

# Architectural Erection of the Sculptural Lingodhbava in a Space and Space and the Space

The Small Circular Temple at a Tank Adjacent To the Shore Temple of Mamallapuram

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## ABSTRACT

The Imperial Pallavas built many temples at their region. Their region was known as Tondaimandalam. Tondaimandalam consist then Chola country and some parts of Southern Andhra. The Pallavas partook for their excellence to their fecund attempts on religious architectural projects from the local art tradition, instead of then explored Gupta style of northern tradition which known as Nagara style. The Tamil Tradition of art and architecture later named as Dravidian art when at naming them under regional wise. Though, many dynasties of India given marvelous contribution to Indian art and architecture but, the innovations of the Pallavas were unique in all aspects. Their structural creativity and representational beauty with decorative pluses were treated aesthetically even beyond that. Therefore, this paper find one of their brand showing understanding on Metaphysics, that, this time not in medium of Sculpture but through architectural depiction is an amazing brilliance of the Pallava Kings and their creative Artists. In general, if a concept goes to depict through visual arts since, is rightly by painting or sculpture. But here entirely that concept depicted through a medium of architecture is the paper's fine interpretations.

**Keywords** – Tank, Rock, Circular Temple, Monolithic, Lingodhbava, Varaha, Rajasimha.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in abstract, The Pallavas built many temples at their region. Those are been with Dravidian style since, having eight or six faceted sikaras crowned at Nārchadura vimanam. Nārchadura vimanam is a Tamil name meant a pyramidal structure of sanctum whose top has truncated; over on the sikara ought to be place. Except of this topical temple; Pallavas never erected such a hemispherical domed vimanas somewhere, according the list of their initial attempts until the period of Nandivarman II (732-796 C.E). In certain, there could be no custom prior to them of hemispherical sikara whilst they did not attempt on. Probably it could be a new effort that causes, perhaps, of the concept has produced it accidentally. Likewise this small temple, we have plenty of them but all at one placed that too in one campus. Of course,

this can seeable at the famous Kailasanatha temple of Kanchipuram, those all are having Dravida style vimanas. Particularly, they all chiseled with eight faceted sikaras. They are two storied vimanas though smaller in size since, seems as aedicules of vimana-hara but placed around the main shrine to form a prakara. This is absolutely an amazing composition.

### Architectural feature

The temple we took here to analyze is in a circular form specially featured as a partly monolithic and partly a built one. However, the built structural has not built stone by stone since also it is a monolithic. Thus, the temple has been with four components. Since, the adhishtana, pithi, a portion of pirastharam to griva and sikara all are the parts which assembled to proportion a temple. Though the temple proportioned with four parts but natured with six. This is

known in Tamil as āru avayam whilst in Sanskrit shadvarga or familiarly known six angas as per the canonical laws. [1]

### **Structural - Monolithic Combo**

As said above, the Pallavas having clear mind on their doings and given full freedom to their artists to bring very new dimension in art. Here need to say, the artists were the people belongs to a particular community known in Tamilnadu as 'Thachar' also known as Viswabramins or Viswakarmas in Sanskrit term those eagerly shown their attributions without off minded. This is clearly evidenced on each and every works of the entire phases of Indian art. In those days the Thachar is the all in all have created both art and architecture. Since the head of the Thachan is called in Tamil as 'Perunthachchan' meant an artist the great. [2]

A structural - monolithic combo which a new technique according to that place where the ideation blossomed due to the material nature. Yes, the material is a sunken piece of rock on the shore or a continuing one of the main shrine particularly to the small western temple of the duo. Hence, due to the dimension of the rock particularly on its top side that determined the nature of the work. In fact, the rock could be as a flat one with considerable elevation but little high at its south end. Of this kind of proportion, the King and the Artists have might had been discuss as how to use and convert as a work of art in this considerable sized piece of rock or the extension of the main boulder. Thus, the discussion may be able to bring the same treatment of the 'place worth' that treated earlier in the Shore Temple. Since the sea and the shore and particularly the rock these three elements combined to click on one more compositional creativity that resulted as the circular small temple especially in a tank. Indeed, the sunken or a lower position of the rock that too has to be considered with the ambience. The atmosphere that is the location is main here, where the erection of two temple for Siva and Vishnu, the later particularly in recumbent posture in between the duo, on which a separate research have written and published by this author in an international Journal. [3]

### **Orientation**

The small circular temple campus which on we are discussing here is located in north side of the Shore temple, adjacently.

