

THE PALLAVA SCULPTURE

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D.R. RAJESWARI

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*Dedicated
to
My Brother*

Preface

This work was undertaken at the suggestion of my teacher Dr. Ananda Krishna, Professor and Head of the Deptt. of Art and Architecture and Dy. Director of Bharat Kalabhavan, Banaras Hindu University and has been completed under his scholarly guidance. I do not have enough words to express my deep sense of gratitude to him. I have to express my thanks to Prof. S.K. Saraswati for his kind patronage. I extend my thanks to the authorities and the staff of American Academy and Government Museum, Madras who supplied me necessary photographs. Finally I feel indebted to all concerned for their valuable help in connection with this research work.

Madurai-21

Jan. 88

(D.R. RAJESWARI)

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Abbreviations

A.R.(S.)I.E.	: Annual Report of (South) Indian Epigraphy.
A.S.I.A.R.	: Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report.
E.I.	: Epigraphia Indica.
I.A.	: Indian Antiquary.
J.A.	: Journal Asiatique
J.I.S.O.A.	: Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art.
M.A.R.	: Mysore Archaeological Report.
M.A.S.I.	: Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India.
M.E.R.	: Madras Epigraphical Report.
M.G.M.B.	: Madras Government Museum Bulletin.
S.I.I.	: South Indian Inscriptions.
T.A.S.S.I.	: Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India.
A.R.E.	: Annual Report of Epigraphy.

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Introduction

The period between the latter half of the sixth and first half of the tenth century A.D., an interval of four hundred years, marks an important epoch in the history of South India and its culture. Three important dynasties viz., the Chalukyas of Badami, Pallavas of Kanchi and the Pandyas of Madurai rose to power. Alongwith their paramount authority the revival of Hinduism was also heralded. These dynasties were the great contributors to the development of art and architecture in their respective regions. In fact they were also rivals in the realm of art, not as the destroyers of each other's art productions but as patrons. Their keen competition paved the way to the affluent output of permanent artistic monuments in stone. The Pallavas of Kanchi became the central power geographically, politically and culturally. They developed for the first time architecture and sculpture in the hard rock, in this area. The Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas continued the pre-existing tradition of rock-cut art. The Pallava art stood distinct in contemporary styles in material and technique.

The Pallava sculptures are scattered in various places in Tamilnadu' (Madras state) viz., Mandagapattu, Trichinapalli, Siyamangalam, Singavaram, Mamallapuram, Kanchipuram, Kaveripakam, Tiruttani etc. Most of these places are in South and North Arcot districts. But most interesting places of sculptural importance are Mamallapuram and Kanchipuram where the Pallava artists deliberately and significantly carved the figures by singular concentration and inspiration. Especially Mamallapuram is a source of perennial inspiration to the artists and a place of pilgrimage to the art lovers. The rich patronage and encouragement of the cultured kings as well as revival of Saivism and Vaishnavism created an atmosphere where art could thrive. The inspirational surge would have swept over the artists like a tidal wave and their process of creation would have been an intense delight. The result is highly remarkable. Not only were the unknown selfless artists perfect in transmitting their inspiration into effective expression with mastery of technique, but they were well versed in the language and had a keen sense of observation also. The Mamallapuram sculptor reveals the man's attempts to unveil the secrets of the spirit with the chisel and he left behind his discoveries ingrained in rock that is born in his soul which is an outflowing of the eternal rhythm.

This sea port city is variously called Mamallapuram, Mahabalipuram, seven pagodas etc. It is said that the mythical legend of Balichakravarti took place here, hence this place is called Mahabalipuram. Another name Mamallapuram or Mahamallapuram is mentioned in the *Avanti Sundarikatha* of Dandi. Probably this place is famous for great fighters which is the meaning of the word. Mamalla is the corrupted form of Mahamalla. Another version says that this city was constructed by the great warrior Narasimhavarman I with the title Mamalla and hence it was

named, Mamallapuram. But it is proved by the Avanti Sundari katha written by Dandi during the reign of Simhavishnu that this port city is pre-Narasimhavarmān I but it acquired fame during his reign by his indomitable and creditable performances. Now both names i.e., Mamallapuram and Mahabalipuram are in practice.

The phrase 'seven pagodas' was probably used by the foreigners who came by the sea. According to some people the shore temple is one of the seven, the remaining six are under sea level. But no one has seen them. Others say that the five *Rathas* plus the monolithic lion and elephant constitute the seven pagodas. Anyway it is a somewhat vague term. There is a cluster of prominent buildings. Probably these buildings were seen as a landmark from off shore and that is perhaps how the phrase originated during the days of the early European navigators; this place now is generally called Mahabalipuram.

A number of sculptures were executed in relief on the *Rathas*, in the caves and *Mandapas* and also on the open boulders. All the figures are *in situ*. Nearly thirty or thirty five figures are on Dharmaraja *Ratha* and Arjuna *Ratha* and others are in caves and the *Mandapas*, i.e., Mahishasuramardini cave, Adivaraha cave, Trimurti cave, Krishna *Mandapa* and the shore temple exhibit a number of beautiful figures.

Kanchipuram had been the capital city of the Pallavas throughout their hegemony, situated forty miles from Madras in South Arcot district and is one of the holy places of India. It has always been a great seat of learning. This is a meeting place of various religious creeds; the Vedic professors lived side by side with Jain and Buddhist priests. It is praised by Kalidasa as *Nagaresu Kanchi*. The great position was attained by the Kanchi under the orthodox rule of the Pallavas and mainly through Saivism which they propagated and favoured. The later Pallavas since Rajasimha started to embellish their capital city by a number of temples. Rajasimha constructed the Kailasanath temple, according to the inscriptions inscribed on the walls of the temple. It is the repository of the Saiva iconography. The walls of the main temple and the *prakara* also are filled with reliefs showing Siva and his forms. Another important edifice is the Vaikuntha Perumal temple which is dedicated to Vishnu whose sponsorship is attributed to Nandivarman Pallavamalla. This is a three storied building showing a further advanced step in the temple architecture. On the walls of the Garbhagriha certain Vaishnava legends are illustrated as, the boar incarnation. Narasimha, Samudramanthan, the distribution of Nectar by Vishnu in the guise of Mohini, etc. In the cloistery some important episodes of the Pallava geneological history viz., the coronations of the various kings, the death of Mahendravarman III, the coronation of Nandivarman, the war with Chalukyas etc., are inscribed. Dance scenes, wrestling matches, etc. are also illustrated.

Mandagapattu, Dalvanur, Mamandur, Siyamangalam, Trichunapalli etc. exhibit the early Pallava sculptures i.e., the Mahendravarman period. These rockcut caves and *Mandapas* are examples of Mahendravarman's ambitious desire to gain esteem by some extravagant device to create something new. These caves contain very few sculptures, viz., certain *Dvarapala* figures, the Gangavatarana scene in Trichunapalli, Durga in Singavaram. Certain later Pallava figures of the Aparajita period, are available from Kaveripakkam and Tiruttani where Brahma, Vishnu, Surya and Saptamatrika group are sculptured.

Number of scholars like Jouveau Dubreuil in his *Pallava Antiquities*; Longhurst in his *Archaeological Memoirs*; O.C. Gangooly and Goswamy in his *Pallava Art*; K.R. Srinivasan, in his *The Cave Temples of the Pallavas*; Alexander Ray, in the Imperial Series about the temples of Kanchi, C. Minakshi in her *Historical Sculptures of Vaikuntha Perumal Temple*, discussed variously. Later K. Nilakantha Sastri, C. Sivaramamurti, H. Zimmer, Father Heras, T.N. Ramachandran, J.Ph. Vogel, Krishnaswami Aiyangar, Hultzsche etc., contributed in the field of Pallava architecture and sculpture. Most of these scholars have taken much interest to allot the Pallava monuments among the rulers of the Pallava dynasty mainly based on the epigraphical grounds, i.e., the titles which the rulers adopted like Atiranachanda, Atyantakama etc., adopted equally by Paramesvaravarman, Rajasimha etc.

Dubreuil tried to assign the *Rathas* and the *Mandapas* of Mahabalipuram to the period anterior to that of Rajasimha posterior to that of Mahendravarman I. He stated that the Atiranachanda *Mandapa* at Saluvankuppam belongs to Rajasimha and he also ascribed the shore temple, Olakkanath temple and Mukundanayanar to Rajasimha. He accepts the great bas relief as the descent of the Ganges. He says about the art of Mahendravarman I (610-630 A.D.), that it had the origin from the Telugu country i.e., the Undavalli caves of Vishnukundins. He also enumerates the style in four phases as follows :—

Mahendra 600-630 A.D., Mamalla 630-668 A.D.

Rajasimha 690-715 A.D., Aparajita 870-890 A.D.

Longhurst has also shown much interest in architecture. He stresses the similarity between the great bas relief and the Isurumiya reliefs at Anurathapura and identifies it as Brahma Kapal in the Himalayas. However, he is not sure about the Telegu origin. He expressed his doubt about attributing the Undavalli caves to Vishnukundins. O.C. Gangooly and Goswamy attribute most of Mahabalipuram works to Narasimhavarman I Mamalla and there is a possibility that Mahendravarman and Simhavishnu may have had a hand in it. They identify the portraits in the Varaha cave temple as those of Simhavishnu and Mahendravarman I and the great bas relief as the descent of the Ganges.

Alexander Ray discussed only the architecture of the temples of Kanchipuram. K.R. Srinivasan's book *The Cave Temples of the Pallavas* is somewhat comprehensive as he has given equal importance to architecture and sculptures. He deals with the origin from Mahendravarman I and the evolution upto Narasimhavarman. He remarks that the Pallavas are the first extensive initiators of granite stone for sculptural cum architectural purposes and he identifies, the portraits as Narasimhavarman I and Mahendravarman I. He attributes the Atiranachanda *Mandapa* to Rajasimha on stylistic grounds.

A.K. Coomaraswami, Nilakanthasastri, Zimmer Rowland and Stella Kramrisch agree that the great relief is the descent of the Ganges. Sivaramamurti, T.N. Ramachandran identify it as Arjuna's penance and Sivaramamurti ascribes of the monuments, of Mahabalipuram to Narasimhavarman I whose image he says is sculptured on the Dharmaraja *Ratha* and the royal figures in Varaha cave temple he identifies with Simhavishnu and Mahendravarman I.

Father Heras says that Mahendravarman I built Varaha cave I and he identified the two portraits as Simhavishnu and Mahendravarman I, he also attributed Dharmaraja *Mandap*, Kotikal *Mandap* at Mahabalipuram to Mahendravarman I. In conclusion he says that the monuments

started by Mahendravarman and Narasimhavarman finished by Paramesvaravarman I who inscribed his name as Atyantakama Paramesvaravishnu griham and he also attributed Ramanuja *Mandap* and Ganesh *Ratha* to Paramesvaravarman I. Very few books are available on the art of the later Pallavas i.e., the works at Kanchipuram. C. Minakshi took pains to identify the figures engraved in the cloister of Vaikuntha Perumal temple.

With the help of the works of all these great scholars I have tried to give a stylistic analysis of the Pallava sculpture, its aesthetics technique and the themes. This study covers the span of the Pallava period. The originator of Pallava art is Mahendravarman I. This is the first phase of Pallava art dating from 610 A.D. to 630 A.D. The second phase which attains maturity falls in Narasimhavarman I's period since 630 to 700 A.D. During this period three kings ruled : Narasimhavarman, Paramesvaravarman I and Mahendravarman II. Paramesvaravarman I also followed the same style and he brought about completion in some of the unfinished works of his predecessors while he caused to be executed the Ramanuja Mandapa and Ganesh *Ratha*.

The third phase started with Rajasimha from 700 and lasted upto 790 A.D. that is the reign of Nandivarman. Rajasimha's son Mahendravarman III who died before winning the throne and probably ruled along with his father, constructed the Mahendravarman temple. Then came Nandivarman the next important king. He ruled for a long time but his rule was full of wars and internal unrest. Nevertheless, he paid attention towards art and built the Vaikuntha Perumal temple.

Rajasimha changed the traditional rock-cut technique and initiated a new structural style in architecture and sculpture. This period is famous for its enormous output of sculpture on the walls of the temples but it lost the virility and lyrical qualities of the previous phase. The decline in sculptural quality which started in this period reached its final stage in the Aparajitavarman period. This is the last stage of the Pallava sculpture when it was gradually overwhelmed by the Chola traditions at the end of the eighth century and lost its own identity.

The Pallava sculpture started from Mandagapattu Lakshitayatana cave temple where Mahendravarman announced that he had constructed without mortar. He had taken the idea of hewing out of rock boulders from Undavalli the Vishnukundin caves. His carvings are scattered in various places including Mahabalipuram. The Pallava sculptural style was started and developed by him. However very few examples were sculptured during this period. The Gangadhara panel of Lalitankura cave temple from Trichinapalli, the Durga from Singavaram and the portraits of Simhavishnu and Mahendravarman are remarkable instances of the period. Started from Lakshitayatana cave temple the style progressed from cave to cave. Till the style reached Kuranganilmuttam the figures became slim and so that some of the *dvarapala* figures resembled the *Padmapani* Bodhisatva of Ajanta in its articulation, and gesture. This style reached maturity in Trichinapalli which became a proto-type for Narasimhavarman's large compositions. The Mahendravarman's style is simple, vigorous and ingenious. The delineation of the figure is natural and realistic. They derived simplicity of Vishnukundin sculpture and also some of other motifs like the horns of the *dvarapalas* and the standing position etc. In the Avanibhajana cave temple the figures are carved on the pillars like in the Undavalli cave where certain figures appear on the pillars. Some of the architectural decorations like the Makara Torana on the niche and lotus

blossoms on the pillars derived from Amaravati and the pillars, brackets and the *Kudus* on the facade were derived from Mughalrajapuram caves.

In the Narasimhavarman period the Vengi idioms are closely followed. The articulation of the figure, female as well as the male that is, their elongated limbs, their thin legs and the hands, the tapering thighs, the narrow waist etc. show progenity in style with carvings at Amaravati and Nagarjunikunda. Just as his father was impressed very much by the Vishnukundin caves he admired the imposing beauty of the sculptures of the Badami caves of the western Chalukyas. Though he was impressed by their ideas his work is not a case of pure imitation. Narasimhavarman's artists poured their originality and maintained sanctity of the pristine stories from mythology which they handled with command. The same scenes like Trivikrama, Varaha etc., were carved in Badami Undavalli as well as at Mamallapuram. Similarly this period shows architectural forms especially certain ornamentation of the pillars derived from Badami only that these are less decorative than their originals at Badami. Here the Pallava sculptural style reached its maturity and determined a style peculiar of its own. Another problem which we have to deal in connection with the sculpture during the Narasimhavarman period is the sponsorship of Mahabalipuram whether Mahendravarman or Narasimhavarman I. Evidences based on Dandis *Avantisundari Katha* prove that this is pre-Narasimhavarman site while the extant architectural evidences suggest that most of the examples were Mahendravarman's work as stated above.

Then comes Rajasimha, who started structural style in architecture and the figures extended over several courses of masonry, plastered to hide the joints and then were painted. This plastering is very inapt, because it was applied indiscriminately so that the original modelling is replaced by a flat and thick coat of mortar. Possibly several layers of plaster were applied in later times and therefore it is hard to judge the effects of the original plaster. Any way, application of plaster on the carved stone shows the decline of the Pallava sculptural glory.

After Rajasimha, confusion and unrest prevailed in the Pallava dominions. Mahendravarman III died as the heir apparent. Next came Paramesvaravarman who died without any issue having barely ruled for three years. A collateral branch succeeded him but soon anarchy prevailed. Nandivarman among the later Pallavas had a long rule; He constructed the Vaikuntha Perumal temple. Architecturally it is the final stage of the Pallava style but sculpturally it is not so important. The sculptural panels in the cloisters are devoted to illustrate the Pallava geneological table and historical events connected with them. Incarnations of Vishnu are shown on the walls of the main temple but at present they are all white-washed and are not clear.

Once again after Nandivarman confusion and anarchy prevailed. Internal unrest was created by the dynastic wars. Powerful neighbours took advantage of the internal disturbances. Aparajita had to face all these troubles. In spite of all this he tried to revive the past glory. He constructed a few temples; the Virattanesvara at Tiruttani shows his best attempts to regenerate the Pallava sculptural style, which at that stage was much influenced by the western Chalukya, eastern Chalukya, and Rashtrakuta styles. This style shows approximity with the Chola tradition with which it finally merged along with the Pallava dominions.



The Political Background

Starting from 200 A.D., Pallava power gradually rose to a mighty empire in South India. Its glory reached its zenith in seventh century A.D. Thenceforth began its decline and after ninth century A.D., it was no more. For the period from 200 to 350 A.D., the sources of Pallava history are very meagre. We have to depend only on three Prakrit charters. These are the Harahadagalli¹ plates of Yuvamahārāja Śivaskandavarman who is stated to have performed sacrifices, such as the *Agnistoma*, *Vājapeya* and *Aśvamedha*, and the Mayidavolu plates² of Vijayaskandavarman. On palaeographical grounds we can assign the date as the first half of the fourth century A.D. Another chart was issued by Buddhavarman's wife Chārudevi from Darsi.³ We possess very little information about the Pallava history before the time of Śivaskandavarman; we only know that his father was Simhavarman. Furthermore, as Śivaskandavarman is designated as Yuvamahārāja (the crown prince) in the Prakrit inscriptions of Simhavarman from Guntur District⁴ and those found at Harahadagalli. The Vasanta grant⁵ issued during the nineteenth year of Simhavarman mentioned his father and grand-father as Skandavarman and Viravarman respectively. The Allahabad *Prasasti* of Samudra Gupta refers to one Viṣṇu Gopa of Kāñchi whom Samudra Gupta attacked⁶. This ruler of Kāñchi evidently was one of the Pallava kings, and probably a descendent of Skandavarman in the fourth century A.D. However, we find a dark period in the Pallava chronology after Viṣṇu Gopa.

The next stage in the annals of the Pallava rule is revealed by a dozen or so copper plates inscribed in Sanskrit. But the relation between the Pallava kings of the Prakrit inscriptions and of Sanskrit charters is far from clear. Meanwhile an important synchronism is supplied by the *Lokavibhāga*,⁷ a Digambara Jain work by Simhasūri. One Sarvanandī, who is mentioned there,

1. Hirahadagalli Plates, *E.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 2-10.

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 84-91.

3. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 143-46.

4. Manchikallu Inscription of Simhavarman, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 87-90.

5. Copper Plate Inscriptions of the Andhra Pradesh Government Museum 1, pp. 211-38, Silver Jubilee Volume of the Archaeological Society of South India (1962), pp. 85-96.⁷

Cited by T.V. Mahalingam, *Kāñchipuram in Early South Indian History* (Bombay, 1969), p. 26.

6. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, Gupta Inscriptions, p. 6. ff.

7. Discovered and noticed by R. Narsimhacharya in *M.A.R.* for 1909-10, p. 45 and Fleet, *J.R.A.S.*, 1915 pp. 471-75.

copied the text in Śaka era 380 which corresponds to the 22nd regnal year of Simhavarman, the king of Kāñchi". This proves the year 458 A.D. as the initial date of the reign of this ruler. No further information about this king has been given. All these charters either in Prakrit or Sanskrit are in the form of grants. We find no mention of political activities of the Pallavas from 350 to 500 A.D. in those and therefore we have hardly any knowledge of them. Probably during this period the Pallavas were engaged in conflicts with the southern Tamil powers, because the Velūrpālaiyam plates¹ describe Buddhavarman as "The submarine fire to the ocean of the Chola army". Most probably, the Pallavas were acting as feudatories of the Satavāhanas. They followed the administrative and the religious systems of the Satavāhanas. With the fall of Satavāhana empire all their feudatories declared their independence and Simhavarman the father or Simhaviṣṇu started the best known line of Pallava rulers towards the end of the sixth century A.D.

The sources of information for this historical period dating from 575 to 900 A.D. are very wide. Many inscriptions on stone were edited by Hultzsch, Venkayya, Fleet and others. Nearly one hundred records connected with the members of Simhaviṣṇu's dynasty were discovered. Most of them bear the regnal years of succeeding kings in this line. The earliest records were found in the cave temples of the South Arcot district, Trichinapalli and Chengalput districts and were dated in the reign of Mahendravarman I. The others were found in the structural temples at the "Seven Pagodas" and at Kāñchipuram in Kailāśanāth and Vaikuṇṭha Perumāl temple and the rest were distributed in various villages.

THE LITERARY SOURCES

Tevāram "the hymns of Śiva" by the great Śiva devotees of Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar and the Vaiṣṇava text *Nālāyirādivya Prabandham*² belong to this period. Similarly, the Sanskrit work *Mattaviḷāsa Prahasana*³ written by Mahendravarman I is stated to be one of the outstanding classics of that period.

Out of the above list the hymns of the saints hardly mention contemporary life and political events. The *Mattaviḷāsa Prahasana* incidentally throws light upon the contemporary religious atmosphere in Kāñchipuram; for example, it states the rivalry between *Kāpālika* and a Śākya *bhikṣu* and settlement by a *Pāśupata*. The mention of these people in Kāñchipuram by Mahendravarman I strengthened the statement of Hiuen-Tsang regarding the existence of Buddhist *Vihāras* in Kāñchi in 640 A.D. It shows that Buddhism flourished there till at least seventh century A.D.

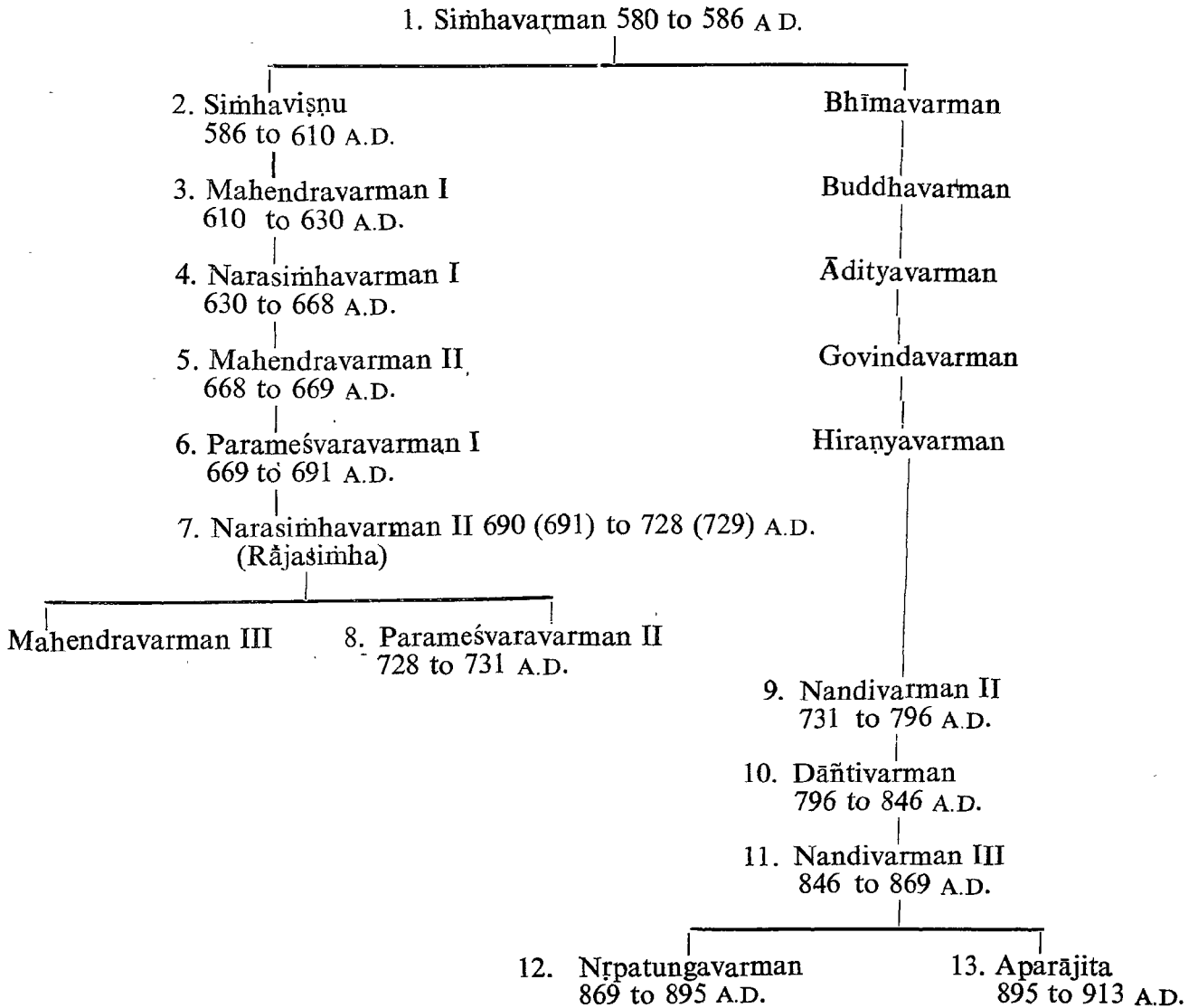
From the days of Simhaviṣṇu, that is the third quarter of the sixth century A.D., the Pallava throne remained in the hands of his direct successors, for a period of 125 years. We do not

1. S.I.I., Vol.II, Part 5, p. 508 ff.

2. *Nālāyira divya Prabhandham*, written by the celebrated scholar and saint Tirumangi. Ālvār, contemporary of Nandivarman II. Gopalan, *The Pallavas of Kāñchi* (Madras, 1928), p. 130.

3. *Mattaviḷāsa Prahasana*, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, No.LV (Trivandrum, 1917), p. 3.

know what position the members of the collateral line such as Bhīmavarman, Buddhavarman, Ādityavarman, Govindavarman and Hiranyavarman¹ held. They evidently occupied subordinate positions, as the Viceroys under these kings. Not until we come to the days of Parameśvaravarman II in the beginning of the eighth century do we find a descendent of Bhīmavarman, the younger brother of Simhaviṣṇu, effecting a change of dynasty by succeeding to the Pallava throne. The line of Pallava kings from Simhaviṣṇu is as follows:



1. These names are mentioned in Kāsakkudi plates. *S.I.I.*, Vol.II, Part 3, pp. 346-53.

SIMHAVIṢṢU

Simhaviṣṣu the son of Simhavarman¹ was the virtual founder of the imperial Pallava power. He was also known as Avani Viṣṇu or Living Viṣṇu on earth who waged wars against the Cholas, the Pāṇḍyas and their other allies. He advanced as far as the delta of the river Kaveri and annexed that part of the country to his dominions. He was a worshipper of Viṣṇu. The Udayendriyam² plates of Nandivarman II clearly call him “Bhaktyārādhita Viṣṇu Simhaviṣṣu” (Simhaviṣṣu who worshipped Viṣṇu in devotion). None of the temples that this sovereign constructed has been discovered as yet, though Prof. J. Dubreuil suggested that the Siyamangalam cave temple which contains an inscription of Avanibhājana identified by Hultzsch with Mahendravarman I, might have been excavated by Simhaviṣṣu. His kingdom probably extended from Manali, a village near Tīruvorriyūr which was called in ancient times ‘Simhaviṣṣu Chaturvedimangalam’³ to Kanjanūr in Kumbhakonam Taluk. A sculptural representation of this king attended by his two queens is found in bas-relief in the Ādivarāha cave temple at Mahābali-puram (Māmallapuram). There is a label written in Pallava Grantha script as ‘Simhaviṣṣa-Pottrathi rajan’ (Simhaviṣṣu the king and emperor of the Pallavas).

MAHENDRAVARMAN I

Simhaviṣṣu’s son and successor Mahendravarman I who reigned from 610 to 630 A.D.⁴ was the most remarkable of the Pallava monarchs. At the beginning of his career, Pallava rule extended upto perhaps a little beyond the river Krishna and bordered on the kingdom of the Kandaras and Viṣṇukunḍins.

His rule witnessed the beginning of the long drawn conflict between the Chālukyas and the Pallavas, and the Pāṇḍyas and the Pallavas. In the *Aihole Prasasti*⁵ a mention was made of a humiliating defeat of Mahendravarman I at his very capital Kāñchipuram in the hands of Pulakeśin II. According to the Kāśākuḍi plates a victory was won by Mahendravarman I at Pullalūr. But it was not made clear as to who was the winner. According to Gopalan, they were the same Chālukyas. In the second place his reign synchronised with the religious activity of Saint Appar and the literary efforts of Bhāravi in the field of Sanskrit. His government

1. “Then from the King named Simhavarman who wiped off the pride of (his) enemies was born the Victorious Simhaviṣṣu whose prowess was widely known on Earth.” *S.I.I.*, II, p. 510.

The Indrapālanagara copper plate inscription of the Viṣṇukunḍin King Vikramendra Bhaṭṭārakavarman II mentions that he gained a victory over the Pallava King Simha (Varman) in S. 488=566 A.D. It appears that Simhavarman invaded the Viṣṇukunḍin kingdom, but was defeated by Mūlarāja, a Viṣṇukunḍin subordinate. Later Vikramendravarman seems to have pursued the retreating army across the river Krishna and defeated Simhavarman. Bhārati, June, 1965, pp. 2-14; *J.I.H.*, XLIII, pp. 733-48 and also XLIV, pp. 684-91. T.V. Mahalingam, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

2. *S.I.I.*, Vol. II, pp. 74, 11, 120.

3. T. V. Mahalingam, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

4. Though the initial year of his reign cannot be definitely known, its closing year is suggested by the Bādāmi inscription of his son Narasimhavarman I dated in thirteenth year of his reign, which was equivalent to S. 565=643 A.D. *I.A.*, IX, p. 99; *S.I.I.*, XI, No. 1.

5. *E.I.*, VI, pp. 8 and 11.

facilitated peaceful pursuit of avocations on the part of his subjects. Considerable impetus was given to productions in the fields of drama, music, painting and other arts.

Originally he was a Jain; it is said that he persecuted the other religions. It has been stated in the *Periyapurāṇam* that this conversion to Śaivism was brought about by Appar¹ who was a great devotee of Śiva. Later he executed the rock-cut Śiva temples. He originated the practice of inscribing the epithets of the reigning monarchs on the pillars and walls of the various temples. Among other epithets this king assumed, a few interesting titles are: *Gunabhara Purushottama*, *Satyasandha*, *Lalitankura* *Avanibhajana*, *Chitrakarapuli* and *Vichitrachitta*, so on. He was not a fanatic. He hewed out a Viṣṇu temple called Mahendraviṣṇu Gṛha on the banks of Mahendra *Tataka* in 'Mahendravadi' near Arkonam which was discovered by Hultzsch.² The Maṇḍagapaṭṭu inscription of this king for instance records the fact that the king 'Vichitrachitta' or Mahendravarman I caused to be constructed a temple of Brahmā, Īśvara and Viṣṇu without using bricks, timber, metal and mortar which may mean a rock-cut. He was the author of a work entitled *Mattavilāsa Prahāsana* in Sanskrit. This work describes the drunken rivalry of a Kāpālika with a female companion, his falling out with a hypocritical *Sakyabhikṣu*, believing him to have stolen his Kapāla which had been carried away by a dog, his having recourse to a degenerate Pāśupata for the settlement of the dispute and finally the recovery of the Kapāla from a mad man. "Within this loosely joined framework there is much rollicking fun of the knock-about kind, with no small measure of wit and humour. The characters are vigorously drawn, especially the tipsy Kapālin with his unfailing flow of logic and theology and the Buddhist monk with his leaning towards wine and beauty and his desire to find scriptural warrant for them, while the damsel's shrewish femininity is cleverly sketched and the poor lunatic babbles and acts with a consequent inconsequence that reminds the reader of Lewis Carroll. Altogether the little play is a remarkably smart production of the picturesque genre, replete with mirth and satire."³ Some light is thrown on contemporary life by this work.

NARASIMHAVARMAN I

Mahendravarman I was succeeded by his son Narasimhavarman I (630 to 668 A.D.). His reign marks the zenith of Pallava power. He seized the Chālukyan capital, Vāṭāpi and assumed the Tamil title 'Vāṭāpikoṇḍa' "Conqueror of Vāṭāpi". The Kūram plates of Parameśvaravarman I,⁴ the Udayendriyam plates⁵ and Kāśākkuḍi plates⁶ referred his conquest of Vāṭāpi. On that account he was compared to Agastya who subdued the demon Vāṭāpi. During his reign the Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang visited Kāñchi in 642 A.D. Narasimhavarman is said to have

1. Tirunāvukkarasu Purāṇam, verse 146, cited by T. V. Mahalingam, op. cit., p. 75.

2. महिततमं मतामुपमहेन्द्र तटाकमिदं
स्थिरमुरु कारितं गुणभरेण विदार्य शिलाम् ।
जननयनाभिराम गुरुधाममहेन्द्रपुरे
महित महेन्द्र विष्णु गृहनाम मुरारिगृहम् ॥ —E.I., Vol. IV, p. 153.

3. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, Vol. V, Pt. IV, pp. 698-99, cited by T. V. Mahalingam, op. cit., p. 74.

4. Kūram plates, S.I.I., I, pp. 144-55.

5. Udayendriyam plates, ibid., II, pp. 366 and 370.

6. Kāśākkuḍi plates, ibid., pp. 349 and 356.

vanquished the Cheras, Kalābharas and Pāṇḍyas but no details of battles fought by him are known. Under him the Pallava power attained strength and prestige which it had not known since its revival under Simhaviṣṇu.

Some idea of Pallava maritime power during this period can be gathered from the 'Mahāvamśa'¹ which mention two successive naval expeditions by Narasiṃhavarman I to secure the throne to Mānavarman, the dethroned prince of Ceylon. Kāśakkuḍi plates state that "Narasiṃhavarman surpassed the glory of the valour of Rāma by his conquest of Lanka".² He got the title *Mahāmalla*³ (the great wrestler) and it is said that he founded the city Māmalla-puram which seems to be the port town of Kāñchi, their capital. Māmallapuram was embellished by a number of rock cut caves.

MAHENDRAVARMAN II

He came to the Pallava throne in 668 A.D. Nothing particular is known about his achievements except the reference in the Kūram plates⁴ that he "thoroughly enforced the sacred laws of the castes and the orders" (the *Varṇa* and *Āśrama*). The Velūrpālayam plates⁵ omit his name altogether from the geneological list of the Pallavas. This probably indicates that his reign was very short. He followed Parameśvaravarman I (669 to 691).

PARAMEŚVARAVARMAN I

The invasions and counter-invasions of the Pallavas and the Chālukyas became once more the order of the day. Parameśvaravarman's great Chālukyan rival was Vikramaditya I who according to the Gadval plates⁶ conquered Kāñchi, defeated Īśvarapotarāja and destroyed the Mahāmalla family. This grant was dated in the Śaka year 596 which corresponds to 674 A.D. The Pallava power began to dwindle during the reign of Parameśvaravarman I. The monolithic temples Ganeśa *Ratha* and the two cave temples called Dharmarāja *Maṇḍapa* and Rāmānuja *Maṇḍapa* at Mahābalipuram were according to inscriptions built by a king 'Atyanta Kāma' who has been identified by Dr. Hultzsch with Parameśvaravarman I. The Kūram plates⁷ mention that he had erected a structural Śiva temple called 'Vidyāvinīta Pallava Parameśvara Gṛham' at Kūram. This inscription states that some land was to be allotted for burning tiles for use in constructing a temple."⁸ He was a devotee of Śiva. "The first verse in his Kūram plates contains the earliest epigraphical reference to the Sadāśiva aspect of Śiva in South India, giving in considerable detail the chief iconographic features."⁹ He was succeeded

1. Geiger, *Mahāvamśa*, Ch.47 (Turnour's translation), cited by T. V. Mahalingam, op. cit., p. 86.

2. Kāśakkuḍi plates of Nandivarman II, *S.I.I.*, Vol. II, pp. 349 and 359.

3. Bādāmi inscription, *I.A.*, Vol. IX, p. 99.

4. Hultzsch, *S.I.I.*, Vol. I, p. 152.

5. H. K. Krishna Sastri, *ibid.*, No. 98, pp. 508 and 511.

6. Hultzsch, *E.I.*, Vol. X, No. 22, p. 101, copper plates.

7. Hultzsch, *S.I.I.*, Vol. I, No. 151, p. 144.

8. T. V. Mahalingam, op. cit., p. 106.

9. *Ibid.*, p.107.

Hultzsch, *S.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 148 and 152.

by his son Narasimhavarman II.

NARASIMHAVARMAN II (RĀJASIMHA)

His reign was very peaceful. He constructed Kailāśanāth temple. His queen Rangapaṭāka raised a Śiva temple¹. He got 250 birudas being found on the walls of the Kailāśanāth temple alone. Some of these are, Śankarabhakta, Śri Vidyādhara, Śri Āgamapriya, Śiva Chūḍāmaṇi, Īśānasarana etc. These titles are suggestive of his personal tastes, his accomplishments and religious inclinations. Rājasimha was not a fanatic and in the Reyūru copper plate grant² he is also described as Paramabhāgavata, Paramamaheśvara and Paramabrāhmaṇya. It is said that the saint Sundarai was his contemporary.³ Among the temples built in this period are the Śiva temple at Panamalai, the Shore temple at Māmallapuram as well as the Airāvaṭeśvara temple and Kailāśanāth temple at Kāñchīpuram. Rājasimha seems to have two sons, Mahendravarman III and Parameśvaravarman II. Mahendravarman III constructed a temple in front of Rājasimheśvara temple, i.e., Kailāśanāth temple at Kāñchīpuram. It seems that he died as a prince during the life time of his father. Hence Parameśvaravarman II succeeded the throne. Kāśākkuḍi plates⁴ and Velūr Pālayam plates⁵ mentioned him. But the last known inscription of Parameśvaravarman II dated in the third year of his reign, inscribed on a stone lying in front of the Virāṭtaneśvara temple at Tiruvādigai in South Arcot district.⁶ He was defeated by the Chālukyan prince Vikramāditya.⁷ However, it seems that his short reign lasted for three years after which he died. He followed Nandivarman Pallavamalla. The Kāśākkuḍi plates⁸ inform that he was a descendent of Bhīmavarman, the younger brother of Simhaviṣṇu. Probably, till this incident took place, they remained as subordinate chiefs of viceroys to the Simhaviṣṇu family. This is the account furnished by the labels beneath certain sculptured panels in the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāl temple.

NANDIVARMAN II

His reign was crowded with military engagements, sieges, invasions and counter invasions. Vikramāditya II Chalukya invaded Kāñchi and defeated Nandivarman II. But the former did not confiscate the property of Rājasimheśvara temple (Kailāśanāth) and granted large sums to

1. देवे जगद्वलयरक्षणवद्ध दीक्षे निविभिक्ष शत्रु हृदये नरसिंहविष्णो

वाल्लभ्यस्मृज्जितसवाप्य विराजते या निज्जित्य गव्वमिव पुष्कर देवतायाः ॥

निर्मापितमिदं धाम तथा चन्द्र शिखामणेः

पता (कयेव) नारीणां रम्यं रंगपताकयां ॥

Kailāśanāth temple third niche to the right of front entrance. Hultzsch, *S.I.I.*, pt I.

2. *E.I.*, XXIX, pp. 95-96.

3. M. Raghava Aiyangar Alvārgal Kalanilai, pp. 135-36.

4. Hultzsch, *S.I.I.*, Vol. II, p. 357.

5. *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 511.

6. *S.I.I.*, III, No.331, T. V. Mahalingam, op. cit., p. 133.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

8. *S.I.I.*, Vol. II, pp. 349 and 357.

the same. Nandivarman II ended with reconquering Kāñchi. He led an expedition against the Ganga kingdom, defeated Śripuruṣa and forced him to surrender. This is supported by the existence of a village called Śripuruṣamangalam in North Arcot district forming part of the Pallava kingdom.¹ He took back from him the necklace *ugroḍya* the crest jewel of the Pallava kings.² He came into conflict with Jatila Parāntaka the Pāṇḍya king. The Rāṣṭrakūṭa King Dāntidurga invaded Kāñchi which is recorded in Kadaba plates.³ From the Ellora inscription as well as Bagumra plates⁴ of Govinda III, we learn that Dāntidurga conquered the city of Kāñchi. From the Velūrpālayam plates we came to know that Nandivarman's queen consort was called Reva and the prince born of her was named, Dāntivarman. It appears that the latter subsequently gave his daughter in marriage to Nandivarman II and thus established a matrimonial alliance with the Pallavas. The son of Nandivarman was evidently named Dāntivarman after his grandfather.

Dāntivarman succeeded Nandivarman II. After him came Nṛpatunga probably his son after whom the order of succession of the Pallavas was confused. Aparājītavarman (895-913 A.D.) who appears to have been his immediate successor fought a successful battle against the Pāṇḍya King Varguna II. This victory, however, proved to be the last flicker of the Pallava glory. In the words of R. Gopalan, "The Chola King Āditya defeated the Pallava King Aparājita and added Pallava dominions to his kingdom. With the death of Aparājita, the Pallava kingdom passed into the hands of the Cholas."

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL CONDITIONS

The period between the later half of the sixth and the first half of the tenth centuries marks the religious revival under the leadership of Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite saints who are called *Nāyan-mārs* and the *Alvārs* respectively. In the beginning of the Pallava rule there was a great stir in the religious conditions of the country. It was proved by *Mattavilāsa Prahasana* written by Mahendravarman I in 620 A.D.⁵ At that time the *Kāpālīka* faith was in vogue. Buddhism flourished there at least till the seventh century A.D. and that the statement of Hiuen-Tsang regarding the existence of *Vihāras* in Kāñchi finds support in this work of Mahendravarman I. The reign of Mahendravarman I synchronised with the period of decay of Buddhist and Jain religions at Kāñchi. According to the testimony of these saints as represented in their works, we may infer that the Buddhists and Jains of this period were in a degenerate position. Even in the Vaiṣṇava work entitled '*Nālayiradivya Prabandham*', they are mentioned in the same manner. The Śaiva saint Appar and Tirugnāna Sambandhar were actually devoted to propagation of Śaivism.

1. *J.I.H.*, XXIX, No. 56, p. 167. cited by T. V. Mahalingam, p. 177.
2. Tandantottam plates, *S.I.I.*, II, p.511, cited by T. V. Mahalingam, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
3. *E.I.*, Vol. IV, p. 334.
4. *E.I.*, Vol. IX, p. 24.
5. *Supra*, p. 9.
6. 400 small Prabandhams together called Nalayira Divya Prabandham, Tirumangai Alvar contemporary of Nandivarman II contributed this book; others are Periya Tirumoli Tirukurṇḍaṇḍakam etc. R. Gopalan, *The History of the Pallavas of Kāñchi* (Madras, 1928), pp. 130-131.

“The Nāyanmārs and Alvārs evolved a new type of *bhakti*, the emotional surrender to God which found in due course its supreme literary expression in the *Bhāgavat Purāṇa*. The outspoken hatred towards Buddhism and Jainism found expression in their hymns. There were challenges to public debate with the condition that the vanquished party should give up his creed and adopt that of the victor. The competition was in the performance of miracles and the tests of truth of respective doctrines by means of ordeals under the leadership of one gifted saint. This great wave of devotional enthusiasm attained its peak in the seventh century A.D. and had not spent itself out in the mid ninth century A.D. This indeed was the golden age of Hindu revival in the south.”¹

Among the sixty-three Nāyanmārs three, namely, Appar, Sambandar and Sundaramurti were the contemporary of the Pallava kings. Appar was the contemporary of Mahendravarman I who was a Jain in his early life and later he became a Śaivite. It is said in the *Periyapurāṇam* written by ‘Śekkilār’ that the Jains persuaded Appar with the permission of Mahendravarman I. Later the king himself influenced by Appar embraced Śaivism. The *Periyapurāṇam*’s account that Mahendravarman I desecrated the Jain monastery and constructed a Śaiva temple at Tiruvādi is doubtful, because the Maṇḍagapaṭṭu inscription proves that he was far from being a fanatical sectarian and records his construction of a rock-cut shrine of Trimūrti. In Mahendravarman in North Arcot district a Viṣṇu shrine was also constructed by the same king.

On the other hand the type of *bhakti* put forward by the Vaiṣṇava saints is gentle and simple and altogether free from an intolerant sectarian outlook. An inscription in Māmallapuram Shore temple describes Rājasimha as Chandrārdhasekhara Sikhāmaṇi that is, the bearer of Śiva as his crest-jewel and Śivachūḍāmaṇi and so on.² It is also stated in explicit terms by the Trichinapalli inscription.³ All the Śaivite temples of this period contain Somaskanda bas-relief on back walls and a *dhāralinga* on the floor. The characteristic feature of the Pallava structural temples and the monolithic *Rathas* is the absence of the water chute to draw the *Abhiṣeka* water. By this we can assume that the object of worship inside the cella was generally a painting or stucco-relief which could not be bathed and the *Abhiṣeka* was a later innovation. For example, the back wall of the sanctum of the Arjuna *Ratha* has an empty cell with traces of plaster, showing that the deity was painted or made in stucco. The completed top storey of the Dharmarāja *Ratha* contains a Somaskand panel carved probably by Parameśvaravarman I. There is no doubt that the reign of Parameśvaravarman I and Rājasimha witnessed a high water-mark of the Śaiva revival and this is amply proved by the numerous structural temples at Māmallapuram, Kāñchipuram and Panamalai.

1. K. Nilakantha Sastri: *Development of Religion in South India* (Madras, 1963).

2. It appears that this custom of showing a miniature image of the divinity to whom the king was devoted, on the *Kirīṭamukuṭa* was very popular in the post-Gupta period. For example, we find a representation of Narasimha in the *Kirīṭamukuṭa* of a Viṣṇu image in Bādāmi. Another example of this kind is supplied by Viṣṇu image from east Bengal, in which a tiny figure of four armed Viṣṇu is shown on the *Kirīṭamukuṭa*.—J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, (2nd Ed. Calcutta, 1956), pp. 401 and 405.

3. Guṇabhāra-Nāmaṇi rājanyena lingena lingini jñānam!

Prathāñ-ciraya loke vipakṣa vṛttech Paravṛttam!!—Hultsch, *S.I.I.*, Vol. I, p. 28.

The Śiva affiliations became so deep rooted that even Nandivarman II though he was Vaiṣṇava also paid homage to Śiva. This shows the catholicity of the Pallava emperors from the beginning. Thus in the opening verses of Kāśākkudi plates¹ we find that obeisance is offered first to Brahmā then to Trīvikrama form of Viṣṇu and then to Śiva. Apart from the Tevaram the hymns of Śiva, the inscriptions in this great renaissance period inform us more about kings and officials than the common people. All the Pallava kings were the worshippers of Śiva or Viṣṇu.

The composite images Ardhanārīśvara, Somaskanda, etc. indicate an effort to bring closer together Śākṛism and Śaivism. The religious rituals were practised by offering of wine and blood to Śiva and Kālī. The prominent place was given to Durgā particularly to Mahiṣāsura-mardinī among the sculptures of Mahābalipuram; a number of offering scenes appear in Mahābalipuram panels. In the Ādivarāha cave, the Varāha Maṇḍapa and in the Draupadi Ratha the devotees are offering their blood and heads to Durgā. The terrible forms of Śiva like Bhairava and Brahmasiraschedakamūrti found in Kailāsanāth temple are clear proofs of the worship of terrible forms of Śiva.

This religious revival was accompanied not only by the enormous literary output but also by the consequent development of art, architecture, sculpture and painting. During the Pallava period Kāñchipuram, their capital was centre of Sanskrit learning. Buddhist and Jain educational institutions were also established in Kāñchi. Hiuen-Tsang who visited the Pallava kingdom described the country around the capital. He found some hundred Sangharamas and ten thousand priests, all of whom studied the teachings of the Sthavira school of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Hindu including the Jain temples numbered about 80 and in other neighbouring places, he found many adherents of the Digambaras. He also referred to Dharmapāla, the well known metaphysician who preceded Śīlabhadra as the head of the great University of Nālandā. Sanskrit was patronised by the Pallavas. Most of their records were composed in Sanskrit. It is said that Simhaviṣṇu invited the great poet Bhāravi to his court. *Avantisundarī Kathāsāra* written by Dandi² mentions the Chālukya King Viṣṇuvardhana and the western Ganga Durvīṇita as contemporary of Simhaviṣṇu and thus establishes a valuable synchronism in South Indian history.³ Mahendravarman I was an accomplished scholar, musician and a lover of dance. As already

1. Hultsch: *S.I.I.*, Vol. II, p. 346.

2. तस्यां जज्ञे बुधव्रात ध्वस्ताखिलवि पल्लवः ।

पल्लवेषु महोपालः सिंहविष्णुरिति श्रुतः ॥१३॥

स मेधावी कविविद्वान् भारविः प्रभवन् वीरिराम् ।

अनुबुध्या करोम्यैत्री नरेन्द्रविष्णु वर्धनो ॥१३॥

स बुविनीतनामा सो दलन्वर्थाभिधानवान् ।

तस्यान्ति के वसत्येष तेनायेयिमुदीरितः ॥१३॥

अस्ति विज्ञाप्यमस्माकमन्तर्ग्राह्या स्मि यद्यहम् ।

प्रार्थनोचितयो कर्तुं प्रभवो न भवादृशाः ॥१४॥

दण्डिन्, अवन्तिमुन्दरीकथासार, श्लो० १३, २३, २७, ४०

Cited by R. Gopalan, op. cit., p. 22.

3. R. Gopalan: op. cit., p. 81.

mentioned before, he had to his credit a Sanskrit *Prahasana* written and entitled “Mattavilāsa”¹. Dubreuil suggests that he encouraged dancing and probably wrote a treatise on painting and other works on music, composed by him. The *bhakti* literature, that is, the hymns of the Śaiva Saints *Tevāram* and the Vaiṣṇava work *Nālāyiradivya Prabandham*. *Mahāvamśa* and *Kirātārjunīya* were highlights of the period. The Tamil work *Bhāratavenba*, believed to be composed in the ninth century A.D. during the reign of Nandivarman III, the victor of the battle of Tellāru was written by Perundevanār, *Nandikalambakam* a Tamil poetical work, probably belongs to the same period. Rajasimha bears the title of *Āgamapramāṇa*, *Āgamānusāri*. Here the reference to the *Āgamās* is significant as the first notable date of the mention of this literature. It has been pointed out distinctly that the technique adopted in the monolithic temples at Māmallapuram dating from the time of Narasimhavarman I seems to furnish enough proof of the observance of the injunctions of the *Āgamās* and probably having thus come into existence already.

The fresco painting also flourished at Siṭṭannavāsal and Panamalai. Now we cannot find anything in Panamalai because all the walls were white-washed. Recently one artist named Kodi Rāmamūrti, a student of Devi Prasād Raichowdhary in Madras School of Arts, Madras, discovered and copied a Pārvati figure in Panamalai. In Siṭṭannavāsal fresco we find the depiction of a lotus tank which is replete with lotuses and lotus leaves. Between these the artist painted fishes, swans, buffaloes and three Jains, two holding lotus flowers and the third one gathering flowers. There are a few dancing figures following Bharata’s Nāṭyaśāstra.

A figure of Naṭaraja on the walls of Kailāsanāth temple shows that the dance and music, both combinedly appealed to the artistic taste of the people. In the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ temple a couple of sculptures represent group dancing composed by men and women. In one of the panels the king is seated on throne among his officials and before them three dancers stand. In the centre is a male dancer and the female dancers one on each side. In the another panel we find a group of dancers men and women marching to the king’s court. Among them there is one drummer playing on his drum. By this we can assume that during the time of the Pallavas dancing was the delight of the people.

