CHAPTER – I

NARRATIVE ART IN INDIA
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Indian art and aesthetic principles lead one into a flowering paradisiacal garden. The land is so vast and its history so complex that Indian art presents a rich and kaleidoscopic vision of styles and forms. Narrative art is one such style continuously practiced by the artists and patronised by royal personage. The scholars and laymen alike throughout Indian history have appreciated it. Indian narrative art has its roots strongly fixed in the religions of the land. Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism used the art in sculpture and painting as the vehicle of communication. During the course of time each religion, influenced by one another, developed a vast and varied mythology to suit the changing needs of the society. To make its mythology popular and eternal each religion used narrative technique. As a result, the stūpas, caves and temples – their walls, ceilings, pillars and lintels – were filled with panels depicting stories from the sacred books.

In this chapter an attempt is made to briefly discuss the themes selected for narration in sculpture and paintings by the artists of this great country. For convenience the themes are divided under different heads such as Buddhist, Jain, secular, Saivite and Vaishnavite themes. The last mentioned is again divided into Bhāgavata, Bhārata, Rāmāyana and Krishnalīla themes. These are discussed, as far as possible in chronological order.

BUDDHIST THEMES:

In the five hundred years beginning with the second century B.C. narrative reliefs carved in stone are one of Buddhism’s contribution to Indian sculpture. In the Sunga period narrative sculpture first appeared on Indian scene in a rich series of carvings
comprising a portion of the rail around the Buddhist stūpa in Bārhut. Important episodes from the life of Buddha were narrated here. “Some popular tales, with a message to society, were adopted by the Buddhists and were told as Jātakas. By this clever device, the wit of the popular tradition was brought to the support of the new teaching.” These tales were depicted on Bārhut and other stūpas. These stories were precisely labelled. Latukila jātaka, Kukkuṭa-Bidāla jātaka, funny tales like Āramadūsaka jātaka, philosophical stories like Mahājanaka jātaka and others were narrated in great detail. Many jātakas are narrated here. The Bārhut sculptor adopted a synoptic method to narrate the sequence. “Here for the first time, we come across scenes from the life of Buddha and the jātakas precisely labelled and to be compared with texts for corroboration. The labels giving the titles of the jātakas represented generally confirm to the titles in the jātaka texts though sometimes showing variation. The titles of the jātakas are mentioned in legends carved in early characters in each panel.”

Suvama karkata jātaka, kukkuta bidāla jātaka are some such examples. These jātakas appear on the balustrade and the tōranas unlike the stūpa at Sānchi where only the tōranas are embellished with jātaka stories. But the panels do not tell the entire story always. Singling out only its most significant episodes they merely remind one of the fables by presenting the actors in telling attitudes. The dream of queen Māyādevi, the descent of Buddha from Heaven, the presentation of Jētavana to Buddha by Anādhapindaka are some of the episodes from the life of the ‘Great Master’ selected for visual representation here.

On the stūpa at Sānchi numerous jātakas are represented in sculpture. The art of Sānchi shows a marked struggle on the part of the craftsmen to evolve a more natural mode of representation. Among the jātakas represented here none is more elaborate than
that of Vessantara jātaka. Chhaddanta jātaka is narrated at great length. Mahākapi jātaka
and Sāma jātaka are as vivid here as at Bārhut. More depth, better arrangement of
figures, a better plan and conception are noticed here. The sizes of the figures are also
more realistic when compared with Bārhut. Events from the life of Buddha attracted
the attention of the artist more. "The dream of queen Māyādevī, the Master’s turban,
offering of honey by a monkey at Vaisāli, Māra’s birth and his enlightenment,
Māhasambōdhi, the turning of the wheel of law, the great disease, the conversion of
Jatilas, the descent of Buddha by a jewelled ladder at Sāmkṣa after preaching to his
mother in Heaven and some other miracles of the Master are depicted with great zest."

In the South, the magnificent rail around Amarāvati stūpa has excellent panels
illustrating the Buddhist legend. The story of Udayana and Samavati, the visit of
Ajātasatru, Buddha’s visit to the palace of Yasodhara, the subjugation of Nalagiri,
Māndhata and other jātakas were narrated here with superb skill. The contours of
figures, the pose and poise, the decoration of garment and jewellery, simple but effective
expression, dynamic action are all distinctive of this great art of the Deccan in the middle
of the second century A.D. The Madras Museum collection of Amarāvati marbles
represent nearly twenty two jātakas, most of which belong to the rail period. Among
them some rare episodes like Nalagiri Damana, the story of Angulimāla are highly
effective. The world famous medallion depicting subjugation of Nalagiri, let loose on
Buddha in the streets of Rajagraha by his wicked cousin, Dēvadatta, has a synoptic
presentation of the events, the first half showing the furious elephant creating havoc and
striking terror… and the other depicting the animal again but calm and kneeling at the
feet of the Master. It displays the exuberance in artistic output in the monuments of
time.
Here are several splendid sculptures illustrating jātakas not found elsewhere that proves the existence of early texts for the early carvers of Amarāvati. The legend of king Sibi is not from the extant Sibi jātaka but illustrates a variant early text now lost but preserved for us in a late version, that of Kshemendra’s Avadāna kalpalata. The story of Padumā Kumāra is another such example. Some of the jātakas portrayed here are either little known or not portrayed elsewhere. Lossa jātaka is one such.11

Narrative themes did not miss the attention of the Gāndhāra artist. In a panel, now preserved in National Museum, Delhi, labelled as toilet of Samadasi, Nanda welcoming Buddha is depicted. “The story of Buddha depicted in Gāndhāra sculpture is quite interesting for comparison with that of indigenous sculpture and peculiarities like the actual figure of the child Siddhartha issuing from the side of Māyādevi are noteworthy.”12 There are certain special favourite themes in the Gāndhāra sculpture, not usually met with elsewhere. The miracle of Buddha under a tree during ploughing festival, the story of interpretation of the furious barking of a dog near Sravasti by Buddha, the young prince, Siddhartha going to school in a ram-cart are but a few examples.13 The renunciation of Gouthama, shown in two stages on a panel, now preserved in the Lahore Museum, speaks volumes of the narrative ability of Gāndhāra Sculptor.14

Buddhist mythology is also found in Indian paintings. In cave No.9 and 10 at Ajanta we find such themes in paintings. The Vākāṭaka painter’s tender affection on themes of flora and fauna can be noticed in Hamsa jātaka, Mriga jātaka and Vessantara jātaka found in the Ajanta caves. Vessantara jātaka in cave No.27 is a strikingly beautiful picture of urban life in ancient India.15
JAIN THEMES:

Jain sculptures on the whole lack variety and versatility as compared to early Buddhist and Hindu sculptures. The general restraint and orthodoxy not to deviate from the original injunctions of Jainism offered little scope to the Jain artists to exhibit their professional talent and ingenuity. Still at some places Jain narrative art was noticed. In the caves of Udayagiri and Khandagiri in Orissa, certain Jain themes were noticed. Some sculptural freizes of Rāṇigumpha cave depict a procession led by Pārśvanātha. A.C. Mittal opines that the friezes in the lower main wing, here, may present Pārśva as a thīrthankara, his wanderings and the honours shown to him.

