CHAPTER - III

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III.1.1 GODDESSES IN VEDIC LITERATURE :

Conceptually speaking the feminine principles of nourishment, plenty, fertility etc. are symbolised under different names in the Vedas which do not grow further. e.g. the concepts of Puramdhi (plenty and activity), Dhisana (abundance), Ila (nourishment), Brhaddiva (mother), are all mentioned more than once in the Rgveda[1] Rgveda also mentions Raka, a rich and bountiful goddess along with Sarasvati and Ila. Sinivali is refered to as a sister of the gods, broad hipped, fair armed, fair fingered, prolific, a mistress of the family, and is implored to grant off-spring. In the AV (8, 46[3]) Sinivali is called the wife of Visnu. The later Samhitas and the Brahmanas also mention a goddess Kuhu, a personification of the new moon. Raka and Sinivali are in later Vedic texts connected with phases of the moon, the former being the presiding deity of the actual night of full moon, and the latter of the first day of the fortnight of new moon.[2] It is significant to note that these goddesses exist individually and not as consorts of any male deity. This emphasizes their power and individual significance addressed in feminine gender and imagery which to certain extent is anthropomorphic.

There is no further reference to these goddesses coming into their own, but as often observed and agreed upon by scholars, the highly developed concepts of Uma, Parvati, Durga, Lakshmi etc., have some connection with Vedic fertility goddesses such as Sarasvati, Puramdhi, Aditi etc. It is only in the final stage of the development of religious imagination that the divinity is conceived as 'All Mother' - an abstract conception[3].

In my view the higher concepts of Durga, Lakshmi, etc. developed by the amalgamation of the attributes of the above mentioned Vedic goddesses, but the concept of the power of the female to procreate, regenerate and sustain 'life'-in short eroticism, fertility and fecundity, were never obliterated from the memory of the mankind. This yearning to create beautiful imageries of female divinities to reassure, fulfil the desire and invoke love, found imagery in apsaras and gandharvas. Since the concepts of Shakti, Durga and Lakshmi became esoteric and sacred, beyond the grasp of the common man, the minor female divinities representing the sphere of the profane were conceived to fulfil similar functions. The imagery of the apsaras is not only effusive, illusive, alluring but certainly fulfilling, sustaining and entertaining. As concepts, these goddesses, apsaras, yaksis etc. emerge out of the attitude of veneration for nature worship, in which earth, sky, water, vegetation, sun, moon, air are all inter-related phenomena. Hence their attributes and functions are not only connected but transferable and therefore mutative. Hence the concepts of Vedic goddesses, apsaras and yaksi are not diametrically opposite imageries but deeply interconnected.

The concepts of Vedic goddesses and apsaras develop in Vedic literature but do not find a visual representation, while the principle of yaksi through its absorption in Buddhist art acquires a visual imagery which when compared with the apsaras and other goddesses seems to be analogous. Would it be too farflunged to observe the traces of Puramdhi in the Bharat Kala Bhavan yaksi (Fig.), Ila in the yaksis from Mathura and Sanghol (Fig.), squeezing their breasts, a motif which continues later at Jagat and Rani ki Vav temples or Brhaddhiva in putravallabha? The representation of the yaksis from Didarganj and

Sanchi, relate well with the discription of the goddess Sinivali from Rgveda.

All these goddesses share common attributes which are no doubt there in the higher goddesses as well. But the sheer continuation of the generic female divinities' concept, imagery and visual representation, from Kushana period, hints at its secular impact and demand. The visual imagery has distinct gestures, postures and attributes which connect various forms of different periods.

Even the concept of 'Vac', Speech, conceived in feminine gender and form, accompanied all the gods, supports Mitra-Varuna, Indra-Agni, Asvins and bending the bow of Rudra against the unbeliever in the Rgveda. She has a place in the waters and sea, besides encompasses all beings. In the Brahmanas she is refered in the legend of Soma, purchased from the gandharvas by the devas with the help of a woman, 'Vac', the goddess tempts the gandharvas, makes them surrender the Soma and return to the devas. 'Vac' is equated with thunder and the development of the human speech.[4]

Stella Kramrisch identified the sculptures of surasundari - vyala juxtaposed on the temple architecture as symbols personifying Vac as 'prakriti', activating the dormant 'purusha'.[5] This 'Vac' is also connected with Sarasvati in the Brahmanas (SB 3,9,1[7], A.B 3, 1[10]) and in the post - Vedic mythology Sarasvati becomes the goddess of eloquence, wisdom, invoked as a muse and regarded as the wife of Brahma.[6]

Exploring the nature worship as a germinal phenomenon in the development of the apsara-devangana imagery, the waters and rivers

also play a significant part. The waters are personified as mothers, young wives, and goddesses who bestow boons and come to the sacrifice. They are celestial, as well as flowing in channels, and have the sea for their goal (7, 492). It is implied that they abide where the gods are and the seat of Mitra and Varuna is (10, 30). King Varuna moves in their midst, looking down on the truth and falsehood of men (7, 49^3) Here the rain water is meant. Agni is dwelling in the waters and as mothers they produce Agni (10, 91^6, AV 1, 33^1). The waters cleanse and purify guilt and sins, and heal, bestowing wealth, strength and immortality.[7] Atharva veda refers to the installation of Purnakumbhanaris (AV 3.12.8)[8]. Number of rivers like Sarasvati, Sarayu, Sindhu, Ganga, Yamuna, Sutudri, Parusni. are mentioned in the Veda out of which Sarasvati is much celebrated than any other river. She performs the attributes of waters mentioned above. Over and above, she bestows vitality, off-spring (2, 41^{17}) and is associated with deities who assist procreation (10, 184^2). She is bountiful, and in her terrible form she is a Vrtra slayer. (6, $61^{3.7}$) This shows that the concepts of water are also closely linked with fertility and eroticism, while the upholding of ethical values and purification are also suggested. The connection between nadi devatas, apsaras and later devanganas is undoubtedly indicated here. Sarasvati has a male correlative, Sarasvat, who is invoked by worshippers desiring wives and off-spring, protection and plenty. Here the male fertilizing water, semen is implied. Roth regards him as a guardian of the celestial waters who bestows fertility, while Hillebrandt identified Sarasvat with Apam Napat = Soma, the moon[9].

Soma is connected with waters and the moon for its quality to swell (apya). In Rgveda (1, 91^{16-8}), 10, 85^5) it is identified with the

moon. It swells like a river or sea and is connected with waxing and wanning of the moon. Soma produces waters and causes heaven and earth to rain (9, 96^{3}) Soma is the embryo of the waters (9, 97^{41}, SB $4,4,5^{21}$) or their child, for seven sisters as mothers are around the child, gandharva of the waters (9, 86^{36}) and waters are his mothers.

Soma is also called a bull (9, 7^{3}). Being a bull among cow waters, Soma is the fertilizer of the waters (10, 36^{8}). He is also (9, 86^{39}) an impregnator (Retodha), an epithet applied to the moon in the Yajurveda (eg. MS 1, 6^{a})[10] Hence he is a bestower of fertility (9, 60^{4}, 74^{5}). By drinking Soma, gods became immortal. Soma stimulates the voice and the speech. He is referred to as 'Vacaspati' (9, 26^{4}, 101^{5}). Soma is also called the lord of the plants (9, 114, 2) and receives the epithet 'vanaspati' lord of the word (1, 91^{6}, 9, 12^{7}).

Soma is referred to as moon in Rgveda (1st & 10th mandala) Atharvaveda (7, $81^{3.4}$, 116^{7} etc.) Chandogya Upanisad (5, 10^{1}) and even the Brahmanas identify Soma with moon. There is nectar in moon, when gods feed on thus the moon wanes away. Soma is celestial and bright dispelling darkness and swelling in the waters and it is often called a drop, Indu (6, 44^{21}). Thus Soma in the bowls is said to appear like the moon in the water (8, 71^{8})[11].

Therefore, Soma in water implies the male-female concept commonly shared by apsara-gandharva, apsara - soma (drink), apsara-moon, apsara shala (tree & vegetation in general), a feature explicitly depicted by the ever-auspicious mithuna pairs. In my view the element of suggestion (dhvani) of male-female principle is very subtly implied in this pairing, which is poetically expressed. Further exploration of it in devangana,

imageries of kesanistoyakarini, salabhanjika, madhupana, prasadhika holding mirror or a bowl, is worth while.

Thus recapitulating the concept of goddesses personified as nature spirits namely Raka, Puramdhi, Sinivali, Ila, not only lead to the concepts of Aditi (which is more abstract and generalised than the former) Sri Lakshmi, Durga, Uma-Parvati etc. on one hand and apsara, yaksi, surasundari, devangana etc. on the other. This process is perennial and continues in temple architecture where it obtains a concrete form from the literary imagery. (In a sense they are alankarika, not only decorate the temple but enrich the literary flourish with poetic imagination). It is very essential to visualize the cognate nature of Vedic goddesses, apsaras, yaksis, river goddesses and later day devanganas.

The representation of Sri in early Indian art shares with our feminine forms the visual semblance in depiction of its postures and attributes e.g., salabhanjika posture, lotus, vessel, elephant, rich foliage etc. and conceptual function - bestowing of prosperity, abundance, progeny, good fortune and so on. The worship of Sri as a popular goddess in pre-Buddhist times, like the Yaksa cult, and the yaksi was the model for the representation of her form. Sri was associated with the northern quarter and Srimati or Srima with the southern one[12]

In Srisukta, Sri is referred to as seated on a lotus, holding lotuses and being bathed by elephants holding water jars. The early sculptures at Barhut, Sanchi, Bodhagaya, Udayagiri and other places conform to this description. The Vedic concept of Sri as the 'lady bountiful', bestower of garments, food and drink, is closely related to the Vedic concept of Aditi, the lady of Visnu, the Vedic predecessor

of the epic Bhudevi. Early sculptures contain suggestions of these concepts also. Thus the lady pressing her breast in the Lucknow Museum (which I prefer to call as svastanasparsa) and the lady carrying food and water, represented at both Mathura and Amaravati, are sculptural echoes of Yajurveda passages describing her as rich in milk, the goddess... the lady of Visnu" and "Sri that brings garments, cows, food and drink"[13] Her associations with lotus and her bounty in the bestowal of food and drink are brought together, as Coomaraswamy has pointed out, in a sculpture from Sanchi, which is the link between the yaksi type from Mathura and Amaravati and the lotus inhabiting lady. Everything good and auspicious is believed to be the abode of Sri who is Mangala. Thus a good house, gateway, flowers, banners, parasole, seats, beds, gems, charming married women with their living husbands, different fruits, grains, seeds, vessels, new clothes, cow, horse, elephant and host of other objects are the abode of Sri.

Different concepts of Lakshmi such as Dhanalakshmi (goddess of wealth), Dhanya Lakshmi (goddess of corns), Bhagyalakshmi (goddess of prosperity), Bhogalakshmi (goddess of pleasures), Rajyalakshmi (goddess of royalty) Viralakshmi (goddess of valour) are all suggestive of the presence of Sri in various auspicious things.[14]

III.1.2 APSARA IN VEDIC LITERATURE :

The present attempt is directed towards compiling the available references from Vedic texts regarding apsara and her nature. In order to understand her origin and characteristics, one has to observe that the nature and associations of an apsara have been changing from Rgveda to Atharva Veda and to later Vedic literature. This indirectly is the

iconology of an apsara motif in Vedic literature. It is more imaginary because the whole concept is ambivalent. The nature of apsara as an aqueous nymph, also associated with trees, fertility and engaging in dance, song and play, prompts one to connect them as the predecessors of the devanganas shown in sculpture on the temple architecture. Hence the present chapter is intended at bringing together all the varied references and interpretations on apsaras, to pose them against the devangana concept in order to try and see how both these concepts work as complementary and interfacing alongwith each other.

