

A Study on Anthropomorphic Images in the Temples of the Kadapa District of Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

This article describes the prominence of anthropomorphic images in the temples of the Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh. In Kadapa district, significant temples are Pushpagiri Temple and Siddavattam Fort. The anthropomorphic images are depicted from the Hindu epic of Dasavatara and Ramayana episodes, which were the sculptors' primary subject matters. In 1346- 1646 A.D, the Vijayanagara dynasties produced anthropomorphic images in the Pushpagiri temple and Siddavattam fort in the Rayalaseema region. The walls and pillars of the temple are adorned with fascinating anthropomorphic images. Historically, anthropomorphic sculptures have been developed from the prehistoric period to Vijayanagara period. The Pushpagiri and Siddavattam fort temples works of art are dedicated to God Vishnu and depict themes of Vaishnavism and Shaivism. The Pushpagiri and Siddavattam Fort temples consist of approximately 90 anthropomorphic images, each represents in a unique and narrative mode; the sculptures style reflects the Vijayanagara period. It is also believed that the primary role of anthropomorphic sculptures exposes the message between the gods and devotees, conveying the gods' commands and carrying blessings and instructions from the gods.

Keywords: Anthropomorphic; Pushpagiri temple; Sculptures; Siddavattam fort; Vijayanagara art.

Introduction

Kadapa district is in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. Topographically, it lies between latitudes 13° 43' and 15°14 'in northern latitude and 77° 51' and 79° 29' in eastern longitude¹. It is the district headquarters of the YSR

Kadapa district and is situated in the Rayalaseema area. The Kadapa district has popular and significant temples such as Pushpagiri Temple and Siddavattam Fort. The exquisite anthropomorphic sculptures in these two temples depict the most legendary scenes and narratives in the anthropomorphic sculptures on the Pushpagiri temple and Siddavattam fort walls.

Attributing a human personality to anything impersonal or irrational." The fascination with anthropomorphic forms is immense in the Kadapa district. The anthropomorphic sculptures are curved in the temples of Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh, which are Pushpagiri temple and Siddavattam fort. Anthropomorphic images are the attribution of human characteristics, emotions, and behaviors of animals or other non-human things. Anthropomorphic forms are curved in vaishnavite temples such as Pushpagiri temple and Siddavattam fort walls in Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh. Most of the scenes shown in the temple's sculptures are narratives of Vishnu's incarnation, including Dasavataram. The purpose of the anthropomorphic narrative sculptures, which depict historical, social, or mythological stories, was to tell the story using illustrations.

Review of Literature

In this context, a few authors choose exclusively anthropomorphic images as the subject of their study or research. In Subrata Dey's Ph.D. thesis, named anthropomorphic forms in Indian contemporary art, and Mrs. Nirmala Sharma's thesis, described in a book chapter on anthropomorphic forms in her thesis's fourth chapter, titled *A Critical Study of Ragamala Paintings of Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Central India*, many book authors have introduced book chapters on anthropomorphic sculptures.

Among them, one author, K.M. Suresh, in his 2011 book *Vijayanagara Sculptures at Hampi*, represented anthropomorphic forms. The book of South India under Vijayanagara, written by Anila Verghese and A.L. Dahmen Dallapiccola, was published in 2011. Which discusses the political imagination and inspiration of regions that include Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra.

This book covers the significance of Vijayanagara's art and archeology. It mainly develops the post-Vijayanagara paintings, Shaivite ascetic iconography, Vijayanagara coinage, and the regional art and architecture of Vijayanagara. In this book, some of the chapters explain anthropomorphic forms.

In 1993, Shakti M. Gupta introduced a new book named 'Vishnu and his incarnations'. The study of this book explains how the entire philosophy, culture, and tradition of the Hindu religion flow from the concept of the three gods: Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer. In this book, the author has presented a study of Vishnu and his incarnations. The philosophy of Vaishnavism, the interpretation of the various symbols and ornaments of Vishnu.

The book deals not only with the major incarnations but also with the less known ones like Mohini, Dattatreya, Pradyumna, and others. The myths connected with the various incarnations add to the interest of the book, which has been illustrated with photographs of Indian temple sculptures. Many of these sculptures evolved from anthropomorphic forms.