The Tejpal temple, Mount Abu has many intricate carvings of Jain mythology. "The sculptor’s love of narration is seen at its best in the crowded grouping of Nēminātha’s life story on corridor ceiling here. Ādipāla killing the buffalo demon is narrated here. The story of princess Sudarsana and Samāli vihāra thīrtha is carved in Nēminātha temple, Kumbhēria, South Rajasthan. Scenes from the marriage party of Aristanēmi, the twenty second Thīrthankara, is depicted on the ceiling of the same place in a wide panel of 8' length. Scenes from the early life of Krishna, the cousin of Nēminātha, in Gōkul are also seen here. Illustrations on palm leaf manuscripts of Kalpasūtra from Gujarat reveal many jain themes such as nativity of Mahāvira. Paintings on palm leaf belonging to the Hoysala art, preserved in Moodbidri, contain some Jain themes. Such narrative panels are very limited, when compared to the same in other faiths. Rāyadurg and Kambadūru in Anantapur district, Dānavulapādu in Cuddapah district and many places like Patāncheruvu in Telangana, were great centres of Jainism. But narrative panels are not known to be existing in these places.
SECULAR AND HISTORICAL THEMES:

The Indian sculptor, showed keen interest to narrate secular and even historical themes in his art, the first examples of which, we find in the Sunga period. Historical incidents like Ajātashatru visiting Buddha and the presentation of Jētavana by Anādha Pindaka to the great Master are some of the lively scenes of immense historical interest. At Sānci some historical themes are narrated. Asoka’s unsuccessful attempts to open up the Rāmagrāma Stūpa and his visit to the Bōdhi tree are some such. Amarāvati, also exhibits certain historical incidents, which are not found elsewhere. They are Ajātashatru’s consultations with Jīvaka before he visited Buddha, his visit to Buddha, Prasēnajit entertaining Ānanda and other monks, division of relics of Buddha and Asoka’s attempt to open up Rāmā grāma stūpa guarded by a Naga king.

In the early carvings of Udayagiri and Khandagiri in Orissa the famous story of Udayana, popular in Brahmanical and Buddhist lore, is depicted in a slight variant Jain version. Some of the sculptured friezes in cave No.1 Udayagiri depict the king (Khāravēla) commencing his military campaign from his capital city and submission of the chiefs of different lands mentioned in the Ĥāthigumpha inscription. The best scene here represents the glorious entry of the digvijayi (victorious) king into the capital city. The two full and two half spandrills on the façade of the lower right wing depict four scenes. Fergusson observes that the sculptures are of a wholly domestic character and represent a nāch (dance) in a queen’s palace. These may be related to the life of Khāravēla and his queens as the dancing scene bespeaks the spirit of Ĥāthigumpha inscription where Khāravēla has been represented as a great lover of dance and music.

In the upper story of the same cave is a panel which represents the romantic marriage of
the hero of Hathigumpha inscription with the daughter of a hill chief, as it is mentioned in the inscription.31

Manchapurigumpha (cave No.9, Udayagiri) has a long drawn panel identified by scholars like T.N. Ramachandran and N.K. Sahu, as worship of a sacred Jain symbol by Khāravēla, his chief priest and other royal family members.32 Ganeshgumpha (cave No.10, Udayagiri) has a sculptured freize depicting the story of Udayana and Vāsavadatta, their flight from Ujjayani on elephant. Three terracotta plaques from Kousāmbi, the capital of Vatsarāja Udayana, now in Bhārat Kala Bhavan, Banāras, also deal with the same theme. S.K. Saraswathi appreciates the linear rhythm found in the panels, which are freed from unnecessary details. He hails them as “belonging to a natural tradition, a local movement dependent mainly on the art of Madhya desa.”33

The National Museum, New Delhi, houses an interesting Kushān sculpture depicting the first act of Mrichchakatika, an early Sanskrit drama. It shows Vasantasēna, the heroine of the play, trying to escape from the pursuing villain, Śakāra.34 Two reliefs of the Gāndhāra art depict the technique of wine preparation as known to the Gāndhāras. The reliefs depict two men standing inside a tank kneading grapes while one more outside the tank ready with fresh supply of grapes in his hands. The juice flows into a bowl and the filtered juice drops into a tall wine jug on the ground.35

A few scenes depicting the culture of the people in the Gupta period are found in sculpture and paintings. A big stone lintel from a ruined temple in Pawāya, now preserved in the Gwalior Museum describes a happy Janapada view in the Gupta period. The panel consists of ten female figures engaged in dance and music. Except the dancing figure in the fore ground all are seated on round cushions and play on different
musical instruments except the woman in the extreme left holding a lotus flower who is watching the scene. She appears to be the principle figure who is being entertained by the other women. The painting on the façade of caves 4-5 at Bagh reveal a dance scene known as Hallisaka which resembles the kōlātām dance in South India. Such scenes are also seen in the projections of the plinth of Dasavatāra temple, Deogarh. In south India we find a few panels of such sculpture. Mention must be made of a painting in one of the caves of Ajanta, which is believed to be that of Pulakēśin II of the Bādāmi chālukya dynasty. He is shown here in his court receiving the ambassador of king of Persia.

Tales from Panchathantra find place in the Navabrahma temples, at Alampur. The Pallavas had their history carved on the slabs of the walls of the pillared cloister of the Vaikunthā Perumal temple, Kanchi.

The Eastern Gāngas (A.D. 750-1250) built many temples. Narasimha, the famous king in that line, built the Konark temple. It contains delicate carvings showing the life of the king. One panel depicts Narasimha as a gay prince in a swing. In another he, who is also a poet and patron of arts, is shown amid the poets of his court. Another shows him wielding a mighty bow and adoring at the shrines built by his ancestors.

A sculpture of the 9th Century A.D., now in the Bangalore Museum, describes another historical episode. It represents an unforgettable scene – Nītimārga, the Gāṅga king, receiving the crown from king Rāchamalla who lie on his death bed.

