

CHAPTER - IV

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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF DEVANGANA SCULPTURES

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CHAPTER - IVWEAVING THE ARCHITECTURAL FABRIC -
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF DEVANGANA SCULPTURESMETHODOLOGY :

The present chapter aims at exploring the architectural development of Nagara temples in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh between the span of four centuries starting from the eighth century A.D. The observations have been drawn from 'reading' the mandovara patterns and the placement of various devangana types on its facets. The exploration brings into focus only those temples which take recourse to figural ornamentation as part of their iconographic vocabulary, which is essentially a medieval phenomenon.

While looking for the right examples, one gathers that there are two trends in mandovara programming, viz. (i) that which does not place any figures in the ratha, pratiratha, but bhadra and karna devakosthas are invariably filled by the manifestation of the presiding deity and the dikpalas respectively. This trend even in the tenth century continues to keep the mandovara walls essentially bare. e.g. Auwa, Lamba, Nagda. (ii) The second trend, in contrast, brings into action a whole range of images which not only adorn the walls with variety but also lend aesthetic beauty and richness of meaning.

The imagery of the figures placed on the mandovara combines aerial beings like gandharvas and apsaras; fantastic composite creatures like vyalas and nagninis; terrestrial beings like rishis, kanyas, tapases etc. rallying in unison with the other iconic deities, into a ^{culminating} pulsating vision of the cosmos e.g., ^{at} Osia, Harihara temple group; Khajuraho : Laksmana /

and Kandariya Mahadev temples. The second trend is relevant to our study, because it helps in pin pointing a site or a region and ^{specifying} a broad date bracket, during which the emergence of the devangana imagery as part of the temple iconography becomes active. Here, the researcher also attempts to thread the development of individual image types and their preference and frequent representations with its iconographical function (if any?) e.g. the aquatic connection is a very early phenomenon which goes back to Gupta doorways, a case in point being Osia where the river goddesses appear in large size on the karna of the mandovara, flanking the Kalyan ^{sundaramurti} in the bhadra devakosthas : Harihara temple-2, north west devakulika, north wall. Their makara and kurma vahanas are distinctly visible. They stand holding the water pitchers with flowing garments striking swastika chari and katiavalambita posture. At many other temples in Osia, the devanganas have been shown, but the water connection is unique to this site.

In this manner an attempt will be made at analysing the mandovara pattern of a cross section of temples to arrive at a generic recurrent scheme, unique to the regional schools e.g., Pratihara, Kachchapaghata, Chandella, Guhila, Chahamanas etc. The chronological frame work will be broadly kept in the background as a supportive guide-line. The main focus will actually be on the regional stylistic exchanges of motifs, and thereby to trace the path of development. Holding on to the devangana motif, we will journey through the same old tracks on which this imagery must have once travelled from region to region with the skill and imagination of the master craftsmen.

The above attempt will be further carried on to study the later temples of the so called 'Maru Gurjara' style in the regions of Maru

and Gurjara to discern, how the devangana imagery culminates and degenerates. Its later representations are too stiff and *ossified* so much so that they are almost not worth mentioning. Therefore, the exploration will be wound up by the thirteenth century.

Following the vastusastra the Nagara temple develops the vocabulary of decorative constructs, namely vyalas, apsaras, gandharvas etc., to fit in the mandovara walls besides the doorways, ceilings, pillar bases and brackets. This 'placement issue' is noteworthy, because there is a great congruence in text and practice. Note the Sas temple, Gwalior, Lakshmana temple and Vishvanath temple, Khajuraho, in which a great many salabhanjikas are placed (majority of them removed now) on the mandapa vitana, which is authorised by the Samaranagana Sutradhara and the Aparajitapriccha.

As a case study, the researcher has in mind a number of sites which merit special attention, namely Jagat, Modhera, Rani ki Vav, Badoli and Khajuraho. Sections I and II of this chapter are intended at exploring the logic of programming of the devangana sculptures on the temple mandovaras.

INTRODUCTION :

Devangana/apsara/surasundari sculptures, emerge on the temple architecture in the post-Gupta phase. Hence, it is clearly a medieval phenomenon. But at the outset, it has to be observed that in the past, architectural necessity had given rise to these motif types, which went into oblivion for sometime and again emerged when the aesthetic, social and religious functions called for their presence. In other words, neither the religious purpose nor the placement on the temple wall, was

prescribed as sacrosanct, and thus playing around with the various image types, was the privilege of the creative artists, who fared excellently at some places, to create masterpieces of exquisite beauty and grace. The present exploration is not a purposeless race, but a marathon task at scaling through the four centuries of the medieval period across Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh to differentiate the many devangana imageries and to probe more carefully into their meaning.

The areas under discussion here are traditionally addressed as Maru, Maru-Gurjara, Dahala, Gopagiri, Malava, Arbuda and so on. The architecture that developed in these areas, falls under the greater category of 'Nagara', but when minutely observed, each area has its own localised style, scale and motif type. While probing from a morphological stand point, M.A.Dhaky was able to give his insight into the unique as well as common features, shared by these regions which gave birth to a new amalgamated style in late tenth century A.D. which he prefers to call Maru-Gurjara.¹ This particular research has lent a new approach and dimension to the study of architectural morphology and structure, based on the lines of biological species and the study thereof. What is even more significant, is the use of sanskrit terminology and its introduction in describing the various parts of the temple; their typologies and variations thereof. The present study also takes into consideration the nomenclatures, stylistic groupings, cross currents of influences and sharing of common motifs, as proposed by Dhaky, Michal Meister and Krishna Deva.²

Rightly observed by Dhaky, "the style of Madhyadesa, of contemporary Dasarna-Malava, Cedidesa, of the Maru-Medapata-Sakambhari complex, and of the Himalayan kingdoms, represent variants of one and

the same style, which evolved in the pre-medieval period (the Pratihara age) from the earlier, almost homogeneous, style that prevailed in the Ganga-Yamuna valley as well as in central India during the times of the Guptas.³ Krishna Deva has called the art and architecture of pre and early medieval times in central India and upper and eastern India, an 'extension of Gupta art.'⁴ But elsewhere Krishna Deva distinctly mentions the 'common features' and 'regional variations' and 'local idioms' shared by the temples of the Pratihara period in central India and Rajasthan.⁵

The probe concerning our study neither pertains to the originality of the Pratihara style nor to the motifs developed by the localised guilds, but to the furtherance of the style itself; to its evolution and specifically to the development of the mandovara. In order to do this, the mandovara of the Pratihara temples is required to be studied since our period commences with the beginning of the Pratihara age.

Krishna Deva identifies the Pratihara style of central India as akin to that of Rajasthan, but its roots lie deeper in the soil of central India itself; with antecedents for a number of decorative motifs in the earlier temples of the Gupta period of the area : echoed by Dhaky in his study on 'vitanas'. This point remains undisputed.⁶ Temples at Amrol (early 8th century A.D.) and Naresar (late 8th century A.D.), were constructed by the imperial Pratiharas after their shift from Marumandala to Kannauj. The 9th century A.D. saw the arrival of Jaina temples at Deogarh and the Badoh Shiva temple Indore, the Jarai mata temple, Barwasagaar, the Sun temple, Mankhera, the Telika Mandir, Gwalior, the Gadarmal temple, Badoh and the Maladevi temple, Gyaraspur.⁷

The 8th and 9th century temples of the Pratihara age in Rajasthan are the Osian, Harihara group; the Kalika mata temple, Chittorgarh,

the Kumbhashyama temple, Chittorgarh; the twin temples of Shiva *and* Vishnu, Buchkala; built by the Pratihara king, Nagabhata II in 815 A.D., the Kameshwara temple at Auwa (dating from the mid 9th century) and the old temple at Lamba, also fall into the early phase of this architecture.

The pre-Solanki period architecture prevailing in Gujarat was of the Saurashtra style, patronised during Maitraka and Saindhava rule. Resembling the Kalika mata temple at Chittorgarh and generally relating with the architecture of the Pratihara age, are the Sun temple, Sutrapada, the Roda group of temples and the Sun temple, Bhimnath near Prabhas Patan.⁸

The commencing of the tenth century brought about further development in temple architecture, not only in terms of structural complexity and expansion but also in intricacy of design, sculptural imagery and form. At the close of the tenth century, the styles of Maru and Gurjara were swept off their heels, *and* they lost their individual provincial features *giving birth* to a new style, *which is* termed by Dhaky as 'Maru-Gurjara'. This confluence turned out to be a 'passionate embrace' of styles, one exemplified by a masculine strength and structural monolithic firmness (Gurjara) and the other epitomised by grace, decorative beauty and delicacy of treatment (Maru). This style was patronised later by the Solanki Kings of Gujarat and it spread its influences to Maharashtra, Malwa and the Cedi country.⁹

The 'Maha-Maru' and the 'Maha-Gurjara' are two distinct regional schools with their own sub-regional stylistic variations. The following sites indicate the development process, observed in the architecture of

these two major regional styles by Dhaky, which this author conforms to, in the present study ^{concerning} the placement of devangana sculptures on the mandovaras of the following temples:

The notable Maha-Maru temples are Kalika temple (Sun temple) and Kumbhasyama temple (Shiva temple) at Chittor, in all probability founded by the Grahapati king, Manabhanga, in years between 644 and 743 A.D. the Mahavir temple, Osia has a foundation inscription of V.S. 1013/A.D. 956, coeval to the Pratihara king Vatsaraja (C. A.D. 777-808). The Visnu temple at Buchkala was founded in the reign of his son, Nagabhata II, which is securely dated to V.S. 872/A.D. 815. While the Harshanath temple at Sikar, on the basis of its famous inscription, was constructed sometime between A.D. 956-73.¹⁰

The two sub regional styles of Maru region are Maru Sapadalaksa and lower Medapata-Uparmala regions. The major temples taken for discussion here from Maru Sapadalaksa are the Harihara temple, 1,2, and its deva kulikas-osia; old temple-Lamba (775-800 A.D.) Shiva temple-Buchkala, Kamesvara temple-Auwa; Mahadeva temple, Bundana (825-850 A.D.) Nilakantheswara temple, Kekind, Harshanath temple, Sikar (950-975 A.D.)

The lower Medapata Uparmala temples are Kalikamata and Surya temples, Chittor (725-750 A.D.); Sun temple, Bodadit (C. 950 A.D.); Ksemankari temple, Chittor (C. 825 A.D.).

The early Maha-Maru temples essentially are dvianga or trianga plan shrines, with a latina shikhara which carries latas. The mandapa is not fully developed except for a small mukhachatuski. The madhyalata called panjara is in rare instances flanked by a second, inner venukosa,

which takes the place of the subsidiary latas called balapanjaras. The ranga mandapa, when present, consists of a vedika, asana pattaka and a mattanarana. The pillars are of ghatapallava or ruchaka or bhadra type. The vitanas are also decorated and either follow samatala or nabhic chanda orders. The door frames are either trisakha or panchasakha, containing patrasakha, nagasakha, malasakha, mithunasakha and rupastambha etc. Ganga - Yamunna are also present along with attendants on the udumbara level. Generic connections with the temples of the Gupta period on the one hand, and the temples of the Pratihara age in Madhyadesa and the Desarna-Cedi-Malava country on the other are born out by these door frames.¹¹

The Mandovara either remains plain, save for the bhadra niche containing a major manifestation of the presiding deity and the karna koshtas, sometimes carrying the dikpalas. Some temples of Medapata-Uparmala region repeat the older style of the Maru Sapadalaksa of tall udgamas surmounting the sculptured niches of bhadra and karna. Rarely, do these also cover the pratiratha sculptures of devanganas and chauri bearers. Refer the Bodadit Sun temple and the Nilakanthesvara temple, Kekind. Dhaky observes elongated udgamas as reminiscent of central Indian examples such as found at Barwasagar.

The extensive sculpture material observed on the Maha-Maru temples consists of nagas, vidyadharas, gandharvas, maladharas, foliage of different kinds, and decorative geometric designs as well.

The Maha-Gurjara style is represented in three regions namely, Anarta, Arbuda and the lower Medapata. The handful of dated temples are Durga Ksemankari temple, Unwas, (960 A.D.); Ambika temple, Jagat

(961 A.D.) and Lakulisa Temple, Eklingji (972 A.D.). An indirect reference dates the temple of Ghanerao to 954 A.D. to which its style also conforms.¹²

The Maha Gurjara temples have a pitha, but the jangha has shorter udgamas and practically no sculptural images save for the bhadra niches. The pratiratha is not articulated as a ghata pallava pillaster (which is of Gupta origin) but¹³ reminiscent of the Rashtrakuta style. The door frames are quite elaborately carved but the mithuna and nagasakhas are absent while the Ganga-Yamuna do not occupy the same prominent position as they do at Maha Maru sites¹³ Rightly observed by Dhaky, the Maha-Marua style has more inclination towards sculptural treatment of the mandovara and doorway while the Maha-Gurjara is essentially architectonic which emphasizes the structural strength and not decorative embellishment. The above observation leads to an inference which the author would like to explore with definite examples and that is the placement of devangana figures on the mandovara, as a unique Maha-Marua phenomenon and later its spreading to the Maha-Gurjara area in the tenth century. This phenomenon will be elaborately discussed elsewhere.

The Maha-Gurjara style in its last phase developed in the Arbuda-Madapata region and introduced the anakandika-shikhara and samadala pratiratha. With this change, the expansion of the nagara temple was possible and it began to develop from Jagat and Kotai in lower Madapata and Anarta to central Indian Jejakabhukti and Cedidesa through the Chahamana channel.¹⁴ The Lakshmana temple at Khajuraho exemplifies this development. The tenth century also saw the inception of the merging of Maha-Marua and Maha-Gurjara traits, which will be dealt with in the section III of this chapter.

Central India is replete with temples of the Gupta period situated at Sanchi, Eran, Tigowa, Nachna-Kuthara, Bhumara, Deogarh etc. The Pratihara age in central India kept the continuity of the Gupta tradition further by fusing the indigenous tradition of mandapika shrines with it. Krishna Deva has found a recognizable "cognate group of temples with very distinctive features" attributable to this period and calls it "the Pratihara style of central India". This style has ^{its} offshoots in Rajasthan as well, represented by the group at Osia.

The central Indian sites are Naresar *and* Batesar, near Gwalior, Mahadev temple, Amrol, Telka Mandir, Gwalior fort, founded most probably in the reign of Pratihara king Mihira Bhoja (836-88 A.D.) Shiva temple, Indore. Co-eval with the former are the Jarai Mata, Barwasagar; Gadarmal Temple, Badoh; Chaturmukh Mahadev temple, Nachna; Sun temple, Mankheda; Jaina temple No.12 and 15, Deogarh; Maladevi temple, Gyaspur; which bears similarity with the Shiva temple at Kerakotin Kutch.¹⁵ Thus the Pratihara temple of central India of 8th and 9th centuries have a simple plan and design, displaying some characteristic ornaments of the style including tall pediments, a frieze of garland loops on the top of the wall, a band of nagas on the door-frame and rich carvings of vases and foliage, scrolls and kirtimukhas, and a square, ribbed cushion capital to be found largely on the pillars.¹⁶

The temples of Dahala region included for our study are the Shiva temples at Nohta, Marai, Sohagpur, and Janjgir between 10th and 12th centuries belonging to the 'Cedi style'. Most of them possess a mandapa.

The Jejakabhukti area, at Khajuraho, the medieval capital of the Chandella monarchs, saw the raising of grand temples, namely the

Lakshmana temple (c.954 A.D.) the Parshavanatha temple (c.955 A.D.) Ghantai temple (late 10th Cent. A.D.) the Vishvanath temple (c.1001-2 A.D.) the Devi Jagdambi and Chitra gupta temples. (c. early 11th Century A.D.) the Kandariya Mahadev temple (mid 11th cent. A.D.) the Vamana and Jawari temple (late 11th cent. A.D.) the Duladeo temple (early 12th cent. A.D.) This chronology is according to Krishna Deva. Dhaky and Krishna Deva have observed the presence of powerful Rajasthani elements in the fabric of these temples, especially in the ceilings. The present study will subsequently show how the devangana sculptures of Khajuraho bear the influence of the Rajasthan sculptures especially of Kekind and Jagat.

The Kacchapaghatas of Gopagiri, ruling in the area where older Pratihara temples exist, have a unique style. The transitional style temples are the Kadwaha and Tarahi (early temples), the ruined Vishnu temple of Gyarpur, while the fully developed temples are Padhavli (late 10th cent.) Jain temple, Jhalarapatan (c. end 10th cent.) the great temple, Suhana (c. 1001-10 A.D.); Vishnu temple, Nohta and the Sas-Bahu temple, Gwalior fort (c. 1094 A.D.)¹⁷

The Paramaras of Malwa took the lead in temple architecture from Ujjain and Dhara in 11th Century. The Udayeshvara temple erected in the time of Udayaditya (A.D. 1059-80) at Udayapur, is the finest example of Paramara architecture in the Bhumija style which alone will be discussed here. Dhaky observes an influence of Karnata-Maharashtra style, fused with the Kacchapaghata style in the Paramara architecture.

SECTION - IIV.1.1PRATIHARA AGE - BEGINNING OF DEVANGANA SCULPTURES ON NAGARA TEMPLES - RAJASTHAN, GUJARAT AND MADHYA PRADESH

The Pratiharas ruled during the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. over a vast region of western and north ^{ern} India and the identifiable style of architecture that they helped to evolve, has been recognised by scholars as the Pratihara architecture. This style had its regional variations and local idioms, but most notably it took on from where the Guptas had left off. The Pratiharas extended the existing tradition by adding a full fledged mandapa to the single shrine temple types of the Gupta age and of the early Pratihara period e.g. Naresar, Batesar etc. The shikhara also got elaborated and *as a* consequence, the mandovara too got articulated into either the triratha, or the pancharatha in plan, e.g. Gadarmal temple, Badoh-Pathari, Shiva temple, Kherat, etc.¹⁸ The pioneering contribution of the Pratiharas to Nagara temple architecture is the structuring and designing of the mandovara wall, devising sculptures to decorate its erstwhile bareness and standardizing an iconography of dikpalas, devanganas and vyalas, to drape the garbhagriha and the mandapa walls.

It being the most widely known architectural idiom, the Pratihara architecture had its impact on *far* off regions like Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. But the building activity patronised by the Pratiharas in north western Rajasthan and central India before the Kannauj phase sculpture and architecture, *is* more significant. They created new space concepts, structural and functional constructs, motifs, designs and figures together with aesthetic and iconographic norms.

Let us take a closer view of the earliest Pratihara temples of Rajasthan and central India with analogous examples from Gujarat. The Harihara group I and II temples from Osia, (Fig. 1, 3) Ksemankari temple from Chittorgarh, Vishnu and Shiva temples from Bundana, Roda temple from Gujarat; Shiva temple, Terahi; Gadarmal temple, Badoh Pathari (Fig. 6) and Teli ka Mandir, Gwalior Fort from Madhya Pradesh, are some of the leading examples considered here. The Roda group in the Anarta region and the Osia group in the Maru Sapadalaksa region, bear witness to (i) latina shikhara type of humble size, (ii) articulation of the garbhagriha walls into bhadra, karna and pratiratha projections, preceded by a small porch or mukhachatuski, outside the main doorway. These temples have been securely dated between last quarter of ^{the} eighth and early ninth century by Dhaky.¹⁹ Out of these temples, the Roda group bear niches for placement of sculptures in the bhadra while the rest of the wall remains plain. While at Osia, dikapalas are also introduced along with the other forms of the presiding deities, ^{which are} placed in the karna. e.g., ^{the} Vishnu temple, Osia, and Roda temple-1. Buchkala and Bundana also ^{adhere} to similar mandovara designing, in which the size of the bhadra is slightly larger than the pratiratha and karna. Ranak Devi temple, Wadhwan, and Maniyara Mahadev temple at Dedadara (early ninth century) also consist of plain bare walls with no embellishment, except for the niche in the bhadra and a garland circumscribing the temple; while ^{the} Roda temple III of the late eighth century has ruchaka type pilasters with fluted cushion like capitals at the pratiratha, creating another facet for the salilantara. Now a stage has come when the wall articulation is complete, but the figural sculptures have still to be fashioned. (For plates refer Dhaky, 1975)

For this break-through we will have to turn our attention to the Osia group of temples in Maru Sapadlaksa and the earlier temples at Chittorgarh in the lower Medapata-Uparamala region and Ksemankari temple C.825 A.D. The mandovara of this temple is divided into karna:

pratiratha : bhadra : pratiratha : karna, in the ratio ^{of} $1:\frac{1}{2}:2:\frac{1}{2}:1$ leading to unequal but rhythmic facets, which correspond with the shikhara shakhas, creating deep grooves, indicating the third dimension and visual articulation. The pratiratha is treated more like a pilaster of the ruchaka type, topped by a ghatapallava capital ^{with} a dense cluster of drooping foliage. The pratiratha contains the chamara dharinis flanking the bhadra image of a rider?²⁰ But above the rathika, there is no udgama as is present above the bhadra and karna images of the dikpalas.

