

The beauty in the door panels...

- *Deepthi R. Bhat, Bengaluru.*

The Hindu temple, from the beginning, has not only been the abode of the gods and goddesses but also a space to showcase beautiful architectural and sculptural intelligence. Since the structure of the temple was simple, all the complex sculptural art was incarnated in pillars and door panels. Today I will be taking you through some Kolar temples' door panels.



The first thing one will notice is the sculptures of women or dwarapalika. But who is a dwarapalika? Dwarapalika are the guards to the deity. They act as an intermediary between a Bhakta and the deity. As they carved at the bottom of the pillar, many of us might ignore them but they are believed to have equivalent powers.

We can notice that each of these women are standing on an animal. They are grandly dressed, minute and rich details in their costume and jewellery. As these are seen in pillars outside the Garbhagriha as well we can think of the object they are holding in their hands as Chamaras.



On both sides of the doorpanels, we see circular patterns as shown above and inside which different sculptures with different themes are carved. For example in the first picture from below we see, a mystical sculpture a man with three bodies and four legs; above this we see a girl dancing with a Damaru, in the second picture we see a peacock bird, above that a sculpture of a saint and a woman with a pot in her hand. In the third panel, first we see a hunter holding a bunch of dead animals tied to a stick, in the next sculpture we see a man dancing with a Damaru attached to a stick in his right hand and a small vessel in his left hand. The next panel circle shows a man dancing with a drum. next we see a lady holding a musical instrument on her left shoulder and a lady holding a Chamara.



At the top of the panel, we get to see similar sculptures like the ones on the sides but at the centre of the panel we see a flower like pattern. Though the sculptures on the side differ from one temple to the other the flower pattern will remain the same.



On the other side of the entrance, we can see individual sculptures carved within tiny boxes. None of them have any common story behind them. As we can observe in the first picture, we can see a *Kubja* (dwarf) sitting, a lady sitting, a man playing with a snake, again a *Kubja* playing *Shankha*, two *kubjas* playing a trumpet and drums etc. In the second picture we see sculptures of Ganesha, shanmuka Nataraja, narasimha all in one row. Different position of lion sculpture which is commonly seen in many of Vijayanagara era temples also one of interesting factors.



Most of the times the panels in the doors of Garbhagriha consist of simple patterns like - snake, leaf, circular shaped, stars etc.



This is a sculpture that we get to observe in a lot of Vijayanagara era temple's premises. Here we see a woman dressed like a hunter, a bow in her hand with her leg lifted, a man sitting down and trying to remove something from her foot. It seems like, a woman/huntress walking barefoot along a path accompanied by her attendant. She steps on a thorn and turns— bending her left leg, twisting her body—to point out the thorn and ask her attendant's help in removing it.

By observing these various types sculptures on door panels we can understand that the sculptor took advantage of every piece of stone they had to fill them with various sculptures some of which have different stories behind them. These designs and patterns have also contributed to the beauty of the temple. One must appreciate the eye for these detailing and the uniqueness of each pattern in every corner of the temple.



About the Author

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Learning dance from 10 years. Disciple of Dr. Dwaritha Vishwanath.

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