



RECENT PERSPECTIVE ON KARNATAKA ART HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

The southern state of Karnataka, in India, has a distinct art and culture. The diverse linguistic and religious ethnicity that are local to territory of Karnataka joined with their long chronicles have contributed massively to the differed social legacy of the state. Aside from Kannadigas, Karnataka is home to Tuluvas, Kodavas and Konkanis who likewise think about themselves as Kannadigas. Minor populaces of Tibetan Buddhists and Siddhi clans in addition to a couple of other ethnic gatherings additionally live in Karnataka. The customary society expressions cover the whole array of music, move, dramatization, narrating by vagrant troupes, and so forth. Yakshagana, an established society play, is one of the significant showy types of seaside Karnataka. Contemporary venue culture in Karnataka is a standout amongst the most energetic in India with associations like Ninasam, Ranga Shankara and Rangayana dynamic on establishments set around the Gubbi Veeranna Nataka Company. Veeragase, Kamsale and Dollu Kunitha are popular dance forms. Bharatanatyam also enjoys wide patronage in Karnataka.

KEY WORDS: distinct art and culture , Tibetan Buddhists and Siddhi clans.

INTRODUCTION:

The antiquity of Architecture of Karnataka (Kannada: ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಾಸ್ತುಶಿಲ್ಪ) can be traced to its southern Neolithic and early Iron Age, Having witnessed the architectural ideological and utilitarian transformation from shelter- ritual- religion. Here the nomenclature 'Architecture' is as old as c.2000 B.C.E. The upper or late Neolithic people in order to make their shelters, they constructed huts made of wattle and doab, that were buttressed by stone boulders, presumably having conical roof resting on the bamboo or wooden posts into red murrum or paved granite chips as revealed in archaeological excavations in sites like Brhamagiri (Chitradurga district), Sanganakallu, Tekkalakota (Bellary district), Piklihal (Raichur district). Megaliths are the dominant archaeological evidence of the early Iron Age (c. 1500 B.C.E- 100 C.E unsettled date). There are more than 2000 early Iron Age burial sites on record, who laid the foundation for a high non perishable architecture in the form of various distinct architectural styles of stone built burials, which are ritualistic in its character. The active religious architecture is evident 345 with that of the Kadamba Dynasty. Karnataka is a state in the southern part of India originally known as the State of Mysore. Over the centuries, architectural monuments within the region displayed a diversity of influences, often relaying much about the artistic trends of the rulers of twelve different dynasties. Its architecture ranges dramatically from majestic monolith, such as the Gomateshwara, to Hindu and Jain places of worship, ruins of ancient cities, mausoleums and palaces of different architectural hue. Mysore Kingdom (Wodeyar) rule has also given an architectural master structure in the St. Philomena's Church at Mysore (extolled by the King as a structure of divine compassion and the eager gratitude of men) which was completed in 1956, in addition to many

Dravidian style architectural temples. Styles of Indo-Saracenic, Renaissance, Corinthian, Hindu, Indo-Greek and Indo-British style palaces were built in Mysore, the city of palaces. Sikh architecture at Bidar (1512) and also in Bangalore in 1956 can also be cited as having an impact on the architectural composition of the state.

KADAMBA ARCHITECTURE

The Kadambas of Banavasi were the ancient royal dynasty of Karnataka from 345 to 525, and made a significant early contribution to the architectural heritage of Karnataka. Dr. G. M. Moraes opines that apart from using some unique features, the Kadambas incorporated a diversity of styles in their architecture (Kadamba architecture), derived from their predecessors and overlords, drawing upon the architectural tradition of the Satavahanas for instance. The Kadambas were the originators of the Karnataka architecture.

The most prominent basic feature of their architecture is the Shikara (dome), called Kadamba Shikara. The Shikara is pyramid shaped and rises in steps without any decoration, with a stupika or kalasha at the top. Occasionally the pyramids had perforated screen windows. This style of Shikara was used several centuries later, having an influence on the Doddagaddavalli Hoysala Temple and the Mahakuta temples in Hampi. The Madhukeshwara (Lord Shiva) Temple in Banavasi was built by Kadambas, and has an intricately carved stone cot. Originally built by the Kadambas, it has undergone, over a period of a thousand years, many additions and renovations, from the Chalukyas to the rulers of Sonda. "Kadambotsava", an annual cultural festival is held here in the month of December.

