

Siddheśvara Temple at Sirur – A Pāśupata Śaiva Monument : Architecture and Cult

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Sirur is a fast developing village situated about 12 km south-east of Bagalakote, the headquarters of a district of the same name in Karnataka. The occurrence of numerous inscriptions of 10th-12th century period and of early medieval archaeological remains projects this village as a prosperous place during that time. These inscriptions give an account of constructions and renovations of temples, provisions made for worship in temples, constructions of tanks etc. The details of the archaeological remains at this place had been brought to light for the first time by the present author.¹ They include among others temples called Rāmalingasvāmī-guḍi, Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa-guḍi, Mallikārjuna-guḍi, Tūbina-guḍi, Gaṇeśa-guḍi and Akka-Tangiyara-guḍi, three tanks of which one is very large, a *Śailastambha* (a stone pillar) in the middle of the *br̥hat-taṭāka* (large tank), a couple of wells, a couple of herostones, and the Siddheśvara temple complex. The last of these, namely Siddheśvara temple complex is to this day central to the socio-religious activities here. Presently it is under the *Vīraśaivas*. Assignable to CE 1049, the temple complex represents an early monument of the *Singhapariṣe* branch of *Kālamukha* brand of *Pāśupata Śaivas*. The inscriptions on its wall contain interesting details which throw light on various aspects of the

complex. The present paper discusses this temple complex as a *Pāśupata-Śaiva* monument to focus on its various aspects.

The Siddheśvara temple complex

This is a homogeneous temple complex (Fig.1) situated

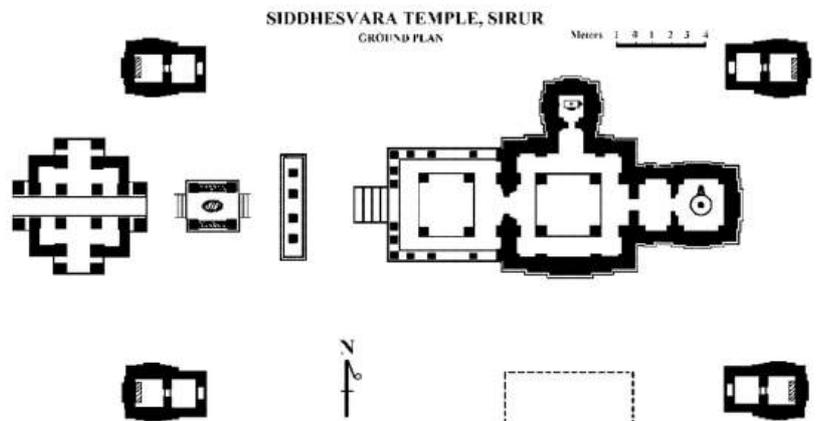


Fig.1 : Plan of the Siddheśvara temple complex

at the foot of spurs on the south bank of the large tank. It comprises of a west-facing double-shrine principal temple called Siddheśvara, fronted by a quadrangular platform supporting four pillars in a row, a *Nandi-maṇḍapa*, and a *pratoli* (gate-house), all arranged in a east-west



Fig.2 : General view of the Siddheśvara temple

axis in that order (Fig.2). There are four separate subsidiary shrines arranged around on the north-west, north-east, south-east and the south-west sides of the main temple, those on the western side facing towards the east and those on the eastern side facing the west. Though these sub-shrines are in alignment, the distance from the main temple to the sub-shrines on the south is more compared to those on the north side. Together, the plan of the ensemble looks like a *Pañcāyatana* complex. A modern hall stands on the south side of the temple.

The entrance to the complex is provided from the west side through a



Fig.3 : Pratoli

square open *sarvatobhadra maṇḍapa* – like *pratoli* structure. Its passage runs west-east, flanked on either side by raised platform to serve as seat. The structure has open *mukha-bhadras* on all four sides, with roof supported on each side by a pair of *rudrakānta* (circular) pillars which are square-sectioned at base. This is probably *māḍa* of the inscription (Fig.3).

Then follows the Nandi-*maṇḍapa* (Fig.4), a small four-pillared shrine, which was originally open on all four sides. But now inter-columnar walls are raised to some height and a doorframe fixed on east. A couple of steps bound by a pair of *hastihasta* railing are provided to the structure from the west. The pillars are square with a pointed petal decoration about the *mālāsthāna* level. The roof is attractive with a prominently curved *chāḍya* on all four sides. Over the *chāḍya* runs a *hāra* of Karnataka *Drāviḍa* order comprising *śālās* and *kūṭas*. The Nandi inside is of a later date. The original Nandi mentioned in the inscription seems to be the one lying near the entrance to the *pratoli*.



Fig.4 : Nandi-maṇḍapa



Fig.5 : Torana

After Nandi-*maṇḍapa* there is a rectangular platform on which rest four *pālikā*-type pillars arranged north-south in a row (Fig.5). The pillars support a decorated beam flat at

top. At both its ends as well as on corresponding pillar shafts there are sockets which suggest that originally there were two bracket figures also. It is possible that a *triśūla* rested over the beam. This should be the *toraṇa* referred to in the inscription.

In front of this *toraṇa* is the principal temple, called Siddheśvara. The temple is entered by stairs flanked by *hastihastas* leading into an open pillared *agramaṇḍapa*. This rectangular *maṇḍapa* has four central pillars resting on a slightly raised square platform supporting a flat *vitāna*, which is decorated with a fully blossomed *padma*. A noteworthy feature is the presence of a separate *kapota* component over the central part. There are ten pillars of lesser height arranged around corresponding to the central ones. The aisles are covered by roof interiorly well carved with rafters, but exteriorly finished as plain slope.

