

MYSORE

CHITRAMĀLĀ

Traditional Paintings



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TRADITIONAL PAINTINGS

S. K. Ramachandra Rao



Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath
Bangalore

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D.K. Chowta

General Secretary

Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath

Kumara Krupa Road

Bangalore - 560 001, INDIA

Tel: +91 80 22261816

Fax: +91 80 22263424

email: chitrakala@vsnl.net

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Text

Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao

Photographs

Muni Mohan

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Kamalesh

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MYSORE CHITRAMĀLĀ



sketch by Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao

This volume brought out on the occasion of the
inauguration of the Gallery of
MYSORE TRADITIONAL PAINTINGS
is dedicated to the memory of
MUMMAḌI KRISHṆARĀJA WODEYAR
(1794 - 1868)



GAṆEŚA

An excellent painting of Gaṇeśa done in the typical Mysore style. The painted details and the uncoloured details are very well connected; they supplement each other, and together they add delicacy and balance to the painting. The lines are splendid, and suggestive.

FOREWORD



Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath feels proud to present this gallery of Mysore Traditional paintings to the art-loving public of the Country. It is a valuable addition to the excellent galleries that are already there in the Parishath. And it represents the unique merit of the Mysore idiom in painting. The paintings illustrating this idiom were collected with great effort for the Parishath by its former Secretary, the late Prof. M.S. Nanjunda Rao, and preserved with loving care in the Parishath's archives over years. Shri D.K. Chowta, the present General Secretary is to be congratulated for donating a gallery to house these



paintings. It shows his love for art and dedication to the cause of art in Karnataka. The excellent manner in which the gallery has been planned is due to the effort and imagination of the Parishath's Vice-President, Shri Kamalesh, the well-known artist. Together they merit our deep indebtedness for the fine manner in which this gallery has been planned.

Appropriately, a volume of Mysore Paintings is being published on the occasion of the Gallery's inauguration. Vidyalankāra, Vāchaspati Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao kindly acceded to our request to prepare the text for this volume, and we are deeply indebted to him for this help. This volume has rightly been dedicated to the memory of the late Maharaja of Mysore, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, for his patronage it was, that was mainly responsible for this style of painting.

I cherish fondly the hope that Chitrakala Parishath will continue this laudable work in the coming years.


S.M. Krishna

President, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The present volume on the Mysore traditional paintings is being published on the occasion of the inauguration of a gallery of traditional paintings of Mysore which are in possession of Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore. Both the gallery and this publication were ideas of the Parishath's General Secretary, Shri D.K. Chowta. It was he who prevailed upon me to undertake the job of preparing this volume. The well-known artist and my friend, Shri Kamalesh (who is Parishath's Vice-President) came forward to help me in this arduous task. The elegance of the gallery is due to his untiring effort and sense of aesthetic perfection. He has also enriched the publication with his calligraphy. I value working with him in this endeavour. I am indebted to the enthusiasm and vision of Shri Chowta, to the wisdom and discernment of Shri Kamalesh, and to the information provided by Smt. Kamalakshi. I am also indebted to Shri Munimohan of the Parishath, for the excellent photographs he prepared of the paintings included here (for my leisurely and careful perusal). But for their ready and full cooperation, this volume would not have seen the light of the day.

S. K. Ramachandra Rao

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SARASVATĪ

चतुर्भुजां शुभ्रवर्णां वीणवादनतत्पराम् । कण्ठपुस्तकहस्ताढ्यां सर्वविद्याप्रदायिनीम् ॥ (*Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā*)

An excellent specimen of the typical Mysore style of iconic painting. Four-armed, the two normal ones playing on veenā, and the extra hands carrying pen and book, the goddess is pleasant and prepossessing. Lines are free and flowing, firm and fluid; the drawing is crisp and expressive.

KRISHṆARĀJA WOḍEYAR III MAKER OF MODERN MYSORE



n March 27, 1868 a hundred and thirty six years ago, a great ruler of

Mysore passed away. But for him, Mysore State would have lost its individuality and unitary character; it

would have become part of the Madras Presidency. Kannaḍa would have ceased to inspire the community and to provide the rallying ground for unification.

The Maharaja was beset with a series of misfortunes, but he fought against all odds with rare restraint and fortitude. Although he died in anguish, broken with frustration, the fruits of his efforts were borne soon after his demise: Mysore could continue as an entity with distinction.

His Highness Sri Krishṇarāja Wodeyar III, the great-grandfather of the last Maharaja in the lineage, was born on 25th July 1794, when the State was passing through tumultuous times. For 38 years the royal family had lost control over the administration of the State: Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan were the real rulers. The English and the French were freely exploiting the situation. The resourceful Dowager Queen Lakshammaṇṇi applied herself with singular zeal to the task of restoring the royal rights to the family. Till 1801 she was the Regent of the young prince, and the astute Pūrṇayya was the Dewan till 1811.

All was well until the prince came of age and began to administer the kingdom himself, in 1810. The Regent

had taken care to provide the boy with the best education; and Pūrṇayya, the most remarkable man of his times, had managed the State affairs with great care and skill. Ill-advice led the prince, after he came to power, to dispense with Pūrṇayya's services; and Pūrṇayya died soon after his retirement. The wise Regent was already dead. Mediocres gathered round the prince, whose hold over the administration grew steadily weaker.

The chieftains of several old principalities, subjugated by Hyder Ali, now sought to become independent and fomented trouble. The famine of 1823-4 and the cholera epidemic of 1825 involved the State in extraordinary expenditure: the financial resources of the Government were almost entirely depleted. It is said that Pūrṇayya had, when he retired from office, handed over to the Maharaja 7,83,749 Kaṇṭhīrāya Varahas (each Varaha was worth three rupees), as the State's savings: all this was now spent, and a debt to the tune of 77 lakh Kaṇṭhīrāya Varahas was incurred. However, opinion is not unanimous on this issue. Whatever the figures, and whatever the facts, it is certain that the financial stability of the Government broke: the landholders felt aggrieved and harassed, and the agrarian unrest became widespread.



KRISHNARĀJA WODEYAR III

A very fine painting in oils, portraying the Mahārāja in his daily apparel, with a simple but laced turban, the white kase-angi, with a chowkuḷi-towel hanging from his left shoulder. He holds a rose in his right hand (recalling the Mughal style). There is a one-line writing in old Kannaḍa characters on top of the painting, indicating that the portrait of the Mahārāja was done on 10th bright day of Phālguna, in the year Prabhava 1769 (śālivāhana) (1847 A.D.). The artist's name, Māñji, occurs at the left bottom corner of the painting.

There were several violent outbursts, and armed revolts; there was an apprehension that law and order would collapse. While the situation was grave, it was certainly not hopeless.

The Maharaja was not directly responsible for this crisis, nor was he indifferent to it. He set himself to improve the situation with great care and tact. But the British Resident in Mysore, A.H. Cole, sent highly exaggerated, coloured and alarming reports to the Madras Governor, and made it appear that the Maharaja was incapable of handling the situation; he pleaded that the British should interfere and take over the administration. Sir T. Munroe, who was at that time the Governor of Madras, came down to Mysore to find out facts, and found that there was little reason to interfere. This was in 1825.

But Cole's report had left a trail behind; and the British imperialists decided to eliminate the rule of the Maharaja, and extend their direct administration. Lord William Bentinck wrote to the Maharaja on September 7, 1831 directing him to hand over the administration "within ten days" to the Commissioners appointed by him, which the Maharaja did on the 19th October 1831, soon after the celebrated

Dasara festivities. The letter was as indecent as the act was sinister; but the Maharaja reacted with grace and dignity. He did not, however, compromise with the error. He continued the struggle to get the wrong righted till his last days; and he succeeded, although not until after his death in 1868.

This misfortune would have made a lesser man sour and desperate; but this monarch preserved his peace with remarkable nobility and fortitude. He put his trust in God, and persevered in his effort. The long years of unsuccessful waiting did not break his spirit. He spent his time not in intrigues or in idleness, but in writing books and patronising talents. He acquired great proficiency in religious and philosophical literature, and could hold learned discussions with scholars. He had in his court the most eminent scholars of the times: Kuṇṇigal Rāma Śāstri, Bhāshyam Appā Śāstri, Kāśi Śesha Śāstri, Sajjayam Thāthāchārya, Vyākaraṇam Vyāsakrishṇāchārya, Kavi Varadāchārya and others. He had also around him a group of poets of no mean stature: Rājakavi Liṅgarāja, Garaḷapuri Śāstri, Mādappa Śāstri, Kempunārāyaṇa Kavi, Devalāpura Naṇjuṇḍa Kavi and others. He spent most of his time in the company of these intellectuals, and came to be regarded as the modern Bhoja.

He was himself a writer of repute: he wrote as many as seventy works, important among which are Śritattvanidhi, Chāmuṇḍikā-nighaṇṭu, Saugandhikāpariṇaya, Siri-Naṇjuṇḍa-Śataka, Chaduraṅgasarvasva, and Navagraha-pūjā-mañjari. He could write fine poetry both in Kannaḍa and in Sanskrit. He knew many languages including Persian, Hindustani, Telugu, Marāṭhi and Tamiḷ. His Kannaḍa prose style was ornate and elegant. His knowledge of astrology was considerable, and he has written books on this subject. He was interested in symbolic mathematics and in the designing of mystic diagrams. His manuscripts were illustrated by himself.

He was proficient in music, and he played on Veeṇā. He had in his court musicians of great eminence like Sadāśiva Rao, Veeṇā Venkaṭasubbayya, Veeṇā Sāmbayya and Doḍḍaśeṣhaṇṇa. Mysore evolved a distinct style of playing Veeṇā during this time. He has composed musical pieces in Kannaḍa, and has written Yakshagāna plays.

He encouraged graphic arts; and commissioned a large number of artists to paint court scenes, and portraits of his officers, scholars, musicians and pontiffs. He was responsible for the creation of the Jaganmohan art gallery

in Mysore. His interest in painting was unbounded. In his court, there were several artists who were his personal friends. The grandfather of the famous K. Venkatappa was one of them.

Krishṇarāja III was chiefly responsible for the introduction of English education in the State. He also started the Rājā's School in Mysore for the teaching of English; this school which was started in 1833 became in due course the Maharaja's College and the nucleus of the Mysore University. The name of this prince is also associated with the first hospital along modern lines of medicine in Mysore. This was rather remarkable, because he was himself an enthusiast of Āyurveda, and patronised eminent Āyurveda physicians like Guṇḍlu Paṇḍita, Hosa Paṇḍita Bhīmarāo, Gurumūrti Paṇḍita, Jinachandra Paṇḍita and others.

He was born in Śrirangapaṭṭaṇa which had been the capital of the State for nearly 400 years; but he was installed on the throne in Mysore, at that time little more than a small village. The ruler took great care to develop this township into a well laid out, modern, and prosperous city. He visited Bangalore in October 1811 and held a durbar in Tipu Sultan's Fort. Since then, he applied himself zealously to develop

this city. The cantonment areas was in fact his gift to the then "Supreme Government" for the purpose of stationing the garrisons. It should be said to his credit that he foresaw great potentialities in this city and extended all assistance towards its growth. He can truly be described as the Father of the Modern Mysore State.

The ruler was helped in this mission of modernising and developing Mysore State by his dewans and residents. Pūrṇayya, a man of "extraordinary merits", paved the foundation for this work by setting up an appropriate administrative machinery, and by repairing the damage done by warfare for a hundred years. Savār Bhakshi Rāma Rāo, Bābu Rāo, Venkaṭarāje Urs, Pantoji Subba Rao, Bhakshi Narasappa and Bhagavata Subba Rao were among his trusted officers who were eminent and sincere. Dr. John Campbell, Major Evans Bell and Sir Henry Rawlinson were friends of the King who helped the cause of Mysore.

Here was undoubtedly the greatest ruler in the Mysore royal family. He was accomplished and versatile, diplomatic and steadfast. He was devoted to the welfare of the people: he mixed with them freely and shared their

pleasures and sorrows. During the days of drought in 1811-12 he spent without a second thought 8,50,272 Kaṇṭhīrāya Varahas to keep the people from want.

It was at that time a very huge sum. Even when the State finances were visibly dwindling, he continued to spend lavishly on public works. Perhaps this was an unsound economic policy; but then the King was an uncompromising humanist, and his considerations were different. He no doubt came to grief on this account, but he never regretted. In fact, he justified his action in the despatches to the Court of Directors of the Company and in the Kharīthas to the Crown, for the rendition of the State.

He was a man of unimpeachable integrity: he never stooped to conquer, nor did he strike with spite. Here is what The Pall Mall Gazette of London wrote about him in 1866 (September 26): "During all the darkest season of our trouble, when he might have wrought grievous mischief to our people, he was firm and faithful to the British alliance (But) he reasserted his claims with increased emphasis,....." His was a case of the age-old conflict between the Hour and the Man: and the Man ultimately won.

WHAT ARE TRADITIONAL PAINTINGS ?



The English word 'tradition' (derived from the Latin *traditio* and *tradere*, meaning "to hand over") signifies the action of handing over or transmitting of something from one to another, from one generation to another. It also refers to some usage, custom, or practice that is long established, that is regarded almost as immemorial, or the objects (material things) that are heirlooms of a past. It becomes important in the context of cultural continuity or preservation of cultural details of a community. More significantly, it is the transmission by practice of what is generally called oral tradition, without reliance on writing. It is to be noted that the word tradition also signifies etymologically an active

involvement in such transmission (from *tra*=*trans*+*do*, "I place, I give").

Tradition, therefore, refers to the ways of living, ways of thinking, ways of enjoying, ways of interacting and ways of finding the meaning in life. Relevant to us here is traditional art, the ways of decorating oneself and one's habitat, ways of connecting truth with beauty and utility with aesthetic appreciation, involving ideas and emotions in living at a higher plane, removed from the purely mundane, drab and dreary, ordinary and animal existence. Art is different from the 'natural'; it is created, constructed, confabulated, and in this sense 'artificial'. Beauty in a flower is natural, but its

portrayal in a drawing or painting is art. Art has many dimensions: body-decoration, garments, ornaments, eating, diversions, buildings, gardens, handicrafts, artifacts, communication, self-expression, amusements, enjoyments, sports and so on. In all these, there is a role that tradition plays. It makes not only for continuity, but for the enhancement of quality and value.

This is emphasized in the Sanskrit word 'sampradāya' for tradition. The word basically means transmission (sam+pra+dā+ghang, "to give") but the prefixes "sam" and "pra" added to the

root 'dā' bring out the detail that the transmission is of the values held in high regard by the elite in society.

Hence Bharata's definition:

शिष्टपरम्परावतीर्णोपदेशः सम्प्रदायः ॥

Sampradāya consists of useful instructions (upadeśa) handed down by a long line of cultural folk (śiṣṭas). The Sanskrit word links up tradition with enculturation and education. It is value-oriented. Another definition of the word draws attention to the unbroken succession of wise masters as teachers of proper conduct and right living.



ARCHAKĀS

This is part of a larger but damaged glass-painting. This shows the priests in a Vaishnava shrine, distributing holy water and offering the imprints of the Lord's feet to the devotees.

गुरुपरम्परागत सदुपदेशः ॥

The word 'sampradāya' emphasizes the right teaching that is got in the proper manner, with attention to good and correct instructions (sadupadeśah: sam samyak-prakāreṇa prāptah). Tradition is what is of benefit to individuals and society. However, it does not connote a passive reception. *Śakti-saṅgama-tantra*, which discusses at length the nature and modes of tradition (1st paṭala, 8th khaṇḍa) points out that the reception of tradition is facilitated by an inner power, which can bring about unity of body, the vital currents and the objects of the world outside:

शरीरमर्थं प्राणांश्च तन्निवेदनकारकम् ।

अन्तःशक्तिपरो देवि.....॥

The receiver of tradition needs to be in favour of noble conduct, pure in body and mind, and doing things always with perfect freedom and full deliberation (not by impulse, pressure or under compulsion)

आर्यपक्षान्वितः स्वच्छः स्वच्छन्दाचारतत्परः ॥

Further, he should not be motivated by selfish interests, but engaged all the time in actions that will benefit others:

स्वोपयोगफलाग्राही परकार्यपरायणः ॥

Thus, the idea behind tradition is that it is good for all, and that because of tradition, the individual will thrive and society flourish. The values that are in consonance with the good of all are sought to be preserved and transmitted to future generations. Traditional art is the art that is relevant for the entire community. The individual artists, in the context of tradition, are ushered into oblivion, for they are only transmitters and not creators. That is how all those artists, artisans and craftsmen who built our grand temples and made our finest of sculptural specimens are unknown and unheard of. They worked for a collective cause. And their creativity was submerged in the idiom that they represented. Traditional art differs from modern art in this regard.

In the realm of painting, tradition began with painting one's own body and on rocks, pots, jars, funerary urns, walls and weapons of war and hunting. In all such instances it was the painting that was important, and not the painters. The early painter produced an idiom, a style for the community, and himself disappeared into it. The idiom survived,



YAŚODĀ AND KṚṢṆA

Yaśodā, the foster-mother, standing and carrying the boy-Kṛṣṇa in an attractive posture (tribhaṅga). The painting has been done with minimum colours, green outstanding, and with delicate draughtsmanship. The pavilion treatment is typically Mysore in design. The parrot in green appears to have lent the emphasis on the green colour in the painting. The tray-stand with inlay work is also seen, together with lamp-stands, and a pot hanging on top.

the style flourished, but not the originators thereof. That is also why the Upanishad calls for the remembrance of what is done (kṛtam-smara), and not of who did it.

We have in India evidence of a distinct idiom being developed in the murals of Ajaṇṭā (between about 200 BC and 400 A.D.) during the period of the Śātavāhana monarchs and the Vardhana kings (contemporaneous with the Guptas). This idiom continued in Bāgh (under the patronage of the Gupta kings), Badāmi (early Western Chāḷukyas), Elūra (Rāshtrakūṭas), Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchīpuram (Pallavas), Talagiriśvara in Panamalai, Śittanna-vāsal in Pudukkoṭṭai (Pallavas), Bṛhadīśvara temple at Tañjāvūru (Chola), Virūpāksha temple at Hampi and Lepākshi (Vijayanagar) and Tiruparumkunraṁ (Nāyaka).

It is important to note that the early extant specimens of what may be described as truly traditional Indian paintings were murals. Here the painting is made to stick to the ground (lime plaster) applied on a durable support (stone or rock). In Ajaṇṭā, for instance, for the wall-paintings, the tempera method was used. Mud-plaster

was applied in two coats. The first was to fill the rock crevices as also the marks left by the chisel strokes (in order to make the rock surface rough enough to take mud-plaster splashing). And the second was a fine coat of lime plaster to enable the artist to draw and paint. Usually this was allowed to dry completely before the artist drew his lines or applied his pigments.

The idiom that thus evolved in wall-paintings was extended to the mainiatures and illumined manuscripts. It covered both the theme and the style. In Ajaṇṭā the theme was largely Buddhist, in Sittannavāsal it was Jaina, in Bṛhadīśvara it was Śaiva, and in Vijayanagara, the themes were largely drawn from the epics and the purāṇas. But the style continued almost the same. The theme was also uniformly largely religious. This is what makes all these paintings conform to the traditional mould. The traditional Indian paintings has an idiom that goes back to the early period of the Christian era. When the theme is religious, or the style of rendering these themes reminds us to what we see in Ajaṇṭā, Elūra, Sittanna-vāsal, Hampi, Lepākshi or Talagiriśvara, the painting may rightly be described as traditional in style.

TRANSITIONAL IMPACTS



This does not, however, mean that the style which is identified as traditional has continued without alteration or innovations. We can consider the Ajaṇṭā paintings and the paintings in Lepākshi, in order to drive home this point. Even in the context of tradition, Lepākshi has moved away from Ajaṇṭā, but has not totally departed from it. The undercurrent has survived, while the overlays have undergone some change. The style has changed retaining the core intact. Look at the splendid depictions of Draupadī- svayamvara or of Kirātārjunīya. The wall-paintings are highly decorative, especially with regards to costumes, jewellery and hair-do; the textile designs steal the show. But lines are drawn freely and forcefully, and the attempt to model the figures in

the round is conspicuous by its absence. Few are the colours used: earth red, yellow ochre, green, black and grey. The tradition of using green where blue is indicated can be discerned.

A peep into the textual tradition also becomes appropriate at this point. We have few books that can be called ancient that are wholly devoted to the art of painting. Nagnajit's *Chitra-lakṣhaṇa* (in its Tibetan version), the third part of the sixth century work *Vishṇu-dharmottara-purāṇa*, Chālukya-Someśvara's *Abhilashitārtha-Chintāmaṇi* (otherwise known as *Mānasollāsa*, about 1120 A.D), Keḷadi-Basava-bhūpāla's *Śiva-tattva-ratnākara* (about 1720 A.D) and portions of *Samarāṅgaṇa-Sūtradhāra* (around 1060 A.D.) provide us with some details about



LAKSHMĪ
GAṆEŚA
SARASVATĪ

Three separate paintings have been framed together. The paintings of Lakshmi for luck, Gaṇeśa for success, and Sarasvatī for wisdom have been in the folk context together adored. The paintings have here been obviously done to supplement each other. Each is a fine specimen of the Mysore style, in excellent draughtsmanship and delicate gold work.

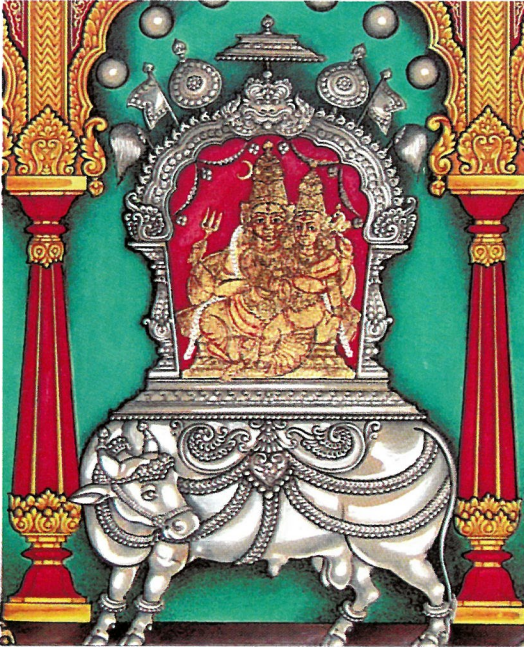


the craft of painting, like the preparation of the wall for painting, the preparation of pigments, the making of brushes, and so on. There are also instructions, brief but pointed, about how to make a painting correct and pretty.

However, there are two points to be noted in this connection. The first is that the texts did not appear first, and the early paintings were not done on that basis. Texts mentioned above were in fact prepared on the basis of the paintings that were already there. In all art, artists appear first, and the theorizing comes later. The second point is that the artisans or craftsmen could not be expected to become directly conversant

with the texts (which were all in Sanskrit). There were always scholars in the courts of Kings who could communicate the relevant contents of these books to the craftsmen in the language that they could understand. And the scholars, not being artists, could not be expected to inform the artisans correctly or completely about the technical details contained in these books. There was thus a gap between the textual tradition and the actual art-tradition.

And the artists, artisans and the craftsmen of any age had necessarily to care for, and cater to, the idiosyncracies of their patrons, and to get influenced by contemporaneous trends, ideologies and technological developments. Traditional painting could not, and did not, remain confined to the original models and ideals. The line drawings, ethereal coloration, textile designs and flat composition that we find in the Ajañtā paintings have undergone a sea of change by the time we reach the paintings in the Virūpāksha temple at Hampi, in the Huchchappaiah-maṭha in Ānegondi or in the Virabhadra-temple in Lepākshi, or again in the Bṛhadīśvara temple in Tañjāvūru. It is the same tradition, but nuances differ. Traditional paintings have incorporated transitional changes.



TEXTUAL TRADITION



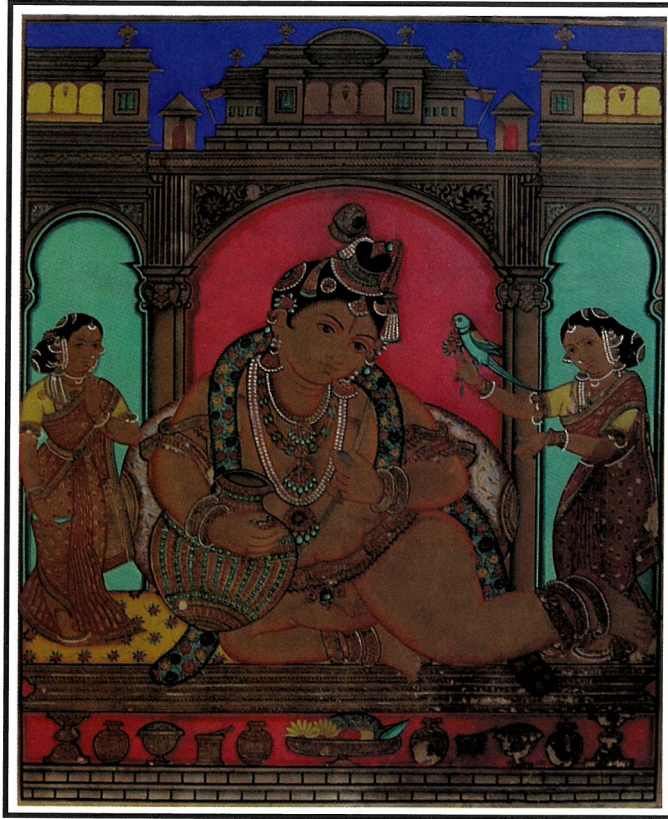
The early texts provide us with information regarding colours, brushes, quills, pens as well as preparation of the ground, on the basis of the paintings already executed. There is mention of “vīraṇa”, fragrant grass, the pointed ends of which were employed as brushes for fine work in miniatures. Skill in the use of such brushes was hailed as expertise. The artist who was an adept in handling it was described as “vidyun-nirmāṇa-kuśala” (expert in the free and quick flow of fine lines). *Abhilashitārtha-chintāmaṇi* refers to two kinds of pens: one called ‘tindu’, for draft outlines made out of a bamboo shoot, with a copper conch-like nib fixed at both ends; and the other (called *vartika*), for bold strokes and thick flourishes, a stick made out of charcoal-powder mixed with wax

and flour, like the wick of a lamp. For painting, a brush (*tūlikā*) was made with calf’s body-hair and wax smeared over a stick. Three kinds of brushes were used: a thick one (*sthūla*) for painting broad areas and wide surfaces, a midling one (*madhya*) for filling the enclosures with paints, and a thin one (*sūkshma*) for fine lines. Also used was a knife (*kshura*) for applying paint on extensive areas, or for removing paints. *Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtradhāra* mentions brushes 2”, 3” and 4” broad. *Vishṇudharmottara* counsels that different brushes must be used for white and black paints. The proficient artist in painting was hailed as “varṇa-pūraṇa-daksha”.

Employment of gold (leaf, foil, powder, liquid) for jewellery in

miniature painting, whether on suitably prepared cotton cloth (*paṭa*) or silk (*paṭṭa*) is also described in early texts. When fine gold powder was applied, it was preserved and fixed repeatedly stamping it with a boar's tusk, which would also make it shine (यावत्कान्तिं समायाति विद्युच्चकितं विग्रहम्।). Purification of gold, straining it and making a concoction of it are also described. *Vishṇudharmottara*

(27, 8) mentions white, red, yellow, black and green (but blue in 40, 16) are mentioned as primary colours. There were vegetable dyes as well as mineral pigments. Preparation of secondary colours is also mentioned. It was suggested that the base might be in one colour, and another colour overlaid on it. Artists were required to recognize five kinds of white: *danta-gaura*, white



NAVANĪTA KRISHṆA

Baby Kṛishṇā (Bāla-Kṛishṇa) shown with a pot of butter (navanīta) in a posture of elegance, innocence and ease. Two gopis are looking at him. The pavilion and the superstructure represent the typical Mysore architecture of the Wodeyar rulers.

of the elephant's tusk; *sphuṭa-chandana-gaura*, white in the sandal wood; *śaradghana-gaura*, white in the clouds of śarat season; *chandra-gaura*, white like the moon; and *rukma-gaura*, white in the gold. Also twelve shades of black: *rakta-śyāma*, the dark shade in blood; *ghana-śyāma*, the dark hue in cloud; *pāṇḍu-śyāma*, ashy grey and so on. Red also had different shades (like *darada*, *alaktaka*, *gairika* and so on).

Emergent colours like goose-red (from *darada* and *śaṅkha*), dove-grey (*kapota*) (from blue and white) and green from the tree *Butes frondosa* (*palāśa*), blue and yellow, (in three shades *śuddha*, *śukla* and *nīlābhyadhika*) are also dealt with.

Fixing colours (*varṇa-stambhana*) by applying on the painted surface the exudation from the indigo plant (*bahula*)



NAVANĪTA KṚISHṆA

Counterpart of painting on the opposite page

or milk mixed with red lead (minium, *sindūra*) or by spraying the coloured surface with casein (albuminoid in milk) is also mentioned.

Such comprehensive textual information and instruction constitute the core of the traditional painting practice. Despite the numerous transitional phases due to the Graeco-Roman, Mongolian, Persian and European influences, the core survived. Included under this fold are the numerous folk styles, which are altogether uninfluenced by the textual mores. We see in many so-called traditional paintings a judicious incorporation of folk elements, both in ideas and in execution. This, however, is not a transitional influence. It is indigenous, and established right from the earliest of phases. We find evidence of this in the early miniatures as well as

in the illustrated manuscripts and the mural paintings (like those of Ajaṇṭā and Sittannavāsai). There is an undercurrent of this folk art even in the Deccani paintings of Bidar (around 1347) and in the Vijayanagar paintings of Hampi, Ānegondi and Lepākshi. The tableau-like placement of flat figures as distinguished from an elaborately decorative and patterned background in all these paintings is characteristically folk in intent and execution.

The so-called traditional paintings of Mysore belong to an idiom that was fostered largely in the royal court of the erstwhile state of Mysore (included in the present-day Karnataka). After the collapse of the Vijayanagar empire (1336-1565) the royal patronage for the “traditional” painters shifted to Madurai, Penukoṇḍa and Chandragiri. From Chandragiri, it reached Mysore and got



MATSYA



KŪRMA



VARĀHA



NṚSIMHA



VĀMANA

firmly anchored. Rāja-woḍeyar, the then ruler of Mysore (1578-1617) shifted his capital to the nearby Śrīrangapaṭṭana, and took care to provide accommodation and encouragement to the painters (chitra-kāras) who had migrated to Mysore seeking royal patronage. These artists belonged to the Kshatriya-caste of Soma-vaṁśa lineage, and were devotees of the form of the mother-goddess known as Nimishāmbā. The ruler not only assigned a colony for these artists, but built a shrine for their tutelary goddess in the new capital, Śrīrangapaṭṭana (Gaṇjām).

The later rulers, Raṇadhīra-Kaṇṭhīrava-Narasimha-Rāja-Woḍeyar (1638-1659), Chikka-deva-rāja-Woḍeyar (1673-1704), Kaṇṭhīrava-rāja-Woḍeyar (also called mūkarasu 1704-1714) and Doḍḍa-Kṛṣṇa-rāja-Woḍeyar (1774-1766) continued the royal patronage to the artist

community from Vijayanagar origin. The interregnum of Haidar-āli (1761-1782) and Tippu-sultān (1782-1799) also was encouraging to the artists. The splendid wall-paintings of Dariyā-Daulat (18th century) in Śrīrangapaṭṭana are evidence of this. Even as the Vijayanagar paintings were traditional in the transitional sense, the paintings in Dariyā-Daulat were also transitionally traditional. Scenes of battle abound in these paintings, but there are also portrait-paintings (of several persons, like Pūrṇayya the dewan, Lord Cornwallis, Dupleaux, the Nawab of Arcot, Smith, the ruler of Taṇjāvūr, the king Vīra-rājendra of Koḍagu, Madakari-nāyaka of Chitradurga, and the queen Chennamma of Kittoor). When the interregnum was over with the installation of Kṛṣṇarāja-woḍeyar III (1799-1868), son of the ruler Khāsā-Chāmārāja-Woḍeyar (1776-1796), on the



PARAŚU-RĀMA



RĀMA



BALA-RĀMA



KṚṢHṆA



KALKI

throne in Mysore by the British overlords, a new chapter in the history of traditional paintings began in Mysore (the new capital).

It may be recalled that the mural paintings of the Vijayanagar period were influenced not only by the pot paintings

and the folk arts, but there was a pleasant and effective incorporation of the Sittannavāsai, Elūra, Māmaṇḍūr and Tañjāvūr styles. During the reign of Venkaṭapati-deva-rāya (1586-1614) in Vijayanagar, there were Portuguese artists in his court. In the area in and around Mysore, however, traditional painting

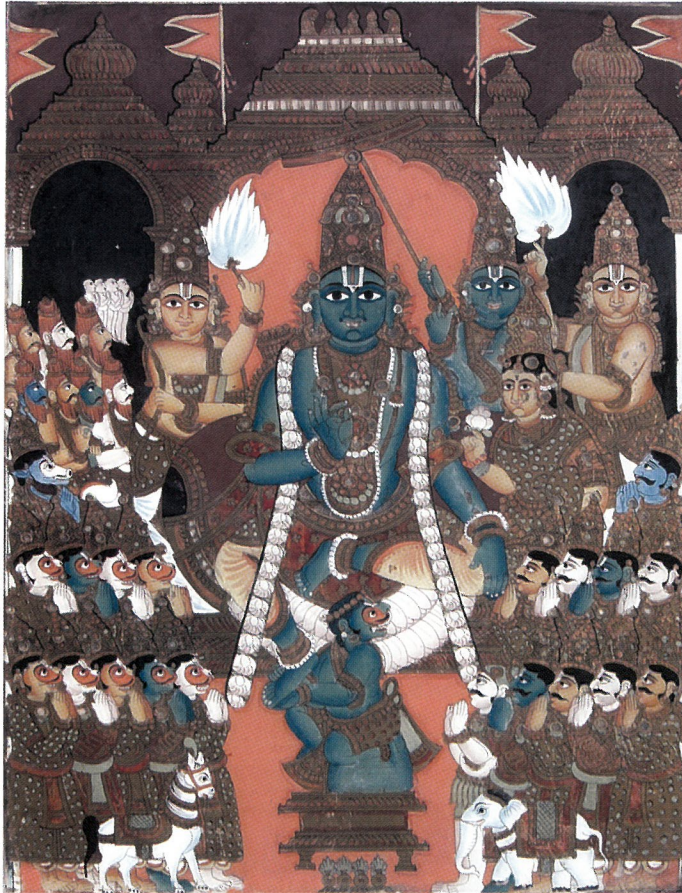


GARUḌA - VĀHANA

The most popular among the periodical processions in Vaiṣṇava shrines is Garuḍa-Vāhana, Viṣṇu seated on his favourite mount Garuḍālvār, who is also independently worshipped. This is the processional image of Varadarāja-svāmi of Kāñchīpuram on Garuḍa, attended by priests. It is a painting on glass.

continued almost in its indigenous phase, outside these influences. Hoysaḷa-Narasimha (around 1170 AD) was a great patron of art. Wall-paintings, found for instance in Śāntinātha-basadi in Śravaṇabelgoḷa, the grand portico of Tōṇṭada-siddha-liṅgeśvara temple in Yeḍiyūr (15th century), Teru-Malleśvara-

temple in Hiriyūru (16th century), Padmāvati-temple at Vastāre (17th century), Someśvara temple in Māgaḍi, Siddhalingeśvara-maṭha in Haradanahaḷḷi, the courtyard of Kempegowḍa III in Māgaḍi (1712), the courtyard of Maṇṭeśvāmi-Maṭha in Beḷakavāḍi and Pāpanātheśvara temple in Lepākshi



RĀMA GROUP

Rāma and Sītā on throne, with Hanumān in a gleeful mood. Rāma's throne has the lotus motif. This is a glass-painting.

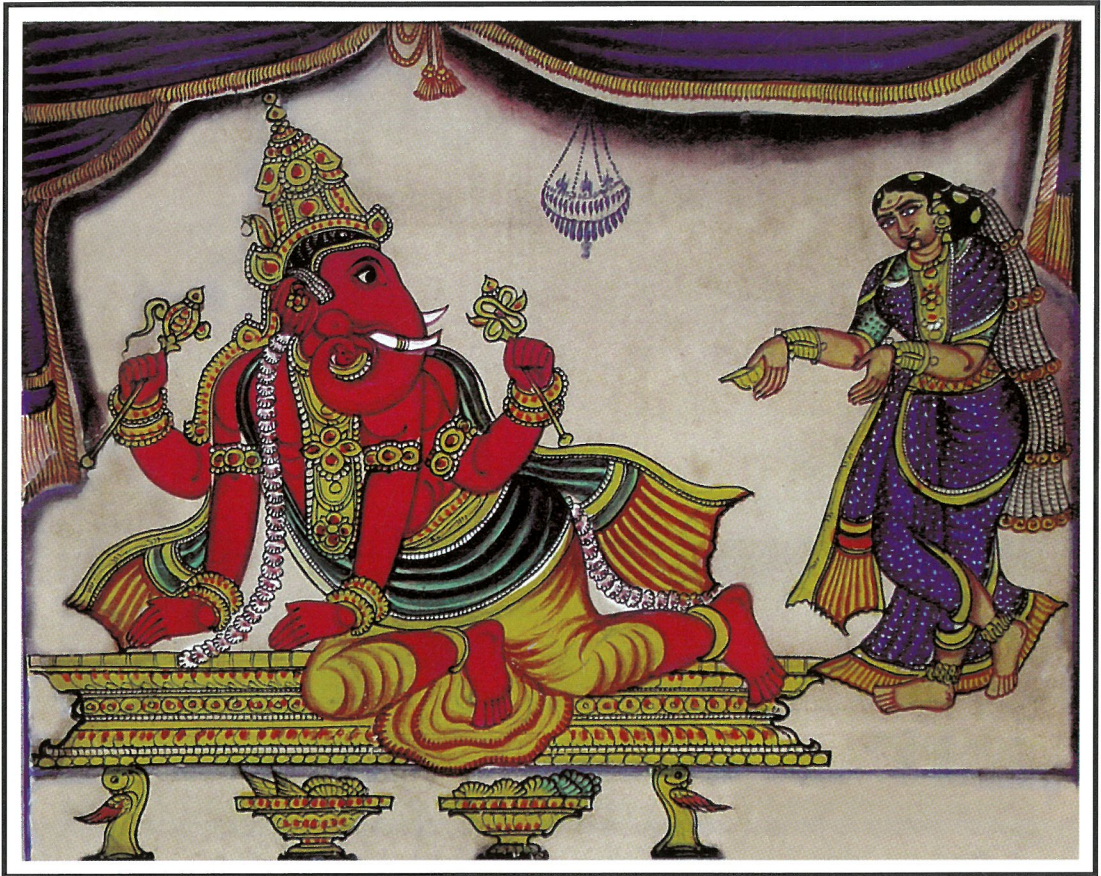
(all 18th century) illustrate the traditional style of painting inherited from the Vijayanagar phase, composite and vibrant.

