CHAPTER VIII

THE EARLY-MEDIEVAL PERIOD

( C. 550 to 900 A.D. )
I - SOURCES

In the chapter on political history of Bundelkhand, we have noted that the period between the decline of the Guptas and the rise of the Čandellas witnesses the rule of numerous dynasties in Bundelkhand, but very few of these have left their inscriptive records for us. The reason is not far to seek. Some of these carved an empire for them in northern India of which Bundelkhand was a part. And so their records are available elsewhere but not in the area of our study. Bundelkhand was a part of Harsha's empire, but not a single record of him has been discovered here. No different is the case of the Gurjara-Pratihāras of whom we have a solitary record from Deogarh known as Deogarh Jain Pillar inscription of Bhōja Pratihāra.¹ The Kalacuris have also left a single record in the area of our study belonging to this period. It is known as Sagar stone inscription of Saṅkarasena.² Of the Raṣṭracūṭas also we have only one record found in the vicinity of our boundaries and known as Pathari Pillar inscription of Parabala.³ Barring these, we possess some dedicatory records a from the Jain temples of Deogarh.

But in respect of Harsha and Gurjara-Pratihāras, utilisation of their records found outside Bundelkhand will not only enable us to note the cults favoured by them but will throw welcome light on the general features of religious life of this period as well. Thus Gwalior Inscriptions⁴ of the time of Bhōja Pratihāra will prove to be of immense value to us and Gwalior is not far from Satia district.

² C.I.I., Vol.IV., No.35.
In regard to Numismatic data also, we depend largely on Harsha and the Gurjara-Pratiharas. For literary evidence the works of Bana Bhatta and Rajasekhara constitute the only source for us.

In glaring contrast to the meagerness of inscriptive, numismatic and literary evidence, Bundelkhand is immensely rich in sculptural and architectural evidence. The period under review witnesses the erection of numerous temples that show advance in architecture on the Gupta period. Lofty sikharas now greet our eye and richly sculptured janghā allures us from afar. Two styles of temples architecture exist side by side. We meet with artistic and ambitious edifices like the Vaisnava shrine of Baruaśāgar (Dist. Jhansi) on the one hand and simpler and modest temples as those of Mam-suhāni (Dist. Chhatarpur) on the other. We are told by Yuan Chwang that Harsha and Rājyaśri became followers of Mahāyāna Buddhism in their later life. Besides Harsha is known to have adopted 'Paramasaugata' as one of his titles. Yet he never ceased worshipping Hindu deities such as Siva and Sūrya.

II - BUDDHISM

The cult of Buddha commanded currency only in the isolated areas of Bundelkhand. Standing aloof and apart from the mainstream of religious life, it somehow maintained its existence at Khajurāho and in the district of Datia. Towards the end of the period perhaps it could secure a foot-hold at Deogarh from where a solitary sculpture of the Buddha has recently been discovered in the area covered by the Jaina group of temples.

Buddhism continued to occupy the holy hillocks of Gopesvara in Datia district. Clay sealings containing the representation of a miniature Stūpa and the Buddhist formula in the characters of the 9th century A.D. have been collected from here. The collection of sculptures at P.A.G. Office, in Datia town includes a broken slab with carvings on it that appear to be Buddhist in character. Prominent among them is a finely carved Čakra followed by the figure of a deer to right who is shown couchant. The next figure is that of a lady with her hands in añjali-mudrā and last is the figure of a lion with its back to the lady. Nothing has survived to the left. The slab seems to be a fragmentary part of an icon of Buddha in dharmākramudrā, for Dr. J. N. Jenergerme says that Buddha's preaching of the First Sermon is "suggested not only by the dharmākra-mudrā peculiar to this motif but by the presence of a wheel(dharmākra) flanked by two couchant deer on the pedestal." In the present slab the couchant posture of the deer sitting next to the Čakra associates the piece with Buddhism. The lion perhaps stands for the Sākyamuni aspect of the Buddha and the Čakra must be dharmākra. The find-place of the slab could not be ascertained but in all probability it hails from the hills of Gopesvara or the village of Radnuāpurā, for these are the only two Buddhist sites in the district of the period.

An icon of the Buddhist goddess Tāra² was discovered at Radnuāpurā but nothing can be said about iconographic features of the goddess as the whereabouts of the icon are not known now.

1. A.I.K., P.276.
(B) Khajurāho:-

At Khajurāho a large image of Buddha was found from the ruins of the Chantāi temple, which led Cunningham to believe that it was a Buddhist shrine. Discovery of numerous naked Jaina icons, later on, however, cleared the misunderstanding and established beyond doubt that it was a Jaina temple. The Buddha image depicted the deity in bhūmisparśa-mudrā. Seated padmāsana on a double-petalled lotus and clad in an upper as well as lower garment, the god is not accompanied by any other figure. An oft-quoted couplet of Buddhism 'Ye dhammā hetu prabhavā...' in characters of 9th century A.D. is inscribed on the lotus petals of the pedestal. The image is thus one of the earliest icons of Khajurāho.

Huen Tsang noticed some Buddhist monasteries at Khajurāho, remains of which Cunningham located in the northern group which is about a km. from the western group. About Bundelkhand the pilgrim remarks," The king who was a Brāhmaṇa, was a firm believer in Buddhism and encouraged men of merit and learned scholars of other lands collected here in numbers."² We are in absolute dark about the identity of this Brāhmaṇa king and can not verify the statement of the traveller with regard to the religion of this king. If Buddhism was flourishing in India, as is reflected in the accounts of the pilgrim, it is intriguing to note that it is not mentioned in the description of the various sects and philosophical systems (flourishing in the 7th century, A.D.) as left by Hāṇa.³

(C) Deogarh:- The discovery of an isolated Buddha image from Deogarh by Dr. Klaus Brunn⁴ indicates that Buddhism attempted to secure a foot-hold at the place in the post-Gupta period, in which the image

2. Sharma, B.N.. Ibid., P.231.
3. Ibid., P.403.
has been placed. At about the same time Jainism must have entered Deogarh, and it is noteworthy that whereas Jainism obtained a complete monopoly in the spiritual life at Deogarh in the succeeding centuries, the cult of Buddha could not maintain even its existence.

The Buddha image (No.8) mentioned above, was found among the debris lying scattered between the temples. It has been fixed on a wall. The face, the lower arms of the figure and the parikara are severely damaged. The details have been obliterated. There are four narrow ridges which run over the lower legs. They indicate the hems of the two garments of the Buddha (the outer ridges denoting Saṅghāti and the inner ridges antarvāsaka) besides dharma-cakra with ribbons and standing on lotus blossom and flanked by lions on corners of the pedestal is also present." The right hand of the Deogarh Buddha probably performed the abhaya-mudrā while the left rested on the knee. The bhāmaṇḍala is divided into three zones separated by bands either plain or in bead-form. The missing or damaged parts probably looked like similar to the corresponding parts of the Buddha from Sānātha.

III - Jainism

The sway of Jainism in Bundelkhand during the period was certainly greater and stronger than that of Buddhism. The sculptural and architectural evidence, attesting to its existence, is available to us from a number of sites, indicating that the influence of Jainism was spread over a large area.

At least one Gurjara-Pratināra monarch is known to have been initiated into Jainism. From Sappā-Bhaṭṭicārita of Čandraprabhāsūri, we note that in V.S.890 king Nāgāvaloka(Nāgabhāta II) gave up his life after worshipping Paṇḍa-parmeṣṭhī (the great ones) pinning firmly his faith in the Jina and his own Guru Sappā-Bhaṭṭī.

(A) Jain Temples of Deogarh:

The period under review witnesses the emergence of Deogarh as a great center of Jainism. Such was the sway of Jainism here, that it never allowed any other cult to enter Deogarh and acquire influence. We have already noted in the preceding chapter that the cult of Viṣṇu was ruling supreme at Deogarh during the Gupta period. The Gupta temple and the Varāha temple at the place speak eloquently of it. Suddenly Viṣṇuism disappears now, yielding place to Jainism which monopolised the religious life at the place ever after.

