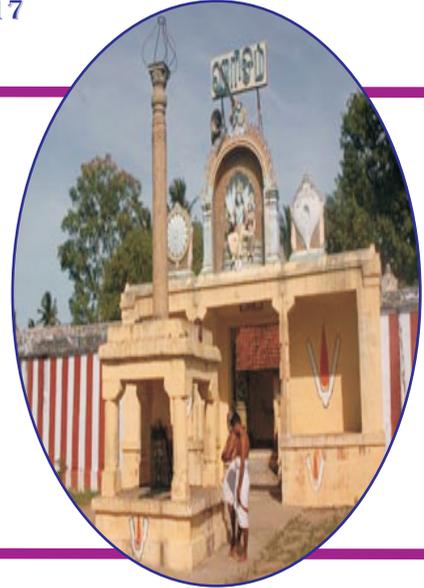




THE ART OF SCULPTURE OF SRI KALYANA VARATHARAJA PERUMAL TEMPLE AT KOLUMAM

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ABSTRACT :

Sri Kalyanavaratharaja Perumal temple near Udumalpet which consists full of Vaishnava Sculptures. The Torana Sculptures are notable one. In the 'garpagruha Devakoshta' of this temple there are no sculptures. Instead of the sculpture that has to be installed there a model of it installed at the central part of the archway in the form of a small relief structure exhibits the growth of the art. Chief among them is the 'garpagruha' south side 'Devakoshta' archways sculpture bears in his upper two hands is on the thigh and the right hand the 'Abaya Muthra'. (To cling to the heels of the Lord is to attain the eternal house). Hence clinging the Lord Garuda and serving him is understood. This archway sculpture which is less than a feet has been sculptured by the Kongu Cholas.

KEYWORDS : Grieva koshta sculpture, Pillared Sculpture, Padmasana, Virasana, Abayamuthra, Varathamuthra, karantha maguta, Suhasana.

INTRODUCTION:

In the same direction at the 'Artha Mandapa Devakoshta' archway Annai Mahalakshmi appears. She is seated in the 'Padmasana' state with the four hands and wears the 'Karantha Maguta'. She has in her upper two hands the Conch and the wheel while the lower two hands the 'Abaya Varatha Muthra'. Though it is a very small relief structure, the divine figure is not ruined. The divine figure on the 'Padmasana' reveals the Kongu Chola artistic features.

METHODOLOGY :

To structure the research article both descriptive and analytical methods are used. In the western side 'Grieva Koshtas' of the 'Vimanas' the 'Narasimha Avatar' has been wonderfully carved. Here, Narasihma staying 'Samhara' is clearly carved. The upper two hands bears the conch and the wheel while the two lower hands is in the posture of killing Hiranyahasibu. The divine faces have been sculptured in accordance to the 'Avatar'. One can see the right of the deity abolishing arrogance can be only is such types of the archway sculptures. This relief Sculpture which is less than a feet in height manifests the growth of Vaishnavism. These model sculptures are the examples of sculptures to be installed in the 'Devakoshtas' in later days. Such type of archway relief sculptures are also found in the north side. Among the north side archway sculptures Maha Vishnu as Venu Gopal is an important creation of art. The upper two hands bears the Conch and the wheel while the lower two hands bears the musical instrument, the flute. Other things that are carved are the 'Maguda' the weapons, the dress and the ornaments. For this beautiful sculpture a small Upa- 'Peeda' has been carved.

In the northern-side 'Devakoshta' of the 'Artha Mandapa' in the archway the Kalinganarthana relief sculpture has been created. The Lord as Kaliganarthana dancing on the snake can be noticed. Such type of archway sculptures can be found only in this temple. Moreover during the growth of Vaishnavism creating such rare sculptures by the Kongu Cholas exhibits their ardent love for the art.

The Vimana Sculptures of the North:

On the first 'Thala' to the north of the 'Vimana' of the temple the posture of Maha Vishnu in the 'Suhasana' state has been carved. The deity seated with four hands facing the north bears the 'Maguda', the 'Keyura' the shoulder-bangles and the hand-bangles with the 'Skanda Mala'. The deity is adorned with Pathra Mahara Kundalas and the ornaments around the neck. It is an important relief structure with the conch, the wheel and the Abaya Muthra.