Historical BackgroundThe name "anthropomorphism" was introduced due to the combination of two Greek words, anthropos (meaning "human") and morphe (meaning "form"). The Greek word morpheme, or isma, is the source of the phrase "anthropomorphism." However, the term's historical provenance is unclear. An academic study indicates that the word has been used extensively in stories, paintings, and sculptures in addition to literature. The definition of anthropomorphic, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is "a. treating the deity as anthropomorphous, or as having a human form and animal form; the research study focuses on the anthropomorphic images."

Anthropomorphic images have been developed since the prehistoric period, around 2600 B.C.E., in Indian prehistoric art, specifically the seals and terracotta figures found at the Harappa and Mohenjo-daro sites. The rendering of human and animal forms on the seals demonstrates advanced artistry and technical proficiency in these early phases of art. Sir John Marshall, an archaeologist, introduced the seals from the Mohenjo-daro site. This seal purpose is to hint at animal sacrifice by the human; not only that, but we can also understand by reading this historic period that *Pashupati* was in ancient times, meaning "lord or father of all the animals." ²

It is noticed a lot of interesting information in the Ellora caves by looking into the anthropomorphic sculptures, which really piqued my curiosity. In 600 A.D the Ellora Caves had significant anthropomorphic sculptures carved in Cave Number 14. Some unique sculptures among them are the Varaha Vishnu incarnation in the Dasavatara temple (Ravana Ki Khai) in Ellora and the Narasimha incarnation as Vishnu in the Dasavatara temple in Ellora, which were greatly created

anthropomorphic sculptures in the early phase of art. In the Gupta Period, early 5th century A.D., the cave temples of Udayagiri are among the greatest and earliest sculpture compositions. The spectacular relief panel of Lord Vishnu in one of his ten incarnations, varaha, or the boar incarnations, is an admirable and remarkable act. The curved stone relief of Varaha incarnation (anthropomorphic form) provides a comprehensive and significant picture of cave number five³.

In the 5th to 12th century A.D, the Chalukyas of the Badami dynasty initiated temple architecture, during which it is noticed and comprehended the concept of anthropomorphic sculptures. The vaishnavate sculptures, which depict several forms of Vishnu incarnations (anthropomorphic images), temple complexes in Badami, Pattadakal, Aihole, Durga temple, and Mahakutesvara, depict Vishnu incarnations, or anthropomorphic forms, from the Chalukya Badami art period. ⁴ In the 6th century A.D.

A great relief sculpture from the Pallava art period called the Descent of the Ganges was carved in relief sculpture. There are 150 life-sized figures, deities, animals, and other forms scattered throughout the panel. The anthropomorphic form in the centre of the panel represents the snake princess, symbolizing the Pallava kingdom and its existence. Likewise, we can understand that anthropomorphic images have been developed since prehistoric times based on mythology, worship, time, culture, tradition, beliefs, hopes, and human activities.

Purpose of Anthropomorphic Images

In Hindu temples, anthropomorphic sculptures depict communicating things because they are thought to be incarnations or manifestations of celestial beings. In Hinduism, god is believed to be present in everything, and the gods themselves said to have taken on many forms, such as those of sculptures and icons.

These sculptures, called murtis, are thought to be potent means of interacting with the divine since they are said to be imbued with the heavenly energy of the gods. Iconic sculptures are usually found in temples; they serve as the focal point of regular rituals and acts of devotion. The sculptures are also thought to have the ability to serve as a bridge between the gods and the devotees, carrying the blessings and instructions from the gods back to the devotees in addition to helping the devotees communicate their prayers and gifts to the gods.⁵

Anthropomorphic Images during the Vijayanagara Art-period

The first major work speaks that the Vijayanagara dynasty spanned three centuries, from 1346 A.D. to 1646 A.D. The Vijayanagara dynasty is composed of four prominent dynasties: firstly, the Sangama dynasty; secondly, the Saluva dynasty; thirdly, the Tuluva dynasty; and fourthly, the Aravidu dynasty. The Sangama dynasty, which was in power from A.D. 1346 to 1486-87, was followed by the Salivas, whose first representative was Narasingha.