Kṛṣṇārāja-Wodeyar III was keenly alive to this heritage, and continued this idiom in the murals in Janana-maṇṭapa of his father in the Chāmarājeśvara temple at Chāmarājanagar, in the Chitra-maṇṭapa (art-gallery) in the Mallikārjuna-temple at mudukutore near Talakāḍu, and also in the Prasanna-Venkaṭaramaṇa temple in Mysore. He emphasized the epic elements in these murals, although portraits also figure in them. He was instrumental in the crystallization of Jaganmohan-palace (begun in 1861), as almost exclusively dedicated to painting. Here we see iconic paintings, jostling with royal processions and tiger-hunts; there are hundreds of portrait-paintings (varied subjects like Raṇajit Singh of Punjab, the Peshwas of Puṇe, the kings of Travancore, officers of the Mysore court, relatives of the Mahārājā, the pontiffs revered by the ruler, etc.)

Kṛṣṇārāja-Wodeyar encouraged the new dimension acquired by the traditional paintings in the seventeenth century, namely making these murals available to the common people through miniatures prepared in the same style

and with the same themes. The ruler got his court-artists prepare traditional paintings, especially iconic paintings in small size, done on canvas, cloth or paper on board, for private homes and for halls used for religious congregations like Rāma-mandiras and bhajana-mandiras in towns and villages. A number of traditional paintings of Mysore that are extant today belong to this period, and owe to this ruler's initiative, generosity and enthusiasm. They are scattered all over the state, well or ill preserved.

He was, in fact, zealous about iconic paintings. His monumental work *Śrītattva-nidhi* with over a thousand paintings is a store-house of miniature paintings executed in mural style, of gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. Other works composed by him (like *Sachitra-rāmāyaṇa*, *Devī-Bhāgavata Saugandhikā-pariṇaya*) are also illustrated with similar drawings and paintings. This ruler had a lithograph press to print his handwritten books and reproduce their iconic paintings commissioned by him, right behind the Jaganmohan palace. Such iconic paintings in miniatures were mostly employed for book-illustration. The early illumined manuscripts with Jaina or Buddhist themes were on palm-leaf, and date back to the Pāla period.



GAṆAPATI AS CHILD

An unusual posture of Gaṇapati, after the child Kṛishṇa, crawling on all four legs (ambegālu). Probably, Gaṇapati is here pictured as a boy (Bāla-gaṇapati). The lady offering him milk in a spouted vessel (called vaḷale in Kannaḍa) adds life and colour to the painting.

The wooden boards that cover the palm-leaf manuscript of *Ashṭa-sāhasrika-prajñā-pāramitā* were painted with fine icons in 1028 A.D. The manuscripts of Mūḍabidri (Karnataka), *Dhavaḷa*, *Jaya-dhavaḷa* and *Mahā-dhavaḷa*, contain beautiful illustrations that were done around 1113 A.D. by the Hoysaḷa

painters. The palm-leaf manuscript superbly illustrated, *Śiva-dharma*, belongs to the period around 1220 A.D. The palm-leaf manuscripts of Bāgevāḍi date back to the sixteenth century. We have also illumined manuscripts belonging to the Vijayanagar period (1336-1505).



COSMIC VISION

A representation of the Cosmic vision of (Viṣṇurūpa-darśana), described in the eleventh chapter of Bhagavatgītā, in its all-devouring aspect. Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that he is equipped with numerous heads, arms and legs and that he is not only the creator of the universe, but the consumer of all phenomena (ಕಾಲೋಚ್ಛೇದಕೋ). Arjuna is shown with his bow, suggesting that the vision of Viṣṇurūpa changed his resolve not to fight. The chariot is also shown with Vāsuki (Time-dragon) as the plank and drawn by four horses (the Vedas).

TECHNIQUES

 Speaking about illuminated manuscripts, we are reminded of the Byzantine art in the Western world. This medieval art began in Alexandria in Egypt and became highly stylized in Byzantium. Icons in painting were devotional pictures for piety, with no particular story to illustrate. Such iconic paintings became very popular. They were painted in gold, silver and purple backgrounds, drapery outlines were done in gold, and rhythmic pattern dominated the treatment. Such iconic paintings were done on thin cloth covering a wooden panel; pigments were mixed with the white of the egg, serving as a glue. This art, which flourished in the ninth century spread to the Balkans and Russia. Constantinople became the

center around the eleventh century; leonostasis was introduced in the churches during the fourteenth century. Wooden screens dividing the sanctuary from the nave were painted over with icons of Jesus, Mary Modonna and the saints. There were also holy episodes illustrated. This medieval art tradition had doubtless an impact on the traditional paintings of Mysore. While in the West it survived within the church, here it became available to all sections of the society.

It may also be noted that Giotto di Bondone (1266-1336) of Florence broke away from this Byzantine tradition, and caused Renaissance Art to emerge, and attain importance. The traditional or medieval art was pushed to the

background, almost into oblivion. A similar fate visited the world of traditional paintings of Mysore when Ravi-Varma (1848-1906) preferred the European models and styles to depict Indian epic-themes, and when the influences from the East India Company artists began to be felt, occasioning thereby what may be described as modern painting. That is a different story. But what is relevant to us here is to note that even traditional painting techniques underwent changes, to accommodate the idioms and styles of the company art, and of the methods and ideals of the European art. This was again a transitional phase, where traditional art was no longer strictly traditional, no longer purely iconic, or strictly religious. It was traditional only in the sense that it was different from modern, and it represented an anterior stage in the development of painting.

Traditional paintings of Mysore have many details in common with the iconic paintings of Byzantium and Constantinople, but there are also differences. The painters there used goose-quills, and chose as medium gouaches (water colour mixed with the white of Zinc) combined with gold or silver. Here in the paintings done during the days of Kṛṣṇarāja-Woḍyer III, there was a rather heavy employment of gold,

especially for the ornaments, textile designs and some other details. And vegetable colours prescribed in texts like *Śiva-tattva-ratnākara* were mostly used with gold foils, gold powder, layers and liquid gold, employed to elevate and make prominent the ornaments or textile designs. An indigenous technology in *makki-sapheda* (dry white) or gesso (gold-work) came in handy for the Mysore painters. Lines are still important. Firm and free flowing lines can be of great beauty. The figure-ground differentiation is elaborate, but crisp.

The use of green for blue, which is found in many traditional paintings of Mysore, needs some explanation. *Vishṇu-dharmottara* counts green among the primary colours, excluding blue in one place (27, 8), but mention being made of blue instead of green in another place (40, 16). It is believed that blue is not indigenous, but borrowed from Persia. It is also true that in the traditional paintings from the Ajaṇṭa days to the Vijayanagar times we do not find blue. But it is not true that we did not know of this pigment in the ancient days. In many early texts like *Rāja-nirghaṇṭa* we find not only the word *nīla* for blue, dark dyes, black salt, blue vitriol, antimony, but its many synonyms: *sauvīrāṇjana*, *kācha-lavaṇa*,

tālīsapatra, *suṁvīraka* and *pārvateya*. Sapphire is called *nīlāśma*, *indranīla-maṇi* or *maṇi-viśeṣha*. Many blue coloured objects are known: young shoots of bamboo (*vamśāṅkura*), *śuka* (parrot), moss (*śaivāla*), grass (*dūrvā*), precious stone (*marakata*). The infant Kṛṣṇa is bluish in hue, likewise the planet Budha.

Śani (Śanaiśchara, Saturn), the evil celestial body personified, wears blue garments; so does Balarāma, who is described as 'nīla-vasana' (*Trikāṇḍaśeṣha*). One of the synonyms of 'nīla' is 'visha' (poison). *Garuḍa-purāṇa* (the chapter on expiation, *prāyaścitta*) warns one against touching blue garments, lest he move into the dark hell.

नीलवस्त्रं न स्पृशेच्च नीलिमनिरयं व्रजेत्॥

Alberuni (1070) writes that blue is inauspicious to the high-born. Thomas Roe (1616) records that blue in India is the dye for funerary situations. Edward Terry (1617) gives blue as the colour associated with crematoria in India. It is true that ritualistic texts (like *Tithyāditattva*) describe blue as inauspicious (*aśubha*). It is such negative ideas that make blue appear rather improper for worshipful icons, and made them prefer green for blue,

for the word *nīla* or *nīlati* also means green or black. The pigment *harita* signifies yellowish green (hence *harit-parṇa* for green leaves, *harit-tṛṇa* for grass). And in many instances, blue and green are interchangeable. In fact, there is a saying: "Blue and green are identical in essence, even as ice and water are identical in origin".



HARIHAREŚVARA

Line-drawing with colour tint.

ARTISTS OF THE ROYAL COURT



he paintings classed as traditional flourished during the life-time of Kṛishṇarāja-Wodeyar III. He was an avid and generous patron of all forms of art. His court had many talented painters, and also great scholars to guide them in the traditional mores. That is how he could prepare such monumental tomes like *Śrītatva-nidhi*. Among the artists of that period, some names have survived to our day, like those of:

Jāvagal Narasimhayya who hailed from the suburbs of Halebīdu in Hāssan, and who specialized in painting themes and episodes from *Śiva-purāṇa* and *Devī-māhātmya*; his signature is to be found in one of the paintings reproduced here: Kāmeśvara-Kāmeśvari.

Naguvanahaḷli Nāraṇappa who was famous for his paintings on the theme of Rāma-Paṭṭābhisheka, and who made large paintings for many bhajana-mandiras.

Pātāla Nañjundappa who hailed from Raṅgasvāmi-temple street in Bangalore, and who made paintings like Kodaṇḍa-Rāma and Vaikuṇṭha-Nārāyaṇa. His paintings were popular in the bhajana-mandiras.

Tippāji of Shikāripura, who lived between 1780 and 1856; he took the traditional craftsmen, guḍi-kāras of Sāgara, as his guides, and adopted their fine work in wood in his paintings; his style and talent can be seen in one of the paintings that can be identified as his, Viśvarūpa darśana.

Krishṇappa of Durga, who was patronized by the pālḷēgār chieftans of Chitra-durga; he specialized in painting scenes from *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*; among his works are Ekānta-Rāma, Keśava and Sarasvatī. He was known for his composition of Pañcha-nārī-turaga, arrangement of five ladies in the form of a horse.

Nelamangala Raṅgappa

Viraṇṇa whose painting of the theme of Siva's wedding (Girijā-kalyāṇa) was well-known; he was also the artist commissioned to work in Jaganmohan Palace in Mysore.

Yallayya, working in Jaganmohan Palace, he did many paintings like

Chāmuṇḍeśvari; he also assisted in illustrating *Śrītattvanidhi*.

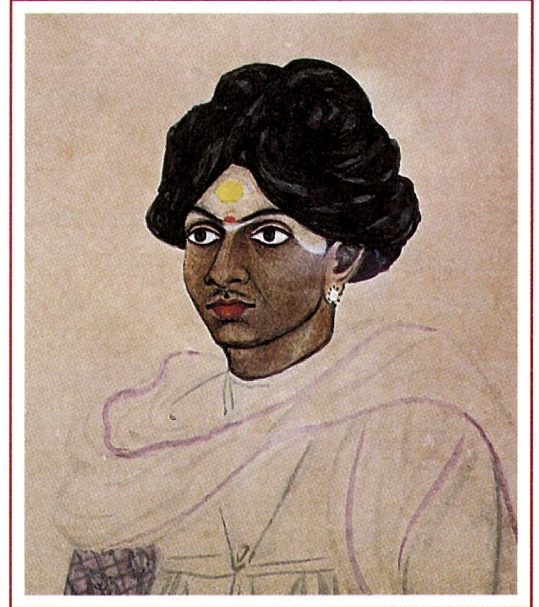
Sundarayya, well-known in his days, was a favourite of Krishṇarāja-Woḍeyar III, and assisted in the illustration of *Śrītattvanidhi*; among his works, Sandhyā-tāṇḍava was popular.

Tippaṇṇa, who was the superintendent (gottugāra) of the palace artists, painted 'Santanāmbuja' of Kṛishṇarāja-Woḍeyar III, reproduced here.

Rāmōji

Venkaṭasubbu

Most of the traditional painters who adorned the Mysore court belonged (as





indicated earlier) to the Āryakshatriya community of Soma-vamśa, who were originally from Kāñchīpuram, and devoted to Mukta-deva of that place. Among the deities they adored were Mailāra-deva, Veñkaṭa-ramaṇa of Tirupati, Nañjuṇḍeśvara of Nañjangūḍu near Mysore, and Nimishāmbā of Gañjām in Śrīrangapaṭṭana. All of them hailed from families of traditional artisans and craftsmen, and they settled down mainly in and around Mysore during the days earlier to Kṛṣṇarāja-

Woḍeyar III. Later they migrated to other parts of the erstwhile state.

It is these artists who preserved the idiom and style of traditional paintings in Mysore. Their contribution does not consist in merely preserving the old techniques and epic themes, but in suggesting new dimensions of creativity within the traditional context. They freely incorporated the significant aspects of the transitionally modern

trends while holding fast to the traditional spirit.

It must be noted that during their days, rightly designated as the Rāj days, the British rule had already materialized here. In the three presidency towns that the British carved out, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, the painting began to be done increasingly and wholly in the British way. What is called the Company Art was making a headway in these towns, and its impact could not be ignored or sidelined. There were already in India about thirty British painters

and twenty-five miniaturists in the period between 1770 and 1825 (cf. G.H.R. Tilloston, *The Indian Picturesque*). The Indian artists were naturally open to their influence in their techniques as well as subjects. Mysore was a little removed from the presidency towns, and thus the British impact was only marginally felt. The court-artists could continue their interest in traditional styles and themes, especially under the patronage of a ruler who was wedded to tradition, while being open to the ideas of westernization in some details of life. The artists of his court were



encouraged to paint portraits and secular themes also, and to assimilate some features of the Company Art.

The present publication contains specimens of the traditional paintings done in Mysore during the days of Krishṇa-rāja-Woḍeyar III and his successors. They have been selected from among more than two hundred paintings of this genre in possession of Chitra-Kala-Parishath, Bangalore. It is unfortunate that the artists who were responsible for these elaborately decorative and finely finished paintings have not left their signatures on them (except for a solitary instance: Jāvagal Narasimhayya in his Kāmeśvara-Kāmeśvarī).

Of course, traditional Indian art, whether architecture, sculpture or painting, is highly impersonal. In it, the idiom is what matters, not the author of a particular expression of it. The traditional artist is merely a medium, a vehicle. He is averse to imagining himself as the creator of an art-piece; he honestly believes that it is art that is trying to express itself, through him, incidentally. The real creator is Viśva-karmā (the All-maker); he alone is the real artist (kavi). That is why the builders of our temples and makers of

sculptural icons in them chose to remain in oblivion (barring a few Hoysaḷa sculptors).

Nevertheless, one cannot fail to discern in the paintings the individual idiom of the painters. Often, the element of time-honoured pageantry enters into this idiom, but how the contending details are handled so as to give the total impression of compactness is also individual. Some painters are adept in imparting to their painting a romantic tone; some articulate freely with feeling and sensitiveness; some succeed in setting the painting in simplicity and quiet dignity (as, for instance, in the painting of Rājarājeśvarī in this book).

There are some paintings, of course few, which leave us in admiration and awe. Tippājī's Viśva-rūpa-darśana is an example. Some are obviously ostentatious, bordering on the crude and laborious. Those iconic paintings which are dominantly devotional in mood tend to adhere to the traditional norms of painting with ease and naturalness. Others which emphasize pageantry or romance are found to incorporate transitional influences. Work with gold in the traditional paintings may be delicate or oppressive, depending on the painter's personality.

THE MYSORE STYLE



The traditional paintings of Mysore represent a miniature continuation (if also a noteworthy deviation) of the Vijayanagar murals, incorporating Deccani elements. This transitional style was crystallized in and around Mysore during the reign of the Wodeyar rulers (1371-1947), especially owing to the encouragement provided by Krishnarāja Wodeyar III (1794-1868). It marked a revival of interest in religious themes and conventional idioms. There was also an emphasis on iconic representations of gods and goddesses drawn from epics and mythology. It is a traditional style in a transitional phase, judiciously mixing textual prescriptions with contemporary perceptions. The tendency towards portraiture and story-

telling is obvious. The delineation of forms, figures, and postures, expression of emotions, the fluid yet firm lines, and use of colours to highlight contours are competent and creative. There is also accommodation of folk elements in classical depictions.

It is a distinct style, at once decorative, aristocratic and popular. Conformity with convention goes along with innovations. The influence of murals is evident in the earlier paintings while the impact of Company Art is obvious in the later paintings. There is also a clear thrust towards realism in the portraits that belong to the later phase of this style. The popularity of these paintings becomes evident by the possession of hundreds of them in the

bhajana-maṇḍalis and Rāma-mandiras in villages and towns all over the erstwhile state of Mysore. It is a royal school of painting which found favour among the people at large.

The paintings are traditional in the sense that the canons of paintings (chitra) found in Vishṇudharmottara-purāṇa are adopted, however inadequately, in these paintings: differentiation of forms, proportions, figures, pavilions, gods and humans, floral decorations and textile designs (rūpa-bheda), lines at once suggestive and definitive, clear and fine (pramāṇa), expressions of emotions, feeling, action and movement (bhāva-yojanā), creation of beauty, grace, brilliance and fascination (lāvaṇya-yojanā), depiction of likeness and portrayal of realism (sādrśya), and modelling by bright and harmonious pigments and shadeless colours (varṇikā-bhaṅga). This prescription also occurs in Yaśodhara's gloss on Vātsyāyana's Kāma-sūtra:

रूपभेदाः प्रमाणानि भावलावण्ययोजना ।
सादृश्यं वार्णिकाभङ्ग इति चित्रं षडङ्गकम् ।

While however adopting this six-fold principles of painting, the depiction of beauty, which is the essential element in a painting, is seen in innovations as

regards draughtsmanship, brush-work, colour-schemes and figure-ground differentiation. In the Mysore school of paintings, convention has been crystallized, and attention has been focussed on graceful contours. Although the plasticity of form is rather side-lined, and the perspective is rather juvenile, the figures come to life. What is most obvious in these paintings is the aristocratic elegance. One cannot forget that it is a royal school of painting, and the painters were not only acquainted with, but admired, the splendid pavilions, the luxuriant gardens, the excellent furniture and the fascinating textile designs in the palace. All these provided models; they were introduced into the paintings, often regardless of relevance to the themes, and squeezed into the conventional standards. There was also a delight in story-telling which often becomes evident. Vivacity is sought to be created by contrasts of colours. Drapery and jewellery enliven most of these paintings.

The 'traditional' paintings that originated in Mysore, especially those that were done with royal patronage, exhibit a strong influence of the palace and its environs. The royal court, the audience given to the dignitaries, the throne, the decorated halls and pavilions, ornamental gardens, and the

attendants of various types all figure in paintings done during this period, whatever the theme and the subject-matter. The throne in particular in many paintings is clearly inspired by the bejewelled throne (ratna-simhāsana) in

the Mysore palace. This throne is no doubt a splendid piece of furniture, and has a history of more than three hundred years. It dates back to the times of Rāja-Wodeyar (1578-1617) who was a contemporary of the Mughal emperor



CHĀMUṆḌEŚVARĪ

The tutelary deity of the Mysore Wodeyars, Chāmuṇḍeśvarī, with a smile on her countenance and seated upon a regal lion against a red background

Jehangir. He got this throne made around 1610 A.D. There is an inscription of 1646 (Śrīrangapaṭṭana), belonging to the period of Kaṇṭhīrava-Narasimha-Rāj-Woḍeyar (1638-1659), which mentions this throne:

ಜಯತು ಶ್ರೀಪತೇರ್ವಾಮನೆವಂಶಾಶ್ವಿಚಂದ್ರಮಾಃ
ಕಲಾನಿಧಿರುದಾರಶ್ರೀಃ ಕಂಠೀರವ ನೃಸಿಂಹರಾಡ್ ।
ಶ್ರೀಮತ್ಪಶ್ಚಿಮರಙ್ಗಪट्टಣವರೇ ಸಿಂಹಾಸನೇ ಸಂಸ್ಕುರನ್
ಮುಕ್ತಾಛತ್ರಸುವರ್ಣಮತ್ಸಯಮಕರಾಕಾರಧ್ವಜೈಶ್ಚಿಹಿತಃ ॥

Another inscription (of 1678 in the same place) describes the throne as bejewelled:

ಚಿಕ್ಕದೇವಮಹಾರಾಜ ಒಡೆಯರೈಯ್ಯನವರು
ಶ್ರೀರಂಗಪಟ್ಟಣದಲ್ಲಿ ರತ್ನಸಿಂಹಾಸನಾರಾಢರಾಗಿ
ಪೃಥ್ವೀರಾಜ್ಯಂ ಗೈಯುತ್ತಿರಲು

Another inscription (T. Narasipur, 1748) eulogizes the grandeur of the same throne in the same capital (ಶ್ರೀರಂಗಪುರ್ಯಾ):

ಆರುಹ್ಯಾನ್ವಿತಚಿತ್ರರತ್ನಖಚಿತಂ
ಪ್ರೊತುಂಗಸಿಂಹಾಸನಮ್ ।
ಸಾಮ್ರಾಜ್ಯಶ್ರಿಯಮಾಪ ತತ್ರ
ನಿಖಿಲಕ್ಷೋಣಿಶಮದ್ವಾಂಶ್ರಿಕಃ ॥

It was Krishnarāja-Woḍeyar III, who got the throne repaired and refashioned with added decorations in 1812-14. Exquisite work in gold was elaborately done and introduced into the thorne. It

was a delight to look at, and an abiding fascination for the artist.

Likewise, the court-scene, the monarch seated on the bejewelled throne decorated with flowers and finery, surrounded by elegantly dressed attendants, male and female, in a grand and pompously got up pavilion during the days and nights of Dusserah, was another memory that lingered in the minds of the artists and influenced their compositions. It was scripturally ordained that the anointed ruler should sit on the throne during the “nine nights”, and hold durbar. The rulers of Mysore made it a memorable occasion. It was in Śrīrangapaṭṭana, the original capital of the state, that the Navarātri celebrations began to be conducted in the palace. The ruler being seated on the throne on this occasion is prescribed in Kālikā-purāṇa and the ritual is done in accordance with the prescriptions of this purāṇa (‘ಕಾಳಿಕಾ ಪುರಾಣೋಕ್ತ ಪೂಜಾ ಪುರಃಸರವಾಗಿ ಸಿಂಹಾಸನಾರೋಹಣಂ ಮಾಡಿ’)

As the ruler was seated ceremoniously on the throne, the well-dressed female attendants (ಚೇಟಿಕಾ ಸ್ತ್ರೀಯರು) were standing on the sides dutifully carrying the sacred parasol (ಛತ್ರ), two flywhisks (ಚಾಮರ), fan (ಬೀಸಣಿ), bunch of peacock feathers meant to cause delight (sumāna) (ಸುಮಾನಗರಿ), silver spittoon

(ಕಾಳಂಜಿ), ornamental mirror (ಕನ್ನಡಿ), basket of holy pots (ಚಂಬಿನ ಚೀಲ), a snuff-box (ನಶ್ವದ ಡಬ್ಬ), a decorated box containing betel leaves (ವೀಳಯದ ಪೆಟ್ಟಿಗೆ), the materials for a gambling game (ಏಟುಪಾವಡೆ), ornamental sandals (ಹಾವುಗೆ), and scented water sprinkler (ಪನ್ನೀರದಾನಿ). There were several attendants, each with a fixed service (like ಸಂಚಿಯ ಊಳಿಗ, ಚಂಬಿನ ಚೀಲದ ಊಳಿಗ, ಕತ್ತಿಯ ಊಳಿಗ, ಪಡೆಗಡ ಊಳಿಗ, ಕನ್ನಡಿಯ ಊಳಿಗ, ಕುಂಚದ ಊಳಿಗ, ಕೈಯಾಲವಟ್ಟದ ಊಳಿಗ). The decorations for the pavilion (ಹಜಾರ, ಸಜ್ಜೆ) included finely embroidered and woven silk draperies (ಮೇಲುಕಟ್ಟು, ಪ್ರಾವಾರ, ಪಟ್ಟಿ ಪಾವುಡೆ, ತೆರೆ) and hanging bunches of pearls (ಮುತ್ತಿನ ಕುಚ್ಚು).

All these details are introduced somehow into the paintings of the court-artists, irrespective of the subject-matter. Even in the iconic paintings, some of these details are to be found. A word must also be said about the deities selected by the Mysore artists of this period for their paintings. The artists employed by the state administration to work for the palace were asked to prepare paintings of deities for worship in the homes of relatives of the monarch. The monarch himself commissioned such paintings and presented them to his favourites. The usual choice for such paintings were Rājarājeśvarī, Chāmuṇḍeśvarī, Rāma, Kṛishṇa, Śiva and the saints. The presiding deities of

Nañjangūd, Mēlukōṭe, Tirupati and the Chāmuṇḍi-hill in Mysore were frequently painted.

The art-enterprises of the Mysore court-artists were in a curious way inspired by the shrine of Chāmuṇḍeśvarī on the hill in the city of Mysore, ever since Yadu-rāya, the founder of the Wodeyar dynasty, visited the hill-shrine around 1371 A.D. The goddess was Durgā in the form of Mahisha-mardini, the slayer of the demon Mahisha. The very name of the town, Mysore , is due



KRISHNARAJA WODEYAR III ON HORSE BACK

The Mahārājā, dressed in his usual finery and elegance, is riding a splendid and spirited charger, shown in its gallop. The painting, with white dominating, portrays the dignity and sportsmanship of the great ruler.

to this detail. She was also Vindhyavāsini. She became the tutelary deity of the rulers of Mysore, and the Navarātri celebrations in the palace centered round this goddess. It is an ancient shrine, which was repaired, expanded and made prosperous by the services of Krishṇa-rāja-Woḍeyar III in 1742-43. Another tutelary deity of the early Woḍeyar rulers was Jvalāmālīni of Uttanahaḷḷi. During the days of Rāja-Woḍeyar (1578-1617), Śrīrangapaṭṭana, Melūkoṭe, Tirupati and Śrīrangam were frequently visited by the royal family. The deities in these places attracted them, and artists were asked to do paintings of these deities. Krishṇa-rāja-Woḍeyar III himself was greatly attached to the deity at Naṅjangūḍ (Śrīkaṇṭheśvara). He was also proficient in Śaiva-āgama and in the worship of Śrī-chakra. He commissioned numerous paintings of Rājarājeśvarī, who is the principal deity of the cosmogram known as Śrī-chakra.

Krishṇa-rāja-Woḍeyar III was a very religious person. He spent his time visiting sacred places, and spent his money in getting the deities of those places painted by the court artists, who always travelled with him. He was also an aesthete who delighted in painting and music. There were several enclosures and pavilions (called totti)

in his palace, which were all decorated by paintings in the traditional style. Some of these enclosures were rich in paintings. The names of the enclosures themselves were significant: Samukhada-totṭi, Śringārada-totṭi, Chāndra-vilāsa-totṭi, Ambā-vilāsa-totṭi, Ramā-vilāsa-totṭi and Ātma-vilāsa-totṭi. The paintings in these enclosures were not only 'traditional'; they incorporated subjects and techniques made popular by the company artists (of the East India Company, around 1782) and the French artists who resided in Pondicherry.



KRISHṆA WITH CONSORTS

Krishṇa surrounded, and almost submerged, by his eight consorts (ashta-mahishī), each of whom is splendidly decorated with white pearls; and donning beautiful sarees with unique colours and designs. The soft green of the background lends charm to the painting, which assumes an almost circular shape.

THE UNIQUENESS OF MYSORE PAINTINGS



There is often a difficulty experienced by students of art in identifying the paintings of the Mysore school. This difficulty is natural because the paintings done in Mysore, especially during the reign of Krishṇarāja-wodeyar III (1794-1868), inherited the Vijayanagar idiom, and incorporated the styles of Rajasthani and Mughal miniatures and also of the Deccani School. It also had an impact of the company Art. It was open to the trend of Tanjore and Pudukkottai schools. People find it difficult to distinguish between Mysore and Tanjore styles, for there are more similarities than differences between the painting techniques and themes in these two styles. It is necessary therefore to dwell

briefly on what constitutes the uniqueness of the Mysore school of paintings.

The Mysore style has its roots, as mentioned earlier, in the Ajaṇṭā murals, dating back to the second century B.C. to about sixth century A.D. and in the Badāmi cave paintings (especially cave III) of the sixth century. Among the early influences that moulded this style were the paintings in the Dhavala palm-leaf manuscripts (now in Mūḍabidri) of the early twelfth century. These paintings (in Dhavala, Mahādhavala and Jayadhavala), which are Jaina in theme, are characteristically different from those in the *Kalpasūtra* manuscripts of Western India, although they share the

Jaina ideology and orientation. The Dhavala paintings were indigenous to Karnataka, with an emphasis on miniature delineation. The impact of this style survived the subsequent influences.

The more immediate background to the Mysore paintings was the Vijayanagar style, which prevailed in the centuries fourteen to sixteen. The murals in Ānegondi and Hampi (in Karnataka), Tāḍapatri, Lepākshi, Kāḷahasti and Tirupati (in Andhra Pradesh), Śrirangam and Kumbhakonam (in Tamil Nadu) typify this style. The Mysore style inherited details like the absence of naturalism, two-dimensional texture of the painted surface despite the flow of lines and dignity of contours, colour and drapery-dispositions only for formal and ornamental purposes. But it retained the Dhavala details like the sculpture-models for drawing figures, the linear draughtsmanship, heavy and angular features, postural expressions and the emphasis on contour lines.

There were also influences from the Bāgewāḍi school (Bijapur district), which flourished in the sixteenth century, and which delineated scenes from *Śivapurāṇa* on wooden planks. This school,

also indigenous to Karnataka, emphasized linear representation, anatomical accuracy and the aesthetic appeal of colours, designs and lines. It achieved great effect with limited colours. The remnants of the Vijayanagar style found in the murals of Nippāṇi (Belgaum district), Naragunda (Dhārawāḍa) and Kammatagi (Bijapur district) also provide clues to the early formation of what constituted the Mysore Style. Not to be forgotten in the context is the northern Deccani school of the Adil Shahi period, which was contemporaneous with the mature Mysore school. It revived the Mughal elements to some extent.

After the fall of the Vijayanagar empire in 1565 the two schools that rose to prominence in the field of art were Tanjore and Mysore. The social religious, economic and political conditions in the two areas facilitating the emergence of art-styles were almost alike. It is here that the personality of Krishṇarāja-woḍeyar III, who ruled over Mysore, that makes the marked distinction. He was personally and deeply, almost passionately, involved in the creation of new trends in art. The Mysore style of painting arose as a magnificent edifice, owing to his enlightened patronage. A passing review of the artists of his court



ROYAL MESSENGER

This painting which is both simple and elegant, represents the visit of a messenger (probably from Mahārāshṭra) to the Mysore Court. The scene is typical of the Mysore palace, while the dress and head-gear of the visiting messenger suggests the Mahrāṭṭāh idiom.

brings out the unique character of the Mysore school of painting which took shape during that period.

The Maharajah of Mysore was himself an accomplished scholar and poet; he was well-versed in Sanskrit and several Indian dialects. He was familiar with Persian, and was acquainted with the best of Mughal art and literature. He was a traditionalist, uncompromising in his religious beliefs and behaviour, but open-hearted and tolerant. He encouraged his court-artists to experiment with techniques and colours, while focussing their attention on traditional themes. He directed the paṇḍits of his court to instruct and assist the artists in the selection of themes. Many of the artists were themselves proficient in purāṇas and the epics in Sanskrit and in Kannaḍa.

For instance, Durgada Kṛṣṇappa was well-versed in *Bhāgavata* and *Vishṇu-purāṇa*. He delighted in painting episodes from these books. Jāvagal Narasimhayya was a keen student of *Śiva-purāṇa* and *Devī-Māhātmya*; he was also a devotee of Śrīvidyā. His painting of Kāma-Kāmeśvarī is an exposition of the Śiva-Śakti ideology. Sundarayya, the descendent of the celebrated Yallayya and Veeraṇṇa of the Śrī-tattva-nidhi fame, was a master of

mythological lore. His highly imaginative compositions of Girijā-kalyāṇa and Sandhyā-tāṇḍava of Śiva, and his depiction of Chāmuṇḍeśvarī show how brilliant he was as a storyteller. The delicate lines, the subtle shades of colour, and attention to minute details are evident in all his works. Madhugiri Lingappa, whose ancestors were patronized by the Nāyaks of Chitradurga, was a fervent devotee of Rāma. His paintings of Rāma paṭṭābhisheka adorned many a bhajana-mandira in and around Mysore. So was Ananta-mūrti of Cubbonpet (in Bangalore), who was a great student of Rāmāyaṇa. His paintings on the theme of Rāma's coronation, and on the theme of Rāma in the forest are outpourings of a devout heart. His delineation of Vaikuṇṭha-nārāyaṇa reveals his knowledge of *Bhāgavata* and the purāṇas.

It is to be noted that the Mahārājah of Mysore was not only a patron for these artists; he was also their mentor, teacher, guide and friend. Many of them were patronized by the people as well. A large number of bhajana-mandiras in the state ruled by this Mahārāja pressed on these artists to prepare paintings for their halls. Among such artists who were popular with the bhajana-mandiras were Lingappa of Madhugiri, Pātāla

Nanjuṇḍappa, Durgada Kṛishṇappa, Nāranappa of Naguvanahaḷḷi, Venkaṭasubbu, Koṇḍayya and Ananta-mūrti.

Each of these artists was innovative and imaginative; he could produce variations in composition. And the artists being themselves learned, and guided as they were by the luminaries of the royal court, the themes for painting selected by them are indeed various and significant. This is one of the outstanding features of Mysore paintings; variety and width of thematic representations, all from myths and legends.

To get an idea of this unique feature of Mysore paintings one must look at *Viśvarūpa-darśana*, a remarkable painting done by Tippāji of Shivamogga (who lived around 1780-1856). This is a comprehensive mythological depiction of God, each part thereof being so exquisitely executed that it is a complete picture by itself, a veritable masterpiece. The technique is in keeping with the theme. The artist has used a single-hair brush as well as the pointed blades of grass.

Another of the unique characteristics of the Mysore style is the fidelity with which the artists of the

royal court here assimilated the textual prescriptions. Their ability to create illusions of elevation (unnata), depth (nimna), delicacy (komala), sublimity (ghana), and loftiness (uttunga) on a mere flat surface, is a textual detail, praised by the great poet Pampa (*Vikramārjuna-vijaya*) as an ability indigenous to the Kannada country. Closely related to this is the inclination to bring out a total aesthetic effect (samudāya-śobhā), which is also a canonical expectation. All the artists of the Mysore court appear to have been impelled by this art-appeal.

They also seem to have studied the texts dealing with different methods of application (lepana), drawing and sketching (rekḥā-pāta), and various brush-strokes (like analika, patraka, binduka, udvartaka, dhūmra-vartaka and chitra-pravartana). Evidence of this textual acquaintance can be had in the paintings that are extant. The artists also made use of a judicious combination of figure-drawing (viddha) with free-flowing lines (aviddha), to enhance the aesthetic effect (rasabhāva).

Even in the matter of technical details, we find that the Mysore paintings have been made on wood, cloth and paper, using the methods which are partly textual and partly

belonging to oral tradition. For instance, the paper paintings are done using a board made of paper pulp, thin and light wooden plank on which sheets of paper are fixed with a rich paste to provide thickness; by drying the prepared board in Sun, and the surface made smooth and even by rubbing it slowly but firmly with a polished quartz stone. If cloth is chosen for painting, it is pasted on a wooden board with white lead (sapheda) mixed with gum and gruel (gañji), and then the board is dried and burnished. When the painting is done on a wooden board, the surface is prepared by applying dry white lead, mixed with yellow ochre (gopi) and glue. For sketching, tamarind twigs are used as charcoal sticks.

In the matter of colour also, they were prepared in the usual traditional manner using minerals, leaves and flowers. And the colours frequently used in Mysore paintings were vermillion (chandra), chrome yellow (nāṭu-haḷadi) and Indian red (urumañji), all three being mineral colours, and green (pachche), white (sapheda), crimson (kirmi), amber (chamala), black (kappu), red (kāvi), gamboze (makki) and indigo (nīli), all from vegetable source. In the preparation of the colours, textual prescriptions and folk tradition were combined.

The Mysore paintings are not distinguishable from the Tanjore paintings for the inexpert, because the themes are largely the same, all taken from Indian mythological lore; and especially the iconographical representation of familiar gods and goddesses, following the sculptural depictions and dhyāna-ślokas. Most of such representations are familiar and popular in Karnataka as well as Tamil Nadu. Treatment of the subject-matter is also often similar. The background, drapery, pavilion and setting are conventional in both styles. And both styles have branched off from the same parental Vijayanagar style, and therefore they are bound to display characteristics that are common.

