

**CULT IMAGES OF KONKAN
(A STUDY THROUGH TRADITIONS, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND
ICONOGRAPHY)**

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Submitted By

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Under the Guidance of

Prof. Pramod Joglekar

October 2015

Certificate of the Guide

CERTIFIED that the work incorporated in the thesis **Cult Images of Konkan (A study through Traditions, Religious Beliefs and Iconography)** Submitted by Ms **Shilpa Hadap** was carried out by the candidate under my supervision/ guidance. Such material has been obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged in the thesis.

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Declaration by the Candidate

I declare that the thesis entitled **Cult Images of Konkani (A study through Traditions, Religious Beliefs and Iconography)** submitted by me for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is the record of work carried out by me during the period from 2009 to 2015 under the guidance of **Prof. Pramod Jogalekar** and has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship, titles in this or any other University or other institution of Higher learning.

I further declare that the material obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged in the thesis.

Date :

Signature of the Candidate

This thesis is dedicated to the great scholar

Dr. Ramchandra Chintaman Dhere

(His works has inspired me for this research)

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Chapter I

Introduction

Konkan is the land situated on the western coast of India. The Konkan region of Maharashtra is consists of Palghar, Thane, Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurga districts (Fig. 1). Goa though politically a separate state, to some extent a cultural part of Maharashtra. For the present study the Sindhudurga and Ratnagiri districts were selected (figure 2 and 3). The focus of this thesis is on the survey, documentation and study of the cult images from these two districts, as the title of the work suggests. In this research the author has tried to study the cult images through traditions, religious beliefs and iconography.

The term ‘cult’ indicates that ‘a system of religious devotion directed towards a particular figure or object’ (Pearsall 1999: 348). The word ‘image’ indicates ‘representation of the external forms of a person or thing in art’ (Pearsall 1999: 708). In the present work the term ‘cult images’ indicates that ‘representation of the external forms of a person or thing in plastic art form, that representing a system of religious devotion directed towards a particular iconic or aniconic object or faith’.

Broadly speaking in the folk life there are many cults, traditions and beliefs. Those traditions exist from the remote times. That may have got changed or modified. There is possibility to consider that the new beliefs have entered in the life of Konkan folk from time to time. Such processes are continuous, relating to spatiotemporal aspects. All the data for this thesis is gathered entirely by conducting the field work in the Sindhudurga and Ratnagiri districts of the Konkan region of Maharashtra.

In these regions, throughout the year, people perform ceremonies and festivals of several deities from the time immemorial. Campbell rightly mentioned his observation in 1880 about this region that “*Devayajnya* has been replaced by *devapooja* and the most significant event in the orthodox Hindu household is the daily ceremonial worship of the family deity. *Panchayatan* worship is important. Backward communities worship Taks (small, flat, low weight and low relief metal images). They are often installed in a grouped with other images in the *Devhara*’ the wooden small shrine placed in houses” (Campbell

1880: 192) Among the Brahmin community the worship is highly systematized called *devapooja*. The worship of these deities is the important part of their religious life. People believe to get inevitable outcomes or adverse effects if they do not perform the daily rituals. Change is the unavoidable in any custom like the worship of cult images from Konkan. In Konkan region the changes are found in the beliefs, importance of worship of deities and the transformation of a main deity into a minor deity. For example, the worship of Gajalakshmi was popular during the rule of Rashtrakuta in this region, but today the old images of Gajalakshmi are ignored and kept along side of the shrine or main deity.

The worship of the folk deities is the important part of lifestyle of Konkani folk. The people of all castes in Konkan region are the worshippers of many folk deities. These deities are scattered all over the region. They worship these deities faithfully, celebrate the festivals genuinely and conduct the processions. People present them offerings. People make vows and complete these vows after fulfilment of their wishes. They have deep faith in deities and their traditions even today.

Mukhavata (mask) is an important element of image worship in this region. The masks are generally made with timber, silver, and copper and rarely with the gold. Many times these masks are offered to the deity by the devotees after the fulfilment of their vows. The masks are mostly used during festivals as the representation of deity during procession to keep it in the palanquin.

In some cases due to tradition of covering the face of images with the mask, author has not been able to see the face of some images. In some temples a flower arrangement was done by the priests. Thus one cannot see the details which are carved around these images such as *Aayudhapurush*, (attendance), *Vahanas*, decorative forms and other motifs.

Campbell 1880 opined about the deities of Konkan that “Whenever a village is founded, it is customary to establish a village deity as the guardian of the village. Certain ceremonies are performed for consecrating the place to the deity, and some time deity called after the village. In the most villages the chief village god is Maruti or Hanuman, whose temple is situated at the entrance of the village which he is supposed to guard against evils of all kinds. The pujaris (ministrants) in most of the temples of Maruti are Guravs, Ghadis,

Marathas or Gosavis. In many villages of the Ratnagiri district the goddess Pandhar is considered to be the gaon-devi or the chief goddess of the village. “Pujari is generally a Gurav or Maratha Kunbi” (Campbell 1880: 192).

Folk literature and *Lokachar* are fundamental elements of our folk culture. Many folk deities whose antiquity probably goes back than the popular Vedic deities are still in worship (Dhere and Gajendragadakar 2000: 70-71) (though the images are may be very recent). For example, in Konkan *Yaksha pooja* is still there. Now people worship these deities in different form. People may perform the rituals with little difference, but the core concept of the worship is still the same. This tradition descends from generation to generation and people still strongly believe in the age-old concepts. The flow of the culture is floating uninterrupted since an ancient time with various innovations. Konkan cult images are the part of such flow of culture. This study is presenting a picture of several important aspects of such dynamic folk culture.

In some cases, Hindus and Muslims both are involved in rituals, e.g. in Karde, a village in Ratnagiri district people perform a ritual of *Katkhel* in *Shimaga*. At that time, Muslim people participate in the Hindu rituals. It is the custom that Hindus should let the Muslims perform the ritual first. The palanquin of Khem is taken first to the mosque and then to the Khem temple.

Whitehead mentioned approximately a hundred years ago about the origin and names of deities of said region that “The names of the village deities are legion. Some of them have an obvious meaning, many are quite unintelligible to the people themselves, and I have often failed to get any clue to their origin, even from native Pandits” (Whitehead 1921: 23). The present author has similar experience during the field visit regarding this study.

The deities were studied in different perspectives in the present thesis: in term of method of worships, traditions, origins, iconography and beliefs. The scope of this study of cult images is vast and profound. All deities, their myths, other information and photographs were collected during field visits. The information is vast. It is very difficult to present the names and photographs of each and every deity as they are scattered over a large area. The noteworthy and unique cult images and worship practices are included in this work.

Many local traditions have unique titles in this region. These titles are like key words of their daily religious life. The general but important term for folk rituals is Devdevaski. This local word is for all types of works related to god. For example putting forward, problems of devotees for consideration of god, daily worship etc. Other similar terms are Gaonrhati and Maryada.

‘Gaonrhati’, is the important word which is used by the local people in the Konkan region to indicate the long tradition of rituals of village. The word ‘Gaonrhati’ indicates that the ways of worship which is created for the progress, peace and happiness of the villages and villagers. ‘Gaonrhati’, means the ways and remedies, making for the pleasure and the satisfaction of the gods, evil spirits and ancestors of the native people (Dhuri 2002: 29).

The fascinating world of the faith and respect about the unknown power is locally called Maryada. The great faith in worship of the gods, goddesses, evil spirits, animals, trees and unknown things comes under the term Maryada (Dhuri 2002: 29). People believe that these supreme powers exist in universe from remote time and the myths or folklores are the result of their phenomena.

Konkan is traditionally called the land of Parashurama. The region of Konkan is full of myths, legends, folk songs, folk stories (e.g. *Kahanya*), praises, preserved, mainly, by the oral tradition. The horizons of folk culture extend far beyond space and time. They are abundant. The influence of the folk culture on common religion is still seen, in the low levels of our present urban life, and it exists at the centre of enculturation of higher classes. An overview of unending flow of folk culture can be studied through classical literature other than folk literature. Folk literature which can show us the foundations of existing folk culture and beliefs has perished over time. The use of many customs is stopped today. Some folk customs have changed due to modern life, information technology, religious conversion, political interests, etc in recent years. The field work done in this region shows many other layers of folk life and its link with cult images.

Frame work of the thesis

In the light of a view of previous works on the study subject, the present study was carried out based on the absence of any specific work devoted exclusively to the study of cult images of the Konkan region particularly in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga districts.

The present thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is the general introduction to the subject, history of study, aim and objective, methodology, types of the shrines and temples and general placement of the cult images.

Chapter II consists of the introduction of the male deities found in Sindhudurga and Ratnagiri districts. Subchapters include Part I: Vyakta male deities, Part II: Avyakta male deities and Distinctive cult images and their iconography. Last part of this chapter is conclusion about the male deities and the local style of these cult images.

Chapter III includes the introduction about the female deities, and it is divided into three parts: Part I: Vyakta female deities. Part II: Avyakta female deities, and Part III: Sixty four Yogini images. Last part discusses the observation that the dominance of the female deities is more than the male deities found in these two districts.

Chapter IV consist introduction about the worship of elements of the nature and also about the worship of the unknown things. This chapter is divided into four parts: Part I: Tree and animal worship, Part II: Ghost and spirit worship, and Part III: 'Taranga' (stick) worship, and Part IV: Memorial stones. Conclusion is last part of this chapter that discusses importance of all these types of worship practices.

Chapter V and the last part incorporate the general observation of the study area and folk cult of these regions. Concluding remarks and discussion of the research work.

Shrines and their contexts

Mandir, Deula, Ghumati, Vas, Pataa, Sthana and Sthala are the local names for the places of existence of deity or unknown power in this region. Some are used to indicate shrines. Many shrines are built on the side of the roads, or are placed in the remote area of the

villages. Some shrines are found in the agricultural fields. In Konkan region we can see varied types of shrines scattered in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga districts.

In Konkan region there are many small villages and each village, small or large, it has its own preceding deities. It may be the head deity or an associate deity. Some of these deities are placed on the plinth beneath a tree (Plate 1(a) and 2) and do not have any type of structure or roof over it. In some examples villagers built a shrine for them but these shrines are very small in size, locally called '*Ghumati*' (Plate 3, 4 and 5). *Ghumati* structure covers only the deity, and not the devotees. In many cases the forms of these deities are Avyakta and these natural stones are daubed in red lead. Most of these village deities have their shrines on the periphery of the village; but it is depending on their position in hierarchy of deities. It is depending on how much that specific deity is vigilant.

In Konkan region it is seen that there are many small shrines built in the premises of the main temple of village god or goddess (Plate 6 and 7). These minor shrines have roofs on it but do not have the walls around (Plate 8 and 9).

The best example of Konkan late medieval temple structure in Konkan is found at the village Tervan, Rajapur Taluka, District Ratnagiri, namely Vimalleshwar Mandir. This temple was rebuilt by Sardar Visaji Krushna Biniwale alias Chinchalkar in 1759 A.D (Hadap 2013: 14) (Plate 10, 11 and Fig. 2). According to local oral tradition Gujarati craftsmen were appointed for the wooden carving and construction of this temple (Hadap 2013: 14). It is interesting to note that the copper plate inscription dated 1260 A.D. has mention of this village and temple, so the antiquity of the deity and temple goes back to 1260 A.D. (Bhusari 1965: 196-198). Bhusari had not visited the village and was not sure about its extant in the village in the modern time. Present researcher has found the temple in a good condition. This is classic example of shrine of a brahmanical deity. The folk and brahmanical traditions of worships are interwoven in this region. They do not have any conflict, rather they support each other. The plan and elevation in given Fig. 2 indicate the distribution of pillars in *Sabha-mandap*, *Mandapa*; pyramid shaped roof of the temple, *Nandi-Ghumati* and *Dipamala*. These are the common features of a Konkani temple structure.

In term of structural material the important elements in Konkani temples are timber and *Chira* (laterite stone dressed blocks). *Chira* walls are used as partitions and also provide strength to the framework (Hadap 2013).

General placement of the cult images

The way of placement of the cult images are noteworthy in this region. In shrines villagers place several Vyakta and Avyakta deities together. Each and every deity from these groups not necessarily has a specific name, and associated ritual (Plate 1, 12, 13 and 14). In some cases the deities are kept outside of the main temple in open air or in a shrine structure (Plate 15 and 16).

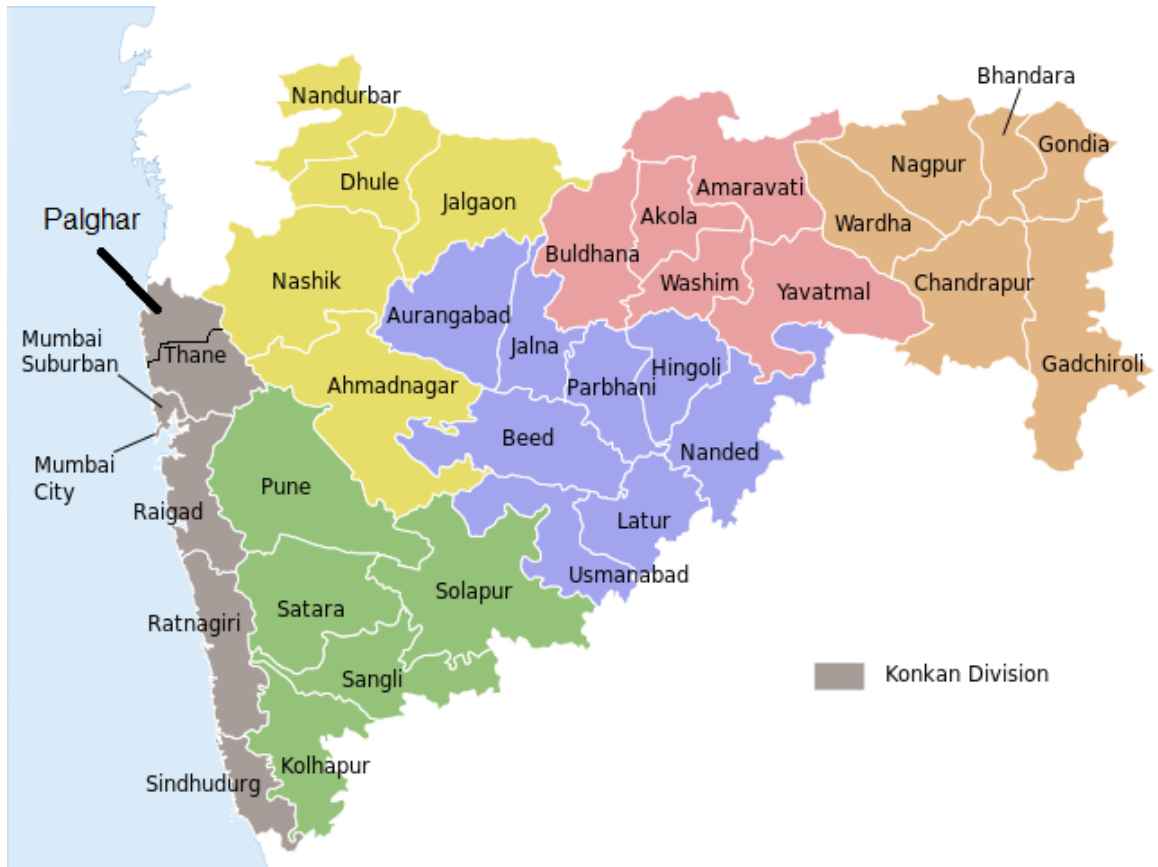


Fig. 1 Map of Maharashtra, showing Konkan Division

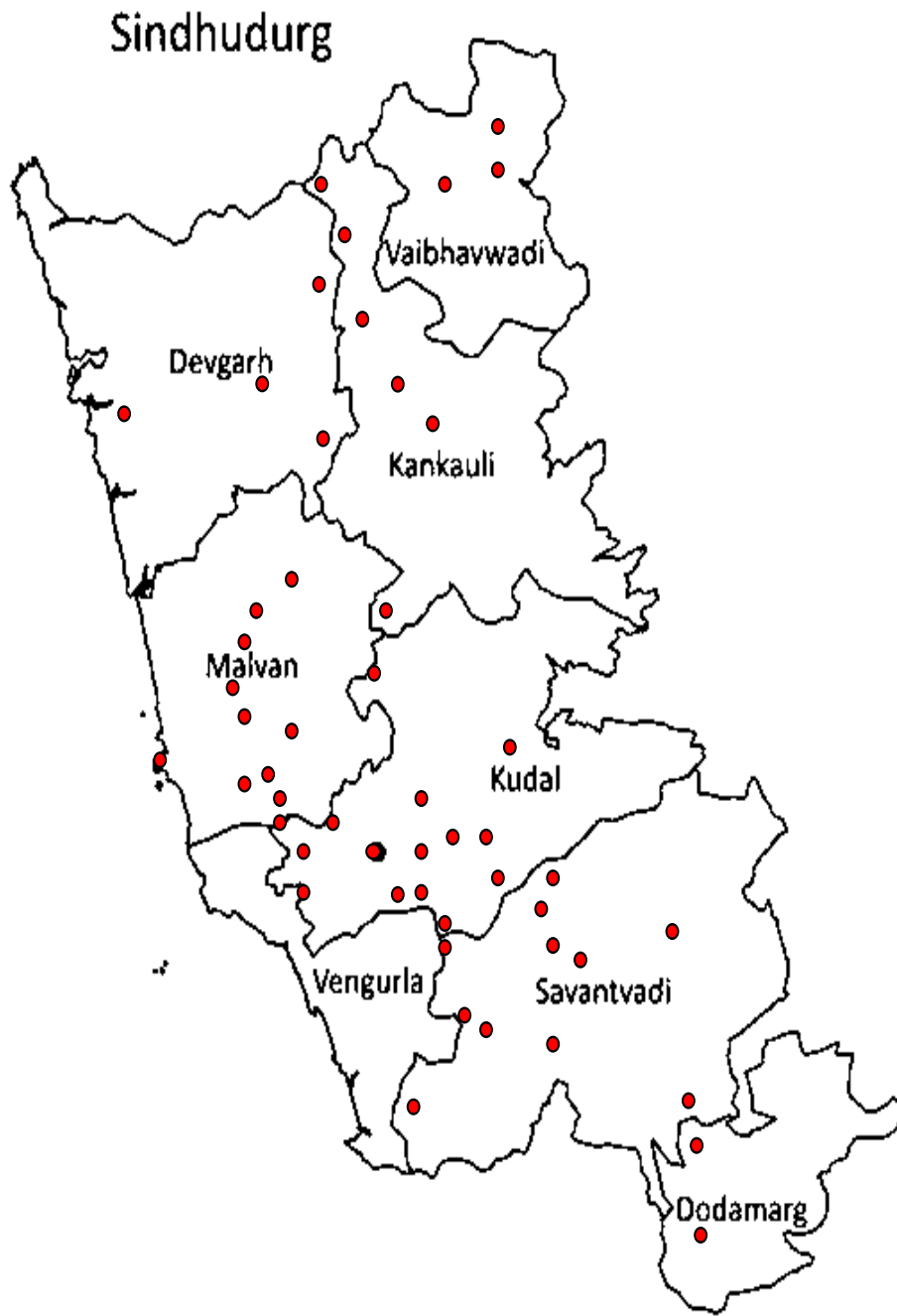


Fig. 2: Map of Sindhudurga District showing the distribution of noteworthy religious sites explored during the survey

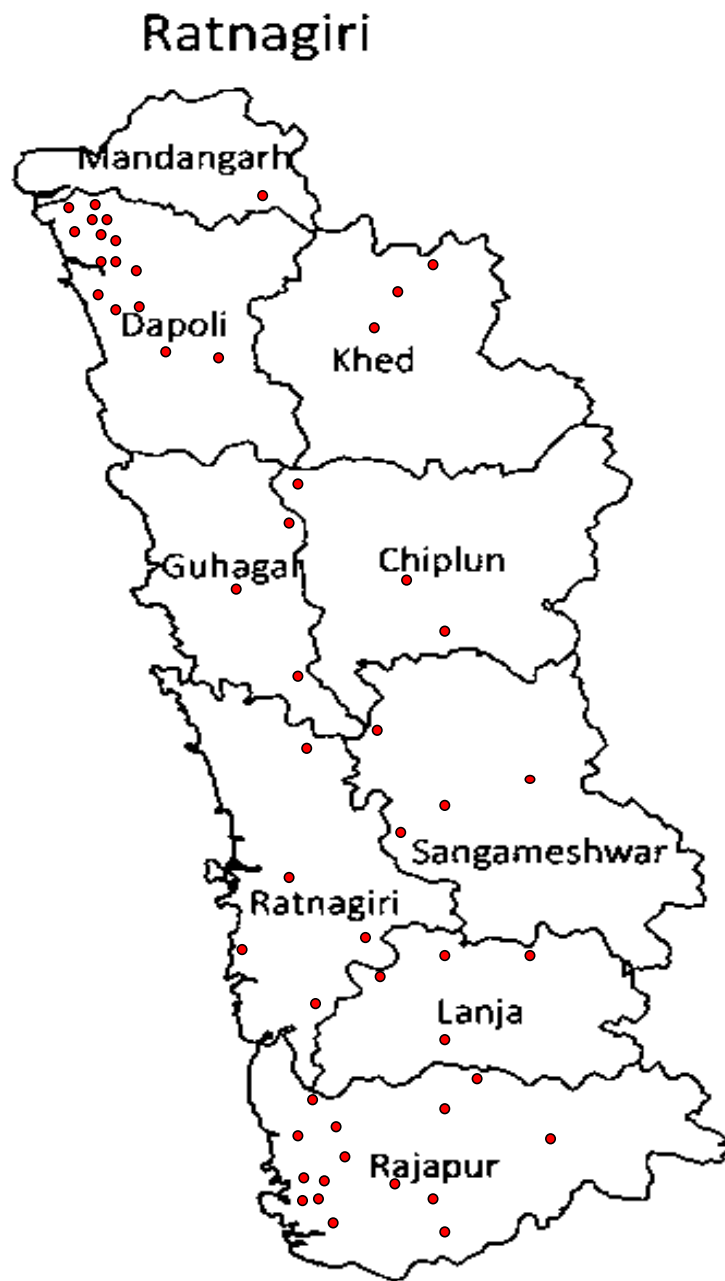


Fig. 3: Map of Ratnagiri District showing the distribution of noteworthy religious sites explored during the survey

Dressed stone or sculptures Main deity Memorial stone also kept as deity

Pebbles or natural stone as deity



Deities are kept in a line or in 'L' shape as well as in 'C' shape. The shrines have shelters, but in most places do not have walls. Present height of walls is maximum 60 cm. In some of the shrines platform of 10 cm is found, which is used as pedestal for deities. The roof of teen sheets or terracotta tiles is found in pyramid shape. The roof is supported by pillars, either wooden or stone.

Plate 1: General placement of deity in the shrine



Plate 1 (a): Deities beneath the tree, Asud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 2: Deities beneath the tree, Murud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 3: Ghumati, Aakeri, Sindhudurga District



Plate 4: Ghumati, Aakeri, Sindhudurga District



Plate 5: Ghumati, Malawan, Sindhudurga District



Plate 6: Lakshminarsyasa temple, Walawal, Sindhudurga District



Plate 7: Santeri temple, Pinguli, Sindhudurga District



Plate 8: Mahapurush temple, Juwati, Ratnagiri District



Plate 9: Nina Devi temple, Juwati, Sindhudurga District

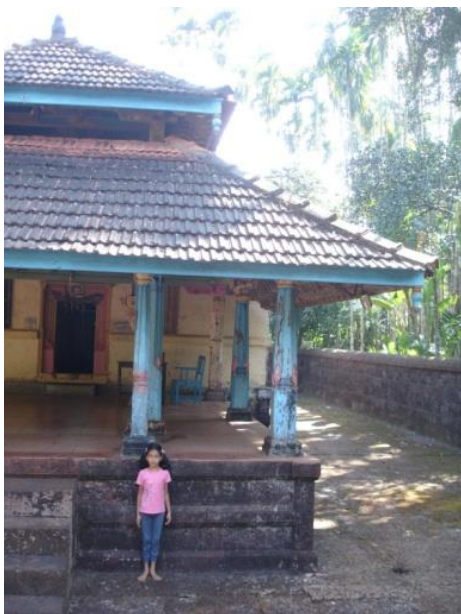
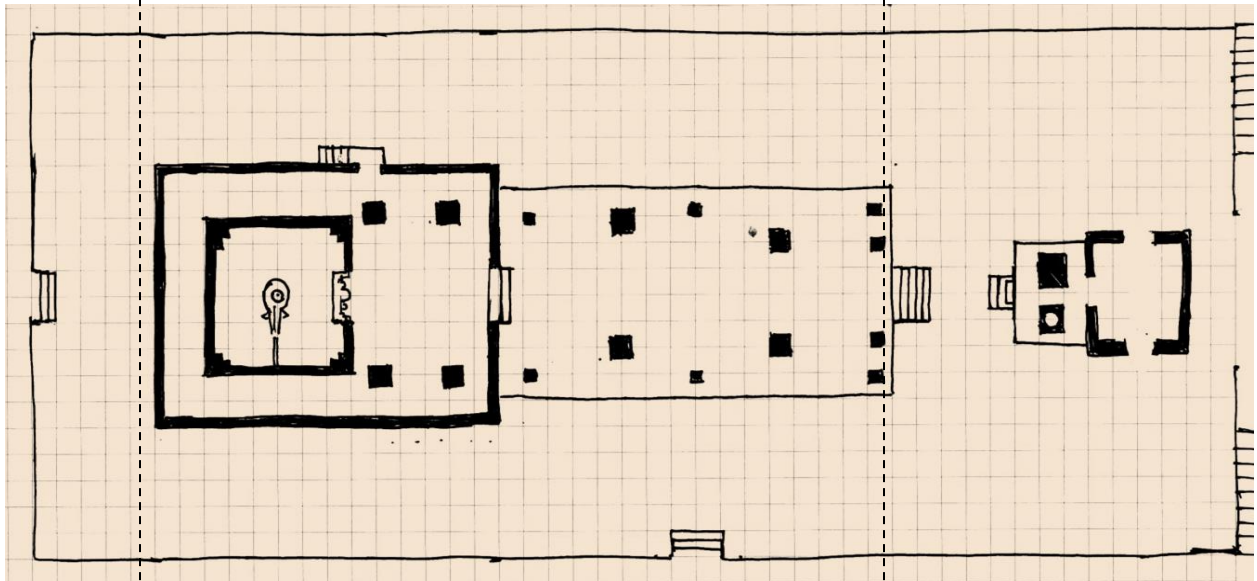
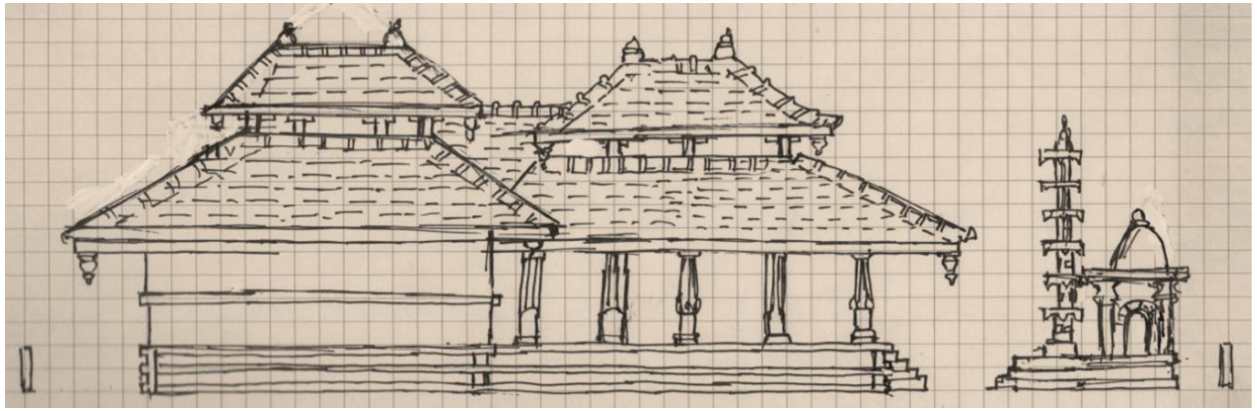


Plate 10 and 11: Vimalleshwar temple, Tervan, Rajapur Taluka, Ratanagiri District



A

B

C

D

E

Fig.4: Plan and Side elevation, a case study of Vimalaeshwar temple, Tervan, Rajapur Taluka, Ratnagiri District
(After Hadap Nitin 2013, 14)

- A. Fencing
- B. Mandap
- C. Sabha-mandap
- D. Dipmal
- E. Nandi-Ghumati



Plate 12: Parab temple, Pinguli, Sindhudurga District



Plate 13: Rawalnath temple, Otawane, Ratnagiri District



Plate 14: Devi Santeri temple, Otawane, Ratnagiri District



Plate 15: Rawalnath temple, Otawane, Ratnagiri District



Plate 16: Tandala kept out side of the temple, Rawalnath temple, Kalase, Sindhudurga District

History of Study

The earliest known work about this area of study is a manuscript written by the author named Raghunath, in 1589. He wrote a manuscript entitled '*Iti Shree Konkan Mahatmya*'. This mythological manuscript informs about the land of Konkan. In this work it is mentioned that in the remote time Parashuram (sixth incarnation of lord Vishnu) has developed or created this land. The text has the names of gods, goddesses and their grandness (Raghunath 1589). The present author has revisited the places mentioned in this text during survey visit.

Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. X (1880), Ratnagiri and Sawantwadi (under government order) is the second important document. In this volume one can get the detailed information about the history of these districts. The information about the temples and the legends related to them gives important clues for further studies. In this volume one can see the reference of the temple of Devi Bhagavati that stands on the edge of a pond (Gazetteer Vol. X 1880, 334). In this gazetteer it is mentioned that the 'the deities of the Hindus can be divided into five classes, viz. 1) Gramdevatas (village deities) 2) Sthandevatas (local deities) 3) Kuladevatas (family deities) 4) Ishtadevatas (chosen deities) 5) Vstudevata or Gruhadevata (house deities established at Vastu- house warming – ceremony)'

Narren (1894) has written the history of Konkan in the gazetteer of the Bombay territory. In this gazetteer, he gave all kinds of information about the people of Konkan. According to him Konkani people worship deities protecting them from diseases, ghosts, spirits and animals. Crawford (1909) has published a book named '*Legends of the Konkan*'. He collected the stories from the native people about their faiths and beliefs upon the god.

Enthoven (1915) has published a monumental work. He has documented worship of the local deities and rituals. He has classified the deities as nature's powers, hero gods, disease deities, ancestors and saint worship, malevolent dead, evil eye and scary ghosts, animal worship, totemic and fetishism. He has also described the traditions, worship, beliefs about the gods and goddesses in the Konkan region. All this information was collected from the teachers of the schools from this region.

Whitehead (1921) presented his study about folk lore in South India. This study is a mirror of his painstaking efforts towards this area of study.

Behare (1955) has written a book in Marathi language - '*Shri Rawalnath Aani Konkanatil Devadevaski*'. In his book he gives information about the folk worship tradition and Taranga deity.

