



“A Scrutiny on the South Indian Jain Temples”

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Abstract:

The ancient history of South India is more interesting to study. The origin and development of the Jains are also very important as they have had a profound impact on the political, religious, and literary institutions of South India in the past. The Ancient History of India contains enough material to create a true and authentic account of the early Jain sector. Of particular value and importance to us are the detailed articles and authentic Jain notes by eminent scholars such as Colebrook, Weber, and Buhler. This article is about the crucial role of Jainism in South India.

Keywords: South India, Historic Times, Jainism, Jain beds, and Jain temples.

Introduction:

As a religious institution and place of worship, the temple in India has a rich history. Different parts of the subcontinent show different levels of growth. This corresponded to local needs and religious requirements or the exchange of thoughts and ideas. Organized religions, Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism, in the early stages of their development, spread with their own vitality in successive waves across the Vindhyan Mountains and forests to the southern peninsula and merged with the southern religions, the living cultures, patterns, traditions, and their own religious beliefs. The expression of architectural and sculptural forms through the enduring medium of stone was first adopted by Buddhists, then by Hindus and Jains. The monuments give us a fairly accurate idea of what contemporary sacred architecture and sculpture, in general, looked like.

Hindus and Jains in the south started digging rock-cut cave temples in the sixth and seventh century AD after adopting the stone media. Carve monolithic rock temples and eventually build them in stone. We have a long line of such stone temples, built in rapid succession and increasing in size over the last thirteen centuries. Thousands of these have been preserved on the

southernmost peninsula, where most of them are still in use.

The first Hindu and Jain temples were built under the royal patronage of the rulers of the three great southern kingdoms: Chalukyas, Pallavas, and Pandyas. It was soon overtaken by the nobility, the merchant guilds, and the agricultural and handicraft guilds, which then flourished. Consequently, in every village and town in the south, there was a chain of temples large and small. Thus, South India became known as the Land of Temples. The temple is documented with its own expressive and detailed inscriptions. The temples of the Chola era (10th-12th centuries) became the centers of rural and urban life in all its aspects: religious, cultural, social, economic, and educational, thus becoming the source of the best in architecture, sculpture, and other arts.

Hindu temples predominate to a greater extent and Jain temples to a lesser extent. By this time the Jains had already established their Sangams in Madurai. Digambara's persuasion focused primarily on Shravanabelagola in Mysore. And the branches emanated in Andhra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.

Objectives:

1. To study the concept of Jainism.
2. To understand the significance of Jain temples.

Research Methodology:

The exploratory analysis served as the foundation for this investigation. The assessment data is compiled from a variety of reliable online sources, including journals, websites, digital books, and other materials.

Jainism:

Vardhamana Mahavira was born in 599 BC. born. in Kundagram near Vaishali. In the thirteenth year of his asceticism, he attained supreme knowledge and became known as Jaina (conqueror) and Mahavira (great hero). Jainism is about living simply and without violence (ahimsa). Jainism is a lifestyle in view of the lessons of the 24 Tirthankaras, of which Master Mahavira was the last and most prominent. Rishabha was the first Tirthankara and Parshvanath was the penultimate or twenty-third. The word Tirthankara means the founder of Tirtha, which means to cross the endless sea of birth and death (called samsara) that can be waded through. The Tirthankaras are variously referred to as 'teachers of the gods', 'ford makers', 'crossroad makers', and river crossing makers.

The rulers of Magadha, Bimbisara, and Ajatashatru were influenced by his teachings. The three tenets of Jainism, also called Tri-Ratna, is right belief, right knowledge, and right action. In North India, this new faith was espoused by leaders like Dhana Nanda, Chandragupta Maurya, and Kharavela. They were joined by many Jains and settled in Karnataka. The statue of Bahubali known as Gomateswara, the 57-foot tall Shravanabelgola in Karnataka is the tallest Jain statue ever carved in India. Jainism has split into two branches: Digambaras and Svetambaras. Jainism was one of the main religions of the Tamil region in the 7th century AD. King Mahendravarman of Pallava was a Jain. Under the influence of Appar, he converted to Saivism. Near today's Kanchi town, there is a place called Jaina Kanchi with many Jain temples. The Thiruparuthikundram Temple, whose dome is decorated with Mahavira's life tale, is one of the most significant temples.