The central pillars have in the ascending order usual members, *oma* or *pīṭha*; *kāṇḍa* – square at bottom, circular at the centre, and octagonal *padmabandha* in upper part; fluted *kalaśa* (or *laśuna*) with a band of *muktā-hāras* (pearl-festoons) issuing from *kīrtimukhas*; *taḍi*; *kumbha*; *padma* and *phalaka*. Atop the *phalaka* is a *potikā* of corbel-type (*ādhāra-potikā*) on which rest *jayantīs* (beams). Each pillar's square bottom part carries reliefs of dancing females or floral motifs on its faces. The pillars are painted with colour enamels.

On either side of the doorframe of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* are pairs of pilasters corresponding to the side and central rows of pillars. The latter are of a different type with two prominent triangular motifs arranged one below the other. The wall between these pilasters has slender *kuḍya-stambhas*. A part of the miniature *rekhanāgara-śikhara* (of *latina* type) motif, obviously intended to serve as component of *hāra* is seen above this wall. These details provide evidence that the *agramaṇḍapa* is an afterthought.

A doorway leads into the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa*. The *dvārabandha* of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* is of *sapta-śākhā* type. In the lower *peḍya* part of doorjambs are reliefs of *nadī-devatās*, *cāmara-dhāriṇīs*, Śaiva-*dvārapālas* in *dvibhaṅga* within a shrine motif and a *puruṣa* in *dvibhaṅga*. The Śaiva-*dvārapāla* on the right side *peḍya* holds *gadā*, *sarpa*, *ḍamaru* and *phala*, while the other on the left side holds *abhayahasta*, *triśūla*, *ḍamaru* and *gadā*. The seven *śākhās* depict from the inner (*antaḥ-śākhā*) to the outer (*bāhya*) : *ratna-śākhā*, *vallimaṇḍala-śākhā* with dancers, *vidyādhara-śākhā*, *stambha-śākhā*, *prāṇi-śākhā* (composite animals), *stambha-śākhā*

and *padmapatra*. A seated two-armed *Śriyādevī* (i.e. *Gajalakṣmī*) holding *padmas* adorns the *lalāṭa-bimba*. Above, on the *uttaraṅga* are carved three miniature shrines of



Fig.6 : Uttaraṅga of gūḍhamaṇḍapa doorway

drāviḍa order in bold relief with *rekḥānāgara-kūṭas* in between (Fig.6). The central

miniature shrine contains the figure of Śiva as *Naṭarāja*. On the north flank of this miniature shrine is a figure of *sthānaka* Viṣṇu as *Keśava* and on the south flank, the figure of *sthānaka* *Brahmā*. The remaining two miniature shrines are empty.



Fig.7 : A pillar in gūḍhamaṇḍapa

In the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* are four central pillars resting on a square platform. They comprise of the same components as the pillars of the *agramaṇḍapa* with difference in detail, conforming to *citrakhaṇḍa* type with a square base and central square block (Fig.7). Faces of both the square base and the central square block are carved with reliefs. *Bhāravāhaka-gaṇas* are carved at the top angles of central blocks and square bases of some pillars. Further there are miniature *nāsi* motifs at the cardinal points of base and *laśuna*

(*kalaśa*) members. The themes carved on the square central blocks are as follows:

1. North-west pillar : East face : Hanumān meeting Sītā in *Aśokavana* (Fig.8); South face : *kinpuruṣas* flanking a *muktā-padaka* (pendent) issuing from *kīrtimukha*; West face : Hanumān and Garuḍa together holding a fruit, probably *jambu*; North face : Mahākālī (Fig.9).



Fig.8 : On pillar : Hanumān meeting Sītā in *Aśokavana*

2. South-west pillar : East face : Ugra-Narasimha; South face : an enraged elephant; West face : a bearded man sits under a tree while a huntress carries her preys (Fig.10); North face : *kinpuruṣas*.



Fig.9 : On pillar : Mahākālī on pillar

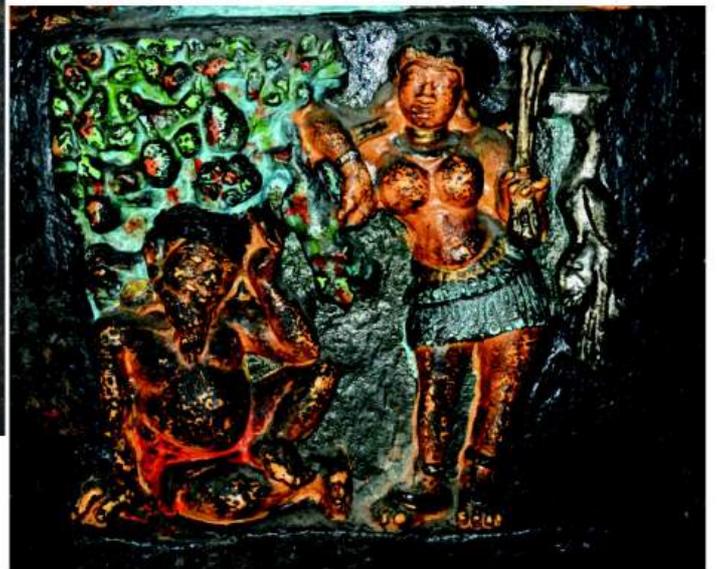


Fig.10 : On pillar : Huntress carrying her prey

3. North-east and South-east pillars : The blocks are carved either with floral designs or are blank.

The carvings on the square base parts of pillars are as follows:

