

G A N A P A T I

Ganapati or Ganesha, the elephant headed God, occupies a pre-eminent place amongst the Hindu deities, next to the famous Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.¹ Ganesha is the God whom the Hindu invokes when he begins all sacrifices and religious ceremonies, all addresses even to superior Gods, all serious compositions in writing and all worldly affairs of moment.² He is also referred to as the Master of Obstacles, hence he must be praised. Nobody can control obstacles except Ganesha.³

In the Rig-Veda, Brihaspati is addressed as Gananam Ganapati.⁴ It seems that it is merely an epithet referring to Brihaspati or Brahmanaspati.⁵ However, it is also argued that Brihaspati or Brahmanaspati, who is identified with Vachaspati is some thing like a Vedic counterpart of Ganesha, God of Learning.⁶ Ganesha being AUM,⁷ is Brahma, being such he is everything past or future, therefore, he is called Universal.⁸

Yajur-Veda is considered as the earliest genuine reference to Ganapati, as the Ganas and Ganapati are invoked in its

Vajasaneyi Samhita.⁹ Manu says : Shiva is the God of the Brahmanas while Ganesha or Ganapati is the God of Surdras.¹⁰ Due to this minor importance of the deity, R.N.Mehta¹¹ said, while explaining the absence of Ganapati or Ganesha in the list of Vedic deities, that, although he is mentioned in the Yajur-Veda and Taittiriya Aranyaka, he was a minor deity as noted by Manu.

Ganapati, as supposed by Coomarswamy,¹² is a Yaksa. It is mostly admitted the lower part of his body to the Yaksa cult. However, none of his names are found on Yaksa's lists,¹³ nor he is associated with Yaksas in any Pauranic Myth.¹⁴

In the Vedic account, except Ganapati, other names of Ganesha is not traced so far, so his Vedic importance is probably less.¹⁵ Some authors believe that Ganapati was originally a Dravidian deity worshipped by the aboriginal mass of India. Some opine that, his elephant-head and his vehicle, the rat, indicate that, although he may have been taken over from indigenous Mythology, he belonged originally to any animal cult.¹⁶ These are highly imaginative explanations.

It seems that in early stage Ganapati was worshipped by the Non-Aryan, and later on, gradually, he was included in the list of Aryan deities.¹⁷

In the Yajnavalkya Smriti, Vinayaka, is referred to as Chief of Shiva's Ganas, moreover the Great Mother, Ambika-Parvati

is also referred to as his mother.¹⁸ In the Mahabharata, he is shown as a supervisor and universal deity, and said that he should be worshipped to overcome difficulties.¹⁹ The Manava ^{Sutra} Grhya also refers to the worship of four Vinayakas as a means to avoid possible dangers and difficulties. This indicates the Vighnantaka character of Vinayakas, those later on were identified with the elephant-headed God Ganesha or Ganapati.²⁰ According to Bhandarkar, the cult of Ganapati-Vinayaka-Ganesha may already have been set up by the end of Sixth century.²¹

Ganapati usually regarded as the elder son of Shiva and Parvati, but the Puranas differ very considerably in their accounts of his origin. Same way the phenomenon of head changing was also explained side by side in the Puranas.

Shiva himself informs, in the Suprabhedagama,²² explaining to Ganapati his origin and also why he is elephant headed. 'I in company with Parvati, retired once to the forest on the slopes of the Himalayas to enjoy each other's company. We saw there a female elephant making herself happy with a male elephant. This excited our passion and we desired to enjoy ourselves in the form of elephants. I became a male elephant and Parvati a female one, and pleased ourselves, as a result of which you were born with the face of an elephant.'

The story narrated in the Shiva Purana,²³ tells that Shiva himself cut off the youth's head while fighting with him not knowing that he was the son of Parvati. Then on learning the

truth he ordered the Devas to cut off the head of the first being they would find nearby, which happened to be an elephant, and placing that head on the headless trunk, Ganesha was figured as elephant headed deity.

