CHAPTER IV

MAHIṢAŚURAMARDINI IN THE TEMPLE ART OF ANDHRA PRADESH
( Early Chāḷukya to Eastern Gaṅga- A.D. 6th to 11th Century)
IV-1. MAHISAŚURAMARDINI IN THE EARLY CHĀLUKYA ART
(A.D. 6th - 8th Century)

Historical Background

The Early Chālukyas established themselves under Pulakēśi-I in A.D. 543 at Bādāmi and their power grew in stature during Kīrtivarman-I and his brother Mangalēśa. The rule of the Early Chālukyas forms an important landmark in the political and cultural history of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Pulakēśi-I (A.D. 535/543-566), the founder of the Chālukya dynasty, first fortified the hills at Bādāmi. His son Kīrtivarma-I, ruled from A.D. 566 to A.D. 598. During his period, the authority of the Early Chālukyas was acknowledged by the Kādambas and Nalas. The extension of Chālukya power into the Ballary, Kurnool region after the Vanquishing of the Nalas marks the beginning of Chālukya influence in Andhra Pradesh1. Since the period of Kīrtivarma-I, the western part of Andhra Pradesh became the part of the Early Chālukyan empire2.

It was during the reign of Pulakēśi-II, Kīrtivarma’s son (A.D. 608/9-642) the Chālukyas first attained imperial status. It is known from the Aihole inscription of Pulakēśi, that he subdued feated South Kōșala, Kāliṅga and a further south, the Dūrjayas and Vishñukundins in Andhra Pradesh were conquered3. During the reign of Pallava Mahēndravarman-I, Pulakēśi invaded the Pallava territory resulting in an extension of Chālukya authority over Nellore, Guntur, Kadapa, Chittoor and Anantapūr districts of present Andhra Pradesh4. The death of Pulakēśi-II occurred around A.D. 642, followed by anarchy and the loss of southern Chālukya territories, especially the Kadapa, Chittoor and Kurnool region. This interregnum in the Early Chālukya rule ended in A.D. 654/5 when Vikramaditya-I, son of Pulakēśi-II, succeeded, with the help of Gaṅga Durviniṅha (his material grand father) to drive the Pallavas from the Bādāmi region and ascended the throne. In his early years, Vikramaditya again established Chālukya authority over Kurnool, Kadapa, Anantapūr and Nellore region. His inscriptions from Āmudalapādu, Talamanchi and Turimēḷa attest his control of this region5. From the time of Pulakēśi-II (A.D. 610-642), the Chālukyas showed preference for Saivism. His son and successor,
Vikramāditya-I took Śivamāndaladīkṣa from Śudarsanacārya. This event is recorded in the Āmudalapādu (Mahabubnagar) inscription.

Vinayāditya (681-696 A.D.), the successor of Vikramāditya, had a peaceful and prosperous reign. Vijayāditya (696-733 A.D.), the son and successor of Vinayāditya, ascended the throne in 696 A.D. He associated his son, Vikramāditya-II in administration of his empire throughout his long rule. Paṭṭadakal in his reign received greater patronage than did Badami and the Vijayēswara temple was erected there by Vijayāditya. An inscription at Ālāṃpūr, Mahaboobnagar district, dated A.D 718 records his stay.

Vikramāditya-II (A.D 733-745) succeeded his father in 733 A.D. He contained an Arab invasion in the north. In A.D. 741, his son Kṛttivarma-II invaded the Pallava Kingdom. From a Chāluṣkya inscription found at Paṭṭadakal, it seems that Kṛttivarma may have conquered Kanchi thrice.

During the reign of Kṛttivarma-II (745-757 A.D.), the last Early Chalukya king, his subordinates became strong. Rāstrakūta governor Dantidurgā already held the Ellōra region in A.D. 742 and slowly undermined Kṛttivarma’s authority over all the Northern provinces. Around 752 A.D., Dantidurgā defeated Badami and proclaimed himself sovereign ruler. Kṛttivarma continued to rule for a few years, from his own territory. In 757 A.D. his reign ended with defeat by Rāstrakūta king Krishna-I, with it ended the first Early Chalukya empire.

Construction of temples in the Early Chāluṣkya period was due both to the systematic organization of religious sects and to a general theistic attitude of the community. Temples built during this period are found in Andhra Pradesh at places like Ālāṃpūr, Mahānāḍi, Kuḍāveli, Satyaṉūl, Pānyam, Penchakalpādu, Būḍedipādu, Mārumunagala, Mādugala, Ātmakūr, Beejanāvēmula etc. The Early Chalukyas of Badami heralded a composite architecture which is a harmonious blend of northern and southern styles. They have left behind a complex of temples at Ālāṃpūr on the left bank of Tungabhadra in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. These temples were profusely decorated with sculpture and carvings of elegant beauty. Ālāṃpūr seems to
have developed into a great centre of Saivism under the patronage of the Badami Chalukyas.

The nine temples at Ālaṁpūr in Mahaboobnagar district are dedicated to the worship of Śiva. But each of them is named after Brahma. The Nava Brahma temples, Viśwa-Brahma, Garuḍa-Brahma, Padma-Brahma, Tāraka-Brahma, Bāla-Brahma, Śvarga-Brahma, Arka-Brahma, Kumāra-Brahma and Viṁ-Brahma as the group is called, were built by the Early Chalukyas of Bādami. The Chalukyas of Bādami were zealous patrons of art and architecture. It was during this period that the entire Andhra region witnessed an outburst of great artistic activity with the construction of lofty structural shrines, dedicated to various Hindu gods and goddess. The Chalukyans were also ardent devotees of Śakti. Every inscription of these kings opens with an invocation to Śakti as Koušiki, Hārīti and Matangaṇas. They described themselves as the sons of seven Matrikas who are the protectors of seven lokaś. The names of their donees like Gāyatrīsiva, Durgāsiva sarma, Durgayya show that Durga form of Śakti was popular during the period. A large number of icons of Kārttikeya, Śūrya, and Mahiśasuramardini are found in the temples. There are also a very large number of sculptures of Mahiśasuramardini found preserved in the Ālaṁpūr, Kurnool and other Museums in the Andhra Pradesh.

**Iconographical features of Mahiśasuramardini in the Early Chalukya Art:**

On the basis of the mode of representation, the sculptures of Mahiśasuramardini of the Early Chalukyan period can be classified into the following three categories.

1. Four armed sculptures of Mahiśasuramardini.
2. Eight armed sculptures of Mahiśasuramardini.
3. Ten armed sculptures of Mahiśasuramardini.
I. Four armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśuramardini.

The Birla Archaeological Museum at Hyderabad preserves four sculptures of Mahiṣaśuramardini.

The first sculpture (98x48 cms) is of Red sand stone. It was collected from Mārumunagala, Mahaboobnagar district. This sculpture represents the goddess Mahiṣaśuramardini as having four hands. She holds śaṅkha, buffalo’s head, trisūla and caktra. She is twisting the buffalo’s head with her lower left hand and with her lower right hand she is piercing a trīśula into the body of buffalo. The goddess is trampling the buffalo demon with her right leg and her left leg is placed on the ground. She wears kirīṭamakuta, kundalas, ṛharas, yaṃopaviṭa and kāṭisūtra (Plate 2).

The second sculpture (42x 34 cms) from Ātmakūr, Kurnool district, represents the goddess with four arms (Plate 3). The goddess holds kheṭaka and sword in the upper hands. Her lower left hand holds buffalo’s tongue and her lower right hand holding a trisūla, pierces it into the body of Mahisha. She is pressing back of the demon with her left leg and her right leg is kept on the ground. The lion is shown at the bottom right of the goddess. She wears āṭamakuta, cakra kundalus, ṛharas, keyuras, kāṭisūtra, anklets and kāṅkanas.

In the third sculpture (90x39cms) of granite from Mārumunagala, Mahaboobnagar district, the goddess has four hands. She holds śaṅkha and cakra in her upper hands. Her lower left hand is placed on the head of the buffalo and piercing with a dagger holding in her lower right hand. She is pressing the back of the buffalo with her right leg and her left leg is placed on the ground. She wears āṭamakuta, kundalas, ṛharas, kāṭisūtra, anklets and kāṅkanas (Plate 4).

