

Vol. 7, Issue 4, January 2018

ISSN 2249-894X

# REVIEW OF RESEARCH

*An International Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed & Refereed Journal*

**Impact Factor: 5.2331**

**UGC Approved Journal No. 48514**

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## ART HISTORY OF THIRUPURAMBHAM SRI SAKSISWARA TEMPLE AT KUMBAKONAM

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### ABSTRACT:-

**T**he Early Cola king Uttama Cola, the son of Gandarathithya who ruled the Cola Country from 971 to 988 A. D. In his period more than eighteen religious monuments have been constructed. The king Uttamacola style based temples are as follows; The Nageswaram



Nageswarasamy Temple, Konerirajapuram Uma maheswara Temple, Kuhur Amarawaneswara Temple, Thiru Rameswaram Rameswara Temple, Thiruvidai Maruthur Mahalingaswamy Temple, Thiruvilakudi Manavaliswara Temple, Kovilthevarayan Pettai Matsyapuriswara Temple, Anangur Agastheeswara Temple

Karunthattankudi Anantheeswara Temple, Thirukodikaval Thirukodeeswara Temple, Viruthachalam Virutthagiriswara Temple, Sembian Mahadevi Kailasanatha Temple, Thirukarukavur Thiruvelladai Iswara Temple, Govindhaputtur Gangajatathara Temple, Thirupurambiyam Saksiswara Temple and Aduthurai Apathsahayiswara Temple. The above said temples are possessed the impact of the king Uttama Cola style and latter the renovation works of Sembian Madevi.

**KEYWORDS:** Vimana, Karnas, Sribandha, Vaikanasagama, Visnukantha, Devakostha, Panjarakostha, Vedikostha, Galapada, Isakantha, Vimanadevatha...

### INTRODUCTION :

The typical styles of Uttama Cola period have been adopted within these temples. The Vimana is wide and rather more ornate other temples at this time. The karnas and bhadras are clearly differentiated, The hara space is occupied by deeply projecting panjarakosthas.

The adhisthana is close in type to the Sribandha described in the Vaikhanasagama Marici samhita and thus close to the Vrddhacalam, Kuttalam and Madagadipattu temples. There are miniatures on the galapadas of the vedikostha. The introduction of a full-blown lotuses between the galapadas is a new feature. The padas of the karnas, panjarakosthas, and bhadras all are Visnukanta. The former particularly show carving typical of Sembian Mahadevi and Uttama Cola's times. The bhadradevakosthas have split Isakanta pilasters. Rearing vyalas appear over the phalakas. The vimanadevatas are a Dakshinamurti (south), Lingodbhava (west), and Brahma (north).

### ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF THIS PERIOD

The panjarakosthas have an upapitha, supported by bhuta pairs, level with the ksudrapadma above the

jagati on both vimana and ardhmandapa. The bhutas in the heavy structure above. The adhisthana base for these panjaras is of the general Kapotabandha class but lacks the prati kantha. The walls of the panjarakosthas show paired pilasters on all three sides. Up to the panjaras low kapota, these panjarakosthas are elegantly rendered, but in order to raise the panjara's nasi- level to the prastara's kapota, an attic storey has been added. This unnecessarily elongates the panjara, the single defect in an otherwise finely conceived composition. The panjaras of the ardhmandapa by and large avoid this defect. The bhutamala underneath the prastara shows some bhutas squeezed between the kapota and pattikas of the pillars below<sup>1</sup>.

The antarala has grilled windows framed as if they were devakosthas. The ardhmandapa is wider than the vimana and has broader karnas. Its walls also show shallow panjarakosthas, but these are topped by sikhara-roofs and not by panjaranasis. The central devakosthas accommodate Nataraja(south) and Durga(north). Flanking the panjarakosthas are guha niches which are cut through the vedi of the wall. These niches contain Agastya, Ganesa, Kankala and Vinadhara- Dakshinamurti (south) and Kalantaka, Ardhanari, Gangadhara and Bhiksatana (north). The ardhmandapa has four pillars in the nave of its interior which are square at the base, octagonal and then 16 sided at the top. This rather unusual composite type is rarely encountered in tamil country.<sup>2</sup>