One legend says that Parvati after gently rubbing her body caused a youth to be produced who had four arms and the head of elephant.²⁴

Another story relates that Parvati made Ganapati out of the impurities of her own body giving him the face of an elephant, but it was only a lifeless figure. Then she sprinkled it with the water of the Ganges, which communicated life to it.²⁵

It was possibly because of his early popularity as remover of obstacles that he was attached to different groups of deities such as the Navagrahas and the Saptamatrikas, whose origins are as ancient as they are obscure. The Navagrahas were believed to direct the destinies of men and in order not to offend any of the group by the special worship of one of the Grahas, they were appealed to as a group, but before addressing their supplications to the Navagrahas the worshippers considered it propitious, to implore the 'Remover of Obstacles', Vighnantaka, to intervene in their favour. It is probably for this reason that Ganesha figured in the group; and that, as he is to be addressed first before the others. He is represented standing of equal size at the extreme right of the Navagrahas (planets). In the

same way, his presence in the group of Saptamatrikas, where he is always represented of equal size with the Goddesses, seems to indicate that his role is the same as with the Navagrahas.²⁶

It is said that Ganapati have written the Mahabharata²⁷ at Vyasa's dictation. In the same text, it is also said that when the sage was about to compose it, Brahma advised him to ask Ganapati to become his amanuensis.

By an extraordinary antithesis the other name of Ganesha is attached to four demons by the name Vinayaka, malignant beings who created obstacles and difficulties but who were easily propitiated. Pauranic literature of a much later period explains that the group of four Vinayakas was merged into one definite God whom Rudra constituted the 'leader of the Ganas, Ganapati.'²⁸ It was doubtless, the influence of Ganesha sect that introduced Ganapati. The influence of the ideas of the Ganapatyas was so great that they made him, as it were, at home in every other sect, combining him with almost all other Gods so that, now, "all sects unite in claiming him as their own".²⁹ Even Saktism adopted Ganesha as their special deity with the exclusion of all other Gods even of Shiva and Parvati.³⁰ It shows that the cult of Ganesha spread parallelly to the cult of Shiva all over India. In south India he is invoked the first of all the Gods at the morning ablutions, and again at noon and at night before going to sleep. He is often worshipped in company with four great deities; Vishnu, Shiva, Parvati and Aditya, the sun, symbol

of Brahma.³¹ In this way, Ganesha has finally become, the most popular of all the domestic deities of India.

The Bruhatsamhita³² describes four handed Ganapati, with Battle-axe, Tusk, Mulakakanda and Suniladalakanda in his hands. The Vishnudharmottara Purana³³ recommends him with elephant head and four arms. His right hands should hold a Trident and a Rosary, while left hands should hold an Axe and a vessel full of Modaka. The Matsya Purana³⁴ has laid down that four hands of Ganapati should be carrying Tusk, Lotus, Battle-axe and Modaka. The Agni Purana,³⁵ the Aparajitapruccha,³⁶ the Rupamandana³⁷ and the Rupavatara³⁸ has described Ganapati same as described in the Matsya Purana, but with little change in the arrangement of the attributes. Accordingly, his right hands should carry the Tusk and Battle-axe, and left hands Lotus and Modaka.

Most of the texts generally recommend the image of Ganapati with four hands and also point out to be held any four from the below mentioned articles: Trident, Rosary, vessel of Modaka, ~~or Modaka~~ Battle-axe, Tusk, Lotus, Kapittha, Goad, Fruit and Cobra.

In addition to the above mentioned descriptions of the images of various forms of Ganapati, various Puranas and texts on Iconography and religious³⁹ have also given few more types and forms of Ganapati. They describe several varieties among the images representing this deity, like Bala-Ganapati, Taruna Ganapati, Bhakti-Vighnesvara, Vira-Vighnesa, Lakshmi-Ganapati, Uchehhishta-Ganapati, Maha Ganapati, Heramba-Ganapati, Vakratunda

Ganapati, Bija-Ganapati, Kshiptra Ganapati and Nritta-Ganapati. Amongst these forms of Ganapati, the images having four hands to sixteen hands are included.

