BHITTI / WALL

Bhitti is the wall-proper built above the plinth. The word bhitti is derived from the Sanskrit root “bhid” meaning to separate. The main function of the bhitti is to separate the interior from the exterior and the different parts of the building. The Canons on Indian architecture refer to the wall as bhitti and as kudya. The outer contour of the bhitti corresponds to the same as that of the plinth. The wall is built slightly receding on all the sides from the vertical norm of the mouldings of the plinth, so that the distinction between the plinth and the wall is easily discernible. Bhitti corresponds to that portion of the elevation, from the top of the adhisṛṣṭāna to the bottom of the prastara.

The wall of the temple is generally built very thick and heavy. It normally contains two layers, i.e., the inner wall (antarbhitti) and the outer wall (bāhyabhitti). Both the layers are dressed on their exposed surfaces, while their backs are roughly dressed. The gap between the inner layer and outer layer is filled with debris material. It is generally noticed that the antarbhitti is constructed with stone slabs laid in horizontal courses in the gap between the engaged pillars. The exposed face of the antarbhitti, though dressed well, is devoid of any decoration. All the decorations mentioned in the Texts apply only to the bāhyabhitti.

The wall, according to the Texts, should be decorated with bhittipādas (pilasters), kāśās (niches), tōranas (decorative door-frames), kumbhapaṇjaras (decorative vase motifs) and jālavātāyanas (perforated windows) (Fig.-1).

The walls are constructed in different medium and in different types. They are built out of mud, wood, brick and stone. Mayamata mentions three types of walls. They are –

1. Jālakakudya – Perforated wall
2. Isṛtakakudya – Brick wall

3. Phalakakudya – Wall of planks (of stone or wood).

Kāmikagama\(^3\) mentions only two types namely, the perforated wall and the plank wall. Šilparatna\(^4\) mentions four types, adding mrūnmayakudya (mud wall) to the other three types.

The walls of the temples of the area under study are built as per the prescriptions of the Canons mentioned above. There are certain exceptions, where the decoration is not done as per the prescriptions. The walls that we find in this region are not all alike. They vary in their look and also in their decoration. Decorations vary from place to place and from time to time. Apart from the decorations mentioned in the Canons, the artist had the freedom to execute decorations of his choice. This sometimes leads to over-decoration of the bhitti as noticed in the Hoysala temples.

The temples of the region under study, as already stated, were built in two different media, namely, brick and stone. The brick temples are all either destroyed or they are repaired in subsequent times so as to lose most of their original features. Therefore, based on the features found on the stone temple walls, a study and analysis of the walls of the temples of the region are made here. Irrespective of the medium used for the construction of the bhitti, the Texts prescribe the same decorations for the bhitti.

Stone structural temples in the region of our study begin from the end of 9\(^{th}\) century A.D. The earliest temple reported in the region is the Bhoganandishwara temple at Nandi. By this time, distinct developed architectural features are already seen. Indented wall surface, bhittipādas, tōranas, jālavātāyanas, valabhi, kapōta, vitāna and hāra are all discernible. The indentations are very clear, neat and distinct in their form. Temples having plain and straight walls, walls with bhittipādas, walls with bhittipādas and kōśānas and walls with bhittipādas, kōśānas and jālavātāyanas are also available. These facts prove that a systematized architectural tradition was in existence as early as the middle of the 8\(^{th}\) century A.D. Depending
upon the convenience, cost and the availability of skilled artisans, temples were erected in stone in the region of our study.

In the present study, the different components of the wall such as bhittipādas, tōranās, kumbhaṭaṇjaras, kōsīlās, jālavāṭāyanas, wall sculptures and other sculptural and decorative reliefs are dealt with separately.

BHITTIPĀDAS / PILASTERS - Bhittipādas are equivalent to the pilasters. Bhittipādas are used as decorative members of the wall and they are not functional in their character. They are generally carved on the wall surface, generally after the wall is constructed. Pilasters are carved at regular intervals all over the wall either singly or in pairs. In very simple walls, pilasters are carved only at the four corners.5 Pilasters possess all the decorative members of a regular pillar. Even the Texts prescribe that the bhittipādas are to be carved resembling the regular order of pillars in form and decoration.6 The Texts mention that the bhittipādas should be to the extent of 1/4th or 1/2 or 3/4th of its girth.7 Engaged pillars, appearing like pilasters, on the outer surface of the wall, are occasionally seen.8 However, this is of very late appearance in a crude structure of the late Vijayanagara period. Pilasters are normally carved on the walls in such a way that only one fourth of their girth is relieved.

Pilasters, with some exceptions (Pl.-1), are not provided with a carved pedestal.9 Directly above the prati moulding, the pilasters are raised. Pilasters appear square in their section during pre-eleventh century (Pl.-1 and Fig.-1a), and after this period octagonal pilasters are also seen (Pl.-2 and Fig.-2). However, no pilaster with a round section (split pilasters excepted) is noticed in the area of our study. Pilasters have slender shafts superimposed by a vase or a bell-shaped moulding, a cushion capital (kumbha), a palagai abacus (phalaka-manḍi) and corbels (pōtika) (Fig.-3). Pilasters change in their form from time to time, depending upon the change in the order of the pillars of the temple. Occasionally, pilasters devoid of any of these or any one or some of these members are also noticed.
Mayamata states “whatever order of decoration practiced for the pillars of the temple applies to both the pilasters and the engaged pillars”\textsuperscript{10}. But during the Vijayanagara period, only the brahmakānta and visṇukānta type appear in pilasters but the other distinct types of pillars of Vijayanagara style are not used in the carving of pilasters.

Early temples of the region of our study (Ganga period) possess pilasters with developed decorative features. At the same time, they also have pilasters devoid of certain decorative members. Pilasters of the early period do not possess decorated or distinctly carved bases for the shafts. The same trend continues during the later period also. However, in the later period, they become more and more elegant in their form and decoration. The bases of the pilasters are also distinctly designed and depicted. Octagonal pilasters (visṇukānta) also begin to appear from 10\textsuperscript{th} century onwards. Reliefs of floral designs are carved on the shafts in vertical bands, beaded string festoons and horizontal mouldings of various types are also carved. Carved bases for the bhittipādas do not appear for all categories of pilasters. That is to say, the brahmakānta type (square) of bhittipādas will not have carved bases, whereas, the visṇukānta type (octagonal) of bhittipādas are provided with distinctly carved bases. Pilasters change in their form from time to time in conformity with the change in the order of pillars of the contemporary period and style.

By the beginning of 12\textsuperscript{th} century, ornamentation on the surface of the wall and pilasters as well can be noticed. Walls are decorated with relievo sculptures of different themes (Pl.-3a and 3b). The upper portion of the shaft of the pilasters is decorated with relief sculptures (Pl.-4). So also, the upper members of the pilasters are treated elaborately with delicate carvings of floral matter, divine figures\textsuperscript{11}, bands, mouldings, grooves, etc. The cushion capital is also horizontally fluted\textsuperscript{12}.

In the temples of the Vijayanagara period, ornate bases for the bhittipādas begin to appear. Reliefs of floral patterns are found carved here. However, during the Vijayanagar period, the bhittipādas on the wall do not reflect all the types of pillars.
that were used in the temple construction. It is a known fact that different types of pillars were used profusely in the construction of temples and their adjuncts. Of these types of pillars, only brahmakānta and visṇukānta pillar forms appear as pilasters.

Cushion capitals (manḍi) of the bhittipādas also change in their form and design from time to time and place to place. A noteworthy feature of the cushion capitals is that, their forms are always identical to the shape of the shaft of the pillar. As majority of the bhittipādas are brahmakānta type (square sectioned) (Pl.-5A), the cushion capitals are also square in their form with their sides rounded. Cushion capitals of the octagonal (Pl.-5b), many sided (Pl.-4) and cylindrical (Pl.-5c) forms are also noticed. Another notable feature of these cushion capitals is that majority of them, irrespective of their forms, possess flat base, rounded sides and top. Sometimes, they are horizontally grooved, indented or sometimes provided with a fillet. In some examples, the lower portion of these cushion capitals is deeply grooved and hollowed. Decorations like floral patches, creeper scrolls, scalloped lotus petals and fillets are also carved (Pl.-6).