No other Jaina site of Bundelkhand is as rich as Deogarh in respect of sculptural, architectural, and inscriptional material. Dr. Klaus Brumm has classified the Jaina remains of Deogarh into six periods of which the first three fall in the period under review. His basis of classification is inscriptional evidence and architectural-type. To the post-Gupta period he assigns several architectural fragments lying to the west of temple No. 20. On the basis of a Jina icon of post-gupta period, the earliest among all the icons of Deogarh, he assumes the existence of a Jaina temple of 7th-8th centuries A.D. To the early medieval period belong temples No. 12 (Vimāna with porch) 15, 3, 13, 16, 17, 18, 20 and majority of the small shrines Nos. 12A, 3, 9, 22, 24 A and 27. The structures of this period have been dated around A.D. 862. The frequency of small shrines in the period reflects the economic background of the community against which the building activity took place. The community being predominantly middle class, few large donations were made. Most of the donors were not able to contribute appreciable sums.

worthy of study and description among the temples of this period are temple No. 12 and 15. The former of these enshrines an image of Sāntinātha known as 'larger Sānti' (image No.1), placed against the back-wall of the sanctum. That the image is one of Sāntinātha is not indicated by his lāṅchana, but by five inscriptions mentioning his name and appearing elsewhere. Of utmost importance among these records, is the Jain pillar inscription of Bhaja Pratināara dated in V.S. 319. The inscription records that the pillar was caused to be made and set up near the temple of holy (Jaina arhat) Sānti (or Sāntinātha) by Deva, a disciple of ādārya Kamaladeva.¹ In the second place, an inscription of V.S. 1051 on the door-frame shows that the whole place was known after Sānti as Śrī-Sāntinātha-tīrtha.² Further the gazelle symbol, carved below the middle of the Jina of the lower tri-tīrtnākē on the lintel of the inner door-frame, points to the dedication of the temple to Sāntinātha. Of course, it should be remembered here that the figure on the so-called dedicatory block in the center of the lintel does not, in each and every case, represent the same god as the main idol. The icon of Sāntinātha in the sanctum is flanked on one side by the cauri-bearing Indra and on the other by ambikā Yakṣī.

Temple No.15 is the only temple at Deogarh with three cells and an enclosed porch. The three cells do not extend down to any depth, since in each case, a niche was hollowed out of the corresponding part of the outer wall. Thus it bears some similarity to the Gupta temple standing at Deogarh. Influence of the plan and design of the Gupta temple on temple No.15 may not be entire

². Ern, Klaus : Ibid., P.70.
ruled out as both stand at one place, but proximity in their dates is unacceptable. A pavilion rises over the flat roof of the temple. In each of the niches, three Jina images stand arranged in a manner reminiscent of the tri-tirthikā. Dr. B.C. Jain has waxed eloquent over the beauty of this temple calling it a Sodasaabhādha temple and recognising it to be the first among Deogarh temples built according to scriptural injunctions; so much so that it answered to all the features of Mândighośa variety of temples, described in Śanarāṅga-Sūtrādhāra. The door-frame of this temple is profusely carved and among other figures, those of the river-goddesses riding their respective mounts and occupying their respective positions are also present.

(9) Chhoti Badoni:

From Datia district also we get the evidence of Jainism assignable to this period. Remains of a solitary shrine of the Jainas still stand on a mound at Chhoti Badoni near the house of the old Diwan. Locally it is mistaken for a 'Buḍhā-mandira'. The temple is deserted and dilapidated now, but whatever survives clearly indicates a sanctum preceded by a shallow porch, having been in existence. Neither any trace of a Śīnāra can be made out nor that of the pradaksināpatha.

Bearing a horizontal band of crudely executed four-petalled flower, the exterior of the temple is severely plain. Alike is the door-frame measuring 1 mr. 50 cms. in height and 74 cms. in width, indicating thereby that the temple was of modest dimensions, having kinship with the similar shrines of Mau-Suhāniā and Kajurāho. As the temple is built entirely of granite, it can be placed in the 9th century a.d., to which the temples of Mau-Suhāniā have also been assigned. Shukrīkṣaṇa Deva is of the view that under the Pratihāras

two temple styles developed in Bundelkhand. Of these the ornate and artistic style is illustrated by the Viṣṇu temple, Baruasāgar (Dist. Jhansi) and the Sun-temple of Markhērā (Dist. Tikamgarh). The other style represented by simpler shrines of granite is illustrated in the temples of Mau-Sunānīa, Kainrī, Chamruā, all in Chhatarpur district.1 The Ācārāṅgāyogini and Laiguān-Mañādeva temples of Khajurāho also belong to this style. The Jain temple of gūnottī Badoni may be dated to the time of these temples i.e. 3rd century A.D.

It was dedicated to the 22nd Īṭṭhaṅkara Neminātha, whose massive icon is still lying inside the sanctum. The Jina is represented padmāśāna and is flanked on each side by a Ācārāṅgāyogini and a Kāyotsarga Jina. Flying Viḍyādhāranas occupy the top corners. The figure of laṅgī ambikā seated ānuttāmāśīsa and holding a child occupies the place below the Viḍyādhāra on right. The Jina is identified only on the basis of her presence, but nowhere we come across a Jina icon, in which the laṅgī is represented above the Jina.

(C) Makarbāi :-

The period witnessed manifestation of Jainism in Hamirpur district also. The Makarbāi temple situated about 19 kms. northwest of Manoba is also a Jaina temple assignable to this period. Its a small, but beautiful, temple of unique type for it possesses three (instead of one) sanctums round a common mandapa, like temple No.15 of Deogarh described above. Each of the lintels surmounting the sanctum doorways contains representation of the navagrahas. Cunningham was of the view that the temple was of Buddhist dedication for one of the lintels had padmāśana human figures which he connected with Buddhism. He further held that one of the sanctums was equally clearly dedicated Śiva.2 Śrī Dayaram Sanani disagreed with him and

1. Śrīkrīṣma Deva : Tbid. P.44.
according to him, the temple was of Jaina faith. He says" None of
the images that were worshipped in the temple have come down to us,
but the lintels of the entrances to the cells bear figures of the
nine planets (navagrahas) and other seated figures which look like
Jaina Tirthaṅkaras. Dr. U.P. Shan has also expressed an identical
opinion regarding the dedication of the temple. and we may accept
their view.

(D) Jain-Sculpture :-

Prolific are the sculptural creations of the
Jainas at Deogarh. Some of the Jina images were belong to this
period. The vast majority of the images, fixed or unfixed, are in
no way connected with the architecture. They were donated individuall
and gradually fixed in existing temples. Temple Nos. 4, 8, 13 and 14
look so gaudy that a relationship between the images and the building
(i.e. between a nucleus of the images and the original structure) is
ruled out. As a matter of fact, these temples are Museum rather
than places of worship.

A post-Gupta Jina (Image No. 9) has been held
to be the earliest Jaina icon of Deogarh. In the absence of
lāṇchana it can not be identified. The dharmaakra is carved on the
pedestal flanked by a miniature Jina on each side. The lion masks
appear on the ends of the pedestal.

Of uncommon charm and indescribable beauty are two
Jina icons (No. 13-14) for which the artist of Deogarh deserves our
highest appreciation. Radiating spiritual grace and sublime joy from
their faces, the Jinas of these icons are unidentifiable as they are
destitute of lāṇchanas. One of these rich and remarkable icons is
the main idol of temple No. 15. Dharmaakra flanked by a lion on each

side is appropriately carved on its pedestal. Tri-chatra canopying the deity is also carved. Besides, Āaurī-bearers and garland-bearing Vidyādharas can also be seen. A rare and noteworthy feature of this image consists in the presence of a miniature Jina seated padmāsana on a viśva-padma and accommodated in the second parikara at top. Indeed, nowhere do we come across an icon showing a miniature Jina above a Jina or a miniature Buddha above a Buddha. With unearthly calm and uncommon grace characterising the face, it is no wonder, that every visitor is struck by its similarity with the world-famous Buddha of Sārnātha.

