CHAPTER - VI

PRASTARA – ENTABLATURE

PRASTARA (fig 34)

Prastara (Sanskrit) means entablature. It is found above the architrave of the temple, inside or outside. *Prastara* is one of the six important architectural parts of the body of the temple. It is the third member of the temple building from the bottom. *Prastara* is considered very important in the architectural composition of the temple. *Prastara,* in dravidian context, means a meeting place. This is the meeting place of the two divisions of the temple namely the *prāsāda varga* and the *pāda varga. Pāda varga* represents the earth and the *prāsāda varga* represents the Heaven. In the entablature both *pāda varga* and *prāsāda varga* unite. Therefore this part is given the name *prastara.* According to Hindu metaphysics the mother Earth (*bhūmi tatva*) is feminine (*prakṛti*) in character. It is embraced by *ākāśa tatva,* which is masculine (*puruśa*). The *prastara* represents the union of these two concepts. In the temple building the *adhiṣṭhāna* and *bhitti* correspond to the *Bhū varga* while the *prāsāda* represents the *ākāśa varga* i.e. the heavenly abode. Therefore, in the *prāsāda* of the temple only denizens of the sky are represented, while on the *adhiṣṭhāna* and *bhitti* both earthly and heavenly beings are represented. The meeting place of these two concepts is always represented by the *bhūtas, gaṇas, gandharvas, yakṣas, vāstu puruśa,* etc.

Prastara is not only functional but also decorative in character. Functional in the sense it adds to the elevation of both the interior as well as the exterior. In the interior of the temple, the *prastara* sits above architrave of the colonnade. It helps to increase the height of the ceiling of the temple in the interior without increasing the height of the colonnades or pillars. Therefore, the interior *prastara* forms that part of the temple between the architrave and the ceiling[1]. The larger halls of the temples require an elevated ceiling to increase the height of the interior. It is essential to increase the height of the pillars correspondingly. Instead *prastara* is built above the colonnade to

heighten the ceiling. Above the colonnade rests the architrave. Instead of keeping the roof slabs directly above the architrave a small wall-like structure is built above the architrave and this is called *prastara* / entablature. Above the entablature, the roof slabs are placed. Both the sides of the *prastara* are decorated with suitable architectural, sculptural and decorative motifs.

On the exterior *prastara* is purely decorative in nature. Above the corbels of the pilasters, the architrave is placed. The decorative parts of the *prastara* are *uttara* (architrave), *valabhi* (cornice), *kapōta* (drip stone), *vājana* (string course) and *prati*. These are the major mouldings of the *prastara*. Besides these minor mouldings like fillets, doucines, grooves, indentations, bands, etc., can be seen.

Prastara, according to Mayamata, should be decorated with sculptures of *yakṣas, vidyādharas, bhūtamāla, gaṇas, hamsas*, floral decorations, etc. According to Mānasāra the semi divine and demi-divine and other celestial beings are to be carved in *śayana* (lying) or *āsīna* (seated) postures. Accordingly the *ganas* appear in squatting, sitting and lying postures. Mānasāra mentions six types of *prastara* based on the arrangement of its different parts and their measurements. But it does not give any names for the different types.

The details of the different parts of the *prastara* are explained here under:

UTTARA

Uttara is the beam/ architrave placed above the *pōtika* of the *bhittipāda*. According to Manasara it should be slightly projecting forward from the vertical norm of the wall below[2]. The Mānasāra also states that *uttara* should be decorated with reliefs of squatting and jumping lions. It is also classified into three categories namely:

i.   *khaṇḍōttara*. (Panelled)

ii.   *patrōttara*. (floriated) (Fig-35)

iii. *rūpōttara* (sculptured)

Mānasāra gives some synonyms of the term "*Uttara*"[3]. Use of those terms may lead to confusion, hence only the term *uttara* is used here.

Uttara corresponds to the beam above the *pōtika* in the architectural framework of the temple. Hence it should be of one stone sitting like a beam. But in practice, while carving the *uttara* on the exterior wall surface it is carved to look like a beam but actually it may not be so. In the gap between two *bhittipādas*, the *uttara* may be carved in several pieces. Sometimes it may also be the part of the slab in which the wall portion below is also carved. Likewise, sometimes it may be even of the same block of stone in which the corbels are carved. But it is always shown differently from the other architectural members noted above.

The function of the architrave is to span the gap between the two pillars so that the load from the top is borne by the architrave and is distributed over the two pillars. Further the architrave should be carved out of one block of stone covering the span between the two pillars. But in the case of the temples they are not constructed so. This shows that the outer wall was meant purely for the sake of decoration. Examples of temples having architraves made of several pieces of stone that do not cover the entire gap between the pillars are found in good number. These architraves rest upon the lower course of the stone of the wall proper. The very purpose of the architrave is defeated in these structures. They are made only as decorative parts of the temple wall.

