PRATIMA KOSHA

A Descriptive Glossary of Indian Iconography
in Six Volumes

Vidyalankara
Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao

Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao Memorial Trust ®
305, 6th cross, I Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore 560011
Phone: 080-26563957
Website: www.profskr.com

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RAKTA-KĀLĪ
RAKTA-CHĀMUṆḌA
RAKTA-JYESHṬHĀ
RAKTA-ḌĀKINĪ
RAKTA-TĀRĀ
RAKTA-DANTIKĀ
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HĀRĪTI
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HĀLĀHALA-LOKEŚWARA
HERAMBA
HERUKA
HERUKA-VAJRA
HERUKI
HEVAJRA

INTRODUCTION

With the publication of this sixth volume, I can heave a sigh of relief: I have completed a task, which I often thought I had rashly undertaken. It was doubtless an ambitious, and even unrealistic, project to cover the entire field of Indian Iconography all by myself. It was but divine grace that made this possible, and I have no doubts about this. But I also feel a sense of great indebtedness to the early pioneers like T.A.Gopinath Rao, Jatindranath Banerjee, Bhavatosh Bhattacharya, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and H.Krishna Sastry. Their work has not only shown for me the way but has made my task lighter. I am honestly amazed that they could do so much of good work, at a time when little real help was forthcoming by way of historical research, archaeological findings or academic publications. As my work progressed I was full of admiration for these early savants.

While the area I planned to cover was wide (because I set out to include here all icons meant for worship or adoration by Saivites, Vaishnavas, Sāktas, Jainas and Buddhists and deities of folk as well as sophisticated religion), I had restricted my attention to the textual prescriptions. I was interested in Āgama and Silpa-Sāstra for over thirty years, and had collected hundreds of dhyāna-slokas; my familiarity with the Sanskrit texts was an advantage, as also was my acquaintance with several old- time preists and āgamikas, especially those who were associated with Āgama-Traya-Mahāmandala of Bangalore. I am grateful to them for having spent hours patiently explaining to me practical implications and religious significance of many a passage in the Āgama texts.

The Volumes therefore seek to present only the traditional picture of our icons with reference to their worship. I have relied entirely on the Āgama and the Silpa-Sāstra texts and on the dhyāna-slokas, and have not attended to the extant specimens except marginally. Wherever indicated, I have provided the background myths and legends (from the purānas) of the iconographic representations of the deities, so that the natural context of the icon could be visualized and appreciated.

I should place on record my appreciation of Daivajna Shri K.N.Somayaji, Director of Kalpatharu Research Academy, Bangalore who has made this Project possible by his zeal and effort. I am grateful to him not only for having provided me with this opportunity but for having co-operated with me at every stage and in all details of this publication.

I acknowledge the help rendered by the Superintending Archaeologist, Mid-Southern Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India, the Director of All India Handicrafts and Design Centre (Govt. of India) and Sri D.V.Chary of Tirupati in the preparation of illustrations included in these volumes.

I am grateful to the Payonidhi Printers, Bangalore, for having co-operated with me during the printing of these volumes.

Bangalore
10th February 1992

S.K.RAMACHANDRA RAO

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(a) The drawings on pages 17, 20-24, 26, 29, 72, 73, 121, 126, 130, 133-134, 162, 171, 190, 195, 196, 214, 215, 216, 217, 232, 244, 255, 257, 258, 264, 270, 271, 283, 292, 301, 311 were made by Sri Appukuttan Achari.

(b) The drawings on pages18, 19, 25, 33, 43, 44, 50, 99, 101, 112, 119, 132, 151, 158, 183, 194, 227, 243, 299 were made by Sri. M.S. Raman.

(c) The drawing on page 254 was made by Sri. K.V. Bhandari.

(2) The drawings on page 91, 92, 106, 134, 197-198, 280, 309 were made by Sri. Ganapathi Sthapati.

(3) The drawing on page 276 was made by Silpi.

(4) The drawings on 273-274 and 304 are from Vaishnava Iconography.

(5) All other drawings in the book have been prepared by the author from actual sculptures and icons in temples, museums and personal collections.

PRATIMĀ-KOSHA

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF INDIAN ICONOGRAPHY

VOL. VI

RAKTA-KĀLĪ

A variety of Kālī (see KĀLĪ), counted among the ten mahā-vidyā goddesses (see DAŚA-MAHĀ-VIDYĀ), she figures prominently in the worship of Kālī according to Kālī-krama (as distinguished from Śrī-krama), which takes the form of the path of wisdom (jñāna- mārga) and where the devotee will approach the goddess through divya- and vīra-bhāvas. Included in the group of Kālī-Kūla are, besides Rakta-Kālī, Tārā, Bhuvanā, Mardinī (or Medinī), Tripurā, Tvaritā, Durgā and Pratyaṅgirā.

She has the same iconographic details as Kālī.

RAKTA-CHĀMUṆḌĀ

The form of Chāmuṇḍā (see CHĀMUṆḌĀ), which was assumed to destroy the demons Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa, occurs in two varieties : Vāruṇī- chāmuṇḍā and Rakta-chāmuṇḍā. The latter is identified with Yogeśvarī (see YOGEŚ-VARĪ).

She is said to pervade the entire universe, in all its aspects both moving and unmoving. she is visualized as having four arms, carrying in her hands sword, ploughshare (hala), club (musala) and cup (pātra).

According to Prapañcha-sāra-saṅgraha (Vol II, p.752), this deity is red-coloured, wearing yellow garments, with a smile on her face and decorated with bejewelled ornaments; crescent moon adorns her crest. She wears garlands of severed human heads. She has four hands, carrying in them sugar-cane bow, arrow, discus and lotus. She is invoked for destroying the lives of the enemies ('śatru- jīvita-nāśinī', 'ripu-kula-mathanī')

There is also a yoginī with this name (see YOGINĪ)

RAKTA-JYESHṬHĀ

A variety of Jyeshṭhā-gaurī (see GAURĪ), she is often identified with Jyeshṭhā-devī (see JYESHṬHĀ-DEVĪ) or Alakshmī. She is also regarded as the mother of Ganeśa (see GAṆAPATI), and is worshipped along with him on the fourth day of the bright half of the Bhādrapada month. She is described as specially worshipped by heroes (Vīra-vanditā).

She is represented as two-armed, showing the gesture of protection in the right hand, and holding a blue lotus in her left. She either sits on a stool-like seat with both her legs hanging down and touching the ground, or sits with only one of her legs hanging down and supporting herself by placing her left hand on the seat ('pīṭhe vāma-karas sthitā').

Texts like Aṁśumadbheda describe her as dark like collyrium in complexion (añjana-saṅkāśa) with protruding breasts (lamba-māna-stanā), thin long nose (dīrgha-nāsikā), and large belly (viśālodarā); she wears red garments (rakta-vāsasī).

RAKTA-ḌĀKINI

One of the four ḍākinis, associated with the Vajrayāna deity Vajra-vārāhi (see VAJRA

VĀRĀHĪ), others being Vajra-ḍākinī, Padma-ḍākinī and Viśva-ḍākinī.

RAKTA-TĀRĀ

The goddess Tārā of the Mahāyāna pantheon (see TĀRĀ) is represented in five different aspects, identified by the five colours: green (Harita-tārā), yellow (Pīta-tārā), red (Rakta-tārā), white (Gaura-tārā) and blue (Nīla-tārā). Each of the aspects has several varieties, excepting Rakta-tārā who is the same as Kurukullā (see KURUKULLĀ).

RAKTA-DANTIKĀ

One of the fierce aspects of the mother-goddess (mahā-raudra-rūpa), it was assumed according to Devī-bhāgavata (18,19) to kill the demon Rakta-bīja. Another account (cf. Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa, Devī-māhātmya, 91,40) describes Rakta-dantikā as a form of Chāmuṇḍā, assumed for killing the wicked descendents of the demon Viprachitti. A terrible goddess, she not only killed them but ate them up; her teeth became red like the pomegranate flowers. Hence she was called 'red-toothed' by gods and mortals:

भक्षयन्त्याश्च तानुग्रान् वैप्रचित्तान् महासुरान् ।
रक्ता दन्ता भविष्यन्ति दाडिमी कुसुमोपमा: ॥
ततो मां देवता: स्वर्गे मर्त्यलोके च मानवा: ।
स्तुवन्तो व्याहरिष्यन्ति सततं रक्तदन्तिकाम् ॥

RAKTA-YAMĀRI

One of the two forms of the god of the Vajrayāna pantheon, Yamāntaka or Yamāri (see YAMĀRI), the other form being Kṛshṇa-yamāri. The two forms are distinguished not only by their complexions (red and dark blue respectively) but by the directions they face (west and south respectively). Rakta-yamāri is worshipped by tāntrik practitioners who are intent on exercising influence upon, or subjugating, friends and enemies (vaśī-karaṇa); and Kṛshṇa- yamāri is invoked for attracting all people (ākarshaṇa).

Rakta-yamāri is worshipped generally along with his consort (prajñā) in the posture of embracing her (yab-yum, see YUGANADDHA); or alternately as a single deity. He is visualized as buffalo-headed, two-armed and riding upon a buffalo. He carries in his hands skull-cup filled with blood (rakta-paripūrṇa-kapāla) (left hand), and white cudgel on top of which rests a freshly severed head yellow in colour and wet with blood (sārdra-pīta- muṇḍāṅkita-sita-daṇḍa) (right hand). He stands in the pratyālīḍha posture. His hair, tawny red in colour, stands erect (piṅgalordhva-keśa). He wears snakes as ornaments (nāgābharaṇa vibhūshaṇa), and tiger-skin as garment (vyāghra-charmāmbara- dhara). He carries on his head the tiny icon of the dhyānibuddha Akshobhya, suggesting his lineage.

When he is shown in the saṁpuṭa-yoga posture, (viz.yuganaddha), his consort (bhagavatī) is two-armed, well-bedecked with various ornaments, and clothed by a tiger-skin which is slipping (skhalad-vyāghra-charmāṁśuka). She is shown in the pratyālīḍha posture, like her spouse, and as inebriated with liquor (mada-vihvalā).

RAKTA-LOKEŚVARA

One of the forms of the celebrated bodhi-sattva of the Mahāyāna pantheon, Avalokiteśvara (see AVALOKITA), this occurs in two varieties, two-armed and four-armed. Both are red-complexioned.

The former variety carries on its crown of matted hair an image of the dhyānI-buddha Amitābha (amitābha-garbha-jaṭā-makuṭa-dhara). The left hand of the deity holds a red lotus, and the right hand is engaged in opening it out (vāma-kara-gṛhīta-rakta- padmam tach cha dakshiṇa-kareṇa vikāsayantam).

The latter variety is accompanied by two consorts, Tārā on the right side (see TĀRĀ) and Bhṛkuṭī on the left (see BHṚKUṬĪ). The god here wears red garments and red unguents. His four hands carry noose, goad, bow and arrow. He is shown as standing under an Aśoka tree which pours out red flowers (rakta-kusumavatāśoka-taror-adhastād avasthitam).

Rakta-lokeśvara is also called Chaturbhuja-lokeśvara.

RAKSHĀ-KĀLĪ

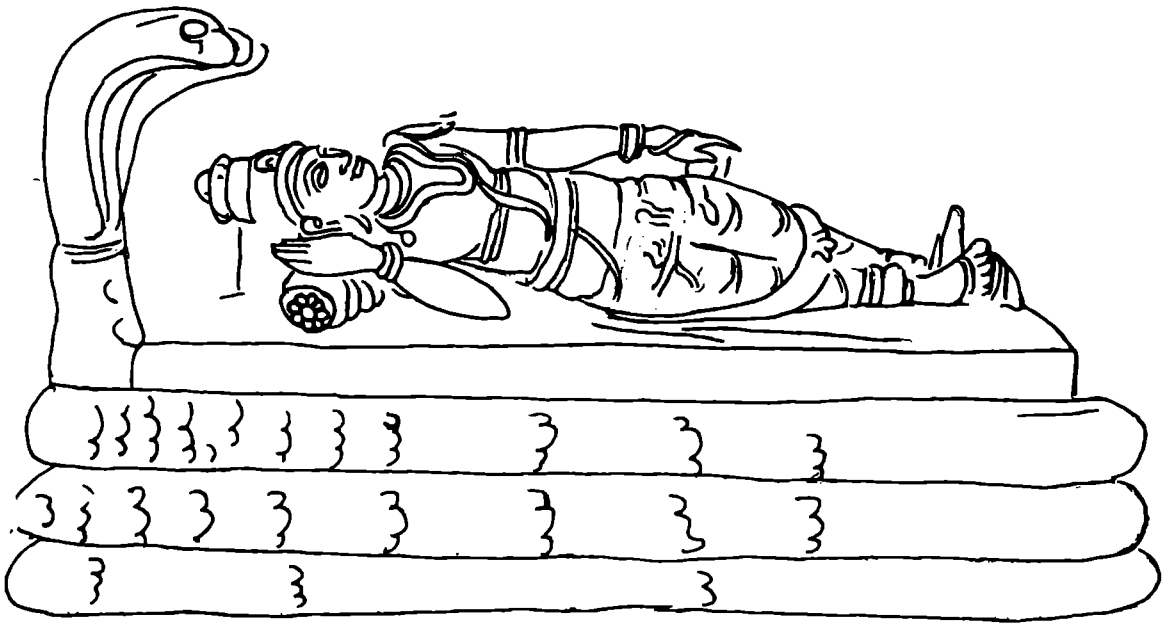
A form of Kālī (see KĀLĪ), distinguished by her role as protectress. She is visualized as dark in complexion and four-armed. Her matted hair stands erect and reaches the high heavens. She stands with one of her feet planted upon a corpse and the other on a lion (which is her mount). She decorates herself with serpents and wears around her loins tiger-skin.

RAKSHOGHNA-MŪRTI

A form of Śiva depicted as killing or subduing Yama with his trident. It is different from Kālāri (see KĀLĀRI) in that Śiva in this form is accompanied by piśāchas, bhūtas and pretas in the crematorium, and is gobbling up corpses. He wears matted hair as crown, and has daubed his whole body with ash. His mouth is fierce with tusks. He carries in his four hands a skull with flames coming out of it, hand-drum, battle-axe and trident (cf. H.Krishna Sastri : South Indian Images of Gods and Goddeses, 1916).

RAṄGANĀTHA

Vishnu in recumbent posture upon Ananta (or Śesha) in the famous shrine of Śrī-raṅgam in Tamiḷ Nāḍu is known as Raṅga-nātha (see VISHNU). The precise origin of the word however is uncertain. The word 'raṅga' means stage, platform or arena which has been rendered delightful. The Āḻwārs have sung the praises of the god



RAṄGANĀTHA
(stone, from Śiva-samudram)

RAṄGANĀTHA
(bronze, private collection)

RATI

at what is now known as Śrī-raṅgam, and the god himself is called 'Iraṅga' by them.

RAJAS

An iconometric unit (see TĀLA-MĀNA), meaning a speck of dust (also called trasa-reṇu), equal to eight paramāṇus (a mote in the sun-beam filtered through a lattice). The paramāṇus are not visible to the normal eye; they are described as discernible only by the eyes of the yogis (yogi-dṛshṭi-gochara). The rajas is, therefore, the smallest visible unit. Eight rajas ranged side by side are equal to the tip of a single hair (vālāgra). (crf. Bṛhat-saṁhitā, 57,1-2).

RATI

Rati (enjoyment, pleasure) is the consort of the Indian god of love, Kāma (see KĀMA-DEVA). Sometimes she is regarded as one of the two wives of Kāma, the other being Prīti (delight, relish). She is in legends celebrated as the charming daughter of Daksha- prajāpati (born

RATI
(stone, from temple at Vellore)

out of the creator Brahmā's right breast), who gave her to Kāma, son of another prajāpati Dharma.

The purāṇas describe that she was reborn as Māyāvati, who became the consort of Pradyumna, son of Kṛshṇa and reincarnation of Kāma after Kama was reduced to ashes by Śiva in an encounter.

She is usually shown in sculptures and paintings in the company of Kāma; but sometimes she is represented alone. She must be shown as exceedingly pretty (kamanīyā ratih kāryā), bedecked by bright ornaments suited for the spring season (vasantojjvala- bhūshaṇā). She must be represented as engaged in dance (nṛtya- mānā) or as playing on lute (vīṇā-vādana-śīlā). She is two- armed, and holds in her hands mendicant's staff and rosary (daṇḍāksha-sūtra-dharā), when she is represented in the attitude of ascetic fulfilling a vow (vratastha yoga-saṁsthitā).

Normally, however, she is shown as riding a parrot and holding in her two hands the sugarcane stalk as bow and flower-darts (emblems of her husband Kāma). Her body is daubed with strong camphor paste (mada-karpūra-charchitā).

Rati is included in the group of four demigods and their consorts, being tampled under the four legs of the Paramāśva form of Hayagrīya (an emanation of Akshobhya), a Mahāyāna deity (see PARAMĀŚVA).

Kāma-sūtra manuals restrict the meaning of the word 'Rati' to sexual passion, and enumerate rati-nāga, rati-pāśa, rati-mitra, rati-sundara etc as various forms of coitus. They are sometimes illustrated in sculptures and paintings.

RATNA

Literally meaning "what delights all those who thirst for wealth" (dhanārthino janās sarve ramantesmin; ramayati harshayati), ratna signifies any precious stone, jewel, treasure or wealth. It also symbolizes excellence in a class. Different varieties of ratna are used for ornaments, and some ratnas are also employed to fashion icons (ratna-ja kind).

As objects of decoration, we meet with śiro-ratna (diadem on the head), ratna-kuṇḍala (earrings studded with pearls), ratna-mālā (neck-laces of pearls), ratna-makuṭa (crowns studded with precious stones), ratnāvalī (string of pearls), ratna-dāma (waist-belt made of pearls) and so on. We also have royal umbrellas, shafts of which are fitted with precious stones (ratna-daṇḍātapatra), banners (ratna-dhvaja) and hand-mirrors studded with precious stones (ratna-darpaṇa).

It is usual to speak of nine kinds of ratna (nava-ratna): mauktika or muktā-phala (pearl), māṇikya (ruby), pushpa-rāga (topaz), hīraka (diamond, vajra), rājāvarta (lapis lazuli), pravāla (coral), indra-nīla (sapphire), gomeda (cinnamone stone, sardonyx) and marakata (emerald). Sometimes, vaiḍūrya (chrysoberyl, cat's eye) is included among the nine ratnas.

Some texts enumerate gold, silver, coral, pearls and cat's eye (vaiḍūrya) as forming a group known as 'pañcha-ratna'.

For making icons (by carving), hīraka (or vajra, diamond), nīla (sapphire), vaiḍūrya (cat's eye), pushpa-rāga (topaz) and vidruma (coral) are prescribed, and it is said that the benefits following from worship of such icons are wealth (śrī), wish-fulfilment (kāma), health (ārogya), children (putra), happiness (sukha) and victory (jaya) respectively (Īśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati, uttarārdha, 36,1-26).

However, while selecting the ratna for making the icon, the following defects are to be noted, and the ratnas having them must be avoided: scratches (rekhā), spots (vindu), impurities (kalaṅka), damage (kākāṅghri-kshata), dirt (dhūli), blotches (tushāra) and holes (randhra) (ibid.).

Sphaṭika (crystal) is also included among the ratnas in some texts, as in the one cited above. And three varieties in them are regarded as suitable for icon-making: sphaṭika (pure crystal), chandra-kānta (moon-stone) and sūrya-kānta (sun-stone). The benefits of worshipping the icons in crystals of these varieties are wish-fulfilment (kāma), wealth (artha) and salvation (moksha) respectively.

RATNA-KUṆḌALA

Ear-rings worn by feminine deities, which are studded with pearls and other precious stones.

RATNA-KUṆḌALA

RATNA-KETU

An emanation of the dhyāni-buddha Vajra-dhara (see VAJRA-DHARA), of the Mahāyāna pantheon, crystallizing the mystic ejaculation 'ratna-dhṛk' emerging out of the contemplation that the dhyāni- buddha was engaged in. Ratna-ketu is human in form, located on the southern side of Vajra-dhara. His distinguishing aspect is the gesture of boon-bestowal (varada) that he assumes. He belongs to the Chintāmaṇi family of deities.

RATNA-ḌĀKINĪ

One of the four attendant deities of the Mahāyāna god Mahāmāya (see MAHAMĀYA), a form of Hevajra (see HEVAJRA) in the yuganddha aspect (viz. embraced by his consort Buddha-ḍākinī).

Ratna-ḍākinī who is stationed in the southern quarter has a body of yellow complexion, and four faces, the principal face being yellow and the other faces blue, red and green. She is four-armed, carrying in her two right hands jewel (maṇi) and trident (triśūla), and in her two left hands banner (dhvaja) and jackal (śṛgāla).

The other ḍākinīs who attend upon Mahāmāya are Vajra-ḍākinī (east), Padma-ḍākinī (west) and Viśva-ḍākinī (north). They are all fierce-deities (krodha-devatās), wearing garlands of severed human heads dripping with blood, and human skulls stuck into their tawny hair which rises up like flames of fire. Each of them has three eyes in her head, and fangs sticking out of her mouth.

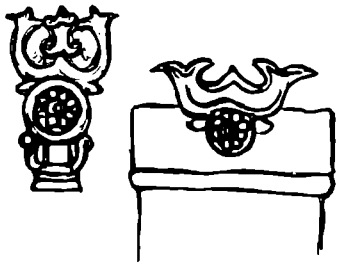
RATNA-JVĀLINĪ

A form of Tārā (see TĀRĀ), she is visualized as bright like a jewel (ratnojjvalā) and two-armed. Her right hand assumes the gesture of a flower and holds two red lotuses with their stalks (pushpa-mudrāṅkitana sa-nāla-padme). And her left hand carries double-lotus (viśva-kamala, two lotuses joined at their base). To the left of the goddess is shown a flame-like arrangement of nine kinds of precious stones (see RATNA) (nava-ratna-jvālikām) and to her right is a lotus with numerous petals (cf. Dharma-kosha-saṁgraha).

RATNA-TRAYA

Three 'jewels' (excellent objects of reverence) adored by the Buddhists, viz. the Buddha, (the awakened one, who teaches the doctrine), the Dharma (the doctrine that the Buddha expounds) and the Saṅgha (the community of monks and nuns who illustrate the doctrine in their own lives) are often represented stylistically in several ways, and also involved In decorative motifs.

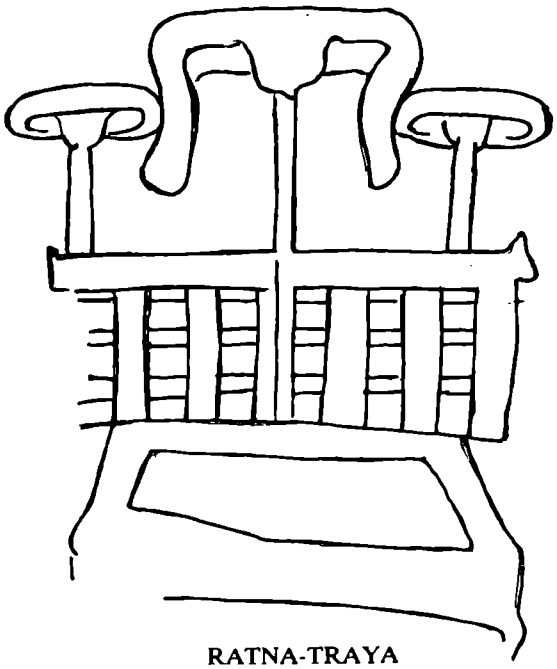
Likewise, the Jains adore the 'tri-ratna' or 'ratna-traya', which are perfect vision (samyag-darśana), perfect understanding (samyag-jñāna) and perfect conduct (samyag-chāritra). The



RATNA-TRAYA

RATNA-PAṬṬA

three aspects are also stylistically shown in sculptures and paintings.



RATNA-TRAYA
(from Amarāvati)

RATNA-DALA-LOKEŚVARA

One of the 108 forms of Avalokiteśvara (see AVALOKITA), this is distinguished as two-armed deity standing on a lotus, with his left hand touching his shoulder and the right hand assuming the gesture of boon-bestowal. The hands do not hold any objects.

RATNA-PAṬṬA

The head-band (śiro-paṭṭa) studded with precious stones; the band is meant to hold the hair in shape. Ratna-paṭṭa is also the bottom portion of a crown (see KIRĪṬA).

RATNA-PĀṆI

A bodhi-sattva of the Mahāyāna pantheon, he is identified by the jewel (ratna-chhaṭa) which he carries in one of his two hands; jewel is placed upon a lotus, the stalk of which he holds. He has another form in which he holds the jewel in his right hand (dakshiṇa-pāṇinā ratnam) and moon-disc upon a lotus in his left (vāmena abjastha-chandra-maṇḍalam). This bodhi-sattva

belongs to the ratna-kula of the dhyāni-buddhas, the progenitor of which family is Ratna-sambhava (see RATNA-SAMBHAVA).

RATNA-PĀTRA

Golden bowl studded with precious stone, carried in the hand of deities like Anna-pūrṇā (see ANNA-PŪRṆĀ), or bowl filled with jewels held in the hand of deities like Kubera, Ganeśa, Jambhala and Vasudhārā.

RATNA-MAKUṬA

A variety of crown, which is studded with precious stones.

RATNA-MAKUṬA

RATNA-MAÑJARI

Sheaf of jewels, held in the hand of some deities of the Mahāyāna division, like Vasudhārā (see VASUDHĀRĀ).

RATNA-SABHĀPATI

Name of Naṭarāja as visualized in the Chidambaram temple-complex, which includes a 'jewel-pavilion' (see NAṬARĀJA).

RATNA-SAMBHAVA

One of the five major dhyāni-buddhas of the Mahāyāna pantheon who represent the directions, the primary elements, the basic sensations and fundamental colours (see DHYĀNI-BUDDHA)

1. Vairochana: center-ākāśa-sound-white

2. Akshobhya: east-air-touch-blue

3. Ratna-sambhava:south-fire-form-yellow

4. Amitābha: west-water-taste-red

5. Amogha-siddhi: north-earth-smell-green

Ratna-sambhava has been mentioned in Guhya-samāja-tantra, which was composed earlier than 300 A.D. He is described as the progenitor of the family known as ratna-kula, and as emanating from the seed-syllable 'trām', which is stationed on the solar orb (sūrya-maṇḍalopari trām-kāra-ja). He is distinguished by the jewel, which is his characteristic symbol (ratna-chihna), and which he carries in his left hand laid on his lap, the other hand assuming the gesture of boon-bestowal (varada-mudrā). He rides upon a pair of lions.

Besides the details represented by him mentioned above (viz.southern direction, fire as the element, form as the sensation and yellow as the colour), he symbolizes the vedanā-skandha, slander as personified (piśuna-śarīra), spring season (vasantartu-rūpa), saline taste (lavaṇa-śarīra), the third and fourth divisions of day and night (tṛtīya-chaturtha- praharātmaka), and the ta-group of letters of the alphabet (ta- varga-vyāpi, viz. ta, tha, da, dha and na). He signifies the knowledge of sameness of all phenomenal appearances (samatā-jñāna-vān)

The bodhi-sattva that corresponds to him is Ratna-pāṇi (see RATNA-PĀṆI) and the human Buddha is Kāśyapa (see MĀNUSHĪ-BUDDHA). Vajra-dhātvīśvarī is his spiritual companion (see VAJRA- DHĀTVĪŚVARĪ).

Among his emanations are Jambhala, Ucchhushma-jambhala, Vajra- tārā, Mahā-pratisarā (of the Pañcha-rakshā group), Vasudhārā, (Jambhala's consort), Aparājitā (trampling upon Gaṇapati, and hence described as Gaṇapati-samākrāntā), Vajra-yoginī (the Mahāyāna ver-

sion of Chhinna-mastā) and Prasanna-tārā (who despite her name is a fierce deity, mahā-ghorā).

RATNOLKĀ

One of the four Mahāyāna deities representing light (the other three being Sūrya-hastā, Dīpā, and Taḍitkarā, representing sun, lamp and lightning).

Ratnolkā represents bejewelled torch, which she holds in one of her two hands (ratna-dharā). She is yellow in complexion (pīta), fierce in apearance and nude. She wears a garland of human heads, and dances upon a corpse in pratyālīḍha posture (cf. B.Bhattacharya, op.cit., p.317-318).

There is also a deity of magical spells (dhāraṇī) with this name. She is red-complexioned and two-armed. She carries in her right hand the double vajra (viśva-vajra) and in her left the banner with the emblem of Chintāmaṇi-jewel on it (chintāmaṇi-dhvaja- dharā).

RAKTOSHṆĪSHA

One of the eight direction-deities called Ushṇīsha-devatās in the Vajrayāna cult, Raktoshnīsha presides over the southern direction in the maṇḍala of these deities (cf.Durgati-pariśodhana-maṇḍala). Two-armed, elaborately ornamented, and wearing a bejewelled crown, he sits on a man as his mount; he is dark blue in complexion (nīla), and one of his hands assumes the gesture of boon- bestowal (varada).

RATHA

Meaning 'that which delights' (ramyate anena), the word refers to two-wheeled war chariots (yuddhārthe syandanah), vehicles for travels and sport (saṁkrīḍārthe yāne cha pushpa-rathah) and carriages in which gods are taken out in procession (devārthe marud-rathah) (cf.Hemachandra Abhidhāna-chintāmaṇi). The Indian wheelwright or carpenter is distinguished by his ability to make rathas, and hence known as ratha-kāra.

The wheeled war-chariots are usually drawn by horses, while the chariots used in temples are pulled by congregations of people, on ceremonial occasions; carriages for travel may be yoked either to horses or to bullocks.

Kaurma-purāṇa (chap.40) prescribes different kinds of rathas for different deities, especially for the nine planet-gods (see GRAHA and NAVA-GRAHA).

Ratha is also a variety of temples. The so-called 'rathas' of Māmallapuram (near Madras), which are justly celebrated, are rathas only in the sense of temple-varieties.

The expression ratha usually refers to the wooden temple-chariots which are elaborately constructed and richly carved, and which are taken out in grand style on festive occasions. Texts prescribe specific wood (like tiniśa) which is suitable for making a chariot for the gods. The symbolism is that the ratha represents the Meru mountain, the wheels symbolize sun and moon, the images of four horses that are also carved in wood and installed in front stand for the four Vedas; the actual charioteer is believed to be Brahmā, the creator.

The rituals of worshipping the chariot first, putting the deity on the chariot, drawing the chariot along the streets, and offering worship along the route of the procession and taking the deity out of the chariot for conducting it back into the temple are important sequences in the festival known as rathotsava or ratha-yātrā. Every temple of importance conducts rathotsava as an annual event; generally the day chosen for it recalls the day on which the temple was consecrated or the icon installed (see the author's ĀGAMA-KOSHA for details).

The ratha is made of several parts; some texts prescribe that a ratha must have a hundred parts (śatāṅga). The wooden framework is attractively carved, and delightfully fashioned.

Richly coloured cloth pieces are hung over it as draperies (dukūla- vastra-sañchhanna); the top portion of the ratha is decorated with flower-garlands, bells, jingle-bells, mirrors, banners and buntings.

Some of the parts of the ratha are specially mentioned: ratha- mukha (fore-part), rathoḍupa (body, boot), ratha-chakra (wheels), ratha-nābhi) (nave of the wheels), ratha-niḍa (inner part or seat), rathopastha (seat), ratha-ketu (banner), ratha-kūbara (shaft or pole), ratha-yuga (yoke), ratha-bandha (fastenings), ratha-granthi (knots), ratha-gupti (fence of wood or iron to prevent collissions), ratha-jaṅghā (hind-part), dhvaja (flag), daṇḍa (flag-post) and so on.

RAṀBHĀ

Principally the name of a celestial damsel (apsaras) of extraordinary charm, it is also the name of Gaurī as seated upon iguana (godhāsamāśritā). Among the fifty centres of Śakti worship (see ŚAKTI-PĪṬHA), Raṁbhā is the name of the goddess in the Malaya mountains.

As a heavenly beauty, she is classed with Vipulā, Urvaśī and Tilottamā. They are also shown as excellently clad (dukūla- vasanā), richly ornamented (nānālaṅkāra-samyuktā), slightly smiling (kiñchit-prahasitānanā), and with thin waist (madhya-kshāmā) and large breasts (vipula-stanā). They are shown as standing in sama-bhanga on lotus-seat (padma-pīṭha).

As one of the twelve forms of Gaurī (see GAURĪ), she is four- armed, carrying in her hands on the right side sacred water-pot (kamaṇḍalu) and rosary (mālā), and in the hands on the other side lotus (padma) (or vajra according to Rūpa-maṇḍana) and goad (aṅkuśa). Elephant is her mount (gajāsanopari sthitā); and she is capable of fulfilling all the desires of the devotee (sarva- kāmadā) (cf. Jayokta-devatā-mūrti-prakaraṇa).

Raṁbhā is also included in the six principal forms of Devī, other forms being Umā, Pārvatī, Totalā, Tripurā, and Śrī. All the forms are four-armed, three-eyed and decorated with all ornaments (cf. Rūpa-maṇḍana). In this form she is visualized as having elephant as her mount (gajārūḍhā) and exceedingly pretty; she carries in her four hands sacred water pot, rosary, vajra and goad.

RĀVAḶA-NĀTHA

A folk deity extensively worshipped in Mahārāshtra as a form of Śiva, he is identified with Khaṇḍoba or Mallāri (see MALLĀRI).

RASA-LIṄGA

The linga made out of mercury (rasa, pārada) is held especially sacred and is regarded as possessing magical powers, especially the power to transmute base metals into gold. Mercury is described as the semen of Śiva (harabīja). Rasa-liṅgas are installed in the pavilions where mercurial preparations are made (rasa-śāla) for various therapeutic purposes.

Rasa-liṅga is said to be superior to the bāṇa-linga (see BĀṆA- LIṄGA) a crore of times; a mere look at the rasa-linga will destroy all sins ('darśanād duritam hanti'), prostration in front of it will pacify all evil planetary forces ('namaskāreṇa durgrahān') and worshipping will bring about the fulfilment of all desires ('sarvān kamān avāpnoti pūjanāt', Nārada-smṛti', quoted in Sakalāgama-sāra-saṅgraha). Devotion to rasa-liṅga is also claimed to accomplish magical skills (aṇimādi-siddhi) and great powers (mahābhūti).

The preparation of rasa-liṅga is described in texts like Mātṛkā- bheda-tantra (paṭala 8).

RAHASYA-YOGINĪ

The group of eight attendants or minor forms of Devī located in the seventh enclosure called Sarva-roga-hara of Śrī-chakra (see ŚRĪ-CHAKRA) identified with the Lambikāgra centre in the

human body. Corresponding to the eight corners of the chakra, there are eight deities, described collectively as vāg-devatās: Kāmeśi, Sarveśi, Aruṇā, Jayinī, Modinī, Vimalā and Kaulinī.

They are all red in complexion like the fresh sprouts of aśoka (raktāśoka-prasūnabhā), and their bodies are completely covered by armour (kavachācchhanna-sarvāṅgyah). They are four-armed, carrying in their hands bow, arrow, lute (vīṇā) and scripture (pustaka). They are responsible for the destruction of all demons (daitya-saṁhāra-hetavah).

The deities in the next (viz.eighth) enclosure (known as Sarva-siddhi-pradā, and identified with the ājñā centre) are three in number corresponding to the three corners of a triangle. The apex of the triangle is represented by Kāmeśvarī, the right corner by Vajreśvarī, and the left corner by Bhaga-mālinī. They are white, rosy and yellow in complexion. They are known as ati-rahasya-yoginīs and are described as equal to Lalitā herself in prowess and glory (lalitā-sama-māhātmyā, lalitā-sama-tejasah).

They are all shown as eight-armed, carrying in their hands bow, arrow, bowl of liquor, mātuluṅga fruit, sword, shield, snake-noose (nāga-pāśa) and war-bell. They are described as inebriated with liquor (madironmattāh).

RĀKĀ

Like Sinīvālī (see SINĪVĀLĪ) and Kuhū, Rākā is a moon-goddess of considerable antiquity. She represents full-moon (sampūrṇa- chandra paurṇamāsi). She and Sinīvālī are worshipped in temples during installation and consecration ceremonies (cf.Vaikhānasa- pratishthānukramaṇikā, pūrva-pīṭhikā). Rākā is invoked in mud pots with fissures (chhidra-kumbheshu) and Sinīvālī in mud- platters (śarāveshu).

Brahmā the creator has several prajāpatis as his offsprings. One of them Aṅgiras married Smṛti and begot four moon-goddesses (chandra-devatās); Anumatī, Rākā, Kuhū and Sinīvālī. Anumatī represents the night previous to the full-moon, while Rākā is the deity of full-moon.

Rākā is visualized as white in complexion with golden tinges (hema-miśrita-dyuti), and clad in red garments (rakta-chela). She is two-armed, and carries flowers in her hands (dvi-bhuja pushpa-hastā).

She has swan on her banner (haṁsa-dhvajā) and swan is her mount (haṁsa-vāhā). She is associated with the music of lute and flute (vīṇā-veṇu-ravā). Her seed-syllable is 'ra' (nāmādyakshara-bījakā), and her birth asteric is mūlā-nakshatra.

(see SINĪVĀLĪ for more details).

RĀKSHASA

Beings who are extremely evil, malignant, wicked, cruel, irritable and powerful are generally known as rākshasas, sometimes distinguished from the asuras or enemies of gods (sura-dviṭ) daityas (children of Diti), and dānavas (offsprings of Danu). It is reasonable to consider the rākshasas under three classes:

(1) Those who are by nature benevolent, skillful, possessed of magical power (yātudhāna) and semi-divine, grouped along with yakshas (see YAKSHA, 'yaksha-raksho-gaṇāh');

(2) Titans, who are mighty and huge, and are sworn enemies of the gods and the good folk; and it is in order to kill them that the major gods (like Vishṇu, Śiva, Durgā and Skanda) appear in various sportive forms.

(3) Demons and fiends who wander about during night (naktam- chara), devouring human beings and disturbing the penances of ascetics and sacrifices of sages.

Rākshasas are visualized as ugly and misshapen (virūpas), with heavy facial hair (śmaśrula), equipped with terrible tusks (daṁshṭriṇah),

delighting in eating human flesh (palāśī), powerful at nightfall (sandhyā-bala), fond of snatching away the sacrificial offerings (kravyāda), clothed in dark blue garments (nīlāmbara) and huge in form (bhūta).

They are supposed to dwell in the regions below the solar region (teshām vihārah sūryalokād adhah) and to move about in the company of bhūtas, pretas and piśāchakas. Their source is sin, and they revel in deeds which are dark and sinful.

Iconographic representation of rākshasas in terms of tāla-māna is differently given in the texts. Considering their huge forms, it is prescribed sometimes that rākshasa images must be in twelve-tāla measure (while the sages are to be represented in eight-tāla and the gods in eleven-tāla). Some other texts hold that the vetālas (imps and fiends), bhairava (the indignant and violent form of Śiva) and Narasiṁha (see NARASIṀHA) are to be shown in twelve-tāla measure, the rākshasas in thirteen-tāla and the daityas and dānavas in fourteen-tāla. It is usual, however, to show rakshasas in nine-tāla (see NAVA-TĀLA).

Vimānārchanā-kalpa (20th paṭala) prescribes that rākshasas are to be represented in the sixth enclosure of a Vishṇu shrine, and that they must be shown as dark-blue in colour (śyāmābha), wearing red garments (raktāṁbara-dhara), two-armed (dvi-bhuja), holding spear in hand (śūla-dhara), with hair tawny red in colour (rakta-keśa), terrible fangs (daṁshṭra-mukha) and riding on asses and having ass as their standard (khara-dhvaja-vāhanā).

There are several legends describing the origin of the rākshasas. One of them ascribes the origin of the rākshasa to the left foot of the creator, Brahmā. Another narrates that yakshas and rākshasas were born of Kaśyapa-prajāpati and his consort Munī by name. Still another claims that at the beginning of Kṛta-yuga, Brahmā felt famished and became indignant, and from his hunger issued forth the yakshas and from his anger the rākshasas. There is also an account that the rākshasa tribe, especially of Laṅkā, originated from Pulastya, whose son Viśravas married Ilabilā (or Deva-varṇinī) and begat Kubera (Vaiśravaṇa), and Kaikasī begat Rāvaṇa, Kuṁbhakarṇa and Vibhīshaṇa. Kumbha-karṇa married Vajramālā, and Kuṁbha and Nikuṁbha were born to her.

The first rākshasas are said to be Heti and Praheti. Heti and his wife Bhayā (daughter of Kāla) had Vidyutkeśa as son, who married Sālakaṭaṅka (daughter of Sandhyā); and their offspring was Sukeśa who by his wife Deva-vatī (daughter of the gandharva, Maṇimaya) begat Mālyavān, Sumāli and Māli, all three of whom were responsible for thousands of rākshasas. The three progenitors forced the celestial architect Viśvakarmā to build for them Laṅkā on the mount Trikūṭa in the Southern seas.

Among the more famous rākshasas were Rakta-bīja, Danu, Raṁbha and his son Mahishāsura, Karaṁbha, Chaṇḍa, Muṇḍa, Suṁbha, Niśuṁbha, Hiraṇyāksha and his brother Hiraṇya-kaśipu, Bāṇa, Śaṁbara (son of Hiraṇyāksha), Namuchi, Prahlāda (son of Hiraṇya-kaśipu), Bali (son of Virochana), Viprachitti, Andhaka, Puloma, Dhūmrāksha, Śūra-padma, Tāraka (son of Vajraṅga), Māyāvī and Naraka (son of Anṛta). Many of them are descendents of Kaśyapa through his wives Diti (daityas), Danu (dānavas), Surasa, and Krodhavaśā (Khasa).

There were also female descendents, who were known as rākshasīs: Kaikasī, Sumālī, Kuṁbhīnasī, Tāṭakā, Pūtanā, Vekā, Śūrpaṇakhā, Pushṭoṭkaṭā and others.

RĀKSHASA-LIṄGA

According to Suprabhedāgama, liṅgas (see LIṄGA) are classified into nine varieties, one of which is 'rākshasa'. This type of linga is reputed to be set up by rākshasas who were great devotees of Śiva (like Rāvaṇa). It is to be noted that this text distinguishes asuras from rākshasas

and suras from devas. The nine varieties listed here are : svāyaṁbhuva, pūrva (or paurāṇika), daivata, gāṇapatya, asura, sura, ārsha, rākshasa, mānusha and bāṇa.

RĀKSHASENDRA

One of the eight attendant-deities (parivāra-devatas) of Subrahmaṇya (see KĀRTIKEYA), he is stationed on the south-east. He is two-armed, carrying sword in the right hand and shield in the left. He is dark-complexioned and fierce in aspect. The other seven deities that keep company with Rākshasendra are Yakshendra, Piśāchendra, Bhūta-rāṭ, Daitya-nāyaka, Dānavādhipa, Gandharva and Kinnara; they are chieftains of yaksha, piśācha, bhūta, daitya, dānava, gandharva and kinnara tribes.

RĀKSHASEŚVARA

He is the Śiva-counterpart (piṭha-bhairava) of the form of Śakti known as Indrākshī, presiding over the Laṁkā-piṭha, where Sati's anklets (nūpura) fell (see SATI and ŚAKTI-PĪṬHA).

RĀJA-MĀTAṄGĪ

A variant form of Mātaṅgī (see MĀTAṄGĪ) visualized as seated on a bejewelled throne and listening to the talk of the parrot (śṛṇvantī śuka-jalpitam). She is also shown as playing upon lute (viṇām ālāpayantī). Her posture of sitting is easy, with one of her legs resting on a lotus (abja-nyastaika-charaṇa). She is decorated with ornaments (vibhūshaṇair bhūshitā), clad in red garments (rakta-vastra) and with her forehead adorned by tilaka (tilakodbhāsi-phālikā). Her hair is made up by tying wreaths of fragrant flowers (saugandhikā-srak-kalika-chūlika). (cf. Rāja- mātaṅgī-kalpa). She wears ear-ornaments carved out of conch- shell (karṇoddyat-śaṁkha-patra).

The parrot by her side is said to signify all arts and sciences (śukam akhila-kalā-rūpam asyāś cha pārśve). The dhyāna-śloka given in Prapaṁcha-sāra-saṁgraha (paṭala 8) provides a graphic description of her playing on the lute (vallakīm vādayantīm). The viṇā-head rests beneath her left breast, and she is strumming the strings with the nails of her right hand. Her eyes are half- closed in absorption and her neck is slightly bent.

She is here described as the charmer and deluder (mohinī), as one who holds all beings spell-bound (sarva-vaśaṁ-karī). She is invoked to charm all human beings (sarva-jana-manohari), to subdue all vicious animals (sarva-dushṭa-mṛga-vaśam-karī), to attract all creatures (sarva-sattva-vaśam-kari). Her worship is calculated to bestow wealth, learning and musical skill (aiśvarya-vidyā-gāna-phala-pradhāna).

RĀJA-RĀJEŚVARĪ

Another name of Lalitā as Tripura-sundarī (see TRIPURA-SUNDARĪ, LALITĀ), the presiding deity of Śrī-chakra (see ŚRĪ-CHAKRA). The description of this goddess is elaborate in Shoḍaśī-kalpa, a gist of which is given below. Bhairava-tantra includes this form among the ten mahāvidyās.

She is seated on the lap of Śiva (Śiva-vāmāṁka-vāsinī); she is four-armed, carrying in her hands noose, goad, sugar-cane-stalk as bow and flower-arrows. She is seated upon five 'pretas' (viz. the five gods, Brahmā, Vishṇu, Rudra, Īśvara, and Sadāśiva).

She is charming like a crore of the god of love (koṭi-kandarpa- lāvaṇyā); and she is bright like a million suns and moons arisen at once ('eka-kāloditāneka-chandra-koṭyarka-koṭi-bhā). Her complexion resembles the hue of red hibiscus (japā-kusuma- saṁkāśa); she is rosy like the pomegranate flower (dāḍimī-kusumāruṇā). She is three-eyed (tryakshā); her garments are tawny red (piṅgala-vāsasā). Her ear-rings are sun and moon (suryendu-maṇḍalākāra-maṇitāḍaṁka-maṇḍitā). Crescent moon illumines her crown (bālendu-makuṭojjvalā).

RĀJA-RĀJEŚVARĪ
(bronze, private collection)

She has a face that is tranquil and pleasant (prasanna- vadanāmbujā), and her eyes sparkle with slight smile (sumanda- hasitekshaṇā). Her lovely neck is adorned with auspicious and bejewelled neck-laces (maṇi-maṅgala-sūtreṇa vilasat-kandharā). She is decorated with jewel garlands, arm-lets, bangles, anklets, crown and rings.

It is probable that the goddess in Kāñchīpuram Kailāsanātha shrine was called Rāja-rājeśvarī, because the consecration of this shrine was undertaken by the Pallava monarch Narasiṁha-varma who called himself Rāja-rājeśvara.

RĀJASA-MŪRTI

One of the three types of icons (other two being sāttvika and tāmasa), this is distinguished by the red complexion and six arms (white and four-armed being sāttvika, and black and eight-armed being tāmasa); the posture here will be standing (sthānaka) but not in perfect equipoise (sama-bhaṅga).

RĀJA-HAṀSA

The mythical swan, white in body but having beak and legs red in colour (Amara-kosha, 2,5,24). It is frequently depicted as a decorative motif in temple sculptures; and it is regarded as the mount of Brahmā (see BRAHMĀ).

RĀTRI

Considered as a benevolent goddess 'Night-deity' is of Ṛgvedic antiquity. She is visualized as the sister of Ushas (dawn), wearing black robes adorned with glittering stars. She is invoked for warding off the threat of darkness (robbers, reptiles, wild animals and wicked spirits).

RĀDHĀ

Celebrated as the consort of Kṛshṇa (see KṚSHṆA), she is the spirit that accomplishes the mission of Kṛshṇa (rādhnoti sādhayati kāryāṇi iti). She is regarded as Kṛshṇa's energy on his left side (kṛshṇa-vāma-bhāgāṁśa-śakti) and also as the sakti of Bṛndāvan. She is a popular deity in Bengal and Gujarat.

The legends narrate that at the beginning of creation, in the heavenly realms (Goloka, Bṛndāvana, Rāsa-maṇḍala), the Lord abided. And when out of his will (svechchhayā) he desired to enjoy (ramaṇotsuka), he split into two: the right half was Kṛshṇa and the left Rādhā, the charming damsel who was eager to provide enjoyment to Kṛshṇa (ramaṇī ramyā ramaṇotsukā, kāmāturā). She was in fact a form of

Mahālakshmī. From the hair follicles of Rādhā, the host of gopīs (cowherd damsels of Bṛndāvana) issued forth. And she represents the goddess of wealth and happiness in every household (martya-lakshmī gṛhe gṛhe).

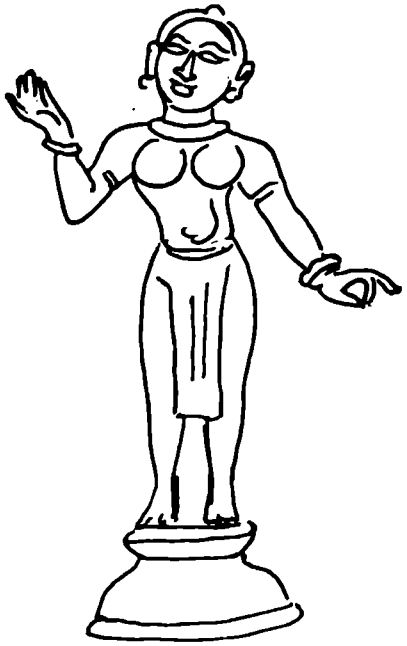
The earliest reference to a gopī who was Kṛshṇa's favourite and with whom he goes out alone occurs in Bhāgavata (10,30, 35-38). But the name Rādhā and the accounts about her are to be found only in later works like Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa (Prakṛti-khaṇḍa, Rādhopākhyāna, chap.45), Padma-purāṇa and Devī-Bhāgavata. Jayadeva's Gīta-govinda (12th century) made the cult of Rādhā popular.

Rādhā is visualized as seated upon a bejewelled throne (ratna- simhāsana-sthā); she is lustrous like a million suns and moons (koṭi-sūrya-śaśi-prabhā). Her body-colour is like burnished gold (tapta-kāñchana-varṇa) or like red lotus covered with dew (śarat- padma-nibhā). She has a charming smile on her face (sa-smitā). Garlands of mālatī flowers and necklaces of jewels and pearls adorn her. Her hair is done up as a beautiful bun (bibhratī kabarīm ramyām).

She is described as a 'parakīyā', viz., an already married woman when she came to live with Kṛshṇa. Stories make her, however, the first love of Kṛshṇa, before he married Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā. Her symbolic significance, which is more important, is that she represents the active energy of Godhead, inseparably abiding within. This is why she is described as 'dwelling ever in the chest of Kṛshṇa' (kṛshṇa-vakshas-sthala-sthitā). Every individual soul is in reality Rādhā, and the immanent Godhead is Kṛshṇa; every heart or body is Brndāvana.

RĀDHĀ-KṚSHṆA

Rādhā (see RĀDHĀ) is described as the 'dear consort' or Kṛshṇa (priyā-śakti), and as 'the lady of Bṛndāvana' (bṛndāvaneśvarī). She is always shown as accompanied by Kṛshṇa; she is rarely shown alone. Hence the expression Rādhā-



RĀDHĀ
(bronze from Bengal)

RĀDHĀ-KṚSHṆA
(bronze, from Uttar Pradesh)

RĀMA

RĀMA

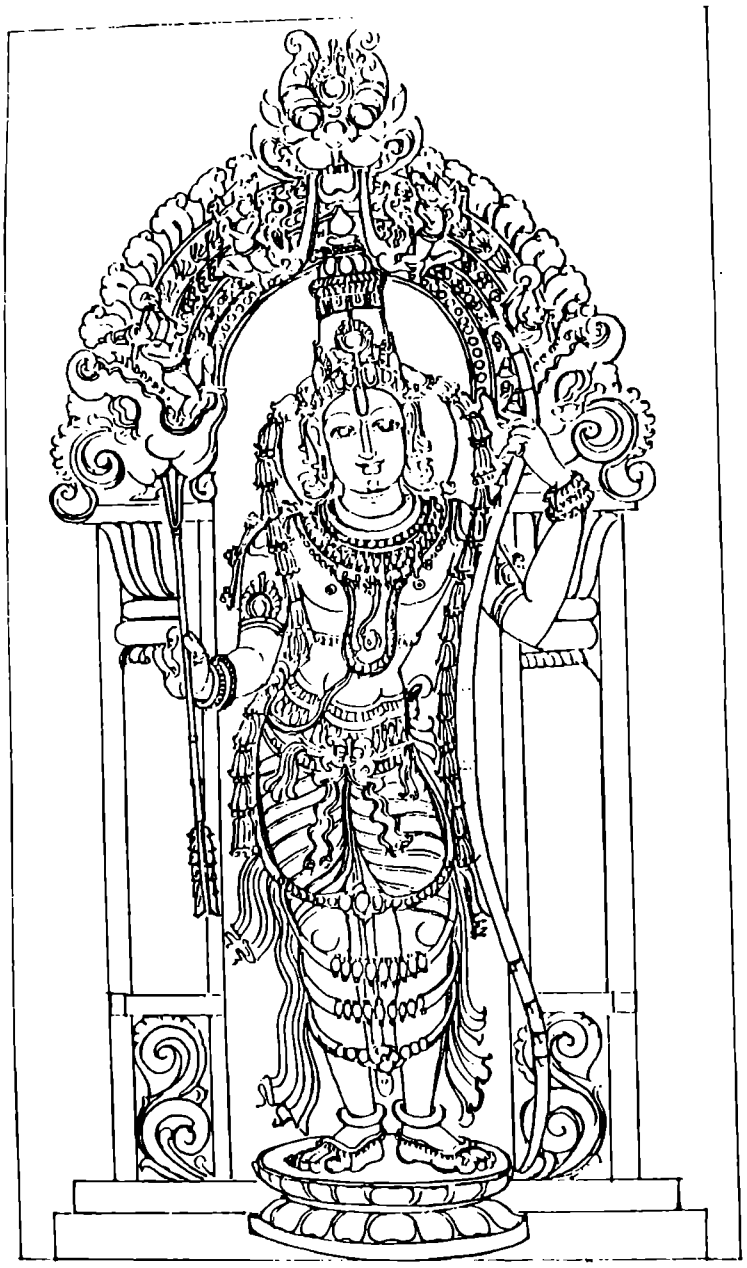
Kṛshṇa, like Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa, and Umā-maheśvara.

When Kṛshṇa is represented alone, Rādhā is believed to be abiding in his heart (hṛt-sthā), never removed from him.

RĀMA

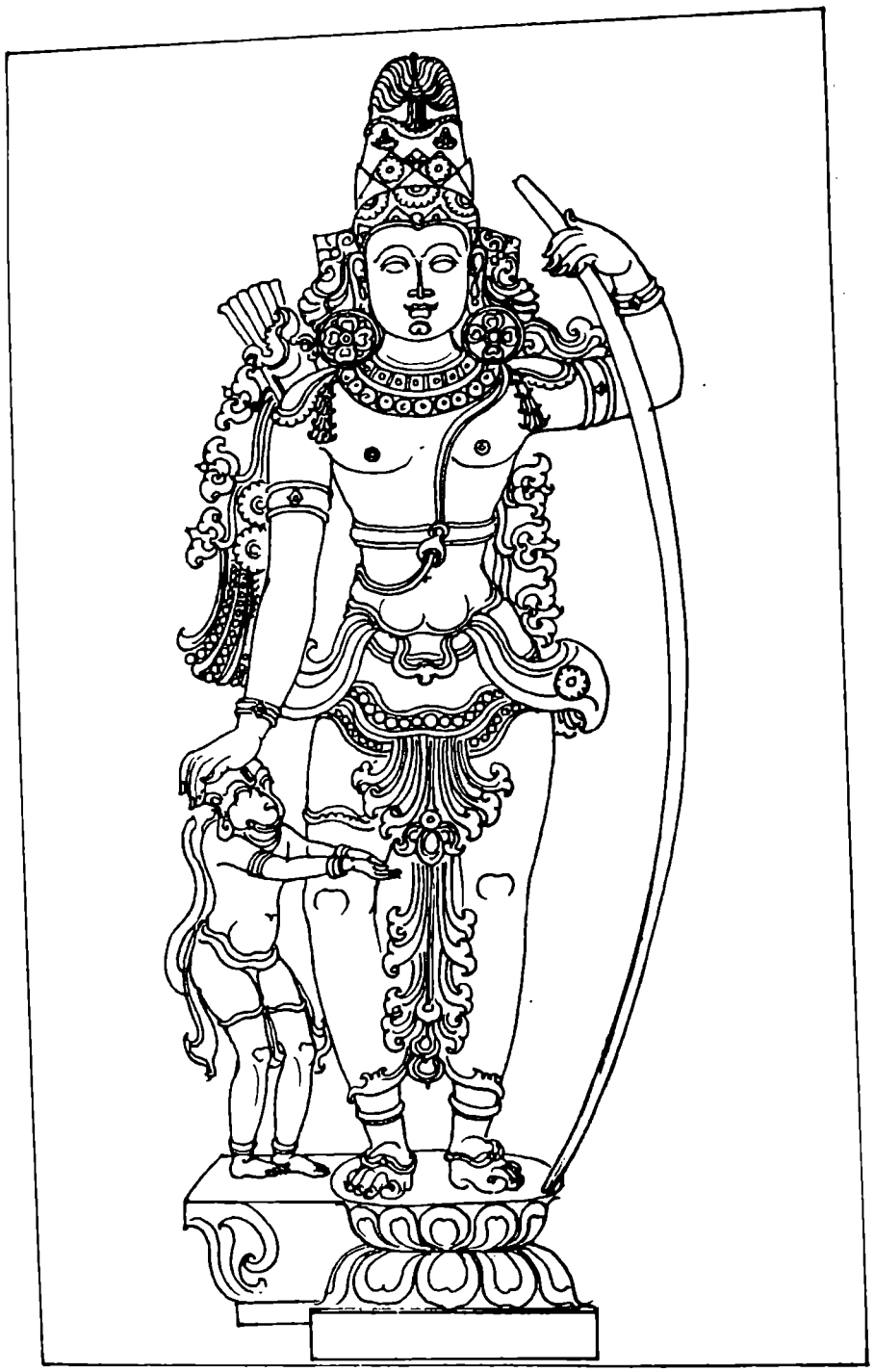
One of two most popularly worshipped forms of Vishṇu (the other being that of Kṛshṇa, see KṚSHṆA), this is regarded as an entirely human incarnation (mānusha-vigraha), assumed for the purpose of destroying the might of the rākshasas headed by Rāvaṇa of Laṅkā (see RĀVAṆA). This is included among the ten incarnations of Vishṇu (see AVATĀRA, DAŚĀVATĀRA). The expression Rāma however signifies Rāma who was the son of Daśaratha, king of Ayodhyā (Dāśarathi Rāma) although two

RĀMA TRYING ON ŚIVA'S BOW BEFORE MARRYING SĪTĀ
(wood-carving from Śuchīndram Temple)

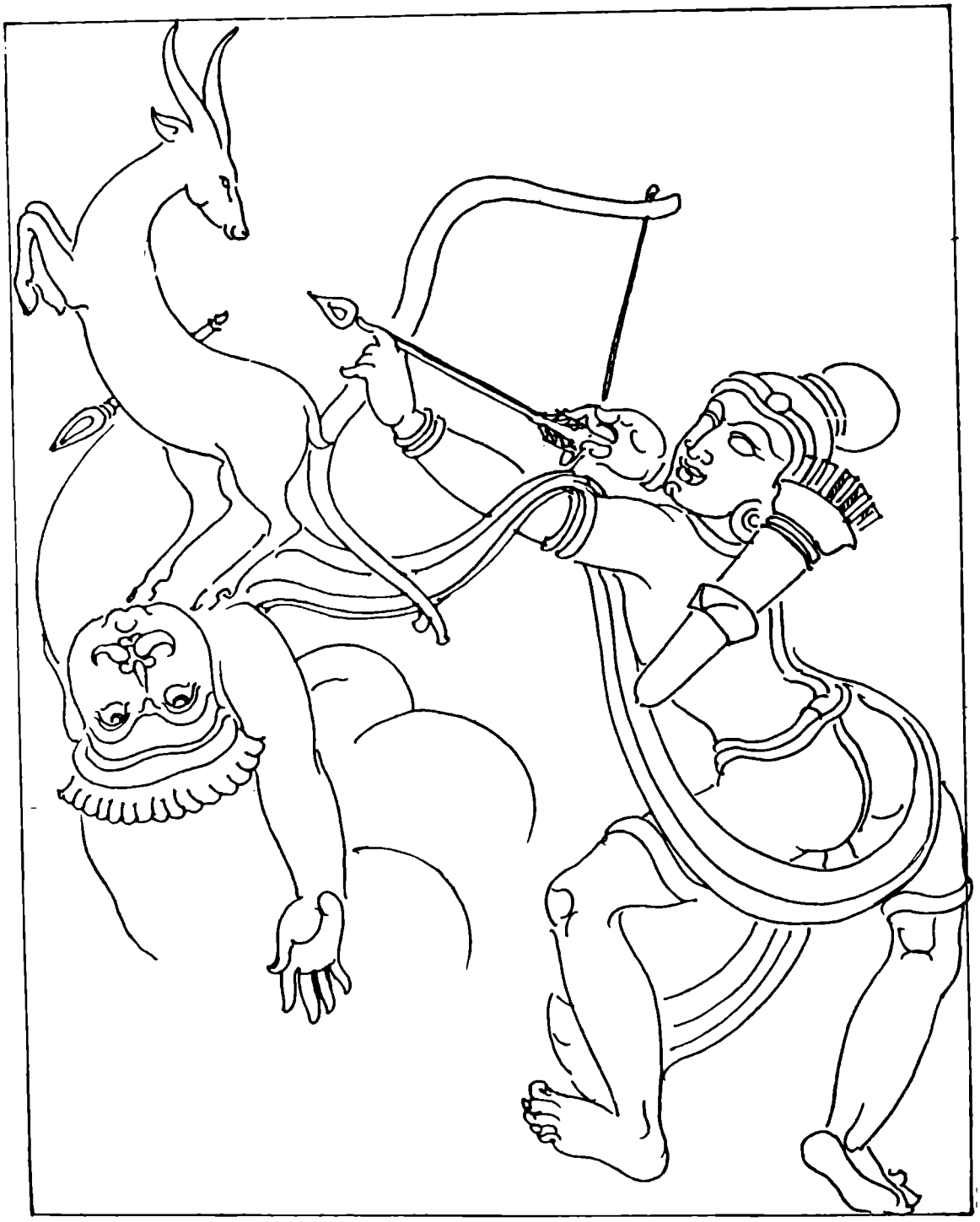


RĀMA

RĀMA AND SĪTĀ

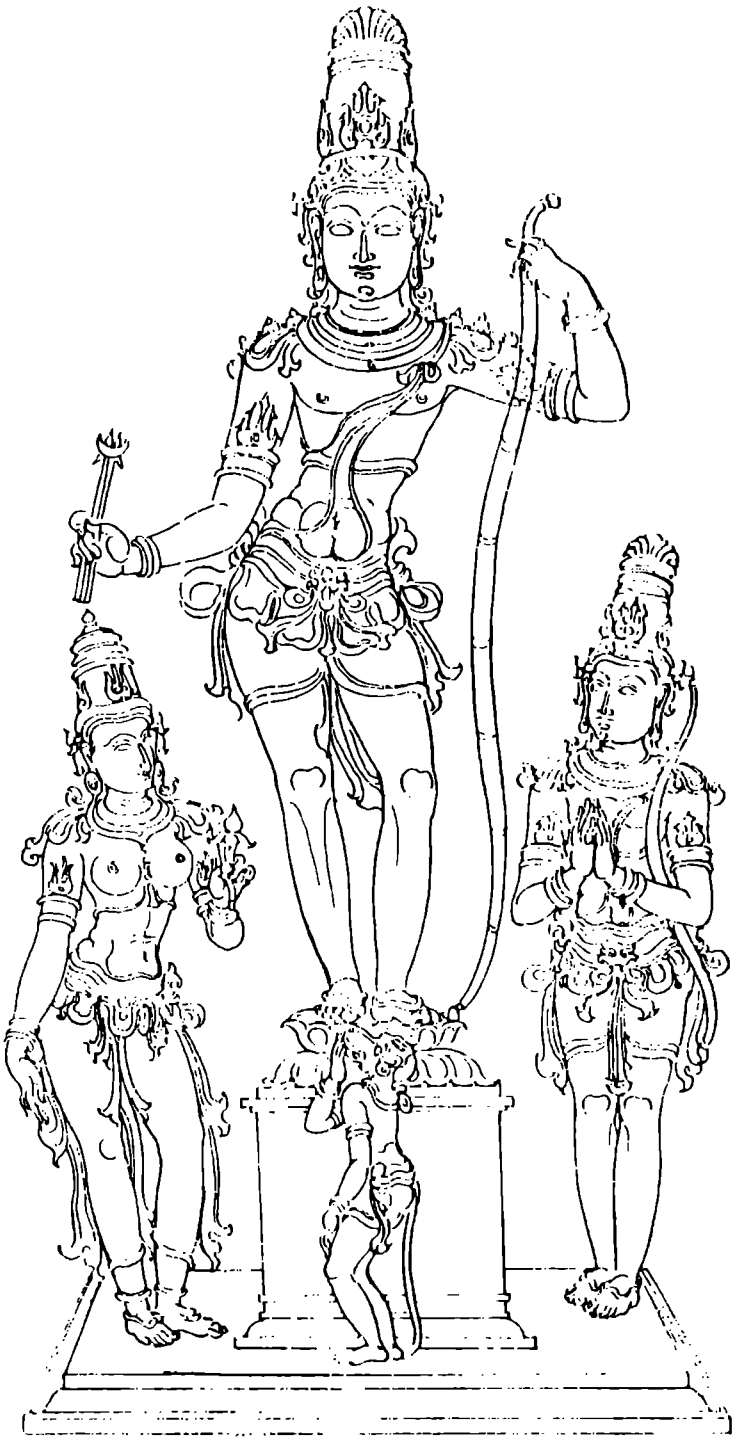


RĀMA WITH HANUMĀN
(stone, from Thali temple, Calicut)

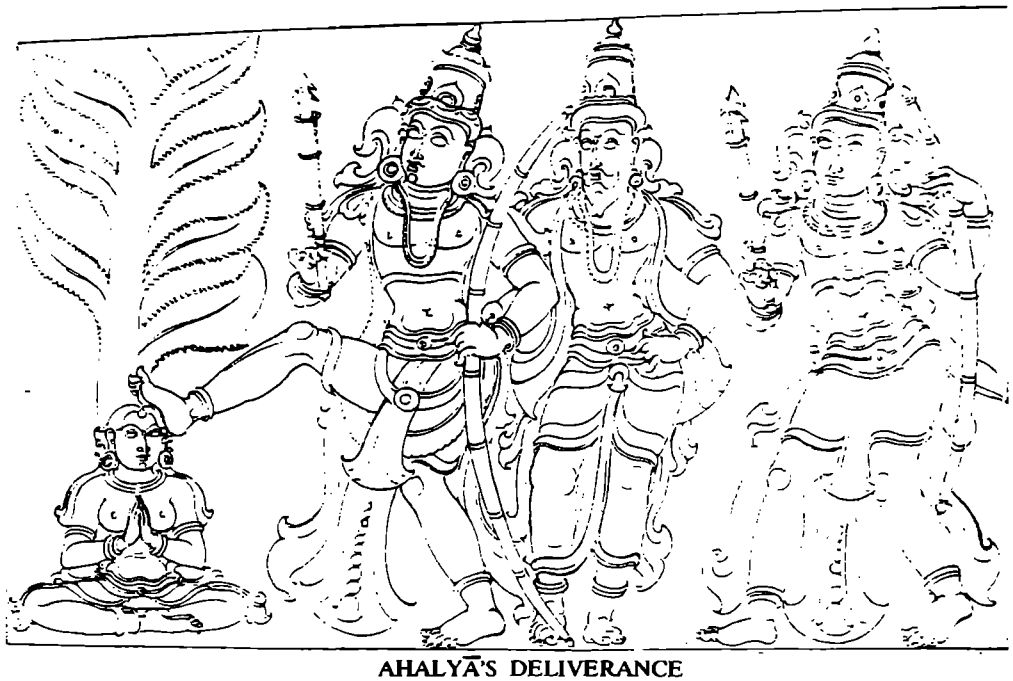


RĀMA KILLING MĀRĪCHA
(wood-carving, from Trivandrum Museum)

RĀMA WITH HANUMĀN
(wood-carving from Kulattupuzha temple)

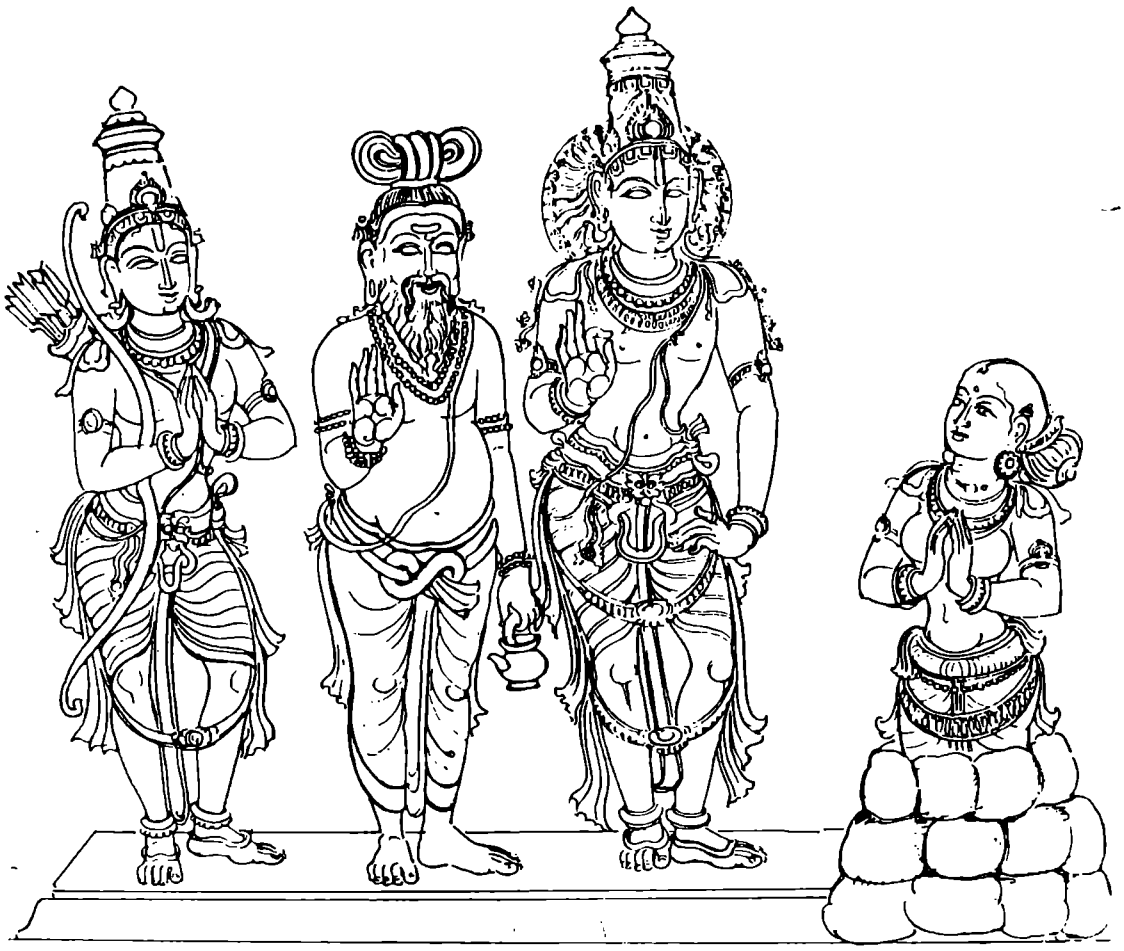


RĀMA GROUP
(stone, from Śārṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbhakoṇam)



AHALYĀ'S DELIVERANCE
(wood, from Rāma temple, Kanyākumāri)

AHALYĀ BEING DELIVERED
(wood-carving from Kaviyoor temple)

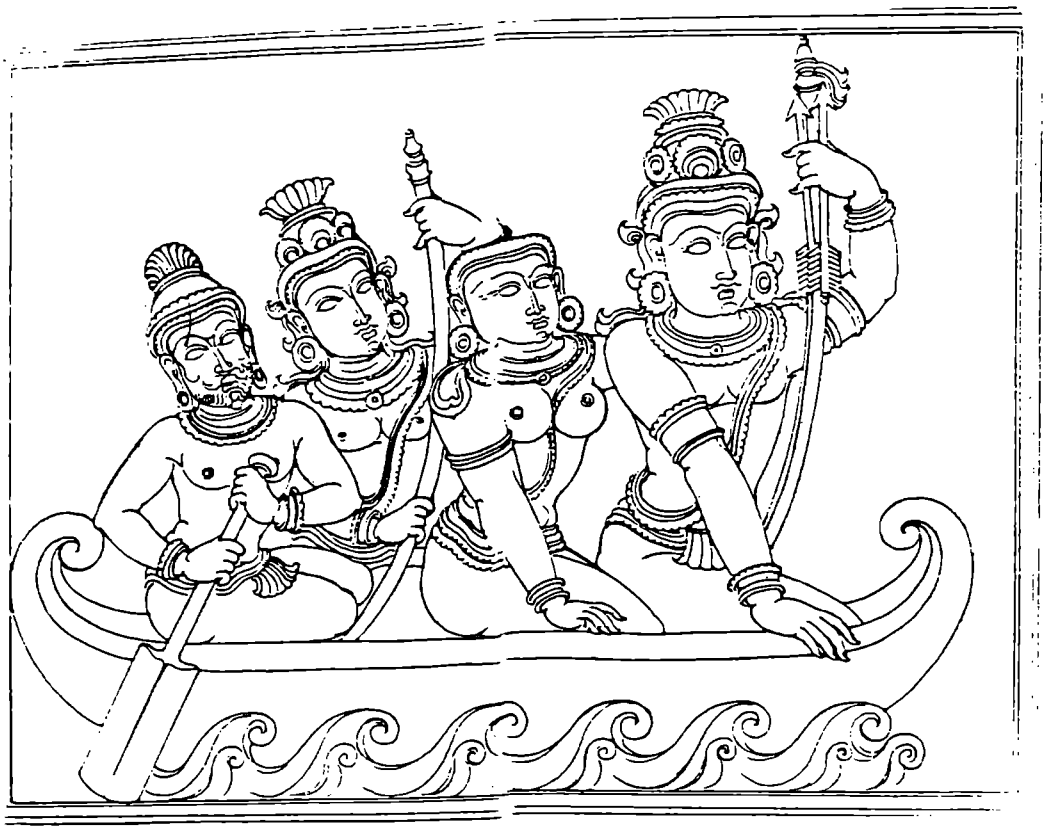


AHALYĀ BEING DELIVERED

other incarnations of Vishṇu, viz. Paraśu-rāma (son of Jamadagni and Reṇukā, see PARAŚU-RāMA) and Bala-rāma (the step-brother of Kṛshṇa, see BALA-RĀMA) are also known as Ramās ('rāmo rāmaś cha rāmaś cha').

The story of Rāma is too well-known to need recounting here. In iconography Rāma is most often shown as accompanied by his wife Sītā, his brother Lakshmaṇa and his attendant-devotee Hanumān. The group is mostly frequently shown as standing (sthānaka), Rāma in the centre, Sītā to his left and Lakshmaṇa to his right; Hanumān sits at the feet of Rāma, usually on the right side, a little in front (dakshiṇe lakshmaṇo dhanvī vāmato jānakī śubhā, purato mārutih).

Rāma, like Kṛshṇa, is shown as two-armed (Agnipurāṇa, 45.5) although some texts provide him with four arms. He is of dark blue complexion (śyāmāṅga), resembling rain-bearing cloud (kāla- megha-nibha), and wears yellow-



RĀMA BEING FERRIED ACROSS THE RIVER BY GUHA
(wood, from Kaviyoor temple)

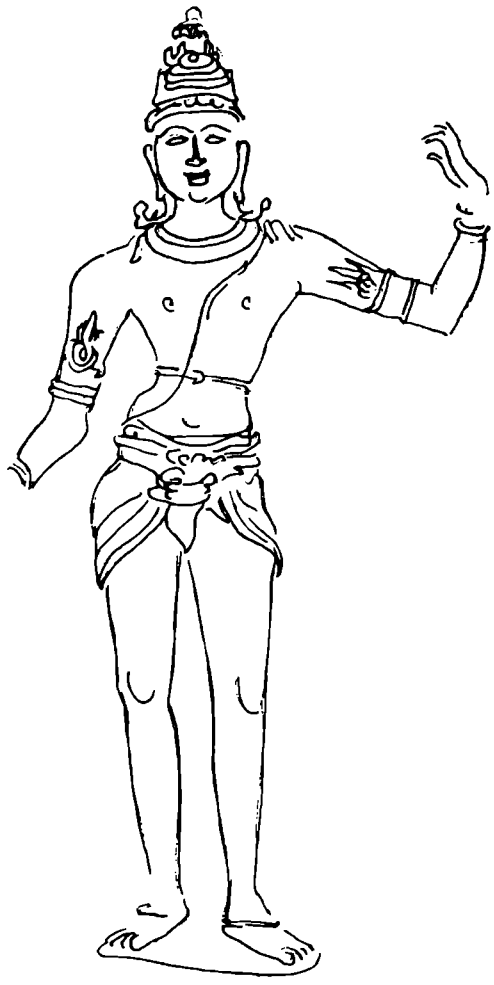
garments (pīta-vāsa). He is shown as youthful (yuvā) and handsome (sundara). He wears on his head matted hair done up as a crown (jatā-mukuṭa-maṇḍita), or alternately wears a long crown (kirīṭa-mukuṭa). The former recalls his days in the forest as a hermit. He has neck like conch (kaṁbu-grīva), broad shoulders and large chest (mahoraska). His body is well-proportioned (samas sama-vibhaktāṅga). His long arms reach the knee. In short, he is shown as possessing all the thirty-three marks of a great man (trayas-triṁśal-lakshaṇopeta), but wearing a minimum of ornaments (alpa-bhūshita).

When two-armed, he carries bow (kodaṇḍa) with his left hand which is raised to the level of his forehead ('uddharech cha lalāṭāntam vāma-hastam dhanur-dharam'). The arrow is held in his right hand which hangs down. He is shown in three-bend stance (tri-bhaṅgi), while standing; the face tilts to the right, while the torso inclines to the left and the legs to the right ('mukham dakshiṇato bhaṅgam, madhya-kāyam tu vāmatah, kaṭyām dakshiṇato bhaṅgam'). The image of Rāma is to be made in madhyama-daśa-tāla (viz. 120 aṅgulas, see TĀLAMĀNA).

According to most texts, Sītā is to be shown on the left side of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa on the right ('vāme bhūmi-sutā' 'dakshiṇe lakshmaṇenopaśobhitam'), although some texts prescribe that Sītā is to be on Rāma's right while Lakshmaṇa will be on his left ('lakshmaṇam kārayed vāme, jānakīm dakshiṇa-pārśve').

Sita is golden-complexioned (hiraṇya-varṇā) and two-armed, carrying a red lotus in her left

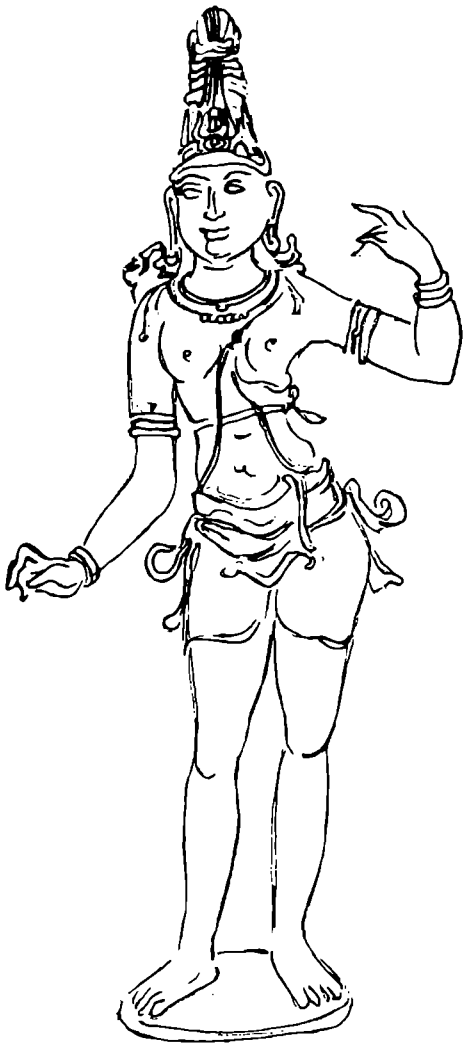
RĀMA
(the earliest available icon of Rāma in bronze)



RĀMA

hand (vāma-haste sarasī-ruha-kuḍmalam', Pādma-saṁhitā, 'kriyā-pāda', 17,60 ff) or a blue lotus (nīlotpala) in the kaṭaka posture. Her garments must be green in hue. Her hair is tied in a knot with curls showing above the forehead (kabarī-valakair-yuta); she wears a karaṇḍa-makuṭa (karaṇḍikā-mauli). Her right arm hangs down touching the thigh. This is when Sītā stands on the right side of Rāma, but when she is to the left of Rāma, the flower is held in the right hand, and the left arm hangs down. The height of Sītā should reach the level of Rāma's shoulders; the image of Sītā may be made in navārdha-tāla.

Lakshmaṇa is to be shown as an exact replica of Rāma, in all details but his image is to be made in adhama-daśa-tāla (viz. 116 aṅgulas) and his height should reach the level of Rāma's ear or shoulder. According to Vishvakena-saṁhitā (10, 116 f), Rāma and Lakshmaṇa are in actuality Nara and Nārāyaṇa (see NARA-NĀRĀYAṆA), while Sītā is the personification of



RĀMA
(bronze, Chola period)

Māyā ('triguṇātma-mayī māyā mūla-prakṛti-saṁsthitā'). Both Rāma and Lakshmaṇa are to be shown as exceedingly handsome (atīva rūpa-sampannau), calm in aspect (saumyau) and slightly smiling (prahisitānanau); their eyes must be large and long (karṇānta-lochanau); and they must be visualized as being in the prime of their youth ('prathame vayasi sthitau'). According to this text, Rāma and Lakshmaṇa should carry bows in their left hands and swords in their right ('khaḍga-hastau dhanushpāṇī'); quivers of arrow must hang on their backs.

Hanumān is to be represented in the form of a monkey (vānarākāra), with his great tail bent in humility (kuñchitāgra- mahā-bāla). He is golden complexioned (hema-sannibha) and stands or sits with hands folded in respect (prāñjali). He may also place his right hand on his mouth, to express loyalty, his left arm hanging down and tucked in (see HANUMĀN). His image is to be made in sapta-tāla (see TALAMĀNĀ).

Pādma-saṁhitā (op.cit), which prescribes that a shrine to Rāma must be located in south-eastern corner of a Vishṇu temple, suggests that the group may include Rāma's other two brothers, Bharata and Śatrughna. According to this text, Rāma and Lakshmaṇa must have the śrī-vatsa mark and kaustubha-jewel on their chests. Rāma is dark blue in clour, but Lakshmaṇa is golden-hued (kanaka-prabha),. Lakshmaṇa stands on Rāma's right, carrying like Rāma bow and arrow Bharata also is on Rama's right side; he is, like Rāma, dark blue in complexion (śyāmala); but he carries in his hands sword and shield, Śatrughna who resembles Lakshmaṇa (even as Bharata resembles Rāma), is golden-coloured and stands on the left side of Rāma, to the left of Sītā. Excepting Rāma, the others do not wear crowns; their heads are adorned with top- knots of hair ('mauli-vivarjitāh; Vishṇu-dharmottara, 3, 85,65).

There is a prescription that while Lakshmaṇa's height should reach the level of Rāma's chin (chibukānta), Bharata's should be at the level of Rāma's eye-brows (bhū-pradeśānta), Śatrughna's height must reach the middle of Rāma's neck (kaṇṭha-madhyānta). The brothers may be accompanied with their wives, Sītā, Ūrmilā, Māṇḍavī and Śruta-kīrti respectively.

Rāma may also represented as seated in vīrāsana or on a throne (bhadrāsana). While seated, he does not carry bow and arrow; his

RĀMA'S CORONATION
(stone, Padmanābha-svāmi temple, Trivandrum)

right hand will assume the gesture of protection and his left hand the gesture of boon-bestowal. The bow may be carried on his left shoulder. Sītā should be comfortably seated (sukhāsīna) either on his right side (dakshiṇe pārśve) or on his left lap (vāmāṅka-sthitā). In the former case, Lakshmaṇa stands on Rāma's left side, holding bow and arrow in his hands, or alternately folding his hands in respect (rachitāñjali).

Rāma's coronation in Ayodhyā after his return from Laṅkā is recalled in the iconographic representation of Rāma seated on the throne. He sits in vīrāsana, showing the gesture of wisdom in his right hand (mudrām jñāna-mayīm dadhānam) and placing his left hand on his lap (aparam hastāmbujam jānuni). Sītā sits to his left carrying a lotus in her hand or she may be seated on his left lap, when Rāma's left hand holds her in embrace ('vāma-pārśvasthayā devyā vidyunnibhāṅgayāstishṭan' 'sītālaṅkṛta-vāmāṅgah, vāma-hastena sītāyās sparśayan stana-

maṇḍalam'). Lakshmaṇa stands by the side of the throne, holding bow and arrow in his hands. Hanumān sits in front of the throne, in the posture of supplication and service (hanūmat-sevitam chāgre).

According to Vāyu-purāṇa (chap.2), Rāma seated upon the throne must be shown as surrounded by sages headed by Vasishṭha, and as attended not only by all his brothers and Hanumān, but also by Vibhīshaṇa, Aṅgada and Sugrīva. And Rāma may be represented with four arms, carrying in the upper hands conch and discus (which are emblems of Vishṇu).

There is also a provision for representing Rāma as recumbent (mahārha-śāyane), recalling his days in the forest. In such an image, Sītā sits by his side at the back near his head ('pṛshṭhato mauli-pārśve tu jānakī syāt sukhāsanā'). Other figures of his entourage may be shown as reliefs in the wall ('kuḍyasthāh'). According to Atri-saṁhitā (60,44-45), this variety of image (śayana) must show Rāma reclining on the ground, placing his head on the lap of Sītā ('sītāyāh urau vinyasta-mastakam') while Lakshmaṇa sits near Rāma's feet, pressing his brother's legs with care and fondness ('tat kāle lakshmaṇa- devam pāda-saṁvāhane ratam, hasan-mukham rāghavasya pīḍayantau padaṁbujau').

Or, Rāma may be shown as being carried by Hanumān on his shoulders (pavanātmajārūḍha), recalling battle-scene in Laṅkā.

Scenes from Rāmāyaṇa are frequently represented in relief sculptures in many temples, especially in South India. Shrines to Rāma are numerous all over the country.

RĀMA-DŪTA

(see HANUMĀN)

RĀMĀNUJA

One of three celebrated ācharyas of South India, Rāmānuja (1019- 1139) was born near

RĀMĀNUJA

RĀMĀNUJA
(bronze)

RĀMĀNUJA
(from an old drawing done in Mysore)

Kāñchīpuram, and administered the Śrī-vaishṇava community from the great temple at Śrīraṅgam. He is regarded as an incarnation of Lakshmana and of Ādi-śesha. He is the most eminent of the advocates of the doctrine of devotion, and his influence is felt even in northern parts of the country.

His icon is usually found in all temples of the Pāñcharātra division of the Āgama. He is worshipped along with the ten Āḷvārs (see ĀḶVĀR), whose religion he upheld. It is said that some images were carved or cast in metal during his lifetime. The icons found in the temple on top of the Tirumala hills and in Śrī-perumbudūr, the place of his birth, are said to be very old; they are fine specimens of portrait-sculpture.

RĀVAṆA

The rākshasa ruler of Laṅkā, who was killed by Rāma (see RĀMA) in the battle that was fought between the rākshasas and the vānaras. Rāvaṇa was thus punished for having carried away Sītā, Rāma's wife, during Rāma's sojourn in the forests for fourteen years in fulfilment of a promise he had made to his father.

Rāvaṇa is a descendent of Pulastya, the progenitor of the rākshasa tribe. He was the son of Viśravas by his wife Kaikasī; and Kumbhakarṇa and Vibhīshaṇa were his younger brothers, and Śūrpaṇakhā his sister. Viśravas had another wife Ilavilā, to whom Kubera (Vaiśravaṇa) was born. Kubera was older, and he became the king of the yakshas and ruled at the city of Laṅkā which was constructed by the celestial architect Viśva-karmā.

But Rāvaṇa, who was wicked and violent by temperament, drove Kubera out of Laṅkā and established himself there as the king of the rākshasas.

Incensed by the harm caused to his sister Śūrpaṇakhā by Lakshmaṇa in the Daṇḍaka forests, and instigated by his friend and cousin Mārīcha, he carried away Sītā by a deceit. Rāma learnt of the whereabouts of Sītā through Hanumān, and attacked Laṅkā with an army of vānaras. Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa were killed, and Vibhīshaṇa, who had sought refuge under Rāma, was crowned king of Laṅkā.

Rāvaṇa is imagined as possessing ten heads (daśa-kaṇṭha), and twenty arms and four legs (chatushpāt). His ears were like pegs (śaṅkukarṇa). He was tawny red in complexion (piṅgala-varṇa), and his hair was blood-red in colour (rakta-mūrdhaja). He was immense in size (mahā-kāya) and extraordinarily strong (mahābala). He was by nature cruel (nisargād dāruṇakrūra). He was called Rāvaṇa, because he made all beings cry in fear (loka- trayam yasmād rāvitam bhayam āgatam).

According to Agni-purāṇa, he was the demon Hiraṇya-kaśipu (who was killed by Vishṇu in his

Narasiṁha incarnation, see NARASIṀHA) in his previous birth.

RĀVAṆĀNUGRAHA-MŪRTI

One of the sportive forms (līlā-mūrti) of Śiva (see ŚIVA), this involves the story of how the mighty ruler of Laṅkā, Rāvaṇa was humbled, as its background. Rāvaṇa, the chief of the rākshasa clan went to attack his step-brother Kubera, the chief of the yaksha clan, and was returning to Laṅkā victorious on his pushpaka chariot. On the way, he rested for a while on the Himālayan foothills. As he was looking round, he saw a lovely pleasure- grove on top of a hill. He mounted his aerial chariot and tried to alight on the hill, but the chariot could not proceed; when he tried to know the cause of this impediment, he learnt that Śiva and Pārvati were soujourning in the grove on top of the hill, which was Kailāsa, and no one was allowed to go near.

Roused to fury, he resolved to lift that mountain itself and throw it away. He put his twenty hands underneath the hill and plucked it out of the ground. Pārvati was scared, when the hill shook. In order to reassure her, Śiva pressed the big toe of his left foot, and the hill stood firm. And at the same time, the hands of Rāvaṇa were caught beneath the hill. Under the weight of the hill, the rākshasa chief suffered great agony and cried out in pain. He thus became known as Rāvaṇa (one who cries).

At last and in despair, he prayed to Śiva and sang his praises for a thousand years. Śiva took pity on him and freed his hands. He also presented him with a magic sword. It is this occasion that is celebrated in the form 'Rāvaṇānugraha' (bestowing grace on Rāvaṇa).

Splendid sculptures in bold relief of this form are to be found in the rock-cut shrines of Elūra (in the Daśāvatāra cave and in the Dhumar-leṇa cave), and in the Chenna-keśava temple at Belūr in Karṇāṭaka.

RĀHU

Meaning 'the seizer', (rahati, gṛhītvā tyajati), Rāhu is so called because he is believed to be responsible for the eclipse of the sun and the moon, and is described as the beginning of an occultation or obscuration.

Legends make him the child of Viprachitti and Siṁhikā (hence his name Saiṁhikeya). He is the eldest of the fourteen children they had, who include Śamba, Ilvalā, Namuchi, Vātāpi and Naraka, all of whom were cruel by nature and vengeful (dāruṇābhijanāh krūrāh).

Rāhu disguised himself as a god, when Vishṇu as Mohinī, was distributing nectar (soma) to the gods on the occasion of the churning of the milky ocean (samudra-mathana). He received the nectar from Vishṇu's hands and was sipping it, when Sūrya and Chandra (sun and moon) saw through his guile and revealed his identity to Vishṇu. Vishṇu at once cut off Rāhu's head. But the effect of nectar made the head immortal, and the head flew into the atmosphere and remained there as a 'planet' (Bhāgavata, 8,9).

Another account makes Rāhu assume the form of a serpent and lick the drops of nectar that had fallen on the grass. When Vishṇu severed his head with his discus, the head became known as Rāhu and the tail Ketu. The head was fixed in the heavens as a planet, while from the tail all the terrible comets and meteors took shape (see KETU).

Rāhu is one of the nine 'grahas' and receives worship in the group. He is said to be born in the Malaya mountain, in the śūdra caste; he is dark coloured (or smoky grey) and wears dark garments (kṛshṇa-vastra). He is in some texts described as having the head of Sūrya (sūryāsya). But according to Bṛhajjātaka, he has the form of a snake or dragon (sarpākṛti).

Śilpa-ratna (chap.25) provides him with four arms, carrying in them the gesture of protection,

RĀHU

sword, shield and lance. He is seated upon a throne (simhāsana-gata). But Vishnu-dharmottara, which makes him two-armed with book in the left hand and nothing at all in the right (śastra-śūnyam tu dakshiṇam), prescribed that he must be visualized as seated in a silver chariot drawn by eight horses (raupya rathe ashṭāśve). Some accounts make lion his mount (simha-vāhana).

The image of Rāhu consists mainly of head (rāhos śirah), and not infrequently the head is that of a serpent; the tail portion is regarded as a separate graha, Ketu.

RIPU-MĀRIṆĪ

A form of Durgā, and counted among the nine varieties of Durgā (see NAVA-DURGĀ) according to Rūpa-maṇḍana, she is deep red in complexion (rakta) and fierce of aspect (bhayaṁkarī) (Śāradā-tilaka). She is two-armed, her right hand assuming the gesture of warning and threat (tarjanī) and her left hand carrying a flaming trident (tri-śikha). She is to be invoked in the solar orb. Her worship is meant for the destruction of enemies.

RUKMIṆĪ

Kṛshṇa's chief consort (mahishī), Rukmiṇī was the daughter of Bhīshmaka, the king of Vidarbha, and born as a partial incarnation of Lakshmī ('kamalāṁśena saṁbhutā'). She was Sītā in her previous incarnation, according to Padmottara-khaṇḍa, (67). She was in the present birth promised to wed Śiśupāla, much against her will. Kṛshṇa saved the situation by carrying her away and marrying her (cf.Hari-vaṁśa, 116). Her son was Pradyumna.

She is represented always with Kṛshṇa, and never alone. She is two-armed, charming in aspect, golden-hued (rukma-varṇā) and well-decorated.

RUDRA

The expression 'rudra' involves the idea of crying and making others cry. The purāṇas relate that at the beginning of creation (kalpādau), the creator willed to bring forth powerful force necessary for creation; and the will manifested itself as a little baby, who started crying (rudan). The creator inquired and found that the cause of crying was the absence of a name ('nāma dhehi'). The creator thereupon called him Rudra because he cried ('rudras tvam, mā rodīh dhairyam āpnuhi') (cf. Vishnu-purāṇa, 1,8). Bhāgavata, on the other hand, relates that Rudra was born from the eye-brows of an angry creator, and was the embodiment of anger (krodha-rūpah bhrū-madhyāt jātah); and that from Rudra were born all the bhūtas, pretas and piśāchas which made all people cry (rodayatī ti rudrah). Rudra is here viewed as the destroyer (saṁhāra-kartā).

Rudra is also regarded as responsible for a creative process known as 'rudra-sarga'. Having created the worlds, the creator Brahmā requested Rudra to fill the worlds with creatures ('jagad etad pra-pūraya). Rudra thereupon created numerous beings like demons (bhūta), departed spirits (preta), goblins (pishāchakas), malignant imps known as kūshmāṇḍas, deformed fiends who roared frighteningly ('vikṛtākārān bhairavān bhīma-nādinah') and numerous other trouble-makers of the world (jagad-vidrāvakān bahūn). (Pādma-purāṇa, svarga-khaṇḍa, chap.8).

Matsya-purāṇa (chap.5) enumerates eleven Rudras, who are in the text called 'gaṇeśvaras' ('leaders of hosts'), and relates that 84 crores of guardian-spirits sprang forth from them (dikshu sarvāsu rakshām kurvanti') (see RUDRA-GAṆA).

According to another account in Padma-purāṇa (op.cit.), Rudra cried as soon as he was born, and to pacify him Brahmā the creator gave him eight names, which became the eight aspects of Rudra, presiding over the eight details of creation: Bhava (sun), Śarva (water), Īśāna (fire), Śiva (earth), Paśupati (air), Bhīma (ākāśa), Ugra (sacrificer or yajamāna) and

Mahādeva (moon). The eight deities were associated with their feminine counterparts: Suvarchalā, Ushā, Vikeśī, Śivā, Svāhā, Diśā, Dīkshā and Rohiṇi respectively. The children born out of them are: Śanaiśchara (saturn), Śukra (Venus), Lohitāṅga (Mars), Manojava, Sarga, Sunda, Sanātana and Budha respectively.

The same purāṇa enumerates eleven Rudras (see Ekādaśa-rudra), providing information about their locations (sthāna) and consorts (patnī):

1. **Ṛta-dhvaja** - sense-organs - Dhṛti
2. **Manu** - life - Dhīh
3. **Manyu** - heart - Asi
4. **Ugra-retas** - void of sky - Lobhā
5. **Mahān** - air - Niyut
6. **Śiva** - fire - Sarpī
7. **Bhava** - water - Vilaṁbikā
8. **Kāla** - earth - Irāvalī
9. **Mahīnasa** - austerity (tapas) - Svadhā
10. **Vāmadeva** - moon - Dīkshā
11. **Dhrta-vrata** - sun - Sundarī

The notion that the Rudras are eleven in number is a familiar one, so well-known indeed that the expression 'rudra' is taken to represent the number eleven. But their names are given differently in texts.

Vishṇu-purāṇa (1,15,122), however, mentions only four offsprings (putraś chatvārah) of Viśva-karmā, the creator, and Rudra is one of them, the other three being Ajaikapāt, Ahibradhnya and Tvashṭr. The usual number of Rudras is eleven, and given below are their names according to different authorities. If may be noted that Ajaikapāt is usually regarded as two distinct forms, Aja and Ekapāt although early references refer to a single form (ajaikapāda). This is of Vedic origin, even as Ahirbudhnya (spelt differently as Ahi-budhna, Ahir-bradhna, Ahir-budhna etc.) is.

ELEVEN RUDRAS

Mahā-bhārata	Jaṭādhara	Gāruḍa-p	Agni-p	Matsya-p	Aṁśumad-bheda	Viśva-karma	Rūpamaṇḍana
1. Aja	Ajaikapāt	Ajaikapāt	Ajaikapāt	Ajaikapāt	Mahādeva	Aja	Tatpurusha
2. Ekapāt	Ahirbudhnya	Ahirbudhnya	Ahirbudhnya	Ahirbudhnya	Śiva	Ekapāt	Aghora
3. Virūpāksha	Virūpāksha	Tvashṭr	Kṛttivāsa	Virūpāksha	Śaṁkara	Ahirbudhnya	Īśāna
4 Sureśvara	Sureśvara	Viśva-rūpa	Viśva-rūpa	Raivata	Nīla-lohita	Virūpāksha	Vāmadeva
5. Jayanta	Jayanta	Hara	Hara	Hara	Īśāna	Revala	Sadyojāta
6. Bahu-rūpa	Bahu-rūpa	Bahu-rūpa	Bahu-rūpa	Bahu- rūpa	Vijaya	Hara	Mṛtyuñjaya
7. Tryaṁbaka	Tryaṁbaka	Tryaṁbaka	Tryaṁbaka	Tryaṁbaka	Bhīma	Bahu- rūpa	Kiraṇāksha
8. Aparājita	Aparājita	Aparājita	Aparājila	Sureśvara	Deva-deva	Tryaṁbaka	Śrīkaṇṭha
9. Vaivasvata	Vaivasvata	Vrshākapi	Vrshākapi	Sāvitra	Bhavo-dbhava	Sureśvara	Ahirbudhnya
10. Sāvitra	Sāvitra	Śaṁbhu	Kapardi	Jayanta	Rudra	Jayanta	Bahu- rūpa
11. Hara	Hara	Kapardi-raivata	Raivata	Pināki	Kapālīśa	Aparājita	Tryaṁbaka

Matsya-purāṇa (Chap 5) which enumerates eleven 'gaṇesvaras' who are Rudras, describes all of them as 'trident-bearers' (tri-śūla-dhārinah). It is only in later works like Rūpa-maṇḍana and Viśva-karma-śilpa that we find iconographical details of the eleven Rudras. Rūpa-maṇḍana incorporates the five forms of Śiva (pañcha-brahma) in the ekādaśa-rudra group and provides some details of these five forms together with three others (Mṛtyuñjaya, Kiraṇākshha and Śrī-kaṇtha); nothing is extant about the remaining three Rudras (Ahirbudhnya, Bahurūpa and Tryambaka) who complete the list of eleven.

1 **Iśāna**: crystal white in complexion; matted hair done as a crown with crescent moon stuck on it, four arms carrying rosary, trident, skull-cup and gesture of protection in the hands.

2. **Tatpurusha**: yellow garments; two arms, the right holding rosary and the left hand carrying mātuluṅga fruit

3. **Aghora:** complexion resembling blue lotus; three eyes of yellow hue; fierce face with sharp tusks; all the ornaments made of serpants (ear-rings, arm-bands, necklace, sacrificial chord, loin-belt etc); garland of scorpions round the neck; band of skulls (kapāla-mālā) round the matted hair, yellow in colour, done up as a crown; eight arms, the hands on the right side holding trident, battle-axe, sword and cudgel, while those on the left khaṭvāṅga, skull-cup, shield and noose.

4. **Vāmadeva:** the body, eyes, garments, ornaments and sacred chord all red in colour; three eyes, long nose; two arms, carrying in the hands sword and shield.

5 **Sadyojāta:** the body, garments, garlands etc all white in colour; joyous handsome appearance, three eyes; two arms, hands assuming the postures of protection and boon bestowal

6. **Mṛtyuñjaya**: fair-complexion; garments of tiger-skin, garland of skulls; six srms, two hands being laid on the laps in front in the yoga-posture and the other hands carrying trident and rosary (right) and skull-cup and sacred water-pot (kamaṇḍalu) (left)

7. **Kiraṇākṣha:** four arms, carrying in the hands the gesture of protection, rosary, sacred book and śukla-pāda(?)

8. **Śrīkaṇṭha**: garments of variegated colour; decorated with all ornaments; handsome face; four arms, carrying bow, arrow, sword and shield in the hands.

Viśvakarma-śilpa provides information only about the weapons carried in the sixteen hands of each of the Rudras. They are in clockwise order beginning with the topmost hand:

1. **Aja:** (right) spear, goad, skull-cup, hand-drum, serpent, club (mudgara), rosary, discus; (left) gesture of warning, mace, khaṭvāṅga, iron mallet, bell, śakti, axe, sacred water-pot

2. **Ekapāt**: (right) bow, bell, skull-cup, crescent moon, gesture of warning, bell, axe, śakti; (left) khaṭvāṅga, dart, discus, hand-drum, club, gesture of boon-bestowal, rosary, spear.

3. **Ahirbudhnya**: (right) mace, discus, sword, hand-drum, club, spear, goad rosary; (left) weapons tomara and paṭṭiśa, shield, skull-cup, gesture of warning; pot, śakti and axe.

4. **Virūpākṣha**: (right) sword, spear, hand-drum, goad, serpent, discus, mace; rosary; (left) shield, khaṭvāṅga, śakti, axe, gesture of threat, pot, bell and skull-cup.

5. **Revata**: (right) bow, sword, spear, mace, serpent, discus, goad, rosary; (left) bow, shield, khaṭvāṅga, bell, gesture of threat, axe, paṭṭiśa, and bowl.

6. **Hara**: (right)club, hand-drum, spear, goad, mace, serpent, rosary; (left) paṭṭiśa, tomara,

śakti, axe, gesture of warning; pot, khaṭvāṅga and broad shield (paṭṭikā)

7. **Bahu-rūpa**: (right) hand-drum, discus, serpent, spear, goad, crescent moon, rosary, (left) bell, skull-cup, khaṭvāṅga, threat-gesture, sacred water-pot, bow, axe and paṭṭiśa

8. **Tryaṁbaka**: (right) discus, hand-drum, club, arrow, spear, goad, serpent, rosary; (left) mace, khaṭvāṅga, bowl, bow, threat-gesture, pot, axe and paṭṭiśa.

9. **Sureśvara:** (right) hand-drum, discus, spear, goad, dart, club, bow; (left) lotus, axe, bell, paṭṭiśa, gesture of warning, bow, khaṭvāṅga and bowl.

10. **Jayanta:** (right) goad, discus, club, spear, serpent, hand-drum, arrow, rosary, (left) mace, khaṭvāṅga, axe, skull-cup, śakti, gestures of warning, bow and sacred water-pot.

11. **Aparājita:** (right) tomara, sword, goad, spear, serpent, discus, hand-drum, rosary; (left) śakti, shield, mace, bowl, gesture of threat, pattisa, lotus and bell.

In Śaiva-siddhānta, from the Maheśa-mūrti (see MAHEŚA-MŪRTI) the three celebrated gods of creation (Brahmā), preservation (Viṣṇu) and destruction (Rudra) emerge. The order of emergance is as follows. From one-thousandth part of Maheśa-mūrti, Rudra takes shape; from one out of a crore parts of Rudra, Viṣhṇu is formed, and from one out of a crore parts of Viṣhṇu, Brahma appears.

Rudra is also associated with Āditya (sun) and Agni. Śrī-kaṇṭha-śivāchārya's commentary on Brahma-mīmāṁsā mentions that Rudra is the presiding deity of form (rūpa, which is associated with Agni), even as Sadāśiva of sound (ākāśa), Īśvara of touch (vāyu), Viṣhṇu of taste (āpa), and Brahmā of smell (pṛthvī). Texts like Kāraṇāgama prescribe that Rudra is to be represented as white complexioned (kailāsābha), five -faced (pañcha-vaktra), three-eyed and four-armed, carrying in his hands the gestures of boon-bestowal, and protection, rosary and sacred water-pot. He is clad in tiger- skin garments, and is decorated with serpent-ornaments. He wears matted hair on which Gaṅgā and crescent moon are represented. He is shown in company of Gaurī (devyā yukta').

In the sacred site of Kedāra in Uttara-khaṇḍa, Śiva is said to have assumed the form of a gigantic buffalo, and the spots where the parts of its body rested became celebrated as 'pañcha- Kedāra': Kedār-nātha (hind-parts), Madhyameśvara (the middle part around the navel), Tuṅga-nātha (the legs), Rudra-nātha (the face) and Kalleśvara (the top of the head).

RUDRA-GAṆA

The host of Śiva's attendants (śiva-pārshada-gaṇa), who number thirty-six crores. They are all called Rudras, and were born, according to Kālikā-purāṇa (chap.29) for destroying the army of wild boars that plagued the earth ('varāha-gaṇa-nāśārtham'), for bestowing benefits to the world ('hitāya jagatām') and for serving Śiva ('śaṅkarasya sevāyai samutpannāh').

They are all possessed of a form very similar to Śiva. They weave their matted hair in the form of a crown, to which crescent moon is tucked. They abide in the heavenly regions ('tri-dive'), and are very powerful ('sarve balavattarāh'). They not only attend upon Śiva ('harasya sevām kurvanti') but protect the good folk and scare away the wicked. They especially confer boons on the devotees who engage themselves in the pāśupata-vrata; they also remove the obstacles in the path of the yogins.

RUDRA-CHAṆḌĀ

One of the nine Durgās (see NAVA-DURGĀ) mentioned in Skanda-yāmala, others being Prachaṇḍā, Chaṇḍogrā, Chaṇḍa-nāyikā, Chaṇḍā, Chaṇḍa-vatī, Chaṇḍa-rūpā, Ati-chaṇḍikā and Ugra-chaṇḍikā. Eight Durgās (each of whom is

sixteen-armed) are arranged around a central Durgā (with eighteen arms) to represent the eight directions.

Rudra-chaṇḍā occupies east and is of yellow complexion (gorochanābha). She is seated upon a lotus mounted upon a chariot.

RUDRĀKSHA

Berry of the tree known as rudrāksha (Elaeocarpus ganitrus), held sacred by the Śaivites; a rosary or garland made of these berries is employed in worship. Meaning 'the eye of Śiva', the berry is believed to have had its origin in the tears falling on earth from the eyes of Śiva in the course of his fight with the Tripuras ('rudrasya akshṇopatatam stu ye aśruṇo bindavah'). It is told in Vātulāgama that Śiva used Aghorāstra against Tripura and had to keep his eyes open for a thousand years, at the end of which tears fell on the ground. The rudrāksha trees sprang up in the spots where the tears fell. The berry is normally multi-faced (bahu-mukha), but the berry with a single face is regarded as Śiva himself ('Śivas sakshāt') and therefore most sacred. It should be worn on top of the tuft ('śikhāyām dhārayed-ekam').

The rudrāksha berries with two to fourteen faces are said to be endowed with spiritual properties, and their worship is calculated to eliminate sins and misfortunes (according to Yoga-sāra, second section):

2-faced one (called Hara-gaurī) will destroy all major sins; 3- faced one (Agni) will undo the evil done in three lives; 4-faced (Dhātṛ) will destroy the sin acquired by murdering some one; 5-faced (Kālāgni) will eliminate the sin got from eating the forbidden food; 6-faced (Guha) (to the worn on the right arm) will avert the sin of killing the foetus; 7-faced (Ananta) will nullify the sin of stealing gold; 8-faced (Vināyaka) will destroy the sin of falsehood; 9-faced (Bhairava) will lead to heavens; 10- faced (Vishṇu) will undo the fear of goblins, fiends and imps; 11-faced (Rudra) will secure the benefits of performing various sacrificial rites; 12-faced (Arka) (to be worn on the neck) will bestow the merit of all pilgrimages; 13-faced (Kāma) will fulfill all desires; and 14-faced (Śrī-kaṇṭha) will make ones family flourish and continue.

Rudrākshas are also grouped in 38 varieties: 12 varieties said to have emerged from the eyes of the sun, reddish brown in colour (kapila); 16 varieties from the eyes of the moon, white in colour (śveta); 10 varieties from fire (vahni), black in colour (kṛshṇa). The berry that is white in colour is assigned to the brāhmaṇa group, red in colour to the kshatriya group, mixed (miśra) to the vaiśya group and black to the śūdra group.

The rudrāksha berries are strung in garlands and worn on different parts of the body : on the head (a garland of 10 or 22 rudrākshas): in the ears (a ring of five or six), in the wrists (bracelet of twelve or ten), around the arms (armlet of 14 or 15) and on the chest (garland of 108 berries). Care must be taken to select the berries which are perfectly ripe (su-pakva) and which have no holes (niśchhidra). Larger the berry the better suited (Meru-tantra, 9th prakāśa). There are also rites to consecrate the rosary of rudrāksha. When garlands are strung, some people encase the berries in gold covers. Rudrāksha is not to be worn on the body when one is unclean due to birth or death of a near one ('sūtake mṛtake vā pi rudrāksham naiva dhārayet') (Kālottara-tantra).

RUDRĀṂŚA-DURGĀ

A form of Durgā (see DURGĀ), she is described as incorporating an aspect of Rudra (see RUDRA). She is dark blue in complexion (śyāmalinī), wearing red garments (raktāmbara). She is two-eyed and four armed, carrying spear, sword, conch and discus. She wears a tapering crown (kirīṭa) on her head, and wears ornaments of gold and jewel. She rides upon a lion (mṛgendra-yāna) and she is adorned by sun and

moon on her sides (ravi-chandra-bhūshā) (cf. Kāraṇāgama).

RURU-BHAIRAVA

One of the eight bhairava forms of Śiva (see BHAIRAVA), he is three-eyed, youthful (kumāra) and fair complexioned (suddha- sphaṭika-saṁkāśa). He is tranquil in aspect (śānta), benevolent by nature (varada) and entirely nude (digaṁbara). He is four- armed, carrying in his hands stone-mason's hammer (ṭaṅka), black antelope (kṛshṇa-mṛga), skull-cup (pātra) and sword (kṛpāṇaka). He rides upon a bull (vṛshārūḍha) and is accompanied by his consort Maheśvarī. He has a smile on his countenance (smitānana).

RENUKĀ

A folk goddess of great celebrity, she is worshipped in several shrines in the country. She is identified with Ekavīrā, the presiding deity of Tulajāpur in Mahārāshṭra and Yallamma in Karnāṭaka.

The legends make her the daughter of King Reṇu-dhvaja of Kanyākubja on the banks of river Bhāgīrathī, wife of sage Jamadagni and mother of Paraśurāma, the incarnation of Vishṇu (see AVATĀRA). Watching once the amorous sport of the gandharva Chitra-ratha with his damsels, she was excited and for this lapse the sage asked his son Paraśu-rāma to behead her. Paraśu-rāma obeyed, but prayed that his mother be revived. Later, the Haihaya chief Kārtavīrya killed the sage Jamadagni when on a visit to his hermitage. Reṇukā was thus widowed and she burnt herself on the funeral pyre of her husband, Paraśu-rāma, at her behest, not only killed Kārtavīrya but undertook to wipe out the Kshatriya clan.

