

CHAPTER - IV

TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

Two noteworthy attempts to synthesize ideas about early Indian architecture, which have exercised great scholarly influence, are Ananda Coomaraswamy's essays on the subject that appeared in 1930 and 1931 in the annual journal *Eastern Art* and Louis Renou's article called "La maison védique" (The Vedic house) that appeared in *Journal Asiatique* in 1939.¹

The temple (*devālaya*) is the house for the God or Goddess. The Vāstu texts present the temple plan as homological to a human body. The human body serves as the plan for all creation as in the *Purusa-sūkta*. The temple structure is homologous to the standing *purusa* as the *śilpa-pañjara*. At a lower level, a similar measure informs the proportions of the sculpted form, that may be standing or seated, and also of painted figures. This body at its deepest level is a body of knowledge. The structure of music is also to be conceived as such a body; hence one can speak of the *sangīta-purusa*, where there exist precise relationships between ascending and descending notes. According to Śārṅgadeva, the musical composition is endowed by the composer with eyes, hands, and feet: it must have balance between opposites: symmetry and asymmetry, movement and pause, recurrence and variation.

¹ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Essays in Early Indian Architecture*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992, p.24.

. The fundamental Vedic idea of recursion represents reality. The recursion is also seen in exterior decoration and composition and its basic compositional elements and grammar related to the joining of these elements has been described in the texts. Adam Hardy sees these elements as shrine-images or aedicules, conceived three-dimensionally and embedded in the body of the temple and on the superstructure.

The temple, together with its images, represents movement and change. This is achieved by the use of projection, extension and repetition across different scales. An extension at the centre of the body of the form is a bhadra; when located at the corner, it is a karma; located between the bhadra and the corner, it is a pratibhadra. Their use in different ways creates unique representations out of the basic Vāstu purusamandala.

Movement is also expressed by increasingly concrete representation of an image, from *niskala* to *sakala*. To illustrate the last idea, the emanations of Śiva are in the form of a formless *linga* as the axis of materiality and consciousness (*niskala*), to the intermediate *niskala-sakala mukha-linga* which has faces in cardinal directions (*Sadāśiva*), to the *sakala Maheśa* (the anthropomorphic Śiva). There are also other variations: Śiva with one face and two hands, or with four hands; Śiva with four, five, eight, or twelve faces; Śiva with bull, lion, or elephant; Śiva and Parvatī; *Ardhnārīśvara*, *Harihara*, *Daksināmūrti*, and *Aja-Ekapad*. The faces emerging out of the plain *linga*, along the cardinal directions, are those of

Sadyojāta, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa, and Vāmadeva. For Maheśa, the corresponding emanations are Śiva, Viṣṇu, Sūrya, and Brahmā.

Śiva inheres in himself all contradictions, just as is the case with our reality. He grants wealth and prosperity but is himself clad in elephant hide and he is a beggar; he is personification of asceticism, yet half of his body is that of his consort. Śiva manifests in different forms: as viśva-rūpa or the universe, as linga-śarīra in the hearts of beings, and as the omnipresent antar-ātman in the heart of all beings. Śiva is also known as Maheśvara, the great Lord, Mahādeva, the great God, and Mrtyuñjaya, conqueror of death. He is the spouse of Śakti, the Goddess. His usual mantra is om namah śivāya. He is a yogin. When symbolized as the Sun at dawn in conjunction with the moon, he is shown with matted locks with the crescent moon, from which streams the river Ganga, symbolic of the Milky Way. He is smeared with ash, symbolizing all that remains at the dissolution of the universe. This dissolution occurs when his third eye opens, which refers to one's symbolic death and renewal with the realization of one's consciousness, which is Śiva. His right hand shows the mudrā dispelling fear, while in his left he holds the trident, symbol of the three worlds, on which is bound the damaru.

THE HINDU TEMPLE

The Hindu temples commonly known as Mandir in Hindi and derived from the Sanskrit word Mandira , are identified by several names in different parts of India as koil or kovil in Tamil , devasthanā in Kanāda and devalaya , in Telugu

etc. In general Hindu temple structure can either be isolated structure or a part of complex.

The character of Hindu temples reflected local architecture styles and the material and skills to which they related. The main forms and styles of the Hindu temple were established during 600-800 AD. The cell or shrine, the garbhagriha (usually square in plan), housed the image and was approached through a columniated porch or mandapa . The shrine was roofed with a pyramidal spire or vertically attenuated dome like structure known as sikhara . The temple as a whole was raised on a massive plinth and was often surrounded by subsidiary shrines and by an enclosing wall pierced by one or more gigantic gateway towers or gopurams . It is the outline and detailing of the sikhara and other roof-forms which determine the character of monumental Hindu architecture and give a formal as opposed to historical basis for its classification.

The architecture of temples varies across India, however while the basic elements of the temple are the same, the form and scale varied. For example as in the case of the architectural elements like Sikhara (pyramidal roofs) and Gopurams (the gateways). This following section describes the evolution of the temple and the development of their architectural styles along their materials of construction.

ELEMENTS OF HINDU TEMPLE

In the words of Stella Kramrisch,² “The temple is the concrete shape (mūrti) of the Essence; as such it is the residence and vesture of God. The masonry is the sheath (kośa) and body. The temple is the monument of manifestation³.