The rider figure (Rivanta?) is flanked not by chamaradharinis as in the case of Ksemankari image, but by devanganas, who are shown holding a mirror and a bowl respectively. (Fig. 11) It is probably one of the earliest representations of devanganas on the mandovara, a position which they will firmly maintain for the forth-coming centuries. From the point of view of space organisation on the mandovara, the sculptors' hesitation in giving fuller growth to sculpture is self-evident. The udgamas cover the major space and ^{the} faceted walls leave very little plain spaces to allow sculptures to emerge out. Gradually, a change will come in a century's time. Note should also be made of vyala brackets supporting the bhadra niche, which will later on multiply and secure the space in the salilantara.

Harihara Temple-1, Osia ;

At the outset, note should be taken of a significant observation,²¹ ^{the} that devangana images on Osia temples are introduced amply by their

sculptors on the devakulikas or the peripheral shrines, and not on the presiding deity's shrine i.e. the mula prasada. Hence, the main temples like Harihara I and II, Sun temples, Vishnu temples etc., do not represent devanganas on the mandovaras of their mula prasadas. One wonders, what could be the reason for this purposeful elimination. Conversely, the sculptors may have first experimented with this imagery on the devakulikas and later^{on} introduced it on the main shrine. However, at Osia it is only in the Maru-Gurjara phase that devanganas come back on the mandovara of the Sacchiyamata temple.

In the south eastern devakulika (north face) of the Harihara-I group, the mandovara is divided into five parts with the bhadra twice as big as the karna and the pratiratha. The udgama is well articulated, while the figures canopied by them are Balarama Revati in the bhadra, a six armed Ganesh and a lady with a bow on the karna; river goddesses or ladies bearing water pitchers (kumbha) flank the central aqueous deity in the pratirathas. This scheme of rectangular composition is not complete without the purnakalasa, ghata pallava and kirtimukhas to which are added musicians, who squat at the lotus pedestals supporting the figures above. Here, the mandovara is compactly designed and decorative motifs and human figures are carved with equal sensitivity and spirit. They cover equal volumes and space without superceeding each other in prominence. The graceful tribhanga disposition of the sculptures lends an air of casualness to the form, and at this stage of iconographical development on temple architecture, the sculptors seem to have been highly imaginative. (AIIS 492.50) (Fig. 3)

Two more examples of Harihara group I and II will provide a clearer idea of the mandovara design concept, which is analogous to the

previous example and ^{is often} repeated at this site which goes to indicate its preference at Maru-Sapadalaksa in general.

On the mandovara of the north eastern devakulika of the Harihara group-I is placed, the darpana devangana who holds a lotus on the other hand. This image is placed on the karna, a position accorded generally to dikapalas²². The bhadra proudly bears the Garudarudha Vishnu, who is flanked by female attendants, ^{each} holding ^a chamara and ^a lotus. The kosta at the bottom is occupied by gana figures. This arrangement clearly distinguishes the devangana figures from the mere attendants. From here, the devangana imagery seems to take off on its own independent growth, locus standi. (Fig. 2)

The second example refers to Harihara group 2, the north wall of the north western devakulika. The bhadra niche has the Kalyanasundara murti flanked by attendants and the river goddesses, Ganga-Yamuna distinguished by their vahanas. The karna position is rarely given to river goddesses, who generally appear on the doorways of the Gupta-Vakataka and the Pratihara temple. (Fig. /)

It is note worthy, that even though Dhaky observes that Maha Maru is the presiding style of decorative motifs and sculptures, he does not mention the devanganas in his list of sculptural embellishments.²³ Will it be too hasty to suggest Maru-Sapadalaksha as the one of the leading sites for the emergence of devangana imagery? For even the Dasarna Cedi and Malwa regions are no where lacking in develop^{the} ment of^{ment of} the devangana imagery to adorn the pillar, mandovara and the doorway.

Mandovara decoration was indeed an important issue in the medieval period as the mandovara is the most representative portion of the temple,

where the masses gather, and hence ^{is} most challenging to design. Sculptural forms began to be carved and embedded into their respective niches. At different sites, artists designed figures and motifs, with the aim of creating visual articulation, on the physical surface of the architecture, by juxtaposing them in various iconographic imageries. This very articulation immensely contributed to the symbolic enrichment of the temple, imparting it a larger cosmic meaning.

Before leaving the eighth century, the major Maha-Gurjara site of the Pratihara age, namely the Roda group of temples in north Gujarat demands our attention. Other sites of this group are Ranakadevi temple, Wadhvan; Maniyara Mahadev temple, Dedadara, Brahmansvami temple, Varman etc. which do not bear any mandovara figure sculpture and hence ^{is} eliminable. But the very fact they do not bear ^{that} ^{any figural} sculpture, signifies a different trend and an approach to design which has its manifestations in Kameshwar temple Auwa, Ghateshwar Mahadev temple, Badoli and Sas-Bahu temple, Nagda. The eight temple of the Roda group follow the stunted shikhara type triratha and pancharatha plan with a small mukhachatuski and a large sukanasa, prominently adorning its facade. Inscriptional evidence to support its patronage and date are still wanting. It has been dated to the last quarter of the 8th century by Dhaky and hence ^{is} contemporaneous with the Osia group. The temple VI at Roda is note worthy not for its mandovara articulation or sculpture, but for the capital sculptures of its mandapa. The images of almost all devanganas alongwith ^{the} images of Vishnu are found here. This is the first ever unique approach to carve the entire imagery of the devanganas, but instead of placing them on the mandovara, capitals have been found more appropriate. This indicates an experimentative approach which will

slowly get absorbed in the main stream with the next century when in the nearby osia region full fledged devangana forms will be sculpted on the mandovara, seemingly, without hesitation. (Fig. 230)

The two temples from central India namely Shiva temple, Terahi (AIIS 427.83) (Fig. 5) and Gadarmal temple, Badoh Pathari (AIIS 81.9) (Fig. 5, 6, 7) reveal yet another mandovara morphology, which is in the process of evolution. The Terahi Shiva temple has a triratha plan without a salilantara. Bhadra niches have a canopied udgama and a roof which covers the deity placed ^{within} it. The karna houses the dikpalas as well as a very tall udgama of five tiers. The pratiratha appears in the form of a false pillar, containing two ghata pallavas, amalakas and brimming leaf motifs. The absence of devangana is especially noteworthy.

The Gadarmal temple of Badoh-Pathari is the most complicated of them all because the decorative motifs, niche windows and sculptures, do not appear in a vertical order of juxtaposition, but keep meandering all around the mandovara wall; a chequered pattern here, a human figure there, a ghata pallava here and an udgama there and so on. This temple is one of the first large scale temples to appear in this age. It has to be viewed as a predecessor to the Khajuraho temples of the next century built by the Chandellas. ^{Its} high plinth is the first connecting link with Khajuraho, while the second is the scale, and the third ^{is} the mode of dividing the mandovara into two tiers. At the plinth level, no tharas or horizontal bands like narathara, gaja-thara etc. have appeared, except for a chequered pattern and an acanthus creeper motif pattern. The mandovara is divided into two horizontal levels, both containing small niches with tiny figures and tall udgamas with kirtimukhas. The

grand plan of this temple is triratha and hence the highly faceted surfaces are available for the sculptor to fill in the empty spaces. The devanganas in this temple are placed in both the tiers of the mandovara, surmounted by tall udgamas on pratiratha, karna and even the nandika which are identified by me as vasana bhramsa, nalini, alasa, svastanasparsha, and prasadhika (AHS 431.12, 430-96, 81.9) (Fig. 6, 7, 166)

This unique feature of the Gadarmal temple stands as the earliest example of devangana imagery, *which is* designed to embellish the temple architecture in central India. In the 9th century, this remains a significant experiment of devangana imagery which was revived having been retrieved from the Kushana period. The above conclusion is debat able and needs some more supportive evidence.

Out of the Jaina temples at Deogarh, the temples No. 12 and 15, are traceable to the ninth century.²⁴ The temple 12 is pancharatha in plan and carries a heavy shikhara. Its mandovara has latticed windows, alternating with pilasters and niches with tall udgamas. It has got twenty four labelled Jaina yaksis represented all around; a unique feature which is useful for the study of devangana sculpture.

Teli ka Mandir at Gwalior is an unusually grand structure of the Pratihara style. It has a lofty, wagon vaulted superstructure and a rectangular section. The wall at cardinal offsets displays elaborate niche shrines, surmounted by a large udgama in the shikhara motif. The karnas also repeat the same design in smaller scale. The entrance doorway and the niches on the cardinal walls represent the river goddess and *the* Shakta and Shaiva dvarapalas, respectively. Krishna Deva holds that, this temple (on the basis of the palaeography of its inscription) appears to have

been founded by Mihira Bhoja around 850 A.D. Another temple of Shiva at Indore also bears a striking affinity with the Teli ka Mandir and hence is coeval and shares a common authorship. (Fig. -)

The Nachana temple of Chaturmukha Mahadev, like the Shiva temple at Terahi is entirely devoid of the use of devanganas in the mandovara decor. It has a developed shikhara of pancha ratha plan, but the garbhagriha is only triratha. The richly decorated exterior consists of trellis windows, niches depicting vidyadhararas with consorts, crowned by large udgamas. Each karna wall bears the dikpalas placed in a niche with tall udgama. While the windows and doorways of the temple are carved with friezes depicting dwarfs, scrolls and river goddesses in the Gupta tradition; its mouldings and shikhara design, the dikpalas, decorative architectural motifs like pediment, heart shaped flowers, garland-loops, vandana malika and square rafter-ends carved with conventional kirtimukhas, are in the developed Pratihara style of the ninth century. Nachana temple thus, represents a trend favouring decorative motif vocabulary, to figural sculptural language of symbolic meaning. (Fig. 8)

The Ghatesvara mahadev temple at Badoli (datable to ninth century) in east Rajasthan has a triratha sanctum and shikhara. The kapili joins the mukha mandapa which is surmounted by a shukanasa. The mandapa has a stepped roof which presupposes the samavarna roof of Jagat. The mandovara wall is plain, save for the bhadra niches containing Nataraja, Chamunda etc. The plinth is not very high at the sanctum base, but the mandapa is almost at the ground level. The mandapa pillars bear octagonal faces which are occupied by 'apsaras' devanganas standing on lotus pedestals. ^(Fig. 9) Krishna Deva observes the

resemblance of these figures with Khajuraho 'apsaras' in postural details of dress and jewellery.²⁵ This temple anticipates the Lakshmana temple at Khajuraho and appears to date roughly from the end of the ninth century²⁶. The devangana imagery represented on the pillars includes vasana bhramsa, markatachesta and some more. This particular trend is continued at many more sites in Madhya Pradesh, namely Gurgi (now in Reva Maharaja's Palace (AHS 58.43, 58.39) (Fig. ²³⁵239)) Sas-Bahu temple Gwalior fort (AHS 300.71) (Fig. ²³⁴233) and in Rajasthan at natamandapa of the Delwara temples, Abu and Kumbharia group of Jaina temples. At Gujarat, Sun temple of Modhera provides the most leading example.

Thus, the above examples highlight the two major trends in mandovara decor; one favouring plain surfaces interspersed by decorative motifs, and the other favouring sculptural forms with a definite iconography and heirarchy of placement. The hesitation and experimentation of the artists continued, and so the devanganas shift their placements from the capitals to the bases of the pillars, to small niches on the mandovara, but seldom do they come on par in scale with the sculptures of other divinities. With the onset of the tenth century, the sculptors ^{would} gather more confidence and certainty in the treatment of this imagery, and develop it to its final culmination, ^{and when} they ^{would} surpass the other sacred images of the dieties, in grace, charm and aesthetic beauty.

IV.II.1

10TH CENTURY - COMING OF AGE WITH KOTAI, JAGAT, KEKIND AND OTHER WESTERN INDIAN SITES

The tenth century brought about a new enthusiasm in temple architecture and replenished the temples in western India with new motifs, sculptures and design patterns. Both the Maha-Maru and the Maha-Gurjara styles had come to a point of final fruition beyond which further growth was not possible. It was at this opportune moment of the merging of both the styles, that the harmonious fusion of Maru with ^{the} Gurjara elements showed a fresh avenue of growth; the path tread upon by the ^{se} combined styles has come to be termed as 'Maru-Gurjara' by Dhaky. Rightly opined by him, that, had they been left uncrossed, the fate of each one of the two styles would have been not unlike that of the sedentary style of Jejakabhukti best exemplified at Khajuraho',²⁷ Still however, it is important to note that tenth century also brought about development in Dahala, Malwa and Kosala regions. While viewing all these developments in totality, tenth century temple architecture stands at the highest peak of the parabolic ascent after which medieval architecture slips into the decadent phase.

The tenth century temples to be discussed here from Anarta region are the Shiva and Surya temples at Kotai, Lakhesvara temple, Kerakot; (c. 950 A.D.), Muni Bava temple, Than (c. 975 A.D.); ^{and} Bhadreshwara temple, Anjar (C. 1000 A.D.). While in the Medapata region are Mahavir temple, Ghanerao (954 A.D.); Ambika temple, Jagat (960 A.D.); Sun temple, Tusa; Vishnu temple, Kiradu, Sas-Bahu temple, Nagda; Mira temple, and Mahavir temple, Ahar (c. 1000 A.D.)

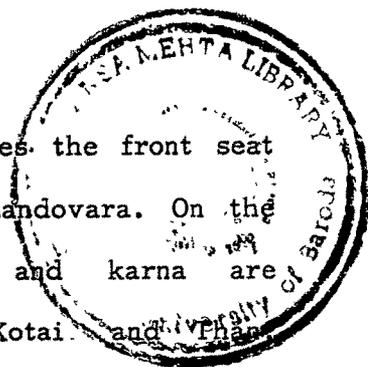
The significant temples of the Maru Sapadalaksa region are *the* Nilakanthesvara temple, Kekind (c. 975 A.D.); and the Harsanatha temple, ^(at) Sikar (956-73 A.D.); While the Sun temple of Bodadit (c. 950 A.D.) is significant from the lower Medapata region.

The most prolific phase of the Maha-Gurjara style at Anarta and Medapata culminated at Kotai and Jagat respectively, with the arrival of the anekandika sikhara. With the introduction of the samadala pratiratha plan, the designing of the anekandika sikhara became possible. The kumbha of the vedibandha began to get decorated with figure work, while the jangha in most cases contained the full retinue of images - dikpalas, apsaras, gandharvas and vidyadharas, elephants and vyalas.²⁸

The Ambika temple at Jagat is datable to 960 A.D., according to a pillar inscription of one of its sabhamandapa pillars, which mentions a date, V.S.1017 = 960 A.D.²⁹ The sanctum is *pancharatha* with *an* anekandika sikhara; *it has* a kapili with stepped roof, a mandapa with latticed windows in the lateral transepts, *and* a mukhachatuski with balustrades, completes the plan of the whole structure. (Fig. 13) The humble scale and compactness of the structure is the quality of the Jagat temple. Fortunately, it has neither been ravaged by weather nor by iconoclastic invaders, because of which is preserved the pristine purity and originality of the structure. Save for some repairs, much of the structure appears complete. The jangha section, emerges on a very high pitha with several bands of kumbhaka, kalasha, antarapatra, kapotali and manchika. The jangha is draped with several sculptures which begin to integrate organically with the substance and form of the architecture. The Jagat temple leaves little space empty or devoid of ornamentation, *while* *which is* the articulation of the wall facets in unison, *a* creates a pulsating visual effect.

It is with this century that figural sculpture takes the front seat in the design of the jangha and other parts of the mandovara. On the typical pancharatha plan the bhadra, pratiratha and karna are interspersed with salilantaras, as is the case at Kotai and Jagat. (Fig. ²⁰¹ ~~200~~) The bhadra and karna niches are prominently styled as rathikas with udgama and pillars, in which ^{the} presiding deities and dikpalas are placed. The images of devanganas are invariably placed on the pratiratha which is projecting forward (Kotai, Than Jagat). But very often, the Jagat sculptors have placed ^{along with Vyalas,} devanganas as well, in the salilantara, a feature that emerges gradually with the expansion of the mandovara facets, due to which more space is made available for the figures. The devanganas are perched on a pedestal (Jagat) or a lotus petalled pedestal with a stem alluding to the aquatic origin (Kotai). On the sanctum mandovara of the Kotai Shiva temple, ^{and} above the jangha sculptures, are situated ^{the} barani, antara patra and kapotali; while on the mandovara of the mandapa, a parikara runs across the face of the entire wall, depicting some floral design just behind the head and shoulder of the images. Just above the head of the sculptures is perched another group of figures, which are seated and involved in music, love play or just conversation. These appear on the Jagat temple but only on the salilantara and pratiratha, while at Kotai it recurs on all the facets of the mandapa. The meaning of these figures has been discussed in chapter VI.

The recurrence of some generic motifs e.g., dikpala, devangana, vyala, on the mandovara seems to follow a system which remains more or less unchanged. As for instance, the devakostha on the bhadra contains Durga Mahisasuramardini on the south wall, flanked by two vyalas



on the salilantar^{which are}as, immediately followed by devanganas in the narrow pratirathas, riding on elephants. The following pratiratha contains a devangana again and is buttressed by a karna containing dikpalas. Hence the jangha division is as follows.

d,c,c,b,a,b,c,c,d, This completes the garbhagriha unit.

The Kotai (Fig. 12) programming differs slightly from the above in which, the bhadra is immediately followed by a vyala pair in two salilantara on both the sides. This is followed by a pair of devanganas in pratirathas projecting forward. Even the two lateral sides of the pratiratha wall contains sculptures of devanganas. Hence, they come in pairs, a feature which will continue in the Maru-Gurjara and the Chandella styles as well. This shows that sculpture develops analogous ^{the} to developments in architecture, ^{and} as the articulation of faceted walls emerge, sculptures develop ^{so as} to accomodate ^{itself} within its range. The next column is occupied by the vyalas in the salilantara, which is completed by karna containing dikpalas. The corners are traditionally assigned to the dikpalas and hence the guardians of both the coinciding directions stand adjacent to each other, but facing their own directions. Therefore, the jangha division programme on the sanctum of the Kotai Shiva temple is d,b,c,c,b,a,b,c,c,b,d.

On the Muni Bava temple, Than; the pattern is d,b,c, - a,b,c,b,d which conforms the Kotai pattern. Interestingly, the width of the bhadra in Than temple is 2, that of pratiratha and salilantara 1 each and the karna is 1.5 units.

While at Kotai, the bhadra covers 2 units, salilantar^s $\frac{1}{2}$, and the pratiratha and karna $1\frac{1}{2}$. At Jagat, the proportion is totally different.

the bhadra occupies 2, the salilantaras 1, the pratiratha $\frac{1}{2}$ and the karna 2 units. Thus, the faceting of the wall follows an asymmetrical pattern, interspersed by a regulated division. It is quite evident that Jagat has a uniqueness which is not found at Kotai and hence, pro-claiming the two temples as similar is not very convincing.³⁰

Even at the Lakheshwar temple of Kerakot, the jangha contains figures of dikpalas and apsarases.

Of the central and southern Rajasthan, two temples from Kotah district, need ^{to be} mention ^{ed} here, since they represent the triratha plan temples with a kapili and a small mukha mandapa ^{as} an extension of the Pratihara type plan. One is the Sun temple from Bodadit (c.900-925 A.D.)³¹ and the other is Amvan Temple 2 of c. ninth century A.D. Both are in Maha-Maru style. The udgamas are very tall and elaborately carved. The pratirathas contain the devanganas, ^{while} the karnas, the dikpalas. The devakoshthas of the Bodadit Sun temple, are canopied by a roof which is supported by stambhikas. The roof is supported by small figures of vyalas. The lateral protrusion of the bhadra is also occupied by figures which appear to divide the bhadra into a triptych with the two-sided columns further divided into two. This particular division of the jangha actually occurs first at Osia, and from here, in my view, it will be carried forward to Modhera on a very high scale. The sculpture of Bodadit is much mutilated but the devanganas on the pratiratha depict alasa and padmini nayikas. (Fig. 14) (AHS 637.78) The jangha programming of the Amvan Shiva temple also follows the same mode of depicting the images of attending female figurines in two rectangular boxes around the bhadra devakostha; a feature which will be carried forward in Bodadit, Modhera and Atru. This feature of the

Maru convention will be taken up while studying the Maru-Gurjara architecture.

The Bhadreshwara temple at Anjar, dateable to 1000 A.D., in Kutch, is a slightly later temple. It has a latina shikhara with central bhadra sakha flanked by the latasakhas and the karna sakhas. The backwall of the garbhagriha has ^{an} eight armed Shiva in the bhadra niche, who is flanked by chamaradharinis followed by the vyalas in the recesses. The karna contains the dikpalas. The interesting feature of wall faceting is, that the bhadra is flanked by pratiratha and not salilantara, as in the case of Kotai. Secondly, the madhyapatra is running across the temple, dividing the smaller upper section to house small dancing figures, couples etc. The bhadra niche is topped by an udgama and maladharas, while the pillars of its rathika are supported by the vyalas. These tiny vyalas had appeared before at Chittorgarh, Ksemankari temple, but not found at Kotai, Jagat or Than. This temple does not offer much sculpture, of devanganas.