The fourth sculpture has been collected from Būdidapāḍu in Mahaboobnagar district. It is of granite and measures 95x 70 cms. It represents the goddess in dvibhaṅga pose. She has four hands and holds cakra in the upper right, śaṅkha in the upper left,
trisūla in the lower right and pulls out the animal tongue with the lower left hand. The left leg of goddess is bent at knee and pressing the demon’s shoulder who holds a khetaka and the dagger in his left and right hands. Her right leg is resting on the ground. She wears karanḍamakuṭa, kundalas, ḍaras, yagnopaviṭa, kāṭisūtra, anklets and kankana. There is prabhā behind her head. There is a lion behind the deity (Plate 5).

The Archaeological Museum at Kurnool, preserves a sculpture of Mahiṣāśuramardini. This sculpture represents the goddess as standing with her left leg resting on the ground and right leg placed on the back of the buffalo. She has four hands. She holds cakra, trisūla in her right hands and śankha in her upper left hand and the mouth of the buffalo with her lower left hand. The goddess holds in her lower right hand trisūla and thrust it into the mouth of the buffalo. She wears kirāmakpute, kundalas, ḍara, harmlets and other ornaments. There is a lion on her right side. A prabhā is found behind her head (Plate 6).

Three sculptures of Mahiṣāśuramardini are found displayed in the Archaeological Museum at Alāīpur in Mahaboobnagar district.

The first sculpture of Mahiṣāśuramardini is of pale brownish sand stone (0.77x0.54 cms). This sculpture represents Mahiṣāśuramardini as standing with her right leg bent at knee and kept on the head of the buffalo and the left leg resting on the ground. The goddess is four armed, holding cakra, śankha in the upper hands and the front right hand thrusts trisūla into the body of the buffalo. The front lower left hand catches the tail of the animal. She wears a makuta, makarakundalas, ḍara and other ornaments (Plate 7).

The second sculpture of Mahisasuramardini is of red sand stone (0.68x0.42 cms). This sculpture also represents Mahiṣāśuramardini as standing with her left leg resting on the ground and the right leg bent at the knee and kept on the body of the buffalo. The goddess has four hands and holds cakra, śankha in the upper right and left hands. The lower right hand holds and thrusts trisūla and thrusts it into the back of the buffalo and
the lower left hand is holding the tongue of the animal. She wears *kiritamakuta, kundalas*, necklace and gridle (Plate 8).

The third sculpture of Mahiṣaśuramardini is of brownish sand stone (1.00x0.53 cms). The deity is seated on the head of the Mahiṣa who is represented in human form. The deity has four hands and carries *cakra* and *śankha* in her back pair of hands. The goddess holds *trisūla* with a long shaft in her front right hand, her left hand kept on the thigh in *katyavalamibita* pose. She wears *jaṭamakuta, śankhapātra kundala* in the right ear and a *hāra* around the neck and other ornaments (Plate 9).

There is an image of Mahiṣaśuramardini in the Kumāra-Bramha temple at Ālappūr. The goddess has four hands. She holds *śankha, cakra* in the upper hands. In the lower right hand, she holds *trisūla* and thrust it into the neck of the buffalo and her lower left hand holds Mahiṣa’s snout tightly. Mahiṣa iconometrically is of a bigger proportion. She wears *kiritamakuta, kundalas* and other ornaments (Plate 10).

II. Eight armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśuramardini

In a niche in the courtyard of the Balabrahma temple at Ālappūr, Mahaboob nagar district. The goddess is standing with the right leg bent at the knee and resting on the head of the buffalo and the left leg stiff and kept on the ground. She has eight hands and holds arrow, *cakra* and *trisūla* in the right hands and *kheṭaka, bow and śankha* in the left hands. The lower right holds sword and the lower left catches the tail of the animal (Plate 11).

On the inner side of the *prākāra* of the Balabrahma temple, Ālappūr. The goddess is standing with the right leg resting on the ground and the left leg kept on the head of the buffalo. She has eight hands and holds *cakra, arrow* and *trisūla* in the upper right hands and *śankha, bow and kheṭaka* in the upper left hands. She thrusts *trisūla* with the two lower hands. She wears *cakrakundalas, hāras* and *graivēyakas*. There is a lion at behind the goddess.12
There is another eight armed sculpture of Mahiṣāsurasārmanadini found preserved infront of the Alampūr Museum (Plate 12). The goddess is standing with her left leg crushing the demon and the right leg is broken. In her left hands, she holds conch, bow, shield and the front left hand is holding the tongue of the Mahiṣāsura which is issuing out from the mouth of the animal. The body of the animal below the head and all the right hands of the Devi are broken. She wears a headgear, kundalas, yajnopavita and kuchabañadh. The north of the Garuḍa-Brahma temple at Alampūr houses an image of Mahiṣāsurasārmanadini. The goddess is in āḍīḍha posture, having the left leg lifted and placed on back of the Mahiṣa. She has eight hands. The goddess holds the buffalo’s horn tightly and inserts a short trisūla into his neck with her lower hands. She holds śāṅkha, bow, khetaka in her upper left hands, and arrow, khadga and cakra in her upper right hands.

An image of Mahiṣāsurasārmanadini in the Pāpanāśēśvara temple at Alampūr is an aṣṭabhujā and is in āḍīḍha posture, having the left leg placed on the shoulder of a theriomorphic Mahiṣa. The goddess holds the horn of Mahiṣa with the front left hand and thrusts trisūla into the back of the demon with her front right hand. She holds śāṅkha, bow, khetaka, khadga, cakra and arrow in her left and right hands. Mahiṣa has a human body and buffalo’s head. The lion stands to the right of the deity (Plate 13).

The Birla Archaeological Museum at Hyderabad preserves eight eight armed sculptures of Mahiṣāsurasārmanadini.

In the first sculpture (90x 59 cms), the left leg of the goddess is pressing the right shoulder of the demon, while her right leg is firmly placed on the ground. She has eight hands and holds śāṅkha, bow, khetaka, buffalo demon’s tongue, trisūla, cakra, khadga and sāra from the pouch. The lower left hand holds the buffalo demon’s tongue. The lower right hand is broken at the edge of the trisūla which is piercing into the heart of the demon. To the right of Devi is a squatting lion with its mouth open and uplifted right paw is ferociously depicted. The demon holds trident in his left hand and the right hand carries a khadga. She wears kirītamukta, karnakundalas, hāras, bhujakīrītis, yajnopavita, kēyūras, mēkhala, kātiśūtra, anklets and kāṁkaṇa. The demon is depicted in human form.
with a buffalo head. This sculpture is of basalt and has been collected from Penchakalapadu of Kurnool district (Plate 14).

In the second sculpture (90x 49cms), the goddess has eight hands. She holds śāṅkha, kheṭaka and bow in her upper left hands. Her lower left hand holds tongue of the buffalo and her lower right hand holds trisūla, thrusts it into the body of buffalo. The other three right hands are broken. Her left leg is pressing the buffalo back of demon, while her right leg is firmly placed on the ground. She wears makuṭa, kunḍalas, hāras, yagñopavīta, keśyuras, katiṣūtra and kaṅkaṇas. Here the dimensions of the image are irregular. The right hands are carved irregularly. This sculpture brought from Jincture, Kurnool district (Plate 15).

The third sculpture (90x50cms) is in a highly worn-out condition. The eight armed goddess holds in the left hands śāṅkha, bow, kheṭaka, buffalo demon’s head and the right hands hold trisūla, sāra, khaḍga and cakra. The lower left hand holds the buffalo demon’s head, while her lower right hand is holding a trisūla piercing it into the body of the Mahisha. The back of the buffalo demon is being pressed by her left leg and her right leg is firmly placed on the ground. There is a lion to the right of the Goddess. She wears jaṭamakūṭa, kunḍalas, hāras, katiṣūtra, anklets and kaṅkaṇas. This sculpture brought from Beekjanavemula, Kurnool district (Plate 16).

