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TEMPLES ARCHITECTURE IN TELANGANA – A STUDY

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Introduction

A newly formed state in India, Telangana has a reputation of having its core in holiness. The state was ruled by many dynasties namely the Kakatiya, Chalukyas, and the Mauryas. These kingdoms have left their imprint on the state and their legacy now lives in the popular places of worship. The various temples in Telangana are solid examples of grandeur and marvel. Boasting of an amazing architecture these shrines also have loads of stories veiled between them, giving them an interesting angle.

Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple, Telangana

Rudreshwara, popularly known as Ramappa Temple, is located in the village of Palampet approximately 200km north-east of Hyderabad, in the State of Telangana. It is the main Shiva temple in a walled complex built during the Kakatiyan period (1123–1323 CE) under rulers Rudradeva and Recharla Rudra. Construction of the sandstone temple began in 1213 CE and is believed to have continued over some 40 years. The building features decorated beams and pillars of carved granite and dolerite with a distinctive and pyramidal Vimana (horizontally stepped tower) made of lightweight porous bricks, so-called ‘floating bricks’, which reduced the weight of the roof structures. The temple’s sculptures of high artistic quality illustrate regional dance customs and Kakatiyan culture. Located at the foothills of a forested area and amidst agricultural fields, close to the shores of the Ramappa Cheruvu, a Kakatiya-built water reservoir, the choice of setting for the edifice followed the ideology and practice sanctioned in dharmic texts that temples are to be constructed to form an integral part of a natural setting, including hills, forests, springs, streams, lakes, catchment areas, and agricultural lands.

Thousand Pillar Temple

The most popular place to visit in Warangal is the Thousand Pillars Temple, located at the base of Hanamkonda hill. It was built in 12th century by the Kakatiya King Rudra Deva. Dedicated primarily to Lord Shiva, this temple is also known by the name of Sri Rudreshwara Swamy Temple. At this temple, three deities- Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu and Lord Surya are worshipped. They are known as Trikotalayam. There are three shrines, one for each deity.

Rudreswara Temple locally known as Veyisthambala Gudi (Thousand pillars temple) is one of the fine and earliest available examples of Kakatiya art, architecture and sculpture. It was built by Rudra Deva and named after him as ‘Sri Rudreswara Swamy temple with the presiding deity as Rudreswara, in 1163 AD in the style of later Chalukyan and early Kakatiyan Architecture, star-shaped and triple shrined (Trikotalaya). The temple is a fine specimen of architecture and sculpture with One thousand pillars. There are richly carved pillars, perforated screens, exquisite icons, rock cut elephants and the monolithic dolerite Nandi as components of the temple. Strengthening of foundations like sandbox technique, the skill of Kakatiya sculptors is manifest in adroit craftsmanship and flawless ivory carving technique in their art. The ingenuity of Kakatiya sculptors is visible in likes of lathe turned, and shiny polish in dolerite and granite stone sculpture and craftwork of Nava Rangamandapa.

Currently under the maintenance of Archaeological Survey of India, Thousand Pillar Temple is known for intricately carved pillars. A massive sculpture of Nandi, carved out of a single rock, is another attraction of this temple. Rock cut elephants and exquisite engravings at the temple are also worth noticing.

Vemulawada Rajanna Temple

Vemulawada is home to one of the famous temples devoted to Lord Shiva in the state of Telangana. Popularly called as Dakshina Kasi, the devotees at this temple worship the presiding deity, Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy. The temple complex is also home to Sri Raja Rajeshwari Devi temple and also a holy idol of Sri Laxmi Sahitha Sidhi Vinayaka. The main presiding deity here is also fondly called as Rajanna. The temple is thronged by thousands of devotees during festivals especially Shivarathri and other auspicious occasions. Rock cut inscriptions found in and around Vemulawada Temple establish the historical importance of this place which was the capital of the Vemulawada Chalukyas, from 750 AD to 973AD.

Tradition associates with this place with famous Telugu poet “Bheemakavi” but there is more definite proof of the famous Kannada poet “Pampa” living here as the court poet of Arikesari-II and dedicated his “Kannada Bharatha” to his royal patronage.