As said before, the Shore temple which erected on a natural rock since the rock treated as a terrace partially. In further, in fact the west facing Small Temple namely known as Rajasimeswara which its adhistana mouldings were in two categories. This is evidentially traceable at north-east side of adishtana where exactly at corner, a piece of moulding carved in mother rock as adhishtana. From this part the continuation of adhishtana by dressed stones were followed. This is again very clearly visible in southern adhishtana of centrally treated Anandhasayanamurty Temple. [4] Probably the entire adhishtana of the mid temple's western and the southern sides were entirely carved in the mother rock itself. Though this temple and its adhishtana is paralleled with the frontal small temple's running continuity but the former's adhistana varga were not in relation with the later. Thus the adhishtana of Anandhasayanamurty sub shrine has designed with the simple padhabanda adhishtana, whilst its tripatta kumuda seems immediately just above to the jagati of it. Opposite to this, the adhishtana of the both eastern big and western small temple were designed with padma banda adhishtana. [5] Pada and Padma the both words are look almost same since to be read with little care to know the variation of the form of adhishtanas. Therefore their trippatta kumudha seems little higher than the Vishnu Temple's. Of this we have to do a cross-check on the other sub work of the main campus that follows below.

### **Adhishtana of the Monolithic Lion sculpture**

Since, we can assume that the Vishnu Temple of centre was quite earlier to both front and the back temples because of the former's adhishtana are in plain of earlier style. And the observation made keenly by me, on the adhishtanas of the main temples in situ, they were designed with the same style though they built in different time. Beside this, the adhishtana of a lion sculpture found near prakara wall at south side is also having the same style. The lion sculpture itself a separate monolithic and too placed on a partly monolithic adhishtana of an original rock probably a continue one to the main mother rock of main temples. The lion itself sized with 5.3 feet high, whilst its adhishtana is with 2.5 feet. A special mention must here on the lion which its chest set up with a deep niche that sized with 1¼ x 1¼ feet square, in that a relief figure of Durga has been carved. This is an outstanding attempt carving a

figure at in the much deeper niche which is  $37\frac{1}{2}$  centimeters deep. The given measurements are exacts, taken by author myself. Why because, if insert both hands to chisel the figure at the depth of the niche, the vision could be hidden by both the occupied hands of the sculptor. Also hammering should be done while at carving, with huge discipline and restriction because, the diagonal strokes may chance to damage the square proportion of the front surface of the niche. The repeated slight or some time heavy blows of hammer might causes loss of concentrations and thus chancing the disproportion or even the figure can be disfigured. Therefore, this was neatly followed that can see in the square without any aberration by wrong chiseling and hammering. This is amazing and beyond. (See figure: 4)

### Plan of the campus

This is a sub campus as mentioned earlier adjacently created to the main campus of the Shore temple in north side. In addition, this underground campus which, exactly being situated quite opposite to the small west shrine of Rajasimheswara of the main campus, is note worthy. Though, it is even an undergrounded but not sealed at top dealt as a tank with three sides of steps. However a tank but not proportioned as a regular shapes of rectangular or a square.

The sub campus having four components such as:

1. Tank, 2. Circular - Temple, 3. Monolithic Varaha, 4. Circular well.

1. Tank: This is a small sized tank and a composition to a familiar concept with aesthetical value is a rectangular one. However, both its short sides are having curvy shapes. Since, the south side curve is having good proportion reflects the parallel of the bulgy profile body of varaha. However, the curve of Southside that somewhat did not have symmetry.

The size of the tank is 27' x 18' in approx but the measurement given is almost nearest. The tank is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep composed with a varaha sculpture. [6]

### Applied Science

2. A Small Circular temple: it is a circular temple could be first of its kind according to the living sources, erected over on an embedded rock at the centre of the tank. As described