Rājasimha was also an accomplished musician as is known from his titles as *Śrī Vādyā*, *Vidyādhara*, *Śrīvīṇa Nārada* and others. The Pallavas’ contribution to Indian art can be written in golden letters, in its history. It is Mahendravarman I who initiated the rock-cut temple architecture without using mortar. His titles, *Vichitrachitta* and *Chitrakarapuli* are well deserved. The monolithic *Rathas* of Mahābalipuram, the rock-cut *Mandapas* of Trichinapalli and Mahābalipuram attained a remarkable place in the rock-cut architecture. The Pallavas had given a rich tradition to their successive ruling dynasties such as Cholas, Pāṇḍyas and Nāyakas. The elegance of the Kailāsanāth temple witnesses the nobility and valour of this dynasty. They also

1. पल्लवकुलधरणि मण्डलकुलपर्वतस्थः सर्वनयविजितसमस्तसामन्त
मण्डलस्थः, आखण्डलसमपराक्रमश्रियः, श्रीमहिमानुरूपदान
विभूतिराजराजस्य श्रीसिंहविष्णुवर्मणः पुत्रः शत्रुषडवर्गविग्रहपरः
परहितपरतंत्रतया महाश्रुतसद्यर्मा महाराजोः श्रीमहेन्द्रविक्रमवर्मानामः ।

Prologue in Mattavilāsa Prabhasana, Mattavilāsa Sthapana, p. 3.

give evidence of their aesthetic sense. The 'Shore' temple and the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāl temple show their advance in the structural temple architecture.

The sculpture depicting animals attains its highest mark in Indian art. The entire world was carved in an open air panel, probably known as the Kirātārjunīya composition. The life-size elephant figure shows its majesty; the ascetic cat, the pair of deer, the male monkey picking vermins off the female while she suckles her two little ones reveal the living nature of the scene and at the same time provoke humour. All these animal sculptures are elegant, realistic as well as amusing. In the Govardhanadhāri cave, the scene of the milking of a cow which is licking her calf's back is admirably naturalistic. Sculptural compositions in the Mahiṣāsura-maṇḍapa are noted 'for their repertoire including a battle between Mahiṣāsura and Durgā which is a life-like scene of a real battle. The Trivikrama and Varāha panels show the *virāṭ* form of Viṣṇu. These are the distinguished examples worth citing for their bold expression and execution.

Along with the naval power and maritime trade of the Pallava empire, its art also spread to Ceylon, Malaya and Indonesia. In Malaya Peninsula and Java, the Pallava Buddhist as well as Hindu statues have been discovered. Java and Barabudar sculptures show much affinity with the Pallava sculptures of Kalugumalai. On the main land the Pallava art played a considerable role in the formation of Chālukya and Rāṣtrakūta art.¹

1. Herman Goetz: *Five Thousand Years of Indian Art* (Art of the World Series, New York, 1959), p. 130.

Background of the Pallava Sculpture

The principle subject matter in Indian Art has been sectarian iconography. Highly conceived ideal of human faith dominates the age. Buddhism was very popular on the eastern coast from second century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. A gospel of the Buddha was predominant. Great monuments were built to express that sentiment of the people towards Buddhism. The artist described the essence of life of his own age at Sāñchi, Bharhut, Mathurā, Jaggayyapet, Amarāvati, Nāgārjunikoṇḍā etc.

Jaggayyapet, Ghanṭasāla, Amarāvati, etc., were situated in the ancient Vengi country. This Vengi country was the converging point of the ancient trade routes. Numerous coins with a figure of ship on them of the time of the Satavāhanas, were found in the Coromandal coast. In Pondicherry also Satavāhana coins were found by Dubreuil¹. It shows they encouraged a flourishing maritime trade. The merchant of Vengi poured wealth in the region. Economically the country was stabilised. The generosity and the rich patronage of the great Satavāhanas is reflected in the form of sculptures and architecture. During this period, Vengi became culturally important and prosperous, and it grew to be a prolific centre of art. Art here continues from second century B.C. to fourth century A.D., after which it declined in Vengi along with Buddhism. After this, came the revival of Hinduism under the Viṣṇukoṇḍins and Western Chālukyas which flourished more and more under the Pallavas.

The initial products came from Jaggayyapeta, thirty miles north-west of Amarāvati. Amarāvati became an active centre of this artistic movement later from third century A.D. onwards at Nāgārjunikoṇḍā. The art activities continued for several centuries as shown by the inscriptions from second century B.C. to fourth century A.D. and thenceforward to the time of the Pallavas.

Only a few fragmentary reliefs are available from Jaggayyapet, one of them is preserved in the Government Museum, Madras; this probably represents *Chakravarti* Māndhātā (Fig. 1). This is a very flat relief almost a sketch on the stone. It looks that in the first stage the artist drew his figure and then he gave the depth by scooping out the redundant portions of the stone. Thus it gives the feeling of an initial stage of a relief. The movements are restrained as compa-

1. C. Sivaramamurti: *Early Eastern Chalukyan Sculptures*, 2nd Ed., Madras Government Museums Bulletin (Madras, 1957), p. 9.

red with the later Andhra style at Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa. The limbs are long and slender, but sturdily built. The figures show accuracy of outline and sensitiveness of modelling. The *Chakravarti* stretches his right hand upwards to the clouds which rain square coins. He is surrounded by the seven treasures; a wheel to represent his paramount power, his royal horse and elephant and jewel (*chudamani*), his wife, his treasures and his ministers. We might refer the above scene to a passage in the *Prabandhachintāmaṇi* of Merutuṅga, in which the king has been described:

“O king! when the cloud of your hand has begun its auspicious ascent in the ten quarters of the heavens and was raining the nectar, flood of gold with the splendour of the trembling golden bracelet flickering like lightening.”¹

We can compare the style of the Jaggayyapet relief with scenes at Bharhut and Sāñchi stūpa No. 2, only the physiognomy is different, but the dress and the wooden appearance of the *Chakravarti* figure looks like its counterpart at Sāñchi; the queen consort of *Chakravarti*, Māndhātā, in her modelling, her girdle, the heavy ear ornaments etc., resembles the Bharhut *Yakṣi* figures. From this time onwards the lengthening of the lower portion of the figure and slimness became the characteristic features of this southern movement.

Amarāvati produced a large number of reliefs starting from the pre-Christian era which reached its culmination in the second century A.D. The life stories and the *Jātaka* stories (the previous births of Buddha) were very successfully depicted on the railings and the casing slabs of the stūpas. It expressed a spirit of enthusiasm and exuberance. Each scene reflects emotion of the donor and craftsman. “Vividly poignant are many of the groups, they seem to imply that the sculptor was communicating some of his own soul into the people; he portrayed as if his chisel and mallet were not mere tools, but for the time being formed part of himself.”² Though in the beginning the liner rhythms of Amarāvati sculpture suffered from heaviness, in second century A.D., it effloresced in all its qualities. This is the period of the great Satavāhana princes, Vaśiṣṭaputra-Pulamai, Śrī Yajña, etc., according to the inscriptions found at the sites. This period roughly falls in the second and third quarters of second century A.D. when the Satavāhana glory reached its highest peak in all its aspects. The works were produced exuberantly.

The artists of Amarāvati were not blind carvers; they were well versed in the traditional literature in allied arts. They displayed imagination and originality combined with depth of religious fervour. They worked on very large slabs and exhibited perfect mastery of composition dealing with a number of figures and scenes. All the figures are knit together in one organic unity with overflowing lines of figures. The movement passes on from figure to figure binding the whole scene together. For example, the scene of the translation of the Bowl (Fig. 2), the movement goes in circular manner; the line starts from the bowl and circumambulates the whole panel. The rhythm provided by the dramatic movements and directions of the figures are arranged in the composition. Technically, Amarāvati sculpture is highly advanced. The figures in the reliefs are deeply cut and the modelling is round. The lines

1. Sherman, E. Lee: *History of Far Eastern Art*, p. 45.

2. Percy Brown: *Indian Architecture* (Hindu and Buddhist), 3rd Ed. (Bombay, 1956), p. 38.

are accurate and sensitive. The lower part of the figures look long. The legs are very slender with tapering thighs. The human figures are ideally modelled. The delicacy, and grace of feminine form is quite clear in these sculptures. The amazonian nature of the feminine figures of Gandhāra and the luscious sensuality of the Mathurā style are absent in this art. The abundance of flesh is avoided. The figures are slim but full of strength, and elongated limbs added the vegetal suppleness to the figures. Especially, the articulation of the feminine form in the hands of the master artists of Vengi achieved the ideal representation of celestial grace as described by Kālidāsa in his *Meghadūta*.¹ In all her actions, i.e., in sitting, standing and in relaxing she looks very charming and tender. All the movements look like *Nrtyabhaṅgimās*: for example in a fragmentary panel the ladies are worshipping the feet of Lord Buddha (Fig. 3). The figures are very beautiful with their delicate body; their smiling faces and the gestures of their paying homage, giving life like impression. The subsequent expression in the *Viṣṇudharmottara* namely “लसतीवच मूलम्बो, हसतीवच माधुर्यम इव सजीव दृश्यते” seems to be already established in the Vengi sculpture. Even the pratihāra figures are beautiful with delicate bodily contours but they are fearful by their expression and long swords.

The toilet scene of the women folk are interestingly and elegantly depicted. A female figure gracefully looks in the mirror while arranging her hair. Her proud countenance expresses joy. She may be called *rūpagarvitā*. In some of the scenes the maids are adoring their princess with ornaments. One *Yakṣi* figure of superb beauty stands under the tree, carved in the *chaitya* arch putting on in her ear hole a *kundala* (Plate LV, Ske. I). The thighs of the figure picked up the suppleness and the softness of the plantain tree. Her shoulders can be compared with elephant trunk. Here the idealisation of the figure reached its high watermark. On the whole the figures are decorated with various types of ornaments, and coiffures. Everywhere feminine vanity, delicacy and grace have been profusely depicted by the sculptors of Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa.

The youth of Amarāvati is calm and dignified with slender and strengthly limbs and narrow waist (*Sinhakati*) (Plate LVI, Ske. 3). They are also adorned with turbans, *kundalas*, girdles, etc. The artist has shown explicitly the differences between the king and the servant, by their attitude and dresses. The king is depicted in the *mahārājaleela* pose in *sukhāsana* and certain symbols like flywhisk, umbrella, etc. are also used. The servant is in his reverential pose and the warrior in a vigorous and stiff attitude.

The ideal male figure has been carved in the most beautiful panel—“worship of a

1. Kālidāsa describes the ideal feminine beauty in his *Meghadūta*—as slim, youthful, with fine teeth, and lips red like ripe bimba fruit, attenuous in the waist, with eyes like those of frightened dove and deep navel, slow of gait by the weight of the hips and slightly bent by her full breasts, as it were the first and the best in the creation of the feminine by the creator.”—(Trans.) C. Sivaramamurti.

तन्वी श्यामा शिखरदशना पक्वबिम्बाधरोष्ठी
मध्ये क्षामा चकितहरिणी प्रेक्षणा निम्ननाभिः ।
श्रेणीभागादलसगमना स्तोकनम्रा स्तनाभ्यां
या तत्र स्याद्युवतिविषये सृष्टिराद्यैव धातुः ॥

miniature stūpa by the nāgas".¹ In this relief the nāga kings are standing. Their shoulders are robust, symmetrical and well shaped. Their waists of the *simhakatī* type are most effectively depicted. They are indicated as the nāga kings by expanding hoods behind their heads. The male attendants formed a semi-circle while the women are gathered in the foreground and on either side.

The Vengi artists followed the synoptic method in depicting the stories on the stones. He narrated the stories in a manner in which probably language cannot do. The figures show their feelings and powerful emotions such as joy and sorrow, pride and depression, compassion and stiffness of attitude successfully with the sensitive facial expressions, unlike at Bharhut and Sāñchi where the figures fulfil their need merely by their presence without expression and action. Though the Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa artists followed the same narrative method, they poured life in their sculptures. They were well versed in depicting human nature.

The scene of subjugation of Nalagiri is a remarkable example (Fig. 4). The uncontrolled mad elephant created terror in the streets of Rājgrha by tearing and trampling every one on his way. The women folk are frightened very much and one of them clings to her male partner, with a terrified look. People from the balcony are shown observing the scene curiously. In the same composition the elephant was subdued at the feet of Buddha. In this composition the artists maintained balance between the havoc produced by the elephant and the peaceful atmosphere produced by the presence of Buddha. They have shown their dexterity in handling of space and representation of a human figure. There is a naturalism in the scene. The elephants are bigger than the human figures. The treatment is the same as in the Māyādevi's dream at Bharhut² where the elephant which entered the womb of Māyādevi is bigger than Māyādevi. This particular expression suggested that Māyādevi had the vision in which the forms were symbolic. But in the above composition from Amarāvati, the elephant is more material in character. The elephant is closer to the spectators. The descending size of the most distant figure in composition is another feature of the Amarāvati style. There is no straight line, everywhere there are slightly twisting curves and fully rounded shapes; flat planes are avoided; everything is treated in a sensuous way. It is this type which greatly influenced the development of South Indian sculpture in the Pallava period.

Moreover, the artists showed their capacity in depicting various animals and birds, mythical as well as realistic, the elephant, the horse, the bull, lions, deers and birds are different types each being an excellent specimen of its kind. Similarly, the *Gandharvas*, *Kinnaras*, *Nāgas*, etc., were carved, in adoring attitude. Hardly the scenes left anything untouched.

Themes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* found place among the carvings. For example, as identified by C. Sivaramamurti, *Kabandha* a demon, personification of an evil spirit was so intelligently and appropriately carved in the temptation scene having an addi-

1. Zimmer, H.: *The Art of Indian Asia*, Bollington Series, 2nd Ed. (New York, 1964, Vol. II, Plates PL 95, fig. a).
2. Zimmer: op. cit., Plate 38, fig. D.

tional head in his stomach, in Ghaṇṭasāla and also in Amarāvati (Plate LXV, Fig. 1). The same motif was adopted in Ajantā, Badāmi, Māmallapuram (Plate LXIV, Fig. 2). A peculiar fish with front portion of an elephant and horse and the hind part of a fish, is the *Gajavaktra-jhasha* described in Mahābhārata¹ (Plate LXV, fig. 4). The other important motifs are the rows of swan carrying lotus stalks, the full blown lotus flowers in their beaks and the Pūrṇakumbha, the sacred vase which we can see in splendid examples at Amarāvati, Bhattiprolu, Ghaṇṭasāla and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa. The *Pūrṇakumbha* probably signified the Royal insignia of the Satavāhanas which was quite befitting of their plentitude. There is a vivid description of this *Pūrṇakumbha* in the *Gāthāsaptasati*.² It seems from this description that a pair of Pūrṇakumbhas usually were placed at the door as an auspicious symbol. The swans occur in Amarāvati in the scene of Buddha crossing the river Nirāṇjana³ and also in the Nāgārjunikoṇḍa as described in the *Rāmāyaṇam*. These artistic motifs travelled all over the country and formed a uniform style. These are the main bridges which connect the various styles flow on the various parts of the country. "Contemporary sculptors of a later date like those of the Guptas, Vakatakas and Pallavas have immortalized the motifs. Thus an epic tradition has persisted through the ingenuity of an intelligent sculptor, versed in the literary traditions of his land."⁴

The mature Amarāvati style of second century A.D., declined in third century A.D. From the third century onwards the artists of Ikṣavakus were active at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa. Here the same Amarāvati style was followed. Themes, technique etc., are the same. Only there are some minor changes in the physiognomy. The faces of the figures of Nāgārjunikoṇḍa are round and the legs are too slender. The faces are somewhat less expressive and dull, but the same charm and elegance is present. "The Mithuna couples, charmingly sensuous in their pose and attitude of dancing and dalliance, are the pride of Nāgārjunikoṇḍa reliefs. The linerism that characterises the individual figures and the total composition, the robust manliness of the masculine figures and the feminine grace of the female ones and the soft but firm plastic treatment of the contours are certainly admirable qualities that characterise the relief panels."⁵ Among the splendid examples of Nāgārjunikoṇḍa reliefs

1. A fish with elephant's head, of owl's and those resembling fish-horse:

अषाढां गजवक्त्राणामूलकानां तथैव च॥

मीनवाजिसंस्थाणां.....

—महाभारत; १११-१७३, ५०-५१

Cited by C. Sivaramamurti, *Sanskrit Literature and Art*, M.A.S.I., 1955, No. 73, p. 2.

2. With her blue lotus-like eyes running to the road she sees you, coming, with her pair of breasts like two auspicious water pitchers placed at the doorway.

रत्नापदराणं न अणुपला तुम सा पडिच्छए एन्तम् ॥

दारणि हिए हि दोहि विमङ्गल कलसे हि व थणे हि॥

—गाथासप्तशती ११.४०

Ibid.

3. Zimmer, op.cit., Plate 94.
4. C. Sivaramamurti: *Amarāvati Sculptures*, p. 51.
5. Amita Roy: *Marg*, (March, 1965), No. 2, p. 39.

"Chanda giving news of Siddhartha's departure to Suddhodhana" (Fig. 5), is very sentimental. Here the grief and despondency spread out throughout the atmosphere. Suddhodhana who wants to escape this event in his life cannot hear this truth. So he turned his head from the unbearable grief. Yaśodhara was shown about to faint, one of her maid servants supported her. In this composition the most important part is played by the horse. It expresses its dumb grief by putting its head upon the feet of Yaśodhara. So the whole atmosphere is charged with grief. Siddhartha's renouncing the world (Fig. 6) and his first sermon in Sārnāth etc., also are very elegantly, expressively, and forcefully carved. In between the two plaques the mithuna figures are engraved (Fig. 7). They are all very delicate and beautiful. Among them very interesting scene is the man offering the drink to his female consort (Fig. 8). Here the modesty of the woman is shown, as she declines it. Her expression is very delicate and elegant.

This panel Siddhārtha's renouncing the world is most symbolic. It shows his calmness while he was leaving the palace. He was riding on his horse on that remarkable midnight. Some of the figures probably the semi-divine beings putting their palms under the feet of the horse to prevent the sound produced by its majestic gait. It shows the great tranquillity of the universe on that immemorial moment. The nature is welcoming the illustrious one; the searcher of the peace. There is a rhythmic movement in the whole panel as if all are walking. The direction of all the figures is towards the front. The horse is elegantly and beautifully carved. It gives the appearance as it is about to change its gait.

In another panel the birth of Buddha is carved (Fig. 7) in the same manner as in Amarāvati sculpture. Among the amorous couples the male one showing mirror to his female consort is very interesting.

Thus the art at Vengi continued the earlier traditions and itself inspired in its later phases. The early figures of Amarāvati, Bharhut and cave No. 10 of Ajantā resemble each other. The Bharhut figures are rigid, gradually shaped in rhythmic *bhāngimas* with soft features in Amarāvati. The costumes and jewellery, i.e., the turbans, necklets, earrings as well as facial features correspond to one another. Plate Nos. LVIII, LIX and LVII show how the figures of Amarāvati influenced Ajantā. The physiognomy, the pose and *bhāngimas* are the same. These figures resemble in sitting position physiognomy etc. with that of Pārvati in Somaskanda panel in Mahīśasuramardini cave at Māmāllapuram (Fig. 65) and also the portrait of Rangapaṭaka at Kailāsanāth temple at Kāñchipuram (Fig. 107). But only the pearl ornaments, ribbons and the mode of dress differ, and it is somewhat simplified while the Gupta figures show more refined treatments. The Plate No. LXI also shows how close resemblances are. Except the minor differences in ornaments and dress, the general attitude of the artist towards bodily form is the same. In representation at Ajantā the feet and the palm are frequently shown turned slightly probably to indicate the simile of the feet and the palm with that of new leaf, i.e., *Navapallava* just as *Karapallava* and *Padapallava*. It can be seen in Plate No. LIX in the standing figure from Ajantā and with the same idea the Amarāvati sculptor treated the feet of the women very delicately

followed by Māmallapuram artists. There are so many similitudes in the conception of *Prasādika* figure of Mathurā who is carrying water and flowers etc., and Amarāvati *Yakṣi*; she may be *Nadidevatā* as stated by C. Sivaramamurti. She stands on her *vāhana makara* and taking food and water. So, definitely, she is the river goddess and probably she is the river Krishna as Amarāvati is situated on the bank of river Krishna. There is slight flexion in this figure while the *prasādika* figure is in *Samabhanga*.

In the Chālukyan sculptures the Satavāhana tradition is continued through their immediate Gupta-Vakaṭaka sources and the long *muktayajñopavīta*, jewelled *udarabandha*, twisted cloth below the waist, and *Suvarṇavaikakṣaka* for women are excellent examples. The motif of head on stomach of dwarf also occurs in Chālukya sculpture.¹

The same Satavāhana tradition was fostered in the Krishna valley in later centuries and persisted there during the time of the Viṣṇukunḍins in the fourth century A.D. It is from them, as Prof. G. J. Dubreuil has pointed out that "the Pallava cave temples with their sculptures beginning with the early ones of Mahendravarman have their origin".

Figures in identical poses are to be found at Ajantā and Mahābalipuram, both inspired undoubtedly by those from Amarāvati.² For example, the female figure on Arjuna Rathas (Fig. 41) and the famous Black Princess in Ajantā (see Zimmer, Plate No. 149) is identical in her soft suppld body and the standing posture. Not only that the earlier motifs such as, *vastrayajñopavīta*, *udarabandha*, *katisūtra* etc. found in Bharhut, Amarāvati and Māmallapuram figures as shown in Plate LXXV, Ske. 5 to 13. The seat of Simhaviṣṇu carved in Ādivarāha cave temple resembles with the Amarāvati (Plate No. LXIV, Ske. 3, 4 and 5). The nudity of the female figures which continues from the earlier days through the transparency of the dress also persists at Māmallapuram figures.

"The art of the Satavāhanas has had two later developments, one in western Deccan and the other in the east. The Vakaṭaka caves at Ajantā with the finest floral designs and sculptures show the effect of Gupta art on something which is fundamentally derived from the late Satavāhana tradition. The sculpture and architecture is continued in the earliest Chālukya temples at Badāmi and Aihole."³ The full and half lotus medallion with half open buds is repeated in Ajantā on the pillars. The Satavāhana tradition continued through the Gupta-Vakaṭaka art movement into the Chālukyan sculptures. The *Pūrṇakumbha* motif of the Satavāhana was also repeated in Gupta as well as in Chālukyan art. In this way, as also in the case of many other motifs Satavāhana art has left impression on many a latter phase of art in South India.

The Buddhist sculpture flourished under the Satavāhanas and Ikṣvākus. Hindu sculpture blossomed forth under Viṣṇukunḍins, who ruled since fourth century A.D. to sixth century A.D. from their capital Dendulur in Krishna district. Their sculptures are found scattered in

1. Zimmer: Plate 138, The Udaramukha motif is seen below the panel of Varāha alongwith the other dwarf figures.
2. C. Sivaramamurti: *Amarāvati Sculptures*, pp. 52, 53 ff.
3. C. Sivaramamurti: *Early Eastern Chālukyan Sculpture*, Madras Government Museum Bulletin, (Madras, 1962), p. 18.

Vijayawada, Mughalrajapuram, Uṇḍavalli, Madugula in Macherla district and Pedamuddiyam in Cuddapah district. Perhaps the Hindu renaissance was started in south by Viṣṇukunḍins though some figures like Kartikeya, *Aṣṭabhujaśwāmi* and some of the reminiscences of Aśva-medha sacrifice are found at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa.¹ But it seems that there were hostile relations between Brāhmaṇism and Buddhism. Two panels are available to show these relations. In one of the panels, Prince is crushing a *Śivaliṅga* with his right foot; coiled round the base of the *liṅga* is a serpent depicted writhing by its expanding hoods in anger. On the right, a group of Brāhmīns are shown protesting at the king's action. The city wall and the gateways denote that the incident took place outside the town where the *liṅga* has been cast forth. Thus there is little doubt that the scene represents a king denouncing Brāhmaṇism.² Another such representation came from Stūpa No. 9.³

Later the Hindu renaissance was supported by Viṣṇukunḍins. Their cave temples in Mughalrajapuram exhibit some of the Brāhmaṇical sculptures. But these sculptures are mutilated very badly. The fragments exhibit simplicity and the same treatment of Amarāvati, i.e., the slim and supple body. The Nataraja figure from Mughalrajapuram caves probably the first representation of Śiva as Nataraja in South, is the most beautiful one but damaged by ruthless hands. This figure is very simple and rhythmical with eight hands. The *apasmara puruṣa* appears under his feet and the Lord is in *Ūrdhvajanu* pose,⁴ which resembles in many points with the Pallava Metal Nataraja figure of Kurram.

In Uṇḍavalli caves near Vijayawada there are a number of sculptural panels on the pillars representing Viṣṇu as *Trivikrama*, *Varāha*, *Narasimha*, *Anantasayi*, etc. In the *Varāha* panel (Fig. 10) of Uṇḍavalli, the *Varāha* is seated in *alidha* pose and *Bhūdevi* also seated comfortably on his lap supported by his two hands. Though the composition of the figures in Māmallapuram is too imminent to Badāmi, the sentiment behind the figures of *Varāha* and *Bhūdevi* of Uṇḍavalli and Māmallapuram is the same. The *Trivikrama* (Fig. 11) and *Anantasayi* (Fig. 12) panels are narrated in the same manner as in Māmallapuram. It seems that this style influenced the Badāmi Chālukyas and it was through the Chālukyas that Narasimhavarman Pallava was inspired to have the above discussed panels. Some of the details like the Gopi carrying pots arranged one over the other found at Uṇḍavalli, was repeated almost identically in the Govardhan cave at Māmallapuram. The same type of figure also found in Nāgārjunikoṇḍa (Fig. 9), but this figure has only one pot on her head and somewhat heavy ornaments compared to the Viṣṇukunḍin and Māmalla-

1. About the Gudimallam Liṅga, Sivaramamurti stated in his *Amarāvati Sculptures*, "Its existence as a solitary representative of early Hindu deity of the second century B.C. in the reign of the Satavāhana kings, gives the hopes that there may be others yet to be discovered. The same Satavāhana tradition that accounts for the execution of this figure was fostered in the Krishna Valley in later centuries and persisted there during the time of the Viṣṇukunḍins in the sixth century A.D."; p. 52.
2. Plate XXX, C. Chakravarti is denouncing Brāhmaṇism from stūpa No.2. Longhurst: *Buddhist Antiquities of Nāgārjunikoṇḍa*, 1936, No.54, p. 32.
3. Pl. XXXI-a. A king denouncing Brāhmaṇism from stūpa No.9, *ibid*.
4. C. Sivaramamurti: *Early Eastern Chalukyan Sculpture*, Plate No. IV, fig. a, p. 14 ff.

puram sculptures. In *Anantasayi* figure, the position of hands of Viṣṇu, the coils of the serpent and its hoods all are alike. The *Gajendramokṣa* panel of Uṇḍavalli (Fig. 13) shows how the sculptures of Viṣṇukunḍins were inspired by the Gupta tradition. There are close resemblances between the *Gajendramokṣa* panel of Devagarh temple of the Guptas and the Uṇḍavalli caves of Viṣṇukunḍins. The Narasiṃha who is spearing Hiranyakaśyapa is very forcefully carved (Fig. 14). This inspiration came through the Vakatakas who were closely connected through the matrimonial alliance with the Viṣṇukunḍins.

Another figure of Śiva now in Vijayawada Museum (Fig. 15) is in white marble of Amarāvati type. Śiva is two handed and holds *paraśu* in his right hand. The *jatājuta* is arranged like *uśniṣa*. Nandi is also carved in front of him. It reminds us the Gudimallam Śiva of the Satavāhana period. The tassels and loops around his waist and ear ornaments are the characteristic features that became more elaborate in the later Pallava sculpture. The Viṣṇukunḍin sculptures are scattered in a vast area. A Śiva panel from a small Śiva temple at Madugula near Macherla in Guntur district is also assigned to the same period. It presents the family of Śiva very interestingly (Fig. 16). Śiva seated on an *āsana* which is supported by one of his *gaṇa*. He is four handed and holds the *śūla* in one hand and snake in another hand. He is caressing Nandi. Pārvati stands beside him. She is carrying Skanda in her lap. Gaṇeśa also is present. The other figures in the corner of the panel have been identified by C. Sivaramamurti as Rati and Kāmadeva. Brahma (Fig. 17) and Viṣṇu (Fig. 18) figures from the same place are also attributed to the Viṣṇukunḍins by the above scholar. Both the figures are very simple. Brahma has only two hands while Viṣṇu has four hands.

Viṣṇu has four hands having *śaṅkha*, *chakra* and *gadā* and the fourth hand is in *Abhayaḥasta*. The big central loop and the side tassels are also present which has taken a beautiful form in Māmallapuram.

Pedamuddiyam plaque (Fig. 19) is important for its development of iconography in Andhra sculpture. "This plaque may be assigned to the period of the Viṣṇukunḍins and that of the early rule of the Pallavas which extended to certain Andhra districts, during the period of Simhaviṣṇu."¹ In this there is a representation each of Gaṇeśa, Brahma, Narasiṃha, the *līṅga*, Viṣṇu, Lakṣmi in her semi-symbolic form, Mahiṣasuramardini, and Pārvati-Parameśwara, etc. Here except Mahiṣasuramardini, all other gods are two handed; all of them bear a *kirita*. In the Mahiṣasuramardini scene, Durga has four hands and Mahiṣasura represents as a buffalo. Though these figures represent something like packing in one panel, they are important for their iconography. So, all these sculptures formed a rich background for Pallava sculpture as Śuṅga, Andhra and Kuṣāṇa sculptures provided an important background for the Gupta sculptures in the North.

During the time of Mahendravarman Pallava I, the sculpture and architecture were directly influenced by the Viṣṇukunḍins. The facades of the Viṣṇukunḍin caves at Mughalrajapuram and Uṇḍavalli, resemble with the caves of Mahendravarman I at Maṇḍagapaṭṭu and Dalvanur.

1. C. Sivaramamurti: *Early Eastern Chalukyan Sculpture*, p.12.

The *dvārapāla* (Fig. 20) figures in particular of the horned variety from Uṇḍavalli show great affinity to the *dvārapālakas* of Mahendravarman I, at Dalvanur and Maṇḍagapaṭṭu. "Both agree in features like the peculiar headgear, horns, hair arrangement, extending on either side of the face, jewellerys, waist band treatment, heavy club, general bearing, etc."¹ The figures in identical poses are to be found in Amarāvati, Ajantā and Māmallapuram (Plate LIX, Ske. 9, 10 and 11; and Plate LXVI, Figs. 1, 2 and 3). It appears that these motifs at Ajantā and Māmallapuram were inspired by Amarāvati. In the Govardhana scenes at Māmallapuram, slender and elongated limbs of the female figures are closer in style to their counterparts at Amarāvati. The head of Gopa (Plate LV, Ske. 2) who is shown milking the cow in the above panel of Māmallapuram resemble the head of the Buddha in Amarāvati. If we remove the local peculiarities, whatever remains is of Vengi tradition. The contribution of the Vengi style principally determined the character of the Pallava style. In this connection Rowland remarks, "The Pallava sculptures retain the extremely graceful attenuatism of the forms at Amarāvati and animated by the same feeling for movement and emotionally expressive poses and gestures. Thus the tradition of Amarāvati travelled all over the South and enriched the Pallava sculpture."

It is not inappropriate to give the opinion of Professor S. K. Saraswati, here, "The plastic movement in Vengi is important not only because of its prolific output of remarkably outstanding qualities, but also, on account of the manner in which it carries on the traditions of early Indian art, develops them in its own spectacularly dramatic way and finally leads on to the bold and imposing compositions of the subsequent Pallava, Chālukya period."²

1. C. Sivaramamurti: *Early Eastern Chalukyan Sculpture*, p. 18.

2. S. K. Saraswati: *A Survey of Indian Sculpture*, p.79.

The Origin and the Beginning of the Pallava Sculpture

We have already observed that the founder of the political power of the Pallavas was Simhaviṣṇu, who reigned from 586 to 610 A.D.; yet, the originator of the Pallava architecture and sculpture was his son and successor Mahendravarman I who became famous as 'Vichitrachitta' (curious minded) and 'Chitrakārapuli' (Tiger among the artists) noted for his curious inventive mind and vivacious virtuosity. He ruled from 610 to 630 A.D. The great achievement of Mahendravarman in the field of rock-cut architecture was his first introduction of the technique of hewing hard rock like granite and the execution of the stone temples in Tamil land¹. In that his architects achieved perfection in a very short period. In Maṇḍagapaṭṭu he excavated his first rock-cut cave-temple which is called Lakṣitāyatanā cave temple. There is an important inscription of Mahendravarman which proves that he was the originator of rock-cutting art in this area. There were hardly any stone sculptures before Mahendravarman. Only some literary evidences are available from Sangam literature. But most of the picturesque description of painted or stucco forms are recorded. Ahanānūru gives a description of a brick temple with the principal deity painted on the wall inside the shrine.² The Avanti Sundarī Kathāsāra narrates how the queen of Rājahamṣa offered worship to Guha in the Guhālaya and saw the wall picture of Guha playing beside his parents and son was born to her by the grace of God.³

“‘NEDU-NAL-VĀDAI’ one of the ‘ten idylls’ (Paṭṭupattu) mentions the construction of buildings religious as well as secular.”

Purnanuru I (the collection of 400 poems dealing with wars, kings and polity) described a Śiva figure wearing cassica flowers garland and the crescent moon and Ardhanārīśvara with a

1. We find that soft sandstone was used from Maurya to Gupta periods while limestone was used by the architects of Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa stūpas. Even in Jaggayyapet, Bhaṭṭiprolu, etc., the soft marble like limestone was used.
2. Ahanānūru verse 67, quoted by K. R. Srinivasan, *Cave Temples of the Pallavas* (Delhi, 1964), p. 34. Itṭikai neḍum cuvar Viṭṭam.....Cor māḍattu eḷuḍaṇikaḍavuḷ Silappadikaram, mentions—skyscrapers jostling with the clouds, built by skilled architects.
3. *Avanti Sundarī Kathāsāra*, Ed. Harihar Sastri, 111, vv. 37-38 (Mylapore, 1957), quoted by K. R. Srinivasan, op. cit., p. 35.
Rājñi punas=tapasvinyā upalabhya guhālayam, anapatyajanārādhyam prasasthe tanyāsthaya: Bhitti Chitragataṁ pitroḥkrīḍantaṁ guham=antikāt, dṛṣṭvā svatanayāvasthā-smaraṇena ruroda sā.

bull as his mount and with his throat blackened by poison. He is adored by men and another Pu. 55 described Tripurāntaka Śiva.¹

Silappadikāram also mentions an Indra festival at Puhar and worship was offered to various deities housed in the temples in the city; among them are Mahādeva, Muruga, Viṣṇu, etc. "So we have sufficient iconographic description of the various deities worshipped in Tamil land and there is positive mention of the existence of temples therein. From the fourth century onwards, the Pallavas ushered in a great era of temple-building activities in South India and their work has left an imperishable mark on the artistic achievements of the Tamils and greatly influenced feature."² It seems brick architecture with painted or stucco mūlaberas were in common before Mahendravarman I.

The ancestor of Simhaviṣṇu Skandaśiṣya probably the father of Kumāraviṣṇu or Vizaya-skandavarman made some grants to the God of the holy mūlasthāna at Tirukkalkunṇam³. Another grant made was in the name of Chārudevi, the daughter-in-law of the above Kumāraviṣṇu or Vizayaskandavarman to the God Nārāyaṇa of the Kulimahātāraka temple at Dālūra.⁴ Even in Simhaviṣṇu's time also the same process was followed. Avantisundarī Kathāsāram written by Daṇḍi who flourished in Simhaviṣṇu's court stated that there was a Mukunda temple on Mahābalipuram hill.⁵ But now no traces of all these temples or the main deities of these temples are visible. So probably all these temples were built with bricks and the main deities were painted on the back wall of the sanctum and all have perished by the ruthless hands of time. It is also confirmed by the inscription of Mahendravarman I on the walls of Lakṣitāyatana cave temples of Maṇḍagapaṭṭu. There he inscribed: "This brickless, timberless, metalless and mortarless mansion of Lakṣitā was caused to be made by King Vichitrachitta for Brahma, Īśvara and Viṣṇu."⁶ This inscription shows that this is the first temples of this type in Tamil land. It is clear by this inscription that before Mahendravarman, the temples did exist but they were constructed in perishable materials like brick, mortar, timber, etc. This is the first time he executed solid rock and the stone sculptures also originated with him. Mahendravarman's predecessors followed the old

1. S. R. Balsubrahmanyam: *Early Chola Art*, part I, (Bombay, 1966), p. 3.

2. Ibid., p. 11.

3. It is mentioned in the Āditya Chola's (870-907 A.D.) inscription found on the wall of a late Pallava apsidal temple in the centre of the village at the foot of the hill. This inscription records the renewal of the grant made by Skandaśiṣya first time by Narasiṃhavarman and the second time by Āditya Chola I. Now it is impossible to find out this holy mūlasthāna; probably Narasiṃhavarman I converted it into a cave temple and grant renewed with the original name. *E.I.*, Vol. III, p. 277.

4. British Museum plates of Chārudevi, *E.I.*, Vol. VIII, p. 145 (after R. Gopalan).

5. महामल्लपुरदेवः स्वैरे वारिधिसन्निधौ ।

आस्ते मुकुन्दः सानन्दं कपीन्द्र इव मन्दरे ॥

6. The inscription of Mahendravarman I in Maṇḍagapaṭṭu:

(i) Eta-an-iṣṭakam-a-druma (m-a-lō)

(ii) ham-a-sudham (vichitrachi) ttena

(iii) Nirmāpitan-nripe(na) Brahm-E-

(iv) Śvara-Viṣṇu-Lakṣitāyatanam.

This inscription has been edited by Gopinathrao, T.A., in *E.I.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 14, 17.

traditions and they did not have any scope for using new material. It had been done by Mahendravarman I. Hence he is called 'Vichitrachitta' (curious minded or inventive minded).

There are some sculptures in Ādivarāha cave temple at Mahābalipuram which are attributed to Simhaviṣṇu by some scholars like Krishnaswami Ayyangar. These sculptures are the portraits of Simhaviṣṇu and his two queens and Mahendravarman and his two queens called "Sri-Simhavinna-pottr-adhirajan" (Simhaviṣṇu Pallava king of kings) and Sri-Mahendra-pottr-adhirajan (Sri-Mahendra Pallava king of kings) respectively.¹ These two effigies therefore represent Simhaviṣṇu and Mahendravarman I. Who were the sponsors of these effigies? Was it Simhaviṣṇu or Mahendravarman I? If it is Simhaviṣṇu, Mahendravarman has got a rich background and his inscription becomes valueless. Krishnaswami Ayyangar attributed to this cave temple in which these sculptures are executed to Simhaviṣṇu on the basis of religion.² Since this temple is Vaiṣṇavite in attribution, Mahendravarman could not possibly be the sponsor of this temple because he was a Jain in his earlier days before he was converted into Śaivism by Saint Appar³. It may be true he does not seem to be a fanatic and narrow-minded prince.⁴ His zeal was that of an artist but not of a fanatic. The king had regard for the saint whose selfless life and poetic talent might have appealed to him. Along with the Śaiva temples he also excavated the Trimūrti cave temple at Maṇḍagapaṭṭu and Viṣṇu temple at Mahendravadi with the name "Mahendra Viṣṇugṛham". This shows his tolerance and catholic spirit. If we see the religious conditions of that age, there were no fanatic controversies between Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism. It seems that both together were upholding the cause of Brāhmanism against Jainism and Buddhism. Not only Mahendravarman I but no Pallava king was fanatic in his religious ideals. So we fail to agree with Krishnaswami Ayyangar's above view.

The reason for attributing the Ādivarāha cave temple to Mahendravarman I's period can be summarized by the absence of carved stone panel in the principal niche. We find that the caves of Mahendravarman I and Māmalla period have one speciality. The general practice was to install the main deity in the form of painted panel or a painted stucco in relief, whereas the group compositions depicting Purāṇic stories on the walls of the Maṇḍapa, but there

1. Krishnasastri: *Two Statues of Pallava Kings and Five Pallava Inscriptions in a Rock Temple at Mahabalipuram*, M.A.S.I., No. 26, p. 3.

Annual Report in South Indian Epigraphy, 1922, No. 665, cited by K.R. Srinivasan, op. cit., p. 173.

2. Krishnaswami Ayyangar: *Antiquities of Mahabalipuram* (Supl. to the I.A.), p. 31.

3. It is said that Saint Appar also was Jain in his earlier youth. Once he suffered by stomachache severely. Then he was advised by his sister who brought him up after the death of his parents to go to the Śiva temple and pray to the God. He only can cure. Then he went to a Śiva temple; he worshipped the God and by the grace of God he was cured. Then onwards he was converted into Śaivism.

4. From the Hosakote plates that his grand mother was a Jain, while the Udayendriyam plates mention that his father was a devotee of Viṣṇu. It seems members of the royal family belonged to different religions and no wonder therefore that Mahendra chose the path of his own grand-mother.

—T.V. Mahalingam, op. cit., p. 76.

is no figure in the sanctums.¹ Now, according to the above standards the absence of the carved figure in the central niche in the Ādivarāha cave temple is significant and on that ground this cave can be assigned to Mahendra I's time. Not only this, even the Koṭikal Maṇḍapa² at Māmallapuram was perhaps another example of the Mahendra style and therefore the architectural activities at Māmallapuram seems to have originated in the time of Mahendravarman Pallava I.

It is pointed out that the pillars of this cave differ in style from the pillars of the other caves built by Mahendravarman I. Yet, we may suppose that the Mahendra style originated and developed in his own time since he ruled for a long time. The pillars of this cave temple take the form of the shaft supported by figures of lions and therefore certain scholars felt that they belonged to the time of Narasimhavarman I, rather than to the time of Mahendravarman I. The main reason seems to be that these pillars are closer to the Māmalla order than to the Mahendra type. But here again we have to give allowance for long reign of Mahendravarman I and therefore the pillars in the Ādivarāha cave could be the recourcers of the Māmalla style. Actually the pillars we find in this cave are more primitive in form than any other definite examples in the Ādivarāha cave and are devoid of the crowning abacus which is always found more elaborated in Māmalla style. Thus, the pillars of this temple mark

1. In the later cave temples of both Mahendra and Māmalla styles, and two of the *rathas* (Dharmarāja *ratha* and Draupati *ratha*) however there are bas reliefs of the Somaskanda group on the back walls of the sanctum and appear to have been introduced from the time of Paramēśvaravarman.

—K.R. Srinivasan, op. cit., p. 36.

2. Along with the Ādivarāha cave temple, the Dharmarāja Maṇḍapa and Koṭikal Maṇḍapa at Mahābalipuram are attributed to the Mahendra I's time on the basis of the style of architecture. In style and plan the Dharmarāja Maṇḍapa is similar to the Maṇḍagapaṭṭu temple of Mahendra I and the style and the dimensions as well as the plan of Koṭikal Maṇḍapa resemble to the Mahendravadi temple built by the same king. Only the departure is in the case of the female which was necessitated because the shrine was dedicated to Durga. However, their posture and dress are all similar to their male counterparts in other temples of the Mahendra group. Here again we have their formal treatments. On the other hand we begin to get the side views of the Dvārpālas in the later examples. Moreover, the plan and the dimensions of these two temples are so remarkably alike that one is inclined to think that they must have been excavated by the same workmen.

—Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, M.A.S.I., No. 33, p. 10.

On the other hand K.R. Srinivasan suggests in his cave temples of the Pallavas that the Dharmarāja Maṇḍapa should be attributed to the time of Paramēśvaravarman I. His main theory is based on the inscription appearing on this temple which describes it as 'Atyantakāma Pallaveśwaragṛham' since Paramēśvaravarman bore the title of Atyantakāma along the other titles, Śrinidhi Śribhara, Kāmarāja, etc. Srinivasan thought that on the basis of the inscription the credit of sponsoring this temple should go to Paramēśvaravarman and not to Mahendra I. The inscription clearly states that it was called the temple dedicated by Atyantakāma or Paramēśvaravarman. But this could be only a later addition and in that case, Paramēśvaravarman seems to have plagiarized his ancestors' dedication. The main reason for this view is the primitive style in the plan and ornamentation of the temple as already shown above. Thus, the temple might have been originated by Mahendra I and Paramēśvaravarman could have been added here and there in the architectural embellishments. It is also possible that these temples for some unknown reason remained unfinished for a few generations and Paramēśvaravarman completed the project and engraved his name to them.

the beginning of the transition between the two forms.

Another suggestion put forth by K.R. Srinivasan in his 'Cave Temples of the Pallavas' is that the statues are Narasimhavarman I and the other portrait is that of Mahendravarman II. "The work apparently started late in the reign of Māmalla, as is indicated by the stylistic and other architectural features, was in progress during the short reign of Mahendra II, and was completed early in the reign of Paramēśvara, who consecrated it."¹ But, Mahendravarman II seems either to have reigned for a very short time or not to have reigned at all.² I mentioned in the previous chapter, i.e., The Political History of the Pallavas, that the Velurpalayam plates excluded the name of Mahendravarman II from the geneology of the Pallavas. If at all he is Mahendravarman II, he might have been inscribed as Mahendravarman Dviteeya (the second) or he might have held another name like Narasimha II alias Rājasimha. And also nowhere do we find any activity done by Mahendravarman II. So he is not Mahendravarman II; but he is Mahendravarman I.³

These portrait figures closely resemble in delineation with the figures of Gangādhara panel of Lalitāñkura cave temple of Trichinapalli executed by Mahendravarman I. The conclusion is, there were no stone sculptures in Tamilnadu at least in Pallava territory before Mahendra I. If any work had been done by his father Simhaviṣṇu, he could not overlook his father's achievements. So it is he who introduced stone for architecture and sculpture which was already in vogue in other parts of the country particularly in Buddhist places like Amarāvati, Nāgarjunikoṇḍa and Udayagiri and Khāṇḍragiri hills of Orissa, Karle, Kanheri, etc. in Western Ghats, Sāñchi and Bharhut in North. But it is absent only in Tamil land. Why it was so, we cannot give proper explanation. K.R. Srinivasan explained for this absence thus: "Perhaps the non-availability of considerable soft rock cliffs of desired strength and texture in this part of the country explains the absence of earlier excavation."⁴ But this does not appear to be the proper explanation. How could the rock which became the favourite material for the chisels of the sculptors and architects of Mahendravarman I and his successors and the rocky hills of Mahābalipuram which are shaped in the monolithic *rathas* by the artists of Narasimhavarman, not be desirable material for the predecessors of Mahendra-

1. K.R. Srinivasan: op. cit., p. 175.

2. Jouneau Dubreuil: *Pallava Antiquities*, Part I, (Pondicherry, 1916), p. 40.

3. At the fag end of the *Vāmanapurāṇa*, there is mention of Viṣṇu temple (Keśavadevālaya), built by Mahendra-Śilpi-Pravara (Vn. 75.70) which means both that the temple was built by Māyā Asura who was the architect of Indra, and that the great shrine was put up by King Mahendravarman who considered himself to be the most excellent amongst the *śilpins*, and it is stated that provision for its repairs, etc., were made by the king and his wife, much emphasis being laid on this fact that both the king and the queen ordered the building of the temple. This reminds us of the stone sculptures of Mahendravarman and his queens, found carved at Mahā-Mallapuram."

—V.S. Agrawala: *Vāmanapurāṇa—A Study* (Varanasi, 1964), p. XVI.

Here it is said that it was built by Mahendra-Śilpi-Pravara i.e., none else than Mahendravarman I Pallava. The *Vāmanapurāṇa* has been written in the first half of the seventh century A.D. when Harṣavardhana ruled in North and Mahendravarman I Pallava in South whose name is actually mentioned (Vn. 95.70).

—V.S. Agrawala.

4. K.R. Srinivasan: op. cit., p. 28.

varman I? This is not the cause. Probably, their artistic zeal was attracted or confined to brick construction and painting. The Āgamas mentioned the nature and materials of the icons in worship as Chitra, Chitrārdha and Chitrābhāsa or of wood, stucco, and stone.¹ It seems in ancient times painting wood or stucco were used more than stone mainly in this part of the country. Now, too, there are still wooden or stucco mūlaberas (main deities) in some of the temples of the south as in the Vaiṣṇava temple at Tirukkōvitūr and in Jagannāth temple at Puri (Orissa) etc. Even in seventh century A.D., when Mahendra introduced rock for temples, the mūlaberas are in painting or in stucco. Even in Sangam literature all the picturesque descriptions of painted or stucco forms are recorded. They followed the traditional method.

Longhurst attributed the cave temples of Uṇḍavalli, Mugalrājpuram, Vizayawada to Mahendravarman I or perhaps by some of his ancestors. Again, Longhurst remarks that "the origin of these temples is obscure and there is no actual proof that they are the work of Pallavas, but their architectural style seems to denote that they were executed by the latter (Pallavas) and that they represent their earliest attempts in this direction before the Pallavas were driven south by the Chālukyas and executed similar but better works in the Tamil country".² So it seems that Longhurst himself is not definite about Mahendravarman's work in the Telugu area. If it is the work of Mahendravarman, he could not have been able to write the inscription mentioned earlier in Maṇḍagapaṭṭu in which he states the temple is first of its kind. J. J. Dubreuil pointed out in his book 'The Pallavas' that the earliest Pallava style is of Telugu origin having been formulated at Uṇḍavalli by the predecessors of the Pallavas. The carvings of Uṇḍavalli are of the Viṣṇukunḍin period who were inspired by the art of Vakātakas of the North. They ruled from fourth century A.D. to sixth century A.D. having Dendur as their capital. Uṇḍavalli, Mugalrājpuram and Vizayawada rock-cut caves are the works of Viṣṇukunḍins. These served as models for Mahendravarman I who spent his earlier days in this area as the Pallavas were connected by matrimonial alliances with Viṣṇukunḍins.³ Longhurst's theory is based on purely architectural grounds. He says that there are resemblances between Uṇḍavalli and later carvings of Mahendravarman. But it is natural that the copy would resemble the model. If we compare the sculptural style of Uṇḍavalli with that of the Mahendravarman I, we see that both belong to entirely different types. Mahendravarman's style is forceful, and heavily built but with very slow movements. Moreover in the Uṇḍavalli examples, modelling is different. The figures are very delicate and elongated with slim limbs. The faces are round whereas the Pallava faces are long with protruding cheek bone. Thus, we may conclude that these are not the works of Mahendravarman or his ancestors. It may be

1. Gopinath Rao: *The Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 18.

2. Longhurst: *Pallava Architecture*, M.A.S.I., No. 17, (Simla, 1924), p. 5.

3. J.J. Dubreuil: *The Pallavas* (Madras, 1907), p. 35.

contribution of Viṣṇukunḍins¹ by which Mahendravarman's style was inspired and his inspiration found expression of the rock-cut caves and sculptures.

Western Chālukyas were one of the politically rival rulers of Mahendravarman I. Their hostility started during his time. The Chālukyas were great patrons of art; the Bādāmi caves were executed by the Chālukyan King Mangaleśa, as is proved by his inscription on a pillar on the veranda of cave No. 3, dated Saka era 500 or 578 A.D. The cave No. 1 which is Śiva cave appears to be the oldest.² To quote Burgess, "the full delineation of these Bādāmi caves might be excavated without much trouble by a few school of art students under proper direction and if well done would form a valuable illustration of Vaiṣṇava mythology and Indian art only to be equalled by what Ajantā affords for Buddhism." Though Mahendravarman did not have any models for his cave architecture in his own territory, his neighbouring States provided the same. Love for art seems to have ignored the rivalry in Mahendravarman; probably, he was attracted and inspired by the works already executed at Uṇḍavalli or at Bādāmi. C. Sivaramamurti pointed out that "being descended from the Viṣṇukunḍins on his maternal side, Mahendravarman brought to the South this novel type of cave architecture as well as other traditions from the Krishna region with their roots in the Satavāhana traditions."³

The sculptures in Mahendravarman period were intimately associated with architectural designs and patterns. During the Mahendravarman period in India, the temple became the matrix of all fine arts. It is very difficult to treat sculpture independently from architecture, particularly in the Pallava period. The monolithic Rathas are sculptures on a grand scale. The technique of the carving is the same in either cases. Here importance has been attached to the architecture and the sculptural panels illustrating the legends and myths which the niches of the temples frame and which add to the beauty of the temples.