1. North-west pillar : East face : A hunter and a huntress under a tree; South face : Viṣṇu as Mādhava; West face : a *kubjā* removes thorn from a bearded man's foot; North face : Rāvaṇa lifting Kailāsa.
2. South-west pillar : East face : *Darpaṇa-sundarī*; South face : *Vidyādharas*; West face : Śiva as *Gajāśura-saṁhāramūrti*; North face : a female dancer.
3. South-east pillar : East face : blank; South face : blank; West face : a female dancer; North face : Bhū-Varāha.
4. North-east pillar : East face : Kāma and Rati; South face : Śiva as *Bhikṣāṭanamūrti*; West face : Mohinī; North face : Viṣṇu as Janārdana.

The nave of the *vitāna* (ceiling) is plain and flat within an octagon formed by slabs arranged on the beams. On the triangles formed by corner slabs of this octagon are reliefs of respective *upa-dikpālas*: Īśāna (northeast, Fig.11); Agni (southeast, Fig.12); Nirṭti (southwest, Fig.13) and Vāyu (northwest, Fig.14),

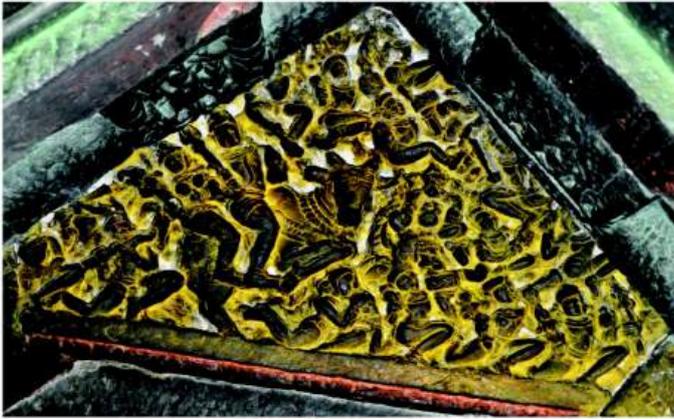


Fig.11 : Ceiling : Īśāna



Fig.12 : Ceiling : Agni

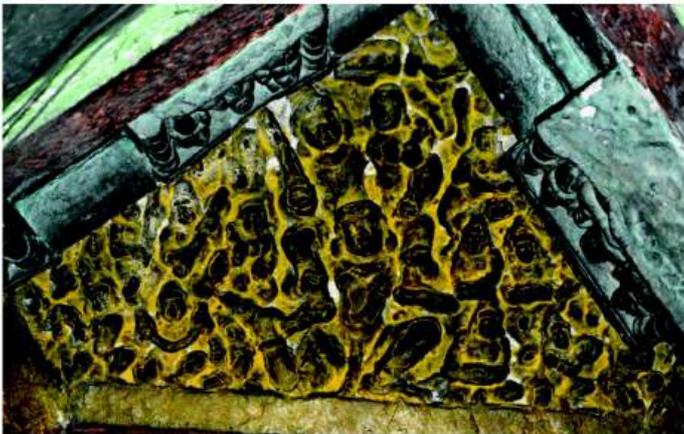


Fig.13 : Ceiling : Nirṭti

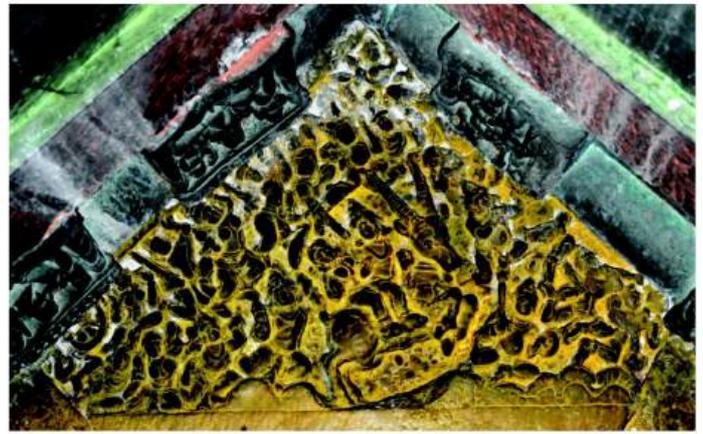


Fig.14 : Ceiling : Vāyu.

riding on their respective *vāhanas* (bull, ram, man and deer) and accompanied by their consorts and attendants. On the side faces of the *vitāna* slabs there are small relief sculptures of *Nidhis*, *Pārvatī* in meditation, dancing *Gaṇeśa*, *Gaṇas*, etc. As in the case of *agramaṇḍapa*, this part of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* also has a separate curved *kapota* on all four sides. The walls of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* are provided with pilasters and canton-pilasters corresponding to the four central pillars. Along the beams over the walls, on all four sides there are small high relief sculptures at regular intervals. These include themes such as Śiva as *Kapālin* and *Pārvatī* as *Kapāli* (Fig.15), *Vāmana-Trivikrama*, *Bhū-Varāha*, *Bhairava*, *Kāma* and *Rati*, as also *Vidyādhara-mithuna*, *Aśvamukhī-yakṣī* accompanied by man (Fig.16), warriors, musicians, dancers etc.

