

HONNAVARA KESHAVA TEMPLE – AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract:- *The village is situated 20 km away from the Hassan city to the Northeast. It is known that this village was anciently the home of the Iron Age. There are a total of 6 inscriptions in this village and seven temples namely Kesha, Eshwas, Anjaneya, Kodamma, Veerabhadra and Beeridva. Among these, Keshava Temple is a beautiful temple built during the Hoysala period.*

Key words:- *Honnavaara, Keshava, Hassan, Hoysala, inscription, Ganapati, Surya, Bhairava, Saphamatruka, Garbhagruha, Sukhanasi, Navaranga, Mukhamapntapa. Prathibhanda Adhithana’.*

The village is situated 20 km away from the Hassan city to the Northeast. It is known that this village was anciently the home of the Iron Age. There are a total of 6 inscriptions in this village and seven temples namely Kesha, Eshwas, Anjaneya, Kodamma, Veerabhadra and Beeridva. Among these, Keshava Temple is a beautiful temple built during the Hoysala period. The inscriptions show that this village was an important Agrahara which was belonged to the Nirgunda Naidu in ancient times.

Keshava Temple

It is situated to the West of the village, facing East direction. The inscription which was found here states that this temple was built by Koneya Sankaranandanatha in 1149 during the dynasty of Hoysala Vishnuvardhan. The temple was built following the rules and theory of Aagamashastra. The Mantra Siddhanta means that the goddess of the other religions/ family goddess should not be worshipped, instead only one deity to be worshipped. For the same reason, unlike other Hoysala temples where sculptures like Ganapati, Surya, Bhairava, Sapthamatruka and other sculptures can be found, no such sculptures are found here. So, it is called as a temple of 'Aagamokta mantra siddanta'. The temple is a consortium built of red mixed Kanashile consisting Garbhagruha, open Sukhanasi, Navaranga and parts of Mukhamapntapa.

Garbhagruha: This Garbhagriha is 8.5x8.5 in size, with a 6 feet tall Keshava statue placed on the 1.6 feet Garuda Peeta. It is a beautiful statue, where Lord Keshava is seen holding Shnaka in his back right hand, Gadha in front left hand, Padma in front right hand wearing Kantihara, haara, keyoora, udharabhandha, kankana, rataanguleekayakagalu, yagnopaveeta and vanamala. Goddess Shreedevi and Bhoodevi both can be seen on the either side of the Keshava. The sculpture is surrounded by a halo, where Lord Vishnu's Dashaavataara sculptures have been craved. The entrance of Garbhagudi consists Chaturshaaka namely Vajra (diamond), Vallee, Stamba and Vallee and Laalatabimba of entrance has a Goddess Gajalakshmi's sculpture. Vaishnava doorkeepers called by the names Jaya-Vijaya, who are completely dressed, are seen on both sides of the entrance, standing in Dhivbhangi holding the Shankha, Chakra and Gada.

Sukhanasi: The temple has Sukhanaasi with no gateway. The sculpture is surrounded by a halo. Having octagonal sides; the centerpiece has a Chatrushrava Shilapalakha. Sculptures of Astadikpaalakas have been situated in all the directions accordingly. . The sidewalls of this distributor are sculptures of instrumentalists and dancers, as well as the decoration of frescoes. On both sides of the Vinaathana the sculptures of instrumentals, dancers, and the decoration of fame faces are also found.

Navaranga: Navaranga is about 21 * 22 feet wide with four Shreekaara pillars. These pillars have a Peetha, a four-angle trunk, Circular bangles, gantaakaara shaped shaalaka, Kantha, escutcheon and a Musthibhanda Pothike. Micro beads work can be seen on the the cube part and neck parts of the pillar. Vardhamaana pillars can also be seen adjacent to the walls. Navaranga comprises of 9 Bhuvaneshwari sculptures and all these sculptures are constructed with a simple

Padma structure in Nabhischandra style except the central court Bhuvaneswari. The decoration of frescoes is also found in the central courtyard Bhuvaneswari. Navaranga has a fascinating panchatshakha, and the sculpture of Gajalakshmi has been placed in Lalattabamba. Vaishnava doorkeepers named Jaya-Vijaya, are seen on both sides of the entrance, standing in Dhivbhangi.

Mukhamantapa/ porch: The Mukhamantapa is very simple in architecture consisting two half pillars of Shrikara type and newly built Kakshaasanas. The pillars have only the organs that are found above the cube.

Adhistaana/ Foundation: The temple's foundation has a height of 4 feet in which Upaana, Jagathi, Padma, Triptych, Kumuda, Danta Pankati, Aliganga and other parts have been found and it is named by 'Prathibhanda Adhithana'.

Bhitti/ Wall and Prasthara: The Bhitti of this temple being an attraction part consists of beautifully craved Kosthakas, Pillars, Cages, Bhramhakanta Bhittipaads, Vine rolls, Lord Vishnu's chaturvishanti idols and also the sculptures which depict the heritage of Vaishnava. A variety of peaks are built on the Kostaas with some main deities. Sthamba (pillars) panjaras and vine rolls can also be seen here. The sculptures found on the walls are beautifully carved, with the most important wall paintings being named as follows.