In '*Devikosha*', Prabhudesai (1968: 102) discussed about female deities and mother goddesses from India. According to him the names of the village deities are corrupt versions of the names of the *Pitastha Devata* (places of pilgrimage), for example Kali converted into the Kalamba, Kamakhya - Khamda, Chandika- Chandkai, Padmavati - Padubai, Bhavani - Bhavakai, Mahamai – Mahamai, etc. He has also mentioned about the book written by the N. G. Chaphekar titled '*Chittapavan*'. In this book Chaphekar has given some information about the village deities of the south Ratnagiri district.

Mirashi (1974) has mentioned that Shilahar was a tributary of the great king Rashtrakuta. Rashtrakuta's family deity was Gajalakshmi. In Konkan region Shilahar has installed images of Gajalakshmi abundantly to show their honesty towards Rashtrakuta.

Dhere (1988) has mentioned in his book titled '*Lajjagouri*', about the Taranga deities of South Konkan and Gomantak, (the Goa). He has given the outline of this popular deity of south Konkan.

Sontheimer (1995) published a monumental work folk culture titled '*Among the various gram- devatas of the Desh and the Konkan there is a clear mention of yaksha or yakshini as the gram-deva or gram-devata. In the list compiled by the late N. G. Chapekar in his work in Marathi Chitpavan, the following gram-devatas from south Ratnagiri Dis. Clearly relate to the worship of yaksha yakshini as the village deity. Jakhai, Jakhmata, Jakhadevi, Jakhubai, Jagerdari*'.

Khobrekar (1997) has given list of remarkable objects of worship, for example *Shaligram* (pebble from river), *Shankh* (conch), *Kokra* (dish), a piece of metal (a symbol of

goddess Durga), Crystal (a symbol of Sun) and Ganesh in the form of red stone, and also the list of village deities for example Bhairoba, Mhasoba, Rawalnatha etc. These deities are worshiped by people of all sections of the society.

In Konkan Itihas Parishada's first conference report (Kamble 2003), the president has argued that the further study is needed in this region related to Konkani history and culture.

Ghanekar (2006) has written a book in Marathi in which, the focus is on the useful information about tourism. He has specifically given information about famous temples and the deities in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga districts.

Kunte (2007) has taken painstaking efforts and collected information mostly about the popular deities from Konkan. In his work he has put down the information gathered during his travel in Konkan region. He has published this work as a devotee and for devotees; hence he has neither analyzed nor studied the information critically.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of the thesis was to comprehend the cult images of Konkan region which have been less attended before. The aim behind study is to records the iconography of cult images. The focus is also on the recording the unique traditions and religious beliefs from the study area.

The general objective was to survey the unexplored area from broader archaeological perspective. This study was to find out intra-regional and inter-regional connections from historical point of view.

Present research has also tried to understand roots behind folk beliefs and image worship practices. Another aim was to find relation between day-to-day practice of cult images and role of images in the life in Konkan region.

The aim was to see the ritual practices from naturally remote areas of this region. It was also thought to examine the surrounding evidences, local relevance and oral traditions.

Present research was taken in hand to decipher the human-god relationship from this region as well as to decipher the related social, religious, economic, political, cultural, conditions and its impact on cult images.

Other aspect of objective is to examine religious icons from cultural study point of view. The social aspects of various communities have also added in said studies.

Methodology

The methodology applied for the present research included all available and important sources of information. Literary sources available from the previous works on the Konkan region were studied to understand the potential of the cult images of Konkan. The manuscript written in the sixteen century titled '*Eti shree Konkan Mahatmya*' has been referred to understand the antiquity of the deities from this region. Village to village survey has conducted during survey visits.

Village to village survey of important sites of folk cults, shrines, temples of minor deities has been done in the said region. The interviews of the *Guravs* (priests) and villagers were conducted. Photography and video documentation of the deities, temples, etc. was made during survey visits. To crosscheck the data collected from the fieldwork textual references to the Indian Pauranik traditions, and published material was consulted.

Historical Background of Konkan

According to Chavan (1924: 2) the word "Konkan" has many layers of meanings. In the ancient texts like Kamasutra the land of Konkan is mentions as *Kunkana* or *Kunkuna*. It is said that Muslim writers called it *Kemkem*, *Kankan* or *Komkam*. Various opinions, rather speculations are found about the origin of the word Konkan. It may be derived from the Kannada word *Konku* meaning uneven ground (Chavan 1924: 2).

Chavan (1924: 3) further mentions that during the time of Varahmihir (sixth century A.D.) the word Konkan was well-established. In fact the northern Konkan was under the successive rules of the Mauryas, the Andhrabhrityas, and the Kshatrapas and so on up to the seventh century A.D. In the latter half of the sixth century the Konkan was under the rule of Chalukyas king Kirtivarman.

Dey (1927: 9) mentions that the Aparant was the early name given to the Konkan. Its use is found in the records, epigraphic of Mauryan era. Ashoka sent a Buddhist missionary named Yona-Dhammarakkhita in second century B.C. to Aprant. In Raghu-vansh Kalidas has used the word "*Aparanta*" (Dated 5th century A.D.) which indicates this region. A copper-plate of 584 A.D. refers to Puri as the capital of Konkan. The important of this plate consists in furnishing as with the first evidence of the word Konkan, to be seen in official records (Chavan 1924: 3).

According to Chavan the word Konkan may have been derived from the Persian word "*koh*". Which means a mountain and "*kund*" means a ditch, so the word "*koh-kund*" should be taken to mean a ditch or a ground below a mountain (Chavan 1924: 3).

Chavan has mentioned that there is no question that Konkan ports were the outlets for the products of the whole of India since a very early period (Chavan 1924: 4).

Skanda Purana has given the name of seven parts of Konkan as 1) Barbar 2) Sourastra 3) Konkan (proper) 4) Karhat 5)Karnat 6) Tulang and 7) Keral. Apart from Skanda Purana the word '*Sapta Konkan*' is mentioned in an inscription dated 1034 A.D., in which the Chalukya king Jaya Sinha the third, obtained a victory over *Sapta-Konkan* (Chavan 1924, 8-9).

Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang mentions in his account about a country known as "Kong-Kina- Pulo" indicates Konkan. Alberuni, this has account referred to Konkan and mentions that Thana as the capital. Konkan is known as *Aparanta*, meaning the country near the western end (Chavan 1924: 9).

Chapter II

Male Deities: The Gods

Introduction

The various types of male gods are worshiped in many ways in Konkan region. These male gods appear in variety of types. They are found in the *Vyakta* (Described) and *Avyakta* (Amorphous) forms. Mainly in the non-Brahmanical society the cult images are prominently worshiped. Offering is a common thing in this worship; the range of offerings is from betel leaf to an animal sacrifice. Enthoven rightly mentions about this aspect regarding then (1924 A.D.) contemporary life of Konkan that ‘The ruling factor in worship and propitiation would appear to be fear, fear of power, and all power being a form of god (*deva*) which must be propitiated by offerings if it cannot be rendered harmless by some special rite. The assistant Collector and Magistrate thus becomes a god (*deva*). The sun, moon, earth, stars, rivers, mountains, trees, stones, diseases, are all gods or spirits, with power to work good or evil, and therefore requiring worship, offerings, and propitiation in various ways’ (Enthoven 1924: 15). It is clear that every one, either useful or harmful has become a deity in this region.

In Konkan region in some cases the name of the male deity is same but the form of the deity is different. We can see the example of Gavade Vasa or Bhosale Vasa. In some places this deity has had a *Vyakta* form and other places the same has the other *Avyakta* form. For the devotees the form is not important but the power of deity and faith behind that is more important. Villagers believe that these deities are protecting the villagers from the calamities, so the worship of folk deities is in the main stream of folk life even today.

Vyakta and Avyakta forms of gods

Noteworthy names of the deities found in both the Vyakta and Avyakta forms are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Vyakta and Avyakta deity

No.	Name of Male Deity	Vyakta	Avyakta
1	Vetala / Vetoba	✓	✓
2	Chala	✓	✓
3	Rawalanath	✓	✓
4	Khem	✓	
5	Kshetrpala	✓	✓
6	Veergala	✓	
7	Khatiya	✓	
8	Jain Brahman / Brahman		✓
9	Linga Puja		✓
10	Vasa	✓	✓
11	Bhutnath	✓	✓
12	Baaracha Purvas		✓
13	Holdev		✓
14	Gawaldev		✓
15	Taranga	✓	
16	Gangodeva		✓
17	Barapach		✓
18	Nitkari		✓
19	Mayecha Purvas		✓
20	Varebuwa		✓
21	Teloba		✓
22	Ubhadonda		✓

23	Dandekar	✓	✓
24	Mulpurush	✓	✓
25	Rakshak		✓
26	Mharka		✓
27	Senapati	✓	✓
28	Pata		✓
29	Bhadakomba		✓
30	Gavdoba		✓
31	Barachi / Pachachi Neet		✓
32	Marka		✓
33	Brahman Dev		✓
34	Nagleshwar		✓
35	Chavhata / Baaracha Chavhata		✓
36	Nhavi Vasa		✓
37	Bombaleshwar		✓
38	Shankar (Shiva linga)		✓
39	Vyaghreshwar	✓	
40	Ashtadigpal	✓	

Dev, Nath and Buwa: the common epithets of cult deities

It is interesting to note that some of the folk deities of this region having certain epithets behind their names. We can see the example of Holdev. In this name 'dev' is the epithet and it also shows respect for this deity. 'Dev' means god or lord. If we remove this epithet from the name then we can get the original meaning or transformation of this name (Dhere 2004: 140). If we remove the 'dev' from Holdev it is became a Hol > Holi means the festival which is held in the Indian calendar month of *Falgun* (March). Here we can take another example

and that is the Gawaldev. In this example dev is the epithet and Gawal > Gawali means milkman.

Nath is another epithet; it means the master or the lord. Rawalanath and Bhutnath are popular examples of this kind. The word Rawal is made from Rawan and it means ant hill. Royanb >Rawan = Rawal (Dhere 1988: 152). If we remove the *Nath* from Bhutnath, remain word is Bhut means ghost. Bhutnath it means that lord of all the ghosts and he protects villagers from all type of ghosts.

Buwa is another epithet popular in this region e.g. Varebuwa. If we remove the *Buwa* from Varebuwa, remaining word is *Vare* meaning the wind. Varebuwa means the god of wind. The shrine of this deity is near the sea shore. The name of the deity indicates its role and territory. Another meaning of word *Vare* in ritualistic life in Marathi is the ghost or unknown power. Here the word a *Buwa* indicates the lord or the god.

Most of these village deities have their shrines on the periphery (border or outskirts) of the village as a representation of their village guardian position. Some of these village deities have their temples in the heart of the village. Here are the main village deities and have their special rituals and position in the society.

Part I Vyakta Deities

Vyakta Cult Images of Gods, their Iconography, Myths and Some Observations

In this part folk image of deities like Vetala, Vasa, Mulpurush, Chala, Indrajitacha Hata, Khem, Rawalanath, and Jain Deva are discussed. These cult images have unique place in the life of people. The masses take advises in day to day life from these deities. The images of some of these deities are noteworthy and interesting.

Folk deities and their Images

Vetala

Vetala is an important folk deity of this region. In this region villagers consider god Vetala, as the guardian of the village. He is known as one of the gana of lord Siva. He is presented in literature as a master of ghosts, spirits, and goblins. Because of his violent attributes he became a guardian of village. Siva a lord of ghosts, is always surrounded by goblins, and lives in cremation ground. He wears a Naramundmala (garland of skulls). Vetala is a soldier of Siva. Siva made him a soldier of spirits, so he became a master of ghosts.

For understanding iconography and form of any deity one has to understand the myths about it. Religious texts e.g. Sivashata, Kalika Purana, etc. provide some references in this regard. In the Shalyaparva of Mahabharata, Vetala is known as a disciple, follower or adherent of Skanda. In Mahabharata mother of Vetala is referred as a Matraka, who was in turn also a disciple of Skanda.

There are some myths about the birth of Vetala, has mentioned in Kalika Purana and Siva Purana - shatarudra. Noteworthy myth is mentioned in the Siva-shata. In remote time Siva and Girija were spending time in isolation. Bhairav was the guarding of the enclosure. Siva ordered Girija to do some work for him, immediately Girija came outside. By seeing attractive and beautiful Girija in that state; Bhairav got attracted towards her and he disallowed her to go outside. After this episode she became angry and cursed him saying that “You will take a birth on the earth as a human being”. Because of this curse Bhairav has taken birth as a Vetala on the earth. With Bhairav, as he was great devotee of Lord Siva and Girija; both of them were incarnated on the earth respectively as Mahesh and Parvati.

Another myth related to this *gana* (Bhairav) is found in Kalika Purana. There was a king named Chandrashekhar, he had a queen named Taravati. She has got a curse from a sage named Kapota. Because of this curse Brungi and Mahakala took birth in form of Vetala and Bhairav. Brungi and Mahakala both are the ganas of lord Siva. King Chandrasekhar distributed his wealth among his legitimates. After listening this Vetala and Bhairav became

nervous and went into the forest for penance. In the forest sage Kapota told them to see sage Vashishtha. Sage Vashishtha showed mercy on them and they could see Siva, the *Darshana*. With the advice of Vashishtha they worshiped goddesses *Kamakhya* and she has given them place in the Siva's gana.

Vetala is also mentioned in Bhagwat Purana, Matsya Purana and in Brahmanda Purana. In Matsya Purana he is mentioned as blood and flesh eater. Matsyamahapuranam Part II also indicates that Vetala image should be in dancing posture and should be installed before the lord (Wilson 1983:1123).

The literary sources are not much vocal about the physical description of this deity. In Mahabharata find the description of Skanda's disciples. They have faces on their shoulders, on their belly and on the waist. Some of them have big bellies, big ears and deformed legs. They have awful teeth, auburn eyes, and they wear skin clothes.

In ancient Sanskrit literature the Vetala is considered as a dwarf, grotesque with a cruel soul, who had carried the calamities with him. He is admitted as a monster. He is also a good actor found in the stories of Vikrama and Vetala.

'Vetalapanchvishi', is the supplementary part of the main text which is known as 'Kathasaritsagara', which is written in 1070 A.D. In this text there is a collection of legendary twenty five stories of king Vikrama and Vetala.

Vetala always holds a sword as he is soldier and belligerent. Therefore, at the time of war he is always there. Marathi literature also gives information about this belligerent gana. Vetala is known as *Agya Vetala*, *Jwala Vetala* and *Pralaya (catastrophe) Vetala*.

In the region of the Konkan, particularly in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga districts, this deity has a status of the village deity. Villagers of these two districts have a deep faith in him. In Konkan region we find various types of local deities; for example, Nitkari, Baaracha Purvas, Mulpurush, etc. These types of local deities have large number of devotees. Compared to these important deities, Vetala has less popularity in this region. In some

villages we have examples that villagers have installed him in a small shrine nearby the main temple (Plate 17). People make vows. Konkani people worship him because they have strong belief in ghosts, evil spirits and haunting. They have faith that Vetala is the master of goblins, and can control these dark powers.

An interesting reference about Vetala and Konkani occurs in the manuscript known as '*Eti Shri Konkani Mahatmya*'. It is written by Raghunath in 1667 A.D. The number of verse in this text is 1183. In the section of this text called *Sasasti Mahimana*, author gives names and grandeur of gods and goddesses from this region. Vetala is mentioned in connection with two villages: Ambone and Ajgaon. It is mentioned that in these villages this deity was very famous during his time. Further he has mentioned that 'Villagers and devotees are reading the stories from Puranas regularly in front of him. They are performing the great festivals; they are doing an acclamation of this deity'. Even today, after three centuries this deity in Ambone and Ajgaon is popular. It is interesting to note Enthoven's (1922) observation that Ambone and Ajgaon are the popular places of the worship of Vetala.

There are two types of images of Vetala, one is found in human shape and the other is amorphous. Many villages in Pune and Konkani region have a village deity known as Vetala. In Konkani region we can find both types. But in Pune region he appears only in the amorphous form. In Pune region these amorphous stones are dubbed in the red lead and worshiped as Vetala. In local language these types of stones are called '*Tandala*'. With the main deity (Vetala) another small stones are also placed inside the shrine. They are also dubbed in the red lead. These stones are known as soldiers of god Vetala. The Mahara (traditionally a so-called low caste in Hinduism) community mainly worships this god. They worship this deity without wearing any dress and offer him fowls and goats.

The images of Vetala particularly in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga districts have their own local peculiarities. These images are from sculptural point of view not ideal, but are make an impression at the first sight. Many images found in these regions are undressed and

decorated with the noteworthy ornaments. Today in many shrines priests are put on cloths on the image after worship.

In Konkan region a new tradition is developed very fast, these days. Villagers kept a new idol in the place of old one. An old idol is consigning in the sea or in the well, for example the village Mangaon, Pinguli, Nerur, Pendur and Aarawali (Plate 18, 19). There are two villages in the Konkan; the author has found distinctive images of Vetala, the Kunakeri and the Otawane.

Vetala image from Kunakeri

In Kunakeri (Sindhudurga district) there is a temple of goddess Bhawai. The image of Vetala is kept in the corner of the Sabhamandap of this temple. The height of this stone image is approximately one twenty cm. (Plate 20). He has remarkable *Khadawa* (high soled footwear) in his feet (Plate 20, a). He is adorned with two types of anklets, one is traditional Nupur and the other is snake-shaped anklet. *Mundmala* (Garland of skull) is depicted prominently. It is made by one skull and one big bead (the shape of this bead is giving appearance of *Rudraksha*) (Plate 20, b). Waist band is made of two hanging small bells and tied around the waist. Two bells are hanging with the chain to his waist band. Both the upper hands are ornamented with the snake shape *bajuband*. His matted hairs are depicted as the snakes with serpent hoods (Plate 20, c). A frieze of serpent hoods is also depicted on his crown. Above this frieze we can see a depiction of a five-hooded snake. This image is neither fearsome nor pleasant. The eyes are big, mouth is slightly open and tongue is slightly stuck out. He has a beard and moustaches. *Nama* or *Tilak* is depicted on his forehead. He wears thick garlands. He has slightly big belly. He holds *Vadaga* (bowl) in his left hand and sword in his right hand. The sword in his hand is fixed and not of a moveable type. Villagers make a vow to fulfil their wishes and offer him coconuts and bananas. But there is no specific ritual among the villagers.

Vetala image from Otawane

A similar image of this deity is found in the small village named Otawane, (District Ratnagiri). It is difficult to say about the dating of this image at this stage of study. In this image the sword is absent, but we can see a dagger tucked in the waistband. This image is bare feet. It is made up of stone and the height of this image is approximately one twenty cm. We can see the similarities between the two images i.e Kunakeri and Otawane Vetala. The anklets, hand ornaments and the *mundmala* of this image are just like that from Kunakeri. Waist band has two small hanging bells (locally called *Kargota / Sakhlai*). This image has crown on its head and one can see the snake hoods depicted on it (Plate 21). A dagger is also hanging from the waist band. The upper part of his dagger is as look like as trident (Plate 21, a).

We find unique tradition of worship of Vetala in Ajgaon. The Vetala of Ajgaon is very popular in Sindhudurga district. Villagers believed that he guards or protects their village from all type of calamities. He is a guardian or protector of the village. Villagers strongly believe that during the night time he walks around the village, therefore his footwear becomes worn-out. They make vows and after fulfilled their vows they offer him a pair of new footwear.

Vasa

'*Vasa*' is a local word, meaning perhaps the divine recipients or followers of the cosmic power. These divine recipients are the ancestors of specific Samaj, the clan. *Vasa* have to follow-up the orders given by the cosmic powers to the devotee. This is belongs to the local belief system or known as *Gaonrhati*. The name of family, clan or group of people is placed in front of the word '*Vasa*'; for example, *Parabacha Vasa*, *Gawadyancha vasa* and *Bhosale Vasa*. This deity is found in some villages of this region. Probably it is a concept that the deity belongs to specific group of people. It is noteworthy that this type of folk deity is found in southern part of said survey region and not found in northern part of this area.

Parabacha Vasa

This small wooden icon is kept in the small temple known as Parab temple in the same shrine in village Pinguli. This male figure is depicted in standing position, holding a spear or stick like object in his right hand. He wears a dhoti like lower garment. Villagers called this deity as a '*Parabacha Vasa*'. There is no particular ritual or worship of this deity. Daily worship of this deity is done by local resident Mr. Dhuri (Plate 22).

Parab vasa

Impact of this deity is placed in the premises of the main temple of Rameshwara in the small village named Aakeri, Taluka Dhamapur, and (District Sindhudurga). This image is seating on a horse and two attendants standing of both sides. Left side attendant holds a *chakra* on the head (As told by Mr. Mahadeva Parab). This icon may be the 'first person' (*Mulpurush*) who settled the clan of the Parab (Plate 23).

Gawadyancha vasa

This icon is worshiped only by the people whose surname is Gawade. This small shrine was built in premises of the main temple named Kaleshwar and known as Gawadoba Mandir in village Nerur, Tal. Dhamapur, (Sindhudurga). The image is in standing position. The right hand is holding a sword and left hand is holding a cloth, locally called as Uttariya or Uparane (upper garment). He wears a Dhoti. On his head there is a crown and other ornaments are garland (mala), bracelet and earrings. This male figure may be the guardian, protector of the particular cult which is known as Gavade. May be he is the worrier of this cult. In the ancient time people placed his icon and worshiped him. Villagers told that, this god has to serve the main god Kaleshwar, but what type of service is done by this god could not be known from the villagers (Plate 24).

Shree Dev Nagoji Bhosale Vas

The image is placed in the premises of the main temple of goddesses Santeri in village Kunakeri Taluka Kudal, (Sindhudurga). The name of this temple is 'Shree Dev Nagoji

Bhosale Vas Mandir'. The male figure is sitting on a horse, he holding reins of the horse, in his left hand and sword in the right hand. A small dagger is tucked into the waist band. We can see the two attendants on both side and a third one is depicted at the back of that horse holding a *Chamar*. Left side attendant holds a *Chatra* and right side attendant holds the horse (Plate 25).

Baaracha Purvas

A small icon is kept in the small temple of Lingeswar in village Pinguli, in the Sindhudurga district. Villagers worship this icon as a *Baaracha Purvas*. But iconographically it is actually Rawalanath. A man is shown riding a horse and holding a sword in his right hand, and shield in his left hand. Two attendants are depicted on both sides. Left side attendant of this image holds reins of the horse, while the other attendant holds a *Chamar* (Plate 26).

Minor Deities

Mulpurush

This simple image is also kept in Lingeswar temple in village Pinguli, in Sindhudurga district. The deity has two hands and his right hand is depicted in the Abhayamudra. He has moustaches and a turban. He wears a *dhoti* and a *kurta*, a typical traditional Indian dress. Villagers believe that he is a first male (*Mulpurush*) of their Parab clan. In this small temple there are twelve Vyakta and Avyakta images and villagers worship all these images. They call these twelve deities as '*Baara Thala*' (Plate 27).

Chala

This image is kept in the Rawalanath temple at village Dhamapur. This deity is known as Chala. Chala means destructive power or ghost. He holds a sword and shield in his hands and looks like as a warrior, but the villagers worship him as a Chala. In many villages this deity is worshiped in amorphous (Ayakta) form. But in the temple of Rawalanath, this deity is in human form. If somebody has done a black magic (karani, called in local language) on

his/her enemy, then the victim comes to this temple and praise for protection. They place complaint in front of this deity and believe that their problems will be solved (Plate 28).

Indrajitacha Hata

A hand of a woman is depicted on the stone slab seen in Nerur (Sindhudurga). This type of stone slab is known as Satishila. Some unidentified object like (triangle) is depicted nearby. Villagers worship this stone as Indrajit's hand. This slab is kept in the small shrine known as Brahmanath Temple and this small shrine was built in the premises of the main temple called Kaleshwar Temple (Plate 29).

Khem

Only in Karde village author found a face carved on the oval shape stone. Villagers of Karde worship this deity as a Khem. Khem may be the corrupt version of Sanskrit word Kshem. Kshem means welfare, well-being and happiness. In Prakrut Ksha are converted in Kha, and the Khem is the best example of this kind. The image of Khem has a face with moustaches and has an appearance of a Mukhalinga. The antiquity of the Mukhalinga goes back to the 1st century B.C. (Joshi 1979: 313-315). Earlier the idol of Khem was taken in procession from one village to other. But now a day this custom is not in practice. In the remaining part of these two districts the appearance of this deity is in Avyakta form (Plate 30).

Mahamai

This image is known as a 'Mahamai', which is placed in the Khem temple at Karde village. According to the villagers this image is worshiped as a female called Mahamai. But it is clearly seen that this is not the female figure but it is male one. Artists made it in typical Konkani style. The figure is short and bulky. He wears a *dhoti* type cloth. He has four hands. He holds a bud of the flower like object in his upper left hand, small *Vadaga* (pot) in the lower left hand. In the upper right hand he holds a sword like weapon and in the lower right hand he holds an unidentified object. There is no local myth related to this icon (Plate 31).

Jain Deva

Villagers of Nerur village worship this deity as Jain Deva. This image is placed in the Deva Jain Brahman Mandir, in the premises of the Kaleshwar temple. This image has two hands: in right hand he holds a *Japmala* and in his left hand is in *Varadamudra*. This image looks like of an ascetic. He has a short beard. Two attendants are in standing position on his both side (Plate 32). The followers of this deity are not associated with Jain religion. Even iconography is not similar to any Jain deity.

Apart from folk cults, the worship of Brahmanical images is also in practice. In addition the Jain images are also in worship. The deity like Rawalanath is worshiped mainly by everyone. The typical Jain deities are worshiped only by Jain community.

Brahman Dev

The deity is called Brahman Dev but it has no any connection with the brahmanical worship. There are few images and two Shiva lingas are kept in the small shrine which is built in the premises of the main temple known as Bhagavati Devi Mandir, village Kudal (Sindhudurga). Villagers called and worship these deities as Brahman Dev. According to the local people image on the left side is known as Brahman Dev and right side image is known as Narayan Dev. There is no particular ritual of these deities. Because of humid climate, now these figures are eroded.

The author has identified the leftmost figure from this group as of Balaram. The tradition of the worship of Balaram began in the period of Kushans. Worship of Balaram takes place in Jainism also. Twenty six types of Balaram icons of the Kushan period are divided into four groups, as per their number of hands, depiction of the snake and Aayudha (weapons) (Joshi 1979: 74).

The figure of Balaram from Kudal wears a crown of snake's hood, his right hand is in Varadmudra and he holds a plaque in his left hand. In this icon the snake hood is like the Prabhamandal. Sometimes Balaram is connected with the other deities also, like Krishna,

Ekansha and Parshwachar Baladev of Tirthankar Neminath. With this icon of Balaram, many other deities are found in this small temple that were unidentified icons, Veeragala or hero stone and two Siva linga (Plate 33, a).

Brahman

This small figure is kept in the small temple known as Brahman temple in the premises of Bhagavati Devi Mandir, village Kudal (Sindhudurga). This deity is worshiped by the People of Brahman caste. This male icon in standing position has two hands. In its left hand he holds a Kamandalu and in right hand a stick. It has a *dhoti* like lower garment. This deity has no particular worship or ritual. All the above small shrines are in the vicinity of the main temple of goddesses Santeri and different clans are worshiping these deities for generations (Plate 34).

Bhutnath

This small slab with the two icons is found (Plate 35) in the temple known as Bhutnath Mandir in village Nerur, Taluka Dhamapur (Sindhudurga). These two figures are in the seating position: one is man and another is a woman. From their posture they look like devotees of god. But local people called them as Bhutnath. There is no myth or local story related to these figures.

Rawalanath

Rawalanath is a famous deity in the both districts. Almost each and every village has the temple of this deity. It is assumed that he is a celibate deity. Rawalanath is an incarnation of Shiva and therefore the attributes of Siva like *Damaru* and Trident are depicted in his hands. The priest of Rawalanath is strictly traditionally either from the Jangam or Gurav family. This deity is worshiped by all people.

The one idiom used in the Konkan region which is '*Rawalanathchi Kule*' (in local language). The meaning of this idiom is 'mob of ghosts'. Siva and ghosts are very close to each other. Thus this idiom shows that Rawalanath is incarnation of lord Siva. Near

Kolhapur there is a hillock known as 'Jyotibacha Dongar' or Ratnagiri. Jyotiba is known as Kedar Rawalesha. Mahalakshmi brought him from Himalaya to fight with the demon named Kolhasura. Moreover, he has killed two other demons named Ratnasur and Raktabhojan. Kedar Rawalesha has brought a Linga from Himalaya and installed it as Kedareshwara. This myth is mentioned in text called 'Karavir Mahatmya'. This has become popular deity as a Rawalanath in Konkan region and the grandeur of this deity pervade everywhere (Behare 1955: 17, 18).

Rawaleshawar is another name of Jyotiba. There is a myth related to this name. Rawaleshawar is the incarnation of 'Rawagni' means anger of saint Jamadagni. When Jamadagni slew his wife Renuka, he abjured his anger. After this incident Parashuram, Navanath, sea, jungle, and the whole world shared the anger of Jamadagni. Kedarnath collected the anger from the Navanath and incarnate as a Rawaleshawar / Rawalanath.

The image of Rawalanath in Kalase village, Taluka Dhamapur, district Sindhudurga is in standing position and has four hands. In his upper left hand he holds a snake; in the lower left hand he holds a vessel. He holds Parashu-like weapon in his upper right hand and in lower right hand a sword is depicted. This image has a Kirit (crown), earrings, and garlands. On the lower body dhoti-like cloth is depicted. At the bottom of the right side of the icon there is a tortoise. And tortoise is the Vahana of god Rawalanath. This image kept near the ant-hill which is known as goddess Santeri (Plate 36).

A small icon of the Rawalanath is kept in the Rawalanath temple, village Nerur, Dhamapur Taluka, District Sindhudurga. This icon has four hands. In upper right hand he holds a *Damaru*, in lower right hand he hold a *Khadga* (sword), in upper left hand *Trishul* (trident) and in lower left hand *Patra* (cup). He wears a crown on his head and few ornaments on his body. Some decoration is there on the back stone of this icon (Plate 37).

A distinct image of Rawalanath is kept in the Kaleshwar temple, Nerur village, District Sindhudurga. Iconographically this deity is known as Rawalanath. We can see a deity in human form sitting on the horse. He holds a sword in his right hand and shield in his left

hand. He has moustaches. He has crown on his head. Two attendants are depicted in standing position on both sides. They hold a *Chatra* (an umbrella) in their hands. The most interesting part in this image is that, the horse is in a seated position. Below the horse there is face of an animal that's look like a tiger. May be the horseman deity who is known and worship as a Rawalanath is originally a warrior or *veer* of that particular village in remote time and then got converted into a god. Villagers call this image as a Kuladevata -Pata. There is no myth related to this deity in this village (Plate 38 a).

The image of Rawalanath is kept in the small temple of Rawalanath in village Dhamapur. This image may be a new image and is fully covered by cloths and on the face villagers had fixed a metal mask. This icon is sited on a horse (Plate 39). At the right side of the main god Rawalanath his three generals (Senapati) are situated. Two of them are sitting on horses. The third is in standing position, and looks like a warrior. There is scope to assume that the generals, who are called Senapati by the villagers, may be the old icons of Rawalanath. The iconography of these images is similar to the main deity (Plate 40).