DRAVIDIAN ARCHITECTURE

Various temples in the Jaina, Shaiva and Vishnu traditions were built under the Western Ganga Sovereign Dynasty, which was subordinate to Pallava from 350 to 550, under Chalukya overlordship until 753 and under Rashtrakuta overlordship until 1100. The construction of monuments such as Gomateshwara (982 – 983) in places such as Shravanabelagola, Kambadahalli and Talakadu by the Western Ganga kings reflect a tolerance to different faiths. Some Vaishnava temples were built by the Gangas, such as the Narayanaswami temples in Nanjangud, Sattur and Hangala, in the modern Mysore district.

GOMATESHWARA

Gomateshwara (983), situated in Shravanabelagola is a monolithic statue standing 17.8 metres (58 ft) high above a hill (618 steps climb leads to this monolith), and is visible from a distance of 30 kilometres (19 mi) and regarded as one of the largest monolithic statues in the world. The statue was built by the Ganga minister and commander Chavundaraya (940–989) in honour of Lord Bahubali. Carved from fine-grained white granite, the image stands on a lotus. It has no support up to the thighs and is 60 feet (18 m) tall with the face measuring 6.5 feet (2.0 m). With the serene expression on the face of the image, its curled hair with graceful locks, its proportional anatomy, the monolith size, and the combination of its artistry and craftsmanship have led it to be called the mightiest achievement in sculptural art in medieval Karnataka. It is the largest monolithic statue in the world.

PANCHAKUTA BASADI (JAIN BASADI)

This is one of the most elegant monuments built in Dravidian, Vesara and Nagara styles during the period between 900 and 1000. The temple, which is oriented to the north towards the Brahmadeva pillar, has five shrines (hence the name Panchakuta). Three shrines are connected to a mantapa by a vestibule and consist of the main shrine of tirthankara Adinatha flanked by Neminatha shrine to the east and Shanthinatha shrine containing a 3 metres (9.8 ft) tall idol of the tirthankara to the west. The other two shrines, which are disconnected and lie to the north of the trikuta cluster (three shrines), are also dedicated to tirthankaras. These are two different monuments.

TALAKAD

Talakad is a historical site along the banks of the Cauvery River near Mysore. This small town, with a strong history and a prolonged period of human settlement was a flourishing city during the Hoysala period (12th–13th century), and was also an important trade centre during the reign of Gangas (from the 6th century for about 400 years) and Cholas (close of 10th century) and the Hoysalas from 1116. Towards the early 15th century it came under the Vijayanagara rule, and remained with them until the end of the 16th century. There are about a dozen temples spread over a small area of 4 square kilometres (1.5 sq mi), perhaps reflecting the rich art, culture, trade and human activities that once existed there. The town now looks abandoned, except during the time of pilgrimage held once every few years. The temples, whose deities are regularly worshipped, such as the Kirthinarayana Temple, are either uncovered frequently or are protected continuously from accumulation of sand. The sand is removed to uncover them for a specific worship and an important pilgrimage held every five to twelve years; the recent Panchalinga Darshana pilgrimage was held during December 2006.

NANJANGUD TEMPLE

The temple, located at Nanjangud on the right bank of the Kabini River, was originally built in Dravidian style by the Ganga Dynasty rulers in the 9th century during their occupation of this region. It has undergone extensions during the reign of Cholas, Hoysalas, and Wodeyars from the 9th to 19th centuries. It is one of the biggest temples in Karnataka with an area of 560 square feet (52 m²) and with a Gopura (tower) of 36.576 metres (120.00 ft) height, which has seven stories with seven gold plated Kalasas on top of the Gopura.

