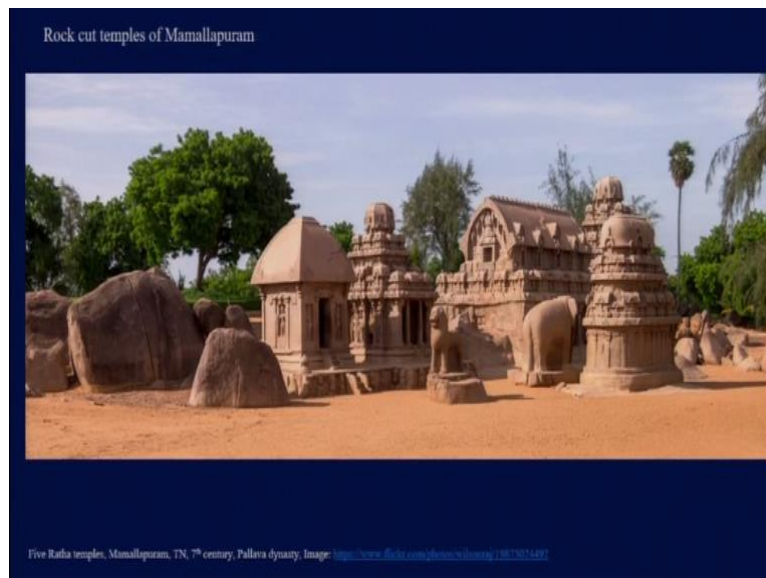


Indian Art: Materials, Techniques and Artistic Practices
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Lecture – 18

Hello everyone. We will be continuing on our theme on Hindu temples and architecture. And here as we have already covered some of the aspects of the early architecture building in the Hindu context. We have seen that how the rock cut structures as well as the structures which are made from individual blocks of stone or from brick they came into being and how they have already started to address the complexity of the ritualistic practices as well as the philosophy in Hinduism.

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Now, there are some of the other examples that we have here and today we will be getting into the rock cut structures as well as the temples and architecture building patronized by the Pallava kings in the state of Tamil Nadu today in southern India. So, what we have there are particular two sites that we will be talking about today that is Mamallapuram and Kanchipuram.

So, Mamallapuram being a port city which is situated by the Bay of Bengal, which is around 40 kilometres from the city of Chennai today and there we see there are a number of rock cut structures. So, that starting with a temple on the top of the hill to there are those five very celebrated ratha structures or the chariot like structures and then there is also a Shore temple. So, it is believed that there were such temples like the Shore temple which were swept away in the ocean.

So, we see that this is a particular site which is of high interest to all of us how this building activity that had flourished there between 7th and 8th centuries and those were patronized by the Pallavas. Now, the other thing that we find there is that how this particular site, it was not really the capital city of the Pallavas, but this site was perhaps used as a place for different kinds of experimentation.

So, this is basically a space for different kinds of artistic experimentations that we can imagine that had taken place in the 7th and 8th centuries. So, the kinds of experimentation which still talk about today in the art studios and in the workshops, so Mamallapuram should also be related to that kind of experiments if we think about it some 1200 or 1300 years back. Now, what happened in Mamallapuram?

So, in Mamallapuram we see that there have been those rock structures, sandstone structures and then these ones the sculptors and architects they have carved these magnificent structures and they have made the temple forms as well as reliefs and so on. And here we have on screen at the 5 ratha temples and these ratha temples being very important as we know that they are the ones they sort of show some of the early developments in southern Indian art and early developments of southern Indian temple structures, the Hindu temple structures.

Now, what are some of the traits are the features that we see there? So, I will start with the structure here which look very similar to the kind of the temple structures that we see today and in which we find that this particular temple, the main temple is called vimana. And in this vimana what we have here is that there is also this entrance porch, which we have already addressed how there needs to be an entrance porch for the devotees to approach the temple.

And on the top of the temple, we have this very elaborately made shikhara. So, here what we have there is a pyramidal roof. So, if we think about the roofs we have seen in Bhubaneswar and so on, the roof we see that that is slightly different from this pyramidal roof that we have here. And here again, we have the vertical divisions, but the vertical divisions, this parallel panels that we have here they are much more distinctive than the ones that we have seen in the northern Indian temples or the central Indian ones.

