CHAPTER II
CHAPTER 2

ICONOGRAPHY OF VISNU

INTRODUCTION:

The origin of Vishnu worship and Vishnu images

Vishnu is by far the most popular deity among
the Hindus. One of the most important Brahmical
cult which was widely known as Visnuism in the medieval
period had a long history of evolution and, has
undergone many changes.

Vishnu is represented as one of the great Gods
even in some sections of the Rigveda, though Judging
by the small number of hymns in which he is invoked,
He may not have been very popular. The Rigveda
conceives Vishnu as one of the manifestation of the
Sun. He is called Sipivista, i.e. clothed with rays
of light.¹ Rigveda hymns mentions Vishnu as having
traversed the whole of the universe with three strides.²

1. Sarkar, D.C. Studies in the religious life
   of ancient and medie - India -
   Page No. 1.

2. Rigveda Vedic Sanshodhan Mandal, Vol-II,
   Poona, 1933-46.
   Translation By - Griffith.
   I-22-18.
Sākapuri, one of the ancient Vedic commentators interprets the three steps as the course of the solar deity through the three divisions of the universe, the God being manifest in a threefold form, as Agni, on the earth, Indra or Vayu in the atmosphere and Surya in the sky. These three steps in course of time developed into myth relating to the dwarf incarnation of the Puranic Visnu.¹

Visnu is also conceived in the Vedas and elsewhere as the sacrifice, and in this aspect he is at present worshipped under the name of Yajna-Narayana.² Visnu is associated more with sacrifice, than with devotion and grace.³

The most important phase in the evolution of this religion is his identification with Vāsudeva in the Mahābhārata - an assimilation with cult, that centered round Bhakti or devotion.⁴

The Vāsudev worship was differently designated as Bhāgvata, Sāttavata, - Skāntika, - or Pāncarātra. The earliest treatise propounding this religion is the Nārāyanīya Section of Mahābhārata. This section is designated after the principal deity Nārāyanā, who is glorified throughout the Mahābhārata. He is addressed as "Older than the oldest one", thus assigning him the highest position.¹ The concept of Narayana is initially responsible for the evolution of Viṣṇu sesasmāyI form where he is represented as the creator, recling on the serpent symbolising eternity, amidst the primaeval waters.²

According to Dr. Bhandarkar, Nārāyana has a cosmic character and is not an historical or mythological individual.³ He takes the word Nārāyana in the sense of the resting place or god Nara, i.e. the multitude of Nāregga (Men). To quote Dr. D.C. Sarkar, it seems more reasonable to think that Nārāyana, was an ancient leader of thought, born in the family of another sage called Nara and that both of them probably advocated Solar worship that ultimately led to the Identification, especially of the former with solar deity Viṣṇu.

¹ Sukhajankar.V.S. Mahabhārata, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, VII, 166, 66.
² Dr. Desai. Kalpana Op.-cit, Page No.2.
³ Dr. Bhandarkar. R.G. Vaisnavism, Saivism and other Minor Sects. Strassburg, 1913, Page No.42-43.
It is difficult to determine whether the family of Nārāyanē had anything to do with the Yadavas. It is, however, not impossible that the followers of Narayana were originally called Pancaratrika and were later merged with the worshipers of Vasudev Krishna.  

The important phase in the evolution of the worship is his identification with Vasudev. The Bhagavata religion, propounded by Vasudeva, which incorporated the earlier cult of Narayana and was the source of Later Visnuism, was therefore the development of an original Sun cult. 2

It is clear from the Mahabharata itself that Vasudeva, the Chief god of the Ekāntins, was a hero of the Vrsni race. Vasudeva Krsna is several times glorified as a Vrsni hero. 3 Samkarsana, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, and Sāmba were few other heroes of Vrsni race.

It is noteworthy that Sāmba worship is left out from the Vyuha theory through formerly five Vrsni heroes were worshipped, as is clear from Brhatsamhita. 5

5. Brhatsamhita Bangalore,1947 and VIII - 40
Visnu-dharmottaram, as well as Vikhanasagan from this Caturyūha, which gave rise to the Iconographic form of Vaikuntha Caturmūrti.

Another concept of Vibhāva or Incarnation contributed to the evolution of this cult and from which various Iconographic form evolves, is traceable in Epic and Puranic literature. In the epic and Puranic age Visnu is regarded as the most influential member of the later Brahmanical triad, Brahma, Visnu and Siva. The creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. But this Visnu round whom one of the major Brahmanical cults grew up, was really a result of the syncretism of three god concepts, the man god Vāsudeva - Kṛṣṇa, the vedic sun god Visnu and the Cosmic God Nārāyaṇa of the Brāhmaṇas.

According to the re-oriented ideology of the cult, the one god Vāsudeva-Visnu - Nārāyaṇa could be conceived in his five fold aspect or forms; these were Para - the highest, Vyūha-the emanatory, Vibhava - the

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Incarnatory, Antaryāmin - The inner controller of all beings, and Arccā—the images (named as Vigrahas or the very bodies) of the god. It is with the last aspect of the god that the students of Iconography are directly concerned, this aspect really illustrate the first three, para, Vyūha, and Vibhavam form of the lord.¹. Infine, Visnuism, as the name implies, is the particular, theistic religion which recognized Visnu, as the object of devotion, As already stated Visnu is minor deity in Rigveda. When the doctrine of Trimurti was established and Visnu had taken his place as a second member of triad, he was often, like-śiva, Identified by his worshipers with self existent all pervading spirit and under this aspect seems to have been associated with watery element diffusing itself everywhere before the creation of the world.² The supreme spirit is called Nārāyana. His identification with Vāsudeva in the Mahābhārata an assimilation with a cult that centered round Bhakti or devotion, is the further evolution of the cult worship.

An important feature of Visnuism in the Gupta

2. Sir Monier Williams Hinduism Rare Books, Delhi-7, Page No. 99.
age was the popular worship of Incarnation i.e. Avtara. The architectural evidence in the form of cave temple reveal that the Vaisnava Cult was popular in this region too. Siur caves from Nanded District reveal Vaisnavite sculptures and this confirms the popularity of Incarnation deities in the Gupta Vakataka age in the region.¹

The early Čālukyas of Badami, used Vārāha as their Lankchana. This Lankchana indicate that Čālukyas brought to the earth prosperity and plenty.

¹ Dr. Deo.P.R. and Shelke G.C. Brahmanical Caves of Siur Muj. XI-I ,September'1972 - PPTI.
ICONOGRAPHY OF VISNU

Various structural temple sculptures in Marathwada illustrate Visnu in his various forms and incarnations. Loose sculptures scattered all over the region of our study relating to the Visnu Pantheon have been taken into consideration. Saivism was popular in Marathwada even though Vaishnava icons are found in numbers, from which it can be concluded that Visnu was well known, but all his manifestation are not observed in Marathwada. The icons of Visnu found in the structural temples and loose sculpture in Marathwada fall between 11 to 14 Century A.D. with exception of Visnu Icon from Ter.

Icons of Visnu from Marathwada region may broadly be classified into following groups.

1. Caturvimsati Mūrtis
2. Dasavatara or the ten incarnations.
3. Minor forms of Visnu.

1. Caturvimsati-Mūrtis:

The text on Hindu Iconography have acknowledged the twentyfour varieties of standing Visnu Images giving each of them a particular Iconographical pattern. In Sanskrit it is termed as Kesāvādi Caturvimsatimūrtis mūrtayah. The groups begins with the name Kesava hence

1. Dr. Desai. Kalpana -- Op-cit Page - 10
it is called Kesavadi. Dr Kalpana Desai has illustrated the theoretical aspect of the theme. It is said that according to the Sāṅkhya system, the universe is made up of twentyfour elements. Beyond these elements, stands the supreme Being, Visnu. He creates the universe with the help of these forms which are known as his Vyakata rupas, which can be visualized through images, while, He the twentyfifth, who is formless can never be represented in any way.

T.A. Gopinathrao observes about these images, "All these images Twentyfour are very alike. They are all standing figures, with no bends in the body, possessing four arms and adorned with the kiritra crown, and other usual ornaments."

Generally the Caturvimsatimurtis are carved in the Sambhanga posture, but a few images in the dvibhang postures have also come to light. For example a mutilated image of either Hari or Janārdana from of Geralior is articulated in the dvibhanga posture.

1. Dr. Desai. Kalpana Op-cit Page-10
2. Mahabharata Op-cit XII,291,37-38
3. T.A. Gopinathrao Op-cit P Page-227
A similar image of Govinda has been found from Suhania near Gwalior\(^1\). It is the tendency of the sculptor of the Khajuraho group of temples to model the images in the rhythmic dvibhanga or the t\(^3\) tribhanga posture\(^2\).

According to the description given in the different texts cited in Table (Appendix) the four armed images are supposed to hold the four usual emblems of Visnu viz. the Conch, the lotus, the mace and the disc. The sculptor very often takes the liberty to represent the lower right hand of the God in the varad or the abhayamudra.

The Conch Shell, being a precious object in itself, is considered to be a nidhi or treasure, signifying prosperity in the Mahabharata\(^3\). The disc, a symbol of Universality and power is also prominently adopted in Buddhism. So also the lotus, a mark of divine purity. The mace, a very prominent weapon signifying strength, was also attributed to him. The Abhay and Varad mudras would naturally find their place in the Iconography of a beneficient god, like Visnu\(^4\).

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1. Annual Administrative Report of Archeological Department, Gwalior for the year 1927-28, Pl-VI
2. Agrawal, Urmila — Khajuraho Sculptures and their significance, Delhi, 1964 figure 6,7,8.
4. Dr. Desai, Kalpana Op-cit
The order of emblems of twenty four forms of Visnu given in the different texts does not tally with one another and hence, the choice of the right order becomes difficult to determine.

The earliest description of the above twenty four forms is given in Agnipurana. The list given by Aprajitapracchā and Rūpmandana are the same as that of Agnipurana could be considered and therefore the list given by Agnipurana could be considered more popular than the list of other texts.

The difference between any two of these images has to be made out by the way in which the Sankha are found. The Cakra, the Gada and the padma are found distributed among their four hands. It is worthy of note that the number of possible permutation of four things taken four at a time is exactly twenty four, and the order in which the permutation of these four articles, among the four hands is to be observed, is in passing, as in a circle, from the upper right hand to upper left hand, thence to the lower left hand, and from there lastly to the lower right hand.

The order is shown as above.

Dr. Banerjea does not agree with this view and he comments that this chief criterion of differentiation is liable to be misinterpreted and is prone to lead to confusion in naming the individual icon of the order. T.A. Gopinath Rao's remarks that the circle begins from the upper right hand of the image is not clear, for the Rupamandana texts which is taken by him as a reliable one in this matter expressly lays down that such image should be known from their lower right hand onwards. (Etastu Mūrttay Jneya dakṣinādhaḥ Karat Kramat). The Agnipurāṇa begins the description of these image with this couplet: Oṁ Rūpaḥ Kesavaḥ Padma Sankha Cakra gada dharaḥ.

Narayanaḥ Sāṅkha Padmagadācakra Pradaksinam (Ch. 48 V.I). The last word Pradaksinam in this couplet and the slight variations in the order of the emblem contain the most important indications in this description. We are to understand from this clues that a Padma a Sankha, a Cakra

1. Dr. Banerjea. J.N. — Development in the Iconography Page 410
and gada refer to attribute in the lower right hand first, then to that in the upper right hand, thirdly to that in the upper left hand and lastly to that in the lower left hand.

I have followed the order described by Dr. Banerjea and Khare G.H.\(^1\). The probable date of the innovation of these varieties tabulated by Khare G.H. was under?


2. Brhatasmhita - 6th century A.D. Reference to first 12 names but not to the varieties and the lotus attribute


4. Visnudharmottara - 7th century A.D. No reference to 24 names and varieties.

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5. Bhāgavata Purāṇa - 9th century A.D. No reference to 24 names and varieties.

Infine G.H. Khare concluded that though the group of 24 particular names of Visnu may have been formed before the 6th century, the twenty four varieties of Visnu images based on that name group, must have come into existence not before the end of the 9th century A.D. along with other Visnuite tantric rites, rituals, and daily practices which were probably being innovated in that period.