In Mewar, the region under study, the images of Ganapati depicting various forms with two hands, four hands and ten hands are found. It would be interesting to note that most of these images are not followed the textual injunction perfectly, however, traditional attributes associated with Ganapati like, Tusk, Battle-Axe, Goad, Lotus, Modaka, Trident etc. are found in the hands. In all these images he is portrayed as a pot bellied deity with the head of an elephant. In some images snake is also found as his sacred thread. Most of the images are in Ardhaparyanka asana, some in Dvibhanga pose and few are in Dancing mood. Mouse, the traditional vehicle of Ganapati is found in most of the specimens, however some are also without it.

Ganapati with two hands

Only five images of two handed Ganapati are found in the area under study. These images carry any two of the traditional articles associated with this deity. These figures represent various types.

I Type (Battle-axe, vessel of Modaka)

One specimen representing this type is found in the Vijaya-stambha, Chittor Fort. It is standing image in Dvibhanga pose and with mouse as a vehicle. The name 'Ganesha' is inscribed below the image.

II Type (Modaka, Lost)

One image of this type seated in Ardhaparyanka asana is found near the Ganesha Pole in Chittor Fort. This image is without vehicle.

III Type (Tusk, Modaka)

The sculpture representing Ganapati of this type is found in the open space opposite to the Jagadamba temple, Jagat. The deity is seated in Ardhaparyanka asana. No vehicle is seen.

Ganapati with four hands

Number of specimens representing four handed Ganapati are found in the region of Mewar. The images described as I A Type (Tusk, Battle-axe, Lotus and vessel of Modakas), are holding the articles as prescribed by the Agni Purana, the Aparajitapruccha, the Rupamandana and the Rupavatara.

I A Type (Tusk, Battle-axe, Lotus and vessel of Modakas)

Forty nine images, as enlisted below representing this type of Ganapati, are found in the region under study. Forty seven specimens represent the deity seated in Ardhaparyanka asana and only two standing in Dvibhanga pose. Twenty five images of this type are having mouse vehicle, while remaining are without vehicle. One specimen representing this type, which is in the M.B.College Museum, Udaipur, has lost its two right hands. The name 'Ganesha' is inscribed below the image, which

is found in the Mahadev temple, Kumbhalgarh. The find spot and other details of the images included in this group are given below:

Sr. No.	Find spot & location of the image	Vehicle	Asana/Posture
1	2	3	4
1	Mahadev Temple, Kumbhalgarh	Mouse	Ardhaparyanka asana
2	Compound of the Eklingji temple, Eklingji	"	"
3	Templet near well, Nagada	"	"
4	Surya temple, Ranakpur	"	"
5	Baradari 1, Sec.9, Rajnagar	"	"
6 to 9	Baradari 2, Sec.8, Rajnagar	"	"
10 to 13	Baradari 2, Sec.5, Rajnagar	"	"
14 to 16	Baradari 1, Sec.1, Rajnagar	not found	"
17 to 21	Baradari 1, Sec.3, Rajnagar	"	"
22	Baradari 1, Sec.5, Rajnagar	"	"
23 to 26	Baradari 1, Sec.9, Rajnagar	"	"
27	Radhakrishna temple, Udaipur	Mouse	"
28	Nolakha Bavadi, Udaipur	"	"

1	2	3	4
29	Panchadevji temple, Udaipur	Mouse	Ardhaparyanka asana
30	Rupananarayanji temple, Pulan, Dist. Udaipur	"	"
31.	Courtyard of the Baijanath temple, Sisarama	"	"
32	Bavadi, Debari, Dist. Udaipur	"	"
33	Rajrajeswar Mahadev temple, Debari	"	"
34	Templet adjoining to Charbhuj temple, Jawar	"	"
35	Bavadi, near Charbhuj temple, Jawar	"	"
36	M. B. College Museum, Udaipur	"	"
37	Nolakha Bavadi, Udaipur	not found	"
38	Ambagiri Ki Samadhi, Udaipur	"	"
39	Chhatriwali Bavadi, Udaipur	"	"
40	Charbhuj Ka Mandir, near Baiji Raj-Ka-Kund, Udaipur	"	"
41	Templet in the compound of the Baijnath temple, Sisarama	"	"
42	Open space near Jawar Mata temple, Jawar	"	"
43	In the Western frame of the entrance to the Sabhamandap, Ambaji temple, Jagat	"	"

