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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SRIVAIKUNDAM TEMPLE SCULPTURES THEMES AND ARTS

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Abstract

The temple at Srivaikundam is called Srivaikundanathan Perumal Temple. The other name for the temple is Kallapiran Temple. Srivaikundam is located in the town of Thoothukudi District in the South Indian State of Tamil Nadu.

The Srivaikundam Temple is part of the Nava Tirupathi Temples. The Nava Tirupathi Temples are a part of these 108 Divya Desam Temples. It is a belief that a devotee who visits the 106 Divya Desam temples fervently will be escorted by lord Vishnu himself to the other two in the celestial world.

Thiruvengada Mudaiyan Mandapam in the Srivaikundam Temple, houses rare life size sculptures commissioned during the 16th century. These sculptures were constructed during Nayakkar's period. This Mandapam is rich with Sculptures of Yallis, Warriors, and folk sculptures. The aim of this paper is to describe only the folk Sculpture in Srivaikundanathan Perumal Temple.

Introduction

Purpose of the Study:

Finding the folk sculptures in Shi Vaikundam Vaikunnathar Temple and to know the way those sculptures were made and the lifestyle of the people of that time through the sculpture is the purpose of this study.

Methodology:

The research planned to employ both primary and secondary data for the present study. Primary data is to be collected from the field visit. The required secondary data to be collected from Journals, Books, Thesis and from Thoothukudi District Profile

Selection of the Study Area:

On the banks of the Thamiraparani River, which is the source of prosperity for the two districts of Tuticorin and Tirunelveli, Arulmiku Sri Vaikundanathar Temple, Sri Vijayasanaperumal Temple, Sri Devar Pran Temple, Sri Aravindalosanar Temple, Sri Mayakkuthan Temple, Sri Vaithamanidi Perumal Temple, Sri Makaranedungulaikadhar Temple, Sri Adinathar Temple are situated in nine Vainava temples. Vaishnava elders claim that if you visit these nine temples, you will get the benefits of visiting Tirupati. Hence these abodes are called Navathirupati. These Navasthalas are united with Navagrahas and worshipped similar to the Navagrahathalas in Cholanadu.

Nammalvar, one of the Azhwars, was born in this area, and Madhurakhaviyalvar, who called Nammalvar as an incarnation of Perumal, was born in this area. From Chola period inscriptions to Nayak period sculptures are found in these temples. Due to the flow of Tamiraparani river, the people here have mostly done agricultural work.

Limitation of the Study:

Even though more number of sculptures available for the study of folk sculptures, on the topic of Story Telling Sculptures, some of the sculptures got damaged, because of these damaged sculptures, it is difficult to identify their nature.

From Cholas Period inscriptions to Nayak Period sculptures are found in these temples. But there is no inscriptional data about who constructed and when it was constructed.

Scope of Study:

Out of the nine Vaishnavism temples located around the Tamiraparani River in Thoothukudi district, Shi Vaikundam Vaikundanathar temple is the only one within the scope of this study.

History of the Srivaikundam Temple in Thoothukudi District:

The Srivaikundam Temple is situated in Tamil Nadu, a state in southern India, near the town of Thoothukudi District. The temple is one of the Surya (the Sun God)-related Navagraha temples in Vaishnavism.

This temple is thought to have been built during the Pandyan era. There have been numerous rulers of that dynasty, as well as the Vijayanagar and Nayak kings, who have all contributed to its growth and advancement. This substantial building, which spans 5 acres, was constructed in the Dravidian architectural style, is surrounded by a granite wall, and includes a 110-foot-tall temple tower with an amazing 9-tiered Rajagopuram. In the sanctuary, Lord Srivaikunanathan can be prayed to while standing and holding a club. It is a rare occurrence, yet the gigantic serpent Adisesha is spreading his hoods over the head of the standing Lord. The holy bath is typically presented to the deity with milk, and this figure is carved from the holy Saligrama stone. Kallapiran is the procession deity. The Garuda Sevai, celebrated annually at all nine Navatirupathi temples, continues to be this temple's biggest event. All of these temples' processional deities, including the Lord of Srivaikuntam, are carried on the Garuda mount. The Pasurams, the sacred lyrics that Saint Nammazhwar sang in favor of these deities, are chanted with devotion during this festival, and his image is also transported in a palanquin.

Introduction:

Tamils have practiced idolatry since ancient times. This is the main reason for the development of sculpture in Tamil Nadu. Sculptors in Silapathikaram are known as Manitalas. Our forefathers created beautiful sculptures on temple pillars, Vimanas, temple towers and walls according to their own ideas. Sculptures can be divided into full figure sculptures, relief sculptures. Movable sculptures are called Salam and non-movable sculptures are called Asalam.

