Nandi and Gana

A. Nandi:

Nandi has been described in the Epics, Puranas and other early literature as one of the chief Ganas of Siva. As such, he is depicted in human form as a dwarf Gana as well as in theriomorphic form i.e. Vrśa (bull), as a vahana of Siva. He is also described as an incarnation of Siva. In Visnudharmottara Purana, Nandi is referred to as a symbol of dharma (III, XLVIII, 18). But the bull figures are invariably associated with Saivite places of worship all over India. In every Sivalaya, the Vṛṣa (Nandi) is represented on a pedestal in sitting attitude, invariably facing the Siva-linga.

The bull is recognised in Indian Culture from very early times as a symbol of power and vitality. The earliest representation of bull appears on a large number of seals discovered at Indus Valley civilization sites and other Chalcolithic sites. Perhaps, the bull was considered sacred in Indus Civilization. The profusion of bull forms found from the excavations at Kayatha shows that perhaps a sort of 'Bull cult' existed here during 1700-1500 B.C.

In the Vedic literature, Vṛṣabha has been used as the epithet of several deities viz. Indra, Dyaus, Rudra etc. and
here, there is no proof of actual direct worship of bull as such. But in the later Vedic texts Vṛṣa or bull has been specifically associated with Śiva.

Nandī has been described in the early literature also as one of the chief personal attendants (Gāṇa) of Śiva. Kālidāsa describes Nandī as keeping guard over the entrance of Śiva's abode at Kamā. With a golden staff resting against his left forearm and silencing the Gāṇas with a finger of his right hand placed on his mouth. In the Rāmāyana, Nandī is described as having general appearance of a monkey (Vanararūpa) and the body of a fierce dark brown short-armed powerful dwarf. In various Purāṇas he is described as the chief of the Gāṇas.

In another tradition, Nandī under the title of Adhikāranandī is presented as a bull-faced human being, or as a duplicate of Śiva, in a good many south Indian temples. The accounts of these aspects of Nandī are given in the Purāṇas. The aspect of Adhikāranandī is described in the Śiva Purāṇa, Liṅga Purāṇa and Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Among several images of Adhikāranandī with bull-face, the image in the collection of the Sanskrit University Museum, Varanasi is unique. In this, Nandī is shown standing with his wife to his left in āliṅgana pose. Nandī in anthropomorphised form is not very common in Hindu Iconography and still more rare are his images with his wife.
The other aspect of Mandī showing him like a Śiva is referred to in the Visnudharmottara Purāṇa (BK. III, ch. 73, vv. 15.7) and Uttarakāmikāgama.

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A fine illustration of Adhikāranandī may be pointed out in the figure hailing from Śiva temple at Veluvur which follows the rules given in the Uttarakāmikāgama.

The idea about the bull being the amount of the god seems to have originated before the 1st century B.C. Śiva used to be represented in theriomorphic form as bull on coins in the Gandhāra region. By the time, the Kuśāṇas had begun their rule, the bull was recognised as his mount.

The humped bull appears on several seals from spooner's finds at Basarh showing Śavite association. The seals unearthed by Sir John Marshall at Bhiṣṭā show the bull along with the other Śaiva emblems. An intaglio in the Indian Museum, Calcutta,
belonging to the late Kuśāṇa period, represents four-armed Śiva seated on his mount Nandī. Here it may be pointed out that Śiva's Vṛṣavāhana form (riding his bull-vāhana) has been referred to by Kālidāsa at several places. There is a reference to the images of Nandī (Bull) in Mahābhārata also.

In numerous images of Śiva-Pārvatī, belonging to late Kuśāṇa, Gupta and post-Gupta period, the deities are shown standing in front of a Nandī. Besides this, in several images of Viṣṇu, Viṣṇudhara Śiva, Śaṅkara Śiva, Ardhanārīśvara, Pārvatī, Maheśvari, and others are represented in company of a bull-mount.

In Śiva temples, Nandī is invariably represented fully in the theriomorphic form (bull) wherein the bull is shown squatting on a raised platform, facing the entrance-door of the shrine in which is placed the divine emblem of Śivalinga. This position of Nandī is fully corroborated by the description given in the Matysa Purāṇa (i.e. devavīkṣanatatparah).

The sculptural tradition of Nandīs and his allocation to the temple proper are, however, described in detail in the Aparājita-taproča which describes Nandī or Nandikesvara in a bull form and gives all the relative measurements of the figure. According to this text, height of Nandī should cover the sight up to Viṣṇu-bhāga of the Śivalinga. The text further describes that the bull should be adorned with the Ghaṇṭā (bell), Cāmara (fly whisk), Ghurgharmālā - (garland of rattle - boxes), and Śṛṅgabhāraṇa,
(horn ornament). It also refers to the pot containing modaka (sweet balls) to be placed in front of the Nandi.