The fourth sculpture brought from Kuḍavalli, Mahaboobnagar district (50x34cms) is of sand stone and it represents the goddess as standing with the left leg stiff and the right bent at the knee and resting on the back of the buffalo. She has eight hands and holds śāṅkha, bow, trisūla in her upper left hands. She holds cakra, sāra, kheṭaka in her upper right hands. The Goddess is shown killing the buffalo by pressing the buffalo’s head with her lower left hand and with the raised dagger in her lower right hand. She pierces the demon with the trisūla holding in her second left hand. Her right leg is forcefully kept on the back of the buffalo as if she is pressing the on its back (Plate 17).
In the fifth sculpture (95x69cms) collected from Marumunagala, Mahaboobnagar district, the goddess has eight hands. She holds khetaka, sankha, bow and buffalo head in her left hands and trident, sara, khaḍga and cakra in her right hands. She wears yagnopaviṣṭa. The head portion is broken. She is shown in the act of killing buffalo demon from right side. The right leg of the goddess is trampling the buffalo demon and her left leg is standing erect (Plate 18).

The sixth sculpture (53x43cms) from Madugula, Kurnool district, represents the goddess as having eight hands. She holds sankha, bow, khetaka in her upper left hands and arrow, khaḍga and cakra in her upper right hands. She is holding the buffalo head with her lower left hand and with her lower right hand she is piercing a trisūla into the body of buffalo demon. The goddess is standing on the back of the buffalo with her left leg and her right leg is firmly placed on the ground (Plate 19).

In the seventh sculpture (72x49cms) from Marumunagala, Mahaboobnagar district, the goddess Maḥiṣāsuramardini has eight hands. She holds sankha, noose, bow in her upper left hands and sara, and cakra in her upper two right hands. She holds khetaka in her lower left hand and in her lower right hand holds khaḍga. She is piercing with trisūla on the back of the demon with her lower most right hand. The Mahishāsura is shown emerging from the neck of the buffalo. The emerged Mahishasura holds khetaka and khaḍga in his left and right hands. He wears kundalas and kankaṇas. The right leg of the Devi is firmly placed on the ground and her left leg is placed on the back of buffalo. The lion with its mouth wide open is depicted to the right of the Goddess. She wears kirītamakuta, karnakundalas, ṭhāras, yagnopaviṣṭa, kṣīras, kajiśūra, mēkhalas, anklets and kankaṇas (Plate 20).

The eighth sculpture of red sand stone (95x72cms) is from Utukuru, Mahaboobnagar district. It has eight hands and holds sankha, khetaka, bow, tongue of the buffalo in her left hands. She holds khaḍga, cakra in her two right hands and other right hands are lost. Her left lower hand is holding the tongue of the buffalo and she kills the
buffalo with a khaḍga held in her lower right hand. She wears kirīṭamakuta, kundalas, hāras, yagnopavīta, kēyuras, kaṭisūra and kaṅkaṇas (Plate 21).

The State Archaeology Museum at Hyderabad preserves one eight handed sculpture of Mahiṣāśuramardini. The goddess is standing with her right leg resting on the ground and left leg bent at the knee and placed on the body of the buffalo. She holds bāna, cakra, khaḍga in the upper hands and khetaka, sāṅkha, bow in the upper left hands. The front right hand holds trisūla and thrusts it into the head of the buffalo. The goddess catches the mouth of the buffalo with her lower left hand. She wears kirīṭamakuta, kundalas, hāras, harmlets and kuchabaṇḍha (Plate 22).

The Ālamūr Archaeological Museum at Ālamūr, Mahaboobnagar district also preserves four eight armed sculptures of Mahiṣāśuramardini.

The first sculpture is of red sand stone (0.81x0.65cms). The goddess Mahiṣāśuramardini is standing with her right leg resting on the ground and left leg resting on the back of the animal. The deity has eight hands. She holds khaḍga, cakra, bāna in the back right hands and the front right hand holds trisūla which is thrust against the body of the Āsura coming out of the animal body. The back left hands hold bow, sāṅkha and bell. The front left hand holds the head of an Āsura. There is a lion at the bottom of her right side. She wears kirīṭamakuta, makarakundalas, necklace and other ornaments. There is a prabhāmandala behind her head (Plate 23).

The second sculpture which measures 0.68x0.56cms is of red sand stone. In this sculpture, Mahiṣāśuramardini is represented as standing with her right leg bent and resting on the ground and the left leg kept on the human body of the Mahiṣāsura. This sculpture represents Mahiṣāsura with the head of the buffalo. This deity has eight hands. The deity holds a bāna, khaḍga, an indistinct weapon in the back right hands and sāṅkha, khetaka, bow in the back left hands. The front right hand holds and thrusts trisūla into the body of the demon Mahiṣāsura. Her front left hand is holding the tongue of an Āsura in
the act of destruction. The mount lion of the goddess is at the right side of the Aśura. She wears kiriṣṭamakuta, hāra, kuchabāndha, armlets and other ornaments (Plate 24).

The third sculpture of Mahiṣāśuramardini is of brownish sand stone (0.95x0.60 cms). It represents Mahiṣāśuramardini as standing with the left leg resting firmly on the ground and the right bent at the knee and resting on the body of buffalo. The goddess has eight hands. She holds khaḍga, bāṇa and two other contents which are broken in right hands. She holds kheṭaka, thrusts triśula in to the neck of buffalo and bow in the upper left hands and the front lower left hand catches the mouth of the buffalo. Her breasts are broken. She wears kiriṣṭamakuta, makarakunḍalas, hāra, kuchabāndha, armlets, ardhōrīka and other ornaments. Her mount lion stands at the bottom right side (Plate 25).

The fourth sculpture of Mahiṣāśuramardini is of light brownish sand stone (0.85x0.67cms). In this sculpture, Mahiṣāśuramardini is standing with legs wide apart, the right one crushing the demon and the left resting on the ground. She has eight hands. She holds khaḍga, cakra and ḍaṇa in the right hands. In the left hands, she holds śankha (broken), shield and bow. The front right hand holds triśula (broken) and thrusts it into the neck of demon and the front left hand catches the arm of the demon. The front left hand and the breasts are broken. There is a lion to bottom right. She has prabhāmanḍala behind her head and wears kiriṣṭamakuta, hāra, armlets and other ornaments (Plate 26).

The Archaeological Museum at Kurnool, preserves two eight armed sculptures of Mahiṣāśuramardini. In the first sculpture, the goddess has eight hands. The goddess is standing with her right leg kept on the ground and her left leg resting on the back of the buffalo. She holds cakra, bāṇa, khaḍga in the upper right hands and thrusts triśula into the neck of the buffalo with her front right hand. She holds śankha, bow and kheṭaka in the left hands. The front lower left hand catches the tongue of the buffalo. She wears karantamakuta, kundalas and armlets (Plate 27).

In the second sculpture, the posture of the goddess resembles the first sculpture described above. She has eight hands and holds cakra, bāṇa, khaḍga in the upper right
hands. In the upper left hands, she holds śaṅkha, bow and kheṭaka. The front right hand holds trīśūla and thrusts it into the neck of buffalo and the front left hand catches the mouth of the buffalo demon. Her face and breasts are broken. She wears kundālas, armlets and others. This sculpture closely resembles the first sculpture. In both the sculptures, the lion is found at the back of the goddess (Plate 28).

There is a small platform to the back wall of the Rock cut temple No-II at Adavisoimanapalli, Karimnagar District. It contains a loose beheaded sculpture of Mahiṣāsura-mardini in black basalt. The devi is standing in dvibanga with the right leg steady on the ground and the left leg kept on the neck of the demon, who is in buffalo form. She has eight hands and her upper left hand is broken and her upper right hand is piercing the trīśūla into the body of the asura. Her lower left hand holds the twisted tail of the animal while her lower right hand thrusts a khaḍga into its body. She is adorned with ear-rings graivēyakas, kēyūras, and yajñopavītha13.

III. Ten armed sculptures of Mahiṣāsura-mardini

In the Bālabrahma temple at Alampūr, the goddess is standing with right leg stiff and the left leg bent at the knee and resting on the neck of the buffalo. This deity has ten hands. She thrusts trīśūla into the body of the animal with her lower right hand and catches the makuta of Mahiṣāsura coming out of the body of the animal with her lower left hand. The other eight hands are broken14.

