



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2017; 3(2): 146-148
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 23-12-2016
Accepted: 24-01-2017

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Superstructure architecture of Ghanpur group of temples in Kakatiya times

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Abstract

The excellence of the kakatiya architecture and sculpture is revealed in the constructions of a later age. They include the famous temples at Hanumakonda, Warangal, Pillalamarri and palampet. The thousand pillar temple known as the Rudreswara temple at Hanumakonda constructed by Rudradeva in 1162 A.D. Stands as a testimony for the great architectural triumph of the age of the kakatiyas. The ceilings, the portals, the inner walls and pillar of this temple and colossal image of Nandi-all built of granite and black stone were finely chiselled, elaborately decorated with intricate designs and perfectly proportioned with amazing skill and mastery, depicting the figures of animals, deities and scenes from the epics.

The Ganapeswara Swamy temple complex is a 13th century Kakatiya wonder located at a partly-excavated spot amidst rice fields, outside Ghanpur, a small village near palampet. The temple complex has red sandstone shrines dedicated to lord Siva. Known locally as Kota gullu, the complex currently has two east-facing Siva shrines. The temple and the village are named after Ganapathi Deva, the kakatiya ruler during whose reign the shrines were constructed. It is situated 65km from Warangal via Parakala.

Keywords: Kakatiyas, Ghanpur, Kota Gullu, superstructure, architecture, temple, lord Siva, inscriptions

Introduction

The Kakatiyas were one of the major rules of Andhra Desa for about three hundred twenty years from 1000 A.D. to 1323 A.D. The Sub-ordinate rulers associated with early Kakatiyas – Viriyala and Natavadi families were the earliest associated who were subjected to Rastrakutas later to Chalukyas of Kalyani were shared the common interest of independency and further promoted by their relationship for a long period for the benefits of the Kakatiyas for the fulfillment of their political aspirations. maintain control over the different regions Kakatiyas appointed as rulers – The Recharla Reddies were appointed as the rulers of Anangallu and Pillalamarri region of the present Nalgonda District Ex: Bamma Senani, a sub-ordinate chief of the early Kakatiyas in this family served his successors up to the period of Ganapathi Deva. Similarly, the Malyala Chiefs also followed same traits testified by their inscriptions. The cheruku chiefs were the great warriors and faithful subordinates of the Kakatiyas appointed Kata, I as a ruler of Cheruku region and extended loyalty up to 1323 A.D. The Kakatiyas as in the case of other aspects followed the main architectural style of the Chalukyas period. However the distinct feature of the Kakatiya architecture is the display of more indigenous art than adherence to the tenets laid down in the texts on vastu and silpa. In trikuta temples they closely followed the architecture of the Chalukyas. The locally available granite and sand stone are largely used for the main structures upto the vimana and its super structure being built in brick and lime. Black granite is used for pillars, jams, lintels, decorative motifs and icon.

Ghanpur group of temples

Ghanapuram is veritable museum of kakatiya architecture and art. The temple complex is located on the north-east of the village.

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Altogether nearly 22 temples are constructed here within a stone enclosure. The main temple i.e. Ganapeshwaralayam dedicated to Lord Siva faces east. The 60 pillared natya mandapa to the southern side of the main temple is probably the main entrance to the complex, with 19 subsidiary shrines in rows all around the main temple, and there is another Siva temple, to the north of the main temple. All are built in red sand stone.

Later a mud fortification was reportedly raised all around the entire temple complex probably to protect them and hence, they are locally termed as "Kota Gullu". The inscriptions inscribed on the wall of mukhamandapa of Ganapeshwaralayam refers to the visit of Vibhutigaura, the resident of Srigriri, the house hold servant of Panditaradhya and a native of Machirajupalli near Orugallu.

The other inscription slab refers to certain Ganapati Reddy, who installed Lord Ganapeswara and donated land during the reign of Ganapathi Deva (1199-1262 A.D.) in the cyclic year of "Jayanama samvatsara, Vaisakha Sudha Trayodasi, Bruhaspati Vasaram" (corresponding to 1234-35 A.D.) From the epigraphical evidence, it is believed that the temple was built during the first half 13th Century A.D.