However, the artists in Mysore were mostly favoured by the Mahārāja, his relatives, wealthy courtiers and officials of the palace. Hence they frequently visited the palace in Mysore and the luxurious residences of those associated with royalty. They were familiar with the architectural details (like artistic pavilions, fluted columns, carved pillars, and cusped arches) of the old (and no longer extant) wooden palace in Mysore, and residences of the elite in the city. The Mysore paintings incorporate these artistic and architectural nuances, prevalent in the 17th and 18th centuries

among aristocracy, especially the ornate throne of the Mahārāja, the expensive carpets, the elegant hangings, fine chandeliers, artistic drapery, the embellishments of the rooms and the enclosures. They also document the ornaments and dresses of influential men and women of those days. Whatever the principal subject-matter, the

inclusion of these details of intensely human and historical interest, makes the Mysore paintings unique. The portraits are no doubt stylized, but they are full of life. They capture the spirit of the times that has long since disappeared. The Mysore paintings provide an eloquent testimony to the royal and opulent city that Mysore was.



SARASVATĪ

The goddess of learning, Sarasvatī, is a popular subject-matter in the Mysore style. She is shown as an independent divinity, playing on Veenā, with her two main hands (nijahasta) and holding in her extra-hands (parahasta) a manuscript (śāstra) and a quill (lēkhani). She is seated in sukhāsana.

The differences in the technique of painting adopted in Mysore and Tanjore are also there. For instance, the Mysore artists preferred paper on wood or cloth for painting, while the Tanjore artists preferred only cloth on wood. They used different materials for the ground and binding medium. In Mysore, white lead (sapheda, a term used extensively in Mysore, probably borrowed from Persian) and gamboze (makki, for yellow) derived from the exudation of a particular tree (Revaṇa-chinni-hālu) were used for getting a golden hue without using gold. In Tanjore, raw lime in the paste of tamarind seeds, powdered, was employed in Gesso work.

The differences are more pronounced in the matter of the employment of gold principally in jewellery and ornamentation, and in borders and designs and in Gesso-work. In the Mysore paintings, we find pure gold leaf being employed, not only for enhancing the lustre but to render the Gesso work durable. But in Tanjore, the painters used gold-coated silver leaves. That is why the Gesso work in the Tanjore paintings is in high relief, whereas it is low in relief in the Mysore paintings. Also of interest is the use of glass pieces of varied colours in the Tanjore paintings for the sake of embellishment of dress and decoration,

jewellery and ornaments. Sometimes, precious stones and pearls themselves are set in the paintings to add effect and value. This is altogether absent from the Mysore paintings. Pigments in different densities and dilutions are here employed for the purpose.

Gesso work (covering some details like jewellery or portions thereof with gold) is important in Mysore paintings as well as in Tanjore paintings. But the way it is done in Mysore is significant. Usually this work was begun when the picture including the base of gold work was still moist, so that gold foil would firmly be fixed. If the gold applied overflowed, the unwanted gold area is covered by pigments while the finishing touches are given to the picture. The outlines of the details covered with gold are shown off in darker shades (called in Kannada 'gaṭṭi-baṇṇa') or in black. When the picture is finished, it is allowed to dry. It is then glazed by covering the entire picture by a thin paper, and rubbing it with soft glazing stone (called in Kannada, 'Kulupada-kallu') or with the seed of a prickly climbing shrub, (Gullandina bonducella) known in Kannada as 'gajjuga'. When the covering paper is removed, the painting and especially the gesso-work, shines resplendently.

SANTĀNĀMBUJA

The Lotus of Royal Descent

‘ಮಹೀಶೂರು ಮಹಾಸಂಸ್ಥಾನದ ಈ ಸಂತಾನವೃಕ್ಷವು
ಗದ್ಯಸಹ ಶಾಲೀವಾಹನಶಕ ೧೭೭೯ಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂದ ಪೈಂಗಳ
ಸಂವತ್ಸರದ ಆಷಾಢ ಬ೨ ಗುರುವಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಸರಿಗೆ ಚಿನ್ನಯ್ಯನ
ಮೊಮ್ಮಗನಾದ ಚಿತ್ರಗಾರ ರಾಮಪ್ಪನ ಮಗನಾದ ಚಿತ್ರಗಾರರಿಗೆ
ಗೊತ್ತುಗಾರ ಮಹಾಸನ್ನಿಧಾನದ ಚಾಕರನಾದ ತಿಪ್ಪಣ್ಣ ಬರೆದು
ಒಪ್ಪಿಸಿದ್ದು’



This family tree of the royal
dynasty of the state of
Mysore has been painted
along with the prose narrative
accompanying it by Tippiṇṇa, the servant
of the royal Court, who is the
superintendent of the artists (in the
palace) and who is the son the artist
Rāmappa, who (in turn) was the
grandson of Sarige Channayya. This is
being submitted on Thursday the second
of the dark fortnight of the month of

Āshāḍha in the Paingalā year
corresponding to Śālīvāhana era 1779"

This is the writing that goes along
with the painting done around 1856
A.D., and reproduced here. The painting
is named 'Santānāmbuja' (the lotus of
the geneology) of the then ruler
Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar III, who is seated
on the throne in the centre of the
painting. The artist mentions that he is
represented along with the kings that
preceded him right from Yadu-rāja.

सन्तानाम्बुजमध्यस्थं सिंहसनपदाश्रितः।

यदुरायादि संयुक्तो राजते कृष्णभूमणिः॥

He is also described in words: His
forehead is adorned by the sacred
ash; he wears a necklace of splendid
rudrāksha beads. He is covered by

golden garments. His bearing is fascinating. He is the son of (Khāsā-) Chāmarājendra-woḍeyar:

भसितलसितफालं रम्यरुद्राक्षमालम्
कनकमयसुचेलं कामनीयस्वलीलम् ।
सदवनवरशीलं चारु चामेन्द्र बालम्
हृदयकमलमध्ये सन्ततं भावयामि ॥

The geneological tree begins with Yadu-rāya (1399-1423) and ends with Krishṇarāja-Woḍeyar III (1799-1868), who was the twenty-second ruler in the line. After him there were only three rulers: Chāmarāja-woḍeyar (1868-1901), Kṛishṇarājā-woḍeyar IV (1901-1941) and Jaya-chāmarāja-woḍeyar (1941-1947). The kings represented in the 'Santānāmbuja' painting include:

1. Yadu-rāya (Vijaya) (1399-1423)
2. Hiriya-bettada-chāmarāja-woḍeyar I (1423-1459)
3. Timmarāja-woḍeyar (Appaṇṇa-Timmarāja) (1459-1478)
4. Bettada-chāmarāja-woḍeyar II (1478-1513) (He had six fingers, hence called 'Āru-beraḷa')
5. Bettada-chāmarāja-woḍeyar III (Vijaya-chāmarāja) (1513-1553) (first ruler of Mysore to appear in inscriptions)

6. Timmarāja-woḍeyar II (1553-1572)
7. Boḷa-Chāmarāja-woḍeyar IV (brother of 6) (1572-1576)
8. Bettada-woḍeyar (son of 6) (1576-1578)
9. Rāja-woḍeyar (son of 7) (1578-1617)
10. Chāmarāja-woḍeyar (son of 6) (1617-1637)
11. (Immaḍi) Rāja-woḍeyar II (1637-1638)
12. Kaṇṭhīrava-Narasa-rāja-woḍeyar (1638-1659) (son of Bettada-chāmarāja-woḍeyar who was the younger brother of Rāja-woḍeyar)
13. Doḍḍa Devarāja-woḍeyar (1659-1673) (son of Muppina-Devarāja-woḍeyar, another younger brother of Rāja-woḍeyar)
14. Chikka-Devarāja-woḍeyar (1673-1704)
15. Kaṇṭhīrava-Narasa-rāja-woḍeyar II (son of 14) (1704-1714) (born deaf and dumb)
16. Doḍḍa-Kṛishṇarāja-woḍeyar I (1714-1732)
17. Chāmarāja-woḍeyar (adopted son of 16) (1732-1734) (deposed by Naṇjarājayya the Daḷavāi)
18. Kṛishṇarāja-woḍeyar II (adopted son of 17) (1734-1766)
19. Naṇjarāja-woḍeyar (son of 18) (1766-1772)

20. Chāmarāja-woḍeyar VII (son of 18) (1772-1776)
21. Khāsā-Chāmarāja-woḍeyar VIII (adoted son of 20) (1776-1796)
22. Krishnarāja-woḍeyar III (son of 21) (1799-1868) (His adopted son was Chāmārāja-woḍeyar IX, who ruled from 1868 to 1901)

The painting, however, has more personages, as the brothers of the rulers (Yuvarājas) are also represented. Among these kings, the 9th (Rāja-woḍeyar) the 12th (Kaṇṭhīrava-Narasarāja-woḍeyar), the 14th (Chikkadeva-rāja-woḍeyar) and the 22nd (Krishnarāja-woḍeyar III), rulers in the line were outstanding in their accomplishments, as also the queen-regent Lakshammaṇṇi (died 1810, at the age of 68), wife of the 18th ruler.

Although it is uncertain where Yadu-rāya (or Vijaya) hailed from, the account appearing in Govinda-vaidyā's work (contemporaneous with the Mysore ruler Kaṇṭhīrava-Narasa-rāja-woḍeyar 1638-1639) is that the two brothers Yadu-rāya and Kṛishṇa-rāya were from Dvārakā, belonging to the lunar race of the Yādavas. They arrived here to worship at the shrine of Nārāyaṇa in Yadu-giri (the present Mēlukōṭe) and eventually became rulers of Mysore. Another account relates that they came to Śrīrangapaṭṭaṇa and settled down at Haḍadaṇa near Mysore. The ruler of

the area, Śānta-nāyaka had disappeared in a fit of renunciation, and his commander Māra-nāyaka of Kārugaḷḷi had usurped the throne. He wanted to marry the princess, the daughter of Śānta-nāyaka. Śānta-nāyaka's wife sought the help of Yadu-rāya, and the brothers fought against Māra-nāyaka and drove him out. The grateful queen offered her daughter to Yadu-rāya (Vijaya) and asked him to be the ruler of the land. There was a loyal jaṅgama priest (oḍeru) who helped Yadu-rāya in this enterprise; and Yadu-rāya assumed the title 'oḍayaru' ('the lord'), which got stuck to the names of the Mysore rulers (Woḍeyar). Yet another account, an old document unearthed by Muddarāj Urs (Bhakshi of Khās-sammukha in the Department of Palace, Mysore) relates that the brothers visited Śrīrangapaṭṭaṇa and then came to the Chāmuṇḍi-hills, and settled down in Haḍadaṇa, which was a fort on the southern hill-slope, to worship Chāmuṇḍeśvari, the goddess they chose as their tutelary deity.

“ಶ್ರೀರಂಗಪಟ್ಟಣಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದು ಅಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಡಿಕೊಂಡು ಕಾವೇರಿಗೆ ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ದಿಕ್ಕಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಚಾಮುಂಡೇಶ್ವರಿ ಅಮೃತವರ ಬೆಟ್ಟದ ಪತ್ತಿನಲ್ಲಿ ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಪಾರ್ಶ್ವದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಡದಣ ಎಂಬ ಕೋಟೆಗೆ ಬಂದು ಚಾಮುಂಡೇಶ್ವರಿ ಅಮೃತವರ ಸೇವೆಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು ಈ ಪ್ರಕಾರಕ್ಕೆ ಇರುತ್ತಾ ಇದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ....”

Yadu-rāya (born in 1371) is said to have ruled over the area covered by the

present day Mysore, Śrīrangapaṭṭaṇa and Haḍadaṇa, for about twenty-five years (1399-1423). He was a contemporary of Harihara II (1377-1404) and Devarāya (1406-1422) of Vijayanagar. We are on firmer ground only after the reign of Beṭṭada-chāmarāja-woḍeyar III (1513-1553). We have epigraphs and historical narratives. Although the Woḍeyar dynasty is reputed to have been founded in 1399, it would appear that the Yādavas were feudal vassals of the kings of Vijayanagar.

It was Rāja-woḍeyar (1578-1617) who was appointed as the viceroy of Śrīrangapaṭṭaṇa in 1610 by a royal order (rāja-nirūpa) of Venkaṭapati-rāya of Vijayanagar (1586-1614). He became soon an independent ruler of the place, and began building an empire.

He encouraged art and learning. In his court was the well-known poets Tirumalārya and Aḷani-singaraingār. He was a devotee of Viṣṇu, and made generous grants to several temples including those of Mēlu-koṭe, Śrīrangam and Kāñchīpuram. The deities of these shrines were also got painted by court-artists.

The next woḍeyar to attract our attention ws Chikka-devarāja-woḍeyar (1673-1704), in whose court were

numerous eminent poets and scholars (Chikkupādhyāya, Tirumalārya, Singarārya, Timmakavi) including a poetess of merit, Sañchi-Honnamma. They wrote works on Viṣṇu shrines and Vaiṣṇava ideology. The next ruler who has claim on our attention is Krishna-rāja-woḍeyar II (1734-1766), whose court-poets (like Karāchūri-Naṇja-rājayya) made Śiva-worship a matter of popular appeal (with works like *Sangīta-gangādhara* and *Śiva-pāda-reṇukā-sahasra*). The worship of Gaṇapati became extensive during this period all over the state.

Krishṇa-rāja-woḍeyar III (1799-1868) was, of course, the greatest of the Mysore rulers in the field of culture. He consolidated the art trends and religious leanings of the earlier rulers, and continued the encouragement to art and letters that the Vijayanagar monarchs were famous for.

In the field of painting, mention must be made of the picture-gallery (Chitra-śāle) in the palace of Kaṇṭhīrava-narasa-rāja-woḍeyar (1638-1659) that has been eulogized by his court-poet Govinda-vaidyā. The murals were from *Bhārata*, *Bhāgavata* and *Purāṇas*. Temples built by royal patronage during this period must also have been adorned by mural paintings

depicting popular scenes from the epics and mythology. This is suggested by a fifteenth-sixteenth century temple still extant in Haradanahalli in Chāmarājanagar Tāluk. The temple dedicated to the deity Anileśvara (Divyalingeśvara) has an apartment at the back, with a row of cells and a long corridor in front of them. On the ceiling and beams of this corridor are to be found murals, now extensively damaged. From the fragments that survive we can discern themes like Pañcha-mukha-śiva (five-faced), Umā-maheśvara, Gaja-lakshmī, Kirātārjunīya, Rāja-rājeśvarī, Vṛshārūḍha (Śiva on the Bull), Gaṇeśa and Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa. The style of depiction and decoration, which may be gleaned from these fragments, reminds one of the murals of the Vijayanagar period, in Lepākshi and Hampi.

Krishṇa-rāja-woḍeyar III must have been conversant with the paintings (both murals and miniatures), done by the court artists of the earlier reigns in Mysore, and he seems to have sought to continue this endeavour. The artists of his own court were probably asked to reproduce the temple-murals that survived in his days. We find in the paintings commissioned by him themes from *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bhārata*, *Bhāgavata* and *Purāṇas*. Some of the paintings of his

period like Girijā-kalyāṇa, Rājarājeśvarī, Vṛshabhārūḍha, Kirātārjuna, Umā-maheśvara and Pañchamukha-śiva would be reproductions of the murals in temples like those of Haradanahalli mentioned above. The paintings of the period of Krishṇarāja-woḍeyar III are no doubt largely inspired and influenced by the Vijayanagar idiom, but they bear a distinct stamp of the woḍeyar patronage. They answer neatly to the description suggested by the nomenclature "the Mysore style of painting".

What follows is the prose piece (gadya) in praise of Krishṇarāja-woḍeyar III, composed by his attendant Tippaṇṇa, who was also the artist of 'Santānāmbuja'. It is clear that he looked upon his monarch as a veritable divinity, worthy of adoration.

The throne on which the Mahārājā is shown as seated in some of the paintings is an excellent piece of craftsmanship. The original structure was of fig wood, overlaid with ivory. It is said to have been a presentation in 1699 to Chikka-Devarāja-woḍeyar (1673-1704) by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, whose friend he was. There is another account that the founders of the Vijayanagar empire, Harihara and Bukka, discovered this throne buried

near Penukṇḍa; the Vijayanagar rulers used it until it came into the hands of Rāja-woḍeyar (1578-1617), who sat on it when he acquired Śrīrangapaṭṭana in 1610 A.D. And the throne discovered burried in Penukonṇḍa is said to have been the one on which the Pāṇḍava monarch sat in Hastināpura. Whatever the antiquity, it is certain that it was used by Chikka-Devarāja Woḍeyar.

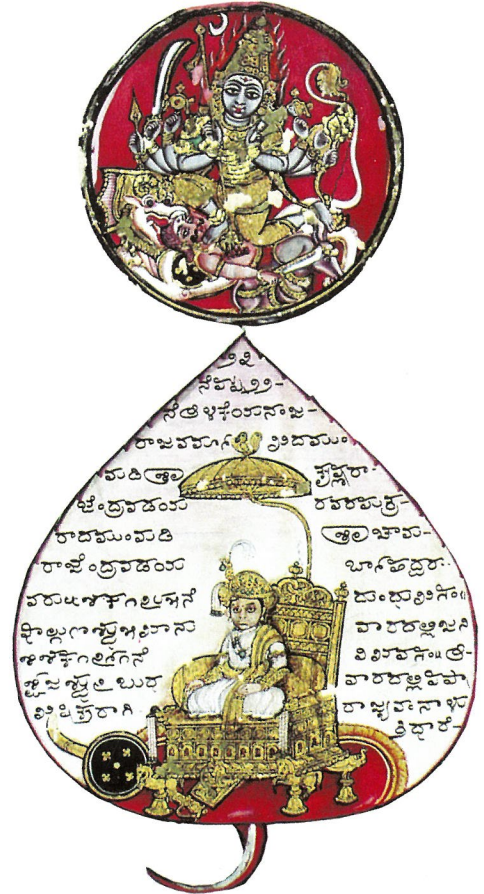
An inscription of 1678 in Kannada found in Śrīrangapaṭṭana tāluk says:

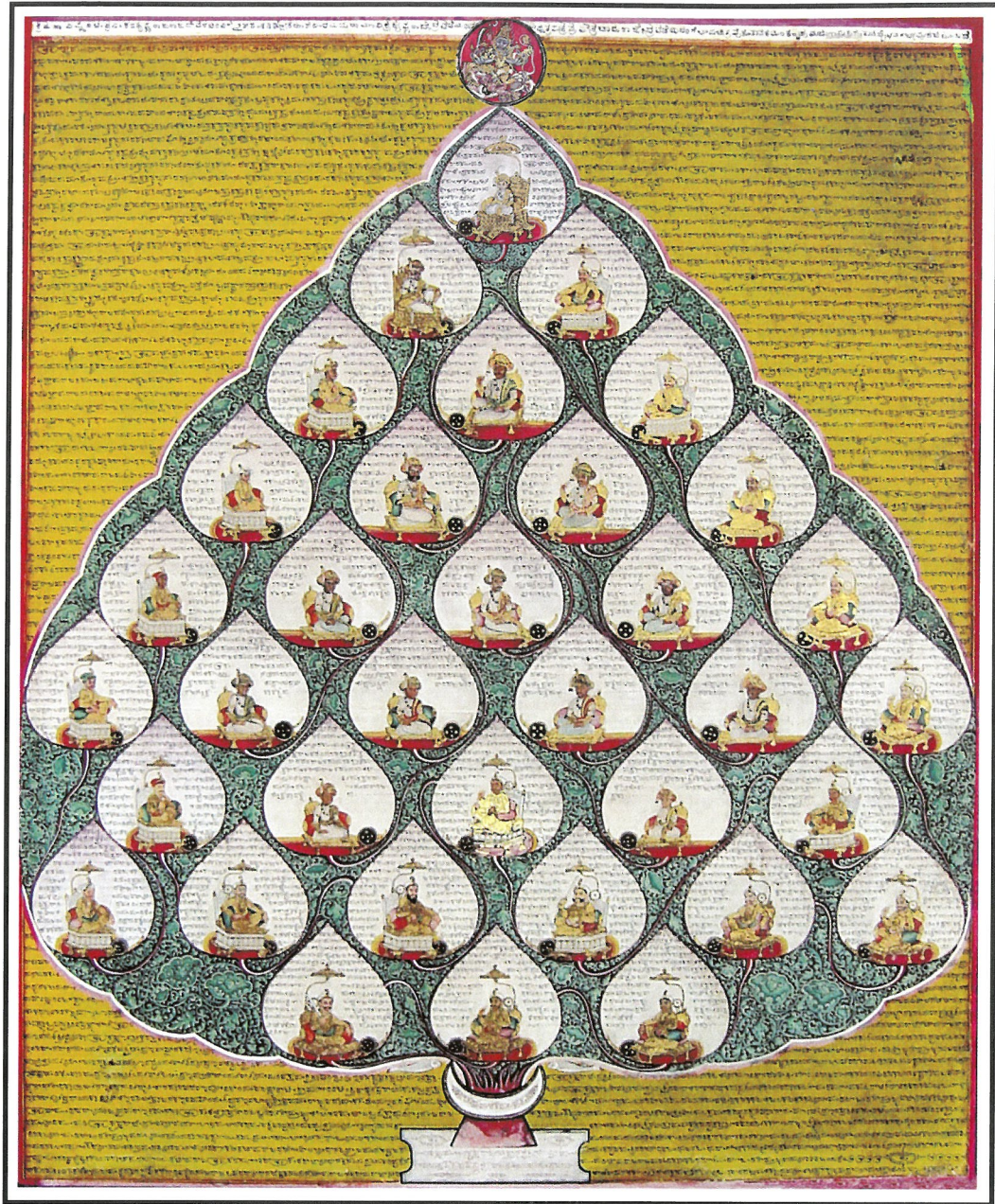
“ಶುಭಮಸ್ತು ಸ್ವಸ್ತಿಶ್ರೀ ವಿಜಯಾಭ್ಯುದಯ
ಶಾಲಿವಾಹನಶಕ ವರ್ಷ ೧೬೦೦ ಸಂದ ವರ್ತಮಾನವಾದ
ಕಾಲಯುಕ್ತಿ ಸಂವತ್ಸರದ ಆಷಾಢ ಶುದ್ಧ ೧೧ರಲ್ಲ
ಬಿರುದಂತೆಂಬರ ಗಂಡ ತ್ರೈಲೋಕೈಕವೀರ ಶ್ರೀಮನ್ಮಹಾ
ರಾಜಾಧಿರಾಜ ಪರಮೇಶ್ವರ ಪ್ರೌಢಪ್ರತಾಪಾಪ್ರತಿಮವೀರ
ನರಪತಿ ಶ್ರೀ ಚಿಕದೇವ ಮಹಾರಾಜ ಒಡೆಯರೈಯ್ಯನವರು
ಶ್ರೀರಂಗಪಟ್ಟಣದಲ್ಲಿ ರತ್ನಸಿಂಹಾಸನಾರೂಢರಾಗಿ
ಪೃಥ್ವೀರಾಜ್ಯಂ ಗೈಯುತ್ತಿರಲು.....”

It is a strong twist of fortune that when Tippu-Sultān was killed in the battle at Śrīrangapaṭṭana in 1799, the throne was found in the lumber-room of the Mohammedan palace; and it was taken out by the British officers and used for the coronation of the young prince, Kṛishṇa-rāja-woḍeyar III, in Mysore in 1799.

The throne that one sees now has lost its original character. The ivory which covered the figwood structure

was overlaid with gold and silver plating, with elaborate carvings of theological themes and figures. The lion-motif has been prominently employed in keeping with the significance of the expression `simhāsana' for throne. The swan-motif (hamsa) is also used. The throne was bejewelled and artistically re-fashioned. The throne was gold-plated in 1812-14, and further improved by an order of Kṛishṇrāja-woḍeyar III. It was a characteristic symbol of the royal dynasty in Mysore.





GENEOLOGY OF MYSORE ROYAL FAMILY

This unusual, interesting and highly artistic representation of the royal dynasty of Wodeyars in Mysore, called 'Santānāmbuja', was done by Tippaṇṇa who describes himself as the personal attendant (ಚಾಕರ) and superintendent of the court-artists (ಚಿತ್ರಗಾರರಿಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತುಗಾರ) during the reign of Kṛṣṇarāja-wodeyar III (1794-1868). The painting along with an ornate eulogy in customary literary style in Kannada (ಗದ್ಯಪದ್ಯ) was submitted to the Maharāja in 1856 A.D.

ಶ್ರೀರಸ್ತು

ಶ್ರೀ ಕೃಷ್ಣರಾಜ ಮಹಾರಾಜ ಕಂಠೀರವರ ವಂಶಾವತರಣ ವೈಭವ ಗದ್ಯ

ಸ್ವಸ್ತಿಶ್ರೀಮಚ್ಚಂದ್ರ ವಂಶಮುಕ್ತಾಫಲಾಯಮಾನ ಯದುಸಂತತಿ ಸಮುದ್ರವದಾದಿಯದುಮಹಾರಾಜ ಕುಲಲಲಾಮಭೂತ ಬೃಹರೈಟ್ಟ ಚಾಮರಾಜತನೂಜ ತಿಮ್ಮರಾಜಾತ್ಮಜ ಮಹಾಚಾಮರಾಜತನೂಭವ ಬೆಟ್ಟ ಚಾಮರಾಜನಂದನ ತಿಮ್ಮರಾಜಾಜ್ಞಾಪರಿಪಾಲಕ ಚಾಮರಾಜ ಪ್ರಿಯತನಯ ಬೆಟ್ಟಚಾಮರಾಜ ಕರುಣಾಕಟಾಕ್ಷ ಸಮಾಸಾದಿತ ಮಹಾರಾಜ್ಯಾಧಿಪತ್ಯ ಧೌರೇಯ ರಾಜಾಧಿರಾಜ ಕರ್ಣಾಟಕ ಜನಪದ ರಾಜ್ಯಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀತಾಟಂಕಾಯಮಾನ ಮಹೀಶೂರನಗರ ಶ್ರೀರಂಗಪಟ್ಟಣಾಭಿಧ ಮಹಾಸಂಸ್ಥಾನ ವಿದ್ಯೋತಮಾನ ದಿವ್ಯರತ್ನ ಸಿಂಹಾಸನಾರೂಢ ರಾಜಕ್ಷಿತಿಪಾಲ ಕುಲಾನಂದನ ಚಾಮರಾಜಮಹೀಪಾಲ ಪರಿಪಾಲಿತ ಮಹಾರಾಜ್ಯಧುರಂಧ ರೇಮಡಿ ರಾಜಸುತ ಸಂಪತ್ತಲಾಯಿತ ಪಂಚರತ್ನನಿರ್ಮಾಣ ಧುರೀಣಾ ಪ್ರತಿಮ ಭುಜಬಲ ಪರಾಕ್ರಮ ಸಮುತ್ಸಾರಿತ ವೈರವರ್ಗ ರಣಧೀರಕಂಠೀರವ ನರಸಿಂಹರಾಜ ಮಹಾರಾಜ ಹೃದಯಾನಂದಕರ ಧರ್ಮೈಕನಿರತ ಮಾನಸ ದೊಡ್ಡದೇವರಾಜ ವರತನಯ ನವಕೋಟಿನಾರಾಯಣ ಪದಾಲಂಕೃತಸಮಸ್ತ ಮರ್ಯಾದಾದಿ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ಚಿಕ್ಕದೇವರಾಜಮಹಾ ರಾಜಾತ್ಮಜ ಕಂಠೀರವ ಮಹಾರಾಜತನಯ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಕೃಷ್ಣರಾಜಕುಲೋದ್ಭವ ಚಾಮರಾಜಸಮಾಸಕ್ತರಾಜ್ಯ ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀಹೃದಯಾನಂದ ಕರೇಮಡಿ ಕೃಷ್ಣ ರಾಜತನೂಜ ನಂಜರಾಜ ಮಹಾಸಾಮ್ರಾಜ್ಯಧುರಂಧರ ಬೆಟ್ಟ ಚಾಮರಾಜ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀಸ್ವಯಂವರ ವರಾಯಮಾಣ ಸರ್ವಜನ ಸುಕೃತಾನಂದರಾಶಿ ವಾರಾಶಿ ಕೌಸ್ತುಭಾಯಮಾನ ದೇವ ಬ್ರಾಹ್ಮಣ ಮನೋರಥಪರಿಪೂರಣ ಕಲ್ಪಶಾಖಿ ಶಾಖಾಯಿತಭುಜಲತಾಲಂಕೃತ ಶ್ರೀಮಚ್ಚಾಮುಂಡಿಕಾಂಬಾ ಚರಣಾರವಿಂದಮಿಳಿಂದಾಯಮಾನಮಾನ ಸತಾಸ ಮಾಸಾದಿತಸಮಸ್ತಪುರುಷಾರ್ಥ ಪರಿಶೋಭಿತ ಸತ್ಯಸಂಧ ಕೋಟಿ ಪಂಚಾಕ್ಷರೀಪುರಶ್ಚರ್ಯಾ ಪರಿತೋಷಿತ ಶ್ರೀಕಂಠೇಶ್ವರಕರುಣಾಕಟಾಕ್ಷಪೂರ್ಣಪಾತ್ರ ಶ್ರೀಮನ್ಮುಮ್ಮಡಿ ಚಾಮರಾಜೇಂದ್ರ ಸಾರ್ವಭೌಮ ಧರ್ಮಪತ್ನೀ ಕೆಂಪನಂಜಮಾಂಬಾ ಗರ್ಭಸುಧಾಂಬುಧ ರಾಕಾ ಸುಧಾಕರಾಯಮಾಣಃ ಸಪ್ತಮ ವೈವಸ್ವತ ಮನ್ವಂತರಾಷ್ಟ್ರವಿಂಶ ಮಹಾಯುಗಾಂತರ್ವರ್ತಿ ಕಲಿಯುಗ ಜೀವರತ್ನ ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀವ್ಯೂಹ ಸಖ್ಯೋಚಿತ ಶ್ರೀಮದ್ರಾಜ್ಯಾಂಗಧರಾಗಿ ರೀಂದುಶಕೋಲ್ಲಸದಾನಂದವರ್ಷ ದಕ್ಷಿಣಾಯನ ಗ್ರೀಷ್ಮರ್ತುಕಟಕಾಷಾಢ ಕೃಷ್ಣ ದ್ವಿತೀಯಾ ಚಂದ್ರವಾರ ಶ್ರವಣತಾರಾ ಪ್ರೀತಿಯೋಗ ತೈತುಲಕರಣ ದಿವಾಭಿಜಿನ್ಮಹೂರ್ತಾನುಗುಣ ಮೃಗರಾಶಿ ಕನ್ಯಾಲಗ್ನಿ ವರಾಖ್ಯಾ ಷೋಡಶ ಘಟಕಾಯಾಂ ಶನಿಶುಕ್ರಾಂಗಾರಕ ಗುರುಷು ವೃಷಭ ಮೃಗೇಂದ್ರ ತುಲಾಚಾಪರಾಶಿಯುತೇಷು ಬುಧಾರ್ಕರಾಹುಷು ಕರ್ಕಸತ್ತೇಷು ಚಂದ್ರಕೇತೋರ್ಮಕರಸ್ಥಯೋ ವೃಶ್ಚಿಕಸ್ಥೇಚಮಾಂದೌ ಏತಾದೃಶೇಸುಸಮಯೇ ದ್ವಿಜರಾಜದಶಾಂತರೇ ಶ್ರೀ ಚಾಮುಂಡಿಕಾಂಬಾ ಮಹಾಪ್ರಸಾದ ಪರಿಕಲ್ಪಿತಾವತಾರಃ, ಸುಕೃತಿಸಂತತಿಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿಃ, ಶೌರ್ಯದಾರ್ಯಗಾಂಭೀರ್ಯ ಧೈರ್ಯಸ್ಥೈರ್ಯ ಚಾತುರ್ಯೈಶ್ವರ್ಯ ಸೌಂದರ್ಯ ವಿದ್ಯಾವಿನಯ ಶಕ್ತಿರಾಜನೀತಿ ತೇಜಸ್ಸಾಹಸಾದ್ಯನಂತ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಗುಣಗಣರತ್ನ ರತ್ನಾಕರಾಯಮಾಣಃ, ಶಮದಮಕ್ತಮಾದಯಾ ದಾಕ್ಷಿಣ್ಯಾದ್ಯಾತ್ಮಗುಣಾಲಂಕೃತಃ, ಸಿದ್ಧಾರ್ಥಿವತ್ಸರ ಜ್ಯೇಷ್ಠ ಕೃಷ್ಣ ತ್ರಯೋದಶೀಂದುವಾರ ರೋಹಿಣೀ ತಾರಾಕಲಿತ ಕನ್ಯಾಲಗ್ನಿ ಸುಮುಹೂರ್ತ ಕರ್ಣಾಟಕಮಹಾರಾಜ್ಯ ಪಟ್ಟಾಭಿಷಿಕ್ತಃ, ತುಲಾಪುರುಷ ಹಿರಣ್ಯಗರ್ಭ ಗೋಸಹಸ್ರವಸುಂಧರಾಗ್ರಹಾರಾದ್ಯನೇಕಮಹಾದಾನ ಸಮೇಧಮಾನಕೀರ್ತಿಮಂಜರೀಪುಂಜ ವಿರಾಜಿತ ಸಕಲದಿಜ್ಜಂಡಲಃ, ಅಪರಿಮಿತ ವಾಪೀಕೂಪ ತಟಾಕದೇವಾಲಯ ಗೋಪುರಾನ್ವ ಸತ್ರ ಸೋಪಾನ ಸರಿತ್ಸೇತುಮಂಟಪ ಧರ್ಮಶಾಲಾರಾಮಾದ್ಯನೇಕ ಧರ್ಮಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪನ ಧುರೀಣಃ, ರಜತಪೀಠಪುರ ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯಾದಿ ದಿವ್ಯಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ ದೇವತಾದರ್ಶನ ಸಮುದ್ರ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಸಕಲ ತೀರ್ಥಯಾತ್ರಾಸ್ಥಾನ ಪರಿಶುದ್ಧ ನಿಜಾಂತ ರಂಗಃ, ಶ್ರೀತತ್ತ್ವ ನಿಧ್ಯಾದ್ಯನೇಕಗ್ರಂಥ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣಪ್ರಕಾಶಿತ ಸಕಲ ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಾರ್ಥ ಪಾಂಡಿತ್ಯ ವೈಭವಃ, ಭುಜ ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀದ್ವೀಪೇಂದು ಪರಿಮಿತ ಶಕಾಬ್ದಸಂಗತ ರಾಜ್ಯಪಟ್ಟಾಭಿಷೇಕಾದಿ ಷಷ್ಠಿತಮ ಸಿದ್ಧಾರ್ಥಿವರ್ಷ ಜ್ಯೇಷ್ಠಾಸಿತ ತ್ರಯೋದಶೀ ಭೌಮವಾರ ರೋಹಿಣೀ ಕನ್ಯಾಲಗ್ನಾಭಿಜಿನ್ಮಹೂರ್ತ ಯಥಾಶಾಸ್ತ್ರವಿಹಿತ ವರ್ಷವೃದ್ಧಾಭಿಷೇಕ ಮಹೋತ್ಸವ ಸಮುತ್ಸೇಜಿತ ಜಗದ್ವಿಖ್ಯಾತ ಮಹಾರಾಜ ತೇಜಃ ಪ್ರಭಾವಃ, ಶ್ರೀಮತ್ಸಮಸ್ತ ಭೂಮಂಡಲ ಮಂಡನಾಯಮಾನ ನಿಖಿಲ

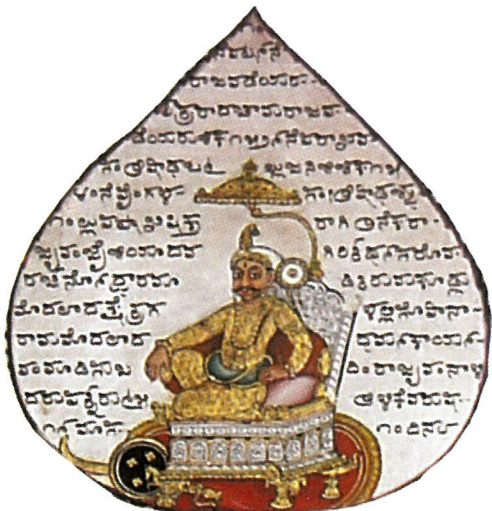
ದೇಶಾವತಂಸ ಕರ್ಣಾಟಕ ಜನಪದಸಂಪದಧಿಷ್ಠಾನ ಭೂತ ಶ್ರೀಮನ್ಮಹಿಶೂರ ಮಹಾಸಂಸ್ಥಾನಮಧ್ಯ ದೇದೀಪ್ಯಮಾನಾವಿಕಲ ಕಲಾನಿಧಿ ಕುಲಕ್ರಮಾಗತ ರಾಜಕೀತಿಪಾಲಪ್ರಮುಖಿನಿಖಿಲನಿಜ ರಾಜಾಧಿರಾಜ ಮಹಾರಾಜ ಚಕ್ರವರ್ತಿಮಂಡಲಾನುಭೂತ ದಿವ್ಯರತ್ನ ಸಿಂಹಾಸನಾರೂಢಃ, ಶ್ರೀ ಮದ್ರಾಚಾಧಿರಾಜ ರಾಜಪರಮೇಶ್ವರ ಪ್ರಾಥಪ್ರತಾಪಾಪ್ರತಿಮವೀರ ನರಪತಿಬಿರುದಂತೆಂಬರ ಗಂಡ ಚಂಡಪ್ರಚಂಡೋದ್ಗಂಡ ರಿಪುತಿಮಿರಮಾರ್ತಾಂಡ ಲೋಕೈಕವೀರ ಯದುಕುಲಪಯಃಪಾರಾವಾರ ಕಲಾನಿಧಿ ಶಂಖ ಚಕ್ರಾಂಕುಶಕುರಾರ ಮಕರಮತ್ಸ್ಯ ಶರಭ ಸಾಕ್ಷ್ಯ ಗಂಡಭೇರುಂಡ ಧರಣೀವರಾಹ ಹನುಮದ್ಗುಂಡ ಕಂಠೀರವಾದ್ಯನೇಕ ಬಿರುದಾಂಕಿತಃ, ಶ್ರೀಮಹಾವಿಷ್ಣುರಿವಜಗತ್ಪಾಲಕಃ, ಶಂಕರ ಇವ ಸರ್ವಜ್ಞಃ, ಷಣ್ಮುಖ ಇವ ಶಕ್ತಿಸಂಪನ್ನಃ, ಬೃಹಸ್ಪತಿರಿವ ಪ್ರಜ್ಞಾಶಾಲೀ, ಶ್ರೀರಾಮ ಇವ ಸುಕೀರ್ತಿವೈಭವಃ, ಶ್ರೀಕೃಷ್ಣ ಇವ ಭಕ್ತರಕ್ಷಕಃ, ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯ ಇವ ಸದಾನ್ನದಾತಾ, ಸೂರ್ಯ ಇವ ತೇಜಸ್ವೀ, ಚಂದ್ರ ಇವ ಆಹ್ಲಾದಕರಃ, ಇಂದ್ರ ಇವ ಐಶ್ವರ್ಯಭೋಗಸಂಪನ್ನಃ, ಹಿಮಾಚಲ ಇವ ದೈರ್ಯವಾನ್, ವೀರಭದ್ರ ಇವ ಶತ್ರುವಿದ್ದಂಸೀ, ಕಾಲಾಗ್ನಿರುದ್ರ ಇವ ಪ್ರಚಂಡಕೋಪಃ, ಸಮುದ್ರ ಇವ ಗಾಂಭೀರ್ಯವಾನ್, ಬಲೀಂದ್ರ ಇವ ಔದಾರ್ಯವಾನ್, ಭೂಮಿರಿವ ಕ್ಷಮಾನ್ವಿತಃ, ಹರಿಶ್ಚಂದ್ರ ಇವ ಸತ್ಯಪ್ರತಿಜ್ಞಃ, ಭೀಮ ಇವ ಪ್ರತಿಜ್ಞಾತಾರ್ಥಸಾಧಕಃ, ಅರ್ಜುನ ಇವ ಧನುರ್ವಿದ್ಯಾವಿಶಾರದಃ, ಸಹದೇವ ಇವ ಭಾವಿಕಾರ್ಯಪರಿಜ್ಞಾತಾ, ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿರಿವ ಚಿಂತಿತಾರ್ಥ ಪ್ರದಾಯಕಃ, ಕಲ್ಪವೃಕ್ಷ ಇವ ಸರ್ವಾಭಿಷ್ಠದಾಯಕಃ, ಆಕಾಶ ಇವ ನಿರ್ಲಿಪ್ತಃ, ಜನಕ ಇವ ಮಹಾಯೋಗೀ, ಧ್ರುವ ಇವ ಬಾಲ್ಯಪ್ರಾಪ್ತ ಮಹಾರಾಜಪದಃ, ಮಾರ್ಕಂಡೇಯ ಇವ ದೀರ್ಘಾಯುಷ್ಮಾನ್, ಶ್ರೀ ಚಾಮುಂಡಾಪದಾಂಭೋಜ ಭ್ರಮರಾಯಿತಮಾನಸಃ, ಶ್ರೀಕಂಠೇಶ್ವರ ಪ್ರಸಾದಲಬ್ಧ ಸರ್ವಸಾಮ್ರಾಜ್ಯಶಾಲೀ, ಶಿವಪೂಜಾಬದ್ಧ ದೀಕ್ಷಾಧುರೀಣಃ, ಆತ್ರೇಯಗೋತ್ರಾಶ್ವಲಾಯನ ಸೂತ್ರಯುಕ್ತಾಖಾನುವರ್ತೀ ನಂಜರಾಜವರ್ಮಾಭಿಧ ಮುಮ್ಮಡಿ ಶ್ರೀಕೃಷ್ಣರಾಜೇಂದ್ರ ಸಾರ್ವಭೌಮಸ್ಸರ್ವೋತ್ಕೃಷ್ಟೋ ಜಗದ್ವಿಖ್ಯಾತೋ ವಿರಾಜತೇ.