REFERENCES:

4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
Historical Background:

The Eastern Chālukya dynasty of Vēngi was a branch of the Early Chālukyas of Bādāmi. This dynasty played an important role from 7th to 11th century A.D. in the Andhra Pradesh. Pulakesī-II (A.D.608/9-642), the famous monarch of the Chālukya house of Bādāmi, invaded the east coast and occupied the Telugu districts of Ganjam, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur early in his power. He inflicted crushing defeats on the local rulers and annexed their territories. Pallava Mahēndravarma was also conquered and driven out of the Guntur district which was then under his rule¹. Pulakesī-II was accompanied in this campaign by his younger brother and Yuvarāja, Kubja-Vishnuvardhana (A.D.624-642) who stayed back in the conquered region after the campaign was concluded. He consolidated these conquests and constituted them into an empire. He became the independent ruler of this kingdom, with the consent of his brother, in 624-625 A.D². He and his successors ruled over it till 1076 A.D. Kulottunga, son of Rājarāja (A.D.1021-63), the last but one king, went to the Tamil country, seized the Chōla throne and became the ruler of this region. After the death of Vijayāditya-VII, his paternal uncle, Kulottunga resumed charge of the Vēngi kingdom and governed it through his sons who acted as its viceroys. The successors of Kulottunga continued to rule over the coastal area assuming Chalukyan titles through local viceroys³.

The Eastern Chālukyan rule witnessed internecine fights, usurpations and foreign invasions and occupations. There was prolonged rivalry between the Eastern Chālukyas of Vēngi and the Rāstrakūtas which resulted in confusion and Chaos. The Eastern Chālukyan rulers were driven out of their kingdom and there was an interregnum of 27 years. They were restored with Chōla help but this brought in a fresh complication. Vēngi became, thereafter, the bone of contention between the Cholas of the South and the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇi in the west. Numerous minor ruling families came to power during this period owing nominal allegiance to the victorious contestant but actually enjoying independence. Ultimately, the Kākatīyas restored peace and order in this region⁴.
Among the Eastern Chalukyan rulers, there were a few great rulers who, inspite of serious pre-occupations and persisting dangers, could devote time to peaceful pursuits. These rulers like Narēndramrīgarāja Vijayāditya (806-846 A.D.), Gunaga Vijayāditya (848-891 A.D.), Chālukya Bhīma-I (892-922 A.D.) and Dānarāva (971-73 A.D.) were great temple builders and many of the temples erected by them are still intact. Narēndramrīgarāja Vijayāditya fought with the Western Gāngas, Rāstrakūtas and other enemies 108 battles and raised as many temples of Śiva on the battle fields in order to expiate for the sin of committing human slaughter. Gunaga Vijayāditya was also a great temple builder. One of the three temples of a group found in the village of Bikkavolu, in the East Godavari district, was erected by him and its god was named Bijayēśwara. On stylistics grounds, these three temples and three others, which are outside the village, ought to be assigned to the time of Gunaga Vijayāditya. Another king, Chālukya Bhīma-I, was also a great fighter and devotee of Śiva. He also constructed temples dedicated to Śiva. The Bhīmēśwara temples of Drāksharāmam, Chālukyaḥīmavaram and Cēbōrōlu were constructed by him and their god named after himself. There are several well known temples in Coastal Āndhradēsa5. Saivism was favoured in the Eastern Chālukyan period of Veṅgīdēsa. Among the Eastern Chālukyas, Vijayāditya-I (A.D.753-770) was the first to take the title ‘Paramamaḥēśwara’. Most of his successors i.e. Vijayāditya-II, Chālukya Bhīma and Ammarāja-II were Saivates and took the above title. The Pāncārāmas, Biccavōlu, Vijayawāda, Cēbōrōlu, Śrīsailam and Agastyēśvaram (Mahaboobnagar) became sects of Saivism in Āndhradēsa. Radical Saivite sects like the Pāṣupatās and Kālamukhas entered Āndhradēsa and received patronage from the Eastern Chālukyas. Many temples dedicated Śiva were constructed by the Eastern Chālukyas. Vijayāditya-II (A.D.808-847) built 108 temples of Śiva whereas the temples of Pāncārāmas are attributed to Chālukya Bhīma6.

The temples of the Eastern Chalukya are found at Biccavōlu, Drāksharāma, Bhīmavaram, Samaralakōta, Elamānĉhili, Panchadārla (East Godavari District), Cēbōrōlu, Pondugula, Terāla, Amarāvati (Guntur district), Ralakollu (West Godavari district) and Ayyangārīpālem7, Advīsōmanapalli (near Undāvalli), and Bhairavakoṇḍa8. The worship of Mahīśasuramardini also seems to be very popular in this period as is seen from the
sculptural panels and images of Mahisasuramardini found all over the territory of Vēṅgi dynasty.

**Iconographical features of Mahiṣaśuramardini in the Eastern Chalukyan Art**

The sculptures of Mahiṣaṣūrāmardini are found depicted in the Eastern Chalukyan Temple Art in the following three ways.

I. Four armed sculptures of Mahiṣaṣūrāmardini.

II. Six armed sculptures of Mahiṣaṣūrāmardini.

III. Eight armed sculptures of Mahiṣaṣūrāmardini.

I. **Four armed Sculptures of Mahiṣaṣūrāmardini.**

The niche in the east wall of the Gōlingēśwara temple at Bikkavōlu, East Godavari district contains the sculpture of goddess Mahiṣaṣūrāmardini. This temple was constructed by the Eastern Chalukyan king Gunaga Vijayāditya -III (848 -891 A.D.).

The goddess is standing in samabhānga on the head of the buffalo. She has four hands. The goddess holds cakra, śaṅkha in her upper hands. Her lower right hand is in abhaya pose and her lower left hand is in kaṭihasta. There is a prabhā behind her head and a lion at her right leg. She wears kṛiṣṭamakuta, āhāra, yajnopavīṭa, kaṅkaṇas, etc (Plate 29).

A niche on the north antarāla wall of the Rājarājēśwara temple at Bikkavōlu, East Godavari district contains four handed goddess of Mahiṣaṣūrāmardini. The goddess is standing in samabhānga on the head of the buffalo. She holds cakra in her upper left hand and śaṅkha in her upper right hand. Her lower right hand in abhaya pose and her lower left hand is kept on the waist. There is a prabhā behind her head. Her mount lion is seen on her back side. She wears kṛiṣṭamakuta, kundalas, āhāra, yajnopavīṭa, kaṅkaṇas and māṇijīras (Plate 30).

There is a loose icon in front of a house in Jammidōḍdi at Vijayawāḍa. The goddess Mahiṣaṣūrāmardini is standing with the left leg stiff and the right bent at the knee and resting on the back of the buffalo. This deity has four hands and holds cakra in the upper right hand and śaṅkha in the upper left hand. The lower right hand holds trisūla.
and thrust it into the back of the animal and the lower left hand catches the horn of the buffalo. There is a lion behind the deity\textsuperscript{10}.

There is another sculpture of Mahiṣaśuramardini in Jammidoḍi at Vijayavaḍa. The goddess is standing with the right leg stiff and the left resting on the neck of the buffalo. She has four hands and holds cakra in the upper right hand and śāṅkha in the upper left hand. She holds trisula with her lower right hand and thrust it into the body of the buffalo and pulls out its tongue with the lower left hand. There is a prabha behind her head\textsuperscript{11}.

The Bhimesvara temple at Bhimavaram, West Godavari district, which was built by Chālukya Bhima\textsuperscript{12} towards the end of the 9\textsuperscript{th} century A.D, contains in a niche left side of the garbhagriha a four handed sculpture of goddess Mahiṣaśuramardini. The goddess is standing with her legs firmly resting on the ground. She holds cakra in her upper left and śāṅkha in her upper right hand. Her lower right hand is kept in abhaya pose, lower left hand is kept on the waist. There is a lion at her back side.

A niche in the west wall of the Ramalingeswara temple at Palakollu, West Godavari district, contains four handed goddess of Mahiṣaśuramardini. She holds cakra, śāṅkha in her upper hands. Her lower right hand holds trisula and thrust it into the body of the buffalo and her lower left hand catches the tail of the buffalo. The demon is shown only in buffalo form. There is a lion at her right side. She wears kirītakamukta, hāras, kuchabandha, yajñopavīta and other ornaments (Plate 31).