In the same direction of the 'Grieva Koshta' Hayagirivar appears with Sridevi and Poodevi. The lord is in the Suhasana state with the conch and the wheel and the Abayavaratha Muthra and the 'Maguda' on his head. In this sculpture in accordance to the 'Avatar' the face has been personified and created well. The general features are the dress and the ornaments that have been carved. The lord with his consorts 'Sridevi' and 'Poodevi' is a wonderful creation. Sridevi to the right side with the two hands has the 'Padma' in her left hand. To the left side of the lord is Poodevi with two hands, the right hand bearing the 'Padma' while the left hand in 'dolakastha'. Such type of the collection of sculptures can be seen in the Vainava temples. The north-side of the 'Vimana' bearing Mahavishnu and Hayagreeva has many other relief sculptures. The 'bhudaganas' that bear the 'Prasthara' and the sculptures of Garuda in the worshipping posture of the corners of the 'Grieva' seated adds beauty to the scene.

The Vimana Sculptures-west:

In the first 'Thala' to the west side of the 'Vimana' Narasimha appears as Lakshmi Narasimha. The Lord bearing Lakshmi to his left side, has in his upper two hands the conch and the wheel while the lower left hand bears Lakshmi and the right hand the 'Abaya Muthra' in the seated posture. With the beautiful face suited for the Narasimha 'Avatar', the sculpture has been carved with the 'Maguda'. Ornaments like the 'sacred thread' the 'Keyura' the shoulder-bangles, the hand-bangles and the lower-dress have been carved with the deity in the 'Suhasana' state seated. This 'Lakshmi' relief sculpture has been carved following the artistic features of the 'Ahamas' with the 'Padma' in the right hand. In the 'Grieva Koshta' Narasimha in the 'Suhasana' state is seated with Sridevi and Poodevi with the conch and the wheel and the 'Abayavartha Muthra'. The Sridevi and Poodevi sculptures have the 'Padmas' and the 'Karanda Magudas'.

They are in the 'Thiripanga' state adorned with ornaments and dressed in high artistic excellence. On both sides of this fantastic sculpture the sculptures of the elephants and Yazhies are found. To the west side of the 'Vimana' many sculptures have been carved showing the deity in different stages which have to be scrutinized. In the archway sculptures the 'Ukura Narasimha' and the 'Lakshmi Narasimha' have been carved in the first 'Thala'. In the 'Grieva Koshta' Narasimha along with Sridevi and Poodevi has been engraved with a mild attitude. Having carved Narasimha at various levels can be understood from this.

The Vimana Sculptures in the South:

In the first 'Thala' Thirumal appears in the sitting posture. This sculpture bears the 'Abaya Muthra', with the ornaments and the 'Maguda'. The dress is to the toe and the 'Ejgnopavitha' has been worn. Other decorative features are the Pathra 'Kundalas' and the hand bangles. This sculptures is seated and faces to the south with a minimum of ornamentation.

Maha Vishnu with his consorts are in the sitting posture in the 'suhasana' state with the 'Maguda', the conch, the wheel and the 'Abayavaratha Muthra'. The Consorts have been adorned with ornaments and in their they bear the 'Padmas' and on their head the 'Karanda Maguda'. On both the sides of the collection of sculptures the 'Vahana' sculptures have been carved.

VIMANA SCULPTURES-EAST:

In the 'Grieva Koshta' MahaVishnu appears with his consorts as Kalyana Varatharaja Perumal. On all the sculptures in accordance to the 'Agamas' 'Magudas' ornaments, different variety of dress with artistic grandeur, the shoulder-bangles, the hand-bangles with good craftsmanship, the different features and the weapons have been engraved. Near it are the sculptures of 'Garuda' in the sitting posture and that the elephant in the standing posture. In the 'Vimana' 'Prasthara' the 'bhudaganas' are all relief sculptures.