The abacus (manḍī-phalaka) above also varies in its surface treatment. Abacus consists of two parts. They are the cyma mouldings lotus/idall manḍi at the bottom, superimposed by a plank (phalaka) - like moulding. Both together are termed as manḍī-phalaka instead of the term abacus. The phalaka above the manḍi is always carved square and thin. Occasionally, it is relieved with muktāgrāsas. The lotus moulding (manḍi) below changes in its form in accordance with the shape of the capital and shaft below. In the brahmakānta type of bhittipādas, it is generally square (Pl.-7). But in octagonal varieties, the manḍi also becomes octagonal (Pl.-8). The treatment of the lotus petals also changes from place to place and from time to time. In the early examples, the petals of the lotus at the bottom of the phalaka are thinly scalloped or plain. But in the late Chola and Vijayanagara examples, though the scalloping of the petals is not deep, the edges and the shaped tips of the petals are shown very prominently out-curled.
The corbels are meant to support the beam above in the architectural framework. Corbels of the bhittipādas are sometimes functional and sometimes decorative. These corbels are carved to support the architrave above. In the projecting terminals of the wall, the corbels are carved in the round, projecting forward from the line of the wall. But the two other arms of the same unit of the corbel are just relieved on the surface. Corbels of the Vijayanagar period, sometimes, possess small panels with relief sculptures and other decorative designs. Corbels also, like their counterparts in the pillars, are designed like taranāga (Fig.-3a, Pl.-1c), adhāra (Fig.-3b, Pl.-1a), musūtibandha, (Fig.-3c) puspa (Fig.-3d, Pl.-2a) and chitrapōtikas. Interestingly, the corbels carved on the pilasters, sometimes, are relieved to support the beam above and sometimes they are carved as a part of the beam itself.

TŌRANĀ  Tōranā literally means an ornamental canopy above the entrance\(^\text{13}\). The tōranā may be to a courtyard, a hall, a mantapa, a cellar or to a niche. The concept of the tōranā is seen as early as the beginning of the Christian era. Tōranās of the Sanchi stupa are well known examples. Badami Chalukyan city like Aihole and Kalyana Chalukyan city like Kuruvatti possess tōranās at important places of the city of those times.

Tōranā consists of two vertical posts, supporting a decorated canopy above. This architectural model is used as a decorative motif on the walls of the temple. Tōranās are also set to precede the kōśtās in the walls. As a decorative motif, the tōranās consist of two pilasters supporting a canopy bedecked with varieties of architectural and decorative motifs.

Right from the beginning of structural temple architecture, one can see the use of this architectural motif for decorating the wall. As stated earlier, they are found carved on the wall just as tōranā and also as an architectural framework for the niche. The space in between the two pilasters of the tōranā may be plain\(^\text{14}\) (Fig.-4, [...)]
Pl.-9), may have a recessed niche\(^{15}\) (Pl.-10 figure) or may have a relief sculpture\(^{16}\) (Fig.-4a, Pl.-11) or may even have a perforated window\(^{17}\) (Pl.-12). In the present study, the tōranās are classified into different categories depending upon the decoration of the superstructure.

Tōranās may or may not have a niche or a recession in the centre. If it does not contain a niche, the central portion of the tōranā will be in conformity with the level of the wall. The wall of the tōranā is plain in most of the cases and occasionally a relief of a sculpture may be found there. If it has a recession it may be in the form of a deep or a shallow niche. The niche may contain a sculpture or a perforated window (jālavāṭāyana). If a niche contains a sculpture of a divinity, mythological figure or a sculpture of a saint, it is referred to as ‘dēvakōṣṭhā’. Generally the tōranās consist of two split pilasters supporting a canopy. Pilasters are often closely spaced. However, occasionally, they are spaced quite apart also. Split pilasters contain all the decorative details that a regular pilaster of the wall contains, but the details are carved in such a way, that they look as though the pilaster is vertically split. Pilasters having only plain shaft without upper decorative members are also noticed (Fig.-4b, Pl.-10). However, no mention of the split pilaster is found in the Texts.

A note regarding the decoration of the pilasters of the tōranās is not out of place here. It has been observed in the course of the field study that there are two distinctly different traditions in the carving of the pilasters of the tōranās. They can be called as the Kannada and Tamil traditions / idioms. The temples of Karnataka, right from the Badami Chalukyan times, contain kōśṭhās with pilasters. These pilasters are carved in full, from bottom to top. Tradition of carving of full pilasters for the kōśṭhās was continued in Karnataka by the Rastrakutas, Kalyana Chalukyas and the Hoysalas.

As against this tradition of carving of full pilasters for the kōśṭhās, the Pallava and Chola sculptors carved split pilasters for the kōśṭhās (Fig.-4c). Therefore, two distinct traditions in the mode of carving were in use. The region of our study
being a buffer region between these two powers, all the temples built here possess only split pilasters for the kōśṭha as the influence of Tamil tradition was dominant in this region right from the beginning.

The tōranās generally contain the decoration of kapōta with nāsis, floral patterns, puspa patṭikaśas, muktāgrāsas, etc., and all these present an attractive elevation to the tōranās. Above the kapōta, sometimes, a vājana is also carved distinctly. They are sometimes decorated with vyālāmāla and makaramukhas also.

Carving of different types of canopies to the tōranā, it appears, was a matter of convenience (Fig.-5). If the area between the pilasters is wide enough to accommodate a broad śāla canopy, such a design was chosen. If the area was narrow, kūṭa or pañjara canopies were chosen for decoration.

The pilasters support a canopy. The architrave of the canopy is carved sometimes like a patṭika (Pl.-9) or like the prati moulding (Fig.-15, Pl.-13) or like the kapōta (Fig.-8, Pl.-14). Above the kapōta, the decoration may be architectural or faunal and/or floral. Depending upon the type of decoration, tōranas are differently named as makaratōranās (Pl.-15) or nāsitōranās (Fig.-10, Pl.-16) or śālatōranās (Pl.-17) and kūṭatōranās (Fig.-9, Pl.-18).

**MAKARA TŌRANĀ - Makara tōranā** consists of a popular motif having two makaras carved facing each other with wide-open mouths (Pl.-19, Fig.-6). The floriated or decorated tongues that come out from the mouth of these two makaras are joined in the form of an arch (Fig.-7, Pl.-15). The entire theme is normally carved with rich decorative designs. Variants of the makara tōranās are also available in good numbers. They may be classified into different types based on the orientation of the makara heads. Makaras are placed at the bottom facing opposite directions (Pl.-11). Sometimes, the makaras face opposite directions at the top of the arch, and their projecting tongues bend forward and form the arch. Makaras facing each other are also found. Many times, kūrtimukhas are carved as the crest for the arch (Pl.-20). The central part – gāḍha of the arch may contain a divine
motif\textsuperscript{22} (Pl.-11), secular motif\textsuperscript{23} (Pl.-10), a \textit{gandharvamukha}\textsuperscript{24} (Fig.-7, Pl.-15), a rosette\textsuperscript{25} (Fig.-5, Pl.-21) or a \textit{stūpi}\textsuperscript{26}, etc. An erotic sculpture is also found carved in a temple of 7\textsuperscript{th} century at Badami\textsuperscript{27}.

\textit{Tōran\textsuperscript{2}a} is always placed on an architrave having a string course or a \textit{prati} moulding. Rarely, the \textit{makaratōran\textsuperscript{2}a} has a drip-stone below (Fig.-10, Pl.-22)\textsuperscript{28}. In a few \textit{tōran\textsuperscript{2}as}, \textit{kīrtimukha} is carved with \textit{makara} heads flanking it\textsuperscript{29} (Pl.-11). This type of a decoration appears in a Chola temple of 12\textsuperscript{th} century in the region of our study\textsuperscript{30}. This motif reminds us of the Kalyana Chalukya decorative motif having creeper scrolls or volutes rising in a conical fashion supporting a \textit{kīrtimukha} crest at the apex. This canopy has an additional feature in the form of two armed soldiers jumping out of the \textit{makara} mouths.

A simplified form of the \textit{makara tōran\textsuperscript{2}a} is found in the temples of the medieval times in the region of our study. In this example, the upper portion of the canopy contains a decorative motif in the form of a stringed bow with its two ends curled outward like volutes\textsuperscript{31}. A \textit{kīrtimukha} or a shovel head is carved as a cresting for this arch. The central portion of the arch may contain a decorative motif in the form of a seated lion or a rosette or a pendant and such other designs (Fig.-5, Pl.-23).

