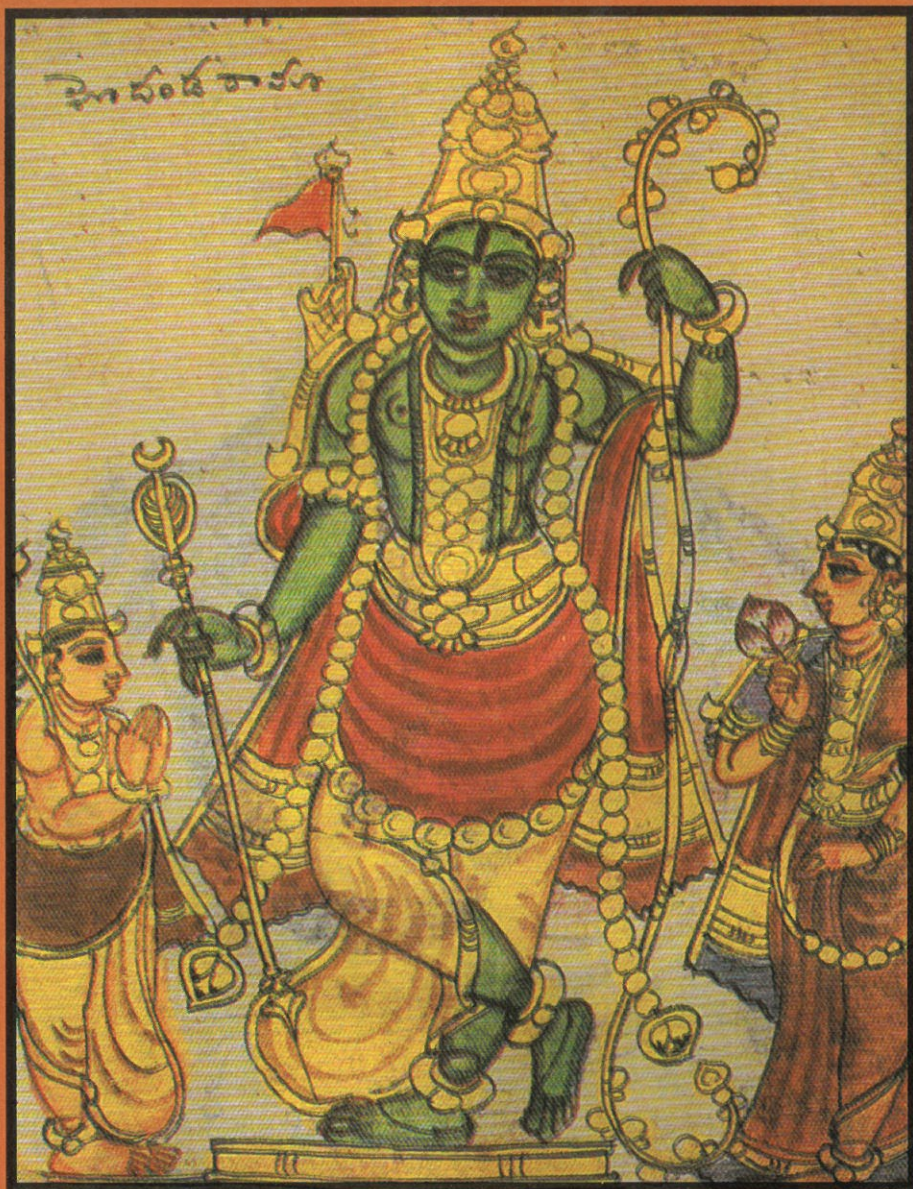


VISHNU KOSHA



PROF. S.K.RAMACHANDRA RAO

VISHNU KOSHA

Sri Garib Das Indological Series No.52

VISHNU KOSHA

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

PROF. S.K.RAMACHANDRA RAO

VASU PUBLICATIONS
Delhi-India

Published by
VASU PUBLICATIONS
Indological Publishers,
40/5, Shakti Nagar,
Delhi-110 007
India

© All Rights reserved

First Edition: Bangalore, 1998
Reprint Edition: Delhi, 2013

ISBN 978-93-82565-89-5

Printed in India.

Preface to the New Edition

Vishnu is a popular form of God who is worshipped all over the country, and that the antiquity of worship of this God goes back to the Vedic corpus is shown by the fact that there are many Vishnu Suktas in the Vedas. Vishnu has been the Kula Devata and Ishta Devata of Prof Ramachandra Rao, and for him it was a labour of love to write this volume. This volume incorporates the general details of Vishnu worship, and also give the details of the celebrated forms of the ten avataras. Also included are the details of the parivara deities of Vishnu like Garuda, Lakshmi, Ananta, Sudarshan, etc.

On behalf of the Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao Memorial Trust, I thank Sri Sunil Gupta of Vasu Publications for reprinting this volume.

1-3-2013

Magha Krishnna Chaturthi.

Dr. S. R. Sudarshan

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	VISHṆU	15
CHAPTER TWO	AVATĀRAS	123
CHAPTER THREE	OTHER FORMS OF VISHṆU	316
CHAPTER FOUR	VISHṆU - PARIVĀRA	359
APPENDIX		431

(Mantras and Dhyāna-ślokas have been given at the end of each avatara).

CHAPTER ONE

VISHṆU

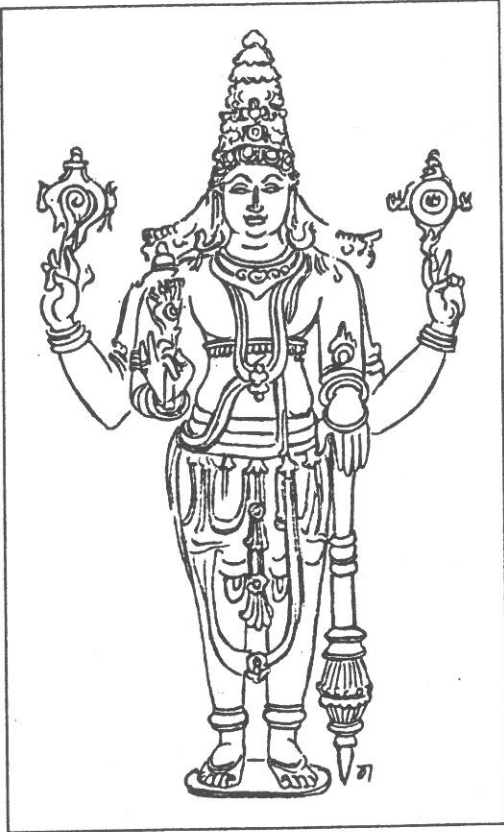
(1)

INTRODUCTION

The expression 'deva' or 'devatā' (for the two words have the same meaning, 'yo devah sa devatā', Sāyaṇa on *Ṛgveda*, 1,1,1) meaning 'god' is of great antiquity. It occurs in the *Ṛgvedic* hymns in the sense that prevails to this day. The ancient authority on Vedic interpretation, Yāska, derives the word to mean 'the spirit that bestows gifts on the worshipper' (dānād), 'the spirit that shines' (dyotanād), or 'the being that dwells in the heavenly regions' (dyusthāno bhavati) (*Nirukta*, 7, 15).

He also discusses several issues connected with the Vedic gods. The gods are distinguished from human beings on account of their 'great excellence' (mahābhāgyāt): their supernatural powers of eight sorts (asṭaiśvarya) are inseparable from their very being (unlike similar powers, seen in some human beings, that endure only for a while and not for all time). The powers signify that the possessors of such power are able to assume any form at will, and give expression to any power they like. In the words of Yāska, the essence of the gods itself becomes chariots, horses, weapons, and all things about the gods (*ibid*, 7,4). Further, Yāska

asserts that the essence of godhood is one, although it is recognized in diverse ways (*eka ātmā bahudhā stūyate*); all the different gods that human beings approach are only so many aspects of this one essence (*ekasyātmāno anye devāḥ pratyāṅgāni bhavanti*).



Vedic gods are, as is well known, forces of nature. According to the Nairuktas, these forces can be grouped in three dimensions: the dwellers on earth, like the Fire (Agni), the denizens of the mid-region, like Air (Vāyu), and the residents in heaven, like the Sun (Sūrya). But they are, in fact, essentially one god who is capable of assuming many forms, distinguished only by the planes of their operations (cf. *Nirukta*, 7,5 'tisra eva devatā iti nairuktāḥ: agnih pṛthvi-sthāno, vāyur vendro vāntariksha-sthānah, sūryo dyus-sthānah; tasmāt mahābhagyāt ekaikasyāpi bahūni nāma-dheyāni bhavanti; api vā karma-pṛthaktavāt, cf. also *Bṛhad-devatā* 1, 69-70).

In the Vedic context, the gods of the earth are illustrated by Fire (Agni), Earth (Pṛthivī), Moon (Soma),

River (Nadi) and the Lord of Speech (Bṛhaspati); the gods of the mid-region by the Lord of Thunder and Lightning (Indra), Air (Vāyu), the god of Hurricane and Roaring Storm (Rudra), the divinities of Breeze and Wind (the Maruts), the god of Rain (Parjanya) and Water (Āpa); and the gods of the heavens by Sky (Dyauh), the divinity of Order (Varuṇa), different aspects of Sun like Pūshan, Savitr, Sūrya and Āditya, the twin gods Aśvinau, Night (Rātri), Dawn (Ushas) and the All-pervading god (Viṣṇu). Yāska tells us that these are all in reality so many names or aspects of the one god (ekaikasya bahūni nāmadheyāni bhavanti, *ibid*). He also points out that these several aspects are not independent of each other; we find that one aspect gives rise to another aspect and that one aspect

will constitute the original nature of another (*ibid*, 7,4,12, 'itaretarajanmāno bhavanti, itaretaraprakṛtayah'). Each aspect, however, symbolizes a power of the one god manifesting itself in an action (*ibid*, karma-janmānah).

Yāska also discusses whether it would be proper to visualize these gods representing forces of Nature in human form (*ibid*, 7,6, 'atha ākāra-chintanam devānām, purusha-vidhāh syuh ityekam'), for the forces of Nature are not 'living beings' (achetanāni) as human beings are ('purusha-vidhāh syur ity aparam, *ibid*, 7,7). His own view is that the gods as forces of Nature are no doubt non-living and, therefore, do not have human forms, but that as spirits dwelling in them they may be

visualized by devotees as having recognizable forms for purposes of adoration (*ibid.*, 'api vā ubhaya-vidhās syuh').

The post-Vedic gods were counted as thirty-three crore, and this number includes the denizens of the three worlds (trailokya), along with



LAKSHMĪ-NĀRĀYAṆA

their consorts and attendants (sadārā svānām svānām gaṇais saha, cf. *Padmottara-khaṇḍa*). Many of these gods were in groups, and hence called 'gaṇa-devatā, like the twelve Ādityas, thirty Tushitas, ten Viśvedevatās, twelve Sādhyas, sixty-four Ābhāsvaras, two hundred and twenty Mahārājikas, eleven Rudras, eight Vasus and fifty Maruts.

The habit of recognizing groups of gods continued in the middle ages, as for instance in the case of the six-fold gods (deva-shaṭka) mentioned in *Brahma-Vaivarta-purāṇa* (Prakṛti-khaṇḍa): Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, Agni, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Pārvati, or the Vaishṇava reckoning of five gods in a group attending on viṣṇu: Viśvakṣena, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra.

The major gods were represented (or described) as surrounded by their retinue (parivāra): Śiva with his consort Pārvati, sons Gaṇeśa and Skanḍa, attendants Nandi, Chaṇḍeśa and Bhṛṅgi, and his own forms Bhairava, Vīrabadra and Kshetrapāla; Viṣṇu, with his consorts Lakshmī and Bhūdevī, commander Viśveksena, attendant Garuḍa, and weapons personified (Chakrapurusha and Gadādevī) and Devī with the seven mother-goddesses (māṭṛkās), attendant yoginīs and forms like nine Gaurīs.

The concept of pañchāyatana involves the worship of five gods on one pedestal: Śiva, Viṣṇu, Durgā, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa. Four gods occupy the four corners of the seat, and one god, who is regarded as the principal

one is located in the centre. The pañchāyatana is known after the god located in the centre (like Śiva-pañchāyatana, Viṣṇu-pañchāyatana, Gaṇeśa pañchāyatana etc.,)

Some gods were represented in pairs. Even in the Vedic age, we hear of Dyāvā-Pr̥thivī, IndrāVaruṇa, Soma Sūrya, MitrāVaruṇa, Aśvinau, Indrāgnī, Ushāsānaktā, AgnīSoma, AgnāViṣṇu and so on. In the Purāṇic period, we have twin gods, like Sankarshaṇa-Vāsudeva, Nara-Nārāyaṇa, and Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa.

The country has indeed a multitude of gods and goddesses, although there is a pervasive belief among the people that god is but one, and has many manifestations. Some of these gods are protectors of fields (kṣhetra-pāla), others guardians of

villages (grāma-devatā); still others tutelary deities (kula-devatā). Some of them are chosen gods of devotees (iṣṭa-devatā). *Āhnikatattva* enumerates Sun, Gaṇeśa Devī, Rudra and Nārāyaṇa among tutelary deities.

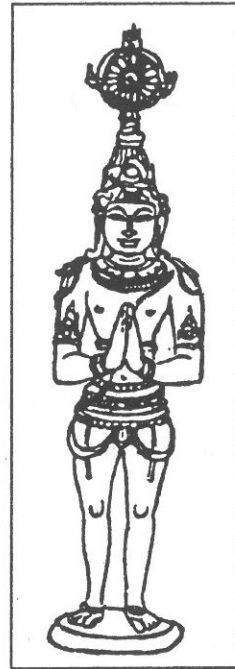
According to *Kūrma-purāṇa*, Viṣṇu is the god of the gods (daivānām daivataḥ); the holder of the trident (viz. Śiva) the god of the dānavas; Soma of the demi-gods like gandhārvas and yakṣas; Vāgdevī (viz. Sarasvatī) of the demi-gods like Vidyādharas, Hari of the Sādhyas, Śankara of the Rākṣhasas, Pārvatī of the Kinnaras, Brahmā of the sages, and Vināyaka of the spirits known as Kūṣhmāṇḍas. The same text prescribes that Mahādeva (viz. Śiva) must be worshipped by all householders, Brahmā by all celibates, Āmbikā by

the forest-dwelling hermits (vaikhānasa), Maheśvara (viz. Śiva) by the monks, Viṣṇu by the kings, Agni or Āditya by the Brāhmaṇas.

Notwithstanding such prescriptions, any individual is free to select for his devotion his own 'upāsya-devatā', the form or quality of which appeals to his fancy and feelings (yā yasyābhimatā puṁsah sā hi tasyaiva devatā): this god becomes his 'iṣṭa-devatā', and may be different from his kula-devatā adored by his family, or grāma-devatā worshipped in the village.

Besides the major gods like Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devī, Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya, who are worshipped all over the country and who have large shrines where people throng, there are several minor gods or spirits who receive

adoration from people in the countryside. Such spirits are half-way between gods and humans: they are less powerful than regular gods, but more powerful than human beings. In this class are included yakshas, guhyakas, apsaras, vidyādhara, kinnaras, siddhas and piśāchas. Some of them are benevolent by nature,



Chakra-Purusha

while others are malevolent and vengeful.

They are characterized by possession of power to help or harm, ability to travel in air at will, or on earth, assuming whatever form they choose, and love for music and dance. Most of them do not have permanent shrines where they are worshipped, but they make their presence known by possessing the shaman-priest or devotee. They are fond of wandering about at night, and inhabiting lakes, trees and bowers. They are credited with expert knowledge of medicinal properties of plants and herbs. They are generally attendants of Śiva.

Quite frequently, folk-heroes of renown, and women with exceptional character in the village or tribe are deified, and in course of time their

human origin is forgotten; and the ascribed divinity endures as a natural feature. Many of the gods and goddesses who are widely worshipped



today were once human beings, as legends would unmistakably show. Such gods and goddesses are usually affiliated to, or identified with, the major gods, Śiva, Viṣṇu or Devī. Their worship is confined to localities where their services or exploits are remembered and praised.

The iconographical representation of gods and goddesses closely follows the sculptural idiom of attributes and abilities (guṇakriyānusāreṇa kriyate rūpakalpanā). Multiplicity of heads denotes the concurrent presence of many attributes, and multiplicity of hands indicates numerous abilities. Three heads of a god signify the presence of the guṇa-triad (sattva, rajas and tamas) or power-triad (icchhā-śakti, jñāna-śakti and kriyā-śakti). Four heads represent the totality

of the four-fold scripture (Veda) or comprehension of the four directions. Five heads stand for the five elemental principles, the bhūta-pentad (pṛithvī, āp, tejas, vāyu and ākāśa). or the five divine attributes, the kṛtya-pañchaka (sṛṣṭi, sthiti, saṁhāra, tirodhāna and anugraha).

Each head means two arms (prati-vaktram bhuja-dvayam) and thus the three-headed god has six arms, four-headed god eight, and five-headed god ten; and the hands represent the abilities appropriate to the attributes.

Not all gods have iconic representations. Śiva is invariably worshipped in the aniconic liṅga in the sanctum, although his iconic images are employed for other rituals in the temple. Viṣṇu is worshipped



VISHNU
(Pallava, stone)

in household shrines and temples in Śālagrāma-stones, along with iconic representations. Gaṇapati is held especially sacred when worshipped in the roots of the arka-plant; and Gaṇapati is often represented by the red stone (śoṇa-śilā) or in a turmeric piece (haridrā-khaṇḍa). The Devī in

the Kāmākhyā temple is worshipped in a natural fissure of a rock. In many a Narasimha shrine, only rocks are worshipped in the sanctum.

The three principal gods of the Hindu pantheon, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra (Śiva), are collectively called tri-mūrti or traipurusha. Although their celebrity goes back to the Vedic texts, they achieved popularity only during the middle ages. Till the ninth century, Brahmā received worship in common with the other two gods (as evident from numerous inscriptions like the one dated 866 AD, EI, 6, p.102 and from the many three-celled shrines built by the early Chāḷukyas of Bādāmi, like the 'Viṣṇu-grha' excavated by Maṅgaḷīśa in 578 A.D. and the 'Vijayeśvara' shrine built by Vinayāditya, 596-733 in Bādāmi).

Later, however, votaries of Brahmā diminished in number, and important and independent shrines to him were few, the most celebrated among them being in Pushkar (near Ajmere in Rājasthan). Temples to Viṣṇu and Śiva filled the country in

all provinces, and numerous legends and myths concerning these two gods became popular. Brahmā was iconographically represented only in these temples as an attendant-divinity (parivāra-devatā) or as a vimāna-devatā.



Brahmā

The three gods are recognized as responsible for creation (Brahmā), preservation (Vishṇu) and destruction (Rudra) of the world. In accordance with these functions, they represent the three fundamental guṇas: Brahmā-*rajas*, Vishṇu-*sattva*, and Rudra-*tamas*. They were also associated with three major goddesses as their consorts: Brahmā with Sarasvatī, Vishṇu with Lakshmī and Rudra with Gauri.

(1) Brahmā is regarded as the first of all the gods to appear (cf. *Muṇḍaka-upanishad* 1, 1), and as the creator of all the beings in the world (*Vishṇu-purāṇa* 1,4,2). He is called Prajāpati (the 'progenitor' of all things that exist and that do not exist, 'asataścha sataśchaiva yonir eshā prajāpatih', *Bṛhaddevatā*, 1, 62), and Hiranya-garbha ('golden-womb'), the

unoriginated originator, (*Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*, 46, 21, 'hiranya-garbho devādir anādir upachāratah').

Iconographically, Brahmā is represented as an aged priest (purohita), bearded, having four heads (representing the four Vedas) and four arms, carrying in his hands rosary (aksha-mālā), sacred water-pot (kamaṇḍalu), and two sacrificial ladles called *śrak* and *sruva*. He is seated, officiating as a priest before the fire, or standing in a balanced posture (sama-bhaṅga). His head is crowned by matted hair coiled up (jaṭāmukuṭa). His characteristic emblem or vehicle (vāhana) is the celestial swan (haṁsa).

(2) Vishṇu is the Vedic god of considerable importance, whose 'three strides' (tri-vikramaṇa) are celebrated

in the Vedic hymns. he is so called because he spreads over everything, enters into all objects and beings (as antaryyāmi), and envelopes all (Bṛhaddevatā, 2,69, 'vishṇatēr viśāter

vā syād veveshṭer vyāpti-karmaṇah)'. He has ten incarnations (avatāra) and twenty-four worshipful forms which are popular.



VISHṆU

His iconographic representation involves dark-blue complexion (śyāma or nīla), one head, and four arms, carrying in them discus (chakra), conch (śaṁkha), mace (gadā) and lotus (padma). He wears a long and splendid garland called 'vana-mālā', and a precious gem called 'kaustubha' on the chest. His appearance is always pleasant and his aspect tranquil (śānta). He is usually represented as standing in a balanced posture (samabhaṅga). His vehicle is Garuḍa, and he is often shown with his consort, Lakshmi. When he is solitary, Lakshmi is represented by a mark on his chest called Śrī-vatsa.

(3) Rudra or Śiva, also a Vedic god of thunder and wind, is so called because everything 'sleeps' or rests in him, *Siddhānta-kaumudī*, 1032, 'sete

asmin sarvam iti 'śivah', *Uṇādi-sūtra*, 1, 153). He was in the Vedic texts identified with Agni (e.g. *Śata-patha-brāhmaṇa*, 5,3,1,10, 'agnir vai rudrah', also *Nirukta*, 10,17). His major role was as a destroyer (cf. *Atharva-veda*, 1,19,3, 'rudrah saṁhartā devah'). But in later times, he became a complete god endowed with powers of creation, preservation, destruction, obscuration and compassion.

In temples to Śiva, it is usual to find in the sanctum an aniconic liṅga representing this god. But there will be iconic and metallic representations of Śiva for purposes of procession and other rituals. When shown iconographically, he is either standing in a balanced posture (samapāda-sthānaka), or seated in paryāṅkāśana, alone or with his

consort Gauri (Pārvati). He is shown with one head, crowned by matted locks of hair (jaṭāmakuṭa) to which crecent moon is stuck and in which the river Gaṅgā is represented. He has four hands, two of which (the extra ones) carry axe (paraśu) and deer (mṛga); the other hands assume the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. Śiva is also represented in several sportive forms (līlāmūrti). His vehicle or emblem is bull (vṛshabha).

