

Temples at Polasa in Jagityal District - A Study

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Abstract: This paper represents an overview of Temples at polasa in jagityal district - A study.

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1. Introduction

Once it was the capital of Polavasadesa ruled by some chiefs who had their affiliation with the Rashtrakutas. The ruins of temples and a large number of sculptures scattered in and around the village can be noticed by the visitor. The village had a string mud fort around it and the remains of which along with the moat can still be seen in the village. About a dozen epigraphs from the fiefs of Polavasadesa and Hanumakonda Vishaya refer to the Polavasa chiefs (A.D. 1080 – 1138). This family with its feudal principality in the region extending from Polavasa (modern Polasa in Jagityal district) to Narsampet Taluq (Warangal Rural district) along the river Godavari and butting the dominions of Hanumakonda, is closely associated with the history of the early Kakatiyas particularly Prola II and his son Rudradeva. Polasa is a village in Jagityal Mandal in Jagityal district of Telangana State, India. It is located 196 km. towards North from state headquarters Hyderabad, 7 km. from district headquarters Jagityal. The total geographical area of village is 1482 hectares.1 Polasa has a total population of 5,149 peoples.2 Geographically, Polasa is situated between East Longitudes 79.300' and 18.90' and North Latitudes 18.90' and 19.00' and is at an altitude of 866 ft. (264 meters) above the sea level.3 Polasa is famous for the agricultural research station (Prof. Jayashankar Agricultural Research Station).

There is an inscription4 dated A.D.1079 on a pillar near the local Panchayat raj office. It records only the date and the day in Saka year 1001 Siddharthi Sravana Suddha Padyami Thursday probably indicating that the pillar was set up as a part of the mandapa. Another important inscription5 of Medaraja I standing before the Pulastyeshwara temple dated A.D.1108 records the name of the village of Polavasa and Pulastyasrama-Pattana (City) and certain gifts made by the Virabalanja community consisting of Ayyavali-five hundred swamis, Mummuridandas of 36 Bidus and Ubhayanadesis to the god Pulastyeshwara. It is a Kannada inscription of 49 lines and calls Medaraja I as Lattaluru Purvaradhisvara, Suvarnagarudadhvaja with several other titles mentioned in his

prashasti [6]. Alampur in Jogulamba district, on the banks of river Tungabhadra was very big trade centre and the epigraphs of that place make a mention of merchant guilds consisting of Kannada Ubhayanadesis-400 and Mummuridandas belonging to 36 Bhus.7 Alampur had trade links with Kannada merchants who were very charitable. Virabalija samaya or the merchant guilds very often made gifts to various temples.8 these merchant guilds also made gifts to Pulastyeshwara temple of Polavasa (Polasa) as mentioned in the inscription of that place [9].

1) Temples at Posala (Polavasadesa):

Polasa being the capital city during 11th and 12th centuries A.D. enjoyed royal patronage. It seems to have been a great centre of Saiva and Jaina worship. The Polavasa chiefs and their ministers built several Jain and Siva temples and endowed them with gifts of lands. The tradition of erecting trikuta temples in Chalukyan style was already in vogue in Polavasadesa. A fine specimen of trikuta temple built by Medaraja is still extant at Nandi Mydaram village in Dharmapuri mandal [10]. The capital the temples of Pulastyeshwara and Venugopala are found in good state of preservation.

2. Virakamala Jinalaya (Jain Temple)

The Polavasa chiefs patronized Jainism besides Saivism and Vaishnavism. An inscription11 of Banajipet dated A.D.1082 in Narsampet Taluq of Warangal Rural district records that Virakamala Jinalaya was built by Medaraja I. It appears that Polasa also contained at one time a Jain temple which can be evidenced by the Jain figures now found in the village. Curiously enough a nude Jain figure of 2 feet in height in Kayotsarga posture is recovered recently from the foundations of a building belonging to Kolichala Vishvanatham.12 Serpent hoods do not shade this Jain image but his head contains the hair with spiral curls. This image placed in the local Satyanarayana temple located beside the tank is no more seen now. Another seated image of Jain Tirthankara in Padmasana with the soles of his feet turned upward and his hands placed in dhyanamudra is noticed on a hillock near the Pulastyeshwara temple. The head of the image is mutilated. This worn out figure is similar to the figures found in Vemulawada.

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3. Pulastyeshwara Temple

Pulastyeshwara temple stands to the north of the tank and faces the east. This is a single shrine dedicated to Siva with a 10 feet square garbhagriha and an antarala with 7 feet length and 9 feet width. The exterior length of the shrine is 24 feet with a width of 16 feet. The doorway of garbhagriha contains Purnakumbhas beneath the jambs and Gajalakshmi motif on the lintel with a projecting cornice above the lintel. The ceiling of garbhagriha is laid in Kadalikakarana process with lotus medallion on the central square slab. The adhisthana of the temple is plain and simple, above which the plain wall rises to the height of 6 feet. The spire is of curvilinear type, but the curve being very sharp at the top makes the spire disproportionate. It is crowned by a beaded amalka, above which there is a large spherical stone Kalasa. The spire does not contain sukanasa before it.