Reṇukā was deified and worshipped on the Sahyādri ranges. Māhur in Mahārāshṭra and Saudatti in Karnāṭaka are important places where her worship is popular. She is regarded as Ādi-śakti, Mahā-māyā, Aditi, and Eka-vīrā.

There are several shrines to her, where only her head is worshipped (as for instance in Vyāghreśvari on the banks of river Tungabhadrā near Hospet in Karnāṭaka. Many of these shrines claim that Paraśu-rāma himself consecrated them.

Along with Reṇukā, Paraśu-rāma (her son), and Jamadagni (her husband) are also worshipped. Some shrines include Dattātreya also in Reṇukā cult; because Dattātreya (see DATTĀTREYA) who was the teacher and mentor of Paraśu-rāma, directed the obsequies of Jamadagni and Reṇukā.

Prapañcha-sāra-saṅgraha (paṭala 32) quotes from Reṇukā-kalpa and provides the following iconographic detils: Reṇukā (also called Rakta-pañchamī) is three-eyed and four-armed, carrying spear and skull-cup in her hands on the right side and sword and hand-drum (kvaṇad-ḍiṇḍima) in her hands on the left side. She is decorated with eight serpents (nāgāshṭa-bhūshojjvalā). She is lustrous like a million suns, and she wears bright ornaments. She sits in a half -lotus posture, resting her left leg on the right thigh (dakshālaṁbitavāma-mudrita-padā).

REVANTA

Celebrated as son of Sūrya (see SŪRYA) and his consort Saṁjñā, he was appointed as the overlord of the guhyaka spirits wandering about dense forests and deep ravines. His worship, which became very popular in the medieval times especially in the northern parts (in Gujarat, Rājasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya-Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal) was calculated to provide security against all kinds of fears, and to bestow welfare (kshema), intelligence (buddhi), happiness (sukha), health (ārogya), fame (kīrti) and prosperity (unnati) (Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa, 105, 22-23).

Bṛhat-saṁhitā (58,56) prescribes that the image of Revanta must be made to ride upon a horse ('aśvārūdha'), surrounded by his com-

panions engaged in hunting ('mṛgayā-krīḍādi-parivārah'). Vishṇu-dharmottara (3,70,5) suggests that he must be represented like Sūrya ('sūrya-vat kuryāt') and upon the back of a horse ('pṛshṭhe-śve'). Agni-purāṇa describes him as a horseman (aśva- purusha).

Kālikā-purāṇa (86, Nīrājana-vidhi, 46 ff) specifies that Revanta must be worshipped by kings at the gates of the city (dvāropānte). He must be represented, according to this text, as riding upon a white charger ('sita-saindhava-saṁsthitam'), dressed in the armour of a soldier ('kavachojjvalam') and wearing white clothes ('jvalantam śukla-vastrena); his hair is secured by a band of cloth ('kesān vitatya vāsasā'). He is two- armed, carrying in his left hand a whip ('kaśam vāma-kare bibhrat'), and a sharp sword in his right ('dakshena khadgam mahā-tīkshnam')

Among the various names of his, mentioned in texts like Aśva- śāstra, are Vīra (valiant), Aruṇa (dawn, and Surya's charioteer), Bhūteśa (chief of the spirits,) Raṇa-priya (fond of battle), Nirbhaya (fearless), Sarva-rakshā-kara (protector of all), Mahā-svāmi (great lord) and Vaidya (physician). Skanda-purāṇa (Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa, 164) calls him the 'worshipful master of the land' (rājya-bhaṭṭāraka).

The Buddhist text Dharma-kosha prescribes that the image of Revanta must be made to carry javelin (vallaka-dhāriṇam) in his left hand and sword (khadgam) in his right; according to this text, he rides upon a gandharva, and is exceedingly handsome (ati-sundaram).

RAUDRĪ

A form of the Devi, who was fashioned by the demon Ruru to delude and stupefy the gods (sarva-deva-pramohinī), but who attacked Ruru

REVANTA
(from County Museum of Art, Los Angelos)

REVANTA
(from National Museum, New-Delhi)

himself and severed his head from his body (Charma-muṇḍe, hence called Chāmuṇḍā), according to Varaha-purāṇa (tri-śakti- māhātmya). She is Maha-māyā (the great deluder), Saṁhāriṇī (destroyer), Sarva-bhūta-mahā-raudrī (the great terror for all beings) and Kāla-rātrī (dark night).

Siddhanta-sārāvalī, a work bearing on Śaiva-siddhānta by, Trilochana-Śivāchārya, explains that Raudrī is the form assumed by Parā-śakti (see PARĀ-ŚAKTI) to represent and bring forth the fire element. The book describes that Parā-śakti assumed eight forms to symbolize the aspects of reality (tattva): Vāmā (earth), Jyeshṭhā (water), Raudrī (fire), Kālī (air), Kala-vikariṇī (ākāśa), Bala-vikariṇī (moon), Bala-pramathinī (sun) and Sarva-bhūta-damanī (self, ātman); and Manonmanī is Parā-śakti herself.

She is represented as black in complexion, fierce in aspect (ugra), clad in red garments (raktāmbara) and of the form of fire (agnyākāra)

RAUDRA-PĀŚUPATA-MŪRTI

A variant form of Pāśupata-mūrti (see PĀŚUPATA-MŪRTI) this is a violent and fierce aspect of Śiva. The body as well as the eyes are red in colour; the face is terrifying with knit eyebrows and sharp fangs. The head is surrounded by flames of fire; his garments are red-coloured. He stands in the posture of balance (sama-bhaṅga). He is three-eyed and four-armed. He carries in his normal hands the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal; in his extra hands are held spear and rosary. Some texts prescribe that his hands must carry trident, skull-cup, stone-cutter's weapon (ṭaṅka) and sword. The trident must have its head turned down, viz. ready to be used.

LAKULĪŚA

Also called Nakulīśa, he was the founder of the Pāśupata system (later known as Lākulāmnāya or Lākulāgama-samaya, identified with the Kālāmukha division of the Śaivas), which was prevalent in the early centuries of the Christian era.

He is celebrated as an incarnation (28th incarnation according to some purāṇas) of Śiva, born of Brāhmaṇa parents Viśva-rājā and Sudarśanā in Ulkāpuri in Bhṛgu-kshetra. His name is associated with Kāyāvarohaṇa (present Kāravaṇa near Baroda) ('Śrī-mat kāravaṇe tīrthe mūrti-mān śaṁkaras svayam'). He is said to have gone to Ujjaini, where he taught his doctrine of five topics (pañchārtha) to Kuśika who hailed from Āryavarta. The line of Pāśupata teachers thus begins with Lakulīśa and Kuśika around the first part of the second century A.D. and goes on to Kauṇḍinya (Rāśi-kara), who wrote the celebrated commentary (bhāshya) on Pañchārtha in the fourth or fifth century.

LAKULĪŚA
(gilt copper, from Bihar)

Lakuliśa was a historical figure who was deified and worshipped by the adherents of the Pāśupata cult especially by the Kālāmukhas. There were numerous shrines to Lakuliśa in Eastern and Western India, especially in Orissa, Gujarāt, Bengāl and Bihār around the ninth and tenth centuries. The images of Lakuliśa are to be found in many Śiva temples, especially in the Liṅga-rāja temple of Bhuvaneśvar, and in Paraśu-rāmeśvara, Kapileśvara and Kedāreś-vara temples (Orissa). We have also Lakuliśa images in Karnāṭaka; Belagāmvi was an important centre of the Lākula-śaiva division.

The icons of Lakuliśa are in the yogic posture, seated with crossed legs (baddha-padmāsana); he is shown as having a citrus fruit (mātuluṅga) in his right hand and a short cudgel (laguḍa) in his left. In fact, the word 'lakuliśa' is taken to mean 'the lord of those who bear cudgels'. Some images show his membrum virile prominently. It was usual to show a linga at his back; but later images omit this detail.

He was also represented as standing and holding a cudgel in one hand. It has been suggested that the human figure in front of the Guḍimallam liṅga is in fact Śiva-Lakuliśa.

Lakuliśa was also shown as four-armed. An interesing icon from the Someśvara temple at Mukha-liṅgam, shows him seated like Buddha in tbe baddha-padmāsana posture, and his two normal hands joined in the dharma-chakra-mudrā. He sits upon a double lotus (viśva-padma). His upper right hand holds a rosary and the corresponding left hand carries a big trident. Tucked in on the left side is cudgel (laguḍa) resting on his lap. The stalk of the double-lotus divides the pedestal-panel into two halves, each half showing two sages seated in yoga-paṭṭa. The four figures are identified as the disciples of Lakuliśa: Kuśika, Maitreya, Gārgya and Kaurūshya, who spread the Pāśupata cult.

LAKSHAṆĀ

Name of Durgā as the vanquisher of Mahisha (see DURGĀ). An inscribed icon made in brass as early as the eighth century (during the reign of King Meru-varman of Chambā in Madhya-pradesh) represent her as the four-armed goddess, lifting up the baffalo-demon's hind part by the tail with her normal left hand, the corresponding right hand thrusting the trident into the demon's neck, pinned down by the right leg of the goddess. The upper hands carry sword and bell. (cf. J.N. Banerjea: Development of Hindu Iconography, p. 498).

LAKSHMAṆA

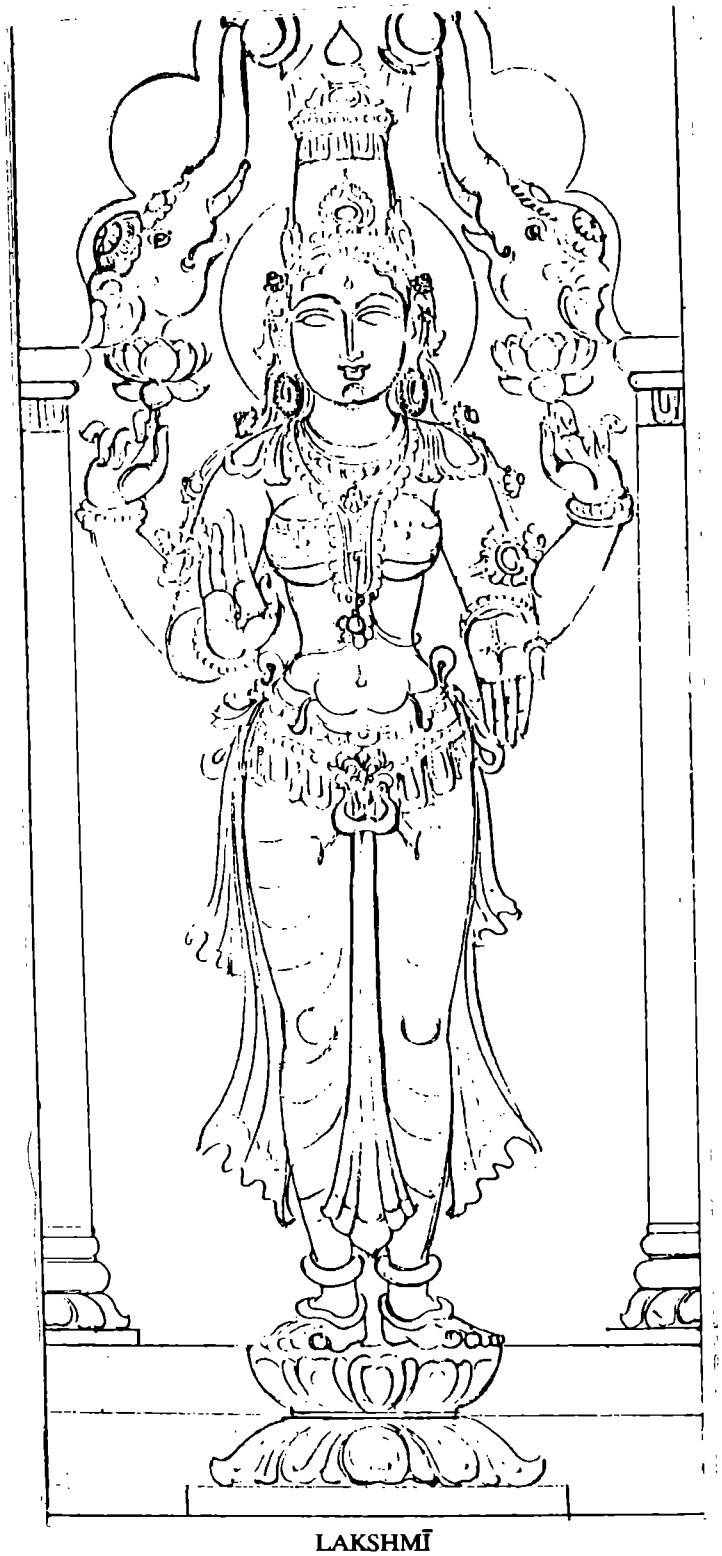
Brother of Rāma (see RĀMA), and son of Daśaratha and Sumitrā, he is always shown as accompanying Rāma, and never alone. Usually he is represented in sculptures and paintings standing on the right side of Rāma (Sītā being shown on the left side of Rāma), and almost as a replica of Rāma: two-armed, carrying bow in his left hand and arrow in the right. His stance inclines in Rāma's direction. His ornaments and decoration are the same as Rāma's. But his image in sculpture is prescribed to be made in the inferior ten-tāla variety, whereas Rāma's image is made in the midling variety of the same tāla. His height should reach Rāma's shoulder or ear.

It is usual for the Rāma group to consist of Rāma, Lakshmaṇa and Sītā (all three standing), with Hanumān (standing or seated in a supplicating posture). When the theme of depiction is the coronation of Rāma, Lakshmaṇa stands wearing a crown and carrying bow and arrow, while Bharata and Śatrughna wear their hair tied in top-knot and with hands joined in the gesture of supplication (añjali-mudrā).

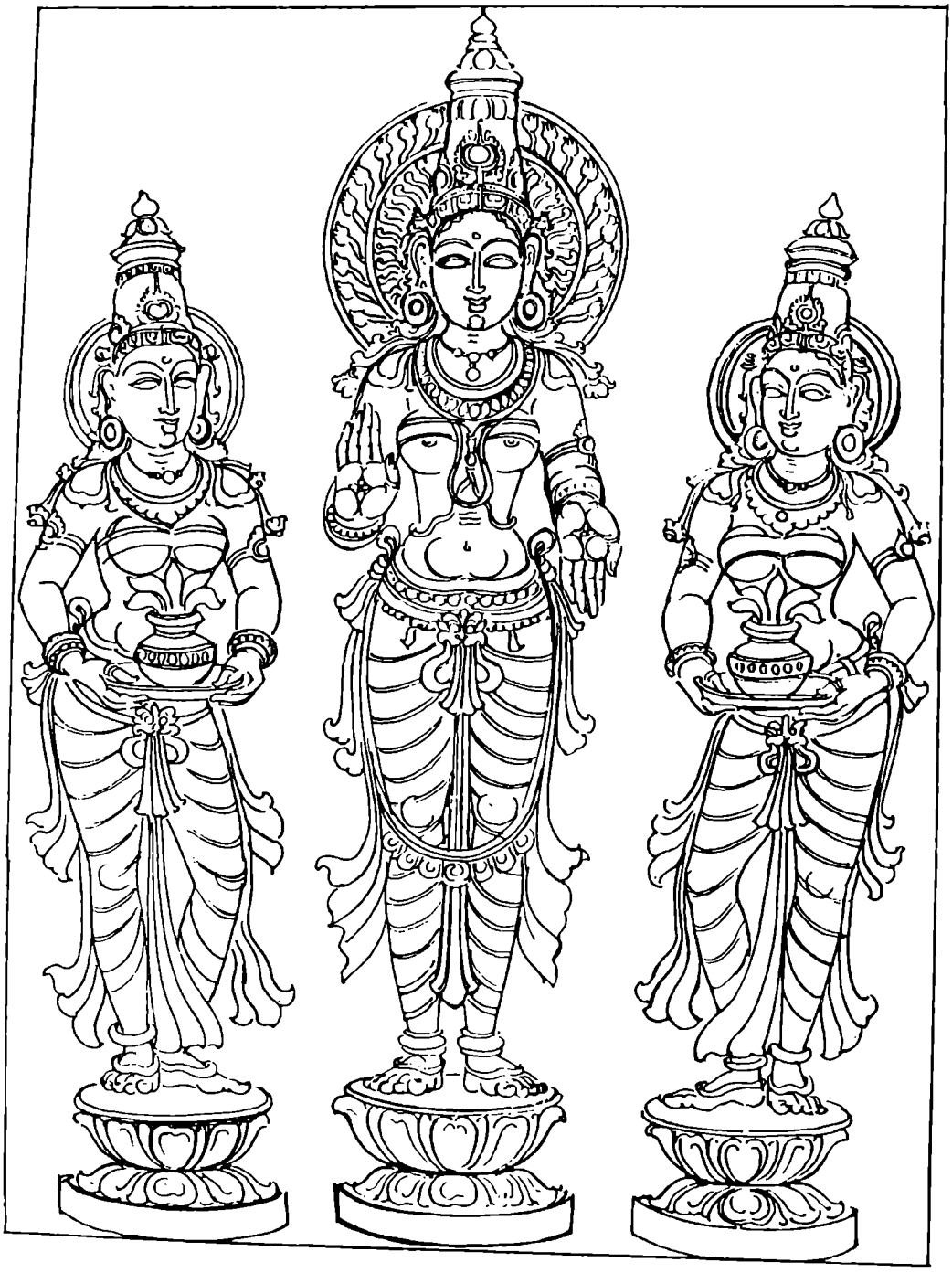
LAKSHMĪ

The word 'Lakshmī' signifies 'the sign of beauty', 'the token of good fortune', 'the mark of royal power', and is synonymous with luck, prosperity, grace, happiness and royal domain.

She is widely worshipped in the country by all sects, including Jains and Buddhists. Her



LAKSHMĪ



LAKSHMĪ

LAKSHMĪ
(from an old Painting in Mysore)

eulogy is to be found even in Ṛgveda (e.g. 1.45, 40-43, and Śrī-sūkta, the supplement of Khila portion). Her iconic representations go back at least to the second century before Christ: We have Lakshmī clearly depicted on the seals and coins found at Basārh and Bhiṭā, Kauśāmbi and Ujjayinī, and inscriptions reveal that she was adored by the royal dynasties of Maurya, Suṅga, Gupta and Kushāṇa divisions in the early centuries.

She is identified not only as the wife (śakti, 'energy') of Vishṇu-Nārāyaṇa, as is well known, but as the cosort of Sūrya (the sun-god identified with Vishṇu), Prajāpati (the creator), Dharma (the aboriginal order and virtue), Indra (symbol of royal prosperity), Kubera (the god of riches, wealth and abundance) and Bali (the pious and powerful monarch).

Legends describe her nature and origin variously. She is regarded as the daughter of Dakshha-prajāpati (the primal creator), who gave her to Dharma as his wife; and in this role as the mother of Kāma. Mahā-bhārata (3,168,3) describes her as the feminine aspect of Kubera (the lord of the Yakshas). Śrī-sūkta (2,6) eulogizes her as the 'golden antelope decorated with garlands of gold and silver' ('suvarṇa-varnām hariṇīm suvarṇa-rajata-srajām'). The brāhmaṇa texts narrate that Soma won her as the result of penance. He became 'King' (rājā), thanks to her.

Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa (11,4,3,1 ff) ascribes her origin to the austerity of Prajāpati, and mentions that her boons were sought by all the gods; Agni sought from her food, Soma royal power, Varuṇa universal sovereignty, Mitra superior status, Indra lordship, Bṛhaspati sacred glory, Savitṛ dominion, and Pūshan wealth and fortune; and the goddess Sarasvatī obtained from her charm and bounty.

More popular is the legend of her origin from the milky ocean (Mahābhārata, 5,102, 12 ff,' Bhāgavata, 8,8,7-28, Padma-purāṇa, 5, 4, 1, Vishṇu-purāṇa 1, 9, 105, etc.). Durvāsa, the sage known for his irascible temper, was once presented with a flower-garland of extraordinary beauty and maddening odour by a celestial damsel. He in turn presented it to Indra, who was coming along just then on his elephant, Airāvata. But Indra, in a fit of haughtiness, threw that garland on the elephant's head. And the elephant took hold of the garland with its trunk and trampled it under its feet. Durvāsa, who was promptly and greatly annoyed at this, cursed Indra that his royal spendour and power be lost.

Lakshmī, prosperity personified, left Indra, and Indra became woe-begotten. Indra thus rendered powerless and poor, the gods were left without strength or succour. They went to Brahmā, and he took them to Vishṇu. Vishṇu suggested churning the milky ocean for nectar

which will make the gods powerful and immortal: when the ocean was churned by gods and demons, along with nectar (amṛta) appeared Lakshmī, who once again made by her very glance the gods happy and prosperous. Lakshmī later disappeared into the chest of Viṣṇu. This is how Lakshmī became the daughter of the milky ocean (kshirābdhi-tanayā, sāgara-kanyakā) and the dweller in the chest (vakshah-sthala-vāsinī) of Viṣṇu.

According to Jayākhya-saṁhitā (8,77), Lakshmī heads the list of divine qualities abiding in Viṣṇu: Lakshmī (the lordship, aisvarya), Kīrti (celebrity), Jayā (success) and Māyā (creative power) ('devyās tasyāśritās sadā'). In Pāñcharātra ideology, the will (icchhā) of the Transcendental Absolute (parā) was projected upon Lakshmī (the primordial power), who had a dual nature: matter (bhūti) and energy (kriyā). The three powers (icchhā, bhūti and kriyā) were responsible for six divine aspects: jñāna (absolute knowledge), aiśvarya (lordship), śakti (potency), bala (strength), vīrya (virility) and tejas (splendour). The conjoint energy of all these aspects is Lakshmī, who is inseparable from Viṣṇu as the trascendental absolute. She is celebrated in many pāñcharātra texts, especially in Lakshmī-tantra and Śrī-praśna-saṁhitā.

Lakshmī is regarded as the divinity directly responsible for the creative evolution of the universe (hence called Loka-mātā): she is the energy (śakti), which unfolds itself as nature (prakṛti). Further, she represents divine mercy and grace (dayā), which brings the devotee into communion with the Lord. Thus she becomes an object of adoration (cf. Lakshmī-tantra, 50, 110)

She symbolizes power, prosperity, sovereignty and abundance, greatly sought after by rulers, chieftains and noblemen. Lakshmī was naturally identified with kingdom (rājya-lakshmī), treasure (dhana-lakshmī), enjoyment (bhoga-lakshmī), army (sainya-lakshmī), and royalty (rāja-lakshmī). Lakshmī as the goddess especially of the kings has a great antiquity. The seals and coins of the centuries before Christ represent Lakshmī as standing or seated upon a lotus (symbol of purity and abundance), and as being bathed by two elephants (symbolizing royal power and royal splendour).

Lakshmī attended by elephants (gaja-lakshmī) is a very old idea. The early Maurya and Sunga representations of Lakshmi in the coins and seals provide her with a large pair of ear-rings, huge bracelets and exquisite ornaments. She is also represented here amidst trees (symbolizing plenty), with elephants attending upon her (symbolizing royal power) and with yakshas doing her honour (suggesting sovereignty).

Lakshmī's association with red lotus is both ancient and enduring. Lakshmī is herself regarded as a lotus (padmā); she resides in lotus (padmālayā); she is seated upon a lotus (padme sthitām, padmāsanā); she holds a lotus in hand (padminī, padma-hastā). She is decorated with wreathes of lotus (padma-mālinī); Her complexion is that of lotus (padma-varṇā). Lotus in Indian thought is a symbol of purity, spiritual wealth, divine power, abundance, unhampered growth and fertility. The life-bestowing quality of water gets crystallized in the lotus with a thousand petals (suggesting the expanding universe): it is indeed the world itself in all its variety and glory.

Lakshmī's association with the elephants also is ancient, as already mentioned. Elephant has always represented to the Indian mind royal splendour and authority; richly caparisoned, heavily ornamented, colourfully got up, it is majesty itself. Elephants and horses constitute the power of king's army. Lakshmī is mentioned even in the Rgvedic Śrī-sūkta along with the inspiring call of the elephants (hasti-nāda-prabodhinīm), the horses (aśva-pūrvām), the chariots (ratha-madhyām) and gold (suvarṇā, hemamālinī).

Vishṇu-dharmottara (3, 82, 10) explains that the two elephants attending upon Lakshmī represent the two treasures known as śaṁkha and padma ('hasti-dvayam vijanīhi śaṁkha-padma subhau nidhī'). Padma is the figure 1,00,00,00,000 and śaṁkha 10,00,00,00,00,00,000. They suggest immensity of the treasure.

The elephant is also a symbol of fertility: the form of elephants is projected upon the rain-bearing clouds, which make the land fertile. Lakshmī as the goddess of plenty is also associated with agriculture. The very grains are regarded as forms of Lakshmī (dhānya-lakshmī). and she dwells in the soil-invigorating cow- dung (nitya-pushṭām karīshiṇīm); moist and abundant earth (kardama) is regarded as Lakshmī's offspring (prajā-bhūta), who is invoked to bring the mother Lakshmī and make her dwell here (śriyam vāsaya me kule mātaram').

It is usual to enumerate eight forms of Lakshmi: Ādyā-lakshmī (the deity as primordial creative power), Vidyā-lakshmī (the deity as power of learning), Santāna-lakshmī (progeny as abundance and prosperity), Saubhāgya-lakshmī (the deity of well- being and happiness), Dhana-lakshmī (the deity of wealth), Vīrya-lakshmī (the deity of valour and energy), Vijaya-lakshmī (the deity of success and glory) and Mahā-lakshmī (to be described later). These are known to constitute the 'ashṭa-lakshmī' group.

The eight forms are sometimes differently named: Ādi-lakshmī, Gaja-lakshmī, Sāmānya-lakhmī, Indra-lakshmī, Mahā-lakshmī, Vīra-lakshmī, Prasanna-lakshmī, and Dhanada-lakshmī; or Dhairya- lakshmī, Kīrti-lakshmī, Vijaya-lakshmī, Sthairya-lakshmī, Dhana-lakshmī, Dhānya-lakshmī, Santāna-lakshmī and Bhāgya-lakshmī; or again Ādi-lakshmī, Santāna-lakshmī, Gaja-lakshmī, Dhana-lakshmī, Dhānya-lakshmī, Vijaya-lakshmī, Aiśvarya-lakshmī and Vīra-lakshmī (iconographical details later).

Īśvara-saṁhitā (7,7,62) distinguishes between three forms of Lakshmī: 1) Yoga-lakshmī (residing in the Śrī-vatsa on the chest of Vishṇu, 'śrī-vatsa-gā'), (2) Bhoga-lakshmī (standing by the side of Vishṇu, 'pārśva-gā'), and (3) Vīra-Lakshmī. The last form is to be installed separately (pṛthag-gehe) in the first, second or third enclosure of the Vishṇu temple, and worshipped independently (svātantrena), while the first two forms receive worship along with Vishṇu. It is Vīra-lakshmī (seated in the lotus posture upon a lotus, with four arms, the normal hands showing the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, and the upper hands holding lotuses) that is most often found in temples. (see Vīra-lakshmī).

The iconographical details given in the texts all agree that the goddess must be represented as incomparably beautiful (atīva-rūpa-sampannā rūpeṇāpratimā bhuvi), resplendently youthful (su-yauvanā), delightfully decorated with all auspicious ornaments (sarvābharaṇa-bhūshitā), wearing splendid ear-rings (chāru-kuṇḍala), with prominent breasts (pīnonnata-payodharā), with a smiling countenance (su-smitānanā), with eyes wide and long like a well-blossomed blue lily (prabuddhotpala-vistīrṇa- lochanā), showing lovely curls of dark hair above the forehead, resembling the fluttering bees (chalad-dvirepha-paṭala-ramaṇīyālakāvalī), and the forehead adorned with auspicious mark (lasal-lalāṭa-tilakā).

Other details that are common to all texts are that her aspect is benign and tranquil ('saumya-vaktrā', 'śāntā'), that she is seated in a lotus posture upon a red lotus ('baddha-padmāsanā', 'padmāsanopavishṭā', 'padmāsanāsīnā', 'padma-patra-samāsīnā'), that her large breasts are covered by fine bodice (kañchukāchchādita-stanī), that she is adorned with bejewelled waist-bands (ratna-mekhalā), that she is slightly red-eyed (raktākshī), that she carries red lotus in her hands ('padma-hastinī'), and that she wears on her head a tall and excellent crown (mukuṭot-tama- śobhitā).

Her complexion is usually given as that of burnished gold ('tapta-kāñchana-sannibhā', 'tapta-jāmbūnada-mayī', Vishvaksena-saṁhitā, 18, 48 and 20, 255), although sometimes she is described as having the colour of red lotus ('padmābhā', Purva-kāraṇa, 12th paṭala) or that of coral ('pravāḷa-prabhā', Chaṇḍī-kalpa), or again as being fair-complexioned ('gaurāṅgi', Śilpa-ratna; 'gaurī', Hemadri's Vrata-khaṇḍa). Her garments are generally prescribed to be white ('śveta-vastrā', Śilpa-ratna, 'śveta-mālyāmbra-dharā', Lakshmī-tantra, 38,29), but some texts give her clothes as red ('raktāmbara-samanvitā', Vishksena-saṁhitā, 20, 256,; 'pravāḷa-sadraśāmbarā' Īśvara-saṁhitā, 9,10 and Pārameśvara-saṁhitā, 11, 9), or yellow ('pīta-vastram') Vishvaksena-saṁhitā 20, 145)

The early iconic representation as evidenced by numerous images of Lakshmī on coins and seals of the Mauryas, Śuṅgas and Guptas, appears to have been two-armed. Lakshmī-tantra (38, 29-35 and 45, 16-21) prescribes that Lakshmī must be shown with two arms (dvibhujām), carrying in her hands noose and goad ('pāśāṅkuśa-kara- dvayī). Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā (1, 104) also prescribes for Lakshmī two arms, but provides only lotuses in the hands ('dvi-bhujām padma-dhāriṇīm'). Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā (18,1) speaks of Lakshmī with two arms, carrying lotus in the right hand and wood-apple (śrī-phala) in the left. Pūrva-kāraṇa (patala 12) and Aṁśumadbheda (paṭala 49) prescribe the same details in her hands, and the texts also suggest only two arms for Lakshmī.

Later images are four or more armed, but a two-armed variety continues to be popular. Vīra-lakshmi has two sub-types: two- armed (dvibhuja-vīra-lakshmī) carrying the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal in her right and left hands, and eight-armed (ashṭa-bhuja), carrying noose, goad, rosary, lotus, bowl, mace and the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal in the hands.

It is explained that when Lakshmī is shown near Vishṇu (or seated on his lap), she must be two-armed ('hares samīpe kartavyā lakshmīs tu dvibhujā', cf. Hemādri-Vrata-khaṇḍa), and that when she is independently represented she must be four-armed ('pṛthak chaturbhujā'). Hemādri-Vratakhaṇḍa prescribes that the right normal hand must assume the gesture of protection while the corresponding left hand carries a golden pot filled with nectar (amṛta- ghaṭa); and the two extra hands hold a bilva fruit (Agela marmelos) and conch.

She must be seated in the centre of a lotus with eight petals (ashṭa-patram) placed upon a throne ('simhāsana-stham kamalam'). Behind her on either side is an elephant pouring water on the goddess from a pot held in its trunk ('āvarjita-ghaṭam kāryam tat-prshṭhe kuñjara-dvayam, devyās cha mastake'). As we have seen, this is a very ancient motif.

Rūpa-maṇḍana, which provides four arms for this goddess, carrying in the normal hands pot of nectar (amṛta-ghaṭa) and citron fruit (mātuluṅga), and in the upper hands lotuses (ūrdhvau hastau paṅkaja-dhāriṇau), suggests that she must be shown seated like Gaṇapati (vināyaka-vad āsīnā') upon the eight-petalled lotus placed on a throne. This is an unusual prescription, for most of the texts insist on the goddess assuming the posture of crossed legs (baddha-padmāsanā).

Vishvaksena-saṁhitā (20, 255-261) provides in the four hands of the goddess discus (right upper hand), conch (left upper hand), lotus (normal right hand) and the gesture of boon-bestowal or of protection (normal left hand). The variety known as Prasanna- Lakshmī is also four-armed, and it carries the bījapūra fruit, golden chalise and golden lotuses in the hands.

Mahā-lakshmī, according to Chaṇḍī-kalpa, is eighteen-armed, carrying in the hands rosary, sacrificial ladle, mace, arrow, vajra, lotuses,

bow, small water-pot (kuṇḍika), cudgel (daṇḍa), śakti, sword, shield, bell, bowl of liquour, noose, spear and discus.

It is common practice to represent Lakshmī on top of the door- lintel in a panel. Īśvara-saṁhitā (9, 9-12) which prescribes that the door-lintel must be of udumbara wood (dvārasyordhva udumvare), makes the goddess sit on a lotus with only two arms, holding in one hand a lotus and in the other a pot ('padma-kumbha-karam').

Now, a description may be given of the eight varieties of Lakshmī (ashṭa-lakshmī) that are well-known.

1. Ādi-lakshhmī: two-armed, with lotus and gesture of protection in the hands, wearing flower-garlands and having an aureole (prabhā-maṇḍala-maṇḍitā).

2. Santāna-lakshmī: having her matted hair done up as a crown (jaṭā-makuṭa) and wearing bodice and cross-belt (kañchuka- chhanavīra); four-armed, showing the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal by the two normal hands, and holding a lamp and the other fly-whisk (dīpa-chāmara-hastaiś cha pārśva-dvaya-virājitā).

3. Gaja-Lakshmī: having complexion like lac (lākshā-rasa-varṇābhā), wearing karaṇḍa-makuṭa, and four-armed, carrying in the two upper hands lotuses, the normal hands assuming the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal; on her sides are elephants pouring water on her head ('pārśve cha gaja-tuṇḍābhishechanam')

4. Dhana-lakshmī: Golden-hued complexion, youthful, wearing kirīṭa-mukuṭa, and bedecked with all ornaments; has six hands, carrying discus, arrow, betel leaf (tāmbūla) (right hands), conch, bow and water pot (left).

5. Dhānya-lakshmī: having six hands, carrying lotus, sugar-cane stalk (ikshu-śālī), basket of plantains (droṇikām kadalī- phalaih), sheaf of paddy, and the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal; she is an embodiment of compassion (kṛpā-mūrti) and she rides upon an elephant (gajārūḍhām).

6. Vijaya-Lakshmī: seated upon a throne ('simhāsana-saṁsthitā), and having swan as her mount (haṁsa-vāhanā); has eight arms, carrying sword, noose, discus, gesture of protection (right hands), shield, goad, conch, gesture of boon-bestowal (left).

7. Aiśvarya-lakshmī: four armed and riding upon a horse.

8. Vīrya-Lakshmī: seated upon a throne and having eight arms, assuming the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal with the two normal hands, and carrying in the other hands discus, arrow, spear, bow, conch, and skull-cup.

There is another form of Lakshmī known as Āryā (or Yoga-nidrā), mentioned in Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā (1,210-219). She is to be represented as dark-complexioned, three-eyed and four-armed, carrying in her hands conch, discus, bow and spear. She is benign in aspect (saumyā) wearing red garments and a garland of red aśoka flowers (raktāśoka-srajopetā). Her eyes are long like lily (utpalāyata-lochanā), and her girdle consists of a serpent (sarpendra-mekhalā). She is flanked by two damsels carrying fly whisk: Jayā and Vijayā at the back; and on her right side stands Pushkalā carrying betel-leaf (tāmbūla-patra-hastā) and on her left Pūṃā, holding a ball (kanduka) and a hand-mirror (darpaṇa). This form of Lakshmī is prescribed to be made in the likeness of a thirteen-year old girl (trayodaśābda-deśīyā). And further, it is insisted that she must always be shown in a standing posture and never as seated ('kuryād-devīm sthitām nāsīnām tu kadāchana')

She may be made in the nine-tāla measure or eight-tāla measure.

LAKSHMĪ-GAṆAPATI

There are numerous shrines in the country where Lakshmī is worshipped as an independent deity. The most celebrated is the Mahālakshmī temple at Kolhāpur in Mahārāshṭra. (see MAHĀ-LAKSHMĪ). She is also worshipped in households. Lakshmī is believed to have appeared as Sītā when Vishṇu incarnated himself as Rāma, and as Rukmiṇī during the incarnation of Vishṇu as Kṛshṇa. Her presence is also recognized in the tulasī plant, bilva tree, lotus, cows, elephants, house-threshold and money.

LAKSHMĪ-GAṆAPATI

One of the many forms of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), this is frequently worshipped in the tāntrik cults, and is regarded as next in importance to Mahā-gaṇapati (see MAHĀ-GAṆAPATI). This form is distinguished by the presence of two śaktis on his laps, who are identified with Lakshmī and her variant form Pushṭi, on his right and left laps respectively (devī-dvayam chāntike). Both of them are nude, and are embracing Gaṇapati with one of their arms, the other of the hands holding lotus (saroruheṇa sahitam). They are also explained as Siddhi (achievement) and Buddhi (intelligence).

The god is fair-complexioned (gaurāṅga), and eight-armed. The hands hold pomegranate-fruit (bīja-pūraka), parrot (śuka), bowl of jewels (ratna-kumbha), goad, noose, the wish-fulfilling creeper (kalpa-latā), sword and the gesture of boon-bestowal (vara- dāna-hasta).

Kriyā-kramodyota gives his complexion as dark (śyāma).

The god is worshipped for prosperity and power and for spiritual and material wealth (signified by the two consorts Lakshmī and Pushṭi). This is included in the class of tāntrik images

LAKSHMĪ-GAṆAPATI
(old drawing done in Mysore)

LAKSHMĪ-NĀRĀYANA

LAKSHMĪ-NĀRĀYANA

known as 'Śakti-ganapatis', and involves magical rites during its worship.

Mantra-mahodadhi provides only Lakshmī; daughter of the ocean (abdhi-putrī) as his consort. According to this text, he is golden complexioned (kanakābha), three-eyed and four-armed. One arm embraces Lakshmī (who is two-armed, and carries a lotus in her left hand, her right arm embracing Gaṇapati), and the other three hands carry tusk, discus and gesture of protection. His trunk carries a golden pot (karāgra-svarṇa-ghaṭa).

LAKSHMĪ-NĀRĀYAṆA

Images of Vishṇu, seated with Lakshmī on his left lap are quite freqently seen. Lakshmī is the inseparable energy of Vishṇu, and even when Vishṇu is represented alone, Lakshmī is believed to reside in his chest as Vyūha-Lakshmī (see ŚRĪVATSA), or Yoga- lakshmī (see LAKSHMĪ): She is united with Vishṇu indistinguishably.

When, however, Lakshmī is shown separately but not independently, she is known as Bhoga-Lakshmī. Vishnu-purāṇa (1,8,15 ff) explains that Vishṇu and Lakshmi are like word and meaning; tree and the entiwining creeper, love and pleasure. Vishṇu represents the principle of masculinity, while Lakshmī the principle of femininity. Vishṇu is the supreme reality and Lakshmī is his energy manifesting itself as all creation. They are in short 'purusha' and 'prakṛti' (see VISHṆU).

In Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa icons, Vishṇu is four-armed, carrying his usual emblems viz. conch, discus, mace and lotus, or alternately conch, discus and the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. He sits with the right leg stretched down, and Lakshmī sits on the left leg which lies recumbent on the seat. She has only two hands, one of them (the left one holding a lotus, while the other hand (the right one) goes round the god's back, embracing him.

LAKSHMĪ-NṚSIṀHA

If the Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa image rests on the shoulders of Garuda, the form is known as Śrī-kara-mūrti.

LAKSHMĪ-NṚSIṀHA

One of the varieties of Narasiṁha images (see NARASIṀHA), distinguished by the presence of Lakshmī (unlike in the kevala, ugra, sthāṇu and saṁhāra forms). This form is also called Prasanna- Narasiṁha, because the presence of Lakshmī (the embodiment of compassion, kṛpā-mūrti) not only assuages the fury of the man- lion incarnation but renders it benign. It is usual for the Lakshmī-narasiṁha images to include a small representation of Prahlāda in a posture of supplication (baddhāñjali).

This image is similar to Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa images, but sometimes Narasiṁha is shown in the posture of yoga-patta (as Yogā-narasiṁha), while Lakshmī is seated on his left knee.

LAGHU-ŚYĀMALĀ

A minor form of Devī, she is represented as dark-complexioned (śyāmalā), with prominent breasts (ghana-stana-bharālasā'), and wearing

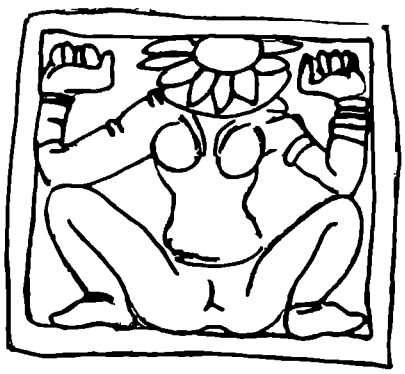
ear-rings made of conch-shell ('vimala-śaṁkha-tāṭaṅkinī'). She is shown as playing on lute ('kara-sphurita- vallakī'), and as holding a bowl of liquour ('gṛhīta-madhu- pātrikā'). Her eyes display inebriation ('mada-vighūrṇa-netrāñchalā'). Her hair is dishevelled (galita-chūḍikā).

She is imagined to be a girl in her first menstruation ('prathama-pushpiṇī'), her garments are blood-stained ('rudhira-bindu-śoṇāmbara').

LAJJĀ-GAURĪ
(stone, from Hosa-mahākūṭa)

LAJJĀ-GAURĪ
(terracotta from Bhiṭā near Allahabad)

LAJJĀ-GAURĪ
(from Nāgarāḷ)



LAJJĀ-GAURĪ
(from Majatī)

LAJJĀ-GAURĪ

A very ancient representation of the mother-goddess displaying her pudenda prominently, entirely nude and squatting in the posture of delivery. In most of the images, the head of the goddess is not shown, and instead a lotus emerges from the neck.

She is obviously a fertility goddess, having close links with Orphic and Hellenistic traditions, and with Egyptian myths. But her origin is undoubtedly indigeneous, for we find the description of Aditi-uttānapād (the headless goddess with legs spread open) in Ṛgveda 910,72,3-4); and we read in Taittirīya-āraṇyaka (1, 28) about the headless Nirṛti ('viśirshṇī') who is also a naked torso (nagna-kabandha).

Representation of this goddess in stone and terra cotta dating back to the first century A.D. are available in several sites in the northern parts of the country as well as in the South. The images discovered in Bhiṭa and Kosam (near Allahabad), now in the Indian Museum of Calcutta, were identified by Marshall as earth- goddesses (pṛthvī).

The legend associated with an image of this type found in the Chāḷukyan site of Lañjikesvara in Karnāṭaka is that once Śiva and Pārvatī were sporting in a nude state in the waters of the tank here, when suddenly and unannounced a devotee of Śiva appeared on the scene to do reverence to Śiva. Śiva immediately disappeared in the liṅgam that was on the tank-bund, but Pārvati nude as she was and therefore smitten with shame and embarassment (lajjā) did not know what to do. She hid herself in the water and covered herself with a lotus flower that was close by.

Although nude, the deity is usually decorated with girdles round the waist, bangles for the hands and anklets. In the specimen found in Karnāṭaka (Hosa-mahākūṭa, Nāgarāḷ, Jālihāḷ etc.) the two hands of the goddess hold lotuses.

There are many specimens of this form of the deity from Nāgārjuna-koṇḍa, Mathurā, Bhiṭā, Alampur, Nevāsa, Vaḍagāon and Mahūrjhari. (see for photographic reproductions J.N. Tiwari, Goddess Cults in Ancient India, Sandeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1985)

LAṂBAKARṆA

The expression refers to the Indian convention of showing the ears of saints and deities (male as well as female) as elongated and hanging (laṁba). This is one of the thirty-two marks of great personages (dvā-triṁśallakshaṇāni) (see MAHĀPURUSHA-LAKSHṆA). Among the five parts of the body that must be shown as unusually elongated, ears figure (the other four being arms, eyes, nose and jaws, 'bhuja-netra-hanū-karṇa-nāsā-sthāneshu pañcha-dairghāni').

The convention follows an ancient practice of wearing heavy ear-ornaments, which would enlarge the ear-lobes and make the ears hanging down. It was also a mark of beauty to deliberately and gradually extend the ear-lobes by inserting rolls of palmyra leaf into them.

LAṂBA-MĀNA

One of the six iconometric measurements which are valid while fashioning the images of gods and goddesses ('shaṇ-mānair yutam beram kārayet'). Also known as sūtra, laṁbāna and unmita, this is the measurement taken along the plumb-lines.

The other five measurements are māna, pramāṇa, unmāna, parimāṇa and upa-māna. (see MĀNA)

LAṂBODARA

One of the familiar names of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPTI), bringing out the detail of the extended belly as distinguishing this deity.

LALĀṬA-TILAKA

A dance pose, where one of the legs is lifted up straight to the level of the head, with a suggestion that the tilaka-mark is made on the forehead with the big toe of the lifted foot ('pādāṅgushṭhhena lalāṭe tilakam kuryāt'). When the leg is lifted up from behind, the particular posture is known as 'vṛśchika' ('vṛśchikam

charaṇam kṛtvā'), for it resembles the scorpion's tail ('pādasya tasyaiva paśchād-bhāga-mitasya aṅgushṭhena tilakam.')

An old and splendid iconic representation of this posture true to the textual prescription is to be found in a panel in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchīpuram. There are several representations of this dance mode as related to Naṭarāja (see NAṬARĀJA) in the variety known as 'ūrdhva-tāṇḍava' (see ŪRDHVA-TĀṆḌAVA)

LALĀTA-PAṬṬA

A band of cloth (paṭṭa) that goes round just above the forehead (lalāṭa) keeping the dressed hair in position; sometimes it is elaborately made with jewels and pearls (ratna-paṭṭa).

LALITA

A dance pose where the left arm is stretched across the chest towards the other shoulder, in a sweep resembling an elephant's trunk ('kari-hasto bhaved vāmo'), while the right arm assumes the 'pravartita' pose ('dakshiṇaś cha pravartitah'), viz. the upper arm is lifted up to be on a line with the shoulder, and the fore-arm is bent down, while the palm is again lifted up to face the audience. While the two arms assume this stance, one of the legs rests firmly on the ground and the other touches the ground only with the big toe and strikes on the ground with the heel ('bahuśah kuṭṭitah pādo').

Śiva's dance as represented in sculptures frequently adopts this dance pose, an excellent illustration being the stone panel at Ellora (see NAṬARĀJA).

LALITĀ

One of the twelve forms of Gaurī (see GAURĪ) according to Aparājita-sūtra, this is distinguished by the articles carried in the four hands of the goddess: rosary, lute, hand-mirror and sacred water-pot. She is described as an object of worship for the siddhas and chāraṇas. She is three-eyed and decorated with all ornaments.

According to Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa (prakṛti-khaṇḍa) she is to be shown as standing in perfect equipoise (sama-pāda-sthānaka), whereas texts like Rūpa-maṇḍana and Aparājita-sūtra prescribe that she must be seated upon an iguana ('godhāsanopari sthitā')

Lalitā is generally identified in conception and iconography with Rāja-rājeśvari (see RĀJA-RĀJEŚVARI) and worshipped in Śrī-chakra (see ŚRĪ-CHAKRA). There are many texts like Lalitopākhyāna Lalitā-triśatī, and Lalitā-sahasra-nāma which eulogize her as the most sublime form of Durgā, the mother goddess (see the author's LALITĀ-KOSHA).

Lalitā as the presiding deity of Śrīvidyā is Kāmeśvari, visualized as red in colour, brilliant like a million suns, and seated upon the lap of Kāmeśvara (symbolizing consciousness), she is four-armed, carrying sugar-cane stalk as bow (mind), arrows of flowers (the five basic sense-functions), noose (desires) and goad (indignation or control). The couch on which the two sit is described as Sadāśiva, dark in colour and devoid of attributes (nishkala), and therefore inert like corpse. Kameśvara is another form of Śiva, representing 'becoming', while Sadāśiva is 'mere being'. Kāmeśvarī is 'the energy or power of becoming'. Kāmeśvarī sitting on the lap of Kāmeśvara signifies the union of 'becoming' and 'the power to become' (śiva-śakti).

Lalitā is regarded as an embodiment of the sacred Śrī-Vidyā- pañchadaśī, a mantra of fifteen syllables used in Śrī-Vidyā. Another expression of this mantra is the Yantra known as Śrī- chakra (see ŚRĪ-CHAKRA), which is also a form of the goddess Lalitā. Lalitā is thus of the nature of mantra and also of yantra (mantrātmikā and yantrātmikā).

Lalitā is the goddess worshipped by the tāntrik practitioners of Dakshiṇāchāra division (also known as Samaya-mārga). Lalitā is identified here with the Kuṇḍalinī within the practitioner's body; and worship is accorded to the Devi as abiding in

the sahasrāra or 'thousand-petalled lotus', which is the highest psychic centre. This group makes extensive use of Lalitā-sahasra-nāma and Lalitā-triśatī.

According to Kālikā-purāṇa (ch. 81), Lalitā is a river, on banks of which Vishṇu settled down in the form of a linga ('Vishṇur liṅga-rūpī'). Bhavishya-purāṇa prescribes a ritual known as Lalitā-vrata (otherwise called Kukkuṭī-vrata), when Śiva and Durgā are worshipped together.

A ferocious form of Śiva, Mahākāla, is said to be constantly engaged in the contemplation of Lalitā (cf. Lalitopākhāyana).

Lalitā is the name of the goddess worshipped in Prayāga (Allahabad), which is one of the fifty centres of Śakti-worship (see ŚAKTI-PĪṬHA): this is where the fingers of the hand of Sati fell, when Śiva was wandering about carrying her dead body (see SATĪ). Bhava is the name of the Bhairava, associated with Lalitā here.

LALITĀSANA

Also called 'Lalitākshepa' it is an easy and careless posture of sitting with both legs on the seat; one of the legs (usually the left one) is laid across resting on the seat, while the other leg is slightly raised, only the foot touching the seat. Gaṇapati is usually shown in this posture.

LĀMĀ

One of the four ḍākinīs (see ḌĀKINĪ), recognized as spiritual helpmates in the Vajrayāna division of Buddhism. The four ḍākinīs are shown in the maṇḍalas of Vajra-vārāhī (see VAJRA-VĀRĀHĪ) and Saṁvara (see SAṀBARA). They are Ḍākinī, Lāmā, Khaṇḍa-rohā and Rūpiṇī.

They are identical in appearance and all details, except in their complexions; they are blue, green, red and white respectively. Each of them stands in the ālīḍha posture with dishevelled hair (mukta-keśa) and is four-armed, carrying hand-drum and chopper in the hands on the right side, and khaṭvāṅga and skull-cup in the hands on the left. Each of them is three-eyed, and decorated with five bone-ornaments of magical merit (pañcha-mudrā-vibhūshitā).

LĀMĀ
(after a Nepalese drawing)

LĀSYA

One of the four groups of deities supposed to preside over religious dance-drama in Vajrayāna Buddhism, this group represents typical feminine dance filled with grace (lāsya). The other groups are named Nṛtya (masculine dance), Gīta (music) and Mālya (garlands). They are also described as two-armed and violent in character, wearing garlands of severed heads and showing the gesture of threat and warning with their right hand held against their chests. They dance in the pratyālīdha posture.

Lāsyā is red in complexion and both of her hands assume dance poses (lāsyābhinayobhaya-bhuja); she exudes the feeling of pride (sagarvam).

Nṛtyā is of varigated hue (viśva-varṇa), and she is shown as engaged in dance holding a vajra in her hand. Gītā is reddish white in complexion, and she is seen playing on gongs. Mālyā is of red complexion and she dances with a garland in her hands (cf. B.Bhattacharya, op.cit. pp.312-314).

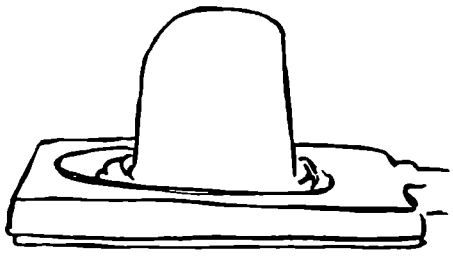
LIṄGA

Liṅga is the usual form in which Śiva (see ŚIVA) is worshipped. It must be noted that Śakti too is worshipped in this form. According to Devī-purāṇa (Nanda-Kuṇḍa-praveśa section), liṅga is best among the objects of worship of Devi ('liṅgasthām pūjayed devīm'), others being consecrated altar (sthaṇḍila), sacred book (pustaka), holy sandals or foot-prints (pāduke) and icon (pratimā). In several shrines dedicated to Śakti, it is the liṅga that receives worship in the sanctum. There are temples, especially in the coastal region of Karnāṭaka where Gaṇapati also is worshipped in the form of linga. Many Narasiṁha shrines have liṅga in the sanctum representing the man-lion incarnation of Vishṇu.

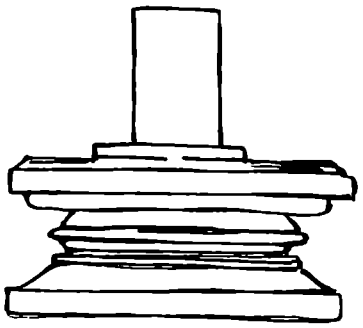
It is more usual, however, for the liṅga to signify Śiva. The word 'liṅga' means a symbol, a sign (chinha), and indicator ('liṅgyate jñāyate anena'); it also means phallus (śepha, śiśna). There is a story in Padmottara-khaṇḍa (chap. 78) to explain how Śiva came to have this form which is 'mean and despicable' ('vigarhitam rūpam'). Svāyambhuva-manu once performed a long-drawn sacrifice (dīrgha-sattra) on the mount Mandara. All the sages who were invited discussed about the greatest of the gods to whom all honour was due. They despatched the sage Bhṛgu to visit all the gods and ascertain their relative merits. Bhṛgu arrived in Kailāsa to meet Śiva, but was prevented by Nandi from entering Śiva's presence. Nandi asked Bhṛgu to return ('nivartasva), for Śiva was engaged in amorous sport with his consort ('devyā krīḍati śaṁkarah'). Bhṛgu thereupon became angry and cursed Śiva and Pārvati to assume the form of liṅga and yoni.

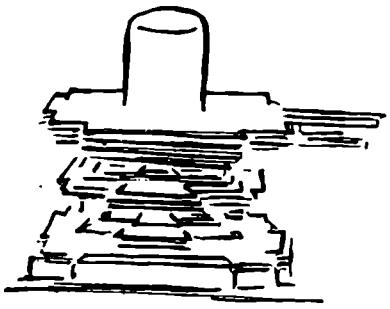
The phallic association with Śiva-liṅga cannot be disputed; the earliest of the liṅgas extant in the country is the one at the Paraśurāmeśvara temple in Guḍimallam, which has become justly famous for its excellent sculpture. It is dated around the first or second century before Christ (cf. T. Gopinatha Rao, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Stella Kramrich). Carved out of a hard igneous stone of dark brown colour, it is a liṅga which is five foot tall from the floor. It has no pedestal or yoni part, but the nut on top differentiated from the shaft is a very realistic representation of the human phallus in a state of erection.

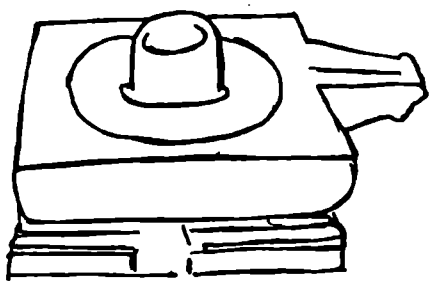
The more important part of this specimen, however, is the sculpture of two-armed Śiva standing upon a rākshasa or apasmārapurusha. (see ŚIVA for more details)). But Śiva's

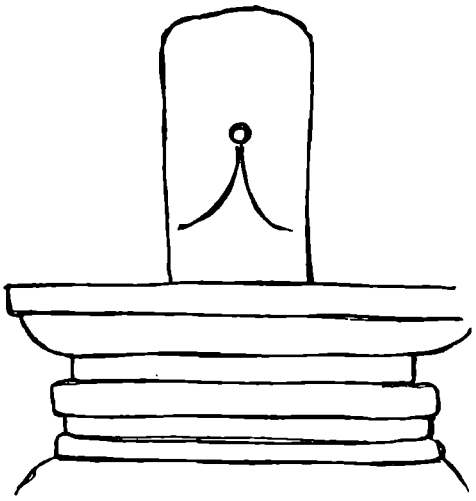


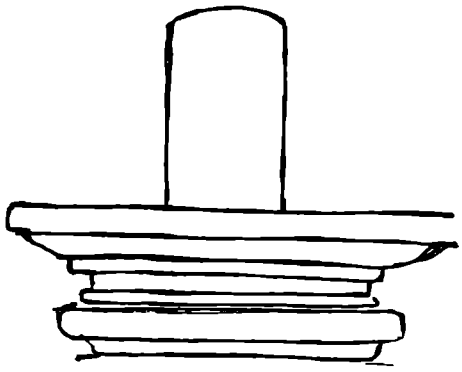
ĀDI-MAHĀBALA-LIṄGA
(at Gokarṇa)

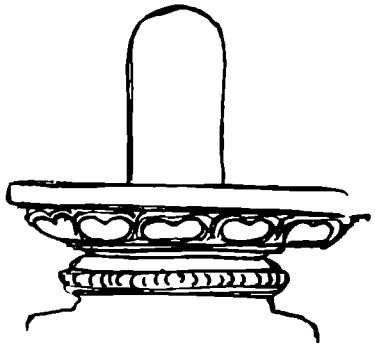


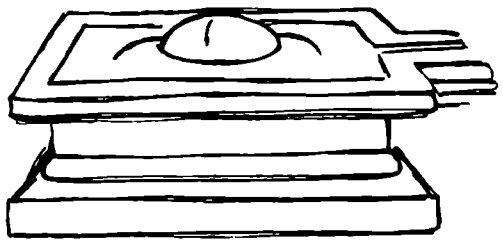




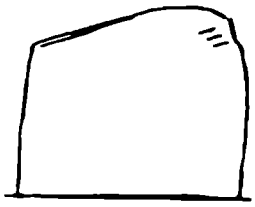




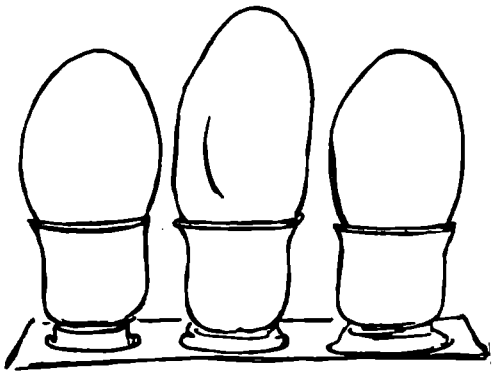




representation as an erect phallus is of interest to us here. Later lingas have the male phallus or linga along with the female generative organ or yoni (also called arghya, pīṭha, bhaga, piṇḍikā) as its pedestal. The two together signify the union of Purusha and Prakṛti, responsible for all creation (cf. Liṅga-purāṇa, 100,6 'sā bhagākhyā



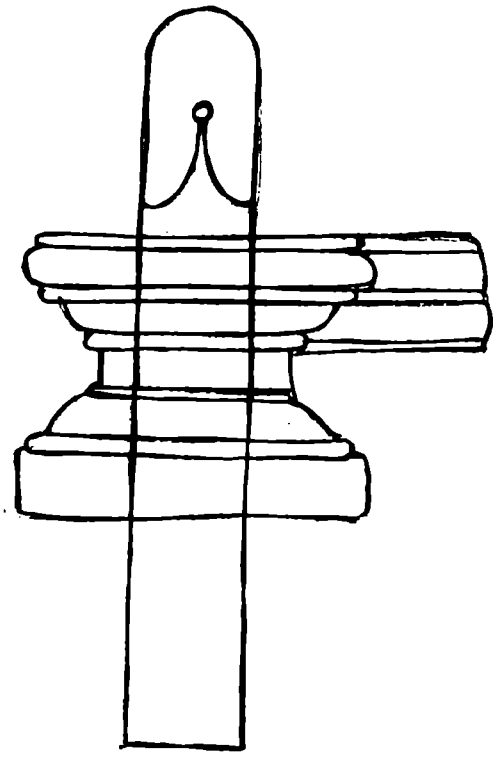
BRAHMA-LIṄGA

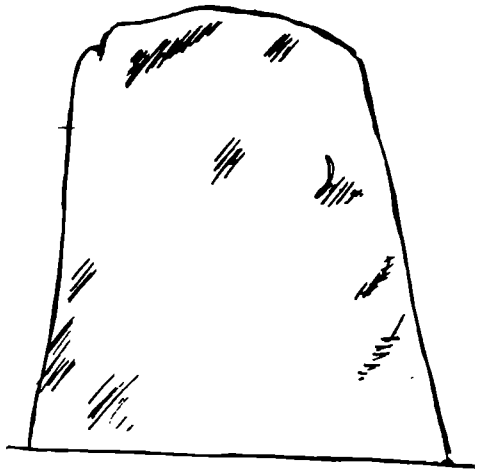


Liṅgas representing Brahma, Vishṇu and Śiva in the temple at Śāstāna (Karnāṭaka)

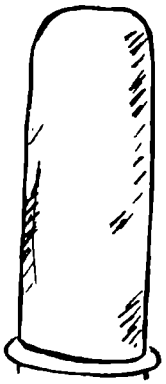
jagad-dhātrī...liṅgas tu bhagavān; dvābhyām jagat-sṛshṭih' and Vātulāgama, 'yoni-liṅga-prakāreṇa jagat-sṛshtyartha-kāraṇam')

Liṅga is therefore to be viewed not as a phallic symbol but as generative principle. Indeed, the early references to Śiva speak of his form as a golden altar, a pillar of fire or a huge tree. In Mahābhārata (Sauptika-parva, 17, 13-14), Śiva is said to have appeared before Aśvat-

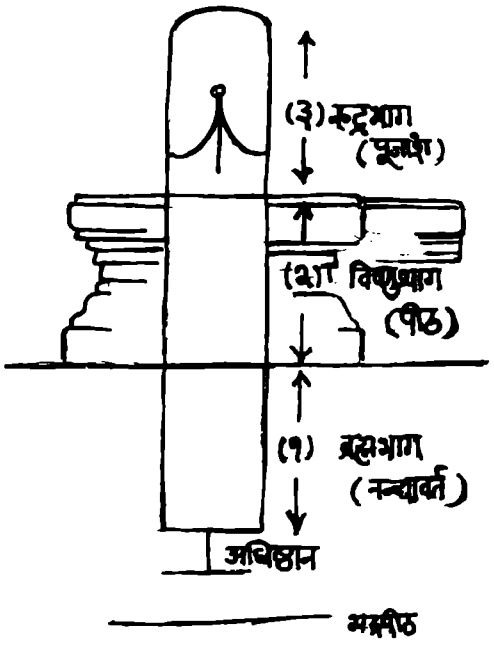




MAÑJUNĀTHA-LIṄGA
(the ancient shrine on Kadri Hill, Mangalore)

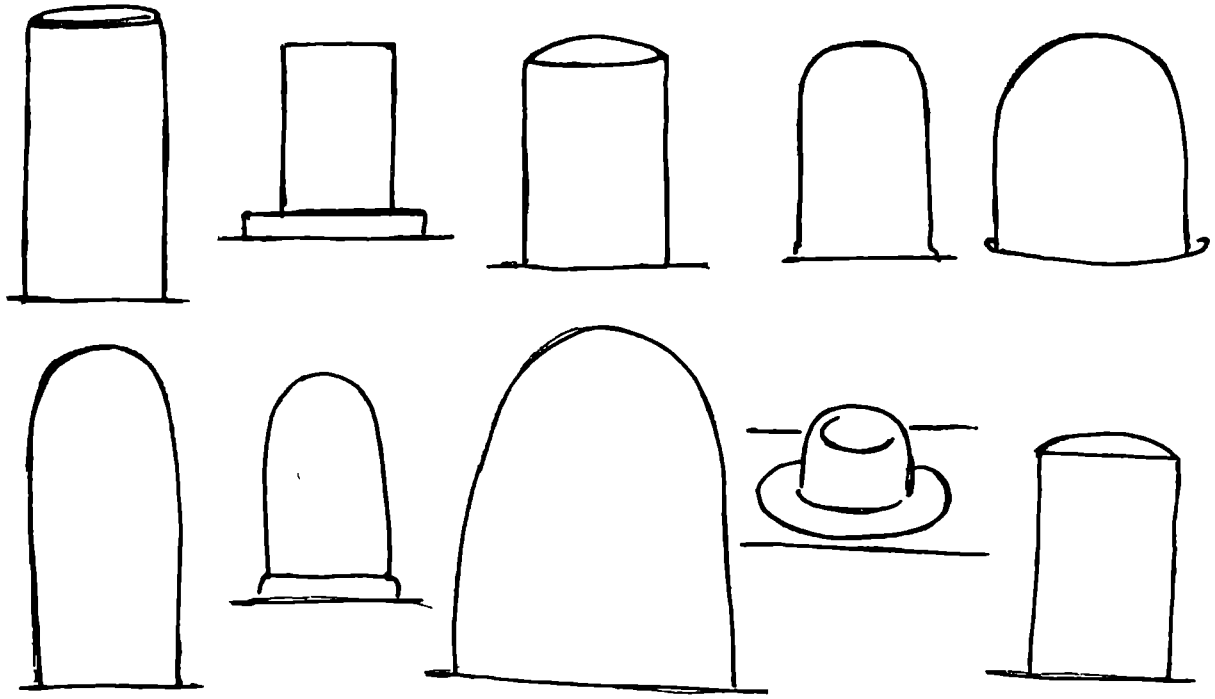


ṚSHYAŚṚṄGA-LIṄGA
(the ancient temple in Kigga, Śriṅgeri)

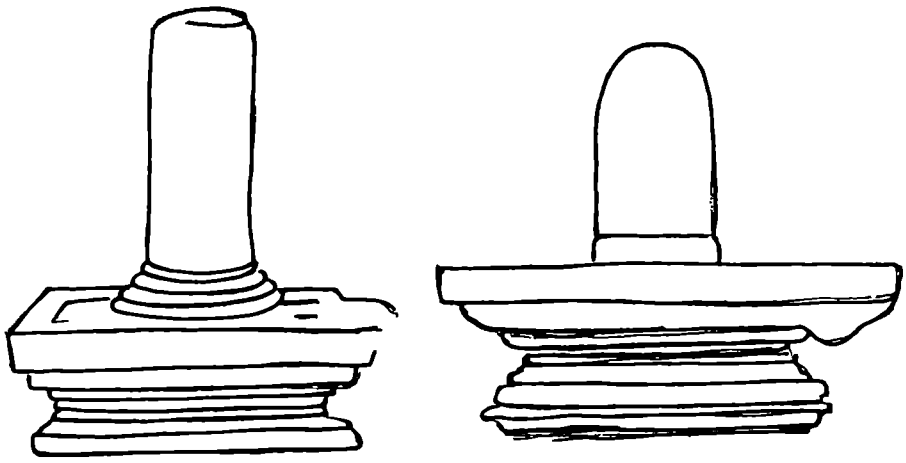


thāma as a great altar of gold, from which fire sprang forth ('purastāt kāñchanī vedī prādurāsit... tasyām vedyām tadā... chitrabhānur ajāyata'). In the same text (vana- parva, Kirātārjuna episode), Arjuna as an ascetic in the forest worshipped Śiva in the form of a high altar made of mud ('bhagavantam pinākinam, mṛṇmayam sthaṇḍilam kṛtvā...apūjayad bhavam')

The Vedic hymns identify Agni with Rudra, and speak of the universal parents Dyaus (the heavens) and Pṛthvī (earth goddess); and describe the former as bull. Skanda-purāṇa says that the sky is liṅga and the earth its pedestal ('ākāśam liṅgam ityāhuh pṛthivī tasya pīṭhikā); and because this is the home of all the gods, it is called liṅga ('ālayas sarva-devānām layanāl liṅgam uchhyate'). Dyāvā-pṛthvī are indeed parents of all the gods and men. The former was the liṅga and latter the yoni; the two together had the Vedic skaṁbha and Vaitasa in the back-



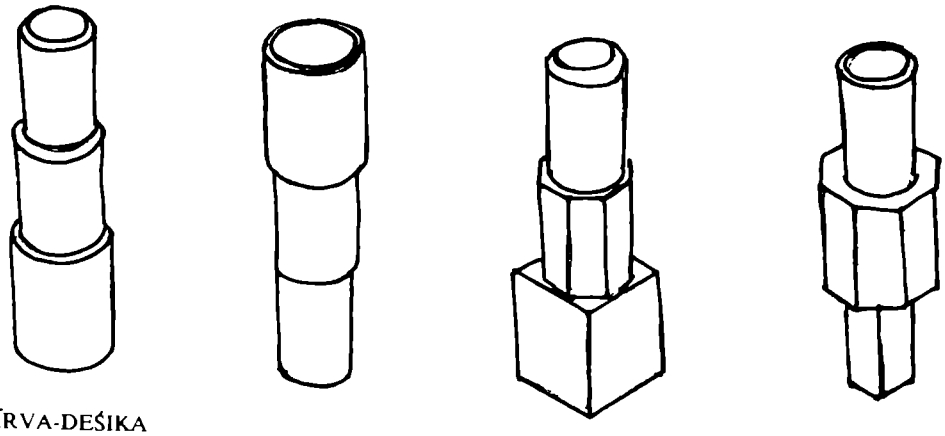
TYPES OF ŚIROVARTANA



ground. Skaṁbha is the support and progenitor of all things, the trunk of the heavenly tree. Saura-saṁhitā (śiva-rahasya section) explains that the liṅga is the symbol of primeval energy of the creator.

Liṅga is thus closely connected with the ancient cults of tree, mountain and serpent. Śiva was not only associated with snakes, but the liṅga was the replica of ant-hills (as, for instance, the oldest deity in Tiruvārūru in Tamiḷ Nāḍu, who is known as Valmīka-nāthar), which in turn is a condensed mountain in shape.

It was on the model of the mountain that the early liṅga took shape and that the stūpa was modelled, which paved the way for the temple form. The practice of burial mounds, which is prehistoric, led in course of time to the installa-

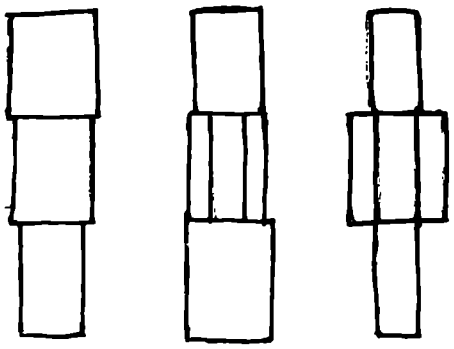


SĀRVA-DEŚIKA
ĀDYANTAVRTTA

STHŪLĀGRA

STHŪLAMŪLA

STHŪLA
MADHYA

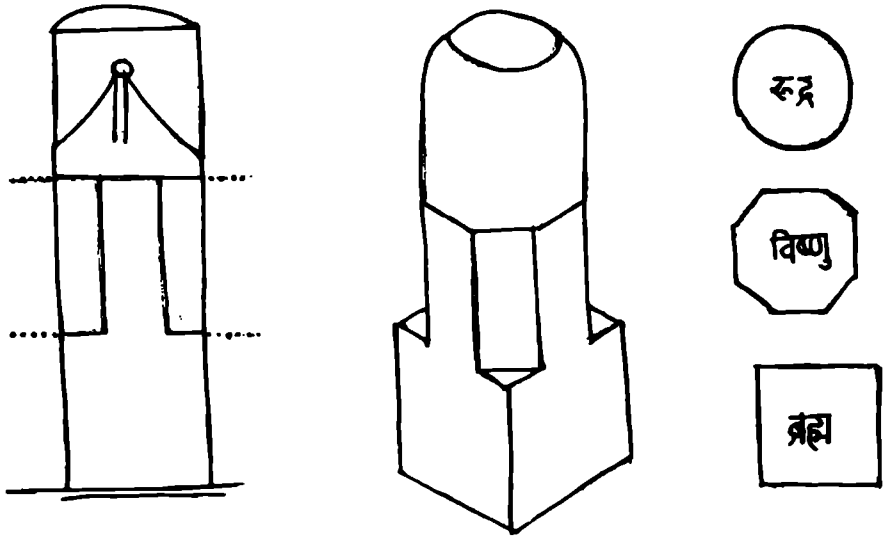


STHŪLĀGRA STHŪLAMŪLA STHŪLA MADHYA

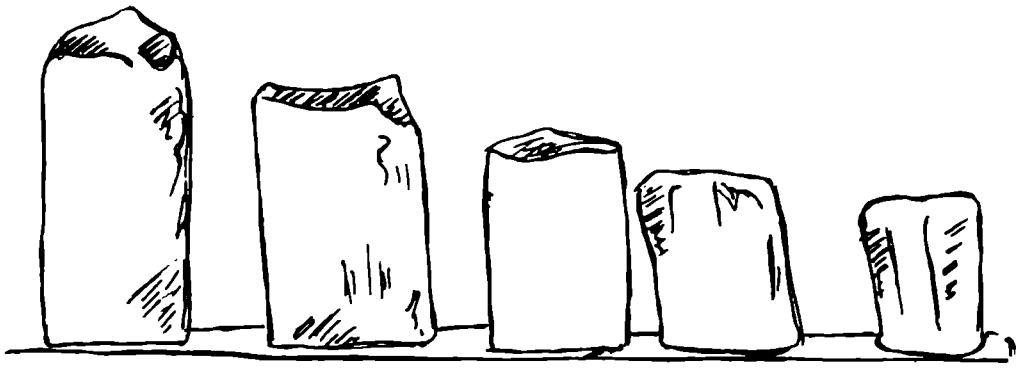
tion of liṅga on the burial site. Śiva's association with death and the crematorium is to be explained on this basis.

It must also be noted that Śiva was not in the early religious phases, always represented as a linga. The early Ujjain coins (third and second centuries before Christ) and Kushāṇa coins (about the first century A.D.) show two-armed Śiva carrying club and water-vessel; and sometimes bull was represented, either by itself or with a trident-bearer (see ŚIVA). And in popular legends Śiva was distinguished from the liṅga. In the Uttara-kāṇḍa of Rāmāyaṇa, for instance, Rāvaṇa carried a golden linga with him, but fought with Śiva! In Rāja-taraṅgiṇī (1,3) we read that during Śiva's marriage, he made a liṅga and worshipped it. We have images in Ellora of Śiva worshipping a liṅga, or carrying it.

It is an error to regard all liṅgas as necessarily phallic in shape, more so in significance. There are many types of liṅgas without this shape but which are held supremely sacred. For instance, the 'self-manifest' (svayaṁbhū) liṅgas are shaped like an umbrella, sword, water-vessel, trident or flag (see later for details). Among the bāṇa-liṅgas, some resemble a club, some are circular, some are like jaṁbū-fruit. A variety of ārsha-liṅga, known as 'gola-liṅga' is like a pumpkin in shape (kūshmāṇḍasya phalākāram). Daiva-liṅga is elongated (dīrghākāra). Even the liṅgas that receive worship in numerous famous shrines of the country are not phallic in shape.

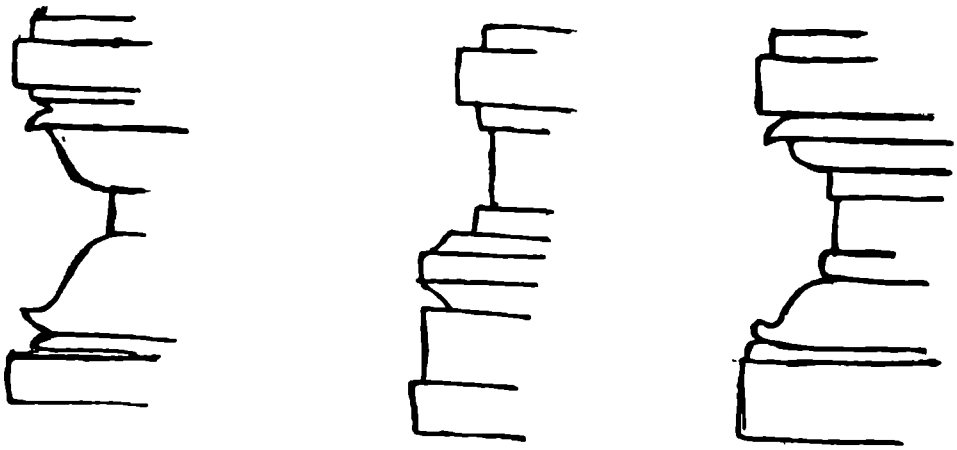


SARVA-SAMA-LINGA



PAÑCHA-LIṄGA IN THE TEMPLE AT BĀRAKŪRU

Aparājita-pṛcchā attempts an explanation for the shape of the liṅga. Prior to the creation, the creator Brahmā and the preserver Vishṇu thought highly of their own prowesses, ignoring altogether, Śiva who immediately assumed the form of a pillar of fire ('jvalana-stambha-rūpa-dhṛt', 1, 7) in between them ('madhye') and filled them with wonder. They did not know what this was, and to examine its top and bottom, which were not visible to them, Brahmā assumed the form of a swan and soared up, and Vishṇu became a boar and dug down ('haṁsa-kroḍa-śarīrena tat-paryanta-didṛkshayā'). But they failed to reach the top or bottom of that pillar and returned crest- fallen. Śiva thereupon told them that the pillar was the symbol of the great-



(PADMA) (BHADRA) (VEDI-BHADRA)

PĪṬHAS OF LIṄGA

ness of Rudra ('tasya liṅgam idam'), which made both Brahmā and Vishṇu competent to create and preserve.

This text further explains that the pillar of fire became known as linga because all creatures merge in it at the time of dissolution ('layam gachhanti bhūtāni saṁhāre nikhilāni cha') and they emerge from it at the time of creation ('nir-gachhanti yataś chāpi liṅgoktis tena hetunā, ibid-, 16)

The liṅga as the pillar of fire contains in itself all three divinities: Brahmā the creator abides in the lower part of the liṅga that is hidden under the earth; Vishṇu the preserver occupies the middle portion that is covered by the pedestal or piṇḍika (or yoni, also called arghya) and Rudra the destroyer is in the top portion that is visible above the pedestal. The Rudra-bhāga is known as 'pūjāṁśa', or the part of the liṅga that is available for worship. Vishṇu-bhāga is identified with Devī ('yonis tu jagad-dhātrī Vishṇu-svarūpiṇī'). The Rudra-bhāga is said to be masculine, the Vishṇu-bhāga feminine and the Brahma- bhāga neuter (cf. Matsya-purāṇa, Suprabhedāgama, 33 and Kāśyapa- śilpa, 49).

Generally, the stone or wooden liṅgas of human handicraft have all these three parts, while the liṅgas that are self-manifest (svayaṁ-bhū) and the liṅgas that carved in precious stones (ratna-ja) as well as the lingas which are temporary in character (kshaṇika) have only the 'pūjāṁśa' (viz. Rudra-bhāga). Bāṇa-liṅgas, raudra-liṅgas, rasa-liṅgas and the liṅgas installed by gods (daiva-liṅga) and by sages (ārsha-liṅgas) also are devoid of the Brahmā- and Vishṇu-bhāgas.

Āgamas prescribe different shapes and heights for the three parts of the liṅga, except in the case of sarvatobhadra-liṅga, where the entire body of the liṅga from top to bottom is cylindrical (mūlād agram suvṛttam'). Dīpārṇava 913, 19) and Suprabhedāgama (op.cit) insist that the Brahma-bhāga (viz. bottom portion) must be a square (chaturaśra) in shape, Vishṇu-bhāga (the middle portion) an eight-sided figure (ashṭāsra), and Rudra-bhāga (the top part) circular (vṛttam) ('aja-hari-hara-bhāgam veda-vas-vasra- vṛttam')

When the heights (utsedha) of the three parts are equal, the liṅga is called 'sarva-sama' (all equal). When the Rudra-bhāga is taller than the other two parts which are equal, then the liṅga is 'śivādhika' (greater in the Śiva part). When the Vishṇu-bhāga is taller than the Brahma-bhāga, and the Rudra-bhāga is taller than the Vishṇu-bhāga, the liṅga is 'vardhamāna' (gradually increasing). When however, the Rudra and Vishṇu-bhāgas (Viz. the liṅga and the piṇḍikā) are equal in height, and taller than the Brahma-bhāga the liṅga is 'svastika'.

Ajitāgama (chap.4) describes 'sarva-sama' as composed of three equal units (1:1:1), whereas 'vardhamāna' has a total of 24 units (7:8:9 'muni-vasu-nava-bhāgam brahma-vishṇvīśvarāṇām'); "śivādhika" is made up of ten units (3:3:4) and 'svastika' has eleven units (3:4:4). The four types are described as brāhmaṇa, kshattriya, vaiśya and śūdra respectively. They also differ in the matter of the treatment of the top of the Rudra-bhāga (śiro- vartana) of each type: in the shape of a cucumber (trapusha), in the shape of an umbrella (chhatra), in the shape of crescent moon (ardha-chandra) and in the shape of hen's egg. (kuk-kuṭāṇḍa) respectively. (ibid.,4, 40-44). It is also maintained that the umbrella shape is the best for all lingas ('chhatrākāraṃ tu sarveshām bhavel liṅga-śire')

In the 'sarvato-bhadra' liṅga, which is cylindrical (round) in shape from bottom to top the three parts (designated as Brahma, Vishṇu and Rudra) are equal in height. When the relative heights vary the shape being the same, the liṅga is known as 'sārva- deśika'; and when the circumference also varies, it is 'trai- rāśika'.

According to Īśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati (2,38), when the Brahma-bhāga and the Vishṇu-bhāga of the liṅga are both four- sided in shape ('vedāsrau brahma-vishṇvaṁśau liṅgeshv ārsh-eshu sammatau'), while the Rudra-bhāga is circular (vṛtta), the liṅga is known as 'ārsha-liṅga'. And four varieties are distinguished here: the bottom portion being thick (sthūla-mūla), the top portion being thick (sthūla-śira or sthūlāgra), the middle portion being thick (sthūla-madhya), and the middle portion being thin (madhya-kṛśa).

There are liṅgas which have the cylindrical 'pūjāṁśa' (viz. the top-portion available for worship, Rudra-bhāga) treated with the design of fluted facets. They are known as 'dhārā-liṅgas'. And fluted facets may be 5, 6, 9,12, 16, 20, 24, or 28 according to Suprabhedāgama; it may go up to a hundred, according to Kāmikāgama (62, 33 'ekādi-dhārayā vṛddhyā śata-dhārāvasānakān)'. But Kāraṇāgama fixes the number of permitted fluted facets at sixteen. The Brahma- and Vishṇu-bhāgas, however, will be four sided and eight sided figures respectively. According to Maya-mata, Brahma-bhāga is to eight-sided and Vishṇu- bhāga sixteen-sided, when the Rudra-bhāga has 72 fluted facets. (see DHĀRĀ- LIṄGA)

Ajitāgama mentions different benefits for worshipping the dhārā- liṅgas with different number of 'dhārās'. Fluted façets three, five and six in number are auspicious: wish-fulfilment, wealth and enjoyment result from them respectively. But a liṅga with seven, eight, or nine is suited only for black magic: results in hatred, distress and uprooting respectively (dvesha, kleśa and ucchāṭana). Worshipping a liṅga with eleven dhārās will bring about diseases for the worshipper, while worshipping a liṅga with twelve dhārās will cause anxiety and terror. A liṅga with sixteen dhārās is meritorious; it will result in all happiness (sarva- sukhāvaha).

Sahasra-liṅga is a variety of 'dhārā-liṅga'. The 'pūjāṁśa' of the sarvato-bhadra-liṅga (viz. the liṅga where all the three parts of the shaft are circular in shape) is equipped with 25 equidistant fluted façets, on a design which is seven-petalled ('sapta-parva-dalākārah'), and along each façet are carved twenty pairs of tiny liṅgas from top to bottom. The total number of carved lingas along the twenty-five façets will be one thousand (40x25) (see SAHASRA-LIṄGA).

Sometimes, the anthropomorphic representation of the head or bust of Śiva is carved on the 'pūjāṁśa' of the 'Śivādhika' variety of the liṅga (viz. the Rudra-bhāga being taller than the other two bhāgas which are equal in height), and this is known as 'mukha- liṅga' (see MUKHA-LIṄGA). The faces of Śiva shown may be one, three or four (Rūpa-maṇḍana, 4,92). When it is one-faced, it faces the devotee. In the three-faced liṅga, the front and the sides of the 'pūjāṁśa' are sculpted. The four-faced liṅga will have a face on each of the four directions. Īśāna-śiva-guru-deva-padhati (3,40) prohibits the making of two-faced liṅgas ('na kuryād dvi-mukham liṅgam'), for it is suited only for witchcraft and sorcery ('tacchhastam ābhichā-rake').

When the face alone is carved on the 'pūjāṁśa' shaft of the liṅga, the liṅga is called 'Īśvara-liṅga', belonging to the vyaktāvyakta (manifest as well as unmanifest, iconic as well as aniconic) variety. If, however, the entire anthropomorphic figure of Śiva is carved on the 'pūjāṁśa' of the shaft, it is 'raudra' liṅga, belonging to the vyakta (manifest or iconic) variety. The liṅga that has no representation of Śiva's face or body on its 'pūjāṁśa' is called Sadā-śiva-liṅga, belonging to the avyakta (unmanifest or aniconic) variety (cf.Ajitāgama, 'vyaktam yat pratimā-yuktam, avyaktam śiva-liṅgam iti smṛtam; mukha-liṅgam bhaved asya tṛtīyam ubhayātmakam').

Liṅgas are broadly divided into two classes: kṛtrima (artefact) and akṛtrima (natural).

The latter class of liṅgas are celebrated as self-manifest (svāyam-bhuva), viz. Śiva manifesting himself in the form of a liṅga, on his own accord, or at the instance of a devotee. This class includes the bāṇa-liṅgas, which are obtained mainly from the river Narmadā; the origin of these liṅgas is ascribed to the request of the asura Bāṇa by name (son of Bali). They occur in several shapes and sizes, and they are named after several gods: Yāmya (club-shaped), Nairṛta (sword-shaped), Vāruṇa (round), Vāyavīya (dark coloured or grey, looking like a banner), Kaubera (mace-shaped), raudra (shining like gold, and looking look a piece of bone), Vaishṇava (with four colours, and looking like conch, discus or śrī-vatsa). The best among bāṇa-liṅgas are said to be those which are honey-coloured and shaped like a ripe jaṁbū-fruit or water-bubble (bud-buda). Those which are egg-shaped are ranked next, followed by those which resemble the hump of a bull.

The divya-liṅgas are also included in the same class. They are elongated in shape, but have uneven surface (nimmonnata- samanvita); they also have natural scratches and crevices (rekhā-koṭara-samyukta). The raudra-liṅgas are made smooth and shining owing to the river-currents, and occur in different colours, white, red, yellow or black; the black ones are supposed to be the best.

The natural liṅgas are divine on their own, and do not require the rites of installation, consecration, invocation and so on. Even when a natural liṅga is damaged, it continues to be fit for worship, if it gets broken, the parts may be joined by some adhesive, without needing any ritualistic purifications. This class of liṅgas is regarded as most superior (uttamottama).

The liṅgas that are reputed to have been installed by the gods (daivata-liṅga), or the lingas that were installed in very ancient times (pūrva-liṅga or purāṇa-liṅga) are regarded as moderately superior (madhyamottama). The texts also speak of liṅgas worshipped by Gaṇapati (gāṇapa-liṅga), to be included in the same group. The liṅgas installed and worshipped by great sages (ārsha-liṅga) belong to the inferior variety of the superior class (adhamottama).

But the liṅgas that are called artefacts (kṛtrima) are those made by human beings (mānusha-liṅga), and they are the ones that are frequently seen; textual prescriptions of iconometry, rites of installation, consecration etc. apply strictly only to them. Two broad divisions are generally made in this class; immobile or permanently fixed (achala or sthāvara) and moveable (chala or jaṅgama).

The former is suitable for temples ('prāsāda-sthāpane hitam') and for public worship ('parārtha-yajana', Suprabhedāgama, 8,2-4). It is carved out of stone and has three distinct divisions (tribhāga-sahitam) representing Brahmā, Vishṇu and Rudra ('śilāmayam yad rūpam brahma-vishṇu-harair yutam', Pūrva-kāraṇa, 9,177). And it must properly be installed and consecrated (in accordance with the āgama prescriptions) (nidhi-kuṁbha-pratishṭhādi sarvam uktānusāratah kṛtvā pratishṭhitam biṁbam achalam). It is prescribed that this liṅga must not be under a 'hasta' (viz.twelve aṅgulas) in height ('hasta-kshīṇam na kārayet', Kāśyapa-śilpa, 49,85). It may be of any height which is above one tāla (viz.twelve-aṅgulas) but not above nine tālas, when it is worshipped in a temple ('ekādi nava-hastāntam liṅgam prāsāde pūjitam'), but a liṅga which is taller than nine tālas must not be enclosed in a sanctum; it should be worshipped in the open ('nava-hastordhvam liṅgam tu prāsādena vinārchayet', Dīpārṇava, 13,5).

The liṅga which is mobile in character (viz.chala) is suitable for worship at home, and

for worship for ones own sake (ātmārtham). It does not need the customary installation rites, or a permanent abode. It may be placed on any pedestal, divinity formally invoked in it (unless it is a bāṇa-liṅga), and worshipped (Śilpa-ratna 2,6), 'piṭhikopari saṁsthāpya pūjitam chalam eva hi'). Its height may be anything between an aṅgula and a tāla (viz.twelve aṅgulas), ('tālād aṅgula-paryantam tal liṅgam chalam uttamam'). And it should not have the three divisions (Brahma, Vishṇu and Rudra) which are necessary in a liṅga which is permanently fixed and worshipped in a temple; the moveable liṅga has only the Rudra-bhāga or pūjāṁśa (Ajitāgama, 4,21 'chalam śaivāṁśam eva hi'). That is why probably the immobile liṅga is considered to be superior to the moveable liṅgas ('jaṅgamāt sthāvaram śreshṭham').

The moveable liṅga may be made in metals (loha-ja) or clay (mṛṇmaya), or carved in precious stones (ratna-ja) or wood (dāru-ja). Texts like Suprabhedāgama (4,21-22) distinguish eight varieties of liṅgas cast in metal, seven varieties of liṅgas carved in precious stones, eight varieties of liṅga carved out of wood, and two varieties of liṅgas made in clay. Liṅgas may also be made in minerals (dhātu-ja).

Among the metals (loha) suitable for making a liṅga are mentioned suvarṇa (gold), rajata (silver), tāmra (copper), kāṁsya (bell metal), arakūṭa (brass), sīsakam (lead), āyasa (iron) and trapu (tin). Suprabheda (op.cit, 33) lists the benefits that result from worshipping metallic liṅgas: wealth (golden-liṅga), royal domain (silver), progeny (copper), longevity (tin) and health (lead). Liṅgas made in bell-metal, brass and iron are used in magical practices for accomplishing vidvesha (causing enmity or hatred among friends and allies), ucchhāṭana (driving away the enemy from his own realm) and kshaya (decay and decline) respectively.

The minerals (dhātu) from which liṅgas may be made include śilājitu, hari-tāla (yellow orpiment), manaś-śilā (Arsenic rubrum), gairika (ochre), añjana (galena), iṅgalika ( ), gandhaka (sulphur) and abhraka (mica) which are obtained from mountains ('dhātavo giri-saṁbhavāh').

The precious stones (ratna) which are recommended for carving the liṅga, and the benefits that result from worshipping the liṅgas carved out of different precious-stones are given in several texts like Ajitāgama, Chintyāgama, Kāraṇāgama, Suprabheda and Śilpa- ratna: māṇikya (ruby) for all accomplishment (sarva-siddhi), muktā (pearl) for elimination of sins (dosha-mukti), pravāḷa (coral) for magical attraction and possession (vaśya), marakata (emerald) for nourishment (pushṭi), pushpa-rāga (topaz) for prosperity (saubhāgya), vajra (diamond) for fulfilment of desires (kāma), nīla (sapphire) for celebrity (yaśas) and health (ārogya), harid-aśma (jade) for wealth (dhana-lābha) and prosperity (vṛddhi), vaiḍūrya (cat's eye, chrysoberyl) for destruction of enemies (vairi-nāśa) and longevity (āyur-vrddhi), sphaṭika (rock-crystal) for fulfilment of all desires (sarva-kāma-prada) sūrya-kānta (sun-stone) for salvation (moksha) and chandra-kānta (moon-stone) for material well-being (artha). The first seven of these are considered especially suitable.

The liṅga carved out of a precious stone is best if it is placed upon a pedestal made of that very stone ('uttamam sva-sva-yonis syāt') during worship. If, however, such a pedestal is not available, gold may be used for the purpose, which is of moderate benefit ('madhyamam svarna-yonikam'). Bell-metal is the next alternative; copper is to be preferred, if bell-metal is not to be [illegible] failing this, a stone pedestal would do (Ajitāgama, 4,56).

Aparājita-sūtra (198,18), prescribes that the liṅga carved out of a precious stone should not be taller than two hastas (viz. 24 aṅgulas), nor shorter than an aṅgula ('ekāṅgula dvi-hastāntam ratnajam na param tatah').

Liṅgas carved out of timber (wood) are included normally in the moveable variety (chala), although prescriptions with regard to it suggest its immoveable character (achala). For instance, Aparājita-pṛchhā (200,1-8) insists that a wooden liṅga must at least be sixteen aṅgulas in height or taller, (cf. also Dīpārṇava, 13,10 and Īśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati, 40, 35-37) while the maximum height allowed for a chala-liṅga is nine aṅgulas.

According to this text, the following trees are suitable for carving liṅgas out of them: chandana, rakta-chandana, khadira, aśoka, devadāru, śiṁśupa, śirīsha, hintāla, arjuna, bilva (śrī- phala), rañjānaka, sarpa, agaru, (lavaṅgāksha) and pārijāta. Kāmikāgama adds sāla, badara, kadaṁba and panasa. Suprabhedāgama (33,52-57) regards arjuna, śamī, madhūka, tinduka, pippala and karṇikāra as best for the purpose. Ajitāgama (kriyā, 4,16) includes arishtha and karañja also among the recommended trees.

Suprabhedāgama (ch.33) says that the sculptor of a liṅga must avoid trees which have been set fire to (agni-dagdhāh), which have dried and withered (śushkāh), which provide shelter for birds (pakshiṇām niketanāh), and which are supports for creepers and anthills (latā-valmīka-saṁsthāh). The wood that is chosen must be hard and dense-fibred (dṛdha-kāshṭha).

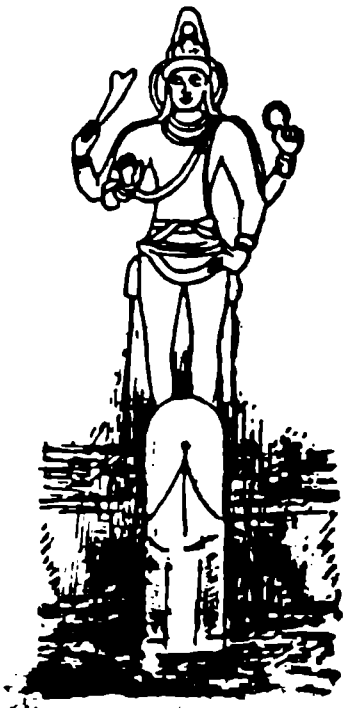
The liṅgas made of clay (mṛnmaya or pārthiva) are said to have the same iconometric prescriptions as the stone ones (Pūrva-kāraṇa, 10,190 'pārthivasya cha liṅgasya śaila-van mānam ishyate'). The clay liṅgas are of two types: burnt clay (pakva) and unburnt clay (apakva) (Kiraṇāgama, 3,21,56 Pūrva-kāraṇa, 10,190, Ajitāgama, 4,17 and Suprabheda, 33,29).

Clay is collected from a clean spot, preferably from the top of a hill or from the banks of a river; clay may be white, red, yellow or black in colour. It is well soaked in the five products of the cow (pañchagavya, milk, curds, ghee, urine and cowdung). It is then kneaded with the milk from a red-coloured cow, to which is added curds and til oil, mixed with wheat flour and blackgram-dal-flour taken in equal proportions. Then lac, kundurushka (a perfume), the milk of devadāru tree, guggulu, gum of sāla tree and the sap of the bilva tree are added to it and the whole thing is left alone for a month or a fortnight before the liṅga is made out of it (Pūrva-kāraṇa, 10,190-200).

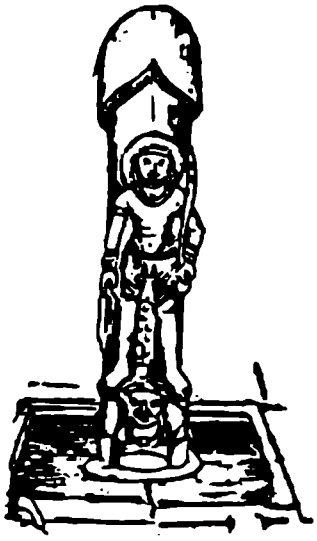
Different ingredients to go with clay are suggested by texts. Suprabheda (33,29-31) prescribes that black-gram dal flour, ghee, milk, herbal decoction (kashāya), guggula, exudation of sarja tree and pulp of bilva fruit must be mixed with clay. Ajitāgama (4,13-20) recommends the mixture of powdered tri-phala (three kinds of berries) and the powdered barks of trees which have milky exudation to be added. Kiraṇāgama (21,56-60) prescribes among other things oil extracted from agase, pulp of bilva fruit and bark of the devadāru tree to be added.

The clay liṅga may later be baked; but baked lingas are worshipped only by the practitioners of witchcraft and sorcery. It is said that baked lingas are more powerful than the unbaked (apakvāt pakvaje punyam daśa-guṇam). The linga fashioned out of unbaked clay must have the pedestal of the same material. The worship of this linga is said to result in longevity, virility, progeny, wealth and fulfilment of all desires.

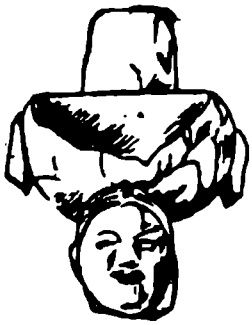
We read in Śiva-dharmottara that liṅgas made in different substances were worshipped by different gods, and appropriate benefits were procured by them : (the liṅga made in) stone by Brahmā, sapphire by Vishṇu, jewel by Indra, gold by Kubera, silver by the Viśve-devas, brass by Vāyu, bronze by the Vasus, clay by the Asvins, crystal by Varuṇa, copper by Sūrya, coral by Śesha, iron by the rākshasas, tin by the piśāchas, liṅga made of three metals (trailohika)



LIṄGA
(at Māmallapuram
Trimūrti cave)



LIṄGA
(at Gudimallam)



BHĀRA-ŚIVA
(from a piece in Bhārat Kalā
Bhavan, Delhi)

BHĀRA-LIṄGA-ŚIVA
(preserved in Mathurā Museum, about the
second century A.D.)

ŚIVA and PĀRVATI WORSHIPPING
LIṄGA
(Ellora, Kailāsa temple)

by the guhyakas, and the linga made of many metals (bahu-loha-maya) by the seven mātṛkā-goddesses.

Stone-liṅgas are said to be ten-fold superior to the liṅgas carved in wood ('dārujāt śailajam puṇyam daśa-guṇam'); the metal liṅgas are a hundred times more meritorious than the stone ones ('tasmāt śata-guṇam lohe'); next in the order of superiority is the liṅga carved in precious stones ('lohāt ratnam anantaram'). The bāṇa-liṅgas are of course vastly superior to the ones made from precious stones (saṁsmṛtam bāṇa-liṅgam tu ratnāt koṭi-guṇam').

There is another class of liṅgas, which are purely temporary in character (kshaṇika). They are prepared just before the commencement of the worship sequence, and dispensed with immediately after the worship is over. They acquire divine character by the rite of prāṇa-pratishṭhā, and retain it till the rite of dismissal (visarjana) is performed ('pūjānte kshaṇikas tyājyah').

Twelve are the varieties of a temporary liṅga, dependent upon the substance employed to make it. The following substances are used: sand (sikata), uncooked rice grains (taṇḍula), cooked rice (anna), riverside clay (nadī-mṛttikā), cow-dung (go-maya), sandal-paste (chandana), grass (darbha), flowers (pushpa), jaggery (guḍa), flour (pishṭa), butter (navanīta) and rudrākṣha-berries. Suprabheda (33, 25-28) lists the benefits that result from worshipping these twelve varieties of temporary liṅgas: salvation, prosperity, plentiful food, domain, cure of disease, welfare, emancipation, longevity, fulfilment of desire, nourishment, happiness of mind and wisdom respectively.

For these liṅgas no pedestal is to be made (na eteshām piṇḍikā kāryā', Īśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati, paṭala 38); the temporary linga does not have the usual divisions into Brahmā, Vishṇu and Rudra-bhāgas, nor the treatment of the top ('naisha trikhaṇḍam na śiro-vartanādi'). And no iconometric prescriptions apply to this class of liṅgas ('eteshām na pramāṇam na cha sthitih', Suprabheda, 33, 58), nor any of the characteristic features of a liṅga ('naivāsti lakshaṇam', Ajitāgama, 4,62).

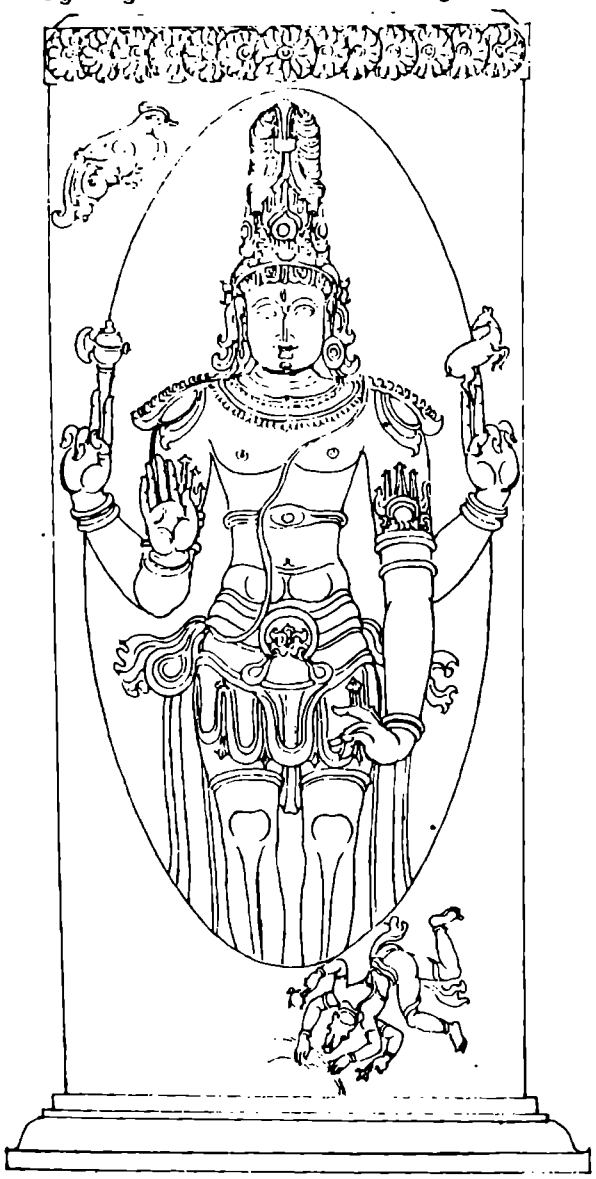
Stone liṅgas are prescribed to be made in the masculine variety of stones (puṁ-śilā), while their pedestals are to be in feminine stones (strī-śilā). This class of liṅgas must have the three sections (named after Brahmā, Vishṇu and Rudra) clearly marked off, and only the portion known as 'pūjāṁśa' (or Rudra-bhāga) must be made visible. This cylindrical section must also have distinguishing features (lakshaṇoddhāra), which indicate the front side, viz. facing the devotees.

These features may take different forms: barely grain (yava), eyes of an elephant (gajākṣha), ears of a cow (go-karṇa), lotus bud (saroja-mukula), plaintain flower (kadalī-mukula) aśvattha leaf, hen's egg (kukkuṭāṇḍa), umbrella (chhatra), conch (śaṁkha), spear-head (śūlāgra), tiny liṅga, hands joined in supplication (añjali), horizontal lines two or three in number, triangle, circle or water-bubble (budbuda).

Texts also insist that while marking these lines, the length of the pujāṁśa must be divided into three equal parts, and the middle and the lower parts only must be used. The liṅgas with the top-treatment (śiro-vartana) in the shapes of umbrella, cucumber, hen's egg, and crescent moon must have the Lakshaṇoddhāra of elephant's eye, hen's egg, umbrella, and water-bubble respectively.

It is not unusual to find in shrines more liṅgas than one According to Kāraṇāgama, worshipping a single liṅga leads to salvation, but two liṅgas in a shrine will result in diseases for the devotees (vyādhi-rūpa). Three liṅgas are meritorious, resulting in worldly prosperity (bhoga) as well as emancipation (mokṣha). Four liṅgas, however, are undesirable, leading to the

loss of wealth as well celebrity (śri-kirtī-hāni). Five liṅgas are excellent: worshipping them is capable of removing all sins including the five major ones (pañcha-pātaka-nāśanam). Six liṅgas can lead to death and distress. Seven liṅgas will pacify enmity and promote good will; but eight liṅgas make enemies and cause great diseases. Nine liṅgas are the best, as they bestow salvation when worshipped together (śiva-loke mahīyate')



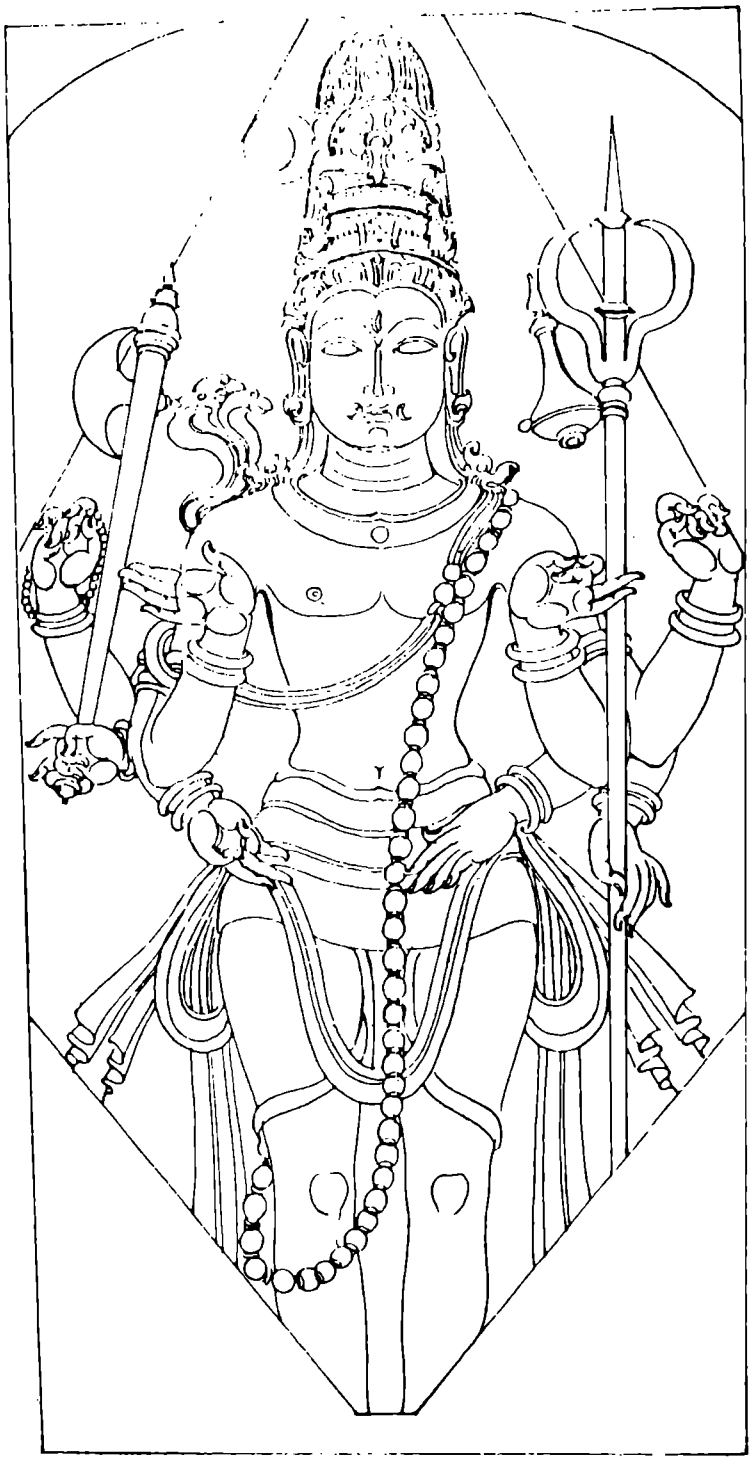
LIṄGODBHAVA-MŪRTI
(from Dhārāśuram temple)

LIṄGODBHAVA-MŪRTI

The occasion for the appearance of Śiva in the form of a liṅga ('liṅgāvatāra' according to Śrī-tattva-nidhi) has already been given (see LINGA). Purāṇas (like Śiva-, Kūrma-, Liṅga- and Vāyu-) give the story of the dispute between Brahmā and Vishṇu for superiority and Śiva's appearance before them as a huge pillar of blazing fire. Brahmā and Vishṇu, curious to find out the nature of this phenomenon, attempted to discover the top and bottom of the pillar; Brahmā assumed the form of a swan and soared high into the heavens, while Vishṇu became a boar and dug into the earth. But they failed in their attempt and returned to where they were. Then, Śiva burst forth from the middle of the pillar and revealed himself (liṅgodbhava, 'arising out of the liṅga') with a thousand arms and legs, and thereupon Brahmā and Vishṇu realized the superiority of Śiva and offered him their respectful homage.

The āgama texts prescribe that an iconic form of Śiva should be represented as revealing itself on the front side of the pujāṁśa of the liṅga (see LIṄGA). Śiva is to be shown, according to most texts, as similar to Kevala-Chandraśekhara (see CHANDRA-ŚEKHARA), in a standing posture (sthānaka), with four arms. Sometimes, however, six or eight hands are shown. But usually, the figure is four-armed, the normal hands showing the gestures of protection (right) and boon-bestowal (left) (more frequently in the kaṭyavalaṁbita posture) and the upper hands holding axe (right) and antelope (left) (cf. Kāraṇāgama patala 11). Śilpa-ratna, however, prescribes that Śiva must be shown as carrying a spear (śūla) in one of his hands.

Śiva stands here in sama-pāda-sthānaka posture, but his feet are hidden within the shaft of the liṅga ('nālakādhas sthitam pādam') and,



LIṄGODBHAVA-MŪRTI
(from Kailāsanātha temple, Kañnchipuram)

LIṄGODBHAVA-MŪRTI

according to some texts, his crown also is not seen (Suprabheda, paṭala 34, 'adṛśyau tasya pādābjau tathaiva mukuṭam yathā'). This relates to the detail in the legend that Brahmā and Vishṇu could not reach the top or bottom of the pillar of fire.

While the iconic representation of Śiva is enclosed within an oval or lenticular aperture opening in the liṅga's shaft (nāla), Brahmā and Vishṇu in the forms of swan and boar are sculpted on the surface of the shaft. The swan (the size of which must be equal to the face of Śiva shown here, 'biṁbasyānana-mānena kārayed-dhaṁsam', Uttara-Kāmikā, paṭala 50; but Kāraṇāgama, paṭala 11, suggests that the size of the swan must be two times the face of the iconic representation of Śiva, 'biṁbasya dvi-mukhenaiva haṁsa-rūpam tu kārayet') on top of the opening (showing liṅgodbhava-mūrti) to the left ('ūrdhve vāma-pārśvake'). The boar must be shown below the opening to the right ('dakshiṇāṁśe tvadho- gatah').

The boar is required to be made twice the size of the swan; and shown in the act of digging the earth ('biṁba-dvi-mukha-mānena bhūkṛshṭāsyam tu sūkaram', Uttara-kāmikā, op.cit.). Suprabheda (paṭala 34), however, suggests that Vishṇu must be shown here as having a boar's face ('vishṇum varāha-vaktrakam', also Kāraṇāgama, 'sūkarānanam'). It is common practice to represent Vishṇu only in the boar's form.

Brahmā and Vishṇu are shown in their human iconic form as flanking the liṅgodbhava-opening on the left and right sides respectively. They must be splendid in appearance ('sarvāvayava-sundarau') and must be shown as four-armed joining their normal hands in an attitude of supplication ('hṛdaye-ñjali-saṁyuktau', Aṁśumadbheda, paṭala 76), and as looking at the liṅga ('sthitau liṅgam samīkshya cha'). The other two hands of the gods carry the usual emblems: ladle and roasary by Brahmā, conch and discus by Vishṇu. Śiva is visualized as red (rakta) in complexion, Vishṇu dark-blue (śyāma) and Brahmā golden-yellow (hiraṇyābha).

Even if Brahmā and Vishṇu are not shown in the manner on the sides of liṅgodbhava, the gods as swan and boar must necessarily be represented ('brahma-vishṇu-vihīno vā haṁsa-sūkara-samyutah', Uttara-kāmikā (op.cit.)

The place on the liṅga's shaft where lingodbhava is to be shown is given as the central portion ('liṅga-madhye tu kartvyam', Suprabheda; also Aṁśumadbheda, 'liṅgākārasya madhye tu'). Kāraṇāgama (op.cit) is more specific; the height of the liṅga must be divided into five equal parts ('āyāmam yat tu liṅgasya bhūtāṁśam vibhajet'), and one part on the top and one part at the bottom must be left out ('ūrdhve vyomāṁśakam tyaktvā mūle chaiva tathā bhavet'); and the figure must be carved in the remaining space, viz. in the centre ('tan-madhye kārayet').