The Śaivagama Nibandhana, a South Indian work (c. 11th cent. A.D.) though available in corrupt form, gives almost similar description.

Although the Śiva temples in India, show Nandi in front of the linga, as described above, except an exhaustive article on the Nandi images of Tamilnādu and Kannadānādu, the bulls of northern tradition are rarely published.

The bull from Chanpur (M.P., c. 12th cent. A.D.) is shown in squatting pose. Tinkling bells, ghurghurmālā are laid on his carved back while another garland, a hump-band, passes over the hind-quarter. There is a beautiful Gana figure which is clinging to the garland.

A huge brass image of Nandi is lying in the compound of Acalesvāra Sivālaya at Mt. Abu (Rājasthān). Here the bull is decorated with the chain, and the garland as usual. Another such massive image of bull, now in the Decca Museum was found from Deobhog in the Faridpur District. Its hump is encircled by two garlands, and an embroidered carpet covers the whole of the back from tail to neck. A band circles around the neck and a tiny bell is suspended from it hanging by the dewlap. Its front leg is shown bent at the joint, as if the bull is about to rise.
M.A. Dhaky has recently brought to light some interesting bull figures from Tamilnadu and Kannada26. Bull is represented in Dravidian temples in three positions: (i) facing the sanctum from outside the ardhamandapa (Hall); (ii) as cognizance placed over each of the four corners of the vimana; (iii) in partly decorative and partly symbolic role, placed along the top of the prakara (wall) surrounding the temple complex.

The sitting postures of all these vṛṣa figures are uniform, following the iconographic texts. But, of these bull figures, some Nandi images are unadorned and some are decorated with chain, Ghanṭamālā and head-band (maṇīrekha).

Some interesting depictions of Nandi have been found from Gujarat. Here it occurs in three ways: (i) on the coins and seals; as an emblem of Śaivisam; (ii) in the company of Śaiva images viz. Śiva, Viṇādhara-Siva, Ardhanārīśvara, Māhesvara, Pārvatī and others, as their Vāhana; (iii) as a free standing sculpture facing the sannctum and calmly starring at the Viṣṇubhāga of linga; this being the general rule.

The earliest depiction of bull in Gujarat known so far is found on a coin of Wema Kadphises (c. 40 – 78 A.D.). It was discovered from Kārvaṇa27. It shows Śiva standing against his bull mount. A coin of Śiri Satakarnī with bull-mark was also secured from the same site28. Several Kṣatrapa coins represent bull, indicating their leanings towards Śaivism29. Some Western
coins of the time of Skanda Gupta showing bull have been found from Gujarat and Saurashtra. The bull-mark is also found on numerous coins of the Maitrakas. Besides this, Valabhi copper-plates seal has device of a seated Bull. A mediaeval seal showing seated bull and trisulā is found from the excavations at Nagarā. Numerous Caulukyan inscriptions also continued to represent Nandi in sitting posture.

Nandi as Vāhana of Saiva deities:

The earliest depiction of Nandi as vāhana of Saiva deities known so far could be traced back as early as Kṣatrapa period. A terracotta plaque obtained from the excavation at Amrelī represents Uma-Mahēśvara seated on bull. Unfortunately the bull is damaged and worn out.

But the seated bull in the image of Viṇādhara Śiva from Gaḍha (Dist : Śabarkāntī) is equisitely carved. This and similar seated bull shown in the sculptures of Uma-Mahēśvara (Roḍā), Viṇādhara Śiva (Koṭēśvara, Ambājī area) and many others are adorned with the Ghurghurmālā, a chain neatly suspended around the neck and the head-band are comparable to the bull-vāhana of Viṇādhara Śiva from Amzārā (Rajasthan).

The bull in the image of Viṇābhadrā from Šamalājī is also nicely carved. Here the animal, with its forelegs broken, stands behind the god. Nandi is decorated with a garland of lion-headed
rattle-boxes (Ghurghuramālā) around the neck which passes behind the hump. A beaded-head-band with a pendant of leaf motif in the centre of the forehead add beauty to this vrṣa figure. Almost similar depiction of Nandī is found in the image of Māheśvarī from Śāmalājī, now in the Baroda Museum. The garland of lion-headed rattle-boxes seem to have disappeared and replaced by GhurghurmAłā and Ghaṇṭa-cāmaramālā. The bull represented in the images of Uma-Maheśvara (Gadha), Śiva-Parvati (Kārvana), Viṇādhara Śiva (Vaḍāval), dancing Māheśvarī (Kārvan) and many others are almost identical. The Nandī in the above mentioned images show stylistic similarity with the bull depicted in the images of Śiva from Kalyānapura and Mahēśvarī from Sagar and many other post-Gupta Śaiva figures noted from Rajasthan. In most of these depictions, Nandī appears on either right or left side of the deity.