Apsara denoted a kind of nymph, who is refered to only five times in Rgveda as collated by Macdonell. She smiles at her beloved gandharva in the highest heaven (RV 10, 123^5). Apsarases of the sea are described as flowing to Soma (RV 9, 78^3) with reference to the water which is mixed with the juice. The long haired ascetic with semidivine powers, is spoken of as able to move on the path of the apsarases and the gandharvas (RV 10, 136^6). The Apsaras is also meant by the aqueous nymph (apya yosa), the wife of the gandharvas in the waters (RV 10, 10^4).

More light on apsaras is thrown by Atharva Veda as further explored by Macdonell. Their abode is in waters, whence they come and go in a trice (AV. 2, 2^3). They are besought to depart from the vicinity of men to the river and the bank of the waters (AV. 4, 37^3). The Goddesses connected with gandharva Visva Vasu are described on connected with clouds, lightening and stars. (AV. 2, 2^4). They are also known as wives of the gandharvas (AV. 2, 2^5) and their connection with the latter has assumed the character of a formula in the later Samhitas

(VS. 30,8, AV. 8,9[9]). In the Satapatha Brahmana (11,5,1[4]) the apsarases are described as transforming themselves into a kind of aquatic bird (atyah : RV. 9,5[9]). In the post Vedic literature they are very often spoken of as frequenting forest lakes and rivers, especially the Gangas, and they are found in Varuna's palace in the ocean. The etymological meaning of the word is most probably 'moving in the waters'. (according to Yaska's Nirukta, 5, 13 by ap-sarini).

From the early Vedic literature it can be seen that the oldest conception of the apsaras is a celestial water numph, and a consort of a 'genius' named gandharva. In later Samhitas the sphere of the apsarases extends to the earth and in particular to trees. They are spoken of as inhabiting banyans (nyagrodha) and sacred fig - trees (asvattha), in which their cymbals and lutes resound (AV. 4,37[4]). Elsewhere, the same trees as well as other varieties of the fig tree (udumbara and plaksa), are said to be the houses of gandharvas and apsara es (TS. 3,4,8[4]). The gandharvas and apsarases in such trees are entreated to be propitious to a passing wedding procession (AV. 14,2[7]). In the S'B (II, 6, I) the apsarases are described as engaged in dance, song and play. Post Vedic texts even speak of mountains, both mythical and actual, as favourite resorts of these two clases of beings. The Atharva Veda adds the traits that the apsarases are fond of dice and bestow luck at play. (AV. 2,2[5]) But they are feared especially as causing mental derangement, magic therefore being employed against them (AV. 2, 3[5] etc.).

The love of the apsarases, who are of the great beauty (S'B 13,4,3) is employed not only by the gandharvas but occasionally even by men (op 10, 95[9]). A myth turning on such a union is related to at

least one individual apsaras in Vedic literature. The names of several other apsarases are also mentioned. Gandharva and the aqueous nymph, are alluded to as the parents of Yama and Yami. (SB 10, 10^4). They dwell in waters (AV $2,2^3$, 4, 37^{12}). The union of gandharva with the water nymph is typical of marriage. He is therefore connected with the wedding ceremony, and the unmarried maiden is said to belong to Soma and Agni (10, 85^{40-1}). The gandharva Visvavasu, in the first days of wedlock, is regarded as a rival of the husband (ibid^{22}), and the gandharva's love of women is prominent in later texts (HS. 3, 7^3). The gandharvas and apsarases thus preside over fertility and are prayed to by those who desire offspring (PB. 19, 3^2).

Originally, gandharva is a bright celestial being, some times thought of as dwelling in the waters with his spouse the apsaras. Various conjectures have, however, been made by different scholars. Some regard the gandharvas as wind spirits, representing the rainbow, or a genius of the moon, Soma, the rising sun or a cloud spirit[16]

Yama lives in the other world delighting himself in the company of the apsarases (nymphs) who are connected with Soma (AV. 4, 34, 3). Thus apsaras adorn the court of Yama and Varuna before gitting associated with Indrasabha.

III.1.3 GANDHARVAS and APSARASES

In the Rgveda the word gandharva occurs 20 times, but only thrice in the plural, from which it is fair to deduce that the nature of the 'spirit' was originally conceived as one. He is the high being of the air in the sky, a measurer of space who stands erect on the vault of heaven. He is brought into relation with the sun, the sun-bird, the

sun-steed and Soma, likened to the sun. He is also connected with the rainbow in a late hymn. He is especially connected with Soma, whose place he guards, standing on the vault of heaven. Gandharva is also connected with waters, Soma in the waters is said to be the gandharva of the waters : gandharva is the lover of the apsaras. The gandharva is further found in the marriage ceremony : the bride is claimed by him, and he is in the beginning of the marriage a rival of the husband. Gandharva has a fragrant garment and is wind haired.

Keith observes that in the later Samhitas the account of the gandharva is fuller, but not essentially different. They now form a class of demigods, their abode is in heaven, they are mentioned with sun deities as Agni, Sun, Moon, wind and in the post-Vedic literature the Fata Morgana are connected with the gandharvas. Gandharvas kept Soma for the Gods, but allowing it to be stolen, were punished by exclusion from drinking it. Gods got the Soma stolen from the gandharvas through Vac who in female form allured the gandharvas. In Atharvaveda, gandharva knowns plants, doubtless the Soma, and that the odour of the earth arises to him, probably an idea due to folk etymology, with gandha, odour.

In the Brahmanas, texts and rituals, the connection between the apsaras and the gandharvas is especially close : the gandharva Urnayu sits among the apsarases who swing themselves, and is beloved by them. (PB, 12, 11, 10). In a rite, the priest can point to the young men and young maidens present, when he means to indicate the gandharvas and apsarases. (SB, 13, 4.3, 7.8). They are besought to bestow progeny (PB, 19, 3.2, SGS i. 19,2) and in the Buddhist texts, the being, which by the law of transmigration, enters the womb at the time of conception, is called a gandhabba.

For the nights immediately after the marriage, when the newly-wedded couple are not allowed to consummate the marriage, a staff who represents the Gandharva Visvavasu, is placed between them and not until he is formally dismissed to the highest region, is the marriage completed. (RV. 16, 85.22). A different and lower view of the gandharva is also found in the Atharvaveda, where the plant, goat's horn, is used to drive off the gandharva, who are regarded as shaggy with half animal forms, and are said to seek to ruin women in the guis of an ape, a dog, a hairy child or a fiend.

In a Buddhist text, Samyutta Nikaya, Pisacas replace Gandharvas in conjunction with the apsarases - can be developed from the Gandharvas of the Rgveda. Gandharvas association with marriage leads to a secondary connection with the embryo. According to Keith, Gandharva therefore is not in the secondary period of the Vedic religion any longer a single concept : he is compounded of different and in essence disparate ideas. To Kuhn he is a cloud spirit, to Wallis the rising sun, to Bergaigne Soma, to Hopkins a genius of the moon, and to Roth the rainbow. To certain scholars like Manahardl EH. Meyer and von Schroeder, he is a wind spirit developed out of the conception of the spirits of the dead as riding in the wind and passing therefore into wind spirits.

The gandharva in his origin is a spirit of the heaven and is also associated with waters of the sky and the earth due to their association with the apsarases.

The long haired Muni or ascetic with magic powers, moves on the path of the gandharva and the apsarases. (RV 10, 136.6).

In the Atharvaveda and the Yajurveda the connection of the Apsarases with the waters is frequently expressed : they abide in the waters, they are often asked to depart from men to the river and the bank of the waters, possibly a hint at the dangerous quality of the nymphs.

In the Satapatha Brahmanas apsarases appear as swimming about in a lake in the form of birds, ati, and the later literature often treats them as water spirits, in forest lakes, in rivers, even in Varuna's palace in the ocean. They have a further field of activity, they dwell in the banyan and the fig - tree, according to Atharvaveda (4. 37.4), where their cymbals and their lutes resound. The gandharva and apsarases in these trees are begged to be propitious to a passing wedding party (AV. 14, 2.9) (TS 3. 4.8.4). They are also said to be engaged in dance and song and play, but the Atharvaveda mentions some sinister characteristics : if they are fond of dice, and bestow good luck in gambling, they are also liable to cause madness, and magic has to be employed against them in this regard. In the post Vedic literature besides trees, even mountains are their places of habitation. It is perhaps from them that the Gandharva attains his power of causing derangement or at least mental excitement, which is attested for the Brahmana period by the phrase 'seized by a Gandharva' used for a lady who is inspired or demented.[17]

III.1.4 RISE OF THE INDIVIDUAL APSARAS IN VEDIC, EPIC AND PURANIC LITERATURE :

Atharvaveda refers to three, Ugrajit, Ugrampasya and Rastrabhat apsaras (AV. 16, 118 1.2) while Vajapeya Samhita, among others speaks of Urvasi and Menaka (VS. 15, 15-19). Even the Satapatha Brahmana (3,4,I[22])

specifically talks about Sakuntala, the ancestress of the royal family of the Bharatas (SB. 13,5,4[13]) as well as Urvasi (SB. 2,5,I')[18]

According to Natya Sastra, the apsaras were created by the powerful Brahma from his mind, who were skillful in embellishing the drama and gave them over to Bharata in performance. (NS. 1, 46-47). They are mentioned as Natyalankara, the embellished support to drama. Their names in Natyasatra are as follows :

Manjukesi, Sukesi, Misrakesi, Sulocana, Saudamini, Devadatta, Devasena, Manorama, Sudati, Sundari, Vidagdha, Sumala, Santati, Sunanda, Sumukhi, Magadhi, Arjuni, Sarala, Kerala, Dhrti, Nanda, Supuskala and Kalabha.[19]

Rsi Kasyapa is the father of the celestial nymphs who were delivered by his wife Arishta. They were thirteen apsarases and four gandharvas. Alambusa, Misrakesi, Vidyutparna, Tilottama, Raksita, Rambha, Manorama, Kesini, Subahu, Suraja, Surata, Supriya, while the Gandharva are Haha, Huhu, Alibahu, Tumbura.[20]

Another theory prevalent in the Epic - Puranic literature about apsarases and their origin is through the Samudra Manthana. They were born out of the ocean.[21]

Matsya Purana[22] refers to the origin of apsaras along with rishis, gandharvas and kinnaras from a common parentage, namely Kashyapa and Arista.

A significant verse (MP. 10.24) refers to a metaphorical comparison between the holding of a suckling infant by the apsaras (dugdha vatsa) with the aid of gandharvas and the smell and fragrance which is the inherent quality of the padmadala. Therefore the creation of the suckling

baby, Chitraratha refers to the nourishing aspect of an apsaras character, where she can be compared with the mother. By refering to padmadala gandha, the intention is to underline the inseperability of the quality of nourishment.

Vayu Purana[23], which is one of the older Purana, refers to the origin of apsaras as a creation of Brahma, who created moveable and immoveable objects along with groups of yaksas, pisachas, gandharvas and apsaras. (MP. 9.55). Out of the many similar groups of apsaras, most of them were endowed with happiness, benevolence, protection, fragrances and purity, (VP. 30.87).

Moreover, each group of apsaras contains 14 boon bestowing ones, who are called the beauty incarnates, (VP. 69.53). Vayu Purana clearly mentions them as the Manasa Kanya of Brahma who emerge from his mental creativity. They are endowed with the nature of energy, force and created from Agni and Arista (VP. 69.54).

They are bright and resemble the long rays of the sun, they also bear nourishment from moon and benevolence. (VP. 69.55).

They are born of yajna and are called subha, they also resemble the sound of Rik and Sama recited before Agni. They are born of water and nector and known as amrita (VP. 69.56). Vayu Purana also refers to them as born of the wind, and calls them as Suddha, while the mundane ones are earth born, the lightenning born are called Richa, the death born are called Bhairava (VP. 69.57). This verse is very significant because it characterises the diverse origins, names, characters and affiliations of apsaras. Some of them are boon bestowing, nourishing, while some of them are ferrocious.

