

Sculptures in the Temples of Surwaya

Abstract

Surwaya was a major center of the Mattamayura sect of the Shaivism. It has been identified with ancient Sarasvati-pattanam and Shankhamathika. An inscription at Surwaya mentions it as Sarasvati-pattanam while Shankhamathika is mentioned in the Ranod Inscription (Epigraphia Indica vol I). As per the Ranod inscription, Shankhamathikadhipati (the lord of Shankhamathika), was the immediate successor of Kadambaguhadhivasi, the first Acharya who started a disciple lineage and paved the way to a prominent Shaiva sect, Mattamayura. Surwaya (ancient Sarasvati-Pattana) has a group of Siva temples of Kachchhapaghata style and a *Matha* with in a late medieval *Garhi*. It has some of the finest sculptures which need to be mentioned.

Keywords: Sect of Mattamayura, Matha, Garhi. Mahisasurmardini, Gangadhar Shiva, Gajasur Sangram, Sheshsayi Vishnu, Rishi And Munis, Inscriptions, Monastery, Ganesh, Kichaks, Sages, Miniature Temple, Baoli, Geometrical Pattern.

Introduction

Surwaya is a small village on the Jhansi-Shivpuri road, about 20 kilometers away from east of Shivpuri. It was an important town in medieval period. It is presently a popular place for its archaeological and historical places.

Surwaya (ancient Sarasvati-Pattana) has a group of Siva temples of Kachchhapaghata style and a *Matha* with in a late medieval *Garhi*. It has beautiful surroundings and this place was once a seat of learning which is also mentioned in the Rannod inscription. The place was also the seat of ascetics of a religious order which can be judged from the monasteries in the premise of the fort. The fort or gadhi is quite an unassuming structure and is not so old and important as the religious monuments which stands within its precincts. It has only one approach through a series of two gates in the western wall, and its fortification is decaying day by day.

Aim of the Study

To study the sculptures and the architecture of the temple and monastery. To study the Philosophical ideas underlying such structures.

Review of Literature

Till 2017 the surwaya Garhi has not much described by the scholars. The garhi has been mentioned by many a scholars but the sculptural details have not yet been described. The purpose of study is to bring a close picture of these beautiful monuments and the idea behind the construction of such sculptures. Dr. R.N.mishra, Krishna deva, Tamara I Sears, Saurabh Saxena and ASI has mentioned it before, but the sculptures need special attention yet.

Surwaya (ancient Sarasvati-Pattana) has a group of Siva temples of Kachchhapaghata style and a *Matha* with in a late medieval *Garhi*. It has beautiful surroundings and this place was once a seat of learning which is also mentioned in the Rannod inscription. R N Misra mentions that the very strong, massive and exclusive structures of these monasteries symbolizes the power and authority of the mathadheesh who presided over those and lived there in opulence and glory. He suggests that these monasteries incorporated, within their scope, religious and political power which gave significant meaning to their patronage and that's how these have survived for more than six centuries. The royal patronage was extended to these mathadeesh on account of their already established status and eminence. The place was also the seat of ascetics of a religious order which can be judged from the monasteries in the premise of the fort. The fort or gadhi is quite an unassuming structure and is not so old and important as the religious monuments which stands within its precincts. It has only one approach through a series of two gates in the western wall, and its fortification is decaying day by day.

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Inside the fortification the ancient temples and the monastery is located. The temples are of ancient importance and are built beautifully with rich carvings on them. In the south eastern portion of the enclosure is a monastery meant for the residence and the practices of the monastic order. It is now confirmed that the sect of Mattamayur Shaivites used to stay in these monasteries as it has been mentioned in the inscription of Rannod. The structure is provided with a small open courtyard surrounded by corridors. In the north corner of the courtyard is a well for drinking water and bathing purpose. The drainage system is properly made. It seems that few small rooms are made near the well for female bathing purpose. The monastery has a large hall in the floor of which a yantra has been drawn, which is made for some religious purpose.

Figure

The Geometrical Pattern Drawn on the Floor of The Monastery



The part of the monastery is double storied. Huge slabs of stone have been used for roofing purpose. The monastery was the residential houses for monks.

Towards the north of the monastery are the groups of temples built on the paved plinth. There are at present only three temples which are seen in ruins. Few of them are in good condition but their shikhar has been totally demolished. The carved stones are lying scattered here and there which are arranged in the premises by the archaeological survey of India.

The remains of the garhi or the fortress suggest that it was built by kachhawaha rulers of narwar. It was snatched by the rulers of Jajpel dynasty from the Kachhavahas. An inscription of Samvat 1341 in the step well inside the fortress names it Sarasvatipattanam. The step well was built by a person named Buddhiman. Subsequently it came to be called Surwaya. The Math and temples are about 500 years older than the fortress.

These temples have some of the best sculptures of this region. The temple No.01 faces

west dedicated to Lord Shiva is built of stone and on a low plinth. The Vedikabandh composed of Khura, Kalash and kapota mouldings. The adhithan part is comparatively higher bearing sculptures in the projected niches. But sculptures in the bhadra niches are completely missing in the temple. A remarkable feature of this temple is miniature sculptural niches on all projections at the adhithana mouldings. It consist of a sanctum and a porch with shikhar over the sanctum and the porch. Although the shikhar is now broken but the stone formation that rest on the shikhar portion witness a shikhar over it. The amalakas of the shikhar can be seen in the fragments that are being gathered near the temple. The walls are decorated with two rows of sculptures. The pillars are low and decorated with Ghata pallava motifs. The temple has a beautifully carved entrance and porch is heavily sculptured from inside. The sanctum is plain from the inner side but the outer part of the temple bear enormous sculptures. They are so beautiful that one can imagine the perfection of the sculptor during that period. This temple is a masterpiece of Kachhaphghata style of sculptural art.