LILĀ-MŪRTI

The sportive forms which Śiva assumed on various occasions are generally known as 'līlā-mūrtis'. Major shrines of the Śaivite division have iconographic representations of these forms, kept in niches in one of the enclosures, the sanctum, however, contating only the anlconic liṅga (see LIṄGA). These forms do not receive ceremonial worship, nor are they meant to. They are decorative in intent; and more significantly they illustrate the purāṇic accounts of Śiva's glory. (see ŚIVA).

According to Śaiva-siddhānta, the sportive forms of Śiva are emanations from the Maheśa-tattva (see MAHEŚA), which in turn is an expression of 'Karma-sāda'. These forms are all 'sakala', having identifiable forms and associated symbolisms. They illustrate Śiva's role in creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe. And in all these forms, Śiva is seen as having a human figure, having one head, three eyes, four or more arms, and wearing his matted

hair done up as a crown. The weapons held in the hands, the postures assumed and the actions shown vary.

Some forms are seated, some standing and some moving about. Śaivāgama-sāra classifies these forms into those which illustrate creation (sṛshṭi-mūrti), preservation (sthiti-mūrti), obscuration (tirodhāna-mūrti) and bestowal of grace (anugraha-mūrti). Another classification is according to the action shown: bestowal of grace upon devotees like Vigheśa, Chaṇḍeśa, Nandi, Rāvaṇa etc. (anugraha-mūrti); destruction of demons like Tripura, and Gajāsura, and vanquishing of spirits like Kāla, Kāma and Jālandhara; illustrations of legends like Bhikshāṭana, Kaṅkāla, Vishāpaharaṇa, Valvāhika, Vīrabhadra, Liṅgodbhava and Kirāta; and themes illustrating aspects of Śiva like Chandraśekhara, Nṛtta-mūrti, Dakshiṇā-mūrti, Haryardha, Umārdha, Sukhāsina, Eka-pada and Vṛshārūḍha.

While the traditional number of Śiva's sportive forms is twenty-five, the āgamas do not always enumerate or describe these forms. Ajitāgama, for instance, speaks only of seven forms: (1) Śiva alone (kevala) (2) Śiva with Pārvati (sāmbika), (3) Śiva with Pārvati and Kārttikeya (sāmbikā-guha), (4) Śiva with Brahmā and Vishṇu (sa-brahma-keśava), (5) Śiva sharing his body with Vishṇu (haryardha), (6) Śiva sharing his body with Pārvati (devyardha), and (7) Soma Śrī Vishṇu Padma (?)

Rauravāgama (patala 25, 1-3) counts only eight forms: (1) Sukhāsana (seated in easy posture), (2) Someśvara (called in Suprabheda 'Umayā saha', in the company of Pārvati), (3) Somāskanda (called Umomā Skanda-sahita in Kāmikāgama along with Pārvati and Kārtikeya), (4) Ukshārūḍha (or Vṛshhārūḍha, riding a bull), (5) Purāri (or Tripurāri; the vanquisher of the Tripura demons), (6) Chandra-śekhara (called in Suprabheda Somārdha-śekhara, wearer of crescent moon on head), (7) Kāla-hari (Kālaghna according to Suprabheda, or Kālāri, Kālāntaka, the vanquisher of Kāla, the god of death), and (8) Kalyāṇa (Kalyāṇa-sundara or Valvāhika-mūrti, Śiva in the act of taking Pārvati for wife).

Suprabheda (1, 34, 72-75) enumerates twelve forms ('dvādaśa pratimā'), adding the following five forms to the above list omitting Somāskanda: (8) Nṛttaka (or Nṛtta-mūrti, Śiva as a dancer), (9) Ardha-nāriśa (as man-woman), (10) Harer-ardha (sharing his body with Vishṇu), (12) Bhikshāṭana (Śiva on his begging rounds) and (12) Liṅga-purāṇika (or Liṅgodbhava, or Liṅgodbhūta in Kāmikāgama, appearing from the liṅga).

To this list are added another thirteen to make up the traditional number of twenty-five: (13) Tripurāntaka (as the vanquisher of Tripura), (14) Gajāri (or Gajāsura-saṁhāra, as the killer of the demon in the elephant form), (15) Kirāta (or Kirātārjuna, encountering Arjuna as a hunter), (16) Kaṅkāla (as a wanderer in order to expiate the sin of brahma-hatyā), (17) Chaṇḍeśānugraha (bestowing the status of prime attendant to Chaṇḍeśvara), (18) Vishāpaharaṇa (in the act of swallowing the deadly poison Kālakūṭa, which sprang forth from the milky ocean as it was being churned), (19) Chakra-dāna (or Vishṇvanugraha, presenting discus as gift to Vishṇu), (20) Vighneśānugraha (bestowing grace upon Gaṇapati), (21) Ekapāda (with only one leg, Brahmā and Vishṇu emerging from his loins), (22) Dakshiṇā-mūrti, (23) Vīra-bhadra (setting out to destroy the sacrifice of Daksha to avenge the death of Satī), (24) Kalyāṇa-Sundara (same as Kalyāṇa of Raurava), and (25) Jālandhara-vadha (as killer of Jālandhara).

The list of twenty forms given in Kāmikāgama (1, 65, 23-27) includes some of these forms (Nṛtta-mūrti, Umayā-saha, Indu-śekhara, Tripuraghna, Liṅgodbhūta, Dakshiṇāmurti, Sukhāsana, Vṛshārudha, Kaṅkāla, Chaṇḍeśādhipati, Kalyāṇa-sundara); mentions some forms together (Kāla-Kāmādi-nāśana and Umā-

Vishṇvardha- rūpa), omits some forms (Vīrabhadra, Jālandhara-vadha, Kirāta, Gajāri and Vishāpaharaṇa) and adds Geyamūrti (Śiva as singer, probably the same as Vīṇā-dhara-mūrti), Gaṅgā-yuga-para (receiving Gaṅgā in his locks of hair and releasing her at Bhagīratha's request probably the same as Gaṅgādhara and Gaṅgā-visarjana), Bali-bhartā (receiving offerings?), Nandīśvara- prasāda (bestowing grace on Nandīkeśvara), Ūrdhva-pāda-samanvita (with his leg lifted up, probably the variant form of Nṛtta-mūrti known as Ūrdhva-tāṇḍava) and Sadāśiva.

(see for details under individual forms)

LUPĀKĀRA (LŪPĀROHA)

One of the five kinds of treatments for the top of the gopura, mentioned in Rauravāgama (kriyā, paṭala 42, 4-5), the others being Śālākāra, harmyākāra, maṇḍapākāra and chhatrākāra. Kāśyapa-śilpa (44, 18) describes it as equipped with two finials ('yugma-stūpi-samāyuktam')

LEKHYA

One of the eight varieties of icons, mentioned in Śukra-nīti-sāra (4,4,72), lekhyā means a drawing, others being saikatī (icons made by sand), paishṭi (made by dough or rice-powder), lepyā (see below), mṛṇmayī (made of clay), vārkshī (carved in wood), pāshāṇa (stone sculpture) and dhātūttha (metallic images). The text says that this variety (drawing on paper or board) is more durable than the icons which are saikatī and paishṭī, but less so than lepyā and mṛṇmayī.

Lekhyā is what is delineated, written or inscribed on palm leaf, paper, cloth, wooden board or on a platform. Icons for worship also sometimes assume this form (like the patas and chitras of later times). Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtra-dhāra (Chap, II, 1.1) mentions 'lekhya' as distinct from 'chitra', which generally is taken to mean drawing or painting (although the technical term for it is 'chitrābhāsa', 'chitra' being sculpture in the round). This text enumerates seven materials out of which an icon can be made ('dravyam archhāsu saptadhā'): gold, silver, copper, stone, wood, lekhyā and chitra. The last two are doubtless pictorial representations; it is possible that 'lekhyā' meant only linear drawings or delineations in lines made by stylus or reed-pen while the term 'chitra' referred to paintings, or application of different colours by brush. The word 'chitra' also means "variegated".

Delineations in lines of diagrams (maṇḍala), designs, deities (archā) and sacred syllables (bījākshara) on ritual pots (ghaṭa), cloth-screens (paṭa) and walls (bhitti) are included in 'lekhyā'.

LEPYĀ

Another variety of icons mentioned in Śukra-nīti-sāra (4,4,72)-, it is said to be more durable ('sthira') than lekhyā (see above) but less so than clay images (mṛṇmayī). Bhoja's Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtra-dhāra (op.cit), however, does not count lepyā among the seven varieties of icons. It is probable that the word 'chitra' which comes immediately after 'lekhyā' in Bhoja's enumeration means only 'lepya', for we often find the expression 'lepya-chitra' in texts dealing with iconic representations (as for instance in Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā, 'lepye chitre harir nityam' etc.)

Lepyā means fresco, providing moulded or modelled mortar, plaster or clay with coats of painting; it also refers to the paintings made on wooden boards and planks, on canvas or on paper.

According to Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā, Vishṇu is best worshipped in lepya-chitra ('lepye chitre harir nityam sannidhānam upaiti hi; tasmāt sarva-prayatnena lepyam chitra-gatam yajet'), for it is in this variety of iconic representation that ornaments, lustre, facial expressions and other details could be clearly delineated ('kānti-bhūshaṇa-bhāvādyaiś chitre yasmāt sphuṭam sthitah; atas sānnidhyam āyāti chitrajāsu janārdanah').

LOKANĀTHA

A form of Avalokiteśvara (see AVALOKITESVARA), which has some interesting iconographic specimens. He is described in the Sādhanā texts as lustrous like moon (śaśi-prabhā), and as two-armed, his right hand-assuming the gesture of boon-bestowal and his left holding a lotus. He has his matted hair arranged like a crown (jaṭāmukuṭa), in which is stuck a tiny image of Vajra-dharma ('jaṭāntahstha'). He is said to free the devotee from all diseases (aśeshha-roga-nāśana). And he is visualized as flashing forth from the mystic syllable 'hrīh' (hrīhkārākshara-sambhūta).

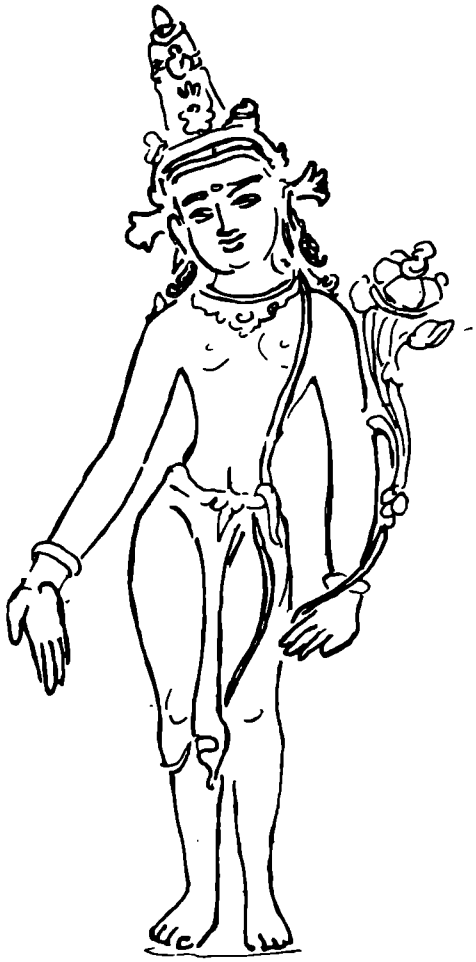
He is seated in the lalitākshepa posture, and he is perfectly tranquil (mahā-saumya) and luminous (prabhāsvara). There are, however, some icons of his which show him in a standing posture, or seated in paryaṅka attitude.

He may be represented alone, or with Tārā (see TARĀ) on his right side and Hayagrīva (see HAYAGRĪVA) on his left. Tārā here is two-armed, and tranquil in aspect (saumya); she carries a blue lotus (utpala) in one hand, the other hand assuming the gesture of boon-bestowal. Hayagrīva is red-complexioned, extremely ferocious (mahā-raudra) and is fond of covering himself with tiger's hide (vyāghra-charmāmbara-priyah). One of his hands (presumably the right one) assumes the gesture of offering respectful homage (vandana), and the other carries a cudgel (daṇḍa)

One of the varieties of Loka-nātha is described as Raktārya viz. red-complexioned. He has the same iconographical details mentioned above, but he is always represented alone.

LOKAPĀLA

Name for the guardians of directions (see DIK-PĀLA)



LOKEŚVARA
(gilt bronze from Nepāl)

LOKAPĀLA-VISHṆU

A form of Vishṇu (see VISHṆU), who is two-armed, carrying mace and discus in his hands. He is invoked as the guardian of the worlds.

LOKEŚVARA

One of the forms of Lokeśvara is as an attendant bodhi-sattva standing on the left side of the Buddha in Vajra-paryaṅkāsana (showing bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā), Maitreya standing on the other side. In this aspect. He is white-complexioned (śukla), and two- armed, holding a flywhisk in his right hand and a lotus in his left.

LOKEŚVARA
(bronze from Kāshmīr)

The other form, which is more popular, shows him as an independent bodhi-sattva; in fact, the word 'lokesvara' is the short form for Avalokiteśvara (see AVALOKITEŚVARA), and some of the forms of Avalokiteśvara are specifically called 'lokeśvaras' (like Shaḍakshari-lokeśvara, Siṁhanāda-lokeśvara, Rakta-lokeśvara, Oḍḍiyāna-lokeśvara, Hālāhala-lokeśvara and Sugati-sandarśana-lokeśvara).

Siṁha-nāda-lokeśvara is a popular god in the countries where the Mahāyāna doctrine prevails (see SIṀHANĀDA-LOKEŚVARA). Shaḍakshari-lokeśvara is associated with the famous six-syllabled mantra 'om-ma-ṇi-pa-dme-hūṁ' (see SHAḌAKSHARI-LOKEŚVARA). Kha-sarpaṇa lokeśvara is always accompanied by Tārā, Sudhana-kumāra, Bhṛkuṭī and Haya-grīva (see KHA-SARPAṆA-LOKESVARA). Hālāhala- lokeśvara is seated with a śakti on his lap (see HĀLĀHALA-LOKEŚVARA)

Oḍḍiyāna-lokeśvara (also called Trailokya-vaśaṁkara) has two hands, carrying in them noose and goad, both bearing the emblem of Vajra. Three-eyed, and the whole body red with erotic excitement (sarvāṅga-mahā-rāga-rakta), he sits in the vajra-paryaṅka attitude upon a red lotus.

Rakta-lokeśvara is red in complexion and is four-armed. Standing beneath an aśoka tree (with red flowers), he wears red garments, and has red sandal paste smeared on his body. His four hands carry noose, goad, bow and arrow. He is accompanied by Tārā and Bhṛkuṭi.

Nīlakaṇṭha-lokeśvara corresponds in many details with Śiva. He sits in the attitude of meditative absorption (samādhi), but his hands carry skull-bowl overflowing with numerous-jewels (nānā-ratna-paripūrṇa-kapāla). He sits in Vajra-paryaṅka posture upon the deer's skin which is spread over a lotus; he also wears deer-skin for his sacrificial cord (see NĪLAKAṆṬHA).

Sugati-sandarśana-lokeśvara is six-armed and he stands upon lunar orbit placed on a lotus (see SUGATI-SANDARSANA)

Pretāsanārpita is another form of Lokeśvara which has six arms and which is also visualized as standing upon a lunar orb placed upon a lotus. He wears his matted hair as a crown (jaṭā-mukuṭa), and sacrificial thread on his body (Vrata-sūtra); he has a pleasant aspect (saumya-mukha, and Is bedecked with all ornaments (sarvālaṅkāra-bhūshita). His six hands carry gestures of boon bestowal (first pair), jewel and

book (second pair), and rosary and triple-staff (third pair).

Sukhāvatī-lokeśvara is popular in Nepāl (see SUKHĀVATĪ- LOKEŚVARA). This form has three faces and six arms. There is also a Lokeśvara, worshipped in Tibet, which has eleven heads and eight arms.

LOCHANĀ

She is regarded as the energy of dhyāni-buddha Vairochana personified (see DHYĀNI-BUDDHA and VAIROCHANA). Belonging to the Tathāgata clan of the dhyāni-buddhas, she is fair-complexioned (śukla-varṇā); she carries discus as her distinguishing form (chakra-chinhā). She represents the earth element (pṛthvī-dhātu-svarūpā) and the power of delusion (moha-raktā). She is imagined as emerging from the mystic syllable 'loṁ', which is also white in colour.

LOHA-JA

The class of icons which are cast in metals is also called pāka-ja (molten). Gold (sauvarṇa), silver (rajata), copper (tāmra) and brass (paittala) are regarded as auspicious metals for making icons, resulting in worldly enjoyment and salvation (bhukti-mukti), nourishment (pushṭi), progeny (putra), longevity and health (āyur-ārogya) for the devotee respectively. Bronze (kāṁsya) also is a good metal, as it brings about happiness (saukhya).

Three metals are inauspicious and must be avoided (varjya); they are called 'ghoulish metals' (piśācha-lohas): iron (āyasa), lead (saisaka) and tin (trapusha). The last two are employed by practitioners of witchcraft and sorcery for accomplishing hatred among friends (vidvesha), removal from ones own place (uchāṭana) and death (māraṇa).

Bhoja' Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtra-dhāra (GOS, II, 1,1) mentions only gold, silver and copper as suitable for metallic images for worship ('dravyam archāsu'). Śukra-nīti-sāra (4,4,72) regards metallic images (dhātūttha) as most permanent and durable (sthira) among the eight varieties of images.

It is usual to have metallic images in temples as chala-beras (see BERA, BIṀBA) or moveable icons, used for bathing (snapana), procession (utsava), supervising food-offering (bali). It is rarely that the main image in the sanctum of a temple is metallic; but household icons are, as a rule, made of metals.

For making lingas, Ajitāgama (4,5) prescribes any one of the following eight metals: gold, silver, bell-metal, copper, brass, iron, tin and lead ('amūni śuddhāni chāshṭau'). But Suprabhedāgama (33) provides information about the consequences following the worship of lingas made in each of them: wealth (gold), empire (silver), progeny (copper), elimination of diseases (lead), longevity (tin), hatred among friends (bell-metal), displacement (brass) and decay (iron). The last three metals are obviously unsuitable.

VAKRA-TUṆḌA-GAṆAPATI

A tāntrik of Gaṇapati recognized in Pūrvāmnāya for propitiation in magical rites like fulfilling whatever is desired (kāmya). He is red-complexioned (or golden coloured) and is seated on red lotus. He is four-armed, carrying in his hands noose, goad and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. He is also invoked in fire.

VAJRA

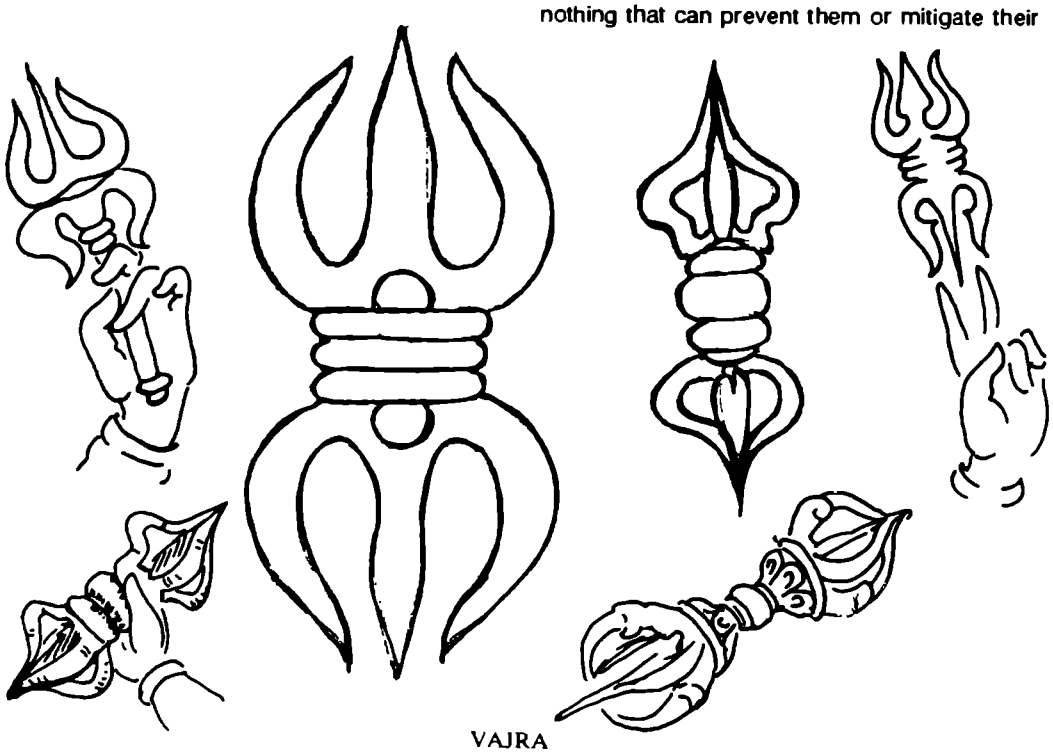
Vajra is an expression of occult, mystic and spiritual significance in Indian thought. this has been so from very ancient times. Even in Rg.Veda (1,32,2) the celestial architect Tvashṭr is said to have fashioned this magical weapon for Indra, the chief of the gods ('tvashṭāsmai vajram svaryam tataksha). Bhāgavata (6,18) describes how the maker of the universe (Viśvakarmā) fashioned this adamantine weapon from the bone of the great sage Dadhīchi, and

presented it to Indra for slaying the demon of draught Vṛtra. As Indra struck the demon with Vajra, sparks from it fell from the sky on mountain-tops, and thus the human beings had their diamonds. Matsya-purāṇa (chap.11) tells us that the heavenly sculptor Tvashṭṛ cut off the edges of the fiery solar orbit, and carved from them the discus for Vishṇu, the trident for Śiva and Vajra for Indra; Vajra had a thousand flaming rays ('sahasra-kiraṇātmaka').

The word Vajra has three meanings : (1) the precious stone, diamond, distinguished by its brilliance (vidyut-prabha), hardness (dṛḍha), beauty (saundarya), sharp edge which can cut anything (tīkshṇa-dhāra), uncuttable character (abhedya) and incorruptibility even by fire (nāgnau vikṛtim vrajet); (2) thunderbolt which is heavenly in origin and disastrous by nature; (aśani, pavi); and (3) lightning (vidyut, śata-dhārā), which both illumines and burns up as it strikes.

The three meanings coalesced in the employment of the word in literature and religious practices. The diamond is not only rejuvenating (rasāyana), capable of making the body strong (deha-dārdhya-kara) and proof against old age, disease and death (vyādhi-vārdhakya-mṛtyu-hṛt) (as detailed in the medical texts like Bhāva-prakāśa) but also competent to remove all sins (sarvāgha-śamana) and eliminate all ailments (sarva-rogāpahāraka) (as claimed also by the same text). It has six corners (shat-koṇa) and many edges (bahu-dhārā). This naturally had mystic overtones, which figured prominently in the conception of Vajra as an invincible weapon.

The visualization of Indra's Vajra was in the form of two transverse bolts which cross each other, very much like the shape of a diamond. Thunderbolt and lightning strike with an uncanny force and mysterious power, and there can be nothing that can prevent them or mitigate their



VAJRA

destructive energy; emerging from the thundering clouds, they recall Indra's fight with Vṛtra; indeed Indra is the lord of the sky and Vṛtra is draught.

Vajra came to represent a mystical and magical weapon which is adamantine and invincible; it destroys all evil spells, charms and machanizations. It is small wonder that the seat on which Gautama the Buddha sat, and the posture that he assumed, beneath the bodhi-tree, with a resolve never to stir until enlightenment dawned upon him, was called 'vajrāsana': it not only accomplished what he had sought for, but drove away the army of Māra (temptations and threats personified) that troubled him until then.

The model of this achievement was responsible for the involvement of Vajra imagery in Mahāyāna Buddhism. A distinct school of Mahāyāna, which was mystical in outlook, relied entirely on this imagery, and it came to be known as Vajra-yāna. The spiritual masters who were also adepts in mystical and magical practices were called Vajrāchāryas. The cult with Vajra as its focal point, which originated in India in the early centuries of the Christian era, was adapted by Tibet. It took deep roots there, and flourished marvellously. It also developed into an elaborate philosophy and meaningful ritual.

Vajra (dorje in Tibetan) was not only a ritual implement but symbolized the highest reality, viz. śūnyatā. Along with the ritual bell (ghaṇṭā), which signified compassion (or karuṇā), it became an indispensable tool for magical attainments as well as spiritual perfection. The yab-yum (see YUGANADDHA) figures are actually iconographic expliçations of the union of Vajra and ghaṇṭā (śūnyatā and karuṇā; or prajñā and upāya).

There are numerous deities conjured up in the Vajrayāna cult, which have major involvement with Vajra; and they have their names prefixed with 'Vajra'. Some of them will be described in the subsequent entries.

Vajra is a weapon (āyudha) found in the hands of several deities, like Indra, his consort Śachī (Indrāṇī), Kārttikeya, Sudarśana, Hanumān and Durgā. In the hands of Vajrayāna deities, it occurs in combinations like vajra-ghantā (vajra marked on bell), vajrāṅkuśa (goad with a vajra mark on it), vajra-padma (lotus with vajra on it) and vajra-kartrī (chopper with vajra as its handle). Frequently found is double vajra (called viśva-vajra, see VIŚVA- VAJRA), which is regarded as especially powerful and holy.

VAJRA-KULA

Vajra-yāna looks upon the five cosmic processes (viz. the skandhas: rūpa, vedanā, samjñā, saṁskāra and vijñāna) as personified in five dhyāni-buddhas (see DHYĀNI-BUDDHA), each of whom was responsible for the emergence of a set of deities (male and female). The dhyāni-buddhas were thus called Kuleśas (leaders of groups or clans), and described as progenitors of Kulas (group, clan, family). Each kula was also distinguished by a symbol.

The five dhyāni-buddhas were Vairochana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amogha-siddhi and Akshobhya. Their clans were named after Tathāgata, Ratna, Padma, Karma and Vajra.

Akshobhya is the leader and progenitor of the Vajra-kula group of deities, who all owe perfect allegiance to him, and who wear on their crowns tiny representations of Akshobhya to announce this. Māmakī is the consort of Akshobhya, and Vajra-pāṇi the bodhi- sattva (spiritual offspring of Akshobhya and Māmakī).

To this group belong important gods like Heruka, Chanda-roshana, Hevajra, Buddha-kapāla, Saṁvara, Mahāmāya, Hayagrīva, Yamāri and Bhūta-ḍāmara, and popular goddesses like Jāṅgulī, Mahāchīna-tārā, Prajñā-pāramitā, Parna-śabarī, Vasudhārā, Mahā-pratyaṅgirā, Eka- jaṭā, and Nairātmyā.

VAJRA-GARBHA

He is a bodhi-sattva, having two forms. In Dharma-dhātu-vāgīśvara-maṇḍala, he has the

VAJRA-GHANTĀ

complexion of a blue lotus (nīlotpala-dala-varna) and is two-armed, carrying vajra in his right hand, and the scripture Daśa-bhūmikā-śāstra in his left hand. In Durgati-pariśodhana-mandala, his complexion is whitish blue (nīla-sita) and his right hand holds a blue lily while his clenched left hand is placed upon his loins (kati-nyasta-vāma- mushti).

VAJRA-GHAṆṬĀ

Regarded as an emanation of the dhyāni-buddha Ratna-sambhava he guards the northern gate of the mansion of the goddess Vajra-tārā (see VAJRA-TĀRĀ). He is fair-complexioned (sveta-varṇa) but ugly-faced (vikṛta-vadana). He carries vajra in one hand (right) and bell (ghaṇṭā) in the other. Vajra symbolizes sūnyatā and bell karunā.

The other gate-guardians of Vajra-tārā are Vajrāṅkuśī (east, dark-complexioned, carrying in one hand vajrāṅkuśa or goad marked with vajra, and blue lotus in the other), Vajra-pāśī (south, yellow, holding vajra and noose in his hands), and Vajra-sphoṭī (west, red, holding a chain marked with Vajra).

VAJRA-CHARCHIKĀ

Belonging to the Vajra clan, this goddess wears on her crown a tiny image of the dhyāni-buddha Akshobhya. She has red- complexion and three eyes. She is emaciated (kṛśāṅgī) and fierce-looking with bared fangs (daṁshṭrotkaṭa-bhairavā). She dances in the ardha-paryaṅka posture upon a dead body (mṛtakāsanasthā). She wears round her neck a garland of human heads, and her ornaments are made of human bones.

She is six-armed, carrying in her three hands on the right side vajra, sword and discus, and in her three hands on the other side skull-cup, magical gem (maṇi) and lotus. Her form is invoked in witchcraft and sorcery.

VAJRA-ḌĀKA

A minor god of Vajrayāna, he has four smiling faces, four arms, and three eyes. he is moon-coloured (chandra-varṇa); and the face on the right side is dark, the one to the left is red, and

the face at the back is yellow. He carries in his hands Vajra, sword, bell and skull-cup.

He is well decorated and is surrounded by a host of ḍākinis (female companions). He is to be visualized as dancing upon a corpse.

VAJRA-ḌĀKINĪ

She is one of the six minor goddesses in the mandala of Hevajra (Saptākshara). She is white in her body-colour, and has a frightening form. Three-eyed, entirely nude and with hair untied and dishevelled, she flaunts on her head a row of gaping skulls. She stands in the ālīḍha posture in the solar orb which is perched upon a corpse. She has four arms; she carries hand-drum in one of the hands, and bell in another; the remaining two hands hold the human skin.

The other goddesses who keep her company are Herukī (blue), Vajra-vārāhī (yellow), Ghora-chaṇḍī (red), Vajra-bhāskarī (green) and Vajra-raudrī (grey).

VAJRA-TĀRA

A very popular goddess in the countries where the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism prevails, she is regarded as an emanation of the dhyāni-buddha Ratna-sambhava (see RATNA-SAMBHAVA).

According to Nishpanna-yogāvalī, she is of golden complexion (suvarṇa-varṇā), four-faced and eight-armed. Her principal face is of course golden yellow (hemābhā), while the face on the right side is white, the face on the left red, and the face behind the principal face is blue. She carries in her eight hands: vajra, noose, arrow, conch (on the right side), yellow lotus (pītot-

VAJRA-DHARA
(bronze from Nepāl)

pala), bow, goad and the gesture of threat (tarjanī) (left).

There is a variant form, which is described as splendid in aspect (bhavya), youthful and pretty (nava-yauvana-lāvaṇyā), with her golden earrings dangling (chalat-kanaka-kuṇḍalā). She is seated in the vajra-paryaṅka posture on double lotus (viśva-padma-samāsīnā) and is surrounded by reddish aura (rakta-prabhā-vibhūshitā). She is eight-armed and holds the same items as in the earlier form.

VAJRA-DHARA

An important deity in Mahāyāna Buddhism, who has religious as well as philosophical implications, Vajra-dhara (the wielder of vajra) is regarded as the manifestation of Ādi-buddha (viz. the supreme and primordial reality, sūnyatā) in a human form. There are several iconic representations of Vajradhara, especially in Tibet.

Nishpanna-yogāvali affirms his presence in the innermost area of the shrine (kūṭāgāragarbhe), or in the central part of a maṇḍala. According to this text, he is white-complexioned with a tinge of red (īshad-raktānuviddha-sita-varṇa), three-faced (the face on the right being blue and the one on the left red) and six-armed. He embraces his spiritual consort (svābhāprajñā) with two of his hands, which also hold vajra and bell; the second pair of hands carry sword and goad; and the third pair skull-cup and noose. His consort, identified with Prajñāpāramitā (see PRAJÑĀ-PĀRAMITĀ), carries a chopper in her right hand and skull- cup in her left. The figure is in a dancing post (nava-nāṭya-rasais-tāṇḍavī), assuming the ardha-paryaṅka attitude.

If this is the yab-yum version (see YUGANADDHA) of the deity, there is also a variety which represents him as solitary, as seated in a vajra-paryanka posture (two legs crossed, with soles of the feet turned upwards) engaged in profound contemplation. He is bedecked with all ornaments and is two-armed. His hands, holding vajra (right) and bell (left) are crossed over the chest. This is known as the vajra-humkāra-mudrā. The vajra symbolizes śūnyatā, the right reality, and the bell (ghantā) prajñā, the absolute wisdom.

VAJRA-DHARMA

A form of Avalokiteśvara (see AVALOKITA), he is visualized as seated upon a peacock which is located in the lunar orb (chandra-maṇḍale mayūropari nishaṇṇā), and as moving about inside a shrine while worship is being conducted (chaityāntastha-mahā-karma-kūṭāgra-vihārī). He is red-complexioned with an admixture of white (sitam raktam), lustrous like the padmarāga gem. His eyes are dilated with glee ('harsheṇutphulla-lochana). He is two-armed, carrying a lotus with a long stalk in his left hand, while his right hand in engaged in opening out the petals of the lotus, in front of his chest ('vikāsayantam cha hṛdi dakshiṇa- pāninā'). His general aspect is erotic (sa-śṛngāra-rasotsava).

VAJRA-DHĀTU

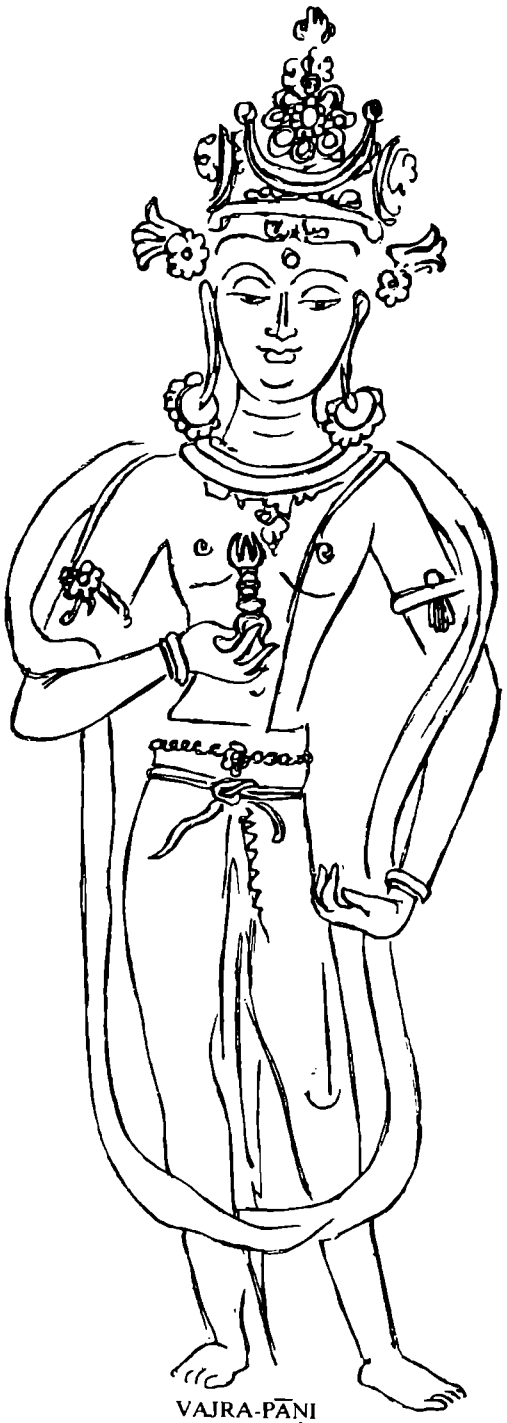
Also called Vajra-dhātu-lokeśvara, he is one of the 108 forms of Avalokiteśvara. He is two-armed, carrying a lotus in his left hand, the right hand assuming the gesture of boon-bestowal. He stands upon a lotus.

VAJRA-DHĀTVĪŚVARĪ

A variety of Mārīchī (see MĀRĪCHĪ), and an emanation of Vairochana (see VAIROCHANA), this deity is among violent goddesses invoked in magical rites. She is frightening in aspect, standing in the ālīdha posture, decorated with serpents as ornaments and clothed in tiger's skin. She puts out her tongue and bares her fangs.

She has six faces, the top one being blue in colour and looking like a pig's snout, and the other five faces being red, blue, green, yellow and white in complexion. She is twelve-armed: the six hands on the right carrying sword, plough-share,

VAJRA-PĀṆI
(after an icon in Cleveland Museum of Art)



VAJRA-PĀṆI
(from Musee Guimet, Paris)

arrow, goad, vajra and axe, and the six hands on the other side carrying noose, skull-cup, aśoka bough, the severed head of Brahmā, bow and trident.

VAJRA-PĀṆI

An emanation of Akshobhya (see AKSHOBHYA), he is also the bodhi- sattva of his family (viz. Vajra-kula). He is popularly worshipped in the Vajrayāna cult. Fair-complexioned, he is two- armed. The right hand holds the vajra, the emblem of the family, and the left hand asumes the gesture of boon-bestowal.

VAJRA-PRASTĀRIṆĪ

A tāntrik goddess, described in texts like Śāradā-tilaka-tantra, she is visualized as seated on a lotus in a red-coloured boat floating on the ocean of blood. Her body-colour is red, and she wears red garments. She wears a crescent moon on her head, the hairs of which are also red. She is three-eyed and eight-armed. She has a charming smile on her face. She carries in her hands bow, arrow, club (musala), goad, noose, garland of flowers (srak), pomegranate fruit (bījapūra), and skull-cup.

VAJRA-RĀGA

A form of Mañjusrī (see MAÑJUŚRĪ), he is also known as Amitābha- mañjuśrī. He is described as bedecked with all ornaments suitable for a young man (aśesha-kumārābharaṇa-rūpa), but he is dressed in monkish garments (pañcha-chīvaraka). He is two-armed and seated, keeping his hands joined in an attitude of meditative absorption, in the hollow between his loins and the crossed legs (samādhi-mudrā-hasta). It is said that the dhyāni-buddha Amitābha dwells on his vajra-tongue ('vajra-jihvopari buddham amitābham').

VAJRA-VĀRAHĪ

This goddess, who is popular in Vajrayāna circles, is regarded as an emanation the dhyāni-buddha Vairochana, and as the chief consort of god Heruka (see HERUKA) ('śrī-heruka-

devasyāgra- mahishī'). Chakra-saṁvara-tantra prescribes the yab-yum representation of Hevajra and Vajra-vārāhī.

She is described as a 'ḍākinī' (see ḌĀKINĪ), two-armed, three- eyed, and nude. Her complexion is that of the pomegranate flower (dāḍima-kusuma-prakhyā, viz.red), and she is decorated with garlands of freshly severed human heads ('sārdra-muṇḍa-mālālaṁkṛta-gātra'). Her hair is let loose (mukta-keśī) and her aspect is one of natural glee ('sahajānanda-svabhāva'); she is shown standing in pratyālīḍha posture, trampling upon Bhairava and Kāla- rātrī. She is also seen as drinking blood that is fresh and flowing ('sravad-rudhiram pibantī'), or blood trickles down from her mouth (sravad-rudhirānanā). She carries vajra in her right hand which assumes the gesture of warning and threat (vajra- tarjanī), and human skull on which the magical spear is placed (karoṭa-khaṭvāṅga) in her left hand.

In another sādhanā, she is nude, two-armed carrying skull-cup filled with blood in her left hand and showing the gesture of warning with her right hand which also holds a chopper marked by vajra ('dushṭa-tarjanī-vajra-kartṛkā'). She is shown as copulating with the god Vajra-varāha, whom she fixes firmly between her thighs ('jaṁghā-dvayena bhagavantam samāguhya anurāganti').

She is described in Pūjā-paddhati as without beginning or end, as having an immaculate body and as the mother of all the Buddhas ('jananī jinānām'). She is also the dancer at the time of dissolution of the world ('kalpānta-nartakī'). Among the twelve names by which she is known are Kolāsyā (boar-faced), Guhyākhyā (hidden), Māyā (mysterious power), and Vajra-vāṇī (the voice of the imperishable).

VAJRA-ŚĀRADĀ

A minor goddess of the Vajrayāna pantheon, who sits on lotus, with crescent moon on her

VAJRA-SATTVA
(bronze from Orissa)

head; alternately she is seated in a lotus posture upon a bhadrāsana. She has two arms, holding lotus in her right hand and book in her left. It may be noted that this form of Śāradā as the goddess of learning was popular in South India, when Mahāyāna Buddhism prevailed in Kāñchīpuram and the neighbouring tracts; it has tāntrik associations in worship.

VAJRA-SARASVATĪ

Another form of the goddess of learning worshipped in the Vajrayāna cults, she is three-faced and six-armed. Her complexion is red, and her hair is tawny, rising up in the shape of flames. She stands in the pratyālīḍha posture upon a red lotus.

Of her three faces, the one to the right is blue and the other to the left white, while the central face is of the body-colour (viz. red). The three hands on the right side carry a lotus on which the scripture Prajñā-pāramitā is placed, sword and chopper; and the three hands on the other side skull (brahma-kapāla), jewel (maṇi) and discus.

VAJRA-SATTVA

He is one of the dhyāni-buddhas (see DHYĀNI-BUDDHA), who also is known as Dharma-dhātu He is visualized as born from the mystic letter 'hūm'. Seated in a lotus posture, he is richly ornamented. The right hand çátṛies vajra, which is held against his chest, and the left hand which is kept on his left thigh holds a bell, on which vajra is surmounted (vajra-ghaṇṭā).

He symbolizes astringent taste (kashaya-rasa), autumnal season (śarad-ṛtu), duration of time between midnight and dawn and the letters ya, ra, la and va. He is of white complexion.

He is widely represented as a lone deity. But it is said that the practitioners of Vajrayāna-tantra secretly worship his yab- yum form (see YUGANADDHA), united with his consort, who holds a chopper in her right hand and skull-cup in her left.

VAJRĀNAṄGA

A tāntrik god of Vajrayāna, he is the Buddhist counterpart of Kāma-deva (see KĀMA-DEVA and MANMATHA). He is invoked in rites meant for enticing celestial maidens (apsarākarshaṇa). He is yellow-complexioned and two-armed. His left hand holds a bow, and his right an arrow. He is surrounded by Rati on the east, Madana-sundarī on the south, Kāma-devī on the west and Madanotsukā on the north. The goddesses are respectively yellow, red, dark blue and whitish red (śukla-rakta) in complexion. They all carry bows and arrows.

His door-keepers are Vasanta and Makara-ketu, and he has an attendant in Aniruddha (the husband of Ushā), who stands in a corner.

VAJRĀSANA

Actually meaning the seat under the bodhi-tree at Gayā on which Gautama the Buddha obtained supreme enlightenment, the expression also refers to the Buddha himself on this occasion. He is represented as seated in the Vajra-paryaṅka posture, with his right hand assuming the gesture of calling the earth as witness to his perfection of virtues (bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā), and his left hand resting on lap (utsaṅga-sthita). He wears the ochre robes of a monk (kashāya-vastrāvaguṇṭhana). He is tranquil in aspect (śānta).

He is visualized as seated upon a double lotus impressed with vajra ('viśva-padma-vajrāvasthitam'), which in turn is placed upon the shoulders of four Māras (personified spirits of worldliness), who are blue, white, red and black in colour.

To his right stands Maitreya, the future Buddha (see MAITREYA), and his left Lokesvara (see LOKEŚVARA).

VAJREŚVARĪ

A tāntrik deity, who is imagined as seated upon a bejewelled lotus, placed inside a boat on the sea of blood. She is dark- complexioned and three-eyed. She has four arms, the right hands holding goad and pomegranate fruit, and the left hands noose and sugar-cane-stalk as bow.

She is a form of Pārvatī, surrounded by gods and sages who praise her.

VAṬA-YAKSHINĪ

A popular folk-deity worshipped as residing in the sacred Vaṭa- tree (Ficus). She is described as wearing red garments and as having two hands, carrying betel-leaves in one hand and areca-nuts in the other (cf.Iconography of Śrī-vidyārṇava-tantra, Dr.S.Srikantha-Sastri, 1944, p.23).

VAṬUKA-BHAIRAVA

See BATUKA-BHAIRAVA. Further details are provided here.

The expression 'Vaṭuka" means a boy, and originally this form of bhairava (see BHAIRAVA) was imagined to be the son of the Mātṛkās (see

MATṚKA). The worship of boys and girls (unmarried) is prescribed on the fourteenth day of the dark half of the moon. Mahā-nirvāṇa-tantra (2,24) mentions Vaṭuka as a bhairava; this form is invoked for protection against misfortunes (āpad-uddharaṇa) (cf. Viśva-sāroddhāra-tantra).

He is identified sometimes with Kaṅkāla-murti form of Śiva (see KAṄKĀLA-MŪRTI, BHIKSHĀṬANA), and with Vīra-bhadra ('makhāntakṛt'). He resides in burning grounds, and moves about as a naked beggar (digaṁbara-bhikshuka), surrounded by all sorts of evil spirits (dushṭa-bhūta-parivṛta). He drinks blood (rakta-pā) and eats flesh (māṁsāśī). He is fierce-looking (karāla) but tranquil in aspect (praśānta). He is invoked in the rites of black magic.

He is described as having three variant forms: Sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa.

(1) In the first, he is a boy who is white-complexioned like pure crystal, his ears are decorated with bright ear-rings; he also wears bejewelled bracelets and anklets. His face is calm (suprasanna) and lumininous (dīpta). He is three-eyed and two-armed; he carries in his hands spear (śūla) and cudgel (daṇḍa). He is invoked for averting untimely death (apamṛtyu), and for achieving longevity, health (āyur-ārogya) and salvation (apavarga).

(2) In the rājasa form, he is resplendant like the rising sun. He is three-eyed, and has a smile on his face (smerāsya). His neck is blue-coloured, and he wears garlands of live coal (raktāṅgāra-sraja). He is four-armed, showing the gesture of protection and boon-bestowal, and holding skull-cup and spear in his upper hands. Crescent moon adorns his head, and his body is draped in garments red in colour like the bandhūka flower. He is invoked for displeiing fear (bhaya-hara), and for accomplishing the three objectives of virtue, pleasures and wealth (dharma, kāma and artha).

(3) The tāmasa form of Vaṭuka-bhairava is huge in size and dark in complexion like the Nīla-mountain. He has tawny hair on his head to which crescent moon is tucked, and is decorated with garlands of severed heads; he is entirely nude (dig-vastra). He has eight arms, carrying in his hands hand-drum, noose, sword, spear, gesture of protection, serpent, bell and skull-cup. He is terrible-looking with tusks (bhīma-daṁshṭra). He is three-eyed, and he wears bejewelled armlets and bracelets. He is invoked for counteracting evil spells (kṛtya) and for averting the play of evil forces and diseases (bhūta-gada).

A dhyāna-śloka (in Vaṭuka-bhairava-kalpa) describes him as riding on a dog (śvānārūḍha). He has matted hair red in colour, and dishevelled (vikīrṇa-lohita-jaṭā); he is red in complexion (rakta-vigraha) and nude. He is four-armed, carrying spear, skull-cup, noose and hand-drum in his hands.

VANA-DURGĀ

One of the well-known forms of Durgā (see DURGĀ), who has many shrines. She is like fresh grass in complexion (nava-dūrvā- sadṛśā) viz.golden, and stands upon the head of the buffalo-demon (mahishottamāṅga-saṁsthā). She is eight-armed, and her hands carry discus, conch, sword, shield, arrows, bow, spear and the gesture of threat (tarjanī).

VANA-MĀLĀ

The garland of wild flowers (of all seasons, 'sarvartu-kusuma') in the centre of which are large-sized kadaṁba-flowers ('madhye sthūla-kadaṁbādhyā') worn by Vishṇu, as one of his distinguishing emblems.

VANA-ŚAṀKARĪ

Another popular goddess, worshipped especially in Mahārāshṭra and Karnāṭaka, she is a form of Durgā, worshiped by Brahmā, Vishṇu and Rudra, according to Padma-purāṇa. Her body resembles the fire of final destruction ('kal-

pāntānala-kāyā'). She is three- eyed, and is decorated with jewels and fine garments; her head is adorned by crescent moon. She is ten-armed; spear, skull-cup, arrow, bow, gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, the weapon known as parigha, conch, discus and mace are to be found in her hands.

VARADA-GAṆAPATI (VARA-GAṆAPATI)

One of the thirty-two well-known forms of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), he is red-complexioned (sindūrabha) and three-eyed; his head has crescent moon on it. He is four-armed, holding in his upper hands noose and goad, while his right hand carries a skull-cup filled with liquour (madhu-mat-kapālam) and his left arm embraces the consort Pushti, seated on his left lap; the left hand is inserted in her private parts ('tad-yonyāhita-pāṇi'). His trunk carries a bowl of treasures ('vasumat-pātrollasat- pushkara'). The consort is two-armed, holding a flag in her right hand ('dhvajāgra-karayā') and red lotus in her left ('padmollasad-dhastayā').

VARADA-TĀRĀ

She is a variant form of Tārā of the green hue (see TĀRA), seated in ardha-paryanka posture. she is accompanied by four deities Aśoka-kānta-marīchī, Mahā-māyā, Eka-jaṭa and Jāṅguli.

VARADA-RĀJA

The form that Vishṇu assumed to protect Gajendra, the elephant from the clutches of the crocodile (see GAJENDRA-MOKSHA). The name is the shortened form of Kari-varada-rāja (the master who bestowed boons on the elephant). this is the deity that is worshipped in Kāñchīpuram (in Tamiḷ-nāḍu).

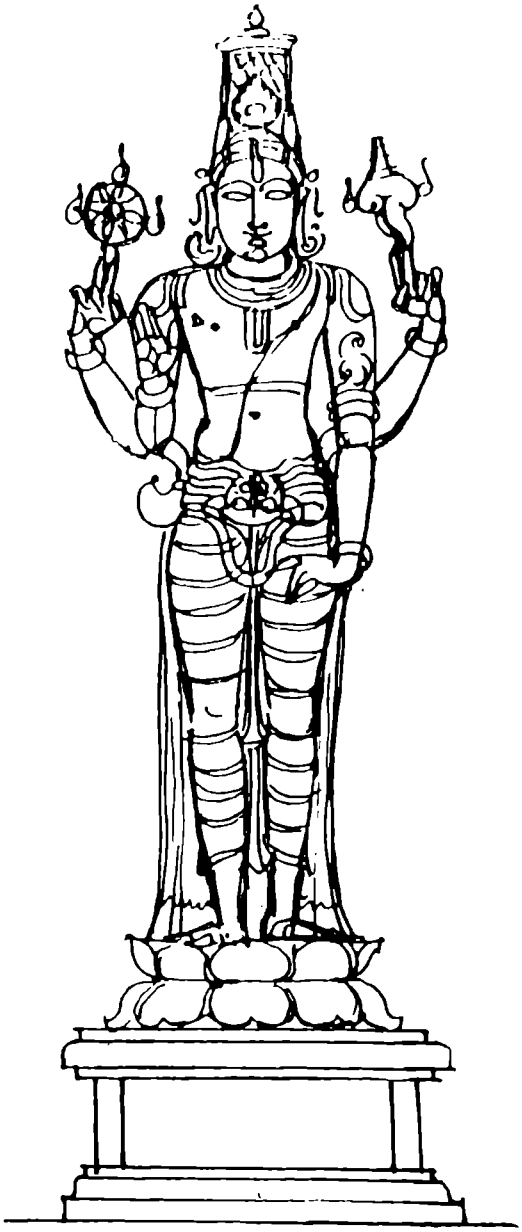
The form is a standing one, in sama-pāda-sthānaka attitude. The right upper hand holds discus, and the left conch. The normal right hand assumes the gesture of protection, while the corresponding left hand is in the katyavalambita posture.

VARADA-RĀJA

When depicted in panels, he is shown perched on the shoulders of Garuḍa, arriving to extricate the elephant, which also is shown.

VARADA-HASTA

Gesture of boon-bestowal assumed by either the right or the left of a deity.

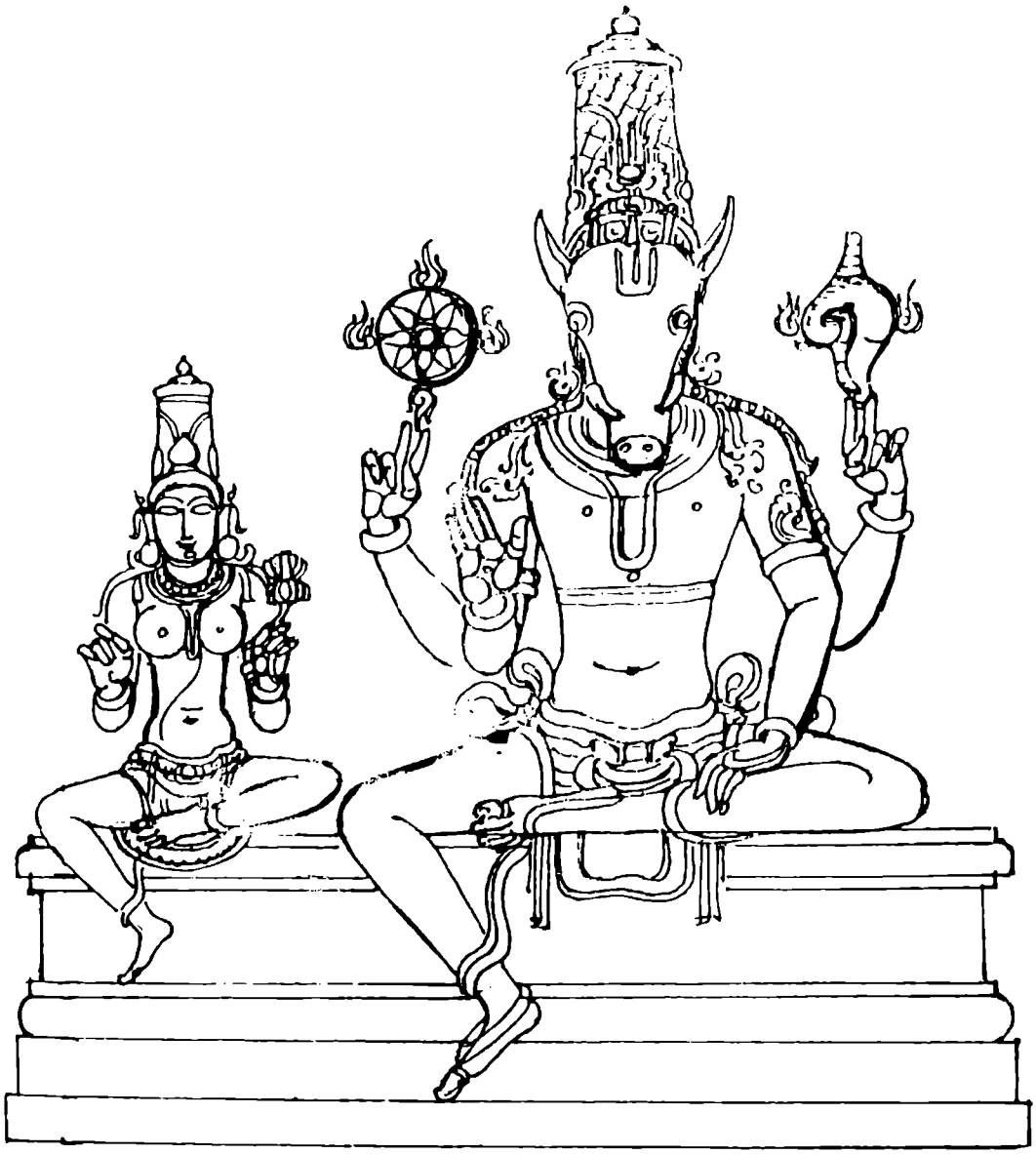


VARADA-RĀJA

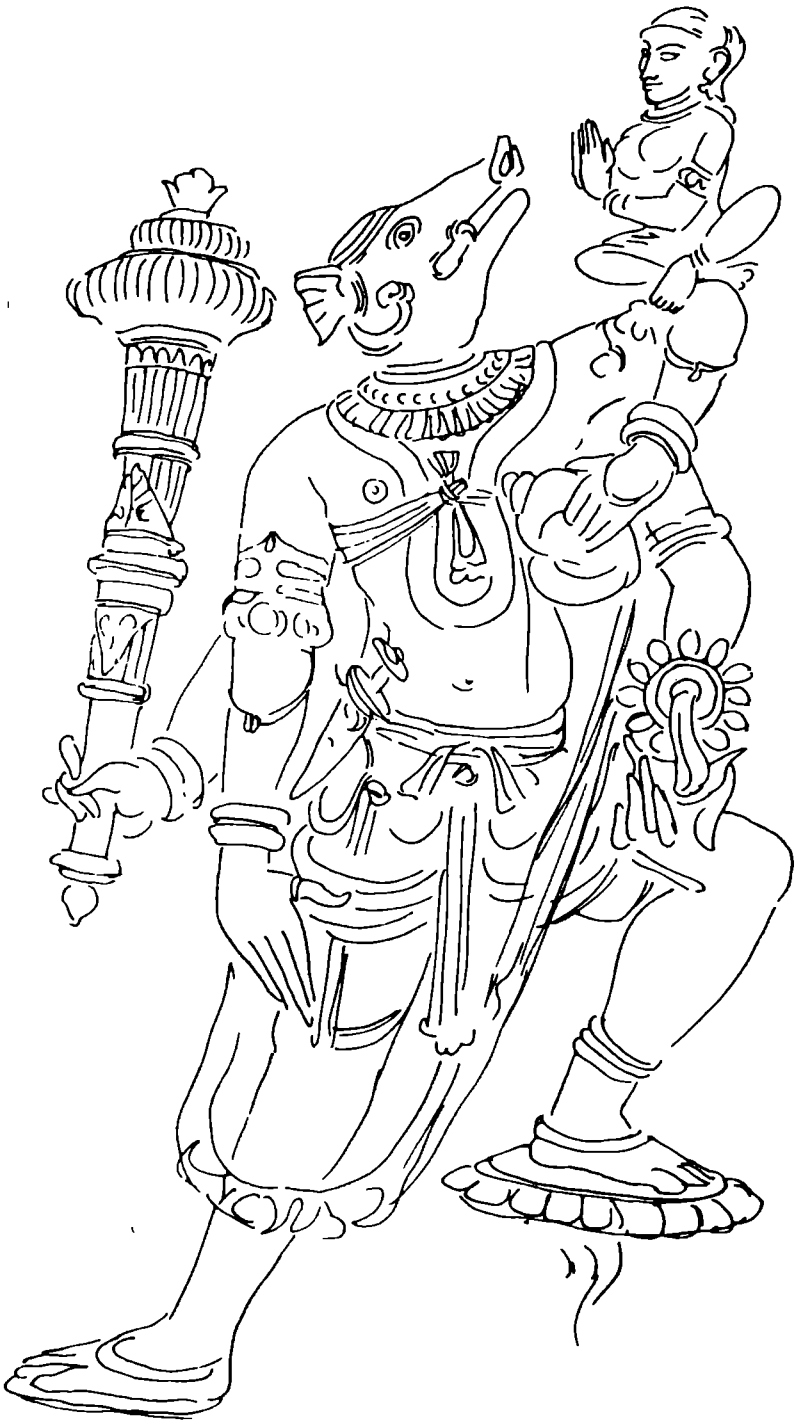
VARADA-HASTA

VARĀHA

An incarnation of Vishṇu (see AVATĀRA, DAŚĀVATĀRA and VISHṆU). Varāha is associated with creation and stabilization of the earth. According to Bhāgavata, the creator at the time of dissolution wondered where the beings would dwell, the earth having been submerged under the deluge of water ('pṛthvī tāvat jalārṇave magnā'). As the creator was brooding over the problem, from his nostrils issued forth a thumb-sized piglet (varāha-pota) into the wide expanse of the sky. In a moment, it grew to the size of mountain ('ākāśasthah kshaṇa-mātre parvatopamah'). It then dived into the bowels of the watery mass and brought out the earth settled on its tusks ('dantāgreṇa pṛthivīm uddhṛtya'), and having settled the earth firmly disappeared ('saṁsthāpya antarhitah'). It was then that Vaivasvata-manu began his career and created all beings.



VARĀHA
(with Lakshmī)



VARĀHA
(Chauhān sculpture in Victoria & Albert Museum, London)

VARĀHA
(Bhū-varāha))

The imagery of the cosmic boar being responsible for the formation of the earth is a very ancient one. Even the early Vedic hymns describe the winds as invincible boars with tusks of iron, call Rudra, the 'boar of the upper regions', and imagine Vrtra the cloud as a veritable boar (cf.Rgveda 1,88; 1,114,5; 1,121,11; 8,66,; 10,67,7; 10,99,6 etc). The Atharva-veda (12,1,48) mentions that the earth was thrown up by the great boar ('varāheṇa pṛthivī saṁvidānā').

VARĀHA
(Chāḷukyan relief)

Taittirīya-saṁhitā contains two legends which involve the incarnation of Prajāpati as boar (varāha). One of them is that the boar hid the wealth of the asuras behind the seven hills, and that Indra split the hills by means of a magical blade of grass (kuśa) and killed the boar before appropriating the wealth (6,2,4,2). Another legend (7,1,5,1) relates to the lifting up of the earth by the hundred-armed and black boar ('uddhṛtāsi varāheṇa kṛshṇena śata-bāhunā'). Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa (14,1,2.11) describes how the fierce boar ('emusha varāha') recovered the earth from the watery mass. Kapishṭhala-kaṭha-saṁhitā (6,7) narrates that at the beginning there was only water ('salilam eva'); and that Prajāpati assumed the form of a boar, entered into the water's depths, and threw up some mud equal to the size of its snout ('tasya yāvan mukham āsīt tāvatīm mṛdam āharat'). The text explains that

VARĀHA
(Pallava relief)

VARĀHA
(with Lakshmī)

this mud it was that became the earth ('saivam abhavat')

Mahābhārata (12,330,24) identifies Varāha with Vṛshā-kapi (the best of dharma), who in Gopatha-brāhmaṇa (2,6,12) has been identified with Sun ('ādityo vai vṛshā-kapih). Hari-vaṁśa and Matsya-purāṇa (6,63,13) mention Varāha (whom the earlier texts had described as a form of Prajāpati) as an incarnation of Vishṇu ('varāhaś chaiva siṁhaś cha trivikrama-gatih prabhuh'); and we have in Hari-vaṁśa (3,34,30-43) an elaborate account of this incarnation.

Agni-purāṇa (chap.5) relates the boar-incarnation of Vishṇu with the killing of the demon Hiraṇyāksha (cf. also Padma-purāṇa, Bhūmi-khaṇḍa, chap.91). Hiraṇyāksha, the brother of Hiraṇya- kaśipu, and son of Kaśyapa-prajāpati, fought with the gods, and rolled the earth like a mat and hid it deep under the ocean. Vishṇu appeared in the form of a boar and recovered the earth.

There are many forms of Varāha (like Ādi-varaha, Yajña-varaha, Bhū-varāha, Lakshmī-varāha, Varāha-narasiṁha and so on), and in all these forms he is shown in a human form with a boar's head ('purushākāram vapushmantam vaktram varāha-vad bhavet'). Hence he is frequently called nṛ-varāha ('man-boar'), like the subsequent incarnation of Nara-siṁha ('man-lion', nṛ-kesarī).

The body-colour is differently given as dark like collyrium ('añjanādri-sama-prabha', Sāttvata-saṁhitā, 12,46), as crystal- coloured ('sphatika-prabha', Pādma-saṁhitā, krlyā-pāda, 17,12), as conch-hued ('śaṁkha-varṇa'), or as

green ('harita'). The body is huge, like a mountain ('udārāṅga', Vishvaksena-saṁhitā 11,45-51; 'mahā-kāya', ibid). While it is usually four-armed, some texts (like Parāśara-saṁhitā, 30,10) provide eight or sixteen arms. According to Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā ('Ādi', 23), the image of Varāha, like that of Narasiṁha, is to be made in the seven-tāla measure ('sapta-tālau praśasyete nṛ-varāha-nṛ-kesarī').

Varāha is shown in the act of lifting up the earth-goddess by one of his arms ('bāhunā-dhārayan dharām') and embracing her with the other ('aparenāślishya').

The snout is held close to the earth-goddess, sniffing her face ('jighran devī-mukham'), or touching her breast or thigh. The left arm embraces her at the shoulders while the right arm holds her thigh firmly ('vāmenāliṅgya hastena tasyās skandham, gṛhītvoru-dṛḍham, tasyā dakshineṇa kareṇa cha', Vishvaksena-saṁhitā, 11,45-47). Alternately, the earth-goddess is lifted up to the level of the snout and placed upon his left elbow ('uddhṛtya nāsikā-tulyam vāma-hastasya kūrpare'); the god looks at her, and she at him; he embraces her with his right arm at the level of her hip ('kaṭi-pradeśam āliṅgya pāṇinā dakshineṇa tu').

The earth-goddess is always shown seated (āsīna) on the left side of Varāha ('vāma-pārśve pratishṭhāpya varāha-vapusho hareh', Pādma-saṁhitā, op.cit.) According to Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā (23), when Varāha carries Lakshmī on his arm, the earth-goddess sits at his feet (pāda-lagnā dharā kāryā yadā lakshmīr-bhuja-sthitā). She is dark in colour (śyāma-varnā) and two-armed: either she joins her hands in the attitude of supplication ('kṛtāñjali- puṭa'), or she holds flowers in her hands ('pushpa-hastā'). She is decorated with crown and other ornaments.

Varāha is shown standing or seated. While seated, his body is straight ('āsane ṛjur-bhavet'); when the earth-goddess accompanies him, she is seated on his left lap. But the body is never to be represented to be straight when standing ('sthānake ṛjvaṅgam naiva kārayet', Pādma-saṁhitā, op.cit). It should be in the ālīḍha posture. It is also prescribed that this incarnation of Vishṇu is not be shown as 'moving about' (yānaka) or 'recumbent' (śayana). Vishṇu-dharmottara (3,79,9-10) mentiones a form of Varāha seated in the meditational posture, like Kapila, holding a ball of rice (piṇḍa) symbolizing earth.

The two normal arms are engaged in carrying the earth goddess and fondling her; the extra hands carry conch (left) and discus (right). Some texts, however, prescribe that three of the hands must hold discus, conch and mace while the fourth one carries the earth-goddess. When the icon has eight arms (as in Parāśara- saṁhitā, 30,10), discus conch, mace, lotus, bow, arrow, sword and Vajra are shown in the hands. The god is seen having his foot on the dragon Śesha ('śeshāhi-vidhṛtam padam', Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā, op.cit.).

Vishṇu-dharmottara (3,79,2-7) suggests that Śesha on whom Varāha places his foot must be represented as four-armed (carrying ploughshare and pestle-like club in the upper hands, the normal hands being joined in the attitude of supplication). His eyes must be wide open because of wonderment (ascharyotphulla-nayano) and he must be looking intently upon the earth goddess (devī- vīkshaṇa-tatparah).

Matsya-purāṇa (260, 28-30) prescribes that the earth-goddess (who is seated on the god's left elbow) also be shown as wide-eyed with wonderment ('vismayotphulla-nayanam'). According to this text, one of the feet of the god must be on the back of the primaeval tortoise that supports the universe and the other on the serpent, viz. Śesha ('kūrma-pṛshṭhe padaś chaikam anyan nagendra-mūrdhani', cf. Devatā-mūrti-prakaraṇa).

The god is decorated with all of the usual ornaments, especially the Śrī-vatsa mark, characteristic of Vishṇu.

Among the several forms of Varāha, five are most frequently represented : (1) Bhū-varāha, shown as standing and having four hands, two of which carry conch and discus and the other two supporting and embracing the earth-goddess; (2) Yajña-varāha, seated on throne with Lakshmī on his right side and the earth- goddess on his left, (3) Pralaya-varāha, seated with his right hand assuming the gesture of protection and the left resting on his thigh, (4) Ādi-varāha, standing with the earth-goddess seated on his left arm, and his foot resting upon the hood of a snake (phaṇā-mūrdhni sthita); and (5) Lakshmī-varāha, seated with the earth-goddess on his left lap and Lakshmī on his right lap; embracing both goddesses with his normal hands, holding in the other two hands mace and discus.

A variant of Ādi-varāha is known as Śveta-varāha, represented as black-complexioned and emerging from the sea with the earth- goddess on his tusks. Or he may have eight arms, carrying in the hands discus, conch, sword, shield, mace, sakti and gesture of boon-bestowal and protection. The earth goddess is settled on his white tusks.

Prapañcha-sāra-sāra-saṅgraha (Vol.II, p.609) mentions another form of Varāha which is multi-coloured and eight-armed. From the feet to the knee, the colour is like molten gold ('jānor-āpādam udyat kanakam iva'); from knee to the navel it is white like snow ('hima-prakhyam ājānu-nābhah'); from the navel to the neck it is red like fire ('kaṇṭhād nābhi vahni-prabham'); and the head is blue ('śiraś chāgalam nīla-varṇam'). The god carries in his hands discus, conch, sword, shield, mace, śakti and gestures of boon-bestowal and protection.

The god here carries the earth goddess on his white and raised tusks ('vasudhollāsi-daṁshṭram'). It may be mentioned that in early sculptures, this is the usual delineation ('sita-daṁshṭrika-dhṛta-bhuvam'). It was only later that the position of the goddess was shifted to the left arm or elbow of the god.

VARĀHA-NARASIṀHA

A conjoint representation of the incarnations of Varāha and Narasiṁha, assumed to kill the demon-brothers Hiraṇyākṣha and Hiraṇya-kaśipu respectively. According to Parāśara-saṁhitā (30,26) this conjoint form has four hands carrying in each of them a discus ('chatuś-chak-

VARĀHA-NARASIṀHA
(of Simhāchalam)

ra-dharam'), and is accompanied by three consorts: Lakshmī, Bhū and Nīlā ('śrī-bhū-nīlādhipam'). The text, however, does not provide iconographical prescriptions about how the two forms (of Varāha and Narasiṁha) are to be conjoined.

The presiding deity of the well-known place of pilgrimage in Āndhra Pradesh, Siṁhāchalam, is known as Varāha-narasiṁha. The sanctum houses a natural rock the top portion of which resembles the head of a boar, and the rest of the boulder suggests a human torso with two arms. The deity is covered over completely with a thick coat of sandal-paste (chandana) all round the year; it is removed only for a day on akshaya-tritīya (viz. third day of the bright half of the mouth Vaiśākha), when the original form of the deity becomes visible.

According to Parāśara-saṁhitā (30,21) Varāha-narasiṁha has four hands, carrying in all of them discus (chatuśchakra-dhara), and he is invoked for victory and kingdom (rājya-jaya-prada).

VARĀHA-MUKHĪ

One of the four attendant deities of Marīchi-pichuvā, eight-armed goddess of the Vajrayāna pantheon (the others being Vārtālī, Vadālī and Varālī). Varāha-mukhī is ruddy coloured and boar-faced. She has four arms, carrying in her hands on the right side vajra and arrow, and in her hands on the other side aśoka bough and bow.

Vārtālī is red-coloured, wearing red garments and decorated with various ornaments. She is four-armed, carrying noose and aśoka bough (in her left hands) and goad marked with vajra and needle (in her right hands). She has the face of a son.

Vadālī is yellow-complexioned and four-armed, with noose and vajra (in her left hands) and aśoka bough and needle (in her right hands).

Varālī also is yellow-complexioned and four-armed. She holds in her left hands noose and aśoka bough, and in her right hands vajra and needle.

VARUṆA

A god of Vedic origin, he has been praised as the guardian of the cosmic law and order (ṛta), as one who encompasses the entire universe (as the etymological meaning of the word Varuṇa means 'vṛṇoti sarvam'), as the god who makes the sun his instrument for measuring out the three realms (earth, mid-region and heavens) and as the lord of the waters. The Vedic hymns describe him as the energizer and mover of all things.

In Ṛgveda he is described as having four faces, with Agni as one of them; the sun is his eyes; he has a thousand eyes . He wears a golden mantle and his breath is the wind (cf. Ṛg veda, 7,88,2; 7,34,10 and 5,48,5).

More particularly he is associated with the principle of truth, justice, law and order of the universe, and he sits in judgement over the actions of all the beings. His ordinances, which are inscrutable, are expressions of his power known as māyā. He regulates the days (as Mitra) and nights (as Varuṇa). He judges the actions of human beings (in the light of ṛta) and punishes the wicked. He binds them up for their sinful deeds and this is symbolized by the noose (pāśa) which is his characteristic weapon and by which the transgressions of ṛta are punished.

By his māyā, he makes the rivers flow in their courses, the seas ebb, the sun shine and the rains fall. He keeps the heavens far removed from the earth, and prevents the demons of watery darkness (viz.sea-monsters) from attacking the denizens of the earth. He keeps the oceans and clouds in their places.

VARUṆA

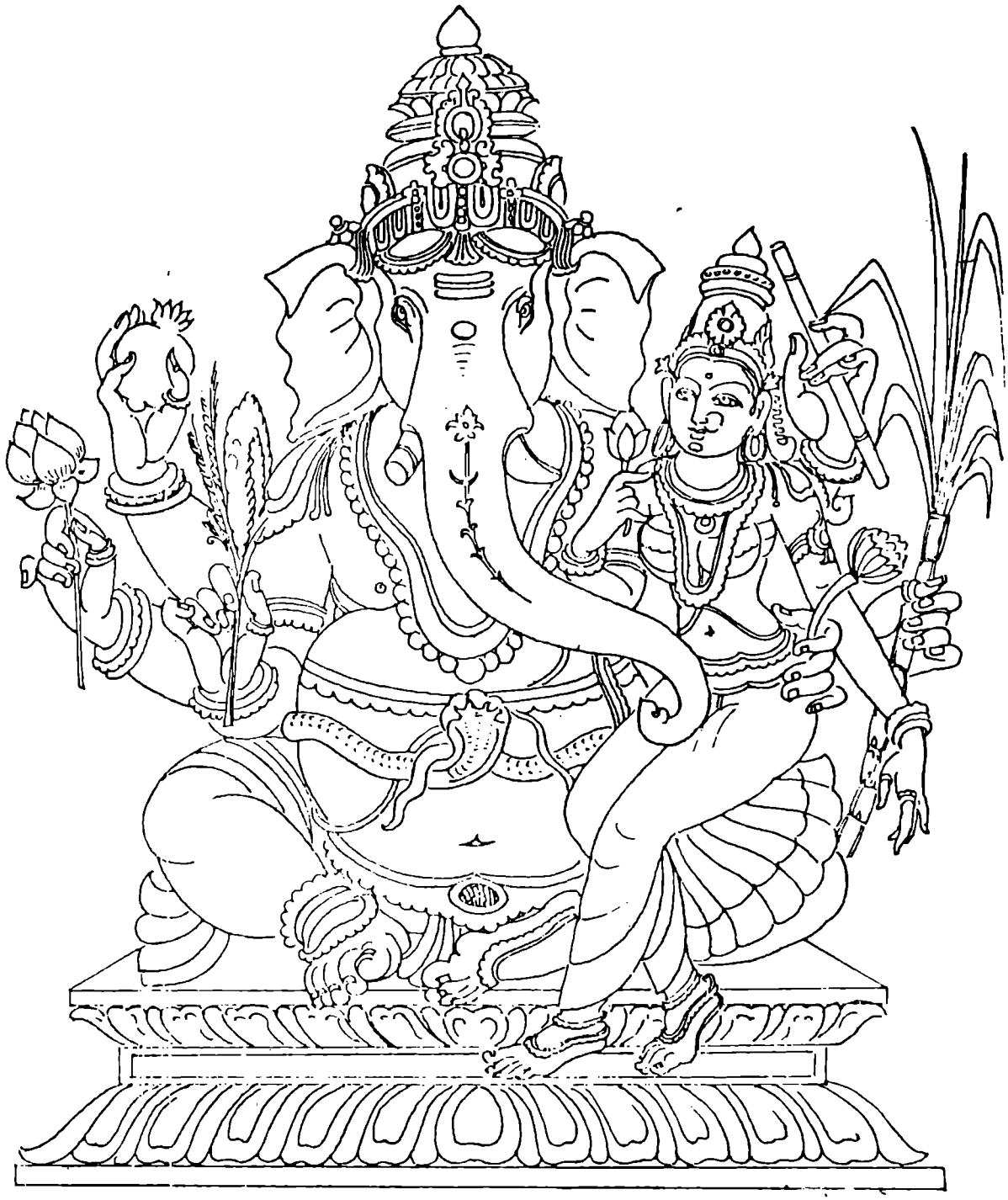
Varuṇa is described as the son of Kāśyapa and Aditi (hence one of the twelve ādityas), and as having many wives one of whom was Charshaṇī, from whom he begat Bhṛgu and Vālmīki. Gaurī was another; and from Varuṇānī were born Vasishṭha, Susheṇa and Vāruṇī; Jyeshṭhā, yet another wife, was the mother of Surā (personified liquor), Sura-nandinī, Bala and Adharmaka. Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā (187) prescribes that Ṛddhi (prosperity) must be shown on his left and Pushkara (nourishment) his son on his right. Fish is said to be Varuṇa's emblem.

VARUṆA
(after an icon in Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Banaras)

He is sometimes identified with Pradyumna, and his wife Gaurī with Ratī. He is believed to dwell in his golden palace with a thousand pillars and a thousand doors, which is situated upon the mountain Pushpa-giri under the oceans. According to Devī- bhāgavata (8th skandha), his capital is known as Śraddhāvatī. He moves about on a 'makara' (see MAKARA), the mythical horned crocodile with the head and legs of an antelope. His retinue consists of rivers, snakes and demons.

His Vedic celebrity was, however, lost in course of time, and he survived only as the guardian of the western direction (see DIKPĀLA). In this role, he was visualized as fair-complexioned ('hima-kundendu-sannibha', like snow, moon or kunda flower) and two or four-armed. When two-armed, he carries the snake-noose (nāga-pāśa) in his right hand and water-pot (salila) in the other hand. When represented as four-armed (as for instance in Rūpa-maṇḍana) he carries noose, lotus, sacred water-pot and gesture of protection in his hands. He is tranquil in aspect (saumya, prasanna-vadana), and he possesses all the marks of a great being (sarva-lakshaṇa).

He rides upon a celestial swan (rāja-haṁsa), or according to Vishṇu-dharmottara (3,52) upon a chariot drawn by seven swans representing the seven seas. More frequently, however, makara is shown as his mount. And he is flanked by the river-goddesses, Gaṅgā and Yamunā, as attendant-deities. Gaṅgā stands upon the mythical crocodile (makara), and Yamunā upon the mythical tortoise (kūrma); both the goddesses are two-armed, carrying in one of their hands a fly-whisk (chāmara).



VALLABHA-GAṆAPATI

According to Śāradā-tilaka-tantra, Varuṇa is white-complexioned, seated upon a lotus and wearing pearl necklace. He has four hands, carrying in them noose, goad, and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal.

The yaksha of the twentieth tīrthaṅkara, Munisuvrata, of the Jaina pantheon, Varuna has eight heads (ashṭānana) with three eyes in each head, and is white in complexion. He has a large body (mahākāya), and his head is decorated with matted hair done up as a crown. He rides upon a bull, and has four arms, carrying in his hands citrus fruit (mātuluṅga), sword, shield and gesture of boon-bestowal in the Digambara version. Hemachandra, however, makes him four-faced (chaturmukha) and eight-armed, carrying in his hands, citrus fruit, mace, arrow, śakti, mangoose, rooosary, bow and noose.

VARDHAMĀNA-LIṄGA

A variety of lingas, where the heights of the three portions of the shaft (viz. Brahma-bhāga, Vishṇu-bhāga and Rudra-bhāga) are progressively increasing (see LIṄGA for details).

VALLABHA-GAṆAPATI

One of the thirty-two well-known forms of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), Vallabha-ganapati is a variety of Śakti-ganapatis. He is distinguished by his consort, Vallabhā by name, who sits on his left lap embracing him; she is well decorated and holds in her left hand red lotus ('vallabhayā cha padma-karayā ślishṭojjvalad-bhūshayā'). This form of Gaṇapati is widely worshipped because it is believed to bestow all that one wants ('viśishṭārthadah'). He is also described as creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe ('viśvotpatti-vināśa-saṁthiti-karah').

He is ten-armed, carrying in his hands pomegranate (bījapūra), mace, sugar-cane stalk as bow (ikshu-kārmuka), discus, red lotus, noose, blue lotus (utpala), paddy-stalks (vrīhyagra), tusk and pot of jewels (ratna-kalaśa).

VALLĪ

One of the two consorts of Subrahmaṇya (see KĀRTIKEYA) (the other one being Devasenā, personified army of the gods, which he directed, hence Devasenāpati), she is said to have been born under a creeper (hence her name Sundara-vallī) and to have been adopted by a hunter chieftain Naṁbi-rāja by name. She was in fact, like Devasenā, a daughter of Vishṇu, and it is therefore that Subrahmaṇya or Kumāra (viz. Kārtikeya) is closely associated with Vishṇu in legends and shrines.

Subrahmaṇya clandestinely courted and married her, and brought her to the mountains of Tiruttani (one of the six famous centres of Murugan worship in Tamiḷ Nāḍu, about seventy miles north-west of Madras), where he settled down with her.

Devasenā (also called Amṛta-vallī) was adopted by Indra and was given in marriage to Subrahmaṇya at Tirupparan-kuṁram (another of the six centres associated with Murugan, very near Madurai in Tamiḷ-Nāḍu).

Vallī is visualized as dark in complexion (śyāmā), with her face, however, resembling coral (pravāla-vadanā), and two-armed. She carries a red lotus in her right hand, the left arm left gracefully dangling. She is decorated with excellent ornaments; her ear-rings are bejewelled and resplendent ('maṇi-lasat-tāṭaṅka-karṇojjvalā'). She is to be represented as a forest-maid (vanyā), brought up by the hunter chief (vyādha-nṛpānvaya). She wears round her neck a garland of guñjā seeds. On her head is the crown of the kirīṭa-type ('kirīṭa-makuta'). Her breasts are large and covered by bodice ('tuṅga-stanī-kañchukā').

She is to be shown on the left side of Subrahmaṇya.

VALLĪ-KALYĀṆA-SUNDARA

One of the ten major forms of Subrahmaṇya (see KĀRTIKEYA), this relates to his acquisition

of Vallī (see above) as his consort, and resembles in most details the Vaivāhika or Kalyāṇa-sundara form of Siva (see KALYĀṆA-SUNDARA and LĪLĀ-MŪRTI).

Subrahmaṇya is here four-armed. His right hand (normal) assumes the gesture of protection and the left (normal) holds the hip (śroṇī-bandha). The upper hands carry the rosary (right) and the small sacred water-pot (left). His complexion is rosy like the morning sun (aruṇābha).

Vishṇu is shown as the parent of the bride Vallī, giving her in marriage to Subrahmaṇya; and Brahmā officiates as the priest, seated in front of the couple to their left tending the sacred fire. Vishnu has his usual emblems conch and discus in his two upper hands and carries the water pot in his normal hands (jala- kalaśa-dhṛta vishnuṇā). Brahmā is shown holding the sacrificial ladle ('vāme nishaṇṇa-sruva-yuta-vidhinā juhvatā')

VAŚYA-TĀRĀ

Also called Ārya-tārā, she is similar to Khadiravaṇī-tārā (see TĀRĀ and KHDIRA-VAṆI-TĀRĀ) in form. She is green-complexioned and two-armed, carrying blue lotus in her left hand, the right hand assuming the gesture of protection. A tiny icon of Amogha-siddhi (see AMOGHA-SIDDHI) adorns her crest, indicating her lineage. She sits upon a throne (bhadrāsana).

VAŚYA-MUKHĪ

One of the minor forms of the Mother-goddess, she is red-complexioned like hibiscus (jabā-rakta) and two-armed. She is shown in the act of shooting the flowery dart from the drawn sugar-cane bow ('sandhāya sumano-bāṇam karshatīm aikshavam dhanuh'). She is described as the conquerer of the worlds ('jagajjaitrī').

VASU

Eight Vasus are recognized. According to Vimānārchanā-kalpa (paṭala 20), they are to be installed and worshipped in the fifth enclosure of the Vishṇu temple. They are Dhara, Dhruva, Soma, Apāna, Anala, Anila, Pratyūsha and Prabhāsa. They are all of them of the complexion of lotus (padmābha), clothed in flowers (pushpa-vastra-dhara), and two-armed carrying red-lotuses (padma- hastāh). They are imagined as riding hares and having them as their standards (śaśa-dhvaja-vāhanāh).

VASUDHĀRĀ

The consort of Jaṁbhala (see JAṀBHALA) she is represented in many forms. In the two-armed form, she is a sixteen-year old damsel ('dvir-ashṭa-varshākṛti'), with a golden complexion (kanaka- varṇā). She carries a sheaf of grain-stalks (dhānya-mañjarī) in her left hand, the right hand assuming the gesture of boon-bestowal. The dhyāni-buddha Akshobhya adorns her crest. (see AKSHOBHYA)

The six-armed form is visualized as seated upon an auspicious jar (bhadra-ghaṭopari-sthitā), in the centre of the lunar orb (chandra-maṇḍala-madhyasthā). She is yellow-complexioned, and has a bejewelled crown on her head; the crown also shows Vajradhara (see VAJRA-DHARA) in a tiny icon. Her normal right hand assumes the gesture of boon-bestowal, an other hand on the right side assumes the gesture of prostrating the Buddha (saṁbuddha-praṇāma), and the third hand on the same side carries a bunch of jewels (ratna-mañjarī). The three hands on the other side carry a sacred water-pot (bhadra-ghaṭa), the scripture, Prajñā-pāramitā (prajñā-pustaka) and a sheaf of grains (dhānya-mañjari).

VAHNI-VĀSINĪ

A minor form of Tripurā (see TRIPURĀ) and a nityā-goddess, she has a body whose colour is that of burnished gold (taptodyat-kāñchanābha). She is three-eyed and eight-armed. She wears a bejewelled crown on her head (maṇi-maya-makuṭa).

Her eight hands display red lotus, conch, sugar-cane bow, moon (hima-kiraṇa) (right side), kalhāra flower, golden horn (hema-śṛṅga), flowery dart and citrus fruit (mātuluṅga).

VĀGĪŚVARA

One of the thirty-eight incarnations (prādurbhavas) of Vishṇu, enumerated in Pañcharātra texts (like Sāttvata-saṁhitā, 9, 77-84), it is identified with the horse-headed god of learning, Hayagrīva. But this form personifies the sacrificial lore and the numerous hands (unspecified) of the deity carry implements and utensils of sacrifice like ladles (sruk, sruva), staff (danda), water-vessel (kamaṇḍalu) and platter of offering (chamasa- bhājana); also conch, rosary and book.

Vāgīśvara is also a Buddhist god, worshipped extensively in Nepāl and also in Tibet. He is visualized in the sādhanās as regal in his bearing, bedecked with all ornaments (kumāra, sarvābharaṇa- bhūshita), and as having a reddish complexion (kuṁkumāruṇa). He is two-armed; he holds a blue lotus in his left hand ('vāmenotpalam'), while his right hand is relaxed and does not hold anything ('dakshiṇena līlayā sthitam'). He is seated in the ardha- paryaṅka posture upon a lion-throne (simhāsanastha). The icons of all the five dhyāni-buddhas (see DHYĀNI-BUDDHA) adorn his crest.

VĀGĪŚVARĪ

A form of the goddess Tripurā (see TRIPURĀ), she is invoked especially for proficiency in learning. She has some variant forms like Dhenu-vāgīśvarī and Saubhāgya-vāgīśvarī. She is a tāntrik deity, and she is described in texts like Śāradā-tilaka and Śrī-Vidyārṇava-tantra. She is also a 'mañcha-devatā', along with deities like Loka-dhātrī, Śubhaṅkarī, Svasti-devī, Bhadra-kālī, Māyā and Gaurī. (cf. Iconography of Śrī-vidyārṇava-tantra, p.11).

Pāñcharātra texts describe Vāgīśvarī as white-complexioned, three-eyed, four-armed, seated upon a white lotus (śveta- padmāsanārūḍhā), and wearing her matted hair in the shape of a crown. Bejewelled ear-rings adorn her ears; and she wears the sacrifical chord (yajñopavītinī). In her hands are seen staff (daṇḍa), and rosary (on the right side), book and small water-pot (on the left side). Her necklaces are made of pearls ('hāra-muktābharaṇa-bhūshitā').

Similar is Saubhāgya-vāgīśvarī, but she has crescent moon adorning her head ('taruṇa-śakalam indoh bibhratī') and she has only two hands, carrying in them quill and book ('nija-kara-kamalodyal-lekhanī-pustaka-śrīh). (cf. Śāradā-tilaka-tantra).

Dhenu-vāgīśvarī is described in Āśvalāyana-kalpa and identified with Śabda-brahmā (viz. the ultimate reality as sound). Crystal- white in body-colour, she wears white garments and garlands. She is three-eyed and four-armed. Her ornaments are made of gold and jewels. She illumines the three worlds ('dyotayantīm jagat-trayam'). Her face is like full-moon and on her head is crescent-moon. Her matted hair is done up as a crown. Her hands carry rosary, goad, noose and book.

As a 'mañcha-goddess', she is white in complexion and two of her four hands carry lotuses, and the other hands looking-glass (ādarśa) and gesture of boon-bestowal (cf. Śrī-vidyārṇava-tantra).

VĀGDEVĪ

Goddess of speech (see SARASVATĪ)

VĀDIRĀṬ

A form of Mañjuśrī (see MAÑJUŚRĪ) of the Mahāyāna pantheon, he is visualized as a sixteen-year old handsome youth, seated in the ardha-paryanka posture upon a mythical tiger (śārdūla-pṛshṭha- sthitam). He is two-armed, and

the hands are joined in the attitude of scriptural exposition (vyākhyā-vyākula-pāṇi-padma-yugalam'). His height is particularly mentioned in a sādhanā as medium, neither too tall nor too short ('dīrgham nāpi na chāpi kharvam').

Dharma-kosha-saṁgraha describes a form of Vādirāṭ with three faces and eight hands. The main face is of the body-colour, viz. reddish (kuṁkuma). The other faces are white and yellow. The four hands on the right side carry bowl filled with gems (ratna-pūrṇa-pātra), sword, arrow and vajra; and the four hands on the other side the gesture of unification (bindu-mudrā, or chin-mudrā), axe, bow and trident (or rosary). He is regarded as an incarnation of Vairochana (see VAIROCHANA)

VĀDYA

Musical instruments like lute (vīṇā), hand-drum (damaru), flute (veṇu), conch (śaṁkha) and cymbals (tāla) are found in the hands of several icons of deities: hand-drum in Śiva's forms, conch in Vishṇu icons, flute in the hands of Kṛshṇa and Vīṇā in the hands of Sarasvatī, Dakshiṇā-mūrti and Vīrabhadra.

VĀMADEVA

One of the eight aspects of Śiva (see MŪRTYASHṬAKA), Vāmadeva is said to symbolize the water element and represent moon; Rohiṇī is his śakti, and Budha his offspring. Vāmadeva is more importantly one of the five primordial and creative aspects (viz. pañcha- brahmā), which are emanations from the undifferentiated and unmanifest absolute (nishkala-śiva). Vāmadeva stands for water element (even as Sadyojāta for earth, Aghora for fire, Tatpurusha for air and Īśāna for ākāśa), and for ego (ahaṁkāra) (even as Sadyojāta for manas, Aghora for buddhi, Tatpurusha for māyā and Īśāna for the soul).

He is the aspect, according to Vishṇu-dharmottara, that presides over South (even as Sadyojāta over east, Aghora over north, Tatpurusha over west and Īśāna upwards), or according to Kāraṇāgama over north (Sadyojāta over west, Aghora over south, Tatpurusha over east and Īśāna over the upper direction).

Two of the ten hands of Mahādeva (see MAHĀDEVA) representing Vāmadeva carry club and citrus-fruit (māṭuluṅga), which symbolize, according to Vishṇu-dharmottara (3, 47, 1-18), death and the ultimate elements of which the universe is made. Vāmadeva is also called here Bhairava, having a frightening appearance (Sadyojāta being called Mahādeva, Aghora Umā-vaktra, Tatpurusha Nandi-vaktra and Īśāna Sadāśiva).

Rūpa-maṇḍana and Śrī-tattva-nidhi give the complexion of Vāmadeva as red, while Vishṇudharmottara makes it black; Kāraṇāgama likens the complexion to the filament of red lotus ('saroja-kiṁjalka- samāna-varṇa'). Rūpa-maṇḍana further says that the eyes, clothes, garlands, sacrificial chord, sandal paste and ear-ornaments of Vāmadeva are to be red in colour. According to this text, he is three-eyed, wearing a crown of matted hair to which crescent moon is stuck and decorated with all ornaments. He carries in his two hands sword and shield.

Śrī-tattva-nidhi provides the gestures of protection and boon- bestowal for the two normal hands, and rosary and hammer (tanka) for the upper hands. The same details are to be found in Kāraṇāgama, which also mentions that Vāmadeva is four-faced ('chāru- chatur-mukhaḥ').

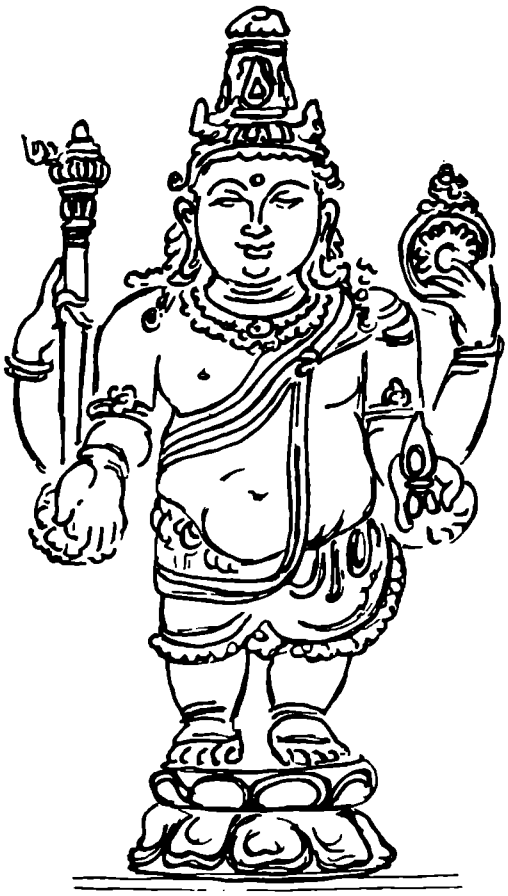
VĀMANA

Like Varāha (see VARĀHA), Vāmana also is an ancient imagery found in the earliest passages of Ṛg-veda (1, 22, 7; 1, 155, 6; 6, 49, 13; 7, 100, 4). The background legend begins with the conflict between devas and asuras for mastery over the earth. The contending parties agreed to arrive at a compromise, and to share

VĀMANA AND TRIVIKRAMA

the earth. The devas had Vishṇu in the form of sacrifice (yajña), and the asuras agreed to let the devas have only as much of the earth as Vishṇu lay upon but no more. Vishṇu who had arrived as a dwarf (Vāmana) was laid by the devas in all the three directions, encompassing the entire earth. The asuras were thus deprived of their share of the earth (cf. Śataptha-brāhmaṇa, 1, 1, 5; Taittirīya-saṁhitā, 2, 1, 3; Taittirīya-brāhmaṇa, 1, 6, 1).

The epic Rāmāyaṇa (1, 27, 12-14) and the Purāṇas (Vāmana-, 23, 31; Matsya-, 161-167; Pādma- 266-67; Agni, 5 etc) narrate the story of Bali and Vāmana that is well-known to us. The story given in Padmottara-khaṇḍa (chap. 47 ff) is as follows: Bali, the vituous and mighty asura was the son of Virochana and grandson of Prahlāda (see NARASIṀHA). He was a great devotee of Vishṇu, truthful, restrained and wise. By the power of his goodness, he conquered all the worlds, and the gods including Indra had to serve him as attenders. Indra's father Kāśyapa with his wife Aditi performed severe and long penance, and Vishṇu promised to restore for Indra his original glory.



VĀMANA

He was born as a son to Aditi, and even as a young boy he went to Bali, who was engaged in a sacrifice. He begged Bali to grant him land sufficient to establish his sacrificial fire-pit ('agni-kuṇḍasya pṛthivīṁ dehi'), which might just be covered by three strides ('mama tri-vikramam padam mahīṁ'). But when Bali agreed to donate this land, the little boy assumed a gigantic form (as Trivikrama, see TRIVIKRAMA) and covered the entire earth with his first stride.

Then Vishṇu revealed his identity to Bali, who was overjoyed. The second stride encompassed the heavens till the Brahma-loka. The third step was placed upon Bali's head, on his own request, and Bali was sent to the excellent nether-world known as Rasātala, where he was allowed to rule ('rasātalam śubham lokam pradadau').

Vāmana is prescribed to be represented as a short-statured (kubjākāra) student of the Vedic lore (vaṭuka), two-armed and with the usual features: umbrella (chhatra), mendicant's staff (daṇḍa), water-pot (sajalam kamaṇḍalum), sacrificial belt (mauñja), sacred chord (upavīta), antelope's hide as upper cloth (ajinottaram) (cf. Bhāgavata, 8, 18, 13-24). While Bhāgavata (op.cit) suggests matted hair on his head (jatila), Devatā-mūrti-prakaraṇa (5,71) prescribes a small tuft of hair customary for students ('śikhayā yuktah'). Vaikhanasāgama (paṭala 58) adds that he must wear a narrow strip of cloth to cover his private parts (kaupīna), that he must wear on his fingers the ritual ring of grass-reeds

(pavitra-pāṇinam), and that he must carry a book.

Vishṇu-dharmottara (3, 85, 54) would have Vāmana's body stockily built ('pīna-gātrah') (according to a Pāñcharātra text, like a baby elephant, 'bāla-kuñjara-samkāśam' and with broad shoulders, 'bṛhat-skandham') and crooked at the joints ('saṅkaṭair gātra-parvabhih'). It is usual for Vāmana to be represented as two- armed (as most texts prescribe), but Agni-purāṇa (49, 5) allows four hands also. He carries in the latter case discus, lotus and mace in his three hands, the fourth being shown 'as receiving the gift' from Bali or carrying water-pot (kamaṇḍalu). Kālikā-purāṇa (83, 16-21) substitutes lotus with conch. According to this text, mace is in the upper right hand, discus in the upper left hand, water-pot in the normal right hand and conch in the corresponding left hand.

Vaikhānasāgama (op.cit.) describes a form of Vāmana with eight hands ('devam chatur-bāhum ashṭa-bhujam vā'): the hands on the right side carry conch, discus, sword and śakti, while the hands on the other side shield, bow (śārṅga), ploughshare and pestle-like club (hala-musala-dhara). This, however, accords more with the Trivikrama aspect than with that of Vāmana. More usually Vāmana is only two-armed, and occasionally four-armed.

It is also prescribed that Vāmana's right hand (normal) must be stretched forward with the palm upwards (in the attitude of asking for a gift) while the corresponding left hand is left free dangling down, or shown as carrying an umbrella.

Mārkaṇḍeya-samhitā (chap.8) prescribes that the right hand of Vāmana must be stretched out and the right leg slightly bent in an attitude of begging ('īshat-kuñchita-savyāṅghrim yāchamānam vasundharām').

Vāmana's complexion, according to Kālikā-purāṇa (op.cit), is moon-like and his garments yellow-coloured. The same text gives other details like that he must be accompanied by Lakshmī on his right side and Sarasvatī on his left, that he must be shown as having śrī-vatsa mark and kaustubha jewel on his chest, and vana-mālā hanging from his neck; and that a quiver of arrows must be shown to his left and Nandaka-sword to his right.

There are many sculptural representations of Vāmana along with the monarch Bali shown in the act of pouring water on the stretched palm of the god to signify promise (to give the gift that is sought for). Bali is also shown as accompanied by his queen Vindhyāvalī and his priest Uśanā (Śukrāchārya). Both Vāmana and Bali in such representations are standing, and Vāmana's profile is generally shown.

It is not uncommon to show Vāmana along with his transformation as Trivikrama (see TRIVIKRAMA). The legend says that as soon as the water of promise from Bali's hand fell on Vāmana's hand, Vāmana became Trivikrama ('toye tu patite haste vamano-bhūd-avāmanah').

Several varieties of Vāmana are mentioned in texts, as for instance Dadhi-Vāmana (Meru-tantra 26, 341-342 and Śāradā-tilaka, 15, 56-60). It appears to be a tāntrik form, derived from the conception of 'dadhi' (curds) as the creative principle of life. In Meru-tantra Vāmana is visualized as seated upon a red lotus under the parasol of golden rays, lustrous like full moon, ('jvalan-mayūkha-kanakacchhatrādhah puṇḍarīka-gam') holding in his right hand a golden bowl filled with cooked rice mixed with curds ('dadhyannam vāma-hastena svarṇasya chashakam dadhat'); Lakshmī and the earth-goddess embrace him from the sides ('śrī-bhumyāślishṭa-pārsvakam').

Mantra-devatā-prakāśikā (cited in Prapañcha-sāra-sāra-saṅgraha, Tanjore, Vol II. paṭala 31, p. 904) which also mentions Dadhi-vāmana, makes him reside in the lunar orb (chandra-samstha) and hold in his two hands a golden jar filled with pure water ('kanaka-

kalaśam śuddha-toyābhipūrṇam') and a golden bowl filled with cooked rice mixed in curds (dadhyannādhyam kanaka- chashakam'). It makes no mention of Lakshmī or the earth-goddess. Dadhi-vāmana In both accounts is only two-armed.

Mantra-devatā-prakāśikā also mentions other varieties like Yajñeśvara-vāmana (same iconographical details as Dadhi-vāmana), Bhoga-vāmana (blue-complexioned and four-armed, carrying conch, discus, mace and lotus), and Viśva-vāmana (visualized as the apparition-boy; māyā-bālaka', or as Bhāgavata has it 'māyā-māṇavaka' draped in yellow silken garment as upper-cloth, wearing kaupīna, mauñji and yajñopavīta, and four-armed, carrying in his hands water-pot, bowl of dadhyanna, staff and umbrella). According to Śrī-tattva-nidhi, Yajñeśvara-vāmana is white-complexioned, and has four hands in which are held staff, bowl of nectar, curds rice and gold cup with water.

Vāmana is also one of the twenty-four forms of Vishnu (see CHATURVIMŚATI-MŪRTI): crystal white in complexion, he carries in his normal hands conch (right)and lotus (left), and in his upper hands discus (right) and mace (left).

VĀMINĪ

A śakti, who is two-armed and fair-complexioned; her hair is tied on her head (baddhakeśā). She shows the gesture of boon-bestowal with her right hand and holds a blue lotus in her left. She is seated comfortably (sukhāsana).

VĀYU

One of the guardians of directions (see DIK-PĀLAKA), Vāyu presides over north-west (hence called 'vāyavya'); he is described as the breath of the cosmic spirit (Rgveda, 10, 90) and as the parent of Agni (ibid., 1, 7, 112). The word Vāyu means a pervader, and he is so called because he pervades the mid-region or space between the earth and the sky (antariksha).

He is described as white (śveta) or ashy grey (dhūmra) in complexion, two-armed carrying in his hanos bow and arrow, and riding upon a deer (mrgārūdha). According to Rūpa-maṇḍana, he is four-armed. He holds aloft a banner (dhvaja-patāka) with his upper hands, and carries in his normal hands a water-pot and gesture of boon-bestowal. Alternately, the four hands show noose, goad, lotus and cudgel.

The name of his palace is given as Gandhavatī, and he is regarded as the parent of Hanumān (see HANUMĀN) and of the Pāṇḍava hero Bhīma.

VĀRĀHĪ

The boar-faced goddess is counted among the well-known seven mother-deities (see Sapta-mātṛakā). She is dark in complexion (kṛshṇa-varṇā) and is six-armed; Her hands on the right side hold the gesture of boon-bestowal, sword and cudgel; and the hands on the other side the gesture of protection, shield and bowl (pātra). She rides upon a buffalo (mahisha-sthā) and has a large belly (mahodarī.)

According to Aṁśumadbheda, Vārāhī is like the cloud of destruction (pralayāṁbuda-sannibhā), wearing coral-red ornaments (vidrumābharaṇānvitā); she rides upon an elephant, and her four hands carry ploughshare, śakti and gestures of protection and boon- bestowal. Vishnu-dharamottara prescribes that she is dark, and six-armed, with gesture of boon-bestowal, cudgel and sword in her right hands, and shield, noose and gesture of protection in the left hands. Pūrva-kāraṇa makes her ride a buffalo, and carry in her hands gestures of protection and boon-bestowal (in the normal hands) and spear and pestle-club (in the extra hands). Rūpa-maṇḍana also describes her as riding a buffalo, but as carrying bell, flywhisk, mace and discus in her hands. Devī-purāṇa calls her Vaivasvatī and describes her as drinking blood from a skull-cup ('kapāle asṛk-pibantī') and as carrying a cudgel (daṇḍa-dhāriṇī).

VĀYU

There are several varieties of Vārāhī like Mahā-vārāhī, Svapna-vārāhī, Nigraha-vārāhī, Dhūmra-vārāhī, Astra-vārāhī and Daṇḍa- nātha-vārāhī. All these forms are boar-faced and invoked in tāntrik rituals. Maha-vārāhī is excellently ornamented, wearing a bejewelled crown and coral ear-ornaments; her silken garments are yellow in colour, but she herself is dark-complexioned (śyāmalā). She has four hands, carrying pestle-like club and gesture of boon-bestowal (right) and ploughshare and skull-cup (left). She is invoked for arresting the faculties of speech, eyesight and mind of the enemies.

Svapna-vārāhī is black in colour like a mountain of collyrium (nīlāñjana-giri-śyāmā), with terrible tusks (tīkshṇa-damshṭrā) and riding upon a horse (aśvārūḍha). She is four-armed; noose, goad, sword and shield are seen in her hands. She carries the earth on top of her tusks (damshṭrāgrastha-vasundharā). She is invoked to appear in dreams and destroy the enemies.

Nigraha-vārāhī is seated upon a lotus and wears a garland of severed heads. Her four hands carry ploughshare, pestle-club, and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal.

Dhūmra-vārāhī and Astra-vārāhī are both ash-coloured and shown as devouring the enemies offered to her as bali.

Daṇḍa-nātha-vārāhī is the commander of the army of Lalitā (see LALITĀ)

VĀRUṆĪ

Like Danda-nātha-vārāhī, Vāruṇī is also associated with the goddess Lalitā (according to Lalitopākhyāna). She is the controller of the fleet of boats ('naukādhi-nāyikā', 'taraṇi-śreṇi-nāyikā'). Also called Amriteśvarī and Sudhā-mālinī, she is red- complexioned like the morning sun (taruṇāditya-saṅkāśā) and her hair arranged in a bun is decorated with wreaths of Pārijāta flowers ('pārijāta-prasūna-srk-parivīta-kachocchayā'). She maddens the three worlds by the her merest glance ('īshad-ālokana-mātreṇa trailokya-mada-dāyinī').

She is four-armed. A cup filled with liquor (madirā-pūrṇam chashakam'), a bowl containing cooked meat (pakvam piśita-khaṇḍam'), a bejewelled jar (maṇi-pātra) and a blue lotus (utpala) are seen in her hands. She is surrounded by a host of feminine spirits (śaktis).

The word 'vāruṇī' actually means liqour and the deity that presides over inebriating drinks (madirādhishṭhātrī-devatā).

VĀSUKI

One of the eight serpents of purāṇic celebrity (ashṭa-nāga), Vāsuki is more familiarly known as Nāgarāja (or Nāgendra), the king of nāgas (cf. Mahābhārata, Ādi-parva, chap. 36). He was born as the offspring of Kaśyapa-prajāpti and Kadrū, and is believed to be one of the seven dragons holding the earth on their hoods. Vāsuki was used as the rope wound round the Mandara mountain to churn the milky ocean for the sake of nectar (samudra- mathana). He was also the string for the bow of Śiva when the god set out to destroy Tripura. Two of his followers, Jaya and Mahā-jaya were gifted by him to Subrahmaṇya (see KĀRTIKEYA) as attendants.

Gobhila-grhya-sūtra prescribes the worship of Vāsuki during the ritual 'vāstu-śamana' (pacification of site-spirits prior to construction). Vāsuki is sometimes included among the ten guardians of directions (dikpāla), presiding over the downward direction, Brahmā being the guardian of the sky.

VĀSUDEVA

A form of Vishṇu, he is identified with Kṛshṇa (see KṚSHṆA), son of Vasudeva of the Vṛshṇī clan, who was in turn the son of Śūrasena, and brother of Kunti (the mother of the Pāṇḍava heroes), and minister of the Yādava king Ugrasena. Vasudeva's wife Devakī (also called

Māyā, or Amāvāsī) bore him a son, Kṛshṇa, and a daughter, Subhadrā. Another wife of his, Rohiṇī, was the mother of Bala-rāma (viz.Saṁkarshaṇa). The brothers were deified and worshipped by the devotees of the Bhāgavata cult. As Vāsudeva and Saṁkarshaṇa they were the principal factors of the Vyūha doctrine (see VYŪHA). Vāsudeva's son Pradyumna and grandson Aniruddha were also included in the vyūha. Vāsudeva and Saṁkarshaṇa were iconically represented and installed in temples for worship even in centuries prior to the Christian era. (see KṚSHṆA).

The Vaikhānasa texts distinguish between 'mānusha-Vāsudeva', and 'daivika-Vāsudeva'. The former is a human representation with two hands, carrying conch and discus. He is surrounded by the five heroes of the Vrshni clan (Pañcha-vīra). Vimānārchanā-kalpa (paṭala 60) prescribes that to his right must be shown Rukmiṇī (see RUKMIṆĪ), and to her right Balabhadra (viz. Saṁkarshaṇa, two-armed and carrying pestle-club and ploughshare); to his right will be Pradyumna (two-armed, with knife-sword in his right hand, the left hand holding the hip), and to his right four-faced and four-armed Viriñchi (viz. Brahmā). To the left of the god is stationed Aniruddha (two-armed, holding sword and shield in the hands), and to his left Sāmba (son of Jāmbavatī, another wife of Kṛshṇa, two-armed, his right hand assuming the gesture of boon- bestowal and the left carrying cudgel), and Garuḍa is shown on his left side.

Daivika-vāsudeva is four-armed (carrying conch and discus in his upper hands, the normal hands assuming the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal) and is flanked by Śrī-devi (viz. Lakshmī) and Bhū-devī (the earth-goddess) on his right and left respectively. He is surrounded by the same retinue as Mānusha-Vāsudeva, but barring Garuḍa and Brahmā others are accompanied by their consorts Bala-bhadra with Revatī, Pradyumna with Rohiṇī, Aniruddha with Ushā and Sāmba with Indu-karī.

The expression Vāsudeva is interpreted as signifying his all-pervasive character and his being the abode of all things (Vishnu-purāṇa, 1,2 'sarvatrāsau samastam cha vasaty atra'); he is the inner controller of all beings. His famous mantra 'om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya, is twelve-lettered (dvādaśākshara). Vāsudeva is said to have four aspects ('chaturdhā mūrtih', Kūrma- purāṇa chap. 48). One aspect pervades all things and is known as Vāsudeva. It is beyond forms and devoid of gunas. It is of the nature of knowledge (jñāna-rūpa). The second aspect is time (kāla-saṁjña), known as Śesha, dissolving everything at the end of the aeon. This is the tāmasic form of Vāsudeva. The third aspect is that of preservation of the universe, known as Pradyumna; and this is distinguished by the predominance of sattva-guṇa. The fourth aspect is creative in function (sṛshṭi-kārikā), and is known as Aniruddha, characterized by rajo-guṇa.

Vāsudeva is one of the twenty-four forms of Vishṇu (see CHATURVIṀŚATI-MŪRTI): he carries in his normal hands mace (right) and lotus (left), and in the upper hands conch (right) and discus (left).

Vāsudeva is also counted among the sixty three (tri-shaṣṭi) śalākā-purushas of the Jainas.

VĀSUPŪJYA

The twelfth among the twenty-four tīrthankaras of the Jaina pantheon. Vāsupujya was born in Champā-pura as the son of the monarch Vāsupūjya and his queen Vijayā-devī. He was of red complexion, and he obtained kevala-jñāna under the pāṭalikā (according to Abhidhāna-chintāmani) or kadaṁba tree (according to Uttara-purāṇa). His emblem is buffalo, and his ganadhara was Dharma, and chauri-bearer Darpishṭa-Vāsudeva.

VĀSTU-PURUSHA

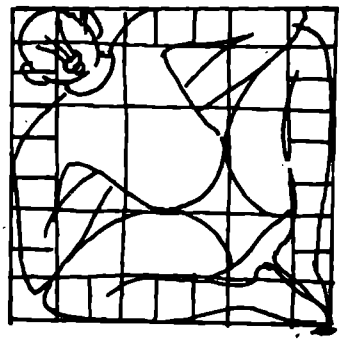
Personified deity of the 'site' (vāstu, from the roof 'vas', "to dwell" 'vasanti prāṇino yatra', "on

which the beings reside"), to be pacified (śamana) and worshipped (pūjana) before constructions are undertaken. Private residences, temples, public buildings, palaces, mansions, villages or township, forts, gardens, streets and so on are all included in the idea of the 'deity of the site'. The site is divided into a number of cells constituting a mandala (see VĀSTU-MAṆḌALA)

The idea of a Vāstu-purusha is an ancient one. The Ṛg-veda refers to the deity or spirit presiding over the building site (Vāstoshpati). This name is often used for Vāstu-purusha in the Smṛti texts. Bṛhat-saṁhitā speaks of a gigantic monster in human form lying on his belly covering the entire earth, his body concealing the mid-region (antariksha). It is said that he lay across the space between the heavens and the earth, that the gods seized him and pinned him to the earth with his face downwards, and that the gods stationed themselves on various parts of his body to secure him and prevent him from getting up. It is because his body became the dwelling place for the gods that he came to be known as Vāstu-purusha.