There is one amorous group of apsaras who are refered to as beautifiers and they are fourteen in number. They are created to enhance the beauty of the Indra Sabha. (VP. 69.58). Note that nowhere have they been refered to as prostitutes, courtesans or enchantresses given to mean ways. The Surayana of Indra Sabha are bestowed with beautiful form and youth, and these celestial maidens are known by names such as Dhanurupa, Mahabhaga, Tilottama. The illustrious divine beings are born in the circle of Brahma and Agni. (VP. 69.59). Further on, Vayu Purana mentions a metaphorical verse in which one Apsara, called Vedavati, is born from the alter of Brahma's mental sphere bearing a great bright halo (VP. 69.60).

The next verse refers to the daughter of Yama who is youthful and beautiful. This celestial maiden called Sulochana is suffused with golden halo. (VP. 69.61). These various groups of apsaras which range into thousands, some of them are the wives of the Devas, and Rishis while some are mothers. (VP. 69.62). This verse throws much light on the material aspect of the apsaras. It would be worth mentioning at this stage that nowhere in the preceding verses do we come across the nature of the apsaras as a seductress or an enchantress, the maligned position to which they were brought down in the later periods of the Epics and the classical literature. Therefore the data given in Vayu Purana is very valuable in reviewing the character of apsaras and also for interpreting the sculptures. (to be elaborated in the relevant context).

Vayu Purana not only mentions the entire range of the imagery of apsaras but also mentions their physical attributes along with their names. They are golden complexioned, suffused with fragrance and when they perform their chores, their orb intoxicates the onlooker without

the aid of wine. Their touch alone enhances the ananda (VP. 69.63).

This group of thirty four apsaras of the heaven are full of auspiciousness, water, and one of them, Surottama, is the specially loved (69.4). The list of them are Misrakesi, Chasi, Varnini, Alambusa, Marichi, Putrika, Vidyutparna, Tilottama, Adrika, Laksana, Devi, Rambha, Manorama, Suvara, Subahu, Purnita, Supratisthita, Pundarika, Sugandha, Sudanta, Surasa, Hema, Saradvati, Suvrata, Subhuja and Hamsapada, these are the wellknown apsaras known from the Munis of the yore (VP. 69.5-8).

Brahmanda Purana[24] also has a list of 24 apsaras such as Misrakesi, Chasi, Parnini, Alambusa, Marichi, Suchibha, Vidyutparna, Tilottama, Adrika, Laksmana, Ksema, Divya, Rambha, Manobhava, Asita, Supriya, Subhuja, Pundarika, Jagandha, Sudali, Surasa, and Subahu. The list gives only 22 names and comparing it with the Vayu Purana list the names appear more or less the same or analogous, eg., Sugandha, Jagandha, Sudanta - Sudali, Putribha - Suchibha and so on. These apsaras belong to the lower class of the auspicious heavenly beings, who are fair complexioned (Aruna) and harmless. (BP 3 7.5). They are the attendants (Shaivya) of the Devi (Lakshmi?) and out of the 1016 of them, the group of apsaras consists of 14 of them (BP.3 71.243). Brahma asked Indra to send some chosen ones from his palace to become the wives of Vasudeva (BP.3 71.244). This connection of apsaras with Brahma (as Manasa Kanya) reiterated by (NS.1.46-47) and with Krishna (as Patnyartham Vasudevasya) throws light on their acceptance into the pantheon, right from the early classical period.

VISHNU PURANA: DVITYA AMSHA

Monthly entourage of the twelve Adityas in the whole year

SR. NO.	MONTH	ADITYA	RSI	GANDHARVA	APSARAS	YAKSHA	NAGA	RAKSHASA
1.	Madhu or Chaitra	Dhatri	Pulastya	Tumburu	Kratusthala	Rathakrit	Vaduki	Heti
2.	Vaisakha or Madhava	Aryamat	Pulaha	Narada	Punjikasthali	Rathaujas	Kachanira	Praheti
3.	Suchi or Jyeshtha	Mitra	Atri	Haha	Mena	Rathasvana	Takshaka	Paurusheya
4.	Sukra or Ashadha	Varuna	Vasishtha	Huhu	Sahajanya	Rathachitra	Rathachitra	Budha
5.	Nabhas or Sravana	Indra	Angiras	Visvavasu	Pramlocha	Srotas?	Elaputra?	Elaputra
6.	Bhadrapatra	Vivasvat	Bhrgu	Ugrasena	Anumlocha	Apurna	Shankhapala	Vyaghra
7.	Asvin	Pushan	Gautama	Suruchi	Ghratachi	Sushena	Dhananjaya	Vata
8.	Kartik	Parjanya	Bharadvaja	Visvavasu	Visvachi	Senajit	Airavata	Chapa
9.	Agrahayana or Margasirsha	Ansu	Kasyapa	Chitrasena	Urvasi	Tarkshya	Mahapadma	Vidyut
10.	Pausha	Bhagakratu	Urnayu	Purvachitti	Arishtanemi	Karkotaka	Sphurja	
11.	Magha	Tvasta	Jamadagni	Dhritarashtra	Tilottama	Ritajit	Kambala?	Brahmapeta
12.	Phalguna	Vishnu	Visvamitra	Suryavarchchas	Rambha	Satyajit	Asvatara	Yajnapeta

Vishnu Purana[25] mentions the apsaras as the attendants of Surya in the form of the twelve Adityas who are the harbingers of various seasonal changes and who dance to spread happiness. This iconography (which is given supra in a tabulated manner) throws further light to support the mainstream acceptance of apsaras in the Hindu pantheon in association of the major male gods. Their representation on Nagara temples in the medieval period is a logical continuation of the same textual memory.

Parasara says that between the extreme northern and southern points, the sun has to traverse in a year one hundred and eighty degrees, ascending and descending. His car is presided over by divine Aditya, Rsis, heavenly singers and nymphs, yaksas, serpents and raksasas (one of each being placed in it in every month). (VP.2. 10. 1-2).

In this manner, Maitreya, a troop of seven celestial beings, supported by the energy of Visnu, occupies during the several months the orb of the sun. The sage celebrates his praise, and the gandharva sings, the nymph dances before him, the raksasa attends upon his steps, the serpent harnesses his steeds and the yaksa trims the reins, the nunerous pigmy sages, the Balakhilyas, ever surround his chariot. The whole troop of seven, attached to the sun's car, are the agents in the distribution of cold, heat and rain, at their respective seasons. (VP.2.10. 19-20).

Bhagavat Purana[26] reiterates the origin of apsaras from the churning of the ocean, they emerge after the kalpavriksa. They were draped with beautiful robes and golden neckleces. These celestial nymphs

were engaged in enticing by making langourous movements and amorous glances. (BHP, 8, 8.7).

In another context Bhagavat Purana (12 8.16) says that Indra sent Gandharvas, apsaras, Kama, Vasant, Malayanila and Mada to the ashram of Markandeya to disturb his penance. From the above references the amorous character of apsaras comes to the fore. They have been portrayed as agents of allurement, a stumbling block, to test the integrity of a sage or a mortal.

The beautiful women were created by Visnu with his yogic powers. They were beautifully dressed and attended upon him. Looking at their Lakshmi-like form and affected by their sweet smell, the subordinates of Indra lost their lustre. Then with a polite smile Visnu said selecte an appropriate one from among them and make them embelish the heavens (BHP.11.4.12-13) At that time they also lauded Urvasi as the best apsara.

Visnu Purana mentions in the famous incident related with Samudra Manthan how there arose the goddess Varuni, coral tree parijata, the jewel kaustubha, sacred cow kamadhenu, celestial apsarases and the goddess Lakshmi who went to Hari (VP. 1,9,2-116). When the goddess Lakshmi arrived with vibrant beauty, the seers assembled there praised her with the Srisukta and the gandharvas led by Visvavasu sang before her and the throngs of apsarases led by Ghrtaci, danced[27]

One of the most fascinating imageries of apsaras found ever is in Vamana Saromahatmya (10.33-66). When Vamana shed his dwarf-like form, in a twinkling of an eye, he manifested the form which consists of all the gods, his eyes were the moon and the sun, the sky was his head

and the earth his feet, his toes were the Pisacas and his fingers the guhyakas. The Visvedevas were in his knees and the excellent deities, the Sadhyas were in his skins. In his nails appeared the yaksa and in the contours of his body, the apsarases[28]. This suggests that apsaras have been associated with aerial form which is contourless and can change at will.

III.1.5 EMERGENCE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT APSARAS : THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND INTERPRETATION :

URVASI :

Urvasi is mentioned in Rgveda as an apsara to whom Vasistha is said to have been born, (7, 33[11.12]). She is once invoked with the streams (5, 41[19]). She is also described as aqueous (apya) as filling the atmosphere, traversing space, an expression which is applied to the celestial Gandharva (in 10, 139[5]). She is said to have spent four autumns among mortals (5[16]) and is besought to return (5[17]), the request of Pururavas is granted with an entry into the heaven (5[18]). Several verses of this hymn find their setting in a continuous story told in the SB (2,5,I) which fills in details partly based on a misunder-standing of the text of RV.

Urvasi is the abstraction of a subtle principle. She is the life - principle in matter (pranagni) that requires a unit of ghrita (clarified butter, literally) for its sustenence daily. Ghrita is a form of Agni who in turn is nothingg but the life - principle. It is then, this life-principle that is kept kindled by its daily share of sustenance that it reviews from various sources. The crux of it all is that energy is sustained by energy and life is sustained by life-to continue for its full

span of existence in the human body or on the material plane for a period of one hundred years. The measure of fuel which supports this life is symbolised by the 'one drop of ghrita'. The principle of Rajas measures at life and such is the function of Urvashi as well (RV 10.95.17).

Urvashi is most clearly a celestial nymph or apsaras (amanushi) who is wooed by immortal man (RV.10.95.8). She is the immoral lady of the heavens whom mortal man follows and posseses but for a while! Their mutual covenant is that she would have him if her daily share of ghrita were to cease. She reveals her true nature in the Rgveda saying : 'I am like the first of the dawns; I move like the tempestuous wind difficult to hold or capture; I flash brilliant as the falling lightenings!

It is for Puraravas, the unique, separate manifestation of prana that Urvashi has descended upon the earth. She herself says :

'The birth had made me drink from earthly milch kine'. (RV.10.95.11). According to the Rgveda Urvashi moves in a select band of six other nymphs making in all the seven sisters, which is analogous to the principle of the seven fold female powers or mothers of creation.

In addition to the condition of her daily portion of ghrita, there were two other conditions that she imposed on the king Pururavas. That her two lambs should ever be protected from any danger and that she should never behold the form of the king in a complete state of nakedness. The lambs symbolise the firm principles of Prana and Apana whose mingled energy is the lightening like Urvashi. (RV.10.189.2). The veil over Pururavas is the physical body itself, the fabric of material form or corporeal modality which is essential as an element of life in

matter. Urvasi and Pururavas separate as soon as life leaves the mortal coil.

Urvasi is a mental creation of Narayana illustrated in a verse from Visnudharmottara (3, 35, 2-4) which relates a tale of the meditation of Nara and Narayana in the Badari grove. While they were in deep concentration, celestial damsels were sent by Indra to disturb the peace of asceticism. Narayana took a fresh mango leaf and with its juice sketched on his thigh the most beautiful form of a nymph that at once sallied forth from it, appropriately styled Urvasi. She put to shame everyone of them by her superior grace and perfection of charm.[30]

The association of the creation of apsara from the thigh of a rsi with the sap of a mango leaf presupposes a number of conclusious we are going to draw in the forth coming chapters relating to eroticism, asceticism, fertility and creativity.