The uniqueness of the temple is that it has 66 idols of Shaiva saints called as Nayanmars and more than 100 Lingas (of different kinds and sizes) including the main deity of Srikanteshwara (Nanjundeswara) Linga. The main deity is also called Hakim Nanjundeswara; a title given by Tippu Sultan. It is inscribed in the temple history that on Tippu Sultan's special prayers to the deity, eyesight of the royal elephant was restored, where after the Sultan had a lingam made of jade along with an emerald necklace and donated it to the temple.

BADAMI CHALUKYA ARCHITECTURE

The architecture is of a temple building idiom that evolved in the time period of 5th to 8th centuries in the area of Malaprabha basin, in present-day Bagalkot district of Karnataka state, sometimes called the Vesara style and Chalukya style. The earliest temples dating back to around 450 in Aihole when the Badami Chalukyas were feudatories of the Kadambas of Banavasi are also reflected during this period. According to historians, the Badami Chalukya contribution to temple building matched their valour and their achievements in battle. Their style included two types of monuments, namely the rock cut halls (caves) or cave temple features and the surface structural monuments.

CAVE TEMPLES

Cave temple architecture is found in the Badami cave temples at Badami, the early Chalukya capital, carved out in the 6th century. There are four cave temples hewn from the sides of cliffs, three Hindu and one Jain, which contain carved architectural elements such as decorative pillars and brackets as well as finely carved sculpture and richly etched ceiling panels. Nearby are many small Buddhist cave shrines. The four caves are basic in style. The passageway is a basic verandah with stone segments and sections - an unmistakable component of these caverns prompting an ordered mandapa and after that to the little square place of worship (sanctum sanctorum) cut profound into the buckle. The sanctuary hollows speak to various religious orders. Among them, two are devoted to Lord Vishnu, one to Lord Shiva and the fourth is a Jain sanctuary. The initial three are dedicated to the Vedic confidence and the fourth buckle is the main Jain sanctuary at Badami.

The cave temples architecture is a blend of North Indian Nagara Style and South Indian Dravidian style. Each buckle has a sanctum sanctorum, a mandapa, a verandah and columns. The give in sanctuaries additionally bear lovely carvings, models and delightful wall paintings.

DRAVIDIAN AND REKHANAGARA STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE OF RASHTRAKUTAS

The Rashtrakutas who ruled the Deccan from Manyakheta, Gulbarga district, Karnataka in the period 753 – 973 created the Dravidian style and Rekhaganagara style of architectural monuments. One of the richest traditions in Indian architecture took shape in the Deccan during this time and one writer calls it Karnataka Dravida style as opposed to traditional Dravida style. Pattadakal UNESCO World Heritage Site and the Navalinga temples are the structural types of the Rashtrakutas.

PATTADAKAL

A group of monuments at Pattadakal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is located in the Bijapur district of Karnataka. The temples of this group are the finest structural temples of this period and these are the Jaina, Dolmen, Kadasiddheswara, Jambulingeswara, Galaganatha, Chandrashekhara, Sangameswara, Kasivisweswara, Mallikarjuna, Virupaksha and Papanatha Temples. The uniqueness of this place derives from the presence of both the Dravidian or the Southern and the Nagara or the Northern (Indo-Aryan) styles of temple architecture. Of the ten temples in Pattadakal, six are in Dravidian style and four in Rekhaganagara style. The most famous temples are the Virupaksha Temple, Jain Narayana Temple and the Kashivishvanatha Temple at Pattadakal.

The best known Virupaksha Temple, earliest of the temples in the Chalukyan series, was built by Queen Lokamahadevi in 745 to commemorate her husband's victory (Vikramaditya II 733 – 746) over the Pallavas of Kanchi. The temple closely resembles the Kailashnatha temple in Kanchi which served as a model for this temple. The Virupaksha Temple in turn served as an inspiration for the Kailashnatha Temple built by the Rashtrakuta dynasty in Ellora.

The Virupaksha Temple is rich in sculptures like those of Lingodbhava, Nataraja, Ravananugraha and Ugranarasimha. It is stated by the Archaeological Survey of India that the tall vimana with axial mandapas and peripheral sub-shrines round the court, enclosed by a wall with gopura-entrances in front and behind were all designed and completed at one time. Adoptions from the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram in the form of kuta and said-heads has an impressive view from a distance.