The Brihadiśvara temple, Tānjore, has a few panels describing Rāja Rāja I, taking part in some of the religious ceremonies at the temple. The dance hall at Chidambaram has a panel having a large image of Natarāja adored by a prince, obviously Rāja Rāja
himself with three of his queens, his guru Karuvur Devar and a large retinue consisting of priests and devotees.\textsuperscript{40}

The Chandêlas (A.D. 950-1203), the builders of temples at Khajurâho and other places, also had a desire to narrate their history in sculpture. One can see historical and mythological scenes revealing a wealth of human imagination rendered in the most dazzling forms in the Chandêla Temples.\textsuperscript{41} The prince fighting a lion illustrates the legend of the progenitor of the race. The Hoysala temples also have a somewhat similar motif that occurs prominently in their temples – a prince fighting a tiger – explaining the derivation of their family name. The Hoysalas in their early inscriptions trace their origin to the mythical founder of the Hoysala dynasty, Såla. One day when Såla went to visit the temple of Vasantikâdëvi a tiger bounded out of the forest, rushed into the temple and was about to pounce upon a Jaina ascetic, Sudatta. At this, the latter commanded Såla to kill the tiger saying ‘Hoy’ ‘Såla’ (Såla, hit it). Accordingly Såla killed the animal and was blessed by the ascetic to become the king of the locality.\textsuperscript{42} The Kësava temple at Belur shows scenes of their kings holding durbar. The first screen, to the right of the east doorway, represents the durbar of Vishnuvardhana.\textsuperscript{43} On the other side of the doorway, one screen shows the durbar of Narasimha I, son of Vishnuvardhana.

The Vijayanagara artists narrated important contemporary incidents in sculpture and painting. Mention must be made of uniquely royal imagery of the processional friezes in the Hazâra Râma temple, Hampi. “It can be interpreted in the light of Portuguese description of the great Maharnavami festival. The remarkable correspondence between the eye witness accounts of Maharnavami, and the themes illustrated on the temple walls indicate that this monument was closely linked with royal ceremonies.” \textsuperscript{44}
Mrs. Anna L. Dallapiccola, J.M. Fritz, George Mitchell and S. Rajasekhara observe thus: “In particular we interpret these scenes (friezes on the enclosure walls) as narrative illustrations of the Maharnavami processions.” 45 The four authors further observe thus: “We have little doubt that they are intended to depict the king himself. We believe that these carvings were intended to depict the king himself. We believe that these carvings were intended to portray the actual processions of the Maharnavami. As we shall see these descriptions, particularly of the processions, (by the foreign travelers) are easily matched with the friezes of the Rāmchandra temple. Thus we interpret these carvings as visualizations of actual historic events.” 46 It is impossible to disagree with them. The paintings of this period also show a few contemporary events such as sage Vidyāranya being taken in a palanquin etc. 47

Thus we see the narration of secular and historical themes in sculpture and paintings, though limited in number, attracting the attention of the artists, from the times of the Sungas to the Vijayanagara period.

SAIVITE THEMES:

Saivism in India is as old as the hills. 48 The cult of Siva is prevedic and non-aryan. Siva’s worship is of great antiquity. Siva is complex product and Saivism is not a single cult but a bundle of cults. 49 But the iconography and mythology of Saivite deities are not as vast and varied as those of Vaishnavite deities. It may be due to the fact that Siva is mostly worshiped in the form of linga in temples. He is also anthropomorphically represented in sculpture.

The origin of Siva worship is traced in the Harappan culture. During the Gupta period Siva temples with lingams enshrined are numerous. In Gupta art Saivism here and there, as at Bhūmara, occasionally spells out captivating forms of Siva such as
Natarāja on the facades of temples.\textsuperscript{50} An outstanding sculpture of the fifth century from Nāchana kuthārā depicts Mahānaṭa Siva in the tāṇḍava dance. This appears to be the earliest representation of the tāṇḍava motif so far known in Indian Art.\textsuperscript{51} A terracotta plaque from Kasia, now in the Lucknow Museum shows seated Pārvati with her two sons Ganēsa and Kārtikēya engaged in a lively scramble for sweet balls.\textsuperscript{52} Another from Ahichchhatra, U.P., now preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi, dated 5-6 century A.D., shows Sivaganas destroying the sacrifice of Daksha.\textsuperscript{53} The story of Siva receiving Ganga, attracted the sculptor in ancient India. A highly narrative relief of Siva receiving Ganga dated 5\textsuperscript{th} century A.D., collected from Bihar is in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.\textsuperscript{54} By 7\textsuperscript{th} century A.D., the cult of Siva had developed a full-fledged iconography illustrating his fourteen līlāmurtis later codified in the form of Silpa texts.

The Kailāsanādha temple at Kanchi is the richest of all the Pallava temples in terms of figural decoration. All incidents of Sivapurāṇa are narrated here in main niches, inside the attached cardinal and corner niches and on their outer walls. The western niche shows Siva in ārdhva and sandhya tāṇḍava poses. The other niches contain Tripurāri, Kālāri, samhāra tāṇḍava forms. On the south outer wall of mukhamandapā and antarāla there are images of Durga, Siva tāṇḍava, Siva cutting off the fifth head of Brahma, Jalandhara vadha, Tripurāntaka, Kālāri, disruption of Dakshayagna, Gajāntaka and other forms. On the north we see Chandēśanugraha, Brahmānugraha, Indrānugraha, Rāvanānugraha, Kalyāṇa Sundara, Vishāpaharana, Kāmānugraha, Lingōdbhava, Vīnādhara and Gangādhara forms.\textsuperscript{55} Here one can notice a particular pattern in selecting the episodes. All samhāra or ugra aspects of Siva are seen on south side while the soumya or anugraha forms are depicted on the north and west. This is because the south is the direction of Yama, the God of death. The sculptured
panel in Durga caves, Mahābalipuram depicting the battle scene between Durga and Mahishasura stands testimony to the narrative ability of the Pallava sculptor. The Talagirīsvara temple in Pānmalai, built by Pallava king Rājasimha, contains the painting of dancing Siva in talasamsphōlīta pose, a favourite theme of Rājasimha. Witnessing the divine dance is Bhavānī standing in a delightful tribhanga. This is one of the finest specimens of early south Indian painting.\footnote{56}

The mythology of Siva dominates much of the early western Chalukyan art.\footnote{57} Siva as Natarāja, in Rāvanaphadi, Aihole, flanked by dancing matrikas.\footnote{58} Rāvana shaking mount Kailāsa in Pattadakal,\footnote{59} Kumāra killing Tāraka in the Huccimallī temple, Aihole,\footnote{60} Līlā-mūrtis of Siva carved on exterior walls between niches and dēva-kōshtas of the Pāpanādha temple, Pattadakal, rectangular panels depicting Siva's marriage, Siva and Pārvati seated on mount Kailāsa, Rāvana shaking mount Kailāsa carved on columns of the Visvēśvara temple, Pattadakal\footnote{61} are some of the narrative panels of Siva which belong to Bādāmi Chālukyan period. Ugra aspects of Siva are depicted in plenty in their temples. Andhakavadhamūrti is particularly popular with the Bādāmi Chālukyan sculptors.\footnote{62} Siva also figures prominently in Kirātārjunīyam panels of this period. This theme occurs in the Pāpanādha, Mallikārjuna and Virūpāksha temples of Pattadakal.\footnote{63}

Saivism enjoyed a boost under the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. “The Rāṣṭrakūṭas, with some exceptions, were staunch Saivas. With their advent Saiva faith replaced the Vaishnava faith.”\footnote{64} The Kailasa temple, Ellora houses some eloquently carved narrative panels of Siva such as Siva and Pārvati seated together with Nandi nearby indicating a domestic scene,\footnote{65} Siva and Pārvati playing dice,\footnote{66} Rāvana shaking Mount Kailāsa,\footnote{67} Siva’s marriage,\footnote{68} Pārvati at toilet,\footnote{69} Siva conversing with Pārvati attended by deities and maids on both sides\footnote{70} and rescue of Mārkandēya\footnote{71} are found here. The ceilings and
walls of the Kailāsa temple, Ellōra were originally wonderfully painted the survivals of which were discovered by Dubreuil. Siva as Lingōdbhava, here, is so elaborately shown that the painting occupies backwalls of three cells at the back of the shrine.  