There are composite images in which all three gods are represented, like Eka-pāda-mūrti (with Śiva as the principal god) and Dattātreya (with Viṣṇu as the principal god). It is usual for temples to Śiva in South India to have separate shrines for Viṣṇu within the premises.

It is prescribed that each of the three gods must be made in superior 10 tāla measure. (viz.124 aṅgulas).

(2)

VISHṆU

Among the gods eulogized in *Rg-veda*, Viṣṇu is a prominent one and has survived to this day, receiving adoration from vast multitudes. Earliest temples to Viṣṇu known to history date three centuries before Christ. He was worshipped as Vāsudeva and Kṛṣṇa during the centuries before and after Christ. The Bhāgvata cult contributed significantly to the spread of the worship and ideology of Viṣṇu. The Vaikhānasa and Pāñcharātra divisions of Āgama stylized the iconic representations and modes of worship relevant to Viṣṇu.



VENKATESA FORM OF VISHNU

The Vishṇu of *Ṛg-veda* is celebrated for his three gigantic strides encompassing the entire universe (1,11,16;1,154,3;1,154, 4;6,69,5, etc.), for the welfare of worlds. Vishṇu is a good friend of the good folk (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') and was prevalent in that period, as is evident from several references (e.g. *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, 12,3,4,1; *Taittirīya-āraṇyaka* 10,11; *Bṛhad-devatā* 4,10; *Mahā-bhārata*, 12, 325,4 and 12, 336,14 and *Vaikhāṇāsa-smārta-sūtra*, 4,12,118-119).

(For details concerning the antiquity of Vishnu 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 Vishnu in the iconographical context are the four aspects known as Vyūhas, the twenty-four forms and the ten incarnations. The earliest available icon of Vishnu (belonging to the early Kushāṇa period) has an inscription that it is four-armed ('chaturbhujībhagavān'), 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 Vishnu, 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 Vishnu also goes back to this early period.

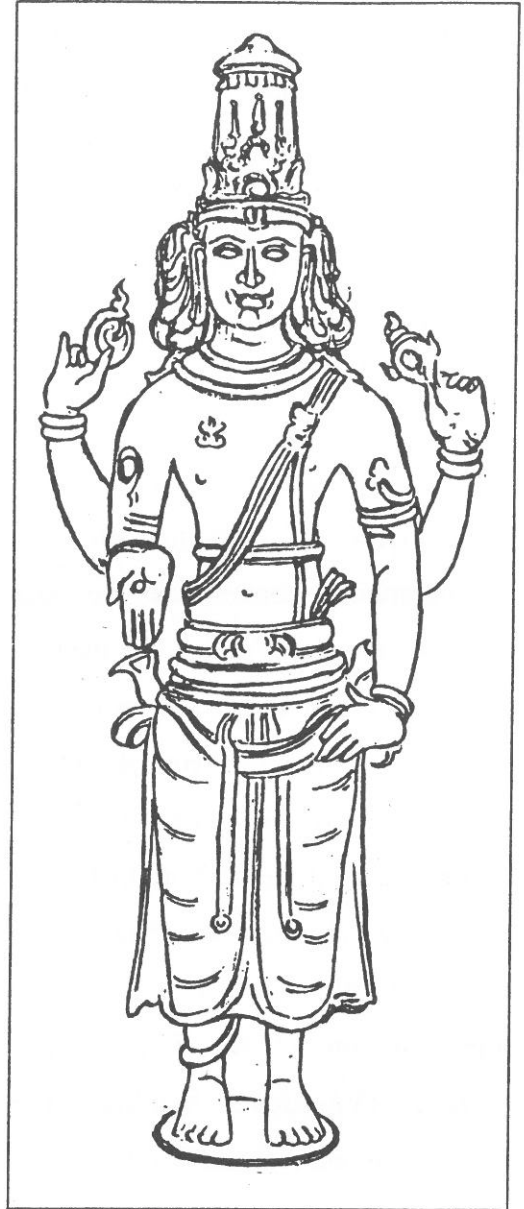
In the Vyūha ideology, Nārāyaṇa the primordial aspect is phenomenologically structured into Vāsudeva, Sankarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha forms. The symbolism of these forms will be explained later.

Each of the vyūha-figures is only two-armed. And in the syncretic representation, four-faced and eight-armed forms (like Trivikrama, Hayasīrsha, Vaikuṇṭha and Trailokyamohana) 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) Viṣṇu 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 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 Viṣṇu also date back to a distant past, and texts like



VEṆKATEŚA
(early icon)

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 chaturbhuja-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 Vishṇu*, Abhinav Publ. New Delhi, 1973).

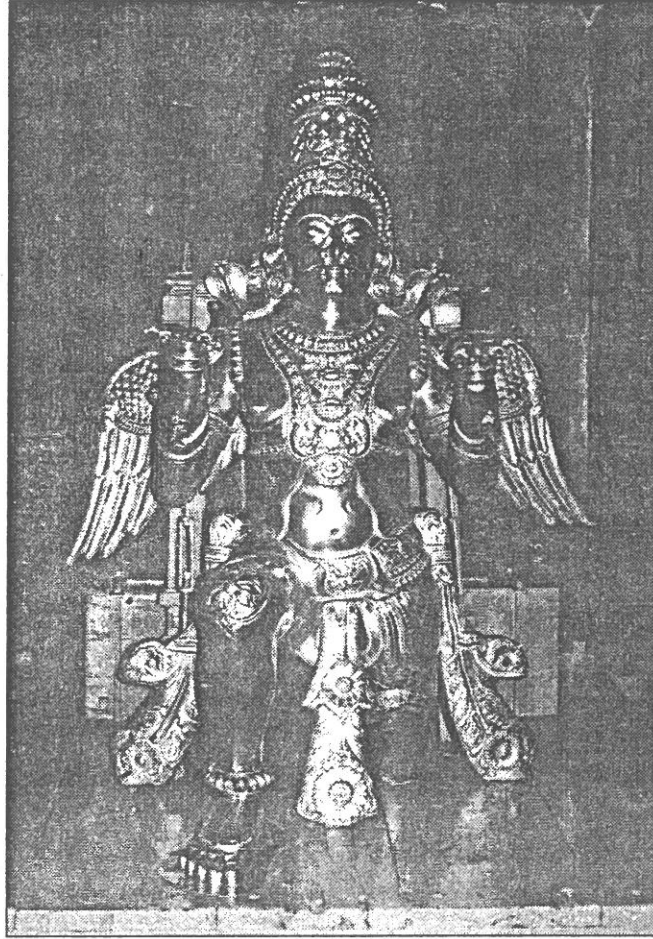
In course of time, however, icons of Vishṇu with six arms (*Sāttvata-samhitā*, 12,222, carrying sword, lotus and mace in the right hands, and bow, arrow and conch in the left hands), with eight arms (*Matsya-purāṇa*, 258,7, sword, mace, arrow and lotus in the right hands, and bow, shield, conch and discus in the left hands), with twelve arms (*Sāttvata-samhitā*, 12,225 lotus, sword, discus, arrow, mace and goad in the right hands, and conch, noose, gesture of protection, śakti, pestle-club and bow

in the left hands) and with fourteen arms (*op.cit*, 227, the above with the addition of ploughshare in one of the left hands) were mentioned in texts and also represented in icons.

The association of Garuḍa with Viṣṇu is also fairly ancient. The

inscribed votive pillar erected by Heliodorus (son of Dion and Greek ambassador from the monarch Antial 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 Śeṣha, the serpent of





Garuda-Vāhana

the primordial waters, with Vishṇu also dates back to early days. Indeed Śeṣha is another version of Samkarshaṇa with whom Vāsudeva

as Vishṇu was always associated. *Vishṇu-dharmottara* (3,820) describes Vishṇu as reclining on serpent-bed. There are numerous early sculptures



ŚEṢHA

where Vishṇu is shown as seated in lalitāsana on Śeṣha with five or seven hoods (as, for instance in Bādāmi or Aiholē). While Vishṇu reclines on Śeṣha, the form is known as Śeṣha-śāyi, whereas the form in which Vishṇu is seated on Śeṣha 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.

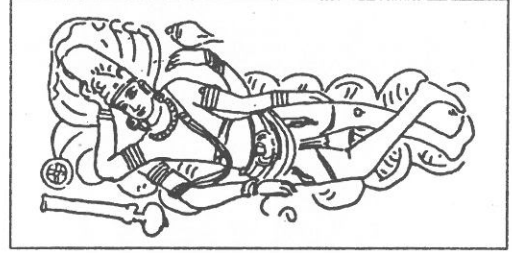
Vishṇu is undoubtedly the most popularly worshipped god in the country's pantheon; the Vaikhānasa and Pāñcharātra texts prescribe several forms in which this god is to be worshipped. There are also legends in purāṇas which occasion special forms (like Gajendra-moksha, and the ten major incarnations).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

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

Viṣṇu may also be seated on the coils of *Śeṣha*, 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 '*āsīna*'. The god may also lay down in slumber on the coils of *Śeṣha*, 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*.



ŚEṢHA-ŚĀYI (stone, Aihole)

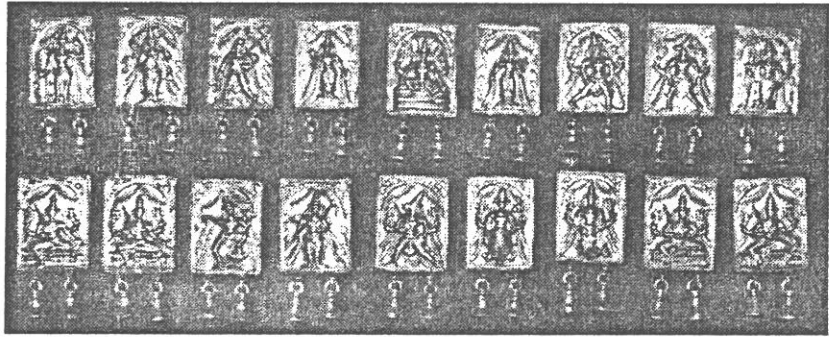
He may be represented alone (*kevala*), or in the company of his consort *Lakṣmī* (the personified primordial nature, *mūla-prakṛti*). It is quite common for images of Viṣṇu to be flanked by two goddesses, *Lakṣmī* and *Bhūdevī* (earth-goddess), on the right and left sides respectively. *Garuḍa* is represented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

(3)

FORMS OF VISHṆU



Although the incarnations assumed by Vishṇu are thirty-eight according to *Sāttvata-saṁhitā* and *Ahīrbudhnya-saṁhitā*, and twenty-two according to *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* (1,3,6,22), the major incarnations are only ten : Matsya (fish), Kūrma (tortoise), Varāha (boar), Narasimha (man-lion), Vāmana, Paraśu-rama, Śrīrama, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. The Buddha is sometimes substituted by Bala-rāma. Among them, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are very popular forms of Vishṇu, followed by Narasimha.



DAŚĀVATĀRA-VADYĀNA
(of Veṅkaṭeśvara in Tirumala)

Vishṇu is always shown wearing Kirīṭa-mukūṭa variety of crown on his head and makara-kunḍalas in his ears, and decorated with jewel-ornaments. He is draped in yellow-silken garments (pītāmbara). His complexion is blue like the atasi-flower (atasīkusuma-śyāma). His face is tranquil and cheerful (prasanna-mukha). He has broad chest and shoulders and thick neck (pīna-galoras-sthūlaṁśa-bhujah) (cf. *Bṛhat-saṁhitā*, chap 58). There will be śrīvatsa 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 ('asṭa-bhujah, chaturbhujah dvibhujā eva vā'). When he is two-armed, the right hand bestows hope and peace ('śānti-kara-

dakṣiṇa-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 ('gadā-hastaś-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



YOGESVARA

sometimes shown with four faces and twelve arms. There is a form of Śiva regarded as his sportive form, which incorporates the Viṣṇu form on his

left side. This is known as Hari-hara or Śaṅkarānārāyaṇa. A form of Viṣṇu as a solar divinity is celebrated as Sūrya-nārāyaṇa.

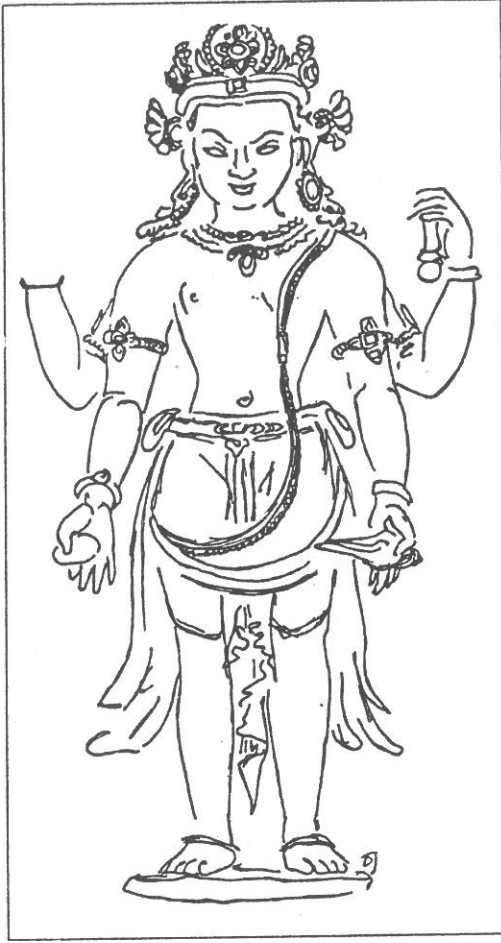
There are several forms in which Viṣṇu is worshipped, like Vyāsa, Kapila, Dattātreya, Raṅganātha, Pāṇḍuraṅga, Varada-rāja and Hayagrīva.

Durgā is also known as Nārāyaṇī, and legends speak of her as brother of Kṛṣṇa. She shares many details with Viṣṇu, including the dark complexion. The Āgamas prescribe that worship for her must be accorded in the same manner as to Viṣṇu.

Vimānāchanākālpa (20th paṭala) speaks of four forms of Viṣṇu in accordance with the four great periods of time (chatur-mūrti). In the Kṛta-yuga, the first of the periods, he is Viṣṇu, white in complexion (śveta-varṇa); in Tretā-yuga, the second, he is Mahā-Viṣṇu, golden coloured

(rukṁābha); in Dvāpara-yuga, the third, he is Sadā-Viṣṇu, red in complexion (raktābha); and finally in Kaliyuga, he is Vyāpi-nārāyaṇa, dark-complexioned (śyāma-varṇa). In all these forms, he is four-armed, carrying in his two-upper arms conch and discus, the normal right hand assuming the gesture of protection, and the corresponding left hand holding his hip (kaṭyavalambita). He is accompanied by Śrī (the goddess of prosperity) on his right side and Bhū (earth-goddess) on his left.

The five heroes of the Vṛṣṇi family (a branch of the Yādava clan), deified and worshipped by the Bhāgavatas since very early times, were iconically represented (archā) and housed in stone temples (śaila devagrha). An inscription of the



VISHṆU
(gilt copper, from Nepāl)

second century B.C. found in Besnagar mentions the erection of a garuḍa dhvaja column in honour of 'deva-deva Vāsudeva', one of the heroes

of the Vṛshṇi family. The chieftain Heliiodorus (son of Dion), an inhabitant of Texila, who erected this monument, came as an ambassador of the Greek prince Antielkidas to the court of King of Vidiśā, 'Kāśiputra-Bhāgavata'. Another inscription of Ghosunḍi (Rājāsthān) belonging to the century before Christ mentions two of the heroes of the Vṛshṇi family, Saṁkarshaṇa and Vasudeva. A temple with an enclosure called Nārāyaṇa vāṭikā ('pūja-śilā-prākāro nārāyaṇa-vāṭika') was constructed by the prince Gājāyana-pāraśarī-putra who also describes himself as a 'bhāgavata'. And the two heroes to whom the shrine was built are described as 'honoured ones, unrestrained ones and lords of all' ('bhagavadbhyām Saṁkarshaṇa- Vāsudevābhyām anihatābhyam sarveśvarābhyām'). J.C.

Ghosh interprets the expression 'pūjā-śilā' in the inscription as a 'śālagrāma' which represented these heroes.

The Morā well inscription (assigned to the first century A.D. and found near the present Mathurā city) refers to the five heroes of the Vṛshṇi family ('bhagavatām vṛshṇīnām pañcha-vīṛāṇām'), whose stone icons ('pratimāh'), glowing and exceedingly handsome ('jvalata iva parama-vapushā'), were installed in a stone temple ('śaila-deva-grihe') as objects of worship ('archā-deśam'). (El.vol.XXIV No.27.1) Dr. H.Luders and Aisdorf identified the five heroes as Baladeva, Akrūra, Anāḍṛṣhti, Sāraṇa and Viḍūratha. On the basis of *Vāyu purāṇa*, the five heroes thus honoured are Baladeva (Saṅkarshaṇa),

Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa), Sāmba (son of Vāsudeva and Jāmbavatī), Pradyumna (son of Vāsudeva and Rukmiṇī), and Aniruddha (son of Pradyumna). These five were together known as 'heroes of a family' (pañchaite varṇśa-virāh prakīrtitāh). And the same text explains that they were originally human beings but deified as deities ('manushya-prakṛtidevāh').

The Bhāgavata cult had what came to be known as the 'doctrine of heroes' (vīra-vāda). Besides the five 'heroes' of the Vṛshṇi family (varṇśa-vīras), the doctrine counted also seven 'atirathas' (Rauhiṇeya, Vāsudeva, Sāmba, Chārudesṇa, Chakra-deva, Sātyaki and his brother) and seven 'mahārathas' (Kaṅka, Śaṅku Kunti etc.) all of them belonging to the Vṛshṇi family. Pāṇini refers to the

tribe Vṛshṇi (4,1,114' sahyandhaka
vṛshṇi-kurubhyaś cha') along with the
tribes Andhakas and Kurus; and his
commentator Patañjali mentions three
leaders of the Vṛshṇi-tribe: Vāsudeva,

Baladeva and Vishvaksena. Patañjali
also refers to Vāsudeva as the younger
brother of Baladeva (saṁkarshaṇa-
dvitīyasya balam kṛshṇasya
vardhatām).



Among the five heroes, Saṁkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva became most important and received widespread worship in centuries prior to the Christian era. The 'vīra-vāda' was incorporated into the Nārayaṇa cult (*Mahābhārata*, Śāntiparva, Nārayaṇīya section). Saṁkarshaṇa (identified with Śeṣha, Ananta, Nāga and Rudra) is credited with having taught the Bhāgavata doctrine (which integrates 'Vīra-vāda' of the Sāttvatas and the Nārayaṇa cult of the ekāntins) at the end of the Dvāpara age (cf. *Mahābhārata*, 6,62,42).

Saṁkarshana and Vāsudeva are said to be incarnations of the white and black hairs of Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) respectively (ibid; 1,189,3). With the omission of Sāmba, the other four 'heroes' of the Vṛshṇi family were

grafted into the vyūha framework with Vasudeva as more important than his elder brother Saṁkarshaṇa.

The four heroes were now regarded as emanations from Parā-Vāsudeva. From Para-Vāsudeva emerges Vyūha-Vāsudeva (or Shāḍguṇya-vigraha; the hero of the Vṛshṇi clan), from whom Saṁkarshaṇa (viz. Baladeva, another hero of the same clan) comes forth as a secondary emanation. From Saṁkarshaṇa emanated Pradyumna, and from Pradyumna Aniruddha.

The worship of Vāsudeva and Saṁkarshaṇa, two of the 'pañcha-vīra' group, was popular in the country as early as the fourth or fifth century before Christ. Saṁkarshaṇa was frequently worshipped as a snake-

god. His cult was at one time more widely spread than Vāsudeva's. But in course of time, Vāsudeva as Kṛṣṇa became the popular god, pushing his brother Saṁkarshaṇa (Baladeva, Balabhadra) to a secondary position.

The Vaikhānasa text, *Vimānārchanākālpa* (paṭala 2) prescribes that the icons of 'pañcha-vīra' must be installed in the centre of the village or in its outskirts in any quarter ('pañcha-vīrāṇām sthānam grama-madhye bāhye, dikshu vidikshu vā').

(4)

THE VYŪHA CONTEXT

The four are the primordial forms of Viṣṇu extolled in the Pañcharātra texts as significant and

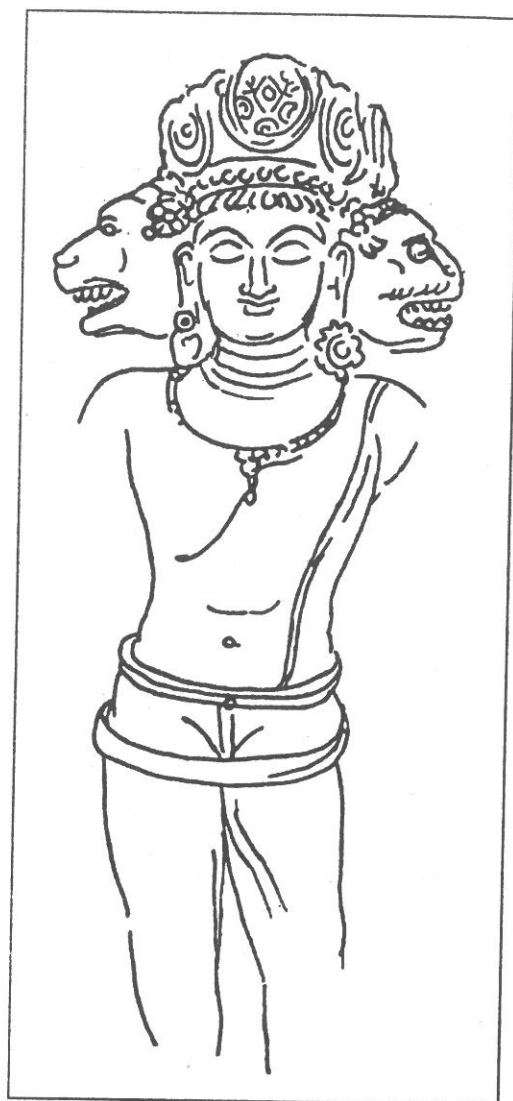


CHATURMŪRTI with his hand on chakra-purusha (from Kashmir)

emanatory aspects (vyūha). The conceptual context of these forms relates to the six divine attributes (śaḍ-guṇa): gnosis (jñāna), lordship (aiśvarya); potency (śakti), energy, (bala), valour, (vīrya) and splendour (tejas). The six qualities are grouped

into three sets; the first set comprising the first three qualities, the second set the remaining three qualities, and the third set formed of three pairs, knowledge and energy, lordship and valour, potency and splendour. All the six qualities are manifest in the first of the four forms, known as Vāsudeva. The three pairs of qualities making the third set are manifest in three other forms respectively known as Saṅkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

The Pāñchartra texts declare that the four forms are in fact four aspects of the same Godhead, and suggest a sequence in the four emanatory forms in the context of creation: first Vāsudeva, then Saṅkarshana, followed by Pradyumna and finally Aniruddha (cf. *Nāradiya-saṁhitā*, 1.33cf).