The sixteen pillared mandapa existing immediately before the shrine is enclosed by a parapet wall over which the brick walls are raised in later times. The connecting part of the mandapa with the antarala of the shrine now stands collapsed, the traces of which can be noticed even today. The second phase mandapa probably built during the Kakatiyan times is enclosed by a parapet wall adorned with kakshasanas or the stone seats with sloping backs to rest.¹³ The second phase mandapa contains porches on east, north and south with a passage on west leading into the mandapa of the first phase. The central part of the second phase mandapa contains a circular ranga-sila. This mandapa contains all along a big projecting cornice with slight slant which is now seen damaged in certain parts.

There is a separate small shrine to the north of the mandapa with a stepped pyramidal spire of brick construction. The bricks used in the spire are strong and each brick measures 11" x 8" x 2". To the north of mandapa is a small holy tank in the shape of a big well with steps on south to reach the water. The old temple including the second phase mandapa was in a state of crumbling condition. Thanks to the munificent outlook of the people of Polasa village that they have generously undertaken the repair works and brought temple into order with a beautiful garden around it. This temple, which was neglected for centuries, has now developed into a beautiful picnic spot attracting a good number of devotees on festival days as well as holidays from the surrounding places including Jagityal.

Sculptures and Icons: There are several loose sculptures which are now placed in a row before the temple.

1. *Saptamatrikas*: This is a rare early panel with seven figures of divine mothers seated in a row with their left legs folded and right legs hanging keeping the feet turned towards right. The figures are two armed and there are no vahanas (Vehicles) or any other distinctive marks to separate them from each other. The head of each goddess is decked with a tapering kirita. They are adorned with graiveyakas, armlets, bracelets and anklets. The panel does not contain Vinayaka or Virabhadra carved on either side as noticed in later representations. The panel no doubt represents earlier iconography of Saptamatrikas and resembles the panel of the Chalukyas of Badami. It can

be dated to 8th or 9th century A.D. as the later panels are carved with the vahanas of their respective spouses. Moreover they are invariably shown flanked by Ganapathi on one side, Siva or Virabhadra on the other.¹⁴

2. *Devi*: This is a seated figure with four hands holding Khadga in lower right hand, damaru in upper right, trisula in upper left and a bowl in the lower left hand. She wears a Karanda mukuta. Her right leg is folded and left leg is hanging beside which Nandi is carved. The presence of bull indicates that she is the consort of Siva. This image resembles the images of Patancheru¹⁵ which was once the headquarters of the Chalukyas of Kalyani. Similar images of Devi are found in a large number throughout Jagityal district.
3. *Viragal*: There is a hero stone holding shield in left hand and Khadga held high in his right hand. His hair is combed and arranged into a side knot. An elephant is carved with a raised trunk to his left side.
4. *Viragal*: He holds shield and Khadga in his hands. His hair is tied in the shape of a bun to his left side. He wears rings to his toes. He keeps a dagger tied to his waist. To his left is a standing female figure with her hands in anjali placed between the breasts.
5. *Viragal*: This is similar to No.4.
6. *Viragal*: This is similar to No.4 and No.5. It is now placed in the sub-shrine lying to the north of the mandapa.
7. *Nandi*: This is recently dug out and recovered from the ground. The chains of bells adorn its body. It is of medium size in Chalukyan style.
8. *Ganapati*: He is two handed with a short mukuta over his head.
9. *Ganapati*: He is four handed with wide ears wearing a mukuta.
10. *Nagini*: This Nagini is shown in anthropomorphic form upto navel and below navel with the body of snake. She holds Khadga in right hand and shield in left hand as stated in the silparatna.¹⁶ She has five out-stretched hoods canopying her head. She is adorned with necklaces and a hara hanging over her breasts. Her head is plain without a mukuta. The Naga stone are usually worshipped and installed with a belief to beget children.¹⁷
11. *Nagini*: This is like No. 10 but small in size.
12. *Nagini*: This is line No. 10 and 11 but wears a Karanda mukuta over her head. About a dozen beautiful sculptures of Nagas and Naginis are noticed in the village. These figures are similar to those found in the temples of Alampur¹⁸ in Jogulamba district, Kolanupaka¹⁹ in Jangaon district and Biccavolu²⁰ in East Godavari district.

4. The Siva Temple on the Tank-Bund of the Village

This temple had collapsed totally and its ruined pillars can be seen beside the tank-bund touching the water.

Sculptures and Icons: However, a few beautiful sculptures still remain on the bund attracting the attention of the visitor.