ಸಂತಾನಾಂಬುಜವದ್ಯಸ್ಥ ಸಿಂಹಾಸನಪದಾಶ್ರಿತಃ! ಯದುರಾಯಾದಿ ಸಂಯುಕ್ತೋ ರಾಜತೇ ಕೃಷ್ಣ ಭೂಮಣಿಃ (ಪತಿಃ)!!

ಭಸಿತಲಸಿತಫಾಲಂ ರಮ್ಯರುದ್ರಾಕ್ಷಮಾಲಂ! ಕನಕಮಯಸುಚೇಲಂ ಕಾಮನೀಯಸ್ವಲೀಲಂ!!

ಸದವನಪರಶೀಲಂ ಚಾರುಚಾಮೇಂದ್ರಬಾಲಂ! ಹೃದಯಕಮಲಮಧ್ಯೇ ಸಂತತಂ ಭಾವಯಾಮಿ!!

ಮಹಿಶೂರು ಮಹಾಸಂಸ್ಥಾನದ ಈ ಸಂತಾನವೃಕ್ಷವು ಗದ್ಯಸಹ ಶಾಲೀವಾಹನಶಕ ೧೭೭೯ಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂದ ವೈಂಗಳ ಸಂವತ್ಸರದ ಆಷಾಢ ೨೨ ಗುರುವಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಸರಿಗೆ ಚನ್ನಯ್ಯನ ಮೊಮ್ಮಗನಾದ ಚಿತ್ರಗಾರ ರಾಮಪ್ಪನ ಮಗನಾದ ಚಿತ್ರಗಾರರಿಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತುಗಾರ ಮಹಾಸನ್ನಿಧಾನದ ಚಾಕರನಾದ ತಿಪ್ಪಣ್ಣ ಬರೆದು ಒಪ್ಪಿಸಿದ್ದು.



KṚISHṆARĀJA-WOḌEYAR III



The following five paintings represent the most illustrious among the kings of Mysore, Kṛishṇarāja-woḍeyar III (born as Nañjarāja in 1794), ascended the throne in 1799 and died in 1868). He was regarded as the 'Abhinava-Bhoja' (the Bhoja of modern times) for his munificent patronage of all forms of art and learning. He was himself a scholar and writer of no mean merit in Kannaḍa and Sanskrit; he was acquainted also with Persian, Mahrāṭhi, Hindi and Urdu. Among more than twenty interesting works of his, Śrī-tattva-nidhi is the most remarkable. He got the book splendidly illustrated with about a thousand paintings, done at his direction by some of the best artists in his court.

He also got numerous iconic paintings done in the Mysore style for distribution among his favourites.

It is unfortunate that there was unrest and economic instability in the state due to his administrative inefficiency, and the British Commissioners took over the administration from 1831 till 1868. Owing to his persistent efforts, the administration was reverted to Chāmarāj-woḍeyar, his adopted son in 1868.

He was a deeply religious man and made generous donations to many temples in South India, especially in the state of Mysore. His tutelary deity



MAHĀRĀJĀ, KRISHNARĀJA-WODEYAR III

Portrait of Krishnarāja-Wodeyar III, incomplete (the right hand holding the flower is still to be completed). There is an evident likeness of the Mahārājā. The elaborate head-gear, bejewelled and ornate, and the splendid garments, together with ornaments, suggest that the Mahārājā gave the sitting during Navarātri celebrations in the palace. The glow of medieval aristocracy is there in the portrait.

Chāmuṇḍeśvarī of the Chāmuṇḍī hills in Mysore received his deepest devotion, Śrīkaṇṭheśvara of Nañjangūḍ, Cheluvā-Nārāyaṇa of Mēlukōṭe, Venkaṭeśvara of Tirumala, Varadarāja of Kañchīpura, Ranganātha of Śrīrangam and Śrīrangapaṭṭaṇa, Jvālāmālīnī of Ummattūr, and Rājarājeśvarī were

forms of divinities closest to his heart. The court artists were kept fully busy painting these icons for the palace, for his relatives, and for his books, and making sculptures for the numerous temples that he got renovated or constructed. His favourite god was Kṛishṇa, and he was a keen student of

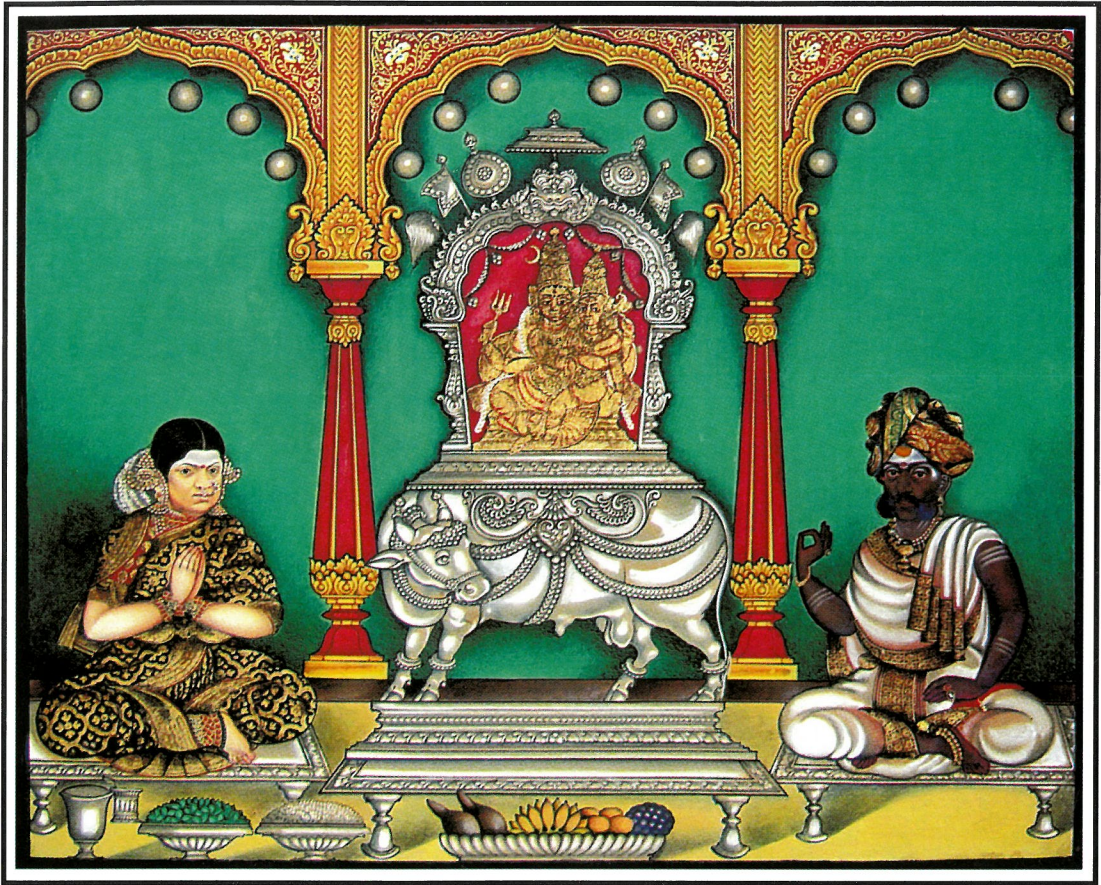


KRISHNARAJA WODEYAR III IN ZENĀNĀ DURBĀR

This represents the 'Zenānā-durbār', the regal audience being given to the ladies of the royal household, and feminine dignitaries during Navarātri celebrations. The usual entourage is also there. The customarily worshipped horse (ಪಟ್ಟದ ಕುದುರೆ) and elephant (ಪಟ್ಟದ ಆನೆ) are also seen in the painting, with their guardian-officials in ceremonial dress. The pavilion is stylized, as also the flying gandharvas on top, jostling amidst candle-light stands and chandeliers.

Bhāgavata. He was a Śaiva in his personal predilection and read Śiva-purāṇa frequently. This contributed considerably to the religious and iconic themes that prevails in the Mysore paintings. He insisted that the old style encouraged by the earlier Woḍeyar-rulers should be preserved and continued.

But he encouraged the court-artists to assimilate and incorporate techniques and forms that were gaining currency during his days. The influence of the Vijayangar mural style is evident in the paintings of this period, as also the Deccani style; and in many of the later paintings, the influence of the Company



WODEYAR COUPLE IN ŚIVA-PŪJĀ

The painting shows a Woḍeyar dignitary (probably Krishṇarāja-woḍeyar III) with his wife, engaged in the worship of Umā-maheśvara on the bull (Vṛshabhārūḍha-mūrti) in the shrine-room within the palace. The aṣṭottara-archanā (recital of the 108 names of the god) is in progress. The worshipper and his consort are obviously śaivite in their appearance; and they also have an aristocratic bearing. The bull in silver is an excellent representation. The icons of Śiva and Pārvatī lodged on the bull are specimens of processional images (utsava-mūrti).

art, and even of the European masters can be discerned. The king was conservative in his religious aspirations, but he was an aesthete to the core, romantic in disposition and had a breadth of vision that was unusual among the royal folk. He loved horse-

riding and indoor games like Indian Chess (chaduraṅga) and Gañjīphā. All these princely pursuits find expression in the paintings done in his court. The Mahārājā was also keenly interested in getting the portraits of his eminent courtiers painted by the court-artists who



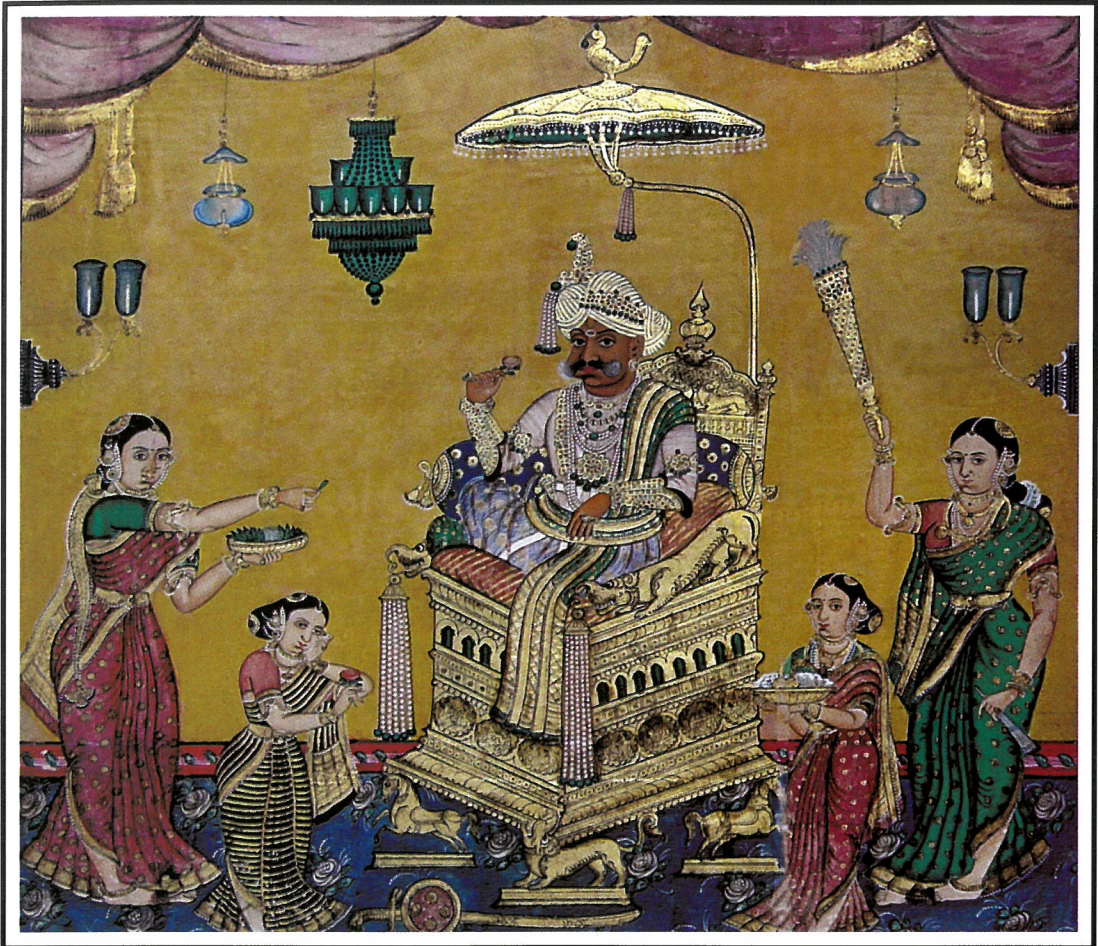
KRISHṆARĀJA WODEYAR III

The Mahārājā (Krishṇarāja-wodeyar III) giving audience to an important officer of his government, probably his 'darbār bakshi'. Two attendants are also seen, each with his conventional silver staff (ಬೆಳ್ಳಿಯ ಕೋಲು) to represent royal service. The Mahārājā is seated on his customary chair, inside a pavilion in the palace.

were proficient. Here are some specimens included, although they do not strictly adhere to the 'traditional' norms of the Mysore school.

The Mahārājā was also responsible for the founding of the first tasteful art-gallery in the state of Mysore. Called

Jaganmohan-mahal; it was situated outside the Brahmapuri gate of the Palace to its west. He also organized another art-complex with sculptures, outside the Fort on the eastern side near the Kārañji-kere Lake. It was called Lōkarañjan-mahal.



KRISHNARAJA WODEYAR III

The Mahārājā (Krishnarāja-Wodeyar III) is seated on the throne, attended by his female companions (ಚೇತಿಕಾರ್ಥಿಯರು). It is the typical representation of the throne in the Mysore palace. It is obviously during one of the Navarātri celebrations that the painting was done.



PROTRAIT OF AN OFFICER

An eminent officer of the Mysore palace is seated on a rose-wood chair with rattan seat, in an ornate pavilion inside the palace. The floor-tiles and arches with drapery are highlights of the painting. The face of the seated figure is full of dignity and importance.

PORTRAIT OF A DEWAN

An important officer (dewan) of the Mysore Durbār (probably Pūrṇayya), giving audience to an official from elsewhere, probably a messenger. The two attendants standing behind the seated officer are dressed in a fashion not typically Mysorean. The pavilion is treated with care and imagination. The rose-wood chair with elaborate ivory inlay and the carpeted floor add significance to the painting.



CHĀMUṆḌEŚVARĪ



The following four paintings represent the tutelary deity of the Woḍeyars of Mysore, Chāmuṇḍeśvarī, whose shrine is atop the hill in the vicinity of the city of Mysore. The hill is therefore called Chāmuṇḍi hill; it was formerly known as Mārbaḷa-tīrtha (Mabbela-tīrtha), in the tenth century. It has been a sacred spot since early antiquity, frequented by ascetics and adepts. The hill is 3,489 feet above sea level. The Mahābaleśvara temple on top of the hill was existing there even before the Hoysala monarch Bitṭiga-Vishṇuvardhana, who makes a grant for 'Mārbaḷa-tīrtha' in 1128 A.D.

Chāmuṇḍeśvarī (the vanquisher of the demons Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa) is a

form of Durgā, who killed the Buffalo-demon (Mahishāsura), and hence came to be known as Mahisha-mardini. The local legends state that the demon Mahisha ruled over this tract of the land including the hill known as Mahisha-maṇḍala (which got corrupted in course of time as Mahishūru, and later into Mysūru). Chāmuṇḍi came here at the request of the gods, killed the demon Mahisha, and settled down on the hill. Jvālāmukhi of Uttanahaḷḷi helped her in the fight, and so the Woḍeyars have a special regard for this goddess also. The goddess fighting with Mahisha is eulogized in many purāṇas (like Skanda, Kālikā, Mārkaṇḍeya, and Vishṇudharmottara), and her form is described in all Śilpa-sāstra texts.

CHĀMUṆDEŚVARĪ

श्रीमत्कर्णाटराज्यश्रीराजेन्द्रकुलदेवताम् ।
महाबलाचलावासां श्यामामष्टभुजान्विताम् ॥

She, the tutelary deity of the Mysore royal family, abides on the hill of Mahābala (the Chāmuṇḍi hills). Dark of complexion, she has eight arms, carrying various weapons.



दुर्गा देवादिसंस्तुत्यां सर्वचैतन्यरूपिणीम् ।
चण्डमुण्डशिरश्छेत्रीं महिषासुरमर्दिनीम् ॥
सिंहारूढां चन्द्रचूडां रुण्डमालाविभूषिताम् ।
शूलासिशंखचक्रादिधारिणीं जयदायिनीम् ॥

Praised by all the gods, she cut off the heads of the twin demons, Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa, and vanquished the Buffalo-demon. Riding on a lion, wearing the crescent moon, and carrying weapons, she bestows victory on her devotees.



Note the palace-pavilion, complete with attendants. The inset is the icon worshipped in the palace. The red background for the icon is noteworthy.





CHĀMUṆDEŚVARĪ

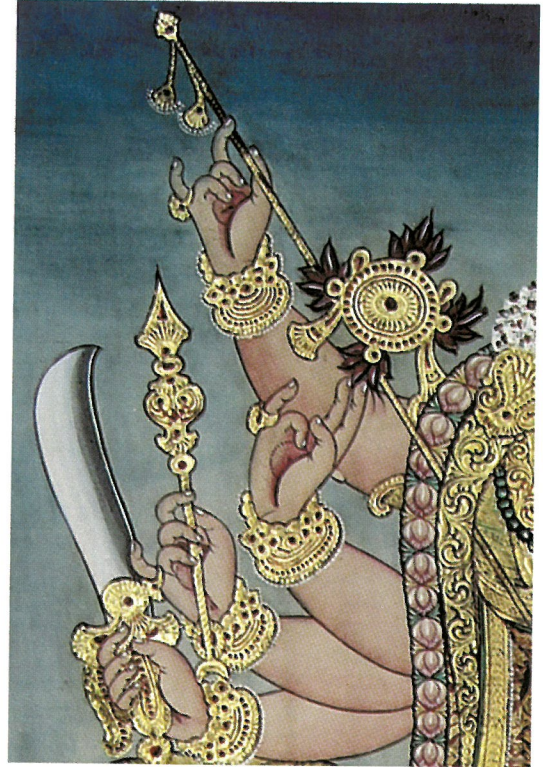
CHĀMUNDEŚVARĪ

श्रीचामुण्डा महादेवी सृष्टिस्थित्यन्तकारिणी ।
महाबलाचलावासा सूर्यचन्द्राग्निलोचना ॥

राजराजेष्वरदा राज्यलक्ष्मीप्रदायिनी ।
शक्तित्रयरूपाढ्या सन्निधत्तां सदा हृदि ॥

The goddess, with the sun, moon and fire as her eyes, and the composite form of the three divinities (Lakshmi, Sarasvatī and Kālī), fulfils the longings of mighty monarchs.

She rises in glory, above the demons of darkness.





CHĀMUṆDEŚVARĪ

This form of the goddess became the tutelary deity of the Mysore monarchs, ever since the founder of this dynasty Yadu-rāya, came to this hill in 1399, and settled down in a village called Haḍadaṇa at the foot of the hill. Yadu-rāya (Vijaya-rāya) and his brother Krishna-rāya became staunch devotees of this goddess, and built the Mysore Kingdom owing to the grace of this goddess. So we learn from an old manuscript dated śālivāhana-era 1707 (corresponding to 1785 A.D.), unearthed in 1920 in Mysore (cf. Annals of the Mysore Royal Family in Kannada ಶ್ರೀಮನ್ಮಹಾರಾಜರವರ ವಂಶಾವಳಿ, Mysore 1922, Part-II, Pages 86-87).

All the Woḍeyar rulers have been fervent devotees of this goddess. The hill on which her shrine stands is as sacred as the shrine itself. This is why many of the names in the royal line begin with "hill" (beṭṭa). It cannot be ascertained when the shrine was originally built, or by whom. It would appear that it was there when Yadu-rāya visited the hill, for the early accounts mention that he worshipped there. Rāja-Woḍeyar (1578-1617) thought of constructing the entrance-tower (dvāra-gopura) for the shrine around 1610. He got the hill-temple repaired, and also did service to Jvālāmukhi shrine in Uttanahalli. Doḍḍa-Devarāja-Woḍeyar

(1659-1673) got a sopāna with one thousand steps constructed in 1664 to climb the hill easily and reach the shrine; and he got a monolith Nandi (16 foot-tall) carved in a rock in situ at the seven hundredth step. He also arranged for its daily worship.

It was Krishnarāja-Woḍeyar III, who not only carried out extensive repairs for the temple on the hill but enlarged the structure. As the 'asṭabandha' for the shrine done in ancient times had got weak, he got the 'asṭabandha' ritual done again in accordance with Devyāgama around 1818; he got the processional images made in 'five-metals' (pañcha-loha) for the deity. He arranged for periodical festivities in the temple, especially during Navarātri season. A splendid entrance-tower (dvāra-gopura) in seven storeys was erected by him; it was consecrated in a grand manner in 1827. His own statue in stone in a devout posture (bhakta-vigraha) was installed in front of the sanctum of the processional image, along with those of his consorts Devājammaṇṇi, Chaluvājammaṇṇi and Lingājammaṇṇi. He regularised the worship conducted in the shrine, and regulated the procedure of temple administration.

Numerous iconic paintings of Chāmuṇḍeśvari were prepared by the

court-artists during his period, for the Mahārājā's own books as well as for presentation to his favourites. The Mahārājā was keenly and constantly aware of this form of the goddess being his tutelary deity. He mentions in his *Śrī-tattva-nidhi* (introductory verses):

श्रीचामुण्डा महादेवी सृष्टिस्थित्यन्तकारिणी ।
महाबलाचलावासा सूर्यचन्द्राग्निलोचना ॥
यादवान्वयराजेन्द्रवंशाम्बोनिधिचान्द्रिका ।
राजराजेष्टवरदा राज्यलक्ष्मीप्रदायिनी ।
शाक्तित्रयरूपाढ्या सन्निधात्तां सदा हृदि ॥



CHĀMUṆDEŚVARĪ

Typical Mysore painting, highly stylized, elaborately ornate, minute work in gold (punching) and splendidly decorated. The goddess has twelve hands, carrying weapons of warfare; but her countenance is tranquil and pleasant. There are flames of fire around the crowned head, signifying 'Agni-durgā'.

RĀJARĀJEŚVARĪ



The paintings figured here represent the goddess Rājarājeśvarī (otherwise known as Lalitā or Tripura-sundarī), adored and worshipped by the devotees of Śrī-vidyā. The worship involves both Vedic and Tāntrik approaches. It has its focal point in the mystic diagram known as Śrī-Chakra and the manifest form of this goddess. The two are in principle identical, and symbolize the primordial power, the ultimate reality. The goddess is the personification of the diagram (cosmopsychogram), and the diagram (Chakra, maṇḍala, rajya) is symbolic of the kingdom of all existence and all energy, including will (icchhā), action (kriyā) and wisdom (jñāna).

If the diagram grows out of the central point (bindu) identified with

Śiva (pure consciousness), the goddess is the visual manifestation of the same central point and is identified with śakti (energy). The diagram of the goddess signifies the union of śiva and śakti. They are in fact inseparable in principle, but phenomenal and transactional existence pulls them apart, resulting in stress and sorrow. Śrī-vidyā as a cult seeks to achieve the commingling of consciousness (Śiva) and energy (śakti). When materialized, the two principles appear as Kāmeśvara (male) and Kāmeśvarī (female).

In this cult, energy (feminine principle) is emphasized, and consciousness (male principle) is but an aspect of energy. Hence the worshipful form is a goddess, seated upon her male consort or counterpart. Prakriti prevails

on the basis of Puruṣa, and this makes Rājārājeśvarī sit on the body of Śiva lying across as a corpse (preta): without her, Śiva is but inert (śava). The whole imagery of this goddess speaks of the primordial energy (śakti of prakṛti) as the wondrous mother (śrī-mātā), or as the resplendent empress of all creation (rājā-rājeśvari).

This goddess is visualized as most charming, and as brightest of all lights. She shines like countless suns and moons all arisen at once. She sits at ease (lalitāsana), with the right leg dangling down and the left leg held across the seat. The seat on which she sits is Śiva himself, who is described as the plank of the swing-cot. The legs of this cot are the four deities, Brahmā the creator, Viṣṇu the preserver, Rudra the dissolver and Sadāśiva the principle of bliss that is unchanging. These four gods are inert without the goddess energizing them, even as Śiva is. It is therefore that the goddess is described as perched on five corpses (pañchapretāsanā).

The complexion of the goddess is the hue of the red hibiscus (japākusuma), or the rosy colour of ripe pomegranate (piṅgala-vāsasā). She is bedecked by all auspicious ornaments, her ear-rings representing the solar and lunar orbs.

Her countenance is tranquil and pleasant (prasanna).

She is four-armed, carrying in her extra-hands (para-hasta) an elephant-goad (symbolizing anger and aversion) and noose (passions and urges), and in her normal hands (nija-hasta) a bunch of five flowers (symbolizing the five primordial elements, audition, vision, olfaction, gustation and tactation) as arrows, and the sugar-cane stalk (Mind) as the bow.

पाशाङ्कुशोदण्डपञ्चबाणलसत्कराम् ॥

(कोधाङ्कुशः। रागपाशाद्या। पञ्चतन्मात्रसायका।

मन इक्षुकोदण्डः ॥)

She has the goddess of wealth and prosperity (Lakṣmī) and the goddess of learning and liberation (Sarasvatī) as her attendants, standing by her sides, entertaining her and fanning her.

Beneath the dangling foot of the goddess is usually represented the celebrated Śrī-chakra. It may be in close contact with foot (pāda-samsprṣṭa), or a little removed (antarita). Śrī-chakra symbolizes the entire universe as the union of śiva and śakti.

शिवशक्त्यात्मकं ज्ञेयं श्रीचक्रं शिवयोर्वपुः ॥

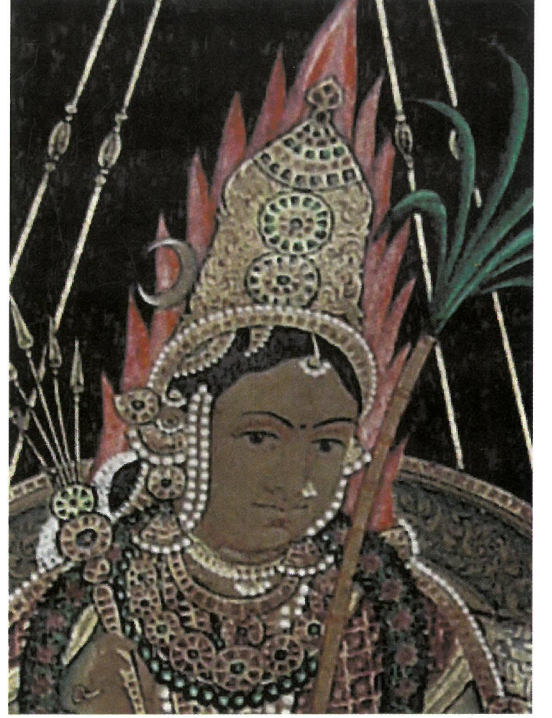
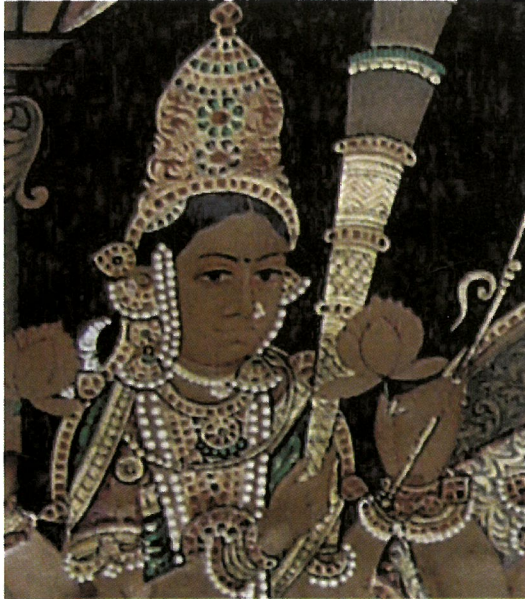
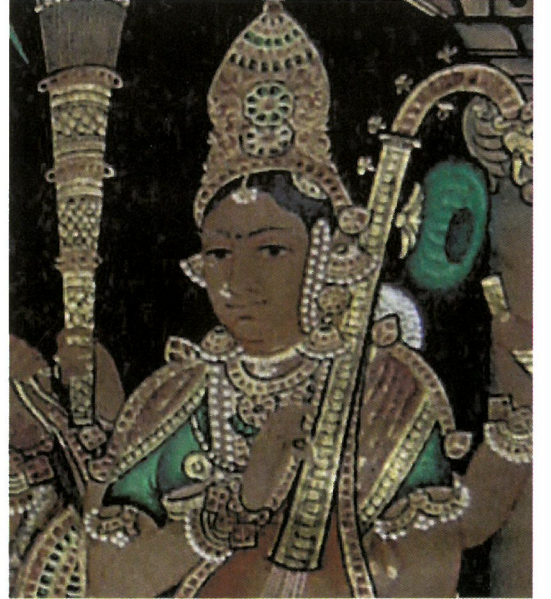
(शिवशक्त्यात्मकं सिद्धं जगदेतच्चराचरम् ॥)

RĀJARĀJEŚVARĪ

बिन्दुस्थानं सुधासिन्धुः पञ्चयोन्यः सुरद्रुमाः ।
तत्रैव नीपश्रेणी च तन्मध्ये मणिमण्डपम् ॥
तत्र चिन्तामणिकृतं देव्या मन्दिरमुत्तमम् ।
शिवात्मके महामञ्चे महेशनोपबर्हणे ॥
तन्नास्ते परमेशानी महात्रिपुरसुन्दरी ॥

(Vāmakeśvara-tantra)

The goddess emerges from the sacred cosmogram (Śrī-chakra), which is Her dwelling town, pleasure-garden, splendid mansion, and mystic seat. Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity and Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning attend on Her, holding in their hands the reverential 'sumāna-gari'.





RĀJARĀJEŚVARĪ

RĀJARĀJEŚVARĪ

पञ्चविंशतिसालाढ्यश्रीचक्रपुरवासिनीं ।

चिदाग्निकुण्डसम्भूतां मूलप्रकृतिरूपिणीम् ॥

One of the early acquisitions of the Parishat, it is being worshipped ever since it was acquired. The royal family from which it was got also worshipped it all along. It is an iconic painting, meant specifically for worship. It breathes an air of sanctity. It perfectly portrays the dhyāna-śloka given by the Mahārājā in his *Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā* (4).





RĀJARĀJEŚVARĪ

Some texts insist that worship of Rājarājeśvarī would be in vain without the worship of Śrī-Chakra as associated with her:

विना यन्त्रेण चेत्यूजा देवता न प्रसीदति ॥

However, there are paintings of this goddess without Śrī-chakra.

The early paintings of Rājarājeśvarī are from the Tañjāvūr area and from the court of the Woḍeyar rulers of Mysore. It is probable that the name of the goddess is derived from the ancient abode of this goddess in the Bṛhadīśvara temple at Tañjāvūr in Tamiḷ Nādu. The Choḷa monarch, who built this temple around 1010 A.D., called himself Rāja-rāja (Rājarājeśvara).

The cult of the goddess, however, is ancient. We find many āgama-texts like Shoḍaśī-kalpa and Śrīvidyārṇava-tantra, entirely devoted to the doctrinal and ritual considerations of Śrī-vidyā. The cult is widely prevalent in the whole of South India. Krishṇarāja-Woḍeyar III (1794-1868), the erstwhile ruler of Mysore, was himself initiated into this cult, and he actively encouraged the artists of his court to prepare stylized paintings of Rājarājeśvarī for purposes of worship in the households of his relatives, friends, dignitaries and scholars of his acquaintance. Most of

the extant paintings of this goddess belong to his period. And all of them were meant for ritualistic worship.

They generally follow the dhyāna-sloka specifications, although the artists are also found to give expression to their own imagination with regard to composition, ornamentation, architectural background and colour schemes. The mood of the goddess (prasanna-vadanāmbujā), the presence of the crescent moon on the crown (bālendu-mukutojjvalā), the third eye on the forehead (tryaksha) characterize the iconic form.

The auspicious necklace (maṇimaṅgala-sūtreṇa vilasat-kandharā) and sparkling eyes with a slight smile on the face (sumanda-hasitekshaṇā) are characteristic features of this goddess.

The dhyānaśloka composed by the Mahārājā himself is given in his book *Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā* (4). The paintings follow the iconic details given here.

पञ्चविंशति सालाढ्य श्रीचक्रपुरवासिनीम् ।

बिन्दुपीठसुखासीनां योगिनीगणसेविताम् ॥१॥

चतुर्भुजां रक्तवर्णां चन्द्ररेखाविभूषिताम् ।

पुण्ड्रेक्षुचाप पुष्पेषु पाशाङ्कुशलसत्कराम् ॥२॥

चिदग्निकुण्डसम्भूतां मूलप्रकृतिरूपिणीम् ।
पञ्चप्रेतासनारूढां षोडशार्णमनुप्रियाम् ।
कामेश्वरांकनिलयां राजराजेश्वरीं भजे ॥३॥

Rājarājeśvarī is well settled in the central point (bindu-pīṭha) of Śrī-chakra. She is red in complexion and is adorned by crescent moon on her crown. She is four-armed, carrying the bow of sugar-cane stalk and arrows of flowers in her normal hands, and noose and goad in her extra-hands. She has emerged out of the fire of consciousness (chid-agni). She is seated on a cot, the legs of which are the five divinities who would be inert without her power (pañcha-preta). Alternately, she may be seated on the lap of Kāmeśvara, her consort (viz. Śiva as the base for śakti).

The first painting reproduced here has been in daily worship at the Chitrakala Parishath ever since its acquisition from a royal household in Mysore. Even at this household, the painting was in daily worship. It would appear that the painting was got made only for the purpose of worship. The painting therefore breathes an unusual, almost occult, atmosphere around it. And it has been executed with great care, interest and devotion. The attention devoted even to the minor details is astonishing. It is a perfect

specimen of iconic painting. No significant detail has been omitted, and nothing is overdone.