The temples of Bhuvaneswar, in Orissa, contain certain intricately carved panels of Saivite themes. The Parasurāmēśvara, Svarajalēśvara, Bharathēśvara, Kapilēśvara and Paramaguru temples here are full of such panels.

The Chōlas, who were great patrons of Saivism, built many magnificent temples for Siva, Kumāra and others and filled them with sculptured panels depicting Sivapurāṇa, Periyapurānam and other stories. Siva Natarāja is the most popular theme here. Nātyasāstra describes karanas (combined movement of hands and feet in dance). Siva as Nataraja is shown displaying such karanas in Chōla temples. “The earliest such carvings still ‘insitu’ in South India are inside the main shrine of the Brihadēśvara temple, Tanjore.” Here only 81 karanas are depicted. Sivaramamurti and Raghavan interpret the Tanjore karana panels as depicting Siva with four hands, two of which dance while the two other hold various emblems. The early Chōla temples are famous for miniature sculpture narrating Siva themes. Temples at Kumbakōnam, Tirukkandiyur, Kilūr, Takkōlam, Pūnjai, Kāmarasavalli are but a few examples. S.R. Balasubramanyam observes “these panels have not been fully photographed and studied. It will be an interesting project of absorbing interest.” The Siva temple, Kāmarasavalli is associated with the story of Tālakkai and Kunkuliyakkalaiya nāyanars. The temple of Thiruvārur which was praised by Appar in his book ‘Thiruthertha thogai’ has interesting panels on the north eastern side of outer prākāra describing the story of legendary Chōla king Manuchōlan. This legend itself is recorded in an inscription of the fifth reignal
year of Paramēsari Vikrama Chōla inscribed on the north wall of the second prakara of this temple.78

The Sārangapani temple, Kumbakonam, of later Chōla period also contains such panels.79 The Brahmapurīśvara temple, Pullamangai contains some sculptures depicting Sivalīlas.80 Tripurāntaka vadha is depicted in great detail in the Bṛhadēśvara temple. “The narration begins with the representation of triple cities and ends with Vishnu assuming Māyavatāra (Buddha) to convert the asuras so that they may easily be destroyed by Siva.”81 By this time an interesting story of Buddha was popular in south according to which Vishnu took the form of Buddha to convert Tripurāsuras into Buddhism which did not believe in Vedas or gods so that Siva could destroy them.82

The Gangaikondachōlapuram temple contains panels of Kāmāntaka, Chandēśanugrahamūrti, and Ānandatāndava of Siva.83 In the Amrutationēśvara temple, Mēlaikkadambur, Saivite legends such as the stories of Kannappa nāyanār, Chandēsa, Kunkiliyakkalaiya nāyanār and others, are depicted.84 The Airavatēśvara temple, Dārāsuram, has many miniature panels describing Periyapurānam. The story of Sundaramūrti nāyanār rescuing a child from the mouth of a crocodile, Sundara regaining his stolen wealth by the mercy of Siva, his marriage with Sangili, Siva testing Sundara’s devotion are found here.85 The stories of Vāyilār, Kaviyār and Sirappuliyandar – all Siva devotees – also find place here.

Siva also figures in the Chōla paintings. He appears as an old man in the story of Sundara nāyanār, as Tripurāntaka mūrti and as Natarāja whose dance is witnessed by a prince. Sundara and Chēraman, a royal devotee, hurrying to witness the great dance at Chidambaram on a horse and on an elephant is the theme of another painting found here.86
The Eastern Ganga temples at Mukhalingam in Andhra Pradesh have some interesting Saiva panels on the outer walls of the Sōmēśvara temple. The story of Durga vanquishing Mahishāsura is shown here in two stages.\(^\text{87}\)

The Kākatiyās built many temples for the great god, Siva. They contain Saiva narrative panels. On a pillar from Kaṭangur, now preserved in the State Museum, Hyderabad, Rāvana shaking Mount Kailāsa and Kumāra destroying Tārakāsura are powerfully portrayed. The Siva temple at Palampet contains two panels highly narrative in character depicting Gajāsura and Tripurāntaka forms.\(^\text{88}\)

The Telugu Chōlas who ruled over Nellore and surrounding areas during 12\(^\text{th}\) and 13\(^\text{th}\) centuries were great temple builders. The Manusiddhēśvara temple at Krishnapaṭnam, other temples at Mallam, Chinnakrāka, Gandavaram and other places have many sculptures narrating samhāra aspects of Siva and also soumya aspects.\(^\text{89}\) In the Hoysala temples themes like Rāvana shaking Mount Kailāsa, Kirāṭārjunīyam, Siva’s marriage with Pārvati and Siva as Bhikshāṭana and Lingōdbhava mūrti are seen.

The early rulers of Vijayanagara were devotees of Virūpāksha Siva. Their temples in Hampi, Vellore, Kanchi, Thiruvannāmalai and other places show many saivite panels in sculpture. Siva’s marriage with Pārvati, their marriage procession, Kirāṭārjunīyam, Kannappa story, Siva testing the devotion of Pārvati (Jalamāya mūrti) Lingōdbhava and Bhikshāṭana forms of Siva are their favourite themes. Siva also figures in Vijayanagara paintings, which are found in Hampi, Lēpākshi and other places. The same patronage was extended to Saivism by their vassals, the Nāyakas of Madurai and Tanjore.
BHĀGAVATA THEMES:

The earliest reference to Vishnu is found in the Rigveda. But he does not occupy a very significant and important position in the mythology of Vedas. The Kushāns were perhaps the first imperial dynasty to have patronized Vaishnavism. It began with the Krishna-Vāsudeva-Samkarshana cult in the Kushān age and blossomed into the Bhāgavata cult in the Gupta age. The Mōra inscription of Mathura, the Garuḍa pillar inscription of Vīdīsa, Nānēghat inscription and others are some of the earliest inscriptions referring to the cult of Vishnu. Vaishnavism or Bhāgavata cult had profound influence on Indian art. With the development of the concept of Dasāvatāras, Vishnu came to be represented in sculpture in numerous forms and poses. A brief description of them is attempted in the following pages.