The central niche on the north wall of the Virabhadra temple at Bikkavolu contains a beautiful image of Mahiṣaśuramardini. She is depicted firmly standing on her right leg and the left raised to the height of thighs touching the back turned head of the buffalo below. She has four hands. The back right hand holds a wheel and the back left hand, a conch. The front hands hold a long trident with upturned working end piercing through the neck of the buffalod demon. The goddess is adorned with kirītakamukta, makarakundalas, kanṭhāhāras, keyuras and kanṭkāṇas. She also wears a short pearl yajñopavīta hanging upto the waist. A big round
halo with concentric rings is depicted behind the head of the goddess. The deity is less ornamented.

II. Six armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini.

In the third niche on the north wall of the Golingēśwara temple at Bikkavolu, the goddess is standing with her right leg stiff and resting on the ground and the left leg bent at the knee and kept on the back of the buffalo. She has six hands. The goddess holds sword above the head in the upper right hand and arrow in another right hand and khetaka and bow in two upper left hands. The middle right hand holds trisūla and thrust it into the body of the animal and the front left hand bent at the elbow and upraised and is kept in abhaya. The demon is shown emerging out of the neck of the animal and holding sword in the right and shield in the left hand. She wears kirītakukuta, hāra and other ornaments (Plate 32).

The central projection on the north wall of the Rajaṭēśwara temple at Bikkavolu, East Godavari district contains the sculpture of goddess Mahiṣaśūramardini. This temple was constructed by the Eastern Čalukyan king Gunaga Vijayēḍitya-II (848-891 A.D.)

In this sculpture, she has six hands and holds one right hand up in vismaya, holds khaḍga in one hand and thrusts trisūla with another hand into the body of the buffalo. One left hand holds khaḍvaṇga, another khetaka and the third holds the end of the sword held by Mahiṣa in human form. Above Devi are two celestials holding a crown (Plate 33).

III. Eight armed Sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini.

A shrine to the right of the entrance to the ground floor of the shrine of the Bēmeśwara temple at Drākhara, East Godavari district contains a sculpture of Mahiṣaśūramardini. The goddess is standing on the back of the buffalo. She has eight hands. She holds śāṅkha, bow, khetaka in her upper left hands and cakra, arrow and khaḍga in her upper right hands. The lower right hand holds trisūla and thrust it into the human body of the demon and the lower left hand catches the horns of the animal. There
is a prabhā behind her head and a lion to the right of her leg. She wears kiriṣamakūṭa, kundalas, ĕras, kuchabāndha and other ornaments (Plate 34).

The niche in the west wall of the Bhūmeswara temple at Drakshārāma also contains the sculpture of Mahiṣāsuramardini. The goddess stands with her right leg resting on the body of the Mahiṣa and the left bent at the knee and kept on the head of Mahiṣa. She has eight hands. The upper right hands holding cakra, bāna, khaḍga and the upper left hands holding sāṅkha, kheṭaka and bow. The lower right hand holds a trisūla and thrust it into the neck of Mahiṣa while the lower left catches the hair of human figure issuing out of the mouth of Mahiṣa. There is a prabhā behind her head. She wears karanḍamakūṭa, kundalas, ĕras and other ornaments. The lion is seen at her right side (Plate 35).

The exterior walls of the Traipurusha devalaya at Valiveru, Guntur district contains the sculpture of Mahiṣāsuramardini. As per inscriptive evidence of the place, it was identified as a royal memorial shrine of Eastern Chālukya Vikramādiya-II (A.D. 733-744)\(^5\). The sculpture of Mahiṣāsuramardini is carved as standing with the right leg bent and placed on the back of a lion, while the left leg is placed on the Mahiṣa. The image is eight handed and holds khaḍga, sāṅkha, cakra, bāna, ankuṣa, and dhunṣa. Her two front hands hold the trisūla firmly and is piercing the body of the demon. Her second left hand is holding the āsura in the act of destruction. There is a lion at the bottom of her right side. The goddess is adorned with ratraśakundalas in her ears, kuchabāndha across the prominent breasts and other usual ornaments. Her face is expressive and is exquisitely modelled with short nose, thin lips, wide eyes and shapely eye-brows\(^6\).

REFERENCES:

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Rama Rao, M., op.cit, p.2.
11. Ibid.
IV-3 MAHISASURAMARDINI IN THE NOLAMBA ART
(A.D. 8th to 10th Century)

Historical Background

The Nolambas ruled from Hemavati during eight and tenth centuries A.D. They were a feudatory family under the Gaṅgas, Rastrakūtas and Chālukyas. They were the rulers of the districts of Tumkūr and Chitaldurg in Karnataka, parts of Anantapur and Kurnool districts of Andhra Pradesh and portions of Salem and North Arcot districts of Tamilnadu. The inscriptions of the Nolambas are largely found in Kolar area, Chittoor district, Hēmavati, Dharmapuri, Bhoğanāndi etc. The Nolambas ruled over Nolambalige, later known as Nojambavādi 32,000 with their capital at Hēnjēru or Hēmavati in the Māṭakāśira taluk of Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh. This Nojambavādi area extended as far as Kolar district on one side and Anantapūr in the north.

The reign of Mahēndra-I (A.D 860-895), the sixth prince in the line was more eventful than that of his predecessors. He is attributed with defeating the Bānas, a victory attested to by inscriptions at Dharmapuri in Salem district of Tamilnadu. After Mahēndra, his brother, Iṣiva Nolamba (A.D 895-919) seems to have ruled conjointly with his mother Devalabbarasi. An inscription at Avani refers to the death of Mahēndra and the raising by his mother Devalabbarasi of the temple known as Nojamba Narayanesvara after one of the epithets of Mahēndra. In the period of the subsequent rulers Ayyapada and Anniga (A.D 919-940), the fortunes of the Nolamba Kingdom suffered heavily due to the combat of the Gaṅga king Rācamalla against Nojambavādi which resulted in the loss of the region around Avani. Another inscription at Avani dated A.D 931 states that one Tribhuvana Kartaradeva, a Siva pontiff, governed Avani for 40 years and built many temples. Iṣiva Nolamba Dilipa (A.D. 940-970), the next ruler of Nojambavādi, was a powerful monarch who fought on the side of the Rastrakūta Krishna-III in the battle at Takkolam against the early Chōḷa Parantaka-I (907-955 A.D.), the Gaṅga Narasimha (A.D.960-974) overran Nojambavādi and captured Uchhangi fort, but soon after, in Mahēndra-II’s reign (A.D 975-980), the Nolambas regained their independence. This
was but for a brief time, for at the beginning of Ekavākyā’s rule (A.D. 980-1005), the Chālukyas of Kāḷyāna conquered the Noḷāṁbas and Noḷavāḍi became a part of the Chālukya empire. Saivism was in flourishing condition and received royal patronage. The Noḷāṁbas were beneficent patrons of Saivism, as their many temples constructed to Śiva at Hēmavatī would clearly indicate. Hēmavatī, the capital of the Noḷāṁbas, is about twenty two miles west of Māḍakaśīra of Kōḍikonda -Amarāpuram road and is about eight miles from Amarāpuram. The village stands on an extensive mound and was a town of considerable importance during A.D 8th to 10th century under the Noḷāṁbas when it was known as Heṇjūru or Heṇjeri. Of the temples at the place, the chief are those of Śiddeswara, Dōḍḍeswara, Viṛūpākṣeśwara and Maḷeśwara standing in a group to the north-west of the village. These temples present a grand galaxy of sculptures which are utmost importance to study the art and iconography of the Noḷāṁbas. The temple of the Noḷāṁbas are also seen at Dharmapuri and Arlaguppe. The cult of Mahiṣāśuramardini was also supported by the Noḷāṁba rulers. Beautiful representations of Mahiṣāśuramardini are found in the Noḷāṁba temples at Hēmavatī. This shows that the Noḷāṁbas showed keen interest in representing Mahiṣāśuramardini in the Noḷāṁba Art. Noḷāṁba school of art is fascinating and intensely reflects the artistic expression. Fully following the Chālukyan style, yet the sculptors maintained a special distinctiveness defined the school of art, finely carved lustrous sculptures of Noḷāṁbas and adorned a number of imposing temples of the Noḷāṁba period. The art of Noḷāṁbas bears a marked stamp of individuality and ingenuity of local craftsmen. The suppleness of form, short angular features stepped head gear with a diamond shaped decoration on the forehead, stringed necklace, thick yajñōpavīta, udarababdha, dotted prabhāvali and the lower garment with central look and tassels are the characteristic features of the Noḷāṁba art; the broad open eyes with carved eye-brows, smiling face and superb anatomy of the figures in black granite, no doubt reflect the high water marks of the Noḷāṁba artisanship. These sculptures show elasticity and liner rhythm and produce a
balancing effect to the overall carving. The sculptures of the Nojamba period are mostly made of black granite.