The image of a Rawalanath installed in the Rawalanath temple, village Otawane in District Sindhudurga. This temple was built in 1623-28 A.D. by Khem Sawant-Bhosle. This image has two hands. In his right hand he holds a sword and a Trishula (Trident). Horse, the vahana of Rawalanath is also depicted here. Villagers held his festival on Khande Navami and Dashami. They also arrange the marriage ceremony of Rawalanath with Devi Santeri every year. A festivale of this deity is held on Tripuri Pournima and on the day of Dahihandi (Plate 41). According to Behare (1955: 19) people believed in curing snake bite by brining the person in front of the deity.

On the pedestal of this image, a tortoise and snake are depicted. According to Madhusudan Gawkar (a priest of this temple), in this village villagers never kill these two animals. They believe that these animals are the vehicles of this god. On the bottom of this figure a tortoise is carved. On the back of this tortoise we can see the depiction of the snake. Vyala-like composite beasts are depicted on the both side of this snake (Plate 41, a). In case

of tortoise and snake we can refer to Enthoven's observation about the belief regarding these two animals in Konkan region. Some believe that there is a tortoise under the divine cobra that supports the world; others go further, and add a frog below the tortoise; and it is said that slightest motion on the part of either the tortoise or the cobra is the cause of an earthquake (Enthoven 1915: 34, 35). Similar episode is also depicted on the pillar of Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, District Sindhudurga (Plate 42).

A small stone slab of Rawalanath is kept in a small temple, which is known as Devi Santeri. This is situated in village named Pinguli, Taluka Kudal, Sindhudurga District. The figure is seated on the back of the horse and holds a sword and shield in his right and left hand. Two attendants are portrayed on the both side. The right side attendant holds an umbrella (Chatra) on the head of that horseman. Left side attendant is depicted only in standing position. Iconographically this image is known as Rawalanath (Plate 43).

The two stone slabs are kept in the temple of Bhavai in the main temple of Kunakeri. Left icon of Rawalanath is a recurring symbol of the folk deity in Konkan region. This male icon is sitting on the horse holding a spear in right hand. One attendant is standing beside him. He holds a sword in his hand. Below the mouth of the horse a face like that of a tiger is depicted. There is another stone slab kept beside this image. On the slab three human figures are depicted. Main figure is sitting in the palanquin. May be he is a king or may be the head of some clan. He is in sitting position and holds a sword in his right hand. Left hand is kept on his left thigh. Two attendances are carrying his palanquin. May be the horseman went on the hunting and fought with the tiger. In this fighting perhaps both the tiger and the horseman died; therefore in the second slab artists showed that he became a hero god and attendants took him in the heaven with them (Plate 44).

The figure of Rawalanath is placed in the small temple named Manai in the Village Taksul, Dapoli Taluka, Ratnagiri District. He is in standing position, behind this god, his vahana, horse is depicted. He holds sword, shield, *damaru* and dagger. There is nobody to

give any information about these deities, so that the local names of these deities are unknown (Plate 45).

Jain deities

A Jain temple named Chandraprabha Jain Mandir is situated in village Kharepatan, Taluka Rajapur, District Ratnagiri. Main image of this temple is known as Chintamani Parsrwanath. A myth about this image was told by the priest of this temple named Gajakumar Pandit. Before 127 years the great-grandmother of the priest went on the bank of the river named Sukhanadi for washing clothes. At that time she found the image in the water. Villagers built the temple. Now the temple is totally renovated. On the terrace of the temple there is a shrine. In this shrine the image of Adinatha is placed. This image was found in the Vhayangani village while ploughing the field. This information was given by the same priest.

Chintamani Parsrwanath

The image of Chintamani Parshwanath is in standing position. It is made up of black stone. In Jainism this position is known as Khadgasana or Karyotsarga Mudra. Serpent hoods are depicted around the head of this image. Serpent hood is the characteristic of Parshwanatha. Coils of the snake are depicted behind the image. It is difficult to say about the dating of this figure (Plate 46).

Adinath

Adinath or Rushabhath is the first Tirthankar. The image is placed in a small shrine on the terrace of Chandraprabha Jain Mandir. This image is in sitting position (Plate 47). On the pedestal of this image a bull is depicted in sitting position. Bull is a symbol of Adinath (Plate 47, a).

Chaturmukha

The small stone carving is kept in the window of the same temple. Villagers called it Chaturmukha. Most probably this piece of stone is a part of some ancient temple. It has four sides. On the four sides of this part sitting figures are depicted. There is scope to assume that these figures are of Adinath, Parshwanath, Nemi and Mahavir. This type of figure is called 'Sarvobhadra' (Joshi 1979: 338). Two human figures are depicted on each corner of this piece (Plate 48).

Chaturvinshtika or Choubisi

In this type of sculpture twenty four figures of Tirthankar are depicted together. Therefore this sculpture is known as Chaturvinshtika or Choubisi. Generally image of Adinath is depicted at the centre and other Tirthankars are depicted around. In some cases Parshwanath is depicted instead of Adinath (Plate 49).

Many images made up of brass, copper and stone are kept in the Chandraprabha Jain / Jin Mandir. Some images are in standing position, some in sitting position, and some Chaturvinshtika can be seen in this hoard. Two Chaturvinshtika from this hoard have an inscription on the rear side (Plate 50). The details of these images are as follows

One of the Chaturvinshtika is having three inscriptions; first is on the rear side, second is on the front side and the third one is at the left side of the plinth of the image. The script of these inscriptions is Devnagari and the language is probably Prakrut. The word carved on the front side of the plinth is probably 'Dharnaya or Dharmaya' (Plate 51). The word carved on the left side of this plinth is probably 'Upoda or Upada' (Plate 52).

On the rear side of this Chaturvinshtika author found an inscription. On the top of the rear side Shri is depicted. Below this word 'Shri', three lines are depicted; these are 'Shake 1164 or 84 Nandan Nam Savsere (Savstare) Aa.....' (Plate 53). The date of the image goes back to 12th c. CE.

On the second Chaturvinshtika the twenty four Tirthankars and some human figures are also depicted. Two figures like Tirthankars are carved on both side of the main figure. Male and female figures are depicted beneath the main sitting figure. Here we can see the composite animals carved on the both side of this Chaturvinshtika. Gajalakshmi is also depicted here (Plate 54). An inscription is inscribed on the rear side of this image. The script is not easy to read and it is a separate area of study. (Author will try to read and study of this inscription separately with help of other scholars).

Brahmanical deities and their Images

Brahmadeva

The iconography of this Brahmadeva is common as it found all over India. This figure has four hands, two legs and three heads. He holds *Pali* (ladle) in his upper right hand and *Japmala* (string of beads) in his lower right hand. It holds a book in his upper left hand. It has a crown on his head. This temple is built in the premises in the Kaleshwar temple for the completion of the *Panchayatan* (the group of five temples) (Plate 55).

A wooden panel is carved on the ceiling of the Kanakaditya temple at Kasheli in Ratnagiri District. In this panel we can see the five human figures. Three of them may be the attendant of the main figure. Forth one is lying near the feet of this main figure and he holds a lotus bud in his right hand. May be this figure is vahana of this main god. Local people named it as a Brahmadev. It has eight hands. In the most upper left hand he holds some unidentified object. In the second upper left hand is a bud of lotus. In the third left hand again is an unidentified object. In the lower left hand there is a spoon. In most upper right hands there are some unidentified objects. In its third right hand (from upside) he holds a *Trisula* (trident) and in the forth right hand he holds a snake. This deity is wearing a dhoti. He has moustaches (Plate 56).

Hanuman

The images of Hanuman are found all over India. Konkan is not an exception to this. In this study some interesting local names of Hanuman were found, e.g. Nagada Maruti. The image of Maruti is found at Nerur, Taluka Kudal, Sindhudurga District coated with red lead pigment. In the month of January villagers perform a *Dashavatar* in front of him (This information was given by Radhabai Krushna Kambali). The name of this deity may be the degeneration of his original name. There is no mace (*Gada*) in his hand, which is the characteristic of god Hanuman. So there is no *Gada* in his hand and Na-Gada is may be converted in Nagada means no mace in his hand (Plate 57).

From the 8-9th century the images of Hanuman are found in India (Joshi 1979: 321). The figure of the Hanuman is also found from the Siva temple, Bovanewadi. This village is in between Murud and Asud. This figure of Hanuman has moustaches. His right hand is in 'Chapat Mudra' (a slap) and left hand rests on the left thigh. He holds Panavati under his feet. An interesting thing is he holds a human figure in his tail, this figure is unidentified. That small figure holds a tail which is around the neck of that figure (Plate 58, a).

Vishnu

The image is kept in the small shrine known as Brahmanatha temple, village Nerur, Sindhudurga District. Vishnu holds *Chakra* (discus), *Shankh* (conch), *Gada* (club) and the forth one is in the abhaymudra (Plate 59).

The small figure of Vishnu is kept in the Yakshini temple in Mangaon village, Sindhudurga District. He has four hands; he holds *Shankh* (conch) in his upper left hand. In his lower left hand there is a *Vadaga* (pot). His lower right hand rests on the mace and he holds a Chakra in his upper right hand. This figure is decorated by lots of ornaments. There is some decoration on his dhoti also. One figure is depicted in sitting position, at the left side of Vishnu. May be he is devotee of lord Vishnu. This figure is sitting in the Padmasana (Plate 60).

The image of Vishnu is placed at Manai temple in village Taksul, Taluka Dapoli, District Ratnagiri. The style of this icon is as similar to that of Gupta style. He holds *Shankh* (conch) in his upper right hand, *Chakra* in his upper left hand, *Gada* in his lower left hand and lower right hand is in *Varadamudra* but a small lotus bud is depicted on this hand. This icon is fully ornamented; each and every finger is decorated with rings. Also bracelets, and elbow ornaments are depicted. He wears a short crown like Gupta style. A long and decorative *Yadnyopavit* (sacred thread) shown as an ornament on this icon. This ornament has become very famous from 11th-12th A.D.

Decorative *Kamarbandha* and the highly ornamented figures is the main characterization of mediaeval period. The weapons are holds loosely and fingers are depicted in delicate style. In this period the Aayudha of Vishnu had also become very decorative. In this period *Gada* (mace) became long and short also. A strip of *Shankh* became very long and this style was newly introduced in this period. There are ten incarnation of Vishnu depicted on the '*Prabhavalaya*' of this icon. On the right side of this figure Garuda Vishnu's favourite vahana is depicted, Garuda holds his hands and is depicted in standing position. One small male figure is depicted near to this Garuda. May be he is Aayudhaprusa. In the left side of the Vishnu, one female figure is depicted. She may be the Shreedevi or Lakshmi or may be the figure is known as Gadadevi and she holds a Shreephala or Kumbha like object in her left hand. Broken crown is placed at the bottom of this figure. Kirtimukha is depicted on it (Plate 61).

Lakshmikant

This small temple is situated in the small village named Bhu, District Ratnagiri. This deity is known and worshiped as Lakshmikant, as Gramdevata of village Bhu. Villagers celebrate the festival of this deity, in the month of Kartik (November), from *Dashami* to *Tripuri Pournima*. The worshipers of this deity are mostly Karade Brahmans.

According to the villagers this deity has no weapons. The priest covers this deity by cloth; therefore it is very difficult to see any details. A local play of *Dashavatar* is present by

the devotees in the front of this deity; and another famous story of Parashuram and Sahastrarjuna is also present in the front of this deity. Priest was not ready to remove cloths of this image because it is only done at the time of the Pooja ritual at the dawn (Plate 62).

Keshavraja

This deity is known as Keshavraja, village Asud, Taluka Dapoli, District Ratnagiri. This figure has four hands. In its upper left hand he holds a *Chakra* (disc). Its lower left and right hands are covered by cloth and in his upper right hand he holds *Shankh* (conch). His head is also covered by the cloth and the priest of this temple has done some flower arrangement on it. Therefore, it is very difficult to say whether he has a crown or any other headgear. The ears are not of normal size, they are big and face is slightly peculiar (Plate 63). In Konkan region the ears of the cult images are mostly shown in large size manner.

Skanda or Kartikeya

This small slab of the stone was found in temple of Siva in Bovanewadi between Murud and Asud. It is kept into the recess of the wall of this temple. On this slab two small human figures are depicted. Left one is female and another is male. Male figure is sitting on the big cock or peacock. He holds some unidentified object in his right hand and left hand rests on his waist. Female figure is in standing position and she also holds some unidentified objects. According to the iconography this image is recognized as a Skanda or Kartikeya and female figure is depicted as a power of Kartikeya. But these types of figures are depicted from late Gupta period. In this image Skanda is sitting on his vahana-peacock. Shakti, the power of Skanda was also depicted in human figure from this period (Plate 64).

Unique Ganesh Image

In the Konkan region the eminent deity like Ganesh was founded in every large and small village. The focus of the thesis is mainly on the cult images. But a unique and noteworthy image was found during the survey in the village Bhu.

In Hindu tradition each and every ritual starts with Ganesh worship. In Mediaeval times, people depicted Ganesh on a decorative strip called ‘Ganeshpatti’, carved on the lintel of entrance door of houses, temples and residential complexes. But the supremacy of this god is not very ancient. As to the antiquity of Ganesh, the name appears in literature earlier than in iconography. The mention of Ganesh as he is known today is found clearly in Maitrayani Samhita and Ganeshopnishat.

The icons and worship of Ganesh emerge from worship of Yaksha and Nagas. At first, Ganesh was associated with Vinayakas who were cruel and created obstacles. But these Vinayakas became calm when worshipped. This belief is reflected in the names Vighneshvara and Vighnaraja. Later, Ganesh became a popular deity, as seen from new narratives added in Purana tradition. There are Puranas entirely dedicated to Ganesh, e.g. Ganesh Purana and Mudgal Purana. Then it became a major deity and occupied the status of prime deity in worship and rituals.

There is a great similarity between the Ganesh and Yaksha images, e.g., the short thighs, trunk of an elephant, big stomach and huge forehead. In Yaksha images often a head of bull, horse or an elephant is combined with human body or limbs. At Amravati, Gajamukha Yaksha is depicted on a coping stone. Coomarswami stated that the origin of Ganesh is found in Gajamukha Yaksha (Coomarswami 1928: 7).

In the village Bhu, a temple of Vishnu is situated known as ‘Lakshmikant mandir’. In the Mandapa of this temple said image is kept outside of the door of the Garbhagriha (sanctum) (Plate 65).

Iconography of the rare Ganesh image from village Bhu

This sculpture of Ganesh is quite different from the sculptures found elsewhere. It has a unique iconography, having a composite face of lion and elephant. The face combines the elements of Narsimha as well as Ganesh (Plate 66). The eyes are vertical and oval (mostly lion’s eyes are depicted in this manner in Indian art). Ears are small and resemble that of a lion than that of an elephant (Plate 67). It is interesting to note that this image having four

hands, carries the attribute *Shankh* (conch) in its upper right hand, *Chakra* (a serrated discus) in its upper left hand, some eatable in its lower left hand and a dagger or tusk in its lower right hand.

The attributes *Shankh* and *Chakra*, in the hands of this image are the particular attributes of Vishnu. Other attributes - the tusk and food items - are related to Ganesh. This implies a combination of Vishnu and Ganesh. There is no special place, ritual, festival or status bestowed on this Ganesh idol in the temple and in the village. His role is as Upadevata (a minor deity) or assistant deity of the temple.

Ganesh –Vishnu Relation Appearing In Pauranik Tradition

A Myth about Ganesh being identical with Vishnu appears in Ganesh Purana. According to this Purana monster Vishvadeva took the form of Bhagvan Vishnu having *Shankh* (conch), *Chakra* (disk), *Gada* (mace), *Padma* (lotus) in his hands and came as a guest to Gauri's house. When she served him food, he told her that, he "never eats anything before paying a visit to Bhagvan Vishnu" at his abode. Ganesh told him: "If you are resolute, then you can have the merit of seeing Vishnu here by greeting Gauri, who is the wife of Siva." But Vishvadeva told him: "I am a devotee of Ramapati. I can't greet anybody else. If you are omnipotent, show me Vishveshvara / Narayan". After this communication, Ganesh vanished, and became manifest immediately as Vishnu. He held *Shankh* (conch), *Chakra* (disk), *Gada* (mace) and *Padma* (louts) in his hands. He wore a *Pitambar* (a yellow lower garment). Seeing this, Vishvadeva joined his hands together and greeted him and told him that, "My ancestors and I are blessed." Narayan also embraced him and told him: "Just to see me, you refused the food. Because of your resoluteness and adoration I have come from Kshirasagar (an ocean). I love my devotees always. Then Mayuresha (Ganesh) took his original form. He took Vishvadeva with him and showed him some devotees worshipping Ganesh and Narayan. In every place, Vishvadeva saw both the gods simultaneously. Then he believed that there is no difference between these two gods and Ganesh means Vishveshvara (Vishnu). Thus, he believed in oneness of Ganesh and Vishnu.

Another myth is found in Brahmavaivarta Purana. According to this Purana, Goddess Parvati demanded Shiva to give a powerful son. In response to this Siva told her to take a Vrata (vow) named Punyaka and adores the Shrihari. Parvati honestly followed the vow. Pleased with the worship, Shrihari granted a boon that “Lord Shrikrushna will be born to you. He will become a lord of ghosts and will be known as ‘Ganesh’. He will destroy all kinds of obstacles. He will become famous as a ‘Vighna-nighna’ (remover of obstacles), ‘Lambodar’ (big-bellied), ‘Gajanan’ (with elephant face), and ‘Ekadanta’ (single-toothed). In the whole world, people will worship him at the beginning of every ritual or worship (Puja). Saraswati (the goddess of intelligence), as a heavenly voice, told Parvati “Go and see Lord Shrikrushna come to your home as a baby. Lord Shrikrushna will fulfil your wishes. Go and see your beautiful baby.” Parvati entered her home and saw a beautiful baby playing on the bed. She became very happy and picked the baby up in her arms and breastfed him. Lord Siva was also very happy to see the baby. One day Shanaishchara (Saturn the misfortune) came to see baby Ganesh. When he saw the baby his glance beheaded the baby. Seeing this, Parvati became unconscious. To save the life of the baby, Shrihari sat on his vehicle Garuda and came to the Pushpabhadra River. He saw an elephant there and cut his head. He stuck it on the baby’s body and gave life to the baby, using his divine knowledge (Brahma-jayana).

In the Brahmavaivarta Purana we find another story of the birth of Ganesh, son of Siva and Parvati. When Siva and Parvati were making love, Vishnu came as a thirsty Brahman and asked for water and food. At that time Siva arose but his seed fell on the bed, instead of into the womb of Parvati. Shiva and Parvati offered food and water to the Brahman. Immediately Vishnu in a Brahman’s form vanished and took the form of a child and went to Parvati’s bed where the seed of Siva had fallen. There he became united with the seed of Siva. When Parvati entered the room, she found the child and named Ganesh and nursed him.

The above mentioned myths support the unique iconography of the said image. Rather we may safely say that this image is plastic representation of these myths. Apart from this unique composite image some other popular images of Lord Ganesh shows the Ankusha,

Shankh and Pasha are depicted as Aayudhas, but the combination of the face of lion and elephant is probably exceptional. All these stories indicate that the lord Ganesh is connected with lord Vishnu; rather, they indirectly indicate Ganesh to be the incarnation of Vishnu. We can safely conclude that these myths and image have probably been created in the process of transformation of Yaksha into Vinayaka. It will not be proper to date the image at this stage of study. In Konkan the iconography and style of sculptures are different from that of a rest of India and thus we cannot date with the conventional way of dating on the stylistic basis.

As stated above, the face is a combination of that of a lion and an elephant, i.e., the trunk of elephant is attached to a lion face (This face resembles that of Narsimha) and the head is combined with human torso. Thus present author suggests that this image can be named as Narusimha-Gajanan.

A figure of Ganapati is kept in premises of Manai temple in village Taksul, Taluka Dapoli, Ratnagiri District. Now this image is eroded and broken. He has four hands but they are not visible properly. He is depicted in sitting position-call Lalitasan or Ardhaparykasan. A snake is tied on his belly. Iconographically this style is known as '*Udarbandha*' means a belt tied on belly as an ornament. The antiquity of this style was being after Gupta era. The ornamentation was absent in the Gupta period (Joshi 1979: 274). This image is also not having any types of ornaments except *Udarbandha*. May be the figure is incomplete because there is no detailing carved on his face and on the other part of the body.

Shiva and Parvati

The male and female figure is placed in the Yakshini temple, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District. These two figures are perhaps of the Siva and Parvati. Both are depicted in the sitting position. Shiva has four hands and he holds *Damaru* in his upper right hand. In his lower right hand he holds a sword. He rests his upper left hand on the shoulder of his consort and his lower left hand is keeps on his lap. May be he holds a *Vadaga* (pot) in his hand. Parvati is sitting close to Shiva. She holds a *Kamandalu* type object in her lower left hand and may be a lotus bud or mace holds in upper left hand. Her rear right hand rests on the lap

of the Shiva and in the front side hand, she holds *Akshalma*. The antiquity of these images is not so old. May be all these idols are the copy of the old idols. Old idols were eroded because of humid climate and devotees made new ones. In Konkan region this type of tradition can be seen in practice (Plate 68).

Kedareshwar

This small temple of Kedareshwar is situated in village Karul, Taluka Kudal, District Sindhudurga. All the information is given by the villager named Raghunath Kolte. In the old days *Rasadevi* was the main village deity but now Kedareshwar has become a main village god. In this temple there were many Vyakta and Ayakta deities are placed. From left to right the names of the deities are Navalai, Vithaladevi, Khotai, Kedareshwarling (main deity), and Pavanai. On the left side four stones are placed, they are known as *Shipai* or *Rakshak*. The villagers put a mask on the face of the village god. This god is known as a Kedareshwar. He holds a sword in his lower right hand and *Damaru* in his upper right hand. He holds a *Vadaga* (pot) in his lower left hand and serpent like thing in his upper left hand. A horse is depicted on the right side of this figure and unidentified figure on the left side (Plate 69).

Bhairavanath

This icon is placed in village Murud, Taluka Dapoli, District Ratnagiri in Bhairavanath temple. This image has four hands. In the upper left hand he holds a shield, in the lower left hand may be he holds a *Vadaga* (pot). In the upper right hand he holds a sword type weapon and his lower right hand is in *Varadmudra*. He wears a crown. Near his lower right hand a human figure is depicted. May be he is attendant of Bhairavanath or maybe he is Aayudhapurush. The image is covered by cloths therefore it is difficult to say more. Near his left side a female figure is depicted. All three figures are depicted in simple way. Villagers come to this deity to ask for verdict, in local language the people called '*Kaul*' for this ritual. For this *Kaul* villagers use buds of tree named *Devhari*. Villager's paste this buds on the plinth of this deity. The devotees have done this ceremony at *Shimaga* (in March) and they called it *Phak Panchami* (Plate 70).

Another temple is known as Bhairavanath temple in village Murud, Taluka Dapoli, District Ratanagiri. This figure has four hands; he is sitting on the horse. In his upper right hand he holds a sword, in his lower right hand he holds a round-shaped unidentified thing, in his upper left hand he holds a long spear and lower left hand he holds a shield. The front leg of his horse is slightly upheld. According to Shiva Purana, Bhairav itself is a complete form of Shiva. The etymology of this word is cruel or dangerous. Therefore, this form of the Shiva is in furious form. Second meaning of this word Bhairav is eater of anything (Joshi 1979: 148, 49). The icon of the Bhairav depicted and worshiped in Jainism also (Joshi 1979: 347). Village deity known as Kshetrapal is also included as a Bhairav in Jainism (Joshi 1979: 354, 355). Above Bhairavanath image is not looking cruel or horrifying. On the *Narali Pournima* devotees play a song named '*Sobole Dada*'. This deity is worshiped only by Maratha, Kunabi and Bahujan Samaj. Villagers have done a verdict twice in a year in front of this deity. The priest of this temple is Mahadik and he gave all this information (Plate 71).

Kalabhairav

The icon of the Kalabhairav is situated at the primes of the main temple of the Zolai Devi in village Asud, Taluka Dapoli, District Ratnagiri. This small shrine is known as a Kalabhairav temple. This icon is sitting on the horse and to hold the reins of that horse. In his upper right hand he holds *Damaru* (a small drum) and *Naga* (snake in one hand), may be Damaru is tied with the snake. He holds a rein in his lower right hand. He holds a *Trishul* (trident) in his upper left hand and in the lower left hand he holds the rein and a sword. This deity is *Kuladaivat* (a family god / deity) of Kale family. Villagers believe that Yogeshwari is always live or to be present with this deity. So the icon of the Yogeshwari is also depicted with him. Because of this belief an idiom used by the local people, that '*Yogeshwaracha vaas* (to be present) *asawa*' (Plate 72).

Shiva worships as Pavanai

The small image of *Pavanai* deity is kept in the Rawalanath temple of village Dhamapur. This figure is known as Devi Pavanai by the villagers, but actually the sculpture

is similar to the lord Shiva. He holds trident, Damaru, sword in his three hands and in the fourth one is probably broken. He has moustaches. Even after the moustaches this image is called *Pavanai*, the goddess. This is a unique character of this region (Plate 73).

Brahmanical figures found on pillars

Some deities are found carved on the pillars of Kaleshwar temple Nerur, that are not worshipped separately but may be are just decorative.

Agni

This figure is a combination of man and a ram. The body is human body and head is of a ram. It has two heads, seven hands and three legs. The iconography of this figure is that of a fire god, Agni. This type of figures also found in south India (Joshi 1979, 310). Agni has incarnated himself into a ram to entertain to his children as Negmeya (Joshi 1979, 223) (Plate 74).

Another small image found on a pillar is recognized as of Agni. This image has two heads of ram and body of human. In his right hand he holds a fan and some eatables are in the left hand. In the one right hand he holds a rein of his vahana and other hands are empty. He has two legs (Plate 75).

Yama

In the of image Yama we can see a Khadga (sword) in his right hand and rein in his left hand (Plate 76). Yama is recognized as a symbol of religion. In this image of Yama, he is shown with his vahana Mahisha. According to Vishnudharmottar Purana he holds danda, Khadga, Trishula (Trident) and akshamala (Joshi 1979: 310).

Kuber

Kuber is depicted riding on the back of another man. Kuber holds a Kamandalu in his right hand. He holds *Trishula* (trident) in his left hand. Kuber is one of the Dikpals and the master of the north direction. According to Vishnudharmottar Purana the vahana of Kuber is

a *Narvahana* (a man as a vehicle) and according to the *Aparajitpruchha* a Gaja (an elephant). He holds a *kamandalu* (pot). Because he is opulent he never walks and always sits in the palanquin therefore he has been known as a *Narvahana* (Joshi 1979: 12, 308) (Plate 77).

Buddha

Buddha is the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. This male figure is depicted in sitting position in Dhyana mudra. It is interesting to note that he is shown in a hood. His eyes are closed (Plate 78). The iconographic depiction of this image is unique here.

Vishnu

The image of Vishnu is depicted in the small panel; he holds the buds of flowers in his both upper hands. His lower left hand is kept on his waist and a sword is depicted in lower right hand. Because of this lotus bud we can recognize this image as Vishnu. He is depicted in a dhoti as lower garment. He is bare feet (Plate 79).

Ravana

The small figure of Ravana is also depicted on the same pillar. He has ten heads and many hands. He has moustaches. He holds a bow and arrow in his hand. He stretches a string of his bow for shooting the arrow. He also wears a long dhoti and the shoes called *Mojadi*, this type of footwear is mostly used in Rajasthan (Plate 80).

Rama

The small figure of Rama is portrayed on the side of the above figure. Rama is the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. He also stretches a string of his bow and wants to shoot his adversary. He wears a long dhoti and a *Mojadi* (Plate 81).

Brahma

This figure has a four heads, four hands and four legs. This figure is an image of Brahmadeva. He holds a *Mala* (*garland*) in his lower right hand. Lower left hand and upper

right hand is empty. In the upper left hand he holds a book. He wears a long *Angarkha* like upper garment and long garland. The uniqueness of this image is that, artist has depicted four legs (Plate 82).

Varuna

The present figure of Varuna is a plastic representation of description of this deity as per the Vishnudharmottar Purana tradition. In this image Varuna holds a Pasha in his right hand and lotus in his left hand. He is seated on the Makara (Plate 83). Among the Vedic deities the group of Indra, Agni and Varuna is a famous group of deities. From the Pauranik period these deities became less important. Varuna became a master of west direction. Now a days in Konkan region, there is no special group of devotees of this deity. He is worshiped only in the rituals in the form of Kalasha and people do not need any image for worship. According to the Pauranik tradition *Pasha* is one of the important Aayudha and Makara is the vahana of this deity. According to the Vishnudharmottar Purana; depiction of the Varuna is corpulent and he wearing an ornaments of the pearls (Joshi 1979: 311).

Shiva and Parvati

The figure is that of a popular deity Shiva and Parvati. Here the lord Shiva and Parvati are sitting on the back of the Nandi. Shiva holds *Damaru* (drum) in his upper left hand, he holds Parvati with his lower left hand. He holds *Ankusha* (goad) in his lower right hand and *Trishula* (Trident) in his upper right hand. Parvati has two hands. Kaleshwar is a temple is a lord Shiva (Plate 84).

Ashtadikpals on ceiling panel

Ashtadikpalas are not separately worshiped in this region but their images are very common among the wooden sculptures on the temples. Ashtadikpalas are found on the ceilings of temple of Lakshmi Narayana Mandir, Walawal; Yakshini Mandir, Mangaon, Sindhudurga and Mahakali Mandir Adiware.

This type of wooden ceiling panels in this area are called as Pata. This type of panels is very important document from the study of cult images point of view. Apart from Brahmanical god, goddess and Ashtadikpalas the hybrid images are also found on these panels. These figures are noteworthy in this regard and discussed elsewhere in this thesis. Ashtadikpalas are occurs on Indian temples as a guardians of directions and it is very common feature of temple architecture, this region is not an exception to it. These relief panel sculptures are made in a local style. On the basis of style we can date these panels to the 18th and 19th century. In case of Yakshini mandir we can stretch the date little earlier as same unique panels are found here.

Niruti

The figure of *Niruti* is found on the ceiling of the Yakshini temple at village Mangaon. In this figure there are two human figures, one is in lying position. His hands are in upside position. This figure is giving illusion of flying in the air and another figure is sitting on the back of that horizontal figure. Sitting figure holds sword and shield in his hands. He wears some ornaments like bracelets, crown, necklace, Nupur, Bajuband and earrings. Yadnyopavit is also shown. This image is identified as a Niruti and this horizontal figure is depicted as his vahana (vehicle) which actually a dead body means *Shava*. As per 'Aparajitpruchha' and *Agama* the *Shava* is Vahana of Niruti (Plate 85).

Yama Dev

Yama is known as one of the Vedic deity. He is son of the Sun or Vivaswan and brother of Yami or Yamuna who is mentioned in Purana also. Yama is also known as symbol of Dharma (religion). He is a monarch of south direction. Pasha and Danda is the main characteristic of this deity and his vahana is Mahisha means he-buffalo (Joshi 1979: 310).