SANGAMESHWARA TEMPLE

Sangameshwara Temple built by King Vijayaditya Satyashraya is incomplete, yet attractive. It is the oldest temple built by Vijayaditya Satyashraya (697 – 733) exhibits in its vimana a large degree of the contemporary Pallava temples in the southerly elements, as in the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples. The temple is square on plan from the base to shikhara similar to Virupaksha Temple, has no sukhanasika but the vimana has three storeys. The lowermost storey is surrounded by two walls, the inner and outer, the second storey being an upward projection of the inner wall, while the outer wall encloses the covered circumambulatory round the sanctum.

GALAGANATHA TEMPLE

Galaganatha Temple, facing east, built around 750, in the finely evolved rekha-nagara prasada style of architecture contains a sculpture of Lord Shiva killing the demon Andhakasura. The temple, built on a plinth with three highly ornate mouldings, comprises a sanctum (garbhagriha) which a linga and a vestibule (antarala), both surrounded by a closed circumambulatory path (pradakshinapatha), a hall (sabha-mandapa) and an entrance porch (mukhamandapa). The most striking feature of the temple is its well-preserved northern superstructure (rekha-nagara shikhara), topped by amalaka and kalasha. The sculpture housed in this pavilion is that of Siva slaying Andhakasura. The eight-armed god wears a wreath of human skulls

(munda-mala) like a sacred thread (yajnopavita) and is depicted as piercing the demon with the trident (trisula).

PAPANATHA TEMPLE

The Papanatha Temple, built around 740, as per Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) records, is in the Vesara style. The temple was started in nagara style but later changed to a more balanced Dravidian style. Sculptures here depict scenes from Ramayana and Mahabharatha. The temple's plan has a sanctum (garbhagriha) surrounded by a circumambulatory path (pradakshinapatha) with devakoshtha pavilions in its three walls, an ardha-mandapa, a sabha-mandapa and an entrance porch (mukhamandapa) provided with kakshasana. A well-developed rekha-nagara (northern) shikhara with an elaborately carved Chaitya-arch enshrining Nataraja on the frontage of the sukanasa is a special feature at this temple. This temple has many similarities with the Navabrahma temples in Alampur, Andhra Pradesh, which were also built by the same dynasty.

Archaeological studies of all the Pattadakal temples show that some have the stellar (multigonal) plan later to be used profusely by the Hoysalas of Belur and Halebidu. Another fine monument at Pattadakal is the Navalinga temple at Kuknur.

NAVALINGA TEMPLE

The Navalinga Temple was built in the 9th century, during the reign of King Amoghavarsha I or his son Krishna II of the Rashtrakuta Dynasty. The temple is located in the town of Kukkanur, 40 km away from Gadag. Built in the South Indian Dravidian architecture style, each of the nine temples in the cluster has a linga, the universal symbol of Hindu God Shiva, and hence the name Navalinga (lit nine lingas).

WESTERN CHALUKYA ARCHITECTURE

Western Chalukya architecture (Kannada: ಪಶ್ಚಿಮ ಚಾಲುಕ್ಯ ವಾಸ್ತುಶಿಲ್ಪ), also known as Kalyani Chalukya or Later Chalukya architecture, is the distinctive style of ornamented architecture in the Shaiva, Vaishnava, and Jain religious traditions that evolved during the rule of the Western Chalukya Empire in the Tungabhadra region of central Karnataka, in the 11th and 12th centuries. Western Chalukyan political influence was at its peak in the Deccan Plateau during this period. The centre of cultural and temple building activity lay in the Tungabhadra region, where large medieval workshops built numerous monuments. These monuments, regional variants of pre-existing Dravida (South Indian) temples, defined the Karnata dravida tradition.

Temples of all sizes built by the Chalukyan architects during this era remain today, known as a transitional style and provides an architectural link between the style of the early Chalukya dynasty and that of the later Hoysala Empire.