VALABHI

Valabhi is a stringcourse above the *uttara* and below the *kapōta*. Mānasāra gives some synonyms of the *valabhi*[4]. The height of the *valabhi* should be equal to or more than the height of the architrave. *Valabhi* should be decorated with rows of *bhūtas* (pls 66-67), *ganas, kubjas, hamsas,* floral, faunal and narrative themes (*nāṭaka*)[5] (pl-68).
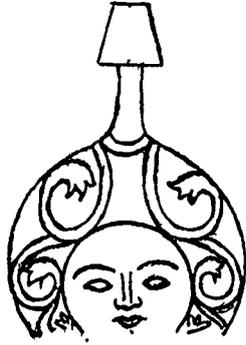
KAPŌTA

Kapōta is the dripstone placed above the *valabhi*. It is a very prominent member of the elevation. Its synonyms are *vaktrahasta, lupa, gōpānaka* and *candra*[6]. *Kapōta* is called by this name because it resembles the shape of a pigeon's head. It projects forward from the vertical norm of the parapet. With projection and the shape of a semi circle, it resembles a pigeon's head.

Kapōta is constructed projecting prominently forward from the vertical norm of all the other members of the elevation, to serve as a dripstone for the temple wall. *Kapōta* is generally cut out of long thick beams of stone. The section of the *kapōta* is similar to a quadrant. The upper portion is always rounded or sloped and its soffit or under-portion in most cases, is flat. Sometimes, the soffit is made hollow or concave or sometimes even decorated like the underpart of a wooden roof having beams, battens and purlins[7] (pl-69)

There are two varieties of *kapōta* found in the dravidian architecture. The first type, which is also the first to appear chronologically and most commonly found, is the one, which is of quadrant shape. Hereafter in this study, these *kapōtas* are referred to as *kapōta* of the first type and *kapōta* of second type, for easy narration and identification. This type of *kapōta* is built on the building where there is a wall surface below. This type of *kapōta* is decorated with *kudus*, also called *nāsis* (pl-60). *Nāsis* are carved at regular intervals on the façade of the *kapōta*. Occasionally, patches of floral decorations and faunal figures, human and demonic faces, *muktāgrāsas*, etc. are also found carved. The floral patch on the *kapōta* is referred to as *candramandala*[8], as one of the names of *kapōta* is *candra*. *kapōta* is occasionally decorated with a series of pointed knobs at its bottom edge (pl-69).

The second variety of *kapōta* is broad, double flexured and differently decorated on its lower and upper parts. This type of *kapōta* is provided for open pavilions and rarely for regular buildings[9] (pl-70). As the practice of
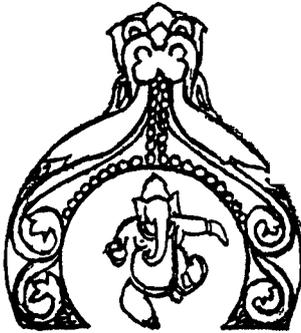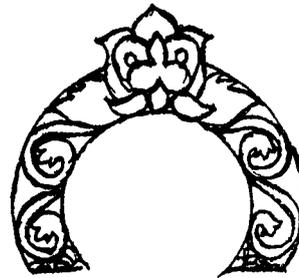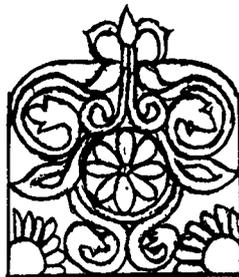
Fig 37. *Nāsis*

a) Pallava period
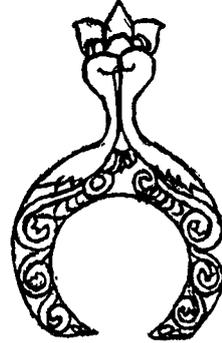
b) Early Chola

c) Late Chola/ Hoysala

d) Vijayanagara

e) Vijayanagara

constructing open pavilions for the temples began from the medieval period onwards, the appearance of this type of *kapōta* also begins from that time.