CHATURMŪRTI (from Kashmir)

Piercing the dense darkness that existed prior to creation, from Viṣṇu

emanated Vāsudeva, white in body-colour and complete in all the four aspects (kalā). He had four arms, representing the four dimensions of the created universe: emergence (sṛṣṭi), maintenance (sthiti), dissolution (saṁhāra) and emancipation (mukti). From Vāsudeva's own body, another body was dragged out (ākṛṣhya tu svakād dehāt), viz Saṅkarshaṇa. Red in body-colour, he too was complete in all the four aspects (chatuskalā). Based on Vāsudeva, he performed severe penance and produced Pradyumna, the third emanatory form. He was the universal soul (viśvātmā), and was four armed, carrying conch, discus, mace and lotus, symbolizing the four dimensions of the created universe. Pradyumna in turn contemplated and produced from half of his own body

(dehārdhāt) Aniruddha, the lord of the universe and master of yogins.

All four of these forms are indeed one with Vāsudeva (Vāsudevātmaka). And they were ritualistically named Paramahamṣa (or Puruṣa), Vyoma (or Satya), Nāda (or Achyuta), and Hamsa (or Nārāyaṇa), respectively. They were also said to represent the four great time periods, viz. Kṛta-yuga, Tretā-yuga, Dvāpara-yuga and Kali-yuga respectively (*Nāradiya-saṁhitā*, 1, 50-51). Their feminine counterparts were forms of Lakṣmī: Śānti for Vāsudeva, Śrī for Saṅkarshaṇa, Sarasvatī for Pradyumna and Rati for Aniruddha (*ibid*, 52-55).

The ten incarnations (avatāra) of Viṣṇu are accommodated within

the four emanatory forms; Vāmana and Kṛṣṇa are manifestations of the Vāsudeva form; Matsya, Kūrma and the two Rāmas (Jāmadagni and Dāśarathi) and Kalki of Saṅkarshaṇa; Buddha of Pradyumna; and Varāha and Nṛsimha of Aniruddha (ibid, 1,57-60).

The texts prescribe that icons of these four forms must be installed separately (chatasro mūrtayah pratishtāpya prthak), and that they must assume four bodily postures; Vāsudeva, standing (sthānaka); Saṅkarshaṇa, seated (āsīna), Pradyumna, recumbent (śayana); and Aniruddha, in the moving posture (yāna-karmāṇi).

(1) Vāsudeva may be represented either as two-armed or as



CHATURMŪRTI
from Kashmir, now in Berlin Museum

four-armed. This primal divine form (ādyam bhagvad-rūpam) is white in complexion like snow. He is pacific in aspect (saumya-vaktra), and wears yellow silken garment (pīta-kausēya-vasana), according to *Lakshmī-tantra*, or red garments, according to *Vishvakṣena-sahmitā*. It is more usual

to show him as four-armed. His normal right hand assumes the gesture of protection (or holds a lotus), the corresponding left hand holds the conch (śaṁkha), the upper right hand carries the discus (chakra), and the corresponding left hand carries the mace (gadā) or a scripture (pustaka) (*Lakshmītantra*. 10. 29-30). *Vishṇu-dharmottara* (3,85,11-12) prescribes that the mace must be shown in a lady's form and the discus as a man. His chest is marked by the Śrīvatsa mark.

When represented on the Vimāna (superstructure over the sanctum), he faces the western direction.

(2) Saṁkarshaṇa (also known as Bala-bhadra) is lustrous like the morning sun (bāla-sūrya-pratīkāśa,

viz. pink), or white like snow (tushāra-nichayākāra), and wears blue garments. He wears ear-ornament only for one ear (kuṇḍalaika-vibhūshita). He is four-armed, and carries in his hands plough (lāṅgala) instead of discus, pestle (muśala) instead of mace (*Vishṇu-dharmottara*, op.cit.22 and cf. *Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā* 21,5). Some texts substitute plough with arrow (astra) and pestle with sword (khadga).

When represented on Vimāna, he faces the southern direction.

(3) Pradyumna is red in body-colour, or dark-green like sprouts of grass (dūrvāṅkura-śyāma) (according to *Vishṇu-dharmottara* op.cit), and wears red silken garments (*Lakshmītantra*, 38,56). He is distinguished by his crocodile-banner

(makara-d^hvaja). He may be two-armed or four-armed. When two-armed, he holds a bow and an arrow in his hands (*Hayaśirsha-saṁhitā*, 21,9) and when four-armed, he holds discus (chakra) and bow (dhanu) in his right and left upper hands respectively, and his normal hands assume the gestures of boon-bestowal and protection (varadābhaya). Alternatively, he holds in his four hands conch, discus, mace (daṇḍa) and lotus. He may also hold sword (khaḍga) and spear (śūla) in his hands. *Vishṇu-dharmottara* prescribes that bow must be substituted for the usual discus, and arrow for the mace; and the other hands must hold plough and pestle (*op.cit.*, 24-25).

When represented on the Vimāna, he faces the western direction.

(4) Aniruddha is dark-blue like cloud in body-colour (*nīla-jīmūta saṅkāśa*) and wears yellow garments. He is, alternatively, pink like lotus-petal in body-colour and he wears red garments (*Vishṇu-dharmottara, op.cit.*, 26). He is accompanied by his consorts, Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī. He is four-armed, and carries in his hands the bow called Śārṅga, arrows, and the gestures of boon-bestowal and protection. According to *Vishvakṣena-saṁhitā* (11,25-26), however, he carries in his upper hands conch (left) and discus (right), and in his normal hands the mace (left) and gesture of protection (abhaya). *Vishṇu-dharmottara* suggests that he must have shield (charma) instead of discus, and sword (asi) instead of mace (*op.cit.*, 26)

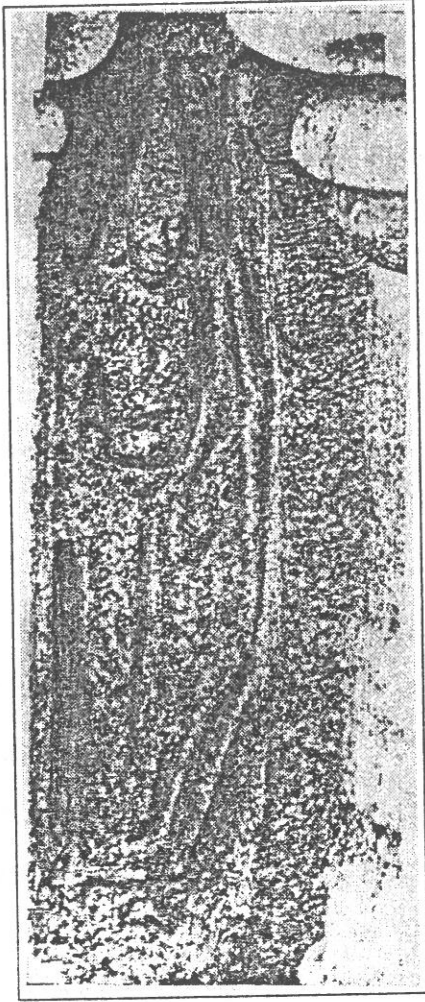
The form may also be represented as recumbent upon Śeṣha (*anantopari śāyinaṃ*), with Śrīdevī to his right and Puṣṭi-devī to his left. In this posture, he may be two-armed or four-armed.

When represented on the Vimāna, he faces the northern direction.

In the Āgama-siddhānta division of the Pāñcharātra adherents, importance is given to the worship of all these four forms of Viṣṇu (*chatur-mūrti-pradhāna*). In the sanctum of the temples belonging to this tradition, all the four forms are iconographically represented in identical shape, and on the same pedestal. They are only two-armed, and they carry no weapons; the arms

must hang down at the sides. They are all regarded as white in complexion, and wear white garments. Worship is accorded equally to all of them. And the usual sequences of food-offering (*bali-dāna*), daily procession (*nityotsava*), rites of sanctification (*pavitrotsava*) and ceremonial conducting to bed (*śayanotsava*) are omitted in the worship of these four forms. The deities are not accompanied by their consorts.

In the northern parts of the country, there is a representation of Viṣṇu, which was very popular in the medieval times. Known as Chatur-mūrti or Vaikuṇṭha, this is a composite icon of the four emanatory forms. *Viṣṇu-dharmottara* (3,47,8-18) contains an elaborate account of the



symbolism involved. The image has four faces (symbolizing the four guṇas,

bala, jñāna, aiśvarya and śakti, and the forms representing them, Vāsudeva, Śaṁkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha respectively). Each face has two arms (dvau dvau bhujau prati-vaṅtram): Vāsudeva is known by the hands carrying discus and mace (chakra-gadā, representing puruṣa and prakṛti, sun and moon); Śaṁkarshaṇa by the hands that carry pestle (muśala, representing death or mṛtyu) and plough (representing time or kāla); Pradyumna by the hands that hold bow (chāpa, representing Sāṁkhya) and arrow (bāṇa, representing Yoga); and Aniruddha by the hands that carry shield (charma, standing for the veil of ignorance that brings forth the world, 'ajñānāvaraṇam jagat-sṛṣṭi-prayojanam') and sword (khaḍga,

standing for renunciation or vairāgya that cuts asunder the veil of ignorance and its bondage).

The same text prescribes (3,44,9-13) that the image of Chaturmūrti must be made as mounted on Garuḍa, as bedecked with all ornaments, with the Kaustubha gem adorning the chest, and as wearing splendid yellow garments. He must have four faces, and arms twice that number (eight). The face that is turned to the viewer (viz. front, or the face that is to the east) is a human one, pacific in nature (saumya); this represents the Vāsudeva form and among the guṇas, bala. The face to the right (viz. on the southern side) is that of Narasimha, representing Saṅkarshaṇa and Jñāna. The face to

the left (viz. on the northern side) is that of a boar (Varāha), representing Pradyumna and aiśvarya. The face to the back (viz. on the western side) is terrific (Kapila i.e., raudra), representing Aniruddha and śakti.

Jayākhya-saṁhitā (6th paṭala 71-76), calls this form Vaikuṇṭha, the creator and lord of the universe (jagat-srasṭāram īśvaram), and describes it as four-faced but four-armed (unlike *Vishṇu-dharmottara* which prescribes eight arms for this form.) The face in front is that of Vaikuṇṭha (probably identical with Vāsudeva), and the other three faces are as mentioned above. *Rūpa-maṇḍana* (3,52,54), which text also knows this form as Vaikuṇṭha, gives it four faces and eight arms.

The face in front is that of a human being (*agratah purushākāram*); the face to the right is that of Narasimha; the face at the back is that of a woman (*aparam strīmukhākāram*) and the face to the left is that of Varāha. The eight arms carry mace, sword, arrow and discus on the right side, and conch, shield, bow and lotus on the left side.

When the face at the back is known as Kapila, it is made fierce-looking and tawny-red in colour (hence called *kapila*). It is identified with Agni. When the face is that of a woman it probably represents Prakṛti, even as the face is front represents Purusha. The other two faces probably suggest the two familiar incarnations (Narasimha and Varāha).



GĀYATRI
(Chera Style)