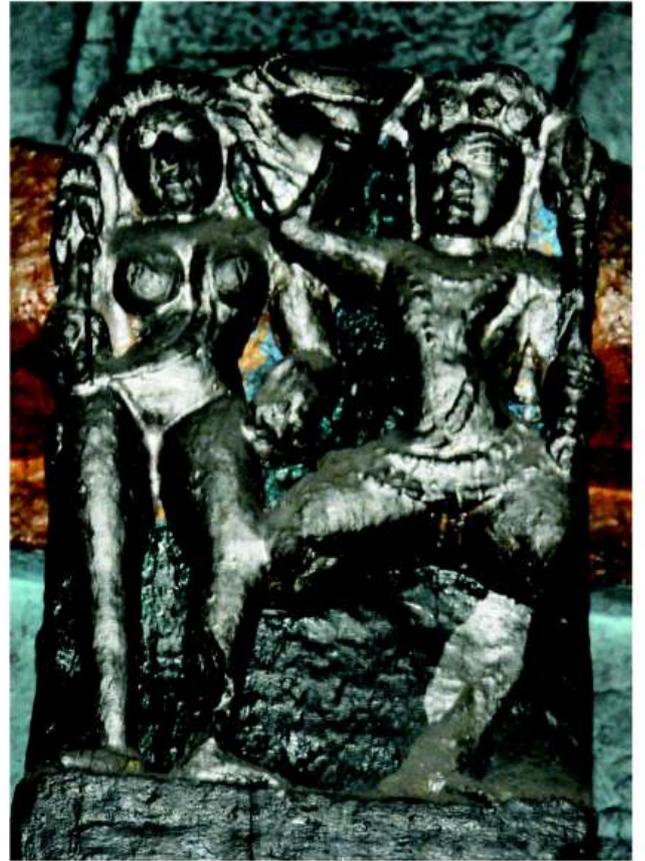


Fig.15 : Gūḍhamaṇḍapa : Śiva as Kapālin and Pārvatī as Kapāli



Fig.16 : Gūḍhamaṇḍapa : Aśvamukhī-yakṣī with man

A doorway on the east leads into the *antarāla*, which is framed by perforated stone screens. Each side wall of the *antarāla* has a recess. A doorway carved with plain *dvārasākḥās* and miniature shrine models on the *uttarāṅga* leads into the *garbhagrha*. At the centre of the floor there is a small *liṅga* with a circular *yonipīṭha*, not rising much above the ground.

Another doorway through the northern wall of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* provides access to a sub-shrine through an open *antarāla*. It contains a *liṅga* on a rectangular *pīṭha* suggesting that it was not the original deity of the shrine. This *pīṭha* must have held an image originally.

In elevation, the *mūlaprāsāda* (Fig.17) of the temple consists of three usual parts, namely *pīṭha*, *jaṅghā* and *śikhara*. The *pīṭha* or *adhiṣṭhāna* of the *mūlaprāsāda* is done in *pañcaratha* manner with *Drāviḍa* details. It has *bhiṭ*, *khura*, *padma*, *tripaṭṭa-kumuda* and *kapota* mouldings. Above it is raised the *jaṅghā*, which is relieved into *karṇabhadra*, *upabhadra* and doubled *subhadra* offsets. Each of the *karṇabhadra* and *upabhadra* offsets is suggested by the presence of a *bhadra* pillar-relief, *upabhadra* pillar-relief being slightly thinner than the *karṇabhadra*. The double *subhadra* offset, however, is defined by thin *Drāviḍa*



Fig.17 : Mūlaprāsāda from east



Fig.18 : Erotic mithuna between śṛṅgas

kuḍya-stambha pilasters. The *jaṅghā* is otherwise plain. Its *uttara* is in the form of pillar brackets (*ādhāra-potikā*) and supports the *kapota* which has plain *nāsi* reliefs. On the *kapota* rests a *hāra* comprising of four *nāgara śṛṅga*-reliefs of *latina* type on each side of *prāsāda*, corresponding to *karṇabhadras* and *upabhadras*, those corresponding to *upabhadras* being smaller. In the intermediary space between each pair of these *śṛṅgas* are carved erotic couple in *mithuna* (Fig.18). Corresponding to the *subhadra* of wall of each side a *uraḥśṛṅga* relief fashioned in *pañcaratha* model rises to half the height of the *mūla-rekhā*-

śikhara proper. The *madhya-latā* is of *uraḥśṛṅgas* terminates with a *kīrtimukha*. At the foot of the *madhya-latā* of *uraḥśṛṅga* is a *rathikā* shrine-motif, accommodating a deity : dancing Mahākālī (north, Fig.19), Lakulīśa (west, Fig.20)