And here on in the horizontal registers that we have here we see that there are those individual units which look like a barrel roofed temple form. So, all those forms and then here we have this particular forms here as well. So, the replication of this temple like form or the shikara or the superstructure and then on the top of the superstructure, this idea of multiplication and replications that already we have studied so far is also here in this temple as well.

And apart from this, what we also see in the body of this temple are there are those vertical projections which sort of come out of the main structure of the temple and then there are elaborate carvings. Usually in these vertical projections we have that individual figures carved, individual or figures in groups and most of these carvings they show the deities, they are either part of a narrative or they are as granting boon or reassuring the devotees.

So, these kinds of structures are there and then these sculptures are sort of like carved out of the structures here. Now, on the top of this here, we do not really see an amalaka stone, but this is this cupola like structure that we find which is also called as stupika. As stupika is something that we can understand that this also resemblance the Buddha's stupas. So, it is not necessarily that we have to think that whether it came from the Buddhist practices or not.

But one can imagine that this kind of; this stupa or this particular piled like form is not only just there in the Buddhist practice, but it had already been there as we have seen very briefly in our discussion on the burial practices in Southern India where we see that there are those main hill-like forms or those stone structures which are erected vertically for marking a sacred space. So, it can be a much more sophisticated and polished form of that as well.

But in a way, we know that how this particular piled form or which has a vertical growth that marks a space which is sacred, which is divine and that is the reason we see that all these elements are there represented in this particular temple which is also known as the Dharmaraja temple or the temple which is dedicated to Dharmaraja Yudhishtira. Now, the other temple that we find here very interesting that is this Bhima ratha and in this one we have this barrel roof.

So, the barrel roof is something we find this long rectangular kind of this barrel roof and this barrel roof also has this chaitya to like opening, the chaitya the trefoil arch that we have already studied in the Buddhist context. We have already seen that how this form got prominence in

many sites, not only in Bihar and part of northern India, but also was there in the Deccan for example in Maharashtra and so on.

So, similar to that form that we have studied in Karla and Bhaja caves and so on, so this trefoil arch motif is here as well. And you can see that there are those bracket-like forms those are added here as well. And as I have already mentioned that they bear the resemblance to the earlier wooden structures, which might have looked like that. So, this barrel roof structure, we will also see that this structure is very important in the later architectural planning in southern India.

Now, apart from that we have another important structure and that is this particular ratha which is small in shape, but really relevant and this is the Draupadi ratha and which has again a pyramidal roof and on the top of that there must have been a cupola. And so, this is another structure that we find and this is a temple which is dedicated to the great goddess and this form it actually resemblance a heart like structure.

And a heart like structures we have already addressed in our discussions on Buddhism and so on, how the asceticism and monasticism they have something to do with the heart like structures, but this particular kind of heart like structures are not really commonly found in the Hindu context. As I have said if in the Buddhist context, we have seen that how the structures are made for communal use and then those are the ones which are made as monasteries or prayer halls and so on.

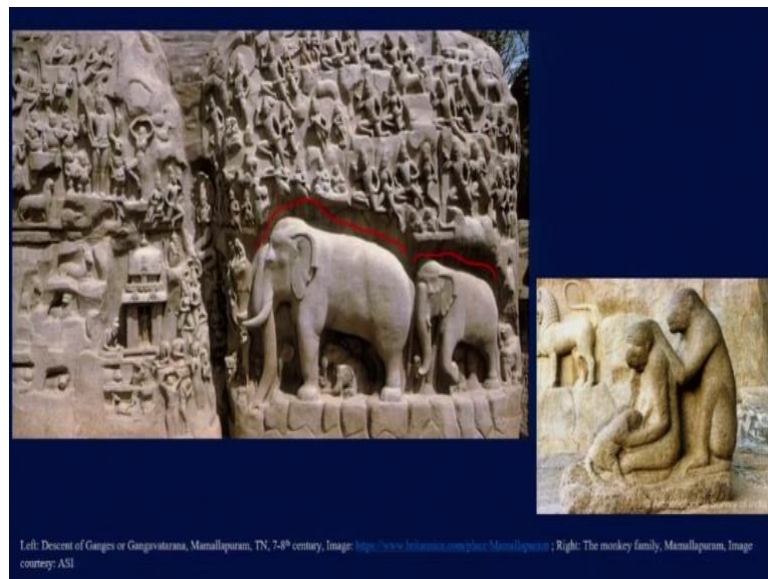
And as opposed to that in the Hindu belief we see that the structures are built from these two ideas. One is prasada which is the royal palace and then the other one is the womb chamber, which is the most important part of the temple where the deity figures are kept. So, this heart like structure we do not really find to be commonly used in the Hindu temples, but only we will be seeing this particular kind of structure in different pockets of the Indian subcontinent.