The story of Sunda and Upasunda, the demon brothers who could not be killed by anyone except by themselves, their destruction achieved skillfully by Tilōthama, a devine nymph created by Vishnu, found place on the panels of the plinth of the Dasāvatāra temple, Deogarh. The rock cut Mahāvarāha image of colossal size from Udayagiri in Madhya Pradesh standing as a powerful human being with a boar’s head engaged in the act of uplifting the goddess Earth from the ocean is an excellent example of narrative art of this period. Varāha in theriomorphic form from Eran is both the largest and the earliest example of the fully theriomorphic images of Vishnu as the boar. Undoubtedly the finest piece of sculpture from Eran is the anthropomorphic image of Vishnu as the boar now preserved in the Sagar University Museum. The Trivikrma panel from Pawāya, now in the Gwalior Museum is a fragment but it has carvings on both sides depicting scenes of ritual sacrifices. The post for tethering the sacrificial horse, the assemblage of priests and the rest of the visitors (including women
viewing the scene from the balcony) are all graphically represented besides music and
dance performance in the sacrificial hall. It is typical of sacrifice in the ancient India.
On the opposite side is the imposing figure of Trivikrama.96

The Bhāgavata scenes appear for the first time in Andhra during the
Vishnukundin times. The pillars in Mogalrājapuram caves contain scenes such as
Varāha rescuing Bhūdevi from the ocean, Narasimha killing Hiranyakasipu, and
Trivikrama overcoming Bali etc.,97 Narasimha killing the demon, shown on a panel dated
6th century A.D. is in the Bhārat Kala Bhavan, Benāras.98

The caves of Bādami also contain some rare episodes on the lintels such as
Vishnu lying on ocean and receiving the deputation of gods, etc.99 The Most eloquent
narration of the Trivikrama story is found in cave No.III and cave No.II at Badami.100

In Cave No. II the churning of the milky ocean and other Bhagavata scenes are deleniated
on the lintel.101 The same thing is elaborately depicted in six panels on the ceiling of the
mandapa of Cave No.III. In the first panel, Vishnu is receiving the deputation of gods.
In the next, he informs them about his next incarnation. In the third the gods are shown
on the shores of the ocean of milk. The next two panels describe their failure to lift the
Mandhara Mountain and to churn the milky ocean. In the last the churning is
depicted.102 Indra sporting with Ahalya is the theme on a pillar in the Virūpāksha
temple, Pattadakal.103 Garuḍa and Tumbura garvabhanga at the hands of Ānjanēya
while Vishnu watches it sitting on Garuḍa is another theme intricately carved in a panel
now preserved in the Alampur Museum.104 Gajēndramōksha story is deleniated here in
three small panels. The most detailed narration of Vāmana-Trivikrama is found in the
Svarga Brahma temple, Alampur. It is depicted in five stages. A fuller representation of
this story than that at Alampur is not found anywhere.105
The Bhāgavata panels appear at Pattadakal also. The Pāpanādhā temple has three panels depicting the story of Vāmana. There is a gigantic panel of Varāha rescuing Pridhvi in the Vishnu temple, Mahākut, near Bādami.\(^{106}\)

The Vaikunṭaperumal temple, Kanchi has many rare Vishnu sculptures. On the āditala of the vimāna, Vishnu is shown as Siva’s teacher and Brahmānugraha mūrti. The second tala shows Garudārūdha Vishnu fighting Madhu and Kaitabha, Chaturbhujā Vishnu fighting a demon, Gajēndramōksha, Aṣṭabhujā Vishnu fighting with two demons and other forms.\(^{107}\) The Sundararavada Perumāl temple at Uttiramērur (Chengalpat District) built by Pallava King Dantivarman is a three storied temple, all the three stories being functional, with the sanctums dedicated to the standing, seated and reclining forms of Vishnu. Six principal forms of Vishnu – Satya, Achyuta, Aniruddha, Naranārāyana, Narasimha and Varāha are also seen in the smaller shrines here. K.R. Srinivasan opines that the nine forms or Navamūrtis are shown in accordance with the Vaikhānasa Āgama.\(^{108}\)

The Gwalior Museum houses a beautiful Mastyāvatāra panel dated 9th century A.D. which shows the figure of Vishnu as fish on which four men stand, the first one with a crown. It describes the story of Vishnu rescuing Manu from the great floods and to help him assume the role of creator.\(^{109}\) The story of Narasimha killing Hiranyakasipu is found in the Dasāvatāra cave, Ellora.\(^{110}\) Churning of the milky ocean is intricately carved on the tōrana at Dabhoi, Gujarat.\(^{111}\) Vāmana and Narasimha themes appear repeatedly in the Hoysala temples such as the Kēśava temple, Bēlur, the Hoysalēśvara temple, Halebid and others. On the 10th screen to the left of the eastern doorway of Bēlur temple is an interesting panel, which shows Hunumān and Garuḍa fighting over what
looks like a linga placed between them. The object is split into two halves by the disc of Vishnu seated above.\textsuperscript{112}

The Kākatiya temples contain many Sāgaramadhana scenes. They are found on a pillar, now preserved in the state Museum, Hyderabad and in a painting from Pillalamarri temple of the same period.

The stories of Sāgaramadhana, Vāmana, and Narasimha are favourite themes of the Vijayanagara period. The romantic life of Narasimha with a Chenchu (tribal) girl attracted the attention of the artists of this age. This theme is invariably found in many Vijayanagara temples.

The Bhāgavata themes also found favour with the painters of Kāngra, Pahāri and other Rajasthāni schools of art, which belong to the later medieval period. The Pahāri painters selected certain rare themes. In one painting the white horse of Vishnu's tenth avatāra (Kalki) is shown being led to him so that he may mount it and destroy the evil with his blazing sword.\textsuperscript{113} Another shows the story of Narasimha while a Kāngra painting, now preserved in Victoria Albert Museum, shows Yama taking out the life of Satyavanta. The love story of Nala and Damayanti is also included in the Pahāri paintings.\textsuperscript{114} Parasurāma killing the kshatriyas is another theme found in a Kāngra painting now preserved in the London Museum.

RĀMĀYANA THEMES:

Rāmāyana has profound influence on Indian art, thought and literature. The earliest reference to the image of Rāma occurs in the Brihat Samhita of Varāhamihira.\textsuperscript{115} Rāmāyana scenes appeared as early as 2\textsuperscript{nd} century B.C. A Terracotta plaque from Kousambī shows a man carrying away a lady. It is identified as Rāvana abducting Sita.\textsuperscript{116} The Dasāvatāra temple, Deogarh contains many rectangular panels dealing with
Rāmāyana themes such as Rāma redeeming Ahalya from her curse, and others. The Ahichhatra, Nalanda, Mathura, Apsād, Srāvasti and Nāchana temples built during the Gupta and the later Gupta period contain many narrative panels describing Rāmāyana. The Parvati temple at Nāchana Kuthāra contain some of the best Gupta panels showing mutilation of Sūrpanakha by Lakshmana, abduction of Sīta, Rāma and his brother meeting vānaras and Vāli-Sugrīva fight etc. In Apsād, Gaya district, Bihar is a ruined temple the basement of which contains the largest Rāmāyana panels of this period. They represent later Gupta art. But the modelling is crude, compositions are crowded where all the figures are seen jammed into each other in uncomfortable profile.

