



Volume: 2, Issue: 9, 275-278
Sep 2015
www.allsubjectjournal.com
e-ISSN: 2349-4182
p-ISSN: 2349-5979
Impact Factor: 4.342

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Spatial glory and Perspective freedom of Thanjavur Rajarajesvaram

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Abstract

Many important Southern temples were enlarged largely thus having many mandapas and prakaras etc. Hence, the aerial view of them shows flat ceilings of many structures between the prakara walls. Hence, thanks to the next rulers after the Cholas, who they never disturbs by annexing additional mandapas and prakaras in Thanjavur Big Temple. Though, the replaced Nandhi and its mandapa in huge size, by removing the original of Cholas during the Nayak period, show the lacking of spatial organization. The planned layout is based on its negative spaces; the great understanding dealt on; it is one more disciplinal evolution of Dravidian architecture. Further, the additional sub shrines originally not in plan. Whereas, the sub shrines of all the *parivara* deities' were set in ambulatory colonnade passage of prakara, according to the master plan. Therefore, the plan of the big temple was carefully drafted and skillfully executed. The space composed according to the huge nucleolus-vimana of the big temple was logically and highly handled which on, this article interpreting newly.

Keywords: Big Temple, Rajaraja, Vimana, Space, Prakara, Mēru

1. Introduction

The Rajarajesvaram, a Big Temple of Thanjavur is an epitome to Dravidian Art. This is not a mere value of us but was a hypothesis to the project when it took dimension. It is being as a research field to seekers, of own, and alien side. The research on it done in high extent in various perspectives since many of its features has been brought out to limelight. Thus the architectural, sculptural, painting, measurement and etc. wise the research results have been. However, most of them were on its macro. Since the micro study has to do, to bring the aesthetical magnificence. The liberal and transition set situation now to write on, thus...

2. Methodology

This article methodised by field works and comparative studies, that going to value the negative spaces of the campus which originally proportioned, that, how it enhances their exposed positives. Naturally and according to human mind, the vision of a man is determined in two kinds. Thus, the closer and wider views are defaults. Such views reflected and evidently found, even in the very early period of primitive Cave art. We can see there a wide view scenes and closer pictures. Thus, the giant and vast proportions are being seen at needful distance. Hence, their paintings of hunting scene in wider view and portraying animals in closer view were composed accordingly spread or dimension of the visual was seen. Thus it is a fundamental phenomena to acquire the dimensions of seeing things by watching closer or far.

3. Early vimanas

The big temple of Thanjavur is a structure erected at a good propitious period, particularly in high movement of art. Before Rajaraja I, the Great Pallavas initiated this vigorously. Since the 300 years of practically a span yields a great distinctive style in fine manner to Tamil regional art and architecture. Between these stretches, we have numerous outputs that evidencing their chronological advancements of both Pallavas and the Early Cholas in phase wises. Since, Pallavas experimented from *eka tala* vimana to *chatur tala vimana*. Their *eka tala vimana* is a circular temple that belongs to Shore temple campus of Mamallapuram, which situated at the *varaha* tank.^[1] *Varaha* tank is not a right name just we given here to know easily of that sculpture being at it. Since, the success of *dvitala* is furthered to *tritatala*, then to *caturtala* temples. Therefore, imposing giant sized structures such in hard medium by practical effort that based to the further heights, gradually. In this kind, the Kailasanatha and Vaikunthaperumal Temples both are four storey *vimanans* stood examples for the technical brilliance of those days. Besides, Early Chola too followed repeatedly the *eka*, *dvi* and *tri tala vimanans*. The spaces

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between the exposed structures were not left accidentally of their layout. The space- deal shows then comfort and enough.