RAMBHA[31] **:**

Rambha in Purana is mentioned as an apsaras presiding over the month of Suci (Bha 12 11.36) and Urja (Bha p.12 11.44, 1b II 23.22, 1V 33.18), where as in (Br. P.3 6.28, 7.7) she is mentioned as wife of Maya. In (MP. 136.11) Rambha was created by Brahma, while she is described to be well versed in dancing in (M 24.28 Va 69.6). She is supposed to have gone with the sun sometimes in (IB 126.23) while once she was seized by the suras (IB 126.7, 133.9) in the abha of Hiranya Kasipu (1b 161.75). According to Vishnu Purana, Rambha accompanies Surya during the months of Phalguna and Asadha (2 10.18). The nature of Rambha is snake-like in the month of summer, when she accompanies the sun (va 52.6) where as she along with other apsarases was cursed by Astavakra (Ib 5 38.73.77)

In the Puranic literature, Rambha is considered as one of the most beautiful of the apsarases along with Urvasi, Tilottama etc. All these celestial women are considered to be daughters of Kasyapaprajapati by wife Pradha. Adi Parva of Mahabharata Ch. 65 mentions that from the above parentage were born Alambusa, Misrakesi, Vidyutparna, Tilottama etc. Once Ravana raped Rambha and her lover Nalakubera cursed him. Indra once killed an asura chief Mayadhara, and in the victory festival Rambha danced before her preceptor, Tumburu.

ALAMBUSA[32] :

Alambusa - celestial maiden born to Kasyapa by his wife Pradha. Alambusa entices sage Dadhicha, whose semen flows into the river resulting in the birth of child, Sarasvata. Then crops fail in the land resulting in a wide-spread famine. The brahmins flee the land and finally Sarasvata resuscicates the dying old order by reciting passages from the scriptures. Once when Indra goes to see Brahma, Alambusa also happens to be there, when her robes are displaced by the wind, Vidhuma, who had accompanied Indra, is over-come by libido. The mutual passion of Vidhuma and Alambusa displeases Indra and Brahma, who cursed them to be born as humans. Vidhuma is reborn as Sahasranika, an illustrious king of the Candra-mansa, Alambusa is reborn as Mrigavati, the daughter of king Krtavarma and Kalavati. Sahasranika is invited by Indra to heaven. The apsara Tilottama is sent with him to entertain, but Sahasranika is immersed in the love of Mrigavati. He earns the curse of Tilottama for having scorned her. She curses him to suffer the proverbial fourteen years of seperation from his beloved. The child born of the union of Sahasranika and Mrigavati is Udayana who is instrumental in bringing them together eventually.

Alambusa is said to have taken part in the birthday celebrations of Arjuna (Kaunteya). MB, Adi Parva-65.49.

TILOTTAMA[33]:

One of the more prominent celestial maidens, was born to Kasyapa through his wife Pradha. Kasyapa was the grandson of Brahma and the son of Manci. Alambusa was one of the sisters of Tilottama (Adi parva 65). To cause a schism between the demons Sunda and Upasunda, Brahma creates her baking the (Uttama) of both the animate and inanimate objects (Adi parva 215). She is also said to have been created from small particles of diamond by Brahma (Anushasana Parva 141.1).

Shiva sees her circumambulating Brahma wanting to behold her constantly, he causes faces to form pointing towards all the four quarters. A similar situation results in the "many eyed" form of the king of the Gods, Indra.

MENAKA[34] :

A nymph of extraordinary beauty, taking instructions from Indra, enticed and shook the tapas of many sages destroying their powers of penance. Impregnated by a gandharva named Visvavasu, she bore a girl child whom she deserted on a river bank. Sage Sthulakesa brought up this girl as Pramadvara who married king Ruru. Another source has it that Menaka unites with Viswamitra to give birth to Sakuntala. Menaka's gift to Durvasa leads to the churning of the Ksirasagara. Menaka holds pride of place amongst the apsaras along with Urvasi, Purvacitti, Sahajanya, Ghritaci and Visvaci (Adi Parva 74.68). Menaka is said to have been present at Arjuna's janmotsava and is also said to have sung on the occasion (Adi Parva 122.64). She was a dancer in the court of Kubera.

(Sabha Parva 10.10). Menaka gave a musical performance in Indra's court to honour the archer, Arjuna (Vana Para 43.21).

III.1.6 APSARA-DISAKUMARI INTER RELATIONSHIP

While exploring the contents of the Vedic and the Puranic literature regarding the role of apsaras in Indian literary thought, one also felt a need to look into the Agamic and Prakrit indexes as well, which could throw more light on our subject.[35]

The apsaras as we now understand is a charming and beautiful concept of the aquatic origin which resides in the air and shares intimate communion with Surya, Marut, Kubera, Kama, Yama and of course Indra and Varuna. Apsaras also appear on the earth to charm the mortal men. They are bestowers of luck, hapiness, prosperity and progeny. As they adorn the sabha of Indra in the heaven, they also adorn the earthly abode of the Gods on earth to add splendour and beauty to the monument. As conceived by the temple architect and sculptor these apsaras (devanganas) adorn all the four walls of the temple facing the four cardinal and the four subsidiary directions. An interesting concept of disakumaris is found in Prakrit literature which indicates the presence of presiding directional deities who belonged to the Bhavana Vai class of Gods.

It was observed that many of the disakumaris shared the same names as the apsaras viz. Alambusa, Missakesi, Vicita, Vijaya etc. These disakumaris preside over the four directions of the Ruyyaga mountain. They are 56 in all and they are called disakumarimaha ttariyas. Each of them have a large retinue and mount Ruyagga is their main abode. Each of the four quarters have four divisions and each division

has eight peaks. They are divided into those of the adholoka and urdhvaloka. Their character has been observed as sportive and they participate in the consecration ceremony of Tirthankaras. The following list gives their names. The principal disakumari of adholoka are Bhogamkara, Bhogavai, Subhoga, Bhogamalini, Toyadhara, Vicitta, Pupphamata, Animdia. They built a maternity hall for the expectant mother of a Tirthankara, while the disakumaris of the urdhvaloka purify the maternity hall with artificial rain. They are known as Mehamkara, Mehavai, Sumeha, Mehamalini, Suvaccha, Vaccamitta, Varisena, Balahaga.

The disakumaris of eastern Ruyaga mountain wait on the expectant mother holding mirrors in their hands. They are Nanduttara, Nanda, Ananda, Nandivadhana, Vijaya, Vejayanti, Jayanti and Aparajita. The western Ruyaga is adorned by Iladevi, Suradevi, Puhai, Paumarai, Eganasa, Navamiya, Bhadda and Sita, who wave the fan. On the northern Ruyyaga are placed Alambusa, Misrakesi, Pundaria, Varuni, Hasa, Savvapabha, Siridevi and Hiri, who wave the chauries. The southern Ruyaga is inhabited by Samahara, Supainna, Supabudha, Josahara, Lacchimai, Sesavai, Cittagutta, Vasundhara, who raise pitchers in their hands and all of them sing auspicious songs. Some more are also known viz. Citta, Cittakanaga, Sutara and Soyamani, who belong to the subquarters and hold lamps while Rua, Ruasia, Ruagavai of the middle region perform the ceremony of severing the naval string of the new born child.

Does the above data not throw light on the similarity of functions shared by apsaras and disakumaris? the aquatic association in terms of rain and other auspicious functions like holding lamps, fan, pitchers and chauries. Their association with maternity itself shows the fertility

connotation. Would it be possible to connect the disakumaris with the devanganas sculpted on the temple mandovara on all the corners next to the dikpalas, involved in the above mentioned actions. The devanganas adorn the temple which is conceived as a meru prasada, the form of a mountain and the devanganas in different imageries adorn the walls of the mountain just like the disakumaries.

The Agamic tradition also has a concept of Vijjukumara and Vijjukumari mahattariya, who are the personification of light and they are supposed to hold lamps in their hands. Could we not extend this personified idea of nature from iconography to physical representation of female forms on temple architecture? Jaina and Hindu temples alike have the representation of the devanganas on all the cardinal directions signifying auspiciousness and removing evil. It is very likely that the original idea must have struck the sculptors in the context of disakumaris to evolve from the imagery their visual representation. This phenomenon of identifying in the devangana imagery the disakumari concept itself, suggests a step further to the previous step of personification. Hence the devanganas could be taken as embodiment in female form the natural concept of apsara, surasundari, yaksi and disakumari as well. Their representation often overlaps their imageries because symbolically and conceptually they share parallel thoughts. Thus superficially they all look alike because their visual representation is similiar, but when probed more carefully one could unravel parallel segments of congruous symbolism. This brings us back to noticing the significance of the female form and the female potential energy and its role in religion, culture, life and philosophy. Buddhist sources also reveal the significance of protective directional guardian gods and goddesses.

The four quarters of a Buddhist stupa are protected by the lokapalas known as kings or guardians of the four quarters, each quarter being represented by a quadrant of the railing. According to setting suggested in the Atanatiya Sutta, Dhritarastra is to guard the eastern quarter with the aid of Surya, seven constellations and eight devakumaris. Virudhaka is to guard the southern quarter with the aid of Yama, seven constellations and eight devakumaris, Virupaksa is to guard the western quarter with the aid of Varuna, seven constellations and eight devakumaris, and Kubera is to guard the northern quarter with the aid of Manibhadra, eight constellations and eight devakumaris[36]. It is difficult to verify if these directions have been strictly followed, says Barua. Here the devakumaris are mentioned in every direction accompanying the lokpalas of each direction. The above data tallies with disakumaris quoted by us in the Jaina context. The only difference is that their names and functions are not mentioned, but conceptually their presence as protective spirits is commonly shared in Jaina and Buddhist iconography and art. On a stupa at Barhut they appear in the form of devatas and yaksis for the first time. For a discussion see the chapter on sculpture.

SECTION - II

In this section one tries to aquaint with the literary sources dealing with the role of dance in social, literary, aesthetic and religious spheres. Tracing its development through the Vedic to classical Kavya and Natya literature one can realise that dance was integral to life and it had been viewed in different dimensions including poetic imagery of similies and metaphors. Dance was the most significant accomplishment of the apsaras, devadasi and the royal women who were expected to learn it as one of the sixty four arts. But dance is also a mode of worship dedicating one's body and soul in honour of the almighty. The tradition of temple dancers and temple dancing originated as a continuous process of thought and living. This also gives a thematic background to our dance forms which are essentially religious in origin.

One is interested in the poetic imagery of dance and its comparison with the beauty of the nature and the beauty of the charming woman. In this section an attempt has been made to realise the qualitative similies of nature and the feminine beauty, dance and nature's play and the various social events in which dance is the integral mode of celebration.

III.II.1 THE CONCEPT OF FEMININE BEAUTY

Sensual charm of a woman has always engaged the attention of poets, writers, painters and sculptors from times immemorial. In Indian psyche, woman is not only a mother, wife, sister, courtesan or goddess, her representation in visual form is always charming and beautiful. So, the image and the imagination both result into a beautiful form of woman.

And when it comes to depicting an apsara, yaksini or a surasundari, the epitome of beauty and ultimate charm of allurement, the artist puts his soul into the creation of her ideal form. The ideal of Indian feminine beauty[37] can be traced from Mauryan times and the most bewitching are the Didarganj yaksi at Patna Museum, salabhanjikas from Sanchi and Mathura. Another glorified yaksi of the medieval period is the Gyaraspur vrksaka of Gwalior Museum. The Andhra, Kushana and Gupta period yaksis, nadidevatas and other deities have always been recognised for the beauty of their supple bodies, youthfulness and accentuated sensualness. The conventions of drapery, mekhala, ekavali, hair-do and ornamentation more or less augment resemblances among them. These provides a concrete evidence to artist's image of an ideal Indian woman, may she be a duti, attendants, Mayadevi, Lakshmi, apsaras, devangana, vrksaka, yaksi, a queen or Durga.