Typically, the temple has a stone or brick structure, which is in the image of a wooden building. Where it is too difficult or expensive to construct a stone or masonry temple, it may be built of wood or any other available material. The idea behind use of stone, but in the image of wood -- normally the building material for the residential house --, is to project that the wooden, or human, nature of the conception is to find expression in the much more permanent stone just as the transcendent category of divinity is given the iconic expression derived from the human world.⁴

It was the latter half of the 7th century that the Hindu temple structures of India began to acquire a definite form⁵. Similar to terminology used to distinguish the basic components of a Gothic Church (for example nave, aisles, chancel, spire, etc), the common elements of a Hindu temple which are known in their original sanskrit words are as follows:

² Kramrisch.S, *The Hindu Temple* University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1946, p.36.

³ *Ibid.*, p.65.

⁴ Meister. M.W, (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture. Vol. 1*, 1996, p.1.

⁵ Fletcher, Sir. Banister. *The History of Architecture*, New Delhi, 1992, p.89.

The sanctuary as whole is known as the Vimana that consists of two parts. The upper part of the Vimana is called as the Sikhara and the lower portion inside the Vimana is called as the Garbhagriha (cella or inner chamber).

1. 'Sikhara' meaning the tower or the spire. It is the pyramidal or tapering portion of the temple which represents the mythological 'Meru' or the highest mountain peak. The shape and the size of the tower vary from region to region.

2. 'Garbhagriha' meaning the womb chamber. It is nucleus and the innermost chamber of the temple where the image or idol of the deity is placed. The chamber is mostly square in plan and is entered by a doorway on its eastern side. The visitors are not allowed inside the garbhagriha in most of the temples, only the priests perform the rituals and worship.

3. 'Pradakshina patha' meaning the ambulatory passageway for circumambulation. It consists of enclosed corridor carried around the outside of garbhagriha. The devotees walk around the deity in clockwise direction as a worship ritual and symbol of respect to the temple god or goddess.

4. 'Mandapa', is the pillared hall in front of the garbhagriha, for the assembly of the devotees. It is used by the devotees to sit, pray, chant, meditate and watch the priests performing the rituals. It is also known as 'Natamandira' meaning temple hall of dancing, where in olden days ritual of music and dance was performed. In some of the earlier temples the mandapa was an isolated and separate structure from the sanctuary.

5. 'Antarala' meaning the vestibule or the intermediate chamber. It unites the main sanctuary and the pillared hall of the temple.
6. 'Ardhamandapa' meaning the front porch or the main entrance of the temple leading to the mandapa . Some other essential elements found in the Hindu temples are
7. 'Gopurams' meaning the monumental and ornate tower at the entrance of the temple complex, specially found in south India.
8. 'Pitha' , the plinth or the platform of the temple.
9. 'Toranas', the typical gateway of the temple mostly found in north Indian temple and Building Science of Indian Temple Architecture
10. The Amalaka the fluted disc like stone placed at the apex of the sikhara

MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION

The Indian temples were built with all types of materials depending upon the availability from region to region. The range of material varied from timber to mud, plaster, brick and stone during all periods and throughout India. The materials play an important role in the overall appearance, construction techniques and monumental character of these temples.

As the earlier structures were fashioned from less durable materials such as timber, brick and plaster the early examples of Hindu architecture and art have mostly disappeared or are detectable only by the most fragmentary remains. However some of the relief carvings and paintings show that the earlier Hindu temples were constructed in timber and bamboo. Many of the later stone temples

were modelled on wood and bamboo architecture is apparent from the carvings, roof forms and window shapes. This usage of timber and bamboo governs the form of temples mostly in the Himalayan valleys and regions of Kerala and Bengal. The remains of temples constructed in brick dates back to the centuries before the Christian era. The brick and mortar temples were constructed in the region where there was easy availability of brick and the availability of suitable stone were limited.

The construction of temple in stone is the most distinctive expression of Hindu architecture. The highly evolved techniques of excavating and cutting blocks of stone constitute one of the major technical achievements associated with the history of the Hindu temple.⁶ The construction in stone dates back to 2 nd and 3 rd centuries in the form of rock cut sanctuaries and later in the form of temples with use of stones like granite, marble, soap stone, sandstone and locally available stones. The stones were used with most intricate and ornate carvings and sculptors throughout India.

EVOLUTION OF ARCHITECTURE STYLES

The distinctive architectural styles of Hindu temples have so developed due to broad geographical, climatic, cultural, racial, historical and linguistic differences between the northern plains and the southern peninsula of India. Broadly based on geography, the Indian temple tradition falls into two broad

⁶ Michell, G, *The Hindu Temple: An Introduction to its Meaning and Forms*. Chicago and London, 1988, p.121.

categories.⁷ the Nāgara and the Drāvida, whose separation from the earlier tradition is traced back to the middle centuries of the first millennium. In addition, the texts speak of a hybrid category, called Vesara, which in Sanskrit means “mule” that emphasizes this hybridity

There are also other distinct styles in peripheral areas such as Bengal, Kerala and the Himalayan valleys. This dissertation focuses on The Nagara or ‘the northern style’ and the Dravidian or the southern style of Hindu temple architecture.