\textit{Śāla Tōran\textsuperscript{2}A} \textit{Tōran\textsuperscript{2}as} crowned by \textit{śāla} canopies are found in plenty. Above the \textit{kapōta} of the \textit{tōran\textsuperscript{2}a}, a neatly cut \textit{śāla} pavilion model is carved with almost all the details\textsuperscript{32}. Above the \textit{kapōta} is the entablature with \textit{vājana} and the \textit{prati} and above the \textit{prati} a neatly carved \textit{śāla} is found (Fig.-11, Pl.-24). Thus the decoration of the \textit{śāla tōran\textsuperscript{2}a} becomes ornate and its height also increases. By the end of 12\textsuperscript{th} century, these \textit{śāla} canopies become even more decorative\textsuperscript{33}. \textit{Kapōta} has elongated lotus petals with beaded string festoons which make it look very attractive (Pl.-14)\textsuperscript{34}. The \textit{nāsis} become circular; \textit{gāḍha} is surrounded by creeper designs. The neck of the \textit{kīrtimukha} becomes longer. The \textit{nāsi} at the centre of the wagon-vault portion becomes prominent leaving a deep recession for the \textit{gāḍha} cavity. In the \textit{gāḍha} cavity, a well carved miniature shrine motif is noticed \textsuperscript{35} (Pl.-25).
Sometimes, a lion motif is also carved within this shrine motif\textsuperscript{36}. By this time, instead of the horse-shoe shape, the arch on either side of the gāḍha gets doubled. Deeply cut grīva with pilasters, a barrel-vaulted roof with a row of kalaśas on its ridge, gable-ends and cow-horn cresting at the two ends are also carved. Sometimes, the early śāla canopies possess only the gable ends with kirtimukha crestings and nāsis in the front (Fig.-12). Below the nāsi also, sometimes, a seated figure, mostly of a divinity, is carved\textsuperscript{37} (Pl.-26).

The roofs of the śāla with criss-cross (karkari) designs are also found (Fig.-13, Pl.-25)\textsuperscript{38}. The mahānāsis at the centre of the śāla becomes prominent with a deep recession or gāḍha cavity. In the gāḍha, a deity is carved\textsuperscript{39} (Pl.-11). All the modes of decoration were obviously left to the imagination of the artist who carved them. In some places a squatting lion is also found carved within the gāḍha cavity.

**KUTA TŌRANĀ -** This type of a canopy for the tōrana occurs rarely in the temples of the area of our study\textsuperscript{40}. In this type, other than the kapōta, a miniature vēdi (platform) is carved. Above the vēdi, separated by a grīva, a kūta-type of cupola is carved. A stūpi above is also found (Fig.-9, Pl.-18).

Different types of tōrana are provided for the niches where the images of deities are placed and also for niches where the perforated windows are fixed. The niches were meant for keeping the images of deities as specified in the Texts\textsuperscript{41}, but many of the niches carved on the temple walls hardly have any indication to suggest that they once housed an image, because some of them are very shallow to accommodate an image of a deity there. Some of them, though are deep enough to hold an image, are empty now. There are also a few niches which have the images of deities carved in situ in relief.

The niches, according to kāmikāgama, should have a vēdi at the bottom. There are a few instances of a moulded vēdi carved for the niches (Fig.-14, Pl.-11)\textsuperscript{42}, but in majority of the cases no such vēdi is seen. The prati moulding of the plinth itself
serves as the floor of the niche. After 11th century A.D., there is a general trend to carve the niche up to the mahāpati carved below the upper gālā of the adhisrāhāna. Examples to this are found at Kolaramma temple at Kolar, Someshwara temple at Kurudumale, Anjaneya swamy temple at Anekal (Pl. 22, 23, 24, 25).

Tōranōs, as said earlier, are also carved for the perforated windows (Fig.-17, Pl.-12). Perforated windows are placed inside the openings made for that purpose in the wall at the time of construction itself. Such openings are also provided with suitable decorative tōranōs. Whenever a decorative tōranō is cut on the surface of the wall, the latticed windows placed inside the openings of the wall will not contain any architectural framework on them. Only a simple decorative frame is carved and suitable perforations are made in the slab. If the decorative carving of a tōranō is not made on the wall surface, in such cases, the window slab itself may possess the architectural decorations of a tōranō (Pl.-44, 53, Fig.-16).

NĀSI TŌRANĀ - Nāsitōranā is a tōranō where a prominent nāsi (arch) like motif is carved surmounted by a kīrtimukha. The nāsi may be of different forms. Sometimes, they resemble an arch of a semicircle or a rainbow or their variants. The two lower ends of the semicircle often turn outside into volutes. The gāḍha or the central part of the arch may contain reliefs of various subject matter as noticed in makaratōranā. Of the motifs carved in the gāḍha, the gandharvamukha motif dominates in number.

KŌŚṬA / NICHE - Kōśṭa is an architectural decoration sometimes functional and sometimes decorative. Kōśṭa means a niche, recessed portion in the wall surface. To make the wall surface elegant and to avoid monotony of the wall surface, kōśṭas are provided at regular intervals or at suitable places in the wall. The Texts mention a scheme for installing deities in the niches facing different directions. According to Texts, in Shiva temple, the southern and the northern walls
of the \textit{garbhagṛha} should enshrine \textit{Dakshinamurthy} and \textit{Brahma} respectively. The back wall should enshrine \textit{Lingodbhavamurthy} or \textit{Viṣṇu}. The south wall of the vestibule should enshrine the image of \textit{Ganesha} (Pl.-28) and the northern wall, \textit{Durga} or \textit{Mahishamardini} (Pl.-29). These rules apply only to the central part of the wall of the \textit{garbhagṛha} and \textit{antarāla}. If there are extra \textit{kōṣṭha}s in these parts and also \textit{kōṣṭha}s on the \textit{gūḍhamanṭapa} wall, images of deities can be installed according to the taste and belief of the builder.

As the temple walls are notably thick, the depths of the \textit{kōṣṭha}s are also suitably designed. Sometimes, the \textit{kōṣṭha}s are made for placing the \textit{jālavāṭīyana} also. In such cases, a window slab is cut and fixed into the niche in the wall. If no windows are placed, then a sculpture of a divinity is placed or sometimes it is even left empty. A \textit{kōṣṭha} may or may not have an architectural frontage, or a sculpture inside. Depending upon the necessity, a sculpture is placed in a \textit{kōṣṭha}. \textit{Kōṣṭha}s are carved in the wall surface slightly above the prati moulding of the \textit{adhisṭhāna}. In the later examples, the \textit{kōṣṭha}s extend up to the \textit{mahāpati} of the \textit{adhisṭhāna} cutting through the prati and urdhvagāla.

\textit{Kōṣṭha}s are generally placed leaving some space above the ground level. This was the procedure followed in the early period. By about 12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D., the \textit{kōṣṭha}s get extended at the bottom beyond the ground level inside.

\textit{Kōṣṭha}s, which are non-functional, are also found on the wall of the temple. These \textit{kōṣṭha}s possess very shallow niches in them. These niches neither can hold an image nor do they contain relief of an image on their wall surface.

\textbf{KUMBHA\textsc{PAJAR} - Kumbhapaṇja\textsc{ra}} - \textit{Kumbhapaṇja\textsc{ra}} is a type of decoration on the wall carved in high relief. Mānasāra explains \textit{kumbhapaṇja\textsc{ra}} thus: “A niche in the wall. It consists of a vase, a pilaster and a little pavilion at the top”\textsuperscript{46}. \textit{Kumbhapaṇja\textsc{ra}} is a decorative motif devised by the Tamil architects. It is not found in the early Chalukyan temples. From the time of the Cholas and onwards, \textit{kumbhapaṇja\textsc{ra}} motif appears on the walls of the temples as a very prominent decorative motif.
Kumbhapāṇjara is derived from the ancient Indian concept of the pūrnākalaśa. This motif consists of a big globular pot kept on a pedestal. From the mouth of the pot, creeper scrolls emerge and fall out on its two sides. This is the concept denoting the Universe (brahmanadā). The pot represents the Universe. It is filled with water (‘āpomayam – jagat’). From that water, life emerges in the form of creepers coming out from the pot. This concept was taken by the artists and further developed as a pillar coming from the pot and on the top of the pillar a pavilion with a canopy is carved. This concept is depicted in various ways in a glorious manner.

A good number of representations of the kumbhapāṇjaras are found in the area of our study with umpteen varieties. This concept reminds us of the famous prayer in praise of Shiva composed by Bana Bhatta in “Harsha Charita”, which says

“namastunīga śiraścumbi candra cāmara cārave|
trailōkya nagarārambahgā mūlastambhāya śambhave||”

This verse is in praise of Śambhu (Śiva), who is the ‘mūlastambha’, i.e., the main support for all the three worlds. The essence of this verse is that Śiva is the supporter of all the three worlds in this Universe. This message is very effectively conveyed through the motif of kumbhapāṇjara. The pot represents the Universe. The pavilion above represents the three Worlds and the pillar represents Shiva supporting the three Worlds. There is also a living practice amongst the traditional architects of India who chant this verse while commencing their work. Several versions of this verse are available in the contemporary inscriptions of Karnataka, which make the meaning of the pūrnākalaśa motif clearer.

Kumbhapāṇjara, according to Kāśyapaśilpa, should be carved on vēdi. Above the vēdi, the kumbha is placed. From the mouth of the kumbha emerge rich foliage (valli) and a pillar (stambha). The stambha consists of manḍi and phalaka. Above the phalaka, a suitable turretted pavilion is carved. The same motif without the kumbha is called by the name ‘Stambhapāṇjara’.
**Kumbhapañjara**, because of its profound metaphysical symbology, is very prominently relieved on the surface of the walls of the temples of Tamil country. The reliefs are sometimes as deep as to expose half of its girth and they are variedly and delicately designed and executed.