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This place is highly mystical. People with challenges in their life would visit this temple, to gain prosperity. Health-related challenges are often cured by the magnificent grace of the Lord. People with financial constraints would come to this temple to worship Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Vishnu here. Other prayers like the job, career, life partner, progeny, and good health are also bestowed here.

Kaleshwaram Temple

According to historical evidence, Kaleswara Temple has a history of more than two thousand years. AD There is historical evidence that the Chalukya Bhima, who ruled Telangana between 892-921 AD, built this temple. It is also known from the inscriptions that the Kakatiyas restored the dilapidated temple in the later period. The inscriptions of the temple state that Kakatiya Prataparudra took a golden weight and presented it to Sri Kaleshwara Swamy. Based on the found inscriptions, it is evident that Vijayanagara Lord Shri Krishna Devarayalu also arranged adequate facilities for the maintenance of the temple.

Kaleshwaram is a village in Mahadevpur Mandal in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district in the Indian state of Telangana. This name refers more broadly to the state of Telangana & Kaleshwaram Temple.

Kaleshwaram is at the juncture of the rivers Godavari and its Pranahita tributary. It is 277 kilometres from Hyderabad, 125 kilometres from Karimnagar, 130 kilometres from Warangal, 95 kilometres from Ramagundam railway station, 60 kilometres from Godavarikhani, 75 kilometres from Parkal and 60 kilometres from Manthani. This place is also popularly known as second Kashi or southern Indian Kashi. It is 10 kilometres from Sironcha, Maharashtra.

It is the site of a temple of the Hindu god Shiva. The temple is significant because of the two Shiva Lingas that are found on a single pedestal. These Linga are named Lord Shiva and Lord Yama. Collectively, they are known as Kaleshwara Mukteswara Swamy. Kaleshwaram is one of three Shiva temples mentioned in Trilinga Desham, or "Land of Three Lingas."

The holy place draws tourists during the Karthika Month of the Indian Calendar, 16 November – 15 December. Holy baths are held during 6–17 of December. People who bathe here first visit Lord Ganesha, then pray to Lord Yama and then to Lord Shiva. Vasavi kanyaka Parameshwari temple, Kaleshwaram In Year 2018 March a new temple Sri Vasavi Kanyaka Parameshwari temple was opened near Kaleshwara Mukteswara Swamy Temple. Adjacent to it we have a new Nitya Anna Dhana Vysya Satram too. Temple is funded and built by Rajaiah and Satyavathi Devi Daram. Everyday rituals are being performed by priests.

Siddeshwara Temple

Siddeshwara Temple is located in Hanamkonda at a distance of about 4 Km from the city centre of Warangal and 142 Km from Hyderabad. The temple is also known as Paschimdwara Mukha Temple because of its entrance gate facing west. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva like many other temples of South India. This is one of the most ancient temples of the Telangana region and holds a significant place in the hearts of people not because of its religious importance but also for its architecture style. It is one of the most important temple for all the devotees of Lord Shiva and for all the people who have interest in architecture and ancient history. Siddeshwara temple is built in Chalukya style. There are many carvings engraved on walls and pillars of the temple which makes it unique in its style from other temples of India. The temple has a splendid appearance due to these carvings. The temple is located in Hanamkonda Hills and is a marvel in itself. One of the unique things about the architecture of this temple is that it is Paschimdwara Mukha means that its entrance gate is facing west unlike other temples of India. People find peace to their mind after visiting the temple.

Pachala Someswara Temple is a Saivite Hindu temple located in Panagal of Nalgonda district, Telangana, India. It is a popular pilgrimage site during Maha Sivaratri. The idol of the deity here is carved out of green onyx which gives the temple its name - Pacha in Telugu means Green. The temple is in close proximity to Chaya Someswara Temple, another Saivite shrine in Panagal. The temples dates to 11th to 12th centuries CE and was probably built during the rule of Kunduru Chodas and Prataparudra I of Kakatiya Empire over the Panagal region.