But compared to above specimens the bull-mount in the mediaeval Śaiva icons seems to become smaller in size. The image of Māheśvarī from E.M.E. School, Baroda, numerous icons of Śiva, Viṇādhara Śiva, Nāṭeṣa and others show Nandī either seated, standing or with upturned head. In many mṛtya mūrtis of Śiva, Nandī is shown with upturned head, watching and enjoying the dance of his lord.

Nandī in free standing sculpture:

An excellent early sculpture of Nandī (Figure X - 1) carved
in schist (length 80 x h. 37.5 cms. approx.) now preserved in the Baroda Museum (No. Ac. 20.365) is reported to have come from Sāmalājī region. Its steady squattine pose, huge hump nad vigorous modelling even at rest are executed naturally. The bull is bedecked with a long Ghaṇṭamālā around the neck passes behind the hump. There is another chain-like garland encircling its wrinkled neck. The bejewelled head-band (manirekhā) look beautiful. Unfortunately its mouth and frontal part of the pedestal are broken. Stylistically this fine specimen could be ascribed to c. 5th cent. A.D.

Similar sculpture of bull (Figure X - 2) found from Rānacho-dajī temple in Sāmalājī, is now displayed in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay (Acc. No. 574). This figure also sculptured in greenish schist (size : L 121 x 70 x 70 cms. approx.) shows the crouchant bull with short horns and huge hump. Its snout is broken. Here the bull is shown wearing a chain with metallic look around his neck. An elegant ghurghuracāmara-mālā is worn around the neck and back of the huge body whose lion-headed rattle-boxes are similar to these shown in the bull-vāhana of Vīrabhadra image from Sāmalājī. There is a fine head-band consisting of a two-stringed mālā. On the other side of the bull is a Gana tying a garland around its body while in front was perhaps a vessel of sweet-balls (modaka-pātra). This and the other bulls noted above, illustrate fine local breed of Kāṅkareji and other bulls of Western India.
Another early bull (size: h. 70 x L. 121 cms.) also belonging to the same date and place (Figure X - 3) is now exhibited in the Baroda Museum (Acc. No. 574). Unfortunately its mouth, horns and the hump are mutilated. The ghurghurmālā composed of rattle-boxes and flywhisk (ghurghur-çāmamālā) chain and the head-band are similar to those shown in other two Nandi images from Șāmalājī.

A colossal figure of Nandi51 (Figure X - 4) is lying in the Sandhesvara temple at Sañdhidi (near Bhāvnagar, Saurāstra). Its mouth and horns are broken. Here the bull is adorned with decorative belt worn rather tight and a ghantacāmamālā looped behind the hump. There are anklets on the legs. The massive body with its well developed hump is treated with realistic touch. This image has been ascribed to c. 7th cent. A.D.

Similar huge Nandi52 in the Siddhesvara Mahādeva temple (Figure X - 5) is approximately 240 cms. in length, 150 cms. in height and 155 cms. wide. Its ornaments are similar to those shown in the bull from Sañdhidi.

The bull preserved in the Rājarājēśvara temple at Kārvaṇa (Figure X - 6) though smaller in size (c. 47 x 39 x 37 cms.) than the above specimens, and the massive back are realistically treated and show nearness in style to the bull from Sañdhidi, described above. The belt encircling the neck, the garland of bells carved in low relief and the manirekhā decorated the bull as usual. It is datable to c. 8th cent. A.D.
There is a beautiful sculpture of Nandi (Figure X - 7), displayed in the E.M.E. School, Baroda. Its snout, ears and horns are broken. It is bedecked with a tight fitting chain worn around the stiff neck. It gives a metallic look. Another garland of the ghanțamālā passes behind the hump. The maṇīrekhā made of two strings is seen on the forehead. There are Gana figures in sitting postures, one on each side of the modaka-kundika which is placed in front of the bull. It is assignable to c. 8th cent. A.D.

The Nandi lying in the Pāṇcesvara temple in Karvaṇ (Figure X - 8) is carved in the style of Ṣamalāji bull described above. But this sandstone specimen (75 x 35 x 35.5 cms.) seems to be a bit later and could be ascribed to c. 8th cent. A.D. It is adorned with a long garland of bells looped behind the hump and a maṇīrekhā (head-band) on the forehead. The wavy folds of its dewlap are nicely shown. Here also the Gana figures sit in front of the Nandi, holding modaka-pātra in their hands.