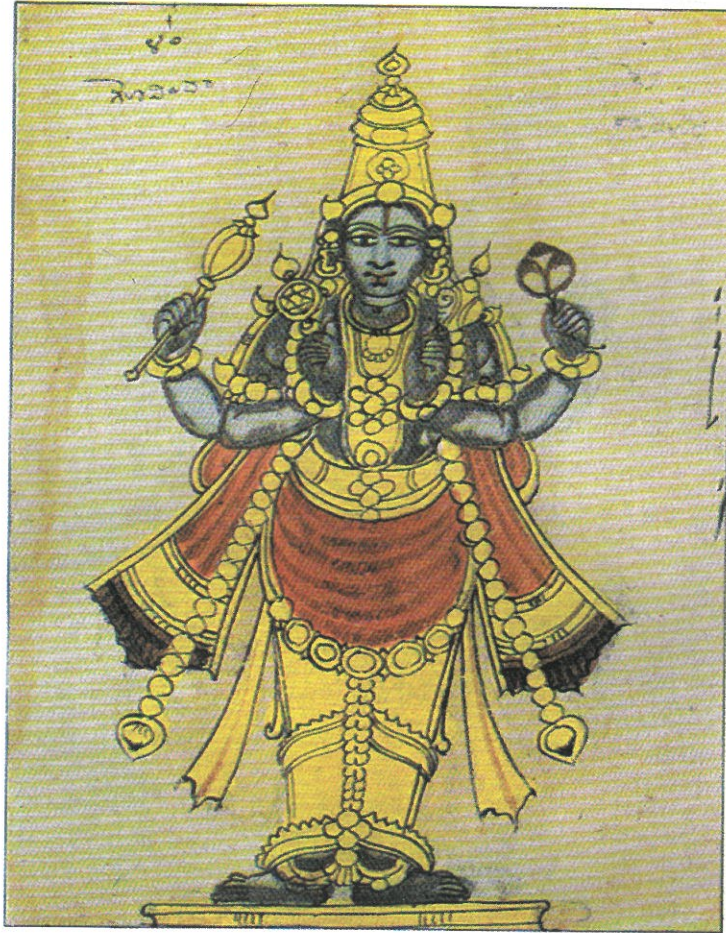
Keśava



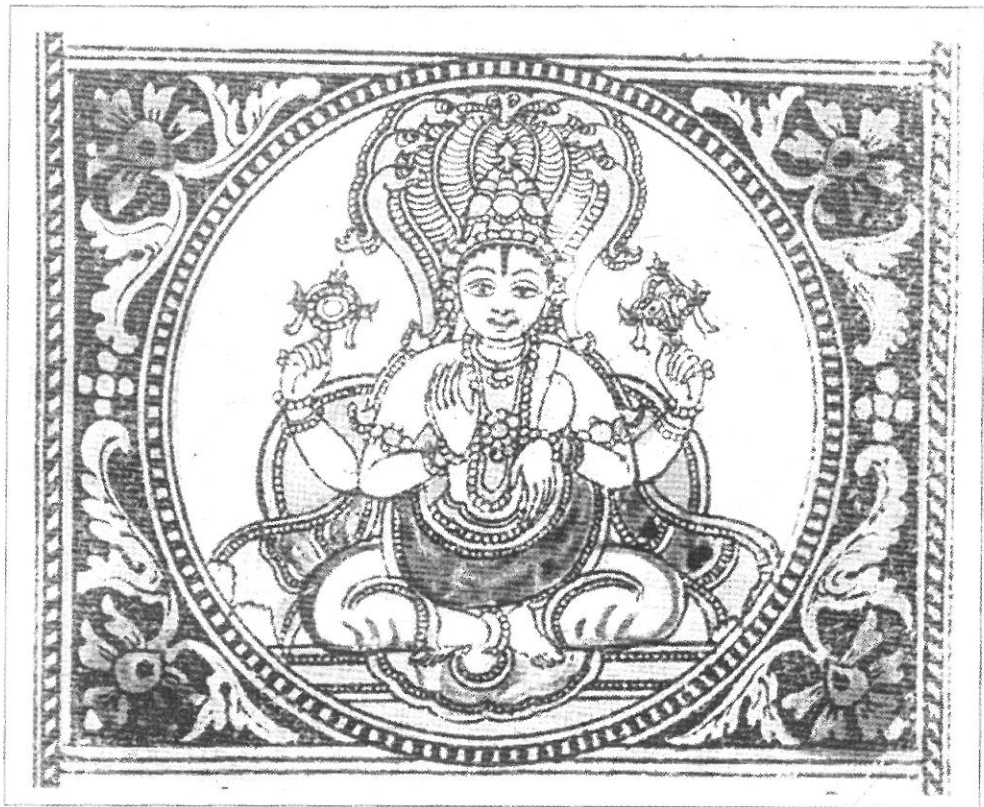
Nārāyaṇa



Mādhava



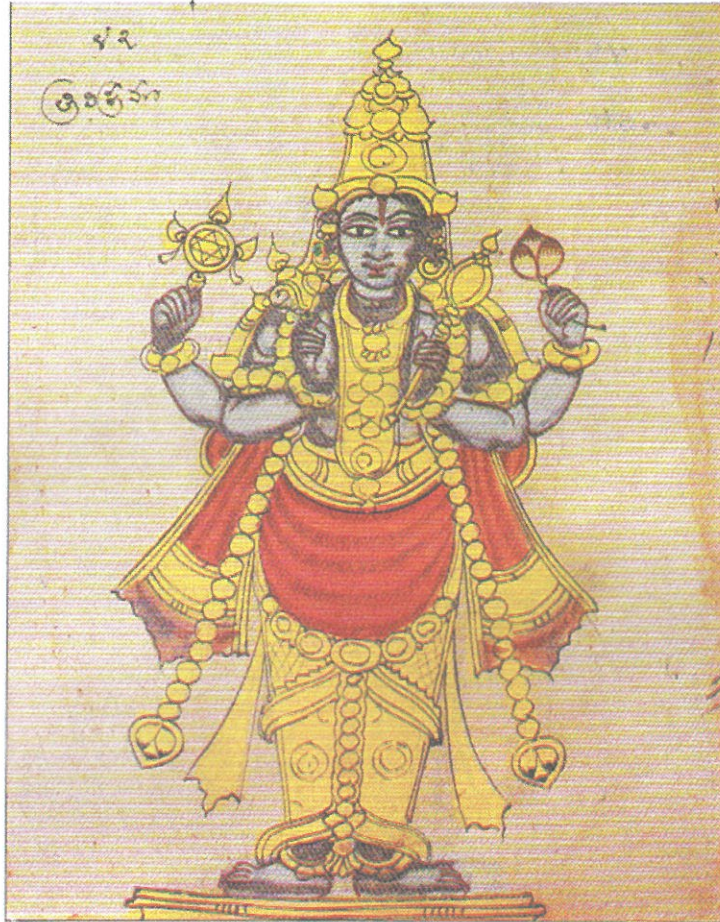
Govinda



Vishṇu



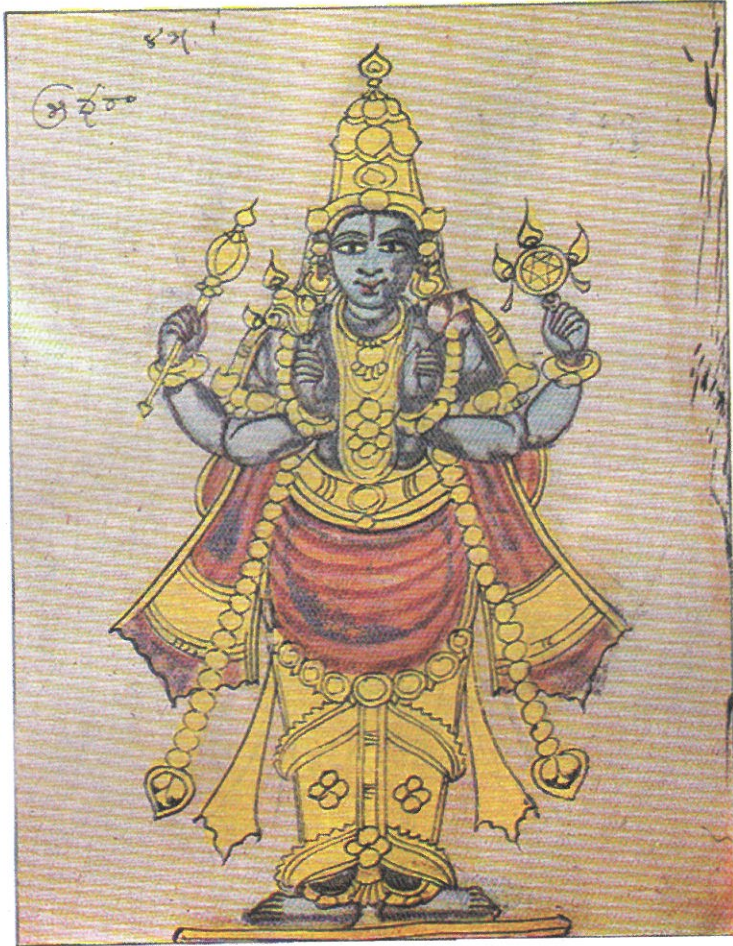
Madhusūdana



Trivikrama



Vāmana



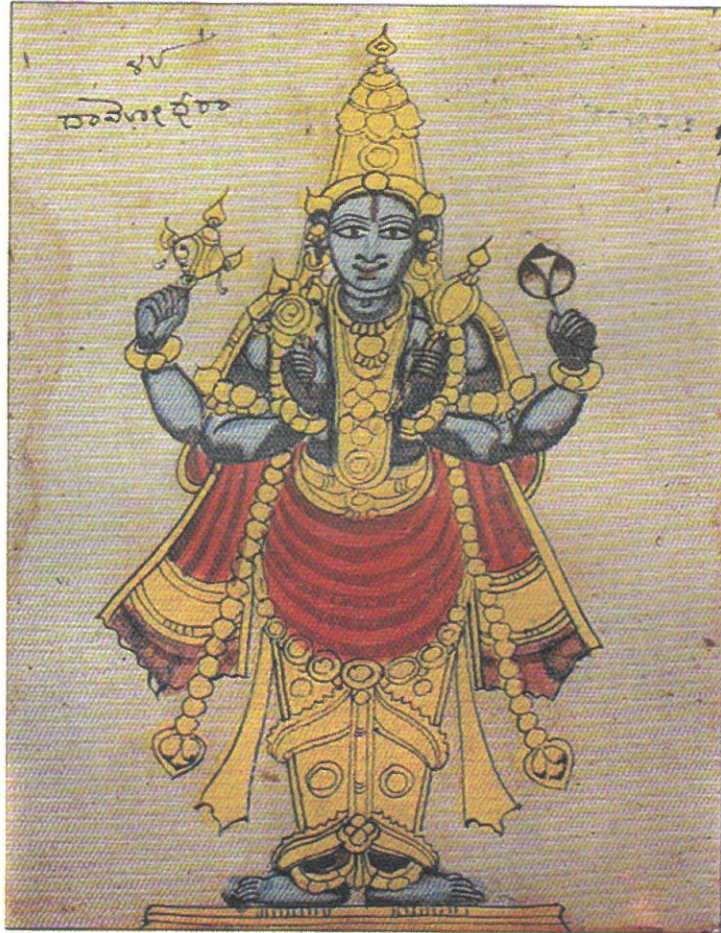
Śrīdhara



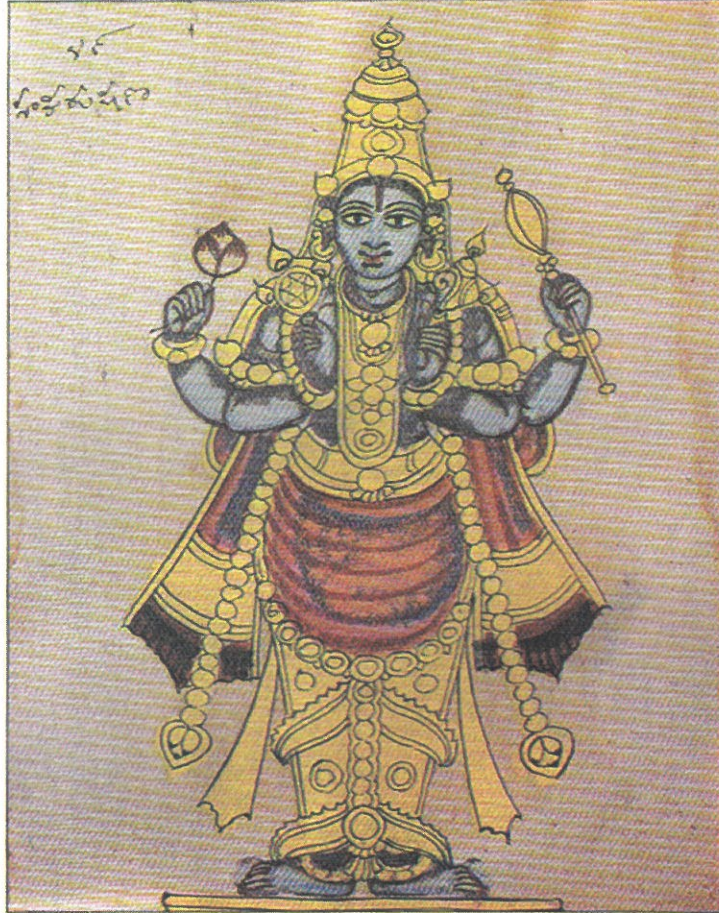
Hṛshikeśa



Padmanābha



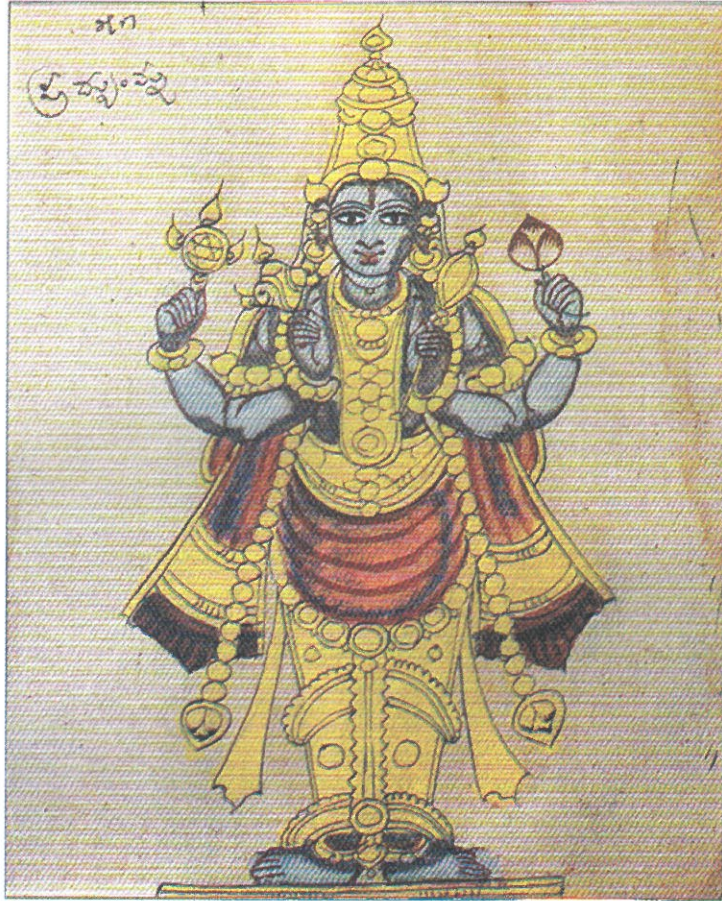
Dāmodara



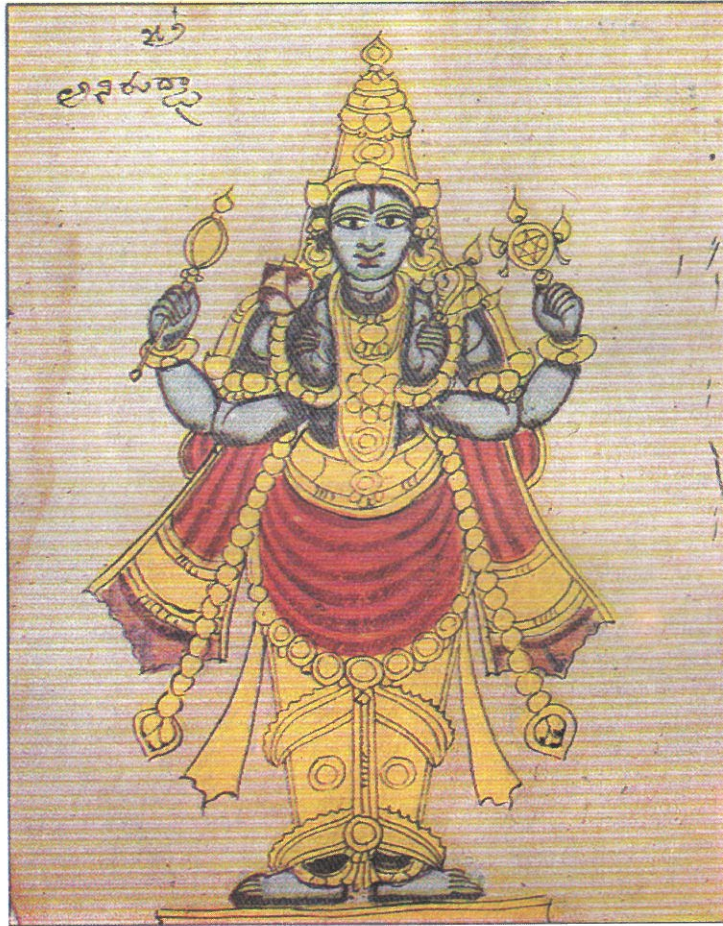
Samkarshana



Vāsudeva



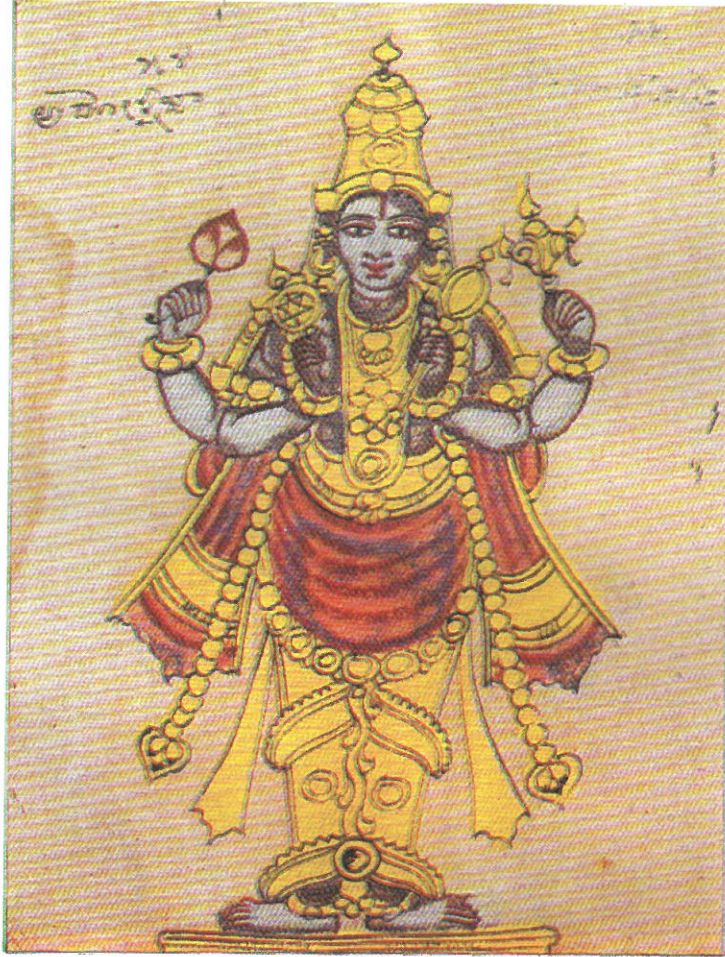
Pradyumna



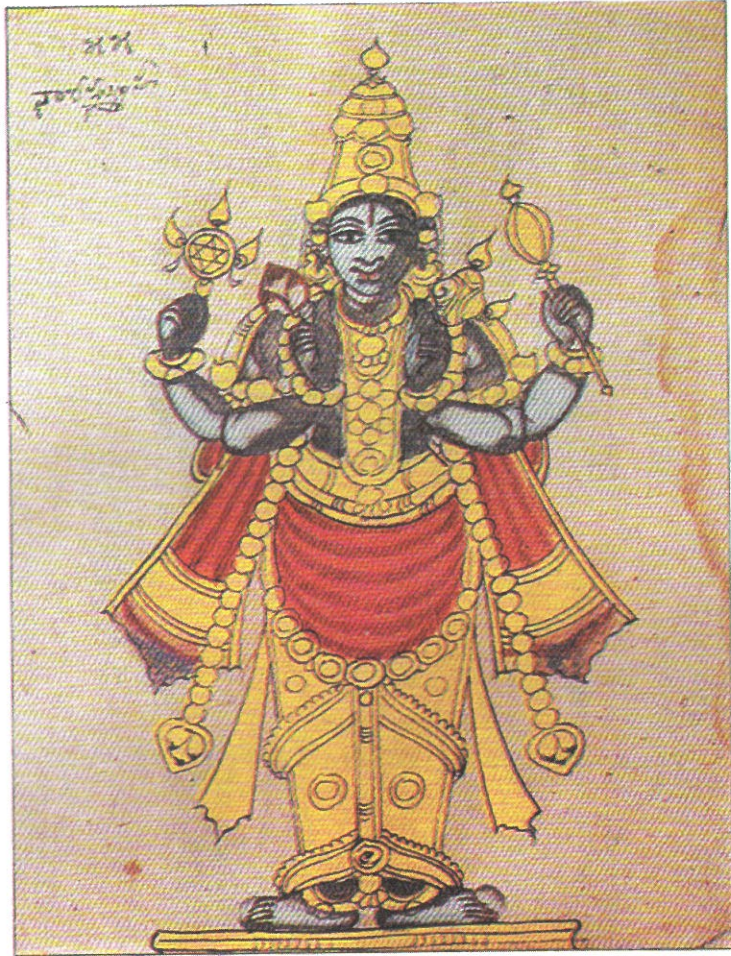
Aniruddha



Purushottama



Adhokshaja



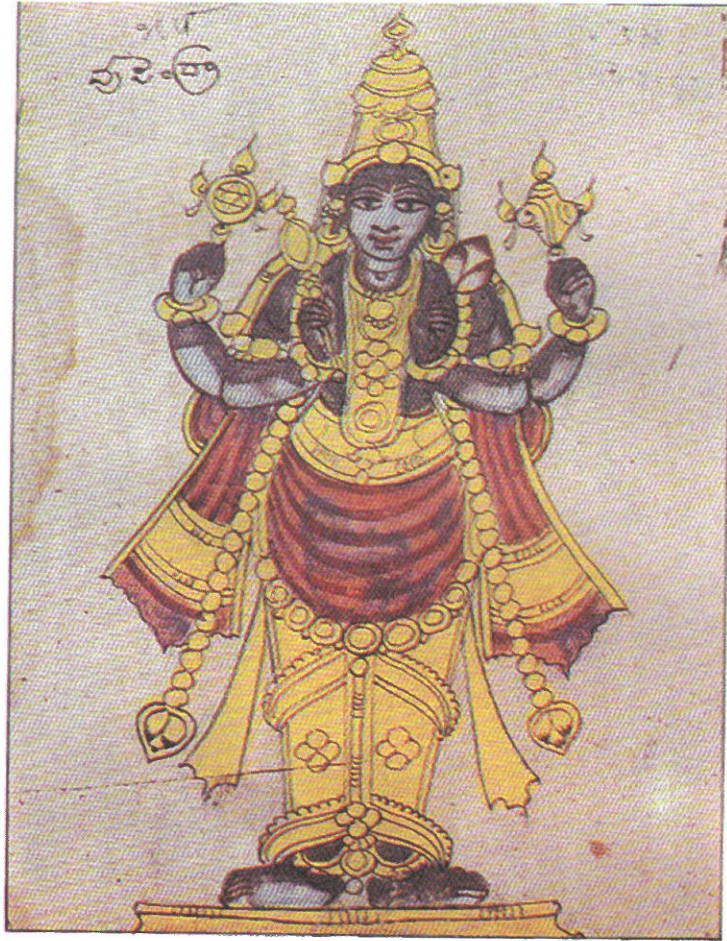
Nārasimha



Achyuta



Janārdana



Upendra



Hari



Śrī-Kṛishṇa

(5)

CHATURVIMŚATI-MŪRTI

Twenty-four classical forms of Viṣṇu (the names of which are daily recited by a large section of the Hindu population), which are distinguished from each other mainly by the arrangement of the four characteristic weapons of Viṣṇu, viz., conch (śaṁkha), discus (chakra), mace (gadā) and lotus (padma) (cf. *Abhilashitārtha-chintāmaṇi*, 3, 726, 'āyudhānām viparyāsāc chaturshvapi cha bāhushu'). The four weapons symbolize the universal processes relevant to the divinity: lotus symbolizes creation (sṛṣṭi-bījam tathā padmam), discus preservation (chakram sthiti-nibandhanam), mace dissolution (gadā saṁhāram) and conch emancipation of the soul from

bondage (śaṁkham mukti-nibandhanam) (*Parama-saṁhitā*, 3, 17; cf. also *Bṛhat-brahma-saṁhitā*, 1, 12, 102, 103).

According to the Pāñcharātra doctrine, each of the four vyūha or primary emanatory forms of Viṣṇu bring forth three other forms, which are regarded as vyūhāntara or secondary (and also emanatory); (1) From Vāsudeva emanate Keśava, Nārāyaṇa, and Mādhava; (2) from Saṅkarsaḥaṇa emanate Govinda, Viṣṇu and Madhusūdana; (3) from Pradyumna emanate Trivikrama, Vāmana and Śṛidhara; and (4) from Aniruddha emanate Hṛshikeśa, Padmanābha and Dāmodara. The twelve secondary emanations are together called 'mūrtyantara' or 'dvādaśa-mūrti',

Form these twelve secondary forms are produced eight other forms, which are further manifestations of the four primary vyūha-mūrtis; Purushottama, Adhokshaja, Nārasimha, Achyuta, Janārdana, Upendra, Hari and Kṛṣṇa. Thus, the four primary 'vyūha' forms, the twelve 'mūrtiyantara' forms, and the eight further emanatory forms together constitute the twenty-four forms known as Chaturvīṃśati-mūrti.

It is believed that each of the letters of the celebrated Gāyatri hymn (consisting of twenty-four letters) is represented by one of the twenty-four forms of Viṣṇu. And while performing the daily ritual of sandhyā, it is customary to recite the names of these twenty-four forms and consecrate the twenty-four spots in the body (cf. *Tantra-sāra*, 1,43,44).

Gāyatrī-sāra-saṃgraha identifies the twenty-four letters of the mantra with dieties presiding over the letters (abhimāni-devatā) and names of Viṣṇu:

1.	त	Agni	Keśava
2.	त्स	Prajāpati	Nārāyaṇa
3.	वि	Soma	Mādhava
4.	तु	Īśāna	Govinda
5.	र्व	Savitṛ	Viṣṇu
6.	रे	Bṛhaspati	Madhusūdana
7.	णि	Paitṛ-deva	Trivikrama
8.	यं	Bhaga	Vāmana
9.	भ	Aryamā	Śrīdhara
10.	गो	Sāvitrī	Hṛshikeśa
11.	दे	Tvashtṛ	Padmanābha
12.	व	Pūshan	Dāmodara
13.	स्य	Indra	Saṃkarshaṇa
14.	धी	Agni	Vāsudeva
15.	म	Vāyu	Pradyumna
16.	हि	Mitrā-Varuṇa	Aniruddha
17.	धि	Bhrātṛdeva	Purushottama
18.	यो	Viśvedeva	Adhokshaja
19.	यो	Viṣṇu	Nārasimha
20.	नः	Vāsava	Achyuta
21.	प्र	Tuṣṭāba	Janārdana
22.	चो	Kubera	Upendra
23.	द	Dasra	Hari
24.	यात्	Brahma	Śrī-Kṛṣṇa

Gāyatrī-tantra (1,214) insists that each letter must be contemplated upon:

वर्णानां चिन्तनं ध्यानं सम्यक् पापप्रणाशनम् ॥

While the adherents of the *Tantra-sāra* tradition held that the basic forms of all the twenty-four deities are identical but for the order of weapons held in their hands (mūla-rūpa-savarṇakāh), and that all of them must be contemplated upon as possessed of the colour of the ruddy dawn, several Pāñcharātra texts describe the forms as varying in body-colour and in the colour of the garments worn, besides in the order of the weapons held. There are slight variations in the details furnished by the texts which deal with the twenty-four forms, like *Padma-purāṇa* (Pātāla-khaṇḍa), *Skanda-purāṇa* (Kāśi-khaṇḍa), *Agni-purāṇa*, *Nārada-pāñcharātra*, *Bṛhat-brahma-saṁhitā*, *Rūpa-maṇḍana*, *Tantra-sāra* and *Nirṇaya-sindhu*. But the account that follows is what is generally accepted.

The order of the twenty-four forms gives here is also what is in vogue in the country. But this appears to be based on the *Agni-purāṇa* account. The earlier practice, however, seems to have been different, and more orderly in its enumeration. *Skānda-purāṇa*, and, following it, *Tantra-sāra* take conch (śaṁkha) as the principal weapon (for it symbolizes emancipation, which is the goal of all worship) and which is the first among the four weapons in the customary listing, ('śaṁkha-chakra-gadā-padma') and make four groups; śaṁkha in the upper right hand, śaṁkha in the upper left hand, śaṁkha in the lower left hand and śaṁkha in the lower right hand (in circumambulatory order, prādakṣiṇya-krama). In each of the four groups, six forms are accommodated, with

varying orders of the other three weapons. The six orders are: krama (serial order, omitting śamkha, the remaining three: chakra-gadā-padma); vyutkrama (reverse order, viz. padma-gadā-chakra); padmādi-krama (beginning with padma, viz., padma-chakra-gadā); gadādi-vyutkrama (reverse order beginning with gadā, viz., gadā-chakra-padma); ardha-krama (the first two in serial order, viz. gadā-padma, thus omitting śamkha, the order would be chakra-gadā-padma); and sântara (serial order from the middle, viz. gadā-padma-chakra). Six forms in each of the four groups would thus give twenty-four forms.

But the more usual order of the twenty-four forms is given-below. All the forms are in a standing posture without bends (sama-sthānaka), pacific

in countenance (saumya-vaktra), and four-armed (chatur-bhuja). They wear the characteristic emblems of Viṣṇu like the tall crown (kirīṭa), garland of wild flowers (vana-mālā), and the Kaustubha gem on the chest. The forms are bedecked with the usual ornaments (like wrist-lets, arm-lets, necklaces, ear-pieces, and loin-chain), and wear yellow silken garments (pītāmbara). While the acutal forms are solitary images, there is a textual association with their feminine counterparts, who are all so many forms of Lakshmī.

The names given to the forms appear to be arbitrary, for there is no correspondence between the meanings implied in the names and the peculiar nature of the forms. For instance, names like Trivikrama,

Vāmana, Narasimha and Kṛṣṇa have no suggestion whatever of the familiar iconographic representations of these forms of Viṣṇu. It would appear that among the thousand names of Viṣṇu, given in the 'Viṣṇu-sāhasra-nāma' section of *Mahābhārata*, twenty-four have been selected to indicate the vyūha, mūrtiyantara and the further emanatory forms of Viṣṇu.

The major detail for the identity of the forms is, as said earlier, the arrangement of the four weapons of Viṣṇu in the four hands. While indicating the specific weapons in each of the forms, the order known as 'circumambulatory' (prādakṣiṇya) is followed. Some texts begin with the weapon carried in the normal right hand and go on to the weapons carried in the upper right hand, in the upper left hand and the normal left hand in order (dakṣiṇādhah karāt

kramāt). But the order given here begins with the upper right hand, and goes on to the upper left hand, normal left hand and finally the normal right hand. This is because the first form known as Keśava carries the weapons in the familiar and conventional order of 'śaṁkha-chakra-gadā-padma' and śaṁkha (the weapon with which the enumeration should begin) is held in the upper right hand.