*Kumbhapañjara* for the first time, appears in the area of our study in a temple dated to 1234 A.D. (Pl.-30). During this period, this region was under the occupation of the Hoysalas, but it is interesting to note that the Hoysala architects in their heartland did not use this motif for decoration. Instead, they profusely used the *stambhapañjaras*. The area under study, though was under the Hoysala rule, *stambhapañjaras* are never used in this region. Instead, only *kumbhapañjaras* are used. This is a clear proof of the strong influence of the Tamil architectural tradition in the region of our study.

The *kumbhapañjaras*, as said earlier, is purely a decorative motif used for decorating the outer surface of the walls of the temple. *Kumbhapañjara* motif consists of three decorative components (Fig.-18). They are –

i) The *kumbha*

ii) The shaft emerging from the mouth of the pot vertically with all its decorative members.

iii) The crowning member.

The descriptions, of different components of the *kumbhapañjaras* are given here.

**KUMBHA** - *Kumbha* is the pot at the base. It is normally placed on a pedestal, circular or square. The *kumbha* is globular, sometimes it is octagonal or cubical with the two corners of front neatly depicted, while the upper and lower portions are rounded. The bulbous body of this pot is often decorated with sharply cut ridges and grooves decorated with a central fillet. The body of the pot is often decorated with a fillet, *puṣṭapatiśṭīka, ratnapatiśṭīka, vajrapatiśṭīka*, etc. The tassels of the *patātika* are also sometimes carved on the two sides of the *kumbha* (Fig.-19). The neck of the pot is
distinctly cut with a rim above. From the mouth of the pot emerges rich floral motifs and they fall on the two sides of the pot. It is interesting to note that the floral motif sometimes comes out from the mouths of the *makaras* carved just above the mouth of the pot. Depending upon the skill and imagination of the artist the floral decoration is carved differently.

**SHAFT** - From the mouth of the pot rises a vertical post. This pillar may be square (*brahmakānta*), octagonal (*visṇukānta*) or cylindrical (*rudrakānta*). Except the pedestal, this pillar consists of all the decorative components, like, the vase, *kumbha*, *manḍi* and *phalaka*. The shaft, besides being square or multifaceted, may also have the decoration of horizontal bands, grooves, beaded string festoons and other similar decorative designs. Above the abacus, an architectural design in the form of a miniature pavilion with a turret above is carved. Full-fledged miniature pavilions are noticed, but in most of the cases this architectural form is symbolic. Other decorative motifs like a seated lion (Pl.-37a) or a *kalaśa* (Fig.-22) are also found.

**CROWNING MEMBER** - Generally a turreted pavilion is the crowning member of the *kumbhapāṇjara*. It is elaborately carved. Three types of crowning pavilions are commonly noticed. They are of *śāla*, *kūta* and *paṇjara* types.

**PILLAR CAPITAL TYPE** - In a few instances, *kumbhapaṇjara* having only the pillar capital are found. Above the shaft of the pillar, *kumbha*, *manḍi*, and *phalaka* only are carved. Above this rests the corbel touching the architrave of the wall. This is a rare type of *kumbhapaṇjara*. It has a *brahmakānta* shaft with all the details of a regular pilaster. But it is shown as emerging from the *kumbha* below (Pl.-31)\(^{48}\).

**ŚALĀ TYPE**  
Majority of the crowning members are of *śāla* type. Above the oblong ridged roof of the *śāla*, a row of miniature *stūpis* are placed. The front portion of the *śāla* is also sometimes decorated with the *mahānāsi* motif with *nāsi*
and kīrtimukha distinctly carved. Sometimes, the śāla also possesses lion motifs instead of nāsi (Fig.-18, Pl-32).

KŪTA TYPE In the kūta variety of canopy, square to round coping is carved. Over the palagai is carved a miniature pavilion having regular architectural features. But the kapōta is carved prominently with nāsis. The finial of the coping may be in the form of a round kalaśa or a kīrtimukha. The kūta motif is generally placed on a kapōta (Fig.-21, Pl.-33).

PAṆJARA TYPE - In the pañjara type of coping, a rounded gable formed by a big nāsi with kīrtimukha is carved. The ‘gādha’ of the nāsi may sometimes have a miniature architectural model or a human face or may even be empty. Generally, the pañjara is also placed above a kapōta (Pl.-34).

Besides the various types of decorations described above, a few kumbhapañjaras also have certain additional decorations on their sides. In one instance, the kumbha does not have the floral motif coming out from its mouth. Instead, from the two sides of the pedestal of the kumbha, creeper scrolls come out with a lotus each. The lotuses support a standing lady figure carved on the two sides of the shaft (Pl.-35).

In the contemporary Hoysala and Kalyana Chalukya architecture, as said earlier, kumbhapañjaras are not used as a decorative motif. There, the pillar is placed above the pedestal. It supports an architectural design comprising of a tall turret representing different types of vimānas that were in vogue during that time. In the Kalyana Chalukya temples, the same turret is set up inside a richly decorated tapering floral pattern formed of series of volutes crowned by a kīrtimukha. These richly floriated volutes arranged in the shape of a pointed arch, crowned by a kīrtimukha, is noticed in umpteen varieties in the heart-land of the Chalukyas, but this type of a design is nowhere found in the region of our study. Instead, kumbhapañjaras are available in good numbers and variety also.

During the Vijayanagar days, kumbhapañjaras appear as decorative motifs on the pillars shafts also. The pillar above the kumbha here is entwined by an elegantly
carved creeper scroll bedecked with flowers, leaves, fruits and birds. These pillars are known for their exquisite quality of workmanship and exuberant decorations. The most florid example of the *kumbhapañjara* is noticed on the gateway of temple of the Vijayanagara period (Pl.-37). In this example, the relief of the motif is up to half of its full form. The *kumbha* is very neatly designed like a bulbous pot, having vertical and deeply relieved ribs. The ribs are alternately beaded. The horizontal central band is decorated like a *rathnapati*.*i*. From the mouths of the *makaras, vallimāla* springs out. The shaft of the pillar above is of *rudrachchanda* variety, and has floral motifs and festoons of beaded strings. The *manḍi*.*i* is also delicately relieved with floral patterns. The pavilion above the *phalaka* has lion-head motifs in the place of pillars. The canopy above is very broad. The *nāsis* of the *kapota* are also relieved very distinctly. The coping above is of the *pañjara* type. It is noteworthy here that ornate and simple *kumbhapañjaras* are found side by side in the region of our study (Pl.-37a). No development in the formation or design of the *kumbhapañjaras* can be noticed.

**JĀLAVĀTĀYANAS / TRACERIES** - The *jālas* are the traceries of stone or wood. They are described in various Texts on Indian architecture. *Jālas* are also called *jālavātāyanas* because they are used for ventilating the interiors of the temple. *Jālavātāyanas* are found normally in the walls of the *navaranāga*, walls of the *antarāla*, *ardhamanātapa* and on the walls of the *pradakshina*patā. Rarely, *jālas* are noticed on the walls of the *garbhagṛha*. *Jālavātāyanas* provide dim light into the interior of the temple making that place gloomy and mysterious. During the medieval period, *jālavātāyanas* flank the *antarāla* door-frame of the temples of Karnataka.

*Jālavātāyanas* are carved only in stone because of its permanent nature and also for the reason that it blends well with the elevation of the temple. However, it is to be noted here that *jālavātāyanas* made of wooden planks are also mentioned in the Texts on architecture, because, wood is also mentioned as a medium of construction. Though no wooden *jālavātāyanas* are extant to us, their use, however, is proved by the existing door leaves of the ancient temples.
A brief account of the nature and scheme of decoration of the jālavāṭāyanas has already been given while dealing with the tōranās. However, it is necessary here to highlight certain other characteristic features, as these jālavāṭāyanas attained such a degree of skill and perfection that they stand out distinctly as master pieces of the concerned schools of art, and also are unique to this region. The quality, the workmanship, the wealth of imagination found in these jālavāṭāyanas are so high that Rajendra Chola who invaded Nolambavadi (Kolar and Bangalore Districts), enamoured of the beauty of the Nolamba jālavāṭāyanas, dismantled a few existing temples of the Nolambas and took away the jālavāṭāyanas as war trophies. One of them, at present, is placed in the premises of the Brihadeshwara temple at Tanjore.

