

Unusual forms of Ganesha – The Elephant Headed God in India and Mysticism

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Vakratunda mahakaya suryakoti samaprabha i

Nirvighnam kurme devo sarva karyeshu sarvada ii

“You of the twisted trunk and the massive body with the dazzle and light of millions of suns lead me on a path that has no obstacles or hindrances, clearing the way in all that i do ever and always.”¹

This is a very popular sanskrit chant in praise of lord *ganesha*, the elephant headed god which is chanted at the beginning of any activity done by his devotee for acquiring blessings and success. His popularity, folklores and forms are seen in the pauranic literature and in the *ganesha* and *mudgala upapuranas* respectively.

According to the *mudgala purana* the elephant head represents the formless nirguna brahman while the human body of *ganesha* represents the saguna brahman. Thus the idol of *ganesha* represents a fusion of *dharmakaya* and *roopakaya* leading to the concept of *adhyatmikakaya*.

Ganapatya cult and Ucchista Ganesha

Before we understand the three unusual representations of *ganesha* one should understand the cult of the *ganapatyas* and its evolution in maharashtra. One does not find the existence of a *ganesha* cult prior to the vakataka period circa 4th-5th c.e in this region. He is shown along with the *saptamatrikas* in the brahmanical caves of jogeshwari, elephanta and at ellora, which are dated to the rashtrakuta era of 7th-8th c.e. prior to this, evidence of the image of *ganesha* is seen in the first brahmanical cave at badami in the state of karnataka. These caves are dated to the chalukya phase of 6th c.e. *Ganesha* is shown in an inferior position below the dancing nataraja which according to iconographic standards is an *uttama* image with *ganesha* at his feet is shown as *adhama*. Observations show that the sculpture of *ganesha* was always portrayed with shiva and his *ganas* or as a part of his *parivāra* or family. In the *ganapatya* cult *ganapati* or *gañesha* is considered as a supreme god. From the 7th to the 12th c. Was the peak period of tantra works and cults. Hindu, buddhists and even the svetambara jains indulged in *mantrashastra*.

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The *ganapatya* sect has six sub divisions. Anandagiri's *sankaradigvijaya* of 8th.c.e and also *dindimakhya's* commentary on it provides information about these six sub divisions. The earliest existence of this *ganapatya* cult is seen at the caves of panhale kaji which are located near dabhol port in ratnagiri district, on the banks of the river kotjai. There are total 29 caves which were originally buddhist and were later occupied by the vajrayana sect of buddhism, which after the decline, were occupied by the *ganapatya* sect and the *natha sampradaya* or cult. This area was originally known as *pranalaka* as mentioned in two shilahara inscriptions of 12th.c.e.²

The *vajrayana* doctrines believed in esoteric practices and their rituals were accompanied with sexual symbolism. These caves are located in a dense forest and hence despite the decline it continued to nurture the tantric tradition for a very long time till it was supplanted by the followers of the *nath sampradaya* whose emergence is considered as a reaction against the esoteric tantric *sadhana* practised by *vajrayana* buddhist, *shaiva*, *shakta*, *kapalikas* and followers of other tantric orders. At the caves of panhale kaji one also sees the development of the *ganapatya* cult. Cave no. 21 is known as the *ganesha lena* (figure 1) on account of the image of *ganesha* carved in a large niche on the eastern wall of the verandah.³ this image is seen in a semi-circular niche and was carved according to m. N, deshpande, in 12th c.e. This *ganesha* has four hands or *chaturbhuj* and holds an axe and a lotus in the upper right hand and left hand and a broken tusk and a bowl of sweets in the lower hands. He is seated on a low stool in *savyalalitasana* with his *vahana* the mouse or a *mushaka* is shown near his seat below the left leg. The sculpture of *ganesha* is boldly cut. He wears a *karanda mukuta* of three tiers. He also wears a *yajnopavita* and entwining his belly is a *naga udarabandha*. He is adorned with *keyuras*, wristlets and anklets as a part of his jewellery.

The development of the *ganapatya* cult is seen in cave no 22 (figure 2) which has a small verandah with niches in the eastern and western walls containing rock cut images of *ganesha* and *saraswati*. The image of *ganesha* in the eastern wall is seated in the *ardhaparyankasana*. In the upper right hand he holds an axe; the left hand holds a lotus which is damaged. Other characteristics are similar to the previous *ganesha* except that he has a beaded *keyura*.