Based on the inscriptional evidence and architectural style of the temple, it is dated to the 11th-12th century CE. The temple was probably built during the rule of Kanduru Chodas and Prataparudra I of Kakatiya Empire over the Panagal region. The ground plan of the temple is markedly different from other shrines in Telangana. It has four shrines and three of the shrines are arranged on the western side while one is on the eastern side with a common and large rectangular mandapam. The main shrine is dedicated to



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Shiva who is in the form of a Linga made out of green onyx stone (Pacha in Telugu) and hence the name Pachala Someswara. It has a pillared hall at the end of which is a Nandi facing the presiding deity Pachala Someswara (Siva linga).

The temple has 70 pillars with intricate carvings depicting stories of Vishnu and Shiva. Scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata were exquisitely carved onto the pillars and the walls of the temple. One of the temple legends states that just below the shining lingam in the temple there used to be a very big and brilliant emerald which was stolen during the numerous Islamic raids in the region.

Yadagiri Gutta Temple

Sri Lakshminarasimha Swamy Temple or Yadagirigutta is a popular Hindu Temple devoted to Lord Narasimha Swamy, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. It is situated over a hillock in the Nalgonda district, Telangana at a distance of 6 km from Riagir Railway station, 13 km from Bhongir and around 60 kilometers from the capital city of Hyderabad.

Yadagirigutta is a unique and pleasant hillock that enjoys moderate climate in all seasons. The place witnesses a heavy rush of devotees, not less than 5000-8000 pilgrims on average each day for offering their vows, performing pujas, kalyanam, abhisekam etc. while the crowd grows substantially during weekends, holidays and festivals.

According to legend in Tretayugam, there was a sage called Yadarishi, who was son of the great sage Rishyasringa and Santa Devi and performed penance inside a cave with Anjaneya's blessings. Pleased with his devotion Lord Narasimha reportedly appeared before him in five different forms namely Sri Jwala Narasimha, Sri Gandabherunda, Sri Yogananda, Sri Ugra and Sri Lakshminarasimha which later manifested into finely sculpted forms and hence it is worshiped as Pancha Narasimha Kshetram. According to Skanda Purana, there is a cave temple of Lord Vishnu where several years ago the invincible Sudharshna chakra moved in the direction like a compass guiding them towards this temple. Here Aaradhana and Puja are performed as per Pancharatra Agamam. The puja vidhanam here is done as prescribed by Late Sri Vangeepuram Narasimhacharyulu who had served as Sthanacharya of this famous temple. In 15th Century, the Vijayanagara king Sri Krishnadevarayalu had mentioned about the temple in autobiography that before going to war he always visited the temple praying the lord for victory. The temple town has facilities for accommodation of pilgrims while many tonsure their heads after fulfillment of a wish. The town is well connected by a ghat road to the capital and nearby key towns. There are many restaurants here for the sake of devotees while the devasthanam board continues to make other amenities available for the public including special darshan, kalyanam, providing prasadam etc. The temple is highly revered in the Telangana region.

Jogulamba Temple

Jogulamba temple is regarded as a Shakti Peetha where Sati Devi's upper teeth fell. The mythology of Daksha yagna and Sati's self immolation is the origin story of Shakti Peethas. The original temple was reportedly built in seventh century CE. It was grounded by Bahmani Sultans in 1390 CE. Vijayanagara Emperor Harihara Raya II was said to have sent his army to fight the Bahmani Sultan's army and fortified the temple complex to stop further attacks. It was said that the main idol was shifted to the nearby Bala Brahma temple in the Navabrahma temple complex. Since then, the idol had been worshipped in a secluded place in the Bala Brahma temple. Jogulamba temple was rebuilt at its former location in 2005 and the original idol was installed in the new temple. Jogulamba temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Goddess Jogulamba, a form of Shakti located in Alampur, Telangana, India. The temple is one of the Maha Shakti Peethas, a group of eighteen (Ashtadasa) temples considered the most significant shrines and pilgrimage destinations in Shaktism. Alampur is located on the banks of the Tungabhadra river near its confluence with Krishna river. Jogulamba temple is located in the same complex as that of the Navabrahma Temples, a group of nine Shiva temples built in the seventh-eighth century CE.