The use of jālavāṭāyanas start from the Badami Chalukyan times. Lad Khan, Durga and later temples contain the jālavāṭāyanas. The art of carving jālavāṭāyanas attained maturity as early as the middle of 8th century A.D., as seen in varieties of jālavāṭāyanas on the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples at Patadakal. There are many agamas and vāsthushāstras that deal with the jālavāṭāyanas, but the most comprehensive list and detailed account of the jālavāṭāyanas is given in Mayamata. Mayamata lists ten types of jālavāṭāyanas, Mānasāra lists eight types of jālavāṭāyanas. However, many of the types are common to both the Texts, while a few appear only in Mayamata and a few only in Mānasāra. In spite of the explanations given for different types of jālavāṭāyanas, it is not possible, in most cases, to identify the existing models with those mentioned in the Texts. Many new types which are not found in the Texts also appear. Texts give the names for the jālavāṭāyanas based on the main features of decorations and carvings they possess. They, however, do not give any explanation regarding the other types of decorations found along with the main features of decorations. These jālavāṭāyanas contain other types of decorations along with the ones mentioned in the Texts. Therefore, they are to be considered as hybridized forms or variants, devised and carved by the imagination and skill of the artists. As the jālavāṭāyanas were the artistic productions of the creative genius of the artisans, the artisans have applied their skill of carving and their wealth of imagination into them. Therefore, some of them
stand out as the best creations of art of that particular school of art. Therefore, instead of following the typology given by the Texts, a study of the jālavātāyanas is made here on the basis of the types of decorations found on the actual examples.

Given below is the table of the jālavātāyanas with details about their types and their textual references:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Type of jālavātāyanas</th>
<th>Text/ Chapter/ verse</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Swastika</td>
<td>Mayamata-16/ 63</td>
<td>Resembles a Swastika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mānasāra - 17 / 30-36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Nandyāvarta</td>
<td>Mayamata - 16/ 58b-59a</td>
<td>Resembles an Akshayaswastika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mānasāra - 17/ 27-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kāmikāgama-55/162-163</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Isanasivagurudevpaddati</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Rjujālaka</td>
<td>Mayamata-Kāmikāgama-55/157-158</td>
<td>Resembles a rope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Isanasivagurudevpaddati</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Caturasra</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Kunjarāksha/ Gajāksha</td>
<td>Mayamata - Mānasāra–33/581-582-585</td>
<td>Resembles the eye of an elephant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kāmikāgama-55/157-158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Isanasivagurudevpaddati</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Gavāksha</td>
<td>Mayamata-</td>
<td>Resembles the eye of a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A factor, noteworthy in this context, is the method of preparation of *jālavātāyanas*. Texts do not give any details regarding the method of carving of *jālavātāyanas*. They are the stone planks (*ṣilāphalaka*) and wooden planks (*dāruphalaka*). Taking cue from the Texts, the sculptors have carved the *jālavātāyanas* in stone, ranging from ordinary works of art to those of high artistic excellence. Even in the choice of the medium, the artists have used their discretion. To make the *jālavātāyanas* good specimens of artistic beauty, sometimes, the stone medium used for their carving is changed to a better variety of stone than the one used for the construction of the temple. This trend comes into practice in the region of our study during 10th century, particularly in the Nolamba temples. In the Nolamba temples, generally, greenish blue basalt is used for carving the *jālavātāyanas*, door frames, pillars and sculptures, while ordinary granite is used for...
the building. Basalt, being a stone with fine grains and of dark color, the art objects carved in this stone presents a distinctly different look than the surface in which they are set. The fine grains of the stone facilitate the artist to carve the art objects more intricately and crisply and also to give a metallic luster to the surface of the art objects.

In the carving of jālavātāyanas, certain practicing norms are noticed. It is already said, while dealing with the tōranās, that an architectural frontage was provided for the niches (kōsṭānās) provided on the wall surface. Normally, an architectural frame-work of the type described already was carved on the wall surface. In the deep or shallow niches that are made in the centre of the tōranā a sculpture was relieved on the back wall or was separately placed. In certain other niches, perforated windows were carved on a separate slab and fixed into the opening made in the wall. If that opening is already preceded by a tōranā on the wall, the jālavātāyana slab will only contain a decorated border. If no tōranā design is made in the wall then the jālavātāyana slab will contain the necessary architectural frame work within. Exceptions to this trend are also not unknown.

The earliest specimens of the jālavātāyanas of the region come from the time of the last quarter of the 8th century A.D., to which period, the beginnings of stone temple architecture is assigned. Here the jālavātāyana is of a very simple type consisting of two circular windings of creepers. But the humble beginning made in this direction soon became florid, rich and complicated in its theme. These jālavātāyanas have very neatly delineated figural, floral and religious motifs, sometimes with developed architectural patterns carved on them. The art of carving jālavātāyanas was taken to the height of its quality and workmanship during the 10th century A.D. by the Nolambas. By the end of 10th century A.D., this area came under the occupation of the Cholas. The Chola artists were not so adept, like the Nolambas, in this field. Therefore, from the middle of 11th century onwards, jālavātāyanas are found in less numbers. Their quality also is comparatively inferior. The Vijayanagara artists no doubt gave importance for the carving of
plinths, pillars and wall surface but the *jālavātāyanas* of this period (with a few exceptions) are not so exquisite in their workmanship as their early counterparts.

It is a fact that different categories of *jālavātāyanas*, like simple and ornate, appear side by side. The study of the *jālavātāyanas* of the area under study is made on the basis of the designs carved on them.

Geometrical Designs - The perforation in the form of geometrical designs is of two types. They are square or rhombus. Square or rhombus designs are arranged in groups or rows to suit the required design and shape of the slab\(^6\) and the design as well. Occasionally, both the designs are also found used together (Fig.-5, Pl.-38,39)\(^6\). The perforation made in square shape is called as the *turyashra / chaturashra* variety, and the perforation in the form of rhombus is called as *gavāksha* or *gōnēthra*\(^6\) (Fig.-16, Pl.-39, 40, 41 and 42).

Floral Designs - Floral designs with perforations are found in quite a good number in the area of our study. Evidently, this was also a favourite theme of the artists of the region from the beginning. Very delicately and beautifully carved undulating creeper scrolls are depicted on the slabs. The vines are sometimes inter-twined if they have two roots. The vines are provided with tender sprouts, leaves, flowers and fruits. If the vine of the creeper itself forms the design of the window, the canons name it as *vallijālas*\(^3\) (Fig.-17, Pl.-43). The circles of the vines filled by sculptures of frolicking *garṇḍas*, dancing couples (Pl.-44 and 45), individuals (Pl.-46), parrots and birds (Pl.-47) or such other animal motifs are also found in plenty in the area of our study\(^7\). However, no reference to this type of *jālavātāyanas* is found in the Text. Therefore, this may be taken as a variant of the *valli* type. In the depiction of figural motifs inside the loops of the vines, the artists have exhibited their creative genius\(^7\). Dancing figures, male and female couples and frolicking *garṇḍas* are very skillfully combined and mixed with the floral designs (Pl.-44, 45). In the depiction of such designs, erotic narrative theme is also introduced. A very interesting theme is depicted in a narrative order inside the loops of the intertwining vines of the *jālavātāyana*
Kāmasutra of Vātsyayana refers to the art of love making with a procedure and this procedure is illustrated visually step by step in six stages. The carvings are very symbolic, effective and instructive too. As early as the beginning of 9th century A.D., such a delicately carved window appears on the wall of the temple of Kapileshwara at Manne (Pl.-49).

Figural Designs - Īlavātāyanas consisting of figural subject matter are available more often than any of the types mentioned above. These īlavātāyanas contain figural subjects of religious 73 (Pl.-50), semi-religious74(Fig.-22, Pl.-48) and secular themes75(Pl-51). They are found carved inside the square or rectangular frame of the ālavātāyana (Pl.-52). Sometimes, the figures are also carved within the frame-work of an architectural niche (Pl.-53). In the composition of the figural sculptures, sometimes, the frame of the ālavātāyana is also divided into several horizontal registers78(Fig.-22, Pl.-48), inside which, figures are composed. This type of ālavātāyana is designated as gulika in the architectural Texts79. Such instances are found in plenty in the area of our study. But the ālavātāyanas having the floral motif along with figural motif are not separately illustrated in the Text. Therefore, the ālavātāyanas having floral and figural motif as described above, may be taken as the result of hybridization of the two types namely valli and gulika by the artists.

Religious themes- Standing, dancing, annihilating forms of Hindu divinities are normally found as the subject of the figural sculptures. Standing forms of Vishnu inside a niche 80 (Pl.-50), or dancing Shiva as Nataraja 81 (Pl.-53), Mahishamardini killing the demon Mahisha82(Pl.-54) or simply standing over the head of Mahisha83(Pl.-55) are some of the important themes found here. After carving the sculptures suitably on the ālavātāyana, slab the plain space left is perforated wherever possible. Such perforations may be square84, circular85, triangular86, and rhomboid87 or may be of even of irregular contours88.
Semi-divine themes- In this category, two types are noticed. The first type consists of two inter-twining cobras. This kind is mentioned in the text as nāgabandha variety (Pl.-56)\textsuperscript{89}. The other semi-divine subject matter of the jālavātāyanas is the gan\textsuperscript{as} or kubjas frisking and frolicking in different poses \textsuperscript{90} (Pl.-48). These merry-making gan\textsuperscript{as} are mostly playing musical instruments like flute, cymbals, drums and other percussion instruments\textsuperscript{91} and some are in dancing poses. The divine bliss and enjoyment of these figures are very refreshing. Dancing couples are also a subject of these jālavātāyanas\textsuperscript{92} (Pl.-59).

