

ICONOGRAPHY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SCULPTURES AT THE CHENNAKESAVA TEMPLE COMPLEX PUSHPAGIRI, KADAPA DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH.

Dr. K. Mrutyunjaya Rao¹

Dr. K. Mrutyunjaya Rao, Associate Professor, Dept of Fine Arts, Yogi Vemana University,
Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh, kotamr@gmail.com.

Abstract: This paper describes the study on the iconography and significance of the sculpture in the Chennakesava temple complex at Pushpagiri of Kadapa district in Andhra Pradesh which is rich in historical and mythological significance that thrived and peaked under the Vijayanagara dynasty. Hindu legend asserts that the Penna river sprang from the bow of God Shiva, referred to as Pinaka.

Epigraphical evidence indicates that the Chennakesava, Santanamalleswara, and Umamaheswara temples were established in 1294 CE. Reports indicate that these temples were in a state of disrepair by the early sixteenth century. The Chennakesava temple is an artistic masterpiece, including three inner shrines and two external sub-shrines on an elevated platform in common. The author has delineated the sculptures of the temple complex throughout several sections, including narrative episodes, individual and decorative friezes etc. Observers can perceive the motifs of the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata, and other deities such as Surya, Parvati, Kamadeva, Ganapati, Nataraja, Bhudevi, Vrishabharudamurti, Hayagriva, and Narasimha. The narrative of Kiratarjuniyam is intricately carved with exceptional mastery. The skill in sculpting and the temple's Mukhamandapa, characterised by its projections, reveals the influence and participation of Hoysala artisans. Nearly 2688 sculptures were found in this temple complex. All the sculptures measure between 2 and 20 inches in height. The temple construction includes a combination of limestone, granite, and sandstone mortar. The stone available locally, technically called a blend of sedimentary limestone and ferric impurities

Keywords: Pushpagiri, Garuda, Nectar, Vijayanagara, narrative, ornamental, Hoyasala.

Introduction

The Chennakesava temple is located in Pushpagiri village of Kadapa district in Andhra Pradesh. It faces west, overlooking the Penna River as it changes course from east to south. From the main gateway tower, there is a path across the river that leads to the Pushpagiri temples inside the village of Pushpagiri in the Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh.

The Chennakesava temple complex is an artistic masterpiece that includes three inner shrines and two outside sub-shrines on the raised platform. The platform houses a temple for the principal god Chennakesava, while the shrine on the left is dedicated to Shiva. A modest temple exists where a seated statue of Umamaheswara Swami was reportedly located, but it has since been vandalised and now stands empty. A little relief sculpture of Umamaheswara on the bull positioned on the rear wall of the shrine is believed to be a duplicate of the god that originally embellished it.



Fig.1 Aerial View of the Chennakesavaswami temple complex, Pushpagiri

The Chennakesava, Santana Malleswara, and Umamaheswara temples constitute a collective group. These three shrines share a rectangular mandapa in common. Inscriptional evidence indicates that the temples of Santana Malleswara and Umamaheswara have existed since 1294 CE, while the Chennakesava Swami Temple is dated to 1299 CE. These temples appeared to be in a state of disrepair or incompleteness throughout the early part of the fifteenth century CE, underwent restoration in 1436 CE, and in 1501 CE, in the time of Agoracharya, plaster work was done to the sikhara. (Gurumurti, A.1990). The prominent architectural elements of Vijayanagara, such as kumbhapanjaras, sala-khostas, statues, pilasters topped with pushpapotikas, and further ornamental decorations on the exterior walls of these three temples, corroborate the inscriptional evidence. The Chennakesava temple is dedicated to Vishnu, while the Santana Malleswara temple and Umamaheswara shrines are dedicated to Shiva, sharing similar architectural and sculptural traditions.

The temple remains active in devotion, with both the Linga and the idol of Chennakesava venerated, attracting numerous pilgrims. The distinctive aspect of this temple is that both shrines share a single flagstaff, which features Garuda with folded hands directed towards the Chennakesavaswami shrine. God Chennakesavaswami has received patronage through generations from the times of the Cholas. The Chennakesava idol is facing west in a standing pose. The Mulabera's statue is over 10 feet tall, carved from black granite. The stone "halo" of the deity features intricately etched Dasavatara incarnations of Vishnu. Upon completing the parikrama of the shrine, one encounters a shrine dedicated to Rajyalakshmi Devi, the consort of Chennakesava Swami. A mandapa is situated to the right of the Rajyalakshmi Devi shrine, while a shrine descending to the river steps for Hanuman appears to have been incorporated into the complex subsequently.