The emergence of Hinduism under the Gupta dynasty (320-550 AD) responded in sacred forms of art and architecture built with permanent materials to protect the divine essence in monumental temples. The history of northern style of temple begins from the Guptas and their successors (5 th to 7 th century) and advanced to Early chalukyas (7 th to 8 th century), the Kalingas and Eastern Gangas (8 th to 13 th century), the Pratiharas and Chandellas (8 th to 11 th century), the Maitrakas and the Solankis (8 th to 13 th century) and the Rajputanas (8 th to 12 th century). The Hindu temple construction during the medieval period (6 th -13 th centuries) took place on a magnificent scale comparable to the building of churches and cathedrals in the medieval Europe.

Hindu temple architecture reached to its final form by combining influences from both the northern and southern India and probably also from the cultures of

⁷ Kak. S, *The Gods Within*. Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 2002, p.12.

invaders who continued to enter India from the north- west during this period⁸. In the southern style of temples the history begins with the Early Chalukyas , and Kalchuris (6 th to 8 th century) and advanced to the Pallavas (7 th to 8 th centuries), the Rashtrakutas (8 th to 10 th century), the Cholas (10 th to 11 th century), the Hoyshalas and Later Chalukyas (11 th to 14 th century) and the Vijayanagas and the Nayakas⁹ (15 th to 17 th century) .

In northern India the evolution of Hindu temple architecture was largely interrupted by the Muslim invaders whose presence was increasingly felt from the 11 th century AD onwards. Many of the finest temples were destroyed during this time¹⁰. In contrast, the southern India did not experience Muslim rule until a late period and thus had a less disrupting effect upon Hindu tradition and architecture of south India. The temples architecture of south India is therefore relatively better preserved till present time.

DEVELOPMENTS IN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

INAGARA OR THE NORTHERN STYLE

The characteristic temple plan of the northern India was developed in the 5 th century under the rule of Hindu dynasty. These temple consisted of all the basic elements; the garbhagriha surrounded by an ambulatory path, an outer portico with columns in front and a flat roof of stone. The temples constructed during this period were simple and less impressive compared to the temple constructed during

⁸ Michell, G, *Op.cit.*, p.14.

⁹ Brown, Percy, *Indian Architecture: Buddhists and Hindu Period*, Bombay, 1942, p.85.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.86.

the 10 th -13 th century temples. Some of the examples from this period are temples at Sanchi, Tigawa and Deogarh. The development of sikhara started at the temple of Deogarh in Madhya Pradesh¹¹. The temples constructed in the 8 th century had smaller shrines and the sikhara became the crowning feature of the temples. The addition of mandapa (the pillared hall) to the temple started during this period itself. The other distinct character of this period was the rectangular wall around the temple and addition of subsidiary shrines at each corner.

The most common examples of this period are the temples at Osian Rajasthan and the cluster of Jain temples built between 8 th -12 th century in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

The temple of Teli-ka mandir, Gwalior and Vaital Deul, Bhubaneshwar were unique and inspired from the early Buddhist architecture with rectangular plan and the barrel vault roof of chaitya hall. These temples don't make the full composition of Hindu temple as they only consist of main sanctuary with neither the mandapa nor the portico. This form of architecture was abandoned by the architects in the north but was accepted in the architecture of south India. A distinct architectural style developed in the temples of Orissa (7 th to 11 th century). The elliptic curve of sikhara from the earlier periods were modified as a perpendicular prismatic tower and converged near the peak. For the first time in history special attention was given to the construction of mandapa ; the roof of the mandapa was now pyramidal with tapering at the top and lower than the sikhara

¹¹ *Op.cit.*, p.87.

. The finest examples of this period are the Lingaraja temple, Bhubaneswar, the Jagannath temple Puri and the Sun temple Konark with their sikhara height ranging from 43 m to 57 m high.

A parallel development to the Orissa temple, took place in the central India during the 9th to 11th century. The temples of Khajuraho are famous for their conical tower made of piles of stone with an arrangement of miniature towers called sikhara¹². Each of these temples has portico, entrance hall and the sanctum. The roofs of various sections of the temple have distinct form. Each and every façade, wall, ceiling of these temples have carved figures from the mythology and history. The finest examples are the Khandriya Mahadev temple, and Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho.

DRAVIDIAN OR SOUTHERN STYLE

Temple development in southern India started during the Chalukya rule in the early 7th century. These temples were inspired from the Buddhist architecture. The temples evolved from simple rock cut shrines to large and complicated structures. The temples in this period were large square building with a projecting porch and decorative pillars.

The roof of the temple had small structure which later emerged as the sikhara . The entire temple is simple with minimal decoration. Some of the examples from this period are Lad Khan temple and Durga temple , Aihole.

¹² Grover, Satish, *The Architecture of India: Buddhist and Hindu*, New Delhi, 1988, p.43.