Cave no. 29 also known as *gaur lena* has a sculptured panel showing *ganesha* flanked by *lakshmi* and *saraswati* carved on the dwarf wall opposite the entrance to the *gaur lena*. *Ganesha* is *chaturbhuj* and in his two right hands he holds an axe or a *parashu* and a broken tooth. In his two left hands he holds a lotus and a *modak patra* or a bowl of sweets. His trunk is turned towards his left and holds a *modak* in it. He has tied his belly with an *udarabandha* and a snake is flung across his body in the *yajnopavita* fashion. He wears a *karanda mukuta* with beaded bands on his head and wears wristlets and anklets. His *vahana* the mouse is seated beside his right leg which is flexed in an upright position at the knee.

Inside the caves there are sculptural panels of *natha siddhas*. Among the five great tantric teachers who are regarded in the *natha* tradition as *adi-siddhas*, are *minanatha*, who, is also known

¹ Shakunthala Jagannathan, Nandita Krishna Ganesha –The Auspicious 1992 pg 50

² Thosar H.S, Historical Geography of Maharashtra and Goa. (2004) pg 207

³ M.N Deshpande, The caves of Panhale Kaji. 1986 pg 93.

as *matsyendranatha* and *gorakshanath*, with who are associated such tantric works as the *gorakhasamhita* and the *gorakhashu siddhanta samgraha*. The yoga of the *natha* cult gave a new content to the cult of ganesha. The *gajamukha* or the elephantine face of *ganesha* is identified with *aum*. It stresses on the yogic aspect of the cult of ganesha.⁴the *mudgala* tale brings out the yogic aspect of the cult relating to austerities and penance for appeasing ganesha.⁵ the seventh verse of the *ganapati atharvasirsam* speaks of presence of ganesha in the first chakra that is the *muladhara chakra*. The chant of ganesha helps open this *muladhara chakra* and the arousal of the *kundalini* energy.

Thus the ganesha images of panhale kaji caves indicate the promotion of the *ganapatya* cult by the *natha* cult.the single sculptures of ganesha are also seen in the buddhist caves at lenyadri near junnar and in aurangabad caves. The presence of *laxmi* and *saraswati* indicates the early stages of the *ganapatya* sect. The followers set up the cult of *shakti ganapatias* where *ganesha* is accompanied by his *shakti* or energy.

Name of the <i>ganapati</i>	Arms	Colour
<i>Uchista ganapati</i>	4	Red
<i>Maha ganapati</i>	10	Red
<i>Urddhva ganapati</i>	6	Yellow
<i>Pingala ganapati</i>	6	White
<i>Lakshmi ganapati</i>	4 or 8	White
<i>Unmatta vinayaka</i>	6	Golden yellow

With the growing influence of tantras and the popularity of shaktism, ganesha was depicted with his female counterpart.⁶ the *ganapatya* sect was divided into six sects. These differ mainly in forms and titles. One such unusual form which is worshipped by the followers of one of the sect is *uchista ganesha*. The development of this form owes its origin either to the *vaamachara* tantric cults as observed in the case of *shakti ganesha*, *unmatta vinayaka* and *uchista ganesha*. This meditative sect opened their doors to all castes, creed and sex. *Ganesha* is depicted as *chaturbhuj* or four armed, and holds a pomegranate in one of his hands while embracing *shakti*(figure3). This form of *ganapati* worship was very sensual and eroticism became part of the rituals. So was the use of wine. All the other ceremonies like *sandhyavandana* were left to the will of its followers. Though the *ganapatya* sect believes that *mahaganapati* is the creator of this sect, it gave rise to the esoteric sect of the *herambasuta*, which believes in *uchista ganapati*. It was followed by some *shaiva* sects who practised the *vama marga* or the left hand worship. The *herambas* as they are known abrogated all the obligatory rituals, distinction of caste and marriage ties. The *shankaravijaya* stated that he is so called because their followers followed the foul left-handed path.⁷

⁴ Dr P.G.Shahpurkar- Ganesha in tantric literature- From the origin and evolution of the cult of Sri Ganesha (1988)

⁵ Maa Geetanjali: Ganapati Occult an ancient secret,(2005) pg7

⁶ Alice Getty Ganesha-A monograph on the elephant-faced god (1936) pg20.

⁷ Shantilal Nagar, Ganesha-The remover of obstacles. (2006) pg 63.

