Chapter-11
Puranic Themes in Temple Art- A Background
In this chapter an attempt is made to recount the use of Puranic themes in the temples of both North and South India through the centuries to serve as an historical background to the study of Puranic themes in the Rayalaseema region. In the following random survey the depiction of Puranic themes in temples is traced age wise, beginning from the earliest to the Vijayanagara period.

Iconic representations invariably carry the mark of the age in which they are executed and on the basis of their style, the period of evolution of the various forms of the deities may be determined. The vast mass of sacred literature in Sanskrit, which may be classified as Vedic, Puranic and Agamic, provides a useful background to the study of Hindu iconography. The Vedic literature may be said to contain the germs of many concepts, which were developed in the Puranic works and has an important bearing on image worship in India.

Puranic themes formed part of temple sculpture in many a number from the inception of temples in India. Themes from the Viṣṇupurāṇa and Śivapurāṇa are abundantly found on the walls, pillars, vimānas, gopuras, and adhiṣṭānas of temples belonging to the Guptas, the Gaṅgas, the Rāśtrakūtas etc. in North India and the Satavahanas, the Pallavas, the Chāllukyas, the Chōlas, the Nolambas, the Kakatiyas, the Hoyasalas, the Vijayanagara etc. in the South.

Both Śiva and Viṣṇu were adopted as patron dynastic deities by the Kushan kings. They were perhaps the first imperial dynasty to have patronised Vaishnavism, which began with the Brahma-Vaiveśe-Saṅkarṣaṇa cult in the Kushan age and blossomed into the Bhāgavata cult in the Gupta age. Vaishnavism or the Bhāgavata cult had a profound influence on Indian art. With the development and popularity of the concept of Dasāvatāras, Viṣṇu came to be represented in temple sculpture in numerous forms and poses.

Iconographic details can be noted in such images as Varāha, one of the Viṣṇu’s incarnations, with the wheel in the both hands. Viṣṇu with a mace taller than himself, Ekamukhaṁśa with the third eye horizontally on the forehead, the head of the Ardhanārisvāra is important in the study of early Kushan iconography; the
crown and ear-rings are details that are especially noteworthy. The deity is shown either standing alone or by side of his mount, Nandi. The Śilparatna, Matsyapurāṇa, Mānasollasa, etc. provide elaborate descriptions of the standing Ardhanārīśvara form of Śiva. R.C. Agarawala remarks that the earliest so far known, depiction of Ardhanārīśvara in the plastic art of India is to be found in Kushan reliefs from the Mathura region. It undergoes change through the centuries. The image of Harihara, illustrating the fusion of the two great gods Hari and Hara, seems to have evolved for the first time in the Kushan period.

The Gupta emperors were the first imperial royal dynasty of India to have adopted Vaiṣṇavism as the state religion. They consciously propagated Viṣṇavism among their subjects. They assumed the title of Paramamahā Bhagavata to denote their adoration of Viṣṇu. The most widely circulated Gupta coinage had the emblem of Lakṣmi to illustrate their patronage of Viṣṇavism. The image of Sudarśana on the reverse of their coin shows the Guptas favouring Viṣṇavism. The worship and adoration of Viṣṇu was well established in the country by the end of the Gupta age.

Bhakti movement had two offshoots in Saivism and Vaiṣṇavism. The Guptas were mainly Vaiṣṇavites, and Vaiṣṇavism seems to have been generally more in vogue than Śaivism during their times. However Hinduism took deep roots only in the Gupta period, as it is evident from the inscriptions belonging to the period between 4th-6th century A.D.

A large number of sculptures found all over India depict the incarnations of Viṣṇu. They are found carved in the rock-cut temples at Udayagiri(M.P), Bādami(Karnataka) and Mahābalipuram (Tamilnadu) belonging to the Gupta, early Chālukya, and Pallava periods respectively. The Vāmana and the Lakṣmana temples at Khajuraho, and Daśavatāra temple at Deogarh (M.P), Kailāsanātha temple at Ellora (Maharastra), Anantavāsudeva temple at Bhubaneswar in Orissa and many other old shrines embody the images of the different incarnations of Viṣṇu.

The inscriptions of the time of the Guptas mention frequently Viṣṇu temples. Among the avataras of Viṣṇu, Varāha and Kiṣṇa who are mentioned in the Purāṇas provided themes for Gupta sculpture and art. In this age Rāma is not so much
in evidence as Krishnas. Interestingly there is a sculpture in Mathura depicting a devotee offering his own head to Siva. This motif is often repeated in Pallava sculptures of the next epoch. In the realm of sculpture and painting Gupta art marks the highest reach of the Indian genius. Its influence radiated all over India and beyond.

In some of the sculptures in North India, the Matsyavatara is shown in the full form of fish, as seen for example in the sculptures kept at Gwalior museum and Bharat Kala Bhavan at Benaras. But in many of the South Indian sculptures, this avatara is shown in a half-fish and half-man form. Usually, the lower portion depicts the body of the fish and upper portion shows the bust of Vishnu with his usual weapons like sankha and chakra.

In the South Indian sculptures usually the Kurmavatara is represented in half man and half-tortoise form, though in some of the North Indian sculptures the full form of Kurma (tortoise) is shown on a lotus pedestal, as found in an exhibit in Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benaras.

The Iconographic representation of Varaha became widely popular from the time of the Guptas. In antiquity the Varaha worship goes back to a hoary past. The earliest representation of this incarnation belongs to the second century A.D. in the Gupta period. The cluster of monuments on the Udayagiri hill, only 8 kms from Bhilsa (now Vidisa), preserves the celebrated works of Gupta carvers which include the Varaha incarnation. In the words of Ananda Coomaraswamy, "The Varahavatara of Udayagiri is of unsurpassed splendour and unabated energy; here Vishnu as the primal boar raises the earth (goddess) from the cosmic waters at the initiation of a new cycle of creation.

Iconographically, Varaha is represented in two forms, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic which remained popular even during the medieval period. Just a few examples of this form are found in North India at places like Eran in Sagar district, in which the huge figure of the boar is usually shown. This form is called Mahavarah or Adi-varaha. But this form was limited in use, whereas the anthropomorphic form of Varaha was more popularly used for worship. In this form, the face alone is that of
Varāha with its long snout and the body is that of an ordinary human being. In all three types of Varāha are met with in the region under study and they are Bhū-varāha, Adi-varāha and Prajñaya-varāha.

In the North and East Indian sculptures of Varāha, the goddess is generally placed on the left elbow of the deity, one of whose feet rests on ṛddiseṣha. This feature corresponds partially to the Agnipurāṇa description of the Varāhavatāra. According to the Varāhāparāṇa, the goddess seated on the left elbow of the god is to be identified as Śrī and the earth goddess and Ananta are to be found near his feet. But according to the Matsyas Purāṇa, Maha-varaha who holds a gada and a lotus in his hands, after rescuing the earth with his sharp tusk, places her on his left elbow; one of his feet is placed on the head of a tortoise and the other on the head of a Nāga king. In T.A. Gopinath Rao’s work, the picture of an Indian museum specimen of Varāha is reproduced in which the figure corresponds to the descriptions given above.

A fully theriomorphic representation of Varāha comes from Eran in Central India. During the period of Brahmanical revivalism under the Guptas, this form of Viṣṇu along with that of Narasimha became the symbols of the power and strength of the Brahmanical gods. Hence there is a tendency to depict them in massive proportions to symbolize the vitality against the heterodox religions, as seen in the famous sculpture at Udayagiri.

The Narasimha incarnation became one of the most powerful sculptural themes even during the Gupta period and continued to be so in South India in the Pallava temples. Figures of Narasimha in North India usually depict the act of the god killing Hiranḍyakasipu. The Narasimha figures, however, are not as numerous as the Varāha figures in the North. “In the North Indian sculptures of Narasimha, either from Central India or from U.P, Bihar, Orissa, this incarnate god is represented as dancing with his left leg slightly raised and bent in what is known in Buddhist iconographical parlance as ardha-paryanka, and he is also represented as tearing the stomach and pulling out the entrails of Hiranḍyakasipu. This is the shauna form of Narasimha and is the only one known in these parts.”
It would appear that Narasimha is depicted in two ways by the sculptors. In the first instance the god and the asura are shown fighting with each other and in the second the god is represented as tearing the entrails of the asura. Sculptures illustrating both these forms are found in plenty in South India, in the Pallava, Early Chalukya, Rastrakuta, later Chalukya, eastern Chalukya, Chola, Vijayanagara and Nayaka sculptures.

The earliest references to Narasimha worship are to be found in the Taittariya, Aranyaka, Mahanarayaṇa Upanisad, etc. As an incarnation of Viṣṇu, Narasimha finds mention in the Mahābhārata and the Harivamsa describes this image, though in brief, for the first time. In the realm of plastic art, Narasimha seems to have found representation initially in the early Gupta period. Various types of these images have been described and illustrated by T.A. Gopinath Rao and J.N. Benerjea. Interestingly, Hiranyakasipu does not find representation in the Narasimha images of the Gupta period but in Post-Gupta period the demon is invariably represented as being killed by the god. All the images of Narasimha show him in the act of tearing out the entrails of the demon and are thus of the sihauna type commonly found in North India.

The Vāmana-Trivikrama sculptures of the next incarnation of Viṣṇu, are also found in North India. The earliest representation of Trivikrama is in the Daśavatāra temple of the Gupta period at Deogarh. In North India, the Trivikrama variety seems to be numerous, though independent representations of Vāmana with two or four hands are also common. The latter forms are evidently based on the Agnipurāṇa descriptions of the two and four-armed god. Besides, the great number of literary and epigraphic references to the Trivikramavatāra indicates that like the Varaha and Narasimha forms, the Vāmana-Trivikrama form too was very popular both in the North and South.

The cult of Viṣṇu was prevalent in all over Northern India as attested by plenty of evidences. Apart from the stylistic peculiarities, the images datable from the seventh to the tenth century A.D, display hardly any iconographic varieties. The most common type is, however, the Trivikrama form. Innumerable images of Trivikrama have come to light from North India. An image of Trivikrama is preserved in the collection of the Baroda museum, datable to the seventh century. A panel on the wall
of the Harsat Mata temple at Abaneri represents Trivikrama. The head of the figure is lost, but the emblems are preserved quite well. It is peculiar that all the four emblems are represented in their personified forms, two on each side. Similar images of Trivikrama have also come to light from Bhilsa, Devangana, Ujjain, Patan, Dhank, Baroda, etc. The museums of U.P (Lucknow museum) and especially eastern India are full of such Viṣṇu images. Numerically, the Trivikrama image tops the list of Viṣṇu images right from the early times in North India. The other selected forms are Puruşottama, Kṛṣṇa, Śrīdhara, Gōvinda, Adhokshaja and Achyuta.

The great Vāraha temple at Udayagiri (400 A.D) is a masterpiece of powerful execution in which the volume of the main image is enhanced by contrast to the lesser dimensions of the scenes of the background. The Deogarh temple contains many effective sculptures of episodes from the Rāma and Kṛiṣṇa legends. Other notable panels such as Gajendramokṣha, Viṣṇu reclining on the Ananta, undoubtedly rank among the best specimens of Hindu sculpture. The outstanding panels at Deogarh include images of Ahalya freed from the curse, Devaki giving baby Kṛiṣṇa to Vasudeva to be transported to Gokula, and the punishment of Sūrpanakha. Thus the Guptas have been considered as the pioneers in depicting the Puranic themes in their temple art and painting.