(1) Keśava : The order of the weapons is Śaṁkha-Chakra-Gadā Padma; the body-colour is golden (suvarṇa); and the form of Lakṣmī associated with the form is Śrīdevī, or Kīrti according to *Mantra-mahodadhi* (14th taranga) following *Gautamīya-tantra*;

(2) Nārāyaṇa: Padma-Gadā-Chakra-Śaṁkha; dark blue (śyāma); Lakṣmī (Kānti);

(3) Mādhava; Chakra-Śaṁkha-Padma-Gadā; crystal-white (sphāṭika); Kamalā (Tusṭi);

(4) Govinda; Gadā-Padma-Śaṁkha-Chakra; dark coloured (kṛshṇa); Padmā (Pushiṭi);

(5) Viṣṇu; Padma-Śaṁkha-Chakra-Gadā; white (gaura, kiṁjalka); Padminī (Dhṛti);

(6) Madhusūdana; Śaṁkha-Padma-Gadā-Chakra; lotus-red (aruṇāmbuja); Kamalālayā (Śānti);

(7) Trivikrama : Gadā-Chakra-Śaṁkha-Padma; peacock-blue coloured (śikhi-nibha); Ramā (Kriyā);

(8) Vāmana; Chakra-Gadā-Padma-Śaṁkha; dark coloured (śyāma); Vṛshākapī (Dayā);

(9) Śrīdhara; Chakra-Gadā-Padma-Śaṁkha; yellow (haridrā); Dhanyā (Medhā);

(10) Hṛshīkeśa : Chakra-Padma-Śaṁkha-Gadā; lightning hue (taḍit); Maṅgalā (Harshā);

(11) Padmanābha; Padma-Chakra-Gadā-Śaṁkha; dark-coloured (ghana-śyāma); Buddhi (Śraddhā);

(12) Dāmodara : Śaṁkha-Gadā-Chakra-Padma; yellow (haridrā); Indirā (Lajjā);

(13) Saṅkarshaṇa; Śaṁkha-Padma-Chakra-Gadā; Red (rakta) or white (śveta); Hariṇī (Sarasvatī);

(14) Vāsudeva; Śaṁkha-Chakra-Padma-Gadā; white (śveta); Dakṣiṇā (Lakṣmī);

(15) Pradyumna : Śaṁkha-Gadā-Padma-Chakra; golden (svarṇa); Nityā (Prīti);

(16) Aniruddha; Gadā-Śaṁkha-Padma-Chakra; dark (śyāma); Ānandā (Rati);

(17) Purushottama: Padma-Śaṁkha-Gadā-Chakra; white crystal (sphāṭika); Sadāśrayā (Vasudhā);

(18) Adhokshaja: Gadā-Śaṁkha-Chakra-Padma; dark (śyāmala); Śubhā;

(19) Nārasimha: Padma-Gadā-Śaṁkha-Chakra; golden hue (hema-sannibha); Yajñā (Vidhulā)

(20) Achyuta : Padma-Chakra-Śaṁkha-Gadā; golden yellow (pīta); Sukhā;

(21) Janārdana: Chakra-Śaṁkha-Gadā-Padma; bright red (atīva-rakta); Saugandhī (Umā);

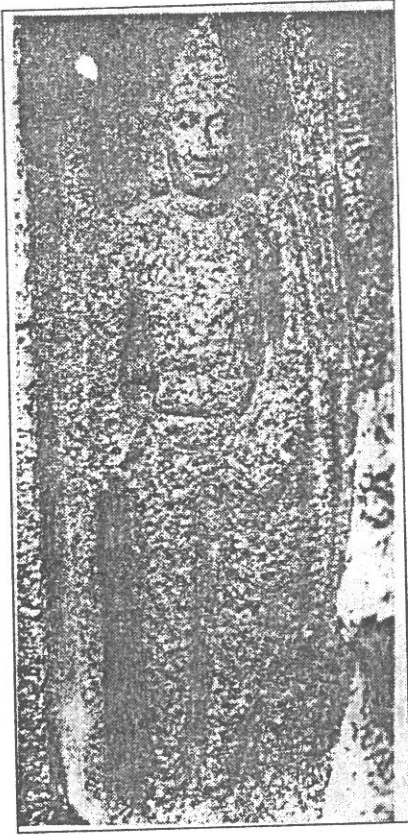
(22) Upendra : Gadā-Chakra-Padma-Śaṁkha; rainbow-coloured (indra-chāpa) or dark (śyāma); Sundarī;

(23) Hari : Chakra-Padma-Gadā-Śaṁkha; golden yellow (pītanibha); Vidyā (Śuddhi); and

(24) Kṛṣṇa : Gadā-Padma-Chakra-Śaṁkha; dark-blue (kṛṣṇāmbuda-prakhyā) or collyrium coloured (aṅjana); Suśīlā (Buddhī).

Sculptural representations of all these forms are extremely rare; we find them only in some temples of the Hoysala period. The forms of Keśava, Mādhava and Janārdhana are met with in South India, especially in Karnāṭaka, and independent shrines to these forms of Viṣṇu are not uncommon.

Known as Vaikuṇṭha-nātha, Vaikuṇṭha-nārāyaṇa is Chatur-mūrti, as incorporating the four vyūhas: Vāsudeva, Saṁkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, emphasizing the four major guṇas: bala, jñāna, aiśvarya and śakti respectively. Viṣṇu in this



form has four faces (vaktra-chatusṭaya) and eight arms (bāhavosṭau). The eight arms represent the four quarters (diśās chataśrah) and the four intermediary directions (tāvatyo vidiśāh) (cf. *Vishṇu-dharmottara*, 3,47,8-10)

According to this text, each of the vyūhas is characterized by two specific guṇas, and thus the four vyūhas together have four pairs of guṇas, symbolized by the four pairs of hands and the weapons they carry. As already mentioned, 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 (Sāmṁkhyā) and arrow (Yoga); and Aniruddha shield (the cover of ignorance, ajñānāvaraṇa) and sword (renunciation, vairāgya). If Vāsudeva represents Viṣṇu, Saṁkarshaṇa represents Rudra and Aniruddha represents Brahmā. Thus, this form is all-comprehensive and most significant ('evam śārireṇa jagat-

samagram bibharti devas sa jagat-pradhānah').



VISHṆU (as Vaikuṇṭha-nātha)

The four faces, as told earlier, 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 aiśvarya); and the face at the back (viz.. the western face) is terrific (raudra), standing for Aniruddha (and śakti) (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 Agni or Kapila. The other two faces are identified with Narasimha and Varāha.

This form of Viṣṇu is shown seated on the shoulders of Garuḍa ('kārayet garuḍa-sthitam'; 'tārksyāsanah') He is decorated with all ornaments and garlands, his body is smeared with camphor ('karpūra-lipta-vigraham'), and he is lustrous like a million-suns ('sūryāyuta

sahasrābham') (cf. *Jayākhya-saṁhitā*, 6,73-76).

We have seen that 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 the those who want peace ('śāntim ichhatā').

Sāttvata-saṁhitā (9,77-94) in its list of 38 vibhava forms of Viṣṇu includes Śaktyātmā (or Śaktiśa), 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').



(6)

ĀDI-MŪRTI

Ādi-mūrti or Para-Vāsudeva represents, in the Pāñcharātra ideology,

the transcendental form (para) of Godhead (Vishṇu, Nārāyaṇa), abiding in the highest realm. Parama-pada (Vaikuṇṭha), as the divinely auspicious and charming image (divya-maṅgala-



Para-vāsudeva (Ādi-mūrti)



Para-Vāsudeva

vigraha). He has four arms and resting on Ādi-Śeṣha. He is ever attended by Garuḍa, Ananta, Vishvaksena and others. Nitya-sūris and the

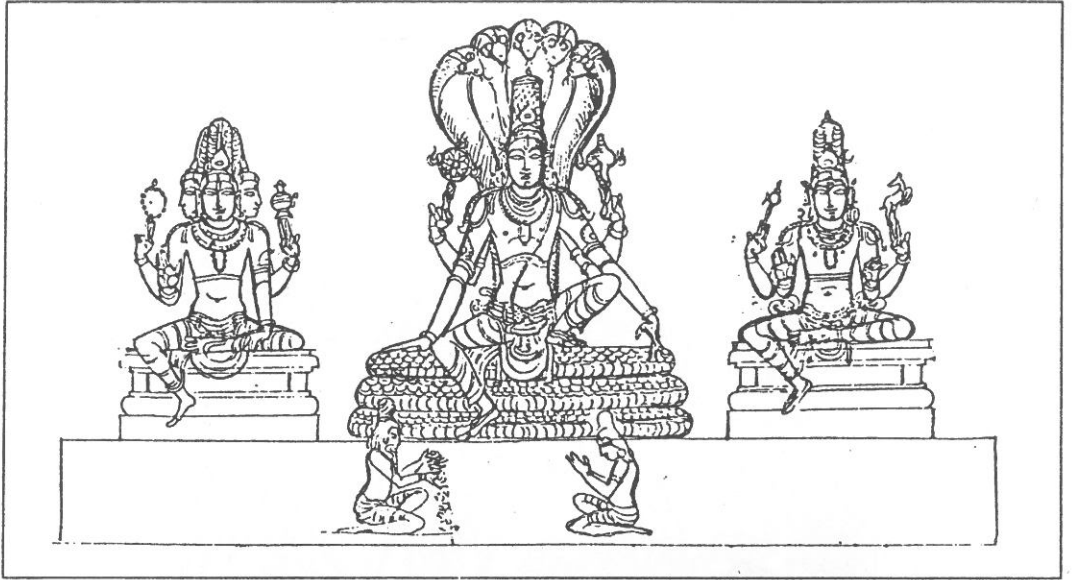
emancipated souls (muktas) also see him in this state. He is complete with all the six ideal attributes in their entirety (śaḍguṇa-paripūrṇa); wisdom

(jñāna), sovereignty (aiśvarya), energy (śakti), strength (bala), valour (vīrya) and lustre (tejas). He is also associated intimately with Lakshmī (Śrī); and at

his instance (viz. by the power of his will, icchhā-śakti) Lakshmī differentiates herself into the power of action (kriyā-śakti) and the power



Paravāsudeva panel - (Nāmakkal cave-temple)

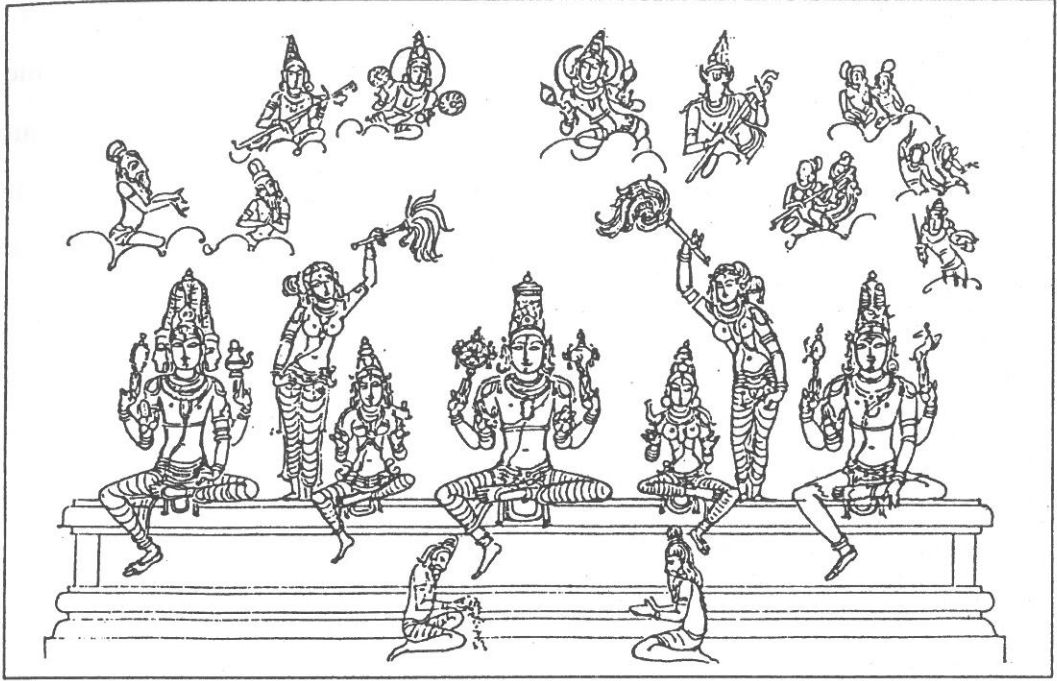


PARAVĀSUDEVA

of becoming (bhūti-śakti). Because of these three powers, the emanations proceed (vyūha): Vyūha-vāsudeva as the puruṣa; Vyūha-saṁkarṣaṇa as the prakṛti; Pradyumna as the manas (cosmic mind); and Aniruddha as ahaṁkāra (cosmic self-consciousness). These are various manifestations of the six divine attributes mentioned above. The one Vāsudeva is conceived

in five-fold aspects in the vyūha-doctrine; the highest (para), emanatory forms (vyūha), incarnations (vibhava), inner-controller among individual beings (antaryāmi) and iconic manifestation (archā).

Para-vāsudeva is so called because he is the all-pervasive divinity (sarvatra vasatiti vāsuḥ, vāsuś chāsau



PARAVĀSUDEVA

devaś cha) which is transcendental (parā). He is the primal source of all other divine forms and manifestations ('mūrtinām bijam avyayam', *Vihagendra-saṁhitā*); and the transcendental form is for the experience and enjoyment of all the gods and the emancipated souls. This is the aspect of Viṣṇu's body, as

Godhead which is primordial and eternal ('rūpam ādyam sanātanam, viṣṇu-dehamayam mahah', *Pāḍma-tantra*).

According to *Vihagendra-saṁhitā*, he is in this aspect visualized as pure and resplendent ('mahah parama-bhāsvaram'), like a clear

crystal; he is two-armed and is clothed in garments, golden yellow in colour. He is complete and pervasive, free from all tendencies, positive or negative. He has two phases; 'nityodita' (his natural and luminous expression) and 'śāntodita' (when vyūha-emanations take place). He is four-armed and carries in the hands lotus (symbolizing creation) discus (protection), conch (salvation) and mace (destruction). His characteristic marks and weapons symbolize several fundamental details of creation: Kaustubha (or the jewel on the chest) signifies the ātman, whereas Śrīvatsa (the mark indicating the presence of Lakshmī) suggests prakṛti. Among his weapons, mace stands for the principle of primordial consciousness (mahat), conch for self-consciousness with

sattva as the dominant guṇa (sāttvikāhaṁkāra), bow for the same principle with tamas as the dominant guṇa (tāmasāhaṁkāra), sword for knowledge (jñāna), the scabbard for ignorance (ajñāna), discus for mind (manas) and the arrows for the sense-organs (indriyas).



According to *Ahīrbudhnyā-saṁhitā* (9, 31) the parā or transcendental aspect of Vāsudeva is always conjoined with Lakshmi ('devyā lakshmyā sāmasīnam'). Texts like *Pārameśvara-saṁhitā*, however, mention Bhū also as associated with Para-vāsudeva ('lakshmī-puṣṭyos svarūpe cha nitye bhagavati saha').



And some texts like *Vihagendra-saṁhitā*, add Nilā to the pair, and explain that Lakshmī or Śrī signifies the power of will (icchā-śakti), Bhū the power of action (kriyā-śakti) and

Nilā as the direct power behind all emanations (sākshāt-śakti). Para-vāsudeva as associated with his 'consorts' possesses eight powers; celebrity (kīrti), prosperity (śrī), victory (vijaya), confidence (śraddhā), memory (smṛti), intelligence (medhā), fortitude (dhṛti) and forgiveness (kshamā) (cf. *Pādma-tantra* and *Vishṇu-tilaka*).



Para-vāsudeva is regarded as identical with the iconic form of Vishṇu known as Ādi-mūrti. Vishṇu is here visualized as seated in a relaxed posture on the coils of the serpent Ādiśesha (Ananta) who symbolizes the primordial principle of Time ('anantotsaṅge samāsīnam'). The serpent's hoods, seven or five, are spread over the head of Vishṇu as a parasol. Vishṇu is seated with his right leg stretched out ('dakṣiṇa-pādam prasārya'), while the left leg is folded ('vāmam ākuñchya'); However, in many representations, the position of the legs is reversed. His normal right hand is placed on the coils of the serpent ('dakṣiṇa-hastam anantotsaṅge nyasya') and his left hand is placed upon the left knee ('vāmam vāma-jānūrdhve prasārya'). He is four-armed, and the two upper

hands carry conch and discus. His body-colour is that of coral ('pravālābham'), and he is bedecked with all ornaments. On his right are sage Bhṛgu and the god Brahmā, and on his left stand the sage Mārkaṇḍeya and the god Śiva (cf. *Vimānārchanā-kalpa*, paṭala 59).

The Vaikhānasa texts distinguish between 'divine Vāsudeva' (daivika-vāsudeva) and 'human Vāsudeva' (mānusha-vāsudeva). The former is four-armed carrying conch and discus in the extra hands, seated upon a lion-throne, and flanked by Śrī on his right and Bhū on his left; all the gods attend on him. The latter is two-armed, carrying conch and discus, and surrounded by Rukmiṇī, Balabhadra, Pradyumna, Viriṇchi, Aniruddha and Garuḍa. It is probable that the 'divine' form of Vāsudeva

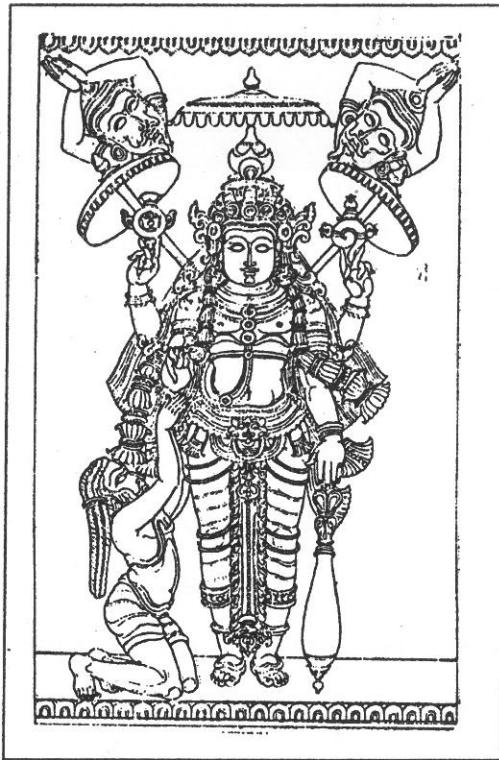


answers to the 'para' aspect of the Pāñcharātra ideology.

NĀRĀYAṆA

One of the most popular names of Viṣṇu, the expression suggests several meanings, of which 'residence in the water of existence', (āpo nārā iti proktā, ayanam sthānam asya), and being 'the goal of all knowledge'

(*nārasya jñānasya ayanam prāpya-sthānam*) are frequently given. Nārāyaṇa is distinguished as primary to the four vyūhas of Viṣṇu viz. Vāsudeva, Saṁkarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha and also as the divine presence and source of inspiration in



Nārāyaṇa (wood, from Kerala)

the heart-recesses of all beings (*daharākhye hṛdi sthitah, bhāva-hṛd-bhāva-bodhakah*).

While the general iconographic details are the same as those of Viṣṇu, there is a suggestion that the form of Nārāyaṇa is to be conjured up in the solar orb, as for instance in the dhyāna-śloka given in *Āditya-hṛdaya*: 'Nārāyaṇa is to be contemplated upon (dhyeyah) as ever abiding in the center of the solar disc (*savitṛ-maṇḍala*), as seated upon a lotus, and bedecked with armlets, and crocodile-shaped ear-ornaments, crown and garlands, as having a body of golden hue, and as carrying conch and discus in his hands.

ध्येयः सदा सवितृमण्डलमध्यवर्ती
नारायणः सरसिजासनसंनिविष्टः ।
केयूरवान् मकरकुण्डलवान् किरीटी
हारी हिरण्मयवपुः धृतशंखचक्रः ॥

The usual description of Nārāyaṇa is that he is four-armed, the arms representing the four vyūhas, and that he carries conch, discus, mace and lotus in his hands. Other characteristic marks are the Śrī-vatsa on the chest and the garland of wild flowers (vana-mālā) around his neck. He wears yellow silken garments (pītāṃbara). His countenance is tranquil (śānta), and his whole bearing is one of equipoise (sama-sthiti). He is commonly shown as standing upon a white lotus (śuklābjāsana-gata).

Nārāyaṇa-hṛdaya describes his body-colour as that of the rising sun (udyad-āditya-saṅkāśa), and *Kālikā-purāṇa* (chap.22) as shining like a pure crystal (śuddha-sphaṭika-saṅkāśa). It is more usual, however, to describe his complexion as dark blue like the

rain-bearing clouds or like the blue lily (kvachin-nīlāṃbuja-chhaviḥ, *Kālikā-purāṇa* op. cit.) The symbolism of blue is formlessness, like the sky. Nārāyaṇa is devoid of concrete form (nirākāra), and is apprehended only by intuitive wisdom (jñāna-gamya). It is only for the purpose of meditation that the devotees provide him with a form.

In the group of twenty-four forms of Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa has dark blue body-colour (śyāma), and carries conch and discus in his normal right and left hands, and lotus and mace in the extra right and left hands. The form of śakti accompanying Nārāyaṇa in this group is Lakshmī. It is common, therefore, to speak of the pair as Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, although Lakshmī is not always shown by the

side of Nārāyaṇa; she is symbolized by the Śrī-vatsa.

NARA-NĀRĀYAṆA

In *Bhāgavata* (2,7,6) we find Nārāyaṇa as the son of Dharma by the daughter of Dakṣha, and as a great sage associated with Nara.