CATURVIMSATIMUTIS FROM MARATHWADA

Innumerable images out of 24 form of Visnu are to be met either in loose sculpture or on the exterior wall of the temple in the region. Few selected images from different sites of Marathwada are taken into consideration for the present Iconographic analysis. In Marathwada, most of the Caturvimsatimurtis are carved in Sambhanga posture. But few icons are found to have been sculptured in dvibhanga and tribhanga postures too.

Kesava

Kesava is the first among the twenty four forms of Visnu. The icons of Kesavas are found generally in the shrines mostly in their original position. The images of Kesavas are found at Nilanga, Aundha, Keshavapur, Dharmapuri, Ardhapur etc. A few of these are described below:

Pl. I,1

Earliest image of Kesava come to light from village Tagar, Ter, an historical site of Osmanabad District. It is presently kept in the vicinity of Uttareswar Temple. The image is in sthanaka in somebhangha pose, having four hands. In the lower right hands he holds Padma, in the upper right hold the Conch, upper left disc and
and in the lower left hand mace. This is just in conformity with the Iconographic norms of Rupamandana. He wears Kiritmukata, Kundala, Mekhala, Vaijantimala, Keyura, Nupura and other usual ornaments.

Another image of Kesava is in the subsidiary shrine of the Triple shrined Nilkanthesvara temple at Nilanga in Osmanabad District. The Vaisnava dwarapalas sculptured on the door frame of the garbhagriha confirms the identity of the shrines as of Visnu. A huge slab contains the representation of Kesava. It presently occupies garbhagriha facing to the South. It has been placed as a main deity in the said garbhagriha. Kesava is four handed holding the Aūdhōs, Conch, disc in the upper hands and lotus and mace in the lower hands. Rupamandana describes Kesava in the said form. 

1. Dr. Balram Srivastav. – Rupamandana –Adhya 3 P-135

A makartorana is sculptured with the Kiritimukh overhead. Garud is shown to the right in Anjali pose. Kesavas head is aureoled by Visnus ten incarnation.

Pl.II.3

An image of Kesava is carved on the exterior wall of Dharmapuri temple, in Dharmapuri village on Ambajogai Ahmedpur Road, 20 K.M. from Ambajogai. In circumambulation it occupies the position of Icon No.38 on the jangha. Visnu is carved in sambhanga posture having usual emblems of Kesava, ie. Padma, Conch, Disc and mace from lower right to lower left hand. He wears Kiritamukuta, yadnya yajnopavita, Kundala, Keyur and other usual ornaments.

Pl.II.4

The similar sthanaka image but in tribhanga posture have come to light from the exterior wall of the same temple. It is icon No.31 on the jangha portion of the exterior wall. Kesava is four handed. The figure holds the mace in his lower right hand, the upper right hand holds conch. The upper left hand is in Gajahasta or dandahasta pose. The disc is placed in the lower left hand. As usual, he is adorned with multifarious ornaments.
Another image of Kesava is deposited in one of the garbhagriha of the triple shrined Siva temple at Omerga in Osmanabad District. It is kept in garbhagriha facing to the East. As usual, the image is standing in Sambhanga posture, having four hands. The lower right hand is in abhayamudra and holding Padma. The upper right hand holds conch, in the upper left hand is a disc, and the lower left hand he holds mace. His person is adorned with different ornaments as usual. This is also in conformity with Textual Tradition quoted in a `Rupamandana'.

A similar image of Kesava, is preserved in Aundha nagnath temple Aundha, in Parbhani District. It is housed in Mahamandapa and presently well preserved in a glass frame. It was a loose sculpture found nearby. The image is carved in Sambhanga posture.

having four hands, holding Akshmala in Varad pose, the conch, the disc, and mace the
Iconography of the sculpture follows the order of objects suggested in the Textual tradition of Rupamandana¹. His person is adorned with Kiritimukuta, Makarkundala, Vaijayantimala, Angada, Urusutras, mekha, etc. The ten incarnation in miniature are carved in such a way as to form aurole round his head. A beautiful makartorana is carved with Kiritimukha at the top of the joint. The minor gods and goddess are carved as per the canons of Iconography. The characteristic details of ornamentation, the minutes and clearly traceable workmanship in the carving, the excellent and beautiful, through conventional sculpturing of the various figure marks. This Vishnu image of Kesava as belonging to the one of the most attractively artistic school of late period.

Pl.IV,77

An image of Kesava is preservee in Marathwada University History Museum, Aurangabad. The image holds as usual emblems viz. Padma in lower right hand, badly mutiliated conch in the upper right

hand, artistic disc in upper left hand, and the mace is in lower left hand. Sri and Laxmi standing either side of Kesava. This is the Sambhanga sthanaka image of Kesava, with Kirita crown, Kundala, Kayura, Vaijayantimala and other ornaments. This is again a continuation of Textual Tradition referred to by T.A. Gopinathrao.

Pl-IV, 8

A partly mutilated image of Kesava is also preserved in Marathwada University Museum. It is in sambhanga. In the lower left hand it holds mace, all other hands are broken. On the right hand side, Garuda is carved in anjali pose and on the left Lakshmi as usual the icon is adorned with richly and multifarious ornaments.

Pl-V, 9

An elegant image of Kesava is observed and placed in the temple of Kawatha, in Osmanabad District. It is a loose sculpture found near

the delapidated temple and presently housed in garbhagriha. The Kawatha Pati is on Latur-Omerga Road 20 K.M. from Lamjana Pati. The image holds the Padma, the conch, the disc and the mace in his hands starting from the lower right. The only difference between the image of Kawatha Pati and the image of Aundha is of lower right hand. Here the lower right hand is in position of abhayamudra, holding Padma in his hand artistically. Other details are the same of Aundha and Ardhapur. This image is carved as per the description given by Rupmanda and Agnipurāṇa. This is indeed an admirable piece of sculpture, rich in details, correct in pose and possessed of true proportions.

The image of Kesava found at Ardhapur in Nanded District 10 to 12 K.M. from Nanded on Nanded-Nagpur Road. The icon is found in Kesava temple. The temple is in the complete ruins. The Icon is presently laying in the vicinity of the temple. This icon is carved on a slab of black besalt. The image is however, accurate in proportion, natural in pose and attitude. The elaborateness of the workmanship in all the richness of their ornamental details is such as to exhort the
admiration of even the most adverse critic.

The sculpture is carved in Sambhang posture having four hands, holding Akshmala and in Varad pose, the conch, the disc, mace is in the order in which the Kesava form of Visnu holds. His person is adorned with Kirita mukuta, Makarkundala, Vaijayantimala, angadas, Urasutras, mekhala, etc. The ten incarnations in miniature are carved in such a way as to form aurole round his head. A beautiful makartorana is carved with kirtimukha at the joint in the centre. Other minor gods and goddesses are carved on the left and right side of the icons.

Pl. VI.11

An image of Kesava is found at Ramling Mudgad in Osmanabad District. Ramling Mudgad is 10 K.M. from Kawatha Pati on Nilanga Road. Kesava Icon has been found laying in the debris of loose sculptures near one of the delapidated Temple in the village. Here the Kesava image is in Sambhang posture, having four hands folding usual emblems as per the canons of Iconometry.
His head is badly mutiliated. He wears Vaijanyantimala, Vajnyopavita, Graivekas, Kundala, Udarbandha, Katibandha, and other usual ornaments. Sri and Laksmi are carved on the two sides of Vishnu. Standing Garuda is also carved in Anjali Pose, ten miniature incarnation of Vishnu is carved starting from right side.

The icons of Narayana is observed at Trivikram Temple, Ter, But now it is preserved in Musium of Ter. The hands of Narayana are badly mutiliated. The image is richly ornamented. The unique feature of this image is that Garuda is carved on the mace of Narayana\(^1\). This is the only icon of Narayana found in the region. The Icon follows the Pratimalaxan referred to in Padmapurana and cited by T.A. Gopinathrao\(^2\).

**PI.VI.12**

An image of Madhava in dwi-bhang posture is is preserved in Marathwada University Museum. It is kept in the Sculpture Gallery in the varanda. The image holds the mace, Disc, conch and the

   Volume XIV No.4 March,1934
   Page - 77, Foot-Note-I.

2. T.A.Gopinathrao - Op-cit Volume-I Part-II
   Pratimalaxana,P.62(Appendix)
lower left hand is mutilated. Two attendents are standing on both the sides. His person is adorned with various various ornaments.

Another solitary Icons of Visnu in Madhava forms is observed on the structural temples of Madh Mahadeva at Pingli Railway Station on Kachiguda-Manmad line. Here he holds disc and conch, in the back right hand and mace and lotus in the front right hand respectively.

The other Icon of Madhava comes from the Bhimasankar temple at Latur. The Icon is found as a loose sculpture at Latur and is presently kept in the campus of Bhima sankar Temple. The attributes Madhava holds here are asper the cannons of Iconometry. Here he is sculptured alongwith Garuda, his Vahana, and a Camardharini.

Pl. VII, 13

Third Icons of Madhava occupies a prominent place in Nagnath temple at Aundha. It is also kept in the Mahamandapa near Kesava Icon. Here, he stands in Sambhag Pose. He holds the disc and conch in upper hands, mace in front right hand and the left hand is in Varad pose. He wears Kirita crown, Vaijayantimala, Maniyajnypavita, Kundala, Kayura, Nupura, and other usual ornaments. On the left and right side
Sri and Laksmi is carved. Behind the head, Prabhavalaya is carved out.

Pl. VII, 14

An image of Trivikram in Sambhang Pose is observed at Dharmapuri on the exterior wall of the Kedareshwar temple. The Icon is carved at sculpture No. 42 on the Jangha in circumambulation. The lower right hand is in Abhamudra and in the upper right hand holds the mace, while in the upper left holds disc, and in the lower left holds conch. The God seems to be in Pacific mood, and his person is adorned with various ornaments as usual.

Pl. VIII, 15

Another Trivikrama image, has been preserved in Marathwada University Museum. The image is standing in Sambhanga Pose. The two upper hands of the God holding mace and disc, both the lower hands are broken. The image is adorned with Mekhala, Graivekas, Yajnopavistam; Kundal, Keyura Kirita Crown etc. The consort of Trivikrama stands on the left.

One more icon of Trivikrama is found sculptured on the
Jangha portion of the exterior wall of Nagnath temple Aundha. All these Trivikram Icons follow the Iconographical Traditions of Rupamandana.

Pl. VIII, 16

The Vamana image is preserved in Marathwada University Museum. The image of Vamana has only two upper hands, holding disc and mace, respectively. Both the lower hands are broken. His person is adorned with multiferous ornaments. This is the only Vaman Icon found in the region. The Rupamandan Tradition is followed here to.

Pl. IX, 17

An image of Visnu in the form of Sridhara is observed on the exterior wall of the Kedareshwar temple Dharmapuri. It is sculptured as Icon No. 14th in circumambulation from the right. He is in tribhang posture.

The lower right hand is in Abhāya mūdra, and the image holds Chakra, mace, conch in his hands. As usual his person is adorned with various ornaments.

Another Icon of Sridhara along with his consort Medha, is represented on the Jangha of the Nagnath temple Aundha. Sridhara holds Cakra in the upper right hand and Gada in the upper left, Sankha is in his lower left and the lower right is held in Varad mudra. The Icon is fully in conformity with Iconometric norms of Indian Iconography referred by T.A. Gopinathrao1.

PI. IX, 18

A loose sculpture of Hrisikesa is found preserved in the Bevi Temple of Jagji 3 K.M. from Ter. It is kept in one of the niches in the step well infront of the Bevi Temple. Hrisikesa is carved in full conformity of the Textual Tradition of Rupamandan2. It is carved on the black basalt. The image is standing in Sambhang pose having four hands holding gada in the lower right hand, disc in the upper right hand, Padma in the upper left and conch in the

Lower left hand. As usual it wears different ornaments. There are no such Icons noticed elsewhere in the area.

Vasudeva is depicted on the main niche of the mandovara of the Kedareshwara temple at Dharmpuri. He has four hands. The object in the lower right hand is broken. He holds in the upper right hand Sankha, upper left Chakra, and Padma in the lower left hand.

Anirudha is illustrated on the Jangha of the Nagnath Temple Aundha. His lower right hand is in the Varadamudra. He holds the mace in the upper right hand, upper left hand is broken. He holds lotus in the lower left hand. Rati is standing to the left. The order emblems of mace and the lotus is similar to that of Upendra but the Icon of a consort confirms the identification of the said icon as that of Anirudha Upendra has no corresponding consort. Hence, this Icon might be of Anirudha. This is the only Icon of Anirudha noticed in the region. It has been sculptured as per Textual tradition.