Several religious treatises have given various descriptions of *ucchista ganेशha*. According to *kriyakramadyoti*⁸ it is said that this image should hold in its hands a lotus flower, a pomegranate, a *veena*, some quantity of paddy and an *akshamala*.

The *mantra-maharnava*⁹ prescribes that *uchchista ganेशha* should carry with him a *bana* / arrow, the *dhanush* /bow, the *pasha* /noose and the *ankusha* /elephant goad. He should be reddish in colour and seated upon a *padmasana*, with a nude *devi*, and should be shown as if he is making attempts for coition.

The *uttara kamikagama*¹⁰ has given an elaborate description of the deity that is depicted with three eyes or trinayana like shiva. It should be a chaturbhuja, and in the three of his arms he should hold the *pasha*, *ankusha* and sugarcane or a *gada* or a club respectively. The fourth hand should either be shown in *abhaya mudra* or should be touching the private part of the *devi* who is also identified as *vighneshwari*. Instead of the fourth hand his trunk touches the private part of the goddess. “*cubantam sprasamstunden vai bhagam.*”¹¹ the *devi* is depicted with two arms and is seated on his lap and adorned with ornaments and is shown fondling the genitals of the deity and holding a lotus in her left hand which is also a sign of fertility and wealth.

The mystical contemplation behind such an image is primarily to worship him as a creator, of all gods and the universe. He is considered as a supreme spirit or *paramatma* by the followers. The pomegranate reflects fertility as he is shown embracing *shakti*(figure 4). The *ucchista ganेशha* is shown with the *urdhva linga*¹².

The iconic representation of *ucchista ganेशha*(figure5) is given by a mother to her daughter as a part of sex education before marriage by the followers of this cult. It is to make the virgin realise her role as *vighneshwari* and her husband as her *paramatma* who will be responsible in creating a new soul.

The tantric form of worship of *ganेशha* is described in the *sharadatilakatantra* of circa 1100 c.e wherein *ganेशha* is worshipped as a *bija* or a seed in symbolic form, *dhyana* form for tantric worship, mantras for mystical sounds and *yantras* are mystical diagrams which represent *ganेशha*. These esoteric practices were responsible for the disintegration of this cult even though few south indian temples do have images of *ucchista ganेशha*. In maharashtra this form is worshipped as a *yantra* and the mantra is called as *ucchista ganapati nirvana mantra*.¹³ the devotee feels while chanting and meditating that he is *ekrupa* or one with *ganेशha*. There is a strong belief that the recital of this mantra helps in acquiring *mahasiddhis*, wealth and protection.

8. T Gopinatha Rao, Elements of Hindu Iconography. Vol 1 part 1 second edition (1993)Pg54

9. Ibid

10. Ibid

11. Maa Gitanjali Op cit pg 7.

12. Op cit 8 pg no 53.

13. Editor Amarendra Gadgil Shree Ganesha kosh (Marathi) 4th edition (2011) pp283-284

Vinayaki

Though *ganesha* is identified with his two consorts *riddhi* and *siddhi*, the *shaktirupa* or the female form of *ganesha* has been popular probably after the development of the *ganapatya* cult. the *shakti rupa* of *ganesha* has been identified with several names such as *vinayaki*, *vighneshwari*, *ganeshani* and *ganeshwari*. Surprisingly the nude goddess seated on the lap of the *ucchista ganesha* has been referred to as *vainayaki*. Reference to this *shakti rupa* has been included in the *matsya*, *skanda* and the *vishnudharmottara purana*.¹⁴ the *devi sahasranama* includes three names of *ganeshani* including *vinayaki*, *lambodari* and *ganeshvari*.¹⁵

The importance of *ganeshayani* increased with the rise of the *ganapatya* cult and tantrism. She was absorbed as one of the *chausath* or sixty four *yoginis* that are worshipped. Her presence as a *yogini* is seen in jainism where she is identified as *vinayaki*. Jain texts and manuscripts like *vidhi-prapa* composed in 1306 a.d¹⁶ mention her as *vinayaki*. similarly she was absorbed in *vajrayana buddhism* as *ganapatihridaya*.¹⁷

Just as the *natha sampradaya* encouraged *ganapatya* cult, the *gorakha samhita* (chapter vii pg37) composed in medieval times is a treatise of the *natha sampradaya*, and has an important verse dealing with the iconography of *vinayaki*.