The most well known descriptions in Indian literature - Sanskrit and Prakrit alike, evoke the imagery of the beautiful female body using similies and metaphors from nature to denote different parts of the body, their actions and moods. Thus this illustrates the implicit parallelism between nature's forms and human form, nature's mood and human mood and a symbiotic relationship that exists between the two. This poetic imagination pervades the world of art as well, and as dhvanikara or alankarikas would say, the best mood for illustrating is vipralambha shringara and the most delicate symbol of appreciation is woman.

Poets and writers from Hala, Asvaghosa, Kalidasa to Rajasekhara and Jaydeva, have sung the glory of the feminine beauty. Although nature's forms are often cited as comparable examples qualifying feminine beauty, the woman's body bears all those qualities in totality which in the

nature are found in part. As yaksa in Meghadutam recalls the beauty of his beloved wife in the nature around him on the Ramagiri hill, 'In the syama vines I see your body, your glance in the gazelle's started eye, the cool radiance of your face in the moon, your tresses in the peacock's luxuriant train, your eyebrow's graceful curve in the stream's small waves, but alas! O cruel one, I see not your whole likeness any where in any one thing (Meghadutam, 103)[38]

III.II.2 SIMILIES ON DANCE IN LITERATURE

From the Buddhacarita of Asvaghosa we find that the mrdanga was ornamented with golden bands and played by women 'with the foreparts of the hands' (nari karagrabhira hataih). The ladies of the palace hold different musical instruments in their laps which the Bodhisattva watches and then walks out of the palace. In another instance Buddha's voice has been compared with the sound of the thundering clouds. (ghana dundubhi VIII.53)

The ladies of the palace are endowed with alluring movements (lalitabhava) while their eyebrows are arched (bhruvancitaih) and they cast on Boddhesattva half shut half stolen glances (II.31). The terms lalita and ancita occur in Natyasastra for demonstrating amorousness.

Kalidasa in Kumarasambhava mentions the sukumara dance of Parvati, the graceful abhinaya of the trees, the dance of the peacocks, as also the grotesque dance of Bhrngi on the occasion of the marriage of Siva and Parvati (IX.48).

The graceful dancing of the earlier cantos is replaced by the dance of swords and men in the context of Kartikeya's fight with Tarakasura

(XVI.48.49). The swords covered with blood dance like lightening in the battle field (XVI.15) and soon there is nothing but the dance of headless trunks of soldiers which the spirits of the soldiers watch from above[39]

Meghaduta and Rtusamhara are more imaginative and the similies on nature's beauty resplendant with rhythm and grace are numerous in these two kavyas. The peacocks dance to the rhythm of the thunder, trees dance to the rhythm of the personified wind, while the thunderous clouds provide percussion accompaniment like muraja to the sangita in Alkapuri.

The woman of Alakapuri have large eyes and with their cakita netra and through their graceful movements they allure the cloud - messenger (Purva Megha 29). The bhru-vilasa is the amorous movements of the eyebrows which attract the attention of the cloud. Kalidasa notices the graceful dance like movement of such a delicate part of the human body namely bhrukuti and kataksa.[40]

In Rtusamhara Kalidasa observes the gracefully gliding movement of the river as 'Pretily girdled by glittering minnows darting about, garlanded by rows of white birds on the margins, with broad curving flanks of sandy banks, rivers glide softly like young women rapt in love'. (Rtusamhara, III, Antumn, 3)[41]

III.II.3 DANCE AND DRAMA TYPES : KRIDA AND COURTLY PAST-TIME

An interesting corpus of information from Sanskrit literature is the material on the so-called 'love sports' or 'desi kridas' which are performed by men and women together or by all women groups. Representation of such instances are found in painting and sculpture from

time to time in all the regions of India. What is most significant to note here is that not only Kavya and Natya literature mention them, but even shastrik literature mentions them. In Prakrit literature also such references are met with. This signifies the cross currents between Sanskrit and Prakrit and between 'margi' and 'desi' literature, and the fluid nature of the themes like ashokadohada and kanduka krida. Some of these desi kridas are mentioned in Katha Saritsagara, Brihatkatha and Brihatkatha Manjari (folk-tales), Hala's Gahasattasai (Prakrit), Bhoja's Sringara Prakasa and Kamasutra of Vatsyayan (Shastra) and Bana's Harsacarita and Rajashekhar's Viddha-Salabhanjika (Natya)

A light on the nature of the kridas opens up a totally secular world. This is an aspect of the Indian culture committed to a gay abandon and a celebration of the youth. Bhoja mentions them in Sarasvati Kanthabharana and the Sringara Prakasa, under the different headings of seasonal festivals, while Vatsyayan calls them as uddipana vibhavas, nourishing love.

References to udyanakrida are ample, (BKSS, II.24, IV.55) known also as mandirodyana or bhavanodyana in which the king ordered his ministers to arrange for an apana bhumi, a pavilion for enjoying drinks. Royal enjoyments in the palace garden consisted of several items : Pushpa krida and Salila krida, Vastra bharana Mandava, Kesa Samskara and Chandananulepana, Nritya, Sangita, Rahovilasa, Panagoshthi, to which references are found in the kavyas and the puranas.[42]

The drinking sessions were punctuated by dance and music and 'all-women' theatre (BKSS, II 30-32)[43]

There are a number of kridas mentioned in Sringara Prakasa, Kamasutra and its commentaries, and Bhava Prakasa, which refer to the seasons in which they are celebrated. Bhoja's Sringara Prakasa written around 1050 A.D., has chapters related to celebrations to love, which are devoid of any religious significance. Sanskrit literature is full of mahakavyas and natakas which supply references to love festivals like kaumudi mahotsava, carcari dance etc. As an anga of the subject of kama Sastra, a large number of these are mentioned by Vatsyayana, and Bhoja also mentions them in Sarasvati Kanthabharana, as a comparative study between Kamasutra and Jaya Mangala's tika.[44] Kamasutra (1, IV, 42) enumerates twenty group sports or sambhuya kridas, and some desi kridas (III, 6.7). Saradatanaya borrows from Bhoja, and makes slight amplifications by classifying them according to the six seasons (Bhava Prakasha, VI, pg 137, 138). Sahitya Mimamsa follows Bhoja, and gives some regional varieties also, while Virabhadra's Kandarpa Cudamani follows Jayamangala in his description of these sports.

Under the season of vasant the following sports are known : Astamicandra, Sakrarca, Vasantotsava, Madanotsava, Vakulavihara, Asokavihara and Salmalimula Khelana.

Sakrarca or Indrotsava is a festival in honour of Indra, the antiquity of which goes back to Rgvedic times. References to Indradvaja festival can be found from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Mrcchakatika, Raghuvamsa, Buddha carita and also Silappadikaram and Manimekhalai. The origin of Sanskrit drama can also be traced to this festival and in the Purvaranga this is absorbed in the form of a ritual. The Indra's banner is represented by a high pole which in installed, followed by sword fights and wrestling. Samarangana Sutradhara mentions manufacture

of divine staff, its erection and festival. (SS, XVII). People keep awake whole night around it, sing and dance and make merry (SS, XVII, 104, 141-42, 191)

Vasantotsava is mentioned in the opening of Ratnavali while Bhoja calls it Suvasantaka, it occurs in Chaitra when the mango tree is in blossom. Jayamangala mentions that both these festivals are characterised by music and dance.

Vasantotsava is also called Madanotsava in which Bhoja says Kamadeva is worshipped by ladies, on the caitra sita caturdasi, (KS) wearing saffron coloured dresses.[45]

They also play ekasalmali by decking themselves with flower, and playing the blind man's buff.

Raghavan gives a number of references to Asokottanisika and the use of these references to interpret the motif of salabhanjika in Indian sculpture. When beautiful damsels kick the asoka tree with their delicate feet, decked with alaktaka paint and tinkling anklets, the tree burst into blossom and the damsels deck themselves with fresh asoka flowers. The act of asoka dohada is mentioned by Kalidasa in Malavikagnimitra, the only place in a nataka where it integrates with the plot of the play. It is believed that the tree requires upacaras from the ladies before that gives forth flowers, spitting of chewed betel, half drunk wine, embracing and so on. The asokottamsika of Bhoja is asoka vihara for Saradatanaya .

Another krida is the cutabhanjika, plucking of fresh clusters of mango blossoms, offering as arrows for cupid and bedecking them.

Sakuntala also mentions this krida in Act VI, where as Sringara Prakasa mentions this as sahakara bhanjika among group sports (sambhuya kridas). Jayamangala describes it as eating mangoes and not the blossoms. Raghavan observes that these kinds of amusements for couples and ladies in the gardens were mentioned as early as Panini's times. They have also been found apt for the interpretation of the common sculptural motif of salabhanjika and other such images.[46]

Vasant, a season also calls for a play with water filled in syringes and spraying on each other. It is known as udakasvedika by Bhoja and ṡrugakrida by Jayamangala. The last two sports namely cutalatika or navalatika and pancalanuyana, will be discussed in Chapter IV in support of the sculptures illustrating these kridas.

The vinodas mentioned for grisma, summer, are salilakrida, udyanayatra, puspavacayika, navamrakhadika, cutamadhavi, navasamagama, etc.

The varsa vinodas are sikhandilasya and navambuda abhyudgama, the enjoying of peacocks dance and the welcoming of first rain clouds at hearing their rumbling noise. The game of kadamba yuddha is also mentioned by Bhoja and Vatsyayana. The couples search for kadamba blossoms and after that a mock fight is enacted. In sravana month dolovilasa is also performed.[47]

The navapatrika of sarad is mentioned by Bhoja in which men and women sit on the ground making merry, eat, drink and celebrate fictitious marriages. Mrnalakhadika is a game which is a water sport in which men and women eat the lotus stalks. Other sports are kanduka krida, candrikatalana, hamsalilavalokana, balikrida, yaksaratri,

saritpulinakeli, according to Saradatanaya. Raghavan refers to kanduka krida very elaborately pointing to the dance form and the various charis employed in this dance, curanapada, mandalabhramana, panca bindu prasrta, gatamarga, gomutrika etc. Dasakumara carita, Chapter VI, mentions the daughter of king Tungadhanva named Kandukavati, who plays kanduka nrtya on krtika of every month to propitiate goddess Vindhyavasini. The commentary quotes a treatise on this dance game called kanduka tantra.

Yaksaratri is dipavali, and kaumudi jagarana in the month of asvin are celebrated by keeping awake whole night, and enjoying gambling, swing games and others in the moon light. Some more sports like cock and ram fights, sunbathing, drinking, and teaching pets to speak,while eating freshly roasted pulses in the fields with raw sugar-cane etc., are among the known ones.

III.3.1

PRATIHARIS/FEMALE ATTENDANTS, KANCHUKINS AND DANCING GIRLS FROM EPIGRAPHY AND LITERATURE.

It is an accepted fact that dancing girls (among them devadasis) were, dedicated to the major temples (Saiva, Vaisnava, Sakta) of India (more so in south India but also to a notable extent in the north as well) all through the medieval period. Indian epigraphy can furnish authentic reference to the activity of dancing in temples, the proficiency of some kinds of women at dancing and the socio-economic condition of many such families. Even Sanskrit literature can supply enough evidences to the historicity of certain social/religious/cultural institutions like Devadasi, Kanchukin and Pratihari system in the medieval period.

The following references are collected from secondary sources.

The Harsanatha Temple at Sikar was presented with many maidens, so mentions the Harsanath temple inscription of the time of Vigraharaja, II. (V.1030).[48]

An inscription found from Kalanjar of the Chandella period mentions that the Mahapratihara Sangram Singh had a court dancer by name Padmavati. Many dance performances were organised in Nilakantha temple during this time.[49]

A fragmentary copperplate inscription of Alhana (VS. 1205) records the arrangements made by various rulers for courtesans and musicians attached to the temples of Chandalesvara and Tripurusadeva. The debate broke out when Raja Jojaladeva of Nadol ordered the courtesans to join the royal processions in order to punish learned people, old men and others who tried to interfere with this time-honoured custom.[50]

While checking the medieval cultural history, an interesting debate between the royal class patronizing the institution of prostitution and the resenting Jaina monks has come to light.

