



## ARCHITECTURE OF KARAMADAI SRI RANGANATHA PERUMAL TEMPLE IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT :

**T**he famous vaishnava temple in Kongunadu is located in between Coimbatore and Mettupalayam with the distance of 25 k.ms from Coimbatore. This Sannathi has been constructed on the basis of the organs of the architectures of the Dravidians and with the artistic excellence of the Vijayanagar and Nayaks days. The Athistana that is present here was hised in the early days of the Pandyas the Cholas and the Pallavas. The 'Upana' is concealed under the 'Athishtana' but all the other features are found. The 'Athishtana' belongs to the 'Padapanda' type while the jagadi and the Thripatta kumuda that are found here which is prevalent in the temples of Saivism in Kongu Nadu. The Pada portions here deep Devakoshtas but the sculptures are found here. Instead in the 'Pada' part the relief sculptures at the height of a man has been carved in the north and east directions which remind of the days of the Nayaks era. Moreover, in this side the four-sided and eight-sided half-pillars with their sub-organs can be found. The

chief organs of the half-pillars namely the Malathana the Padmapanda, the Kalasa, the Thadi, the Palahai and the pushpa Pothihais remind of the modern days.

**KEYWORDS :** Pathapantha, Arthamandapa, Thripattakumutha, Palakai, Adhithana, Brahmakanta, Devakostha, Grivakostha, Jagati, Gopura, Garbhagruha, Ehatala, Gajaprstha...

### INTRODUCTION

In measurement the Pada portion is twice the height of the 'Athishtana'. The Karpagruha, the Arthmandapa and the Devakoshtas have been carved as maadapura. Though it has been carved during the days of the Vijayanagar and Nayaks days there is less of decoration. The Athishtana the Pada and the Prasthara can be found till the front- Mandapa continuously. Though it has been carved during the reign of the Vijayanagar and Nayaks kings the has not developed to the level of the kodungai has to be examined. In the prasthara few kudas have been also decoratively carved and the 'Kudas' with beautiful 'Kodikarukku' have been carved. In the gap of the 'Prasthara' Kudus novel sculptures have been chiseled. To the west side of the Prasthara elephants in rows can be noticed.

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### METHODOLOGY

Here both descriptive and analytical methods are inevitable. This type of decorative designs are also to be seen in the Arthmandapa and in the Mahamandapa. The chief sanctums Vimana belongs that to the dvithala type possesses many other architectural organs. In the carners of the Vimana beautiful Karna kudas are seen. In between the

Karnakodus, the Salais and kotas have been carved. On the sides of the salai models of Sthupies are found plenty in numbers. In the first Thala that possesses such features the wall-pillars of stucco sculptures have Kosta 'Structures'.

In the four directions of the first Thala the divine figure of Mahavishnu in the sleeping posture is carved in stucco sculptures. In the gap between the Grivakoshta and the first Thala the beautiful 'Prasthara' can be found. They are stucco sculptures with the many Kudus. The Swami Aranganathar Temple Vimana has beautiful griva Koshtas. In the Griva koshta the Avathara of Vishnu has been carved.

The 'Vimana' of the 'Sannathi' has the brahmakanda structure about it and with huge Nasikodus on its four sides. In the four corners of the sikhara, kodikarukku artifacts have been carved decoratively. One can find in many of the temples 'Vimana Sikhara in between the Nasikodus' small- sized kudus. This kind of structure can be found here. The Kalasa that has been found here belongs to the modern days. From the Upana to the first Prasthara the architecture has been structured with hard stones while the Thala, the griva and the Sikhara have been carved as stucco sculptures.

From the field study it has been understood the sanctum, the Arthamandapa, the Mahamandapa and the Muhamandapa have been erected at the same time. In between the Devakoshtas sculptures, decorations have been carved which cannot be found elsewhere.

### The Architecture of the Thayar Sannathi

In the Karamadai Temple campus to the right side of the Moolavar the Thayar Sannathi has been put up in with the Moolavar. Its Athishtana is of the Pada panda type with the aforesaid organs. The decoration found here are lesser than that in the chief sanctum. Other organs that are found here are the beautiful Pranala, the jagadi, the Thripatta humuda, the Kala the Pattihai the kanda and the veithihai. The sanctum and the Artha mandapa bear the same architectural structures while the other structures bear the later artistic traditions.

The Pada part is very simple and the Deva koshtas have been frames. All the pillars found in the Pada parts are four sided pilasters. Here there are no Nagapandas or Kodikarukku craftsmanship. This type of artistic works can be found in the chief sanctum. All the pilasters that are found in the chief sanctum have their kalasas circular in shape. In the Thayar Sannathi this type of structure with the four sides can be seen. The Arthamandapa, 'Karpagruhas, Devakoshtas which are present in this sannathi are of the type of the archway. There are no relief structures in the Pada part. On the pilasters of the chief sanctum the 'Pushpa Pothihais' have been engraved. Here there are only ordinary Pothihais being carved.