The Deogarh temple is closely associated with the legend of Kṛiṣṇa's life. It is now known that the detailed cycle of Kṛiṣṇa's story was also depicted in the plinth of the Deogarh temple. The panels of the birth of the Kṛiṣṇa of Nanda and Yasoda, Kṛiṣṇa kicking at the milk cart, Kṛiṣṇa and his friend Sudāma, portray four important scenes from the life of Kṛiṣṇa, offer welcome sculptural evidence of the extent of popularity of the Kṛiṣṇa story in the Gupta period. The panels are in the best style of Gupta art and may be assigned to the early fifth century A.D.

Sculptures depicting the scenes of the Rāmayana are to be found even in the temples of the Gupta period. The earliest depiction of Rāma in art is to be found in North India, datable to the first century B.C., which depicts the abduction of Sītā by Rāvana. The Rama story has attracted not only the poets and dramatists but also the artists. The oral as well as written Rāmayana tradition found visual representation in art since an early time. In the early stage, only some isolated
incidents, which captured the imagination of the people, were delineated. The narrative representation of the Ramayana scenes showing the sequence of events seems to have come into existence first during the Gupta times. During later times, say from the tenth century A.D. onwards, when the cult of Rāma developed and became popular group representation of Rāma, Sīta and Lakṣmana attended by Hanumān was done by the artists. These phases were successive but not completely exclusive. The visual representations of the scenes went a long way to satisfy the religious urge of the people. The high ideals of Rāma, the intrigues in the royal family of Ayodhya, the brotherly affection of Rāma and his brothers, Rāma’s exile, the abduction of Sīta, the exploits of Hanumān in Lanka, the fight between Rāma and Rāvana, the rescue of Sīta, her fire ordeal, the short period of the conjugal love of Rāma and Sīta, her banishment in the āśrama of Vālmiki and ultimately her disappearance into the mother earth are stirring events which easily lent themselves to representation in plastic art. People were already familiar with these episodes having listened to oral narrations of the Ramayana story by Purāṇikas. Now the sculpted episodes enabled them to see concrete visual forms which they had only visualised in imagination whole in listening to them or reading them.

The earliest representation of the Ramayana theme in North Indian art so far discovered is a terracotta from Kausambi. The piece in question shows Rāvana carrying Sīta away forcibly. The helplessness of Sīta in the arms of Rāvana has been vividly delineated by the artists. This terracotta has a great historical value also. It provides us with positive evidence that the Yuddhakanda of the Ramayana was known as early as the second century A.D.

As the Gupta monarchs were champions of Vaishnavism, during their rule many temples were built with panels representing scenes from the Ramayana, Mahābhārata and Bhāgavata. J. Ph. Vogel unearthed many terracotta panels in the Gupta style from Saheth-Maheth in the district of Gond and Bhitargaon in Kanpur district. They are now housed in the Brooklyn museum, U.S.A. Proper identification of the panel has not yet been done by any scholar. A close study of the subject reveals that the panel represents Viṣṇu’s fight with the rākṣasas headed by Mali, Sumali, and Malyavan as described in the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana. Another panel from Bhitargaon shows Rāma and Sīta seated and a crow by the latter’s side which
probably represents the episode of *Kaka Jayanta* whom Rāma punished for teasing Sīta. This is considered to be an interpolation by many scholars. But its occurrence on the Bhitargaon temple shows that the story was current in society as early as the Gupta period (5th c A.D). There is a beautiful stone sculpture from Sringaberpur in the Allahabad museum at Allahabad, which depicts Rāma and Lakṣmana with Sugrīva and other monkeys.

The Dasavatāra temple (550 A.D) at Deogarh in Jhansi district is embellished with various scenes from the *Ramayana* and Krishna's life. The *Ramayana* panels include the redemption of Ahalya, Rāma's journey to the forest along with Sīta and Lakṣmana, Rāma's visit to the *āśrama* of Atri, archery training of Rāma and Lakṣmana, Lakṣmana's disfiguring Surpanākha, Lakṣmana garlanding Sugrīva before his fight with Vālī, Rāvana threatening Sīta, Hanuman carrying the Śrījivani hill, the Abduction of Sīta by Rāvana, the combat of Vālī and Sugrīva etc. The Dasavatāra temple provides us for the first time with profuse illustrations from the *Araṇyakāṇḍa*.

Some very beautiful sculptures depicting scenes from *Araṇyakāṇḍa* have also been found at Nachna Kuthara, which seems to have been a flourishing centre of art during the Gupta and early medieval times. Scholars have presumed that these sculptures formed part of a Vaishnava temple which once existed in Nachna Kuthara. Of these panels, one depicts the Surpanākha episode, bringing out at the same time the high character of Lakṣmana.

Another panel at Nachna represents the advent of Rāvana in the ascetic garb and Sīta offering alms to him. Sīta steps forward with her alms but she leans backwards as the audacious mendicant draws close to her. Among the other Nachna panels there are two figures, are showing Hanumān's meeting with Rāma and Lakṣmana in the Pampa forest and the other showing the fight between Vālī and Sugrīva. A beautiful terracotta comes from Bhind which gives a realistic representation of the sorrowful Sīta at *Aśokāvana*. This terracotta can be ascribed on stylistic grounds to the fifth century A.D and it is preserved now in the National museum, New Delhi. The Gupta period has yielded also some beautiful *Ramayana* sculptures from Paunar, near Nagpur.
The episodes of Krishna in sculpture are known from the second century A.D. in North India. The Śatavāhana inscriptions refer to Krishṇa. In the Deccan, Krishṇalāla scenes are depicted at Badami in Caves No. II & IV, datable to the sixth century A.D. In Āndhradeśa the seventh century A.D temples at Ālamāpur carry Krishṇalāla reliefs. In the Tamil country they appear from the same period43.

In the earliest representation of the bālyakrīdas (the childhood “pranks”) of Krishṇa, his extraordinary power of protection is stressed. Thus the raising of mount Govardhana by the boy Krishṇa is shown in a Gupta work from Mandasor and in a Viṣṇukūndin sculpture from the Mugalraja puram cave44.

Some medieval images of Dāmodara and Krishṇa published by R.C. Majumdar and the images of Purusottama, Viśnu, Madhusūdhana, Krishṇa, Trivikrama, Padmanābha, and Dāmodara tally exactly with the description given in the Rūpamaṇḍana45.

All these images, described or referred to above, are either installed in shrines or worshipped independently, or occupy the wall panels. An interesting record of these images is still present in a temple at Valam in Gujarat, where most of the varieties of standing four handed images of Viṣṇu are not only carved together but are also identified by the inscriptions on their pedestals. Only seventeen of them have survived, from which the iconography of Kesava, Narāyaṇa, Sanākaraṇa, Gōvinda, Viṣṇu, Madhusūdhana, Krishṇa, Trivikrama, Padmanābha, and Dāmodara tally exactly with the description given in the Rūpamaṇḍana46.

Generally the chaturvinsātīmirūs, the twenty four forms assumed by Viṣṇu, are carved in the samabhāṅga posture, but a few images in the dvibhāṅga posture have also come to light. A mutilated image of either Hari or Janārādhana from Gwalior is articulated in the dvibhāṅga posture. A similar image of Gōvinda has been found in Suhana near Gwalior. It is the tendency of the sculptors of the Khajuraho group of temples to model the images in the rhythmic dvibhāṅga or the tribhāṅga posture and hence some of the Viṣṇu images are also in these postures. For instance, the images of Purusottama and Padmanābha in the Lakṣmanā and Jagadāmbika temples are either in dvibhāṅga or tribhāṅga pose47.
Sometimes the devotees of Hindu gods accept the Buddhist pattern of iconography. An image of Kesava from Gujarat bears an image of Viṣṇu on his crown, like the figure of the dhyāna-Buddha on the crown of a bodhisattva. It represents something like the emanation of the different forms of Mahāviṣṇu or Viṣṇu as the Puranapuruṣa.

The early iconography of Viṣṇu is a very simple representation of Him only in one iconographical form, which must have been the only established form of the Viṣṇu image till the Gupta period. Later on in the medieval period it becomes more complicated because an attempt was made to represent the various aspects of Viṣṇu, merely through the order of emblems. Not satisfied even with this the sculptors and the devotees try to represent His super human qualities through multiple hands and emblems, as reflected in several texts on iconography and religion. When this form with multiple hands and emblems was blended with the chatuṣṭrahasta, it gave rise to the image of Mahāviṣṇu.

Deogarh temples contain magnificent large reliefs of Viṣṇu mythology. The temple at Gwalior, Tyeli-ka-mandir, is remarkable for its rhythmic proportions, classic quality of ornament, and judicious distribution of plain and carved surfaces. Geotz has called it “the last master piece of Gupta art”. Divinities remaining in this temple are predominantly Śaivite. Durga and Lakulīsa are depicted on the south and north face of the sikhara. Śiva-Prathiharas appear on the vedibandha show Śaivite themes, including Gaṇapati, Ekapīda, Lakulīsa, Gaṇesā, and Karitkeya. The vedibandha also harbour figures of Brahma, Viṣṇu, Trivikrama, etc.

During the Gupta period, despite the monarchs being champions of Vaishnavism, several Śiva temples with lingas enshrined also seem to have been built. At Bhumra, one finds captivating forms of Śiva such as Nātarāja on the facades of temples. An outstanding sculpture of the fifth century from Nachna Kuthara depicts Mahanātha Śiva in the tāṇḍava dance. This appears to be the earliest representation of the tāṇḍava motif so far known in Indian art. These are samples of Śaivite art during the Gupta period.
Siva, as the great teacher Dakṣiṇāmūrti, is generally shown under a banyan, the most magnificent of trees, surrounded by the ancient seers who are his disciples. Viṣṇu as teacher is Nārāyaṇa of the Nārāyanāṇa pair, with the badari tree spreading its shade over both their heads. The most impressive representation of this theme is a Gupta sculpture from Deogarh.

The composite figure of Harihara is probably depicted on a Gupta seal discovered at Nalanda. The images of Śaṅkara are comparatively rare and sculptures earlier than the early medieval period have not yet been found from any part of North India. The earliest extant example of Śaṅkara is from Etah (U.P) and it is now preserved in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Vāraṇāsi. The magnificent theme of Gaṅgādhara Siva receiving Ganga on his locks is expressed in a variety of ways. In an early Gupta panel from Rajauna, for example Ganga seated on a makara respectfully approaches Siva who offers her a curl of hair for her abode.