“*neelabha neelavarna ca neelalohitapingala i gajavaktraa mahakayaa trinetraa mukutojwala ii Lambodaraa sthula hasvaa chaturbhujakritayuddha i modakadashana vaame parshu sutram ca dakshine ii..... Vinayaki mahadevi gaja charma paricchadaa i.....*”¹⁸

This verse gives a description of *mahadevi vinayaki* who is bluish in colour, with a face and trunk like that of an elephant twisted to the left, with three eyes and four hands, with weapons and a *modak*.

Depictions of *ganeshani* or *vinayaki* are found not only in the states of punjab, orissa, bengal, and madhya pradesh, south india but also in maharashtra. A bronze image of a standing four armed *ganeshayani* dated 17th c c.e worshipped as a folk deity is also seen in the heras museum in st. Xavier’s college mumbai (figure 6). She is shown standing on a pedestal. Her *ayudhas* in her upper hands are missing. She is shown wearing a single bangle in each hand and anklets on her feet. She has a *mukuta* or a headdress. In the lower right hand she holds a cup, probably to carry her *prasada*. The lower left hand is kept free. There is a dagger tucked in her waist on the left side indicating a fighting spirit. The upper garment appears like a *yajno pavita* and may be a part of the lower garment, reminding us of the traditional garments worn by *yakshas* and sages in the form of animal skin.

¹⁴. B.N.Sharma, Iconography of Vainayaki (1978) pg23

¹⁵. Ibid pg24.

¹⁶. Ibid pg25

¹⁷. B.Bhattacharya, The Indian Buddhist Iconography 1958 pg 349.

¹⁸. Shantilal Nagar, Indian Gods and Goddesses, Hindu Jain and Buddhist Goddesses Vol 3 2003 pg 68.

Vinayaki (figure 7 & 8) and her relation with tantrism and presence as one of the *chausath yogini* is more baffling when one sees her as two armed form with a knot of matted hair or *jata-juta* over her head. Dr suresh balabantaray¹⁹ feels that she is mounted on a donkey instead of a *mushaka* and may be identified as even *matangi* or *shitala*. the yoginis are carved in fine grey chlorite .hence, the artisan may not have been successful in carving a *mushaka* or a mouse that looked like a donkey, which seems to be an artist error.

Just as *vinayaki* is mentioned in the *gorakha samhita* the *kaula –jnana –nirnaya* a work by *matsyendranatha*²⁰ expounds the *yogini-kaula* which means and describes the power of *shakti*. In the *akulaviratantra matsyendranath*²¹ has propounded a kind of monoism where kula is ultimately identified with *akula (shiva)*. The *kaula- jnana- nirnaya* deals with the rousing of *shaktis*, done through mantras and rituals for the attainment of yogic powers or siddhis. This fact helps us understand the link between *ganeshayani*, who was worshipped as a *yogini* who became an identity by herself. According to the agni purana the yoginis are derived from the *ashta* or eight *matrikas*.²² the presence of ganesha along with the *matrikas* indicates the importance of *ganapatya* cult. Such sculptural panels are found in the brahmanical caves of elephanta and ellora. This concept became very popular during the rashtrakuta and shilahara period. The 13 th c.e bhuleshwara temple near yavat, pune district, state of maharashtra dedicated to lord shiva has certain interesting iconographic features.

1. This temple has a *prakara* with *devakulikas* or cells to house images. It is very interesting to note that the doorways of these *devakulikas* bear upon their lintels the image of *bhairava*, instead of the image of ganesha.
2. There are large panels of image sculpture over the cornice of the open part of the colonnade that faces the *antarala* or the vestibule and *garbhagriha* or inner sanctum exterior. They are arranged symmetrically on both sides viz, on the south and the north. There are a total ten elongated panels; four each of the south and north wings of the *prakara* and the west wing has two panels. Each panel contains three figures in a semi-circular space. The rest of the space is covered by decoration. Of these ten panels panel no 4,5 and 9 have sculptures of *ganeshani* or *vainayaki* (figures 9, 10 & 11).