**Iconographical features of Mahiṣaśūramardini in the Nojamba Art**

The sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini are found depicted in the Nojamba art in the following three ways.

I. Two armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini.

II. Four armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini.

III. Six armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini.

I. **Two armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini**

On the right side, east face of the third north pillar of Virūpākṣa temple at Hēmavati contains two armed image of Mahiṣaśūramardini. In her right hand the deity holds *trīśūla* and piercing it into the theriomorphic Mahiṣaśura and the asura’s neck is twisted by the other hand.

II. **Four armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini.**

There are two beautiful sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramadini in Hēmavati Museum at Hēmavati Village, Anantapur District.

In the first sculpture, the ferocious looking goddess stands resting her right leg on the ground and the left leg bent at the knee and placed on the back of the buffalo. She has four hands. Her upper right and left hands hold *cakra* and *śāṅkha*. In her lower right hand she holds sword and thrust it into the neck of the animal and with her lower left hand the goddess presses the head of the animal. The demon is represented in full animal form. The buffalo does not have horns and its legs are folded. She wears *makuta*, ear-rings, *hārās*, *kuchabahāndha*, *yāgṇopavīta*, and *kaṅkanas* (Plate 36).
In the second sculpture, the goddess is in standing posture. She has four hands. She holds *cakra* and *sāṅkha* in her upper hands. In her lower right hand, she holds *trisūla* and thrusts it into the neck of the buffalo and with her lower left hand she presses the mouth of the buffalo. The demon is fully represented in an animal form. The buffalo is represented with large and thick horns. She wears *makuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *kāras*, *yagyōpaṇīta*, and *kaṅkaṇas*. There is a *prabhāmandaṇḍala* behind her head and it is partly broken on the left side (Plate 37).

The Pārvati temple in the courtyard of the Mallikārjuna temple at Kambadūr, Anantapur district contains in its niche a four armed sculpture of Mahiṣāsura-mardini. The goddess is standing with her right leg resting on the ground and the left leg bent at knee and placed on the ground. She holds *trisūla* in the lower right hand and thrusts it into the back of the buffalo. The lower left hand rests on her right thigh. The contents in the upper hands are broken. She wears *kiriṇamakuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *kaṭiṣūtra*, anklets and *kaṅkaṇas*. There is a mount lion at her right bottom. The demon is represented in animal form but its head is broken (Plate 38).

On the west face of the north pillar of Siddhāśvara temple at Hemavati is found carved the sculpture of Mahiṣāsura-mardini. The goddess is in *sthānaka* pose. She has four hands. Her left leg is kept on the back of theriomorphic Mahiṣāśura. She holds *cakra* in the upper right hand, *sankha* in the upper left hand. In her lower right hand holds *trisula* and thrusts it into the neck of the āśūra and her lower left hand twists the head of the āśūra.¹²

On the south face of north third pillar of the Siddhāśvara temple is another sculpture of Mahiṣāśura-mardini having four hands. She holds *cakra* in her upper right hand and *sankha* in her upper left hand. In her lower right hand, she holds *trisūla* and pierces it into the theriomorphic Mahiṣāśura and her lower left hand twists the āśūra’s head¹³.

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On the east face of the north pillar of the Virūpākṣa temple at Hēmavati, the goddess Mahiṣāśuramardini is shown crushing the theriomorphic āsura’s back with her leg. The goddess has four hands. One hand twists the āsura’s neck and a trisūla pierces the āsuras body. cakra and śankhu are found in the upper hands.\(^\text{14}\)

On the east face of the north pillar of the Virūpākṣa temple at Hēmavati, in the right side, the actual conflict in progress between the goddess and Mahiṣāśura is well delineated. Having an anthropomorphic body but a buffalo’s head, Mahiṣāśura has khaḍga and kheṭaka held for battle is observing on the defensive in a retreating stance. Durga is bursting forward towards the āsura, holding cakra in the upper right, śankha in the upper left hands. She holds khaḍga in the lower right hand and kheṭaka in the lower left hand.\(^\text{15}\)

III. Six armed sculptures Mahiṣāśuramardini

The north face of the north-east pillar of Śiddeśwara temple at Hēmavati has an unusual Mahiṣāśuramardini scene. Six-armed Durga Mahiṣāśuramardini is on top of her lion and to her left lies a decapitated buffalo form. Mahisa has fully emerged in human form. In Noḷaṁbavāḍi sculptures Mahiṣāśura is most commonly portrayed in theriomorphic form or partially theriomorphic with some human features. On this pillar the completely human and āsura form continues the battle.\(^\text{16}\)

REFERENCES:

5. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
15. Ibid
IV-4. MAHIṢAŚURAMARDINI IN THE EASTERN GAṆGA ART
(A.D. 5th to 11th Century)

Historical Background

The rule of the Eastern Gaṅga’s commences with the reign of Indravarma-I (493-532 A.D.). He is attributed in his records with the title of Trikalingādhipati and from this we can infer that he might have conquered the whole of Kaliṅga and firmly established his rule over that region. He had his capital at Dantapura, but later shifted it to Kaliṅganagara (Mukhalingam in Srikakulam district). The Gaṅgas thus ruled with their capital at Mukhalingam in Andhra for nearly five centuries (493-1147 A.D.) until it was shifted to Cuttack at the end of 11th century. The Eastern Chālukyas of Vėṅgi annexed to their kingdom a large portion of the dominion of the Gaṅgas, only a small track of Andhra in the north around Mukhalingam remained in the Gaṅga rule upto the 11th century.

Anantavarma Vajrahasta-VI (1037-38) was the first ruler of the Later Eastern Gaṅgas. Rājarājā Devendravarma-VII (1070-77 A.D.) ascended the Gaṅga throne after the death of his father Ananthavarma Vajrahasta. During his reign, Rājendrachōla invaded Kaliṅga to punish Devendravarma Kajārajadeva for having supported the right of Chālukya Vijayāditya to the throne of Vėṅgi. Both the parties are claimed to have seen successful in the battle. Whatever be the outcome of the battle, peace was brought between the two and Kullottunga-I gave his daughter in marriage to Rājarājadeva. Anantavarma Chōda Gaṅga who succeeded his father, Rājajadeva to the throne in 1078 A.D. was the most illustrious of the Gaṅga rulers. He ruled for nearly 70 years. He was the son of Rājarājadeva by the Chālukya-Chōla princess, Rājasundari and closely related to the neighbouring Chālukya-Chōla kings. When his succession was disputed by Devendravarma, a Gaṅga king of a collateral line, Kullottunga-II, sent his army under Vikrama-Chōla to punish Devendravarma. Thus his relationship with the Chālukya-Chōla kings helped Anantavarma in establishing his rule during the early years. However, after the death of Kullottunga-I, Anantavarma invaded the neighbouring Chālukya-Chōla
territory and annexed a part of it to his territories. By about 1135 A.D\(^5\), he brought under his authority the territory extending from the river Gaṅga to the Godavari. He changed his capital from Kalinganagaram (Mukhalingam) to Cuttack in about 1136 A.D\(^6\).

