# Monthly Multidisciplinary Research Journal

# Review Of Research Journal

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ISSN No: 2249-894X

#### Kamani Perera

Regional Centre For Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka

#### Welcome to Review Of Research

#### RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

#### ISSN No.2249-894X

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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#### ISSN: 2249-894X



### Review Of Research



## SCULPTURAL BACKGROUND OF THIRUPURAMBIAM SRI SAKSISWARA TEMPLE AT KUMBAKONAM- TANJORE DISTRICT

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#### ABSTRACT:

n the early days of the Cholas the motif of setting up the sculptures have been methodized. This kind of status was also in the days of the Pallavas. Lingothbhava seated to the western-side was common during the early days of the cholas. Among the three Murthies namely Siva, Vishnu and Brahma, Sivan being top-listed first reveals growth of Saivism. This kind of status was prelavant during the early days of the Cholas. All the Chola kings praised saivism.



KEYWORDS :Lingothbavas, Samabangas, Kandihai, Padasara, Maguda, Mehalai, Kandamalai, Charappali, Kundalas, Jadabara,Thribanga,Padma.

#### INTRODUCTION

Chola's sculptures are very innovative. They kept Lord Siva as the chief deity, built temple for him and also erected the 'Avatara' sculptures around the sanctum. Among them Lingothbhava was the first. The sculpture is nearly five feet tall which reveals the growth of sculpturing in the days of the early Cholas. The sculpture has been well designed and engraved with all three aspects namely. The appearance of Siva from the Linga, Vishnu in the shape of a mole at the foot of Sivan and the attempt of Brahma and Vishnu to find the last foot of Sivan are dexterously carved.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

Both descriptive and analytical methods are used here. One should deeply note that Lingothbhavar is seated in the 'Samabanga state with the deer and the malu along with the weapons. This adorned deity with beautiful 'Maguda' and the 'Kundalas'. Other ornaments that are engraved on the sculpture are the 'Charapali', the 'Kandihai', the holy-string, the ornaments around the waist, the Mehalai, the Padasara, the shoulder-bangles, the wrist-bangles and the 'Kanda Mala'. Vishnu in the shape of a mole reflects that saivism gained momentum.

Vishnu and Brahma in search of the last feet of Siva and accepting their state have been clearly carved. This Sculptures is found in the early days of the Cholas and also in the temples of the Kongu Cholas.

#### The Deva Koshtas of the Sothern-side:

In the early reign of the Cholas the 'Devakoshtas' were increased in number. In the southern-side more than six sculptures were engraved. Chief among them is the Pikshadanar sculpture. Here the Lord Sivaperuman has worn the Jadaparam as Pikchadanar. Beautiful ornaments adorn this sculpture Ornaments like the holy-

thread, the Jewels around the neck, the shoulder bangles and the hand bangles have been dexterously carved. The Lord appears in the 'Thiribanga' with the 'bhudaganas'. Other jewels are the ornaments around the waist, the lower dress and the Padasara. It was the chief sculpture during the reign of the Cholas. It is nearly three feet tall and is considered to be the chief sculpture during the Chola days and is the best for the flourish of the art, and architecture. To the north-side of this sculpture another sculpture of Lord Siva has been carved. Beside this the sculpture of Natarajar in the divine status is a rare sculpture.<sup>1</sup>

Though the sculpture is in its ruins the sculpture with the disheveled and spreaded hair, the 'Udukkai', the flame and beautiful ornaments have been wrought with artistic features. The divine face takes one to a land of serenity away from the madding crowd. This 'Devakoshta' sculpture which is nearly four feet tall was the chief one in the interim reign of the Cholas. On the feet of Lord Muyalaha have been engraved. The deity Natarajar has been worshipped by the Chola king and his consort which is a wonderful sight.<sup>2</sup>

The significant place is held by the Ganapathi sculpture among the southern-side 'Devakoshta'. The sculpture is in the standing posture and bears the 'Pasa', the 'Angusa', the 'Mothaga' and the writing nail with the holy-thread across his chest. He is dressed with the lower garments the beautiful 'Maguda' and the 'Aara' around the neck. He comprises the three beings together namely Man, divine-beings and the demon and is nearly three-and-a-half feet tall. His broad ears are ready to hear the grievances of his devotees. During the age of the Cholas, this sculptures was a prominent one. The early Cholas carved many divine sculptures during their reign. Hence, they carved a sculpture for Agasthiyar in the 'DevaKoshta'. He is recollected with the 'Jada' hair, the long beard, the holy-string and the simple lower clothes. He is seen seated on the pretty 'Padma Peeda' in the 'Suhasana' state, Agasthiyar has the palm- in his hands.