Vinayaki who is not a part of the *matrikas* is added in these panels. Surprisingly images of *bhairava* who represents the complete form of shiva are found here. The tantric sects speak of the sixty-four yoginis who serve as consorts to each one of the *bhairavas* who act as guardians of the yoginis. This temple of bhuleshwara dated first half of 13th c.e on a hillock may have served as a temple which promoted the *ganapatya* sect, and promoted *kaula marga* mainly because the *garbha griha* has a *yoni pitha* and the phallic form is removable and put as a mask or a *linga* separately in worship. This is the only temple in maharashtra which has a *vinayaki*. The *matrikas* are shown flanked by *ganesha* and *kartikeya* or *virabhadra* respectively in cave temples and structural temples indicates the assimilation or acceptance of *shakti* and *ganesha* in shaivism.

¹⁹. Suresh Balabantray: Sixty four Yogini temple at Hirapur, 3rd edition 2010 pg86.

²⁰. Shantilal Nagar Yogini shrines and Shakti Pithas volume 4 part 1 2005,pp34-35

²¹. Ibid pg35

²². Ibid pg 36

Panel	Location	Central image	Image on the left side of the central image	Image on the right side of the central image	Description of <i>vinayaki</i> Attributes in her hands
4	Left side of the circumambulation path, images facing north	<i>Vaishnavi</i> <i>Vahana</i> <i>Garuda</i>	<i>Kaumari</i> <i>Vahana</i> <i>Mayura</i>	<i>Vinayaki</i> <i>vahana</i> <i>mushaka</i>	<i>Paryanka, bhadra</i> <i>pitha, kirita</i> <i>Parashu/ ankusha</i> <i>Danta / x</i>
5	Behind the inner sanctum off the circumbalation path, images facing east	<i>Maheshwari</i> <i>Vahana</i> <i>Bull or vrsabha</i>	<i>Brahmi</i> <i>Vahana</i> <i>Hamsa</i>	<i>Vinayaki</i> <i>vahana</i> <i>mushaka</i>	<i>Paryanka, bhadra</i> <i>pitha, karanda</i> <i>Parashu/ ankusha</i> <i>Modaka/ sriphala</i>
9	Right side of the circumbalation path, images facing south	<i>Kaumari</i> <i>Vahana</i> <i>Mayura</i>	<i>Vaishnavi</i> <i>Vahana</i> <i>Garuda</i>	<i>Vinayaki</i> <i>vahana</i> <i>mushaka</i>	<i>Paryanka, bhadra</i> <i>pitha, karanda</i> <i>Parashu/padma</i> <i>Danta/modaka</i>

Parshva yaksha

the presence of *ganesha* in jainism can be observed the twelve figures of *ganesha* as reported from different jaina sites. These are mostly from western india. These images are located at the doorframes and the basement (*pitha*) of jaina temples.²³ the jainas specially the mercantile class included a number of brahmanical deities such as *indra*, *saraswati*, *lakshmi*, *vasudeva*, *baladeva*, *surya* and others in their pantheon. The museum of the heras institute of indian history and culture possesses a few metal images of *ganesha* which came from places of jaina worship, among them one of is *maha-ganapati* with his *shakti*. These jain images have their *prabhavalis* always crowned by a *kalasa*.²⁴ hence *ganesha* was also accepted by the jains into their pantheon during the early medieval period, retaining the iconographical features and attributes of the *brahmanical ganesha*. However, there is a distinct difference in the treatment of *ganesha* in jainism as compared to that in buddhism and hinduism. Here *ganesha*, the remover of obstacles was included in the jain pantheon as a *yaksha* deity reducing his position as a semi divine deity and not as a god.

the human form *dharnendra yaksha* of 23rd *tirthankara parshvanatha* became an anthropomorphic elephant faced deity *parshvayaksha* in the early medieval period. A brief study on a similar subject is seen in j.p.sharma's *jain yaksha* (meerut, kusumanjali prakashan ,1989); pratapaditya pal's *ganesha : the benevolent*, (bombay marg, 1995); b.c.bhattacharya's *the jaina iconography*, (delhi, motilal banarasidas, 1939) and shantilal nagar's *iconography of jain deities*, vol1, (delhi, b.r. Publishing corporation, 1999).

The elephant faced *parshva yaksha* is dark in complexion, and has a snake hood with a tortoise or *kurma* as his *vahana* (figures 12 & 13). He is four handed and holds a snake, citron, and noose and is in *varada* mudra. Some times he is shown with two snakes. Both the *digambara* and the *shvetambara* sects have described him as *gajanana* (*gaja+anana*) that who has a face of an elephant.

²³ Maruti Nandan Tiwari and kamal giri in *Images of Ganesha in Jainism*, 1991, pp102-103.