During the Mahendravarman period it seems more importance has been given to temple architecture than sculpture. The purpose of the sculptures wherever they were carved is to decorate pillars or the facades of the cave temples. For example, the lotus and some decorative medallions are carved on the pillars in Lalitānkura cave temple at Trichinapalli and even the figures of Naṭarāja and Umā and Śiva were also carved on the upper part of the pillars of Avani-bhajana cave temple at Siyamangalam to enhance the beauty of the pillars. In most of the temples, we find only *Dvārapāla* figures, yet the figure of the main deity or others were not sculptured. The main attention thus is towards architecture.

There are numerous cave temples executed by this king. He selected different places and

1. "The seal of the Chikkula plates of Vikramendravarman I Viṣṇukunḍin (E.I.IV) resembles that of the Ramatirtham plates; an advancing lion with its fore paw raised, mouth wide open and the tail surging over the back so as to end in a loop; the lion was then the crest of the Viṣṇukunḍins" which we find in Mughalrājpuram and Uṇḍavalli caves.

We find an image of a vase and the image of a lion on the reverse and obverse respectively on the Uṇḍavalli coins which also find place on the Mughalrājpuram and Uṇḍavalli caves.

—K.R. Subrahmanian: *The Buddhist Remains in Andhra and the History of Andhra between 225 and 610 A.D.*, (Madras, 1932).

2. J.N. Banerjea: *Bas Reliefs of Bādāmi*, M.A.S.I., No. 25, p. 2.
3. C. Sivaramamurti: *South Indian Bronzes* (New Delhi, 1963), p. 9.

rocky hills to carve his temples. The caves which are attributed to him are as follows: Maṇḍagapaṭṭu, Pallavaram, Vallam, Mahendra Vadi, Trichinapalli, Dalvanur, Ādivarāha cave temple, Dharmarājamaṇḍapa, Koṭikalmaṇḍapa at Mahābalipuram.

The sculpture in the Mahendra period is restricted to a few examples only. In this early phase the Pallava sculptures were almost exclusively confined to low relief and intimately connected with the architecture. Sculptural embellishments are furnished in these cave temples by only the *dvārapāla* figures. These were carved in bas-relief and all are two armed. Both the figures show frontality, and look towards the visitor and not towards the shrine. In the Śiva temples usually one of the *dvārapālas* bears horns on his head; this probably represents Nandi. All the door-keepers are in the *Tribhanga* pose or sometimes in the *Atibhanga*. They wear *Mukuta* with heavy *Jatabhāra* on either side. They are adorned with large *patrakuṇḍalas*, necklaces and wristlets. They wear the thick *Yājñopavita*, and *Katīśūtra*. Most of the *dvārapālas* hold clubs and often lean on their clubs. In the Durga shrines the *dvārapālikas* are shown with one hand raised in adoration and the other hand resting at *Katī* (middle portion of the body).

By the study of this group we can see the sequence of the evolution of the style. In these examples, the style appears in its experimental stage. The expressions and postures changed from figure to figure. There is hardly any repetition and we find a variety of expressions within its limited scope of the representation of the *dvārapālas*. The *dvārapālas* of Maṇḍagapaṭṭu (Fig. 23), Lakhitayatana cave temple are not an exact pair. The *dvārapāla* at the right is in profile, facing towards the shrine. He is in the *Atibhanga* posture. The left one is in the *Tribhanga* posture and he has gruesome expression. Both figures are slim. But the feet of the figures and the lower part of the club of the right *dvārapāla* are not carved. It appears that these *dvārapālas* were probably the starting point of the Pallava style. The conical type of *Mukuta*, elongated faces with somewhat protruding cheek bone, thick lips, broad shoulders with narrow waist continue throughout in this group. The girdle which they tied around the waist was depicted throughout the history of style and which can be related directly to representations of Bharhut and Amarāvati. The *Paṭbandha* which was tied loosely around the waist is similarly shown prominently in Amarāvati and later in the Bādāmi figures. The *Yājñopavita* is very thick and it descended from the left shoulder to the right arm. In Bādāmi cave No. 1, the treatment of *Yājñopavita* of Śiva and of *dvārapāla* resembles the Pallava type of *Yājñopavita*. The *dvārapāla* figures at Maṇḍur wear *dhoti* upto the ankles and the ends and the hem of the *dhoti* dangle loosely, between the two legs. The pleats are left hanging. The same type of dress for male figures has been followed even in the Gangādhara form of Śiva in Trichinapalli and continued in Narasimhavarman period also. The remarkable and interesting thing is the gesture of adoration with one hand. This is peculiar to the Pallava period. This starts from the *dvārapāla* figures of Kuranganilmuttam (Figs. 28 and 29) temple of Mahendravarman. This style was followed by the artistes of Narasimhavarman period. Probably this has been taken from the Chakravarti Mandhata of Jaggayyapeta bas-relief (Fig. 1).

It is to be noted here that there are two types of physiognomical forms. One is the slim

body with elongated face and another is fleshy and heavily built with somewhat round face, bulging eyes, thick lips and broad nose. The Naṭarāja bas-relief (Fig. 24), Umā-sahitamūrti of Śiva (Fig. 22) and the *dvārapālas* of Avanibhajana cave temple (Figs. 26 and 27) belong to this type. This form starts from the Kuranganilmuttam temple and is depicted by one of the *dvārapālas* among three pairs (Fig. 25). Another physiognomical form is very beautiful, slim and strong, elongated faces which determined subsequently the style of the Pallavas in the Narasimhavarman period. These figures exhibit the characteristics of *Padmapani* Bodhisatva of Ajantā cave No.1, in a very charming Tribhanga pose.¹ These *dvārapālas* are also from Kuranganilmuttam (Figs. 28 and 29). Śivagangādhara of Trichinapally, *dvārapālikas* of Koṭikalmaṇḍapa and Durga of Singavaram (Fig. 36) also belong to this style.

We find in this group of sculptures that the human figures are heavily built with broad shoulders to depict might. The modelling is superficial and a greater emphasis is laid on exaggerated flexes amounting to angularities. The figures are slow moving yet vigorous, determined in their expressions. The floridsome attitude of the Śivagaṇas of the Gupta temples (e.g., the Bhumra temple) is replaced by their awesome expressions which may be directly related to early and independent gruesome expressions of certain Yakṣa figures, e.g., the Rājghāt Yakṣa in Bharat Kalabhavan. This marks the beginning of the heavily built *dvārapāla* figures in the South Indian sculpture for several centuries, while the later examples are stereotyped in their forms and attitude. The examples of the Mahendra period show diversity and ingenuity in their representation. These are probably the best examples of the formal and eve period of Pallava sculpture which restrained the form even in the other examples of the Mahendra sculpture.

For the first time the Gaṇeśa and Jeṣṭhadevi figures found in Vallam Vasanteśvara cave temple are attributed not to Mahendra but his vassal King Skandasena, son of Vasanta Priyarāja. There is an inscription in which Mahendra's titles have been formed.²

Outside the rock surface the Gaṇeśa figure is carved.³ The figure is four armed, the object held by the right hand is broken while the left holds a lotus bloom. The lower right arm is placed on the upraised right thigh while the lower left rests on the pillow behind. The trunk is coiled towards the right. This is in high relief. In the opposite niche the figure is identified as Jeṣṭhadevi. This is in a very bad condition. It is very difficult to find out its original finish and its details.

1. Zimmer: op. cit., Plate No. 148.

2. (A) Pakappiduka Lalitāṅkuram, (B) Shatturamallan kunaparan, (C) Mayentirap-pottaresaru adiyar, (D) Vayantappiriarsaru makan Kantasena, (E) Seyivitta tevakulam.

The inscription on South pillar gives the *birudas* of Mahendravarman I viz. Pakappiduku, Lalitāṅkura in Tamil. The next one also in early Tamil gives the other *birudas* of Mahendra and mentions it was excavated by Skandasena of Vasantapriyarāja who was a vassal of Mahendrapotārāya.

—Cited by K.R. Srinivasan, op. cit., p. 63.

3. Among the numerous icons of the time of Mahendra and Māmalla or in succession till the times of Rājasimha this is only a special deity on the facade of Rāmānujamaṇḍapa at Mahābalipuram; he is shown like any other gaṇa in freeze as carrying a garland having elephant head and occupied the central position. Plate XI B.

—Ibid, p. 64.

The most interesting and beautiful sculptural panel is of Śiva as Gangādhara (Fig. 30) in the *Lalitāṅkura's* cave temple at Trichinapalli on the west wall of the Maṇḍapa. In this panel the sculptor illustrated the purāṇic story of the descent of Gangā from heaven to earth to purify the ashes of the sixty thousand sons of Sagara who became the victims of the curse of a sage. At the request of Bhagiratha, Śiva received the first force of Gangā on his head, after slowing down Gangā descended from Śiva's head. Here in this panel Śiva is shown receiving Gangā on his head and the others paying homage to the god.

In this composition the whole myth is simplified. The story is suggested by representing Gangā in an anthropomorphic form. Śiva receives her with one of his right hands holding a lock which he extends on that side. The four Vidyādhara carved in the four corners of the panel show that homage is being paid to the god. Śiva is carved in the centre of the panel. His physiognomy is very interesting. He is four armed and broad shouldered with comparatively narrow waist. He stands firmly to receive the tremendous force of Gangā by planting his left leg on the ground and his right leg on the head of a *Gana* (a dwarfish figure) who is supporting Śiva's leg with his head and hand. The God's lower left hand is placed on his hip and with upraised upper left hand he holds *Japamālā* (rosary), with his lower right hand he holds a hooded serpent. Lord Śiva is decorated with scanty ornaments like the *Jatamukuta*, *Kuṇḍalas*, *Keyuras* and flat and solid *kānṭhi* in the neck. His *Yajñopavīta* starting from his left shoulder touching the chest falls on the two right arms. This is thick and simple. Longhurst says in his Pallava architecture No. 17 that, "this is the hooded serpent, the body of which entwined round Śiva's chest and right arms". However, this *Yajñopavīta* is also visible in other two Vidyādhara figures carved in the above corners of the panel in the same manner. On the other hand the *Yajñopavīta* worn by the Vidyādhara in the lower corners is shown in the normal way, i.e., under the arm. It is interesting to note that the treatment of the *Yajñopavīta* is changed in these cases, which is linear. These two types of treatments continue throughout the style of the Pallavas. Śiva wears a *dhōti* which clings to the body and is very well represented showing folds through the lines reaching upto the ankles and between the two legs the pleats are hanging free. The hems and the ends of the *dhōti* have been given a separate volume. This is the same dress of the *dvārapālas* of the Kurangnilmuttam temple which we have noticed above. Śiva stands firmly and peacefully. His elegant posture and the tranquillity of the figure suggests the supraphysical divine energy which only can bear the force of Gangā who descends from Heaven. The other figures also show the same physiognomy and the same treatment of the ornaments. But they are only two handed. One hand is raised in adoration in the usual Pallava style and another hand placed on the waist. The two Vidyādhara engraved in the above part of the panel are in flying attitude as in the Chālukyan style; the two figures in lower corner of the panel are shown kneeling while with one upraised arm they are also paying homage to the god; their left hand is on *kati*. Above the left upper arm of Śiva corresponding to the position of Gangā there is a figure which is unidentified but Longhurst calls it a deer.

On the whole the composition displays profound originality of the sculptor of Mahendravarman I. The figure of Śiva is dominating the whole composition by his majesty and austerity. The sculptural style of Mahendravarman reached its maturity here. Among

these figures especially the figure of Śiva probably reflects the heroic nature of Mahendravarman as occupied the mind of the sculptor and he expressed it well through the figure of Śiva. The figures have accurate proportions and precise outlines, and are well balanced but heavily built. The palms are more accurately carved than the *dvārapāla* figures. The modelling also is more refined. There is rhythm in the figure of Śiva but it is controlled. The line of the contour from the arm-pit to the foot is rhythmical and precise but it is interrupted by the hand placed on the hip. The balance of the figure is distributed on both the legs equally. The figure is forceful and majestic. There is monumentality but the lyrical feeling is absent. He seems very detached and serene. Instead of widening the contours of the chest from the waist gradually, the sculptor here broadened the shoulders and has given thick and round shape to them so that the whole chest looks broad. Probably, this tendency was derived from the Ajantā tradition. In the beautiful Padmapaṇi Bodhisatva figure at Ajantā Cave No.1, the shoulders also are treated in the same manner. But in the Chola figures the contours of the chest broadened gradually from the waist. The curve that comes in the line from the arm-pit to the hip is rhythmical and beautiful. Here the curve came in the figure of Śiva in the line from the arm-pit to the hip because he is bending a little. The arrangement of the two upper left and right hands of Śiva at Trichinapalli is not rhythmical and it does not enhance the beauty of the figure though it fulfilled the idea of the sculptor. The swaying movements are restricted even in the composition by four adoring hands of the corner figures forming a square.

The panel is divided vertically into three parts and the central part is occupied by Śiva and the other two by the two devotee figures. Probably, the navel of Śiva is the centre for this composition. All the figures are composed very balancedly and harmoniously but in a fixed manner. It looks that the sculptor arranged the places previously and fixed the figures in set places. It is not like an incident taking place as in Mahiṣasuramardini panel but all the figures are arranged in architectonic discipline. The four figures in four corners restrict the movements of Śiva. They have given him a limited scope to move.

It is worthy of notice that this tendency of composing the figures in a fixed rigid manner started in fifth century A.D. at Aihole. The Viṣṇu and Brahmā panels on the walls of Huchhimalli temple at Aihole were composed (Fig.31) in the same manner as a central figure balanced by four others in a rigid arrangement. This oblong panel also can be divided in three parts, the central part occupied by seated Viṣṇu who dominated the whole composition and the two parts were occupied by the flying figures who were paying homage to god Viṣṇu. Here the figures seem floating on the surface of the panel and handled by the sculptor as if boneless beings. The knees and elbows are turned as if they were made of clay and they yielded readily to the will of the sculptor.

Compared to the Viṣṇu panel of Aihole the Gangādhara panel is relatively more balanced and the human figures are carved with greater amount of naturalism.

In the Gangādhara panel Śiva is not accompanied by Pārvati. Another figure of Śiva Gangādhara carved in Ādivarāha cave temple in Mahābalipuram which is more beautiful and delicate than its counterpart at Trichinapalli is similarly devoid of the Pārvati figure. This ten-

dency continued for some time among the Pallava images. Later on during the Chola and Vizayanagara periods, Pārvati figures were introduced to the scene. One of the interesting examples of Gangādhara Śiva from the Vizayanagara period comes from Veerabhadra temple of Lepakṣi. This is a painting on ceiling of the *ardhamandapa*. Here Gangā is represented as a fisher woman standing beside Śiva. Pārvati is looking towards Gangā in an angry mood and Śiva is eagerly trying to appease Pārvati. This scene is imbued with lyrical feelings. Probably, this conception of Śiva as Gangādhara by Śaivism is counterpart of the conception of Varāha form of Viṣṇu by Vaiṣṇavites. Viṣṇu in his boar incarnation held the earth goddess rescued from the clutches of *Asura* Hiranyakṣa aloft on his tusk. The Gangādhara Śiva held the Goddess Gangā on his *Jatājūta* and rescued the ancestors of Bhagiratha from the curse of a sage. In the sculptural panel also the gesture and posture of both the main deities are the same. Viṣṇu has one of his legs upon the serpent (Śeṣa) and the other on the earth in the manner of Śiva Gangādhara with one leg on the head of his *gaṇa* and the other on the earth. Both have one of their hands upon the knee and the other on *kaṭi*. Both gods show their might in upholding the Goddesses. The Gangādhara Śiva is the finest specimen of early Pallava sculpture and is the forerunner of the large reliefs of the Māmalla period.

Another masterpiece of the Mahendra period is Naṭarāja Śiva in Avanibhajana cave temple at Siyamangalam (Fig. 24) in North Arcot district. Probably this is the first representation of Śiva as Naṭarāja which has given the idea of Naṭarāja to the Chola artistes who produced a remarkable piece in bronze.

This is Ānanda Tāṇḍava dance. There is no *apasmara puruṣa* under his foot. But below the upraised left foot there is a coiled serpent with raised hood. The other side correspondingly a *gaṇa* is seated with both hands beating the drum. There are *kinkinis* on both ankles of Śiva. The upper right arm of Śiva holds the bowl of fire; the upper left hand the *paraṣu*; the lower right is in *abhaya mudra* and the lower left is a *lola hasta* posture almost touching the head of the *gaṇas*. This figure differs from the famous Chola bronzes. The left hand is in the *lola hasta* mudra crossing the chest towards right side and indicating the cobra similarly. The left leg is also upraised transversely. In later figures, the *ḍamaru* (kettledrum) held by Śiva conspicuously is absent here. Iconographically the Gangādhara Śiva of Trichinapally is not fully developed, because his third eye, the crescent moon and skull which are most important attributes of Śiva are absent there. More iconographic features are seen in this Naṭarāja figure, e.g., the third eye on the forehead, the crescent moon on the right side and skull on the left on the *kirīṭa mukuṭa* are introduced. The heavy *Patrakuṇḍalas* adorn his ears. The *Jatājūta* of Śiva in wavy lines in relief floats in the air as he whirls in dancing. The figure is very fleshy and the modelling is superficial. The movement has been shown by the wavy *Jatas* and the fluttering ends of his drapery. All his ornaments including necklace, *udarabandha*, *keyuras*, etc., are very thick and coarsely carved. The modelling of the palms and the feet is carelessly done.

Śiva's dancing posture depicts the *Ānanda Tāṇḍava* which is appropriately shown in his facial expression. His lips are slightly parted in a half smile or *hāsa*. We see the smile even in his eyes. The eyes are very distinctly carved. The Śiva's figure retains balance and force. Naturalism

prevails in the treatment of the snake. The tongue of the snake has been shown protruding from its mouth. The drummer is joyfully beating the instrument. The whole atmosphere of the composition is happy. This figure is in bas-relief, carved on the upper portion of southern pilasters of the Avanibhajana cave temple.¹

There is another bas-relief on the northern pilaster of the same temple, this is a Umā-sahita Vṛṣavāhanamūrti (Fig. 22). Here Śivā leans on his vāhana Nandi (bull). By the side of Śiva, Pārvati is standing and the head of bull intervals between the two. Śiva is four armed in this panel, the upper two hands holding the *mṛga* and the Akṣamāla, while the lower right hand is on the *Kati* and the lower left hand rests on the head of the bull. Behind him the Trisūla is planted. Pārvati is in *tribhanga* pose. She is two armed. Her left hand is on *Kati* and in the right hand she holds a lotus blossom. Behind her a tree also has been shown. The treatment of these two figures is in the same manner as in the Naṭarāja Śiva of the previous panel. The figures are fleshy and the features are also very coarse. The physiognomy of these two figures is very heavy. Perhaps this is the first representation of female figure as Pārvati. Her head dress is too heavy. Within the limited scope of the relief the roundity of the figure also has been shown very well. The tree behind the figure of Pārvati corresponds to her Bhangima. This is the first example of the composition of Umā-sahita Vṛṣavāhanamūrti along with the vegetal representation in the Pallava art. The figure of Pārvati recalls the Yakṣi figures of Mathurā; her one hand is on *Kati* and her right hand is raised up to the ear as in the *yakṣi* figures. The lower portion of the pillars are decorated with the lotus motif as in Amarāvati.

In the niches at the extreme end of the facade inside the *Toraṇa stambhas*, are two warrior figures (Figs. 32 and 33). These figures are very vigorous and forceful. Both are defending themselves with shields and trying to attack their rivals. But the position of their shields and swords indicate that both are fighting each other. In Fig. 32, he is defending himself from the side with a drawn sword in his raised right hand. His expression is determined and is concentrated upon his rival. His strong body and his dress are quite appropriate. His tightly closed lower lips, bulging eyes and the heightened eyebrows give warlike expression. He wears *Kuṇḍalas* in his ears.

In Fig. 33, the warrior is almost identical with above discussed figure in dress and modeling, except that he wears upper garment also. He holds sword in his right hand, shield in his upraised left hand; a dagger is tied at his waist.

The Ādivarāha cave temple in Mahābalipuram consists two groups of portraits of Simhaviṣṇu and his queen (Fig. 34) consorts and Mahendravarman and his queen consorts (Fig. 35). Both the groups are similarly modelled and treated. Not much differences between Mahendravarman and Simhaviṣṇu can be seen; the body, the facial features and dress are alike. Only

1. Probably this figure has been described by Saint Appar who flourished during the time of Mahendravarman as follows:

Kunitha, Puruvamum, Kovvai, Chevveyir Kuminsirippum, Panitha Chenjadaikum, Pal Vennirum Edutha Porppathamum Kanappetral Manitha Pirviyūm Venduvethe Manilathe.

the attitude is changed. Mahendravarman I is standing while Simhaviṣṇu is seated in kingly pose, right hand is in *Chinmudra* and the left hand rests on his lap. The posture is very majestic and displays royalty. Flat ended caplike *Mukuta* on his head and a broad necklace adorn his neck. Simhaviṣṇu sits very comfortably on the seat, the legs of which are modelled after the legs of a lion probably to show that this is a *Simhāsana*. The broad shoulders and strong arms are showing the might of the Pallava monarch. He is in the attitude of calm concentration. His two queen consorts were also modelled very simply. We find no exuberance of ornamentation on these figures while they stand very rigidly. It seems that they do not have any upper garment. The diaphanous treatment of the lower garment wrapped round the waist which is like the modern *lungi* displays nudity of the figures, only the ends of the dress have been shown prominently. Their faces are elongated which is further emphasised by the conical type of *Mukuta* they wear. The queen consort on the right of Simhaviṣṇu is modelled beautifully though she stands rigidly. Her left hand is in *katyavalambita* pose and with right hand she held *nīla kamal* raised up to her chest. Her nose is very thin and long like in Chola figures. She looks very sober and serene with her downcast eyes as if she is modelled as a divine figure. The queen who stands on his left side is similarly treated as the first queen. She rests her left hand on her waist and right hand is raised upto the shoulders. Her standing position is very rigid. Her expression is not distinct. She does not have the upper garment; even the lower garment is not visible. She is somewhat bulkier than the other queen.

The Mahendravarman group of portraits (Fig. 35) is similarly executed. Mahendravarman and his two queens are standing. The king appears to be indicating something with his index finger. He also wears the same type of dress and *Mukuta* as his father. But his figure is somewhat relaxed. A ray of smile illuminates his face. The queens are also treated with simplicity. They are very slim having elongated figures; their slender hands and legs follow the Vengi style. They look tallish yet delicate, very gentle and graceful. They bend slightly their heads so that they are looking very modest. Their smiling faces express the sentiment of peace, content and happiness. They are also dressed like Simhaviṣṇu's queens. On the whole these portraits are very naturalistic and beautiful. But we cannot say that these portraits are real portraits; these are idealised versions. If they had not been labelled nobody could distinguish them. All are alike, the same dress, same faces except very few differences. Usually the artistes attribute divinity to royal personages. So they carve their portraits after the gods and they engrave their names. All the ancient portraits are carved or painted in the same manner.

The dress of the queens is peculiar. The same type of treatment we can see in Bādāmi Cave No. I in Ardhanārīśvara panel. Beside Ardhanārīśvara Śiva there is a female figure with the same type of dress.¹ Even in the Varāha Panel Cave No. II, Bhūdevi also wears the same type of undergarment.

It seems that the sculptor faced the problem of arranging the position of the hands of the queen consorts of Mahendravarman and he solved it by resting their tender hands

1. Zimmer: Op. cit., Plate Nos. 138 and 139.

on their laps. This became one of the characteristic features of the Pallava female figures. It continues even in Narasimhavarman period.

Another interesting and important figure is Durgā Mahiṣāsūramardini from Singavaram cave temple (Fig. 36) which is attributed by J.N. Dubrueil to Mahendravarman on the basis of the style of the *dvārapālas* of the temple. Here the style of Mahendravarman reached its climax. Durgā stands in Tribhanga posture with one leg on the ground and another on the head of Mahiṣāsura. She has four hands. The upper right and left hands hold the *Śaṅkha* and *Chakra* respectively and lower was placed on the right lap and left hand near the waist. On the left arm a parrot is shown perched. She wears the conical *Karaṇḍa Mukuta* and *Patra Kuṇḍalas* in the ears. She is adorned with necklaces, *Keyuras*, armlets, girdle and there are many ornaments on the legs also as we find in the *Amarāvati* figures. The fine workmanship over the ornaments, as found either in later styles or at Bādāmi, is absent, the details are simple and blunt. The modelling of their figures is more refined than the portraits of the queens. Her face is elongated with protruding cheek bone with tightly closed lips and downcast eyes. However, we find that the sculptor took special care in the treatment of the eyebrows and the eyes than in the previously discussed figures. The sloping shoulders with full and light bosoms of the goddess show her feminine qualities. But the treatment of her hands and legs are in tubular form. The rhythm of the side contours of the body is well maintained; the space between her legs form a triangle which so to say interprets the rhythm of the figure. Although she appears here in the Mahiṣāsūramardini aspect, she looks serene and sober and even her facial expression is placid.

On either sides of the Durgā figure we find two devotees, worshipping her by self-immolation. One on the right side is stabbing himself on the left with a dagger, and the left one is offering some unidentified object. Probably, this is the forerunner of other Durgā figures in the Narasimhavarman period. In the Ādivarāha cave temple, the same type of Durgā is carved but that is more refined than the figure under discussion. The main idea seems to have been taken from this figure. Though this figure is more rhythmical and relaxed than the previous examples, the rigidity still lingers on because of the placement of the hands. Starting from the *dvārapāla* figures of the Lakṣitayatna temple of Maṇḍagapaṭṭu upto the Durgā figure of Singavaram cave temple, there is an unbroken sequence of the evolution of the sculptural style of Mahendravarman I. From one figure to the other we can see the technique, the iconography, plasticity, proportions are increasing and reached its maturity in Trichinapalli Gangādhara panel for the male figures and in Singavaram Durgā for female figures. Thus Mahendravarman provided a rich background for the Narasimhavarman period sculptures.

The Mature Pallava Style

Narasimhavarman Māmalla, worthy son of a worthy father inherited the imperial status along with the artistic and literary traditions. The first artistic expression which had been given by his father Mahendravarman I, was followed by Narasimhavarman I. The architecture as well as the sculpture matured under his noble patronage. His rich patronage, his refined taste and his valour inspired the sculptors of Māmallapuram. He made Māmallapuram an immortal sanctuary for the art lovers. We can feel his own grand personality behind the sculptures of Māmallapuram. Really speaking, this is an open air museum of architecture and sculpture; the five *Rathas* are massive works of sculpture rather than architecture, which paved the way for the great, grand Kailāsanāth temple of Ellora built by Rāṣṭrakūṭa King Kṛṣṇa II. The designs probably were intended to produce five model shrines, each of them of different type, showing the development of southern architecture from the origin to his own day. In such a calm atmosphere the monolithic *rathas* are standing alone to indicate the ancient glory of the Pallavas. In the words of O.C. Gangooly and Goswamy, “The entire corpus of Pallava carvings are either low relief or high relief panels, mostly pulsating with impassioned devotional emotions fulfilling the demands of generations of religious devotees and pilgrims—who for centuries flocked to these cave temples with their offerings of flowers, fruits and coins. Not only streams of pilgrims flowed into that temple city of Māmallapuram in their thousands—but the architectural and sculptural glories of the cave temples attracted expert architects and connoisseurs of carvers of art.”¹

This prosperity and maturity of the architecture and sculpture dawned during Narasimhavarman I period. The same mature style was followed by Paramesvaravarman I, the son of Narasimhavarman I, and the grand son of Mahendravarman I. He completed the unfinished work of Narasimhavarman I, and also contributed some of architectural and sculptural monuments to the glory of Māmallapuram. We find some of his inscriptions along with his titles. In the Ādivarāha cave temple, early Chola inscriptions of Rajendra I, relating to this temple, call it, *Paramēśvara Mahāvarāha Viṣṇu Gṛham*. Thus possibly Paramesvaravarman I finished this cave temple which was started late in the reign of Māmalla.² The tradition continued its course undisturbed and recorded significant achievements in Māmallapuram. But Nara-

1. O.C. Gangooly and Goswamy: *The Art of the Pallavas*, p.26.

2. K.R. Srinivasan: *Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, p. 175.

simhavarman's artistic activities were confined only to Māmallapuram, which was named after his name, Māmalla. The site is also known as 'Seven Pagodas'.

The general view of the scholars is that it was founded by Narasimhavarman Māmalla; hence, it was named after him. As I stated, in the previous chapter that Māmallapuram was a pre-Māmalla site, but it became a prolific centre of trade and art during Narasimhavarman's time; hence, it was named after him.

R. Nagaswamy, in his article '*New Light on Mahābalipuram*', observed that the whole achievement at Māmallapuram belonged to Rajasimha's reign, his evidence being mainly epigraphic. He noted that among thirty *birudas* appearing on the Dharmarāja *Ratha*, sixteen also appear on the walls of Kailāsanāth temple at Kāñchipuram built by Rājasimha. Moreover, the title '*Atyantakāma*' appears on a variety of monuments, namely the Ganeśa *Ratha*, Dharmarāja *Ratha*, the Rāmānuja *Maṇḍapa*, Varāha cave, shore temple and the Vāyalūr inscriptions of Rājasimha. He also added that the Somaskanda motif found on the shore temple, in Dharmarāja *Ratha*, Maḥiṣāsūramardini cave, Mukundanayanār temple, etc., was introduced by Rājasimha.¹

These epithets common to the Dharmarāja *Ratha* and Kailāsanāth temple are used by Nagaswamy to support his attribution of sponsorship of Māmallapuram to Rājasimha. But on the Dharmarāja *Ratha* the name of Narasimhavarman along with his other titles is inscribed.² There are a number of common epithets to all the kings of Pallava dynasty. For example, in the Varāha cave temple, '*Atyantakāma Paramēśwara Gṛhaṁ*' is inscribed on the floor. *Birudas* like Sribhāra, Avānibhajana, Trilokyavardhana, Lalitānkura, etc., were adopted by Mahendravarman also. In the same manner the same titles are attributed to Rajasimha. So, use of the common epithets, is not a convincing proof. What is the evidence to conclude that these *birudas* along with the inscriptions were not added long after the monuments were built? Such inscriptions might belong to portions added subsequently in a monument, for example, Paramēśwaravarman I added some sculptures to the Ādivarāha cave temple originally built by Mahendravarman I.

The analysis of the sculptural characteristics of the *Rathas* and *Maṇḍapas* on the one hand and the shore temple at Māmallapuram, Kailāsanāth temple of Kāñchipuram etc., on the other, shows the differences between the two styles. The figures on the *Rathas* are slim, strong and elongated. Their faces are oblong and expressive. They are simple and display originality whereas the sculptures of Kailāsanāth and shore temples are shorter and the faces are circular and devoid of expression. So, we cannot attribute the entire sponsorship of that splendid work to Rājasimha. The work would have been started at the time of Mahendravarman and contributed by the succeeding generations, i.e., by Narasimhavarman I, Paramēśwaravarman I, and Rājasimha. But the main part of the project had been done by Narasimhavarman I. He made Māmallapuram spectacular so it has been named after him as Māmallapuram. So far as the Somaskanda motif is concerned, it started from Paramēśwaravarman I period and was a favourite motif of

1. R. Nagaswamy: *New Light on Mahābalipuram*, T.A.S.S.I. Vol. VI (Madras, 1962), pp. 1-50.

2. Sree Narasimha, Prithvisarh, Sree bharah, Bhuvana Bhajanah, Sree Meghah, Trilokyavardhanah, Vidhihi, Atyantakāmaha, Anekobhanah, etc.

Rājasimha.

Narasimhavarman I inherited from his father the hostile relations with Chālukyan dynasty along with the imperial power and artistic tradition. Soon after his succession to the throne, the expedition of Chālukyan Pulakesin II took place (637-38 A.D.). He defeated Pulakesin II, and sacked Vaṭapi, the capital city of the Chālukyas, the modern Bādāmi. Then he adopted the title '*Vatapikoṇḍa*', the conqueror of Vaṭapi. He seems to have been very much impressed by the beautiful and magnificent caves of Bādāmi, which had been carved and finished by Mangaleṣa in Saka Era 500 (578 A.D.). Narasimhavarman I carried home the Chālukyan art tradition. So, during the first half of the seventh century A.D., the Chālukyan style influenced the Pallava style. The result is some of the grand panels at Māmallapuram, viz., Varāha, Trivikrama, Mahiṣāsūramardini, etc., but these are not the replicas of the Bādāmi caves. The sculptors followed their own style and displayed originality. They immortalised Māmallapuram by hewing out heavy rocks and transforming them into the temples of great beauty which are famous as *Panchapāṇḍava Rathas*. These are creations of great skill. Percy Brown says that these are the replicas of the various religious structures of wood common at that time.¹ Now the technique of rock-cutting art reached its culmination. These *Rathas* are the repository of all the divine images. This period is the Golden Age of Pallava art and architecture. The artist has shown his originality and versatility in depicting the divine myths. In the delineation of divine images they expressed powerful dramatic intensity and profound cosmic feeling. They carved various forms of Viṣṇu and Śiva. The rows of relief sculptures on the Dharmarāja *Ratha* displayed the sixteen forms of Śiva as described in the Kasupiya Śilpaśāstra.² Many of these icons inspired the Chola artistes, the result is the great master-pieces of Chola bronzes. For the Viṣṇu iconography probably they followed the Vaikhāṇasa-gama. For the first time we find the epigraphical enumeration of the incarnations of Viṣṇu, in the Ādivarāha cave temple, on the niche to the South of the shrine entrance. In this list Kṛṣṇa is excluded and Buddha is included.³

However, among the representations at Māmallapuram, Varāha, Vāmana among the *avatāras* mentioned in the inscription are depicted. Moreover, Kṛṣṇa's feats as Anantasayi, Govardhan-adhāri, Kāliyamardana forms have been given visual expression. All the panels are either in low or in high relief and the human size. Almost all the divine figures are shown in the *samabhanga* posture and exhibit certain amount of stiffness. The movements of the figures are restricted. On the other hand certain human figures including *dvārapālas* on the *Rathas* and *Maṇḍapas* display easy and graceful postures. These figures are the very fine examples and beautifully proportioned. The slim and strength body is a characteristic feature of these sculptures. Profiles are more frequent, and sometime three-quarters view of the figure from behind also has been shown. This displays the technical virtuosity of the sculptors. The reliefs are relatively high but keep very much to one plane, so that the figures in general are related to the surface of the stone. In general, the compositions are simple and balanced, but we find very little attempt to show light and shade.

1. Percy Brown: *Indian Architecture* (Buddhist and Hindu Periods), (Bombay, 1959), p.79.

2. C. Gangooly and Goswamy: *The Art of the Pallavas*, (Calcutta, 1957), p.27.

3. Matsyāh Kūrmā, Varāha-cha, Narasimha-cha, Vamaṇa(h) Rāma Rāma-cha-Rāma-cha, Buddha(h), Kalki-cha te dasa. A.R.(S.), I.E., 1923, p. 94.

Thus every thing is clear cut. The style is more natural and original. The treatment of the weapons and the position of the arms holding of the weapons are similarly shown with naturalism (Plate LXII, Ske. 1 to 5). Even in the divine figures human qualities are visible. In the large compositions the carver followed the synoptic method as is usually followed by the previous phases of Sāñchi, Bharhut, Amarāvati. etc. The figures are more restrained and refined. There is no variety of poses, gestures and flexions as we find in Amarāvati and Ajantā. The figures are seen somewhat rigid in body and serious by nature and look serene and self-disciplined. Very rarely can we see the blushful or joyful innocence on female faces. But, they are dignified and majestic. This is so because, they have chosen divine and the members of Royal family. The most important thing in Māmallapuram is that the art is fully devoted to religion. Except gods and goddesses there is no scope for secular figures. Only in the Govardhana panel certain secular figures have been carved. The sculptor produced these compositions on a grand scale. These compositions look like frescos in sculpture. They chose the *paurāṇic* stories as their subject matter. They displayed great freedom in execution and maintained the authenticity of the story. During this period the sculptor enjoyed more freedom. It is the Pallava sculptures which paved the way for the grand gigantic Rāṣṭrakūṭa sculptures at Elephanta and Ellora. The figures are very simple and vigorous and their actions are very well rendered. Especially in this period the rendering of the animal figures reaches its height as in the much later Mughal painting. Thus Indian art blossoms in the realisation of a new and graceful idealism in Narasimhavarman period.

The *dvārapālas* of this period are gentle and devoid of the fierce looks of Mahendravarman period. "They are gentle, slender, and graceful, that well represent the specific quality of the more Southern style. There is in the department of these youths a touch of meditating dreaminess and lyrical musicality that has keyed down their manly valour to such a degree that they can hardly indicate to have been meant to protect the shrine. They are rather reflections and inspirations of the mood of pious delight that the worshippers are to feel when they step into the visible and tangible presence of their god. The sensitive bodies, symbols of an attitude representing a sentiment and forces of soul are suffused by the refined voluptuousness of some spiritual realm."¹ All the *dvārapālas* are accommodated in very narrow niches and without any weapons. In the Draupati *Ratha* alone the *dvārapālikas* have long bows and arrows. They are two handed. One hand is at the *kati* and the other indicating towards the *garbhagṛha*. There is no variety in *dvārapāla* figures of Māmallapuram (Fig. 37).

Among the five *Rathas*, the Arjuna *Ratha* and Dharmarāja *Ratha* are the repository of a number of carved figures. Each and every niche on all the three sides of the Arjuna *Ratha* has one or two figures, all are very finely executed. These figures are more elegant than others at Māmallapuram. On the eastern facade there are five niches. In the central niche, Indra on his *Airāvata* is frontally carved. At the next right side of the Indra figure two female figures (Fig. 41) probably from the Royal family are portrayed. Among them the younger one is very charming and modest (Fig. 41). Her round shoulders, narrow waist, tapering thighs, supple but strong legs and hands display aesthetic sobriety. She is a woman of resplendent beauty. She is very delicate like a creeper as it is said *Lateva rajase Tanvi*. Her flutter of delight, simplicity of dress and her voluptuous gracefulness reminds us of the famous black princess of Ajantā. Though, she differs in

1. Zimmer; *The Art of Indian Asia*, 2 Vols., Vol. I, Text (New York, 1955), p. 87.

dress and decoration, the appraisal of form is like that. Her blushful smile looks like a half blown lotus.

Next to this niche appears a *dvārapāla* figure (Fig. 40), which is very interesting; he stands very majestically having a long bow in his left hand and the right hand is at his *kaṭi*. He has skull *yajñopavita* and flat ended *kiriṭa* with heavy *kuṇḍalas* in his ear lobes. He has strong features. The articulations of the human figure is ideal with round and robust shoulders, attenuated waist. His face is very expressive with a smile on his full and tight lips. His erect, alert, majestic and serene pose resembles the Chālukyan *dvārapālas* at Badami¹ except for his weapon; here this *dvārapāla* holds a bow while the Chālukyan *dvārapāla* a *triśūla*.

On the Northern facade of the Arjuna *Ratha* the four niches accommodate other figures. In the central niche appears Śiva as *Vṛṣavāhana* and on both sides of the *Vṛṣavāhanamūrti* are Royal couples (Fig. 38). Next to these couples, *dvārapāla* figures are carved on either side. The *Vṛṣavāhana* Śiva is the centre of attraction (Fig. 38). Śiva is four handed leaning on Nandi which is carved frontally. He wears simple jewellery, a necklace, in the left ear *Patrakuṇḍala* and the right ear is left bare. This feature is probably to show his *ardhanārīśvara* form; what he held in his hands is not clear. He wears *jaṭāmukuṭa* and his pose is very relaxed, easy and graceful. The tranquil smile and the spiritual expression of the God is no where so well expressed in Pallava art as in this figure. There is no *kaṭisūtra*, but one *uttariya* is around his waist. He is standing cross legged. Probably this is the first representation of Śiva as *vṛṣavāhana*. There are no space values here; he is carved in a narrow niche as if, the two side pilasters of the niche restrict the scene. On the left side next to the Royal couple there is a *dvārapāla* figure with a *chauri* at his left shoulder (Fig. 39). The left hand is on his *paṭabandha*, which is tied by his long sword after the Chālukyan fashion. He has *kaṭisūtra* in ribbon like form. He does not have the usual *yajñopavita*. He wears *jaṭāmukuṭa* with all the śaivite symbols, for example, a skull and the crescent moon. The most interesting and important point in these three figures is the treatment of the faces of the *vṛṣavāhana* Śiva, *chauri* bearer and the above discussed *dvārapāla* with a great bow. These faces are square with full and smooth cheeks, full lips and down cast eyes. Generally, the Pallava faces are oblong with wide open eyes. So, the contours of these faces are new to Pallava art. The contours of these faces, are closer to the faces at Elephanta. The *vṛṣavāhana* Śiva's face (Fig. 38) with downcast eyes has more resemblances with that of Mahadeva figure at Elephanta. The facial contour of the *vṛṣavāhana* Śiva of Arjuna *Ratha*, also resembles the Chālukyan faces at Bādāmi. Generally, the faces of the figure of Māmallapuram are oblong, but not square. So, probably, this is the influence of Bādāmi on the Māmallapuram school.

The Royal couples (Fig. 38 and 39) are also carved very beautifully. The broad chest, as well as the prominent and round shoulders of the king shows Royal dignity. The treatment of *yajñopavita* can be compared with that of Śiva Gangādhara figure, from Trichinapalli. His one hand is at his *kaṭi* and the other hand is indicating towards the God. The two Royal persons look alike in their gesture and expression. In the same manner the queens also show resemblances, as their hands are placed on their laps just as in the portraits of the queen consorts of Mahendravarman I, in the Ādivarāha cave temple. But, here, their modelling is more refined

1. Zimmer; *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Plate 140.

and proportioned. These figures are more expressive, very delicate and serene. The vegetal suppleness and softness are poured in their slender limbs. But they are not looking tender hearted. They are reminiscent of these lines from "Mirror of Compositions,"—"Thy face, my Love, is as the Moon, Thy hand is equal to the tender leaves, Thy words are as nectar, thy lips are like the bimba fruit, but stone-like is thy heart."¹ These are idealised portraits. They are not real and are not inscribed. We cannot say who the personages are meant to be. This much we can say that they are the members of the Royal family. We can see the princely delicacy and Royal majesty in the male figures. Their garments are transparent and the tassels are hanging on the sides. The garments of the female figures also are diaphanous and the tassels are hanging behind. On the whole the easy and graceful gestures of these female figures remind us of the female painted at Ajanta.

Dwarfish figures are carved under the *kapota* in a row as if they are supporting the terrace and look like Śiva *gaṇas* from the Gupta period. In the second story beneath the *kapota*, a row of swans is carved.

Next to the Arjuna *Ratha*, the Dharmarāja *Ratha* is a repertory of Śiva and his various forms, for example, *Ardhanārīśvara*, Śiva, Bhikṣātana, Vṛṣavāhana, *Andhakāśura sarīhāra mūrti*,² etc. Not only śaivite figures but some vaiṣnavite figures are also present. On the east side of the right niche the *ardhanārīśvara* form of Śiva is carved out in the Dharmarāja *Ratha* (Fig. 42).³ Probably this is the first representation of Śiva in his half male, and half female form in the Pallava style. The figure is in *samabhanga* pose, i.e., without flexion in the body. We can admire the characteristic features of this figure, though we cannot find any delicate feeling in it. The sculptor has shown excellently, the anatomical features of male and female forms. The droop in the shoulder and the dip near the waist and the pelvis of the female half are beautifully shown. The treatment of hand of the female form has a curve and it sways like elephant's trunk. The chest of the male half is very broad and the shoulder is very prominent. The figure is four armed. In the male half, the upper right hand holds a *paraśu* and the lower right hand is in *abhaya mudra*. In the female half, the upper hand is holding *lilakamal* and the lower left hand is left free as *katyavalambita*. In the left ear-lobe we find a *patrakunḍala* and in the left leg an anklet. The *mukuta* also is a combination of *jaṭamukuta* and *karandamukuta* for Śiva and Pārvati respectively. In the male half the *kaṇṭhakakunḍala* is adorning in the right ear of the god. The lower garment is similar to that of the male portion which folds around the waist and tassels hang to the sides. The next figure is Hariharamūrti or Hryarthamūrti (Fig. 43).

1. मूषमिन्दुर्यथा पाणिः पल्लवेन सहस्रः प्रिये ।

वाचः सुघा दूषेष्टस्ते बिम्बतुल्यो मनो रमवत ॥

साहित्यदर्पण, पृष्ठ 354 ।

2. The *aṣṭamūrti* forms of Śiva are *prthvi āp* (water), *tejas* (light), *vāyu* (air), *ākāśa* (outer space), *Sūrya* (Sun), *Chandra* (Moon) and *Yazamāna* (Lord). Fire, sun and moon are often equated with three fires and the three eyes of Śiva. The lords of the eight forms are Bhava, Sarva, Íśana, Paśupati, Bhīma, Mahādeva, Ugra and Rudra. This *aṣṭamūrti* form was prevalent in contemporary time as is attested to by the Tevaram Sambandhar and Appar.

—K.R. Srinivasan, *The Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, p. 129.

3. In the Vedic language the *Ardhanārīśvara* form is the fusion of Agni and Soma, fire and water, the two principles of heat and cold by which the world is brought into existence and held together. . . . In the Śaiva iconography this form is a great idea with patent meaning.

—V.S. Agrawala; Siva Mahadeva (Varanasi, 1966), p. 41.

On the second storey at the South facade, Śiva has been carved as *Samhāramūrti*. He is killing an *asura*, probably Andhaka (Fig. 46). He is spearing the demon with his *trīśūla*, who is down and has taken the support of a pillar. Śiva's expression is terrifying. He is four handed, in one hand he holds *paraśu*. The next one is Kalari *mūrti* (Fig. 47).

The *vṛṣavāhana* Śiva (Fig. 48) on Dharmarāja *Ratha* is somewhat peculiar. Here his *vāhana* the bull is represented as a human being. The human-bull, here, has no horns and thus differs from the horned *dvārapālas* of Mahendravarman style. Śiva rests one of his hand on him. In one ear, he wears *patrakunḍala*, while the other is left bare. His head gear shows the change which is turban-like. This figure is four handed. The Andhakāsura and Nandi figures show a great deal of similarities in treatment, and both are modelled in the same manner. The Andhakāsura figure expresses an angry mood, while the Śiva *gaṇa* is in happy mood. On the whole the figure of Śiva, is the model for the famous Chola bronze *vṛṣavāhana* *mūrti*, in the same pose and in the same dress.

The most important for its iconographical features is the *Bhikṣāṭana* *mūrti* Śiva at the second storey, west facade. This figure is modelled with great sensitivity (Fig. 49). The nose of this figure is prominent which is high and thin edged as is found later in the Chola style of which it became a special characteristic feature. Śiva is four handed, in his lower left hand he has a skull as his *bhikṣāpātra* and his upper left hand holds an object resembling the *pāsa*. What he has in upper right hand is not visible and in his lower right hand he has *trīśūla*. He is dressed in a *kṛṣṇajina* instead of being nude. This figure is very fine and became a model for future figures. It seems that this figure is the combined form of *Bhikṣāṭana* and *Kankala* form. Because he had *Kankala Daṇḍa* on which the dead body of Viśvakasena is hanging.

On the second storey, north facade, Śiva is shown along with a human figure, probably, the latter is Arjuna (Fig. 50). Here Śiva is four handed, in one hand he holds a bow and carries at his back his quiver (*Akṣayatunir*). His other hand is on the shoulder of Arjuna in a friendly gesture. Arjuna is depicted in a very simple form with *dhoti* and turban. He bears a dejected expression looking towards the god's feet, as if, the mythical hero is repenting of his fight with Śiva in the disguise of *kirata*. On finding that the *kirata* was none other than Śiva himself, for whose realisation he was undergoing the penance, Arjuna is lamenting and Śiva is shown here probably consoling being gracious to him.

Another important figure in this series is the *Kāliyamardana* Kṛṣṇa (Fig. 51). Kṛṣṇa is crushing the serpent Kāliya by standing on his back and holding his tail. The attempt of the sculptor to show Kṛṣṇa as a young boy, is visible, yet Kṛṣṇa appears as a grown up. His head is adorned with peacock feathers, the heavy *patrakunḍala* in the ear lobes, and thick *yajñopavīta* has been carved. The serpent is engraved with a human head and expanding hoods appear as a halo behind him.

Besides the icons of god's figures, some of ascetics and devotees are also carved. Among them, a figure of a devotee is executed very expressively, in the third storey, north facade (Fig. 52). Certain new features are introduced in this figure. His one hand is in the *kaṭihasta* posture and with the other hand he is holding flower. Special attention was paid to carving this hand posture, which is very rare in the Pallava art. He wears a turban out of which his beautiful curly hair overflows. The narrow and long eyes express devotional bliss. The usual thick band type of

yajñopavīta was changed here, into the *vastra yajñopavīta*. The ribbon type of *kaṭisūtra* and the loops around the waist were similarly turned into a girdle, which is wide and tight fitting. On the left side the fan shaped hems on the girdle have been shown; which enhances the beauty of the figure. Probably, this figure is portrait of Narasimhavarman I who is the sponsor of this work. He is described in an inscription engraved on Dharmarāja *Ratha* as “handsome and omnipotent, passionate, serene etc. Since this figure expresses all these qualities I suppose he is Narasimhavarman I.¹ Certain other forms of Śiva, like Gangādhara (Fig. 54), Viṇādhara Dakṣināmūrti (Fig. 55), etc. also carved. Some portraits of the devotees also hewed out, for example, the portrait of Eripattar-nayanar (Fig. 57) and Tirunilkāntha-Yalppanar (Fig. 58). It is said in the *Periyapurāṇam* that Eripattar-nayanar used to collect the flowers for the worship of Śiva and he always carrying an instrument like sickle for plucking the flowers. And Tirunilkāntha Yalppanar a great Śiva Bhakta used to play the hymns composed by Sambandhar on his *yal* (the music instrument, the prototype of modern Viṇa). On the Dharmarāja *Ratha* twenty to twenty-five figures were carved in three storeys, each became a specimen of its own. According to the śaivite pantheon the various aspects of śiva are illustrated, and became models for the subsequent styles. (The figure of Surya is a masterly example of the Pallava art. The figure with a big halo in *samabhanga* posture expresses heavenly dignity. It is distinguished from the robust earthly beauty and displays the grace of stateliness and restraint.) Among all the five *Rathas* only in Draupadi *Ratha* the mulabera has been carved on the back wall. Durga stands on *kamalāsana* two of her devotees are in the attitude of self-immolation while on the above two ganas on each corner carved in adoration posture (Fig. 60).

In Māmallapuram, all the three major Hindu cults have been given equal importance. Along with the illustrations of Śiva and Vaiṣṇava myths, Durgā as the head of Śākta cult also became popular among the Royal patrons. The sculptor illustrated all these divine myths more explicitly and powerfully than any language. It may be noted that the majority of the divine images have either two hands or four hands. The only exceptions are the Trivikrama figure in the Ādivarāha Maṇḍapa, the Durgā figure in Ādivarāha cave temple, Mahiṣāsūramardini Durgā in the Mahiṣāsūramardini Maṇḍapa, and the Durgā figure in Trimūrti cave are eight armed. Most of the four armed deities are provided with two emblems in the two hands and the other two hands are in the position of *abhaya mudra* and *kaṭi hasta*. The deities are not provided with *prabhamāṇḍala* except Sūrya, and Chandra who invariably have haloes.