It appears to be an important feature of Guhila and Chahamana temples that ^{the} figural sculptures placed in the jangha of the mandovara, are given a special treatment and individuality. The sculpture for architecture comes into its own in ^{the} tenth century only with these sites. And therefore, even though Osia may have taken the lead, the overall development of architecture and the placement of sculpture in it, were devised entirely by the Mewar artists of the Chahmana and Guhila monuments, in their transition from Maha-Gurjara to Maru-Gurjara. The concept of sculpture integrated with architecture, was entirely non-existent in Maha-Gurjara, but ^{for} the transitional phase, ^{when} there was a sudden outburst of sculpture. Look for example at the Tusa, Ahar and

Nagda temples, of course, besides Jagat. This however, need not be ^{confused} with the already existing sculpture of matrikas in western India of seventh and eighth century hailing from Shamalaji, Amjhara, Mandsaur, Sondhani, Kotyarka, Jagat, Mt. Abu etc. These sculptures of masterly quality may have stood under woodensheds or small cellas, as in the Yogini temples in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.³² These sculpture may *also* have existed as individual entities. But whether the "body" of architecture was draped with the "raiment" of sculpture, is not known. The sensibility for integrating sculpture with architecture should have posed a different kind of challenge and this watershed century with its prolific examples invites us to probe into this issue.

The Sun temple at Tusa in Udaipur district, is dateable to the third quarter of tenth century and resembles the Jagat Ambika temple in a modest way. It is smaller in size, ^{and} less crowded than Jagat, but the sculptural style and jangha decoration clearly remind us of Jagat. The bhadra devakostha has an image of Surya, seated in his seven horsed chariot surrounded by a tiny udgama. The bhadra is flanked by a pratiratha in which two devanganas are placed; one involved in kanduka krida and the other in alasa pose, lifting her arms aloft. They are held on lotus pedestals without kostha frames, while above them are maladhara couples. These devanganas are accompanied by kutillaka and dwarfish attendants. Could not an allusion to time be an obvious conjecture about their disposition? Their occurrence in conjunction with Surya, who signifies eternal movement, enables us to extend the metaphor further, in interpreting the two adjacent figures of devanganas as symbolically alluding to the 'up and down movement' of the ball and the 'angadayi' of time, as suggested often in Bharatanatyam dance by a

virahanayika, in the posture as the one struck by the devangana on the left. (AIIS A 49.33, A 47.29) (Fig. 5).

The salilantara follows next, which is occupied by vyalas, while the karna is occupied by the dikpalas. This unit of the sanctum is quite compact, yet open, since none of the sculptures are bound by any frame. This allows the surrounding space to interact with the space occupied by the sculptures. This feature will be slowly absorbed for a more crowded jangha organisation in the following centuries. (Therefore, the concept of sculpture of environment introduced by Focillon can be applied to the Tusa sculptures) The natamandapa of the Tusa Surya temple, also needs mention, since it contains eight vidyadevi or devangana figures in its vitana, in keeping with the tradition suggested by the texts and confirmed by practice in : Gujarat, Rajasthan and central India from the tenth century onwards.³³

Dhaky has an interesting observation on the placement of nayikas on vitanas and this is the first time in our discussion on devangana in temple architecture, that the question related to vitana is occurring. "The provision for nayikas in the form of supporting brackets attached to the pillars is highly significant, in that here, one sees the beginning of that well known convention not known in that age anywhere else in western India".³⁴ Hence, according to Dhaky, at the Kamesvara temple, Auwa, the nayikas on the vitana are seen for the first time while in the tenth and later centuries its occurrence is quite usual. In our second chapter the section dealing with architectural texts, portions from Aparajitaprccha and Samarangana Sutradhara are quoted which throw light on the components of the vitana and placement of the devanganas. There is an interesting conformation of the text to architectural practice. (A typical chicken and egg situation!

The Mira temple at Ahar is another interesting temple, bigger in height and width as compared to the Tusa temple of the Maha Gurjara style in Udaipur region. It is dateable to c. 990 A.D. It is an anekandika sikhara structure, pancharatha on plan ^{and} dateable to c. 990 A.D. The mandapa and sikhara appear highly renovated but the garbhagriha mandovara seems to be original. (AIIS 28, 23, 27, A 49.6, A 49.5, A 49.8) (Fig. 16)

The bhadra contains Vishnu-Lakshmi or Shiva-Parvati images surrounded by two devanganas in the bhadra pratiratha, which bears two more devanganas in its lateral wall facets. The salilantara bears ferocious vyalas while, the pratiratha and its lateral sides support two devanganas on a pedestal. The stambhikas are slender and contain two drooping tamala patras. The devanganas are so placed as though they were posing for a photograph, from a Zharokha for someone. This convention of organising the pratiratha rathikas continues at Modhera and Rani ki Vav in Gujarat, where the images are not bound by the frame and breathe the space with ease. The imageries of the devanganas range from nalini, chamaradhari, vinavadini to the markatachesta, alasa, svastanasparsha etc. Probaly ^b a number of stylistic features of the devangana sculptures of Ahar, Mira temple, relate on the one hand to those at the Jagat, Ambika temple, and on the other to the Maru-Gurjara sculptures of Rani ki Vav. The proportions are slightly heavier, while the form is the p^etite Gurjara model of the tenth century exemplified by Jagat. In|contrast, the Maru type is slender, elongated and slimmer, exemplified by Kekind.

One sees a shade of both these styles on the Ahar, Adinatha temple mandovaras, which depicts a profusion of devangana sculptures.

It is slightly later to the Mira temple and is datable to C.1000 A.D. The plinth is very high in keeping with the Jagat Character and the Jangha portion quite squeezed and compact. The barani and kapotali have been pushed up by adding another moulding to contain Jaina tirthankaras. The devanganas are carved in the same manner as at the Mira temple, projecting out of the stambhika , but at the back ground of all these figures a thick foliage fashioned in the form of a stylized manner of the lotus stalk is carved. Does this not remind us of the yakshi connection? Well, on the Jaina temple this is very much possible, since the allusion to vegetation and yaksi is integrated into the Jaina iconography. The devangana imagery of nupurapadika (AIIS 28.43) vinadharini, darpana (AIIS 28.36) markatcheshta, keshamstoyakarin, (Fig. (AIIS 28.57) alasa, kandukakrida, (Fig. 162) prasadhika (Fig. 16) (AIIS 28.64) putravallabha (Fig. 17) (AIIS 28.59) are found on this temple. Almost the entire range of devangana imagery has been carved out here. Is it not interesting to note, that the reliefs depicting the tirthankaras have been given a small and minor place in the mandovara with no compromise as far as the devangana images are concerned? If one notices carefully, the cult images are never given prominence, nor profusion, on the tenth century temples. It is the vyalas, the devangana and the dikpalas, who have reigned supreme. That the sculptures of the gudhamandapa are much later than those of the mulaprasada, is quite evident. On the apsaras of the southern bhadra niche, an inscription is carved which mentions the name Padmavati. The other is not very clear.³⁵ The three dimensional^s of the sculptural form itself suggests a variation in the treatment of the carving process. The arrival of the eleventh century is actually proclaimed by the Adinath temple at Ahar and Dhaky opines that the Vishnu temple (Nagada, stands at the end of

one tradition and the Jaina temple at the beginning of the other. The difference between the two is due not so much to the time factor. Hardly a quarter of a century separates the two. It is due to a separate phenomenon that had happened precisely during that very interval, namely the fusion of the Maha-Maru style of the upper Rajasthan with the Maha-Gurjara style of the lower Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Ahar temple reflects the impact of the art of the Maru land and hence *its* ideals and expression.

The Nagda temples known as the Sas-Bahu temples are Vaishnavite in affiliation. (Fig. 20) The sculptures of these temple show strong, affinities *with* those on the Jagat, Tusa and Kotai temples. The presence of the typical leaf and chain leitmotif along the upper edge of the wall, reminds us of the same feature *which is* in an identical position on the Lukulisa temple in the Eklingji group.³⁶ The walls of the garbhagriha and antarala are plain, while a lot of sculptural figures are placed on the mandapa exterior as well as the interior. In the vitana of one of the temples, eight figures of salabhanjikas are found. The magnificence of decorative carvings in the interior, is balanced by the simplicity of the exterior.

The most magnificent and sculpturally excelling temples of the Chahamana times in Rajasthan are the Shiva temple on the Harshagiri hill near, Sikar, dating from 956-973 A.D.³⁷ and the Nilakantheshvar temple from Kekind 956 A.D.,³⁸ which are coeval.

Much of the Harshagiri temple³⁹ is dilapidated, hence it is not very convenient to study the programming of its mandovara sculptures or the proportional relationship of the different parts of its rathas. Nevertheless, out of the existing sculptural figures of devanganas in situ

on the sanctum wall, one is able to observe a range of imagery devised by the artists ^{to realize} and that this image type has now come into its own. The larger figures placed on individual lotus pedestals appear to sway in unison to the rhythm of the music they are engrossed in. Some of them are shown playing on a Vina, some blowing a conch, some holding flowers and garlands or standing with rapt attention, fixing their gaze on the horizon. Some are also decorating themselves or holding chamaras and standing. The kshipta knee enhancing the curve of the body, or swastika pada induce a dance like movement in every figure. There is no stiffness in any of the figures; instead their movements add dynamism to the otherwise stationary, architecture. (Fig. 18, 129) (AIIS 502.42, 507.43, 507.39, 507.37, 507.2, 507.3, 507.41). Only the devanganas holding the vina and flute (it is my supposition because the right hand is broken but a stick like object is visible and the left hand reaches out for it as though it were to hold it) are accompanied by drummers and flutists and are made to stand below a densely foliated tree. Here, traces of the vegetation connection can be deciphered. These devanganas are actually seventeen in number and stand surrounding the sculpture of Gauri or Godha.

Interesting figures of devanganas are also found in the doorway sculpture, antarala panel and kakshasana balustrade, although this may not have been their original place. The doorway mithunas merit a special mention, since they seem to depict some shringaric events, a feature that was first observed at the Khilchipura pillars (referred to in the sculpture chapter), the origin of which goes back to the Mathura pillars.⁴⁰

Similarity in the treatment of the sculptural form of this temple sculpture-especially with that of the devanganas of Jagat and Kekind, is striking, but they are coeval and might have exchanged ideas ^{between them} /but the similarity with Khajuraho is even more striking.

They almost impose their presence upon the monument and stand there with grace and poise, as if, to communicate with the on-looker. The sculptors of the tenth century go out of their way to decorate their temples with devanganas so much so that at Nilakanthesvara temple, Kekind (Fig. 19) the devanganas are placed prominently in the devakosthas of the pratirathas and also on the lateral facets, while the mother goddesses, the sapta matrikas are pushed into the salilantara. (Fig. 206) The karna retains the dikpalas and thus completes the programming. The uniqueness about Kekind is (i) the incorporation of matrikas on the jangha, a place never allotted to them before and (ii) the prominent placement given to devanganas. But in terms of depiction of the imagery, the sculptor has truly excelled above our expectations. The disposition of the figures which are generally in swastika or gatagata or baddha chari posture, is extremely dynamic and full of vigour. Their outstretched arms in uromandali hasta, despite mutilation, create an impression of the verve and strength. The imageries of these devanganas will be discussed in the sculpture section. Dhaky observes their stylistic similarity (especially of the headgear, coiffure and ornaments) with the devanganas of Khajuraho, Lakshmana temple (954 A.D.) in a generic way⁴¹. The figure design pattern on the Kekind temple jangha is d,b,c,c,b,a,b,c,c,b, of which creates a symmetrical rhythmic order on all the three sides of the sanctum.

IV.II.2

KHAJURAHO AND THE CENTRAL INDIAN CONTINGENT

This section has been specifically separated from the previous one in order to focus more closely ^{on} the central Indian tenth century temples and the role of sculpture in their architecture, which has a strong stamp of its own individual style and design organisation. The Khajuraho sculptures have been extolled as the most glorious sculptures of medieval India but little has been done to probe into their antecedents, the Gurjara-Pratihara phase.⁴² The present section is an attempt to discuss at length Khajuraho and certain other temples of the tenth century in Central India, which cannot be overlooked in the broad survey of devangana sculpture on Nagara temple architecture of the medieval period. Parimoo observes, that the whole articulation of the temple wall changed by the tenth century, as the Chandellas became the patrons in Bundelkhand and the Solankis in Gujarat. As the articulation of the wall became more evolved, the role of the sculptor became more demanding. During the second phase of the medieval period however, the phenomenon of the collaboration between the architect and the sculptor became very dynamic. It is at Khajuraho that the sculptor emerges ^{as} the most eloquent and the temple turns into a sculptor's paradise⁴³

The following temples of Madhyadesh of the tenth century will be discussed here : of the Kalachuri-Chedi style in ^a Dhala region, the Mahadeva temple, Nohta (Damoh district), Shiva temple, Marai (Satna district), Virateshvar temple, Sohagpur (Shahdol district); Shiva temple, Kodal (Damoh district); Bajramath, Gyaraspur, (Vidisha district), Pali (Bilaspur district).

The group of temples of the Kacchapaghata in the Gopagiri region Surwaya (Shivpuri district); Mohajamata temple, Terahi (Shivpuri district); Kakanmadh temple, Suhania (Morena district), also temples at Padhavli and Mitaoli, in the same district, Kadwaha (Guna district) Mahadeva temple, Chorepura ruined temple (Shivpuri district), Sas-Bahu temples of Gwalior fort, the temple of the Chandellas of Jejakabhukti from Laksmana (c. 954 A.D.) to Duladeo (early twelfth century), from the Malwa region under Paramara sway, Udayeshwara temple of 1059-80 A.D. built by the king Udayaditya.

The Shiva temple at Kodal dateable to 900 A.D. is an interesting structure. The shikhara is triratha but the garbhagriha is pancharatha, the kapili has a broad sukanasa at the top and the temple has no gudhamandapa or a mukhachatuski. The pitha is broad and tall, which carries traces of Gurjara. Pratihara elements, some contemporaneous and some of a century anterior viz. the tall intricately carved udgama. The jangha is clearly divided into two tiers by a madhyapatra, a floral motif. The upper section contains vyalas and gandharvas and Shaiva rishis, while the lower section contains devanganas placed in pratiratha and salilantara with the dikpalas on the karna and the main deity's from in the devakoshtha. The devangana figures placed either on the pratiratha or the salilantara merge with the outer space of the wall facets, are not bound by any stambhika frame work. This typical' Maha-Gurjara feature is also traceable at Jagat, Tusa and Kotai but at Ahar, Kekind and some other sites, the stambhika-bound frames become an established convention. The imagery of the devangana also draws our attention because the entire range is represented here with immense vigour and abandon. The highly dynamic figures, seem to bend and sway,

striking ever captivating sensual postures. The devangana proto types seen are the prasadhika, vasana, bramsa, svastanasparsa, alasa, kesanistoya karini, padmini, chamaradharini and nartaki. The preference for baddhachari, (Fig. 205, 207) (AIIS 523.48, 523.29) nupurapadika, avaspanidita, (AIIS 523.23, 523.26) charis (Fig. ²¹⁴215) and ayata, avahittha, tryasra, gatagata, svastika, valita, motita, sthanakas of dance, in the depiction of the devanganas, can be observed. Many of these postures are used in natya such as ayata and avahittha and by the virtue of their being adapted for these images; the entire mandovara appears to have been used as a theatrical arena by the sculptors.

Temples of the early tenth century pre-Khajuraho phase are, Nohta in Damoh district and Marai in Satna district. The Shikhara is of the latina type primarily with a triratha plan, but the presence of broad salilantaras on the mandovara have necessarily converted it into a pancharatha ground plan. The temple is placed on a prominent pitha and the parts of it are highly developed. The mandovara is divided into three tiers horizontally and a madhyapatra decorative creeper serves as the divider. The second tier contains udgamas which are placed above the each image of dikpala, vyala and devangana (Fig.) (AIIS 522.99, 59.99). The largest udgama is obviously above the devakostha which contains Varaha. The third tier is separated by a manchika and in the devakostha above a varaha, a seated image of Surya is placed, while other sculptures represent mithunas, devanganas, dancing groups, etc. The temple also has a large pillared mandapa and a porch, but with no sculpture on this section. It is similar to the temple of Shiva at Maihar in Satna district, dating from 960 A.D., which is locally known as Golmath.

Marai has a ruined temple constructed on a high plinth. The shikhara has completely *collapsed* and so have the upper portions of its mandapa and mukha mandapa. The mandovara of the sanctum wall is divided into two tiers and contains highly graceful but heavy proportioned sculptures of vyalas, devanganas, dikpalas on the lower tier; and vasus, devanganas, and erotic couples on the upper tier. The treatment of the figures is very smooth. The nupurpadika and Markatacheshta are represented on the pratiratha around the devakostha. The vyalas are as large as the human figures. (AHS 57.56) (Fig. 23)

The most developed among the Kalachuri temples, *are* the Virateshvara temple of Sohagpur and the Shiva temple at Pali, which are eleventh-twelfth century temples. *At Pali* the mandovara is highly ornate, the jangha sculptures are placed in three tiers and each tier is supported by bharaputras. The repertoire of the sculptural decoration is highly elaborate, one could say matching that at Khajuraho. Vyalas of various types in the salilantara and devanganas in dancing modes, shringaric and raudra modes, are placed on each facet of the temple pratiratha walls. (Fig. 24) (AHS 59.47, 32.7, 32.8) The sculptures have now become so profuse and activated, that the whole wall has become complex and replete with a varied imagery. The occurrence of cultic images is markedly much less, compared with the secular motifs of devanganas, vyalas and their various manifestations. Could it not be said that nagara temple architecture is a celebration of the sacred at the expense of the secular, without which the cosmic order could never have been complete? The guesuous, the ferrocious and the erotic combine to form the secular imagery of the temple decor repertoire.

The Bajramath temple at Gyarpur, is a less ornate kachhapaghata structure of the tenth century, which is triple shrined and hence its mandovara is very broad and multifaceted. The much dilapidated mandapa is supported on three rows of pillars which lend a lot of bay space to the interior. While watching the temple from the corners of the southeast or the northern sides, the tiered roof of the side shrines cusps at the centre to join the main latina sikhara. Structurally a unique temple, Bajranath also has some unique types of devanganas. Divided into two parts by a horizontal band of creepers, the mandovara contains figures of the deities, dikpalas, devanganas but (AIIS 310.64, A 3-93, 523.82), (Fig. 25²⁶) not of vyalas etc. The upper tier is devoid of any sculpture. It is quite clear that empty spaces meant a lot at this stage but this gradually gave way to crowding of forms and exhibition of spatial organisation and virtuosity. The unique type of devangana found at Bajramath is a horse-headed lady dancing in ayata mandala, one foot in kunchita, holding a fish and a cup. Who could she be? Perhaps, Matrika Varahi.

The other Kachchapaghata temples of the tenth century hail from Surwaya, Terahi (Mohajamata temple), Suhania (Kakanmarh), Kadwaha (Khirniwala group) and Gwalior (Sasbahu temples).

Both Surwaya temple 2 and Mohajamata temple, are devoid of shikhara. The plinth is not very high and the mandovara also not very tall. The mandapa in front is supported on four pillars. The bhadra niche houses the Andhakavadha Shiva (Fig. 28²⁹) (AIIS 83.10) who is surmounted by a canopied chhatra. The udgamas above the bhadra and karna are large, reminding us of the Gurjara - Pratihara period temples of Badoh - Pathari and Terahi. The devanganas stand on the pratiratha

which has drooping foliage. The devanganas are not bound by any frame and stand gracefully on their pedestals; (Fig. 28) (AIIS 83.13) on the west wall is seen The lady with her back towards us lifting her foot as if to pluck a thorn.⁴⁴

The Mohajamata temple has a more elaborate design of sculptural figures, which occupy both the tiers and represent vyalas, devanganas, dikpalas, demons, devis and so on. The second tier in the west, south and the north janghas is fully occupied by skeletal figures and demon-faced figures. On the lower tier matrikas are arranged. The ayata mandala is widely favoured here. (AIIS 89-41, 428.10, 428.12, 428.15, 428.17, 428.20, 428.18) (Fig. 27)

At Kadwaha, the Chandalmadh temple belongs to the first half of the tenth century, the second half is represented by a small Shiva temple near Murayat of c.975 A.D., the Khirniwala group represents the first quarter of the 11th century, and Murayat dates from circa 1075 A.D. closing the cycle as the end of the 11th century. At the Khirniwala group temple - 1, (AIIS 429.39, 429.40, 429.42) one sees a compact treatment of the mandovara, in which the devanganas and dikpalas are placed in two horizontal bands. The sculptures remain mainly embedded into the stone surface but the postures are highly accentuated and create a great sense of movement. The salilantara is broader than the ratha pratiratha, which allows greater space to the sculptural forms. The lower band contains devanganas, vyalas and dikpalas while the upper band in the salilantara bears the forms of dancing devanganas instead of the vyālas.