For example, in Bengal we find that how the terracotta temples, at least the ones we have them to be existing from 16th 17th century and so on, they also display this heart like form, but nowhere else we find that. Now, this particular structure since we see that this is one space, this is one place in which there are multiple kinds of architecture building that we have here.

So, that is the reason this place is considered very important site to understand the different ways in which architecture was perceived during this time.

And how these different ways of architecture building had also made a deep impact on the South Indian temple constructions in the later times. So, that is also the reasons why we find for these ratha structures and other temples, this is considered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. And of course, apart from these structures, we also have free standing the elephant and the lion figures who seem to be paying their homage to the deities in the temples.

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So from there, there is this another great panel that we find there in Mamallapuram which makes this site absolutely stunning and very important as well. And so this is a particular stone that we find that there was already this huge living rock structure which was there in that site. And then there was a recess in this particular rock structure, perhaps it was made by a water channel. So, the water channel certainly was not there when this rock was selected for this cultural activity.

However, this particular recessed area which appears like a river, so that was utilized by the sculptors and the artisans at this site and they have transformed this living rock into the story of the descent of Ganges onto the earth. So, this particular recess, this area that became a symbol of the river Ganges and from the very early times we find that river Ganges even though it flows in northern India that is considered to be one of the most sacred rivers in the Indian subcontinent alongside river Godavari, Kaveri, Narmada and so on.

So, those are the reasons why we find that the idea of the descent of Ganges which had been discussed in the Hindu mythologies that has been featured with all its grandeur and with all the possible details that can be featured here. Now, what we have here, how there are so many different things which are associated with it, that there are the celestial figures, the figures with halo on the back of their head that shows the divinity of them.

And these flying figures, the kind of gestures they have we have already discussed them in the context of Ellora and so on that how they are not walking, but they are flying so that is something that is shown in their gesture. So, this kind of flying figures that we see that all of them they flock towards the river Ganges and that is here and there is no personification of the river here.

So, for example in the Hindu belief we also find that how river Ganges is personified as the mother goddess figure, but she is not featured here as the mother goddess. However, we see that there is a naga figure, there is a hooded snake and this composite figure who is flowing here. So, it suggests that this particular area is actually water and beneath the water, there is the kingdom of the nagas and the other the creatures who do not inhabit the earth but they sort of inhabit in the water, right.

So, that is a way in which this particular area is marked as water and that is different from the areas around it like here and here. So, apart from that what we also see that there are different kinds of activities those are taking place. So, this particular figure here as we can see there is a man whom we find that is performing a tapasya or penance and then he is considered here as Bhagiratha and Bhagiratha is someone who is considered to be responsible for bringing the river Ganges to the earth.

And here we have the mighty figure of Lord Shiva and then there are other figures who sort of accompany him. Here, we also have a structure of a temple, which gives us a sense of how the simple forms of the temples existed during that time period. And here we see this typical like structure on the top of it and then of course this is a simple self here. So, these are all different kinds of expression that not only just talk about the mythologies in Hinduism.

But also gives us a sense of how the sculptors and the artisans in the 7th century, 8th century Mamallapuram they have seen the world and they have represented their contemporary

activities around it. Now, all these great details that we have in this panel they are matched by these mighty elephants. So, in a way this is a fantastic visual strategy. It is an ingenious visual strategy in which we find that how all those narrative details and everything.