All Orissan Siva temples contain a Śivalīṅga within the main shrine. Associated with Siva his divine consort Pārvati, and their sons Gaṇapati and Kārtikeya, and their images are placed in three subsidiary-deity niches of all Orissan Siva shrines. There are only two examples of Viṣṇu shrines among the early Orissan temples. At Gandharada on the banks of Mahānadi is the Nilamadhav temple of Viṣṇu with a crowning chakra on the tower and a large standing image of Viṣṇu within the shrine. It is one of the two identical temples standing on a common platform, the other being dedicated to Siva as Siddhāśvara. This adjacent placing of Siva and Viṣṇu temples must surely reflect the happy co-existence of the two faiths. The second Viṣṇu shrine is the Panchayatana temple at Garēsvarpur which again has a crowning chakra and a standing image of Viṣṇu within the shrine. Śaivism, as an independent religious system with Siva as Supreme Being, cannot be traced back much earlier than the beginning of the Christian era, and the earliest Śaiva sect is that of the Pasupatas whose prime teacher was Lakulin. The Vaiṣṇava and Liṅgapurāṇas record the legend that Siva would incarnate himself as a brahmacārin named Lakulin and that he would initiate four pupils, Kukisa, Gārgya, Mitraka and Rushta into his cult. The early Siva temples of Orissa display affiliation to this Pasupata sect, and all of them are embellished with carvings of Lakulin. The emergence of Viṣṇu...
into general popularity in Orissa is a relatively late phenomenon in Orissa. In the later period Višnū worship certainly gathered great popularity.\(^{58}\)

In all North Indian sculptures of Narasimha, either from Central India or U.P, Bihar or Orissa, Narasimha is represented as dancing with his left leg slightly raised and bent in what is known as ardhaparyāhka Buddhist iconographical parlance, and he is represented as tearing the stomach and pulling out the entrails of Hiranyakāśipu. This is the sthauna form of Narasimha and is the only one known in these parts.\(^{59}\)

In the earliest Orissan temples the images of Śiva in his variety of forms are invariably depicted with ārdhvaliṅga. The reason for this, one assumes, is that the erect phallus emphasized the power of the god who was normally worshipped in the form of a linga. Dancing Ardhanārīśvara, seated Śiva in Śiva/Pārvati panels, Nātarāja, Īkapāda, Harihara, Lakulīsa, Virabhadra and Bhairava are all shown with a prominently carved upright linga. In the later temples this practice seems to have been abandoned.\(^{60}\)

In Orissa and Nepal Ardhanārīśvara is often shown with one leg on the bull and the other on the lion. Śiva dancing as Ardhanārīśvara is particularly interesting; the most striking examples are perhaps those from the Chandela territory in which the bearded right cheek of the god is effectively contrasted with the smooth left.\(^{61}\)

The Nātarāja relief found in a miniature temple in the Mukthēśvara compound at Bhuvaneswar is a marvelous piece of Kālinga art.\(^ {62}\) Śiva as the Lord of wisdom has two forms Lakulīsa and Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Lakulīsa is found in the northern temples, while Dakṣiṇāmūrti appears in the southern shrines. In the south Lakulīsa is represented in a lone carving at Tiruvottiyur in Tamil Nadu which was commissioned in a spirit of connoisseurship by the appreciative Rajendra after his conquest of Kālinga. While Lakulīsa is represented in the west at Modhera in Gujarat, in the north at Payar in Kashmir, and in the east at Bhuvaneswar in Orissa, Dakṣiṇāmūrti in several forms occurs throughout the South. A lovely Dakṣiṇāmūrti playing the drum -an unusual musical figure close to the Viṇādhara-Dakṣiṇāmūrti is seen at Kalugumalai, Tirunelveli. The Dakṣiṇāmūrti form at Kaveripak, which is more

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sophisticated than the similar figure from the Olakkanatha temple at Mahabalipuram, is an exquisite example of this form.63

The Orissan artists also display several scenes from the epics. In the east, Paharpur temple (8th c A.D) in Bangladesh, the temples site No.2, Nalanda, and certain stuccos from Aphsad at Bihar, the Simhanada temple in Cuttack District, the Sathrughneshwar and the Varahi temple at Chaurasi in Orissa, etc. present many Ramayana episodes. On the dado of the temple site No.2, Nalanda, are seen represented the redemption of Ahalya from the Balakanda and some events of the Aranyakand, namely Rama and Sita in Panchavati and the abduction of Sita by Ravana. In Orissa the Ravanagunaghamurti on the Sathrughnesvara and the Parasuramesvar temples are fine representations of the theme. These Bihar and Orissa groups of temples may be ascribed to the 7th-8th century A.D.64

The Rashtrakutas, with some exceptions, were staunch Saivas. With their advent the Saiva faith replaced the Vaishnava faith in the areas under their control. The Kailasa temple, Ellora, houses some eloquently carved themes of Siva. The caves 15 & 16 (Dasavatara and Kailasanatha temples) at Ellora contain beautiful reliefs of Lingodbhavanamurti. Three sculptures of Siva as Tripurantakamurti are found in the rock-cut temples at Ellora. Of these, one sculpture is found in the Dasavatara cave. In this Mahadeva is shown driving the chariot drawn by four horses. He has eight hands. The other two sculptures are found in the Kailasanatha temple, Ellora. In this Siva is standing firmly in the chariot drawn by horses. The three-faced Brahma is represented as the charioteer.65

The Gajasurasaamharamurti aspect of Siva is found in the caves at Elephones and Ellora.66 The best Rashtrakuta examples of the images of Siva as Nataraja are in the Dasavatara, Kailasa and Ramesvara caves at Ellora. These Nataraja reliefs at Ellora also reveal the fusion of North and South Indian traditions.67

There are two lively ganas panels which remind us of the Badami caves. One is placed under the Kalyanasundaramurti panel, in which Siva's sprites apparently constitute the wedding party. The other panel, with the ganas frolicking around
Nandi, is placed below the relief of Śiva and Parvati playing dice. These gāna panels might be a southern feature if so, this would be the only one.

The magnificent Ardhanarīsvara at Elephanta is not easily matched by another. An outstanding early medieval example of this form is the Čūrjara-Pratihāra work from Abanerī now in the collection of the Maharāja of Jaipur. Vīṣṇu-Parvati aspect of Śiva is depicted drinking without hesitation the deadly poison that meant sure death and destruction for the world. For charm of form and pose, there is no sculpture of Śiva that can rival the Maitraka Śiva from Samalaji, north Gujarat or the monolithic Śiva with attendants from Mandaśor.

One of the most striking representations is the Kalyānasundara panel at Elephanta. The stately noble Himavan, accompanied by his queen, Mena, gives his daughter Uma in marriage to Śiva. At Ellora the rishis, headed by Brahma himself, are shown conversing with Himavan and Mena and requesting to give his daughter in marriage to Śiva. The tradition of personifying mountains survived, and in a seventh century A.D painting, Śiva is shown bowing to Himavan, whose embarrassment is wonderfully delineated by spirited artists of the Kangra School.

At Elephanta Gāṅga is seen on the locks of Śiva Gaṅgādhara and at Pattadakkal she is depicted as a mermaid dancing on the locks of Śiva which swirl as he performs the tāṇḍava, an energetic and virile dance.

Interestingly the Rāṣṭrakūta representations of Narasimha are found at Ellora though the Rāṣṭrakūtas were Saivites. A magnificent panel, depicting the duel between the god and the demon, is sculptured in the Daśāvatāra cave. Another interesting sculpture of Narasimha is found on the left corridor wall of the Lāṅkesvara cave in the Kailāsa rock-cut temple at Ellora. The Trivikrama relief found in the Daśāvatāra cave at Ellora represents the Rāṣṭrakūta art.

With the increase of temples and the growth of Rāma worship, the Rāmāyaṇa scenes formed a major theme of the artists in the medieval period. In this connection the Rāmāyaṇa panels of Ellora are to be noticed first. They are mostly seen in several rows on the southern wall of the sabhā-mandapa of Kailāsa temple. They include the
departure of Rāma from Ayodhya, Bharata meeting Rāma to persuade him to return to Ayodhya; Rāma, Lakṣmīmaṇḍa and Śīla crossing the river Sarayu, the abduction of Siṁa; Jatayu pursuing Rāvana’s aerial car, the combat between Vāli and Sugrīva, the death of Vāli and several other incidents of the Aranyā, Kīśkinda and Sundararakandaś. The Kāliyamardana Krishna image is also seen on the walls of the pillared wall round the central shrine in the same Kailāsa temple.

PURANIC THEMES IN SOUTH INDIAN ART

All the Pallava rulers patronized Hinduism and most of them followed Śaivism. Mahendra Varman I, though the follower of Jainism in the beginning later embraced Śaivism. He constructed many temples of Viṣṇu also. The next ruler in importance was Narasīmha Varman II. During his period some sub-sects of Śaivism like Kapālika, Kālāmukha and Paśupata seemed to have been adhered to by the people. From the sculptures of the Kailāsanātha temple at Kanchipuram, where the forms of Śiva, like Bhairavamūrti and Brahmāsirachchedanamūrti are found, it is evident that worshippers of Bhairava also had their place in society. These instances suggest that the Pallava monarchs favoured Hinduism which was acclaimed as the religion of the state.

The representation of Śiva at Guḍimallam in Andhra Pradesh goes back to the early phase of the Satavāhanas. Here is Śiva as Kalagnirudra, a pillar of fire, symbolic of Agni and Rudra in unison. Śiva, erect and two-armed, carries the club, the axe, and the vessel of ghee and the ram for the sacrificial rite. His locks are combed into a turban like form. There is a peculiar representation of ārdhvalinga though draped; it is much more prominent than in contemporary and even somewhat later sculpture of the Gupta period.

The Pallavas, who ruled in the early years of the Christian era, made significant contribution to the development of art in south India. Their capital Kanchipuram, the temple city even now stands as a testimony of Pallava art and architecture. The earliest Śivalinga may be seen in the rock cut caves and the rathas at Mahābalipuram which are fine specimens of Hindu deities. Mahābalipuram also has
perhaps the world’s largest bas-relief called Arjuna’s penance. The Pallava temples are decorated with sculptures from the Epics and Puranas. The Kiratarjunya theme also attracted the attention of the Pallava architects. One of the mandapas in the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram contains panels illustrating this theme. The most famous Pallava example of this theme is found at Mahabalipuram.

The Pallavas drew inspiration and guidance from the Viṣṇukundaśins for the excavation of caves, construction of temples and modelling sculptures. The Natārāja sculpture found in the Dharmarajaratha at Mahabalipuram appears to be the earliest Natārāja figure in the realm of Pallava art.

The Bhikṣuṭanamūrti images are found in plenty in South India. They represent various art traditions and belong to different periods. It appears that the Pallava sculptors were the first to represent this aspect of Śiva in stone. Two superb reliefs of Bhikṣuṭanamūrti are found in Kailasanātha temple at Kānci. The Pallavas were the first to introduce Dakṣiṇāmūrti into the art of temple sculpture. A majestic sculpture of Dakṣiṇāmūrti is found at Kaveripakam. It is very interesting that a deer and a cobra are shown listening to his discourse. B. Rajendra Prasad points out that early image of Śiva as Vyākhyāna-Dakṣiṇāmūrti are indeed rare in the temples particularly of seventh and eighth centuries A.D. in Andhradesa. They are indeed rare in the temples of Tondamanāḍalam, Nāṇḍīmandalam and Baṇavāḍī. In this context it is noteworthy that even prior to Rajasimha’s time (700-728 A.D) Śiva-Dakṣiṇāmūrti was housed in the south wall of vimana-aditala in the Pallava temples.

Several examples of Kalarimūrti are found in South India and Deccan, while this representation in North India is extremely rare. In South India, the Kāṇḍiṭamūrti and Kalarimūrti aspects of Śiva are noticed for the first time in the Dharmaraja ratha at Mahabalipuram. These themes received due recognition and importance at the hands of the Chōla artists. According to Nihar Ranjan ray, “the Arjuna’s penance or Gangavatharaṇa is a panel carved in epic scale and epic breadth.”
All incidents of the Sivapurāṇa are depicted in the main niches, inside the attached cordinal and corner and on their outer walls in the Kailāśanātha temple at Kānchi. Gaṅgādharamūrti, Tripurāntakamūrti, Gajasurasanātharamūrti, Vṛshabhāvatārāramūrti forms of Siva are the famous themes of Śiva during the Pallava period. The Pallavas were the first to represent the theme of Gajasurasanātharamūrti. The irate god engaged in destroying Gajasura is vigorously portrayed in a miniature Pallava relief found in the Kailāśanātha temple at Kānchipuram. Another interesting sculpture on the same theme is found in the porch of the Vaikuṇṭha perumal temple at Kānchipuram.

In South India the earliest representation of Vṛshabhāvatārāramūrti is found in the Arjuna ratha at Mahābalipuram. One of the finest representations of this in bronze is found in Tondanatçam. In these cases the god is shown with two hands and standing cross-legged with the right arm resting on the bull.