Ancient Indian Texts on vāstu prescribe different locations for the placement of the jālas in the building. According to them, the jālavātāyanas may be inserted above the vēdika\textsuperscript{93}. The vēdika may be taken here as the plinth, above which, in the wall surface, jālas are placed. Vēdika also means the top of the prāsāda above the sanctum. Here the jāla is to be placed at the neck (grīva) below the cupola. If the prāsāda is hollow, the jāla placed here provides dim light into the sanctum\textsuperscript{94}. Likewise, jālas are also provided in the roof of the nave portion of the early Chalukyan temples\textsuperscript{95}. The Kāshyapaśilpa also states that the jālavātāyanas should be provided on the wall and on the neck of the prāsāda\textsuperscript{96}. Mānasāra prescribes that “Jāla should be provided on the wall and also on the gōpuras, vimānas, etc.”\textsuperscript{97}

The temples of the area under study possess jālavātāyanas only on the wall surface. Very few temples of the region have intact original prāsāda over their sanctums and they are all solid in their construction. Hence, no jālavātāyanas are found on the grīva of the vimānas of these temples. None of the gōpuras found in the region, though intact, have the provision of jālavātāyanas below the cupolas. Instead, they all have small door openings, some of them filled with wooden frames, in each of their tiers, on their front and back sides. Though these are provided obviously for ventilation they cannot be classified under the category of the jālas.

The jālas found in the region of our study are fixed into the walls of the śukanāsas / ardhaman\textsuperscript{ī}t\textsuperscript{apas} and navaran\textsuperscript{agas} with a solitary exception of the
Ranganatha temple at Rangasthala\textsuperscript{98}, where, on the eastern wall of the garbhagrha a\textsuperscript{ja}lavātāyana is provided\textsuperscript{99}.

RELIEF SCULPTURES - Carving of sculptures on the outer wall of the temple is an age-old practice in South India. In the Badami Chalukyan temples, the tradition of carvings sculptures on the bhitti for the sake of decoration, for entertainment and for education was in vogue. The Hoysalas took this art to the height of its excellence and made the wall sculptures of their temples a gallery of Hindu mythology and society. This great tradition of carving sculptures on the wall surface gradually deteriorated. Yet the traits of such a rich tradition continued to be in use during the Vijayanagar times. The relief sculpture on the main shrine and on the prākāra of the Hajara Ramaswamy temple at Hampi is a good example to the practice of decorating the bhitti with sculptures. Pale forms of such a tradition are noticed in the region of our study also.

After describing the various components of the wall of the temple, now, it is necessary to trace the development of the trait of these components of bhitti in the region of our study.

Now, coming to the area of our study, bhittis of various types are noticed. Straight walls, indented walls and elliptical walls are noticed. Walls devoid of any architectural or sculptural decoration, wall only with the decoration of the bhittipādas, wall decorated with bhittipādas and kōśṭhaas, wall decorated with the bhittipādas, kōśṭhaas and kumbhapañjaras and wall decorated with bhittipādas, kōśṭhaas and relief sculptures are noticed. Wall built of brick and plastered with mortar and wall built of stone are discernible. However, the brick temples are very less in number. The average height of the bhitti outside is about ten feet.

Now, coming to the different components of the decoration on the wall, first comes the decoration through bhittipāda. Bhittipādas are carved quite profusely on the wall surface of almost all the temples. These bhittipādas are carved singularly and nowhere, bhittipādas carved in pairs are noticed. The brahmakānta type occurs
very frequently. Right from the early times, up to the modern period, the use of this type of *bhittipāda* can be noticed. The shafts of these *bhittipādas* are generally devoid of any sculptural decoration. So also they are devoid of carved pedestals. The shaft begins directly from the top of the *kampa* of the *prati* moulding. The shaft is generally plain; the upper part of the shaft contains the usual *laśuna* (vase), *kumbha*, *manḍi* and *phalaka*. Sometimes, simple decoration of *muktāgrāsas*, horizontal grooves and ridges are also made on the shaft. In the early *brahmakānta bhittipādas* of the region, the *manḍi* portion gets the scalloping of the lotus petals with out-curled, thin, pointed edges. In the later period the lotus petal scalloping became prominent.

The second major type of *bhittipāda* that occurs frequently on the walls of the temples of the region of our study is the *viṣṇukanta* type. This type of *bhittipāda* begins to appear in the temples of 12\(^{\text{th}}\) century and onwards. This type of shaft possesses a carved cubical base. Above, the shaft is made octagonal up to the bottom of the *phalaka*. Because the shaft is made octagonal, the upper corner of the base is decorated with *patra* decoration. The octagonal shaft contains *laśuna*, *kumbha*, *manḍi* and *phalaka*. The *viṣṇukanta bhittipādas* are generally attractive in their form because of the delicate decorative carvings made on them. The base is relieved with *vallimanaḍala* and other floral designs. The decoration of the shaft includes *muktāgrāsas*, *vallimanaḍala*, *patras*, fillets, medallions, and *padmas* carved on the upper part of the shaft, on the body of the *laśuna* and *kumbha*. The *manḍi* is also treated well with sharp and up-curved lotus petals. In some of the examples of the Vijayanagar period, the octagonal shaft gets the decoration of vertical bands of *kalpavalli*.

The third type of *bhittipāda* noticed in the temples of the region of our study is the *saumyakānta* variety. A solitary instance of this type of *bhittipāda* is noticed on the *mahādwāra* of a temple (Pl. - 60). As it is difficult to carve multiple faces on the shaft, it is found only in one temple. *Saumyakānta bhittipāda* contains multiple faces for the shaft and also for the upper decorative members.
The rudrakānta bhittipāda contains a square base supporting a cylindrical shaft. Laśuna, kumbha and manḍi are all cylindrical in form. No specimen of this variety as a full pilaster on the wall surface is noticed in the region of our study. The bhittipāda of the rudrakānta type is seen in the architectural frame work of the kōsāras. Therefore they are all split pilasters. Yet they contain all the essential features of a bhittipāda of other types.

The corbels or the pōtikas form the top-most part of the pilaster. This part is not only an indispensible part of the architectural frame-work; it is also helpful in fixing the chronology of the development of temple architectural forms. The pōtikas of the early period of the region are similar to those found in any other important temple of southern Karnataka. The earliest pōtikas to be noticed in the region belong to 9th century A.D. These pōtikas are used for the regular pillars in the interiors only. They are the vrūttapōtikas. Taranapōtikas are a developed form of vrūttapōtikas. First, a vrūttapōtika is carved and then it is designed to give the look of a taranapōtika. Taranapōtika, during Chola period, turns into ādhārapōtika, that is, the beveled and tenon type of corbel. This was used extensively throughout Karnataka. The beveled ādhārapōtika by the middle of 13th century A.D., takes the shape of the pusāpōtika. In this type, the extending arms of the pōtika project with double flexure and the terminals of the corbels bend downwards having the motif of the flower and the bud. Further elaboration and exaggeration of the same motif is also noticed during Vijayanagar period.

The development of the corbels in this manner, described above, is considered helpful for fixing the chronology of the temples. Hitherto it was believed that during the Vijayanagar period, the ādhārapōtika of the Chola order took the shape of a pusāpōtika. But surprisingly, the pusāpōtikas begin to appear in the region of our study by the middle of 12th century, i.e., long before the foundation of the Vijayanagar empire.

It is a known fact that the pōtikas are used as a functional member of the building. Therefore, on the outer face of the wall, pōtikas are found used as a
separate entity over the pilasters. Sometimes, they are carved decoratively in the same block of stone in which the architrave is also carved. In such cases they are non-functional and purely decorative in character.

The function of the architrave is to span the gap between the two pillars so that the load from the top is borne by the architrave and is distributed over the two pillars. Therefore the architrave should be carved out of one block of stone covering the span between the two pillars. Strangely, they are not carved so in many of the outer walls of the temples. Examples of walls having architraves made of several pieces of stone that do not cover the entire gap between the pillars are found. These pieces of architraves rest upon the lower course of the stone of the wall proper. Sometimes they are carved as part of the slab used for bhitti, thus the very purpose of the architrave is defeated in these structures.

From this it becomes clear that the decoration on the outer wall such as pilasters, corbel, architraves, are all carved only for decoration and they do not serve the purpose for which they are specifically designed for.