Fig.19 : Mahākālī in the north rathikā

and Naṭarāja (south, Fig.21). Above the *hāra* a *kañṭha* (neck) like part is



Fig.20 : Lakulīśa in the west rathikā

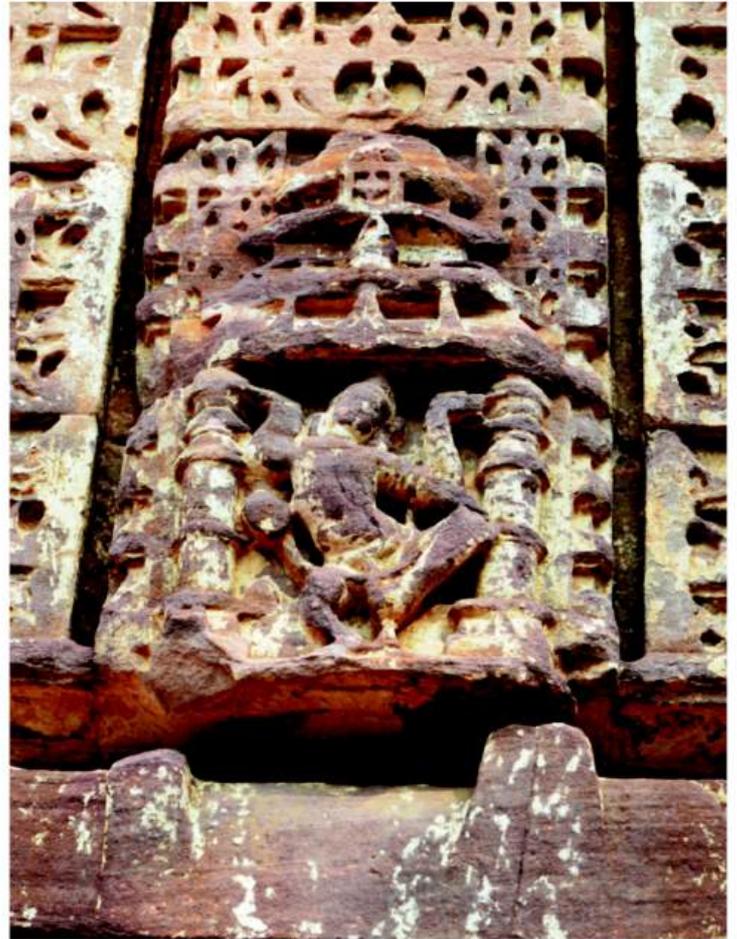


Fig.21 : Naṭarāja in the south rathikā

prominently seen and forms the base for the *mūla-śikhara* which is of *rekhānāgara* form. The *mūlamañjarī* is articulated into a web of stencil like well-cut *gavākṣa* arches. There are no *karṇāmalakas*. The *madhyalatā* of the *mūla-śikhara* rises above the *grīvā* (neck) to reach the *āmalasāraka*. The *śikhara* terminates with a prominent *vedi*, which supports a circular *grīvā*, a prominent compressed *āmalasāraka*, a *kalaśa-stūpi* one above the other in that order. Considering the fact that the *mūla-śikhara* is single, perhaps it may be identified as a *nāgarachanda latina* class *śikhara*.² From the west face of the *śikhara* projects a wagon-vault roofed *śukanāsa* which is crowned by a *kalaśa*. Its *gāḍhā* carries the image of Śiva as *Naṭarāja*.

The *adhiṣṭhāna* of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* and *jaṅghā* are also relieved into *pañcarathas* defined by *kuḍyastambhas*. On the east side *karṇa* of the wall a *koṣṭha-pañjara* is carved. The south side wall carries some long inscriptions of 11th century, the earliest and most informative of which dates 1049 CE.³ The *hāra* scheme of *latina śrīngas* seen on the *mūlaprāsāda* is further carried over the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* also. On the roof of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* is placed a prominent *āmalasāraka*, surmounted by a *kalaśa*.

On the north side of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa*, the symmetry of the plan is broken by a lateral subsidiary shrine. Smaller in height than the *mūlaprāsāda*, this shrine also has *pañcaratha* plan exteriorly, but its *jaṅghā* carries *kuḍyastambhas*. Over the *kapota* is a *vedi* with *makaramālā* below. The superstructure is of different type, and is formed by three receding tiers of *kapota-gala* scheme, comparable to *phāṁsanā śikhara*. The *vedi* supports a *ghanṭā* rising in three steps crowned by a *kalaśa*. These last mentioned components owe to later renovations.

The next major component of the plan is the pillared *agramaṇḍapa*. Its *adhiṣṭhāna* has only *jagatī*, *kaṅṭhā* and *prati* components. In the *kaṅṭhā* part there are projections, sometimes plain and sometimes shaped as a *yāli* or *makara*. Like in the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* the roof over the *agramaṇḍapa* also carries a compressed *āmalasāraka* surmounted by *kalaśa*. The roof over front part and north and south aisles is sloping. From a study of the front (west) wall details of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* it becomes clear that this *agramaṇḍapa* was an afterthought and added later in place of what would have been a small *mukhacatuṣkī*.

The sub-shrines around on the four corners are similar to one another (Fig.22). Each of them comprises of a *garbhagr̥ha* and an *ardhamaṇḍapa*. The *adhiṣṭhāna* is similar to that of the *mūlaprāsāda* and the *jan̄ghā* exterior is relieved into *pañcaratha* scheme with *Drāviḍa kuḍyastambhas* at the corner of each offset. The superstructure of *phāmsanā* order rises in five tiers and is crowned by *ghanṭā*, *padma* and *kalaśa*. The *ardhamaṇḍapa* doorway is bound by perforated stone screens. Over its roof projects a *śukanāsa*, whose *mukhapaṭṭī* is designed into a *mahānāsi*. In the *gāḍhā* of this *mahānāsi* is a *stambha-kūṭa* relief. In the sanctum of each of these four sub-shrines a *liṅga* is installed over a rectangular *pīṭha*; obviously originally each of these *pīṭhas* held an image of a god or a goddess. The sub-shrine on the northwest had been dismantled and reset earlier, probably in the 15th century CE, as indicated by the inscribed directions and numberings on the walls and superstructure.⁴ The State Archaeology Department has recently cleared the lime wash accumulation and made extensive renovations to the temple complex.