Among the puritanic Jaina monks, Haribhadra Suri raised his voice against the above practice, including the Kharataras and others which led rulers like Jojaladeva to issue their edicts. Haribhadra's pupil, Uddyotana Suri wrote an allegorical story named Upamitibhava prapancha-katha, to carry the message in his own way to the people.[51]

It appears that the participation of monks in dance and music as part of the temple worship was a normal practice against which certain

Jaina monks raised their voice. As part of Jinavallabha's anti-chaityavasa propaganda, Sangha pattaka, is a specimen of his writing- which criticizes those sadhus whose life was interfered by singing of musicians, dancing of courtesans (in front of the deity) sounding of drums and crowding of spectators wearing garlands.[52]

Conversely, courtesans added magnificence to the glory of the ruler and were a major source of income to the state. The Bhinnamal inscriptions of V.S. 1306, V.S. 1334, V.S. 1345 convey elaborate arrangements which were made for the 'pramada-kula' of the Sun temple of Jagat Swamin.[53] From Moharajaparajaya it is learnt that Kumarapala Chaulukya tried to eradicate many social evils from his dominions, but for prostitution he says that nothing is lost or gained from its removal or continuance.[54]

According to Kavya Kalpalata Vrtti, a Jaina work of 13th century, there is a general rule cited in which the ruler should always be attended upon by courtesans in the royal court.[55] Kadambari and Priyadarsika of Bana and Harsa mention that the courtesans bathed the ruler and even accompanied him to the temple and danced in front of his favourite deity.[56]

Jinadatta Suri, the pupil of Jinavallabha (d.1167 V.S.) who propagated the Kharatara gaccha, adopted Apabhramsa to popularize his ideas. His Charchari, Upadesarasayana and Kala Svarupa - Kulaka, were set to music and sung while dancing.[57]

Some more epigraphical references may be looked into which are from north India, contemporaneous to Bhoja Paramara's times.

Sudi Inscription of the reign of Somesvara I dated AD. 1054, refers to dancing girls as members of the organising staff of the temple.[58] Kalhana refers to the devadasis in the temples of Kashmir and Merutunga in the Kumara Vihara in Somanath Pattana.[59]

Alberuni observed that the kings maintained the institution of devadasis for the benefit of their revenue even in the teeth of opposition by Brahmin priests. Kings made these dancing girls as a source of attraction to their subjects for meeting the expenditure of the armies out of the revenue derived therefrom.[60]

This practice of maintaining devadasis in temples is as old as Kautilya, but there was no attempt before 11th century to pool together all dancing girls, attached to all the temples of particular region, with a view to adding to the attraction of particular religious festival. A 10th century inscription from Rajasthan confirms the statement of Alberuni. It records the instructions of a chieftain to his descendants that if the arrangement that he had made about the services of the dancing girls at different temples was interfered with by ascetics and brahmins, they should at once be stopped.[61]

Merutunga in Prabandha Chintamani refers to hetaera poetess of Gujarat, who pleased the Paramara king Bhoja.[62] He also tells the story of Chaula Devi of Pattana, a courtesan who remained faithful to her lover during his long absence. The great grandfather of Kumarapala was born of this Chauladevi.[63] Dancers thronged the temple courtyards and the palaces of the kings.[64] The above data has been supported by the inscriptions from different parts of India. In the plan of a palace, Bhoja included, interalia the construction of a dancing hall, a theatre and a

gymnasium.[65] In the same chapter a reference to music hall has also been given. The Sangita Makaranda, attributed to Narada (perhaps belongs to the 11th century A.D.) which deals with music and dance in two seperate sections[66] The well-known architectural text - Aparajita Prccha as well describes various kinds of dances with their main characters.[67]

The Kuvalayamala[68] of Udyotanasuri describes that to the temples of Avanti were attached vilasinis who gave musical concerts, plied morchals and held umbrellas. In one instance the author describes the scene of heaven on earth in which some vilasinis hold pitchers, fans, chauris, mirrors etc. while some apsaras held vinas, mridangas, and some moved langurously and danced. This implies that heavenly activities of the court were recreated in the temple court yards where the vilasini - devadasis impersonated the roles of the heavenly apsaras.

In Kuttanimattam[69], 563 devadasis are mentioned who carved their livelihood from the temple. In Samayamatrika[70] of Ksemendra it is recorded that the devadasis received grains in exchange for their services. They performed only before the God. Sringaramanjari[71] sites an example of a beautiful courtesan known as lavanya sundari who danced only before the God in the temple of Bhaillasvami at Vidisa. The above reference have been quoted from Moti Chandra's study on 'Courtesans' who interpretes the devadasis as some kind of courtesans on the basis of their proficiency in music, dance and the other 64 arts. In my view, a devadasis in not on par with ganika and their functions are targeted at two different kinds of andiences. This distinction on microlevel is rendered insignificant by the esteemed scholar[72]

It was interesting to observe that the sword of the king was

generally held by a female attendant who would be called a khadga - vahini. She appears to be the female counterpart of the asiggahaka of the Jataka stories[73]

Probably because she was closely akin to the pratihari, both in her physical features and in the nature of her job, she has not received much attention. The characters employed in the roles of keeping charge of the king's sword or bow and addressed as Yavanis in the Sanskrit dramas, as mentioned above, are the same as the khadga vahinis. From Kautilya's specific reference to them we may conclude that they were Greek or of Amazonian origin.[74]

Bana's works are full of descriptions of personal attendants of royal courts, of which Kadambari has an instance of King Sudraka. Bana says that when King Sudraka after lunch reappeared in the audience hall, he was sitting with his feet resting on the foot stool, which were gently massaged by his sword bearer. She was doing this with her delicate hands after placing, for the time being, the long thin sword on her lap. She herself was seated on the floor of the audience hall. This shows that besides the Pratihari it was the khadga - vahini who was closer to the king and followed him everywhere and attended upon him as a dasi shampooing his feet as well. In fact if one begins to notice carefully, there are numerous sculptures from Mathura, Amaravati, Ajanta and other early sites depicting the khadgadhari. An elaborate discussion will be followed in Chapter VI.

The Brihat Katha Sloka Samgraha of Buddhaswamin,[75] written in chaste Sanskrit sometime in Gupta period, is a summary of the Brihat Katha of Gunadhya. This collection of verses is divided into lambhakas

which revolve around the fact that the hero Sanudasa in each sarga contracts a new marital alliance. It throws lights on female attendants of this kind. The female attendents of the royal palace were kept satisfied with drinks, ornaments, clothes, garlands and sweet words. These were the same as antahpurika, chief of them were known as dauvarika or vetragrahini (BKSS II 19).

The rakes formed part of the royal entourage to which literature and art provide enormous proofs. The Brihat Katha refers to Vita - Sastra, i.e. the lore of Rakes (or ways of Rakes?) which the girls of the courtesan's quarters were expected to learn as part of their education. There was attached to their quarters, a shrine of god Kamadeva, in which the deity was worshipped by offering a pradakshina to him. In X. 76-7, the actual Vesa is described as having the appearance of a royal palace in which a number of hermaphrodites (yoshidvashavarapraya) were employed.

Besides the courtesans' quarters, mention of Prekshaka Kula and Ranganganam i.e. auditorium and stage are found on which the two nrityacharyas are said to have come and done namaskara (XI.3). Kanchukin or chamberlain is the attendent of the women's apartment. Kautilya mentions his job, the designation and also the uniform, viz. the dress of a kanchuki. The Varshavaras (eunuchs) and other attendants of the abhyya-garika are also mentioned in the Artha Sastra. It describes the kanchuki as the chief, kanchukosnist, because they were all wearing kanchuka (a close jacket), and usnisa (the turban). Kanchuki would generally accompany the king every where, and being the king's attendant, would remain in the fore-front of the palace activities. It is said that while Sita was being brought out of the palace of Ravana,

the attendants of the inner apartment, wearing kanchuka and usnisa and holding cane - sticks in their hands, cleared her way to the palanquin.[76] While dwelling on abhyuga-garikas, Bharata, in his Natya Sastra, offers details regarding not only the kanchuki, but also other attendants of the harem. Kanchuki knows the nature of the women of the harem and can keep them under his control. In one MSS of the NS, kanchuki is described as an expert in the art of controlling women.[77]

Besides this, there is a verse which is generally quoted by most of the traditional commentators on Kalidasa, ascribing it to Bharata, which explains the prominent features of a kanchuki more directly and in detail also.[78] Kanchuki appears prominently in the plays of Kalidasa-Latavya is the kanchuki of Vikramorvasiyam who finds it difficult to handle the women of the harem in his advancing age. The reference to vetra - yasti in Sakuntalam, concerns the old kanchuki, whose cane staff which was once the mark of his office in the female appartment of the palace, has now become in course of time an indispensable object of support for him in his tottering old age.

In the Kadambari, Bana takes up the gay description of the birth day celebrations of Chandrapida and Vaisampayana describing the gay abandon with which the ladies of the harem and their maids, were celebrating the happy occasion. Bana says that their pranks did not spare even the old and the sober looking chamberlains. They were playing jokes upon the multitude (kadambaka) of aging chamberlains, by tying the silken upper garments round their necks and dragging them.

The term vidambi could be meant for teasing, joking and pranking. The reference to playing of joke by tying the upper garment (uttariya)

is interesting, because even V.S.Agrawala refers to a term, chelukkhepa, from Pali which means the waving of the upper garment as a token of joy. A similar reference is made by Harsa in Nagananda, where a Vita pulls away a scarf thown round the neck of the court jester, who wants to run away. Amarakosa mentions kanchuki and his synomyms, like sauvidala, sthapatya and sauvida. These terms as explained by the commentators of Amara, tend to mean one and the same thing, namely that a kanchuki was to look after the ladies of the harem.

Bana in Kadambari mentions mahattarika, the female official, in-charge of the bed-chamber called kulavardhana. She is called efficient by long experience in the service of the royal household. She is even well skilled in all the auspicious rites.[79] Tiwari differs with Agrawala in his comparison of mahattarika of queen Vilasavati, with the pratihari of Indumati, called Sunanda, because the lady attendant of the royal bed-chamber and an ordinary female doorkeeper are al together different. In the Vaijayanti Kosa of Yadavaprakasa it is described that mahattri is an old lady-attendant of the harem who was well versed in all the auspicious rites.[80]

III.4.1

REFERENCES FROM ARCHITECTURAL TEXTS FOR DEVANGANA PLACEMENT AND OTHER DANCE REFERENCES.

The following references have been put together with a view to collect all the references from texts dealing with architecture, on the placement of the devangana figures in the architectural fabric. Since temple architecture is the main focus of this research, our data here elaborates upon the architecture of the temple alone and not the stupa, vihara, or chaitya. The references to salabhanjika on stupa etc. will be

taken up in the context of the evolution of the salabhanjika motif itself in the chapter on sculpture. The textual references collected here are not exhaustive and much more data is yet to come to light. But whatever little that has been found by the researcher here bears testimony to the tradition of placing apsara, kumarika, salabhanjika, varangana, surangana, devangana type of figures on the vitana, stambha, jangha, sikhara and such other parts of the temple. Curiously only two texts refer to their number, names and imagery while the rest only suggest their generic names as listed above. Their ritualistic or religious purpose is seldom attested to, although they are generally invoked to protect, decorate, bestow peace and prosperity. Their cultic association with Śakta, Śaiva sects is absent since in the texts and in practice, they are freely represented. It appears that even though their imagery is seldom mentioned by the architectural texts before 15th century their representation in sculptures from western India to eastern India, retains a uniformity of form and imagery. Hence there must have been an oral exchange of ideas between the sculptors of various regions who may have shared their common information of iconography of gods, goddesses and other semi divine figures. Even in texts dealing with Pratima Laksana the iconography of Vishnu, Shiva, Devi etc. are mentioned in detail, but the apsaras are generally not described (except for Ksirarnava and Silpa Prakasa). It appears that information on apsaras may have circulated in the form of desi literature in colloquial parlance and widely shared but the authors of classical texts like Bhoja and Bhuvanadeva, may have overlooked the significance of noting their imageries. The following texts have been studied by the researcher for preparing a corpus of information from architectural texts on apsaras

and their placement on temples, palaces, courts, city gates etc. The texts are Samarangana Sutradhara, Silpa Prakasa, Aparajit Prccha, Vaikhanasiya Atrisamhita, Laksana Samucchaya, Vastusutra Upanisad, Ksirarnava, Vrksarnava.