A number of Durgā figures appeared in Māmallapuram.² Her Mahiṣāsūramardini aspect

1. स्थिर भक्तिः

मदनाभिरामः विधिः ।

श्री नरसिंह भुवन भाजनः श्री मेघः अप्रतिहत- शासनकामललितः असेयमायः सकल कल्याणः

नयन मनोहरः वामः अतिमानः

वामः पराभरः

सत्यः पराक्रम परावरः ।

2. It is said that in Tamil country, Pidari, is the arch type of the female village deities. She is regarded as the guardian deity, protecting the people against evil spirits and especially epidemics like the cholera. She is known by various names. Kālī with power over death, protects against evil spirits and the wild beasts. She is later integrated with Durgā or Mahiṣāsūramardini. Human and animal sacrifices were offered to her. There are a number of figures carved in Pallava sculpture.

—S.R. Balasubrahmanyam, *Early Chola Art*, Part I (Bombay, 1966), p. 4.

is a favourite subject for the artists of all ages. All the figures are illustrated as standing on the head of the Mahiṣa, except on the Varāhamaṇḍapa, where she stands on a lotus seat. She is always accompanied by antelope, except in the Mahiṣasuramardini cave.¹ Durgā has been given saivite as well as vaishnavite symbols, for example, the *trisula*, *sarpa*, *chakra* and *sankha*, etc., and she is also associated with Vishnu temples. We can take the instances of the Mahishasuramardini figure along with the Anantasayi Vishnu relief in the Mahishasuramardini *Mandapa*, the Durga on *Varaha Mandapa* and also, in the trimūrti cave.² Thus she is represented as the *Adyaśakti*, the supreme consciousness and powerful above all others. It is by her grace that all the gods are manifested, and even the supramental Īśwara comes into manifestation through her. The *Nirvāṇa Tantra* also says that all the gods came from her and will disappear in her like, "Lightning is produced by the clouds and disappears within the clouds."

Another important and peculiar feature of Pallava Durgā at Māmallapuram except in the Mahiṣasuramardini cave is that devotees are shown in sculpture offering their flesh and blood to the goddess. It shows that the sacrificial rituals were in practice at that time. K.R. Srinivasan observes in his '*Cave Temples of the Pallavas*' this is the method of worship according to the *Kalikāpurāṇa* which is described as the *Navakhaṇḍa Vidhi*.³ This method of worship is called *vāmachara vidhi*, "The left hand ritual", of the *Tantras*. In the *Devi Rahasya Tantra*, it is said that she will be satisfied with the sacrifices of Mahiṣa etc. (the animals), and she will take Madhu, Mamsam,⁴ etc. Probably at that time that type of worship was in vogue.

1. Durgā is called in *Gāyatri Sahasraṇam* as Yājuṣi Yajñarūpinī

(यकारदि हकारागता याजुषी यज्ञरूपिणी ।

यामिनी योगनिरता यातुधान मयकरी ॥)

i.e., she is Yazurveda and she is the form of yajña or she is yajña herself and it is also said that she is Agni. In *Markaṇḍeyapurāṇa* Brahma invoked her as स्वाहा, स्वधा (त्वं स्वाहा, त्वं स्वधां, त्वं हि वषट्कारः स्वरात्मिका) स्वाहा and स्वधा are considered to be the eyes of Agni. That means she is herself Agni. By all these references it shows that she is vedas, she is yajña and is the fire of yajña. The Pallava artists want to show all these aspects of Devi. Hence they carved the head of a deer on the back wall. The deer symbolizes Vedas and also yajña. It is supported by the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*. There it is considered the deer as the form of yajña. It is also said in the above *Brāhmaṇa* and also in (तैत्तिरीय) *Tyittariya Brāhmaṇa*. The Agni hides in the forest when the Devatas searched, it has been found in the form of a deer. So it is called Agnimṛga. This Agni is herself. In *Gāyatri Sahasraṇama* she is called as Sarabha, who is the form of a deer.

शरावती, शरानन्दा, शरज्जोत्सना शुभानना ।

शरभा, श्लिनि, शृङ्गा, शबरी, शुकवाहना ॥

2. From a very early period, she was also mythologically associated with Viṣṇu Kṛṣṇa. The Durgāstotras of the Mahābhārata and the Āryastava of the Harivaṃśa describe her as having been born in the womb of Yaśodā in the house of the cowherd Nanda. (Yaśodā garbha sambhutam Nanda-Gopakula jatam) The *Markaṇḍeyapurāṇa* also gives us the same information and in its Nārāyaṇi-stuti the gods characterise her as the infinitely powerful Vaiṣṇavisakti (Tvam Vaiṣṇavisaktirantavīrya viśvasyā Bijamparamasimaya).

J.N. Banerjea; *Development of Hindu Iconography* (Second Edition, Calcutta, 1956), p. 502.

3. K.R. Srinivasan : *The Cave Temples of the Pallavas*. p. 172.

4. महिषादिवलिः पिशितम् मधुमांसानि देवी सेवेत् ।

-मैरवतन्त्रे, देवीरहस्य तन्त्र, कुलार्णवम् ।

मांसंतुत्रिविधं देवी ख-भृ-जलचरप्रिये यथासम्भवमेतेष्वतर्पणार्थम् प्रकल्पयेत् ।

मांसा मावे तुलशून-माद्रकं नागरतुवा ।

बादायि पृज्ये देवी चान्यथानिष्फल भवेत् ।

देवी पूजाकल्पम् ।

The very conception of Durgā in Indian religious literature is very idealistic. She combines two adverse ideas (विरोधी भाव) i.e. delicacy and energy, *lalita* and *ghora*, beauty and ugliness, *saumya* and *raudra* (अतिसौम्यायै अतिरौद्रायै) etc. It is said that she is Tīrpurasundari.¹ Her celestial beauty is uncomparable among the three worlds and also she is terrible and hideous (भयङ्करा). One of her names itself signifies that she is Durgā—unconquerable or unassailable one.² For the śakti worshippers she is all in all. She creates, she preserves and destroys. Perhaps to express this idea Durgā has been attributed all the different types of weapons. Almost all the figures of Durgā are most amazing and delightful specimens of the Pallava conception of feminine beauty. They are very slim and slender and most of them are in beautiful *tribhanga* pose.

A Durgā figure is carved on the southern side of the Ādivarāha cave temple (Fig. 61). She is eight armed. She stands in the *tribhanga* posture on the head of Mahiṣa. She holds in three of her right hands the *chakra* (wheel), *khadga* (sword) and *ghanta* (bell) respectively and in corresponding left hands, the *Śankha* (Conch), *Keṭaka* (shield) and *Dhanuṣ* (bow). The right front hand holds a cup. But it is not clearly visible. K.R. Srinivasan, in his 'Cave Temples of the Pallavas', stated that it is a cup. But Krishna Sastry felt that it is evidently a *śree phala* (bale fruit). Her lower left hand is at the *kaṭi* and a parrot perched on the wrist as she is praised as '*līlāsuka priye*'. She wears *kucha bandha*. She is adorned with a necklace, *paṭrakunḍala* and *kiriṭa*. Behind her, there is a *triśūla*, probably it represents *śakti dhvaja*. In the top corners of the panel there are two flying figures. On the right the head of a lion and on the left the head of an antelope have been carved. The lion symbolises *dharma* and *śakti*, while the antelope probably signifies her *samyam* and her Paśupati aspect. Below at either side of Durgā figure two attendant female figures are shown standing, the right one with sword and the left one with a bow. Both the figures slender yet they exhibit their amazonian strength. Similarly, on either side of Durgā two devotees are shown kneeling, the right one is piercing his left hand with a dagger and the left one holds a sword in his left arm-pit. This indicates the sacrificial rituals which symbolises the self-immolation at the goddess's feet, by piercing their *rāgadweṣādi guṇa* so that, they can get her blessings. All the figures in this composition are arranged beautifully and harmoniously. The figure of Durgā looks fine with her subtle and rhythmic body. Her face is very elegant with a tranquil smile on her lips as described in the 'Devi Māhātmya'.³ According to the Mayamata, she is *Katyāyini* having the characteristics shown above.

The most remarkable and unique sculpture in Māmallapuram is the Durgā Mahiṣāsūramardini scene in the Mahiṣāsūramardini *Maṇḍapa* (Fig. 62). The style reaches its highest water mark

1. सौम्या सौम्यतरा शेष सौम्येभ्यस्त्वति सुन्दरी ।

कनकोत्तम कान्तिः सः सुकान्ति कनकाम्बरा ॥

देवी कनकवर्णाभि कनकोत्तम भूषणा ।

रक्ताम्बरा रक्तवर्णा रक्त सर्वांग भूषणा ।

रक्तायुधा, रक्तनेत्रा रक्तकेशाति भीषणा ॥

दीर्घा लम्बावतिस्थूला तां वतीवमनोहरी ॥

देवी महात्म्य, डा० वासुदेवशरण अयवाल । p. 40

2. तां दुर्गां दुर्गमादेवी दुराचार विधातिनीम् ।

(देव्युपनिषत्)

3. ईषत्सहासममलं परिपूर्णं चन्द्र-विम्बानुकारिककनकोत्तम कान्तिकान्तम् ।

- देवी साहात्म्य अध्याय ५, श्लो० ११, पृ० ६८-६९ ।

in plasticity, elegance and vividness in the representation. This is the most original work, as though the sculptor has a spiritual vision of the whole battle. It proves that the Indian artist enters a plane of *dhyāna* (contemplation) in order to conceive the mental picture before he executes it on stone. In his *dhyāna* he gets the vision and *tādātmya* (having the same self). Then he expresses it and creates it following his greater inner vision. It is said that Vālmiki before he began his dictation, first visualised in *yoga* the entire *Rāmāyaṇa*. The characters appeared in his vision living and moving as though in real life.¹ The same thing seems would have happened, here, in the Mahiṣāsūramardini composition. The literary meaning of this aspect of Durgā is one who crushed the buffalo demon (the personification of evil forces, i.e., *ajñāna*, *avidyā* and the violent egoism, devourer of the world). On the other hand Durgā is cosmic energy, *mahāvidyā* and enlightenment, or of the valour or powers of all the gods together. She rescued the universe from the tyranny of the demon, Mahiṣāsura and which, became a favourite theme for the Indian artist. The details of the story has been given in the *Devi Māhātmya* of the *Markaṇḍeyapurāṇa* probably written in fourth century A.D. and in the *Devibhāgavatam*. But it appears first in the Kena Upaniṣad, where she is described as 'Brahman'. The same idea is developed later. According to the *Markaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, "the pile of light which was collected by all the gods transformed into a woman, illuminating the whole world by her luster." The gods bestowed upon her all their weapons.² "In this personalities were powerfully integrated. Such an overwhelming totalization signified omnipotence. By a gesture of perfect surrender and fully willed self-abdication, they had given their energies to the primeval śakti, the one force, the fountain head, whence originally all had stemmed. And the result was now a great renewal of the original state of universal potency. When the cosmos first unfolded into a system of strictly differentiated spheres and forces, life energy was parcelled out into a multitude of individuated manifestation. But these now had lost their force. The mother of them all, life energy itself as the primeval maternal principles, had reabsorbed them, eaten them back into the universal womb. She now was ready to go forth in the fullness of her being."³

In Māmāllapuram, this panel is illustrated following the description of the *Devi Māhātmya*. When Mahiṣāsura heard about Devi he rushed towards her, and declared war on Devi. He saw Devi filling the three worlds with her splendour, bending low the earth with the force of her strides stretching the sky with her pointed diadem, shaking the nether worlds with the twang of her bow-string and standing there filling the ten directions of space with her thousand hands.⁴ She is riding

1. A.K. Coomaraswamy; *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, Second Edition (New York, 1956), p. 175.

2. अतीव तेजसः कूटं ज्वलन्तमिव पवतंम् ।
ददृशुस्ते सुरास्तत्र उवाचाव्याप्तदिगन्तरम् ॥
अतुलं तत्र तत्तेजः सर्वदेवशरीरजम् ।
एकस्थ तदभून्नारी व्याप्तलोकत्रयं त्विषा ॥

—Dr. V.S.Agrawala; '*Devi Māhātmya*,' Chapter II, Cant 11 & 12, pp. 46-47.

3. H. Zimmer; *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* (New York, 1962), p. 191.

4. स ददर्श ततो देवीं व्याप्तलोकत्रयत्विवाम् ।
पादाक्रान्त्या नतभुवं किरीटोत्थिताम्बराम् ।
क्षोभिताशेषपातालां धनुर्ध्यानिः स्वनेन ताम् ।
दिशो भुजसहस्रेण समन्ताद् व्याप्त संस्थिताम् ॥
Ibid., pp. 50-51.

on her lion with erect and firm grace. She is eight handed holding the bow by her hand bent behind her ears as if, she is drawing the bow-string, yet the arrow is not carved (Fig. 63). She appears in such a firm and concentrated pose, drawing the bow-string that we feel that both are there. Three other right hands hold a *khadga*, *ghaṇṭa* and *chakra* and the three left hands hold a dagger, *pāśa* and *śankha*. One of her *gaṇas* holds a Royal parasol over her. Her elegant body is really illuminating. She is delicate like a flower. Her face is charming like a moon with a proud smile of triumph. She is advancing, seated on the lion and accompanied by the *gaṇas*. "The adversary gigantic and grotesque, is sulkily yielding ground. The final triumph is not depicted, yet it is suggested obviously between the two wings. The brilliant amazon, provided with the weapons of all the gods and stimulated by their hymns of praise, is the representative of all their affirmative forces of the universe. The demons already in hopeless resentment, are about to fall."¹ Below the Devi one of her *gaṇas*, probably, Jaya is holding shield and sword warring with one of the *asuras*. She is equally beautiful like Durgā. All her *gaṇas* are in joyful mood and are taking the battle very lightly. They seem to be conscious of their association with Durgā, the primal energy herself. Mahiṣāsura is trying to defeat her. He is waiting for an opportunity to war upon her. Mahiṣāsura is described in the Devi Mahātmya as *ardhaniṣkanta*, half-buffalo and half-man, who shakes the three worlds by his might.² Here he has human body and buffalo head. His face and his posture are suggestive of his firmness and brutal force. While holding a club with both hands, he has a long sword tied to his belt. One of his servants is holding a Royal parasol. Another is fighting and one is retreating while some others are killed. Though the battle scene is yet indecisive one can expect the result by the attitudes of the adversary. The entire grouping of the figures and the depiction of the incident is forceful and graphic. Though it is vigorous, yet gentle in representing the brutal dramatic scene of the battle. Thus they followed the Devi Mahātmya version. This is not merely a sculptural panel, but a moving picture of a living battle. But no where else is a female figure depicted with such grace and power, and breathing such a sense of triumph. This is irresistably cosmic, even the Devi Mahātmya hardly gives a truer concept of the victorious mother than does this stone relief.³ The delineation of the whole composition displays human sublimity, grace and excellence.

In the other examples, i.e., in the sculpture at the Rāmeśwara Cave at Ellōra, generally, in paintings, the Devi is represented killing Mahiṣāsura in his Mahiṣa form. In these cases she cuts the throat of Mahiṣa by the trident and then the *asura* in his human form emerges out of his neck. The *asura* in these cases is smaller in proportion, probably to express the difference between the cosmic and earthly forces. Two such stone figures of this type are in Bharat Kala Bhavan collection (These are seventh and eighth centuries A.D., Banaras style). The reference may be

1. K.M. Munshi; *Temple Sculptures*,

2. ततो महासुरो भूयो माद्विषं वपुरास्थितः ।

तथैव शोभयामास त्रैलोक्यं सच्चराचरम् ॥

—देवी महात्म्य, डा० वासुदेवशरण अग्रवाल, श्लो० ३२, पृ० ६२ ।

3. K.M. Munshi; *The Saga of Indian Sculpture*, p. 23.

made to the Devi *Mahātmya* for such compositions.¹ The same iconography as in Māmallapuram has been repeated in the Kailāśanāth temple at Ellora (eighth century A.D.). Here again the Mahiṣāsura has been shown as humanbeing with horns on his head, but, he is shown frontally not turned towards the Devi. The Devi is also carved frontally and all her hands are flying in air. Rows after rows of gods and goddesses are witnessing the scene from the sky. In the Ellora group, it does not provide the actual war field where both the parties have met. On the other hand, in Māmallapuram panel we can see the concentration and determination of both warring sides as they are trying hard to get victory over the other. The Devi figure, who rides her lion naturally appears in correct position with piercing looks. The arrangement of her eight arms and her three fourth profile of her body and the face are unique. Her radiant beauty is illuminated by her subtle body with light and compact bust and serene and elegant face with a triumphant smile.

Opposite to Mahiṣāsuramardini panel, we find the scene depicting Viṣṇu as *Anantasayi* (Fig. 64). Viṣṇu is in *yoganidra* and is reclining on the cosmic serpent, *Ananta* at the end of the Kalpa. The choice of this particular form to be associated with the Mahiṣāsuramardini scene suggests that both of them are executed from the story given in the *Devi Mahātmya* (I & II Chapters). This describes Devi or *Viṣṇu maya* or *yoganidra* coming out from the body of Viṣṇu while Brahmā invokes her. So Devi is also called *Viṣṇuśakti*. While Viṣṇu was sleeping from his *karṇamāla* (impurity of the ears) were born two *asuras* named Madhu and Kaiṭabha.² They made attempts to kill Brahmā who is powerless without Viṣṇu's *śakti*. Brahmā invoked the goddess Yoganidra to release Viṣṇu from her power. Thus invoked, the Devi comes out from the eyes, mouth and nostrils of Viṣṇu. He wakes up from his sleep and kills Madhu and Kaiṭabha.

In this composition Viṣṇu is sleeping on the five hooded *Śeṣa*.³ He is two handed and reclining by stretching his two legs as well as his right hand, while with his left hand, he is turning the beads of a *japamāla* (Rosery). In front of him, near his feet two *asuras* are conspiring and looking for a chance probably to strike at Brahmā, who is not shown here. Below, the *Bhūdevi* is kneeling

1. एवमुक्त्वा समुत्पत्य साऽऽरूढा तं महामुरम् ।
पादेनाक्रम्य कण्ठे च शूलेनैनमताडयत् ॥
ततः सोऽपि पदाऽऽक्रान्तस्तया निजमुखात्ततः -
अर्धनिष्क्रान्त एवासीद् देव्या वीर्येण संवृतः ॥
अर्धनिष्क्रान्त एवासी युध्यमानो महामुरः ।
तया महार्हसना देव्य शिरश्छित्वा निपातितः ।

—देवी महत्म्य, पृ. ६२ । *Devi Mahatmya* p. 62

2. तदा द्वावसुरौ घोरी विख्यातौ मधुकैटभौ ।
विष्णुकर्णमलोद्भूतौ हन्तुं ब्रह्माण्मुद्यतौ ॥
—*ibid.*, p. 36.

3. The Buddha and Jaina type of a seated or standing figure, sheltered by the expanded hoods of a ptycephalous *nāga*, and the similar Hindu type (Viṣṇu Anantasayin but not always reclining there being a five seated example in the Vaiṣṇava cave at Bādāmi) present a common interest. Here in the same way it would be usual to derive the Hindu from the Buddhist type; but the converse is more probable. At any rate the Mahābhārata story of Rājā Adi in which the sleeping Droṇa is found sheltered by a serpents hoods is older than any possible Buddha figure. From this story is derived the place name Ahichchatra 'serpent umbrella and Cunningham suggests, the Buddhists probably took over the idea from the Hindus."

—A.K. Coomaraswamy; Origin of the Buddha Image, *Art Bulletin*, IX 4 (New York, 1927), p. 24, Cited by C. Sivaramamurti, *Amarāvati Sculptures*, p. 58.

and praying to the god. By her side according to some scholars, his weapons, *Sudarśana* and *Nandaka*, his sword are depicted as two youths. The two flying figures above are signified as *Śankha* and *gadā*. T.A. Gopinadharao felt that the two kneeling figures carved below were the sages, Markaṇḍeya and Bhrigu.¹ But they do not look like sages; they are vigorous and forceful. They wear *mukuta* and *yajñopavita*. Both are consulting among themselves. Probably they are the *āyudha puruṣas*, the *khaḍga* and *śankha*. The flying figures at the top are the *chakra* and *gadā*, who are trying to attack the asura. Though the composition was depicted after the Devi Mahātmya tradition, the flying female figure cannot be identified as *yoganidra* as stated by Vogel.² Because *yoganidra* quitted Viṣṇu and thus awakened him. She did not fight with asuras.

The two different forces—the demonic as well as godly aspects of the cosmic process have been shown here. Both forces originate from Viṣṇu, that means from the same root as given in the Bhagavadgītā : Viṣṇu maintains the equilibrium by crushing the evil forces by his cosmic energy. He is transcendental reality, pure and infinite essence. The asuric figures, Madhu and Kaiṭabha are equally powerful and heroic, evil minded, personification of the great *tāmasic* forces. On the whole, the composition displays the originality and is realistic. The figure of Viṣṇu is more human than cosmic in sublimity. The cosmic and lyrical qualities of the Gupta *Anantasayi* Viṣṇu, for example, the panel as Devagarh has given place to a naturalistic treatment. The reclining Viṣṇu of Gupta period looks exquisitely beautiful; moreover the Māmallapuram Viṣṇu looks more human though the plasticity and monumentality is uncomparable.

We can see how this composition is influenced by the Anantasayi Viṣṇu of the Viṣṇukuṇḍin period at Uṇḍavalli (Fig. 12). The composition of Māmallapuram is exactly the same. Position of the reclining Viṣṇu on five hooded serpent, for example, in both the panels, the position of the hands the coils of the serpent and the articulation of the figures of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, or of the kneeling Bhūdevi are very similar. The only difference lies in the physiognomy of the principle figures yet all the *ayudhapuruṣas* are carved simultaneously at top portion in the Viṣṇukuṇḍin relief yet only the *Chakrapuruṣa* and *Gadādevi* have been carved at that position, in the Māmallapuram panel. In the sanctum of Mahiṣāsuramardini cave the Somaskanda form of Śiva has been carved (Fig. 65).

In the Ādivarāha Maṇḍapa, there are four sculptural panels, viz., Varāha (Fig. 66), Trivikrama (Fig. 67), Gajalakṣmi (Fig. 68) and Durga (Fig. 69). All are the very superb examples of Māmallapuram sculpture. The Varāha and Trivikrama, the two incarnations of Viṣṇu are illustrated in large panels. These are symmetrically balanced, though vigorous, they are very gentle. The sculptor illustrated these dramatic cosmic forces with calm and undisturbed mind. So, these compositions are calm and clean without any confusion. The mood expressed in it is one of quiet solemnity rather than of forceful activity.

The Varāha panel depicts the story of the Varāha incarnation of Viṣṇu (Fig. 66). Viṣṇu by taking the form of a cosmic boar plunged into the cosmic waters, killed *Hiranyakṣa* the demon

1. T.A. Gopinatha Rao: *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Part 1, pp. 109-10.

He identified the two figures on the top as Chakrapuruṣa and Gadā Devi, represented by the dwarf and devi and the two kneeling figures near Bhūdevi as Markaṇḍeya and Bhrigu. However C. Sivaramamurti identified as Chakra and sword personified.

2. Vogel; Annual Report of A.S.I., 1910-11, quoted by Longhurst in M.A.S.I., No. 33, pp. 35-36.

who is the personification of *anaiśvarya* and redeemed the earth from the depths of the primeval sea. The sculptors of Māmallapuram handled this complicated myth in a very easy manner and with great mastery. Varāha stands out in his therio-anthropo morphic form in the centre of the panel. He is four handed. The upper left and right hands hold *Śankha* and *Chakra* and with other two hands he holds a female figure, the personification of *Prthivi* (earth goddess), who sits comfortably on his right knee, which is placed on the head of *Anantanāga* the cosmic serpent. His left leg is straight, and firmly planted on the ground. The cosmic serpent holds five hoods above his human head, and is shown emerging from the water, indicated by the lotus flowers and leaves. The lower portion of his body is hidden in the waters, while his tail has been shown upraised behind Bhūdevi. The treatment of the *Ananta* and the serpent Kāliya in Kāliyamardana panel on the wall of the Dharmarāja *Ratha* is the same. There also, the lifted tail of Kāliya is treated in the same manner. Thus it is not a representation of cornucopia as is suggested by Longhurst. Behind the figure of Varāha, Brahmā is depicted with three heads and standing in *tr̥bhanga* pose. He wears *jaṭajūṭa* and his two right hands are in *kaṭaka* and *kaṭihasta* mudras, respectively, while the two left hands are carrying the *srūk* (ladle) and *kamaṇḍal* respectively. He wears *dhoti* whose pleats are hanging between his two legs, while its hems are thick. He has an *uttariya* on his left shoulder. By the side of him a sage like figure carrying a *viṇa* (perhaps Nārada) is carved in three fourths view from the back. The moon is depicted in flying attitude at the top corner.

In front of Śeṣa stands another lady whose legs are in the water, and she is praying to the god with *anjali* pose. K.R. Srinivasan suggested that this figure was the consort of Śeṣa, according to the *Vaikhansagama*. But in that case the figure would have been associated with hoods as in the Bādāmi figure which are absent here. Possibly she is the representation of Bhūdevi herself, before she was uplifted by the god as interpreted by T.A. Gopinatha Rao. Behind her a male figure probably a rishi is carved from the back view. On the top most corner above the ṛṣi, the Sūrya figure has been engraved, with folded hands in the *Anjali* pose. The two figures Nārada, and the ṛṣi are shown in half view from the back as if they are coming out of the cave and the haloed Sūrya and Chandra with folded hands have been shown as if they are emerging from the clouds. The description of Ādivarāha in this panel corresponds to the text by Bṛgu in the *Vikhansagama* which even now, is in the form of an unpublished manuscript.¹

In this composition, we find no physical exertion of the god as displayed in the Udayagiri Ādivarāha scene. Here the god is quite calm, he seems to have rescued and uplifted the earth goddess smoothly and effortlessly. This is sentimental and psychological. It shows the reunion of Lord Viṣṇu and Bhūdevi; he holds her in a very loving manner and he is looking towards her very eagerly. The goddess Prithvi also looks very happy and modest. This does not simply give the feeling of a dramatic scene, but the artist displayed his natural concentration and contemplation. These two central figures, viz., Varāha and Bhūdevi are facing each other with rapt attention, while the other figures, who are taking part in this event are not simply observers, but they also are participants. All the figures in the composition are beautifully arranged. By introducing the

1. आदिवर ह चतुर्भुजं शंख चक्रधरं सख्यश्याम ।
निभं नागेन्द्रफणामणि स्थापित दक्षिणपादम् ॥
रमातलादुत्क्रमहाइ कुंचित वामपादम् ।
व्रमको महीघानं दक्षिणहस्तेन देव्याः ॥

three fourth back views of the figures at both corners, depth is suggested in the composition. All the figures are held together harmoniously. "It is held together by the double steady ascent of movements working across the panel from left to right. There is a delicate rhythm in the ascending sequence of these figures which, in their different size, shape and position, are like the notes and beats of a musical phrase. The flow of these ascending rhythms follows step by step the great action by which Varāha lifts Bhūdevi from the depth of the abyss to the regions of Sun and Moon. All the figures help to fulfil this action by participating in its rhythm, each in its own way. The Nāga at the bottom of the panel. . . . where the ascent reaches its culmination, in the figure of the Devi and by his squat and heavy mass underlines the upward aspiration of all others."¹ The composition is sparsely arranged, the economy of the forms provided a smooth flowing simplicity. The details like eyes, nose, mouth and ornaments are indicated only by their general form and position leaving out the details. "Each of the figures is inscribed in a simplified outline that obeys neat well defined directions and angles. In the straight and sober contours, both in light and soft shadows, life and spirit are communicated by inner vibrations. A net of line currents spread across the whole panel and fills it with an atmosphere of intense rapture. This synthetic and sensitive modelling, which is a characteristic of Pallava sculpture is the crowning feature of a composition entirely devoid of violent contrasts where action is sublimated into delicate cross currents of pure rhythms. On the gentle play with light and shade and the ascent set on inner psychological relations blossoms forth as the necessary, supreme fulfilment."²

This Ādivarāha theme is the most interesting of all scenes carved during all the periods. This form symbolizes valour which redeems earth from the clutches of the demons. It depicts parallel to kings protecting their mother-land from external enemies. For example, Chandragupta II, of the Gupta dynasty rescued the Gupta territory from the Saka invasions by killing Rudradaman, the Śaka king. Similarly, Narasimhavarman I, freed the Pallava domains from the Chālukyan invasions by defeating Pulakesin II, which had become a continuous source of trouble, since the time of Mahendravarman I. Just as Viṣṇu rescued the Earth from Hiraṇyākṣa (the Golden eyed), similarly the territories were protected by the ruling monarchs. This incident inspires the sculptors of Māmallapuram and compared the valour of his favourite king with Varāha in the sculptured panel. By the side of Varāha panel appears Śridevi, the symbolic form of *Rajyaśri*, while by the side of Trivikrama panel Durga, the goddess of victory are *Vijayaśri*, has been carved. Probably, the cave itself has been hewed after the Māmalla's conquest over Bādāmi.³

Śridevi (Fig. 68) in her Gajalakṣmi aspect has been carved on the left side of the Varāha panel. This theme is repeated in the Ādivarāha cave temple. In this composition in the Varāha *Maṇḍapa*, the figure of Lakṣmi is seated on full blown lotus, her two legs are resting on the spread out lotus leaves below. She is two handed; both the hands are held up in *kātaka* pose as if, she holds lotus bloom. Her hair dress looks like a *jaṭabandha* with a conical peak in the middle. On either sides two nymphs are standing holding full vases and they wear highly transparent lower garment so that, all the figures look nude. The elephant on the right side holds in his trunk a pitcher, by which he pours water on Lakṣmi; the elephant on the left side, is coiling

1. Alice Boner; *Principles of Composition in Hindu Sculpture*, p. 138.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 138-139.

3. K.R. Srinivasan: *Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, p. 148.

his trunk around the pot held by the lady as if, he is lifting it up. Lakṣmi's figure is fresh and youthful and it resembles a lotus bloom. She displays grace, charm and spiritual purity. "The image is exquisitely sensuous and passionate, full of the freshness and the fragrance of the primaordial nature. The treatment of her form is impressionistically sensitive; the smooth, simple and delicate modelling adds to the fluid lightness of all the movements and creates the *bhava* of the water element, which could not, by means of sculpture in the hardest stone, be rendered with more engaging and striking evidence."¹ Though the figure of Lakṣmi is small, she dominates the whole composition by her grace and compactness of the scene. She is as fresh as new blown lotus flower. She herself looks like a lotus, as she is described in Śrī Sūkta. Unlike the previous depictions,² at Sāñchi, Bharhut and Bādāmi, where her motherly aspect is stressed, here her *kanya* aspect with her innocent pure beauty has been expressed.

The composition is perfectly balanced. There is great ease and fluidity of movements. This panel is neither overcrowded nor has deep recesses between the figures. The elephants behind her are not present in full, only their heads are carved, which are spread over the whole of the upper portion. It forms a background which does not over power, but only helps to enhance by contrast the slender grace of Lakṣmi and her attendants.

Next to Gajalakṣmi, Durgā as Vijayaśrī (Fig. 69) has been carved. She is in *samabhanga* and stands on her lotus seat (*bhadrapiṭha*). All other characteristic features are displayed as usual in all other Durgā panels. Next to Durgā, Viṣṇu is illustrated in his Tṛvikrama form (Fig. 67). He first appeared in the *Rgveda*. He is described there, as follows: "The whole world was strode by Viṣṇu thrice. He planted his foot and the whole was gathered in his foot step's dust."³ There he is also called Yuvakumara (a young hero of beautiful form) बृहच्छरीरो विविमान ह्रस्वाभिर्युवा कुमारः प्रत्येत्याहवम् । The story is that in his Vamana form Viṣṇu requested three steps of land for his Agnisala (the three steps corresponds to the three fires in the sacrifice), from King Bāli (ममाग्निशरणार्थी देहि राजन्धपदत्रयम् । Bāli generously granted his request, but as soon as the holy water is poured in

1. Alice Boner; op. cit., p. 139.

2. Śrī Lakṣmi has been a popular deity from very ancient time and representations of her form are found among Mauryan sculptures. Different concepts of Lakṣmi such as Dhana Lakṣmi, Dhānya Lakṣmi, Rajya Lakṣmi, Gaja Lakṣmi all are suggestive of the presence of Śrī in various auspicious things. In the Mahābhārata, the goddess Lakṣmi is said to be ever present in the mansion of Kubera; the Hindu conception of Śrī is essentially that of a deity of beauty, auspiciousness and prosperity. She is good fortune personified. Rāmāyaṇa describes the Torana of Rāvana's city and palace as decorated with the figure of Lakṣmi. She is represented there as seated on a lotus, holding lotuses in her hands and attended by elephants that bathe her with jars of water. This is seen in Abhiṣekha type just as in Māmallapuram. Śrī Sūkta's description is faithfully followed in early sculptures at Bodhagaya, Sāñchi and other places. The late Pallava carving from Kaveripakkam in Madras Museum shows the ancient motif of Devi on the lotus the most auspicious of flowers, bathed by elephants suggestive of royalty.

—C. Sivaramamurti, *Amaravati Sculptures*, p. 84-85.

3. इदं विष्णुत्रिचक्रमे त्रेधा नि दधे पदम् ।

समूलं हृत्स्य पांशुरे ॥

त्रोणि पदा विचिक्रमे विष्णुर्गोपः । अदाम्यः ।

अतो घर्माणि धारयन् ।

—RV. 1-22, 17-18.

his hands to confirm the gift, Vāmana expanded himself as *Virāt*.¹ He covered with two steps, *Prthvi* and the *Antarikṣa*, and with the third step conquered Bali himself. He sent Bali down to *Pātāla*. This is the story which is illustrated by the Māmallapuram artists. This form was carved in all the periods. Though the original ideas were derived from the Vedas but, it was the *purāṇic* account which attracted the artists. The *Vāmanapurāṇ* was written in seventh century A.D., which mentions Mahendravarman Pallava in the south and Harṣavardhana in the north and it also mentions Kāñchi as the centre of culture during the period. So, this form became popular in the post Gupta period. In Māmallapuram Trivikrama scene is carved opposite to the Vāraha panel in the Ādivarāha *Maṇḍapa*.

In this panel the *virāt rūpa* of the god has been carved. Here Trivikrama is eight handed. Three of his right hands carrying his usual attributes the *Chakra*, *Gada* and *Khaḍga*, while the fourth is held high with the palm turned up. Three of his left hands carry *Śankha*, *Keṭaka* and *Sāranga* and the fourth is stretched towards his uplifted leg, the index finger pointing beyond Brahmā, who is shown seated on a *kamalāsana* by the side of Lord, Trivikrama's uplifted foot and offering *Pūjā*. Between Trivikrama's head and Brahmā, a boar faced figure in flying attitude may be *jāmbavanta* as stated by T.A. Gopinatha Rao in his '*Elements of Hindu Iconography*' is beating a drum as if, he is announcing the Lord's victory. On the right side of Viṣṇu, Śiva also has been shown seated on *Padmāsana* as if, witnessing the scene. On either side of the Trivikrama at the level of his navel, Sūrya and Chandra have been carved in flying posture. On the left side near Chandra, a figure is shown as if, falling down in mid-air. K.R. Srinivasan identified this figure as Triśaṅku, who belonged neither to earth nor to heaven. But T.A. Gopinatharao opines that perhaps, he is one of the danavas who fly up in the air as if, by a hurricane when Viṣṇu assumed his *virāt rūpa*, as stated by the *Brahmaṇḍapurāṇa*. All the *Asuras* became powerless before Viṣṇu's *virāṭarūpa*. The people who sat on the ground are the vanquished *Asuras* who were surprised at Viṣṇu's adventure. They tried to resist without knowing what happened to their hands. They touched the hilts of their swords but they felt powerless. One of them seated between Viṣṇu's feet is resting on his arched belly, as if, due to the impetus force of the Viṣṇu's stride, he turned away and still his one hand rests on his sword and his left hand is in attitude of wonder as if, he is trying to figure out the situation. Possibly, he is Bāli himself to whom Lord Viṣṇu wanted to curb and "Who keeps in his grip the principles of movements locked in a dead coil and therefore creation cannot proceed."²

In this composition, except the figure of Trivikrama, all other figures especially in the middle section of the panels are in the flying and coiling attitude. The Trivikrama figure occupies vertically all the space from the bottom to the top who stands firmly on his left leg spreading his hands like a tree with its branches. "This can be said of even the seed which by the principle of movement is destined to become the tree. Each organism starts life from a single fertilized cell and by virtue of the process of pulsation or rhythmic movement or rotation of *Chakra* become

1. पाणी तु पतिते तोये वामनोऽभूदवामनः ।

सर्वदेवमयं रूपं दर्शयामास तत्तन्नात् ॥

Vn. 31-53.

—V.S. Agrawala, *Vaman Purana—A Study* (Varanasi, 1964), pp. 58-59.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

manifest as the full body. This is the conversion of Vāmana into Virāt.”¹ Almost all the forms are multiplied and have certain relations with one another. All the lines are interwoven in the scene. In spite of this complexity the composition looks clear. The figures surrounding Trivikrama are not in background, but, they participate in the drama, Viṣṇu is dominating the whole composition by his huge dimensions and by his *samabhanga* posture in the centre of the moving figures. He stands erect with solemnity yet with boldness reaching from the nether worlds of the asuras upto the heaven and extending on both the sides to the ends of the otherwise endless universe. He is indifferent, impersonal, aloof and acts by his spiritual potency. In his fanned out arms effortlessly, he conducts his energy to the universe. Despite all its rigidity detached expression and frontality the figure of Viṣṇu is pulsating with an inwardly contained energy. The gradual broadening of his form from the foot to the chest, creates an impression in our minds of great sustaining cosmic power described in the Ṛgveda.²

The above conception seems to be illustrated in the present composition. Here we find no scenes, illustrating the story of Vāmana, but it sets a wider cosmic stage for his *virāt rūpa*. Śiva, Brahmā, Sūrya, Chandra are also carved to represent other regions, i.e., the outer space of the heavens and the earth and the nether worlds. This was the basic principle of Vedic metaphysics. The god symbolising by his three-fold movement, pervaded all the three worlds so, he is Viṣṇu (etymologically, “*veveṣṭi vyāpnoti iti viṣṇuh*”). “The principle that transforms the dwarf into the Giant or the microcosm into macrocosm, or again the centre into its diameter, named *Rikvan*, i.e., rhythmic movement. Owing to the efficacy of this movement a perfect circle is evolved at each and every point on the two sides of the centre enclosing within its womb a *svāstika* of four right angles.”³ In this composition, the sculptor tried to illustrate this idea. The figure expanded upwards to form a circle with spreading hands. On the whole, the sculptor fully succeeded in illustrating the Ṛgvadic idea of *Virāt Puruṣa*. It is well balanced and rhythmical, our eye is not fixed in any one place or one form except the central vertical figure of Viṣṇu which stands for the transcendental principle.

Elsewhere, another remarkable scene, Kṛṣṇa, Gōvardhandhāri appears in the Kṛṣṇa *Maṇḍapa* (Figs. 70 and 71). This is a huge panel occupying the backwall and some portions of the side-walls of the cave. Kṛṣṇa raised a mount with his little finger to protect the people of Brindāvan from the storm created by Indra, who was angered by the neglect of the cow-herds. The cowherds, the milkmaids, the cattle even the wild animals gathered to seek shelter. This composition is one of the most extraordinary achievements of the Māmallapuram artistes. The scene has been rendered with refined naturalism. The main attraction in this scene is the gopa milking the cow which is carved at the centre of the backwall. The gopa is milking the cow, while the cow is

1. Vamana puran *op. cit.*, p. 62.

2. यस्मिन्नुषु त्रिषु विक्रमणेष्वपि क्षियन्ति भुवनानि विश्वा ॥
य इदं दोर्घं प्रयतं सद्यस्थमेको विममे त्रिभिरत्पदेभिः ॥
यस्य त्रौ पूर्णं मधुना पदाभ्यक्षीयमाणा स्वधया मदन्ति ।
य उ त्रिधातु पृथिवीभुत दामेको दाघार भुवनानि विश्वा ॥
—*Ibid.*, p. 59 (RV. 1.54.2-4).

3. चतुर्भि सार्कं नवति च नामभिश्चक्रं न वृत् व्यतीरवीक्षित ।
(RV. 1.155.6)

—*Ibid.*, p. 61-62.

licking its calf by turning her neck with great motherly affection (Fig. 72). The pulsating movement and rhythm moves from the calf to the cow and to the *gopa*. We feel the sensation of that dumb movement of the tongue of the cow and the enjoyment of the calf. This is beautiful and natural. This is one of the examples of the keen observation of nature by the artists of Māmalla. Before the cow a woman is standing with a bundle of grass on her head (Fig. 72). At the back of the cow, Balarāma stands majestically. Next to Balarāma, *gopies* are standing and then appears the figure of Kṛṣṇa. He is in *samabhanga* and in the attitude of raising the hill by the left hand (Fig. 70). He is lifting the hill with his left hand while, his right hand dangles by the side. Besides Kṛṣṇa a milkmaid is carrying the milk pots on her head and an old man having a baby on his shoulder. All these people are taking shelter under the hill. Other cattle, the *gopas* and the *gopies* are standing on the left centre. All these figures are rendered very realistically. No redundant space has been left between the figures. It seems that the sculptor never felt the need of that, because all the figures converge on a centre and stand closely. Here what the sculptor has intended to express is somewhat obscure. Because the main theme is the lifting up the hill by Kṛṣṇa, who is the main figure, yet is carved in the corner. On the other hand, the milking cow is captivating in her expression. The country life has been shown elaborately. Probably, the artiste wants to show the country life through the Govardhana story just as in Bharhut, the artistes displayed the contemporary life through the *jātaka* stories. It would have been better if, the whole panel were carved in two parts with one part devoted to the country life and the other part to Kṛṣṇa. Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa are distinguished from the rest, by their physiognomy and their jewellery, both are crowned with *kirita*s and *kuṇḍalas*.

The female figures with their slender hands and legs are near to the *vengi* tradition. The *gopi*, who is carrying pots on her head resembles the Nāgarjunikoṇḍa figures (see the Daśaratha *jātaka* panel, Fig. 9). The head of the *gōpa* who is milking the cow resembles the head of the Buddha at Amarāvati, especially in the coiffure of the *Gopa*. The most interesting is the old man having a baby on his shoulders stands with the support of a stick. It resembles with the figures of Amarāvati and Ajantā (Plate LXVI, Ske. 12, 3). Almost all the female figures look nude. They have undergarments, yet this emphasises the diaphanous quality of their dress. The modelling of the figures, especially the milking cow is sensitive. The strong features of her face, the solidity of her horns and the flowing tail together became one harmonious unit. The *gopa* who is milking is carved almost in round. His sitting posture and his back view altogether show the personal touch of the artiste. Probably, the artist wants to show the scenes of Brindāvan as the people are enjoying the shelter of Kṛṣṇa. Normal peace prevailed under the Govardhana hill, though outside a great natural calamity is taking place. They forget all their grievances and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere. Thus the artiste has shown this, in many ways. One *gopa* is playing flute, one *gopi* is dancing. The emphasis on the milking cow is laid perhaps, because the cow cannot give milk until she is free from any sort of fear. Even the wild animals are also seeking the shelter together with the human beings. They cannot do harm to each other. Everybody is afraid for his own life. This shows what a fearful calamity prevails outside. Bhāravi also, describes the atmosphere prevailing on the Indra keela hill when Śiva approached Arjuna in a *kirāta* form along with his *gaṇas*, who were also, in *kirāta veśa*. They are roaring and coming in such a forceful manner that even the wild animals were running away along with the deer, cow, etc., for seeking shelter. They

forget their individual grievance and combine momentarily against the common enemy.¹ The carving of the cows is done in crowded manner. It seems that the cows are rubbing against each other. The heads of the cows have been carved as if, they are coming for shelter under the hill. The modelling of Balarāma is something like an *yakṣa* figure.

One of the most published variously discussed open air relief is the so-called Kirātārjuniya panel (Figs. 73, 74, 75, 76), which was carved on two stone boulders, which combinedly makes the panel nearly ninety-six feet wide and forty-three feet high. There is a narrow fissure between the two rocks. There is yet another version of the same theme which remains in an unfinished stage about one furlong south of the finished relief. Who started this and why it is left unfinished is unknown to us. Longhurst presumed that this rock cracked badly which is still visible, and may be the reason for its unfinished state. It might have been the first experiment for the great finished work.

Anyhow, the finished work is variously explained by scholars. Dr. A.K. Coomaraswamy identified it as Bhagirath *Tapascharya* (*Gaṅgāvataṛaṇa*) scene,² Longhurst as the *Brahmakapal* in Himalayas, Vogel and others, forming the majority of scholars identified it as *Kirātārjuniya* or *Arjuna's penance* scene. Let us first describe the panel.

This is one of the largest sculptural panels where innumerable figures have been carved on two enormous granite boulders. In the middle of the two rocks a narrow channel runs vertically which represents the river Gaṅgā. The figures on both the rocks are moving towards this pit. 'It is a veritable microcosm.' Figures in great variety including the representations of Nāgas, Nāginis, ṛṣis, Vidyadhara couples, Kinnara couples, Siddhas and the *gaṇas* (Fig. 73) and animals like the elephants (Fig. 76), deers, boars, tigers, lions (Fig. 74), etc., have been carved. Here the cleft is the focus of attraction. The representations of the Nāgas and Nāginis with human torso and their lower portion like a snake and in *Anjali* pose confirms that it is an aquatic region. All the figures move from two directions towards the cleft. In the lower right side of the cleft there is a small temple of Dravida order, in which, probably, the Viṣṇu figure is installed. Around the shrine a group of ascetics are engaged in *dhyāna* where another ṛṣi is seated on a high seat. He seems to be explaining something to his disciples. Below them, two sages are doing, probably, their morning prayers (*sandhyāvandanam*), while the other two ascetics are fetching water from the river, one with a pot on his shoulder. Similar figures are also carved on the Dharmaraja *Ratha*. Dr. Vogel reminds us that this may be the Daśaratha story of Rāmāyaṇa. Raja Daśaratha killed a young ascetic while he was taking water from the river. But, I think this identification is not accepted. Generally, the young ascetics used to assist their elder colleagues. The figure of the ascetic is beautifully modelled with strong features on the face, his *jatas*, are tied on the head. He wears the *vastra yajñopavīta*. Everything is perfect and beautiful in this representation. The deer, boar, tiger

1. नविरोघिनो रूपं हयया पथि मृगविहङ्गसमंहतिः ।

षणानन्तो सहजं अपि मूरिभिः सममानताः सपदो वैरं आपदाः ॥

—Kirātārjuniyam, chapter 6-12, (किराताजुनीयम्, सर्ग ६-१२, श्लो० ३४-४६) ।

2. The unfinished Elephants of the Isurumuniya Vihāra at Anurādhāpura in Ceylon carved in the same style and the sage Kapila, one of the finest sculptures of Ceylon also in pure Pallava style. Probably, this Vihara also executed of the Narasimhavarman's period. The Loha Prasada described at length in *Mahāvamsa* appeared like the Māmallapuram *Rathas*.

—A.K. Coomaraswamy: *History of Indian Indonesian Art*, (Dover Edition, New York, 1965), p. 162.

etc., are also carved around the temple. Just above temple, an ascetic is doing *Tapascharya* by standing on one leg with his both hands upraised (*ūrdhvaabāhu*). He is an emaciated figure and seems to have been engaged in the penance for a long time as is suggested by the over-grown hair and beard. His cheek bones protruding, his stomach pitted and the ribs and veins are shown prominently. All this suggests his great dedication.

Next to him stands the colossal figure of Śiva. He is four handed and carries trident and axe with two of his hands. His lower left hand is in the *varada mudrā*. and the lower right hand is on *kaṭi*. A *jatāmukuta*, long *yajñopavita*, a loin cloth up to the knee, *patrakunḍala* in the left ear and *kaṇṭhakakunḍala* in his right ear are depicted with sensitivity. This form of Śiva is identified by Longhurst as *Bhikṣāṭanamurty*. But the iconographical texts describe the *Bhikṣāṭanamurty* as nude and having a *bhikṣāpātra* in his hand. In *Dharmarāja Ratha*, a *Bhikṣāṭanamurty* has been carved. There he wears *Kṛṣṇajina*. Yet, he has *bhikṣāpātra* in his hand. However on the panel, under reference, Śiva is neither nude nor with a begging bowl. So, Longhurst's identification cannot be accepted.

Here Śiva is surrounded with his *gaṇas*. The *gaṇa*, who stands before Śiva bears an extra head on his stomach, and holds a chauri in his hand. This type of the figure is carved in Amarāvati and Ghantasāla in the (Plate LXIV Ske. 1 and 2) *Maravizaya* scene, and has been identified by C. Sivaramamurti, as *Kabandha*.¹ T.N. Ramachandran opined that he may represent the *Pāśupatāstra* or the *Raudramastram* which Bhāravi describes as "*Tanum bhimam bibrat trigunapativāra prahārānah*".² But, T.A. Gopinatha Rao has given the iconographical features of *pāśupatāstra* as "Four faces with three eyes in each having a tusk, stiff hair, terrific moustache, four arms with a spear, mace, conch and sword, constitutes the description of the godling, who is to be shown seated on a padmāsana."³ Hence according to the previous tradition and the iconography of *pāśupatāstra*, which has been given in the *Śaiva Āgamas*, this figure cannot be identified as *pāśupatāstra*. He can be one of the *gaṇas* of Śiva. Above Śiva's head Chandra has been shown with a big halo represented in a flying attitude. On the other side of the cleft, the Sūrya figure is also illustrated with considerably a big halo. We can recognise these two figures as Sūrya and Chandra only by their expressions. The figure of Chandra which is executed above the head of Śiva has a soft and gentle face and expresses tender feelings, whereas Sūrya expresses vigorous feelings. The other figures which are hewn out of the rock behind Śiva are Kinnara *mithunas* and Vidyādhara *mithunas* in flying attitude and the wild animals like tigers, boars are shown peeping from their caves and the deers running towards the cleft.

Below the small temple where the ascetics are engaged in their *tapascharya*, a stag and a dove are displayed naturally and interestingly. There is tremendous simplicity in these carvings. The stag is rubbing its hoof and is looking towards the dove (Fig. 77). Both are immersed in their

1. The Rāmāyaṇa describes Kabandha as huge, headless and devoid of neck, with his face on his stomach. The sculptor of Amarāvati has made an exceedingly interesting study of this subject and created a visual form of an evil one with head on stomach so clearly introduced that with his normal head above the shoulders he looks at first sight in no way different from his comrades that attack Buddha."

—Amarāvati Sculptures, p. 51.

2. T.N. Ramachandran: *Kiratarjuniyam or Arjuna's Penance in Indian Art*, J.A.S.O.A., Vol. XVIII (1950-51), p. 83.

3. T.A. Gopinatha Rao: *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 216-17.

own feelings. In this instance we can recall Harsha's verse in *Naishadhacharitam* where the deer on the pretext of rubbing their hoofs, convey consolation to their own eyes, drooping with a sense of defeat from the splendid beauty of their eyes.¹ The sympathy of an Indian artiste towards the animals reached its height in the carvings at Māmallapuram. They successfully tried to show the sensitive and tender feelings of the animals. We have seen above while we were discussing about *Kṛṣṇa Maṇḍapa* how elegantly, the motherly affection of the cow has been expressed there. Another superb example for this is the monkey family (Fig. 79). This is an unique example modelled in round. How beautifully composed is in one stone the whole family of a monkey which is realistic as well as humorous. The male monkey is picking vermin of the female while she suckles her two little ones. This shows the keen observation and wonderful assimilating capacity of the artist.

