CHAPTER - V

BHITTI - WALL

The wall of the temple is called by the name bhitti. The word bhitti is derived from the root “bhid” (Sanskrit), which means to separate. The main function of the bhitti, thus, is to separate the different components of the temple plan and the interior from the exterior. Therefore the Texts refer to the wall as bhitti. Kudya is a synonymous term for the bhitti. Bhitti is constructed above the plinth. Bhitti corresponds to that portion of the elevation from the top of the adhiiṣṭhāna to the bottom of the prastara. The outer contour of the bhitti generally corresponds to the contour of the plinth. In the outer line of the outer elevation, the bhitti slightly recedes from the vertical norm of the mouldings of the plinth so as to make it distinct from the plinth below. The walls of the temple are generally built very thick and heavy. They normally contain two layers namely the inner (antarbhitti) and the outer (bāhyabhitti). Both layers are dressed on their exposed surfaces while their back surfaces are roughly treated. The gap between the inner 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 Texts prescribe that the bhitti should be decorated with bhittipādas (Pilasters), kōṣṭhas (Niches), tōraṇas (canopies), kumbhapañjaras (vase decoration) and jālavātāyanas (perforated windows) (pl-29). The exposed face of the antarbhitti though dressed well, is devoid of any decoration. All the decorations mentioned above apply only to the bāhyabhitti.

The medium used for the construction of bhitti may be of different types. They are built out of mud, wood, brick and stone. Mayamata mentions three types of walls. They are –
i) **jalaka kudya** - the wall with perforations.

ii) **iṣṭaka kudya** – The wall made of bricks.

iii) **phalaka kudya** – The wall made of planks of stone or wood.

Kamikagama mentions two types, namely, the perforated wall and the plank wall. Silparatna mentions four types of bhitti. They are *jalaka kudya*, *iṣṭaka kudya*, *phalaka kudya* and *mṛṇmaya kudya*.

The *bhittis* of the temples of the region of our study are generally built as per the prescriptions of the Texts mentioned above. Yet there are certain variations in the decoration of the *bhitti*. They vary in their look and also in their surface treatment. Decorations vary from place to place and from time to time. In spite of the prescriptions of the Texts the artists had the freedom to exhibit their profound skill in the treatment of the wall surface. This resulted in the elaborate decoration of the *bhitti* as can be noticed in a few temples of the later period.

The temples of the region of our study are built in two different media i.e. brick and stone. However, the latter medium dominates the former. It is also possible that the temples of the brick medium are either destroyed because of the ravages of time and weather or, it is also possible that they are renovated or rebuilt subsequently in stone medium. Irrespective of the medium used for the construction of the *bhitti*, the Texts prescribe same decorations for the *bhitti* of both media.

Structural temples of stone in the region of our study begin from the end of 9th century A.D. The earliest temples to be constructed are the Mallikarjuna and Kamakshiamman temples at Dharmapuri. By this time, well-developed architectural forms were already in vogue in South India. Temples having straight and indented wall surfaces, walls decorated with *bhittipādas* or/and *kōśṭhas*, *tōraṇas*, *jālavāṭāyanas*, were already built in South India. Therefore temple walls with *bhittipādas*, *kōśṭhas*, *jālavāṭāyanas* and *kumbhapañjara* are all
discernible. Decorations of the wall surface were made depending upon the convenience, cost and availability of skilled artisans. The temples of varying aesthetic values were erected in stone. The Nolambas were the first known royal dynasty to build temples in this region. Two temples built of Nolamba patronage are found at Dharmapuri. They are the Mallikarjuna and Kamakshiamman temples. The Mallikarjuna temple (except the sikhara) is fully built of stone, while the Kamakshiamman has the bhitti built of bricks. These two temples mark the beginning of temple architectural activity in the region of our study.

For the sake of study, different components of the walls are studied individually as follows:

**BHITTIPĀDAS (PILASTERS):** Bhittipādas are the Pilasters. Pilasters are not functional in character. They are purely decorative in purpose. Bhittipādas are pillar like decorative motifs carved on the surface of the wall. However, they 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\(^3\). The bhittipādas may be square, many sided or rounded in their section. However, only a portion of the bhittipādas is relieved from the wall surface. The Texts mention that the bhittipādas should be to the extent of \(1/4\) or \(1/2\) or \(3/4\) of its girth\(^4\). Bhittipādas are generally carved on the wall surface after the wall is constructed. Pilasters are carved at regular intervals throughout the length of the outer surface of the wall singularly or in pairs. Very simple walls possess bhittipādas only at four corners\(^5\). Heavy buttress like pillars are also sometimes carved on the outer wall surface as bhittipādas. In the post Vijayanagara temples constructed under poor patronage, the bhittipādas are in the form of engaged pillars common to both the exterior and interior. These are instances where the wall is single-layered.

Directly above the *prati* moulding of the *adhisṭhāna*, the shafts of the bhittipādas are carved. Generally the bhittipādas appear square in their section
and often they are octagonal and many sided and rarely cylindrical. Pilasters have slender shafts superimposed by a vase/bell shaped moulding, a cushion capital, a palagai abacus and corbels. Pilasters, with rare exceptions, are not provided with a carved pedestal⁶ (Fig-34). Likewise, the carved bases for the bhittipādas also do not appear for all categories of bhittipādas. That is to say, the brahmakāṇtha type (square) of bhittipādas are not provided with carved bases (pls 30-31), whereas the viṣṇukāṇta (octagonal) (pls 32-33), saumyakāṇta (sixteen sided) (pl-34) and rudrakāṇta (cylindrical) varieties of bhittipādas are provided with distinctly carved bases. It is also observed that the rudrakāṇta variety of bhittipādas is provided only for the kōṣtaś and they are split pilasters (pl-35). Nowhere a full bhittipāda of rudrakāṇta variety is noticed on the wall surface of the temples in the region of our study. Pilasters change in their form from time to time in conformity with the change in the pillar-order of the contemporary period and style. Occasionally, pilasters devoid of vase/bell, or capital or abacus, or any one, or a few, or all of these mouldings are also found⁷.

In the late Chola temples, rampant lion bases are also noticed for the bhittipādas⁸ (pl-36). In the temples of the Vijayanagara period ornate bases for the bhittipādas begin to appear. Reliefs of floral patterns and figural sculptures (pl-33) are found carved here. However, during the Vijayanagara period, the bhittipādas on the walls do not reflect all types of pillars that were used in the temple construction. It is a known fact that during the Vijayanagara period different types of pillars were used profusely in the construction of temples and their adjuncts. Of these types of pillars, only brahmakāṇta and viṣṇukāṇta pillar forms appear as pilasters.

Cushion capitals of the bhittipādas also change in their form and design from time to time and place to place (pl-37). 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 brahmakāṇtha type (square sectioned) the cushion capitals are also square in their form with sides rounded. Cushion
capitals of the octagonal, many sided and cylindrical varieties 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.

The *phalaka* or the abacus above, also varies in its surface treatment. The *phalaka* above the *maṇḍi* is always carved square and thin. Occasionally they are relieved with *muktāgrāsas* on the sides. The lotus moulding (*maṇḍi/ idal*) below changes in its form in accordance with the shape of the capital and shaft below. In the *brahmakāṇtha* type of *bhittipādas* it is generally square. But in other varieties like octagonal and many sided, the *maṇḍi* becomes octagonal or multi faceted or completely rounded. The treatment of the petals of the lotus also changes from place to place and 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 sharp tips of the petals are shown very prominently out-curled. An interesting feature of the abacus of the temples of the region is that wherever *bhittipādas* are carved closely, at the junction of the two walls, lie a common single abacus and is carved of one stone slab for both the *bhittipādas*, and so also the cushion capital below (pl-30).

*Pōtikas* or corbels are meant to support the beam above in the architectural framework. Corbels of the *bhittipādas* are sometimes functional and sometimes decorative. These corbels 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 Vijayanagara period sometimes possess small panels with relief sculptures and other decorative
designs. Corbels also, like their counterparts in the interior are designed like *taraṅga, ādhāra* (pl-38), *puspa* (pl-39) and *citrapōtikas*. Interestingly, the corbels carved on the pilaster sometimes support the beam above and sometimes they are carved as a part of the beam itself (pl-38).

**TŌRĀṆĀ**

*Tōrāṇa* (Sanskrit) means an ornamental canopy set at the entrance⁹. The entrance may be to a courtyard or an enclosure or hall or *maṇṭapa* or a cellar or a Niche. The concept of *tōrāṇa* is seen as early as the beginning of the Christian era. *Tōrāṇas* of the Sanchi Stūpa are well known examples. Badami Chalukyan city like Aihole, Kalyani Chalukyan city like Kuruvatti possess *tōrāṇas* provided to the important places of the city of those times.

*Tōrāṇa* consists of two vertical posts installed at a distance, supporting a decorated canopy above. This architectural model is used as a decorative motif on the walls of the temple. *tōrāṇas* are also carved to precede the *kōśthas* on the walls. These *tōrāṇas*, as a decorative motif, consist of two pilasters supporting a canopy designed with varieties of architectural, faunal, floral and decorative motifs. Right from the beginning of structural architecture, the *tōrāṇas* are used as decorative motifs on the exterior wall surface of the temples. They are just carved as a decorative design on the wall and also as an architectural framework for the niche. The space in between the pilasters of the *tōrāṇa* may be plain¹⁰ or may have a niche¹¹ or a plain niche with or without a sculpture¹² or even may have a perforated window¹³ (pl-40).

*Tōrāṇas* may or may not contain a niche within. If there is no niche inside the *tōrāṇa*, the wall surface will be in conformity with the level of the wall. Sometimes, a relief sculpture may be found in this place (pl-41). If a niche is carved, it may be deep or shallow. If it contains a sculpture of a divinity, mythological figure or a sculpture of a saint it is referred to as *dēvakōśṭha*. Generally the *tōrāṇas* consist of two split pilasters of identical shape and size.
supporting a canopy. Pilasters are often closely spaced. However, no mention of the split pilasters is found in the Texts. Instances of pilasters spaced quite apart are also not absent. Split pilasters contain all the decorative details of a regular pilaster of the wall. But they are carved in such a way that these look like a vertically split pilaster.

The canopy carved above these pilasters consists of an architrave or a vājana or a kapōta. Above the architrave or kapōta the decoration may be architectural or faunal and floral. Architectural decorations are of three types. They are called by the names sāla tōraṇas, kūta tōraṇas and pañjara tōraṇas, depending upon the type of canopy the architectural design possesses. makara tōraṇas are those where two makaras are placed to form an attractive design of a canopy. Another type of tōraṇa called nāsi tōraṇa is also noticed. This tōraṇa possesses a big nāsi with a kīrtimukha.

ŚĀLA TŌRAṆĀ (pl-42): Tōraṇa crowned by śāla canopy is called a śāla tōraṇa. This type of tōraṇa is found in plenty. Above the kapōta, elegantly shaped model of an oblong pavilion with śāla canopy is carved with almost all the architectural and decorative details. The śāla canopy may be in the form of a regular miniature śāla pavilion or only its canopy part. If it is in the form of a miniature pavilion, its wall surface will again have all the details of a regular wall such as bhittipādas, a kōśta with a canopy, etc. If it is just a conventional śāla canopy only a deep recessed gala with galapādas separate the canopy and kapōta below. Whatever may be the details of a śāla tōraṇa, the śāla canopy at the top is always with all the details of mahānāśis on all its three open sides, with kīrtimukha above and series of kalaśas on the ridge of the śāla flanked sometimes by the “cow horns”.

By the end of 11th century and early 12th century, vyaḷamāḷa (pl- 43) above the kapōta becomes a norm, and the kapōtas also have floral designs carved on them14. By the end of 12th century, śāla tōraṇas became even more
decorative. Kapōta with elongated lotus petals and muktāgrāsas make it look very attractive (pl-44). The nāsis have circular gāḍha surrounded by creeper designs. The neck of the kīrthimukha becomes elongated. The roof of the śāla is decorated with criss-cross designs (karkari). The mahānāsi at the centre of the śāla becomes prominent with a deep recession or the gāḍha cavity. In the gāḍha, a well-carved miniature śāla shrine motif is relieved. In the miniature shrine, under the mahānāsi, the deity to be enshrined in the kōṣṭa on the wall is carved. On either side of this shrine, the vāhana of the deity is also sometimes carved. Sometimes, the miniature śāla shrine is flanked by kūṭa and pañjara shrines as the façade of the main śāla canopy. All modes of decorations are left to the imagination of the artist who composed them. In the place of the mahānāsi of the façade of the śāla, a squatting lion is also found carved.

KÜTA TÖRAṆA (pl-45): Kūṭa tōraṇa is an architectural design where the canopy above the tōraṇa is designed in the shape of a miniature shrine with a kūṭa canopy. This type of tōraṇa occurs rarely in the temples of the area of our study. Above the ornate kapōta, a deep gala having a wall surface is carved. Above the gala, a kūṭa having nāsis on all sides and a stūpi is carved. Instances of kūṭa tōraṇa itself are rare in the region and hence its variants are not noticed.

PAÑJARA TÖRAṆA (pl-46): Pañjara tōraṇa has derived its name because of the design of its canopy. Above the kapōta, separated by a deep neck, a mahānāsi of the façade of a pañjara pavilion is carved. The mahānāsi contains, on its façade, a gāḍha surrounded by a flat surface, relieved with delicate carvings of floral and decorative designs. Inside the gāḍha also, a miniature śāla pavilion is relieved. The pañjara tōraṇas are found only in two places in the region of our study. But in each place four examples of the pañjara tōraṇas are noticed.

All these different types of canopies namely śāla, kūṭa and pañjara are invariably placed above a vājana or a kapōta below. The kapōtas are provided
with nāsis, floral patterns, puspapatikas, muktāgrāsas etc., and present an attractive elevation to the Tūrāṇa. Above the kapōta, sometime, a vājana is also carved distinctly. They are sometimes decorated with vyālamāla and makaramukhas also.

Carving of different types of canopies to the tūrāṇa, it appears, was a matter of convenience. 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, kūta and pañjara canopies were chosen for decorations.

MAKARA TŪRĀṇA (pls 47-48): The name makara tūrāṇa has been given to this type of canopy because of the prominent presence of a pair of makaras carved either facing each other or facing opposite directions. But the instances of the former are more in number when compared to the latter. The framework of a makara tūrāṇa consists of two split pilasters with a lintel and a vājana (or rarely a kapōta21). Above the vājana two makaras are placed at the two ends. From the mouths of the makaras come out long floriated tongues and join forming an arch or a semi circle. The pinnacle of the arch or the semi-circle is normally crowned by a kūtimukha22. Multiple variants of this common theme of superior and inferior workmanship are also noticed. Depending upon the quality of the building and the imagination of the artist, makara tūrāṇas are conceived and carved diversely23. The tails of the Makaras are carved like a big bunch of floral material also varying in its shape, size and form. The central part of the semicircle or the arch formed by the tongues is also often relieved with decorative designs. The subject matter of these carvings is varied in nature. Mythological, divine24, semi-divine, a gandharvamukha25, a goblin26, worldly subjects27, a rosette28, flora and fauna29, geometrical, non-geometrical, etc, themes are found carved. In the general outlook, the tūrāṇas with architectural motifs are more protruding from the wall line than the makara tūrāṇa. Makara tūrāṇas are mostly flat in their carvings.
NASI TÖRÄNA (pls-49-50): Nāsi tōrāṇa is a tōrāṇa where a prominent nāsi (arch) like motif is carved surmounted by a kirtimukha. The nāsi may be of different forms. Sometimes, they resemble the arch of a bow or 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 again contain reliefs of various subject matters as noticed in the makara tōrāṇa. Of the motifs carved in the gāḍha, the gandharvamukha dominates in number.

KÖSTA/ NICHE (pl-51)

Kōsta is an architectural decoration sometimes functional and sometimes decorative. Kōsta means a niche, recessed portion in the wall surface. To make the wall surface elegant and to avoid monotony, kōstas 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 the southern and the northern walls of the garbhagrha should enshrine Dakṣināmūrti and Brahma respectively. The back wall should enshrine Liṅgodbhavamūrthi or Viṣṇu. The south wall of the vestibule should enshrine the image of Ganesha and the northern, Durga/Mahiṣamardini. These rules apply only to the central part of the wall of the garbhagrha and antarāla. If there are extra kōstas in these parts and also kōstas on the gūḍhamanṭapa, then wall images of deities can be installed according to the taste and belief of the builder.

As the temple walls are notably thick, the depth of the kōstas is also suitably designed. Sometimes, the kōstas are made for placing the jālavātāyana also (pl-52). 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 kōsta may or may not have an architectural frontage, so also a sculpture inside. Depending upon the necessity, a sculpture is placed in a kōsta. Kōstas are carved in the wall surface slightly above the prati
moulding of the adhiśthāna. In the later examples, the kōṣṭas extend up to the mahāpaṭṭi of the adhiśthāna cutting through the prati and ūrdhvagala.

Kōṣṭas are generally placed leaving some space above the ground level. This was the procedure followed in the early period. By about 12th century A.D., the kōṣṭas get extended at the bottom beyond the ground level inside. Rare examples of sōmasūtra fixed into the kōṣṭa (pl-53) indicate that the bottom line of the kōṣṭa outside has descended lower than the ground level inside. In a rare instance, kōṣṭa cuts through even the kumuda moulding and ends at the top of the jagati of the plinth.

Kōṣṭas, which are non-functional, are also found on the walls of the temples. These kōṣṭas possess shallow niches in them. These niches neither can hold an image inside nor they contain relief of an image on their wall surface.

**JĀLAVĀṬĀYANAS/ PERFORATED WINDOWS (pl-52):**

Jālavāṭāyanas are the traceries, made of wood or stone. They are available in the region of our study. Jālavāṭāyanas are meant to provide light and air to the interiors of the temple. Jālavāṭāyanas may be in the form of a slab fixed in the place of a window or in the form of a door shutter or in the form of the tracered slab fixed on the sides of doorjambs. Texts also give the same reason for the provision of jālavāṭāyanas in the context of temple architecture. Jālavāṭāyanas are found on the walls of the antarāla, ardhamāṇṭapa, gūḍhamāṇṭapa, pradaksīṇapatha and occasionally of the garbhagṛha. However, the Texts mention that the jālavāṭāyanas can be provided for the garbhagṛha in the grīva above. jālavāṭāyanas provide dim light to the interior of the temple keeping the interior gloomy and mysterious.

Jālavāṭāyanas are normally carved in stone slabs, the thickness of which varies depending upon the nature of the perforations made (pl-54). Texts mention that the jālavāṭāyanas may be made of wood also. Because of the impermanency
of the wood, stone medium is preferred in temple art. However, it is often noticed that wood is also used for this purpose in the door shutters of the temples.

Now, coming to the mode of making the *jālavātāyanas*, the Texts prescribe certain modes and subjects for the *jālavātāyanas*. The table given at the end of the chapter gives a picture of the different types and their textual references.

The *jālavātāyanas* begin to appear in south India as early as the Aihole temples. The Ladhkhan and Durga temples have *jālavātāyanas* of different designs and shapes of high quality workmanship. The art of carving *jālavātāyanas* attained maturity as early as the middle of 8th century A.D., as seen in the varieties of *jālavātāyanas* on the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples at Pattadakal. The Nolambas mastered this craft and carved the *jālavātāyanas* in such a way that they excelled all their predecessors in quality, elegance and beauty. Rajendra Chola, who conquered Nolambavadi, got attracted by the beauty of the Nolamba *jālavātāyanas*, destroyed many Nolamba temples and took away, as war trophies many Nolamba pillars and *jālavātāyanas* to his native land. One of the *jālavātāyanas* carved out of greenish blue basalt was originally fixed into the *gūḍhamanṭapa* of the Brihadishwara temple, Tanjavur. Now it is removed and preserved in the Tanjavur temple museum. The Kalyana Chalukyas excelled all others in the craft of carving the *jālavātāyanas*. The famous Tripurantaka temple at Balligave is, no doubt, the masterpiece of the *jālavātāyanas* found in Karnataka.

But in the Tamil kingdom, the craft of carving *jālavātāyanas* did not achieve the quality and excellence as noticed in Karnataka. *Jālavātāyanas* are structurally necessary for all buildings to provide light and air into the interior and hence the Pallava and Chola temples do have *jālakas* provided in them. But they are purely functional in their character. For reasons not known, the Tamil
artists never took the pain to make the jālakas attractive in their form. Therefore the jālavātāyanas of the Tamil tradition are very simple in design and execution.

The region of our study being a buffer state, should have had the influence of both the Karnataka and Tamil traditions. But, unfortunately, all the Jālakas found in the region are very simple, plain, and functional.

It is a known fact that the Nolambas ruled this region for over a century. Only two temples built under the Nolamba patronage are extant to us. As mentioned earlier, the Mallikarjuna temple is built of stone. But no jālaka was required in the construction of this temple, because it has only a garbhagrha, ardhamantapa and gūḍhamantapa with two doorways. These doorways were enough to provide sufficient ventilation to the ardhamantapa and gūḍhamantapa. The Kamakshiamman temple, as already stated, has a bigger hall and it also has a jālaka opening. But the existing wall of the temple is not the original. Therefore it is possible that the original jālaka done by the Nolamba artists is displaced.

After the Nolamba rule, the area of our study came under the political sway of the imperial Cholas. The temples constructed under the early Chola patronage are small in their dimension. On plan, they possess a garbhagrha and an oblong ardhamantapa/gūḍhamantapa and all the temples are nīrāndhara temples. Therefore the main doorway was enough to ventilate the interior of the temple.

The temples built by the late Cholas, by 12th century onwards, are considerably bigger in dimensions. Hence, they required jālakas for ventilating the interior. Therefore, simple and most utilitarian jālakas are fixed in to the kōṣṭas of these temples. These jālakas have the simple gavākṣa decoration (pl-55). All the gavākṣas found in the region are identical in their design and only differ in their size and shape. They are all carved on a single slab having a paneled surface. Each of the panel contains a “diamond shaped” square perforations. Such a design is called, gō + akṣa = gavākṣa, meaning a cows eye.
Same type of gavākṣa continued to be in use even during the Vijayanagara period. While fixing the gavākṣa into the wall, architects provide a suitable opening inside a kōṣṭa or in the wall surface without the kōṣṭa. Corresponding to the opening made in the kōṣṭa or on the plain wall the jālaka was prepared and fixed firmly. In rare occasions jālakas covering only a part of the kōṣṭa is also noticed. In a solitary instance at the ruined temple of Cholishwara a jālaka of puṣpabandha type is found (pl-54).

**KUMBHAPAṆJARA** (pls 56-61)

Kumbhapaṇjara is a decorative motif carved on the outer wall surface of the temple. It is generally carved in high relief. Manasara explains kumbhapaṇjara as follows “A Niche in the wall. It consists of a vase, a pilaster and a little pavilion at the top”.

Kumbhapaṇjara is a decorative motif devised by the Tamil architects. It connotes profound symbology and Hindu belief of the origin of the universe. Kumbhapaṇjara is a motif not noticed in the early Chalukyan temples. Not even the Pallava temples possess this motif. From the time of the Cholas and onwards kumbhapaṇjara motif appears on the walls of the temples profusely as a very prominent decorative motif.

Kumbhapaṇjara has been derived to effectively depict the ancient Hindu concept of the pūrṇakalāśa. This motif consists of a big globular pot placed on a pedestal. From the mouth of the pot creeper scrolls emerge and fall out on its sides. This is a concept, which denotes symbolically the universe (brahmaṇḍa). The pot here represents the universe. It is filled with water to denote the statement of Bhagavata Purana – “āpōmayam idam Jagat”. From the water life emerges in the form of the creepers, which is shown as coming out from the pot. This concept was taken by the artists and further developed with the introduction of the concept of architecture that developed on this earth. This suggestion is made by representing a pillar, coming from the pot, and on the top of the pillar a
canopied pavilion is carved. This concept has been depicted in various ways and in a glorious manner.

This concept has been effectively conveyed in the famous prayer in praise of Śambhu (Shiva) composed by Bana Bhatta in “Harsa Carita”.

“Namastuṅga śiraścumbi candra cāmara cārave"

Trailōkyā nagarārāmbha mūlastambhāyā śambhave||”

The essence of this verse is that ‘Shiva is the supporter of all the three worlds in this Universe’ and this fact is very effectively conveyed through the kumbhapañjara motif. The pot represents the universe and the pavilion above represents the three Worlds. The pillar represents Shiva, the supporter of the three Worlds. There is also a living tradition amongst the traditional architects of India who chant this verse while commencing their work. Some versions of this stanza are found in the inscriptions of Karnataka of the medieval period. Ultimately all these verses connote one meaning that the sacred building of the god is finally the creation of God himself.

Kāśyapaśilpa gives the method of carving the kumbhapañjara motif. It says a vedi should be carved first and above the vedi sits the kumbha. From the mouth of the kumbha emerge rich foliage (valli) and a pillar (stambha). The stambha should consist of a phalaka and padma (Palagai abacus). If the capital is absent above the pillar, such a motif is called by the name “stambha kumbhalatha”. The description given in the Kāśyapaśilpa applies to only a few kumbhapañjaras in the region. But there are more elaborately carved kumbhapañjaras for which there is no mention in the Texts.

The kumbhapañjara motif above the pillar or above the abacus contains a pavilion motif of the śāla, kūṭa and pañjara types. Such kumbhapañjaras with pavilion motif only, approximately qualify for the description given in the
invocatory stanza mentioned above because they contain a miniature form of a full architectural unit.

The different components of the kumbhapañjaras are dealt with in a detailed manner now. They are:

i) The Kumbha

ii) The shaft

iii) The crowning member.

KUMBHA: Kumbha is the pot base, which is generally placed on a pedestal, which may be circular or square and may be ornate or non-ornate. The kumbha is generally globular (pl-58) and some times it is cuboid (pl-59) with its two corners ridged and sides rounded. The body of the pot is often decorated with a fillet, ratnapattika, puspapattika, vajrapattika, (pl-56) etc. The tassels of the patti are also sometimes carved on the two sides of the kumbha (pl-56). Sometimes, it may have deep grooves and prominent ribbings (pl-58). The neck of the pot is prominently depicted. From the mouth of the pot, emerges rich floral motif that spreads on the body of the pot or projects on the two sides, like a hastihasta terminating like a volute (pl-60). Sometimes, makaramukhas are also carved near the mouth of the kumbha and from the mouth of makaramukha long floriated designs emerge (pl-58). Depending upon the skill and imagination of the artist the decorations of the pot are made. However, in the Vijayanagara examples, the pedestal and rim of the kumbha are carved resembling a vēdihadra upapītha (pl-56), in which deep gala with galapādas, uttara and kapōta with nāsis are delicately carved.

SHAFT: From the mouth of the pot rises a vertical pillar. The shaft of this pillar may be square (brahmakānta) (pl-57), octagonal (viṣṇukānta) (pl-59) or cylindrical (rudrakānta) (pl-58).
The brahmakāntha shafts are of two types. The first type is very simple with a square shaft from bottom to top. Its two corners are vertically indented. The flat band, on the face of the shaft, over a pedestal like motif is relieved with patra, vallimandala etc. The second type possesses a shaft similar to the regular brahmakāntha pillar. It has a square shaft superimposed by vase, kumbha, maṇḍi and phalaka motifs. It is horizontally grooved and ribbed.

The viṣṇukāntha types of shaft are carved with a square base and octagonal shaft having vase, kumbha and maṇḍi, which are also octagonal. Horizontal grooves and ridges are also carved according to the taste.

The rudrakāntha type possesses a shaft, which is cylindrical throughout. It is superimposed by vase, kumbha and maṇḍi, all in circular form.

The shaft of the pilaster contains no pedestal or base. But other components like vase, kumbha, maṇḍi and phalaka are distinctly carved. The shaft may also have the decoration of horizontal bands, beaded string festoons and other similar decorations. Above the abacus, an architectural motif in the form of a miniature pavilion with a turret above is carved. A full-fledged pavilion is discernible. Sometimes, they are symbolic. In a solitary instance, a shaft decorated with two kumbhas carved one above the other is also seen.\(^{35}\)

CROWNING MEMBER: The crowing members above the pilaster of the kumbhapañjaras are of four types. They are of the pillar capital type (pl-57), śāla type (pl-60), kūta type (pl-58) and pañjara type (pl-56).

PILLAR CAPITAL TYPE: Very few instances of kumbhapañjara of this type are found.\(^{36}\) Above the shaft of the pillar, a cushion capital and palagai abacus are carved. Above this rests the corbel touching the architrave of the wall. This type of kumbhapañjara usually contains a brahmakāntha shaft with all the details of a regular pilaster and it is shown as emerging from the kumbha below.
SALA TYPE: Majority of the crowning members are of śala type. Above the oblong-ridged roof of the śala a row of miniature stūpis are placed. The front portion of the śala is also sometimes decorated with the mahānāsi motif with nāsi and kūrtimukha distinctly carved. Śalas are topped by a shrine motif\textsuperscript{37}. The finial of the coping will be in the form of a śala topped by stūpi.

KUTA TYPE: The kūta type of crowning member is found in quite good numbers. Over the palagai is carved a miniature pavilion having regular architectural features. But the kapōta is carved prominently with nāsis. The kapōta is superimposed by grīva and kūta sikhara and stūpi. Some of the pavilions carved here are hollow and some are solid. In the hollow pavilions, they may have a sculpture of a divinity carved in it\textsuperscript{38}.

PAŅJARA TYPE: The crowning members of the paņjara type are normally found on the brahmakāntha shafts. Above the shaft, prominent kapōta with nāsi, grīva and paņjara sikhara are carved. Only the façade of the paņjara is relieved. The gāḍha of the paņjara may contain a shrine motif\textsuperscript{39}.

BHITTI ŚILPA / WALL SCULPTURES

Carving sculptures on the outer wall of a temple is an age-old practice of temple architecture in south India as seen in the temples of the Pallavas and Badami Chalukyas. The tradition of carving sculptures on the bhitti is for the sake of decoration, for entertainment and for education. The Hoysalas took this art form to the height of its excellence and made the wall sculptures of their temples a museum of Hindu mythology and society. This grand tradition of carving sculptures on the wall surface gradually deteriorated. Yet the remnants of such a rich tradition are reflected in the temples of the Vijayanagara times. The relief sculptures on the walls of the prākāra and the main shrine of the Hajara Ramaswamy temple at Hampi is a good example to the practice of decorating the Bhitti with sculptures. Such a tradition is reflected on a lesser scale in the region of our study.
Some of the temples in the area of our study have relieves of sculptures of mythological and sociological interest. For the sake of decoration as well as for educating the visitors, these sculptures were generally carved on the lowest part of the bhitti of the temple. They are carved in between the pilasters. Their average height is about two feet. No separate panels or kōṣṭas are provided for them. 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), āśīna (sitting) or samhāra (annihilating) postures. Important incidents of the Hindu mythology are depicted as brief narrative panels. It is interesting to note that some of the relief sculptures look like the replicas of the bronzes of the same theme known to the present day. These sculptures are carved on the walls of the different parts of the main shrine. The devotees who circumambulate the temple get a glance at the important incidents of Hindu mythology and also different aspects of Hindu divinity.

The Vijayanagara period witnessed deterioration in the craft of sculpture carving in the temples. Importance was given for building structures of huge dimensions, on a large scale. Therefore, emphasis was on architectural members and their decoration and the sculptures received less importance. 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 artists, perhaps suffered a set-back during this period. Therefore, the Vijayanagara period is known for dearth of sculptural art compared to the architectural art. To overcome this deficiency some temples are provided with relief sculptures on the outer wall surface to the extent possible during that period (pls-62-63). These sculptures are not aesthetically very elegant and attractive. Some are crude, some are symbolic, some are disproportionate and some lack maturity in their execution.
**GHANADWĀRA (pl-64):**

*Ghanadwāra* is an ornamental doorway. It is used as a decorative motif on the outer walls of the shrine of the temple and also at other suitable places. It is found on the *hastihasta* of the temples of coastal Karnataka. Tantrasamucchaya gives a detailed account of *ghanadwāras*, whereas other Texts like Mayamata and Mānasāra are silent about this. Tantrasamucchaya states that *ghanadwāras* should resemble in all respects the details of a regular doorway. It should be provided on the other three directions of the main doorway of the main shrine. The reason for providing the *ghanadwāra* is not mentioned anywhere. But Tantrasamucchaya prescribes that the *ghanadwāra* should be provided on the three other sides, at least through line drawings. This statement suggests the importance of providing *ghanadwāra* to the shrine. The intention being that a shrine should be provided with a doorway on all four sides (*sarvībhūdha*). If it is not possible due to structural, security and other reasons, at least a *ghanadwāra* should be provided on these sides. The Text also mentions that the height of the *ghanadwāra* should be either one and a half or twice its width. *Ghanadwāras* are found carved inside the niches of the temple.

Carving of the *ghanadwāra* is a practice commonly noticed in the temples of the west coast, particularly in Kerala and coastal Karnataka. It is not to be seen in the temples of Tamilnadu and Karnataka.

The design of the *ghanadwāra*, as said earlier, resembles in every respect the details of the main doorway of the main shrine. Therefore a *ghanadwāra* motif possesses the jambs, the lintel, threshold and the paneled door leaves with miniature carvings of latches and other decorative designs. The *ghanadwāra* is carved in the framework of a wall niche.

Now, coming to the area of our study, *bhittis* of various types are noticed. Straight walls, indented walls and circular walls are noticed. The average height of the *bhitti* outside is about 10 feet. Walls devoid of any architectural or
sculptural decoration, walls only with the decoration of the bhittipādas, walls decorated with bhittipādas and kōṣṭas, walls decorated with bhittipādas, kōṣṭas and kumbhapañjaras and walls decorated with bhittipādas, kōṣṭas and sculptural relief decoration are noticed. Walls built of brick and plastered with mortar and walls built of stone are discernible. However the brick temples are very less in number.

Now coming to the different components of the decoration on the wall, first comes the decoration of bhittipāda. Bhittipādas are carved quite profusely on the wall surface of almost all the temples. These bhittipādas are carved single and nowhere bhittipādas carved in pairs are noticed. Of the bhittipādas, the Brahmakāntha 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 square in their section. Except in two instances, these brahmakāntha bhittipādas are devoid of carved pedestals. No carved base for a brahmakāntha bhittipāda is noticed anywhere in the region. The shaft begins directly from the top of the kampa or the prati moulding. The shaft is generally plain. The upper part of the shaft contains the usual vase, kumbha, manḍi and phalaka. Sometimes simple decorations like muktāgrāsas, horizontal grooves and ridges are also made on the shaft. The early brahmakāntha bhittipādas of the region are devoid of decorative carvings like muktāgrāsas, vallimandala, etc. But after the 11th century A.D. delicate decorative designs of muktāgrāsas, vallimandala, patras and padmas begin to appear on the surface of the shaft and also on the vase and kumbha. Likewise, the manḍi portion gets the scalloping of the lotus petals, with out curled thin pointed edges, during this period.

The second major type of bhittipāda that occurs frequently on the walls of the temples in the region of our study is the viṣṇukānta type. This type of bhittipāda begins to appear in the temples of 12th century and onwards. This type of shaft possesses a carved cubical base. Above this, the shaft is made octagonal up to the bottom of the phalaka. Because the shaft is made octagonal, the upper
corners of the base are decorated with patra decoration. The octagonal shaft, like the brahmakantha type, contains vase, kumbha, maṇḍi and phalaka. The viṣṇukāṇṭa bhittipādas are generally attractive in their form because of the tasteful decorative carvings made on them. The base is relieved with vallimāṇḍala and other floral designs. Another way of decorating the base is carving of relief sculptures, mostly of mythological subject matter. Seated and standing reliefs of divine figures are found carved on them. This type of carving for the base is a feature noticed in the temples built in the Vijayanagara period. The decoration of the shaft includes muktāgrāsas, vallimāṇḍala, patras, fillets, medallions and padmas carved on the upper part of the shaft, on the body of the vase and kumbha. The maṇḍi is also treated well with sharp, out-curled lotus petals. In some of the examples of Vijayanagara period, the octagonal shaft gets the decoration of vertical bands of padmapatras and kalpavalli.

The third type of bhittipāda that is to be seen in the temples of the region of our study is the saumyakāṇṭa variety. Saumyakāṇṭa bhittipāda contains multiple faces for the shaft and so also for the upper decorative members. This type of bhittipāda occurs rarely in the temples of the region. As it is difficult to carve multiple faces they are found in less number. The shafts are multifaceted, horizontally indented, moulded and decorated also. Only three examples are found. The first one is from Ekamranatha temple, Tadavur datable to 11th century A.D. In this example the Maṇḍi below the Phalaka is somewhat differently carved. This does not have the carving of crisply carved lotus petals. Instead, the edge is fully rounded like a rope moulding. The other examples is from the Karaburanatheshwara temple, Uttamacholapuram and Shukavaneshwara temple at Salem.

The rudrakāṇṭa bhittipāda contains a square base and a cylindrical shaft. Vase, kumbha and maṇḍi are also cylindrical in form. No specimen of this variety, as a full pilaster on the wall surface, is noticed in the region. The bhittipādas of the rudrakāṇṭa variety are to be seen only in the architectural
framework of the kōṭas of the temples of the region. These bhittipādas are not in their full shape, but they contain all the important mouldings and decorations of a full fledged bhittipāda of the saumyakānta and viṣṇukānta types like a cubical base, a cylindrical shaft, vase, kumbha, maṇḍi and phalaka with appropriate decorative designs. But the entire shaft from the phalaka to the bottom is shown as though it is vertically spilt. For reasons unknown, this is the type of pilaster carving for all the kōṭas of the Tamil tradition. In the pure Karnataca architectural idiom, as practiced by the Badami Chalukyas, the Kalyana Chalukyas and the Hoysalas, the use of spilt pilasters design for the kōṭas is not at all seen. Therefore the design is definitely the innovation of Tamil artistic genius. This Tamil tradition continued during the Vijayanagara period throughout south India, though occasional use of the Karnataca idiom is also not unknown.41

A note regarding the corbels or pōtikas is necessary here as this part is not only an indispensable part of the architectural framework, but it is also helpful in fixing the chronology of the development of temple architectural forms. The pōtikas of the early period of the region, like those found in any other important centres of south India, were also designed and adopted in the architectural models of the region. The earliest pōtikas to be noticed in the region belong to 7th century (rock-cut) and 9th century (structural) A.D. Both these specimens belong to the taraṅga pōtika type. These types of pōtikas were used for the regular pillars in the interior and for the bhittipādas on the outer bhitti. Taraṅga pōtikas are a further development of vṛtta pōtika. First a vṛtta pōtika is carved and then it is designed to give the look of a taraṅga pōtika. Taraṅga pōtika, during the Chola period, turned into ādhāra pōtika, i.e., beveled and tenon type of corbels. This was extensively used throughout the Tamil region and also in parts of Karnataca region and this continued till the modern times. The beveled ādhāra pōtika by the middle of the 12th century A.D. takes the shape of the puspapōtika. 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 a flower and bud. Further elaboration and exaggeration of the same motif can also be noticed in the late Chola and Vijayanagara architecture.

The development of the corbels in this manner is considered as a determining factor for fixing the chronology of the temples. Hitherto it was believed that during the Vijayanagara period, the ādhāra pōtika of the Chola order took the shape of puspapōtika. But surprisingly the puspapōtikas begin to appear in the region of our study by the middle of 12th century i.e., two hundred years earlier to the foundation of the Vijayanagara Empire.

It is also a general practice among the art historians to identify taraṅga pōtika as a feature of early temples i.e. earlier to 10th century A.D. But stray incidents of the use of taraṅga pōtika in the temples of later period i.e. 12th century are noticed. Interestingly, in this temple the early and late features are used simultaneously side by side. Both taraṅga pōtika and puspapōtika are used for the bhittipādas in the same building. But the taraṅga pōtika form can be identified as that of a later date because the projecting arm of the corbel is not in vṛṭta form but it is shaped in the beveled form. Over this beveled form taraṅgas are neatly carved. From this it may be concluded that certain architectural motifs of the earlier date were used in the later period also, with modifications, because of the fancy of the artist for such a motif.

It is a known fact that the pōtikas are used as a functional part of the building. On the outer face of the wall, pōtikas are found used as a separate entity over the pilaster and also they are carved decoratively on the same block of stone in which the architrave is carved. Therefore, sometimes these are non-functional and purely decorative in character, so also the architrave.

Temples of the region, right from the beginning, possess kōṣṭas of various dimensions and depths. Some of them are purely ornamental in nature. To this category tōraṇas carved on the plain wall surface of the temple, along with the
kōṣṭas are included. These tōrāṇas have architectural framework similar to those found for the kōṣṭas. But the surface of the wall is not at all recessed. Therefore they resemble a shallow kōṣṭa in every respect. Some of the kōṣṭas 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 kōṣṭas started from the times of the Cholas. The temples of the early Chola period of the region possess full-fledged deep dēvakōṣṭas on the three sides of the outer wall of the vimāna and on the outer wall of the antarāla/gūḍhamanṭapa. In these kōṣṭas were enshrined the images of the deities as ascribed in the prescriptions of the canons. These temples are all small in dimensions in comparison with those built in the heartland of the Cholas. Therefore, minimum number of kōṣṭas as per the norms of the Texts only was 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 kōṣṭas also possess jālavātāyanas in them.

Intention of carving of the kōṣṭa is both functional and ornamental. Even if it is devoid of a sculpture inside, the architectural framework 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 also serves the purpose of a small shrine. So in both the ways it is utilitarian in nature. There is no rule that these kōṣṭas are to be carved only on the outer surface of the wall of the main shrine. Kōṣṭas are found carved on the plinth, on the interior wall surface of the main shrine, on the inner wall of the prākāra, on the hāra, on the talas and grīva of the vimāna, on the wall of the dwārāmanṭapa and the talas of the gopura. Therefore there is no specific place, which is not occupied by the kōṣṭa. Kōṣṭa, 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.

Kōṣṭas in the temples of the region are umpteen in numbers. They are invariably found on the outer surface of the wall of the shrine proper. These
koṣṭas, 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 the 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. Only six koṣṭas with kūta type of canopies are noticed in the region and that too they are in the dwāramanṭapa of a temple. Koṣṭas having pañjara canopies are also noticed in the region. There are also certain other Koṣṭas, which only have pilasters having an architrave and a vājana without any decorations of any pavilions above. There are also some incomplete or unfinished copings for the koṣṭas in the region.

Koṣṭas having makaratōranas 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 nāsitōranas are also carved.

Kumbhapāṇjaras begin to appear in the area of our study from 11th century onwards. As has already been stated, it is a decorative motif devised by the Cholas. Therefore, the Chola temples of that period in the region invariably possess kumbhapāṇjaras on the outer wall surface of the shrines and that of dwāramanṭapa. In the latter part of the Vijayanagara days, they also appear as decorative motifs carved on a very small scale on the corbels, beams and on the prastara inside the temples. Earliest reference to kumbhapāṇjara in the region comes from the temple dated to 11th century A.D. It is quite simple in its execution, in the sense it has only a kumbha, danda, mandi and phalaka. No coping of an architectural motif is found. By about the late Chola period canopies of the kumbhapāṇjaras get more elaborate. Over the phalaka a kūta pavilion is symbolically carved. The corner pillars of the kūta pavilion and its interior are relieved leaving a central core for the carving of a divine sculpture.
inside. The pillars of these pavilions are very attractive and elegant. They are short and squattish but their execution is quite unique. They are not straight. Instead, they are double flexured and appear like an elegantly flexed flower stem. Over this, the canopy of a kapōta, grīva and the coping of kiṭa śikara are carved. Side by side, the simple form of the same having only the mahānāsi of the façade of the pañjara pavilion carved above the kapōta and grīva is also found.

Two kumbhaṇjaras of exquisite workmanship reported from the region of our study are described here. These specimens stand out separately because of their exuberant decorations. The most florid example of the kumbhaṇjara of this region is noticed in the mahādwāra of Kalipatti temple (pl-61), Salem dist. In this example, the kumbha motif is relieved up to half of its full form. It has a padmapāthā and the kumbha resembles a cushion capital having horizontally and deeply relieved ribs. The shaft is octagonal resembling the jalakumbhi type of pillar. The cushion capital is also delicately carved. Above this is the phalaka in the form of a kapōta decorated with nāsis. The coping above is of the kūṭa type.

Another noteworthy kumbhaṇjara is noticed on the bhitti of the mahādwāra of the Kailasanatha temple at Tiruchengodu (pl-58). The kumbha is very neatly designed like a bulbous pot, having vertical and deeply relieved ribs. The ribs are beaded alternatively. The horizontal central band is decorated like a ratnapāṭṭika. From the mouth of the makaras the kalpavalli springs out. The shaft of the pillar above is of rudrakāṇṭa variety and has floral motifs and festoons of beaded strings. The cushion capital is also delicately carved. The pavilion above the abacus is carved like a kapōta with two nāsis. The nāsis of the kapōta are relieved very distinctly. The coping above is of miniature shrine topped by a stūpi. It is noteworthy here that ornate and simple kumbhaṇjaras are found contemporarily in the region of our study. No development in the formation or design of the kumbhaṇjaras can be noticed.
By 14th century A.D., exquisitely carved *kumbhapañjaras* comes into picture in the region. These ornate *kumbhapañjaras* are found generally on the wall of the gateways and *maṇṭapas* built during Vijayanagara period. The *kumbha* of this motif gets prominent ribbings and deep grooves on its body. The body may be circular or cuboid but the central part of the *kumbha* gets a horizontal band decorated variedly like *rānapatī, puspapatī* etc. The floral scrolls that come out of the mouth of the pot are shown as though they are coming out of *makara* heads provided at the rim of the pot. The pillar shaft and its decorations like the vase, *kumbha, maṇḍi, phalaka* and the *maṇṭapa* motif above are all very neatly and elaborately carved exhibiting superb quality workmanship.

Now coming to the *ghanadwāras* of the region, in a solitary instance, the design of *ghanadwāra* is noticed on the three open sides of the shrine. It is said in the Text that the height of the *ghanadwāra* should be twice in width, but in this example, the exaggerated form of a *ghanadwāra* is carved. The height of the *ghanadwāra* is many times more than its width. It is also interesting to note that the bottom of the *ghanadwāra* cuts through the upper mouldings of the plinth and ends at the top of the *jagati*. The decorations of the *ghanadwāra* contain all the details of a regular doorway. The carvings are elaborate and intricate and very clear and crisp in their execution. This is the only instance of a *ghanadwāra* carved in the region of our study. This temple is datable prior to 12th century A.D., during which period Hoysala rule was prevalent in this region. This was a part of the Kongu region, hence the influence of architecture of Kerala appears to have penetrated into this region and made its impact noticed through this motif.