The Toteshvara temple of eleventh century at Kadwaha is a temple of singular beauty for its figural sculptures. The elongated figures,

elegantly bent with accentuated grace, are carved with great plastic facility. The ornamentation is rather understated and not over exaggerated with the result that the plastic form of the figures appears very sensuous. The sculptures have highly attenuated proportions and figures, both male and female are slimmer even compare^d to those at Kekind. The devakosthas are empty but the upper row contains figures of couples, devanganas and dikpalas, while the lower row has vyalas, devangana couples and dikpalas. Most of the sculptures are mutilated but never fail in creating an impact. (Fig. 3^o) (AIIS 432.18, 432.20, A 44.23, 432.23) The identifiable devangana forms here, are kesanestoyakarini, kandukakrida, darpana, prasadhika, nartaki, alasa etc. Stylistically and posturally as well, these sculptures are more unique comparing admirably *well* with the Lakshmana or the Kandariya mahadev temple sculptures of Khajuraho.

The two temples of Sasbahu at Gwalior mark the culmination of the Kachchapaghata architecture. Both the Vaishnava temples, the larger one was completed by Kachchapaghata Mahipala in 1093 A.D. Its plan comprises of a sanctum, antarala and mahamandapa with three entrance porches; the temple has grand dimensions and an impressive design showing a two-storeyed elevation for the antarala and the entrance porch and a three-storeyed elevation for the maha-mandapa which has a lofty samvarna roof. The roof has a circular ceiling supported on pillars and therefore, not much of a mandovara, as in the regular Nagara style. There is only one recognisable devangana, kesanistoyakarini, while rest of the sculptures represent the deities and their consorts. The mandapa interior contains alasa, vasanabhramsa, svastanasparsa, putravallabha etc. The smaller temple which is like a nata mandapa has a series of dancing

figures girdling the pillars, suggestive of a movement in unison.⁴⁵ (Fig. (AIIS 300.71)

The culmination of the decorative sensibility of the tenth century is the celebration of the sculptor's virtuosity with the human figure and a glorification of the temple as the Cosmos in stone. This is seen in all its splendour in the tenth century on the Lakshmana temple at Khajuraho, the Chandella centre. The high plinth lends soaring height and an expanding breadth bequeaths an unprecedented majesty to these temples. (Fig. 33) It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Khajuraho temples are as exquisite as a finely cut diamond, as delicately carved as a smooth finished silk and as genuinely conceived as a pearl an epitome of perfection in nature. One almost wonders whether these temples were really created by men or by gods?

A look at some of the early temples of the Dahala and Kachchapaghata has suggested the stylistic base, visually for Khajuraho. Also the Kodali, the Kadwaha, the Nohta styles along with some others seem to have possibly blended together, to form the Chandella idiom and perhaps the sculptors too would have exchanged in ideas, norms, forms and aesthetic sensibilities moving about in this area. The two tiered mandovara, high plinth, anekandika sikhara, prominent bhadra niches, vyalas placed in the salilantara, and so on, are features which remain unchanged. The Chandella style strikes its individual note with the sculptures of devanganas and naginis, mithunas and vyalas on the mandovara, which are specially carved with a view to fill up all the facets of the ratha-pratiratha projections. The basic decorative scheme followed (by the artists of Khajuraho) bears witness to precision in the general as well as the particular treatment of form and motif with

the result that the entire monument is carved with uniform finesse. Such superior carving is simply unmatchable.

The Lakshmana temple is considered the earliest temple constructed by the Chandella king Yashovarman in c.950 A.D. It is a Vaishnavite temple of the Panchayatana variety. The Parsvanath temple appears closer (stylistically speaking) to Lakshmana, having been built during early part of Dhanga's reign in c.950-70 A.D. Despite its Jain affiliation, it bears sculptures of Vaishnava themes. Sculpturally and architecturally, the Shiva temple of Vishvanath comes midway between the Lakshmana and the Kandariya, and its importance lies in the fact that it anticipates in plan, design and ornamentation the Kandariya, which marks the culmination of the central Indian temple building style. The Vishvanath temple was completed in c.1002 A.D. The Devi Jagadambi, Chitragupta, Vamana and Adinath are notable for their excellent sculptures, including the nymphs flaunting their voluptuous charms in an infinite variety of gestures and flexions.⁴⁶ The Duladeo is the most developed sapta ratha temple, having a large closed hall with the ceiling embellished with twenty apsara brackets grouped in bunches. It is dateable to the twelfth century and marks the last glow of the remarkable vitality of Chandella art.

At Khajuraho on Lakshmana temple, the river goddesses and naginis appear on the salilantara and other phalanas of the mandovara, wearing naga hoods and standing either with folded hands or engaged in all the activities that the devanganas engage in, for example, keshastoyakarini, darpana, vasanabharamsa, nalini, alasa, vinavadini etc. Some of them have five to seven serpent hoods above their heads, but the body is completely feminine. There is no tail and these females stand firmly

on their feet. Who then are they? May be the artist has carefully placed them on the planes upon which flows down the rain water, and metaphorically they specify the region of water. They stand ^{with} folded hands, as if venerating the deity and lustrating its abode. While not repeating this action, they are also given the attributes and actions of the devanganas; since they are all auspicious and boon-bestowing protective spirits. It is on the basis of water connection that the image types are interchanging placement on the temple and attributes. (Fig.

). The Kandariya Mahadev temple represents the naginis with folded arms only on the salilantara alongwith vyalas; while at Vishvanath temple on the Karna ksobhana projection of the bhadra. They stand prominently adjoining the bhadra ksobhanas engaged in actions of kesanistoyakarini, sadyasnata or nalini, indicating vegetation and aquatic principles.

If one watches the Lakshmana or Vishvanath or the Devi Jagdambi temples in elevation and concentrates upon its mandovara, the sculptures of the jangha catch our attention mainly for their variety and beauty. The bhadra niche is converted into the kaksasana balcony, with the result that sculptures are present mainly in the antarala region, one between the garbhagriha and the gudhamandapa and the other between the gudha mandapa and the mukha mandapa. This is a unique positioning for sculpture. The vyalas are still present in the salilantara but a new entrant to the sculptural repertoire are the nagini sculptures, which are given the same imagery of the devanganas, but for their snake hoods. This duplication of imagery sometimes lend repetition, where as sometimes innovation in the posture, gesture and treatment of rasa. The presence of nalini devangana is also in great number at Khajuraho, and the presence of erotic sculptures on the conjunction of two walls is also

amply illustrated. (Fig. 257) The entire range of devangana imagery enfolds here. At Kandariya Mahadev, the pratiratha is broken up for a five faceted organisation of phalanas and karna into three ksobhanas, followed by the antarala in which erotic sculptures are placed. The multiplication of the motif is the significance of the Khajuraho temple sculptures. The devangana images not only multiply on the mandovara, but they are to be found on the walls of the innerside of the sandhara vestibule, plus the walls of the garbhagriha. They indeed reveal women in sensuous poses capturing their intimate activities as if being watched by their lovers. But from the point of view of imagery and placement, relationship of the devanganas and the nayikas, what is still intriguing is the complete *ambiguity* of meaning. One is still not sure as to why a particular figure is placed where it has been. From this point of view, a mere listing of their imageries will be futile. I shall discuss individual devanganas in the sculpture chapter, while dealing with their imageries.

IV.2.3

MARU GURJARA TEMPLES

When the Maru Gurjara merger took place, did any one know of the great efflorescence caused by this union? Great temple sites like Kiradu, Modhera, Rani ki Vav, Abu and Osia began to pulsate with verve and dynamism, which the new style had brought with it in western India. The mid tenth century temples of Jagat, Kekind, Auwa Kotai etc. were already showing signs of change but the actual Maru-Gurjara decorative opulence began only in the eleventh century. Modhera temple site has a kunda with corner shrines which are dateable to the beginning of the eleventh century while the temple proper is after 1026 A.D.,

a work of Bhimadeva I phase while the dancing hall, gate way, porch of the temple proper and the door frames of the temple and the garbha griha are executed in the third quarter of the eleventh century⁴⁷.

Kiradu, north west of Badmer, has one Vaishnava and four Saiva temples, dateable to the first half of the eleventh century A.D. In Dhaky's view the Visnu temple at Kiradu is the first definite landmark attesting to the beginnings of the fusion of the Maha-Gurjara with the Maha-Maru style into the Maru-Gurjara style, that was to appear in its fully developed form within a generation. (Fig. 36,³⁷)

The recent excavations at Rani ki Vav has kindled new interest in its sculptures and architecture, which too belongs to the later half of the eleventh century and marks an important landmark in the achievement of the Maru-Gurjara style. An analysis of its sculptures has been attempted in the Sculpture Chapter. Abu and Kumbhariaji are two Jaina temple sites, which add to the opulence of the medieval grandeur of temple architecture suffused with sculptures. The Jaina and Saiva temple at Kambharia of early eleventh century anticipate the Dilwara group of Vimala Vasahi and Luna Vasahi of 1031 and 1230 A.D. by Vimala and Vastupala-Tejapala, the Solanki ministers. They bear memorable figures of vidyadevis, apsaras, dancers, musicians etc., on pillars, ceilings and mandovara.

The Sachiyamata group of temples at Osia, dateable to c.1025 A.D., have a fine structure in which the jangha sculptures and the entire mandovara design, resemble the Solanki style of the Maru-Gurjara phase. (Fig. 38) It bears an inscription dated A.D. 1178⁴⁸ referring to repairs done by one Sadhu Gayapala. The placement of devanganas on its

on the either sides of the garbhagriha wall facets six on each side. The dikpalas are placed on the karnas of the garbhagriha, antarala and mandapa which makes them totally ten.⁴⁹

Let us look at the individual devakostha and its subsidiary kosthas which contain the images of the devanganas, rishis and matrikas. (Fig. 152) The bottom two kosthas contain the figures of devanganas and the imagery of most of the types is similar to Jagat and Khajuraho sculptures. What is uncomfortable to watch and a bit disappointing to note, after an elaborate study,^{is} that, there is no particular conformity of the sculptural panel organisation with the text, see the Devi 1 and 2 on the jangha of the mandapa facing east⁵⁰. (Wibke Lobo, pl. 143, 144) The Devi group is organised with putravallabha and a standing devangana on the lower section, while Brahma and Vaishnavi are placed in the upper panel. The Devi 2 group consists of a kesanistoya karini and nupura padika in profile, placed in the lower register, while Ganesha and Ardhanarishvara *are placed* in the upper two registers.

The Aditya groups reveal the same pattern of organisation, e.g., Aditya 2 has a lady pulling out the thorn by lifting the leg to the waist and bending her arm above the head, while the other devangana is shown holding a mirror or a cup and standing. The top two registers show Nirrti and Indrani.⁵¹ (Wibke Lobo, pl. 113, 119)

Hence, looking for a semiotic interrelationship of the devanganas with the images of the deities, *has* *ed* do not reveal any specific meaning. The division of the devakosthas neither seems to follow any text nor have the artists revealed any imaginative streak, and the arrangement is only a chance meeting of images.

The Vishnu temple at Kiradu has a stylistic affinity with Abu, which Dhaky rightly points out in his observations on the figure sculptures and the grooved udgamas. This would suggest that the guild working at Kiradu had possibly more immediate relations with Abu, rather than with Medapata or for that matter with Anarta or Malawa.⁵² Dating it somewhere between Ambika temple, Jagat (961 A.D.) and the Sun temple, Modhera (1027 A.D.), this temple bears some very significant features, the presence of a true narathara and gajathara on the pitha *and* the presence of a mancika, and it has the first full fledged samvarana. ^{also} There is a rupapattika above the vedibandha which is never found before in Gujarat at that position. For the junction between mandapa and sikhara the pratikarna is formed for coupling, because of which the sikhara in profile assumes a sort of pseudo roundity. This convention is not found on Solanki temples of Gujarat. (Fig. 36) The ranga mandapa is twice in ratio to the sanctum and thus, too broad for the size of the shrine as a whole. Dhaky observes Osia, Harsha, Lamba and Kekind temples of the tenth century, as the ancestry of Kiradu, which politically also was never under the Gujarat Solankis.⁵³ Despite these differences and unique features the Kiradu sculptures of the devanganas have certain affinity with the sculptures of this imagery found in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

The mulaprasada of the Somesvara temple ^{at} has chaturanga, and the bhadra ksobhanas contain the chauribearers attending on the deity in bhadra niche. Followed by devanganas in the pratilatha dikpalas in the karna, the fourth anga called mandika, contains one more pair of devanganas in the profile, which is a feature never repeated in the Solanki temples.⁵⁴ (Fig. 37) The rathikas which contain the sculptures

of devanganas and the dikpalas, are surmounted by udgamas, which look like the Kekind ones and so do the sculptures, which stylistically relate to the Kekind matrikas and devanganas. Despite much damage, the sculptures of devanganas holding a bow and arrow or involved in vasanabhramsa etc. are visible. A representation of a vira nayika holding a khatavanga and wearing a mundamala, is seen on the south wall near Andhakasura Vadha Siva. The figure appears to be in a mood of great dynamism and would swing into action any moment. There are devanganas on the lateral phalanas also. The ~~salilantara~~^{is} occupied by the vyalas as well as rishis.

The large open pillared mandapa near the Visnu temple, bears devangana sculptures carved on their pillar-bases which appear closely akin to the Badoli devanganas. Their actions, postures and the manner in which they jut out into the space enliven the Badoli grace. The same convention appears at Gwalior, Gurgi, Abu, Alwar, Modhera and many other sites. Hence, the study of pillar sculptures also emerges as an important case study for devangana figures. (Fig. ²³²233, 259) The kesianistoyakarini, alasa, markatachesta and some more imageries are identifiable, the rest are all broken and difficult to study.

In the final phase of architectural development at Osia, one comes across the Maru-Gurjara features on the Sacchiyamata temple, dateable to c.1025 A.D. The mandovara is well preserved and the temple rests on a high plinth which has a gajathara, narathara etc. clearly defined. The jangha portion is very narrow and contains sculptures in rathikas, which have inverted leaves on both its stambhikas. The bhadra niche contains gods with their consorts. Its stambhikas support a large udgama and sloping roof, which are supported by vyalamakara brackets. This

convention was noticed as a feature of Moha-Mara at Chittor, Osia, Kekind etc. The salilantara contain the rishis while the vyalas are completely absent. The devanganas are prominently placed and their heirarchical position remains maintained for four centuries intact. On the jangha of the west devakulika on north side, the devanganas like svastanasparsa, markatachesta, yogini (holding kapala, wearing jatabhara and muundamala etc.) are noticeable (Fig. 38) (AIS 489.84, 490.6) while the east devakulika on north side contains Putravallabha, alasa, nupurapadika etc. type devanganas. (Fig. 155)¹⁹¹ (AIS 490.3, 490.7, 490.10) The rathas are proportionately organised based on a ratio of 1.5:1:2:1:1.5 from karna to pratiratha to bhadra, on each directional facets. The presence of yogini and kirati type of devanganas at Kiradu and Osia, need to be studied more closely in the Sculpture Chapter.

IV.3.1

11TH AND 12TH CENTURIES - THE FINAL PHASE

Majority of the temples in this section are a continuation of the Maru-Gurjara idiom, which was in vogue and spread like wild fire in the western Indian region, between Gujarat and adjoining parts of Rajasthan. While listing them here our aim is to collect such examples in which the practice of placing devanganas on the pratiratha of the jangha is still prevelant. They are also there on the vitanas as supporting brackets numbering eight or sixteen and also adorn the pillar etc.

Limbojimata temple, Delmal; Somesvara temple Gorad, Siva temple, Sander (Bhimdev Phase-1022-66 A.D.), Nilakantha Mahadev temple, Sunak; Santinath and Mahavir temple, Kumbharia (Karnadev Phase 1066-94 A.D.);

Parsvanath temple, Kumbharia; Navlakha temple, Sejakpur, (Siddharaja Phase 1094-1144 A.D.); Navalakha temple, Ghumli, (Bhimdeva II Phase 1178-1242 A.D.); are some of the temples which need to be mentioned here.

The Delmal temple is dviangana and its rangamandapa is compact and connects with the main shrine by kapili. The jangha sculptures contain the devanganas and dikpalas alongwith risis but not vyalas. The bhadra image comes out of the frame while the devanganas too execute poses which evoke grace and dynamism. But plasticity of the organic form begins to lose its identity and the figures begin to lack monumentality of conception. The lady sporting with snake and swan (kesanistoyakarini) is visible here.

The features of exaggeration and accentuation are noticeable in all the subsequent temples of Gujarat of the eleventh and twelfth^f centuries. Notice the Siva temple at Kumbharia, which is triratha, but each ratha has sculptures on its lateral facets, making the jangha portion reverberate with action. The devanganas although damaged, are represented in different dancing postures bending, turning or rotating around the madhya sutra. This is a new feature of the mature medieval period sculpture which not only multiplies the images of the devanganas, but also reposes them into more expressive dancing postures. But notably, these figures are still placed on the lotus pedestals with aquatic plants around them. This allusion to their original form as aquatic - vegetal forces of nature personified, are still extant.

The Siva temple at Kumbharia has a triratha plan, but each ratha has figures placed in the lateral off-sets as well, due to which the

jangha sculptures appear jumbled up, but the contour of each of the vertical planes are indicated by deep saliantaras. This interplay of spaces articulates the visual beauty of the manlovara form in total.

At Sander, on the main temple with a samvarana mandapa, the plinth is very tall and the jangha sculptures occupy very little space at a very high level. (Fig.) The conventions of designing are the same as in Delmal, Gorad etc. But the quality of carving is such that the sculptures do not really emerge out. The saliantara contain rishis in different postures of penance which lend a punctuation to the projecting rhythm of the jangha design. Dhaky observes an appearance of an upabhadra here, which is an advancement over Kotai or Modhera, indicating the beginning of the tendency towards further elaborations. The circular ceiling has the eight nayikas still in their position.⁵⁵

Taking a panoramic view of the eleventh century temples, like Sander, Sunak, Sejakpur, Kandariya Mahadev at Khajuraho, one notices the architecture in totality as an organism pulsating with life. The structure is well defined and compact and holds together as if to imply an upward ascent. The multiple sikharas and the samavarna mandapa, lend an articulation to the top most surface of the structure; while the multiplicity of the phalanas of the rathas continue in a linear accent, which create multiple facets. In the temples of the ninth and tenth centuries it was possible to grasp the shape and forms of the jangha sculptures, but with the eleventh century, each individual form, decorative motif, or a human figure, lose individual identity and merge into the larger formal structures. This change in the syntax of the architecture and sculpture integration is clearly represented. This could be called as the Baroque phase of temple decor and organization in which

the work of art gets charged with momentum and dynamism, swirling the compositional axes into multiple directions. The monument gets completely covered with decoration, which leave no breathing space or negative spaces.

The Gujarat temples do not increase in height like their Khajuraho cousins, but the intense vertical faceting of the structure are alike in both the structures. The jangha at Khajuraho is divided into three tiers, while providing kakshasanas at garbhagriha and gudhamandapa positions. But the Gujarat sculptures retain their Maha-Gurjara design, without much drastic changes, except for adding more articulation to its wall facets and shringas.

The Sunak temple of Nilakantha Mahadev (Fig. 40) which Dhaky puts in the later half of the eleventh century, shows a number of flaws in alignment, proportions and plumbing. But it contains some of the finest devangana sculptures. Not only the lateral walls of each of the rathas but salilantaras also have devanganas. The multiplication of this motif is indeed charming and gracefully exploited for decoration.

The Navlakha temple at Sejakpur (Fig. 42) has a mandapa that reminds us of Modhera, which is smaller in dimension and does not contain the lateral porches. Its plan is based on octagonal and since it contains as many as five phalanas it creates an illusion of ^{shape} vrttasamsthana.⁵⁶ Dhaky agrees with Sarkaria in dating this temple closer to the temple at Ghumli, than to Sunak, and places it in the twelfth century.⁵⁷ The sculptures of the Sejakpur temple are highly stiff and stereotyped. The form begins to lose plasticity and becomes ornately decorated.

The Sarneshvar temple at Abhapur (Fig. 43) near Antarsuba in Gujarat, is an example of the chaurnakha mahaprasada, comparable only with the Rudramahalaya in Gujarat. It has kakshasanas on all the four sides and it is a double storeyed temple. The devangana appear in the salilantarās and pratirathas on both the storeys in highly imaginative postures. The sculptures are lacking in plasticity and gradually appear stiff.