The temple taken up for study is the Vaikundanathar Temple, which is considered one of the 108 Divya Desams, heavily praised in the Naalayira Divya Prabhanthamand also were blessed by the Alwars. It is also one of the 108 Divya Desam Temples

which is. This temple is located on the banks of river Tamiraparani flowing in Srivaikundam town of Thoothukudi district. In the sculptures of this temple Nayaka period sculptures are seen more. Nayaka sculpture style has been beautified using some new techniques

Sthalapuranam:

The Vaikuntanathar Temple is very closely associated with the Matsya Avatara of Maha Vishnu. Lord Brahma, who is the custodian of the Vedas, loses it to an Asura named Somakasura, who in turn takes the Vedas with him & hides deep beneath the ocean.

Bhrama, who is the creator, was rendered helpless without the Vedas. So he does severe penance on the banks of holy Thamirabarani river seeking Maha Vishnu's help to retrieve the Vedas from Somakasura, which Vishnu does an Matsya Avatara. This is the Sthalapurana of the Temple.

Folk sculptures:



When the Vijayanagara and Nayakar kings established a foothold in Tamil Nadu, their folk arts were also introduced here. Those arts were influenced

by the people of Tamil Nadu. These influenced arts were found in the temple sculptures of Tamil Nadu. Apart from these, the images of Vedan, Nomad, Nomadic Woman, Kuravan, Kuratthi, Dancing Mangai etc, who are involved in the daily life of the people, are present as sculptures in the temples.

“Our sculptures were not only seems for an attractive, but they are describing meaningfulness and feelings”.....Mayilai Seeni Venkatasamy

A sculpture of thorn removing in the foot of a Kuravan:

This Kuravan sculpture is seen below in the front row of the Thiruvenkatamudayan Mandapam. The sculpture shows Kurava and his concubine removal of nipping at his feet. His hunted food, deer hangs on his shoulder and iguana, hare, etc hangs on his waist. The sculpture is realistically posed as his hound stares at something, and another skunk with a bow and arrow is nearby. The right hand of this Vaden sculpture is broken above the wrist.



This Vaden, who is seen with a curled mustache and a cock, carries a bird-catching net over his right shoulder, a pouch for the bird on his left shoulder, and a dove in his hand. An iguana is seen on

his shoulder and the son of Vaden is seen walking fast in the foreground



The statue is six feet tall and is found in the Thiruvencatamudayan Mandapathoon. The sculpture is seen holding a horn-like blowing instrument in the left hand and a sword in the right hand, with a twisted moustache, with salangai on its feet, and it shows removing the sword from its cover on seeing a dragon under its feet.



Royal Princess and Vedan:

This sculpture is found on the upper wall of the temple's glass hall. The image shows the Vedda chieftain carrying Arasilangumari on his shoulders and the soldiers on horseback trying to stop him and rescue the princess.

The statue is depicted as fighting the Vedan soldiers with the weight of the princess and the princess covering her face with her saree.

Gandharve:

A high relief sculpture of a Gandharva playing percussion just adjacent to the Agora Veerabhadra carving, we saw a tweets back. Gandharvas are celestial beings who are also extremely skilled musicians.





Kurathi's Family:

This sculpture shows depicting the life of a kurathi. It also shows two kurathis in the same attire, one kurathi holding a woven basket in his right hand and another kurathi in her left hand, a bowl of food is held in the palms of the hands, a child on the shoulder takes food and eats, two children are seen walking between the two korathis, and a child is sleeping under the chest. In this sculpture, the sculptor shows the family life of Kurathi. The appearance of the Kurathis is depicted with large garlands of beads and bracelets on the arms.

Nammalvar and his two great followers:

This sculpture is found at the bottom of the row of mandapathunas in front of the Thiruvenkatamudayan shrine. The image shows Nammalvar singing the Divya Prabandham sitting under a never-sleeping tamarind tree, Madhurakaviyalvar writing it on a pad while standing, and the nathamunis playing rhythms while standing according to the song.



Animal Sculptures:

The variety of carvings of animals, particularly monkeys, is one of this temple's most intriguing aspects. Here is an example of one of these carvings, which shows a monkey inspecting a snake and what appears to be a big cat chasing a bird. This place is full of carvings like that.

Another monkey is snarling and advancing. The wonderful thing about temples is that the sthapatis accurately and vividly captured every facet of life, even animal behavior, and documented it in stone. How very inventive those people were.



people, animals and historical events they saw in the outer halls of the temple. The sculptural composition of the sculptures arranged in this way is shown to be alive and full of stories

At the conclusion of this study titled 'Sculptures that tell stories in the folk sculptures at Shi Vaikundam Vaikundanathar temple, most of the sculptures are in the form of wall reliefs. The sculptural composition of the sculptures is shown to be lively and dynamic. Kurovar and Vader sculptures as their lives unfold before our eyes shown as a living sculpture by the sculptor's chisel.

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Conclusion:

During the reign of the Vijayanagara and Nayakar kings, they sculpted the lifestyles of the