Fig.22 : Sub-shrine on north-west

The date of the temple and of additions

From a close study of the structure of the temple and the inscription of CE 1049 on its south wall⁵ it may be discerned that the original temple of Siddheśvara already existed by that date, perhaps by 10th century CE. In this connection it may be mentioned that a fragmentary copper plate record of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛṣṇa III (CE 939-966) the village Sirivūra (Sirur) is said to have been granted to certain temples.⁶ Certain additions were made by

Prabhu Mārasimha which were completed in CE 1049. These additions included the sub-shrine on the north side of *gūḍhamanḍapa*, the *agramanḍapa*, the *toraṇa*, the *Nandi-manḍapa*, the *pratoli* and the four sub-shrines at the corners. The inscription refers to the added components as *manḍapa* (*agramanḍapa*), *vitāna* (roof of *agramanḍapa*), *tumbā* (probably *praṇāla* or *āmalakas*), *torāṇa*, *Nandi* (installed in *Nandi-manḍapa*) and *māḍa* (probably *pratoli*). Further a *sumālikā* (resting corridor for votaries) and a *maṭha* (monastery) were also established.

The Deities installed in the complex

According to the inscription of CE 1049, numerous deities were installed by Mārasimha on that date. One of these would have been enshrined in the north sub-shrine attached to the main temple of Siddheśvara and four in the four corner sub-shrines around. The inscription speaks of Viṣṇu, Vināyaka, Caṇḍī, Hanumān, Hāṭakeśvara and Mallikārjuna in a single breath (*Viṣṇum Vināyakam Caṇḍim Hanumānam Hāṭakeśvaram Mallikārjunadevam ca...*), which seems to suggest that each of these had a separate temple. In fact, there are temples of Gaṇeśa (Vināyaka) and Mallikārjuna dating from 11th century CE identifiable in Sirur even today. Beside the Mallikārjuna, there is another temple of the same period, which could be the Hāṭakeśvara of the inscription. Installation of Mallikārjuna was apparently inspired from the famous god of the same name at Śrīśailam in Andhra Pradesh, which the *Pāśupata-Kālamukhas* held in high esteem. Hāṭakeśvara is a form of Śiva which is said to know the mysteries of *Kula* and *Kaula* from whom the secret teachings originate. His domain is “the abode of the fire of time (*Kālāgni*)” which burns in the hells below the world order.⁷

In another breath, the record lists Nandi, Mahākāla, Bhairava, Durgā, Āditya, Caṇḍīśa, Ṣaṇmukha, Sarasvatī and Vāraṇa as also having been installed (*...Nandim Mahākālam ca Bhairavam // Durg-Ādityam ca Caṇḍīśam / Ṣaṇmukham ca Sarasvatim Vāraṇam ca...*). From the context of their occurrence in the record, it would be feasible to infer that these second set of deities were of relevance directly to the Siddheśvara temple complex. Of these, Nandi had separate *Nandi-manḍapa*. Among the remaining eight deities, Durgā, Ṣaṇmukha, Sarasvatī and Gaṇeśa (probably *Vāraṇa* of the inscription, literally meaning elephant, that 'wards off or obstructs' stands for Gaṇeśa) normally appear as deities installed in *gūḍhamanḍapa*, as known from contemporary examples. Thus, the remaining four, namely, Mahākāla, Bhairava, Āditya and Caṇḍīśa,

may be considered as the deities installed in the four *phāmsanā* sub-shrines at the corners of the complex.

The record further gives the information that Mārasimha gave a silver four-faced mask (*raupyamayī catrurvaktra-kṛta-kholā*) to god Siddheśvara. This is a significant reference because, the *Pāśupatas* conceived of Śiva as having four manifest forms, Tatpuruṣa, Vāmadeva, Sadyojāta and Aghora, and a fifth unmanifest form, Īśāna. In imagery the god was represented as a *caturmukha-liṅga* (*liṅga* having four faces). An installed four-faced deity, whether Brahmā or *Caturmukha-liṅga* demands a *sarvatobhadra garbhagrha*, i.e. one having doorways in all four cardinal directions, or at least a window on each of the three walls (cf. Brahmā temple at Khajuraho) in addition to the principal doorway. But an installed *liṅga* without *mukhas* could claim exemption, as there was no visible face. Temples of 10-11th century CE in Karnataka have followed this tradition regularly. The only exception to this is the Candramaulīśvara temple (c.11th century CE) at Unakal, in district Dharwad.⁸ This temple, also of the *Pāśupata-Kālamukha* affinity, originally had a *Caturmukha-liṅga* (now placed in an *ardhamanḍapa*). Accordingly, it has a *sarvatobhadra-garbhagrha*, with openings in all four directions. However, the *Pāśupata* texts convey the importance given to the five-form concept. This requirement the *Pāśupatas* could satisfy by using a metallic four-faced mask as in the present case.