1. **Keshava:** This sculpture is found on the south-eastern wall of the temple, holding the Sankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma, standing in an even pose. The sculpture is seen wearing Guarland, Kanthihaara, Udyana, Kankana, Keyoora, and Vanamaala. But, the face of the sculpture is in ruinous condition.
2. **Manmatha:** This sculpture, which is in Dwibhangi pose, is found on the southern wall where Manmatha is seen decorated with ornaments holding a bow and arrow.
3. **Lakshmi Narayana:** The sculpture is found on the south side wall, with a two-sided Dravidian-style Shikara/ Peak. Goddess Lakshmi is seen wearing jewelery seated on the left thigh of Lord Narayana, holding the Kalasa in her left hand and chinmudra. Lord Narayana is also seen holding Shanka and Padma in his right hand and a Chakra in the left back hand and his front hand is on Goddess Lakshmi's shoulder. A sculpture of Garuda sitting Kneel down on the left side of Goddess Lakshmi can also be seen here.
4. **Mohini:** This sculpture is on the southern side of the temple, where the lady is seen naked in triangle pose. Carved coil cord can be seen at the top of the sculpture.

5. **Keshava:** The left hand of the sculpture, which holds the Shankha, Padma and the Gada, is in ruinous condition. The statue is well decorated with ornaments, with two attendees on either side. At the top, Dravidian-style Shikara/ Peak has been built.
6. **Janardhana:** The sculpture is found on the south side of the wall and a sculpture of Dravidian style Shikara/ peak is in placed on the same. Janardhana standing in Dhivbhangi pose is seen wearing ornaments holding chakra in the right hand, Padma in the front hand, Shanka in the back left han, and Gada in the front hand.
7. **Ugranarasimha:** This sculpture is found on the south side of the wall. This sculpture is carved beautifully where Lord Ugranarasimha, with octagon, is seen wearing the garland of intestine after disemboweling the stomach of Hiranyakashipu. On the top of this sculpture a Dravidian-style Shikara/ Peak has been built.
8. **Dharanivaraaha:** This sculpture is found on the wall of sanctum sanctorum situated west side. The sculpture carved here gives the depiction of Lord Vishnu saving Goddess Bhoodevi and placing her on his left shoulder. The sculpture has a 3-headed Dravidian-style peak.
9. **Vaamana:** The sculpture is dwarf and both hands are ruinous condition.. There are lady servants on either side of the sculpture.
10. **Sankarshana:** It is one of the Chaturvirshanti Deities. This Sthanaka Deity is seen holding Shanka in back right hand, Gada in Front hands, Chakra in the back left hand.
11. **Venugopala:** In the sculpture the Lord Krishna is seen playing flute in Tribhangi pose and cows are enjoying the music.
12. **Govardhangiridhaari:** In the sculpture found in the north, Krishna can be seen standing in Dwibhangi lifting Govardhana Mountain on his left hand. On both sides of the Krishna, sculptures of cows have been craved beautifully. On the top of this sculpture a Dravidian-style Shikara/ Peak has been built.
13. **Dakhshinamurthy:** The sculpture, found in the north, is carved as wearing Shaft, Gown and with a coil in the left hand and a stick in the right hand. The sculpture of this kind is also found in temples of Koruvangal and Belur.

Hoysala temples are astonishing with its sculptural beauty and make one stunning. Similarly, this Keshava temple of Honnavar has several wall paintings, of which the idols of Vishnu are found mostly. Besides these, sculptures of lady servants, musicians have been found enhancing

the beauty of walls. The prasthara have been found after the wall, comprising of Uttara, Valabhi and Kapotha parts. Complete Kapotha parts were again built newly with Granite stones. Some new stones have been placed here also.

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Shikara/Peak: The temple has a Dravidian-style Shikara, with three heads on it. At the top of each head, Denture and aalingaas have been built. The summit is composed of a group, school, cage and nazi, and the sculptures of yaks are built inside these Nazis. At the top of every nasal, there are fame faces structures. Various sculptures of Vishnu have been carved within the Bhadransis. After three heads of the peak, there is an adhpadma of Brahmachandra pattern, at which top which a recent metal Kalasa has been established. At the front of the peak, there is a Shalaa shaped sukhasana with no sculptures in the panel. However, there is a glorious naasi on the top of the Sukhasana, inside which there is a sculpture of Yoganarasimha.

The Keshava Temple of Honnavar is an important evidence for the Hoysala art and has been renovated by the Archaeological Survey of India in 2018. Therefore, some parts of the temple can be found in granite stones. Despite its restoration its original beauty is not damaged. Though some of the sculptures are in broken down condition due to nature's wind, rain and some human acts, it is believed that the ancient beauty of the temple does not seem drooped.

Photographs



Front view of Temple



Side view of Temple



Keshva idol



Door frames of Garbhagudi



Bhuvaneshwari of sukhanasi



wall sculptures



shikara (shrine tomb)

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