LAKKUNDI TEMPLES

Lakkundi in Gadag district is a tiny village on the way to Hospet from Hubli. It is one of the fine architectural feasts of the Kalyana Chalukya period (about 10th century). Currently Lakkundi has about 50 temples of various stature and antiquity. All the temples are made of green schist and the outer walls and entrances are very richly decorated. The shikhara is an in-between-style type and the parapet and the artistic division of the wall with pilasters is typical of the south-Indian style. It is also known for Step wells and historic inscriptions. The centre of cultural and temple building activity lay in the Tungabhadra region, where large medieval workshops built numerous monuments. These monuments, regional variants of pre-existing Dravida (South Indian) temples, defined the Karnataka Dravida tradition.

KASHIVISVANATHA TEMPLE

A great deal of care has gone into the construction of the Kashivisvanatha Temple in Lakkundi, which deifies Shiva. This temple has a unique feature: a small Surya (Sun) shrine faces the main shrine on the west.

There is a common platform between both, which must have been an open mandapa originally. Hence, the Kashivisvanatha Temple has an entrance on the east side and south side of the mandapa. The entrance doorway and the towers are covered with close intricate carvings. The shikhara (dome) is in the North-Indian style and it looks like a lathe must have been used to make the complex circular pillars.

BRAHMA JAINALAYA

Brahma Jaina Basti built by queen Attimabbe is the largest and oldest of many Jain temples in Lakkundi. This temple is dedicated to Mahavira, the most revered saint of Jainism. The temple has a garbhagriha shrine and mandapa style with deep beams on the mandapa from where the eaves are cantilevered. The large Jaina temple, among the many temples at Lakkundi, also near Gadag, is perhaps one of the earliest examples of temples in this area built of a kind of fine-textured chloritic schist as distinct from the hitherto-used sandstone of this region.

MAHADEVA TEMPLE

Mahadeva Temple at Itagi in the Koppal district, built in 1112, is an example of Dravida articulation with a nagara superstructure, dedicated to Shiva and is among the larger temples built by the Western Chalukyas and perhaps the most famous. Inscriptions hail it as the 'Emperor among temples'. Here, the main temple, the sanctum of which has a linga, is surrounded by thirteen minor shrines, each with its own linga. The temple has two other shrines, dedicated to Murthinarayana and Chandraleshwari, parents of Mahadeva, the Chalukya commanders who consecrated the temple in 1112.

SIDDHESVARA TEMPLE

Siddhesvara Temple at Haveri, has a staggered square plan with dravida articulation and superstructure of 11th century vintage, to which some innovative 12th century elements such as aedicules, miniature decorative towers on pilasters, were added. The temple is built of soapstone. The temple bears close resemblance to a few other Chalukyan temples in the vicinity of Haveri; the Muktesvara Temple at Chavudayyanapura, the Somesvara Temple at Haralhalli and the Siddharamesvara Temple at Niralgi. The entire basement of this temple has sunk by a few feet, making it necessary to descend into the open mantapa (hall).

DODDA BASAPPA TEMPLE

The Dodda Basappa Temple at Dambal, a 12th-century Chalukyan temple, is of the Western Chalukya architectural style. It has a unique 24-pointed, uninterrupted stellate (star-shaped), 7-tiered dravida plan, for the vimana with so many star points that it almost becomes circular in appearance. Each right angle is divided into four 22.5 degrees angles. Then each angle is again divided and covered with intricate carvings.

TRIKUTESHWARA SHIVA TEMPLE

The Trikuteshwara Shiva Temple at Gadag, dated between 1050 and 1200, has ornate pillars with intricate sculpture with three Shivalingas enshrined in the sanctum. It has three lingas mounted on the same stone. Beautifully chiselled stone screens and carved figurines are also seen in the temple. The Saraswati shrine within the Trikuteshwara temple complex has exquisite stone columns.

SUDI MONUMENTS

Sudi is famous for rare stone-carved monuments like twin-towered temple with large well built stone carvings. At one time it was a key town of the Kalyani Chalukyas, during 1000. Besides these structures there is a tower (called Hude in native language) located in the centre of the Sudi village. Several stone

temples built by Maha Samanthadhipati Naga Deva in 1100 have caught the attention of Karnataka State Archaeological Department. Quite a few of these structures have been cleaned up.