The epigraph also lists the gifts of *kañkaṇa*, *kaṭisūtra*, *bāhupūraṇa*, *nūpura*, *mukuta*, *kuṇḍala*, *keyūra*, *hāra padaka*, *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *gadā* and *padma* (of silver), embedded with precious stones (*kañkaṇaṃ kaṭisūtraṃ ca bāhupūraṇa-nūpuraṃ mukuta-kuṇḍala-keyūraṃ hārādi-padakaṃ kṛtaṃ / / śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-padmaṃ nānā-ratnaistu veṣṭhitam...*). These could have been only for an image, apparently for god Viṣṇu in the form of Keśava. Considering the importance given to this, it can be surmised that this was for the image of Viṣṇu enshrined in the lateral sub-shrine on the northern side of the *gūḍhamanḍapa* of Siddheśvara temple. In Karnataka, the *Pāśupata-Kālamukha Śaivas* often encouraged installing of Viṣṇu in one of the two or three shrines of the temple. An example is the so-called Baṇaśaṅkarī temple at Amargol, in district Dharwad.⁹ This 11th century CE temple originally had an east-facing single sanctum dedicated to Śiva (in *liṅga* form) with other adjuncts like *antarāla* and open pillared *manḍapa*. However, another sanctum along with an *antarāla* was added to it on the northern side for installing an image of Keśava form of Viṣṇu in CE 1119.¹⁰

The record associated with the temple explicitly states that this great place of worship (*mahā-sthāna*) (of Siddheśvara) belonged to the great *Pāśupatācāryas*. But it opens with a eulogy of goddess Mahālakṣmī of Kolhāpura, whose devotee *Prabhu* Rājavarma, the ancestor of *Prabhu* Mārasimha, the son of Gaurabbe was. Apparently, the patron Mārasimha had a close bond with Kolhāpura (in Maharashtra, well known for the Mahālakṣmī temple built by the Śilāhāras). And the recipient of the grant was Tejorāsimahāyati, the disciple of Maleyāḷa-*paṇḍita*. The latter was among the prominent ascetics of the *Uttareśvara-maṭha*. He belonged to *Siṅgha-parṣe*, which was one of the two principal branches of *Kālamukha-Pāśupatas*, the other being the *Śakti-parṣe*. The earliest known mention of the *Siṅgha-parṣe* (called *Simha-pariṣat*) branch of the *Pāśupata-Kālamukhas* is in the Taṇḍikoṇḍa grant of Ammarāja II of the Cālukya dynasty of Veṅgi dated CE 958.¹¹ This *pariṣe* was particularly confined to northern Karnataka-Maharashtra-Andhra region, with its establishments in Miraj in Maharashtra; in Vannur (Belgaum District), Yewur and Yedrami (both in Gulbarga district), Sirur (Bagalakote District), Kogali, Halagondi, Morigere, Huvinahadagali (all in Bellary District) of Karnataka; and the region of Veṅgi in Andhra.¹² In contrast to this, early references to *Śakti-pariṣe* branch of *Pāśupata-Kālamukhas* are found in the southern part of Karnataka, such as at Nandi (Kolar District)¹³ and Anaji¹⁴ and their centres are mostly located along the Tuṅgabhadrā and in the region south of it. One of their strongholds was the famous Balligamve in Shimoga District. It is possible that lion being the *vāhana* of the Goddess Durgā, the name *Simha-parṣe* had some nexus with *Śākta* deity Mahālakṣmī, who is described as *Janībūdvipāntargata-Śivakṣetra-mahāpātaka-vināsinī*, *Rudrārdhāṅgottuṅganivāsinī* and *Simhavāhinī*.

In the record, some information is given also about the worship-ritual and other arrangements. The grants were given on the occasion of *Uttarāyaṇa-makara-saṅkrānti* day. This was a day considered very auspicious and many a Śaiva temple has received grant on that day. The grant included an income of 400 gold coins from agricultural lands situated in various localities. This was to be utilized, among other things, for *dhūpa* (incense), *dīpa* (lamp), *gandha* (sandalwood paste) (all included in *aṅgabhoga* of god) and *naivedya* (offering to god), as also *gīta* (singing) and *nṛtya* (dance) (both included in *raṅgabhoga* for god). It is known from inscriptions elsewhere in Karnataka that the dance ritual for the god was performed by *sūles* (temple-dancers, *sūle*, normally taken to

mean 'prostitute'). In the present case there is no specific mention of *sūḷe*, though there is mention of *gīta* and *nṛtya* as part of *raṅgabhoga*. Since this temple is described as *Naiṣṭhika-sthāna* (where strict celibacy was to be observed) and it is laid down that in case of any lapse on the part of the *sthānapati* (head of the institution), *gorava* (ascetic) or *vidyārthī* (student) in this respect, such a person should be expelled by the village headman. Thus there is no reason to assume that *sūḷes* were attached to this temple. A possibility is that male dancers performed this *bhoga*. Alternatively, *sūḷes* from the village perhaps were invited to do this service as part time job. The provisions also included arrangement for feeding (*sattra*) of ascetics and students, which implies that a religious school was maintained in the *maṭha*.