Among other Jain images of Deogarh one depicting Tīrthaṅkara's mother should also be noted. It is placed in temple No.4. She has been rendered in ṣāyaṅ-mudrā. Adorned with usual ornaments, she is accompanied by the representation of 24 miniature Jinas, accommodated above and beside her.

Independent sculptural representation of the ācāryas and upādhyāyas also commenced in the period. We possess a beautiful panel depicting them at Deogarh. (No.82 in temple No.4) The central position here is occupied by an ācārya holding a mukha-pattikā in one hand and the other resting on his knee. Figures of upādhyāyas and sadhus flank him on each side. The lower section of this panel contains figures of several Jaina monks with their rajoharaṇas. In the center is placed a sthāpanā.

Very few Jaina sculptures are available from other places. An icon of Jina Mallinātha is lying in a by-lane of Mohendra(Dist. Panna) indifferently trampled upon by the villagers everyday. No Jaina temple now stands at the place but the icon, on grounds of style, could be assigned to this period. The icon could have been the pride of any museum but such is the cruelty of Time and
callousness of man, that far from finding security and reverence, it is subjected to indignity every moment by the ignorant villagers and unlettered urchins. This massive and magnificent icon measures 1 mr. 54 cm., in height and 1 mr. in breadth. The lower portion of the image is buried in earth. Yet the carvings of dharmācakra flanked by lions and figures of Kubera Yakṣa and Aparājītā Yakṣī can be made out. The bāmāndila is extremely beautiful. The Jina has auspicious marks on his palms. In the parikārā several Jinas, vidyādharas dāuri-bearers and a dundubni-vāda have also found place. Śrīvatsa mark has also been placed on the chest of the Jina.

According Varāhamihira, "The god of the arhats (the Jainaś-aany of the 24 Tīrtnānkaras) should be shown nude, young, and beautiful in appearance with a tranquil expression and arms reaching down to the knees; his breast should have the (auspicious) śrīvatsa mark."¹ The Jina icons studied above fulfill most of the injunctions, quoted above, though placing of śrīvatsa mark has not taken place in all the cases. The condition concerning the arms can be properly verified if the jīna is represented in kāyotsarga-mudrā. Incidentally, all the icons, mentioned above, depict the deity in padmāśana-mudrā.

(E) Jñāna-sīlā:

The Jñāna-sīlā has been aptly called an 'epigraphical curiosity.' It is a rare record, of which we have no other example from anywhere else. The upper part of the surface is covered by lines of letters which were partly invented and partly derived from the existing alphabets. Thus first seven lines of the

1. B.S., 57, 45.- ज्ञानसिलाः श्रीवत्साः प्रशस्त्वमुदरिष्य।
   दिव्यवास्तवः रसायनः वा विनाशकं।
epigraph contain different alphabetical orders including the
Dravidian. Below the text of the inscription has been incised,
styling the slab Jñāna-nilā and stating that it contained specimens
of 18 different languages and 18 different scripts. Jñāna-nilā
(stone of knowledge) is probably an abbreviation of a compound like
Jñāna-prakāśana-nilā (stone for the dissemination of knowledge).
The text of the sub-script is an allusion to the origin of the
alphabets as recorded in Jaina tradition, which credits the first
Jina, Rṣabha, with having invented the 18 alphabets. The author of the
Jñāna-nilā inscription was, no doubt, familiar with letters from
various alphabetical orders including Brāhmī.

IV - VAISHNAVISM

The cult of Viṣṇu towered above all other cults
during the preceding period, owing largely to the patronage, given to
it by the Guptas. It now lost its status of being a royal religion.
Harsha, a devotee of Śiva and the Gurjara-Pratihāras were not
attached to any particular Brahmanic deity. Indeed, it is interesting
to note that father and son in Pratihāra dynasty worshipped
different deities. Note may be taken that Devaśakti was a Vaisnava;
his son Vatsarāja a Śaiva; the latter's son Nāgabhaṭa was a devotee
of Bhagavatī, whose son Rāmakṛishna was a saura and Bhoja, the great
son of Rāmakṛishna, followed in the footsteps of his grand-father. If
this is a good example of catholic spirit and broad outlook, it also
indicates that no cult enjoyed the status of being a royal-cult during
the Pratihāra times, so each cult was to survive and progress in
proportion to the strength of its appeal among the masses, without
being helped by royal favour and fervour.

Of utmost importance and profound significance in this regard, is the case of Bhoja. He is known to history by several names which were actually his virudas. Gwalior inscription of Alla calls him as Śrīmadādīvarāṇa.¹ The Sāgarāla-Praśasti records his name as Mihira.² But the etymology of these virudas does not shed any light on the personal religion of the king. The two virudas dīvarāṇa and Mihira, if interpreted literally, might signify that he was a devotee of Viṣṇu or the Sun. But as a matter of fact, he was a Śaṅkta like his grand-father Nāgabhaṭa, and styles himself in his records as Parama-Bhaṅgavatībhakta. It goes without saying that this eclectic religious spirit of the Gurjara-Pratihāra rulers is of its own kind in the history of Bundelkhand.

The case of Bhoja, as cited above, further proves that though he was devoted to one deity, he had equal regard and respect for others as is not only reflected and recorded in his epigraphical records but is borne out by his coins as well.

(A) Viṣṇu on coins:

The coins issued by Bhoja have the legend Śrīmadādīvarāṇa on the reverse, while those of Viṇāyakapāladeva bear the king’s name on the reverse.³ Within the encircled area on the obverse Viṣṇu in his Boar incarnation has been represented in the Nṛvarāṇa form. The god seems to be striding to his proper left, with his left leg slightly raised and bent at the knee. He is endowed with two arms, of which the right rests on the hip and the left one which is bent at the elbow, rests on the knee of his bent left leg. The earth-goddess appears to have been placed on the left

2. B.I., Vol. XVIII, p. 109, l. 11.
elbow of the god. A wheel with six or seven knobs is depicted in front of the god to the right, symbolising dákra. Other emblems associated with Viṣṇu occupy the left field, one may note here gada, padma and śāṅkha. Beneath the feet of the deity a reptile is also represented, probably standing for the serpent in an attitude of supplication.

(B) Viṣṇu in Inscriptions: —

In addition to the numismatic data, we possess numerous insciplational records attesting to the fact that the Kurjara-Pratiharā kings offered encouragement to Viṣṇavism though few of them were Viṣṇavites. Of utmost importance are the two Gwalior stone inscriptions of Bhoja.¹ Dated in V.S. 932 and 933 respectively, the former of these records the erection of a Viṣṇu temple and the latter mentions four donations to the temples, which had been built by alia, the son of Vaillabhaṭṭa called in this record 'the guardian of the fort'(koṭtapāla) of Gopādri. The donee of the first grant was the Navadurgā temple while those of the three remaining grants were the Navadurgā temple of the earlier record and the Viṣṇu temple called Vaillabhaṭṭasvāmin. It is interesting to note that Viṣṇu has been named in this record after name of alia's father. The second record invokes the god with the words—"Om Namo Viṣṇave."

Noteworthy also is the Śūgaratāla Pradāsti of Bhoja² which mentions the erection of a house in honour of Viṣṇu by the king in his sarghla. Among other Kurjara-Pratiharā records, the Anar inscription mentions an avāra belonging to the illustrious Daśavatāraṇeśa; the Bhena inscription³ records a temple of Viṣṇu.

