

Evolution of Temple Architecture and Art Forms During The Kakatiya Dynasty

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ABSTRACT

The Kakatiya dynasty, who dominated most of the Deccan from the 10th to the 14th century CE, left an indelible mark on South Indian temple architecture and creative traditions. The Kakatiyas were an architectural family that emerged in the Telugu-speaking areas of what is now Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Their unique style combined aspects of Nagara, Chalukyan, Vesara, and Dravidian architecture with significant regional features. This study delves into the progressive development of Kakatiya temple architecture, highlighting the creative building techniques, space planning, sculptural brilliance, and incorporation of art forms including mythology, music, and dance. Studying famous structures like the Warangal Fort complex, the Thousand Pillar Temple at Hanamkonda, and the Ramappa Temple at Palampeta, the research demonstrates the technical prowess and creative brilliance of the Kakatiya builders and craftspeople. Additionally, the research delves into the ways in which the period's architectural and creative representations were influenced by religious beliefs, governmental authority, environmental factors, and cultural interactions. Aesthetic sophistication, technological ingenuity, and a profound fusion of art and religion were all on display in the Kakatiya temples, which the results show were more than just places of worship.

Keywords: *Warangal Fort, Ramappa Temple, Thousand Pillar Temple, Culture, Chalukya.*

I. Introduction

Over the course of about three centuries (c.950–1323 ce), the Kakatiyas exercised considerable control over the Deccan.Orugallu, which is now called Warangal, was their capital. Famous in the Telugu or Andhra regions was the Kakatiya dynasty. The Western Chalukyas of Kalyana were feudatories of Betaraja I, Prolaraja I, Betaraja II, and Durgaraja, among others, in the past. The

Kakatiya monarchy was officially recognised as a sovereign monarchy by Prola II. According to Vidyanadha's "Prataparudra Yashobhushanam," the Kakatiyas were so named because they paid homage to a deity known as "Kakati." The Kakatiyas were thus named for that reason. commonly revered by the Kakatiyas was Svayambhuva, commonly known as Siva. Additionally, the epigraphs mention that the Kakatiyas were originally from a Ratta or Rashtrakuta dynasty and then became Chaturdhakulajas or Sudras. In due time, the Delhi Sultanate took control of the region. They were called Sultanpur after being conquered twice: once by Alauddin Khalji for pillage and secondly by Ulugh Khan, son of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. Their capital was Hanamakonda before Orugallu. The famed Koh-i-Noor diamond was mined during the Kakatiya Dynasty. Rudramadevi, the renowned female monarch of the Kakatiya dynasty, was noted for her administrative prowess and statesmanship; it was during her reign that the Italian traveler Marco Polo visited.

Originally located in what is now Telangana state in northern India, the Kakatiya kingdom expanded its power to the coastal delta of Andhra between the Godavari and Krishna rivers. While constructing Hindu temples, the Kakatiyas—one of four southern Indian monarchies at the time—stayed true to long-established traditions of utilising indigenous materials and labour. There were already many temples with the same function, but the less internationally orientated temples of the hilly regions did not emerge until the reign of the Kakatiya empire.

Between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, the Kakatiya dynasty had absolute control over a large portion of what is now the Deccan region of India. Its boundaries extended throughout a large portion of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and even into Odisha, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Scriptures and other artefacts from the time provide light on the rulers and their cultural ideas, lending credence to hypotheses about the impact they had on the densely populated delta regions that were subject to their control.

Numerous ancient Indian architectural styles had a significant impact on the Kakatiya era's built environment. As far as anyone can tell, it's a hybrid of Chalukya and Vesara styles with hints of Dravidian and Nagara Bhumja thrown in for good measure. The usage of sandbox technique, which has historically been employed to construct Vimana-shaped or horizontally stepped structures, particularly in temple complexes, is evidence of that.

When constructing their magnificent temple complexes, the Kakatiyans would often utilise bricks and stones, depending on their location and the resources that were readily available. All of the great temples of the complex were to face the rising sun in the east, following the commandments of the Vastu Shastra. Their plans for the temples had five key characteristics: Ekakuta, Dwikuta, Trikuta, Chatuskuta, and Panchakuta.

II. Temples in Kakatiyas Dynasty

Each of the three potential serial locations—Tank, Temple, and Town—serves as a unique testament to the rich cultural heritage of the Kakatiya people and serves as a model for creative masterpieces, cultural exchange, and common ground. Water tanks, or water conservation structures, led to the growth of towns adorned with temples and interwoven with one another, even if the three buildings may provide separate perspectives on their period roles.