The founder of the third dynasty was Krishnadevaraya, the Tuluva. Krishnadevaraya ruled (1509-1530).⁶ Vijayanagara During his reign, which was the wealthiest in South India, art in the fields of literature, archeology, paintings, sculptures, and architecture reached its pinnacle. The Yadava, Kakatiya, Chola, Pallava, and Hoysala architectural styles were influential on the Vijayanagara dynasty during their rule, resulting in the introduction of a new architectural style. During the Vijayanagara dynasty period, they developed anthropomorphic images in the Rayalaseema region.

Sivaramamurti made a comment and mentioned the introduction of a new architectural style. One could categorize the Vijayanagara dynasty's architectural styles into schools, such as religious, civil, or military architecture. When building temples, the master builders used blue and black stones as building materials. They also used ground plans and pillars, many of which had anthropomorphic forms.

Temple culture was greatly expanded during the Vijayanagara art period. The ruler of the Tulava dynasty, Sri Krishna Devaraya, and other empires contributed several temples to the Rayalaseema region. They built Pushpagiri and Siddavattam forts in the Kadapa districts of Andhra Pradesh, which are among the region's most exquisite examples of monument art history⁷.

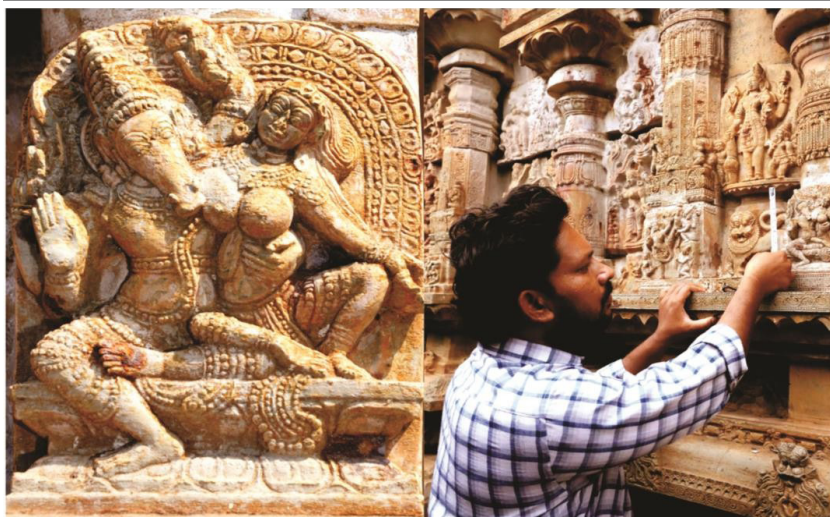


Figure 1: Varaha lifting bhudevi, south wall east corner of Chennakesava temple of Pushpagiri

Pushpagiri Temples

Ten miles to the northwest of Cuddapah lies a little village called Pushpagiri. The temples are located on the left side of the Pennar River on the slopes of Pushpagiri Hill, while the village is located on the right bank of the river. The shrines inside the Pushpagiri temple complex are the Lakshmi, Cennakesava, Santanamallesvara, and Umamahesvara, Sakshi Mallesvara, and Anjaneya shrines, with the Gopura gateway entrance on the western side.

The subject of the research study is the Pushpagiri temple complex. It was first mentioned in an inscription dated 1514 A.D. Records and gifts of the village given by the Sri Krishnadevaraya Vijayanagara dynasty for the deity Cennakesava's services and offerings date back to 1520 A.D. Numerous people contributed to the temple's growth at that time. Another document records the donations of taxes made by many rope dancers to the temple, while a third, dated 1559 A.D., and marks the contributions of land given to the Cennakesava temple by the koneti Tiruvengalanathayya. The Santanamallesvara and Umamahesvara temples have existed since 1294 A.D., while the Prakara Gopura entrance was constructed in 1500 A.D. ⁸

Temple-description

The temples are surrounded by a complex, with massive blocks of stone making up the walls. During Vijayanagara period the main entrance faces westward and is encircled by a gopura. The gopura the lofty adhistana of the gopura is a hallmark of the Vijayanagara era. Simple pilasters with Vijayanagara capitals adorn the walls. The five-storey brick superstructure has kutas, salas, and panjaras on each floor. The passage's follows are vertical on either side of the temple. Most of the temple walls are adorned with famous sculptures, many of which depict events from Indian mythology, Ramayana narratives, and Vishnu incarnation works of art⁹.