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Garudāsana; the undated Prasasti of Mahendrapāla records the construction of a Viṣṇu temple and the Barton Museum Inscription also mentions a temple of Viṣṇu. The Nāmgāya inscription is incised on a bas-relief showing the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. By far the most important is Siyādoni stone inscription, which has been discovered from Siron-Khurd village of Lalitpur district. But as the dates of the record range between V.S. 1380 to 1023, falling thus in the 10th century A.D., we will make a detailed study of the record in the next chapter. Meriting mention also is the Paṭhārī pillar inscription of Parabala which purports to record the erection of Viṣṇu temple and the raising of a Garudā-dhvaja Pillar infront of it.

(C) Viṣṇu-Temples :-

(1) Baruṅsāgar :-

Finest among the Vaisnavas shrines of this period is the Viṣṇu temple of Baruṅsāgar (Dist. Jhansi). A niranḍnāra-prāśāda surmounted by a lofty curvilinear śikhrā, it is one of the few surviving monuments representative of Gurjar-Pratināra style.

Registering advance on the Gupta temple architecture and presupposing the marvellous and magnificent Khajurāho temples, it constitutes, at it were, alongwith the Sun-temple of Markhera(Dist. Tikamgarh) and Čaturmukha-Mahādeva temple of Nachnā (Dist. Fanna) an important link between the simple and early śikhrā temples of the Gupta period in Central India and ornate and alluring temples of Candella times.

The placing of the aṣṭa-dikpālas on the jaṅghā of a temple commenced during the period under review and we meet them at Baruṅsāgar temple occupying their allotted positions. Last, but not the least, is the

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2. Ibid., Vol.XIX, P.175.
5. Ibid., Vol. IX, PP.248-56.
Richly sculptured jaṅghā of this temple, that ultimately became a prominent feature of Central Indian temple style.

Consisting only of a sanctum surmounted by a śikhara that survives, it must have stood on a jagatī few traces of which are left now. The sanctum being empty its Vaishnava dedication can be decided as much on the basis of the figure of Viṣṇu in the lalāṭabimba as on his icons appearing on the jaṅghā.

Facing west, the temple is pañḍaratha in plan as well as elevation. A high adniṣṭhāna and a horizontal frieze of kīrtimukhas running right round the structure marks it out as the precursor of Chandella temples at Khajurāho. The śikhara is typically north Indian being curvilinear in design and carved monotonously with āsitya window design all over. Striking elemental and heavy at first glance, it is graceful and artistic nonetheless. The existence of five karna-āmalakas indicates the arrangement of six bhūmis. The bhūdra-projections on the jaṅghā contain miniature shrines surmounted by udgamas of traceries of āsitya-window design. Of supreme importance are three sculptured horizontal bands anticipating identical arrangement on later shrines. Among the figures occupying the jaṅghā Viṣṇu with his consort and flanked by śaṅkha and Čakra-puruṣa; Nṛsiṃha ripping open the belly of Hiraṇyakaśyapa and flanked by śaṅkha-puruṣa and Cādā-devī; Sūrya riding a car driven by seven horses and attended by āruṇa, Daṇḍa, Piṅgala are notable.

The five-śaṅkha door-way of the sanctum is richly carved. Figures of the river-goddesses occupy their respective positions on the jambs riding their respective mounts. On the lintel, in addition to the orthodox Brahmanical triad, Navagrahas and Sapta-mātrikās (preceded by Vīrabhadra and followed by Gaṇeśa) are also present. It is noteworthy that aṣṭa-dikpālas bearing their respective ayudhas and riding their respective mounts also find place above the
lintel. On the door-sill nāgi-figures, carrying coconuts and preceded
by ghatas ornamented with leaves and flowers also deserve mention,
as they seem to be going for worship and thus indicate the objects
associated with worship.

Behind the main temple stand two smaller shrines
in corners of the courtyard. But they appear to be of later times.
Shrikrishna Deva has placed the main temple in the ninth century A.D. 1
(2) Khajurāho :-

The so-called Brāhma temple of Khajurāho was
originally a Vaiṣṇava shrine, as can be made out from the figure of
Viṣṇu occupying the lalāṭadimba on the door-lintel. Of note among
the architectural features of this temple is the use of sandstone for
the śikhara and of granite for the body. The temple has been dated
to about 900 A.D. 2
(3) Bhenswāhā :-

Bearing a deserted and dilapidated appearance
and belonging to a village that now exists merely in name, on the
Viṣṇu temple 3 of Bhenswāhā stands right on the bank of Naren river.

Consisting of a fragmentary ardhāṁḍapā, an
empty garbha-grāha and a crumbling śikhara, the temple seems to have
stood on a jagati of which only few traces remain. (Plate No.II.Fig.
No.4) As for mandapa, mahāmāndapā and antarāla, they can be imagined
to have been in existence basing our surmise on the large vacant
space intervening between the ardhāṁḍapā and garbha-grāha,
abundantly overgrown with thorny bushes and wild trees. That the
temple was dedicated to Viṣṇu is indicated by the figure of garuḍa
occupying the central position on the door-lintel of ardhāṁḍapā.

1. Deva, Shrikrishna : Ibid., P.44.
2. Ibid., P.52.
3. For details see my article "Archaeology of Bhenswana" published
The ardhamandapa appears to have been crowned by a small śikhara of pyramidal design and horizontal sections. What remains of it now measures about 7 mrs. in height. The gateway is about 2 mrs. high and 1 mrs. 30 cms. wide.

The interior of the sanctum is severely plain save for some flower medallions on pilasters and geometrical patterns in the upper section. The sanctum measures about 4 mrs. 65 cms. by 3 mrs.

Casting a glance at the outer facades we find that they are adorned with figure sculpture. None of the outer walls is completely preserved. But we can make out from the eastern and southern walls that shallow pilastered niche had been arranged on the adhīṣṭhāna as well as jaṅghā. Each niche is canopied by a miniature tower. Perhaps aṣṭa-dikpālas were also accommodated on the walls.

Among the deities present on the outer facades, the icon of Govardhanadārī-Kṛṣṇa is by far the most important and beautiful. Note may be taken here that though we possess numerous panels representing scenes from Kṛṣṇa-līlā which were found at Nachma Kran, Deogarh and Knajurāha, but nowhere we meet with Kṛṣṇa's feat of lifting the Govardhana mountain. In this respect the icon of Bhenswāhā is indeed unique. (Plate No.II. Fig.No.1) Nāga-pairs with their upper body anthropomorphic and the lower one theriomorphic have been placed on the southern and western facades in upper section. Each contains one such pair. The theriomorphic parts of the pair are entwined in each other.

The śikhara is pāṇḍaratna in elevation and contains a few karṇa- śālakas also. Five of them are still in situ in south-eastern corner.
The importance of this temple lies in the fact that it seems to be the earliest shrine of Bāndelkhand containing all the compartments of a developed Central Indian Hindu temple. Later on, some temples of Khajurāho were provided with an ardhamandapa, mandapa, mahamandapa, antarāla and garbha-gṛha enclosed by a pradaksīṇa-patha. Barring the last, the Bhenswānā temple contained all the architectural components mentioned above. Thus architecturally it is a great advance on the temple of Baruṇsāgar. Allowing sufficient time for the development of conception of additional parts, we can place the Viṣṇu temple of Bhenswānā in the last quarter of the 9th century A.D. Till some inscriptive evidence is discovered, deciding otherwise, this may be accepted as the probable date of this temple on sculptural and architectural grounds.

(D) Viṣṇu Icons :-

Switching over now to Vaiṣṇava sculpture, we find that among all forms associated with the 'para' aspect of Viṣṇu, Yogāsana became the most popular during this period. According to Shri T.A. Gopinath Dāo, "In Yogāsana form Viṣṇu should be shown seated in padmāsana. With eyes intoxicated by spiritual power, the gaze directed to the nose, he should have a padma and a large gada on his sides. His front hands should be shown in yoga-mudrā and back ones holding cakra and saṅkha."