The main figure (Rājarājeśvarī) merits the center of attention and covers the main area of the painting, what in sculptural texts is designated as the "brahma-sthāna". The figure is excellently delineated, with fidelity to the usual dhyāna-śloka of this divinity. The goddess is flanked as usual with two other divinities, Sarasvatī playing on the veenā (to the right of the goddess) and Lakshmī playing on the violin (to the left) while the goddess is seated in lalitāsana posture. These divinities are standing, attending on her.

In conformity with canonical formulation, the goddess is seated upon Śiva (whose head and leg all that cannot be seen of him) lying prone on a swing-cot which stands on four legs representing Brahmā (four-headed), Viṣṇu (blue hued body), Rudra, and Sadśiva (five headed). Even these squatting gods are finely painted. At the bottom of the cot and beneath the goddess is the mystical diagram, Śrī-chakra, perfectly drawn. This is placed prominently in the lower portion of the painting, removed from the main figure (called *antarita* variety), unlike some other versions where the diagram is

RĀJA-RĀJESHVARĪ

Another lovely portrayal of the deity in characteristic Mysore style. The reclining śiva's head is on the left side of the goddess. Delicate work in gold and subdued colouring. The foreground is treated uniquely and tastefully. There is no Śrīchakra at the feet of the goddess; nor are there the usual Lakshmī and Sarasvatī attending on the deity. There are only two damsels carrying fly-whisks (chāmara-dhāriṇis).





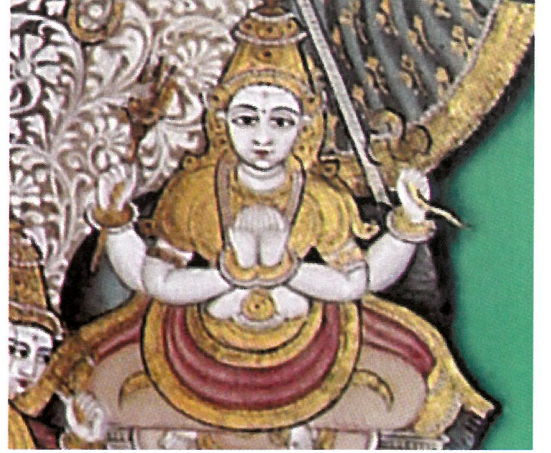
RĀJA-RĀJESVARĪ

RĀJARĀJEŚVARĪ

बिन्दुपीठसुखासीनां योगिनीगणसेविताम् ।
चतुर्भुजां रक्तवर्णां चन्द्रेखाविभूषिताम् ॥

Seated in regal splendour, she seems to give audience (ōlaga) to her devotees. A piece of elaborate, careful and correct draughtsmanship, ornate, elegant, and balanced in details as in colours.

The swing-cot on which she sits has four male divinities as legs thereof: Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra and Sadāśiva.





RĀJARĀJEŚVARĪ

KĀMA - KAMEŚVARĪ

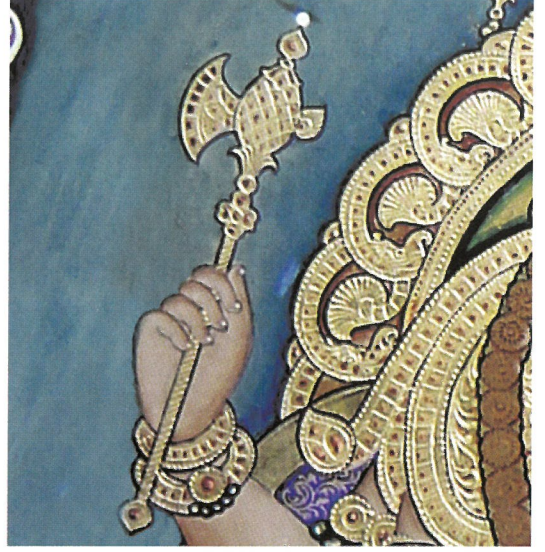
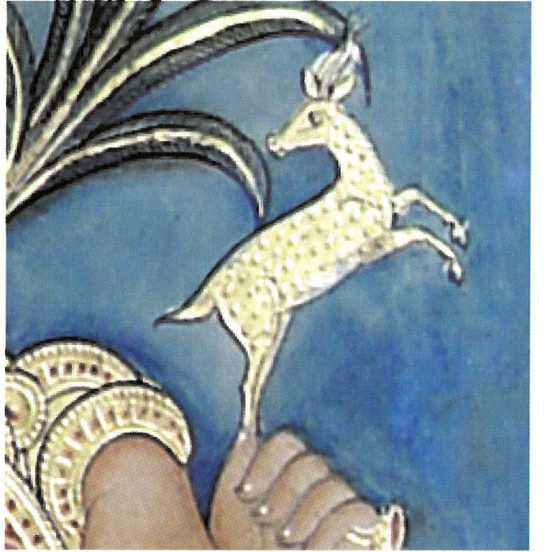
कामेश्वरांकनिलयां राजराजेश्वरीं भजे ॥
अथ मञ्जोपरिष्ठात् हंसतूलिकातल्पकः ।
तस्योपरिष्ठात् कौसुम्भवसनोत्तर च्छदः ॥

तस्योपरि वसन्पूर्वं दिङ्मुखो दययान्वितः ।
शृङ्गारवेषरुचिरः सदा षोडशवार्षिकः ।
कमनीयस्थित ज्योत्स्नापरिपूर्णकपोलभूः ॥

जागर्ति भगवानादिदेवः कामेश्वरः शिवः ।
तस्योत्सङ्गे समासीना करुणादित्यपाटला ।
सदा षोडशवर्षा च नवयौवनदर्पिता ॥
(कामेश्वरांकनिलया)

(Lalitopākhyāna)

Kāmeśvara with Kāmeśvarī (Rāja-
rājeśvarī) seated on His lap. The two
represent the union of Śiva and Śakti,
or Mūlaprakṛti and Puruṣa, the very
core-concept of Śrī-chakra. The
painter's signature is there:
Narasimhayya of Jāvagal.





KĀMA - KAMEŚVARĪ

close to the right or left foot that is dangling. It stands aloft in the center of the stage ascended by a flight of five steps. It is in perfect tune with the Brahma-sūtra of the figure of the goddess.

The foreground represented by a well laid out garden with flower beds, and the architectural background are tastefully composed. The central expansive arch, the yellow background for the main goddess and the narrow arches on the sides providing red backdrop for the goddesses of learning and wealth add dignity, grace and

grandeur for the painting. The whole ensemble is delightful. Śiva lying across as the plank of the cot has his head to the right side of the goddess. Only his head and legs are seen, the rest of the body being covered by the splendidly designed and elegantly pleated drapery of the saree of the seated goddess. This is also in accordance with the iconographical prescriptions in the canonical texts. Śiva's body-complexion is bright white (signifying pure sattva of the purusha) in pleasant contrast to the rosy red complexion of the goddess (symbolizing the rajas dominant prakṛti).

RĀJARĀJEŚVARĪ

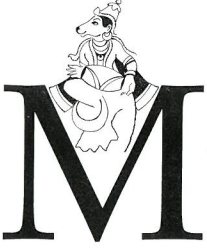
पञ्चप्रेतासनारूढां षोडशार्णमनुप्रियाम् ।

पुण्ड्रेक्षुचापपुष्पेषु पाशांकुशलसत्कराम् ॥

Another representation of Rāja-rājeśvarī, but without Śrī-chakra accompanying the goddess.



CHELUVA-RĀYA-SVĀMI OF MĒLUKOṬE



Mēlukōṭe (Yadu-giri) is a famous pilgrim-centre in the old Mysore territory. Hallowed by the visit of Sri Rāmānuja, it has been a Śrī-vaishnava centre. There is a large temple here, of Chōḷa architecture, dedicated to Sampatkumāra (or Cheluva-Nārāyana). The Woḍeyar rulers of Mysore have served this God with various gifts and donations.

Rāja-Woḍeyar (1578-1617) got an extraordinary crown, bejewelled generously, called Rāja-muḍi, made for the processional deity (Cheluva-rāya), to be used during the annual temple-celebration, 'brahmotsava'. This was to be worn by the deity, after the removal of the customary diamond-studded crown, Vayira-muḍi (vajra-muḍi) from the deity. He also presented gold coverings (kavacha) for the main deity. He contributed to the magnificence of the temple, and its safety.

Chikka-Deva-raja-woḍeyar (1673-1704) also attended to the upkeep and repairs of this temple. Later, Krshnarāja-Woḍeyar III (1799-1868) made many contributions to make the temple and the town prosperous. During his birthday celebrations (Khāsā-varḍhanti) in 1817, he presented the third splendid crown called Krishnarāja-muḍi, to the processional deity. He stipulated that the colourful ritual, Kalyāṇotsava, was to be performed before decorating the deity with this crown; and that a car-festival (rathotsava) was also to be arranged on the occasion.

The accompanying painting represents the wearing of bejewelled the crown presented by Krishnarāja-Woḍeyar. The processional image (Cheluva-rāya-svāmi) is seated on Garuḍa, and is accompanied by his consorts, Śrīdevī and Bhūdevi (ubhaya-nāchchiyars).

CHELUVA-RĀYA-SVĀMI

सम्पत्कुमारं देवेशं कृष्णर्चितपदाम्बुजम् ।

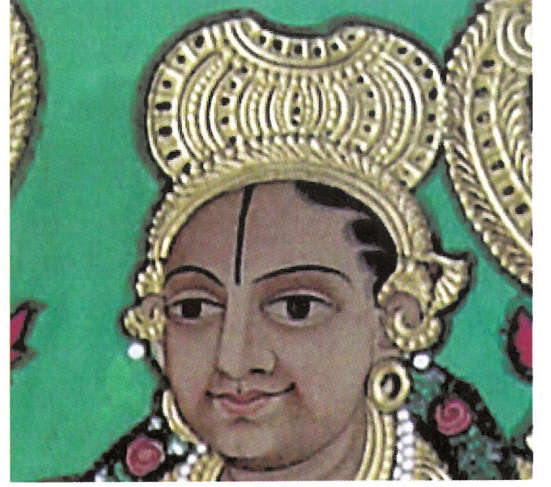
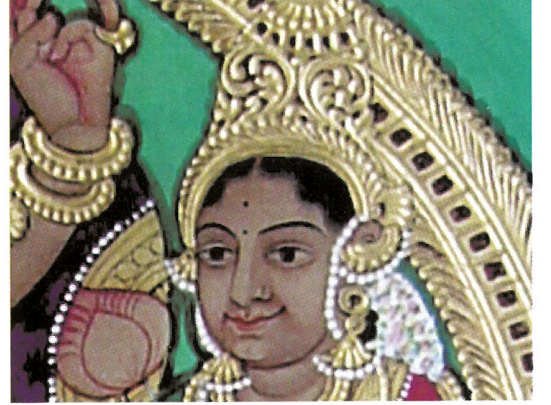
ज्ञानाश्रयनृसिंहद्रिवराहक्षेत्रभासुरम् ॥

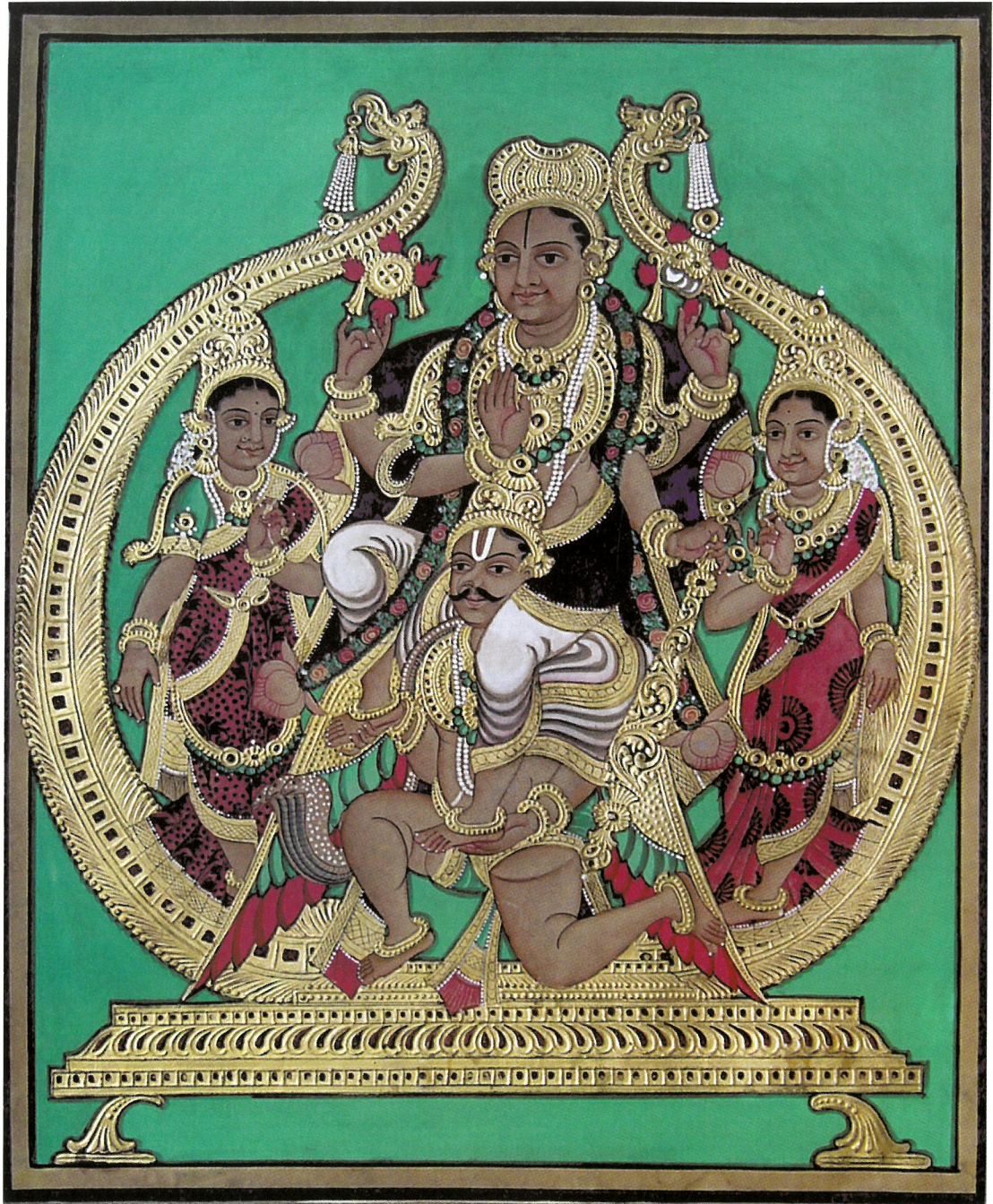
कल्याण्यादिसुतीर्थाढ्यं हरिं रामानुजप्रियम् ।

डिळ्ळीशतनयासेव्यं यादवाद्रीशमाश्रये ॥

(Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā)

The processional icon of Sampatkumāra mounted on Garuḍa (Garuḍotsava) is the theme of this excellent painting. The composition inspires admiration. Embossing done in gold, and the use of gold for painting are noteworthy. The green background has been very effective in highlighting the red, gold and the makki-safeda work that goes into the encircled iconic representation of the form of Viṣṇu that the Woḍeyar family was devoted to. The figures are very neatly drawn, the colours are soft and sober.





CHELUVA-RĀYA-SVĀMI

VARADA-RĀJĀ, KĀNCHIPURAM

देवं हस्तिगिरीशानं ब्रह्मकुण्डसमुद्भवम् ।
शंखचक्रगदापद्मधरं श्रीभूमनःप्रियम् ॥

श्रीवत्साङ्गं मेघवर्णं ब्रह्मेन्द्रादिसुरस्तुतम् ।
चक्रदारितनक्रास्यं वरदं तं नमाम्यहम् ॥

(Devāta-dhyāna-mālikā)

This painting was inspired by the Mahārājā's visit to Kañchīpuram, the celebrated Śrīvaiṣṇava centre, where Varada-rājā-svāmi is worshipped. The topmost panel is typically Śrīvaiṣṇava in character: the nāmam flanked by discus and conch, Hanumān and Garuda, and royal insignia (parasol and banner). The panel below it represents Ranganātha (reclining form of Viṣṇu on Ādiśeṣha), flanked by the sports of Kṛṣṇa narrated in the Bhāgavata-purāṇam. The next panel depicts the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu (daśāvatāra).

Below this horizontal panel, and occupying the centre of the painting is the representation of Varada-rājā mounted on Garuḍa. The background story is the saving of the elephant (Indradyumna, Viṣṇu's devotee cursed by an irate sage) from the clutches of a crocodile. This is the processional image



in the Kāñchīpuram temple. By the side of this large panel are representations of Śrī Rāmānuja and Tirukacchi-nambi, the form of Viṣṇu, Vaikuṇṭha-Nārāyaṇa and Rāma-paṭṭabhisheka. The two panels below show the iconic portraits of the divine preceptors (divya-sūri) and the ālvār-saints ('divers' into the bliss of God-realization).

The whole painting is crowded with fine iconic paintings, done in the typical Mysore style. The red colour is outstanding, and leaf-work in gold (with no embossing) abounds.



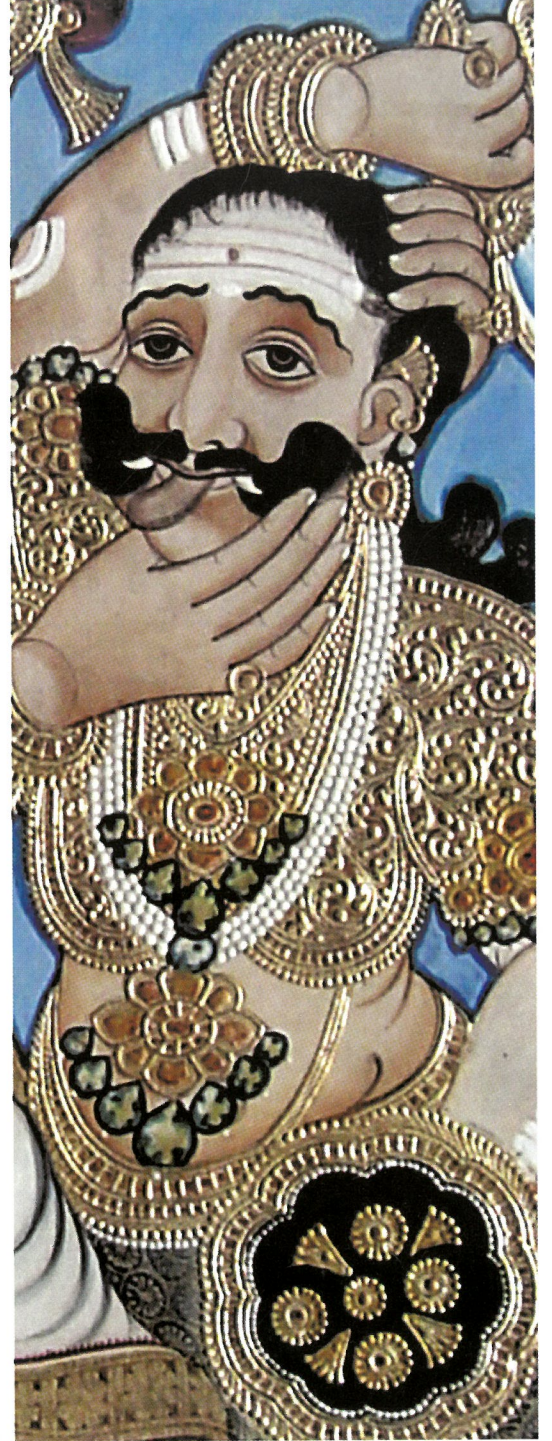
VARĀHA-SVĀMI

दंष्ट्रोद्धतमहीभागं हिरण्याक्षनिषूदनम् ।

शुभ्रवर्णं महाकायं श्रीधरं सूकराननम् ॥

(Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā)

Chikka-Devarāja-Woḍeyar (1673-1704) brought from Śrīmushṇam the icon of Śveta-varāha-svāmi and consecrated it in Śrīrangapaṭṭaṇa. Along with this image, the icons of the two consorts (Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī) which were lying in Tañjāvūru were also brought and consecrated. So was the metallic processional image (Nīlamegha-śyama-svāmi) brought to this shrine in Śrīrangapaṭṭaṇa. The temple that was built and consecrated was later embellished with a splendid gopuram by Krishṇarāja-Woḍeyar III (in 1809 A.D.)



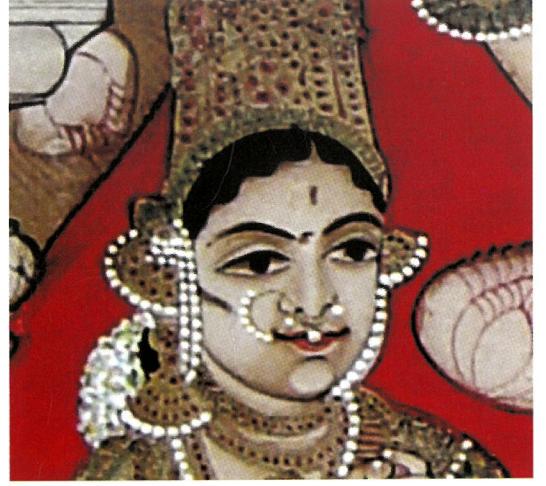


VARĀHA-SVĀMI

VENKATEŚA WITH CONSORTS

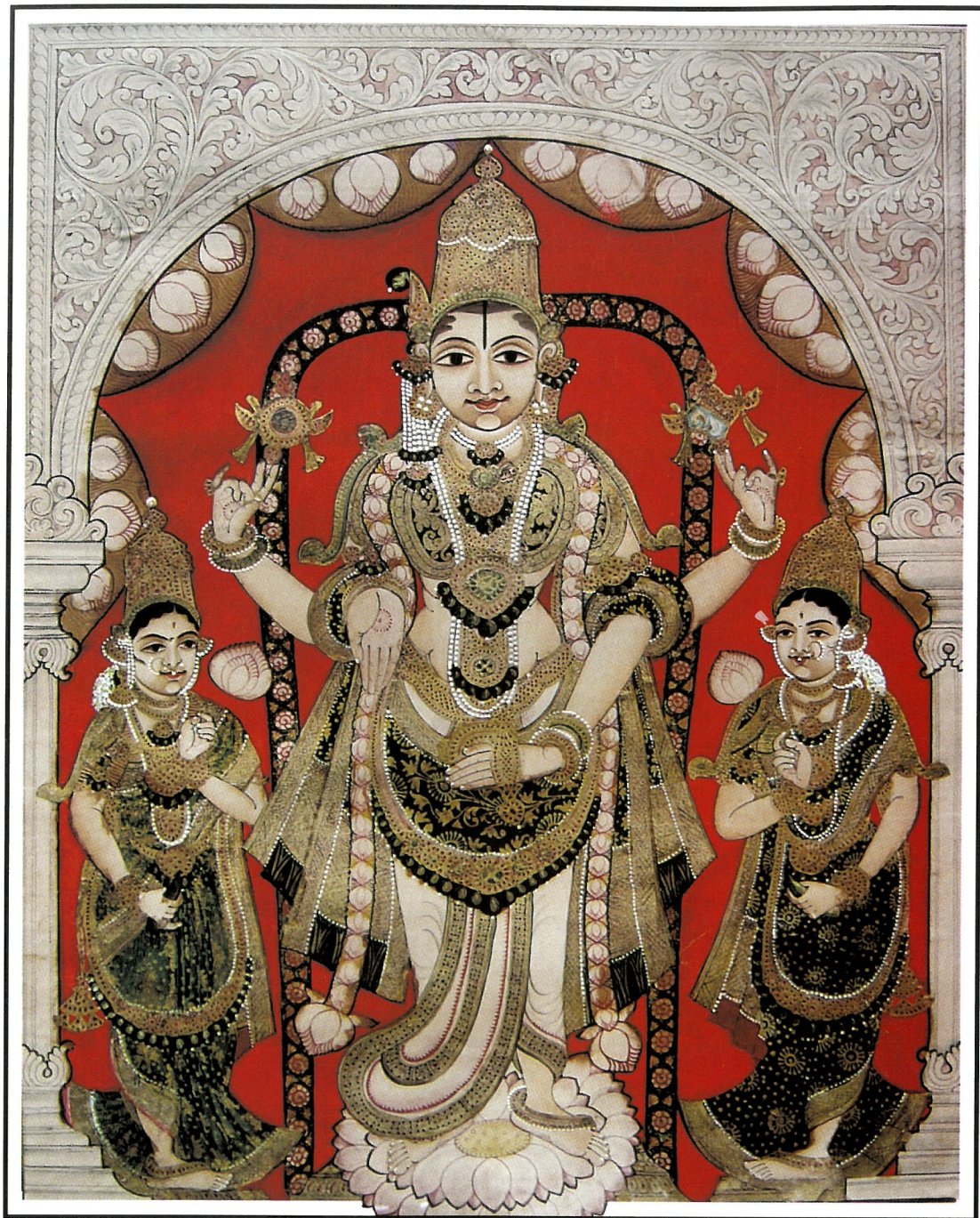
शेषद्रिकृतावासं पद्मिनीचित्तवल्लभाम् ।
आकाशराजवरदं बिल्वपत्रार्चन प्रियम् ॥
चतुर्भुजं शंखचक्रधारिणं कटिसंस्थितम् ।
वरहस्तं मेघवर्णं भक्तार्पितधनप्रियम् ॥
वैखानसागमाराध्यं मृगयासक्तमानसम् ।
ब्रह्मोत्सवसुसन्तुष्टं वैङ्कटेशं भजाम्यहम् ॥

The royal dynasty of Mysore was always devoted to the Lord of the Seven Hills (Tirumala-Tirupati). Doḍḍa-Devarāja-woḍeyar (1659-1673), especially, arranged for many daily and occasional worship rituals in a grand manner, and presented ornamental and bejewelled seats for the processional deity (mandāsana) as well as gold vessels for offerings to be made (poṅgal-naivedya-gaṅgālas). He also made provision for sahasra-nāma to be recited daily in the sanctum. He donated many villages to the temple. Chikka-Devarāja-woḍeyar (1673-1704) continued the interest and arranged for more festivals in the temple. He presented gold parasol for the processional image (Malayappa) and gold utensils for worship (pūjopakaraṇa). Krishṇa-rāja-woḍeyar III was most generous in his gifts and donations to the temple. The articles



presented by him are still in use in the temple.

It may be remembered that Raṇa-dhīra-Kaṇṭhīrava-Narasarāja-woḍeyar built a temple for Venkateśa of the Seven Hills around 1640, on a small hill near Śrīrangapaṭṭaṇa, called Karī-ghaṭṭa, which is visited to this day by throngs of devotees.



VENKATEŚA

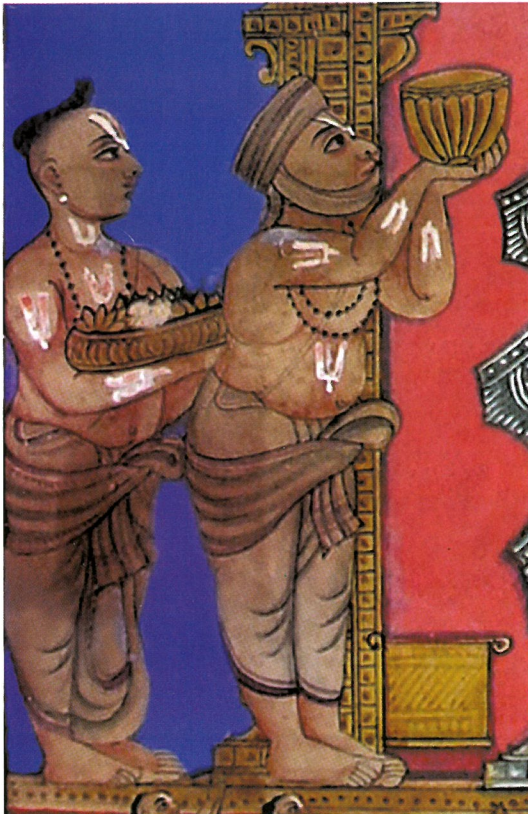
VENKATEŚVARA ABHISHEKA

The main image of Venkateśa in the sanctum of the temple atop the hill (Tirumala-Tirupati) receives his elaborate bath (abhisheka; tirumañjana) every friday; and it is an awe-inspiring occasion for the devotees.

This painting captures the extraordinary spectacle and reminds the devotees of the memorable experience. The reverential priests are busily

engaged in performing the sacred task of bathing the deity. The blue background turns red within the enclosing arch of glory (prabhāvali). The deity, devoid of heavy ornaments, is painted grey, and touched up in white.

The deity, popular all over the country, stands in majesty and splendour. The priests serving him are puny, but feel privileged and important. The painting does not need gold or gesso work to impress the onlooker. The subject itself is grand.





VEŅKATEŚVARA ABHISHEKA

RANGANĀTHA



Vishnu reclining on the folds of Ādi-śeṣha (time), and being attended upon by Lakshmi and a chowrie-bearer (chāmara-dhārīṇī). The creator, Brahmā, emanates from the navel-lotus. Tumburu and Nārada, the celestial minstrels, are shown on the sides, singing his glory. The four young sages, Sanaka, Sanātana, Sanandana and Sanatkumāra, are also seen. Vishnu's vehicle (vāhana), Garuḍa is shown in readiness to carry him. The treatment of the clouds above and of water below (with fish moving about) is suggestive. No gold has been used, but the effect is brought out successfully. This is the deity in Srirangapaṭṭaṇa, the former capital of Mysore state.

FORMS OF ŚIVA



Krishṇarāja-woḍeyar III was a staunch devotee of Śiva, especially of Śrīkaṇṭheśvara in the great temple of Nañjangūḍu. He is said to have been born immediately after (and as a result of) his father, Khāsā-Chāmarāja-woḍeyar, went through the ritual of reciting Śiva-pañchāksharīmantra (ओं नमः शिवाय।) one crore times in the temple at Nañjangūḍu. This was in 1794. And after Krishṇarāja-woḍeyar III became the ruler, he got the Nañjangūḍu temple repaired and enlarged (around 1819 A.D.); among the services that he undertook at this shrine, the sculptural representations of the twenty-five classical sportive forms of Śiva (pañcha-vimśati-līlā-mūrti) that he got made and installed, figure prominently. Similar series of Śiva-representation is to be found also in the temple at Chāmarāja-nagar, for which he alone was responsible. These forms of Śiva were included in his

Śrī-tattva-nidhi in the form of excellent paintings.

By the side of the palace in Mysore, the Śiva temple (Triṇeśvara) was in a state of disrepair with the sanctum being empty. Krishṇarāja-woḍeyar III arranged for the deity that was hidden in the fort at Nazarbād brought and installed in the sanctum, along with the consort-deity Tripura-sundarī. He also built the temple anew, and arranged for regular worship. Other Śiva-shrines to which he offered his services include Muḍukutore (Mallikārjuna) Talakāḍu (Vaidyeśvara), Kañchi (Ekāmreśvara) and Śrī-śaila (Mallikārjuna).

The ten paintings that follow are from the classical sportive forms of Śiva mentioned above. They are done in the typical Mysore style, crystallized by the court-artists during the days of Krishṇarāja-woḍeyar III.

KĀLĀRI-MŪRTI

श्रीमद् गरपुराधीशं पार्वतीप्राणवल्लभम् ।
गणेशस्कन्द समायुक्तं नारायणसखं शिवम् ॥
कपिलाकौण्डिनीमध्यवासिनं लोकपूजितम् ।
भृगुरामाघशमनं भवरोगहरं प्रभुम् ।
फणासप्तकसुशोभिभूषाढ्यं लिङ्गरूपिणम् ॥

(Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā)

Although the painting relates to the story of the devotee Mārkaṇḍeya being saved by Śiva from the clutches of Yama (Kāla), and represents Śiva as Kālāri-mūrti, the liṅga reminds one of the shrine in Nañjangūḍu, of which

Krishṇarāja-wodeyar III was a staunch devotee. There are other paintings done at the royal court which strongly resembles this mukha-liṅga.

The story-telling painting done on paper-mount provides an intricately worked pedestal for the mukha-liṅga, embossed with gold. On the sides of Śiva and Pārvati are fine designs in gold and gesso work, although unconnected with the theme. Yama, the god of death, has his terrible attendants behind the boy-devotee. Seated on the dark buffalo, Yāma is being pierced by the trident held in Śiva's hand.





KĀLĀRI-MŪRTI

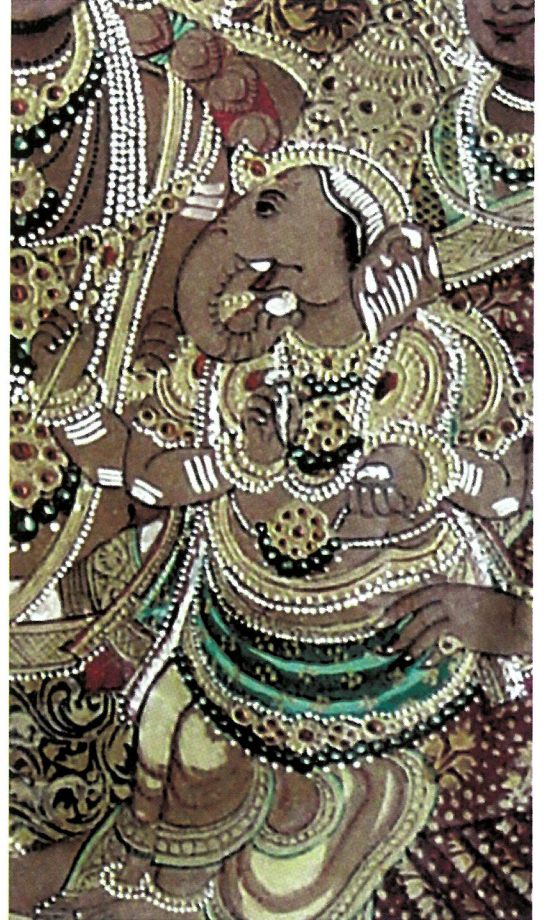
ŚIVA-FAMILY

पार्वतीपरमेशानौ गणेशस्कन्दनन्दिनः ॥

(Śrī-tattva-nidhi)

The family of Śiva, comprising of Pārvatī as his consort, and the six-headed Kārtikeya and the elephant-headed Gaṇeśa as their children, is invariably associated with the white Nandi as Śiva's vehicle. They are

together known as 'Śiva-pañchāyatana' (Śiva-pentad). The family constitutes a circle in the painting, elaborately composed and intricately decorated; still, but charming. It shows a judicious use of gold and gesso-work. The 'circle' is poised on a fine rectangular carpet in Vandyke brown, buff and burnt sienna. The designs are fascinating. The Nandi, white all over, though sitting stands out majestically; it steals the show !





ŚIVA-FAMILY

VRISHĀRŪḌHA

सव्ये स्याद्वक्रतुण्डान्वितकटककरं
गोपतेः पृष्ठसंस्थं वामस्यार्धं ।

सवक्षं वरकरयुगले टङ्ककृष्णं दधानं
पृष्ठस्थोऽक्षं प्रसन्नं त्रिणयन-लसितं
बद्धवेणीकिरीटं ।

वामे गौर्या समेतं नमत शुभकरं
तं वृषारूढ शम्भुम् ॥

Pretty picture of Śiva and Pārvati riding the sacred bull Nandi. The bull, is magnificently drawn, elaborately adorned, and is up and about. The divine couple seated on it are splendid specimens of icons in Mysore style, full of grace and grandeur, poise and dignity.

Late in period, the painting has used colours which are at once sober and subdued. Embossing with gold leaf and liquid has been done in a pleasing manner.