Both contemporaneous writers like Kridabhiramamu and the illustrious traveler Marco Polo made extensive reference to the cultural and administrative distinctions of the Kakatiyas. Rani (queen) Rudrama Devi, Prathapa Rudra, and Ganapathi Deva are prominent figures among the rulers. It was fifty years after Pratapa Rudra's defeat that the Musunuri Nayaks, with the help of 72 other Nayak chieftains, conquered Warangal from the Delhi sultanate.

Warangal Fort

The fort of Warangal, constructed by King Ganapathi in the 13th century and finished by his daughter Rudrama Devi in 1261 A.D., is located twelve km from Hanumakonda. There are two walls to the fort and remnants of a third. Swayambhudevi Alayam, a shrine dedicated to Mother Earth, sits atop the fort's 45 towers and pillars, which extend forth across a 19-kilometer radius.



Figure 1: Warangal Fort

A massive structure, the Warangal Fort consisted of three separate circular forts connected by a moat. In the middle, at the spot where the massive Shiva Temple (Swayambhu Gudi) previously stood, are four avenues flanked by ornate and high entrances called Keerthi Thorana and Hamsa Thorana, respectively, arranged in accordance with the cardinal directions. According to Kridabhiramamu's contemporaneous writings and the archaeological evidence found in the Swayambhu temple's investigated ground plan, the temple had enormous dimensions. Since the whole temple complex, including the entrances, is plainly visible, a large portion of the temple is archaeologically significant. The artefacts unearthed in the Swayambhu temple complex and Keerthi Thoranas show not just a masterwork of creativity but also the evolution of Indian and Asian art over many centuries of shared cultural values.

The Ramappa Temple at Palampeta

Located at Palampet, 65 miles from Warangal, lies the Ramappa temple. If there is just one temple in India where the sculptor's name is known, it would be the Ramappa Temple. Instead of the usual presiding god, Ramalingeswara, the chief sculptor was Ramappa, after whom the temple is currently called. Rudra Samani, the principal commander of King Kakati Ganapathi Deva, had the temple of Ramappa constructed at Ranakude in the region of Atukuru.



Figure 2: Ramappa Temple

The "brightest star in the galaxy of mediaeval temples of the Deccan" is an apt description of this magnificent structure, which is home to exquisite sculptures that showcase the Kakatiyan creative talent. On a star-shaped pedestal six feet high, the Shivalaya temple rises magnificently. Unique to the reign of the Kakatiyan sculptors and empire, the hall outside the sanctuary features a number of carved pillars placed in such a way as to produce an illusion of light and space that is both beautiful and ethereal.

Inspiration for Jayapa Senani's renowned piece "Nritya Ratnavali" came from the temple's sculptural work of dance positions, which seem like a frozen record of the region's dances in stone. Mukha Mandapam's pillars and top beams include engravings of several yoga poses, including Bharata Natya, Shruna, Bharunga, Rathi, and Perini Nritya, among others. 'Gopika Vastrapaharanam, Tripura samharm, Daksha Samharam, Ksheera Sagara Madhanam, Girija Kalyanam, etc.,' are examples of legendary tales that represent the pinnacle of Kakatiya sculpture. Beams set as supports on either side of each entry are the 'Nagini' and the other eleven devanarthakis. These twelve devanarthaki positions display the great aesthetic sensibility that Kakatiya sculpture is known for. The sculptures of the temple feature dancing styles from the local culture, including Perini, Prenkana, Sudda Nartana, Dandarasak, Sivapriya, Chindu, and Kolata. It is believed that the architecture and artwork of the Ramappa temple served as inspiration for the renowned dance treatise Nritya Ratnavali, which was composed during the Kakatiya dynasty.

The Kakatiya patronage of the arts is best exemplified by the Ramappa temple. Located in a valley, the temple was constructed using bricks so lightweight that they float on water. It was developed after scientific study revealed the period's creative masterworks. Natural disasters, invasions, and battles were no match for the temple.

In the next months, representatives from UNESCO will likely visit the temple to determine if it qualifies as a World Heritage site due to its universal characteristics. In particular, the temple stands out from the crowd due to four main features. The floating bricks of the temple are the first, according to Rao.

Bricks used to construct the garbhalayam, or roof, of the temple are so airy that they float when placed on water. A second reason the Ramappa temple was able to withstand earthquakes and other natural disasters is that it was constructed using sand box technique. The foundation was excavated three meters deep, the exact depth depending on the dimensions and area of the building. The professor explains that after filling it with sand, the mixture was fortified with granite, jaggery, and Karakkaya (Chebula).