The Prasthara that is found in the Thayar Sannathi are of the stucco craftsmanship of the modern days. A part from this many Kudus have also been carved with ornamentation. In the west side of the Prasthara there are no stucco sculptures or any elephants in row as found in the chief sanctum. In the Thayar Sannathi, the Athishtana and the Pada are of stone-craftsmanship while the other organs are of stucco craft. Like the chief sanctum the Vimana belongs to the dvithala type. In the first 'Thala Kudus', the 'Kostas' and the 'Panjaras' are found. On either side of the majority of the first 'Thala Kosta sculptures many sub-sculptures have been carved. Griva Kosta is found with rich and many stucco sculptures with the Vahana sculptures. Thayar sannathi is carved with the four-sided 'Sikhara' and sthupi. Its Sthupi has been formed nowadays when one roes to recollect the Vimana structure of the Thayar Sannathi with that of the chief sanctum the Thayar Sannathi from the 'Prasthara' to the 'Sthupi' is full of excellent craftsmanship.

The 'Prastha Kudus' of the Thayar Sannathi are of stucco artistry. On the other hand the chief sanctum is of stone structure. Between these two sanctums there are certain similarities. Both are of the 'dvithala' structure. The sanctums of both the Sikhara are of the brahmakanda structure. One cannot find any 'Sub-Kudus' here. The stucco sculptures in measurement regularities are found in many. The Athishtana Pada structure of the chief sanctum are smaller when compared with the Athishta Pada organs of the Thayar Sannathi.

### The Architecture of the Aandal Sannathi

The architecture of this Sannathi is the same as that of the chief sanctum and the Thayar Sannathi Vimana structure. Here too the Padapanda Athishtana is with the Upana that is pretty. Other aspects that are

present here are the Jagadi, the Thripatta Kumuda, Kanda, the Pattihai and Veithihai. The Athishtana portion which is at a height of nearly five feet of the Aandal Sannathi has been carved equal to that of the Thayar Sannathi. In the sannathies that are found here there is the padapanda type. Similarly in all the other Vainava temples also such type can be found in plenty. The Pada part of the Arthamandapa of Aandal sannathi is of the Karpagruha Devakoshta structure. The half-pillars that are found here remind one of the four-sided half pillars of the Thayar Sannathi and also the simple Thadi, the Kudam, the Ethazl, and the Palahai.

The 'Veera kanda' and the Pothihai are of the ordinary Vettu Pothihai. At a rate of four half-pillars for each side in all the directions with the same number of half-pillars have been carved. Between the chief sanctum and the Arthamandapa a beautiful Panjara is found. Similarly in the Thayar Sannathi this type of structure cannot be found. Its majority of the architectural features are similar and also dissimilar to that of the chief sanctum.

Though there one many kostas found here no sculptures have been carved. The Arthamandapa is less in length and width when compared to that of the sanctum. The Prasthara structure of Aandal Sannathi is with stucco craftsmanship and are with many Kudus. The Vimana which is of the dvithala type has many stucco sculptures like the Thayar Sannathi. The Kudus that are found in the Thalasa, the kutus the supporter of the Vimana sculptures and Kosta sculptures possess the general features of the art. The sculptures and the Avatars that are found in the Grivakosta are of different kinds that found in the Thayar Sannathi. The Grivakoshta sculptures of the Aandal Sannathi are of the stucco sculptures and are in the standing posture beautiful four sided Sikhara the Sthupi and Naasi kudus have also been carved.

From the Prasthara to the Sthupi the architectural motifs are of stucco sculptures. Likewise it can also be found in the Thayar Sannathi also when one compares the Thayar Sannathi with that of the chief sanctum many architectural features can be linked with each other. The Devakoshta structure with the archway craftsmanship can be connected with the Thayar Sannathi. The stucco sculptures that are found in the midst of the archway cannot be found in the Thayar Sannathi. When one compares it with the chief sanctum this possesses the Devakoshtas with the sala structures. Having the stucco structures in the archway is the Aandal Sannathi. Besides in the chief sanctum there are four-sided wall-Pillars with the Nagapandas and the Malasthana. This kind of traits cannot be found in the Aandal Sannathi. It is possible to find the stucco sculptures here like that of the Thayar Sannathi.

### The Architecture of the Paramapatha Vaasal

The Paramapatha Vaasal has the structures of architecture belonging to the later Nayaks days, with the Kopadapanda Athishtana. It has the organs like the Upana, the Jagadi the Mahapadma, the Kanda, and the Kapoda. The Kudus that have been carved in the 'Kapoda are very simple. The 'Pada' is twice the height of Athishtana like the other Sannathies or the wall-Pillars there are no decorations. Next to the Athishtanas 'Pada' side a simple Prasthara can be seen.