On the left side of this cleft, the Vidyadhara and Kinnara couples, the Siddhas, *gaṇas* and *kirātas* are depicted. The Vidyadhara couples are a celestial race who are usually shown in flying attitude and here they are paying homage to the god, Śiva. The kinnaras are represented as half bird and half human beings. The male is playing on the *viṇa* and the female is accompanying him on the cymbals. Kālidāsa calls the Kinnara *mithuna* as "Amara mithunas", whose flutes filled with wind, produced pleasant music.² These Kinnaras are also carved in Amarāvati sculptures often holding stūpa by their hands. In the Gupta period also, the Kinnara motif is popularly used. In the Hindu mythology, they are described as excellent masters of music in emphasizing the musical talent, their voices are considered the sweetest and hence, the phrase, *Kinnara kaṇṭhi* is used for the melodious voice of the people. The *gaṇas* are moving very slowly with their heavy bodies and pot bellies. The Siddhas with their *jaṭās* tied on the top of the head also have been shown in the flying attitude. In the mythology they are described as immortals, inhabitants of the *Bhuvārloka*, which is situated between the earth and heaven. Below, a cat is practising penance by standing on its hind legs while its fore legs are raised up (Fig. 78). Its ribs are visible through the skin, i.e., it is emaciated in her ordeal. It is pretending as an ascetic by gazing towards the sky. It is trying to convince the innocent rats who are gathered around it that it is holy and worthy of worship so that it is able to catch them easily. This scene is very humorous and at the same time satirical, probably, the artiste wants to make fun of the deceptive ascetic. We have a number of folk stories depicted like this. It also reminds us of the story of *Dadhikaran* in the *Hitopadeśa*. The elephants (Fig. 76) are in massive proportions, male, female and baby elephants are successfully represented in the scene. The artiste displays the nature of the elephants, their mass, their bulk, their deliberate movement and also expresses their wisdom beyond their beastly character.

"Partly because of the nature of the material this is one of the most extraordinary achievements of the Hindu sculptor. The granite is very hard; the carving in some places is slightly

1. स्वदृशीर्जनयन्ति सान्त्वना खुरकण्डूयनकैतवान्मृगाः ।
जितयो रूपवत्तमीलयोस्तदश्ववर्णेन शोभयामयात् ॥

—नेषधचरितम् (Naishadhacharitam)।

—Cited by C. Sivaramamurti, *Art and Letters*, M.A.S.I. (1955), No. 73, p. 48.

2. शब्दायन्ते मथुरमनिलैः कीचकाः पृथमाणाः ।

संखतामिस्त्रिपुरविजयां गीयते किन्नरीभिः ॥ 51 ॥

—मेघदूत (Meghadūt)

unfinished. But everywhere the forms are more simplified than usual and the effect is a slightly stronger, stonier style than that of usually found in the softer sandstones of the North. If we look at a detail we may be able to see clearly the elements of representation and of style. Some of the human figures might have been derived from Amarāvati. But, here the style is much more natural and organic, with that of the quality of ease and amplitude so characteristic of developed Pallava style.”¹

Now we will see what is the theme of this great panel. Is it the Kirātārjuniya scene of Bhāravi? The story of Kirātārjuniya according to him is as follows: Arjuna is doing penance to get *pāsupatāstra* on the Indrakila hill. Mūkāsura in the form of a boar wants to attack Arjuna. Śiva came along with his gaṇas in garb of a *kirāta* to rescue Arjuna. He followed the boar. A battle took place between the *kirāta* and Arjuna because both wanted the boar, as prize. Arjuna is defeated. Arjuna recognised Śiva and Śiva is pleased at his bravery and gave the *pāsupatāstra* to Arjuna. How far it can be interpreted to this sculpture? Here neither Śiva nor his gaṇas are in the *kirāta* form and there is no depiction of battle between Arjuna and Śiva for their hunted boar. Bhāravi says that Śiva pleased by Arjuna not by his deep asceticism but for his skill and strength as a wrestler² and he praised Arjuna as having tripped Śiva the great victor of the Tripuras by catching his legs as he jumped.³ Śiva wondered by this act of Arjuna trying to throw him down on the ground.⁴ Next Śiva pleased and revealed himself, Arjuna bowed immediately.⁵ These are the important points. So, the important features of this story are not carved in this panel. Also according to Bhāravi, Śiva as *Kirāta* appeared.”... in the first instance, on the track of his game, after leaving his *Kirāta* army below in the bog of the Gangā and taking care to conceal his body behind the bushes and stones.”⁶ These important details are completely absent in the panel.

Bhāravi's Arjuna is not *Mokśakāmi*, i.e., he is not doing penance to get *mokśā*. Arjuna is

1. Sherman E. Lee; *The History of Far Eastern Art*, pp. 185-86.

2. तपसा तथा न मुदमस्य वयो भगवान्यथा विपुलसत्त्वतया ।

गुणसंहतेः समतिरिक्तमहो निजमेव सत्त्वमुपकारि सताम् ।

प्रवृत्तेऽथ महाहवमल्लयोरचलसन्चलनादुरणो रणः ।

करणशृङ्खलसंक्लनागुरुगुरु भुजायुध गवितयोस्तयोः ॥

—*Kirātārjuniya*, XVIII, 14 & 8.

3. वियति वेगपरितुलितमन्तरा समभिमृत्य रयेण कषिध्वजः ।

चरणयोश्चरणानमितिक्षितिनिजगृहे तिसुणां जयिनं पुराम् ।

—*Ibid.*

4. विस्मितः सपदि तेन कमणा कर्मणा क्षयकरः परः पुमान् ।

क्षेप्तुकाममवनो तमक्लमनिष्पिषेष्ट परिरेभ्य वक्षसा ।

—*Ibid.*, XVIII. 13.

5. अय हिमशुचि भस्मभूषितशिरसि निराजितन्मिदुलेखया ।

स्वपुरतिमनोहरं ह्रं दधतमुदीदय ननाम पाण्डवः ॥

—Bhāravi, *Kirātārjuniya*, XVIII. 15.

—Cited by C. Sivaramamurti, *Early Eastern Chalukyan Sculpture*, pp. 45-46.

6. कच्छान्ते सुरसरितौ निधाय सेनाम् अन्विलः ।

प्रच्छन्नस्तम्भहर्नः सगुलमजालेः ।

लक्ष्मीवान - अनुपदा - मस्यसम्प्रतस्थे ।

—भारवि, किराताजुनीयम्, सर्ग १२० श्लो० ५४ (Bhāravi-kirātārjuniya) ।

associated with his weapons while he is doing penance. Indra advises Arjuna, he cannot get *mokṣa*, "unless he abandons his war like weapons".¹ Arjuna replied that his was not a *munidharma* nor his end *mokṣa*, but a *vrata*." This reveals that Arjuna is associated with the weapons though the other description corresponds with this sculpture. But here the figure is in *muni veṣa* without his *Gāṇḍīva* which is an inseparable weapon of Arjuna. So, this also cannot be tenable.

If we suggest that this panel illustrates the episode of bestowing of *pāśupatāstra* to Arjuna by Śiva as suggested by certain scholars, in that case Arjuna would have been shown in the attitude of receiving the weapon. On the other hand, the *muni* figure in this scene is shown immersed in Tapascharya. According to Bhāravi, while bestowing *astra*, Śiva revealed his real form. Bhāravi describes him as one who had moon in his *jaṭās* and who was handsome having *pinaka* in his hand.² In this composition, Śiva is beautiful but does not have the crescent moon in his *jaṭās* and *pinaka*, nor is he granting the weapon. But his one of the left hands is in *Varada mudrā*. Hence Bhāravi's Kirātārjuniya cannot be a source of this great sculpture in any way.

Similarly, this composition cannot be identified with the *Gaṅgāvatāraṇa* story. The Gaṅgādhara form of Śiva is well known to the Pallava sculptors, from the time of Mahendravarman I. In Tiruchinapalli, in the *Dharmarāja Ratha* and in the Adivarāha cave temple, the Gaṅgādhara Śiva figures have been carved. In all these examples, Gaṅgā is represented as the female figure and she has been shown descending from the heaven, into the Śiva's *jaṭājūṭa*. As the Pallavas had a definite iconographic form of Gaṅgādhara known to them, why they failed to adopt it in this case? Hence, this cannot be accepted as the Gaṅgāvatāraṇa scene.

I may suggest here that this panel could represent the Himalayas where, the sages and the ṛṣis used to perform penance. The Himalayas have been given an important place in literature. Bhāravi, Kālidāsa, etc., the great poets have described variously the Himalayas. In the Hindu mythology also, the Himalayas have a remarkable place in the life of the ṛṣis. It is a pure, calm and beautiful sanctuary. The celestial beings are always moving about in that region. All the wild animals like the tigers, lions and deers and the rabbits inhabit the hills. The perennial water-falls abound in the country. The people perform penance and Śiva gives boons to them. So, it is proper to interpret it as the scene of the Himalayas inspired by the myths.

Narasimhavarman I also dedicated a cave temple to Brahma (Fig. 81), Viṣṇu (Fig. 82), and Śiva (Fig. 80). Brahma has a single face and is standing in *Samabhanga*. The two *rudrākṣamalas* are crossing the chest. He has four hands. He holds in his upper hands a lotus and rosary while the lower hands are in *abhaya* and *katyavalambita mudrās*. On the top at either side two flying *gaṇas* are carved in the attitude of paying homage. In the lower portion the two devotees are offering worship. Gopinath Rao identified the central figure as Brahmasasta, which is an aspect of Subrahmanya. Vogel identifies him as Brahma.

1. त्रिविक्रतेस्मिन्मन्त्रे भूयः प्लाविते जाह्नूनुकम्ब्यया ।

प्रत्यासिदति मुक्तिस्तत्रम पुरा मा भुरुदायुषाः ॥

सर्ग ११, श्लो० ३६ ।

—T.N. Ramachandran, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

2. प्रीते पिनाकिनी— सर्ग ११, श्लो० ८१ ।

नारागी सेतः परमाविलासिता कला हिमान्धोश्च सोमम् सकस्ति ॥

भास्वी, किरातार्जुनीयम् (Bhāravi-kirātārjuniyam) ।

The other figures are Śiva and Viṣṇu and are carved beautifully as usual. The next important ruler was Paramesvaravarman I. He completed the unfinished works of his predecessors. It seems that he originated the idea of applying plaster over the stone work which was followed by Rajasimha. In Ādivarāha cave temple certain figures, for example, Viṣṇu (Fig. 84), Harihara (Fig. 85) and Gaṅgādhara Śiva (Fig. 87) are covered with plaster. According to the Kurram plates he constructed a Śiva temple at Kurram called *Vidyā-vinīta-Pallava Paramesvara gṛham*. It is obvious that Rajasimha followed the structural style of architecture inaugurated by Paramesvaravarman I.

The Late Pallava Style

In the previous chapters, we discussed the fine quality of figure sculptures which adorn the *Maṇḍapas* and the *Rathas* at Māmallapuram. These figures expressed a notable sense of restraint, refined simplicity and experienced craftsmanship, showing a very delicate and spirited style. In the rock-cut technique the Pallava examples from Māmallapuram are the finest and the earliest ones. The plastic quality of this style extended over the whole of South India and also influenced the art movement of Java and Cambodia which displayed the same high artistic character. Such a glorious and spirited style's degeneration started coinciding with the death of Narasimhavarman I Pallava in the last quarter of the seventh century A.D. Though his son and successor Paramēśvaravarman I pursued the same tradition and style, the *Rathas* and the *Maṇḍapas* which heightened the glory of the Pallava art are lacking in the final effort. It seems the great and grand project started by Narasimhavarman I needed much more time than a bare span of seventy years. After Paramēśvaraman I his son and successor Narasimhavarman II alias Rājasimha came to the throne in 700 A.D. He resumed the structural technique of architecture. So the rock-cut technique ceased back and no further labour was put into the *Maṇḍapas* or the monolithic *Rathas*; in a word, that form of expression became obsolete. (The direction of the waves of Pallava art was diverted towards the structural method instead of the inflexible and permanent 'granite rock-cutting. Probably, he thought that this method is easy and flexible for the workmen.) Though the Sāluvāṅkuppam cave temple has been attributed to Rājasimha by K.R. Srinivasan on the basis of sculptural style; this king's main zeal was towards structural architecture.

His rule was peaceful and free from internal and external disturbances. He patronised arts with irresistible enthusiasm and he opened a new phase in the annals of Pallava art, which occupied the whole of eighth century A.D. He was an ardent devotee of Śiva designated by the titles of 'Śivachūdāmani', 'Śivabhaktyārādhitā' etc. and he set an example like his forefathers, in showing Catholic spirit towards other religions. It seems he constructed a Jaina temple known as Vardhamāna temple at Tirupathikundram where a number of paintings of no particular artistic merit but interesting from an iconographical point of view adorned the walls of the temple.¹ Another Buddhist Vihāra at Nagapattinam was also constructed by him probably to serve the Chinese monks.² Several notable temples were constructed in this period viz., the Shore temple at

1. Longhurst; *Pallava Architecture*, M.A.S.I. No. 40, p. 9.

2. K.R. Srinivasan: *The Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, p. 8.

Māmallapuram, Kailāsanāth temple and the Airāvateśvara temple at Kāñchipuram, the Talapuriśvar temple at Panamalai, etc. A number of small temples also were constructed at Kāñchipuram but among them the Kailāsanāth temple is most interesting and important.

Almost all the temples constructed by Rājasimha were dedicated to Śiva. All the temples contained the Somaskanda panel on the back wall of the sanctum-sanctorium and the fluted, polished and long black stone linga without a '*pītha*' was invariably placed in the middle of the *garbha grha*. It seems the Somaskanda form of Śiva was most favourite with Rājasimha. Hence it is repeated a number of times not only in the *garbha grha* but on the outer walls. Similarly previously the representations of Gaṇeśa, Kārtikeya and Jyeṣṭha Devi were rare in the Pallava period. During the reign of Mahendravarman in the Vasanteśvara temple at Vallam the two niches on either side of the doorway contain figures of Gaṇeśa and Jyeṣṭha Devi. After Mahendravarman, both figures disappear. Once again they were resumed on the walls of the Kailāsanāth temple. A number of Jyeṣṭha Devi figures had been carved as represented here with heavy body and pot belly. Her expression is somewhat gruesome and the two handed Devi was seated on a rectangular seat with dangling legs. Gaṇeśa has been shown on the top centre of each niche. Kārtikeya has not been given special importance except as a boy seated between his divine parents Śiva and Pārvati in the Somaskanda panel enjoying the parental love. Another figure frequently visible on the walls of the temples constructed by Rājasimha is Durgā. She is represented here in different attitude. In the case of Māmallapuram, she is represented as Mahiṣāsuramardini Durgā who stands on the head of Mahiṣa while the lion and the head of an antelope are carved on the top corners of the panel. Her devotees are offering blood and flesh to her. All these motifs disappeared in the Rājasimha period as she is always represented with not less than ten hands while the highest number of the hands is sixteen. She stands by resting one leg on the lion and the other on the ground having various weapons including a long bow and *Nāgapāśa*. She stands like a soldier taking rest in the midst of war. Viṣṇu and Brahmā are depicted but always in the attitude of paying homage to Śiva. Moreover, the representation of Gajalakṣmi is found here and there but with less candour. The artistic elegance and the fresh fragrance of Gajalakṣmi from the Ādivarāha cave temple at Māmallapuram is almost an event of the past. Śiva is presented in various forms as *Samharamūrti*, *Anugrahamūrti* and *Nṛtyamūrti*.

By examining the figures of the Rājasimha period it seems the sculptors followed two methods of carving: either on a single stone which was fixed in the wall or on the in site blocks of stone after they were fixed to form the niches. Because there are a number of joints in the figure. The proportions, the thickness and the lines of the figure are even and accurate. To hide the unsightly joints and the roughness of the stone the artistes applied plaster, and finished finally all the details and then painted the figures. This was the usual custom of the sculptors of Rājasimha. But these plastered figures soon decayed, being exposed to the Sun and rain so they needed periodical renovations. The workmen at places applied cement and smoothened the joints with trowel. Hence the original plaster work is not found anywhere. Hence it is difficult to estimate the characteristic features of this style. Originally the figures were beautiful although not so slim as in Māmallapuram and because of the plaster they look more bulky. Generally, the main figure is in central niche; the other figures related to the story and also the devotees are carved in the side niches, in smaller proportions. The same method is adopted by the Cholas also. But in Māmallapuram a mythological story was illustrated in one and the same panel as if the

concerning figures were the participants of the drama: For example, in the panels of Trivikrama, Varāha, etc. The posture of paying homage, as usual in Māmallapuram with one hand is not so graceful in this later group. All the niches show the *Makara Torana* on the top and Gaṇeśa and other seated figures in the centre of *Makara Torana* while at the lower portion of the niche some dwarf figure or the head of an elephant have been carved. All the walls of the temples are overcrowded with superficial decorations. (The figures are not modelled in the lyrical manner as in the earlier period even though they tried to follow the Māmalla artistes.) The female figures are slim with attenuated waist. All the Śiva figures are forcefully modelled. Sometimes the artistes overlooked the traditional style and made the figure short and stout. The lower garment of the figures resembles the Māmallapuram style. The method of holding the weapons is in natural manner and some of which are decorative in form. The *hastamudrās* are very limited; only the *Abhayamudrā* and in very few images the *Varadamudrā* has been shown. The lower garment of Viṣṇu and Brahmā hangs down to the ankles and in many figures the *yajñopavita* is running from left shoulder to the right arm and is treated somewhat in a decorative manner. The faces are elongated in some cases, and round and plump in others. The Śiva figure is always represented with many hands. The coiffure of Durgā is not in the *Karandamukuṭa* (Plate LXII, Ske. 7) tradition as in Māmallapuram but like the head dress of Gajalakṣmī (Plate LXII, Ske. 6) of the Ādivarāha *Maṇḍapa* but the central projection is elongated (Plate LXII, Ske. 8) and for all other gods the traditional type of *Kirita* is used.

Rājasimha's initial efforts probably started from Māmallapuram and maturity was attained at the Kailāśanāth temple, Kāñchipuram. The shore temple contains a number of figures but all are weather worn and damaged; no longer they have any artistic merit. On the enclosure wall all the figures are so much eroded that we cannot recognise the form. On the north side of the enclosure wall an interesting scene is carved. In the upper panel six ascetics appear in a group. One of them is standing on one leg in the act of doing penance and below the penitent cat, a monkey and two deer are present. Probably, the sculptor wanted to repeat the same theme of the open air composition of Narasimhavarman I's period. On the opposite side of the enclosure, facing the west, is a quaint image of Durgā's lion. It is larger than human size and Durgā is shown sitting astride the lion's right thigh and on the chest of lion a small square niche is seen. In that also a figure of Durgā is carved. Probably, this niche is a receptacle for a lamp. This temple contains three Somaskanda panels (Fig. 88) which are in good condition. These reliefs follow the tradition of the proto-type in the Mahiṣasuramardini *Maṇḍapa* (Fig. 65). Four-armed Śiva is shown on a rectangular seat in *Sukhāsana* and on his left side Pārvati with two hands is seated facing Śiva. In between, Skanda as a boy is shown seated and enjoying the parental affection. In this relief the surfaces are flat and the figures are somewhat short and their *Kiritas* are long. All the figures are frontal in attitude and the chest is too broad. Brahmā and Viṣṇu are standing behind Śiva. Somaskanda became popular in the Chola period and also in the bronzes. "Though Kālidāsa has suggested the form of Somaskanda in his description of the happy Śiva and Umā in the company of Skanda, but no such figure has been discovered in North India."

A figure of Durgā (Fig. 89) along with her *gaṇas* is carved on the back wall of the temple. All the *gaṇas* are holding weapons in their hands looking forward to her word. The treatment of

1. C. Sivaramamurti: "Geographical and Chronological Factors in Indian Iconography," No. 6 (1950), p. 58.

these quaint figures is in the same manner as in the Mahiṣāsūramardini panel or as the figures carved on the above corners of the Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva panels in Trimūrti cave at Māmallapuram (Fig. 83). But the treatment of Durgā is peculiar. She, in spite of her changing attitude, is relaxed in her expression. She stands by resting one leg upon the lion and she is holding a long bow. The figures were covered with plaster which still survives in patches here and there.

A small apartment at the back of the latter temple contains the sleeping Viṣṇu figure nearly ten feet long.¹ But this is an inferior copy of the figure of Anantaśayi Viṣṇu of the Māmalla period in the Mahiṣāsūramardini cave. The Śiva temple situated on the summit of the great rock which is called now the old light house contains certain Śiva figures in the same style as in the Kailāśanāth temple at Kāñchipuram. All the figures are plastered. Similarly the Panamalai temple contains the Somaskanda relief on the back wall of the *Garbhagṛha*. The style of architecture and sculpture show that this temple was contemporary in date with the Kailāśanāth temple.

The walls of the temple bear the inscription of Rājasiṃha.²

The Rājasiṃha style reached its zenith at Kāñchipuram in the Kailāśanāth temple. The walls of the Kailāśanāth temple, also called the Rājasiṃheśvara temple, contain several inscriptions of Rājasiṃha. According to one of the inscriptions³ this temple was built for the sake of his queen consort named Rangapaṭaka who was famous for her beauty and chastity. This temple is the most remarkable example and a turning point in architectural style of the Pallavas. This is a creditable performance of the architects of Rājasiṃha who kindled with enthusiasm and vitalised by thought. They were guided by their king Rājasiṃha who was entitled *Agamanusari*, *Agampariya* etc., and worked with great zeal. Probably, the sculptors haunted by visions of pristine myths of Śiva illustrated one scene after another. This is once again a glorious period in a composite whole in all of its cultural aspects in the Pallava history. The Kailāśanāth temple signifies Rājasiṃha's voracious aptitude which embellished not only with sculptures but also with paintings. The whole temple along with the painted sculptures, would have been a grand view. Even at present, i.e.,

1. In Tamil records *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. I, pp. 63 to 67, refer two different temples: the Jalasayana alias Kṣatriya Siṃha Pallaveśvara, the Palli-Koṇḍaruliyaśvara, and Rājasiṃheśvara. The central shrine containing the huge liṅga washed by the sea is evidently the Jalasayana temple, the little apartment at the back of latter of Viṣṇu and the temple facing the west which contains the head of Śiva is Rājasiṃha Pallaveśvara temple.

—Longhurst; *op. cit.*, No. 40, p. 10.

2. Dubreuil: *Pallava Antiquities*, Vol. I, pp. 2-24.

3. नमश्चिवाय

भर्तुः पुरोन्मथनदृष्टुं धनुर्वलस्य शैलाधिराजतनयैव वृषभजस्य ।

या काल काल इति विश्रुत पुष्कोत्तैः कान्तानितान्तदयिता परमेश्वरस्य ॥

देवे जयदवलक्षण बद्धदीक्षेनिबिम्बन शत्रु हृदये नरसिंहविष्णो ।

वाल्लभ्यमूर्जितमवाप्यविराजेत या निज्जित्य गन्धमिव पुष्करदेवतायाः

निम्नपितमिदं न्याम् तया चन्द्र (शखा) मणेः

पता (कयव) नारीणां रम्यं रंगपताक (य ॥)

आकार सुन्दर विलासवती सहस्र सर्ग प्रबन्धचिर (संस्कृतको) शलस्य

लावण्यमार्द्धविलास मृजासमग्रा निर्माण सिद्धिरिव या प्रथमस्य धातुः

अक्लिष्ट माधुर्यं विलोचनीया विभूषितां बिभ्रमहावज्ञावैः

आकर्ष्य विद्यामिव लो— — —

after undergoing a number of extensive repairs, time and again, it stands with indomitable pride as a symbol of the Pallava glory.

Numerous sculptures are produced in the Kailāśnāth temple and almost all are plastered and painted. Certain larger compositions are executed in brick and plaster. But most of the figures are extending over several courses of masonry and very few are carved on a single stone. Originally, the figures are executed finely though not finished in the stone but the plaster work is not so good as the original ground work. This temple has undergone a number of renovations and every time something new was added by the workmen. In the words of Longhurst, "The attendant buildings were extensively renovated. Whether the modern work is inferior to the original, we are not able to say. But it is certainly of no particular artistic merit and the temple is spoiled by the over ornamentation, every available space being covered with crudely executed plaster figures and reliefs depicting Śiva in his numerous manifestations in bewildering confusion. However, from an iconographical point of view, this vast collection of Śiva deities, symbols and legends depicted in the bas reliefs must be quite the largest and most complete in India."¹ Now most of the figures are damaged. On certain figures cement is applied and the workmen have given newer details haphazardly. Hence most of the figures have lost their original beauty and sometimes look ugly. For example, the *dvārapāla* figure of the Kailāśanāth temple cemented and smoothened by trowel and certain lines have been drawn for the sake of decoration. The seated *dvārapāla* (Fig. 90) is an innovation of the Rājasimha sculptors. The attitude of the standing *dvārapāla* figure (Fig. 91) resembles an eastern Chālukyan *dvārapāla* from Vijayawada preserved in Government museum, Madras. Here the sculptor of Rājasimha made the fruitless efforts to bring force and majesty of Mahendra's, style and the lyric quality of Māmallas' style by expanding the shoulders to the measureless width, and depicting protruding teeth, bulging eyes and knitted eye brows.

Gajalakṣmi is repeated many times on the walls of the temple. Gajalakṣmi is one of the most splendid themes of Māmallapuram for its celestial elegance. Even at the present the spectator experiences the freshness and the fragrance of the lotus and the consecrated figure of Lakṣmi who is being bathed by the sacred waters poured by the elephants. This is one of those figures created by the sculptors of Māmallapuram with perfect concentration and inner spiritual vision. Behind these figures appears and works the supreme imagination and supreme intelligence of the artistes of Narasimhavarman. However, the artistes of Rājasimha depicted Gajalakṣmi on the walls of Kailāśanāth temple in a squattish form (Fig. 92).

As stated above a number of Durgā figures are carved on the walls of the Kailāśanāth temple. Among them certain figures are well preserved and attractive (Fig. 93). This figure is composed unlike Māmallapuram Mahisāsūramardini Durgā, as standing in relaxed position in the midst of the battle. She stands in the *Tribhanga* pose resting one leg on the back of the lion while the other is planted on the ground. A sarcastic smile is seen on her face as if she is aware of the fate of her enemy. In these panels she is not shown in her Mahisāsūramardini form, i.e., as the concentrated light which emanated from all the gods to kill Mahisāsura (सम्भूता देवीदेव शरीरोभ्याः). Once again she came out of body of Pārvati (पुनश्च गौरी देहात्मा समुद्भूता) to kill Śumbha and Niśumbha, the brother demons. After the assassination of Niśumbha through the hands of the various forms of her power

1. Longhurst: *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

as Kālī, Brāhmi, Vaiṣṇavi, Vārāhi etc. Śumbha came to the war field with great anger on account of the death of his dear younger brother and ridiculed her by saying that she was fighting with the strength of others. She replied that she was all in all and all these goddesses were simply manifestations of her power. Thereafter, she withdrew all her *śaktis*, thus only Durgā remained at the scene smiling at the ignorance of the Asura.¹ Possibly, Durgā is represented here in the above context. She is eight handed and her long bow is held by one of her left hands. The corresponding right hand is in the gesture of holding *nīla kamal*. Another right hand is at the *Kaṭi* while the corresponding left hand rests on her raised leg and a parrot is perched on her arm. The ferocious lion as who is her mount and a lovely parrot on her hand shows her inconsistent qualities of अतिसौम्य and अतिरोद्र. She wields various weapons including the *nāgapāśa*. The carver exhibits the careless amazonian nature of the goddess even in the standing posture. She has *patrakuṇḍala* in her ear lobes. She is simply dressed with scanty ornaments. The side tassels and the centre loops are corresponding to those in the figures from Māmallapuram. Though roughly carved, the figure is composed elegantly and rhythmically. The goddess in the fullness of her beauty stands in the war field and provokes Niśumbha for the fight. In the words of Zimmer, "Eternal Indian, horrific, beautiful, caressing, murdering, symbolization of the totality of the world creating-destroying eaten and eaten one," such a paradoxical gruesome and brilliant is created by the Pallava artistes as a whole.

Another figure of Durgā is also carved on the wall of the Kailāśanāth temple (Fig. 94). The figure is slim having the *latā sadriṣya tanu*. The standing position, the arrangement of the hands and the gesture of the hands are the same as the above discussed figures. She may have twelve hands having various weapons like *Khadga*, *Chakra*, *Triśula*, *Khetaka*, *Paraśu*, *Nāgapāśa* and a long bow along with two quivers at her back. The *Chhatra* shows her omnipotence and a cup in one of her right hands is filled with the "inebriating, invigorating liquor or the divine life force." Her face is somewhat damaged. The expression is not clear but the enchanting smile is seen, as said in the *Śiva Bhakta vilāsa*, as the "lovely lotus face is beautifully lit by the delicate smile, like the Kunda flowers."² The figure is in the graceful Tribhanga posture with flowing lines. The slim limbs and attenuated waist, exhibit the supple strength as in Māmallapuram. The lower garment is similar but the coiffure is not the *Karandamukuṭa* always used for Durgā figures as in Māmallapuram; but here the coiffure is like *Gajalakṣmi*'s coiffure of the Ādivasāha *Maṇḍapa* at Māmallapuram. Here the centre conical portion is somewhat elongated. In composing this figure

1. बलाबले पाद दृष्ट्वैत्वं मा दुर्गे गर्वमावह ।
अन्यासां बलमानित्य युद्धये याऽतिनिनी ॥२॥
एकैवाहू जगत्त्रय द्वितीया का ममापरा ।
पश्यैतां द्रष्टुं मय्येव विशन्त्यो मद्बिभूतयः ॥३॥
ततः समस्तास्ता देव्यो ब्रह्माणोप्रमुखायम् ।
तस्या देव्यास्तनौ जग्मुरेकैवासीतदाम्बिका ॥४॥
अहं विभूत्या बसुभिरिह रूपैर्यदा स्थिता ।
तत्संहृत मयैकैव तिष्ठाम्याजौ स्थिरो भव ॥५॥

—V.S. Agrawala: *Dēvi Mahātmyam*, Chap. X, pp. 122-23.

2. मन्दस्मितं स्मृतिं मनोज्ञं मुखारविन्दे,
लीलां शुक्रार्थकं मनोहरं हस्तपद्मा ।
कुन्दस्मिते कुमुदबन्धु कञ्जावलिसे ।

the above portion became too heavy supported by two thin legs and the lowest portion of the panel looks empty. But on the whole the figure is fine.

The third one is inferior in quality to the other two figures (Fig. 95). I suppose that the plaster was not applied skilfully in this case. The beautiful curves and the modelling were filled indiscriminately with plaster so that the figure looks squattish and ugly. Moreover, the position of the second leg which rests on the lion is also devoid of grace. So that it is somewhat unbalanced. The sixteen hands of the figure are arranged as if the sculptor wanted to fill the whole panel. The moon is carved in the top corner of the panel. Probably to show that she expanded her body from earth to Heaven and covering the entire space.¹

The *Sapta mātṛika* group is carved in the *devakulikas* and represents probably the first attempt of its kind in the Pallava sculptural history. All the mothers are sitting in a row on a rectangular seat as if crowded together while both Gaṇeśa and Virabhadra are seated on their right side (Fig. 96). Usually, the *Mātṛikas* are represented holding a child. However, in the present case no child has been shown. All the figures are carved with four hands: from right to left they appear as *Brāhmī*, *Maheśvari*, *Kaumāri*, *Vaiṣṇavi*, *Vārāhi*, *Indrāṇi* and *Chamuṇḍi*. All are having *chhatras* and the weapons of the corresponding gods while Chamuṇḍi has her *Triśula* and bowl in her hands. The faces of Vārāhi, Indrāṇi and also Chamuṇḍi are somewhat damaged. The weapons have been shown on the back of the main figures as if they were just symbols and not in their hands excepting in the case of Chamuṇḍi. The emergence of the *Mātṛikas* is also interesting. According to the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* when Devi Durgā was engaged in fighting with the *Asuras*, *Chanda* and *Munda*, to annihilate these two brothers, “the Gods sprang forth their *Śaktis*. Whatever was the form of each *Deva* and whatever his ornament and vehicle in that very form came forth his *sakti* to fight the *Asuras*.”² According to the *Markaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, the *Mātṛikas* are eight in number, *Brāhmī*, *Maheśvari*, *Kaumāri*, *Vaiṣṇavi*, *Vārāhi*, *Narasimhi*, *Aindri* and *Chandika* emanated from Durgā having “most terrific and fierce and yelling like a hundred jackals”.³ She is also called Chamuṇḍi because she killed both the *Asuras* *Chanda* and *Munda*, and brought their heads to the Goddess.⁴ In this panel from the Kailāśanāth temple their *Vāhanas* have been left out and *Narasimhi* is not shown. But this is usually accepted as a list supported by iconographic data and it consists of the seven only.⁵ *Brāhmaṇi* and *Maheśvari* are shown with three heads each. In the

1. She is described in *Markaṇḍeyapurāṇa* as किरितोलिखिताम्बराम्. ‘Her feet are planted on the earth and her head touches the Heaven.’ The same idea has been shown by carving Chandra on the top corner.

—*Ibid.*, p. 194.

2. यस्य देवस्य यदूर्पं यथा भूषणं वाहनम् ।
तद्देव हि तच्छक्तिं रसुरान् योद्धुमायय

—Chap. VIII, v. 13.

3. ततो देवी शरीरात् विनिष्क्रान्ताति भूषणा ।
चण्डिका शक्तिं रत्युषा शिवाशतनिनादिनी ॥

—Chap. VIII, v. 22.

4. यस्माच्चण्डं च मुण्डं च गृहीत्वा त्वमुपागता ।
चामुण्डेति ततो लोके ख्याता देवी भविष्यति ॥

—Chap. VII, v. 25.

—*Ibid.*, pp. 101-05.

5. J.N. Banerjea: *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, p. 505

case of Maheśvari, the number of faces originally required was five, yet the fifth head representing *Ākāśa* is sometimes invisible and therefore left out. While out of the four faces the back one could not be shown in a panel due to the nature of the relief, which did not provide the back view.

Six of the seven Mātrikas have Kiriṭas except Chamuṇḍi whose hair is sprawling out. "There are seven great principles of manifestation, viz., Mind, Life and Matter comprised of five gross elements. These seven are produced by a team of seven Mothers (सप्तमातरः) who in the Vedas were also known as the seven sisters, (सप्तस्वसारो R.V.I. 164.3) who form one band and take their seat on a common moving chariot symbolised as the human body or each solar ray or each octave of sound. In the purāṇic imagery they are represented as the *Sapta mātṛika* goddess personifying the powers of the seven typical Devas."¹

Various forms of Śiva adorn the walls and the devakulikās of the Kailāśanāth temple. Among them the Lingodhava mūrti Śiva is well preserved (Fig. 97). Probably, this figure is the first representation of its kind during the Pallava period. The story behind this figure is very interesting and also psychological. As in human beings so among the Gods we find the ambition for supremacy. At the time of deluge Viṣṇu alone was floating in the water on the Śeṣanāga and from the lotus of his navel Brahmā was born. He saw nothing except water. Then he came down and saw Viṣṇu with four hands. A quarrel started between these two deities for supremacy. While they were arguing in the timeless void a Lingam with infinite measure appeared between them. Both looked amazingly at the *Lingam*. They could imagine neither its height nor its depth. Then Brahmā soared high on his Haṁsa Vāhana to find the top end while Viṣṇu in his boar form plunged into the earth to find the root. Both efforts failed. Viṣṇu agreed that he could not find the beginning, but Brahmā spoke a lie that he had discovered the end. In the meanwhile the *Lingam* burst out in the middle and Śiva revealed himself and proclaimed his own supremacy. Brahmā is deprived of his worship in the temples because of the lie he spoke. This story is explicitly illustrated in this Lingodbhava mūrti. However, instead of the cylindrical type of the Lingam as in the chola figures where this scene is very common, the Pallavas introduced a rectangular frame in which Śiva appears in his human form. Viṣṇu in the form of Ādivarāha with his four hands digging the earth, is carved under the Linga and Brahmā appears flying up in his original form in the upper portion of the right side of the Lingam. Śiva appears in his Chandrasekhara form with eight hands having *parasu* and *triśūla* in the right and left hands respectively. His other two hands are in the *Abhaya* and *Varada mudrās*. We cannot determine his other attributes. The crescent moon embellishes his crown. In the lower portion the niches of right and left contain figures of Brahmā and Viṣṇu in the attitude of paying homage. "Śiva in this myth is represented as winning a momentous victory over the other two supreme divinities of the Hindu triad, Brahmā and Viṣṇu; and this victory, if we may judge from the literary remains, corresponds to an actual, historical development. For the earlier and classic purāṇas (Viṣṇu-purāṇa, Matsyapurāṇa, Brahmapurāṇa and others) Śiva is no more than a function or mask assumed by Viṣṇu whenever the moment approaches for the reabsorption of the universe. Only in a later stratification of purāṇic myth (Markandēyapurāṇa and Kūrmapurāṇa) do we find Śiva

1. V.S. Agrawala; *Devi-Mahatmya*, p. 178.

coming to the fore to enact independently and alone all three of the great world roles of creation, preservation and destruction.”¹

The story also says that Brahmā became the object of Śiva’s anger, thenceforward he was deprived of worship. The *Ketaki* flower was also excluded from the rituals because it bore false evidence in favour of Brahmā. Thus it seems the worship of Śiva replaced the worship of Brahmā.

“The story is given a dramatic touch but the truth remains that both Brahmā and Viṣṇu, the foremost amongst Gods, do not comprehend the mystery and the transcendent nature of Rudra—Śiva who is the pillar of fire or Tower of light supporting the whole universe as the Axis Muṇḍi that fills the interval between mother earth and father heaven. He is like an arrow that pierces the two ends of the creative substance, the supreme reality behind the universe.

“Brahmā represents the approach of intellect which is equipped with the power of argument and arithmetical computation. It throws a challenge to the mathematics of infinity. But it fails. The plenum of Transcendence does not become the vacuum of creation. Howsoever one may try to squeeze the infinite within the dimensions of the finite one can never succeed to adjust it within the limits of the known or within the procrustean bed of one’s intellect. Ours is said to be an expanding universe expanding in Time and space and the process of creation has not reached its ends and will not do so within our comprehension.

“The other approach is that of metaphysics where the power of intuition straight way accepts the transcendence of the divine and declares it to be beyond intellectual comprehension but only worthy of realisation with the infinite power of the soul and operation of the spiritual laws abiding in the human heart.”²

The first and foremost representation of this form of the *Lingodbhava* mūrti is probably the Gudimallam Śiva, where the full form of Śiva is carved standing on a *gana*. Later in Chola period Lingodbhava form became common. This form is favoured mostly by South Indian artistes. In North it is not common, although the *Mukhalingas* were frequently produced in the Gupta period. There is an *Agni Linga* in the collection of Bharat Kala Bhavan (Banaras—probably ninth century A.D.) in which the flames are carved on both the sides of the *Linga* and Brahmā riding his swan and Viṣṇu in the form of a boar going in opposite direction. It stands on a lotus pedestal.³

1. Zimmer, H.: *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, p. 128.

2. V.S. Agrawala: *Sivamahadeva* (Varanasi, 1962), p. 43.

3. (a) “Reference to the presence of Śiva on columnar altars are to be found in the earlier sections of the Mahābhārata. . . Aśvatthāma, on his nocturnal journey to the Paṇḍava camp to murder the fine Paṇḍava brothers, is confronted by a gigantic figure at the gate; he then invokes the aid of Śiva, his patron deity, and there appears before him a huge golden altar with all-spreading flames of fire on it. This concept of the sudden appearance of a flaming golden altar of pillar before Aśvatthāma leads one to the consideration of the Lingodbhava murti of Śiva.” J.N. Banerjea: *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, p. 462.

(b) There is a counter part of this flaming pillar in Buddhism at Amarāvati. “The flaming pillar rises from a pair of feet on lotus crowned by a *Trisūla* on a wheel. . . It contains a suggestion of Buddha’s superiority over not only the Hindu trinity, but also over *Agni* and *Sūrya*. The lotus is suggestive of Brahmā, the feet are suggestive of Viṣṇu, while the flaming pillar and *Trisūla* suggest the *Agni Rudra* concept and the *chakra* suggests the Vedic Adityamaṇḍala. The symbol thus forms a very early example of the blend into one of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Sūrya.” C. Sivaramamurti: *Amaravati Sculptures*, pp. 62-63.

In the Kāñchipuram Lingodbhava mūrti panel, Śiva is carved majestically in the *Samabhanga* posture as if he is proclaiming that he is all in all. In all the figures of the Rājasīmha style the *abhaya mudrā* is not simple but the palm is turned side ways. The story is depicted effortlessly. But the *makaratorana* on the top of the niche, the floral decoration over the pilasters of the niches and the lion pilasters of the wall show overcrowding of details, otherwise the depiction of the story is very clear and explicit.

The *Nṛtyamūrtis* of Śiva is a creditable achievement of Rājasīmha's artistes. The various types of dance of Śiva have been illustrated. All these figures are energetic, vital and balanced. "The dance is an act of creation. It brings about a new situation and summons into the dancer a new and higher personality. It has a cosmogonic function, in that it arouses dormant energies which then may shape the world. On a universal scale, Śiva is the cosmic dancer; in his "Dancing Manifestation" (*nṛtya mūrti*) he embodies in himself and simultaneously gives manifestation to Eternal Energy. The forces gathered and projected in his frantic, ever-enduring gyration, are the powers of the evolution, maintenance and dissolution of the world. Nature and all its creatures are the effects of his eternal dance."¹ Whatever it may be the pose of dance reveals his *pañcakṛtyas* i.e., his five-fold activities viz., creation, maintenance, destruction, concealment and favour. All the five activities are manifested simultaneously with the pulse of every movement.

"Śiva is Mahākāla", "Great time," "Eternity." As Naṭarāja, King of Dancers, his gestures are wild and full of grace, precipitate the cosmic illusion; his flying arms and legs and the swaying of his torso produce—indeed, they are—the continuous creation—destruction of the universe, death exactly balancing birth, annihilation the end of every coming-forth. The choreography is the whirling of time. History and its ruins, the explosion of suns, are flashes from the tireless swinging sequence of the gestures."²

According to Śaiva Āgamas the dances of Śiva have 108 modes. Among them only nine modes are very popular and available in sculptures. The *Bhujanga trāsa* or *Bhujanga lalita* mode of dance was first illustrated in Avanibhajana cave temple of Mahendravarman I's time. The *Kaṭisama*, *Lalita*, *Lalatatilaka*, *Talasamsphotita*, *Chatura*, *Tāṇḍava*, *Nadanta* etc. are also figured on the walls of the Kailāsanāth temple during the period of Rājasīmha. All nine modes or flavours are expressed in the dancing manifestation of Śiva; "for Śiva contains and enacts all possible aspects of life, and his dance is a marvellous blending of opposites. The dance, like life itself, is a mixture of the terrific and the suspicious, a juxtaposition and unification of destruction, death, and vital triumph, the volcanic bursting-forth of the lavas of life. Here is a blending familiar to the Hindu mind, everywhere documented in Hindu art. It is understood as expressive of the Divine, which in its totality comprises all the goods and evils, beauties and horrors, joys and agonies, of our phenomenal life."³

Here in this present composition the figure represents the *Lalata tilaka* or *Ūrdhva taṇḍava* type of dance (Fig. 98). According to the legend there was a competition between Śiva and Kālī in dance. Whatever mode of dance and whatever difficult poses Śiva assumed Kālī could repeat. But at last the *Ūrdhva taṇḍava* was miraculously rendered by Śiva which Kālī failed to imitate,

1. Zimmer: *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, p. 152.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

who retreated in disgust and anger. Hence this precarious position can be possible only by Śiva. The eight handed god upraised his right leg and touched his *Kiriṭa* with his foot. It seems that he raised his leg to that position almost effortlessly. All his hands were also raised in the same direction. His left leg remained planted on the ground, while the wavy loops and tassels being upturned show the movement. One of his *Gaṇas*, *Nandi* with the head of a bull and a human body accompanied him in dancing being intoxicated with joy. Probably, it marked the end of the Mahāyuga. The wild gestures and terrific face shows that this is the dance of destruction. The moods expressed in this representation are wild (*raudra*), heroic (*vīra*) and loathsome (*bibhatsa*). "Steeped in quietude, the enigmatic mask resides above the whirl of the four resilient arms, cares nothing for the superb legs as they beat out the tempo of the world ages."¹

This mode of dance is described in Nāṭyaveda² and also by Gopinath Rao.³ The leg was raised upto the forehead and its toe touched the forehead as if in the action of putting the *tilaka*. But here in this panel we find the foot touching the top of the crown. The composition is very compact. The sculptor balanced this composition by carving the *gaṇas* on either sides. Otherwise the figure looks top heavy because of the raised leg and the spreading hands. The figure of Śiva is very bulky and the plaster applied over the figure is similarly thick.

Another type of dance which was performed by Śiva (Fig. 99) is a peculiar one and stated by Gopinath Rao as similar to the *alidhāsana* which he suddenly assumed during the middle of this dance. There is no mention of this posture in the Nṛtya Śāstra texts. Probably, this pose is one of the parts of the *ūrdhva tanḍava* as one of his hands is shown raised straight, touched his crown and his leg bent and the knee raised. He had eight hands carrying various *ayudhas* including the *ḍamaru*. His right hands are in *Gajahasta*, one is in *paṭaka* and one *chatura* poses. All the hands and the upraised leg and the snake are directed upwards. "Aloof in sovereign silence, the mask of the God's eternal essence remains unaffected by the tremendous display of his own energy, the world and its progress, the flow and the changes of time. This head, this face, this mask abides in transcendental isolation, as a spectator unconcerned. Its smile, bent inward, filled with the bliss of self-absorption, subtly refutes, with a scarcely hidden irony, the meaningful gestures of the feet and hands. A tension exists between the marvel of dance and the serene tranquility of this expressively in expressive countenance, the tension, that is to say of Eternity and Time, the paradox—the silent, mutual confutation of the Absolute and Phenomenal, the self-Immortal and the perishable Psyche, *Brahman-Ātman* and *Māya*."⁴

The next figure shows the *Talasamspholita* mode of dance (Fig. 108). In this mode of dance the hand pose, the *paṭaka hasta*, is also insisted upon, according to the commentary of Nāṭyaveda

1. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

2. वृश्चिकं चरणकृत्वा पादस्याङ्गुष्ठकेकं तु।
ललाटे तिलकं कूर्पात्तललाटे तिलकं तु तत् ॥
Cited by Gopinath Rao

3. पादस्य तस्यैव षष्ठादङ्गनामि तस्याङ्गुष्ठेन तिलकं
तिलकं क्रिया हेतुभूतत्वेन लक्षितं संश्लेषितं कुर्यादित्या सिक मे तत्करण विषये प्रयुज्यते ।
—नाट्यवेदविवृतौ ।

4. Zimmer: *The Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, p. 156.

Vivṛti.”¹ In this figure the right leg is lifted up as if the God is going to thump the ground while the left leg is slightly bent and planted upon the ground. He has eight hands, one is in the *paṭaka* pose and another is in the *Abhaya hasta*. The remaining hands are in various dance poses. Out of his *Jaṭāmukuta* one of the strands branches off on the left side and Ganga with her folded hands is shown seated on the same. Here she looks like a *Nāgin* with five hooded canopy and her back portion is also like the tail of a serpent, a reptile which is associated with representation of water in Indian art. Hence probably the sculptor wants to show that the water is flowing from Śiva’s *jaṭās*. Pārvati is witnessing the dance sitting by his side.

Alongwith the Nṛtyamūrtis of Śiva his *Saṁhārmūrtis* and *Anugrahamūrtis* are also illustrated on the walls of the garbhagṛha and also in devakulikās. Among them the Tripurāsura saṁhārmūrti (Fig. 100), the Chandesanugrahmūrti (Fig. 102), Viṣṇūnugrahmūrti (Fig. 103), the Kankālamūrti (Fig. 104), etc. will be discussed here. In the Tipurāsura saṁhārmūrti panel (Fig. 100), Śiva is seated in the *alidha* posture wielding a bow in one of his eight hands another hand is at the *Kaṭi* but other objects held in the rest of the hands are not clear. He is gazing in the direction of his enemy who however is not explicitly shown here. Brahmā as charioteer is sitting by his side. The chariot is not illustrated here. A *chhatra* at the top shows his superiority. According to tradition, the three demon brothers acquired special powers by intensive penance done for a long time and constructed three cities for themselves “one in the firmament, one on earth, and one in the atmosphere between . . . These three fortresses became a centre of demon chaos and world tyranny, practically unassailable. And through the power of his *yoga* he brought it about that this mighty keep should never be conquered unless pierced by a single arrow.”² Śiva alone could do this being an huntsman according to the Vedic tradition. Pṛthvi became his chariot, Brahmā his charioteer, Sūrya and Chandra the wheels of the chariot, the four *Vedas* became the horses and Maṇḍāra hill his bow and Viṣṇu himself his arrow.³ With all these cosmic equipment Śiva with one stroke destroyed the three cities. In this present composition the chariot is not seen but charioteer Brahmā is there. It was probably damaged and restored rather in a casual manner. In Ellora the whole theme is depicted very well. Two handed Śiva riding on his chariot in the *alidha* posture and he is shooting the arrow. The chariot with the horses and its charioteer Brahmā are also shown. The three cities are executed in the exergue; the god is shown shooting at the city demons.⁴

The next figure represents the Gajāśura Saṁhārmūrti Śiva (Fig. 101). He is again in the *alidha* posture having eight hands; he holds a bow. Behind him is Viṣṇu with folded hands. The plaster is applied to the attenuated figure in such a manner that the whole figure has lost its elegance. Thus the objects in his hands are not clear.

1. अति क्रान्तया चार्यादयः— — — — — नमस्त्विदं कृत्वा तथैवास्ते निपातयेत् तत्समकालं च पताको हस्तौ संश्लेषित शब्दा दमिहित इति तलसंस्फोटितं तस्यै तद्विषय एक यथा तालीदेवो सुमुख सुभस इजणु इत्यादौ ।

— नाट्यवेदविवृति (Natyavedavivriti)

—Cited by Gopinath Rao.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

3. श्रीगौरवो विधियन्ता शरो हं (विष्णुः) मन्दर धनुः रथाङ्गे चापि चन्द्राको युद्धमस्य च त्रिपुरे ॥

4. Zimmer: *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. II, Plate No. 226.

A number of the *Anugraha mūrtis* are also executed. Among them the *Chandēśanugrahmūrti* (Fig. 102) and the *Viṣṇānugrahmūrti* (Fig. 103) are well depicted. In the *Chandēśanugrahmūrti*, four handed Śiva is bestowing *abhaya* to Chandēśa. The father of Chandēśa is prostrate on the ground with his left hand in the *Vismaya* pose while Chandēśa is standing holding an axe. This theme is very common in Chola period, but the Chola examples are shown with Śiva winding a turban on Chandēśa's head which is only a symbolic representation.

In the *Viṣṇānugrahmūrti* (Fig. 103), Viṣṇu is offering something to Śiva. It is also suggestive; later Śiva bestowed him with a chakra. Here the figure of Viṣṇu is carved beautifully.

In the *Kankālamūrti* of Śiva (Fig. 104) the God is carrying on his *triśūla*, the dead body of Viśvakṣena the door keeper of Viṣṇu who baned his way to the inner apartments. This *triśūla* is across the God's shoulder. He wears *Padukās* and his *jaṭā* is flowing. Some of his devotees are paying homage to him. This *Kankālamūrti* is the second example of its class, being the one carved on the *Dharmarāja Ratha*. Later on in Chola period it became more popular. In the *Bṛhadiśvara* temple at Tanjore this figure was combined with *Bhikṣatanamūrti* and the two were carved with grace and vividness.