PI-X,19

An elegant image of Visnu in the form of Adhokashaja is observed on the exterior wall of the Kedareshwara Temple Dharmpuri. It is

Icon No. 32 on the Jangha portion of the temple
Here, Visnu stands in Tribhang posture, having four hands. In his lower right hand he holds citron, upper right hand-Gada, upper left hand he holds conch. His person is adorned with Vaijayantimala, Graiveyikas, Katisutra, mekhala, Udargrandha, Kundala, Keyura, Nupura and wears Kirimukuta. Adhokshaja is sculptured gada Sankha Sudarshanam.

Janardhan holds Mamala Chakra, Shankha Kaumodaki gada. An image of Visnu in the form of Janardhan is observed as 7th Icon on the exterior wall of Kedareshwar temple Dharmapuri. The lower right hand of the God is broken. In the upper right hand he holds Chakra, upper left holds conch, and in the lower left hand hold the mace. Sri and Bhudevi stand on the right and left side. He is adorned with ornamentation.

Another image of Janardan is observed on the exterior wall of the same temple. Here the God stands in tribhanga posture. As an Icon No. 44 is from the right. Janardana's lower right hand is in Varadasta with Akshmala, in the upper right hand he holds Chakra, in the upper left holds Shankha, and in the lower left hand he holds mace. The God is adorned with various ornaments.

Upendra is illustrated on the shaft of the pillar in the antechamber of Vadeshwar temple at Ambhai Wadgaon in Silled Taluka of Aurangabad District. The lower right hand of the Icon is in Varadmuhra. He holds Gada in the upper right hand, the chakra in the upper left and Padma in the lower left hand. Usually Upendra holds Shankha Gada Chakra and Kamala. This is the only Icon of Upendra found in the region.

DASAVATARA OR THE TEN INCARNATIONS

An important concept, or doctrine of the Bhāgvata religion was the theory of VIBHĀV, incarnation, i.e. descent. It means "to come down", "to go descent down" or to descend. The term is composed of two words, ava, and tar. Ava means below and tar denotes the process of coming down. Lord Krishna, Avtar of Viṣṇu says in Geeta to Arjuna, "Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and the rise of unrighteousness, I embody myself.

Yadā Yadā hi dharmasya Glaṇirbhavti Bharata.
Abhyuthānama dharmasya tadaatmanam Srijāmyham.

To quote R.K. Pandey, whenever the decline of integrity, honesty, godness and virtue and dwindling of truth and mutual understanding reaches the lowest point, equity, liberty, piety diminishes to such an extent that cruelty, barbarism, atrocity, emerge, whenever people forget their duties, loose their sense of morality and goodness and the law of nature is undermined, Lord Viṣṇu incarnates, himself as a saviour and protector of Dharma. Dr. Banerjea says that, "The term Avtar is applied to act of the god's coming down in the form of a man or an animal to the earth and living there in that

1. Dr. Pandey.R.K. - Concept of Avtar 1979,Delhi Page - 1
2. Bhagvatgeeta - Chapter-IV-7, Page - 106
form till the purpose for which he had descended in
the universe was fulfilled, it also sometimes denotes
the assumption of different forms by the God for the
attainment of particular object.¹

Traditions as to the number of avtaras are varied,
but the usual names universally recognised are ten,
enumerating, Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Nrsimha, Vaman-
trivikram, Parsuram, Ram Krishna, Buddha and Kalki.
No temple are dedicated to Matsya, Kurma or Kalki, nor
their independent images chiseled or carved out so far.

Out of ten Avtaras, Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Nrsimha,
Vaman, Trivikram, Ram and Buddha are found sculptured
as independent Icons in the region. However, Matsya,
Kurma and Buddha have been rarely found. Whereas Varaha
and Nrsimha have been popularly sculptured. The ten
Avtaras as whole are shown in miniature at Nilanga,
Parbhani, Shelgaon, Kesapuri and Ardhapur etc. Krishna
appears in miniature form on the middle capital's of the
pillars. Ram, Parasuram and Buddha do not occur fre-
quently Kalki has never been sculptured independently
on the structural temples in the region.

¹ Dr. Banerjea.J.N. - Op-cit  Page - 388.
VARAHA

It is rather very difficult to trace out the origin of Varaha worship. The cult must have existed in the Vedic or even prevedic period. 1

In the Rigveda, Maruts are called Iron tusked Boars and wild boars 2. Rudra is addressed as the boar of the sky 3. The boar in the form of Vrata, plays a dominant role, which laid the foundation of Varah myth in the later period. In the Rigveda Vrata is the Personification of clouds 4 and hence the word boar is am identified with Vrata represents the same natural phenomenon.

As per Nirukta, Varaha is the designation of both, the cloud and the boar. Varaha is one who eats the best type of food. The cloud is Varaha, because it takes the best food viz. the water, so also is the boar as he takes the best roots that grow up 5. The cloud and the boar are etymologically identified. Varaha is the therianthropic

2. Rigved - Page -I88 and X 67.7
3. Rigved - I. 114.5.
5. Nirukta - V-4
form of Vrata viz. the cloud. The term Varāha is equated to the clouds. The earth in accord with the clouds, yields to the hogs and animals. It is implied in the hymns that the earth yields corn and riches to the people with the help of Varaha. He is therefore, naturally called the protector or supporter of the riches.

Kapisthala - Kathasamhitā quoted the term Emūsa for Varaha. Varaha means one who carries off the richness or treasures, therefore, the earth is the embodiment of the riches. Varaha is likened to the manistranga, the cornucopia, which is considered to the act of Varaha of bringing be a nīdhī. It may refer symbolically to the act of Varaha of bringing forth the richness of the nether world in the form of Earth. Mythology of Varaha rescuing the earth from the water and Varaha was one of the form of Prajapati in initial.

5. Dr. Moti. Chandra — Nidhisranga Bulletin of the PNM of Western India No.9
stages and later on it became one of the important incarnation of Visnu.

In the Mahabharata, Varaha has definitely been incorporated in the avatara cycle of Visnu. Therein, it is stated that Madusudana or Janardana assumed the form of Varaha, Simha, (Nrsimha) and Trivikrama\(^1\).

According to the text of Iconography, the Varaha can be sculptured either in anthropomorphic or zoomorphic form\(^2\). There are three types of Varaha Icons.

1. Bhu Varaha, Adivaraha or N依靠aha
2. Yajnavaraha
3. Pralaya Varaha.

1. **Bhū Varaha**

The figure of Bhūvaraha should have according to the Vaikhanasagama the face of a boar in association with the body of a man. It has four arms. Two of which holds the Sankha and Chakra, of the remaining two hands, the left hand should be shown as supporting the legs of Bhumidevi, seated on the god's bent right leg, with her own legs hanging down, while the right hand has to be thrown round the

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1. Mahabharata - Op-cit VI, 63.13
waist of his same goddess .... Bhumidevi should have her hands in the anjali attitude.

The Silparatna gives slightly different description. Nrvarahamurti or the man boar image of Visnu should have, according to this authority in its hands the gada and the Padma and carry Bhumidevi on the tusk. One of its feet should rest upon the serpent Adisesha and other on a tortoise. Of, the Goddesses might be shown as seated upon the left elbow of the Varaha, with a Nilotpala flower in her hand. Her face should have eyes which are expressive of wonder. One of the two right hand of this Varaha image should be made to rest upon the hip.

The Visnudharmottera describe the image of Nrvaraha. It may be sculptured seated like Kapila in the dhyana attitude, or the hands may be so placed as if offering pindas, symbolising the earth with its two hands.

2. **Yajñayavarāha**

This form of Varāha murti has to be of white complexion and should have four arms, two of which

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1. T.A. Gopinathrao - Op-cit Page-132-33
2. T.A. Gopinathrao - Op-cit Page-133
are to carry the Sankha and Chakra, the figure should be seated upon Simhasana, with the right leg hanging down and left resting upon the seat. It should be clothed in yellow garments and adorned with various ornaments. On the right side should be seated Laksmi having the golden yellow colour. Her left leg should be bent and kept resting upon the seat, while the right should be left hanging. Her left hand should carry a lotus and the right hand should be resting on the seat. On the left of Yajnavarahanumurti, there should be seated Bhumidevi, of dark complexion.

3. Pralayavaraha

This type of image of Varaha has to be seated upon a Simhasana, with the right leg hanging down, while the left one is bent and kept resting on the seat. This image should have four arms, in two of which the sankha and chakra have to be carried, while the front right hand should be in the abhay pose, and the front left hand be resting upon the left thigh. On the right of Pralaya Varaha and on the same seat should be placed his consort with the right leg hanging down and the left bent and made to rest on the seat.

1. T.A. Gopinathrao - Op-cit Page-135-36
2. T.A. Gopinathrao - Ibid Page-136
Number of images of Varāha belonging to Gupta period testify the popularity of Varaha worship. The Mudraraksasam, compares the great victory of Chandragupta with Varaha conquest of the earth.¹

The early Cālukyan of Badami had the boar as their family emblem which they are said to have obtained through the grace of Nārayana.² Most of the inscriptions of these Cālukya Kings and their sub-ordinates begin with a stanza in praise of Varāha.

The earliest representation of Varāha in Marathwada are those in Desāvatara caves at Elura. The one in the fifth panel in the South wall is an independent representation of Varaha possessing all the iconographical attributes. In cave No.XIV again Varaha is depicted in the third panel to the North. An elaborate image of Varāha is observed in the cave at Ambejogai known as Jogaiche Mahēr³. The image of Varāha is found at Kharusa caves on Latur-Nilanga Road, 40 K.M. from Latur.⁴

1. Mudra Raksasam-VII-18
Besides the cave sculpture Varaha occupies a prominent place in the sculptural complex of the structural temples in the region. All the icons of Varaha so far found in Marathwada on the exterior wall of the structural temples are therianthropic form with the boars head and human body.

**Asana Bhuvanaraha**

The Asana types of Bhū Varāha images are not numerous as the sthanak ones. Visnudharmottar refers to Nṛvaraha seated like Kapila, and there are textual references to Asana varaha in the texts on Iconography. However, very few Asana Nṛvaraha sculptures have so far been reported. None of the published works on Iconography contains illustration of seated Nṛāvaraha. There are two very rare Asana types of Nṛvaraha sculptures in Marathwada.

**Pl. XI.22**

A unique sculpture of seated Varaha has been found on the exterior wall of Mahadeo Temple Omerga. It appears in one of the main niches of the mandovara of the said temple. The Varāha is seated upon Simhasan with the left leg hanging down, while the right leg is bent and kept resting on the seat. Having four
hands, the two upper hands carry the mace and disc, in the lower right hand, he holds Nilotpāla while in the lower right hand, Conch. The face is badly mutilated. The icon follows the Textual tradition of Viṣṇudharmottar and can be identified as Śaṅkanrvarāha referred to in Viṣṇudharmottar Purana. Sculptured tradition in cave and structural temples is mostly influenced by Silparatna and Vaikhanasagama. Bhūvarahas are found commonly sculpture Keval Nṛvaraha is found rarely sculptured. One such rare sculpture is found here on the exterior wall of Mahadeo Temple.

PL. XII, 23

Another icon of Varaha is to be met with on the exterior wall of Vithal temple at Pangaon. It occupies a niche on the Mandovar facing the South. Varaha is seated upon Simhasana in Savya Lalitāsana having four hands. The lower right hand holds mace the upper right hand, has been badly mutilated; the same case is with the upper left hand, he holds Padma. Here Bhu is shown resting on the upper left arm which is folded. The icons of Varaha from

Omerga and Pangaon are carved out in Asana pose. Though there are textual references to this type of Varaha icon, the actual sculptures of the type are very rarely found sculptured on the exterior walls of the temples. Neither T.A. Gopinathrao nor Dr. Banerjee illustrated such type of icons. Iconography of the structural temples from Marathwada reveals this unique Asana sculpture of Varaha.