A mutilated Nandi assignable to c. 10th/11th cent. A.D. is lying in front of the Pasupati temple on Mt. Pāvagāḍha. Its head and hump are broken and lost. The sitting posture and ornaments are as usual (Figure X - 9).

A gigantic Nandi (Figure X - 10 ) carved in sandstone and with its head mutilated is lying in the compound of Gopēvara
temple in Dehgāma<sup>53</sup> (Ta: Nandīād, Dist : Kheda). This bull seems to be an unfinished specimen. It measures approximately L. 315 cms. x h x h. 120 x w. 105 cms. The ghurghurmālā which passes behind the broken hump and the rope around neck decorate the bull. There is a manger placed in front of him and a small unfinished figure of the gana by its side. It is assignable to c. 9th cent. A.D.

An exquisitely carved Nandī with inscription on its pedestal is found from Mahīṭṣa<sup>54</sup>, a village of the Kheda District (Figure x - 11). Unfortunately its mouth and modaka-pātra are partly broken. The vigorous modelling, symmetry and the finishing are characteristics of this animal sculpture. Nandī is adorned with decorative ghurghurmālā passing just behind the hump and a chain around the neck. Both of them are realistic. There is a śṛṅgabhāraṇa (beaded-horn-ornament) also. The inscription on its pedestal reads the date V.S. 1325 i.e. 1269 A.D.

On the eastern bank of the tank at Dantesvara, Pratāpnagar (Baroda), there is a broken image of Nandī (Figure X -12). Unfortunately the image is spoiled by modern oil paints. Here the bull is adorned with a rope around the neck, the ghurghurmālā on his back and the manirekhā on his forehead. In front of the animal are seen the modaka-kundikā and the gana figure. This bull can be assigned to c. 11th/12th on stylistic base.

Another sandstone image of Nandī, ascribable to mediaeval period is noted from Garbada (Ta : Dāhod, Dist : Pañcmahāls). Its
mouth is broken. Here the bull is embellished with a decorative garland in the centre of which is hanging a bell. Another bejewelled garland which passes behind the hump is noteworthy as no garland with such a fine design is noted so far (Figure X - 13).

A mutilated Nandi from Dudhesvara temple in Dāhod (Figure X - 14) is also assignable to mediaeval period (c. 13th cent. A.D.). It is shown wearing a chain around the neck and a ghurghurmālā behind the hump as usual. This sandstone image is assignable to c. 12th cent. A.D.

The E.M.E. School (Baroda) temple compound preserves a fine Images of Nandi. It is reported to have been acquired from Kāvī area (Dist : Bharuch). Scanty ornaments, chain and ghurghurmālā adorn the bull. Stylistically it is datable to c. 12th cent. A.D. (Figure X - 15).

Recently a miniature bull for amulet has been found from scrapping of an early historic mound at Vishod (Ta : Vāgrā, Dist : Broach). In this, the squatting pose of the bull is as usual (Figure X - 16). Here it may be noted that similar miniature Nandi figures are also recovered at Nevasa (c. 1st cent. B.C. - 3rd cent. A.D.). Similar Nandi - amulets are also found from Konḍapur and Vaisālī.

It is clear from the above study that Nandi as the vāhana of Saiva deities, is represented in various poses viz. seated,
standing, with upturned head etc. But his depictions on inscriptions, seals and coins show him in traditional pose such as seated steadily in the squatting pose.

Among the free standing sculptures of bull, those placed in front of the Śiva temples, facing the Sivalinga are also depicted in the traditional sitting attitude. The front legs of the Nāndī are shown bent at the joint as if the bull is about to rise. It is decorated with ghurghurmālā, cāmaraghaṇṭamālā, chain, śrīṅga-bhāraṇa. A modaka kundikā is placed in front of him. All these are represented according to the description given in the Aparājita-praṇāḥ.

Some of the Nāndīs from Gujarat show a few of the peculiarities of Karnāṭa vrṣas such as one from Śāmalājī, a mediaeval specimen from Mahiṣā and others. Perhaps, this is because, south Gujarat remained under the sway of the Cālukyas of Bādami, Rastrakūtas and Cālukyas of Kalyāṇī. Similar Nāndī images are noted from Ellora, Visvanatha temple at Khajurāho (M.P.) etc.

Some of the Nāndīs from Āndhra Pradesa and one now in the Decca Museum show its hump encircled by a skandhamālā. This feature is not seen in tradition of Gujarat.

Several late mediaeval (15th - 16th cent. A.D.) images of bull are generally shown with an embroidered carpet covering its back and sometimes the muzzle tightly bound by a rope fastened from behind the ears and going across jaws (Figures X - 17-18).
B. The Gaṇas:

Lord Śiva has been addressed in the Purāṇas, Tantras and other early literature as 'Bhūteśa' and 'Bhūtanātha', the Synonym for 'Bhūta' being 'Pramatha', during the Gupta and the post-Gupta period, he has also been mentioned as Pramathanātha. Another Synonymous word for these same metaphysical elements is 'Gaṇa'.