The important deity to be worshipped in the southern-side 'Deva Koshta' is the sculpture of Aalamar Selvan Datchanamurthy. From the sculpture, one can understand that he is seated under the Banyan tree. He bears the weapons like the 'Jada Maguda', the 'Agni Pasa', the 'Chin Muthra' and the inscriptions, seated in the 'Suhasana' state facing to the south he endows blessings to his devotees. He is seated as Guru Dakshana Murthy and is considered the Guru for all the sages. This sculptures is nearly five feet in height and reminds of the early Chola days.

#### The Sculptures of the Northern-side Deva Koshta:

Sculptures like Brahma, Veerapathira, Durgai, Arthanareeswara, and Pikshadana are considered as the north-side 'Deva Koshtas'. Brahma is seated with four faces and wears the beautiful 'Maguda' in the 'Samabanga' state. The Ornaments around the neck and the holy-string adorn this sculptures. Near it is the sculpture of Durgai seated on the Mahisa which reflects the days of the Cholas. The Arthanareeswa sculpture reminds one of the early days of the Cholas which is well engraved. The sculptures of Siva and Parvathy engraved together and endowing blessings to the devotees reminds one that without Sivasakthi everything is nothing, can be understood. The main features of this sculpture are the 'Karanda Maguda',rich ornaments are decorative dresses. Siva and Parvathy appearing as Kalyana Sundarar and the Devars spraying flowers on them is an excellent craftsmanship.<sup>5</sup>

Sivanperuman in his high majesty and the cogful Parvathy at the side of the Lord exhibite the grandness of art. Its greatness lies in the smile engraved on the face of the lord. Near this sculpture Pikshadana is seen with the 'Jada' hair. Other aspects of him are the 'Udukai', the deer and the 'bhudaganas'. Since it is a divine grace on the face of the lord the divinity grace and mercy can be noticed. Around the waist the coir of the snake is an important aspect. This scene can be understood as though the lord as on his journey into the Daruga jungle. It is also noted that the lord destroys the sensuousness and arrogance. In the northern-side Devakoshta Annai Durgai is seated on Mahisasura poses as Vishnu Durgai. This sculpture has been erected in recent days. <sup>6</sup> To the back of this sculpture Durgai of the early Cholas can be seen.

#### The Sculptures of the Sub-Sannathi:

Parasu is in the right hand of Chandikeswarar who is put up in the north 'Prahara' near the 'Artha Mandapa' 'Deva Koshta' facing the Moolavar. For the deity many ornaments and the 'Maguda' has been adorned.

Chandikeswarar seated in the 'Suhasana' state is at a height of nearly three feet adorned with ornaments and the holy-string. The Naga sculptures are found under the chief tree namely the 'Punnai'.

In the western side 'Prahara' five sub-'sannathies' have been created for the Pancha bhudas facing the east. Here the lord is in the sitting posture as the Moolavar. These antique sculptures are a part of the form and formless of the lord which are highly symbolic of the transcient nature of life. In this Linga, the Siva part, the Brahma part and the Vishnu part have been shown distinctively. Beside these sannathies the 'Vahanas' are in the sitting posture. They belong to the early days of the Cholas. Next to this is the sub-'sannathi' of Subramaniyar facing the Moolavar. Subramaniyar appears with his consorts Valli and Deivayanai.<sup>8</sup>

He is in the 'Samabanga' state with the 'Maguda'. Subramaniyar is dressed to the toe and adorned with ornaments like the 'Charapali', the 'Kandihai',the 'Aara' and the holy string. His weapons are the 'Sula' and the 'Vazzhira'. On the beautiful 'Padma Peeda' the figure of Subramaniyar has been engraved at a height of nearly four feet which reminds of the later Chola days. Annai Valli and Deivayanai are in the sitting posture with the 'Padma'. The Ornaments and dress for the deitess has been carved following the norms of the 'Agama Sastra' and with the concept of artistry as its basis.