The collection of sculptures at Konendra (Dist. Panna) includes two yogāsana-Viṣṇu icons. One of them depicts the god with kirita-mukuta on his head and accompanied by Śiva and Brahma riding their respective mounts in top corners of the slab. Saṅkha and Čakra-puruṣa have been shown flanking him. The god is two-armed and both of his hands maxima have been shown in yoga-mudrā. The icon

measures 1 mr. 33 cms. in height and 1 mr. in breadth. Another icon 
in the same collection does not contain figures of Brahmā and Śiva. 
The god is four-armed in this icon; his back hands holding padma(left) 
and gādā(right) and front ones shown in yoga-mudrā. Here also Śankha 
and Ĉakra-puruśas flank him. In addition to the kiriṭa on his head, 
the god is adorned with a yağnopavita.

At a place known as Daśarathagātha in Bande 
district is lying an icon of Śeṣaśayi-Viṣṇu, locally known as the 
image of king Daśaratha, the father of Rāma. The recumbent figure 
of Viṣṇu is adorned with kiriṭa, kundalas, keyūras and kaikānas. His 
back right hand supports his head whereas the front right holds gādā. 
The lotus issuing from his navel supports the figure of Brahmā. A 
ĉaurī-bearer is shown near the head of Viṣṇu.

At Bhenswāna a fragmentary sculpture of Viṣṇu is 
lying on the island situated mid-stream of Naren. It probably belonged 
to the Viṣṇu temple already described. Wearing a beautiful kiriṭa 
and holding a ĉakra in one of the surviving hands, the god has 
singular grace and charm characterising his face.

(5) Viṣṇu Incarnations:

As regards the 'Vibhava' or incarnatory forms of 
Viṣṇu, it may be pointed out here that dedication of temples to a 
few of them did take place during the periods preceding and succeeding 
to the present one, but not a single temple is known to have been 
erected in honour of any of them during the period under review. Of 
his Vyūna forms we do not possess even a sculpture.

Mention has already been made of the icon 
depicting Govardhanaśārī Kṛṣṇa accommodated within a niche on the 
facade of Viṣṇu temple at Bhenswāna. Placed within a deep niche it 
measures 51.62 cms. in height and the niche measures 73.33 cms. in 
height and 48.85 cms. in width. The ease and grace with which the
god performed the feat have been perfectly rendered. So symmetrical are his physical proportions and so realistic is the depiction of the event that the icon alone is adequate to testify to the genius of the Śrīśvāna artist. (Plate No.II.Fig.No.1) Standing in dvibhānga posture, the god holds aloft the mountain Govardhana by his right hand and resting the left gracefully on the left thigh. Behind him can be distinctly seen three figures of cows. Tiny heads of queer animals are carved on the miniature mountain above which is supported by the god. Truly the tale is magnificently materialised here.

A square pillar fragment measuring 15 cms. in height and lying in the courtyard of Pārvati temple at Nachmā is worthy of mention here for it contains figures of four avatāras of Viṣṇu. (Plate No.IV.Fig.No.2) Among them Varāha, Nṛsiṃha and Trivikrama can be easily identified. The fourth is severly damaged and defies identification. Of these Varāha and Trivikrama have been depicted in the central act of the myths associated with these incarnations of Viṣṇu. The find of this unique piece from Nachmā indicates that though no temple of Viṣṇu stands at the place now, it must have stood at the site in the times gone by.

It is noteworthy that iconic representations of Balarāma and Parasarūma have been accommodated on the outer facades of Sun-temple at Markhera, also belonging to this period. We have made a mention that the Viṣṇu temple of Baruṅsāgar also contains some representations of Viṣṇu’s avatāras on its walls.

(F) Gajalakṣmī -

Lakṣmī whenever represented independently was always depicted in her Gajalakṣmī form in our area. A collection of sculptures at Datia P.R.O. Office includes an icon of the goddess, finely adorned with a kiritā , necklace, wristlets and flanked on each
side by a female āauri-bearer, the goddess stands in abhanga-mudrā. Her left hand holds a lotus whereas the object of the right hand is uncertain. The pair of elephants standing on lotus and upturning the contents of their jars have been carved as per the textual requirement. Another notable icon of Gajalakṣmi is housed in Mahatma Gandhi Hindi Museum, Malvi (Dist. Jalaun). Seated in padmāsana on a double-petalled lotus and holding lotus flowers in her back hands, she is adorned with usual ornaments. Front right and left hands have been shown in varad-mudrā and holding a mālā respectively. She is flanked by an elephant on each side standing on long-stalked lotuses and emptying their upturned jars over her.

V - Saivism

The period witnessed Saivism acquiring great prestige and popularity. If vaisnavism was the dominant cult during the preceding period, it now lost the position to Saivism. Temples raised in honour of Śiva multipliy and outnumber those dedicated to Viṣṇu.

(a) Royal Patronage:

We possess literary as well as numismatic data attesting to the royal patronage granted to Saivism at least by one monarch of the period under review. Pārmaparā-maṇeśvara was one of the titles of Harsha as we notice from his Banskhura plate.¹ The ancestral religion of Harsha, according to Hena, was Saivism and before setting out for conquests, he worshipped Nīlaloṁita Śiva.² Of utmost importance, again are the maṅgalakāraṇas in Rātanāvali and Priyadarśikā the dramas ascribed to Harsha which are in praise of Śiva and Pārvati.³

2. I.N.S., P. 57.
3. Ibid.
By far the most significant are the coins of Harsha that bear representations of Śiva and Pārvatī. Śiva is shown on their reverse four-armed and nimbat. His front right hand rests on the thigh and back right holds a rosary. With front left he clasps his consort and in back left holds a trisūla. Wearing a jaṭā-mukūṭa and circular kundalas, the god has a snake entwined round his staff. Pārvatī sits gracefully on his lap and holds out her left hand. The goddess is nimbat and has a beautiful coiffure at the back of her head. She wears lalāṭikā, ekāvalī and kundalas. Below, the bull Nandī can be seen seated and facing to right.

The characters of the Brāhmaṇī legend appearing on the obverse are similar to Madhurā and Banskhera records of Harsha.1

3. Śaiva Shrines:

1. Čaturmukha-Mahādeva:

Of all the Śaiva shrines of this period, Čaturmukha-Mahādeva temple of Nāfrā (Dist. Panna) is the earliest. It is earlier in date than even the Viṣṇu temple of Dāruḍāsaṅgar. Its importance further lies in the fact that it still retains its typical north-Indian śikhara which is regarded as one of the earliest examples of the type available to us.

With a severely plain interior and richly carved exterior, the temple stands on jagatī having a door-way in the east and trellis windows in the remaining three sides. Possessing a high adniṣṭhāna which consists of knura mouldings with patrāvalī at angles; kumbha and kalāsa mouldings; kapotas decorated with kudus and with plain vajana and valabhi below. A projecting pattika is the last member of the adniṣṭhāna.

Paṇḍarathā in plan as well as elevation, the sanctum exterior is marked by a onadra on three sides, containing the

1. I.N.S., P.156.
lattice windows. The bhadra as well as karṇa-ratna niches are all formed by pilasters of square section and coroned by a kapota. Of note, again, are asta-dikpālas that were accommodated on the walls of this temple. Only agni and Kubera survive among them. Niches of the karṇa-ratnas were allotted to dikpālas. a prominent caitya separating the sikhara from the jaṅgā is also noticeable. Rising into five rathas, all of which extend beyond the griva, the entire surface of the sikhara is characterised by caitya-window design. The arrangement of 5 karṇa-āmalakas indicates the division of the sikhara into six bhūmis. The sikhara is appropriately crowned by an āmalaka, a kalāsa and a vijapāraka. (Plate No.VII. Fig.No.4)

Walking now into the interior we find that the antarāla has been partly renovated. The sanctum is a plain square cell measuring 4 mrs. side. a samātala ceiling consisting of plain monolithic slabs supported by lintels and architraves is also noteworthy. The sanctum ensnares a beautiful caturmukha Siva-linga.