NARA-NĀRĀYAṆA
(Gupta sculpture from Deogarh)

Nara and Nārāyaṇa are great seers (ṛshis) and inseparable companions, residing in the hermitage on the Himālayan slopes known as

Badarikāśrama. They are regarded as incarnations of Viṣṇu; and incarnations of Nara and Nārāyaṇa were Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa respectively in the Dvāpara age (*Mahābhārata*, Śānti-parva, Chap. 384). Another account in *Mahābhārata* (Ādi-parva, 196,32) adds that from the dark hair of Nārāyaṇa came out Kṛṣṇa, while from his white hair emerged Kṛṣṇa's step-brother Balarāma. According to *Padma-purāṇa* (Uttara-khaṇḍa, 2) Nara was fair-complexioned and Nārāyaṇa dark-complexioned.

The story given in *Kālikā-purāṇa* (Chap. 29) makes the emergence of Nara and Nārāyaṇa subsequent to the Narasimha incarnation of Viṣṇu. When after the purpose of this incarnation was over, Narasimha resolved to give up his

man-lion body ('deha-parityāgam kartum sambhavad yadā) Śiva assumed the form of Śarabha and tore the body of Narasimha into two halves ('nārasimham mahābalaṁ sarabho bhagavān bhargah dvidhā madhye chakāra ha'). From the human half of the body arose immediately a human form of divine glory and that was Nara, a great sage ('divya-rūpī mahān ṛshih'), and from the lion-half of the body came forth another ascetic of great lustre, Nārāyaṇa ('abhavat sa mahātejā muni-rūpī janārdanaḥ'). The two of them became responsible for all creation (sṛṣṭi-hetū).

The legend in *Devī-bhāgavata* (4,5, 1 off) relates that Dharma (born from Brahmā's breast) married the daughter of Dakṣa-prajāpati, and begot four children: Hari, Kṛṣṇa

(both of whom became great Yogins), Nara and Nārāyaṇa (both of whom became great hermits and sanyāsins). Nara and Nārāyaṇa are said to have retired to Prāleyādri (viz. Himālayas) and performed austerities for long years in the sacred spot of Badarī (tīrtha-Badarikāśrama).

The same text relates the story that the penances performed by the two ascetics were so severe that the entire world was set ablaze. Indra, the lord of the gods, was frightened, and came to the Badari hermitage and attempted to make the two ascetics desist from their penance. Failing in his enterprise, he sent Kāma and Rati (Eros and Enjoyment) to win them over by their prowess; and along with them a whole host of celestial damsels of incomparable charm, Rāmbhā,

Menakā, Tilottamā and others. They flooded the hermitage with their presence and their erotic frolicks. Nara and Nārāyaṇa, however, were unmoved. Nārāyaṇa hit upon a device to put the celestial damsels to shame and drive them out. He beat his thigh and produced a damsel, whose beauty was exquisite and surpassed that of the whole host of celestial damsels. As this damsel was thigh-born, she was called Urvaśī. Looking at her, Raṁbhā, Menakā and all others hung their heads in shame, and begged Nārāyaṇa to forgive them. Nārāyaṇa not only forgave them, but sent Urvaśī along with them to Indra.

The story is told with a slight variation in *Vishṇu-dharmottara* (3,35, chitra-sūtra). Nārāyaṇa wrote the picture of the charming damsel on the ground with the mango-juice

(sahakāra-rasam gṛhya urvyām chakāra vara-striyam). Because she took form from the earth (urvī), she became known as Urvaśī. The celestial damsels who were proud of their own beauty and hoped to seduce Nārāyaṇa with their charms, ran away shamefaced. Nārāyaṇa thereupon taught the art and science of drawing and painting (chitra-lakṣhaṇa) to Viśvakarmā (verse 5).

Manu-smṛiti (3,1,10) explains the symbolism of Nara-Nārāyaṇa thus. Nara means that which does not perish: (na rīyate kshīyate) and the word refers to the cosmic spirit or soul, which creates the endless stretch of primeval water (which therefore is called nāram); the supreme spirit that lies hidden in this watery mass is Nārāyaṇa (meaning 'abiding in Nāra').



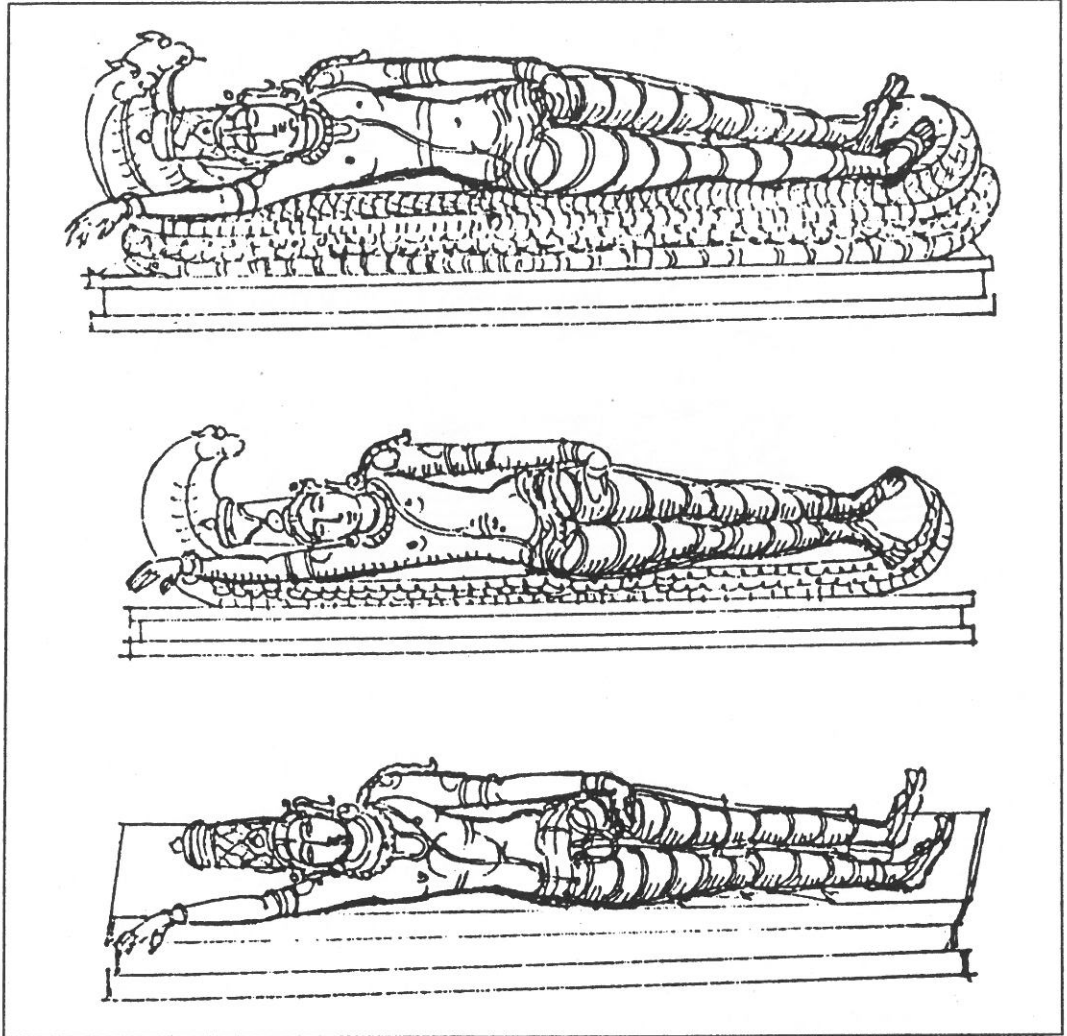
VĪRA-ŚAYANA

ŚAYANA

Abiding in waters takes the form of Śayana-mūrti. The recumbent images of Viṣṇu are regarded as answering to four varieties - yoga-śayana, sṛṣṭi-śayana, bhōgā-śayana and saṁhāra-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 has three types: *uttama* (superior), *madhyama* (midling) and *adhama* (inferior).

(1) Yoga-śayana Viṣṇu is whitish blue (*gaura-śyāma*) or



ŚAYANA-MŪRTI (Ābhichrika Variety, Uttama, Madhyama and Adhama types)

yellowish blue (pīta-śyama) in complexion, two-armed and only partially recumbent ('ardhākhyā-

śayanam'). He abounds in sattva-guṇa. He is lying down upon Śeṣha who is white-complexioned like conch or

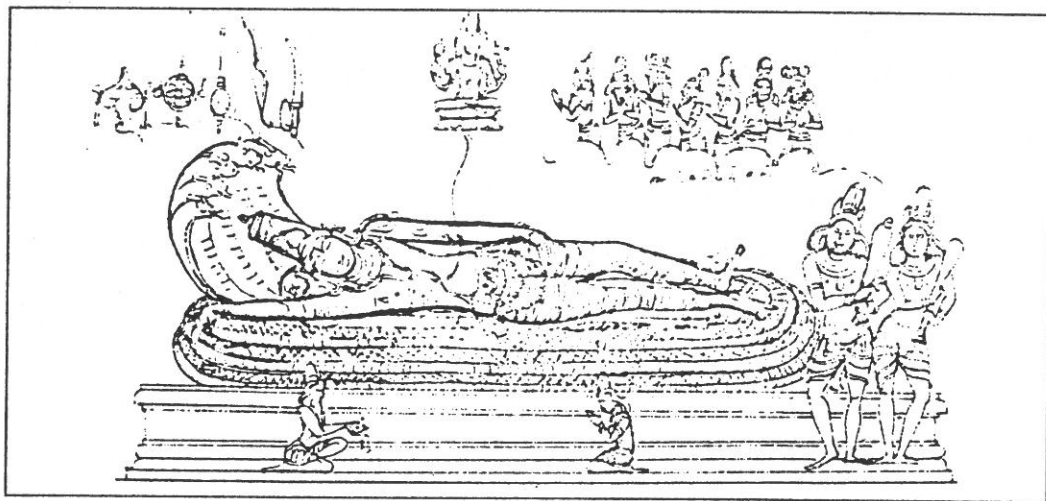
moon. Viṣṇu is surrounded by the sages Bṛḡu and Mārkaṇḍeya, the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha and the five āyudhas, besides sages and gods who adore the God.

If this is the superior type, the midling type is devoid of the two sages Bṛḡu and Mārkaṇḍeya: and in the inferior type the two demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha are also missing.

(2) Sṛṣṭi-śayana Viṣṇu is lotus-eyed (padmekṣaṇa) and dark blue-complexioned (śyamacchavi); he

abounds in rajo-guṇa, and his feet are red in colour. He is surrounded by Lakshmī, Bhū-devi, Brahmā, 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. Bṛḡu 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



YOGA-ŚAYANA

the absence of the two demons; and the inferior variety by the absence also of the two sages Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya.

(3) Bhoga-śayana Viṣṇu is distinguished by the long-stalked lotus that proceeds from his navel, and by the golden-complexioned creator Brahmā (ambhujāsina-svarṇa-pitāmahaṃ). Five or eight weapons of the god ('pañcāśṭāyudham') are arranged on his sides. The goddesses, Lakshmī, Bhū-devī and Śānti are shown attending on the god, Lakshmī and Sarasvatī are seated near his right hand and right foot 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 and 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.

Viṣṇu is bluish green in complexion (sasya-śyāma-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) Saṁhāra-śayana Viṣṇu is in deep slumber, with closed eyes lying down flat with his head laid on the coils of Śeṣha (who is ash-coloured). The snake must have only two hoods. Viṣṇu 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.

SAHITA (WITH LAKSHMĪ)

Images of Viṣṇu, seated with Lakshmī on his left lap are quite

frequently seen. Lakshmī is the inseparable energy of Viṣṇu, and even when Viṣṇu is represented alone, Lakshmī is believed to reside in his chest as Vyūha-Lakshmī or Yoga-lakshmī. She is united with Viṣṇu indistinguishably.

When, however, Lakshmī is shown separately but not independently, she is known as Bhoga-Lakshmī. *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* (1,8,15,ft) explains that Viṣṇu and Lakshmī are like word and meaning, tree and the entwining creeper, love and pleasure. Viṣṇu represents the principle of masculinity, while Lakshmī the principle of femininity. Viṣṇu is the supreme reality, and Lakshmī is his energy manifesting itself and all creation. They are in short 'puruṣa' and 'prakṛti'.



LAKSHMĪ-NĀRĀYAṆA

In Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa icons, Viṣṇu 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.

If the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa image rests on the shoulders of Garuḍa, the form is known as Śrīkara-mūrti.

One of the varieties of Narasimha images distinguished by



ŚRĪ-KARA-MŪRTI
(stone, from Bṛhadiśvara temple,
Tanjavūr)

the presence of Lakshmī (unlike in the kevala, ugra, sthāṇu and saṁhāra forms). This form is also called Prasanna-Narasimha, because the presence of Lakshmī (the embodiment of compassion, kṛpāmūrti) not only



Garuḍa-vāhana (Śrīkara-mūrti)

assuages the fury of the man-lion incarnation, but renders it benign. It is usual for the Lakshmī-



LAKSHMI-NARASIMHA
(Hoysala sculpture)



Narasimha images to include a small representation of Prahlāda in a posture of supplication (baddhāñjali).

This image is similar to Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa images, but

sometimes Narasimha is shown in the posture of yoga-paṭṭa (as Yogā-Narasimha), while Lakshmī is seated on his left knee.

Mantras of Vishṇu

- (i) तारं (ॐ) नमः पदं पश्चान्नरौ दीर्घसमन्वितौ (नारा) ।
पवनो (य) णाय मन्त्रोऽयं प्रोक्तो वस्वक्षरात्मकः ॥८॥
(aṣṭākshara-mantra: ॐ नमो नारायणाय ॥)

साध्यो नारायणः प्रोक्तो मुनिश्छन्द उदाहृतम् ।

मन्त्रस्य देवी गायत्री देवता विष्णुरव्ययः ॥

(For this mantra, ṛshi is Nārāyaṇa; chhandas is Devī-gāyatrī;
and the devatā is Viṣṇu)

Dhyāna :

उद्यत्कोटिदिवाकराभमनिशं शंखं गदां पङ्कजम्
चक्रं बिभ्रतमिन्दिरावसुमती संशोभि पार्श्वद्वयम् ।
कोटीराङ्गदहारकुण्डलधरम् पीताम्बरं कौस्तुभो -
द्वीपं विश्वधरं स्ववक्षसि लसच्छ्रीवत्सचिह्नं भजे ॥

- (ii) प्रणवो (ॐ) हृद्भगवते वासुदेवाय कीर्तितः ।
प्रधानं वैष्णवे तन्त्रे मन्त्रोऽयं द्वादशाक्षरः (१२) ॥
(dvādaśakshara-mantra: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥)

ऋषिः प्रजापतिश्छन्दो गायत्री परिकीर्तिता ।

देवताऽस्य मनोः प्रोक्तो वासुदेवो मनीषिभिः ॥

(For this mantra, ṛshi is Prajāpati; chhandas is Gāyatrī; and
the devatā is Vāsudeva)

Dhyāna :

विष्णुं शारदचन्द्रकोटिसदृशं शंखं रथाङ्गं गदा -
मंभोजं दधतं सिताब्जनिलयं कान्त्या जगन्मोहनम् ।
आबद्धाङ्गदहारकुण्डलमहामौलिं स्फुरत्कङ्कणम्
श्रीवत्साङ्गमुदारकौस्तुभधरं वन्दे मुनीन्द्रैः स्तुतम् ॥

Another dhyāna-śloka :

हरिमुज्ज्वलचक्रदराब्जगदाकुलदोः परिधं सितपद्मगतम् ।
वलयङ्गदहार किरीटधरं नवकुन्दरुचं प्रणमामि सदा ॥

(iii) **Ashtākshārī-mantra:** ओं नमः नारायणाय ॥

The ṛshi is Sādhya-Nārāyaṇa, chhandas is Devi-gāyatrī and devatā is Paramātmā.

Dhyāna :

अर्कोष्ठाभं किरीटान्वितमकरलसत् कुण्डलं दीप्तिराजत्
केयूरं कौस्तुभाभाशबलरुचिरं हारं सपीताम्बरं च ।
नानारत्नांशुभिन्नाभरणशतयुजं श्रीधरास्निष्टपार्श्वम्
वन्दे दोःसत्त्वचक्राम्बुरुहदरगदम् विश्ववन्द्यं मुकुन्दम् ॥

(iv) **Nāma-traya-mantra :** अच्युताय नमः । अनन्ताय नमः । गोविन्दाय नमः ॥

The ṛshis are Parāśara, Vyāsa and Nārada respectively; The chhandas is Virāt; and the devatā is Parabrahma.

or अच्युतानन्तगोविन्दाय नमः ॥

Dhyāna :

शंखचक्रधरं देवं चतुर्बाहुं किरीटिनम् ।
सर्वायुधैरुपेतं गरुडोपरिसंस्थितम् ॥१॥
सनकादिमुनीन्द्रैस्तु सर्वदेवैरुपासितम् ।
श्रीभूमिसहितं देवमुदयादित्यसन्निभम् ॥२॥
प्रातरुद्यत्सहस्रांशुमण्डलोपमकुण्डलम् ।
सर्वलोकस्य रक्षार्थं अनन्तं नित्यमेव तु ॥३॥
अनन्तवरदानं च प्रयच्छन्तं मुदान्वितम् ।
एवं ध्यात्वा हरिं नित्यं परब्रह्मस्वरूपिणम् ॥४॥
प्रातर्मध्यंदिने चैव सायाह्ने च विशेषतः ।
अर्चयेद्देवदेवेशं गन्धपुष्पजलादिभिः ॥५॥

- (vi) डेऽन्तं विष्णुं समुद्धृत्य हृदयं बाणवर्णकः ।
भवाब्धेः सेतुभूतोऽयमव्यक्ताद्यः (ॐ) षडक्षरः (६) ॥
(shadākshara-mantra : ॐ विष्णवे नमः ॥)

नारदोऽस्य मुनिश्छन्दो गायत्री विष्णुरव्ययः ।
देवता मन्त्रवर्णस्तु षडङ्गानि प्रकल्पयेत् ॥

(For this mantra, ṛshi is Nārada, chhandas is Gāyatri; and the devatā is Vishṇu)

Dhyāna :

शङ्खचक्रगदापद्मधरं लक्ष्मीसमावृतम् ।
पीताम्बरं घनस्थामं ध्यायेद्विष्णुं सनातनम् ॥

महापुरुषविद्या ॥

जितं ते पुण्डरीकाक्ष नमस्ते विश्वभावन ।
सुब्रह्मण्य नमस्तेऽस्तु महापुरुष पूर्वज ॥१॥

नमो हिरण्यगर्भाय प्रधानव्यक्तिरूपिणे ।
 ॐ नमो वासुदेवाय शुद्धज्ञानस्वरूपिणे ॥२॥
 देवानां दानवानां च सामान्यमसि दैवतम् ।
 सर्वदा चरणद्वन्द्वं ब्रजामि शरणं तव ॥३॥
 एकस्त्वमसि लोकस्य स्रष्टा संहारकस्तथा ।
 अध्यक्षश्चानुमन्ता च गुणमायासमावृतः ॥४॥
 संसारसागरं घोरमनन्तं क्लेशभाजनम् ।
 त्वमेव शरणं प्राप्य निस्तरन्ति मनीषिणः ॥५॥
 न ते रूपं न चाकारो नायुधानि न चास्पदम् ।
 तथाऽपि पुरुषाकारो भक्तानां त्वं प्रकाशसे ॥६॥
 नैव किञ्चित्परोक्षं ते प्रत्यक्षोऽसि न कस्यचित् ।
 नैव किञ्चिदसाध्यं ते न च साध्योऽसि कस्यचित् ॥७॥
 कार्याणां कारणं पूर्वं वचसां वाच्यमुत्तमम् ।
 योगिनां परमां सिद्धिं परमं ते पदं विदुः ॥८॥
 अहं भीतोऽस्मि देवेश संसारेऽस्मिन्महाभये ।
 त्राहि मां पुण्डरीकाक्ष न जाने शरणं परम् ॥९॥
 कालेष्वपि च सर्वेषु दिक्षु सर्वासु चाच्युत ।
 शरीरेऽपि मतौ चापि वर्तते मे महद्भयम् ॥१०॥
 त्वत्पादकमलान्यत्र मे जन्मान्तरेष्वपि ।
 निमित्तं कुशलस्यास्ति येन गच्छामि सद्गतिम् ॥११॥
 विज्ञानं यदिदं प्राप्तं यदिदं ज्ञानमूर्तिजम् ।
 जन्मान्तरेऽपि मे देव मा भूदस्य परिक्षयः ॥१२॥
 दुर्गतावपि जातायां त्वं गतिस्त्वं मतिर्मम ।
 यदि त्वार्थं च विज्ञेयं तावताऽस्मि कृती सदा ॥१३॥
 अकामकलुषं चित्तं मम ते पादयोः स्थितम् ।
 कामये वैष्णवत्वं तु सर्वजन्मसु केवलम् ॥१४॥