earlier the temple is designed in four parts instead of usually six or eight, due to semi structural and semi monolithic treatment. This is a one storey shrine, does not have munnāli or ante camber. [7] The karuvarai or garbagriha is being designed in square but its exterior suvar or pithi (wall) coincide with circular uniformity of the whole. The pithi designed with pilasters, having rampant lions as usual of Rajasimha temples. As mentioned earlier, the structure of the karuvarai is a monolithic part separately casted and fixed on a monolithic adhistana of that original rock. The karuvarai consist a relief sculpture of vrishabarudar which means Lord Siva seated on a bull, the latter is vahana of him. This is  $2\frac{1}{4}$  x  $2\frac{1}{4}$  feet sized square sanctum and its depth is one feet just. The adhistana of this temple is interestingly applied with a design of polygons which dealt on upana. The upana having two steps since its 8x8 feet bottom is with octagonal whilst the above of 6x6 feet is with sixteen sided. The idea of polygonal is on particularly of upana is have rightly chosen because to parallel the tanks linear proportion and too with varaha sculpture. This disciplinal design reflects the pure skill of the sculptor – maestro. Over of this upana, the padmabanda jagati designed with fosse like water pit, formed as usual in circular structure which on the vedi a final top molding has been carved in respect. The next part that is the third of, which being includes with pirastharam to grivam or from entablature to the neck is also a monolithic, casted in single stone. The prastharam here brilliantly handled as a shape of lotus which a portion familiarly used in the Pallava pillars below to the palaka. On which a well proportioned circular kapotam has projected gently. The kapotam has having four sukanasikas between regular intervals. The kapotam topped with a vajana which is low heighted one more molding has disciplined with eight figures. Of the figures which, the ganas or the celestial dwarfs exactly carved at four cardinals directions, whilst the yalis arranged between them. Mention must on the vajana, which here dealt strangely as a running niche. As said before, the sikara of this temple is with hemispherical shape. Now the finial part is missed; if there, could be nearly one foot high or even less, because to maintain the top portion of phallus imitation. Sikara is the fourth part of the temple also casted in single block up to finial. Below to sikara is griva which is a top of the third part that again composed with four figures thus per direction. They are the squatted dwarfs blowing the

conches. The sikara having makanasis at their four sides figured with the Lord Ganesha at their centre.

### Iconography of Monolithic Varaha

3. The varaha: is belongs to vainava cult though it was chiseled with equal dimension at the Saiva campus. It is known as, according to Hindu mythology, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, familiarly known for lifting the earth or Bhumadevi from the ocean (cosmic) and at, the other of myth of Lingodhbava where he digging the earth to find the feet of the Lord Shiva. Therefore, the figure of varaha chiseled with care, not merely as seen in northern India's free standing sculptures seems with ornamented decorations. The varaha sized with 6 feet breadth and 5 feet height. Thus the size strikes the valour and mighty of the incident and the Lord. The posture of the varaha seems with its nature of gesture while at digging. Thus the frontal legs are being in forward while the backs supporting the action firmly. The face of it perfectly modeled to the forcible action, since seems downward as digging vigorously. The varaha figure stood at its base or pedestal which contains some inscriptions at its facets. Thus, the north and west side facets having inscriptions in certain paleographic style; since, those daringly reflect their period belongs to King Rajasimha (700 – 728 C.E).

Inscription: north side Facet: 'Sri Chithrakarmuka' which is an epithet name of the King Rajasimha.

Inscription: west side facet: 'Sri Rajasimha', 'Sri Ranajaya', 'Sribara'. [8]

Therefore the first is directly bear the name of him, the second is his epithet meant a man of victorious wars; the third is also epithet, means a man who bares the wealth as Vishnu. The provided inscriptions here ensure that the creation belongs to him.

4. The circular well as mentioned earlier is 3½ feet diameter, situated 5 feet distance to the circular temple and the gap between the north walls is 8 feet. The irregular gapping system of the axis of south – north is raising a question again. Because, we can come to a point as that the gap was maintained as so due to the rocks nature. In addition the gap between the circular temple's upana and pedestal of varaha is just 1¼ feet distance only which must be mentioned here.

Besides, the well is at its eastward having a square extension or projection, which imitates the komuki of later Avudai of Linga. The extension part consist a west facing relief sculpture with seated goddess associated with two female attendants on either sides. Further the well is a continuation and a monolithic of the same rock which is a one view, but in other hand may be a well in monolithic carved in loose stone since, there inserted separately.

### Conception of this sub campus

We discussed in prior that why the sub campus took shape there, even though perpendicular in plan to the main campus. When at the origin of Shore temple constructions, their boulder – base could be clearly visible then, since the composition of the sub campus might be an afterthought or perhaps a continuous outburst. Or else, perhaps may the total plan could be possible in first attempt as of the whole. Or we can assume there two phases of work gone. Thus in second phase the elaboration works or the annex can be possible. Since, our topic's sub campus may be an attempt of second phase bloomed with high maturity.