The rock cut structures developed during the 7th -9th century under the rule of Pallavas . The Pallava rulers lead the way of dravidian style of temple architecture and they built the temples at Mahabalipuram. During the Pandyas rule the south Indian temples were added with the lofty gateways gopurams at the entrance with the basic temple composition. The gopurams made the temple visually attractive and also provided the temples with an enclosure. The gopurams evolved from a rectangular base with a pyramid crowned with a barrel vaulted form. In the 11th century the Chola rulers built one of the tallest temples of that time the Brihadeshvara temple, Thanjavur with a height of 60 m¹³. In the later period the temples extended and became more intricate.

More mandaps were included for various activities like dancing, assembly, eating, marriages, etc. The Dravidian style concluded in a series of extended temple cities or townships. The finest example of the temple township is the temple at Srirangam and Madurai with several concentric enclosures.

DISTINCT FEATURE OF THE NORTHERN STYLE AND SOUTHERN STYLE TEMPLE

The major and distinct features between the north Indian temple and the south Indian temple are their superstructures. In the north the beehive shaped tower is the most distinguished element called as the sikhara . The gateways are in the north and they are plain, simple and small. The plans of the north Indian

¹³ Hardy Adam, *The Temple Architecture of India*, Great Britain, 2007, p.59.

temples are based on square but the walls are sometimes broken at so many places that it gives an impression of temple being circular in plan. The tower is made up of miniature sikhara creating an amazing visual effect resembling mountain.

In the south, the distinct features are the vimana and the gopurams . The vimana is a tall pyramidal tower consisting of several progressively smaller storeys, the peak of the vimana is called as sikhara in the south Indian temples. This stands on a square base. The temple complex consisting of the main shrine and other smaller shrines are enclosed by the outer wall called as the prakara. Along these outer walls are the intricate and marvelous gateways called as gopurams . These gopurams became taller and taller overpowering the main shrine and its superstructure and dominating the whole temple complex.

DEVELOPMENT OF DRAVIDIAN STYLE ARCHITECTURE

It has already been shown that the building art as it was developing in Southern India was assuming a separate form. Also that this form, in view of the fact that it was being practiced almost entirely in the Tamil country, anciently known as Dravidadesha, has been referred to as the Dravidian style. This southern type of architecture, it has been found convenient to resolve into five periods, corresponding to the five principal kingdoms which ruled in the south of India during the course of its evolution.

These are as follows: 1. Pallava A.D. 600-900 2. Chola A.D. 900-1150 3. Pándya A.D.1100-1350 4. Vijayanagar A.D.1350-1565 5. Madura from A.D.1600. Of all the great powers that together made the history of southern India, none had

a more marked effect on the architecture of this region than the earliest of all, that of the Pallavas, whose productions provided the foundations of the Dravidian style. Originally the political successors of the Andhras, under whose rule the Buddhist architecture of Southern India attained its finest form, the Pallavas came into prominence in the seventh century, and continued paramount in the south until the beginning of the tenth century. The centre of their kingdom lay on the lower reaches of the Pálár river, and the chief examples of Pallava architecture are to be found in the country around the town of Conjeeveram (Kanchipuram)¹⁴ the ancient capital. There are however a few instances of the work of this dynasty located as far south as Tanjore and Pudukkóttai. The Pallava dynasty maintained its varying forms of architecture for some three centuries, from A.D. 600 to 900, and its productions resolve themselves into two phases, the first of these occupying the seventh century, and the second the eighth and ninth centuries. In the former the examples were entirely rock-cut; in the latter they were entirely structural. There were four principal rulers during the period of their power, and the works of each phase have been divided into two groups, comprising four groups in all, each of which is named after the king who was ruling at the time. First Phase Mahéndra Group, A.D. 610 to 640, pillared halls mandapas only Mamalla Group, A.D. 640 to 690, mandapas, and rathas monolithic temples. Wholly Rock-cut Architecture. Second Phase Rajasimha Group, A.D. 690 to c. 800, Nandivarman Group, c. A.D. 800 to c. 900, Wholly Structural Temples. It

¹⁴ Conklin. E.S, *“The Psychology of Religious Adjustment”*, New Delhi, 1998, p.141

will be seen from the above that the rock – cut architecture of the first phase takes two forms, referred to as mandapas, and rathas. In this connection, a mandapa is an excavation, while a ratha is monolithic. The former is an open pavilion, and, as excavated in the rock, takes the shape of a simple columned hall with one or more cellas in the back wall. A ratha¹⁵ is in reality a car or chariot, provided by the temple authorities for the conveyance of the image of the deity during processions. But here, by common usage, it refers to a series of monolithic shrines, which are exact copies in granite of certain structural prototypes.