इति महापुरुषविद्या समाप्ता ॥



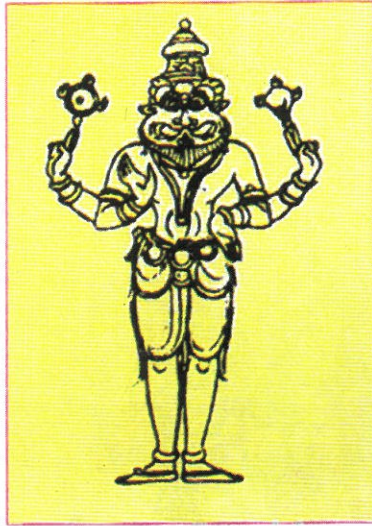
MATSYA



KŪRMA



VARĀHA



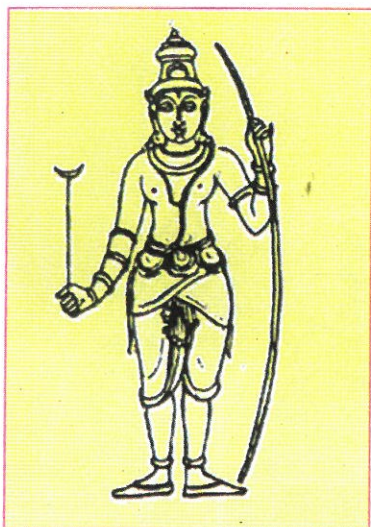
NRSIMHA



VĀMANA



PARAŚU-RĀMA



RĀMA



KRSHNA



KALKI



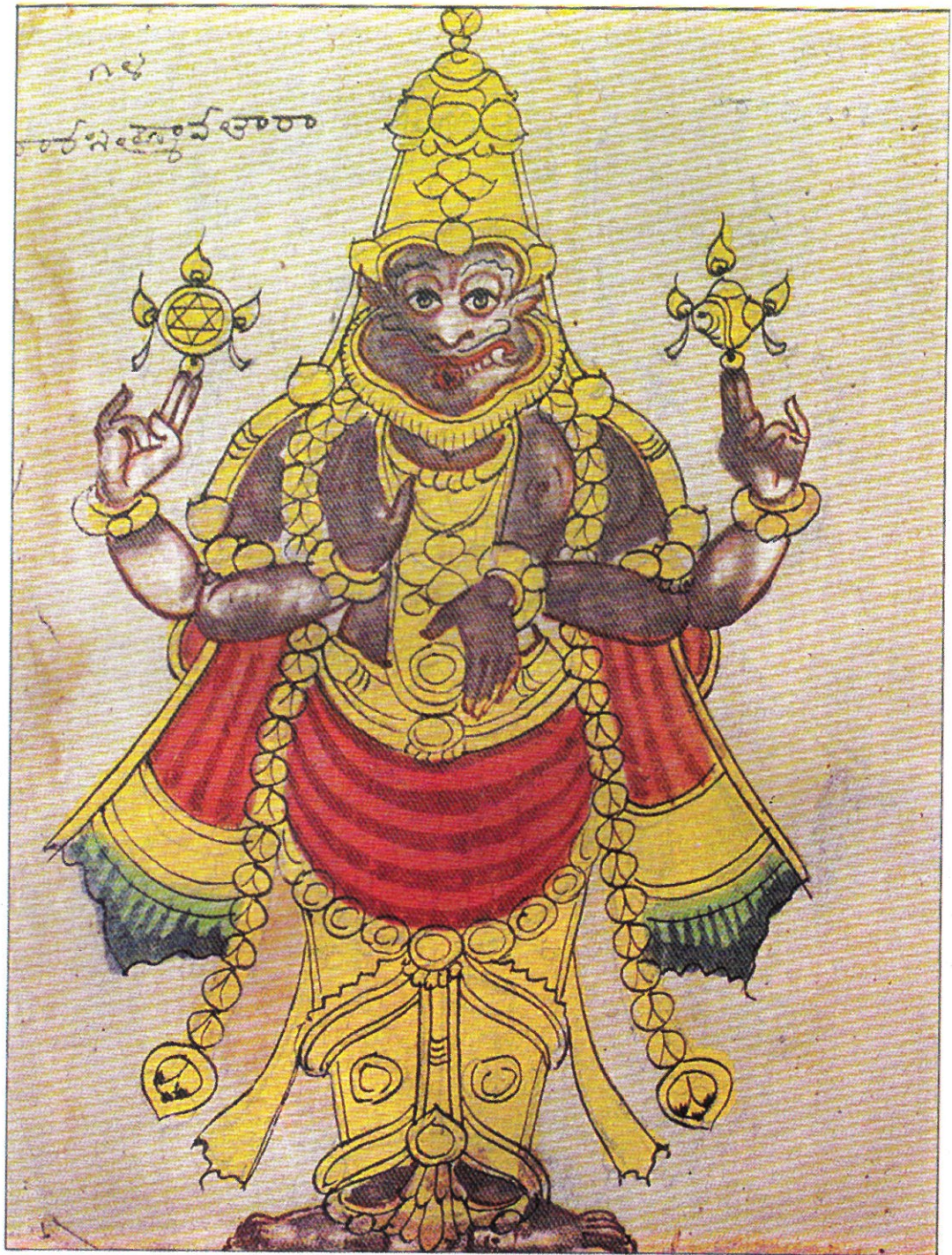
MATSYA



KŪRMA



VARĀHA



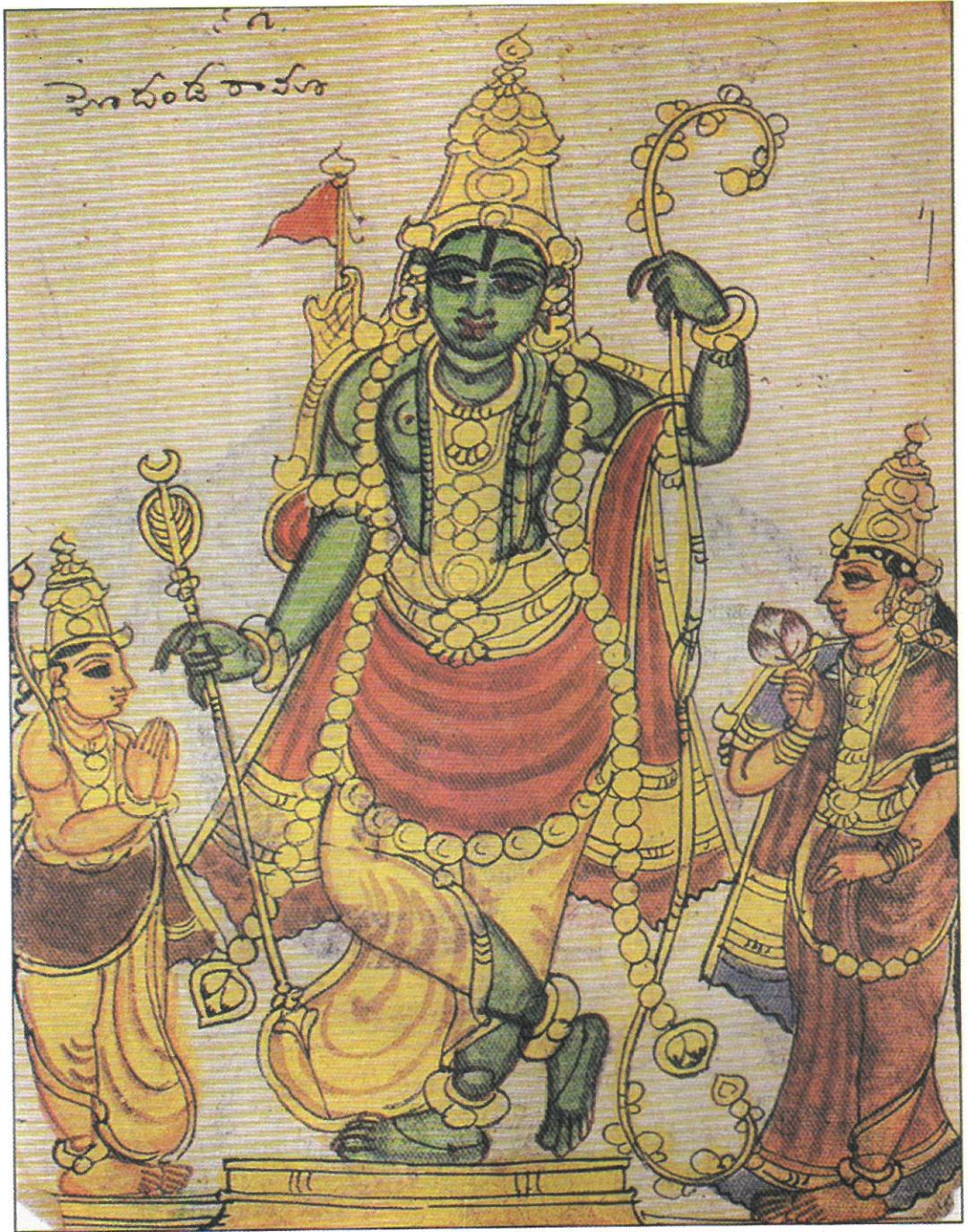
NARASIMHA



VĀMANA



PARAŚU-RĀMA



RĀMA



KRSHNA



KALKI

CHAPTER TWO

AVATĀRAS



RĀMA GROUP
(bronze icons in Tirumala temple)

Avatāra literally means 'descent', 'coming down'. The expression refers to the divine appearances among mankind to extricate the good from the clutches of evil, to save the world from the attacks of the wicked. The

belief is that whenever virtue suffers and vice flourishes, God will manifest himself in some form to set things right (*Bhagavadgitā*, 4,7-8). The idea of such manifestation involves (1) complete divine presence in the form

(*pūrṇāvatāra*), (2) partial or fragmentary divine presence (*aṃśāvatāra*), or (3) divine possession of humans (*āveśa*). *Vishvakṣeṇa-saṃhitā* classifies *avatāra* into two main varieties: principal (*mukhya*), where Vishṇu's nature remains unchanged in the appearances, even as the light that lights up other lights; and subsidiary (*guṇa*), where Vishṇu's transcendental nature (*aprākṛta*) chooses to be associated with a mundane physical frame (*prākṛta*), and appear, for practical purposes, ordinary and human in nature. The latter appearances may also be described as human beings divinely possessed (*āviṣṭa*). Instances given in the text are Brahmā, Śiva, Buddha, Veda-vyāsa, Arjuna, Paraśurāma and Kubera.

While the divine manifestation may be of any god or goddess, it is usual to associate the idea of 'avatāra' with Vishṇu. It may be because the conception of *avatāra* got crystallized in the Vaishṇavite Bhāgavata religion, a text-book of which was *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*; *Bhagavad-gītā* too is a book belonging to this cultic ideology. The *Bhāgavata* (18,7) asserts that the *avatāras* of Vishṇu are really innumerable ('*avatārā hyasaṅkhyeyāḥ hareḥ*') but important among them are twenty-two, according to this text (1,3,6-22): Brahmā (Purusha), Varāha, Nārada, Nara and Nārāyaṇa, Kapila, Dattātreya, Yajña, Rṣhabha, Pṛthu, Matsya, Kūrma, Dhanvantari, Mohinī, Nṛsimha, Vāmana, Paraśu-rāma, Veda-vyāsa, Rāma, Bala-rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki.



Narasimha (in Nāmakkal Cave-temple)

Among these, the more important and widely celebrated are ten: (1) Matsya (fish), for recovering the Veda, which the horse-headed demon had stolen and hid in the

depths of the ocean (*Bhāgavata*, 8, 24) : (2) Kūrma (tortoise or turtle), for supporting the Mandara mountain which was used as a churning-rod by the devas and asuras, who desired to

get nectar out of the milky ocean (*Bhāgavata*, 8,7); (3) Varāha (boar), for extricating Varuṇa, the god of the waters, from the clutches of the wicked demon *Hiraṇyāksha*, who was tormenting all the gods (*Bhāgavata*, 2,7 and 3,18); (4) Narasiṃha (man-lion) for saving his devotee Prahlāda and the world from the terrors of his father Hiraṇya-kaśipu, the demon-brother of Hiraṇyāksha (*Bhāgavata*, 7,8); (5) Vāmana (dwarf), for subduing the daitya, Bali by name, who, although virtuous, was so powerful that he conquered the realm of the gods and drove them into wilderness (*Bhāgavata*, 8,19); (6) Paraśu-Rāma (the hero wielding the axe), for punishing the Haihaya king Kārtavīrya, who had offended the sage Jamadagni (*Bhāgavata*, 9, 16); (7) Rāma (Rāma, the son of Daśaratha,

the king of Ayodhyā), for saving the world from the troubles caused by the demon-king Rāvaṇa of Laṅkā (theme of the great epic Rāmāyaṇa); (8) Kṛṣṇa (the Yādava prince who aided the Pāṇḍavas in the *Mahābhārata* war) for ridding the world of wicked rulers like Kamsa, and helping virtue to overcome vice (the theme of the epic *Mahābhārata* and of *Bhāgavata*) : (9) Buddha (the prince of the Śākya who became an ascetic mendicant), for clearing the world of evil practices in the name of religion and for re-establishing dharma (*Bhāgavata*, 1,3); and (10) Kalki (the warrior-god of the dark age) for destroying the lawless (*Agni-purāṇa*, 16).

The incarnations of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and Buddha are shown as historical human beings, and the time-

periods when they appeared are given as Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali (the present yuga) respectively. We are now living in the dispensation of the Buddha incarnation of Vishṇu. Kalki is expected to appear at the end of the present (viz. Kali) yuga. The purāṇic account of the Buddha incarnation, however, is at variance with the historical details concerning the founder of Buddhism.

Of the ten avatāras of Vishṇu, the most widely celebrated and popularly worshipped all over the country are those of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. There are numerous temples to these forms, and ritualized worship in both cases is stylized. Next in importance and popular appeal is the avatāra of man-lion, known as Narasimha (or Nṛsimha), of which

several forms are iconographically significant. Worship of the other avatāras, with the exception of Kalki, are not non-existent, but are rare. All the avatāras are frequent themes for temple-structure in the country, especially of the Vaishṇavite ideology.

In the temples of Vishṇu, it is customary to observe with special worship and festivity the 'days of appearance' of the ten avatāras ('avatāra-jayantī-tithi'): the third day of the bright half of Chaitra (in the afternoon) for Matsya, the full-moon day of Vaiśākha (in the evening) for Kūrma, the third day of the bright half of Bhādrapada (in the afternoon) for Varāha, the thirteenth day of the bright half of Vaiśākha (in the evening) for Narasimha, the twelfth



KRSHNA (Hoysala sculpture)

day of the bright half of Bhādrapada (at noon) for Vāmana, the third day of the bright half of Vaiśākha (at noon) for Parasu-Rāma, the ninth day of the bright half of Chaitra (in the afternoon) for Rāma, the eighth day

of the dark half of Śrāvaṇa (at midnight), for Kṛṣṇa, the tenth day of the bright half of Āśvin (in the evening) for Buddha, and the sixth day of the bright half of Śrāvaṇa (in the evening for Kalki.

That *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* enumerates twenty-two avatāras has already been mentioned. The same text, in another context (2,7,1 f), enumerates twenty-three avatāras, and at still another place (11,4,3 f) only sixteen. All the three lists, it is interesting to note, include Ṛshabha (the first tīthaṅkara of the Jaina pantheon) and Buddha (the founder of Buddhism). *Matsya-purāṇa* (47,5,46) holds that Viṣṇu had to appear seven times amongst human beings, in order to expiate the sins of the wicked rulers; and he appeared as Dattāreya, Māndhātā, Paraśu-rāma (Rāma of the axe, son of the sage Jamadagni, hence Jāmadagnya), Rāma (son of Daśaratha), Veda-vyāsa, Buddha and Kalki.

Vāyu-purāṇa (98,71 f) speaks of ten avatāras, three of which are

'celestial' (Yajña, Narasiṃha and Vāmana), and others terrestrial. Among the latter are enumerated Dattātreya, Pañchama, Jāmadagnya (Paraśu-Rāma or Rāma the son of Jamadagni), Rāma (son of Daśaratha), Veda-vyāsa, Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa and Kalki. It is interesting that from this list are omitted Matsya, Kūrma and Varāha, which indeed must have constituted the original nucleus of the avatāra-ideology.

The ancient texts *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* and *Taittirīya-saṃhitā* describe these three avatāras as the forms assumed by Prajāpati on different occasions. If the early texts mention only these avatāras, *Mahābhārata* in one place (*Nārāyaṇīya section*, 12,349,37) also lists only three avatāras, but they are Varāha, Vāmana and Nṛsiṃha. In

another context (389,77-90), the epic mentions three human avatāras: Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, Bhārgava-Rāma (Paraśu-rāma or Rāma of the Bhṛgu clan) and Rāma (the son of Daśaratha). In still another place, the epic makes a mention of ten avatāras: Haṁsa, Kūrma, Matsya, Varāha, Nṛsimha, Vāmana, Bhārgava-Rāma (Paraśu-Rāma), Rāma (son of Daśaratha), Sāttvata (the scion of the Sāttvata clan, probably referring to Kṛṣṇa), and Kalki. It may be noted that in the epic list as well as in the *Vāyupurāṇa* list, Buddha is omitted. His place is taken by Haṁsa in the former list, and by Dattātreya in the latter.

The avatāra ideology figures prominently in the Pāñcharātra school of Viṣṇu-worship. According to this school, Viṣṇu has five distinct

aspects-(1) *parā* (transcendental), abiding in his own glory and majesty, not in the least oriented towards the phenomenal appearances and dissolutions; (2) *vyūha* (emanatory forms, four in number : (a) Vāsudeva, (b) Saṁkarshaṇa, (c) Pradyumna, and (d) Aniruddha), which four (*Chaturmūṭhi*) later get expanded into twenty-four forms (*Chaturvimśati-mūrti*); (3) *vibhava* (appearances in specific situations, incarnations or avatāra); (4) *antaryāmin* (inner-centroller in all beings); and (5) *archā* (iconic representation, self-revealed, like the lord of the seven hills in Tirumala). The *parā* and *Antaryāmin* are beyond human approach; the other forms are amenable to being involved in the context of worship. The early Vaishṇava iconography abounds in the representations of the first two *vyūha*

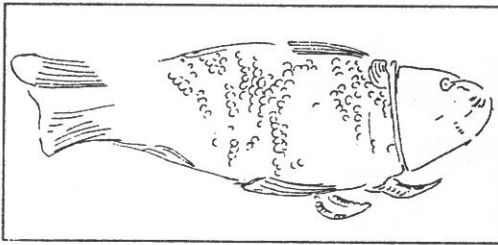


Kāliya-damana Kṛṣṇa (bronze)

forms, viz. Vāsudeva and Samkarshaṇa.

The ten principal incarnations are referred to collectively as 'daśāvatāra'. They are briefly explained below. Some of them (like Varāha and Narasimha) have many variant forms. They are all iconographically stylized.

(1) MATSYA



Vishṇu assumed the form of gigantic and remarkable fish to save all the living beings from the spreading deluge. *Matsya-purāṇa* (1,1)

and *Bhāgavata* (8,24) tell us the story of Manu, one of the creators (prajāpati), who performed severe austerities on the mount Malaya for the sake of a boat (nau) which could carry all beings to safety and survival during the period of final dissolution (pralaya). When he was offering the customary oblation of water to the manes, a tiny fish fell into his hands. The king out of compassion put it in a pot of water. But the fish grew and grew, and could not be accommodated in any container or pond or river. He put it in the ocean, but it covered the entire ocean. Manu, in dismay, wanted to know what really the fish was. The fish revealed that it was Vishṇu, who assumed this form to fulfil the desire of Manu to have a boat of refuge during dissolution.

Manu was the son of Vivasvān (hence known as Vaivasvata-manu), who was the son of Kāśyapa (in turn, son of Marīchi, the offspring of Brahmā the creator). He is associated with the creation of the world and the establishment of order and religion in the world.



MATSYA

In a variant account (*Agni-purāṇa* 2) Manu was performing penance in the forest of Badari. One morning, we went for his bath in the river Kṛta-mālā, and a tiny fish approached him, asking for protection. Out of compassion, he carried it to his hermitage and put in a small pot. But very soon, the fish outgrew the pot. The fish kept on growing, and Manu had to put it finally in the river Gaṅgā. The fish then asked Manu to get a large boat prepared, to accommodate himself and the seven sages, and foretold that in seven days the world would be washed away in deluge. Manu accordingly got the boat ready, and got into it along with the seven sages. A horn sprouted on the head of the marvellous fish, and the boat was tied to it. As prophesied, waters rose and submerged the world.

But the fish dragged the boat and ascended a peak of the Himālayan mountain, and left the boat in safety there.



MATSYA
(from a Ganjipha card from Orissa)

The horn on the head of the fish was 'naubandhana-śṛṅga', and the fish was 'eka-śṛṅgi'. The fish was in fact the incarnation of Vishṇu, assumed to save Manu and the seven sages, who became creators of the world when the deluge receded.

Another story which accounts for the incarnation is that Brahmā the

creator who was entrusted with the Vedas was attacked by the demon called Hayagrīva: the demon snatched the Vedas from Brahmā, and hid himself in the bottom of the ocean. Vishṇu thereupon assumed the form of a gigantic fish, and diving into the ocean, killed the demon and brought back the Vedas to Brahmā.

Hence the mantra to Matsya includes the ideas of dissolution, creation and the Vedic lore ('matsyam pralaya-saṁhāram srashtāram vedarūpiṇam').

According to *Vimānārchana-kalpa* (paṭala 21), Matsya is to be shown in round sculpture (chitra), relief sculpture (chitrārdha) or painting (ābhāsa), in the first or second enclosure of a Vishṇu-temple. The

form is visualized as white in complexion (śvetābha), red in face and with red eyes (raktāsyam rakta-netram), having black fins (kṛṣṇa-paksha-yutam) and four-armed (chaturbhujam).



MATSYA
(from a painting from South India)

Vishṇu-dharmottara (85,59) prescribes that a horn is to be shown on its head ('śṛṅgī-matsyas tu karvaṇyo deva-devo janārdanaḥ'). *Mahābhārata* (3,185,31) contains an account where the incarnation is recognized as the 'horned fish' ('āgamishyāmy aham śṛṅgī vijñeyas tena tapasā').

The iconographic representation of Matsya takes variant forms. Often, it is a simple fish, with a horn, placed upon a lotus. Sometimes one half of the form (the lower half) is that of fish, and the other half a human form (Vishṇu with four arms carrying conch, discus, lotus and mace). Sometimes, the human form emerges only from the neck of the fish seated upon a lotus-pedestal.

1. Matsya :

एक एवाभवन्मत्स्यावतारः कल्प आदिमे ।
तस्य मन्त्रं प्रवक्ष्यामि भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदायकम् ॥
तारो (ॐ) नमो भगवते मँ मत्स्याय रमां (श्रीं) वदेत् ।
द्वादशाक्षरमन्त्रोऽयं (१३) मुनिर्ब्रह्मा समीरितः ।
गायत्री छन्द उद्दिष्टं देवता मीनविग्रहः ॥

(mantra of 12 letters: ॐ मं नमो भगवते मत्स्याय श्रीं ॥)

The ṛshi is Brahmā, chhandas is Gāyatrī and the devatā
Matsya-mūrti.