Observations

From the above discussion, the following observations emerge :

- (1) That a northern temple form (*Nāgara-latina*) was preferred for this temple is noteworthy. The fact that the head of the lineage Maleyāḷa-*paṇḍita* is said to belong to Uttareśvara-*maṭha* is interesting in this background. Perhaps it suggests that the *Pāśupata-Kālamukhas* of the *Siṅgha-pariṣe* branch had northern connections. There is no need to consider this temple form as proto-*Śekhari*, as done by Hardy and Foekema. Its single spire of *nāgara* form implies it be of the *latina* class.
- (2) Iconic placements of this *Pāśupata-Kālamukha Siṅghaparṣe* temple conform to Mahākālī (north), Lakulīśa (east) and Naṭarāja (south) as also some *maithuna* depictions. Though the *Pāśupata-Kālamukhas* explicitly claimed to be followers of and well-versed in *Lākulāgama*, the images of Lakulīśa, depicted as *ūrdhvaliṅgin* are scarcely noticed in Karnataka *Kālamukha* temples of 9th-14th century CE. This temple provides an exceptional example of inclusion of Lakulīśa icon. It should be noted that after 9th century CE, hardly any form of *ūrdhvaliṅgin* Śiva image is found in Karnataka. This only reflects on the aversion of the *Śaivas* of this region for such a representation.
- (3) The deities incorporated in the Siddheśvara complex were Durgā, Ṣaṅmukha, Vināyaka, Sarasvatī, Nandi, Mahākāla, Āditya, Bhairava and Caṇḍeśa. These can be considered as part of programme of *Pāśupata-Kālamukha* temples of *Siṅgha-parṣe*. All these images are now missing from the temple.

- (4) Viṣṇu was also accorded a significant place in this temple as in the case of some other *Pāśupata-Kālamukha* temples. This 'accommodative spirit' could be one reason why *Pāśupata-Kālamukha* Śaivas obtained popularity in Karnataka during 10th-14th centuries CE.
- (5) Like most *Kālamukha* temples this was also a *Naiṣṭhika-sthāna*, where strict celibacy was expected of the *ācārya* as well as the student.
- (6) The temple typifies certain features of *Pāśupata-Kālamukha* *Sinḡha-parṣe* temples in terms of appearance, belief and practice. Other names by which god Śiva was installed in Sirur were Mallikārjuna (apparently inspired from the famous Mallikārjuna temple at Śrīśailam, Andhra Pradesh, which was also a *Pāśupata-Kālamukha* centre) and Hāṭakeśvara (literally Golden Īśvara, Hāṭaka being a form of Śiva concerned with *kaula* as observed above). The latter perhaps suggests some nexus between the *Pāśupata-Kālamukhas* of *Sinḡha-parṣe* and the *Kaula-tantra*. The Hanumanta temple may also have to be viewed in the context of *Śaivism* rather than linking it with *Vaiṣṇavism*, though this requires proper explanation.

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Endnotes

1. Shrinivas Padigar, "Two Rare Temples in Sirur", *The Journal of the Institute of Indian Studies*, Vol.I, No.1, (Kadiyali, Udupi, 1978), pp.46-58. The first notice of this temple was by J. Burgess, *Revised Lists of Remains in the Ahmandnagar, Nasik, Puna, Thana, and Kaladgi Zillas* (Archaeological Survey of Western India, No.6), Bombay, 1887, p.76. Other notices are in Adam Hardy, *Indian Temple Architecture: Form and Transformation*, New Delhi, 1995, p.343; and Gerard Foekema, *Calukya Architecture*, Vol.I, New Delhi, 2003, pp.683-685.
2. This is described by Hardy (*op.cit.*) and Foekema (*op.cit.*) as proto-Śekhārī. The present author feels that this is misleading, because by the time this temple was constructed sub-varieties of the *Nāgarachanda* class temple had already been crystallized and *miśra* temples featuring combination of northern and southern temple components had also been conceived in architectural texts, such as *Samarāṅgana-sūtradhāra*.

3. *South Indian Inscriptions (SII)*, Vol.XI, pt.i, No.85. Other inscriptions of the place are published in *SII*, Vol.XI, pt.i, No.99; Vol.XI, pt.ii, No.183; Vol.XV, Nos.39, 80, 535, 531 and 612. There are some un-noticed inscriptions also.
4. The shrine was apparently dismantled and rebuilt using mostly original material. Its stone blocks are inscribed in 15th century Kannada characters identifying their respective location. Those on the east carry numbers prefixed 'Indra', those on the south 'Yama', those on the west 'Varuṇa' and those on the north 'Kubera'. The same shrine has been dismantled and reconstructed again recently, but the blocks are indifferently marked with numbers painted in enamel, looking ugly.
5. *SII*, Vol.XI, pt.i, No.85.
6. *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy (ARSIE)*, 1937-38, No.20.
7. Mark S.G. Dyczkowski, *The Canon of the Śaivāgama and the Kubjika Tantras of the Western Kaula Tradition*, Delhi, 1989, pp.123-124.
8. M.A. Dhaky, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture, South India: Upper Drāviḍadeśa, Later Phase*, New Delhi, 1996, pp.155-160.
9. *Ibid.*, pp.211-212.
10. *ARSIE*, 1941-42, No.7.
11. *Epigraphia Indica (Old)*, Vol.XXIII, pp.161-170.
12. David N. Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas : Two Lost Śaivite Sects*, Delhi, 1991 edn., pp.141-147.
13. *Epigraphia Carnatica*, Vol.XVII (Old), Chikkaballapura, Nos.106 and 66.
14. *Karnatak Inscriptions (Kannada Research Institute, Dharwad)*, Vol.VI, No.3.