Seated images of Ardhanarīśvara are rare. A seated image of Ardhanārī is described by T.A. Gopinath Rao, the original stone sculpture of which was found lying on the first prākara of the Kailāśanātha temple at Kānchi.

Chandaśvara is one of the names of Śiva and is also the name of one of the principal Śiva gaṇas. Śiva bestowing grace on Chandaśa is a popular theme in sculptural representation in South India.

According to the legend preserved in Tamil literature, a Śaiva devotee Vicharāśarman cut off his father’s leg when he was disturbed while worshipping Lord Śiva. Śiva was greatly pleased by the devotion of Vicharāśarman and made him the chief of the host of his gaṇa. This narrative appears in sculpture in the Kailāśanātha temple at Kānchi, varāha-maṇḍapa at Mahābalipuram and in the Vedagiriśvara temple at Thirukkalikunram. The iconographic form of Canḍēśa as two handed holding a mace in the right hand is similar to the figures of Canḍēśa in the Pallava sculptures. As a parivāradēvata, Canḍēśa figures in the iconographic scheme of the Kailāśanātha temple at Kānchi.
The Matsya and Kurma forms of Vishnu are absent in the early sculptures. They are represented in the late medieval sculptures found in the Vishnu temples in Ariyalur, Kudumiyanmalai and Tadikonebu in Tamilnadu where a hybrid variety of these forms are evolved for facilitating sculptural representations. The upper half of the figure is in human form, while the lower half takes the form of the fish or tortoise. There are also a few late representations of these aspects, entirely in the zoomorphic forms. Similarly, in North India also, the earliest representations of the Matsya and Kurma forms belong to the late medieval period\textsuperscript{93}. Here the same variety of hybrid forms was evolved in sculptures.

There are a few examples dedicated to the Kurma form in South India, and the most famous is found in the temple at Srikurmam in Srikakulam District, Andhra Pradesh. Here the deity is represented by three huge Sāligamas, one representing the head, the middle big conical one, the body, and a small one indicating the tail\textsuperscript{94}.

At Tirukkachur (Alakkoil) near Singaperumal koil, in Tamil Nadu, the Kurma vataarā form of Vishnu is said to have worshipped Śiva; so also at the temple of Kachapeswara at Kanchipuram. Śāligamas representing the Matsya and Kurma aspects are commonly worshipped both in temples and houses\textsuperscript{95}.

Sculptural panels representing the Varaha (Nṛvaraha- hybrid) form of Vishnu, the next incarnation in the traditional order, are found in Mahabalipuram in the varaha-mandapa and the Adi varaha cave temple (7th c. A.D). The latter seems to have been subjected to later renovation and painting whereas the relief in the varaha-mandapa deserves particular attention as the earliest known representation. Varaha rescuing the earth forms the theme of another Pallava sculpture found in one of the panels on the walls of the main shrine in the Vaikunta perumal temple in Kāṇche\textsuperscript{96}.

Later representations of Varaha differ from early treatment and position where the central figure of the god dominates the entire scheme of the composition. This may be described as a gradual transition from the narrative to the iconic representation corresponding to a change in the nature of popular interest in the themes\textsuperscript{97}. 
The shrines for Varāha came to be built in all leading Viṣṇu temples in the Tamil country, because of the great importance given to it by the Viṣṇuva authors. Thus, as at Tirumala, we have shrines for Varāha in Śrī Varadarāja temple at Kāñci and Śrī Raṅganātha temple at Srīrangam.

The earliest known representations of the Bhūvarāha form of Viṣṇu are found in Mamallapuram in the varāha-mandapa and the Ādivarāha cave temple dated to the 7th century A.D. The panel in the varāha-mandapa closely follows the Vaikhanasāgama. Varāha rescuing the earth forms the theme of another Pallava sculpture found in the Vaikunta perumal temple in Kāñci.

In the Viṣṇuva literature of the Śvētāsvars which signified a revival of the Hindu faith in the South, we see considerable importance being given to the Varāha and Narasimha forms of Viṣṇu. Under the patronage of the Pallavas, quite a few temples dedicated to Varāha came into existence, for example the temple of Ādivarāha at Mahābalipuram and the magnificent sculpture of Bhūvarāha in another cave at the same place.

Thus the Varahāvatara seems to have been a favourite subject with the artists of the Pallava, Pāṇḍya, and Kōṅgu countries as much as it was with the artists of the Guptas, Chāḷukyas and Rāstrakūṭas of the North and the Deccan. In the Pallava, Chāḷukya panels, the figure of Varāha is seen wearing the high crown usually associated with Viṣṇu, whereas in the Rāstrakūṭa sculpture no crown is seen. In the Tamil country separate temples enshrining the Varāha form of Viṣṇu are known from the Pallava period onwards (Besides the Ādivarāha cave temple of Mahābalipuram dating from about the seventh century A.D.). Separate shrines dedicated to Varāha are many in South India. Similarly, an exquisite sculpture of Bhū-varāha is found in the cave at Nāmmakkal excavated by the Adigamans. There is a separate temple for Varāha at Tirumala on the banks of the pūṣkariṇī, and it is considered to be an ancient temple. In fact Tirumala is known in orthodox cities as Varāha-kṣethram. There is also a temple of Ādivarāha at Hāmpī, the capital of the Vijayānagara rulers.
The incarnation of Narasimha had become one of the most powerful sculptural themes even during the Gupta period and continued to be so in South India in the Pallava temples. Kings found great delight and pride in assuming the name of this god as their personal name as seen from names like Siṃhaviśṇu, Narasimhavarmaṇa, Rājasimha, etc. Even one of the Vijayanagara kings, who was intimately connected with the Tirupati temple, was called Śalva Narasimha.

An exquisitely carved Pallava relief, depicting the dynamic duel between Narasimha and Hīrāṇyakaśippu, is found in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñcipuram. This also happens to be the earliest known representation of the theme. Another sculpture on the same theme and in a similar style is in the Vaikunṭha perumal temple at Kāñcipuram. In this respect they have followed the iconographic details given by the Māṭṣya-purāṇa. A Late Pallava representation of the fighting scene is found in the Pundarīkakṣa perumal temple in Tiruvellariai.

The earliest representation of Narasimha in Andhra Pradesa is found in Peddamūdiyam plaque in Kadalap District of Andhra Pradesh. The earliest known image of Narasimha, in the Tamil country, is a two-armed seated figure, along with other divinities, found in Mannur. This plaque resembles in many respects the one from Kondamotu. Another representation comes from Maṇimangalam in Tamilnadu and this resembles Peddamūdiyam plaque.

The relief found in the Ādivarāha cave at Mahābalipuram is a typical Pallava representation of the Vāmana-Trivikrama form of Viṣṇu. Two more sculptures of Trivikrama, belonging to uttama class, are found in the Kailāsaṇātha and Vaikunṭha perumāl temples at Kāñcipuram.

Vāmana-Trivikrama, the dwarf and the great form of Viṣṇu, is referred to in early Tamil literary classes like Tirukkāvai and Silappadikāram. It is also glorified by Viṣṇuva saints, the Ālvārs. Trivikrama is referred to by them as Ulagaḻaṇḍa Perumāl, the lord who measured the earth. Separate temples for this form are indeed rare. But there are two ancient and famous shrines in Tamilnadu, one at Tirukkoilur in South Arcot district and another at Kāñcipuram, both of them were eulogised by the Ālvārs.
The popularity of the Rāma legend in Tamilnadu during the Pallava times is evidenced by the contemporary sculptures. There is a representation of Vāli worshipping the Ṛiṅga and Rāvana trying to disturb him, in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kānchi and again the Rāvanaṇugrahamūrti occurs in the Olakkannesvara temple of Mahābalipuram. The Nāgarjunakonda panel (3rd c. A.D) in Andhra Pradesh delineates two scenes from the Buddhist Daśaratha jātaka, i.e., Rāma and Śīta going to the forest in ascetic garb and Bharata meeting Rāma at Chitrakūta and persuading him to return to Ayodhya to be its rulers. This Jātaka version of the Rāma legend emphasizes the spirit of renunciation and the equanimity of the mind of Rāma, which the artist of Nāgarjunakonda has successfully depicted.  

The Purānic themes were known and popular during the times of the Pallava rulers. The Mahābalipuram inscription of Narasimhavarman I refer to the pushing down of Kailāsa along with the ten-faced Rāvana by the toes of Śiva. Though the Pallava inscriptions contain numerous references to the Rāmāyaṇa episodes, the Pallava monuments contain only a few Rāmāyaṇa scenes, Such as the shaking of Kailāsa by Rāvana, the adoration of Śiva by Vāli and the descent of the Gaṅga. 

Among the themes of Kṛiṣna the next incarnation of Viṣṇu, Kāliyamardana-Kṛiṣṇa motif first appeared in South India and then spread to other parts of the country. A solitary example of the representation of this form of Kṛiṣṇa is found in a Pallava panel in the Dharmarājaratha on the middle tier of the roof of the monolithic temple at Mahābalipuram. Here, a two-armed Kṛiṣṇa is seen defeating a three-hooded nāga (serpent) whose tail he holds with both hands. This, however, doesn’t tally with the literary description, for Kṛiṣṇa is not found dancing on the hoods of the nāga. In Āndhradesa, Kāliyamardana forms of Kṛiṣṇa are found in the Mokshēśvara temple at Pālakōṭa in Mahabubnagar district and the Trivikrama temple at Pedachēnu in Guntur district. 

Vēnugopala is not represented in the sculpture of ancient period. In Tamil Nadu Vēnugopala sculptures are known from the eleventh century A.D onwards. The best representation of the Gōvardhana episode is in the Kṛiṣṇa-mandapa at
Mahābalipuram. The figure of Kṛiṣṇa in the act of lifting Gṛwarzdhana is also represented in one of the niches in the Vaikānta perum temple in Kāṇchi.112

After the Pallavas, the Cholās held sway over South India. The Cholā emperors were the finest temple builders of South India. Art and architecture, sculpture of stone and bronze received great patronage and encouragement from the Cholā kings. Though they were generally Śaivites, they made significant contributions to the Viśnu temples.113 There were several temples which contained shrines both of Śiva and of Viśnu side by side, the most conspicuous instance being that of Chidambaram. The position of the icons of Nātāraja and Gṛwarzdarāja in this temple is brought out with great precision (accuracy) in the verse in the work, Tirukkovaiyar which depicts Viśnu as lying in front of Nātāraja, absorbed in the contemplation of the foot lifted in his dance and supplicating him for a view of the other foot as well.114

The impression of the tolerance and eclecticism that generally characterized the religious outlook of the time is strengthened by a study of the pantheon, which included an assortment of all conceivable deities to whom worship was offered throughout the country. Besides images of Śiva in his various aspects, like Kṛiṣṇa, Bīkṣhūsana, Kālīyanasundara, Lingaṭṭhabhavamūrti, Nātāraja, Daksṇiṇāmūrti, and so on, the icons presented to the great temples of Tanjore by its royal patrons included images of Gaṇapati, Subrahmaṇya, Mahāviṣṇu and Śūrya.115

The Lingaṭṭhabhavamūrti sculptures belonging to the early, middle and later Cholā periods are found in numerous temples.116 Lingaṭṭhabhavamūrti is a very familiar type seen almost in all Cholā temples in the centre of the western wall of the central shrine.117 The themes of Kaṇkālamūrti and Kalarimūrti received due recognition and importance at the hands of the Cholā artists. The best examples of the Cholā period are found at Darāsura, Kumbakonam, and Tiruchchēngattangudi etc.118

The theme of Śiva Kalarimūrti received due recognition and importance at the hands of the Cholā artists. A fine sculpture of this form of Śiva is found in the devakṣaṭa of Muvarkovil at Kodumbalur. It is also found in a Śiva temple at Kamarasavalli and in the niche of a Śiva temple at Govindaputur. The sculptures of Kalarimūrti found at Pāṭiśvaram and Tiruchchēngattangudi are almost similar to
those in Mallam, in Nellore District. In this context, the sculpture of Kalārīmūrti found on the outer surface of the back wall of the garbhagriha of the Santhānamallesvara temple at Pushpagiri in Kadapa District of Andhra Pradesh is noteworthy. Another sculpture illustrating the same theme is found in a Śiva temple at Tanjore.