The earliest references to the Gaṇas occur in the Vedic literature. Here their association with Rudra is also mentioned. The Mahābhārata also describes the Gaṇas. Kālidāsa has given some very amusing descriptions of the Gaṇas in the Kumārasambhava. At one place, he describes them as sitting on a hillock, dressed in the bhurjapatra bark and their hair decorated with flowers. On the occasion of Śiva-vivāha, some of the Gaṇas were playing on the musical instruments. Before leaving for the Fürvati's place (Bride's home), Śiva is described as looking at his face in the mirror-like shining sword held by one of the Gaṇas. On the birth of Kumāra (Kārṭtikeya), the Gaṇas made some necessary preparations for the occasion. Kālidāsa has also referred to the dancing of Bṛṅgī, one of the Gaṇa leaders. Another poet, Bharavī, has described the army of the Gaṇa of peculiar forms holding various weapons, They were accompanying their lord Śiva, who had assumed the form of a Kirāta.

The Purāṇas give some interesting accounts of these Gaṇas. According to the Vayu Purāṇa, Bhūti the daughter of Krodha was
married to a risi called Pulah. Bhūti gave birth to no less than one lakh of Gaṇas, who all became attendants of Śiva. Their physical appearance and features are graphically described in the Purāṇas. Some of them were lean and thin; some of them were of colossal size and many were small-statured, hunched or pot-bellied. They held various weapons, such as the bow, arrow, mace, sword and trident. Some of them wore peculiar dress and ornaments; others were completely naked. All these Gaṇas, according to the Purāṇas, were brahmācārins, (bachelors). According to the epic, the Gaṇas bore faces of various birds and animals like the elephant, lion, dog, fox, boar, cat, cock, crow, owl and falcon.

Some Sanskrit texts mention the names of several leaders of the Gaṇas such as Nandī, Bṛṛgī, Durmukha, Kumbhāṇḍa, Kumbhodara, Pramatha etc. These leaders had to perform special duties. Some of the Gaṇas were represented as doorkeepers (dvārapālas) in the temples of Śiva.

An unknown text, mostly a Saivāgama, named Candrāgama mentions six names of the Gaṇas viz. Āmoda, Pramoda, Prahukha, Durmukha, Avighna and Vighnakarta. These six names are also mentioned in the Kasyapa-Silpa, a text datable to 13th cent. A.D. According to Kasyapa-Silpa Āmoda, Pramoda, Prahukha and Durmukha are carved at South-east, South-west, North-west and North-east. The colours of their lotuses are white, red, yellow and black respectively.
The iconographies of the Gaṇas are not clearly described in any iconographic text but their depiction on Śaiva temples enable one to derive general iconographic features of the Gaṇas. In ancient Indian art, the Gaṇas are usually represented on the pīṭha or Kaṇṭha or stambha-sākhā of the door-frame or the roopa-sākhā of the Gupta and the post-Gupta temples. They are depicted in various interesting ways such as with stout body, carefree, heavily coiffed, playful, pot-bellied and as dwarfish personalities.

The earliest depiction of the Gaṇas known so far from Gujarat belongs to the Kṣatrapa period. These are found from Śāmalājī area and are described in the ensuing pages.

In the Gupta Śiva temple at Bhumarā (M.P.), the figures of Gaṇas are found in large numbers, carved on the walls of the temple. In this, the Gaṇas are shown in various dance postures and playing musical instruments. Some of them hold various ayudhas and wear peculiar dresses.

An interesting group of Gaṇa figures, in terracotta are found from Bālṭā. These Gupta figures are shown with short bodies and beautiful curly hair falling on the shoulders.

A terracotta plaque unearthed from the Gupta brick temple of Śiva at Ahicchatra shows Śiva's Gaṇa host, destroying Dakṣa's sacrifice (Dakṣa-yajña Vidhvāṃśa). A fine vigorous example of Śiva's playful Gaṇa from Nāchnā Kuṭhārā, is now preserved in the
Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. The Gana is duly adorned with fluttering ringlets, wristlets, armlets, a tiger's claw-pendant and a waist band.

Recently some very interesting Ganas from Panna (U.P.) were brought to light by K.D. Bajpai. They may be described in brief:

Figure : 1, shows the standing figure of a Gana supporting a club with his right arm and holding a kamaṇḍalu in his hands. A damaru is tied to the club. The Gana has long hair, prominent moustaches and beard and wears a long tunic reaching up to his knees.