The *kapōta* of this type is broad, sloped and double flexured to provide extra protection for the open pavilions from rain and shine. The section of this *kapōta* looks like the elongated English letter 'S'. The outer carving of the *kapōta* is very gentle, smooth and sloped. Ornamentation of floral patches, faunal figures, *gandharvamukhas, rākṣasamukhas, ṛshimukhas*, etc., up-curled horn like decorations at the corners and ridges are often found. The lower part of the *kapōta* is generally carved very elaborately to appear like the lower part of the wooden framework of a tiled roof. The knobs, drops rivet head and lotus buds and such other decorations are discernible at the junctions of the battens and beams. A notable decorative feature of this type of *kapōta*, which appears during the medieval period, is the carving of the stone chain hanging from the bottom of the terminal slab of the *kapōta*. A long stone is taken one end of which is carved to suit the design of the body of the *kapōta* and the remaining part is reduced to form a stone chain with loops that can be rotated.

During the Vijayanagara period the *sikhara* motifs carved above the *tōraṇas* of the *bhitti* are extended over the surface of the *kapōta* above the wall. In such instances the *kapōta*, besides the decoration of *nāsi*, also contains the decoration of *sāla, kūṭa* and the *pañjara* types of *sikharas* (pl-173).

NĀSI/KUDU (Fig-36, pl-71)

Prominent decoration of the *kapōta* of the first type and occasionally of the second type[10] is the *nāsi/kudu* motif. Though this motif is referred to by the name *kudu,* the canonical Texts refer to this motif only by the name *nāsi* and never as *kudu. Kudu* (Tamil) or *gudu* (Kannada) are dravidian terms, which means a nest or a niche. Architecturally it corresponds to the term *nāsi* (Sanskrit), which means the nose. The *nāsi* is a motif used for decorating various parts of the building of the temple complex. Depending upon the size

of the *nāsi*, it is classified into two categories. They are *alpanāsi* (small *nāsi*) and *mahānāsi* (big *nāsi*). It is basically a horse–shoe shaped motif. Sometimes the horse-shoe motif is also rounded. This concept is derived from the Buddhist *caitya* window motif. The semi-circular or horseshoe shaped Caitya window is symbolically represented in later architecture in the *nāsi* motif.

The central semi-circular portion is referred to by the name *gāḍha/kukṣi*.[11] *Gāḍha* may be hollow, recessed or even flat. This portion may contain a decorative motif inside. The subject matter of the carvings in the *gāḍha* may range from religious to erotic sculptures and from architectural motifs to simple decorative designs. The Texts mention that the *gāḍha* may be decorated with any popular architectural motif, decorative design and episodes from religious or social themes. Many of the *mahānāsis*, right from the beginning, are carved with beautiful architectural motifs like pavilions of different kinds.

The *nāsi* is always crowned by a *kīrtimukha*. During the course of time the morphology of the *nāsi* has changed. To a certain extent, the analysis of the shape of the *nāsi* decoration helps to fix the approximate century of its carving. Therefore it is necessary to know the morphological development of the *nāsi* motif in this context (Fig 36).

Nāsi as an architectural motif, which begins to appear from the time of rock cut architecture as well as the structural architecture in South India. The earliest *nāsis* are noticed in the Badami Chalukyan as well as the Pallava monuments. Early forms of the *nāsi* possess a horseshoe shaped *gāḍha* with a flat strip all-round. The apex of the *nāsi* contains a long neck crowned by a shovel-shaped cresting[12]. By about the end of 7th century the shovel-shaped cresting gets the shape of a *kīrtimukha* (lion face) and from the mouth of the *kīrtimukha* emerges creeper scrolls or foliage that spreads over the periphery or the outer circle of the *nāsi*. The *kīrtimukha* apex with elongated neck continues till the 11th century. From 12th century onwards the long neck of the *nāsi* gets reduced and the *kīrtimukha* sits directly above the *nāsi*[13]. This trend

continues till 14th century. After 14th century the *kīrtimukha* becomes almost a part of the *gāḍha* and decorative variants of the *nāsis* also come into being. These variants may or may not have a *gāḍha* in the centre. The *nāsis* of this period also become conventional in their form. Instead of having the horse-shoe motif, a somewhat similar relief having faunal or floral decoration is also carved. Instead, the central composition may represent a *kīrtimukha* or a floral pattern or a seated lion pattern found in the Vijayanagara art. Sometimes, the shape of the *nāsi* becomes squarish with rounded corners[14]. Thus the *nāsi* becomes symbolic in its nature and identified as *nāsi* by its position on any of the known architectural parts (pl-72).

Nāsi as a decorative motif is carved on the pillars, mouldings of the plinth, on the *tōraṇas*, on the doorframes, on the *grīva* of the *śikhara*, on the *śikhara*, on the parapet and on any other place found suitable by the artist for decoration. Therefore, the *nāsi* is the most popularly, profusely used versatile architectural motif noticeable in dravidian temple complex. Depending upon the shape, size and also to a certain extent the location of the *nāsi*, they are classified into different types. They are *mahānāsi, alpanāsi/kṣudranāsi, nētranāsi*[15], *kapōtanāsi,* etc. However, irrespective of the size, shape and the location of the *nāsi*, their treatment is always uniform in nature.