²⁴ H.Heras ,*The Problem of Ganapati* ,1954.pg183.

²⁵ Bhattacharya. B.C. *The Jaina Iconography*,1939 pg 83.

*Hemachandra's parshvanathacarita*²⁵ has given a description of this *parshvayaksha* along with his attributes.

"tatirthabhurbhutpaarshvayakshah kurmarathah shitih i

Gajananah phaniphanaacchatrashobhi chaturbhujah i

Nakulahi vaamadorbhya bijapurorgou punah i"

*Sutradhara mandana's vastushastra*²⁶ has also given a description of the *parshvayaksha*.

"parshvah syatparshvanathaasya kurmarudho gajananah i

Bijapuroragam nagam nakulam shyamavarnakah i"

Images of *parshvayaksha* have been found in western part of india in jain shrines. Many tantric goddesses have also been added in the jain iconography. The *uvasaggaharam stotra* or hymn invokes *sri parshvanath*. He is praised as a remover of calamities. This hymn is available and well known amongst the jains and is considered as *smarana* that is a hymn for a daily recital related to *parshvanatha, padmavati and parshvayaksha*. The *stotra* consists of only five verses. The first line invokes *parshvanatha* and *parshva yaksha*.

"uppasargahar parshva, parshva vande kurmadhanamuktam i

*Vishadharavishanirnasham, mangalakalyanavasam ii 1 ii"*²⁷

The fourth line also mentions the term *chintamani* which is used in praise by the followers of *ganesha* seems to have been adopted in this composition.

the term *parshva* stands for *parshvanatha* while repetition of *parshva* is for invoking *parshva yaksha*. *Kurma* meant the tortoise. This hymn is available in sanskrit and *ardha magadhi*. the *uvasaggaharam yantra* based on the *stotra* is worshipped by the jain devotees which depict *parshvayaksha* (figure 13).

In the *jaina mantravada* the *shri chatuhashishtayoginistotram*²⁸ also praises *ganeshwari* the female form of *ganesha*.

The cloth paintings or *patachitras* or jain *vastrapatas* found in gujarat belonging to c.e 15th century are both tantric and non tantric. The *chintamani parshvanatha yantra pata* dated c 1475 a.d from western gujarat and currently in the collection of the national museum; new delhi has a circular mandala with *mantraksharas* and depicts the *parshva yaksha* to the bottom left. Size 154.5 cm x w54.5 cm.

²⁶. Ibid

²⁷. Uvvasaggaharam stotra Vivechana, Sadhvi Subodhini 2016

²⁸. Mohanlal Bhagwandas Jhavery, Comparative and critical study of Mantrashastra. 1944,Pg101

The *sahastraphana parshvanatha pata* dated c.1450 a.d (figures 14 &15) is a square *pata* size 164.5cm x w68cm in the collection of the I.d.institute of indology also shows a *parshva yaksha*. Thus by c.15th c.e such *vastrapatas* encouraged the worship of *parshva yaksha* as a secondary deity in tantric rituals.

Conclusion

Perusing through the above unusual forms of *ganesha* it can be affirmed that during the early medieval period when tantrism dominated over various cults and religions in india, *ganesha* which was a popular deity in the *shaiva* pantheon was separated by the devotees to form a separate cult called the *ganapatya* cult and worshipped by the common man and those who followed esoteric practices in caves, who gave a tantric form to him. Probably during the rashtrakuta period the presence of *ganesha* is seen with the *matrikas* in the brahmanical caves at elephanta, ellora in maharashtra, which indicates the acculturation of this cult with *shaktis*, but the female energy of *ganesha* was formulated only later. The *natha sampradaya* which believed in the shaiva and shakta principles promoted and encouraged the *shakti swarupa* or female energy in the form of *vinayaki* and even absorbed her as one of the *chausath yoginis* in hinduism and jainism in western india. Slowly the *ucchista ganesha* worship became popular in the deccan and south india. Just as popular hindu deities were absorbed in the jain pantheon, *ganesha* as a *parshvayaksha* was also seen in temples, on *vastrapatas* and through hymns, or with his *shakti* in metallic icons in the household of jains.

Thus till date *ganesha* as a lycanthropic elephant-headed god continues to be worshipped as an image, through *stotras* or hymns or as a *yantra* and remains popular in his *adhyatmikakaya* form amongst adults and children in spite of the tantric elements which have portrayed a totally different image of him.