Figure : 2, shows a pot-bellied God in the dancing pose with his left arm stretched across the chest in the gaja-hasta. The heavy coiffeur arranged in the rightlets is noteworthy.

Figure : 3, also is a dancing Gana with the jaṭājūṭahā over his head.

Figure : 4, represents another Gana in the nṛtya-pose with a dagger-like object held in his raised right hand. The matted locks of the jaṭā are noteworthy. The scorpion-amulet worn in the neck of the Gana is comparable to the similar one found in one of the Ganas in cave No. 21 of Ellora.

Figure : 5, shows the Gana in a distressing mood. The hairs arranged in beautiful curls, look beautiful.

Figure : 6, is a broken slab depicting a Gana, dancing
forcefully. The arrangement of the hair is interesting.

Figure : 7, shows a Gana seated in easy posture. The figure is completely nude.

Figure : 8, depicts a stout Gana figure, holding a heavy mace. He probably represents a dvarapala of Siva.

Figure : 9, represents a Gana with disproportionate limbs. His outcoming belly, thick lips, long nose and big eyes are, remarkable. He wears a long cap on his head.

All these Gana figures from Panna formed part of a Gupta period Saiva temple.

At Ellora, several panels show Siva and Parvatī with the Ganas. In one of the panels, is seen Nandī in the bull form, tended by several Ganas. In the Ramesvara cave, representing Śiva-Parvatī-vivāha is seen a long row of playful Ganas, with the banners, some playing on musical instruments and others in dancing pose.

A beautiful dancing Gana (c. 11th cent. A.D.) from Varanasi is now preserved in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.

In the Kailasnātha Svāmī temple at Kānjiwaram, three figures of the Ganas are shown mimicking Śiva's dance. Some fine representations of the Ganas are noted from cave temples at Badami (No. 1, 2, 3) and Durgā temple at Aihole.
A mediaeval broken figure of seated Gaṇa from Ambernātha (Dist : Thāṇā, Mahārāṣṭra) is shown with left leg bent, smiling face pot-belly and hair arranged in short curls.

In the Dṛāviḍian temple from 8th cent. onwards, the Gaṇas are also shown on the four sides of the vimāṇa of the temples. At Mahābalipuram they are shown as half-seated dwarfs and blowing conches. The Gaṇas at Tirrivalam are depicted in similar pose but hold some indistinct object instead of conch. On vimāṇa of the Pāṇdya temple, at Kālugumlai these Gaṇas are uniquely represented.

Some very interesting figures of Gaṇas are found from Gujarat. They are described as under:

The earliest representations of the Gaṇas so far known from this province could be ascribed to the Ksatrapa period (c. 4th cent. A.D.). These five figures, all carved out from blush schist and probably acquired from Samalājī area, are now preserved in the Baroda Museum and are tentatively identified as Gaṇas by H. Goetz.

Figure X - 19, shows an inscribed image of the Gaṇa with its head broken and lost. The inscription of the pedestal in two letters read as 'Vāyu' or Vasu. In the right hand of this figure is held a staff or sword whereas in the left hand is shown a water pot. The warfish figure is decorated with an elaborate broad
neck-ornament, the garland of huge bells worn like a yajñopavīta and the lower garment reaching up to his ankles. The garland of bells also worn in similar way in the image of Ganesa (the lord of the Ganas) from Bhumara M.P. is suggestive pot-belly and dwarf figure are characteristics of Gana figures.

Figure 2, 3 and 4, according to Goetz, are shown with Central Asian headdress (Huṇas). They are shown with laughing expression.

Figure X - 20, represents a short figure of a pot-bellied Gaṇa. Unfortunately the figure is mutilated from knees. The Gaṇa holds a club or staff like object (or sword) in his right hand while the other hand carries a conch (Saṅkha). At Mahābali-puram several dwarfish Gaṇas are shown with the conches.

In figure X - 21, the Gaṇa is represented in the samabhaṅga posture, holding a neck of a small figure in his right hand. His left hand appears to be in the Katyāvalambita pose. The Gaṇa is decorated with peculiar headdress.

Figure X - 22 also shows a dwarf figure of Gaṇa, standing in the samabhaṅga pose. His mutilated right hand seems to be in Kaṭṭihasta whereas the other hand keeps an indistinct object (bijoru ?). The figure wears a typical cap and usual ornaments.