4. The Early / New - Big Temple

However, we can trace the evolutionary advancements on architectural elements until the Great Rajaraja who came to power, those things gone as it was. Here a mention must on a mention that mentioned by him, on Kailasanatha Temple as; 'Big Stone Temple' [2]. This was stated on his twelfth year probably on 987 C.E. Since 987, he did not start his great temple. In addition, in the fifteenth reign year probably on 1000 C.E. also he stated as same as: big temple [3]. Hence, might be few months later his project could be started. So far then, the Kailasanatha Temple has been as the large Temple undoubtedly. Before Rajaraja, the King Paranthaka I also stated in his inscription, which found in this same temple that simply denotes as 'stone temple' and without the prefix of 'big'. Since, the inspiration conceptually struck, indeed, particularly to Rajaraja only. This reveals, that the Rajaraja was a great connoisseur of fine art, which the feature enables him to do further on. In certain, he was the admirer of that temple. The mention as 'Big Temple' is the touchstone to him, which on he planned to cast his magnum opus. As to come to the final plan, might be he could analysed the early history of art. The plan and schedules of the 'Big temple' of his own, is a keenly prepared one that evidently found by its disciplinary executions. Indeed the canal in exterior, paralleling to the temple which has been used as waterway to import the stone blocks, quarried from the neighbouring hills of Tiruchirappalli area. Hence, the keen attention and the all-disciplinary aspects have followed to impose such a grand structure.

However, the question on the huge space around the main sanctum by scholars, as why such huge place left merely, which showed their view, only on its ground plan that vastly laid out but with minimum structures. This is right because Mr. Pierre Pichard, a scholar who dissected this temple by plan, section and elevation given much architectural details in his book Tanjavur Brahadisvara – An Architectural Study. Hence, the research ethics generally seeks the scientifically logics to announce as right or wrong. But such perspectives never coincides with the creativity of inner science is an individual view of me, is to be a fact, since, the space left vastly is based on highly a science of art.

However, Pichard does not know about the intuition and inspiration of Rajaraja from Kailasanatha Temple. Besides, that temple has been proudly stated by his creator in an inscription, that it was dedicated to Lord Shiva who took abode in Kailas. For him he erected a similar abode that too scrapping sky as the Kailas. To this, we have to value the statement, in those days such a height of *vimana*, could raise such a feeling because, could be then a tallest structure in its kind.[4] In certain the psychology of king Rajasimha that clearly evokes to the Rashtrakutas they who played a major role in cave art. Since, their Cave – Temple at Ellora has having the namesake of the former's temple. Hence, now, the turn of Krishna I, a patron of the same cave-16 of Ellora, was a Rashtrakuta king took the concept of Rajasimha Pallava, but treated in cave style than structural, because to imitate very naturally. Rendering a carved temple at hilly nature, too finally coloured with white plaster to resemble of snowy texture as of original Kailas. The effect which then, really would have been produced the result obviously as what he sought.

Therefore, the king Rajasimha how designed a temple to equal the original, is could be the matter of that day. Hence, the motto and the effort to the motto that stirred deeply at his inner of Rajaraja that daringly evidenced in each matrix of his whole complex.

However, as said above, the Rajaraja followed even the footsteps of the Pallavas, but he analysed too the other immediate structural of Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas. Indeed the plan of the Draksarama and Samarlakota temples of Vengi Chalukyas in East Godavari district of Andhra could be inspiration and reference to base up the concept of his grand. [5] These given precision to do further evolution in his project. Thus the projection at the façade of vimana of Pattadakal Virupaksha Temple and the double storey - prakara use of Kailasanatha of Ellora, of both these elements, stood a major factor to bring a new dimension in to Dravidian Architecture. In certain, this was a transitional continuation over the Pallava phase of art. Because as traced so far, they the people who introduced the multi storey garbagriha in structural temples. Those evidently found as, Vaikunthaperumal Temple of Kanchipuram and Sundara Varada Perumal Temple of Uthiramerur. In prior, this was experimented in Cave art at Mamallapuram in the so-called Dharmaraja ratha, which is the last one among the fives was dedicated to Lord Shiva. Thus, the study over all on the previous works, those might have given a refined composition to the artists of Rajaraja. Since, composing layout has been a great task, as the further refinement on those earlier, by rendering the inspired features to execute in single version uniformly to culminate of the pre span, to the Chola artists.

5. Vast space treated as waste space

According to the scholars, as discussed above, the vast space around the main sanctum than the proportion already followed in Kailasanatha Temple is seems over spaced actually. But, it is a great thing as leaving such spaces to see the total view of the vimana without any hindrance or interference is a master plan, in fact, aesthetically. If not so, where have to go, to have the full view of them. Hence, though the two-dimensional grounded-courtyard also having third dimensions as space perpendicularly, itself also continuity of architecture giving transparently volume.

Moreover, the space of the courtyard is providing a space like gallery from its anywhere, can see the proportions of the vimana in different angle, entirely. Indeed, to snap the vimana, no need to go far, even outer place to the campus, to find the place to get full view. Simply and highly it is possible no need to go extremely outer anywhere. Its own courtyard is enough and provides huge space to see, to do well photography and painting too.