In South India Rāmāyana panels are first seen on a pillar in the Mogalrājapuram caves, a Vishnukundin monument. A panel here depicts Hanumān meeting Sīta in Asākavana. The Pāpanādha temple, Pattadakal has the entire story of Rāmāyana sculptured on its walls with labels. The love of Ahalya and Indra, Jatāyu attacking Rāvana, building the bridge and other scenes are found in the Virūpāksha temple at the same place. The Rāshtrakūtas followed the tradition of narrating Rāmāyana in sculpture. The Ellora caves are replete with such panels. In cave No.16, there is a rare sculpture showing Rāvana offering his severed head to Siva. A Sivalinga is shown with nine heads on all three sides while Rāvana cuts off his tenth head. At Ellora Rāvana is shown with a donkey head on top of his ten heads. As per Vālmiki Rāmāyana bad omens such as rain of blood and braying of a donkey heralded the birth of Rāvana.

The Chōla period witnessed emergence of miniature panels in sculpture of great elegance as decorative motif in the temples. In the Nāgēsvara temple, Kumbakōnam many Rāmāyana miniature panels of 6"x 4" size are carved on the plinth. Vibhīshana saranāgati, Hanumān meeting Sīta in Asākavana, Sūrpanakha’s wail before Khara and
Dhūshana, Rāma’s encounter with Khara and others, Tājāki vadha, Bharata meeting Rāma in forest are some of the scenes portrayed here. The Siva temple at Gangaikondachōlapuram contains a few panels showing abduction of Śīta, Siva bestowing boon on Rāvana etc. Temples in Central India belonging to early medieval period possess numerous Rāmāyana panels. The Lakshmana temple, Khajurāho, Mārkandi temple, Osian temples, Sandhara temple of Ādinādha near Indore have panels describing Rāmā chasing golden deer, Jāṭāyu vadha, Śīta in Asōkavana, Lakshmana wounded in battle and other scenes.

There is a unique bronze image of Bharata in the National Museum, New Delhi where Bharata is shown carrying the wooden sandals on his head. B.N. Sarma observes that no image of Bharata carrying the wooden sandals on his head was so far known to the student of Hindu iconography. The same author deals with the theme of Rāvana shaking Mount Kailāsa in another paper in the East and West journal and cites numerous examples of the same theme in different styles.

Ahalya sāpavimōchana, Rāma’s marriage, Rāma and Śīta at Panchāvati are some of the popular themes of Rāmāyana found in Bihar. The epic attracted the attention of sculptors of Bhuvanēśvar as we notice many such panels in the Svārṇajalēśvara, Amritēśvara and other Orissan temples.

The Hoysala temples at Nuggihalli, Mosale, Javagal, Aralagappe, Sōmanāthapur and Bēlur etc., have continuous narrative friezes in their basement showing a world of mythological content. Many Rāmāyana scenes are found in the Sōmēśvara temple, Bandalike, the Kesava temple, Sōmanāthapur and Halēbid.

The pillars in Kākatiya temples, now preserved in the State Museum, Hyderabad describe Vibhīshana Saranagati, building of the bridge, Rāma and Rāvana fighting and
Rāma’s coronation. The Pachhala Sōmēśvara temple, Pānagal, Rāmappa temple, Pālampet, Nedikonda and Nāgulapādu temples of this period have numerous freizes of Rāmāyana. Lakshmana unknowingly cutting the head of Sūrpanaka’s son who is doing penance inside a bamboo bush is a rare theme found in the Pānagal temple.

The Manusiddēśvara temple, Krishnapatnam and other temples in Mallam, Chinnakrāka, Ātmakūr and other places in Nellore district built by the Telugu Chōlas are also full of Rāmāyana themes. The Manusiddēśvara temple contains narrative freizes depicting Rāmāyana. The story of Srāvana Kumāra and Vāli vadha are some of the best sculptures found here. In the Lakshminārāyana temple, Kōrukonda in the West Godavari district, dated 14th century A.D., the entire story is covered in three registers on the exterior walls in more than hundred panels. The theme is more faithful to Ranganādhā Rāmāyana but the execution is crude and clumsy.

The Vijayanagara artists showed keen interest in elaborate narration of mythological themes. The outer walls, pillars and prākāras of their temples are full of sculptural freizes narrating the epics. The best example is found in the Hazāra Rāma temple, Hampi where the entire Rāmāyana is depicted twice. The first narration starts with Srāvanakumāra episode and the second with Putrakāmēṣṭi sacrifice. The Vijayanagara temples at Vellore, Kanchi, Tiruvannāmalai, Trivellore, Madurai, Srīrangam and other places, the Kōdanḍārāma temple at Bhadrāchalam built in Kutubshāhi period are also known for many panels dealing with episodes from Rāmāyana.

Such themes are also plenty in the later medieval paintings. Kangra, Pahāri, Moughul and Trichināpoly paintings exhibit many such themes. In one Kangra painting Rāma with his vānara force is shown discussing war strategy near the walls of Lanka as
Rāvana and his demons get ready to face them. A Persian translation of Rāmāyana in the 16th century shows Rāvana rallying his demons against the army of Rāma. Another shows Jātayu attacking the ten headed Rāvana. A Moghul painting of 17th century shows Śiṭa proving her innocence by fire ordeal as Rāma, Lakshmana, vānaras and gods watch the scene.

**KRISHNALĪLĀ THEMES:**

The life of Krishna and his juvenile sports has been a perennial source of inspiration to the poets and artists of this country. The very thought of Krishna creates enthusiasm, affection, love and devotion in the minds of children and the aged alike. "Krishnism permeates the entire Indian culture and thought. No other single individual or idea has so much influenced the course of Indian religion, philosophy, art and literature as the life and personality of Krishna."