Beginning with the rock-cut architecture produced during the reign of Mahéndravarman (A.D. 610 – 640), constituting the earlier of the two groups of the first phase, this represents the mode that found favour with the Pallavas in the first half of the seventh century. The examples of the Mahéndra group consist of one type only, namely pillared halls or mandapas. In this connection, it's perhaps only natural to infer that because the surviving relics of an ancient civilization are those formed out of the lasting rock, people were acquainted solely with that method. It will be shown however that a true picture of the time would represent these rock-cut halls supplemented by a very considerable miscellany of other buildings structurally formed. Although the latter have perished, owing to their impermanent character, the style and certain distinguishing features of their architecture are preserved by copies cut in the rock. But it is obvious from the examples of the early group, which are fourteen in number, and enumerated

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.161.

below, that the architecture, whether structural or otherwise, of the Pallavas at this particular stage was of a definitely primitive type. Each rock-cut mandapa consists of a pillared hall serving as a kind of portico to one or more cellas deeply recessed in the interior wall. The exterior presents a facade formed of a row of pillars, each pillar averaging seven feet in height with a diameter of two feet, the shafts being square in section except for the middle third which is chamfered into an octagon. An immense and heavy bracket provides the capital, the composition as a whole suggesting as its origin a very elemental structure in which a ponderous wooden beam and bracket were the main features. So plain and simple is the Mahéndra type that in the earliest examples, as at Mandagapattu¹⁶ and Tiruchirappalli, there is not even a cornice above the pillars, but later a roll-moulding was added as at Pallavaram. Afterwards at Mogalrajapuram, this roll-cornice was ornamented at intervals with a motif known as a kúdú, which is readily identified as the Buddhist chaitya-arch much reduced and converted into an object of decoration.

Towards the end of Mahéndra's reign some efforts were made to break away from this singularly plain treatment of the mandapa, as may be seen in the rock-cut temple of Anantasayana at Undavalli, and in the series of shrines at Bhairavakonda.

The former is a definite departure, as although in some senses a mandapa, for it consists of several of these pillared halls one above another, it is fairly clear

¹⁶ Cuber. A, "*Sociology*" 3rd Edition, New Delhi, 2006, pp.236-237.

that it was an attempt to reproduce in the rock technique a pyramidal composition, evidently based on the conventional form of a Buddhist vihara or monastery, as it is in four stories and rises to a height of some fifty feet. Yet except for its size and more complex design, its architectural rendering shows but little advance on the single storied examples already referred to.

It is, however, in the series of eight excavated examples at Bhairavakonda, probably the latest of this reign that a marked step forward is observable, for here is the beginning of the distinctive Pallava type. It is true that here also the mandapas are of the same simple plan as are all the foregoing, but it is in the design of the facade, and specially in the elaboration of the pillars, that a new spirit seems to have entered architectural effort of the time. It is the stage at which the characteristic pillar, or “order,” of the Pallava in to the style makes its appearance.

Up to this point the pillar in the Mahéndra group of mandapas has been a rudimentary type of beam and bracket, serviceable in principle, but the idea of minds evidently in possession of very limited experience. At Bairavakonda, this crude production is still visible, but superimposed on its simple shape is an entirely different and much more sophisticated design of capital and shaft, a formation which has already been referred to as representing the Dravidian mode. And moreover, with the fusion of the two forms of pillar, there was also added another element, that of a lion, a figure of one of this animals being combined with the lower portion of the shaft and another introduced into the capital.

This heraldic beast, which from now onward occupies a prominent position in the architectural productions of the Pallavas, was appropriated by the ruling dynasty, and made to serve as a symbol of their Simhavishnu, or “lion” (simha) ancestry. The Bhairavakonda pillars therefore depict the Pallava order in the making, the blending of the stark realism of the beginner, with the more reasoned results of endeavour. How this order of pillar design, as yet unformed, was refined and adapted until it developed into a type of column of exceptional character and elegance, is shown in the productions of the succeeding reign.

The second group of the first phase of Pallava architecture, mainly executed during the reign of Narasimhavarman I (A.D. 640 – 68), while still adhering to the rock-cut method, in addition to a series of mandapas¹⁷, is also represented by a number of rathas or monoliths. Practically all the examples of this group are found on one site, marking the position of the deserted seaport town of Mamallapuram, and named after its royal founder, one of whose titles was Mahamalla.

This archaeological record of the one-time might of the Pallavas lies towards the mouth of the Pálár river, thirty-two miles south of Chennai, and indicates that here was the harbour for conjeeveram, the capital seat of the dynasty, situated some forty miles up the river.

Here the configuration of the coastline was singularly suitable for its purpose, as rising out of the sand near the seashore was a large rocky hill of

¹⁷ Leuba. J.H, “*Psychological Origin and Nature of Religious*”, New Delhi, 2002, p.106

granite gneiss, aligned from north to south, measuring half a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide with a height of over a hundred feet. Detached from this main prominence and towards the south, was another and much smaller rocky outcrop, consisting originally of a whale-backed mound of granite about two hundred and fifty feet long and fifty feet high. It was out of these two formations that the rock architecture of the Mamalla group was excavated and sculptured.

As already implied, however, in conjunction with the rock productions, there was a large amount of structural architecture some of it of considerable importance, but all of which has perished.

There are still visible foundations of a citadel which may be traced on the heights of the large hill and within this were palaces and similar royal residences, apparently built on raised masonry basements, while the buildings themselves consisted of wooden framework filled in by brick and plaster walls. As was not an uncommon practice, therefore the secular buildings were structural while the halls for religious purposes were quarried out of the natural rock.

A remarkable feature of the Pallava rock-cut architecture is the fine quality of the figure sculpture which adorns both mandapas and rathas. But in its plastic form it was only part of a movement, which, extending over the whole of southern India, found expression in a school of sculpture of a grand classical order. Most of this is in the rock-cut technique, of which that on the kailasa at Ellora, and at

Elephanta¹⁸, are rather later examples, but some of the finest and earliest productions were the work of the Pallavas.