Anthropomorphic Images in Pushpagiri Temple

Captivatingly, anthropomorphic images can be seen in Pushpagiri temple. The Pushpagiri temple consists of approximately 50 anthropomorphic images. The Pushpagiri temple can be entered from the east side. The temple complex was constructed with stone material; later, the upper part of the temple complex was built with brick and lime plaster. It has a rich collection of statues. The Pushpagiri temple complex has a total of seven shrines. 1. Lakshmi shrine; 2. Chennakesava shrine 3. Santana Mallesvara Shrine 4. Umamahesvara shrine 5. Sakshi Mallesvara Temple 6. Anjaneya Shrine 7. Gopura Gateway. The east-facing entry side is where the Lakshmi shrine is located; it has three tiny anthropomorphic images that are carved on the pillars. The first image of Vishnu as a Narasimha avatar slaying Hiranyakashipu episode is carved on the southern side pillar of the Lakshmi shrine. In the second image, two vanaras are represented as a monkey face and a human body. The depicted two vanaras relief sculptures are shown in the south direction of the west side pillar. The third image is an avatar of Narasimha performing a yoga posture curved on the southeast corner. The Chennakesava temple is situated beside Lakshmi shrines. It is noticed that the walls of Chennakesava temple consist of many anthropomorphic images; they have been adorned with carvings of Vishnu and his incarnations and Ramayana episodes.

Figure 1 depicts the south wall on the east side of Chennakesava Shrine. We notice that the Varaha-lifting Bhudevi episode is finely carved. The narrative figures are shown in a combination of animal and human form. Captivatingly, the Varaha image head is shown as a ferocious wild boar representation, but the rest of the body is depicted as a divine body. The relief sculpture stands 13 inches in height and 18 inches in length. The carvings are made in shallow relief with a delicate and clean finish. Figure

2 Nritta Ganapati is the curved north wall of the east side of Chennakesava shrine; in the picture, it displays Nritta Ganapati. The head represents an elephant in its animal form; the rest of the body shows the divine body. The Nritta Ganapati work of art was presented in dance mode.

One of the most well-known and beautiful representations of Lord Ganesha in Hinduism is Nritya Ganapati, often known as the "Happy Dancer." It is carved at 14 inches in length and 22 inches in height. Figure 3 shows Rama killing Vali from the Ramayana episode carved on the southern adhistana of the Chennakesava temple of Pushpagiri. The picture of Vali is carved as a monkey face, and the rest of the body is represented as a divine body. Rama shot Vali into the chest with an arrow, this episode highlights the remarkable visualization and dramatic composition of Vijayanagara artists. This anthropomorphic image episode stands 23 inches in length and 9 inches in height. In Figure 4 the Narasimha killing Hiranyakashipu episode, the Lord Narasimha was shown as a divine body, with the remaining portion carved like a lion's head. The narration is depicted on the west adhistana of the Chennakesava temple of Pushpagiri. According to the story, Lord Narasimha's mission was to kill the demon Hiranya and protect his devotee, Prahlada. He then listened to the prayers offered by Prahlada and killed Hiranya. It was a captivating narration. This narration stands 15 inches in height and 25 inches in length.

Figure 5 is titled Lord Narasimha performing a pose of yoga. The depiction of Lord Narasimha was of a divine body, with the remaining part sculpted to resemble the head of a lion. The Narasimha image, which is carved at the south adhistana of the Chennakesava temple of Pushpagiri, is the Hindu god Vishnu's lion and divine incarnation. The anthropomorphic sculpture depicts Narasimha in a yoga position, his arms resting on his knees. In his other two hands, he holds a conch and a discus. The image stands 8 inches in height and 20 inches in length. Figure 6 Dasavatara incarnations Vishnu as Narasimha; Narasimha is one of the most formidable and powerful gods in Hinduism. His head is shown as a lion's head, and the remaining portion is depicted as a divine body (anthropomorphic form). He holds *chakra* in his back right hand, and his back left hand holds *sankha*; this is the unique pose of Narasimha. Vijayanagara sculptural style is evident in all the anthropomorphic images portrayed in the Pushpagiri temple. The anthropomorphic sculptures are carved for the purpose of worship. The rich and varied anthropomorphic images depicted in Pushpagiri temple include Vishnu and his incarnations and Ramayana episodes, various forms of dancing Ganapati, varaha, Narasimha, and narrative scenes are depicted in the temple complex of Pushpagiri.