Figure X - 23, showing the Gana in the squatting posture has a third vertical eye on the forehead. The pot-bellied dwarf is represented with the smiling comtenance and wears beautiful ekapāli.
Two Gāṇa figures (Figure X - 24 -25) also carved in schist and represented in similar seated pose with upright legs are found from Aṃbājī area 89 (Dist : Bānasakāñṭhā). Unfortunately their faces are damaged and both the hands of the figure on the left side are mutilated. The figure (Figure X - 24) on the right side has placed his hands on knees and holds a broken round object (bijoru ?) in his left hand. The arrangement of headdress in these figures, is shown with locks of hair falling in tresses reaching up to shoulders. Both the Gānas are shown wearing beaded bājubaṅḍhas, circular kundalas, a torque and an ekāvalī around the neck and a long vanamālā hanging between their legs. Both the figures, depicted with short body and protruding belly are tentatively identified as Gāṇas. They are stylistically assigned to c. 600 A.D.

On the adhisthāna (basement) of the early temple (c. 6th cent. A.D.) at Gopa90 in Bārdā Hills (Saurāstra), there are beautiful representation of playful Gānas. Some of the Gānas are shown in dancing pose (Figure X - 26). Unfortunately the figures are blurred. Some architectural fragments found from Aṃhilwād (Fīg X-27) Paṭan (Dist : Mehsāna, North Gujarat) now in the Baroda Museum (c. 8th cent. A.D.) exhibit beautiful dancing dwarfs in various poses 91. In this, one of the Gānas is shown in the lalita mode. Similar dancing prāmathās are found sheltered in the deep fillet (Rajasāmaka) of the porch of temple III at Roḍā 92 (Dist : Sābar-kāñṭhā). A row of playful Gāṇas are also found on the back wall of
the temple of Harishchandranī chorī (c. 1000 A.D.).

A small fragment of sculpture from Prabhas Museum (Figure X - 29) shows panels with Gaṇesa and Śiva with Gaṇas applauding them, peeping out from small niches in between larger panels.

On vimāna of the Pasupati temple on Pāvagāḍh hill (Dist: Pañcmahāls), there is a row of the dwarfish Gaṇas. Some Gaṇas are palying on musical instruments such as conch, cymbals, vīnā, drum etc. while others are in various dancing poses (Figure X - 29).

The above study shows that the depiction of Gaṇas in most of the regions of the country are identical and they more or less follow the descriptions of the Purāṇas. Among the representations of Gaṇas from Gujarat, those found on the temple of Gopa, and the schist images from Sāmalājī area are shown with the seythian dresses. Such depictions seem to be rare in other parts of the country.


3. Surakant, Vaidic Devasāstra (Hindi), P. 392; Rgveda, 2-33.8; 2.33.15. Atharvaveda, 9-4-9; Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, 2.5.3.18.


7. Vāyu Purāṇa, 77.63; Matsya Purāṇa, 60-49; 95.3; 112-21; 132-18; 133.60-5; Bhāgvata Purāṇa, X. 63.6; IV. 2.20-26; Vāmana Purāṇa, ch. 67.


12. Ibid, p. 460, pl. CXXXI.
15. Ibid, p. 182.
17. Kumarasambhava, V. 80.
22. Ibid.
24. Munishri Jayantavijayai, Holy Abu, 1951, fig. 56.
28. Ibid.
32. Mehta R.N., Excavation at Nagara, p. 107, fig. 53-3.
37. Ibid.
38. Agrawal R.C., 'Some unpublished Sculptures from South-Western Rajasthan', Lalitakalā, No. 6, p. 63-71, fig. 18.
40. Ibid, fig. 32.
42. Shah, U.P., Sculptures from Samalāji and Rojda, fig. 4.

46. Agrawal R.C., 'Mahārājā Reliefs in early Indian Art, East and West, (N.S.), No.21, No. 1-2, 1971, p. 79-89, fig. 25.

47. It is displayed in the temple-compound, E.M.E. School, Baroda.

48. They are described and illustrated in the Thesis.

49. Shah, U.P., Sculptures from Śāmalājī and Rodā, fig. 93.

50. Ibid. fig. 2, See also Motichandra, The Stone Sculptures in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, fig. 82.


52. As quoted by Shastri H. G. in Maitrakakālīn Gujarat, p. 3.


55. I am grateful to Shri R.G. Hajarnish, the Superintending Archaeologists, State Government of Gujarat, Southern Circle, Surat, for kindly giving this information.

56. Sankalia H.D., Deo, S.B.; Amsari Z.D.; Ehrhardt Sophie, From History to Pre-history at Nevasā, Poona, 1960, figure - 171, No+ 3.


60. Kumārasaūbhava, I. 55.

61. Ibid, VII, 40 and 36.


64. KiratārjunaYam, XII, 43.

65. Vāyu Purāṇa, Ch. 69, vv. 224-256.

66. Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, 1.69.6-8. Harivamsa Purāṇa, 2.109; 63-68; 2.124, 19-24; Linga Purāṇa, 1-103, 13-34; Matsya Purāṇa, Ch. 95-102; Vāmana Purāṇa, Ch. 67.