A keen controversy among the scholars rages round the date of this monument. Cunningham placed it in 6th-7th centuries A.D.¹ Shrikrishna Deva brought it down to 8th century A.D.² He is of the view that the temple belongs to the transition between the Gupta and the medieval architecture. An identical opinion is held by Dr. S.P. Saini.³ But we humbly disagree with them. According to Prof. S.K. Saraswati,⁴ it belongs to the 7th century A.D. for sikhara becomes a regular feature of Indian temple from that time. We may accept his opinion.

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(2) Siddhanathna Mahadeva Temple

The Siddhanathna Mahadeva temple of Bilnagoon (Dist. Panna) is also a Saiva shrine of this period. Consisting of a pâñcaratha sanctum as well as śikhara, an antarāla and a mandapa, it faces west. It enshrines a linga. An icon of Naṭarāja occupies the lalāṭabimba of the door-lintel. It is noteworthy that a niche in rear wall of the sanctum contains an image of Cāmuṇḍā. The tri-sākā door-way showing scrolls, mitunās and śārdulas respectively is further adorned with figures of Gaṅgā and Yamunā and Saiva-Pratīkarīs in the lower portion. The door-lintel has figures of Gaṇeśa and Sarasvatī besides the figure of Naṭarāja. Navagranhas can also be seen. The mandapa has a nābhi-gananda ceiling. Resting on ten pillars decorated with bhūta brackets, the mandapa is entered by a makara-torana.

Walking outside, we see that the temple stands on a jagati. The adiśṭhāna mouldings show from the bottom upwards knura, kumbha, kalasha, kapota, karnika and a plain paṭṭikā. The jaṅgha is divided into two bands of sculptural carvings divided by a bandhana. The bhadra-niches are surmounted by udgamas. The karṇas of the jaṅgha show representation of aṣṭa-dikpālas in their respective places. The southern bhadra niches contain an image of standing Śiva in the lower row and a seated male-deity in the upper row. The eastern bhadra shows an icon of Jūrya in the lower niche and Umā-Maheśvara in the upper. An image of Naṭarāja and seated Śiva have been accommodated in the upper and lower niches respectively of the northern façade. The lower and the upper niches of the antarāla depict dancing Gaṇeśa and seated Pārvati on the north and standing Cāmuṇḍā and seated Pārvati on the south.
Surmounting the jaṅghā are varāndika mouldings, above which rises the pāñcaratna śikhara wholly characterised by caitya-arch design. The crowning members of the śikhara are an āmalaka, a kalaśa and a vijāpuraka. The existence of five karna-āmalakas indicates arrangement of six brūmis. The roof of the mandapa consists of horizontal tiers.

The temple appears to be belonging to the last quarter of the 9th century A.D. On grounds of architectural design and sculptural art. It is one of the earliest temples to contain brūta brackets, makan-toranas, and a number of parivāra-deities of Śiva.

(3) Lalguān Mahādeva :-

One of the earliest shrines at Khajurāho, it has a simple plan and modest dimensions. With a body of granite and a śikhara of sandstone, it resembles the Brahmā temple at the same site in many respects. With plain adhiśṭhāna mouldings and a jaṅghā devoid of any sculptural carving, it is akin to the shrines of Mau and is surmounted by a pyramidal roof of receding tiers. Save for the solitary diamond on the door-sill, the door-way, too, is plain. With major part of the śikhara having fallen, the temple bears a deserted and dilapidated look. Shrikrīśna Deva has assigned it to C. 900 A.D.

(4) Copeśvara Mahādeva :-

In the vicinity of Chhoti Bādoni (Dist. Datia) stand the hills of Copeśvara containing a Śiva temple. Actually it is a natural cave with a natural liṅga. Hard by lie some sculptures of early medieval times.

(5) Śiva Temple of Kodal :-

Only the sanctum surmounted by a śikhara survives of this temple which is located in district Damoh. The śikhara is

1. Deva, Shrikrīśna : Ibid., p.32.
is crumbling to the ground. Facing west, the temple stands on a jagati. The five-sākha door-way is richly carved with scrolls, mithunas, dancing ganas and flowers. The lalāṭadvimba contains an image of Umā-Maheśa in alīṅgāsana posture. The upper-section of the lintel has figures of Navagrahas and sapta-mātrkās - the latter preceded by Viśrabhadra and followed by Gaṇeśa.

The temple is pañcaratha in plan as well as elevation. The karnas of the jāṅghā accommodate figures of aṣṭa-dikpālas in their respective corners. In the upper row garland-bearing vidyādharas can be seen. The lower row has figures of sura-suniaris in recesses and parivāra-deities of Śiva in bhadra niches. Among them depiction of Gaṇeśa with Vighneshvarī is noteworthy.

(6) Śiva Temple of Banavansā :-

A Śiva temple of post-Gupta period stands in this village of Damoh district. It is built in single-slab flat-roof pattern and is of very small dimensions. Consisting only of a sanctum and a shallow porch, it enshrines a liṅga. The temple is deserted and dilapidated.

(7) Śiva Temple of Badgaon :-

The temple is in ruins and only the sanctum surmounted by a fragmentary śikhara survives now. The sanctum enshrines a liṅga. Some sculptures belonging to it lie around.

In addition to the temples mentioned above, Śiva temple of Jasso (Dist. Satna) may also be noted as it lies close to the boundary of Panna district. A door-lintel included in the collection of sculptures at Mohandra (Dist. Panna) contains Śiva in the lalāṭadvimba, thus testifying to the existence of a Śiva temple.

At Jenvai in Datia district was found a colossal liṅga with divine figures in relief on all the four sides.¹

¹. I.A.S., 1963-64, p. 87.
The discovery proves that a Śiva temple stood there. The whereabouts of this linga are not known now, so it can not be said whether the carvings on it represented other principal deities of Brahmanic religion.

A ċaturmukha-linga now lying in the courtyard of Pārvatī temple, Nachmā (Dist.Panna) was found at Laknura about 3 kms. away from Nachmā. The four faces of Śiva have been finely carved. All faces are adorned with jāṭā-mukuta and wear a hāra in the neck. (Plate No.VIII.Pig.No.1) This linga from Laknura attests to the existence of a Śiva temple there.

(C) Śaiva Sculpture :-

Of the iconic forms of Śiva we possess numerous examples, though linga was the principal object of worship enshrined in the Śiva temples of this period. At Gopeśvara hills near Chhoti Badoni (Dist.Datia) is lying a fine representation of Śiva in his Rāvaṇānugraha aspect. The demon is seen on the pedestal possessing five heads and eight hands. Perhaps the remaining two hands are mutilated now. He is flanked by four figures on each side. Śiva with his consort sits above in lalitāsana. Their mounts bull and lion are appropriately carved below them. Representation of Gaṇeśa and Kṛṣṇikṣaya may also be noticed.

Another Rāvaṇānugraha-mūrti is available to us from Knumānganj in Tikamgarh district. The iconography of this piece is similar to the one described above.

Of Umāsthita-mūrtis, we have an example in the collection of sculptures at Mohendrā (Dist.Panna). Śiva sits in lalitāsana with Umā on his lap. Appropriately adorned with usual ornaments, he holds a trisūla in the right hand and clasps the goddess with the left. To his right stands Gaṇeśa in attacking posture with
a dagger in left hand and right bearing a sword raised upward. Kārttikeya stands to left riding his mount peacock. In the top corners, Brahmā and Viṣṇu are carved.