His form as he lay helpless on the earth was square (chaturasra), and this is the form of all Vāstu-maṇḍalas. He is imagined to be almost always asleep, with his head resting on his left shoulder. He changes the position of his head several times during a year. He wakes up occasionally in some months and each time he is awake for three and three-fourths ghaṭikās (viz. about one and a half hours). It is regarded as auspicious time whe he is awake, and all construction-work on the site is begun then. The monster as well as the gods seated upon his body are placated, fed and worshipped before the building-work starts.

There are several accounts of his origin. Matsya-purāṇa describes him as the son of Kasyapa and Siṁhikā and as the brother of Rāhu (see RĀHU). Tantra-sāra-saṁgraha identifies him as the son of Vishṇu in his Varāha incarnation.



VĀSTU-PURUSHA

शल्य	मुख्य	सोम	अदिति	ईश
शेष	रुद्र	भूधर	अपवत्स	जयन्त
वरुण	मित्र	ब्रह्मा	आर्यक	आदित्य
सुग्रीव	इन्द्र	विवस्वत	सविता	भृश
पितृ	भृंगराज	यम	वितथ	अग्नि

VĀSTU-MAṆḌALA
(Upa-pīṭha)

वायु	मुख्य	सोम	अदिति	ईश
शेष	रुद्र	भूधर	अपवत्स	जयन्त
वरुण	मित्र	ब्रह्मा	आर्यक	आदित्य
सुग्रीव	इन्द्र	विवस्वत	सविता	भृश
पितृ	भृंगराज	यम	वितथ	अग्नि

VĀSTU-MAṆḌALA
(Ugra-pīṭha)

Matsya-purāṇa (ch. 226) ascribes his origin to the sweat from the forehead of Śiva that fell on the ground, during Śiva's fight with Andhaka. According to this text, the monster that appeared was violent in nature, hideous in aspect and ravenously hungry. He enveloped all space with his body, eager to devour the earth as well as the heavens. But the gods fell on him and pressed him down on the earth. When he fell with his face downward, the gods sat upon his body and secured him with 'ashṭa-bandha' (see ASHṬA-BANDHA).

One of the Vāstu texts assigns Rudra to the head of the Vāstu-purusha, Parjanya and Aditi to the ears, Apah to the face, Apavatsa to the neck, Jayanta and Aditi to the shoulders, Pañchārgala and Mahendra to the arms, Rudra and Savitri to the chest, Prthvīdhara and Marīchī to the breasts, Vivasvān and Mitra to the belly, Brahmā to the navel, Pāpa and Pūsha to the thighs, the Pitṛs (manes) to the feet, and Jaya to the testicles.

As the Vāstu-purusha lies on the ground, his head with face to the earth (adharānana) is said to be in the north-eastern direction, his arms stretching to the north-western and south-eastern directions, the legs will be in the south-western direction. According to Gṛhya-pariśishṭa, the arms and legs are bent so that the hands are placed on the heart in an attitude of supplication ('hṛd-añjalih'); and the elbows and knees face the north-western and south-eastern directions ('ākuñchita-karam agneya-vāyavya- jānuka-kūrparam'; cf. Mahākapiñjala-saṁhitā ,'jānu-kūrparakau vāstoh vahni-vāyu-prakoshthakau').

The Vāstu-purusha is dark in complexion (kṛshṇa-varṇakah) and has his tawny hair spread upwards (ūrdhva-keśa). His eyes are round (vartulāksha). He is stockily built (su-pīna) and has the form of an asura (asurākṛtih). Śaunakīya-vāstu adds that while his body is black (kṛshṇāṅga) his eyes, hair and beard are red (rakta-lochana, 'rakta-śmaśru-saroruha') and that his aspect is fierce (kruddha, su-durdhara) and his body adamantine (vajra- deha).

He is worshipped in the Vāstu-maṇḍala along with all the gods that reside on his body. In fact, vāstu is a collective expression ('sāmūhiko nāma'). The maṇḍala is always square in form (chaturasra) and consists of sixty-four cells in the case of sacred buildings (like temples) and eighty-one for secular constructions, according to Liṅga-purāṇa. The central portion of the mandala (the square consisting of nine cells, 'madhye pādānām navakam') is known as Brahma-sthāna, where Brahmā is supposed to reside. The mandala is drawn on the ground, and the area (excluding the Brahma-sthāna) is covered with five colours signifying the five primary elements (pañcha-bhūtātmakam). The colours are powders prepared afresh: yellow is turmeric powder (haridrā-chūrṇa), white is got from rice-flour (taṇḍula-saṁbhavāni), rosy colour is obtained from powdered safflower (kusuṁbha-chūrṇa), black is got by burning up some dried grains ('dagdha-pulāka-ja') and blue is obtained from crushing leaves of bilva and other trees ('bilvādi-patraja').

In the Brahma-sthāna, Vāsudeva is required to be invoked, according to Matsya-purāṇa; and Vāstoshpati is identified with Vishṇu with four arms carrying conch and discus in the upper hands and the gestures of boon-bestowal and protection in the normal hands. Vāstu-pūjana-vidhi substitutes conch with bow (śārṅga), and adds that the image must be made in gold. Vāstu purusha is described as the bearer of the universe (viśvaṁbhara) and as the cause of all human accomplishments (sarva-siddhi-prada). Ṛgvedīya-vāstu-vidhi prescribes Vāstu-purusha to be the two-armed god, carrying cudgel and noose in his hands ('daṇḍa-pāśa-dharam devam').

There are several varieties of Vāstu-maṇḍala depending on the number of spirits invoked (81, 64, 54, 53 etc.) and on the nature of the building

(house, palace, temple, etc.) proposed to be built on the site.

VĀHANA

Mounts, vehicles (usually animals or birds) on which the gods and goddesses are supposed to ride or be seated (like Vishṇu on eagle, Śiva on bull, Brahmā on Swan, Devī on lion, Kārttikeya on peacock, Indra or Śāsta on elephant, Gaṇapati on rat, Śani on crow, Yama on buffalo, Gaṅgā on the mythical crocodile, Yamunā on tortoise, Śītalā on donkey, Vāyu on deer, Sūrya on seven horses, Chaṇḍī on tiger, Nirṛti on dog, Varāha on serpent, Rati on parrot, Gaurī on iguana, Kubera on man and Revanta on horse). Some deities are also represented as having inanimate objects as their vāhanas (like Śaṅkha-nidhi conch, Kurukullā boat, Yoga-nidrā cot, Kubera throne, Ushṇīsha-vijaya thunderbolt, and so on).

The idea of vāhana as specific to a deity has not only legendary associations but symbolisms. The animals and birds have their own conceptual frameworks and identifications (like eagle with solar energy, bull with dharma, swan with sattva-guna, peacock with fire, etc.). Myths provide clues to the significance of Vāhana for the deities. According to Kālikā-purāṇa (chap.57), the vāhanas are only transformations of the deities themselves ('mūrtyantaram kṛtvā vāhanatvam gatah') to serve a cause. A particular aspect of the deity is emphasized by its recognition as a vāhana.

Vāmana-purāṇa (chap.9) provides a list of vāhanas; gigantic elephant Airāvata, white in complexion and born from the palm of Rudra, for Indra; the ferocious buffalo, Pauṇḍraka by name, dark in colour and born out of the valour of Śiva for Yama; Śiṁśumāra, blue-coloured aquatic creature born from the mind of Rudra and symbolizing the ocean, for Varuṇa; the terrible-looking and huge man, born out of the feet of Devī and with eyes like the cart- wheel, for Kubera; the gandharvas who are very powerful, the great serpents who are very fierce, white dogs and fast-moving bulls for the eleven Rudras; chariot with five hundred swans for Chandra (moon); the chariots to which horses are yoked for the twelve ādityas; elephants for the eight Vasus; human beings for yakshas; dragons for the kinnaras; horses for the Aśvins; antelopes for the maruts.

Iconographically, it is not always that a deity is represented as actually riding his vāhana. The vāhana is often merely indicated on the pedestal (pāda-pīṭha) of the image. Sometimes the vāhana is independently installed in front of the main icon, outside the sanctum and facing the main icon. Temples may have even separate pavilions (like Nandi-maṇḍapa, Garuḍa-sannidhi etc.).

During annual celebrations in great temples, called rathotsava, extending to nine or more days, it is a custom to take out the processional image gorgeously decorated and seated on a different vāhana every day, on the streets of the town or village, in a colourful procession. The vāhanas on such occasions do not have any specific association with the deity seated on them. The processional vāhanas include elephant (gaja), bull (vṛshabha), horse (aśva), serpent (śesha), palanquin (śibikā), swan (haṁsa), solar orb (ravi-maṇḍala), lunar orb (chandra-prabhā), lion (siṁha), flower-seat (pushpa-pīṭha), the mountain Meru, the mythical tree that fulfills all desires (kalpa-vṛksha), Hanumān, Garuḍa and chariot (ratha). These are usually made in metal or carved in wood and painted. They are large-sized, and many temples have separate pavilions where they are kept when not in use (Vāhana-maṇḍapa).

Many tāntrik deities, especially of the Vajrayāna pantheon, are described as riding upon corpses (preta-vāhana), and on magical implements like khaṭvāṅga.

VIKHANAS

A sage of great antiquity who is regarded as an incarnation of Vishṇu and who popularized the Vishṇu cult in the country. He not only wrote the

Kalpa-sūtras, which defined the code of conduct for the householders but also Daivika-sūtra, dealing with iconic worship (samūrtārchana). He taught the Vishnu worship in great detail to four of his disciples, each of whom prepared elaborate manuals which constituted the Vaikhānasa-āgama (see VAIKHĀNASA- ĀGAMA and also the author's book, Āgama-kosha, vol. III).

Vimānārchanā-kalpa (patala 20) prescribes that the image of Vikhanas should be installed at the right side of the entrance to the front porch (mukha-maṇḍapa); together with Tāpasa (who is installed on the left side); he is regarded as a door-guardian (dvāra-pāla). He is white in complexion like crystal (sphaṭikābha), clothed in golden coloured garments (hemāmbara-dhara) and four-armed. Antelope is his mount (ruru-vāhana). He holds a staff in his hand (daṇḍa-dhara).

But the text does not specify what he should hold in the other hands. He is usually shown in sculptures and paintings as seated, in a posture of exposition (vyākhyāna), and surrounded by four disciples, Marīchi, Atri, Bhṛgu and Kāśyapa. He carries conch and discus in his upper hands, and the gestures of textual exposition (vyākhyā-mudrā) and boon-bestowal in his normal hands (right and left respectively). The mendicant's staff is tucked on his right side. An antelope's head is depicted in the centre of the seat on which he sits.

VIGRAHA

The word refers to an icon especially meant for worship ('viśeshena gṛhyate'); it also signifies a form that represents divinity or an aspect of divinity (see BERA, BIMBA). (see also ŚRĪ-VIGRAHA)

VIGHNA-GAṆAPATI

One of the thirty-two well-known forms of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), he has the fair complexion of burnished gold (tapanīya-gaura) and ten hands. He carries in the five hands on the right side conch, his own tusk (sva-danta), goad (smi), bunch of flowers (mañjarikā) and arrows (śaraugha), and in the remaining hands (on the other side) conch, sugar-cane stalk as bow, flower arrows, small axe and noose. He is decorated with all ornaments.

VIGHNA-RĀJA

Name of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), signifying his lordship over obstacles. He is the cause of obstructions to any undertaking (lacking in devotion or purity of heart) as well as the remover of such obstruction. He is thus called Vighna-kartā as well as Vighna-hartā. He is propitiated at the commencement of all important undertakings so that success is ensured. In fact, even while Gaṇapati is being worshipped in an elaborate ritual, the first sequence will be propitiation of Gaṇapati as Vighna-rāja!

Vighna-rāja-ganapati is one of the thirty-two forms of Ganapati. His is red-complexioned and four-armed. The normal hands carry a mango-fruit (right hand) and the gesture of benediction (left, āśīh); and the upper hands hold noose and goad. Another account makes him ride a rat and carry in his upper hands bow and arrow, his right normal hand carrying a whip and the left the reins.

VIGHNĀNTAKA

A deity of the Vajrayāna pantheon, Vighnāntaka (meaning the vanquisher of all obstacles) is a guardian of the northern direction, a dik-pāla. He is either two-armed, carrying noose in the left hand which also assumes the gesture of threat and warning (tarjanikā-pāśa) and the uplifted vajra (udyad-vajra) in his right hand, or four-armed, carrying vajra, sword, jewel and lotus in his hands.

The two armed variety is blue-coloured (nīla-varṇa), with tawny hair on head standing upright (piṅgalordhva-keśa), and awesome in appearance (bhayānaka). He stands in the pratyālīḍha-posture. The four-armed variety is

three-faced, the principal face being green, which is also the body colour, and the other two faces white and red. (cf. Nishpanna-yogāvalī).

While the textual descriptions are silent about what this deity stands upon, there are some iconic representations of Vighnāntaka which show him trampling upon an elephant-headed deity, symbolizing obstacle (Vighna). Some scholars have identified this deity with Ganapati of the classical Hindu pantheon and interpret that the concept of Vighnāntaka involved subjugation of Gaṇapati who was himself an obstacle to the spread of Buddhism. This however is not borne out by the sādhana text. Nishpanna-yogāvalī mentions four deities guarding the four cardinal directions, the deities of the other three directions being Yamāntaka (east), Prajñāntaka (south) and Padmāntaka (west). All four are 'antakas', but what they are 'antakas' of does not bear any relation to any other gods, Vighnāntaka is a vanquisher of obstacles, even as Ganapati is. It may also be noted that according to the purāṇas Gaṇapati fought with and killed an elephant-headed demon, Gaja-mukhāsura by name, who was obstructing good deeds.

VIGHNEŚĀNUGRAHA-MŪRTI

One of the sportive forms (see LĪLĀ-MŪRTI) assumed by Śiva (see ŚIVA), it is also known as Vighneśvara-prasanna. Śiva here is shown in the act of bestowing grace upon Gaṇapati, at the behest of Devī (whose child he was, see for stories GAṆAPATI), and making him the lord of the troops (gaṇa-pati, pramatha- gaṇādhipa).

Śiva is seated with his right leg laid across the seat and the left dangling down. To his left, on the same seat (eka-pīṭha-sthitā) Pārvati is seated in the same manner. To Śiva's right stands Vighneśvara (viz. Gaṇapati), with folded hands. Śiva and Pārvati are both dark-complexioned here (śyāma-varṇa), while Gaṇapati is red-complexioned. Śiva is three-eyed and four-armed, carrying in his upper hands black antelope and battle-axe (kṛshṇa-paraśu). His normal right hand is placed on the head of Gaṇapati in gesture of protection ('abhayam śirasi nyasya'), and the corresponding left hand assumes the gesture of boon-bestowal.

VIGHNEŚĀNUGRAHA-MŪRTI
(old drawing from Mysore)

Pārvati is two-armed but three-eyed. She has a happy expression on her face ('prahasitānanam'). She carries a blue lotus in her right hand, while her left hand assumes the gesture of boon- bestowal.

Gaṇapati is four-armed: while his normal hands assume the gesture of supplication (namaskārāñjali), the upper hands carry noose and goad.

All three figures are decorated with all ornaments. Śiva wears his matted hair in the shape of a crown (jaṭā-makuṭa), and Gaṇapati has a kirīta-type of crown (kirīṭa-makuṭa) on his head.

VIGHNEŚVARĪ

The feminine form of Vighneśvara, either the consort of Gaṇapati or an independent deity with elephant-head (see VAINĀYAKI)

VIJAYA

One of the two door-guardians of Vishnu (the other being Jaya) who are required to be stationed at the sides of the entrace of the half-pavilion ('ardha-maṇḍapa-dvāra-pārśve') according to Nāradīya-saṁhitā, or at the sides of the door of the porch ('dvarāgra-maṇḍapasyāgre'), according to Viśvāmitra-saṁhitā. The former text makes Vijaya two-armed, carrying a cudgel in hand and marked by conch (Jaya being marked by discus). The latter text, however, makes him four-armed.

Usually, Jaya and Vijaya are shown as four-armed like Vishṇu, carrying conch and discus in the upper hands, mace in one of the normal hands, the other hand assuming the gesture of threat or warning (tarjanī-hasta or sūchī-hasta). They are also sometimes shown as having mustaches, and tusks. They are regarded as very powerful (mahā-balau) and decorated with all ornaments.

VIJAYA-GAṆAPATI

One of the well-known forms of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), he is distinguished by the rat as his mount (ākhu-vāhana). He is shown as actually riding the rat and setting out for victory. He is red-complexioned and four-armed carrying in his hands noose, goad, tusk and mango-fruit. He is in the 'yānaka' posture (see YĀNAKA-MŪRTI)

VIJAYA-LAKSHMĪ

An aspect of Lakshmī (see LAKSHMĪ), she is seated upon a throne ('siṁhāsana-susamsthita') and is lustrous like gold ('svarṇābha'). She is two-eyed but eight-armed. Her hands on the right side show sword, noose, discus and gesture of protection, while the hands on the other side shield, goad, conch and gesture of boon-bestowal.

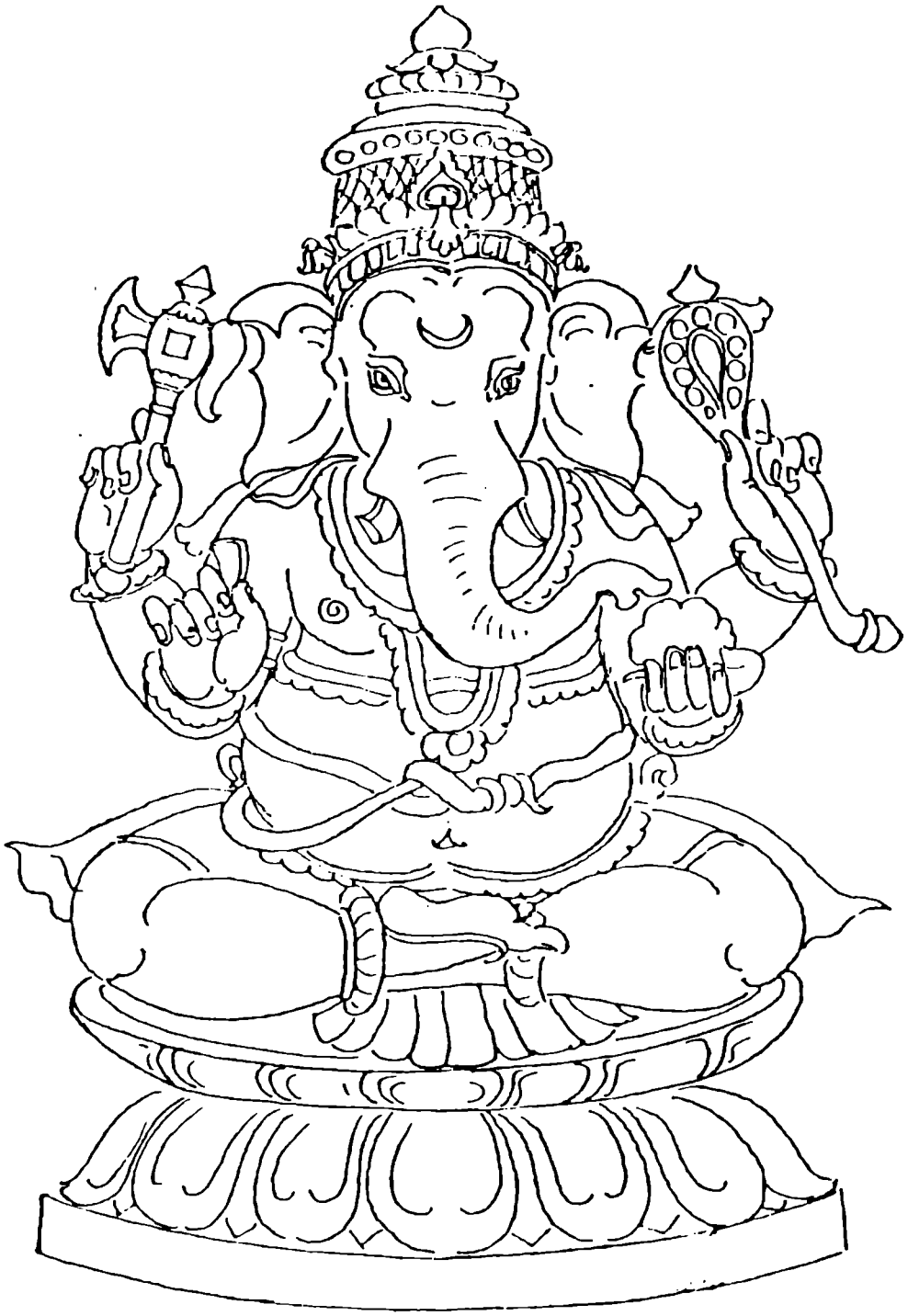
VIJAYĀ

A tāntrik goddess who is regarded as the conquerer of the three worlds (tri-bhuvana-vijayā), she is red in complexion and wears yellow silken garments (pītāmbarādhyā). She is three-eyed and five-faced. And she has ten hands, carrying conch, discus, noose, goad, shield, sword, bow, arrow, blue lotus and citrus-fruit (mātuluṅga).

Vijayā is also a form of Sarasvatī (see SARASVATĪ), four-armed and carrying the gesture of boon-bestowal, rosary, book and lotus in her hands.

Also called Tārāvatī, or Dhāriṇī, Vijayā is the yakshī of the sixteenth tīrthankara, Aranātha, of the Jaina pantheon. Golden- complexioned, she has swan as her mount; she has four hands carrying the gesture of boon-bestowal and vajra (right), serpent and antelope (left) according to the Digambara account. (Pratishthā-sāra-saṁgraha). Hemachandra describes her complexion as dark blue (nīlāṅgī) and gives lotus as her seat (padmāsanā); and her hands carry, according to him, mātuluṅga-fruit, blue lotus, red lotus and rosary.

VIJAYA-GAṆAPATI



VIJAYA-GANAPATI

VIDYĀ

Regarded as the goddess of learning, she is the personified version of all the letters of the alphabet (varṇa-mayī). Mahā-lakshmī-kosha describes her as the support of the entire universe (ādhāra), cause of all enjoyment (ananta-bhoga-nilayā) and fond of music from lute and other instruments (Vīṇādi-gāna-priyā). She is identified with Tvaritā (see TVARITĀ).

She has a face which is luminous like the morning sun (taruṇārka-bimba-vadanā), but has fierce tusks in her mouth (atyurgra- damshṭrā). Her complexion is variegated (chitra-varṇā). She carries human-skull in her hand. Other details are not available.

VIDYĀ-DEVĪ

(see SHOḌAŚA-VIDYĀ-DEVI)

VIDYĀDHARA

A class of celestial beings (like kinnaras, gandharvas and apsaras), said to be denizens of the Himālayan heights and skilled in arts and sciences; they are devotees of Śiva and are equipped with magical powers. They can travel in the sky (khe-chara) and assume whatever form they desire (kāma-rūpiṇah). They preside over mantras and occult practices.

Vimānārchanā-kalpa (paṭala 20) prescribes that Vidyādharas must be stationed in the fifth enclosure of the Vishṇu temple. They are to be shown, according to this text, as dark-complexioned (śyāmābha) and wearing red garments; their hair also is red in colour; their mouths have tusks (damshṭrā-mukhāh). They are two- armed, carrying mace in one hand and hand-drum (ḍamaruka) in the other. They ride upon buffaloes and have buffalo as their standard (mahisha-dhvaja-vāhanāh).

VIDYUJJVĀLĀ-KARĀLĪ

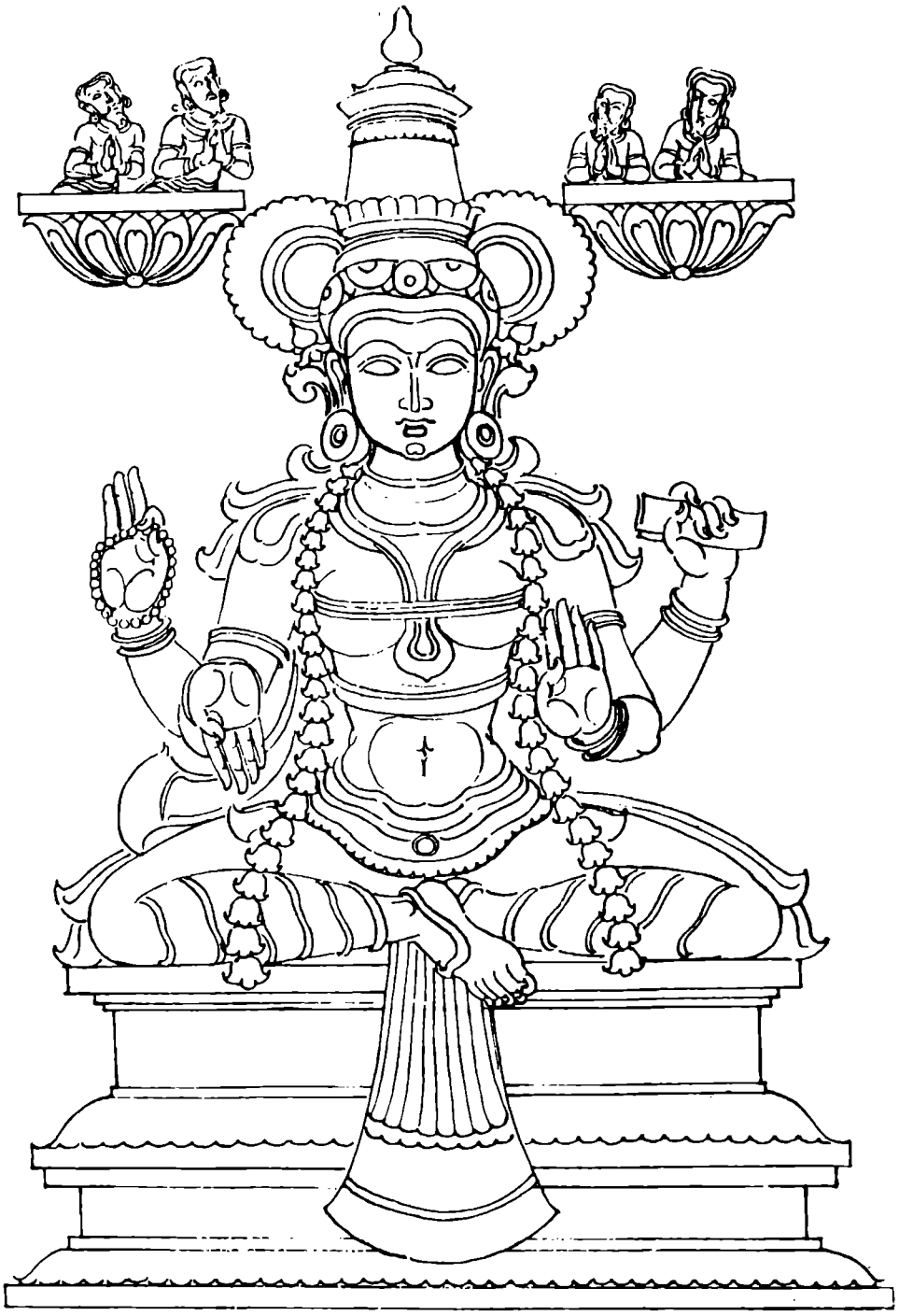
A minor goddess included in the Vajrayāna pantheon, she is regarded an an emanation of the dhyāni-buddha Akshobhya (see AKSHOBHYA) as a form of the better-known goddess Eka-jaṭā (see EKAJAṬĀ). She has twelve faces and twenty-four arms. She is fierce in aspect, dark blue in complexion and decorated with serpents. Her mouth is wide open and tongue is thrust out in indignation, her eyes are round and blazing, her eye-brows are crooked. She stands in pratyālīḍha posture trampling upon four Māras ('chatur-māra-samākrāntām', B.Bhattacharya, op.cit. identifies them with Brahmā, Vishṇu, Śiva and Indra). She resembles the terrible fire of destruction.

VIDYUT-PRABHĀ

Also called Bhṛkuṭī, he is the yaksha attending on the twenty-first tīrthankara, Nami-nātha. Riding on a bull (naga-vāhana), he is four-faced and eight-armed, carrying the gesture of boon-bestowal (ishṭa-dāna), sword, shield, bow, arrow, goad, discus and lotus in his hands (Pratishṭhā-sāra-saṃgraha). He is red complexioned (japābha), and his eyes are red (raktākṣha). According to Hemachandra, his complexion is golden and his hands on the right side carry citrus-fruit, sakti, club, and gesture of boon- bestowal, while his hands on the left hold mangoose, axe, vajra and śakti.

VINĀYAKA

Name of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI). The expression 'vi-nāyaka' means "especial commander of the forces". The Smṛti texts (like Mānava-grhya-sūtra and Yājñavalkya-smṛti) prescribe that the vināyakas are to be placated before any auspicious and important work is undertaken; and they mention several vināyakas like Śāla, Kaṭaṅkata, Usmita, Kūshmāṇḍa, Rājaputra and Deva-yajana. They are described as wicked in intention, interfering wantonly in the affairs of human beings and presenting obstacles. They possess men and women, cause illnesses, physical and mental, and make people miserable. They become responsible for failures and defeats. It is therefore that they must be worshipped with offerings, before any work



VIDYĀ-DEVĪ
(wood-carving, Śuchīndram temple)

is begun, so that they refrain from their usual mischief and malevolence.

Varāha-purāṇa narrates a story that once the gods were distressed that even evil undertakings by human beings were succeeding, causing harm to others. They pleaded with Śiva that some obstacles must be created so that the wicked folk do not succeed. Śiva thereupon looked intently with unblinking eyes at Pārvati ('umām nirīkshayāmāsa chakshushānimisheṇa ha'). And seeing that among the five primary elements, ākāśa was devoid of form, he laughed. From the laughter flashed forth an extremely handsome boy, who charmed all the gods and goddesses including Pārvati, and made them love-lorn. Śiva became angry and cursed the boy to become elephant-headed and pot-bellied. Later, he cooled down at the entreaties of the gods and made the boy the commander of a vast horde of evil spirits who were all called Vināyakas, terrible in their deeds (prachaṇḍāh) and cruel of aspect (krūra-dṛśah). The boy was anointed by Śiva as the monarch of Vināyakas ('rajendrah vināyakānām').

Gaṇa-pati ("leader of the hordes of Vināyakas") was ordered to present obstacles for all the undertakings of human beings unless he was properly propitiated. He thus became Vighna-rāja. He was also empowered to grant success to whoever worshipped him (siddhi-dātā).

VINDHYA-VĀSINĪ

A form of Durgā (see DURGĀ), sometimes included in the well-known 'nine-forms' (see NAVA-DURGĀ), she is the resident deity of the Vindhyā ranges. She is described as moon-faced ('śaśi-mukhī'), sparkling in brillince like lightning ('saudāminī-sannibhā'), three-eyed and seated or standing upon a golden lotus ('sauvarṇāmbuja-madhyagā'). Her crest is adorned by crescent moon. She has four hands carrying in them conch, discus, and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. She is decorated with excellent ornaments. A lion is shown by her side ('pārśvastha-pañchānanā').

Vāmana-purāṇa (chap-51) contains a story that Indra took Durgā to the great jungles of the Vindhyā mountains ('mahā-vane') and requested her to stay there, worshipped by all the gods, In order to kill the enemies of the gods ('bhavāmārāri-hantrī ti'). Durgā thus became Vindhya-vāsinī.

VIBHAVA

Early Pāñcharātra texts (like Sāttvata-saṁhitā and Ahirbudhnya- saṁhitā) consider Godhead in three modes or prakāras: transcendental (para), emanatory (vyūha) and incarnatory (vibhava). The first two are valid in the high heavens, ('vaikuṇṭhesmin para- vyūho'), while the third consists of manifestations upon earth, seen by those who lived contemporaneously ('avatāreshu tat-kāle paśyantopi janā bhuvi'). The three modes are together said to constitute the supreme reality, viz. Brahman

(see VYŪHA)

The vibhavas are so called because they are specific manifestations. (see the author's Pañcharātrāgama, Vol IV in Agama-kosha, 1991, pp. 107-113 for the role of Viśākha-yūpa in the causation of Vibhava forms). They include the avatāras (see AVATĀRA), āveśas (possessions) and archās (worshipful iconic forms). The vibhavas are also called 'the group of special appearances' ('prādurbhāva-gaṇa').

In accordance with the 38 seed-syllables of the alphabet, Sāttvata-saṁhitā (9, 77-84) enumerates 38 vibhava-forms and describes them: (1) Padmanābha, (2) Dhruva, (3) Ananta, (4) Śaktyātmā, (5) Madhusūdana, (6) Vidyādhideva (7) Kapila (8) Viśva-rūpa (9) Vihaṅgama, (10) Kroḍātmā, (11) Baḍavā-vaktra,(12) Dharma, (13) Vāgiśvara, (14) Ekārṇava-śāyin, (15) Kamaṭheśvara, (16) Varāha, (17) Narasiṁha, (18) Amṛta-haraṇa, (19) Śrīpati, (20) Kāntātmā,

(21) Rāhujit, (22) Kālanemi-ghna, (23) Pārijata-hara, (24) Loka-nātha, (25) Dattātreya, (26) Nyagrodha-śāyin, (27) Matsya, (28) Vāmana, (29) Trivikrama, (30) Nara, (31) Nārāyaṇa, (32) Hari, (33) Kṛshṇa, (34) Paraśu-rāma, (35) Śrī-rāma, (36) Veda-vit, (37) Kalki and (38) Pātāla-śayana.

(for descriptions of the above forms see the author's Pañcharātrāgama, pp. 113-123).

Some texts (like Vishvaksena-saṁhitā) distinguish between principal (mukhya) and secondary (gauṇa) forms among the list of 38 vibhava forms given above. The former are direct divine involvements and are therefore worship-worthy (archyā eva hi). The ten avatāras are generally included in this group, although even here Paraśu-rāma is regarded as only partially divine and Matsya and Kūrma as only expressions of divine intention. Parāśara-bhatta in his commentary on Vishṇu-sahasra-nāma regards incarnations of Śrī-rama and Kṛshṇa as only divine possessions of human beings (aveśāvatāra), and Paraśu-rāma and Bala-rāma as only partial manifestations (aṁśāvatāra).

Some vibhavas are looked upon as dependent (prādurbhāvāntara), like Trivikrama or Vāmana. Some others like Vyāsa, Kapila, Kubera and Arjuna are essentially souls, which are inspired by divine presence and will ('jīvātmānas sarva ete')

All the vibhava forms are said to emerge directly from Aniruddha (the last of the four vyūhas, see VYŪHA), and are therefore expressions principally of two divine attributes, energy (śakti) and splendour (tejas), although the other four attributes, wisdom (jñāna), strength (bala), vigour (vīrya) and omnipotency (aiśvarya) are also involved.

Sāttvata-saṁhitā includes the iconic forms of Vishṇu meant for worship (archā) in the group of Vibhavas. However, it is because of the power of the mantras employed while installing or worshipping such icons that divine presence is secured in the icons ('mantra-viśesha-mahimnā bhagavān saṁnihito bhavati').

VIMALA-NĀTHA

The thirteenth tīrthankara of the Jaina pantheon (see TĪRTHANKARA), he was born in Kapilapura as the son of Kṛta-varma and Surama-devī. His kevala-vṛksha is jambū-tree, emblem boar and complexion golden. His ganadhara was Mandara, and the monarch who served him was Svayambhu-vāsudeva.

VIMĀNA-ŚAKTI

The superstructure over the sanctum is personified as a goddess. She is visualized as red-coloured, four-armed and terrible-looking (bhīma-rūpā). She abides in the vimāna, and is known as Rudrāṇī. Her matted hair is done up as a crown. Her normal hands assume the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal while her upper hands carry goad and noose. She is decorated with all ornaments, and clad in silken garments.

VIRI-VIGHNEŚA

A tāntrik form of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), he is of sindūra (red lead) complexion; he has three eyes, and wears crescent moon on his crown. He is four-armed, and carries noose and goad in his upper hands. His consort (śakti) named Pushṭi is seated on his left lap. The god is embracing her and touching her yoni. She is embracing the god with one arm (right), carrying lotus in the other hand.

A variant form has ten hands, carrying lotus, noose, arrow, tusk and jewel-pot (in his hands on the right side), and pomegranate fruit (bījapūra), mace, bow, discus and rosary (on the left side). It is the tip of his trunk that is shown as touching the consort's yoni; and the consort is seen touching his penis.

VIVASVĀN

Regarded as a form of Vishṇu in his solar aspect, he is a Vedic deity (Ṛgveda, 10, 65, 6) and is identified with Viśvakarmā (see VIŚVA-

KARMĀ) or Marīchi. Vimānārchanā-kalpa (paṭala 20) describes him as red-complexioned, wearing white garments and riding upon a horse. He is said to be born out of the sacrifice (makhodbhava). He is two-armed, carrying cudgel (daṇḍa) in one hand, and the weapon known as bhiṇḍipāla in the other.

VIŚVA-ḌĀKINĪ

An attendant deity of Mahāmāya of the Vajrayāna pantheon (see MAHĀMĀYA), she is stationed in the northern direction. Green-complexioned, she is four-faced (the extra three faces being yellow, red and blue in colour), and four-armed, carrying khaṭvāṅga, noose, hand-drum (ḍamaru) and skull-cup in her hands. Her tawny hair is upright, with flames of fire around her head. She wears garlands of severed heads with blood dripping from them, and wears a crown of skulls.

VIŚVA-PADMA

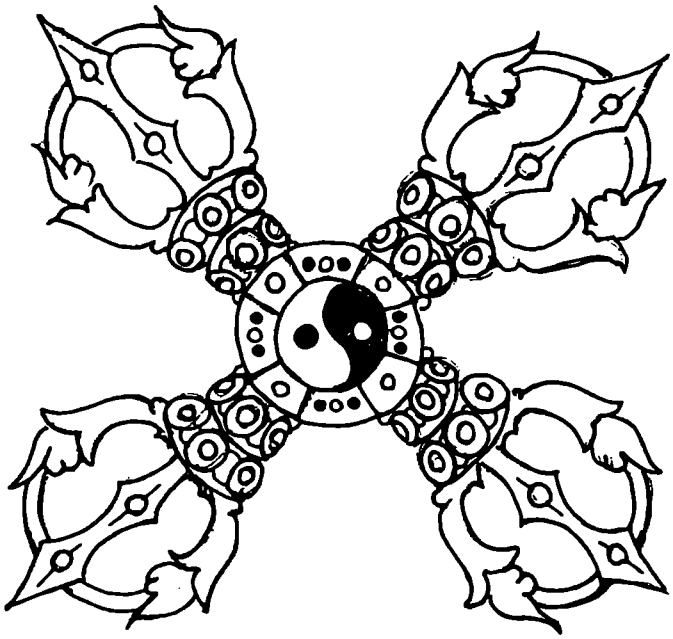
Also called 'mahāṁbuja', it is a variety of lotus-seat as pedestal (padma-pīṭha), on which the deity is stationed (seated or standing). It is double lotus, viz. two lotuses in full bloom, joined at their base, so that the petals of the lotus on top face the deity while the petals of the lotus below turn towards the earth, on all sides.

VIŚVA-PĀṆI

One of the 'human' Buddhas (see MĀNUSHĪ-BUDDHA), he is green-complexioned, (belonging to the Karma family) and holds the stalk of lotus on which double-vajra (see VIŚVA-VAJRA) is placed. Double-vajra is the symbol of the dhyāni-buddha Amogha-siddhi.

VIŚVA-VAJRA

'Double-vajra' (magical implement) is two vajras (see VAJRA) joined at their bases; the



VIŚVA-VAJRA

term also refers to the two double-vajras crossing each other at the centre.

Viśva-vajra is seen in the hands of many Vajrayāna deities, usually along with bell surmounted by vajra (vajra-ghaṇṭā) held in the other hand. Some deities carry visva-vajras in both of their hands, crossed over the chest.

VIŚVA-RŪPA

This is Vishṇu's cosmic form revealed to Arjuna on the battle field of Kurukshetra by Kṛshṇa, (cf. Bhagavad-gītā, ch. 11), and also to Nārada in Śveta-dvīpa (cf. Mahābhārata, Nārāyaṇīya section). It is one of the thirty-eight incarnations of Vishṇu described in texts like Sāttvata-saṁhitā (9, 77-84) and Paushkara-saṁhitā (36, 337). The former text says that Viśvarūpa is also the inner witness and controlier of all beings ('yotas sarveśvaro devas sākshi-bhūto vyavasthitah'); according to this text, he comprehends all the worlds and all the gods, and is distinguished by thirty-three faces and forty-four arms.

Rūpa-maṇḍana, however, describes Visvarūpa as four-faced and twenty-armed. He carries in his hands on the right side banner (patākā), ploughshare (hala), conch, vajra, goad, arrow, discus, pomegranate (bījapūra), and gesture of boon-bestowal, while the hands on the other side carry banner, cudgel (ḍaṇḍa), noose, mace, sword, blue lotus, horn (śṛṅgi), pestle-club (musala) and rosary. The two remaining hands are joined in the yoga-mudrā posture and laid upon the crossed legs. The four faces are those of man, man-lion, woman and boar ('nara-nṛsiṁha-strī-varāha-mukhavan-mukhaih). The god is seated upon Garuḍa (garuḍopari- sthitah).

The god may also stand in a perfect equipoise (sama-pāda-sthānaka).

According to Yajurveda (2, 5, 1), Viśvarūpa was the high priest of the gods ('purohito devānām āsit'), and he is described as the son of Tvashṭā (see TVASHṬĀ), who in turn was the son of Viśva- karmā (see below).

VIŚVA-KARMĀ

A deity of Vedic celebrity, he is regarded as the primordial architect and sculptor, and progenitor of all the architects, painters, sculptors and artisans of India. The five groups of artisans (workers in iron, wood, copper, stone and gold), collectively known as pañchālas, trace their origin to the five sons of Viśva-karmā (Manu, Maya, Tvashṭā, Daivajña and Viśvajña), known as 'pañcha-brahma'.

In the Vedic context, Viśva-karmā ("all-maker" 'yasmad visvam samastam kriyate') is the name given to the supreme god. The tenth mandala of Rgveda has two entire hymnal collections (sūktas 81 and 82) devoted to Viśva-karmā (cf. also 8, 98, 2; 10, 82, 2; 10, 170, 4; Yajurveda 4, 6, 2; Aitareya-brāhmaṇa 6, 20, 5; 4, 22; Yajur-āraṇyaka, 1, 7, 3; Śvetāśvatara-upanishad 4, 17; Śatapatha- brāhmaṇa, 13, 7, 1, 14; 7, 5, 2, 21; 9, 4, 1-12; and 13, 7, 1; Bṛhad-devatā, 2, 50 etc.)

In later literature, he is regarded variously as the ceator of the earth and the illuminator of the heavens, as the support of the universe, as the cause of all prosperity in the world, as a supernormal hero, as a benefactor, as a high priest, as a sage of excellent wisdom, and as a competent architect and fashioner of all things that gods and humans use. He is identified with Prajāpati (Vājasaneya-saṁhitā, 12, 61), with Agni (Śatapatha- brāhmaṇa, 7, 5, 2, 21) and with Indra (Aitareya-brāhmaṇa, 4, 22).

The purāṇas and the epic Mahābhārata regard him as a sage who was also an excellent architect and sculptor, son of one of the eight Vasus (see VASU), Prabhāsa, by the great brahma-vādinī named Yoga- siddhā (Mahābhārata, ādi-parva, chap. 62, Vāyu-purāṇa, Uttara, chap. 22 and Matsya-purāṇa, chap. 51). According to Mānasāra (21, 5-9), the creator Brahmā had four faces, named Viśva-bhū (eastern face), Viśva-vid

VIŚVAKARMĀ
(wooden sculpture from Kerala)

(southern), Viśva-stha (northern) and Viśva-srashṭā (western). From these faces sprang forth four sages, Viśva-karmā, Maya, Tvashṭā, and Manu respectively. They were responsbile for four classes of artisans, Sthapati (master-craftsman, architect), Sūtra-grāhi (draughtsman, designer), Vardhakī (joiner, painter, carpenter), and Takshaka (cutter, worker in stone and wood).

Viśva-karmā was the first major master of the arts and sciences. He ranks as the fourth in the line of eighteen teachers of architecture and sculpture ('vikhyātās śilpa-śāstropadeśakāh'), the earlier three being the sages Bhṛgu, Atri and Vasishṭha. There are several manuals in Sanskrit ascribed to his authorship, dealing with architecture and sculpture: Viśvakarma-prakāśa, Viśvakarma-vāstu, Viśvakarma-śilpa, Viśvakarmīya, Viśvakarmāvatāra, Viśvakarma-mata, Viśvakarma-saṁhitā and so on.

Viśva-karmā is celebrated as the artisan of the gods ('tri-daśānām cha vāstu-kṛt'), who inspired and sustained all the human artisans ('manushyāś chopajīvanti yasya śilpam mahātmanah'). His work includes not only temples, sculptures and mansions, but also decorations, ornaments, chariots, tanks, wells, gardens and mechanical devices and implements of all sorts. (cf. Matsya- purāṇa, ch. 5)

He is visualized as seated upon a divine throne, surrounded by sages and worshipped by gods. He is five-faced, fifteen eyed and ten-armed. He is a celibate ('brahma-chāri-vrate sthita'). He wears his matted hair done up as a crown. Lakshmī and Sarasvati wash his feet, and Brahma-vidyā adorns his chest. He is decorated with all ornaments and his body is daubed with holy ash. He carries in his hands implements of artisans like meru, ṭaṅka, svana, bhūshā, agni-kuṇḍa, karaṇī, vaśī, kuddāla, amī-yantra and kamaṇḍalu (cf. Vayu-purāna, bhū-khaṇḍa, Viśvakarmopākhyāna).

His body-colour is golden but his five faces have different colours. The faces are identified with the five aspects of Śiva: Sadyojāta (white), Vāmadeva (black), Aghora (red), Tatpurusha (yellow) and Īśāna (dark blue). The five faces are also recognized as the progenitors of the five classes of artisans (the pañchālas: iron-smiths, wood-carvers, copper-smiths, stone-workers and goldsmiths). It may be recalled that Mānasāra provides Viśvakarmā with four faces, identified with sthapati, sūtra-grāhi, varddhakī and takshaka.

Further, the iconic representation of Vis-vakarmā includes stockily built body (mahā-kāya), splendid ear-rings (karṇa- kuṇḍala), yellow silken garments (pītāmbara), serpent as sacrificial chord (sarpa-yajñopavīta), necklace of rudrāksha beds, tiger-skin as upper garment (vyāghra-charmottarīya). In the icons that are seen, his hands carry, besides the artisan's implements, rosary, lotus, serpent, spear, bow (pināka) and citrus-fruit (mātuluṅga).

VISHĀPAHARAṆA

One of the sportive-forms of Śiva (see LĪLĀ-MŪRTI), it has the background in the story that during the churning of the milky ocean (samudra-mathana) by gods and asuras for obtaining nectar (amṛta), terrible poison (called hālāhala or kālakūṭa) came out and threatened to destroy the worlds. Śiva, in order to save the worlds from imminent destruction, proceeded to swallow the poison himself. But Pārvati became anxious lest the poison enter Śiva's body, and held his throat firmly so that the poison would not descend through the gullet. Śiva thus became poison-throated (Vishakaṇṭha); the neck turned blue because of the poison (nīla-kaṇṭha). The worlds were saved.

Śiva in this form is red-complexioned, three-eyed and four-armed. He is bedecked with all ornaments, and wears his matted hair as a crown. He carries in his upper hands black antelope and battle- axe. His normal right hand

holds the bowl of poison, which he looks at before drinking it up ('daksha-haste garam dhṛtvā pānonmukhamad-ekshaṇah'). His left hand (normal) assumes the gesture of boon-bestowal.

To the left of the god is Pārvati standing in the three-bend posture (see TRI-BHAṄGA) with her right foot taken to the left of the left foot (savyāpasavya-sthita-kuñchitāṅghri). She must be shown as extremely agitated ('chintākulam') and concerned with the well-being of her husband ('īśvara-tushṭi-dātrim'), thus pleasing Śiva. She wears yellow garments and her right hand is placed upon Śiva's throat pressing it ('kaṇṭhe nipiḍya sthita- savya-laṁbam')

VISHṆU

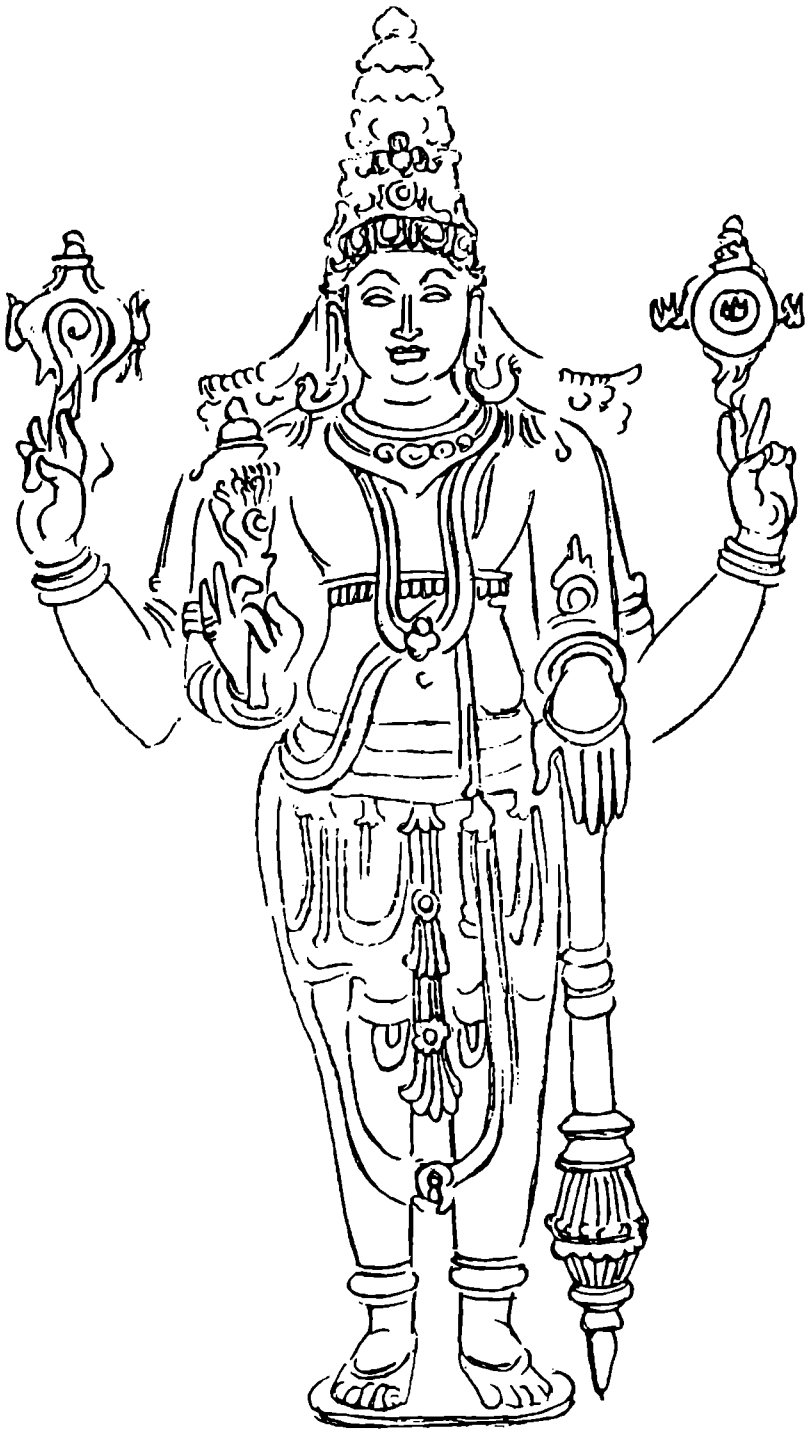
Among the gods eulogized in Ṛgveda, Vishṇu is a prominent one and has survived to this day, receiving adoration from vast multitudes. Earliest temples to Vishṇu known to history date three centuries before Christ. He was worshipped as Vāsudeva and Kṛshṇa (see VĀSUDEVA and KṚSHṆA) during the centuries before and after Christ. The Bhāgavata cult contributed significantly to the spread of the worship and ideology of Vishṇu. The Vaikhānasa and Pāñcharātra divisions of Āgama (see ĀGAMA) stylized the iconic representations and modes of worship relevant to Vishṇu.

The Vishṇu of Ṛg-veda is celebrated for his three gigantic strides encompassing the entire universe (1, 11, 18; 1, 154, 3; 1, 154, 4; 6, 69, 5 etc.), for the welfare of the worlds. (see TRIVIKRAMA). Vishṇu is a good friend of the good folks (1, 154, 4) and a compassionate protector (3, 55, 10). He was intimately associated with Sun (Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa, 3, 7, 1, 17) and Agni (Ṛgveda, 2, 1, 3). It has been suggested that even during the Vedic times, iconic representation of Vishṇu was known (cf. Ṛg- veda, 1, 155, 1 'mahe sūraya Vishṇave chārchata'). That worship of Vishṇu was prevalent in that period is evident from several references (e.g. Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa, 12, 3, 4, 1; Taittirīya-āraṇyaka, 10, 11; Bṛhad-devatā 4, 10; Aitareya-brāhmaṇa; Mahā-bhārata, 12, 325, 4 and 12, 336, 14 and Vaikhanāsa-smārta-sūtra, 4, 12, 118-119)

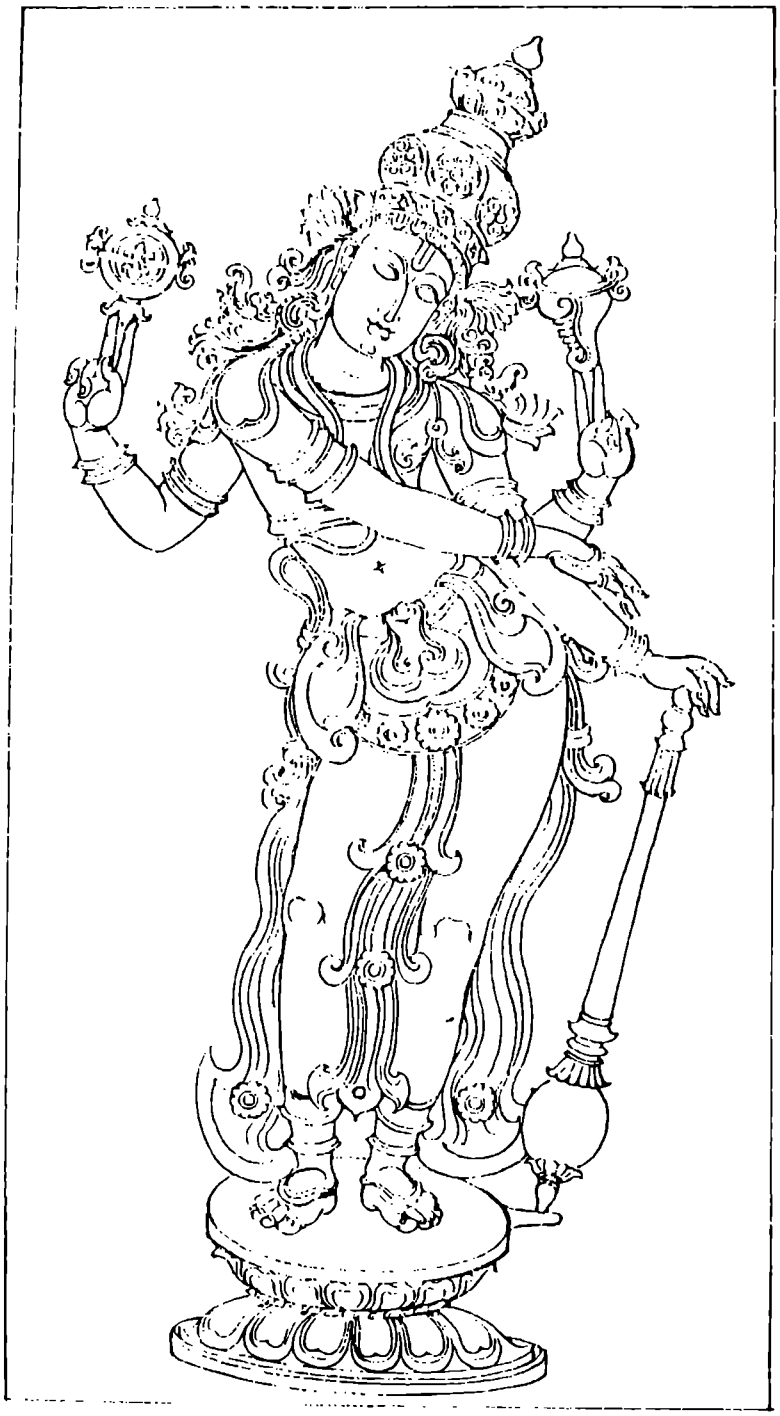
(For details concerning the antiquity of Vishṇu worship and the development of the cult through the ages, see the author's Vaikhānasāgama and Pāñcharātrāgama, volumes III and IV of Āgama- kosha, 1990 and 1991).

Significant to the later conception of Vishṇu in the iconographical context are the four aspects (see VYŪHA), the twenty-four forms (see CHATURVIṂŚATI-MŪRTI) and the ten incarnations (see AVATĀRA and DAŚĀVATĀRA). The earliest available icon of Vishṇu (belonging to the early Kushāṇa period) has an inscription that it is four-armed ('chaturbhujī-bhagavān'), which detail suggests a syncretic representation of the four deified 'heroes' (Vāsudeva, Saṁkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha), honoured in the Bhāgavata cult and involved in the vyūha doctrine. Four arms for deities really originated from the early representation of Vishṇu, especially in the Mathurā region. The ascription of conch (śaṁkha), discus (chakra), mace (gadā) and the gesture of protection (abhaya) for the four hands of Vishṇu also goes back ot this early period.

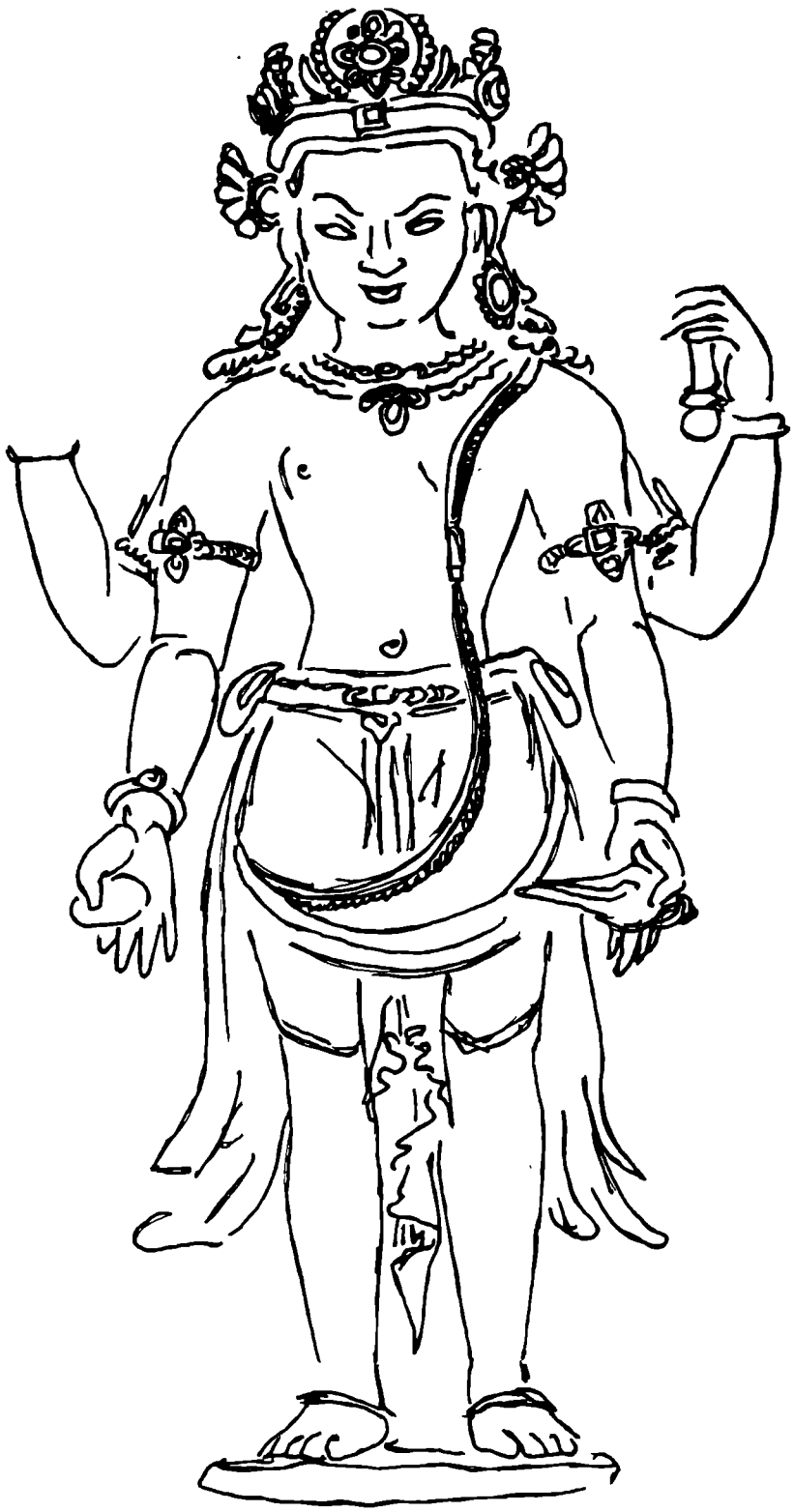
Each of the vyūha-figures is only two-armed. And in the syncretic representation, four-faced and eight-armed forms (like Trivikrama, Hayaśīrsha, Vaikuṇṭha and Trailokya-mohana) became popular in the early period. The eight hands carried weapons that two hands of each vyūha figure carried: discus and mace (Vāsudeva), pestle-club and ploughshare (Saṁkarshaṇa), bow and arrow (Pradyumna), and sword and shield (Aniruddha). The eight-armed (but one-faced) Vishṇu finds mention in several early texts (e.g. Bṛhat-saṁhitā 57, 31-33, Sāttvata-saṁhitā 12, 223,; Matsya- purāṇa, 258, 7). Barring pestle-club and ploughshare, the other



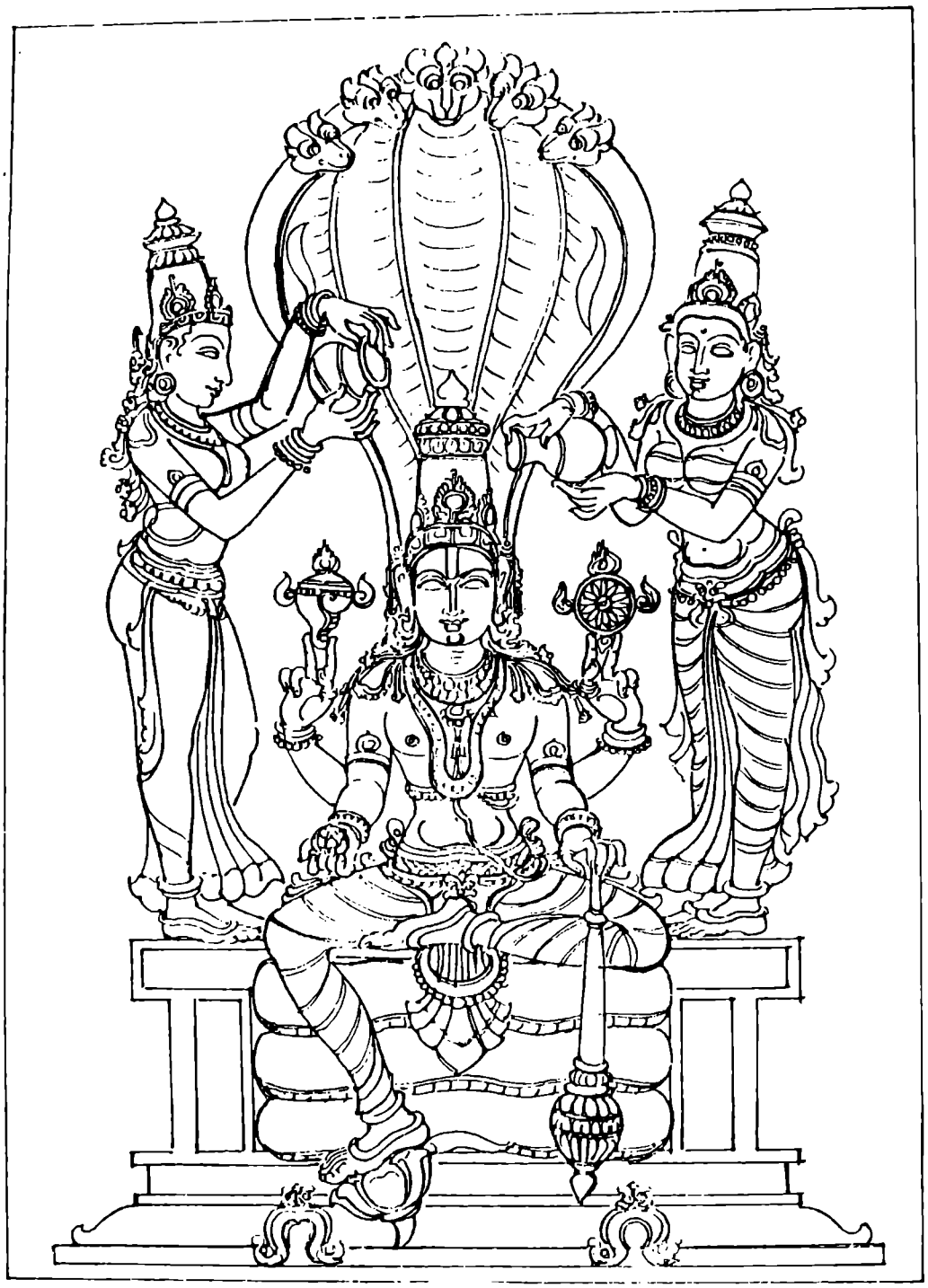
VISHṆU



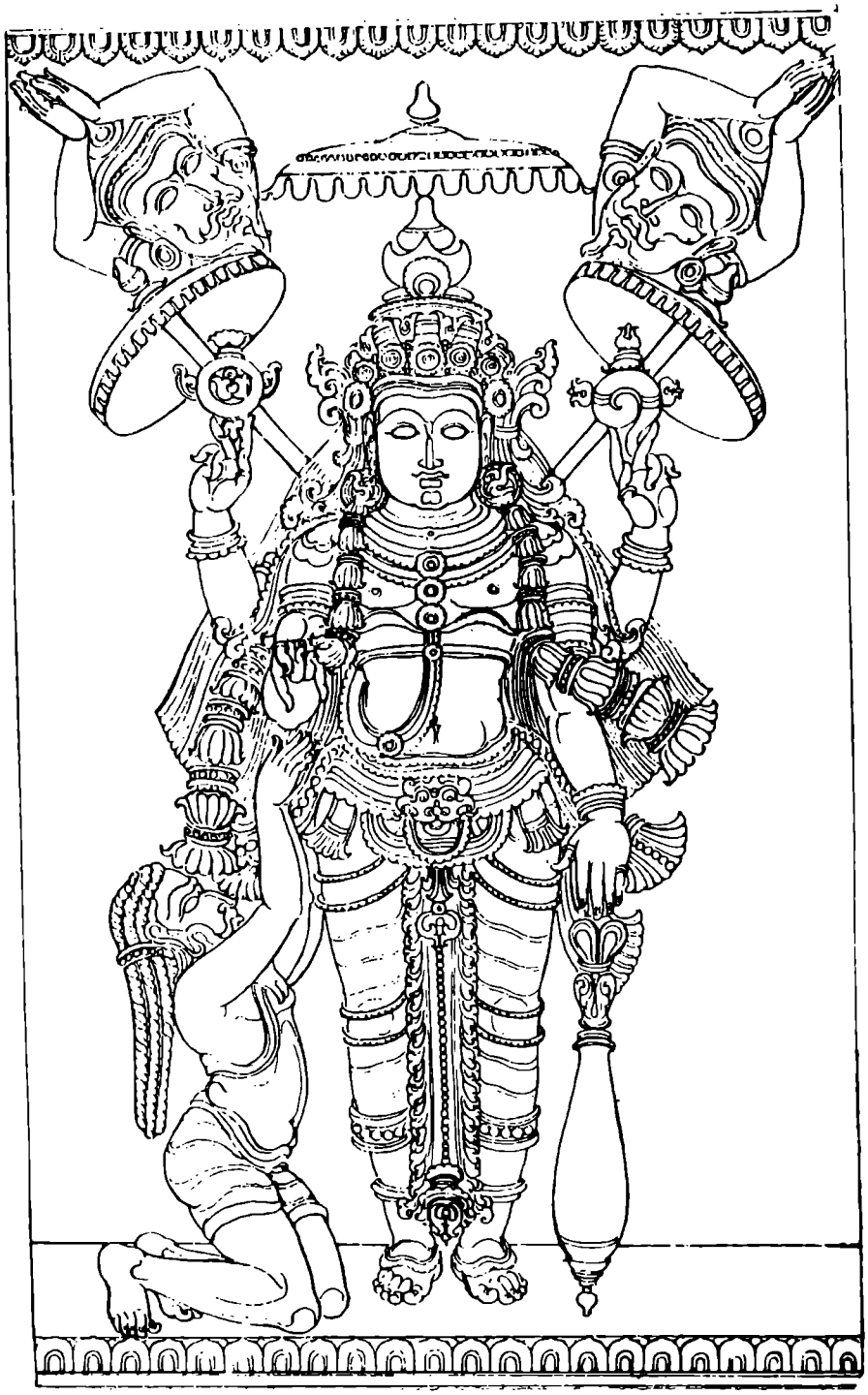
VISHNU
(from Padmanābha-svāmi temple, Trivandrum)



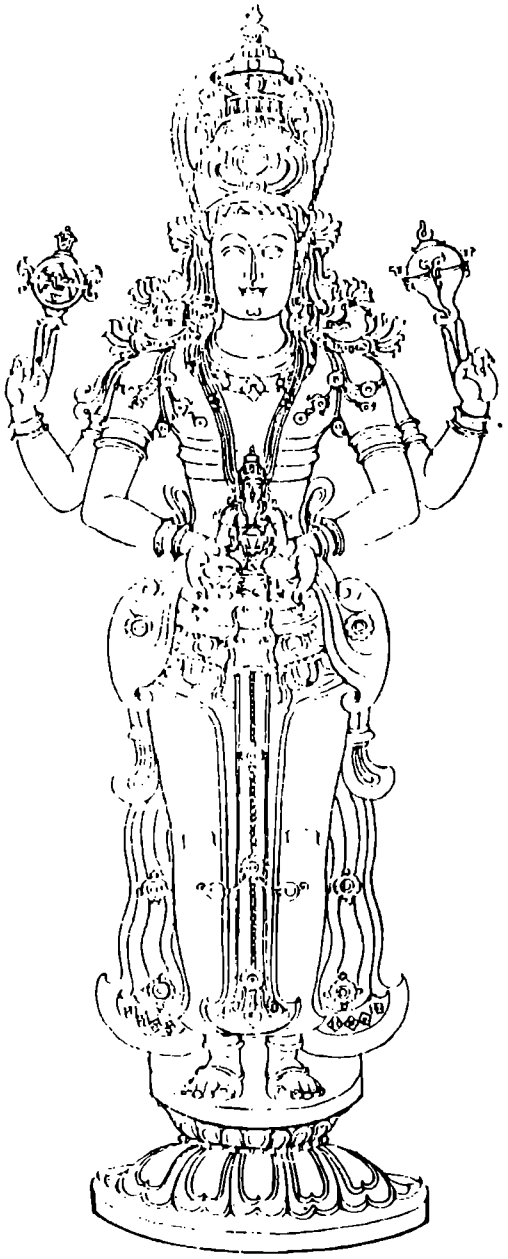
VISHṆU
(gilt copper, from Nepāl)



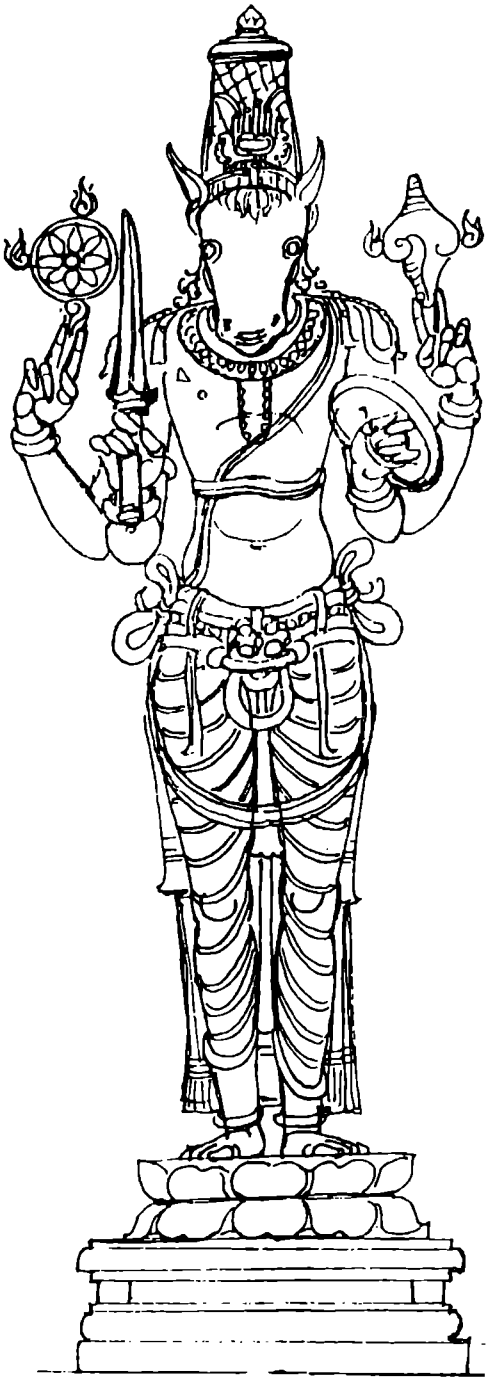
VISHNU
(as Vaikuṇṭha-nātha)



VISHṆU
(wood, from Kerala)



VISHṆU-MOHINĪ



VISHṆU
(as Kalki)

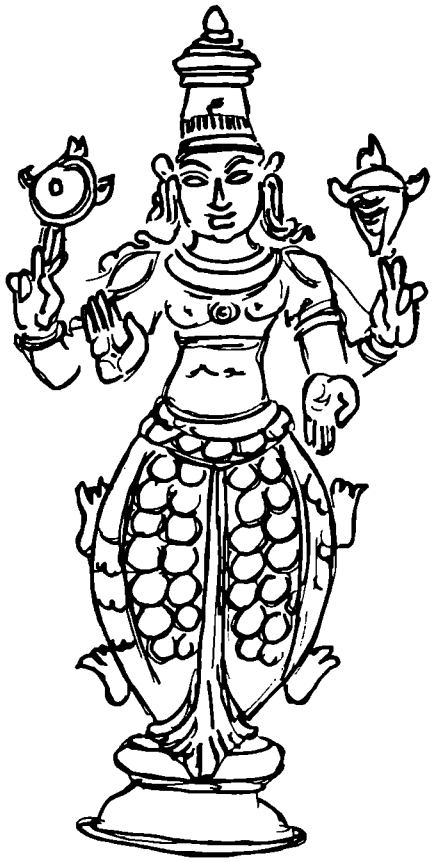
weapons symbolize, according to Vihagendra-saṁhitā (2, 25), creation (lotus), preservation (discus), dissolution (mace), prosperity (sword), victory (bow) and emancipation (conch).

However, two-armed representations of Vishṇu also date back to a distant past, and texts like Vishṇu-dharmottara (3, 60, 2), Matsya-purāṇa (258, 6) and Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtra-dhāra (77, 40) commend this form. Mahābhārata (1, 58, 49) mentions that Vishṇu carries discus and mace in his hands ('sa chakra-gadāpāṇih pīta- vāsa-sita-prabhuh'). The four-armed Vishṇu icon of Burhikhār (around the first century B.C., the chaturbhujī-bhagavān) has only discus and mace as weapons in its upper hands, the normal hands being joined in añjali-mudrā.

The Gupta period produced a number of Vishṇu icons where these weapons were personified as weapon-deities (āyudha-purusha). Vishṇu icons of the late fourth century A.D. show the god flanked by personified mace and discus: on the right was Gadā-devī and on the left Chakra-purusha, both two-armed and short in stature. When not personified, the discus was huge in proportion, the spokes appearing like petals of lotus, while the mace was a simple top-heavy rod (cf. Kalpana Desai: Iconography of Vishnu, Abhinav Publ., New Delhi, 1973)

In course of time, however, icons of Vishṇu with six arms (Sāttvata-saṁhitā, 12,222, carrying sword, lotus and mace in the right hands, and

1. MATSYA



2. KŪRMA

3. VARĀHA

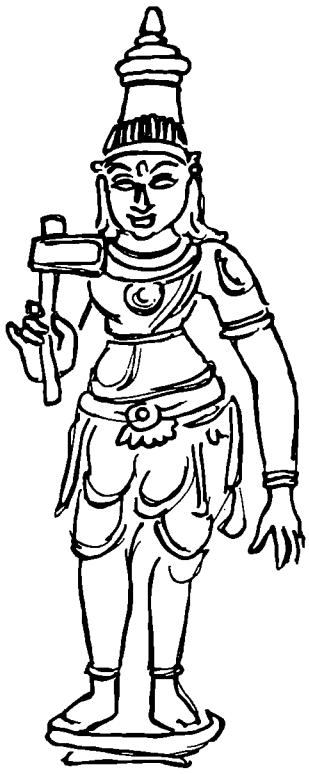
4. NRSIṂHA

5. VĀMANA

bow, arrow and conch in the left hands), eight arms (Matsya-purāṇa, 258,7, sword, mace, arrow and lotus in the right hands, and bow, shield, conch and discus in the left hands), twelve arms (Sāttvata-saṁhitā, 12,225, lotus, sword, discus, arrow, mace and goad in the right hands, and conch, noose, gesture of protection, sakti, pestle-club and bow in the left hands) and fourteen arms (op.cit, 227, the above with the addition of ploughshare in one of the right hands and battle-axe in one of the left hands) were mentioned in texts and also represented in icons.

The association of Garuḍa (see GARUḌA) with Vishṇu is also fairly ancient. The inscribed votive pillar erected by Heliodorus (son of Dion

LAKSHMĪ-NARASIṂHA
(bronze from Sode-maṭha, Uḍipi)

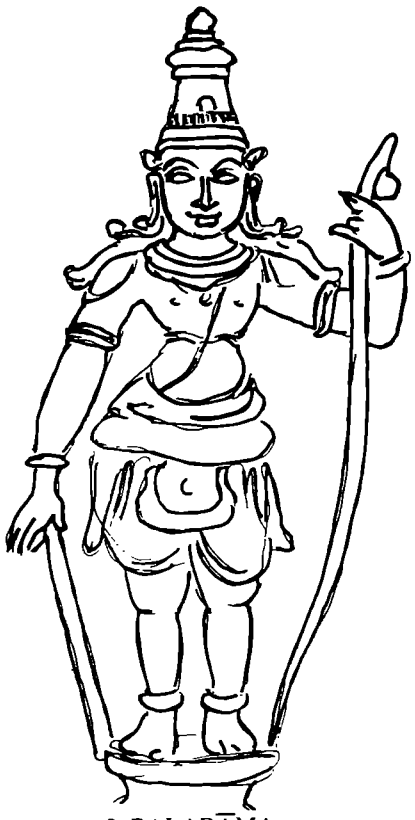


6. PARAŚU-RĀMA

7. RĀMA

and Greek ambassador from the monarch Antlal Kidas) at Besnagur towards the end of the third century B.C. was named 'garuḍa-dhvaja' (Garuḍa-column) in the Inscription. Likewise, the association of Śesha (see ANANTA), the serpent of the primordial waters, with Vishṇu also dates back to early days. Indeed Śesha is another version of Saṁkarshaṇa, with whom Vāsudeva as Vishṇu was always associated. Vishṇu-dharmottara (3,820) describes Vishṇu as reclining on serpent-bed. There are numerous early sculptures where Vishṇu is shown as seated in

8. KṚSHṆA



9. BALARĀMA

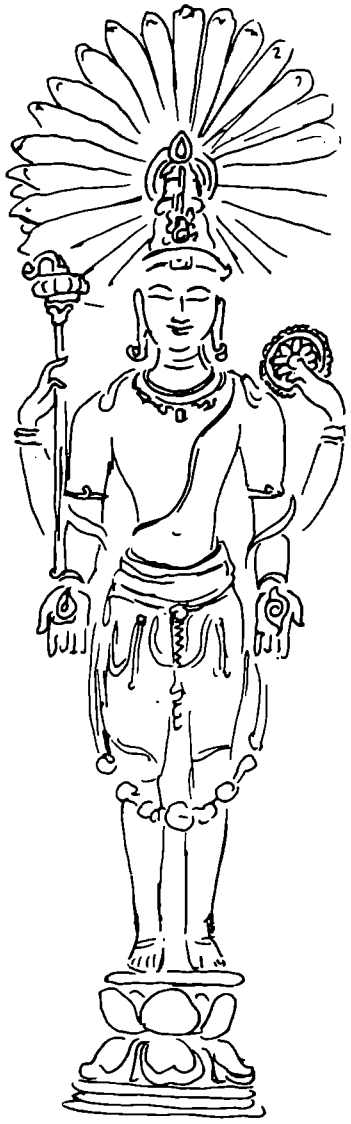
10. KALKI

lalitāsana on Śesha with five or seven hoods (as, for instance in Bādāmi or Aihoḷē). While Vishṇu reclines on Śesha, the form is known as Śesha-śayī, whereas the form in which Vishṇu is seated on Śesha is called Ādi-mūrti. The latter is the form which shows Vishṇu prior to creation, and the former shows the emanation of the creator (Brahmā) from his navel (see ŚESHA-ŚAYANA).

Vishṇu is undoubtedly the most popularly worshipped god in the country's pantheon. the Vaikhānasa and Pāñcharātra texts prescribe several forms in which this god is to be worshipped. There are also legends in purāṇas which occasion special forms (like Gajendra-moksha, see this entry, and the ten major incarnations, see these entries). The Vishṇu is usually represented as standing upon a lotus (padma) in perfect equipoise (sama-pāda-

VISHṆU
(Pallava, stone)

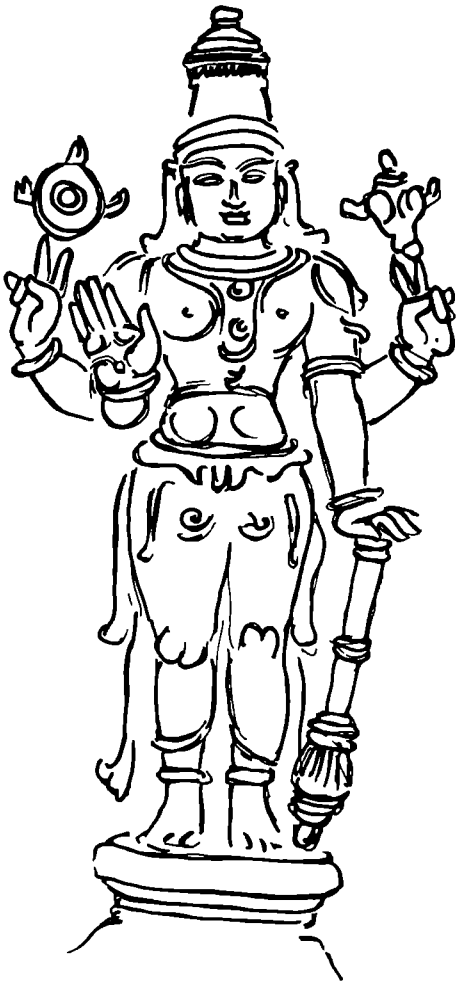
sthānaka), with four hands, the upper hands generally carrying discus and conch: the normal right hand may assume the gesture of protection and the left may carry mace (see VARADA-RĀJA), or the normal right hand may assume the gesture of boon-bestowal and the corresponding left hand in the kaṭyavalmbita posture (as in Śrīnivāsa or Veṅkaṭeśa). However, the normal right hand usually carries lotus.



VISHṆU
(sculpture from Bengal)

The order of the four 'weapons' (āyudhas) (conch, discus, mace, lotus) held in the hands may vary, giving rise to twenty-four forms (see CHATUR-VIṂŚATI-MŪRTI). Or the identification of parts of the devotee's body with the names of Vishṇu results in twelve forms (dvādaśa-mūrti). They are all in standing stance.

Vishṇu may also be seated on the coils of Śesha, with the multiple hoods of the serpent serving as a parasol, or he may be seated on the shoulders of Garuḍa. Such images are called



VISHṆU

'āsīna'. The god may also lay down in slumber on the coils of Śesha, when the image is called 'śayāna'.

In each of these three varieties (sthānaka, āsīna, śayāna), there are four sub-varieties: yoga, bhoga, vīra and ābhichārika (see for details these entries).

He may be represented alone (kevala), or in the company of his consort Lakshmī (the personified primordial nature, mūla-prakṛti). It is quite common for images of Vishṇu to be flanked by two goddesses, Lakshmī and Bhūdevī (earth-goddess), on the right and left sides respectively. Garuḍa is represented on the pedestal (cf. Aṁśumadbheda, paṭala 49 'saṁyuktah kevalo vāpi kartavyam vishṇumūrtinam').

Although the incarnations assumed by Vishṇu (see AVATĀRA) are thirty-eight according to Sāttvata-saṁhitā and Ahirbudhnya-saṁhitā, and twenty-two according to Bhāgavata-purāṇa (1,3,6-22), the major incarnations are only ten (see DAŚĀVATĀRA): Matsya (fish), Kūrma (tortoise), Varāha (boar), Narasiṁha (man-lion), Vāmana, Paraśu-rāma, Śrī-rāma, Kṛshṇa, Buddha and Kalki. The Buddha is sometimes substituted by Bala-rāma. Among them, Rāma and Kṛshṇa are very popular forms of Vishṇu, followed by Narasiṁha (see under these heads).

Vishṇu is always shown wearing kirīṭa-mukuṭa variety of crown on his head and makara-kuṇḍalas in his ears, and decorated with jewel-ornaments. He is draped in yellow-silken garments (pītāmbara). His complexion is blue like the atasi-flower (atasī- kusuma-śyāma). His face is tranquil and cheerful (prasanna- mukha). He has broad chest and shoulders and thick neck (pīna-galoras-sthūlāṁśa-bhujah) (cf. Bṛhat-saṁhitā, chap.58). There will be śrī-vatsa mark on his chest, and kaustubha-jewel.

As mentioned earlier, Bṛhat-saṁhitā (op.cit) prescribes that Vishṇu may be shown with but two hands, with six or eight hands ('ashṭa-bhujah, chaturbhujah dvibhuja eva vā'). When he is two- armed, the right produces hope and peace ('śānti-kara-dakshiṇa- hastah', viz. the gesture of protection) and the left hand holds a conch (aparaś cha śaṁkha-dharah'). When four-armed the normal right hand is like the above ('śānti-da eko'), and the corresponding left holds mace ('gadādharaś chānyah'); the two other hands carry conch and discus. When eight-armed, the right hands hold sword, mace, arrow and the gesture of protection, while the left hands carry bow, shield, discus and conch.

When Vishṇu is two-armed, and carries discus and mace in his hands, he is known as Loka-pāla-vishṇu. Yogeśvara (yoga-nārāyaṇa) is the form of Vishṇu seated in yogic posture upon a white lotus; he has four hands, two normal hands joined in yoga- mudrā, and the upper hands holding conch and discus. Yogeśvara is sometimes shown with four faces and twelve arms. There is a form of Śiva regarded as his sportive form (līlā-mūrti), which incorporates the Vishṇu form on his left side. This is known as Hari-hara or Śaṁkara-nārāyaṇa. A form of Vishṇu as a solar divinity is celebrated as Sūrya-nārāyaṇa.

There are several forms in which Vishṇu is worshipped, like Vyāsa, Kapila, Dattātreya, Raṅganātha, Pāṇḍuraṅga, Varada-rāja and Hayagrīva.

VISHṆU-DURGĀ

Durgā is also known as Nārāyaṇī, and legends speak of her as brother of Kṛshṇa. She shares many details with Vishṇu, including the dark complexion. The Āgamas prescribe that worship for her must be accorded in the same manner as to Vishṇu.

The dhyāna-śloka of Vishṇu-durgā mentions that she is four-armed, carrying conch and dis-

cus in the upper hands, the normal right hand showing the gesture of protection and the corresponding left hand placed on the thigh (ūrubāhum, viz. kaṭyavatambita). She is three-eyed, and her face is benign (saumya-vadana). She stands upon the head of buffalo ('mahishasya śiras-sthām').

VISHṆVANUGRAHA-MŪRTI

One of the sportive forms of Śiva, where he is represented as bestowing grace on Vishṇu by presenting him with discus. See for details CHAKRA-PRADĀNA-MŪRTI.

VISHṆVANUGRAHA-MŪRTI
(drawing from Mysore)

VISHVAKSENA

Vishvaksena is the commander of the hosts following Vishṇu (gaṇapati) even as Vināyaka is the commander of Śiva's hosts. Among the adherents of Pāñcharātra, Vishvaksena occupies the same role as Gaṇapati does for the others. The association of Vishvaksena with Vishṇu is ancient. Even Patañjali in the centuries before Christ refers to three leaders of the Vṛshṇi clan; Vāsudeva, Baladeva, and Vishvaksena (on Pāṇini, 4,1,114).

The legends relate that once Indra sent the nymph Kuntalā to distract and entice the fierce sage Durvāsa; and Durvāsa reacted by cursing her to be born as a huntress on earth. She was born as a daughter to the hunter-chieftain Vīrabāhu; she was named Suvarchalā (or Sūtravatī). She got married to Dharma-putra, but the god Varuṇa clandestinely loved her and Vishvaksena was born. He had golden complexion; wide eyes, and his palms were marked by the symbols of conch, sword and bow. When he grew up, he studied the sacred lore under the sage Kāsyapa. And he went to Vṛshabhādri (the present Tirumala hills) and performed penance for twelve years. Vishṇu was pleased with his devotion and made him the commander of his forces (senādhipati) at Vaikuṇṭha (hence Vaikuṇṭha-senāni, sarva-gaṇādhyaksha).

In the Śrī-Vaishṇava line of teachers (guru-paramparā), he occupies the third place (the first teacher being Vishṇu himself and the second Lakshmī). He is installed in all Vishṇu temples of this sect and worshipped. He is regarded as the custodian of the worn flowers of Vishṇu ('nirmālya-dhāri'). He is said to have appeared in the Bhādrapada month during pūrvāshāḍha constellation.

Vishvaksena is prescribed in the texts to be represented like Vishṇu in all details except that he does not have the śrī-vatsa mark on his chest or the sacred chord ('śrī-vatsam brahma-sūtram vinā sarvam harer iva'). He is no doubt four-armed and carries conch, discus and mace in three of his hands, like Vishṇu, but he is very differently represented. The fourth hand, for instance, assumes the gesture of warning and threat (tarjanī-hasta) or holds a flower (pushpa-hasta). He has long mustaches on his face and wears his matted hair as a crown ('dīrgha-śmaśru-jaṭā-dharah', Kālikā-purāna, chap.82). While

Kālikā-purāṇa (op.cit.) gives his complexion as tawny red (rakta-piṅgala-varṇa), the Pāñcharātra texts make it dark-blue (śyāma).

He is seated upon a throne ('siṁhāsane samāsīna') or on a chariot of flowers (prasūna-ratha-vāhana), with his right leg bent and laid on the seat while his left leg is stretched down ('ākuñchya dakshiṇam pādam vāmam prasārya'). Another dhyāna-śloka, however, reverses the position of his legs ('piṭhādhastat prasārita- dakshiṇa-pādah ākuñchita-vāma-pādah'). He wears yellow silken garments (pīta-dukūlakah), and is lustrous like fire ('agni-saṁnibha'). Sometimes, he is accompanied by his consort ('jayayā sārdham āsīnah') and his consort's name is given as Vārāhī ('vārāhī vish-vaksena-priyā', Kālikā-purāṇa, op.cit).

VISMAYA-HASTA

A gesture of the hand, usually right, which suggests wonderment or mystery.

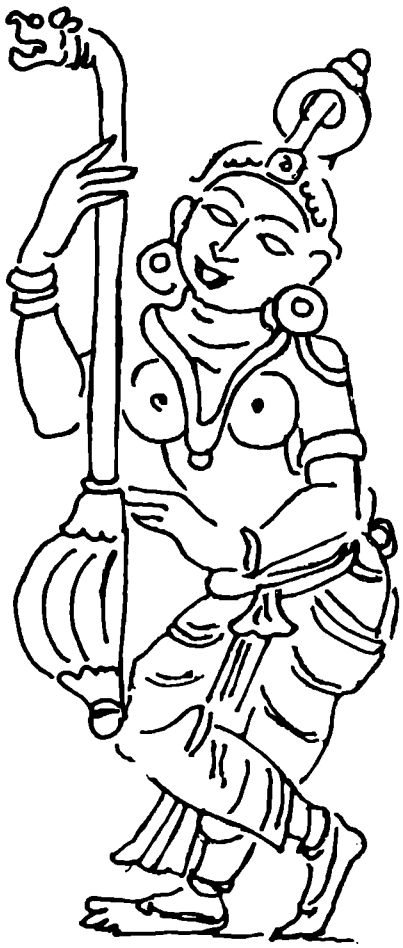
VISMAYA-HASTA

VIHAṄGAMA

One of the vibhava forms of Vishṇu (see VIBHAVA), mentioned in Sāttvata-saṁhitā (12,40-43) and Paushkara-saṁhitā (36,317), this is the sky-soaring divine swan (haṁsa), which is white in complexion like the mountain of snow and has a golden coloured beak (hema-tuṇḍa). Whiteness of the body signifies sattva-guṇa, and the two legs rajas and tamas. The two eyes of the swan are dharma and adharma, and the wings represent Fire and Moon (agnī- shomāt-maka). It is immense in size (mahā-tanu) and it resides in Śveta-dvīpa.

VĪṆĀ

The well-known and ancient stringed instrument (lute) of India, held in the hands of some divinities like Sarasvatī, Gaṇapati and Dakshiṇāmūrti (see below). In the early representations of Vīrabhadra (see VĪRABHADRA) as one of the two guardians of the seven mother-goddesses (see SAPTA-MĀṬṚKĀ) (the other being Gaṇapati) he is seated, playing on vīṇā.

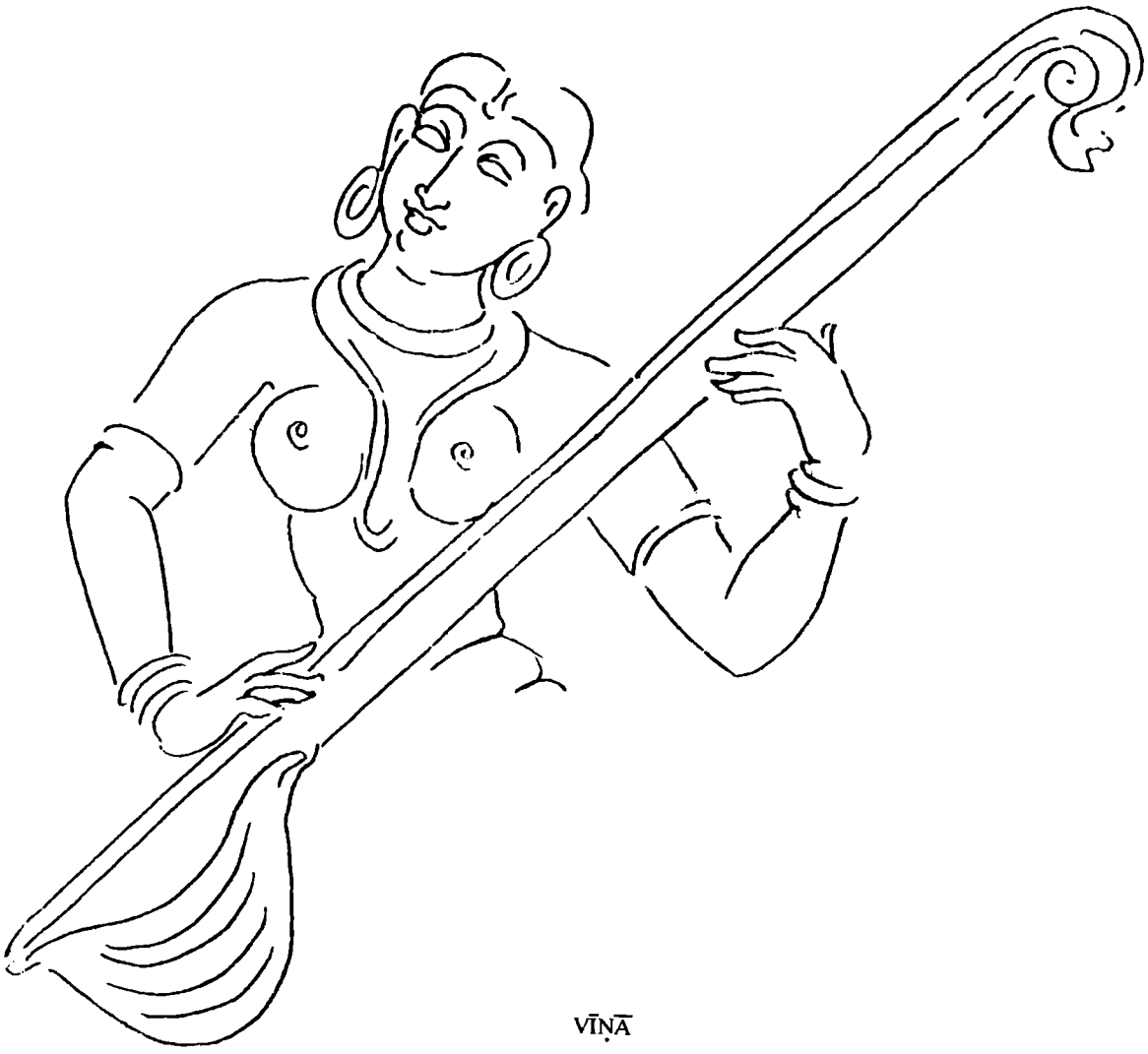


VĪṆĀ

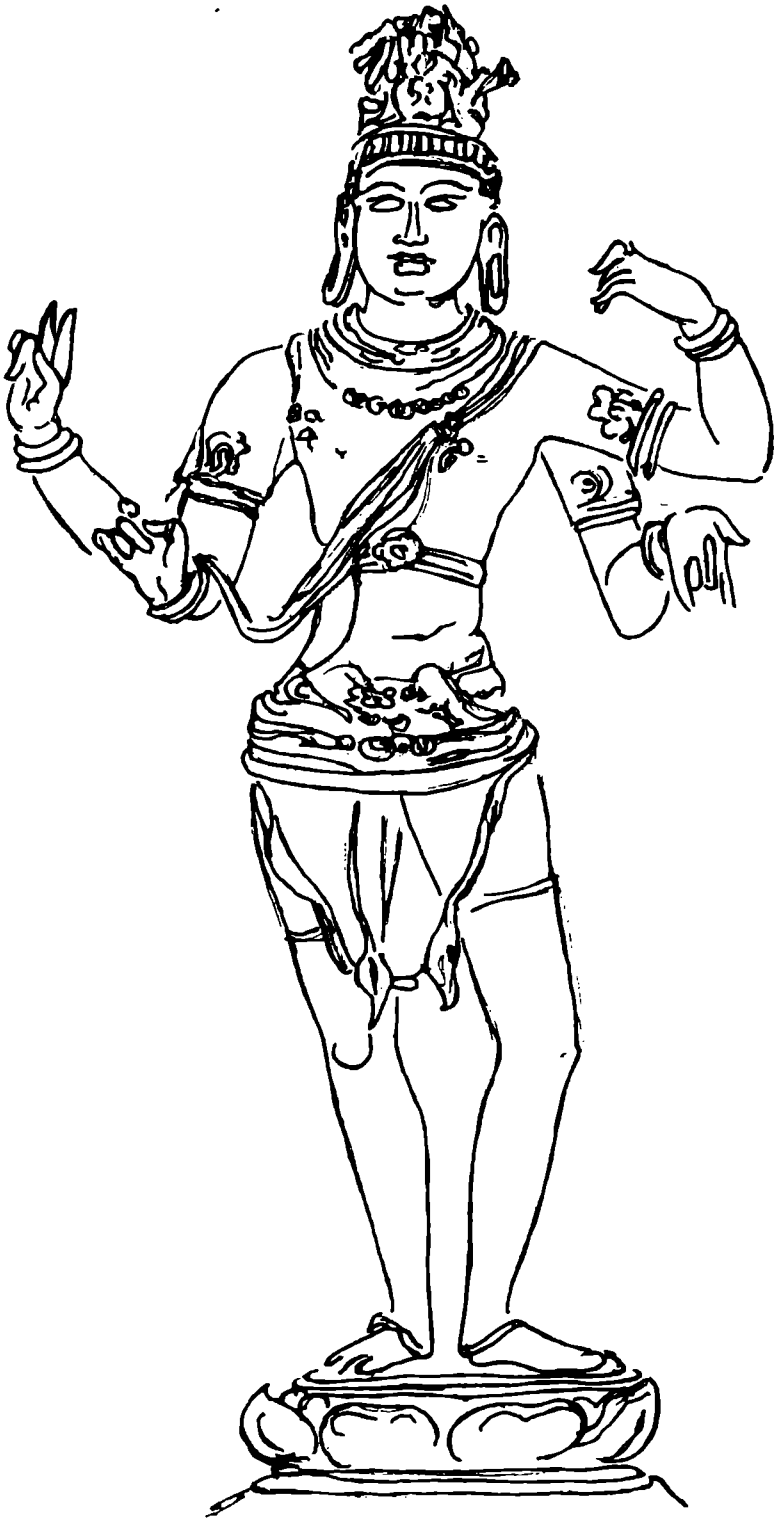
VĪṆĀ-DHARA

A form of Dakshiṇā-mūrti (see DAKSHIṆĀ-MŪRTI) aspect of Śiva, which according to Pūrva-kāraṇāgama (paṭala 11) was assumed to vanquish the god of love ('manmatha-nigraham'). Śiva is extremely handsome in this form and an expert in music. Kāmikāgama calls this form Gāna-dakshiṇā-mūrti, while other texts call it Vīṇā-dhara-dakshiṇā-mūrti.

Śiva is here seated, or he stands with the left leg in the utkuṭika posture. He is four armed, and the upper hands carry the usual emblems of Śiva, axe (right) and antelope (left). The two normal hands assume the kaṭaka posture (called sarpa-kara in Uttara-kāmikāgama, paṭala 51): the left palm faces upwards ('vāma-hastam kaṭakam ūrdhva-vaktram'), right palm is bent downward (kaṭakam dakshiṇa-hastam adhomukham'), as if plucking the strings. The left arm is lifted slightly

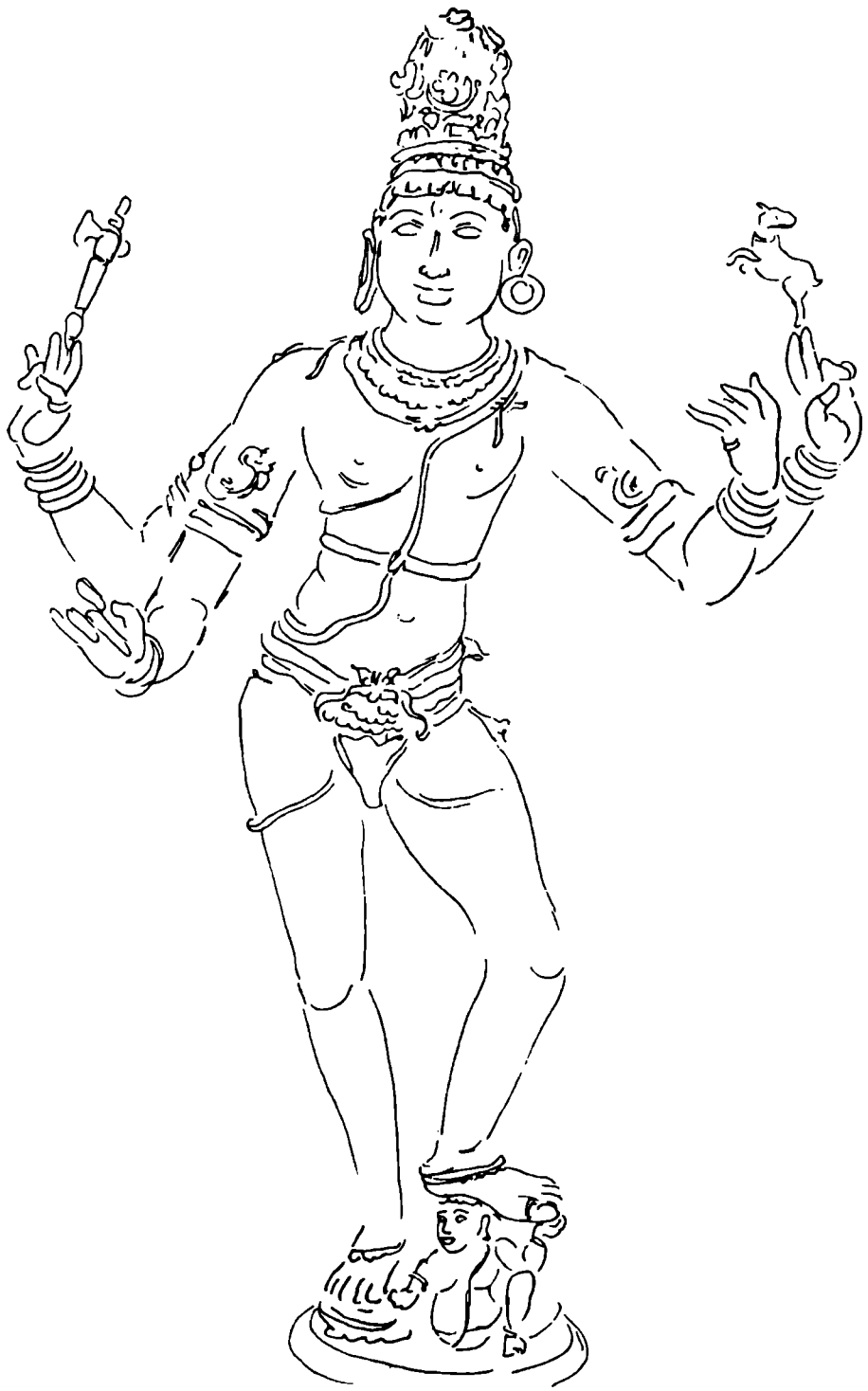


VĪṆĀ



VĪNĀ-DHARA

VĪṆĀ-DHARA



VĪNĀ-DHARA-DAKSHINĀ-MŪRTI
(bronze from Tañjavūr)

up, while the right arm is lowered, as the posture will be playing on the instrument. The arm is lowered, as the posture will be while playing on the instrument. The vīnā is balanced in one of the two hands ('vīnā tu dakshine vādakshine katake sthitam', Uttara-kāmika, op.cit.) or held delicately or cleverly in both the hands ('pūrva-hasta-dvayor vīnā dhrtam yuktyā', Amsumadbheda, patala 75). The gaze of the god is settled on the instrument; and he appears absorbed in music.

While the icons of Dakshinā-mūrti are generally found in a seated posture, this is an unusual form as it is most often represented as standing. In fact, this form shares no specific features of Dakshinā-mūrti and can only with difficulty be recognized as a variety of Dakshinā-mūrti. There is another form of Dakshinā- mūrti, seated in yoga-bandha but carrying lute in his left upper hand; however, he is not shown as playing on the instrument.

VĪNĀ-DHARA

VĪRA-GANAPATI

One of the many forms of Ganapati (see GANAPATI), he is described as rosy-coloured (aruna) and has sixteen hands. The weapons he

VĪNĀ-DHARA

VĪRA-GAṆAPATI

holds are all fierce and war-like. The hands show vampire (vetāla), śakti, bow, arrow, sword, shield, magical weapon called khaṭvāṅga, hammer, mace, goad, serpent-noose, spear, sharp missile known as kunta, battle-axe, war-bell and banner. Another dhyāna-śloka substitutes war-bell (ghaṇṭā) with discus (chakra).

VĪRA-BHADRA

An attendant (gaṇa) of Śiva (see ŚIVA), he is sometimes identified with a variant form of Śiva himself. He is said to have flashed forth from the matted locks of an indignant Śiva ('rudra-jaṭā-saṁbhava', 'rudra-kopa-samudbhūta'). The context was the self-immolation of Satī during the sacrifice performed by her father Daksha-brahmā (see SATI). Śiva sent Vīrabhadra to kill Daksha and destroy the sacrifice. Vīrabhadra is generally represented as setting out (yānaka-mūrti) on his mission of destruction.

There are several forms in which Vīrabhadra is shown. Usually, however, he is black in colour, three-eyed, wearing a garland of severed heads and donning yellow broadshield (in the normal hands) and bow and arrow (in the upper hands). Serpents are his ornaments.

According to Kāraṇāgama, Bhadra-kālī must be shown standing on his left side, while Daksha with goat's head with horns stands on his right side in a posture of supplication (namaskārāñjali). Vīrabhadra beheaded Daksha; but later when gods pleaded that he may be revived, Vīrabhadra joined the body with the head of a goat that was lying about there. Daksha thus recovered his life, and remained a devotee of Śiva (śiva-dhyāna-parāyaṇa).

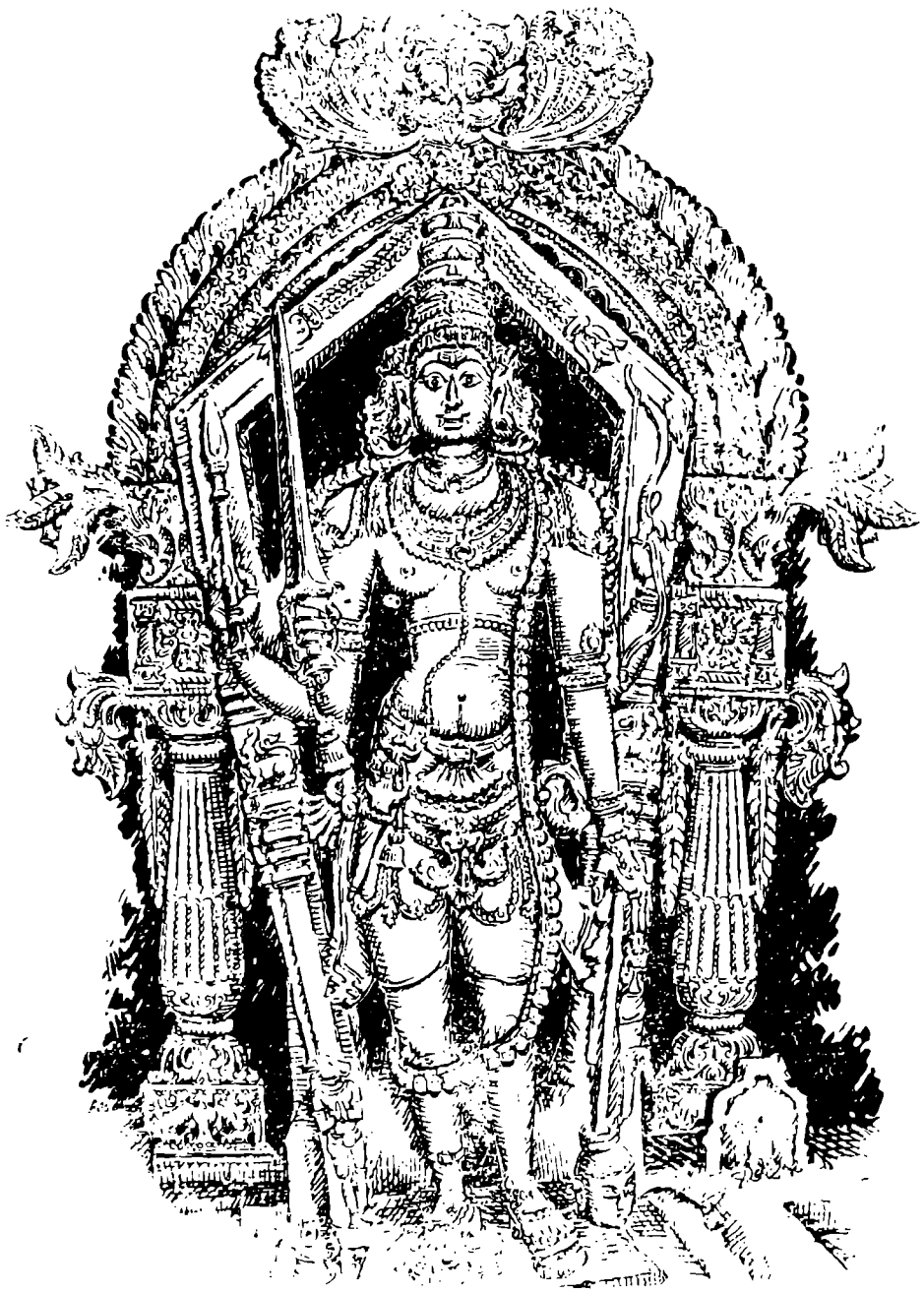
Śilpa-saṅgraha enumerates three varieties of Vīrabhadra images, all of them dark in complexion and fierce in appearance : (1) two-armed (sāttvika), (2) four-armed (rājasika) and (3) eight-armed (tāmasa). The details are: (1) yoga-vīra, two-armed and seated with sword and shield in the hands, one of the legs dangling from the seat; (2) bhoga-vīra, four-armed and standing, carrying bow, arrow, sword and kataka gesture in the hands, with linga on the crown and a garland of severed heads round his neck, and Daksha standing on his right side; (3) Vīra-vīra, eight-armed and walking, carrying trident, sword, arrow, and antelope (in the right hands), and skull-cup, shield, bow, and goad (in the left hands).