**Pushpagiri Temple, Temple of Chennakesava - Anthropomorphic im-
age style, Images of Ramayana and Dashavatara incarnations**



Figure 2: Varsha Lifting bhudevi, South wall east corner of Chennakesava temple of Pushpagiri



Figure 3: Nritta Ganpati, North wall of Chennakesava temple of Pushpagiri



Figure 4: Rama killing vali, Ramayana episode south adhistana of Chennakesava temple of Pushpagiri



Figure 5: Narasimha killing hiranyakashipu Episode west adhistana of Chennakesava temple of Pushpagiri



Figure 6: Lord Narasimha performing a pose of yoga south adhistana of Chennakesava temple of Pushpagiri



Figure 7: Dasavatara incarnation, east gopura gateway of Pushpagiri of temple

Siddhavattam Fort

In the Cuddapah district of Andhra Pradesh, the little village of Siddhavattam serves as the centre of a taluk of the same name. The location is topographically between latitude 14'29N and longitude 78'593.¹⁰ Dakshinakasi or the southern Benares, are other names for it. The Siddhas who practiced tapas, or meditation, beneath its Vatams, or banyan trees, are credited with giving it its name. Siddhavattam's fort is the main point of historical significance since it has remnants of a Hindu temple that existed before the rise of the Musalman dynasty. Numerous inscriptions in the region surrounding Siddhout attest to this.

An inscription dating back to 1233 A.D. in Grantha script and Tamil characters was discovered in the abandoned Siddheswara temple at the Siddhout fort. It commemorates Rajendra III and the building of the temple's western gopura. During the Vijayanagara era, the location came into the possession of the Matli chiefs, who claimed it as their nayankara II. It was once under the control of the Chitvel Raja, a member of the Matli dynasty. The town's fort seems to have been constructed in 1303 A.D. by Anantaraja, a relative of the ruling Chitvel raja, and was later taken over by Muslims. It has several noteworthy buildings.

The fort is home to Matli Anantaraja's Siddhavateswara temple. A wall around the town of Siddhavattam and protecting the temple of Siddhavatteswara was built by Matli Ananta, according to the Siddhavattam inscription from the Venkatapatiraya-II era, which dates to 1605 A.D. Matli Kumara Anantaraja built the temple's prakara and gopuram, gave lavish gifts to the god Chennakesava at Siddhavatteswara, and offered hataka (gold). It's interesting that they provided stories from Indian mythology, the Ramayana, and the avatar of the god Vishnu as artwork, especially sculptures on the walls of the Siddhavattam fort. It is noticed that among all the sculptures in Siddhavattam Fort, it was noticed that there were a lot of anthropomorphic sculptures that depicted the following images.

Anthropomorphic Images in Siddhavattam Fort Interestingly, it was noticed that anthropomorphic images were found in Siddhavattam Fort. In Siddhavattam Fort, approximately forty anthropomorphic images are noticed. The entrance of the Siddhavattam fort starts from the west, but it has an east direction as well. After reaching the west entrance, we encounter a rectangular-shaped courtyard that is built with stone rampart walls. After that, we can find the entrance of the devotees' resting courtyard, which has a south and north direction. The devotees resting in courtyards have numerous anthropomorphic images, which are carved on the pillars.

In the south direction, the first row, the third pillar, and the north corner depicted anthropomorphic images.

Figure 1, which depicts Vishnu as a Kurma avatar, the lower portion is depicted as a tortoise body, and the head is represented as a human head. Figure 1-panel shows the south-facing third pillar of the first-row centre image of the north face of devotees resting courtyard. This anthropomorphic image stands at 18 inches in height and 16 inches in length. Dasavatara, the incarnation of Vishnu Figure 2, Vishnu as Varaha avatar, the Varaha lifting Bhudevi panel, Varaha shows a combination of animal and human form; the Varaha head is depicted in wild boar form, and the rest of the portion is depicted as a divine body. Varaha lifting Bhudevi episode carved on the south-facing third pillar of the first-row lower portion of the north face, the anthropomorphic image stands at 18 inches in height and 16 inches in length. Anthropomorphic image located in the south direction of devotees resting courtyard. Figure 3 depicted the Vishnu as the Matsya avatar; the Vishnu is shown as a human torso with a fish's lower body.

