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History

LORD VENKATARAMANASWAMI TEMPLE AT KOSUVARIPALLE : PLAN and ARCHITECTURE

KEYWORDS: Kosuvaripalle, Lord Venkataramana temple, key plan

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ABSTRACT

Kosuvaripalle is a small village situated at a distance of 11 miles from Kurabalakota railway station and 19 miles to the north-west of Madanapalle. There are three temples in this place, one dedicated to Vishnu and the other to Siva. The Vishnu temple is called Venkataramanaswami temple. The Someswaraswami and Nila Mallikarjunaswami temples are Saiva temples. These are the important archeological monuments. In this study we discuss about architectural plan of Lord Venkataramana temple. Key plan to the lord Venkataramana temple are Sanctum; Antarala; Mukhamandapa; Mahamandapa; Balipitha; Dhvajastambha; Devi shrine; Kalyanamandapa; Kitchan hall.

INTRODUCTION

1. THE LORD VENKATARAMANASWAMI TEMPLE

Kosuvaripalle is a small village situated at a distance of 11 miles from Kurabalakota railway station and 19 miles to the north-west of Madanapalle. There are three temples in this place, one dedicated to Vishnu and the other to Siva. The Vishnu temple is called Venkataramanaswami temple. The Someswaraswami and Nila Mallikarjunaswami temples are Saiva temples.

Inscriptions found on the walls of the Venkataramanaswami temple supply the following information.

An inscription dated saka 1462 (A.D.1540) belonging to the reign of Vijayanagara king Virapratapa Achyutadevaraya Maharaya found on the south wall of the mandapa in the Venkataramanaswami temple registers the grant of the village called Godugubha in the Kosuvaripalle sthala attached to the Vavilipatchavadi in the Penugonda Marjavadi-sima to the Tiruvengalanatha of Kosuvaripalle by the mahanayakacharya kambam Timmanayani Venkatadri nayaka. An inscription dated in saka 1465 belonging to the reign of Vijayanagara king Virapratapa vira Sadasivadeva Maharaya found on the same wall of the mandapa records the grant of a village made to the temple of Tiruvengalanatha of Kosuvaripalle by the mahanayakacharya Venkatappanayaka, son of Kambam Timmanayani Venkatadri nayaka, mentions Penugonda-Marjavada and Vavilipadu. An inscription dated saka 1479 belonging to the same reign, found on the prakara of the dame temple is much damaged and records the provision made for offerings in the temple of Mallikarjuna at Kosuvaripalle by the agent of the Mahamandalesvara Murtiraja Vitthaladeva maharaja.

DATE OF THE TEMPLE:

From the inscriptions cited above it is evident that temple was in existence long before the reign of Vijayanagara king Virapratapa Achyutadevaraya Maharaya (1540 A.D.). So the date of the Venkataramanaswami temple may be ascribed to the first half of the Sixteenth century A.D.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE:

The temple greets the visitors from the east. The temple consists of the garbhagriha, antarala, mukhamandapa, mahamandapa and open pillared verandah. All these structures belong to the Vijayanagara period. There is a Devi shrine in the northern side of the main temple. To the southern side of the main temple there is a four pillared independent mandapa. The temple is surrounded by a big prakara wall on all sides with principal gateways on the east and west.

GARBHAGRIHA:

The garbhagriha is a square structure and faces the east. The garbhagriha, antarala, mukhamandapa and mahamandapa are built on a common adhistana. The adhistana is plain and partly buried in the ground. It comprises of the following members from the bottom upwards—patta, gala alingapattika. The outer surfaces of the wall portion of the sanctum are plain. In the interior the garbhagriha houses the stone image of Lord Vishnu.

Above the garbhagriha there is a tritala vimana with four-sided griva and sikhara, which belong to Nagara order. The vimana appears to have been renovated recently. There is a gorgoyle in the north wall of the sanctum. Each tala of the vimana contains koshta in the centre. These koshtas house the various avatars of Vishnu. In the first tala are depicted the ten avatars of Vishnu. There is a single kalasa in the top portion. The doorjambes of the sanctum are plain.

Antarala:

The outer surface of the walls is plain. The doorway of the antarala is being guarded by two dwarapalakas on ceiling above the pillars is adorned with padma design. In the mukhamandapa there are metal vahanas of Garuda, and Hanuman.

Devi shrine:

To the north of the garbhagriha of the main temple there is the Devi shrine. It consists of the garbhagriha and antarala, built on a common adhistana. The adhistana consists of the following members—patta, gala and alingapattika. The sanctum is a square structure. The outer surface of the walls is plain. In the interior the garbhagriha houses the idol of Lakshmi. The vimana above the garbhagriha of Devi shrine has a single tala. The griva and sikhara are four sided and belong to Nagara order. Above the sikhara there is a single kalasa. The doorway of the antarala is guarded by dwarapalikas.

Alwar shrine:

In the north-eastern corner of the courtyard there is a ruined shrine which originally housed the images of Alwars. The images of Alwars are, kept in the mukhamandapa of the main temple.

Kalyanamandapa:

In the south-west corner of the courtyard there is a four pillared mandapa which is known as Kalyanamandapa.

Kitchen room:

To the south-east of the main temple there is a kitchen hall which is now in ruined condition.

Yagasala:

In the north-east corner of the courtyard there is another small mandapa. This mandapa is called Yagasala. Now it is in ruined condition. To the east of the Mahamandapa there are dhvajastambha and balipitha. To the east of the prakara there is a dipastambha.

To the north of the main temple there is a temple well. The prakara wall is built with stone blocks.

ICONOGRAPHY

VISHNU:

This is the mula bera in the sanctum of the Venkataramanaswami temple. The God stands in samabhanga and has four arms. He holds chakra in the upper right arm, sankha in the upper arm and keeps the lower right in abhaya and the lower left arm in katyavalambita pose. He is decorated with kiritamakuta,

makarakundalas, graiveyakas, channavira, and girdle with simhalalata buckle, purnoruka and padavalayas.

Lakshmi (Padmavathi):

In the garbhagriha of the Devi shrine, Goddess is seated in virasana on a padmapitha. She has four arms. She holds lotuses in both the upper arms. The lower right arm is in abhaya pose and the lower left is placed on her left thigh. She wears karandamakuta, graiveyakas, chakrakundalas, and kankanas.

In mukhamandapa there are the metal vahanas of the God. The most important one is Suryaprabha vahana. It is designed as a chariot drawn by seven horses on which Lord Hanuman is seated. Anura is the charioteer and Lord Hanuman is seated with hands in anjalipose. The Garuda vahana is also very majestic.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS :

The Pujari is a brahmin, and the priesthood hereditary. The important festivals that are being celebrated in this temple are Ugadi, Sri Ramanavami, Vaisakha suddha Purnami, tirunakshatram, Ashadasuddha Ekadasi, Sravana Sanivaram, Kartika Ekadasi, Vaikuntha Ekadasi, MakaraSankranthi, Maghamasam, Brahmostavam and