Somaskanda facing to the east is erected in the western 'Prahara'. The divine figure of Somaskanda is the best example for the architecture of the Pallavas. It is believed to know this that this sculpture might have been carved. Siva Parvathy are seated and near them Kandan is also seated. This divine figure is moulded in copper. The sculpture of Annai is nearly five feet tall in the 'Thiribanga' state with the 'Padma' in the right hand. Another significance about this sculpture is that it is moulded in copper, the lord in the 'Suhasana' state and near him Annai Parvathy also in the sitting posture.

The deity Muruga Peruman is seen in the sitting posture. Copper-Plaiting art is also significant like sculpturing is very well understood from the activities during the reign of the Cholas. From the field study it was also understood that Mahaganapathy is also seated next to this sculpture in the sub-Sannathi in the 'South west' corner.<sup>10</sup>

#### KANDA SCULPTURES:

In the Athistana's Kanda parts very small relief sculptures have been carved. Among them Sivaperuman seated as Natarajar can be noticed. The lord seated on the 'Nandi' is indeed an evidence for the growth of the art. Sakchinatha in the Linga form has been worshipped by Ambal. Noticing this the ladies of the next world sprinkle flowers at this scene.<sup>11</sup>

In this collection of sculptures Pikchadanar is seen seated as the Lord. Along with him are the Rishies and also the female Rishies. In certain, 'Kanda' parts the Devars and Rishies are seen. The Lord seated in the Veerasana posture and endowing blessings to Annai has been skillfully portrayed. Another rare creation is the portrait of the devars and Asuras engaged in churning the Thiruparkadal. Here the divine figure of Thirupuranthanar has been carved. Sakchinathar being carved in the figure of the Linga is again a rare spectacle. In order to eradicate arrogance and the Asuras, Annai Parvathy Devi takes the form of Mahisasuramarthini reveals a milestone in the growth of sculpturing. 12

From the sculpture it is understood how Annai attempts to destroy the Asuras and how they run away reluctantly. Under the 'Prasthara' the other sculptures like the men, women and 'bhudaganas' are found engaged in other services. Among them are the dancing 'bhudakanas', the 'bhudaganas' that play the musical instrument, the 'Mathala', the 'bhudaganas' that blow the conch, the 'bhudaganas' that worship Sakchinatha with the shield in the left hand and the knife in the right hand and the 'bhudaganas' that perform various feats in dancing are all in a cluster carousing the deity. Other important sculptures are the elephants in rows. 'Prasthara', the 'Palahai' of the half-pillars the sculptures of the elephants in the pouncing posture and Annai Parvathy Devi in the dancing posture.<sup>13</sup>

#### The Sculptures of the Pillars of the Prahara:

The sculptures on the pillars installed in the north 'Prahara' is a feast to the eyes. The sculpture of an elephant has been carved on the 'Brahmakanda' part of the pillar. The sun with the 'Padmas' is a wonderful

artistic feature. Other sculptures are that of the 'Nandi' in the sitting posture, elephants 'Dvarabalas' in the 'Samabanga' state and the 'Rishi'. Annai Parvathy Devi bears the 'Padma' on her right hand and is adorned with the 'Maguda'. Sakchinathar in many places is found in the form of a Linga endows blessings to the devotees. The Surya and Chandra sculptures are with the Padmas while the 'bhudaganas' play music be seen from the field-study. The figure of Krishna with the flute, the sculpture of the Rishi seated with the jadabhara and the women with bow and arrow are the significant wall-sculptures.

In the south 'Prahara' the Naga sculptures are well decorated while the elephant sculptures are in the sitting posture. Here there are also the sculptures of the elephants that praise the lord. In many places, the Nayanmars are found wearing the 'Uthrakcha Mala' and in the state of worship. On the pillars found here one can see the slim girls in full decoration, the relief sculptures of Sakchinatha, or Saksiswara the floral designs that covet one's eyes and also the high artistic 'Kodikarukku' craft. Moreover, the pillar-sculptures that are in the north 'Prahara' reflect in the south 'Prahara' also.