The sculptures of the Navlakha temple at Ghumli in Saurashtra also fall into the same category. The iconographies of the devanganas get perpetuated for more than four centuries only to become degenerated and repetitive. But for the decorative beauty of the Maru-Gurjara style, the final phase of culmination is marked by this architectural brilliance which is attained at the cost of sculptural plasticity.

Some more ornate structures are : the Udayesvara temple (dated 1058-80 A.D.) (Fig. 44) Achalgarh kumara vihara, (Fig. 45) c.1165 A.D., Sun temple, Jhalarapatan, c.1075 A.D., which are Bhumija style temples. One needs to probe further into the space conception of the Bhumija temples to talk about the accommodation of the devangana sculptures on their mandovara. Some Bhumija temples also avoid them and so it is the influence of the Maru-Gurjara under which devangana sculptures entered their decorative vocabulary. Another branch of the same study could be extended to Kalinga, Karnata and Dravida regions also, which will establish a pan Indian idea of the concept of devangana and its analogous representations. (Photos - A 4.3, A 51.72) At present we have to be content with what has been covered thus far, as an exercise in understanding architecture, its complexities and manipulation of sculpture.

CHAPTER-IVWEAVING THE ARCHITECTURAL FABRIC - EXPLORING THE ROLE OF DEVANGANA SCULPTURESFOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

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CHAPTER V**DEVANGANA SCULPTURAL IMAGE STUDY: PART-I EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF INDIVIDUAL MOTIF TYPES****METHODOLOGY**

- V.1.1 - ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEMININE CONCEPT
PRE-KUSHAN DEVELOPMENT OF THE LATER
YAKSI-SALABHANJIKA & DEVANGANA MOTIFS
- V.1.2 - ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE YAKSI-SALABHANJIKA MOTIF
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- V.1.3 - ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF YAKSI-SALABHANJIKA MOTIF IN
SCULPTURE-BARHUT, SANCHI, MATHURA, AMARAVATI
- V.2.0 - EMERGENGE OF THE NAYIKA-KUTILAKA MOTIF
- V.3.1 - THE WATER COSMOLOGY
- V.3.2 - EMERGENGE OF THE NADI-DEVATAS AND ITS CONTINUATION IN
LATER DEVANGANAS.

CHAPTER - VDEVANGANA SCULPTURAL IMAGE STUDY PART-I EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF INDIVIDUAL MOTIF**METHODOLOGY**

The present chapter proposes to establish the developmental path through which the sculptural imagery of the devangana motif may have passed in an evolutionary order on Indian religious architecture for several centuries. Here the emergence of the motif in the feminine form will be explored from the prehistoric 'mother' figurines and the 'tree and women' seals of the Indus valley, to the 'yaksi - salabhanjika' motif of the Kushana period. The analytical approach as demonstrated by Erwin Panofsky, will be borne in mind, in order to study the individual sculptural forms, their attributes, gestures and postures and the meaning signified by their actions in general, as well as in particular. The iconological analysis of meaning in a work of art operates in three stages, primary meaning; understanding the iconographical and formal configuration, conventional meaning: identification of motifs and attributes of the images, stories and allegories and finally the intrinsic meaning or content - which is apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a historical period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion - unconsciously qualified by one personality and condensed into one work, the devangana imagery.

The sculptural examples have been freely selected, irrespective of their religious connotation from Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu architectures. To establish the origin and development of the yaksi-salabhanjika motif, one has to take into account a number of other sculptural forms and subjects for discussion. Therefore the 'text' of

this 'discourse' is not only diachronic in axis but also based on 'polysemy' of diverse meanings which enable us to arrive at a concrete meaning of devangana sculptures found on the medieval temple architecture, which already existed in its proto-type form in the earlier period. The present analysis and juxtaposing of the sculptural form synchronically and diachronically hopes to point out the visual semblance on the basis of similar attributes, thereby arrive at the implicit similarity of meaning. An attempt will then be made to show diachronically that the vegetation motif of 'woman ^{and} free' evolves via salabhanjika and river goddess motifs, into full-fledged devanganas with diverse imageries and motif types. This process not only goes into the depth of each individual devangana and its earlier possible origin, but also explores when the yaksi - salabhanjika connotation ceases and where (and when) the ga^mut of devangana imagery germinates and blooms.

Further association and exploration of the Indus Valley and the West Asian material brings to light a conceptual classification by Eric Neumann based on Jungian psychology. From the universal concept of the primordial mother based on the fertility, fecundity, vessel connotation, the concept of the Great God Mother is developed. This concept also transcends to expose sexuality and eroticism. The main principle behind this formation is the cycle of Uroboros - it bears, begets and devours.¹

The present attempt is made to re-assess certain artistic material (symbolic representation in sculptural form) of various historical periods in a new 'psycho-historical' order, one which refers to the various stages in the development of the human psyche. Taking the development of consciousness as the decisive phenomena or human history, we arrive at an arrangement of the phenomena that does not, to be sure, coincide

with the usual sequence of historical events, but makes possible the psychological orientation we require.² This 'training of the eye for the archetypal', will help examine the archetypally conditioned development of consciousness and the dominance of particular archetypes in the Indian context of yaksi, devangana, apsaras etc.

V.1.1

- ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEMININE CONCEPT.

- THE PRE-KUSHAN DEVELOPMENT OF THE LATER YAKSI-SALABHANJIKI AND DEVANGANA MOTIFS.

The Foucauldian approach to the excavation of knowledge that perpetuated from the past centuries but remained veiled and erased from the immediate memory, could be applied to uncover the various layers and stages in the development of the devangana imagery.

The other approach that can help initiate the exploration of this motif from the larger world context of the female principle, is the psychoanalytical one in which female figurines and representations of female sculptures with similar attributes, will be juxtaposed in order to reassess the existing interpretations of the so called 'goddesses' or 'mothers', which lead to the higher divine female concepts of the Devi or Shakti. But what this author proposes to explore is the set of connotations and attributes of the widely spread spontaneous folkloristic culture in most of the early civilizations which slowly get absorbed in the higher religious order. What has so far been interpreted by scholars in a narrowly religious context, could for once be seen from this author's point of view i.e. the larger world context of attributing the female with certain potentials, parallel with nature and not to identify them with the higher and developed concept of the 'mother

goddess' and its various shades. Hence the 'archetypal mother' concept need not necessarily be linked with the highly canonized, mystified and codified 'Goddess' concept. Instead it could be taken as a product of the 'collective unconscious', which weaves around the archetypal mother, the varied attributes of the feminine, of which some grow into the higher religious connotations of the Great Mother, while the others continues to develop at the *elemental* level, the symbols of auspiciousness, fertility and abundance.

Let us proceed now on the Panofskian path to uncover and 'restudy' the sculptural representation of the archetypal females of various historical periods and to note the various layers of meaning and function, constructs and attributes granted by the artists and the contemporary milieu, down the ages.

Not only do the female terracottas from West Asia, Harappa and the Mauryan period connect well with each other through their affinity of content, but also bridge the Indus Valley and the Mauryan forms of female divinity.³ They represent the nude female form with stunted and simplified outstretched arms and legs. The female attributes like the breasts and pudenda are made prominent. Sometime they are heavily adorned with girdles, necklaces and flower decorated headgear. The Mauryan 'Baroque ladies' remind one of the Indus Valley ones, due to the presence of ~~the~~ rosettes and the full and bulky forms. Comparable are the 'mother goddess' figurines depicted on the ring - stones or stone discs and on a gold leaf plaque found at Lauriya - Nandanagarh and Piprahwa stupa. The broad pelvic region of the nude goddesses suggests their procreative power. Their presence on ringstones along with animals and vegetation connotes the larger context of fertility of woman and nature.

According to Irene Gajjar the association of the mother goddess type with discs apparently associated with fertility on the one hand and with Buddhist remains on the other, reveals that the cult was versatile and adaptable both to primitive or elemental as well as relatively more developed religions. They may have served a votive or a cultic purpose. The associated ritual and myth is unfortunately not available.

INDUS VALLEY

The archetypes of fertility extant during the Indus civilization can be seen on the seals found from Harappa, Mohenjo Daro and Kalibangan, ranging from the period between 3000 and 2000 BC. The following seals are of importance because they deal with the representation of fecundity, fertility and the transformation and metamorphosis of feminine - masculine energies.

1. Seal showing a plant sprouting out of the womb of an inverted figures, Harappa.
2. Seal showing a priest worshipping a female deity within a tree, attended upon by seven other deities, Harappa.
3. Seal showing a tree-woman and a tiger in a dialogue, Mohenjo Daro and Kalibangan.
4. Woman transforming into an animal developing horns, hoofs and tail, provoking a tiger.
5. Woman and tiger united and metamorphosed into a unique organism, Mohenjo Daro and Kalibangan.

The sprouting plant with five leaves or petals represents the genesis of nature from mother-earth, who is manifest in the inverted

figure of a woman in the birth giving position. The earth is the great yoni and the woman is the earth bound root, the fecundating source. The rampant tigers, guardians of initiation, protect the mysteries and the immense magic of creation⁴; The reverse side of this seal shows a seated figure with dishevelled hair, perhaps in the form of the branches of a plant, approached by another figure with a bow and a sickle. The representation may be read again as that of a sacrifice offered to the symbol of the earth goddesses. The script on the seal consists of the same set of letters on both the obverse and reverse sides, but fails to shed light on the semantics of the seal.

The other representation is that of a 'tree spirit' with horns and a pigtail placed within the ashvatha tree which is shown as a womb-like vessel. The vessel is circumscribed at its base. There is a kneeling figure with outstretched arms adoring the tree spirit, while a large human-headed long horned goat looks on. In the foreground are placed seven figures with pigtailed adorned with feathery headgear and tendril like tiny leaves growing out of the hair and the arms. The tree spirit also has a similar representation. The adoring figure appears to be a female due to the pigtail. Due to the presence of the fish above the goat, Pupul Jaykar thinks it establishes the sexual nature of the imagery and links the rituals portrayed to rites of union, birth and transformation.⁵ The fish is a recurrent female symbol in the Indian tradition of the aphrodisiacal and was later identified with Bhaga, as the female divinity. As Jaykar rightly observes, the seven pigtailed virgins of the rural symbology represent the vegetal and water nymphs found through out India, the Sat Sahelian of the northern river valleys, the Sapta Kannigais, the seven virgins, of Tamil Nadu, the Sat Asara,

the seven apsaras of Maharashtra - seven forms fusing into a composite image, held within a single field, water divinities invoked at times of drought, protectors of tank and water dam, the essences that make the earth fertile. I feel this seal represents the propitiation of the feminine tree spirit i.e., nature in the womb vessel to unite with the masculine force, represented by the goat which is attended upon by the seven virgins. Could it be a spirit of Yakshi?

The most interesting representation on the Mohenjodaro and Kalibangan seals is that of a tree woman and a tiger, who are represented in stages of transformation and fusion of principle energies. It represents the intimate relationship shared by the early man with with vegetation, earth and animals. The ritual scenes project a fluid movement and a free changeability of form and identity between plant, animal and human. The magician priests of the Indus Valley must have had access to the secrets of a highly developed plant chemistry and alchemy.⁶

In the seal, a tree spirit or an apsara perched on the tree, (her lithesome body matches the slender branches of the tree) is summoning the tiger, who attentively looks at her. In the continued dialogue, the second seal represents the tiger in a more agile posture lifting his forelegs up, and responding to the lady who has transformed herself by developing a tail, horns and hoofs. Her feminine figure seems fleshy and round.

The tree, the buffalo lady and the tiger, have established contact. They move in rhythm in that still moment of magic. The movement of mutation has commenced.⁷

In the last representation, both the buffalo woman and the tiger have become one. Here the lady rides the tiger which has adopted the linear fragileness of the woman. Now the mutation is complete.

Instead of interpreting these seals as representing a magical ritual of alchemy as Jayakar does, I would like to stress their character of fertility, worship and the organic relationship, interdependence and parallels in the world of nature and humans. Later on the same spirit will continue in the plastic representation of the asoka dohada and salabhanjika motifs. What is even more noteworthy is the germination of the symbol of the female in association with the tree i.e. the female archetype and its perpetuation in plastic medium as a symbol of the collective unconscious. As has rightly been observed by Jung that archetype in the form of a symbol is firstly a figure of speech.

Let us examine some parallels from Babylonia, Egypt and Crete. According to Erich Neumann, the tree plays many roles, the birth-giving and nourishing. Like the primeval hill, the uroboric serpent, the lotus blossom, and Horus, the Sun-child, rise up from the primeval ocean as births and rebirths of the luminous principle. Ocean and earth as generative principles stand close together, and like the ocean, blossom and tree are archetypal places of mythical birth.

The goddess as the tree that confers nourishment on souls, as the sycamore or date palm, is one of the central figures of Egyptian art. But the motherhood of tree consists not only in nourishing, it also comprises generation, and the tree goddess gives birth to the sun.⁸

As goddess of earth and fertility, of sky and rain, whose priestess was originally the repository of rain magic, the 'Great Goddess' is

every where the ruler over the food, the springs from the earth, and all the usages connected with man's nourishment are subordinated to her. She is the goddess of agriculture. For this reason the 'Great Goddess' is frequently associated with a Vegetable symbol. (Fig. 51) in India and Egypt with the lotus, as Isis, Demeter, or later the Madonna with the rose. (Fig. 46, 47, ⁴⁸) Flower and fruit are among the typical symbols the Greek Mother, Daughter, Goddess, holds in her hands. The ear of grain is the symbol of the goddess of Rasshamra, of Ishtar and Demeter, of Ceres and Spes, and of the Madonna, who in her character of Earth Mother is the 'Madonna of the sheaves.' (Fig. 49, 50) *

Apples, pomegranates, poppy seeds and other fruits or boughs may be symbols of fertility. Branch and sprout were already related to the 'Greaat Goddess' in Sumer, and in innumerable images of Ishtar and the Cretan goddess. Branches and flowers appear as cult objects of the Great Mother. And we still encounter such tree worship in the cult of Dionysus, as well as later in Rome, and in the pagan rites of medieval peasants. In India too, the tribal rituals and fertility rites are associated with tree worship.

Because originally human life was so strongly affected by its participation mystique with the outside world, that stone, plant and man, animal, and star, were bound together in a single stream. One could always transform itself into another. Men and gods are born of trees and buried in trees, men can turn into plants, the two realms are so close together that one can merge with the other at any time. Man has achieved little independence and is still close to the maternal womb. This proximity to the womb is not only the cause of the frequent mythical transformations of men into plants but also of the magic by

which human beings - at first precisely women - attempted to influence the growth of plants.

The bond between woman and plant can be followed through out all the stages of human symbolism. The Psyche as lotus, lily and rose, the Virgin as flower in Eleusis, symbolize the flower-like unfolding of the highest psychic and spiritual developments. Thus birth from the female blossom is an archetypal form of divine birth, whether we think of Ra or Nefertem in Egypt, of the Buddhist 'divine treasure in the lotus' or, in China and the modern west, of the birth of the self in the Golden Flower.⁹ Here the connotation of Sri Laksmi and Sarasvati with lotus need to be pointed. Laksmi as a parallel to Nut, Demeter, Astarte, Ceres and Sarasvati to Sophia, who share the same attributes and similar visual representations. (Fig. 50)

The representation of Demeter and Kore, as the mother - daughter pair of Greek art, represented by fruit and flower as their attributes, reflects their maiden and mature woman connotations. In case of Aphrodite there is transformation of the figure of the 'Great Mother' as 'Lady of Plants and Animals', into the young and seductive goddess. (Fig. 123) But Neumann feels that it is not the transformative 'anima' character of the Feminine that Aphrodite gloriously represents, but the world-governing individual/dual love principle and sexual principle of life.

Does this explanation not remind us of the yaksi-salabhanjika motif found in early Indian, whose imagery ranges from a vegetation goddess to a fertility inducing *dohada krida* to sexual - erotic exhibition by opening her lower garment? (Fig. 165) I come back to this discussion slightly later in the same section.

V.1.2

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE YAKSI-SALABHANJIKA MOTIF IN LITERATURE.

From the different references, it is learnt that salabhanjika adorned gateways, temples, pavilions, carts and chariots. They were also carved or painted on walls and pillars. Vogel suggests that Asvaghosha was probably the first writer to use the term salabhanjika.¹⁰ Earlier than him it is from Mahavamsa (XXX. 91, XXX. 99) that the motif is known as puppha - sakhadhara¹¹ The connotation in both the cases is either of holding the branch of a flowering tree or breaking it. The motif is also known from Kamasutra, which connects it with festivals of eastern India (Kasika VI-2.74), prachyam krida (Panini 6.2.74). Hence is it quite probable that from a spring sport of a profane kind this motif entered into the sphere of religious imagery, first of the independent yaksha cult and later got absorbed in Buddhist art.

V.S.Agrawala mentions that salabhanjika was a spring sport and in Buddha's life time it was celebrated at Sravasti. Several people gathered there to play and make merry and gather the blossoms.¹² Nidanakatha describes the salabhanjika festival celebrated in the Lummbini garden in which Mayadevi had delivered Buddha (as Siddhartha) standing in the salabhanjika pose.¹³

As referred to earlier, Kamasutra mentions some more desya krida (local sports) eg. sahakara - phanjika, Abhyusha - Khadika, Udaka - Kshvedika, Ikshu khadika, Asokottainsika, Pushpavachayika, Chuta - latika, Damanabhanjika, Ikshubhanjika etc.¹⁴

By post Gupta period in Harsacharita, this motif is connected with Madanotsava, the festival connected with the arrival of the spring. In

Malavikagnimitra it is associated with dohada, the desire during pregnancy¹⁵. Hence the salabhanjika and the asoka dohada are interconnected, the fertility of the tree and the woman are indirectly implied. The strong vegetative connections imply fecundity of the earth and the woman. The fecundating power of the woman, who is identified in the salabhanjika pose, is the yaksi who is the boon-bestowing type. She is a female counterpart or energy of Yaksa.

The Yaksa cult was a creation of the forces that were latent and silently operative in the substratum of the early Vedic religious life. These forces created out of a 'word concept' a 'sentient being' and a 'cult' developed around it, with a body of rituals and practices. Yaksa is considered mysterious, not clearly defineable, dreadful and not friendly. He is considered to be a honorific of Varuna, looked upon as a primordial, chthonic deity or a god. This ambivalence later became the twin aspects of his nature, benevolent and malevolent.¹⁶ Yaksis too have both these aspects attached to their nature.

Yaksa cult got absorbed into Buddhism because of mysticism and bhakti in its mode of worship. Since it lacked self supportive force, it slowly wilted away under the pressure of higher cult gods. Later the Tantric mode of yaksa worship also entered, which evoked better response due to the magical power attached to it. The warding off charms and controlling them to obtain desired wishes, were the two purposes for which Tantric practices were offered to them, says Misra.

It is from Mahabharata and Vayu Purana that yaksinis were regarded as creatures of great beauty. Misra observes that a gandharva kanya, Suyasa, the wife of Pracetas, gave birth to five yaksas and four

apsaras (VP. 69.10-13). One thing is not clear whether to take apsaras and yaksini as one and the same, so also salabhanjika and yaksi as equivalent inter-changeable terms. There seems to be a bit of unclarity in the usages of the term yaksi and salabhanjika and apsara. A discussion on this will be taken up in the section on river goddesses.

Misra mentions that Tantra had already come to grips with the yaksa cult in fourth century A.D. and in the Kathasaritsagara we have a number of instances of yaksinis controlled by magic and charms to serve as wives of the person practicing them. It also mentions a cannibal yaksi, who ^{was} a Pasupata devotee .¹⁷

Yaksas were attracted by fragrance and their habitats were usually fragrant with jasmine and lotus flower perfumes. This characteristic is also shared by apsaras. They relished honey and liquor. They enjoyed dance, song and music (Mahabharata XIII, 101-60). Bharata says a particular instrumental melody, margasarita, pleased them (NS. V.47, V.20). Daughters of Kubera were excellent dancers and 'Natya' came into being only to relieve people from obsession with yaksas. It is also said that yaksas were great actors because they could change their whole image,¹⁸ i.e. impersonate.

Surprisingly these references remain at the level of literature, religious practice and faith, but do not enter the illustrated world of Buddhist art as much as the various aspects of the so-called yaksis. This problem has not been resolved as yet.

A reference from Jataka (J.II.254) refers to the celebration of Kartika festival, making the start of the sowing season, in the presence (of an image) of Yakkha Cittaraja. Apparently this yaksa must have been

regarded as the promoter of crops¹⁹ But the vegetation connotation in art is implied by the salabhanjika motif and not the yaksa Cittaraja. This phenomenon is intriguing but not explainable as yet.

According to Misra, Tantric literary sources dealing with the controlling of yaksis are Guhya Samaja Tantra, Manjusri~~mul~~kalpa and Jayakhya Samhita. After the rites are performed, they appear either as mother, sister or wife and fulfil the wishes of their devotees. (J.S. p.295, MMK II 293, III 720). One of the things offered to them is guggula, with chanting of mantras. In Atharva veda apsaras are known by the term guggula, pila, naladi, auksagandhi, pramardini etc., which indicate smells (AV IV.37.3).