Historical Background:

The Chennakesavaswami temple was constructed by the Musunuri Nayakas during the reign of the later Vijayanagara kings. A multitude of monarchs, rulers, and local chieftains who governed the region have conferred substantial grants and memorials to the temple complex.

The initial mention of this temple appears in an inscription dated 1078 CE, documenting a land transfer by Ahavamalladeva of the Vaidumba dynasty. An inscription from 1182 CE allocates land at Mulakanadu for the daily worship of the temple's presiding deity. The temple complex possesses a recorded history spanning from the early Ikshvakus to the local Zamindars who governed the region. To name a few, it has remnants of the past belonging to the Ikshvakus, Pallavas, Cholas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Vaidumbas, Kayasthas, and Vijayanagara empires. It is one of the significant Advaita mutts founded by saint Sankaracharya and is regarded as the sole location in Andhra Pradesh housing

the sacred Peetham of Sankaracharya. The complex is renowned for its historic, art and architecture, which dates to 1298 CE.



Fig.2. The Chennakesavaswami Temple complex (East View)

Mythological Significance:

Pushpagiri holds considerable mythological importance. The name Pushpagiri originates from a local tale in which Garuda embarks on a celestial journey to liberate his mother, Vinutha, from the bondage imposed by Kadruva, by conquering Lord Indra and obtaining the sacred nectar of Amrita. Garuda, while returning from the celestial realm, traversed the village once known as Kampalle, where he accidentally released a drop into a pond created by the Pinakini River. The pond instantly granted rejuvenating properties to anybody who immersed themselves in it. As a result, individuals began to flock in large numbers to the pond for a swim in its waters. Upon seeing this miracle, the celestial beings approached God Vishnu, who directed Garuda to conceal the pond with a boulder from a neighbouring mountain. The Garuda positioned the megalith on the pond, and it began to float like a flower— "Pushpa" in Sanskrit. To prevent its resurgence, deities Vishnu and Shiva pressed the rock into the earth with their feet. Consequently, the hill appeared to float like a flower, earning the designation Pushpagiri, meaning "Mound of Flowers" in Sanskrit. (Gurumurti, A.,1990). Adishankaracharya is reputed to have visited the location and consecrated a "Srichakram." Hindu mythology posits that the Penna River sprang from the bow of God Shiva, known as Pinaka.

Themes: The temple complex contains Shiva and Vishnu temples as the religious tolerance of the Vijayanagara kings. Themes taken for the sculptures chosen rare and interesting scenes from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata and Sivapurana.

Important Sculptures:

Pushpagiri sculptors has preferred mostly scenes like the fighting scenes. The Kurukshethra battle scenes from between Bhīma and Bhagadatta, Arjuna and Karna, the fighting between Bhīma and Dhuryodhana, Kiratarjuniyam, etc. Rama killing Maricha, Rama giving a ring to Hanuman, Ravana abducting Sita, Rama killing Kumbhakarna, Rama killing from the Ramayana, and episodes from Krishna's childhood like Krishna killing the wild elephant (Kovalayavadha), Puthanavadha, and Dhenukasuravadha from the Bhagavatha are said to be the outstanding sculptures at Pushpagiri. And scenes from Shivapurana were given sculptural representation.

Influence of Shiva Puranam: The Chenna Kesava temple complex also includes the temples of Santanamalleswara and Umamaheswara. Therefore, there are scenes related to the Shiva Puranam on the walls of the temple, which are mainly miniature sculptures. In Shiva Puranam, Kalyana Sundara Murthy, Girija Kalyanam, Vrushabarunamurti, Bhikshatuna Murthy, Bhakta Kannappa Charitra, Ananda Tandavam, Gajasamharamurti, manmade stories, and various types of Shiva Tandava are found here.