If this has not followed as said, the total project never going to be, reach as of now, suppose. Thus the distribution of space with keen knowledge in the built environment displays patterns because of the influence of culture. [6] A mention must here of the culture of Tamil region, which imbued by both visual and performing arts. Thus, the thought of Rajaraja has clearly understood by the 'Kunjaramallan Rajaraja Perunthachan' who was an artist head, built the Big Temple with more space to for performing arts with the background of the visual arts.

The vast space felt later as waste space dues occurrence took part. The thoroughness of the Rajasimha Pallava, Krishna I of Rashtrakutas and finally Rajaraja the Great is not valued later, since, the additional structures of later disturbing asymmetrically.

5.1 Simple reasons for more space

For an instance, if we explain in very contemporary simple way on the spatial glory of Big temple, as:

- If not such space, seeing the vimana could be like seeing an elephant with in 13'x13' sized room by a puppy. On the other hand,
- Seeing a cinema very beneath to the screen will never given an actual proportions of the seeing.

Hence, the space needs to see a full proportion of anything to have knowledge.

This is the study gained from the versions of the Pallavas. Since the Kailasanatha temple was the original inspiration by both conceptual and plan wise. The high space before to the said temple which dealt also as the space behalf of, since the nandhi Mandapam set in very distantly. Hence, that was treated as maquette to many-folded project of Rajaraja. However, the plan and design that carefully revised as mentioned earlier, since the vimana of Thanjavur possessed many greatness by conceptual, design and technically. To see those features need space there.

In addition, the courtyard of Kailasanatha temple is providing space at least at its eastern area to see its vimana. This was purposively done. The mandapa of Vijayanagara inserted between the original mandapa and the main shrine is occupied the space and shut the visions of the vimana considerably. Besides, the King Rajasimha whose thought is the keystone to this perspective made it quite possible. According to him, as said earlier, the vimana designed especially to imitate the mount of Kailas. Therefore, to see the mount we need a space in front of it, since, the front space that vastly provided by the builder, keenly. Oppose to this, the courtyard of Vaikunthaperumal Temple built by Nandivarma Pallava situated in the same Kanchipuram that failure to show its full beauty to its visitors. In fact, there is no need of to see the vimana between the inner courtyards particularly in Vishnu temples. Since the space restriction that could be an advancement from the former when this as being as Vishnu Temple because its vimana not imitated as Kailas of Kailasanatha vimana.

6. Bas relief sculpture of Mēru

In the Vimana of the big temple has a unique feature, that never found almost at anywhere, is a relief sculpture of Mēru mount. This was a composition done according to its original design at the same time. Setting a relief work at such height was not a mere attempt. It should please to the public to create the impact. Actually set for them. Since need a space to the public, to see. If not such a vast space as of now in front ward, then how could be possible to see it. The same example which given before, that should be remember here: is; watching like a seventy mm cinema uselessly at the beneath of the screen if not space in distance. However, the latter additions took place even there, still possibility to see the vimana and the relief sculpture of Mēru mount. In addition, the relief sculpture of Mēru is sized roughly according to me, is 80x35feet breadth and height respectively. The second largest when comparing to the bas relief of Mamallapuram namely known as 'Descent of the Ganges'. Therefore, the courtyard sized with 500 feet length and 254 feet width, is quite enough to see the whole proportion of the vimana [7].

6.1 Thiruvannamalai – Arunachalesvara Temple

Thiruvannamalai was also a part of Thondaimandalam at the reign of Pallava. Probably the thought of the mountain imitation might be initiated from here. Because, in prior, the

early temple of the Arunachalesvara was structuralized in stone by them. The prakara of the temple that chanced to see the mount behind the temple through the campus might be gave an ecstatic experience to the Rajaraja while his visiting, which the frame of the scenario struck, to frame such a novel thought of Mēru on vimana.



Meru relief sculpture on vimana (indicated)



View from south east side



The disturbed front view by huge Nandi Mandapa of Nayak Period (The used photographs were taken by the author in situ)

7. Conclusion

In final word, I want to say on the two-dimensional layout of the Rajarajesvaram that sized and minded on with its third dimension that is the structural elevation. Since, the perpendicular imposing having affiliations with its ground plan and its perpendicular spaces.

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