There are elaborate ceremonies involved in Yaksi worship, there is a passage 'Yaksini Sadhanam' from Jayakhya Samhita and Manjusri mulakalpa, which indicates their names, forms, modes of propitiation and the objects to be offered to them.

By offering before a picture of yaksini incense and guggula for one week at midnight, she would appear before the devotee on the seventh day, amidst the chanting of the charms. The vasikarana of the yaksi could be obtained by offering of wood of banyan tree, curd, honey, ghee or kumkum, juice of dhatura arkakshira, Laksharasa, Mrigamada. From another Tantric work 'Bhuta damara~~tan~~tra' the names of yaksinis, who could be brought under control by the above means, is mentioned as Surasundari, Manoharini, Kanakamati, Kamesvari, Ratipriya, Padmini, Nati and Anuragini.

A yaksa worship involves the drawing of her picture on different objects such as wooden panel for Nati, pata for Tamasundari, wooden

panel, silk or wall for Guhavasini, silk for Naravira, who should be shown as resting against the asoka tree; birch bark for yaksa Kumarika, who should be represented as holding a citron in the right hand and branch of asoka tree in the other. These yaksis satisfied the devotees by bestowing upon them, immortality, nectar, riches, food, clothing, sexual pleasure and the normal birth of a child.²¹

Dehejia^e has suggested that there is an underlying connection between the yoginis and yaksinis who are associated with trees and fertility²². Yaksinis were believed to reside in forests and their touch could cause a tree to blossom or produce fruit (an ability extended poetically to all women). Dehejia refers to Kularnava Tantra which mentions Kulavrksas in which yoginis reside. There are eight varieties of this tree, which should be approached with respect. Their fruits or leaves should not be plucked and one should not sleep under such a tree (Kularnava, 11.66-68). Dehejia rightly^{ly} observes that Coomaraswamy without looking into the Kaula texts had believed that the sixty four yoginis must originally have been yaksinis (1928-31, p.9). References to yogini Padmavati, as being originally a yaksi, are cited by Dehejia with further information on the prayoga and siddhi. Thus yaksi is not only a literary motif but a part of yaksa worship and Tantric ritual. This evolution of the concept envelops all of desires that can be fulfilled by the propitiation of the feminine energy. Let us see how the same concept has been Visualised by the sculptors of the early Indian art.

V.1.3

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE YAKSI-SALABHANJIKI MOTIF IN SCULPTURE

Our journey through the plastic arts exploring the representation of the 'lady of the plants' (Neumann) 'Woman and tree motif'

(Comaraswamy) has entered an area of great variety and multiplication of visual forms and imageries. This makes the 'training of the eye to look for the archetype' more sharp, since the data is not only challenging but beautiful enough to delve into.

Yaksi or yaksini, as they are often known, are essentially tree spirits associated with sacredness, auspiciousness and prosperity. They can have evil as well as good characters. But in visual representation of this 'woman and tree' motif the good character is generally portrayed.

The word yaksa is perhaps of indigenous non-Aryan origin and the tree spirit concept is originally non-Buddhist but got absorbed in Buddhist iconography.²³ Out of the four Vedas, it is the Atharva Veda, which contains elements incorporated from aboriginal non-Aryan sources. It is perhaps also significant (in view of possible Sumero-Dravidian connections) that in Babylonian tradition immortality and productivity are original functions of the tree of Fortune.

We have already referred to this in the earlier chapter.²⁵ But in the Rgveda and also in Atharva Veda the trees and tree deities play but an insignificant part, here they are connected with human life and productivity through the spirits of gandharvas and apsaras residing in the trees.

A note by Comaraswamy should be mentioned here right at the outset.²⁶ The vrksakas of the railing pillars are properly to be described as yaksi, is proved by the inscriptions accompanying the similar figures at Barhut.²⁷ Vrksaka, is of course, legitimate, but hardly more than a descriptive term. Some with musical instruments should perhaps be

described as gandharvis, or even apsarases, but none are represented as actually dancing, and to call them dancing girls is certainly an error. Here Coomaraswamy not only points out the range of the imagery of these female figures but also clarifies the pitfalls in the interpretation of this motif as that of a dancing girl.

This motif occurs in early sculpture of Barhut, Jaggeyapeta, Sanchi, Amaravati, Bodhagaya, Mathura etc. They appear on pillars, gateways, the ayagepattas and other narrative slabs, as railing uprights, brackets supporting the architraves or as punctuating decorative motifs in between two narrative ^{frames.} They are represented as full-bodied, voluptuous beauties, alluring and inspiring the viewer. They wear broad mekhalas, large anklets, bangles, kundalas and necklaces. The diaphanous treatment of their drapery renders them as almost nude. The sensuous beauty of the breasts, like full urns, and the fleshy pudenda, signify their generative power and feminine charm. They sometimes stand on vahanas like makara, elephant or the yaksa. Very often they hold with one hand a branch of the tree under which they stand, sometimes one leg is twined round the trunk of the tree (an erotic conception, for 'lata' is both 'creeper' or 'vine' and 'woman')²⁸. Sometimes they are also shown with the child holding the branch of either asoka or mango tree. Rightly observed by Coomaraswamy, these yaksis give rise to three iconographically similar motifs, differently interpreted; the Buddha Nativity, the asoka dohadana motif in classical literature, and the so-called river goddesses of medieval shrines.²⁹

Following the lead casually but keenly suggested by Coomaraswamy already mentioned above, let us examine the diverse attributes and actions of these voluptuous female forms, generically called yaksis or

gandharvis and so on. A closer scrutiny of their imagery will rather help us to formulate a relevant nomenclature for these sculptures. It will also enable us to have a better clarity of their imagery and purpose in relation with the monument on which they occur. Even by themselves these images have a connecting thread which on formal and thematic level maintains a continuity in time and space. Our exploration might take us to observe that what had been so far called a yaksi, is actually an apsara and the texts also support this. Hence the water-tight compartments distinguishing a yaksi from an apsara would have to be reviewed. Let us proceed with the classification of the imagery types :

BARHUT

This is the earliest site on which apsaras, devatas and yaksis are represented. Probably the first ever visual representation of yaksis in human form can be seen here. They act as potent symbols or metaphors signifying vegetative energy and sensual agility in nature. Most of them are represented on the inner side of the railing uprights in high relief. They are full-bodied and sensuously disposed but the carving being elementary, their volume and dynamism appear underdeveloped. Even then the corporeality of the incorporeal form flashes forth. The Barhut sculptures are inscribed and therefore it is easy to understand the imagery of some of these figures.³⁰ Sirima Devata is represented by a lady holding lotus flowers in samabhanga ^{stance} (Barua, pl.7a,78), while Chandra Yaksi (on northern gateway along with Kubera), Chulakoka Devata (Ksudrakoka Devata), Madhyama koka Devata, (Barua pl.73, 75, 76), are represented in the pose of a vrksaka or later salabhanjika, entwining one of their legs round the tree trunk and clasping the branches of the blossoming tree with the upraised hand in

uromandali. They stand on composite animal, elephant and horse respectively. The inter-relationship between the vegetation and the female form enhance the idea of the woman and tree motif. It is noteworthy that both 'yaksi' and 'devata' imageries share common imagery and attributs.^e Agrawala observes that 'cula' and 'maha' signify small and big, while 'koka' refers to either a lizard, goose, wolf or frog. In that case these figures could be interpreted as analogous to goddess and lizard represented on the Mauryan ringstones.³¹

From the point of view of dance, these figures could be observed as employing kunchita and swastika pada, where as it is not possible to call them as dancers. 'Tree and Woman' motif has engaged the attention of many scholars from the begining of the twentieth century, but the erotic meaning is read in them for the first time by K.Rama Pisharoti³², suggesting that dohada salabhanjika should be adopted, as the Indian technical term to denote all these popular artistic devices, represented 'both in India's literature and sculpture'.³³ The idea in dohada is that some plants, trees and creepers would blossom in the off season, when lovely women direct their activities towards them. These activities may be direct or indirect e.g., touching, kicking or embracing and spitting, singing, laughing, talking or dancing in front of them. Rightly observed by Pisharoti in the alamkarika terminology, these features are like uddipana vibhavas of sringara rasa, especially of the sambhoga variety. Barua questions this justification in reading an erotic meaning into all of such devices, particularly at Barhut.³⁴ Barua is also convinced that in interpreting them, we must *consider* them along with other motifs in which the yaksinis, devatas and devakumaries are represented. He feels they are represented either as female devotees

or as actresses. They are collecting flowers, offering them, adoring the deity, or performing dance and gymnastic act. They are present in miniature form on edges of the uprights as well. All the ascetic and erotic literature see woman as all sex or lust and in every gesture, posture, movement and activity, lustfulness is indicated.³⁵

Our alternative suggestion is to see in this range of female motifs at Barhut and such other sites a visual representation of fertility archetype continued since Indus and Mauryan periods, in an altered form encompassing vegetation and extending eroticism with male partner symbolised by the animals. Thus the fertility archetype absorbed from nature extends to nature and induces erotic feeling in the onlooker. In that sense the female images act as symbols transcending above their physical form. It is not the sensuous form that matters but the higher and wider concept of generative power implied. The erotic implication is a development in the imagery which will connect yaksi-river goddess and devangana. Yaksini by the name Sudarsana (Barua pl.74) and Alakananda (Barua pl.72) are also represented on the upright pillars. Sudarsana holds a tarjani mudra pointing upwards, standing on an aquatic composite animal while Alaka^{nani}nda holds a bunch of flowers and stands on a bharavahaka yaksa. The devatas, yaksinis and kokas are all fertility spirits. Sirima devata or Sri holding lotus blossoms, is represented several times at Barhut, a motif which eventually evolves into the concept of Gajalakshmi. The Lalitavistara and Mahavastu versions of the Atanatiya Sutta mention four types of this goddess, Srimati, Lakshmi, Yasahprapta and Yasodhara; they belong to the southern quarter and stand as prototypes of ideal house wives³⁶

The makara vahini Ganga (Barua pl.77) is also found at Barhut and in Vimanavathu, she may be called padumachchara (Barua 81) or lotus nymph. Barua surprisingly observes that at Barhut it stands for Sarasvati, the goddess of aesthetic culture. It is significant to note that Sri is considered as one among the devakumaris. The above listing of imageries and attributes brings to light the commonality of motifs which will re emerge and merge on the doorways and pillar brackets at Ajanta, Ellora and early Nagara temple doorways of Gupta architecture. The motif of tree woman and river goddess will be evolving at this stage sharing, changing or repeating their imageries. Lotus is an emblem of beauty, purity and moral sensibility. Lotus is identified with earth, waters, birth place of Agni, hence tree and lotus signify similar spirits of creation or existence or space. Even Nalini or Padmini devanganas are prominently placed on Laksmana temple at Khajuraho.

At Barhut the apsaras are also represented on the Prasenajit Pillar in dancing mode, with their names inscribed. (Barua pl.34) Alambusa achhara, Misakosi achhara, padumavati achhara, Sabhada achhara. It also mentions 'Sadika sammadam turam devanam', meaning the music of the gods, joyous with dance. The performance is taking place under a tree which is partly broken. Under the tree sits a group of musicians and singers in a circular manner, engrossed and attentive, while the dancers strike poses keeping arms in chaturasra, uromandali, urdhvamandali and lolahasta nritya hastas. This depiction appears more like an udyana krida than like a heavenly court dance. The reference to sattaka is supportive too. Another note worthy scene depicting dance is chudamaha (Barua pl.39), the hair lock festival. The scene is depicted in two registers with palace and the canopy covering the hair-

lock occupying the upper register, and the four dancers and musicians in the lower register. One of the dancers holding pataka chaturasra hasta, stands in ksipta position while the rest are either in sama or svastika.

The Prasenajita pillar relief is interpreted by *Pravati*³⁷ as an early representation of "all-women's" theatre. The association of apsaras with Indra's Court as inscribed here links Barhut imagery with Puranic concept of Indrasabha and its apsaras.

Thus Barhut represents a significant juncture of continuation and extension of meaning emerging out of similar imagery, but offers limited 'variation'. It marks a significant beginning with respect to yaksini - salabhanjika and river goddess motif.

There is an unidentified goddess or yaksini found from Barhut (Barua 68, 25) in which the lady is shown holding a mirror and adjusting her make up. This imagery will continue to develop as darpana in later sculptures on medieval temple architecture. (Fig. 198)

SANCHI

This monument is almost intact and there is very little displacement of sculptural slabs in the restoration. While going around the stupa the railing uprights become visible. Surprisingly if Barhut memory is lingering in our mind, Sanchi pillars will appear very simple. Instead of yaksas, yaksis and other such images, there are medallions carved with lotus motifs. This reminds us of the 'padmavara vedika' reference pointed out by V.S. Agrawala,³⁸ which is the decorative scheme prescribed for a stupa monument in Rayapaseniya sutta. Baring a few

representations of female figures (yaksi or padmacchara) surrounded by lotus stalks and blossoms (Marshall Pl. LXXVI-12b, 15a, L XXVIII-22a) there are no representations of yaksis in life size on the pillar uprights. There is an interesting figures called Maya according to Marshall³⁹, standing in the middle of the arch surrounded by creepers oozing out of the navels of the kumbhandakas. Below her stands another lady on a half rosace inside a medallion holding a long lotus stalk and the hem of her scarf looking like a sportive beauty of Mathura, as Marshall rightly observes. Vogel has also made a similar observation.⁴⁰

But the most celebrated sculptures of the Sanchi yaksis are the torana salabhanjikas, the round full-bodied sculptures of women bending the branch of a tree with gay abandon. They are placed as curvaceous brackets connecting the architraves with pillars and with the upper registers. Most of them are represented in diaphanous dress revealing their nudity wearing mekhalas and leg rings. They appear like rustic beauties, the kind of which one finds among the tribals today. (Fig. 55, 56, 57)

The yaksis placed on the northern gateway of Stupa-1 lean against the richly foliate tree trunk, their legs are broken but they gently lean against it. One of the hands is placed on the waist. Their hair-do is highly intricate and large. Both the brackets appear as though hanging from the architraves. The upper two registers also show yaksis in salabhanjika poses while the one on the rear side upper register entwines her leg and arm almost embracing the tree. Such a representation almost pre-supposes 'dohada' action.

The eastern gateway right side bracket represents yet another significant torana salabhanjika of the later date. It rests its weight on

the prominent contraposto of the swastika pada and the raised arm in uromandali holding the branch above. She embraces the tree but does not take its support like the one on the northern gateway. Her lush hair are left open at the back which fall heavily while in the front a top knot has been tied a plum like style. ^(Fig 58) Another yaksi is placed on the upper architrave who leans against the tree in an oblique way resting the weight of the body on the bent leg in dandapadachari supporting the tree. The arms are raised up caressing the fruits. This posture will be seen again on Ajanta cave - 4 doorway in the representation of the river goddesses in which the abundant foliage lingers on. (Fig. 92) Some more examples of Sanchi salabhanjika are found in the following museum collections, viz, Indian Museum, Calcutta; British Museum, London; Heeramanek Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and many Indian collections.

A reference to salabhanjika has been cited from Buddhacharita by Sivaramamurti in which the lady holding the side of the window stands flexing her beautiful body like a bow and with her pearl necklace dangling looked like a carved decorative figure on the torana gateway.⁴¹ (Buddha Charita V.52, V.35, IV, 35) Vogel has also found references to torana salabhanjika from Natya Sastra.

AMARAVATI-NAGARJUNAKONDA

The sculptures of Amaravati offer scanty examples of salabhanjika motif, where as Nagarjunakonda is prolific. Since most of the railing pillars, horizontal bars, stupa slabs and gateways have been brought to the museums, it is difficult to obtain a complete view of the original structure and placement of the yaksi figures. When studied closely, the salabhanjika sculptures and other related motifs appear on the horizontal

architraves of the doorway, often they are placed on the two ends of a horizontal slab bearing a scene from Jatakas or Buddha's life. These figures are made to stand on fantastic vyala-like animal, a cross between makara, lion and deer in their characteristic posture. The sensuous yakshi steals our heart by holding the branch in uromandali hasta and standing in swastika chari or dandapada chari. This motif repeats at three places in Nagarjuna Konda, while the posture struck by the yakshi using extreme tribhanga in swastika and dandapada, have occurred at Sanchi before, and will be carried on to Ajanta later. But neither Amaravati nor Nagarjunakonda have large size yaksis represented on the upright pillars as in Barhut. (Fig.)

There are two salabhanjika figures represented on chaitya gavaksas from Amaravati and an engraved line drawing representing the torana salabhanjika from Nagarjunakonda. ^(Fig. 61) One of them stands in swastikachari firmly planted while the arms are in karihasta, one in lola and other bent at the elbow, embracing the tree trunk. (Fig. 60) There is a slight turn to one side which saves the figures from striking an uninteresting frontal pose. Such oblique thrusts are found in Andhra art, thanks to the sensitivity of the sculptors. The thick foliage at the back is predominant in both the sculptures. The second yakshi is engaged in putting on an earring into her large split earlobe. (Fig. 59) She too is bent to one side due to the shift of weight in her contraposto. (U.N.Roy, Fig.21,22)

The occurrence of mithuna couples engaged in shringaric love sports, is first time found at Nagarjunakonda out of which a few imageries of yakshi devanganas will evolve later at Mathura and Sanghol. The Nayaka is shown fondly accompanying the nayika who is engaged in prasadhana,

keshanistoya, playing with a suka or simply standing. At Mathura the same imagery will reappear and the nayaka figure will be dropped from the pair. Hence this is the only site where the mithuna couple is represented and the nayika is engaged in activities that will become the imagery of yaksi later on. These couples are placed as profane punctuations in between the didactic narratives of Buddhist lore. Later on mithuna couples will be adopted in the decoration of the dvarashakhas of Nagara temple architecture. (Fig. 243)

There are two instances of kesanistoyakarini (Fig. 62) where the nayika stands in a languide pose holding the wet hair, nayaka holds her by the waist and the swan catches the droplets. The sukasarita is the representation of nayika holding the parrot in one hand near her shoulder, as if talking to her, while the nayaka looks on. (Fig. 63) The woman's shyness and hassled expression is revealed through her stance in swastika chari, while the ruby held in the other hand indicates what she is about to do and why. A verse from Amarusataka: 15, aptly illustrates the mood. Having heard the words of love whispered by the couple at night, the parrot began to reel them off in elder's presence, next day! The shy young bride took off a ruby from her eardrops, and thrust it into its beak. Even Gatha Saptasati has a verse (G.S. 6.52) O aunt, won't you take this parrot cage away from here, my bed chamber? He keeps repeating to all what others should not know!⁴²

The Mithuna couple also engage in prasadhana, make up where the nayaka plaits the hair while the nayika holding a darpana fondly looks on. This gentle depiction of a couple immersed in their own world is sensuously represented first by the Nagarjunakonda masters. The sensuous

grace is also achieved by the plastic modelling and organic naturalism of the form. Both Sanchi east gate yakshi and Nagarjunakonda figures, pulsate with excessive softness of feminine beauty that urges one to think of the similitude of creeper clinging to the tree trunk. They invoke in the on-looker an avalanche of eagerness to have a tactile experience.

I recently noticed the presence of markatachesta (monkey harassing the woman) represented on Nagarjunakonda sculptures. (Fig. 64) The ayaga cornice stone of Stupa-3 represents in between narrative frames from scenes of Buddha's life, couples engaged in madhupana and prasadhana etc. This theme is very lyrically captured by the artist by representing the lady lifting up her feet in kunchita and leaning toward the nayaka, who holds her firmly, by planting his other arm on the frame. (pl. XXXVII, Longhurst)⁴³ This is a significant sculpture because this motif continues to develop in the devangana imagery on the temple architecture. I can recall Badoli and Khajuraho examples here (Fig. 65)

MATHURA AND SANGHOL

The nature of the imagery that one confronts at Mathura and Sanghol, is so diverse and mind-boggling that one will immediately try to list the varieties and classify them under common groups. Over and above the vrksaka-salabhanjika motif there are ashoka (Fig. 70) dohada krida, sadya snata, kesanistoya karini, prasadhika, sukasarika, (Fig. 73) khadgadhari, vasanabhramsa, (Fig. 165), dugdhadharini, (Fig. 127¹²⁷) putravallabha, nati, paribhogadarshini, yaksarohi, darpana dharini, kandukakrida, madhupana and alasa.⁴⁴ Kushana period monuments especially from the Mathura region have taken the lead in diversifying the vocabulary of the imagery of the so-called vrksaka and for the first time

one is faced with the problem of how to identify them. One must admit that number of scholars have already written euologisingly about their beauty, their graceful actions and the kridas they depict. Even then a lot still needs to be said regarding their function conjointly with the architecture they drape and the pan indian cultural consciousness, reflecting through their imagery. This 'cultural consciousness' is commonly shared in literature, painting, sculpture and dance, which forms the substratum of thematic background of all the Indian arts. This thematic structure evolves the metaphorical imagery, which beautifies the language of all the arts and suffuses it with enormous charm and brightness. Hence the vrksaka sculptures allude to poetic imagery and transcend their physicality and feminine charm.