Additionally, the temple is renowned for its elaborate carvings; among them, the most well-known is the sa-ri-ga-ma flute that adorns the entrance to the sanctum sanctorum.

The dolomite stones used to create the temple are so delicate that a human hair may see right through them. According to Rao, the thirteen important engravings on the pillars likely date the construction of the temple to the thirteenth century.

The Thousand Pillar Temple at Hanamkonda

Located in the town of Hanamkonda in the Warangal Urban District lies the Thousand Pillar Temple. It was constructed in 1163 CE by King Rudra Deva-I of the Kakatiya kingdom (1158-1195 CE). Both the main temple and the Kalayanamandapa, which is located in front of it, include several pillars. The name "thousand pillar temple" has stuck to describe this sacred building. Lord Shiva is worshipped at this temple, which is also known as the Rudreswara Temple. A trikuta temple (Trikutalaya) was its intended purpose when it was built.



Figure 3: Thousand Pillar Temple

A prime example of early Kakatiya architecture, sculpture, and art, the Rudreswara Temple is also known as Veyisthambala Gudi, which translates to "thousand pillars temple" in the local language. Constructed around 1163 AD in the style of later Chalukyan and early Kakatiyan architecture, it is star-shaped and has three shrines (Trikutalaya). Rudra Deva was the name given to the temple after him. The presiding deity is Rudreswara. The one thousand pillars suggest that the temple has numerous pillars, making it a remarkable example of architecture and sculpture. In the temple you may find the massive dolerite Nandi, rock-cut elephants, magnificent iconography, intricately carved pillars, and perforated screens.

Kakatiya sculptors' mastery is on full display in their works of exquisite workmanship and faultless ivory carving, which builds upon earlier techniques such as the sand box method. Lathe turned details, glossy polish on dolerite and granite, and the intricate craftsmanship of Nava rangamandapa are all hallmarks of Kakatiya sculpture.

III. Culture in Architecture of Kakatiya's

While the Kakatiyas of Warangal were in power (around 1000 AD to 1323 AD), the unified Andhradesa people accomplished much. Temples dedicated to Suryanarayana and Narasimha at Alampur, Pacchala Someswara at Panagal, Chennakesava at Gangapur, Ramalingeswara at Nandikandi, Agasthyeswara at Aihole, and Someswara at Kulupak are all believed to have been built during this period, which is more strongly associated with the Chalukyans. It is necessary to analyse the architectural elements of the Rashtrakuta era to underpin the advances in architectural features that followed before getting into the debate on the architectural aspects of 11th century temples. Alampur, Papanasi, Maremunnagala, Panchalingala, and Vemulavada are some of the Rashtrakuta period's noteworthy temples. The trikuta plan is exhibited by the shared Ranga mandapa of the Maremunnagala and Papanasi temples. Nandi mandapa is an essential aspect of this design, as can be seen in the Bhimeswara Temple in Vemulavada, which also has mukha mandapa, antarala, and garbhagriha. There are two main types of bases: manca and pala/pratabhandha. You may find manca type at places like Panchalingala, Merugumalla, Alampur, Papanasi, and many more. At Vemulavada and Alvanipalli, you may see the latter at the Bhimeswara temple. Additionally, the Bhimeswara temple in Vemulavada began to employ upapitha.

The walls of the majority of these temples are simple and include a niche. This meant the wall design was kept plain. Phamsana, Vimana, Salakara, and Gajapristaakara are some of the super structural shapes that we may see. These are chitrakhanda pillars. The doors have three jambs and are vyala stamba and lata patra decorated with richness and ostentation. On either side of the doorjambs, apart from the Ganga-Yamuna high relief sculpture, we can make out nidhi figures and Chandrasila. On the floor of antarala and Garbhagriha, you can usually see Chandrasila, also known as the moon slab, in front of the entrance. The Hanumakonda, Warangal, Jakaram, Nagunuru, Pillalamarri, Kusumanchi, and other temples showcase exquisite decorative members. There are two parts to it, and the carvings are usually in great relief. Typically, the lowest half has the shape of a pattika, which represents the base. In general, the upper part is designed in a semicircle or ardha-Chandra pattern.

The traditional placement of Ganga and Yamuna sculptures is on opposite sides of the sculpture. The ceilings are mostly of the flat variety, however lozenge-shaped ones are not uncommon. While the Phamsana form remained popular in earlier centuries, the Bhumija form began to make an appearance on plans. Temples with open ranga mandapa, antarala, and garbhagriha are common, but you can also find temples with mukha mandapa, like the Suryanarayana swami temple at Alampur and the Chennakesava swami temple at Gangapur. It can also be seen in trikuta form. Nevertheless, the trikuta variety is demonstrated by repositioning the shrines to the rear of the mukha mandapa rather than on each side of it. Panagal, Aihole, and Alampur are common places to witness this characteristic. At the Chennakesava temple in Gangapur, you may see the panchayatana layout. One

example of a garbhagriha plan that takes into account the temple's design is the one at Nandikandi, which is in the Bhumiya style. Panagal, Nandikandi, and Gangapur are among the temples where the wall extends beyond the manasutra line.