Temples of the region, right from the beginning, possess kōṣṭhaśas of various dimensions and depths. Some of them are purely ornamental in nature. To this category, tōranās carved with plain wall surface may be included. These tōranās have architectural framework similar to those found for the kōṣṭhaśas. But the surface of the wall is not at all recessed. Therefore, they are also to be considered as kōṣṭhaśas only. Some of the regular kōṣṭhaśas possess relief sculptures and some others possess sculptures in the round installed in them. A feature observed in the temples of the region, is that the practice of carving kōṣṭhaśas (without jālavātyānas) started from the time of the Cholas. The temples of the early Chola period of the region possess full-fledged deep dēvakōṣṭhaśas on the three sides of outer wall of the vimāna and on the outer wall of the āntarāla and navaranāga. In the kōṣṭhaśas were enshrined the images of the deities as prescribed by the canons. These temples are all small in dimension in comparison to those built in the heartland of the Cholas. Therefore, minimum numbers of
kōśas as per the norms of the Texts only were carved and the deities were installed. But the installation of the deities notably decreased by the 13th century and completely dispensed with during the Vijayanagara period. Some of the kōśas also possess jālavātyanas in them.

Carving of the kōśas is for both functional and ornamental purposes. Even if it does not possess a sculpture inside, the architectural framework of the kōśa itself adds to the beauty of the structure. It relieves the monotony of the wall surface. If an image is installed in it, then, it serves the purpose of a small shrine also. So in both ways it is utilitarian in nature. There is no rule that these kōśas are to be carved only on the outer surface of the wall of the main shrine. Kōśas are found on the inner wall of the prākāra, on the hāra, on the talas and grīva of the vimāna, on the wall of the dwāramanṭapa and the talas of the gopura. Therefore, there is no specific place, prescribed for the carving of the kōśa. Kōśa, for all practical purposes, is a niche, with or without a façade of an architectural framework. It is architecturally and functionally useful in the temple complex.

Kōśas in the temples of the region are umpteen in number. They are invariably found on the outer surface of the wall of the shrine proper. These kōśas, as already stated, may possess an architectural framework consisting of two split pilasters, supporting a lintel above. Above the lintel, depending upon the nature of the carving of the canopy, architectural members are provided. If the canopy is of pavilion type then, above the architrave, a kapōta is carved, which is superimposed by a vājana, grīva and śikhara. The śikhara may be of any one of the three types, namely, śāla, kūta and pañjara. Among these types, the śāla pavilion dominates in number. The reason for this is that the interspaces between two pilasters being broad, it suits the śāla type of framework. Only six kōśas with kūta type of canopies are noticed in the region and that too, they are all in the dwāramanṭapa of the temples and they are carved for the kōśas in the narrow recessions of the wall. Kōśas having pañjara canopies are also noticed in the region. There are also certain other kōśas which only have pilasters
having an architrave and a vājana without any decoration above. There are also some incomplete or unfinished copings for the kōṣṭhās in the region.

Kōṣṭhās having makaraṭorāṇas are treated in a different way. The split pilasters support an architrave and a vājana. Above the vājana, makaras of different types described already are carved. Likewise, the nāsitōrāṇas are also carved.

In the carving of the pilasters of the bhitti, two distinct traditions namely the Tamil and the Karnataka traditions are discernable. In the Tamil idiom, the upper part of the pilasters contains a vase motif. The same in the Karnataka idiom takes the shape of a bell motif. This tradition was strictly adhered to by artists of both the schools. Based on this type of pilaster decoration, one may decide to which school the artisan belongs. Examples to this are available in plenty in both Karnataka and Tamil regions. The Hoysalas used bell motif for the pilasters and the Cholas used vase motif for the same.

Similarly the decoration of the pilasters of the kōṣṭhās have two distinct types of carving one belonging to the Tamil idiom and the other belonging to the Karnataka idiom. In the Tamil tradition, the two pilasters are represented like vertically split pilasters; hence they are called as split pilasters only. Pallava and Chola architects used this type of decoration. Even the temples built under the Hoysala regime in the region of our study have this type of decoration.

In contrast to this, in the Karnataka idiom, the pilasters are represented in their full form. The pilaster of the kōṣṭhās of the Badami Chalukyan temples, Rastrakuta, Kalyana Chalukya, Hoysala, temples all have invariably the representation of full pilasters for the kōṣṭhās. The region of our study being a buffer region, the elements of both the traditions should have been present but Kolar and Bangalore districts right from the beginning, was under the influence of Tamil architectural tradition. This has been established through various other architectural patterns also. Therefore, in the region of our study, only Tamil idiom of representation is noticed.
The *kumbha-pañjara* and *kōsātapañjara* again reflect the Karnataka and Tamil idioms. In the Tamil idiom *kumbha-pañjaras* of various designs only are represented. No *stambha-pañjara* is found in the temple built by a Tamil artisan. Likewise, *stambha-pañjara* is a motif used exclusively by the Karnataka artist. These two motifs are late in their origin. Hence, they are not available in the temples of the Badami Chalukya and Rastrakuta in Karnataka and those of the Pallava and early Chola in Tamilnadu. *Kumbha-pañjaras* begin to appear in the late Chola temples. Likewise, *stambha-pañjaras* are noticed in the Kalyani Chalukya temples. *Stambha-pañjara* is a motif, which consists of a pillar placed on a pedestal. No *kumbha* is found at the bottom of the pilaster. It stands independently without a *kumbha*. This pillar contains the bell motif at the top super-imposed by *kumbha, manḍi* and *phalaka*. Above the *phalaka*, a multistoried miniature turret is carved. As an ‘aura’ to the turret an ornamental *tōra*, formed of series of volutes rising in pyramidal contour, is carved and this *tōra* was optional. The turret is of many varieties. There is no specific pattern for the carving of the turret. The *stambha-pañjaras* are seen only in Kalyani Chalukya and Hoysala temples in Karnataka.

The region of our study, as said earlier, was dominated by Tamil traditional architecture. Hence, no *stambha-pañjara* is found in the region. Even on the temples built in the area during the Hoysala rule only *kumbha-pañjaras* are noticed.

Tradition of carving relief sculptures on the surfaces of the wall and on the pilasters is seen in the temples of the region of our study. Such a tradition is known to have begun as early as 10th century A.D. The earliest examples of wall sculptures are noticed at the Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani dated to the later half of the 10th century A.D. Here, the sculptures are relieved on the plain surfaces of the wall. These sculptures are devoid of any architectural setting. Both divine and secular sculptures are found carved here. These sculptures are carved for the sake of decoration as well as for educating the visitors. These sculptures are generally carved on the lowest part of the *bhitti* of the temple. Their average height is about two feet. Individual themes are carved in the space between the pilasters. Majority
of them are carved in bas relief. Some of them depict Hindu deities in their different forms, like, sthānaka (standing), āsina (sitting) or samhāra (annihilating) postures. Important incidents of Hindu mythology are depicted as brief narrative panels. These sculptures are carved on the walls of different parts of the main shrine. The devotee who circumambulates the temple gets a glance at the important incidents of the Hindu mythology and also the different aspects of Hindu divinity.

From 12th century onwards, this tradition makes its presence prominently on the temple walls of the region of our study. The Mukthinatheshwara temple at Binnamangala has a number of religious and figural subjects carved in high relief on the wall surface, as well as on the pilasters. This period corresponds with the Hoysala period wherein exuberantly carved array of sculptures appear on the wall surface of the Hoysala temples. As this area comes under the rule of the Hoysalas, it is possible that due to the influence of the Hoysala rule, some elements of the florid architectural style of the Hoysalas might have influenced the artisans of the region of our study. The tradition of carving wall sculptures becomes more rampant during the Vijayanagara period in the region of our study. The interspaces of all the pilasters and also the two sides of the kumbhapāñjaras are relieved with sculptures of socio–religious themes throughout. Someshwara temple at Kolar and the Vijayanagara additions to the Bhoganandishwara temple complex contain fabulously carved sculptural relievos on the wall surface. During the post Vijayanagara period, decorating the wall surface with sculptural relievos continues in a different way. Here, instead of individual themes, the narrative panels come into being. Selected themes from Rāmāyana, (Pl.-3a) Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, the avatāras of Vishnu, etc., are carved on the plain surfaces of the wall. A point to be noted in this context is that wherever such narrative themes are carved, the wall surface normally will be devoid of pilasters, kōśašśas and other architectural decorations. This is due to the fact that during the late and post-Vijayanagara periods, temples were constructed without much architectural decoration. The wall surfaces were made plain and simple. To compensate the simplicity of the wall
surface, sculptural themes were introduced on the wall. The Amman shrine at the Someshwara temple at Ulsur contains a richly sculptured wall (Pl.-3b).