Taking stock of their placement and occurrence on Stupas of the Buddhists and Jainas in the Mathura region during the Sunga-Kushana period, one finds that Bhutesvara and Kankali Tila have brought to light the best examples. Jaina stupas at Kankali Tila and Buddhist Stupa at Bhutesvara of Huvishka's time, present the vrksaka-salabhanjika sculptures on the uprights of the railings and the supporting brackets of the architraves of the stupa gateways.⁴⁵ (Fig. ^{68, 69}) Other well-known sites near Mathura such as Sonkh, Mehrauli, Naroli, Jamalpur, Govind nagar, Kumrahara, Faizabad, Giridharapur Tila, Laksmanagarh Tila, Mahaban, have also provided more sculptures of diverse imagery types. The recently discovered Sanghol (Punjab) material has contributed still further in enriching this subject. Even from Begram (ancient Kapisa) in Gandhara region, some ivory plaques have been found depicting many more types of Salabhanjikas and ladies engaged in various kridas. Hence the entire northern and north western region during Kushana period was sharing the common vocabulary of female motifs engaged in various

activities including the vrksaka-salabhanjika motif, only a few out of these are yaksis.

Much has been said about Kushana yaksis. Here are some observations.

Some accept them as Yaksis (super human spirits), vana devatas (forest deities),⁴⁶ vrksakas (tree goddesses), numphs, dryads and dancing girls. It has also been observed that these figures were derived from the early terracottas representing the nude goddess⁴⁷ V.S.Agrawala is of the opinion that they possibly represent the taste of the donor and that neither the donors nor the sculptors were completely religious minded, and so to make the monument more popular they had to make the monument to adjust to the taste of the contemporary society.⁴⁸ Agrawala has brought to light a reference from Rayapaseniya Sutta⁴⁹, which *explains* the making of a vedika for stupa decoration containing numerous types of lotuses called Padmavaravedika. It is interesting to observe that the non figurative organic language of decorative motif as time went by, got altered and was taken over by divine damsels, which presented a glimpse of the profane human activities of sensual pleasure. Agrawala refers to one more verse from Rayapaseniya Sutta⁵⁰, which prescribes the making of '16 Salabhanjika Parivadi' who should be decorated with ornaments and be made to stand on the doorway in graceful poses, slender waisted, eyes with red corners and black curly hair, standing under asoka trees and holding their distended boughs, stealing the hearts of the gods as it were, with their soothing glances and, teasing as it were with the play of their eyes. Agrawala observes that on the Barhut stupa railing there were Sixty four pillars which confirms the Rayapaseniya's prescription.

The frequency of the 'woman and tree' motif i.e. Vrksaka or salabhanjika, is followed by the asokadohada motif and the dugdhadhari and puspaprachayika motifs on Mathura railing pillars. The salabhanjika action of bending the branch of the sala or mango tree is invariably depicted by the vrksaka or yaksi in the swastika feet position while one of the arms is katisama. This gives rise to a sensuous tribhanga of the torso and the waist is either in prasarita or vivrta movement.⁵¹ This lends a rhythm and verve to the body of the lady which merges with the rhythm of the nature signified by the tree. She either represents the action of a garden sport, salabhanjika, or she represents *the* tree spirit—a yaksi. She generally stands on a human dwarf who is her vahana. But there are some types of salabhanjika-asokadohada representations in which the vahana is not shown, then such sculptures can not be identified as yaksis, instead they can be referred to as udyana kridas or ladies engaged in various sports.⁵² (Gzuma, pl. 31,34)

The yaksis represent a tree spirit who is endowed with procreative powers that from the early animistic cults was so successfully adapted to new religious orders. Mackay observes it as one of the manifestations of the mother goddess. She is easier to worship and she is the guardian of the house and the village, she presides over child birth and takes a more human interest in (people's) needs.⁵³ In their malevolent moods they can cause violence and destruction, so they were frequently worshipped more ardently than other idols. It is difficult to agree with the above interpretation of worship 'and goddess' connotation ascribed to the yaksis. They were probably psychologically satisfying symbols and not objects of worship on Buddhist or Jaina monuments. Before Yaksa-Yaksi cult got absorbed into these religions,

they had separate sanctuaries, but when they got absorbed into the two catholic cults, they became part of a larger religious cult. The common man's mind could not reconcile with the new religions without the earlier concepts of chthonic principles like water, vegetation and other spirits. The entire range of yaksi imagery will be discussed below :

The most important example of salabhanjika as bracket sculpture is found from Sonkh (Mathura Museum) (Fig. 69) in which the body of the yaksi is bent echoing the curve of the bracket. The infectious smile on her face intensifies the eroticism implied by her languorous posture.

Two examples from Kankali Tila also need to be mentioned, since one of them is a slightly crude sculpture carved in front and back like the Sanchi Torana salabhanjika, while the other is represented on a Jaina Ayagapatta relief standing on small railing, flanking the gate, these yaksis stand in the typical salabhanjika pose leaning against the votive Stupa behind them. There is no tree present here.⁵⁴ (U.N.Roy, Fig.33,34)

The asokadohada krida enhances the concept of fertility-fecundity, in which the act of striking the tree with the left foot of the lady stimulates the tree to blossom. Kalidasa's Malavikagnimitra is an example of classical sanskrit natya adapting this theme as the major part of the plot around which the romance of Malavika and Agnimitra is centred. (Fig. 70)

The symbolism of women as ever auspicious is implied by this art and hence her asoka dohada krida action is more powerful and inevitable for the monument.

The Sanghol (S.P.Guptha Fig.17, pg.80) and Mathura (U.N.Roy, fig.44,45) versions show the face of the lady in three quarter profile view and the body in complete profile, as she stands leaning against the tree trunk of the flowering asoka. Her left leg is lifted to kick the base of the tree which animates her body. Her hands are pulling at a scarf-like object from one of the branches of the tree. It could also be a garland. A sculpture from Bodhagaya represents the lady almost perched on the tree entwining her legs around the tree trunk, while a man seated below supports her. This is a unique version of the asokadhada in which both male and female participate. Here the fertility connotation comes a full circle. (Fig. 70)

The most unusual of 'the lady and the tree motif' is the lady plucking flowers with her back to the spectator. She stands on a crouching dwarf. The lady could either be in the act of embracing the tree or collecting flowers, pushpaprachayika. (Fig. 72)

The Kesanistoya Karini⁵⁵ or sadyasnata and dugdhadhari (S.P.Gupta Fig.10, pg.71, Fig.16 pg.78) are sensually represented erotically inclined representations, which are symbolising the inherent fecundity. Woman symbolically is equivalent to water. Bathing motif is connected with erotic attraction and impregnation⁵⁶ The lady is represented wringing her hair when a crane stretches its long neck aspiring to catch the drops of water dripping from her hair. There is little doubt that a close association with water cosmology, the giver of life and riches, stimulating procreation and growth, is implied. (S.P.Gupta Fig.3 pg.62, U.N.Roy Fig.57,60) Another representation of nirjharasnana shows a woman bathing under a natural spring. Here again the connotation of pure nature and the natural form of the woman are compared.

Dugdhadhari (Fig. 126) are two examples from Sanghol (S.P.Gupta, Fig.10, pg.71, Fig.16, pg.78) and Mathura (V.S.A. Fig.139a, 139b), in which the lady is shown squeezing or simply touching her breast, while holding a branch of the tree. This act of implying nourishment and abundance signify the benevolent nature of the yakshi. Some of the sculptures also represent mother and child, putravallabha, an imagery which is supported by Matsya and Vayu Purana, with reference to apsaras who are called 'matar' and 'dughavatsa'. In the imagery of 'dugdhavatsa', the nourishment aspect is suggested, which is a role ascribed to apsaras in the Matsya and Vayu Puranas. In that sense both the yaksis and the apsaras seem to share the element of nourishment that vegetation and water offer to the human beings. Some vedic goddesses like Puramdhi (plenty and activity), Dhisana (abundance), Ila (nourishment), Brhddiva (mother), Raka (rich and bountiful) Sinivali (a broad hipped goddess who is implored to grant offspring)⁵⁷ can also be recalled to understand the cultural meaning and antiquity of the motif of dugdhavatsa. The apsaras of the Puranas and the Vedic goddesses together lend a strong thematic base to the generically called yakshi figures. (U.R.Roy, Fig.55,56)

The rest of the sculptures either represent women acrobats balancing a kalasa or a ball on the raised elbow or engaged in drinking, (S.P.Gupta 2,62, VSA Fig.137c) looking into the mirror (S.P.Gupta Fig.8, pg.68) and observing the nail marks. (S.P.Gupta 1,61, U.N.Roy Fig.54) Some women are also shown playing with the pet parrot, who is supposed to nag the lady and reveal the secrets of their love play before the elders. Parrot is often used as an erotic inducer.⁵⁸ Often referred to as Sukasarika, the lady with the parrot is frequently represented at

Mathura where the parrot is perched on her shoulder. At Bhutesvara the parrot has been released and it is perched on the nayika's shoulder. At Kankali tila the parrot is seated on the girdle of a 'dancing' young woman nibbling at the knot in order to untie it. (Fig. 73)

The khadgadhari, 'khadgabhinaya', are the most bold representations of women holding weapons, and their frequent occurrence at Mathura completes the imagery of the yaksi-apsara-nayika full circle, starting with shringara and ending with vira. The variation in the imagery signifies the various roles ascribed to these figures on a stupa monument which ranges from sensuous to erotic on one hand (sukakrida, salabhanjika to nartaki, vasanabhramsa) and brave to dangerous on the other (khadgadhari). Agrawala calls this as an abhinaya of sword dance (Fig. 184) The Bhutesvara pillar from Mathura Museum No.152, and Lucknow Museum pillar No.J.275, repeat the same khadgadhari under a kadamba tree. It is difficult to surmise what a khadgadhari could be doing under a kadamba tree. It certainly evokes questions, such as is it a yaksi or a pratihari? Many references have been found from classical literature referring to this character. (VSA Fig.137b,c,d) Agrawala observes that in later art this subject was styled as Urvasi or Menaka, but the exact references in early art are wanting.⁵⁹ The above point will be elaborated by me in the section on Devangana sculptures. But it is heartening to note that Agrawala has pointed out the continuation of this motif in later art, a 'connection' on which the main thesis of the present exploration is based. The main objective of introducing a section on Kushana period sculptures was to elaborate upon the continuity concept of some of these very motifs and their re-emergence in medieval temples.

One more conspicuous motif is that of a lady removing the the under garment from Bhuteshwar which Agrawala identifies as mahanartaki. (Fig. 165) This implication is that of a dancing girl or a prostitute. But this is not convincing. The lady's stance and gesture are bold and nonchalant, but the element of eroticism has been overridden by fecundity and suggestion of procreation. In later devangana sculpture, the same action will be performed more artistically by letting the garment slip slightly, which the devangana tries to catch by standing in baddhachari. Another occasion on which the lady started by the touch of a scorpion advancing under her garment, shrugs it off by opening it. See this at Rani ki Vav (Fig. 168). The Khajuravahaka evolves out of the vasanabhramsa imagery.

Thus the range of yaksi imagery has widened so much that it has encompassed motifs of shringara, and profane human activities besides the imagery implying fertility and eroticism. Thus the so called stambha yosita are not mere decorative appendages to the Stupa but bear an implicit continuity and logic of meaning. They belong thematically to the folk and mass culture which does not get entangled with the cultic demands on a religious monument and continue to grow independantly. Stylistically, as sculptures I believe they belong to a perennial, unbroken tradition of wooden domestic architecture in which the brackets supporting the pillars generally represented such female figures. To this day in Western India on old timber architecture are represented winged fairies wearing maharashtrian saris playing musical instruments.

V.2.1

EMERGENCE OF THE NAYIKA-VITAKUTTILAKA MOTIF

It was a chance meeting with this motif at Ajanta that my

exploration began and I keenly observed and found the Kutilaka (the dwarf with a crooked stick) almost every where on Vihara doorways and medieval temples, accompanying the nayika alone, dallying with her or simply watching her or providing a jestful interlude when she is with the nayaka. The sites where this motif of Kutilaka occurs with the nayika alone or with both nayaka and nayika are :

- (1) Doorways of Ajanta cave Nos.4,5,20,14, (AIIS 175.46), 27, (Fig. 77, 78, 79)
- (2) Pillar capital, Roda, Temple No.6 (AIIS A20.88) (Fig. 91, 204)
- (3) Vestibule panel, south, Aurangabad cave 1,7, (AIIS A43.43) (Fig. 87, 88)
- (4) Pillar capital, Ellora, Cave-21 (Fig. 84)
- (5) Pillar, Khilchipura Mandasaur, (Fig. 86)
- (6) Mandovara, alongwith Putra vallabha, Jagat, Ambikamata temple
- (7) Alongwith a matrika, Jhularpatan (Fig 151)
- (8) Shamalaji, Ganga fragment (Fig. 89)
- (9) Mandovara, alongwith Alasa, Kekind (Fig. 206)
- (10) Vestibule, cave-14, Rgvanki Khai, Cave-17, Ellora (Fig. 83, 82)
- (11) Doorway, Jogeshwari, Cave (Fig. 85) (AIIS A43-70)
- (12) Garbhagriha doorway, Laksmana Temple, Sirpur (Fig. 90) (AIIS 238.76)

The frequent occurrence of this motif on the doorways of the cave architecture and later on the brackets, capitals and mandovaras of the medieval temples led me to explore the literary sources. The observation regarding the Kutilaka on rock cut architecture, may have some connection with theatre on one hand and the evolving concept of the river goddess on the other. What is the connection between theatre and water cosmology is hard to say at this juncture, but the presence of this character alongwith river goddess on Ajanta cave 20, and with nayaka-nayika pair on Khilchipura pillar, are note worthy evidences.

The interest with which I began to explore the post-Kushana female forms was to look for the continuation of the vrksaka and other nayika forms like sukasarika, kesnistoyakarini, alasa etc., and instead bumped into a curious dwarf dallying with the vrksaka-nadidevi forms on the Vihara doorways at Ajanta.

On the other hand, I searched for a name to assign to this dwarf accomplice of the nayika and with much hope turned to Natyasatra. Bharata's encyclopedic vision came to my rescue. I came across a paragraph from M.Ghosh's translation of NS.⁶⁰ The Gods pleased with the performance (Devasura Sangrama on the occasion of the Indradhvja festival) showered Bharata with gifts signalling the joy that filled them. They gave him the following gifts: Indra-Jarjara, Varuna-Bhragara (golden pitcher), Surya-Chatra, Siva-Siddhi (success), Vayu-fan, Visnu-Simhasana, Kubera-Kirita and Sarasvati, the faculties of sight and hearing (NS 1. 58-61). Brahma endowed him with a Kutilaka. It is this Kutilaka that we need to focus up on. Abhinavagupta takes it to mean 'a curved stick fit to be used by the jester'. In Kalidasa's Malavikagnimitra, the terms 'bhuvangama kudila-dandalattha', 'dandakattha'⁶¹ occur, whether this stick or 'kattha' belongs to the jester, is not clear; the natyasastra also describes a 'dandakastha' but does not connect it to the jester. I am venturing to connect the term Kutilaka to the dwarf character, who could either be a Vita or Vidusaka. Both are theatrical characters and are present in Sanskrit theatre from the very beginning, but what they are doing on the doorway with the nayika, is worth exploring. For the present purpose let us explore the literary (theoretical as well as dramatic) sources to support the sculptural evidences.

When Buddhist architecture in the Mahayana period shifted its focus

from outdoor free-standing monuments (eg. Sanchi, Mathura) to rock-cut cave architecture (Ajanta, Ellora, Aurangabad etc.) a number of sculptural patterns and formats had to be changed and readjusted. The closer scrutiny will show that as the vedika and its ornamented pillars got eliminated in cave architecture, much of the female sculptures got eliminated. The doorway became the focus of attention. The place of torana salabhanjika from Sanchi was taken over by the nadidevi, who for sometime occupied the T. shaped corner on both sides of the lintel and then slowly came to the udumbara level. In the evolving stages of the river goddess concept the vrksaka-woman and tree motif was originally used. Then slowly the makara and kurma were evolved and the nature of Ganga and Jamuna got separated out of the single generic female form of nadidevi. The Gupta period temple architecture had also contributed to the evolving of the nature of river goddesses, but the character of the dwarf with Kutilaka was not found on Gupta doorways. So this is a phenomenon peculiar to Ajanta and later on western Indian temple architecture. (with the exception of Khilchipura pillars, Mandasaur).

The vrksaka-nadidevi (amorphous nayika, in the phase of transformation) stands on the left side of the doorway under a mango or a sala tree in swastika or dendapadachari holding either a lotus (cave 14, 5) or a parrot, sukasarita (cave 29). The other hand rests on the head of the dwarf (almost), which gives a prasarita movement to the waist of the nayika, whose posture strikes a perfectly rhythmic tribhanga. The dwarf rests his fore arms and head gleefully on his characteristic curved stick and watches the nayika. (cave 14, 27, 5, Aurangabad cave-1, 7, Ellora-cave 21) The dwarf has monkey-like face,

long toes and short legs and in some cases large ears. This gives him a comical appearance. Is he a Vita?

On cave 20 doorway at Ajanta, the river goddess Ganga stands on the makara in swastika pada, while her dwarf companion holding Kutilaka on the left shoulder, stands in swastika on a tortoise. This is a unique sculpture. Who is this companion, a Vita, or a Vidusaka?

Vita, whatever may be his origin (which is Winternitz's main concern) was a stage character and nothing else. Where as Vidusakas are fools, who attended the courts of kings only. They were mere comedians, who made their livelihood by their witticisms and also friendly advice. ^{they} were real characters in social life in the 2nd century B.C. and were not merely dramatic invention.⁶² A proof of this can be provided by citing examples from Amaravati and Mathura reliefs on which males and females dwarfs have been shown in court scenes.

A.B.Keith⁶³ has pointed out that in the epics there are ample references to court life, yet there is not single reference to professional jesters. The same is true of Kautilya's Arthashastra (1st Century A.D.) where the word Vidusaka does not occur either⁶⁴.

But Dasakumaracarita of Dandin (C.550 A.D.) refers to Vidusaka as a man who had an access to the harem and who was sitting there near the king, a skillful mind reader, a royal favourite, an adept in song, dance, instrumental music and related arts, a connoisseur of unconventional women, shrewd, talkative, clever in periphrastical and enigmatical speeches (bhangi), critical, a buffoon (parihasa-yitr), "a scandalmonger, an adept in calumny, ready to take bribes even from ministers of state, an instructor in all naughtiness, a pilot in the science

of love (Kamatantra) and the king's servant from the time the former was a prince."⁶⁵ Vidusaka has been again referred to as Kamatantra-Saciva, councillor in matters of Kamatantra or in amorous adventures (Malavikagnimitra IV. 17.10)⁶⁶ Even in Bana's Harshacharita (shortly after 600 A.D.) the reference to Vidusaka as a court jester is mentioned along with kubja, vama, etc. living in and around the court. Somadeva Suri (about 970 A.D.) in his Nitivakyamrta, (14.8) refers to a lot of spies engaged by the king, which includes along with nata, nartaka, gayaka etc., Vita, Vidusaka and pithamardaka etc. For the first time this group occurs in Kamasutra of Vatsyayana (around first century A.D.) in the order of pithamarda-Vita-Vidusaka (1.4.44-46). Agnipurana refers to the pithamarda, Vita, Vidusaka as the companions of the nayaka in his erotic amusements and his attendants. (A.G. 339,39)⁶⁷. As stated by Kuiper and G.K.Bhat, Kamasutra mentions the Vidusaka as a synonym of the nagaraka, for whom he is a play-thing (kridanaka).⁶⁸

According to Dasakumara Carita Pithamarda, Vita, Vidusaka, bhiksukyadi, were used to advertise a young courtesan in the town by having her beauty, character and sweetness praised in the gathering of the nagarkas.⁶⁹

In dramaturgical texts from Natya-sastra onwards, Vita (35-77) has been taken as a stage character and Bharata Prescribes its use in prakarana (20.53) and bhana (20.110). But for Vita there is no reference to prove that he was a social figure⁷⁰. In the Chaturbhani also Vita has been accepted as a stage character. S.K.De has found later theoreticians mentioning some kinds of plays in which a Vita is acting, such as the durmalli or durmallika, Sringara Prakasa (between 1000-

1050), Bhava Prakasa (between 1175-1250) etc.⁷¹ V.S.Agrawala has pointed out palace scenes on Mathura pillars representing the scenes from Asvaghosa's Saundarananda. The fig.95, Scene-1 is interpreted by Agrawala as representing a scene of palace amusement in which a Vidusaka's scarf is being pulled by a lady. But the Vidusaka shown here is neither a dwarf nor holding a Kutilaka. But dwarfs have been represented in toilet scenes.⁷²

But in non-dramatic Sanskrit literature Vita means a paramour (Malatimadhava 8.8 Sisupalavadha 4-48) and a voluptuary, sensualist (Bhagavat Purana X.1327). The terms used in Malatimadhava are 'kanyavita' or 'kanyadusakah' (violator of girls), while in Sisupalavadha there is a pure 'madhukaravita'-means 'the bee acting as lovers'. Kathasaritsagar 6.51 mentions the Vita as a rogue who even deceives clever women.⁷³

Therefore Vita is different from Vidusaka. It has a clear mention as a conventional stage character, as a professional skilled dramatic group and according to Brihad - Kathasloka Sangraha (10.69) there is an existence of a whole Vitasashtra. The character of Vita as a pithamarda, Vaihasika and an expert in Kamasashtra, interests us at this juncture since in sculptural representation it is this character of Vita that is uppermost. By enumerating all the above data we arrive at a notion of Vita, Vidusaka, as dramatic characters but the visual data before us is still not explained by it. Why Kutilaka? Is the dwarf with a crooked stick representing the Vita?