The figure of *Yama* is found on the ceiling of the Yakshini temple at village Mangaon. Here we can see that the some painter has written the name of Yama as 'Yama dharmā' in Devnagari script on the border of panel. In this panel we can see the image of Yama sitting on his vahana with his wife Dhumorna. He holds a Danda in his right hand and rein of the

Mahisha. Male and female attendants are shown in the corner of this panel (Plate 86). There is scope to identify these figures as Savitri and Satyavan as the story is popular in this region.

Kuber

Six male figures and one female figure are there in the wooden panel. The main male figure that is Kuber is in standing position. Kuber is depicted standing mounted on Naravahana. Kuber holds a sword and mace in his hands.

On the left side of the *Kuber* a small human figure is depicted, probably a Shiva, as he holds a Damaru in his left hand and painted in blue colour. The costume of this figure is notable; a piece of pleated cloth is wrapped around the waist of this figure.

At the right side of Kuber a woman is depicted in sitting positing. She holds a louts bud in her right hand and an unidentified object is in her left hand. She is portrayed in a nine yard sari and blouse. There is scope to identify this figure as Vruddhi, the wife of Kuber. There are three attendants portrayed in this relief panel. One attendant is depicted at the right side of the main image. He holds a *Chatra* in his hand and other two attendants stand on the left side of the main figure, they hold a Danda, a stick in their hands.

In Vishnudharmottar Purana Kuber is attributed with Narvahana. His wife mentioned as Bhadra as well as Varuddhi. Kuber holds a mace in his hand (Joshi 1979: 308) (Plate 87).

Varuna

Among these panels we found a figure of *Varuna*. The name of *Varuna* is written at the left corner of the panel. In this image Varuna is sitting on the Makara with his wife. He has four hands. He holds *Pasha* and *Kamandalu* in his upper and lower left hand and he holds stick like thing in his lower right hand and may be *Kamala* (louts) or the vessel of gems in upper right hand (Plate 88)

Vayu

Vayu is one of Dikpals. Here we can also see the name is written on the panel frame. According to the Aparajitpruchha, Vayu has four hands and his vahana is Mruga. He holds *Vara*, *Dhwaja*, *Pataka*, and *Kamandalu* (Joshi 1979: 308,311).

Here the visual reflection of the Puranic textual narration. In this image Vayu is sitting on his vahana with his wife Siva. He has four hands and he holds louts buds in his both upper hands. He holds sword like object in his lower right hand. He holds a rein of his vahana with his lower left hand. Female and male attendants are depicted here. Female attendant holds a *Chawari* in her hand and male attendant holds a *Kamandalu* and lotus bud in his right hand (Plate 89).

Eshana

Eshana in the said ceiling panel holds trident and *Damaru* in his hands. Two human figures carved here. Left one is coloured with blue. He looks like a gana of Shiva and he holds a *Rudravina*. Another figure is in standing position and holds *Kamandalu* in right hand and an unidentified object in left hand (Plate 90). Eshana is one of the forms of lord Shiva. In the depiction of this deity the bull (vahana of Shiva) is also depicted with him (Joshi 1979: 313).

Indra

The image of Indra is found on one of the panel. *Vajra* and *Ankush* is main identity of this god. In this image he has two hands. He holds a *Vajra* type of weapon in his right hand. He is depicted with his wife Shachi. Two attendants are depicted here. One is holding *Chatra* and another is holding *Chamar* (Plate 91). *Irawata* (elephant) is his famous vahana. According to the Pauranic tradition he is a lord of all gods and monarch of Swarga (Joshi 1979: 309).

Unnamed deity

In the Konkan region images of some devotees are found repeatedly in the premise of the main temples. These images are also found near small temples and shrines. Small images are kept in or outside of the temple and villagers worship them. Most of the time there is no specific name given by the villagers and no particular rituals are done by them in the honour (Plate 92).

Warrior

On the small stone slab one human figure are depicted. He holds a sword in his right hand and in the left hand he holds a shield. Villagers worship this figure with no particular name and ritual. Priest offers *mala* made of cotton, to this small image. May be this image was made in commemoration of some warrior, who was died during war, in the past. It is also possible that these days' villagers may have forgotten the story related with this hero warrior and only the practice of worship is continuing (Plate 93).

Orphanage of the gods and goddesses

There is unique collection of icons called in Marathi as '*Devatanche Anathalaya*' of the gods and goddesses in Harne village, Taluka Dapoli District Ratnagiri. Many types of deities are placed in this temple. All these deities are mainly the family deities. According to the priest of this temple saint Ekanath had built this temple. It is possible that in the past, when the villagers migrated out of this village they left their family deities in this temple. May be that people did not want to carry their deities with them since they were not able to do their *Kuladharm* and *Kulachar* regularly.

Many types of deities are placed together in this temple and regularly worshiped by the priest. In this orphanage several types of Brahmanical deities are found like Ganapati, Vishnu, Shankar, Shaligram, Panchayatan, Datta, Mahishasurmardini, Krushna etc. Some icons have appearance like Jain Sadhu and some unidentified icons are also there. Most of

the images are beautiful and with decorations. The images are mostly made up of brass, copper or some alloy (Plate 94).

Unidentified figure

The height of this image is approximately 15 - 20 cm. This male image of deity is in standing position. It has two hands and both are in *Abhayamudra*. It is depicted with a dhoti like cloth. He has tied his hair on his head. He has beard and moustaches. This image has a decorative Makhar and on the top of this Makhar Kirtimukha is depicted. Two snake hoods are depicted on the both sides of the Kirtimukha. Two cows are depicted on the both sides of this image. The image and the Makhar are made up of brass (Plate 95).

Panchayatan

A circular dish with the spout is found in this orphanage. It can be recognized as a Panchayatan. In the middle of the dish the depiction of the Shiva Linga is clearly visible. A serpent hood is depicted near the Linga. Around this Linga three figures are depicted in sitting position, one of them is Ganapati, the other is goddess Annapurna and another one is unidentified. A bunch of fruits or Laddu- like objects can be seen in this dish (Plate 96).

Part II:

Avyakta Male Deities

Introduction

In the first part of this chapter the Vyakta deities were discussed. It is very easy to identify these deities with their iconography, style, vehicle, symbols, weapons and surrounding components. In the second part of this chapter Avyakta deities are mentioned with their basic concepts. These *Nirakar*, the amorphous deities are worshiped in the regions from the remote time.

In the survey area some unique local beliefs and concepts of super natural powers are found. Without their knowledge the picture of role of cult images in this region will be incomplete. These unique terms are vital part of the Konkani folk life. These concepts are playing very important role in their day to day life. These terms are sometimes giving an indication of socio-cultural life of the Konkani people. These are held secrets. For examples *Chala*, *Khem*, *Bhadakomba*, *Mharka*, and *Rakshak* etc. Some of these deities are placed in the main shrine e.g. *Chala* and *Bhadakomba*. The shrines of these powers are placed on the periphery of the villages.

Some unique amorphous deities, local beliefs and terms, concepts of super natural powers are given here

Chala

‘*Chala*’ is known as a destructive force of ‘*Gaonrhati*’, in the local rural custom in Konkani region. He protects the village from malicious powers which may come from the four boundaries of the village. This is a main duty of this local deity. All type of devastating forces is controlled by this power for the protection of the village. He is the chief of the protectors of the village (Dhuri 2002: 84).

This *Chala* has his own identity as amorphous form. He is worshiped by the villagers as village deity; as well it is the family deity of Patekar family, Tarale village, Sindhudurga District. All family members came together once in a year and give offerings to their deity. Three billy goats are killed near the shrine and their heads and hoofs are kept on the plinth for whole night. On the second day they cook these heads and distribute the meat as a blessing, in local language called *Prasad* (blessing). This *Chala* has separate shrine, but this place is uncovered (Plate 97).

Baracha Purvas

The unknown power that undertakes the ‘twelve darkness’ (*Bara Andhar*) of the universe is known as ‘*Baracha Purvas*’. Villagers believed that in remote time one person from a scheduled caste (which is known as ‘*Mahara*’) has created these twelve darkness. In local language *Purvicha* means old. *Purvicha Mahara* it means *Baracha Purvas* according to regional tradition. Sometime this deity holds a stick in his hand, but most of the time this deity is worshiped in *Avyakta* form. The twelve darkness’s are held in the hilt. He is a master of darkness. *Baracha Purvas* is under control of another power called *Pur-Vasa* (the old and specific social group). *Baracha Purvas* is obeying the orders of *Pur-Vasa* and therefore he can prevent any kind of obstacles like *Chala* on the crossroad of the village (Dhuri 2002: 73, 74) (Plate 98).

In Aakeri village, people believed that there are twelve recipients and the names of these recipients are Parab, Gawade, Ghadi, Sutar, Mahar, Gurav, Raula, Patwardhan, Bhagat, Langave, Padate and Naik. All these twelve recipients placed a stone in commemoration of their ancestor. Villagers worship this *Avyakta* deity as *Baracha Purvas*. This information was given by one villager named Mahadev Parab. Sometime this deity has *Vyakta* form, for example the images from Nirawade – Konapal.

Bara Pacha Cult and Tradition

Bara + Pacha + Purva + Ganita = “*Bara - Pacha Purva Ganita*”. This is the main link of the rural costumes. In local common language it is called, ‘*Gaonrhati*’. All the rituals and

thoughts revolve around these principles. Many times the name of these cult deities change, e.g. *Barachi Neet*, *Teen-Pacha*, *Atha-Bara*, etc. Above twelve elements are created from five instruments of action, five sensory organs, mind and intelligence. *Bara- Pacha*, this concept is created to capture the five elements (Dhuree 2002: 80).

Barachi Neet

‘Neet’, is the most important word in *Gaonrhati*. Villagers believed that it is the supreme power of *Gaonrhati*. Native person or founder of that village or religious sect makes some rules and obligations, because the rural customs flow uninterruptedly. Native people call this power as *Barachi Neet*. Most of the time this deity is amorphous (‘Nirakari’), but some time devotees make an image of this deity (Dhuree 2002: 84, 85) (Plate 99).

Mayecha Purvas

According to the villagers this deity is connected with ‘Maya’, meaning love or affection. Descendants placed a shapeless stone in commemoration of their ancestor and call him *Mayecha Purvas*.

Dandekar

This is the deity who protects the village from all type of calamities. In some villages villagers keep a stick as a symbol of this deity. This deity is known as Mahara Vasa in present time. In Rameshwara temple of Aakeri village, there are many small shrines built in the premises. In this premise there is a small shrine called Parab Vasa. At the outside of this small shrine a small ‘*Ghumati*’ is placed and it known as Dandekar means the holy place of *Mahara*. In rural custom, locally called *Gaonrhati*, *Mahara* has a special space in the social ranking. Devotees take their problems in front of this deity, locally called *Garhane*. When they fulfil their wishes they give an offerings called ‘*Naivedya*’. Devotees offer Khara Naivedya means non-vegetarian foods i.e. fowls to this deity. This ritual is held at the periphery of the village. Priest keeps a feather of the neck of the fowl on this deity.

In the same premises of Rameshwara temple there is another small shrine named Gawade Vasa, now known as *Mahara Dandekaracha Deva (Plate 100)*. Priest performs rituals for this deity, but he offers a flower on this deity without touching it. As in the cast system the *Mahara Dandekaracha* are untouchables.

Chavhata and Baracha Chavhata

Chavhata means open space. *Chavhata* means square where two or more streets meets or cross, people get together, solve their problems, and talk to each other with open mind. Here nobody is afraid of others. *Chala* of *Rawalnath* means *Baracha Chavhata*. Bara word represents the whole community of that particular village (Dhuree 2002: 94). Probably Bara means twelve in number. In the past a system that played a major role in the village administration, was known as Bara Balutedara. These are the main twelve persons from the representatives of twelve castes. In Konkan region, '*Bara*' (twelve) figures have significance. Many gods have their names connected with this figure. May be this connection goes back in remote past. These days this practice is outdated, but the remains of this system, is reflected in the names of these deities, e.g. Bara Thala, Baracha Purvas, Bara Pacha etc. According to the villagers of Pinguli, deity named Bara Thala means twelve recipients (*Mankari*), and their names are as follows. Ghadi, Paraba, Raula, Dhuree, Gawade, Sutar, Nhavi, Walawalkar, Khanulkar, Bhupkar, Shetkar and Brahman.

At Thakurwadi in Nerur village, there is a small platform called *Baracha Chavhata*. Villagers have kept some deities on this platform but now these images are worn out and it is difficult to recognize these. A small *Ghumati* is also placed here and villagers worship it as a '*Neet*'. People of this village get together and solve their problems here and have with the communication to this super natural power (Plate 101).

Nitkari

Nitkari means ancestor of Mahara. It is believed in the village that there are some taboos which are made by god and these taboos are obligatory for all. The duties of this deity are as follows. First is that, whether all villagers are following the taboos or not. Second is

that, all the administration which is told by the god is abided by the villagers or not. Villagers have placed an image of male deity and that is itself Nitkari.

Mulapurush

Mulapurush means the founder of the family. In Konkan region, especially in Sindhudurga District, we can see this deity almost in every small shrine. Villagers have placed a shapeless stone as a Mulapurush. According to the villagers 'Vasa' means Mulapurush. Each lineage has its own Mulapurush, e.g. Ghadi, Parab Vasa, Gawde Vasa, Dalavi Vasa, etc (Plate 102).

Rakshak

Rakshak means protector. This Avyakta deity is also seen in these regions. A shapeless stone is placed at the side of the main deity. Some time there are two Rakshaks on both sides of the deity. May be there are body guard of the main deity and they protect the village also. Villagers offer these Rakshak, Kunku (red powder) and flowers. There is no specific ritual done for this deity. It is an associate, minor or servant deity. These are located in either the same premises of the main deity or located in separate small shrine (Plate 103).

Bhadakomba

This amorphous deity is placed in the temple of Bhairavnath / Bhairi Dev temple in Murud. The name of this deity is unique meaning a 'short tempered' (Plate 104).

Teloba

This deity is in the form of an ant-hill and worshiped by the sc people. In Konkan region ant-hill is worshiped as a goddess Santeri, but this is the only example that people worship this deity as Teloba. This deity is placed in the small shrine. When ant hills in the homes of devotees, they pour oil on this ant-hill deity. Villagers believe that a stone image of a male is dumped inside that ant-hill. There is no specific ritual held in honor of this deity in the small village named Asud in Ratnagiri District. Villagers worship this deity as a male

deity but they offer him bangles, *Haladi – Kunku* (turmeric powder and vermilion) and Khana (a piece of cloth). May be the original form and the duty of this deity was oblivious. Now villagers worship this deity as per their daily requirements related to their problems. According to the Narren, Mahara are an aboriginal inhabitant of Konkan region. Ant-hill worship is also very old tradition of Konkan. Certainly from the above instance we can say that ant-hill worship is originally done by the aboriginal inhabitants. The traditions never to come to an end (Mate 2002: 15). According to the Dhere (Dhere 1988: 185), the evolution of the image of Lajjagouri occurred from the ant-hill form. In all over India we can see the journey of ant-hill to Lajjagouri, but in Konkan region still this deity is worshiped in the original form and this instance is noteworthy (Plate 105).

Kshetrpala

This is one of the Avyakta deities where a horizontal stone is placed in small shrine and villagers worship this deity. He is a guardian of the particular area; this information was given by the villager Pandurang Hardikar. Kshetrpala means the guardian spirit of the fields: a kind of stone (Enthoven, 1915 Appendix XVIII). *Kshetra* means particular area and *Kshetrpala* means the guardian of that particular area. Khandoba and Rawalanath are famous Kshetrpala in Maharashtra (Dhere 1988: 152). This deity is known by various names but the works and duties of this deity is the same (Plate 106).

Holdev

Holi is the most important religious festival in Konkan region on full moon day in the month of *Falgun* (March), the last month of Indian calendar.

In Konkan the annual festival of Holi begins from the fifth day of the bright half of *Falgun* (March). Young boys from all the localities of a village assemble at a place appointed for the Holi. The boys then go from house to house asking for firewood, and bring it to the place of the Holi. They arrange the firewood and other combustible articles around the branch of a mango, betel nut or Sawar tree in the pit dug out for the purpose and then set it on fire.

At Vijaydurga in Ratnagiri District a hen is tied on the top of a tree, or a bamboo placed in the pit dug out for kindling the Holi fire. The fowl locally called *Shit*, tied to the top of the bamboo. A small quantity of dry grass is first burnt at the bottom of this tree when the Maharas beat their drums. The *Shit* (fowl) is then removed from the tree after it is half burnt and taken by the Maharas. The Holi fire is then worshiped and kindled by the Gurav (Enthoven 1915: 89). This ritual was recorded by Enthoven in 1915. Today, almost after 100 years the same ritual is performed in the same way there.

This ceremony is almost similar in all villages of Konkan region. In the Rajapur Taluka villagers implant a trunk of a mango or coconut tree near the place of Holi and tie a coconut on that. A small quantity of dry grass is first burnt at the bottom of this tree. The coconut is then removed from the tree after it is half burnt and taken by the Maharas. Then Holi is fired and kindled by the Manakari (recipients) of the village.

Most of the villages in these two districts place an amorphous stone near this fire place and that stone is known and worshiped as the Holdev. In some villages devotees believe that because of some magical power people can pull this heavy stone by their fingers only. Villagers believed that only on the day of this festival this stone is upheld by them only on one finger. In some villages the trunk of the tree is worshiped as a Holdev (Plate 107, 108).

Marka or Mharka

Particularly in Rajapur District Marka or Mharka can be seen in many shrines. May be this is the corrupt form of original word 'Mhorkya'. Mhorkya means leader of community. This is a single amorphous stone kept in the shrine, e.g. temple in Murud, Saladur and Tervan. In the Murud village there is small temple known as Zolai, in this shrine an amorphous stone is kept in front of all the deities and it covered by box of glass. According to the villagers he is guardian of this village. Villagers offers him fowl but not in the shrine: devotee come out from the temple and there is a stone where they offer twenty two fowls on Tuesday in the month of Chaitra (April). The priest worships this deity except on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

In Saladur village there is a temple of goddess Simadevi. This goddess is also an amorphous deity. In her temple there is a stone called Marka. If any married woman prays and call this deity for the help, suddenly this deity comes and gives punishment to the person who give trouble to that particular woman. On the Chaitra Shuddha Chaturthi villagers offers it a fowl for his guardianship and dribble the blood on him (Plate 109).

Brahman Dev

In Konkan region we can see this amorphous male deity in some shrines. From the word Brahman, it does not reflect the meaning of higher class. It means the person who has all the knowledge of the universe (Dhuree 2002: 87). In Konkan region we can see different names of this deity, e.g. Bharada Brahman in Bilawas, Aakara Brahman in Malagaon, Brahman in Nerur, Brahmanik Sthala in Mangaon and Akali Brahman in Tervan. In Tervan village there is a small shrine which is known as Brahman Dev. In this shrine there are two Shivalingas (pindi) and villagers worshiped this deity as a Motha (elder) Brahman (Plate 110).

Ramtirtha

According to local belief this place is known as Ramtirtha in District Ratnagiri. There is a temple of Jugadevi in the village Tervan, and Ramtirtha is known as Jugadevi's maternal place. Villagers believe that in the remote time Rama and Lakshaman came to meet Jugadevi, from that event this place was called as Ramtirtha. In the month of *Shravan* (August) devotees make a band of thread mixed with turmeric and bind on their wrist in the honor of this deity and they call it 'Sutgundi' in local language. This information was given by the priest of Jugadevi named Ramchandra lingayat Gurav.

Ramtirtha is a simple monolithic structure. It is manmade cave like structure having a small Kalash or Shikhar on the top. Inside this structure there is a small room having a small stone bench. Whole structure looks like a shrine, but there is no image of any deity placed in it. There is a pond in front of this structure. This pond has walls from all the sides. May be in

the remote time this place was used by the devotees or pilgrims. But now this pond is not in use (Plate 111).

Linga Puja

The author found one example of the sculpture of phallic type placed in one of the niche in the rampart of the Mahakali temple of Adiware. Now the worship of this phallic image does not exist. Oval shape stones are placed in small pits and worshiped openly everywhere in these regions as *Linga*. Some time villagers give different name to this *linga* and performed totally different ritual, for example Varebuwa. Now a day's women of this village get together in the month of May and celebrate the ceremony of *Haladi- Kunku*. Devotees make a vow in front of this deity and offer a coconut. According to villagers this deity is originally from the nearby area named *Khairyacha Konda*. Actually the shape of this deity is that of a male and female fertility organ. May be in remote time people worshiped this deity in his original form for fertility. But now the significance of all the things related to this deity has change. It is observed from number of examples of phallic worship found from these regions that there is great link between the fertility, strength and phallic worship (Plate 112).

Shiva linga

In Konkan region the worship of Shiva linga is most important part of the daily life. Shiva linga is a symbol of god Shiva. Many small and big temples of this deity are built in these regions. From the point of view of fertility and sex the worship of Shiva linga is important from the ancient time (Joshi 1979: 133). In the primitive stage the shape of Shiva linga is a replica of phallic but later it turned into the beautiful pillar (Joshi 1979: 134). In Konkan region Shiva linga is worshiped with various names, like Vyaghreshwar, Nagaleshwar, Bombaleshwar, Motha Brahman, Raula Vasa, Dev Chaukhurna, Nhavi Vasa and Giroba, etc.

According to the villagers many of these Shiva lingas are Swayambhu, meaning self-existent. Many of them have a common myth. Vitthal Gurav, a priest of this Kaleshwar

temple, told myth about the Shiva linga. In the remote time present area was covered with jungle. A milkman daily took his cows for grazing at the specific place. One day he noticed that his cow allowed itself to drop the milk upon a stone. Villagers dug up at that particular place. From that place blood gushed out. A Swayambhu Shiva linga (self-existent) appeared over there. Villagers came together and built a temple of god Shiva. At that place villagers got many stones of shape of Linga. All these stones are kept in the Garbhagruha. This is a common of story told almost in every village in the Konkan region.

In the Konkan region we can see many temples of god Shiva and about all the temples have the same story. Fertility is the important part of life; therefore the Ling worship in original form or converted form is also important (Plate 113).

Rawalnath

In Konkan region this god is known as a prominent deity. Almost in every small or big shrine we can see this deity in the defined images or in amorphous shape. Sometimes an amorphous stone is placed as a Rawalnath at some places (Plate 114). But most of the times we can see the anthropomorphic image of this deity. Rawal means Varula or ant-hill. Rawal represents goddess Santeri and Nath or Pati means husband. Rawalnath means husband of goddess Santeri. Therefore, in some cases this deity is kept in the temple of goddess Santeri. Vahana of Rawalnath is tortoise but many times it is horse and snake.

Devnagre

This amorphous deity is placed in the small shrine built in the temple of goddess Aaryadurga of village Devihansol, Taluka Rajapur, District Ratnagiri. This deity is prominently worshiped by the Kunabi Samaaj (farmers). There are no specific duties of this deity and there are no specific rituals performed by the villagers. At the bottom of the recess, a figure of a plough is depicted. May be the 'Nagre' is a corrupt version of the word 'Nangar' (in Marathi language), it means plough. It is very interesting that plough, the implement used for obtaining food (crops) has been symbolized as a deity. Therefore, villagers call it Devanngre (Dev means god) (Plate 115 and 116). The worship of plough is

common in Maharashtra. The example of popular deity Jotiba is throwing light on this fact. The name itself indicates that it is derived from the word Jot means the plough (Dhere 1988, 140). So there is scope to believe that in this region we can say that the worship of plough was in practice and the remains of this worship are recorded in the form of Devnagre.

Varebuwa

People worship this deity in the month of May. Woman of Karde village worship this deity and perform a ritual or ceremony of *Haldi-Kunku*. People make a vow to this Varebuwa on Gudipadwa and offer him a coconut. This deity is in amorphous form (Plate 117). Two stones are placed on a small plinth. One is an oval stone. The other is a little bigger than this oval stone and has a small pit in the middle. Looking from the analytical point of view it is clear that, Varebuwa is a combination of a *Linga* and *Yonipith* and may have been related to fertility in remote times. These stones will be the symbols of male and female genitals. Now the original significance of this deity is forgotten.

Gangoba

Gangoba is a main deity of this shrine, village Tervan (Plate 118). *Gangoba* means Shiva, the Lord of Devi *Ganga*. There are few stones placed in this temple and villagers call them as *Gangomharkya*, *Rakshaka*, *Mahapurush*, *Gngobvithalai* and *Shipai and Gangoba*. All these deities are in Avyakta form.

Part III:

Distinctive cult images and their Iconography (Male Deities: The gods)

Introduction

Some iconographically distinctive deities are found in these two districts of Konkan. Human beings are imaginative. We the human beings are inspired by the nature, animals and birds from the remote time for worship point of view. We create the new things in combination of various natural elements. We make composite figures of animals, birds and create the images god and goddesses. In most of the archaic cultures all over the world we find such kind of composite cult images. This region is not an exception to it. This deals with the discussion on iconographically distinctive deities from Konkan region.

Images on temple pillars, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur

The following figures are depicted on pillars of the temple, Nerur village District Sindhudurga in Konkan. The temple is known as a Kaleshwar Temple, the temple of Lord Shiva. In the Mandapa of the temple there are four massive stone pillars and all the pillars are portrayed and ornamented with the figures and decorative motifs. Plenty of figures are depicted on these pillars. The numbers of these figures are approximately hundred. Out of them the researcher selected only the unique figures for this study. Anthropomorphic, theriomorphic, therioanthropomorphic figures are depicted on these pillars. Author has identified few figures out of them. Unidentified figures are mostly therioanthropomorphic and very complex in nature.

Aghor Siva

This figure is depicted on the one of the pillar of mandap. He is in standing position and has two legs. Four additional heads are depicted on the body of this image. These additional heads are smaller in size as compared to the head of main figure. One is carved on the top of the main figure; another two heads are carved on the chest. One of them was carved on the shoulder of the main figure. Two human figures are coming out from his ears.

One small human figure is in sitting position carved at the left side of this figure. There is enough scope to consider that the small figure is sitting on the hand of the main figure. The phallic of the main figure is erected. Some bird like shape is depicted on the belly of this main figure. Three nagas depicted on the right side of the main figure, and some unidentified object is depicted in left side of this figure. This relief image is probably the inspiration from the incarnation of Vshnu, because the Brahma sitting on the louts, which in his term comes out from belly button of this composite image.

The image gives the appearance of Shiva and it can be considered as Aghor Shiva. The iconography has no perfectly matching narration in Pauraanik literature. It has five heads so can be considered as *Panchamahasadashiv*.

This figure is iconographically close to sculpture recorded from unique archaeological site of Tala, Bilaspur, District Madhya Pradesh (Plate 119, a). The Tala figure is probably considered as Aghor Shiva and Rudra.

Viratarupa

This figure is depicted on the one of the pillar of mandap. He is in standing position and has two legs. He holds sword in his right hand and shield in his left. Body and main head is in human shape and additional approximately nine heads are depicted. At the left side of this figure the heads of buffalo, bull, elephant and deer are depicted. At the right side of this figure probably the head of horse and mouse is depicted. Above the both side heads probably the heads of birds are depicted (Plate 119, b). A painting titled 'Arjuna paying Homage to Virat Swaroop' recorded from Mandi, dated 1820 circa was published by the Marg magazine of the Arts vol. 50 No. 1 Sept. 1998. The said figure on pillar has similarity with this miniature painting. In this painting artist has shown many heads of humans, animals and birds to the supreme god (Marg vol. 50 1998, 6).

Unidentified Figure I

This image has four heads. Body and main head is in human shape and additional heads are depicted as of peacock, bull or cow and horse. This image has four hands, out of four two hands are that of a human and another two hands are depicted as horse legs. This figure has two human legs and he is in sitting position (Plate 120, a).

Unidentified Figure II (Probably a Shiva)

The figure on the pillar of Kaleshwar Temple is unique. This therioanthropomorphic figure is carved on the stone pillar. The height of this image is approximately 15 cm. Central figure is that of a man. There is scope to consider this figure as Shiva because it has third eye on its forehead. He is portrayed in sitting position or in Dhyana Mudra. A figure of a woman is placed on the top of the head of this deity, probably the Ganga. It is interesting to note that this figure is shown with Pagadi, the peculiar headgear of the Peshawa period. Sun and moon are also depicted here.

This deity has an additional four heads, two are on his left side and another two are on the right. Head of a horse and probably a head of a dog are depicted on proper left. At the proper right side a head of a deer and probably a head of a bull are portrayed. This figure has ten hands and two legs. He has embellished with two necklaces and earrings (Plate 121, a).

Unidentified Figure III

This therioanthropomorphic figure is carved on the pillar of the same temple. In this figure we can see the upper or front part of the body is that of a man and hind part of the body is that of a bull. Artist has carved a raised rhythmic tail of the bull here. The upper part of the human body holds his hands in *Namaskar Mudra*. A crown is depicted on head. A head of an antelope is depicted on proper left and a head of a bull and probably a head of a donkey is depicted on the proper right. This deity has four hands, two hands are portrayed in *Namaskar Mudra* and in the second left hand he holds a book. In the proper right hand he holds a bud of louts (Kamala) (Plate 122, a). There is hardly any scope to identify this figure. No parallel narration is found in any literary source. Because of bull figure one can connect this figure to Shiva.

Unidentified Figure IV

The unidentified figure is found on pillar. It has five human heads, ten hands and five legs. There are no weapons in the hands. He is depicted having *Angarkha* like garment. Along with the main face, in addition, four added faces are portrayed in profile. Two are at right and two at left. A thick necklace and one long garland are depicted on the chest (Plate 123).

Unidentified Figure V

This image is similar to above mentioned five headed unidentified figure IV. This image (Unidentified Figure V) has seven heads, fourteen hands and seven legs. This image is depicted with *Angarkha*, as upper garment; a long garland and a thick necklace as ornaments. It is very difficult to say more about this image (Plate 124). No patellar literally reference is found so far in this regard.

Unidentified Figure VI

This unidentified pillar figure has three heads, six hands and one leg. There is no weapon in his hands. He wears a thick necklace and a long garland. His leg look-like that of an elephant (Plate 125). There is scope to consider this figure as Aja Ekpada-Shiva, though instead of head of the goat (Aja) here three heads are depicted so that this is unidentified figure.

Unidentified Figure VII

This male figure has a two heads, four hands and two legs. He was wearing a long kurta, a long garland and a thick necklace. We can see combined earring in his both ears. Artist showed him with two heads and four arms. May be this man is a devotee of lord Siva (Plate 126).

Unidentified Figure VIII

This unidentified figure is seated on the animal, probably a cat. He holds a sword in his right hand. It is very difficult to say more about this unidentified figure (Plate 127). The saddle is depicted on the back of the cat.

Unidentified Figure IX

This amazing figure is also found on same pillar and same temple. This super human figure or deity has eighteen heads, thirty six hands and nine legs. There is no weapon in any hand, all the hands are empty. He wears a long Angharkha. He is embellished with a long garland and a necklace. This is an unidentified figure as it is most complex and highly composite one (Plate 128). It is difficult to say more about this figure.

Unidentified Figure X

This unique figure has six heads, sixteen hands and only three legs. There is no any weapon in any hand. He wears a long Angarkha. He is decorated with a long garland and a necklace. It is difficult to identify this figure as no parallel plastic or literally evidence has been found so far (Plate 129).

