

Parallels in Upavishta Sthana Shilpa of Someshwara and Bhoganandishwara temple

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India is a land of rich culture and tradition. Temple tradition stood as a way of showcase, documentation and knowledge transfer. The practices belonging to that particular period, the art, the tradition and sometimes the livelihood were also chiselled in them along with brilliant imaginations. Each kingdom had their unique architectural styles and left their mark. One such south Indian empire was the mighty Vijayanagara. Most of today's Karnataka region was under the rule of Vijayanagara Empire. As a result, certain marvellous temples were constructed in Bengaluru too.

Someshwara Temple is one of the old temples located in Halasuru, Bengaluru. Though the exact dating of the temple is not clear it is said to have been initially constructed by the Kalyani Chalukyas and later additions and modifications were done during the Vijayanagara period by the Gowdas of Yelahanka. It is believed that Shiva linga in the temple is the one worshipped by rishi Mandavya. The elements of Vijayanagara architecture are seen here.

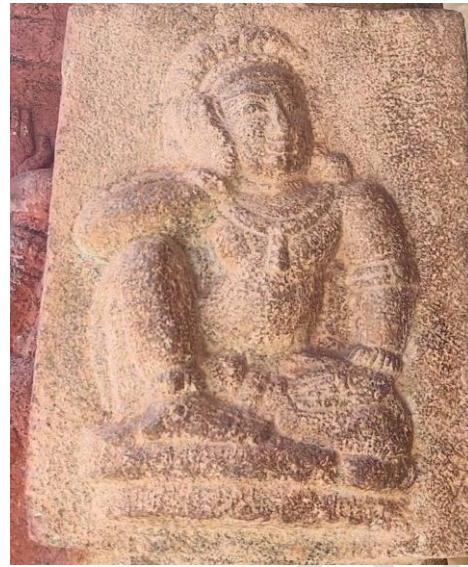
Bhoganandishwara temple, another marvel along with its twin temple Arunachaleshwara is situated at Nandi village of Chikkaballapura district, which is about 60 kms from central Bangalore. It dates between 9th CE - 10th CE; underwent later additions and restorations. It was initially built under the Nolamba rule and later came under the patronage of the Gangas, Cholas, Hoysalas and the Vijayanagar Empire. Though many dynasties have contributed to the structure that we see today each have valued and retained their previous works and also made their mark.

Since both these temples have come under the patronage of the Vijayanagara, there are similarities that we see in various aspects of architecture. One such is the seated sculptures that are seen in the parts of the temple that had been added or renovated under the Vijayanagara rule. These beautiful structures grab your attention. They may look simple but they speak a lot through their postures, body language and the expressions portrayed.

A photo analogy of a few of the Upavishta Shilpa (seated sculptures) from both these temples is done.



Halasuru Someshwara Temple



Bhoganandishwara Temple

The sculptures here are again similar but the clarity in the face is more in case of the sculpture from Bhoganandishwara Temple. In the first sculpture the eyes are closed as though he is thinking something while in the second sculpture the eyes are open and it is as though he is sitting and admiring something in front of him or enjoying listening to something.



Halasuru Someshwara Temple



Bhoganandishwara Temple

These sculptures are in the Kranta sthana (as mentioned in Sangitaratnakara of Sarangadeva under the sitting postures) with chin resting on the two hands, head supported by hand resting on the shoulder. In the first sculpture the eyes are closed, she is seated on an animal which could be interpreted as to denote the deep loneliness that she faces even amongst company. In

the second sculpture though the sthana is the same as the first he can be seen looking down indicating immense suffering or in grief.

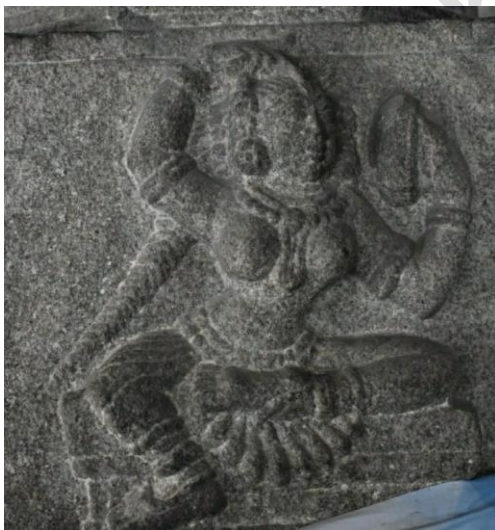


Halasuru Someshwara Temple



Bhoganandishwara Temple

In this set of sculptures the hand is free, the head is slightly tilted down, the eyes are low or half closed. The very first look catches the onlookers attention to the flowing hair, though the posture is firm there is an essence of casualness and flow in it, making it attractive. It hints at a sense of tiredness or exhaustion.



Halasuru Someshwara Temple



Bhoganandishwara Temple

Another beautiful set of sculptures depicting a woman applying tilaka in one hand while looking at the mirror held in the other hand. Though they are similar there is a difference in them. In the first sculpture one leg is crossed and the other is left free like the Madaalasa sthana while the hair is braided and the mirror is oval in shape. Madaalasa sthana here could be a hint of intoxication in love as she is dressing up. In the second sculpture she is seated in

a cross-legged posture, the hair is in a pony and the mirror is rectangular in shape.



Halasuru Someshwara Temple



Bhoganandishwara Temple

These are a unique set of sculptures where you can see humans sitting on an animal. In both the sculptures the eyes are closed, one foot is stretched while the other is placed as if resting and the head is rested to the support of the hand. This is similar to the description of the Madaalasa sthana of Sangitaratnakara. But why sit on a fish or any animal ?! Just like how there is *Kavisamaya* - poetic convention this could be a sculptural convention that existed under the Vijayanagara Architecture.

These are just a few examples to show. As we study further with respect to the history, art, architecture, social, cultural and economical conditions at the time of construction we will be able to understand them better. Though there are similarities they are different and unique in their own ways. As a student and practitioner of Bharatanatyam it also put me into thinking of the various seated postures that could be used to suggest the state of mind through Angika especially in compositions like Padam and Javali.

As connoisseurs of art it becomes important to read about such temples, visit and gain better knowledge not just about our rich culture and tradition but also understand and appreciate art, the technology then and sophistication they had; which serve as a document that has stood the test of time and to become the vehicles to carry the knowledge forward to the generations to come.

References :

1. Sangitaratnakara of Sarangadeva translated by Dr. K Kunjunni Raja, First edition 1976
2. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/date-with-history-someshwara-temple-may-be-just-a-millennium-old/articleshow/49841440.cms>

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4. Photo Courtesy : Sri Vishwanatha, Sri Vishnu Prasad

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