VRISHĀRŪDHA

PAÑCHĀYATANA PARAMEŚVARA

सितद्युतिः पञ्चमुखोऽवतान्मा-

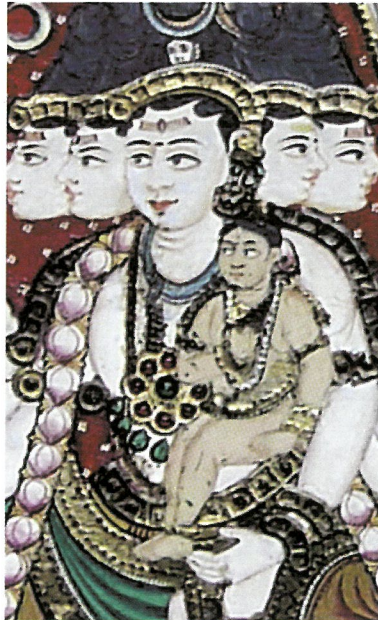
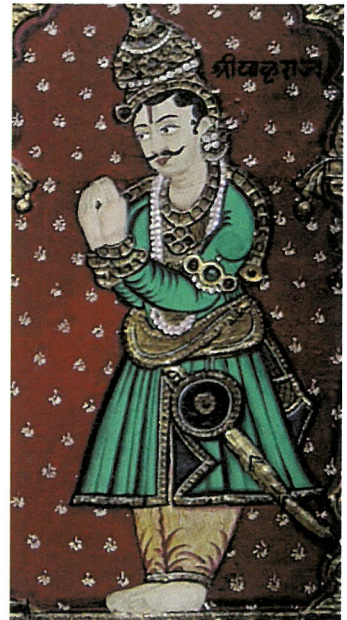
मीशान ऊर्ध्व परमप्रकाशः ॥

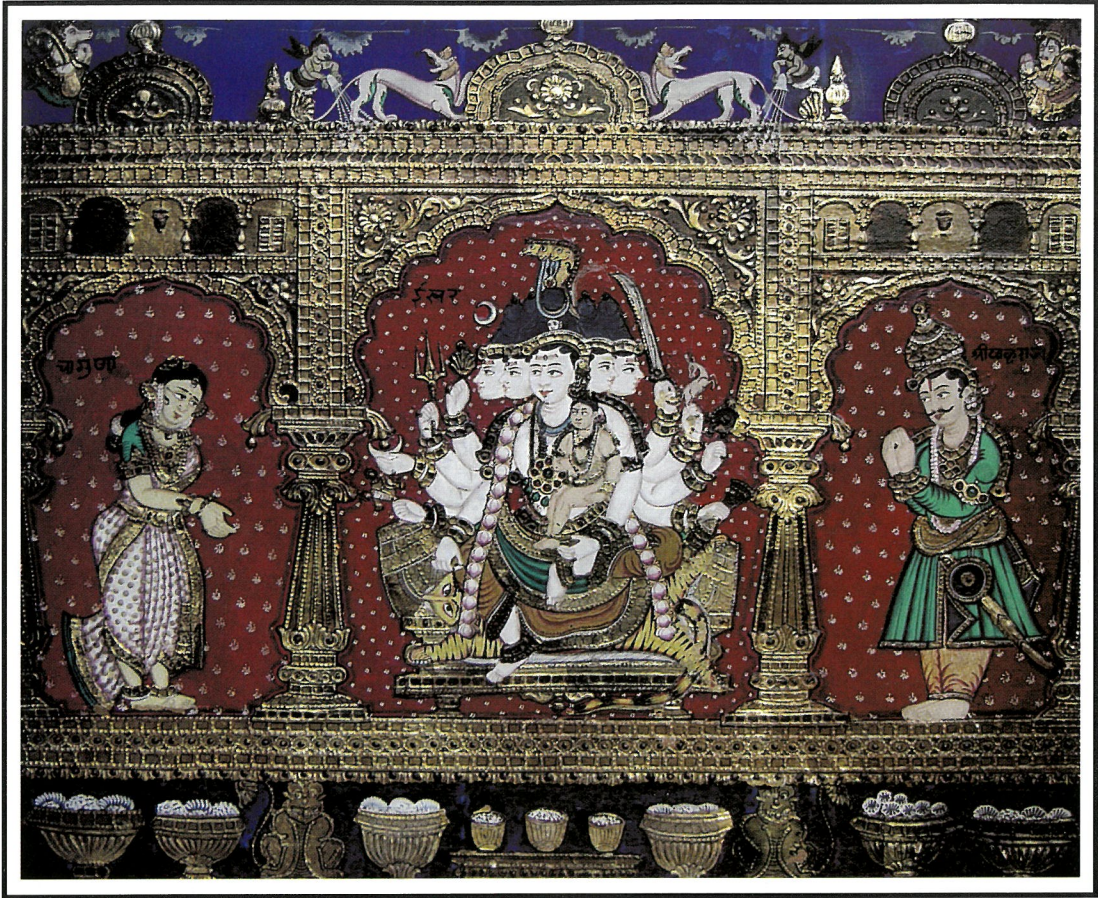
(Śrī-tattva-nidhi)

An unusual painting, probably influenced by the Tanjore style, depicting Śiva with five heads (Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa and Īśāna), and ten hands seated with Kumāra on his lap upon a tiger-skin laid on a beautiful pedestal. The central pavilion, surmounted by a tower-niche flanked by lions, is elaborately and finely worked. Śiva seated in this pavilion is attended by a devout and royal couple, perhaps Śiriyālā-rāja and Changale, in the smaller pavilions on the two sides.

The painting done on coated wood-plank is remarkable for its use of gold leaf, gesso and inset of a few precious stones. Śiva's body is done in gold, and overlaid with greyish white.

The five heads represent the elements earth, water, fire, air and space (ākāśa) in order. The three-hooded snake that is on top of Śiva's head represents the three guṇas, sattva, rajas and tamas. The five faces also suggest the projection of the five directions, west, north, south, east and sky (upward) in order. The ten hands represent these four directions and also the four intermediary directions, together with the directions above and below.





PAÑCHĀYATANA PARAMESVARA

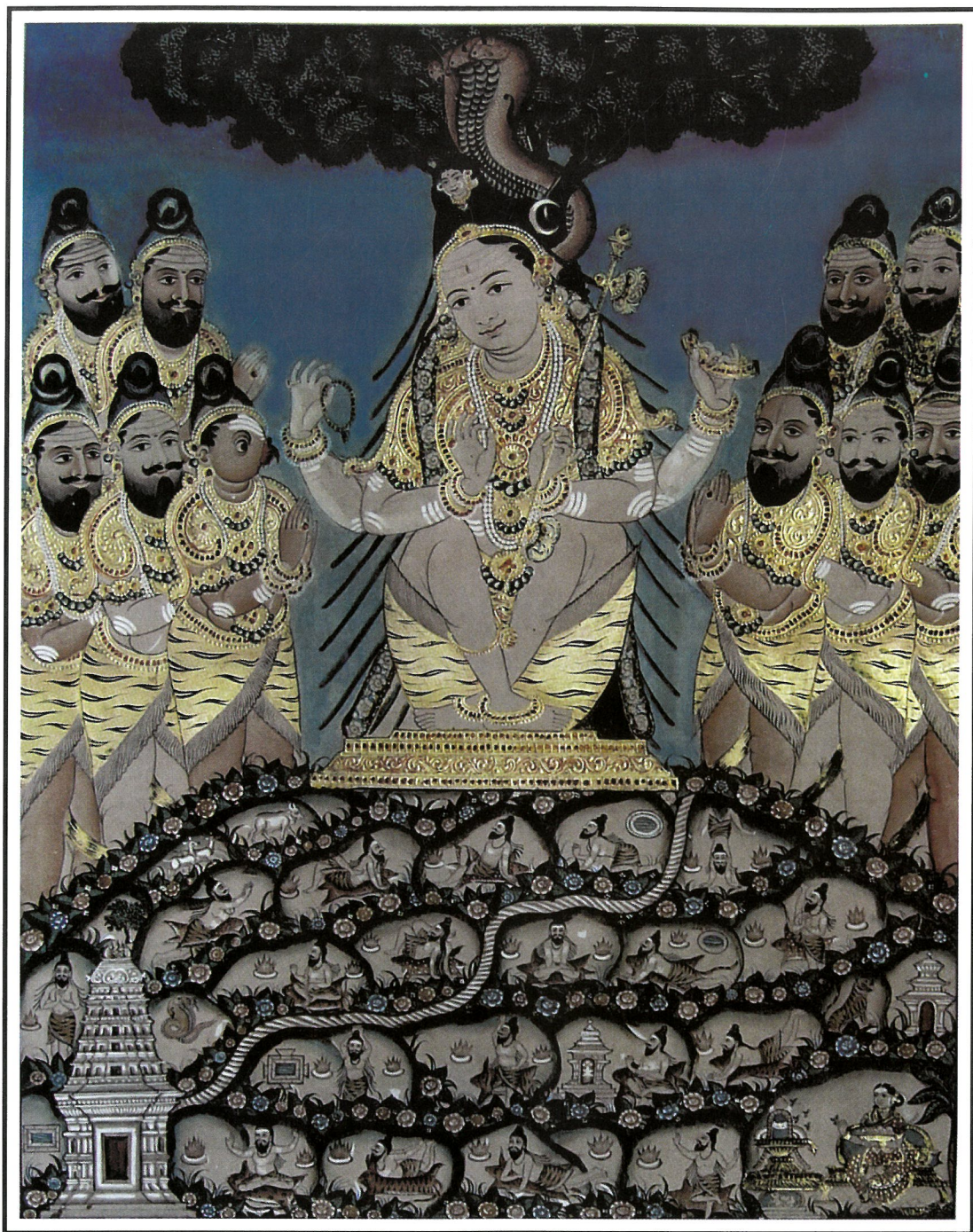
DAKṢIṆĀ-MŪRTI

अचल उपरिशृंगे शंभु योगासनस्थं
धवलममलवर्णं चैकवक्त्रं त्रिणेत्रम् ।
करगतशुचिसर्पं पुस्तकज्ञानमुद्रं
मुनिनुतपदयुग्मं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥

An interesting depiction of Śiva as Dakṣiṇā-mūrti, it abounds in details like the mountain (the Himālayas) on top of which he is seated in the Yogic posture, the caves in which the ascetics do

penance, the sages headed by Śuka surrounding Śiva, seeking grace from him, the sacred tree under which he sits and the three-hooded serpent which emerges from the tree to function like a parasol. There is a small but elegant entrance-tower to ascend the mountain on one corner at the bottom, and the picture of Pārvati engaged in worship on the other corner at the bottom. The figure of Śiva is done with great care and devotion, as also that of the snake on top of his head.





DAKSHINĀ-MŪRTI

GIRIJĀ-KALYĀṆĀ

This was a favourite theme for painters in Mysore during the nineteenth century: Śiva's wedding with Pārvati. There are many of them in the traditional style. This painting is an elaborate one, crowded with numerous figures (sages, gods, demons, goddesses and Śiva's attendants). The marriage-pavilion is exquisitely depicted (gold leaf work), and on top of it are shown the flying gandharvas in the sky (ultramarine), the celestial minstrels Nārada and Tumburu. The Himālaya (father of the bride) along with his consort Menā, is offering Pārvatī to Śiva; the ceremonial milk that he pours (dhārā) into Śiva's palm is being sucked by the devout Nandi,

lying at Śiva's feet. Brahmā officiates as the priest, and he is tending the sacred fire that witnesses the wedding-ritual. The three-legged Bhr̥ngi, the staunch servant of Śiva, is all excited, naturally, because his master is the bridegroom.

It is a painting where romance, colours, figures, devotion, and imagination combine. The centre-piece is the wish-fulfilling tree (kalpavṛksha) under which the divine wedding takes place. The tree also signifies a successful painting, the wish of the artist being amply fulfilled.

Śiva on this occasion is known as Kalyāṇa-sundara-mūrti or as Vaivāhika-mūrti.

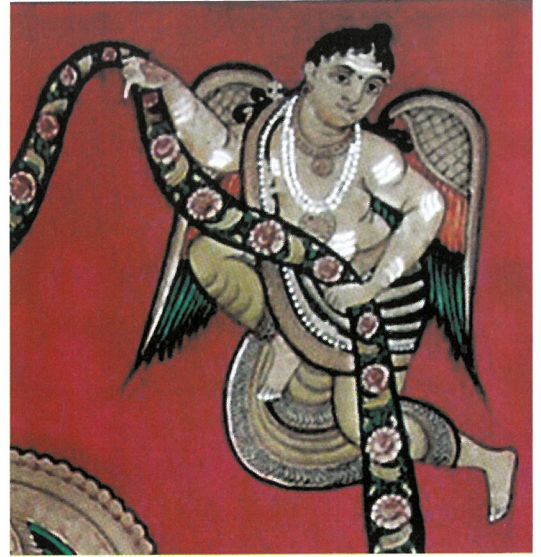




GIRIJĀ-KALYĀṆĀ

ŚIVA - PAÑCHĀYATANA

It is a cosy family portrait, peaceful and serene, with warm green standing out. It shows Śiva and Pārvatī seated on a splendid throne with elaborate designs. Their two children, Skanda (on the right) and Gaṇeśa (on the left) stand on the sides. And the favourite attendant of Śiva, the bull (Nandi) is seated right in front of the divine couple. The flying celestial beings with wings are shown above, holding the garland that runs across the top of the painting, and above the throne.





ŚIVA - PAÑCHĀYATANA

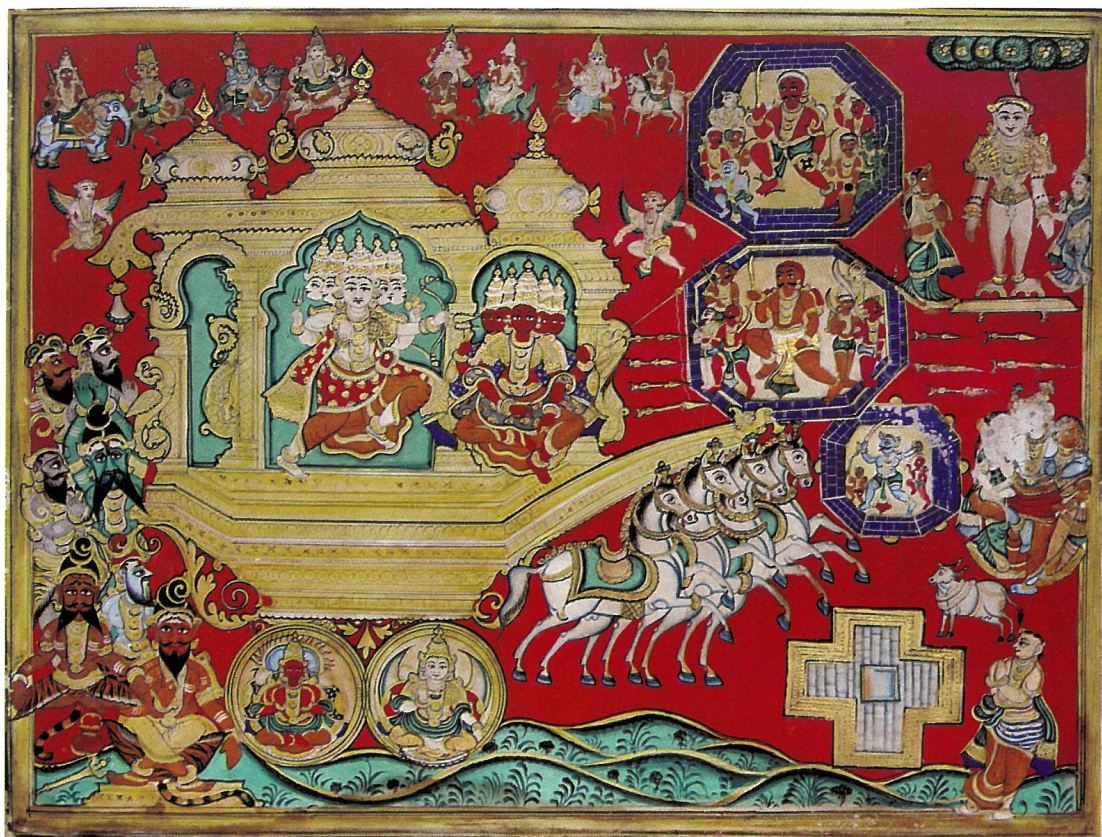
TRIPURĀRI

एवं त्रिपुरसंहारं रूपं प्रोक्तं महात्मभिः॥

Tripura are three demons with cities of gold (heaven), silver (midregion) and iron (earth); they are offsprings of Tāraka. With Brahmā's boon, they begin destroying the world of gods and humans. Śiva sets out to fight with them. This is the painting's theme. The story is symbolic, and very suggestive. And the painting is equally interesting.

Śiva is five-headed, representing the five constituent elements and the five directions. Brahmā, the creator, is his charioteer. The horses that draw the chariot are the four Vedas. Sun and Moon are wheels of the chariot. Vishṇu takes the form of Mohana-Buddha to lure away the śaktis of the three asuras. The eight guardians of the directions (dikpālakas) hover about to help Śiva in the battle. The seven sages are also in readiness to help. Śiva's chariot moves over hills and dales.





TRIPURĀRI

SANDHYĀ-TĀṆḌAVA

कैलासशैलशिखरे त्रिजगज्जनित्रीं
गौरीं निवेश्य कनकाञ्चितरत्नपीठे ।
नृत्यन्तमादिपुरुषं शशिशेखरं तं
देवाः प्रदोषसमयेऽनुभजन्ति सर्वे ॥

Seating Pārvati on a golden throne atop the Kailāsa peak in eventide, Śiva danced in front of her, and all the gods accompanied him: Nārada and Tumburu sang, Brahmā kept time, Viṣṇu beat the drum, Sarasvatī played on the veenā, and so on. This is sandhyā-tāṇḍava, one of the seven classical dance-styles.



The painting is dominated by Pārvatī on the right side, light blue in complexion and by the dancing Śiva on the left side. The hall where the dance is being performed is modelled after a pavilion in Mysore palace (toṭṭi). The guardians of the directions and iconic representations of the gods and sages are neatly drawn and lightly coloured. There is no gesso-work to be seen, but punching in gold has been introduced in designs.

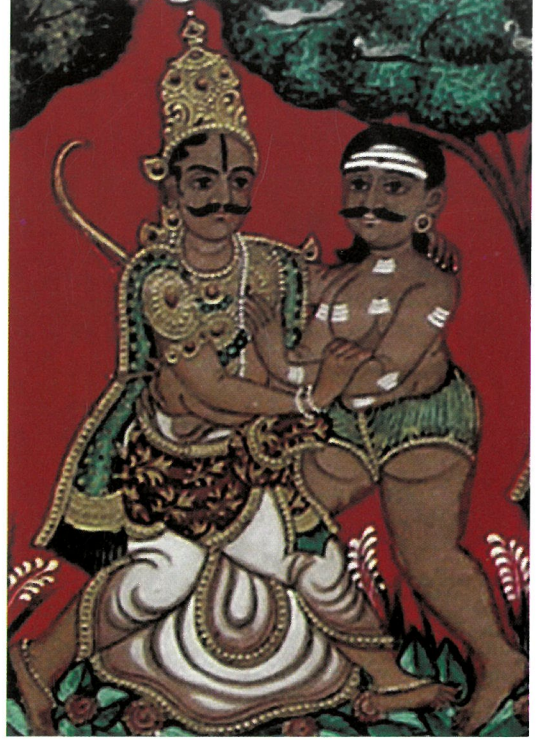




SANDHYĀ-TĀṆḌAVA

KIR ĀT ĀRJUNA

The Pāṇḍava hero, Arjuna, did penance on the Indrakīla mountain to obtain Pāśupatāstra from Śiva. In order to test his ardour, Śiva assumed the guise of a hunter, and created a wild boar (Mūkāsura) to distract Arjuna from his meditation. Arjuna hit the wild boar with his arrow, and at the same moment the hunter (Śiva) also hit the boar with an arrow and killed it. A strife was occasioned as to who it was that killed the boar. The two fought; and at last Arjuna discovered that the hunter he was fighting with was Śiva himself. Arjuna seeks the blessings of Śiva, who presents him with the Pāśupatāstra.



The narrative painting is very effectively composed in three distinct levels moving spirally upwards. The central division shows the fight between the hunter and Arjuna. The top division is interesting. It shows Arjuna recounting the episode to his brothers. Bhīma challengingly claims he would win Śiva's grace within the time his mace he throws up falls to the ground. He proves right. Śiva catches the mace and blesses him. On the top corner to the right is Śiva and Pārvatī seated in a flying chariot.



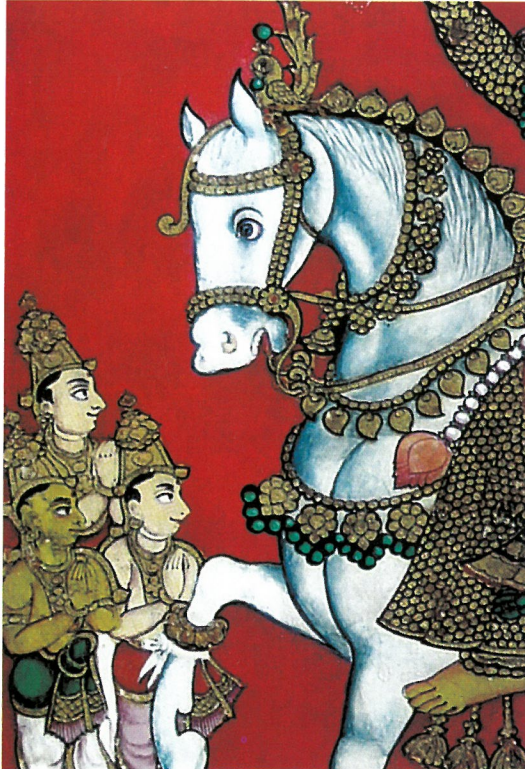


KIRĀTĀRJUNA

MAILĀRA-DEVA

Śiva assumed the form of a valiant hero, semi-divine Mailāra (Mailāri, Mallāri), in order to vanquish the demon Malla. This hero headed an army of seven crores (ēḷu-koṭi), and rode a powerful charger, and accompanied by his consort, Mhālasā (incarnation of Pārvatī), killed the demons. He was fond of dogs, who also helped him in his fight with the demons. He is the folk-god of Mahārāshṭra and northern parts of Karnāṭaka, widely worshipped and eulogized in song, dance and drama.

In the painting, the charger, blazing white in complexion, is shown as spirited and lovely to look at. On top of its head is the Huma-bird with an ornamental plumage. Śiva (Mailāra) wearing a gown, reaching his ankles, is two-armed, the right hand flourishing a bright sword. Pārvatī (Mhālasā) is green in hue and is profusely decorated. The green is for blue, and Pārvatī is the sister of Kṛishṇa whose complexion is blue. The charger's tail is interestingly multi-coloured.





MAILĀRA-DEVA

SPORTS OF KṚISHṆA



Krishna was among the favourite deities of Krishṇarāja-woḍeyar III. The founder of the Woḍeyar dynasty belonged to the Yadu-vaṁśa from Dvārakā. Many of the earlier rulers of Mysore were devotees of Sampatkumāra of Mēlukōṭe, especially Rāja-woḍeyar and Kaṇṭhīrava-narasarāja-woḍeyar. The pontiff of the Parkāla maṭha was the rāja-guru in Mysore. Krishṇarāja-woḍeyar III was greatly devoted to the Aḷvārs and Śrī Rāmānuja.

Almost the first important thing he did after he assumed the reigns of administration, in Mysore, in 1811 was to make the Prasanna-Kṛishṇa-svāmi temple by the side of the palace a centre of Vaishṇava activities. He established

the relatedness of this shrine with the classical Śrīvaishṇava places of importance (divya-deśa-sambandha). He got installed here the typical Śrīvaishṇava-deities in stone: Raṅganātha of Śrīrangam, Varadarāja of Kāñchi, Venkaṭaramaṇa of Tirupati, Ananta, Garuḍa, Vishvaksena, Nammāḷvār, Śrī Rāmānuja, Vedānta deśika, the Jeers and the twenty-four āḷvār-āchāryas. This was around 1828.

He was naturally devoted to the Ranganātha shrine in Śrīrangapaṭṭaṇa, the former capital of Mysore state. He gave many endowments to this temple, and arranged for several services. He got the devotee-icon (bhakta-vigraha) of Kaṇṭhīrava-narasa-rāja-woḍeyar installed in front of the deity. It may be

mentioned that his father Khāsā-Chāmarāja-woḍeyar also was greatly devoted to this temple. In fact, it was he who got the present processional image installed in 1770, when the earlier processional image (Kastūri-ranga) was lost when the chariot got burnt during a festive occasion. Kṛṣṇarāja-woḍeyar III also offered services at Biḷigiri-Raṅga hills, Himavad-gopāla-svāmi hill, Kañchi (Varada-rāja, garuḍotsava), Śrīrangam (nandā-dīpa, Sahasranāma-archanā) and Tīrupati.

In all these Vaishṇava-centres, the sports of Kṛṣṇa were celebrated in a grand manner on several occasions during the year; and the Maharāja was naturally interested in them. It was his custom to listen regularly to the tenth chapter of *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, which describes the juvenile sports of Kṛṣṇa. He therefore directed his court-artists to paint Kṛṣṇa in various sportive moods. Here are paintings of a later period that depict Kṛṣṇa in some of these sportive forms which were then crystallized.

VEṆUGOPĀLA

Kṛṣṇa playing flute, surrounded by his eight consorts (Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, Jāmbavati, etc.) under the wish-fulfilling tree (kalpa-vṛksha). The four cows are also enjoying the music, one of them licking his right foot, for he is go-pāla. The textile designs are prominent, as also the jewellery, treated with lavish gold-work. A serpent is perched on the tree, also enjoying music. This is to justify the saying that music is appreciated by animals and reptiles too. The calf that is sucking milk from its mother, which is absorbed in music, is shown to heighten the effect.



YAŚODĀ - KṚISHṆA

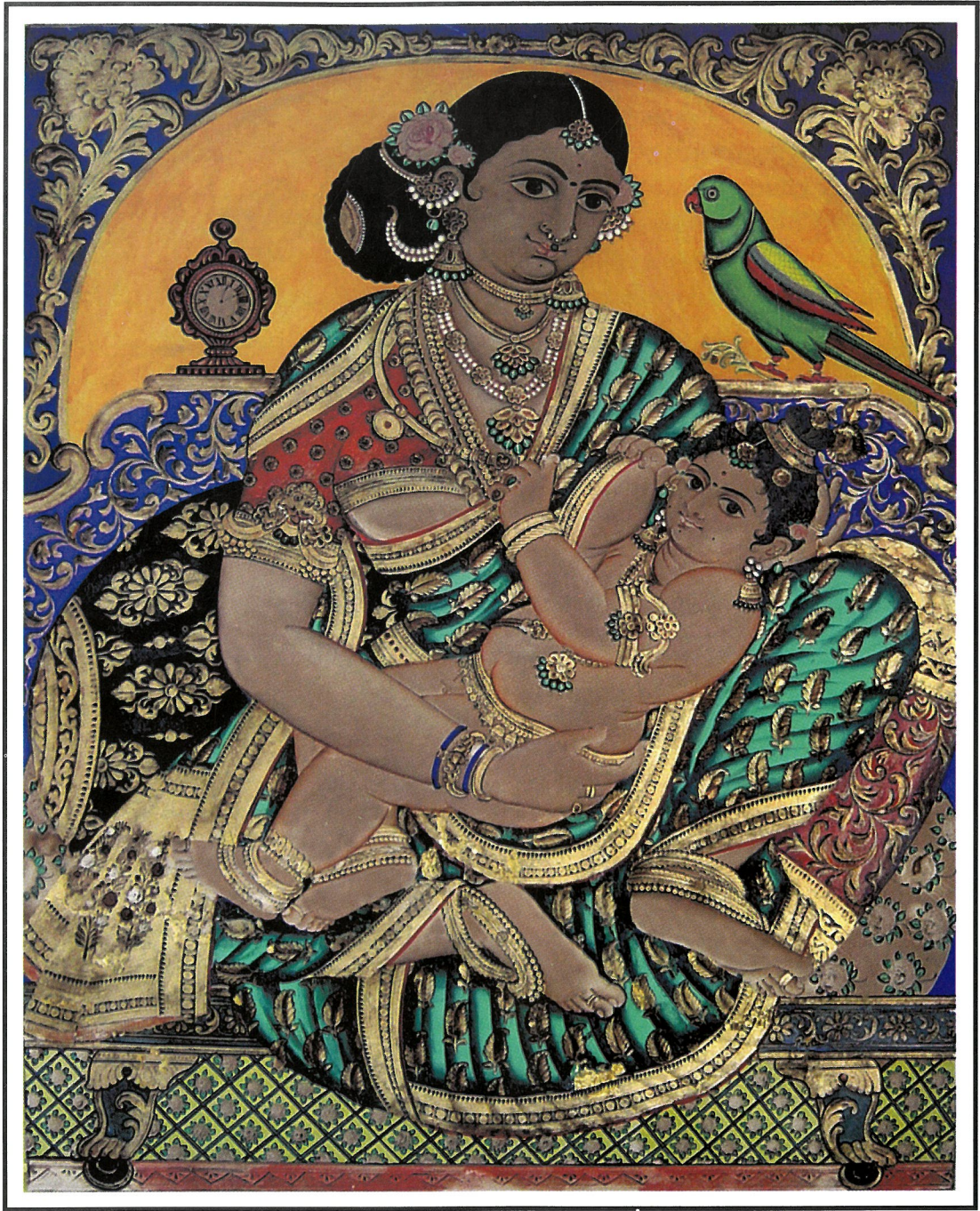
पिबन्तं च स्तनं मातुर्मुखं संवीक्ष्य सुस्मितम् ।
अंगुल्यग्रैः स्तनं चान्यं स्पृशन्तं च मुहुर्मुहुः ।
यशोदाङ्गस्थितं रूपं ध्यायेत्पुत्रदं सदा ॥

(Śrī-tattva-nidhi)

This is a popular subject for the 'traditional' painters of Mysore and Tanjore: Kṛishṇa as a baby being fondled by his foster-mother Yaśodā in Nanda-gokula. It not only brings to focus the innocence of divinity but the motherly love. The artist is free to handle the details of the situation. He can spend all his skill on the portraiture of the fortunate lady and also depict the infant in all its glory. He can even introduce a time-piece that is anachronistic, and a bird that is irrelevant. Some critics trace the origin of this subject to the medieval European paintings of the Infant Jesus with his mother.

The dhyāna-śloka given above, by Krishnarāja-woḍeyar III in his *Śrī-tattva-nidhi* is fully and faithfully followed in this painting. The visualization of the baby-Kṛishṇa in this manner is said to bring about progeny. This is perhaps what made the subject popular.

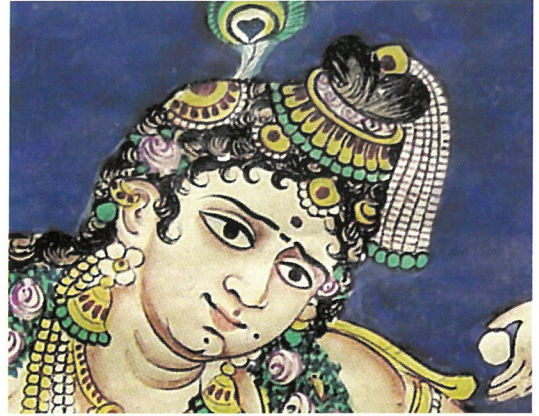
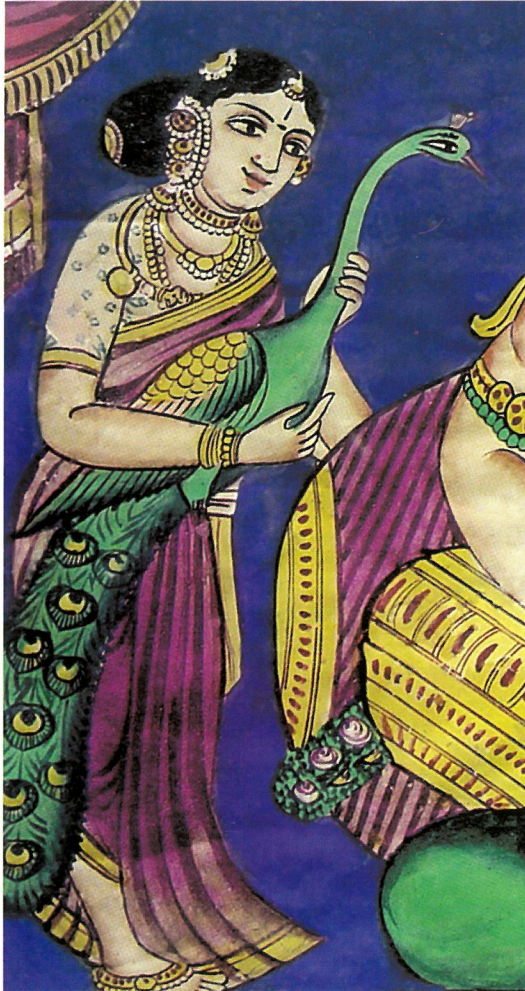


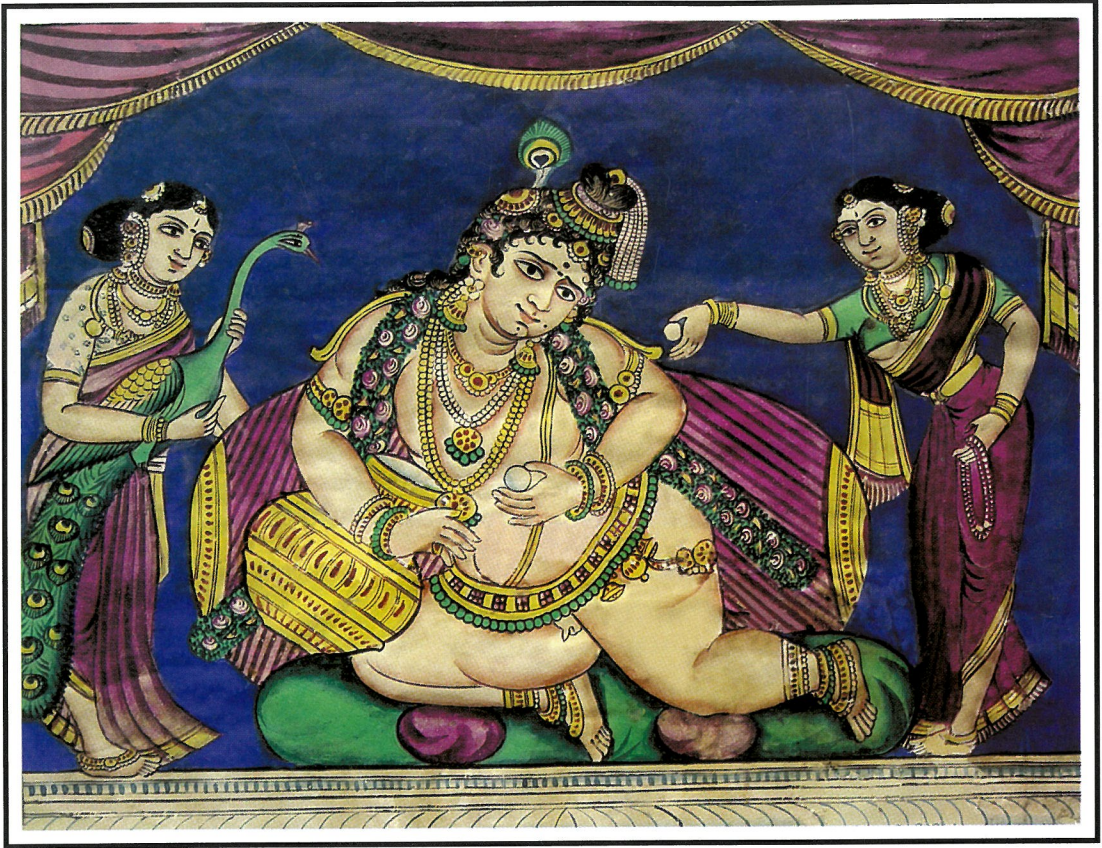


YAŚODĀ - KṚṢHṆA

NAVANĪTA KṚISHṆA

A favourite theme in traditional paintings of Mysore and Tanjore: Kṛishṇa shown as a child enjoying a pot of butter that is freshly churned (nava-nīta) Two ladies attend on him, one offering a delicacy and the other entertaining him with a peacock as his playmate.





NAVANĪTA KṚṢHṆA

KṚISHṆA WITH RUKMINĪ AND SATYABHĀMĀ

गोवर्धनधरोद्धारं यशोदानन्दवर्धनम्।

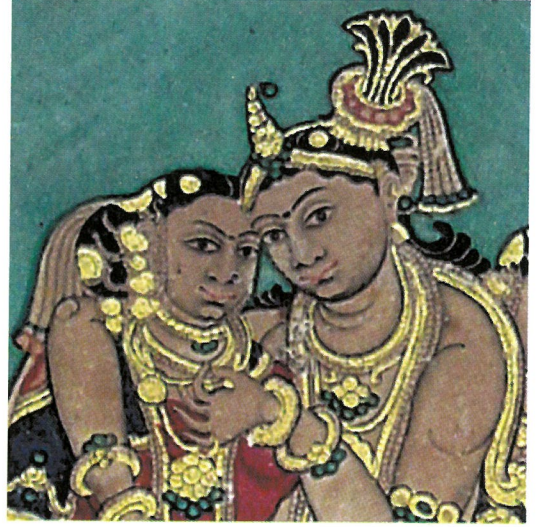
रुक्मिणीसत्यभामेशं लीलामानुषविग्रहम्॥

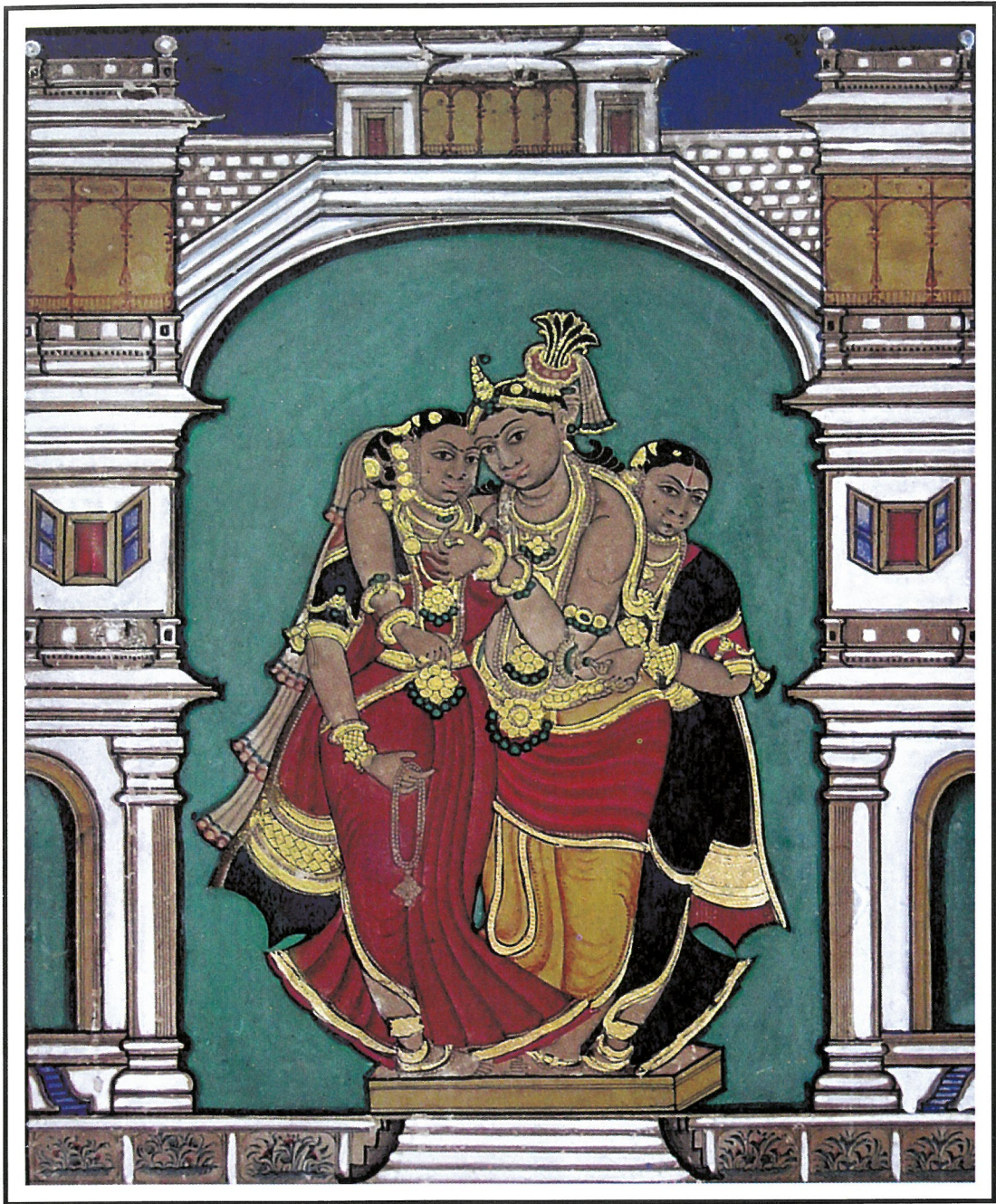
(Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā)

Krishṇarājā-woḍeyar III was fond of the purāṇic imagery of Kṛishṇa. The artists of his court made a large number of paintings on the Kṛishṇa theme, for it was popular even among the people.