Characteristics of Sculptures:

The sculptures at Chennakesava Swami Temple complex are exceptional and refined in the Rayalaseema region. The shrine is renowned for its detailed sculptures. The outer walls of the temple

complex housed the majority of the sculptures. The amalgamation of imagery derived from the motifs of two religions, namely Shaivism and Vaishnavism. Nearly all the sculptures measure between 2 and 20 inches in height. All panels are structured into compartmental divisions by architectural elements such as bittistambas and elaborately adorned arches; even the diminutive panels were intricately carved on the tires of the adhisthana, measuring three to five inches in height. Themes such as Gajendramoksha, the conflict of Krishnarjuna Kaliyamardhana, and the Kiratarjuniyam episodes were elegantly crafted in accordance with Shilpashastra. Loose sculptures, including Vamanavatara and Vishnu as Bhuvanaraha, are also present. (Gurumurthi.A, 1990), accompanied by his consort Bhudevi, Vrishabharudamurti, Hayagriva, semi-divine human figures, Narasimha with his consort Lakshmi, and sensual scenarios exhibiting exceptional craftsmanship. Upon meticulous examination of the sculptures, it appears that each panel or table was sculpted in a workshop located within the temple grounds and subsequently affixed to the walls using an interlocking mechanism and lime as a binding medium. Within a singular work, the distinction between the divine and semi-divine is explicitly illustrated by figuration, scale, ornamentation, and anatomical proportions. Each sculpture was adorned with robust arches and opulent jewelry crafted from pearls. The arrangement of sculptures, including arches, evokes a sense of solidity and strength, imparting an impression of grandeur. The layout of these sculptures is noted as interspersed with Shaivite and Vaishnavite themes, lacking any discernible order. All panels appear to be affixed with a fixative or binding material and a locking mechanism. To quell the riots and conflicts between two religions at the behest of King Achyutharaya, the architect amalgamated figures of both the Shiva and Vishnu cults. A Vaishnavite panel is observed adjacent to a Shaivite panel, with no discernible relationship between them. The faces resemble Chola sculptures; the eyebrows form a singular arched curve over the eyes, accompanied by pronounced noses and robust shoulders. The dhotis are worn to the knees for deities, a characteristic hallmark of Vijayanagara sculptures. All statues of murtis are accompanied by beautiful arches in either seated or standing positions. Images of Mahavishnu frequently adorn the walls of temples on all sides.

Sculptures of Chennakesava swami temple:

Sculptures on the Eastern wall:

The sculptures show a more pronounced reddish hue than that of the Santana Malleswara temple due to the presence of iron oxide. The sculptures were interpreted from right to left. Each sculpture, whether seated or standing, was meticulously sculpted and positioned among the relief carvings of miniature bittistambas and intricately carved arches. The panels measure not more than 15 inches in width and 18 inches in height. The era of the sculptures on the sanctum of Chennakesavaswami appears to be subsequent to that of the Santana Malleswaraswami shrine. The prominent sculpture is Gajendramoksha, situated at the apex of Mahavishnu with possesses four arms. Krishna is depicted as Parthasaradhi, Fight between Bhima and Bhagadatta, a solitary panel of Garuda in anjali mudra, Mahavishnu, and Rati- Manmadha. Each sculpture is partitioned by the bhittisthambas to indicate spatial division. The incarnations of Vishnu, including Matsya, Kalki, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, and Parasurama, were sculpted at a height of 3–5 inches below the pedestal of Vishnu, which is around 15



Fig.3 Sculptures on the East wall of Chennakesavaswami Temple, Pushpagiri
inches in height.

Sculptures on the Western wall:

The western section of the temple features a standard projection of a hall, adorned with a rich designed adhisthana, replete with tiered decorative embellishments. Panels ranging from 5 inches to 18 inches in height are seen. Depictions of Hanuman battling with Rama, the Narasimha incarnation, the conflict

between Vali and Sugriva were sculpted. However, ornamental motifs of horses and elephants predominated on the tiers of Adhithana.

Sculptures on the Northern wall: On the northern side, we notice relief sculptures of Ganesha, the Battle of Krishnarjuna, Mahavishnu, Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana in an upright position, Kama Deva with his spouse, and Rama and Lakshmana safeguarding the sage Viswamithra from demons attempting to disrupt the yajna. All the images are delineated between the two small bhittisthambas as distinct compositions.