The Vimana stucco Sculptures of Vedavalli Thayar Sannathi:

In the 'Grieva Koshta' of this 'Sannathi' Mahalakshmi in the 'Samapanga' is in the 'Suhasana' state with the four hands bearing the conch and the wheel and the 'Abaya Varatha Muthra'. The general features of this sculpture are the 'Karanda Maguda' and the jewels. On both the sides of the sculpture the 'Vahana' is of relief in structure. Other features of the sculpture are the dress and the physical features.

In the north side of the 'Vimana' in the 'Grieva Koshta' the consorts of Brahma namely Brahmi figure has been carved. The four hands bear the respective weapons like the 'Akchamala', the 'Kamandala' and the 'Abaya Varatha Muthra'. Annai is in the 'Suhasana' state with four faces. It has along jada with it the 'Vahanas' also.

Usually it is customary to carve 'Parvathy Devi' though it is a Saiva Vainava Temple in the south side of the 'Grieva Koshta'. On the other hand the divine figure of Lakshmi has been wonderfully carved in the 'Aasana' state. The main features of the sculpture are the conch, the wheel, the 'Abaya Varatha Muthra', the 'Karanda Maguda', the 'Kandihai', the 'aara', the hand-bangles and the ornaments around the waist. Though the Annai is seated in the 'Grieva Koshta' eight types of statues are also found. Among them Gajalakshmi is the first one. Annai with the two hands can be spoken in connection with the various levels like Samanya Lakshmi, Indira Lakshmi, Vara Lakshmi, Thayai Lakshmi, Thairiya Lakshmi, Santhana Lakshmi, Maha Lakshmi, Aathi Lakshmi and Dhana Lakshmi.

In the east-side the 'Vimana' in the 'Grieva Koshta' Annai Maha Lakshmi appears as Vadavalli Thayar, in par with the Moolavar facing the east. She is seated in the 'Arthapadmasana' state with four hands, the upper two hands bears the 'Neeloth pava flower' while the lower two hands the 'Abaya Vartha Muthra'. Though it is a relief structure it reveals the growth of the ait. The 'Grieva Koshta' of Annai sannathi can be explained likewise. Yet all the sculpture have been carved in the 'Arthapamasana' state with four hands, in par with Vishnu and with weapons that can be connected with Vainava.

VEDAVALLI THAYAR MOOLAVAR:

Vedavalli Thayar seated in the sub-'Sannathi' with four hands is seated facing the east. In the divine figure of Annai various noted features are found. This figure which belongs to the early stage bears the beautiful 'Karanda Mandapa' and with 'Kundalas' hanging from the ears. The upper two hands bear the 'Padmas' while the lower two hands has the 'Abaya Varatha Muthra'. Annai has adornments the 'Charapali' the 'Kandihai' the 'Aaxa' the ornaments around the waist the shoulder-bangles and the hand-bangles. The divine figure which is three feet tall is put up on the 'Peeda' which is nearly two feet in height. The figure is so exquisitely carved with all the artistic features which attracts anybody. This divine figure is the wife of Maha Vishnu which bears the artifacts of the later Nayaks days. Among the figures found here in the sub-'Sannathi', the big figure is that Vedavalli Thayar. On the dress also mystical ornamental craftsmanship has been displayed. This reveals the architectural designs of the modern days.

The Kalapada Sculptures:

It is amazing to find many very small relief structures in the 'Kanda' portion of the outer Upa-Peeda of the 'Maha Mandapa' of Kalyana Varatharaja Perumal Temple. Having shown two human figure in the circular-shape is indeed a manifestation of the growth of the art. Next to these figures the 'Kodikarukku' craftsmanship with the Yazhi face is amazing. The relief sculptures of Ramanuja has been dexterously engraved. Another sculpture of an aged man seated is less than half-a-feet. The deity seated in the 'Veerasana' state and appearing before the devotees and in return flooded in happiness the devotees worship the Lord. The dancing sculptures of the village folk irrespective of the sex is also wonderful. Another lady sculpture is found fanning and its head-decoration has

been in the port folio fashion which reminds of the Vijayanagar Nayaks days. This type of relief structures can be found in the Upa-Peeda of Muthukumarasamy Sannathi on the campus of Palani, Aulmigu PeriyaNayakiamman Temple. The same sculptures being carved as relief structures on the pillars can be found in the Balasamudram Ahobila Varatharaja Perumal Temple and in Palani, Latkshmi Narayana Temple.