#### The Divine copper figures of Natarajar:

Natarajar and Umai annai are in figures of copper or icon at a height of nearly five feet facing the south. The divine figure of Natarajar implies the movements of the world. The Sculpture bears different weapons with the right leg lifted. The figure has its hair disheveled and spread. The hares that are noted for their arrogance are found struggling for life at the foot of the deity. The figure of Annai in the sitting posture with the 'Maguda' along with Natarajar is to be commendable, seated on the 'Padma Peeda' in the Thribanga state along with Natarajar is a distinctive work of art. On this figure of Annai, the dress and jewels have been sculptured. The divine rule has been shown here. It is a rare specimen to see Annai seated at a height of nearly three feet. The sculpture of Kalabairava is seen to the left side of the Sannathi of Natarajar.<sup>16</sup>

#### The Sculptures of Bairava, Surya and Chandra

The divine figure of Kalabairava has been engraved with exquisite skill in the art following the sculptural 'Sasthra'. His 'Vahana' is found here 'Kalabairava' in the 'Samabanga' state has in his four hands as weapons, the 'Udukai', the 'Pasa', the trident and the 'Amuda'. In this sculpture, the flaming 'Maguda' is shown. Other decorative ornaments are the 'Kundalas' in the ears, the shoulder-bangles and the hand-bangles<sup>17</sup>. This ancient divine figure is adorned in the brave-chain facing the Moolavar.

The sculpture of Surya is an example to show the involvement of the Cholas on sculpturing. The figure is in the 'Samabanga' state with the 'Kundalas' hanging from the ears; the holy-string and the lower garb. The sculpture is one of the old sculptures at a height of nearly five feet. Beside this sculpture, a sculpture at a height of nearly four feet of Chandra is found in the 'Samabanga' state with the 'Padmas'. Next to this are the sculptures of the Navagrahas.<sup>18</sup>

#### The Divine figures of the Nayanmars

The Nayanmars are the first who claim for the growth and development of Saivism. The Nayanmars four in number have extended their full support and service for the growth and flourish of Saivism from the seventh century. It is Thirugnanasambandar, the pioneer who sowed the seed for its growth by sacrificing his life. Since they worked sincerely for the religious growth, got endivined with the lord and did religious service they were considered in par with the Lord and were worshipped. Gnanasambandar travelled far and wide visited all the temples in the Chola country, sang in praise of the lord and acquired the eternal bliss. In his divine figure the 'Jada' bhara, the divine nature and the 'Uthrakcha mala' have been carved. <sup>19</sup> Beside this sculpture is the divine figure of Appar Swamigal in the 'Anjali Muthira' and seated in the 'Samabanga' state which is a rare work of art. The 'Uthrakcha Mala' have been shown as decorative ornaments. This sculpture is nearly three feet tall in the 'Samabanga' state. <sup>20</sup>

The sculpture of Sundarar is noticed with a beautiful 'Maguda'. The divine grace and nature has been well carved by the Sculptor. Next to this the sculpture of Manikavasagar in the 'Abaya Muthra' in a simple manner.

#### The Divine Figures of Dvara Ganapathy and Subramanya:

Here the deity, Muruga peruman is seated with the 'Dandayutha'. He is adorned with the 'Uthrakcha Mala' and the holy-string. He is seen with all these things like the 'Kandha Mala', the shoulder-bangles, the handbangles, 'Padasara', the 'Danda' and the 'Samabanga' in the right hand and the beautiful 'Padma peeda'. The divine figure in the state of poverty implies the fact that it is far apart of relations and one to acquire that external kingdom has to forego all the wordly likes and dislikes. It is three feet tall and faces to the east. Dvara Vinayaga with the divine 'Maguda' appears as Valampuri Vinayaga. This divine figure is with four hands facing to the east and on it things like the 'Pasa, Angusa', the 'Mothaga' and the writing-nail have been carved. The divine figure of Ganapathy is at a height of three feet and the Figure possesses the animal race bhuda figure. On the sculpture these are engraved. They are the ornaments, decoration and the dress. He is called the Dvara Vinayaga.

#### Sri Karumpadu Cholliammai-Ambal

In the front 'Mandapa' facing to the south Ambal appears in the 'Thribanga' state. The 'Padmas', the 'around the waist and the dress to the toe. For the creation of the worldly organism the blessings of Ambal is very essential. In the 'Maha Mandapa' the 'Dvara balahi' sculptures have been engraved. <sup>22</sup> Abayamuthra' and the 'Tolakastha' have been engraved in the upper two arms. Other things that adorn Ambal are the 'Charapalli', the 'Kandihai', the 'Aara', the ornaments. <sup>23</sup>

#### Prasthara Kudu and the sculptures:

The sculptures that are found in these 'Kudu' are carved on the basis of Vainava. This divine figure namely Mahavishnu appearing with his consorts bears the Conch and the Wheel in his hands. Karuda with Mahavishnu has been carved in the activating mood. Near this sculpture the elephant sculpture is also seen.

