

The Dancing Sculptures seen in Kurudumale Someshwara Temple.

- Vaishali. A.V, Bengaluru.

The Someshwara temple in Kurudumale is built by Raja Raja Chola and it is believed that it is 1330 years older than the famous Kurudumale Ganapathi temple. In this temple the sanctum and the inner hall was built by the Cholas and later, during Hoysalas period the outer surface was built. The carvings on the outer wall/ pillars was sculpted by Jakanachari and his son Dankanachari. This temple has been under the surveillance of Vijayanagara rulers too. Thus we can see multiple styles of architecture and sculptures.

At the entrance we can notice a beautiful stone idol of lord Ganesha. The lower and the middle levels has stone work while the upper level has brick and mortar. The most interesting thing about this temple is that there is no foundation for this temple. It is basically built on rock.

This temple has puranic references too. The main deity in this temple is Someshwara, it is believed that the idol was installed by “Kaundinya Maharshi”. Shanmukha with his two wives, Kshamadaamba / Devi, Guru Dakshina Murthi are others deities of this temple.

There are many dancing sculptures in the inner hall near the sanctum which was built by the Cholas. Detailing of the sculptures done within the artistic rectangular frame. Most of the carvings are Nritha sculptures with motion freezed. Neatly dressed men and women who might be court dancers or regional street dancers can be visualized. They are carrying various instruments and props.



In this sculpture we can see the two artists ; where one is dancing slightly lifted leg (Soochi paada or Kuttanam) with a stick in their hand and the other person is seen holding a percussion instrument. We can consider that both of them are dancing because the musicians body language is same as the dancer, and it is a motion captured sculpture because we can see the motion through their body position and also the thing which the dancer is holding in their hand has a kinetic flow. We can also see that the dancer is wearing a short skirt. The musician hair tied as a side bun.

In this image we can clearly see there is a dancer and musician. We can see the dancer feet is in Soochipaada or Kuttanam and she has lifted her left hand above and also, she is wearing a short skirt and short top with a side bun on the right and the musician is seen holding a musical instrument it can be a Dhamani or Tala. The musician is wearing a Davani with a long skirt. Hair tied in the form of bun.





In this image we can see both the dancer and musician, the dancer is lifting her left leg diagonally and her feet is in Kunchita padam this position is resembles to Bhujangatrasita Karana of Nattyashastra. She is wearing a short Kaccham with a Davani, this is a movement captured sculpture and that is evident through the flow in her costume. The musician is holding a percussion instrument it can be a Mridanga and he is seen wearing a small Dhothi. The final position (Bhangi) of dance movement is addressed in this sculpture.

In the picture we can see both the male dancers with instruments, one is holding a percussion instrument, wearing a short Kaccham and has lifted his left hand above, which is signifying the force of the beats. The other dancer is holding a string instrument and his left leg is in Agratala Kuttanam position. He is wearing a short Kaccham with pleats. Hair tied beautifully as side bun.



This is the picture of a male dancer holding a long stick in his hand and the kinetic flow in the costume is also visible. It is motion freeze sculpture. His left leg is on his toe as Agratala. Another feet is obliquely pointed which is similar to above sculpture. He is wearing a small Kaccham type of Dhothi. Ornamentation is also evident. This sculpture might be showing regional dance of that age.

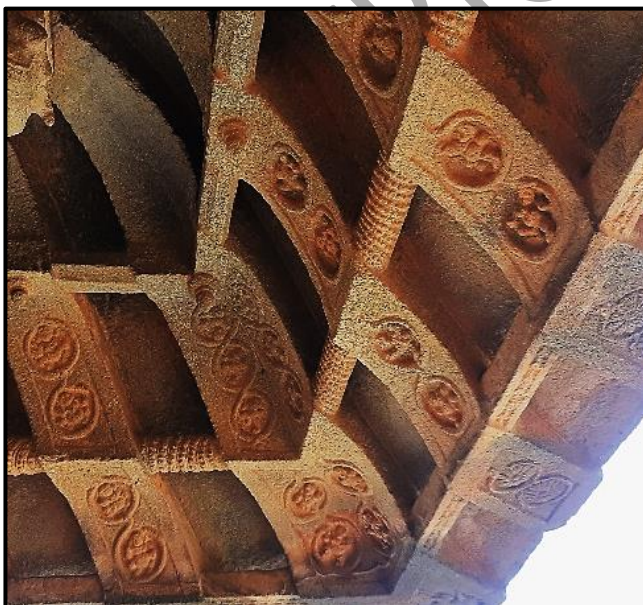
This carving is seen on the entrance left side wall of Garbagriha. There are two musicians along with the dancer and both of them are playing a Avanaddha percussion instruments (Mardala and Dhamani) with foot movements. And the dancer is doing Agratala Kuttanam in her left leg; holding Dolahasta in her left hand and also seems like holding something in her right hand. We can see the ladies wearing Kaccham costume and some ornaments. This sculpture gives the impression of court dancers.





In this image, a dancer is holding a serpent in his hands. one is on serpent's hear and another hand is holding is tile. his right leg is in Kunchita paada position, also we can notice that he is wearing a short Dhothi, a headgear and ornaments.

Similar to the above, here the dancer is stamping his left feet on the serpent's head and his right leg is lifted above in Soochipaadam, we can also see that he is holding a Sarpasheersha hasta in his right hand and holding snake's tail in his left hand. Kinetic flow in his costume and also in his hair movement shows that this is definitely motion freezed sculpture. He is also wearing a short Dhothi, headgear. We can imagine Kaalinga Narthana of lord Krishna by the pose which he carried. It may be dance drama which is portraying the Krishna leela/ Kaalinga Narthanam or a Folk dance with serpents involved.



There are miniature sculptures of dancing Kubjas on the inner side of the ceiling and upper surface of the outer pillars.

Left side before the joint is sculpted by Jakanachari and the right side from the joint is sculpted by his son Dankanachari. We can also identify the difference between the style of carvings done by both the artists on the pillars of the temple.



The carvings near sanctum are very small than the usual ones which we see on the outer wall of the temple. There are few other puranic story based sculptures seen on the pillars too- like Ekapaada Trimurthy, Adhinatha, Different incarnation of Shiva, Bedarakannapp., etc. Gymnastics/acrobatics movements, optical illusionary carvings are also there.

This temple is not so famous as the Kurudumale Ganapathi temple; but the architecture and sculptures are treat to the watchers and visitors. The minute detailing in the feet and hand movements of dancers, their costumes, jewelry and hairdos succeeds in bringing pleasant feeling in viewer. The hair styles, costumes shows the way of Chola styles of dressing. The dance in commoner life is more addressed rather than dance in puranic characters.

It's our duty to preserve these sculptures not only for showing the gratitude and respecting the work done by the artistes; but also to tell about harmonious way of life and art between Tamilnadu and Karantaka region. It is a way to understand our ancestors and take inspiration by them to improve our way of life.

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ABOUT AUTHOR:

Kum. Vaishali.A.V, is learning Kalakshetra Style of Bharatanatyam under Dr. Dwaritha Viswanatha since 2010 at Nirmithi. She has completed her Junior and Senior exams conducted by KSEEB, Visharad Prathama conducted by Akhila Bharatiya Gandarva Mahavidyalaya Mandal, and also completed her Bachelor in Fine Arts in Bharatanatyam from Tamil University, consistently securing first class and distinction. She has performed individually and in group in many places as a part of Nirmithi. She is currently studying final year MA in economics under Maharani Cluster University. She is also an *INTERNEE IN NRITYASHILPAYATRA - a temple study program conducted by NOOPURA BHRAMARI.*