The temples were located inside a fortress and at a lower plinth.



Nearby is a Hindu monastery of Mattamayur sect of Shaivism. The monastery has a well inside its courtyard and proper traces of kitchen and bathrooms can be noticed inside it.. The monastery has a series of smaller rooms inside which were used for meditation purposes. There is a big double storey hall in the front of the courtyard which was supposed to be used for a big ritual. A yantra symbol is made in the center of the hall of which few remains are visible. The monastery has upstairs to reach a smaller temple on the top of the roof. This was used for some meditational purpose. It is miniature temple built in Kachhaphghat style. A shikhar in the centre and four cardinal shikhars on the corners.

It has a smaller window like opening on all four sides. The monastery has a smaller opening towards the temple premises..

This miniature shikhar temple is built on the roof of the monastery. It has a very small opening and it is very difficult to believe that someone could get into it for meditation purpose.



The figure is showing the steps going downwards to the water tank

This is the temple number 1 and the fragments showing is shikhar top and other parts. This temple is very beautifully carved and the sculptures are still in a very good condition. It has been protected by Archaeological Survey of India. The front portion of the temple is so embellished that it automatically attracts the tourist to see its beauty. It has a beautiful porch with heavily decorated ceiling. The pillars have the figures of sages. The seven sages are depicted with puranic descriptions. The Kichaks are displayed on the pillar columns. The entire temple narrates a story in itself.



The Pillars of the miniature shrine have beautiful sculptures on them. Both male and female figurines can be noticed.

In the temple area there is a water tank with flights of steps going downwards to the base of the tank.



A beautiful stone slab of sheshsayi Vishnu along with his consort Laxmiji is placed on the wall of the pathway leading towards the tank. Laxmiji is depicted holding the leg of Vishnu and making him feel relaxed.



Ganesh is depicted with taking a modak from the bowl full of it. He is enjoying his ladoos while dancing.

Ganesh in dancing position. Having four arms, holding a flower, axe modak and varad hasta mudra. Two female figures are depicted on either side of the main deity.





The present image is standing in Atibhang Mudra.(It is a posture of excessive Flexion). The upper portion of the figure is looking just normal but the lower portion is showing back portion in the front. It means that the body is twisted at 360°. An unusual image but installed in temple no.3. It's a female figure depicted as playing with her hair.



article. The lower hands are holding a Kamandal. Ram is shown sitting near his legs.

This image of Gajasur Sangram is according to the description of Amshumadbhedagama. Gajasurasamhara-Shiva dancing inside the skin of the slain elephant, which is arranged like a prabhamandala (aureole) around him. . In the eight-armed form, he holds a trishula (trident), a damaru (drum), a pasha and the elephant skin in his right arms, while the one of left hands makes the vismaya mudra (sign of astonishment) and others hold a kapala (skullcup), the tusk and the skin of the elephant.^[4] Another eight-armed form in the same text holds a trishula, a sword, the tusk and the elephant skin in the left arms and a kapala, a shield, a ghanta (bell) and the elephant skin in the right ones. In the present image shiva is holding a trisula, Shakti, Danda, elephant skin, Kapala, Dhanus. He is wearing a garland of skulls.



The iconography of Agni varies from region to region. Hindu Agam literature describes the iconography of agni. Here he is shown with beard and moustaches. He is having One head and four arms. The upper hands are holding torch and Glass shaped



Another figure is of Gangadhar Shiva. The nandi is depicted seated beside him. He is shown with jata mukuta and holding trident and a flower in his upper hands.



A beautiful sculpture of mahisasurardini is depicted on temple number 1. The face of Goddess is in saumya and shanta mudra. All the hands are broken but still the mahisha and her body and face clearly depicts her form.



A Door Sil of Second Temple



Temple No 1 depicts the figures of sages in the entrance portico pillars.



Beautiful ceiling of the mandapa in front of temple No.1. the ceiling is decorated with a beautiful flower design. The band of musicians are depicted in one lane. The entire ceiling is profusely carved. Unlike the sanctum the mandapa is heavily decorated.

**Entrance of Temple No 1**

The entrance is beautifully carved with the triad, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. The figure of Brahma and Vishnu riding on Garuda are visible while Mahesh is not visible as it is broken on the lalata bimba. The Musicians, Yaksha and Gandharvas are beautifully depicted. The Mithun figures are also placed on the door panels. The architrave has Shiva as Nataraja in middle, with Ganesha and his consort at one terminal and Vishnu with Lakshmi on another terminal. In between these are depicted Sapta-matrikas with Ganesha and Veerbhadra.

**Temple No 2**

This east facing temple has a mandapa supported on two pillars and two pilasters, a narrow antarala and a sanctum. Sanctum doorway is exquisitely carved with three panels on each doorjamb. Ganga and Yamuna adorns the base of

jamb along with dvarapalas. Vishnu over Garuda is located on lalata-bimba with Brahma and his consort at one terminal and Shiva with Parvati on another terminal of the lintel. In between these panels are arranged Sapta-matrikas and nava-grihas.

Temple No 3

This temple is in much ruins however ASI has done the good work in reconstruction of this monument. The sanctum doorway has not survived however few sculptures can be seen on the vimana sides. Ganesha is seen on the southern side while ashta-dikpalas are arranged across the vimana.

Conclusion

Surwaya was ancient Sarasvati pattanam mentioned in rannod Inscription. It has a huge monastery and three temples in its complex. Two temple are beautifully preserved by ASI but the third temple is not preserved from inside but its outer walls still preserve some of the finest examples. Many a figures are broken due to which the identification is not possible. But this place still have a lot of sculptures to study.

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