottom portion consists of a row of elephants, horses, flower designs, swans, stories from the epics and puranas. 6. The doorways of the temples have beautiful carvings in stone and a pair of dwarapalakas stand on either side. 7. The centre of the ceiling of the hall has intricate carvings of Bhuvaneshwari. Above the pillars, on the brackets stand the statues of dancing girls in different poses. 8. Hoysala temples have been classified as per the number of cells (kutas) e.g., One cell (ekakuta) temples to five cells (panchakuta) temples. The sanctums (Garbhagriha) are small and simple square chambers. 2.

Hoysala temple constructions: Hoysalas built more than 100 temples between the 11th and 13th centuries. Vishnuvardhana period was the 'Golden age' of temple building in the Hoysala Kingdom. Vishnuvardhana built, Kirthinarayana temple at Talakadu, Cheluvanarayana temple at Melkote, Channakeshava temple and Kappechenniga temples at Belur, Mallikarjuna and Rangantha temples at Huliur, Veeranarayana temples at Gadag and Bankapura. Channakeshava temple (Ekakuta) at Belur is the epitome of the Hoysala style. Ballala-III (1173-1220 CE) built Amrutheshwara and Ballaleshwara temples at Arasikere and Kedareshwara temple at Halebeedu.

Narasimha-I and his deputy Ketamalla built the Hoysaleshwara (Dwikuta) temple (1121 CE) at Halebeedu. Narasimha II built the Harihareshwar temple at Harihara, Lakshminarasimha temple at Bhadravati, and Someshwara and Keshava temples at Haradanahalli. Narasimha-III built Keshava temple (Thrikuta) at Somanathapura in 1268 CE., Lakshmi temple (chathuskuta) at Doddagaddavalli and Panchalingeshwara temple (Panchakuta) at Govindanahalli. The Channakeshava temple (1117CE) built by Vishnuvardhana at Belur, The Hoysaleshwara temple (1121 CE) built by Ketamalla at Halebeedu and the Keshava temple (1268 CE) built by Narasimha – III at Somanathapura are the best examples of the best variety. According to Fergusson the famous historian, Hoysaleshwara temple can be termed as the 'Jewel of Indian Architecture'.

The themes that appealed to the Hoysala artist seem to be human and animal forms, floral and geometric patterns in different architectural contexts. On the ceilings and perforated screens one finds abstract patterns while the doorways, basements and railings are embellished with smaller figures, scrolls and motifs. The outer walls are filled with large reliefs of divinities and their entourages. Perhaps more than passion or romance it is female beauty that is celebrated by Hoysala artists. Young women engaged in music, dance, sport and self-adulation adorn the surfaces, all reflecting feminine vanity in one way or another. These young women or 'sursundaris' as they were known, epitomise the concept of female beauty. Human or divine, their many forms of physical beauty are captivating. We find for example, a series of a lady admiring or adorning herself, plucking fruits, feeding a parrot, dancing, or surrounded by nature. As evident by their sheer numbers, sculptors seemed to favour dancers in various postures, celebrating the vibrant lines their bodies made. They are an embodiment of life and death, good and evil, objects of love and desire.

Relief panels depicting stories from the Epics

Apart from this fantastic creature, bulls too find a place of importance especially as the vehicle of Shiva. The two Nandis at the Hoysaleshwara temple at Halebeed are apt tributes to the power and beauty of this animal. Carved out of monolithic stone blocks of eight or nine feet, and exquisitely carved to highlight the finest of detail including the folds of the skin and adorned with elaborate ornamentation, these bulls are awesome in their appearance.

Other animals such as monkeys, camels, mice, buffalos, rams and birds like peacocks, swans and small birds too are present in most reliefs. The artists have used an infinite variety of stylised foliage and scroll creepers. Vegetative motifs and floral patterns surrounding deities in which you can see monkeys playing and birds flying seem to compete with nature itself. The finish given to every minute detail is amazing. You can see here the nail of the deity piercing through the skin of the elephant, appearing on the other side. Or the fingers of the drummer through the ropes on the drum...the skin of stone relenting to the magical touch of master sculptors.

The most remarkable feature of these temples are the reliefs which present continuous narratives, entire episodes captured in single compositions. Although the epics have always played a major role in Indian art through the centuries, nowhere else would one find entire stories depicted in sculpture as one does on the outer walls of the temple at Halebeed. Not only are complete stories from the Bhagvad Gita and the Mahabharat and Ramayana depicted in a series of reliefs but sometimes a single relief is enough to recount the entire story. For example the story of Krishna lifting mountain of Govardhana or Narasimha annihilating Hiranyakashyapu. These reliefs served a triple purpose. Not only did they enhance the beauty of the structure but they also revealed various manifestations of the lord to his devotees and entertained and educated them by means of stories.

That the artists who worked on these temples were masters of their craft is obvious. But their commitment and artistry would have come to naught if their society and royalty had not accorded them respect and patronage. The Hoysala society accorded agreeable conditions of work and good fortune to the artists of the time. Only men of great skill and patience whose work was valued by society at that time could have produced such master pieces. Just as warriors were needed to defend boundaries, artists were required by the Hoysalas to promote their religious and social interests. They were considered an important part of society. Notable amongst them are Dâsoja and his son Canava as also Mallitamma. It is thanks to them and so many others like them that we have these amazing temples that continue to inspire “joy, awe and stunned surprise”.

The mantapa is the hall where groups of people gather during prayers. The entrance to the mantapa normally has a highly ornate overhead lintel called a makaratorana (makara is an imaginary beast and torana is an overhead decoration) as you see in this picture. The open mantapa which serves the purpose of an outer hall (outer mantapa) is a regular feature in larger Hoysala temples leading to an inner small closed mantapa and the shrine(s). The vimana, also called the cella, contains the garbhagriha (Sanctum Santorum) wherein resides the image of the presiding deity. The vimana is often topped by a tower which is quite different on the outside than on the inside.

Conclusion

Hoysala art may be said to have its starting point in the temples of the early Chalukyas at Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal, but when it finally developed in the Mysore region, it manifested a distinctly individual approach which has been called the Hoysala Style. One of the principal features of the style at its maturity related to the plan and general arrangement of architecture. An important monument is the Kesava temple at Belur (in Hassan district). Erected on the orders of Vishnuvardhana to commemorate his victory over the Cholas at Talakad, the deity of the temple—in fact, Vishnu in his Kesava form—was named Vijaya Narayana. The central building of the temple consists of the usual compartments, the inner chamber, attached to a vestibule which connects with a central hall preceded by an open pillared pavilion. But it is in the actual architectural planning that the Hoysala temples—the Kesava temple and the temples at Halebid, Somnathpur and elsewhere—are different from others. Instead of consisting of a simple inner chamber with its pillared hall, there are multiple shrines grouped around a central pillared hall and laid out in the shape of an intricately-designed star. In a large number of cases, the structure is formed of double temples, having most of their essential parts in duplicate and quite often they are triple, quadruple and even quintuple in plan. The upward progress of the shikhara over each inner chamber is radically modified by an arrangement of horizontal lines and moldings which resolve the tower into an orderly succession of tiers, diminishing them as they rise to terminate at the apex. In fact, a characteristic feature of the Hoysala temple is the comparative dwarfishness of the whole structure.

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