Sthanaka Nrivaraha

Sthanaka Nrivaraha sculptures are found more commonly sculptured temple in cave temples and structural temples. The iconographic study of the region reveals number of sthanaka Nrivaraha Icons found sculptured on the exterior walls and found scattered as loose sculptures. All these sculptures are identical showing no iconographic variation. The Sthanaka icons of Varaha are found in the Nagnath temple, Nilkantheshwara, Temple Kankaleshwara and Wadeshwara Temple. All these sculptures are carved on the exterior walls. There are loose sculptures mostly disfigured found at Junni Jagji and Wadgaon.
Sthanaka Nrvarāhamūrti is carved on the exterior wall of the Nilkantheshwar temple at Nilanga in Osmanabad District. It is lith deity Icon of the dēity carved on Mandovara of the temple. It has four hands. In the lower right hand, it holds mace. In the upper right hand, Nilotpala, upper left hand, Conch and the lower left hand Cakra. Bhu is shown resting on the upper left arm which is folded. The Varāha is shown standing on the right leg which is firmly set on the pedestal, the left leg is bent and is rested on the lotus. Naga is carved in human form seated at the bottom in Anjali Mudra. As usual, his person wears the Yajnopavita, Kēyur, Kankana, Kamarbandha, Katibandha, Graivekas, Udarbandha and other usual ornaments. In all Iconometric details and ornametation the sculpture resemble with Varaha sculptures from cave temples of Ellora, Ambejogai and Kharusa1.

A similar Varaha sculpture is carved in a niche on the exterior wall of Kankaleshwara

Temple at Beed. The sculpture follows the same tradition and is beautifully ornamented. It is in its worst stage of mutilation. The lower part is almost broken.

Another Icon of Nrvaraha is observed on the exterior wall of Shiva temple Anwa. The icon is carved on a niche on the Mandovara facing to the South. The sculpture is richly ornamented and displays a dynamic force. It is very badly mutilated. Hands are broken and hence objects are unidentifiable. But the Iconometric details suggests that the sculpture is similar to one noticed above.
Nṛśimha

Nṛśimha figures in Vedas as a divinity who can either protect or injure man. In Taittiriya Aranyaka he is invoked and described as possessed of sharp claws and fangs¹. Mahānārayana Upanisad invokes the deity by describing him as having sharp claws and keen fangs².

The invocation of Nṛśimha follows that of Vasudeva or Viṣṇu. The deity who is always connected with the destruction of the demon Hiranyakasipu in the form of an incarnation of Viṣṇu in the puranic period.

In Geeta, Viṣṇu is represented as an ideal divinity and an almighty savior of mankind, as delighting in both moral goodness and retualistic purity, and as incarnating himself from time to time in human or animal form, for the maintenance of the standard of righteousness in the world.

The Nārāyanī section of the Mahābhārata includes Nṛśimha in the list of Avatars of Viṣṇu. It is said that Viṣṇu assumed many different forms in order to protect the world ³.

1. Taittiriya Aranyaka X, I.
The Man Lion incarnation of Visnu became popular in the early century of Christian era. As far as the epigraphical record is concerned, the Alina copper plate record of the Maitraka dynasty of Valabhi in Cathiawar (Gujarat State) which was issued in the year 766 A.D. mention the Nrsimha Avatara of Visnu. The worship appears to have been invoked during the Caluka-Yadava Era.

The Ardhapur Inscription in Nanded Taluka, corresponding to 1236 A.D., May 7, mentions Singhanadeva as ruling from Devgiri and records regular grants of money for the benefit of the deities Nrsimha, Vinayaka, Chandikadevi and others.

The first complete exposition of the myth of Nrsimha Avatara is found in the Harivamsa. The demon Hiranyakasipu, after performing hard penance for ten thousand years, acquired a boon which assured him protection against gods and demons, gandharvas and yaksas, human beings, evils, spirits and beasts. He remained unaffected by the weather and remained safe in heaven or in the neither world. He could only be murdered by one who was capable of killing him merely with a single stroke of his hand. This all powerful

1. Dr. Sarkar, D.C. - Op-cit Appendix-III. Page-266.
demon became a terror to the gods and consequently they approached Brahma who directed them to Visnu. Visnu assumed the form of man lion and tore out Hiranyakasipu's entrails by his sharp claws.

The Kurma-purana, gives brief account of the Nrsimhavatara, with little bit variations but it does not give the circumstances under which Visnu had to assume the curious form of the man-lion.

The name Hiranyakasipu is derived in the vayu purana, from the following legend. Once Kasyapa was performing a sacrifice, and his wife Ditti was in an advance stage of pregnancy. Kasyapa had several costly gifts for the sacrificial priests and one of them was a gold plated wooden seat for the hotri priest. It was kept covered with Kusa grass. As the sacrifice was going on, Ditti gave birth to a son, and the baby, as soon as it was born, walked straight to the place of sacrifice and there sat upon the Gold plated seat and began to repeat the Vedas and Puranas. The performers of sacrifice were exceedingly pleased with the child and called him Hiranyakasipu, and prophesied that he would become very powerful.

1. Dr. Desai.Kalpana - Op-cit Page-85
2. T.A. Gopinathrao - Op-cit Page-147
According to Padma Purana, Pralhad was a Brahmana in his previous condition of existence and though now born as the son of Hiranakasipu, he still retained his old and ardent devotion to Visnu. The father, of course, did not like that his son should be a devout adorer of his mortal enemies, the Gods, and with the object of getting rid of such a misbehaving and undesirable son, he subjected him to various forms of cruel treatments. But Pralhada, by the grace of Visnu, remained quite unscathed, and began to preach, with even greater earnestness than before, the doctrine that Visnu was omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent God who filled all space and regained everywhere, as the supreme Lord.

Then once Hiranyakasipu, in a fit of exasperation, asked his son why, if Visnu was omnipresent, he did not see him in the pillar of the hall. Thereupon Pralhada struck the pillar with his fist and according to another account, Hiranyakasipu himself angrily kicked the pillar, and at once Visnu came out therefrom half man and half Lion, and tore Hiranyakasipu to pieces.¹

It is said that Hiranyakasipu had in his earlier life adored Brahma and obtained from him boons to the effect that he should be so invulnerable as not to be killed by man or beast, that he should not die either

¹. T.A. Gopinathrao - Op-cit
in the day or in the night side of it and that no weapons of any kind should injure him. After obtaining these boons, he naturally became naughty and irresponsible in his working behaviour towards the Gods, and it became imperative that he should be killed. Visnu assumed the form of Man-lion and the Hiranyakasipu with the claws at the time of lingering twilight forming the injunction between day and night, himself being seated upon the doorsill of the mansion of Hiranyakasipu).

These myths relating to the incarnation of Visnu as Nrsimha have tremendously influenced the Indian Iconography. Sculpture have carved Nrsimha sculptures with their master hands immortalising the theme. The images of Visnu as Nrsimha are conceived in the following three forms.

1. **GIRIJA NRSIMHA**

It consists generally of a single figure which should be shown seated on a Padmasana, in a Utkutika posture, the forelegs being maintained in the required position by the yogpatta round them and the back of the body. The concept underlying the name Girija Nrsimha, is that the lions come out of a mountain².

1. T.A. Gopinathrao - Op-cit Page-149.
KevalNrsimha is another name by which Girija
Nrsimha is popularly known. It may have either two
or four arms. In the later case, the upper right hand
should hold the Cakra, and the upper left hand the
Sankha, and the two other hands being stretched for-
ward and supported on the knees.

Sometimes, Girija Nrsimha is represented as
seated upon simhāsana with right leg handing down and
the left folded and made to rest upon the seat. The image
generally has four arms.

2. STHAUNA NRSIMHA

Sthauna (from the word Sthuna meaning a column) is
significant. The God came out of a column when it was
broken in anger by the demon Hiranyakasipu, the Sthauna
Nrsimha is a seated image with four arms.

According to Vaikhanasagama, the image may have,
twelve or sixteen hands and there should be three bends
in the body.

According to Viṣṇudharmottaram, it prescribes the
Alidhasana for the sthaunamurti and it adds that it
should be clothed in a blue garment. Nṛśimha when wor-
shipped increases one’s knowledge of the supreme being.

1. T.A. Gopinathrao — Op-cit Page-150.
3. Vaikhanasagama quoted by T.A.G.
   Op-cit Appendix Page-34.
4. Viṣṇudharmottara quoted by T.A.G.
3. **YANAKA NRSIMHA**

In this aspect, Nrsimha should be seated upon the shoulders of Garuda or upon the folds of Adisesha. This Nrsimha should possess four arms in two of which he should carry the sankha and the cakra, over the head of Nrsimha there should be the five heated hood of Adishesha.

4. **LAKSMI NRSIMHA**

In this aspect, Laksmi should be seated on the left lap of Nrsimha in Aligana pose. Her left leg should be folded and the right leg hanging down.

Nrsimha is perhaps the most commonly represented incarnation of Visnu in this region. Evidently, the icons of Nrsimha are found throughout the region. Moreover, the remarkable feature of these icons is that it is the only incarnation of Visnu whose temples belonging to medieval period are recorded. The icons of Nrsimha are found in the caves as well as structural temples. The icons of Nrsimha found sculptured in Marathwada can broadly divided into two classes, sthanakamurtti and Asanamurtti.

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2. Dr. Upadhyaya. Vasudev - Prachin Bhartiya MurtiShastr (Hindi) Page-68.
1. **STHANAKA MURTI**

The earliest representation of Nrsimha in the Sthanaka form comes from the seventh panel of the Dasavatara caves, Elura\(^1\). As far as the structural temples are concerned, the sthakaka sthavana Nrsimha icons are found on the exterior walls of the temples and sometimes even as loose sculptures.

A beautiful Sthanaka Nrsimha Icon is found as a loose sculpture presently laying in the vicinity behind the Kedareshwar temple at Dharmapuri. Nrsimha is standing in Tribhang pose and has six hands. Unique feature of this icon is that Nrsimha is six handed. The six handed variety of Nrsimha image has not been referred to by any text on iconography. However, certain sculptures appears to have taken liberty in carving six handed Nrsimha. One such six handed Nrsimha sculpture is in Dacca Museum and another such sculpture is reported from Rapavalocana Temple Rajim\(^2\). Nrsimha sculpture from Kedareshwar Temple Dharmapuri is one of the rare six handed Nrsimha Sthanaka Murtis found, so far. On the exterior walls of the structural temples. By his two lower hands, he holds the demon Hiranakasipu by his heir and the leg.

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1. Burges - C.T.I.,II Pl. LXXV Figure-I.
The two front hands are badly mutilated. But they might be occupied in tearing out entrails of the Demon on his lap, he holds the attributes in the upper right hands which are not clearly visible. In the upper left hand he holds khetaka. The strangling Hirankasipu is resting on his folded leg. Pralhad is carved to the right of the Nrsimha.

Pl. XIV, 27

One more six handed Nrsimha is found as a loose sculpture and is presently in the collection of the Marathwada University History Museum. Here, Nrsimha is standing in dwibhanga posture. Nrsimha holds Hirankasipu by his left leg. The legs of Hiranya and Nrsimha are interlocked. The entire sculpture is very forceful and displays an imaginative power manifest in the treatment. Specially, the interlocking of leg of Nrsimha with that of Hiranyakasipu shows the master touch of the sculpture. Similar sculpture showing a master touch in interlocking of the legs has been reported by T.A. Gopinathrao¹ and Havel E.B.²

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1. T.A. Gopinathrao  - Op-cit  Page-157,159  Pl.XLIV.
The entire panel is beautifully sculptured. Nrsimha icon has six hands. By his additional two hands, he holds Hiranyakasipu by his hair and leg. Hiranyakasipu where as two natural hands are taking out the entrails of the recumbent demon. The lower right hand is seizing the right leg of the Demon. The upper right hand is broken. Pralhad is carved out to the right of Nrsimha. He is standing with his hands folded in Anjali-mudra. Two more miniature sculptures badly mutilated are on the left side. They appear to be of the demons. A remarkable feature of this image is that the sculptor has tried to narrate the complete myth of the Nrsimha Nrsimha in stone. There is a Kirtimukha on the Torana and the entire panel is nicely sculptured and ornamented. These Nrsimha de icons do not differ much from four handed varieties in ornamentation and other iconographic details.