SAMARANGANA SUTRADHARA :

It is a text written by Paramara Bhoja around the middle of the 11th century. Bhoja was a great builder and a literateur. His text on architecture is an encyclopaedic work, refering to the architectural traditions in Malawa region in particular, and northern Indian style (nagara) in general. In the section on Meruprasada he discribes that the torana should be adorned with makara, heads of elephants, leaves as well as groups of apsaras.[81] The pillar design contains an elaborate prescription using auspicious motifs for its decoration. The pillars should be many faceted and contain many sections. It should be decorated with painted design everywhere, auspicious signs, chandrashala along with torana and beautiful chamaradharinis. (57, pp.404)[82] The placement of elephant heads which are highly intoxicated and in a playful mood is also indicated. The vidyadhara couples should also be adorsed here who have just started to play (57, pp.404)[83]. It should be surrounded by groups of siddhas, gandharvas, yaksas, devas, apsaras and kinnaras holding Vina (57, pp.404)[84]

In the vimanavali divine apsara groups should be adorned, highly immersed in play continuously with beautiful swaying movements. (57, pp.404)[85] Even nagakanya and kadamba should also be used for adornment everywhere on every storey. (57, pp.404)[86] It appears that the figures of apsaras, nagakanyas, kinnaras, etc. should be placed in the vitana

as well as on the bhumis of the jangha and the stambha. But their imagery and their significancce are not told by Bhoja explicitly.

SILPA PRAKASA

According to Silpa Prakasa, the Orissan temple architectural text,[87] the pillar should be decorated with naga nayika who is a giver of wealth, corn and good fortune. (1. 225, p.32)[88] No further description of this is given. There is another section in this chapter called Avarana Devatas which include dikpala, mahavidyas, etc. (1. 256, p.35)[89] It is followed by a section on alasa, which in local terminology is refered to as naribandha or kanya banda, and it is indispensable in architecture. The main purpose of embellishment is indicated here - a house without a wife, as frolic without a woman, so a monument without (figure of) a woman will be interior and bear no fruit (1.392).[90] Gandharvas, yaksas, raksasas, pannagas (nagas), kinnaras become enchanted on seeing the graceful postures of women. (1.393).[91] Contemplated in various postures, she is known as alasa and it should be placed in gavaksa, sikhara, walls and other parts of the mukhasala. (1.394 - 395).[92] The names given to them (recommended by the Sastras) are Alasa, Torana, Mugdha, Manini, Dalamalika, Padmagandha, Darpana, Vinyasa - Dhyana-karsita, Ketakibharana, Matrimurti, Camara, Gunthana, Nartaki, Sukasarika, Nupura padika, Mardala.[93] These are the sixteen most important types of alasa. There is no sequence or order of placement indicated in this text. The alasa also does not have any relation with dikpala or the major forms of the gods and their placement in the temple architecture seems to be independent and uncanonical. But Silpa Prakasa mentions a yantra to denote the posture of the indolent nayika with predominent oblique lines to indicate the tribhanga posture. The text

also indicates the position of the palms - chandita (palms turned upwards), spandita (palms turned downwards) as the two movements prescribed for alasa.[94]

The various alasakanyas are described thus :

1. Alasa	- indolent, make chandita or spandita hand movements.
2. Torana	- leaning in a doorway
3. Mugdha	- innocent naganundra,
4. Manini	- resentful or offended
5. Dalamalika	- garlanding herself with a branch
6. Padmagandha	- smelling the lotus
7. Darpana	- holding a mirror
8. Vinyasa	- having her mind fixed in meditation
9. Ketakibharana	- wearing flowers
10. Matrmurti	- image of a mother
11. Camara	- holding a flywhisk
12. Gunthana	- hiding herself, showing her back holding drapery, flowers, fan
13. Nartaki	- dancer
14. Sukasarika	- playing with a parrot
15. Nupurapadika	- wearing ankle bells
16. Mardala	- drummer

This attractive naribandha should be placed on the shikhara and other parts like gavaksa etc. This list could be compared with the Ksirarnava list to find out how many of them correspond with each other and the sculptural representation on the whole.

APARAJITA PRCCHA :

It is written under the influence of Samarangana Sutradhara in the reign of Kumarapala by Bhuvanadevachary a, during the later part of 12th and first half of 13th century.[95] It says that on the vitana, 8,12,16,24, 32,64 vidhyadhara should be placed and above that varanganas should be placed. (190-14).[96] They should hold string and leather instruments, and perform acting and dancing movements creating sounds of singing and music. (190-15).[97] It also mentions that in the decoration of the house, village or the town, make a nrityashala to the north of Ghatisthana on whose vitana salabhanjika should be made along with ghanta. (85-26)[98] The jangha should be 35 parts and it should have stambha, Nasika and phalanas on all the sides of the sandhara (prasada). On the mulanasa and all sides of the stambhas Gaja simhavyala and makara should be made (127.21-22)[99] On all the sides of the karnas the eight dikpalas should be placed in the pradaksina order. Natesha facing East, Andhaka facing south and chandika with canine teeth on the north side. Compassionate Sasanadevis should be placed in all the directions (127-23, 24)[100] On the varimarga munindra should be placed while ascetic figures in the pralina.

The placement of decorative figures on the gate ways to the city is also mentioned by Aparajita. On all the four corners make repeated decoration every where, after every 3000 measures a pair of vidhyadhari and a yoddha (70-21).[101]

While on the four sides of the royal court's exit place yaksis for decoration. Embellish each wall with gems in all the dvishalas. On each pratibhadra of the shala make lotuses which are the favourites of the kings. In the vitana place unusual hanging lumas from the centre

while various forms of royal sports be represented in different shapes. On the upper part of the stambha place salabhanjika statues (779-11).[102] It is only here that the term pratima is indicated.

Number of references have been brought to light from the Agama which enlighten us about the parts of temple architecture in which the apsaras should be placed.

Kasyapa Silpa Patala (chapter 48. 49-57) describes the form of the apsaras as very bright with long and heavy hair, decorated with various flowers and draped with silk clothes. Their thighs should be thick and touching each other, waist should be narrow, but face should be serene and slightly smiling, their bodies should be smeared with different fragrances. Their groups should be placed in inter-related movements on the bhadra pitha in samabhanga and they should be seven in number.

Vaikhanasiya Atrisamhita, (Samurtar Chanadhikarana 7.29) mentions the mandapa as the place for pure and divine apsaras and five of them should be placed at five places in the mandapa.

Laksana Samucchaya (chapter 26, 9-11)[103] is more precise in stating the placement of the kumarikas. The 28 kumarikas should be carved fully all around on the stambhas of the bhitti and not on the kudya (pilaster on the relief wall). Refering to the mandapa, which should be visible from all the four sides, clearly and divided into thirty parts, and in the middle of its four pillars should be placed twelve kumarikas. On the corners and on the fore parts and sides of the pillars place the kumarikas.

For Vikhanasa Kasyapa Janakhanda (Chapter 32)[104] the temple wall should be decorated wwith apsara, yaksha, gandharva, naga, as if descended from the heaven in a playful mood. This group should be represented in a beautiful and enchanting way which should give pleasure to the eye.

VASTUSUTRA UPANISAD

This is a text with a difference. Its attributed author, Pippalada, has divided it into six prapathakas just like the Prsna Upanisad of the Atharvaveda.[105] It is known as Vastusutra and not Silpasutra, because it deals more with the layout, and composition of sculptures and not so much with modelling of forms. It proposes a fundamental grid structure for images which are created using geometrical and mathematical configurations. This khilapanjara, as it is known, indicates the basic disposition and movement of the figures in space. In the composition for an image of the main deity who occupies the central Brahma Kshetra the upper Daiva Khetra is occupied by the yakshas, gandharvas and apsaras. The lower khetra is occupied by the adorers, human worshippers and the vehicles of the divinities. (VSU : 8,9). The apsaras entertain the gods in diverse ways and through the representation of the singers of praises, the images become particularly beautiful (VSU : 25).

KSIRARNAVA/VRKSARNAVA (A 120.82 - 132)

During 15th century in Gujarat, three texts were written borrowing from the earlier architectural texts, namely Vrksarnava, Ksirarnava and Diparnava. Dhaky observes that Vrksarnava belongs to the first half of the 15th century, while Ksirarnava (also known as Naradaprccha)

to the beginning of the 15th century. Diparnava, derives from Aparajita prccha, Ksirarnava and Vastu vidya is a 16th century architectural text.

While describing the emergence of the Chaturmukha Mahaprasada[106] the measurements of its parts and the placement of the figures on its mandovara is mentioned. The figures consist of lokpala, dikpala and devangana, who should be placed in the ratha-pratiratha playing on musical instruments and dancing gleefully. Indr a and other gods with ayudha and vehicles should also be made along with ganas and attendants, as if celebrating some festive occasion. The dancing devanganas should look with down cast eyes and aiming arrows or taking a step forward with the left foot. Some devanganas should be shown dancing with left hand descending towards the left side as if demonstrating the left side of her body.

The following few verses throw light on the placement of specific devanganas on certain directions conjointly with the dikpalas. In south, Yama is shown observing while in south-west Ksetrapala, along with yaksas and ganas is placed. West is the place of Varuna, north west is the territory of Vayu, who is to be represented dancing in a circular manner some sort of tandava nritya holding a scarf. In Kubera's abode Padmini devangana is to be placed dancing in an amorous way with one hand above the head. In Isana direction of north-west make Menaka emerging from the heaven to descend on the earth. Even show Indra embracing Rambha, who holds a beautiful arrow and vina with her. Urvasi should be shown playing a flute in the agnikuna, while in south make Trilochana with cymbals and Kamarupa to dance with Yama. In the south west direction place Ksetrapala and Chandrauli holding anjali hasta, while place Varuna in the west, flanked by Rambha holding bow

and arrow. The west north has Vayu on whose right is Manjughosha.

It will be observed that the above description is not consistent and some of the devanganas do not have a specific form, since only their names are given without reference to imagery.

Now starts another list of thirty two devanganas who should be placed in pradaksina order on the jangha starting from the isana corner that is north east with Menaka. The thirty two devangana are : Menaka, Lilavati, Vidhichitra, Sundari, Shubhagamini, Hansavali, Sarvakala, Karpuramanjari, Padmini, Gudhashabda - Padmanetra, Chitrini, Putravallabha, Gauri, Gandhari, Devasakha, Marichika, Chandravali, Chandrarekha, Sugandha, Satrumardini, Manini, Manahansa, Susvabhava, Bhavachandra, Mrigakshi, Urvasi, Rambha, Manjughosa, Jaya, Vijaya, Chandravaletra, Kamarupa.

Place all these Devanganas in the mandovara, and vitana of the temples of Brahma, Visnu, Siva, Surya and Jina. Some of the devanganas could be repeated more than once on the same temple.

Ksirarnava describes how each of the Devanganas should be represented according to their prescribed iconographies and descriptions.