The main thing is there is the location with natural rocks especially in low heights here and there in various sizes. The uniformity of the whole shore side work of art, all shows a particular phase of style. Hence, they all belong to the period of Rajasimha the Pallava King according to the work nature, since; the first quarter of eighth century was their period. As the plan of the Shore temple as to please the sailors from different countries since, the sub campus too created for the same, but with some execution newness on a Lingodhbava mythology. It's a kind of narration in dimensional demonstration on religion can create impacts at the new visitors. However, the sub campus which recently unveiled from its entirely sunken position, but it is being looked just as usual as an ancient monument. Even the contemporary scholars didn't have scanning eye on them to find its reason. Further, it is difficult to observe or understand by merely history based scholars since, the campus left as maiden simply.

### Proto installation of the Art and Architecture

The contemporary modern art scenario of the world, that being busy with a new trend of art installations both in indoor and at the outdoors. This is a kind of an assemblage sometimes with various mediums or things. On concepts, the mediums or things are decided according to the wish of the artists. I the author of this paper; basically a contemporary painter and sculptor based on Madras also used this kind of installation art works at my art shows. However, this is not a new attempts, very long before was attempted in various periods, but I am not sure about the other attempts, perhaps if been; the outstanding among them or independently could be by the Pallavas obviously. The time, space and the group of great artists as this golden combination were; the plus points to the Pallavas. Thus their works got dimensions in high degrees. Why because their strange locations is a rare one especially with granite boulders as of Mamallapuram. However, I chanced to see a relief sculpture - head of Lord Siva at an embedded rock at Goa beach that also having some location similarity of the former but the only one sculpture is found and noticed so far.

Besides, it is the concept that installed compactly with architectural composition at a special location especially in a tank that purposively composed would be a right view of us. The depth of the tank that symbolizes the sea, from where the earth was rescued by Lord Vishnu by a special avatar in an occasion is to be the varaha. Besides, through this mythological incident they interpret their advent and achievements aesthetically. This was unique of them, hence many of their sculptures having this great execution excellence. However, they seems in history even from 3<sup>rd</sup> century onward, but their region that attain as a sovereign and imperial status by hard efforts of Simhavishnu (550 – 580 C.E.), he who defined the vast region of the Pallavas. Thus, the commemoration of him that permanently set for ever celebration by installation in an art medium is the play of aesthetics, though it doesn't strikes at a glance. As well as Narasimavarma Pallavan I (630 – 668 C.E) was a greatest among the Pallava Kings who formed a new kingdom with new extended boundaries also eligible to this hidden concept.

#### The Installation of Lingodhbava

It is the concept visualized primarily at the sub campus whilst the subtle play of them is as fore said matters. The adjacent varaha and the circular temple are the architectural and sculptural figures to the composition of a particular concept whereas, varaha itself stood for the other concept with tank itself. Therefore, Vishnu in varaha avatar digging to find the feet of Lord Shiva, but the depiction of the Linga is not dealt there in sculptural as of the varaha, rather in architecture.

Thus, the Circular temple is the Linga form of Lord Siva's viswarupa, which is a Phallus a venereal part of male, since the temple took the special fluted shape to imitate. Though, the third an important participant to that incident probably not shown purposively; since, the viewers have to think themselves, who is above in space is to be the Brahma.

The later compositions of Lingodhbava in reliefs were composed with centrally an erected Linga. At the centre of the Linga a flame like niche would be depicted with Lord Siva as a Chandrasekhara in samabanga or in a straight pose. Whilst the two other participants of the myth is Brahma and Vishnu respectively, would be depicted as the former at top while the latter at the bottom. The both carved in more animated postures as flying and digging respectively. Sometimes the both were depicted without anthropomorphic forms but with a swan to Brahma whilst a swine to Vishnu. Anyhow, Vishnu if being depicted in human form though he set with swine head is a discipline followed probably.

Thus, the visual was composed with round sculptural and free standing architectural depiction on a concept usually and in fact frequently can see this as relief sculptures in later. Indeed, we can see this Lingodhbava relief sculptures in Chola Period temples particularly in west side devakoshta niches of them. Though, before to Chola the same Pallavas used this composition as a relief sculpture, which is evidently found in their famous Kailasanatha temple of Kanchipuram, at its southern Devakoshta. Yes, it was dealt in reliefs.