IV. Great Art and Innovation in Architecture

Interior design, particularly the latha turned pillars, is a hallmark of Kakatiya temples. There are several Trikuta shrines that the Kakatiyas and their followers left behind in various parts of the world, including Telangana. Some of the finest examples of this architectural style can be seen at the following locations: Hanamkonda, Panagallu, Pillalamarri, Nagunuru, Kalabagur, Kondapaka, Nagulapadu, Garla, Kuchumanchi, Upperapalli, Katkur, Mutharam, Manthani, Vilasagar, Chittapur, Timmapur in the Telangana region, and one Trikuta at Pushpagiri in the Cuddapah district. A prominent element of temple layouts in the Trikuta style of architecture is the placement of three shrines on each of the three sides of a single mukha-mandapa. In certain locations, a common mandapa serves as the focal point of a trio of shrines laid out in a straight line. This style of building is also known as the Trikuta style. Every one of the Trikuta temples constructed by the Kakatiya dynasty followed a cruciform layout. With the exception of one, all of Kuchumanchi's temples have a rectangular mandapa flanked by three shrines.

The whole Telugu-speaking Deccan region was subjugated by the Kakatiyas due to their aggressive conquestism, strong sense of nationalism, and patriotism. Before Andhra Pradesh State was formed, this was the first and final occasion when the Telugu-speaking population was unified under a single administration. Their patriotic and nationalistic zeal helped them put up a valiant fight against the Islamic invaders. But the Vijayanagara dynasty carried on the traditions and heritage of the Warangal kingdom.

While the Chalukyas of Kalyani were in power, the Kakatiyas rose to prominence. The recently found Bayyaram Tank inscription put to rest the prior questions voiced by certain experts regarding the lineage of this dynasty from Kakartya Gundyana, an aide of the Eastern Chalukyan king, Amma II (945 AD.-970 A.D.). There is an etymological relationship between the names Kakaliya, Kakatya, and Kakartya. Either the dynasty's devotion to the goddess Kakati or its ties to the village of Kakatipura (from whence the monarchs received the title 'Kakatipuravallabha') are the sources of the name. The Kakatiyas had a temple dedicated to Kakitamma in Ekasilanagara (Warangal), their capital. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Warangal was also known as Kakatipura. Kakatiyas were Sudras, according to the inscriptions, and they belonged to the Durjaya line; Karkkalahola, a distant relative, was either the founder or the first settler of Kakatipura.

The architectural monuments of Kakatiyas have certain unique features that set them apart from other regions, even if they inherit the style of the Chalukyas. For the Vimana's core construction, the architects utilised locally available sandstone and granite, while for the superstructure, they utilised bricks and lime. Black granite was utilised for the construction of pillars, jambs, lintels, ornamental patterns, and icons.

V. Conclusion

An outstanding period in the Deccan cultural history is embodied in the temple building and art styles of the Kakatiya kingdom. The Kakatiyas left behind a unique architectural heritage that is still admired today by drawing influence from past traditions in architecture and adding creative structural and artistic features. The innovative building technologies used in their temples, such as sandbox foundations, lightweight floating bricks, and precise stone carving, demonstrate a high level of technical proficiency. Architectural and artistic brilliance are on full display in the several Trikuta temple forms, which include lathe-turned pillars, star-shaped platforms, and ornately decorated mandapas. Kakatiya temples were more than just impressive structures; they were also dynamic hubs of cultural expression, where mythology, dance, music, and sculpture all found a home. The intricate portrayal of regional and traditional dancing styles, religious stories, and decorative patterns highlights the dynasty's support for the arts and its dedication to maintaining cultural heritage. Temples strategically placed among tanks and settlements also attest to the Kakatiyas' all-encompassing view of city design, ecological management, and religious life. A lasting testament to the Kakatiya dynasty's vision, inventiveness, and cultural vibrancy can be seen in their architectural and artistic accomplishments. Along with being a place of worship, their temples are a beautiful example of how art, technology, and local identity can coexist in perfect harmony. The Vijayanagara dynasty continued the Kakatiya tradition, which is an important part of India's cultural history and a major turning point in the development of temple construction in India.

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