MAHANĀSI: *Mahanāsi* is the huge *nāsi* that is found on the sides of the vaulted canopy of the *gōpura*. To this class are added the bigger *nāsis* found on the different faces of the *śikhara* of the *prāsāda* above the *garbhagṛha* and on the façade of the *śukanāsa*[16].

ALPANĀSI/KṢUDRANĀSI: *Nāsis* carved for decoration on the miniature pavilions and other architectural parts are called by the name *alpanāsis*. These are small in size but possess all the features of a regular *nāsi*. Sometimes the number of *alpanāsis* found on the *śikhara* above the *garbhagṛha* also helps to determine the type of the *vimāna*.

KAPŌTANĀSI: *Nāsis* found on the *kapōta* are *kapōtanāsis*. Texts prescribe that the carving of the *kapōtanāsi* should begin from the bottom line of the

kapōta and its height should be such that it ends below the level of the *vājana* on the top of the *kapōta*. However, the latter part of this rule was not followed strictly. The Texts also mention that the vertical alignment of the *nāsi* should be parallel to the vertical norm of the *bhittipāda* below. But this was also not always strictly adhered to by the builders.

NĒTRANĀSI (pl-73): *Nētranāsis* are those which are carved in pairs. They are generally found on the *kapōta*, on the *hāra*, on the pedestals of pillars and such other places.

VĀJANA

Vājana is a type of string course decorated/moulded with different types of faunal/decorative motifs. *Vājana* corresponds to the slab that is kept as a facia to the slabs that binds the two layers of wall together at the apex. *Vājana* is the term, which seems to have been derived from the word *"Vāja"* (Sanskrit) meaning strength/energy[17]. Therefore, *vājana* is the slab that brings strength to the two layers of walls of the temple making them join at the apex. The synonyms of *vājana* are *ādhāra, ādhēya, mahātaula, uttara, uddhṛta* and *mūrdhaka*[18]. This is also defined as *"pracchādanasyamāsyam"* meaning 'the face of the roof slab'. Of these terms *"mūrdhaka"* and *"pracchādana"* are noteworthy, as they denote the function of the *vājana*. *Mūrdhaka* is the slab kept above the void between the two layers of the wall and so also the *pracchādana* meaning the capstone which sits on the two layers of the wall. From all these, it becomes clear that *vājana* is a slab which is basically functional in character. Its exposed front is generally carved with reliefs of *vyālamāla* (pl-69), *simhamāla*, etc. It also supports the *hāra* above and serves as a solid base for the *prasāda* above.

Now it is necessary to analyse the nature of *prastara* in the temples of the region of our study. The earliest of the *prastara* noticed in this region is from Veerattaneshwara temple, Pillur. Though it is in a bad state of preservation, the salient features of the mode of the construction of *prastara* are found here. The *uttara* is placed above the corbels of the pilasters

projecting slightly forward from the vertical norm of the wall below. The upper edge of the *uttara* is provided with a prominent *kampa* so as to look like a base for the sculptures of the *valabhi*. *Valabhi* is projecting from the vertical norm of the *uttara*. *Valabhi* is decorated with a *bhūtamāla*, wherein the *bhūtas* of various forms and postures are carved playing, frisking, jumping, running, dancing etc. An interesting feature of these *bhūtas* is that, one of them has an elephant face (pl-66). These denizens of the sky are relieved so deep as to look like sculptures almost in the round. Hence they are not only good specimens of sculptural art but also appear prominent in the elevation. Similar *valabhi* is found in a temple of 12th century also in the region. The *kapōta* above this *valabhi* is of quadrant shape. It possesses *nāsis* at regular intervals but these *nāsis* are not well treated with decorative details. However it is compensated by a row of knobs carved above the *nīvu* (the lower edge) of the *kapōta*. The *nāsis* of the *kapōta* have *kīrtimukha* with elongated neck. The *vājana* above has a row of *simhas, vyālas*, birds etc.

The Ekamranatha temple at Tadavur datable prior to 1088 A.D., has a *prastara* treated in the same way as described above. But there is difference in the depiction of the decorative carvings. *Valabhi*, instead of a *bhūtamāla*, has a row of *kubjas* seated in a line with their hands, disposed in various gestures. They are all decorated with varieties of ornaments like *udarabandha, kundala, lalāṭapaṭṭi* etc. They have almost identical faces with eyes exhibiting different expressions. The *kapōta* is of the first type, the soffit of which is slightly hollow and is punctated with *nāsis* at regular intervals. The *gāḍha* of *nāsi* is relieved uniformly with a blossomed flower. The *kīrtimukhas* carved above have elongated neck. Few of the *kīrtimukhas* only are extant. The reason for this is that during this period the artists have attempted to economise on material and labour in the carving of the *kapōta*.

