

## MURALS OF LEPAKSHI

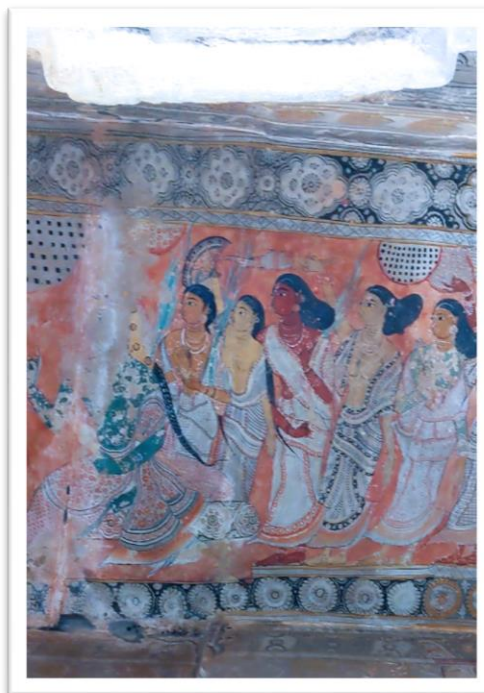
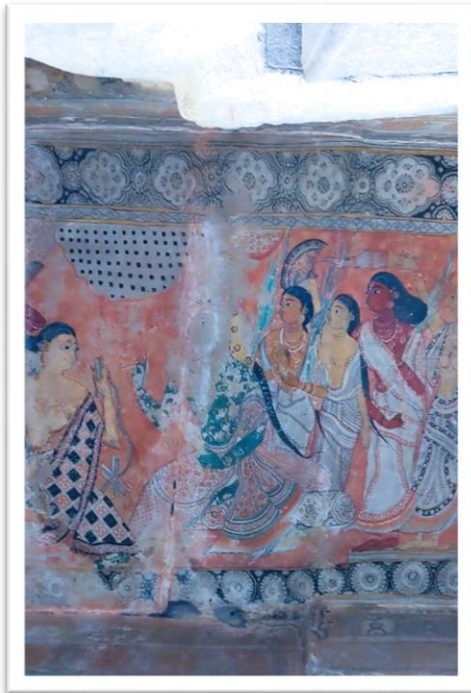
- Anagha G. S, Bengaluru

Lepakshi, which is in Andhrapradesh, is home to numerous great works of art. It is a temple from the Vijayanagara era with several sculptures, paintings, monoliths, and stories. It is a Veerabhadra temple, and among its many unique features are those involving its mural paintings.

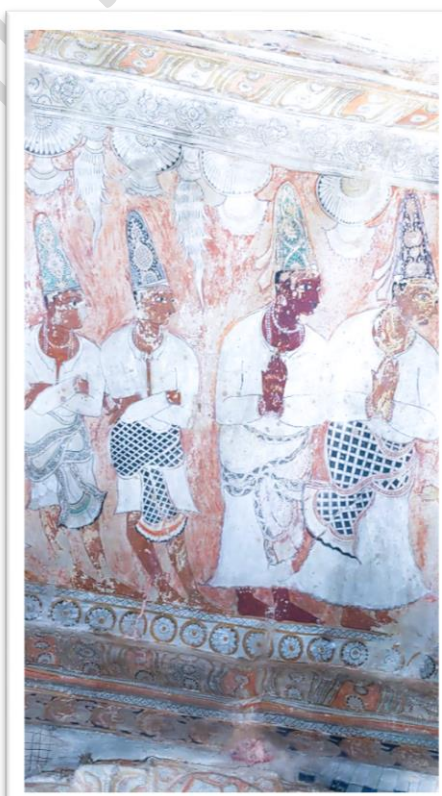
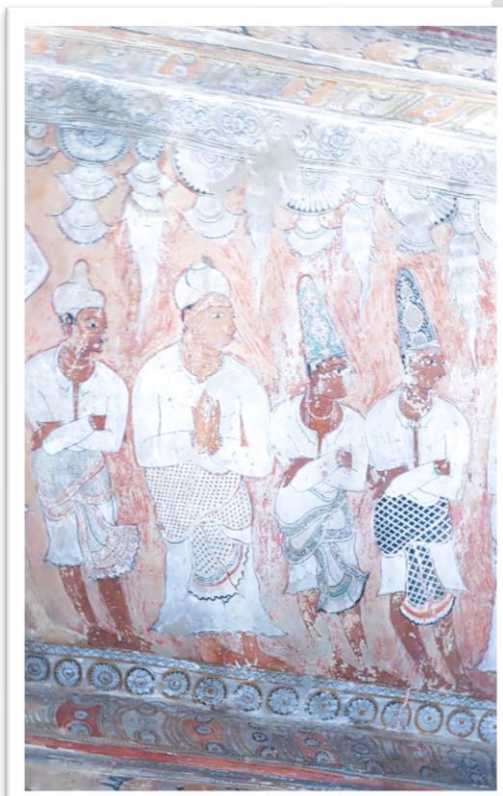
Mural paintings are typically done on walls, ceilings, and other big surfaces, and they typically portray the events and tales known during that particular era. It both depicts and captures narratives artistically.

Lepakshi contains one of the largest mural areas, which features several scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. All-natural vegetable paint was used to create the murals in Vijayanagara. You can notice little bowl-like carvings on the floors of Lepakshi which was used to mix and add the paints. Lepakshi's paintings are renowned for their diverse patterns, with the hall featuring more than 400 unique design patterns.

Despite their fading over time, you can still find remnants of the paintings depicting various stories. You will discover the account of Ravana receiving the Athma linga, which led to the Gokarana narrative. Additionally, you will see the tale of a young prince of the Chola kingdom who was given another opportunity to life with the blessings of Shiva and Parvathi after learning his lesson in ego from his own father's proper judgement.



Parvati devi can be seen getting ready while holding a mirror in her hand and seated with her sakhis at her side. You can see how uniquely distinct each of their saree designs, draping techniques, and hairstyles are.





With such a range of images, you can also observe the famous sculptors and builders who contributed to the creation of that temple, such as Virupanna, Veeranna, Hampanna, and Jakanna, who were some of the many.



Figure: Hari Hara

Kalabhairava story and several Shiva avatars will also be visible to you.

Additionally, you will be able to see a painting of Arjuna shooting the arrow into the fish's eye, a scene from the Mahabharata. On the ceiling of the temple's outside premises is a nearly faded rare painting of Shiva performing his tapas and offering himself abhisheka.



What attracted my attention in all those flowing stories was the painting of Krishna. This painting of Krishna sleeping on a leaf while other devotees stand on each side and bow to him can be found on the left most side of the natya mantapa. Krishna is adorned in jewellery, as you may see, but it's the eyes that really speak to me. You know how people say that no matter where you are, God is watching? This is how that statement is defined here quite literally. No matter what angle you see this painting from, it appears as though the eyes are following you. Perhaps it symbolises god's omnipresence and his watchful eyes that are always on us.

Most paintings have lost their clarity and visibility over time, and they most surely cannot be justified through a lens. These masterpieces, which play a significant role in history and for many years to come, may best be appreciated by the human eye.



#### **About the Author :**

Anagha G S began her training in Bharatanatyam under the tutelage of Guru Dr Shubharani Bolar and is currently training under Guru Smt Shweta Prachande. She has completed her Masters in Bharatanatyam from Jain University, Bangalore. She has had the fortune of performing in dance productions and festivals. She has also been awarded a scholarship from Karnataka Sangeetha Nrithya Academy. **An internee in NrityaShilpa Yatra - a temple study programme conducted by Noopurabhramari.**