Panels showing *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* form of Śiva are also carved on the walls of the *Kailāśanāth* temple. They appear in many varieties in the forms of *Dakṣiṇāmūrtis* for example the *Yoga Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, the *Jñāna Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, the *Vīṇadhara Dakṣiṇāmūrti* etc. The *Vīṇadhara Dakṣiṇāmūrti* was first carved on *Dharmarāja Ratha* (Fig. 55). There is a belief among the Śaivaites that God Śiva is the fountain head of all the arts and sciences; he is also a *yogi*, he is the king of dancers, he is musician and he is the preacher. Moreover, he is gentle as well as firm. In the words of Zimmer, "He is all the containing transcendent source of every possible virtue and form." As is his *tatva*, so is his form. In the words of Pārvatī "he is adorned with all the ornaments and also by the snakes. He wears elephant skin and also *pīṭambar*. He has skull as his *bhikṣāpātra* in his *Bhikṣāṭanamūrti* form and he has also a crown of the crescent moon."¹

In his *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* form he is very sober, peaceful and gentle. He is a Teacher of this universe. Thus he is described as *Jñāna Dakṣiṇāmūrti* (Fig. 106) for he sits under a *Pīpal* tree. He is four handed. In one hand he holds a rosary. One of his left hands is in the *vyākhyāna mudra* and with the other he holds *jyoti*, the light or wisdom which dispels the darkness of ignorance. The snake is also shown on his side and is calmly listening to his preaching. Below his seat two deer are carved, enjoying his presence. In the side niches the tigers are carved alongwith sages who again are listening to the divine lectures. The sculptor has created the atmosphere of the forest, the dwelling place of the *yogis*. Śiva's presence creates a happy and peaceful atmosphere. Even the beasts shed their cruelty and are peacefully hearing or enjoying the presence of the God.

In the next panel Śiva is in his *yogic* posture. He is in deep concentration or *dhyāna*. Śiva assumes the form of the *yoga Dakṣiṇāmūrti* (Fig. 105). He sits in *yogic* posture which is called *utkuṭikāsana* where one sits with heels kept close to the bottom and with the back slightly

1. विमूढोद्भासि भुजङ्गं योगि वा गजजिनालम्बि दुकूलधारि वा ।

कपालि वा स्यादथ इन्दुशेखरं न विश्वमूर्तेरव धार्यते वपुः ॥

—कुमारसम्भवम् (Kumarasambhavam)

curved and the forearms resting on the knees raised above the seat. In order to keep the knees firm in the position described a cloth band known as *yogapaṭṭa* is tied around the raised knees.¹ Another important point in this figure is a person lying on the ground supporting the seat of the God by his hand, as if he is being crushed by the weight of the God. Probably, he is *Muyalaka* the personification of ignorance usually placed under the feet of Śiva Naṭarāja. The four handed God rests his two hands on his knees and with the other two hands he holds the rosary and the Kamaṇḍalu. He is in such deep concentration as to give the feeling of a unflickering lamp. In the principal niche itself and above his head on either side, the Sun and the Moon are carved with folded hands. Brahmā and Viṣṇu are shown as paying homage to the God in the side niches. This composition shows that after the destruction of *Dakshayajña* Śiva entered into *dhyāna* in great despair over the death of Sati. The *Kumārasambhava* beautifully describes Śiva in his *dhyānamudra*.

Next we find portrait of Rājasimha and his queen consort, Rangapaṭaka (Fig. 107). Both are treated in similar way as we find the depiction of Śiva and Pārvati in the Somaskanda mūrti panels. Rājasimha holds a *gadā* in his right hand while his left hand is raised. Probably, he held a *nila kamala*. The queen's right hand also is in the posture of holding a *nila kamala*. She supports herself on the seat by resting on the other hand. These portraits are carved beautifully. Rājasimha sits in kingly pose and his queen consort is delicate and beautiful. A descriptive inscription is carved on the walls of the same temple.² But the sensitivity of the figures is lost by the application of plaster on the surface.

The Atiranachand cave temple of Saluvankuppam is also attributed to Rājasimha by K.R. Srinivasan. There is an inscription on this temple in which the word Atiranachanda is used.³ Whoever may be the original sponsor of this cave temple the sculptural panel showing Durgā (Fig. 109) is similar in style to the Rājasimha tradition shown in the figure of Durgā carved at the shore temple and on the walls of the Kailāśanāth temple. It appears that Rājasimha in the above panel experimented with the treatment before he started his structural style. The Mahiṣasuramardini Durgā in this panel is forcefully carved and the Mahiṣasura is in retreating posture. It is interesting to find that the figure preceding Mahiṣasura resembles the *dvārapāla* of the Kailāśanāth temple.

A number of other temples were constructed by Rājasimha in Kāñchipuram that is, the Airāvateśvara temple,⁴ the Airāvateśvara temple at Kāñchi, another Kailāśanāth temple at Tirupattur in Trichinapalli district. All these temples contain sculptures in the same style as in Kailāśanāth temple. The back wall of the Airāvateśvara temple shows the figures of Naṭarāja in the *alidha* posture in the same manner as in the Kailāśanāth temple at Kāñchi (Fig. 121). The Gajāsura Samhāramūrti and the *dvārapāla* panels from this temple are strikingly alike their

1. J.N. Banerjea: *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 271-72.

2. Supra, p. 159.

3. Dubreuil in his *Pallava Antiquities*, Pt. 1, pp. 66-68, discusses this cave-temple with reference to its inscription and states that it belongs, by its inscriptions, to the time of Rājasimha. Sivaramamurti (*Mahabalipuram*, p. 39) and states that it belongs, by its inscriptions, to the time of Rājasimha. Sivaramamurti (*Mahabalipuram*, p. 39) notices that this cave has intriguing features, as, according to him, while the massive pillars, simple corbel capitals and the *dvārapālas* indicate its early date, the fluted linga inside and the Somaskanda panels both in the cell and in the *Maṇḍapa* are late characteristics.

—K.R. Srinivasan: *Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, p. 128.

4. *S.I.I.*, 1, p. 14; XII, p. 111.

counterparts at the Kailāśanāth temple at Kāñchi. Moreover, the back wall of the Airāvateśvara temple contains the yoga Dakṣiṇamūrti, *Dvārāpāla* and Durgā figures in the same style as in the Kailāśanāth temple (Fig. 122).

The Tirupattur Kailāśanāth temple¹ is dated eighth century A.D. and the pilasters used in this temple are in the Rājasimha style. The Naṭarāja figure however is in the Talasamsphotita dance posture (Fig. 120). The treatment of the *jaṭājūṭa* and the *triśūla* of the figure is based on the Chālukya models.

Rājasimha was succeeded by his son Mahendravarman III who built the Mahendravarmeśvara temple facing the Kailāśanāth temple where we find his inscription.² Mahendravarman's reigning period was short (720-728 A.D.). It appears that during his father's time as the crown prince he was very active in statecrafts and in constructing the temple. The Kailāśanāth temple inscription describes him as the son of King Rājasimha and the grandson of Lokāditya (Parameśvaravarman I) and also informs us about his constructing the Mahendresvara temple.³ K.R. Srinivasan opined that probably he ruled jointly as the *yuvarāja* along with his father, Rājasimha. It is he who is represented as a wounded person being brought in a litter from the battlefield, to the presence of Rājasimha and his queen,⁴ as identified by C. Minakshi.

He was followed by Parameśvaravarman II whose date of accession is recorded as 728 A.D. in the Ulchala inscription of Vizayāditya.⁵ His rule lasted for three years only i.e. upto 731 A.D. His last known inscription is dated in the third year of his reign, records a gift of gold to Virātaneśvara temple at Tiruvadigai, in South Arcot district.⁶ His death was followed by confusion and anarchy in the Pallava dominions; a war of succession started. The twelve-year old Nandivarman, the son of Hiraṇyavarman came to the throne. The inscriptions of Nandivarman II suggest that his accession was not peaceful; he faced some opposition from Pallavadiyar, who came with a mighty force consisting of men and elephants.⁷ These were the circumstances under which Nandivarman II who was called before coronation Parameśvara and also Pallavamalla began to rule from 731 A.D. But after a couple of years anarchy prevailed in the Pallava country. Soon after his coronation once again a Chālukyan invasion took place. Nandivarman was defeated and fled from Kāñchi. Altogether the Chālukyas invaded Pallava territory thrice. Moreover, a number of defeats were inflicted on Nandivarman by Rājasimha Pāṇḍya at Neduvayal.⁸

1. *Ibid.*, 1, Nos. 24, 25 and 26; XII, Nos. 27, 29 and 30.

2. यं राजा राजसिंहस्तनयमजनयन्मोदिनो वीरसिंहो
वृत्तरंहो निवृत्तः कृतयुग सपरन्निम्ममाणो महेन्द्रम्
तेनेदं राजसिंहेश्वर निकट समुत्थापित सप्रसादो
नित्यावास महेन्द्रेश्वर गृहममया साद्वैमोशीविघ्नताम् ॥

3. *S.I.I.*, 1, No. 27.

4. C. Minakshi; *The Historical Sculptures of Vaikuntha Perumal Temple*, M.A.S.I., No. 63 (Delhi, 1941), Plate 6, p. 62.

5. *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Thirteenth Session (Nagpur, 1950), pp. 96ff.

—Cited by K.R. Srinivasan.

6. *A.R.(S).I.E.*, 1903, No. 52; *S.I.I.*, VIII, No. 331.

—Cited by K.R. Srinivasan.

7. C. Minakshi: *Op. cit.*, p. 33.

8. *E.I.*, III, pp. 35ff.

The Rāṣṭrakūṭas under Danti Durga invaded his kingdom and peace was restored later, after he had given his daughter in marriage to Nandivarman. Hence Nandivarman II's reign was far from being peaceful. It was full of wars, invasions and internal disturbances. In spite of the restless times, he paid attention towards arts. His many sided activities are revealed by his inscriptions and those of his contemporaries. He constructed the Vaikuṇṭha-Perumal temple.

Longhurst is of the opinion that this temple was built by Parameśvaravarman II. But the duration of Parameśvaravarman was only three years which of course was not sufficient to achieve a work like Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple. The hymns of Tirumangai Alvār, a devotee of Viṣṇu and the inscription of Dāntivarman, however, point out to the reign of Nandivarman Pallavamalla as the period of architectural activities. Possibly Longhurst's suggestion is based on the fact that the temple is called the "*Parameśvara Viṣṇu gṛham*." Moreover, another ancient name of the temple is "*Dharmamahādevi gṛham*," possibly after his queen, Dharma Mahadevi.¹ He performed the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice. This scene is actually carved in a panel from this temple and also proved by the Udayendriyam plates. Another inscription informs us that he constructed the Mukteśvara temple at Kāñchipuram, which still stands.

The sculptural representations of Viṣṇu on the outer walls of *Garbhagṛha* of the Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple are as important to Vaiṣṇavism as the Śaivite scenes depicting the omnipotence of Śiva on the walls of Kailāsanāth temple. But these figures on the Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple are not clear and all are white-washed. The *Samudramanthan* scene depicting distribution of nectar by Viṣṇu in the guise of Mohini to the *devas* and the *dānavas*, the Bhaktānugrahamūrti Viṣṇu, the Varāhamūrti, the Narasimha form etc. are depicted very well. But here also all the figures were covered with plaster later on probably white-washed and hence no figure is clear to us. In the *Samudramanthan* scene (Fig. 110), the Meru hill and on either side of it one *asura* and one *sura* figure have been carved symbolically, above the hill there is a Viṣṇu figure. On the sides of the panel two devotees are shown paying homage. In the lowest portion of the niche some *Rṣis* appear in sitting attitude. In another panel the figure of Mohini is seen distributing nectar to Devas and in the same niche the *Dānavas* are waiting for their turn (Fig. 111). They are carved in rows after rows one above the other, recalling the treatment of the sculptures of the Sunga period. Such treatments show the Pallava tradition connected with the second century B.C.

Elsewhere Viṣṇu is shown, winding turban on one of his devotee's head (Fig. 112) like the Chandeśānugraha mūrti of Chola sculpture at Gangaikonda Chola Puram. These figures exhibit inaccurate measurements. It remains a mystery to solve as to why the artistes of the Pallavas who created such wonderful sculptures in the earlier period at Māmallapuram should have suffered such decline in taste and expression. The cloisters around the main building are embellished with historical sculptures in two rows and each row is demarcated by a small band which contains the inscriptions. All the panels have been covered with a thick plaster at places so that the figures have lost their individuality. Here all the carvings show historical scenes. The coronation scenes of the various kings including Nandivarman II are the unique features of the Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple (Figs 113 and 114). All these scenes are just the same in representation and style and all the kings are identical. The portrait of the kings are bigger than the other figures which are carved

1. K.R. Srinivasan: *The Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, p. 11.

in a small size. The kings are majestically seated in the *Sukhāsana* posture or kingly pose one hand is on their thigh and the other hand is in *abhaya hasta* or holding the *nila kamal*. They wear the *Mukta yajñopavita*, *keyuras*, *kuṇḍalas*, *kiritaś*, necklaces, etc. Their *kiriṭa* is like the head gear of *Gajalakṣmi* from Māmallapuram.

In the coronation scenes the kings wear special dress i.e., like *Suvarṇa-Vaikakṣika* (as suggested by C. Minakshi) which is linked on the chest with a pendant. The ceremony is performed by the Brāhmaṇas standing on either sides of the king. They are pouring the sacred water over the head of the king and in certain scenes placing the crown. In few other scenes the ministers and officials are also depicted while in others the ladies are witnessing the coronation from the balconies. In certain examples people are shown bringing sacred water on elephants (Fig. 115).

The scenes depicting the *Aśvamedha* sacrifices also are illustrated in these panels (Fig. 116). C. Minakshi states that these representations resemble the *Aśvamedha* coins of Samudra Gupta. Such a sacrifice took place during the time of Kumāraviṣṇu while two others were performed during the time of Nandivarman II. The *yupa* is curved at the top and to which the well decorated horse is tied. The king is offering food to the horse while kneeling. A Brāhmaṇa, probably a priest, sits facing the king. In the upper portion of the panel the king and the queen are sitting on their *siṃhāsana* and the priests are seated before the king.

Severe punishments seem to have been administered in those days. In one panel a man is punished by thrusting a rod through his top to the bottom. Darbar scenes are also depicted (Fig. 117). The king and courtiers are watching dance performance and sometimes wrestling matches. In the war fields the cavalry, elephantry and infantry are used but no chariots (Fig. 118). The war weapons used by the infantry are the javelins, swords of various types (Plates LXV, Figs. 1, 2 and 3), shields etc. They wear shorts and the upper portion of the body is uncovered. Various types of turbans according to their hierarchy have been used. In certain panels the Royal couple is seen whispering to one another and the people are hugging each other out of fear of war. Thus the secular themes vividly carved in the Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple.

Nandivarman also constructed the Mukteśvara temple in the twenty-eighth year of his reign.¹ It has the same style of sculptures as in the panels from the Garbhagrha of the Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple. Though Nandivarman II paid divided attention to art, but the restlessness is seen in his sculptures. The war scenes in which the people are running pellmell appear very frequently. People are bringing the wounded on stretchers. Sometimes they are celebrating the victory. Thus the state of affairs during the time of Nandivarman is illustrated well. Any way, the Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple is the last large temple of the Pallavas.

Nandivarman II was followed by his son and successor Dāntivarman whose reign was similarly full of hostilities with Raṣṭrakūṭas. It seems that he constructed a Kailāśanāth temple at Alambakam after naming the village '*Dāntivarman Mangalam*.' Dāntivarman was succeeded by his son Nandivarman III the victor of Tellaru. It is said that he also constructed a Viṣṇu temple at Kiliyanur in the South Arcot District.² The son and successor of Nandivarman III was Nṛpatungavarman. A dynastic war between Nṛpatunga and Aparājita ensued whose relationship is not clearly known to the Pallava kings. Probably, they were step-brothers. He defeated Nṛpatungā with the help of Ganga, Chera and Chola kings and declared himself as a king.

1. *S.I.I.*, Vol. IV, pp. 285-87.

2. T.V. Mahalingam: *Op. cit.*, p. 208.

The Late Phase of Pallava Sculpture : The Aparājita Period

Aparājītavarman is the last flicker of the sparkling splendour of the Pallavas. His reign was disturbed by the dynastic war on one side, the foreign invasions on the other. All this took away the peace of the Pallava territory. During this period the neighbouring states, i.e., Cholas, Paṇḍyas, Gangas and Raṣṭrakūṭas were growing in power; they were keen competitors for the paramount power. He had to fight continuously with these rival kingdoms with the result that while he suffered a number of defeats at the same time he won many battles. At last he faced a disgraceful defeat at the hands of Āditya Chola. With this the mighty Pallava empire was pushed back into oblivion about the end of the ninth century A.D.

Amongst all these disturbed conditions Aparājita paid some attention to arts which showed that he was following the path of his predecessors and his strong determination to revive past glory. But he had to give up in the wake of his downfall. During this period, i.e., from the beginning of the reign of Nandivarman to the defeat of Aparājita by the Cholas, roughly from 800 A.D. to 900 A.D., small temples were built and just a few of them bear inscriptions. All these temples are merely reproductions of the previous expressions in architecture. "These are the proofs that the might of this one-time powerful dynasty was declining, its end began with its defeat by the western Chālukyans in the middle of the eighth century A.D. All these temples by their lack of virility connote the diminishing power of the dynasty and towards the end of the tenth century, production practically ceased. But even if the art appears to have died, it passed by no means into oblivion. Such movement, although perhaps it has left no large works of genius, was at the same time remarkable for the spirit and vigour of its performance. These qualities had a far-reaching effect. For to the Pallavas is the credit of having kept burning brightly the torch which, kindled by the Buddhists in the early centuries of the Christian era as seen at Amarāvati, was bequeathed to these Siṃhaviṣṇu "lion" kings."¹

The gentle and lyrical qualities of the sculpture of Narasiṃhavarman I diminished even during the time of Rajasiṃha and its decline started at the time of Nandivarman. Aparājita tried to revive the glorious qualities but his art was overwhelmed by the neighbouring cultures i.e., the Chālukyas of Badāmi, the Chālukyas of Vengi and the Raṣṭrakūṭas. This period is the transitional

1. Percy Brown: *Op. cit.*, p. 83.

period between the Pallavas and the Cholas and after the defeat of Aparājita, the Pallava art lost its independent existence and emerged as that of the Cholas in whose hands "the flame glowed with renewed brilliance." During the eighteenth regnal year of Aparājita, a temple was built at Tiruttani by Nambi Appi. It is known by Tiruvelangadu plates.¹ This temple is small, apsidal in plan like the Sahadeva *Ratha* at Māmallapuram. It is built in granite stone and the sculptures also are carved on the same stone of which very few were made. All of these are single icons and there are no compositional illustrations similar to those seen of Māmallapuram. Iconographic panels like the Saptamatrikas, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Sūrya etc., embellish the walls of the temple. One finds an important and interesting point i.e., the style used in the stone work was influenced by the technique of the metal images, but the sublime modelling at Māmallapuram artistes is absent. All the figures exhibit the bronze effect instead of the stone. The conventional style of the bronze casters influenced the stone carvers—consciously or unconsciously. Probably this type of expression was complete during the Chola period. At Tanjore and Gangaikōṇḍa Cholapuram the sculptors of the Greater Cholas consciously composed the figures in the metal style. For instance the Naṭarāja figures of Gangaikōṇḍa-Cholapuram, in pose, expression, decoration and the treatment of the body resembles the bronze statue of Naṭarāja² of twelfth century A.D.

As this is the period of transition changing from Pallava to Chola power as well as in cultural fields, the sculpture shows Pallava as well as the early Chola characteristics simultaneously. Similarly, it shows influences of Chālukya and Raṣṭrakūṭa art styles. Though throughout the Pallava period hostility continued between the two great dynasties i.e., the Pallavas and the Chālukyas of Badāmi, the rival rulers were art lovers and highly cultured. They did not destroy each other's art productions but appreciated and were influenced by each other's performance in the realm of art. Narasimhavarman I was very much impressed by the magnificent carvings of the Badāmi caves when he sacked the capital city of the Chālukyas. This was sublimated in the Māmallapuram carvings. Nearly after hundred years of the above incident and during the period of Nandivarman Pallavamalla, Vikramāditya II Chālukya in revenge attacked the Pallava kingdom and entered Kāñchipuram, the capital city of the Pallavas. It was his turn to get an aesthetic shock by the beauty of Kailāsanāth temple built by Rājasiṃha. It is said that he took away the best architects and sculptors to his territory. The architectural characteristics of the temples at Pattadacal and the inscriptions on the Virupakṣa and Papanāth temples support this event.³ In the words of C. Sivaramamurti, "the fusion of Pallava and western Chālukya traditions produced a strange but rich product of art in eastern Chālukyan area and this art shows an arresting similarity to the late Pallava sculpture of Kaveripakam transformed into something exquisitely rich and beautiful by the transfusion into it of Raṣṭrakūṭa traditions and decorative element which in their turn originate from Chālukya."⁴

1. Annual Report of Epigraphy (1906), p. 65.

2. V.S. Agrawala: *Śiva Mahadeva*, Plate Nos. XX and XXI.

3. "An inscription on the Eastern gate way of the Virupakṣa temple mentions the architect as 'the most eminent *sūtradhāri* of the southern country'. Another inscription on the Papanāth temple states that a sculptor Chattare-Revadi-ovajja is described "as one who made southern country," i.e., who built temples in the southern country."

—C. Sivaramamurti: *Early Eastern Chalukyan Sculpture*, p. 27.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

The northern part of the territory of the Pallavas i.e., the Krishna region had been annexed by Pulakesi II and was given to Kubja Viṣṇu Vardhana the eastern Chālukyan king. Later it was again seized back by Udayachandra, the general of Nandivarman Pallava-malla from the eastern Chālukyas. Owing to this contact the later Pallava phase was influenced by the eastern Chālukyan traditions. Thus, the Aparājita style of art was heavily influenced by all these extraneous elements and the purity of its own tradition was no longer maintained. The physiognomy of the human figures from the panels at the Virattaneśvara temple of Tiruttani built by Aparājita, is heavy but energetic. The female figures of Māmallapuram with narrow chest and narrow waist, long and slim hands and legs were modified here, into wide chested with round and robust shoulders, and the heavy hips. The narrow type of waist is not depicted. The characteristics remain the same for the male figures. It seems that in this period the Saptamātrikas and Dakṣiṇāmūrtis were popular themes. Weapons are given a decorative treatment and they are held in the *Kartari mukha hasta* pose (Plate LXVII, Skes 1 to 7) unlike in the early Pallava art where the weapons are naturalistic in treatment and realistically held (Plate LXII) the weapons of Viṣṇu i.e., the *Śaṅkha* and *Chakra* are somewhat decorative with flames issuing from them. The *Chakra* is in *Chaturāśra* form, the flames appear from the ends and is held in *Kartarimukha* pose. The *paraśu* of Śiva is decorative as in Rājasiṃha period and the *Trisūla* is similarly modified. The earlier ones showed the two side prongs almost circular in form and touching the central one, but here the two are not touching the central one which is like the *Sakti ayudha* of Kārtikeya. These features continued to be used in the early Chola figures. All the figures wear *mukta yajñopavita*, its ends joined with a bell clasp where the ribbon is looped while its ends are hanging. The *yajñopavita* runs from the left shoulder to over the right arm as in the early Pallava sculpture. This *mukta Yajñopavita* tradition was derived from Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa where the figures wear a long *yajñopavita* dangling down to the knees; through the Gupta Vākātakas to Badāmi Chālukyas. The bell clasp and the tassels are the Chālukyan tradition and thus came down to the Aparājita school. This arrangement of the *yajñopavita* is common in both the styles; early Pallava as well as western Chālukya. The *udarabandha* in the early Pallava style is simple, but at this stage it is embellished with floral decoration. In the girdle and in the armlets the *Kirtimukha* motif is introduced, again drawn from the panels of Badāmi. The *Kirtimukha* clasp in the centre of the girdles, the two beautiful loops taking vegetal forms and their ends hanging down at the thighs are again derived from the western Chālukyan or Rāṣṭrakūṭa¹ tradition. Pearl strings are emitted from the mouth of the lion at the clasp and fall between the legs. The *Keyurās* take the form of a *nāga*; the serpent hoods are treated like a floral decoration and is curled up high (Plate LXVII, Ske. 8); this type is common in the Chōla bronzes as well as in their stone sculptures. The necklets are also decorative with small loops and tassels in the Chālukyan fashion. The lower garment has been given more volume and folds are stressed by the flowing lines which reaches down to the ankles in the *Pitāmbara* mode. The figures are stout and energetic somewhat like the Rāṣṭrakūṭa figures. The last mentioned characteristic is derived from the influence of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas on the Pallavas. The conch-like neck, full breasts and the round shoulders are treated very sensitively. The strong chin, the sesame flower-like nose with sharp edge which became prominent in Chola sculpture, started at this stage. Most of the figures have *Śrīśchakras*-like full blown lotus and *Makarakuṇḍals* are sensitively carved and give a metallic effect. The palms and the feet are thickly modelled.

1. Zimmer: *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. II, Pl. 217.

The many handed *dvārapālas* are the result of the onslaughts of western Chālukyas on the style while their cross-legged position is an influence of eastern Chālukyas. The *dvārapāla* from Kaveripakkam (Fig. 123) shows close resemblances with the eastern Chālukyan *dvārapāla* of Vizayawada now preserved in Government museum, Madras.¹ It is interesting to trace the evolution of the *dvārapāla* figure in the Pallava sculpture. From Mahendravarman to Aparājita, the figure underwent various and remarkable changes, i.e., in modelling, expression, gestures and postures and in the iconographical features. In the Mahendravarman period there is diversity and ingenuity in their representation. The unfinished example from the Lakṣitayatana temple at Maṇḍagapattu is cross-legged and reclining on his mace (Fig. 23). The *dvārapāla* from Avanibhajana cave temple has two horns on his head, and is shown standing erect with one hand at the *Kaṭi* and the other placed on the *gadā* (Fig. 26). The *dvārapāla* figure from *Tiruttani* of Aparājita period, again has two horns on his head. This seems to be a Viṣṇukunḍin motif as seen in *dvārapāla* figure from Mughalrājpuram caves and was adopted by the Pallavas. At Kuranganilmuttam there are three sets of *dvārapālas* among them the third set is noted for its slim beauty in the Tribhanga pose with one hand at the *Kaṭi* and the second hand in the adoring posture, a sword is hung behind them in place of the usual *Gadā*. In this period though the *dvārapāla* figures are vigorous in expression yet they give a feeling of benignity. The Māmallapuram *dvārapālas* (Fig. 37) are simple and fine in the attitude of paying homage to their respective gods. The supple strength shows that they are simple attendants of the gods but not the guardians of the temple sanctuary. The *dvārapālas* from the Rājasimha period lost the majestic nature of earlier period and are devoid of the lyrical quality of the later mature period. They are clumsy and gruesome, as they are shown with the protruding teeth, knitted eye-brows and bulging eyes (Fig. 91). All these characteristics can be seen even in more developed form, in the *dvārapāla* from the Mallikārjuna temple of the western Chālukyas of Paṭṭadakal.² They are cross-legged resting one hand on their mace, entwined by a snake and with their second hand they are indicating something. In the later phase this type was influenced by various other styles. For example the *dvārapāla* from Kaveripakkam is under the influences of the Raṣṭrakūṣas, western Chālukyas and eastern Chālukyas (Fig. 123). It resembles in its expression the *dvārapāla* of Mallikārjuna temple of Paṭṭadakal of 750 A.D. i.e., in the raised and knitted eye brows and the staring eyes, the protruding teeth, the type of *Kirīṭa* he wears and the four hands; similarly with one hand he holds a snake in the same manner as the Mallikārjuna *pratihāra*. The *Kirtimukha* decoration in armlets is also in the Chālukyan fashion but the horns are according to the old tradition of the early Pallavas. The *Kuṇḍalas* in his ear lobes, the decorative pearl necklets, the pearl and flower *yajñopavīta* are taken from eastern Chālukyan figures.

The *dvārapāla* from the Tiruttani Virattaneśvara temple shows the same qualities (Fig. 124). This figure has four hands, one of the right hands is in the *abhaya mudra* and with the other right hand he is indicating something. His left hand dangles as *Gajahasta* and rests on the mace which is placed on the right side. The heavy *jaṭās* are spread over the two sides of his head as in the early Pallava period. He has other characteristics, like horns, protruding teeth, raised eye brows etc., as in the above discussed figure which connect this with Raṣṭrakūṣa and eastern Chālukyan types. In this figure the three hands and the *gadā* are placed on left side. Hence to offset the feeling of empty

1. C. Sivaramamurti: *Early Eastern Chalukyan Sculpture*, Pl. 5 (a) and (b).

2. Zimmer: *The Art of Indian Asia*; Vol. II, Pl. 302

space in the panel, the sculptor cleverly arranged the long flowing tassels which are clubbed on his slightly turned back. His *yaiñopavita* is like that of the Naṭarāja figure at Ellora.

The Dakṣiṇamūrti Śiva figures, one from Kaveripakkam and the other from Tiruttani are illustrated in this volume. The Kaveripakkam Dakṣiṇamūrti is very pleasing and fine (Fig. 125). The heavy curly *jaṭās* on both sides of his head are spread out in space. The curls of his *jaṭā* resemble in treatment the *dakṣiṇavarta chūda* of Buddha. His forehead is adorned with the third eye. In his right ear lobe he has the *patrakuṇḍala* and in his left ear, the *Sarpakuṇḍala*. *Rudrākṣas* in two rows around his neck enhance the beauty of the figure. He wears the *vastra yajñopavita* and the *nāga* type of armlets. The loops and pearl decoration in the girdle are in the manner of the western Chālukyan tradition. The flowing lower garment is very charming, fit for a *yogi*. He is four handed. In one of his left hands he has a manuscript, unfortunately one of his right hands is broken. In the other right hand he holds a rosary. Beneath his rectangular seat the two deer and a snake are carved in low relief as if they are listening to his preachings with attention. The sculptor has created the atmosphere of seclusion which is an appropriate situation for the *yogis*.

Another figure from Tiruttani is composed in the same manner but it is not so pleasing and the figure itself is dull in expression (Fig. 126). Śiva is straight in the Sukhāsana posture but lacks in liveliness. He wears a deer skin, *yajñopavita*. In his back a pipal tree has been shown in low relief to give the feeling that he sat under the tree. Beneath his rectangular seat two deer, a rat and a coiled snake are hewn out in low relief. The rat is listening to him very curiously. This form of Śiva as a *yogi* is frequently found in South India.

The above discussed figures are the Jñāna Dakṣiṇamūrtis or the form of the cosmic teacher. "According to the yogic texts, Śiva is the deity of mind and has his seat in higher brain. From there he controls all the nervous centres and the entire mechanical, vital and psychical activities and functionings within the body. As the great God, he has to be present everywhere and direct the subtle vibrations of the entire constitutional system."¹ The above mentioned aspect of Śiva is illustrated here.

Sūrya is first represented on the Dharmarājaratha at Māmallapuram. Later he has no separate existence till the Aparājita period but he is represented in the compositional panel, in the so-called Arjuna's penance, in the Ādivarāha panel and in the Kailāsanāth temple in which instances he appears in the attitude of floating in the air and paying homage to Śiva or Viṣṇu. Probably the sculptors used this figure to show the *virāṭ rūpa* of Gods who filled the whole universe. In the last phase Sūrya attained separate existence. At Kaveripakkam and Tiruttani, Sūrya is majestically carved, standing in the *samabhanga* posture holding the lotus buds in his two hands. Wherever Sūrya is carved in the Pallava period, a *Prabhāmandala* is attributed to him only, an attribute which is not found in case of other sculptural representation of deities from this period. Probably, it shows the infinite rays and effulgence as he is called Anantakoti kiranam tejomayam Bhaskaram (अनन्तकोटि किरण, तेजोमयं भास्करम्). The hands of the Kaveripakkam Sūrya are mutilated. The figure is slim and tall with comparatively narrow waist and looks very fine. The long and full face is stressed with a double chin, a conical *Karanda mukuta* type of the *Kirita* probably with the *ratna Kuṇḍala* gives a charming effect. He wears the *Kanthi* in his neck the *mukta yajñopavita*,

1. V.S. Agrawala: Śiva Mahadeva, pp. 5-6.

decorative *udarabandha*, the girdle with the *Simhamukha* clasp, the flowing *adhottariya*; all of these are very beautiful. His halo is oblong in form like in the Raṣtrakūṭa figures of Ellora.

The next figure of Sūrya is carved on the walls of the Virattaneśvara temple at Tiruttani in granite stone (Fig. 128). He has a round halo around his head; he stands in the *Samabhanga* posture with two lotus buds in his either hand. The *yajñopavīta* is tied with a bell clasp whose tassels are hanging free and it runs as usual from the left shoulder over the right arm. His ears are adorned with *makara kuṇḍalas*. The *Kīrtimukha* girdle as usual in later phase with its ends hanging on the thighs, which are engraved like a chain. Between two legs the pearl string is hanging. In both Sūrya figures from Kaveripakam and Tiruttani the foot is left bare unlike the northern Indian Sūrya figures which are in the *udichya veśa*. Similarly, his seven horses and chariot are also absent here. But the figures are carved majestically.

Brahmā is represented in an exquisite sculptural piece among the Kavaripakam figures. The four handed Brahmā is seated in kingly pose; one of his right hand is in the *Abhaya mudrā* and another left hand rests on his lap (Fig. 129). In his remaining right and left hands he holds a rosary and a *Kamaṇḍalu* respectively in *Kartārimukha mudra*. Actually, his rosary is shown suspended in the air as in the early sculptures of this group or the eastern Chālukyan sculpture.¹ He is four headed, facing the four directions. He is seated on the *Kamalāsana* and his left foot rests on a full blown lotus which gives the idea of his nativity as born of the cosmic lotus which originated from the navel of Mahaviṣṇu. The fine texture in the treatment of the Brahmā figure here reminds us of the Brahmā figure of Aihole or from Huccimalli Gupdi which is preserved in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. The elegantly engraved necklace around his *śaṅkha* like neck enhances the beauty of the figure. The *Keyura* of his left arm is elaborately carved like that of the Pratihāra figure from the Mallikārjuna temple, Pattadakal; the undergarment in the fashion of the *Pitāmbara* is thick in texture; the lines and the ends are emphasised to show the folds. This figure is an advanced example of this phase of Pallava sculpture.

The *Saptamātrikas* are illustrated in the Purāṇic tradition, not on a single seat as at the Kailāśanāth temple, but separately. They are Brāhmi, Maheśvari, Kaumari, Vaiṣṇavi, Vārāhi, Indrāṇi and Chaumuṇḍi. It is said that they represent the energy of the respective gods, given the female form, hence they are associated with the respective weapons and vehicles. Unlike in the later examples, they are not holding a child on their lap to show their mother aspect. Below their seat, their respective *vāhanas* are carved in low relief whereas in Kailāśanāth temple Kāñchi, the *vāhanas* are altogether absent. All are four handed; in their upper right and left hands they hold their respective weapons while in each case the lower right hand is in the *Abhayamūdrā* and the lower left hand rests on their left lap. All are seated in the *Sukhāsana* posture, the left leg is planted on the ground and the right leg rests on the seat crosswise. They wear the *Kuchabandha* and a lower garment upto the ankles. Except in the case of Kaumārī, they have the *mukta yajñopavītas* fastened with a bell clasp, necklaces, *nāga* type of armlets and girdles. The lower garment is given thick modelling as in the Brahmā figure; only Brāhmaṇi has the *Kamalāsana* of Brahmā.

Now let us see the individual figures. Brāhmi has four hands and four heads (Fig. 130). She holds a rosary and the *Kamaṇḍalu* as in the Brahmā figure in her right and left hands respectively

1. C. Sivaramamurti: *Early Eastern Chalukyan Sculpture*, Pl. XXX (a).

and in *Kartārimukha* pose. She sits on the *Kamalāsana* and below her seat the swan is engraved in low relief.

Kaumari (Fig. 131) instead of having the usual śakti weapon of Kumara, holds a rosary and the *Kamaṇḍalu*, she wears the *Channavira* type of ornament instead of the *yajñopavīta* and *Patrakuṇḍalas* in her ear lobes. The bust and the round shoulders upto the arms are very sensitively modelled; the nose is in the form of sesame flower and her face is lighted with smile. The peacock is carved in low relief below her seat.

Maheśvari (Fig. 132) holds in her right and left hands the *Paraśu* and deer respectively (Plate LXVII, Skes 1 and 2) while her other right hand is in the *Abhayahasta* and the left rests on her left lap. In the stone sculptures from the early period of this group the deer is never seen in Śiva's hands, but in this later phase it seems to be very important feature. The Nandi is carved in low relief below her seat.

The face of Indrāṇi is very charming with her arched eye brows and sesame flower-like nose (Fig. 133). The slightly parted thin lips express *hāsa*. Her *Kirīṭa* gives a metal effect and the *makara kuṇḍalaś* in her ear lobes are sensitively carved. She has a *Śrīṣachakra* like a lotus blossom behind her head. The presentation of the *Śrīṣachakra* in the stone was first shown in connection with the Śiva figure in the Somaskanda panel from shore temple, but it became a regular feature of the late Pallava style and in subsequent periods, especially in bronzes. The Indrāṇi figure from this group holds the *Vajra* and *pāśa* in her right and left hands respectively in a naturalistic way (Plate LXVII, Skes 5 and 6) whereas in other figures the weapons are held in the *Kartarimukha* pose. The *vajra* is three pronged like the *Triśūla* but is double faced. In Amarāvati and Nāgarjunikoṇḍa it was three pronged at both the ends but there the side prongs turn outward. In the Raṣṭrakūṭa sculpture at Ellora it is in the same manner as the figure under consideration. The *pāśa* resembles the eastern Chālukyan style.

The Vaiṣṇavi figure is similarly beautiful, has Viṣṇu's characteristics in the introduction of the *Kirīṭa Kuṇḍala* and the *Śrīṣachakra* (Fig. 134). She looks serene and calm, as it is said that Viṣṇu is *Sātvika guṇa pradhan*, which are attributed to this figure also. Garuḍa as her *vāhana* is carved below.

The Vārāhi is another fine example. She has the same weapons as the Vaiṣṇavi figure. The lion is her *vāhana* (Fig. 135).

Chamuṇḍa is represented as a youthful woman with her flames like hair flowing on both sides like thick bands floating in space (Fig. 137). She wears the *Nāga Kuchabandhas* and the *Kapāla yajñopavīta*, as she is praised as *Naramālavibhuṣaṇa* (नरमालाविभूषणा). She is adorned with the *Pretakuṇḍala* in her left ear lobe and in the right with *Patrakuṇḍala*. Her head is decorated with a skull entwined with a snake. Her forehead is also entwined by a snake. As she is the most terrible form of Durgā, she is very fearful with her bulging eyes and fangs protruding from her wide mouth. She is described in the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* "Karaḷavaktāntadrurdarśa daśanojwala (करालवनत्तान्तर्दुर्दर्श दशनोज्ज्वला)." Her upper hands carry the *Triśūla* (Plate LXVII, Sk. 7) and the *Ḍamaru*, while one hand is in the *abhayamūnra*. She holds in her left hand a cup to receive the blood of the Asuras. A grotesque skeletal form of a man is carved below as her *vāhana*. He seems to be chewing an unidentified object (probably a bone). Despite her gruesome attributes and terrible looks she gives an impression of a beautiful and youthful woman. She is an incarnation

of the destructive aspect of Durgā; the Pādasāra, she wears on her feet suggest that she would dance at the cremation ground. The southern conception of Chamuṇḍa or Kālī is not repulsive as in most of the examples from the north, in which she is in emaciated form showing the bones prominently.

Certain sculptures are found at Satyamangalam; Vārāhi (Fig. 136), Chamuṇḍī (Fig. 138) etc., from this site are preserved in the Government Museum, Madras. The Satyamangalam figures preserve the quality of stone as against the former group which give a metallic character. These figures are slim with extremely narrow waist and the abdomen is well modelled. The rest of the characteristics are of early Pallava figures. The Chamuṇḍī from the Saptamātrika group is very interesting. The flames-like *jaṭās* are spread over both the sides of her head. She is in the *dhyāna mudra* with one of her hands raised up. The Vārāhi is also slim, the *śaṅkha* and *chakra* are carved separately on the two sides of her head.

The *Śaṅkhanidhi* (Fig. 139) and *Padmanidhi* (Fig. 140) from Kaveripakam are very interesting in their iconographic forms. They are dwarfish figures with pot-belly, with tiny legs and hands and are shown seated. They wear the *udarabandha* and the *yajñopavīta*. On both sides of their heads the *śaṅkha* and *padma* are carved emitting gems. Here we find impact of the Gupta art through the Vakaṭaka and Chālukyan art which filtered down to the Pallava tradition. The earliest representation of these *nidhis* in the form of issuing gems are from "the famous *kapla-druma* from Besnagar. . . must have formed the capital of a pillar that stood in front of a temple of Kubera."¹ The gems symbolise the glory of the god Kubera. This motif is common in the Gupta period. It is referred to by Kālidasa in his 'Meghadūta' *Dvāropante Likhita vapuṣau Śaṅkha-padmau cha druṣṭvā* (द्वारोपान्ते लिखित वपुषो शंखपद्मौ च दृष्ट्वा). It is also carved on Devagadhā temple.

All these three centres i.e., Kaveripakam, Satyamangalam and Tiruttani depict the last phase of Pallava sculpture. The Kaveripakam and Satyamangalam figures have sublimated modelling and the form of the human body which is more slim than the Tiruttani figures with thick body like those of Ellora. In the Satyamangalam figures the neck and the waist are thin and elongated, the legs and the hands are also very slim. In the previous phases the body of the female figures is very slim with narrow shoulders, and chest and with attenuated waist. The legs and hands are thin with tapering thighs like in the Vengi style. But the Tiruttani figures departed from the Vengi idiom and adopted the Raṣṭrakūṭa. The style is very simple with sparse ornaments at Māmalla-puram but here the ornaments are somewhat elaborated. The last phase was spent out by the end of the ninth century A.D. Let us say that aesthetics of the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam was shifted from Kāñchi to Tanjore, the new capital of the Cholas.

1. C. Sivaramamurti: *Geographical and Chronological Factors in Indian Iconography, Ancient India* (No. 6, 1950), p. 21,

The Themes and the Treatment of the Pallava Sculpture

The architectural and sculptural creations of the sculptors and architects of the Pallava period have immortalised the Pallava patrons. The period spans nearly 400 years from the time of Mahendravarman I Pallava to Aparājita and witnessed an unprecedented artistic activity in Pallava dominions. It is a long journey having its landmarks in Māmallapuram and Kāñchīpuram through Narasimhavarman I and Narasimhavarman II's periods.

(The Pallava sculpture is mainly religious. (Very few sculptures are secular in themes viz. the portraits of kings and queens in Māmallapuram and Kāñchīpuram,) and coronation scenes and war scenes in Vaikuṇṭha Perumāl temple. (In India the greatest efflorescence of art has been associated with the artistic genius that illustrates the thoughts and fancies of religion. The art is not simply associated with the outward form of religion but it carries the spiritual aspirations of the people towards divine knowledge, divine love, divine joy and strength which are centred in the religion. In its spirituality the Indian art soars in its expression. Indian art is not limited to the expression of forms and appearance; it determines the nature of god and man vis-a-vis. Hence there is a continuous flowing tradition of spirituality in Indian art in all the periods. So the Pallava sculpture is mainly spiritual, while satisfying the physical requirements of the aesthetic sense. It also satisfies the laws of formal beauty as well as the spiritual demand. It is delicate and subtle in form and expression. It also refines the human mind. The aesthetic sense of the Hindu religious myths is obscure in nature as the fragrance is hidden in the flower. But it is limited and must be furthered in order that humanity may rise. The good must not be subordinated to the form, but it must be beautiful and delightful.) Thus the very conception of the gods and goddesses in Hinduism is beautiful and delightful, for example, Sri Kṛṣṇa is not only beautiful he is also love incarnated. Without perfect love there cannot be perfect beauty and without perfect beauty there is no perfect delight. These are all present in Indian art. Indian art is always wanting poetic qualities. Though the sculpture has not the movement of poetry, it expresses only a limited movement. It is still and calm. In the words of Sri Aurobindo "Art stills the emotions and teaches them the delight of a restrained and limited satisfaction whereas the poetry raises the emotions." As is put by Dr. A.K. Coomaraswamy, "the tender humanism and the profound nature sympathies which are so conspicuous in the paintings of Ajantā and the sculpture of Māmallapuram are recognisable equally in the works of poets like Aśvaghoṣa and Āryaśura and dramatists like Kālidāsa."¹

1. A.K. Coomaraswamy: *Dance of Siva*, Sixth Printing (New York, 1967), p. 32.

(The Pallava sculpture is out and out religious in character. The catholicity has been shown by the royal patrons. All the three sects of Hinduism have been given equal importance, i.e., Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śāktism. Probably they believe in the trinity. Hence the caves were excavated in honour of the trinity similar to the Trimūrti cave in Māmalladuram of the time of Narasimhavarman.) we have another of Mahendravarman's time in Mamandur. Probably, the worship of Brahmā also prevailed till Rājasimha period. Even in the Rājasimha period Brahmā figure has been carved on the walls of Kailāśanāth temple but in the sequel of the stories like in the illustration of Lingodbhavamūrti scene etc., Brahmā is deposed from his high status. In Māmallapuram, Śiva and his other forms Viṣṇu and some of his incarnations are illustrated exquisitely. Durgā in her Mahiṣasuramardini aspect is illustrated variously in Māmallapuram as well as at Kāñchipuram except in the Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple which is fully devoted to Viṣṇu.

(The Pallava period is the epoch of formative ideas and of new experiments in the spheres of art and iconography. There was a definite effort to give various iconographic forms of Śiva on Dharmarāja *Ratha*.) "In the first place, the forms of images are not arbitrary. Their ultimate elements may be of popular origin rather than priestly invention, but the method is adopted and further developed with in the sphere of intellectual orthodoxy each conception is human in origin." As said by Balasubrahmanyam that the original form of Durgā is 'pidari' who protects the people from evil spirits is the popular origin. Hence the forms of Śiva were conceived in the same manner and were of the popular origin. The description has been given by the ardent devotees of Śiva viz., Appār and Sambandhār. As Sukracharya observes "the characteristics of images are determined by the relation that subsists between the adorer and the adorned."¹ We can map the stylistic sequences, change of aesthetic form without change of basic shape in Mahendravarman, Narasimhavarman and Rājasimha periods. The basic shape is continued in all the periods but newer iconographical features are added to the original form.

(The Pallava sculptors opened up a new vista in the growth of a complex pantheon of numerous Śiva figures in that area for which the iconographical development takes place at Kāñchipuram in Kailāśanāth temple.) The similar attempts were made for Viṣṇu iconography in Mahābalipuram and more iconographical features were founded in Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple. Various forms of Viṣṇu, i.e., Anantasayi, Trivikrama, Vārāha, Kṛṣṇa etc., are so clearly, nobly and dramatically illustrated in Mahābalipuram and other icons of Viṣṇu like Narasimha; and the mythical stories like the Sāmudramanthan, distributing of nectar in guise of Mohini by Viṣṇu etc., are engraved on the walls of the Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple at Kāñchipuram. Some historical events are also described on the walls of Mahāmāṇḍap (cloister) of Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple viz., the war with Chālukyas, the coronations of the various Pallava kings like Narasimhavarman, Rājasimha, Nandivarman etc., according to their geneology and Nandivarman's arrival to Kāñchipuram, some darbar scenes, wrestling matches and the horse sacrifices etc. In Kailāśanāth temple all the Śaiva myths are illustrated viz., Lingodbhavamūrti, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Tripurāsura Sāmhāramūrti, Gajāsura Sāmhāramūrti, etc. Probably some of the myths are for the first time illustrated in the Dharmarāja *Ratha* later in the Kailāśanāth temple. Here all the stories are elaborately illustrated. Somaskandamūrtis are frequently shown. Gangadhara Śiva and Durgā

1. A.K. Coomaraswamy: *Transformation of Nature in Art* (Doner edition, 1956, New York), p. 162.

are repeated in each and every temple of the imperial Pāllavas. In Māmallāpuram also we have already observed that many panels of Somaskanda and Durgā in her Mahiṣasuramardini aspect are present. In the Kailāśanāth temple and the shore temple the same forms are repeated. However, the forms of Durgā at the Kailāśanāth temple is different from those at Māmallapuram. Here she is not shown as Mahiṣasuramardini but she is Durgā in *Viśvarūpa* holding various weapons. She stands in the *Tribhanga* pose by resting one leg upon her *Vāhana*. In the Rājasiṃha period the Somaskandamūrti is painted on the walls of Kailāśanāth temple. Now some traces of lines and colour are found in the *Devakulikas*. They composed the figures of Śiva, Pārvati and Skanda as a boy between his parents, in the same manner as in the sculptural panels of Māmallapuram. Among the other figures Gangadhara Śiva is also repeated a number of times. Since Mahendravarman I period this form is repeated throughout the Pallava period; we find it in Trichinapalli, in Dharmarāja *Ratha* and Ādivarāha cave temple at Māmallapuram and also in Kailāśanāth temple etc. Almost all the kings favoured this theme. It is said in the Kasakkudi plates that “they supposed themselves as the descendants of Viṣṇu i.e., the partial incarnation of Viṣṇu as it displayed unbroken courage in conquering the circle of the world with enforcement of the special rules of castes and orders and which resembled the descent of the Gaṅgā as it purified the whole world.”¹ So this is the main reason they favoured the Gangādhara Śiva to show the purity of their race and the Viṣṇu figures as they are the descendants of Viṣṇu. The names of the early Pallava also resembled this viz., Siṃhaviṣṇu, Narasiṃhavarman etc. Gajalakṣmi and Jyeṣṭha *Devi* were similarly repeated a number of times on the walls of the Kailāśanāth temple at Kāñchipuram. The figure Gajalakṣmi lost its beauty and freshness of Māmallapuram. The worship of Jyeṣṭhadevi who is the elder sister of Lakṣmi the personification of misfortune was in vogue at that time.

Though the figures of the Kailāśanāth temple are aesthetically less important than those at Māmallapuram yet iconographically they are still more valuable. The renovation of the temple almost spoiled the beauty of the figures in applying stucco over the figures. So it is difficult to find out the original style. As Śukrachārya observed “only an image made in accordance with the canon can be called beautiful; some may think that beautiful which corresponds to their own fancy, but that not in accordance with the canon is unlovely to the discerning eye.” The text further says “even a mishapen image of an angel is to be preferred to that of a man, however attractive the latter may be,” because the representation of the angels are means to spiritual ends, not to those which are only likenesses of human individuals.² As the myths provided the details of the figures, the sculptor carved the figures accordingly and the main interest of the artiste was to give more iconographical details. Hence these are all the divine figures, they gained the spiritual ends. Dr. A.K. Coomaraswamy says that “it is a mistake to evaluate the nature of change in terms of decadance. The stylistic sequences are not themselves pure laws, or decadance or progress, but necessary and therefore acceptable developments of special aspects.” Though the

1. “Tatah prabhṛity-akhanda-kalabhuvana maṇḍal-ātmāsatkaran-akhaṇḍita-vikramaparāh, paripalita-sakala varṇāśrama-vyavasthā-viśeṣaḥ prabhaviṣṇu-viṣṇorams avatāra-iva vaṁśa-Avatārah. Pallavānām nikhilabhuvana pāravatya gaṅgāvatāra iva cha nirmalas Samavartata”.

(Kasakkudiplates)

2. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

style is changed in Rājasimha and Nandivarman periods the more iconographical features and more forms are conceived by the artists which became more popular in later periods.

In the Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple also the figures are plastered and it is very difficult to find out the original style of figures. Probably the primary idea of the patrons which was strictly followed by the artistes is to illustrate the whole geneological lists, historical as well as non-historical. So the wall is divided in two rows and each row is divided in rectangular blocks and illustrated the incidents. Some of the panels are labeled, some are not labeled. The figures are very tiny. At some places the P.W.D. department applied cement on the sculpture and white-washed them. The archaeological department tried to remove the cement. The result was that the stone also peeled out, so their attempts failed.