The principal deities at the Jogulamba temple are Jogulamba and Balabrahmeswara, a form of Shiva. In this temple Goddess Jogulamba is seen seated on a corpse with scorpion, frog, and lizard on the head. The word Jogulamba is said to be derived from the Telugu word Yogula Amma which means Mother of Yogis. In 2019, the temple was included under the PRASAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation Advancement Drive) scheme of the Government of India.

Chilkur Balaji Temple

Chilkur Balaji Temple, popularly known as "Visa Balaji Temple", is an ancient Hindu temple of Lord Balaji on the banks of Osman Sagar in Rangareddy District in Telangana. It is one of the oldest temples in Hyderabad Dist earlier now in Rangareddy Dist. built during the time of Madanna and Akkanna, the uncles of Bhakta Ramadas.



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This temple has no hundi and neither accepts any money from devotees. VAK Books also known as the Voice of Temples with religious news is available here. This is one of the special Temples in India with no green channel or privileges for VIP's. The only other such temple is the Jalaram temple in Virpur (Rajkot), Gujarat. This temple fought and won the right to stay out of government control. The only another such temple is "Ramanuj Kot", a temple in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

Bhadrakali Temple

Bhadrakali Temple is one of the oldest temples for Goddess Bhadrakali, situated on a hilltop between the two cities of Hanamkonda and Warangal, Telangana, India.

The temple is believed to be built in 625 A.D by the King Pulakeshin II of Chalukya dynasty to commemorate his victory over Vengi region of Andhra Desham, as per the writings on the temple wall.

Kakatiya kings later have adopted the temple and considered Goddess Bhadrakali as their "Kula Devatha". A lake was also built by Ganapati-deva adjacent to the temple. Due to the fall of Kakatiya dynasty to the Muslim rulers of Delhi, the temple lost its prominence. The Kakatiyas negotiated a truce with Allauddin Khilji by offering the diamond in exchange not to be invaded. He sent his slave and personal confidant Malik Kufur to personally transport the diamond. In 1950, the temple was renovated by Sri Ganesh Rao Sastri a devi upasaka along with Gujrati businessman Shri Maganlal.

After that the help of a local public and other affluent locals. Aparaj Ekadashi is observed as Goddess Bhadrakali Ekadashi. The history of the Koh-i-Noor diamond; part of British Crown Jewels, is closely associated with this temple as it was installed, as the left eye of Goddess Bhadrakali by the Kakatiya dynasty.

Padmakshi Temple

Padmakshi Temple is one of the oldest temples in the Hanamakonda area of Telangana, India. It is dedicated to the Hindu goddess Padmakshi (Lakshmi), and also features Jain imagery.

The site originally had a Shaivite cave temple, and a Jain shrine was established in 1117 CE, during the rule of the Kakatiya chief Prola II, who was himself a Shaivite. Some time later, the Jain shrine was replaced by a Hindu temple. The Jains attempted to regain control of the site in the 19th century, but a commission set up the Nizam of Hyderabad concluded that the site originally hosted a Hindu shrine.

The site originally had a Shaivite cave temple. The artificial caves, located to the west of the present-day temple, were probably carved before the 5th century CE, as they are almost identical to the early Brahmanical caves. A Jain shrine was probably added during the rule of the Chalukyas of Vatapi or the Rashtrakutas.

A 1117 CE inscription found at the temple records the construction of a Jain shrine named Kadalalaya-basadi, and a gift of land to this shrine. The site probably already had Jain presence by this time. Mailama, the wife of the Kakatiya minister Betanapergada, commissioned the shrine. Medarasa of Ugravadi (Meda II), who held the office of Maha-mandaleshvara, donated the land. Betana was a minister of the Kakatiya chief Prola II, who was a Shaivite and a vassal of the Chalukyas of Kalyani. Ugravadi appears to be the name of a historical region comprising the present-day Mulugu and Narasampet talukas.