Sculptures on the Southern wall: On the southern wall, we observe the Dasavatara (ten incarnations of Vishnu), including Mahavishnu, Varahavata, Narasimha, Krishna playing the flute, Kaliyamardhana, and a diminutive panel depicting the Ksheerasagaramadhana event carved on a small scale. A representation of Vishnu as Padmanabha depicts him as standing in samabhanga on a lotus pedestal. He wields a chakra in his upper right hand, another chakra in his upper left hand, a gada in his lower right hand, and a Sankha in his lower left hand. (Gopinatha Rao T.A., 1914).

SCULPTURES OF SANTANA MALLESWARA TEMPLE:

Sculptures on the Eastern wall: The eastern wall of the temple is adorned with sculptures depicting Shiva, and in certain sections, sculptures representing the Vaishnavite religion are also present. The stone is grey in colour, and the sculptures have lost detail and are less distinct than those in the Chennakasavaswami temple. The temple was constructed before the Chennakasava temple. The sandy air from the river also influenced the surface quality, resulting in sculptures with a textured appearance. The statues are of comparable dimensions to the Chennakesava temple. The images include Shiva as Nataraja, Andhkasurasamaharamurti, Apasmarakamurti, and Bikshatanamurti, along with several unidentified subjects, including a lady restraining another woman wielding a sword.

Sculptures on the Western wall: It features a shared projection balcony with the Chennakesavaswami shrine, along with a communal stairway and balustrade. Only the adhithana is carved with sculptures of various incarnations of Vishnu, friezes of elephants and horses, and elaborate decorative motifs. Visitors can observe the theme of Bhakta Kannappa along with associated miniature sculptures.

Sculptures on the Southern wall:



Fig. 4 Kiratarjuniyam episode on the South wall of Santanamalleswara temple

The southern wall features the Kiratarjuniyam narration, depicted in five stages, distinctly separated by bhittisthambas with arches, among diminutive sculptures of ganas, semi-divine entities. The narration is to be read from left to right (east to west).

Sculptures on the Northern wall: Sculptures pertaining to the Vaishnavite worship were carved on this wall. The images depict Rama and Lakshmana alongside Sita, with Rama presenting his ring to Hanuman as a token in the quest for Sita. A diminutive sculpture depicting Hanuman elevating the Sanjeevini mountain beside depictions of Krishna.

Sagara Saranagathi: It is described on the back wall of the Santana Malleswara Swami Temple. (17 inches height x 21 inches width)

Vibhishana Saranagati: Found on the northern outer wall of Santana Malleswara Swami Temple (17 inches height x 21 inches width).

Sculptures on the outer walls of Uma Maheswara Temple:

Abundant sculptures are carved on the adhisthana on all three sides. On the east-facing aspect of the adhisthana, only the ornamental friezes and sculptures associated with Shiva are visible in tiers. On the northern side, there are sculptures depicting the union of Siva and Parvati, along with murtis and divine celestial figures. A five-inch-high Umamaheshamurti relief sculpture is carved within an arch on the lowest deck of Adhithana. On the west-facing Adhithana, we observe the Sravanakumara event and scenes from the Ramayana, including Sita requesting Rama to retrieve the golden deer and Lakshmana pursuing the deer. The sculptures depicting Rama slaying the demon Thataki, the tale of Bhaktha Kannappa, and as Kathyayani holding shivalinga(Jalamayamurti). All these sculptures measure between 5 inches in height and 10 inches in width panels in high relief.

The sculptures on Gopura (Tower):



Fig.5 Sculptures on Gopura of Chennakesavaswami temple complex

In contrast to the lower part and upper tiers of the temple's adhisthana, the sculptures were carved from granite. The gopura was constructed using a composite of brick, sand and limestone. The sculptor has incorporated varying gradations of lime, ranging from robust to soft, for preparation of sculptures. The sculptures on the tower (gopura) have a peculiar style, having been repaired numerous times due to the effects of time and disasters, as they are composed of lime, which is considerably more fragile than stone. The temple has undergone numerous renovations throughout the ages; hence its precise style cannot be determined but can be inferred from the stone carvings. The sculptures were grouped in diminishing staircase formations leading to the tower's spire. The Dasavatara of Vishnu were positioned around the structure. The depiction of the Narasimha incarnation is consistently organized. Hayagriva, Krishna, and Vishnu as Ananthasayanamurti, accompanied by wife Lakshmi, exhibit considerable stylistic richness of Pushpagiri. The architectural design of Gopura indicates its origins with Chola era.