We find a number of portrait sculptures from this period.¹ Even in the Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple they illustrated nearly 25 coronation scenes. In each scene there is a portrait of a king. Simhavarman, Simhaviṣṇu, Narasimhavarman, Rājasimha, Paramēśvaravarman Nandivarman, Mahendravarman etc. are illustrated but no distinctive features are noticed except minor details. Even in Māmallapuram, Simhaviṣṇu and his queen consorts and Mahendravarman I and his queen consorts are portrayed in Ādivarāha cave temple which look quite similar. On the Arjuna *Ratha* the royal couples are carved. Both the couples are alike. On Dharmarāja *Ratha* saint Appār and Sambandhār and the portrait of Narasimhavarman are also portrayed. From a survey of all these portraits we find that the sculptor adopted one traditional style. Only he changed certain postures and the attributes of the royal figures to show the difference. In ancient India the portraits were not the replicas of the natural form but expressed the inner self of a person.² For example, the portrait of Saint Appār is not an expression of his outward appearance or of his outward emotion but of his inner soul as he is in ecstasy of adoration before the presence of Śiva who has been given the form of Appār. In the portrait of Sambandhār also same thing can be seen. But we can differentiate both by their attributes i.e., Sambandār has cymbals in his hand. It is said that he is bestowed by God Śiva and he is always singing the *līlās* of Śiva. On the other hand Appār holds an instrument to clear out the grass in the Śiva temples. The artiste followed in portraying these figures the traditional method, i.e., the Buddha is not a true portrait but reveals the quietitude of Nirvāṇa. Even when the artiste has to portray some incident, it is not usually that alone but some power behind the action has to enter into the spirit of his design.

1. In ancient times it seems that the portraits were not so common though there were certain examples of the kings in Kuṣāṇa period and in Gupta period on certain coins they were not feeling that it is a good practice. Śukracharya says that the portraiture is *Asvargya*. Stella Kramrisch says in her *Indian Sculpture* that the portraiture belongs to civilizations that fear death" (p. 134), and in any case a portrait has merely personal and temporary value, not an ultimate spiritual significance. [A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Nagara Painting*, Rupam, 37, 40 (1929)]—Cited by A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Transformation of Nature in Art*, pp. 204-05.
2. In the Pratimanataka of Bhāsa, III. 5, Bharata, seeing the statues of his parents, whom he does not recognize, exclaims at its workmanship and feelings embodied in those images (*aho kriya-mādhuryam pasanānām aho bhavagatir ākṛtinam*) at last he wonders what the figures represent but "Anyhow, there is a great delight in my heart". In the case of portraits the excellence of the likeness is naturally commented upon, for example, *Swapnavāsavadatta*, VI.13 and *Mṛcchakaṭika*, IV.1, the words *Saḍrsi* and *Susaḍrsi* being employed. In the *Swapnavāsavadatta* the queen looking at the picture of Vāsavadatta, is delighted and perplexed "because she thinks she recognizes the person represented." *Ibid.*, pp. 104-05

Really that is the main thing, that is the spirit which carries the form to which the artiste paid his attention. In the same manner the portraits of the kings also are delineated. Here they have given the form of a king, of his royalty, his dignity, his physical might and power. Their standing pose, their facial expressions, their broad chest etc., are the aids to bring out the same spirit. Sometimes the portraits of the kings are treated as divine figures just as the portrait of *Simhaviṣṇu* in the *Ādivarāha* cave temple at *Māmallapuram* where he sits on a seat in kingly pose with *Chinmudra*. He looks like *Śiva* in *Somaskanda* panel. This is based on the divine right theory of the ancient Hindu polity, i.e., the king emanates from god and possesses divine qualities. Such feelings are always present in the figures of the kings.

(The seventh century Pallava sculpture i.e., mainly belonging to the *Narasimhavarman I* period represents a very high water mark in all its aspects. It differs chiefly from that of the Gupta style in certain details, in the slenderness of the figures, the more oval face and higher cheek bones and also in their transparent drapery.) The divine and human figures are infinitely gracious; especially the figures on the *Arjuna Ratha* display splendid classical beauty in their form, pose and expression (for example, the two ladies, Fig. 41). They are slender and tall with attenuated waist. All the female figures are treated in the same manner in *Māmallapuram*. They have no upper garments even in the portraits of the queens (for example, the portraits of *Simhaviṣṇu's* queen consorts and *Mahendravarman's* queen consorts and also the figures on the *Arjuna Ratha*, Figs. 34, 35 and 39), except in the case of *Durgā* figures who wear *Kuchabandha*. Their lower garments also are very transparent. Only the ends of the drapery are thickly treated. Sometimes it looks like *lungi* as in the portrait of one of the queen consort of *Simhaviṣṇu*. Sometimes the tassels have been shown on the back as in the figures of the *Arjuna Ratha* and long side tassels and the loops (as shown in the Fig. 38); whatever it may be, the dress hardly conceals the nudity of the figures as in the Gupta period. In the Gupta period the diaphanous dress is the fashion of the day but it shows the contours of the body and conceals the nudity of the figure. But here the nudity is stressed not so prominently as in the *Yakṣiṇi* figures of *Mathurā* in *Kuṣāṇa* period. Since the Indus Valley mother goddesses figures in almost all the classical styles, the feminine nudity is shown in an emphasized form; which probably became a tradition. So the same tradition is followed by the Pallava sculptors, for example in *Gajalakṣmi* panel not only the main figure but her four attendants also, are definitely nudes. This type of treatment frequently occurs in this style. On the whole the female figures are with resplendant beauty and sometimes show resemblances with *Amarāvati* and *Ajantā* examples in pose and rendering (Plate LIX, Figs. 9, 10 and 11). The female figures are slender and exhibit the characteristics of *Vengi* especially in the *Kṛṣṇa Maṇḍapa* where the hands and the legs of the female figures are too thin like tubes. The *Māmallapuram* figures are narrow hipped and narrow chested. But in *Amarāvati* the pelvis portion and the chest is broader and the legs and the hands are slender. Hence the thighs look tapering, as shown in the Plate LXI, Ske. 15. Some of the figures are beautifully delineated in *Māmallapuram*. The royal members of *Arjuna Ratha*, the *Varāhamaṇḍapa*, the *Mahiṣāsura-mardini* caves are the superb examples of the whole Pallava period. They have the vegetal delicacy in their limbs. All the figures are modest and serene. The figures are simple and beautifully proportioned.

The male figures also are slender but strong and energetic. They have broad chest with robust and round shoulders exhibiting vigour and vitality. All the figures divine as well as the royal members are usually dignified. They do not wear any upper garments; they wear *dhoti* as the gangadhara Śiva and Anantasayi Viṣṇu and in certain figures the lower garment is like *lungi*, loose and the ends are thickened, the tassels are hanging on both the sides and the pleats are shown between the legs as in the Harihara figure at Dharmarāja *Ratha* (Fig. 43). Another variety of treatment is limited to the loops and the ends hanging around the waist like in the Ardhanārīśvara figure (Fig. 42) (Plate LXIII, Skes, 7 and 8). Almost all the figures have *udarabandha* like a simple tape or sometimes ornamented with floral designs and the *Kaṭisūtra* is in ribbon-like form and the knot shown in the front. They tied *adhottariya* whose ends hang on both the sides. (Plate LXIII, Figs. 7 and 8). There are varieties of *yajñopavitas*, viz., usually it runs from left shoulder to right arm as in the Gangādhara Śiva of Trichinapalli and also the *vastra yajñopavita*, and the *yajñopavita* joined with bell clasp as shown in the Plate LXIII. This type of arranging the *yajñopavita* and *Kaṭisūtra* is found in Badāmi figures. This treatment continued throughout the Pallava style; later we find them in some of the Raṣṭrakūṭa figures also. In the beginning the *yajñopavita* is treated like a thick band for example in the Gangādhara Śiva (Fig. 30), while the style progressed other varieties of *yajñopavitas* were also used viz., *vastra-yajñopavita*, skull *yajñopavita*, *Rudrākṣa yajñopavita* as in the figures on Arjuna *Ratha*, sometimes it takes the form like a “sinuous band and double bell clasp” started in Māmallapuram and it became a regular feature in Aparājita period. From Rājasimha period onwards the *Mukta yajñopavita* was also used; probably this is the influence of the Raṣṭrakūṭas which is caused by their successive invasions on the Pallava territory. In Māmallapuram the *vastra yajñopavita* is treated in various forms as shown in the Plate LXIII.

(Male as well as the female figures wear very few ornaments. The necklaces are simple without details as in the neck of Trivikrama. Sometimes we see pearl necklaces as on Mahiṣāsura-mardini figure. A girdle in their waist and *patra kuṇḍalas* in their ear lobes are common to male and female figures. In the female figures the bracelets and anklets are almost always shown yet certain minor details are left out.) All the figures bear *kirita*s—the female figures have the conical type of Karandamukūṭa as shown in the Plate LXII (Ske. 7) and which became common feature in Chola figures while the male figures conical type of *kirita* and sometimes flat cylindrical crown. We can take the examples of Anantasayi and Trivikrama figures whose *mukūṭas* are very close in form to those of sakka in Amarāvati. Very few figures are left bare headed as some are available in Govardhana panel. The Śiva figure has usually the Jaṭāmukūṭa but sometimes his *jaṭās* are tied on the top of his head where a skull is placed. Sometimes his *jaṭās* are wound around his head like a turban, we have an instance of this type from Māmallapuram (Plate LXVI, Skes. 4 to 9). Later in the Rājasimha period the *kirita mukūṭa* is more prevalent. The type of *Mukūṭa* which is decorated in the *Gajalakṣmi* figure (Plate LXII, Ske. 6) became a characteristic feature of the Rājasimha period; with minor changes the middle portion is elongated in Rājasimha period as shown in Plate LXII Ske. 8.

In this style the movements and the flexions of the figures are somewhat restricted, but the figures never look static like the figures of Bharahut nor have the flying attitude of the Amarāvati figures. Most of the divine images are in the Samabhanga posture, some figures are in delicate

Tribhanga postures. Variety of poses and coiffures like in Amarāvati are not very popular in this group. All the figures are animated and look self-contained. Even the more complex stories are treated clearly without any confusion. The figures are forceful, vigorous, at the same time distinct and delicate. Somewhat more vigorous movements have been shown in the Rājasimha period. The dwarf figures are treated like the Śiva gaṇas of Gupta period i.e., short and quaint yet with lovely face.

(The most important point we find in this style is the conspicuous absence of the amorous scenes. All the figures are divine, serene, self-disciplined and noble. It seems the restraint and refinement was the order of the day. The figures are graceful and dignified and the images yield place to a distinguished poise besides certain vitality and serenity.)

(The Pallava artistes favoured subdued naturalism in the treatment of the animals, the birds, the human and divine beings, yet, there is a strong feeling of simplification of form: on the other hand the Pallava sculpture especially in Māmallapuram is essentially conventionalised. This style is a renaissance in decorative Indian sculpture.) Though it was started in the south at the time of Viṣṇukunḍins it was in full force in the Pallava period. Naturally Indian Art is decorative and poetical. In Amarāvati and Nāgarjunikoṇḍa the figures are more decorative and idealistic. Though the same ideals were followed by the Pallava sculptors yet they gave naturalistic touch to their art. They gave special attention to the forms of the figures but not on the superficial decorations. Limited use of ornaments is always present, which enhance the beauty of the figures like in the Gupta period. Probably the classical art never liked more ornamentation which gives volume to the figures rather than the elegance.

(The animal representations in Pallava period reached its highest water mark. "It is already romantic, humorous and mystical." The rendering of the massive and animated elephants at Māmallapuram at the open air composition exceeds its beauty and modelling. The deer, lions, tigers etc. are treated very naturally and exhibit their temperament. There is no space for mythical animals as in Amarāvati. All are natural.)

However, the animal figures at Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple look like toys. The horse in the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice scene and the elephants in the war scenes are simple representations. They lost their massiveness and dignity of Māmallapuram. The warriors in the Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple are devoid of their vigour and force as against their counterparts of Mahendravarman period.

Different varieties of *Simhāsanas* are also found. One is adorned with lions as well as the *Makara* motif while in a few cases only *Makara* motif is used. Another variety is a round stool with the lions legs as in the *Simhaviṣṇu*'s portrait at Ādivarāha cave temple also shown in the Plate LXIV, Ske. 3, resembles with the same type of stool in the Amarāvati sculptures (Ske. 4). In the Shore temple the Somaskanda is seated on an elongated seat with beautiful legs (Plate LXIV, Ske. 5). The simple narrations and the bare utility are not the rudimentary part of art as illustrated in this temple. They remained as simple to the last. There is a distinction between the three main styles i.e., Mahendravarman I, Narasimhavarman I and Rājasimha and Nandivarman. The sculptural style in the Narasimhavarman period is perfect and it is the golden age for Pallava art in all aspects.

(The divine figures except for their extra hands are treated as the human beings. The weapons which they used and their attitudes treated realistically (Plate LXII, Skes. 1 to 5), the *triśūla* and the *paraśu* of Śiva and the *gadā* of Viṣṇu are realistic i.e., their ornamental character if any was avoided.) The side prongs of *triśūla* are almost curved while the long central prong is of normal height. The holding postures are alike both in the Pallava and Chālukya figures. In the Śiva figures the third eye is absent in Pallava period yet Śiva is always associated with his *triśūla* and *paraśu* and in certain figures he had snake *Katisūtra* as in Ardhanārīśvara (Fig. 42), Harihara (Fig. 43) etc. Probably, this is the influence of the Chālukyas. In Chola and Pāṇḍya figures, Śiva is always associated with *paraśu* and *mṛga* (deer). Probably, this started from Aparājita. The deer is always associated with the Durgā figures in Māmallapuram. Durgā figures are repeated a number of times on the walls of Kailāśanāth temple. During the time of Rājasimha the deer is left out. The *Gadā* of Viṣṇu is heavy, long and barrel shaped. This resembles with the Chālukyan representation of the *Gadā* which is somewhat slender than its Pallava counterpart. In the stone sculptures of Viṣṇu the *Śrivatsa* and the *Vaijayantimala* are absent and *padma* is shown very rarely. Even in early Chālukyan figures of *Badāmi* these are absent. The *chakra* is carved as a disc; the edge almost faces the spectator in early Pallava as well as in Chālukyan figures but in Aparājita period it became rectangular shape and held by *Kaṭakamudra* (Plate LXVII, Ske. 3). In the late Pallava sculptures tiny flames emanate from the *chakra* and *śaṅkha* while later on the flames became a regular feature (Plate LXVII, Skes. 3 and 4).

(The figure of Durgā throughout the classical Pallava sculpture is original and an independent work. She illuminates with her resplendent beauty—an unique example in Indian sculpture.)

The Pallava artistes also adopted some ancient motifs. The Kabandha motif which is used in the open air Himalayan scene panel has been taken from Satavāhana style which profusely used this form in Amarāvati Ghaṇṭasāla and also in Chālukya and Gupta Vakāṭaka styles. Probably, this motif migrated from Satavāhana country to Gupta Vakāṭaka and Chālukyan regions. Another example is the *Makara* motif which is used as *Torana* over the *Kudus*. The rows of *Gaṇas* and the geese are common to all the styles. There are number of common themes between the Pallava and Chālukyan styles. However, the Pallava sculptures are simple while the Chālukyan sculptures at *Badāmi* are massive and decorative. Even in Viṣṇukunḍin and Gupta Vakāṭaka periods the same themes are illustrated. The basic style and the art motifs are the same; only we find the regional differences. It seems that the aesthetics are common and the artistic conceptions are just the same.

(The Pallava style is a monograph of Indian religious sculpture. This is court art like at the time of Aśoka. It is reared and developed by the will and care of the royal patrons since Mahendravarman I. These reliefs hardly ever depict scenes from their contemporary life.) Yet the art is a spring of delight. It is said by Sri Aurobindo in his saying that “the first and lowest use of art is the purely aesthetic, the second is the intellectual or educative, the third and highest the spiritual.” Here in the Pallava art, as usually in Indian art as a whole, we find both aesthetical as well as spiritual aspects as propounded by the Upaniṣads.

रसो वै सः, रसं हि यवावम्

लब्धानन्द भवति ।

He is beautiful and delightful. So art is the expression of that delight or *Rasa* that is the perfect art. Without that aesthetic flavour there is no art.

Appendix A

The Metal Images

The Pallava period is a composite whole in all of its cultural aspects; peace and prosperity prevailed and art in all its phases i.e. architecture, sculpture and painting received impetus. We have noticed in the previous chapters how the sculpture and architecture blossomed forth at Māmallapuram, Kāñchipuram and other places where the hard granite stone was profusely employed by the sculptors. The credit of using the stone as a medium for the artistic expression goes to Mahendravarman I; however, prior to that period besides brick and wood, metal was freely used as a medium of their artistic activities. In his famous Maṇḍagapaṭṭu inscription, Mahendravarman I records these media.¹ A definite example of the work from the pre-Mahendra period, made in wood or metal has not yet been found, but in the light of this inscription we can assume that the craftsmen knew the handling of metal. It seems that even in the Pallava period upto the seventh and eighth centuries the attention and the artistic zeal of the artistes and also the patrons had been attracted predominantly by stone. Since the seventh and eighth centuries some degree of attention was paid towards the metal images, possibly to meet the demand of the temple rituals which were elaborated during this period, mainly processions of the gods round the villages during the festivals. It was considered inauspicious to move the main image from the sanctum, so it became compulsory to make portable images. Probably, the idea was supplied by the Buddhists who used to offer worship to the small Buddha metal images. It is said that Tirumangai Ālvār, one of the last of Vaiṣṇava saints who belonged to the Nandivarman period, raided the Buddhist Vihāra at Nāgapattinam which was full of metal images of Buddha including gold ones. Hence similar practice i.e., offer worship to smaller images was adopted by the Hindus during the time of the Pallavas and continued in subsequent periods which reached its climax in technique as well as in style in the Chola Period.

Most of the 'bronzes' belonged to late eighth and ninth centuries A.D. But the number of bronzes that can be assigned to this period is very limited. Among them some belong to Vaiṣṇavism, a few are Śaiva and one or two are Buddhist in nature. The Vaiṣṇava images are numerous probably due to the influence of Tirumangai Ālvār who was an ardent devotee of Viṣṇu. The devotees of Viṣṇu got the idea of offering worship to the small bronzes at their home from the similar practice of Buddhists at Nāgapattinam and other Vihāras as mentioned above.

1. Supra.

2. T.N. Ramachandran: South Indian Bronzes (Madras, G.M.B. 1930), p. 47.

Most of the Viṣṇu figures are small in size. During the time of Rājasimha and later some Śiva figures were cast. These metal images of the Pallava period are not inscribed. Hence on the basis of the style only we can recognize and assign them to this period as there is no other way to date them. Though there are some minor distinctions because of the change of medium the same style was followed. For example, in Gupta period the same style is seen in the stone sculptures as well as in terracotta example the same type of dress, coiffure, ornaments, faces and poses. In the same manner in Chola period the same style was adopted by the craftsmen of the metal, with minor changes. Obviously, the stylist angle offers the only possibility of identifying the metal sculptures of the Pallavas.

The technique which the craftsmen followed was the lost-wax process which is called *Madhuchchhista* Vidhāna known as *Cire perdue* in French. There are two varieties; the hollow and the solid. These techniques are described in the texts like the *Manasārā*, *Viṣṇu Saṁhita*, *Abhilāṣitārtha Chintāmaṇi*, *Māyāmata* etc., the *Abhilāṣitārtha-Chintāmaṇi* among this group is the latest book written by Someśwara, the Western Chālukya king (1127 A.D.-1138 A.D.). It describes the method clearly and elaborately. Śankara, the contemporary of the later Pallavas, stated in the *Upadeśa Sahasra* as "this is an earthen hollow mould of a figure, just as copper melted by fire and poured into a mould takes that very shape, so does the mind takes the shape of the object comprehended."¹

"The subject was modelled in wax then coated with clay. Next the wax was drained out by way of hestings, leaving a mould behind into which liquid metal was poured to cast a solid image. But if a hollow image was intended the subject would be first modelled in clay and then the core was coated with wax and the wax in turn covered with a negative of clay. . . . After casting of image, its mould was destroyed with the result that no two specimens of south Indian bronzes are alike. Even if they are by one and the same hand the making of this process is laborious but important."²

The artisans followed the same method and they modelled their icons in wax according to the description given in the *dhyāna śloka*s and cast them in the metal. The Pallava bronzes have the same characteristics of the stone sculpture but these are more decorative and iconographically more developed. The third eye on Śiva's forehead in stone sculptures did not appear till the time of Aparājita. But in the bronze sculptures the third eye had been adorning the centre of the forehead of Śiva from Rājasimha period onwards. While the ornaments i.e., the *Udarabandha* and the *Kaṭisūtra* are plain in stone sculptures and they are decorative in metal images. In the case of the *Kaṭisūtra* they introduced the *Kirtimukha* motif; probably this is a western Chālukyan influence on Pallava bronzes. The deer in the hands of Śiva figures is a regular feature of metal images and the absence of which in stone sculptures till Aparājita is conspicuous. The weapons and the gestures of handling is natural and realistic in the stone images while the treatments are changed in the metal images; the weapons are decorative and the method of handling them is in a way artistic. The loops and the side tassels of the *adhottariya*, the *Yajñopavīta* stretching from the left

1. "Muśasiktam yatha tamram tannibham jayate tatha rupadni Vyapnuvat Chittam tannibham dṛṣyate dhruvam."

—C. Sivaramamurti: *South Indian Bronzes* (New Delhi, 1960).

2. P.R. Srinivasan: *Bronzes of South India* (M.G.M. Bulletin, 1963), p. 4.

shoulder to the right arm, the conical type of the *mukūṭa* the elongated face with protruding cheek bone, the eyes, the lips, short neck, soft contours of the body of the male and female figures are the same in both the styles namely in stone as well as in metal. The lips are full with an indication of smile. The modelling of the body of the figures in general is simple. The proportions are excellent and display a supple strength. The noses of the metal figures are not so thick as in stone nor so thin as in Chola figures.

The long cylindrical and flat ended type of Viṣṇu's *Kirīṭa* as in Anantasayi and Trivikrama figures from Māmallapuram became decorative in eighth and ninth centuries A.D. as in Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple and the same type of decorative *Kirīṭa* is used in the metal images. "The crown of Devi is a simple conical head gear with a thick roll-like wreath encircling the core at the bottom of the more common type of *Karandamukūṭa* diminutive in size and decorated with gem and pearl patterns".

Several early small metal images of Viṣṇu share characteristics with stone sculptures. The heavy lower garment of Viṣṇu which reaches upto the ankles, probably suggesting the *Pitāmbara*, is copied in metal images. The crown also is of the same cylindrical type and there is a small projection on the top, like the crown of Viṣṇu on Dharmarāja *Ratha* at Māmallapuram (Plate LXVI, Ske. 7). It is said that this type of crown is derived from the Amarāvati tradition. In Amarāvati the *Kirīṭa* of Indra is simple and of cylindrical type but somewhat short. All the bronze figures have *Śrīśachakras*. These are simple patterns with eight petals and the tassels are shown hanging from the centre. Some braids of *jaṭas* are falling over the back. This type of *Śrīśachakra* was continued even in the Pallava-Chola transitional period. The arrangement of the *jaṭas* below the *Śrīśachakra* was elaborated in case of Śiva figures in the Pallava period.

Most of the Pallava metal images are preserved in Madras Government Museum, two are in Prince of Wales Museum collection, some are in the Victoria Albert Museum and certain figures are in the collection of Sarabhai Navaroji.

The figure of Avalokiteśvara preserved in Albert Museum has been dated fifth century A.D. It has been said that this is the earliest metal image of the Pallavas and it resembles the Amarāvati tradition. It is presumed by the scholars like C. Sivaramamurti that this belongs to the early Pallavas who issued *Prakṛtic* charters.

A number of small Viṣṇu figures kept in Madras Museum exhibit the same characteristics of the Pallava stone sculptures of Māmallapuram. In the earlier figures of Viṣṇu the *Śrīvatsa* mark is absent on the chest of Viṣṇu as in the stone sculptures. Later it is shown in a semi symbolic form. The heavy *Pitāmbara* type of lower garment upto the ankles, the long tassels and the fan shaped hems at the sides and a big loop in a semi circular form are visible. From the *śaṅkha* and *chakra* flames are coming out and they are held in *Kaṭaka mudra* mode. The *gadā* of these bronzes are long and lean with a number of bands. All the figures are in *Samabhangā* posture. The necklaces and the girdles are decorative. The pendant in the necklace, the *Kirtimukha* in the girdle and armlets are introduced. The *Yajñopavīta* is in the *mukta* fashion and a thin thread is shown coming down from the *Yajñopavīta*, some tassels on the shoulders are hanging after the Chālukyan fashion. The modelling is superb. These bronzes would be fine specimen if they had less of the drapery and ornaments; because of the small size of the figures it seems that they are over-loaded. But modelling of the details and the execution of the forms show the technical skill of the craftsmen.

Among them the four armed standing Viṣṇu figure is somewhat larger in size (Fig. 141). This figure is in *samabhanga* posture and four handed. In the upper left and right hands he holds *śaṅkha* and *chakra* and his lower left hand rests on his *gadā* which is long and thin with bands on it. His lower right hand is in *abhaya mudrā*. The modelling of the figure is like stone sculptures, which is also evident by the broad shoulders and narrow waist. The figure is symmetrical. The lower garment is upto the ankles and the hems of the *dhoti* also are treated as in the Viṣṇu figures Trimurti cave at Māmallapuram. The folds of the *dhoti* have been shown through the incised lines on the legs. The hems of the *adhottaviya* are heavy and the central loop is flowing. The *Kaṭisūtra* is simple. *Udarabandha* is broad and decorative, the *Yajñopavita* is pearl patterned and flowing over the arm. In the middle from the bell clasp, a thin thread is coming down after the fashion of Nāgarjunikonda and Chālukyan traditions. There is no *śrivatsa* mark on his chest. The *kiriṭā* is decorated as the *ratna kiriṭā*. The facial expression reveals serene tranquility and a mysterious smile as described in Bṛhat Saṁhita.¹ The idea of the omnipotence and the gentle grace of Viṣṇu have been shown by the dignified *Samabhanga* posture, gesture and facial expressions. The manner of the disposition of the emblems, the decoration and the positions of the hands etc., show the characteristics of stone sculpture of Trimūrti cave at Māmallapuram. The artiste illustrated the 'parā' aspect of the God.

The figures of Rama and Kṛṣṇa are conspicuously absent in the bronzes of this period. Even in stone sculptures Rāma is absent, only two episodes of Kṛṣṇa i.e., the subjugation of Kālīya the serpent and the uplifting, of Govardhangiri are illustrated in stone at Māmallapuram. "The Rāma worship seems to have spread in South India during the period of Vizayanagara empire, perhaps under the influence of its royal princes."²

Another sparkling splendour in Pallava metal icons is the Naṭarāja (Fig. 142), the divine dancer. Probably, this is the first known bronze of Naṭarāja in South India. This is in the *Ūrdhva Jānu* posture. The right leg rests on the *Apasmārapuruṣa* while the left leg is raised. The weight of the body rests completely on the right leg and the balance maintained by the thrust of the hands. The modelling of the figure is delicate and fine and the movement is rhythmic and graceful. The craftsman shows tremendous control and restraint in delineating the sustained vigour and dynamic action of Naṭeṣa and made it a superb specimen of its kind. In the *Śivaprakaraṇa* this posture of Naṭarāja is described as the *bhujanga lalita*. In the *Kāśyapīya śilpa* the god is described, as in this figure, "with a single face, four handed three eyed while one of his legs is lifted and bent, his matted locks are scattered and always standing on the body of *Apasmāra*—I bow to such a Naṭarāja."³ This figure is very fine. The hands are treated in archaic manner. The eyes and eye-

1. Pitāmbara nivasanah, prasannamukha, kuṇḍala-kiriṭadhri and also said that atha ca caturbhujamicchanti, śānti da eko, gadādharaścanyah Dakṣiṇa pārśve hyevam vame śaṅkhach Cakram ca.

पीताम्बरानिवसनाः, प्रसन्नमुख, कुण्डल किरिटधारिः.....,

अथ च चतुर भुजमिच्छन्ति, शान्ति दा एको, गदाधरश्चन्याह ।

दक्षिण पारश्वे ह्येवम् वामे शंखश्च चक्रम् च ॥

2. T.N. Ramachandran: *South Indian Bronzes*, p. 24.

3. *Ekasyān tu Caturbhujam, Trinayanam ūrdhavam padam Kunchitam Kīrna Jatam, Naṭeṣam-amisapasmardehe sthitam. Kāśyapīya.*

Quoted by S. Gopalachari in his "South Indian Metal Images and Their Dhyānās". *J.I.S.O.A.*, Vol. VI, June, 1938.

brows are shown by incised lines. The third eye is on the forehead. *Jaṭāmukuta* is conical with lotus like *śiṛṣachakra* at the back. He has four hands, with the lower left hands he holds a snake instead of fire. This is *Nāgapāśa*. The lower right hand is in the *Abhayamudrā* and in upper right hand he holds *ḍamaru*. He wears in his left ear the *patrakunḍala* and in right ear the *sarpakunḍala* to express the form of *Ardhanārīśvara*. His *Kirita* is also more decorated. He wears shorts and the *Kirtimukha* pattern has been shown in his girdle. On the whole the figure is well integrated in its different symbols or ornamentation.

There is another form of Śiva i.e., Tripurāsura which is interesting, beautiful and very popular in later periods. The date of this figure is assigned to the transition between the Chola and the Pallava periods, i.e., probably the middle of ninth century A.D. According to C. Sivaramamurti perhaps this is one of the earliest bronzes representing this theme. Its *jaṭāmukuta* is very simple and devoid of the skull. His eye-brows are knitted with anger. The eye lids are thick which are unusual in the Pallava style where the eye lids and the eye-brows are very thin. With long but a little blunted nose, full lips the figure looks very signified and majestic. The facial features of this figure are suggestive of supreme self absorption. The *yajñopavita* and *udarabandha* are thick and broad. The arms are attached in an archaic manner. The elbows are treated angularly and the treatment of the legs is beautiful. Here there is an attempt of the sculptor to show the *tribhanga* pose by making erect the right leg straight and the left leg slightly bent. The figure is treated with gentle *tribhanga* which enhances its beauty. John Irwin remarks, "Here is a masterpiece which stands in its own right as a modelled image. It is though, the limbs of the rock-cut figures have changed their substance. The symbol has become a thing of flesh and blood. The bronze is conceived as a shape in sharply defined cubic space unlike the rock-cut figures which were conceived in organic relation to their matrix, the rock. The emphasis is now as poise and dramatic tension and where as texture plays no part. Every detail is treated with a view to cumulative effect. The tassels and the medium loops which in the stone figures receive only formal treatment are here invested with a tension and grace of their own and contribute to the total effect."¹ The Tripurāntaka aspect of Śiva, is suggested by the artist with the help of the standing pose which is called *pratyaldha* usually used by the archers in the attitude usually used by the archers in the attitude of shooting the bow. Here the weapons are not shown. According to mythology Śiva killed Tripurāsura by an arrow. The easy position, the faint smile on the beautifully shaped face and the well modelled grace of the whole figure show the effortless action of the God to kill the *asuras*. The same attitude is adopted by the artist in Chola period also. The *uttara kamikagama* describes the Tripurāntaka murti as

धनुर्बाणयुतोपेतं वामेतरकरान्वितः ।

परहस्तोजिज्ञतो वायु दिवहस्तस्त्रिपुरान्तकः ॥

Here this figure is bare suggestive of this description.

Śiva as Somaskanda (Fig. 143) is modelled in late Pallava style. There are a number of Somaskanda figures in stone as Śiva and Pārvati seated on one and the same pedestal with Skanda between them at Māmallapuram and Kāñchipuram. All these figures are composed elegantly. Here Śiva and Pārvati are the symbols of love and affection. Both figures are modelled with the

1. *The Art of India and Pakistan* (The Commemorative Catalogue of the Exhibition held at the Royal Academy of Arts) (London, 1949), p. 67.

sublimity of cosmic universal parents as said by Kālidāsa: जगतः पितरौ बन्दे पार्वती परमेश्वरौ. The figure of Śiva is effulgent with the beautiful facial features, the *Kirita* with crescent moon and a *dhaturā* flower at the side. The bodies of Śiva and Pārvati are slender. The contours of the body show the style of Pallava and Chola transitional period. The *Paraśu* which is in his upper right hand has a loop which connects to his back. The deer in his upper left hand is depicted with an arched neck and looking towards the face of Śiva. In his left lower hand he has the *Triśūla* and in his lower right hand he has a cup. In his left ear lobe there is a *patrakundala* and in the right ear *sarapakundala*. His *jaṭāmukuta* is very short and broad unlike the Pallava stone sculptures. In the *sukhāsana* the figure looks fine as described in the *Śrītatvanidhi* सौम्य बृङ्गार भावं, विपुल वदन नेत्रं चन्द्रबिम्ब-चन्द्रमौलिम्... हरिणपरशुपाणि. The figure of Pārvati exhibits early Chola characteristics in her face. The short *Karandamukuta*, round face and somewhat sharp features give the idea of the transitional period. The abdomen and the back of the figure are modelled as fleshy and her legs are too slender. C. Sivaramamurti states that the female figures with slender limbs of Pallava period are directly derived from Amarāvati and Nāgarjunikoṇḍa. The figure of Śiva is unique among the southern bronzes in its attributes. Śiva is carrying the *śūla* and *kapāla* along with the other attributes.

Among other important bronzes the Vishapaharaṇamūrti (Fig. 144) is very interesting. Instead of Vishapaharaṇa we can call it Vishapaharaṇamūrti. The four handed Śiva is seated, in *sukhāsana* with *paraśu*, and deer in upper right and left hands, and cup and snake in the lower right and left hands. This figure is the most suggestive one. The snake signifies the deadly poison which emerged at the time of the churning of the ocean, being of a very virulent character, began to burn up every thing. Then it was swallowed by God Śiva and kept in the throat. The cup in Śiva's hand suggests the poison bowl. The *yajñopavīta* is flowing rhythmically from the left shoulder to the right arm as usual in Pallava style. But some tassels and a thin thread is hanging in the Chālukyan fashion. His facial features express tranquility and serenity. A *dhaturā* flower on the left side of the long and conical *jaṭāmukuta* enhances the elegance of the figure. A skull and the moon also are arranged in his *jaṭāmukuta*; the figure is elegant. On the whole the figure exhibits great solemnity.

All the bronzes are modelled excellently. The artists were keeping in mind their medium while they were modelling with wax. The sculptors were not only well versed in the technique but also in the *śilpaśāstras*. They made the figures in the Navatala measure and with accurate proportions.

Appendix B

The Technique of the Pallava Art

The Pallavas were the pioneers in rock-cut art who substituted the stone for perishable material i.e., timber, brick, wood etc. in that area. They chose the hardest local rocks, viz., granite, gneiss and charnockite for their artistic activities whereas their predecessors and contemporaries used soft sand stone, for example, the earlier rock-cut caves in western India, viz., Bhaja, Karle, Ajantā, Ellora etc. These rocks being thick and soft provided ideal surface for carving and allowed the sculptors to finish their sculptural reliefs and the surfaces of the caves smoothly and delicately. The western Chālukyas executed magnificent works at Badāmi and Aihole in compact fine-grained sand stone. In Amarāvati, Ghaṇṭasāla, Nāgarjunikoṇḍa etc., the smooth and fine marble like limestone was employed for the *stūpas* and the sculptures. The Viṣṇukunḍins at Mughalrājpuram, Undavalli, Vizayawāda, etc., used sand stone rock boulders. Later the Hoyasalas in twelfth century at Bellur, Halebid and Somanāthpur etc., have chosen very fine chlorite which allowed them to carve finest details and polished statues. Only the Pallavas accepted the hardest stone like granite to serve their purpose. Probably, the absence of the softer rock boulders forced them to use the locally available hard rocks. Anyhow the new variety of rock introduced by Mahendravarman I with great enthusiasm and competitive spirit which, he proudly stated in Maṇḍagapaṭṭu inscription. His successors also followed his path with high spirits. "In the whole range of 'rock-architecture' in India, the only other achievements of this kind are the seven Ajivika caves in the Barbar and Nagarjuni hills near Gaya, and one more at Sitāmarhi near Rājagṛha, both are in Bihar, making eight in all and dating between the time of Asoka and his grand son Dasaratha. (Here for the first time in India, one sees the large boulder-like masses of hard quartzose gneiss forming this range quarried with infinite labour and finished with an enamel-like polish. This technique of quarrying, carving and polishing started and ended here within the same century, and it was not till after about a thousand years that the Pallavas started excavating into hard stone again in South India.)" The intermediate dynasties chose the soft material. But the tradition of rock-cutting art was continued in an unbroken sequence. In Ajantā and Ellora the roughly finished surfaces of the walls of the caves are plastered and painted. Even the well finished sculptures are also applied over by plaster, finished finely and coloured.

(There is no polish and no plaster on the Māmallapuram works except in the Ādivarāha cave temple where all the figures are plastered thickly. Probably this tradition started after Narasimhavarman I and continued later.) In the Kailasanath temple at Kāñchi and in Īśvara temple at

Panāmalai the figures are plastered and also painted. In Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple, Mukteśvara temple etc., the figures are simply plastered and probably also painted.

(Almost all the rock-cut works at Māmallapuram except the Draupadi *Ratha* and the Varāha cave were left unfinished. Even the facade of the Mahishasuramardini *Maṇḍapa* where the marvellous and unique compositions were engraved, was left incomplete. Number of unfinished sculptures, caves and *Rathas* are to be seen in Māmallapuram in various stages. The Dharmaraja *Ratha*, Bhima *Ratha* and Arjuna *Ratha* were also left with portions uncarved. But the unfinished portion does not disturb the full view. Inside the sanctum of the lower storey of the Dharmarāja *Ratha* and the sanctums of Bhīma and Arjuna *Rathas*, the rock intended for the main deity remains uncarved. In Bhima *Ratha* the positions of the rock look like the figure of *Anantasayi*.)

The rock opposite to the Ramanuja *Maṇḍapa* is cut back in square blocks and some traces of pillars and beams are marked and the intervening spaces are grooved into square blocks to be chiselled. Another rock in some advanced stage of excavation is to be seen below the light house. The *pidari Rathas* (Figs. 145 and 146) are also left unfinished and half carved sculptures are also seen here and there. (The unfinished open air composition of the so called second version of the Arjuna's penance is to be seen at a furlong of the finished panel of the same composition. In the former case the figures are half carved and some remain in the stage of sketches. From these unfinished examples one can reconstruct the technique of carving of the Pallava sculptors.)

Due to the hardness and the formation of the rock the technique of the excavation of the cave temples and monoliths naturally differs from that of the softer stones. They too could have employed hammer and chisel as is employed by the masons here. (The method of hewing the caves and the monolithic *Rathas* also differ from one another. The caves are engraved deep into the rock. First they mark the desired height and carve even the face of the chosen rock and then start to cut back till the appropriate depth is attained by marking the Pillars and beams. In the straight rocks they made 'v' shaped holes at intervals. "A number of flat edged iron wedges of the same thickness were inserted into these holes and driven in with a heavy hammer. The strokes made over all the wedges in position. The pressure and, to some extent, the conclusion of the enclosed air split the rock to a considerable extent downwards, which could thus be removed in sizeable pieces. Having obtained the desired surface of suitable dimensions, the actual quarrying was made by blocking out the face of the prepared scarp into large squares of about 2 ft. and cutting grooves all round the squares to a depth of 2 to 3 inches, so that the squares themselves project out as reliefs. The projecting material of these squares was then subsequently chiselled off by lateral and centripetal strokes starting from the grooves all round and reduced to the level of peripheral grooves. This process was repeated. The progress of the work was kept uniform over the entire region, thus maintaining an even depth of excavation at every stage. While doing so, the positions of the facade pillars, and other members, which were to be left intact were roughly marked and the excavation in the above manner continued into the intervening spaces."¹ It seems that the rough work and the finishing went on simultaneously. The first quarry men went excavating inside and the second set immediately followed to finish the details from outside towards the depth and from the above to downwards in the same manner as the first set. Probably

1. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

the specialists in architecture and sculpture were employed for each part as in the Badāmi caves of western Chālukyas. The Pallava caves are smaller than the Badāmi caves and long periods of time would have been taken in carving them because of the hardness of the stone.)

(The monolithic *Rathas* are cut out of entire rocks; the total external view of the brick construction is reproduced in stone and their interior features are also excavated into them. This type of architecture is described by Percy Brown as rock-cut architecture which differs from structural architecture. The structural architecture is constructed from the ground to the finial and the rock-cut architecture is in reverse order from finial to the plinth. "The excavations of these cave temples or the carving of the *Rathas* are monolithic and though expert achievements by themselves they do not involve constructional principles or display in their members any functional properties; not are they designed to support loads or counter act thrusts. Rock architecture therefore is not architecture in intent and purpose, but sculpture on a grand and magnificent scale."¹)

These monoliths cut down vertically to the base of the hill form a rectangle. They mark the height and the width required. The remaining portion is hewn out, the rectangular block remain intact. Then they sketch their plan. The next stage was to carve from the top into a rough shape. But the rough work as well as final finishing architectural forms as well as sculptural forms went side by side as in the caves. As the work progressed downwards all the rough works are completely finished to avoid the scaffolding which is usually used for structural buildings. The same process is adopted by the Raṣṭrakūṭa architects at Ellora in Kailāsanāth temple. Percy Brown rightly states that "authorities have shown that this method of production by excavation involves much less expenditure of labour than by building, but on the other hand the general effect is marred by the rock production always appearing in a pit, a disadvantage from which the Kailāsa obviously suffers."

(The method of engraving of the sculptures on the *Rathas* and on the caves is also the same. In the beginning the sculptors even the surface of the rock and sketch with coal or pencil, and then deepen the lines with chisel. Then they hewn out the residuary portion, so that the required height of the figure will come out. The next process is giving heights and depths to the figure. Roughly the shape of the figure will appear. Then they proceed towards further finish. In this manner step by step the artist brings the details and finally polishes the figure. This process is followed by the contemporary sculptors.) But during the Pallava and Rashtrakuta periods they followed the same method of the monolithic *Rathas*, i.e., carving from the top to the bottom. Probably first they finished the head of the figure and started for the limbs. Certain finished Buddha heads on the walls of Ellora and Ajantā caves are available. (On Dharmarāja *Ratha* at Māmallapuram a *dvārapāla* figure is also carved upto the knees and from the knees only the chiselling marks on the rough stone are there as in the Buddha figure of Ellora. Certain figures in Māmallapuram are left unfinished. Now it is difficult to make out whether they polished the figures or not at Māmallapuram. Now no polish is seen on them. In shore temple and in the Adivaraha cave temple the figures are applied over with plaster. Probably they tried to bring the desired polish by applying it and once again they finished nicely over it. We can presume that by

1. Percy Brown: *Hindu and Buddhist Architecture*, p. 74.

applying thick plaster the stone could be protected from the weather. It is easier to show more embellishments if the stone is soft while it is difficult to bring out minute details if it is hard. K.R. Srinivasan states that, "the scheme of plastering the interiors was employed for different reasons after the Mauryas in the Buddhist cave temples and *vihāras*, where it evidently took the place of the Mauryan polish. The surface of the trap could not be finished smooth and polished like the Mauryan sandstone. Plastering was also necessary, because throughout the ages the brick and timber structures had been plastered and painted. The brick structures were plastered primarily for protection and painted, like the wooden carvings, for embellishment. Similarly, the friable nature of the soft rock needed a protective coating which was also made decorative."¹ But they could not prevent the carvings from the disastrous effect of the sea. All the figures in the shore temple are damaged. However, the plaster helps to hide the roughness and the joints of the stones. In the Kailāśanāth temple and in Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temple the plaster and stucco were applied over the figures and the structure. In the Kailāśanāth temple the whole temple was painted in the Ajantā tradition. It appears that they prepared a smooth ground by applying the plaster for painting. In the monolithic caves the sculptures are also carved on the same rock but the sculptures at the Kailāśanāth temple are executed on separate stones and fixed in the niches during the time of the construction of the walls. This tradition continued even in later period like the Chola, Pāṇḍya, Vizayanagara periods etc. The tradition of exhibiting the *Parivāradevata murtis* (the various forms and incarnations of the main deity and the relative stories etc.) on the *Prakaras* has been taken by Chola architects from Pallavas. In Kailāśanāth and Vaikuṇṭha Perumal temples certain figures are engraved on the pieces of the stones and joined together at the time of construction like in Barabudar. Even then the measurements, lines and the perfection of the figures is so calm and good, that they took like a single piece. Perhaps to hide these joints also they applied plaster. In the beginning the pieces would have been joined together for sketching, after sketching by pencil and chisel the pieces are separated and finished by various artists. By this process the work could be finished in a short time. At the time of construction all these pieces were arranged together and joined by mortar.

In stone, sculptures are more elegant, vital and natural than the plaster-applied figures. In the Kailāśa temple the original figures are carved beautifully, but by applying plaster the figures look bulky and rough. Hence the Pallava architecture and sculpture are experimental in nature. They adopted a number of techniques and they were successful in all their attempts. Thus they proved themselves to be exemplary connoisseurs of art.