The fabric of the temple and the style of the sculptures clearly suggest a date in Uttama Cola's reign, or at least during the life of Sembiyan Mahadevi. An inscription of the year ten of Rajaraja I (A.D. 995) refers to the setting up of the images of the astaparivaras by one Vanavan Muvendavelan. This has been interpreted to mean the eight niches inserted in the ardhmandapa wall. Silpa and agamic texts, however, do not include Bhiksatana, Kankala, Vinadhara, Kalahara, Ardhanari, and Gangadhara among the however, the temple would have been rebuilt in stone before A.D. 995. Barrett dates this temple in the latter half of Uttama Cola's reign between A.D. 977-985<sup>3</sup>.

Uttama Cola, son of Gandaraditya by Sembiyan, became de facto ruler in A.D. 971 when he had Aditya II slain. The temples of his time are many and thanks more to the munificence and piety of his mother than to him. No radical changes are noticeable in his period.<sup>4</sup> The ardhmandapa receives additional devakosthas first seen at Kattumanargudi, this now becomes a frequent feature. Agastya already introduced in the late years of Parantaka, becomes canonically a deity which rightfully must occupy a niche on the south side of the ardhmandapa. Bhiksatana, Nataraja, and Ardhanari (or rarely Gangadhara) are also included. Their relative positions vary. Earlier, the Nagesvaraswami and Tiruppalanam temples had indicated the possibility for fully decorating the ardhmandapa walls with large images<sup>5</sup>. They do not however, reflect any crystallization of conventions (save that the places for Ganesa and Durga already were fixed). Before the end of the third quarter of the tenth century A.D., however a new convention began to be formulated which gave the ardhmandapa walls a further hieratic meaning by including certain specific figures of the Sivaite pantheon<sup>6</sup>.

In this period the puspa bandha class of adhisthana, first encountered at Tiruvadaturai (A.D.945), enjoys a wider popularity. A variant with kapota also is met with. Figural panels in the kantha sections of the adhisthana and vedi are less frequently encountered. The superstructure in most cases is of brick and often later. What earlier had been achieved was to some extent conserved in this period, with small innovations of little significance. The large number of temples built, or converted from earlier brick structures into stone suggests the recovery of Cola power, which led to "imperial" status by the end of the century.<sup>7</sup>

Cola temples of this early phase inherit general principles and forms from southern architecture of earlier traditions; but they also introduce certain innovations in plan, elevation and in anukaya elements<sup>8</sup>.

On plan the temple in this period consists of a vimana an ardhmandapa and in a few cases taking the evidence of remaining images an entourage of astaparivaralayas. The whole complex is often surrounded by a prakara, with a small gopura at the principal entrance. The superstructure of the gopura, wherever present in almost every case is brick and of later construction and hence does not provide evidence for the development of that structure in the Cola period. The plan of the vimana may be one of several varieties though always, in this period, based on a square.<sup>9</sup> The apsidal type known both in Pallava and Cola times, does not seem to have been favoured in this phase. The vimana can be laid out on a straight manasutra, or angas can break the plan into karnas and bhadras. Sometime this is made even more emphatic by the introduction of salilantara recesses. The

ardhamandapa normally has no anga divisions but there are exceptions where a rhythmic plan reflecting the plan of the vimana, is used also for the ardhmandapa<sup>10</sup>.

The traditional Padabandha adhisthana was favoured in this period but several new varieties are also introduced. In the Padabandha class the galapadas in the kantha moulding often carry beautiful reliefs showing episodes from the epics Puranas and possibly from other typically South Indian religious literature. A second frequently encountered adhisthana, found also in contemporaneous Irrukuvel and Paluvettaraiyar buildings in Colanadu, is the Padmabandha type, the beginnings of which are sensed at the Shore temple at Mahabalipuram. A mahapadma, a vrttakumuda clasped by ksudra- padmas, then prati- kantha with vyala- busts all take part in this elegantly ordered base- type.<sup>11</sup> The Kapota bandha, known in Pallava times but rather infrequently used was revived in Parantaka's time, but with certain changes. From these types certain derivatives and hybrids also occur padmaka, Vaprabandha, Sundarabja, and Puspabandha all appear in varied degrees of preference. Puspabandha becomes fairly frequent in the latter half of the tenth century A.D.<sup>12</sup>