These figure subjects at Mamallapuram are endowed with that same passionate spirit which pulsates in the Christian art of Europe of the corresponding date, but with even a finer feeling for form and more experienced craftsmanship.

There is a notable sense of restraint and refined simplicity specially in the bas-reliefs of single figures, yet even more pronounced in several of the larger sculptured dramas, as for instance Vishnu panel of the Mahishasura mandapa, which has some of the breadth and rationality shown in the sculpture of the Greeks towards the end of their first period. In view therefore of the superb quality of the Pallava plastic art it is not surprising that the schools of sculpture which developed out of this movement in Java and Cambodia displayed also the same high artistic character. The last phase of the second group of Architecture executed during the Pallava regime marks the end of the productions of this dynasty. It represents the works prepared during the rule of Nandivaraman and his successors, and depicts the mode in practice in these parts during the ninth century.

A few small temples show the direction of the movement. The principal examples are six in number as follows:- Two temples at Conjeeveram, the Muktesvara and Matangesvara the Vadamallisvara temple at Orgadam near Chingleput The temple of Virattanesvara at Tiruttani near Arkonam and the

¹⁸ Durkheim. E, "*Elementary Forms of the Religions Life*", New Delhi, 2001, p.71

Parasuramesvara temple at Gudimallam near Renigunta railway junction. The fact that all the temple are of small size, and are mere reproductions of the previous manifestations are proofs that the might of this one-time powerful dynasty was declining, its end began with its defeat by the Western Chalukyans¹⁹ in the middle of the eighth century. Among the examples of this late development, the older are the two temples at Conjeeveram, and are simply copies to a smaller scale of the style which prevailed in the previous reign, except that the temple is entered through a two pillared portico which forms the facade.

The four remaining temples of the group, which appear to have been executed somewhat later, indicate that at this date another prototype found favour, as they are all based on the apsidal example represented by the Sahadevaratha²⁰ at Mamallapuram. All these temples, by their lack of virility connote the diminishing power of the dynasty, and towards the end of the tenth century, production practically ceased. But even if the art appears to have died, it passed by no means into oblivion. Such a movement, although perhaps it has left no large works of genius, was at the same time remarkable for the spirit and vigour of its performance.

These qualities had a far-reaching effect. For to the Pallavas is the credit of having kept burning brightly the torch, which, kindled by the Buddhists in the early centuries of the Christian era as seen at Amaravati, was bequeathed to these

¹⁹ Kirkpatrick. C, "*Religion in Human Affairs*", New Delhi, 1996, P.71

²⁰ Galloway. G, "*The philosophy of Religion*", New Delhi, 2003, p.101

Simhavishnu “lion” king. Later, its flame glowed with renewed brilliance in the hands of the Cholas and subsequent rulers in Southern India, as their architectural undertakings eloquently testify. But perhaps its most potent influence was that which it transmitted beyond the seas, to the countries of Indonesia, where its effulgence, reflected in the vast monuments of those civilizations, shone with even greater splendour than in the land of its origin.

ROCK-CUT ARCHITECTURE

Rock - cut Architecture is produced or hewn out of the hills or rocks. In the ancient days the architect chiselled the rocks in to the caves or mandapas which are the open halls. They are in the form of inverted Tamil Letter ‘g’. In the sixth century A.D. Pallava rulers Mahéndravarman -1 and Narasimhavarman corved the mandapas and Mono-lithic rathas. The Rathas are made out of single rock or stone in the form of chariot (Ter), which are used to carry the images of God and Goddesses towards the provelsion’s during the festival occasions.

The present form of structural temples noticed in the South India based on Dravidian style, was introduced by the pallava rulers, in the later- half of the sixth century A.D. The Architecture which has the dominant character of the fine arts, is having cells for the sculptures, In the rock - cut mandapas, though they are the Pre-dominant character, has the sculptures in its walls as in the form of Bass relief sculptures. In this form this sculpture is noticed only in the front or the rear portions. The remaining parts of the sculpture are attached with the walls of the Architectural treatments. The art of building by means of dressed stone masonry

had already considerably advanced in certain parts of the country. Yet in spite of the progress made in the sphere of constructional architecture, the rock cut form of expression had in the course many years become so inherent a tradition that it continued to be practiced until almost mediaeval times. So much, so that during the period from the seventh to the tenth centuries the most notable development of rock- cut architecture took place. An explanation of this method persisting and surviving in India after the rest of the known world had become proficient in the more rational mode of Architecture Development may be traced to a condition of comparative isolation which appears to have prevailed at the time. Intercourse with other civilizations had tended to be rare and intermittent, so that new experiences were not readily acquired. But another and perhaps more important factor that encouraged this ancient procedure, and gave it so long an existence in India, was contained in the instincts of the people themselves. For it is fairly clear that the rock temples were eminently suitable to their religious susceptibilities, the dim-lit columned halls crowded with immense shapes indestructible and hewn out of the earth itself, when compared with their own puny selves, filled them with fear and fascination combined. The solemn mystery of these great colonnaded caverns, yet orderly and symmetrical in their formation, would appeal to minds imaginative and intensely receptive, an innate mental condition to which the impassioned nature of their art plainly testifies.