Unidentified Figure XI

Another composite figure from this temple on pillar has four heads, eight hands and four legs. There is no weapon in hands of this figure. This super human or deity is shown in long Angarkha and having a long garland. The identification of this figure is difficult because we do not have any parallel reference (Plate 130).

Distinctive Figures from Yakshini Mandir

Wooden figures are depicted on the ceiling on the 'Yakhini' temple in the small village named Mangaon, District Sindhudurga. In this temple we can see figures of various deities depicted on the ceiling and on the beams. Most of the figures are distinctive, but difficult to say more about them. They are as follows.

Unidentified Figures XII

This composite image has eight hands, four heads and four legs. There are no weapons and any other objects in the hands of the figure. The image has short lungi or dhoti-like garment and *Yadnyopavit*. Ornaments are also depicted on this image, i.e. bracelets, garland, necklace, earrings and anklets. Two female attendants are shown on both the sides of this image. These Female figures are holding *Chauri* in their hands (Plate 131).

Unidentified Figures XIII

Another composite image has two heads, four hands and two legs. This figure has a dhoti-like garment. Both hands are depicted in *Abhay Mudra*. Artist has depicted a long garland, necklace, crowns, bracelets, earrings and *Yadnyopavit*. One female attendant is depicted near this image holding a *Chauri* in her hand (Plate 132).

In the small panel of this wall one more unique figure is depicted. This figure has six heads, sixteen hands and three legs. This figure wears a short dhoti, and has wears a thick necklace, long garland, bracelets, crown and *Yadnyopavit* (plate 133).

Another unique figure is carved on this ceiling of the same temple. This male figure has seven heads, fourteen hands and seven legs. Artist has depicted ornaments such as a crown, a thick necklace, a long garland, bracelets, and anklets. He wears a dhoti and artist has shown a *Yadnyopavit* (Plate 134).

Another composite male figure has eighteen heads, thirty six hands and nine legs. On this figure artist has depicted *Yadnyopavit*. Some ornaments are depicted on this figure as follows Thick necklace depicted around his neck, bracelets in each arm and upper arm ornament is also depicted. This figure has shown as a short dhoti-type cloth. Only *Adhariya* is depicted. Anklets are also depicted in each leg (Plate 135).

Another composite male figure has five heads, ten hands and five legs. Artist has depicted *Yadnyopavit* on this image. A thick garland, bracelets, anklets, crown, earrings and armlet are depicted on his body (Plate 136).

Another composite has four heads, four legs and eight hands. This male figure has a short dhoti type lower garment. Same types of ornaments are depicted on this figure as above all the figures have. Two female figures are depicted here. These two figures are the attendants of this main deity or figure. Both the attendants are holds a Chawari in their hands. These figures are in standing position (Plate 137).

Another composite image shows that one male figure holding sun and moon in his left and right, hand respectively. He has one head, two legs and two hands. On this figure a short dhoti-type cloth is depicted. This type of cloth is used in Konkan area; local people wear it daily. This figure also has jewelry. Two female attendants are depicted in standing position and holding a Chauri in their hands (Plate 138).

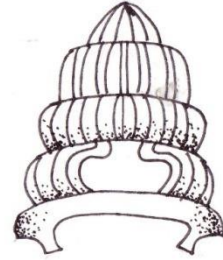
Iconographically another noteworthy figure found on ceiling panel of this temple is Negamesh. He is the general of the infantry (Joshi 1979: 347). This figure of Negamesh has seven hands, four at the right side and three at the left. There are two heads of ram composed on the human body. He holds a sword in his lower left hand. In his middle and upper left hand he holds *Vadaga* (pot). In the lower two right hands he holds a spoon, one in each. In his upper two right hands he holds a book-like object, one in each. A depiction of the *Yjnyopavit* is also present in this figure. He wears a thick necklace (Plate 139). According to the N.P. Joshi 1979 this deity has one head of ram, two human hands and there is no weapon in his hands. This example of Negamesh is distinctive and noteworthy.



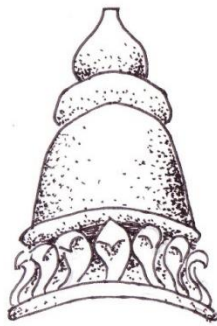
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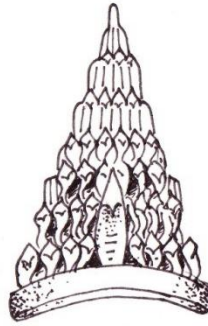
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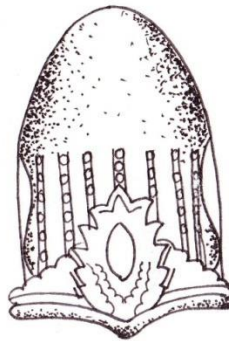
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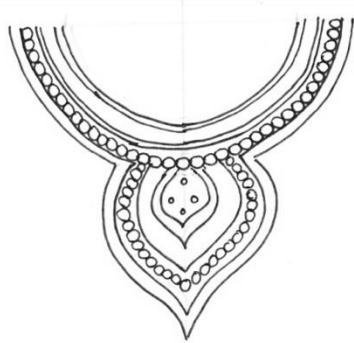
8



9

1. Vishnu, Kaleshwar mandir, Nerur 2. Brhmadev, Kaleshwar mandir, Nerur 3. Hanuman mandir ,Tervan
 4.Vetal Kaleshwar mandir, Nerul 5.Vetal, new image, nerul 6.Rawlanath Kaleshar mandir, Nerul 7. Vetal New
 image, Pendur,
 8 Vetal, Kunkerri 9. Ganga on Shiva's headgear, Kaleshwar Mandir, Nerur

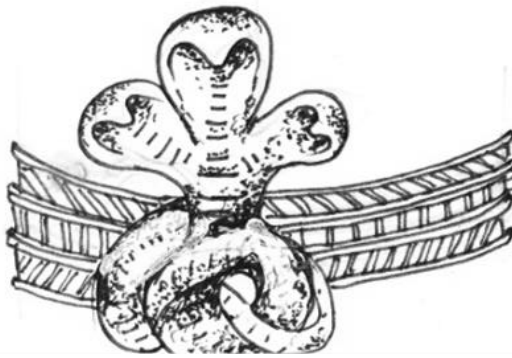
Fig. 5: Type of crowns



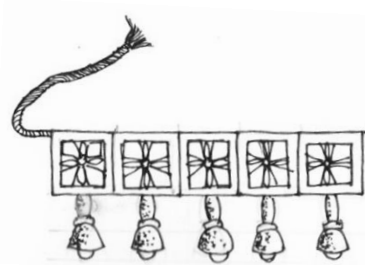
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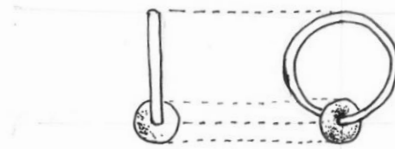
2



3



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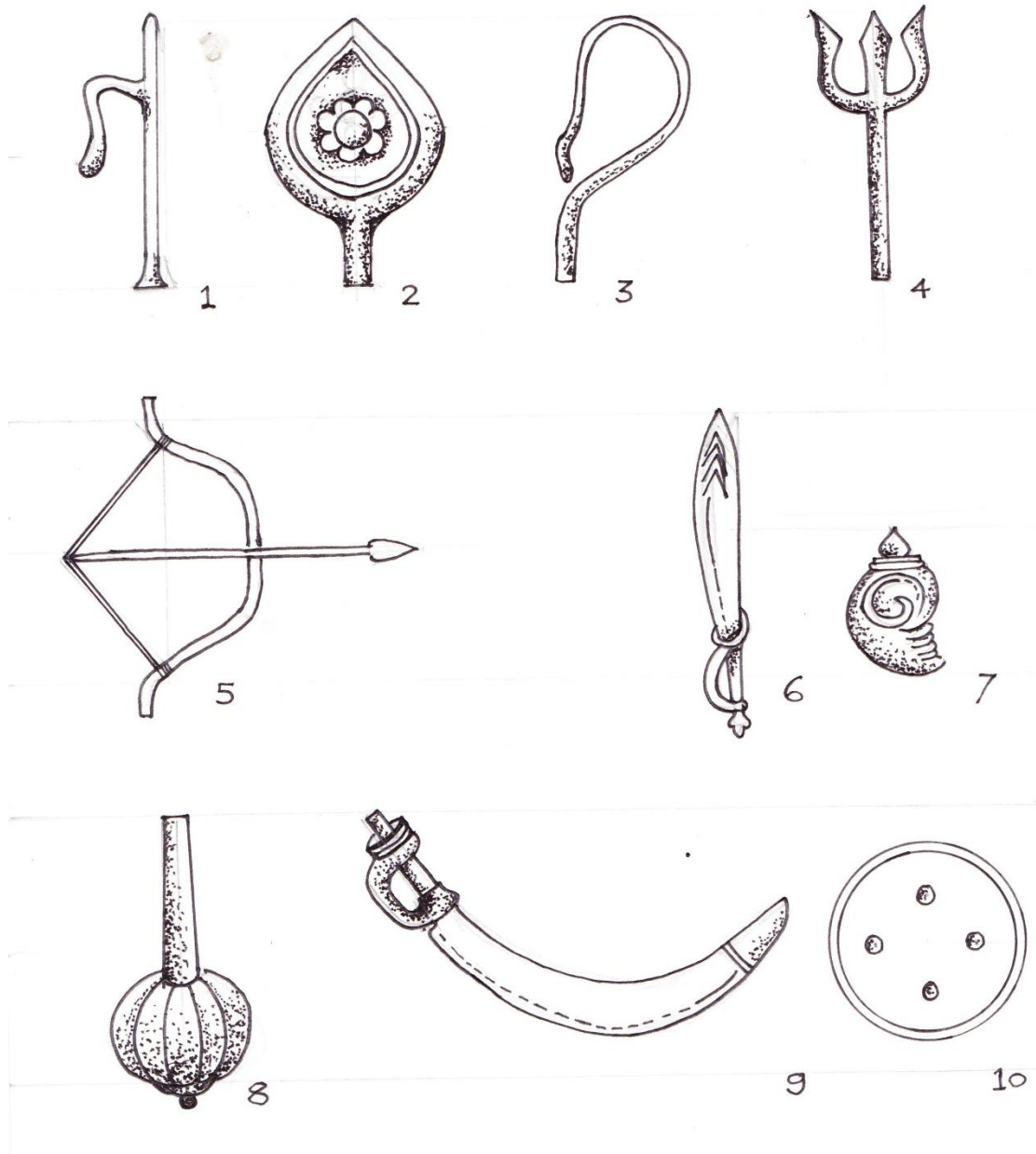


5

1. Garland, Vetal, Pinguli 2. Garland, Vetal, Kunkeri 3. *Bajuband*, Vetal, Kunkeri.

4. *Mekhala*, Vetal, Otwane. 5. Earring, Vetal, Otwane

Fig 6: Types of ornaments



1 *Ankush* 2. Unidentified weapon 3. *Pasha* 4. Trident 5. Bow and Arrow 6. Sword 7. *Shankh* 8 Mace 9. Sword 10. Shield

Fig 7: Types of weapons

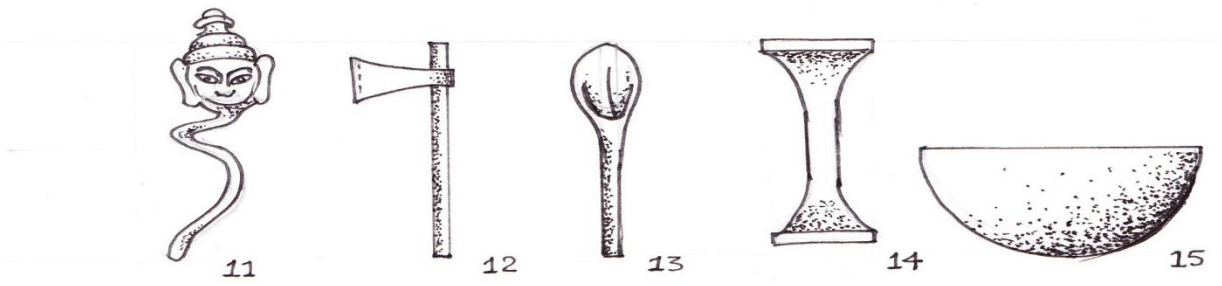


Fig 8: Types of weapons :

11. Human face with stalk, Mangaon 12. Axe, Mangaon 13. Pali, Mangaon 14. Danda, Mangaon
 15. Pot (Vadaga), Mangaon



1. *Mojadi*, Nerur

2. *Khadava*, Kunkeri

Fig 9: Types of foot -wears



Plate 97: Chala, Tarale, Sindhudurga District



Plate 98: Baracha Purvas, Aakeri, Sindhudurga District



Plate 99: Barachi Neet, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 100: Dandekar, Aakeri, Sindhudurga District



Plate 101: Chavhata, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 102: Mulapurusha Kalase, Sindhudurga District



Plate 103: Rakshak, Tervan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 104: Bhadakomba, Murud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 105: Teloba, Asud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 106: Kshetrpala Asud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 107: Holdev, Vaibhavvadi, Sindhudurga District



Plate 108: Holdev, Tervan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 109: Marka / Mharka, Murud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 110: Brahman Dev, Tervan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 111: Ramtirtha, Rajapur, Ratnagiri District



Plate 112: Shiva linga, Asud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 113: Shiva linga, Adiware, Ratnagiri District



Plate 114: Rawalnath, Murud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 115 and 116: Devanagre, Devihansol, Ratnagiri District



Plate 117: Varebuwa, Karde, Ratnagiri District



Plate 118: Gangoba, Tervan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 119: Aghor Siva, Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 119 a) Details



Plate 119 b): Viratarupa, Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 119 b) Details



Plate 120: Unidentified figure I, Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 120 a) Details

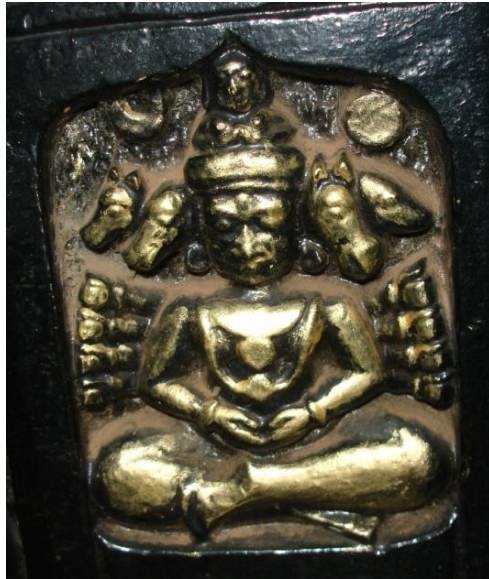


Plate 121: Unidentified figure II, Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 121 a) Details

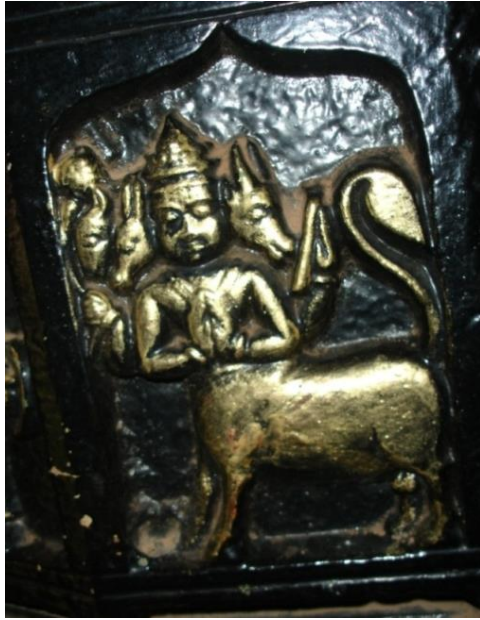


Plate 122: Unidentified figure III, Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 122 a) Details



Plate 123: Unidentified figure IV, Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District

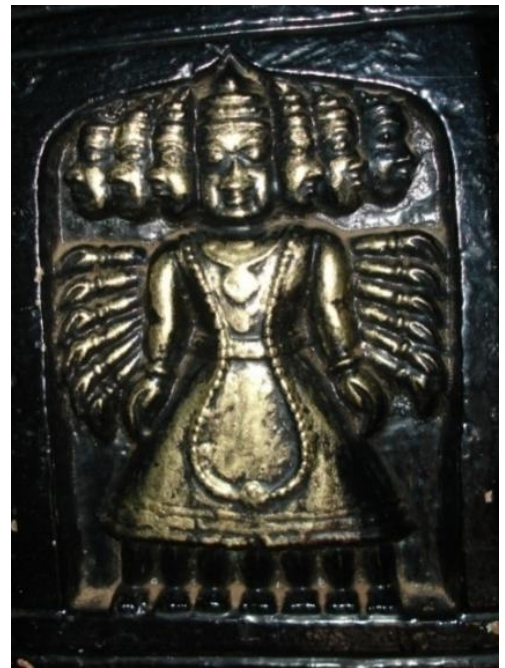


Plate 124: Unidentified figure V, Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 125: Unidentified figure VI, Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 126: Unidentified figure VII, Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 127: Unidentified figure VIII, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 128: Unidentified figure IX, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 129: Unidentified figure X, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 130: Unidentified Figure XI, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 131: Unidentified figure XII, Yakshini Mandir, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 132: Unidentified figure XIII, Yakshini Mandir, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 133: Unidentified figure XIV, Yakshini Mandir, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 134: Unidentified figure XV, Yakshini Mandir, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District

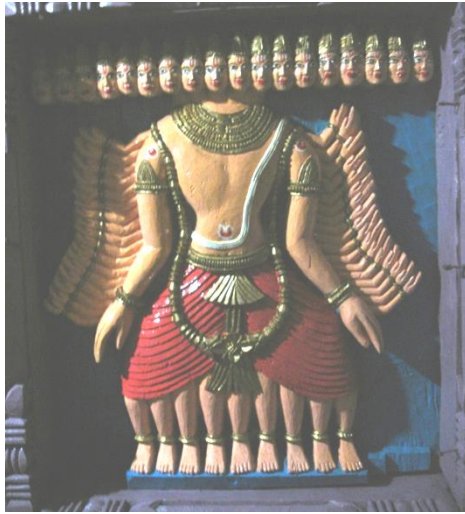


Plate 135: Unidentified figure, Yakshini Mandir, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District

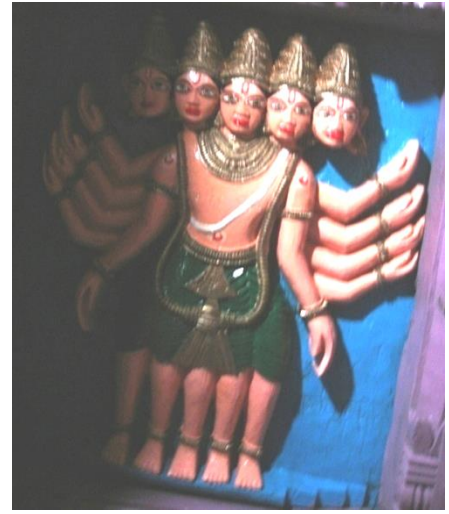


Plate 136: Unidentified figure, Yakshini Mandir, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 137: Unidentified figure, Yakshini Mandir, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 138: Unidentified figure, Yakshini Mandir, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 139: Negamesh, Yakshini Mandir, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 17: Vetala, Pinguli, Sindhudurga District



Plate 18: New image of Vetala, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 19: Old image of Vetala, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 20: Vetala, Kunakeri, Sindhudurga, District



Plate 20 a) *Khadawa* Vetala, Kunakeri



Plate 20 b) *Mundmala*, Vetala, Kunakeri



Plate 20 c) *Bajuband*, Vetala, Kunakeri, Sindhudurga, District



Plate 21: Vetala, Otawane, Ratnagiri District



Plate 21 a) Vetala, Otawane, Ratnagiri District



Plate 22: Parabacha Vasa, Pinguli, Sindhudurga District



Plate 23: Parab vasa, Aakeri, Sindhudurga District



Plate 24: Gawadyancha vasa, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 25: Shree Dev Nagoji Bhosale Vas, Kunaker
Sindhudurga District



Plate 26: Baracha Purvas, Pinguli,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 27: Mula Purush, Pinguli, Sindhudurga District



Plate 28: Chala, Dhamapur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 29: Indrajitacha Hata, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 30: Khem, Khem Temple, Karde,
Ratnagiri District



late 31: Mhamai, Khem Temple, Karde, Ratnagiri District



Plate 32: Jain Deva, Nerur, Sindhudurga District

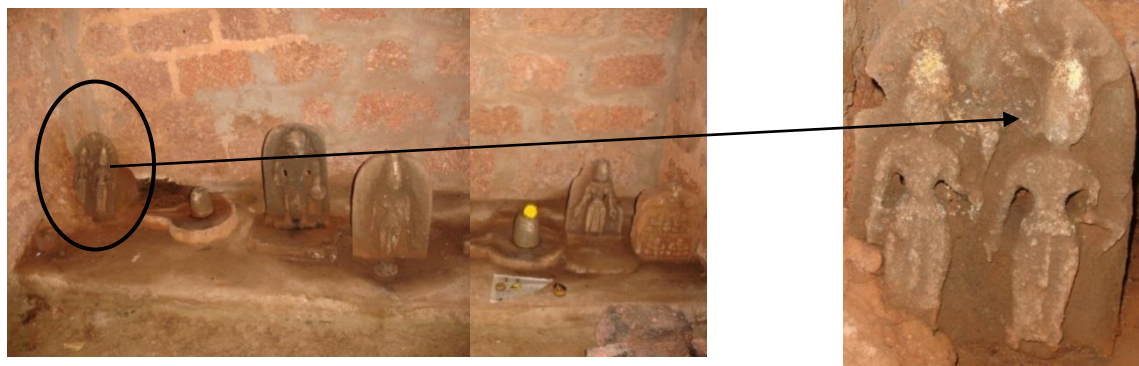


Plate 33: Deities placed in the Bhagavati Devi Temple, Dhamapur, Sindhudurga District

Plate 33 a) Balaram.



Plate 34: Brahman, Pinguli, Sindhudurga District



Plate 35: Bhutnath, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 36: Rawalnath, Kalase, Sindhudurga District



Plate 37: Rawalnath, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 38: Rawalnath, Nerur, Sindhudurga District,



Plate 38 a)



Plate 39: Rawalnath, Dhamapur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 40: Generals (Senapati) of Rawalnath, Dhamapur, Sindhudurga District

Plate 40: Generals



Plate 41: Rawalnath Temple, Otawane,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 41 a) Pedestal of Rawalnath



Plate 42: Earthquake, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 43: Rawalnath, Pinguli,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 44: Rawalnath, Kunakeri,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 45: Rawalnath, Manai temple,
Ratnagiri District

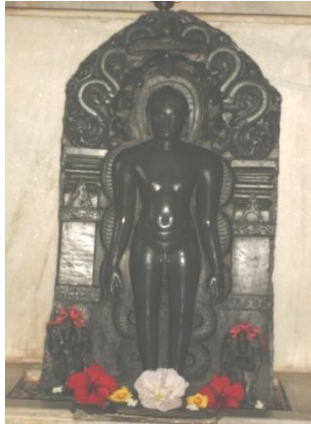


Plate 46: Chintamani Parshwanath, Jain Mandir, Kharepatan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 47: Adinath, Kharepatan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 48: Stone piece kept in Jain Mandir, Kharepatan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 47 a)



Plate 49: Chaturvinshtika / Choubisi, Jain Mandir, Kharepatan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 50: Hoard of images, Jain Mandir, Kharepatan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 51: Dharmaya / Dharmaya, Jain Mandir, Kharepatan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 52: Upoda / Upada, Jain Mandir Kharepatan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 53: Rear side of Chaturvinshtika 1, Kharepatan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 54: Chaturvinshtika 1, Jain Mandir Kharepatan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 55: Brahmadeva, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 56: Brahmadev Kanakaditya Temple, Kasheli, Ratnagiri District



Plate 57: Maruti, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 58: Hanuman, Karde, Ratnagiri District



Plate 58 a)



Plate 59: Vishnu, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 60: Vishnu, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 61: Vishnu, Manai temple,
Ratnagiri District



Plate 62: Lakshmi Kant, Lakshmi Kant Temple, Bhu,
Ratnagiri District



Plate 63: Keshav Raja, Asud,
Ratnagiri District



Plate 64: Kartikeya, Siva temple, Ratnagiri District

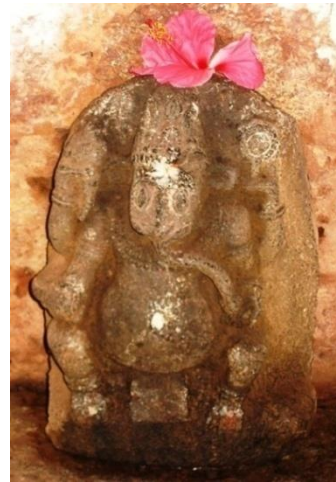


Plate 65: Ganesha, Lakshmi Kant temple, Bhu.,
Ratnagiri District



Plate 66: Narsimha as well as Ganesha, Bhu,
Ratnagiri District



Plate 67: Lion shaped ears of Ganesha, Bhu,
Ratnagiri District



Plate 68: Siva and Parvati, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 69: Kedareshwar, Karul, Sindhudurga District



Plate 70: Bhairavanatha Temple, Murud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 71: Bhairavanatha Temple, Murud, Ratnagiri District

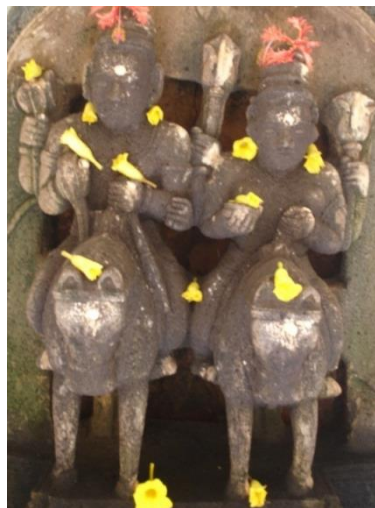


Plate 72: Kalabhairava, Dapoli, Ratnagiri District



Plate 73: Pavanai/Siva, Dhamapur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 74: Agni, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District

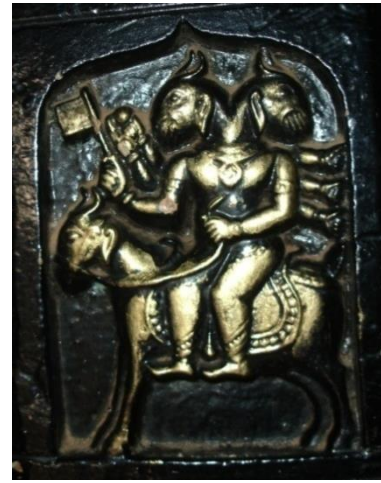


Plate 75: Agni, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 76: Yama, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District

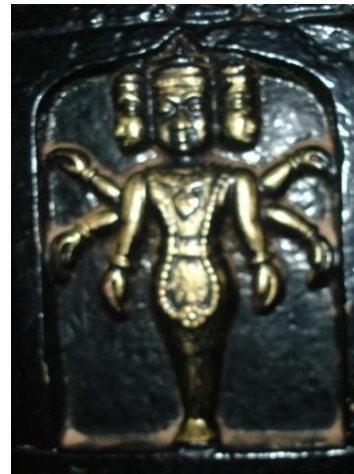


Plate 77: Unidentified Figure, Kaleshwar Temple,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 78: Buddha, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 79: Vishnu, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 80: Ravana, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 81: Rama, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 82: Brahma, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District

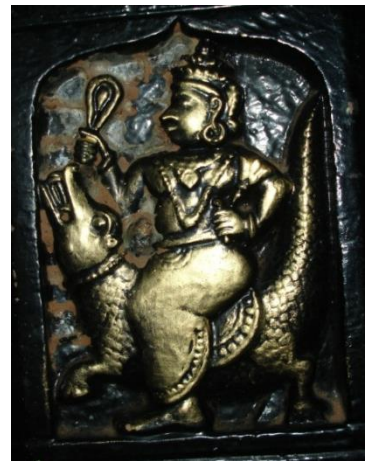


Plate 83: Varuna, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 84: Siva and Parvati, Kaleshwar Temple, Nerur,
Sindhudurga District

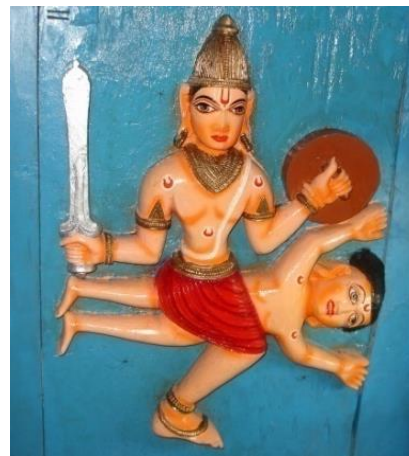


Plate 85: Niuti, Yakshini temple, Mangaon,
Sindhudurga District



Plate 86: Yama Dev, Kanakaditya Temple, Kasheli, Ratnagiri District



Plate 87: Kuber, Kanakaditya Temple, Kasheli, Ratnagiri District



Plate 88: Varuna, Kanakaditya Temple Kasheli, Ratnagiri District

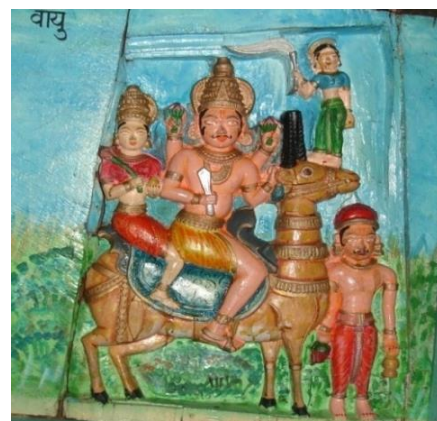


Plate 89: Vayu, Kanakaditya Temple Kasheli, Ratnagiri District



Plate 90: Eshana, Kanakaditya Temple Kasheli, Ratnagiri District



Plate 91: Indra, Kanakaditya Temple Kasheli, Ratnagiri District



Plate 92: Unnamed deity, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 93: Warrior, Mangaon., Sindhudurga District



Plate 94: Orphanage of the gods and goddesses, at Hrne, Ratnagiri District



Plate 95: Unidentified figure at Hrne.



Plate 96. Panchayatan, at Hrne, Dapoli, Ratnagiri District

Female Deities: The goddesses

Part I: Vyakta Deities

Introduction:

The importance of the worship of the Matraka (mother) has been in practice from the remote time. Because of ability to giving birth and protective nature feminine element has received the status of the goddess. The present survey area is not an exception for this universal phenomenon. The concept of the mother is the highest, the noblest and most natural in bestowal of affection. The mother has been conceived in different aspects all over the world. Naturally as Devi she is a great concept in India (Sivaramamurti 1982: 1, 2).

“The Matraka-worship and the related manifestations in plastic arts are a pan-Indian phenomenon, the antiquity of which is considered to be as ancient as that of Siva and the fertility goddesses of the Indus Valley civilization. The distinct, ideational, literary, visual and ritualistic manifestations of the Matraka concept are interconnected with the totality of Brahmanical and Non-Brahmanical religious traditions. And these are integral components of the multifarious historical processes of Indian society” (Panikkar 1997: 1).