In the four corners of the Prasthara the Kudus have been structural. On the top and below of the Prasthara there are no decorations but the lords grace and the weapons have been carved as relief sculptures. From the Prasthara to the Sthupi the stucco sculptures are found. The Paramapatha Vaasal with the Thrithala structure stands as a beautiful Gopura. In each Thala many Avatar sculptures related to Vaishnavism are found. In the Thalasa there are the half-pillars and structures of the 'Karna Kudus. The half-pillars that are found here are all four-sided. In the Renganathar Temple and second Sthala many stucco sculptures are found in the Griva Koshta.

The Gopura frame of Paramapatha Vaasal is of Gajaprushta shape and the structure is that of the Sikhara with the Kalasas. To the east west side of the Sikhara there are the Nasikudus while in the north south direction very small kudus can be found. Though there are many Vainava 'Sthalas' in Kongu Nadu, the Sthala with the three Thala in this temple only.

### The Architecture of Aandal Sannathi Mandapa

The Aandal Sannathih has the Karpagraha, the ArthaMandapa and next the MahaMandapa. This

Mandapa plays the role of the Sub-Mandapa and Muhamandapa for this Sannathi. The four pillars that are found here possess many architectural trends. On the pillar there is the brahmakanda side and the Vishnukantha side. There are no other artistic works and its pothihais are of the ordinary type. The two pillars at the edge of the four pillars are of the relief sculptures with the Nagapandas.

These two pillars are with the ordinary pothihais. These four pillars that are at the height of ten feet has been supported by the pillar with six feet circumference the Pothihais and the uthiras. The Uthiras are slightly bigger in size than the width of the pillars. Each pillar at a height of five feet has been installed with a distance of seven feet in the east western direction and also in the north south direction. In few pillars craftsmanship has not been completed. The relief structures that have been carved at the edge of these pillars are very significant. This artistry remind one of the Vijayanagar and Nayaks days.

### The Architecture of Thayar Sannathi Ranganayaki

The Mahamandapa is located next to the 'Karpagagruha' Arthamandapa with many pillars. Among these four pillars have been in a very exquisite artistic design. This mandapa like the Aandal sannathi possesses the same artistic trends but with the pretty Nagapanda. The general aspect of this pillar are the four-sided the eight-sides and the Vettu Pothihais. The height of the pillars and the Pothihais remind one of the Aandal sannathi. The greatness lies in the Thayar Sannathi which possesses many novel relief sculpture.

Many pillars with the simple artistic designs have been installed in the Thayar Sannathi likewise the pillars are also very simple in designs many structures which are found here are dissimilar to as that in the Vithana part of the Thayar Sannathi. On the other hand both the Sannathies bear the same Vettu Pothihais. The Pothihais of the pillars are in the east western direction.

### The Sub-Sannathies

In the south Prahara of this temple an excellent Sub-Sannathi has been built for Santhanakrishnan. It faces to the north direction. Though it possesses only simple artistic designs, the prasthara is very beautiful from the Upana to the Prasthara beautiful stone works have been wrought. Moolavar is seated as the Lord can also be known. The Alwars who are twelve in number are being chiseled in divine figures and are in this sannathi. They are installed in the Prahara of this mandapa sculptures in the four sides of the pillars and the sharp Nagapandas in the eight and twelve sides.

### Third row of pillars

These row of pillars bear beautiful Pushpa Pothihai and reflect the days of the Nayaks. The decoration the relief sculptures and the floral designs vie each other. It is here that many relief sculptures are found. Its Pothihai have been also carved in the east western direction. Similarly the fourth row of pillars also bear "Pushpa Pothihais" in the relief sculptures. The Nagapandas and many new relief sculptures increase the beauty of the pillars of this row.

The third row of pillars and the fourth row of pillars have been at the same time and possess the artistic trends of the same time. Though the third row of pillars have many relief sculptures in decoration they are lesser than that found in the other pillars. Among these third row of pillars there are pillars that are completed and others stand incomplete with the sculptures. Its Pothihais are also all ordinary in nature.

The sixth row of pillars have been carved in par with that of the first row of pillars and appear very simple. Eight-sided pillars are found here they are full of 'Pothihai' also are very simple in structure. The first and the second rows of pillars can be compared to that of the fifth and sixth row of pillars. Among them the third and the fourth row of pillars are of the same artistic traits. From the research it has been understood that all the pillars are set up in the east western direction with the Pothihais and the Utharas.