Probably sometime after the 1156 CE, the Brahmanical shrine replaced the Jain shrine, possibly due to the influence of the Veerashaivas. In the 19th century, the Jains appealed to the Nizam of Hyderabad to grant them the control of the site, arguing that it was originally a Jain shrine. The Nizam instituted a commission to investigate the Jain claim, and concluded that the earliest shrine at the site belonged to the Hindus. In 1869 CE, the Nizam granted land for the maintenance of the temple.

Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy Temple

Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy Temple is a temple dedicated to Lord Anjaneya Swamy. It is one of the famous temples, located in Muthyumpeta village of Mallial mandal, Jagtial district, Telangana, India. It is located about 15 km from Jagtial, 35 km from Karimnagar.



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According to the folklore, the temple was constructed by a cowherd about 300 years ago. The present-day temple was renovated 160 years ago by Krishna Rao Deshmukh. Besides the main deity Anjaneya swamy, the temple also has the idols of Lord Venkateswara, Goddess Alwaarula and Goddess Lakshmi.

Devotees believe that people who do not have children, when offer puja for 40 days at this temple, then they will be blessed with a child And Devotees believe that people who have mental disability or other health diseases, when offer puja for 40 days at this temple, then they will be cured.

Keesaragutta Temple

Keesaragutta Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva and his consort Parvati at Keesaragutta , Keesara Village in Medchal-Malkajgiri district, Telangana, India. It is about 30 km from Hyderabad and 12 km from ECIL. It is located on a small hillock. The temple draws up to lakhs of devotees on the Maha Shivaratri festival and during the Kartika month of the Hindu calendar. Legend has it that Rama installed the lingam here to atone for the sin of killing Ravana, who was a brahmin by birth but a demon by nature. He selected this beautiful valley surrounded by hills and verdant greenery for the purpose and ordered Hanuman to bring a lingam from Varanasi, believed to be Shiva's favourite place. Hanuman was late in arriving with the lingam and as the auspicious hour was nearing, Shiva himself, appeared before Rama and presented a lingam to him for installation. Hence the lingam in the temple is called a Swayambhu Linga. It is also called Ramalingeswara as Rama had installed the lingam.

Hanuman returned with 101 lingams for selection from Varanasi and felt aggrieved at not having his lingam installed. Hence, he threw them all over the area. Even to this day several lingams are found scattered all over the place outside the temple. These lingams are worshipped along with the lingam in the sanctum of the temple to this day.

To pacify Hanuman, Rama ordained that precedence would be given to him for worship at the temple. He also said that the hillock where the lingam was installed would bear his name Kesarigiri that is, Hanuman, the son of Kesari. Over a period of time, it has colloquially transformed and is now known as Keesara and the hill as Keesaragutta. Ever since, the rituals follow the command of Rama.

Sanghi Temple

Sanghi Temple, located at Sanghi Nagar in Telangana in India, is about 35 km from Hyderabad city. The sacred Raja Gopuram, which is very tall, can be seen from several kilometers away. The temple is located on the top of Paramanand Giri hill, which attracts a number of devotees. The temple is managed by Mrs Anita Sanghi of the Sanghi Family.

Conclusion

Every place of worship across the country has a unique aspect to them which pulls millions of people from near and far. Apart from the peace and tranquil environment surrounding these holy institutions, the destinations are also rich in heritage. The temples in Telangana evoke such architectural wonder that amplifies its beauty. The state has many places of worship to its name and to make your travel itinerary more diverse we have churned out a tailored list that contains some of the renowned places for pilgrimage. Many temples were constructed during their reign, which served as social networks for people of all classes. The thousand pillar temple and Ramappa temple are living examples of the great Kakatiya architecture, with many marvels like floating stones and exquisitely carved sculptures adorning these beautiful shrines. Apart from these temples, the state of Telangana has many ancient temples including a Shaktipeetam in Alampur and one of the Pancha Narasimha Kshetras.

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