It is noteworthy that Śiva- Dakṣiṇāmūrti is invariably represented in the Chōla temples. From the tenth century A.D. onwards the Apasmārapurusā is shown. In the Chittoor region of Andhra Pradesh, the temples at Tōṇḍamanaḍu, Laddigam, Guḍimallam, and Śrīkalahasti etc. datable to tenth to twelfth century A.D. show Śiva-Dakṣiṇāmūrti with the Apasmārapurusā. In the Rēṇāḍu region of the same state also, the temples of Attirāla, Pushpagiri, etc. show Śiva-Dakṣiṇāmūrti with the Aapasmārapurusā. It is noteworthy that these temples exhibit features of Chōla architectural and iconography. The above aspects reveal the influence of the Chōla tradition over Pāṇāḍu.

The image of the Sarabha form of Śiva iconographically and in terms of religious history reveals the religious conflict between Śaivism and Vaishnavism. It has been pointed out that the Sarabha cult emerged during the Chōla period and the figures of Sarabha are found in Dārsuram and Tribhuvanam. Sarabha taming Narasimha symbolizes the Śaivite dominance over the growing Vaishnava faith under Ramanuja. The earliest datable representation of Sarabha comes from the Chōla temples of Airavatesvara in Dārsuram built in the period of Rājāraja II (1156-1163 A.D). The legend is no doubt interesting but it is the outcome of the sectarian rivalry which characterized the religious history of the Tamil country in the twelfth century A.D. The image of Sarabhamūrti is found in the central niche on the south wall of the mahāmandapa of Dārsuram temple in Tamil Nadu.

The Śiva-Gaṅgāadhamūrti form is seen occasionally in the temples of Andhradesa. The best examples of this form of Śiva are known from the Brihadeśvara temples at Tanjore and Gaṅgaikonda Chōlapuram in Tamilnadu.

The temple at Chidambaram contains the painting of Tripurāntaka Śiva in a chariot drawn by the four Vedas, transformed into horses, with Brahma as the
charioter. Siva is in the warrior’s pose of alīda; he is eight-armed and brandishes weapons, including the mighty bow. Equally fierce are the hosts of demons that attack Siva. This great masterpiece of Chōla art continues the earlier tradition of Siva in the alīda pose seen in Pallava sculpture. Siva as the victorious warrior reflects the Chōla military vision and ideals of Rajarāja. Among the sculptures belonging to the Chōla period, an interesting relief depicting the Tripurāntakamūrti theme is found in the Siva temple at Chidambaram. A stone sculpture of the same theme found in the Airāvatesvara temple at Darāsuram shows Siva as standing in a tribhanga and with four hands. A Chōla painting found in the Bṛhadisvara temple at Tanjore depicts Mahādeva as seated on his chariot and fighting the Tripuras with his drawn bow.

A fine representation of Siva as Gajasurasamhāramūrti is from Valuvar in South India. In this sculpture the deity rests his right leg on an elephant’s head while the other is lifted up and bent. The body is twisted and two of his eight arms are opened to stretch the hide of the animal. This bronze image is datable to the early Chōla period. Two more superb examples of Gajasurasamhitramūrti are found at Darāsuram and Tiruchcheṅgattangudi. In these reliefs Siva is standing with his right leg firmly set on the elephant’s head whereas the left one is raised and kept in utkāṭikāśana posture. Another sculpture representing the theme, on a miniature scale, is noticed at Kamarasavalli. The deity is shown with eight hands in the Darāsuram and Tiruchcheṅgattangudi while in the Kamarasavalli miniature relief he has four hands. In all these cases the skin of the elephant is arranged in the form of a prabhāmaṇḍala at the back of the deity. It is observed that in some of the Chōla sculptures, Uma with Skanda seated on her loins, is shown to the proper left of Siva.

In South India, though the Bhikṣhūtanamūrti aspect of Siva found favour with the Pallava sculptors, it became popular only during the time of the Chōlas. Two beautiful sculptures of Bhikṣhūtanamūrti are found at Kalahasti in Andhra Pradesh in which the deity holds mayūrapincha in the upper right hand. Another sculpture of this form is found in the Vaiṣhāṇasvaram temple at Karuntangudi in Tamilnadu. In this sculpture the god is seen holding a mayūrapincha in his upper left hand.

The Vṛishabhavatārāmūrti form of Siva is often met with in all the Chōla temples. The Vṛishabhātanamūrti found at Taramangalam and Tirumiyachur are the best examples to illustrate. In the first example the lower right hand is kept in abhaya
while in the second it is kept in \textit{krt\textivalambita} and in the other respects these sculptures are very closely akin to the Mallam images \textsuperscript{128}.

The art of carving Na\textit{\textatara}ja images reached its perfection during the time of the imperial Ch\textit{\textola} of Tanjore. An early Ch\textit{\textola} sculpture found at Ga\textit{\textigaikondacholapuram} depicts the god dancing in the \textit{bhuj\textangatrasa} posture on the dwarf \textsuperscript{129}. Though charming, the early Ch\textit{lukya Ardh\textit{narisvara} from Mah\textit{kutesvara} temple is excelled by carvings of the earliest Ch\textit{\textola} phase, such as those from Ko\textit{\textudhal}. One of the most effective Ardh\textit{narisvaras} is the early Ch\textit{\textola} metal image from Tiruven\textit{k\textad\textusk}u now in the Madras Museum. Here the beauty is enhanced by a symmetric element; for example, there is one hand on the left side but two on the right \textsuperscript{130}.

In South India, the sculpture of Bhairava found in Pa\textit{\textivisvaram} represents him as youthful nude and in a standing posture. In all the images found in the Ka\textit{\textalahastisvara} temple at Ka\textit{\textalahasti}, the deity is represented as holding a sword in the lower right hands \textsuperscript{131}.

In the Ch\textit{\textola} temples from the 9\textsuperscript{th} century onwards Chand\text بص\textes is represented invariably in one of the \textit{pariv\textara}layas \textsuperscript{132}. In Brihad\textit{svara} temple at Tanjore the figure stresses the warlike aspect of S\textit{\textiva} who is repeated in defiant attitudes as Tripur\textit{\textantaka}, Kir\textit{\textata}, Kalantaka, and so forth. There is no sculpture more beautiful than the famous Chand\textit{\textesanugraha} panel which shows R\textit{\textajendra almost identifying himself with the devotee Chand\text بص\textes and receiving a garland from S\textit{\textiva} as laurels of victories \textsuperscript{133}. Probably the largest and most meticulously fashioned Na\textit{\textatara}ja of this phase of Ch\textit{\textola} art is the huge and imposing figure now found in the Rijks museum, Amsterdam \textsuperscript{134}.

The Kal\textit{\texty\textasundaram\texturthi} aspect of S\textit{\textiva represents S\textit{\textiva and P\textarvati as they were at the time of their marriage. There are fine Ch\textit{\textola images of this particular aspect. Here S\textit{\textiva is seen as holding the right hand of P\textarvati his bride, which signifies marriage (\textit{\textpannigrhana}). S\textit{\textiva is represented as a handsome bridegroom, free from his

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usual ghastly ornaments like snakes, skulls, with four arms, and Pārvati appears as a typical bride in fine *tribhanga* pose.

The Chōla temples have Viṣṇavite sculptures also too. The story of the Varahāvatāra is found among the small scale narrative panels of the early Chōla temples, such as those at Punjai and Kunibakōnām. Here the narration takes a form different from the earlier one found in the Pallava panels. On the right half of the rectangular panels the figure of Varāha carrying the earth goddess is shown fleeing away, being pursued by the *asura* followers of Hiranyākṣa. This method of representation is uncommon, for in the large scale sculptures of the Pallava cave temples of Māmallapuram and those of the Chālukyas in Bādāmi and Aihole, the particular moment in the story chosen for representation is that which immediately follows Varāha’s fight with Hiranyākṣa and the rescue of the earth. The actual fight between Varāha and Hiranyākṣa forms the theme of a few sculptures. But usually the scene depicted in the Chōla panels shows the Varāha being chased by the *asuras*, and not the moment of his victory depicted in the earlier panels. Even in the Puranic stories of the Varahāvatāra this detail is not mentioned. It is, therefore, interesting that it should have been chosen by the Chōla sculptors for representation. However the panels showing this scene are of great artistic merit, as they are dynamic in contrast to the static but beautiful representations of the theme in the Pallava and Kongu Panels.

In the Chōla narrative reliefs, the story of Narasimha is represented invariably in two stages, and occasionally in three. The former method represents the fight between Narasimha the man-lion and Hiranyākaśipu exactly as it is found in the Pallava and Adigaiman sculptures of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. The actual moment of Narasimha killing Hiranya by tearing out his entrails in the second part of the story is represented both in the bas-reliefs and the independent icons of the period. The Chōla inscriptions bear ample evidence to the fact that the building of shrines for Narasimha and setting up images of the god was a common feature throughout this period. One of the few instances of the *avatāra* forms, which have had a continuous predominance over others, is that of Narasimha. The others are those of
Rāma and Kṛiṣṇa. The wide proliferation of this *avatāra* is proved also by the later development of a variety of Narasimha images under the Vijayanagara rulers.\(^\text{137}\)

An eight-armed image of Narasimha, belonging to the Chōla period is found in the Brahmapurisvāvar temple at Pullaṅgangai in Tamilnadu.\(^\text{138}\) In the Chōla narrative reliefs, the story of this *avatāra* is represented in the Somanātha temple in Palaiyarai datable to the 11th century A.D. An image of Narasimha with eight hands seated in the *uktākāsana* posture is found among the late Chōla reliefs of the Kampaharesvāra temple in Tribhuvanam.\(^\text{139}\)

Epigraphical, sculptural and architectural evidences all point to the fact that during the Chōla times which were chiefly Saivite the Rāma legend and the *Rāmāyaṇa* episodes were widely popular. The Kṛiṣṇa theme too seems to have fascinated them considerably. Narrative representations of the *Rāmāyaṇa* episodes appear in plenty in several of their Śiva temples. The earliest representation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story occurs in the early Chōla Śiva temple at Pullaṅgangai, Punjai, Kandiyur and Kumbakonam, all in Tamil Nadu. The temples at Dharmapuri (8th century A.D), The Avanisvāra temple at Gopuraṭṭi, the Kampaharesvāra temple at Tribhuvanam delineate a large number of the *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes. The Nāgesvarasvāmi temple (9th century A.D) and the Kampaharesvāra temple (1167-1218 A.D) at Tribhuvanam may be noted specially in this context. The Nāgesvāra temple is embellished with exquisite miniature panels of significance Rāmāyaṇa events ranging from Dasaratha’s *putrakameshti* and the birth of Rāma and his brothers to the building of the *śrīhu* (the bridge) across the sea to Laṅka. The scenes depicted in the Kampaharesvāra temple range from Rāma, Lakṣhmāna and Sītā at Pañcāhavati, Sītā’s fascination for the deceptive Golden Deer, and Rāma’s going after it, to the birth of Lava and Kuśa, with a number of episodes in between, covering almost the greater part of the Rāma story. The temples mentioned above are only a sample. There are many more Chōla temples in the region depicting various Rāmāyaṇa episodes.\(^\text{140}\)

The *Kṛiṣṇāḷīla* figures are also profusely seen in the Chōla temples. The image of Vēnugopāla from Ennayiram dated to about the thirteenth century A.D., is almost similar to the images of the god at Koḍāvalūr and Kṛiṣṇa Paṭṭānām. Vēnugopāla of two-armed and four-armed varieties are found in the Rāganayaka
temple at Srirangam and show the influence of Karnataka. A bronze image of Venugopala with four arms in the late Chola style comes from Tiruppullani.

