

## 5. The Vijayanagar—Nayak

# 4. Fine Arts

## Architecture—Sculpture—Painting<sup>1</sup>

### Vijayangara—Rulers :

The Vijayanagar and Nayak rulers beautified *The pillars* of the temples. They constructed the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of *Amman temple* in a grand manner. They also constructed *very big halls* for public uses like marriages and other functions. They built *hundred Pillared and thousand pillared halls* with artistic excellence. These pillars were decorated with *fat* of sculptures. They built temples at *chidambaram, Thiruvanna-malai, Srirangam, Rameswaram, and Srivilliputhur.*

1. They built the *Jalakandeswra temple* and the *Kalyana Mandapam* at *Vellore. fort*; Excellent Sculptures adorn this mandapam.

2. *Krishnadevaraya* built the *Rajagopura of Kanehi Ekamparanatha temple*, at a height of 108 feet with 10 decorated abundant sculptures. Marriage halls were built by the *Vijaya Nagar Kings.*

3. *Krishna Devarya* built the *north gopura of Chidambaram temple* at a height of 140 feet. Stones were used upto first floor and later portions were built by bricks, The thousand pillared hall is noteworthy. Each pillar is remarkable for its monolithic construction.

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*Dr. A. Swaminathan, Special lecture given in the Tamil University, Thajavur—amids the foreign students—1982.*

4. The corridors, and the halls of *Srirangam* temple were built by vijaya Nagar kings. The Seshagirirayar halls were called as 'horse hall'.

5. The hall of *Virinjupuram* temple at North Arcot is exceedingly beautiful.

6. The independent pillars standing on the *seashore* of *Pondicherry* were intend to be at Fort Chenjie. These were coustructed by Chenji Nayaks.

7. The Meenakshi temple at Madura was the most beautiful among all the works of Vijaya Nagar kings. The Kampathadi hall, thousand pillared hall built by 'Talavoy Ariyhnathan' and Puthumanuapam are remarkable among them.

### Nayaks

With the growing uncertainties of temporal power, the building of new architectural masterpieces to the glory of God was hardly possible. There was little time, inspiration, or spirit for the blossoming of fresh artistic ideas. They were quite content now to merely elaborate the existing temples.

The requirements of the keepers of the temple also required buildings more of a defensive and essential character rather than of an innovative nature. It was more practical to protect the deity from the defiling invasions of Islam, than to attempt to create new exuberant firms for its house.

### Art and Architecture—Features

The Nayaks ruled in Madura, Chenji, Vellore and Thanjavur as their head quarters. Their contribution to the temple architecture had the following features.

1. Additions like elaborate Mandapas of the hundred pillared type. 2. Larger gopuras with a greater number of plastic stucco figures on them. 3. The closed ambulatory flanked on either side by continuous platforms. 4. Huge pillars have life size portraits of royalty with consorts. Other

sculptures of gods, women in graceful poses, tribal folk like Kurava and Kurathi are also to be found in the composition of pillars.

Like the Cholas, the Nayaks of Madura beautified the capitals and important cities with big temples. They built the Gopuras in large scale. The halls, little towers, compounds were built. The temples were renovated in new methods. The following places were beautified by them.

1. Krishnapuram temple at *Tinnelvely*.
2. Kasi Viswanatha Temple at *Tenkasi*.
3. Nellaiyappar Temple at *Tinnelvely*.
4. Ramanathaswamy Temple at *Rameswaram*.
5. Vadapathsvaswamy Temple at *Srivilliputhur*.
6. Little Towers inside the Temple of *Madura*.
7. Temple at *Tirukkurungudi*.

### **Krishnappa Nayak—1**

The 52nd and 54th poems of *Tiruppauimalai* reveal the works done by Krishnappa—1. He undertook many renovation works at Minakshi temple. Velliampalam, North Gopura, Thirumadaippalli, the Second prahara hall, Veerappa hall, Muthiamman hall were built by him. He covered the halls of Angayarkkanni temple with golden plates. He also built a thousand pillared hall at Madura. His Commander, Talavoy Ariyanatha built a thousand pillared hall at Madura.

### **Veerappa Nayak**

Veerappa strengthened the Fort at Trichy. He constructed the compound walls of Chidambaram Nataraja Temple. He also built a Fort at Aruppukkottai. He built housing units for the brahmins, soldiers and the artisans. He had also executed many art works in the Minakshi temple at Madura.

## Tirumalai Nayak

*Tiruppanimalai* describes the renovation works done by Tirumalai Nayak at Minakshimman temple. He also built temples at Tirupparangunram, Srivilliputhur Andal Temple, Srirangam big temple and Alagar Koil etc.

**Vandiyur Teppakulam :** *Tirumalai Nayak hall, Teppakulam Pudu Mandapam, Rayar Gopuram* etc. were great contributions of him. Vandiyur Teppakkulam was one of the major works done by him. At the centre of the huge tank a hall with Vimana was constructed. Similarly the four corners of the tank were beautified with another four halls with Vimanas. The total area of the tank is  $(1000 \times 950) = 950,000$  sq. ft. There is another hall adjacent to the parapet wall of the tank. There are 12 stair cases in the tank. The shadow of the centre hall is invisible. This tank was completed in 1635 A. D

The *Mukkurinipillaiyar* was found while digging this tank. Tirumalai Nayak erected this Pillaiyar at Somasundram temple. The people offered special rice cake of 18 feet length.