Śilpa-ratna mentions a form of eight-armed Vīrabhadra riding on a vampire (vetālārūḍha),

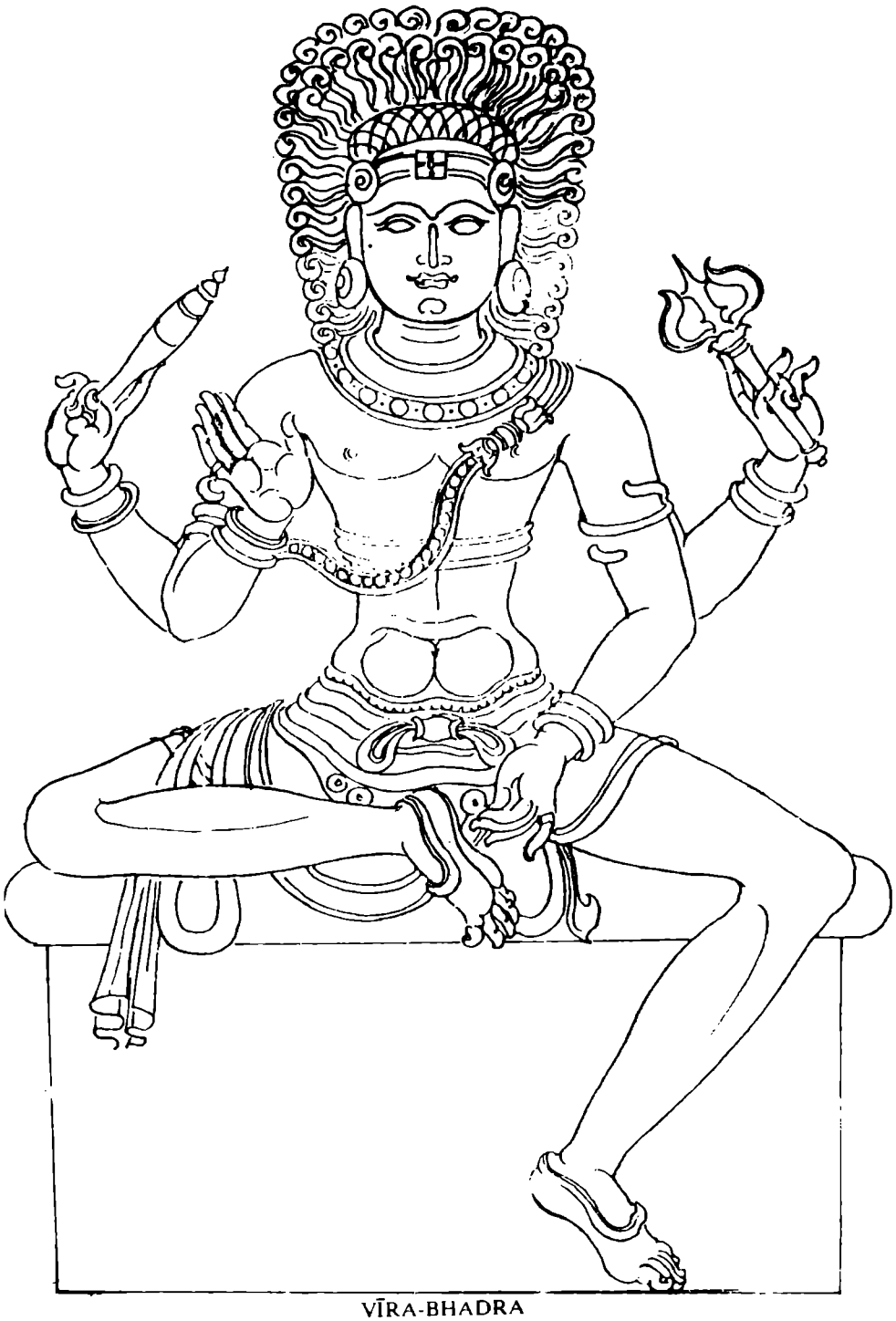
VĪRABHADRA
(old drawing from Mysore)

VĪRABHADRA
(old drawing from Mysore)

VĪRA-BHADRA
(from Tiruvaṇṇāmalai)



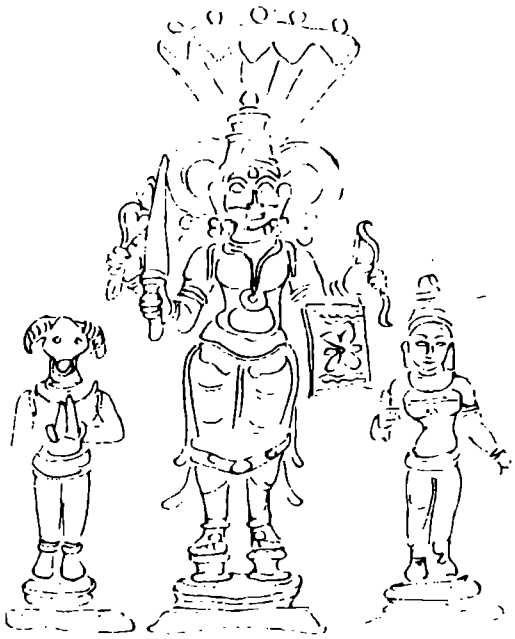
VĪRA-BHADRA
(stone, from Lepākshi)



VĪRA-BHADRA
(Pallava)

VĪRA-BHADRA

VĪRA-BHADRA
(old drawing from Mysore)



VĪRA-BHADRA
(bronze, in London Museum)

VĪRA-BHADRA
(stone relief)

VĪRA-BHADRA
(from Niḍugal, Tumkur)

VĪRA-BHADRA
(as Vīṇādhara)
(from Narasa-maṅgala)

surrounded by his own attendants (nija-gaṇa-sahita). He is here fair-complexioned (white like milk, 'go-kshīrābha') and fierce (ugra). His tawny red hair all matted is tied into a top-knot to which crescent moon is stuck ('kapiśa-tara-jaṭābaddha-sītāṁśu-khaṇḍa'). His hands show battle-axe, hand-drum, sword, shield, skull-cup, spear and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. He is clad in tiger-skin.

Another dhyāna-śloka makes his complexion yellow (haridrābha) and gives him only two hands, one of them holding a mace and the other a clenched fist ('gadā-mushṭi-hasta'). He is terrible and uncontrollable in his glee (karālaṭ-ṭahāsa). He is to be invoked in fire, and worshipped for arresting the enemies (ripu-stambhanārtham vahnau āvahya).

Still another description is that he is naked (digambara) but decorated with many serpents ('bhujaṅga-gaṇa-bhūshaṇa'), that his third eye (viz. the eye on the forehead) is awesome ('bhayada- phāla-netrānanam'); his body is besmeared by the blood of his enemy whom he has massacred with his trident ('bhuja-gata-triśūla-hata-sva-śatru-rudhirokshitam'). His brows are knit in anger (bhrukuṭī) and his hair is like flames (jvālā-keśa).

In the sapta-mātṛkā panels, it is usual to find Vīrabhadra at the right end and Gaṇapati at the left end, flanking the seven mother-goddesses (see SAPTA-MĀTṚKĀ).

VĪRA-LAKSHMĪ

A form of Lakshmī (see LAKSHMĪ), emphasizing her valour and war- like qualities. She is visualized as eight-armed and seated upon a lion-throne. Her complexion is that of burnished gold (tapta- kāñchana-sannibhā). She is decorated with all auspicious signs (sarva-lakshaṇa-sampannā). Her normal hands show the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. The other six hands carry discus, bow, arrow, spear, conch and skull-cup.

Vīra-lakshmī, according to Sītopanishat (hymn 7) is an expression of Vīra-śakti, one of the three energies of icchhā-śakti (the other two being yoga-sakti and bhoga-śakti). This energy manifests itself as four-armed (gestures of protection and boon- bestowal and lotuses), decorated with crown and other ornaments, surrounded by all gods, seated under the tree of wish-fulfilment (kalpa-taru-mūla) in front of Kāma-dhenu, and served by all celestial nymphs. Four elephants carrying bejewelled pots in their trunks sprinkle on her nectar (chaturbhir-gajai-ratna-ghaṭairabhishichyamānā) The sun and moon are lamps for her. Nārada and Tumburu. sing for her. Rākā and Sinīvālī (lunar deities) hold parasols on her; Hlādinī and Māyā wave flywhisks in front of her; Svāhā and Svadhā fan her. She is seated in lotus posture upon a glorious throne ('divya-simhāsane padmāsanārudha').

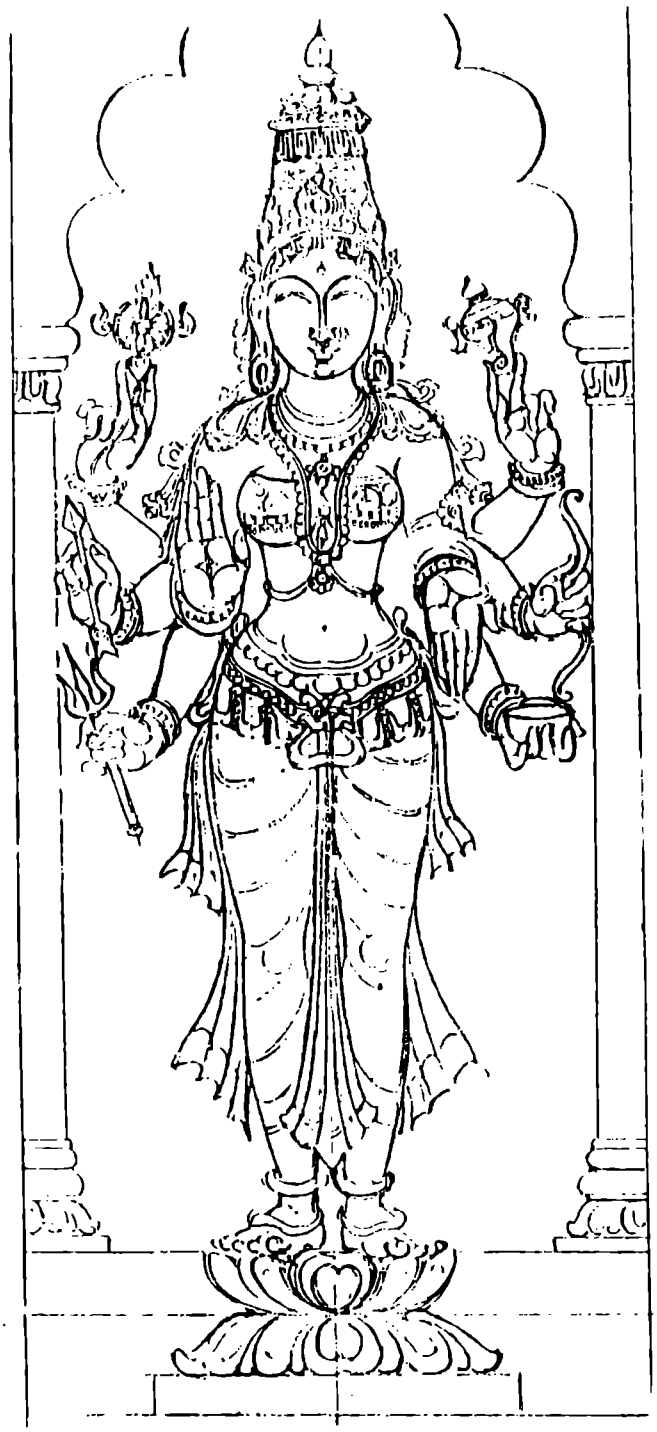
VĪRA-ŚAKTI

One of the three śaktis (see ŚAKTI), (the other two being Yoga- śakti and Bhoga-śakti), she is four-armed, carrying in her upper hands lotus and rosary, the normal right hand showing the gesture of protection and the corresponding left placed on the thigh (ūru-hasta, viz. kaṭyavalambita).

She stands in perfect equipoise (samāṅgam, samapādam), upon bhadra-pīṭha. Large ear-rings adorn her ears (lamba-kuṇḍala). She is draped in a garment of variegated colours (vividha-varṇa- vastra). At her back is a discus.

VĪRĀSANA

A posture of sitting assumed by monarchs and heroes, it is one of the eleven principal postures mentioned in Ahirbudhnya-saṁhitā (chap.30). In this posture, thighs are placed together ('ekatra ūrūṇi saṁsthāpya'), the left leg being placed upon the right thigh, and the left thigh resting upon the right foot ('pādam ekam athetaram, ūrum pāde nivesya').

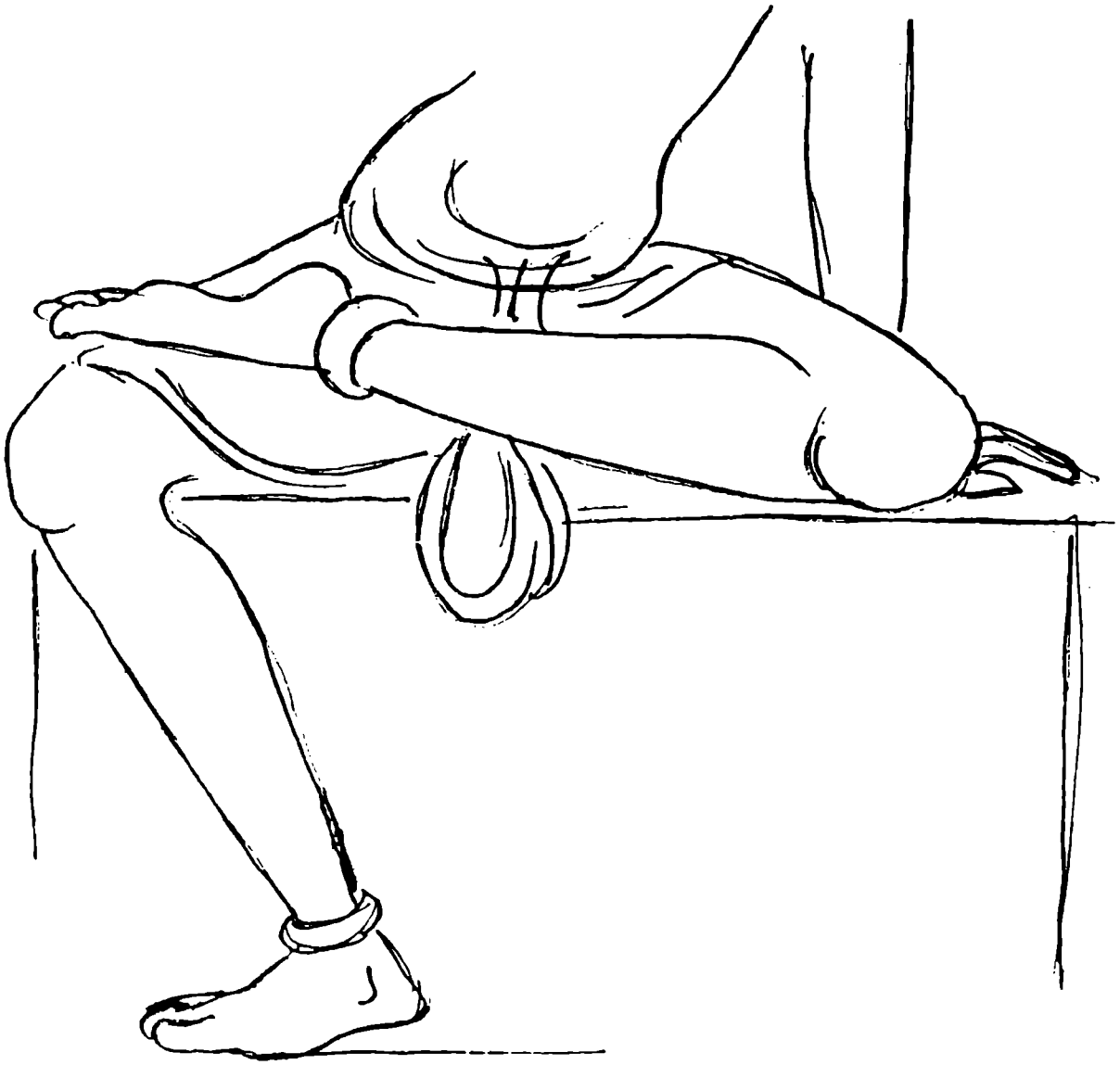


VĪRA-LAKSHMĪ

VṚSHABHA

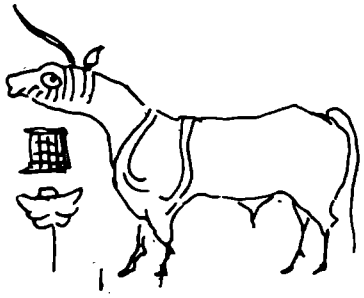
Vṛshabha as the vehicle of Śiva (see ŚIVA) is a marvellous (adbhutam) bull, white in colour like conch or moon (samkhendu- dhavala), with black horns (kṛshṇa-śṛṅga), long ears (dīrgha- karṇa), raised hump (kakudmanta), deep red hooves (ati-rakta- khura) and dark blue tail (nīla-lāṅgūla-kūrcha) (Mūrti-dhyānam, Tanjore, p.47)

Also called Ādi-nātha, Vṛshabha is the first of the twenty-four tīrthaṅkaras (see TĪRTHAṄKARA) of the Jaina pantheon. He is said to have been the first king to have brought into being all forms of culture amongst human beings. He belonged

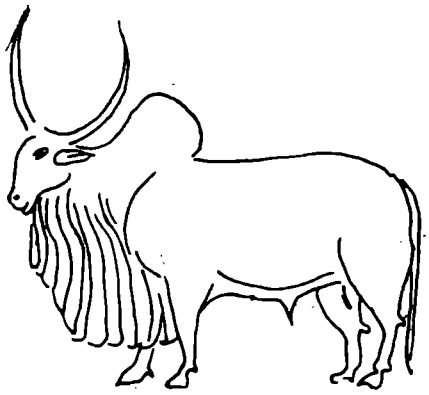


VĪRĀSANA

VĪRĀSANA



VṚSHABHA
(from Mohenjodāro)



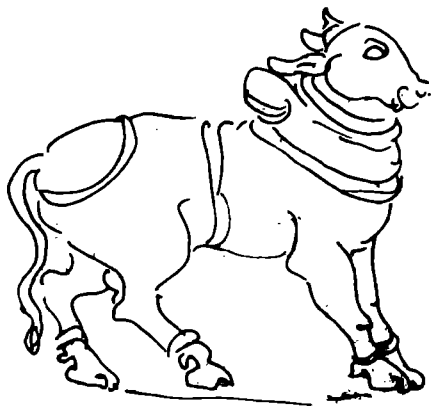
VṚSHABHA
(from Harappa)

to the Ikshvāku lineage, and ruled over Sāketa before he renounced. His parents were Nābhi-rāja and Marū-devī. He was of golden complexion, and he obtained enlightenment while he meditated under the nyagrodha-tree. His emblem is bull. His chief disciple (gaṇadhara) was Vṛshabha-sena. His own sons Bāhubali (see GOMMAṬA) and Bharata served him as attendants. Gomukha (see GOMUKHA) was his yaksha, and Chakreśvarī (see CHAKREŚVARĪ) his yakshinī. Kailāsa is the place where he disappeared.

He is widely worshipped by both divisions of the Jaina community (śvetāmbara and digaṁbara). His icon is like that of any tīrthaṅkara, but he is distinguished by his matted hair falling in strands over his shoulders and by the emblem of bull carved on the pedestal.

VṚSHABHĀRŪḌHA

A form of Śiva as riding his mount, bull (vṛshabha). He is seated on the back of the bull ('go-pateh pṛshṭha-saṁstham'), with Gaurī on his left lap and Gaṇapati on his right. He is white-complexioned and four-armed. The upper hands carry stone-mason's hammer (ṭaṅka) and antelope. The right arm goes around Gaṇapati and the left around Gauri, both hands assuming



VRSHABHA

VṚSHABHĀRŪDHA
(old drawing from Mysore)

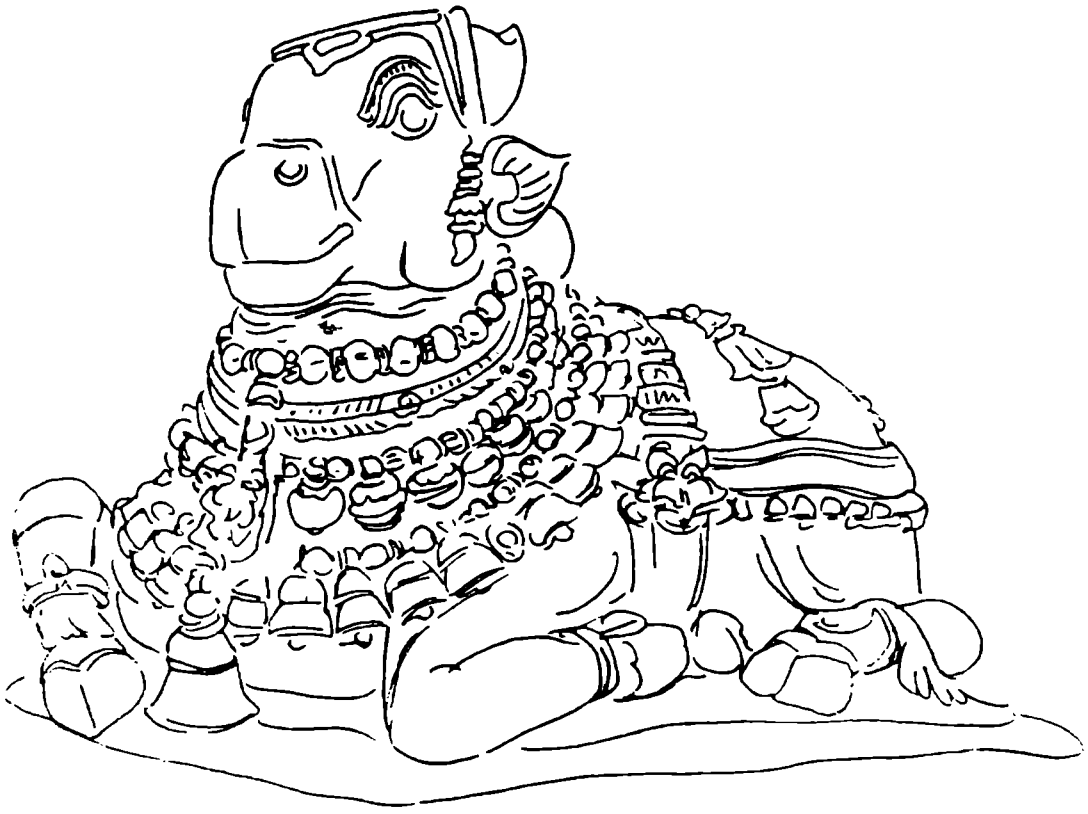
the kataka posture. When Gaṇapati is not there, Gaurī may be seen on the rightside.

Śiva is three-eyed and peaceful in aspect (prasanna). His hair is tied up in the shape of a tall crown (baddha-veṇī-kiṭa).

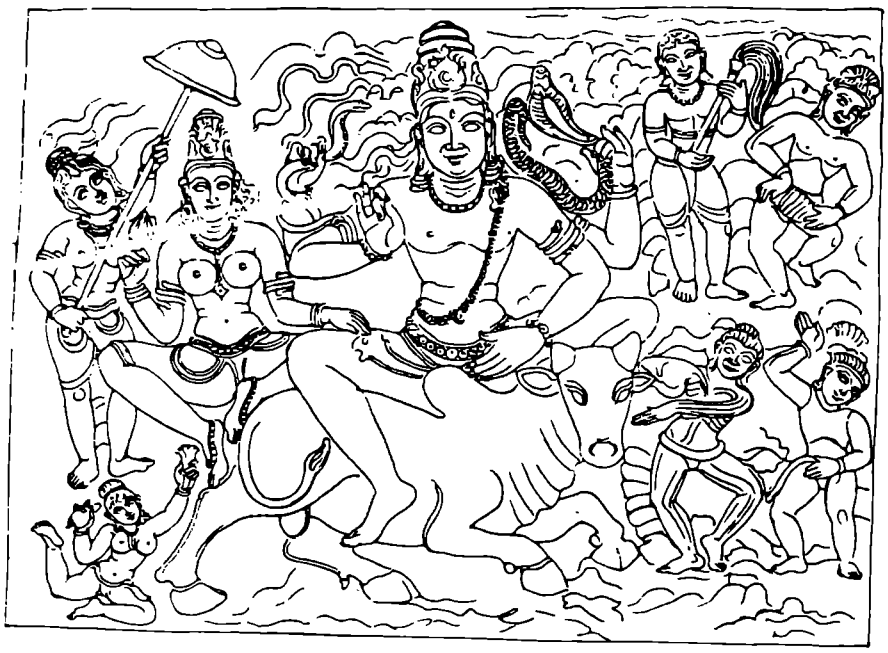
According to Kāśyapa-saṁhitā, Vṛsha-vāhana may show Śiva not as riding but only standing and leaning against the bull, with his right elbow on the bull's head.

VEṆU

Bamboo flute, on which some deities (like Kṛshṇa, gaṇas and gandharvas) are shown as playing.



VṚSHABHA

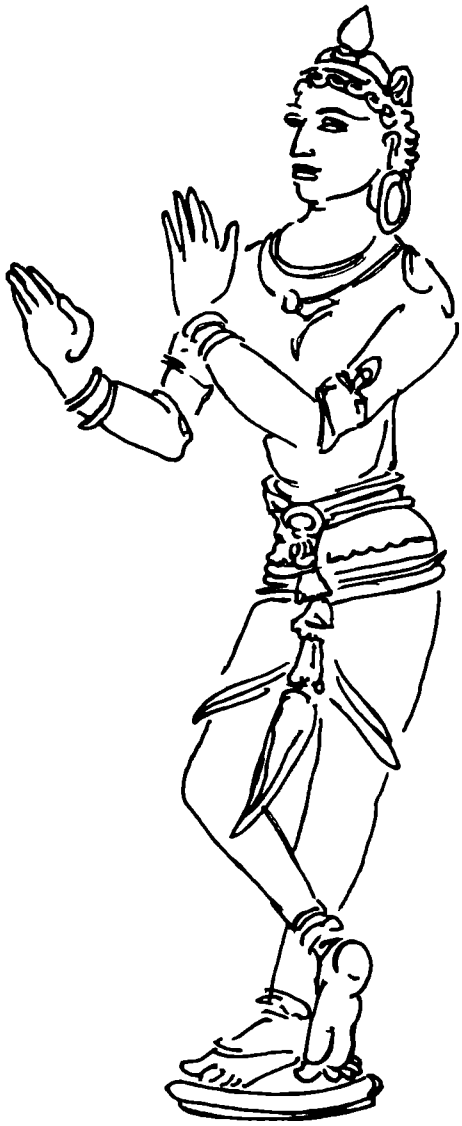


VṚSHABHĀRŪḌHA

VṚSHABHĀRŪḌHA
(stone, Bṛhadīśvara temple, Tañjavūr)

VṚSHABHĀRŪḌHA
(wood carving from Mysore)

VEṆU-GOPĀLA
(wood-carving, Mysore)



VEṆU-GOPĀLA
(bronze, Govt. Museum Madras)

VENU-GOPĀLA

VENU-GOPĀLA

Kṛshṇa (see KṚSHṆA) is often represented as standing under the Kadamba tree playing on flute, while cowherd boys, damsels and cows surround him. This recalls his early life in Gokula. He is depicted as a charming young man, dark in complexion like the rain-bearing clouds, with peacock-feathers adorning his crest. He is two-armed and both hands are engaged in playing the flute. He stands erect or in a two-bend or three-bend posture. One of his feet is planted firmly while the other is bent in a graceful manner, thrown on the other side. The charm of his music must be made visible on the face of Kṛshṇa himself and on the faces of the damsels surrounding him.

VETĀLA

Vampire, or a spirit that possesses dead bodies, making them walk about.

VEDA-MŪRTI

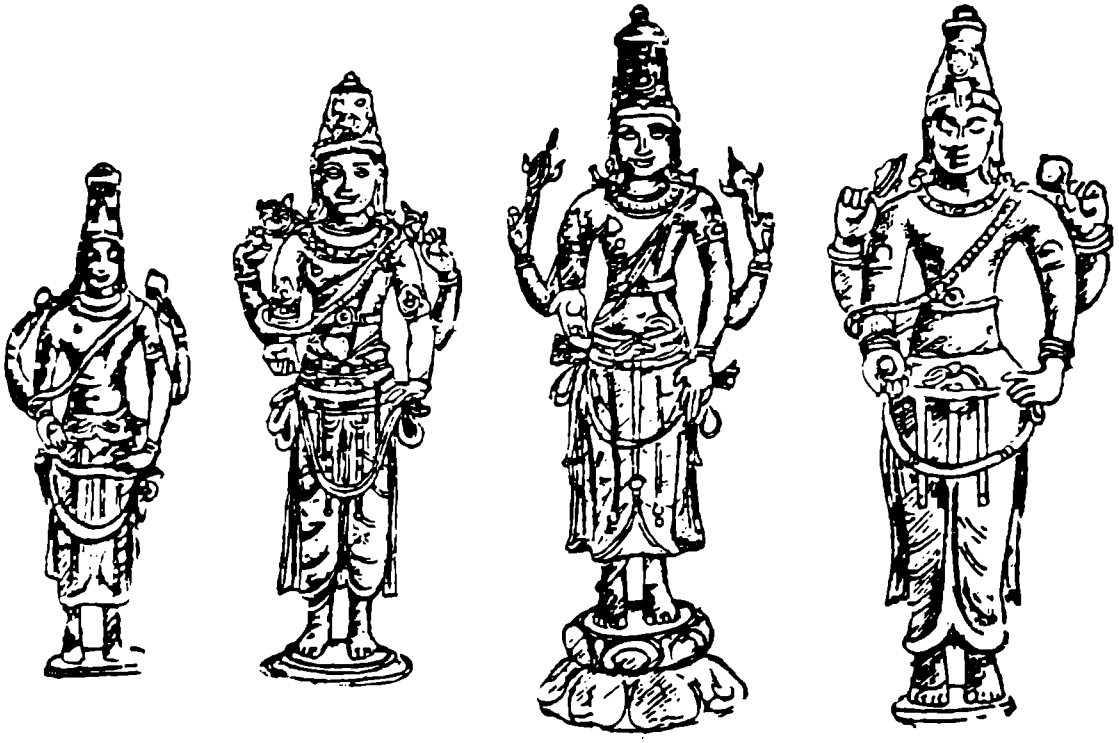
Garuḍa as the embodiment of Vedic wisdom (see GARUḌA) is of the complexion of burnished gold (tapta-hāṭaka-sannibha), clothed in garments of the hue of parrot's feathers (śuka-piñnchhāmbara- dhara), and having a channa-vīra on his chest. His crown resembles the slanting crown of Kubera, and he sits in a chariot drawn by horses (or on a horse as his mount, aśva-ratha-vāhana). His limbs represent several aspects of Vedic learning: his head is trivṛtta; his eyes are Sāma-gāyatra; his soul the Soma-sāma; his body Vāmadevya-hymn; his organs are the chhandas; his tail is the Yajus.

VEDA-VYĀSA

He is one of the most eminent of the ancient sages, who was responsible for the division of Veda into four collections (samhitās: Rg, Yajus, Sāma and Atharva), hence known as Veda-Vyāsa ('vivyāsa vedān chaturo'). He is also renowned as the compiler of the epic Mahābhārata, and author of eighteen great purāṇas.

VEDA-VYĀSA

VEDA-VYĀSA



VEṀKAṬEŚA
(early icon)

According to Sāttvata-saṁhitā (12, 154-156) and Paushkara-saṁhitā (34,63) he was an incarnation of Vishṇu. He is to be shown as seated in yoga-paṭṭa, and two-armed. The right hand assumes the gesture of scriptural exposition ('dakshiṇena śāstrārtham ādiśan'), and the left carries the scriptural text ('vahan vāma- hastena sarva-śāstrārtha-pustakam'). He is of the complexion of atasī flower.

Vishṇu-dharmottara requires him to be represented as emaciated in body (kṛśah) and dark-complexioned (kṛshṇa-tanuh); his tawny hair is done up as a crest. He is surrounded by four disciples Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila and Vaiśaṁpāyana.

VEṀKAṬEŚA

A form of Vishṇu, made very popular by the ancient and celebrated temple of this form on the Tirupati hills (Tirumala) in Āndhra Pradesh. However, the śilpa-śāstra texts do not mention this form. Vishṇu in this form has his normal right hand in the gesture of boon-bestowal, and his normal left in the katyavalambita posture. The upper right hand carries discus and the corresponding left conch. On the chest is the śrīvatsa mark, signifying the presence of Lakshmī. The figure stands in sama-pāda-sthānaka posture. While it is strictly a lone image (kevala), it is sometimes flanked by the images of Śrī-devī and Bhū-devī. This form of Vishṇu is also known as Śrīnivāsa (meaning the abode of Lakshmī). The name Veṁkaṭeśa means the 'lord of the Veṁkaṭa hills' (hence also Veṅkaṭāchalapati'), the expression 'veṁ + kaṭa' signifying "burning up of sins".

VELĀYUDHA-SUBRAHMAṆYA

A form of Subrahmaṇya (see KĀRTIKEYA), usually two-armed, carrying a long spear (vela) in his right hand and the left assuming the katyavalambita posture.

VAIKUṆṬHA

Also known as Vaikuṇṭha-nātha, Vaikuṇṭha-nārāyaṇa or Chatur-mūrti, it is an interesting representation of Vishṇu incorporating the four vyūhas (see VYŪHA): Vāsudeva, Saṁkarshaṇa,

VEṀKAṬEŚA
(early icon)

Pradyumna and Aniruddha, emphasizing the four major guṇas: bala, jñāna, aiśvarya and śakti respectively. Vishṇu in this form has four faces (vaktra-chatushṭaya) and eight arms (bāhavoshṭau). The eight arms represent the four quarters (diśaś chatasrah) and the four intermediary directions (tāvatyo vidiśāh) (cf.Vishnu- harmottara, 3,47, 8-10)

According to this text, each of the vyūhas is characterized by two specific gunas, and thus the four vyūhas together have four pairs of gunas, symbolized by the four pairs of hands and the weapons they carry. Vāsudeva is represented by discus and mace (symbolizing purusha and prakṛti, viz. sun and moon), Saṁkarshaṇa by pestle-club- (musala, symbolizing death, mṛtyu) and ploughshare (lāṅgala, symbolizing time, kāla), Pradyumna by bow (Sāṁkhya) and arrow (Yoga), and Aniruddha shield (the cover of ignorance, ajñānāvaraṇa) and sword (renunciation, vairāgya). If Vāsudeva represents Vishṇu, Saṁkarshaṇa represents Rudra and Aniruddha represents Brahmā. Thus, this form is all-comprehensive and most significant ('evam śarireṇa jagat-samagram; bibharti devas sa jagat-pradhānah').

The four faces are differently shown. The front face (viz. the eastern) is human and stands for Vāsudeva (and the guṇa 'bala'); the southern face (viz. to the right of the front face) is that of a lion, standing for Saṁkarshaṇa (and jñāna); the northern face (viz. to the left of the front face) is that of a boar standing for Pradyumna (and aisvarya); and the face at the back (viz. the western face) is terrific (raudra), standing for Aniruddha (and śaktl) (ibid., 3,47,2-17). The front face is serene ('saumyam tu vadanam pūrvam'); the fierce-looking face at the back is also red or tawny representing Agnl or Kapila. The other two faces are identified with Narasiṁha and Varāha.

This form of Vlshṇu is shown seated on the shoulders of Garuḍa ('kārayet garuḍa-sthitam'; 'tārkshyāsanah'). He is decorated with all ornaments and garlands, hls body is smeared with camphor ('karpūra-lipta-vigraham'), and he is lustrous like a million - suns ('sūryāyuta-sahasrābham') (cf.Jayākhya-saṁhitā, 6,73-76).

According to Rūpa-maṇḍana (3,52-54) the face at the back is that of a woman's ('aparam strī-mukhākāram'). The four hands on the right side carry mace, sword, arrow and discus; and the four hands on the other side conch, shield, bow and lotus. The form is to be worshipped by those who want peace ('śāntim ichhatā').

Sāttvata-saṁhitā (9,77-94) in its list of 38 vibhava forms of Vishṇu includes Śaktyātmā (or Śaktīśa), who is four-faced like Vaikuṇṭha. While three faces are that of Narasiṁha, Varāha and Kapila, the fourth face is called Hayagrīva. And this form has only four arms. The form was assumed for pacifying the miseries ('samam nayati santāpam').

VAIKHĀNASĀGAMA

Vaikhānasa is an ancient group of hermits who were devoted to the worship of Vishṇu as the supreme Godhead and has survived as a distinct community of temple-priests in the southern states of India. it retains its religious and philosophical identity whlch is traced back to the divine sage Vikhanas (see VIKHANAS) and his immediate disciples Bhṛgu, Atri, Marīchi and Kāśyapa. Vlkhanas is credited with a comprehenslve Kalpa-sūtra, and his disciples with their own 'saṁhitās', which laid the foundation for Vaikhānasāgama and spread the temple-culture in the country.

This āgama is distinguished by its uncompromising devotion to Vishṇu as the Vedlc god. It seeks to reconcile the Vedic fire-rituals wlth iconic worship, and Insists that worshipping God in a temple accordlng to the Vaikhānasa rites would secure prosperity for the world. The ritualistic action involved in such worship was called 'kriyā-yoga'.

VAIKUṆṬHA
(an icon now in Berlin Museum)

The āgama also recognized four derived forms of Vishṇu (Purusha, Satya, Achyuta, and Aniruddha) which correspond with the four vyūha forms (see VYŪHA): Vāsudeva, Saṁkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. They are located or visualized around Vishṇu (ādi-mūrti) in the immediate enclosure to the east, south, west and north respectively. Vishṇu is also regarded not only as having these divine forms (mūrti) but also specific iconic forms (bera, archā): kautuka-bera, autsava-bera, snapana-bera and bali-bera respectively, corresponding to the variant forms of aupāsanāgni in the Vedic ritual.

The characteristic Vaikhānasa viewpoint is that the pathway to emancipation is not devotion alone but iconic worship (samūrtārchana) done with devotion (bhakti). It does not equate devotion (bhakti) with worship (upāsanā); the latter is synonymous with sacrifice (yajana). It is superior not only to devotion but even to the knowledge concerning Brahman (brahma vidyā).

Vaikhānasāgama consists of a large number of works in Sanskrit dealing with all aspects of temple-worship. Not all of them however, have been published. Among the basic texts are the three 'tantras' of Atri, thirteen 'adhikāras' of Bhṛgu, three 'kāṇḍas' of Kāśyapa and eight 'saṁhitās' of Marīchi, all of them together constituting 4,00,000 granthas in extent. Texts like

VAIKUNTHA
(from Kashmir)

VAIKUNTHA
(from Kashmir, now in Berlin Museum)

Ānanda-saṁhitā, Samūrtārchanādhikāra, Vimānārchanā-kalpa, Prakīrṇadhikāra Bhagavad-archā-prakaraṇa (Nṛsiṁha-vājapeya-yājin) and Daśa-vidha-hetu-nirūpaṇa are popularly relied upon for the conduct of Vaikhānasa worship sequences.

The Vaikhānasa texts argue that iconic worship was not a later substitute for the Vedic fire-ritual, but was itself a Vedic ritual. The distinction between the two was only in terms of amūrtārchanā (aniconic worship) and samūrtārchanā (iconic worship). Detailed prescriptions for both modes of worship are contained in the Vaikhānasa texts.

Vaikhānasāgama also crystallized the essential aspects of temple-architecture and icon-sculpture. That the technique of visualization of iconic forms is an important aspect of worship has been emphasized in this division of Āgama.

VAINĀYAKĪ

The feminine version of Vināyaka also known as Gaṇeśānī, is classed among yoginīs (see YOGINĪ), and has little relevance to Vināyaka or Gaṇapati in legend, worship or symbolism. Several icons of this deity are found in the yoginī temples at Rikhian, Bārāghāṭ (Chauṁsaṭha-yoginī-temple), Hirāpur, Rānipur-Jhāriyāl, and other places. It is also seen that some sapta-mātṛkā panels include the elephant-headed goddess. Most of the icons noticed (cf.B.N.Sharma, Iconography of Vaināyaki, Abhinav Publ, New Delhi, 1979) are from Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rājāsthān. Vaināyakī appears to have been an independent deity, worshipped by the folk during the medieval period.

However, there was an obvious tendency to incorporate the usual attributes of Gaṇapati like axe, goad, noose and snake in the iconic representation of Vaināyakī. There is no known textual authority for the details that we find in the icons so far noticed (see GAṆEŚĀNĪ).

VAIROCHANA

A dhyāni-buddha (see DHYĀNI-BUDDHA) of great antiquity, importance and popularity, and celebrated in Guhya-samāja-tantra, he belongs to the Vajra-family and is said to have originated from the sacred syllable 'om' on the lunar orb. He is visualized as two-armed (both hands assuming chin-mudrā and held over the chest) or eight-armed (according to Nishpanna-yogāvalī). The latter is seated in vajra-paryaṅka posture, and has four faces, the principal face being white (the colour of the body) and others yellow, red and green. The two principal hands carry vajra along with the gesture of setting into motion the wheel of dharma (bodhyaṅgī-mudrā); two of the other hands are joined in the attitude of contemplation (dhṛta-dhyāna-mudrā); the remaining four hands carry rosary, bow, arrow and discus. His consort is Lochanā.

VAIROṬI

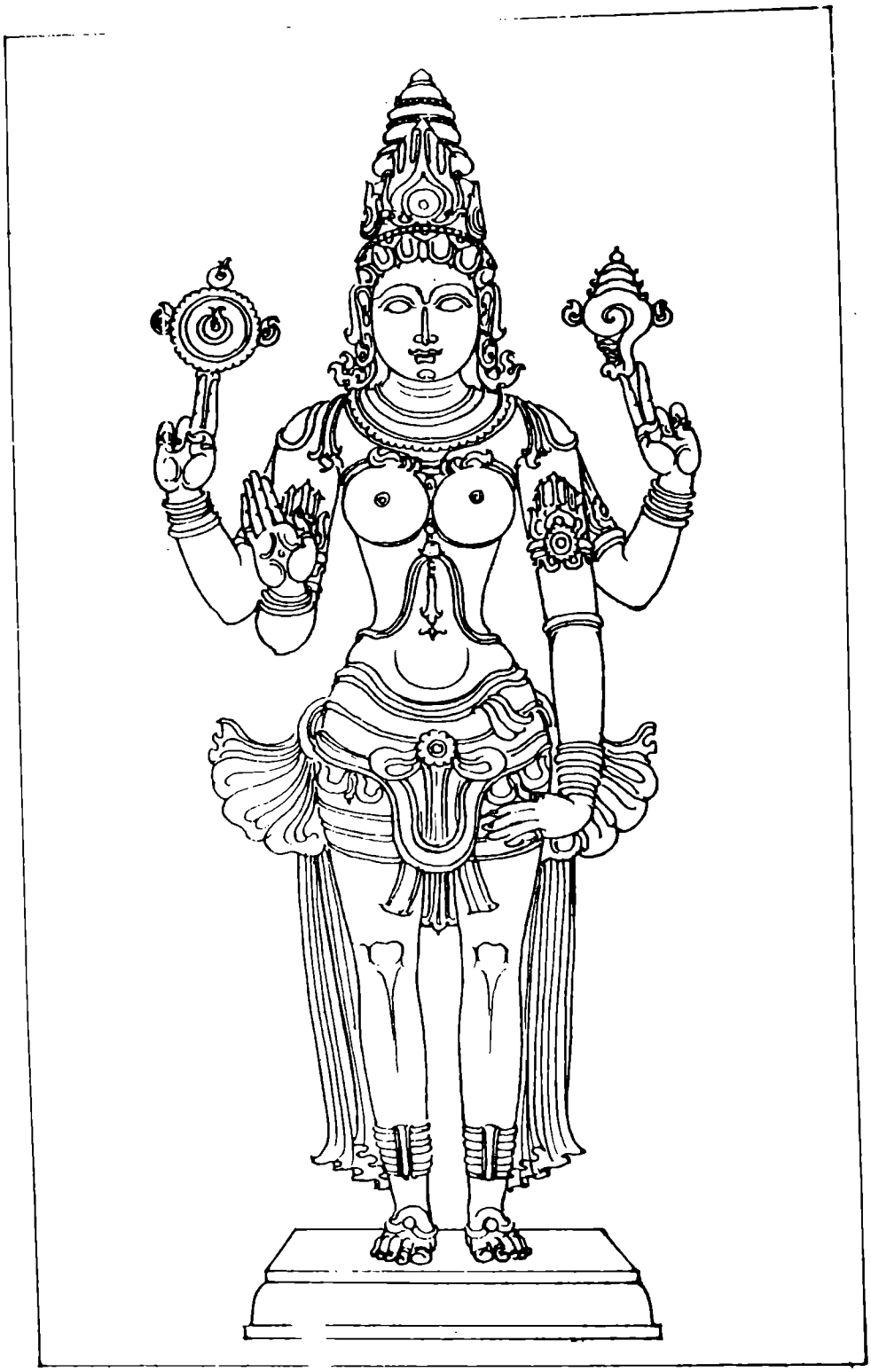
The yakshī of Vimala-nātha, the thirteenth tīrthaṅkara of the Jaina pantheon is also known as Viditā or Vijayā. Aparājita, the yakshī of Mallinātha, the nineteenth tīrthaṅkara is also called Vairoti in some accounts. Vimalanātha's yakshī is green- complexioned (harid-varṇā), and rides upon a serpent (goṇāśa-vāhanā). Two of her four hands carry serpents ('hasta-dvayena sarpau dvau'), and the other two hands bow and arrow (Pratishṭhā-sāra-saṁgraha). According to Hemachandra, she is seated on a lotus (padmārūḍhā) and her four hands hold bow, serpent, arrow and noose.

VAIVASVATA

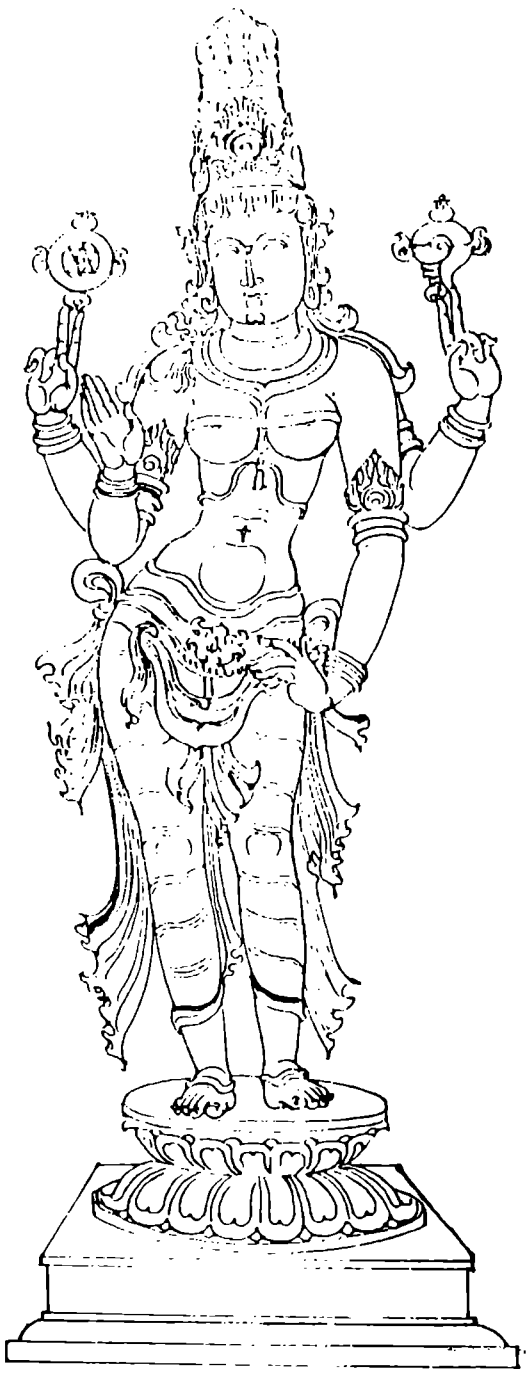
Name of Yama, the god of death, who appears blue-complexioned for the good folk and black-complexioned for the wicked. He is two-armed, carrying a cudgel in one hand (daṇḍa-dhara), and riding upon a buffalo. He is surrounded by the manes (pitṛs, departed souls).

VAIŚRAVANA

An ancient name of Kubera, mentioned by Patañjali (5,2,129), as served by wicked spirits



VAISHṆAVĪ
(from Māmallapuram)



VAISHṆAVĪ
(from Tyāgarāja-svāmi temple, Tiruvārūr)

('piśāchakī vaiśravaṇah') and as seated upon a raised seat ('utthita āsakā vaisravaṇasya'). Sometimes, there is also the expression Śiva-Vaiśravaṇa used. (see KUBERA).

VAISHṆAVĀGAMA

The Āgama texts which commend the iconic worship of Vishṇu in households as well as temples (see ĀGAMA). Such books occur in two broad divisions: Pāñcharātra (see PĀÑCHARĀTRA) and Vaikhānasa (see VAIKHĀNASA). Tantrasārāgama is included in the former (see for details the author's Vaikhānasāgama, Vol III and Pāñcharātrāgama, Vol IV of Āgama-kosha series)

VAISHṆAVĪ

One of the seven mother-goddesses (see SAPTA-MĀTṚKĀ), she represents the sakti of Vishṇu. She is visualized as dark-complexioned (śyāmā), six-armed (the hands on the right side carrying the gesture of boon-bestowal, mace and lotus, and the hands on the left conch, discus and the gesture of protection). She rides on Garuḍa, and wears round her neck vanamālā).

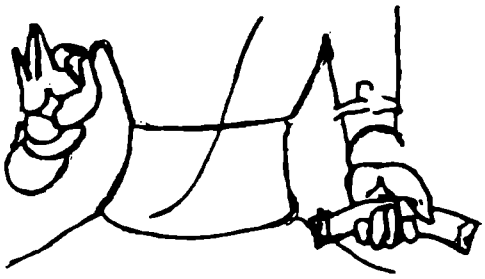
VYANTARA-DEVATĀ

The gods who belong to the midregion (neither the great gods of the classical tradition like Śiva, Vishṇu and Śakti nor the deified human beings of local celebrity), who are worshipped by masses of people in a simple manner. Their worship is not according to āgamic prescriptions, nor are their iconic representations stylized. They are given forms and functions, rather in accordance with folk fancy.

VYĀKHYĀNA-DAKSHIṆĀ-MŪRTI

A form of Dakshiṇā-mūrti (see DAKSHIṆĀ-MŪRTI), visualized as engaged in scriptural exposition to a group of sages who have gathered round him. He is seated in yoga-paṭṭa and his normal right hand assumes the gesture of exposl-

VYĀKHYĀNA-DAKSHIṆĀ-MŪRTI



VYĀKHYĀNA-MUDRĀ

VYĀGHRA-PĀDA

tion (vyākhyāna-mudrā) while the corresponding left hand carries a book.

VYĀKHYĀNA-MUDRĀ

A hand-pose which symbolizes teaching or explaining subtle points in a scriptural passage. Here the palm of the right hand faces the devotee (or the listener), with the top of the thumb and the tip of the fore-finger joined. The corresponding left hand may carry a book, but it is not always the case.

VYĀGHRA-PĀDA

A sage with tiger's legs and feet, who was a devotee of Śiva, performed austerities in Puliyūr (the present-day Chidambaram in Tamil Nāḍu), along with his friend Patañjali, for having the vistion of the dance of Śiva (see NAṬARĀJA). He is represented iconically in the great temple at Chidambaram.

VYŪHA

The expression 'vyūha' means creative configurations of the significant qualities (guṇa-

VYĀGHRA-PĀDA and PATAÑJALI
(bronze icons in Chidambaram temple)

vyūha) for the sake of creation and evolution of the world, for maintaining the world and protecting the devotees, and for leading the devotees to salvation. Pāñcharātrāgama emphasizes the role of divine intention as a mode of Godhead (prakāra). Vyūha mediates between the absolute and transcendental reality which is in the high heavens (para) and the specific manifestations on earth of Godhead for protecting the devotees and leading them to salvation (vibhava or prādurbhāva). The six divine qualities that are patterned in the vyūha are jñāna (omniscience), aiśvarya (omnipotence), śakti (energy) bala (strength), vīrya (valour) and tejas (splendour). The first three enter into the planes of rest (viśrāma-bhūmayah) and the other three into the planes of activity (śrama-bhūmayah). The former is bhūti-śakti (the power of existence) aspect of Lakshmī, while the latter is the kriyā-śakti (the power of action) of Lakshmī.

There is an inherent tendency for the qualities to pair off in both the sets of planes. Thus there are three configurations, and Vāsudeva (see VĀSUDEVA) manifests himself in three sequential emanations from the guna-configurations (guna-vyatikarodbhava) as follows:

(1) jñāna + (4) bala : Saṁkarshaṇa

(2) aiśvarya + (5) vīrya : Pradyumna

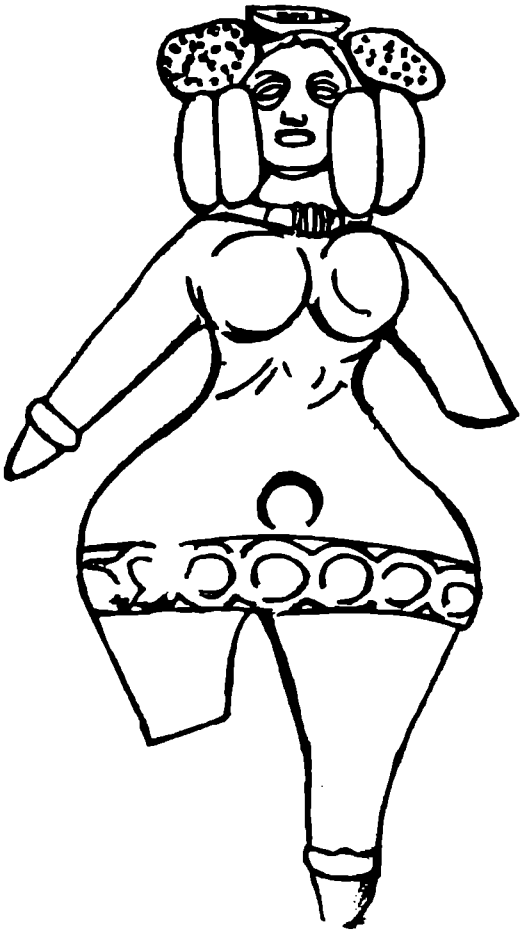
(3) śakti + (6) tejas : Aniruddha

These are known as the vyūha-forms. Vāsudeva has all the six qualities in their fullness and in equal dominance, is the first or primordial vyūha, and he brings Saṁkarshaṇa into being directly and the other two forms indirectly. If we include Vāsudeva also into the vyūha context (although he actually is responsible for the vyūha framework and so is out of it), the vyūhas are four in number (chatur-vyūha). Early texts like Sāttvata-saṁhitā, however, speak only of three vyūhas, excluding Vāsudeva.

See for details the author's Pāñcharātrāgama, Vol IV, Agama- Kosha, 1991, pp.93-107)

ŚAKTI

Meaning 'power', 'force', 'energy', or 'capacity', the expression Śakti refers to the primordial and ever-present power to create, preserve and destroy (dissolve) all things: it is the energy, both transcendental and immanent, behind the phenomenal manifestations. It is



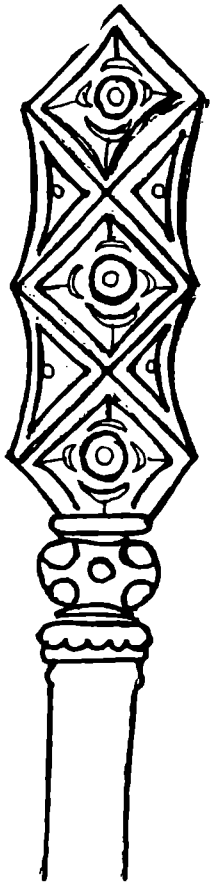
ŚAKTI
(from Indus Valley)

ŚAKTI

identified with the creative urge or impulse inherent in nature : mūla-prakṛti. It is also the principle of origination and nourishment, hence 'mother' (mātṛ, see MĀTṚKĀ).

The ideology of the procreative principle (hence described as feminine) as imbued with divinity is basic to all religious systems in the country, and is especially the focal point of the Śākta systems. Śaiva and Vaishṇava, Jaina and Buddhist divisions have also incorporated the fundamental premises of the Śākta creed, which is essentially folk in origin and character. The biunity of Pārvati and Śiva (see ARDH-NĀRĪŚVARA) and of Lakshmī and Nārāyaṇa (see LAKSHMĪ-NĀRĀYAṆA) are well-known, and have philosophical overtones and symbolize the relationship between the purusha and the prakṛti, the male and the female, the seed and the soil. Several minor gods are likewise frequently represented along with their saktis or consorts: Kārttikeya with Vallī, Gaṇeśa with Pushṭi, Malhāri with Mhāḷsā, Indra with Śachī, Agni with Svāhā, the bhairavas with their bhairavīs and the yakshas with their yakshiṇīs. The gods of the Mahāyāna pantheon are most often seen with their śaktis in the yuganaddha posture (see YUGANADDHA).

ŚAKTI
(from Indus Valley)



ŚAKTI-WEAPON

Even in the Vedic corpus, as many as forty feminine divinities are celebrated and they are not always counterparts of male deities. Numerous goddesses are independent in their nature and function : Pṛthvī (earth-goddess), Ushas (dawn), Āpodevī (water- goddess), Aditi (unbounded nature, mother of the gods), Iḍā (the goddess of sacrifice), Sindhū (river-goddess), Sarasvatī (river- goddess, and goddess of speech), Nishṭhigrī (mother of Indra), Sinīvālī (lunar deity), Vāgambhraṇī (the goddess of articulate speech), Urvaśī (the deity of the mid-region), Rātrī (nocturnal deity), Sarva-rājñī (the supreme sovereign), Rodasī (sky), Medhā (the goddess of intelligence), Ghoshā (the goddess of inarticulate sound), Yamī (the sister of Yama), Saramā (goddess whose form is that of dog), Śraddhā (faith), Sāvitrī (the solar goddess), Rākā, Anumatī and Kuhū (lunar aspects), Śrī (prosperity), Sūryā (feminine sun), Svastī (welfare), Araṇyānī (forest-goddess), Nirṇṭī (misfortune and decay) and so on.

The folk religions which date back to a distant past had a large pantheon of local divinities, mostly feminine powers, ministering to the needs of the individuals and the community and representing diseases and disasters. They related to the fears concerning child-birth, health of the mother, welfare of the baby; and a whole class of 'mothers' (mātṛkās, see MĀTṚKĀ) came into existence. Even the epic Mahābhārata speaks of groups of such maternal powers: mātarah, mātṛkā, mātṛ-gaṇa (cf.Āraṇyaka and Śalya- parvas). As many as two hundred of these spirits which are invoked to preserve the children in their infancy have been named in the epic (bāla-graha. cf.Mahābhārata, 9,45, 1-28). Matsya- purāṇa (179,9 ff) and Vishṇu-dharmottara (1,226, 7 ff) also mention these divinities. They were especially associated with Skanda (see KĀRTIKEYA), and hence a number of them were celebrated as 'skanda-grahas'. There were both masculine and feminine 'grahas'. They seize the pregnant women, the new-born babes, growing children and the mothers. Their propitiation is prescribed to avoid miscarriage, still-birth, dead foetus and afflictions of children ('teshām praśamanam kāryam', Araṇya-parva, 3,219,43). When pacified, they can be benign and contribute to the welfare, longevity, vitality of the devotees (ibid.44, 'evam eterchitās sarve prayacchhanti śubham nṛṇām').

There was also the cult of the dead mothers (the souls of the dead ancestors) in the background: the spirits survive and help the descendents in various ways. They were worshipped in 'ābhyudayika-śrāddha' rites. Wives of the celebrated ancestors were deified and honoured in the community. Even in Grhya-sūtras, we read of 'the wives of the gods' (devapatnyah), who were worshipped in rites like darśa-pūrṇa-māsa (in the sequence known as 'patnī-samyāja') and śūla-gāva sacrifice. Pāraskara-gṛhya-sūtra mentions Indrāṇi, Rudrāṇi, Śarvāṇi, Bhavāni, Agnāyi, Varuṇāni etc.

In the folk imagination, spirits of the mid-region (viz. the celestial nymphs and fairies, gandharvas and apsaras) descend on the human beings driving them insane, their minds troubled and confused ('mano muhah') ('unmādayantī'); they frequent the river-banks and thickly wooded groves (cf.Atharva-veda, 4,37,3). They also haunt trees, open spots, cross-roads, caves, burning grounds, springs and mountains. They have different complexions, forms and natures. Mostly they are tawny red in colour, coppery green, cloud-dark or ash-coloured. They wear a variety of garments and ornaments; and speak several languages ('nānā-bhāshāh') They are ugly, ferocious, and violent; but they can present themselves on occasions as charming damsels and entice innocent people.

Matsya-purāṇa (179, 32) provides a long list of such folk-goddesses of curious forms and functions : Balā ('strong'), Lambā ('tall'), Nandinī ('delighter'), Subhagā ('charming'), Viśokā ('free from grief'), Bahu-putrikā ('having many children'). Bhava-nandā ('erotic'), Gokarṇī ('cow-eared'), Kāḷikā ('dark- complexioned), Krodhanā ('indignant') and so on. The list in

Mahābhārata (9,45,39) is longer, and contains names which are more expressive : Bhayaṅkarī ('terrible'), Śatruñjayā ('conquerer of foes'), Uttejanī ('encourager'), Mahāvegā ('great speed'), Vibhīshaṇā ('terrifying'), Alātākshī ('torch-eye'), Lohitākshī ('red-eye'), Vidyujjihvā ('lightning-tongue'), Lamba-payodharā ('hanging breasts') Ulūka-mukhī ('owl-face'), Paśudā ('provider of kine'), Vitta-dā ('bestower of wealth'), Sukha-dā ('giver of happiness') and so on.

Bhāgavata (10,6,27-29) describes several kinds of malevolent powers of folk origin who cause distress and who must be pacified : ḍākinī (ghouls, female), yātudhānā (evil spirits), kūshmāṇḍa (goblins), arbhaka-graha (imps), bhūta (demons), preta (ghosts) piśācha (flesh-eating fiends), yaksha (sylvan spirits), raksha (monsters), vināyaka (leaders of mischief). Some wicked 'mothers' cause insanity, epileptic fits, and distresses of body, vitality and sense organs. They reveal themselves in dreams and nightmares (svapna-dṛshṭāh), and in natural disasters and catastophes (mahotpātāh).

Some of these spirits of folk origin were elevated to the elite pantheon in due course. In Matsya-purāṇa (179, 87-9), Rudra was described as surrounded by these supernatural powers personified ('parivṛtas tābhir īśāno deva-śaktibhih'); he was settled in the midst of 'mother-spirits' ('mātṛ-madhya-vyavasthitah'). Seven of these mothers became more celebrated than others (see SAPTA- MĀTṚKĀ); and worship of these seven 'mothers' has survived to this day. The seven 'goddesses' along with Gaurī and Sarasvatī were known as 'nava-śaktīs' or 'nava-aṁbikās'. According to some accounts, the thirteen wives of Kāśyapa are called 'mothers of the worlds' ('lokānām mātarah'). Skānda-purāṇa names fourteen goddesses, and Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa sixteen (gauryādi-śoḍaśa- śaktayah: Gaurī, Padmā, Śachī, Sāvitrī, Vijayā, Jayā, Devasenā, Medhā, Svāhā, Svadhā, Śānti, Pushṭi, Dhṛti, Tushṭi, Ātma-devatā and Kula-devatā).

Vājasaneyi-saṁhitā (3,57) and Taittirīya-brāhmaṇa (16,10,5,5) suggest a tendency to amalgamate all these spirits into one feminine deity, known as the 'mother' (Aṁbikā, described as the sister of Rudra, see ŚIVA). Taittirīya-āraṇyaka (10,10,7) calls her Durgā, and gives Kātyāyanī, Kanyā-kumāri and Vairochanī as her variant names or forms. Some later texts (like Śāṅkhāyana- sūtra and Hiraṇya-keśī-gṛhya-sūtra) know her also as Bhadra-kālī and Bhavānī. Mahābhārata has two eulogies for this goddess (in 4,6 and 6,23), known as Durgā. Harivaṁśa has an 'Āryā-stava', where Durgā is hailed as Āryā, and she is identified with the folk goddess worshipped by forest tribes like the śabaras, barbaras and puḷindas.

The pervasiveness, popularity and persistence of the tāntrik cults have contributed not only to the continuity of Śakti worship throughout the history of our country (from the distant past as evidenced by the remains of the so-called Indus valley civilization until our own day), but also to the stylization of iconic representations of Śakti in her various aspects. The Ṛg-Veda knew Śakti as the power to create: it symbolized birth and proliferation, sustenance and strength, destruction and dissolution. The iconic forms of all those aspects are to be found in the seals and images discovered in sites like Harappa and Mohenjo-dāro. The images have large and round eyes, thick lips, outstanding nose, prominent head-gear (fan-shaped etc), small but well-formed breasts and ornaments; nudity is a characteristic feature. There are also ring-stones, suggesting the yoni, symbol of fertility.

Śakti being represented in anthropomorphic forms (iconic) as well as in geometrical designs (yantras, aniconic) is also an ancient practice. Sakti is worshipped in maṇḍalas, yantras, pratimās and kalaśa (water-vessel). Over years, Śakti is principally regarded either as Durgā or as Lakshmī. Texts which eulogize her power, prowess, might and grace (like the Devī-māhātmya section of Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa, Devī-bhāgavata, Tripurā-rahasya, Lalitā-sahasra-nāma and Saundarya-laharī) are popularly used in worship.

The philosophical background of Śakti-worship involves the idea that one Śakti manifests herself as several specific powers, like the triad of icchhā-śakti (the power of all desire and resolution), jñāna-śakti (the power of all comprehension) and kriyā- śakti (the power of all action); the triad of prabhāva-śakti (the power of sovereignty), utsāha-śakti (the power of persistence and onward march) and mantra-śakti (the power of sacred words); and the triad of sattva-guṇa (the pure creative urge, represented by Sarasvatī), rajo-guṇa (preservation, Vaishṇavi) and tamo-guṇa (dissolution, Raudrī) ('prayojana-vaśāt śaktir ekaiva trividhā bhavet').

According to Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa (Gaṇeśa-khaṇḍa, chap.40) the supreme Śakti is the primordial nature or Prakṛti, and all women represent aspects of Śakti ('yoshitāh prakṛter aṁśāh'), while all men are aspects of the conscious principle or Purusha ('pumāṁsah purushasya cha'), which is itself an aspect of Śakti (unmanifest, avyaktam purushāvastham'). At the time of creation, Śakti manifested herself as five-fold ('sā śaktis srshṭi-kāle pañchadhā'): Rādhā (presiding over the vital principle or prāna, the basic process of all creation), Padmā (or Lakshmī, presiding over wealth, energy, celebrity and happiness), Sāvitrī (presiding over all learning, especially Vedic lore), Durgā (presiding over the individual consciousness or buddhi and energy for action, and eradicating all distress and misery, durgati-nāśinī) and Sarasvatī (presiding over arts and sciences, and bestowing wisdom).

These forms receive extensive worship even today. While they have their male counterparts (Krishṇa for Rādhā, Vishṇu for Padmā, Brahmā for Sāvitrī and Sarasvatī, and Śiva for Durgā) in purānic legends and popular imagination, they are really worshipped as indenpendent divinities and as aspects of Śakti. They have many characteristics in common, and quite frequently they are indistinguishable from one another. Iconographic details are mostly uniform.

The Śākta method of worship visualizes Śaktī as three-eyed and four-armed carrying noose, goad, roasary, and book; wearing crescent moon on head and seated on lotus; and invoke her several aspects as follows: Bālā (three-eyed, four-armed, carrying the gesture of protection and book in the left hands, and the gesture of boon-bestowal and rosary in the right hands), Tripurā- bhairavī (three-eyed, wearing red garments, having crescent moon stuck on her crown, wearing the heads of Brahmā, Śiva and Vishṇu as garland and four-armed, carrying pearl rosary, book and the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal), Kāmeśvarī (three-eyed, decorated by crescent moon on her head, wearing red clothes, and garland of severed heads, seated upon a corpse, and ten-armed, carrying trident, hand-drum, sword, shield, bow, arrow, noose, goad, book and rosary), Bhuvaneśvarī (four-armed, carrying noose, goad and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, wearing a garland of heads and seated upon a corpse).

Several forms of Durgā are extensively worshipped. Jaya-durgā (riding on lion, four armed, with discus, conch, sword and trident in the hands); Vana-durgā (three-eyed, seated on lotus, four-armed, with conch, discus and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal); Rudra-durgā (riding on lion, followed by a tiger and four attendants, each carrying sword and shield, eight-armed, three-eyed and with crescent moon on head; the hands carry discus, mace, sword, shield, bow, arrow, noose and the gesture of threat, tarjanī); Śulinī-durgā (on lion, three-eyed and eight- armed with spear, bow, arrow, conch, discus, mace, sword and noose in the hands); Bhīmā-durgā (black-complexioned, three-eyed and four-armed with conch, discus, spear and khaṭvāṅga in the hands); and Vindhya-vāsinī-durgā (seated on a lotus with lion nearby, three-eyed and four-armed, with conch, discus and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal).

Similarly several varieties of Kālī are also worshipped : Śyāmā (see ŚYĀMĀ), Kālika (Ekajaṭā, wearing garland of severed heads and serpents as ornaments; clad in tiger-skin, right foot on lion; four-armed, with sword, two lotuses, chopper, and skull in the hands; lion licking two corpses); Bhadra-kālī (yellow- complexioned, hair standing on end, crescent moon on head, face with terrible tusks, four hands carrying axe, trident, hand-drum and skull); Mahā-kālī (black in colour, ten heads with three eyes in each head, ten arms and ten legs; the hands carrying sword, arrow, mace, trident, discus, noose, weapons known as bhusundi and parigha, bow and skull); Smaśāna-kālī (emaciated body with sunken eyes; blackened face; hair in disarray; hungry and eager to devour the worlds; two-armed, carrying two nooses in the hands; laughing showing black teeth); and another form of Mahākalī (five-faced, each face three-eyed, snakes as ornaments, eight hands carrying sakti, spear, bow, arrow, sword, shield and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal; seated on a lion and surrounded by the mother-goddesses).

The tantra also visualized the sakti in the human body with iconic forms: Kuṇḍalinī is red-coloured, three-eyed and two- armed, carrying a jewel-pot (ratna-pātra) and red lotus (rakta-padma); she wears on her crown crescent moon. Mūlāvidyā is of similar form. Vāgbhava-kūṭa is white in complexion, wears white garments and white-coloured decorations; she is seated upon a lotus and has four hands carrying in them the gesture of scriptural exposition (vyākhyā-mudrā), rosary, pot of ambrosia (amṛta-ghata) and book (vidyā); she has three eyes. Kāma-kūṭa is red-complexioned, three-eyed and four-armed, she carries in her hands pearl rosary (ratnākṣha-mālā), sugar-cane bow, flower- arrows, and book (vidyā); she wears crescent moon on her head. Śakti-kūṭa is of the colour of red hibiscus (japā-kusuma), and seated upon a six-petalled lotus in the kadamba-grove. Her iconic form is the same as that of Tripura-sundarī (see TRIPURA- SUNDARĪ).

The mātṛkā-kūṭa (the collection of seed-syllables of letters of the alphabet) is also endowed with an iconic form. She has five faces, three eyes in each face and ten arms. The faces are of different colours. The main face is white, which is body- complexion. The other faces are pearl-coloured, lightning cloud-coloured, crystal-hued and red-hibiscus coloured. The ten hands carry lotus, discus, noose, deer, book, rosary (with fifty one beads, representing the letters of the alphabet, varṇa-mālā), stone-mason's hammer, white skull-cup, pot of nectar and gesture of boon-bestowal.

The varṇa-mātṛkās are also represented in Bālā-saṁpuṭita, a goddess having three eyes and four hands, carrying in them noose, goad, book and rosary. A variant form of this is that of Śrī-Vidyā, red-complexioned and three-eyed; she is seated upon a lotus, carrying in her four hands noose, goad, sugar-cane-bow and flower-arrows. Another deity belonging to the same group is Haṁsa, whose complexion resembles that of lightning. This form is half masculine and half feminine (ardha-nārī); having theee eyes and four hands which carry noose, axe and gestures of boon-bestowal and protection; crescent moon adorns the crest.

There are goddesses of the couch (mañcha-devatās), attending upon the primordial Śakti (ādyā-śakti), and each of them has a specific iconic form. They are four-armed and have different body colours. Sarasvatī is white-complexioned, and carries in her four hands rosary, book and the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. Mahā-lakshmī is golden-hued and carries in her hands two lotuses and gestures of boon-bestowal and protection. Gaurī is rosy red and has noose, goad and the gestures of boon-bestowal and protection in her hands. Lokadhātrī is golden-hued, carrying two lotuses and gestures of boon-bestowal and protection. Vāgīśvarī is white-complexioned carrying in her hands two lotuses, mirror and gesture of boon-

bestowal. Māyā is blue- coloured, and has in her hands noose, goad, and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. Durgā is grass-green in colour and carries in her hands conch, discus, bow and arrow. Bhadra-kālī is dark in body-colour, and her hands carry skull-cup, sword, shield and trident. Svasti-devī is white in body-colour, and her hands show svastika-sign and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, one of the hands carrying sakti. Svāhā-devī is red-hued, and carries two lotuses and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. Subhaṅkarī is yellow-complexioned and carries in her hands bow, arrow, paddy-sheafs (śālī) and branch of wish-fulfilling creeper (kalpa-latā). Tiraskāriṇī rides on a black horse, and wears blue garments; she is also identified as the goddess of sleep (nidrā-devī); she holds a sword in her hand.

Saṁmohinī, another śākta deity, is three-eyed and eight-armed; she holds in her hands rosary, book, noose, goad, sugar-cane bow, arrow and two lotuses. Padmāvatī sits upon a lotus and has two hands, carrying in them lotuses; she is three-eyed. Ugra-tārā is a tāntrik goddesses who has been incorporated also in the Vajrayāna pantheon. She is seated upon a white lotus, and is decorated with sepents as ornaments. She has four hands, carrying in them chopper (kartrī), sword, shield abd blue lotus (utpala). A variant form of this goddess is Eka-jatā, who is affiliated to the Akshobhya-family of the Vajrayāna pantheon. She has matted hair on her loins, and carries on her head a band made of white bones; her tongue is thrust out (lamba-jihva). Sumukhī is imagined as a damsel who has just matured; she wears blue garments and carries in her two hands a pot of liquor (surā-bhāṇḍa) and lute (viṇā); her ear-rings are carved out of conch-shell. Chaṇḍa-mātaṅginī is another tāntrik goddess who carries lute in her hands; she wears black garments and pearl neck-laces.

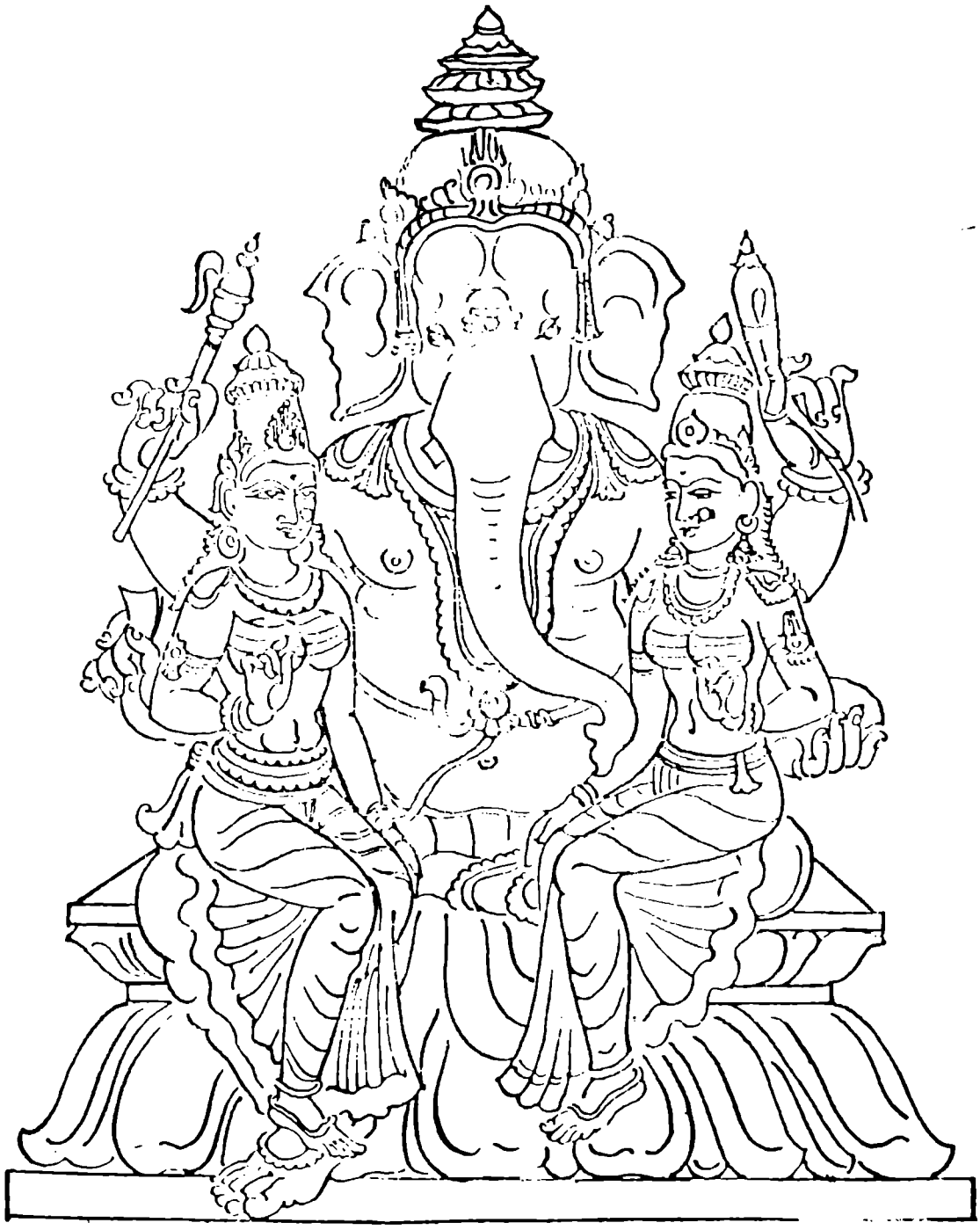
There is reckoning of twenty-five powers of Vishṇu (Vishṇu- śakti), described as feminine in form, and who are forms of Vishṇu seated upon the laps of their loved ones Vishṇu ('priya-tamāṅkeshu nishaṇṇāh'); they have smiles on their countenances ('sasmitānanāh'); their complexion resembles streaks of lightning ('vidyud-dāma-samānāṅgāh'); they are two-armed, the right hands showing gesture of protection while the left one carry lotuses. Prapañcha-sāra enumerates twenty-five 'mudrā-śaktis', who are seated upon the lap of Rudra ('rudrāṅka-piṭhasthāh') and whose complexion is that of red lead ('sindūrāruṇa-vigrahāh'); they carry in their two hands red lily and skull-cup ('raktotpala-kapalābhyām alaṅkṛita-karāh'). Revatī-tantra provides a list of twenty-six 'kula-śaktis': Daivajñā, Vyādha-vāma, Māṁsāpahāriṇī and others.

The expression Śakti also refers to a magical weapor (astra- viśesha) carried by gods like Skanda (see KĀRTIKEYA) and goddesses like Durgā (see DURGĀ)

ŚAKTI-GAṆAPATI

A tāntrik form of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), where Gaṇapati's consort (named variously as Siddhi, Śakti, Pushṭi, Vallabhā, Śyāmalāṅgi, Jayantī or Lakshmī) is shown seated on his left lap. She is said to personify the eight yogic attainments (ashṭa- siddhi). Sometimes two consorts are shown with Gaṇapati, when thery are known as Siddhi ('attainments') and Buddhi ('intelligence'). When Gaṇapati is shown alongside the seven mother-goddesses (see SAPTA-MĀTṚKĀ), they are regarded as so many 'powers' (śaktis) or 'accomplishments' (siddhis) of Gaṇapati.

Six forms of Śakti-gaṇapati are usually worshipped by the tāntrik practitioners: (1) Ucchhishṭa-gaṇapati (red-complexioned and four-armed); (2) Mahā-gaṇapati (red-complexioned and ten-armed); (3) Ūrdhva-gaṇapati (yellow-complexioned and six-armed); (4) Piṅgala-gaṇapati (tawny-coloured and six-armed); (5) Lakshmī- gaṇapati (white-complexioned and four- or eight-armed); and (6) Haridrā-gaṇapati (yellow-complexioned and four-armed). Ucchhishṭa-gaṇapati is seated on red lotus



ŚAKTI-GAṆAPATI

(ārakta-saroruhastha), and the sakti seated on his left lap is nude and engaged in sex-play ('vivastra-patnyā surata-pravṛttayā'). This form of Gaṇapati is described as a 'mahā-yaksha' and as inebriated ('unmatta'). Lakshmī-gaṇapati is described in the dhyāna-śloka as embraced by Lakshmī (see LAKSHMI), who is seated on his lap, and surrouned by eight aspects of Lakshmī (see LAKSHMĪ-GAṆAPATI). He is four-armed and carries a pot of gold in his trunk. Lakshmī-ganapti has in some cases two consorts, and is given ten arms. The consort seen with Mahā-gaṇapati is identified with Bhū-devī. Haridrā-gaṇapati's consort is described as 'sva -retaso vallabhā'.

Trailokya-mohana-gaṇapati, who is ten-armed, is also shown with his consort seated on his lap ('aṅkādhi-rūḍhayā sva-patnyā').

The dhyāna-śloka of Śakti-gaṇapati make him four-armed, carrying in his two upper hands goad and noose and embracing his consort with his normal left arm and holding his own tusk in his normal right hand. The consort (devī) is green-complexioned (haritāṅga-yashṭi) and her right arm holds Gaṇapati in embrace, at the loins, even as Gaṇapati's left arm goes round the Śakti at the loins ('parasparāśliṣhṭa-kaṭi-pradeśam'). Gaṇapati's complexion is that of ruddy dawn ('sandhyāruṇa').

Śilpa-ratna describes Śakti-gaṇapati as Gaṇapati himself in a feminine form: elephant's head above the neck ('kaṇṭhādūrdhvam karīndram') and below the neck the body of a woman ('yuvati-mayam adhastāt'). The body-colour is that of the evening horizon ('sandhyā-sindūra-varṇam'). There are prominent breasts, the stature is dwarfish and buttocks are well-formed ('stana-bhara- namitām, tundilām sannitaṁbām'). The form has ten hands, and two of them hold the ends of a great golden chain ('druta-kanaka-mahāśṛṅkhalābhyām karābhyām').

ŚAKTI-TRAYA

According to Śaiva-āgama texts, Śakti that is worshipped in shrines manifests itself in three forms: Yoga-śakti, Bhoga-śakti and Vīra-śakti.

(1) The yoga-śakti abides in the pedestal on which the icon or linga is installed and consecrated (yogam pīṭha-samāyuktam'). It is formally represented in close proximity to the liṅga (or icon), or to the left of the linga (or icon) in the porch ('mūla-liṅga-samīpe tu vāma-bhagerdha-maṇḍape).

(2) Bhoga-śakti resides on the left half of Śiva. When iconically represented it is either in a standing or in a seated posture. The standing Bhoga-śakti (sthānaka) is three-eyed and four-armed, two normal hands showing the gesture of protection and boon-bestowal in her two normal hands and carrying rosary and lotus in the two other hands. She wears on her head a bejewelled crown, and the back of her head is adorned with śiras-chakra. The seated Bhoga-śakti (āsīna) is two-armed and two-eyed, tranquil in aspect (śānta) and wearing a resplendent crown of precious stones. She is seated with her right leg folded upon the seat, and her left leg dangling down. The left arm rests upon the seat, while the right hand assumes the kataka-pose or carries a blue lotus (savyam kaṭaka-hastam syad atha votpala-dhāriṇam')

(3) Vīra-śakti is always represented independently (svatantram). She is always in a balanced standing posture sama-pāda sthānaka upon a bhadra-pīṭha. She is four-armed, the normal right hand assumes the gesture of protection, the normal left hand is placed upon the thigh (ūru-hasta), and the two upper hands carry lotus and rosary.

ŚAKTI-PĪṬHA

Several sacred spots, celebrated for the worship of Śakti (see ŚAKTI), are spread over the country. Their number is given as one hundred

and eight (Devī-bhāgavata) or as fifty-one (Tantra- chūḍāmaṇi)

The background legend is that Daksha-prajāpati (mother of Sati) performed a sacrifice called Bṛhaspati-sava, and refused to invite Śiva (his son-in-law) for the function. Sati, however, instisted on attending the sacrifice and went there. Daksha ignored her arrival and presence. Sati, humiliated and mortified, immolated herself in the sacrifical fire. Śiva, when he learnt what had happened, despatched Vīra-bhadra to punish Daksha. Vīrabhadra chopped off the head of Daksha, drove away all the priests and guests, and destroyed the sacrifice. And Śiva, inconsolate and besides himself with grief, carried the corpse of Satī on his shoulders and wandered about the three worlds. Vishṇu, in order to drive sense into Śiva, cut the corpse of Sati into several parts with his discus.

The places where these parts dropped while Śiva was roaming about became celebrated as Śakti-pīṭhas. An aspect of Śakti was believed to be present in each of these spots, along with a form of the Bhairava as her guardian.

According to Tantra-chūḍāmaṇi and Mahā-pīṭha-nirṇaya, the śakti- pīṭhas are fifty-one in number ('pañchāśad-eka-pīṭhāni evam bhairava-devatāh, pratyaṅgā-pātena vishṇu-chakra-kshatena cha'). The list gives the traditional name of the pīṭha, the name of the Śakti present there, the part of Sati's body and the ornaments that fell on that spot, and the name of the bhairava attending on Śakti there. The number fifty-one corresponds with the total number of letters of the Sanskrit alphabet (varṇa-mālā), and this has a mystic significance. The pīthas are recommended for practice of tāntrik rites, and the special accomplishment that is to be expected in each pīṭha is also mentioned.

There are several lists, and the pīṭhas are identified differently. What follows is taken from widely accepted texts and local traditions.

1. Hiṅgulā: (a) the part of Satī's body that fell here was the top of her skull; (b) the name of the Śakti is Koṭarī; (c) the bhairava's name is Bhīma-lochana; (d) the place is identified with Balūchis-thān (now in Pākistān).

2. Kirīṭa: (a) the crown fell here; (b) the name of the Śakti is Vimalā or Bhuvaneśī; (c) Saṁvarta is the bhairava; (d) the banks on the river Gaṅgā near Bāṭānagar in Bengal.

3. Bṛndāvana: (a) hair-tresses; (b) Umā ; (c) Bhuteśa; (d), the present Bhūteśvar-mahādeva shrine on the Mathurā-Bṛndāvan road.

4. Karavīra: (a) the three eyes; (b) Mahisha-mardinī; (c) Krodhīśa; (d) Mahālakshmī temple, Kolhāpur.

5. Sugandha: (a) the nose; (b) Sunandā or Ugra-tārā; (c) Tryambaka; (d) Shikārpur village near Bārisāl in Bānglā-desh.

6. Kara-toya-taṭa: (a) the left cheek; (b) Aparṇā; (c) Vāmana; (d) Bhavānīpur village (near Bogdā) in Bānglā-desh.

7. Śrī-parvata: (a) the right cheek; (b) Srī-sundarī; (c) Sundarānanda; (d) near Ladākh (Kashmīr)

8. Vārāṇasī: (a) the ear-rings; (b) Viśālākshī; (c) Kāla-bairava; (d) Maṇi-karṇikā ghat

9. Godāvarī: (a) the left cheek; (b) Viśveśī or Rukmiṇī; (c) Daṇḍa-pāṇi or Vatsanābha; (d) Koṭi-tīrtha on the river Godāvari near Rājamahendra-varam in Āndhra Pradesh.

10. Gandakī: (a) the right cheek; (b) Gandakī; (c) Chakrapāṇi; (d) near the source of the river Gaṇḍakī near Mukti-nāth in Nepal.

11. Śūchi: (a) the upper row of teeth; (b) Nārāyaṇī; (c) Saṁhāra; (d) Sthāṇu-Śiva temple in Suchīndram, near Kanyākumāri (Tamil- Nāḍu)

12. Pañcha-sāgara: (a) the lower row of teeth; (b) Vārāhī; (c) Mahārudra; (d) not identified.

13. Jvālā-mukhī: (a) the tongue; (b) Ambikā or Siddhidā; (c) Unmatta; (d) somewhere in Punjab.

14. Bhairava-parvata: (a) the upper lip; (b) Avantī; (c) Lamba- karṇa; (d) in Ujjainī on the banks of the river Śiprā.

15. Aṭṭahāsa: (a) the lower lip; (b) Pullarā; (c) Viśveśa; (d) near Lābhpur on Ahmedpur-Katwa railway line.

16. Jana-sthāna: (a) the chin; (b) Bhrāmarī; (c) Vikṛtāsksha; (d) Bhadra-kāla shrine in Nāsik (Pañchavaṭi)

17. Kāshmīra: (a) the neck; (b) Mahā-māyā; (c) Tri-sandhyeśvara; (d) Amarnāth cave.

18. Nandīpura: (a) the neck-lace; (b) Nandinī; (c) Nandikeśvara; (d) under a vaṭa-tree in Saindhiya (on Howrāh-Kyul line in West Bengal).

19. Śrī-śaila: (a) collar-bone; (b) Mahālakshmi; (c) Saṁvarānanda; (d) Bhramarāmbā shrine near Mallikārjuna temple in Śrī-śaila (Āndhra Pradesh)

20. Nalahaṭi; (a) (b) Kālikā; (c) Yogīśa; (d) Nalahaṭī in West Bengal

21. Mithilā: (a) the left shoulder; (b) Mahādevī or Umā; (c) Mahodara; (d) Durgā temple near Janakapura (?)

22. Ratnāvali: (a) the right shoulder; (b) Kumārī; (c) Śiva; (d) not identified

23. Prabhāsa: (a) the belly; (b) Chandrabhāgā; (c) Vakra-tuṇḍa; (d) Ambāji temple on Girnār hills.

24. Jālandhara: (a) the left breast; (b) Tripura-mālini; (c) Bhīshaṇa; (d) Punjāb

25. Rāmagiri: (a) the right breast; (b) Śivānī; (c) Chanda; (d) Śāradā temple in Chitrakūta.

26. Vaidyanātha: (a) the heart; (b) Jayadurgā; (c) Vaidyanātha; (d) the Śakti shrine in front of the famous Baidyanāth temple (in Bihār)

27. Vaktreśvara: (a) the mind; (b) Mahishamardini; (c) Vaktra-nātha; (d) in the crematorium in Dubrājpur on Ondala-Saindhiya line.

28. Kanyakāśrama: (a) the back; (b) Sarvāṇī; (c) Nimisha; (d) Bhadra-kālī shrine within the famour Kumāri temple in Kanyā-kumāri (Tamil Nādu)

29. Bahula: (a) the left arm; (b) Bahulā or Chaṇḍikā; (c) Bhīruka; (d) Ketu-brahma temple near Katwā in West Bengal.

30. Chaṭṭala: (a) the right arm; (b) Bhavānī; (c) Chandra- śekhara; (d) Bhavānī temple on Chandraśekhar mountain near Sītā- kuṇḍa near Chathgāom in Bāngla-desh.

31. Ujjayinī: (a) the elbows; (b) Maṅgalā-Chaṇḍī; (c) Kapilāmbara; (d) Harasiddhi temple in Rudrasāgar in Ujjayinī.

32. Maṇi-vedika: (a) the wrists; (b) Gāyatrī; (c) Sarvānanda; (d) on the Gāyatrī hills in Pushkar.

33. Mānasā: (a) the right hand; (b) Dākshāyaṇī; (c) Amara; (d) Mānasa-Sarovar in Tibet.

34. Yaśorā: (a) the left hand; (b) Yaśoreśvarī; (c) Chaṇḍa; (d) Īśvara-purī (Jaishore-yashohara) in Bāngla-desh.

35. Prayāga: (a) the fingers; (b) Lalitā; (c) Bhava; (d) Lalitā- devī shrine near Akshaya-vata in Allahābād.

36. Viraja: (a) the navel; (b) Vimalā; (c) Jagannātha; (d) Vimalā-devī shrine in the famous Jagannāth temple in Puri (Utkala).

37. Kāñchī: (a) the bones; (b) Deva-garbhā; (c) Ruru; (d) Kāli temple in the Śiva-kāñchī division of Kāñchīpuram (Tamiḷ Nāḍu).

38. Kāla-madhava: (a) the left buttock; (b) Kālī; (c) Asitāṅga; (d) not identified

39. Śoṇa: (a) the right buttock; (b) Narmadā or Śoṇākshī: (c) Bhadra-sena; (d) the source of the Śoṇā river in Amara-kaṇṭaka (?)

40. Kāma-giri: (a) the vagina; (b) Kāmākhyā; (c) Umā-nātha; (d) the famous Kāmākhyā temple, Guahāṭī in Assam.

41. Nepāla: (a) the two knees; (b) Mahāmāyā; (c) Kapāla; (d) Guhyeśvarī temple on Bāgmatī river in Paśupati-nāth (Nepal).

42. Jayanti: (a) the left thigh; (b) Jayantī; (c) Kramadīśvara; (d) Baurbang village on Jayantiya hills near Shillong in Assam.

43. Magadha: (a) the right thigh; (b) Śarvānanda-karī; (c) Vyoma-keśa; (d) Paṭneśvarī-devi temple in Patnā (Bihar).

44. Tri-śrota: (a) the left foot; (b) Bhrāmarī; (c) Īśvarī; (d) Jalpoy temple in West Bengal.

45. Tri-pura: (a) the right foot; (b) Tripura-sundarī; (c) Tripureśa; (d) on a hill near Rādhākisore village in Tripura.

46. Vibhāsha: (a) the left ankle; (b) Kapālinī or Bhīmarūpa; (c) Śarvānanda; (d) Kāli temple at Tamluk in Midnāpur district (West Bengal).

47. Kurukshetra: (a) the right ankle; (b) Sāvitrī; (c) Sthāṇu; (d) on Dvaipāyan lake (?)

48. Laṅkā: (a) the anklet; (b) Indrākshī; (c) Rakshaseśvara; (d) Śrī-laṅkā.

49. Yugādyā: (a) the right big toe; (b) Bhūtadhātrī; (c) Kshira-kaṇṭaka or Yugādyā; (d) Uttarkhir village near Burdwān (West Bengal).

50. Virāṭa: (a) the left big toe; (b) Aṁbikā; (c) Amṛta; (d) Vairāṭ village near Jayapur (Rājasthān).

51. Kāli-pīṭha: (a) the remaining toes; (b) Kālikā; (c) Nakulīśa; (d) Kāli temple in Kālighāṭ, Calcutta.

Another account identifies the fifty-one mahā-pithas not only with the letters of the alphabet but indicates the variety of tāntrik practice that is likely to be efficacious in a pīṭha. This account mentions the parts of Sati's body that dropped down on the spots differently, and the pīthas also are differently placed. The pīṭhas associated with parts of Sati's body above the heart are favourable to vaidika and dakshiṇa-margas, whereas those associated with the parts below the heart are conducive to practice according to vāma-marga. In the list given below, the order of the details is: letter of the alphabet, name of the pīṭha, part of Sati's body that fell here, and the special tāntrik attainments to be expected by practices here.

(1); Kāmarūpa-pīṭha; yoni; Kaula-śāstra and Śābara-mantra-siddhi

(2); Kāśikā-pīṭha; breasts (Asi and Varaṇa streams); dakshiṇa- mārga.

(3); Nepāla-pīṭha; guhya; Vāma-marga (56 lakh bhairavis reside here).

(4); Raudra-parvata; left eye; vāmāchara (and vision of devī).

(5); Kāshmīra-pīṭha; (left ear; sarva-mantra-siddhi).

(6); Kanyā-kubja; (antarvedi between Gaṅgā and Yamunā); right ear; Vaidika-marga.

(7); Pūrṇā-giri; nose; yoga-siddhi and vision of mantra-devatā.

(8); Arbudachala; left cheek; vāma-marga and aṁbikā-siddhi

(9); Amrātakeśvara; right cheek; yakshiṇīs, Dhanada and others reside.

(10); Ekāmra; finger-nails; Vidyā-siddhi

(11); Tri-śrota-; trivalī; Paushṭika-mantra siddhi for householders

(12); Kāmakoṭi-; navel; all desires fulfilled

(13); Kailāsa-(Himālaya); fingers; Japa siddhi by Kara-mālā, aṅguli-liṅga

(14); Bhṛgu-; teeth; Vaidika-mantra-siddhi

(15); Kedāra-; right palm; Indrākshi upa-pīṭha and Agastyāśrama

(16); Chandrapura-; right cheek; sarva-mantra-siddhi

(17); Śrī-pīṭha; ornaments bring about upa-pīṭhas:

(i) East: ear-ornaments; Brāhmī-śakti; brahma-vidyā

(ii) South-east: minor ornament of ear; Maheśvarī; mukha-suddhi

(iii) South: Patra-vallī; left ornament; Kaumāri

(iv) South-west: necklace; Vaishṇavī; indrajāla-vidyā-siddhi

(v) West: nose-stud; Vārāhī

(vi) head-ornament: Chāmuṇḍā; kshudra-deva-siddhi

(vii) ornament for hair; Mahālakshmī

(18); Jyotishmatī; breast-band; jyotir-mantra-siddhi; Narmadā-dvāra

(19); Jvālā-mukhī; breasts; Agni did penance here.

(20); Mālavā-; left shoulder; gandharvas accomplished their rāga-jñāna.

(21); Kulāntaka-; left arm-pit; rākshasas obtained siddhi

(23); Gokarṇa-; belly; Vaidika-mārga

(24); Mātuleśvara-; first valī; Śaiva-mantra-siddhi

(25); Aṭṭahāsa-; second valī; Gaṇeśa-mantra-siddhi

(26); Virajā-; third valī; Vishṇu-mantra-siddhi

(27); Rāja-gṛha-; urinary bladder; Vedārtha-jñāna; Ghantikā upa- pīṭha for indrajāla-siddhi.

(28); Mahāpatha-; nitaṁba; Aghorādi-mārga.

(29); Kaula-giri-; jaghana; vana-devatā-mantra-siddhi.

(30); Elāpura-; right thigh; vāma-marga-siddhi.

(31); Kāleśvara-; left thigh; Mṛtyuñjaya-mantra-siddhi.

(32); Jayantī-; right knee; dhanur-veda-siddhi

(33); Ujjayinī- (Avanti); left knee; kavacha-mantra-siddhi.

(34); Yoginī-; right leg; Kaula-mantra-siddhi

(35); Kshīrikā-; left leg; Vaitālika and Śābara-mantra siddhi.

(36); Hastināpura-; right ankle; sūrya-mantra-siddhi; Nūpurārṇava is upa-pīṭha.

(37); Uḍḍīśa-; left ankle; uḍḍīśa-mahā-mantra-siddhi; Ḍāmara is upa-pīṭha

(38) Prayāga; Sevaral upa-pīṭhas like Bagalā to the east of Gaṅgā, Chāmuṇḍā on the north of river, Rāja-rājeśvarī in the mid-region of Gaṅgā

and Yamunā, and Bhuvaneśvarī on the right bank of Yamunā.

(39); Pṛshṭhīśa-; right heel; pādukā-mantra-siddhi,

(40); Māyāpura-; left heel; samasta-māyā-siddhi.

(41); Malaya-; blood; raktāmbarādi-mantra-siddhi

(42); Śrī-śaila-; bile (pitta); vaishṇava-mantra-siddhi.

(43); Meru-(Himālaya); fat (medas); svarṇākarshana-bhairava- mantra.

(44); Giri-; tip of the tongue; vāk-siddhi by japa.

(45); Mahendra-; bone-marrow (majjā); śākta-mantra-siddhi by japa.

(46); Vāmana-; right big toe; sarva-mantra-siddhi.

(47); Hiraṇya-pura-; left big toe; vāma-marga.

(48); Mahālakshmī-; body-lustre; sarva-siddhi.

(49); Atri-; arteries (dhamanī); sarva-siddhi

(50); Chhāyā-; shadow of the body

(51); Kshatra-; hair-strands; sarva-siddhi (sumeru of the japa-mālā)

ŚAṀKARA

Name of Śiva, signifying "the accomplisher of good" (see ŚIVA)

Śaṁkara is also the name of the great ācārya (632-664 A.D.), who was born in Kerala, and brought about a philosophical and religious revival in the entire country. He is celebrated as the first commentator on the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-gītā and the Vedānta-sūtras (viz.pras-

ŚAṀKARA

ŚAṀKARA

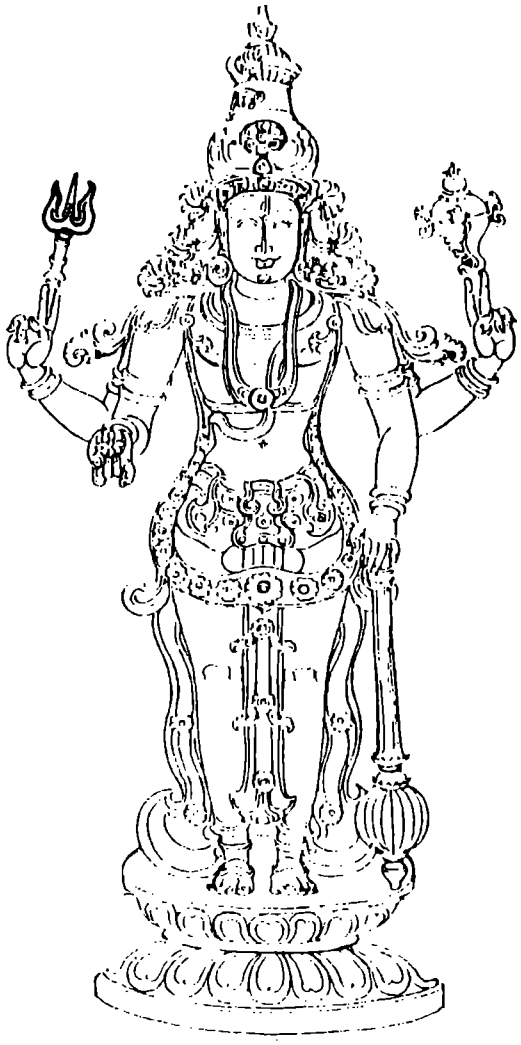
thāna-traya). He it was that crystallized the Vedānta standpoint and laid the foundation for Hinduism as we know it today. He is honoured extensively in the country, and his icons are worshipped in South Indian temples.

He is represented as seated in lotus posture, showing the gesture of scriptural exposition (vyākhyāna-mudrā) in his right hand, the left hand holding a book. The monastic staff (daṇḍa) is also shown leaning against his left shoulder. Sometimes, four of his disciples are depicted in a panel on the pedestal.

ŚAṀKARA-NĀRĀYAṆA

Also known as Hari-hara or Haryardha-mūrti, it is one of the līlā-mūrtis (see LĪLĀ-MŪRTI) of Śiva (see ŚIVA). It is a variant of Ardha-nāriś-vara-mūrti, the left half of the body being substituted by Vishṇu. The right half is coral-red (vidrumābha) in colour, and represents Śiva,

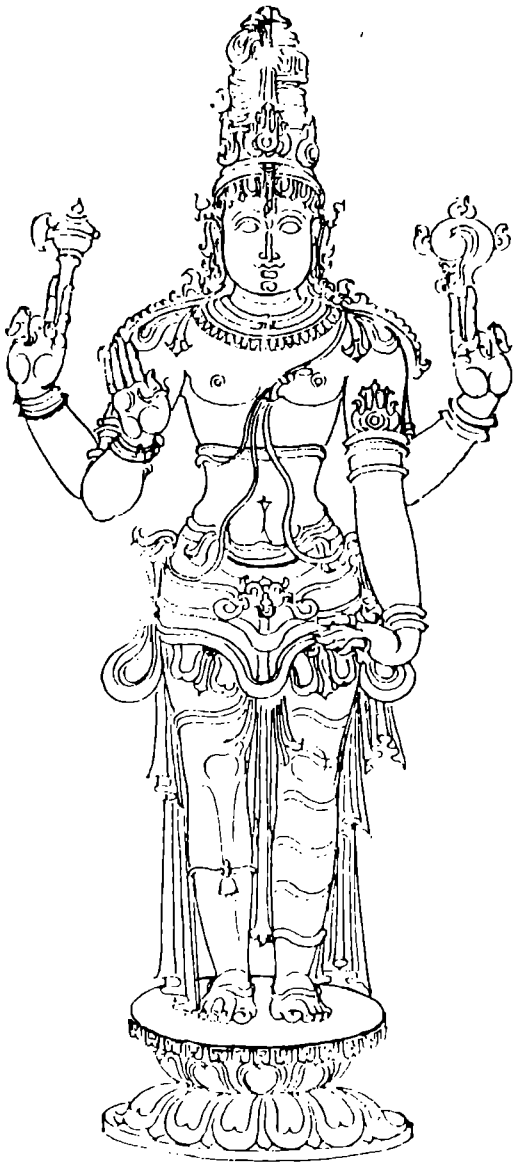
ŚAṀKARA NĀRĀYAṆA



ŚAṀKARANĀRĀYAṆA
(from Kulaśekara-maṇḍapam of Padmanābha temple, Trivandrum)

wearing matted hair as crown to which crescent moon is stuck. The left half is dark-blue in complexion (śyāmalābha) and represents Vishṇu, wearing a bejewelled crown on that side.

The form has four hands, the upper right hand carrying tanka and the normal right hand showing the gesture of protection, while the upper left hand holds conch, and the normal left



ŚAMKARANĀRĀYAṆA
(from Anantesvara temple, Kumbhakonam)

hand carries a mace. The right side of the body is covered by tiger-skin, while the left is draped in yellow silken garment. On the forehead, half of the third eye is shown on the right side ('kiñchil lalāṭa-netram'; 'phālārdhe lochanārdha-kalita').

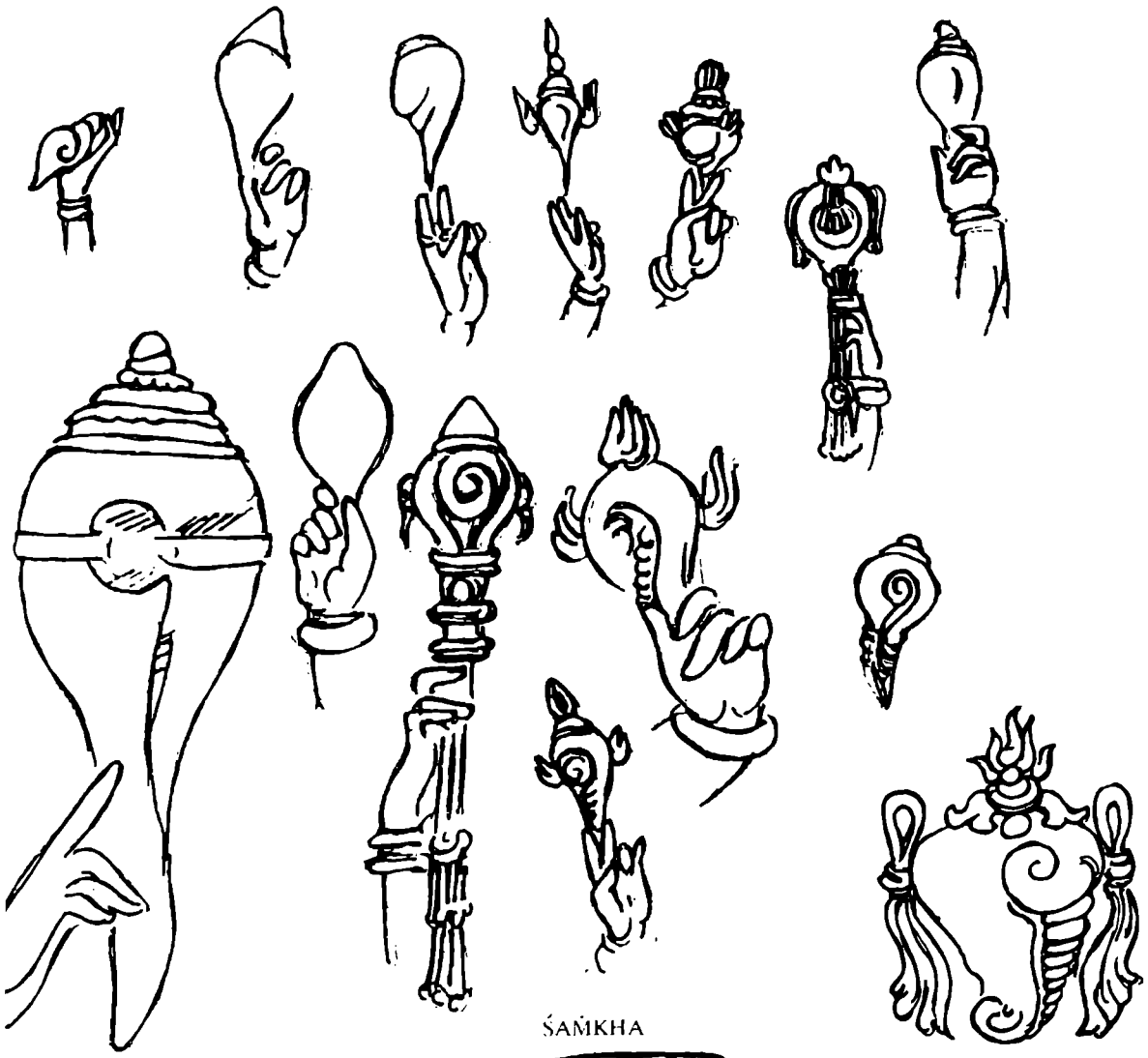
ŚAMKARANĀRĀYAṆA
(from Nāmakkal group)

The form is often represented in a standing posture (sthānaka), with both feet drawn together in a balanced position (sama-pāda).

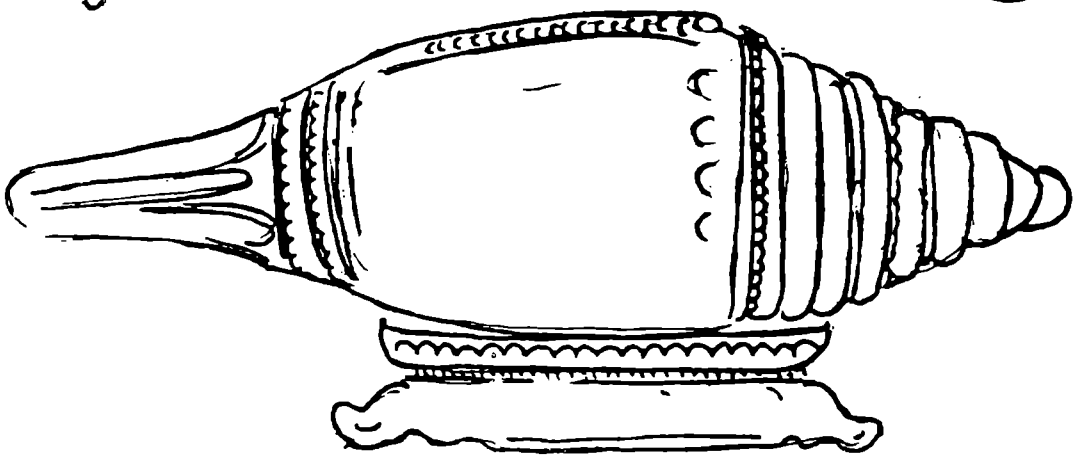
ŚAṀKHA

Conch, which is held in one of the four hands of Vishṇu (see VISHṆU). It is regarded as an aquatic creature of the oceans (samudrodbhava jantu-viśesha). The legends describe conches as produced from the bones of the demon Śaṁkha-chūḍa ('asthibhis śaṁkha-chāḍasya śaṁkha-jātir babhūva ha') who was kill by Śiva (cf. Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa, prakṛti-khaṇḍa, chap.18). Śaṁkha- chūḍa (Sudāma, born on earth by a curse) had an aspect of Vishṇu incorporated in his constitution; and hence could marry Tulasī, who was Lakshmī cursed to be born on earth as a plant by Sarasvatī (see TULASĪ).

Conches are of two types, those with left-inclination (vāmāvarta) and those with right-inclina-



ŚAṀKHA



ŚAṀKHA
USED IN WORSHIP

tion (dakshiṇāvarta), the latter being considered exceedingly holy and meritorious. Yukti-kalpa-taru distinguishes between four types, corresponding to the four castes. Several are the shapes in which conches occur; and they are in many colours. White conches are regarded as the best for use in worship. Conch is sacred for Vishnu, and water held in the conch is holy (praśastam śaṁkha-toyam). The expression 'śaṁkha' is derived from the root 'śam', signifying purification or pacification of all ills ('śāmyati-aśubham asmāt', 'sarva-pāpa-hara').

Conch is also blown during worship. The sound emanating from conch is sacred (pāvana-nāda), mighty (mahā-nāda), and protracted (dīrgha-nāda). Conch is also used for battle-call.

'Śaṁkha' is also a treasure (see ŚAṀKHA-NIDHI). Ear-ornaments made out of conch-shell in leaf-like designs are known as 'śaṁkha-patra'.

ŚAṀKHA-CHŪLI

One of the door-guardians of the sixth enclosure of Vishṇu-shrine, according to Vimānārchanā-kalpa. He stands on the right side of the entrance carrying conch on his head ('śirasi śaṁkha-bhṛt'), and holding a cudgel in his hand (daṇḍāyudha). He is white-complexioned and his garments are blue in colour. He is terrifying in aspect.