At Ajanta Cave 4, (Fig.258) on the door way the lady (a courtesan?) is shown necking the male companion with Kutilaka and

pouring a cup of wine. Is it a scene of madhupana? While above this group on the same doorway on the left side lintel corner, the lady stands leaning against the tree in an erotic shringaric posture.

From Padataditakam of Syamilaka, one of the Chaturbhani plays, it is learnt that the Vita or dwarf is used to the pōda prahara of the nayika and takes great pleasure in being honoured by her foot. The foot of a damsel (vilasini) decorated with red lac and anklet, has been compared to the staff of the cupid (madanasya ketuh) and held worthy of worship, while lying prowl with face steadily placed on the ground. (8 Verse No.7).

The Vita while eulogizing the touch of the foot sole of a charming lady under intoxication, proclaims that her leg adorned with tinkling anklets and raised upwards in dispute of love with the edge of the thighs exposed to the view, because of the transparent lower garment having slipped down, has ever been victorious. (Verse No.8)

At Roda, we find a representation of woman and Vita, whose dress appears to be slipping and the Vita is shown watching her gracefully.

From Padmaprabhrtaka of Sudraka we find the mention of Vaisikikala, the art of loving a hetaerae. It narrates that a certain Dattaka wrote a hand book on this art, in which a Vita ridicules a hypocritical Buddhist monk, who cultivates this kala and is caught in the act of entering a hetaerae's house. On the buddhist monument of Ajanta, Cave-4, especially there is a representation right on the doorway of a woman with a wine cup entwining her arm around a man's neck holding a kutilaka. It has an air of sarcasm about it and in the light of the story mentioned in Padma prabhrtaka, the presence of this

character on a Buddhist monument might be didactic, but not iconographically prescribed.

There are large sized representations of dwarfs with Kutilaka in Ganga fragment from Samlaji (Fig. 89) Aurangabad Cave 7, and Ellora Cave 14, 21 standing next to the river goddesses and oggling at their beauty. At one point in his investigative study on Varuna as Vidusaka, Kuipper observes that Vidusaka impersonated as Varuna who was too inauspicious to act as the protector of a dramatic character. (pg. 176) Could it be possible to identify the dwarf with Kutilaka standing on a tortoise next to the nadidevi, as a impersonator of Varuna? Here water cosmology and dramatic impersonation have combined to produce a unique kind of visual imagery, which has evolved in the transitional phase, only to vanish very soon? Since in the later river goddesses only the dwarf with a water pitcher is used and not with the Kutilaka (Ajanta, Tigowa, Besnagar, Nachna - Kuthera), and they themselves hold a lotus or waterpitcher followed by an attendant with a parasol. The tree with flowers and fruits is completely eliminated. Thus the Vidusaka in the Varuna connotation carries forward the evolving iconography of the rivergoddess via vrksaka and nayika implying vegetative force and aquatic potency. (Fig 94, 95)

The other interpretation which is solely dramatic and less conjectural as the previous one is convincing from the Khilchipura pillars. Here the nayika is pulling the beard of the dwarf and the dwarf makes sure attempts at wooing the nayika to the nayaka standing beside him. The kneeling Vita is pushed to the side by the nayaka, who comes in his full form to woo the shy nayika. The last scene shows the nayika accepting the flower and the amorous advances of the nayaka while the

Vita and another attendant gleefully look on (Fig. 86)

The occurrence of this motif does not end at the Cave sites but continues on temple architecture as well. Foremost among them are Roda and Kekind. I came across this motif in conjunction with the nayika (who from the later sections will be called devanganas) on the capitals of the Roda temple 6 and the mandovara niches on the Siva temple at Kekind. U.P. Shah⁷⁴ in his article does not identify the Vita-Kutilaka character. At Roda the dwarf occurs in the accompaniment of the nayika in alasa pose or playing the blindman's buff or with the kanduka. (Fig. 158, 204)

At Kekind the dwarfish potbellied man appears to look at the nayika in alasa pose and another one holding something in her hand. Both the sculptures are quite damaged and therefore nothing more can be said but the curved stick and dwarf twining his leg around it are clearly visible. These sculptures of the medieval period could be interpreted in the light of the data from Dandin, Bana and Rajasekhara. The continuity of this character in the literature from first century of our era, right into the medieval period, helps in connecting the motifs such as the vrksaka, nadidevi and devangana into a holistic group, parallel and overlapping but heterogenous in character.

The motif originates in sculpture from Gupta-Vakataka art seen at Ajanta doorways and Mandsaur region, but its absence on Gupta temple doorways should be mentioned. After its life on Buddhist and Brahmanical Cave temple doorways, this motif develops in western Indian temples. Roda is the foremost example, but the architectural positioning of this motif changes at Roda from doorways to pillar capital. After its spread in Samalaji and Roda region it is again seen at Kekind where it appears

along with the Devangana sculptures. This progression goes to illustrate the regional development of a larger concept of feminine power of abundance, prosperity and sensuality which share common motifs and imageries, with literary characters.

IV.3.1

THE WATER COSMOLOGY

The yaksas are vegetation spirits directly controlling and bestowing upon their bhaktas, fertility and wealth, or in one word, abundance.

Yaksas have an intimate connection with the waters. For examples, Kubera's inexhaustible treasures are a lotus and a conch, innumerable yaksis have a makara or other fish-tailed animal as their vehicle; Kamadeva, the makara as his cognizance; the greater tutelary yaksas control the grains essential to prosperity, and in the earliest mythology, that germ which the waters held first and in which all the gods exist, rose like a tree from the navel of the unborn who in the oldest passage in Varuna and in the Atharva-Veda is called a 'yaksa'. In the decorative art vegetation is represented as springing either (1) from the mouth or navel of a yaksa, (2) from the open jaws of a makara or other fish-tailed animal (3) from a 'brimming vessel' (4) from a conch, but never directly from any symbol representing the earth.⁷⁵

Yakshas are the 'lords of life', closely connected with the waters, though their habitat is terrestrial. The yaksa control not so much the waters as mere waters, but that essence (rasa) in the waters which is one with the sap in trees, with the amrta or elixir of the Devas, especially Agni, with the soma, and with the seed in living beings.

Coomaraswamy places yaksa at an important place in what is called 'Life cult', to suggest that this life cult, with which is also connected the worship of the Great Mother, may have been the primitive religion of India, and to show that the 'plant style' is actually nothing more or less than the iconography of the water cosmology.

Rightly pointed out by him, a belief in the origin of life in the waters, was common to many ancient cultures, and must have arisen very naturally in the case of peoples like those of the Nile, the Euphrates, or the Indus Valley, amongst whom water, in the form either of seasonal rains or of ever flowing rivers was the most obvious prerequisite of vegetative increase, nor can the belief be regarded as in any way unreasonable. Taken in a purely physical sense, it may indeed be called a fair anticipation of modern scientific ideas.⁷⁶

The term 'water cosmology' was first employed by Hume in his Introduction to Thirteen Principal Upanishads (pp 10-14), with reference to such passages as Brhadaranyaka (5,5) in the beginning this World was just water and (3,6,1) "all this world is woven warp and woof, on water" and kausitaki, (1,7), where Brahman declares "the Waters, verily, indeed are my world"⁷⁷

The reason for incorporating this section here is to bridge the connection between yaksa-yaksis, apsaras gandharvas, aquatic concepts of makara, lotus, purnaghata, Varuna, Soma and so on. This will also create a base for the concept of nadidevata which develops in Gupta architecture. The visual connection between the imageries of the nadi-devata and the earlier vrksaka are self explanatory, but the continuation of this motif in medieval temple architecture is seldom explored. However, many scholars refer to it, but an elaborate study is still

wanting. Coomaraswamy has observed a number of synchronic fundamentals in mythology and art to support a number of conceptual formulations.

Water cosmology is closely connected with the feminine powers of fertility and abundance which can be observed in the prehistoric nude goddess, the Great Mother who may be Aditi or Sri, they are represented as aspects of women in the human form.

Water is the source of all creation and all creation is sustained by water. Yajur and Atharva Veda are rich in references on water. 'Let flow the divine waters, the honey sweet, for health, for progeny!' (S.Br.VI.4,3) 'water, lightening, clouds, rain, let the liberal one favour you. Anoint the earth, O Parjanya, with thy milk, by the poured out, let abundant rain come'. (AV, IV, 5,6,9) 'The waters divine do than pour full of sweetness to avert diseases from men from their place let arise plants with fair leaves (Y.V. IV 1.2) 'From rain originate virility, sap, well being (SB, 1,8, 3,15)⁷⁸

The essence (rasa) of all beings is the earth, the essence of the earth is water etc. (Chandogya Upamshad 1,1,2). In the waters, O Agni is thy seat, thou enterest the plants (YV IV 2,3). Besides the nourishing and reproductive power of the water, earth and creation are also implied; the lotus means the water, and this earth is a leaf thereof, even as the lotus leaf here his spread on the waters, so this earth lies spread on the water. (S.B.X, 5,2,8) Mithuna, a productive pair is also connected with water cosmology. Yaksa-yaksi pair is constantly recognised in Sunga terracottas. The word mithuna is constantly used in connection with ritual coitus e.g., that of the mahisi and the sacrificial horse (S.B. XIII, 5,2,2,) and in connection with Mahavrata festival (Ait. Ar.

V, 1,5) 'From Prajapati, when, dismembered, couples (mithunani) went forth, birth originates from a mithuna (S.B. IX, 4,1,2-5)⁷⁸ This shows the association of mithuna for fecundity and to signify auspiciousness.

Varuna is another deity connected with water of a settled agrarian culture. He is a chthonic principle connected with seasonal festivals, ritual eroticism and possibly human sacrifice, shared commonly by cultures from Mediterranean to Indus⁷⁹. Varuna was originally the root of the tree of life, the source of all creation (RV 1,24,7) and it is presumably still Varuna who is called the unborn in (RVI, 24,7). Maybe it is the Asvatha or Nyagrodha with which Varuna is identified (Gobhila Grhya sutra IV 7,24)⁸⁰ In (SB XIII, 4,3,7,8) king Varuna's people are said to be gandharvas and those of king Soma, apsarases these are closely associated divinities of the waters and of fertility, and originally of more significance than when in the later literature they became little more than the musicians and dancers of Indra's Court. These gandharvas and apsarases are tree and fertility spirits (Nyagrodha, Udumbara, Asvattha, Plaksa,...are the homes of the gandharvas and apsarases Y.V.III 4,8) connected with Varuna and Soma, but later on their function was taken over by yaksas and yaksis.⁸¹ Coomaraswamy points out that both these groups are identical but is not able to delve deeper into the supportive argument.

It is in the context of Varuna again, that the mention of river goddess occurs for the first time in Visnudharmottara III.52. Here Varuna is described as having a large belly, a paunch (for treasure) holding lotus and fetter, a conch, umbrella, His wife is Gauri (or Varuni) holding a blue lotus. Attendants are Ganga on the right, holding a lotus, standing, on makara said to represent virility (Virya), and Yamuna on

on the left, holding a blue lotus, standing on tortoise, said to represent time (Kala)⁸²

IV.3.2

EMERGENCE OF THE NADI DEVATAS AND ^{THEIR} CONTINUATION IN LATER DEVANGANAS.

The yaksas and yaksis, who are connected with gandharvas and apsarases on the basis of water and vegetation, are represented as standing on aqueous animals like jalebha, jalaturaga, a lion, lotus or makara. This attribute connects them as deities of fertility with life giving waters.

On Gupta and Vakataka period architecture (Fig. 96, 97; Fig. 100, 101) we find the first ever representation of nadidevatas (in female form) placed on the door jambs at the sides of the lintel, the place where at one time torana salabhanjikas were placed in the Stupa architecture. (Fig. 93, 104) They carry purna ghata and their imagery is directly derived from that of the yaksi-dryad, which implies that despite the vegetal and apparently terrestrial habitat they were still primarily a spirit of the waters. (pp.55). Slowly they are differentiated as Ganga and Yamuna and attributed different vehicles, namely makara and tortoise respectively. This again recalls the yaksis vahanas which consisted of jalaturaga, jalebha etc. They are often made to stand in the salabhanjika pose holding the branch of a flowering tree while holding a lotus, another aqueous motif. The makara often has a blossoming tail which metamorphosize into a vegetal motif, it is also accompanied by a dwarfgenii holding a vessel standing next to the river goddess. Often it is a dwarf with a crooked stick which has already been cited in the earlier section.

Longhurst (Hampi Ruins, P.116) points out that the undifferentiated twin figures are not met with south of the Ganjam District, but it is seen in Orissan architecture, as dohada motif, the salabhanjika has even reached the Dravidian architecture.⁸³

An inscription of Vaidyanath temple, Baijnath, Kangra, refers to Ganga and Jamuna as separate names (Vogel, Ganga et Yamuna, p.387, 388), even from an inscription at Bheraghat (Cunnigham, A.S.Reports IX, p.66-69) and from the description of Varuna from Visnudharmottara referred earlier. Rivers are called the consorts of Varuna at all times.⁸⁴

A combination of salabhanjika-nadidevi are seen on Nagarjunakonda freize (See Vogel, Ganga et Yamuna Pl.I a) (Fig. 67) which represents it as the end motif standing in the swastika pada katisama pose, holding the branch of a tree in uromandali on a composite makara, lion, deer vahana. This could be taken as a transitional motif.

At Amaravati from a railing pillar, two similar nymphs, each standing on a fish (possibly intended for a makara) and bearing a tray of food at shoulder level, and a water vessel, are found approaching a theriomorphic Naga. (Fig. 109). This paired formula also serves as an example of duplicate river goddesses supported by fish or makara. These relate to the yaksi carrying basket and water jug and indirectly to the concept of Sri Lakshmi as carved on Sanchi Stupa II. Thus the undifferentiated river goddesses connect on one hand with those of yaksis or dryads, on the other hand they exhibit in the vase attribute, what may well have been the immediate source of this motif, as it appears held by the differentiated river goddesses at the close of the Gupta period and subsequently.

According to Coomaraswamy Varaha cave at Udaygiri (inscribed to 402 A.D.) represents the first ever Ganga Yamuna amid nrita-gita-vada, because of their differentiated form, he does not see it as later in date. But the cap worn by Varuna prompts him to call it closer to Kushana in style and therefore in time as well. (Fig. 110) The association of Varuna and the river goddesses with drama has already been referred in the earlier section. Reiterating the same point the dwarf carrying vessels along with the nadidevis in languorous alasa or salabhanjika poses, have to be interpreted in the new light. The Khilchipura pillars have to be mentioned here once again, since on one of their sides river goddess is represented standing on a makara with a lotus in hand and accompanied by a gana holding, a dish or a vessel. (Fig. 98) Here the nadidevis attributes are clear, whereas in the above registers some scenes from drama are depicted, revolving around the nayaka-nayika-Vita group. This is a rare example of its kind and belongs to the same period but never seen in the light of the above data.

At Ajanta caves 1,4,5,16,20,21,23 and 26, the doorways represent the river goddesses. (Fig. ^{105, 106, 100}107) They are mostly Viharas with individual shrines and most of them belong to the Mahayana phase. The only caves which are a bit different from the rest are those in which the Vita with Kutilaka are represented. Note the Jogeshvari cave doorway river goddess with Vita holding kuti laka. (Fig. 85).

Most often the makaras are repeated as vahanas, before the tortoise is introduced. The continuation of foliage and creepers oozing out of makara mouths and yaksa nqvels continue on the doorways, but in a slightly different form. Even the mithunas are repeated. In a way, one can say that much of the water cosmology fundamentals have been

repeated on the temple doorway by readjusting and reformulating the same old motifs.

At Udaigiri Amrita cave 19, (Fig. 111) the nadidevis are shown standing with makara, the influence of which goes to Ajanta, Jogeshwari and Elephanta. At Nachna kumaramath the river goddesses are shown at the udumbara level. When they are brought from lintel to the udumbara, their iconography becomes more formal, they are accompanied by attendants holding chatra and also accompanied by dvarapalas. (Tumain, Barwasagar, etc.) This is a medieval period phenomenon when besides the nadidevis flanking the garbhagraha doorway, a number of other female figures have also been introduced on the mandovara. e.g., Kotai Jagat, Tusa etc. where they are placed on lotus pedestals, holding lotus, water pitchers or floral garlands. It is these very forms which later on develop into apsaras and devangana motifs, In action and gestures the devangana figures resemble the yaksis who are recalled from the architectural memory of decorative motif vocabulary and reused on the temple. From the river goddesses they carry forward the idea of aquatic connection, vegetal fecundity and the concept of abundance and prosperity, They are also considered auspicious and good.

An interesting terracotta Ganga from Mathura of 5th century A.D. (Museum for Indian Art, Berlin) (Fig. 112) is a voluptuous woman seated on the makara head, almost riding it, holding a kalasha, out of which thick foliage is jutting out. This is a very direct representation of the river goddess motif with its essential attributes signifying aquatic connection and vegetal growth. The river goddess is represented with bare breast and wet drapery below the waist indicated with incised lines.

The same motif during the 6th century A.D. is represented at Rajin on a pillar standing on a lotus pedestal above a makara. (Fig. 114) One of the goddesses holding a kalasha and floral garland, while another is holding a floral stick. Both are accompanied by attendants. One of them is holding a container full of pearls. The river goddess has a halo at the back of her head and achatra. The artist has also represented birds holding worms in their beaks. (Fig. 113)

The early sixth century A.D. temple of Dasavatara at Deogarh (Fig. 115) has river goddesses placed on the main garbha griha doorway. They are at the lintel level with vahanas distinguishing them as Ganga and Yamuna. But at the udumbhara level there are dwarfs holding ghatapallavas, out of which a floral shakha emerges. There are auspicious females carrying pearl strings and lilies wearing fluttering garments. There are yaksa dwarfs also shown, out of whose navels a creeper with rich foliage is emerging on the doorway. All these are aquatic elements which come together on the doorway of the temples in Gupta period, which then get carried forward.

At Osia on the Surya temple (Fig. 115) doorway the river goddesses have a richly stylized foliage above their heads turning into a chatra. The auspicious female standing in a svastika pada, might be holding a kalasa, (arms are broken). At another temple site, the same sculpture has been replaced by sadyasnata squeezing her hair after a bath. Thus the aquatic connotation continues. (Fig. 116)

It continues in Kalinga region in the form of naginis on the doorways. Sometimes even salabhanjikas are represented instead of river goddesses.

The river goddesses on the Khajuraho temples, like Lakshmana and Kandarika Mahadeva etc., are represented with abundant foliage, which almost covers them like a parikara. But what attracted my attention was the representation of the naginis, with snake hoods flowing down from the karna conjoins and holding anjalimudra. Some of them were represented in the devangana imagery engaged in keshanistoya or holding a lotus flower, Vasanaabramsā, holding a darpana for applying bindī, standing in alasa pose and so on. This intrigued me because at Lakshmana temple this programming is not only unique but also unconventional. The sculptors have freely and creatively filled up the empty spaces on the vast arena of the mandovara wall with devangana and naginis depicting similar motifs. The fluvial connection not only connects the naginis and the devanganas but even the rivergoddesses. For this point an illustration of the doorway from Kausambi of Allahabad Museum (Fig. 118) (AHS A4-98) may be noted. The rivergoddesses holding ripe lotus bud with a long stalk are placed on their vahanas at the udumbara level. But above on the lintel level on the corners of the lalatabimba are placed two devanganas, flanked by the *vyalas*, in vasanaabramsā and darpana - prasadhika pose. They have the foliage at the back which continues the vrksaka connotation intact. Such examples of medieval doorways shed new light on devangana imagery and its complex connections.