This final manifestation of rock- cut architecture in India was confined to three localities. Ellora,, where excavated halls under the Buddhists had been

already produced for two hundred years, the islands of Elephant²¹ and Salsette near Bombay and a development under the pallava dynasty, the rulers of a kingdom approximating geographically the modern State of Tamil Nadu. The rock-cut groups now to be described are the Brahmanical and Jain Series at Ellora, and the Brahmanical examples at Elephanta and Salsette, all excavated between the seventh and the ninth centuries.

ROCK-CUT CAVE TEMPLE IN PUDUKKOTTAI DISTRICT

The Cave temples found in Pudukkottai are the typical Pándya versions of Pallava Mahéndravarma style. They resemble each other in plan and design but show certain characteristic features of their own, incorporating in the process a few features particularly in respect of sculptural makeup and iconography. The Provision for panel carving, is not seen in pre-Mamalla excavations. On the other hand Chalukya and most of the Pándya caves show such panels. These caves like Mahéndra's, consist of a mandapam, with one or more shrine cells cut at the rear and lateral walls of the mandapam.

They have massive pillars on the facade usually square at the base and top and with an octagonal middle section and corbels with curved profiles. Among the cave temples that have shrine cells on one of the lateral walls of the mandapam may be mentioned the Śiva-Satyagriśvara cave temple at Thirumayam and other cave temple at **Thiru Gokarnam**.

²¹ Thouless. R.H., "*The Tendency to Certainty in Religious Belief*", New Delhi, pp.16-31

SRI GOKARNESWARAR TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

GOPURAS

SOUTH RAJAGOPURA

It was constructed by Pallavarayars in 15-A-D century was present on the entrance of south rajagopura, which shows that Nalla perumal servai belonging to sathapathi of this temple. North gopuram of this temple was consists of Athitanam, Sthambam, Pirasthavaram and Karnakoodu which were belongs to Dravida architecture²².

EAST RAJAGOPURA

It was constructed by pudukkottai thondaiman's in 17-18 AD century²³ for the purpose of sri Prakathambal amman. Sukravara mandapa constructed along with this east rajagopura pond steps stones and outer wall opposite to south mandapa also constructed by thondaimans.

TEMPLE MANDAPAS

ANNUPPU MANDAPA

Entrance of the mandapas was classified in three types. First one was constructed by pallavarayars and design and style based on the Nayakas²⁴. First classified mandapa entrance had number of Anivettical pillars. It means that a stone with big leg along with one or more sub legs is called Anivettikal pillars²⁵.

²² Field Study on 20-04-2013.

²³ Field Study on 05-03-2014.

²⁴ Raja Mohamed.J, *History of Pudukkottai District*, Pudukkottai, 2002, p.189

²⁵ Krishnaswamy Ayyangar, "*Dravidian Architecture*", New Delhi,1987, p.22

The second classified mandapa entrances are constructed by pallavarayars of 16-A-D century and also having same type of anivettikkal pillars. In first and second classified mandapa entrance had an arch type work.

Third type classified mandapa entrance constructed by Vijayanagar dynasty of 15-A_D century. But in third type had no arch type work as seen in first and second type mandapa entrance.

The all pillars of anuppa mandapas having nagabantham, a vijayanagara symbols was present.

CHIRPA MANDAPAS (SCULPTURE MANDAPA)

It was also called as rasi mandappa. A kolu mandpa was present in the west of chirpa mandapa, and a oonzal mandapa was also present in east of chirpa mandapa were constructed by Raja Raya thondaiman (Thondaimans –I) in the period of 1686-1730. A proof was shown in the ceiling of chirpa mandapa inscriptions²⁶. Also the wooden concrete was placed under ceiling shown that he symbol of Kajalakshmi which belongs to the raja symbol of thondaimans family.

In chirpa cmandpa ceiling consists of Rasi so that called as rasi mandpa.hte pillars of chirpa Mandapa constructed based on rajagopuram. In 16-A-D century the place of chitramandpa was created.

²⁶ Article in Tamil Nadu Archaeological Kazhgam, Tanjavur, Vol.13, p-16

MAIN MANDAPA

Main mandapa having pillars with one big leg along with two sub legs. In this mandapa, pillars having three lions sculpture a big leg with two sublegs constructed by using a single stone. The main mandapa had a lot of Architectural interest of 15-A-D century and hence conclude that it was constructed in the period of vijayanagar.

DHVAJA STHAMBHAM MANDAPA (STHALA TREE MANDAPA)

Dhuvasthamba mandapa was present next to dhuvarapalagar mandapa. A path steps to sunai (small pond) which was north from this mandapa constructed by cholas. Upstairs of this mandapa having four small hills (Nalvar Kundru) from which the step down stones path entered to the mandpa was constructed in a early chola period. A continuation of this step stones was shown in small size under the steps of duvarapalaga mandapa.an ancient steps path also seen in the up stair starts from dhandaythapani temple to south hill-rock. This step-paths was used to devotee of pagulavanes war and to carried out water, for abishekam. Hence the steps not gone to gokarneswarar shrine show that, pagulavaneswarar temple was open-site temple and was constructed by an ordinary bricks. After 26th A-D century the temple was built by a black rock stones.