1. K.R. Srinivasan: 'The Pallava Architecture of South India,' *Ancient India*, No. 14 (1958), p. 118.

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Figure 2



Figure 1



Figure 3

PLATE 2



Figure 4

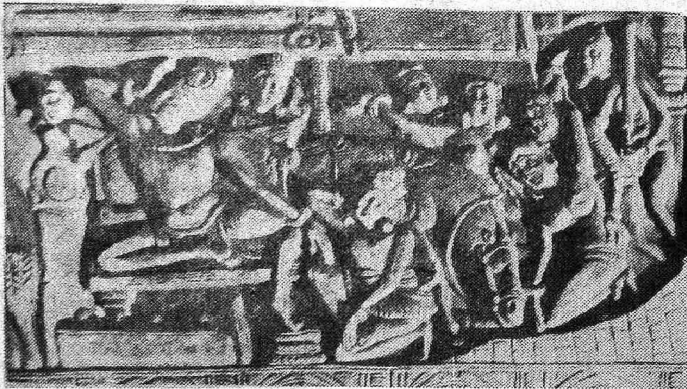


Figure 5



Figure 6

PLATE 3

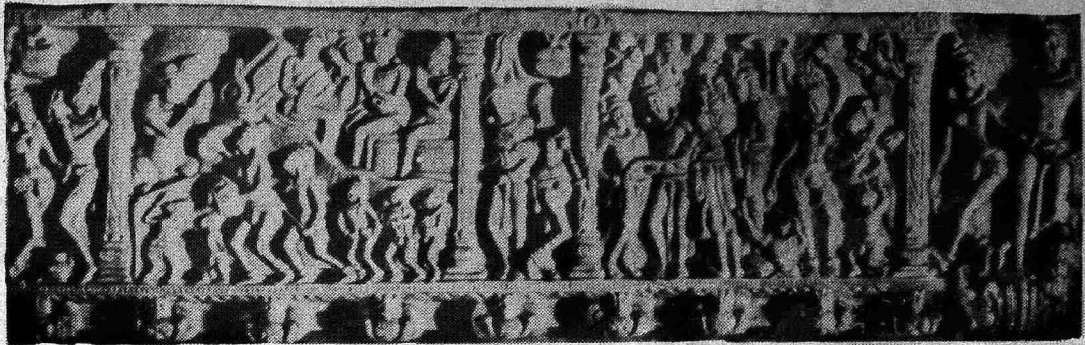


Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 10



Figure 12



Figure 11



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15

PLATE 5



Figure 16



Figure 17

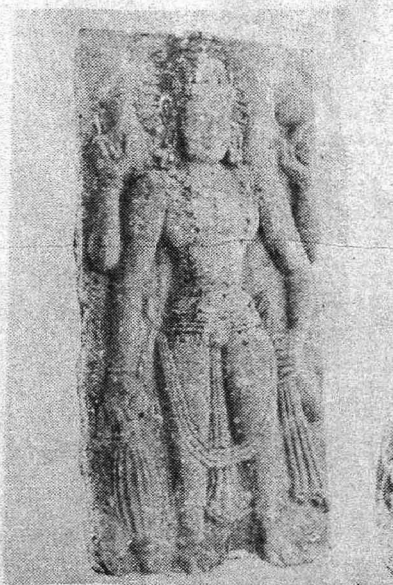


Figure 18

PLATE 6

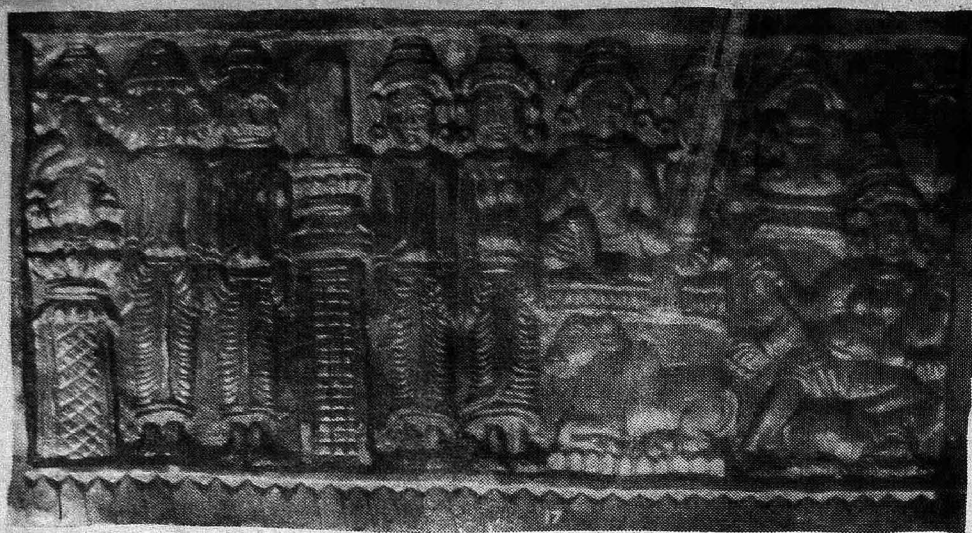


Figure 19



Figure 20

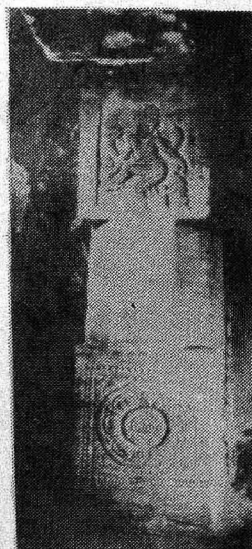


Figure 21

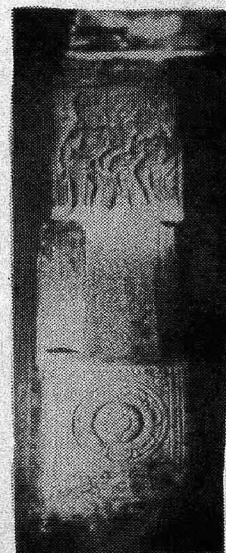


Figure 22

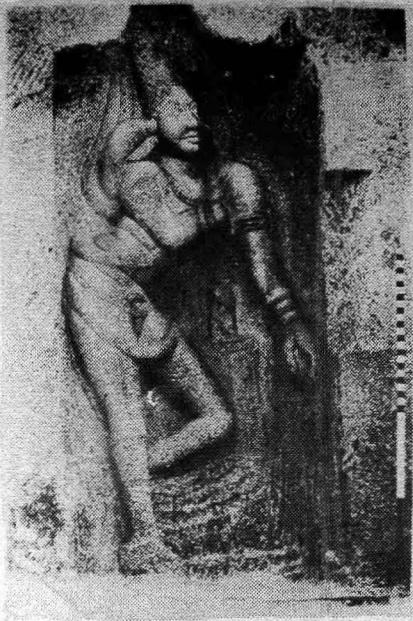


Figure 23



Figure 24

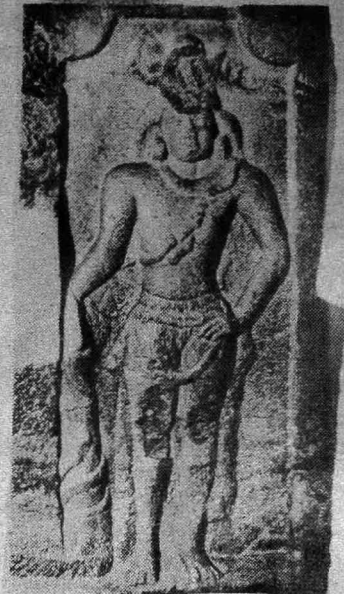


Figure 25

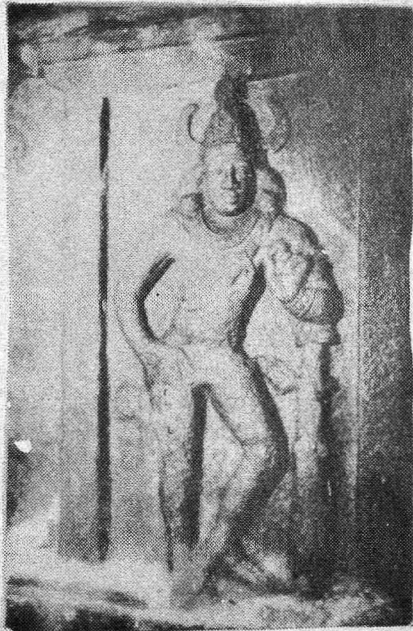


Figure 26



Figure 27

PLATE 8



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31

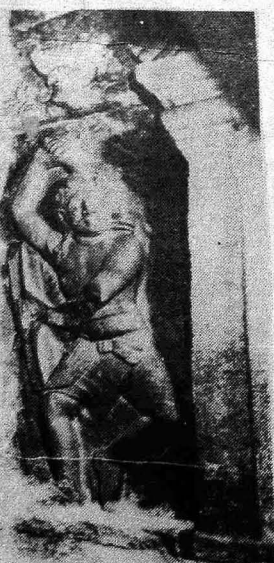


Figure 32



Figure 33

PLATE



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38

PLATE 10



Figure 39

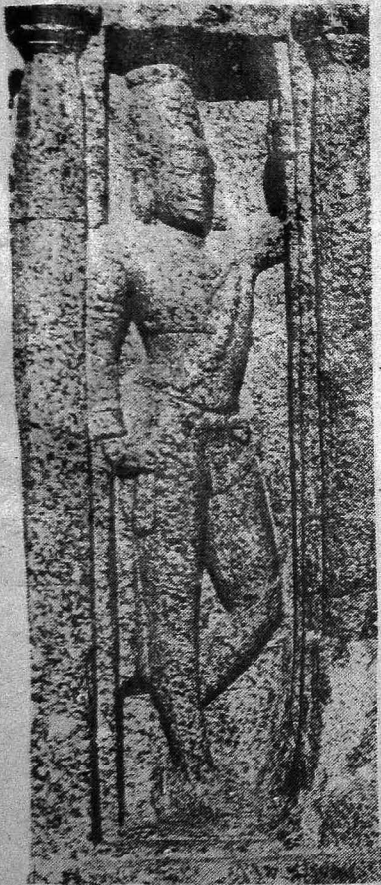


Figure 40



Figure 41

PLATE 11



Figure 42



Figure 43

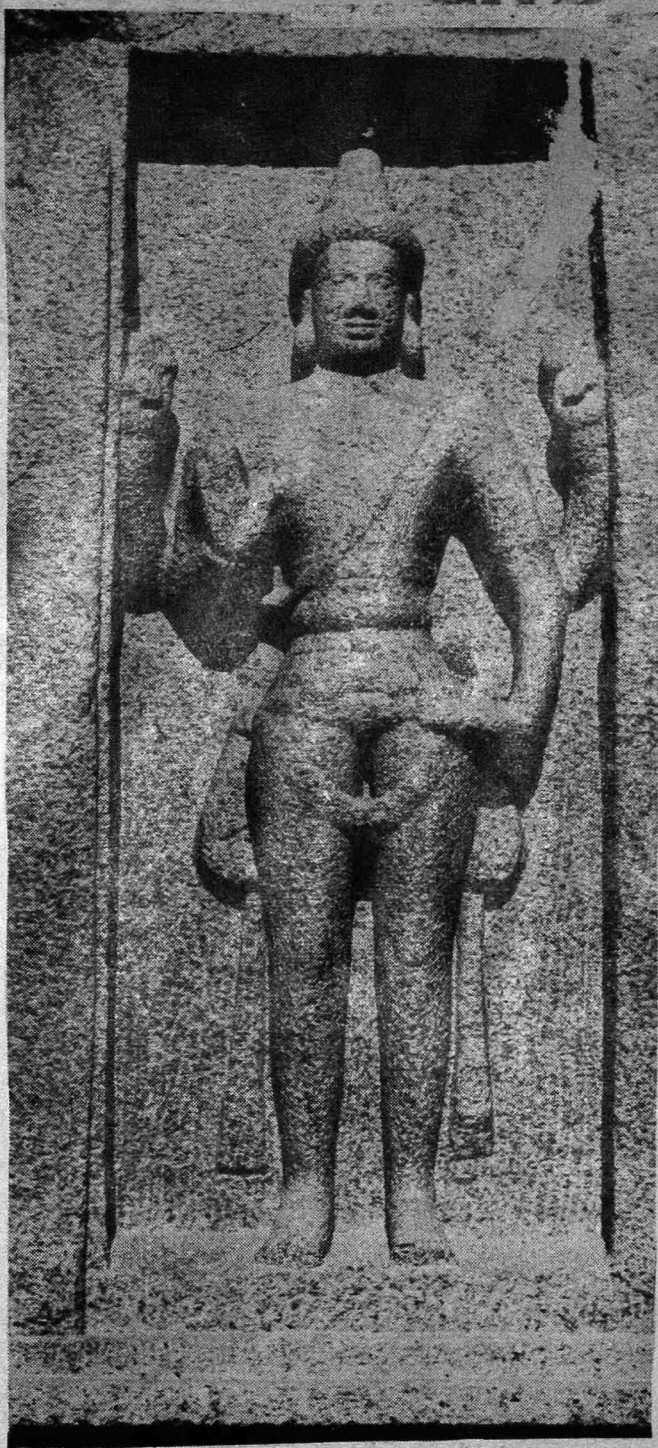


Figure 44



Figure 45

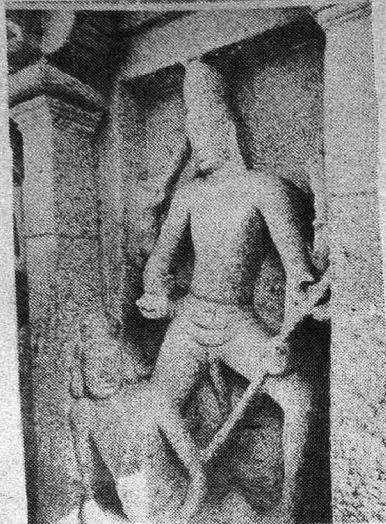


Figure 46



Figure 47

PLATE 13

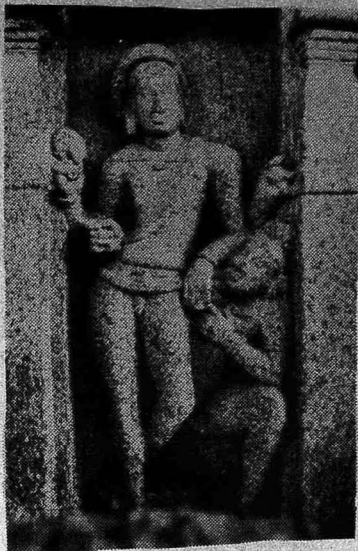


Figure 48

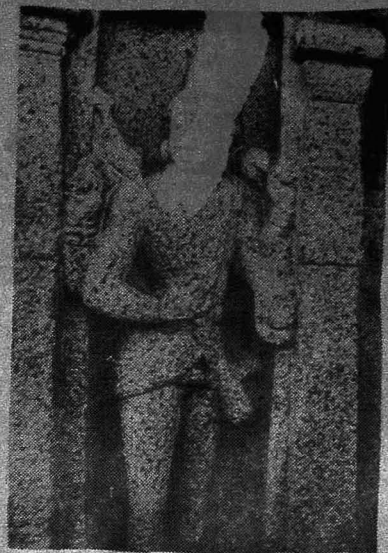


Figure 49



Figure 51

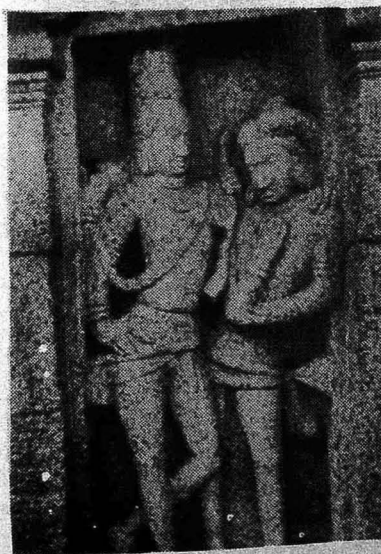


Figure 50



Figure 52

PLATE 14

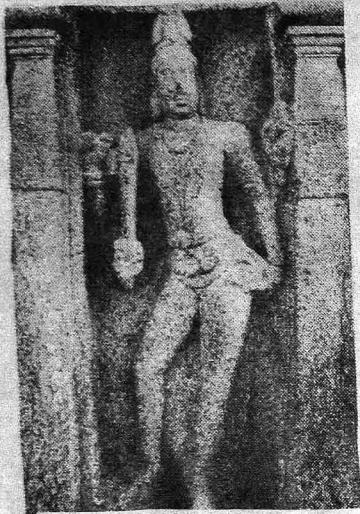


Figure 53

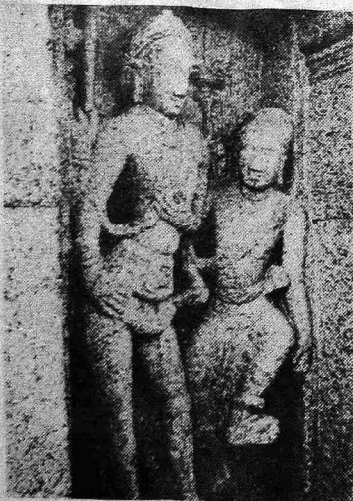


Figure 56



Figure 54

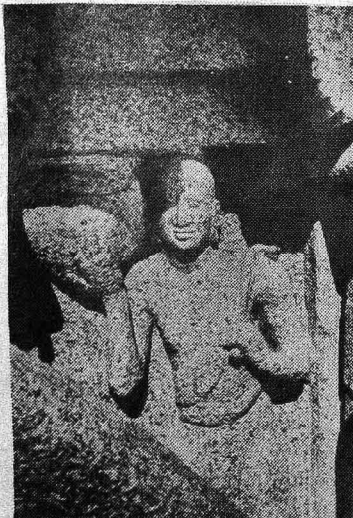


Figure 57



Figure 55



Figure 58

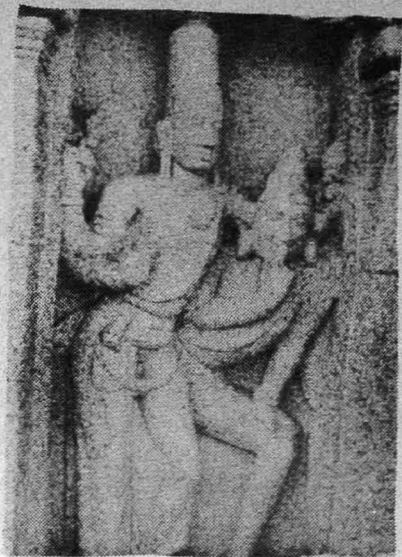


Figure 59



Figure 61

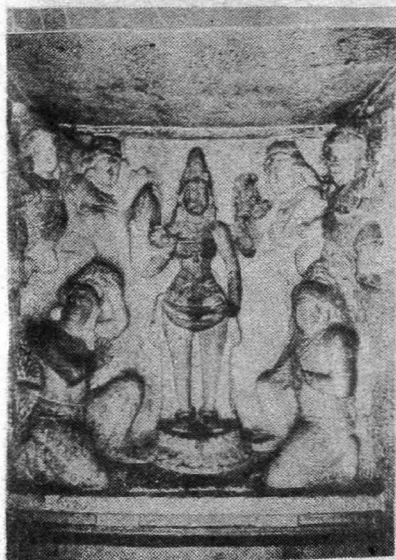


Figure 60



Figure 62



Figure 63



Figure 64

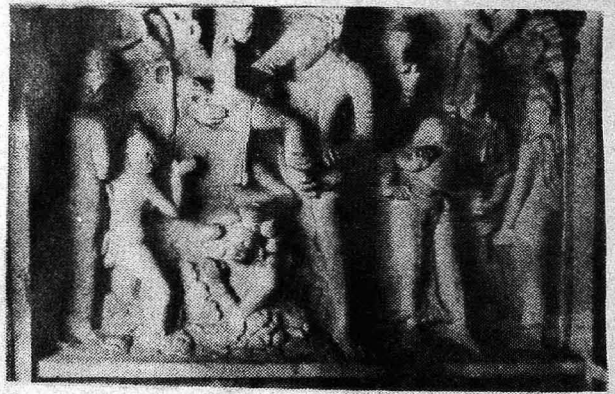


Figure 66



Figure 65



Figure 67



Figure 68



Figure 69



Figure 70



Figure 71



Figure 72

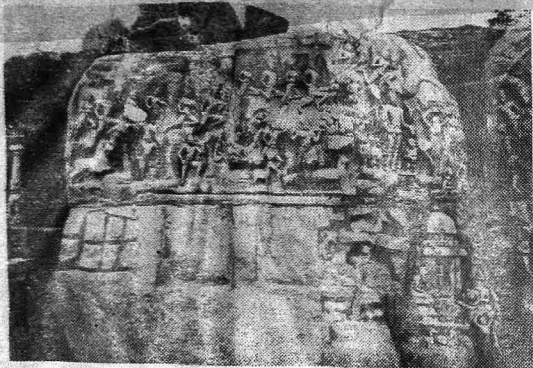


Figure 73

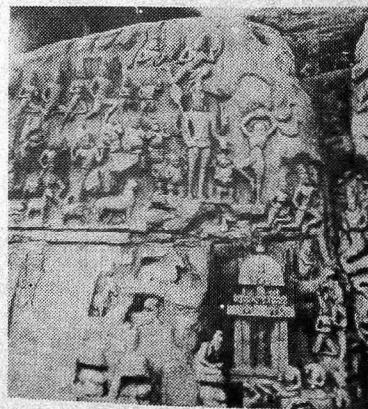


Figure 75

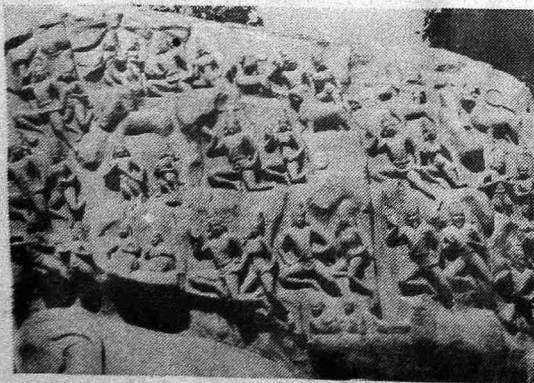


Figure 74

PLATE 19

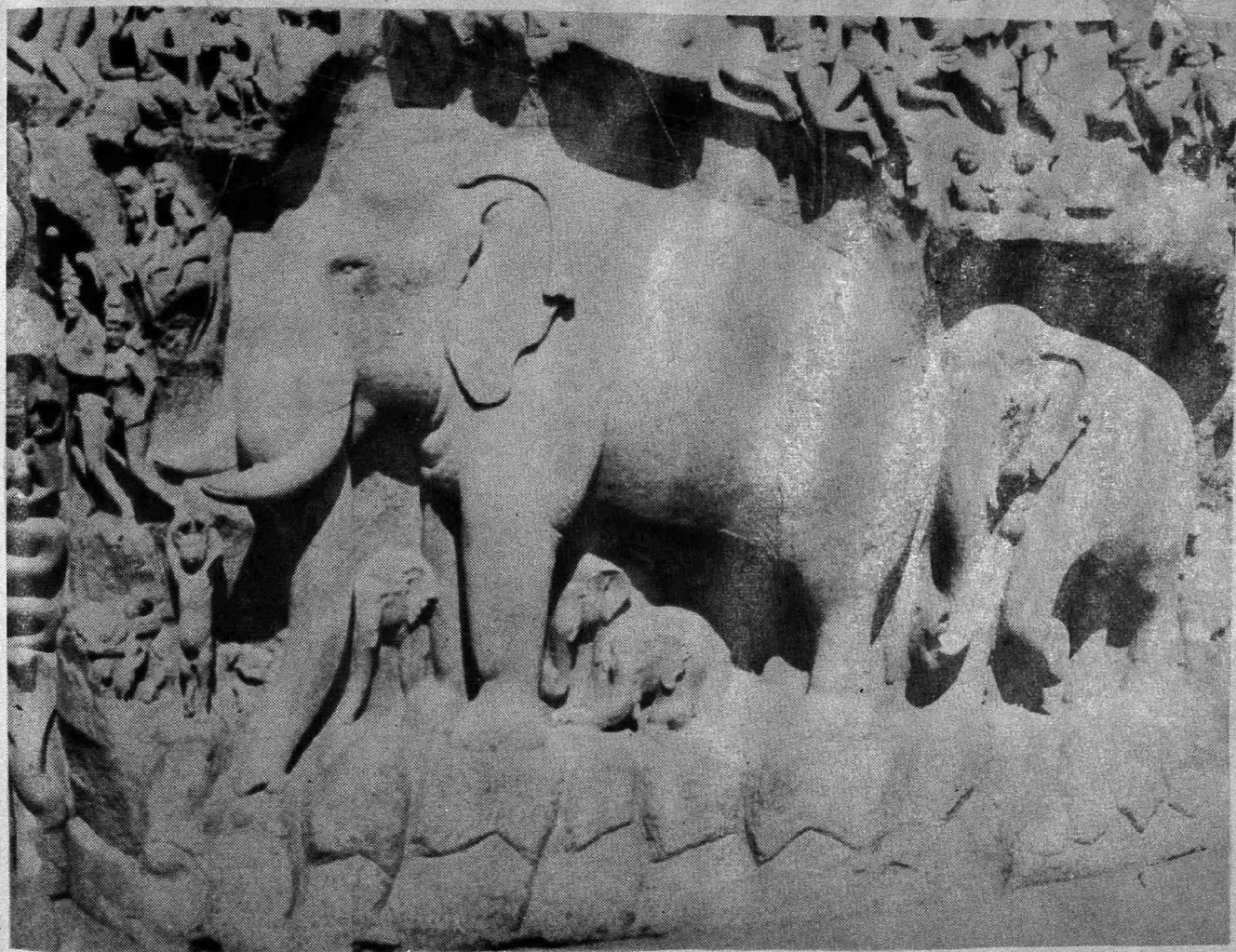


Figure 76

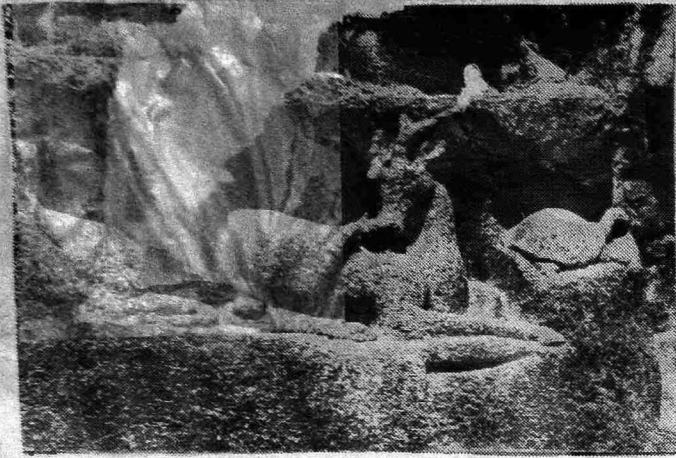


Figure 77

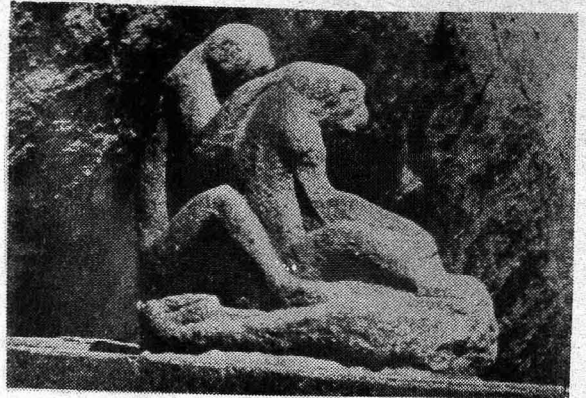
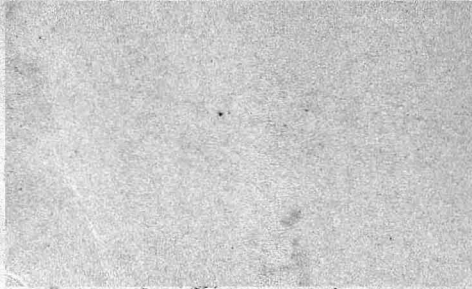


Figure 78



Figure 79

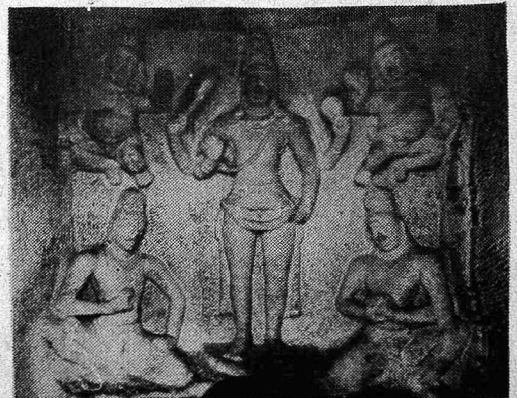


Figure 80

PLATE 21



Figure 81



Figure 82



Figure 83



Figure 84

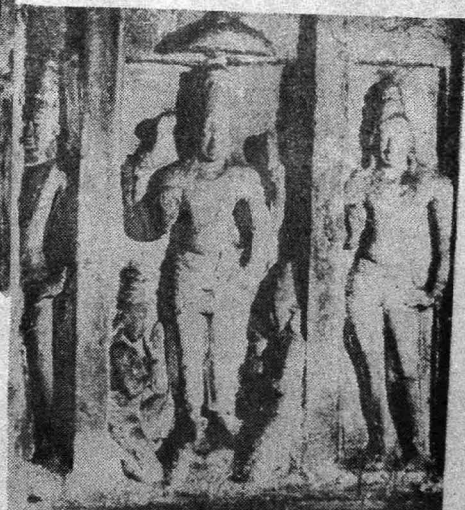


Figure 85

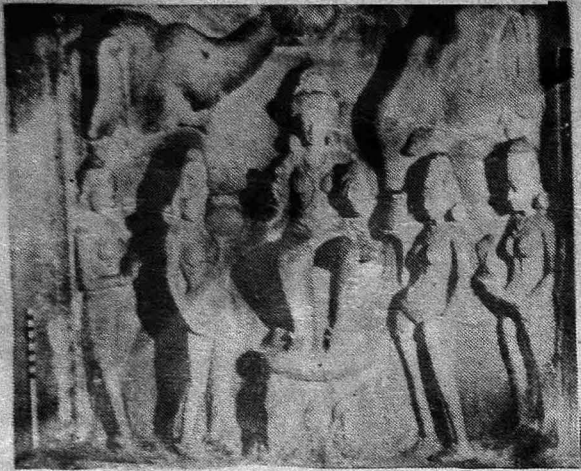


Figure 86



Figure 87

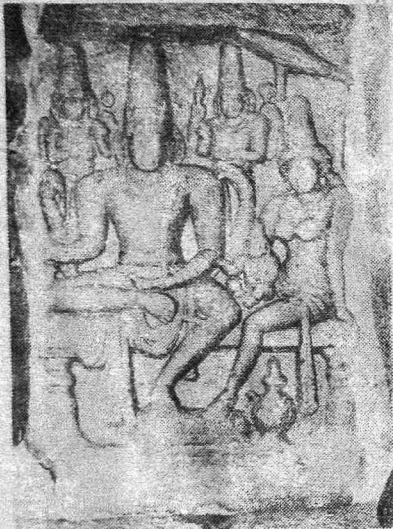


Figure 88

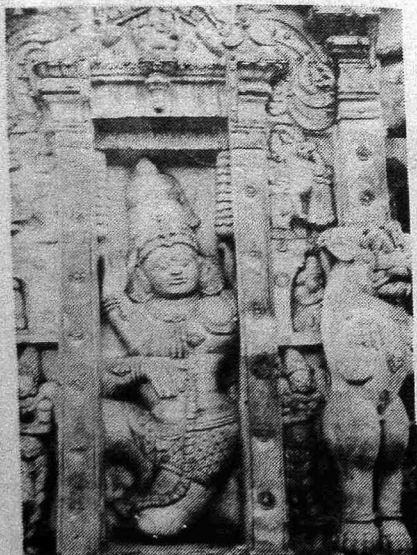


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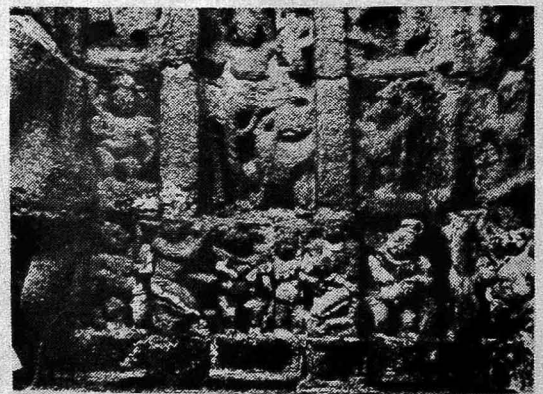


Figure 89

PLATE 23



Figure 91

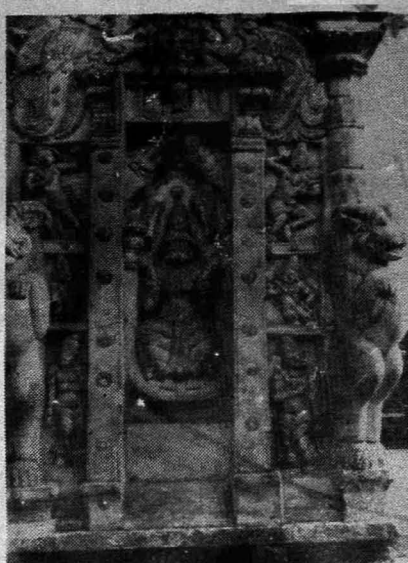


Figure 92



Figure 93



Figure 94



Figure 95 ,



Figure 96

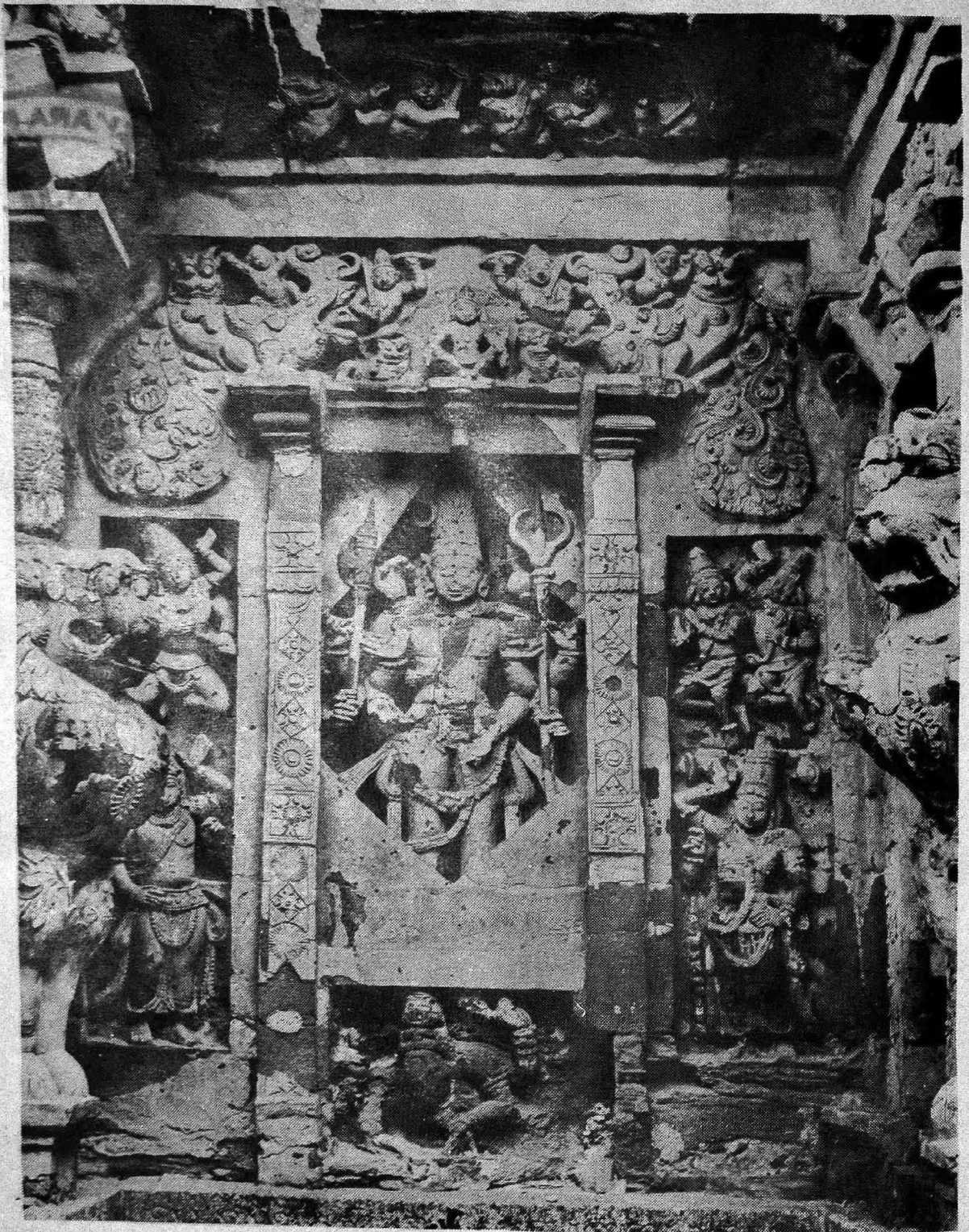


Figure 97

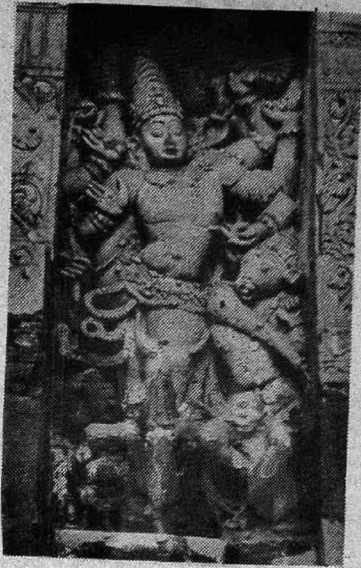


Figure 98



Figure 99



Figure 101



Figure 102



Figure 100



Figure 103



Figure 104

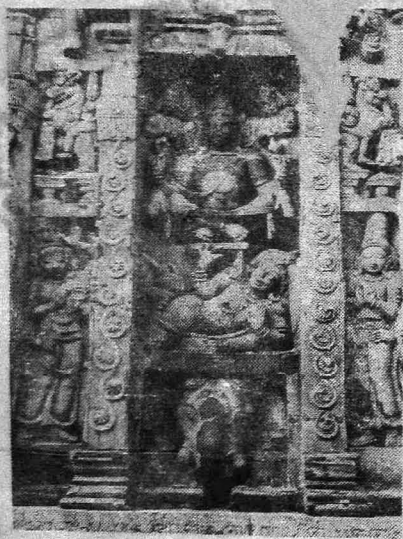


Figure 105

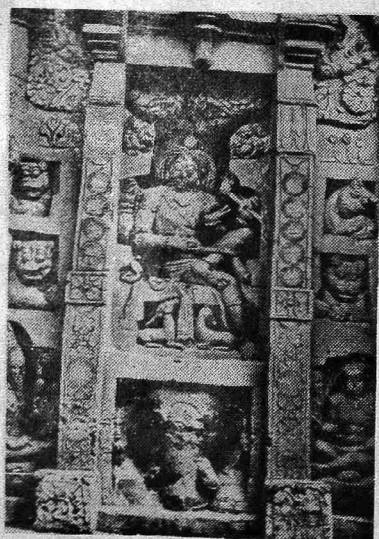


Figure 106

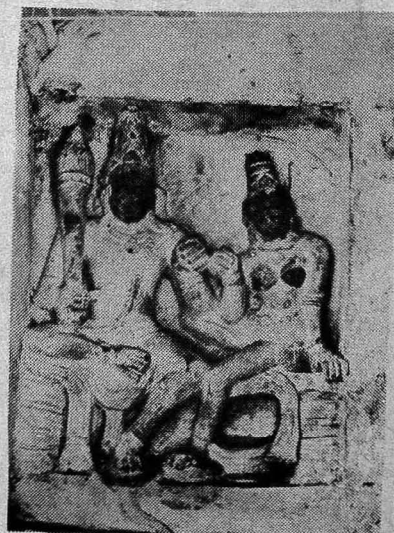


Figure 107

PLATE 27



Figure 108



Figure 109



Figure 110



Figure 111

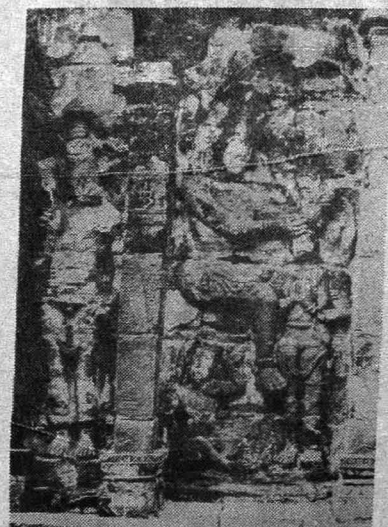


Figure 112



Figure 113

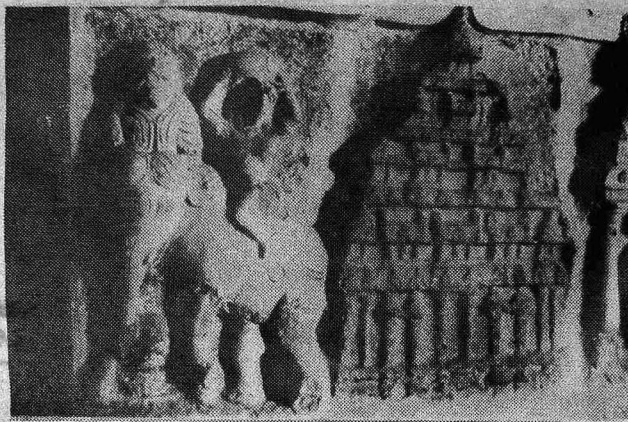


Figure 115

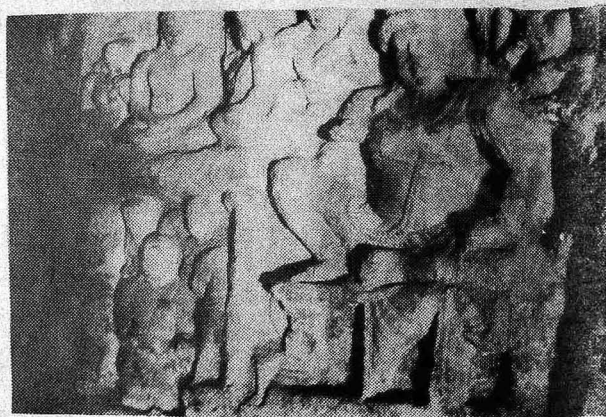


Figure 116

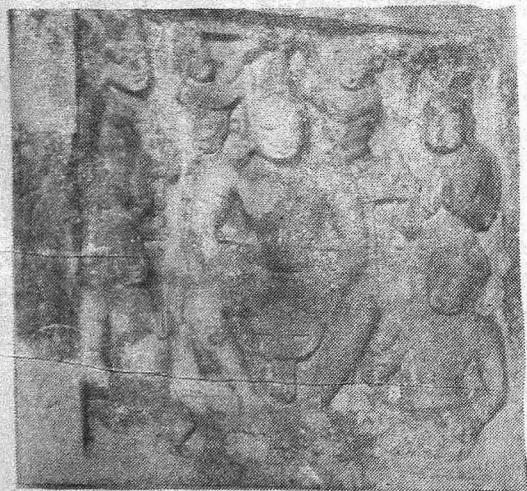


Figure 114



Figure 117



Figure 118



Figure 119

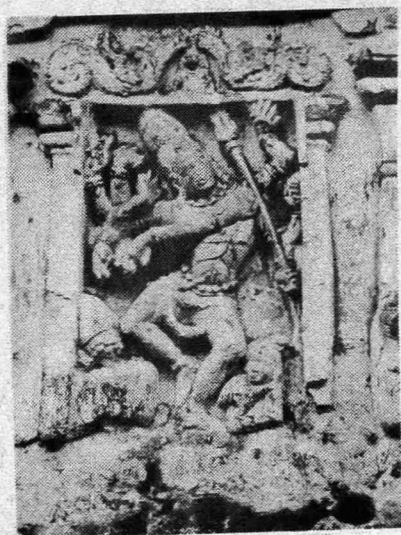


Figure 120



Figure 121

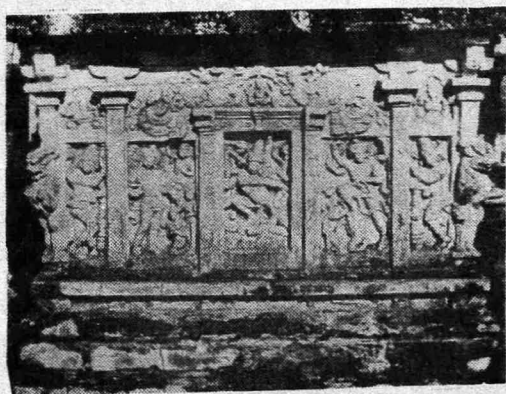


Figure 122



Figure 123

PLATE 30



Figure 124



Figure 126



Figure 127



Figure 125



Figure 128

PLATE 31



Figure 129



Figure 130



Figure 131



Figure 132



Figure 133



Figure 134



Figure 135



Figure 136



Figure 137



Figure 138



Figure 139



Figure 141



Figure 140

PLATE 34



Figure 142



Figure 143

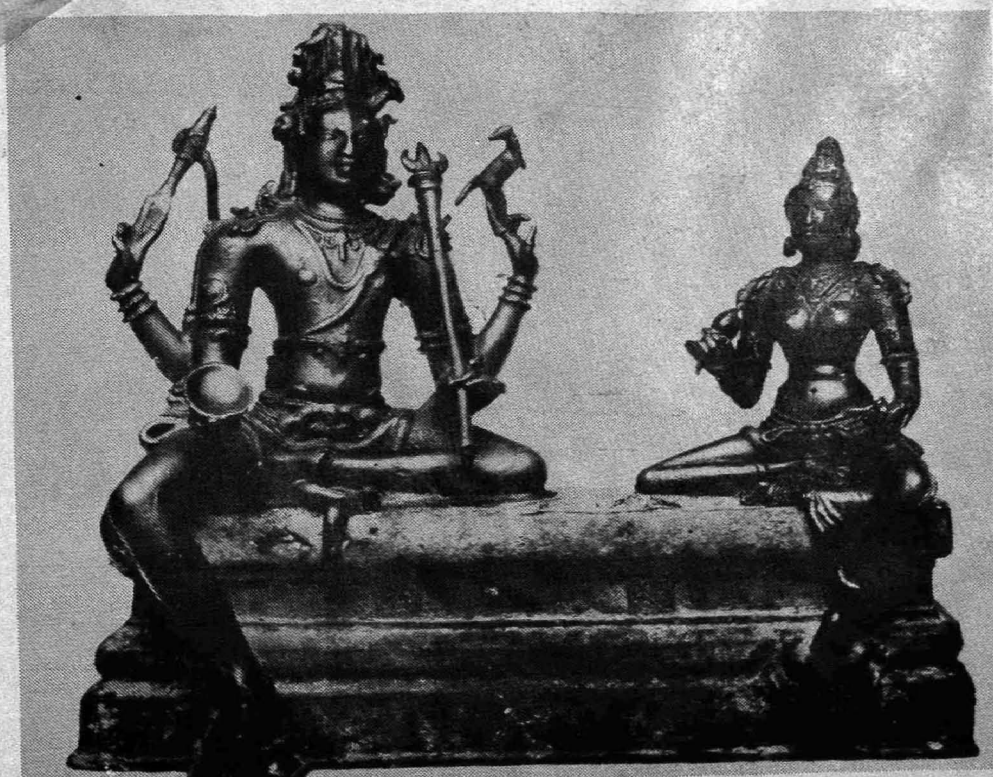


Figure 144

ATE 36

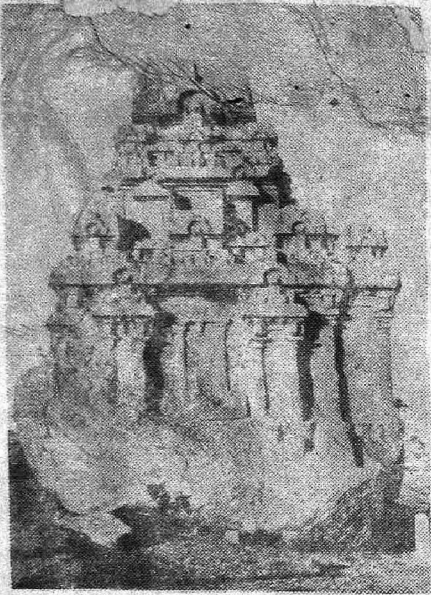


Figure 145

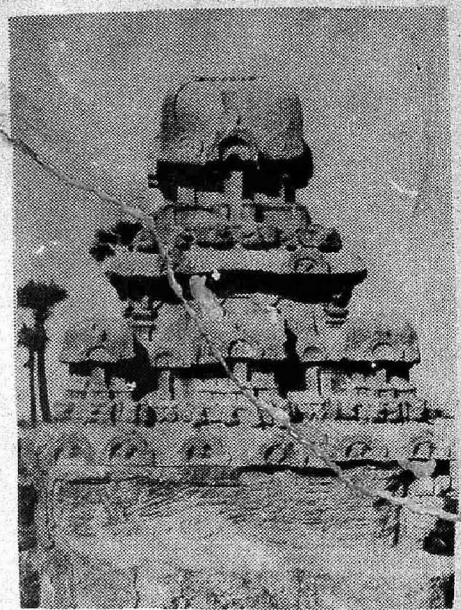


Figure 146



Sketch 1



Sketch 3



Sketch 4



Sketch 2



Sketch 5



Sketch 6



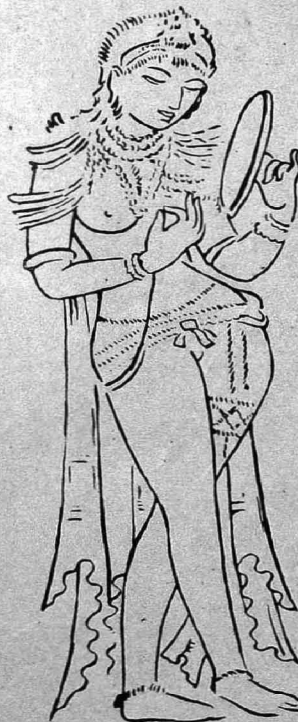
Sketch 7



Sketch 8



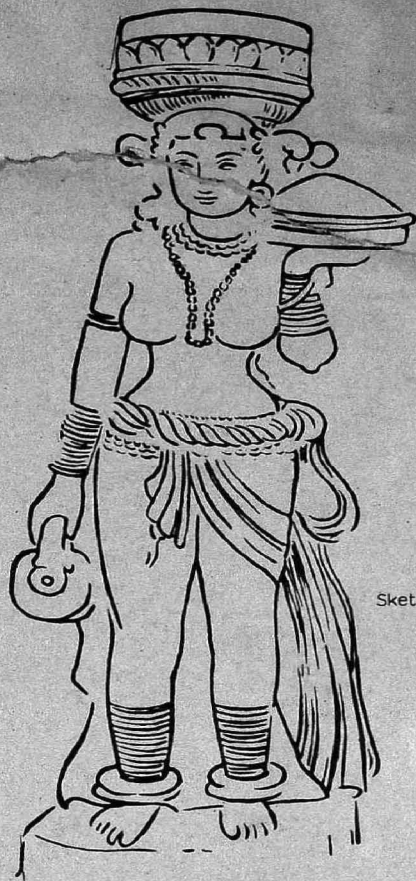
Sketch 9



Sketch 10



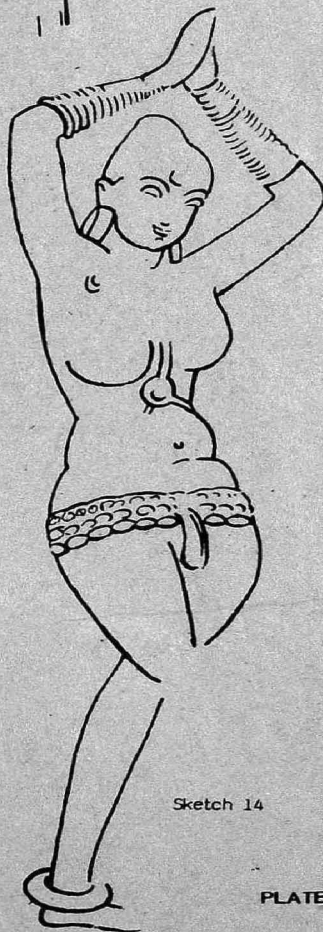
Sketch 11



Sketch 12



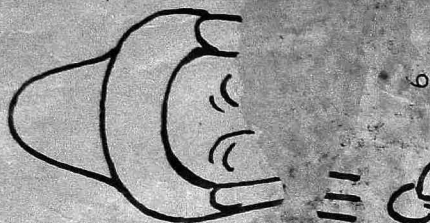
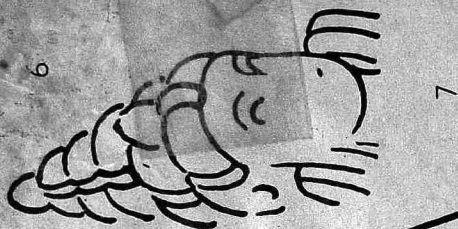
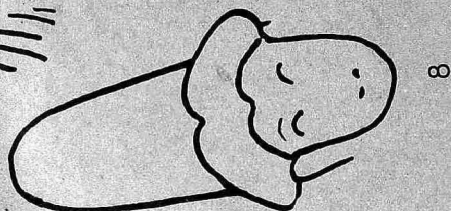
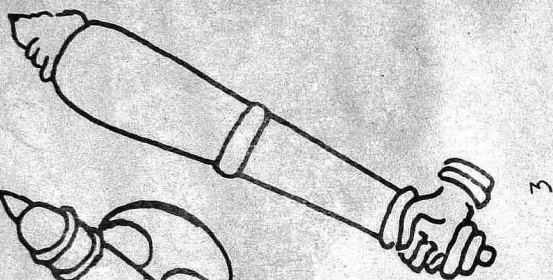
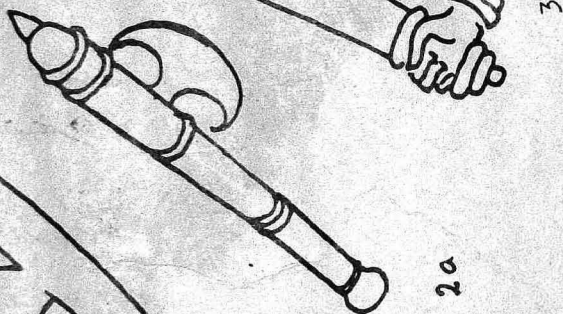
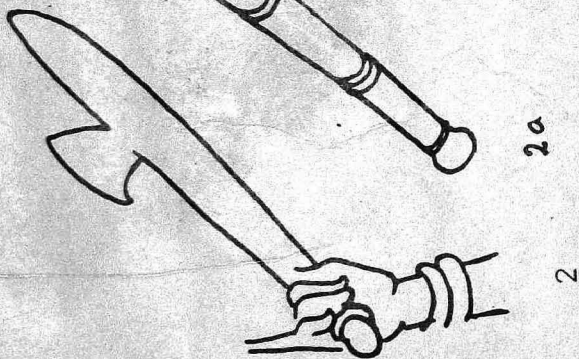
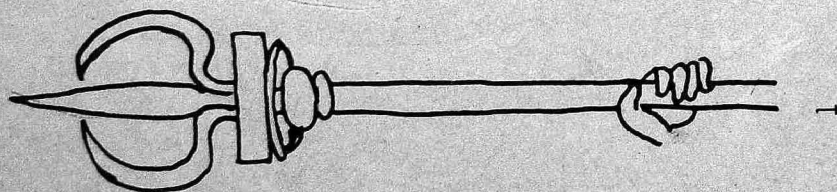
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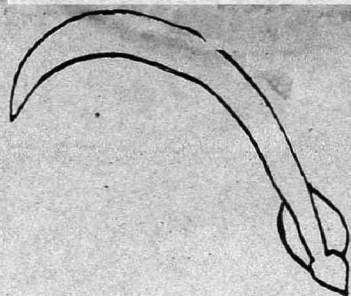


Sketch 14

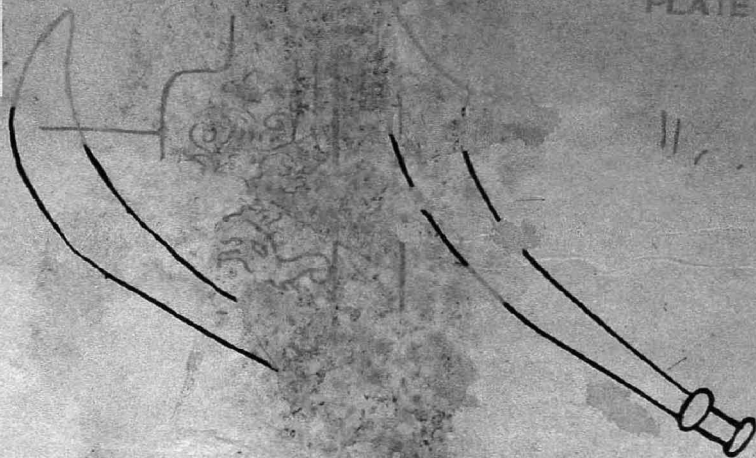


Sketch 15





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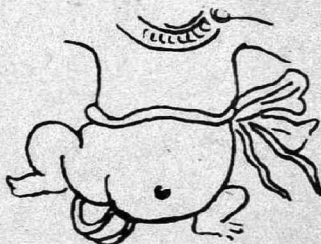
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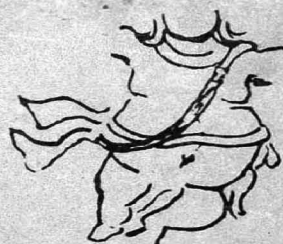
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