The description of Venugopala images given in the VaikhanaSamagama and the Vishnudharmottara indicate only a two-armed figure playing on the flute and in the former, Krishnana is accompanied by gopies and gopas. The two-armed variety of Venugopala is met with in the Hoyasala sculptures of Halebid and Srirangam. The images of Venugopala found at Krishnapatnam, Koivalur and Atmakur differ from the prescription of the texts. The two-armed variety of Venugopala found at Mallam follows is the Vishnudharmottarapurana. The Govardhana episode is represented in the narrative sculptures of the early Chola temple of Nagesvara at Kumbakonam.

The sculptures representing various aspects of Siva and Vishnu are found in the Chalukyan temples. They exhibit the highest degree of perfection in the art of carving. Here also one can discern the interaction of Nagar and Dravid art traditions. For example, the Siva-Nataraja sculptures of this period betray southern and northern traditions. One of the earliest representations of Nataraja, illustrating the early Chalukyan art traditions, is found in cave No.1 at Badami.

The early Chalukyan sculptors were the first to translate the theme of Kiratajuniya story in stone in the Karnataka region. Beautiful narrative panels of this theme are found in the Papanatha, Mallikarjuna and Virupaksha temples at Pattadakal. During the Badami Chalukyan period, the earliest representation of Parvati, as the Kirati, observing the auspicious mark on the back of Arjuna, appears for the first time in the tenth century A.D at Allaipur. Lilamurtis of Siva carved on exterior walls between niches and deva-kritias of the Papanatha temple, Pattadakkal, rectangular panels depicting Siva's marriage, Siva and Parvati seated on mount Kailasa carved on columns of the Visvesvara temple, Pattadakkal are some of the narrative panels of Siva, which belong to the Badami Chalukyan period. The Ugra aspects of Siva are depicted in plenty in their temples. Andhakavadamurti is particularly popular with the Badami Chalukyan sculptors.

The Lingodbhavamurti reliefs belonging to the early Chalukyan period are not unknown. One such image is portrayed on the exterior wall of the Virupaksha temple.
at Pattadakal. Another beautiful relief illustrating the same theme is carved on the eastern wall and immediately to the right of the main entrance of the Svarga Brahma temple at Alampūr in the western region of Andhra. In the western Andhra region, Badami Chalukyan relief representing Tripurāntakaśmiṣṭi aspect of Śiva is found in the Svarga Brahma temple at Alampūr. In this relief, the god is shown standing and driving the chariot.

Chandesa does not figure in the Early Chalukyan temples of Andhradesa, not even in the temples at Bicacavolu, Pondugala of the Eastern Chalukyan period. Hence the representation of Chandesa in the iconographic scheme of the temples at Pākānḍa indicates the impact of the Pallava and Chōla tradition.

The Varahāvataṭa seems to have been a favourite subject with the artists of the Pallavas, Chōlas, Chalukyas and Rāstrakūṭas of the South and the Deccan. There are two representations of Varāha in Badami a century and a half later than Udayagiri, but a century earlier than the Mahābalipuram panel. It is curious that in the contemporary Pallava and Pandyā inscriptions no direct reference to the Varāha form of Viṣṇu.

One of the Bhūvarāha figures in Badami Cave No-II, dated to the 6th century A.D. faces proper left and the goddess Bhūdevi is found standing on a lotus held in the left hand of the god. The other Varāha figure in Cave No-IV is very much similar to it. A similar representation of about the same period is found in the Ravanapadi cave in Aihole. The Bhūvarāha panel is also found in the famous Kailasā temple at Ellora assignable to the later half of the 8th century A.D. In this, the central figure of Varāha faces left and holds the figure of Prithvi by his lower left hand. In the Pallava and Chalukyan panel, the figure of Bhūvarāha is seen wearing the high crown usually associated with Viṣṇu, whereas in the Rāstrakūṭa sculpture no crown is seen.

Many reliefs depicting the Narasimha theme have been found in various parts of India, and a large number of them represent either the combat between the god and the demon or the killing of the latter by the former. Early Chalukyan representations of these themes are found at Aihole. In all the Early Chalukyan Narasimha sculptures,
artists pay special attention to and lay more emphasis on portraying the *raudra and samhara* aspects of the god 155.

The early Chalukyan representations of Vaśana-Trivikrama are found in the Virūpakṣa and Mallikārjuna temple at Pattadakal, the Svargabrahma temple at Alampūr and in the temple situated to the south of Konti-gudi at Aihole156. The most detailed carving of Vaśana-Trivikrama is found in the Svarga Brahma temple at Alampūr.

In Andhra, the Nava-Brahma group of Chalukyan temples at Alampūr contains several scenes from the *Ramāyana* carved on pillars in low relief. This tradition of depicting scenes from the epic on pillars and temple walls was continued during the medieval period. Probably to uphold moral values, emphasis was given by the medieval sculptors to the stories of the *Ramāyana* in the temples 157.

Illustrations of episodes from the *Ramāyana* are found, however, in the Chalukyan temples of Pattadakal datable to the 7th century A. D. and later in the Raṣṭrakūṭa monuments at Ellora datable to the 8th century A. D. Karnatakā abounds with temples plentifully epic scenes. The Durga temple at Aihole and the Paṇāṇāha temple as well as the Virūpakṣa temple at Pattadakkal are profusely decorated with the *Ramāyana* scenes. The Paṇāṇāha temple represents the Rāma story in proper sequence. The story begins with the *putrakāmēṣṭhi* of Dasaratha. All the scenes bear labels in Kannada of the 6th-7th century A.D. The fight between Vāli and Sugrīva and between Ravaṇa and Jáṭayu here as well as in Virūpakṣa temple in Pattadakal have served as the inspiration for the more mature and better designed depiction of the themes on the walls of the Kailāsanātha temple at Ellora158.

The eastern Chalukyas were ardent devotees of Śiva and promoted Śaivism by constructing a number of Śiva temples and encouraging people to emulate them promoting Śaivism 159. Various aspects of Śiva are found in the Chalukyan temples. Among the images of Lingodbhavamurti two interesting reliefs are found in the Bhīmeśvara temple at Draksharāma160. A very fine eastern Chalukyan sculpture, illustrating Śiva as slayer of Gajasura, is found in the Ramalingēśvara temple at Pālakollu. A majestic sixteen-handed image of Gajasurasamhāramurti is in the centre
of the Mahānāśika of the Amṛiteśvara temple at Amṛiapura. It is a museum specimen of the later Chāluṇka or Hoyasala art. One of the eastern Chāluṇka examples of Nāṭarāja, which was originally discovered under a tree at Biccavolu, is now preserved in the Madras Museum. The most note-worthy feature of this image is the ārdhvaliṅga of Śiva. This shows influence of the North Indian tradition, this feature is invariably present in representations of Śiva from Bengal, Orissa and other places.

The Chāluṇka temples also have Vaiśnavite themes. The sculptures illustrating Sthauna-Narasimha are found in the temples built by the eastern Chāluṇyas of Vēṇgi. One such beautiful image is carved on the northern side of the inner enclosure of the Bhimesvara temple at Drākṣarāma. A fine metal statue from the Pallava-Chōla transition period shows Kṛiṣṇa conquering the demon Kāliya. The Vēṇugopala from the Bēḷūr temple represents perfection in the Hoyasala style; and the image of Kṛiṣṇa with his consorts from Chīmakurti is the best example of eastern Chāluṇya workmanship in metal.

The later Chāluṇka sculptures also blend the North and South Indian traditions while representing Nāṭarāja. The best examples of Nāṭarāja the master dancer are found at Harahadagalli, Nandi-Khandi, Ittagi, etc in Karnataka.

Most of the later Chāluṇka reliefs represent a harmonious combination of North Indian and Tamil traditions. The multi-armed aspect of Nāṭarāja shows the North Indian tradition whereas the presence of Āpasmārapuruṣha under the feet of Śiva shows the South Indian tradition. The most interesting feature of this relief is that the Āpasmārapuruṣha is shown with a sword and a shield in his hands. Generally this feature is not noticed in the figures of the Pallava, Rāṣṭrakūṭa, Chōla, and Pāṇḍya etc. The tendency to represent Āpasmārapuruṣha with a sword in one of his hands is introduced by the later Chāluṇka sculptors. Thus in the Nāṭarāja reliefs found at Ittagi, Bēḷūr, Pushpagiri, the dwarfish demon is shown with a sword in his right hand.

The later Chāluṇka representations of Trivikrama are found at Hirahadagalli, Nilgūḍa, Somanāṭhpūr, Bēḷūr and Nugginahalli. These sculptures depict the extremely florid and highly decorative art of the later Chāluṇka period.
Another sculpture of Narasimha is found in a temple at Bagali. It is interesting to note here that a later Chalukyan sculpture found on one of the pillars in the Rāmalingesvarar temple at Nandi-khandi depicts Narasimha with Hiranyakasipu. Both instances are in Karnataka.

The Nolamba of Hemavati, who were ardent followers of Śaivism, favoured the Naṭaraja form of Śiva. A wonderful example of Naṭarāja, dancing in the prishṭhavastika attitude, is now preserved in the Madras museum. In this sculpture the god has six hands and is dancing on the Apsmarapuruṣa. The representation of Apsmarapuruṣa as a dwarf, under the foot of Śiva and the bhujangatrasa in this sculpture clearly indicate that the Noḷāṁba sculptors also favoured the fusion of North and South Indian art traditions. During this period of artistic expression, the Noḷāṁba, even the weaker dynasties among them, were intensely active. They ruled an important portion of the Chalukyan realm from their capital, Hemavati. In Hemavati itself are images of a Gajańtaka, Ravaṇanugraha, a dancing figure of Śiva, a Naṭesa with his legs crossed and his body twisted, several of the Seven Mothers (Saptāṁ̄irikas) and the Śrīlinga-Chandraśekharamūrti.

The Noḷāṁba sculptors also took great interest in the representation of Dakṣināmūrti. Good examples of VyākhyaṆa-Dakṣināmūrti are found at Hemavati and some of them are preserved in the Madras Govt. museum, Chennai. A Noḷāṁba sculpture illustrating VNādhara-Dakṣināmūrti is found in the ASI Museum, Hemavati.

The Kakatiya monarchs (9th-13th c A.D) were great devotees of Śiva, and they were well known for their policy of religious toleration. Though it was the heyday of Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism also flourished. Among the Śaiva sects, the Kālāmukhas were predominant at the beginning, but the Pasupata sect gained an upper hand later. The Vira-Śaiva school of Basava, which was at its zenith in the Kannada country during this period, did not attract many people in Andhra. Local Village and family deities such as Ekārī, Māhārāma, Kākahamba and Kamēswari, were very popular and their worship was general throughout this period.
The Kākatiyās as devotees of Śiva built several temples to him throughout their kingdom. Both their secular and religious architecture was outstanding. Their famous temples at Pālamipēṭ, Hanumakonda, Pillalamarri, Nāgulapadu, Mēcherla, Gursāla and Tripurāntakam clearly show the impact of Chālukya forms 174.