An excellent composition, comprehending the three human figures in one oval form, and the architectural lay-out in the background, recalling the Mysore style of storeyed mansions. Kṛishṇa is in the amorous embrace of his two consorts Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā. The latter is more ostensibly bejewelled, and Kṛishṇa is also shown as partial to her. Probably the influence of Bhāmā-Kalāpam the folk-drama is seen here.

This painting shows Kṛishṇa in romantic company with his two favourite damsels: Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā. The architectural setting for the three amorous figures is that of the palace, probably the inside of a pavilion (toṭṭi) in Mysore. The composition of the main subject is neat, complete and colourful.





KRISHṆA
WITH RUKMIṆĪ AND SATYABHĀMĀ

KṚISHṆA AS LOVER

Kṛishṇa in his early youth was a celebrated lover of the cowherd damsels. This is a familiar theme of painters in India. In this painting, he is shown embracing one damsel, with another one seated on his lap. Two other ladies are attending on him. The sarees of the female figures are done with care and imagination, as also the elaborate couch-spread.

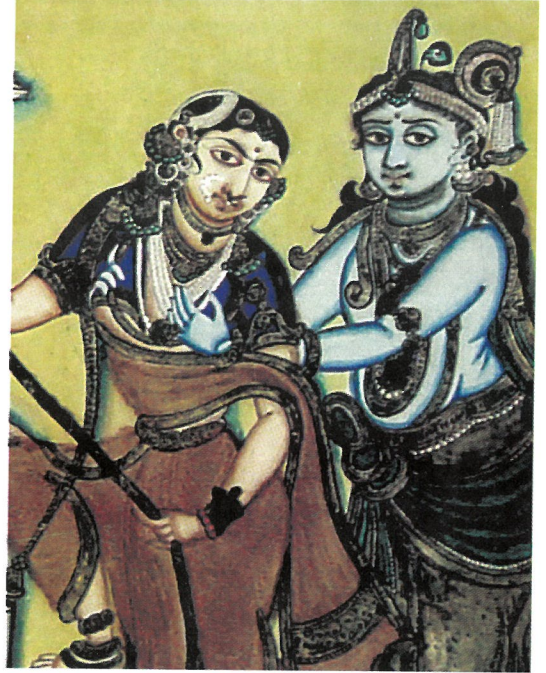




KRISHNA AS LOVER

KṚISHṆA AT THE WELL

A fine painting depicting a sample of the romantic sports for which Kṛishṇa is celebrated. The well forms the centre of the situation. A Gopī has come to draw water from the well, with her friends. As she was about to drop the vessel into the well, suddenly Kṛishṇa arrives (or was he expected ?) and holds her to her obvious delight! He has come with another lass, holding a royal parasol over his head (for was he not the king of Dvārakā?), and yet another girl holding a 'sumāna-gari' (of the Mysore palace?). The Gopī's friend discretely turns her head aside.



The well is shown as situated indoors, in the interior of a mansion, in close proximity to the ornate edifice for the sacred basil plant (*tulasī-katṭe*), also within a pavilion. The white pillar is plain, but the drapery on the other side is fascinating red. Gold probably was rich when applied, but now it has lost its lustre.

Kṛishṇa with five ladies around a well is not merely picturesque, but also symbolic: five sense-organs, mind as their mate and master, and the self hidden in the heart-cavern as water in the well.





KRISHNA AT THE WELL

KṚISHṆA IN DVĀRAKĀ

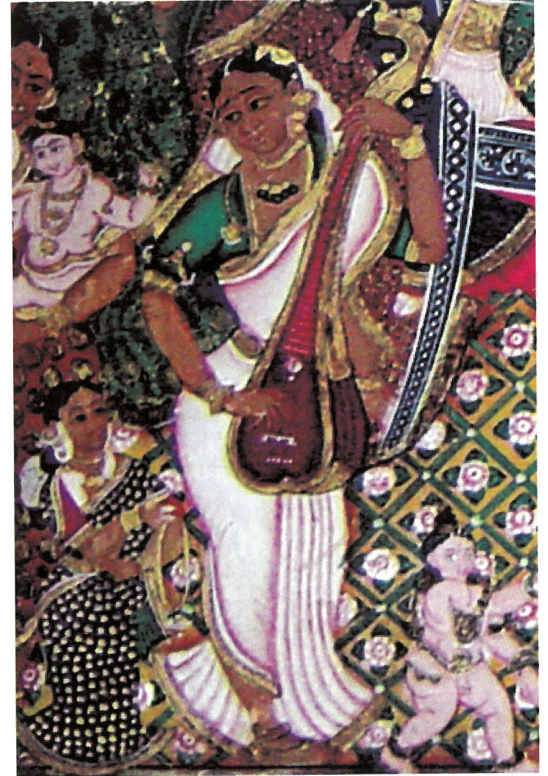
गोगोप प्राणदातारं कंसादिघ्नं बलानुजम् ।

मुरारिं द्वारकाधीशं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥

(Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā)

This is a painting in typical Mysore style, breathing the air of the grandeur, comforts and opulence of the erstwhile Mysore palace. Kṛishṇa is the king of Dvārakā; reminding us of Krishṇarāja III of Mysore. He is seated on an elegant throne surmounted by a charming parasol, playing 'chaduraṅga', a game of Indian chess, with perhaps Satyabhāmā, seated on a chair with ivory inlay. He also holds in amorous embrace, another lady love, probably Rukmiṇī. Surrounding Kṛishṇa the king are all women playing on musical instruments and entertaining the king and the queens. The ladies are all dressed up as typical ಚಿಟಿಕಾ ಸ್ತ್ರೀಯರು. The carpet is of splendid design.

The gold employment is delicate and effective, although gesso-work is not there.





KṚISHṆA IN DVĀRAKĀ

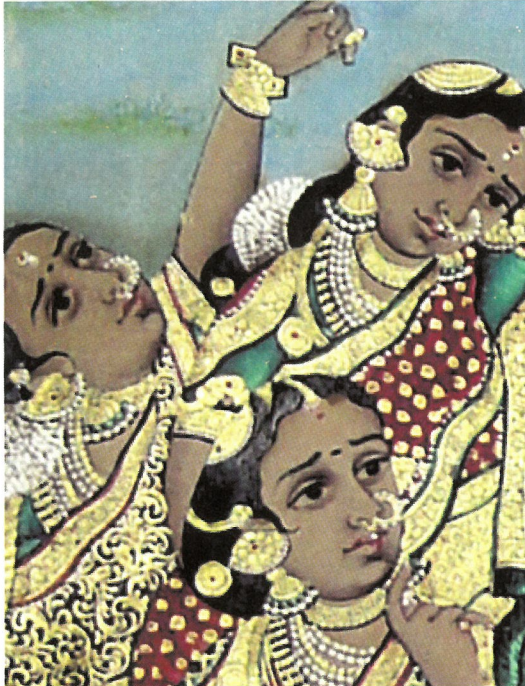
GOVARDHANA-DHĀRI

गोवर्धनधरं वन्दे गोकुलानन्दवर्धनम् ।

A familiar subject in the Kṛishṇa-paintings, it depicts Kṛishṇa with his little finger lifting up the hill (Govardhana) to shield the hamlet from the fury of the storms and torrents of rain sent by the irate Indra. Indra was annoyed because the dwellers of the hamlet stopped worshipping him, on Kṛishṇa's advice, and began offering their adoration to the neighbouring hill, which provided much to the welfare of the people and the cattle of the village (hence, called 'Go-var dhana', 'cattle-

nourisher'). Kṛishṇa held this hill on his finger until the fury abated. Indra was humiliated, and he supplicated to Kṛishṇa.

It is a pretty painting, incorporating several influences. The figures are well drawn, the ladies showing a variety of facial expressions. They are all splendidly decorated, including the cow that stands behind Kṛishṇa. The textile designs are conspicuous and colourful. The hill, alive all over with foliage, animals and birds, has an uninterrupted rampart surmounting it. The dark and rainbearing clouds hover over the hill ominously. But everything is calm below.





GOVARDHANA-DHĀRI

KṚSHṆA'S LIFE-STORY

षोडशस्त्रीसहस्रेशं जारचोरशिखामणिम् ।

वेणुगानप्रियं शौरिं गोपस्त्रीपरिवेष्टितम् ॥

(Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā)

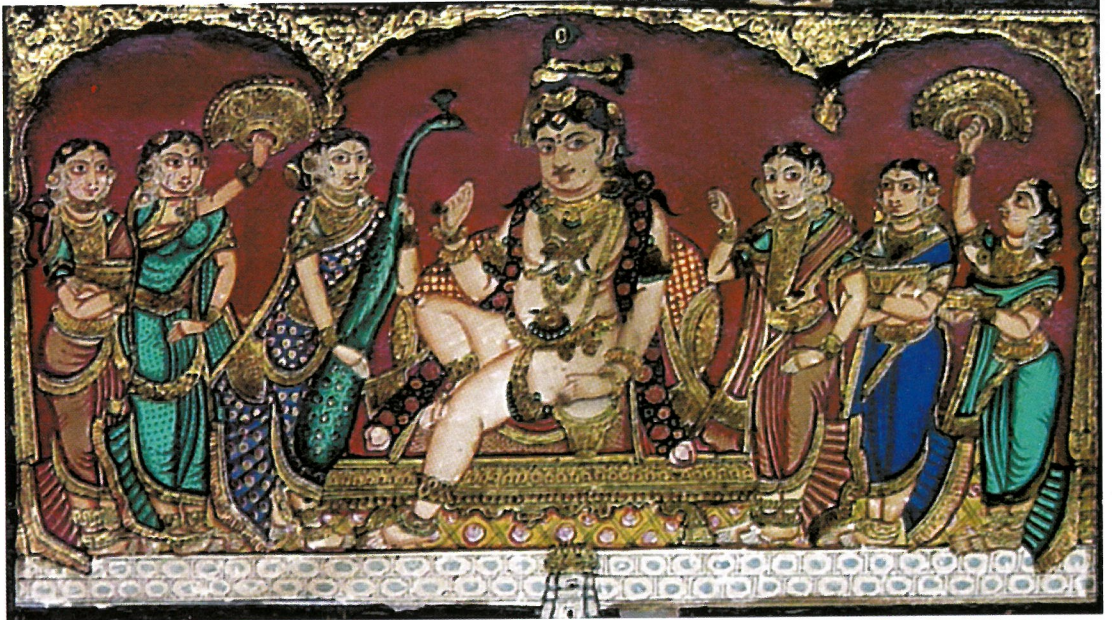
Here is an extraordinary and ambitious painting, attempting to depict the entire, eventful life-story of Kṛishṇa, all in miniatures in one canvas. The artist has been successful. There are forty miniature-paintings, each of which could be blown up into an independent painting, arranged around a central panel in which Kṛishṇa is relaxing with six pretty damsels.

There is an entrance-tower (dvāra-gopura) designed for the configuration

of miniatures, guarded by Jaya and Vijaya, the door-keepers of Vaikuṇṭha (which is Kṛishṇa's Goloka). There are two towers within the enclosure, leading to the rear-tower. All four towers constitute the central dividing line (madhya-rekhā): and the seated Kṛishṇa represents the central point along this line (brahma-sthāna). The composition has been thoughtful.

The miniatures tell the story of Kṛishṇa in an orderly narrative fashion, covering all the major events in his life.

The painting has been done on paper pasted on wood. Gold leaf is generously used, but no gesso-work.





KṚSHṆA'S LIFE-STORY

KUCHELA-EPIISODE

Kṛishṇa and Kuchela are boyhood friends. Kṛishṇa becomes the monarch of Dvārakā. Kuchela remains the poor brāhmaṇa that he always was. Prompted by his wife, Kuchela visits Kṛishṇa. Kṛishṇa receives him with love and affection, warmth and effusion. Kuchela is overpowered, and incidentally all prosperity comes to his lot, unasked.

This episode is the subject-matter of this painting. It is narrative in character, and orderly in sequence, starting from the corner to the right and moving left-ward. Kṛishṇa's elder brother, Balarāma, receives their boyhood friend, Kuchela, and takes him to the inner apartment. Kuchela has not come empty-handed: he has brought a handful of parched rice-grains as present to Kṛishṇa.

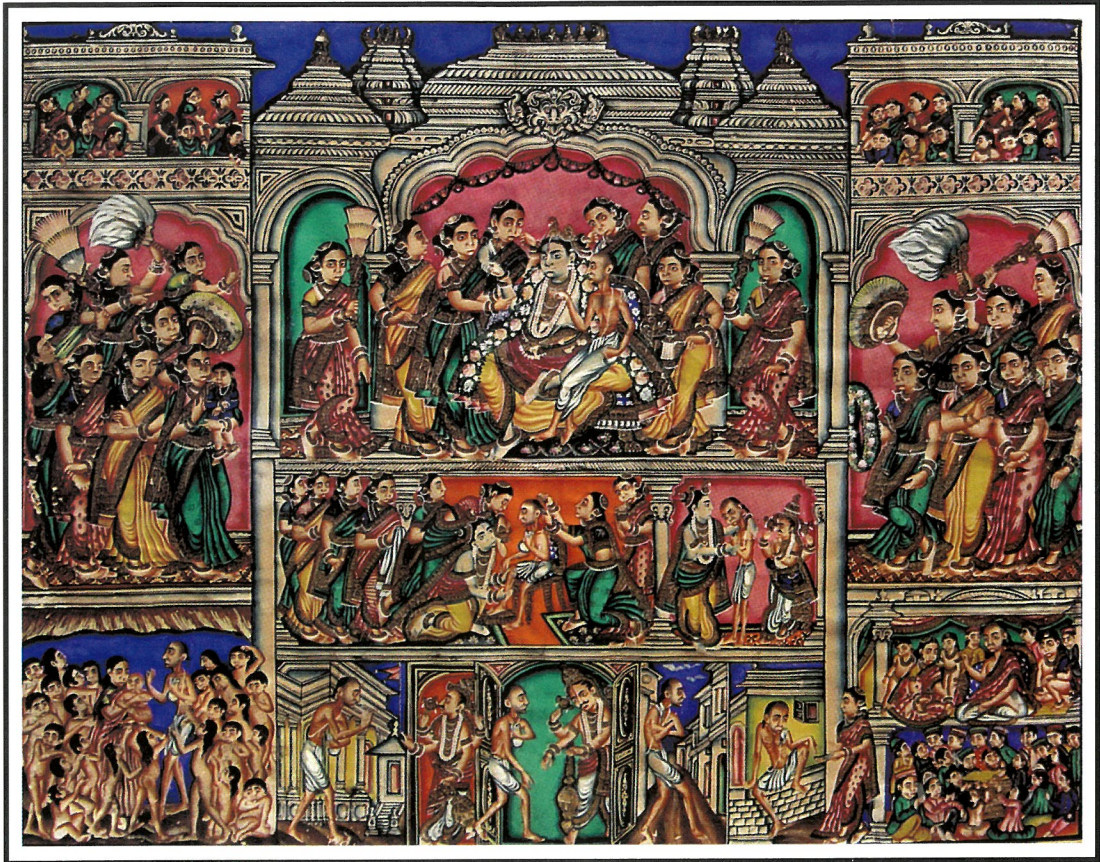
The monarch of Dvārakā is mightily pleased, in fact excited. The poor Kuchela is treated to an extraordinary reception!

The main enclosure in the painting, the largest and most colourful, shows Kṛishṇa seated on his throne with Kuchela by his side, nay of his lap, surrounded by all the ladies in the court, in greeful attendance. Other ladies in the palace gather in the balconies and gaze at this wonderful spectacle.

The painting is crowded with human figures, but the careful composition provides unmistakable identity and meaning to each of the figures.

It is without doubt an unusual painting.





KUCHELA-EPISODE

RĀMA



The Rāma-saga (Rāmāyaṇa) is a popular epic in the entire country. The images of Rāma, his consort Sītā, his brother Lakshmaṇa, and his devotee-aid Hanumān are etched deeply in the Indian psyche. There have been thousands of literary works bearing on the subject of Rāmāyaṇa in all Indian languages, and hundreds of paintings of the Rāma theme. Temples to Rāma in the country cannot be counted. They are all over the country. The day dedicated to Rāma in the month of Chaitra is celebrated with zeal and devotion.

In the old state of Mysore, there have been Rāma-mandīras since ancient days, almost in every village and town, where devotional congregations gather

and sing the eulogy of Rāma, in front of an image or painting of the Rāma-group. Recognizing this, Krishṇarāja-wodeyar III got paintings of Rāma theme made by his court artists, and distributed them to the rural and urban Rāma-mandīras. This is how a remarkably large number of Rāma-paintings are to be seen in the erstwhile Mysore state. And one of the king's own literary enterprises was *Sachitra-Rāmāyaṇa*, full of fine paintings depicting the story of Rāma.

The usual subject-matter for painting is the Rāma-group (Rāma, Sītā, Lakshmaṇa and Hanumān). Sometimes Rāma-pañchāyatana (the four brothers and Sītā) is painted. It is rare that Rāma alone is painted. The theme of Ekānta-Rāma includes Sītā and Hanumān with

Rāma. But the most impressive of Rāma paintings concern the coronation of Rāma after his return to Ayodhyā (Rāma-*paṭṭābhisheka*). The artists have used their ingenuity, imagination and skill in composing this subject. The Mysore palace and its opulence provides the setting; the usual picture of the ruler's *durbār* in royal splendour haunts the memory of the court-artists; the assorted assembly of courtiers and officials, servants and savants, priests and sages

is introduced. Sometimes, the rather unusual depiction of Rāma's children, Lava and Kuśa, in the *durbār* scene of Rāma is also seen.

Independent paintings of Hanumān are, of course, legion.

In Rāma's paintings, the artists have freely used their imagination, since the canonical prescriptions are absent.



A SCENE FROM RĀMĀYAṆA SHOWING THE FIGHT BETWEEN
RĀMA AND MEGHANĀDA (SON OF RĀVAṆA)

KODANḌA - RĀMA

इक्ष्वाकुकुलसंभूतं रावणारिं जितेन्द्रियम् ।

एकपत्नीव्रतधरं द्विबाहुं लक्ष्मणाग्रजम् ॥

(Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā)

A typical portrayal of the Rāma-group (Rāma, Sītā and Lakshmaṇa) as residents in the forest, before their return to Ayodhyā, together with Hanumān in the unusual posture of absolute submission. Copies of this painting can be found invariably in all Rāma-mandiras and bhajana-mandiras; but Hanumān's posture will be different. This situation is said to be auspicious,

for Rāma (Self) has eliminated Rāvaṇa (Delusion) and joined with Sītā (Self-knowledge), and is accompanied by the all-powerful Hanumān (Mind wholesome). The celebrated vimāna (of Kubera) is in readiness to carry them back to Lankā; it is represented beautifully.

The blue sky and the forest landscape are well depicted. Sītā in her lovely red saree and bedecked with all ornaments, stands to the right of Rāma, unusually though (for the classical prescription is to show her on his left side Jeeces Yetefcemeglee).



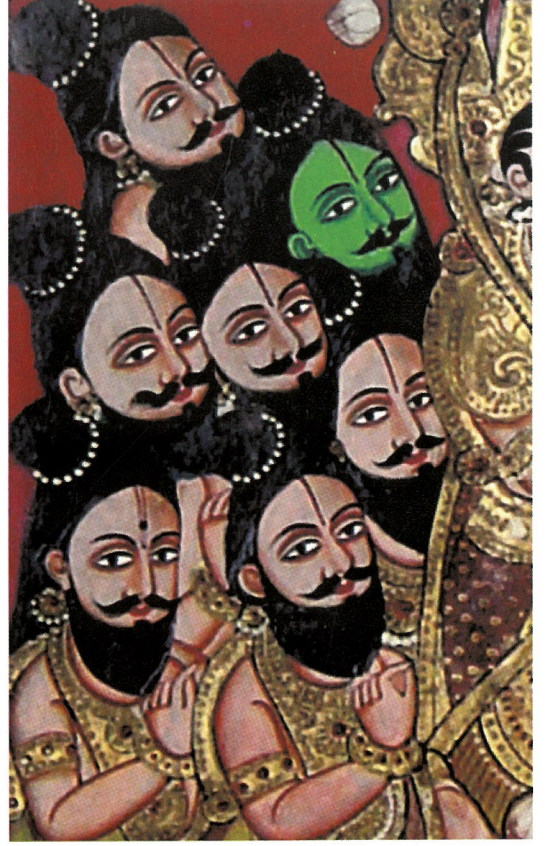
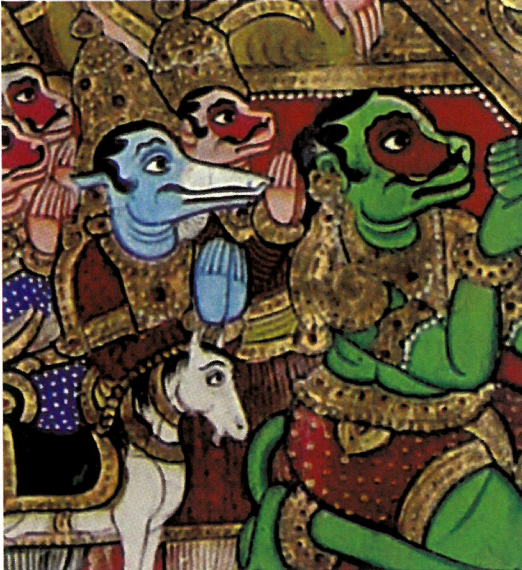
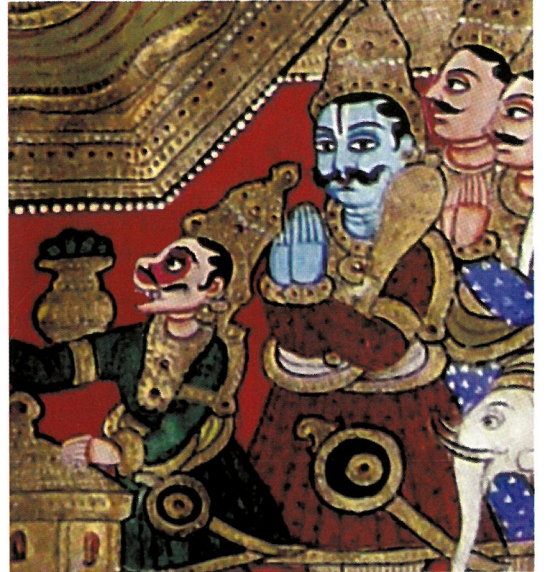


KODANḌA - RĀMA

RĀMA PAṬṬĀBHISHEKA

अयोध्याधिपतिं देवं रूपयौवनशालिनम् ।
धनुर्बाणधरं वीरं जामदग्न्यमदापहम्
सुग्रीवहनुमत्प्रीतं षडक्षरमनुप्रियम् ॥

This painting shows Rāma-pañchāyatana. Rāma is delineated as the king of Ayodhyā, seated on the grand throne with his queen-consort Sītā by his side. Hanumān is at his feet; and so are Aṅgada (son of Vāli), Vibhīṣaṇa, Jāmbavān and others. The seven sages stand to the right of Rāma, each with a word of praise for Rāma (collected as *Saptarshi-rāmāyaṇa*). Standing in attendance are the royal horse and the royal elephant, both finely decorated for the occasion.





RĀMA PAṬṬĀBHISHEKA

TĀRAKA MANTROPADEŚA

Rāma and Sītā, after thier return to Ayodhyā, are seated on a throne, and present a picture of Purusha and Prakṛti. This is a depiction of Sītā instructing Hanumān with regard to Rāma-tāraka-mantra, which is said to be the heart-mantra (hṛdaya-mantra). Rāma, the divinity, is seated in blissful composure. The goldwork utilized in the painting is superbly done.





TĀRAKA MANTROPADEŚA

RĀMA ON THRONE

Rāma being anointed as the king (Paṭṭābhisheka), by the sages. The occasion shows the ceremonial installation of Rāma on the throne, after his return from Lankā, after killing Rāvaṇa. The festive scene shows sages and courtiers in respectful attendance. Aṅgada, the Vānara chieftain of Kishkindha, is in charge of distribution of gifts to the guests. Vibhīṣaṇa, the successor to Ravaṇa on the Lankan

throne, is also seen, along with the Rākshasa and Vānara heroes. Rāma, his brothers and Sītā, attended by Hanumān, are seen.

The depiction recalls the glory of the erstwhile Mysore palace on such occasions; with the state elephant and horse, musicians and dancers. The pavilion also is typically Mysorean, with its ornate columns and decoration. Considerable gesso-work has made the painting valuable.





RĀMA ON THRONE

RĀMA'S CORONATION

This painting, breathing an atmosphere that is at once serene and splendid, depicts Rāma-paṭṭābhisheka. Rāma is being crowned, and made to sit on the ancestral throne of Ayodhyā, after his return from Lankā. He is giving a gracious audience to the Vānara chieftains, sages, Vibhishaṇa and courtiers; Guha too is there. Ladies attending on Sītā are shown. Sītā in all her glory sits on the throne by the side of Rāma; Lakshmaṇa stands behind Rāma. The other two brothers stand behind Sītā. Hanumān sitting gracefully and at ease sits at Rāma's feet; he sits on his own tail!

It is a pretty composition, with pleasing colours and good effect. The Vandyke brown of the floor, the green

of the background and the bands of light-coloured lotuses add charm to the figures.





RĀMA'S CORONATION

CHITRA-RĀMĀYAṆA

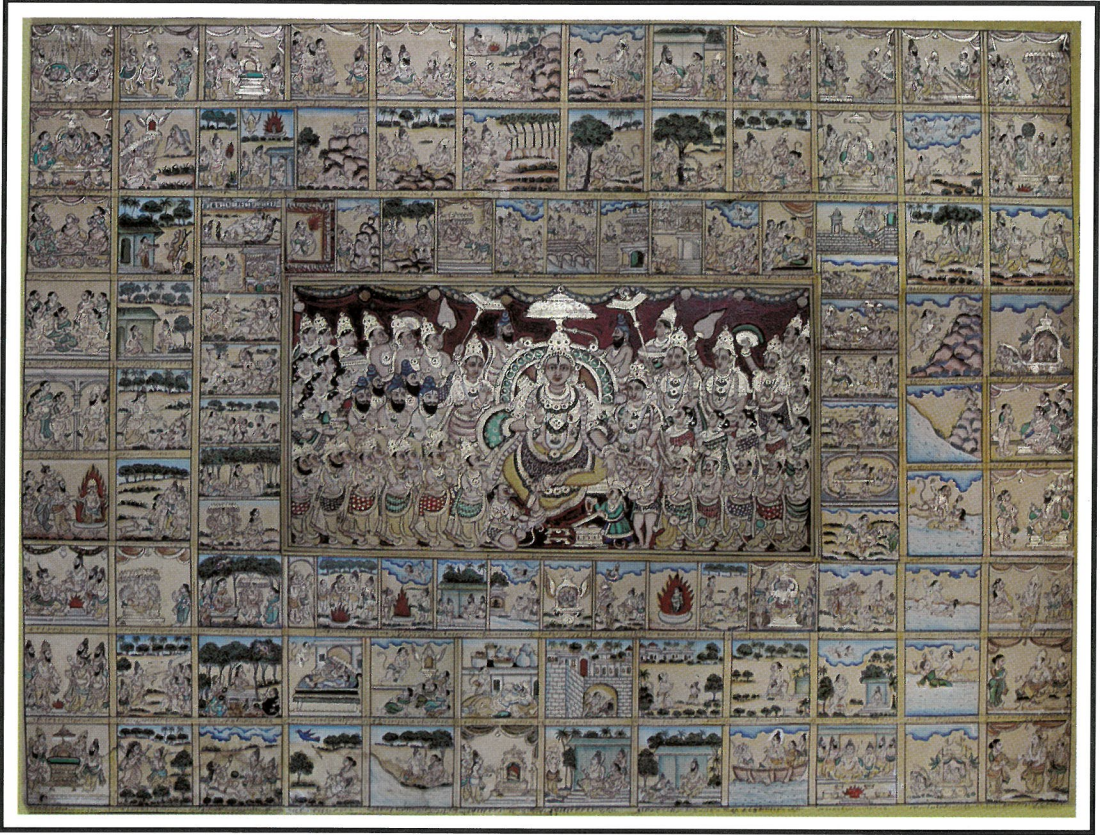
पूर्व राम तपोवनाभिगमनं हत्वा मृगं काञ्चनम् ।
वैदेहीहरणं जटायुमरणं सुग्रीवसंभाषणम् ।
वालीनिग्रहणं समुद्रतरणं लङ्कापुरीदाहनम् ।
पश्चाद्रावण्टकुम्भकर्णहननं एतद्धि रामायणम् ॥

Around a central rectangular space depicting the grand coronation of Rāma (paṭṭābhisheka), as many as 104 smaller spaces are arranged in rows and columns to tell the whole story of Rāma as told in Vālmīki's great epic, Rāmāyaṇa. The sequence starts from the bottom left corner and moves clockwise. Each major

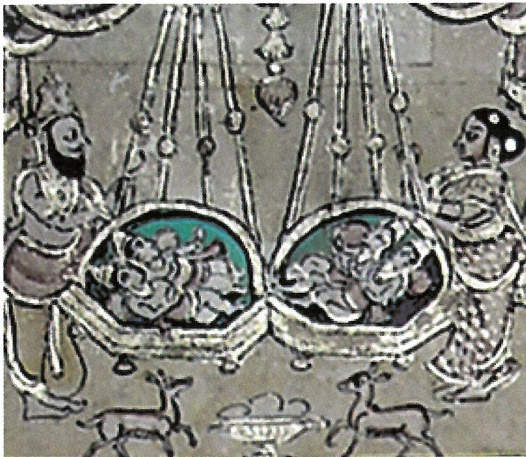
event in the epic is painted carefully and colourfully, especially the episodes involving Hanumān. And each picture in miniature bears being blown up to best advantage.

The copious use of gold in the painting, the elegant gesso-work in the central panel (coronation scene), the use of varnish for the hair-treatment, foliage and trees, stylized stippling technique and the delicate lines all add to the remarkable effect of the crowded painting, which is at once ambitious and eloquent. It is, by all standards, an outstanding enterprise.





CHITRA-RĀMĀYAṆA









LAVA AND KUŚA

This painting, which is ornate, elegant and eloquent, is on the theme of Rāmāyaṇa. But it is unusual inasmuch as the scene takes us beyond the usual Rāmāyaṇa story. Lava and Kuśa are born to Sītā, and are left in charge of the sage Valmiki in his hermitage. The sage brings them back to Rāma and Sītā, who are rulers of Ayodhyā, for being formally named (nāmakaraṇa) and duly anointed as princes (paṭṭābhisheka).

The painting has been elaborately, carefully and tastefully executed. The splendour of the royal pavilion has been brought out well. The creamish green hue in the background, gesso-work in low relief, gold for the throne, and colour scheme in high key make the painting memorable.

HANUMĀN WITH FIVE FACES

आञ्जनेयं पञ्चवक्त्रं मारुतिं रुद्रवीर्यजम् ।
त्रिलोचनं दशभुजं शूलखड्गादिधारिणम् ॥
स्वर्णवर्णं रामदूतं कपीन्द्रमक्षहन्तारम् ।
हनूमन्तं भजाम्यहम् ॥

(Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā)

Pañchamuka-Hanumān is a Tāntrik visualization of the hero of Rāmāyaṇa, incorporating Varāha (boar), Garuḍa (eagle), Narasimha (lion) and Haya-

grīva (horse), all deities worshipped in tāntrik rituals. It is an impressive image with five heads and ten arms, setting out to destroy demons and evil spirits. The background red is effective and symbolic. The blue demon being trampled upon sets off the tone. There is a maṇḍala worn on the chest. The composition is delightful and original.

The painting was probably meant for worship, or for some occult ritual. It combines imagination with awe, stylization with sacred sentiments. It is religious art in essence and effect.





HANUMĀN WITH FIVE FACES

LAKSHMĪ

स्वर्णाभां लोकजननीं पद्मद्वयवराभयाम् ।

क्षीरसागरसम्भूतां विष्णुवक्षःस्थलस्थिताम् ॥

(Devatā-dhyāna-mālikā)

The natural rivals and adversaries, the devas and the asuras, joined to churn the fabulous milky ocean, to get the death-defeating ambrosia (amṛta). Mandara, the tallest mountain, was the churning rod, the primordial dragon Ādi-śeṣha was the rope for churning, and Viṣṇu himself was the tortise to hold the mountain from slipping. Many wondrous objects emerged out of this extraordinary churning. Lakshmī, the goddess of wealth and prosperity was one of them.

All the objects that emerged out of the milky ocean are shown on the top division of the picture: the Aśvins, Ucchaiśravas (horse), Airāvata (elephant), the Moon (chandra), the Kāmadhenu (the cow that fulfills all wishes) the divine weapons, and so on. Lakshmi, of course, is the very theme of the painting; she occupies the central position, and the whole of the middle division of the painting is reserved for her glorification. The bottom-division shows the devas (on the right of

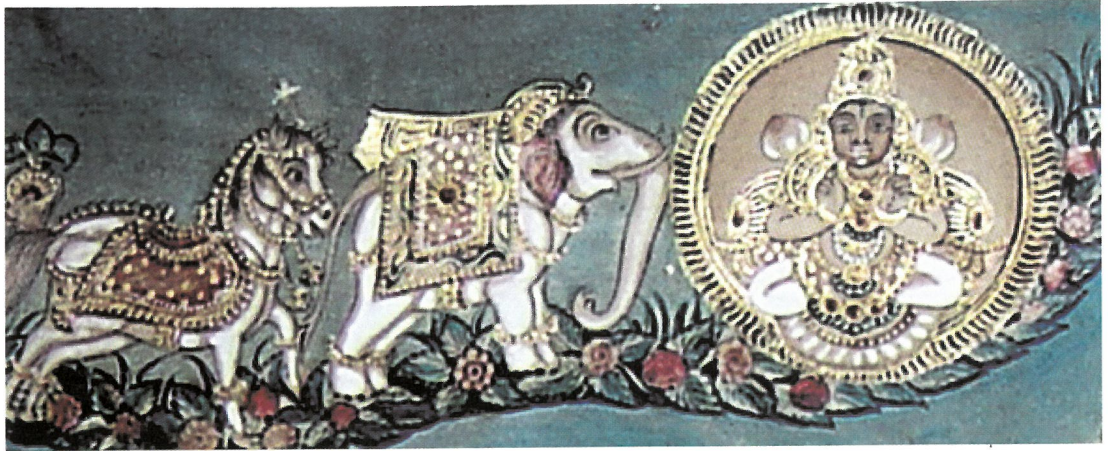
Lakshmi) and the asuras (to the left) in the act of churning.

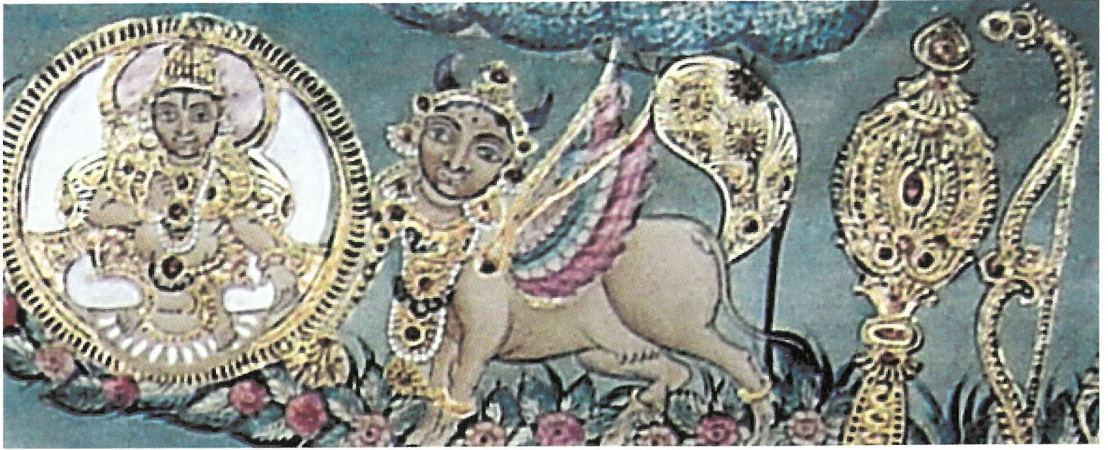
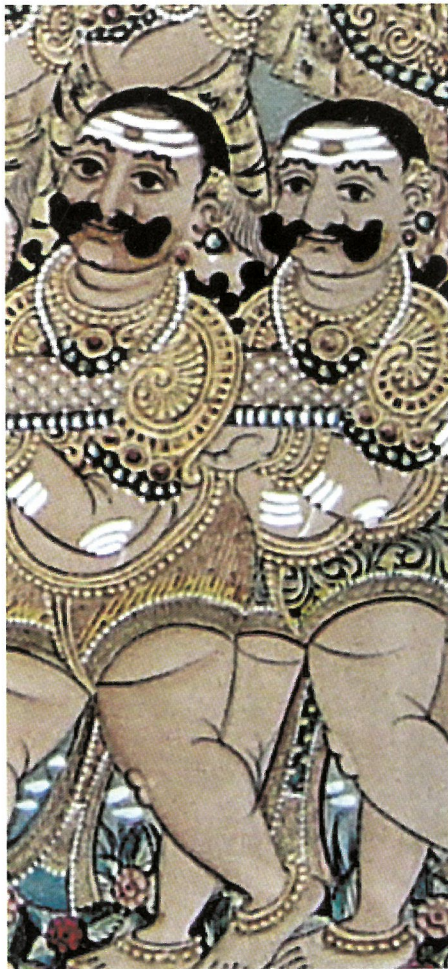
In a complex and crowded composition like this, the artist has been successful in portraying effectively the classical description of Lakshmī as the daughter of the ocean (samudra-rājatanayā). Lakshmī chose Viṣṇu as her consort and disappeared into his chest. The deadly poison, Kālakūṭa, that emerged out of the ocean, causing anxiety to the whole of creation, was consumed by Śiva to save the creation; and Pārvatī, naturally concerned for Śiva, pressed his throat to prevent the poison from getting into Śiva's system. When the devas and asuras began fighting over the nectar that came out, Viṣṇu assumed the form of a bewitching damsel (Mohinī), and cheated the asuras. The painting is a splendid narrative of the high drama of ocean-churning (samudra-manthana), telling these episodes in line and colour.