Various types of female deities are scattered in Konkan region, especially in the present survey area: Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga district. These female deities appear in Vyakta and Avyakta forms. Mainly in the non-Brahmanical society the cult images are worshiped prominently. The focus of this thesis is mainly on the folk cult images; therefore a list of local female deities is important and added here.

Noteworthy names of the Vyakta and Avyakta female deities are as follows

Table 2

No.	Name of Deity	Vyakta	Avyakta
1	Vithala	✓	
2	Juga Devi	✓	
3	Zar Devi	✓	
4	Kalika	✓	
5	Pavana	✓	
6	Aarya Durga	✓	✓
7	Jaka Devi	✓	
8	Kalika Durga	✓	
9	Vithla Durga	✓	
10	Purkai	✓	
11	Mhadevi	✓	✓
12	Sima Devi		✓
13	Durga Devi	✓	
14	Kaleshwari	✓	
15	Jogeshwari	✓	
16	Jakhmata		✓
17	Zolai	✓	✓
18	Manai	✓	✓
19	Yogeshvari	✓	
20	Kalkai	✓	
21	Nantekarin	✓	
22	Nati Devi	✓	
23	Vavalalkarin	✓	
24	Ghanekarin	✓	

25	Navla	✓	
26	Ekvira	✓	
27	Santeri		✓
28	Bhawai	✓	
29	Nina Devi	✓	
30	Sati Devi	✓	
31	Bankai	✓	
32	Talekarin	✓	
33	Mhamai	✓	
34	Mauli	✓	

Aai, Mauli, Devi, Mata and Karin

Many deities of the region have epithets behind their names for example *Aai, Mauli, Devi, Mata* and *Karin*. 'Aai' is a suffix which shows an honour as well as the affection about the deity. The Marathi word 'Aai' means mother, who gives birth and protects the baby from any type of calamities. The mother fulfils all wishes of her children, the devotees. Devotees feel very comfortable in her propinquity. In these districts devotees come to their mother (goddess) to discuss and solve their problems. Many times the problems are very marginal or trivial, and may be related to their day to day life or some problems are even as minor as they would be negligible.

'Mauli' and 'Mata' are another epithets, it also means great mother. The word *Mauli* is the Synonym of the word 'Aai'. Devi-Mauli from village Chendvan, District Sindhudurga is the example of this kind of suffix. The literally meaning of the word Devi-Mauli means the mother-goddess. Here the image of Devi-Mauli is a Mahishasurmardini.

'Devi' means goddess. *Jaka Devi, Sati Devi, Mha Devi, Juga Devi, Sima Devi, Durga Devi*, etc. are the names of popular goddess from this region. *Jaka, Sati, Mha, Juga, Sima* are the words with which the word 'Devi' is combined. *Jaka Devi* from village Tervan is the

village deity. 'Jaka' is the corrupt form of the word *Jakhin* or 'Yakshi'. In Pali and Prakrut 'ya' is converted into 'za' and 'Kha' are converted into 'kkha'.

Samartha Ramdas swami has given the names of the local deities of Maharashtra in his work 'Dasbodha', wherein he mentions *JakhMata (Yaksha Mata), Jakhin, Zoting, Vetala, Manayini*, etc (Dasbodha, Chapter IV , 83) .

Another interesting instance of another epithet is 'Karin'. This epithet is indicating the native place of the particular deity. Many instances of this type of goddess are found in the research area: for example *Nantekarin*, which originally belongs to village Nante, but now migrated and worshiped in the village Karde. 'Karin' is the epithet added with the name of the village (Nante + *Karin* = Nantekarin), Ghanekarin, Kondalkarin, Wawalankarin, Bankarin, etc.

Most of these village deities have their shrines on the periphery (border or outskirts) of the village. Some of these village deities have their temples in heart of the village and they are the main village deity and have specific rituals and position. In village Pinguli, Sindhudurga District there is a small temple on side of road called Sati Devi. There are two stones placed on the small plinth. The shape of these stones is that of a Linga and Yoni. Villagers make a vow to this deity for a child.

Part I

Vyakta Deities: the Goddesses

Vyakta Cult Images of Goddess, their Iconography, Myths and Some Observations

Jugadevi

The image of Jugadevi is kept in the Kalika Devi Temple, village Tervan, Ratnagiri District. This female goddess has four hands. She holds *Dhala* (shield), *Talvar* (sword) and *Vadaga* (bowl), *Khanjir* (dagger). *Naramunda* is depicted near bellow the left hand. This image is sitting in Sukhasan. She wears a *Karandaka Muguta* (crown). This style of crown

is similar to the style of the Chola period. We can see the *Prabhavalaya* (halo) around her head. Ornaments are depicted here; those are earrings, bangles, necklace, *Naramundmala* and armllet. This image is worshiped by *Kunbi samaaj* (farmers). There are no particular duties of this deity. Jugadevi is worshiped on *Holi*, *Shimga* and *Navaratra*. Villagers worship this deity as Jugadevi, but the appearance of this deity is similar to the goddess Durga (Plate 140).

Pavana Devi

This female figure has four hands. In her upper right hand she holds *Damaru* (a small drum), *Talvar* (sword) in her lower right hand, *Trishula* (trident) in her upper left hand and *Vadaga* (bowl) in her lower left hand. She has a *Karandaka Muguta* (crown similar to the Chola period crown). There is short sari-like garment depicted at the waist of this image. We can see the ornaments like earrings, bangles, necklace, mala and *Mekhala*. She wears a long garland too. This goddess is mainly worshiped by *Kunbi Samaj* (farmers). There is no particular ritual for this image. She is worshiped on *Holi*, *Shimga* and *Navaratra*. Iconographically this image has appearance of goddess Parvati (Plate 141).

Bhawai

This female figure is kept in the temple known as Bhutnath temple, village Nerur, Sindhudurga District. She is in sitting position and holds her hands in *Namaskar Mudra*. On this stone slab male and female figures are depicted. The appearance of these two figures is that of devotees. Villagers call this image as Bhawai. There is no specific ritual for this deity. Villagers called this deity as a Bhawai. In the remaining part of the Sindhudurga district goddess Bhawai represents goddess Gajalakshmi. This is the only example of this kind (Plate 142).

Jaka Devi

This deity is placed in the small shrine in the premises of the main temple of goddess Mahakali, village Kasheli, Ratnagiri District. There is no particular ritual of this deity. This

image has four hands. In her upper left hand she holds a Damaru (a small drum) and in her upper right hand she holds a Trishula (trident). She wears a crown, necklaces and bangles. Her lower right and left hands are broken. Lower part of this image is hidden behind garment. This goddess may be is the associate deity of the main goddess. According to the villagers a myth is related to this deity. A famous sun temple named Kanakaditya is situated in this village. Goddess Kalika came with goddess Jaka Devi for the wedding for of Kanakaditya and Jaka Devi. But instead of Jaka Devi, goddess Kalika got married to Kanakaditya. Goddess Jaka Devi remained unmarried and became a village deity of the village Kasheli (Plate 143).

Kaleshwari

This deity is placed in the small shrine in the *Khotachi Vadi* (personal plantation of coconut and betel nut by village heads called *Khota*) in village Asud, Dapoli Taluka, Ratnagiri District. This deity is said to be the first wife of Bhairavanatha. The myth related to this deity is that in a fit of anger, she went to live in *Khotachi Vadi*. This deity is worshipped by Maratha, *Kunbi Samaj* and *Bahujan Samaj*. This image has four hands. She holds a sword and a shield. The lower right hand may be in *Varadahasta mudra*, and in the lower left hand she holds some unidentifiable object. She wears a crown. This design is called *Mukut Bandhan* (Joshi 1979: 34). It is important that she is not depicted wearing clothes, but is covered from below her breast to her ankle by one big leaf. In the month of *Vaishakha*, villagers offer the sacrifice of three hens. Suresh Bal (formerly the *Khot* of village) told that this deity is worshipped by the *Kunbi Samaj* (Plate 144).

The Yaksha figure is depicted as vahana of Yakshi on Vedika at Bharhut second century B.C. This Yaksha figure is showing noteworthy lower garment. The appearance of this garment is that of a leaf. In the figure of goddess Kaleshwari we can see the similar cloth depicted as a lower garment which is noteworthy in this regard (Plate 145).

Katra Devi

This distinctive deity is kept in the small village named Sagwe, Rajapur Taluka, Ratnagiri District. This small metal sculpture is kept in the metal shrine locally called *Devhara* (Plate 146, a). Provenance and date of this goddess is uncertain. According to the villagers this deity lived in Mutad village. The village god of Mutad and this goddess *Katra* are brother and sister. She came to Sagwe village in search of water. At the beginning she lived at a *mistri's* (carpenter) house, and then came to *Guravs* (priest) house. This myth is told by Sadashiv Bapu *Gurav*, the present priest.

To build the temple villagers have taken the verdict of this deity. But many times she told that they have to be built the temple in one night. It was impossible for the villagers. Therefore, she settled in the house. The ritual duty is rotated among the local *Gurav* families yearly. Every year the selected priest family is permitted to hold the deity. The mask of the *Katra* Devi is along with masks of other gods.

This small image of the goddess *Katra* is made up of copper. Total height of this image including pedestal is approximately 25 cm. artistically this image is not beautiful. Her eyes are close. She wears a nose ring locally call '*Natha*'. The nose ring is very small and beautiful. She also wears a crown on her head but in upper side of this crown another small and crown is placed. She has chuckle face. She has a long years and earrings. She has four hands. In her lower left hand she holds an unidentified object. In her lower right hand she holds a sword and many bangles in both the lower hands. May be she holds a bud of flower in her upper left hand because we can see a stem of that flower. Her upper right hand is concealed with the flowers. We can see a rectangular- shaped amulet tide in her waist. In the local language is called a *Linga*.

Upper part of the image of *Katra* Devi is stark and lower part of the body is shrouded by a cloth. This deity wears a necklace which is made of gold coins locally called *Putali* (Plate 147). These types of coins are known as ducat meaning old European gold or silver coins especially used in Italy. From the 14th to the 18th century, there was trade between

Venice and the ports of western and southern India. Traders brought Venetian gold coins known as *Ducats* made of gold. Besides the coins minted by various Indian rulers, many foreign coins too were used in certain parts of India during different periods of history. Merchants and traders brought these foreign coins to India (Plate 148).

On these coins two figures are depicted. Left side figure is in standing position and this figure is of Saint Mark. The sitting figure is known as *Doge* (Italian Renaissance Chief Magistrate). The Doge received the gonfalon at the hands of Saint Mark and the name of the Doge is Alvise Mocenigo. Italian alphabets are carved on the edge of the coins. 'DVX' is written horizontally near the gonfalon. Venetian *Ducat* contained 3.545 g. of 99.47% fine gold. Author was not able to see the reverse side of these coins. May be some merchant offered this ducat necklace after his vow was fulfilled. The priest was unable to give information about this necklace.

Villagers have three days' festival in the honour of this deity. For the first day the villagers call '*Jatra*' (fete), for the second day they call '*Aadhe*', and for the third day they call '*Tengra or Sarana*' (funeral pyre). On first day the image of this deity is kept inside a wooden box, locally call '*Peti*'. Gurav holds this box to take the goddess out from the shrine. At the time of dawn, villagers take out procession of this goddess on outskirts of the village in an open space. Here villagers make *Sarana* means pyre. Before the first day of *Jatra*, villagers prepare this pyre and eight days before this *Jatra* two people (from locally called *Jain* community) go and find out a bone of dead pregnant woman. And every time they get the bone. Devotees of this goddess throw this bone into the pyre and set on fire. This is unique instance found in the study area. When the pyre would be set on fire villagers make shelter for this goddess on the open space. In local language they call it *Aadhe*, and keep the image of this deity into it. All this ceremony is held on a rock plateau locally called *Sada*.

In the evening villagers put their grievances, locally called *Gahrane* in front of this deity and make vows. On the second day, villagers do an interesting act: they remove the effect of the evil eye upon this deity; local people call this act *Chaka kadhane*. They use

mustard and salt at that time. Then the image of this deity is return to her native place. On the third day of this ceremony villagers offer nine hens to this deity and the whole ceremony is over. In these three days all the villagers are in mourning. This whole ritual has stringent rules. Devotees and villagers have great faith on this goddess.

Here we can see the authentic replica of the goddess *Katra*; locally it is called '*Tak*'. It is made by the silver foil. In her lower left hand a face of a baby can clearly seen. May be some part of this ritual is related to pregnant woman so it could be possible to depicted the face of baby here. In this replica we can see the lower garment and thick anklets. This *Tak* is offered by a devotee of this goddess, after fulfilment of his vow recently (Plate 149).

Images of Gopi

Images of Gopis are depicted on the pillars of Kaleshwar temple in Nerur, Sindhudurga District. These images are that of the milkmaid (Plate 150). All the four figures are draped with in Rajasthani style Ghagara (long skirt) and *Choli* (blouse). This is the unique example of images with this type of costume from this region.

Mahishasurmardini

In Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga Districts we can see many images of goddess Mahishasurmardini. In Sindhudurga District this deity is called and worshiped as Santeri and in Ratnagiri District this goddess is worshiped by another name '*Zolai*'. The villagers do not know the meaning of this word. For generations these people have used this word for the particular deity. Some images of this deity are small in size. Some images are became eroded because of climatic conditions. Some have their own shrine and some time the image is placed outside the main shrine. Some images do not have their own ritual. May be some images are made by local stone carvers as their appearance shows. Some deities are getting the appearance of an urban style. This deity is also worshiped as '*Devi Mauli*' on the border of two villages named Chendawan and Walawal in Sindhudurga district.

Zolai

Almost in every village, small or big, in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga district the images of goddess *Zolai* can be found. Ichnographically this image is of the as Mahishasurmardini. Mahishasurmardini has got an important place among goddess. Most ancient and original place of goddess Mahishasurmardini is in Makaran Hills, Baluchistan, and (Dhere 2007: 13). Even these days this deity is worshiped there as ‘Hingalaj Devi’. In Baluchistan people worship this place as Nani Mandir. In India the images of Mahishasurmardini are found from Kushan period (4th century A.D.). When we study the history and geography of this empire, it becomes clear why the Mahishamardini Yogini at Khajuraho is worshiped as Hingalaj (Dhere 2007: 14).

There is a myth about this deity mentioned in Devi Bhagwat, Kalika Purana and Skanda Purana. A demon named Rambhasur pleased lord Shiva and got blessing from him saying that “I am without child; I wish that you take a birth as my child”. After some days he saw a beautiful she-buffalo on the road. Rambhasur got attracted becomes of her beauty. After some days Rambhasur got a child that was named as Mahishasur.

Mahishasur has done a penance of Lord Brahma. Brahma granted a boon that, “He will never dies in hands of a male”. Because of this boon Mahishasur has become very insolent and started persecuting every one. One day he went on the mountain named Arunachala, where Parvati was doing a penance. Seeing her beauty Mahishasur got attracted towards her. He manifested himself as old man and asked her, “Why are you doing a penance?” She said: “I am doing this penance to obtain the most powerful and mighty Lord Shiva.” Mahishasur asked, “I am also powerful, why don’t you marry me?” Parvati challenged him for the war and told him to show his power. A war started between them. Parvati defeated and killed him. After this war Parvati became goddess Mahishasurmardini (Joshi 1972: 256).

In Kushan art in Mathura there are two types of images of this goddess, one is four handed and another is eight handed. In Mahabharata there is description of the fore handed Mahishasurmardini. In her weapons *Trishula* (trident) is more important than sword, belt and

shield. In early images of this goddess, halo and lion are absent. Mahishasurmardini is shown with her right hand around the neck of Mahishasur and pressing him by her left hand. This is the characteristics of the Kushan period. The goddess treading the demon, type of images was created in the Gupta period.

In the survey area many images of this deity were found. In most cases, in Ratnagiri District Mahishasurmardini is known as *Zolai*. It is very difficult to say the meaning of this word. In many villages in Sindhudurga District this goddess is worshiped as Devi Santeri and Mauli. Most of the villages of these two districts have the temple or shrines of this goddess. Some images are eroded; therefore it is difficult to recognize the weapons in her hands. Most of the images have four hands. But in some cases eight hands are also depicted. Here the author tries to give all the types of the goddess *Zolai* = Mahishasurmardini images seen in various villages in the survey area.

The goddess is holding sword and shield in her upper two hands. In the lower right hand she holds a *Trishula* (Trident) and stabs Mahisha (a monster). In her lower left hand, she holds the Mahisha by his lower jaw. The right leg rests on his back. Devotees play a *Katkhel* on *Shimga*. *Katkhel* includes men holding wooden sticks in their hand and dance like the 'Garba'. The *Kunbi Samaj* worships this deity. This goddess desires to ride in a palanquin made of the tree named *Nirgudi*. But it is impossible to make a palanquin of *Nirgudi*. For this reason, *Zolai* does not have a palanquin. Each one who participates in this *Katkhel* is supposed to transform into the *Zolai*.

After the end of the '*Holi*' festival they start playing *Katkhel*. Only one person from every ten villages is chosen for this ceremony and he must be between 18 to 25 years of age. The participants must undergo ten days of this ritual. All these participants have to wear nine-yard sari and each holds four sticks. They wield these sticks like swords. The practice of warfare is the important aspect behind this ritual (Plate 151).

Another image of the deity is located in the small temple of *Khem* in village Karde, Taluka Dapoli, Ratnagiri District. Here the villagers also worship this deity as a *Zolai*. She

has four hands. In the two upper hands she holds a sword and a shield. In her lower left hand she holds a *Khanjir* (dagger). Lower right hand is raised but artist has not depicted a trident in her hand. In some villages of the Konkan region Hindus and Muslims perform the same rituals and worship the same local deity, e.g. in village Karde. Villagers perform a ritual known as *Katkhel* in Shimga. At that time Muslim people participate in Hindu rituals. It is the custom that Hindus should let the Muslims perform the ritual first. The palanquin of Khem is taken first to the tomb / mosque and then to Khem temple. Muslim villagers are given the first place of honour by Hindu devotees in this ritual (Plate 152).

The image of *Zolai* kept in the temple of Vetala, village Mangaon is eroded. But we can imagine on the basis of remains that the image of this deity was beautiful when it was intact (Plate 153).

Jogeshwari

A temple of Jogeshwari is situated in village Murud, Dapoli Taluka, Ratnagiri District. The image of the Jogeshwari is that of a Mahishasurmardini. In her upper right hand she holds a dagger; in upper left hand she holds a shield. In upper right hand she holds trident and stabs into the Mahisha's neck. In her upper left hand she holds a bow. In her third left hand she holds a sword and in the third right she holds a *Pasha*. In the fourth right hand she holds some unidentified object. In the fourth left hand she holds hair of the demon. In this image a demon is shown in the human form from the body of Mahisha and original head is depicted near the left leg of the goddess. Mahishasurmardini has kept her right leg on the back of the Mahisha. In this sculpture the lion is shown attacking Mahisha (Plate 154). The image of this deity is well decorated. She has eight hands, this type of images were created after Gupta period as suggested by Joshi (Joshi 1979: 242).

In the small villages of Ratnagiri District like Asud and Taksul have the images of this deity. Both the images are eroded. Mahishasurmardini of Asud village known and worship as Manai.

Santeri

In Sindhudurga District this deity is worshiped by the name of Santeri. There were many temples and small shrines built in this district. A small image of this deity is kept in the shrine of Vetala in village Pinguli, Taluka Kudal, Sindhudurga District. The image has four hands. In the upper right hand she holds a stick like object and shield in her upper left. She holds her a sword in lower right hand and the head of Mahisha in lower left hand.

A small temple of Santeri is situated in the premises of goddess Huda in the Kunakeri village of Sindhudurga. This image of Mahishasurmardini is also carved beautifully. Villagers worship this deity as Santeri (Plate 155).

Villagers of the Pendur, Sindhudurga District were found approximately five to six images on the top of the small hill near the temple of Santeri. The image of Mahishasurmardini is also found at the same place. This image has four hands. She holds a trident in her upper right hand and a conch in upper left hand. In lower left hand she holds the head of Mahisha. With the sword in the lower right hand, she stabbed the throat of Mahisha. In this image goddess is shown with raised left leg that is on back side of the Mahisha. Generally the head of the Mahisha depicted at the left side of the deity, but in this image the head is depicted in opposite direction. There is no local name or ritual related to this deity (Plate 156). We can see the depiction of this image not only in the shrine, but local artist has also carved an image on wooden roof of the temple of the Lakshmi- Narayana in village Walawal as a decorative form (Plate 157).

Devi Mauli

This deity is known and worshiped as Devi Mauli. Its temple is built on the border of two villages: Walawal and Chendawan. Iconographically the image is that of a Mahishasurmardini. She has ten hands. Villagers believe that she is vigilant deity and fulfil the vows of her devotees. There is a myth about this deity told by the priest named Harishchandra Gurav. According to the priest the antiquity of this deity goes back to the sixteenth century (Plate 158).

The muths says that earlier this deity and her brother Laxminarayan migrated from Karnatak to Goa. Because of proselytizing the people, one native named Kalyan migrated to this village with these two gods. When they reached this village goddess became thirsty. Her brother went out to bring water. He came to a lake in Walawal. On the bank of the lake few Brahmans were eating their food. Brother was also hungry; therefore he stopped there and also had a lunch with them. After this he remembered that he came to bring water for her thirsty sister. In hurry he took a cup of water and came back to her sister. Angry sister gave him a slap and went away. From this incident they both meet only once in a year on approximately on the twelve November (*Kartik Shuddha Dwadashi*).

On every 11th and 12th March (*Falgun Shuddha Ekadashi and Dwadashi*) villagers celebrate an anniversary of this deity. On these two days people do *Hom-havan*. People have deep faith in this deity. Devotee makes vows and after the fulfilment of their vow they offer her several things. For instances, if devotee make a vow for cure of leg or heart then he/she devotee offers this deity a wooden miniature leg or heart. Devotees offer gold, silver, etc. according to one's ability. We can see a big hoard of these things. This hoard has homes, wells, hands, ears, noses, and hearts with valves, intestines, eyes, buses, mice, cows, boats, and cradles in numbers, figures of males or female, etc. These things are mostly is small size and made up of wood.

Gajalakshmi as Bhawai

In Konkan region particularly in Sindhudurga District, Lakshmi is depicted with the elephant as the important element. Gajalakshmi was the family deity of Rashtrakuta dynasty. The period of this dynasty is approximately 750 to 900 A.D. The village with Gajalakshmi image is suppose to be of ancient as Rashtrakuta period. The worship of these images is very old but stopped after the decline of this dynasty (Kunte 2007: 7).

Here are some noteworthy examples of these images from Konkan region. In the Sindhudurga District villagers called this deity as 'Bhawai'. Author could not trace the link between the iconography of Gajalakshmi and the name given by the villagers. We can see

the variation in the depiction of this deity. In some cases elephants are standing on their four legs. In some cases they are standing on their hind legs. In some cases we can see some images of other deities carved on the small plinth of this deity, e.g. the image of goddess Gajalakshmi is placed in the premises of the Manai temple. In this image we can see the depiction of Ganesh and other three images at the bottom of this icon (Plate 159). There is no single shrine for this deity. Also there is no particular ritual or worship done by the villagers.

The image of goddess Gajalakshmi is placed in the premises of the Manai temple. This is only one example of this kind. In Sindhudurga District we find this female deity in numerous places. Even in the small village or in the remote area we can we can find the image of this goddess.

In Sindhudurga District we can found this female deity in numerous places. Even in the small villages or in the remote area we can find the images of this goddess.

The image of goddess Gajalakshmi is placed in temple known as Bhawai in the Kunakeri village. This new image was installed by the villagers. Six figures are depicted at the bottom of this image and these figures are shown with their instruments (Plate 160). In Konkan region villagers have placed new icons instead of the old ones and have submerged the old icons in well, river or sea. Village Kunakeri is not an exception. In this village villagers have kept old icons in a well nearby. We can see these images clearly (Plate 161).

Mangaon, Aakeri, Nerur, Pinguli, Chendawan, Otawane and many other villages have small temples or shrines for this goddess Gajalakshmi. Gajalakshmi is not included as a cult image, but particularly here villagers worship this deity as a local goddess named Bhawai. Therefore, author has included this deity in the thesis.

Gajalakshmi is the popular form of female deity from ancient time. This form of deity is found all over in India (Joshi 1979: 241). In the Ramayana there is mention of Gajalakshmi. On the ancient Indian coins we have the image of this goddess (Joshi 1979:

215). Gajalakshmi images are predominantly found in Shunga period, approximately 3rd century B.C. to 1st century A.D. (Joshi 1979: 216).

The elephant is one of the auspicious symbols in ancient Indian art. Gajalakshmi represents the lady of prosperity - Shri. The elephant represents the laden cloud that bathes the lady of prosperity (Sivaramamurti 66).

Arya Durga

The deity is seen in a small village named Devihansol, Taluka Rajapur, District Ratnagiri. It is worshiped as 'Gramdevata' meaning village deity. There are two images and two temples of the same deity, built nearby. The main temple is a cement concrete structure, new one and comparatively bigger than the other. The small temple is completely built in Konkani style. The image in the small temple is made up of stone. May be this image is old and the original place of this deity. Height of this image is approximately 60 cm. She has four hands. She holds *Pasha* in her right hand and *Ankusha* in her left hand. She holds a sword in her lower right hand and *Patra* in lower left hand. We can see the depiction of the lion behind this image. Villagers ask for verdict from the old image. They took a procession of this deity (Plate 162).

Second image of this deity is kept in the new large temple is probably new one since it is made of marble. Iconography of this image is different than the stone image. This image is that of a Mahishasurmardini (Plate 163). Recently this deity became the family deity (Kuladevata) of Palasule-Desai family, but court cases are going on between villagers and the Palsule family. The height of this image is approximately 60 cm. She has four hands. In upper left hand she holds a trident and in the upper right hand she holds a shield. In the lower right hand she holds a sword and lower left hand she holds hairs of the demon Mahisha. Here also we can see the depiction of the lion.

There is a myth related to this deity. The deity is said to be originally from Ankola. Every year one person named Palasule-Desai of Devihansol used to visit the goddess at Ankola. When he became old he prayed to the goddess that, "Now due to old age, I can't

come here to see you / visit you.” His regret was obvious. At that time the goddess told him. “There is no need to come here to visit me. You start walking and I shall follow you. But remember, don’t turn and look at me.” The old man started walking. He could hear the sound of the goddess’s anklets. When he comes near the village he lost control and turned around to look at the goddess. At that time the goddess disappeared, but her footprint remained on the rock. At night, he had a dream. The goddess told him in the dream, “Now I live where I had disappeared. You can worship my footprint”.

Palasule-Desai family has built a small dome on the foot print, and started the worship. The goddess of Ankola now became famous as Arya Durga of Devihansol. A poisonous snake is vahana of this deity. Villagers consult a village deity named Jaka Devi using ‘Kaul’ (verdict). Jaka Devi tells the villagers whether to bring the idol of Navadurga to meet Arya Durga. The idol of Navadurga is picked up. It is believed that if the Kaul (verdict) by Jaka Devi is adverse, the idol of Navadurga becomes very heavy, and it is not possible to move it. The idol of Navadurga can be moved only if the Kaul (verdict) by Jaka Devi is favourable. The villagers do this ritual at *Margashirsha Vadya Navami* (ninth day of the dark fortnight of *Margashirsha*).

Sati Devi

In village Pinguli there is a small temple known as Sati Devi. In this temple a small female figure is kept. The image of this goddess is very simple. She is in standing position. She has two hands but there is no weapon in her hands. The peculiar thing is a small stone placed behind this deity. The stone is carved exactly in the shape of a Yoni (female organ). Villagers nearby told that they worship this deity for the birth of child. Sati is another name of Devi Parvati and Parvati means Prakruti; who creates all the things. From this instance we can say that the fertility is important factor from the remote time. Till today people worship and make a vow for the same purpose. Now the name and some time shape are different but the continuity of the needs, wishes and purpose is the same (Plate 164).

Ninadevi

The temple of Nina Devi is situated in small village named Juwati in Ratnagiri District. The image had become eroded. She has four hands. May be in her lower left hand she holds a *Vadaga* (vessel), in the lower right hand she holds a sword. May be in the upper left hand she holds a trident and in right hand she holds a *Damaru*. No one could tell information about this temple and the deity (Plate 165).

Pavana Devi

The figure of Pavana Devi is kept in the temple of Nina Devi. The deity has four hands. In her upper left hand we can see a *Damaru* and in the left hand a trident. In the lower right hand she holds a sword. She holds a vessel in her lower left hand. On the back of deity we can see the depiction of a bird. May be the bird is a peacock (Plate 166). The images of Nawala Devi and Vithala Devi are also kept in the same temple. But author could not obtain any information about these deities.

Female Deities: The goddesses

Part II: *Avyakta Deities*

Worship of goddess in *Avyakta* form is common practice in this region. The villagers do not think it in the term of *Avyakta and Vyakta*. For them the ‘presence’ deity is important, and not the image. We can broadly say that the *Avyakta* forms are far ancient than the images. Even history of Indian sculpture has evidence of this phenomenon. In this region we have variety of *Avyakta* deities in vivid forms. The range is from simple natural stones to huge pillars. Some cults suggest their origin in Yashini worship. It is noteworthy that we have a separate shrine of Yakshini in the said study region.

Jakhamata

Jakhamata, the *Avyakta* deity in the form of amorphous stone placed in the temple of Karde village, Ratnagiri District. The villagers call it Jakhamata. Actually she is a living example of people’s belief in Yaksha worship. Yaksha worship is still prevalent in various parts of Konkan (Plate 167).

Kalkai

The amorphous deity named Kalkai is placed in the small village named Asud, Dapoli Taluka Ratnagiri District. This deity is supposed to be the goddess of married women. The moment the bridegroom or his family members do any injustice to the bride, the bride invokes this goddess for rescue, and she solves the entire problem. Devotees believe that the goddess is so vigilant and prompt in helping the married women. People are little afraid of her. Therefore they have turned her over in face down position so that she will not become active. The jurisdiction of the goddess is supposed to be limited only to Asud. The villagers do not light a lamp every day in front of this deity; neither do they worship her every day. They worship her only on Hanuman Jayanti (Plate 168).

Simadevi

Simadevi is one of the amorphous deities found in this region. It is found at the border so it is called Simadevi, in local language Sima means border. An interesting myth is attached with this deity. One day a fisherman found a stone in the net. He threw it in the sea. Second day he found the same stone in the net. Again he threw the stone. Third day the same story happened but this time blood came out from this stone. The fisherman came back to the village and told his experience. Then the villagers went with the fisherman on the spot where the incidence occurred. All the villagers realized that the stone was not an ordinary one: some supernatural power must have occupied this stone. Villagers took this stone with them and placed in their village and started worshiping this stone.

Kondalkarin

This deity is worshipped by Nava Bouddha Samaj. The image of this goddess cannot be seen because ants have built a very big mud mound ant-hill and covering it completely. But still people worship this deity. Now they worship an amorphous stone kept in front of that ant-hill.