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fig. 1 Maha Ganpati, cave no. 21, Panhale kaji.



fig. 2 Ganesha and Saraswati, cave no. 22 Panhale kaji.



fig. 3 Shakti - Ganpati, heras institute collection.



fig. 4 Ucchista Ganesha with his Shakti Mukhamandapa ,Shaktivaneshvara temple ,Tanjore,Tamilnadu a.d 16th century. (left)

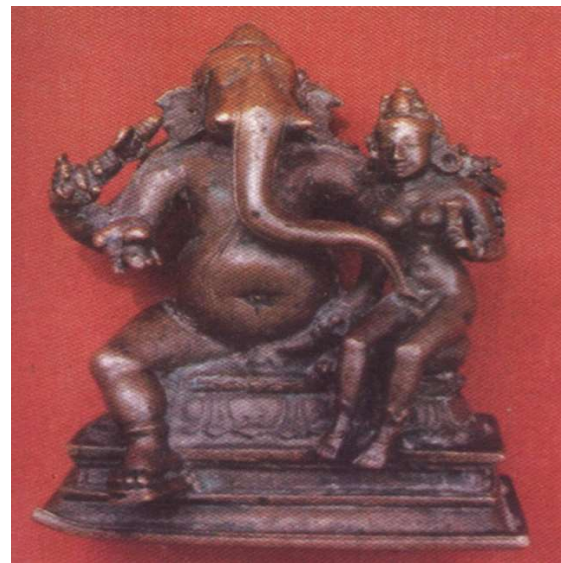


fig. 5 Ucchista Ganesha with his shakti, Tamil nadu.(right)



fig. 6 Vinayaki , 17th cen a.d,heras institute collection (left).



fig. 7 Ganeshayani , Chausath yogini temple ,hirapur, Odissa.(right)



fig. 8 Ganeshayani in panel, Chausath yogini temple, hirapur, Odissa.



fig. 9 ganeshayani, panel no. 4, bhuleshwar temple, yavat,pune.



fig. 10 ganeshayani, panel no. 5, bhuleshwar temple, yavat, pune.



fig. 11 ganeshayani, panel no. 9, bhuleshwar temple, yavat,pune



fig. 12 parshva yaksha , patan
gujarat (left)



fig. 13 parshva yaksha, Gujarat
(right)

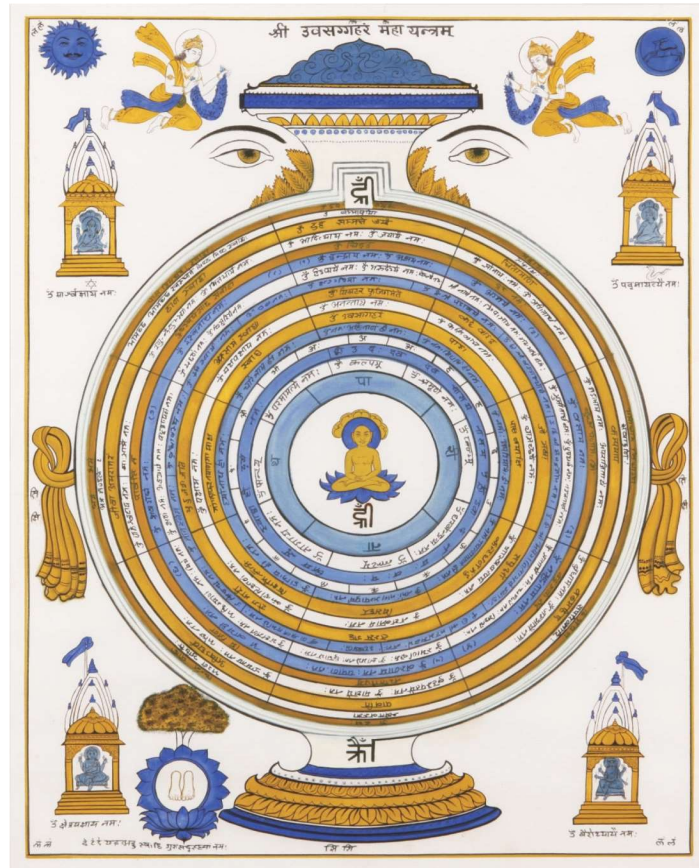


fig. 13 uvasaggaharam yantra



fig. 14,15 sahastraphana parshvanatha pata, 1450 a.d., courtesy I.D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad.