

## DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED TEMPLES

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Nandi is a well known hill station situated 43 kms north of Bangalore. It is to the north west of chikkaballapur taluk, Kolar district. Nandigramma is the village at the foot of the Nandi hills.

There are two identical temples at Nandi, namely the Bhoganandishwara temple and the Arunachaleswara temple. These are the most ornate temples. Both the temples have a common enclosure. The Bhoganandishwara temple lies on the southern side and to the right side of the Bhoganandishwara temple lies the Arunachaleswara temple. On plan both the temples possess a *garbhagrāha* an *ardhamanṭapa*, a *navaranṅga* and a detached *nandimantapa*.

PLAN: The contour of the *garbhagrāha* has *bhadra* in the centre and *karna* in the corners. In between the *bhadra* and *karna* are the *pratibhadras*. The *bhadra* also has the *subhadra* projection. In the centre of the side walls *jālavātāyanas* are placed. The *kapili* wall possesses *bhadras* with *subhadras*. The *navaranṅga* has *bhadras*, *pratibhadras*, *karnas* and *pratikarnas* (Fig.-a).

*ADHISṬHĀNA* – The *adhisṭhāna* is of *pratibandha* variety, which is ornate. The mouldings of the *adhisṭhāna* of Bhoganandishwara temple consist of *upāna*, *jagati*, *tripatta kumuda*, *kantā*, and *prathi*. Whereas, the mouldings of the Arunachaleswara temple consists of *upāna*, *jagati*, *vrttakumuda*, *kantā*, and *prathi* (Pl.-a).

*BHITTI* - The *Bhitti* has *brahmakānta bhittipādas* at regular intervals and four *gulika jālavātāyanas* two on the two side walls of the *ardhamanṭapa* and two on the *navaranga* walls (Pl.-b). The *bhitti* of the Arunachaleswara temple has *brahmakānta bhittipādas* with *śāla*, *kūta* and *pañjaras*.

The *prastara* has *uttara*, *valabhi* and *kōpata*. The *kōpata* is of quadrant shape. On the *kōpata*, *kūd*□*u* are carved in pairs. They are called “*nethranasis*”. The *kūd*□*us* are ornately designed. On the top of the *kūd*□*us* is the *simha mukhas*, lion heads. From the mouth of the lion, creeper scrolls emerge. The *gād*□*ha* of the *kūd*□*us* has humanfaces and *gandharva mukhas*.

The *valabhi* above the *kapōta*, has *vyālamāla*. the parapet has miniature *śāla*, *kūta* and *pañjara* pavilions. where images of the deities are carved.

*PRASTARA* - The *prastara* of the Bhoganandishwara temple is the earliest *prastara* found in the region of our study. Here the *uttara* is placed above the corbels of the pilasters projecting slightly forward from the vertical norm of the wall. The upper edge of the *uttara* is provided with a prominent *kampa*. On this *gan*□*as*, *bhutas*, *vāstupuruśa*, semi and demi divine gods are very neatly carved. These *gan*□*as* are in dancing, playing and florlicking mood. An interesting feature of this sculpture is that one of the divine sculptures is in *sayana* posture and it looks like *vāstupuruśa* similar *valabhi* is found in the Arunachaleshwara temple also.

The *vājana* has *makaramukhas*. The *makaramukhas* are carved at the opposite directions. The *makaras* have wide open mouths. In between the *makaras* are the *yalis*. Even these *yalis* are facing opposite directions(Pl.-c).

In the region of our study, the earliest *vimānas* available are the *vimānas* of the Bhoganandishwara temple and Arunachaleshwara temple at Nandi. Both are identical in their size and design. Epigraphical evidence proves that, the temple existed as early as 806 A.D. This *vimāna* has been identified as the variant of *vimalākruti* type of *vimāna*. All the criteria mentioned in the Mayamata are fulfilled except for the fact that it contains a *griva* and *śikhara* which are square instead of being octagonal. If the *śikhara* and *griva* of these towers had been

octagonal, this *prāsāda* would have been a perfect example for *vimalākruthi*. Therefore, consultation with the renowned scholars on *vāstuśāstra* has led this *prāsāda* to be taken as a variant of the *vimalākruthi prāsāda*, the name and details of which, unfortunately, are not extant to us.

The reasons for considering this *prāsāda* as a variant of *vimalākruthi* is the arrangement of the pavilions of *hāra*, which is somewhat unusual. According to the tradition, followed in a number of *prāsādas* of the Badami Chalukya, Rashtrakuta, Gangas and others, the central part (*bhadra*) of the walls of the *garbhagrāha* will invariably be crowned by a *śāla* pavilion. The same is to be repeated in the centre of each of the succeeding *talas* of the *prāsāda*. But in the *prāsādas* of the Bhoga Nandi complex, the arrangement of the pavilions of the *hāra* is differently treated. The central part of the sanctum wall, on the three sides has a *śāla* pavilion, while its corresponding part of the second *tala* has a *pañjara* pavilion flanked by two *śāla* pavilions, which is unusual.

The pillars are of the *brahmakānta* type. They consist of an ornate, dadoed pedestal. The base of the pillar is cuboid, with plain surface. Above this, a shaft equal to the height of the base is made indented at the corners, leaving a central broad, flat band. This band generally consists of the relief of creeper scrolls. The shaft again is made cuboid. This upper cubical portion is the most important and attractive part of the shaft. Here at the upper end a band of undulating creeper scroll runs around. Below this *kīrtimukhas* are carved, one on each of the central parts of the four faces. The corners also have *kīrtimukhas* but their relief is carved in such a way that half of its face is carved on one side and the other half is carved on the other side. Two beaded strings emerge from the mouth of the central *kīrtimukha*. They bend in opposite directions and join the half *kīrtimukha* carved on the two edges. These festoons are carved prominent. Inside the loops of these festoons, a tiny figural subject religious or secular is carved. Religious themes

include images of gods, goddesses, *avatāras*, *leelamurtis*, or even incidents of narrative episodes. All the four faces of the upper cuboid are treated identically, except the figural themes (Pl.-d).

In between these two temples, a small Girijashankara shrine is built in the later period in front of this shrine is an ornate *kalyānāmanāpa* of the vijayangara period. In front of the *kalyānāmanāpa* is a large open *mahāmanāpa* and a *pātālānkanā*, the *mahāmanāpa* has *śrībhōga adhisāhāna*. This spacious *mahāmanāpa* has sixty four pillars of different types. The pillars of the *mahāmanāpa* are highly ornate. The front pillars are of *vylākānta* type. The corner pillars are of *samyuktastamba* type (Pl.-e).

An interesting feature of the pillars in the centre is that life size sculptures are attached to their shafts. These are maidens in different poses. This *mahāmanāpa* has *chitrakhandā* pillars with many interesting sculptures. In front of the *mahāmanāpa* on the main axis of the Bhoganandishwara temple a *balipitha* a *dhwajastambha* and a monolithic umbrella are built during the vijayanagara period. The pillars of the *pātālānkanā* are massive and highly ornate. These are two amman shrines in the first enclosure.

The amman shrine is built on a *vēdibhadra upapītha*. The *bhitti* is decorated with the sculptures of Girijakalyāna theme and other reliefs. The *bhitti* is not tall. The *prastara* is simple in its form. It has *dalāpadmas* on the *valabhi*, the *kapōta* is of quadrant shape. In front of the *mahāmanāpa* is a *mālika*. The *mālika* has *vyālākānta* type and *chitrakhandā* type of pillars.

The *prastara* of the *mahāmanāpa* has broad double flexure *kapōta*. The projecting corners of the *kapōta* has stone chains. The smooth upper surface of the *kapōta* is provided with reliefs and sculptures of animals like monkeys, snakes and rshimukhas. The *vājana* above the *kapōta* is simple with *dalāpadmas*(Pl-f).

The second enclosure has a *dōlōtsavamanāpa*, *vasantamanāpa* and a *kalyāni*. The *vasantamanāpa* has four beautiful pillars raised on a platform.

The *dōlōtsavamanāpa* is a simple structure with four pillars.

## SRI NAGEŚWARA SWAMY TEMPLE - BEGUR

Begur is situated in Bangalore dist. The temple complex is set up within a rectangular *prākāra*. The gateway in the middle of the south side of the *prākāra* provides access into the temple complex. Three main temples and two subsidiary shrines are built within this *prākāra*. All the three shrines are oriented towards the east. They are Nageśwaraswamy, Nagareśwara and Choleśwara temples. Built in front of the Nageśwaraswamy and Choleśwara temple is a columned closed structure with an opening on its front.

Plan: The Nageśwara temple consists of a square *garbhagrāha* an *antarālā*, a *navaranāga* and a detached *mukhamanāpa*. The *mukhamanāpa* also serves as a *vāhanamanāpa*, as an image of Nandi is actually placed there facing the god. All these parts are arranged axially facing east (Fig.-1).

The *garbhagrāha*, has a doorway on the east leading to a rectangular *antarālā*. *Antarālā* has a doorway connected to a *navaranāga*, which opens itself to a *mukhamanāpa*. The *mukhamanāpa* has six free-standing pillars on a slightly raised floor level.

The *navaranāga* has four pillars. The doorway of the *navaranāga* is ornately carved (Pl.-1). It has got *śankanidhi* and *padmanidhi* at the base and *kalpavalli* having *ganās* and *kubjas* in the centre. A row of *dalapadmas* are neatly carved attached to the *kalpavalli*. The lintel above has *gajalakshmi* as

*lalātabimba* (Pl.-2) and all the *asṭamangalās* like *swastika*, *kalaśa*, *gaja*, *simha*, *dipa*, etc., are carved. The doorway has the traits of the Nolamba art.

*ADHISṬHĀNA* - The temple is set up on a *pādabandha adhisṭhāna* having *upāna*, *jagati*, *tripatṭakumuda*, *kantḥa* and *prati*. The *galā* has *galāpādas* at regular intervals (Fig.-2).

*BHITTI*- The walls of the *garbhagrāha* are completely renovated in recent times (Fig.-2). The *garbhagrāha* has plain walls. In the centre is the Nageśwara *Linga*. The *navaranṅga* has four pillars of the Ganga order. The *mukhamanṭapa* has six pillars. The *mukhamanṭapa* has *sōpanas* in the north and the south. The ceiling of the *mukhamanṭapa* has *asṭadikpālaka* panels.

**PILLARS** - There are four pillars in the *navaranṅga* (Pl.-3). These pillars are of *rudrakānta* type. These pillars consist of a square pedestal. The base of the shaft is cubical; rest of the shaft is cylindrical, with horizontal concave, convex mouldings, cable mouldings and flat bands. The upper moulding looks slightly bulbous in contour. This part is commonly referred to by the name *laśuna*. On the *laśuna*, designs of different type of flowers are carved. Over this, the capital carved out of a separate block of stone, is placed. This is a wheel moulding, the side portion of which is rounded, smoothened and sometimes even polished. The wheel mouldings is neatly designed with creepers and lotus petals. Above the capital, *palagai* abacus is placed. Above the capital are the brackets of *taranṅgapōtika* type suggesting its early period. The contour of the lower bell moulding on the shaft becomes almost straight and it has *mālasthana*, i.e., the area covered by festoons of beaded strings and tassels with or without figural sculptures.

The pillars in the *mukhamanāpā* possess a cubical base and multifaceted shaft and vase motif (Pl.-4). The multifaceted portion is sometimes very thinly fluted to make the ridges prominent. They are *soumyakānta* type of pillars.

#### NAGARESWARA TEMPLE :

PLAN - To the left of the Nageswaraswamy temple is the Nagareswara temple. This temple consists, on plan, a square *garbhagrāha*, a square *antarālā*, a *navaranāga* and a *nandimanāpā*. The *nandimanāpā* has eight free – standing columns on a slightly raised floor level (Fig.-3).

*ADHISĪTĪHĀNA* - The temple is set up on *kapōtabandha adhisīthāna* (Fig.-4, Pl.-5). This is the best example of the *kapōtabandha adhisīthāna* of the Ganga period in the region of our study. The mouldings of the *adhisīthāna* are *upāna*, *jagati*, *tripatīakumuda*, *galā* with *galāpadas*, *kapōta* with *kūdīus*, *kampa*, *galā*, *kampa* and *prati*. The *vyālāmukha pranālā* is cut through the *kapōta*.

*BHITTI* - The wall of the *garbhagrāha* has, in the centre, *bhadras* framing two recesses. The corners have *karnās* and in between are *pratikarnās*. The niches on the *bhadras* are broader and longer, the niches possess split pilasters. A *makaratōrana* is placed on the architrave. The *pratikarnās* possess two *bhittipādas* with an architrave and topped by a *nāsi*. The *bhittipādas* are of *brahmakānta* type, with a plain shaft, with *mālasthana*, *laśuna*, *tadi*, *pāli*, *phalaka* and angled brackets. The *salilāntara* is plain without any ornamentation (Pl.-6).

*PRASTARA* - (Fig.-4) At the top of the wall, the *uttara* is plain. The *valabhi* has *bhūtamāla*, intercepted by geese and narrative panel from *panchatantra*. The *valabhi* runs all over the temple. The *kapōta* is decorated with *kūdīus* at regular

intervals, the *gādā* is plain, *kūdū* has *simhamukha* at the top. The long neck and the creeper design has neatly carved *kīrtimukhas*.

*PRĀSĀDA* : (Pl.-7) The *garbhagrāha* has a stone masonry superstructure of two *talas* and a square cupola above. Each *tala* has a central *śāla* and *kūtās* on either side. The decorated handwall is designed by pilasters, split pilasters and *vr̥ttasputitas*. The *grīva* above the *talas* is circular. The *śikhara* is also circular with *padmaśila*, a prominent *kalaśa* and a *stūpi*. The *grīvakōśās* are prominent; the *mahānāsis* of these *grīvakōśās* have elongated neck and possess *simhamukhas* at the apex. The *gādā* of these *mahānāsis* is decorated with *śālakōśās*. The *vimānadēvatas* are placed at the four cardinal directions, Dakshinamurthi in the south, seated Vishnu in the west, Brahma at the north and Indra at the east. The *prāsāda* is of *mandaram* type as depicted in *vimānārchanakalpa*. The *prāsāda* has *anarpitahāra*. The *hāra* of the first *tala* runs all over the temple covering the *antarālā* and the *navaranāga* as well.

The *garbhagrāha* has plain walls and four pillars at the corners. The Nagreshwara *linga* is at the centre of the *garbhagrāha*. This has a doorway on east leading to the *antarālā*. The *antarālā* has four pillars. The walls and the ceilings of the *antarālā* are plain and the corner columns have angled brackets supporting the beams. *Antarālā* has a doorway leading to a *navaranāga*. The *navaranāga* has four pillars.

The *navaranāga* has a doorway on the east leading to an open *mukhamanāpta*. The *navaranāga* wall has a *valli jālavātāyana*. The doorway of the temple is formed by split pilasters. It is flanked at the base by small niches containing Ganga, Yamuna figures assisted by the attendant ladies holding *chatra* and *chāmara*. The *mukhamanāpta* is on a raised platform with eight pillars.

The pillars of the *navaranāga* are of *rudrakāntha* type (Pl.-8). They are similar to the pillars of Nageshwara swamy temple. The pillars of the *mukhamanātpa* are of *brahmakānta* type. They have a square pedestal and cubical base, the shaft above is having indentations. Above the shaft a cuboid is placed. A *laśuna* topped by a cushion capital and a *palagai* abacus is placed above the cuboid. This part is a highly carved one, with floral and others similar decorations. At the top of this can be found four lion faces (*kīrtimukhas*) carved on the four sides. The lion faces possess twisted strings of pearls, two in the case of every lion face. These strings of pearls hang down on each side to the right and to the left, and are made to join at the top, i.e., at the half lion-faces in the corners. Inside the festoons of these strings of pearls can be found divinities of Hindu mythology.

#### CHOLESHWARA SWAMY TEMPLE

PLAN - The Choleswara temple is situated next to the Nagareshwara temple. It consists of a square *garbhagrāha*, *ardhamanātpa* and a *navaranāga*. The *garbhagrāha*, has a doorway on the east leading to a rectangular *ardhamanātpa* and a *navaranāga*.

ADHISĪTĪHĀNA - The temple is set up on a *pratibandha adhisīthāna* having *upāna.jagati*, *vrīutta kumuda*, *prativajana*, *kantāha* and *prati* (Pl.-9).

BHITTI - The walls of the *garbhagrāha* has, in the centre, *bhadras* framing two recesses. The corners have *karnās*. The niches on the *bhadras* are broader and longer, the niches possess split pilasters. A *makaratōrana* is placed on an architrave. The *bhittipādas* are of *brahmakānta* type, with a plain shaft, with *mālasthana*, *laśuna*, *tadi*, *pāli*, *phalaka* and angled brackets. The *salilāntara* is plain without any ornamentation. At the top of the wall, the *uttara* is plain (Pl.-10).

*PRASTARA* - The *valabhi* has *bhūtamāla*, intercepted by geese and narrative panel from *panchatantra*. The *valabhi* runs all over the temple. The *kapōta* is decorated with *kūdāus* at regular intervals, the *gādā* of the *kūdāu* is plain with *simhamukha* at the top. The long neck and the creeper design has neatly carved *kīrtimukhas*. Above the *kapōta* is a *vyālamāla*.

*PRĀSĀDA* - On the *garbhagrāha* is a stone masonry superstructure of two *talas* and a circular cupola above. Each *tala* has a central *śāla* and *kūtās* on either side. The decorated handwall is designed by pilasters and spilt pilasters. The *grīva* above the *talas* is square. The *śikhara* is also square with *padmaśila*, a prominent *kalaśa* and a *stūpi*. The *grīvakōśātās* are prominent; the *mahānāsis* of these *grīvakōśātās* have elongated neck and possess *simhamukhas* at the apex. Below the *mahānāsis vimānadēvatas* are placed, and this *prāsāda* is of *swastibandha* type as defined in the *Mayamata* (Pl.-11).

*PILLARS* - The *ardhamanātapa* has four pillars. They are of *śrikara* type. The pillar has a square pedestal and a square base. The shaft of the upper part of the pillar is carved with both the ‘bell’ and ‘vase’ motifs suggesting the tradition of lower Gangavadi region. It also has a *laśuna* and a cushion capital with cut corbels (Pl.-12).

The *navaranāga* has four pillars and these pillars consist of a square base and the shaft is octagonal with horizontal concave, convex mouldings, cable mouldings and flat bands. The upper mouldings look slightly bulbous in contour. This part is commonly referred to by the name *laśuna*. Over this, the octagonal capital carved out of a separate block of stone, is placed. This is a wheel moulding, the side portion of which is rounded, smoothed and ribbed. Above the capital, *palagai* abacus is placed. These pillars are of *vishnukānta* type (Pl.-13).

## THE LAKSHMANESVARA TEMPLE

PLAN - The Lakshmanesvara temple is situated in the centre of Rameshwara temple complex at Avani, Mulubagilu taluk, Kolar District. The temple is oriented towards east. The plan consists of a *garbhagrāha* housing the Lakshmaneshwara *Linga*, an *ardhamantrapa* – with two pillars in front, and a *navaranaga* having four pillars (Fig.-5).

*ADHISANTHĀNA* - The temple is built on a high basement of finely dressed granite of about five feet in height. The *adhisantha* is of *prathibandha* type. The main mouldings of the *adhisantha* are *upāna*, *jagati*, *kumuda* (with three facets), *kapōta* with ornamental *kūḍus* (Pl.-14). A special feature of this plinth is that the moulding above the *kumuda* is high and heavy. It is divided into two parts. The lower course is designed like the *kapōta* moulding, whereas its upper part is treated like *patantika* having animal reliefs on it. This unified moulding of *kapōta* and *patantika*, a motif representing the union of Kannada and Tamil traditions is a special feature of decoration of plinth of Lakshmaneshwara temple. The *kūḍus* are decorated with lion heads, topped by a frieze containing figures of *yālīs*, elephants and lions. The topmost moulding being *prati* having lotus petals at the bottom. The northern wall of the *garbhagrāha* has an ornamental *makara pranāla*.

*PRANĀLA* - This *pranāla* has a heavy octagonal shaft which terminates like the head of a *makara*. The *makara* has floral manes, ears, protruding eyes, wide open mouth and a spiraled trunk which rests like a crown above the head. Sharp teeth on both the jaws and protruding canines of the upper jaw are neatly delineated. Here also, a human figure (*vidyādhara*) holding lotuses in both his hands, comes out like the tongue of the *makara*. The human figure is carved with a crown, necklaces and other suitable ornaments and dress. He is two armed, wields a sword in his right hand, and holds a shield in his left hand. He wears a conical

tiered *kirītā*, necklaces, sacred thread, *udara bandha* (Pl.-15). The two ears of the *makara* carved in two different ways are noteworthy.

**BHITTI** - The wall is indented and contains *bhadras*, *subhadras*, *pratibhadras* *karnās* and *pratikarnās*. The walls are decorated with *brahmakānta bhittipādas*, *kōśtās* and *jālavātāyanas*. The pilasters contain, at the top of the shaft, delicate carvings of festoons with floral patterns and hanging pearl tassels. There are ornamental niches formed by closely spaced pilasters surmounted by small turreted canopies. The niches have beautiful images of gods and goddesses like Śiva, *Bhairava*, *Bhairavi*, *Natarāja*, *Ganēsa*, *Sūrya* and of the contemporary famous saint *Tribhuvana Kartaradēva*, etc. These figures are carved in high relief. The niches have architraves topped by *śālas* and *kūtās* (Pl.-16).

The wall contains *jālavātāyanas* on the two sides of the *ardhamanṭapa* and the *navaranṅga*. They have *Nataraja*, *Viṣṇu*, *Mahishasuramardini* and creeper scrolls in them. There are images of *dwārapālas* in front. The *dwārapālas* resemble those of the Chola temples.

The upper portion of the wall above the architrave is built of brick and mortar including the dravidian stepped pyramidal tower and all these belong to a later period.

**PILLARS** - There are four pillars in the *navaranṅga*. They are of *brahmakānta* type. They have a square pedestal and cubical base, the shaft above is having indentations. Above the shaft, a cuboid is placed. A *laśuna* topped by a cushion capital and a *palagai* abacus is placed above the cuboid. This part is a highly carved one, with floral and others similar decorations. At the top of this can be found four lion faces (*kīrtimukhas*) carved on the four sides. The lion faces possess twisted strings of pearls, two in the case of every lion face. These strings of pearls hang down on each side to the right and to the left, and are made to join at the top,

i.e., at the half lion-faces in the corners. Inside the festoons of these strings of pearls can be found divinities of Hindu mythology (Pl.-17).

The *ardhamanṭapā* has two pillars of a special kind. This type of pillar – carving can be found in the later Chalukyan and Hoysala temples. Instead of the shaft being square in shape in the central part, it is cylindrical. Moreover, the elaborate decorations and carvings of figures are not found. In their place, thin ribbon bands, and strings of pearls and cable mouldings are found.

The entrance to the temple has carved creepers and intertwined scrolls, topped by a lintel having a seated Gajalakshmi, and at the bottom of the jambs are two female figures, which represent, perhaps, the two holy rivers, Yamuna and Ganga.

Though there are a number of inscriptions on the plinth of this temple, they all belong to the Chola period. Only two inscriptions, one on the northern wall reading “Sri Tribhuvana Kartara Bhatara” and the other on the right side of the entrance, are in the 10<sup>th</sup> century characters. These two inscriptions lead to the conclusion that the temple belongs to 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

## MUKTHINATHESHWARA TEMPLE

PLAN - The temple is situated at Binnamangala in Nelamangala Taluk, Bangalore Dist. This is a very ornate temple in all respects. This temple has two Chola inscriptions, earliest is dated to 1110 A.D., stating that during the reign of Kulottunga Chola a grant of lands was made to the Muttisvaran.<sup>1</sup> This temple consists of a square *garbhagrāha* and a rectangular *antarāla*, a square *navaranṅga* and a *mukhamanṭapā* (Fig.-6). In front of the temple is a *dwajastambha*.

*ADHISṬHĀNA* - The temple is set up on a *pratibandha adhisṭhāna*. The mouldings of the *adhisṭhāna* are *upāna*, *jagati*, *dharāvratlakumuda*, *galā*,

*kapōta*, *galā* and *prati*. The *galā* above the *kumuda* has reliefs of many kinds of animals in fighting and frolicking poses. Lions, deers, horses, snakes are carved on the *galā*. Ends of the *galā* possess *makaras* with wide-open mouths. The *kapōta* is designed like a *patīkā* below and *kapōta* above. The *kapōta* does not possess *kūdus*(Pl.-18), rather have only *simhamukhas*. The *kapōta* has the design of *kshudrapadmadalas*. The mouldings are topped by *prati* with neatly designed *urdhvapadmadalas*.

**BHITTI** - The walls of the *garbhagrāha* have three central projections (*bhadras*) and two recessions. The central projections are broad and large. They have niches on neatly carved pedestals. The niches possess split pilasters topped by *makara tōranā*. The split pilasters possess bell motif, cushion capital and *palagai* abacus. These split pilasters possess cut corbels. Above the corbels, the *makaratōranās* are carved. The *makaratōranā* consist of two *makaras* placed at the bottom of the arch, facing opposite directions and two *makaras* at the top of the arch, facing opposite directions. *Kīrtimukha* is carved as the crest for the arch. The *gādhā* of the arch has got divine motifs like *Linga*, *Gajalakshmi*, *Ganesha*, etc. These *makara tōranās* are placed on an architrave and above this architrave, the creeper scrolls rise in a conical fashion supporting a *kīrtimukha* crest at the apex. This canopy has an additional feature in the form of two armed soldiers jumping out of the *makara* mouths (Pl.-19).

The niches possess the sculptures of *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva*, *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, *Gaṇeśha* and *Mahishasuramardini*. The recessions on the *garbhagrāha* wall possess reliefs of sculptures of divinities. The corner projections (*karnās*) possess *brahmkānta bhittipādas*. The *bhittipādas* are ornate in nature. They have a square shaft with the relief of divinities. The pilasters possess a bell motif, multifaceted cushion capital, a *mandi* designed like a blossomed lotus and *palagai* with angled brackets. Above the *palagai*, on both the

sides, rampant lions are carved. The area between the pilasters is utilized for the depiction of some reliefs like Agasthya, Venugopala, etc. On the *kapili* walls of the *antarālīa*, sculptures of Mahishamardini and Ganapati are noticed (Pl.-20).

*PRASTARA* - The *uttara* above the wall is decorated with *ganās* and *kubjas*. The *kapōta* is decorated with *kīrtimukhas* at regular intervals. The *prāsāda* above the *garbhagrāha* is completely dilapidated. From the existing structure we can surmise that it was of *dwitalaswastibhanda* type and the *śikhara* was of mud and mortar.

The *garbhagrāha* has plain walls and corner columns. These columns are of *chitrakhandā* type and they have angled brackets. In the centre of the *garbhagrāha* is a Śiva Linga. *Garbhagrāha* has a doorway on the east, leading to a rectangular *antarālīa*. The ceiling of the *garbhagrāha* is of *nabhichhanda* type. The walls and the ceiling of the *antarālīa* are plain and the engaged columns are of *chitrakhandā* type with angled brackets supporting the beam. The *antarālīa* has a doorway which is non-ornate. This leads to the *navaranīga*.

The *navaranīga* has four columns in the centre. The central ceiling of the *navaranīga* has *asṭādikpālaka* panel. The doorway has many horizontally projected bands. They possess the carving of musicians, dancers, *kinnaras* playing with musical instruments. On the lintel, Gajalakshmi is carved as *lalātabimba*. *Makaras* and elephants are carved on the lintel. The whole structure is of granite except the tower, which is of brick and mortar. The building stands in the open without a *prākāra*.

*PILLARS* - The pillars of the *navaranīga* are very elaborately designed and carved (Pl.-21). Each pillar has an ornate pedestal supporting a square shaft. The shaft is richly carved. The upper part of the shaft is designed like a vase, it is much

indented vertically at its corners. Horizontal bands of lotus petals are carved at the neck and at its base; this vase is a prominent motif of the Chola pillars. Below this is the cubical portion which has a row of *kīrtimukhas* on the upper part and the beaded string festoons in the lower part. The lower part of this is slightly reduced in size and also tapered upwards. Its corners are minutely indented; the four central faces of this part have reliefs of religious themes. Below this is a row of squatting lions. All these features remind us of the Nolamba idiom of carving pillars. The square base is slightly dadoed. The shaft supports a cushion capital having multiple indentations. The cushion is lined on both the sides with lotus moulding. The *palagai* abacus with its lotus motif below has multiple indentations. Between the abacus and the brackets, another piece of stone is placed (*veerakanṭha*) which has, on its four faces, the *bhāravāhakas* or the *kubjas*. Above this is the corbel bracket of the *taranṅgapōtika* type with a central band and beveled bottom. The entire scheme of decoration is so unique, so profound in its carving that it is unrivalled in the entire range of Chola pillars of this region. The *mukhamanṭapa* has four *chitrakhandas* pillars.

The *dhwajastambha* is set up on a platform (Pl.-22). This column is about thirty feet in height; This has a square block at the base and above, a tapering eight sided shaft. At the top, a *laśuna* is carved with a cushion capital, on which a circular disc, an upturned lotus, (*manḍi* and *phalaka*) are placed at the top. *Nandi* is carved on the base of this column.

#### SOMESHWARA TEMPLE, KURUDUMALE

Kurudumale is a small village in Mulubagilu taluk of Kolar district. This village has few Hoysala temples and one Vijayanagara temple. Of them, the Someshwara temple is noteworthy. This temple has Tamil records inscribed onto its *adhisṭhāna* dating from 1264 A.D. onwards. This monument is associated

with Ilavanji Vasudeva Raya, Chola viceroy of Hoysala Ballala during 13<sup>th</sup> century.

**PLAN - (Fig.-7)** Someshwara temple at Kurudumale is oriented towards east. The temple is situated in the centre of a compound. The principal temple consists, on plan, of a *garbhagrāha*, an *antarālā* and an *ardhamanṭapa* opening to a *navaranṅga* having four columns. The doorway of the *navaranṅga* is on the south, a *jālavātāyana* is placed in the niche in the east wall, on the main axis of the temple. The doorway of the *navaranṅga* is provided with a porch (*parśwamanṭapa*), with two pillars. In front of the temple is a *vāhanamanṭapa*.

**ADHISṬHĀNA** - The temple is set on a *padmakēsara adhisṭhāna*. The mouldings of the *adhisṭhāna* are *upāna*, *jagati*, *tripatṭakumuda*, *kantāha*, *patṭikā*, *kantāha prati*. All the major mouldings like *jagati*, *kumuda* and, *patṭikā* are carved with the lacing of *dalapadmas* (Pl.-23). The *pranāla* is placed on the northern wall of the *garbhagrāha* and it cuts through the *patṭikā* of the *adhisṭhāna*. *Pranāla* is very attractive in its surface treatment. The two sides of the *pranāla* have the relief of *kalpavalli* with gentle curves.

The *adhisṭhāna* of the *parśwamanṭapa* is of *padmabandha* type. The mouldings of this *adhisṭhāna* are *upāna*, *jagati*, *vrṭtakumuda*, *kantāha*, *patṭikā*, *kantāha* and *prati*. The last two mouldings are interrupted by niches on the wall above. The *adhisṭhāna* has crisply carved details. The stone used to construct this temple is greenish-black basalt, this is an exquisitely finished monument replete with a full complement of decorative designs and figural sculptures in the most refined Tamil style.

**BHITTI** - The *garbhagrāha*, *antarālā* and *navaranṅga* walls have niches in the centre. The walls are decorated with *vishnukāntabhittipādas*, niches and

*kumbhapañjaras* (Pl.-24). The *kumbhapañjaras* are carved on the sides of the niches interrupted by *bhittipādas*. The niches are defined by split pilasters topped by architraves. Above the architrave, canopies with *kalaśas* are neatly carved (Pl.-25).

The walls of the *antarālā* are recessed slightly suggesting its demarcation. The *visānukanta bhittipadas* possess a long shaft topped by a *tadi*, *kumbha*, *pāli* and *phalaka* and miniature brackets with *puspapōtika*. It is three dimensional at the corners. The niches are empty. The *jālavātāyana* on the middle of east wall of the *navaranāga* is of *gavāksha* type. At the top of the walls is the *uttara* supporting a row of purlins. Above that is the ‘S’ shaped *kapōta* with foliated *kūdus* carved at regular intervals. The *vyālamāla* above marks the end of the roof slabs (Pl.-26).

*PRASTARA* - It is to be noted here that, during the Hoysala period the *prastara* of the temples get elaborated with crisp decoration and carvings of various religious themes. To carve this *kapōta*, the artists required a thick slab. The *kīrtimukha* of the *kapōtanāsis* of this period has an elongated neck and it was difficult for the artists to carve the elongated necks. To reduce the labour and also to economise on the material, artists have used a separate piece of stone, for carving the *kīrtimukha* of the *nāsis* and have joined the two pieces firmly with the help of groove and ridge method at the top of the *kapōta* slab. Therefore, some of the *kīrtimukhas* of the *kapōta* of these temples are lost<sup>2</sup>. Above the *kapōta*, *nāsis* are carved at regular intervals. The *nāsis* of the Hoysalas have decorative designs. The *nāsis* are carved with various religious themes. Constructional method gets a change. Though the *kapōta* is made of hard granite, which is not suitable for delicate and crisp carvings, the Hoysala artists have tried to bring out the best possible effect in this stone. The Hoysala delicate carvings and fine workmanship are very clearly

noticeable in these *kapōtas*. The carvings are less, but they are beautiful, attractive and add to the grandeur of the *kapōta* (Pl.-27).

The *parśwamanāntāpa* on the north side of the *navaranāga* is built on a *padmabandha adhisāhāna*. Ascending steps flanked by *yālī* balustrades are provided on both the sides. The balustrade is carved out of black granite, a stone which can take intricate carvings. The workmanship here is exquisite and delicate and reminds us of Hoysala workmanship. The beaded festoons of the tongue of the *vyālā*, its sharp canines, delicate manes, twisted and curled tail, its sharp nails and the delicate multifaceted long tongue of the beast are all superb in their carving. A unique feature of this balustrade is that, the interspace between the body and the long tongue is neatly perforated. A seated relief of a man in *rajaleelasana* is also carved in the interspace (Pl.-28).

The doorways of the *navaranāga* and *antarālā* are very ornate and they closely resemble each other. The doorways have bands of *kalpavalli* and *dalapadmas*, with miniature animal motifs.

The walls of the interior of the *garbhagrāha* are plain. The walls of the *antarālā* are also plain. The *navaranāga* has four columns in the middle and four engaged columns in the walls. The *parśwamanāntāpa* has two columns.

The *prāsāda* over the *garbhagrāha* has been restored in later times. It is of *mandaram* variety as explained in the *vimānārchanakalpa*. The first *tala* has *śāla* in the centre, *kūtās* in the corner and *pañjaras* in between. The *kūtās* and the *śālas* have additional pilaster projections headed by *nāsis*. Projections in the middle of the *śāla* of the *āditala* are occupied by Śiva images which are not clear to identify. Miniature *kūtās* are placed on the second *tala* and *nandi* sculptures in full relief are carved at the corners. A circular *grīva* with *grīvadēvatas* and a

*rudrachanda śikara* is neatly executed. Above the *śikara* the *padmaśila* and *stūpi* is placed.

PILLARS - The pillars of the *navaranāga* and *parśwamanāpā* are of *chitrakhandā* variety. This pillar in its design of the shaft is more akin to the Tamil tradition of pillar carving. The pedestal is of *vēdibhadra* type, contains decorative lotus pedestal with lion motifs at the four corners. The shaft above contains three cuboids interspersed by multifaceted shaft. Each face of the cuboid is relieved with faunal, floral, figural reliefs and also bordered. Another interesting feature of this type that the corners of the inter-space of the lower cuboids have tiny rampant lions facing the four directions. As this is a *chitrakhandā* variety of pillar, cushion capital and abacus are not found. The corbel above is of the *pūpapōtika* type with decorations of multiple rows of petals.<sup>3</sup> (Pl.-29 and 29-a).

#### SOMESHWARA TEMPLE - KOLAR.

##### PLAN - (Fig.-8)

Someshwara temple is situated Kolar, of Kolar district. The temple complex is set up within a rectangular *prākāra*. Gateway in the front of the temple provides access into the temple complex. The temple occupies the centre of this *prākāra*. A lofty *dhvajastambha*, a *balipīṭha* and the principal temple are all set up in the principal axis of the temple. A Parvathi are built in front of the temple to the north of the principal shrine. The amman shrine is built on the north-west of the main shrine. In front of the amman shrine at a distance is the *dōlōtsavamanāpā*. To the south west, corner of the *prākāra*, is an ornate *kalyānāmanāpā*. The remains of the *mālīka* are to be seen in the north and the west and on the south western parts of the *prākāra*.

PLAN - The main shrine consists of an east-facing *garbhagrāha* and *antarālā* adjoining a *navaranāga* with a single doorway on the east. This gives access to

a *mahāman□d□apa* of seven by seven bays, the central bays are widened in both directions. The outer two rows of columns stand only on an *upapīt□ha* while the central hall of six by five bays stand on an ornate *adhis□t□hāna* (Fig.-9). Four columns extend the *mahāman□d□apa* by three bays on the front (east) form a *mukhaman□d□apa*.

*ADHIS□T□HĀNA* - The temple is set on an ornate *śrībandha adhis□t□hāna* interrupted by that of *śribhōga* type.

The mouldings of the *adhis□t□hāna* are *upāna*, *jagati*, *gal□a*, *kapōta*, *gal□a* topped by a *prati*(Pl.-30). The *upāna* is rectangular and plain. All these mouldings are flanked by richly carved *dal□apadmas* throughout. The surfaces of all the mouldings are carved with suitable decorative faunal and floral motifs. Lion faces, leogriffs, *nāsis*, diadem strips, etc., carvings are made profusely on the surface suitably. There are many fillets on this base. Fillets obviously make the contour less rigid and more elegant. The decorative designs found include *rathnapat□t□ika*, medallions, diadems, beaded string festoons, tassels and series of hanging knobs carved elaborately. The scheme of decoration found on various members of this plinth is as follows. The *upāna*, consists, on its face, rows of animal motifs and *kalpavalli*. *Jagati* is often relieved with prominent *dalapadmas* with prominent petals having up-curved edges (Pl.-31). *Kumuda* is *vr□tta* but often made *katakāvr□ta kumuda*. The ribbings of the *kumuda* are very prominent and the grooves are deep and sometimes carved with beaded strings. The face of the *kumuda* is invariably carved with *rathnapat□t□ikā* or a chain of diadems. This plinth is provided with a *gal□a* and a *kapōta* above having closely spaced *nāsis*. Some of the *nāsis* are just conventional and some are real in their form. They have, in their centre, *gandharvamukhas* and other decorative designs. The interspaces of the *nāsis* are filled with elongated stylized lotus petals interspersed with beaded strings. *Prati* is a simple moulding with sharply scalloped lotus petals.

Sometimes, on the *prati*, lotuses are also carved. This kind of plinth, it is said, brings prosperity, health and all kinds of pleasures<sup>4</sup>. It is also said that it must be built by an able *vardhaki* (carpenter/architect). This type of ornate plinth comes into being only during the Vijayanagara period.

In between the *śrībandha adhisṭāna*, *śribhōga* is also carved. The major mouldings of this plinth are *upāna*, *jagati*, *ksudrābja*, *kumuda*, *kampa*, *kapōta* and *prati*. This is an ornate *adhisṭāna* (Pl.-32). In this *adhisṭāna*, the decorations are more luxurious and gorgeous. They present a gorgeous look with their intricate design and decoration. The *jagati* has scalloped lotus petals. They are very huge and deeply relieved with up-curved edges. The *kumuda* and *kapōta* are profusely carved with varieties of designs.

**BHITTI** - The walls of the *garbhagrha* have *bhadras* with *subhadras* and *karnās* and *pratikarnās*. As the central projections are broader and larger, they have niches defined by split pilasters. *Kumbhapañjaras* are depicted in the recessed areas of the *salilāntaras*. The *salilāntara* that flank the niches are decorated with relief sculptures. The walls of the *antarālā* are recessed slightly and a niche is positioned on each of them. The walls of the *navaranāga* are decorated with *bhittipādas*, *kumbhapañjaras*, *kōsṭās* and relief sculptures (Pl.-33).

The niches on the *bhadras* of the *navaranāga* and *antarālā* have deep recesses with *jālavātāyana*. They possess *kapōtas* with a *śāla* coping. The niches on the *karnās* possess half pilasters with sham niches partly obscured by diminutive figures. These niches are intervened by *kumbhapañjaras*. The *kumbha* here has flat bands, from the mouth of the it, *makaramukhas* emerge out. The *makaras* have *kalpavalli*. The *kumbhapañjaras* possess a neatly carved *pañjara* motif at the apex. The *bhittipādas* possess *brahmakānta* shaft, a *laśuna*, *tādi*,

*manḍi* and *phalaka* and the *puspapōtika* with triple brackets. The *bhitti* is very ornate with a well executed blending of all these architectural features.

**PRASTARA** - The *kapōta* of the principal shrine is of quadrant shape. The *kapōta* has *nāsis*. Some are *nētranāsis*(Pl.-34). The *kapōta* of the *mahāranḡamanḡtḡapa* is ‘S’-shaped and double flexured. Lizards and monkeys are carved on the *kapōta*.

**PRĀSĀDA** - The triple-storeyed tower, has, on the first *tala*, *sālas* in the centre and *kūtḡas* in the corners. On the *prati karnḡas* also *kūḡtas* are placed. The place in between is used for *kumbhapañjaras*. Secondary set of pilasters elevate the *sālas* and the *kūtḡa*. The same scheme of arrangement is noticed in the second *tala*. The *bhadrasālas* have arches with divine sculptures. Above the second *tala* is a star-shaped socle. The *grīva* carries *visḡnḡuchchhanda – śikhara* (Pl.-35). A neatly done *padmaśila* and *stūpi* can be noticed.

**PILLARS** - The central columns of the hall facing the aisle are of *supratikānta* type. This type of pillar looks like a pier. It is monolithic in nature. It may have a separate pedestal also. In most of the instances, the pedestal is carved in the same block of stone as the pillar. The main pillar shaft is of the *chitrakhanḡa* variety, decorated and relieved with sculptures on three of its open sides. The fourth side, mostly the front side, is extended forward almost equal to the girth of the main shaft. In the centre of this portion an ornate pillaret is relieved. The shaft of the pillar only is separated from its core while its bottom and top portions are attached to the extensions of the shaft. The pillaret is carved with all the decorative details of an ornate pillar. It may have a carved pedestal in the shape of a big pot or *kalaśa* or it may have a sedant lion also. If the pillarets are more than one, each pillaret will have a separate lion support. Above the pillaret, the space left is filled by architectural and some other suitable decorative design. In the area of our study pillars with single pillaret and triple pillarets are noticed. If the pillarets are three

they are carved on the three corners of the main shaft of the pillar. They are all shown as supporting a common canopy above.

The front row has *vyālākānta* type of pillars. The corner pillars have triple colonettes. The pillars in the centre are of *chitrakhandā* variety. This type of pillar is most utilitarian in character, because of the simplicity of its execution. *Chitrakhandā* variety of pillars contains a shaft having three cubical parts interspersed by octagonal or many sided shaft. The four faces of all the three cubes contain reliefs of varieties of subject matter and decorative designs; the wealth of details is so rich that one has to see it to believe it .

The information that we get from these carvings is highly useful for the understanding of the contemporary socio-religious conditions of this period. No capital or abacus is to be seen on the shaft. Above the shaft, directly, rests the *pūpapōtika* corbel of the Vijayanagara order.

The front pillars of the *mukhamantapa* possess a unique type of two storeyed *vyālākānta* pillars (Pl.-36). In this type, the pedestal, the shaft and its adjoining *vyālā* figures are all designed and carved in one block of stone. The pedestal is common here to both the shaft and its adjoining sculptural motif. The shaft belongs to the *chitrakhandā* variety. To this shaft, on one or two sides, the sculpture of *yālī* is attached. Pillars of this type are found carved in the *pātālānkanā* of the temple, there too, on the outer periphery of the group of columns. These *vyālā* representations are all in the rampant posture. *Vyālā* figure is the major statuary of this type of pillars. Normally, they have human mounts, sometimes holding the weapons of offence and defence. The *vyālās* rise up on their hind legs which are generally placed on a seated elephant. These *vyālā* figures with their soldier mounts represent effectively the martial spirit and the military prowess of the Vijayanagara army. The *vyālā* occupies the height of the shaft, up to the lower end of the upper cuboid. Above this, the gap

between the *vyālā* and the *puspapōtika* is covered by vibrant floral motifs or other suitable architectural or decorative motifs. The rich imagination and the successful execution of this variety of pillars involved stupendous labour and skill. The medium used for these pillars is invariably the hard granite.

Only two pillars of this type are noticed in the front colonnade of the porch of the Someshwara temple at Kolar. The height of the shaft of these pillars is about fifteen feet. The *vyālā* sculptures carved here are of the type described above, but they are carved identically in two horizontal zones. This was due to the fact that the shaft of the pillar is inordinately tall, as these pillars are of the *pātālānkanā*. Therefore, a taller shaft is used here for structural requirement. Single *vyālā* decoration for this tall shaft was not enough to cover the whole height of the shaft. Therefore the architect has intelligently divided the area into two horizontal zones, designed the pillar with two rows of *vyālās*. This not only shows the manipulative skill of the artist but also enhances the beauty and grandeur of the pillar and the facade.

The intermediate beams of the *mahāranāgamanāpa* are decorated with friezes of dancing maidens, row of elephants, *hamsas*, etc.

The doorjambs of the *navaranāga* have triple *shakas*, they are, *rathnapatīkā*, *dalāpadmas* and *kalpavalli* (Pl.-37). The *dwārabandhas* are neatly depicted. *Gajalakshmi* is carved as the *lalātabimba*. The doorways of the *navaranāga* is framed by projecting blocks carved with *ganās* and squatting lions, carrying a *kapōta*. The *navaranāga* has four *chitrakhandā* pillars. The ceiling over the central bay has *asādikpālaka* panel.

*KALYĀNAMANĀTĀPA* - The nine-bayed *kalyānāmanāpa* in the south-west corner of the rectangular compound is a fine work of art (Pl.-38). Central pairs of columns on each side display riders on *gajavyālās*. Corner columns have a pair

of male or female attendants standing against cut-out colonettes. Gracefully posed figures holding lotuses and gifts are overhung by double-curved eaves. The central four columns and the dais on which they are raised are intricately treated. Its *adhisṭhāna* is of *śrībandha* type. Columns also have *adhisṭhānas* at the base, with *ganās* carved on the central *galās*, or pilastered niches framing miniature divinities. Triple blocks on the shafts are partly concealed by ornate *kumbhapañjaras* with *kalpavalli*. Projecting outwards from each column are three colonettes and two figures, mostly maidens bearing lotuses, but also occasionally divinities, such as Venugopala. The brackets terminate in inverted pyramids with triple tiers of petals and parrots. The beams above are decorated with stylized medallions and the *dikpālas*, two on each side; *ganās* and petals appear on the undersides. Double-curved eaves run around four sides, complete three triple sets of ribs and rafters. Pairs of dancers on eight sides frame a *nābhichchanda* type ceiling. This is created by triple tiers of petals interrupted by blocks fashioned as squatting lions, *ganās* and parrots.

*GŌPURA* - The *gōpura* in the middle of the east *prākāra* is equally ornate. It is raised on *kapōtabhadra upapīṭha* with *pādabandha* and *kapōtabandha adhisṭhāna* used alternatively (Pl.-39). The mouldings of the *upapīṭha* are *upāna*, *padmajagati*, with number of fillets, a *patīkā*, a tall *galā* with *galāpādas*, *kapōta* punctuated with *kūdus*. Above the *kapōta* are *kampa*, *galā*, *kampa* topped by a *prati*.

The lowest mouldings of the *adhisṭhāna* are *upāna* and *padmajagati*. In between is a rectilinear *jagati* having a row of elephants. Above the *jagati* is *kampa*, *galā*, *kampa* topped by *tripatta kumuda*. Above the *kumuda* is *kampa*, *galā*, *kampa* with *kapōta* and *prati* moulding. The *pādabandha* type here has instead of *kapōta* a *patīka* and a *prati*.

The *bhitti* of the *gōpura* raises on this *adhisṭhāna*. The *bhitti* has *brahmakānta bhittipādas*, *kumbhapañjaras* and sculptural reliefs of different divinities. The *bhittipādas* have plain shaft with a *laśuna*, *tadi*, *mandi*, *phalaka* and *puspa patṭika* above. In between the *bhittipādas*, *kumbhapañjaras* are carved. These *kumbhapañjaras* do not have the floral motif coming out from their mouths. 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 <sup>5</sup>. In some instances, saints and sages are also carved. The shaft of the *kumbha* has bountifully carved *kalpavalli*. The space between the pilasters is filled with divinities, attendant maidens and *dwārapālas* beneath, and pairs of parrots with tufts of foliage above. Squatting lions adorn the blocks above the pilaster capitals; a frieze of *ganṇas* and overhanging *kapōta*-cornice continue over the passageway entrances.

The *uttara* above is decorated with rows of *ganṇas*, *kubjas* and *bhāravahakas*. The *kapōta* is of quadrant shape topped by *kampa*, *galā*, *kampa*. The *prati* is having *urdhvapadma* and above the *prati* the first *tala* begins.

The five-storeyed brick tower, somewhat dilapidated has a steep pyramidal profile (Pl.-40). Each level presents two full and one half-projection with double pairs of pilasters flanking recesses symmetrically disposed at either side. Intervening recesses have elongated pairs of pilasters. Openings in the central elongated elements are flanked by *dwārapālas* and niches. *Kapōtas* and secondary sets of pilasters elevating *kūtṇas*, *pañjaras*, and *sālas* surmount the side projections. The central projections show *sālas* flanked by two half *sālas*, slightly set back. The tower is capped with the usual enlarged *sāla*, but much of the original details have been lost.

The interior of the entrance that have corbelled courses of brackets has shallow jambs and squatting *ganāśas* carved on them. Front faces of the doorways show *dwārapālas* beneath and Gajalakshmi on the lintel. The side faces have maidens on *makaras* clutching creeper motifs that continue onto the undersides of the lintels. Two storeyed chambers, (missing their intermediate floor slabs,) are raised on an ornate *upapīṭha* with squatting *vyālāśas* between decorated *padmas* and *kapōtas*. Column shafts are covered with delicate creeper motifs. Maidens bearing whisks are seen on the lower columns, with male drummer and female dancer above. The corbelled courses of brackets have pendant buds. The ceiling over the central bay has a lotus with two rings of cut-out petals framing a pendant bud; it is surrounded by shallow scrollwork and bands of lotus ornament.

#### RANGANATHA SWAMY TEMPLE AT RANGASTHALA

Rangasthala is situated in Chikkaballapura Taluk of Kolar district, Rangasthala is six kms from Chikkaballapura town. It is situated at the foot of Jwala Narasimha Swamy hill or Kalavara hills. This historic Ranganatha Swamy temple is datable to Vijayanagara and post-Vijayanagara periods. Because of the temple, Rangasthala has become popular in Indian architecture. From the point of view of architecture and sculptural art, this temple has a unique place not only in Karnataka but also in India<sup>6</sup>.

PLAN - The temple faces south with a rectangular *garbhagrāha*, rectangular *antarālā*, a *navaranāga*, a *ranāgamanāpā*, a large *mahāranāgamanāpā* and a *pātālānkanā*. The temple has a soacuiys *prākāra* with four *mahādwāras*. The *garbhagrāha* and *antarālā* possess a *pradakshinapatha* which is a later addition.

The uniqueness of this temple lies in the ground plan of its *garbhagrāha* (Fig-10). The *garbhagrāha* measures 6 X 5.4 mts. The outer shape of the

*garbhagrāha* is oval or ellipsoid. The *vāstu* texts acknowledge this shape as *Vr̥ttāyata*. While explaining the details of ground plans, Indian architectural texts prescribe different types and shapes. They are *chaturaśra*, *ayataśra*, *trikōṇā*, *vr̥tta*, *dwaśravr̥tta*, *gajapr̥s̥tā*, *as̥tāśra* and *vr̥ttayata*. Square, rectangular, circular and apsidal ground plans are commonly noticed. But so far triangular or eight sided or ellipsoid plans for the sanctum was not noticed.

The *vr̥ttāyata* ground plan of this temple is the only living example of its kind as depicted in the Texts. Therefore it is unique.

In the elevation of the temple, *pratibandha adhis̥tāhāna*, *bhitti* and *prastara* are seen. *Hāra* is completely dilapidated. *Prāsāda* and *śikhara* are recent constructions.

*ADHIS̥TĀHĀNA* - The mouldings of the *adhis̥tāhāna* are *upāna*, *jagati*, *vr̥ttakumuda*, *kapōta*, *pat̥tikā*, *kampa*, *galā*, *kampa* and *prati*. Both *kapōta* and *pratimukha* are in a single moulding. The outer line of the *adhis̥tāhāna* has many indentations. The centre has *subhadras*, the corners possess *karnāas*, in between are *pratibhadras* and *pratikarnāas*. These indentations *subhadra*, *pratibhadra*, *karnāa* and *pratikarnāas* give a rich look to the contour of the temple (Pl.-41).

*BHITTI* - The *bhitti* measuring ten feet in height is constructed with *bhittipādas* and *kōs̥tāas*, which are all neatly executed. As the walls started losing its plumb line as a precautionary measure a corridor is built around to protect this *garbhagrāha* and *vimāna*. Probably in the recent centuries, and this corridor serves as a *pradakshinapatha* at present. The pilasters possess cushion capital, abacus and bevel and tenon corbels (Pl.-42).

*PRASTARA* - The entablature of the temple has *uttara*, *kapōta*, *vājana* and *prati* mouldings (Pl.-43). On the *uttara*, *yālīs*, lions and other animal motifs are carved. The *kapōta* has *nētranāsis* at regular intervals. The *nāsis* are decorated with prominent *simhamukhas*. From these *simhamukhas*, rich foliage and *muktāgrāsas* emerge and flow out. This is an important feature of the *nāsi* decoration of the Vijayanagara period. On the *vājana*, rows of lions, swans, elephants, *kubjas* and *ganās* are carved. The *vitāna* has *urdhwapadma* and *prati*. The upper part of the *prastara* is in a dilapidated state. From the *upāna* upto the *stūpi*, the *vrattayata* form can be clearly noticed. *Vrattāyata* temple is also known as *manika* in texts. There are nine types of *vrattāyata* temples mentioned in the *vāstu* texts. They are *gaja*, *garudā*, *vrusābha*, *hamsa*, *rāshināyaka*, *bhusāna*, *bhudhara*, *simha* and *srijaya*. But it is difficult to ascribe the present temple to any of the types mentioned above.

Generally, the inner walls of the *garbhagrāha* are treated plain. But the same is not true at Rangasthala. In the centre of the *garbhagrāha* is the Sheshashayi Vishnu. Just above the head is *adisāhesha*. At the holy feet of the lord, *Bhudēvi* and *śrīdēvi* are in the *āsina* posture serving the lord. In the central part of the inner wall of the *garbhagrāha*, a row of reliefs depicting the *saptarishis*, *kāmadhēnu*, *kalpavrāksa*, the five *ayudhas* of Mahāvisṇu (*śankha*, *chakra*, *gadā*, *khadga* and *dhanush*), the *astādikpalakas*, *Indra*, *Brahmha*, *Śiva*, *Sudarshana*, *apsaras* are neatly depicted. This is the neat depiction of the concept of the *bhogaśayanamurthy* in *Vaikuntā* the abode of lord Vishnu.

Generally *jālavātāyanas* are not provided for the *garbhagrāha*. But at Rangasthala, a *jālavātāyana* of *nāgabandha* type is provided in the eastern wall of the *garbhagrāha*. This position of *jālavātāyana* is such that it allows the sunrays to fall on the holy feet of the lord on 15<sup>th</sup> January, Makara Sankranti day. The

relief sculptures on the wall, the main image of Ranganatha are all in the Vijayanagara style.

The *navaranāga* and *ranāgamanāpa* possess many ornate pillars. Many are of *chitrakhandā* variety. There are 24 pillars in the *ranāgamanāpa*. The temple has an ornate *pātālānkanā*. The front pillars of the *pātālānkanā* possess *aśhwakānta* pillars. They are carved in two storeys. Above the *pātālānkanā* another floor having an open pillared corridor is noticed. This again is a unique feature of architecture of this temple. It has a painting gallery on its back wall. (Pl.-44).

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<sup>1</sup> Epigraphia of Carnatica Vol.-IX, Nelamangala Tq, No.-3

<sup>2</sup> Someshwara temple at Kurudumale and Rameshwara temple at Avani, Kolar dist

<sup>3</sup> This variety of pillar is found at Someshwara temple at Kurudumale (1260 AD)

<sup>4</sup> Mayamata Ch-XIV, *Ślōka*- 30b

<sup>5</sup> *Mahādwāra* of the Someshwara temple at Kolar

<sup>6</sup> Dr.M.S.Krishna Murthy and V.Anuradha, “Advithiya vasthu kruthi:Rangasthalada Ranganatha Swamy Devalaya(Kannada),Ithihasa Darshana,Bangalore.Vol- Page 2006.