1	2	3	4
44	Sambhavanathji temple, Kumbhariya, near Abu	Mouse	Ardhaparyanka asana
45	Vishnu temple, Rishikesh near Abu	"	"
46	Vishnu temple, Rishikesh near Abu	not found	"
47	Main Shrine, Vasthanji, near Abu	"	"
48	Gyandevji templet in the compound of the Achaleswar Mahadev, Achalgarh	"	Dvibhanga pose
49	Nilkantha Mahadev, Achalgarh	"	"

F-B Type (Hand resting on Knee, Battle-axe, Lotus and vessel of Modakas)

Two sculptures representing this form of the deity are found, one in the Parmeswar Mahadev temple, Suraj Pole, Udaipur and second one in the Bavadi in Debari, Dist. Udaipur. Both are seated in Ardhaparyanka asana and without vehicle.

I C Type (Tusk, Battle-axe, Mace and vessel of Modakas)

Two images of this type are found, one is preserved in the M.B.College Museum, Udaipur and another one in the Bavadi near the Baijanath temple, Sisarama. Both the specimens are seated in Ardhaparyanka asana. The specimen preserved in the M.B. College Museum is with mouse vehicle while remaining is without it.

I D Type (Tusk, Cobra, Battle-axe and vessel of Modakas)

Only one form of this type seated in Ardhaparyanka asana and without vehicle is found in the temple to the north of the Samadhiswar temple, Chittor Fort.

I E Type (Tusk, Battle-axe, Cobra and vessel of Modakas)

Only one image of this type is found in the Giri-Ka-Math, Udaipur. The deity is shown standing in Dvibhanga pose. The mouse vehicle is also found in this representation.

II A Type (Tusk, Lotus, Battle-axe and vessel of Modakas)

Two sculptures of this type without vehicle are found on the northern wall of the Gangodhav, Ayad, Dist. Udaipur. Two more specimens of the same type are found, one in the State Museum, Mt. Abu and second one in the Ganapati temple, near the Dvarkadhish temple, Delwara. The specimen from Mt. Abu is with the traditional vehicle, while other from Delwara is without vehicle. All these four images are seated in Ardhaparyanka asana.

II B Type (Tusk, Mace, Battle-axe and vessel of Modakas)

Two images of this type, seated in Ardhaparyanka asana and without vehicle are found, first one in the Sabhamandap of the Kalika Mata temple, Chittor Fort, and second one in the courtyard of the Dvarkadhish temple, Delwara.

II C Type (Tusk, Lotus, Goad and Modaka or Kapittha)

Two images representing this type and seated in Ardhaparyanka asana are found, one in the courtyard of the Vishnu temple, Rishikesh, near Abu, and the other one in the Bavadi near the Saraswati Bhandar, Udaipur. These both images are mounted on mouse.

Two more specimens representing the same type are also found, first one in the Toran Bavadi, Udaipur and second one in the compound of the Baijanath temple, Sisarama. Both are represented as seated in Ardhaparyanka asana. The specimen from Udaipur is having no vehicle and has lost its lower right hand, while the second specimen has lost its upper right hand as well as the vehicle.

II D Type (Goad, Tusk, Lotus and vessel of Modakas)

An images of this type standing in Dvibhanga pose, but without vehicle is found in the Dwarkadhish temple, Achalgarh.

III A Type (Varada Mudra, Goad, Noose and Modaka)

The Shiva Temple near Delhi gate, Udaipur preserves an image of this type. It is standing image in Samabhanga pose and with mouse vehicle. The inscribed name 'Ganesha' is also noted.