If there were more narrative details, the narrative that we have on the upper register and on the left side of the screen that might have gone last. So, to balance those narrative details, all those minute things we see that the sculptors and the artisans they have made a very conscious choice of depicting these mighty elephants here. This huge form of these elephants they match the balance or the compliment all those intricate details.

And if we see that in which the elephants are carved, and not only just the elephant but all the other bodies are carved, they are carved with high naturalism. The skin is carved very smoothly and then with all the possible details with all the swellings of the muscles and everything else, so almost they are brought into life. Now very close to this particular panel which is also called Gangavatarana or the descent of Ganges.

Here, we also have another sculpture that is shown here on the right side of the screen which is called the monkey family. And this monkey family which is also one of my favourites, this is something where we find that there are those three monkeys; there is the mother monkey and then there is the baby and then there is perhaps the father monkey. And what we have here is it is a family of the monkeys that we have and how the mother monkey is caring for the baby.

And at the same time how the father monkey is perhaps just taking out the lice from the mother monkey's head, something that we see to be associated with monkeys all the time and that is also immortalized by this sculpture here. And unlike the treatment of the elephants that we see that is very smooth, here the structure of the monkeys is very rough, almost like this the furry skin of the monkeys that they have been shown here. And then the minimal details and everything that also adds to this very animated quality of the entire family that is represented.

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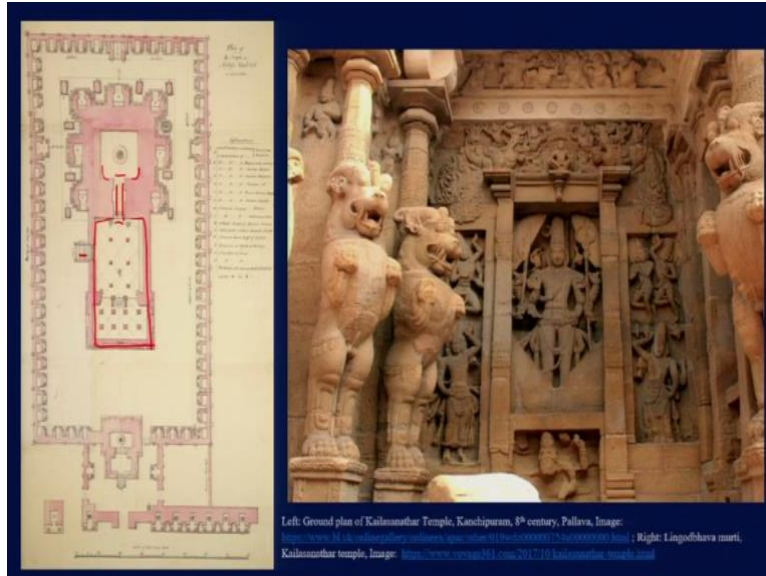
Now, the other things that we have here in this particular site of Mamallapuram is that there is this Shore temple as I have mentioned earlier. In the Shore temple we see there, this is perhaps one can imagine that how this particular form that we have seen in the Dharmaraja ratha that how these horizontal registers with the stupika forms on the top of them and this high pyramidal roof that is something here, all these things have been here in a more prominent form and the stupika on the top of it.

And then on the top here we have the finial or the kalasa. And this particular temple that we have the Shore temple, this has two garbhagrihas; in one there is a lord Shiva and the other one there is this Anantashayana Vishnu. Another feature that we find in these Pallava structures and that will be from the city of Kanchipuram which was the capital city of the Pallavas. And there we have some of the mighty temples.

For example, the one we have on the left side of the screen that comes from Vaikunta Perumal temple and that is a temple that is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and here we have a typical of Pallava lion pillar. So, the lion pillar will be very different from the kind of once we have spoken in the context of Ashokan pillars. And here what we have there are seated lions and those will form the base of the pillar and on the top of that the shaft sort of rises and then there is the capital.

So, for example the one we have on screen here and this became almost a very typical representation of the Pallava pillars that we see there.