Kīrtimukha of this period, as is know, possesses an elongated neck. The artists require a thick slab for the *kapōta* to carve *nāsis* with tall *kīrtimukhas*. To reduce the labour and also to economise on the material, artists have used a separate piece of stone for carving the *kīrtimukha* part of

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the *nāsis* and have joined the two pieces firmly with the help of ridge and groove method on top of the *kapōta* slab in this temple. Therefore, some of the *kīrtimukhas* of this *kapōta* are lost[19] (pl-74)

The *prastara* of the temples of the region during the 12th century become simpler in its execution, and the representations of carvings on it also are less. The *valabhi* is carved simpler with thinly scalloped lotus petals. Instead of the *bhūtamāla*, on the *valabhi*, scalloping of lotus petals appear. This trend became more and more prodigal in the succeeding centuries. The soffit of the *kapōta* is made hollower in nature. The *gāḍha* of the circular type as well as that of horse-shoe type are noticed. The neck of the *kīrtimukha* is reduced and it sits directly over the *nāsi*. The *vājana* with the usual decoration of *vyālamāla* continues.

Elaborate decorations of the *prastara* are discernible during 13th century (pl- 75-76). The *uttara* is decorated with delicately chiseled *muktāgrāsas*[20]. The terminal of the *uttara* is decorated with rosettes and sometimes with even small panels of relievo sculptures. The *valabhi* above is also treated in an ornate manner. Neatly relieved of rows of lotus petals are carved on the body of *valabhi* [21]. The terminals are relieved with rosettes or relief sculptures. The lower part of the *valabhi* is converted to suit the carvings of the lotus petals. Another notable decoration of the *valabhi* of this period is the carving of the *nāṭaka*[22]. Various socio-religious episodes are carved in this part like narrative sculptures, sometimes continuous and sometimes inside frames. Dancers, musicians playing musical instruments, fighting swordsmen and many other socio-religious themes are depicted.

The soffit of the *kapōta* of this period becomes hollow and the lower part of the *kapōta* is decorated with a series of pointed knobs. The upper *kapōta* is decorated by *padmadala* and the *muktāgrāsa* reliefs. It is to be noted here that during 13th century this area was under the occupation of the Hoysalas. It is possible that due to the influence of the Hoysala sculptural art,

the *prastara* of the temples of this period is made ornate with crisp decorations and carvings of various decorative motifs.

The best of the *prastaras* of the Hoysala period is found at Kailasanatha temple at Taramangalam datable prior to 1265 A.D (pl-75-76). In this *prastara*, the *uttara* is plain. The terminals of the *valabhi* have the decoration of lotus petals. The bottom of the rim of the *kapōta* has a row of pointed knobs, the soffit is hollow, and the outer edge of the *kapōta* has multiple horizontal grooves. The upper surface of the *kapōta* has delicately chiseled *padmadalas* interspersed with beaded string tassels. The *nāsis* are elaborately carved with floral patterns. *Kīrtimukhas* are neatly delineated. The *vājana* has the regular *vyālamāla*. Another notable feature of this *kapōta*, which is also generally noticed in the late Vijayanagara temples, is the relief of monitors, parrots and monkeys. It is noteworthy that, such reliefs appear in the late Vijayanagara temples also, that too, on the double flexured *kapōtas* of the open *maṇtapas*. But in the case of this temple, the animals are found carved on the *kapōta* of the first type and that too on the wall of the main shrine. Therefore, this feature deserves special attention not only from the point of view of stylistic trait but also from chronological point of view. Anther point to be noted here is that the medium of construction of temples of the region is locally available granite. This hard granite is not suitable for delicate and crisp carving. But the artist of the region, probably inspired by the contemporary Hoysala art forms of the heartland, has initiated to the best possible extent, the finer and delicate qualities of the Hoysala workmanship. Though the carvings are not as intricate as those of the Hoysala workmanship they are elaborate, beautiful and attractive and add to the grandeur of the elevation. As already noticed in the chapter on the plinth and wall this temple has a very beautifully and intricately designed elevation.