1. Menaka - bow and arrow, left leg raised.
2. Lilavati - amorously shunning laziness.
3. Vidhichitra - holding mirror and putting bindi.
4. Sundari - simply dancing.
5. Subha - pulling out a thorn from the foot
6. Hamsavali - putting payal, lotus eyed.
7. Sarvakala - dancing with varada and chintana mudra.

8. Karpuramanjari - dancing in nude while bathing.

9. Padmini - one holding a stalk of lotus.

10. Padmanetra-Gudhasabda - holding abhaya hasta and a child stands by her side.

11. Chitrini - dancing with left hand on the head.

12. Putravallabha - one who has a baby on her side.

13. Gauri - Killing a lion.

14. Gandhari - a special one dancing with right hand aloft.

15. Devasakha - one dancing a circular dance.

16. Marichika - aiming a bow-arrow looking on left side.

17. Chandravali - looking in front with anjali hasta, beautiful eyed.

18. Chandrarekha - writing a letter, her forehead is broad like the halfmoon.

19. Sugandha - dancing in circles holding the moon aloft.

20. Satrumardini - holding knives and dancing.

21. Manavi - holding flower garlands and dancing.

22. Manahamsa - dancing with her back visible.

23. Svabhava - one whose body is bent in chaturbhangi, leg is lifted and hands raised above head.

24. Bhavachandra - one who is dancing with her hands and feet in yogamudra.

25. Mrigaksi - dancing with full bloom and beauty.

26. Urvasi - killing the asura with a khadga and pulling him by his shikha.

27. Rambha - holding knives in both hands and dancing with her right foot lifted up.

28. Manjughosa - she dances in circles holding khadga in both hands.

29. Jaya	- dancing with a water pot on her head.
30. Mohini	- dancing and embracing the male companion.
31. Chandravaktra	- dancing gracefully by lifting one foot.
32. Tilottama	- either holding manjira or pushpabana and dancing.

Like this the devanganas should be made in the jangha, vitana and the celestial places on the four sides of the mandovara and the mandapa, where as the munis, tapas, vyala and others in the jalantra or salilantara. (133-34). (for diagram see the next page)

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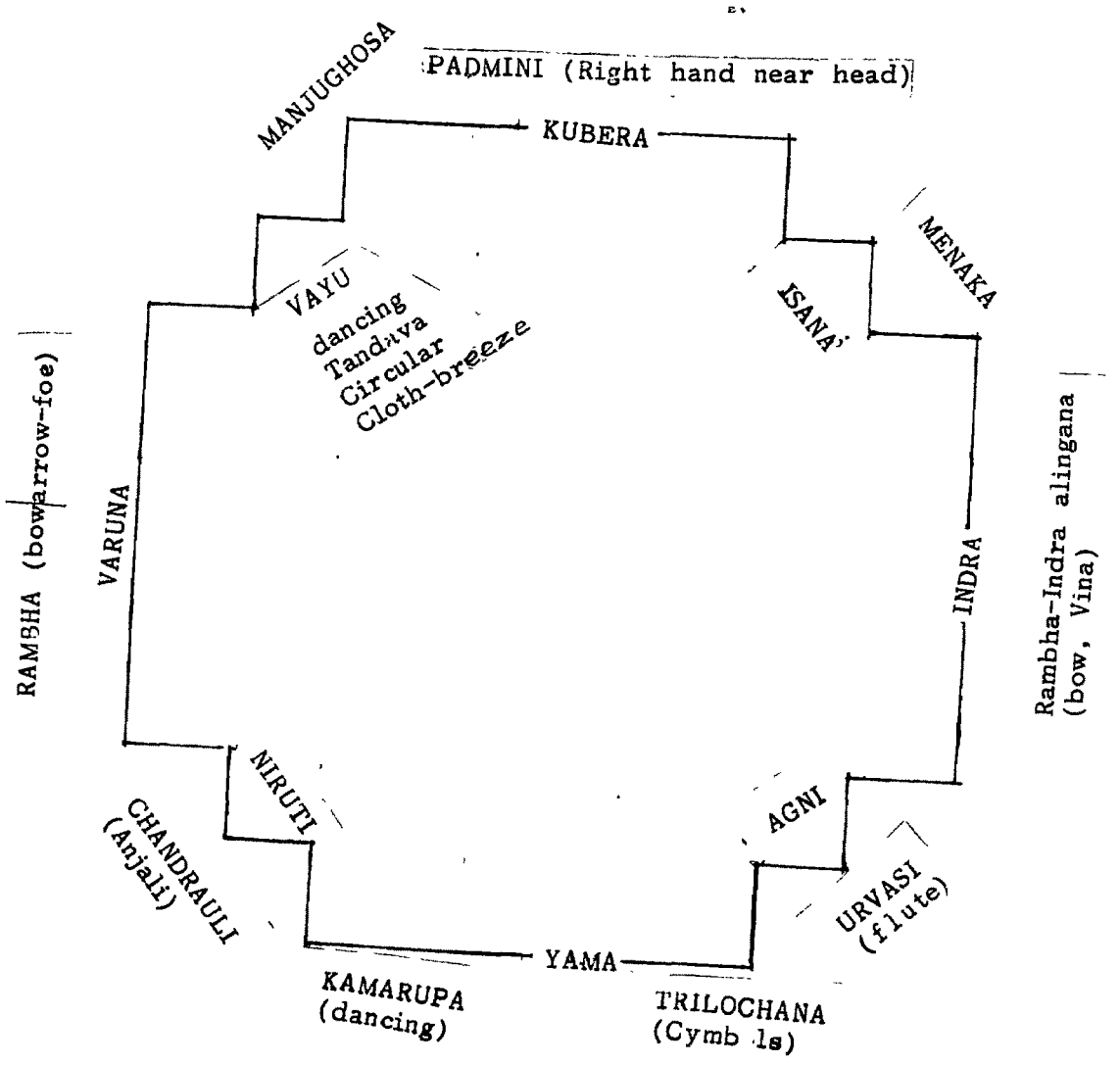
PRASADA MANDANA

Written by Sutradhara Mandana in the reign of Rana kumbha of Chittor between 1433 - 1468 A.D. In the reference dealing with temple parts he mentions that the vidyadhara thara should be seven parts broad and ten parts long. On this make beautiful dancing salabhanjikas. Decorate the centre of the mandapa, vitana with paintings and devanganas in dancing mode along with pauranic themes. (PM, 7-32, 34)

Placement of devanganas on the jangha of the temple mandovara in pradaksina order starting from Isana with Menaka in relation with the respective directions, prescribed in KSIRARNAVA.



CHAPTER-III

REFERENCES TO VARIOUS ASPECTS OF APSARA IMAGERY FROM SANSKRIT AND PRAKRIT SOURCES

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तोरणैर्मकरैः पत्रैः साङ्गैश्च स्वभरावृतैः ॥ 46
हस्तिमुण्डैः समाकीर्णमप्सरोगणभूषितम् । 47
ed. 7. Ganapati Sastri, G.O.S., No.25, Baroda, 1966.

82. स्तम्भैर्विविध विन्यासैर्बहुभङ्गविनिर्मितैः ॥
भूषितैः कर्मभिश्चित्रैः सर्वत्रैः शुभलक्षणैः ।
चन्द्रशालादि संयुक्तैस्तोरणैश्चारुचामरैः ॥
S.S.57, p.404, ibid.

83. मदान्धालिकुलाकीर्णगजयक्षविभूषितैः ।
विद्याधरवधूवृन्दैः क्रीडारम्भविभूषितैः ॥
S.S.57, p.404, ibid.

84. सुराणां सुन्दरीभिश्च वीणाहस्तैश्च किन्नरैः ।
सिद्धगन्धर्वयक्षाणां वृन्दैश्च परितः स्थितैः ॥
S.S.57, p.404, ibid.

85. अप्सरोभिश्च दिव्याभिर्विमानावलिभिस्तथा ।
चारुचामीकरान्दोला क्रीडासक्तैश्च (निःसरम् ?) ॥
S.S.57, p.404, ibid.

86. नागकन्याकदम्बैश्च सर्वतः समलङ्कृतम् ।
एवं विधाभिः सर्वत्र भूमिकाभिर्निरन्तरम् ॥
S.S.57, p.404, ibid.

The above five verses are not numbered but they constitute the Meru section of the Chapter 57, which covers Mervadivimsika Prasada Laksana. Besides Meru, the other type of Prasada which contain Apsara, Kinnara, Vidhyadhari, Gandharvas, Yaksas and Salabhanjika for decoration are Sridhara, Puspaka, Mahavraja, Ratideha, Vimanam.

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चतुः षष्टि विद्याधरास्तदूर्ध्वे च वराङ्गना ॥ 14.
ततानद्धघनाद्यैश्च वादित्रैः सुस्वरैस्तथा ।
97. नाटकैर्नृत्यरङ्गाद्यै गीतिनादैरनेकधा ॥ 15.

AP. 190 - 14,15, Vitana Varnana.

धरीस्थानोत्तरे कार्या विचित्रा नृत्यशालिकाः ।
98. वितानैः शालभञ्जीभिर्घण्टाद्यैर्विभूषिताः ॥

AP. 85 - 26, Griha Grama Nagar Shobha.

कार्या तदूर्ध्वे जङ्घाच, पञ्चत्रिंशत्समुच्छ्रिता ।
99. भ्रमनिर्माणतः स्तम्भैर्नासिकापङ्क्तिफालना ॥ 21
मूलनासासु सर्वासु स्तम्भैः स्युश्चतुरश्रिकाः ।
गजश्च सिंहव्यालैश्च मकरैः समलङ्कृताः ॥ 22.
100. कर्णेष्वष्टौ च दिक्पालाः प्राच्यादिषु प्रदक्षिणम् ।
नटेशः पश्चिमे भद्रे ह्यन्धकैः सह दक्षिणे ॥ 23.
चण्डस्य चोत्तरे देवी दंष्ट्राननसुशोभिताः ।
वीतरागे च शासनदेव्यश्चैव दिशाः प्रति ॥ 24.

AP.127-21,24, Nagar Prasada Vibhakti Pramana.

कर्णे कर्णे तु कर्तव्या वृत्ताकृतिकशोभना ।
101. (त्रि) सङ्घस्यान्ते पुनः कुर्याद्धोर्ध्वविद्याधरी तथा ॥

AP 70-21, Bhudharadi Brahma Nagaram.

निष्क्रान्ता च चतुर्भद्रैर्यक्षी कार्या सुशोभना ।
102. भद्रे भद्रे द्विशालानि सा मता रत्नसंभवा ॥ 7
तस्याश्च प्रत्येकशालं प्रतिभद्रविभूषितम् ।
उत्पला च समाख्याता महाराजेन्द्र वल्लभा ॥ 8
लम्बन्याख्यावितानि विचित्राणि च मध्यतः ।
अनेकाकाररूपाश्च राजक्रीडोचिताः स्थिताः ॥ 9
शालभञ्जिकादि प्रतिमा स्तम्भविमान सम्भवाः ।
मुक्तलम्बाच्छादोपरि घण्टाकूटैरलंकृता ॥ 10

दिव्यसौवर्ण कलशैर्मत्तवारण सम्युता ।
सुरसभोपमाश्चैव नृपसभाग्रमण्डपा : ॥ ॥

AP 77 - 7,11, Sabhastakavedi Nirnaya.

रविभागा न कुर्यात् भ्रमणात् नखांशकै : ।
103. अष्टाविंशति भिर्भित्तः शासस्तम्भ कुमारिके : ॥ 9

Laksana Samucchaya, 26 - 9,11.

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चतुस्तम्भाश्च तन्मध्ये द्वादशस्य कुमारिके ॥ 10
तिस्रस्तिस्रस्तु कोणेषु स्तम्भाग्रे कुमारिके ।
पार्श्वयोरग्रमो वापि कुर्याद्दासार संयुते ॥ ॥

Laksana Samucchaya. 26 - 9, 11.