The earliest reference to Krishna is found in Rigveda. The earliest reference to Vāsudeva cult in inscriptions is found in the Garuda column of Besnagar. The earliest representation of Krishna image is found on the coins of Agathocles (2nd century B.C.) found in Aikhanoun, Bactria. The earliest sculptural representation of Krishna is in the panel from Mathura dated 2nd century B.C. which shows Vasudēva carrying the newborn Krishna and crossing the river Yamuna to reach Gōkula. A Kushān pillar from Mathura shows Krishna subduing Kāliya. The Dasāvatāra temple at Deogarh contains the following panels on its plinth depicting Krishnalīlas. They are

1. Dēvaki handing over the child Krishna to Vasudeva
2. Krishna hurling a cart full of pots of butter
3. Nanda and Yāsōda fondling Krishna and Baladēva
4. Krishna receiving his friend Sudāma
5. A torso depicting *Vastrāpaharana*

6. A torso depicting Dhēnukāsura *vadha*

7. Kamsa *vadha* and

8. Bust showing Vasudeva fondling Krishna and others.

The above panels offer sculptural evidence of the popularity of Krishna cult in Gupta period.¹³⁵

The Bhārat Kala Bhavan, Vārānasi, Museums in Mathura and Lucknow contain many more panels of the Gupta period dealing with Krishnālīlas. Krishna Gōvardhana image, now preserved in Bhārat Kala Bhavan is an example of powerful portrayal of the theme in the Gupta Sculpture.¹³⁶ Krishna as Gōvardhana Giridhāri, Kāliya mardana, Navanītha chōra, Krishna killing Bakāsura and Kēsi are some of the favourite themes of Gupta period. At Patharghata, Bihar, is a scene dated 6th century A.D., showing Krishna wrestling with Chānūra. The Nalanda temple has many scenes such as Yasōda fondling Krishna.¹³⁷ The Pahārpur and Apsād temples of later Gupta period contain large scale Krishnālīla panels.

In South India Krishnālīla panels appear for the first time in Mogalrājapuram caves in A.P in Vishnukundin times. They show Krishna as Gōvardhanagiridhāri and gōpikas carrying the milkpots etc. The Pallavas showed special attention on Krishna themes. Gōvardhanagiridhāri scene in the Krishnāmandapa in Mahābalipuram is known as ‘fresco-in stone.’¹³⁸ On the middle tier of Dharmarāja Radha the episode of Kāliyamardana is shown. Here Krishna is not seen dancing on its hood.¹³⁹ Dr. Champakalakshmi states that the Shore Temple contains Kēsivadha and Kāliyamardana releifs.¹⁴⁰ The Vaikuntaperumāl temple, Kanchi, Pundarīkāksha temple, Thiruvellai, the Pārthasāradhi temple, Triplicane also have Krishnālīla panels of Pallava period.
The caves of Bādami have many interesting bas-reliefs of Krishnalīla. Cave No.II and III have some rare themes like Krishna bringing Pārijāta, abduction of Subhadra by Arjuna, Kamsa’s visit to Dēvaki and Vasudeva in prison. The temples at Pattadakal have many Krishnalīla scenes. A sculpture in a niche of Mālegitti Sīvalaya at Bādami is identified as Krishna subduing Kēsi demon. Krishna killing Śakatāsura, Vatsāsura, Dhēnukāsura and other scenes occur on vēdibandha of the Svarga Brahma temple at Alampur in A.P. Archaeological evidence in support of Krishna themes between 7th to 9th centuries is very meagre in A.P.

The inscriptions of the Sailodbhava kings in Orissa refer to Krishna legends and stand testimony to the popularity of Krishna cult during post Gupta period. The Simhanadha temple in Cuttack, assigned to 7th-8th century contains scenes from Krishna’s life such as Krishna killing Dhēnuka, Arista and Kāliyamardana scenes.144 The Lakshmana temple at Sirpur, M.P., dated 600 A.D. has carvings on the sanctum doorway showing Krishnalīla scenes. A large image of Yasōda nursing Krishna, dated 9th century A.D., from Baroda is housed in Gwalior Museum.145

The later Ganga rulers of Orissa championed the cause of Vaishnavism. Gōpikāvastrāpaharana in the Mēghēśvara temple, Girigōvardhana panel in the Kōnarak temple and similar panels in Mukhalingam, Srikākulam in Āndhra are examples of their patronage to Krishna cult.146

Such scenes are found in the Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho describing important incidents from Krishna’s life.147 In South India the Chōlas, the Vēngi Chālukyas and the Kalyāṇi, Chālukyas who ruled during this period were staunch Saivites but contributed to the growth of the cult of Krishna. The Chōla temples in Mannārgudi, Pūnjai,
pullamangai, Kumbakōnam and other places exhibit many scenes from the life of Krishna.\(^{148}\)

The Hoysala temples also have such sculptured panels. In the Chennakēśava temple, Belur there are many Krishna scenes such as Krishna as Navanītachōra, Yasōda threatening Krishna and Krishna killing various demons etc. In the Hoysalēśvara temple, Halebid scenes such as Vasudeva carrying Krishna to Gōkula, Krishna playing flute while gōpis and even a cobra dance to the tune, Krishna killing Narakāsura, and Pārijātāpaharana are shown.\(^{149}\) The Amritpur temple is richly embellished with Krishna’s sculptures. Some rare themes like Kamsa in _durbār_ and Vasudeva requesting a donkey not to bray and reveal the birth of Krishna, Yōgamaya escaping slaughter from Kamsa’s hands are seen.\(^{150}\) The temples at Vēlavādi, Basrāi, Hosaholalu have some interesting scenes like Balarāma pursuing Arjuna who is abducting Subhadra, Krishna slaying a tiger, Krishna and Sathyabhama on _Garuda_ and others.\(^{151}\) The Kēśava temple, Somanādhapūr has almost the entire story of Krishna sculptured around the temple walls.

The Pandyas and the Vijayanagara kings continued the patronage to Krishna cult. During the Vijayanagara period, the popularity of Bhāgavata cult increased to a great extent. They built many Vaishnava temples in Kanchi, Srirangam and other places. On the outer walls of the Hazārarāma temple, Hampi, Krishnalīla scenes appear in the top row. Krishna tied to a mortar, Krishna stealing the clothes of the gōpikas, Krishna killing many demons are shown in these temples. Krishnarāya, the celebrated emperor of this period brought the idol of Bālakrishna from Udayagiri during one of his campaigns and installed it in the Vitthala temple, Humpi.\(^{152}\)

The life of Krishna also attracted the painters of the country. In the paintings from the Jain temple at Tiruparuthikunram, near Madras, dated 17-18th century A.D., the
life of Krishna is depicted as per the Jain version. Krishna figures in Tanjore paintings of Marāthas of late medieval period also. Mattanchery, Padmanābhapuram palaces in Kerala also contain paintings depicting the life of Krishna. One Pahāri painting shows Vasudeva carrying the new born Krishna to Brindāvan. A Kāngra painting of 18th century shows Yasōda fondling Krishna, while another shows Krishna sucking out the life of Putana. The Rajput paintings also extensively deal with Krishna’s life.