67. Vāyu Purāṇa, op.cit.

68. Raghuvamsa, I, 5; Brhatasamhitā, Ch. 57.

69. Aparājitaprccha mentions Nandi, Mahākāla, Heramba etc. as dvārapālas of Siva.


73. Mukhopadhyaya, Samir K., Terracottas from Bhūta, Artibus Asiae, Vol. XXXIV - i, pl. 20.
74. Agrawala, V.S., 'The terracottas of Ahicchatra', Ancient India, No. 4, 1947-48, pl. LXI, LXII.

75. Agralava V.S., 'A Survey of Gupta Art and some Sculptures from Nachnā Kuṭhārā and Khoh', Lalitakalā, No. 9, 1961, pp. 16. fig. 4, see also, Motichandra, The Stone Sculptures in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay fig. 73.


78. Ibid, Pl. CV.


81. Ibid, Pls. XCIV, XCIX.

81A. Gupte R.S., The Art and Architecture of Aihole, fig. 83.

82. Motichandra, op. cit., fig. 122.


84. Balasubrahmanyam, Early Chola Art, Bombay, 1965, fig. 97.


87. Getty Alice, Gāṇeśa, pl. 3, fig. b.
88. Dhaky M.A., op. cit., p. 16.
90. Nanavati J.M., and Dhaky M.A., op. cit., fig. 3.
92. Ibid, Pl. XI - fig. 8.
Dhyāna-Formulae on Nandi and Gana (Chapter X)

नन्दाय स्वरुपं नन्दिनी
नन्दाय नन्दिनी ततो अनेने मुक्तं पूर्वविनं हि
तस्मि प्रसरसृष्टिनां कल्पणानि तु संप्रति
स्त्रियां विषुवाणिः कल्पणेनस्य चोद्धयमपिर
पाणिको हरिवंश्याः कुमिष्ठं पारिष्टाः
तुर्यचलो वा विशेषेऽभागं पुष्पायायाय
तत्र भगवानाश्व रजु भगवानाथो भैरवः
विशेष वा भिखेरु या प्रवृत्तीवाणे चोद्धयं विदुः
अर्धेश्वरे महस्तद्रसस्य भोगस्तोषे व अतिशयः
श्रुतं पार्थ ते विस्तारे विश्वाशुनस्यावाक्यं
शुद्धारढ़िश्वरेण कण्डः पार्षद भाषिकः
भोगाकारे विवेद्या वृष्ण काव्यकारः श्रद
अधी भागे भरतार् रूपस्यकृत्येऽनानिकम
ति भोगाय तक पृथकं निर्मितं पृथु कृपादाः
विद्यावस्थेष्वरः व पुर्वार्थनात्सुगमम्
बालस्य भोगावेके न जन्मो सुभाष्यकायना
अथ भागे अजातः च शुरुकरं चाहु सृष्टिः
पुरुषमुखः भोगापाषाणे कमलार्पितः
हातु भोगाय नुस्तते भोगेः चाग्यायाः
नृपानामुरुस्ताद्य पार्श्वं चोद्धृंखः कक्षानि
धन्याकार धार्मिकाहिर श्रीनिवासः
શુદ્ધિના મહાયોજના કુઠિલિકાની સંહારકા\nમાયં ઉપચારકાની ગાયસોનું મફતારમુ\nપ્રતિભાજન નદ્યાના-ખીતિશાયનારિ કલીપખતામુ\nએટાવિટી ચાંદુ પણ ચાંદુખાંડુ કલાખે \nત્રાત સંશયનું તુ કરેલું ગુલામેલે મનુષ્કિકા\nખૂબસૂરત ચોક્ક્કલા કારો ચિક્ષણ સાધારણ ડિશીક ક\nપાટ સંશય વર્ધણના વાતચીતને તે\nસુરુખામિ સંશયના કો કૂશેલવાનાકામ ક\nવિલામે કિર્ણે પીઠામા પાટરે ૧૨૩ પૂરણકામ \nદવાનું તવાભૂત્વે ડચીના પરિવર્તનીક\n
અખુરાંજનું પૂર્વ, 208-6-20

શિખરા: \nચીજાપદેય મુકદમી ચુંઢર નાનીસ્માન નિદ્રાકા\nસુર્યાસ્પીનાસં તેખા દીર્ઘલાંખ સંકલામ\nમહારાજ પુરાણનુ-154-538-\nહદેરકા મહાજાના લાલ શિખરાપ્રસ્થાન\nસ્હિખગદગદનને દેવિ સ્વામીને સમેષણ\nસાથે સાથે ચિત્રીની શ્રીમંતુર વાળા\n
નારખુ પુરાણનુ-183-165-166