HOYSALA ARCHITECTURE

The Hoysala architecture style is an offshoot of the Western Chalukya style, which was popular in the 10th and 11th centuries. It is distinctively Dravidian, and owing to its unique features, Hoysala architecture qualifies as an independent style. The Hoysala sculpture in all its richness is said to be a challenge to photography. The artistry of the Hoysalas in stone has been compared to the finesse of an ivory worker or a goldsmith. The abundance of jewellery worn by the sculpted figures and the variety of hairstyles and headdresses depicted give a fair idea of the lifestyles of the Hoysala times.

Some of the famous temples of the Hoysala architectural style are the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura, Chennakesava Temple at Belur, Chikkamagalur Amruthapura Temple, Chennakesava Temple at Aralaguppe, the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu, Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple at Melkote.

1. Somanathapura
2. Chennakesava Temple at Belur
3. Hoysaleswara Temple
4. Ishvara Temple
5. Melkote Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple
6. Lakshminarasimha Swamy Temple

VIJAYANAGARA ARCHITECTURE

Vijayanagara architecture is a vibrant combination of the Chalukya, Hoysala, Pandya and Chola styles, colloquialisms that succeeded in earlier hundreds of years.

Remains of Hampi – UNESCO World Heritage Site Virupaksha Temple, Krishna Temple, Vittala Temple, Ugra Narasimha and Kodandarama Temple are a portion of the celebrated landmarks of the Vijayanagar style.

Its inheritance of model, engineering and painting affected the improvement of expressions of the human experience long after the realm arrived at an end. Its expressive trademark is the fancy pillared Kalyanamantapa (marriage corridor), Vasanthamantapa (open pillared lobbies) and the Rajagopura (tower). While the domain's landmarks are spread over the entire of Southern India, nothing outperforms the tremendous outdoors theater of landmarks at its capital at Vijayanagara, an UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In the fourteenth century the lords kept on building Vesara or Deccan style landmarks yet later fused dravida-style gopurams to meet their ceremonial needs. The Prasanna Virupaksha Temple (underground sanctuary) of Bukka Raya I and the Hazare Rama Temple of Deva Raya I are cases of Deccan design. The changed and complicated ornamentation of the columns is a characteristic of their work. At Hampi, however the Vitthala Temple is the best case of their pillared Kalyanamantapa style, the Hazara Ramaswamy Temple is a humble yet flawlessly completed case. An excellent example of Vijayanagara workmanship, the Vitthala Temple, took quite a few years to finish amid the rule of the Tuluva rulers.

ARCHITECTURE OF KINGDOM OF MYSORE

The Kingdom of Mysore was subordinate to Vijayanagara Empire until 1565 and princely state under the paramouncy of the British Raj after 1799. The architectural designs were in the Indo-Saracenic – blends of Hindu, Muslim or Islamic, Rajput, and Gothic styles of architecture under the Wodeyar Dynasty or Kingdom of Mysore from 1399 to 1947.

Indo-Saracenic type is most notably manifested in palaces and courtly buildings built in various styles, and temples built in the Dravidian style. It is the city of Mysore that is best known for its royal palaces, earning it the nickname "City of Palaces". The city's main palace, the Mysore Palace, was designed by the English architect Henry Irwin in 1897. The palace's exterior is Indo-Saracenic in style but the wealth of detail

inside is distinctly of Hoysala. Domes, arches, colonnades and carved pillars, as well as its size, add to this palace's notability. The octagonal Kalyana mantapa (Marriage Hall) on the ground floor has 26 canvas paintings on its walls depicting the Dassera procession. On the first floor, a marble staircase leads to a grand colonnaded Durbar hall containing famous paintings, including one of the Hindu god Vishnu on the ceiling. The opulent Amba Vilas hall, with its carved teakwood ceiling, white marble floors, semi-precious inlay work in the Agra style, silver door with a depiction of the dashavatara and dikpalas (guardians), teak doors inlaid with ivory, Belgian stained glass, cast iron pillars from Glasgow, etched glass windows and chandeliers are worthy of mention.

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