The Stucco Sculptures of the Vahana Mandapa:

At the north side entrance of the 'Vahana Mandapa' Mahavishnu appears as Vaikundanatha. He is found endowing blessings to the devotees by sitting under the five-headed snake in the 'Veerasana' state. Beautiful 'Maguda' and tuft of hair are found carved on the sculpture. Other ornaments that have been well carved are 'Keiyura', the shoulder-bangles, the hand-bangles, the ornaments around the neck and the 'Pathra Kundalas'. This sculpture with the holy-string has in its upper two hands the conch and the wheel while the left hand of the two lower hands rests on the thigh and the 'Abaya Muthra' in the right hand. Though the sculpture the deity seated on the snake has been cleverly carved. The archway craftsmanship with the face of the elephant has been given to this sculpture. Though it is a relief structure this divine figure has been carved equal to that of the 'Moolavar'.

Hanuman Sculpture (Pillared Sculpture):

In the days of the Vijayanagar and Nayaks days carving relief sculptures on the pillars has been in vogue. Hence the Epic and Purana sculptures were prevalent in their days. In accordance to this the figure of Aanjaneya has been carved with the regular features. In this temple itself for the nearly three feet tall pillar-sculpture a beautiful Upa-Peeda has been erected. This sculpture which faces the Moolavar reminds are of the Vijayanagar Nayaks days. The right hand is in the lifting posture while the left hand is in the Katya 'Valampitha' state. In this sculpture the figure of Hanuman being carved distinctively manifests the growth of Vainava. Other features of this sculpture are the ornaments around the neck, the lower dress and the 'Thanda' around the ankle of the leg.

The Stucco Sculpture of Vahana Mandapa-West:

Opposite to the 'Vahana Mandapa' Arulmigu Kalyana Varadaraja Perumal is seated in the 'Sampanga' state with the conch and the wheel. His lower two hands namely his right hand has the 'Abayavaratha Muthra' and the left hand is in the Katya 'Valampitha' state. In accordance to the structure of the sculpture the upper garments, the ornaments around the neck and the holy-string have been engraved. The lower garments with many fold and the ornaments namely the 'Kundalas' increase the beauty of the sculpture. On both sides of the lord the divine figures of Sridevi and Poodevi have been carved in 'Thiripanga' state. Annai Sridevi is adorned with the 'Karanda Maguda' the ear-rings and the ornaments around the neck. She is donned with the dress up to the toe. She has the 'Padma' in her left hand and the 'Tola Muthra' in the right hand and the 'Tolahastha' which are the chief features of the art. In par with the excellence of Sridevi, Poodevi sculpture has also been sculptured. In certain temples for the figure of Sridevi the breast cloth has been tied while for the figure of Poodevi no such breast cloth has been tied. This is to identify Sridevi from Poodevi. The figures that are found in this temple are carved in the like manner. This collection of sculptures have been shown with the respective decoration in a belighting manner with the face of the elephant. On both sides of these sculptures the weapons of the Lord namely the conch and the wheel have been carved.

Vahana Sculpture:

In the small 'Sannathi' at the front 'Mandapa' in this temple the 'Vahana' of the Lord namely the 'Garudan' has been carved facing the Moolavar in the worshipping posture. This figure which is three-feet in height in the 'Anjali Muthra' bears the 'Maguda' on the head. There are no other figures other the Mahavishnu and that he is Narayana, Thirumal and Kalyana Varatharaja Perumal is very well understood. In this sculpture the features of the Garuda has been distinctively carved. Ornaments like the 'Charapali' the 'Kandihai', the 'Kundalas' and the hand-bangles have been shown. Dress made of different artistic designs has been shown to the toe.