Another image of Kara-Gaurī was found at Keolāri in district Dāṭia.\(^1\) An icon of Ardhanārīśvara and another depicting Gaṅgāsura-samhāra were also found there.\(^2\) The collection of Bundelkhand Chhatrasāl Museum (Banda) also includes a representation of Ardhanārīśvara.

At Lokhri (Dist. Banda) an icon of Lakulīśa is also worthy of mention. Seated in sukhāsana and holding a club in left hand, his right hand rests on the knee. The god wears a narmamundamālā, torque, earrings and a waist girīl. Jhansi Museum also contains an icon of Lakulīśa. Seated padmāsana and adorned with a jatā-mukuta, a graiveyaka, aṅgadas and valayas, his front hands are in yogamudrā. In one of the back-hands he has a danda or āhvāja. Some independent representations of Pārvatī may also be noted here. From the village Sarkar (Dist. Jhansi) was discovered a fine icon of Skandamātā now housed in the Khajurāho Museum. The goddess has a jatā-mukuta and a bull is seen below as her Vāhana.\(^3\) Temple No. 76 on the Sonāgir hill (Dist. Dāṭia) contains an image of Pārvatī with a Sanskrit inscription in Siddhā-Mātrikā characters of 8th century A.D. The epigraph, incised on the auroch of the image, records that the image was caused to be made by Vadaka, son of Simghadeva.\(^4\) An 8th century icon of Pārvatī in the collection of Sir H.S. Gaur Archaeological Museum, Sagar also needs mention here. Seated lalitākṣepa and holding Gaṅeśa in lap, both of her hands and head are mutilated. The mount Nandi is carved below.

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 1962-63, P. 78.
4. Ibid., P. 50.
(D) Gana\ṣa:--

A separate and independent sect of Gana\ṣapatya was not in existence during the period under review for we know of no temple dedicated to this deity. Even the iconic representations of this god are also few. Perhaps Gana\ṣa was still regarded as a parivāra deity of Śiva. Mention has been made above that he is included in the representations of Nāgarājaṇa-graṇha and Umāsanītā-mūrtis of Śiva.

According to Ārṇ tatsamhitā, "The lord of the Pramaṇathas (i.e., Gana\ṣa) be elephant-faced and pot-bellied and should hold a trishūlī (in his hand), one toothed, he should hold (also) the green root of a radish."\(^1\) Amarakoṣa describes him as one toothed, elephant-headed and pot-bellied.\(^2\) According to Viśnu-dnarmottara, "Vināyaka be elephant-headed and four-armed, should bear trisūla and akṣamālā in right hands and modaka-pātra and parasu in left hands. He should be pot-bellied and his ears be raised. Wearing a tiger-skin garment and a sarpa-yajñopavī, one of his legs should be on pedestal and the other on the seat."\(^3\)

It may be seen that all the texts invariably prescribe elephant-face, pot-belly and one-tooth among his iconographic features. Gana\ṣapati icons of Śivendrananda generally abide by the injunctions mentioned above. It may be further mentioned that Gana\ṣapati icons of our area generally correspond to the description given in Viśnu-dnarmottara.

Inside the sanctum of Śatymukha-Mañādeva temple of Nacmā is lying an icon of Gana\ṣa which apparently has not any connection with the temple. Seated rāja-līāsana, the god is endowed

\(^1\) B.S., 57, 58.
\(^2\) 1, 1, 38.
\(^3\) 71, 13-16.
with four arms, holding pāśa, and modakas in two of them, the rest being mutilated.

At Tejgarn in Damoh district lies an icon of Gānēśa inside a temple of Hanumāna. The god is four-armed. Seated lalitākṣepa and adorned with usual ornaments, he holds a paraśu in his back right and modakas in front left hand, objects of the other two hands being unidentifiable. Near Sagarā tank at Ranēh (Dist. Damoh) an image of dancing Gānēśa may also be studied here. Endowed with four arms, his front right hand is gajanasta and front left holds modakas. In back right he holds a paraśu whereas the back left is mutilated. His snake yajñopavīta is clearly rendered.

VI- ŚAKTIISM

The birth of Tantrism is supposed to have given impetus to the cult of śakti and it scaled new heights of popularity during the period under review. At the root of the speculations of the period lay the philosophical theory that not god as such but god as associated with his power (śakti) is responsible for the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe.1

Speaking about Durgā, Dr. H. D. Bhattacharya remarks, "The ten arms may represent the combined ten hands of the four-handed Brahmā, the four-handed Viṣṇu and the two-handed Śiva, seeing that Durgā was considered to be Mahā-Kāli, Mahā-Lakṣmī and Mahā-Sarasvatī in one.2

The Mārkandeya-Purāṇa is the locus classicus for the exploits of the goddess. Its Devī Manātmya chapter includes Mahiṣamardini episode in addition to some other accounts of Śakti’s achievements as also the promise of her periodic appearance whenever the demons would threaten the peace of gods.

2. Ibid., p.338.
(A) Mahiṣamardinī :

A temple of Mahiṣamardinī, utterly in ruins, stands at Khamerā in Datia district. As it is akin to the Jain temple of Chhoti Badoni, already described, in architectural plan and design, it should be assigned to this period. Built entirely of granite and destitute of any decorative designs, it consists of a sanctum crowned by a low sikhara. The figure of Mahiṣamardinī, now enshrined in a new temple nearby belonged to this temple.

We should note here an icon of eighteen-armed Mahiṣamardinī, also enshrined in a newly constructed temple at Bhenswāhā. Some of her hands are mutilated and objects held in surviving hands include a sword, a bell, a club, and a triśūla. The existence of this icon attests to the fact that a temple of Mahiṣamardinī stood at Bhenswāhā. A few rock-cut reliefs available from Daśarathaghāta in Banda district include representations of the goddess. Endowed with four-arms, she is seen fighting with the demon. Holding the tail of the demon with front left hand and bearing a khdga in front right, she has triśūla and ēakra in back right and left hands respectively.¹ The face of demon appears to be that of a crocodile. Two more figures of the goddess are carved at the place. One of them is inscribed in characters of about 700 A.D. with the words 'Śrimurundahasta'.

(B) Yogini Centers :

(1) Khajurāho :

The Čausaṭhā-Yoginī temple of Khajurāho is the earliest among the extant monuments at the place. Deserted and

¹. निः 3. 30 — चकुषीक्षचा चकुषीक्षचा दल्लान न काकुषी ।
   पार्वेया प्रथम कदन खुर्दन नाइयाण ॥
dilapidated now, it was built entirely of granite. Possessing an exceptional plan and design, it illustrates the simpler style of Pratihāra architecture. Standing on a lofty jagati, it is an open quadrangular structure consisting of sixty-seven peripheral shrines. Longest and largest among them is one facing the entrance and occupying the central position in the back-wall. Tiny in size, the shrines have a small door, and are crowned by a modest šiknu or pyramidal design. Destitute of any sculptural carving, the shrines are empty now. Shrikrishna Deva remarks, "of all the Yogini temples in India this is the most primitive in construction and is unique in being quadrangular and not circular in plan." Only three sculptures could be recovered from the temple. On the basis of sculptural and architectural styles, coupled with the early palaeography of short labels on the images, the temple has rightly been assigned to the last quarter of the 9th century A.D.

(2) Lokhri:--

Mention has already been made that Prof. K.D. Bajpai recently discovered a Yogini center in Banda district near the village Lokhri. In all about 29 Yogini images were found at the place. They have been identified on the basis of their iconography and their names are as below:

1. Vaishnavi, riding garuda,
2. Varahi.
3. Vasudhara.
4. Aindrī holding a coconut and a vajra.
5. Kānkāli, four-armed, holding fire, knappa and riding Śiva.
7. Vaināyakī, riding elephant, wearing a torque and kundalas and holding a coconut and a vajra.