It is an unusual but excellent depiction of Lakshmī.



LAKSHMĪ





VAIKUNṬHA-NĀRĀYAṆA

सव्यं पादं प्रसार्य श्रितदुरितहरं
 दक्षिणं कुञ्चयित्वा जानुन्याधाय
 सव्येतरमितरभुजं नागभोगे निधाय ।
 पश्चाद् बाहुद्वयेन प्रतिभटशमने
 धारयन् शंखचक्रे ।
 देवीभूषादिजुष्टो जनयति
 जगतां शर्म वैकुण्ठनाथः ॥

(*Ashtāksharī-kalpa*)

Shown here is the primordial form of the all pervading and all originating Vishṇu, seated comfortably on the principle of Time pictured as the seven-headed dragon (Ādi-śeṣha), in a posture known as *lalitāsana* (or *mahārāja-līlā*). This form is known as *Vaikunṭha-Nārāyaṇa*, *Ādi-Nārāyaṇa*, *Ādi-mūrti* or *Para-Vāsudeva*. Temples to this form of Vishṇu are to be found in many places in the old Mysore state. Krishṇarāja-wodeyar was probably impressed by the imagery of this form, and commissioned his court-artists to paint this form frequently. There are many copies of the paintings of this form of Vishṇu in and around Mysore.

Here the artist has also painted the ten classical incarnations of Vishṇu (the celebrated 'daśāvatāra') in miniature style on the sides of the main figure.

And these have been done with imagination and very effectively. The main figure of Vishṇu, of course, is superbly delineated with firm lines and warm colours.





VAIKUNṬHA-NĀRĀYAṆA

LAKSHMĪ-NARASIMHA

नृकेसरिस्वरूपाढ्यं सभास्तम्भसमुद्भवम् ।
वज्रदंष्ट्रं वज्रनखं चण्डकोपसमन्वितम् ॥
चतुर्बाहुं पाण्डुराभं ब्रह्मेन्द्रादिस्तुतिप्रियम् ।
हिरण्यानुजहन्तारं प्रह्लादपरिपालनम् ॥

A popular and widely worshipped incarnation of Viṣṇu, this man-lion form is the subject of this painting. Viṣṇu made his appearance when the demon Hiraṇya-kaśipu was tormenting his son Prahlāda, to save this young devotee of his. He was in a terrific rage, and to assuage his fury Lakshmi approached him. The demon had been destroyed, and the pious boy had been saved. Now

the god was pacified. This is Lakshmi-Narasimha.

To his right stands his devotee, Prahlāda; and to his left is his vehicle, Garuḍa. Both of them are supplicating.

The figures are highlighted by decorative arches with dome-superstructures in conventional style. Within the central arch are accommodated Lakshmi and Narasimha, and under the arch to its right stands Prahlāda, and under the arch on the other side is Garuḍa. All the figures are painstakingly drawn and coloured. Gesso-work, punching and gold-work make the painting precious and pretty.





LAKSHMĪ-NARASIMHA

PAÑCHA-NĀRĪ-TURAGA

कामदेवस्तु कर्तव्यो रूपेणाप्रतिमा भुवि ।

चापबाणकरश्चैव मदोदञ्चितलोचनः ।

केतौ तु मकरः कार्यः पञ्चबाणधरो महान् ॥

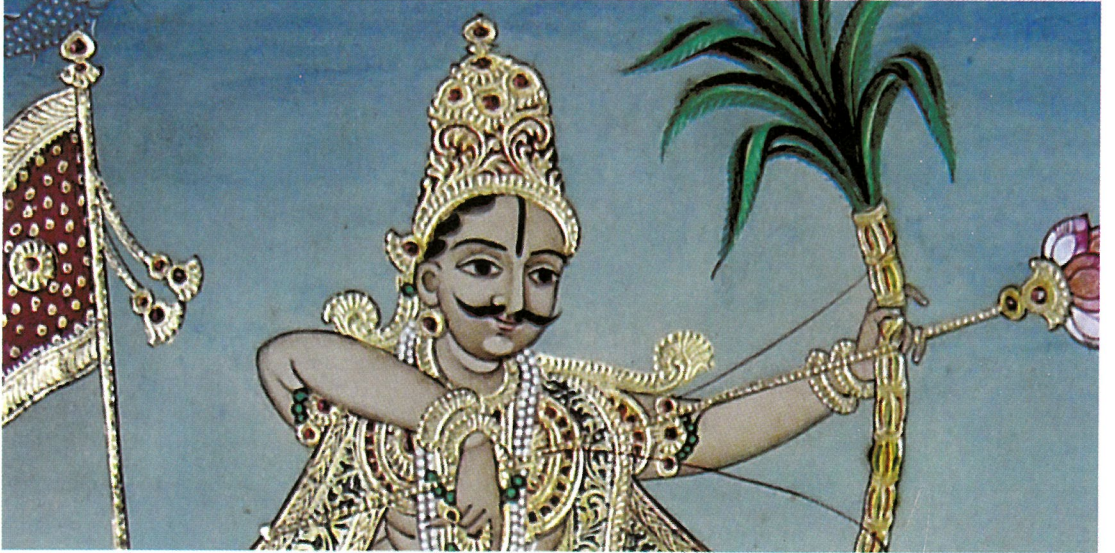
(Śrī-tattva-nidhi, from Śaivāgama)

This delightful painting of Kāma (Manmatha, Eros, the god of love) riding a horse (turaga) composed of five damsels (Pañcha-nārī), is a highly imaginative composition. Son of Viṣṇu, and consort of Rati (meaning Enjoyment), Kāma is visualized as a handsome divinity shooting an arrow of five flowers (Pañcha-bāṇa) with a bow made of sugar-cane stalk (ikṣhu-daṇḍa).

Traditionally, he rides a parrot (śuka-vāhana). But here a horse is

provided for him. But it is not a real horse. Five ladies assume postures to make the shape of a horse: three of them engaged in music (singing and playing the drum and playing on violin) make the belly of the horse; the lady keeping time with cymbals constitutes the head; and the lady holding a flywhisk which is the horse's tail, serves as the back of the horse; the legs of two of the ladies constitute the four legs of the horse.

The horse's imagery is symbolic: The Upanishad, which speaks of the human body as the chariot (शरीरं रथमेव तु), makes the five sense-organs the horses that draw this chariot (इन्द्रियाणि हयान्याहुः).





PAŌCHA-NĀRĪ-TURAGA

VIŚVARŪPA

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण-

स्त्वमस्य विश्वत्स्य परं निधानम् ।

वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम

त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥

(*Bhagavad-gītā*, 11, 38)

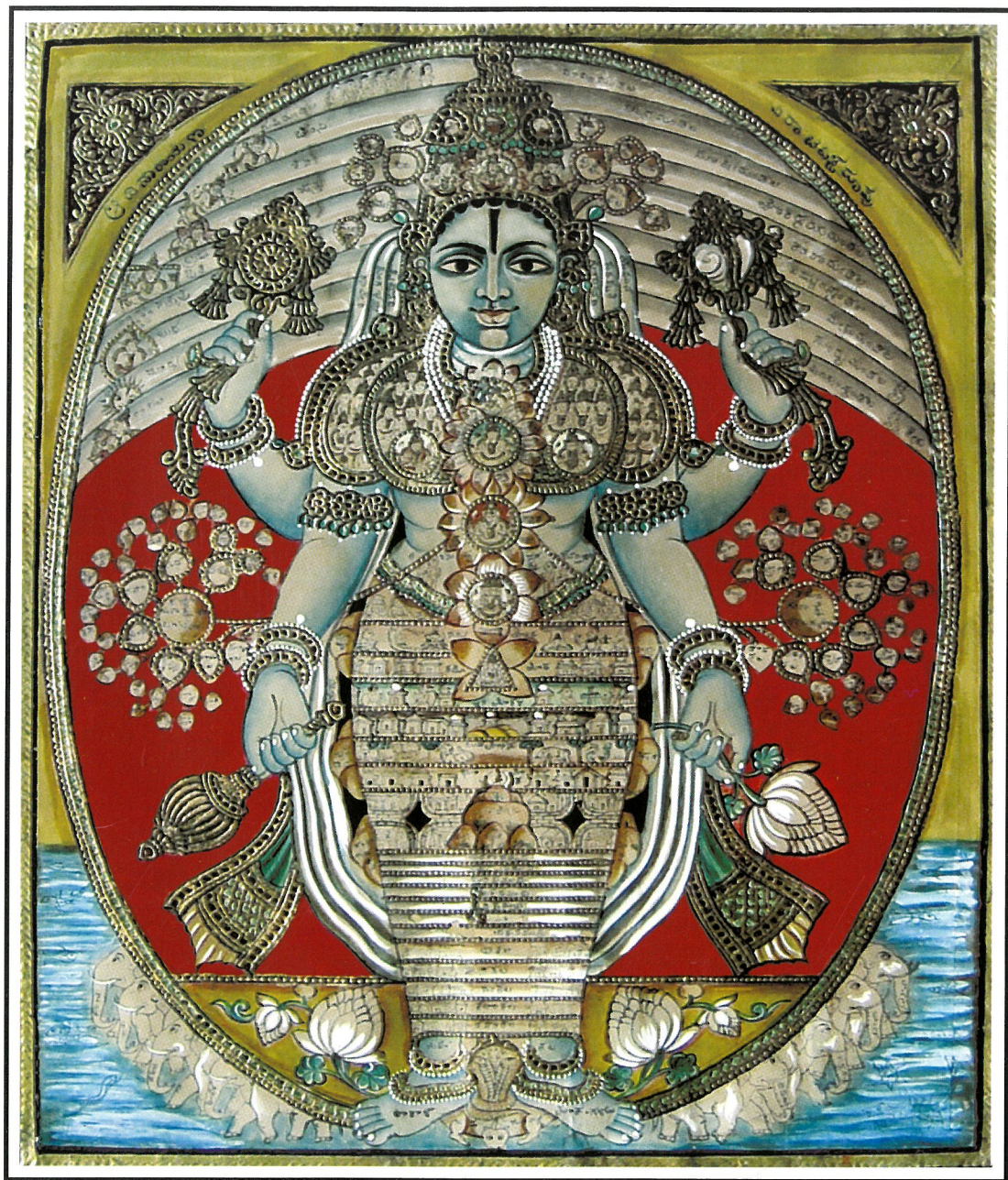
The spiritual seekers aspire to have a vision (darśana) of the All-comprehensive form (viśva-rūpa) of God. God is everything, everywhere, inside and outside of each particle and of the entire universe. He is all that exists, and he transcends existence.

The artist has boldly and cleverly sought to represent this abstract and unfathomable idea in a painting. He has made the oval (egg-shape) signify the universe, for the classical notion of existence is ovular (brahmāṇḍa). It contains in its womb the very source of life and light (hiraṇya-garbha). Viṣṇu is pictured as the primaeval person (ādi-

purusha), without beginning or end, and comprehending in his own person the entirety of the universe: its source, support, sustenance, and destiny.

The painting is remarkable. It is as comprehensive as the Viśva-rūpa itself. It includes all the classical textual details within the limited canvas. The seven oceans at the bottom, the seven worlds on top, the foundational tortoise and, the time-dragon, the gods and the sages, the directional elephants and so on. It is not only the macrocosm that figures here; even the world within man, the six psychic centres (śaṭ-chakras) which are esoteric and mystical, find a place in the very body of the cosmic person. They are the centres for Viṣṇu himself.

Indeed, the human body itself is the combined representation of both the macrocosm and the microcosm. It grows out of the God that abides within the heart-space of creatures, and is sustained by Him.



VIŚVAR ŪPA

VIŚVARŪPA DARŚANA

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।

अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥

(*Bhagavad-gītā*, 11, 13)

Arjuna on the battle-field of Kurukshetra was favoured with the awe-inspiring and extraordinary vision of Viśva-rūpa ('all-forms') (cf. *Bhagavadgītā*, chapter 11). This vision, described eloquently in the epic-poem, has inspired the artist (whose name fortunately has been preserved for us, Tippāji) to compose this magnificent painting, which unfortunately has not been preserved fully. What remains of the painting itself makes it one of best specimens of the Mysore style of traditional paintings.

There are insets of lovely paintings, each a master-piece in itself, all over the composition, which is a veritable treasure for the art-lover. One gleans in these insets myth and legends that make our religion fascinating. The vision of the artist, the freedom and care with which he has handled the details, the aesthetic appeal that is evident in every detail and the delicacy of the free-flowing lines and the subtlety of colours, all render this painting (albeit in fragment) a remarkable one from Mysore.



VIŚVARŪPA DARŚANA

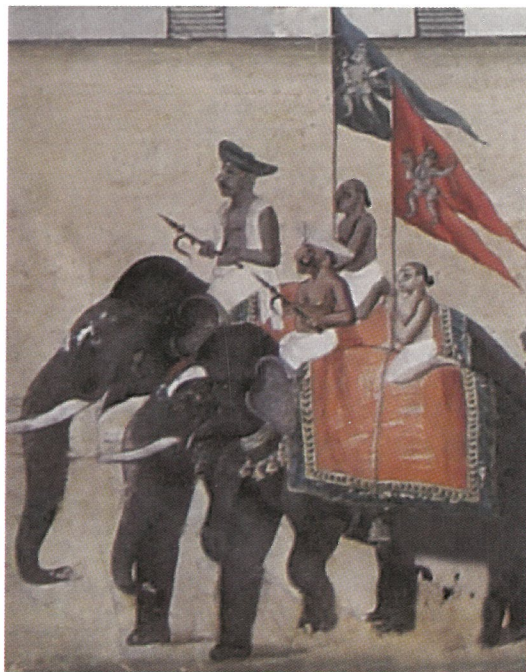
TEMPLE-PROCESSION

The village or town is all agog and excited when the local temple takes out the procession (utsava) of the presiding deity. People gather in large numbers and crowd round the procession-group. But the artist here has focussed attention on the procession proper. The temple looms large in the background.

Perhaps this is the Ranganātha temple at Śrīrangapaṭṭaṇa as it looks a hundred years ago. The processional deity is Viṣṇu, being carried on the shoulders of the employee-devotees of the temple. That it faces us incongruously, and not in the direction of the procession is of course unrealistic, but how else do we get an idea of the deity? The elephants in front and at the back add splendour to the procession. There are of course musicians heralding the procession.

It is undoubtedly an unusual picture in the Mysore style. Its realism is conspicuous; and attention to details is remarkable. There is movement in the picture, especially in contrast to the stillness of the temple behind. The animals and humans are portrayed with feeling and fervour. The whole group, small in size, fills the painting with action and imagination. It is a lovely

painting, with each detail full and fascinating.



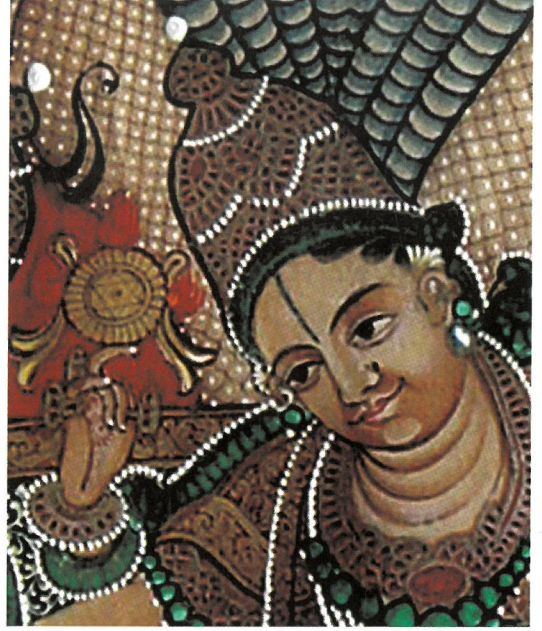
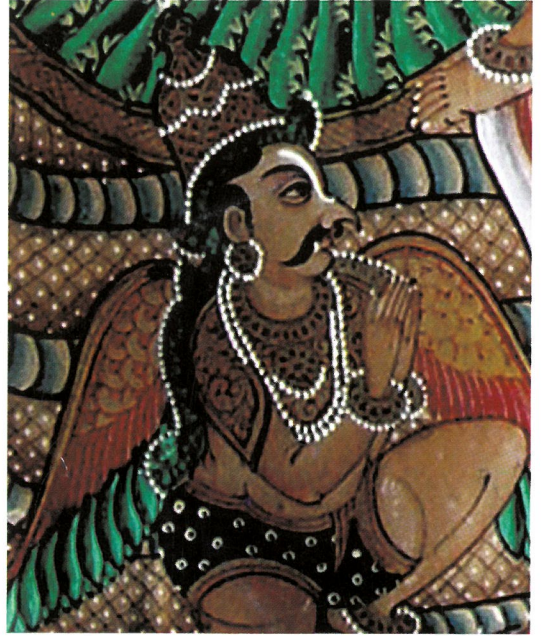


TEMPLE-PROCESSION

PARA-V ĀSUDEVA

An elaborate, ornate and delightful representation of Para-Vāsudeva (or Vaikuṇṭha-Nārāyaṇa) in the typical Mysore style of iconic painting. There are, however, some innovations introduced here. Vishṇu sits relaxed (in what is known as Mahārāja-līlā posture) on the coils of the divine dragon Ādiśeṣha. But the two consorts, Śrī-devī and Bhū-devī, are also shown as seated with him. This is rather unusual, for Para-Vāsudeva is to be shown 'alone' (kevala), according to Śilpa-śāstra texts. Garuḍa is also shown here. The left leg of the deity rests on a lōtus, springing from the primordial waters. All the images are profusely decorated with conventional ornaments.

The colour-scheme adopted by the artist is fascinating, especially the textile designs of Vishṇu and his consorts. There is attention bestowed on the principles of balance and bilateral symmetry. The depiction of the two celestial garland-bearers over the heads of the Lord and his consorts adds movement and life to the otherwise immobile picture. The artist has followed the śāstra-prescriptions of madhya-sūtra and bhaṅga while composing the details.





PARA-VĀSUDEVA

APPENDIX

ICONOGRAPHY: BACKGROUND FOR THE MYSORE PAINTINGS.



Iconography strictly means “drawing” or etching of an icon. It refers to a sculptural representation only by an extension of this meaning. The earlier practice was to draw in lines, sometimes filled with colours also, the image of the deity for purposes of meditation, adoration or worship. Before sculpture in stone or wood appeared, the practice was to draw in outline or sketch on the material. Paintings and drawings to serve an iconographic purpose were in the nature of natural evolutes.

There is a legend that Nārāyaṇa, the great God, drew on earth (Urvī) with mango-juice the drawing of a charming

feminine form, and infused life into it. Thus was the nymph ‘Urvaśī’ born. Then Nārāyaṇa composed texts on painting and iconography and handed them over to the celestial architect/sculptor Viśvakarmā. Nārada-śilpa classifies painting into ‘those on the ground’ (bhaumika), ‘those on the walls’ (murals, and frescoes, bhitti), and ‘portraits’ (bhāva-chitra). The first two were stationary, while the last was meant to be portable.

Portraits and wall-paintings were involved in iconography, the former being regarded as ‘mobile’ (chala) and the latter ‘immobile’ (achala). The wall-paintings were done in four stages.

Whitewashing the surface of the wall (dhauta), mounting a coat of boiled rice on it (ghaṭṭita), drawing of the outline in charcoal (lanchita), and finally filling in the colours (varṇa-rañjita). The same procedure was followed when, instead of wall, cloth (paṭa) was employed as the medium. The manner in which portraits were prepared was slightly different. It was done in the following stages: initial outline drawing (rekḥāpāta), modulating the light and shade, and finalising the sketch (vāstava), arranging decorative details (alankara), and colouring (varṇa).

An old verse mentions that masters are attentive to drawing, experts to modulations, women to decorative details and common people to bright colours. The import of this verse is that outline sketches are regarded as possessing a relatively high artistic value. Differentiation of forms (rūpa-bheda), accommodation of proportions (pramāṇa), projection of feelings and aspects of beauty (bhāva lāvanya-yojanā), bringing out the resemblance (sādrśya) and putting the colours on (varṇikā-bhaṇḡa) are regarded as the 'six limbs' of drawing, according to Yaśodhara's gloss on Kāma-sutra. Among the six details that are here enumerated, it is the last one alone that

makes the sketch a painting; the other five relate to drawing.

The importance of line-drawing is to be gleaned from numerous medieval treatises on painting like Vishṇu-dharmottara, Samarāṅgaṇasūtra-dhāra (Bhoja), Abhilashitārtha-chintāmaṇi (Somēśvara), and Hara-Vijaya (Ratnākara). And the application of this outlook is to be found in the wall-paintings of Ajantā, Bagh, Bādāmi, Sittanavāsai, Hampi Virūpāksha temple, the Ānegondi palace, Lepākshi Pāpanāśa temple and Vardhamāna temple, Tanjore Bṛhadiśvara temple, Śravaṇa-beḷgoḷa Jaina-maṭha and Seebi-Narasimha temple.

A strong iconographic style evolved from these wall-paintings in two principal divisions: the Jain style in Gujarat (principally in illustrated manuscripts) and the Tanjore style of painting icons on pots and paper. It is the impetus provided by the Tanjore style that contributed to the iconographic development in Karnataka, especially under the patronage of the ruler of the erstwhile Mysore State.

Mention has already been made of polytheism being an essential characteristic of Hinduism, and thus

being fundamental to Indian Iconography. Innumerable are the deities that receive worship from the Indian masses, from earliest of times to the present day. In fact, the number of deities that merit adoration is increasing over years. Besides the major gods and goddesses that have scriptural sanction and are of national status (like Viṣṇu, Śiva, Gaṇeśa, Durgā, Hanumān), numerous heroes, saints and benefactors of regional significance are periodically accorded divine or semidivine status; and people look upon them as incarnations or emanations with peculiarities of their own cultic and folk deities form the bulk of Indian polytheism.

Generally, however, five deities constitute the normal or core pantheon of Hinduism: Viṣṇu and Śiva (both of whom have a Vedic background), Devī (the mother-goddess who goes back to a more remote past), Gaṇeśa (the folk god of universal appeal in our country), and Sūrya (the solar divinity, whose cult has been popular all over the world at some time or other). The Sun (Sūrya) is often regarded as an aspect of Viṣṇu (Sūrya-nārāyaṇa), and is represented by Fire (Agni), especially the sacrificial fire. Thus, in effect, there are four major divinities.

But the custom of pentadic worship (pañchopāsana) has gained currency in the country. It is difficult to ascertain when exactly this custom commenced, but we find it recommended in the Purāṇas and the smṛti-texts. Śāṅkarāchārya (early 7th cent.) is supposed to have been responsible for its prevalence. But we find nothing about it in any of his authentic works; and from what he says about worship, it appears unlikely that he prescribed this pentadic worship.

The custom is closely associated with the concept of monotheistic primacy of the deity of the devotee's choice (iṣṭādevatā). The arrangement of the five gods on a common platform would signify their equal status. At the four corners and the centre of a square base (vedi) would be located the five deities. But a Śaivite, for instance, would place Śiva in the centre, and the other four deities in the four corners. A Vaiṣṇavite, on the other hand, would make Viṣṇu occupy the central position. There is thus a sectarian involvement in the arrangement of the five deities.

The presupposition is that the central deity is in fact the only deity receiving worship, the other four being only aspects of this central deity. There is thus a monotheistic tendency even in

the pentadic worship. There were, during the middle ages, five sects that had become important: the Śaivites worshipping Śiva, the Vaishṇavites devoted to Viṣṇu, the Śāktas given to the cult of Devī (Śakti), the Gāṇāpatyas adoring Gaṇapathi, and the Sauras worshipping the Sun. Each sect looked upon its object of adoration as the God, but accepted the gods of other sects also.

The devotee given to the pentadic worship does not actually worship five gods; he worships only one God, but accepts the other gods as belonging to the same family (parivāra). The texts explain that, in accordance with the five elements that ultimately are the stuff of which the entire universe is made, human beings are of five types : the earth type, the water type, the fire type, the air type, and the ether type. Although the elemental predominance is the distinguishing feature, no element can possibly do without the other. In due consideration of the elemental types ('pratyeka tattva-prāchuryam vimṛśya vidhi-pūrvakam'), the pentadic worship is instituted.

The association of the five elements with the five deities is variously given. However, the commonly accepted correspondences are: Gaṇapathi-earth;

Śiva-water; Devi-fire; Sūrya-air; and Viṣṇu-ether. There is another account where Śiva corresponds to the earth element and Gaṇapati to water. They are represented by distinctive yantras in order; square (chaturaśra), crescent moon or hexagon (shaṭkoṇa), triangle (trikoṇa), circle (vṛtta) and dot (bindu).

The five deities are represented on the platform either by these geometrical designs, or by icons. More frequently, however, they are represented by five natural objects : Gaṇapati by a red stone (rakta-prastara-khaṇḍa), Śiva by white quartz from rivers like Narmadā (bāṇa-liṅga), Devī by metallic stone (dhātupatra or yantra), Sūrya by crystal (sphaṭika), and Viṣṇu by ammonite from Gaṇḍakī river (śālagrāma).

The positions of the four deities with respect to the central deity are specified in the texts. The deities being on the same platform, worship offered to the central (main) deity is shared by the other deities. Each deity has a gāyatrī formula of its own, and the sectarian worshipper will utter the gāyatri of the central deity during worship.

1. Gaṇapati : 'Tat purushāya (or karaṭāya) vidmahe, vakratuṇḍāya dhīmahi, tan no Dantiḥ prachodayāt'.

2. Śiva : 'Tat purushāya vidmahe, Mahādevāya dhīmahi, tan no Rudrah prachodayāt'.
3. Devī : 'Tat gaṅgā-gaurhyāya vidmahe; Girisutāya dhīmahi, tan no Gaurī prachodayāt'.
4. Sūrya : 'Tat bhāskaraya vidmahe, Prabhākarāya dhīmahi, tan no Bhānuh prachodayāt'.
5. Viṣṇu : 'Tat Keśavāya vidmahe Nārāyaṇāya dhīmahi tan no Viṣṇuh prachodayāt'.

The philosophical interpretation of the pentadic worship has been given in some texts. Gaṇapati, as the lord of the group of fourteen worlds, signifies the phenomenon of bondage, which obstructs the dawn of enlightenment (hence called Vighneśvara). Sūrya is the principle behind creation (from the root 'sū' to produce). Viṣṇu is responsible for the preservation of the created world, and Śiva for its destruction. Devī is the principle of the power of wisdom (jñāna-śakti) which liberates the devotee from phenomenal bondage. It is well-known that Gaṇapati is worshipped for worldly success, Sūrya for health, Viṣṇu for wealth, Śiva for dispassion, and Devī for the liberating wisdom. Further, the five elements that are represented by the five deities are translated into the five constituents of the inner constitution

of man : earth-ego (ahamkāra), water-object awareness (chitta), fire-primary consciousness (buddhi), air-mind (manas), and ether-'the heart' (hṛdaya, the seat of consciousness). Thus, this mode of worship is sought to be integrated into conceptual and symbolic framework.

Each of the five deities has many iconic forms in which it is worshipped. Examples are Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Narasimha, TrivikRāma and Hayagrīva, (among the forms of Viṣṇu), Vīrabhadra, Bhairava, Dakṣiṇa-mūrti and Naṭarāja (among the forms of Śiva), Kālī, Tripura-sundari, Lakshmī, Mahishamardini and Kanyā-Kumārī (among the forms of Devī), Siddhi-Vināyaka, Heramba, Śakti-Gaṇapati and Haridrā-Gaṇapati (among the forms of Gaṇapati).

Sūrya, however, does not appear in many forms. Usually he is represented as standing with two hands holding lotus flowers, drawn in a chariot to which several horses are yoked and driven by Aruna ("the dawn"). He is often represented as the chief among the nine planets (grahas).

When the deity has iconic variants, there is usually a legend to justify the iconic details like the posture, number of hands, weapons and expressions. The

puranas, some of which are sectarian (like Śiva-purāṇa for Śaivas, Viṣṇu-purāṇa for Vaiṣṇavas, Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa for Śāktas, Mudgala-purāṇa for the Gaṇapatyas) contain these legends. And as part of the worship, these legendary accounts are read in order to crystallize the iconic form of the deity that is worshipped.

The pentadic worship is current among the followers of the Smṛti-texts (the Smārtas), who owe allegiance to one or the other of the monastic institutions claiming to have been founded by the great Śāṅkarāchārya. The Vaiṣṇavas or the Śāktas, however, do not recognise this mode of worship, although they do honour and worship the other four deities (besides their own chosen deities viz. Viṣṇu or Devī), separately and on different occasions. Their daily worship is conducted exclusively to Viṣṇu or Devī.

Whether Śaivas, or Vaiṣṇavas, the Devī is invariably worshipped along with Śiva or Viṣṇu. She becomes some form of Durgā when associated with Śiva, and of Lakṣmī when associated with Viṣṇu. Gaṇapati is also commonly worshipped, though exclusive worshippers of Gaṇapati (the Gaṇapatyas) are extremely rare now. The Sun is adored during the sandhyā-ritual, but

not in any iconic form except as one of the nine planets.

Iconic differences are usually indicated by the posture (bhaṅgi), the number of hands (hasta); weapons (āyudha), ornaments (bhūṣaṇa), hand-gestures (mudrā) and facial expressions (bhāva). The postures can be seated, standing, reclining or mobile. Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa is often shown as a child on all fours (Bāla-Kṛṣṇa), or as an infant lying on its back on a leaf of the banyan tree (Vaṭapatra-sāyin). We find Gaṇapati also being represented as a child moving about on all fours, but rarely. No other deity is represented in this posture.

Seated and standing are common positions in which icons of all deities are represented. But there may be variations in these postures. While seated, the posture may be easy and relaxed (Mahārāja-līlā, e.g. Gaṇapati, and Para-vāsudeva), alert and lotus-like (padmāsana, e.g. Mūkāmbikā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Brahma, Tīrthankara and Buddha), riding an animal (vāhana, e.g. Gaṅgā on the alligator), in a Yogic stance (yoga-paṭṭa, e.g. Yogā-Narasimha, Dakṣiṇāmūrti and Śāstā), or with one of the legs bent (kuñchitapāda, e.g. Sadāśiva, Samhāra-Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, Lakṣmī-Narasimha and Lalitā),

While seated or standing, it is usual for the Vishṇu and Śiva images to be accompanied by their consorts in the same posture (Lakshmi and Pārvati respectively). Rāma with Sītā, Śiva with Gaurī, Sūrya with Chhāyā, Gaṇeśa with Lakshmi, Narasimha with Lakshmi, Naṭarāja with Śivakāmi, are common examples. There are some gods who have consorts on either side of them : Vishṇu, for instance, with Bhū-Devī (the goddess of earth) and Śrī-Devī (the goddess of wealth); Subrahmaṇya with Deva-Senā (personified army of gods) and Vallī (a human spouse); Gaṇapati with Siddhi (success) and Buddhi (wisdom); and Kṛishṇa with Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā.

If the god is alone, it is called 'kevala'. Several Vishṇu and Śiva icons answer to this description: Para-Vāsudeva, Yogā-narasimha, Bāla-Kṛishṇa, Veṇu-gopāla, Kevala-Hayagrīva, Śrīnivāsa, Dhanvantari, Bhairava, Vīrabhadra, Bhikshāṭana, Dhakṣiṇāmūrti, Dattātreya, Śāstā and Śarabheśvara. It is usual for Gaṇeśa images to be represented alone, although in some forms (e.g. Śakti-Gaṇapati, Lakshmi-Gaṇapati and Ucchishṭa-Gaṇapati) he is shown with one, two or eight consorts. Bāla-Subrahmaṇya is likewise a loner, but in some forms he

has two consorts. Hanumān and Garuḍa are invariably single icons, and so is Sudarśana.

The standing posture involves the delineation of flexions or bends (bhaṅgi). When the plumb-line passes through the navel (nābhi) from the tip of the crown (śikhāmaṇi) to a point between the two heels on the pedestal (pīṭha), it is 'samabhaṅga'; upright, symbolising perfect poise. This position is devoid of any bends, and the body is held erect, firm and even rigid. The images of the tīrthankaras in the kāyotsarga posture are excellent illustrations.

However, to heighten the aesthetic effect, bends are delicately introduced. If it is only a slight bend in both the upper and lower parts of the body, it is abhaṅga; if the bend is conspicuous and great it is atibhaṅga. If there are three bends noticeable (the plumb-line passes through one of the eye-pupils and descends to the middle of the chest, and then it passes through one side of the navel, right or left, and finally comes down to the heels) it is tri-bhaṅga (head, trunk and lower limbs). When the sweep of the curve in this posture is emphasized ("like a tree caught in a storm"), it becomes atibhaṅga.

Feminine and dancing deities are shown in *abhaṅga* and *tribhaṅga* postures. The *atibhaṅga* is a rare posture, especially in sculpture. But drawings of *Vajrayāna* divinities in Tibet frequently employ this posture, the excessive flexion being suggestive of violent passion (*krodha*).

Vishṇu is shown in the dance stance only as *Kṛishṇa* (*Kāliya-Kṛishṇa*, dancing on the hood of the dragon *Kāliya*, *Navanīta-Kṛishṇa*, dancing with balls of butter in one hand or in both hands). A pillar in the temple atop the *Tirumalai* hills shows *Narasimha* dancing; and this is altogether a rare depiction. *Śiva* as *Naṭarāja* is a celebrated image and quite popular.

But there are several variant postures in this, which are not so well known, as the famous *Tiruvalaṅgaḍu* icon. *Gaṇapati* and *Sarasvatī* are also shown sometimes as dancing. Several *Devis* with *Tāntrik* background, like *Kālī* and *Aparājitā*, are also shown in dancing postures, or in semidancing (*ālīḍha*) postures.

Reclining is a posture that is almost exclusive to *Vishṇu*. *Raṅganātha* in *Śrīraṅgam*, *Ananta-śayana* in *Trivandrum*, and *Śeṣhaśayana* (terracotta in the 5th cent. temple at

Bhitargaon and relief in stone from *Deogarh*, 6th cent.) are familiar examples.

Rāma is occasionally depicted in this posture, with *Lakshmaṇa* sitting at his head and *Hanumān* standing at the feet as in the *Vijayanagar* panel. This panel may alternately be an illustration of the episode of *Lakshmaṇa* fainting during the Great War, and *Rāma* deputing *Hanumān* to bring the *sañjīvani* drug.

Mobile postures include *Vishṇu* as *Varāha* rescuing the Earth, as *Trivikrama* measuring the upper regions, as *Narasimha* rushing out of the pillar to slay the demon, and as *Veṇugopāla* playing the flute (in a standing posture); *Śiva* as the conqueror of the three realms (*Tripurāri*), as the ascetic on his begging round (*Bhikshāṭana*), and as *Vīrabhadra* destroying *Daksha's* sacrifice; and *Devī* as *Durgā* setting out to kill the buffalo-demon, *Mahisha*, and as *Tārā* shooting arrows.

For main worship, however, the seated and standing postures of the deities are preferred. It is usual, therefore, to find such postures in the sanctum of the temple (with some exceptions like *Śrīraṅgam*). *Vishṇu* is usually represented as standing, and

Sakti as seated, either on a seat (pīṭha) or on lion.

For seated figures, texts like Ahirbudhnya Samhitā, prescribe as many as eleven variant postures ; 'lotus' (padma), 'tortoise' (kūrma), 'peacock' (mayūra), 'cock' (kukkuṭa), 'lion' (simha), 'heroic' (vīra), svastika, 'firm' (bhadra), 'free' (mukta), 'cowhead' (go-mukha), or in a tāntrik diagram (chakra). Usually; however, the lotus-posture is employed by sculptors.

The seats on which the iconic representations are lodged also figure in various forms: circular (padmāsana), rectangular (simhāsana), triangular (anantāsana), octogonal (yogāsana) hexagonal (vimalāsana) and so on. It is also customary to use detachable seats

of different forms in different stages of the worship ritual, like simhāsana for bathing, yogāsana for invocation, anantāsana for witnessing amusements, and vimalāsana for receiving the offering made.

Speaking of the geometrical forms, we need to remember that all icons have their graphic representations (yantras) as well as verbalizations (mantras). During the worship, the yantras are prepared and employed, and mantras are chanted. The Devī is often worshipped in the 'Śrī-chakra', either as a linear diagram (rekḥā-yantra) or as an aniconic image (meru). This is regarded as the most powerful of the yantras. It is also most intricate in its design, and the worship involves an elaborate ritual.