THE MAHĀBHĀRATA THEMES:

Just like Rāmāyana, the Mahābhārata also had profound influence on Indian art. Yet the episodes of this great epic in sculptured panels are not as numerous as Rāmāyana episodes. In the Gupta period we find some of the earliest panels dealing with this epic. A stone lintel from Garhwal near Allahabad dated 5th century A.D., now preserved in the Museum of Lucknow shows Bhīma-Jarāsandha duel, while Krishna, four armed, stands nearby along with Arjuna. Behind them stand three women, perhaps the consorts of Jarāsandha. A terracotta panel from Ahichchathra, dated 5th century A.D., now preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi shows the fight between Dharmarāja and Jayadradha. The Pahārpur temple contains a panel showing Arjuna abducting Subhada. A bas-relief from the Kukundēśvara temple near Indore dated 10th century A.D. shows Bhīma and Jarāsandha in combat while Krishna watches standing nearby.

The caves of Bādami also contain a few panels depicting the Mahābhārata themes. The battle scenes of Kurukshētra such as Bhīma and Duryōdhana fighting with clubs are seen in the Virūpaksha temple, Pattadakal in three registers, each panel measuring 10” x 2½” in size. The rules of the great battle are sincerely portrayed in scenes like a horseman fighting with another horseman, a radhika fighting with another
radhika etc. Bhīshma lying on the bed of arrows after his fall at the hands of Arjuna and Sikhandi is a masterpiece found here.\textsuperscript{159}

The same theme is found on a panel from Kiradu, Rajasthan dated 12\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{160} The Kailāsanādha temple, Ellora shows Krishna in the company of Pāndavas. In cave No.XVI, the battle of Kurukṣeṭra is carved on a grand scale in five registers. The story here starts with Arjuna getting Pāsupatha from Siva. All the important episodes of the great wall are carved very intricately. In the Mārkandi temple Arjuna and Karna duel is depicted.

In South India, the Mahābhārata scenes are carved at many places. In a shrine of Śrīrangam temple Krishna as Pārthasāradhi appears as mūlabhēra. To his right stands Arjuna with hands in anjali;\textsuperscript{161} Krishna showing Visvarūpa to Arjuna is elaborately depicted on the base of the gōpura of the Suchindram temple in Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{162}

The Hoysala temples have many sculptured friezes from the Mahābhārata. The Kēsava temple, Somanāthapūr; temples at Hosahalōlu, Beseralu and Bēlur have such scenes. We find the epic illustrated briefly upto Salyaparva to the right of the entrance of the Kēsava temple, Bēlur.\textsuperscript{163} In the Halebid temple interesting episodes like Arjuna fighting with Indra on the eve of Khāṇḍava dahanā, Bhima killing Dussāsana by tearing out his chest while Draupadi is seen combing her hair smeared with the blood of the latter and a few scenes from Kurukṣeṭra are depicted in great detail. Another long panel shows Duryōdhana anointing Bhīshma as general of his army, Bhīshma and Arjuna fighting, Abhimanyu attacking padmavyūha, Arjuna fighting with Śamsaptaka tribe, Bhagadatta on elephant fighting Bhīma while Arjuna goes to his rescue and a few other scenes.\textsuperscript{164}
The Amrutesvara temple, Chikamagluru also has a few panels on outer walls showing Drupada performing a sacrifice to beget children and Dushtadrumya and Draupadi emerging out of the sacrificial fire. Another panel depicts the swayamvara of Draupadi. Arjuna shooting the fish target while Draupadi stands with a garland are shown here. The Kesava temple, Somanathapur have narrative friezes that follow the contours of the wall all round the temple depicting the epic.\(^{165}\) The temple at Amrutapur has a panel showing Sisupala vadha at Dharmaraja's Rajasuya sacrifice.\(^{166}\) The temples at Velavadi, Hampi and other places also contain scenes depicting the epic.\(^{167}\)

The Mahabharta scenes also occur in the late medieval paintings of Rajasthan. A Jaipur painting (18th century) shows Krishna demonstrating to the assembled princess how the fish target must be struck by aiming an arrow at its reflection in the couldran. Arjuna steps forward to try his skill. Another painting from Chambal valley vividly describes the battle of Kurukshetra while another from Rajasthan of 17th century shows Bhisma lying on the bed of arrows.\(^{168}\)

The above discussion shows that narrative art either in sculpture or painting continuously attracted the attention of the artists all over the country through ages. This art started in the Sunga period before Christ and flourished for centuries until the late medieval period. Even in modern times, the wooden temple chariots or cars especially in Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu contain many miniature panels depicting Hindu mythology. The plinth of the dilapidated wooden chariot at the Trikutesvara temple, Pushpagiri contain some beautiful Kiratarjuniyam panels and other Saivite themes. The Srikalahastiisvara temple chariot, Srikalahasti contain panels of samhara aspects of Siva, Siva performing urdhvatandava etc. So scholars like Dr.K.V. Raman rightly called these
temple cars as “temples on wheels.” Narrating puranic themes on canvas or cloth is continued even now at Śrīkālahasti, Machilipatnam and a few other places.

FOOT NOTES

2. Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of India through the Ages*, p.32.
14. J.A.S. Burgess, *Gāndhāra Sculpture*, p.14 & pl.12, Fig.1.
22. Ibid., pl.139.
23. Ibid., pl.147 & 148.
31. Ibid., p.97
32. Ibid., p.102.
34. C. Sivaramamurti, An Album of Indian Sculpture, p.9.
36. V.S. Agrawala, Gupta Art, p.103, ill.1.
37. Ibid., pl.6.
40. Ibid., p.266.
41. Ibid., p.257.
42. Dr.V. Kameswara Rao, Lepakshi Temple, p.72.
43. R. Narasimhachar, The Kesava Temple at Belur, pp.3-8.
45. Ibid., p.20.
46. Ibid., p.21.
56. R Nagaswamy, *Art and Culture of Tamil Nadu*, pp.120-122.
60. *E.I.T.A.*, pl.608.
71. *Ibid.*, pl.34.
80. *E.I.T.A.*, p.244.
83. *E.I.T.A.*, p.244
86. C. Sivaramamurti, *The Art of India*, p.266.
92. M.S. Vats, *Dasavathara Temple at Deogarh*, *M.A.S.I.*, No.70, pp.23-24, pl.XX a,b,c.
98. Kalpana S. Desai, *Op. cit.*, Fig.68.
102. *Ibid.*, pl.XXII to XXV
103. C. Sivaramamurti, *Sanskrit Literature and Art—Mirrors of Indian Culture* (1955), *M.A.S.I.* 73,
104. A.W. Khan, *Stone Sculptures at Alampur Museum*, pl.101(a)
108. K.R. Srinivasan, *Temples of South India*, p.120.
117. M.S. Wats, *Op.cit.*, pp.16-18, pl.XI(a) to XVII(e)
122. C. Sivaramamurti, *Ramo Vigrahavan Dharmah*, pl.7, 12, 17, 19, 26, 44.
126. Brijendranath Sharma, "Ravana lifting Mount Kailasa in Indian Art," in: *East and West*, vol. 23, Fig.1 to 13.
160. Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, vol. 2, pl. LXXX.