1. *Annapurna*: This is a four handed seated image of about 3 feet height, carved in bas-relief on a black granite stone. She is a three eyed goddess with high breasts. In her lower left hand she carries a vessel and in her lower right hand, she holds a ladle touching the vessel as if ready to serve food. She holds damaru in her upper right hand and trisula in her upper left hand. She keeps her left leg folded and the right hanging. She is adorned with a Karanda mukuta, Patras kundalas, Graiveyakas, armllets, wristlets, anklets and a hara hanging between the breasts. There is a makaratorana behind the image. A similar four-handed image of Annapurna comparatively smaller in size can be noticed in red sand-stone among the several loose sculptures now placed outside the Muktishwara temple at Kaleshwaram.²¹ The sculptures of Annapurna are generally found only in the Deccan.²² Recently this sculpture is placed in a small shrine constructed by the villagers.
2. *Ganapati*: There is a big image of Ganapati with a single pair of arms holding modakas in right hand on which the tip of the trunk rests. He holds a tusk vertically in his left hand. He keeps his left leg folded and right leg hanging. He is adorned with Yajnopavita, wristlets and a short Mukuta over his head. As against the lack of crown in early images, the introduction of Mukuta is after Kalinga tradition which developed in the later Eastern Chalukyan Ganapatis of the Golingeshwara temple at Biccavolu.²³ The glaring contrast is that this image has a single pair of arms where as the Ganeshas of Biccavolu are four handed. Recently this image is placed in a small shrine constructed on the tank by the villagers.
3. *Nandi*: This is of medium size in typical Chalukyan style with a hara of bells.

5. Yellamma (Gudi) Temple

The famous Telugu literary work Kreedabhiramamu of 14th century mentions Polavasa as one of the famous six centers for the abode of a female deity known as Ekavira, the other places being Mandapaka, Penupaka, Mahuramu, Nagavaramu and Orugallu. It also mentions that deities of Ekavira and Kakatamma were set up side by side in Orugallu or Warangal.²⁴ the worship of Sakti in the form of Durga, Gauri, Gangamma, Kakati, Erukamma, Ekavira and Yellamma etc., came into prominence in the medieval period.²⁵

Yellamma temple on the southern end of the tank-bund a few important sculptures are placed together on a little mound near Yerukalawada. The temple is now no more extant but its pillars and ceiling slabs are found scattered in its surroundings. Though the figures are greatly weathered, partly on account of the coarse-grained texture and brittle nature of the stone, they display considerable workmanship. A beautiful temple is constructed recently in brick and cement for this deity.

noticed outside the Yellamma temple.

1. *Mahishasuramardini*: Curiously enough this is a seated image with eight hands, three of which are broken. She holds chakra, khadga and trisula in her right hands and sankha and shield in her left hands. Her right leg is bent at the knee with the foot placed on buffalo. She wears Vanamala and all usual ornaments. Her Vahana (Vehicle) lion is carved separately to her right side.
2. *Bhairava*: This is nude figure standing in tribhanga with a halo behind his head. He holds damaru and trisula in his upper hands and his lower hands are broken.
3. *Naga*: The body of the Naga from the waist upwards is in beautiful human form with the seven hoods on the head and below the navel, he is in serpentine form. He holds khadga and shield in his hands. He does not have mukuta but wears kundalas and armllets.
4. *Nagini*: She is also with half human and half serpentine form with five hoods canopying her head. She does not wear mukuta. A beautiful hara hangs over her breasts. The figures of Nagas and Naginis of Polasa are quite alike in comparison with the figures of serpent gods, which are also in half human and half serpentine form, carved on a big rock known as a panel of penance of Arjuna at Mahabalipuram datable to 7th century A.D.²⁶
5. *A female Devotee*: This is a seated female figure with legs folded and hands placed in anjali. The treatment of her coiffure is noteworthy. She is ornamented with kundalas, graiveyakas, bangles and wristlets.
6. *Bhairava*: The figure is carved in low relief on an immovable boulder with damaru, trident, kapala in three hands while the fourth one is broken. The body below the navel is much damaged.

6. Venugopala Swamy Temple

The temple as seen now contains a garbhagriha, antarala and an open platform before it. It is in the middle of the village facing the east. The trisakha doorway of antarala is beautifully sculptured in Chalukyan style with a panel beneath the jambs on either side containing a four-handed Dvarapala holding Vaishnavite symbols flanked by lady attendants. The treatment of the hair particularly the coiffure of the women is more appealing. The grace of their limbs and the charm of their jewelers are admirably represented. Their youthful bodies and high breasts attract the eye of the visitor. A hara from the neck hangs down between the breasts. The adhisthana and the walls of the temple are plain. The sikhara is a stepped pyramidal one with a wide tapering band in the centre on its four faces. There is a column of about 20 feet in height standing before the temple with a miniature mandapa above it. Several temples scattered over distant places in and around the village reveal that Polasa (Polavasadesa) was a very big city wielding political power during the early medieval period. All the splendor and glory of the village have vanished and it is today a small and unimpressive place. Several Chalukyan and Kakatiyan temples

important for their architectural and sculptural wealth are to be seen in the village as the vestiges of its past glory.

7. Conclusion

This paper presented an overview of Temples at polasa in jagityal district - A study.

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