Based on the observations made above it may be said that the decorations of the *bhitti*, which was simple in the beginning, becomes more and more elaborate and exquisite. The *bhitti* of the early temples appears less ornate and simple because of the sparsely placed pilasters and *kōṣṭas*. This trend continued up to the late Chola period. By the 12th and 13th centuries, a trend towards the
decoration of the wall surface, more elaborately through architectural motifs is seen. Pilasters appear in good numbers and also get closer in their arrangement. Kōṣṭas also are carved prominently, and in more numbers. During the Vijayanagara period the same trend continued and the temples were also constructed huge. The walls were made elaborate in their dimensions. Besides the bhittipādas and kōṣṭas the tradition of carving relief sculptures as in the preceding period also continued with the same pace and quality. This period also witnessed a renovation of several existing temples of the early period. Many architectural adjuncts in the form of ornate maṇṭapas, corridors, prākāras, gateways and gateway towers were added. Of these additions, the vertical bases of the gateway towers have neatly decorated bhittis. These bhittis possess bhittipādas, kōṣṭas, and kumbhaṇḍāras carved on them. These are all of superb workmanship reflecting the high quality of architectural art that prevailed during Vijayanagara period. Attractive dwāramaṇṭapas of this period are reported from the region of our study and the exquisite workmanship of the architectural motifs can be compared with any of the best specimens of their type in the heartland of Vijayanagara Empire. The high architectural excellence achieved during the Vijayanagara period witnessed a sudden decline during the later half of the second century. This decline was not only in quality and quantity, but also in the art of construction of buildings. Very ordinary and non-ornate temples of poor workmanship were constructed during the 17th century A.D.

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<td>Manasara/ 17/27-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kamikagama/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kasyapasilpa</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Isanasivagurudevapaddati</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sl No</td>
<td>Type of Jalavatayana</td>
<td>Text/ Chapter/ verse</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>-------</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Rjujalaka</td>
<td>Mayamata/ Kamikagama/ Kasyapasilpa Isanasivagurudevapaddati</td>
<td>Resembles a rope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Caturasra</td>
<td>Square</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Kunjaraksha/ Gajaksha</td>
<td>Mayamata/ Manasara/ Kamikagama/ Kasyapasilpa Isanasivagurudevapaddati</td>
<td>Resembles an elephant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Gavaksha</td>
<td>Mayamata/ Manasara/ Kamikagama/ Kasyapasilpa Isanasivagurudevapaddati</td>
<td>Resembles a cows eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Nagabanda</td>
<td>Manasasra</td>
<td>Resembles entwined serpents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Patrajalaka</td>
<td>Kamikagama/ Isanasivagurudevapaddati</td>
<td>Possess Kalpavalli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Vardhamana</td>
<td>Mayamata</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Sarvatobhadra</td>
<td>Mayamata</td>
<td>Manasara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Sakarna</td>
<td>Mayamata</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Valli</td>
<td>Manasara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Puspakhand a</td>
<td>Mayamata/ Kamikagama/ Kasyapasilpa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4. Mayamata, Ch-15
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6. Chandrachudeshwara temple at Hosur, Krishnagiri dist. and Arunachaleshwara temple at Pillur, Paramti taluk, Namakkal dist.
7. Vaishnava temple at Peddur, Harur taluk, Dharmapuri dist. and Devi shrine at Kayanirmaleshwara temple at Attur, Salem dist.
8. Main shrine of the Kayanirmaleshwara temple at Attur, Salem dist.
10. Ishwara temple at Devarkundani, Vepanapalli taluk, Krishnagiri dist.
11 Narasimha temple at Nangavalli
12 Achaladeepeshwara temple at Mohanur, Paramatti taluk, Namakkal dist
13 Kamanatheshwara temple at Aragalur, Attur taluk, Salem dist
14 Bheemeshwara temple at Manapalli, Namakkal dist.
15 Bramhapurishwara temple at Kokkarayanpet, Tiruchengodu taluk, Namakkal dist and Banishwara temple at Paruttipalli, Tiruchengodu taluk, Salem dist
16 Banishwara temple at Paruttipalli, Tiruchengodu taluk, Salem dist
17 Bramhapurishwara temple at Kokkarayanpet, Tiruchengodu taluk, Namakkal dist
18 Varadaraja temple at Pavitram.
19 Ordhvajāṅga of the Mahādvāra of Kailasanatha temple at Taramangalam, Omalur taluk, Salem dist.
20 Vishnu temple at Thyaganur, Attur taluk, Salem dist. And Karivaradaraja temple at Aragalur, Attur taluk, Salem dist.
21 Devi shrine at Kayanirmaleshwara temple at Attur, Salem dist
22 Cholishwara temple at Mallasamudram, Namakkal dist
23 Devi shrine of Kayanirmaleshwara temple at Attur, Salem dist has two Makaras facing opposite directions carved below the Kirtimukha
24 Adikeshava perumal temple at Paruttipalli, Tiruchengodu taluk, Salem dist and Devi shrine at Cholishwara temple at Aragalur, Attur taluk, Salem dist.
25 Kailasanatha temple at Rasipuram, Salem dist.
26 Someshwara temple at Shankari durg, Salem dist and Achaladeepeshwara temple at Mohanur, Namakkal.
27 Ekamranatha temple at Tadavur, Attur taluk, Salem dist.
28 Rama temple at Ayodhyapattinam, Salem dist. and Shiva temple at Puthur, Namakkal dist
29 Devi shrine at Kayanirmaleshwara temple at Attur, Salem dist and Adikeshava perumal temple at Paruttipalli, Tiruchengodu taluk, Salem dist
30 Mayamata Ch 23-
31 In a rare instance at Ekamranatha Temple, Tadavur, this niche enshrines an impressive sculpture of Umasantvanamurthy or Gangavisarjanamurthy.
32 Ranganathaswami temple at Rangasthala, Kolar dist.
33 Mānasārā
34 “namastāmrajatājalālabalacandrārdhadhārīnē
dramhānda maṇḍapārāmbha pūrṇakumbhāya śambhavē”
EC VII-Sk 137
“namastāmrajatājalālabalacandrārdhadhārīnē
saṅkalpa samphala brahmasthambhāya śambhavē”
EC VII-Sk 119
35 Mahādvāra of Chandrachudewhara at Hosur, Krishnagiri dist.
36 Devi shrine at Kamanatheshwara temple at Aragalur, Attur taluk, Salem dist. and Ekamranatha temple at Tadavur, Attur taluk, Salem dist
37 Kailasanatha temple at Taramangalam, Omalur taluk, Salem dist. and Kailasanatha temple at Tiruchengodu.
38 Someshwara temple at Shankari durg, Salem dist.
39 Varadaraja temple at Sendamangalam, Attur taluk, Salem dist and Vishnu temple at Thyaganur, Attur taluk, Salem dist.
40 Tuluva History and Culture- Dr Gururaja Bhat- Plate no.
41 In the mahādvāra of the main entrance of Virupaksha temple at Hampi has both these types used alternately.
42 Someshwara temple at Shankari durg, Salem dist.
43 Kailasanatha temple at Taramangalam, Omalur taluk, Salem dist
44 Śilparatnakoṭa verses 209-210

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Fig 35. Prastara (earlier variety)- Someshwara temple- Shankaridurg.

Fig 36. Prastara (later variety)- Achaladeepeshwara temple- Mohanur.