Ghanpur village is situated at a distance of about 6 miles from palampet, in the Mulug taluk of Warangal District. The group of temples here are in the typical Kakatiya pattern and the few inscriptions show that the place was a flourishing town in the Kakatiya times along with Hanamakonda, Warangal and Palampet. Three inscriptions have been found at Ghanpur, of which one is carved on a wall of the Main temple entrance near the devidi and this inscription belongs to the Kakatiya times referring to Vibhuti Gaura, the household servant of Panditaradhya. The temples of Ghanpur twenty-two in number are situated within a double enclosure measuring 260' square. The inner enclosure is constructed of huge blocks of stone.

The Main Temple

The Main temple of the group, which is dedicated to Siva, stands in the centre of the stone enclosure. It is in a ruined state. The temple faces the east and consists of nvaranga, three porches on the east, north and south, the antarala and garbha-grha on the west. The temple has an upapitha. The measurements of the temple are 92'6" from west to east and 55' from north to south. The garbha-grha measures 14 x 14 and antarala 13'4 x 13'4. The upapitha and adsthana of the temple consist of several mouldings as at Palampet. The temple has eight black granite human and animal bracket figure, which are quite identical in their style and form with Palampet brackets. The walls of the temple are treated into broad pilasters and narrow pilasters alternate carved. The doorways of the garbha-grha and antarala are beautifully carved. The antarala doorway has jail work. Siva Tandava is carved on the architrave.

Other Shrines

In a line with the main temple at either end of the compound wall there are two subsidiary temples measuring 65'3" x 65'3" and 48' x 48" respectively. The first temple which stands nearly 25 feet north of the Main temple has porches on the south, east and north of a mantapa and garbha-grha and antarala on the west. The second temple stands nearly 20 feet south of the Main temple.

Along the western wall of the enclosure there are 8 small subsidiary temples in a row. There is group of five shrines to

the north of the Main temple, west to east. The superstructures of these shrines are interesting. They consist of three bhumis with skandha over it. Surmounting the griva is a ribbed and flattened circular stone in some cases and a four-sided stone with a flattened top in other cases.

The Siva temple situated inside Ghanpur village is locally known as "Reddy Gudi". It is believed that the temple was constructed by Ganapathi Reddy, a member of Recharla family. Hence, it is named as "Reddy Gudi".

The Siva temple i.e. Reddy Gudi faces north and consists of grabhagriha, antarala entrance ways on north, east and western sides. Although simple in plan, it is embedded with all the elegant characters present in the nearby main shrine i.e., Ganapeshwaralayam of Kakatiya times.

Ghanpur inscriptions

The village Ghanpur is in Wanaparthy taluq, mahaboobnagar district present Muluk taluq Warangal district at a distance of 65km from the district headquarters.

1. The inscription is engraved on a stone slab lying behind the Z.P.High School. It is in Telugu prose with some Arabic words current among the masses at that time. The epigraph is dated in Saka year 1416, Ananda, which corresponds to 1494 A.D. It registers a lease-out of a cultivable area of the village Ghanpur in favour of merchant community by one (Nizamul Muluk?). The boundaries of the land are given as, beginning from the gate called Sasakhman upto the stream known as Sana Sita Yeru. Just as in the other epigraphs an imprecatory note is given at the end of inscription in which it is exhorted that some penalty would be levied on those who meddle with the arrangement.
2. This inscription is engraved on a pillar which originally belonged to a temple and at present erected near a well in the village. It is dated Saka 1451 Khara, Phalgun 2, Thursday. These details in the cyclic year Khara correspond to Saka 1453(A.D. 1532, February 22) but not to Saka 1451. It records the construction of a well by (-) Muluk son of Yarali for the merit to his progeny. Both Hindus and Muslims should not prevent each other community from taking water from the well.

Conclusion

The Kakatiya period witnessed remarkable activity in the fields of social reconstruction and cultural development. Buddhism and Jainism were completely replaced by the Bhakti cults-Virasaivism and Vaishnavism and the society was finally organized into castes and sub-castes, Agriculture, industry and commerce were promoted. Marco Polo, Amir Khusru and Wassaf paid alluring tributes to the prosperous conditions of the country.

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