Siddhavattam fort anthropomorphic images style, Dasavatara incarnations



Figure 8: Dasavatara incarnations Vishnu as Kurma avatar, the south direction, devotees resting courtyard, third pillar of first row north face Siddhavattam Fort



Figure 9: Dasavatara incarnation, Vishnu as varaha avatar, Varaha lifting bhudevi, the south direction, devotees resting courtyard, third pillar of first row north face, Siddhavattam fort.



Figure 10: Dasavatara incarnation, Vishnu as Matsya avatar, the south direction, devotees resting courtyard, third pillar of first row north face, Siddhavattam fort.



Figure 11: Dasavatara incarnation, Vishnu as Narasimha avatar the south direction, devotees resting courtyard, fourth pillar of first row south face, Siddhavattam fort.

This anthropomorphic image stands in the south direction, the third pillar of the first row in the north face, at Siddhavattam Fort. The image stands 18 inches in height and 16 inches in length. Dasavatara, the incarnation of Vishnu Figure 4 Narasimha incarnation The Vishnu head is carved as a lion's head, and the remaining body portion is represented as a divine body. The image is carved in devotees resting courtyard premises; the image is carved on the fourth pillar of the first row, facing south in the south direction of Siddhavattam Fort. The anthropomorphic image stands at 18 inches in height and 16 inches in length.

Conclusion

Researching anthropomorphic sculptures is incredibly interesting. The Pushpagiri Temple and Siddhavattam Fort are particularly unique and have a strong artistic legacy in the Rayalaseema region. However, even though many scholars have studied Rayalaseema temples, but a specialized study needs to be done on anthropomorphic images. The sculptors of the Pushpagiri Temple and Siddhavattam Fort are followed by the Vijayanagara sculpture characteristics and standards; primarily, the gods

and goddess sculptures are carved with a very youthful presentation, and most of the panel sculptures are represented in modes of suitable narratives. It is observed that there are several backgrounds in the temple and fort walls that may be seen in the anthropomorphic compositional narrative sculptures inspired by Hindu mythology, Ramayana, Dasavatara incarnations.

The anthropomorphic sculptures at Pushpagiri Temple and Siddhavattam Fort serve primarily as objects of worship, decoration, and symbols of beliefs, hopes, and faiths. The Vijayanagara artists have portrayed the figures of gods and goddesses with muscular bodies, and men and women are shown as tall and well-built. The study of anthropomorphic sculptures brings to light many interesting and valuable aspects of artwork tradition that prevailed in the

Royalaseema region, specifically Pushpagiri Temple and Siddhavattam Fort at different places. The influence of Vijayanagara art traditions can be seen in Royalaseema temples.

Another interesting factor is that the artists of Vijayanagara seem to be more skilled at portraying human figures in profile and frontal positions. In a few unique situations, particularly in depicting the iconic forms of the divine beings such as Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, and Narasimha, Vamana, Parashurama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Kalki the incarnations of Vishnu depicted on the walls of the Pushpagiri Temple and Siddhavattam Fort in some art works, only the face is depicted as facing to the front, while the rest of the images are shown as looking toward either the right or left sides. The artwork displayed at both locations features small proportions, stout bodies, a broad chest, a slender waist, and round figures. The faces of divine beings are portrayed with prominent emotions, notable expressions, movements, feelings, and gestures. There are some variations in how the depictions of anthropomorphic figures are portrayed in Pushpagiri Temple and Siddhavattam Fort. The figures of divine beings are depicted with elegance and aesthetics.

The artists of Vijayanagara followed schematic representations in their works of art; likewise, the anthropomorphic divine beings' dresses are decorated with borders and some floral design patterns. In the dress patterns of figures, you can find unmistakable terms. In depicting the women devotees in association with the incarnation of Vishnu, particularly in the case of Varaha murti and goddess Bhudevi, both are shown with well-decorated and carved ornamentation. Considered as internal components of the temple and fort, the mythological stories are filled with ideological aims. The temple sculptures represent as holy and narrative

scenes. The most comprehensive depiction of the Ramayana and Dasavataara epic scenes are presented in several sculptures. To satisfy the aesthetic demands of their own period and society, the artists have followed to several various narrative concepts.

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