The excellence of the Kākatiya architecture and sculpture is revealed in their constructions which include the famous temples at Hanumakonda, Warangal, Pillalamarri and Pālamipēṭ. The thousand pillared temple known as the Rudrēśava temple at Hanumakonda constructed by Rudradēva in 1162 A.D. stands as a testimony for the great architectural triumph of the age of the Kākatiyas. They are elaborately decorated with intricate designs and perfectly proportioned with amazing skill and mastery, depicting the deities and scenes from the epics 175. The great temple of Pālamipēṭ is decorated with a variety of figures including deities, warriors, musicians and dancers 176.

On a Pillar from Katangur, now preserved in the state museum, Hyderabad, Rāvana shaking Mount Kailāsa and Kumāra destroying Taarakāsura are powerfully portrayed. The Śiva temple at Pālamipēṭ contains two panels highly narrative in character depicting the Tripurāntaka and Gajasurasamhāra forms 177.

A beautiful sculpture depicting Tripurāntakamūrti is found on a beam of the ceiling at Pālamipēṭ temple of the Kākatiya period. The eight-armed Śiva is standing in alidasaṇa on the chariot. He holds bow in his main left hand. The asuras are shown seated and lying on the ground. The chauri bearers, dancing Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu and the Gandharvas are carved on either side of the god. Brahma is seated in front of the chariot. The relaxed posture of the god indicates that he has successfully conducted the task entrusted to him by the gods 178.

The Kākatiya representation of Gajasurasamhāramūrti is found on one of the entablatures supporting the central ceiling of the sabhā-mandapa in the Śiva temple at Pālamipēṭ. In this relief Śiva is seen standing on his left leg firmly on the elephant head while the right one is raised and bent at the knee. The ten-armed deity holds khaḍga, kheṭaka, đamaru, pāsa, triśūla, aṅkuśa, bāṇa, and dhanus. The remaining lower right and left hands are kept in abhaya and varaḍa poses. Brahma and Viṣṇu flank him on
either side. This is not according to the *Silpa* texts. In style and technique this illustration closely resembles the later Chālukyan and Hoyasala sculptures.

The Ainavolu temple for Mailārudēva or Khaṇḍerāya is in accordance with the pattern of the Somesvara temple of Kolanupāka. Mailārudēva was a popular deity with all the attributes of Bhairava except his ferocity and nakedness and the dog. At the Ekavirā temple at Mogilicherla, we see a crude Bhairava figure carved in bas-relief near the temple and a very recent figure intended to portray Ekavirā. On the top of the hill at Hīḍimbāśrama, a Jain temple facing north was converted into a temple of Virabhadra. This Virabhadra figure is in bold relief, the figure sticking to the back plate, parikara. He has eight hands and is full of vigour. He holds a sword and shield in his front hands. The back plate ends as a triangle just as the space around the sun at Rudrēsvāra in Hanumakonda.

Among the beam sculptures at Palampeta, we see rishis, Marṇḍeswāra, and Brahma. Here the marriage proposal is made. The southern face shows Śiva starting for the marriage with his retinue, and the western outer face depicts the marriage. On the lower face of the beams we see the great deeds of the lord: fight with Gajasura, Śiva-tāṇḍava, and the killing of Gajasura. Śiva dances on the head of Gajasura. This representation, which was adopted later in many temples, is in clear contrast to the Chola type of Gajasurasamiharamūrti, wherein the lord is seen in profile, standing on his right leg, and folding up his left leg, and looking back. The Rastrakūṭa and Chālukyan types of Gajasurasamihāra are followed here. However, the Kakatiya sculpture attempts to narrate the Puranic incidents at Palampet.

The Rudrēsvāra temple at Palampet has figures like the dancing Gaṇapati, Bhairava with a dog, Narasimha tearing out the intestines of Hiranyakasipu, Gaṇapati six-handed etc. The Raṅga-maṇḍapa on the north western pillar has the gopika vastrapaharana scene. These are not as good as the Rastrakūṭa or Chālukyan groups; they were perhaps made by Jain sculptors converted to Saivism.

The Ramappa temple in Warangal district, one of the finest examples of Kakatiya art, contains various scenes from the Ramayana which include Sīla in Aśoka-vāṭika, Lakṣmīṇāra going to chastise Sugrīva, submission of the sea god to Rama,
Rāma’s vow to annihilate the rākṣasas etc. There is also another interesting panel carved on one of the chajja slabs of the Śiva temple at Nidikonda in Warangal district. This panel, also of the Ṛkṣa period, shows the episode of Rāma’s arrow through piercing of the seven palm trees in a single stretch.

Ballāla I (1102-1108 A.D.) the Hoyasala king was a devout Śaiva and his devotion to Śiva was extraordinary. Viṣṇuvardhana was a brother of Ballāla I. In the early part his life he was under the influence of Jaina teachers. But later he converted to Viṣṇavism and he got built magnificent temples all over his realm and those at Belur and Halebid are gems of Hoyasala architecture. The famous figure of dancing Gāṇeśa, like the colossal seated figure of the same deity from Halebid, illustrates the magnificence of iconographic depiction by the Hoyasalas.

In the Hoyasala temples, themes like Ravana shaking the mount Kailāsa, Kirātārjunīyam, Śiva’s marriage with Pārvati, Bhikṣātananāmūrti and Lingodbhavamurti are seen.

Among Viṣṇu’s incarnations, the Viṣṇapa and Narasimha themes appear repeatedly in the Hoyasala temples such as the Kesava temple at Belur, the Hoyasaleśvara temple at Halebid and others. On the left of the eastern doorway of Belur temple is an interesting panel, which shows Hanumān and Garuḍa fighting over what looks like a linga placed between them. The object is split into two halves by the disc of Viṣṇu who is seated above.

The Hoyasala temples at Nugginahalli, Sosale, Javagal, Aralaguppe, Somanathapūr and Belur etc., have narrative friezes in their basement showing a world of mythological content. Many Rāmāyaṇa scenes are found in the Sōmeśvara temple at Bandalike, the Kesava temple, Somanathapūr and Halebid. The Hoyasala temples are full of the Rāmāyaṇa scenes. Among them are, apart from the Hoyasaleśvara temple at Halebid and Chennakesava temple at Belur, the Amṛtiḥesvara temple at Amritpur, the Mallikarjuna temple at Basral, the Lakṣhmi-Nārāyana temple at Javagal, Somanātha temple at Somanathapur and many others.
The main thing to be noticed in the Amrithesvara and Somanathapur temples are the episodes from Balakanda very few of which, except the redemption of Ahalya, occur in the North Indian temples. Among the scenes, depicted are Daśaratha performing putrakameshti, Daśaratha in his court with his queens, Viśvāmitra seeking the help of Rāma and Lakṣhmāṇa, Rāma slaying Tālaka, Rāma punishing Mārīcha and Subahu, Rāma breaking Siva's bow, Viśvāmitra, Rāma and Lakṣhmāṇa in Janaka's court, the defeat of Parusurāma etc. The other incidents of Balakanda also depicted in the Somanatha temple are the birth of Rāma and his brothers, the naming of the infants, the babies in the cradle, the infants crawling on fours, the marital training of Rāma and others, Daśaratha in his court, Daśaratha's fight with the enemies of Indra etc.

On the back wall of the Kaśivisvēśvara temple in Lakundi which was once the capital of the Hoyasalas, is a spirited representation of Rāvana fighting a diggaja. There are sculptures which describe a very few episodes of the Uttarakanda.

The Hōyasalaśēvara temple at Dharmapuri (9th c A.D) furnishes charming portrayal of Rāma's piercing the saptatilas, the fight between Vāli and Sugrīva, etc. In the Hoyasala sculptures the two-armed variety of Viṇugopāla is found. Viṇugopāla sculptures are also noticed in the temples of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries A.D in Andhradeśa.

The Vijayanagara rulers were staunch followers of Hinduism. The early Vijayanagara kings were Śaivites of the orthodox type, but the later kings became staunch Vaishnavas with a predilection for Lord Venkatesa of Tirupati in preference to Sri Virūpākṣa of Vijayanagara, the tutelary deity of the early rulers. Even during the tenure of the first dynasty in Vijayanagara, Vaishnavism, serving along with Śaivism, had not gained ascendancy. The change of faith of the kings had its indirect effects on the faith of the people in the empire and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries A.D Vaishnavism spread in South India with amazing rapidity. Consequently the Vaishnava temples in their realm received more attention. The impact of the Bhagavata cult to which the Vijayanagara rulers were inclined, is very clear through the sculptural depiction of Krishna's story in their temples. The epic
stories and *Bhāgavata* episodes came to be portrayed with great vividness and charm, rarely attempted before.\(^{195}\)

Under the Vijayanagara rulers like Krishṇadevarāya, Achyutarāya and Sadasivarāya, Vaiṣṇavism gained great influence. Krishṇadevarāya's grants to the Vaiṣṇava shrines were numerous and rich.\(^{196}\) The Vijayanagara period is rightly considered a golden age in the history of the iconography of Andhradesa. The Vijayanagara emperors ushered in a new phase of art, which mostly followed the southern traditions. The sculptural art of Vijayanagara period shows the popularity of relief sculptures. The temples of Vijayanagara are famous for the sculptures of Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite gods and goddesses. In the Vijayanagara temples, the theme of Daśāvatāra became popular with sculptors and we find them occurring in many of the temples. The *avatāras* of Vāmana and Narasimha are favourite themes of the Vijayanagara period. The romantic life of Narasimha with a Chēndu (tribal) girl attracted the attention of the artists of this age. This theme is invariably found in many Vijayanagara temples.\(^{197}\)

In the Bhūvarāha form, Viṣṇu generally is depicted as half-boar and half-man standing with his right leg slightly bent and placed on the hood of the serpent. On this leg is seated Bhūdevi. This form is popular in the sculptures of North India. The Advarāha or Yajñavarāha form is shown seated on the *siṁhāsana* flanked by Lakṣmī and Bhūdevi. In the Prajayavarāha type, he is seated on *siṁhāsana* with Bhūdevi alone. All these three forms were handled by the Vijayanagara artists both at Hanmpī and elsewhere. Two figures of Bhū-variha are found, one at Tirumala and another at Tirupati.\(^{198}\)

Usually Narasimha is depicted in two ways by the sculptors. In the first place the god and the *asura* are shown fighting with each other and in the second instance the god is represented as tearing the entrails of the *asura*. Sculptures illustrating both these forms are found in plenty in South India, as amply demonstrated by the Pallava, Early Chāחלukya, Rāṣṭrakūta, Later Chāحلولya, Eastern Chāحلولya, Chōḍa, Vijayanagara and Nāyaka sculptures.\(^{199}\)
The cult of Narasimha became very popular during the Vijayanagara times when the glory of Hinduism had to be reasserted in the wake of external threat. It is not surprising to find this particular theme being preponderant amongst the sculptors of Vijayanagara period wherever they are found\(^{200}\). Several varieties of the Narasimha image came to be evolved in later times under the Vijayanagara rulers and the usual type of the seated god with the goddess on his lap continued to be widely represented. Development of a regional nature based on local traditions and legends may be noticed in important centres of Narasimha worship in the Andhra country. In Ahobilam, one of the celebrated centres of the cult of Narasimha, tradition associates the god with a tribal girl of the hunter class (the Cheñchus), who is said to have married Vishnu in the Narasimha form. Hence, in her representation in the company of Narasimha she is shown attired like a huntress\(^{201}\). The Vijayanagara sculptures of Narasimha, arc found at Srívilliputur, Tadipatri, Ahobilam, Nāgalaṣṭṭura, Sōmāraḷa, Kadiri etc., all in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra.