In the 'Vahana Mandapa' and all the 'Sannathies' of the Vainava temples this sculptures is seen seated facing the Moolavar and the divine grace of the Lord.

The Sculptures of the Maha Mandapa:

On either side of the 'Maha Mandapa' the individual sculptures of the Aalwars in rows are seen seated. They are the sculptures of Ramanujar, Namalvar, Thirumangai Aalvar, Periya Aalvar and Sudarsana Murthi.

Ramanujar:

Through this one can understand the ways adopted to attain the foot of the Lord by the devotees. For the growth of Vaishnavism Ramanujar extended full contribution. He had Sriman Narayanan as the first deity and his contribution to Vaishnavism is tremendous. He started the 'Varnasara' method and adopted the single way of attaining the foot of the Lord. His figure is nearly two feet tall and is seen worshipping the Kalyana Varatharaja Perumal with the 'danda' to his left side. To attain the bliss of the Lord one should possess sincere piety and simplicity is understood from him. Seated in the state of 'Padmasana' he is very simple in appearance.

The Ornaments and the dress that have been worn by him are simple. On the face of this sculpture one can notice the sincere state of finding the Lord. The divine appearance of Ramanujar is a sure proof to know that one when he lives in the world itself he can attain the divine grace of God.

Namalvar:

The Aalvars are the divine sages who sowed the seeds of Vaishnavism to grow. The 'Pasuras' of Nammalvar are about the Lord. He is the one who understood that the Lord who is seated in tall the Vaishnava temple is no one other than Mahavishnu. Nammalvar is put up on the Upa-Peeda at a height of a feet nearly with two hands and in the 'Padmasana' state. Though he has the left hand his right hand bears the 'ChinMuthra'. From this divine figure one can understand that to attain the feet of the Lords one has to clean his heart. He appears with the 'Jada' and is very simple. It is an independent sculpture with the 'Kundalas' and simple ornaments.

Sudarsana Moorthi:

The deity Sudarsana Moorthi appears as Moorthi to the right side of the 'Maha Mandapa' facing the east. This sculpture which belongs to the early days has been carved with full decoration. The upper two hands bears the conch and the wheel the left hand of the lower two hands has the 'Viyakyana Muthra' while the right hand the 'Kadamuthra'. For the 'Padma' of this sculpture a beautiful 'Maguda' has been worn along with the ornaments like the 'Keiyura' the shoulder-bangles, the hand-bangles, the 'Charapali', the 'Kandihai' and the holy-string. He is seated in the 'Artha Padmasana' state. Many sculptures have been engraved but this sculpture is adorned with the ancient ornaments. The face exhibits the piety and religious fervour. The eternal bliss can be attained only by seeing God. This state has been manifested through this sculpture.

Thirumangai Alwar:

This figure can be seen as an independent sculpture to the left side of the Maha Mandapa. Among the four heads, the upper two hands bear the 'Padma' while the lower two hands the 'Abayavaratha Muthra'. This figure is nearly three feet tall, facing the east and in the sitting posture. She is seated in the suhasana state wearing very simple jewels. The face blessing with grace can very well be noticed that she has seen the lord. The devotees also if they worship with piety and sincerity will get the eternal bless from the lord.

Periyalwar:

Periyalwar occupies a special niche in his ardent efforts in the growth of vainavam. It is an ancient sculpture and is nearly two feet in height, He is in the badasana state and is very simple in appearance. He has the Varadha muthra in his left hand while his right hand bears the sin muthra. On the head of the sculpture a duft of hair is scene. Seated on a peeda of a feet in height the figure of periyalwar reveals a face that has already seen god. The sculpture is no ornaments are decorations and is dressed with simple lower garments while the upper body lies bare. This is why the divine figures of the alwar have been kept here to prove that they had been instrumental in the flourish of vainavam. Independent sculptures and divine figures of the alwars in greater

number can be found in the other vainava temple.