The wall proper ie., pada begins usually with a vedi which can be rendered in any one of above three types of slightly differing compositions. The kantha of the vedi has galapadas, often showing carved pictorial reliefs as in the adhisthana. The wall is punctuated by pilasters. The Brahmakanta type is often used alone, but in many instances one or another of the other three types also takes part in the rhythm of the wall<sup>13</sup>. Visnukanta and Isakanta were frequently used and in a few cases saumyakanta also enters into the design. The split Isakanta type is generally used to frame the central devakostha- niches. Malasthana, lasuna, ghata, mandi, and in rare cases, phalaka form the sub- parts of these pilasters. These usually are carved with considerable finesse and elegance at least in the early half of this phase. Potikas of all three varieties. Taranga, ratna and citra- are found but compact versions, often without the Taranga undulations are favoured.

The devakosthas frequently are crowned by patra toranas of citra or ratna type or by a composite of the two types. As icons in the devakosthas, Daksinamurti (south), Ardhanari (west), and Brahma (north) form the general rule. The ardhmandapa walls have often Durga on the north and Ganesa on the south<sup>14</sup>. Rarely, Harihara takes the place of Ardhanari. In Parantaka's times and later, the latter was frequently replaced by Visnu or by Lingodbhava- Siva. Bhiksatana and Vindhara appear rarely, and then largely as a substitute for Daksinamurti. In the last days of Parantaka or early in the days of Gandaraditya, Agastya was added on the south wall<sup>15</sup>. Other divinities found on ardhmandapa walls, particularly in many buildings of Sembian Mahadevi, include Nataraja, Bhikstana, Ardhanari, and Gangadhara. Alingana is known from a few examples<sup>16</sup>.

The recesses between bhadra and karana were filled by devakosthas (without toranas) or with guhas. These sometimes carry figures of amaras and apsarases. Sometimes panjarakosthas decorate these recessions. The prastara is composed of kapota with bhutamala underneath and prati- kantha with vyala- busts<sup>17</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The vimana of the temple is generally of the ekatala type. With a few exceptions, the griva and sikhara are built of brick and are often of a later age. Sometimes the griva is of stone, but the sikhara – built of brick- is a later reconstruction. There are also dvitala vimanas with a full enclosure of kuta, hara and sala elements. The andharika walling of the second storey supports its own prastara, which is topped by griva and sikhara. The kutas and nasikosthas of the hara generally carry figures of rsis and amaras. The sala and grivakostha figures are generally the echoes of or in hieratic consonance with the Pullamangai and at Tiruvarur are also known<sup>13</sup>. The prati- corners of the upper tala support figures of the vahana of the main deity. This usually, is a vrsa since the temple most often will be saivite in this period. An ekatala vimana in this phase will always have a large Rudracchanda sikhara. Dvitala and tritala vimanas usually favour the Brahmachanda variety. Stupis for both the karanakutas and the sikhara follow the configuration of the cupola- roof; those for the salas, usually a pair are always round.

The ardhmandapa walls frequently have Brahmakanta pilasters. This hall has a flat roof. In the interior, four pillars generally are used to form the nave, though in halls of smaller dimensions only two are found. Normally Visnukanta type is used. In only a few cases are Isakanta and Indrakanta types found. Unlike Karna tradition, the brahmakanta type was never used as a free- standing pillar. The ekasakha doorframes of the

ardhamandapa and garbhagrha were only rarely carved. In a very few cases a snapana- mandapa was also introduced a little distance away from the ardhamandapa. Later this was connected to the ardhamandapa with the help of a grilled antarala- walling. Carving in this period especially the early part, is generally very fine. The above details one fundamental features of temple architecture of early Chola Period.

**END NOTES:**

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