MANGALAMBIGAI KOVIL MANDAPA

This mandapa was placed opposite to Mangalambigai temple constructed by Kulasekara Pandia period at the age at 13-A-D century. Pallavarayars was ruled

on 13-A-D century under the control of pandia kingdom who were built this mandapa and their statue was present in this mandapa.

SUKVARA MANDAPA

A mandapa was originally built by kulassekara pandian placed on opposite to Mangalambigai temple under gone some changes by raja vijaya Rangunatha Thondaiman (1730-1769) for the purpose of Sathasiva Prementhirar was now called as sukvara mandapa.

It was a hexagonal style mandapa placed opposite to sri Prakathamba temple. Top ceiling of this mandapa had 12 Rasis as shown in painting manner. In this mandapa, the upper vidhana had a elephant and buffalo of same head structure was designed. In our view it has shown elephant in one direction and buffalo in other direction.

In south direction of sukvarar mandapa Sathasiva prementhirar was created on the stone pillar. In this mandapa also had one (Dhuvasthambam) kodi maram of very old placed by beginners of Thondaimans.

MANGALA POND MANDAPA

A north side of Mangala pond, a mandapa was built by Pandia period. Also the east entrance of the mangala pond was originated by pandias period. East entrance had Murugan and Ganesa on either side.

North side mangala pond steps were developed in an early period of pandias. The west side of Mangala pond steps were developed by and Pandias and

Thondaimans. The southside mandpa of mangala pond was constructed by raja Vijaya reghunath aThondaiman.

SRIPRAGATHAMBAL TEMPLE

Sri prakathambal Annai was a family goddess of Pudukkottai Thondaiman. A 1000 years old lamp was there. In sanctum, sri prakathambal placed in a standing position on a small stage. He stage was decorated by silver plates. In this temple Goddess of two were present as securities on either side of the temple. According to Dr.J.Rja Mohamed, the temple was built by Rajendra chola I²⁷ 200 years back 15, the temple was renovated and stated by K.K. Venkatrama Iyyar²⁸.

In opposite to Sri prakathambnal temple, a small mandapa was built by pallavaraytars during the period 1616-1217 A.D²⁹. In the period 1518-1519, king of Vijayanagar, Sri Krishna devaroyar visited this temple and donated a number of ornaments to the temple³⁰.

PAGULANESWAR (OR) MAKILANESWAR TEMPLE

The temple was built in 16th century A.D. a nandhi near to Makilaneswarar was a style coin side with Hossilar design³¹ and hence the temple was built by 13th century. A.D stated many peoples. But the temple had a latest design and also

²⁷ Direct Interview with Mr. Ganesan Gurukkal on 19-08-2013

²⁸ Venkatarama Iyyer. K.R, “*Manual of Pudukkottai District Vol- II*”, 1994, p.981

²⁹ Article in Tamil Nadu Archaeological Kazhgam, Tanjavur, Vol.13, p-16

³⁰ Venkatarama Iyyer. K.R, *Op.cit.*, p.982.

³¹ Gopalakrishnan, S, *Early Pandyan Iconometry*. New Delhi, 2005, p.12

placed in a mandapa of 15th century A.D³². therefore finally one conclude that he temple was built in 16th century A.D

KASI VISWANATHAR TEMPLE

The temple was present in the outere pirakara of sri gokerneswarar temple. The temple was constructed by pallavarayars in 15th century A.D of Vijayanagara period. Front mandapa of this temple was joined only on 17th century A.D.

FRONT MANDPA

Front mandpa placed next to small Artha Mandapa. Two pillars are there. In these pillars “Naga pantham” was placed. Also a well designed naga structure³³ shown in this pillar. Two Nagam (snake) joint with each other sculpture was made on this pillars. A”Yali” with spring steps adjoined front mandapa also placed. From this way anybody entered into the front mandapa.

VASANTHA MANDAPA

This mandapa constructed by pallavarayars before 1678th AD. A great festival of vasantha vizha was celebrated in this mandapa. It was done on vaikasi month of Tamil (May, June) full moon with various music instruments. At the time of vasantha vizha, the Urthsava Amman was carried out in a Pallakku (a small wooden type chair uplifted by peoples) and go around the vasantha Mandapa and then done special poojas in a high level stage.

³² Latha, V, *Cave Temples of Pandya Country: Art and Ritual*, New Delhi, 2005, p.38.

³³ Srinivasan, K R, *Temples of South India*. New Delhi, 1996, p.89.

MADAPPALLIGAL

Madapalli, and Yogasala ; near to Oonjal Mandapa were constructed in 17-18th century A.D by Thondaimans of Pudukkottai by using the damaged and an using pillars of pandia and chola periods. In this temple has three madarpallis.

TEMPLE CAR

In front of the temple have two big size temple car and three small size temple car were here. Big size temple car belongs to main deity swamy and Ambal and small size temple car belongs to Vinayagar, Subramaniam and Sandigeswarar. Big size temple car made on 17th century A.D and small size temple car made on 18th century A.D.