During the Vijayanagara period, the *prastara* of the temples gets more ornate than those found during the Hoysala period. During this period, certain decorative elements of the Hoysala period continue with lesser grandeur. *Prastara* having decorative carvings is noted at the Rama temple,

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Ayodhyapattinam and Tenkarai Kottai (pl-69). Both these *prastaras* are identical. The *uttara* is decorated with a row of *muktāgrāsas*. The *valabhi* has purlins as well as the decoration of *simhamāla*. However, the *uttara* on the backside has decoration of *padmadalas*. The *kapōta* is decorated with rows of pointed knobs at the tip. Above this horizontal indentations are made and the surface of the slope of the *kapōta* has the rows of scalloped lotus petals interspersed by beaded tassels. The *kīrtimukhas* are also elaborately carved. The *gāḍhas* have varied relief sculptures like *gandharvamukhas*, Navaneetha Krishna, etc.

During the Vijayanagara period, the temples of the region of our study were added with *maṇṭapas* to serve different functions. These *maṇṭapas* being open all-round, required broad *kapōta* to protect it from rain and shine. Therefore, such *maṇṭapas* have broad double flexured *kapōtas* and are of the second type discussed already.

Vājanas of the Vijayanagara period are decorated with boldly relieved *vyāmālas* [23], *simhamālas*[24], *cakravākas*[25] and various mythical and natural animals (pl-77). They are neatly executed to appear prominently in the elevation of the temple. A notable feature of the *vājana* of the Amman shrine of the Betarayaswamy temple at Denkanikota is that of the relief of deers carved inside the panels.

HĀRA (pl-79)

Hāra is the parapet of the temple. It is a hand wall. It is optional in the construction of the temple. *Hāra* does not find a place in the *ṣaḍvarga* of the temple but in the dravidian architecture. *Hāra* is normally constructed to give an elegant elevation to the temple. *Hāra* literally means a garland. Another expression used in the Texts for the *hāra* is "*pramālikā*", which means a special garland. Therefore, in the context of architecture, *hāra* is a garland of miniature pavilions. The pavilions that are found in the *hāra* are of three types. On plan they are square, rectangular and apsidal. Therefore, their canopies are pointed, wagon-vaulted and apsidal respectively. The square

pavilion with pointed canopy is called *kūṭa*, the pavilion with wagon-vaulted canopy is called *śāla* and the apsidal pavilion with *gajapṛṣṭa* (elephant back like) canopy is called the *pañjara*. Thus the *hāra* is a 'garland' or chain of *kūṭa*, *śāla* and *pañjara* pavilions[26]. Depending upon the necessity these pavilions are arranged alternatively in the construction of the parapet. The *kūṭa* pavilions are generally placed on the corners and in the intermediate spaces if required. The *śālas* are generally placed at the *bhadra* projection of the temple plan. *Pañjaras* are at the interspaces of *kūṭa* and *śāla*. The interspaces of these pavilions are generally connected through a hand-wall and this hand-wall is called *hārāntara*. The *hārāntaras* are provided with a coping and the copings are often decorated with *alpanāsis* and the body of the *hārāntara* on its outer side is also decorated with *vṛttasphuṭitas*[27] and relief sculptures. Thus a continuous architecturally well defined parapet is designed and constructed above the shrine in dravidian style.

In this context, an elaboration regarding the nature of the *kūṭa*, *śāla* and *pañjara* is not out of place as the Texts describe these pavilions quite elaborately. Initially, it is to be stated that all these pavilions conform to the *ṣaḍvarga* class of structures.

KŪṬA: Kūṭa is a square pavilion. Texts mention that the *kūṭa* can be circular or octagonal. But only square pavilions are noticed. It is built like any other structure on an elevated and moulded plinth. It consists of four pillars and is covered with a canopy, which is square at the bottom and sloped and rounded in the apex. It is crowned by a single *stūpi* (finial). The canopy of the *kūṭa* is to be decorated on all its four sides by *alpanāsis*. The synonymous term for the *kūṭa* is '*sauṣṭikam*'[28]. In the elevation in between the pillars relief sculptures are also often carved. In the parapet, the *kūṭas* are generally carved at the corners. Therefore, it is called by the name '*karṇakūṭa*'. If the plan of the temple consists of *pratikarṇas*, at that part also a *kūṭa* pavilion will be carved in the parapet.

ŚĀLA: *Śāla* is a pavilion oblong on plan. The Texts mention that it should be of the "*sabhākāra*"[29] i.e. an oblong or rectangular hall. The synonym of *śāla* is '*kōṣṭaka*'[30], the use of which may lead to confusion. In the elevation it consists of a moulded plinth, four pillars placed on the four corners supporting an oblong wagon- vaulted roof. The two ends of the wagon vault are made semi circular or horseshoe- shaped or gabled. It is crowned by a prominent *kīrtimukha*, therefore it is called by the name *mahānāsi*. The two oblong sides also are provided with *mahānāsis*. The ridge of the coping is provided with a row of finials, which are always uneven in number starting from three. The Texts prescribe that the oblong side of the *śāla* pavilion should consist of a *bhadra* projection (*bhadranīḍa*) surmounted by a *mahānāsi*[31]. On the *bhadra* may be provided a niche, which again is a miniature form of the *śāla* pavilion. In the *śālas* of the parapet relief sculptures are often carved in the *bhadranīḍas*.