Important Sculptures on the Common Adhithana:

1. Bhaktha Kannappa Story

The pilgrim can notice several narrative stories were chiseled in small panels of the Adhithana and on the outer walls of the temple complex. The story of Bhaktha Kannappa as the most special theme considered by Virasaivas. This story was written in Basava Purana by Palkuriki Somanatha. It was carved in a small panel of six inches height and eleven inches width. In most places Kannappa is shown removing his eye with an arrow held in both hands. But in Pushpagiri, Kannappa does not keep his foot on Shiva Linga, and the sculptor shows more imagination and sense by using the left hand already to catch the falling eyes.

2. Jalamayamurti: It is a very rare Shaivite theme depicting Shiva testing Parvati's devotion. It is known as Jalamayamurti. It is found on the north exterior wall of the common mukhamandapa at the top edge of the Adhithana. It is the only one that is carved in the entire Rayalaseema temple, other than the

Ekambareswara temple in Kanchipuram (Subrahmanya Kumar VV, 2003). According to Shaivite mythology Siva Purana, once Parvathi was worshipping Shiva linga on the bank of a river. Shiva wanted to test her devotion and created sudden floods in the river. The water rose and submerged Linga. Parvati, taken back by the sudden development, first thought of the security of her husband, i.e., Shiva Linga. She tightly embraced the linga in the mortal fear of being washed away by water, and if such a thing happened, with the determination of herself to be washed away along with the linga. Shiva, pleased with her total devotion and dedication, withdrew the floods and appeared before her. As he created the illusion of floods, Shiva is known as Jalamayamurti who is surrounded by water. In a small panel, the sculptor created the narration through his choice of images, stances, and composition, which unfolded the narrative ability of the Vijayanagara sculptor.

Kiratarjuniyam narrative episode: It is most outstanding sculpture in Pushpagiri. The incident of Kiratarjuniyam is depicted in five panels on the outer south wall of the garbhagriha, the highest tier of the Adhithana of the Santana Malleswaraswami temple. This narrative panel is significantly larger than the previous two panels and features intricate details inside a 15-inch by 15-inch area, exhibiting high relief in a decorative format. Each episode is delineated by the compartmental divisions formed by ornately carved bittisthambas, which are elaborately adorned in the Hoyasala style. The event is depicted from left to right on the temple wall of Chennakesava Temple. This narrative was intricately sculpted on a tiny scale in 6-inch to 18-inch friezes situated between bhittisthambas and embellished arches (Rao K.M. 2025).

Kiratarjuniyam: The episode of Kiratarjuniyam has been carved on 6 panels on the south wall of Santanamalleswara.

First panel: Arjuna taking leave from Dharma Raja

2nd panel: Arjuna taking leave of Bhīma

3rd panel: Arjuna in penance

4th panel: Arjuna and Shiva fighting with bows

5th panel: Arjuna and Shiva are wrestling.

6th panel: Arjuna receiving pasupatha from Shiva as Vrishabharudamurti.

Story of Sravanakumara: On the top edge of Adhithana, the north outer wall of the Umamaheswara temple at Pushpagiri, in 7 inches height and 16 inches width.

The abduction of Sita: One of the series of narrative sculptures at Pushpagiri. A key episode of the Ramayana is the abduction of Sita. It was carved and can be found on the southern side of Adhithana



Fig.6 Jalamayamurti on north exterior wall of common mukhamandapa at the top edge of Adhithana, Chennakesavaswami temple

on the common mukhamandapa. The panel depicts Ravana abducting Sita on a chariot. Sita is shown as seated in padmasana on the chariot. Interestingly, Ravana was shown with his ten hands and multiple heads with destructive weapons. The figure of the Jatayu bird is a very interesting element to evoke rasa in the composition.



Fig.7. Remarkable sculptures from 3 inches to 7 inches in height in the temple complex

Fight between Vali and Sugreeva: It can be found on the wide gala on the center of the Adhisthana on the southern wall of the mukhamandapa.

The narrative episode is depicted in three panels.