The brother of Tirumalai viz. *Muthuvirappa Nayak* built another temple west of the tank, called '*Muthiswaran Temple Puthumandapa* is also known as "*Vasantha Mandada*. This was also built by Tirumalai, The Area of this hall is  $533 \times 105 \times 25$  feet. There is 124 sculptured pillars in this temple. The inner line of the pillars possess the images of 10 Nayaks including Tirumalai Nayak.

He also annexed Avani Mula street to the temple and connected it into another prahara. Tirumalai wanted to construct 64 gopuras during his reign but he did not complete the construction. The incomplete gopura at Madura is called Rajagopuram.

**Tirumalai Nayak Mahal :** This is called the Tajmahal of South. This was designed by an Italian architect.

### Rani Mangammal

The present *Gandhi museum* was previously constructed by Tirumalai. Rani mangammal built one choultry called Mangammal chatram.

### Vellore Pommi Nayaks

The temples inside the Vellore Fort were constructed by the Pommi Nayaks of Vellore. They built *Marriage hall* and *Vimana*. They built the major portion of *Vrinchipuram temple* near Vellore. The Chenji Fort and the damaged buildings of nearby areas were constructed by them.

With this, the Pillars at the fort of *Chandragiri* were beautifully decorated by them. The beautiful arches and the sculptures in these pillars are very magnificent. The bottom of the pillars have the images of seated horses. These images reflected the age old tradition and artistic excellence of our ancestors.

### Nayak of Tanjore

The Nayaks of Tanjore built temples, gopuras, Choultries, Agraharas, and Jain temples. *Sevappa Nayak* donated a town for the Vellore temple at Tanjavur. He renovated various temples at Tanjavur, including the Sivaganga Fort at Tanjavur. He constructed numerous gopuras, Mandapas and corridors at Tiruvannamalai and Viruthachalam.

*Achutha Nayaka* built a Church at Nagapattinam to encourage the Christians. Another church was built at Tranqubar. He donated a diamond studded chair to Aranganatha peruma! of Srirangam. He also built Arunachaleswarar temple at Tiruvannamalai. He allowed Govinda Diskshitar, to renovate the Mahamaha tank at Kumbakonam.

### Nayaks of Chenji

Achyuta Ramabhadra Nayak built the enclosing walls as well as the Majestic gopuram of Tiruvannamalai temple and twenty years later he built the Vishnu temple at Tindivanam

and temples and gopurams at Nedungunram and Settuppattu. Vengatappa Nayak completed the great gopuram of Tiruvannamalai temple in 1491 A. D. He built a Siva temple at Tindivanam and permitted the Jains to construct a Jain temple at Sittamur. The Kalyana mandapa and Gopura inside the Vellore fort are splendid. There are many small Nayak temple inside the Chandragiri fort.

## SCULPTURE

The Nayak period witnessed the addition of elaborate *mandapas* of the hundred and thousand Pillared type and larger gopuras with a greater number of plastic stucco figures on them, as at Vellore and Madurai. The multi Pillared type having a row of remarkably sculptured columns carrying almost full size monolithic sculptures of rearing horses with warrior riders and retinure and other animal figures of the hunt.

The huge Pillars of the Minakshi temple have life size portraits of royalty with consorts and retinure or donor chiefs, the sculpture so cut out as to form along with the main shaft or common support to the capital, Other sculptures of gods, women in graceful poses tribal folk like the Kurava and Kuratti, hunter and huntress—are also to be found in the composition on the Pillars. The Pudu Mandapam in the Minakshi temple at Madurai and the front Mandapa in the temple at Krishnapuram are notable examples in this respect among hundreds of others.

## PAINTINGS

**Vijayanagar Period :** A siva temple at *Thiruvilimilalai* Tanjavur district has paintings in the ceiling of a Mandapa. Two panels on either side depict-Krishna with two arms is shown dancing on the head of *Kalinga snake* (*Kalinganardanam*) He holds his left arm towards the edge of the tail of the snake, which is shown head downward and the entire body upward. Rukmani and Satyabama holding lotus on their

hands are found on either side of Krishna. They are in small size comparing with the other two ladies, shown on the two sides.

Opposite to above panel, Vishnugopa is depicted in a delightful pose, playing a flute. Cows listen to his flute music; three ladies on his right side are just watching Krishna. On the right side again three ladies—standing nude. The central girl fair in colour, keeps her arms around the neck of the other two ladies: the saree of the fair girl is slowly slipping down.

The outline of the figure is black. The colour extensively used are terre-verte, green yellow and red of varied tones Nayaks period. Paintings are found in the temples at Chidambaram, Kurralam, Madurai, Kumbakonam and Sirkangam.

The Painting of Ranimangammal witnessing the *Thiruk-Kalyanam festival* in the Minakshi temple is quite interesting-

These paintings, some of which are superb art, are a development of the Pallavas and Chola traditions, but with a tendency towards decorativeness and some loss of delicacy. They are essentially a narrative art, depicting continuous stories or episodes often with explanatory labels.

Few or no miniature paintings appear to have been made in Nayak times, but the murals enclosed in panels were bound to develop into the portable paintings on wood, ivory and mica, the forte of the Tanjavur artists.