Devi Santeri: The Goddess in the form of Ant-hill

The list of the cult worshipers of miscellaneous types of gods and goddess is large in Sindhudurga District. But the worship of the goddess Santeri or Sateri is conspicuous. This deity is worshiped in the form of an ant-hill. The form of this deity is very simple but the tradition and the antiquity of this deity goes to ancient times. People worship such local deities as per their faith, traditions and needs of life. We can find diversity in names, forms, way of worship and the concepts about the gods and goddess. The heritage of our culture gets unfolded because of such diversity. These traditions still exist in the interior part of the Konkan region. Santeri is the best example of such old traditions and here author tries to interpret this ant-hill goddess named as Santeri.

In Sindhudurga District, we can find many temples of Devi Santeri. She is placed in the *garbhagriha* of the temple or in some cases this deity is placed outside the temple. We may see this deity in ant-hill form and mostly this ant-hill is very big in size, approximately 3 to 4 m. (Plate 169). If the deity is placed outside of the temple devotees or worshipers have built a shelter. The worship of this deity is the important part of the every village tradition. There were many villages where this deity is worshipping as ant-hill or as an idol, for example Kalase, Nerur, Mangaon, Dhamapur, Pendur and Bilawas.

This deity is worshiped particularly in two forms mainly in the form of ant-hill (Varula), and in some places devotees worshiped this deity as a Mahishasurmardini. This prominent deity is worship particularly in South Konkan, Goa and in south India. We can assume that the ant-hill form of this deity is the earliest form and then gradually the icon of this deity became famous. Initially this deity worshiped in Ayakta form later in Vyakta.

The worship of Devi Santeri in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga districts is very important aspect of life. Significance of this deity in this region is exceptional. Devotees believe that this deity is vigilant and therefore devotees make vows to fulfil their wishes.

In village Kalase, Sindhudurga District goddess Santeri has a huge ant-hill form. Every year villagers play Garba dance in front of her. They perform a *Dashavatar* play (Mythical folk play). Villagers make a vow in front of this deity. Devotees offer her Sari and blouse piece locally call '*Oti*.' In Ganpati festival when the women offer her *Oti* they called it '*Ousa*'. Villagers take five fruits; beaten rice, cashew fruit, rice and coconut are wrapped in the leaf of cucumber or turmeric and put in this '*Supa*' (winnowing basket). When the above ritual is performed in the temple of Devi Santeri, at the same time villagers incantation to another male deity of *Ghadi Samaj* (the name of one of the casts in the Konkan region). Villagers make a vow to this deity for fulfil their wishes like to have child or for setting of marriage. When the wishes are fulfilled devotees offer her *Palana* (a cradle) when they get a child and *Mundawalya* (an ornament made using pearls and tied on the forehead of bride and bridegroom at the time of their marriage).

'*Madiga*' is one of the castes in Andhra - Karnataka. Goddess *Matangi* is mainly worshiped by this caste. Ant-hill is the original metaphor of the goddess *Matangi*. In South India, goddess *Renuka*, *Yallamma* and *Matangi* are worshiped in the form of ant-hill. In Goa and South Konkan, this ant-hill goddess is goddess *Santeri*. Another name of this goddess is '*Kori Bhumika*' (*Kumari* means a young unmarried girl and *Bhumi* means earth). In *Gomantaka* (Goa) goddess *Santeri* is also popular and worshiped as goddess *Bhumika*. Above goddess is known as *Kshetra Devata* and worshiped in the form of ant-hill accordingly *Murugan*, *Subramanya*, *Khandoba*, *Jyotiba*, *Rawalnath* and *Bhairav* these *Kshetrapala* or *Khetrapati* worship in the form of snake. *Subramanya* is still worship in the form of snake that lives in the ant-hill. Snake is worship as *Kshetrapati* and it throw a light on the depiction of the snake in the hand of goddess *Santeri* or a *Nagakashtha* (snake shape stick), holds by the lady worshipper of this deity (Dhere 1988: 65).

In South Konkan goddess *Santeri* is worshiped in the form of ant-hill. *Rawalnath* has tortoise as vehicle but most of the time horse and snake are also depicted. The etymology of the word '*Rawal*' is as follow- Royan > Rawaln > Rawal. These words are indicating goddess *Santeri* and god *Rawalnath* is her husband (Dhere 1988: 152).

In Kalase village, Sindhudurga District, there is small temple of *Devi Santeri*. This deity is also in form of ant-hill. Below this ant-hill a small image of the male deity is seen. This image has four hands. In his upper left hand he holds a snake and in the below left hand he holds a bowl. In his upper right hand he holds a *Parashu*-type weapon and in the lower right hand he holds a sword. He has a crown on his head. On the right side of this image we can see an image of the tortoise. Because of the depiction of the tortoise we can recognise this image as of *Rawalnath*, (Plate 170). There is no specific name for this image and there is no particular ritual.

Goddess *Santeri* is worshiped in the form of ant-hill, in the small village named *Bilawas* in Sindhudurga District. Villagers offer turmeric powder and vermilion, bangles, *Mangalsutra* flowers etc. There is an amorphous stone placed in front side of this deity. He is

called Bharada Brahman. Devotees tie an ornament known as *Mangalsutra* around this stone (Plate 171).

We find the temple of this deity in every big and small village of Sindhudurga District. At places local people have built a separate temple or shrine for this goddess, but in some cases she is in any corner of the temple of Rawalnath or Shiva. Devotees make vow to fulfil their wishes. When devotees vow for baby is fulfilled they offer a cradle to this goddess. Some villages in Sindhudurga District where the goddess Santeri is worshiped in the form of ant-hill are Nerur, Thakurwadi, Mangaon, Dhamapur, Pendur, Waikarwadi, Pata, Malawan, Malagaon, Pinguli, Chendwan and Kharepatan (Plate 172, 173, 174).

Simadevi

This is an *Avyakta* deity. This deity is said to have appeared by herself (by her divine existence). The myth is same as mentioned earlier. A pilgrimage to this deity is performed on *Padva, Chaitra Shuddha Pratipada* (the first day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra). If a couple is childless, they vow to this deity. In this festival, devotees stick new clothes for this goddess. This information was given by the Pujari (priest) named Arvind Shevade. Bankai, Bankidevi, Bankarin, Zolai, Talekarina are all these deities are around the area of Saldur (plate 175).

Huda Devi: A Goddess in the form of teak wood

The unique and distinctive deity named Huda Devi is seen in a Kunakeri in Sindhudurga District. This place is known as Huda Devi Mandir. But there is no temple. In the surrounding area of this deity there are few small temples. They are known as of Devi Santeri, Satya Nitkari, Bhutnath and Bhawai.

Huda Devi has no conventional sculptural image, but symbolised. Approximately 35 m. tall pillar. There is a belief in the villagers that Huda comes on the seventh day of the festival named *Holi*. Huda means a teak wood, locally called as 'Sagawan'. On this seventh day there is an act which is played by the villagers. This play is known as a Ghode Modani. It means a

play of horses. After this play four '*awasari*' means four people possessed by the positive power or god/goddess climb on this huge pillar. Krushna Parab, Govind Parab, Raghunath Gawade these are the recipients of the village Kunakeri. When these people were climbing in the pillar villagers throw stones towards them. Villagers believed that during this act no one has become injured yet.

There is a myth related to this deity as told by the villagers. Kaleshwar of Kolagaon, Kshetrapal of Ambegaon and Bhawai of Kunakeri are the brothers and sisters. About the time of high tide the siblings were passing by this village. The brother went gone ahead, and sister was left behind because she was busy in combing hair. When she came to know that her brother left her and gone ahead she became angry and deny to going with them. Sister has decided to live in this village permanently. From this incident villagers never go for the sea bath (as told by villagers).

The huge pillar is changed after every eighty years. Old pillar is kept in the premises of the temple. Villagers arrange a big ceremony (Approximately two month) for this ritual. Beneath this pillar a small round coin-like object is kept. Villagers call it '*Patua*'. They change pillar but do not change *Patua*. So that there is scope to consider that this coin-like object is antique. One of the heirs of the village named Swapnil Sawant has given the photographs and video shoot of this ceremony to the author (This ceremony was held after eighty years in 2011). One can see image carved on the piece of gold kept beneath the pillar. It is unable to see the close-up view of this piece, but the images shows a figure is that of Mahishasurmardini. A pillar is in the premises of the temple of Devi Santeri. The image of the deity Devi Santeri is that of Mahishasurmardini. Probably locally called '*Patua*' is the replica of this goddess.

There is no any written record of it available. The period of the replacement of the pillar is very long, i.e. eighty years; therefore no one can give more information about all the methods related to this ritual, e.g. how and when this type of ritual starts? Why the height of the pillar is nearly 35 m. Why the villagers place the '*Patua*' beneath the pillar? If there is

any relationship between the image of '*Patua*' and the icon of Devi Santeri (Mahishasurmardini) it is not clear.

There are some temples of few village deities built around this Huda Devi like Bhutnath Mandir, Devi Santeri Mandir, a small shrine of Shri Dev Satya Nitakari and temple of Bhawai. We can see the platforms made of stone and cement, in the premises of the pillar. Stone platforms are the older platforms. Before the religious festival of this deity villagers get together and decide related to the rituals. For this festival villagers also from the neighbourhood came together and celebrate. Before the replacement of the new pillar many holy rituals are done by the priest (Plate 176). This deity is unique and needs further detailed study.

Female Deities

Part III: Sixty four Yogini Images

Introduction

A rare Yakshini temple is situated in the village Mangaon, Sindhudurga District. This wooden temple is one of the best examples of Konkani temples. Yakshini Devi is the ruling goddess of this temple. Native people worship this deity as 'Jakhubai'. The image is made of stone and the height is approximately 1 m. She has two hands. In right hand she holds *Khadga*. There are many wooden sculptures carved on the pillars, ceiling, bracket and cornice.

This temple is divided into three parts, *sabhamandap*, *mandap* and *garbhagriha*. On the cornices of rectangular shaped *mandap* distinctive female figures are depicted. Total sixty four female figures are carved. These figures are carved on four sides of a rectangular mandap, hence the figures are facing each other. The height of each figure is approximately 25 cm. Most of these images are unique and few of them are composite. The images discussed on following pages are not separate deities. They are noteworthy because of their unique iconography. Following figures are identified on the basis of their Vahana and in case of anthropomorphic figures on the basis of *mukhabheda* (facial difference). Yoginis are would have been village deities concerned only with fertility, childbirth, snake bites and disease and related to their daily life. Tantrism took these simple grama devatas and transformed them into potent groups of sixty four Yoginis (Dehejia 1986: 93, 94). When the Yoginis are depicted in sculpture or described in text they often have the heads of various birds such as: parrots, hawks, peacocks, eagles, pigeons, and owls (Kinsley 1998: 197). They were also carved with characteristics from other animals (Donaldson 1975: 619). These include: the frog, elephant, jackal, goat, ox, cat, tiger, horse, and snake (Donaldson 1975: 619). Along with having the qualities of birds and other animals, the Yoginis are repeatedly talked about as having severed Heads in their hands or scattered around their feet (Gadon 2002: 33).

Vetali

The divine female figure depicted on this panel is sitting on a fish. Here the fish is depicted as Vahana of this deity. She has four hands. She holds *Vadaga* (bowl) in her lower left hand. She holds scissor as a weapon in her lower right hand. She holds pot-like objects in both the upper hands (Plate 177).

Chandrakanti/ Jasa

Another figure is depicted sitting on the pedestal. She has two hands. She holds a sword in her right hand and shield in her left hand (Plate 178). Chandrakanti and Jasa both the deities having *manchak* (pedestal) as vahana or symbol (Dahejiya 1986: 199)

The divine female figure is sitting on a donkey. She has two hands. She holds a sword in her right hand and in her left hand she holds some unidentified object. According to Mtsya Purana, goddess Kali has donkey as her Vahana and she holds a flag of a broom (Joshi 1979: 229). In this figure we can see the similarity between their Vahana but weapons are totally different (Plate 179).

Another woman figure in this relief has four hands. She holds *Narmunda* in her lower right hand and a pot in her upper right hand. She holds Swastika-type element in her lower left hand and in the upper left hand she holds a leaf-like object (Plate 180).

The Vahana of another figure from this group is a ram. Devine female figure is sitting on it. She has four hands. She holds *Pasha* (noose) in her lower left hand and a pot in her upper left hand. In the lower right hand she holds *Danda* (shaft or rod) and in her upper right hand she holds an unidentified object (Plate 181).

Another composite figure is noteworthy here. There is a scope to say that if the depiction of the bird is that of a hen then this deity is identified as Kamakshi. The composite figure sitting on the composite bird has a human body and a head that of a donkey. She has two hands. She holds a *Beejpurak* (a particular fruit having a number of seeds) in her left hand and *Pasha* (noose) in her right hand. There are two attendants in standing position.

Right one is holding a *Chatra* (umbrella) and left one is holding a *Chawari* (a fly whisk) (Plate 182). The other figure is in standing position. She holds a pot in her left hand and in her right hand she holds some unidentified object (Plate 183).

Another figure from same group has four hands. She is sitting on a composite bird and the bird is depicted as eating something. This deity holds a sword in her lower left hand and a shield in her upper right hand. She holds a *Beejpurak* (a particular fruit having a number of seeds) in her lower right hand and she holds *Danda* (shaft or rod) in her upper left hand. This deity supposed to be recognized as Kumari (Plate 184).

One more figure is sitting on the *Aasan* is found in this group. She has two hands. In her left hand she holds a *Beejpurak*. There is one female attendant standing near her with holding a *Chawari* (Plate 185).

One of the deities from this group is identified as Maheshwari. She holds *Damaru* (a small drum) in her upper right hand, *Trishula* (trident) in her upper left hand. She holds bow in her lower right hand and arrow in her lower left hand. She is sitting on the human body. According to the Devi Bhagwat this deity is known as *Pretasana* (corpse as a vehicle) (Joshi 1979: 228). But in this instance the weapons are totally different (Plate 186).

Other figurine from this group has Vrushabha Vahana. She holds a sword in her lower right hand. Shield in her lower left hand. She holds *Parashu* in her upper right hand and *Ankusha* in her upper left hand (Plate 187).

A female figure depicted in this panel in standing position. She holds *Pasha* (noose) in her right hand and *Parashu* in her left hand (Plate 188).

The deity is known as Aghora appears in this panel. She is depicted sitting on a goat. She has four hands. In her lower left hand she holds a *Beejpurak* and in the upper left hand she holds scissor-like weapon. She holds a *Danda* (shaft or rod) in her lower right hand and *Khadga* (dagger) in her upper right hand (Plate 189).

Another noteworthy female figure is depicted in the standing position. She has a head of goat. She holds a *Pasha* (noose) in her right hand and a bud of louts like element in her left hand. This image can be identified as of Agnihotri (Plate 190).

A standing figure from this group has four hands. This deity is holding sword, shield and *Pasha*. She holds in her lower right hand a shape like snake, but it has a head of human, though it gives an appearance of a monster (Plate 191).

One more noteworthy figure is sitting on a tortoise. She has two hands. She holds *Pasha* in her right hand and a bowl in her left hand. This figure is a representation of Yamuna (Plate 192).

An interesting relief figure has a Narvahana. She is sitting on the shoulder of her vehicle, a man. She has four hands. In the lower left hand she holds a bowl. In the lower right hand she holds a bud louts. In her upper left hand she holds *Kalasha* (pot). In the upper right hand she holds some unidentified object (Plate 193).

The noteworthy standing female figure has four hands. She holds *Pasha* in her lower left hand and an axe in her lower right hand. In the upper left hand she holds may be a bird and in the upper right hand some unidentified object (Plate 194).

Other female figure from this group has four hands. She holds bow and arrow. Bowl in her lower left hand and upper right hand is in Varadamudra (Plate 195).

Another female figure is depicted in sleeping posture on the Shesha. She wears a crown of serpent hoods. There is no weapon in her hands and iconography suggest this figure as Padmawati (Plate 196).

A Yogini as divine women depicted in a small panel is sitting on the moon among this group. She holds an arrow in her lower left hand and in the lower right hand she holds a sword. She holds *Mashal* (a fire-torch) in her upper left hand and *Kalasha* in upper right hand (Plate 197).

A figure of a woman has four hands. In the upper left hand she holds a *Damaru* (a small drum). In the lower left hand she holds a *Pasha*. In the lower right hand she holds a bunch of mangos and in the upper right hand she holds a dagger-like object (Plate 198).

Another figure from this group is sitting on a horse. She has four hands. She holds a sword in her lower right hand and dagger in her upper right hand. In the upper left hand she holds a *Kalasha* and may be in the lower left hand she holds a *Taraju* (balance) (Plate 199).

A divine Yogini figure is in standing position appears in this panel. She has four hands. She holds a sword and a scissor in her lower and upper right hand. Her upper left hand is empty and in her lower left hand she holds a *Beejpurak* (Plate 200).

An image of divine woman is depicted sitting on the back of a horse or donkey. She has four hands. She holds a sword, *Vadaga*, the *Pasha* and in the upper right hand she holds some unidentified object (Plate 201).

Another noteworthy figure is depicted sitting on a horse. She has two hands. In her right hand she holds a *Beejpurak*. In the left hand may be she holds a bowl (Plate 202).

An interesting figure from this panel is sitting on a bird. The bird looks like a duck. This deity is identified as Dhumawati. The deity is holding a *Damaru* in her right hand and *Trishula* in her left hand (Plate 203).

Another figure has four hands and she holds a louts flower in her upper right hand, in her lower right hand she holds *Aksh mala*. In the upper left hand the deity is holding a pot and bowl in her lower left hand. She is sitting on the dog like animal (Plate 204).

A Yogini deity is depicted sitting on a donkey. This deity is combination of animal and human. This composite deity has a face of a horse and she has four hands. May be her upper and lower left hands are empty. She holds a Danda-like object in her lower right hand and a bowl in the upper right hand (Plate 205).

The female figure depicted sitting on the pedestal has two hands. She holds a mace in her right hand and fish in her left hand. This deity is also a composite figure. She has a head of the horse. The name of this deity is Jwalamukhi (Plate 206).

This composite deity is known as Jalakamini, carved as sitting on the fish and she has a face of a frog. She has four hands. She holds a *Danda* in her lower right hand and *Akshamala* in upper right hand. In her upper left hand she holds a leaf-like object and in the lower left hand she holds may be a *Beejpurak* (Plate 207).

One composite figure has a head of a mouse and female body. She holds a bell in her upper left hand and *Pasha* in her lower left hand. A bird-like object is in her lower right hand and upper right hand is empty. It can be recognized as Vainayaki (Plate 208).

Another figure is depicted sitting on louts flower. She has four hands. She holds a spoon in her lower right hand and upper right hand is empty. May be she holds a flower-like object in her upper left hand and a *Beejpurak* in lower left hand (Plate 209).

These sixty-four figures are found on the cornice panel in the Yakshini Mata temple. So we can safely assume that there is scope to consider the remote relation of Yakshini cult with sixty-four Yogini cult and its practice in this region.



Plate 167: Jakhmata, Karade, Ratnagiri District



Plate 168: Kalkai, Asud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 169: Devi Santeri, Pendur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 170: Devi Santeri, Kalase, Sindhudurga District



Plate 171: Devi Santeri, Bilawas, Sindhudurga District



Plate 172: Devi Santeri, Dhamapur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 173: Devi Santeri, Pinguli, Sindhudurga District



Plate 174: Devi Santeri, Chendvan, Sindhudurga District



Plate 175: Sima Devi, Sagwe, Ratnagiri District



Plate 176: Huda Devi, Kunakeri, Sindhudurga District



Plate 140: Jugā devi, Kālikā Devi Temple,

Plate 140: Jugadevi, Kalika Devi temple,
Tervan, Ratnagiri District



Kālikā Devi Temple,

Plate 141: Pavana Devi, Kalika Devi temple,
Tervan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 142: Bhawai, Bhutnath temple,
Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 143: Jaka Devi, Mahakali temple,
Kasheli, Ratnagiri District



Plate 144: Kaleshwari, Asud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 145: Yaksha figure Bharhut Found similarity in the leaf like garment



Plate 146: Katra Devi, Sagwe, Ratnagiri District



Plate 146 a) Details



Plate 147: Necklace of the coins



Plate 148: Venetian gold coins called ducat



Plate 149: Tak (replica) of Katra Devi



a) b) c) d)

Plate 150: Gopi, Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 151: Zolai, Zolai temple, Murud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 152: Zolai, Khem temple, Karde, Ratnagiri District



Plate 153: Zolai, Vetala temple, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 154: Jogeshwari, Jogeshwari temple, Murud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 155: Santeri, Kunakeri, Sindhudurga District



Plate 156: Mahishasurmardini, Pendur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 157: Mahishasurmardini, Walawal, Sindhudurga District



Plate 158: Devi Mauli, Chendwana, Sindhudurga District



Plate 159: Gajalakshmi, Manai temple, Ratnagiri District



Plate 160: Bhawai, Kunakeri, Sindhudurga District

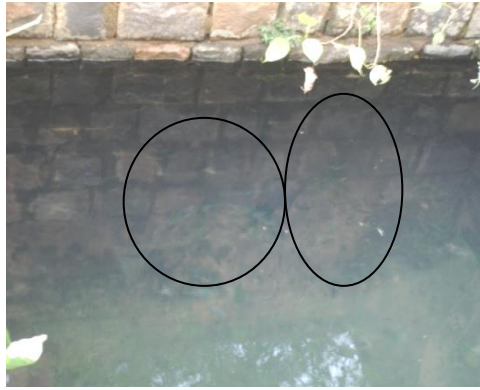


Plate 161: Submerge old icons in well, Kunakeri, Sindhudurga District



Plate 162: Aarya Durga (old image), Devihansol, Ratnagiri District



Plate 163: Aarya Durga (new image), Devihansol, Ratnagiri District



Plate 164: Sati Devi, Pinguli, Sindhudurga District



Plate 165: Nina Devi, Juwati, Ratnagiri District



Plate 166: Pavani Devi, Juwati, Ratnagiri District



Plate 177: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 178 Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 179: Kali, Sindhudurga District



Plate 180: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 181: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District

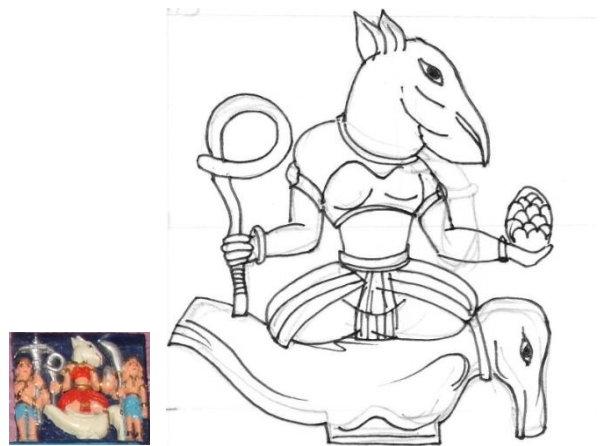


Plate 182: Kamakshi, Sindhudurga District



Plate 183: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 184: Kumari, Sindhudurga District



Plate 185: Chandrakanti / Jasa, Sindhudurga District



Plate 186: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 187: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District

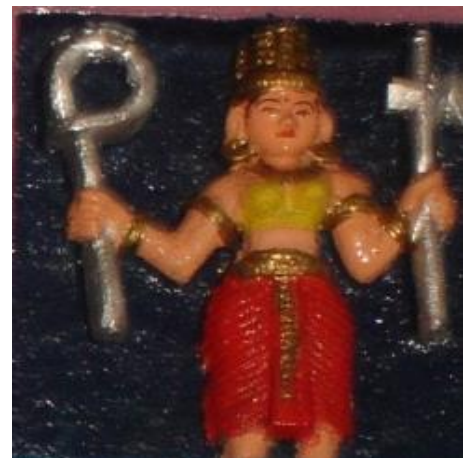


Plate 188: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 189: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District

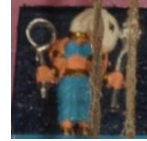
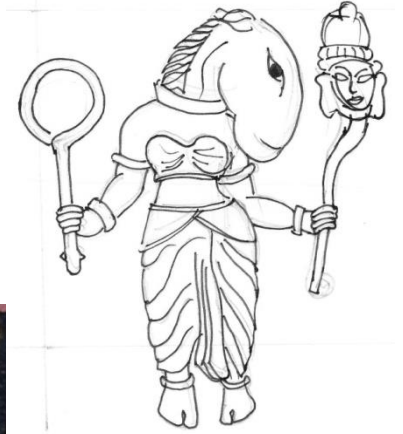


Plate 190: Agnihotri, Sindhudurga District



Pl

Plate 191: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Pl

District

Plate 192: Yamuna, Sindhudurga District



Plate 193: Unidentified Figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 194: Unidentified Figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 195: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 196: Padmawati, Sindhudurga District



Plate 197: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 198: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District

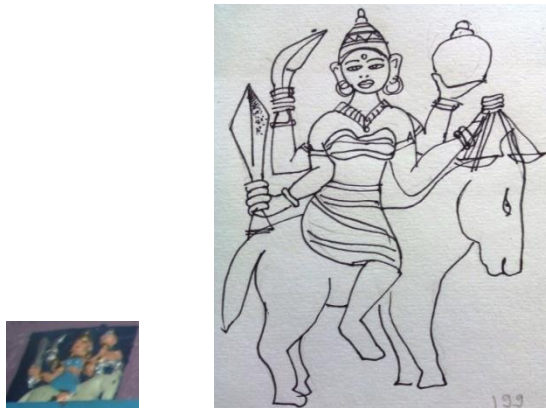


Plate 199: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District

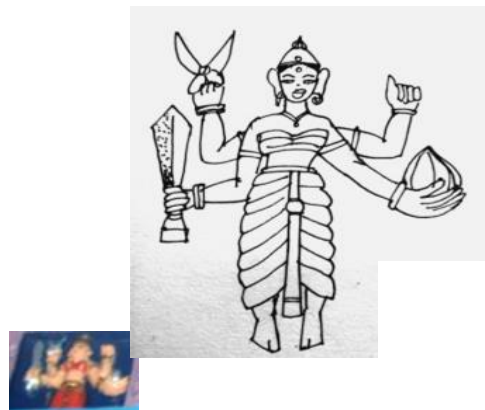


Plate 200: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District

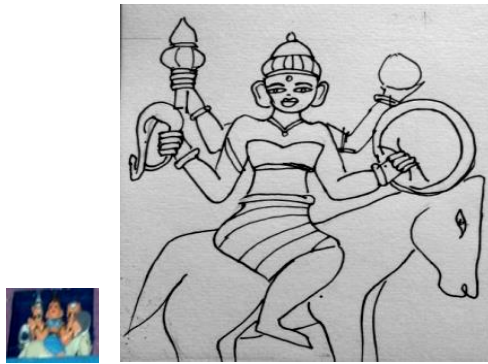


Plate 201: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District

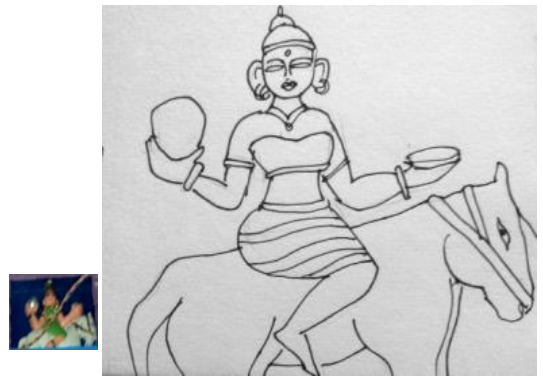


Plate 202: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 203: Dhumawati, Sindhudurga District



Plate 204: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 205: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District



Plate 206: Unid

Plate 206: Jwalamukhi, Sindhudurga District

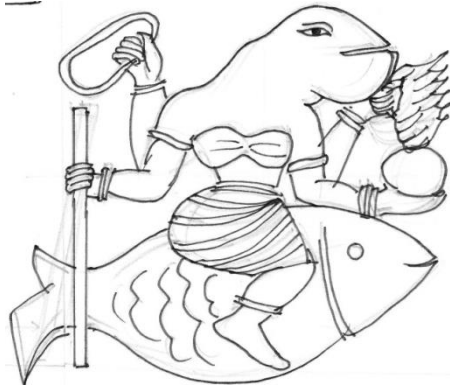


Plate 207: Jalakamini, Sindhudurga Distric



Plate 208: Vainayaki , Sindhudurga District



Plate 209: Unidentified figure, Sindhudurga District

Chapter IV

Nature Worship

Part I – Tree and Animal Worship

Introduction

From very early days, human beings are worshipping the elements of the nature. Trees and animals are closely associated with the life of human beings. We are benefited from the nature and express our gratitude towards the nature in the form of worship. Not only the gratitude but the fear is also the aspect behind the act of worship. Worship of snakes, tigers, bull and elephant are the representative examples of animal worship. Not only from the remote time, but the worship of the trees and animals are still exists in India. Konkan is not exception for this. “It is a general belief among Hindus that trees from which such pleasure and protection are derived must naturally be the abode of the gods” (Enthoven 1915: 71).

Tree Worship in Konkan

In Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga Districts we can see that tree and animal worship still exists. According to Enthoven in Ratnagiri District the *Pipal*, *Vad* or banyan tree and *Tulsi* plant are worship by Hindus in general. *Apta* tree is also worship by them on the festival *Dasara*. People distribute the leaves of this tree as gold (Enthoven 1915: 72). This practice is still there in this region.

In the village Kalase of Sindhudurga District there is a plateau known as *Hubalicha Mala*. On this plateau a huge *Vad* or banyan tree is there. Villagers believe that the tree is the god of cowherds and they call it ‘*Gawaldev*’. Cowherds also worship the god Krushna. In December or January villagers do a *puja* of *Satyanarayan*. At that time villagers perform an interesting act. First they make a tiger of flour. Then they bake or fry it and then worship it. One of the villagers steals this idol and runs away. Other villagers throw cow dung or stones and shout at him. Now the act of throwing cow dung or stones is banned by the villagers, but even today villagers drive away that person beyond the village boundary. When the person

crosses the boundary he stops. He perform *puja* rituals of the flour idol of the tiger and eats some part of that idol as '*Prasad*' means blessing and comes back to the village after taking bath.

Above metaphoric custom is related to earlier days when fear of the tigers was there. During early days cowherds faced the attack of the real tigers therefore, they must be throwing stones or cow dung to drive him away. The person means the symbol of the tiger and people drive him out, far away from their cattle. Villagers first of all worship the banyan tree locally known as '*Gawaldev*' (Plate 210).

In Ratnagiri District people worship the trees which were planted in their own land locally called '*Vadi*'. Every morning after worshipping their own family deities' people worship the trees like palm, betel nut, mango, jackfruit, *chikku*, cashew-nut etc. Most of the families in Konkan region depend on variety of trees which give them the source of money. These trees are the most important thing in their life; therefore the tree worship is having significance in their daily life.

Animal worship in Konkan

Snakes are believed to be the step-brothers of the gods. They reside under the earth and are very powerful. An image of a snake made of brass is kept in the temple of god Shiva, and worshipped daily along with the god (Plate 211). There is a custom among the Hindus of worshipping Naga on *Naga Panchmi*, the fifth day of the bright half of *Shravan* (August). Images of snakes are drawn with sandal paste on a wooden board or on the walls of houses and worshipped by Hindu women on this day (Enthoven 1915: 74, 75).