PAÑJARA: *Pañjara* is a pavilion, which is apsidal on plan. Normally, the façade of the *pañjaras* are shown in the parapet. *Pañjaras* are also provided with an elevated plinth, two pillars in the front and a semi circular façade, often mounted with a *kīrtimukha* at the apex. In the façade of the pavilion, between the pillars, a relief sculpture is often carved. *Pañjaras* are placed always perpendicular to the line of the parapet, so that the façade of the *pañjara* faces front. (exception to this is also not absent).

*Hāra*s are provided for the shrine, the different *talas* of the *prāsāda*, the *gūḍhamaṇṭapa*, porches, the *mālikas* surrounding the courtyard, the different types of maṇṭapas in the temple complex, the *gōpura* on the gateway and sometimes even on the *prākāra* wall.

Hāra is a feature of the dravidian architecture since the early times. The Pallava, Badami Chalukya and Chola temples possess the *hāras* on different buildings mentioned above. The *hāras* of the early temples were of stone in which the temple was built. During the period of the Cholas, construction of the tower and parapet in soft medium began. Some of the

Chola temples built of stone possess the tower above the *garbhagṛha*, which is of brick and mortar and these towers have *hāras* in their *talas* in the same media. The earliest such towers are noticed in Chinthalpadi[32] and Kambainallur[33]. These towers, because of their soft medium, due to ravages of time and weather, are dilapidated and some have been restored to their original form in recent times. These towers possess *hāra* on their different *talas*.

During the Vijayanagara period, the construction of towers above the sanctum and the gateways in soft medium became the norm of the day. Number of towers above the sanctums and gateways are found in the region of our study. The trend of the Vijayanagara days was to make the tower above the sanctum small in size. In contrast to this the towers of the gateways were made bigger and sometimes even massive. Generally towers above the sanctum were simple in their execution and also less in their *talas*. Occasionally these *talas* of the tower were also decorated with stucco sculptures of religious interest. These stucco sculptures were of lime and mortar finished over a core made of bamboo reeds and coir threads. Similar was the way of decorating the *talas* of the *gōpuras* also. But the stucco sculptural decoration on the *gōpura* was quantitatively more. Sculptures of mythological and secular themes were provided to each of the *talas* all-round and sometimes, were painted with different colours. Of the decorations of the *gōpura*, the noteworthy portion of the tower is the coping, which is made exquisitely ornamental in nature. The semicircular ends of the oblong vaulted coping of the *gōpura* were provided with massive and prominently projecting *kīrtimukhas* from the mouths of which emerge profusely carved floral motifs that spreads on the sides of the *mahānāsi*. The ridge of the oblong roof was provided with a row of finials flanked by 'cow horn' shaped motifs. The centre of the two oblong sides of the *śāla* coping was also provided with prodigally designed *mahānāsi*.

During the Vijayanagara period, the quality of the *hāra* decoration on the parapet of the temples suffers quality of carving as well as the variety of

designs. The *hāras* of these temples are no longer a chain of mixed types of pavilions. Depending upon the sculptural decorations, the pavilions are designed. Importance is given to sculptural decoration than the architectural forms of the pavilions. Stucco sculptures of *sthānaka, āsīna* and *śayana* postures were placed here. To suit the nature of the posture of the sculptures, the pavilions are designed. Attention for decoration was given only to the façade of these pavilions. The sides of the pavilions are mostly ignored. Therefore, they give a stereotype appearance and sometimes even look monotoned if not monotonous.

UTTARA (ARCHITRAVE / BEAM)

The architrave is the beam placed above the pillar. This covers the span between the two pillars. Architrave is used to take the load of the ceiling. Most of the architraves of the region of our study are plain. Sometimes, they are horizontally moulded or indented. In the temples of the Vijayanagara period, they are often carved with scalloped lotus petals. Occasionally, they are also carved with a frieze of *vyālas* or *hamsas* or creeper scrolls etc.

By 16th century, i.e., during the Vijayanagara period the decorations of the architraves become more gorgeous and exuberant. All kinds of subject matters like the *aṣṭdikpālakas, saptarṣis* and panels depicting episodes form Shaiva mythology are found in good numbers (pls 80-81).