During the reign of Anantavarma Chōda Gaṅga’s successor, Kamamava (1147-56), Velaṇāṭi Gōṅka-II\(^7\), the Chālukya Chōla feudatory at Vēṇgī invaded Kaliṅga and conquered its southern part. From this time onwards, the attack of the rulers of Āndhra on Kaliṅga became continuous and parts of Kaliṅga kept on changing hands between the Gaṅgas and the rulers of Āndhra. During the reign of Rājarājadēva-II (1170-90 A.D.)\(^8\) the Gaṅgas reoccupied the territory upto the Godāvari lost during the reign of their previous rulers. After the conquest of the Velaṇāṭi territories by the Kākatiyāyas, the latter became the main rivals to the Gaṅgas in the Kaliṅga region. After the fall of the Kākatiyāyas, the conflicts of the Gaṅgas continued with the Reḍḍis and Velamas. The Gaṅgas also had to face the enmity of the Sultans of Gułbarga who were trying to establish their control over Āndhra. The Gaṅga power weakened considerably during the reign of Narasimhadēva-IV (1378-1414 A.D.)\(^9\). Later, under Bānudēva-IV (1414-32 A.D.)\(^10\), the Gaṅgas had to face opposition from the rulers of Vijayanagara as well. The rule of the Eastern Gaṅgas came to an end with a revolt led by Kapilēśwara Gaṇapati, who occupied the throne at Cuttack and displaced Bhānudēva-IV. Thus ended the long rule of the Eastern Gaṅgas over Kaliṅga.

As regards to the religion, Anantavarma Vajrahasta-V is attributed with the epithets Paramamaheśwara and Paramabhaigraka, while the former signifies his Saiva faith, the latter shows his Vaishnava inclination. Most probably by the time of Vajrahasta-V, the Vaishnava sect might have become popular and therefore the Gangas also had to patronize it. Within a few years, during the rule of Anantavarma Chōdagaṅga, the popularity of the Vaishnava faith had reached its zenith. Moreover, the seals on the plates of Vajrahasta also show the emblems of bull, trident, half-moon, conch etc\(^11\).

Rājarāja Dēvēndravarma, like his predecessors, is described as a follower of Śiva. Moreover, the Vizagapatam plates\(^12\) of Chōdagaṅga dated in 1135 A.D. record the
building of a temple by his father for Śiva in the form of Rājarājēśwara, named after Rājarāja. Chōdagaṅga, like his predecessors is described as a follower of Śiva. The seal of his copper plates also shows the Saiva emblem of bull. Moreover, he and his queens offered gifts to god Śiva of Mukhalingam, Drākṣārāma and other places. During his reign, a number of endowments were made to Madhukēśwara, the presiding deity of Mukhalingēśwara temple. Not only the members of the royal family but also common people gave to the temple gifts in kind and cash. For the maintenance of the temple ritual, endowments were made in favour of the courtesans, singers, musicians and the like. A number of endowments for the temple were kept up from the proceeds of the lands situated in and around Mukhalingam. With the growth of the temple ritual, a Saivaite priestly class settled itself at Mukhalingam. One of the records⁴ from the temple mentions one Mādhavābattu as a priest of the people.

The reign of Chōdagaṅga is notable for different reasons. He was the first Ganga ruler to bring about a substantial change in the religious outlook of the people. Kings prior to him were mostly ardent devotees of Śiva. Chōdagaṅga was the first to patronise Vaishnavism on an equal footing with Saivism. He is described as a Paramavaiṣṇava, Paramabhatāraka. Moreover, the Gara⁴ and Śri kurman⁵ epigraphs record his gifts to Vishnu. The catholicity of Chōdagaṅga is also exhibited in the gifts made to the temple of the Sun god at Araśavalli during his reign and they indirectly show his patronage of Sun worship along with other cults⁶.

The temples erected by the Eastern Gaṅgas are found at Mukhalingam. These temples were built during the period between ⁹th and ¹¹th centuries A.D. The temples of Mukhalingam are noted for their abundant iconographical wealth. The Madhukēśwara temple, the earliest of the three, was built in the middle or second half of ⁹th century A.D. and it can be assigned to the period of Anantavarma Vajrahasta who ruled from 850 to 876 A.D. The Bhūmēśwara temple was built in the beginning of ¹¹th century A.D. and it can be assigned to the reign of Aniyankaṭhūma Vajrahasta-IV (980-1015 A.D.). The Somēśwara temple, the last and the latest of the three, was built in the middle of the ¹¹th Century A.D. during the reign of Anantavarma Vajrahasta-V (1037-1070 A.D.)¹⁷.
Iconographical features of Mahiṣaśūramardini in the Eastern Gaṅga Art

The sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini are found in the Eastern Gaṅga temples at Mukhalingam, Jayati and Pottarigi. On the basis of number of arms these may be classified into the following three categories.

I. Four armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini.
II. Eight armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini.
III. Ten armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini.

I. Four armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini

In the Madhukēśvara temple, Mukhalingam is the image of Mahiṣaśūramadini standing with the left leg resting on the ground and the right placing on the head of the buffalo. She has four hands and holds cakra in the upper right hand, śaṅkha in the upper left hand, trisūla in the lower right and pulls out the animal’s tongue with the lower left hand. There is yet another image in the same temple standing with the left leg bent and the right bent at the knee and resting on the head of the buffalo. This goddess has four hands and thrusts trisūla into the body of the animal with her upper right hand and she holds śaṅkha in the upper left. She holds cakra in the lower right hand and catches the tail of the buffalo with the lower left hand. She wears hāras, kundalas and girdle and her hair is done in the shape of a bun behind the head.  

II. Eight armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśūramardini

The central niche on the north wall of the sanctum of the Śiva temple at Jayati near Mentada mandal of Vizyanagaram district contains an image of eight armed Mahiṣaśūramardini (Plate 39). In the composition of the Mahiṣaśūramardini image, buffalo demon comes out of the beheaded buffalo. The demon holds a sword with curved blade.
(knife) in the right hand and a shield in the left. The lion-mount of the goddess attacks the
demon from the left. The goddess is standing with one foot resting on the buffalo and the
other leg on the back of the lion. On the right side of the image from top to bottom holds a
shield and the rest of two attributes are completely damaged. The front right hand holds a
trident and thrusts it into the head of the demon. The front left hand is in the act of crushing
the demon. The goddess wears a crown, armlets and necklace. The goddess is also depicted
with closed eyes.

The central niche on the north wall of the sanctum of the Durga temple at Jayati near
Mentada mandal of Vizayanagaram district, contains an image of Mahiṣāṣūramardini. The
image of Mahiṣāṣūramardini is not in a perfect state of preservation. She is shown in the act
of killing Mahiṣaṣūra, who comes out of the decapitated buffalo. The severed head of the
buffalo is lying below. The demon has a shield in the left hand, but the weapon which was
evidently a sword, in his right hand is damaged. The lion-mount of the goddess, attacking the
demon from the left, has nothing but traces left. The fray against the demon has been joined
by two female attendants, one each on either side of the goddess. The composition, however,
is dominated by the image of the goddess, whose right foot is planted on the decapitated
trunk of the buffalo and the left one is placed on the disfigured. On the left side of the image
the upper hand is in a visible condition but the attribute is damaged. The remaining hands
from top to bottom hold bow, shield and snake respectively. The goddess wears kundalas, a
crown, jewelled armlets and katiṣūra. In addition to the usual necklace there is another
ornament round her neck. The bracelets and armlets consist of many rings. The lower part of
her body is covered with a short thick folded garment. The sculptor had succeeded in
representing the goddess as fighting the demon with effortless ease (Plate 40).

A niche on the west way of the Pottēswaraśāmy temple, Pottaingi, Mandasa
mandalam of Šrikaṇḍa district, contains an image of eight handed Mahiṣāṣūramardini.
She stands with her left leg resting on her mount lion and her right leg is placed on the
back of the buffalo. She holds sword, arrow and bow in her left hands and an other left
hand carries a snake which also attacks the demon. One of her right hands holds a triśūla
which is seen piercing through the head of the human form of the demon issuing forth
from the dead buffalo. The demon holds a sword in his right hand and a shield in the left. The sword of the goddess is held horizontally behind her head. The severed head of the buffalo can be seen at the bottom. Her mount, the lion also engages itself in the combat and is seen attacking the demon. She wears a conical crown, *kundalas*, armlets and *kaṭisūtra*, necklace (Plate 41).