Jainism seems to have had more appropriate headquarters in the regions of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. Their religious buildings, and especially their temples, differed little in their layout from Hindu buildings, a feature that has survived over the centuries to the present day. The difference in belief was only emphasized by

the deities or objects placed for worship, and their respective symbols formed the decorative elements of these temples.

Spots of love have likewise been uncovered in the gentler rocks of the Eastern Ghats in the northern beachfront regions of Andhra and the southern locale of Orissa, for instance at Guntupalle and Sankaram, both slashed and cut; Models in Orissa are the Jain caverns of Khandagiri and Udayagiri. This area was chosen because softer trap rocks were easier to work than hard granites or gneisses.

The inauguration of this type of rock temple to Hindu and Jain deities began with the seizure of power in the Deccan region of the three great Chalukya peninsular kingdoms of Vatapi (Badami) along with their offshoot Chalukyas of Vengi (or Eastern Chalukyas) on the coast of Andhra, the Pallavas of Kanchi on the east coast and the Pandyas of Madurai in the extreme south. These three powerful kingdoms were not only political rivals but also close competitors in the promotion of art, architecture, and literature.

The three-century rock-carving phase in Hindu and Jain temple architecture also coincided with the great Hindu revivalist movements and the continued dominance of Jain sects over certain populations. At the beginning of the 7th century, in the course of the Hindu revival movements, great changes took place and the Bhakti cult grew. In the Tamil country, the holy hymns of Shiva and Vaishnava, Nayanmar, and Alwar took over the Vedic traditions and traveled throughout the region, visiting temples, singing hundreds of devotional hymns in Tamil and awakening the people. This also led to the reform of the Shiva extremists Kala Mukhas, Pasupatas, Mahesvaras, Saktas, and others, which curbed the strong influence of Jainism on the people. Jainism prevailed in the Telugu and Kannada regions through the patronage of kings and wealthy merchant groups. The Kannada region continued to be the center of South Indian Jainism, from where various such branched into the Tamil and Telugu regions.

The famous rock temple Sittannavasal in the Pudukkottai area (Tiruchirapalli district) with famous ancient wall frescoes is an example of a Jain temple from the 8th to 9th centuries. According to the accompanying long verse inscription, during the reign of Avanipasekhar Sri

Vallabha Pandya (c. 815–862), this was redecorated by an Ilan Gautaman aka Madurai Asiriyar and a structural mukhamandapa was added to the front. It contains

Jain Tirthankara reliefs on the back wall of the temple and in the niches on the side walls of the mandapa at the front. This cavern sanctuary is a common Pandya form of the Mahendra-style cave sanctuary, with the front points of support supporting the backings of the taranga.

Jain beds and Jain temples in western districts of Tamil Nadu:

There are three Jain carvings from the 2nd century AD at Arachalur in Herod's district. It is perhaps the second Jain center in Kongunadu, followed by Vijayamagalai. Alangadu Tirupur Jain Temple is dedicated to Lord Adinath, the 24th Jain Thirthankar. The approximately 1,100-year-old Jain temple is located in Alathoor Village in Tirupur. The inscription of the Jain Vijayamagalai temple speaks of the beauty of Perunkathai. This temple was built in 678 AD. There is proof of Jain design in the western regions of Tamil Nādu.

Conclusion:

Indian temples were not only a place of worship but also a place of education and cultural activities of the society. The temples describe the culture and heritage of our country. It can be said that the architecture, sculpture, and iconography of South Indian temples play a major role in this. This scripture is helpful in understanding the unique values of Jainism in southern India.

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