ŚAṀKHA-NIDHI

A guardian of treasures, attending upon Kubera (see KUBERA), he is usually represented in shrines as a door-guardian, along with Padma-nidhi, another treasure-guardian. Śaṁkha-nidhi is placed on the right side of the entrance; he has the complexion of conch (śaṁkhābha) and he wears blue garments (nīlāṁbara-dhara). He is demonic in form (bhūtakāra). He holds conch in both of his hands ('hastābhyām śaṁkham dadhānah').

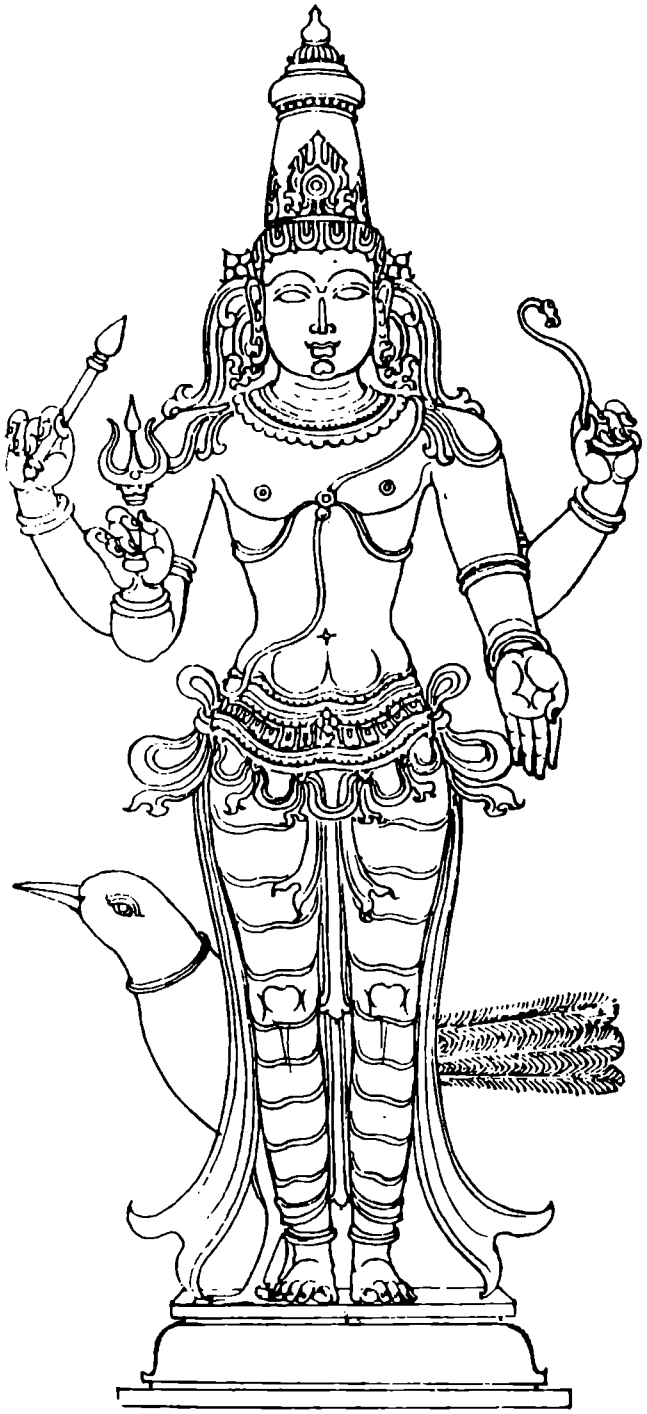
ŚAṀKHANIDHI

ŚANI

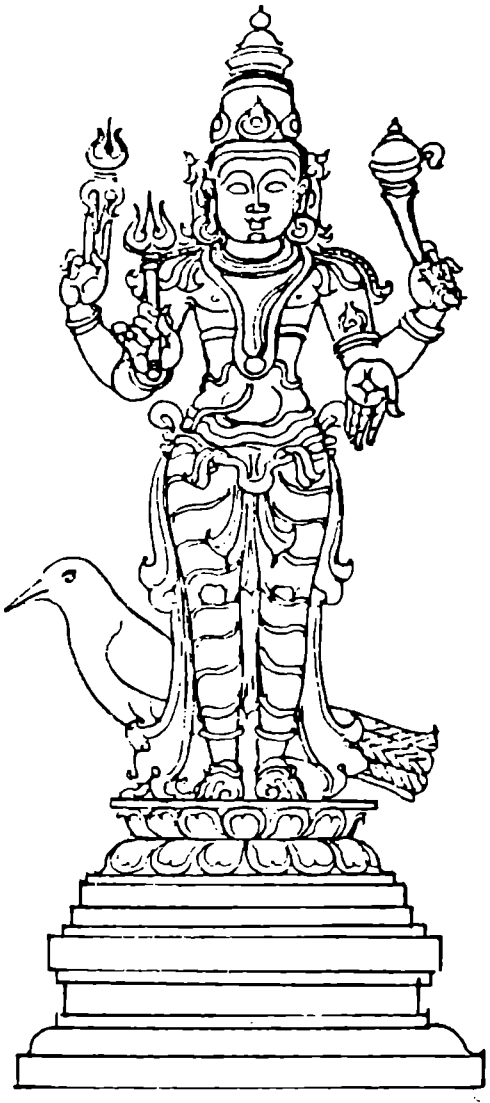
Also known as Śanaiścara ('slow-moving'), Śani (Saturn) is counted among the seven grahas (see GRAHA and NAVA-GRAHA). Son of Sūrya and Chhāyā (the shadow-like presence of Sūrya's consort Samjñā), he is dark-complexioned and slow in gait, (manda), being lame (paṅgu) (hence his name). He represents tamo-guna. He wears blue garments (nīla-vāsah). He is valorous in nature (vīra), and his sight is said to be cruel (krūra-dṛshṭi).

Iconographically, he has the face of the sun, but rides an eagle (gṛdhra-vāhana) or a crow. He is four-armed, carrying in his hands sword, bow, arrow and spear (or the gesture of boon-bestowal).

SANI



ŚANI
(stone from Vellore temple)



ŚANI

According to some texts (like Śrī-vidyārṇava-tantra), he is only two-armed and his right hand shows the gesture of protection, while his left hand is in katyavalambita stance.

ŚABARĪ

One of the eight Gaurī divinities of the Tibetan Vajrayāna pantheon, according to Pañchaḍākā-maṇḍala (cf. Nishpanna-yogāvalī).

She is fair-complexioned (sita), and two-armed. Violent in aspect, she wears garlands of severed heads and dances in pratyālīḍha posture. The right hand carries the mountain Meru, while the left hand is pressed to the chest with the gesture of threat (tarjanī-mudrā, raised forefinger).

The Indian version of this goddess is red-complexioned and carries a noose (pāśa) in her hand, to bind the enemy ('sādhya'). She is visualized as a huntress.

ŚAṀBHAVA-NĀTHA

The third tīrthaṅkara in the Jaina pantheon, (see TĪRTHAṄKARA), he was the son of Jitāri and Susheṇā. He was born in Śrāvasti, and obtained the final emancipation while meditating under the śāla-tree. His complexion was golden, and his emblem is horse. His principal disciple (gaṇa-dhara) was Chāru-sheṇa, and attendant-monarch (chauri-bearer) was Satya-vīrya.

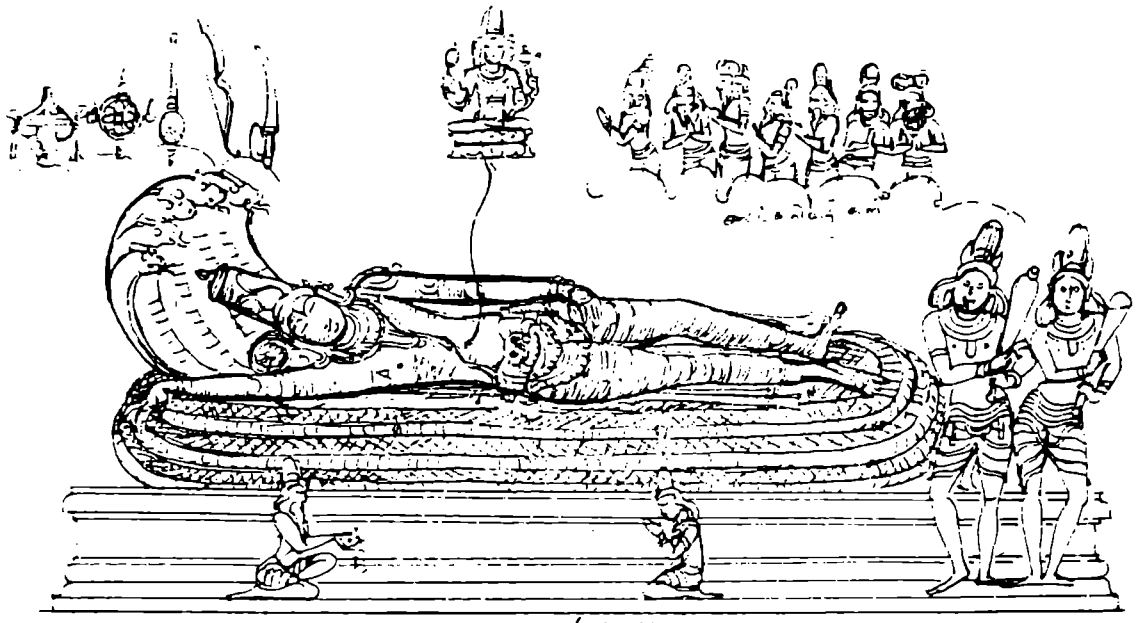
ŚAṀBHU

One of the eleven Rudras (see RUDRA and EKĀDAŚA-RUDRA), he is red-complexioned. He is looked upon as the progenitor of Brahma, Vishṇu, Maheśa, all the gods and demons.

ŚAYANA-MŪRTI

One of the four postures of a worshipful icon (the other three being sthānaka or standing, āsīna or seated and yānaka or mobile), it represents the god recumbent or asleep. This posture is almost exclusively confined to the Vishṇu images (see RAṄGA-NĀTHA, ŚESHA-ŚAYANA); and even the Vishṇu images of this kind are not often seen. The most well-known temple at Śrī-raṅgam houses in the sanctum a large figure of Vishṇu lying upon the coils of the snake Śesha (Ananta).

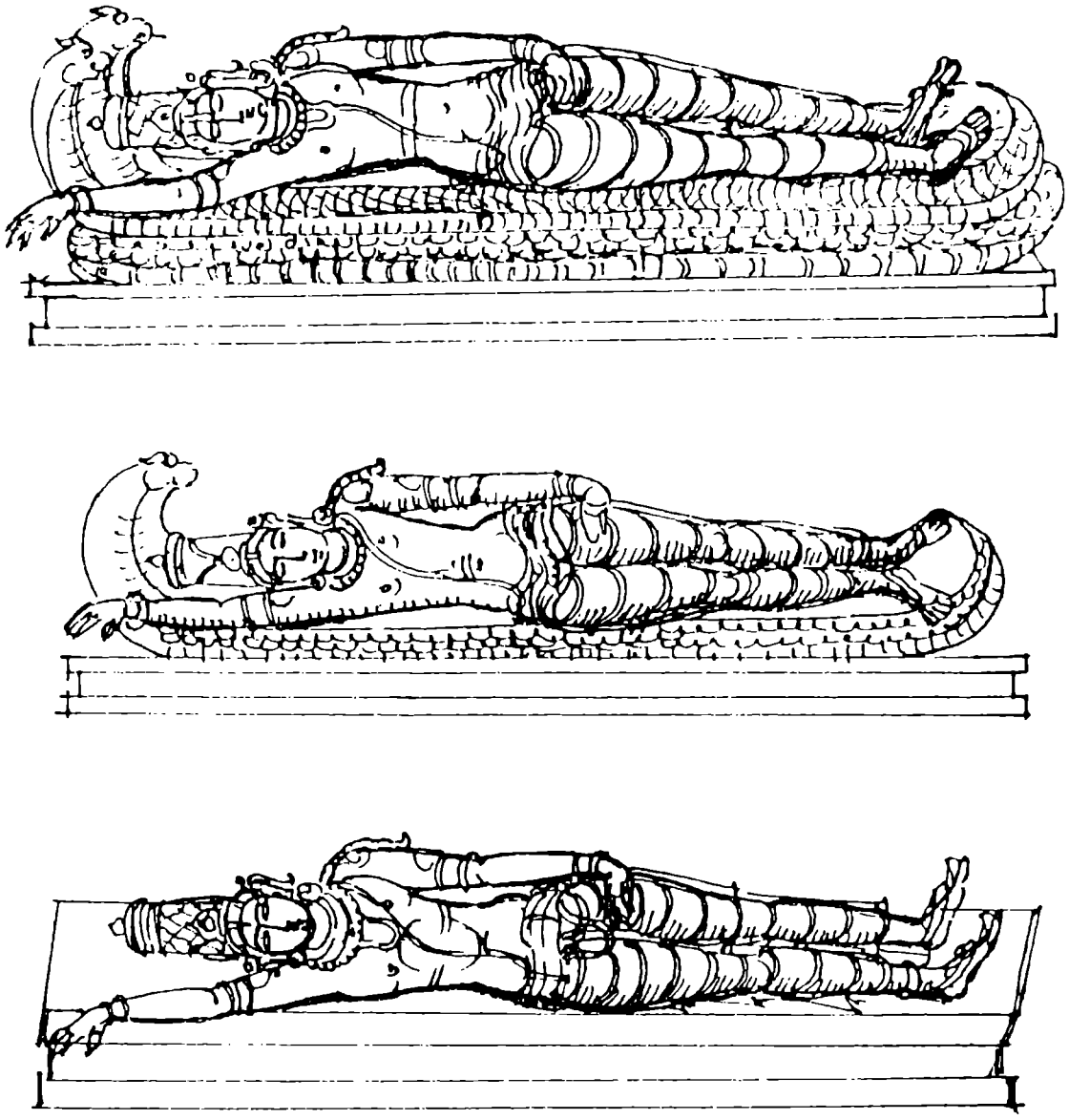
The recumbent images of Vishṇu are regarded as answering to four varieties: yoga-śayana, sṛshṭi-śayana, bhoga-śayana and saṁ-



YOGA-ŚAYANA

hāra-śayana. They are worshipped by those who seek salvation (moksha), those who desire progeny (putra-pautrādi-vṛddhi), those who look for increased prosperity and enjoyments (bhoga-vṛddhi) and those who want to destroy their enemies (śatru-paksha-vināśa), respectively. Each of the first three varieties had three

VĪRA-ŚAYANA



ŚAYANA-MŪRTI
(Ābhichārika Variety, Uttama, Madhyama and Adhama types)

types: uttama (superior), madhyama (midling) and adhama (inferior).

(1) Yoga-śayana Vishṇu is whitish blue (gaura-śyāma) or yellowish blue (pīta-śyāma) in complexion, two-armed and only partially recumbent ('ardhākhya-śayanam'). He abounds in sattva-guṇa. He is lying down upon Śesha who is white-complexioned like conch or moon. Vishṇu is surrounded by the sages Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya, the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha and the five āyudhas (see PAÑCHĀYUDHA), besides sages and gods who adore the god.

If this is the superior type, the midling type is devoid of the two sages Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya; and in the inferior type the two demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha are also missing.

(2) Srshṭi-śayana Vishṇu is lotus-eyed (padmekshaṇa) and dark blue complexioned (śyāmacchhavi). He abounds in rajo-guṇa, and his feet are red in colour. He is surrounded by Lakshmī, Bhū- devī, Brahma, Sūrya, Chandra, Indra, the celestial nymphs (apsaras), the eight Vasus, the eleven rudras, the twelve ādityas, kinnaras, the gods and the sages like Sanaka and Nārada. Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya are prominently shown as worshipping him; and the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha are also shown.

If this is the superior variety, the midling variety is recognized by the absence of the two demons; and the inferior variety by the absence also of the two sages Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya.

(3) Bhoga-śayana Vishṇu is distinguished by the long-stalked lotus that proceeds from his navel, and by the golden- complexioned creator Brahmā seated upon the lotus ('nābher ūrdhvāmbhujāsīna-svarṇa-varṇa-pitāmaham'). Five or eight weapons of the god ('pañchāshṭāyudham') are arranged on his sides. Four goddesses, Lakshmī, Sarasvatī, Bhū-devī and Śānti are shown attending on the god, Lakshmī and Sarasvatī seated near his right hand and right leg respectively, and Śānti and Bhū-devī near his left hand and left foot.

In the sky above, sun and moon are shown, as also the celestial minstrels Tumburu and Nārada. The guardians of directions (lokapālas), and the twin celestial physicians (aśvins) are also seen. Near the seat of worship Narasimha and Varāha are shown. Near the feet are the two demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha, made in nava-tāla measure, are shown as coming out of the milky ocean.

Vishṇu is bluish green in complexion (sasyaśyāma-varṇa); his smiling face resembles full moon, and he is pleasantly decorated. Madhu is red-coloured and Kaiṭabha yellow.

In the superior type the god is surrounded by gods and sages as described above. But in the midling variety, only Lakshmī and Bhū-devī among the four goddesses are present; the two incarnations Narasimha and Varāha will not be shown. In the inferior type, all the gods and goddesses (excepting Brahmā, Lakshmī and Bhū-devī) and the two demons (Madhu and Kaiṭabha) will be missing; the five āyudhas, however, will still be shown.

(4) Samhāra-śayana Vishṇu is in deep slumber, with closed eyes lying down flat with his head laid on the coils of Śesha (who is ash-coloured). The snake must have only two hoods. Vishṇu represents here tamo-guṇa; he has three eyes ('tāmasam nayana- trayam'). His face and body are emaciated ('śushka-vaktram saśushkāṅgam); and he wears dark garments (śyāma-vastram). He has only two arms. He resembles Rudra and similar deities.

In this type, Vishṇu is represented alone, without any gods, goddesses, sages or demons.

ŚARABHA

Śarabha ("killer", from śṛ, himsāyām', śṛṇāti himsati) is a mythical animal with uplifted eyes and eight legs, four normal and four turned

ŚARABHA

upward ('ashṭāpad-ūrdhvanayana ūrdhva-pāda-chatushṭaya') that attacks and kills lions ('tam siṁham hantum āgacchham' cf.Mahābhārata, 12, 117, 12). The same epic gives Śarabha as one of the names of Vishṇu ('atulas śarabho bhīmah', 13,149,52). The lexicons however, describe this mythical animal as a 'great lion' ('mahā-mṛga') and a kind of lion ('mṛgendra-viśesha'), that roams about in mountains ('parvatāśraya').

But the legends recounted in the Āgama make Śarabha a form of Śiva (or of Vīrabhadra, cf.Śiva-purāṇa, Śatarudrīya-saṁhitādhyāya), assumed to restrain the form of Vishṇu known as Narasiṁha. Narasiṁha, after killing the demon Hiraṇya-kaśipu, for which purpose he had appeared, continued to be ferocious and destructive. Troubled by this violence, the gods sought Śiva's help. Śiva thereupon assumed the form of Śarabha (or Śarabheśa), sprang upon Narasiṁha, picked him up with two of his legs and tore his body apart. Vishṇu was thus happily delivered from the strangles of his own incarnation, and rose up to Vaikuṇṭha, thanking Śiva for this good turn. Śarabha is therefore also known as 'killer of the (man-) lion' (siṁhaghna).

We read in Śarabhopanishat that Śiva assumed a terrible form and killed Narasiṁha who was destroying the worlds ('yo ghoram vesham āsthāya śarabhākhyam maheśvarah, nṛsiṁham loka-hantāram sañjaghāna mahā-balah'). This text identifies Śarabha with Rudra as Vīrabhadra, Tripurāri and Kāmāri. Curiously, the same text seeks to explain that 'śara' means the soul, and that Śarabha is Vishṇu that shines forth in the soul ('śarā jīvās tadaṅgeshu bhāti nityam haris svayam'), and who bestows emancipation on the devotees ('mokshada'). The text, however, does not say what the 'terrible form' was like.

According to Uttara-kāmika, the worship of this form of Śiva is resorted to by those who intend destroying their enemies, by those who seek to win battles, or by those who want to get their ailments cured. The form of Śarabha, as given in this text, is more symbolic than iconographic: the two wings represent Kāli and Durgā; the three eyes are Sun, Moon and Fire; the tongue is the oceanic fire (bāḍavānala); the nails represent Indra, the belly the fire of destruction (kālāgni), the thighs Kāla (time) and Mṛtyu (death); and the great energy Mahā-vāyu (the wind).

The Śaivāgama texts (like Uttara-kāmika, patala 54) provide more details. The form is huge and monstrous like the mountain Meru, and is resplendent like the sun. It is a composite form of man, lion and bird. Uttara-kamikā specifies that it is mainly a bird's form ('pakshyākāram'): golden-coloured (suvarṇābha), its two wings are uplifted ('ūrdhva-paksha-samāyuktam'). Its two eyes are round and red. But it has eight legs, four of which are those of a lion ('pādais siṁha-padākaraiś chaturbhiś cha') touching the ground, and the other four are those of a bird with sharp claws, lifted up ('sutīk-

SARABHA
(an old drawing from Mysore)

shana-nakha-samyuktair ūrdhvasthair veda-pādakaih'). And it has a fine tail (divya-lāṅgūla).

Above the torso, the form is that of a man ('kandharordhva- narākāram') with a brilliant crown on his head and with matted strands of hair flying alround ('suvikīrṇa-jaṭānvitam'). The man, however, has a lion's face with terrible tusks ('simhāsyam bhīma-damshṭram'). The whole form suggests mighty power and energy ('bhīma-vikrama-samyutam').

Śarabha is shown in the act of holding Narasimha, who however has only a human form here, but completely lifeless ('niścheshṭita-mahātanum nara-deham'), although shown with folded hands ('kṛtāñjali-puṭopetam'). Narasimha had to be restrained because he was about to destroy the whole world ('jagat-samharaṇodyatam').

Above the body of Narasimha is to be shown Vishṇu, held by the four legs of Śarabha which are poised in the sky ('pādābhyām ambarasthābhyām'); he is intent on moving upward ('gaganābhimukham devam kārayet').

Śrī-tattva-nidhi adds some more particulars. His wings, body and beak are all golden in hue; his hair which rises up is blue in colour; there is also crescent moon on his head. His roar is deep, sharp and loud (su-tīkshna-ghana-garjita). He is endowed with thirty-two arms, sixteen on each side. In the hands on the right side are seen vajra, clenched fist (mushṭi), gesture of protection, discus, śakti, cudgel, goad, sword, khaṭvāṅga, axe, rosary, bone, spear, bow, plough-share and fire, while the fifteen hands on the other side carry the gesture of boon-bestowal, noose, mace, arrow, banner, saw (krakacha), boar (kroda), conch, shield, serpent, lotus, skull-cup, book, short lance (kunta) and pestle-club, and the sixteenth hand embraces Durga (durgā-ślishṭa-karāmbuja').

ŚARAVAṆA-BHAVA

A form of Kārtikeya (see KĀRTIKEYA), with six faces and twelve hands. He is golden-complexioned and tranquil in aspect. He is surrounded by hosts of gods who are worshipping him. His hands carry śakti, bell, banner, lotus, cock, noose, cudgel, stone-mason's hammer, arrow, bow and gestures of protection and boon- bestowal.

The name signifies his appearance on the stretch of reeds on the banks of the river Gaṅgā. According to Kumāra-tantra, he is six-faced (shaṇmukha) and twelve-armed. His hands show the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, śakti, bell, banner, lotus, cock, noose, cudgel, hammer (ṭaṅka), arrow and bow. He is yellow-complexioned and pacific in aspect (saumya). He is surrounded by hosts of gods.

Śrī-tattva-nidhi, however, makes him one-faced and six-armed; his complexion is like that of the rising sun. He rides on a lion (simhastha). He carries in his hands cock, sword, shield, sugar- cane stalk as bow and flower-arrows. He is three-eyed and decorated with all ornaments.

ŚALĀKĀ-PURUSHAS

The class of works dealing with legends known as Purāṇa in the Jaina religion are mainly

intended to glorify sixty-three excellent characters from the ancient epics and traditional narratives. These characters are known as Śalākā-purushas (or lakshaṇa-purushas). The expression 'śalākā' signifies pegs for identification and the personages who are marked out as preeminent in history were called śalākā-purushas ('purusheshu jāta-rekhā ityarthah', comm. on Abhidhāna-chintāmaṇi).

They include not only the twenty-four tīrthaṅkaras (see TĪRTHAṄKARA) but twelve chakravartis (emperors), nine Bala-devas, nine Vāsudevas, and nine Prati-vāsudevas (or Vishṇu-dvishah). They are characters drawn from Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and Bhāgavata.

Hemachandra's Trishashti-salākā-purusha-charita (about 1170 A.D.), based on earlier sources like Trishashṭi-lakshaṇa-mahā-purāṇa and the Prākṛt Chaūpanna-maha-puriśa-chariya, is a standard and popular book on the subject.

ŚĀKAṀBHARI

A form of Durgā, she is celebrated for having fed a group of sages with nourishing vegetables during severe draught and famine ('varshābhāva-vaśāt hatān muni-gaṇān śākena yā arakshata'). She has sixteen hands, carrying in them spear, noose, skull-cup, bow, vajra, arrow, goad, shield, conch, discus, mace, snake, sword, khaṭvāṅga, cudgel and gesture of protection. She is described as the mother of the three worlds (trailokya-jananī) and consort of Śiva (maheśa-dayitā).

ŚĀKYA-MUNI

Name of the Buddha, also called Śākya-siṁha (see BUDDHA), who was the scion of the Śākya clan of Kapila-vāstu. He is to be represented, according to Dharma-kosha-saṁgraha, as golden-complexioned (svarṇa-varṇa) and two-armed, clad in rags (chīvara-vasana). He sits upon vajrāsana (see VAJRĀSANA) with his right hand touching the earth, and his left hand carrying the begging bowl (piṇḍa-pātra).

ŚĀNTAMATI-LOKEŚVARA

One of the 108 forms of Avalokiteśvara or Lokeśvara (see AVALOKITA), he stands upon a lotus, with his right hand showing the gesture of boon-bestowal and his left carrying a tree-branch.

ŚĀNTI-NĀTHA

One of the twenty-fourth tīrthaṅkaras of the Jaina pantheon (see TĪRTHAṄKARA), he is the sixteenth in the series. Son of Viśva-sena and Irāvati, he was born in Gajapura. He obtained the final emancipation (kevala-jñāna), while meditating under the nandi-tree. Chakrāyudha was his principal disciple (gaṇadhara), and the monarch Purusha-datta his main attendant (chaurī-bearer). His complexion was golden; and his icon is identified by the emblem of a deer (mṛga).

ŚĀRṄGA

Name of Vishṇu's bow, and one of the 'pañchāyudha' (five principal weapons of Vishṇu). It is personified and regarded as door-guardian of the Vishṇu's shrine in the fifth enclosure. He is stationed on the left side of the entrance (Nandaka, the personified sword being located on the right side). His body-complexion is said to be composite of five colours (pañch-varṇair yukta). He is a hermophrodite (napuṁsaka), and rides upon cloud (megha- vāhana). He wears white garments, and carries on his head the bow which he symbolizes ('śirasi chāpa-dhara'). His banner has the figure of an arrow upon it (śara-dhvaja) (cf. Vimānārchanā-kalpa, patala 20).

Nandaka, his associate on the other side of the entrance, is red-complexioned, and carries sword on his head. He wears blue garments and rides upon wind. His standard has fire upon it (anala-dhvaja).

ŚĀRADĀ

Name of Sarasvatī (see SARASVATĪ), and a form of this goddess when she is visualized as

seated upon a throne, and as three-eyed and six-armed. She carries in her hands lotus, barbed missile (prāśa), spear, water-pot (kalaśa), noose and goad.

ŚĀRDŪLA

Mythical tiger or lion with wing-like appendages; form assumed by a demon.

ŚĀLAGRĀMA

Ammonite fossil stones, recovered from the Gaṇḍaki river-bed in Nepāl, are regarded as exceedingly precious and sacred. Vishṇu is believed to be present in them, and these stones require neither consecration nor any ritual infusion of divinity in them; they are worship-worthy as they are. They continue to be fit for worship even when broken or damaged; and they cannot be defiled or polluted by any means. Households and temples all over the country treasure these sacred stones and worship them daily. Water in which they are washed is considered holy and sipped with devotion; it is believed to eliminate all sins, ailments and misfortunes and contribute to health, wealth and longevity.

Śālagrāma stones are very ancient geological specimens, rendered rounded and smooth by water-currents in a great length of time. They are distinguished by the ammonite (śāla, described as 'vajra-kīṭa', 'adamantine worms') which having entered into them for residence, are fossilized in course of time, leaving discus-like marks inside the stone ('śilā-kuhare chakram karishyanti'). Such marks alone make the stone eligible to be called a śālagrāma and worshipped. Legends describe that Vishṇu himself enters into these stones in the form of śāla creatures and makes his presence felt by the discus-marks ('chakra-chinhair-alaṁkṛtāh'). Thus a śālagrāma is verily the image of Vishṇu ('śālagrāmo harer mūrtih').

Śālagrāmas occur in as many as 89 varieties. They are said to represent so many forms of Vishṇu. They include the twenty-four forms (see CHATUR-VIṀŚATI-MŪRTI), the ten major incarnations and their variant forms (see AVATĀRA, DAŚĀVATĀRA), and several minor manifestations (like Hayagrīva, Kapila, Ananta, Hiraṇyagarbha and Gadādhara). The śālagrāma to become one must not only have one or more discus-like marks (chakras) near an opening in the stone (called 'vadana', 'mouth' or 'śilā-dvāra', 'the gate by which the śāla had entered'), but also lines, scratches or holes on the surface suggesting several emblems of Vishṇu, like vana-mālā (garland), padma (lotus), gadā (mace), kaustubha (chest- ornament) and so on.

Examination and identification of śālagrāma stones constitute an entire art (śālagrāma-parīkshā), and there are several texts in Sanskrit dealing with this subject. Some purāṇas (like Pādma, Agni, Varāha, Kūrma and Brahma) contain elaborate accounts of how śālagrāmas may be recognized and worshipped. Śālagrāmas differ in several particulars, like size, shape, colour, texture, the number and nature of discus-forms, and other marks. Because of the great sanctity attached to these stones, they are bought and sold for enormous amounts, and fake-śālagrāmas are cleverly produced by unscrupulous jogis and palmed off to unsuspecting folk. It is therefore that examination by an expert is often resorted to.

Perfectly smooth (snigdha) and blue-black (mechaka) śālagrāmas are regarded as best. If the colour is like washed coal (dhautāṅgāra-vat) or bluish, the śālagrāma stone is of midling merit. If the colour is tawny (piṅgala), yellowish (pīta), ash-grey (dhūmābha) or red (rakta-varṇa) the stone is to be avoided. Perfectly round (vartula) stones contribute to prosperity (śrī-prada), and umbrella-shaped stones will secure soveriegnty (sāmrājya); cart-like stones (śakaṭākāra) will spell misery, and a spear shaped stone will bring about death and ruin. Crooked stones cause poverty.

Śālagrāmas occur in several sizes, from as small as a gooseberry (āmalaka) to as big as a ball that can just be covered by both palms. Larger śālagrāmas are not suitable for household worship. However, more important than size, shape or colour are the marks on the stones. Without these marks, the stone becomes unfit for worship ('nishphalam lāñchhanam vinā'). And among the marks, the discus-mark is the most significant.

The marks of identification of some of the well-known śālagrāmas are given below:

1. Vāsudeva-śālagrāma: round in shape, with two chakras at the opening (dvāram chakra-yugmakam), whitish in hue, even on all sides (samam), and bright-looking.

2. Nārāyaṇa-: dark blue (asita) in colour, an elevation suggesting the navel-lotus (nābhimadhya-mahonnata) and a line in the centre suggesting mace (madhya gadākṛti-rekhā); another account prescribes two lines.

3. Vishṇu- : size and shape of a bilva fruit, black in colour, a hole at the back (pṛshṭha chhidram).

4. Śrīdhara-: very small in size (ati-kshudra) and shape of a kadamba flower, five lines suggesting vanamālā and mace (pañcha-rekhā, vanamālā-gadāṅkita); two chakras.

5. Nārasiṁha-: wide opening like an open mouth (ati-vistṛtāsya); tawny-coloured (kapila); a line above the opening and another in the middle of the stone; two chakras; three or five spots in the lower portion.

6. Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa-: one opening with four chakras (eka-dvāre chatush-chakram); colour of rain-bearing cloud (navīna- nīradābha); line suggesting vanamālā. Without vanamālā, it will be known as Lakshmī-janārdana.

7. Dadhi-vāmana-: very small in size; dark-blue in colour; two chakras.

8. Varāha-: large-sized; colour of blue beetle (indranīla); without any lines (virekhā).

9. Matsya-: long and lotus-bud-shaped (dīrghāmbujākāra); golden-hued; line at the opening; three spots (bindu-traya).

10. Hayagrīva-: blue in colour; two chakras; five lines together making a mark like goad (aṅkuśākāra-pañcha-rekhā); many spots (bindus); shape of a horse's head.

11. Aniruddha-; blue-black in colour; round in shape (vartula); pleasant in aspect (ati-śobhana); two lines at the back suggesting a lotus.

12. Pradyumna-: cloud-coloured or yellowish hue (pītaka); a very small chakra at the opening (sūkshma-chakra); many holes (bahu- chhidra) and dents.

13. Keśava-: blue coloured; two lines suggesting a rectangle.

14. Kūrma-: greenish hue; round but elevation on top; a line at the bottom; mark of kaustubha; chakra

15. Saṁkarshaṇa-; two chakras at the opening joined face to face (lagna-dvichakrī); a chakra in front, and another at the back (prāk-paśchād chakra-yugmakam); the front portion thicker than the back (pūrva-bhāgas tu pushkalah)

16. Dāmodara-: large in size (sthūla); round in shape (vartula); bluish hue (nīla); yellow line at the opening; chakra in the middle (madhye chakrah); small holes; no vanamālā line.

17. Vāmana-: round in shape (vartula); deep-blue in colour like atasi flower; spots (bindu); a very small chakra on the left side (vāma-chakra) or two tiny chakras; lines on the right side.

18. Lakshmī-nṛsiṁha-: black in colour; wide opening (vistṛtāsya); two chakras on the left side; two spots; vanamālā mark.

19. Trivikrama-: black in colour (śyāma); two chakras on the left side (vāma-chakra) and two chakras on the right (daksha-chakra); line suggesting vanamālā; according to another account, a chakra on the left side and line on the right (daksha-rekhā); rightward inclination (dakshiṇāvarta).

20. Kṛshṇa-: round with elevation on back-portion (unnata- pṛshṭhaka); four openings; two chakras in the middle; four lines on the sides.

21. Raghunātha-: two openings and four chakras (dvāra-dvaya chatuśchakram), mark of cow's hoof (goshpāda) mark; line suggesting a bow.

22. Padmanābha-: marks of lotus and parasol (chhatra-chinha).

23. Hṛshīkeśa-: shape resembling crescent moon.

24. Ananta-: thick or large in size (sthūla); mark of serpent- hood (nāga-bhogi); very black in colour or having many colours (nānā-varṇa); and as many as fourteen chakras.

25. Sudarśana-: one chakra; or a mark resembling chakra.

26. Purushottama-: openings on the four sides and also on top

27. Hiraṇya-: moon-shaped; whitish hue and golden lines

28. Brahma-: large (pṛthu); many holes (sushira); one chakra and lotus mark (eka-chakrāṁbujah); a long line (sudīrgha-rekhā).

29. Yogīśvara-: a liṅga-like protuberance on top (śikhare liṅgam)

30. Raṇa-rāma-: round in shape (vartula); medium size (madhyama); two chakras (dvi-chakra); marks like that of an arrow (bāṇa- vikshata), bow or quiver.

31. Madhu-sūdana-: cloud-coloured; shape of a discus (chakrākāra); two chakras, cow's hoof (goshpāda) mark ; auspicious in aspect (sa-śrīka)

32. Rāja-rājeśvara; seven chakras, mark of umbrella (chhatra); medium size

33. Gadā-dhara; not bright, only one chakra

For worship in the household the following four śālagrāmas are considered meritorious: Vāsudeva-, Hayagrīva-, Lakshmī-nṛsiṁha-, and Sītā-rāma- śālagrāmas. Some śālagrāmas are regarded as 'ferocious' (ugra) (like narasiṁha-śālagrāma), and requiring special worship everyday. Ordinarily, it is sufficient ritual to bathe them ceremonially (abhisheka), viz. to the accompaniment of prescribed mantras. Only one śālagrāma or more than two are recommended for worship; a household shrine is not to have two śālagrāmas ('śālagrāma-dvayam gṛhe nārchyam')

ŚĀLABHAÑJIKĀ

An image of a dancer, courtesan or celestial maiden carved in wood (especially 'śāla' wood, Vatica robusta), and kept in halls and pavilions for decorative purposes ('kāshṭhādi-nirmita-putrikā'). Such images were also used as toys (putthalikā). In some of the temples, figures of dancing maidens were carved in stone and displayed as necessary, graceful architectural devices (madanikās).

ŚĀSANA-DEVATĀ

Yakshiṇīs in the Jaina pantheon, whose function was to preserve and promote the ordinances of the tīrthaṅkaras (see TĪRTHAṄKARA). Their help is sought by the pious devotees (see YAKSHIṆĪ).

Seven śāsana-devatās are counted: (1) Gomukha (golden-complexioned, riding an elephant-faced and four-armed); (2) Chakreśvarī (golden-hued, riding on garuḍa and eight or twelve-armed); (3) Aṁbikā (yellow-coloured, riding a lion and holding a bunch of mangoes); (4) Pārśva (black-complexioned, riding a tortoise, elephant-faced and four-armed); (5) Padmāvatī (red- complexioned, seated on a lotus or cock, and four-armed); (6) Mataṅga (two-armed and seated on an elephant); and (7) Siddhāyikā (blue-coloured, riding a lion and four-armed).

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Also known as Ayyappan, Śāstā (Sanskritized form of Chāttan) is the most popular god of Kerala and the neighbouring regions, his principal shrine being upon the hill, Śabarimalai (in Quilon district, Kerala), amidst dense jungles. It is obvious that he had a folk origin; he was the god of forest tribes and hunters (malai-arayan, malap-paṇḍaram, maṇṇan, kaṇikkāran, pulayan, vishuvan, uraḷi and so on, most of them inhabiting Koṭṭayam and Ernākulam districts). But legends made him the son of Śiva and Vishṇu (as Mohinī), and he became celebrated as Harihara-putran (cf. Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa, 4,6, 6-9; Suprabhedāgama, 53,2 and Īśāna-śiva- guru-deva-paddhati, 'śāstā-dhyāna').

The Tamiḷ Akārādi-nighaṇṭu identifies him also with Jina and Buddha ('chāttan enbatuve aruhanum puttanum arihara-puttiranutam muppeyare'). Piṅgaḷa-nighaṇṭu describes him as the 'guardian of dharma' ('arattai-kkāppon'. Śabarimala temple (the principal shrine of Śāstā) was originally a Buddhist vihāra (cf. Census of India, 1961, Vol. 7, Kerala, Part 7, B(1)). The name Śāstā for this god is in fact the shortened form of Dharma-Śāstā. Chūḍāmaṇi-nighaṇṭu calls this god 'māchāttan' (viz. mahā-śāstā).

Whatever the background of this god, he came to be most popular among all sections of the people, and standard iconographic manuals like Pūrva-kāraṇa, Aṁśumadbheda, Śilpa-ratna,

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Īśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati, Sārasvatīya-chitra-karma-śāstra and Kulāla-śāstrāgama included descriptions of this deity. Piṅgaḷa-nighaṇṭu, probably the oldest among the sources of information concerning Śāstā mentions that he rides upon a white elephant (veḷḷai-yānai-vākanan; śveta-mātaṅga), carries a crooked stick (cheṇṭāyutan), and is accompanied by Pūrṇā (who was his wedded wife, 'pūraṇaik-kēḷvan') and Pushkalā (or Pudgalā who was his beloved, 'putkalai-maṇāḷan').

Other early sources (like Chūḍāmaṇi-nighaṇṭu) provides other details: having eyes which are tawny red (piṅgaḷākṣha), wearing garlands which are red in colour (rakta-mālā-dhara), body smeared with yellow paste (pītānulepana), wearing black garments (kāḷa-vāsas), carrying a

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sword in hand (khaḍga-hasta) and riding on a blue-black horse (nilāsva). He was known as the son of Śiva (bhava-putra), son of Mohinī (mohinī-tanaya) and son of both Śiva and Vishṇu (hari-hara-putra).

Folklore regards him as the guardian of villages, riding upon a horse or an elephant, accompanied by two generals Madurai-vīran and Pāvaḍai-rāyan and attended by other spirits like Kuṭṭichāttan, Karuppan, Muṇḍan and Guḷikan. His complexion is dark and he carries in his two hands bow and arrow. He has long and curly hair, and wears a crown and gold ear-rings. He is also seen as seated upon a throne under the banyan tree.

In Suprabhedāgama, he is two-armed, his right hand carrying a crooked stick (cheṇṭu, viz. Vajradaṇḍa) and his left fruits and tender leaves. He sits with his legs folded. His body resembles that of a bhūta, with a large belly, but he wears the sacrificial chord. Dogs, sheep and fowls surround him in a playful mood. He is accompanied by two consorts, called here Madanā and Varṇinī.

Kāraṇāgama, which also describes him as two-armed, makes him sit on a throne with his right leg folded while his left leg hangs down. His body-colour is blue. He is young and tranquil in aspect; but his hair is spread out. Elephant is given as his vehicle; it is also shown in his banner.

Aṁśumadbhedāgama, describes him as four-armed, three-eyed, golden-complexioned, draped in silken garments and seated in a lotus posture. His aspect is peaceful. He shows in his normal hands the gesture of protection and boon-bestowal; his other hands carry sword and shield.

Īśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati provides in the four hands, arrow, knife (kshurika), bow and sword. Sārasvatīya makes the two normal hands assume the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal; and the two upper hands chopper (kartarī) and lotus (kamala- pushpa); or alternately a crooked stick (vakra-daṇḍa), lotus (pushpābja) and a young one of the peacock (śikhi-pota) in his hands. Kulāla-śāstrāgama which also describes the four-armed variety gives stick with a knob (śikhā-daṇḍa), noose, sword and gesture of threat and warning (sūchī-hasta).

One of the dhyāna-slokas describes a eight-armed image of Śāstā, carrying in his hands spear, goad, noose, sword, shield, sugar cane stalk as bow, flowers as darts, and a bowl of pearls (māṇikya-pātra).

However, two-armed images are common, and among the weapons in his hands, the stick is frequently seen. It is a crooked stick (vakra-danda), according to Sārasvatīya; a stick with a curved top (maṇḍalībhūta-daṇḍāgra), according to Pūrva-kāraṇa; a stick with a knob (sikhā-danda) according to Kulāla-śāstrāgama; a stick with flowers (pushpa-daṇḍa) according to Śāstr-sthāpanā.

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Īśāna-śivāchārya-paddhati (śāstā-sthāpana-vidhi, 68-69) mentions several forms of Śāstā: Ādi-śāstā, Hara-śāstā, Hari-śāstā, Senāni, Bhūta-vallabha, Bhogi-śāstā, Gaja-śāstā and Eka-vīra-śāstā. Elsewhere, we have other forms enumerated: Mada-gaja-śāstā, Mohinī-śāstā, Vīra-śāstā, Amṛta-śāstā, Grāma-śāstā, Ugra-śāstā, and Lakshmī-śāstā. We also get some descriptive details. Mahā-śāstā has four-arms, showing in his normal right hand the gesture of exposition (vyākhyāna-mudrā) and in corresponding left hand the gesture of boon-bestowal, and carrying in his upper hands snake and rosary. Mada-gaja-śāstā is two-armed, holding a stick in one hand and small axe (kuṭhāra) in the other; his complexion is golden (kanaka-śikhara-varṇa). Lakshmī-śāstā is also two-armed, the hands showing the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. Mohinī-śāstā is four-armed, his hands carrying lute (vīṇā), book,

rosary, and the gesture of scriptural exposition (vyākhyāna- mudrā); he is fair-complexioned like autumnal moon (śārada-chandra-kānti-dhavala).

Among the mounts of Śāstā are included elephant in rut (mada- gaja), white elephant (śveta-mataṅga), high charger (ucchāśva), blue-coloured horse (nīlāśva) and bull (vṛshabha). The manner of sitting is sukhāsana, vīrāsana, yogāsana (in yogapatta). He is shown normally as tranquil (śānta); but sometimes his eyes are shown as red in indignation (raktāksha), and terrible tusks in his mouth (ghora-daṁshṭra).

The dhyāna-śloka given in Prapañcha-sāra-saṁgraha (II.p.755) describes his complexion as blue-black (āśyāma) and his garments multi-coloured ('vichitra-vāso-vasānam'); he wears a tall crown studded with pearls ('uttuṅga-ratna-mukuṭa'). His hair curls at the ends (kuṭilāgra-keśa). He is two-armed, holding a red lily in one hand and showing the gesture of boon-bestowal with the other ('aruṇotpala-dāna-hastam').

Sometimes, rarely however, he is accompanied by his consorts Pūrṇā (on his right) and Pushkalā (on his left). Pūrṇā is described as dark-complexioned, two-armed and wearing karaṇḍa type of crown. She shows with her right hand the gesture of boon- bestowal, and holds in her left hand a blue lotus. Her right leg is slightly bent (kiñchit-kuñchita-dakshāṅghri). Pushkalā is yellow-complexioned and two-armed, and she wears the kirīṭa type of crown. She holds a noose in her hand (pāśa-hasta), and her left leg is slightly bent. Both are bedecked with all ornaments (cf. Mūrti-dhyānam, Taṅjore, pp.55-86).

According to Kulāla-śāstrāgama, the image of Śāstā when installed on top of a mountain must be sixteen-armed ('parvate shoḍaśa-hastam'), in a jungle ten-armed ('vane daśa-bhujam bhavet'), inside a town eight-armed ('nagare ashṭa-bhujam kuryāt'), within a large town four-armed ('pattane cha chaturbhujam'),

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in a village or in a fort two-armed ('grāme cha kheṭake chaiva dvi- bhujam'); when installed on the banks of a river or on the bunds of a lake the image should have only two arms ('dvi-bhujam cha prakartavyam nadī-tira-taṭākayoh').

It is also insisted that in the case of the Śāstā-image, the temple must first be constructed and only then the image consecrated within it ('mandiram kalpayet, paschāt pratishṭhām kārayet tatah'). Pūrva-kāraṇāgama gives the names of eight parivāra- devatās of Śāstā: Madana, Bhīshaṇa, Raudra, Unmatta, Ugra-bhāshaka, Āścharya, Sundara and Vīrya.

Some texts suggest that the Śāstā image may be made in the superior nava-tāla measure (viz. 112 aṅgulas) or in the inferior daśa-tāla measure (viz.116 aṅgulas).

In the temple on Śabari-mala, the sanctum houses a metallic image of the god with two arms and seated in the yogāsana posture (with yoga-patta). He holds no weapons in his hands; he has a crown on his head. He is visualized as a boy or young man. The image was consecrated in the Malayāḷam śaka year 1085 (corresponding to

1910 A.D). The Sanskrit verse-inscription on the image mentions that Prabhākarāchārya installed the image with his own hands ('prabhākarāchārya-kara-pratishṭhito: mahān ayam varshatu bhūri- maṅgalam'). But the legends relate that Paraśu-rāma established the shrine (along with other Śāstā shrines in Acchen-koyil, Kulattu-puḷha, Ariyen-kāvu and Arakulam on the hills and Thagaẓhi near the sea-coast) in days of yore. It is probable that the deity in ancient days was devoid of an iconic form.

Worship of Śāstā at Śabarimala involves maṇḍala-pūja (rigorous vows kept for two months commencing from the first day of vṛśchikam, about mid-November and ending with makara-saṅkrānti, about mid-January) and makara-viḷakku (light that is seen on the hill in a mysterious manner on the final day).

ŚIKHAṆḌI

One of the eight Vidyeśvaras (who constitute the lower order of divinely ordained deities to bring human beings to higher stages of spriritual evolution) of the Śaivāgama, he is dark brown in complexion and three-eyed; and he wears matted hair in the shape of a crown. A sacrificial chord adoms his torso.

According to Pūrva-kāraṇa, he is four armed; his normal hands assume the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, while his extra- hands carry spear (śūla) and stone-mason's hammer (ṭaṅka). Vishṇu-dharmottara, however, prescribes that his normal hands must be joined in an attitude of supplication (añjali) and that the extra hands must hold arrow and trident.

ŚIKHI-VĀHANA

A form of Kārtikeya (see KĀRṬIKEYA) in which he is shown as riding upon a peacock. His complexion is coral-red (vidrumābha- tanu), and he has but a single face (eka-mukhādhyam), and four hands in which are seen vajra, śakti and the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. He is engaged in combat with the enemies of gods; and he removes all obstacles (avighnam).

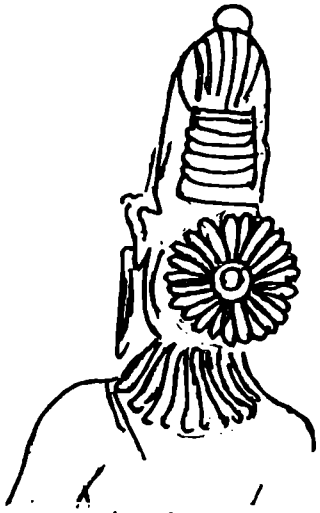
We have in Kumāra-tantra another description of this form: golden-complexioned (kanaka-prabha), three eyed and four-armed (with gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, water-pot and rosary in the hands), clad in red garments (raktāmbara), accompanied by Vallī and Devasenā; he wears karaṇḍa-mukuṭa on his head and makara-kuṇḍalas in his ears; he rides upon a peacock. Other texts make him six-faced and twelve-armed, have his hair done flame- like (jvālā-keśa) or done in śikhaṇḍaka style; and ride upon a blue coloured cahriot (indra-nīla-ratha, which may also mean a peacock).

ŚIRAŚ-CHAKRA

A circular (discus-like) design at the back of the head of an icon attached with a knob. It is called nimbus and is a sort of halo, having the form of a fully blossomed lotus with about eight petals, emanating from a central hub. Texts prescribe that it should be at a distance from the head, the distance being equal to a third of its diameter. A few tassels may also be shown, dangling from the hub.

ŚIRASTRAKA

Headgear or turban, elaborately worked, especially in the case of subsidiary deities like yakshas, nāgas and vidyādharas.



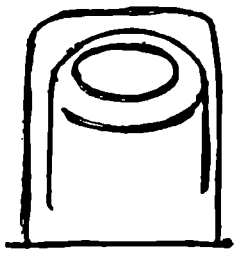
ŚIRAŚCHAKRA

ŚIRAŚCHAKRA

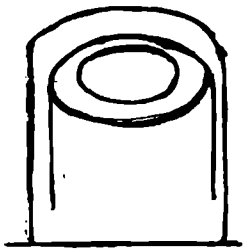
ŚIROVARTANA

Treatment of the top portion of the liṅga (see LIṄGA), without leaving it flat, receives special attention in the āgama texts (e.g. Kāmika, 1,62,52-61; Suprabheda, 1,33,122-127; Raurava, kriyā, 28,15; Kāśyapa-silpa, 49,15-165). While Kāmika concedes that there may be many kinds of such treatment ('bahudhā matam'), and mentions several types like puṇḍarīka, viśāla, śrī-vatsa and śatru-mardana each with a specific benefit (bhinna-phala), most of the texts enumerate only four varieties: (1) trapusha (for the sarva-sama-liṅgas) or anāḍhya; (2) chhatrākāra (for vardhamāna- liṅgas) or sarva-sama; (3) ardha-chandra (for śivādhika-liṅgas) or āḍhya; and (4) kukkuṭāṇḍa (for svastika-liṅgas) or sureḍhya. They are indicated for the four castes brāhmaṇa, kshatriya, vaiśya and śūdra respectively. However, the chattrākāra variety is said to be suitable for all ('chhatrākāram tu sarveshām bhavet liṅga-śire nṛṇām') and best of all lingas ('sarveshām api liṅgānām chhatrākāram tu praśastakam').

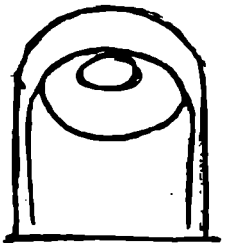
The iconometric details of these varieties are given as follows:



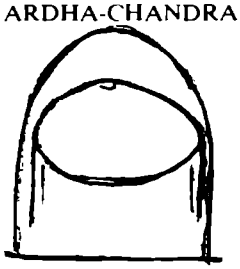
TRAPUSHA



CHHATRA



ARDHA-CHANDRA



KUKKUṬĀṆḌA

ŚIROVARTANA

(1) trapusha: 7 3/4 Brahma, 8 Vishṇu, 8 1/4 Rudra; 2:8; two and half parts out of six chosen for treatment.

(2) chhatrākāra: 8,8,8; 1:4; two parts out of eight.

(3) Ardha-chandra: 8 1/2, 8, 7 1/2; 1:4; two parts out of three.

(4) kukkuṭāṇḍa: 7,8,9 ; 1:9; two parts out of four

Īśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati (37) adds a fifth variety, budbuda (resembling a water-bubble)

ŚILĀ-PARĪKSHĀ

Examination of stone that is suitable of carving icons is an important sequence. Stones which are free from defects ('dushṭa-lakshaṇa-varjitāh') will help the invocation of divinity in the icons. Texts (like Vāsishṭha-saṁhitā, 4,58-68, and Sanatkumāra-saṁhitā, 7,51-59) enumerate several possible defects. Stones got from the banks of rivers and lakes, burning grounds, middle of the village, crematoria, the vicinity of a temple, places where grass does not grow and water is scarce or where anthills abound, deserts and where four roads meet are not suitable (varjya), as icons made out of such stones spell ruin (sarva-saṁpad-vināśinah'). Stones from mountains are the best ('parvate tu śilā grāhyā') and the stone from under the earth are to be chosen, if the former are not available ('tad-alābhe tu bhūtale', Sanatkumāra-saṁhitā, 7,4 and Vishvaksena-, 4,1).

Examination of 'garbha' is regarded as significant (garbham parīksheta) (see for details Purushottama-saṁhitā- 5,63-64 and Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā, 15,39-48). 'Garbha' refers to the hollow portions hidden in the rock, where frogs, lizards, cobras, scorpions or rats may be found.

Stones are said to be of three types: masculine (puṁ-śilā), feminine (strī-śilā), and neuter (napuṁsaka-silā or shaṇḍa-śilā). Masculine stones emit sound similar to bell-metal or bell, when struck ('kāṁsya-ghaṇṭā-ninādа-vat') or send out sparks like fire when cut (utpāṭyamāṇe dṛśyante sphuliṅgā yatra chāgni-vat') (Īśvara-saṁhitā, 18,77); they are also free from crevices, holes and knots, and they are compact ('vivarāvarta-rahitāh yās snigdhāh granthi-varjitaā'), (Vāsishṭha-saṁhitā, 4,25).

Stones are said to be feminine when they are beautifully coloured (vara-varṇa), and fine-grained (laghu-snigdhah), when they are cold to touch ('sīta mṛjāvatī'), and when they emit soft sound when struck (mṛdu-svanāh). Some texts describe the sound as feeble ('nyūnah dhvaneh', Purushottama-saṁhitā (op.cit) and Īśvara-saṁhitā, 18,28) or as similar to the sound from a broken bell or bell-metal vessel ('bhinna-kāṁsya-dhvanih', Haya-śīrsha- saṁhitā, 15,36).

The stones which are neuter do not produce any sound when struck (śabda-hīna), but have veins, patches and grains (sirā-maṇḍala-saṁyukta) (Vāsishṭha-saṁhitā, 4,30); they are also hard to touch (karkaśa).

It is prescribed that the icon of a male deity must be carved in masculine stone, but its pedestal must be made in feminine stone ('puṁlińgena tathā beram strī-śilā pīthikā bhavet', Kāpiñjala- saṁhitā, 11,37); the foundation stone below the ground must be neuter ('ratna-nyāsād adhastāt tu napuṁsaka-silā', Vishṇu- saṁhitā, 13,79 and Haya-śīrsha-saṁhitā, 5,61).

If the icon to be made is that of a goddess, feminine stone must be selected; and for its pedestal masculine stone ('devīnām nirmāṇe strī-śilā varā, puṁ-silā pāda-pīṭham'); the stone used for foundation under the ground must be neuter ('ratna-nyāse napuṁsakam', Purushottama-tantra, 5,63)

ŚILPA-ŚĀSTRA

There is a large number (totalling 12,00,000 granthas, a grantha being 32 letters in the anushṭubh verse) of independent texts in Sanskrit bearing on temple architecture and sculpture (including iconography and iconometry), besides accounts relating to these subjects in several purāṇas, like Agni, Matsya, Pādma and Vishṇu-dharmottara. These books are collectively known as śilpa-śāstra, belonging to the upa-veda called Sthāpatya, an auxiliary discipline of Atharva-veda (cf. Charaṇa-vyūha, 4th division; 'sthāpatya-vedo viśva-karmādi-śilpa-śāstram atharva- vedasyopavedah').

Sthāpatya is the art and science of building temples, carving icons, consecrating and installing them. A sthapati is the chief architect and master-craftsman; he is well-versed in the āgama-śāstra and it is he who guides and directs sūtra-grāhī (architect, expert in designing and measurements), Vardhakī (expert in measurements and strength of materials, 'joiner', carpenter) and takshaka (worker in stone, wood, iron, brass, copper, gold and silver).

Among the important and widely followed works included in Śilpa- śāstra are Bṛhat-saṁhitā (around fifth century A.D.), Pratimā- lakshaṇa (of Nagnajit, an ancient work not fully available), Chitra-lakshaṇa (available only in Tibetan translation, ed. by Laufer, B.N.Goswami and A.L.Dahmen-Dallapiccola, 1976), Mānasāra (ed. by P.K.Acharya), Aṁśumadbheda (Kāśyapa-śilpa) Viśvakarma- śāstra, Sārasvatīya-śilpa-śāstra, Sakalādhikāra (of Agastya), Sanatkumāra-vāstu-śāstra, Aparājitaprachhā, Devatā-mūrti- prakaraṇa, Samaraṅgaṇa-sūtradhāra (of Bhoja, eleventh century). Meya-mata , Mānasollāsa (of Chaḷukya-someśvara, twelfth century), Chaturvarga-chintāmaṇi (of Hemādri, thirteenth century), Rūpa- maṇḍana (of Maṇḍana-sūtradhāra). Nārada-śilpa, Pratimā-māna- lakshaṇa, Śilpa-ratna (of Śrī-kumāra, sixteenth century), Yantra-sarvasva, Narādiya-saṁhitā, and Śrī-tattva-nidhi.

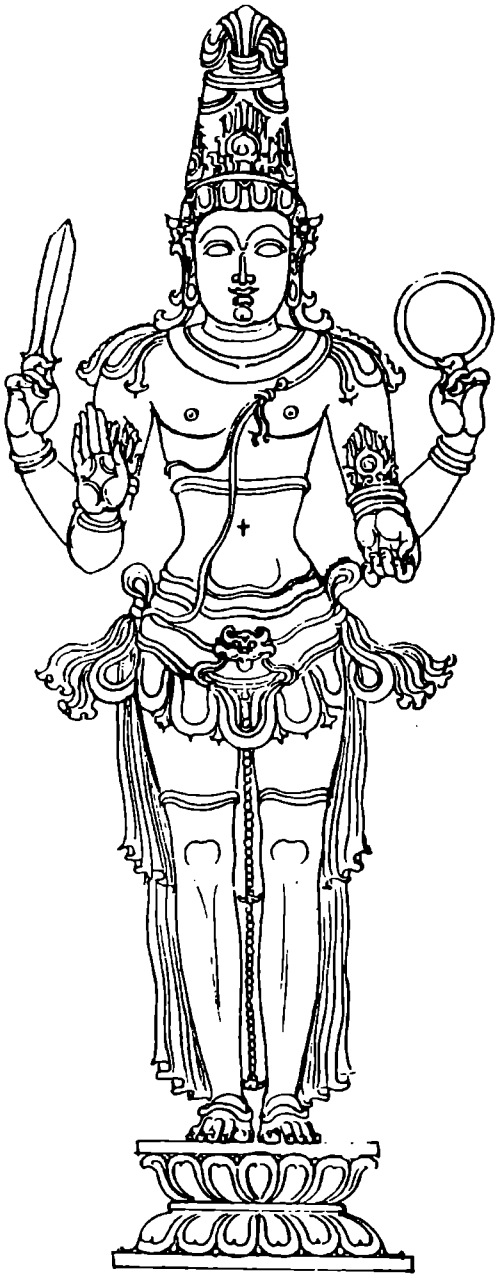
All these texts deal with śilpa in its broad sense; architecture, sculpture, painting and decorative arts. An important aspect dealt with concerns iconography, iconometry, and details relating to āsana, āyudha, bhaṅgi, mudrā, ābharaṇa and māna. Several āgama works also provide details of iconography, (like Kāmika, Kāraṇa, Vaikhānasa, Suprabheda, Aṁśumadbheda and Ajita). Śukra- nīti-sāra is an important work dealing with architecture and sculpture.

It must be noted that in India Vāstu (architecture) and śilpa (sculpture) are not considered as two mutually exclusive disciplines; they are complementary in nature and even interdependent. Most of the texts mentioned above deal with both subjects. However, a distinction is made between secular and sacred architecture and sculpture. In sculpture, the expression 'pratimā' (or bera, bimba, vigraha) refers to the icons of gods and goddesses while the word 'chitra' is secular in intent ('pratimā cha chitram cheti dvidhā vibhajyate; pratimā deva-devyādīnām chitram sarvatropayujyate'). The former are installed in temples or household shrines and worshipped, whereas the chitra specimens (including paintings) are decorative in character.

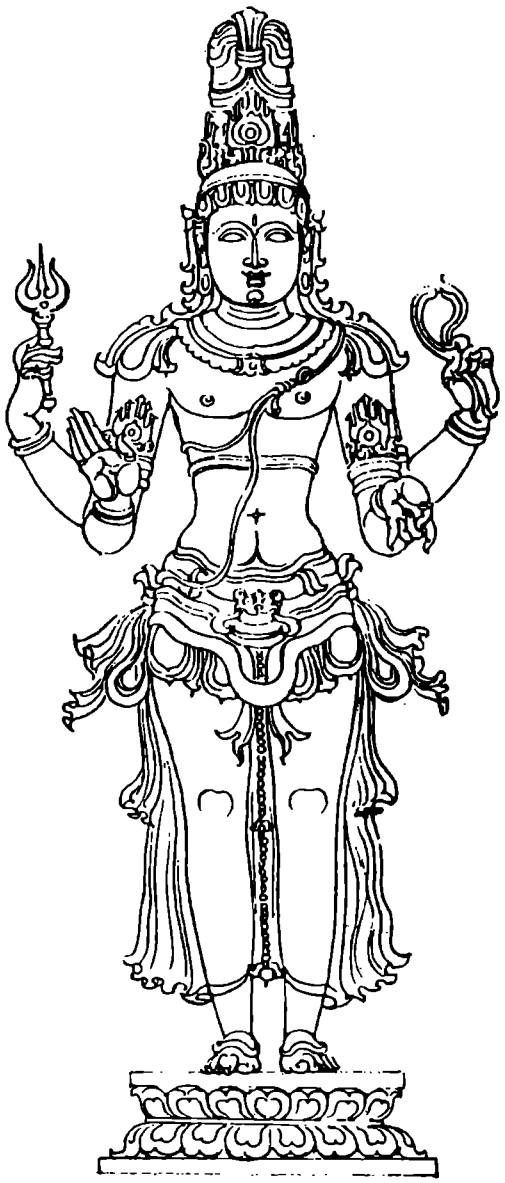
ŚIVA

One of the two most popular and widely worshipped gods in India (the other god being Vishṇu), Śiva has an interesting conceptual context. The worship of Śiva goes back to a distant

ŚIVA FAMILY
(an old drawing from Mysore)



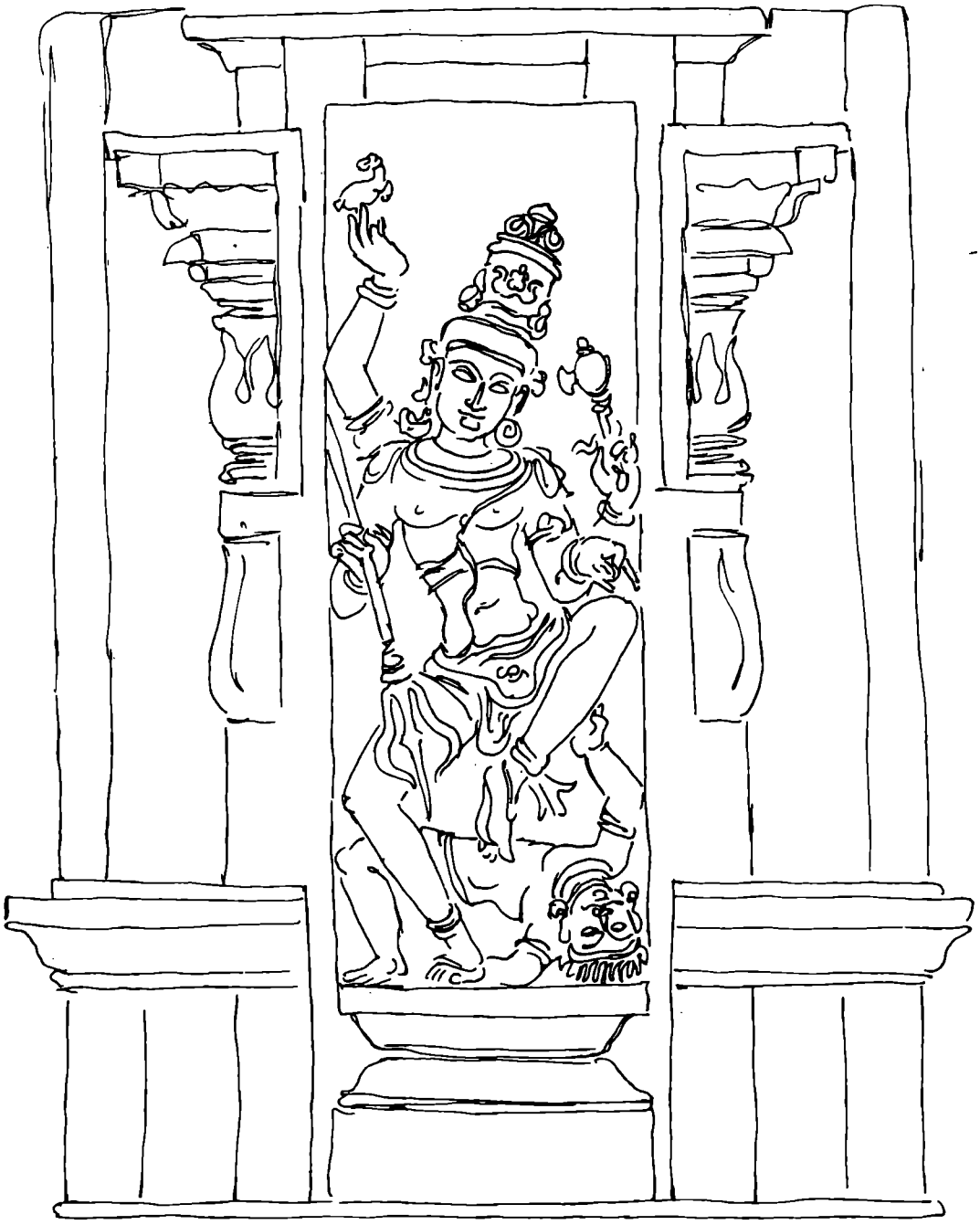
ŚIVA
(From Tiruvārūr Temple)



ŚIVA
(from Tiruvārūr Tyāgarājasvāmi temple)

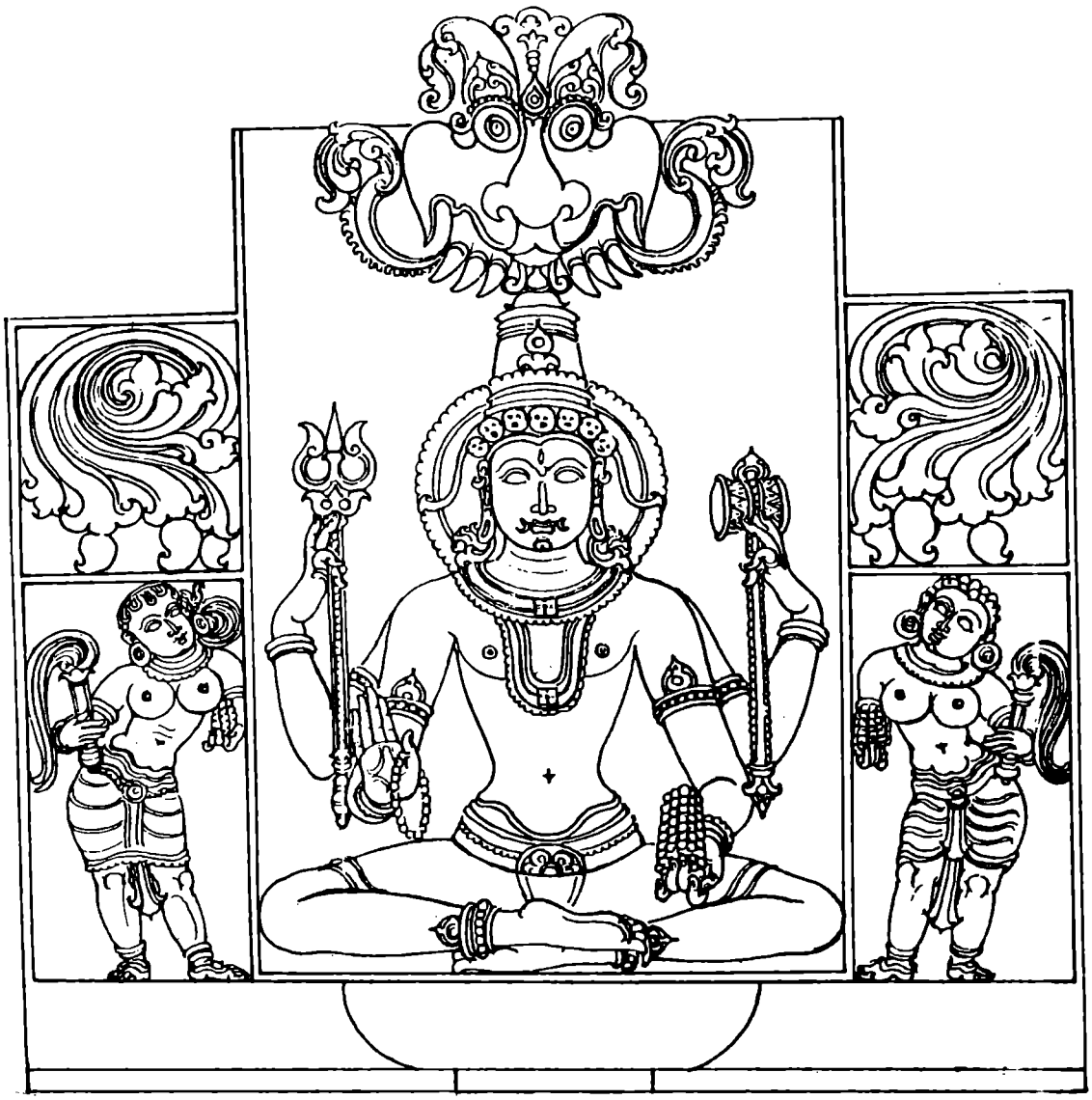
prehistoric past and has survived till our own day. The appeal of Śiva has been strong and persistent among all sections of the population.

It is difficult to trace the stages through which the worship of Śiva has assumed the present position. The seals of the Indus valley civiliza-



ŚIVA
(as Kālāri,Tañjāvūr Temple)

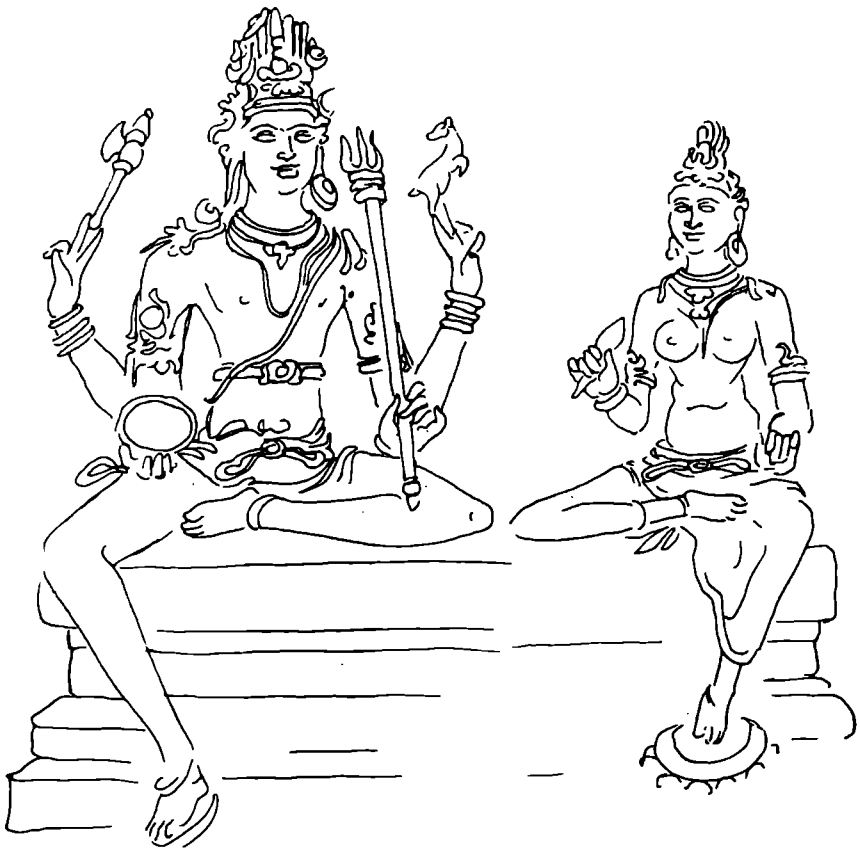
ŚIVA
(as Naṭarāja)



ŚIVA
(from a sculpture in Egmore Museum,Madras)

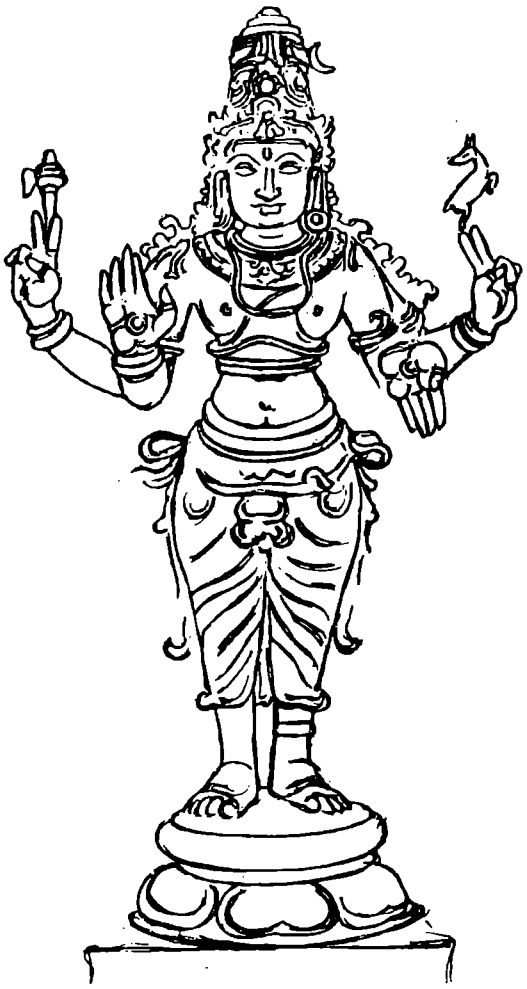
tion portray Śiva as the lord of the beasts (paśu-patI), as an ascetic (yogi), as a medicine-man (bhūta- bhishak), and as involved in serpent and tree cults (nāga and vṛksha). The earliest passages in Ṛgveda (as for instance 1,114) describe Rudra as a fierce deity of the stormy winds and deafening thunderbolts, devastating floods and raging epidemics. But there was also a pacific aspect to him: he was benevolent, he reassures the frightened folk and cures diseases. As a later text says: Two are the forms of this god known to the wise - one terrible and the other benevolent ('dve tanū tasya devasya brāhmaṇā vedajñā viduh; ghoram anyad śivam anyam te tanū bahudhā punah').

The early Brāhmaṇa texts (e.g.Taittirīya-brāhmaṇa 1,6,10, Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa, 12,6,2, Vājasanayi-saṁhitā, 3,57-63) describe a



ŚIVA with PĀRVATHI

popular, magical but inauspicious ritual known as 'tryaṁbaka- homa', which involves Rudra as a cruel deity and also his sister Aṁbikā, who too is a cruel goddess. The priest prepares on the gārhapatya-fire the puroḍāśa-cakes, takes a fire-brand from the dakshiṇa-fire, deposits in a place where four roads meet and offers parts of the cakes to Rudra and Aṁbikā with the mantra 'esha te rudra bhāgah saha svasrāṁbikayā tam jushasva'. This offering is made so that Rudra may go away to the Mūjāvat mountains, ('etat te rudrāvāsam tena paro mūjāvato atīhi'). It is a ritual to ward off evil, and Rudra here personifies all evil spirits. Further sequence of the same ritual, involves depositing an additional cake (from which no parts were taken off) on a molehill or on earth dug up by rats, with the mantra 'ākhus te rudra paśus tam jushasva'; the rat (also an evil spirit) is visualized as the vehicle (or stake-beast) of Rudra. The previous sequence is intended to free the children of the yajamāna from the powers of Rudra, while this sequence is intended to deliver even the unborn children of the yajamāna from Rudra's hold. It is interesting to note that both Rudra and his sister Ambikā were considered cruel deities and evil spirits working in unison for destructive purposes (cf. comm. on Vājasaneya-saṁhitā, 3,57: 'yoyam rudrākhyah krūra devas tasya virodhinām hantum icchhā bhavati, tadanayā bhaginyā krūra- devatayā sādhana-bhūtayā tam hinasti').



ŚIVA
(bronze, utsava mūrti)

We find the word Śiva in the Ṛgveda, but it is not the name of any god; it is only a quality found in many gods. But Rudra is the proper name of a deity, but the expression also is a collective one: there are several rudras, providing a background for the eleven Rudras of the purāṇas (see RUDRA). Rudra's identification with a single god, whose other name was Siva was achieved in the Śvetāśvatara-upanishad and Yajur-veda (Taittirīya-saṁhitā, 4,5,1, 'śatarudrīya' section), Vajasaneya-saṁhitā (3,63) also identified Śiva with Rudra ('tam śivanāmāsi'). Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa knew that

ŚIVA
(bronze, utsava mūrti)

Rudra-Śiva was also called Bhava, Mahādeva, Śarva, Paśupati, Ugra and Īśāna. Pāṇinī's Aṣṭādhyāyayī (1,49; 3,53; 4,100; 5,3,99) also knew that Rudra was called variously Mṛḍa, Bhava, Śarva, Girīśa, Mahādeva and Tryaṁbaka.

Patañjali's Mahābhāshya provides us with the information that there was already a group of devotees affiliated to Śiva, the 'śivabhāgavatas', and that there were also icons made of Śiva for purposes of worship, along with those of Skanda and Viśākha. Śiva's character as a god must also have been crystallized by then: we read, for instance, in the Śatarudrīya hymns that Śiva was celebrated as 'aghora' (benevolent), 'kapardi' (matted hair on his head), girīśa (lord of the mountains), bhīma (terrible), nīlagrīva (blue-throated), tryaṁbaka (three-eyed), sabhā-pati (master of the assemb-

ty), gaṇa-pati (leader of the hosts), senānī (commander of the forces), śaṁkara (doer of the good) and śaṁbhu (appearing for the welfare of all).

The purāṇas wove legends to explain all these characteristics and in the classical age we find Śiva a full-fledged god with myths and a cult round him. The Śaiva āgamas also helped to crystallize the cult of Śiva. But the worship of Śiva in the form of a liṅga was not known to the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇa texts, or even to Patañjali. The first occurrence of the idea of liṅga meant for worship is to be found in Bṛhat-saṁhitā (57,53-54); we also find here the mention of the liṅga stem being divided into three units after the three gods, Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva.

The early liṅgas also involved iconic representations. The well-known (so-called Paraśurāmeśvara) liṅga at Guḍimallam in Āndhra-Pradesh (about the first century B.C.) has the entire human representation of Śiva, while the liṅga at Bhiṭā (a little later) has a bust and also four human heads below it. In both of them, the phallic association has been realistically shown, but the idea of a liṅga is not exhausted by it. Liṅga-purāṇa (20,16,1) says that liṅga is Maheśvara, and that he is called liṅga because the mortal eye cannot perceive him, and all things ultimately dissolve themselves in it ('liṅgas sakshān maheśvarah; layanāl liṅgam ity uktam').

It is important to realize that Śiva is called a liṅgin (who bears or sustains the liṅga); liṅga (which is another word for the Sāṁkhyan prakṛti or śakti) is an attribute of Śiva (who symbolizes purusha, liṅgin). The idea of the generative organ (phallus) is little more than symbolic. More important is the conception that pradhāna (fundamental creative urge) is liṅga, and that Parameśvara is the liṅgin.

The early liṅgas (as those of Guḍimallam and Bhiṭā) are actually liṅgins; the suggestion of phallus (realistically moulded in the first case, and drawn by lines in the second case) is only in the background. Later liṅgas, however, contain the two distinct units: the pedestal or yoni and the shaft that rises above it. The pedestal is feminine in aspect while the shaft is masculine. the former is identified with Pārvati or Śakti and the latter with Śiva ('liṅga-vedī mahādevi liṅgam sakshān maheśvarah'). In the Āgama-texts, the shaft-portion of the liṅga is more often known as the Rudra-bhāga, and the portion beneath it covered by the yoni Vishṇu-bhāga (Vishṇu being identified with Devī); the portion below the Vishṇu-bhāga, hidden under the ground is the Brahma-bhāga, neuter in aspect and unmanifest in nature (avyakta). The expression Śiva comprehends all the three parts of the liṅga; the word is more inclusive than Rudra.

The epic Mahābhārata (anuśāsana-parva, 17,13-14) narrates that Śiva appeared before Aśvatthāma first as a golden altar and later as a resplendent deity upon it ('purastāt kāñchanī vedī prādurāsin mahātmanah; tasyāṁ vedyāṁ tadā rājān chitrabhānur ajāyata'). In 'vana-parva' of the same epic, Arjuna, when defeated by the hunter (kirāta, Śiva in disguise), worshipped Śiva on an earthern altar ('sthaṇḍilam mṃmayam kṛtvā mālyenāpujayad bhavam'). In such and other references, it is hard to see any phallic associations with the idea of a liṅga.

The early Ujjain coins (3rd to 2nd cent. B.C.) portray Śiva in the liṅga form as well as in the theriomorphic (as bull) and anthropomorphic forms. The phallic representations, however, are not common. And it is to be noted that whenever the linga is shown, trees are also shown alongside (as the uninscribed cast coin, which has a liṅga on a square pedestal, with a tree in railing on its left, cf. J.Allen: Coins of Ancient India, p.85, no.2, plate XI). The liṅga is more naturally aligned to the cult of trees (sthala-vṛksha) than with the phallic associations.

Quite frequently the early Ujjain coins show Śiva in his antrhopomorphic aspect, as a two-armed hero standing, carrying club in one hand and water-vessel in the other (daṇḍa and kamaṇḍalu). Sometimes the club takes the form of a trident or a battle-axe. Some coins show Śiva holding trident in one hand and club in the other. Bull as an emblem of Śiva occurs frequently in the coins belonging to the early Kushāṇa period

(around the first century A.D.). The gold and copper coins of Wema Kadphises (the Kushāṇa monarch who ruled after the Indo-pārthian Goṇdophares, early first centry A.D.) show the trident-bearing Śiva along with the bull. The legend on the coins describe Śiva as the 'lord of all the world' ('sarva-loga-īśvarasa') and the 'great lord' ('mahīśvarasa').

The expression Śiva (from 'śi' with the suffix 'vaṅ', meaning 'auspicious') signifies 'auspicious' ('śivam kalyāṇam vidyate asya') or 'averting the inauspicious' ('śyati aśubham'). The early iconographic manuals like Tantra-sāra describe several aspects and forms of Śiva, all of which are anthropomorphic in character. Several details like three eyes (signifying sun, moon and fire), crescent moon on crest, matted hair as crown, serpents as ornaments, tiger-skin as garment, and battle-axe and deer in the hands are all brought out in these descriptions. Half of Śiva's body being identified with Śakti is also an old concept.

It is usual for Śiva to be visualized as having five heads and ten arms. The five faces have different colours: ('mukta-pīta- payoda-mauktika-japā-varṇair mukhaih'), and the ten hands carry spear, (śūla), hammer (ṭaṅka), sword (kṛpāṇa), vajra, fire (dahana), serpent (nāgendra), bell (ghaṇṭā), goad (aṅkuśa), noose (pāśa) and the gesture of protection (bhīti-hara).

The Śaivāgama texts enumerate several sportive forms, each of them associated with a legend, which are represented in the Śiva temples (see LĪLĀ-MŪRTI and individual entries)

The cult of Śiva recognized eight forms (ashṭa-mūrti) corresponding with the five primary elements ('pañcha-bhūti'), Sun, moon and soul (yaja-māna or jīvātmā, kshetrajña): Śarva (earth element), Bhava (water), Rudra (fire), Ugra (air) Bhīma (ākāśa), Īśāna (su)n, Mahādeva (moon) and Paśupati (soul). Eight centres of Śiva-worship are also recognized: Śiva-kāñchī (Ekāmranātha in Kāñchipuram, Tamiḷ Nāḍu), Jaṁbukeśvara (near Śrīraṅgam, in Tamiḷ Nāḍu), Aruṇāchala (Tiruvaṇṇāmalai in Tamiḷ Nāḍu), Kāḷahastīśvara (on banks of river Svarṇamukhī in North Arcot district), Chidaṁbaram (in Tamiḷ Nāḍu), the visible solar disc (pratyaksha- devatā), Somanāth (in Saurāshṭra) and Paśupati-nātha (Khāṭhmaṇḍu in Nepāl).

Vishṇudharmottara provides iconographical details of these eight forms. They all have matted hair done up as a crown (jaṭā- makuṭa), crescent moon on head, four-armed, two of the hands assuming gestures of protection and boon-bestowal and the other two holding trident and khaṭvāṅga. Śarva, Mahādeva and Paśupati are similar: white-complexioned like conch, pacific of aspect, standing on lotus seat, and carrying in the four hands sword and shield and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. Bhava and Bhīma are alike; red in complexion, matted hair done up as crown, tusks in mouth, and carrying in the four hands spear and noose and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. Bhīma, however, is terrible in aspect while Bhava is pacific.

According to Pūrva-kāraṇa, all of them (excluding sun and moon) are three-eyed and draped in silken garments. Bhava is white-coloured, Śarva black, Īśāna red, Paśupati blue, Ugra pale pink, Rudra dark brown (musk-coloured), Bhīma coral red and Mahādeva deep blue. The eight forms constitute the eight legs of Śarabha (see ŚARABHA).

Texts like Sūta-saṁhitā describe five aspects of Śiva (pañcha-brahma): Sadyojāta (representing earth, and pervading ego), Vāmadeva (water, and manas), Aghora (fire and buddhi), Tatpurusha (air and māyā), and Īśāna (ākāśa and soul). Śrīkaṇṭha-śivāchārya identifies the five aspects with Brahmā, Vishnu, Rudra, Īśvara and Sadāśiva respectively (Brahma-mīmāṁsā-bhāshya). These five aspects not only pervade the universe but help the devotees cross the sea of transmigration.

Aparājita-sūtra enumerates five iconic forms of Śiva:

(1) Ahirbudhnya : (sixteen-armed; carrying on the right side mace, serpent, discus, hand-drum, club, trident, goad and rosary, and on the

other side tomara, paṭṭiśa, shield, skull-cup, bell, śakti, axe and gesture of warning and threat.

(2) Bahu-rūpa-sadāśiva: sixteen-armed, hand-drum, discus, serpent, trident, goad, pot, mace and rosary on the right side, bell, skull-cup, khaṭvāṅga, gesture of warning, small water-pot, bow, axe and paṭṭiśa on the left side.

(3) Virūpākṣha: sixteen-armed, sword, trident, hand-drum, goad, serpent, discus, mace, and rosary (right), shield, khaṭvāṅga, śakti, axe, gesture of warning, pot, bell and skull-cup (left).

(4) Tryaṁbaka: sixteen-armed, discus, hand-drum, club, bow, trident, goad, shield, and rosary (right), mace, khaṭvāṅga, bowl, bow, gesture of warning, pot, axe and paṭṭiśa.

(5) Vaidya-nātha: the form of Śiva as he drank up the terrible poison that came up when the milky ocean was churned, white-complexioned, pacific in aspect, seated in the lotus posture, decorated with all ornaments, serpent as the sacred chord (nāga-yajñopavīta), three-eyed, resplendent like a million suns, matted hair on head to which crescent moon is stuck, draped in tiger-skin and four-armed, carrying trident, skull-cup, rosary and gesture of protection; he is invoked for strength and health.

There are twelve principal forms of Śiva, which are popularly worshipped and celebrated in legends and myths; they include the five aspects (pañcha-brahma) and have stylized iconic forms.

(1) Sadyojāta: white-complexioned, three-eyed, matted hair in a bunch (jaṭā-bhāra), pacific countenance, crescent moon on crest; two-armed, the hands showing gestures of protection and boon- bestowal.

(2) Vāmadeva: red-complexioned, three-eyed, matted hair and crescent moon on head, straight nose; two-armed, carrying sword and shield.

(3) Aghora: blue-lotus complexioned, terrible tusk in mouth, serpent on head, three-eyed, garland of severed heads, serpents as ear-rings, sacred chord and girdle, yellow hair; eight-armed, carrying in the hands on the right side khaṭvāṅga, skull-cup, shield and bowl, and in the hands on the other side trident, axe, sword and cudgel.

(4) Tatpurusha: yellow-complexioned, a sacrificial chord, two- armed, holding in the right hand rosary, and in the left fruit.

(5) Īśāna: white-complexioned like crystal, matted hair and crescent moon on head, three-eyed, and two-armed, carrying trident and skull-cup.

(6) Mṛtyuñjaya: exceedingly white in colour, crown of matted hair to which crescent-moon is stuck, draped in tiger-skin; four- armed, carrying trident and rosary (right) and skull-cup and posture of yogic meditation (left).

(7) Vijaya: resplendent form, three-eyed, matted hair and crescent moon, four-armed with trident and lotus and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal

(8) Kiraṇākṣha: white complexion, great arms (mahā-bāhu), three eyes, four hands carrying book, rosary and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal.

(9) Śrī-kaṇṭha: well decorated and draped in garments of varied colour, sacrificial chord, four-armed, with sword, bow, shield and arrow in the hands

(10) Sadāśiva: three-eyed and four-armed, two normal hands holding a pot filled with nectar (pūrṇāmṛta-kumba), and the other hands carrying pot and rosary.

(11) Dvādaśa-kalā-yukta Sadāśiva: five faces, three eyes (representing icchhā, kriyā and jñāna) and ten hands, seated in lotus posture;

two normal hands joined in yoga-mudrā, and carrying gesture of protection, sakti, trident and khaṭvāṅga (right) and serpent, rosary, hand-drum and fruit.

(12) Aghorāstra: appearing as if in great indignation (like fire flames), two hands, carrying trident and sword.

ŚIVA-KĀMI

Pārvati represented as standing on the left side of Śiva as Naṭarāja (see NAṬARĀJA), witnessing his dance (śiva-tāṇḍava- sākshiṇi). She is two-armed, and her right hand carries a blue lotus while the left arm dangles in a graceful posture. Her right foot is placed firmly on the ground, her left leg is bent at the knee ('savya-

ŚIVAKĀMĪ

ŚIVAKĀMĪ

pāda-sthitam, kuñchitetarajānukam'). She is also called Śiva-kāmeśvarī.

ŚIVA-CHAṆḌA

A form of Chaṇḍikeśvara (see CHAṆḌIKEŚVARA), who is shown as absorbed in contemplation on Śiva ('śiva-dhyāna-parāyaṇa'). He is two-armed, and his hands are joined in supplica-

ŚIVAKĀMI

tion to Śiva ('śivāñjali-kṛtam'). He is empowered to bring to fruition the devotee's worship ('śivārchā-phala-dātāram')

ŚIVA-DŪTĪ

A form of Durgā and also one of the eight yoginīs (the other seven being Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaishṇavī, Vārāhī, Nārasiṁhī and Aindrī). She is said to have emerged out of the heart-cavern of the Devī, as Vishṇu contemplated ('kaushikyā hṛdayād devī nissṛtā dhyānato hareh'). Śrī-tattva-nidhi knows her as only Dūtī.

Kālikā-purāṇa (uttara-tantra, chap.50), Mārkandeya-purāṇa ('devī-māhātmya', rakta-bīja-vadha) and Vāmana-purāṇa (ch.53) contain elaborate descriptions of this form of the goddess. She is four-armed, large-faced (sthūla-vaktrā), big-lipped (pīnoshṭhā), tall figure (tuṅga-mūrti) and terrible-looking (bhayaṅkarā). She wears garlands of severed heads, and matted hair as crown on her head to which crescent moon is stuck. Her ear-ornaments and necklaces are snakes ('nāga-kuṇḍala-hārābhyām śobhitām'). She is draped in tiger-skin; she carries in her right hands spear and discus, and in the left noose and shield. She stands in the ālīḍha posture with her right foot placed upon a corpse ('kuṇapopari') and her foot upon a jackal's back ('śṛgālasya pṛshṭhe'). She is surrounded by hundreds of wolves ('śivā-śata-susaṁvṛtā').

Matsya-purāṇa describes her face as showing utter dejection (āvarta-mukhī), her body as especially emaciated ('śushka-kāyā viśeshatah'), and her aspect as terrifying ('bhīmā'). She is decorated with serpents (bhujagaih pari-veshṭitā). She has many arms ('bahu-bāhu-yutā'). And she has a jackal's face, which is also auspicious ('śṛgāla-vadanā śubhā'). She carries a khaṭvāṅga in one of her hands.

In a variant form, she is four-armed, carrying in her hands cup filled with blood ('asṛk-pātra-dharā'), sword, shield and a bowl with flesh (or fish) in it ('sāmishah'). She stands in an ālīḍha posture ('ālīḍhāsana-saṁsthānā').

Śrī-tattva-nidhi makes her eight-armed, three-eyed and fierce like the mid-day sun ('madhyāhnārka-prabhābhā'). Her hands carry jewel-pot (ratna-pātra), mace, shield, noose, lotus, short axe (kuṭhāra), sword, and goad.

According to Kālikā-purāṇa, along with Śiva-dūti the following twelve yoginīs are to be worshipped: Kshemaṅkarī, Śāntā, Veda-mātā, Mahodarī, Karālā, Kāmadā, Bhagāsyā, Bhagamālinī, Bhagodarī, Bhagaharā, Bhaga-jihvā, and Bhagā.

ŚIVA-PRATĪHĀRA

Attendants, who are all four-armed, and three-eyed in a Śiva- shrine, they are also door-guardians.

(1) On the eastern side are Nandi (to the left) and Mahākāla (to the right). The former has citrus, serpent, hand-drum and pomegranate in

his hands while the latter has khatvāṅga, skull-cup, hand-drum and gesture of warning.

(2) On the southern side, are Heramba (left) and Bhṛṅgi (right), the former with gesture of warning, trident, hand-drum and gaja- hasta and the latter with gaja-hasta, hand-drum, khaṭvāṅga and gesture of warning in the hands.

(3) On the western side Durmukha (left) and Pāṇḍura (right), the former with trident, hand-drum, khaṭvāṅga and skull-cup, and the latter with skull-cup, hand-drum, cudgel and pomegranate fruit in the hands.

(4) On the northern side, Sita (left) and Asita (right), the former having citrus fruit, lotus-stalk, khaṭvāṅga and lotus-bud, and the latter lotus-bud, khaṭvāṅga, lotus-stalk and pomegranate fruit in the hands.

(The arrangement of what the hands carry is in the circumambulatory order (prādikshinyakrama) beginning with the normal right hand).

ŚIVA-ŚAKTI

The presiding deity of Kāmakoṭi centre, she is visualized as dark-complexioned (śyāmā), three-eyed and four-armed. Her hands carry the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal (normal right and left) and rosary (upper left) and lotus (upper right). She wears on her head the karaṇḍa-mukuṭa type of crown, and she is adorned with all ornaments.

ŚIVA-LIṄGA

see LIṄGA

ŚIṀŚUMĀRA

A cosmic form of Vishṇu representing the principle of time (kāla-rūpī). His body comprehends all the stellar worlds (jyotir-loka-kāya), all the gods and all astral occurrences. The description of this form occurs in Vishṇu-purāṇa (2nd aṁśa, ch.12) and Bhāgavata (5th skandha, 23-4).

ŚIṀŚUMĀRA

The form resembles a scorpion, with the body curled up with the right inclination (dakshiṇāvartam kuṇḍalī-bhūta-deha), suspended in space, tail above and head below ('pucchhāgre avāk-śirasah'). In his tail are stationed Prajāpati, Indra, Agni and Dharma; at the tip of his tail Dhātā and Vidhātā; in his loins the seven sages, Aṅgāraka is in the the head. Āditya on the chest, Bṛhaspati at the rear, Nārāyaṇa in the heart, Chandra in the mind, Uśanā on the navel, the Aśvins on the breasts, Rāhu at the throat, the Ketus all over the body; the stars constitute the hair on the body of this form.

The tail supports the entire region consisting of all the heavenly bodies (jyotiśchakrādhārapucchha), and his body has the brilliance of all the stars appearing at once (sphurat-tārā- nibhakāntih'). There are four hands, in which are seen conch, discus and the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. The uttarāyaṇa is the right half of the body, and dakshiṇāyaṇa the left. The legs are held aloft (uttāna-pāda).

ŚĪTALA-NĀTHA

The tenth tīrthaṅkara in the Jaina pantheon (see TĪRTHAṄKARA), he was born in Bhadrapura as the son of Dṛḍha-ratha and Sunandā-devī. He renounced and performed penances. He became a kevalin, while meditating under the bilva tree. His complexion was golden, and his

emblem is the tree that fulfills all desires (kalpa-vṛkṣha). Other accounts, however, name this tree aśvattha or śrī-vatsa. His principal disciple (gaṇa-dhara) was Anāgāra, and the monarch who attended upon him was Sīmandhara.

ŚĪTALĀ

A minor form of Devī, who probably had a folk origin. According to Rudra-yāmala, she is black-complexioned, two-armed, naked and riding upon a donkey (rāsabha-vāhanā). She carries in her hands a broom (mārjanikā) and a pot of water; and her head is adorned by a winnow-basket (śūrpālaṅkṛta-mastakā).

A variant form of the same goddess is red-complexioned (aruṇa-mani-nibhāṅgā), three eyed and four-armed. Her hands carry skull-cup, hand-drum, spear and sword. Her hair rises in flames of fire (agni-keśa). She is seated in a lotus (padma-pīṭha).

She is regarded as the goddess of small-pox. The tāntrik deity Parṇa-śabarī is flanked by Śītalā on one side and Hayagrīva (the god of fever) on the other.

ŚĪTALĀ

ŚĪTAVATĪ

see MAHĀ-ŚĪTAVATĪ

ŚUKRA

One of the nine graha-deities (see NAVA-GRAHA), he is regarded as the preceptor of the daityas, even as Bṛhaspati (see BṚHASPATI) is of the gods. The two (Bṛhaspati and Śukra) have almost identical forms. But Śukra is said to ride upon a white chariot, drawn by eight white-coloured horses born out of the earth ('bhū-saṁbhavair hayaih'); the chariot is adorned by a white coloured banner. He is followed by an army (sa-varūthaḥ).

He is white-complexioned and four-armed. In his hands are seen rosary, water-pot, staff (daṇḍa) and the gesture of boon- bestowal.

ŚUKLA-KURUKULLĀ

A form of the tāntrik goddess Kurukullā (see KURUKULLĀ), who also figures in the Vajrayāna pantheon, she is distinguished by her white complexion. She illustrates all the emotions beginning with the erotic (śṛṅgārādi-rasopetā). She is fair-complexioned, three-eyed and two-armed. In her right hand, she carries rosary (at which she is looking with her head inclining in that direction) and in her left a bowl containing the juice of blue lotus (utpalāmṛta-kuṇḍi). Her matted hair is done up as a crown, in front of which is seen a tiny image of the dhyāni-buddha Amitābha.

She is seated upon an animal in a relaxed posture (sattva-paryaṅkāsana-sthā). The eight great serpents (aṣhṭa-nāgā) serve as her ornaments: Ananta as her hair-band, Vāsuki as her necklace, Takshaka as her ear-ring, Kārkkoṭaka as her sacred chord, Padma as her girdle, Mahā-padma as her anklet, Śaṁkha-pāla as her bracelet, and Kulika as her armlet. The snakes

are of different colours: blue, cream-white, red, green, white, lotus-stalk colour, yellow and ash-grey respectively.

She is filled with the spirit of compassion (karuṇārdra-chittā). And all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas attend on her.

ŚUKRA

ŚUDDHA-VĀRĀHĪ

A variety of the tāntrik goddess Vārāhī (see VĀRĀHĪ), she is visualized as blue in complexion (nīla-varṇā), boar-faced (varāhasyā) and draped in red upper graments ('rakta-vastrottarīyā'). She has four hands in which are seen spear, skull-cup, pestle-club (musala) and serpent; crescent moon adorns her head (indu-rekhā-alasan-mauli).

ŚŪNYA

An important concept in Vajrayāna Buddhism, it is identified with ultimate reality. Although the word means 'void', the concept has a positive meaning: it is productive of great and eternal bliss (mahā-sukha), and when the bodhi-chitta of the practioner attains nirvāṇa, it merges in Śūnya. All the gods and goddesses of the Vajrayāna pantheon are looked upon as actually substanceless (or void-like) but manifestations of Śūnya. The multiplicity of the deities is due to the visualizations of Śūnya in terms of so many seed-syllables (bījāksharas).

Śūnya manifests itself both as gods and goddesses. For instance, when the devotee aspires for the buddhahood, he takes for contemplation the form of Heruka (see HERUKA), a powerful and popular god; he may also take the feminine form of Heruka, known as Nairātmyā (see NAIRĀTMAYĀ). The yuganaddha or yab-yum form of the god and goddess illustrates the principle of Śūnya as productive of 'mahā-sukha'.

The different purposes of the devotees also results in the manifestation of Śūnya in different iconic forms: Jāṅguli for curing snake-bite, Simha-nādā or Parṇa-śabarī for curing and preventing diseases, Kurukullā for success in love-affairs, Vajrānaṅgā for attracting by magical means, Mahākāla for overcoming enemies and so on.

ŚŪLA

Long spear, carried in the hands of violent deities (rājasa- mūrti).

ŚŪLINĪ

A form of Durgā, she is distinguished by spear as her main weapon. She is black-complexioned (megha-śyāmā) and terrible in aspect (bhīshaṇā); and she rides upon a lion (simha-skandhārūḍhā). She is eight-armed, and in her hands are seen spear, arrow, sword, conch, discus, mace, noose and bow. Four maidens carrying in their two hands sword and shield surround and follow her.

ŚESHA

Also called Ananta (see ANANTA), he is regarded as the monarch of serpents. Two-armed, he is white in complexion (sita-prabha) but wearing blue garments (nīlāmbara). He holds his hands in an attitude of suplication (prāñjali). Over his head are the thousand hoods in a halo (phaṇā-maṇḍala-madhyastha).

ŚAILAJA-LIṄGA

Liṅga carved out of stone (see LIṄGA). The stone that may be used for carving a liṅga is of four kinds: white (like cow's milk) , red (like hibiscus or bandhūka flower), yellow (like turmeric or gold), and black (like mustard or guggula), and they are suitable for the four castes respectively (cf. Suprabheda 33, 42 and Ajitāgama, 4,12). However, black stone is good for all people ('sarvesham tu śilā kṛshṇā sarva-sampat-karī-śubhā', Suprabheda, 33,48).

According to Aparājita-prcchhā (201, 6-12), the height of the stone linga may be from one hasta (viz. 24 aṅgulas) to nine hastas (24x9 aṅgulas, viz. 216 aṅgulas), and we get thirty-three possible lingas ('hastādi nava-hastāntam trayas-triṁśaś cha saṁkhyayā'). They are also named:

1. Bhava (1 hasta)
2. Bhavodbhava (1 $^1/_4$ hasta)
3. Bhāva (1 $^1/_2$ hasta)
4. Saṁhāra (1 $^3/_4$ hastas)
5. Bhaya-nāśana (2 hastas)

6. Pāśa-yukta (2 1/4 hastas)
7. Mahā-teja (2 1/2 hastas)
8. Mahā-deva (2 3/4 hastas)
9. Parātpara (3 hastas)
10. Īśvara (3 1/4 hastas)
11. Śekhara (3 1/2 hastas)
12. Śiva (3 3/4 hastas)
13. Śānta (4 hastas)
14. Manohlādaka (4 1/4 hastas)
15. Rudra-teja (4 1/2 hastas)
16. Sādhātmaka (4 3/4 hastas)
17. Vāmadeva (5 hastas)
18. Aghoraka (5 1/4 hastas)
19. Tatpurusha (5 1/2 hastas)
20. Īśāna (5 3/4 hastas)
21. Mṛtyuñjaya (6 hastas)
22. Vijaya (6 1/4 hastas)
23. Kiraṇākṣha (6 1/2 hastas)
24. Aghora (6 3/4 hastas)
25. Śrīkaṇṭha (7 hastas)
26. Puṇya-vardhana (7 1/4 hastas)
27. Puṇḍarīka (7 1/2 hastas)
28. Su-vaktra (7 3/4 hastas)
29. Umā-teja (8 hastas)
30. Viśveśvara (8 1/4 hastas)
31. Tri-netra (8 1/2 hastas)
32. Tryaṁbaka (8 3/4 hastas)
33. Mahā-kāla (9 hastas)

ŚAILA-PUTRĪ

One of the nine forms of Durgā (see NAVA-DURGĀ), as daughter of the mountain (viz.Himālaya). She rides upon a bull (siṁha-skandhārūḍhā), and carries a spear (śūla-dharā). In Sapta-śatī, she is described as two-armed, carrying trident in one hand and lotus in the other.

ŚAIVĀGAMA

Śaivāgama is a collective term for the group of twenty-eight texts in Sanskrit dealing with worship in temple. It is hard to ascertain the period in which these texts were compiled or the circumstances that prompted their composition. Early texts were probably got ready during the first few centuries of the Christian era; but the middle ages saw their emergence into prominence. Evidences suggest that they originated in the central region of India and spread to Kāshmīr and South India in two branches. Its prevalence is now confined to the southern states.

The Śaivāgama texts focus their attention on Śiva as the supreme and sole object of worship in his iconic (viz. līlā-mūrti) as well as aniconic (liṅga) aspects. The texts declare that Brahmā was worshipped in the Kṛta-age, Sun in the Tretā-age, and Vishṇu in the Dvāpara-age; and Śiva is to be worshipped in the present age, viz. Kali ('kalau rudro maheśvarah'). And the details of worship were given by Śiva himself: 'āgama' is so called because the texts emerged out of the five mouths of Śiva and entered into the ears of Pārvati ('āgatam śiva-vaktrebhyo gatam cha girijānane'), while Vishṇu formulated the doctrine for the benefit of mankind ('matam cha vāsudevasya', cf.Rudra-yāmala).

The five faces of Śiva (pañcha-brahma) are regarded as the source of the twenty-eight texts which constitute Śaivāgama:

I Sadyojāta: (1) Kāmikāgama, (2) Yogajāgama, (3) Chintyāgama, (4) Kāraṇāgama and (5) Ajitāgama

II. Vāmadeva: (1) Diptāgama, (2) Sūkshmāgama, (3) Sahasraka,. (4) Aṁśumad-bheda and (5) Suprabheda

III. Aghora: (1) Vijaya, (2) Nihśvāsa, (3) Svāyaṁbhuva, (4) Anila, and (5) Vīra,

IV. Tatpurusha: (1) Raurava, (2) Mukuṭa, (3) Vimala, (4) Chandra-jñāṇa, and (5) Mukha-biṁba

V. Īśāna: (1) Prodgīta, (2) Śarvokta, (3) Lalita, (4) Parameśvara (5) Siddha, (6) Kiraṇa, (7) Santāna and (8) Vātulāgama.

Of these texts, those which came out of the Sadyojāta- and the Vāmadeva- faces of Śiva are called Śiva-saṁhitās (ten of them) and the texts coming out of the other three faces Rudra-saṁhitās (eighteen) (cf. Mṛgendrāgama, Charyā, 1). The forms assumed by Śiva to deliver these texts are distinguished accordingly as ten Śiva-forms (Praṇava, Sudha, Dīpra, Kāraṇa, Suśiva, Īśa, Sūkshma, Kāla, Diśeśa and Aṁśa, respectively) and eighteen Rudra-forms (Anādi-rudra, Daśārṇa-, Nidhana, Vyoma, Teja, Brahmeśa, Śiva, Sarvātmā, Ananta, Praśānta, Śūli, Ālaya, Bindu, Śiva-nishṭha, Soma-deva, Śrī-devi, Devatārkshya and Śiva, respectively. There came into being also 207 upāgamas.

According to Pūrva-kāraṇa (26,58-61), Śaivāgama occurs in four major divisions: Śaiva, Pāśupata, Soma and Lākula. The first division (Śaiva or Śuddha-śaiva) is again three-fold: Vamā, Dakshiṇa and Siddhānta. The Vāma subdivision is illustrated by the Kāpālika, Kālāmukha and the Aghora sects. The Dakshiṇa subdivision is represented by the trika-doctrine of Kāshmīr, Svacchhanda-bhairava sect and so on: The Siddhānta sub-division is the collection of 28 texts mentioned earlier (Kāmika and others).

The 'siddhānta is so called because it comprehends the conclusions (regarding practice and doctrine) arrived at by the wise folk after careful examination. The knowledge contained in these twenty-eight texts are regarded as the head of Śiva, while the other books of Śaivāgama are the other limbs. Kāmikāgama (pūrva-bhāga, 1,117-119) says that the books other than the twenty-eight ('kāmikādi-śiva-jñānam mūrdhā bhagavatah') were postulated only as a priori propositions ('pūrva-pakshatayā kathitāni'), whereas the group of twenty-eight texts was the ultimate and final conclusion about what must be accepted and what rejected (heyopādeya-vastūnām nirṇaye paramārthatah, tat- sarvam adharī-kṛtya śaiva-siddhānta iritah').

The Śaivāgama tradition was crystallized by eighteen Śivāchāryas, who thus were responsible for several strands of exposition and practice known as paddhatis: Ugra-jyoti, Sadyojyoti, Śrī-rāma- kaṇṭha, Vidyā-kaṇṭha, Nārāyaṇa-kaṇṭha, Vibhūti-kaṇṭha, Śrī-kaṇṭha, Nīla-kaṇṭha, Soma-śaṁbhu, Īśāna-śaṁbhu, Hṛdaya-śiva, Brahma-śaṁbhu, Vairāgya-śiva, Jñāna-śaṁbhu, Trilochana-śiva, Varuṇa, Īśvara-śiva and Aghora-śiva. Another account includes Īśāna-śiva-gurudeva in this list and this is a popular paddhati. Among the earlier classical paddhatis important are those ascribed to Soma-śaṁbhu and Aghora-śiva.

The āgama texts deal with matter pertaining to temple-worship: the selection of site, construction of temples consecration, carving of icons and linga, varieties of linga, the sportive forms of Śiva, iconometric prescriptions, parivāra-devatās, worship rituals, installation, festivals, periodic purifications, the classes of priests, initiation, duties and responsiblities etc.

It is usual for the texts to have four major divisons (called pādas): Jñāna or vidyā (relating to philosophical presuppositions and doctrinal discussions), kriyā (actual rituals connected with installation and consecration of temples and icons, worship and so on), yoga (private conduct and spiritual practices of the priests) and charyā (conduct of the priest at home and in the temple, his observances, vows, and duties, occasional public festivals within the temple, the discussion about the castes and states of life, Varṇāśrama-dharma etc).

Inquiry into reality and its categories (tattva-traya; pati, paśu, and pāśa), production of the phenomenal world, the individual soul, the ultimate release from bondage and the means thereof are discussed in the first section. The topics covered in the second section include mudrās, mandalas, mantras, ideal teachers and their qualifications. The third section deals with the yogic methods that are beneficial to the

renunicants as well as householders. The last section discusses the classes of priests ('samayi, putraka etc) and the peculiarities of tradition.

(for details, see author's Āgama-kosha, Vol II, Śaivāgama and Śāktāgama).

ŚAIVĀDHIKA-LIṄGA

A variety of liṅga (see LIṄGA), in which the length of the Rudra portion of the liṅga-shaft is greater than the other two portions (viz. Brahmā- and Vishṇu-) which are equal. According to Kāmikāgama, the three portions should be in this proportion: Brahmā 7, Vishṇu 7 and Rudra 8; according to Kāraṇāgama 5,5 and 6; and according to Maya-mata 3,3 and 4.