### The Kodimara, the Pali Peeda and the Vahana

The artistic of these organs are of the later Nayaks days and are studded with many metallic artistry which is of the artistic craftsmanship of the modern day. Four pillars have been installed around them which

recollects the Vijayanagar and Nayaks time. The four pillars that are found here are lesser in decoration when compared to the front Mandapa. Other features are the relief sculptures and the 'Pushpa Pothihais'.

### The Architecture of Maha Mandapa

Sri Ranganatha seated independently in the sanctum is in the copper divine figure along with Sridevi and Boodevi in the Mahamandapa. In this Mandapa four pillars of exquisite craftsmanship are found. This type of pillars reminds one of the artistic tradition of the Nayaks days have the pretty Pushpa Pothihai in the east – western direction. On the four sides of these pillars many relief sculptures have been carved along with many floral designs. The four pillars that prop the Mahamandapa are nearly ten feet in height. Thus the pillars in the Karamadai Sri Ranganathar Temple can be explained on the other hand the grown pillars that are found in the Mahamandapa have to be examined.

### The Architecture of the Kalyana Mandapa

This Mandapa with the artistic trends of the Nayaks days is constructed near the Aandal Sannathi to the left side of the 'Moolavar' in the north 'Prahara facing the south direction. The twelve pillars that are found here bear a variety of artistic designs. In the first row of pillars each pillar has three 'Pushpa Pothihai' which reflect the Nayaks days. In the four and eight sides of these pillars there are wonderful relief sculptures 'Kodikarukku' workmanship donors sculptures and 'Purana' sculptures. Two pillars of the second row of pillars about in 'Pushpa Pothihais while the other two pillars bear the Vettu Pothihais. There are Nagapandas in these pillars on the four eight and twelve sides and also donors sculptures of men and women at a height of nearly four feet. In the third row of pillars each side bears three 'Pothihais.

In the third row of pillars the 'Aswapatha' has been carved and on it many sculptures are found. Among them a few pillars have the 'Pushpa Pothihais in the north south direction. Erecting the pillars with the equal gap and structuring excellent Mandapa are the trends of the Nayaks. Conducting the divine marriage ceremonies between the deity and the deities has been prevalent in their days. This kind of majestic Kalyana Mandapa cannot be seen in any temples. On the outer walls and on the pilasters many relief sculptures have been carved.

In this temple to the left side is an independent Sannathi of Ramanujar the sanctum the Arthamandapa and the front Mandapa. A sub-sannathi has been put up for Hanuman.

### The Architecture of Ranganatha Perumal Gopura

Nowadays a Rajagopura for Swami Ranganathar has been in progress. Since it as a Rajagopura the artistic features have been very clearly slated out and carved. The Upana of the Rajagopura is at a height of twelve feet. Other organs are the Kapoda the Kanda the Padma the Patihai and the Jagadi. The 'Athishtana structure which is in the chief sanctum has been very clearly carved. The Athishtana which is at a height of nearly seven feet has the organs like the Jagadi the 'Thripatta Kumuda' the Kanda the Pattihai the Kalam and the 'vethihai. In the north and south side of the Pada part beautiful Deva Koshtas have archways. On either side many half pillars with four sides have been well created. Its sub organs like the veerakanda and the 'vettupothihai' occupy a special niche. This Pada which is nearly ten feet in height supports the prasthara. The Prasthara that is structured here is with 'Kudus' that protects the gopura of four sides.

With ten Kudus for a side the Prasthara has been framed with the faces of elephants. The other organs next to the Prasthara are under construction. Beside, the gopura the muhamandapa, Mandapa with the recent artistic trends and more than thirty pillars have been constructed. Each pillar with four and eight sided and Nagapandas have been structured with the craftsmanship of the same time. In the midst the Deepasthamba has been erected with four legged Mandapa. Its 'Athishtana is of the Kapodapanda type with the 'Virutta Kumuda and Padma about it. The four pillars that are found here are four and eight sided with the relief sculptures.

### CONCLUSION

Karamadai Sri Ranganathar Swami Temple was constructed in the manner of the Dravidian artistry in the

Vijayanagar and Nayaks days. Its worship is of very early days. On the basis of its architectural basis it is understood that like the chief sanctum of this temple the sub-sannathies namely the Thayar Sannathi and Aandal Sannathi have been constructed. The three Sannathies possess the Padapantha Athishtana with the simple Pada about it. The sanctum in which Sri Ranganathar has been seated has been decorated with rich artistry. The half-pillars bear the beautiful Pushpa Pothihai. The Sannathies are of simple wall-pillars and Vettu Pothihai. The six rows of pillars in the chief sanctum are excellent in artistic craftsmanship. Each row of pillars have many Pothihais. The 'Kodimara', and the Pali Peeda' are very ancient and a tall Kodimanra can be seen. The Thayar Sannathi and the Aandal Sannathi with the simple front Mandapa are structured with decorative pillars. Finally we have to take more steps to preserve our ancient arts.

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