Pl.XIV,28

A four handed Sthanaka image of Nrsimha from Kedareswar temple of Dharmapuri depicts in a vivid manner the fight between the God
and the demon. The panel is sculptured as icon No. 15 on the Mandovara of the temple. His face is that of a lion with his name falling on his shoulders. Here, Nrsimha is standing in dvibhang pose. The left leg of the God is firmly rooted on the ground while the right leg inter-wined tightly with the left leg of the defeated Hiranakasipu. In this image, the upper right hand is in Varad mudra. It shows obviously indicating boon giving to Pralhada threatened by his own Father. By the upper left hand, he holds the right hand and the demon. Fromt two hands are tearing out the bosom of Hiranayakasipu. Normally Nrsimha Icons carry Vaishnavite emblem in the hands. The remarkable feature of this image is that there is no Vaishnavite emblems in the hands of Nrsimha. Such type of image without Vaishnavite emblem is not referred to by any text of iconography nor illustrated by T.A. Gopinathrao, Dr. Banerjea and Dr. Kalpana Desai.

An eight armed (badly mutilated) sthanaka image of Nrsimha is observed on the exterior wall of the Anwa temple Anwa. It appears to be
a panel depicting the fight between the God and the demon. It is carved in a niche on the Mandovar. The niche is facing South. Face of the icon is that of the Lion with his name falling on his shoulders. The left leg of God is firmly rooted on the ground while the right leg is interlocked tightly with the left leg of the defeated Hiranakasipu. The head and hands of Hiranakasipu are badly mutilated. As usual, the God Nrsimha is richly and multifariously ornamented.

ASANAMURTI

Asana Murti of Nrsimha is normally conceived in three types.

(1) When it is sculptured seated with Hiranaya on the legs, it is known as the Vidāranā murtis.

(2) When it is sculptured seated without Hiranaka-sipu, it is known as Keval Nrsimha. It is also named as Yanak,Girija and Yoga.

(3) The the third type, it is accompanied by Laksmi and is known as Laksmi Nrsimha.

Present Iconographic study reveals that, Vīdarana Murti and Keval Nrsimha Murti were carved on the structural temples in the region. However, Laksmi Nrsimha Murti have not been found sculptured.
VIDARANA MURTIS

Vidarana Murtis are found both in the caves and in the structural temples. Structural Temples from Marathwada also reveal number of Vidarana Murti of Nrsimha. The sculptures conceived certain new forms purely through their imagination. There are number of beautiful sculptures showing some remarkable features and excellent sculptural embellishment.

Pl. XV.30

A loose Nrsimha Icon is found at Pangaon and presently kept in the private house of Shri Baburao Pathak. It is a fine specimen of workmanship. The icon is seated on simhasana in Pratyayalidhasana pose. He has six hands. He holds Hiranya on his lap. Natural front two of his hands are engaged in taking Hiranya’s entrails out of his stomach. In the upper right hand, he holds khetaka. In the upper left hand, he holds the pash. Hiranaya is held by his legs and hand with right lower and left lower hand of Nrsimha. Like all the Nrsimha icons, he is shown with lion’s mane and with kirta on heads. The Icon is adorned with all ornaments. There is aurole on his head. On the right side of the icons is carved Garuda and on the left
Pralhad both are standing in Anjali pose. On the right side at the bottom, the Vaishnava attributes mace is carved out.

Pl.XVI, 31

An image found at Ramling Mudgad is another beautiful representation of Nrsimha. It is a loose sculpture laying in the ground near a delapidated siva temple in the village. The icon is seated in Pratyidhasana and has six hands. The demon Hiranya is laying on the lap of Nrsimha. Nrsimha has a very fierce face of a man with big moustache and bluging eyes, and his mane falling on his shoulders in two tufts. His two natural hands are engaged in tearing upon the entrails of the demon. The lower two hands hold tightly the hair and the legs of the demon. The upper right hand is in Varad Mudra. The upper left hand is badly mutilated. The icon is elaborately ornamented. A remarkable feature of this image is that the sculptor has tried to carved out the man-face in place of lion face carving a man face displaying a fierce anger and bulging eyes almost similar to that of
Lion, sculptor is using his imaginative force and trying to slightly deviate from textual tradition. When the textual tradition speaks of two, four, eight handed Nrsimha a sculptor has conceived six handed Nrsimha Icon.

Another Icon of Nrsimha has been found on the exterior walls of the structural temples of Marathwada. It is carved on the exterior wall of Dharmapuri Temple and occupying a niche facing South and is fifty-six Icons from right. It has four hands and is seated in Pratyakshasana. Its two natural hands are disemboweled. Hiranyakasipu's prostrate figure is on the lap. In the upper right hand, Nrsimha holds the disc, and the upper left hand, he holds the mace. On the right side, the Garuda is standing in Anjali Mudra while on the left devotee Pralhad. As usual he is adorned with various ornaments. The image is carved as per the cannons of the Agnipurana\(^1\) and Rupmandana\(^2\).

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1. Agnipurana - 49.4
2. Rupmandana referred by T.A. Gopinathrao - Op-cit
These Nrsimha sculptures are very identical with slight variation in attributes and size, with the Nrsimha sculptures, in one at the Kailasa in the fourth panel from the East in the South Cloister\(^1\), and other in the back aisle of the lanka-shvara part\(^2\) of the Kailasa at Ellora Cave complex.

Another icon of this type is found kept in one of the niches on the terrace of the stepped well which is in front of the Mahadeo temple at Pingali in Parbhan District. The Nrsimha here, is also in the Pratyalidhasana. He This sculpture can also be identified as Yanak Nrsimha described in Murtivijnan.\(^3\) He holds Hiranya on his lap. Two of his hands are engaged in taking Hiranya's entrails out of his stomach. Other holds cakra and sankha. Unlike all the Nrsimha icons from the caves, he is shown with Lion's mane and without kirit on the head. Such images seems to have been popular in Northern India. There is a considerable similarity between this image and that of Manora in Madhya Pradesh.

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One superb icon of Nrsimha comes from Paithan. It is a loose sculpture presently enshrined in a newly constructed temple right in the locality. Nrsimha is seated in Vamalalitasana and has fourteen hands. The lower right hands the hand of Hiranyakasipu. Other hand is entailing the belly of the demon. Remaining five hands from the lower right hand holds serially Sankha, Khadga, Gada, Pasha and Shield. The upper left hand hold Khadga, Ankush, Padma Bana, Chakra, serially downwards. The lower left hand is shown entailing the belly of Hiranya. Whereas the lowest left hand is holding leg of Hiranya tightly and fiercely, so as not to allow him to move from the lap. Nrsimha wears kirit mukuta, udarbandha, valayas round the wrist, keyuras, skanda pattas and anklets. The sculpture is one of the rare intact sculpture found and nicely preserved. It is the superb piece of sculptural embellishment ornamentation and precision.

Seated representations of this form are also found on the exterior of the structural temples at Bori and
amongst these icons the one on the pillar in the
ruined temple at Bori in Parbhani District seems
to be unique. The unique feature of the icon is
that Hiranya's belly with the pointed ends of two
swords instead of his Lion's Claws. It has been
rightly said by Dr. Degloorkar, that none of the
figures reproduced by T.A. Gopinathrao, Gumarswami
and Kramrish Stella resembles this\textsuperscript{1}. All these afore-
said representations may be classed as Vidarana
murtis of Nrsimha. They all show the god as seated
in Savyalalitahasana. The therianthropic forms is
strictly maintained.

Pl.XVII,34

Another superb icon of seated Nrsimha in
pratylidhasana is in the collection of
Marathwada University History Museum. In
this image, the upper two pairs of his
hands are in varad mudra. In middle two
pairs of hands he holds disc and conch,
fronts two hands are tearing out the bosom
of the Hiranya and by his lower two hands
he holds demon Hiranya.

\textsuperscript{1} Dr. Degloorkar G.B. - Op-cit Page-138

Foot-note- 1
His face is that of a Lion with his mane falling on his shoulder in two tufts, seated Garuda is in Anjali pose, Pralhad and other attendants are carved out on the two sides. His person is richly ornamented.

Another Nrsimha sculpture in Vidaranamood has been found in Ambejogai. It is a loose sculpture laying uncared in the vicinity of ruined the temple. The sculpture is badly mutilated. One more Nrsimha sculpture has been found as a loose sculpture at Rajapuri eight kilometer from Aundha. This is a superb sculpture of art and comparatively intact.

KEVAL NRSIMHA

Keval Nrsimha is a God of peace and tranquility and Yogic meditation. The sculptors, however, do not seem to have been inclined always to depict this aspect of the God. Visnu and most of his aspects were premiinently Gods of love, and whatever deeds of destruction were associated with him in some of his forms were really acts of grace and deliverance, and these were rarely represented in Iconoplastic Art.

Most of Nrsimha sculpture are carved in Ugra or terrific form. Keval Nrsimha has been called as Girija Nrsimha, YogNrsimha and Yanak Nrsimha. Present Iconographic study of the Brahmanical structural temples of the region reveals that Keval Nrsimha's sculptures were not commonly sculptured as those of Vidarana murti. However, there are few Keval Nrsimha sculptures found on the exterior walls and as loose sculptures. Yanak Nrsimha sitting on Garuda has also been found in the region. The sculpture found at Pingali may be identified as Yanak. Garuda however, is not clearly seen. Some of the note-worthy icons of Keval Nrsimha found in the region are as follows

Pl.XVIII.35

Icon of seated Nrsimha has been very recently found as a loose sculpture at Shelgaon in Degloor Taluka, Nanded District. The unique features of this Icon is that, the absence of Hiranya. It can thus be classed as Kevala Nrsimha Murti or Yog Nrsimha Murti referred by Khare G.H.1 Here, he is four armed the disc and mace are in the upper hand while his two lower hands are on his lap. Garuda is to his

right in the Anjali pose. A Makara Torana is at the back of Nrsimha with the Kirtimukha at the apex. The Kirtimukha is flanked by Dasavatara. As usual, he is adorned with various ornaments.

Another four handed Keval Nrsimha is kept in front of Jagaji temple in Osmanabad District. Here, Nrsimha is seated in Padmasana. The Vahan Garuda is carved on the lower side of the Simhasana. Presence of Garuda on the Simhasana suggests that this Kevalnrsimha is Yanaknrsimha and hence, it can safely be identified as Yanak. In the upper right hand, he holds pash, lower right hand is in Varadamudra, in the upper left hand, he holds mace while in the lower left hand, he holds conch. The entire sculpture is beautifully ornamented.

Pl.XVIII,36

A loose sculpture found at Ramling Mudgad badly disfigured because of oil is also that of Kevalnrsimha. It is presently laying in the Mandap Hanuman Temple. Nrsimha is four handed and sculptured, seated in ardhaparyankasan. The attributes he holds are indistinct. An attribute he holds in the lower right hand appears to be citron, and the attribute in the upper
right hand is nilothpala. His face is fierce with bulging eyes and roaring in mouth.

Pl. XIX, 37

An image found on the exterior wall of Siva temple at Omerga is another such type of representation. The icon is kept in the same niche facing to the North. Here, he is seated in Padma asana on a beautifully carved Simhasana. He holds conch, mace pash and Khetaka taken clockwise in his four hands. As usual Nrsimha sculpture is adorned with all ornaments. The sculptor is following a traditional pattern of ornamentation.

Pl. XIX, 38

Another identical icon of Keval Nrsimha has been found as a loose sculpture at Pangaon. It was lying in the vicinity of a ruined Nrsimha temple and is presently kept in the temple inside. The sculpture is mostly intact, but has been disfigured because of decay in stone.
Nrsimha seats here in Utkita asana and has four arms. The lower right hand is in varadamudra. The upper right hand holds sankha and upper left hand holds cakra. The lower left hand is badly disfigured. The face is terribly fierce with bulging eyes and roaring mouth. He wears kiritimukha and his body is adorned with usual ornaments.

LAKSHMI NRISHMA

The iconographic study reveal that Lakshmi Icon Nrsimha Icons were rarely carved on the structural temples, as not a single sculptures of this type has been noticed so far in the region.
VAMANA TRIVIKRANA

The origin of Vaman myth is in Rigveda itself.\(^1\) Visnu's feet of traversing the Universe with three steps in explicily referred to in the Rigveda\(^2\). Griffith translates it as follows, "Through all this (world) strode Visnu, thrice his foot he planted and the whole was gathered in his footsteps dust"\(^3\).

Dr. V.S. Agrawal, traces the references to the Vamana Visnu conception to a reference where "Vamana is conceived as a "YUVKUMARA", or a young hero of beautiful form and Virata Visnu as a giant form"\(^4\).

The germs of evolution of myth starts from Satapata Brahmana\(^5\). The gods and the Asuras were contending for supremacy, and the Asuras thought that they were the masters of world. Thereupon, they got together and decided to devide the world amongst themselves. The Gods, anxious to have their own share rushed to the demons accompanied by Visnu in the form of sacrifice. The Asuras replied," as much as this Visnu lies upon, and no more, we give you".