III B Type (Tusk, Goad, Lotus and vessel of Modakas)

An image of this type representing the deity seated in

Ardhaparyanka asana, but without vehicle is found in the Baijanath temple campus, Sisarama. Other two sculptures representing the same type also in Ardhaparyanka asana are found, one in the Surya temple situated in the compound of the Madavaji temple, near Abu, and second one in the Suryanarayan temple in Nitoda. In the last example, the upper hands of the deity are lost.

III C Type (Aksamala, Goad, Lotus and vessel of Modakas)

Two images of this type representing the deity seated in Ardhaparyanka asana are found, one in the Amareswar Mahadev temple on the Hanuman Ghat, Udaipur, and another in the Dholi Bavadi, Udaipur. The previous one is with mouse vehicle, while later one without vehicle and has lost its upper hands.

III D Type (Hand resting on Knee, Goad, Lotus and vessel of Modakas)

The Amareswar Mahadev temple, Udaipur is having the specimen representing the deity in this type. The same type of image is also noted in the Charbhujateple, Udaipur. Both of them are seated in Ardhaparyanka asana and without vehicle.

III E Type (Lost, Goad, Lotus and vessel of Modakas)

Two representations of this type but standing in Dvibhanga pose are found, one in the Kukadeswar temple, Chittor Fort, and the other in the Navagrha templet, Achalgarh. The example from Chittor Fort is having a mouse as vehicle, while that from

Achalgarh is without vehicle. The lower right hand of the deity shown in these two images is lost.

III F Type (Tusk, Goad, (lost), and Modakas and Kapittha)

The Nolakha Bavadi, Udaipur is having an example of this type. It is a seated image in Ardhaparyanka asana, with mouse vehicle. However the upper left hand of the deity is missing.

IV A Type (Battle-axe, Tusk, Lotus and vessel of Modakas)

An image of this type standing in Dvibhanga pose and with mouse vehicle is found in the Sihanath temple, Delwara. Two more examples, also standing in Dvibhanga pose but without vehicle are noted, one in the Shringar Chau ri, Chittor Fort and the other in a ruined templet near the Charbhuj temple, Udaigar. One image representing the same form standing in Dvibhanga pose is found in a templet located in the compound of the Devakshetraji, Abu,. Here, the deity is having mouse vehicle. It is noted that the deity has lost his upper right hand.

IV B Type (Battle-axe, Cobra, Lotus and vessel of Modakas)

One example of this type standing in Dvibhanga pose is found ^{along} the road in Achalgarh. It has a mouse vehicle.

IV C Type (Indistinct, Lotus, Cobra and vessel of Modakas)

An image of this type seated in Ardhaparyanka asana, but without vehicle is found on the door frame of the Lakulish temple,

Eklingji,

V A Type (Varada+Aksamala, Lotus, Battle-axe and Kalash)

One sculpture of this type in Ardhaparyanka asana but without vehicle is found in a templet, near Devasthanji, Abu.

V B Type (Aksamala, Battle-axe, Goad and Kalash)

The Bhimāpāmeswar temple, Udaipur preserves an image of this type representing the deity standing in Dvibhanga pose. The mouse vehicle is also seen.

V C Type (Hand resting on knee, Battle-axe, Goad and Kapittha or Modakas)

One example of this type seated in Ardhaparyanka asana but without vehicle is found in a templet near the Bhatiyani Chauhatta, Udaipur. One image of this type also seated in Ardhaparyanka asana but without vehicle is found in Parsvanath temple, Ayad, Udaipur. In this image, the deity has lost his first three hands, and the lower left hand carries a Kapittha or Modaka. Another image of this type but standing in Dvibhanga pose and with mouse vehicle is found in the main temple, Eklingji. The first three arms of the deity are missing and the remaining lower left hand carries a vessel of Modakas.

VI Type ((Lost), Cobra (head), Cobra (tail), (Lost))

One standing image is found in the niche on the Purvasati gate, near Samadhiswar temple, Chittor Fort, (Fig.1). Lower two hands of the deity are lost and upper two hands are engaged in holding the snake, cobra.

JNANA MURTI GANAPATI

Two images of Ganapati, both are from Udaipur, holding the Book in one of his arms in addition to his traditional attributes, are found. Ganapati was the writer of Mahabharata and this form perhaps indicates that the work was completed. As the Book represents the knowledge or Jnana, these forms may be called Jnana Murti Ganapati.