1. Deva, Shrikrishna : Ibid., P.52.
8. Yamı, riding buffalo and holding knapper and vyālaśūla.

9. Agneyī, riding meṣa and holding a rosary in right hand.

10. Kaumārī, riding peacock who eats a fruit held by her. (Sketch No. 1)

11. Meṣamukhī.

12. Hayagrīvī, riding vidāla and holding danda in both her hands.

13. Saśī, riding nare and holding yajñapattà and kamandalu in right hands and with a māla in one of the left hands.

14. Māneśvarī, riding bull and holding Kārttikeya and fruit in front hands and śūla and mirror in back hands.

15. HarinaŚrīgā, riding a deer and holding a vijapūraka in right hand and śūla in left hand.

16. Vārāhī, four-armed, holding čakra and padma in back hands and gadā and śaṅkha in front hands, riding a boar.

17. Nāgī, riding elephant and holding vajra and fruit in right and left hands respectively.

18. Ulūkī, four-armed, riding on owl and holding āmrapala and śūla in upper right and left hands respectively and a cup in lower right.

19. Ruṣādāi.¹

VII- Sauma CULT

An independent sect of the Sauras existed in Bundelkhand during the period. Elsewhere in India, the sect became active even during the Gupta period and temples were erected in honour of Sūrya. Devotion of Harsha to Sūrya is vouched for by Yuan Chwang.²

That the cult spread its influence in Bundelkhand is attested to by the Sun temple of Markherā (Dist. Tikamgarh). (Plate No. IV. Fig. No. 4) which belongs to the period under review.

¹ For the names and description of all the Kṣiti icons of Lekhri, I owe to Shri S. D. Misra, my guide and supervisor.
Standing on a low jagatī and consisting of a
garbha-grha crowned by a śikhara, an antarāla and a mandapa, the
temple is pāñcāratna in plan as well as elevation, the rathas being
projected even beyond the grīvā. Carved with dāitya-window design
all over, the śikhara is crowned by an āmalaka the other members having
fallen now. Bedecked with beautiful bands of statuary, the jāṅghā
contains numerous niches crowned by long udgamas. The bhadrā niches
accommodate icon of the Sun-god in different poses. The antarāla
niches contain Durgā and Cajalakṣmī in southern and northern facades
respectively. Figures of the aṣṭa-dikpālas occupy their allotted
corners.

The pāñcāsākha door-way to the sanctum is carved
with a number of motifs. River-goddesses riding their respective
mounts occupy their positions on the jambs. A four-armed icon of Sūrya
occupies the lalāṭatimba on the uttarāṅga of the door-way. Riding a
chariot drawn by seven horses, he is accompanied by Uṣā-Pratyuṣā and
Arunā. Figures of four horse-riders that also appear on the uttarāṅga
seem to stand for his four sons. In addition to these, the lintel also
contains representation of navagrahas and saptā-mātrkās.

The sanctum enshrines a large and beautiful icon of
Sūrya. According to Varāhamihira, "The nose, forehead, shanks, thighs,
cheeks, and breast of Sūrya should be elevated; he should be attired
in the northern's dress being covered from feet to breast; holding
in his hands two lotus flowers born of his two hands (i.e. by their
stalk). He wears a crown and his face is adorned with earrings; he
has a long necklace and the girdle called viśāla round his waist; he
is covered by kāñcuka his face being shown as possessing the lustre
of the inside of a lotus, smiling and pleasant; he has a halo
brilliant on account of gems; a Sun image fashioned in this manner
confers blessings on his maker."1 It is interesting to note that no details are given regarding Sūrya's chariot, his charioteer Aruṇa, his attendants Danda and Pin'gala and his wives Usā and Pratyusa, some of whom generally accompany him in his icons that we get in Bundelkhand. In the image envisaged in the Sun-temple of Markherā, the god stands samāpadasthānaka on a tri-ratna pedestal. He is appropriately attired in Uḍiṭavesa and wears boots also. He is adorned with kirıța, kundalas, nāra, yajñepavita and mekhalā. He is accompanied by Danda-Pin'gala, Usā-Pratyusa and Rajñī-Nikābha.

VIII - INTER-SECT RELATIONS

Very little incipional and literary evidence we possess throwing light on the inter-sect relations during the period under review. We have noted that kings of this period were very liberal and catholic in their attitude towards religion. Harsha, for example, adopted the titles of 'Pāramanvēvara' and 'Pāramasaugata' indicating thereby that he was equally attached to the cults of Śiva and Buddha.2 At the same time he was devoted to Sūrya like his predecessors. The Gurjara-Pratihāra monarchs followed different cults and we have seen that even father and son in this dynasty were not devoted to one deity. But their inscriptions reveal that they encouraged other cults also than their own. Bhoja was a devotee of Bhagavatī but in his Gwalior inscription, erection of a Viṣṇu temple is mentioned.3

1. यकृतप्रवचन, ५५, ४९९ म —
विज्ञापणस्थितरूपं पार्थिविन्द्रं फलमेवः पुरुषवारिक
कुलपुप्पाधिकारिन्योः प्राचीनस्वतः विपूर्व
कलाकृति नायनिशिचः कृत्वा: मुक्तस्वात्म प्रयत्नमुग्धः
रतनान्वित्च भ्रात्रमपेशस्त्रव कृत्तस्वामाराजः:।

2. B.I. Vol. IV, No. 20.
It is but natural that this healthy and catholic attitude should have influenced the people. Of utmost importance and profound significance in this connection is the gathering of people following different cults - orthodox as well as heterodox - at the hermitage of the great sage Divākara Mitra. This momentous event has been recorded by Bāna who mentions names of the following sects and cults, while describing the people who were included in the gathering—Bhāgavatas, Śveta-Paṭāh (Śvetāmbarās), Kesā luṅcanaḥ (the people who pulled out their hair-Digambarās), Kapilāh (followers of Kapila), Lokāyatikās (followers of Čārvāka), Mañśvara-karnikās (Mañśvara-matas), Kanādāh (Vaiśeṣikās), Upanisadās (followers of the doctrines of the Upanisads), Dharma-sāstrins (persons who studied smṛtis), Paurāṇikās (who mastered Purāṇas) and Saptatantavās (who studied sacrifices)....

Pañcarātrās, 1 This impressive gathering of people representing practically all sects and cults of the time save Buddhism proves that a healthy catholicity reigned in the realms of religion during the period under review.

Further proof of this liberal outlook is provided by sculptural and architectural remains. It is not without significance that temples dedicated to Śiva, Viṣṇu and Sakti stand in close proximity at Khajurāho. The Causatna-Yogini temple, Lalguan-Mahādeva and Brahmā temple (originally dedicated to Viṣṇu) were raised during this period at Khajurāho. Evidence of Buddhism has also been found there. At Nachnā the temple of Śiva still stands whereas that of Viṣṇu has vanished but both stood side by side. At Deogarh Buddhism and Jainism flourished together.

This happy state of inter-sect relations led to syncretist ideology emphasizing the one identity of all important

Brahmanic gods. For the cult of the Pentad we do not possess any evidence belonging to this period. But the spirit of syncretism found favour and we come across some syncretic icons of this period.

An icon of Ardhanarīśvara housed in Sir H.S. Gaur Archaeological Museum, Sagar deserves mention here (No. 63-120). It attests to the syncretism between the cults of Śiva and Śakti. It is assignable to 600 A.D. Seated lalitāsana with left leg bent and right one broken, the left half of the deity represents Gaurī and the right half Śiva. Both hands are mutilated. The headdress is divided in jatā on the right and kirīṭa on the left. Wearing a mālā of beads in neck and armlets, the deity has a plain large halo behind head. Yajñopavītta and waist band have also been carved. The icon is 1 mr. high and 54 cms. broad.