According to the Enthoven in Ratnagiri District on the day of *Nag Panchmi* some people go to the snake abode called *Varula* an ant-hill worship the snake itself and offered him milk and *Lahya* means parched rice (Enthoven 1915: 75). On this day some people make earthen image of snake and worship it at their home.

Hindu worship the image of a snake made of Darbha grass or of a silk thread on *Anant Chaturdashi* day (Enthoven 1915: 76). Actually this day comes on the tenth day of the Ganesh festival. On that day images of Ganesh are dissolved in water and ten days festival is over. In the morning of the same day the worship of *Anant* meaning snake is done. It is difficult to say the connection between these two different customs like Ganesh worship and snake worship, on the same day.

The terracotta animal figurines

In village Tervan, the area called Thorali Wadi has a temple known as '*Gangodeva*' (Plate 212). In this temple, there are 13 animal figurines kept on a small platform (Plate 213). Villagers worship these figurines as a part of group of deity called *Gangodeva* (Plate 214). Villagers are worshipping these figures as '*Govardhan*'. There is no specific or special worship or ritual in the context of these terracotta figures. All the deities of this temple are worshiped by *Kunbi-Samaj*, the farming community.

These terracotta animal figurines are approximately 5 to 12 cm in length. The figurines are probably handmade and baked in fire. The colour of these figurines is reddish black. Many of them are similar to the cattle. May be some figures are of pig, dog, and horse. But most of them are cattle, may be identified with hump. All the figurines are badly damaged.

On the right side of *Gangoba* these cattle figurines are kept. As tradition villagers call them '*Govardhan*'. In this small village, earlier the group of such said terracotta figurines were placed under the tree locally called *Ratamba*, the Kokam (*Garcinia indica*). According to local legend villagers had cut that tree and built this existing temple over here in remote time.

The word '*Govardhana*' indicates the growth of the cattle herd. 'Go' indicates the cow and 'Vardhan' it seems to be increases the number of their cows and bulls. From ancient time to till date bulls and cows are very important element for human life, especially for the farmers. So these figurines take care of the cattle of the villagers and protect them.

According to local belief is worship of this hoard is continuous from the age of Lord Shree Krushn.

Among these figures a reddish figure, probably of a bull, is in broken condition. It has a broken tail and horns, but it is very difficult to say more about it. There is clear depiction of hump on its back (Plate 215).

Another figure of terracotta is technically different. The legs are joined to the body. We can see the cavity in this clay figure and this is the most interesting part related to this figure. We can clearly see the groove-like clay ring at rear part of this animal. One can observe this on the front an additional appliqué work. In this group this is the only example of a hollow object (Plate 216).

Another figurine shows different technique: here the legs are integrated part of solid cylindrical body shape (Plate 217).

Apart from all the above beliefs and myths it is necessary to examine these figurines with the chemical analysis to know the date of these figurines. During exploration in Konkan region, author came across this unexplored terracotta hoard. It is possible that in the past time people brought these figures with them while migration or may be these figurines are made near the site where they found before this small temple named '*Gangoba*'. These figures are surface findings and found without any contextual references. Numbers of figures are limited and are still in daily worship of villagers. Villagers are not ready to give any figure from this group for further research chemical analysis.

Taranga: The Unique Divine Prop

In the Konkan region, tree and animal worship have the importance in the life of the native people. Similarly the Taranga deities also have the importance. Particularly in Sindhudurga District this deity has more importance than nature worship. 'Taranga' means wave. Here the wave means positive energy that passes through the body of the person.

The form of Taranga is a plain or decorative wooden shaft of approximately 2 to 3 m height. Wooden or metallic mask of god or goddess and a palm or animal image is placed on the top of the shaft as capital. During the festival these shafts are draped with nine-yard Sari from below the capital to the one third of the upper portion of the shaft.

Ritualistic traditional dance by putting Taranga in hands and resting on shoulder is performed during the fete. Particularly in Sindhudurga District every small village and shrine has Taranga deities. Enthoven did not mention anything about the Taranga in his book named 'Folklore Notes Vol. II Konkan', published in 1915. Behare has recorded this tradition in 1955 in his work (Behare 1955: 20, 21).

According to Dhuri, 2002, antiquity of these deities is not so ancient. Only '*Danda*' means stick is the only deity present from the early period. This stick means a symbol of the deity named Dandekar. It can be found almost in every village. The work of this deity is protecting the village from calamities. When the Taranga deities come out from the temple at the time of the fete, this stick has got the foremost place in front of these Taranga deities. Author has found the images of man holding '*Danda*' in his hand in many temples in the Sindhudurga District. A man is depicted in the standing position wearing a dhoti and holding a stick in his hand (Plate 218).

"The masks fixed on the top of the sticks locally called '*Mohari*' means '*mukhawate*' are represents the power and the duties of the particular deities. These masks are the symbol of the power of the particular deities e.g. the right side palm or image of the horse are the symbols of Rawalnatha. *Kalasha* means pot is the symbol of Linga or god Someshawar or Rameshwar. The left side hand represents the symbol of Bhutnath etc" (Dhuri 2002, 99).

According to Dhere 1988 Taranga (wooden sticks) worship is seen in particularly in Gomantak South Konkan. The stick which is four to six feet in height, decorated with the masks or symbols of the deities, and with nine yard sari, known as 'Taranga'. In Goa and Sindhudurga District every small shrine has these Taranga deities. These sticks are coloured with different colours. On these sticks the masks of male of female are fixed. They are made of brass or silver. They are decorated with the colourful saris or dhoti and these sticks are worshiped on the special day or fete. In most of the shrines the numbers of these sticks are three and Taranga of Rawalnath is must. We can see the difference between the number of the sticks, and deities related to the Taranga. But the Taranga of Rawalnath is the most important among them and from generation to generation the recipient of this Taranga is the person from Gurav family.

The origin of this worship is found in Andhra-Karnataka. In this part people worship goddesses Jogulamba, Matangi and Yallamma. The snake-shaped stick is very important element of this worship. These stick and above three deities are worshiped in the form of *Varula* (ant-hill) (Dhere 1988, 185).

In Sindhudurga District, almost in every temple or shrine we can see these Taranga deities or wooden sticks kept upright with the help of a wooden stand. Numerically they are three, five or seven. Only in the temple of Devi Santeri, village Pendur, Sindhudurga District author found ten Taranga sticks (Plate 219). The masks and capital motifs are common. Only the colours are different and they are divided into two parts. We can see the variety between these Taranga shafts. They have different masks, motifs, colours, height and numbers of the sticks. All these things depend on the devotion of the villagers of each village. Most of the time it also depends on the importance of the deity in that particular village. Pavanai, Rawalnath, Ling or Lingeshwar, Santeri, Bhutnath these are the common Taranga shafts but in some shrines or temples author has found different Taranga shafts of the local deities like Nishan Kathi, Vetala, Kalakai, Baracha Prvas, Gangodev etc.

Masks and other motifs on shaft capital

The importance of Taranga deities has gradually increased in Konkan region, particularly in Sindhudurga District. We can see the variations in the masks, motifs and the material from which they made. Some time these sticks do not have any masks or symbols e.g. the Taranga sticks in the Rawalnath temple in village Damapur in Sindhudurga District (Plate 220).

Masks are made of wood and metal. Metal masks are sometime made of silver or gold. It is mostly depends on the economic condition of the temple or villagers of the village. Most of the time masks or symbols are made of wood. Masks of gods and goddess are shown with their Vahana, e.g. goddess Pavanai or Kalkai depicted on tiger (Plate 221), and god Rawalnatha is depicted on horse (Plate 222).

In most of the temples the mask of Devi Santeri is shown with the crown of snake hoods, some time two masks with snake hoods are present in the same temple (Plate 223). In some temples the masks of Taranga deities are made of brass, e.g. Taranga from temple of Lakshminarayana in village Walawal and the temple of Pataleshwar and Bhawai, village Chendavan (Plate 224, 225).

In some cases female figure is also depicted as sitting on the horse (Plate 226). In some examples Ayudhapurusha-like figure is depicted near front legs of the horse. He holds a shield in his hand these kinds of examples are seen in the temple of Kedareshwar, village Karul, Sindhudurga District (Plate 227).

Some shafts of peculiar deities have their own names but not having mask or figure on capital. Instead of mask only symbolic elements are there. For instance, the palm of left hand represents Bhutnath; palm of right hand represents Rawalnath. Holy pot, locally called 'Kalasha' represents Ling or Lingeshwar. But there are no rigorous rules about these symbols. Sometimes palms represent Vetala or Baracha Purvas etc.

In some temples, for instance, Kaleshwar in villages Nerur, Taranga sticks are held during fete only by particular clans. For example, at the time of the fete the Taranga stick of Bhutnath is held by washer man; Taranga of Rawalnath is held by a *Sutara*, the carpenter and Taranga of Baracha Purvas by a *Kumbhara*, the potter. Apart from specific caste there is taboo on other castes to hold these Taranga shafts or deities. In the temple Taranga of Bhutnath wears only green colour nine yard sari. Other colours are prohibited for this holy shaft (Plate 228).

In Konkan region particularly in Sindhudurga District we can see these Taranga deities in every temple. These sticks are related to those deities who are probably eminent in that particular village, e.g. Devi Santeri is the eminent deity of any village so the temple has the stick of this deity. If the Pavanai is main deity then the Taranga of this deity is there in her temple. Therefore, in each shrine or temple we can see variety among these Taranga deities. Some time myths are also related to Taranga. In some temples there are taboos related to Taranga and they are obeyed strictly by the devotees and villagers. The number of these shafts is also different in each shrine or temple. In religious life of this region, the dominance of Taranga deities has increased. At the time of the fete villagers take out these draped shafts from the temple and recipients hold them in hands, rest on the shoulder and take a round with ritualistic traditional dance performed on the traditional music.

In this regard there is scope to compare the Taranga tradition with the Islamic tradition. These shafts like elements are found in Islamic tradition. The similar elements are found in miniature paintings of Mughal Era belong to Akbar and Shahajahan era. This is indicating towards the possible origin of Taranga. During the procession of Moharam this type of shafts are found even today in Kolhapur, Satara and Pune region. There is enough scope for further study in this regard.

Memorial stones: the Veergala and Satishila

In the Konkan region author found several memorial stones. In remote area of this region author found these stones in numbers. Broadly speaking in each temple we can see minimum three to four memorial stones. Sometimes the numbers of these slabs are fifteen to eighteen. Mostly villagers worship them as *Dev* meaning god. There is only one example that author found in Sindhudurga District that has a different name. Here these stone slabs are worshiped and called with the name 'Lajjagouri'. The example is discussed in this chapter in details. This is the exception. The villagers are far away from the real concept behind the raising of these memorial stones.

It is interesting that the number of Satishila means Sati stones are almost equal to hero stones. These memorial stones are raised on behalf of dead warriors who died while boundary dispute, clash between two villages and local fights among social or economic groups.

The memorial stone slabs of the Konkan region are ordinary and crude from carving point of view. These slabs are not very decorative and huge in size. These slabs have a folk touch. Most of the slabs are divided into two to three parts. Some slabs have four compartments also.

Stone slabs in District Ratnagiri

In the temple of goddess Zolai in village Murud, Taluka Dapoli, author found two hero stones kept besides the main deity. Both the slabs are curved on the top. Shiva Linga and two human figures are carved in upper part of these slabs. In the second part of the bigger slab we can see three human figures, a man and two women. Here the man is a hero and the two women are bewitching *Apsaras*. On the second slab three human figures are depicted in the second part. In the third part of these two slabs three male figures with their weapons are depicted, here the battle scene is depicted (Plate 229).

Two hero stones are kept in premises of the temple of Manai, village Taksul. One of them is small. The small one slab is having curve on the top and depicted a human figure with his weapons. The second slab is divided into the three parts. At the top, the depiction of *Kalasha* is clearly seen. Shiva Ling between two human figures is depicted in first part. Third slab is divided into four parts and *Kalasha* is carved at the top. In the first part Linga and two devotees are depicted. In the second part two women hold the hero and are taking him to heaven. In the third and forth part fighting scene of worriers is depicted. Second stone slab is eroded. In the first and second part three human figures are depicted. These slabs are kept outside the temple (Plate 230).

Kalika Mandir is small temple in village Tervan. In that temple two Satistone slabs are kept along with the other village deities. One is bigger than the other and having common carvings (Plate 231).

In the back side of the temple of Aaryadurga of Devihansol, there are eighteen memorial stones kept together. Among these memorial stones eight stones are Sati stones and others are hero stones. Some of them are broken. The depiction upon these slabs has now become fuzzy. All these stone slabs are divided into one or two parts. On some slabs the hand of Sati is depicted attached with a wooden stand (Plate 232). These types of wooden stands are kept in the temples of these regions for upholding the image of deity, for example the stand of Devi Santeri of Kunakeri village (Plate 233).

Stone Slabs from Sindhudurga District

In the temple of Rameshwara, Yedgaon, four memorial stones are found. Two of them are inside the temple and two outside. The slabs which are inside the temple are Sati stones. One of them is broken on one side. Both are divided into three parts. Both slabs are triangular. On the upper parts of both slabs are sun, moon, linga, devotee and hand of Sati. On the second part of the broken slab two human figures are depicted. One is sitting in a palanquin. It is difficult to say that if the figure is of male or female. Probably the figure is of a woman, because the slab is raised on behalf of her commemoration. Second figure is of the

palanquin carrier. On the second part of another slab four figures are depicted. One man and a woman are sitting in the palanquin. On both side two palanquin carriers are depicted. In the third part of the broken slab two figures are sitting on horseback. Two human figures are walking with the horse and an umbrella is hold by one of them. The third part of another slab has dressed horse and four figures. The figures are dancing and playing their instruments. The horse back is empty (Plate 234). Two hero stones are kept outside the temple.

A hero stone kept in the premises of the Yakshini Mandir in Mangaon is having a separate shrine. There is no particular name for this slab. Villagers worship. Triangular shape at the upper part and Kalasha is depicted here. In the second part linga and two human figures are depicted. In the third part three human figures are shown (Plate 235).

In the same village Mangaon there is temple of Vetala. Outside this temple, some memorial stones are kept (Plate 236). A broken part of a hero stone is kept near the above mentioned stone slab. On a part of this slab a man and a woman are depicted. In the middle of these two figures we can see the depiction of the Shiva-ling and an umbrella carved on it. In a hand of a man a bell is depicted and in other the unidentified object is carved. He has a different style of turban. Woman is showing tieing a knot of her hairs and holding her hand in Namaskar Mudra (Plate 237).

In the premises of the Rameshwara temple in Aakeri Village, Sindhudurga District there is some small temples. We can see some memorial stone slabs kept outside one of these small temples. There is a hero stone having a semi-circular shaped at the top. Semi-circle is divided into two parts and sun and moon are carved in them. In between the semi-circle artist has carved a square, but it is difficult to say the meaning of that. Second part is divided into four equal parts. Human figures in sitting position are shown in each part (Plate 238).

Broken part of a hero stone is kept together with the other broken images. This part is dome-shaped at the top. In this part we can see a man sitting palanquin. He holds tassels of the palanquin with his both the hands. Two palanquin-carriers are also depicted (Plate 239).

One memorial stone slab is kept in the small shrine built in the premises of the main temple of lord Kaleshwar. This small shrine is known as Gavdoba Mandir. In this shrine there is a slab of Sati stone which is worshiped as 'Indrajitacha Hata'. No particular worship is done by the villagers for this deity. The top of this slab is semi-circular. Instead of the depiction of the sun and moon we can see a triangle is carved near the hand. A thick bracelet is depicted in the hand (Plate 240).

In Taluka Malavan there is a small village named Vadacha Pat. In this village there is a small temple called Palava Mulapurusha. In the premises of this temple we can see the newly built shrine. Villagers have placed some memorial stones in this shrine and they worship them. Here these memorial stones are called 'Lajjagouri'. Some slabs are hero stones and some are Satistones. Every Tuesday villagers offer *Haladi* (turmeric) and *Kunku* (red powder) on it. Some time in past these slabs were kept in the premises of this temple. We can see the remains of the old plinth outside the temple. First hero stone on the left is small in size. We can see two warriors fighting each other. Second hero stone is divided into three parts. The top is triangular. In the first part we can see the depiction of sun, moon, linga and a devotee. Devotee holds a bell in his hand. In the second part one woman and a man are depicted. Man holds a sword in his hand. In the third part a woman and a man are sitting in Namaskar Mudra. Whole slab was decorated with small triangular motifs on the border. Third slab is a Sati stone. This slab is divided into three parts. In the first part three human figures, sun, moon and linga is depicted. Left side figure of this slab is in sitting position and hands in Namaskar Mudra. Next figure may be female figure and is sitting on the unidentified object. Another figure is depicted next to the linga. The figure holds a bell in his hand and is worshiping the linga. In the second part four figures are depicted. Probably two are women and two are men. One of a man holds a sword in his hand. Corner figures hold *Chawari* in their hands. In the third part three women are sitting on the bed and holding some unidentified objects in their hands. There is a wooden stand depicted in this part. Two hands are attached with this stands. Forth slab is also a Satistone. These four and three similar slabs

are in good condition and depiction is also comparatively clear than other memorial stones so far found (Plate 241).

In Konkan region author found numerous memorial stones described as above in the following villages Bilawas, Karul, Pendur, Pinguli, Kunakeri, Walawal, Chendawan, Adiware, Kasheli, Asud, Saldur and Adkhal. Most of the slabs are eroded because of humid weather. In the survey area author found the scenes of the ground war. Warriors fight with each other with sword and shield or bow and arrow. They are shown mounting horse.

Here the author gives some scholars opinions about these memorial stones. “For over a century, memorial stones have been noticed in various parts of India, although the focus of attention has been on their epigraphical rather on their archaeological and plastic contents. Lack of co-ordination on the one hand and slow pace of recognition of their artistic importance on the other, kept this vast body of sources away from the serious consideration of scholars” (Settar and Sontheimer: 1982,).

“All authors of *mahakavyas* have used the image of the dead hero welcomed by celestial damsels in heaven. The *Mahabharata* assures a reward to the hero after his death on the battlefield” (Pierre: 1982, 3). In Konkan region we can see the depiction of these celestial damsels on these hero stones.

In Konkan we can see the depiction of the Sati slabs without relief figure panels, e.g. the panels found on *Veergala*. The stone carving is crude. The tradition of these types of Sati stone carving started only after the Yadava period. According to Sontheimer Sati seems to have been relatively rare in the pre-Yadava and even Yadava period in Maharashtra (Sontheimer: 1982, 280).

In this survey area memorial stones are worshiped with misconception e.g. ‘Indrajitacha Hata’ and ‘Lajjagauri’. After seeing the worship of memorial stones we can conclude that the authenticity, the image, the name and the place of deities are not important for the local people. The devotees believe only in the power though to be in the stones and not the outer form, the plastic images.



Plate 229: Veergala, Murud, Ratnagiri District



Plate 230: Three hero stones, Manai temple, Ratnagiri District



stones, Kālikā Temple, Ratnag



Plate: 231 Sati stone, Kalkai temple, Ratnagar District



Plate 232: Sati stone, Devihansol, Ratnagiri District



Plate 233: Wooden Stand for uphold the image Kunakeri, Sindhudurga District



Plate 234: Sati stones inside the temple, Rameshwara temple, Sindhudurga District



Plate 235: Hero Stone kept in premises of Yakshini Mandir, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 236: Hero Stone, Vetala, temple, Mangaon Sindhudurga District



Plate 237: Broken part of the Memorial Stone, Vetal temple, Mangaon, Sindhudurga District



Plate 238: Memorial Stone, Rameshwara temple, Aakeri, Sindhudurga District



Plate 239: Memorial Stone, Rameshwara temple, Aakeri, Sindhudurga District



Plate 240: Sati Stone, Gavdoba Mandir, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 241: Lajjagouri mandir, Vadacha Pat, Malavan, Sindhudurga District



Plate 218: Dev Dandekar, Kharepatan, Sindhudurga District



Plate 219: Taranga deities, Pendur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 220: Taranga deities without masks or symbols, Dhamapur, District



Plate 221: Pavanai or Kalkai with tiger, Sindhudurga Sindhudurga District



Plate 222: Rawalnath sitting on the horse, Dhamapur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 223: Mask of Devi Santeri, Dhamapur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 224: Metal masks, Lakshminarayana temple, Walawal, Sindhudurga District



Plate 225: Meal masks, Pataleshwar and Bhawai temple, Chendawan, Sindhudurga District



Plate 226: Female deity on horse, Kedareshwar, Karula, Sindhudurga District



Plate 227: Male deity on horse, Kedareshwar, Karula, Sindhudurga District



Plate 228: Taranga in Kaleshwar temple, Nerur, Sindhudurga District



Plate 210: Gawaldev, Hublicha Mal, Sindhudurga District



Plate 211: Snake made of copper, Ratnagiri District



Plate 212: Gangodeva Temple, Tervan, Ratnagiri District



Plate 213: Hoard of the Terracotta Animals, Ratnagiri District



Plate 214: Few Deities in the Temple of Gangodeva, Ratnagiri District



Plate 215: Terracotta bull with hump, Ratnagiri District



Plate 216: Hollowed Figure of Terracotta, Ratnagiri District



Plate 217: Unidentified Broken Animal figurine, Ratnagiri District

Chapter V

Conclusions

The range of the cult images in this region is vast. They are abundant. Iconography and style of the images of minor deities are unique in Konkan. The plastic representation of images is not very artistic. The images of the deities are simple and crude. Proportionately the depiction of the idols is short (the head is large and the torso is short). In Konkan region the ears of the cult images are mostly large in size. Various types of crowns, anklets, necklaces, earrings, girdles are the ornaments depicted on the male and female deities.

In most cases male deities are depicted only with the lower garment, locally called *Dhotar* or *Sowale* and upper part of the body is bare. Female deities are also depicted in similar manner in some cases. In many temples and shrines, priests cover almost all parts of the image with cloth such as *Dhotar* or sari after daily *Pooja* ritual.

In some cases villagers put on masks on the face of the main deity. Sometimes devotees offer these masks after fulfillment of their vows. These masks are made of brass or silver. Some time mask is offered by the whole village community. In some villages villager's offers eyes of metal.

Most of the deities in Konkan region have tradition of daily worship, and devotees offers *Naivedya* (an eatables offering to an idol) on daily basis. In case of some minor deities, there is tradition to worship the deity twice or thrice in a week. In some cases people perform *Pooja* ritual only once in a year. In case of some other deities there is tradition of offering *Goda Naivedya* (vegetarian eatables) and in case of some other deities they offer *Khara Naivedya* (non-vegetarian eatables). One cannot say about this classification on the basis of the follower's food habit from this region but it is very strict tradition in itself.

Some myths about minor deities are the mirror of human behaviours. The crises and complex relation between lower and upper class of society is reflected in some of the myths. We can see the example, the myth of 'Kaleshwari Devi', Murud, Taluka, Dapoli, District

Ratnagiri. This myth is the reflection of the hierarchy in social structure, acceptance of the social changes and the broad landscape of the society. The story about goddess Nantekarin from Asud village near Dapoli, is presenting oral customary law about extra-marital affairs and taboo on this type of relations. The myth of the Devi *Kalkai* from same region narrates that the goddess's gives protection to the native married women against any trouble from her in-laws relatives. The myth of Huda and Devi Mauli indicates practical relations between sisters and brothers, and moral of the story is that the brother should take care of sister and protect her otherwise she will get sulk. In short through the folk- cult myths, social and moral laws are cultivated in the society.

In Konkani temples and shrines, the main idol is installed with a number of other deities. These sub-deities are also worshipped. All are important to them. Sometimes these sub-deities have separate shrines, festivals, rituals and duties. There is great faith in both the main and minor deities in Konkani region at the same time. It is rarely seen that only one deity is placed in the temple or shrine.

It is observed that Shaivism is a popular cult in Konkani. Many *Linga* stones and *Yoni-pithas* are scattered in the villages of Konkani. It shows that the tradition of *linga* worship in Konkani is still in practice, though the images are known with other or local names like *Varebuwa* or *Sati Devi*. Some examples of this kind are '*Brahman*' or '*Akali Brahman*'. The word '*Brahman*' is not related with the upper cast of Hindu society, but the meaning comprises here that a power who has a knowledge of the universe. This deity has a shape of *Shiva linga*. There is scope to assume that these fertility symbols show a continuity of the practice of the Non-Brahmanical tradition, even during the modern times.

People even today strongly believe in the worship of images; they have deep faith of presence of supernatural powers in these images. There are many levels and layers of these supernatural powers blending with each other. They are vigilant; their effects are malevolent as well as benevolent. People are superstitious and their day-to-day life is closely associated with rituals and religion. Their beliefs are mostly based on the traditional knowledge passed

from generation to generation which is mostly intact in this region even today. Thus, the recording of this intact tradition is most important role of present thesis. The people of Konkan do their rituals from the heart, because their ancestors have done the same. They have very great respect and fear about natural as well as the supernatural powers.

Ancestral worship is another interesting aspect of the Konkani cult images. In Sindhudurga District villagers have made images of some of their *Mulpurusha* (first human who establish a particular family or clan in the particular area) and *Mahapurusha* (Great human) as deities. Sometimes they worship these ancestral images as a village deity and perform some rituals also. The names of these deities are attached with the surname of that particular clan of family. These deities are known as '*Vasa*' and the example of these deities are Gawade Vasa, Ghadi Vasa, Parab Vasa, etc. It is observed that the cult images are unique and distinctive in this district than in Ratnagiri District. The goddess Katra and Huda are the best example of this uniqueness.

In the both the districts present researcher has found the peculiarities in the names of the folk deities. These names are different than that of a popular and common names found in other parts of India. Most of the names are given after the surnames of devotees or the original (native) place of the particular goddess, for instance Nantekarin, Kodalkarin, etc.

In most of the shrines we find the images of *Rawalnath*. The iconography of this lord is mounting the horse, and holding a sword and shield in his hands. Many times the images of *Rawalnath* are placed outside of the main temple but in the premises of that temple. At times two attendants are shown with him. Present author want to raise a point regarding these images that these images are possibly the images of a hero or warrior. Many images of *Rawalnath* are placed in a temple even after the preceding deity of particular shrine is other than *Rawalnath*. The cult of lord *Rawalnath* is prominent in Konkan. In Sindhudurga District in Kunakeri village, there is a small temple named 'Nagoji Bhosale Vasa'. In this temple the *Rawalnath* image is placed. '*Vasa*' means community; here the community indicates the particular family or clan. Nagoji Bhosale was one of the kinfolds of this clan and probably

died in the battle. Here *Rawalnath* image has played the role as the memorial stone in different form (not in the form of typical *Veergala*). Large numbers of images of *Rawalnath* are found in Konkan region and we can safely say that these are the images of the heroes or warriors the 'Veer'.

In Sindhudurga district there is practice of ancestral worship called as '*Baracha Purvas*' or '*Barapach*'. In this connection numeric figure twelve is significant. We may connect the age old tradition of the village administration system called Bara Balutedara, meaning twelve of the village administration, with *Baracha Purvas*' or '*Barapach*' ritual practice. This system is preserved in this form of ancestral worship and ritual practice called *Baracha Purvas*' or '*Barapach*'.

In both the districts the number of Avyakta deities is more than Vyakta deities. We find these types of deities everywhere over the landscape. Konkani people deeply believe in the evil spirits and worship them regularly. Vetala and Bhutnath are the classical or diluted examples of this kind. Worship of the Vetala is still there, though the tradition is from remote times. A manuscript of the 16th century (by Raghunath) mentions the names of these deities. Raghunath has mentioned the grandeur of Vetala from Ajgaon. He talks about severity of this deity and therefore, every night devotees read the stories from the Purana text, do jagara (applaud) and celebrate festival of this deity. In these days this ancient tradition had not been followed emphatically. Devotees offer a pair of *Chappal* to him and take a procession. From this manuscript we know the other names of the folk deities for instance *Mhalsa*, *Santeri*, *Rawalnath*, *Chala*, *Mauli*, *Kaleshwar*, *Kshetrpala*, and *Veer deva*, etc. and all are discussed in depth in this thesis.

In some cases the iconography of the folk deity is same as some Brahmanical deity, but identified with different names in this region. For example goddess Mahishasurmardini is known in this region as *Zolai and Devi Mauli*; goddess Gajalakshmi is known as *Bhawai*. Both the cult images have large number of followers spread over large area. The images of Gajalakshmi have spread in over vast area and some images are found in open space. Some

of them are very old and probably on stylistic basis go back to the Rashtrakuta period. Konkani was under the Rashtrakutas and Gajalakshmi was their family deity.

Another noteworthy aspect of Konkani folk socio-religious life is that people have single cult metaphor but with different names. For example the ant-hill worship is worshiped in village Asud as god *Teloba* and other places as goddess Santeri. Another example is there to support this statement. In Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga same icon is worshiped with two different names as Rawalnath and Bhairav.

Devotees attach epithets next to the name of the deity, for example Nath, Buwa, Ba, Aai, Mauli etc. These epithets are used in day-to-day life in this region to a person with whom one is emotionally attached or is very close. In same manner people of the region want to maintain relationship their god and goddesses. Therefore they have attached these kinds of epithets with the title. Villagers come to their deity for very minor or trivial problems, for instance, the trouble from insects in their homes or problem of rats in the fields. Deities or divine powers indirectly and the Bhagat or Gurav (shaman) directly play important roles in each and every decision of their day to day life.

In these regions particularly in Sindhudurga District, villagers built the temple in the honour of the first male of their samaj means clan. They called it '*Mulpurusha*'. Some time image is placed in the small temple or shrine or in some instance we can see the amorphous stone.

Taranga deities have become very famous particularly in the region of the Sindhudurga District and not found in Ratnagiri district. In every festival villagers wave these sticks in front of the main deity. Each and every village, may be in the remote area, has these deities.

There is only one living example found of terracotta animal figurine worship by the villagers in district Ratnagiri in Konkani region. There is no specific ritual related to them.

In the time of festival villagers play a traditional play known as Dashavatar. This act has an important place in Konkani traditional life.

Amalgamation of two religions can be seen in the religious life. At many places Muslims have got the honour from Hindu community in the rituals. In some cases even before the Hindu devotees Muslims got chance to worship. For example, there is a divine stick of lord Khem kept in the temple of Khem in Karde village. There are seven recipients in the Karde village. Each recipient takes the care of this stick for one month. In these seven recipients one is from Muslims and he also takes care of this stick. Name of this person is Bhauuddin Mukadum. When the procession starts the palanquin of lord Khem goes first in the mosque and then at the other places in the village.

We can see the influence of South Indian style of iconography particularly on the metal sculptures and on the cult images of gods and goddesses. The crowns of many deities are similar to the Vijaynagara style. In some examples the long *Angarkha* and horn shaped shoe shows the impact of North India. In some cases the footwear and clothes are found in Gujarathi and Rajasthani styles.

After studying the mystic world of worship in this region we can conclude that the authenticity or purity, the images, the names and the places of deities are not important for the villagers. They strongly believe in the intangible supernatural powers and not the outer form of the cult images.

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