I A Type (Aksamala, vessel of Modakas, Mace and Book)

An image of this type representing the deity seated in Ardhaparyanka asana is found in the Rameswar temple, Hanuman Ghat, Udaipur.

I B Type (Varada Mudra, Goad, Mace and Book)

An example of this type is found in the Lalitadevi temple, Samor Baug, Udaipur. In this example, the deity is shown standing in Dvibhanga pose. No vehicle is found.

NRITTA MURTI GANAPATI

Four images representing the deity in Dancing pose are found in the region under study. As the Dancing pose shows, this is a form of Nritta-Murti Ganapati. Various types of this form are found, those are described as below.

Nritta Murti Ganapati with Two Hands

I Type (Battle-axe, Modaka)

One image of this type in Dancing pose is found in Baradari 3, Sec.1, Navchauki, in Rajnagar. Mouse vehicle is seen here.

II Type (Battle-axe, Lotus)

One sculpture of this type in Dancing pose is found in Baradari 3, Sec.1, Navchauki, in Rajnagar.

Nritta Murti Ganapati with four hands

I Type (Tusk, Lotus, Battle-axe and vessel of Modakas)

An image of this type is found in the Kumbhashyam temple, Chittor Fort. The mouse vehicle is seen. It is interesting to note here, that the Matsya Purana⁴⁰ while describing the Ganesha, it has not mentioned about the pose, however it has prescribed Ganesha holding the Tusk, Lotus, Battle-axe and Modaka in his four hands. This agrees with the form discussed here as I Type.

II Type (Hand resting on Belly, Battle-axe, Tusk and Modaka or Kapittha)

One image of Nritta Murti Ganapati of his type is found opposite to the Ram Pole in Chittor Fort. This image is without vehicle.

III Type (Goad, Inverted Varada Mudra, (Lost), and vessel of Modakas)

One sculpture representing this form, but without vehicle is found on the Toran in the outer compound of the Madavaji temple, Abu. The upper left hand of the deity is missing.

IV Type ((lost), Goad (?), (Lost) and (Lost))

The Vijayastambha, Chittor Fort displays the Nritta Murti Ganapati on its exterior. The deity has lost his all hands, but the upper right hand holds the Goad or Battle-axe(?). The dancing mouse is also depicted near left leg of the deity, (Fig.2).

Nritta Murti Ganapati with eight hands

One image of this type is found in outer niche of the Kukadeswar temple, Chittor Fort, (Fig.3). The deity is seen standing, probably in Dancing pose. As one attendant playing Gagar⁴¹ is seen in this representation, this image is included in the group of Nritta Murti Ganapati. Hands of the deity and articles are damaged, so it is found difficult to identify the articles. However, the Cobra and Modaka are seen in the upper most right hand and one of the left hands respectively. Small Mouse is also depicted here as a vehicle.

One more beautiful image of this type is preserved in Sabhakhanda of the Kukadeswar temple, Chittor Fort. The deity is seen standing in Dancing pose and with eight hands. Upper two hands

of the deity, are engaged in holding the Snake, Cobra. The articles placed in first three right hands are not clear, i.e. indistinct. First and second left hands of the deity are equipped with Battle-axe and Modaka. While third left hand is beautifully shown in Nritta-Mudra. It is interesting to note that two attendants playing the musical instruments are depicted in this illustration, (Fig.4).

R E F E R E N C E S

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4. Rig-Veda, 2,23,I.
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35. Agni Purana, 50/26.
36. Aparajitapruccha, 212/36.
37. Rupamandana, 5/15.
38. Rupavatara, 8/21.
39. Rupamandana 5/16-18; Rupavatara, 8/22, 26-28; Shilparatna, II/25/43, 53, 55-60, 63; EHI, I/I pp.51-61; EHI, I/II appendix pp.6-12, 24-25.
40. Matsya Purana, 260/52-55.
41. Gagar (Pot) is also used as a musical instrument.