VITĀNA (CEILING)

The ceilings found in the temples in the region of our study are often treated in a very simple way. They are no doubt divided into different sections by the network of architraves. Except for the central part of the ceiling of the hall the rest of the parts are plain and simple. The ceilings of the temples are covered by the slabs, dressed on the lower portion and the sides, while they are undressed on the outer part. The observation made above is regarding the construction of the ceiling of the halls, pavilions, cloisters and other simple constructions.

In the treatment of the central part of the *gūḍhamaṇṭapa* ceiling special attention is normally given for its surface treatment. The earliest temples of the region of our study, which are Nolamba structures, possess the *aṣṭdikpālakas* panel, carved in the central bay, which is divided into nine panels of equal size (pl-82). The *aṣṭdikpālaka* panels surround the central panel, which generally contains the relief of the form of the presiding deity of the temple i.e. Shiva. The Kalyana Chalukyas and Hoysalas continued this tradition in their heartland, in a different form. The carving of such panels in the *gūḍhamaṇṭapa* is a practice found in the Karnataka style.

The temples built during the Chola rule in the area of our study, as already stated, contain only the sanctum and a vestibule in front. Hardly a *gūḍhamaṇṭapa* built contemporarily, is seen in this region. In the additions made to Chola temples during later time, generally, *nābhicchanda* ceiling is constructed. Most of the temples possess a blossomed lotus motif carved on the central part of the ceilings (pl-83).

Nābhicchanda roof is similar to the lantern roof of the western architecture. It's a very simple and effective method of covering a span. The construction consists of placing stone slabs at the four corners of the square diagonally to the preceding square. This method is repeated till the area is covered to the required size. Finally one capstone is placed at the top. In this method in the lower portion of the roof a big void is formed while its outer portion becomes bulbous. The surface of the void is trimmed or decorated according to the need to get a fine ornamental domical ceiling. The Hoysala artists excelled all other artists in this field. Such decorative ceilings are also called by the name '*bhuvaneśwari*'. In a solitary instance at the Amman shrine in the premises of Betarayaswami temple at Denkani kota, Krishnagiri dist. an ornate *nābhicchanda* is carved.

During the Vijayanagara period the tradition of carving ornate ceilings was introduced in the region of our study. Beautiful *vitānas* come into being, with highly ornate lotus flowers, blossomed with three or four rows of petals.

Beautiful parrots are carved surrounding the lotus (pl-84). On the four corners of the *vitāna,* stone chains are provided (pl-85). The ceilings of the *ardhamaṇṭapas* and the *garbhagṛhas* were normally constructed in the *nābhicchanda* method. In a solitary instance, the ceiling of the *ardhamaṇṭapa* is decorated with a panel of dancers and musicians (pl-82a).

References

1	*uttarādi pradēśāntam sarvēṣām prastarōdayam||*
	Mānasāra Ch-16,Verse- 6
2	Mānasāra Ch-16,Verse- 23a
3	Ibid- verse 23b-24a
4	Ibid – verse 26
5	Ibid-verse 27
6	Ibid-verse 24b-25
7	Someshwra temple at Kurudumale
8	Mānasāra Ch-17,Verse
9	Someshwra temple at Kurudumale
10	Someshwra temple at Kurudumale
11	Mānasāra Ch-17,Verse
12	Pallava monolithic rathas and Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi possess *nāsis* with shovel shaped crestings
13	Kuntishwara temple at Devarakundani, Vepanapalli taluk, Krishnagiri dist.
14	Rama temple at Tenkaraikottai, Harur takuk, Dharmapuri dist.
15	Kuntishwara temple at Devarakundani, Vepanapalli taluk, Krishnagiri dist
16	Sangameshwara temple at Pattadakkal
17	Monier Williams- Sanskrit English Dictionary
18	Mānasāra Ch-17,Verse
19	Kunneshwara temple at Kunnamalai, Namakkal
20	Ponneshwara at Valavanadi
21	Shiva temple at Veeraganur, Attur taluk, Salem dist.
22	Shiva temple at Adhiyaman kottai, Dharmapuri.
23	Adikeshava temple at Paruttipalli, Tiruchengodu.
24	Shiva temple at Veeraganur, Attur taluk, Salem dist.
25	Devi shrine at Shiva temple at Veeraganur, Attur taluk, Salem dist.
26	Kāmikāgama Ch- 51, vs 92
27	Mayamata Ch 21, v 84-86a
28	Ibid Ch 20- verse 9
29	Ibid Ch 24.-v 8
30	Ibid Ch 20- v 9
31	Ibid Ch 20, v-7
32	Shivanishwara temple at Chintalpadi, Harur taluk, Dharmapuri dist.
33	Desinatha temple at Kamabainallur, Harur taluk, Dharmapuri dist.