Subramaniyar in the 'Samabanga'' state is seen seated on his 'Vahana' of Subramaniya has been carved facing the north south direction. Subramaniya appears facing the 'Moolavar'. Mahavishnu along with Sridevi and Bhudevi appear in the 'Thribanga' state. The 'Samhara' scene of Narasimha is in a beautiful relief sculpture.<sup>24</sup>

#### The Divine Figure of Saksiswara

Sakchinathar in the Linga form as the Moolavar is of nearly three feet tall. On the Linga the Siva part, the Vishnu part and the Brahma Parts are carved. During the early Chola days Saivism was its pinnacle, hence for Siva many temples came into being, Sivaperuman seated as the 'Moolavar' is also the owner of the five elements. As a symbol of Siva Linga has been sculptured.

In this temple, the 'Devakoshtas' rank the first can very well be understood sculptures and 'bhudakanas' sculptures have been elegantly carved. Special mention should be made of the 'Devakoshta' which has been carved with the artistic flavor very smoothly. The figure of 'Lingothbhavar' reflects the artistic features of Cholas. Another divine figure that reminds one of the Cholas is the 'Arthanareeswara'. The pillars that have been erected in the 'Praharas' are rich in sculptures that have been scooped out. Animals, birds, Rishies, the Devas and the 'bhudaganas' abound in this place. In the south 'Prahara' and on the 'brahmakanda' parts of the pillars fine sculptures are sculptured.<sup>25</sup>

The Icon divine figure of Natarajar and the divine figure of Ambal are good examples of the 'Padma' art of the Cholas. The Iord is the owner and creator of the five elements can also be known. The Bairavar, the Surya and the Chandra and Dandayuthapani are found here. The 'Kodipen' sculpture and the 'Prasthara' collective sculptures are the best creations of the art. The 'Vahana' sculptures are very ancient ones. The 'Vimana' sculptures are relief structures. They belong to the later artistic trend. On the pillars the figures of the elephants are engraved and on the 'Uthira' parts the elephants in the attacking posture are carved. The Thuthi yazhi sculptures and the elephant sculptures have been differentiated. The divine figures of Somaskanda, Vinayaga, Datchinamurthi and Chandikeswarar sculptures remind the Cholas. On the 'Prasthara' of the Upa-'Peeda' in the 'Gopura', the 'Kudus' have been formed. Among them the sculptures are relief in nature.

The rich craftsmanship of 'Kodikarukku', the figure of the elephant, the swans on the 'Gopura', the divine figure of Muruga Peruman and the figure of Venugopal are life-like.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In this temple, the 'Devakoshtas' rank the first can very well be understood sculptures and 'bhudakanas' sculptures have been elegantly carved. Special mention should be made of the 'Devakoshta' which has been carved with the artistic flavor very smoothly. The figure of 'Lingothbavar' reflects the artistic features of Cholas. Another divine figure that reminds one of the Cholas is the 'Arthanareeswarar'. The pillars that have been erected in the 'Praharas' are rich in sculptures that have been scooped out. Animals, birds, Rishies, the Devars and the 'bhudakanas' abound in this place. In the south 'Prahara' and on the 'bramakanda' parts of the pillars fine sculptures are sculptured.

The Copper divine figure of Natarajar and the divine figure of Ambal are good examples of the master piece of the Cholas art. The lord is the owner and creator of the five elements can also be known. The Bairavar, the Suriya and the Chandira and Dandayuthapani are found here. The 'Kodipen' sculpture and the 'Prasthara' collective sculptures are the best creations of the art. The 'Vahana' sculptures are very ancient ones. The 'Vimana' sculpture are relief structures. They belong to the later artistic trend. On the pillars the figures of the elephants are engraved and on the 'Uthira' parts the elephants in the attacking posture are carved. The Thuthi yazhi sculptures and the elephant sculptures have been differentiated. The divine figures of Somaskandar, Vinayagar, Datchinamurthi and Chandikeswarar sculptures remind the Cholas. On the 'Prasthara' of the sub-'Peeda' in the 'Gopura', the 'Koodus' hOave been formed. Among them the sculptures are relief in nature.

#### **FOOT NOTES:**

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