Another image of Mahiṣāsūramardini is found in the Durga temple at Pottaṅgi. She has eight hands. Three of her right hands carry a sword, vajra, and arrow, while her lower right hand holds a long trident which pierces through the body of the buffalo demon. Her left hands carry bow, bell and lotus and the lower left presses down the upturned head of the buffalo demon. The sword in the upper right hand is held horizontally over the head of the goddess. The lion, the mount of the goddess, also takes part in the fight attacking the demon with its jaws and biting the demon. The demon is represented in anthropomorphic form, as the body is human and the head is that of a buffalo. The demon holds a sword tightly in his hands. The demon is depicted as fighting fiercely but helpless to face the mighty power of the goddess. The goddess stands on her left leg and her right leg is placed on the back of the demon crushing it to the ground. She is ornamented and has a third eye on her forehead (Plate 42).

The niche on the south wall of the Madhukēśvara temple at Mukhalingam, Srikakulam district contains a sculpture of Mahiṣāsūramardini. The goddess has eight hands. This deity holds *kunta*, *khadga* and *śankha* in the upper right hands and *trisūla*, *cakra* and *ghanṭa* in the upper left hands. She holds vajra in the lower right hand and dagger in the lower left hand²⁰.

A niche in the north-east corner shrine of the Madhukēśvara temple, Mukhalingam. This deity rests her left leg on the ground and the right bent at the knee and placed on the back of the lion. Mahiṣa below has the head of a buffalo and the body of a human being and holds sword in his hands. The goddess has eight hands. She holds *khadga* above the head with one upper right hand and arrow and *trisūla* in the other upper right hands and *khêtaṇa*, bow and *ghanṭa* in the upper left hands. She thrusts *trisūla* into
back of the Mahiṣa with the lower right hand and she holds his horns with the lower left.\footnote{21}

In a niche on the north wall of the Sōmeśwara temple, Mukhalingam. The goddess standing with the left leg stiff and resting on the ground and the right bent at the knee and resting on the Mahiṣa. This eight handed deity holds cakra with one upper right hand and pulls out an arrow from the quiver with another. She holds khetaka in the lower left hand and trisūla in the lower right hand. There is a lion to bottom left biting the knee of the demon.\footnote{22}

The parallel of the Mahiṣaśuramardini image of the Durga temple can be found in a niche on the north wall of the antarāla of the Bhimēśvara of Mukhalingam which contains an image of eight handed Mahiṣaśuramardini. She stands with her left leg resting firmly on her mount lion while her right leg is placed on the body of the buffalo and is seen crushing it down. Her hands carry weapons like sword, arrow, and bow. One of her left hands carries a snake which also attacks the demon. One of her right hands holds a trident which is seen piercing through the head of the human form of the demon issuing forth from the dead buffalo. The demon holds a sword in his right hand and a shield in the left. The sword of the goddess is held horizontally behind her head. The severed head of the buffalo can be seen at the bottom. Her mount, the lion, also engages itself in the combat and is seen attacking the demon. The goddess wears a conical crown, kundulas jeweled armlets and katisura. In addition to the usual necklace there is another ornament round her neck. The wristlets and armlets consist of many rings. The lower part of her body is covered with a short thick folded garment.

The central niche on the east wall of the north-east corner shrine of the jagamōhana of the Madhukēśvara temple, Mukhalingam contains an image of Mahiṣaśuramardini. She is depicted as standing with eight arms. Three of her right hands carry a sword, a vajra and an arrow (?) while her front right hand holds a long trident which pierces through the body of the buffalo. Her left hands carry a bow, a bell and a lotus (?) and her front left hand presses down the upturned head of the buffalo. The sword in the upper right hand is held horizontally.
over the head of the buffalo. The lion, the mount of the goddess, also takes part in the fight attacking the demon with its jaws and biting it. The demon is represented in therianthropomorphic form, as the body is human and the head is that of a buffalo. The demon holds a sword tightly in his hands. The demon is depicted as fighting fiercely but helpless to face the mighty power of the goddess. The goddess stands firmly on her left leg and her right leg is placed on the back of the demon crushing it to the ground. She is elaborately ornamented and has a third eye on her forehead (Plate 43).

A niche on the north wall of the anitārāja of the Bhimesvara temple at Mukhalingam contains an image of eight armed Mahiṣaśuramardini. She stands with her left leg resting firmly on her mount lion while her right leg is placed on the hind body of the buffalo demon and is seen crushing it shown. Her hands carry weapons like sword, arrow and bow. One of her left hands carries a snake which also attacks the demon. One of her right hands holds a trident which is seen piercing through the head of the human form of the demon issuing forth from the dead buffalo. The demon holds a sword in his right hand and a shield in the left. The sword of the goddess is held horizontally behind her head. The severed head of the buffalo can be seen at the bottom. Her mount, the lion, also engages itself in the combat and is seen attacking the demon. The goddess wears a conical crown, kundalas, jewelled armlets and katiśūtra. In addition to the usual necklace there is another ornament round her neck. The wristlets and armlets consist of many rings. The lower part of her body is carved with a short thick folded garment. There is an oval halo round the head of the goddess. The artist has fairly succeeded in representing the goddess as fighting the demon with effortless ease.

III. Ten armed sculptures of Mahiṣaśuramardini

In the central niche on the north wall of the Sūmeswara temple at Mukhalingam. The goddess standing with the left leg kept in a slant position on the back of the lion and the right kept on the back of the buffalo. This ten armed deity holds vajra in the upper right hand, pulls out an arrow from the quiver with another and supports this hand with the third. She holds a crooked sword in one upper left hand and rests another hand on the head of a woman below. The lower right hand holds cakra and the lower left khaḍga.
The north wall of the Kāmeśvara temple at Gallavalli, Vizayanagaram district contains the image of Mahiṣaśuramardini. This temple was built in the middle of 11th century A.D. by Gaṅgas of Kaliṅga. The image is ten handed and is shown in an aggressive pose, where the three prongs of the trisūla pierce the demon. Her right hands carry a sword, wheel, trident and a vajra, while her left hands carry a bow, nāga, a sword, battle axe and her natural left hand presses down the upturned head of the demon. The sword in the upper right hand is held horizontally over the head of the goddess. She is carved as standing firmly on her left leg and her right leg is placed on the back of the demon. Here the demon is shown in animal form and a human demon emerges from the decapitated head of the creature. This figure is in contrast to the earlier examples of the depiction of the goddess wherein the demon below the feet of the deity is shown with a human body and a buffalo head. The goddess wears kundalas, jeweled armlets and katiśūra.

The large central niche on the north wall of the sanctum of the Sōmeśvara temple at Mukhalingam contains an image of ten armed Mahiṣaśuramardini carved almost in round. This image closely resembles the one on the wall of the Bhīmeśvara described earlier. The goddess stands with her left leg placed on her mount lion and the right on the back of the buffalo demon crushing the latter under her foot. Her hands carry sword, arrow, trident, ankusa and cakra on the right hands and axe, śāṅkha, bow, snake and shield on the left hands. The sword is held horizontally above her head with an axe supporting it on the right. The trident is seen piercing through the head of the human body which comes out of the dead buffalo. She wears the usual ornaments including a prominent waist girdle adorning her elegant body. The hair is arranged with a big knot at the back. The smile on her face indicates with what an effortless ease she is fighting against the demon. The human form of the demon holds a pointing sword in his right hand and a shield in the left. Another sword hands on the right. The severed head of the buffalo can be seen at the bottom. The lion, the mount of the goddess, carved at the bottom, is also seen attacking the demon with its jaws and teeth. The standing female attendants carved behind the goddess at the bottom, one on either side, carry heavy objects on their heads. A lotus is carved in each of the top corners (Plate 44).
The images of Mañṣaṣaṣaṣaṣaṣaṣaṣamardini found at Mukhalingam conform to the descriptions given in the Śilāparatna and the Viṣṇudharmottara but with slight variations in the number of hands of the goddess and in the contents held by them.

REFERENCES:

6. That Mukhalingam continued to be Chōdagarī’s Capital until 1135 A.D. can be known from his Srikakulam inscriptions S.II. Vol.V, No.1335
8. *Ibid*.
10. *Ibid*.
14. ARSIE, 1933, Para.9.