1. The conversation of Tara and Vali (8 inches X 13 inches)
2. Vali and Sugriva are fighting (9 inches x 20 inches).
3. Rama killing Vali (9 inches x 22 inches)



Fig.8 Decorative Sculptures on Adhisthana of the temple complex



Fig.9 Drawings of the relief sculptures at Pushpagiri

Influence of Hoyasala Art: In the era of the Vijayanagara dynasty, it is evident that religious themes eclipsed the plastic arts. The aspiration of Vijayanagara artists to visually depict the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavatam has motivated the folks, led to the creation of shadow leather puppetry. The influence of Hoyasala art is clearly evident in scenes depicting Narasimha vanquishing Hiranyakasipa, Narasimha with his consort, the Dasavatara narratives, Mahavishnu holding the Sankhu and chakra, Trivikrama, Varaha, and Shiva as Nataraja, which are extensively sculpted in various locations within the temple. These same motifs are present in Halabed, Hampi, and Kanchi, while the Vijayanagara artists exquisitely rendered Gajendramoksha as a favoured theme on the walls of the Pushpagiri temple on a smaller scale. The affinity is evident not only in the selection of subjects but also in the distinctive arrangement of visual elements.

The sculptors of the Vijayanagara times were influenced by the Hoyasala. It is possible that certain master sculptors from the Hoyasala period might have been commissioned for this temple. The author

TABLE :1 DETAILS OF SCULPTURES IN THE CHENNAKESAVA TEMPLE COMPLEX , PUSHPAGIRI, KADAPA, ANDHRA PRADESH						
S.no	Figures	East wall	West adhisthana	South wall and South adhisthana	North wall and North adhisthana	Total figures
		and East adhisthana				
Condition of Sculptures : Good and partially damaged						
1	Gods	81	46	72	107	306
2	Goddess	46	16	49	49	160
3	Soldiers	156	274	224	183	837
4	Elephants	67	94	76	55	292
5	Horses	53	121	2	74	250
6	Camels	0	2	0	0	2
7	Lions	84	70	123	185	462
8	Monkey's	3	3	4	5	15
9	Crocodile	1	1	0	1	3
10	Birds	97	86	31	112	326
11	Chariot's	1	0	0	2	3
12	Nandi	4	0	0	3	7
13	Pigs	0	2	1	2	5
14	Snakes	4	0	4	4	12
15	Cows	1	0	4	0	5
16	Deer	1	1	1	0	3
Total Sculptures		599	716	591	782	2688

posits that the sculptors may be affiliated with the Viswabrahmins (Goldsmiths) community, renowned for their expertise in jewellery, ivory and stone carving. Subsequently, it was verified that all details were expertly carved, including the ivory craftsmanship and gold embellishments executed by goldsmiths from the Hoyasala dynasty (Sampathkumarachar V.S. 1969). The sole indication of the geographical variances in the wording employed by these painters is seen in the inscription dated Malaguru 1117 A.D. This record pertains to the artist known as Hoyasalacharya, who is also designated as Viswakarma (Rao K.M. (2025).

The sculptures of the Chennakesava temple complex surpass those of other temples in the Kadapa region. The art and architecture of the Pandyan dynasty have been enhanced by Vijayanagara styles, seen in the mandapas, gopuras, and the external design of the temples. The heritage of Hoyasala in Vijayanagara is seen in sculptural themes and ornamental elements. The influence is clear and articulate. Artists from both Vijayanagara and Hoyasala exhibited notable similarities in their choosing of Puranic and secular topics, as well as in their choice of episodes, narrative compositions, and their execution. The Hoyasala exemplars were, in numerous respects, the forerunners of Vijayanagara art and architecture. Raman, K.V. (2006)

Key Observations:

Nearly 2688 sculptures were found in this temple complex. But many of these sculptures have been partially damaged due to the destruction of the temple after Thalikota battle and ravage of time, climatic conditions and vandalism. We found 292 elephants, 250 horses, 2 Camels, , 462 lions,837 soldiers, 466 deities and devaganas and semi divine human beings were carved. Most of the sculptural panels are in 15 inches width to 20 inches height and in some panels on adhisthana are 6inches to 14 inches in which