ŚYĀMĀ

A form of Kālī (see KĀLĪ) extensively worshipped in the northern parts of the country, especially in Bengal. She is identified with Dakshiṇā-kālī. According to Kālikā-purāṇa (ch.40) she was born as daughter to Menakā, wife of Himālaya, at midnight on the ninth day in spring season; as her complexion was like that of the blue lotus ('nīlotpala-dala-śyāmā'), she was called Śyāmā.

The dhyāna-śloka describes her as terrible in aspect (ghora), four-armed, decorated with garlands of severed heads, round her neck and with two dead bodies inserted in her ears as ear-ornaments ('karṇāvatamsatānīta-śava-yugma-bhayānakā'), roaring loundly (ghora-rāvā), and standing upon the heart of Śiva who lies prostrate on the ground ('śava-rūpa-mahādevahṛdayopari saṁsthitā'). She carries in her hands on the left side a human head freshly cut off (normal hand) and sword (upper hand), and on the right side the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal (upper and normal hands respectively). She is surrounded on four sides by howling jackals ('śivābhir ghora-rāvābhiś chatur-dikshu samanvitām'). She is eager for union with Mahā-kāla. Her face is frightening with tusks, but she has a happy smile ('sukha-prasanna-vadanā').

For other dhyāna-ślokas, see Śabda-kalpa-druma, vol.5, 149-149).

ŚRĪ

Name of Lakshmī as she signifies prosperity and good fortune and is sought after by all. She is celebrated as the consort of Nārāyaṇa (Vishṇu-purāṇa, 1,8,13)

ŚRĪ-KAṆṬHA

Name of Śiva. According to Śrī-vidyārṇava-tantra, the particular form of Śiva as half-woman (ardha-nāri), is called Śrī-kaṇṭha: he is three-eyed and four-armed, carrying in his hands noose, goad, rosary and gesture of boon-bestowal.

He is also one of the eight vidyeśvaras (see VIDYEŚVARA), exceedingly handsome, wearing garments of variegated colour, and four-armed, carrying in his hands, sword, bow, arrow and shield. Or he is clad in red garments, and holds in his hands gesture of protection and boon-bestowal, ṭaṅka and spear. He stands upon a lotus-seat.

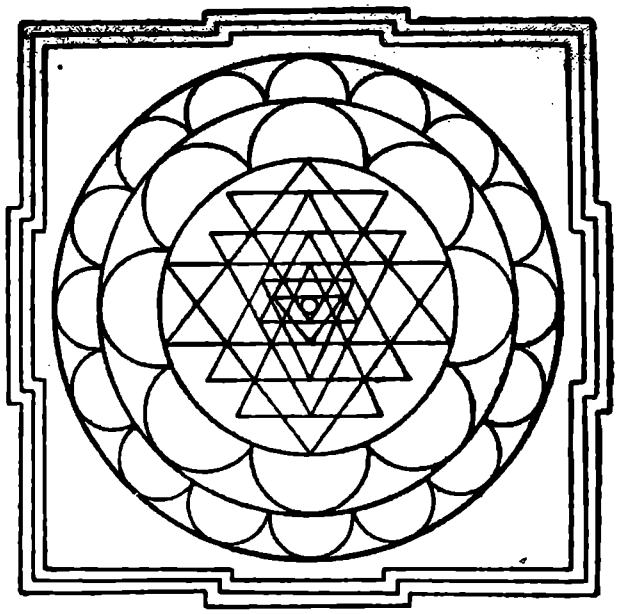
ŚRĪ-KARA-MŪRTI

The form of Vishṇu riding on Garuḍa and coming to the relief of the elephant (see GAJENDRA-MOKSHA). He is four-armed and carries mace, lotus, conch and discus (in circumambulatory order from the left normal hand).

ŚRĪ-CHAKRA

Śrī-chakra (also known as Śrī-yantra) is a psychocosmogram (maṇḍala) plan of the presented universe and the perceiving individual employed extensively in the worship of the devi, especially in her aspect of Lalitā Tripura-sundari or Rāja-rājeśvarī. It is the linear or visual aspect of the Śrī-vidyā mantra of fifteen or sixteen letters

ŚRĪ-KARA-MŪRTI
(stone from Bṛhadīśvarara temple, Tañjavūr)



ŚRĪ-CHAKRA

(pañcha-daśī or shoḍaśī), regarded as the body of the goddess.

Corresponding to the three groups (called Vāgbhava, Kāmarāja and Śakti kūṭas) of letters, the design of Śrī-chakra has three divisions, each of them having three subdivisions. Thus Śrī-chakra consists of nine enclosures (āvaraṇas). According to Yoginī-hṛdaya (1,73), the numbers 3 and 9 are of great significance in Śrī-chakra, which consists mainly of nine triangles (3- sided figures) intersecting. Four of the triangles, with their apex upward, are known as Śiva-chakras (masculine) and five of the triangles, with their apex downward, are Śakti-chakras (feminine). The intersections of these triangles bring into being 43 triangles (if however, the central point (bindu) is also regarded as a triangle, there are 44 triangles , 24 sandhis (the meeting spots of two lines) and 28 marma-sthānas (where three lines meet).

The design illustrates the union of four forms of Śiva (Brahmā, Rudra, Īśvara and Sadāśiva) and five forms of Śakti (Śrī-vidyā, Tvaritā, Pārijāteśvarī, Tripurā and Pañcha-bāṇeśī). The meeting of two lines (sandhi) indicate the union of Śiva and Śakti, and the meeting of three lines (marma-sthāna) the harmony between Śiva and Śakti (sāmarasya). The goddess is visualized as seated in the central point (bindu) on a mattress (Sadāśiva) upon a cot with four legs (Brahmā, Vishṇu, Rudra and Īśāna. The point thus signifies the union of the ultimate male and female principles (Śiva-śakti or purusha-prakṛti). viz. consciousness and energy.

The structure of Śrī-chakra is basically a pattern of three-sided figures arranged in nine successive coverings or enclosures. The nine enclosures from the interior to the exterior are arranged in three units : inner (saṁhāra or absorption), middle (sthiti or preservation and outer (sṛshṭi or creation).

I unit (inner):

(1) The central point (bindu or bindu-maṇḍala), identified with Lalitā or Rāja-rājeśvarī (see

LALITĀ, RĀJARĀJEŚVARĪ) is known as Sarvānanda-maya;

(2) The primary triangle with apex downward, not intersecting with any other triangles but the extension of the three sides of this triangle contributing to the formation of other triangles, is known as Sarva-siddhi-pradā; the three sides of the triangle are identified with the three forms of the goddess, Kāmeśvari, Vajreśvarī and Bhagamālinī;

(3) The eight-cornered figure (vasu-koṇa); immediately outside the primary triangle, is known as Sarva-roga-hara;

II unit (middle):

(4) The ten-angled figure (inner or antardasāra), composed of ten triangles and enclosing the entire first unit, is known as Sarva-rakshā-kara;

(5) Another ten-angled figure (outer or bahirdasāra), also composed of ten triangles, is known as Sarvārtha-sādhaka;

(6) The figure of fourteen angles (chaturdaśāra or manvaśra), consisting of fourteen triangles, is known as Sarva-saubhāgya- dāyaka.

III unit (outer):

(7) The eight-petalled lotus (nāga-dala, ashṭa-dala-padma), enclosing the whole of the second unit, is known as Sarva- saṁkshobhaṇa);

(8) The sixteen-petalled lotus (shoḍaśa-patraka or shoḍaśāra), immediately within three concentric circles (vṛtta-traya) is called Sarvāśāpari-pūraka); and

(9) The suqare field, which includes all the above details (sarvānta-chaturasra or Bhūpura), with three lines (tri-rekhā), is called Trailokya-mohana.

The nine enclosures are presided over by the forms of the goddess, Lalitā or Mahā-kāmeśvarī (Parā-bhaṭṭārikā), Tripurāmbā, Tripura-siddhā, Tripura-mālinī, Tripura-śrī, Tripura-vāsinī, Tripura-sundarī, Tripureśī and Tripurā respectively.

The background philosphy of Śrī-chakra is explained in Bhāvanopanishat on which there is an elaborate commentary by Bhāskara-rāya-makhin. (For details, see author's The Tantra of Sri-chakra, Sarada Prakasana, Bangalore, 1983).

Śrī-chakra, which is used for worship, is either drawn on the ground, written on paper, or inscribed on a metallic sheet (preferably copper), when it is a linear diagram (rekhā-yantra). It also occurs in the form of a small mound (meru), with the nine enclosures represented in different elevations; it is either carved in stone or cast in metal (ten parts of gold, twelve parts of copper and sixteen parts of silver). It may also be incized or carved in crystal (sphaṭika) or other precious stones (coral, sapphire, diamond, lapis lazuli etc).

When drawn on an altar (sthaṇḍila), it must not be more than a cubit in extent (hasta-mātram); but when prepared (incized or carved) in stone or metal, it may be of any size ('mānam icchhā-vaśād bhavet'). When drawn on the ground, the lines must be in kuṁkum powder ('raktena rajasā-pūrya śrī-chakram bhuvi pūjayet').

(For details see author's: Sri-chakra, its Yantra, Mantra and Tantra, Kalpatharu Research Academy, Bangalore 1982).

ŚRĪDHARA

Name of Vishṇu, it is also one of the forms of Vishṇu (see CHATUR-VIṀŚATI-MŪRTI). Vishṇu in this form is described as golden or lotus-hued (kanaka-varṇa or puṇḍarīkābha) and resting in the milky ocean or standing on lotus, or riding

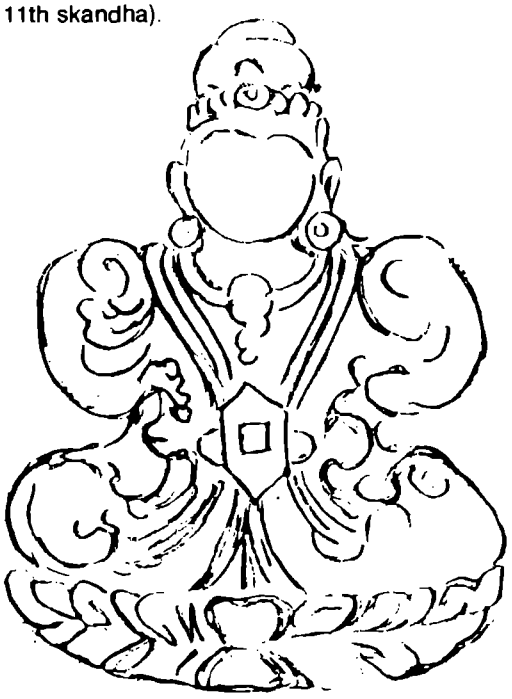
upon Garuḍa. He carries in his hands lotus, discus, mace and conch (in the cirm-cumambulatory order beginning with lower right hand). He wears garlands of red flowers, and his head is adorned by wreaths of lotuses (puṇḍarīkavātaṁsaka).

ŚRĪ-NIVĀSA

Name of Vishṇu, who accommodates Lakshmī (Śrī) on his chest.

ŚRĪ-MŪRTI

The name of Vishṇu-icons (cf. Bhāgavata, 11th skandha).



ŚRĪ-VATSA
(metal, 9th cent, Govt. Museum, Madras)

ŚRĪ-VATSA

The distinguishing and auspicious mark on the chest of Vishṇu, composed of a small mass of white-coloured hair, with rightward inclination ('vakshastha-śukla-varṇa-dakshiṇāvarta-romāvali'). It is also identified sometimes with the Kaustubha jewel; but the identification is erroneous. Kaustubha is a jewel worn on the body, whereas śrī-vatsa is a congenital mark on the body, one of the marks of a great person (see MAHĀPURUSHA-LAKSHAṆA). Vishṇu is described as Srīvatsāṅka.

Sītopanishat (hymn 7), narrating the three aspects of icchhā- śakti, describes śrī-vatsa as the form assumed by yoga-śakti (one of the three varieties of icchhā-śakti, the other two being bhoga-śakti and vīra-śakti) as a mark on the right chest of the lord (bhagavato dakshiṇa-vakshas-sthale śrī-vatsākṛtir bhūtva viśrāmyati), during the period of dissolution of the universe (pralayāvasthāyām viśramaṇārtham).

In early icons of Vishṇu, this is represented as a tiny triangular mark on the right chest, and later it was modified as frame within which two-armed Lakshmī (vyūha-lakshmi) is accommodated stylistically. The śrī-vatsa mark also figures on the icons of the tīrthaṅkaras of the Jaina pantheon; but here the mark is right in the middle of the chest, and assumes the form of a four-petalled flower. Hemachandra describes śrī-vatsa as the 'banner' (viz.distinguishing mark) of the tīrthaṅkaras ('arhatām dhvajah'). The same mark is also to be found in some of the icons of Buddha.

ŚRĪ-VIDYĀ

A goddess of the Śākta pantheon, she is identified with Mālinī, who is five-faced, with three eyes on each face, and four-armed. She wears red garments and is seated upon a lotus. The hands carry noose, goad, skull-cup filled with nectar and trident (cf. Iconography of Śri vidyārṇava-tantra, S.Srikantha-Sastri 1944, p.41).

ŚREYĀṂSA

The eleventh tīrthaṅkara of the Jaina pantheon (see TĪRTHAṄKARA), he was born in Siṁha-pura as the son of Vimala-vāhana (or Vishṇu) and Vimalā-devī. He renounced and practised severe austerities before he became a kevalin while meditating under the tumbara tree. His complexion is described as golden, and his identifying mark rhinoceros (gaṇḍaka). His chief disciple (ganadhara) was Kunthu, and the monarch who attended on him was Tripishṭu-vāsudeva.

ŚRUTA-DEVĪ

The Jaina version of Sarasvatī (see SARASVATĪ), she is the chief of the sixteen Vidyā-devatās, and is worshipped on the fifth day of the bright half of the month Kārtika (jñāna-pañchamī). She is the goddess of scriptural learning, white-complexioned, clad in white garments and seated upon a white throne. The Śvetāmbaras describe her vehicle as swan (haṁsa-vāhinī), while the Digaṁbaras provide peacock as her her vehicle (mayūra- vāhanā). She is four-armed, carrying lute (vīṇā), book, lotus and rosary in her hands, according to Śvetāmbara accounts, but the Digaṁbara description substitutes the gesture of protection (abhaya) for lute. Āchāra-dina-kara identifies this goddess as 'bhagavatī brahmāṇī' (consort of Brahmā), and Pratishṭhā-sāroddhāra describes her as the goddess of speech ('vāgadhidevatā', 'vāgvādini'). She is also three-eyed, and crescent moon adorns her head.

SHAṬ-TĀLA

An iconometric device (see TĀLAMĀNA) prescribed for making icons of Gaṇapati, Varāha form of Vishṇu and Kumāra aspect of Kārtikeya. It measures 72 aṅgulas.

SHAḌAKSHARA-LOKEŚVARA

A deity of the Vajrayāna pantheon, he is white-complexioned and four-armed. In his two upper hands are seen lotus (left) and rosary (right); the two normal hands are held on the chest in the gesture of supplication ('hṛdi-saṁpuṭāñjali-sthitam'). He is flanked by Maṇidhara on the right and Shadakshara-mahāvidyā on the left.

The deity is so-called because he personifies the six letters of the famous mantra, 'Om-maṇi-padme-hūṁ'.

SHAṆMUKHA

The form of Kārtikeya (see KĀRTIKEYA), in his six-faced aspect. He is red-complexioned and rides upon a peacock. He has twelve eyes and twelve hands. He carries in his hands the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal in the two normal hands, and in the other hands mace, banner, sword, arrow, śakti, spear, lotus, shield, vajra and bow (or śakti, arrow, sword, discus, noose, cock, bow, shield, conch and ploughshare, according to Śrī-tattva-nidhi).

Shaṇmukha is also the name of the six-faced yaksha (see YAKSHA) attending on the thirteenth tīrthaṅkara Vimala-nātha. He is white-complexioned and rides on a peacock. His twelve hands carry sword, fruit, lunar disc, arrow, noose, rosary, gesture of protection, goad, shield, bow, discus and mangoose. His corresponding yakshiṇī is Vidita (Vairoṭī).

SHASHṬĪ

A minor goddess, included among sixteen mātṛkās (see MĀTṚKĀ), who cause maladies for children and who also protect them. According to Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa, (prakṛti-khaṇḍa, chap.1), she represents the sixth aspect (kalā) of mother nature (prakṛti), and she guards the baby on the sixth day of its birth. She is worshipped therefore on the sixth day in the room set apart for delivery ('pūjā cha sūtikāgāre para shaṣṭha-dine śiśoh') and also on the twenty-first day ('eka-viṁśati-tame chaiva pūjā').

She is celebrated as the wife of Skanda (see KĀRTIKEYA), and is identified with Deva-senā

(see DEVASENĀ). The worship of this god on the sixth day of the Hin' month includes the worship of this goddess also (skanda-shashṭi).

SHOḌAŚA-BHUJA-DURGĀ

A form of Durgā (see DURGĀ) with sixteen arms. She is three-eyed and decorated with serpents; she carries a spear prominently (śūla-vyāgra). Her throat is blue coloured, and her complexion is dark (nīla-grīva, śyāma-varṇā). She is Mahāmāyā, and her worship is prescribed to be done in the night of the fourteenth day of the dark half of the Kanyā month (Kālikā-purāṇa, Chap.59)

SHOḌAŚA-MĀTṚKĀ

Śākta texts like Durgotsava-paddhati and Śrāddha-tattva enumerate sixteen minor forms of the Mother-goddess: Gaurī, Padmā, Śachī, Medhā, Sāvitrī, Vijayā, Jayā, Deva-senā, Svadhā, Svāhā, Śānti, Pushṭi, Dhṛti, Tushṭi, Ātma-devatā and Kula-devatā (the last two representing the deity of ones own choice and the tutellary deity).

SHOḌAŚA-VIDYĀDEVĪ

The sixteen goddesses of wisdom enumerated in the Jaina pantheon are: (1) Rohiṇī, (2) Prajñapti, (3) Vajra-śṛṅkhalā, (4) Vajrāṅkuśī, (5) Chakreśvarī (Apratichakra), (6) Purusha-dattā, (7) Kālī, (8) Mahākālī, (9) Gaurī, (10) Gāndhārī, (11) Mahā-jvālā, (12) Mānavī, (13) Vairoṭī, (14) Achyutā, (15) Mānasī and (16) Mahā-mānasī. They are also yakshīs attending on tīrthaṅkaras and iconographical details may be found in the individual entries as well as under YAKSHĪ.

SAṄKATA-HARA-GAṆAPATI

One of the thirty-two forms of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), he is seated upon red lotus and is red-complexioned (bālāruṇa-kānti) and four-armed. He carries in his left hand a bowl of mil-puddling (pāyasa-pātra), and noose and in his right hands the gesture of boon-bestowal and goad. Seated on his left lap in the goddess name Bālā, who is fair-complexioned (gaurāṅgi) and decorated with jewels (ratna-śobhādhya). ıe is two-armed, and carries a lotus in one of her hands. This form is worshipped by the devotee when he is beset with distress ('saṅkaṭa-haraṇaḥ pāyāt saṅkaṭa-pūgād').

Some texts name this form Vallabha-gaṇapati (see VALLABHA- GAṆAPATI).

SAṀKARSHAṆA

A form of Vishṇu (see VISHṆU), and one of the four vyūha-aspects (see VYŪHA), he is identified with Ananta or Śesha (see ANANTA); he appeared as Balarāma, half-brother of Kṛshṇa (who w. Vāsudeva). He is one of the fire heroes of the Vishṇu clan (pañcha- vīra), who were deified and honoured. He was worshipped in the centuries before and after the Christian era began, along with Vāsudeva. Inscriptions indicate that there were numerous shrines to Saṁkarshaṇa-Vāsudeva. Early literary references also mention the two gods together. Further, Saṁkarshaṇa was regarded as an aspect of Rudra.

Iconographically, Saṁkarshaṇa is required to be made in the likeness of Vāsudeva (see VĀSUDEVA, 'Vāsudeva-svarūpeṇa kāryas saṁkarshaṇah'). But he is to be shown as white in colour ('śukla-vapuh'), and clad in blue garments (nīla-vāsas). Instead of mace and discus (which adorn the hands of Vāsudeva), pestle-club (musala) and ploughshare (lāṅgala) are to be shown in Saṁkarshaṇa's hands. The other hands carry bow (śārṅga) and conch.

As one of the twenty-four forms of Vishṇu (see CHATUR-VIṀŚATI- MŪRTI), Saṁkarshaṇa is red-complexioned, and carries in his hands mace (right normal), conch (right upper), lotus (left upper) and discus (left normal). His consort's name is Hariṇī.

SAṀKSHIPTA-MĀRĪCHĪ

Otherwise known as Mārīchī-pichuvā, she is a form of the goddess Mārīchī (see MĀRĪCHĪ) of

the Vajrayāna pantheon. Three-faced, she illustrates three groups of sentiments: the central face, blue in colour (indra-nīla-maṇi), shows fear, horror and hate (bhaya-bībhasta-raudra); the face to the right is golden coloured (jāmbūnada), and represents love, valour and happiness (śṛṅgāra- vīra-harsha); and the face to the left is crystal-white (sphaṭikendu) and shows compassion, wonderment and peace (karuṇa-adbhuta-śānta). Each of the faces has three eyes.

She is eight-armed (hence called Ashṭa-bhuja-mārīchī). In the two normal hands, she holds a needle and string. In the other six hands she carries goad, noose, bow, arrow, vajra and aśoka flower.

A variant form has yellow complexion and wears red garments. In her crest is image of the dhyāni-buddha Vairochana. Her three faces are golden-coloured, blue-coloured and red-coloured, showing love, anger, and peace respectively. She is visualized as standing in the ālīḍha posture upon a chariot to which are yoked seven pigs. Her attendants are Vārtālī, Vaḍālī, Varālī and Varāha-mukhī. Rāhu (only the face) or Aruṇa (only the face and torso) is depicted below the chariot.

SANDHYĀ

Sandhyā is the meeting of any two divisions of time, like day and night or fore-noon and after-noon. Three Sandhyās are recognized: morning, midday and evening. The three periods are considered propitious for worship of the Sun-god.

The three sandhyās are personified as the three consorts of the sun-god or as three aspects of solar energy: Gāyatrī (morning sun), Sāvitrī (midday sun) and Sarasvatī (evening sun).

Gāyatrī is of the nature of Agni, Sāvitrī of Rudra and Sarasvatī of Vishṇu. They are visualized as a girl (kumārī), a maiden (yuvatī) and old woman (sthavirā), respectively, and wearing red, white and blue garments in order. All three of them are four- armed, but Gāyatrī is four-faced with eight eyes, Sāvitrī four- faced with twelve eyes, and Sarasvatī one-faced with two eyes. They represent Gārhapatyāgni, Dakshiṇāgni and Āhavanīyāgni; Ṛgveda, Yajurveda and Sāmaveda.

Gāyatrī carries in her hands a rosary of lotus seeds (padmāksha- mālā), water-pot, sacrificial ladle and gesture of boon-bestowal. Swan is her mount (haṁsa-vāhanā).

Sāvitrī carries in her hands a rosary of rudrāksha seeds, khaṭvāṅga, trident and gesture of protection. She wears crescent moon on her head. She is seated on a golden throne (svarṇa-piṭhe sthitā) and pacific in aspect (saumyā).

Sarasvatī carries in her hands conch, discus, mace and gesture of protection. She is clad in yellow garments; and she rides upon garuḍa.

SANDHYĀ-TĀṆḌAVA

One of the seven major dance-varieties in-which Śiva is depicted (see TĀṆḌAVA and NAṬARĀJA), it is regarded as having been performed in the eventide. Śiva here is four-armed, three-eyed and dancing upon a seat and not upon Mūyalaka (see MŪYALAKA) ('apasmāram vinā piṭhe'), The left leg is placed on the ground and is slightly bent ('vāmāṅghryā kuñchitam sthitam'), while the right leg is lifted and thrown left-ward ('ūrdhve tu dakshiṇam pādam apasavyānugam dadhat'). Alternately, the right leg also is placed on the ground with a bend ('tat-pādam kuñchitam vā').

Śiva has on his head his matted hair done up as a crown (jaṭā- makuṭa-bhūshaṇa), to which crescent moon is stuck and in which the river-goddess Gaṅgā is also seen. He is fair-complexioned, and wears on his left ear tāṭaṅka and on his right ear makara- kuṇḍala. He covers his

waist with tiger-skin. Serpents constitute his ornaments, especially the bracelets. His four hands carry the gesture of protection and the hand-drum (on the right side) and the gesture of wonderment (vismaya) and peacock feathers (piñchha) (on the left side)

SAṀPRADĀYA-YOGINĪ

The fourteen minor goddesses regarded as forms of 'ājñā-śakti' of Lalitā (see LALITĀ), represented in Śrī-cakra (see ŚRĪ-CHAKRA), they are named Sarva-saṁkshobhiṇī, Sarva-vidrāviṇī, Sarvākarshiṇī, Sarvāhlādinī, Sarva-sammohinī, Sarva-staṁbhinī, Sarva- jṛṁbhiṇī, Sarva-vaśaṁkarī, Sarva-rañjanī, Sarvonmādinī, Sarvārtha-sādhikā, Sarva-sampat-pūraṇī, Sarva-mantra -mayī and Sarva-dvandva-kshayaṁkarī.

All these goddesses are visualized as having been projected to battle with the demon that sprang up from the ashes of Kāma, when he was burnt by Śiva's third eye. They are like fames in their appearance (dīpti-vigrahāh), and indignant in aspect (kruddhāh). They present themselves as the great fire that consumes the worlds (kālānala-sama-tvishah), and as exceedingly intense (ati- tīvra-svabhāvāh). They are all four-armed, carrying in their hands bow with flames (vahni-chāpa), similar arrow, sword which is aflame and similar discus-shield (chakrākhya-phalaka). They have their hair plaited (veṇī-kṛta-kacha-stomāh) and their foreheads are adorned with sindūra mark.

SAṀVARA

A form of Hevajra (see HEVAJRA), and important and popular deity of the Vajrayāna pantheon, he has a maṇḍala of his own. He is represented in two forms: two-armed and twelve-armed. The former stands in the ālīḍha posture, trampling upon Bhairava and Kāla- rātrī. Clad in tiger-skin he is three-eyed and blue-complexioned; his hands carry vajra and bell. His head is decorated with a crown of skulls and crescent moon, and is Impressed with a double-vajra (viśva-vajrī). The crest also has a tiny image of Akshobhya (see AKSHOBHYA). His stature is that of a dwarf (kubja), but he is heroic (vīra). His consort Vajra-vārāhī, two-armed and carrying vajra and blood-filled skull-cup, red-complexioned and two-armed and three-eyed, having khaṭvāṅga tucked in her girdle, embraces him. She is nude and her hair is in disarray. She too wears a garland of severed heads. A tiny icon of Vairochana adorns her crest.

The twelve-armed form is four-faced, his faces being blue (on the east), green (south), red (west) and yellow (north) in colour. As in the above form, Vajra-vārāhi embraces him. He holds her in embrace with his two normal hands, which also carry vajra and vajra-ghaṇṭā. Two of his other hands, hold the elephant-skin with blood dripping from it. In the remaining hands he carries axe, hand-drum, chopper, trident, khaṭvāṅga, blood-filled skull-cup, noose impressed with vajra and the severed head of Brahmā.

He is the Vajrayāna version of Śiva as Brahma-śiraś-chhetṛ-mūrti (see ŚIVA, KAṄKĀLA, BHIKSHĀṬANA-MŪRTI).

SAṀVIT-TRIPURA-SUNDARĪ

Śāradā-tilaka-tantra describes this goddess as white-complexioned, three-eyed, and four-armed. Her normal hands show the gesture of scriptural exposition (vyākhyā-mudrā) and book (the right and left respectively); and her other hands carry rosary and pot filled with nectar.

She is the personification of the fifty letters of the alphabet (pañchāśad-akshara-mayī). She is white in colour, like the autumnal moon. Her head is adorned by crescent moon.

SAṀHĀRA-TĀṆḌAVA

One of the forms of Śiva as dancer (see NAṬARĀJA and TĀṆḌAVA), he is here fair-complexioned, eight-armed and accompanied by Nandī (see NĀNDĪ) on his right and Gaurī on his

left. As usual, he is three-eyed and his matted hair is spread out in strands ('su-vikīrṇa-jaṭānvita'). His left leg is bent, and the foot presses upon Mūyalaka ('kuñchitam vāma-pādam tam apasmāropari-sthitam'); and the right foot is lifted up ('uddhṛtam dakshiṇam pādam'). He is clad in tiger-skin as upper garment ('vyāghra- charmottarīyakam').

His hands on the right side carry the gesture of protection, spear, noose and hand-drum, while one of his hands on the other side shows the gesture of wonderment (vismaya) and two of the other hands carry skull-cup, and fire in a bowl; the remaining arm is thrown across to the right like an elephant's trunk ('gaja- hastopamam sarvam apasvyānugam tathā')

SAṂHĀRA-BHAIRAVA

One of the eight forms of Bhairava (see BHAIRAVA), he is youthful, naked and accompanied by Chaṇḍikā, his consort. He is three-eyed and ten-armed, and he wears a serpent as his sacrificial chord. His face is terrible with fangs in his mouth (daṁshṭrā-karāla-vadana). He carries in his hands spear, hand-drum, conch, discus, mace, sword, bowl, khaṭvāṅga, noose and goad. He is worshipped for obtaining the eight kinds of wealth (ashṭaiśvarya-phala-prada).

SAṂHĀRA-MŪRTI

A god or goddess represented as killing the demons for securing the welfare of gods and men: Śiva vanquishing Gajāsura, Kāla and Tripura, Narasiṁha killing Hiraṇya-kaśipu, Vīrabhadra beheading Daksha, and Durgā killing Mahishāsura are examples. Such images are violent in aspect, equipped with numerous hands carrying powerful weapons and in a mobile stance (yānaka). They answer to the rājasa and tāmasa types of icons.

SATĪ

Name of Devī, as the daughter of Daksha-prajāpati (who was born from the right thumb of the creator). She was born as the daughter of Daksha and his wife Asiknī (or Vīraṇi). She married Śiva, towards him Daksha was ill-disposed. Once Daksha performed Bṛhaspati-savana sacrifice, to which all the gods, except Śiva, were invited. Although uninvited, Satī went to the sacrifice but she was completely ignored by her father. Humiliated, Satī jumped into the sacrificial pit and immolated herself. When the news reached Śiva, he was indignant, and from his anger Vīrabhadra was born. Vīrabhadra was sent to punish Daksha. He arrived, beheaded Daksha, drove away all the guests and destroyed the sacrifice (Devī-bhagavata, chap.7).

Śiva's grief at the loss of his wife was inconsolable; he put the dead body of Sati on his shoulders and moved about like a mad man for several years. In order to drive sense into him, Vishṇu undertook to cut the body of Sati to pieces. And where the several limbs fell, Śakti-pīṭhas were formed (see ŚAKTI-PĪṬHA)

SATTVA-PARYAṄKĀ

A term frequently met with in the sādhanā-accounts of deities belonging to Vajrayāna, it means 'animal-cot': the deities are shown as sitting on an animal (or upon a man) not in the riding posture, but as seated on a cot or on seat placed upon the animal (or man lying on his back).

SATYA-NĀRĀYAṆA

A minor form of Vishṇu introduced for worship in Gujarāt during the last century or so, it become popular, especially among the trading communities. It is described as the form of Vishṇu best suited for worship in the present Kali age, and the worship is distinguished by certain observances (vrata) and sweet preparations offered as naivedya and partaken by the devotees (cf. Skanda-purāṇa; Revā-khaṇḍa, Satya-nārāyaṇa-vrata-kathā). Vishṇu is visualized here as standing, four-armed (carrying conch, discus, mace and lotus) decorated with all ornaments and clad in yellow silken garments. During wor-

SATI

ship, he is invoked in a consecrated pot (kalaśa).

SATYA-BHĀMĀ

One of the eight wives of Kṛshṇa, she was the daughter of the Yādava monarch Satrājit and she was given to Kṛshṇa in marriage, when Kṛshṇa recovered the śyamantaka-jewel (cf. Bhāgavata, 10th skandha). She is usually shown on the left side of Kṛshṇa, along with Rukmiṇī (another wife of Kṛshṇa) on Kṛshṇa's right side. She is two-armed; her hair is done in the 'dhammilla-kuntala' fashion.

SADĀŚIVA-MŪRTI

In Śaiva-siddhānta, from the five śaktis (parā, ādi, icchhā, jñāna and kriyā, corresponding with śāntyatīta, śānti, vidyā, pratishṭhā and nivṛtti-kalās) manifest five Sadā-śiva-tattvas (śiva-sādākhya, amūrta-sādākhya, mūrta-sādākhya, kartṛ-sādākhya and karma-sādākhya, corresponding with Sadāśiva, Īśa, Brahmā, Īśvara and Īśāna). Sadāśiva is the supreme godhead but absolutely formless, all-pervading, extremely subtle and incomprehensible. As the source of the entire universe, he is both sa-kala and nish-kala (aspected and unaspected), and this is known as Sadāśiva-mūrti, as distinguished from Śiva who is only nishkala and Maheśa who is only sakala.

According to Uttara-kāmika (paṭala 43), he is to be shown as white-complexioned, five-faced, and ten-armed. Each of the five heads has a crown of matted hair, brown in colour. And the hands carry śakti, spear, khaṭvāṅga, gestures of protection and boon- bestowal (right side), serpent, snake, hand-drum, blue lotus and pomegranate fruit (bījapūra) (left). He sits in a bound lotus posture (baddha-padmāsanam).

Alternately, Sadāśiva may be visualized as having a single face but with three eyes (representing the three powers: icchhā, jñāna and kriyā), and adorned by crescent moon on the head (representing jñāna). His consort in this form is Manonmanī.

One of the dhyāna-ślokas, which provides him with five faces and ten arms, makes him seated upon a white lotus (śveta-kamalāsana).

Another dhyāna-śloka describes him as four-armed and pacific in aspect (saumya). He carries in both of his normal hands a pot filled with nectar (pūrṇāmṛta-kumbha), and in the two other hands another pot and rosary.

SADYOJĀTA

One of the five aspects of Śiva (pañcha-brahma) (see ŚIVA), represented as his five faces, Sadyojāta is also an iconic form. Kāraṇāgama describes this form as white in colour (like the jasmine flower, moon or conch), four-faced (chatur-vaktra), with three eyes in each face, and four-armed, carrying in the hands book (veda), rosary, and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal.

Rūpa-maṇḍana, however, describes him as having a single face, calm in aspect (saumya-mukha), and two hands, showing the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. Clad in white garments, he wears garlands of white-coloured flowers. His crest is adorned by crescent moon, and his matted hair is in the 'jaṭā- bhāra' shape.

SANTĀNA-GOPĀLA

A form of Kṛshṇa (see KṚSHṆA), who brought back to life his teacher's son who had been drowned in Prabhāsa-tīrtha, and presented the boy to his teacher Sāndīpanī as guru-dakshiṇā. Kṛshṇa in this form is visualized as four-armed, carrying in his hands conch, discus, mace and lotus. He is clad in yellow-silken garments, and his head is adorned with peacock feathers (mayūra- piñchha). He is surrounded by cows, calves, cowherds and maidens.

SANTĀNA-LAKSHMĪ

One of the elght forms of Lakshmī (see LAKSHMĪ), who is worshipped for the fulfilment

of desires (iṣhṭārtha-siddhi-pradā), is regarded as a great queen (mahārājñī), youthful (bālā), golden-complexioned (suvarṇābhā) and compassionate in expression (karuṇāpāṅga-śobhinī). She is flanked by two damsels who carry light and flywhisk ('dīpa-chāmara-nārībhis sevitām pārśvayor dvayoh'). She wears a crown of matted hair (jaṭāmakuṭa), bodice (kañchuka) and cross-belt (ṣhhanna-vīra). She is four-armed, her normal hands assuming the gestures of protection and boon- bestowal, and the other two hands carrying sword and shield.

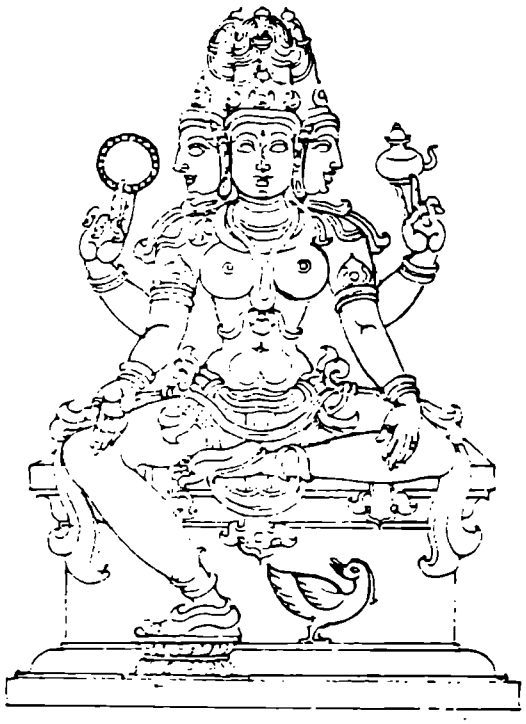
SANTĀNA-LAKSHMĪ

SAPTA-TĀLA

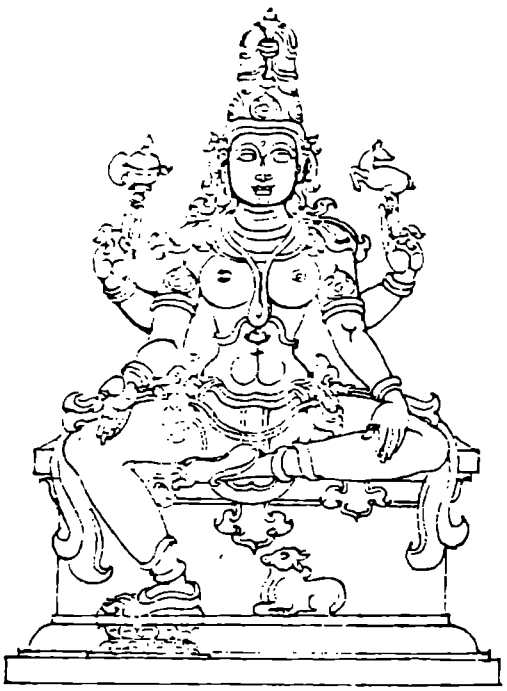
One of the ten (or twelve) measures used for making icons (see TĀLA-MĀNA), it measures seven 'face-lengths' (viz. 84 aṅgulas). Most texts prescribe this measure for making images of ordinary human beings (mānavas). Vaikhānasāgama, however, recommends this measure for representing vampires (bhetāla).

SAPTA-MĀTṚKĀ

The seven mother-goddesses (usually Brāhmī, Vaishṇavī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Indrāṇī, Vārāhī and Chāmuṇḍā) are worshipped all over the country since very ancient times. We have numerous references to the 'seven mothers who regulate the preparation of Soma', the 'seven sisters', 'the seven voices' and the 'seven mothers of Agni' even in the Ṛgvedic corpus



SAPTA-MĀTṚKĀ
(from Nalliyappan temple, Tirunalveli)
1. BRAHMĀṆĪ

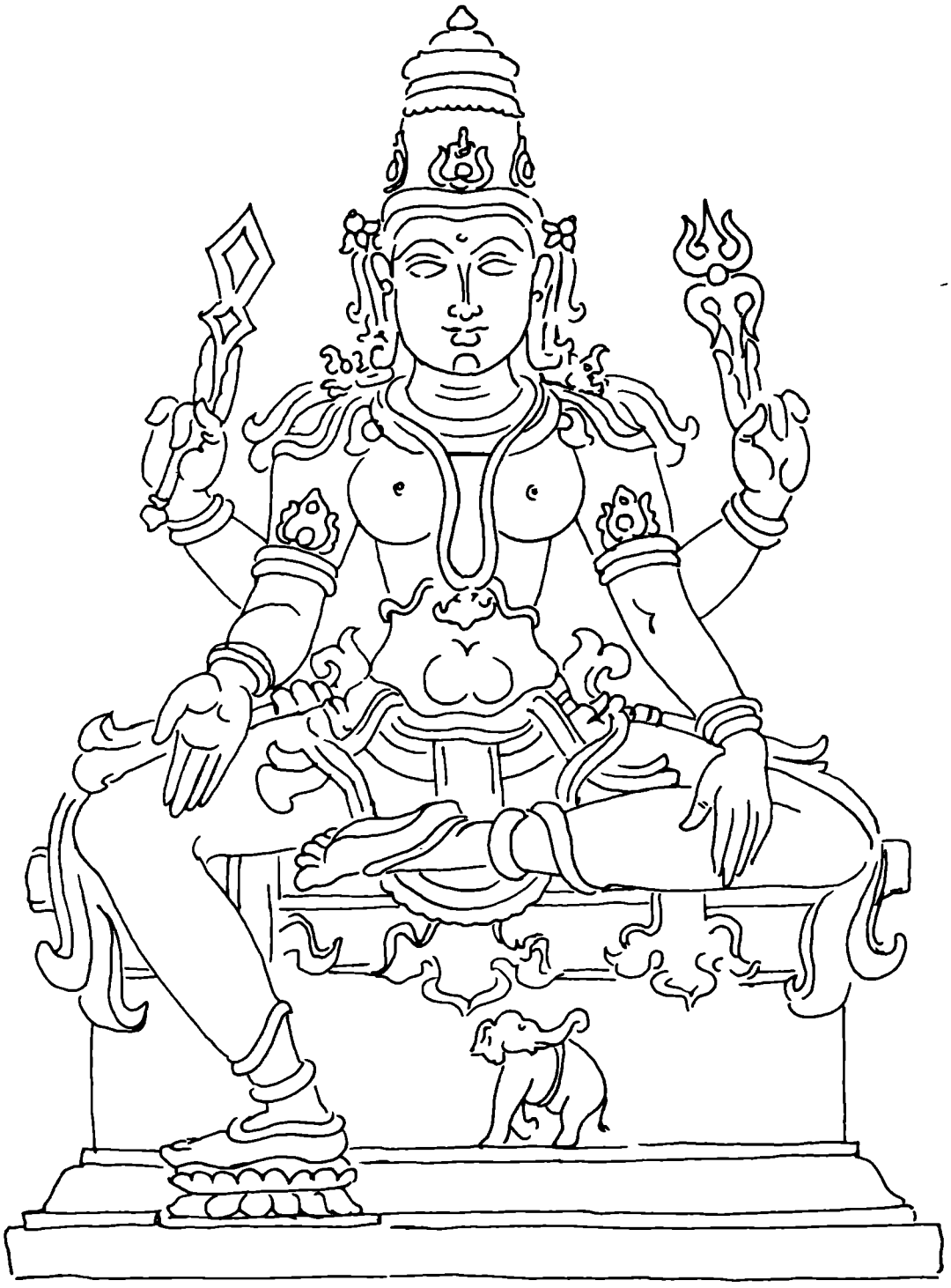


2. MĀHEŚWARĪ

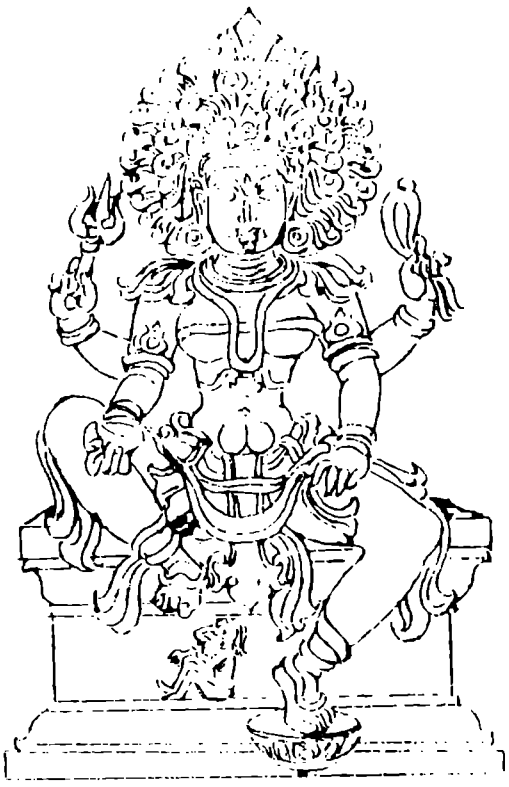
3. KAUMĀRI

4.VAISHṆAVĪ

5. VĀRĀHĪ



6. INDRĀṆĪ



7. CHĀMUṆḌĀ

SAPTA-MĀṬṚKĀ
(BRAHMĪ)

('1,34,8; 1,141,2; 8,96,1; 19,102,4; 1,164,3; 1,191,14; 6.61,10; 8,41,2; 9,66,8; 2.2.9 etc). Muṇḍakopanishad (1,2.4) speaks of the seven 'tongues' of fire as so many damsels (Kālī, Karālī, Manojavā, Sulohitā, Sudhūmra-varṇā Sphuliṅginī and Viśvarūpā).

There are sculptural representations of the seven mother-goddesses in the same panel right from the days of the Mohenjo-dāro seals The early Kushāṇa sculptors showed them as two-armed women, well decorated, showing with their right hand the gesture of protection and holding a water-pot in their left, works of the first and second centuries, these figures, which are seated, have neither emblems nor vehicles but are flanked by 'āyudha-purushas' (cf. specimens in the Mathurā Museum). The figures belonging to the next period (3rd century) now in the Baroda Museum, are standing, with children on their laps and with faces of birds and animals. Rājāsthān also had the representations of these goddesses in relief either in a group or independently; but the goddesses are already flanked by Vīrabhadra on one side and Gaṇeśa on the other. Ellora (6th century) presents these goddesses with their emblems and weapons, and with children on their laps.

The Chāḷukyas of Bādāmi were devotees of the 'seven mothers', and we find splendid specimens of the māṭṛkās (about 489-490) standing or dancing, in Aihoḷe, Rāvaḷ-phaḍī and Hucchimalli temples. The figures in the last mentioned monument are flanked by Śiva and Gaṇeśa (on the right and left sides), and are distinguished by their vehicles (vāhana) The

SAPTA-MĀTṚKĀ
(from Govt. Museum, Patna)
(MĀHEŚVARĪ

KAUMARĪ

VAISHṆAVĪ

Parusurāmeśvara temple of Orissa (650 A.D.) and the Vaitāla shrine (755 A.D.) also have mātṛkā representations in relief.

There are variations in the delineation of these goddesses. The usual order is Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaishṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī and Chāmuṇḍā. The specimens preserved in the Patna Museum have Vaishṇavī and Chāmuṇḍā four-armed, but the others only two-armed; each of them however, has a child on the left lap Elsewhere, Brāhmī is sometimes shown as three-faced; and Vārāhī carries a lotus and fish, a short axe and water-pot. The figures in the Lucknow Museum have animal faces, anu carry

babies. In the Mukteśvara temple, the seven goddesses are shown upon lotuses. While it is usual for Vīrabhadra (or Śiva) and Gaṇapati to be shown on their sides, the Vaitāla shrine of Bhuvaneśvar has these goddesses headed by Kārtikeya, and Chāmuṇḍā is shown as the leader of the group. The Kailāsanātha temple of Kāñchīpuram has these goddesses (all four-armed except Indrāṇī) seated on a common platform, and Vīrabhadra is seated in yoga- paṭṭa while Gaṇeśa has his trunk incline rightward. The presentation of these goddesses as dancing appears to have become popular by about the ninth or tenth century (Allahabad panel, Mahādeva temple at Hoṭṭul, Kāmeśvara temple of Āwā in Rājasthān, Mahādeva temple at Kukhaḍ etc); frequently, along with the goddesses Śiva and Gaṇeśa on their sides are also shown as dancing (as in the Kukhaḍ temple).

The dates of these sculptures range from the first century A.D. till about the thirteenth century. The early specimens are from the Kushāṇa period; Mathurā Museum has specimens dating back to the first three or four centuries after Christ. Ellora and Elephanta figures belong to the sixth century; the specimens from Bādāmi and Aihoḷe to the sixth and seventh centuries. The representations in the Bhuvaneśvar go back to the seventh century, in Rājasthan to the ninth century.

The cult of the seven mother-goddesses was in vogue even when Bṛhat-saṁhitā (59,19) was composed. The expression 'mātṛṇām api' has been explained by the commentator Utpala as 'in accordance with the cult-texts' ('sva-kalpa-vihita-vidhānena'). The Nāṭya-śāstra of Bharata (3,66) also refers to the worship of mothers headed by Brāhmī and specifically as 'mothers of dancing' ('namostu nāṭya-mātṛbhyo brāhmyādibhyo'). The presence of several specimens of early sculpture of the mātṛkās in dancing postures has already been referred to.

Several are the legends that gained currency during the middle ages concerning the origin and nature of these mother-divinities. Mārkandeya-purāṇa (Devī-māhātmya, 82-7) relates that these śaktis arose from the bodies of the gods when Śumbha attacked. Suprabhedāgama (patala 42) ascribes the creation of the seven mātṛkās to Brahmā when he wanted to kill Nirṛta. Vāmana-purāṇa (30,3) makes the śaktis emerge from Chaṇḍikā's own body: all the śaktis are in fact only Chaṇḍikā, they emerge from her and again dissolve themselves in her ('mayyeva viśantyah mad-vibhūtayah'). Matsya-purāṇa (179,9-32) mentions that these divinities were created by Śiva while he fought with Andhaka in Mahā-kāla-vana (in the Avantī-vishaya). Varāha-purāṇa which gives the same story, narrates that Śiva created Yogeśvarī out of the fire that issued from his mouth; and the other seven goddesses were sent by other gods (Brahmā, Indra etc) to assist Yogeśvarī, who according to this text, rides upon a lion and has four hands in which she carries hand-drum, trident, sword and skull-cup. Along with Yogeśvarī, the number of mātṛkās was eight.

Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa gives the name of the eighth mātṛkā as Mahālakshmī; other texts substitute Nārasiṁhī, Charchikā, Chaṇḍikā, Vāmani, Vaināyakī or Kāla-saṁkarshiṇī for Yogeśvarī. Another list has Raudrī instead of Indrāṇī (or Aindrī) and Charma-muṇḍā instead of Chāmuṇḍā. Some texts retain Vārāhi, Chāmuṇḍā and Indrāṇī, and substitute Nārasiṁhī, Vāruṇī, Lakshmī, Kapālī and Kurukulyā for others.

Texts also differ in the matter of the total number of mātṛkās. While the usual list has seven (or eight as indicated above), Naishadha-charita (7, 97) has nine (nava-mātṛkās, adding Gaurī and Sarasvatī), Skanda-purāṇa has fourteen and Brahma-vaivarta- purāṇa sixteen.

Descriptions of the sapta-mātṛkās occur in several Smṛti texts (like Gobhila and Kṛtya-ratnākara), purāṇas (Devī-purāṇa, Skāda-purāṇa,

Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa, Varāha-purāṇa, Matsya-purāṇa, Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa etc). and tāntrik works (like Prapañcha-sāra, Yoginī-hṛdaya and Svacchhanda-tantra). The early tāntrik accounts make all the mātṛkās sit in lalitāsana, and wear heavy ornaments; among them Kaumāri, Vaishṇavī, Vārāhī and Indrāṇī wear kirīṭa-mukuṭas. Brahmāṇī has four heads and four hands (carrying the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, noose and water-pot), and has swan for her mount, her body colour is yellow; Māheśvarī has three eyes, four hands (hand-drum, trident, rosary and skull-cup) and rides on a bull. Kaumārī, yellow- complexioned, has six heads and six hands (axe, bow, śakti, ṭaṅka, gestures of protection and boon-bestowal) and rides on a peacock; Vaishṇavī is dark-complexioned, and four-armed (conch, discus, mace and lotus); she rides on garuḍa. Vārāhī is also dark in colour and has four hands (cudgel, goad, vajra and cup of liquor); buffalo is her mount. Indrāṇī, also (dark-coloured) has four hands (goad, noose, lotus, vajra) and rides upon an elephant. Chāmuṇḍā has an emaciated body, with hanging breasts and sunken belly; she is black in complexion, and has three sunken eyes; she wears a garland of severed heads, and her matted hair is bound by serpents. She has four hands (hand-drum, trident, sword and skull-cup), and her mount is variously given as jackal, owl and dead body (preta).

Suprabheda (paṭala 42) makes all of them four-armed and prescribe that six of them (excepting Chāmuṇḍā) should be shown as duplicates of their male counterparts (Brahmā, Vishṇu, Maheśvara, Kumāra, Indra and Varāha). All of them assume the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal in their normal hands, and have weapons, mounts, colours and standards of the gods from whom they have emerged; Chāmuṇḍā is to be shown as terrible-looking ('ugra-rūpiṇīm'). They are stationed on lotuses ('nalināsana- saṁsthitāh'). The description follows the prescription that the śaktis must have the same form and other details (like ornament, weapon, mount etc) as the gods from whom they emerge ('yasya devasya yad-rūpam yathā-bhūshaṇa-vāhanam, tadvad eva hi tacchhktih').

(1) Brahmāṇī (also called Brāhmī), the śakti of Brahmā, made the enemies powerless by sprinkling holy water over them, so that other saktis may overtake them. According to Aṁśumadbheda (chap 47) and Pūrva-kāraṇa (chap.12) she is to be represented as golden-complexioned, four-faced and four-armed, riding on swan, and with matted hair as crown on her head. The former text provides in her hands gestures of protection and boon-bestowal (normal right and left), spear and rosary (upper right and left), while the latter provides in the upper hands water-pot and rosary (right and left). Vishṇu-dharmottara makes her six-armed, and tawny red in complexion; she is clad in antelope-skin as her upper garment (mṛga-charmottarīya); and in her hands are seen gestures of boon-bestowal and protection (normal right and left), rosary and sacrificial ladle (upper right), book and water-pot (upper left). She is regarded as 'the mother of the Vedas' (veda-mātā) in Pūjā-paddhati, a Mahāyāna work on rituals. She resides under brahma-vṛksha (Aṁśumadbheda).

(2) Māheśvarī (or Śivā) attacked the demons with her trident. She is white-complexioned, three-eyed and four-armed, riding upon a bull and wearing a crown of matted hair, according to Pūrva- kāraṇa (cap.12); she shows with her normal hands gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. Aṁśumadbheda (ch.47), however, gives her complexion as deep red (ati-rakta-sama-prabhā); and Vishṇu-dharmottara describes her as five-faced (pañcha-vaktrā) and six-armed (shaḍ-bhujā), with the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal (normal left and right), rosary and hand-drum (right-upper) and bell and spear (left upper). Śrī-tattva-nidhi provides her with five faces and ten arms (sword, vajra, trident, axe, protection and boon-

bestowal, noose, bell and goad). Rūpa- maṇḍana, which gives her a single face and four hands makes her carry skull-cup, spear, khaṭvāṅga and gesture of boon-bestowal. She charms the three worlds (trailokya-mohinī) acording to Pūjā- paddhati.

(3) Kaumārī struck down the demons with her śakti-weapon, and bound them with her noose. She is red-complexioned (kuṁkuma-prabhā), clad in red garments (rakta-vastra), and mounted on a peacock; she shows with her normal hands the gestures of boon- bestowal and protection, and she carries in her other hands śakti and cock (Pūrva-kāraṇa, Aṁśumadbheda and Devī-purāṇa). Vishṇu- dharmottara prescribes six faces and twelve arms for her; in her hands on the right side are seen gesture of boon-bestowal, śakti, banner, cudgel, cup and arrow, and in the hands on the other side bow, bell, lotus, cock, axe and gesture of protection. She resides under the udumbara-tree (Aṁśumadbheda).

(4) Vaishṇavī attacked the demons with her discus and mace. She is prescribed to be made as a lovely woman with large breasts (su-stanā) and pretty face (chāru-vadanā), dark-complexioned and beautiful eyes (su-lochanā), clad in yellow silken garments and decorated with kirīṭa-mukuṭa. She has four hands in which she holds conch, discus, mace and lotus; and Garuḍa is her mount. She resides under rāja-vṛkṣha (Aṁśumadbheda). According to Vishṇudharmottara, she has six arms (shaḍ-bhujā) and wears vanamālā; the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal are seen in her two normal hands; the other four hands carry conch, discus, mace and garland of lotuses (aṁbuja-sraja). Pūjā-paddhati calls her Mahā-māyā.

(5) Vārāhī tears open the belly of the demons with her terrible tusks. She has the face of a boar (sūkarāsyā, varāha-vaktrā), and her complexion is that of the dark cloud; she is clad in yellow garments. She is invincible and extremely hard to restrain (durdharā). She rides upon a buffalo. According to Aṁśumadbheda, she carries in her four arms ploughshare (hala), śakti and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. The first two weapons are substituted with pestle-club (musala) and spear (śūla) in Pūrva-kāraṇa. The four hands carry bell, flywhisk, mace and lotus, according to Rūpa-maṇḍana. Vishṇu-dharmottara describes her as large-bellied (mahodarī) and six-armed (showing the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal with her two normal hands, and carrying cudgel, sword, shield and noose in the other four hands). Aṁśumadbheda makes her sit under a kalpa-vṛkṣha.

(6) Indrāṇī (or Aindrī) is like Indra, having many eyes (lochanair bahubhir vṛtā.), riding on an elephant and having four hands in which she carries vajra, spear, mace and gesture of boon-bestowal (Rūpa-maṇḍana). Aṁśumadbheda makes her three-eyed and Pūrva-kāraṇa two-eyed; both these texts give śakti and vajra in her upper hands, the normal hands showing the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. Vishṇu-dharmottara describes her as thousand-eyed (sahasra-dṛk) and six-armed (with gestures of protection and boon-bestowal in the two normal hands, and rosary, vajra, water-pot and bowl in the other hands). She resides under the wish-fulfilling tree (kalpa-druma). Devī-purāṇa makes her two-armed only and seated upon an elephant; she carries in her hands an elephant-goad and vajra.

(7) Chāmuṇḍā is the most important of the seven māṭṛkās, and when she is shown alone, she represents all the māṭṛkās together. She is described as black in colour (kṛshṇakā), terrible looking (bhīma-rūpiṇī) with wide open mouth (vivṛtāsyā) and baring her fangs (daṁshṭrālā); her body is emaciated (kshīṇa-dehā), belly hollow (kshāma-kukshī), and eyes sunken (gartākshā); her hair, red in colour, rises flame-like (ūrdhva-piṅgala-keśā). She has ten arms (dig-bāhu): pestle-club, armour, arrow, goad and

sword are seen in the hands on the right side, while noose, bow, shield, cudgel and short axe are in the hands on the other side (Vishṇu-dharmottara).

She is also shown as eight-armed with skull-cup, shield, bell and serpent (on the left side), and spear, sword, vampire (vetāla) and hand-drum (left); or as only four-armed, with skull-cup, spear, and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal (Aṁśumadbheda). Pūrva-kāraṇa, mentions that her four hands carry a skull- cup filled with bits of meat ('māṁsa-khaṇḍa-susaṁpūrṇam kapālam'), fire (vahni), spear and serpent (śūlāhi); she is three-eyed; clad in tiger-skin, and decorated with conch-shell ear-rings (śaṁkha-kuṇḍala); crescent moon adorns her crest; her tusks are black in colour (kṛshṇa-daṁshṭrikā).

This text (Pūrva-kāraṇa) gives her mount as owl (kauśikārohiṇī) and corpse (śavārūḍhā). Vishṇu-dharmottara, Rūpa-maṇḍana and Maya-mata make her ride a corpse (preta-gā). Aṁśumadbheda, however, describes her as seated upon a lotus-seat ('padma-pīṭhopari-sthitā'), under the ficus-tree (vaṭa-vṛksha). This text gives her body-colour as red (rakta-varṇā), while the other texts make her black-complexioned. Svacchhanda-tantra describes her as sitting with her right leg firmly planted on the seat and with her left leg pressing down the demon (Dārukāsura); she is surrounded by pretas, bhūtas, piśāchas, hākinīs, ḍākinīs and yoginīs.

The panel of the seven mother-goddesses is required to be flanked on the right side (mātṛṇām agratah) with Vīreśvara (Śiva as Vīra-bhadra), and on the left (ante) Ganeśa. Vīreś-vara is required in some texts to be shown as three-eyed, four- or ten- armed, and riding a bull (vṛshārūḍha). When four-armed, he must be shown as playing on the lute (vīṇā) with his normal hands, and carrying bow and trident in the upper hands. When ten-armed, rosary, water-pot, lotus, conch, mace, trident, hand-drum, sword, shield and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal are seen. Īśāna-śiva-pad-dhati identifies him with Lakulīśvara or Purusha and prescribes that he must be shown in the yoga posture (yoga-rūpa) with two hands carrying rosary and fire ('aksha-sūtrāgni-dhārī'). This text also gives the mantra: 'Lakulīśāya vidmahe, aksha-mālā-dharāya dhīmahi, tan no vīra-bhadrah prachodayāt'.

Gaṇeśa on the other side of the panel is the master of all the hosts (gaṇādhipati); he is shown as elephant-headed (hasti- vaktra), one-tusked and two- or four-armed.

Independent temples to the group of seven mother-goddesses appear to have been there in the early centuries of the present era. We have inscriptional reference to such a temple having been built by Mayūrāksha, a feudatory of Viśva-varma in the fifth century. There is a Sapta-mātṛkā temple in Vechcheri in Chinglepet district (Tamil Nāḍu). The Piḍāri temple of Kolār (in Karnāṭaka) is actually a Sapta-mātṛkā shrine. The Chaushashṭi-yoginī temple of Hīrapūr (Oris-sa) was originally a shrine for the seven goddes-ses; later it accommodated two more deities and became 'nava-kātyāyanī' shrine.

The texts also recognize such independent temples, and prescribe that a Sapta-mātṛkā temple must have four entrances called Pra-modinī (on the east, guarded by Rakshoghna and Vāha-gahana), Abhayā (on the south, Sumukha and Kāla-daṇḍa), Śānti (west, Atithi and Mudita), and Śubhakarī (north, Sakala and Śukti- karṇa). The door-guardians are also to be accompanied by their yoginī-consorts: Karālī and Kāmukā (east), Subhagā and Dāhinī (south), Gaganā and Hlādinī (west), and Vis-phuliṅgī and Virūpākshī (north).

SAPTA-ŚATIKA-HAYAGRIVA

One of the several forms of Haya-grīva (see HAYAGRĪVA), an important deity of the Vajrayāna pantheon, he is so-called because he is as-sociated specifically with Sapta-śatika-kalpa.

The god is red-complexioned and terrible-looking ('rakta-varṇam mahā-bhayānakam'). He is three-eyed, and pot-bellied (bṛhad-udaram); and his beard is tawny-coloured (kapila-śmaśru). His aspect is indignant (raudra). He wears garlands of severed heads. His head is surmounted by another head blue in colour which is that of a horse ('hayānanam'), neighing without a break ('hīhī-kāra-nādinam'). Short and dwarf-like, he is decorated with the eight celebrated serpents (see ASHṬA-NĀGA) and is clad in tiger-skin. He is two-armed, and he holds in his hands cudgel and vajra. One of his feet is placed on the top of the universe ('brahmāṇḍa-śikharākrāntam') and the other on the other end of the world ('bhavāgra-paryantam'); thus covering in his stride the entire existence.

SABHĀ-PATI

One of the forms of Śiva as dancer (see NAṬARĀJA), this particular form represents his performance on the Kailāsa mountain, in front of Pārvatī, who is seated upon a bejewelled throne, during the 'pradosha' period (first part of the night, dusk, eventide), as all the gods were witnessing; Brahmā held the cymbals, Vishṇu played on paṭaha, Sarasvatī accompanied on the lute (vīṇā), Sun and Moon played on flutes, Nandi and Kārtikeya beat the drums, and Tumburu and Nārada sang.

In the dance-form, he is four-armed and he dances upon the prostrate Mūyalaka (see APASMĀRA). His normal right-hand assumes the gesture of boon-bestowal, while the corresponding left arm is hanging down or thrown across (dolā-hastaka). the upper hands carry hand-drum (ḍhakkā, right) and fire (agni, left). The left leg that is placed on Mūyalaka is slightly bent ('kuñchitam vāma-pādam apasmāropari saṁsthitam'). His matted hair, red in colour, is tied on the head (rakta-jaṭādhara); crescent moon and Gaṅgā adorn his crest. He has a smile on his face.

On his side stands or sits the goddess, Pārvatī, known as Śiva-kāmī, witnessing the dance ('śiva-kāmeśvarī-pārśvam'). The sages Vyāghra-pāda and Patañjali are also seen in postures of supplication.

SAMANTA-BHADRA

A bodhisattva of great celebrity, he is variously invoked and worshipped in places where Mahāyāna form of Buddhism is prevalent. He heads the list of sixteen bodhisattvas (see BODHI-SATTVA). Nishpanna-yogāvalī describes him as yellow complexioned (suvarṇa-varṇa), two armed and standing on lotus-seat; his left hand (fist) is placed on the hip, while his right hand carries a bunch of jewels ('ratna-mañjari-bhṛt dakshiṇa-pāṇih kaṭi-stha-vāma-mushṭih'). Alternately, his right hand assumes the gesture of boon-bestowal and the left hand holds a sword placed upon a blue lotus ('utpala-khaḍga-dharah').

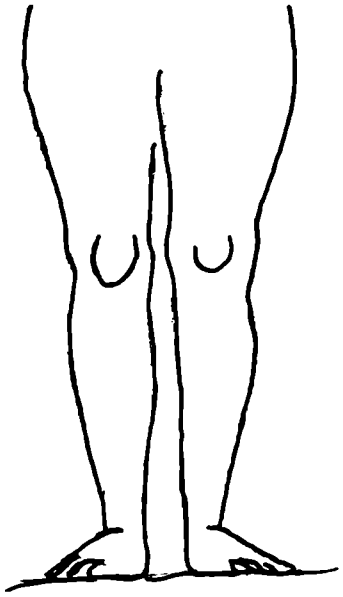
Kāla-chakra-maṇḍala makes his complexion blue, and the number of his hands six. His hands on the right side show vajra, chopper (kartrī) and axe, and the ones on the left bell, skull-cup and severed head of Brahmā (or in its place blue lotus ('brahma-śiras-sthāne utpalam vā'). His śakti, Dharma-vajrā, holds him in embrace.

He is also visualized as white-complexioned, decorated with all ornaments and showing with his hands the gesture of turning the wheel of dharma.

As a bodhisattva he bears the discus symbol, and is aligned with the dhyāni-buddha, Vairochana (see VAIROCHANA). He is also one of the forms assumed by Lokeśvara, when he is seated on a lotus in the vajra-paryaṅka posture; two-armed, he shows the gesture of boon-bestowal with his right hand, while his left hand placed against the chest holds lotus-stalk.

SAMA-PĀDA-STHĀNAKA

It is a posture of standing perfectly erect with both feet drawn together and placed firmly on the seat; it conveys the impression of balance and equipoise.



SAMA-PĀDA-STHĀNAKA

SAMA-BHAṄGA

The bodily posture assumed by a deity (see BHAṄGI), where the right and left halves of the body are completely balanced, without a tilt or bend on any side (see also DVI-BHAṄGA and TRI- BHAṄGI).

SAMĀDHI-MUDRĀ

The position or gesture assumed by the hands of a deity seated in lotus posture, indicating contemplative absorption (samādhi). The hands are brought together and placed over the centre of the crossed legs; the palms are held upward, usually the right palm over the left.

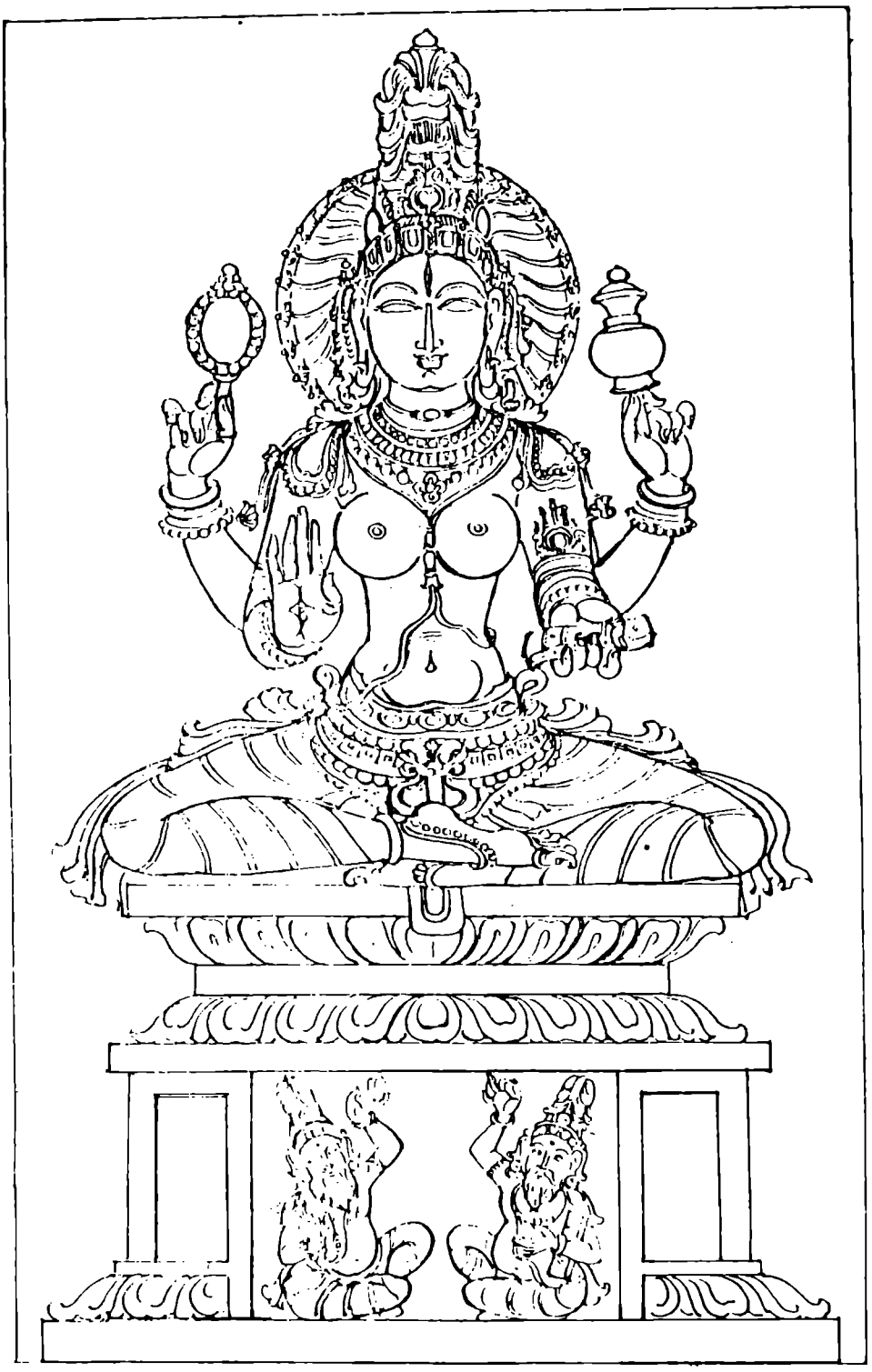
SARASVATĪ

Celebrated as the goddess of learning, she is one of the most popularly worshipped deities in India; and her inclusion in the Vedic, Tāntrik, Jaina and Buddhist pantheons is an evidence of her widespread appeal. Temples to her have

SARASVATĪ
(old drawing from Mysore)

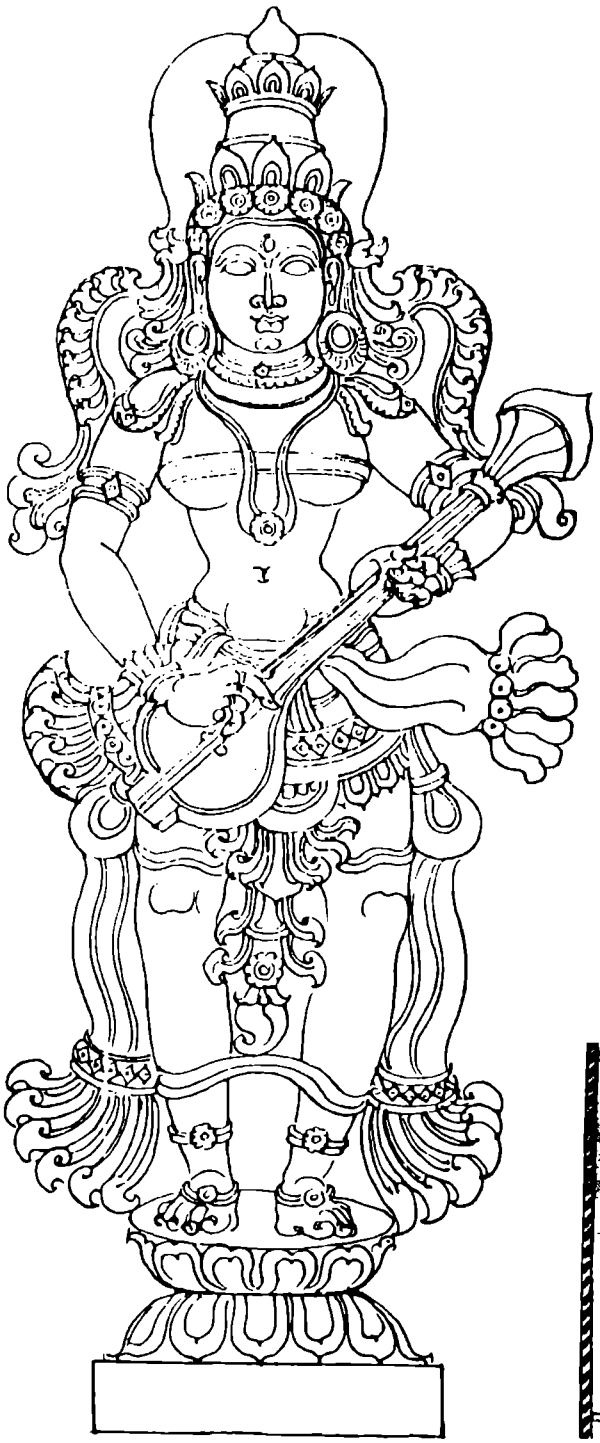
SARASVATĪ
(old drawing from Mysore)

SARASVATĪ
(Hoysaḷa sculpture)



SARASVATĪ
(from Chidambaram temple)

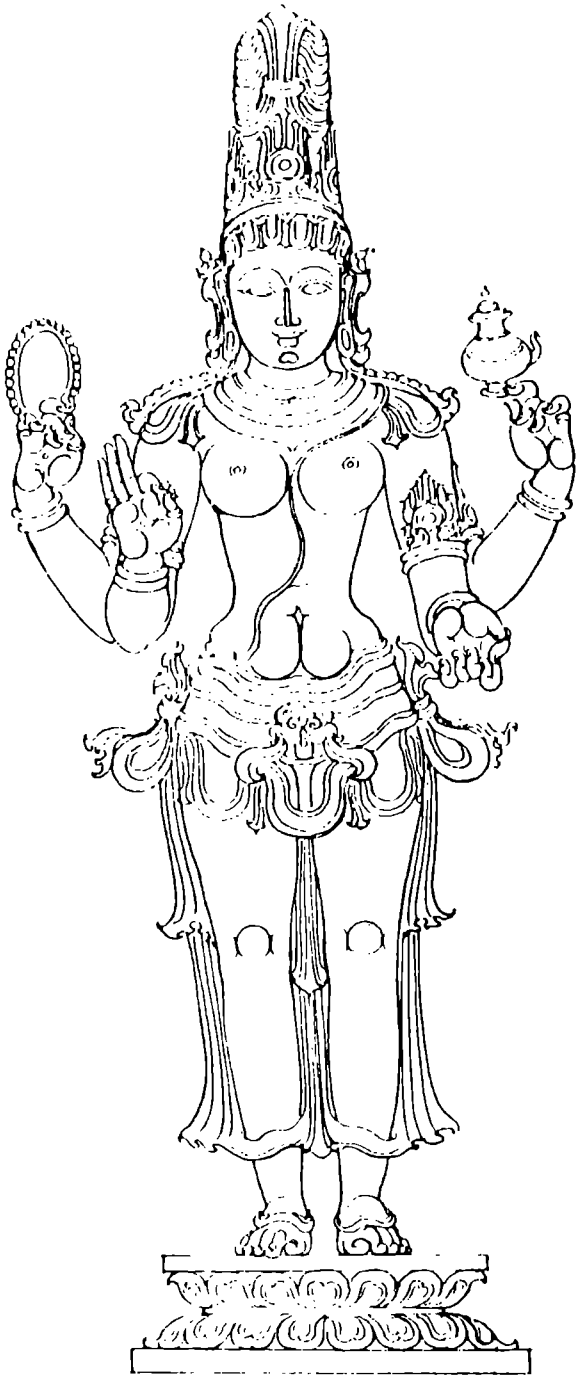
SARASVATĪ
(from Mahadeva temple Ettamannur, Kottayam)



SARASVATĪ
(from Thali temple)

SARASVATĪ

SARASVATĪ
(old drawing from Mysore)



SARASVATĪ
(from Tiruvārūr temple)

SARASVATĪ
(from Somanātha temple, Bārkūr)

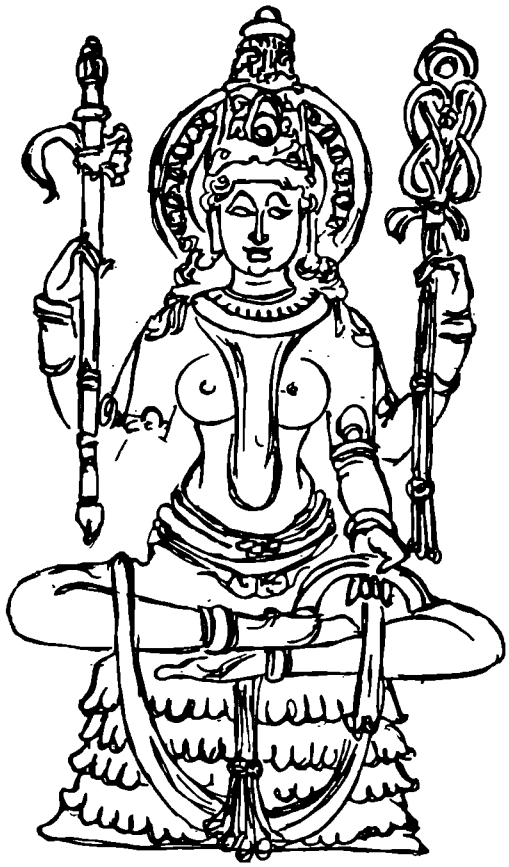
SARASVATĪ
(Pāla sculpture, from Bengal)

been built in the medieval period, and her iconic representations are remarkably numerous. Known also as Śāradā or Vāgdevī, she is invoked in households all through the year, and especially during nava-ratri.

She is undoubtedly of Vedic origin. Rgveda knows of this goddess in her two aspects (1,3,12, cf.also Nirukta, 2,23): as a river- goddess and as a goddess of speech and intelligence. She is hailed as the 'best of mothers' (ambitame), as the 'best of rivers' (naditame) and as the 'best of goddesses' (devi-tame) (2,14,16). She was the first of all the rivers (7,95,2), and is mighty, benevolent, splendid and dearly loved by human beings for whom she is an 'iron-fortress' (7,95,1 cf.also 1,3,12; 6,3,10 and 7,96,3). She is also 'the child of lightning' (6,49,7); she smote Vṛtra with lightning (6,61,3). She prompts good thoughts ('chodayitrī sūnṛtānām', 1,3,11); and she protects our thoughts. She is bountiful and she feeds all beings, gives them wealth, and finds for them treasure (1,164,49 cf.also 6,61,1). Atharva- veda eulogizes her as one who can calm down agitated minds (7,57,1).

Her dual role (viz. as a river and as a goddess) continued to interest the purāṇas. Matsya-purāṇa (113,20) and Vāyu-purāṇa (1,45,94) mention the Himavat (viz.the Himālayan ranges) as the source of the river, more specifically Plaksha. As a goddess, she was produced from the mind of Brahmā, who was in meditative

SARASVATĪ
(Early Kadamba, stone, Madhukesvara temple, Banavasi)



SARASVATĪ
(stone, Seneśvara temple, Baindūr)

absorption (sattva-guṇa prevailing). Brahmā granted her three forms: as a river on earth, as speech on the tongues of all mortals, and as the goddess of wisdom abiding in himself. The purāṇas have legends associating her with Brahmā (as Sāvitrī and Gāyatrī), with Vishṇu and with Śiva, as the śakti of all three gods.

Early iconographic accounts of Sarasvatī uniformly describe her as white-complexioned, wearing white garments, seated upon a white lotus (śveta-padmāsanāsīnā) decorated by pearl ornaments, and as four-armed (with book, rosary, water-pot and lotus in her hands). Aṁśumadbheda (paṭala 49) and Pūrva-kāraṇa (paṭala 12) mention also that she is three-eyed and wears a crown of matted hair (jaṭā-makuṭa) and a sacrifical chord (yajñopavīta). The variety called Vāgdevī in the former text and Vagīśī in the latter, carries in her right hands the gesture of scriptural exposition (vyākhyāna-mudrā) and rosary, and in her left hands book and white lotus. Crescent moon adorns her crown. Rūpa-maṇḍana describes the form known as Mahā-vidyā as carrying rosary, lotus, lute (vīṇā) and book in her four hands and the form called Sarasvatī as carrying the gesture of boon-bestowal instead of the lute.

While Aṁśumadbheda makes her sit upon a white lotus, Vishṇudharmottara describes her as standing in sama-bhanga upon the white lotus. According to the latter text, one of the hands carries a water-pot (kamaṇḍalu). In Agni-purāṇa, she is prescribed to be shown as playing on the lute with her two normal hands, while her upper hands carry book and rosary. Another dhyāna-śloka makes her carry book and rosary in her right hands while the left hands hold a parrot (śuka) and lotus. Still another describes her as holding in her hands book (vidyā), lute (vīṇā), pot of nectar (amṛta-maya-ghaṭa) and rosary (aksha-sraja).

The early texts do not mention any vehicle or mount for her. But later texts provide swan or peacock as her vāhana or lāñchhana. While all the texts describe her as white-complexioned, Śilpa- ratna gives her body colour as red (rakta-varṇa), but seated upon a lotus. Agni-purāṇa mentions a variety which is eight-armed (with bow, mace, noose, lute, discus, conch, plough-share and goad in her hands). Actual icons often show in her hands rosary, book, goad and noose, thus making her a variety of Lalitā.

Vāstu-vidyā-dīpārṇava enumerates twelve forms of Sarasvatī, which are all four-armed and without vāhana; they have aureole around their heads (prabhā-maṇḍala-samyuktāh); they are splendidly attired and decorated, pretty and youthful (vastrālaṅkāra-samyuktāh surūpa yauvanāvitāh); they are happy in aspect (suprasannāh) and bright-looking (su-tejaskāh): The hands and what they carry are mentioned in this order: right lower, right upper, left upper and left lower.

1. Sarasvatī I: rosary, lotus, lute, book.

2. Sarasvatī II: rosary, book, lute, lotus.

3. Kamalā (Rukmiṇī): boon-bestowal, rosary, lotus, book.

4. Jayā: boon-bestowal, lotus, book, rosary.

5. Vijayā: boon-bestowal, rosary, book, lotus.

6. Sāraṅgī: boon-bestowal, book, rosary, lotus.

7. Tumburī: protection, rosary, lute, book.

8. Nāradī: boon-bestowal, book, lute, lotus.

9. Sarva-maṅgalā: boon-bestowal, lotus, book, protection

10. Vidyā-dhāri: lotus, rosary, lute, book.

11. Sarva-vidyā: rosary, lotus, book, protection

12. Śāradā: protection, lotus, book, rosary.

Jayamata has another list of twelve forms of Sarasvatī: (1) Mahāvidyā (rosary, lotus, lute, book in the above order), (2) Mahā-vāṇī (rosary, book, lute, lotus), (3) Bhāratī (boon- bestowal, rosary, lotus, book), (4) Sarasvatī (boon-bestowal, lotus, rosary, book), (5) Āryā (boon-bestowal, rosary, book, lotus), (6) Brāhmī (boon-bestowal, book, lotus, rosary), (7) Mahā-dhenu (boon-bestowal, lotus, lute, book), (8) Veda-garbhā (boon-bestowal, book, lute, lotus), (9) Īśvarī (rosary, protection, lotus, book), (10) Mahā-lakshmī (rosary, lotus, boon-bestowal, book), (11) Mahā-kālī (rosary, lotus, book, boon- bestowal) and (12) Mahā-sarasvatī (rosary, book, lute and lotus).

According to Śrī-vidyārṇava-tantra, Mahā-sarasvatī (who is born out of the body of Gaurī) has eight arms; and in her hands are held arrow, pestle-club, discus, trident, conch, ploughshare, bell and bow. (Śrikantha-sastri, op.cit.,p.18). Among the tāntrik forms of Sarasvatī, Nīla-Sarasvatī (blue-complexion, three eyes, crescent moon on head, one of her legs on an animal, four arms with bell, skull-cup, spear and sword in her hands, or with chopper, skull-cup, trident and bowl). Ghaṭa-sarasvatī (a form of Vāg-vādinī). Kiṇi-sarasvatī (another form of Vāg-vādinī), and Śāradā (seated on throne, three eyes, six hands carrying lotus, prāśa, spear and water-pot) are important. Nīla-sarasvatī is also one of the eight forms of Tārā (see TĀRĀ).

In the Vajrayāna pantheon, the tāntrik forms of Sarasvatī figure like Vajra-sarasvatī (six-armed and standing in pratyālīḍha posture), Vajra-śāradā (seated on bhadrāsana or white lotus, crescent moon on the head, two hands, the right holding a lotus and the left a book). Vajra-vīṇā-sarasvatī (two armed, playing on lute with both hands); and deities like Prajñā-pāramitā and Muñjusrī incorporate the essential features of Sarasvatī. We find Sarasvatī assimilated in the Jaina pantheon in deities like Śruta-devatā, Prajñapti, Mānasī and Mahā-mānasī.

SARPA

Snakes shown on the body of some deities as ornaments: sacrificial chord (sarpa-yajñopavīta), ear-rings (sarpa-kuṇḍala), bracelets (sarpa-kaṅkaṇa) and so on.

SARVATOBHADRA-LIṄGA

A variety of liṅga (see LIṄGA) in which the shaft is round from bottom to top (āmūlād agram suvṛttam), in all the three divisions (brahmā, vishṇu and rudra-bhāgas) (cf.Kāśyapa-śilpa, 49,132 and Maya-mata, 33,74).

SARVA-MAṄGALĀ

A form of Devī, she is golden-complexioned (hemābhā) and decorated with splendid ornaments. She is four-armed, and in one of her right hands is seen rosary, while her left hands hold spear and water-pot (Vishṇu-dharmottara). According to Śarabha-tantra, she bestows wealth on her devotees (bhaktānām dhana-dam); and two of her four hands assume the postures of boon-bestowal, and protection, and another hand holds a citrus fruit (mātuluṅga). She is seated on a lion (simhasthā), or alternately upon a lotus with 8,16, or 32 petals.

SARVA-VARṆEŚVARĪ

A minor form of Devī, described in texts like Siddha-śābara- tantra, Śrī-vidyārṇava-tantra and Svacchhanda-tantra. She is red-complexioned, three-eyed and four-armed. She wears on her head crescent moon; and is seated upon a red lotus. She carries in her normal hands rosary and book, and in the upper hands an antelope (hariṇa-pota) and stone-mason's hammer (ṭaṅka).

SARVA-SAMA-LIṄGA

A variety of liṅga (see LIṄGA), in which the three divisions of the shaft representing Brahmā, Vishṇu, and Rudra are equal in height, the first division being square in shape, the second oc-

togonal and the third circular ('trividham api samam syād unnate').

SARVĀRTHA-SIDDHA

The monarch of the gandharvas (see GANDHARVA), white in complexion and two armed, he carries a garland of fragrant flowers in his hands.

SAHASRA-BHUJA-LOKEŚVARA

A Vajrayāna deity, he is a form of Lokeśvara (see AVALOKITA and LOKEŚVARA) with one thousand arms (or one hundred and eight). However, four pairs of hands are regarded as principal ('ashṭau mukhyāni'): the first pair joined in the attitude of supplication (kṛtāñjali-mudrā), the second carrying rosary and book (mālā- pustakau), the third posture of boon-bestowal and lotus (varada-kamale), and the fourth discus and bow (chakra-dhanushī). The arms are of different colours (white, blue, yellow, red and black). The deity is decorated with garlands studded with jewels, and wears the six-fold magical ornaments (shaṇ-mudrā).

SAHASRA-LIṄGA

A variety of Sarva-sama-liṅga (see LIṄGA and SARVA-SAMA-LIṄGA), with twenty-five equi-distant (samāntarāh) fluted sections (dhārās) in the pūjā-bhāga (viz. the division of the shaft known as rudra-bhāga, seen above the yoni), in the form of seven leaves joined together (sapta-parṇa-dalākārāh). In each fluted section are carved from top to bottom twenty pairs of tiny liṅgas (viz.forty), all of same size (ekaikasyam tu dhārāyām chaturviṁśat-saṁkhyayā kuryāt samāni liṅgāni), thus the number of liṅgas totalling one thousand (cf.Dīpārṇava, 13,42-43). Kāmikāgama, however, prescribes that the height of the round shaft in its rudra-bhāga division must be horizontally divided into eleven sections, and ninety-one liṅgas ('ekādhike navatyaṁśe') must be carved around the shaft in each section, thus totalling one thousand and one liṅgas ('eka-sāhasra-liṅgānām').

SĀGARA-MATI

One of the sixteen bodhisattvas (see BODHI-SATTVA) of the Mahāyāna pantheon, he is regarded as fair-complexioned and two- armed. His hands are stretched out ('hasta-dvaya-prasāritah'), the fingers in each hand showing the play of waves in an ocean (sarvāṅgulibhis-taraṅgābhinayī'). Alternately, he holds a conch in his right hand, and carries in his left a sword with an impress of vajra.

SĀDHANA-KUMĀRA

An attendant or companion of the bodhi-sattva Avalokiteśvara (see AVALOKITA) in his Khasarpaṇa form (see KHASARPAṆA-AVALOKITA). A prince-like deity ('kumāra-rūpa-dhāri'), he stands to the right of the bodhi-sattva (dakshiṇa-pārśve). He is golden-complexioned and two-armed; his hands are joined in an attitude of supplication ('kṛtāñjali-puṭah'); under his left arm-pit is tucked a book ('vāma-kaksha-vinyasta-pustakah').

SĀDHANA-MĀLĀ

Collections of short texts in Sanskrt each of which describes a deity of Vajrayāna pantheon; the texts also prescribe ritual details, mantra of the deity, and the method of visualizing the deity. B.Bhattāchārya has prepared an excellent edition of these collections (Gaekwad Oriental Series, Baroda, 1942).

SĀRVA-LIṄGA

A variety of liṅgas made by human hand (see LIṄGA and MĀNUSHA- LIṄGA), which is round-shaped all along the shaft (viz. In all the three divisions, Brahmā, Vishṇu and Rudra) but with variation in the height of the shaft-divisions. For example, If the Brahmā-division (hidden under the ground) is five units, the Vishṇu- division (covered by the pedestal) will be four units and

the Rudra-division (seen and worshipped) three (cf. Kāśyapa-silpa, 49,122).

SĀVITRI

Actually signifying 'solar energy' (from Savitṛ), Sāvitrī is regarded as one of the three goddesses associated with the Sun-god: Gāyatrī, Sāvitrī and Sarasvatī, representing respectively the morning sun, the midday sun and the evening sun. If Gāyatrī is of the form of Agni, Sāvitrī is of the form of Rudra and Sarasvati is of Vishṇu-form.

(see SANDHYĀ)

SIṀHA

Lion, as vehicle of Devī.

SIṀHA-KARṆA

A hand-posture resembling the ears of a lion. It is also called kaṭaka-mudrā (see KAṬAKA).

SIṀHA-GAṆAPATI

One of the thirty-two well-known forms of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), this is distinguished by a lion's face with trunk. Gaṇapati here has eight hands in which are a lute (vīṇā), creeper of wish-fulfilment (kalpa-latā) discus (ari) and gesture of boon- bestowal (on the right side), and lotus (tāmarasa), pot of pearls (ratna-kalaśa), bunch of sprouts (san-mañjarī) and gesture of protection (on the left side). He is of white complexion.

SIṀHANĀTHA-LOKEŚVARA

One of the 108 forms of Avalikteśvara, he sits upon a bhadrāsana placed on lotus. He is four-armed, carrying in his hands sword and jewel (right), and book and nose (left).

SIṀHANĀDA-LOKEŚVARA

A form of Avalokiteśvara (see AVALOKITA), popularly worshipped in countries where Mahāyāna Buddhism prevails, as a god who cures illnesses. He is so called because he is seated upon a roaring lion, in the posture known as mahārāja-līlā (see MAHĀRĀJA-LĪLĀ). He is white-complexioned, three-eyed and clad in tiger-skin. On his head is his matted hair done up as a crown (jaṭā-mukuṭa). He is devoid of ornaments ('nirbhūshaṇa').

On his right side is seen a trident, white in colour, on which a white snake has entwined itself ('sita-phaṇi-veshṭitam triśūlam śvetam'); on his left side is a lotus that has sprung from his left hand, and on the lotus is a flaming sword ('vāma-hastād uttham padmopari jvalad-khaḍgam').

SIṀHĀSANA

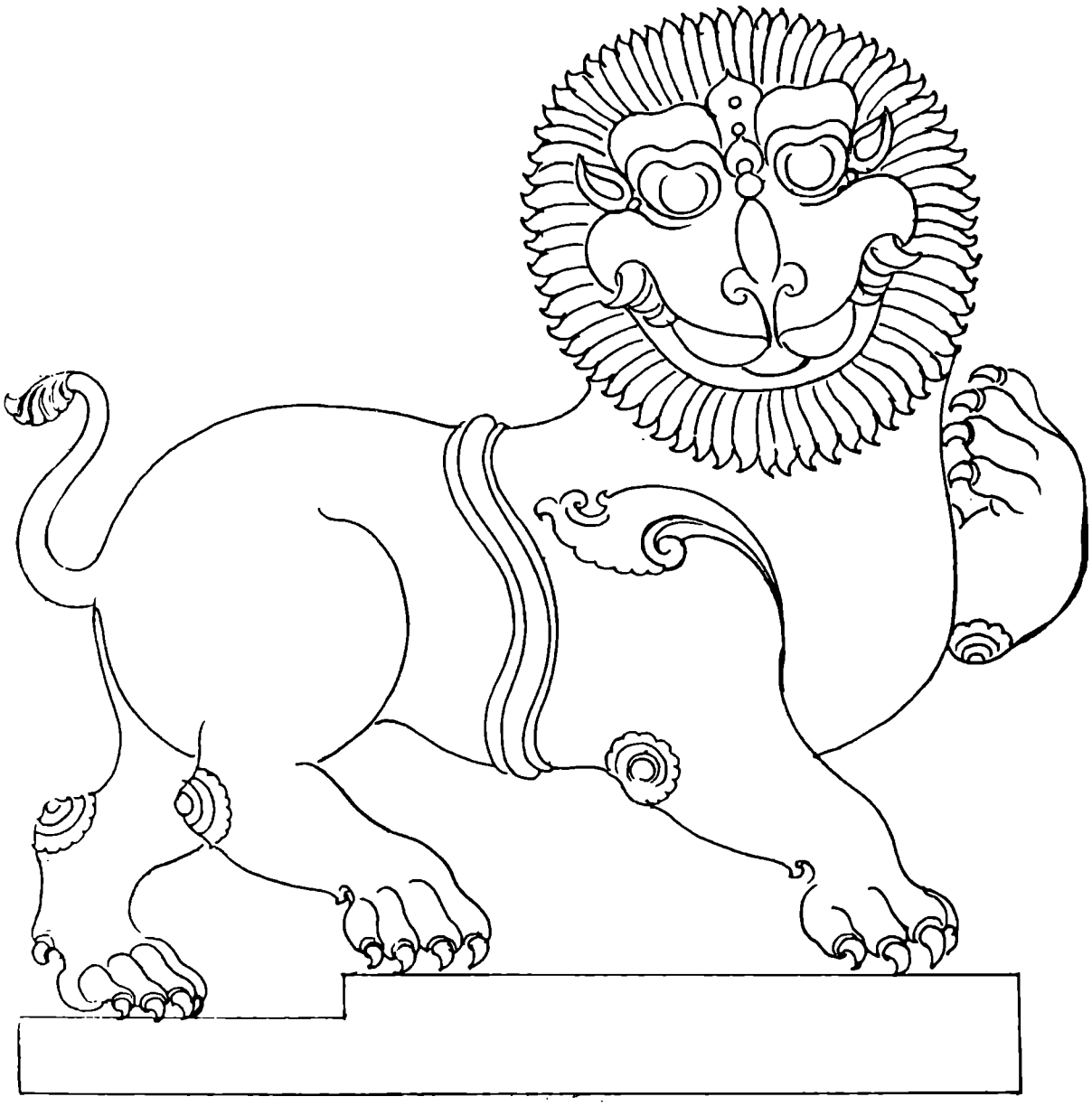
Meaning 'lion-seat', it is a throne used by monarchs, signifying suzereignty over a vast domain. The reference is to the lion being the king of animals in the forest. The throne is usually decorated with figures of lions on either side of the seat (as arm-rests); or the four legs of the throne are modelled like crouching lions.

SIṀHĀSYĀ

One of the four animal faced deities of the Vajrayāna pantheon mentioned in Nishpanna-yogāvalī, and representing the four quarters. Siṁhāsyā is lion-faced and situated in the north. Hayāsyā is horse-faced and located in the east; Sūkarāsyā is sow-faced and is in the south; and Śvānāsyā is dog-faced and occupies western direction.

They are all of them blue-complexioned, but each has a distinct hue. Siṁhāsyā and Śvānāsyā have reddish-blue colour (rakta- nīla), Hayāsyā whitish blue (sita-nīla), and Sūkarāsyā yellowish blue (pīta-nīla).

Siṁhāsyā is violent in nature, naked, and dancing upon a corpse. She is two-armed, and in her right hand is seen a chopper (kartrī) while her left hand carries a skull-cup. Sometimes she is described as four-faced and four-armed (as in Hevajra-maṇḍala).



SIṀHA

SITA-TĀRĀ

A form of Tārā (see TĀRĀ) and an emanation of the dhyāni-buddha Amogha-siddhi, she is white-complexioned, three-eyed and four-armed. On her crest are images of the five Buddhas (pañcha- tathāgata-mukuṭī). Her normal hands assume what is known as utpala-mudrā. The other two hands carry a bunch of blue lotuses (utpala-mañjarī) (left) and the gesture of fulfilling the desires of all beings ('sarva-sattvānām āśām pari-pūrayantīm') (right).

SITA-PRAJÑA-PĀRAMITĀ

A variety of Prajñā-pāramitā (see PRAJÑĀ-PĀRAMITĀ), which is white in colour (distinguished from the Pīta-prajñā-pāramitā which is yellow and Kanaka-prajñā-pāramitā which is golden). This goddess is an emanation of the dhyāni-buddha Akshobhya. She is seated in vajra-paryaṅka posture upon a white lotus. She is two-armed, the right hand holding a red lotus and the left the scripture Prajñā-pāramitā. She is bedecked with all ornaments, and is charming in appearance (manoramā).

SIDDHA

One of the five groups of adorable beings in the Jaina pantheon (see PAÑCHA-PARAMESHṬHI). The siddhas are released and perfected souls abiding on the Siddha-śilā, the plane on top of the world, to which the souls made light by the elimination of Karma rise, and from which the worlds and non-worlds are all cognized. These souls are distinguished by the absence of physical bodies (aśarīri). In iconic representation of siddhas, it is usual to cut out and remove a standing human form from a metal sheet.

SIDDHA-LAKSHMĪ

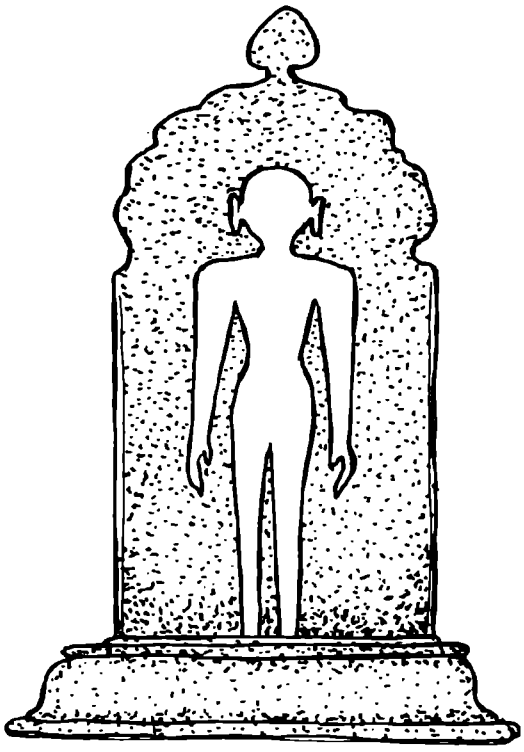
One of the eight forms of Lakshmī (see LAKSHMĪ), she is of the complexion of ruddy dawn (aruṇa-sadṛśa-varṇā), and seated on a lotus. Her ears are decorated by pearl ear-rings (ratna-tāṭaṅka-bhūshitā). She is four-armed, two of the hands assuming the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, and the other two carrying lotuses (abja-yugmam).

SIDDHĀYANĪ

Also called Siddhi-dāyinī or Siddhāyikā, she is is the yakshī (see YAKSHĪ) attending on Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth tīrthankara of the Jaina pantheon. According to Rūpa-maṇḍana, her complexion is blue and she is four-armed. In her hands are seen book, gesture of protection, lute (vīṇā) and citrus fruit (mātuluṅga).

SIDDHI-GAṆAPATI

Tawny-coloured (hema-piṅgala) and filled with plenty and prosperity (śrī-samṛddhi-yuta), this form of Gaṇapati has four hands in which are held ripe mango fruit (pakva-chūta-phala), bunch



SIDDHA

of flowers (pushpa-mañjarī), sugar-cane stalk as bow and axe; a sweet cake containing sesasum (tila-modaka) is held in the trunk (see GAṆAPATI).

SIDDHI-DĀYINĪ-DURGĀ

A form of Durgā (see DURGĀ), as she is surrounded by siddhas, gandharvas; yakshas, devas and asuras who worship her for accomplishing their purposes.

SIDDHI-DEVĪ

One of the two familiar consorts of Gaṇapati (the other being Buddhi), she is attainment personified, even as Buddhi is the personified intelligence. Siddhi-devī is yellow-complexioned and two-eyed. She wears on her head a crown of nine precious stones (see NAVA-RATNA), and her body is draped in yellow silken garments. In her right hand she holds a red lotus, and the left arm hangs down gracefully by her side. She wears garlands of jasmine and champaka flowers. She stands in the three-bend stance (tri- bhaṅgi). She is stationed on the right side of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI).

Buddhi, who is placed on the left side of Gaṇapati, is of similar form. But she is dark blue in complexion, and she wears garlands of pārijāta and utpala flowers. She holds in her hand a blue lotus.

SIDDHAIKAVĪRA

One of the gods of the Mahāyāna pantheon, he is an emanation of the dhyāni-buddha Akshobhya. He is white-complexioned, two-armed and bedecked with fine ornaments. He is seated in the vajra- paryarika posture upon lunar orb, illumining the universe. His right hand assumes the gesture of boon-bestowal while the left carries a blue lotus. On his head are tiny images of the five Buddhas (pañcha-tathāgata-mudrā).

Another account makes him red-complexioned.

SINĪVALĪ

A lunar deity (chandra-sinī), she represents full moon, while Kuhū is new moon ('dṛshṭa-chandrā sinīvālī'; 'nashṭe kuhūr amāvāsyā'). (cf.Halāyudha: Abhidhāna-kośa, 1,112). She is described as the sister of the gods in Yajurveda (34,10, cf.Śukla-yajurveda, 11,56). The purāṇas narrate that she was the daughter of Aṅgiras and Śraddhā, and that she married Dhātā (one of the ādityas, see ĀDITYA). Nirukta (11,31) identifies both Sinīvālī and Kuhū as 'wives of gods' (deva-patnyau). Some texts (like Amara, 129,30) recognize four lunar deities: Anumatī (without any lunar aspects, 'Kalā-hīnā'), Rākā (full moon, 'pūṃe niśākare'), Sinīvālī (when the lunar aspects are visible, 'dṛshṭendu') and Kuhū (new moon 'nashṭendu').

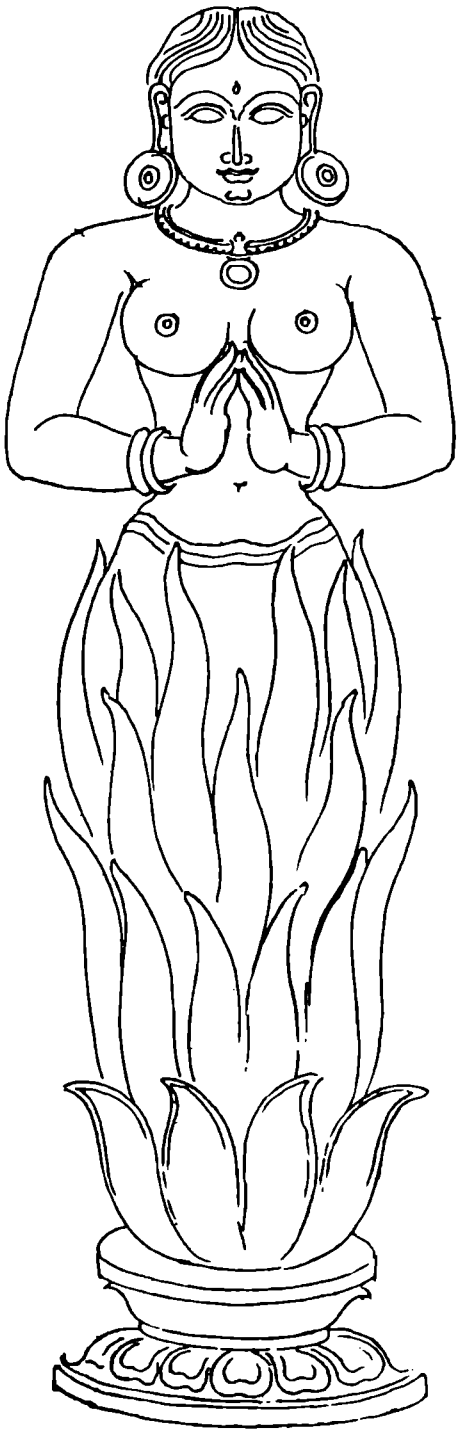
Sinīvāli is visualized as having a complexion which is dark mixed with white (sita-śyāma) and two-armed. She carries flowers in her hands, and she is clad in samī-flowers ('śamī-pushpāṁbarām'). She has large breasts and thick hip. She rides on swan.

SĪTĀ

Wife of Rāma (see RĀMA), she is regarded as an incarnation of Lakshmī. She was born immaculately, and she appeared as a baby thrown up while the king of Mithilā, Janaka, was ceremonially ploughing the earth for a sacrifice. She was adopted as daughter by the king. Rāma married her in a svayamvara. Later the demon king of Laṅkā, Rāvaṇa, carried her away, when she was residing in a forest retreat with Rāma. Rāma with the help of Sugrīva and his army killed Rāvaṇa and recovered Sītā.

Usually Sītā is shown standing on the left side of Rāma, (Lakshmaṇa being on the right side). She is two-armed, holding a lotus in her right hand, while the left arm hangs down gracefully. She wears a crown on her head, and is splendidly attired and decorated.

SĪTĀ



SĪTĀ
(from Pūrṇa-trayīśvara temple, Tripunnitura)

SUKHĀVATĪ-LOKEŚVARA

Śrī-vidyārṇava-tantra has a tāntrik image of Sītā: three-eyed and wearing crescent moon on the head; she has four hands in which noose, goad, bow, and arrow are seen (S.Srikantha Sastri, op.cit. p.28).

SUKHĀVATĪ-LOKEŚVARA

One of the forms of Avalokiteśvara, a deity of the Vajrayāna pantheon, he is white-complexioned, three-faced and six-armed. In the hands on the right side are shown the gesture of shooting an arrow (mudrā-śara-kshepa), rosary and gesture of boon- bestowal, while in two of his hands on the other side bow and lotus are held, and the third hand is placed on the thigh of his consort Tārā (tāroru-samarpita). He sits in lalitāsanā upon a lotus; and above him is a cairn (chaitya). He is surrounded by Vajra-tārā, Ratna-tārā, Padma-tārā and Viśva-tārā (cf.Dharma- kosha-saṁgraha).

SUGATI-SAṀDARŚANA

A form of Lokeśvara (see LOKEŚVARA), he is described as a 'reverend master' (bhaṭṭāraka). White-complexioned and six-armed, he is decorated with fine ornaments, and his matted hair is done up as a crown. He wears a sacrificial chord (vrata-sūtra). In two of the hands on the right side, he shows the gestures of boon-bestowal and protection, while the third holds a rosary. In the three hands on the other side he carries lotus, water-pot and cudgel with three prongs (tridaṇḍī). His aspect is benign (saumya-rūpa), and he is seated upon the lunar orb, which is placed upon a lotus.

SUDARŚANA

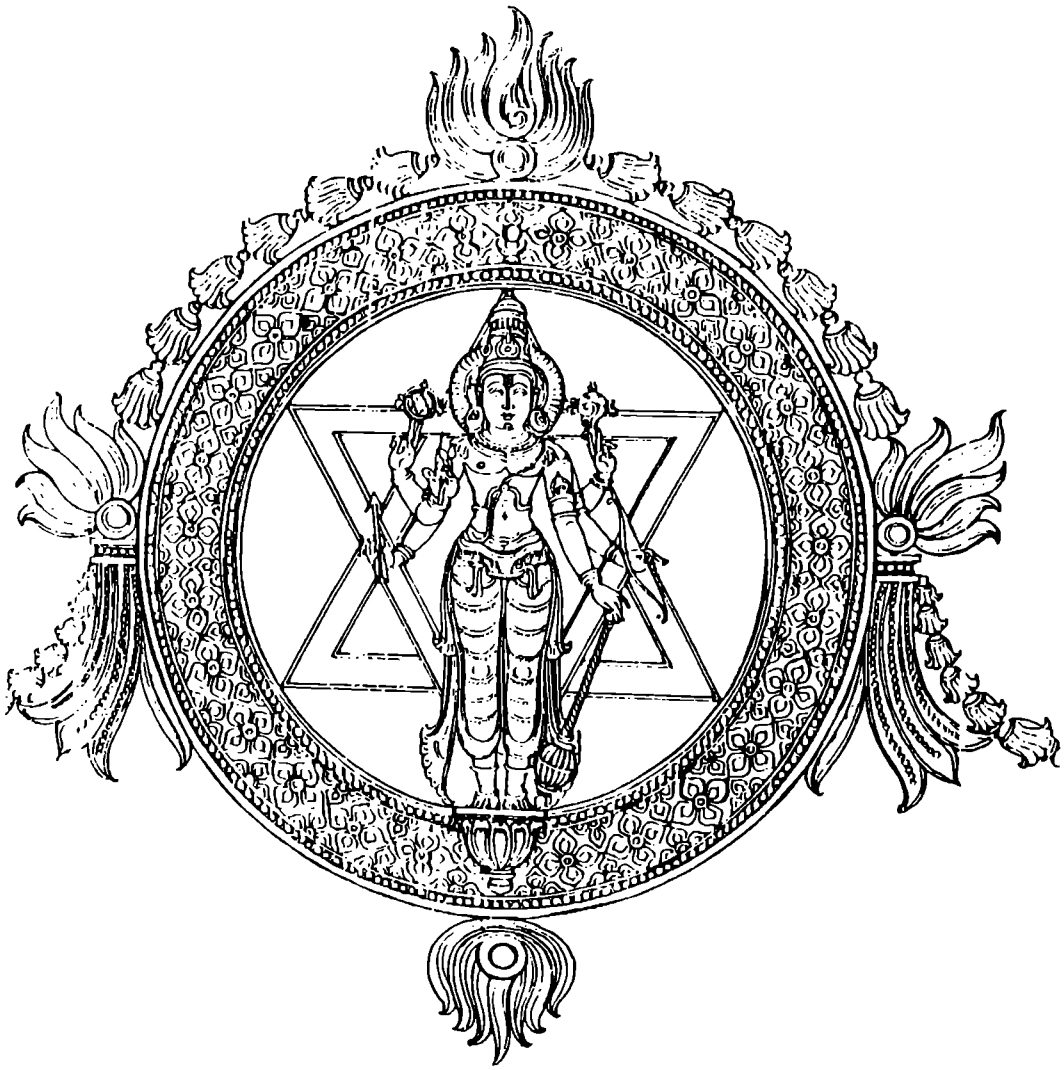
Vishṇu's discus personified (see CHAKRA) and worshipped both as an āyudha-purusha and as an independent deity. In early sculptural respresentations, he carries discus (chakra-dhara), whereas in later icons he is shown standing or moving about within a discus (chakra-madhya-gata). The discus surrounded by a thousand flames (jvālā-mālā) is known as Sahasrāra: brilliant like a thousand suns, (sahasrāditya-saṁkāśa), having a thousand faces (sahasra-vadana), and thousand arms (sahasra-doh) and with a thousand spokes (sahasrāra). (Śesha-saṁhitā, 24,6). The personification of this Sahasrāra is Sudarśana (chakrābhimāni-deva, heti-rāja).

Within the circle is a six-angled figure (shat-kona), representing the shāḍguṇya-yantra which illustrates the vyūha ideology of six divine qualities (see VYŪHA); and it is in front of this that the deity is accommodated.