2:==Dr.=DeesirKaipana==Op=cit
5. Satapata Brahmana - Page-1,2,5.
Now Visnu was a dwarf, hence the Gods laid him on the three directions and thus obtained the entire earth\textsuperscript{1}. The said legend is related in Taittiriya samhita\textsuperscript{2} and taittiriya Brahma\textsuperscript{3}. The more developed form of myth of king Bali and Vamana is, referred to in Ramayana.\textsuperscript{4} The legend and the myth of Vamana Avatara are also referred by many Purana\textsuperscript{5}. The contents seems to be the same.

Bali, the Son of Virochana and grandson of Pralhad, the great devotee of Visnu in the man lion incarnation was able to vanquish the Gods by means of strength. He had acquired through his religious penances. Indra was in consequence driven out of his kingdom, this pained Aditi, his mother, who prayed to Visnu to be born as a son to her and to conquer the Asuras and restore the lost celestial kingdom to Indra. Accordingly, Visnu was born as the son of Aditi, and when he was a young boy, he proceeded to the place where Bali was conducting a sacrifice,

\begin{itemize}
\item 1. Dr. Desai.Kalpana - Op-cit Page-98.
\item 2. Taittiriya Samhita - 11,1,3.
\item 3. Taittiriya Brahma - 1,6,1.
\item 4. Ramayana - 1,27,12,14.
\end{itemize}
and begged of him for some land to be given as a gift. Bali saw the Brahma dressed as a Brahmecharian or Vedic student arrive there, and after duly honouring him asked him to give out what he wished to have him as a sacrificial gift. Sukra the Guru of the Asuras, knowing that the young Brahmacharin was no other than Vamana himself, warned his disciple Bali to be careful in making promises. Noble and generous hearted Bali, however, paid no heed to this warning, and said that, if Vamana, who, as a yajna purusha, is the divine embodiment of the sacrifice and for whose acceptance, he was offering the sacrifice, should himself come to him to ask for a favour on the occasion of the sacrifice, he would consider it to be the greatest honour shown to him by that great deity, and would certainly promise to give him anything asked. The boy then asked Bali, the emperor of Asuras to bestow on him the gift of just three paces of space, which was of course readily promised and confirmed by the ceremonial pouring out of water. At once this Vamana, the young dwarfish boy so designated in Sanskrit assumed a gigantic form and with one pace th he measured the whole of Bhuleka or the earth world, and with another the Antaralaleka or the mid world,
between the earth and the heaven. There was thus nothing left for measuring out the third pace of space which Bali had promised, and he thereupon requested the God to utilise his own royal head for measuring out the third pace. Immediately pleased with Bali, this Vamana who had been Trivikrama, or the god of three strides after he assumed his enormous proportion sent him by the pressure of his foot to the Patal Loka. The world's so acquired from Bali were duly made over to Indra to the great satisfaction of Aditi, and the Gods again became independent.

The Vamana image should be carved as under. It should have two arms, one of which should carry a Kamandalu and other an umbrella. On the crown of the head there should be a tuft of hairs tied up in a knot, and there should also be a pair of Kundalas in the ears, a deer skin worn in the upavita fashion, the scared thread, a waist zone, and a Kaupina (Lion Class). In his third finger, there should be the pantra or the ring made of the scared Kusa grass. He should also carry with him a book².

The Agnipurana prescribes the umbrella and the staff as his emblems, if the figure of Vamana is two handed.

Sculpture illustrating the Vamana incarnation falls under the two categories, one of the dwarf (Vamana) and the other huge Colossus (Varatarupa) about to take three steps (Trivikrama).

The two handed variety of Vamana image are referred by Agnipurana, but none of authorities like Dr. Banerjea, T.A. Gopinathrao or Dr. Kalpana Desai, illustrated such types of images so far.

The Devatamurti Prakarna, specially attributes the figure of Vamana with the sikha and Yajnopavita - the indication of a brahmacarian or mendicant. He should hold umbrella and the Kamandalu in his hands.

1. दर्शनिक मानिष: स्थापत्य स्वार्थसम्पूर्ण:।
2. Dr. Banerjea. J.N. | Agnipurana Adh. 49.5

Devata Murti Prakarna V-71
Silpa Ratna 25,III-112 Ref. By Dr. Desq. Kalpana
The iconographical representation of Visnu in this incarnation is sculptured depicting the earlier part of the story before Trivikrama came to existence or grown into a gigantic stature.

The Icons of Vamana Trivikrama was not much popular in Marathwada in the medieval period. However, a rare panel of Vamana incarnation is found at SiV Temple, Dharmapuri in Ambajogai Taluka.

Pl. XX,39

Batuka Vamana incarnation panel described fully on huge stone has been found as a loose sculpture laying uncared, unprotected behind Kedareswar temple, Dharmapuri. It appears to have once occupied a prominent place on the Manodavara of the same temple.

Batuka Vamana is two armed folding the umbrella in the left hand, the right one is broken. He is adorned with ornaments, like earrings, necklaces, armless, bracelets, and anklets. He has curly hair and wears an adhomouka of ardhoruker type.
Here, king Bali a son of Virochana and grand son of Pralhad, the great devotee is shown standing in tribhanga. Vamana is receiving libations from him who is holding in his hand a picture. Behind King Bali, stands Sukra, who is trying to dissuade Bali from fulfilling his promise. Bali is depicted with various ornaments and sukra with beard and vesthi round the waist. Separate figures of Vamana are very rare and such figures are always four armed. Here, in a sculptural panel of Dharmapuri, Vamana is two armed.

The mythology of Vamana Incarnation of Visnu has been more frequently represented as Trivikrama when Visnu suddenly grew into the Virata from the dwarf form, to measure the whole world. The image to be executed according to Visnudharmottara is peculiar. "The image of Trivikrama should be like the cloud laden with water, (of dark shadi) and in his eight hands, he should hold the staff, the nose, the conch, the disc, the mace and the lotus, with his other two

hands he should blow the conch.  

Vaikhansagama says that the image of Trivikrama may be sculptured according to the level of the upraised left foot.

(1) Right knee
(2) To the navel
(3) The forehead

and intended to represent him in the act of striding over the three worlds. It should have either four or eight hands.

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1. द्वितीय या शनिय: कस्तोत्तमसातः ॥
समस्तान्वः कस्तोत्तमसातः कार्यतिमिकम्: ॥
द्वितीयार्त: कार्त्तिकाविरुद्ध: ॥
विक्रमम् (वाहित: ) कार्यविधिः: ॥

2. निविश्याण विनाय दोषं तदे तिलकरस्वाते लोकोत्तम ज्ञेय
कालिष्ठीर नक्षत्रमयोऽक्षरां वीण सिरियवः: कार्त्तिकाबुद्ध: वेद
दशिनकालस्य वास्तवम्: वेद दसिनं कार्तिकाहिकम् वा
देवस्व माहात्म्य सातस्तन दधिक वेद स्वेद
शह दशिनमया वर्तमानाः दशिनं दिक्षां वर्ती दसिनं
दशिनकालस्य वास्तवमयात्म्य दसिनं स्वेद वर्ती
दशिनामयकालस्य वास्तवमयात्म्य:

Visnudharmottaram III,85,55,56

Vaikhansagama, Patala 58, P.200
A unique representation of two handed Trivikrama is found at Trivikrama Temple, Ter. A huge sculpture is enshrined in the Garbhagriha of the Trivikrama temple. Here God sits on Simhasan with his right leg firmly planted on the pedestal and the left leg raised up to knee. A grinning face is shown just near the upraised leg of the God Trivikrama. The two hands of the God are in Akimbo pose. Below it on the ground King Bali stands on Knee and observing the god with keen sight nearby Sukra, the preceptor of Bali, watching the God Trivikrama, and he raised his right hand on his fore-head. And it suggests that whatever is going to happens even-though he dissuaded Bali from fulfilling his promise. Behind Sukra is Namuchi. The god Trivikrama seems to be in pacific mood and is adorned with various ornaments.
Trivikrama images from Ellora and Badami caves are eight handed. Mahabalipuram sculpture is also eight handed. Two handed Trivikrama seems to be rare. Such type of images are observed only in the period of Gupta. Trivikrama sculpture from Ter shows its affinities to Gupta Art tradition. Another aspect which confirms its affinities to early medieval art tradition is a grinning face shown just near the upraised leg of Trivikrama. According to Dr. J.N. Banerjea, Rahu is normally carved like this in Trivikrama panel in Medieval Art Tradition.

Trivikrama Incarnation has been sculptured in the caves like Dasavatara caves, Jogaiche Mahes and Karosa caves in Marathwada. The theme of Trivikrama appears to be more popular in the cave temples and it was naturally followed by some in the sculptors working on structural temples in the Region. Another huge Trivikrama sculpture is enshrined

in Parmeswar Temple at Himayat Nagar. It appears to be original temple dedicated to Trivikrama. It is a family deity of many families in the region.
The mythology of Ram has greatly influenced Indian Culture and Religion. "In the Ramayana itself, except the later interpolation, Rama is merely a great hero portrayed as an ideal Son, husband, and king. Lateron he was deified and accepted as an incarnation of Visnu. Dr. Bulcke has thoroughly studied the evolution of Rama legend and has come to the conclusion that Rama was originally a Hero later on deified and identified with a Visnu.1

Rama workshop appears to be popular in Gupta Vakataka - Age. Ram was being carved out in the sculpture complexes of the cave temples. However, Rama sculpture were never abondently sculptured as those of Siva or Visnu. Visnu Dharmottaram2 and Agnipurana3 described how to carve out the images of Rama. Agnipurana specifies clearly that Ram image

2. रामकार्य: कार्यों रामकार्य: Threebrane: रामकार्य: श्रीमण्डलिङ्गम: तत
3. रामवाणी गरू अवस्था शक्ति द्वार विद्युष्म: रुप: ॥
Agnipurana-49 - 6.
should have two hands and it should hold conch, Dhanushya. The earliest representations of Rama are to be met in Marathwada in caves of Ellora. Besides Ellora complex, Rama sculpture has been found carved on the exterior walls of the Medieval structural temples. One of the best Ram sculpture is reported from the delapidated temple at Ambajogai. A pillar shaft at the Mandap of Amleswar Temple has been ornamented with beautiful Icons of Rama, Lakman and Sita. A sculpture has been very badly mutiliated, however, its all iconographic details are still clearly visible. Rama is shown standing in Tribhanga pose while others are in somebhang. They are with long bows. They are flanked by monkeys and Hanumanta.

Another Rama sculpture more exquisitely carved in standing on the exterior wall of Nagnath Temple, Aundha. Here, he seated in Sayalalitasana and is four handed. The upper right hand holds a bow and the lower left arrow. Two hands are broken.

Rama sculptures have been rarely carved in the iconographic panel of other structural temples of Marathwada. In couple of temples more, Rama sculpture has been carved in the form of a panel in minature sculpture on the middle capital of the
pillars in the Mandapa. Such miniature panels are found at Charthana and Wadgaon. One peculiar thing to be noticed is that, Ram sculpture never occupied predominant place in the sculpture complex of the structural temples in the region.
KRISHNA BALARAM

It is rather difficult to ascertain the exact date of the beginning of Krishna Balaram worship due to lack of proper historical evidence. The feats of cowherd Krishna are purely later interpolation, and those legends appears when Krishna is turned into an incarnation of Visnu$^1$. Hari-vamsa gives detailed accounts of Krishnalila. Bhagvat Purana follows to a great extent the Hari-vamsa, Mahabharata also gives us information regarding Krishna's relations with Pandavas.

Krishna Balaram Icons occupy a minor place in the iconography from the structural temples of Marathwada, Krishna legends are carved mostly on the middle capital of the pillars in the Mandapa. Such sculptures are found even at Sinner Jodga and Loner$^2$. However, Krishna legends occupy prominent place at Ellora caves. Govardhangiri$^3$ and Kaliyamardan$^4$ sculptures are the best representations.

of the Theme. Sculptural complex from temples at Bori, Pingali, Bhir and Aundha possess some minor Krishna miniature panels.

On the Mandovara of Nagnath Temple, Aundha, Krishna is shown as standing and embracing gopies flanking him. He holds venue in two of his hands. A sculptural panels from Aundha is exceptionally elaborate and bold.