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Now, if we see that the other developments in temple building and we will be coming back to the Kailasanatha temple which we have partly addressed in the earlier module about its paintings. And if we now see the kind of the development in terms of its ground plan and its iconographic programmatic, then we see that there are certain things that suggests how this making up the temple, the temple architecture got more and more complicated with time.

So, here what we have this is the main sanctum sanctorum of the Kailasanatha temple which houses this Lingam and which you can see that this is still the square structure and then the centre of it there is the Shiva Lingam, so which goes with the ground plan that we have studied. And then how there are more sort of projections and more additions to this temple proper those were not present earlier.

So, between the temple here like from the garbhagriha and then if this is the place we can imagine as the ceremonial hall or the mantapa and then there will be also like ardha mantapa, maha mantapa like the entrance porch and then how it opens into the main mantapa. So, this is basically is a pillared hall which is covered and there are stairways through which one can enter this place. And between the garbhagriha and mantapa there is this narrow space which is called under antarala.

And this is a place in which we find how the mantapa is made for ceremonial purposes, for rituals and so on. And from there, when one approaches the garbhagriha then they have to go through this narrow space so that it is not really like too many people can actually go inside. So, since garbhagriha is usually considered to be the space of seclusion where a devotee has

their one to one conversation with the gods and goddesses that is the reason there is this narrow space through which like not too many people can go inside it.

And of course, as I have said by this time perhaps the devotees would be allowed only until this point and not entirely in the garbhagriha. Now, the other thing that we also find that how this idea of the circumambulation around the temple keeping the right shoulder towards the temple and circumambulating it, something that we have already seen in the Buddhist practices as well that gave rise to having this the wall, which sort of like the enclosure wall around the temple.

So, we see that there is this enclosure wall which marks the sacred space, but it also sort of gives an opportunity for the devotees to circumambulate the entire space here like this. So, this is how we find that how the ideas about circumambulation, paying homage and respect to the deities and so on that also made a huge deal of impact on how the architecture is constructed.

So, from there if we see some of the ways in which the iconography had also developed and something I have already suggested that if in the Vaishnava iconography or the people who give prominence to the images of Vishnu or people who give prominence to the figure of Vishnu, then they will consider Vishnu to be the supreme deity in the entire universe for the Hindus. And then if we see that what happens for the Shaiva worshipers?

So here we see that how this iconography has shown that the Shiva being the prime deity of the universe, the supreme one, and this is a very particular figure that we find that is called Lingodbhavamurthy in which we have the Shiva Linga from which Shiva had appeared and then there is a story that how Vishnu and Brahma they have tried to find the base and top of this particular column of fire which also later on that became the Shiva linga.

So, this entire story that praises Shiva and also explains that why Lord Brahma is not worshipped in the Hindu temples. But also what we have here; this also shows how all these mythological stories and the narratives and everything else they have developed here and then how all these stories they also relate to the Hindu philosophy or at least like the Shaiva philosophy. And as I have said that how Vaikunta Perumal temple is also there in Kanchipuram.

So, if this is a temple that is dedicated to Kailasanatha or Lord Shiva and then the other temple Vaikunta Perumal that is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. So, both these belief systems we see them being like side by side in the same city and of course not to mention that Kanchipuram is also known for Kamakshi Amman temple that is also a manifestation of the great goddess.

Now, here in this particular sculpture in this exterior wall of this temple we see that these lion figures that we have already seen those, the seated lion figures, they appear here in a much more dynamic fashion that this is not just seated lion figures, but they are jumping. So, that is something that shows that it is not only just the iconography and the temple architecture that was being experimented with.

But also like how certain forms or how certain forms or motifs which have already been established and how the artisans and the sculptors during this time period they have also played with these forms further to make them much more dynamic, to add to the theatrical impact of this exterior walls of the temples. And this particular kind of this sculpting, these lion figures or these jumping lion figures that we find them they will be more sort of stylized.

And they will be more emphasized in the sculptures and the pillars in the later times during the Chola period and also in the Vijayanagara and Nayak period in southern India. Thank you.