The bāṇa of the lingam if fluted as usual in stones called as sculpture or sculpture in round. Also the lingam sometimes depicted in relief technique too. Apart from these two depictions, if the bāṇa or the whole concept as of the Pallava and Chola depictions, perhaps, if architecturally composed how it could be depicted suppose, is obviously a tempting

expectation to all, really the answer is our topic sub campus of installation. Indeed, kind of this understanding never has been attempted by others; before or after, which could be a right statement not excessively said. According to the relief tradition, we have countless relief panels so far produced to depict many themes according to mythology on any sects. Particularly we have a great creative output especially on this, which known as Lingodhbava is a familiar depiction in its kind. The figural depiction of this concept that, where it has been initiated is not yet traced. However, according to the existing things we can say roughly as this temple might be the working reference to introduce the Lingodhbava composition and further newly in reliefs according to my point of view. Why because the earliest temples such as the Shore temple and Panamalai Talagiriswarar Temple near famous Senji Fort town and Olakaneswarar Temple of Mamallapuram all belongs to the Pallavas are not having the relief sculptures of Lingodhbava, at any side of their Devakoshtas. But according to the Shore temple the eastern front temple's western and southern walls or devakoshtas are fully disfigured by erosion, since nothing to say on them. Though, the northern wall's devakoshta figures are very keenly studied by the author me, and those not having the Lingodhbava reliefs. As well as the western small temple's southern wall too disfigured by sea wind and water whilst the western wall is being a wall part of the Vishnu temple since no figures.

Now coming to our matter, the researching circular temple is an architectural execution of Linga as above said, the axis of universe according to me is the Linga, due to that the entire temple from *adishtana* to *sikara* were treated with circular shape. If suppose, the king wants to erect a temple in small scale, usually there would be a square or rectangular bodied temple has been indeed. In certain according to the proportion of the campus, a sala type of vimana or an apsidal structures-like is very suitable to the rectangular tank, rather in rounds. [9] It is easy to determine by anyone since, the attempt is showing the strange that purposively done, is now clear.

### Conceptual and Perceptual

The study of the location that casted a great work of art there by religious and art and architectural wises. The keen perception of both the king and his creative artists on the

atmosphere that set forth very suitable concepts played with double dealing successfully.[10] The duality is the specialty of the Pallavas on these, the author - I have done some very new researches, thus, one came in my book and the others going to be published.

The science of matter and the material by them is with an axial discipline which the threes; as time, space and the existence. With the existing things tried to demonstrate on the existence; is the matter here we are dealing dealt earlier by the Pallavas.

### CONCLUSION

So far the study gone seriously with unviewed attempts probably could be a first of its kind, put forth a fact or a fresh hypothesis for further. Why because the circular temple was, until this temple's coming, have not been constructed. Addition to this, even the Pallavas have not built the free standing single storey temples at anywhere except this. Though, it is a freestanding one, but in a composed manner. Instead of the freestanding temples, they depicted the one story temples of Narchadura vimanas or the pyramidal like proportioned shrines in relief manner at Mamallapuram. For an example, the giant relief of Descent of the Ganges which posses the relief sculpture of a one storey vimana.

The art of India is always having its own discipline because of the conceptual sameness; however, the execution brilliance shows the meditative creativities regional wise. In addition; the Idealistic, mystic, symbolic and transcendental which are the main points have been positioned in a single axis is the essential feature to Indian art. [11] Moreover, a statement by a doyen which is necessary to mention here, which as: "Indian art appeals only to the imagination, and strives to realize the spirituality and abstraction of a supra – terrestrial sphere."



Fig: 1. Circular temple / Varaha sculpture / myself at study



Fig: 2. See the rock is flatly made even as a floor and their elevations beings as work of art.



Fig: 3- Circular Temple – Front Look.



Fig: 4- Monolithic lion sculpture

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- [4] Cf. Michael W. Meister, (ed), , Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture, Lower Dravidadesa, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983, p 55.
- [5] Michael Meister (ed), Encyclopaedia of Indian Architecture, South India Lower Dravidadesa, American Institute of Indian Studies, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983, p 49.
- [6] The provided measurements of all are approximately quoted but were all studied in situ by the author at many time since all the measurements are almost a very nearer to the original sizes.
- [7] Munnāḷi a Tamil word means ardhmandapa in Sanskrit.
- [8] Tha. Johnson Wesley, Inscriptions of Mamallapuram (Tamil), Chennai (nd) p 41.
- [9] The third monolithic rectangular temple among the five vimana samples (five rathas) of Mamallapuram is fine example to sala type of Vimana. For apsidal vimana the fifth monolithic temple adjacent to the monolithic elephant sculpture of the same group is fine example.
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