At Bori and Pingali, Krishna holds the Murli by his two hands. At the earlier place he is flanked by Camaradharinis and at the later by the Gopies. This is, however, in the miniature form of sculpture carved on the middle capitals of the Mandapa pillars.
MATSYA AND KURMA

Matsya and Kurma are the two minor incarnations of Visnu. As compared to others, they are neither usually represented in stones or worshipped by peoples. However, Matsya and Kurma has greater symbolic significance in the sculpture complex of the temples. In Brahaddevata\(^1\) there is an interesting story of the Matsya Avatara. The main or the only function of Matsya as an incarnation of Visnu was to save Manu from the great flood and help him to assume the role of creator\(^2\).

Satapatha Brahmana\(^3\), and Mahabharata\(^4\) give the same legend with little variations. However, these two incarnations of Visnu, never witnessed and popular worship. These animal forms were treated as pious and auspicious and naturally they had symbolic

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1. रथि के वसित-समुद्र में से समुद्र निकट-वसि: त
   रथि निकट समुद्र: तम पर पूजन समय महादयभिः

Brahaddevata V.151-152.

significance. Their appearance in the sculpture is naturally in this form. They are invariably present in the incarnation panel or Dasavatara patta carved in caves and temples. Matsya and Kurma Avataras very rarely appear on the Mandovara. In Dasavatara patta all the incarnation sculptures are carved in a minature form. These a little scope for iconographic details and ornamentation. Dasavatara patta itself is normally excellent sculptural embellishment accompanying Visnu Icon. Such Dasavatara pattas and sculptural representation of Matsya and Kurma from Aundha, Nilanga, Shelgaon, Kesapuri, Ardhapur and Kawatha are noteworthy.

Matsya and Kurma has been carved on the exterior wall of Kankaleshwar Temple at Bhir. Both these sculptures are on the Jangha portion of the exterior. Both these sculptures are in the animal form. Matsya and Kurma sculptures from Kankaleswar temple are noteworthy.

Pl. XXII. 42

Matsya Avatar is depicted as a simple fish on the exterior wall of Kankaleshwar Temple, Bhir. It is in animal form.
A unique image of Matsya as an incarnation sculpture is carved on the exterior wall of the Kankaleswar Temple at Bhir. Here, Visnu is seated in the Yogasana with two lower hands in Dhyana-mudra. No emblems of Visnu are cut out. It is unique that the emblem of Matsya is shown in the lower portion of the panel. This sculpture is in the miniature form and is the first incarnation of Visnu, shown in complete human form which is very rarely seen. One such type of sculpture is referred to by Avasti\(^1\). The Saptamatrikas are usually carved in this manner whereas the emblem is carved out on the seat. While carving Matsya incarnation, sculptor appears to have been influenced by the tradition of carving Saptamatrikas. Though very rare, such type of Matsya sculpture are being reported now.

1. Avasthi Ramashraya - Khajuraho Ki Dev Pratimaya(Hindi)Pratham Khanda,Agra, 1967 Page No. and 
Kurma

Kurma is identified with the life sap of the world. The whole universe and the sun. The only important part which Kurma played as an Incarnation of Visnu was in the churning of the ocean in which it served as a support of the mountain Mandara\(^1\). According to Rupamandana\(^2\), the image of the Kurma is to be made exactly in the form of tortoise.

Pl.XXIII.44

An image of Kurma Avatara is carved on the exterior wall of Kankaleswar Temple, Bhir. It is carved in the form of tortoise, as per the canons of Visnu Dharmatatoram and Agnipurana. Kurma has been very rarely carved on the exterior of the structural temple. The only one example noticed so far is from Kankaleswar Temple of Bhir. Here the icon has been independently carved and is prominent representing. At few other places

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1. Dr. Desai, Kalpana - Op-cit Page-658
2. Dr. Srivastava. Rupamandana Page-139.
Kurma Icons are met with in the minature form and are in Dasavatara patta. This clearly indicates the subsidiary position of Matsya and Kurma in the iconographic complex of the region.
Buddha has occupied a prominent place in the art history of India. Icons of Buddha have been found mainly, through the cave Temples of India. These cave temples were the main centres of Buddhist art and it was here that the Buddhist Iconography has evolved. However, with the decline of Buddhism and further evolution of Hinduism, Brahamanical caves Iconography developed steadily. Number of Brahamanical caves have been carved out. Buddha enjoyed a position, however, minor it was in the Brahamanical Iconography of the temple complexes. Here, Buddha was being conceived as one of the incarnation of Lord Visnu. Some of the medieval structural temple of the Deccan have Buddha Icons on the exterior walls. They are all shown seated in Padamasana and are in Dhyanamudra. Buddha Icon from Pedgaon is noteworthy for its exhaustive exquisit carving. Icons of Buddha incarnation have been found at Bhir and Omerga. Few more loose sculptures of Buddha are reported from the délapidated temples.

at Junni and Wadgaon. All these Buddha Icons are the Incarnations Icon of Visnu. Buddha Icon, as rightly remarked by Dr. Desai Kalpana, does not carry any Vaisnavite emblem, and are seated on high lotus pedestal with hands in Abhay and Varad Mudra. The present Iconographic study brings out definite illustration of Buddha Icon as an Incarnation deity. Such illustration have not been reported earlier by Dr. T.A. Gopinathrao and Dr. Desai Kalpana. As there are textual references to Buddha incarnation but Buddha occupied a minor position in the Brahannical sculptural complex of the structural temples. However, Buddha was definitely sculptured as an incarnation deity as evidence from the above examples.

This aspect of Visnu is the one conceived to be assumed by him at the end of the Maha-Pralaya or the great deluge of universal dissolution. In Mahabharata, Visnu is described as reclining on the coil of serpent. The serpent symbolises eternity, as his name Anant suggests. To quote Gonda, "Visnu sleeps on Sesa, and Visnu is Sesa, Sesa is the form of supreme Being."

Devatamurtiparakarna, gives a detailed account of the Jalasayi Visnu, the God is to be carved reclining on the coils of the serpent Sesa amidst the waters, one of his hands is resting on the thigh and the other is near his navel. One of the upper hand is near the head and the other holds the Santanmanjari. Brahma is to be carved in the lotus issuing from the naval of Hari while the demons should be holding the lotus stalk.

1. T.A. Gopinathrao - Op-cit Page-263.
Sesasayi Visnu the deity as it has been conceived in Hindu Mythology and it has been represented in the Indian Iconography stands for certain, Metaphysical, Physical and Mythological concept. Metaphysics of the concept mainly Centres round the idea of creation. Anantasesa representing the nature, Visnu the Prakrati and Brahma the Purusa or Jiva. To be more specific in the language of Sankha philosophy Anant is prakrati. Visnu is Mahattatva and Brahma is Ahanikara. At first, there was eternal space full of darkness (TAMO MAYI) from which sprang up Intelligence or light (Chinmya) whence was born the world including man. Physically creation may be explained as the gradual evolution, from Proto-atomic matter, of the sun, which has its turn created the solar system. Now this proto-atomic matter is represented by Ananta. The sun by Visnu and world by Padma including Brahma¹.

Mythologically, Narayana residing in water, it is said to have slept on the serpent². Ananta in the premordial time, from his navel came fourth

a large lotus, the earth with its seven Island, forests and seas. In the midst of its petals was born Brahma.

Infine, there are two basic points of Iconographic Interest, one is that from Visnu's navel comes out of the Lotus, and the other is that on the same Lotus, God Brahma is seated. Like the Art representations, Epigraphical verses are also found, which reflects on the Iconographical details of this form.  

The Anantasayana Icons of Visnu there three major varieties.

1. **YOGASAYANAMURTI**

Yogasayanamurti is only two handed, the hand right/placed near the pillow and other is in the Kataka pose, By this side should be placed Bhrgu and Markandeya and near his feet the demon Madhu and Kaitabha; while on the lotus issuing from Visnu's navel should be Brahma. Above the image on the back wall should be sculptured the Ayudha - Purusas, Garuda, Visvakhsena and seven RSIS - all in the Anjali-mudra\(^2\).

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2. **Bhogasayanamurti**

   It has four hands. Two of them are same as in the Yogasayana, but nothing is said about the other two hands, Goddess Laksmi should be seated near his head holding a Lotus in her right hand. Bhumidevi should be shampooing his left foot. To the right of the main image should be Markendeya and to his left Bhrgu. On the South wall of the shrine should be Brahma and on the North Siva. Near his left feet should be demons Madhu and Kaitabha. Brahma should be seated on the lotus issuing from Visnu’s navel to his right should be five ayudha-purusas, Garuda and Surya. To the left of Brahma, should be Asvins and Tumbhru and Narada represented as young children.

3. **Virasayanamurti**

   Visnu holds the conch and the disc in his two hands. The other two being same as in the other images. By the side of his feet should be Laksmi and Bhumidevi. The demons Madhi and Kaitabha should be holding the feet of Visnu in their hands, Brahma is seated on the lotus.

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4. ABHICARAKAMURTI

It is one more variety of Visnu Icon wherein Visnu is to be carved reclining on the coil of the serpent\(^1\). The earliest Icons of Anantasayain of Visnu are found in the Ellora caves\(^2\). These are in the Dasavatara and Kailas cave temples. Anantasayain Visnu is a popular theme that has been immortalised in stone at number of places in cave and structural temple complexes.

Iconography of the Brahmanical Structural Temples of Marathwada is also equally influenced by this Vaisnavite art theme and artists have immortalize their art dreams in the form of useful icons of Anantasayain Visnu on the exterior walls of number of the structural temples. Many of these temples have now been reduced to a debris of ruins and elaborately sculptured stones are found scattered in the vicinity. In these ruins are some beautifully sculptured stones showing Anantasayain form of Visnu. Most of these type of Visnu

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icons found in Marathwada are the loose sculptures at Paithan, Junni, Latur, Ardhapur, Omerga, Ramling Mudgad, Jagji and Shelgaon. These loose sculptures are temporarily housed in some newly build shine or sometimes, they are laying & uncared near the ruined debris. Only two of these sculptures have been housed in a museum, one is in Marathwada History Museum and other one at Godateer Itihas Sanshodhan Mandal Museum, Nanded.

This form of Visnu image appears to be very popular in the region. Atleast a dozen of such Visnu icons are being reported from the structural temples of the region. Most of these icons were carved on the Mandovara and torona of Anataraldoors. Very few of the icons were on the exterior walls.

Pl. XXIII, 45

Anantasayain Visnu Sculpture is found at Paithan and presently placed in the shrine newly constructed Nrsimha Temple. There is in a black basalt and highly polished. Visnu is shown reclining on the bed prepared by the nine coils of the Sesa, whose seven hoods form a canopy over Visnu's head.
Visnu is holding disc and Gada, in the left hand. His upper right hand is under his head supporting it. His fourth hand is folded on his chest holding the Padama. His right leg is being pressed by Laksmi, seated at his feet and left leg is placed crossing the right leg. Brahma is seen seated on the Padma, the steam of which is seen coming out of Visnu's navel. Garuda is standing in Anjali Mudra. The entire panel is covered by beautifully sculptured frieze depicting ten incarnations in miniature form.

Pl. XXIV, 46

Another excellent sculpture of Sesasayi Visnu has been found at Ramling Mughad. Here Visnu is shown elegantly reclining on the serpent bed, with his left leg bent and kept on the right leg. His upper left hand supporting his head canopied by seven serpent hoods. His lower right hand is slightly bent and rests on his chest. His upper left hand holds cakra and lower left hand is stretched along the body.
His right foot is stretched on the lap of Laksmi. Behind the left leg, sits Bhumidevi, peculiar features to be noted is the weapons are not represented as their personifications here but are treated as actual weapons and mace is carved behind Bhumidevi. Dasavatarpattu is sculptured above depicting the ten avatars of Visnu. The incarnation Icons on the Dasavatara frieze are as per the canons of Rupamandana. 

Pl. XXIV, 47

Mostly identical with the earlier sculpture but more elegantly carved is a loose sculpture of Anantasayain Visnu found at Latur. Presently, it is laying in the vicinity of Siddheswar Temple. Here Visnu is laying on the bed of serpent coils. One of his upper right hand supports his head while the lower right hand is slightly bent and kept on his chest.