The reason for introducing such sculptural reliefs on the wall surface may also be attributed to another important factor of the building. Many of these important reliefs are found carved on the wall surface of the Amman shrines of the temple complex. These Amman shrines are built on a smaller scale, as a subsidiary shrine to the main shrine. Therefore, the heights of the walls of these temples are also very low. Instead of carving simple architectural decorations on the wall, the entire surface is converted into a sculptural gallery of notable artistic merit. Episodes like Girija kalyāṇā101, Sita kalyāṇā (Pl.-3b) with all the divine retinue of the concerned Gods are fabulously carved on the wall surfaces. These episodes not only create interest in the Hindu mythology for the visitors, but also give an appealing artistic form to the structure.

The Vijayanagar period witnessed deterioration in the craft of sculpture carving in the temples. Importance was given for building structures on a large scale, of huge dimensions. Therefore, architectural members, their decoration received much attention. The bhitti of the Vijayanagara temples are, therefore, filled with purely architectural decorations. Sculptural art, which was actually a skill, mastered by a different class of artisans, perhaps suffered a setback during this period. Therefore, Vijayanagar temples lack in sculptural art when compared to the architectural art. To overcome this deficiency, a few temples are provided with relief sculptures on the outer wall surface, to the extent possible. But these sculptures are not at all aesthetically elegant and attractive.

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1 A Sanskrit English Dictionary – P. 756- Monier Williams, Oxford Clarendon Press- 1899
2 Mayamata Ch-XV, Śīloka -17.
3 Kamikagama Ch-XII, Śīloka -18.
4 Shilparatna Ch-XV, Śīloka-21.
5 Dharmeshwara temple at Aigandapura, Hesaraghatta taluk, Bangalore dist.
6 Mayamata Ch-XV, Śīloka -7.
7 Mayamata Ch-XV, Śīloka-27.
8 Narasimha temple at Goribidanur, Kolar dist.
9 Akka tangi temple at Manne, Nelamangalam taluk, Bangalore dist.
Mayamata Ch-XV, - Śloka -7.
Muktinateshwara temple at Binnamangala, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
Muktinateshwara temple at Binnamangala, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist. and Swayambhunathswarna temple at Madivala, Banganapete taluk, Kolar dist.
Sri Rama temple at Kudalur, Channapattana taluk, Bangalore dist.
Chennakeshava temple at Kurudumale, Mulbagal taluk, Kolar dist.
Muktinateshwara temple at Binnamangala, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulbagal taluk, Kolar dist.
Ramanatha temple at Bellur, Kolar taluk, Kolar dist.
Kolaramma temple at Kolar.
Narayanawamy Temple, Malurpatna & Nagareshraswamy Temple, Begur.
Anjaneyaswamy temple at Anekal, Bangalore dist.
Muktinateshwara temple at Binnamangala, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
Bheemeshwara temple at Kaivara, Chintamani taluk, Kolar dist.
Kolaramma temple at Kolar.
Ishwara temple at Bellur, Kolar taluk, Kolar dist.
Ramanatha temple at Bellur, Kolar taluk, Kolar dist.
Mallegithi Sivalaya, Badami.
Anjaneya swamy temple at Anekal, Bangalore dist.
Muktinateshwara temple at Binnamangala, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
Muktinateshwara temple at Binnamangala, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
Nagareshwara temple at Begur, Bangalore dist.
Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulbagal taluk, Kolar dist.
Someshwara temple at Kurudumale, Mulbagal taluk, Kolar dist. and Someshwara temple at Doddagubbi, Hosakote taluk, Bangalore dist.
Someshwara temple at Doddagubbi, Hosakote taluk, Bangalore dist.
Chennakeshava Temple, Anekal and Someshwara temple Kolar.
Someshwara temple, Kolar.
Muktinateshwara temple at Binnamangala, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
Chennakeshava Temple, Anekal and Someshwara temple Kolar.
Someshwara temple at Kolar.
Someshwara temple at Kurudumale, Mulbagal taluk, Kolar dist. and Muktinatheshwara temple at Binnamangala, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulbagal taluk, Kolar dist and Someshwara temple at Kolar.
Muktinateshwara temple at Binnamangala, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist, Markandeshwara Temple, Vakkaleri, Malur taluk, Kolar Dist.
Kapileshwara temple at Manne, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
Bhogananandishwara temple at Nandi, Chikkaballapura taluk, Kolar dist.
Ibid.,
Mānasāra, Ch-XV, - Śloka -72.
Kāśyapaśīlpa, patala -IX, Śloka -12.
Kumbhapanijara found on the mahādwāra of Someshwara temple Kolar, and Rameshwara Temple Magadi.
Someshwara temple at Doddagubbi, Hosakote taluk, Bangalore dist.
Someshwara temple at Kurudumale, Mulbagal taluk, Kolar dist and Someshwara temple at Kolar.
Someshwara temple at Ulsoor, Bangalore and Someshwara temple at Kolar.
Mahādwāra of the Someshwara temple at Kolar.
On the Pillar of the kalyana mantapa of Bhoganandiswara Temple, Chikkaballapura taluk, Kolar dist.
and on the Pillar of the kalyana mantapa of Someshwara temple, Kolar.

54 Mayamata Ch-XVI, Mānasā Ch-XVII.
55 Ranganatha temple at Rangasthala, Bodigenahalli, Chikkaballapura taluk, Kolar dist.
56 Mayamata
57 The Nolambas, A Politicial & Cultural Study, page.188, Dr. M.S. Krishnamurthy, Prasaranga, Mysore University

58 Kosṭa on the northern wall of the antarala of Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist. which has image of Mahishamardini carved like a Kuta tōranā with all architectural frame work.

59 Nataraja Sculpture on the wall of the āntarala of Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist.
60 Muktinatheshwara temple at Binnamangala, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
61 Arunachaleshwara temple at Nandi, Chikkaballapura taluk, Kolar dist.-Gulikajala has lotus petals as the border.

62 Ibid.,-Nataraja jālā on the wall has the architectural framework.
63 Bharateshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist.
64 Kapileshwara temple at Manne, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
65 The jālas of Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist. are the best jālas of our region.

66 Champakadhamaswami temple at Bannerughatta, Anekal taluk, Bangalore dist and Someshwara temple at Kurudumale, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist.
67 Ishwara temple at Bellur, Kolar dist.
68 Mayamata Ch-XVI,- Śīkā -57 b.
69 Mayamata Ch-XVI,- Śīkā - 60a.
70 Venkataramanaswami temple at Devaragudi palli, Bagepalli taluk, Kolar dist.
71 Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist. and Kapileshwara temple at Manne, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
72 Kāmasutra of Vātsyayana mentions six stages of love making, they are ālinganadhikāra, dantashādhikāra, nakhashādhikāra, chumbanādhikāra, sambhogādhikāra, vaijikarunādhikāra.
73 Bhoganandishwara temple at Nandi, Chikkaballapura taluk, Kolar dist.- jālas of Mahishamardini and Nataraja.

74 The jālas of ganūras dancing found on the wall of Arunachaleshwara temple at Nandi, Chikkaballapura taluk, Kolar dist
75 Shatrughneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk. Kolar dist.
76 Ibid.,
77 Niche on the northern wall of the antarāla of Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist.
78 Shatrughneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk. Kolar dist.
79 Mayamata Ch-XVI,- Śīkā -62a
80 Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist. and Muktinatheshwara temple at Binnamangala, Nelamangala taluk, Bangalore dist.
81 Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist. and Arunachaleshwara temple at Nandi, Chikkaballapura taluk, Kolar dist.
82 Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist.
83 Bhoganandishwara temple at Nandi, Chikkaballapura taluk, Kolar dist
84 Lakshmaneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist.
85 Shatrughneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist.
86 Ibid.,
87 Dancing ganūrās in the jālā of Shatrughneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist.
Ibid.,
Mānasāra Ch-XVII, Śloka-32.
Bhoganandishwara temple at Nandi, Chikkaballapura taluk, Kolar dist.
Shatrughneshwara temple at Avani, Mulabagal taluk, Kolar dist.
Ibid.,
Mānasāra Ch-XVI, Śloka-31.
Ananthasayanagudi 1526 A.D. at Anantasayana Hosapete taluk.
Papanatha temple at Pattadakal.
Kāśyapaśīpa pāṭala IX, Śloka-9.
Mānasāra Ch-XVI, Śloka-23.
Ranganatha temple at Rangasthala, Bodigenahalli, Chikkaballapura taluk, Kolar dist.
On the Makara Sankranti day rays of the morning Sun enters the sanctum through this jālā and falls directly on the feet of the deity.
Venugopala swamy temple at Devanahalli, Bangalore dist and Timmaraya swami temple at Avati, Bangalore taluk, Bangalore.
Someshwara temple at Ulsur, Bangalore.