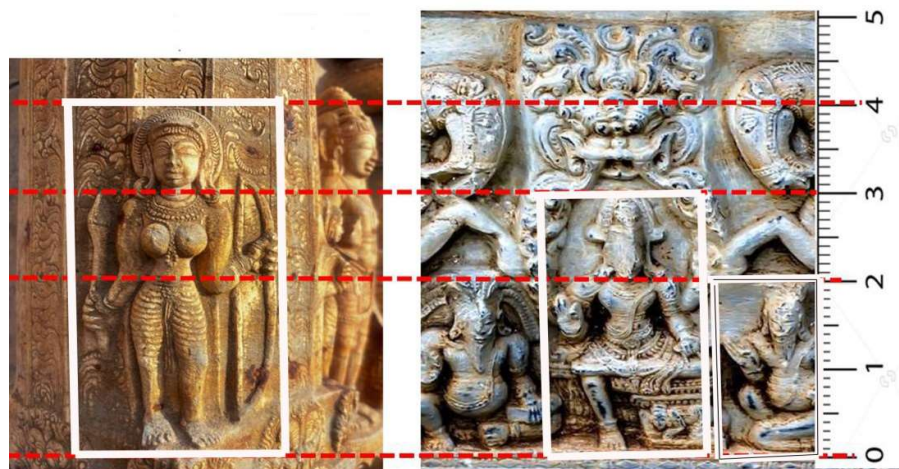


Fig.10. Micro Sculptures at Pushpagoro Temple Complex




2-4 inches sculptures were delicately carved. The 6-inch-tall Dashavataras are beautifully carved on the north and south walls of the Chennakesava temple. The image of Vishnu shown in standing positions than sitting position.

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The stone available in local, technically called blend of sedimentary limestone and ferrous impurities. This high quality lime stone led the sculptor to execute high relief sculptures with deep cutting, sharp lines with buff orange colour as patina. The expertness in carving small scale sculptures with minute details without any tool marks, lavish and minute jewelry proved the sculptors were originated from Viswabrahmins or Goldsmiths community. May be due to this reason, the Pushpagiri sculptures are elegant and most refined than any other temples of Rayalaseema regions as well as in Andhra Pradesh.

TYPES AND QUALITY OF THE STONES

TABLE 2: THE STONE MATERIAL USED IN THE TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION AND SCULPTURES IN CHENNAKESAVA TEMPLE COMPLEX, PUSHPAGIRI, KADAPA DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

S.No	Name of the Temple in Kadapa district	Types of stones	Color of the stone	Nature of the stone	Image of stone
3	Chennakesava Temple, Pushpagiri	I. Lime stone (CaCO ₃)	Cream, light gray and golden orange and reddish brown	Soft and easy for carving	
		II. Granite stone (SiO ₂)	Grayish black or dark gray	Very hard for carving	
		III. Sand stone (SiO ₂)	Reddish brown to buff/light yellowish brown	Soft and easy for carving	
		IV. Soap stone (Mg ₃ Si ₄ O ₁₀ (OH) ₂)	Dark gray and greenish gray	Soft and easy for carving	
		V. Quartzite stone (SiO ₂)	Light gray, buff, or pale pinkish-white	Very hard for carving	
4	Santanamalleswara Temple, Pushpagiri	I. Lime stone (CaCO ₃)	Light gray with a suitable blue tinged	Soft and easy for carving	
		II. Quartzite stone (SiO ₂)		Very hard for carving	
5	Umamaheswara Temple, Pushpagiri	I. Lime stone (CaCO ₃)	Dark gray to greenish-grey	Soft and easy for carving	
		II. Quartzite stone (SiO ₂)		Very hard for carving	

The Kadapa district is loaded with the natural resources mainly of rock basins formed with dolomite, lime stone, quartzite, basalts, and granite, sand stone, soap stone, sedimentary rock shale due to the availability of stone massive quantity patterns encouraged a greater number of temples within the radius of 60- 75 kilometers.

At Chennakesava temple complex, different stone materials were used by Vijayanagara architects. The temple construction includes the combination of lime stone, granite stone, and sand stone mortar. The Lime stone is a kind of carbonate sedimentary rock, and this rock main source of the material is lime. It is composed mostly of the minerals calcite and aragonite, which are different crystal forms of calcium carbonate (CaCO₃). Granite and soap stone (chloritic schist) were used in temple construction, the granite provides the structural strength for the temples base and heavy volumes. The soap stone significantly imported to allow for the temples hallmark intricate and beautiful carvings. After many years the Chennakesava Temple, Pushpagiri, the stone has been converted into Quartzite by metamorphism and oxidization in the womb of time.