1. Dr. Srivastav - Rupamandana - Op-cit Page-140.
By his upper left hand, he holds conch and his lower left hand is stretched along the body. The weapon mace is lying near the upper right hand. His right leg is slightly bent and kept on the lap of Laksmi and Laksmi shampooing his foot. His left leg is slightly bent and kept on the right leg. His person is adorned with various ornaments. Brahma is seated on the lotus. On the top of the panel is shown incarnation frieze.

One of the well preserved Icon of Sesasayi is in Marathwada University, Aurangabad. The said sculpture has been found at Golegaon in Silled Taluka. Visnu is four handed and is laying on the bed of a serpent coil. He supports his head by the upper right hand near the chick. The upper left hand holds the disc and the lower left hand mace. The goddesses Laksmi sitting on a stool nearby is shampooing his right foot.

1. Icon No. 31 - Marathwada University History Museum, Aurangabad.
Behind his left leg are demons carved miniature. The top of the panel shows the incarnation panel. Unique feature of this Icon is that the incarnation deities are carved in Sthansaka pose.

Another Sesasayi Visnu image from Marathwada University Museum is much similar in composition to the one described above. Here Visnu is lying on the bed of serpent coils. One of his right hand supports his head. The other right hand is kept on the chest holding Padma. The other iconographical details are similar to the Sesasayi Icon from Latur.

A very intricately carved figures of Sesasayi has come to light from Jumni, District Nanded. Here, as usual Visnu is lying on the serpent bed holding usual weapons and the entire panel is richly decorated.

1. Icon.No.48 - Marathwada History Museum, Aurangabad.
Various similar representation of this form of Visnu are observed in various parts of the region. Most of the sculptures are loose sculptures found scattered in the vicinity of ruined temple sides. This form appears to be known fairly well to the people. But it did not acquire a very important place in Visnu Iconography. There is hardly any change of evolution in his representation of this form.

The only variation worth noting is these representations is about the attendant figures. The number of these figures increases in some sculptures and the panel became more elaborate and at some other sculptors reduces the number of attendance. Sculptors have chiseled the main Icon of Visnu with equal master's stroke.
Lakṣmī as a Goddess of prosperity, is being associated with Visnu from an early period, but her icons in the Alingana-mudra like the Uma-Mahesvara form of Siva, are neither referred to any of the early texts on Iconography, nor any image found prior to the close of the Gupta period\(^1\). The earliest representation of Lakṣmī are the independent images of Gaja-Lakṣmī found from Barhut and other places\(^2\).

The sculptural evidences in Marathwada and other places, reveals that Lakṣmī is first associated with Jalasain-Visnu, and lateron was associated with Visnu in the form of Lakṣmī - Nārayana. Poetic composition about Lakṣmī - Nārayana are as gay and lively as those about Umā Mahesvara\(^3\).

"May Hari bring prosperity to you, Hari who with his body marked with strivatasa, embracing Lakṣmī, was taunted, by the speech of the Goddesses, saying, O, "Lord do not spoil thy fresh garland."

"Oh! Goddess, know it to be morning the gentle breeze (carrying the fragrance) of the kadamba flower blows from Nandana forest and the moon has lost it's beams", having thus with eagerness and in an affected manner addressed her, (The God) Damodara forcibly embraced Lakṣmī whose Limbs were unsteady at that moment^- and who was in a helpless and disturbed condition. May that Damodara be pleased^1.

Visvakarmāsāstra quoted by Hemadri, gives an elaborate description of Lakṣmī Narayana accompanied by Siddhi and the other accessory figures. "Lakṣmī and Nārāyana are to be carved together in their divine forms. On the right is Viṣṇu and on the left Lakṣmī, with one of her arms round his neck and the other holding the lotus. She is beautifully modelled and her young body is decked with ornaments. Siddhi is to be represented by her side, below the God, the conch and disc are to be represented in their personified forms., as dwarf with folded hands and are equipped with the yogapatta^2.

As the name indicates, Viṣṇu as Narayana is to be carved in the company of the Goddesses Lakṣmī. The Goddess, is generally on the left of the God. The right hand of the Goddesses should be thrown round the neck of Nārāyanā, whose left hand in their should be made to embrace the goddesses round her waist, in her left hand Lakṣmī should hold Lotus¹.

The images of Lakṣmī Nārāyanā can be classified as standing (sthana) and Sitting (asana).

**Standing**

Vaisnava Purana's like the Bhagvat Puranā, and Viṣṇu Puranā do not describe Sthanaka Lakṣmī Nārāyanā in details². Sthanaka images were very rarely sculptured Iconography of the region under study reveals that Sthanka Laksmī Narayana Icons are very few in the region with the exception of Dharmapuri Sthanka Laksmī Narayana has not been carved on any of the structural temples of Mahakali. This form do not appear to be popular even in cave sculptures.

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1. T.A. Gopinathrao. - E.H.I. V.I.P.I., Page-258-259
A rare standing image of Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇā of a superior artistic merit is to be found on the exterior wall of Kedareshwara temple at Dharmapuri. Here, Viṣṇu stands in dehūda pose in dvibhang posture, with the disc and mace in two upper hands. He seems to be in happy mood, and embraces Lakṣmī with his lower hand. Lakṣmī standing to the left of Viṣṇu embraces him with her right hand, while her other hands are broken. Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇā, both are the icons are richly ornamented, the Sthānaka images of Lakṣmī—Nārāyana are less popular than the Āsāna ones. However, part from the stylistic varieties, there is hardly any Iconographic peculiarity displayed in these Sthānaka images.

**ASANA**

The seated images of Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇā are more popular than the standing ones. According to Rupmandana¹, Nārāyaṇā holding his usual emblems and Lakṣmī holding a lotus, should be riding on Garuda.

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¹ Dr. Srivastav. — Rupmandana — Op-cit Page-169
Number of the sculptures, carved as per the canons of Rupmandan, have been found both in cave temples and the structural temples. One such beautiful sculpture appears in Ravan-Ki-Khai cave of Ellora cave complex. This tradition of Asana Laksmi-Narayana Icon seems to have greatly influenced the structural temple sculpture. Number of such icons have been found as loose sculptures and on the exterior walls of the medieval structural temples in the region. Sculptures from Latur, Charthana Kawatha, Aurangabad are noteworthy.

PL. XXVI, 51

A Laksmi Narayan Asana image of excellent workmanship is placed in a newly built temple at Charthana in Parbhani District. The sculpture was found as a loose sculpture in the ruins of a medieval temple at Charathana. Here Laksmi and Narayan are seated on a pedestal with their feet supported by the hands of Garuda in flying pose. Laksmi seated on the left thigh of Narayan, passes her right arm round his shoulder and embraces the Lord, while her left hand is broken. Narayan by one of his hand embraces his consort,
whereas the other hands are broken. Here Laksmi is beautifully modelled and her young body is decked with ornaments. Laksmi and Narayanä have a benignant expression on their faces gently looking at each other.

Pl. XXVII, 52

A similar type with less ornamented Icon of Laksmi Narayana is deposited in Marathwada University H.M., Aurangabad. It is preserved in the sculpture gallery in the Verandah. Laksmi Narayana are flying on Garuda. Garuda is carved in human form. By his right hand, he holds Visnu's right leg and by his left hand, he supports the hanging leg of Laksmi. Here Visnu is carved four handed and and hands are badly mutilated. By his left hand, he embraces Laksmi. Laksmi seated on Lords left thigh, passes her right arm round Narayana's shoulder. While her left hand is resting on his lap. As usual both of them are adorned with usual ornaments.

Pl. XXVII, 53

At Ramling Mudgad, Laksmi - Narayana, Icon has been found deposited in a private house
this image is carved on a slab of black basalt. Here Narayana is four handed, having usual emblems, in his hands. His person is adorned with various ornaments. The incarnations in miniature are carved in such a way as to form aureole round his head. A beautiful Makartorana is carved out in the centre. Laksmi sits on the left lap of Narayana. Her right hand is on the shoulder of Lord - Lord embraces Laksmi with his lower left hand. Garuda is carved on the lower side in flying position, and by his left hand, he supports the left hanging leg of Laksmi. This is the unique and fine specimen so far observed in Marathwada.

Another Icon of Laksmi Narayana is observed and now placed in step well of Siddheshwar temple Latur. It has been referred to earlier by G.H. Khare and Dr. Degloorkar G.B.¹. In this Nārāyanā is shown four armed holding the emblem, the conch, the lotus the mace, and the disc, in the order which the Nārāyanā form of Viṣṇu holds. His person's is adorned with various ornaments. Laksmī seated on the left lap of Lord and with Mahalinga in her left hand and

with her right hand on Viṣṇu's shoulder. Nārāyaṇa is shown embracing Lakṣmī with his lower left hand. Apart from stylistic variations, there is hardly any Iconographic peculiarity displayed in these Icon.
The complete form of Viṣṇu that evolved in the medieval period is that of Yoganārāyanā or yogesvara Viṣṇu. Here Viṣṇu is represented as the yogi in Padmasana and dhyana-mudra. Both Sthanak and Asana sculptures of Yoganarayana are found in the region.

**Pl.XXVIII,34**

The Sthanaka Yoganārāyanā or yogesvara Viṣṇu is observed on the exterior wall of the Kedareswar temple Dharmapuri. Here Viṣṇu stands in Samabhanga posture, having four hands. He holds conch and cakra in the two upper hands, while the lower two hands are in dhyānāmudra, holding lotus. He is also adorned with various ornaments, and the vanmala quite unrealistic to this posture.

**ASANA**

Yogesvara Viṣṇu represents him as yogi and hence the most important feature of the image is the Padmasanā and dhyāna mudra. Viṣṇu seated in dhyāna-mudra as the dhyani Buddhā does, but the only
difference is the number of hands. Visnu even in
his dhyani form is endowed with four hands, the
lower two in the dhyani mudra and the upper two
holding two emblems of Visnu\(^1\). The description of
yogesvara Visnu is found in Chaturvarga - chintamani\(^2\). Two beautiful Asana Yogeswar Visnu icons
have been found in the region.

Pl.XXVIII,55

Yogeswar Visnu Icon has been carved in
one of the main niches on the Mandovara
of the exterior of Tripple shrined Mahadev
Temple at Omega. He is seated in Sukhasana and has four arms. In the upper
right and left, he holds the conch and
disc respectively. The remaining two hands
are in dhyanmudra but keeps on the lap.
He wears Kiritmukta and usual ornaments.
There is aurole around head of Visnu.

Pl.XXIX,56

Another same type of Sculpture is observ-
ed on the exterior wall of the Vithal
Deul Pangaon. It is enshrined in beau-

2. Chaturvarg Chintamani-,II, 114.
tifully carved niche on the mandava of the temple. Here the image is carved in Asana posture, and dhyani form. The upper two hand holds the emblems of Visnu's conch and disc respectively. The lower two hands in dhyanamudra are on the lap as they are in the earlier example.
Hindu Mythology depicts Visnu as a supreme deity whose prime work is to preserve the universe created by Brahma. The concept of Samhar is associate with Siva. Here, the Iconographic study of the region brings out two remarkable panels wherein Visnu is shown in his Samharmudra and is sculptured as killing the daityas. Visnu is associated with the Samhar, but in his incarnation form, Visnu has been depicted in his original form and is seen killing the daityas. There are rare examples of these types of sculptures in Indian Iconography. Two such noteworthy Icons have been found on the exterior wall of Kedareswar temple at Dharmapuri.

**Pl. XXIX,57**

Visnu Samhar Muti has been carved on the Mandovara of Kedareshwar temple at Dharmapuri. It stands 17th Icon on the gallery of the Mandovara. Visnu is four armed, holding the disc in upper right hand and spear in the lower right hand. He screws the daityas stomach. The upper left hand is engaged in holding the daityas hand,
holding sword, and with the remaining hands he
holds the head of the daitya. The entire panel
is beautifully sculptured.

Pl. XXX, 58

Another remarkable and unique panel
depicting Visnu Sañharmūrti appears on
the exterior wall of the same temple
at Dharmapuri. The panel is carved at Icon
Number 68 on the Mandovara. Visnu is four
armed. The upper right arm is broken,
upper left hand engaged in holding the
daityas hand which holds sword. By his
lower left hand, he holds daityas head
and by his lower right hand he holds his
face. Here, daityas face is rather differ-
ent. Daitya is trying to kill the Lord
by his left hand sword, but his efforts
seems to be invain. The panel is identical
with the earlier one with the exception
of slight variations.