The relief sculptures of the pillars of the Maha mandapa:

In the mahamandapa four pillars have been erected with high decorations. In the brahmakanda part beautiful relief sculptures exhibit the traditions of the later kongu cholas. Beautiful floral designs have been created on the pothihais on the brahmakanda portion of the pillar a relief sculpture of Garuda has been engraved in the standing posture. It is two feet in height and is put up on a feet tall peeda and wearing Anjali muthra and wearing the maguda. For this sculpture the decoration and the dress have been carved in a very simple manner. It is a novel device to see the Kodikarukku craftsmanship on either side of the relief sculpture. On the pillars that resemble these many relief sculptures are engraved. Among the ten avatars of Mahavishnu the chief one is Kurma avatar which has been engraved as relief sculpture. This sculpture which is nearly two feet in height bears the weapons of Mahavishnu with the decorative maguda on the head, the sculpture has the conch and the wheel on the upper two hands and the lower two hands bears the abayavaratha muthra. From the waist to the head it has the figure of the human being. While from the waist down to the toe the figure is that of Kurma. Having the above shown the legs of the kurma and the human figure reveal that there is no partiality is endowing grace to the lives. The lord protects the lives of the organisms that live on the land as well as that of the once that live under water. The artisans of today who have carved many divine sculptures have not failed to carve the dancing man and woman.

In the four sided pillar found here to the east a ladies sculpture nearly a feet in height is in the dancing posture one can visualize the ardent fervour and devotion that the dancing girl thus for the art. Through the art of dancing artists have attained the feet of god is also understood. This sense has been very well brought out. It is astonishing to note the dexterity of the artist in bringing about hair involvement in the dancing posture. This sculpture which is nearly a feet in height is different from other sculptures. The artisans who carved such type of relief structures have chiseled the Hanuman sculpture in par with the Garuda at a height of two feet. It is thought provoking to see the cleverness of the artist in bringing out all the artistic and facial expressions of the figure. The sculpture shown in the mood of activation exhibits the sculptural art and its flourish.

The Sculpture of Gajalakshmi:

The artisans who have carved beautiful sculptures have also carved the divine figure of Gajalakshmi at the entrance of the 'Gopura'. She is figured as seated on the 'Padmasana' with the 'Maguda' on the head. She has in her upper two hands the 'Padmas' while her lower two hands bear the 'Abaya Varatha Muthra'. For the Annai beautiful dress has been donned and ornaments have also been worn seated on the lotus flower she faces to the east. On either side of the figure the figures of the elephants have been sculptured in the standing posture.

CONCLUSION

The manuscript presents the following suggestions. Kalyana Varatharaja Perumal seated as Moolavar is in the 'Samapanga' state with her consorts facing the east. The Lord's upper two hands bear the conch and the wheel while the two lower hands has the tied 'Valampitha' state and the 'Abaya Muthra'. The figure is crowned with a long 'Maguda' with many pretty decorations on it. The 'Kundalas' hang from the ears and around the neck ornaments have been worn with holy-string across the chest. The dress flows from the waist to the toe and is worn with hand and shoulder bangles. Importance has been given to the facial expressions since the divine 'Sculpture' is the Moolavar. The deity is shown as ready to endow blessings for the devotees. To the left side of the Lord is the figure of Annai Sri Vedavalli as the Thayar. She is crowned with the 'Karanda Maguda' and plenty ornaments are worn. The left hand of Annai Vedavalli Thayar is on the 'Tola hastha' while the right hand there is the 'Padma'. Chief among the ornaments that are worn are the 'Charapalli', the 'Kandihai' and the 'Aara'. The dress is carved to the feet and is seated in the 'Thiripanga' state. To the right side of the Moolavar Poodevi appears equal to that of Sridevi. The 'Thiripanga', the ear-rings, ornaments around the neck and the hand-bangles have been shown in plenty. She has the 'Padma' in her right hand. These sculptures that stand as Moolavars are very ancient. All the figures are erected on the 'Padma Peeda' which is two feet in height.

On the top of the Peeda which is nearly a feet tall Arulmigu Kalyana Varatharaja Perumal appears. This sculpture is at a height of four feet. The figure of Sridevi is a title taken than that of Poodevi. The contribution of the Kongu kings for Vaishnavism can be known from this account and we have to preserve our temple arts.

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