

GREAT TEMPLE TO SIVA AND HIS CONSORT AT MADURA.

Madura is one of the most interesting places in India, the peculiarities of Dravidian art being more marked and more grotesquely elaborate here than in any other southern city. The great Hindu Pagoda, with its picturesque gateways and pillared halls, produces a grand effect, whilst the deeply cut sculptures thrown into strong relief by brilliant sunlight are unsurpassed for variety and elaboration. This cannot fail to be the impression produced on any attentive spectator. The temple buildings are, moreover, not deserted like so many Indian shrines, but at all hours are thronged with priests, worshippers, buyers and sellers, in this respect rivalling the busy religious spectacles which rapidly succeed each other at Benares. The activity of Hinduism both in its religious and artistic traditions is of the first interest at Madura, whilst in the civil architecture of the city one may observe an unrestrained use and appreciation of Muhammadan forms rendered in the peculiar manner of southern artisans.

A plan of Madura dated 1688 A.D., published in "Les Monuments Anciens et Modernes de l'Hindoustan" by L. Langlés (Paris, 1821), shows the city to have been laid out with regularity; the central square containing the pagoda and palace buildings, shut in by double walls, was enclosed by a moat, again surrounded by streets, the whole covering a square area, to walk round which (the author says) took a good two hours.

The invasion of Southern India in 1310 A.D. by Malik Kafur caused the overthrow of the original pagoda, probably some centuries before Christ. The existing edifices, forming the central portion of the temple, are said to date from 1520 A.D., but the surrounding and more magnificent buildings are mostly of Trimal Nayakkan's time (1623—1659 A.D.). Some of the inscriptions on the columns and walls are, however, older.

The two central shrines are dedicated to Siva (called "Sundareshuar"), and "Minakshi" the fish-eyed goddess, consort of Siva. The ceremonies connected with these gods furnish constant occasions for festivals within the walls of the temple, as well as processions outside in the city. Of the most remarkable jewels used for the gods, the oldest is a pendant studded with precious stones presented by Sundara Pandiyan (which, if he was a Pandyan king, must have been before 1310 A.D.). Trimal Nayakkan gave a head turban for the god (Plate 52). The grotesque silver-gilt vehicles for the god and goddess to ride in procession represent a lion, a swan, a human-headed bird and a Yali, or griffin, but are modern goldsmiths' work. The designs of jewels at Rameshvaram and Madura are admirable, particularly pendants of double-headed garudas, or birds with outstretched wings in solid gold, studded with precious stones.

There is no means of knowing what the plans of the original temples at Madura were like. They may have been isolated shrines or with a single enclosure like the "Alaiva" (or Shore temple at the Seven Pagodas), or they may have been buildings with more than one enclosure like the Egyptian temples; but as rebuilt, enlarged and added to by Trimal Nayakkan, they possess three principal enclosures, and it appears from the unfinished Rayar Goparam that a fourth was in contemplation. All are for the service of the temple, and not as fortifications such as may be the last three enclosures at Srirangam. The pagoda is very wealthy, has an endowment from Government, and receives frequent gifts of great value.

The following describes those portions of the temple to which unbelievers have access, and which for the most part are under secular government and used for everyday purposes.

The principal entrance is from the east through the Sundara Pandya Goparam, measuring 102 feet by 58 feet in plan. There are steps leading down from the street; the top one bears an inscription. On the side walls of the passage are several other inscriptions. The wooden doorway of the Goparam is richly ornamented with carvings. On leaving the Sundara Pandya Goparam the Via Vasanta Rayar Mandapam is reached (Plate 51). Four of the columns on either side of the east entrance have life-size sculptured figures. To the north of the Via Vasanta Rayar Mandapam is the Thousand-pillar Mandapam. The first two rows of columns have sculptured figures of considerable spirit. South of the Via Vasanta Rayar Mandapam is the Sher Vagarar Mandapam.

A second approach to the temple enclosure from the east is through the Ashta Sakti Mandapam, a building with a great deal of grotesque carving and coloured decoration. Passing on, the Minakshi Naikar Mandapam is reached. The Chitra Mandapam is a colonnade round the north, south, and east sides of the Potra Mara Culam tank (170 feet by 114 feet). The wall of the north side is covered with frescos representing the Siva Puranas. The west side of the tank is shut in by the Kili Kati Mandapam, adjoining which is the Mutarli Mandapam (see Plate 50). At the west end of this Mandapam is a canopy of black stone supported on columns, and near to it a doorway leading into a garden containing the Mandapam of Jawandi Ishuaram. Passing from the Kili Kati