The deity is visualized as standing within this flaming circle, exceedingly ferocious (atyugra) and bright red in colour (kuṁkuma-prabha); his face is terrible with fangs (daṁshṭrā- karāla-vadana), his eye-brows are horribly twisted (bhrukuṭi- kuṭileskshaṇa); his body is gigantic (mahā-kāya) and his belly prominent (mahodara). He wears karaṇḍa type of crown and red- coloured garments (Īśvara-saṁhitā, 10,20-30). His hair is in flames rising up (jvālā-keśa). He has three eyes, and the eyes are round and red (piṅgāksha). His hair also is red-coloured (piṅga-keśa).

He has two arms (each carrying a discus), four arms (the normal hands carrying discuses and the upper hands conch and mace, Pārameśvara-saṁhitā, 11, 108-113), six hands (lotus, discus and mace in the right hands, conch, ploughshare and bow in the left hands, Purushottama-saṁhitā, 7,40-42), eight hands (discus, ploughshare, goad and lotus on the right side, conch, bow with arrow, noose and mace on the other side, Lakshmī-tantra, 31,45- 60), sixteen or thirty-two hands.

The four-armed figure represents the four vyūhas, when he carries in each of the hands a discus (chakrāyudha-chatushṭaya). The ten-armed figure is known as Kāma-chakra, the eight-armed one Raudra- chakra (red colour, three eyes, matted hair as crown, serpents as ornaments, crescent moon on head, and terrible looking), and the sixteen-armed one Mahā-saudarśana (cf. Vihagendra-saṁhitā, 3,65- 78).



SUDARŚANA
(bronze, from Egmore Museum, Madras)

Śrī-praśna-saṁhitā (30.197 ff) describes Sudarśana as decorated with śrī-vatsa-mark, kaustubha-jewel and vana-mālā; he is an emanation from the Saṁkarshaṇa aspect of Vishṇu ('saṁkarshaṇa- samudbhava'), and thus shares characteristics of Rudra. His eight hands carry noose, goad, ploughshare, discus, conch, mace, bow and arrow. He will firghten even fear ('bhayasyāpi bhayaṅkaram').

According to Vihagendra-saṁhitā (op.cit), Sudarśana-mūrti may be in a standing posture (sthānaka), or in the mobile posture (yānaka) in the ālīdha stance (left foot in front and about to move in that direction) or in the pratyālīḍha stance (right foot in front, and about to move in that direction). Pārameśvara-saṁhitā (11.108-113) prescribes that he must be made as dancing about in anger and inebriation

SUDARŚANA

('krodha-rakteskshaṇam nṛtyantam mada-mattam').

The six-cornered figure which is enclosed within the flaming circle and which in turn encloses the figure of Sudarśana, represents also six chakras: achakra, vichakra, su-chakra, jvālā-chakra, trailokya-rakshā-chakra and asurāntaka-chara.

Sudarśana-mūrti is prescribed to be made in nava-tāla (see TĀLA-MĀNA).

SUDARŚANA-NĀRASIṂHA

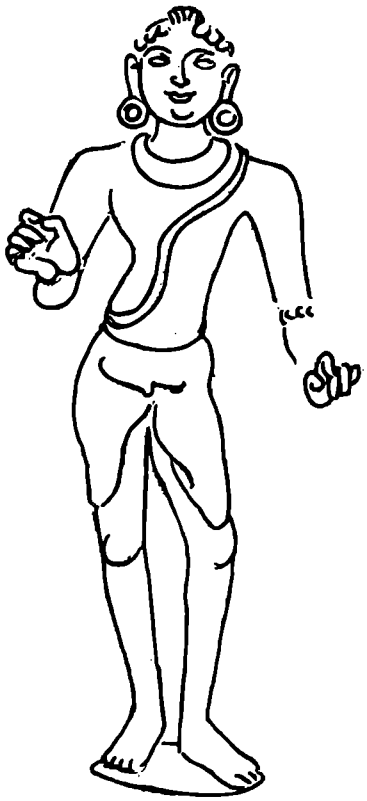
A composite image of Sudarśana on one side of the shaṭ-koṇa (six-cornered figure) within the flaming discus, and that of Narasiṁha on the other side ('pūrvam sudarśanam devam apareṇa nṛsiṁhakam'). While Sudarśana is in the standing posture or in the moving (yānaka) posture, Narasiṁha (see NARASIṂHA) here is always shown in a seated posture (āsīna), often in yoga-paṭṭa (see YOGĀ-NARASIṂHA). Narasiṁha in this case has four, eight or sixteen hands, and carries discus in each of them ('sarveshu chakram bibhṛyāt'). Vihagendra-saṁhitā (4,6), which describes the iconic representation of Sudarśana-Nārasiṁha, also declares that the two forms are really one ('sudarśane nṛsiṁhe vā eka-rūpam ihochyate').

According to Pādma-saṁhitā (31,257-261), Narasiṁha who is to be located in the heart of Sudarśana ('sudarśanasya hṛdaye vishṭitam nṛharim') is like a mountain of crystal (sphaṭikāchala-saṅkāśa'), covered with countless manes, and roaring like the thunder of dissolution ('pralayāmbuda-nirghosha-gambhīra-ghana-dhvani'); his two upper hands carry conch and discus, while the other two arms (normal) are stretched across, elbows resting on the knees; Narasiṁha is seated in the yoga-posture with legs crossed ('vyatyasta-charaṇa-dvandvam āsīnam') and bound by yoga-paṭṭa. He has lotus as his seat ('padma-vishṭare').

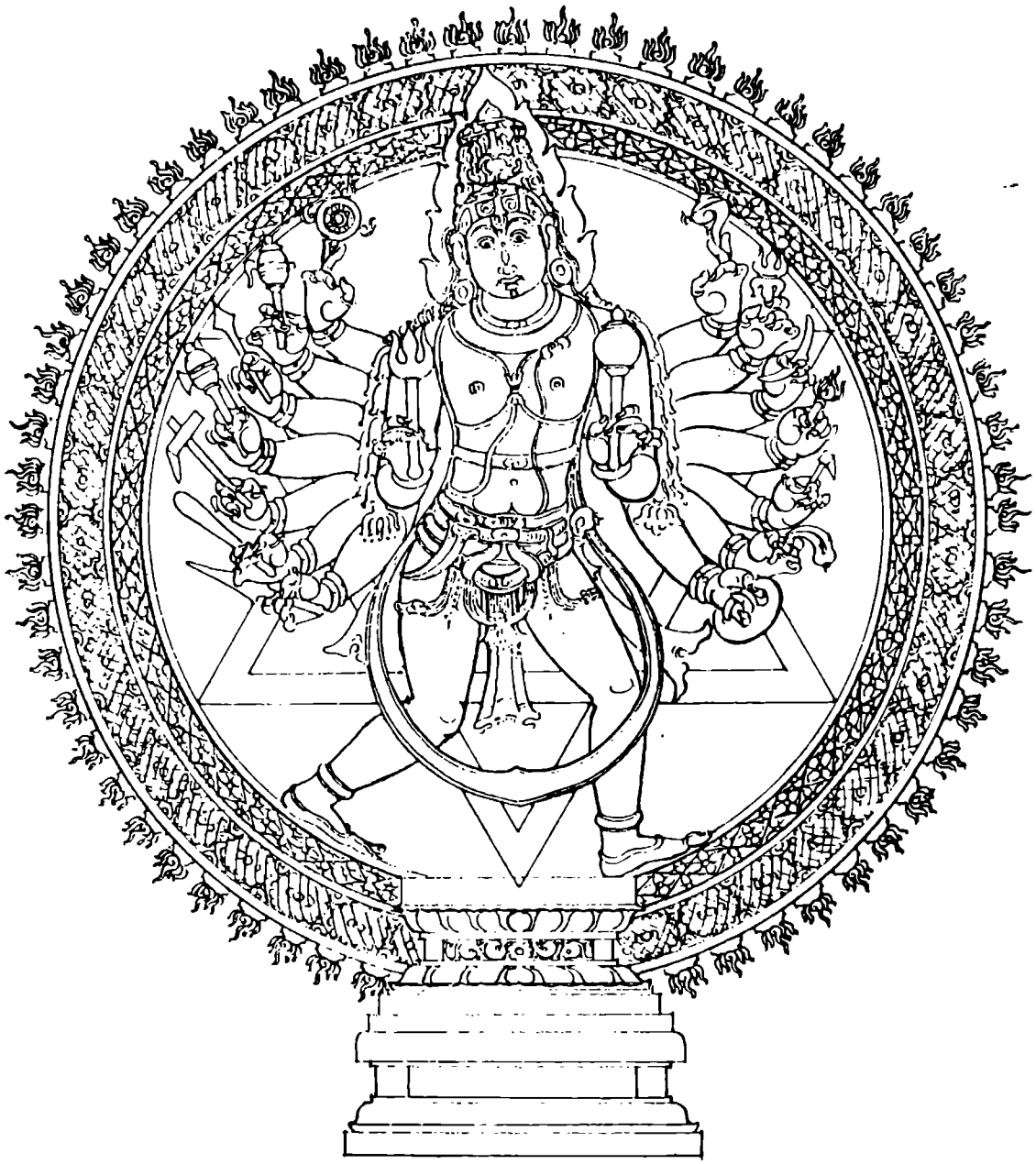
Known also by the Tamil name Aḷahiya-siṅgar ('sundara-siṁha'), this icon is popularly worshipped by the Śrī-vaishṇava devotees in South India. There are fine metallic images of Sudarśana- nārasiṁha in the temples of Kāñchīpuram and Śrī-raṅgam.

SUNDARA-MŪRTI

One of the sixty-three celebrated Śaiva saints of South India (see ARAVATTU-MŪVAR), called nāyanmārs, Sundara-mūrti is counted among the three early samayāchāryas (nāyanārs or aḍiyārs) (the other two being Tiru-jñāna-sambandar and Tirunāvukkarasu or Appar), who composed the Tevārams ('garlands of hymns for God'). His icons are distinguished by the dhoti worn in the orthodox style (pañcha-kaccha-dhṛta-kshaumam) with upper cloth (uttarīya). His right hand carries a bunch of flowers (pushpa-gucchha) and left hand holds a stick (vetra).



SUNDARA-MŪRTI



SUDARŚANA-NĀRASIṀHA
(obverse)

SUDARŚANA-NĀRASIṀHA
(reverse)

SUPĀRŚVA

The seventh among the twenty-two tīrthaṅkaras of the Jaina pantheon (see TĪRTHAṄKARA), he was born in Vārāṇasī as the son of King Supratishṭha and his queen Pṛthvī-devī. He renounced lay life, and performed severe penances. He obtained the kevala- jñāna which made him a Jina, while meditating under the śirīsha tree. His complexion is given as blue and his emblem svastika. His chief disciple (gaṇadhara) was Bala, and the monarch who attended on him was Dharma-vīrya. Like Pārśva-nātha, Supārśva also is represented as sheltered under a serpent, but this serpent has five hoods.

SUBRAHMAṆYA

One of the sixteen forms of Kārtikeya (see KĀRTIKEYA and SHOḌAŚA-MŪRTI), he is of the colour of red lead (sindūrāruṇa- kānti) and decorated by splendid ornaments. He has four hands, with śakti, lotus, cock and the gesture of protection in his hands.

SUMATI-NĀTHA

The fifth tīrthaṅkara of the Jaina pantheon, he was born in Sāketa as the son of the monarch Megha (-prabha or -ratha) and his wife Maṅgalā-devī. He became a kevalin while meditating under the priyaṅgu-tree. He was gold-complexioned, and his emblem is red goose (krauñcha) or curlow (chakravāka). His gaṇadhara was Chāmara, and chowrie-bearer Mitra-vīrya.

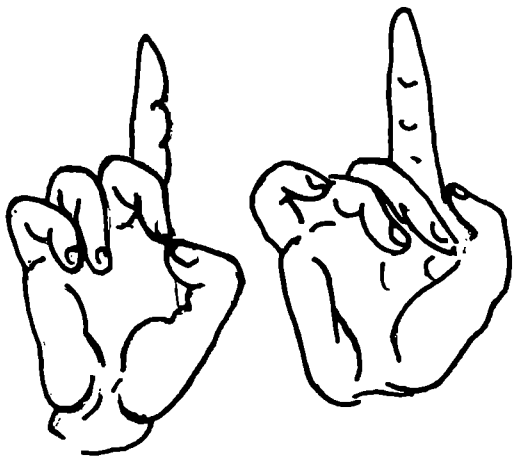
SUMUKHĪ

Also called Ucchhishṭa-chāṇḍālī, she is a tāntrik goddess who is seated on a corpse. She is two-armed, carrying in her hands sword and skull-cup, or alternately lute (vīṇā) and spear. She is draped in red garments and decorated with garlands of guñjā- seeds.

SURĀ

The goddess of liquor who emerged from the milky ocean, while it was being churned by the gods and demons. She has a complexion which is variegated (chitra-varṇā). She surrounds the Mandara mountain like terrible whirlpools of foam ('phenilāvarta- bhīshaṇam'). For demons she appeared black, and others saw her as having the colour of cow's urine or milk. She is eighteen- armed: conch, sword, bow, skull-cup, pestle-club, śakti, mace, bell and the gesture of boon-bestowal are seen in the left hands; discus, fist (mushṭi), arrow, spear, iron club (lohа), shield, tomara, bhindipāla and gesture of protection in the hands on the other side. She is three-eyed and fierce like all-devouring fire (kālāgni). Her long eyes are blood-stained (raktāntāyata- lochanā). She is charming in her appearance.

According to Vimānārchanā-kalpa (paṭala 20), Surā is a goddess that must be installed in the third enclosure of a Vishṇu temple. She faces west, she is red-complexioned and wears red garments. She has black curly hair on her head ('kṛshṇa-kuñchita- mūrdhaja'). She is pretty and shines like lightning ('sumukhī vidyudrūpā'). She carries flowers in her two hands (pushpa- hastā), and has dove for her standard (kapota-dhvajā). A band of flowers adorns her crest (lalāṭopari pushpa-chūḍā). She delights in the sound of lute and flute ('vīṇā-veṇu-ravā').



SŪCHĪ-HASTA

SŪCHĪ-HASTA

Or sūchī-mukha-hasta, it is a gesture (hand-gesture, hasta-mudrā) with the fore-finger of the right hand held upright, and all the other fingers pressed on the palm. It signifies threat (tarjanī), warning, world, plait of hair, creeper, beating of drum, truth, the numbers one and a hundred. Sūchī means a needle.

SŪRYA

The sun-god (see ĀDITYA), celebrated even in the Ṛgvedic hymns, has been worshipped for health and prosperity since very ancient times. The solar myths are numerous, and the cult of the sun-god is widespread. He is the central graha in the nava-graha-maṇḍala (see GRAHA and NAVA-GRAHA). In graha-yajña, his form is round (vartulākāra), but he is also personified in a human form with two hands, holding lotuses and driving in a splendid chariot to which seven horses are yoked. Books on astrology describe him as a brāhmaṇa or kshatriya by caste, born in the Kaliṅga country, red-complexioned and facing east. Saṁjñā is his consort. Among his sons, Manu-vaivasvata and Yama (śrāddha-deva) are celebrated; the daughter Yamī was twin to Yama.

Kūrma-purāṇa (chap.20), which makes Sūrya the son of the prajāpati named Kāśyapa and his wife Aditi (hence Āditya), mentions four wives of Sūrya: Saṁjñā, Rājñi, Prabhā and Chhāyā. From Saṁjñā were born Tvāshṭri, Manu, Yama and Yamunā; from Rājñī, Revanta was born; from Prabhā was born Prabhāta (dawn); and from Chhāyā, Sāvarṇi, Śani and Tapatī. Chhāyā (meaning 'shadow') was the counterpart of Saṁjñā. When Saṁjñā had assumed the form of a horse (Rājñī), Revanta was born. Sūrya's charioteer is Aruṇa (see ARUṆA) who is lame or legless, and attendants are Daṇḍi (Yama) and Piṅgala (Agni).

The dhyāna-śloka of Sūrya describes him as red-complexioned (rakta-varṇa), and youthful; his head is round (vartulākāra- mastaka); and he

SŪRYA
(from Chidambaram temple)

SŪRYA

is two-armed, each of the hands holding a red lotus. His ears are adorned by golden ear-rings ('karṇayos svarṇa-kuṇḍalam'); and he is bedecked with all ornaments. There is karaṇḍa-mukuṭa on his head, which has an effulgent halo round it (kānti-maṇḍala).

Sometimes, he is three-faced, eight-armed and accompanied by two consorts, Ushā (on his left) and Pratyūshā (on his right). The three faces represent the three sandhyās. Ushā ('dawn') is two-eyed and two-armed. She is dark-complexioned (śyāmā) and wears on her head karaṇḍa-type of crown. She carries blue lotus in her right hand, the left arm hanging down gracefully on the side. Pratyūshā, also called Gaurī, is three-eyed and two-armed. She is red-complexioned, and wears on her head kirīṭa-type of crown. She carries red lotus in her right hand, the left arm dangling down. She wears red garlands. Both the goddesses are youthful and bedecked with all ornaments.

SŪRYA
(after an icon in Koṇārka)

According to Viśvakarma-śilpa, Sūrya has straight hair on his head (akuñchita-sukeśa) and an areole of light surrounds his head (prabhā-maṇḍala-maṇḍita); his ornaments are made of gold and pearls (maṇi-ratna-bhūshita). He holds a red lotus in each of his two hands; an armour covers his chest (kañchuka-charma-vakshasa). On his right is Nishkumbhā and on his left Rājñī. In front of him are his commanders or door-keepers, Daṇḍa and Piṅgala, two- armed, carrying a sword in one of the hands.

Bhavishya-purāṇa prescribes that the celestial physicians, the Aśvins, must also be shown in the vicinity of Sūrya.

Aṁśumadbhedāgama and Suprabheda prescribe that the hands of Sūrya must be so held that the fists holding the lotuses will reach the level of his shoulders. On the head, the karaṇḍa-mukuṭa type of crown must be placed. The ear-rings are to be made of rubies. He has necklaces and the sacrificial chord. His garment is one piece. The lotus-seat (padma-pīṭha) on which he stands in sama-pāda-sthānaka must be located in a hexagonal-shaped chariot with only one wheel.

The seven horses which draw the Sun's chariot are identified with the seven Vedic metres: Gāyatrī, Bṛhatī, Ushṇik, Jagatī, Trishṭubh, Anushṭubh and Paṅkti: The chariot is said to measure nine thousand yojanās in length. It has a single wheel, which is the principle of time; its one revolution is regarded as a year.

In the temple dedicated to Sūrya, it is prescribed that Soma should be represented on

the eastern side, Bhauma on the south- east, Bṛhaspati on the south, Rāhu on the south-west, Śukra on the west, Ketu on the north-west, Budha on the north and Śani on the north-east. The guardians of the four gateways of the temple are Dharma and Artha, Garuḍa and Yama, Kubera and Vināyaka, and Raivata (or Revanta, son of Sūrya) and Diṇḍi.

There is an intimate association between Sūrya and lotus. In most iconic representations, Sūrya stands upon a lotus, carries lotuses in his hands, and has a lotus wreath adorning his head.

SŪRYA-NĀRĀYAṆA

In the Vedic context, the sun-god is said to be pervaded by Vishṇu, as Trivikrama, and from very early times, Vishṇu is invoked in the solar orb (sūrya-maṇḍala-madhya-varti) as for instance in the sandhyā ritual, where Gāyatrī - Sāvitrī is recited (see GĀYATRĪ). Called Nārāyaṇa, he is visualized as seated upon a lotus-seat (sarasijāsana), and as golden coloured (hiraṇmaya-vapuh). He wears a kirīṭa on his head, armlets and ear-rings in the form of makaras (see MAKARA-KUṆḌALA). Conch and discus are seen in his hands.

SŪRYA-HASTĀ

One of four goddesses of light in the Vajrayāna pantheon, she is white in complexion and has two hands, in both of which she carries the solar orbit (sūrya-maṇḍala-dharā). The other three goddesses in this group are Dīpā (light lit on earth), Ratnolkā (bejewelled torch) and Taḍitkarā (lightning).

SṚSHṬI-KĀNTA-LOKEŚVARA

One of the 108 forms of Avalokiteśvara (see AVALOKITA), he stands upon a lotus, with several gods emanating from his body. He has two hands, the right one assuming the gesture of boon-bestowal and the left one held near his navel. On his crest is the image of the dhyānibuddha Amitābha (see AMITĀBHA).

SṚSHṬI-GAṆAPATI

One of the several forms of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), this form is associated with creation: Gaṇapati is viewed here as a competent creator (sṛshṭi-daksha). He rides upon a rat (ākhu-vāhana), and has four hands, carrying in them noose, goad, his own tusk and mango fruit. His complexion is red (śoṇa).

SṚSHṬI-ŚAYANA

A form of the reclining Vishṇu (see ŚAYANA-MŪRTI), he is here surrounded by Lakshmī, Bhū-devī, Brahmā, the five weapon-deities, Sun, Moon, Indra, celestial nymphs, the seven sages, the eight vasus, the eleven rudras, kinnaras and all the gods. The devotees like Sanaka and Nārada, Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya are also there. The two demons who fought with Vishṇu, Madhu and Kaiṭabha, are also to be seen. Vishṇu's eyes are like lotus (padmekshaṇa), and his body dark-coloured (śyāma-chhavi). The countenance exhibits the rājasa inclination (necessary for creative activity). The soles of the feet are red (rakta-pādānta).

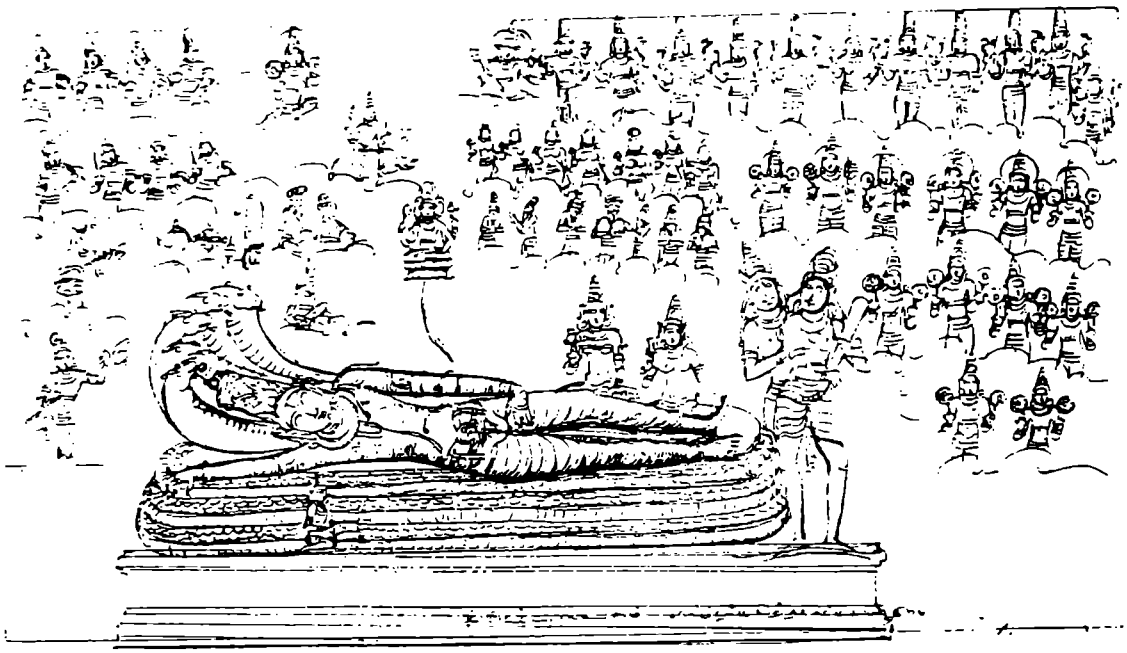
If the above is the superior variety of this form, the midling variety is distinguished by the absence of the two demons (Madhu and Kaiṭabha), and the inferior variety by the absence also of the two devotees (Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya).

SENĀNĪ

It is a form of Kārtikeya (see KĀRTIKEYA and SHOḌAŚA-MŪRTI), having six faces, twelve eyes and twelve arms. The gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, sword, discus, goad, śakti, spear, vajra, noose, lotus, cudgel and mace are seen in his hands. He is imagined here to be the commander of the army of gods which battled against the demon Tāraka.

SENĀPATI

A variant form of Senānī, a form of Kārtikeya (see KĀRTIKEYA), where he is accompanied by



SRSHTI-ŚAYANA

his consort, who is seated on his left lap embracing him. He is brilliant like the sun, and has six heads, twelve eyes and twelve hands, as in the Senānī form. He is seen embracing the goddess placing one of his hands on the left side on her breasts ('uttuṅgoru-stanāgre vihita-kara-talam'). The other hands carry the gesture of protection, sword, spear, dart, śakti, shield, bow, mace, cock, vajra and lotus. The goddess, Deva-senā, who is two-armed carries a lotus in one of her hands, the other hand going round the god. The god here is red- complexioned. (Kumāra-tantra)

According to Śrī-tattva-nidhi, he is one-faced and wears red garments and red unguents (raktāṅgarāgāṁśuka), and his four hands carry conch, discus and gestures of protection and boon- bestowal. He is dark-complexioned and wears white sacrificial chord. He has a charming face and is accompanied by Deva-senā.

SOMĀSKANDA

One of the twenty-five sportive forms (see LĪLĀ-MŪRTI) of Śiva (see ŚIVA), this is popularly seen in most of the big Śiva temples. The images of Śiva, Gaurī and their child Skanda are mounted on the same seat, and Skanda is shown as standing in between Śiva and Gauri, who are seated. Usually, the images are cast in metal, and are large-sized.

Śiva is four-armed, splendidly ornamented, and in complexion he resembles the rising sun (udyad-bhānu-nibha); another account likens his body-colour to that of coral (maṇi-vidrumābha). His matted hair is done up as a crown, in which crescent moon and Gaṅgā are seen. He is three-eyed. He wears patra-kuṇḍala in his left ear, and makara-kuṇḍala in his right. He wears a sacrificial chord. His normal hands show the gestures of boon-bestowal and protection, and

the upper hands carry ṭaṅka and antelope. Another account makes him hold a stick (vetra) in his normal right hand. He sits with his left leg bent and kept over the seat ('śayānam vāma-pādakam'), and his right leg stretched down (laṁbitam dakshiṇam pādam').

Gaurī is seated on his left side; two-armed, her right hand carries a blue lotus while the left hand assumes the gesture of boon-bestowal. She is dark-complexioned. She sits with her right leg bent and kept over the seat and her left leg stretched down.

Both of them have pleasant countenances, and they sit in relaxed posture (sukhāsana). In between them stands Skanda (see SKANDA) as a child, well-ornamented, single-faced and two-armed. He holds a flower in each of his hands. He is blue-complexioned.

SOMĀSKANDA

SAUBHĀGYA-BHUVANEŚVARĪ

A form of Devī, red-complexioned, three-eyed, and decorated with a bejewelled crown, to which crescent moon is stuck. She has a smile on her countenance. She has two hands in one of which she carries a bejewelled bowl filled with pearls ('maṇi-pūṃa-ratna- chashakam') and in the other red lotus. She is pacific in her aspect (saumyā). Under her right foot is a pot filled with jewels ('ratna-nidhi-stha-savya-charaṇam') (cf. Śāradā-tilaka).

SAUBHĀGYA-LAKSHMĪ

Four-armed, this form of Lakshmī (see LAKSHMI) is clad in white silken garments, and flanked by two elephants worshipping her. She is seated on a lotus, and her normal hands assume the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, and each of the two upper hands holds a lotus.

SAUBHĀGYA-VĀGĪŚVARĪ

A form of Sarasvatī (see SARASVATĪ), fair-complexioned, two-armed and seated on white lotus (sannishaṇṇā sitābje): On her head shines crescent moon; she holds in her right hand a quil (kaṇṭha, lekhinī), and in her left a book. She has large breasts.

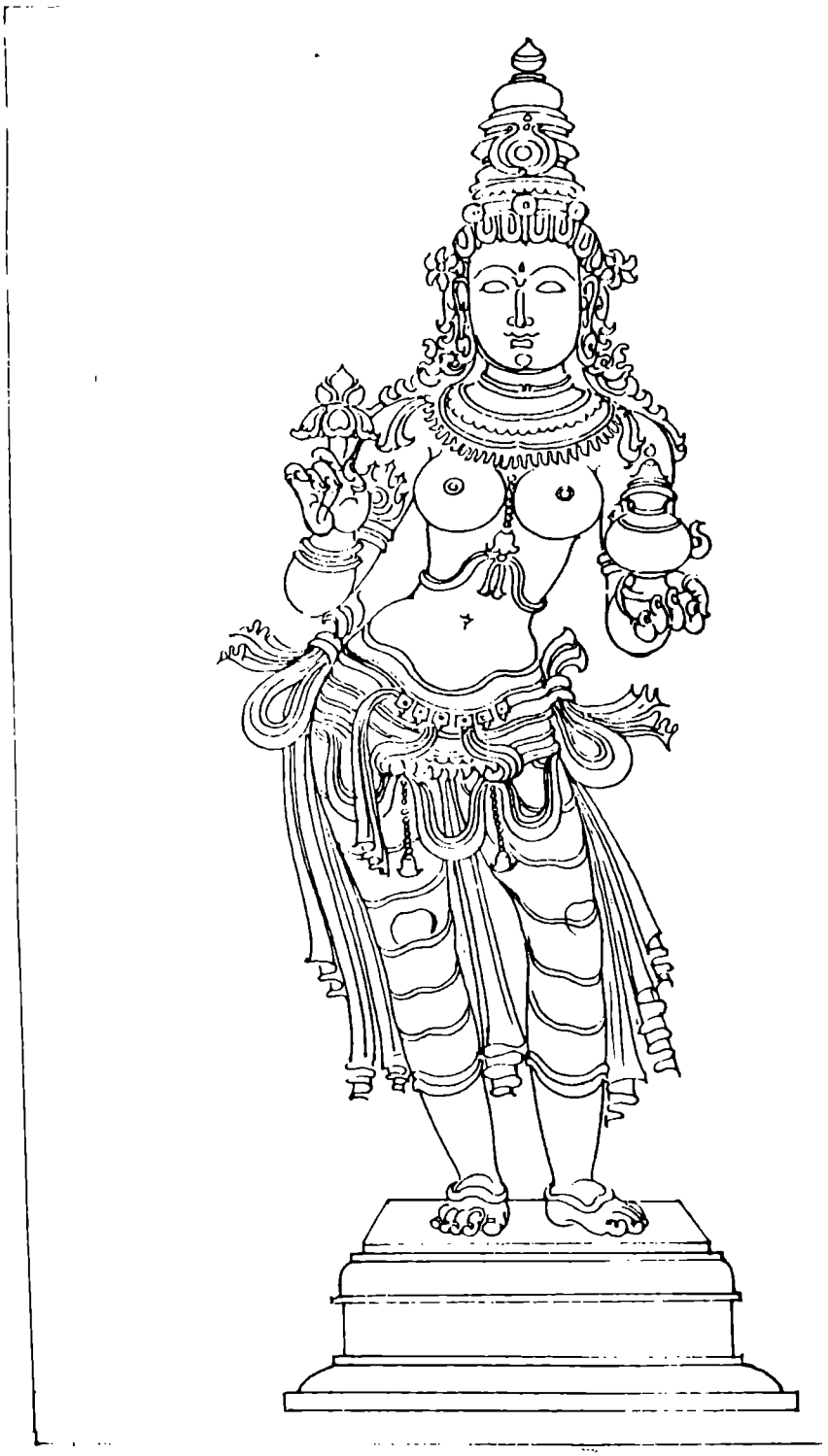
SAURABHEYA-SUBRAHMAṆYA

One of the several forms of Kārtikeya (see KĀRTIKEYA), the god here is four-faced, eight-eyed, and eight-armed. His complexion is that of red lotus (padma-pushpa-nibha or pāṭala-varṇa). He stands upon a lotus with his right leg firmly placed and left leg slightly bent. His normal hands assume the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal; and the other hands carry śakti, blue lotus, and flower-arrow (on the right side), vajra, sugar-cane stalk as bow and spear (on the left side).

SKANDA

One of the four ancient and popular forms of Subrahmaṇya (see KĀRTIKEYA), it is distinguished by having a single face and being baby-like (the other three forms, Kumāra, Viśākha and Guha have six faces and have peacock as mount). The very day Kārtikeya was born (viz. the pratipat), he was called Skanda; he grew six heads on the second and third days, and was called Kumāra; the fourth day saw all his limbs well developed, and he was called Guha; on the sixth day, he set out for the battle with the demons, and won his victories. During these six

SKANDA



SAUBHĀGYA-BHUVANEŚVARĪ
(from Dhārāśuram temple)

days, Agni is said to have assumed a goat's head and played with him; the child thus became known as Naigameya.

Skanda is shown as a blue-complexioned child, standing in between his parents Śiva (to his right) and Gaurī (to his left), in the Somāskanda form of Śiva (see SOMĀSKANDA). He has a single head, two eyes and two hands. In each of his hands a lotus-bud (taralābja) is held. He is bedecked with all ornaments, and his mode of standing is that of a child. His complexion is that of lotus.

Also known as Velāyudha (or Paḷaniyāṇḍar) in Śrī-tattva-nidhi, he holds in his right hand a long stick (daṇḍa), and his left hand rests on his waist in the kaṭyavalambita posture. He wears a narrow strip of cloth covering his penis (kaṭi-baddha-dāma-kaupīna). His head is surrounded by an aerole (prabhā-maṇḍala). On his head is a karaṇḍa-makuṭa, decorated with flowers.

Another dhyāna-śloka makes him four-armed, but one faced. He is ashy-grey in complexion (dhūmra-varṇa), and in his hands are seen cock, vajra and gestures of protection and boon-bestowal.

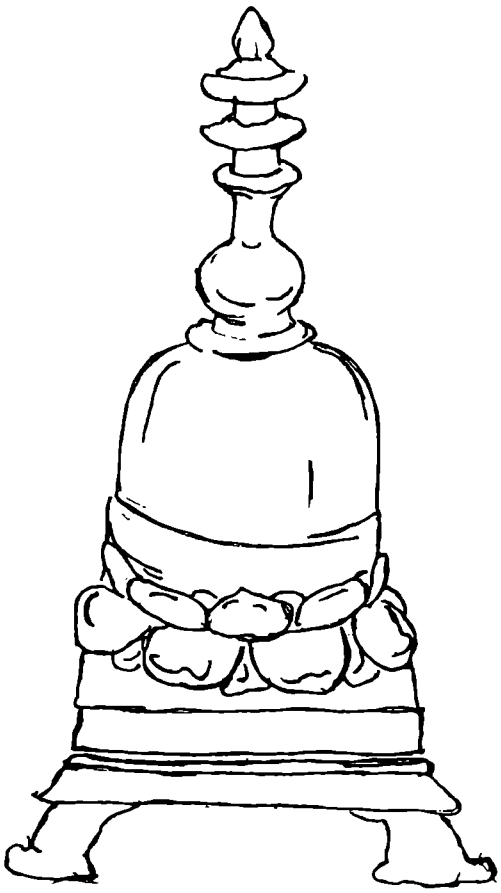
SKANDA-DURGĀ

One of the nine forms of Durgā (see DURGĀ), she is visualized as the mother of Skanda (skanda-mātā). She is seated upon a throne (simhāsana-gatā), and has but two hands, in each of which she carries a lotus ('padmāñchita-karadvayā')

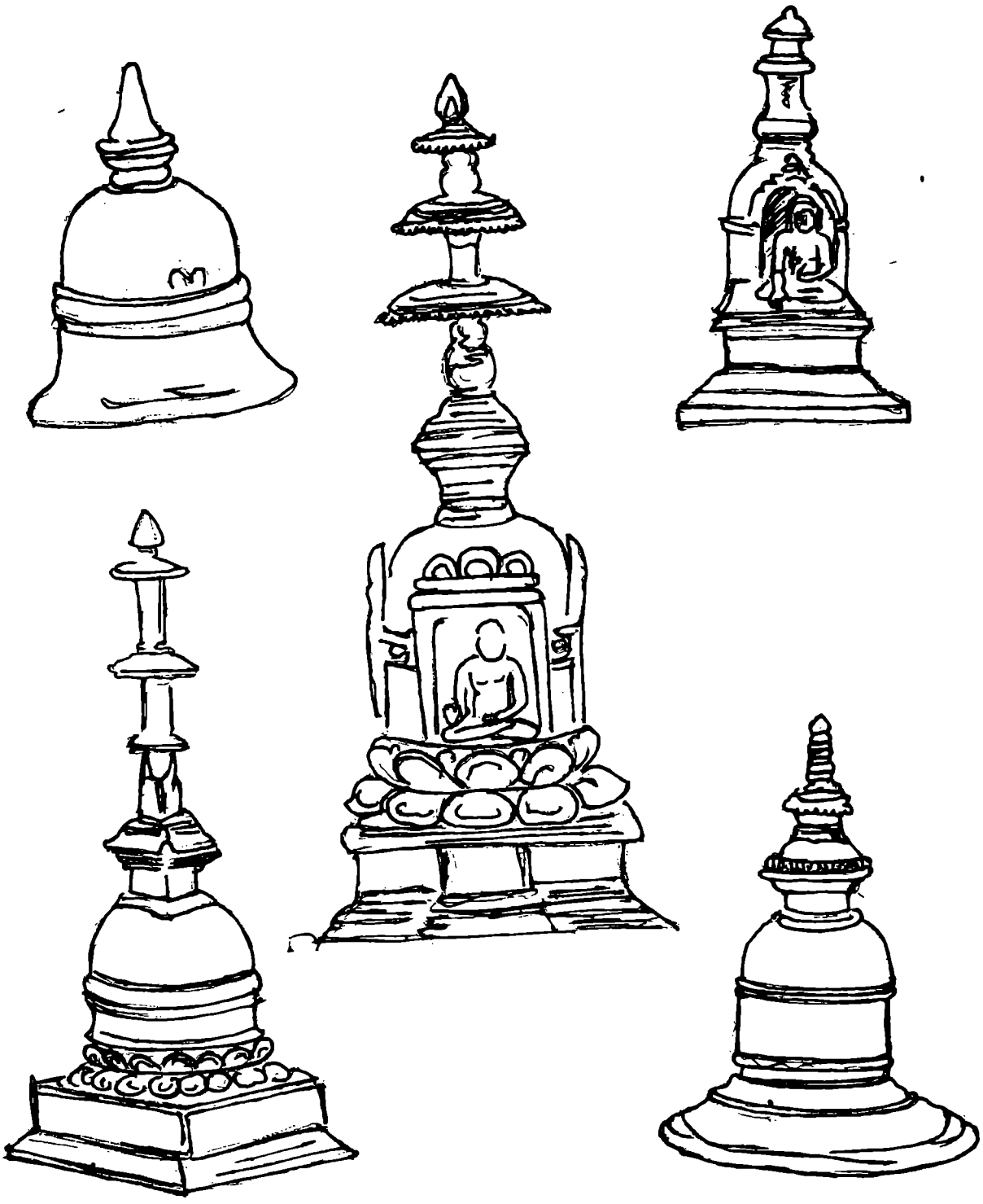
STŪPA

The stūpa is a monumental mound erected originally over the remains of the Buddha. Architecturally, it developed from the Vedic agnidhriya (see for details, author's Evolution of Mandala in Temple Architecture, Kalpatharu Research Academy, Bangalore, 1990). If the stūpa is not actually a burial mound, it was meant to enshrine body relics (śārīrika) or personal belongings (pāribhogika) of worshipful saints like the Buddha or his disciples Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. The structure consisted of a large solid dome (aṇḍa or garbha) in which the relics were hidden, a square terrace (medhi) surrounded by an ambulatory passage (pradakshiṇā-patha) around the dome, and a cubical platform above the dome (harmikā), from which metal shaft (yashṭi) rises, surrounded by railings (vedikā).

However, the stūpa itself became an object of worship, and the custom of fashioning votive-stūpas and miniature stūpas in stone or metal



STŪPA
(votive stūpa, bronze, Orissa)



VOTIVE STŪPAS

came into vogue. The stūpa was visualized as a symbol of the entire universe, and on each of its four sides, a dhyāni- buddha was represented. The dhātu or the essence contained within the dome (hence called dhātu-garbha) was taken to house the principal dhyāni-buddha, Vairochana (see DHYĀNI-BUDDHA and VAIROCHANA); and the other dhyāni-buddhas guarding the stūpa in the four cardinal directions were Ratna-sambhava (south), Amitābha (west), Amogha-siddhi (north) and Akshobhya (east).

The form of a stūpa meant for worship was highly and elaborately stylized, and richly decorated.

STHĀNAKA-MŪRTI

Deity in a standing posture (see BIMBA, BERA, PRATIMĀ). The posture can be either sama-pāda-sthānaka, when the two feet are drawn close together and the deity stands perfectly erect, with no bends whatsoever, or vishama-pāda-sthānaka, where only one of the legs is straight, the foot resting firmly on the ground, and the other leg is slightly bent and placed at a distance from the former foot.

STHIRA-CHAKRA

The position of discus held in one of the upper hands of Vishṇu (usually the right) is called 'sthira' when the flat portion of the discus faces the devotee. When however, the rim of the discus partly or wholly faces the devotee, it is called 'prayoga-chakra' (the discus being ready to be used, viz. hurled against the enemy).

SRUK, SRUVA

Sacrificial ladles, held in the hands of deities like Brahmā.

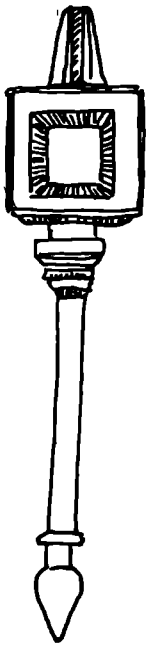
SVAPNA-VĀRĀHĪ

Dark in colour, like the mountain of collyrium (nīlāñjana-giri- śyāmā) three-eyed and sow-faced, this goddess has crescent moon on her head; she holds in her hands sword, goad, shield and noose. She rides on a blue horse.

STHIRA-CHAKRA and PRAYOGA-CHAKRA

VISHṆU WITH PRAYOGA-CHAKRA
(stone-relief from Dharmarāja-ratha, Māmallapuram)

There are some variant forms of this goddess. In one of them she can assume any form at will (kāma-rūpa), in another she carries the entire earth on her tusks ('damshṭrāgrastha-vasundharā'), and holds in her two hands goad and noose, or sword and shield. She is visualized as ready to strike down the wicked folk ('dushṭa-saṁharaṇodyukta'). And she is called Svapna-vārāhī, because she is invoked to make her appearance in the devotee's dream ('ehy ehi vārāhī aghore svapne').



SRUK

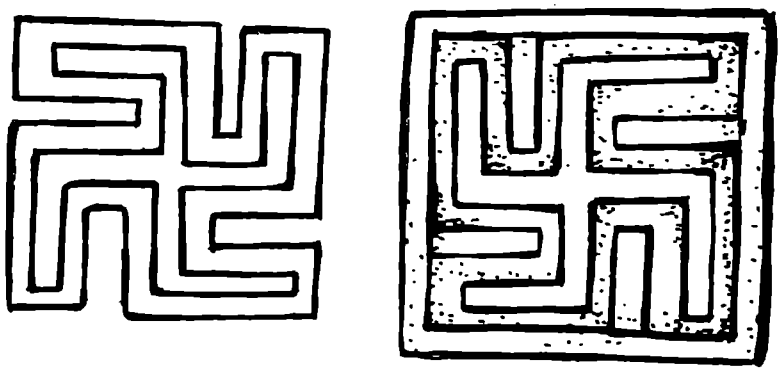
SRUVA

SVAPNEŚVARĪ

A tāntrik goddess, she is white-complexioned and seated on a golden throne. She carries in two of her four hands the gestures of boon-bestowal and protection; each of the other two hands holds a lotus (S.Srikantha-Sastri, op.cit.p.24).

SVARṆĀKARSHAṆA-BHAIRAVA

A form of Bhairava (see BHAIRAVA), who is invoked to relieve poverty (dāridryāpahāra) and accomplish the desired ends (saṁkalpa-siddhi). This form of Bhairava is said to reside in trading centres (āpaṇastha) and attract gold (viz.wealth). He is also said to dwell with Kubera, the lord of treasures (kubera-nilaya). Resplendent like a million suns (koṭi-sūrya-pratīkāśa), three- eyed and four armed, he is surrounded by Siddhas and Vidyādharas who attend on him. He is bedecked with golden ornaments (svarṇābharaṇa-bhūshita). Crescent moon adorns his head, on which matted hair is tied into a bunch (śaśi-khaṇḍa-jaṭā-jūṭa). He shows with his normal hands gestures of protec-



SVASTIKA
(from Harappa)

tion and boon-bestowal, and carries in the two-upper hands noose and goad.

Another dhyāna-śloka describes him as yellow-complexioned, clad in yellow-garments, three-eyed and happily inebriated ('madonmattam sadānandam'). He carries in his right hands a bejewelled bowl of inexhaustible gold (akshaya-pātra) and spear, while his left hands hold lance (tomara) and flywhisk (chāmara).

SVASTIKA

A mystical and popular design of very ancient origin, it is found even in the remains of the Indus valley civilization. Meaning 'auspicious', 'securing welfare' and 'bringing about prosperity', it is essentially a symbol of Sun as Vishṇu's discus. It takes the form of a Greek cross (the two lines being of equal length), with the tips of the lines suggesting a circle (vṛtta-maṇḍala) or square (chaturasra-maṇḍala). The arms emanating from these four tips move in the same direction to form a circle or a square. The four tips indicate the four cardinal directions, and the area covered by them represents the universe. The arms moving (bhramaṇa) symbolize the solar energy (viz. Vishṇu's dominion) that is all-encompassing.

The Svastika mark is painted on sacred pots or drawn (with powdered rice grains) on consecrated ground to indicate the presence of the deity or to secure good fortune. It is also the emblem of the seventh tīrthaṅkara, Supārśva, of the Jaina pantheon. Svastika is the name of an architectural variety, of a posture and of a seat offered to the deity during worship.

SVAYAṀBHU-NĀTHA-BHAIRAVA

A variety of Bhairava (see BHAIRAVA), verily Śiva himself, who is described as engaged in his begging rounds in various forms ('yaś charati bhaikshyam aneka rūpam'). He has four hands, carrying in them spear (śūla), lute (vīṇā), serpent (nāga) and skull-cup (śirah-kapāla) (cf. Mūrti-dhyānam, Tanjore, p.148)

SVĀYAṀBHUVA-LIṄGA

According to Suprabheda (paṭala 33), three types of liṅga (see LIṄGA) are best (uttamottama), among which 'Svāyaṁbhuva' is one (the other two being 'divya', or worshipped by major gods like Brahmā and Vishṇu, and 'pūrva' or extremely ancient). This type refers to the liṅgas that have manifested themselves, of their own accord, and not carved or made by man (mānusha), god (daivata), sage (ārsha) or demon (āsura).

SVĀHĀ

The expression with which all offerings to Agni are made. Svāhā is regarded as Agni's consort. She is also personified. Vimānārchanā-kalpa (paṭala 20) prescribes that she must be installed in the southern quarter of the third enclosure of a Vishṇu temple. She is red-complexioned (rukmābhā) and clad in red garments. She carries flowers in her two hands. She has black curly hair on her head. She faces north.

STHAUṆA-NARASIṀHA

One of the two major forms of Narasiṁha (the other being giri-ja), Sthauṇa-narasiṁha is visualized as emerging out of a stone pillar (sthāṇu); he is described as fierce, having four or sixteen arms, and standing in the ālīḍha posture. He is white in complexion, but wears red garments. When he is four-armed, his normal right hand shows gesture of protection and the corresponding left hand is placed upon his thigh (ūru-pratishṭhita-vāma- hasta). The two upper hands carry conch and discus. His head is surrounded by thick manes, which descend on his shoulders (sa- saṭā-skandha). He has terrible tusks (tīkshṇa-daṁshṭra), and his appearance is frightening (bhayānaka). His left leg is folded and stretched across the seat, while his right leg hangs down.

Vaikhānasāgama, which provides sixteen arms for him prescribes that the demon Hiraṇya-

kaśipu must be shown as held captive upon the god's left thigh; the arms of the god are engaged in securing the demon's body, and ripping open his belly, drawing out the entrails and wearing them as garlands round his own neck. The god stands here in the three-bend posture.

HAṀSA

A mythical bird, inhabiting the Mānasa lake in the Himālayan heights, it is regarded as a celestial being, symbolizing purity, freedom, wisdom, and salvation. In the Vedas, it is the vehicle for the divine physicians, the Aśvins (see AŚVINS) and is capable of separating the Soma juice from water, when the two fluids are mixed up. In the purāṇic period, it became the mount for Brahmā (see BRAHMĀ), Sarasvatī (see SARASVATI), and Brahmāṇī (see SAPTA-MĀTṚKĀ).

Haṁsa was one of the incarnations of Vishṇu in the Kṛta-age, and this is when he instructed sages like Sanaka (cf. Bhāgavata, skandha 11).

The expression is also employed to refer to the universal spirit or individual soul. In the 'ajapājapa' articulation, the soul is constantly engaged in articulating 'haṁ' when breathing

STHAUṆA-NARASIṀHA
(relief on a pillar in Tirumala temple)

STHAUṆA-NARASIṀHA
(wood-carving, Krshna temple, Udipi)

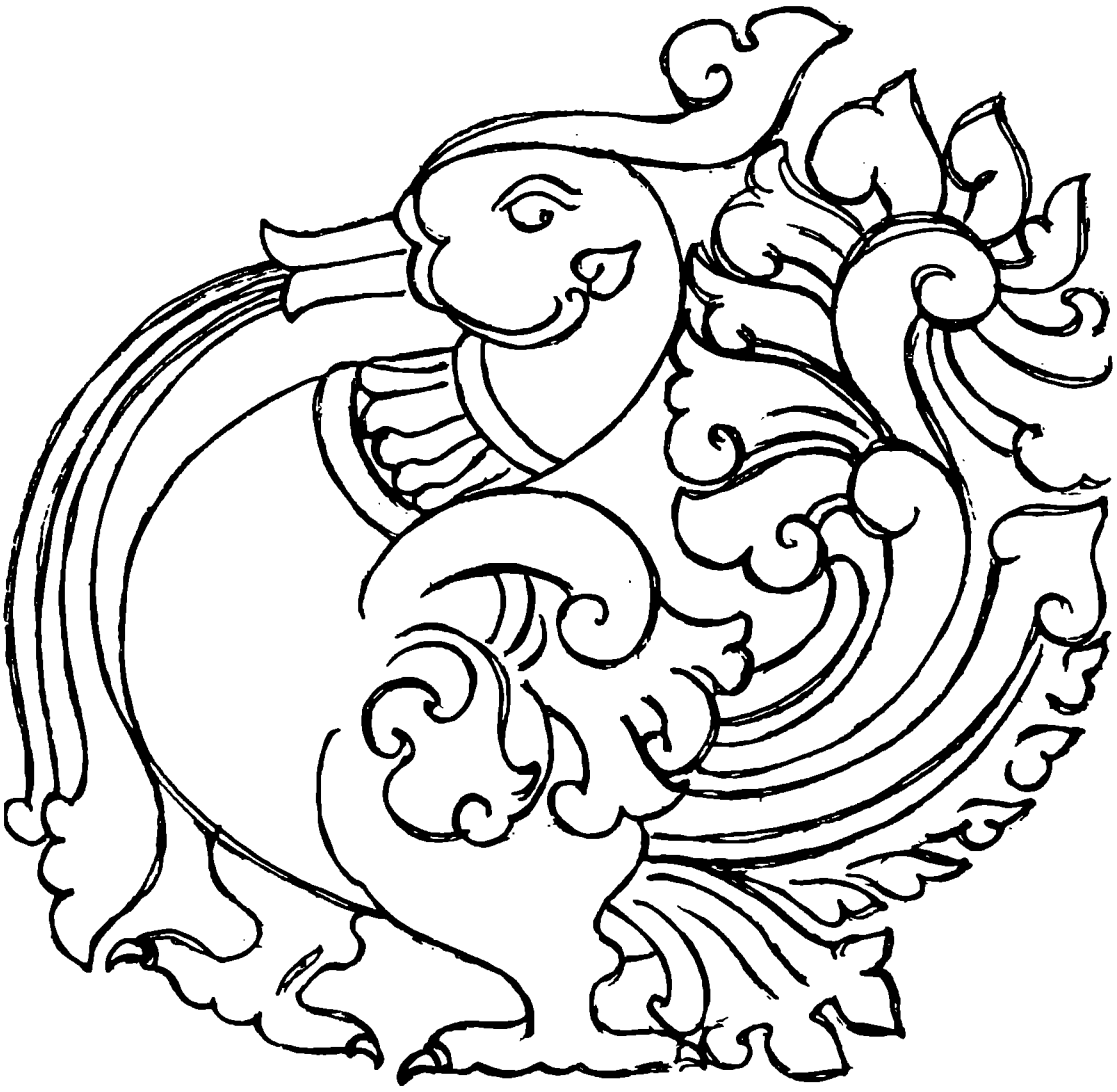
HAMSA

out and 'sa' when breathing in ('haṁkāreṇa bahir yāti sa-kāreṇa viśet punah'). Haṁsa also refers to the sun-god, Śiva and Manmatha.

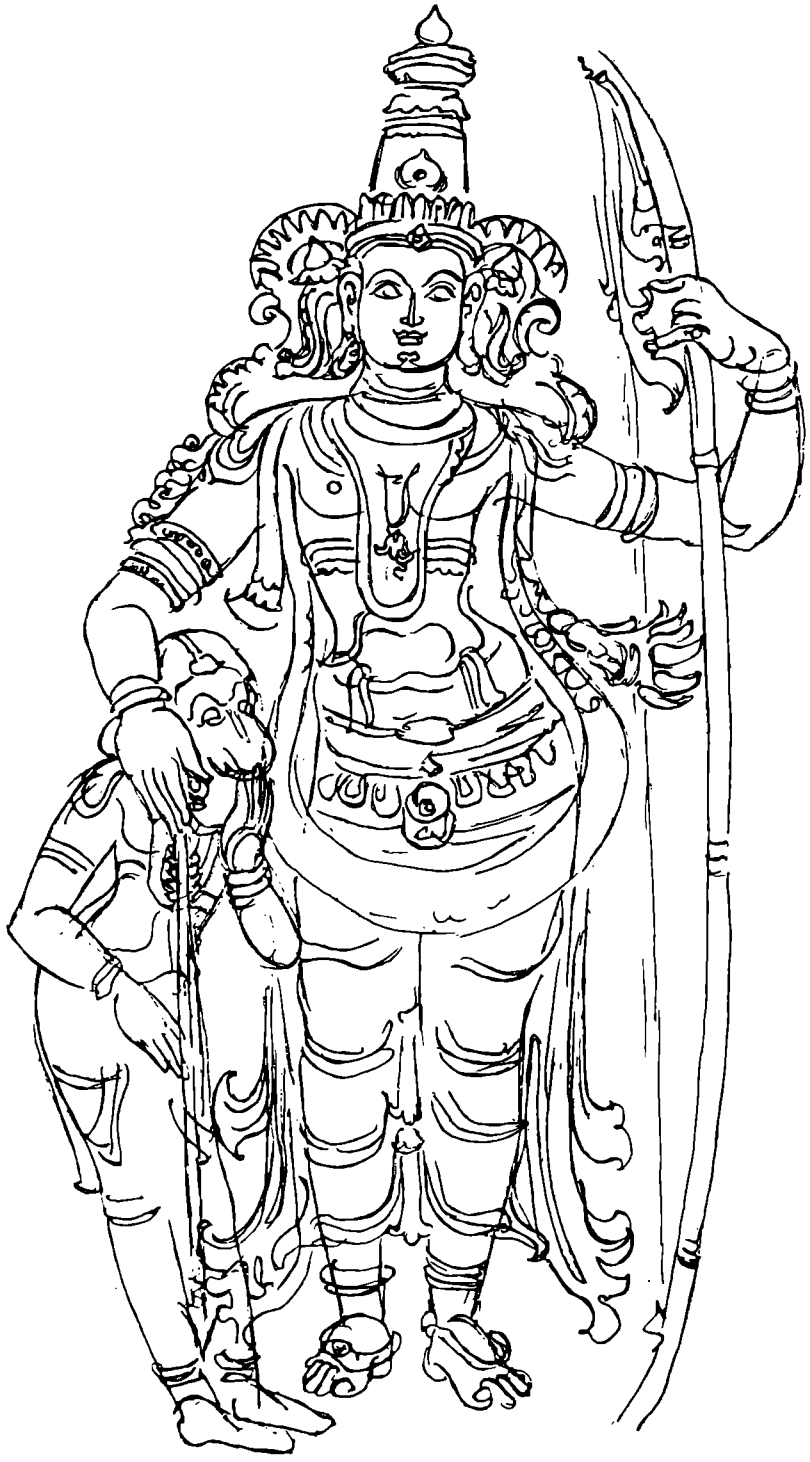
As an incarnation of Vishṇu, Haṁsa is brilliant white in colour, and seated with his consort (viz. Lakshmī) upon the lunar disc ('priyā-sahitam āsthitam indu-biṁbe'). He sprinkles nectar alrouhd from the lunar disc ('indu-biṁbāt saṁsichyamānam amṛtena'). He is four-armed. The hands on the right side carry discus and sun, while the hands on the other side hold conch and moon.

HANUMĀN

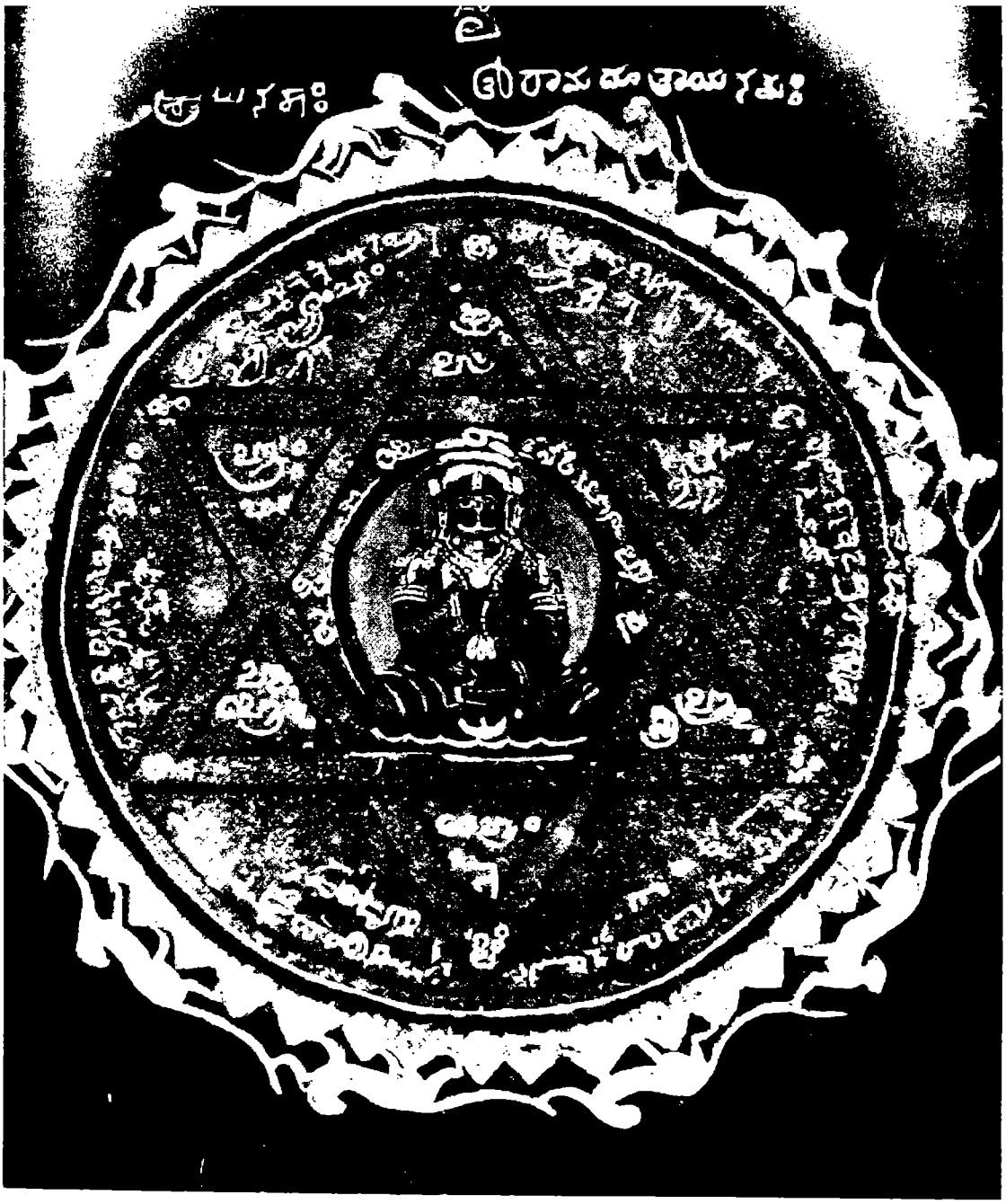
A very popular god, among the rural as well urban folk, he is worshipped for various benefits: health, wealth, hapiness, fulfilment of desires, success and magical accomplishments. There



HAṀSA



RĀMA and HANUMĀN
(from Śrī-Vaikuṇṭham temple)



YANTRODDHĀRAKA-HANUMĀN
(rock sculpture from Rāma temple, Hampi)

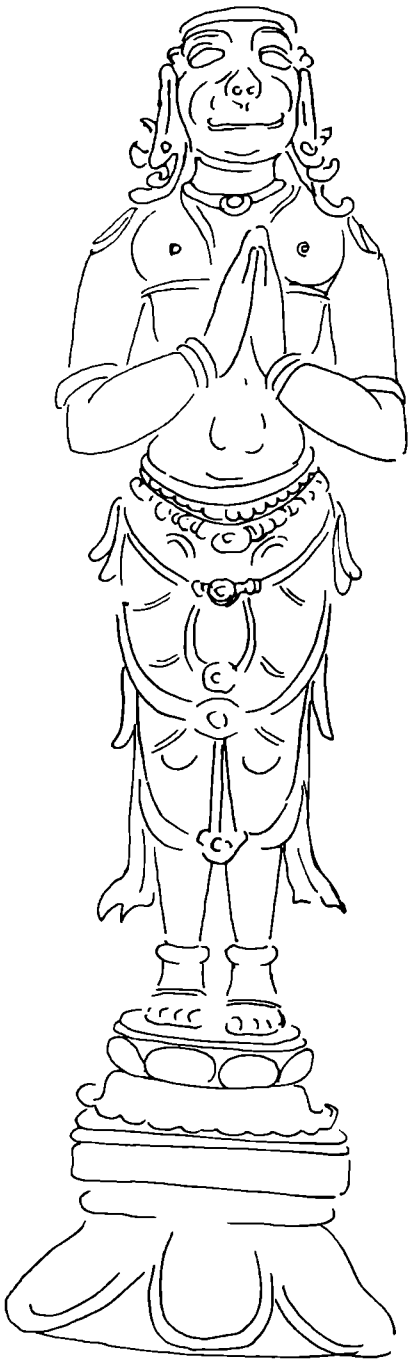
is not a village in India which does not have a shrine to Hanumān, and there is not a Hindu who does not worship him. Although his celebrity rests on the help he rendered to Rāma (see RĀMA) and on his being a devotee of Rāma, he is frequently worshipped as an independent deity. Of course, all shrines to Rāma have invariably a place for Hanumān, right in the sanctum. In fact, Rāma is generally represented with his wife Sītā on his left side, his brother Lakshmaṇa to his right and his devotee Hanumān in front of him (with hands folded in an attitude of supplication).

Hanumān ('the monkey with a large jaw or high cheek') is undoubtedly a folk deity of widespread appeal. Purāṇas have incorporated him in the sophisticated pantheon of gods, and

HANUMĀN
(from Śrīraṅgam temple)

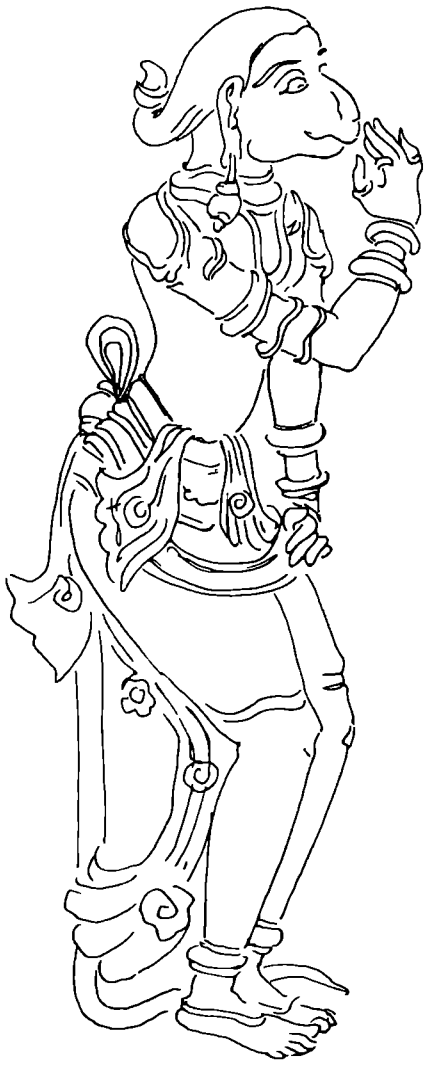
narrate many legends about his origin: his parenthood is shared by Śiva, Vāyu and Vishṇu; and by his mother Añjanā and her husband Kesari (see ĀÑJANEYA); his education was at the hands of Sūrya, with whom he traversed the world learning all the while the Vedic lore and the śāstras; he became proficient in music and defeated Nārada himself in a contest (cf.Adbhuta-rāmāyaṇa); he joined Vāli, the son of Sūrya, and became a minister of Sugrīva. The spot where he was born, bred up and where he spent his early years is identified as the hilly tract Hampi (in Karnāṭaka). It was here that he met Rāma and became his trusted attendant. The rest of the story is too well-known to need recounting here.

HANUMĀN
(stone, from Śuchīndram temple) .



HANUMĀN
(as devotee)

Usually Hanumān is represented in a human form with monkey's head; he has only two hands and wears only a loin-cloth (kaupīna) for garment. His complexion is white; his ears are adorned with large ear-rings (kuṇḍala). He makes fierce noices like 'kiṁ-kila', 'bhūṁ-bhuka'.



HANUMĀN
(stone, Padmanābha-svāmi temple, Trivandrum)

He is shown in several postures. He may be standing in sama-bhaṅga or tri-bhaṅga, with his hands joined in an attitude of supplication (añjali), where he is identified as Bhaktāñjaneya; or with his right hand carrying a lute (vīṇā) and his left a book, or again one of the hands may be seen holding vajra (Agni-purāṇa, ch.51). Alternately, he may be in movement (walking or running), holding a mountain in one of his hands and mace in the other; or carrying an uprooted tree in one hand, and clenched fist in the other. this is known as Vīrāñjaneya. He may also be seated in a lotus posture, with the right hand holding a rosary placed upon his chest in chin-mudrā, and the left hand resting on his crossed legs. This form is called Yogāñjaneya. When he is seated with bent head joining his hand in añjali, in front of Rāma, Sītā and Lakshmaṇa, he is referred to as 'Rāmāñjaneya'.

There are also icons of Hanumān with five heads and ten arms, known as Pañcha-mukhī. The heads are those of monkey (front or east) lion (south, Narasiṁha), eagle (west, Garuḍa), boar (north, Varāha), and horse (above the front head, Hayagrīva). The deities incorporated are

HANUMĀN
(in the Rāma group, bronze, Madras Museum)

for several benefits: Narasiṁha for elimination of fear (bhaya-nāśana), Garuḍa for magical skill, pātāla-siddhi and curing snake-bite etc ('visha-bhūtādi- kṛntanam'), Varāha for subduing all evil spirits and eliminating diseases ('sarva-bhūta-praśamanam tāpa-jvara-nivāraṇam'); and Haya-grīva for overcoming enemies (dānavān'a

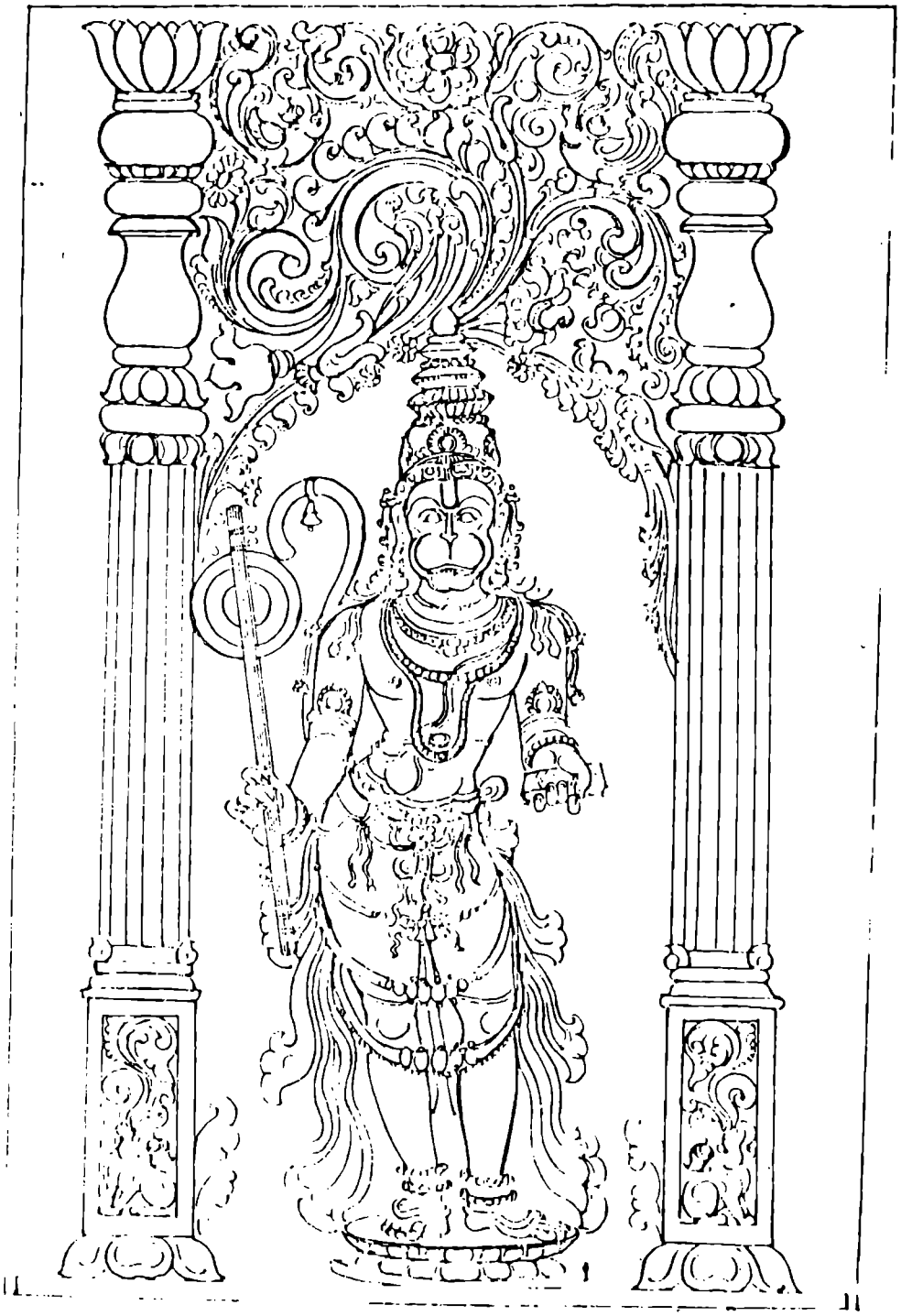
HANUMĀN
(from Tirumala)

PANCHA-MUKHI HANUMĀN
(old drawing from Mysore)

-karam). In the ten hands are seen gesture of cow's face (go-mudrikā), sword, trident, goad, mountain (on the right side), skull-cup, khaṭvāṅ-

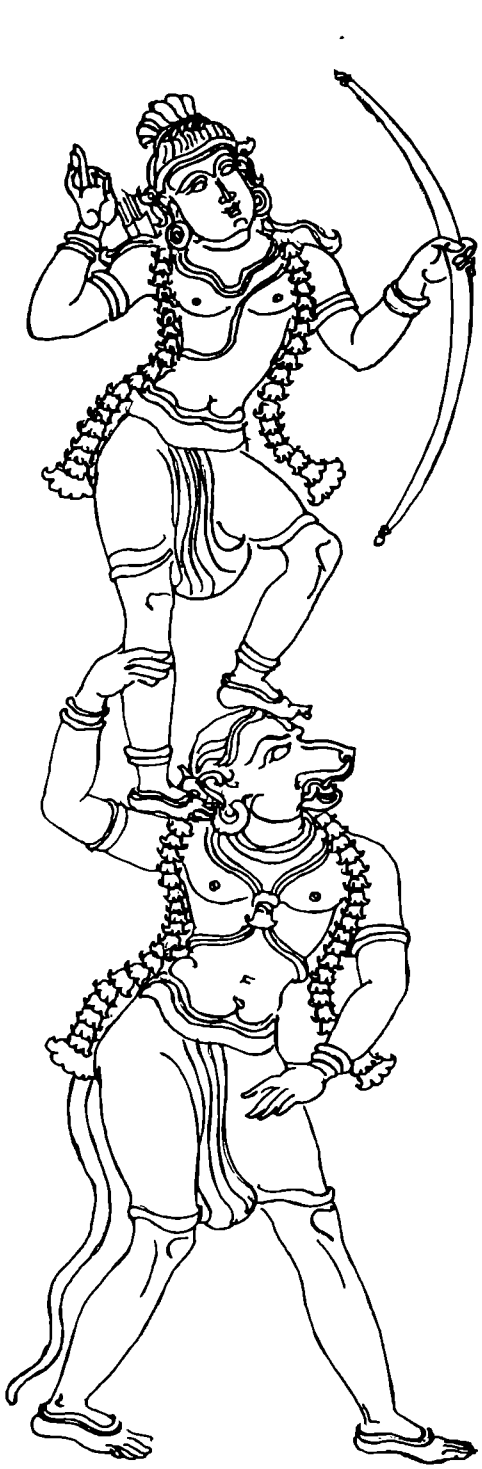
HANUMĀN
(from Vijayanagar)

HANUMĀN
(carved by Vyāsa-rāja-svāmi)



HANUMĀN AS VĪṆĀ-DHARA
(from a temple in Kumbhakoṇam)

HANUMĀN BEING BLESSED BY SĪTA
(wood-carving, from Kaviyoor temple, Kerala)



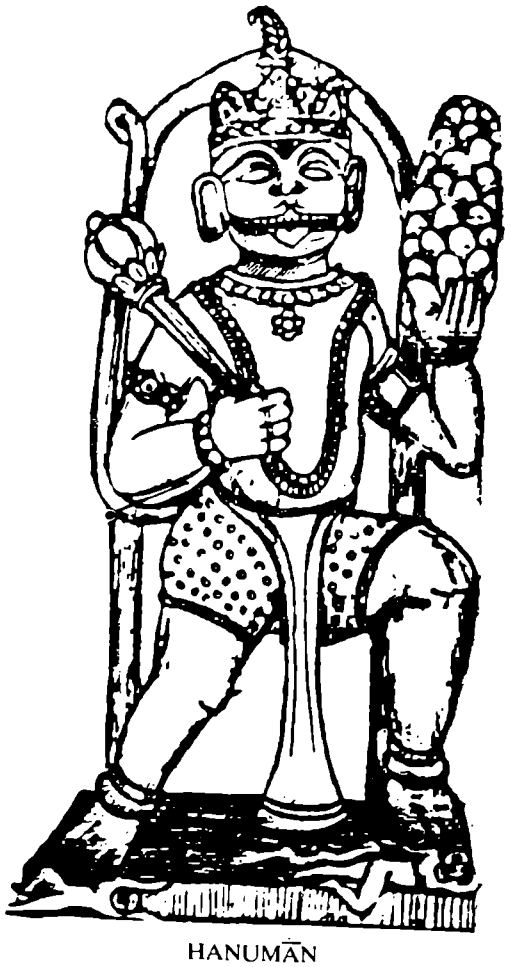
HANUMĀN CARRYING RĀMA ON THE BATTLE-FIELD
(stone, Vaikom temple, Kottayam))

HANUMĀN CARRYING RĀMA
(from Saundara-rāja Perumāḷ Temple, Dāḍikombu, Diṇḍigal)

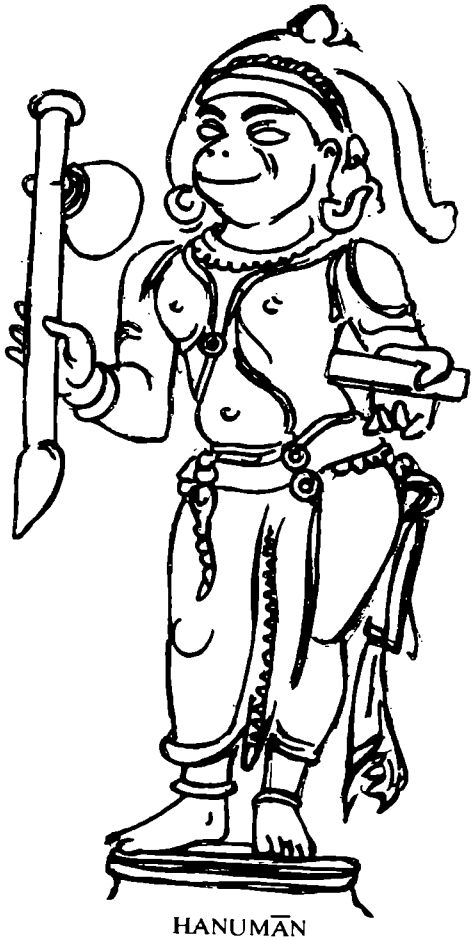
ga, noose, tree and uplifed hand (about to administer a slap, chhapeṭikā-mudrā) (on the left).

Vimānārchanā-kalpa (paṭala 21) prescribes that Hanumān must be represented in the Rāma-group in the Vishṇu shrine. He must be shown, according to this text, as standing with his head and shoulders slightly bent forward ('avanata-gātrah'): dark like collyrium in colour (añjanābha) but clad in white garments (śveta-vastra-dhara), decorated with all ornaments, his right hand must cover his mouth ('dakshiṇa-hasta-nāsyam pidhāya'), and his left hand must conceal the strip of loin-cloth ('vāma-hastena

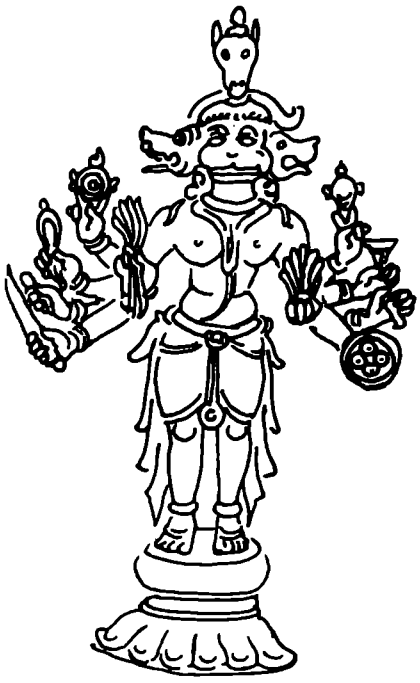
HANUMĀN
(from Hampi)



HANUMĀN
(from Rājāsthān)



HANUMĀN
(bronze, author's collection)



PAÑCHAMUKHI-HANUMĀN
(bronze, from a temple in Abbūr)

HAYAGRĪVA
(old drawing from Mysore)

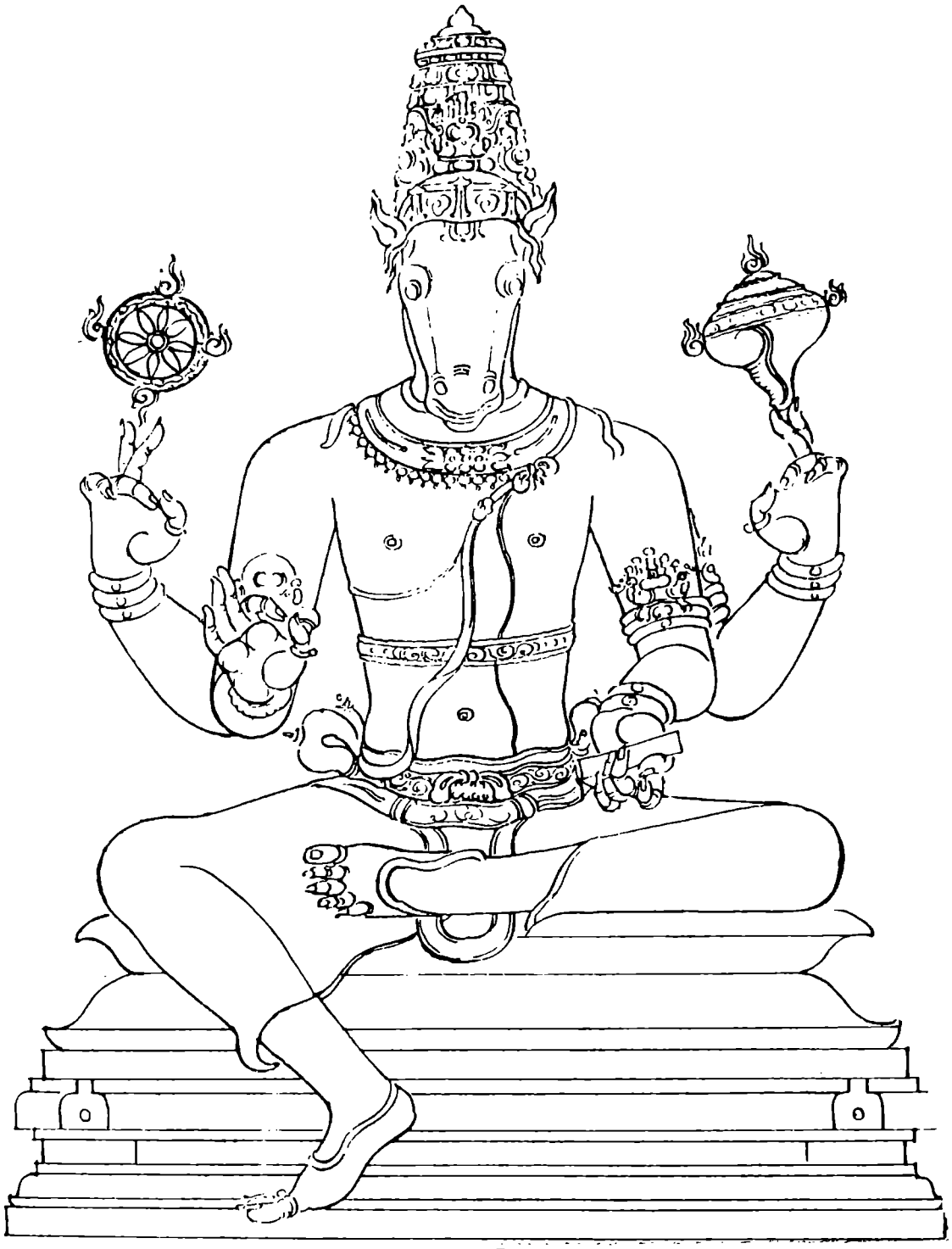
vastram pidhāya'); he is represented as conveying a message to Rāma ('vartā-vijñāpana-parah').

HAYA-GRĪVA

The form which Vishṇu is believed to have assumed to kill a horse-headed demon named Haya-grīva (Devī-bhāgavata, 1,5), or the demon-brothers Madhu and Kaiṭabha, or to recover the Vedaś which were stolen and hidden under the sea by the demon Hiranyāksha. It is a tāntrik deity, incorporated in the Vajrayāna pantheon.

Haya-grīva-Vishṇu has a human form with two, four, eight or twelve hands, and with a horse's head, surmounted by a tall crown. He is celebrated as the lord of learning (vāgadhīśa, vidyā-pradāyaka), especially of Vedic lore. Paushkara-saṁhitā (24, 35) explains that the Vedas are personified as human forms, with faces of horses ('vāji-vaktrās sthitā vedāh sam-pūrṇa-nara- lakshaṇāh'). Therefore, Vishṇu as the presiding deity of Vedic learning must be imagined as a man with horse's face ('kalpayet purushākāram aśva-vaktram').

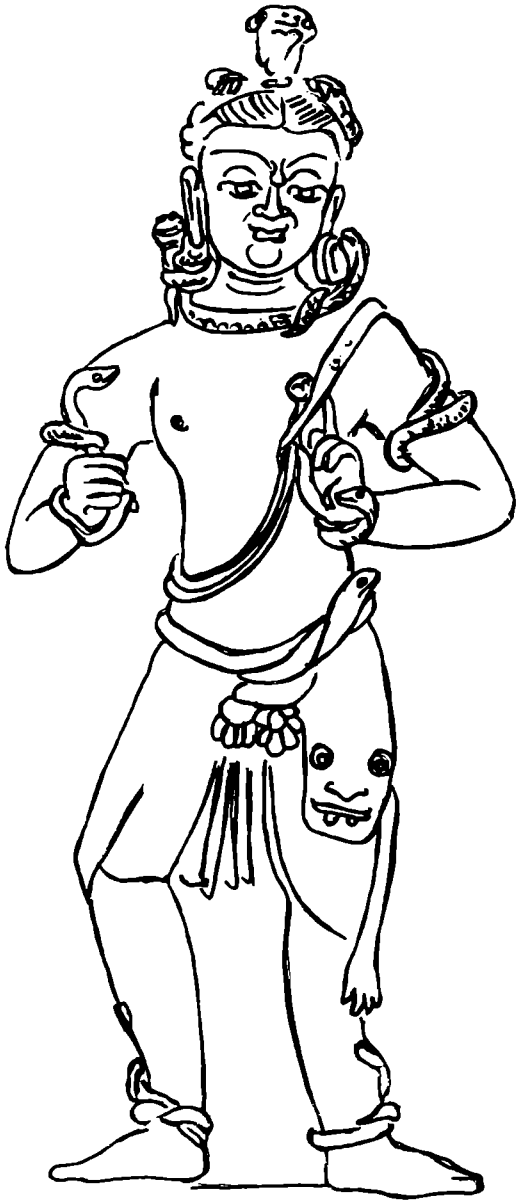
HAYAGRĪVA
(Hoysaḷa sculpture)



HAYAGRĪVA

HAYAGRİVA (Vajrayana)
(from St. Louis Art Museum)

The god is stationed upon the lunar orb (śaśi-bimba-saṁstha), luminous like moonlight, and illumining the entire world, inside of it and outside by his brilliance ('aṇḍāntaram bahir api pratibhāsayantam'). He is also seated upon a white lotus ('śvetāravindāsana') within the lunar orb ('chandra-maṇḍala- madhyastha')



HAYAGRĪVA (Vajrayāna)
(from Doris Weiner Gallery, New York))

When he is four-armed, he holds in his right hands the gesture of boon-bestowal and rosary, and in his left hands book and conch (Pādma-saṁhitā, Kriyā-, 22,. 2-7). The book is identified as the four Vedas ('vāma-hasteṣya kurvīta vedāś chatvārah', Haya-śīrsha-saṁhitā, 22, 26). He is also described as 'veda-pāṇi'.

When eight-armed, he carries conch, discus, mace, lotus, book, noose, goad and gesture of scriptural exposition (jñāna-mudrā) (Parāśara-saṁhitā, 28, 14). And when twelve-armed, he carries in addition to the above, fire (agni), Vajra, weapon known as kunta and shield (ibid., 28, 22-23).

Pādma-saṁhitā (op.cit) describes him as seated comfortably on the serpent-conch, with hoods rising up behind hime ('bhogi-bhoge samāsīnam, pṛshṭhatah phaṇa-maṇḍalaih'). Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā (ādi, 22, 24-26) makes the god's left foot rest on Śesha (see ANANTA, 'śesha-nāga-dhṛtam pādam vāmam'), and the right foot on tortoise ('dakshiṇam kūrma-pṛshṭhastham'). According to this text, he is accompanied by two goddesses, viz. Lakshmī and Bhū-devī ('devī-dvitaya-saṁyuktam').

LAKSHMĪ-HAYAGRĪVA
(old drawing from Mysore)

Haya-grīva, the Vajrayāna god, is an attendant or companion of the Khasarpaṇa (see KHASARPAṆA) and Loka-nātha (see LOKANĀTHA) forms of the bodhi-sattva Avalokiteśvara. As attending on Khasarpaṇa, he is red-complexioned, short-statured (kharva), pot- bellied (lambodara), and clad in tiger-skin. His hair, tawny red in colour, rises up in flames (ūrdhva-jvalat-piṅgala-keśa); his moustache and beard are even tawnier (piṅgala-tara-śmaśru). His eye-brows, knit and crooked, strike terror (bhrukuṭi-kuṭila- bhrūka). He has three eyes, red and round. He carries cudgel as weapon (daṇḍāyudha). But his right hand assumes the gesture of submission and prayer (vandanābhinaya). Similar is his form as associated with Loka-nātha.

There is an independent form of Hayagrīva known as Hayagrīva- Lokeśvara. Here he sits upon a lotus in vajra-paryaṅka posture. He has four hands, in two of which he shows the gesture of scriptural exposition (vyākhyāna-mudrā); the other two hands carry rosary (right) and lotus (left).

HAYĀSYĀ

One of the four animal-faced deities in the Vajrayāna pantheon, she is situated at the eastern doorway of the Nairātmya-maṇḍala; her complexion is whitish blue (sita-nīla). The other three are Sūkarāsyā (sow-faced, south), Śvānāsya (dog-faced, west) and Simhāsyā (lion-faced, north).

HARA-GAURI

The composite form of Śiva or Śakti (see ARDHANĀRĪŚVARA)

HARA-ŚAKTI

The energy of Śiva is personified as the goddess Manonmanī, with two forms. One of them is dark-complexioned, two-eyed and two-armed. She is charming in aspect and stands on the left side of Śiva in the three-bend posutre (tri-bhaṅgi). Her left leg is slightly bent (kiñchit-kuñchita-vāmāṅghri), and right leg firmly placed on the ground without bends ('rjustha-dakshiṇāṅghrikā'). She holds a blue lotus in her left hand, and her right arm is stretched and hanging on the side (pralamba-daksha-hasta).

The other form is moon-coloured (śaśi-varṇa) and three-eyed. She is decorated with all ornaments and is four-armed; she wears her matted hair done up as a crown (jaṭājūṭa-mukuṭa). Her normal hands assume the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal, while the upper hands hold red lotus (right) and blue lotus (left (cf. Mūrti-dhyānam, Tanjore, p. 92).

HARI

One of the twenty-four forms of Vishṇu (see CHATURVIMŚATI-MŪRTI), the god here carries conch and mace in his normal right and left hands, and discus and lotus in his upper right and left hands. Lakshmī in this form is Vidyā-devī.

HARIDRĀ-GAṆAPATI

One of the important forms of Gaṇapati (see GAṆAPATI), it is worshipped in tāntrik cults. The god here is yellow in complexion, clad in yellow garments and decorated with yellow-ornaments. He is six-armed, and his hands carry the gesture of protection and boon-bestowal (normal hands), noose and goad, axe and the gesture of indignation (krodha-mudrā). He sits upon a bejewelled throne (cf. S.Srikantha Sastri, op.cit. p.39).

It is prescribed that the Icon of this god must be prepared in powdered turmeric (pishta-haridrā) mixed in cow's urine. Because turmeric is also called 'niśā' (for haridrā), the god is sometimes referred to as Rātri-gaṇapati. A dhyāna-śloka for Rātri- gaṇeśa describes him as the Image invoked in a piece of turmeric root ('haridrā-khaṇḍa-pratimā'): the god is visualized as three- eyed, one-tusked, clad in yellow silken garments and seated on a golden plank

('kanakāsanastha'). He carries in his hands noose, goad and sweet-cake (modaka).

HARI-VĀHANA-LOKEŚVARA

One of the 108 forms of Avalokiteśvara, he is described as two-armed and standing on a lotus; his right hand holds a water-pot (kamaṇḍalu) and his left a fly-whisk.

HARI-HARA

Composite form of Vishṇu and Śiva, it is also called Haryardha (see ŚAṄKARA-NĀRĀYAṆA). The right half of the god's body is red and represents Śiva; the two hands on that side carry hammer (ṭaṅka) and the gesture of protection. The right part of the forehead shows a part of the third eye (phālārdhe lochanārdham ,'kiñchil-lalāṭa-netram'); the part of the body is bedaubed with ash, decorared with the rudrāksha seeds, and clad in tiger-skin. The left hall of the body is dark-coloured and represents Vishṇu, with the two-hands on that side holding conch and mace.

HARI-HARA
(from Hariheśvara temple, Haribara, Karnataka)

Matsya-purāṇa (260, 22-27) prescribes conch and disus in the two left hands, but allows mace to be a substitute for discus ('chakra-sthāne gadām vāpi'). This half of the body should be clad in yellow-silken garments, and decorated with jewel- ornaments. The text calls this form Śiva-nārāyaṇa.

Devatā-mūrti-prakaraṇa (6, 35-41) recognizes the right half as Sadāśiva and the left half as Hṛshīkeśa ('dakshiṇārdhhe sadāśivah, vāmārdhe cha hṛshīkeśah'). Fair in complexion, Sadāśiva's normal right hand assumes the posture of boon-bestowal, and the upper hand on the same side carries trident, while the blue-complexioned Hṛshīkeśa carries discus and lotus in his hands. Bull must be shown by the side of Sadāśiva, and Garuḍa by the side of Hṛshīkeśa ('dakshiṇe vṛshabhah pārśve, vāme vihaga-rāḍ iti').

Icons of this form have a great antiquity; the earliest specimen dates to the Kushāṇa period.

HARI-HARA-LOKEŚVARA

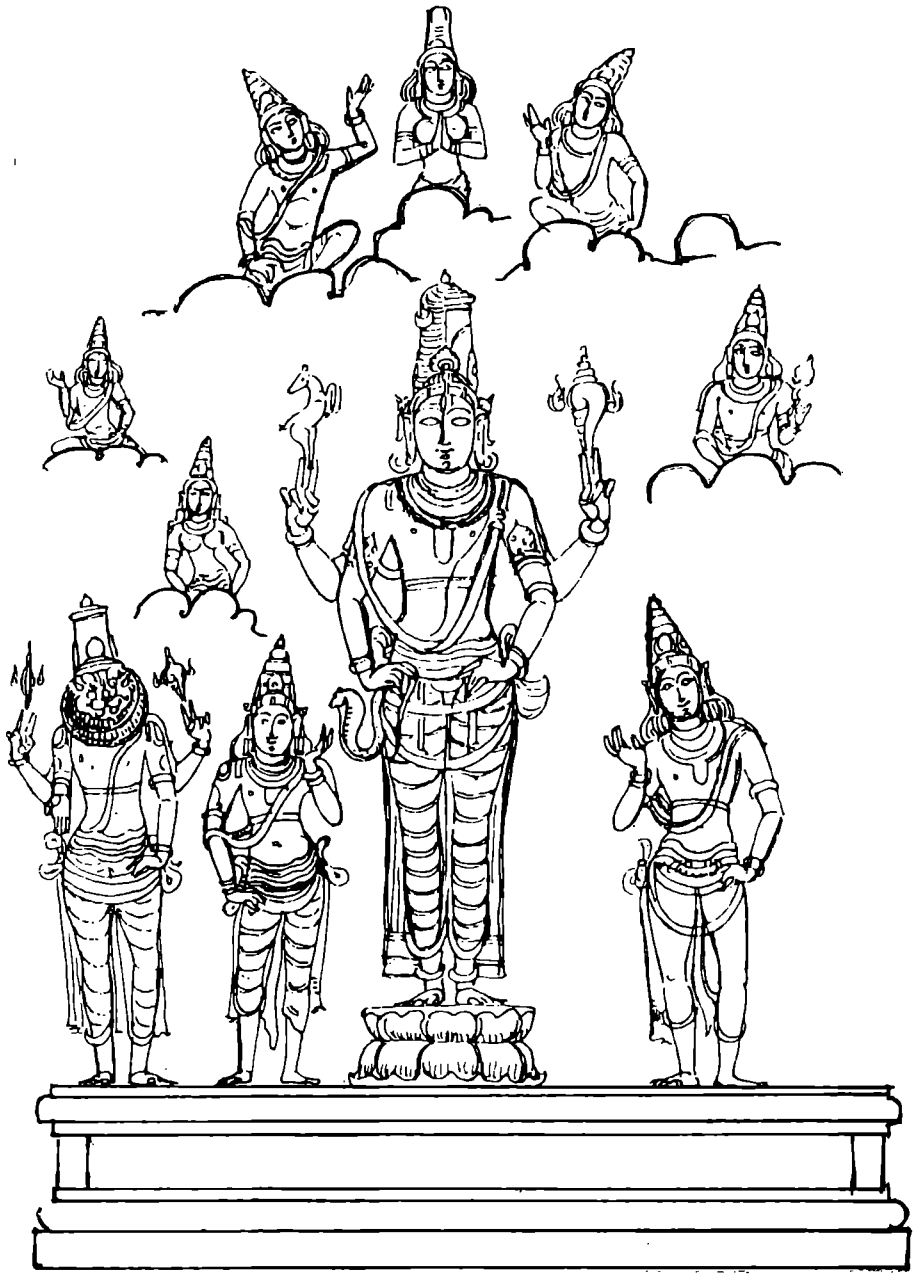
One of the 108 forms of Avalokiteśvara, this form is two-armed and stands upon a lotus. The deity here shows the gesture of scriptural exposition (vyākhyāna-mudrā) with both of his hands placed upon his chest.

HALA

Ploughshare, used as a weapon, and held in the hands of gods like Bala-rāma, Saṁkarshaṇa and some forms of Narasiṁha. It is usually paired with musala (pestle-club), even as goad with noose, bow with arrow, and conch with discus.

HĀRĪTI

A folk goddess, a yakshinī, daughter of Sala, the yaksha of Rājagṛha, married Pañchika (son



HARI-HARA

HALA

of Pāñchāla, the yaksha of Gāndhāra) and became associated with Vaiśāli, Rājagṛha and Takshaśilā. Also called Nandā, Kuṇḍalā, Nandinī or Abhiratī, she was so extensively worshipped that a stūpa was erected for her. She was the patron-goddess of children and images of her were frequently made: she was shown as holding a child in her arm or on her lap, and a cup in the other hand. She is said to have become Vasudhārā (Bhadrā or Lakshmī) in later times. But she was also feared, for she was supposed to have had cannibalistic tendencies.

HĀLĀHALA-LOKEŚVARA

A form of Avalokiteśvara (see AVALOKITA), he shines like white lotus (sitāravinda nirbhāsa) and sits in lalita posture upon a red lotus. He has three faces, the main face being white, the face to the right blue and the face to the left red. There is a crown of matted hair on his head, in which crescent moon, skull-cup and Image of the dhyāni-buddha Amitābha are seen. He appears charming with erotic sentiment in evidence (śṛṅgāra-rasa-sundara). He has a smile on his face (smera-vaktra). He is six-armed, with rosary, arrow (śara-nartana, meaning the act of shooting) and gesture of boon-bestowal in his three right hands, and bow and white lotus in two of his left hands; the remaining hand on the left side embraces his śakti, seated on his lap, and presses her breast. To the right of the god is trident, entwined with serpents, and to the left is skull-cup placed upon a lotus.

The śakti, an emanation from the god himself (svābhā), is two- armed and wears her matted hair done up as a crown and decorated with flowers. Her right hand embraces the god, while her left hand holds a lotus.

HṚSHĪKEŚA

A form of Vishṇu (see CHATURVIṂŚATI-MŪRTI), which is lightning coloured (vidyud-varṇa) and adorned with garlands of red flowers; the head is decorated with white lotus. Lakshmī in this form is Maṅgalā-devī. The god carries mace and conch in his normal hands (right and left respectively), and discus and lotus in his upper hands (right and left).

HERAṂBA

One of the well-known forms of Gaṇapati, especially popular in Nepāl, this has five elephantine heads (pañcha-mātaṅga-vaktra) and is seen riding a lion. He is excessively fair-complexioned (ati-gaurah), and nas ten arms. One of the dhyāna-ślokas prescribes the gestures of protection (right) and boon-bestowal (left) for his normal hands, his own tusk, club (mudgara), rosary and goad for the other hands on the right side, and fruit, axe, laḍḍuka (or modaka) and noose for the three hands on the left side.

HERUKA

An emanation of the dhyāni-buddhya Akshobhya of the Vajrayāna pantheon, he is the most popular among the deities worshipped. He is represented alone or In union with his śakti (see YUGANADDHA), the latter form beIng extensively represented in Tibet. He is worshipped for obtaining the Buddha-hood (buddhatva-

HERAṂBA-GAṆAPATI
(from the Mīnākshi temple, Madhurai)

HERAṂBA-GAṆAPATI
(bronze from Nāga-paṭṭaṇam))

HERAṂBA-GAṆAPATI
(with Śaktī)
(bronze from Nepāl)

HERAMBA-GAṆAPATI
(old drawing from Mysore)

dāyin) and for eliminating Māra or the temptations of the world ('jagan-māra-nivāraṇam'). A variant form of Heruka, Hevajra (see HEVAJRA) is shown trampling under his four legs the four Māras: skandha (the physical body), kleśa (mental afflictions), mṛtyu (death) and deva-putra (enjoyments here and hereafter).

Heruka is two-armed, terrible in aspect and seated in the ardha- paryaṅka posture upon a corpse (śava-stha). He is clad in the skin of a human being (nara-charma-vāsasa') and his body is bedaubed with ash from the burning grounds (bhasmoddhūlita-gātra). His eyes are blood-shot (rakta-netra), and his face is slightly fierce with tusks ('īshad-daṁshṭrā-karālāsya'). His tawny-coloured hair stands on end ('piṅgordhva-keśa'). He is decorated by ear-rings and ornaments made of bones. On his head is the tiny icon of Akshobhya; and five skulls adorn his crest (śirah pañcha-kapāla). He wears garlands of severed heads numbering fifty. In his right hand is a shining vajra (sphurad- vajra), and in his left a skull-cup filled with blood (rakta-karoṭaka). A khaṭvāṅga to which a flowing banner is attached hangs from his left shoulder (chalat-patāka-khaṭvāṅga).

In Abhidhānottara, he is described as extremely fierce in aspect (mahā-pralaya-kālogra): dark blue in body-colour; his head is adorned by a row of skulls (kapāla-mālā-mukuṭa) and double-vajra (viśva-vajra-mukuṭa). Here he is six-faced and the faces are coloured blue, yellow, red, green, white and red, and exhibit heroic (vīra), loathesome (bībhatsa), erotic (śṛṅgāra) and violent (raudra) emotions. He stands in the ālīḍha posture. Vārāhī clings to his knees (vārāhyanu-samapanna-jānu-dvaya-suveshtitam'). She is naked with flowing hair, and stands in the pratyālīḍha-posture.

The god has twelve hands. In his normal hands, he holds vajra and ghaṇṭā and also embraces his śakti (viz. Vārāhi). In the other hands are seen skull-cup, khaṭvāṅga, spear, chopper, goad, noose, a severed head, club and hand-drum. He tramples under his feet Bhairava and Kāla-rātri.

HERUKA-VAJRA

One of the direction-deities of the Vajrayāna pantheon, he is also called Nīla-daṇḍa and Vajra-kāla. He presides over the south-western corner. His compexion is blue, and he has three faces, the face to the right being white and the one to the left red. He is four-armed and carries in his hands blue cudgel (nīla-daṇḍa), sword, magic jewel (maṇi) and lotus. The normal hands also hold his consort in embrace.

The other guardians of directions are also four-armed, and similar but for what the normal right hand carries; the other hands carry, like Heruka-vajra, sword, maṇi and lotus. Yamāntaka (east, dark hammer impressed with vajra),

HEVAJRA
(after a Tibetan painting)

Prajñāntaka (south, white cudgel impressed with vajra) Padmāntaka (west, red lotus, and the fourth hand holding discus Instead of lotus), Vighnāntaka (north, terrible vajra), Takki-rāja (south-east, blue cudgel), and Mahābala (north-west trident).

HERUKĪ

One of the six minor deities associated with Saptākshara, a mantra god who is an emanation of the dhyāni-buddha Akshobhya.

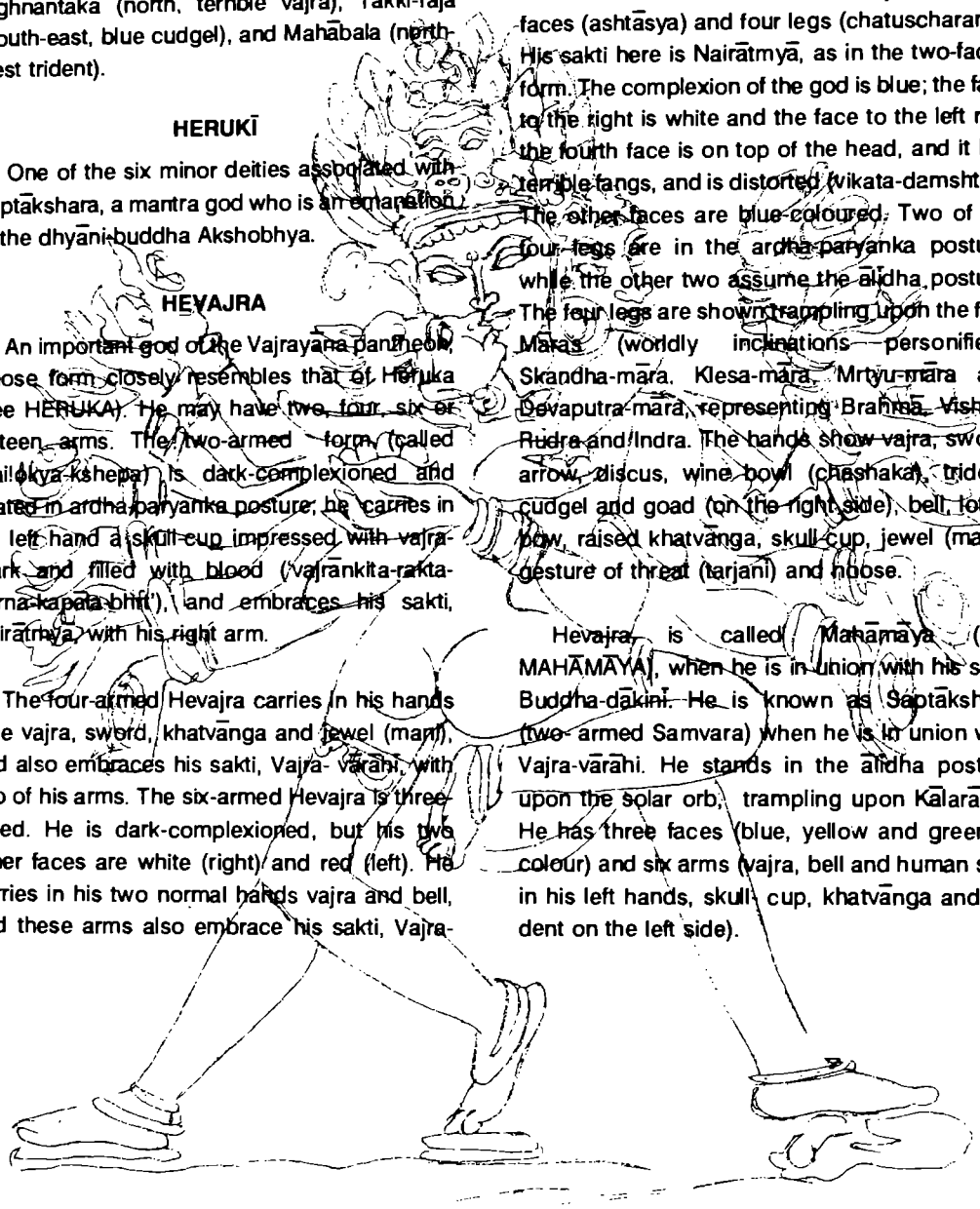
HEVAJRA

An important god of the Vajrayana pantheon, whose form closely resembles that of Heruka (see HERUKA). He may have two, four, six or sixteen arms. The two-armed form (called Trailokya-kshepa) is dark-complexioned and seated in ardha-paryanka posture; he carries in his left hand a skull-cup impressed with vajra-mark and filled with blood (*vajrānkita-rakta-pūrna-kapala-bhrit*), and embraces his sakti, Nairātmya, with his right arm.

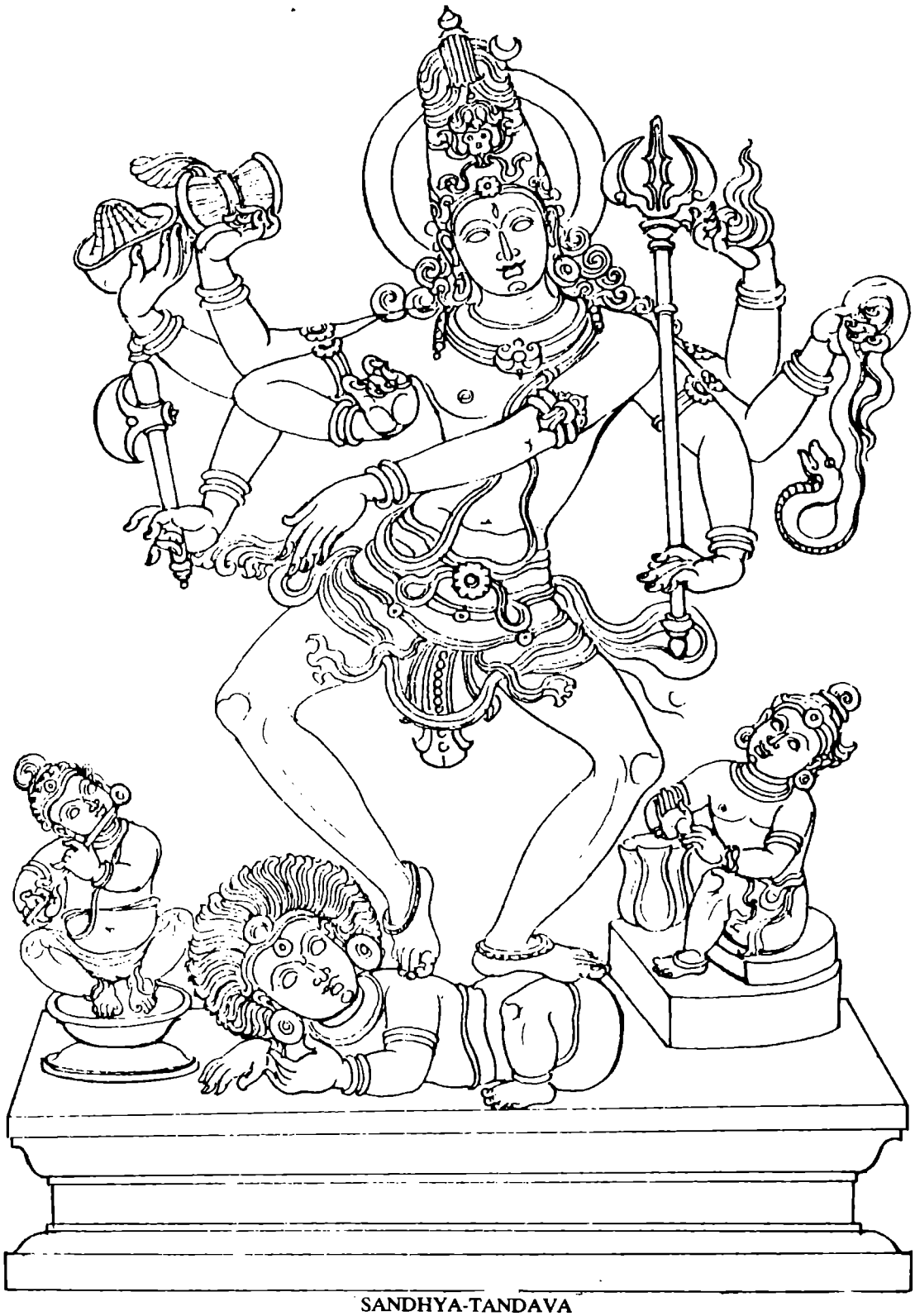
The four-armed Hevajra carries in his hands blue vajra, sword, khatvānga and jewel (mani), and also embraces his sakti, Vajra-varāhi, with two of his arms. The six-armed Hevajra is three-faced. He is dark-complexioned, but his two other faces are white (right) and red (left). He carries in his two normal hands vajra and bell, and these arms also embrace his sakti, Vajra-srnkhalā. The other hands hold bow and skull-cup (left) and arrow and trident (right).

The sixteen-armed form of Hevajra has eight faces (ashtāsya) and four legs (chatuscharana). His sakti here is Nairātmyā, as in the two-faced form. The complexion of the god is blue; the face to the right is white and the face to the left red; the fourth face is on top of the head, and it has terrible fangs, and is distorted (*vikata-damshtra*). The other faces are blue-coloured. Two of the four legs are in the ardha-paryanka posture, while the other two assume the ālidha posture. The four legs are shown trampling upon the four Māras (worldly inclinations — personified): Skandha-māra, Klesa-māra, Mrtyu-māra and Devaputra-māra, representing Brahmā, Vishnu, Rudra and Indra. The hands show vajra, sword, arrow, discus, wine bowl (chashaka), trident, cudgel and goad (on the right side), bell, lotus, bow, raised khatvānga, skull-cup, jewel (mani), gesture of threat (tarjani) and noose.

Hevajra is called Mahāmāya (see MAHĀMĀYĀ), when he is in union with his sakti Buddha-dākini. He is known as Saptākshara (two-armed Samvara) when he is in union with Vajra-varāhi. He stands in the ālidha posture upon the solar orb, trampling upon Kālarātri. He has three faces (blue, yellow and green in colour) and six arms (vajra, bell and human skin in his left hands, skull-cup, khatvānga and trident on the left side).



HEVAJRA
(Tibetan painting)



SANDHYA-TANDAVA
(Stone, Chalukya, from Museum, Hyderabad)

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