Iconographically, Vāmana is shown as a young brahmachāri boy with a kamanḍalu in one hand and an umbrella in the other. Sometimes, he carries a staff. He wears deerskin, has a śikha and the yajnopavita of a brahmachāri. Usually he is shown with only two hands. But some texts like the Bhāgavatapurāṇa give him four hands and he wears a chhatra, danda, kamanḍalu, in three hands and the fourth hand is held in the abhaya. Such representations are found in the medieval temples of North India. But in South India he is usually shown as a pot-bellied mendicant boy with two hands. In the Daśavatāra group almost it is Vāmana who is represented and not Trivikrama\(^{202}\).

The Vijayanagara sculptor, like the painter, had a flair for narration of events and legends. In the Hazara Rama temple at Haṃpi (now in Karnataka), and Rāma temple at Penukonda in Andhra, there are sculptural narrations of scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa and of Kṛṣṇa’s juvenile sports\(^{203}\). The earliest representation of Kṛishnaṅallas in Andhradesa is noticed at Undavalli. Kṛṣṇa as Gōvardhana is found depicted in one of the pillars of the Mōkṣesvara temple at Prātalakōṭa in Mahabubnagar District\(^{204}\). Vijayanagara temples are abundant in depicting Kṛishnalīlā in sculptures. Like the Kṛṣṇa cult, the Rāma theme also enjoyed a wide popularity during the times of the Vijayanagara rule. The following temples of
Rayalaseema are rich in possessing the *Ramayana* panels and Krishna leela sculptures: Chintala Venkataramana temple at Tadipatri, Kodandaraama temple at Vontimitta, Chennakesava temple at Somapalem, and the temples under TTD etc., with in the fortress of Penukonda, there are two temples of the early Vijayanagara phase of which one is dedicated to Siva and the other to Rama. The *garbhagriha* of the Rama temple houses beautiful stone images of Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita. The Kodandaraama temple in Chandragiri has in *garbhagriha* the images of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana, Bharatha & Satrughna. The Mahesvara temple at Pushpagiri, presents also some scenes from the *Ramayana*, including the submission of the sea god to Rama. In a later Chapter of the present work the depiction of The Rama theme in these temples would be considered in detail, as they are in the study region.

The Vijayanagara artists also showed keen interest in the representation of the *liṅgodbhava* form of Siva in the temples erected by them and they followed the Chola traditions while depicting this form of Siva. Some times they deviated from the Chola traditions. On the northern and eastern *prakāra* walls of the Mallikārjuna temple at Srisailam, two reliefs are found in the Undavalli caves near Vijayawada, another sculpture noticed at Alladurg, and the two reliefs found at Panugal are not in accordance with either the Ellora or Tanjore reliefs of *liṅgodbhavamūrti*. The early rulers of Vijayanagara were devotees of Virūpāksha Śiva. Their temples in Hanpi, Vellore, Kāñchi, Thiruvannamalai and other places contain many Śaivite panels in sculpture. Śiva's marriage with Pārvati, the marriage procession, Kiriṅgarjuna, Liṅgodbhava and Bhikṣatana forms of Śiva are their favourite themes. Śiva figures are also found in Vijayanagara paintings found in Hanpi and Lepakshi.

The significance and salient features of the Kalyāṇasundaramūrti aspect of Śiva is depicted in the Vijayanagara and Nāyaka art. C. Sivaramamurti observes: "In the sculptures of the Vijayanagara and Nāyaka periods, Parvati is depicted as standing between Viṣṇu and Śiva, the former giving her in marriage to the latter; and here the pouring of water by Viṣṇu on Śiva’s hand and the presenting of Pārvati as a gift or *daṇḍa* to Śiva emphasizes the *kanyādaṇa* aspect of marriage". This may be true as far as the Kalyāṇasundaramūrti sculptures, which are found in the temples of the Nāyakas. But in the Vijayanagara reliefs, the representation of Viṣṇu as the giver of
the bride is conspicuously absent. In the Lepakshi relief pānigrahaṇa is emphasized but not kanyādaṇa. In the Śrisailam relief pānigrahaṇa and kanyādaṇa are represented. However, Viṣṇu is represented not as the giver of the bride but as the divine guest at the marriage. In the Pushpagiri relief, Viṣṇu is sculptured to the proper right of Śiva. He looks more like a guest rather than the giver of the bride.  

A brief survey of Natārajā through the ages will enable us to know not only its representation in different art traditions in different regions but also help us to find out the source from which the Vijayanagara sculptors drew inspiration and guidance in the delineation of the divine dancer. The advent of the Viṣṇukundins, after the downfall of the Ikṣvākus, opened a new era in the history of sculpture and iconography of Āndhradesā. The Dancing Śiva carved on the kāpoṭa of the triple-celled cave at Mogalrajapuram presents one of the most magnificent creations of the Viṣṇukundin sculptors. In this relief, Śiva is seen dancing in uḍḍhavaṇa posture trampling Apasmārapuruṣa and swaying his many arms in ecstatic rhythm. It appears that this is the earliest representation of the dwarfish gana in association with Natārajā and that it is purely South Indian. In the representation of multiple arms (bhujātaraṇa) the Natārajā relief at Mogalrajapuram represents a North Indian tradition. Thus this Natārajā depicts a harmonious combination of North and South Indian art traditions.  

In the North Indian tradition, Natārajā is shown with multiple hands, dancing in the chatura or lalita mode either on the floor or on the back of Nandi, the bull. In the South Indian tradition he is shown generally with a limited number of hands and dancing in chatura, lalita, bhūjaṅgatrasa, uḍḍhavaṇa, etc. poses. The Viṣṇukundins, Pallavas, the early Chālukyas, Raṣṭrakūṭas, the later Chālukyas, Chōlas, Hōyasalas, etc. sometimes took a fancy to blend harmoniously the North and South Indian traditions in the delineation of the ananda-tāṇḍava of Śiva. In the Lepakshi image the Vijayanagara sculptors maintained purely the South Indian tradition, for the god has four hands and dancing on the prostrate Apasmārapuruṣa. In this case the influence of the Pallava and Chōla traditions played a very vital role. The other Vijayanagara reliefs of Natārajā which illustrate the absence of Apasmārapuruṣa and the presence of multiplicity of hands clearly show that the Vijayanagara sculptors were in no way
inferior to the Châlukyan, Rastrañkuta, etc. sculptors in fusing the North and South Indian traditions in the representation of Śiva as Natarāja.

The Vijayanagara sculptures representing Natarāja are found in plenty. Broadly they may be classified into two types by taking the presence and absence of the Apasmārāpuruṣha into consideration. The best examples of Śiva-Natarāja with Apasmārāpuruṣha are found at Hampi, Tāḍipatri, Śriseilam, Kalahasti, Pushpagiri, etc. The multi-handed Śiva-Natarāja sculptures with Apasmārāpuruṣha are also found in the Vijayanagara temples. The Vijayanagara Śiva-Natarāja, sculptures without Apasmārāpuruṣha are found at Tāḍipatri, Śrikalahasti, Śriseilam, Pushpagiri, etc.

In the Vijayanagara reliefs the Gajasurasāntara aspect of Śiva is represented in three different ways. The first type is represented by the Tāḍipatri relief where the most important factor is that of Śiva thrusting a trisūla into the head of the elephant. In a Pallava relief too, found in the Kailāsānātha temple at Kāñchi, the god is shown thrusting a trident into the head of the elephant. The second type is illustrated by the two reliefs found at Śriseilam, in which the deity is seen standing by placing one of his legs firmly on the head of the elephant. The skin of the elephant is spread like a prabhā-māṇḍala at the back of the god. Several sculptures of this type are found in the Pallava and Chōla temples. It appears that the Vijayanagara sculptors drew inspiration and guidance from their Pallava and Chōla counterparts in the delineation of the above referred sculptures. However, in some respects they had not only deviated from the Pallava and Chōla traditions but sought newness and novelty. This trend is very well illustrated by the relief that is found in the Vīrabhadra temple at Lēpākshi. In this case the asura is shown in human form, emerging from the mouth of the severed head of the elephant. A number of Kāñcarunīya panels ascribable to the Vijayanagara period are noticed at Sanjeridurga, Melukote, Nandi Hills, Bhagamandala, Kallur, Hiriyur, etc.

Several reliefs illustrating Pasupatāṅgaramahurūti aspect of Śiva are found in the Vijayanagara temples at Śriseilam, Lēpākshi, Pushpagiri, Śrikalahasti Attirāla and Animela. The Vijayanagara sculptors also took interest in the representation of Dakṣiṇāmūrti aspect of Śiva. The Dakṣiṇāmūrti sculptures belonging to the Vijayanagara period are found at Śrikeilahasti, Tāḍipatri, Śriseilam, Nāgalaṭpuram, etc. Only two images of Yōga-Dakṣiṇāmūrti have been discovered in Andhra Pradesh one.
at Alampur and another at Tadipatri. The Vijayanagara sculptor’s also evinced interest in the representation of Viśalihara-Dakshināmūrti aspect of Śiva. A beautiful example belonging to this period is found in a niche on the southern wall of the Vedaśārayana temple at Nagalāpuram, a Viśnavite temple.

Several sculptures illustrating the Bhikṣhūtanamūrti aspect of Śiva belonging to the Vijayanagara period are found at Śrīkalahasti, Tadipatri, Lepakshi, Śrisailam, Chandragiri, Puṣṭ pagiri, Vallur, etc., all in Rayalaseema. Images of the Tripurāntakamūrti aspect of Śiva of this period are found at Puṣṭ pagiri, Śrisailam, and Śrīkalahasti. The Kalarimūrti forms of Śiva are found at Śrisailam, Penukonda, Chandragiri, etc.

The Vijayanagara sculptures of Virabhadra are found in several places, such as Tadipatri, Śrisailam, Śrīkalahasti, Puṣṭ pagiri, Penukonda etc. Bhairava form of Śiva too is found at Tadipatri, Animela, Puṣṭ pagiri, Śrisailam, Vallur etc. The Sarabhesamūrti aspect of Śiva as sculpted by the Vijayanagara artists is found in the temples of Śrisailam and Animela. A lone example representing Chandēśanugrahamūrti form of Śiva is found on the exterior wall of the shrine near Patalaganga, Śrisailam.

Two examples of Viśṇuṇugrahamūrti are found in Vijayanagara temples. The first example is found on the south prakārā wall of the Mallikariṇja temple to Śrisailam. The second example is found on the north wall of the garbhagriha of the Śiva temple near Patalaganga, Śrisailam. The Vijayanagara temple sculptors showed keen interest in the representation of Ardhanārisvara both seated and standing forms. The standing Ardhanārisvara sculptures are found at Tadipatri and Śrisailam. The Vijayanagara representations of Gaṇadhamāmūrti are found both in the stone and painting. These are found at Śrisailam, Chandragiri and Lepakshi.

The Vijayanagara examples of Kaṇḍalamūrti images are found in temples at Śrisailam, Tadipatri, Puṣṭ pagiri, Penukonda, and Vallur. This form of Śiva is found in the Saṅgāmeśvara temple at Animela (Kadapa District) and three instances in the Viṇabhadra temple at Lepakshi. The Vijayanagara Ek padatrimūrti sculptures are found in places like Suruṭuṭapatli and Śrīkalahasti in Chittoor district. As all these temples depicting Śaivite themes are in Rayalaseema, the study region, they would be looked at in some detail in a subsequent chapter dealing with the Śaivite Puranic themes in the temples selected for study.
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