Conclusion:

Chennakesava, Santanamalleswara, and Umamaheswara temples are beautiful legacies of Vijayanagara art and architecture, located on the slopes of Pushpagiri hill on the left bank of the river Penna. All these three shrines open into a common rectangular hall. The Adhithana of this common mukhamandapa is highly ornated. It has a broad gala cut into compartments, which contain deity and narrative sculptures in minute details from the rare scenes of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata and puranas. The friezes of the adhithana and every inch were richly decorated with swans, elephants, rampant lions, vyalas, seated sardulas, makaras, figures of gods and goddesses. According to epigraphical evidence, the Chennakesava, Santanamalleswara, and Umamaheswara temples existed by 1294 CE. It has been reported that these temples were in dilapidated condition by the early sixteenth century. Later we notice that these temples were renovated along with tiny and decorative sculptures during Vijayanagara times. Every projection has two pilasters with Vijayanagara lotus corbels; each recess is found with kumbhapanjara. Sculptures of deities are shown in two registers on the outer surface of the walls.

As the Vijayanagara kings gave high regard to religious tolerance and equal priority to both Shaivism and Vaishnavism. Vishnu images are mostly shown in standing and sitting postures or flanked by Garuda. There is a unique specimen of Mahavishnu in standing pose in the Chennakesava temple. Vishnu as Ananthasayana was shown twice in the temple. Noteworthy are the Dasavatara sculptures depicted with two hands, which are seen with meticulous details. The image of Buddha is shown and is interesting. And a few incarnations of Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Trivikrama, Rama, and Krishna are recurrently carved. Sculptors of Pushpagiri took keen interest in carving the figures of other deities of the Hindu religion, Brahma, Ganapati, Kumara, Manmatha, Bhima, Dharmaraja, Surya, Lakulisa, and Chandeswara, and images of goddesses like Lakshmi, Parvathi, Saptamathrikas, Durga, and

Mahishasura. The mark of Hoyasala found on the Adhithana of the common Mukhamandapa indicates the influence of the Hoyasala style on this temple. (Subrahmanya Kumar VV (2003). The sculptor adhered to the principles of Shilpashashtra in distinguishing the characteristics of divine, semi-divine, human, male, and female figures. The Kiratarjuniya story, along with all sculptures, was crafted with exceptional excellence that evokes aesthetic appreciation in the observer; nonetheless, some sculptures were defaced by iconoclasts following the downfall of the Vijayanagara dynasty.

The Vijayanagara kings wanted to bring religion and mythology closer to the folks to provide a spiritual education and showcasing the glory of God and representing scriptural teaching through sculptures. By carving mythological themes people, will enlighten and know the miracles, teachings, incarnations of Gods and goddesses, , blessings, prophesy etc. The iconography channels for the devotees to worship their beloved Gods and goddesses to receive divine character.

This study is a fruitful attempt to expose Andhra Pradesh's strong heritage and artistic development which confirms that temple art forms were the part of matrix of beliefs, rituals, morals, social, codes, mythology or history and the manner of representation, is restricted by the skills passed on from one generation to the other.

The art and architecture of Chennakesava demonstrate the artistic accomplishments of the ancient descendants of the dynasties that governed this Rayalaseema region for ages. The majority of the boulders and rocks were carved into exquisite architectural structures and relief sculptures characterized by opulence and intricate ornamental qualities. Over the past 15 years, there has been a notable increase in large number of pilgrims and visitors to this temple and emerged as a tourist spot in Kadapa, facilitated by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The local governance, youth, temple management, and devotees annually commemorate the temple festival. INTACH's Kadapa chapter, led by Sri Khambam Chinnapa Reddy, an executive committee member of INTACH, India, and the Rayalaseema Tourism and Cultural Society are diligently working on par with local organizations and the government of Andhra Pradesh.

I always wondering by seeing these sculptures that how that all these works are carved with meticulously and with intricate details by the hands of Indian sculptor where there is no provision of any mechanical devices in those times. And a question rose in me that are we (our present day architects, sculptors and engineers) able or capable to recreate all these temples in this technical age? I replied to myself as not possible, forever.

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