Dhyāna :

नाभ्यर्धो रोहितसमं आकण्ठं च नराकृतिः ।
घनश्यामश्चतुर्बाहुः शंखचक्रगदाधरः ॥
शृङ्गी मत्स्यनिभो मूर्धा लक्ष्मीवक्षोविराजितः ।
पद्मचिह्नितसर्वाङ्गः सुन्दरश्चारुलोचनः ॥

(2) KŪRMA



The second incarnation is in the form of a tortoise (Kūrma or Kacchhapa). It is connected with the sun (āditya) in *Atharva-veda* (13,3,10 and 17,1,28) and in *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* (7,5,6). The sun here symbolizes the life-sap of the universe. Viṣṇu assumed this form

so as to provide a firm ground for the mountain Mandara, which was used as the churning-rod (mantha) by the devas and asuras during their enterprise of churning the ocean for obtaining ambrosia (amṛta). This event was said to be in the first of the yugas, Satya. The legend is narrated in *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* (8,7,10).

Iconographically, the Kūrma avatāra is entirely in the form of a tortoise, or alternately the lower part being represented as a tortoise, while the upper part is human in form (Viṣṇu), with four hands, the two extra hands carrying discus and conch, and the normal hands assuming the postures of protection (abhaya) and boon-bestowal (varada). In some

representations, the human portion is only two-armed, the right hand carrying a mace (gadā) and the left conch (śaṁkha).

The only temple of celebrity dedicated to this form of Viṣṇu is in Śrī-Kūrmam (Kūrma-nātha) in Andhra Pradesh.

Kūrma :

अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि कूर्ममन्त्रं महाद्भुतम् ।
एकः कूर्मावतारोऽभून्मथ्यमाने महोदधौ ॥
तारो (ॐ) नमो भगवते कुं कूर्माय धराधर ।
धुरन्धराय णस्यान्ते सिद्धवर्णो मतो मनुः ॥
प्रकृतिश्चन्द उदितं कश्यपोऽस्य मुनिर्मतः ।
देवता भगवान् विष्णुर्मतः कच्छपरूपधृक् ।

(Mantra: ॐ नमो भगवते कुं कूर्माय ॥)

The ṛshi is Kaśyapa, the chhandas Prakṛti and the devatā Kacchapa)

Dhyāna :

पीताम्बरं कूर्मपृष्ठं न्यस्तनेलाङ्गूलशोभितम् ।
दीर्घग्रीवं महाग्राहं गिलन्तं रक्तलोचनम् ॥

(3) VARĀHA



An incarnation of 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 a

mountain ('ākāśasthah kṣhaṇa-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 (śamsthāpya antaṛhitah'). It was then that Vaivasvata-manu began his career, and created all beings.

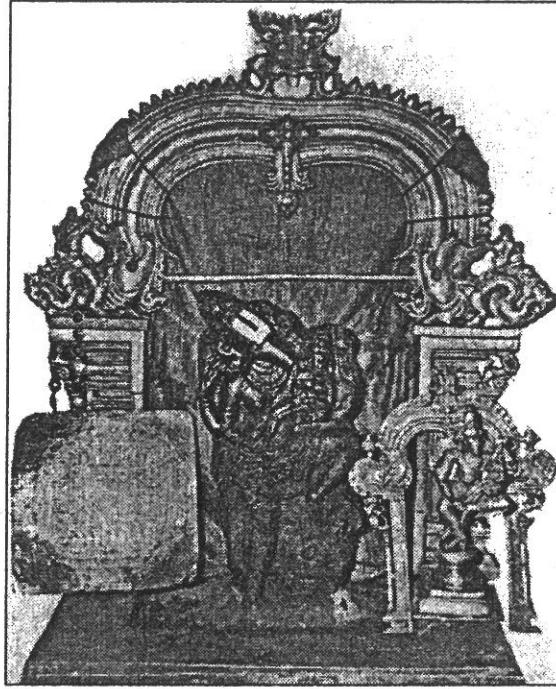


The imagery of the cosmic boar being responsible for the formation of the earth is a very ancient one. Even the early Vedic hymns describe the winds as invincible boars with tusks of iron; describe Rudra as the 'boar of the upper regions'; and imagine Vṛtra the cloud as a veritable boar (cf. *Rgveda* 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').

Taittirīya-saṁhitā contains two legends which involve the incarnation of Prajāpati as boar (varāha). One of



SRI VARAHASWAMI (Tirumalai)



ĀDI-VARĀHA

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). The other legend (7,1,5,1) relates to the lifting up of the earth by the hundred-armed and black-complexioned boar ('uddhṛtāsi varāheṇa' (14,1,2,11) describes how the fierce boar ('emusha varāha') recovered the earth from the watery mass. *Kapishṭhala-kāṭha-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 throw up some mud equal to the size of its snout ('tasya yāvan mukham āsīt tāvatīm mṛdam āharat'). The text



The Varāha incarnation of Viṣṇu

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

Mahābhārata (13,330,24) identifies Varāha with Vṛshākapi (the best of dharma), who in *Gopatha-brāhmaṇa* (2,6,12) has been identified

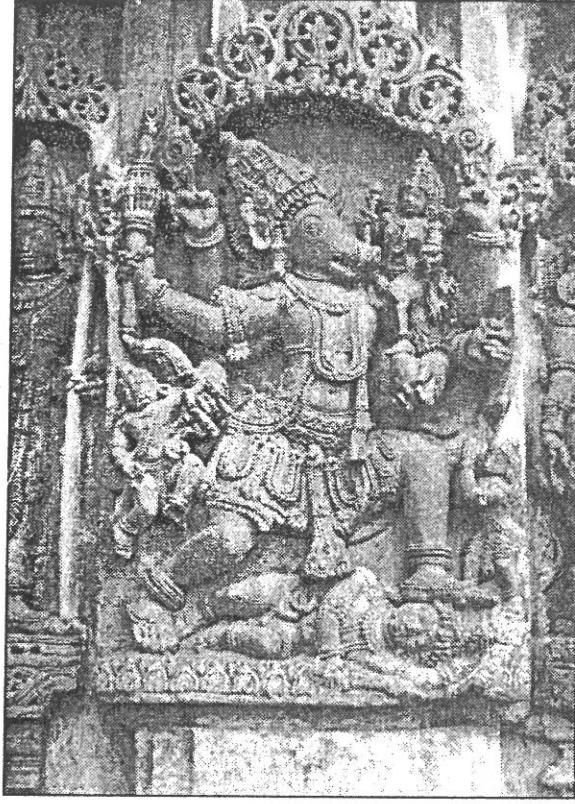
with the Sun ('ādityo vai vṛshākapih). *Hari-vaṁśa* and *Matsya-purāṇa* (6,63,13) mention Varāha (whom the earlier texts had described as a form of Prajāpati) as an incarnation of Viṣṇu ('varāhaś chaiva siṁhaś cha trivikrama-gatih prabhuh'); and we have in *Hari-vaṁśa* (3,34,30-43) an elaborate account of this incarnation.



VARĀHA
(Bhū-varāha)

Agni-purāṇa (chap.5) relates the boar-incarnation of Viṣṇu with the killing of the demon Hiraṇyāksha (cf. also *Padma-purāṇa*, Bhūmikhanda, 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. Viṣṇu appeared in the form of a boar and recovered the earth.

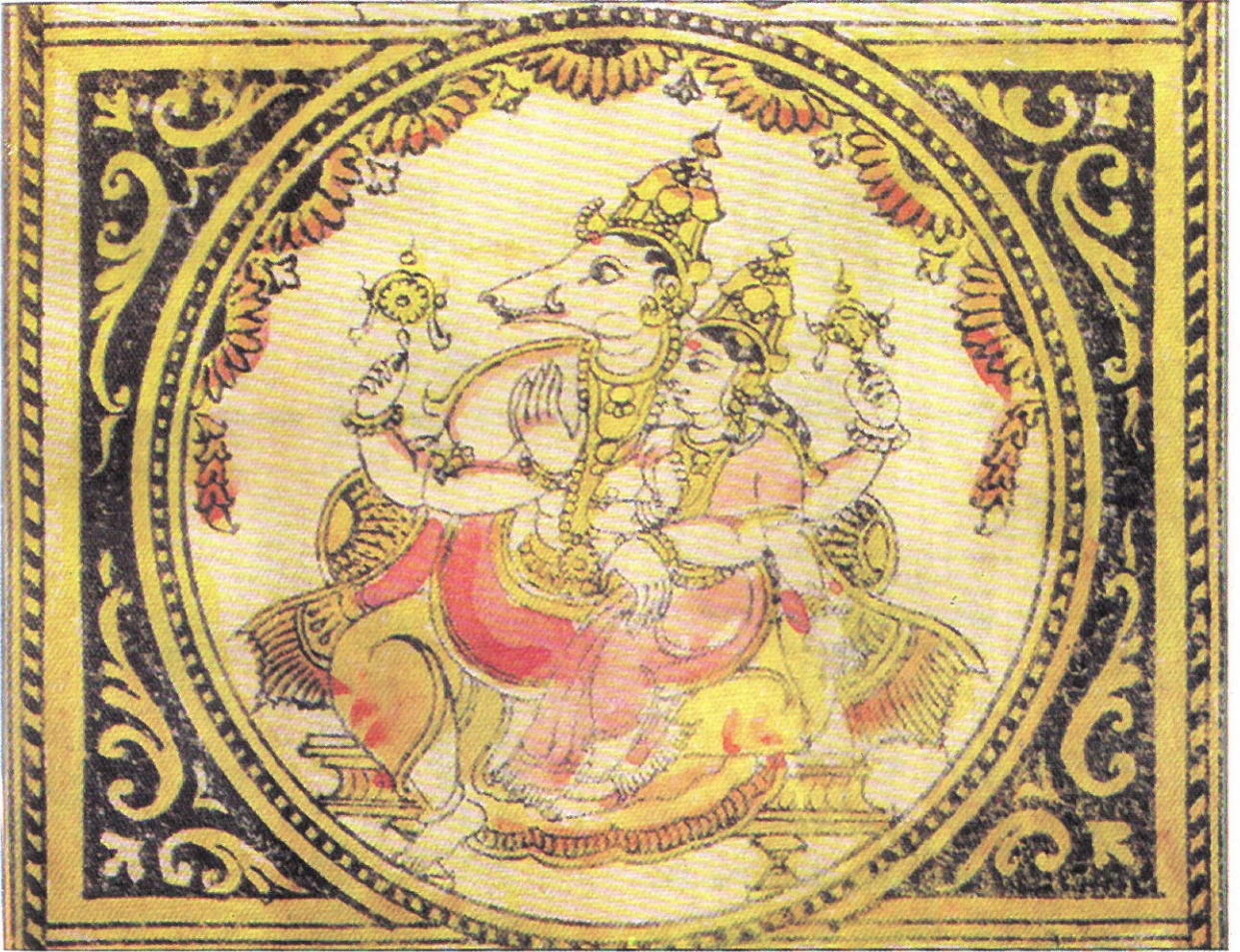
There are many forms of Varāha (like Ādivaraha, Yajña-varaha, Bhū-varāha, Lakshmī-varāha, Varāha-narasimha and so on), and in all these forms he is shown in a human form with a boar's head ('purushākāram vapushmantam vaktram varāha-vad bhavet'). Hence he is frequently called nṛ-varāha ('man-boar') like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



Bhu-varāha-mūrti (Hoysala)

The body-colour is differently given as dark like collyrium ('añjanādri-sama-prabha', *Sāttvata-saṁhitā*, 12,46), as crystal- coloured ('sphāṭika-prabha', *Pādma-saṁhitā*, kriyāpāda, 17,12), as conch-hued

('śaṁkha-varṇa'), or as green ('harita'). The body is huge, like a mountain ('udārāṅga', *Vishvaksena-saṁhitā* 11,45-51; 'mahākāya', *ibid.*). While it is usually four-armed, some texts (like *Pārāśara-saṁhitā*, 30,10)



DHARAṆĪ VARĀHA

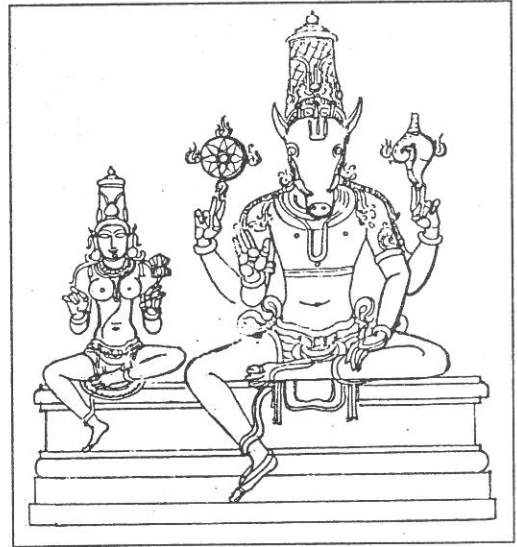


VARĀHA
(Chauhān sculpture in Victoria & Albert
Museum, London)

provide eight or sixteen arms,
According to *Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā*
(‘Adi’, 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 (‘bāhunādhārayan
dharām’) and embracing her with the
other (‘apareṇāślishya’).

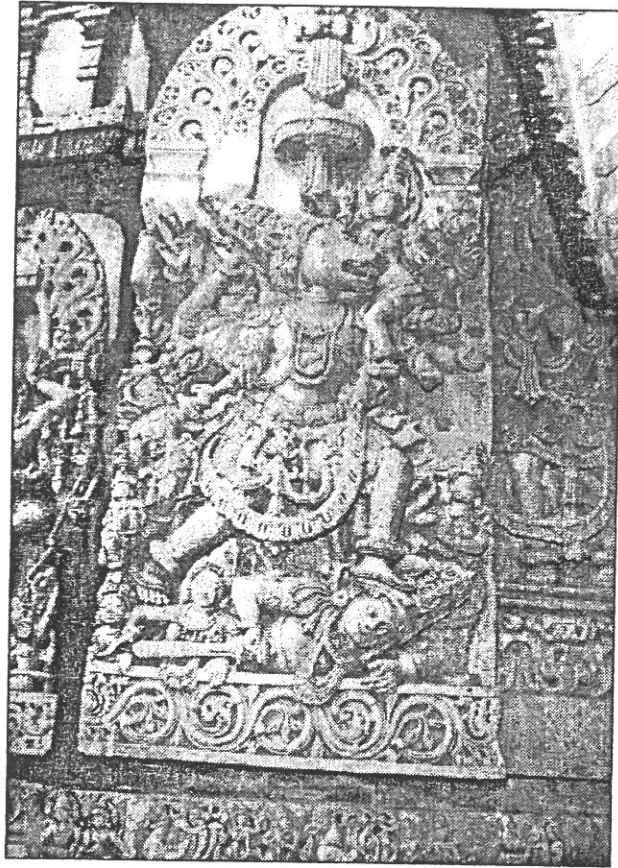
The snout is held close to the
earth-goddess, sniffing her face
(‘jighran devī-mukham’), or touching
her breast or thigh. The left arm
embraces her at the shoulders, while



VARĀHA
(with Lakshmi)

the right arm holds her thigh firmly ('vāmeṇāliṅgya hasteṇa tasyā skandham, grhītvoru-dṛḍham, tasyā dakṣhiṇena kareṇa cha; *Vishvakṣena-saṁhitā*, 11,45-47). Alternately, the earth-goddess is lifted up to the level of the snout and placed upon his left

elbow ('uddhṛtya nāsikātulyam vāma-hastasya kūrpāre'); 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 dakṣhiṇenātu').



The earth-goddess is always shown seated (āsīnā) on the left side of Varāha ('vāma-pārśve pratisṭhāpya varāha-vapusho hareh', *Pādmāsāṃhitā*, op.cit.) According to *Hayaśīrsha-sāṃhitā* (23), when Varāha carries Lakshmī on his arm, the earth-goddess sits at his feet (pādalagnā dharā kāryā yadā lakshmīr-bhujasthitā). She is dark in colour (śyāma-varṇā) and two-armed: either she joins her hands in the attitude of supplication ('kṛtāñjali-puta'), 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', *Pādmāsāṃhitā*, op.cit). It should be in the ālīḍha posture. It is also prescribed that this incarnation of Viṣṇu is not to be shown as 'moving about' (yānaka) or 'recumbent' (śayana). *Viṣṇu-dharmottara* (3,79,9-10) mentions a form of Varāha seated in the posture of meditation, 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



Bhū-varāha (Pallava)

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

Śeṣha ('śeṣāhi-vidhṛtṁ padam', *Hayaśirsha-saṁhitā*, op.cit.).

Vishṇu-dharmottara (3,79,2-7) suggests that Śeṣha 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 (*āścharyotphulla-nayano*) and he must be looking intently upon the earth goddess (*devī-vikshāṇa-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-nayanām'*). 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. Śeṣha (*'kūrma-prṣhṭhe padaś chaikam anyan nāgendra-mūrdhani'*, cf. *Devatā-mūrti-prakaraṇa*).

The god is decorated with all of the usual ornaments, especially the Śrīvatsa mark, characteristic of Viṣṇu.

Among the several forms of Varāha, five are most frequently represented: (1) Bhū-varāha, shown as standing, two of his hands holding 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 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, śakti and gesture of boon-bestowal and protection. The earth-goddess is settled on his white tusks.



ADI-VARĀHA

Prapañcha-sāra-sāra-saṅgraha (Vol.II, P.609) mentions another form of Varāha which is multicoloured and

eight-armed. From the feet to the knee, the colour is like molten gold ('jānorāpādam udyat kairakam iva'): from knee to the navel it is white like snow ('hima-prakhyamājānunābhah'); from the navel to the neck it is red like fire ('kaṇṭhād nābhi vāhni-prabham'); and the head is blue ('śiraś chāgaḷam 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 ('vasudhollāsadaṁśhṭram'). It may be mentioned that in early sculptures, this is the usual delineation ('sitadaṁśhṭrika-dhṛta-bhuvam'). It was only later that the position of the goddess was shifted to the left arm or elbow of the god.

The legend in *Bhāgavata* accounting for Ādi-varāha is that the creator, Brahmā, wondered where the beings to be created by him would reside, since the earth was hidden deep within the watery mass (in the general dissolution or pralaya). he meditated upon Viṣṇu for guidance. As he was meditating a young boar whose size was that of a thumb ('aṅgushṭha-pramāṇo varāha-potah') proceeded from his nostril, out into the wide space. In a moment, it grew to gigantic dimensions. Brahmā recognized that it was none other than Viṣṇu, and offered it worship. The boar dived into the waters and lifted the earth with its huge tusks. Then there appeared on the earth the progenitor of the beings, Svāyambhuva-Manu.

The form known as Bhū-varāha or Dharaṇī-varāha, is distinguished by the god being accompanied by the Earth-goddess. She is seated on the left lap of the god (devasya vāmotsaṅge), who is also seated (āsine tu tathāsīnā) embracing the goddess

with his left arm (ālangitā cha hastena vāmena). She holds a lotus in one of her two hands. The face of the god must be pleasant (saumya-vaktra); and the god must be four-armed. The two upper hands carry conch and discus.

Varāha :

कल्पे जाताश्चतुर्वर्णा अवतारा रमापतेः ।
तारो (ॐ) नमो भगवते वराहेति च संवदेत् ॥
रूपाय भूर्भुवः सुवः पतये भूपतीति च ।
त्वं मे देहि दापयेति स्वाहान्तः सुरवर्णकः ॥

(Mantra : ॐ नमो भगवते वराहाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वराहरूपाय भूर्भुवःस्वः पतये
भूपतित्वं मे देहि दापय स्वाहा ॥
(हूं is said to be Varāha-bīja)

भार्गवो मुनिराख्यातश्छन्दोऽनुष्टुबुदाहृतम् ।
देवताऽदि वराहोऽस्य मन्त्राय कथितो बुधैः ॥

(The ṛshi is Bhargava, the chhandas Anusṭup, and the devatā Ādi-varāha)

Dhyana :

आपादं जानुदेशाद्वरकनकनिभं नाभिदेशादधस्तान्
मुक्ताभं कण्ठदेशात् तरुणरविनिभं मस्तकान्नीलभासम् ।

ईडे हस्तैर्दधानं रथचरणरदौ खड्गखेटौ गदाख्याम्
शक्तिं दानाभये च क्षितिधरणलसद्वंष्ट्रमाद्यं वराहम् ॥

- (ii) अथान्यं संप्रवक्ष्यामि वराहाष्टाक्षरं परम् ।
ॐ भूर्वराहाय नमो मुनिर्ब्रह्मा समीरितः ॥
जगती छन्द उद्दिष्टं वराहो देवता स्मृतः ॥

(ashtākshara-mantra: 'om bhūr-varāhāya namah')

The ṛshi is Brahmā, chhandas Jagatī, and the devatā Varāha).

कृष्णाङ्गं नीलवक्त्रं च मलिनं पद्मसंस्थितम् ।
पृथ्वीशक्तियुतं ध्यायेच्छंखं चक्राम्बुजं गदाम् ॥
भूलक्ष्मीकान्तिरतिभिः समन्तात् परिवारितम् ।

- (iii) ओमित्येकाक्षरो मन्त्रो वराहस्य प्रकीर्तितः ।
हयग्रीवो मुनिः प्रोक्तश्छन्दोऽनुष्टुप् च देवता ।
वराहो दीर्घयुक्तेन बीजेनैवाङ्गकल्पनम् ॥

(Mantra of one letter: 'Om')

The ṛshi is Hayagrīva, the chhandas is anuṣṭup, and the devatā is Varāha.)

- (iv) भूरित्येकाक्षरं बीजं सर्वं प्राग्वत्समीरितम् ॥
(one-lettered mantra: 'bhūh')

- (v) Bhū-varāha : Dharaṇī (bhū) mantra: ॐ भूवराहाय नमः ॥
हृदयं (नमः) भगवत्यै स्याद्धरण्यै तदनन्तरम् ।
धरण्यन्ते धरेद्वन्द्वं द्विठान्तोऽयं ध्रुवादिकः ॥
एकोनविंशत्यर्णाख्यं धराहृदयमीरितम् ।
वराहोऽस्य मुनिः प्रोक्तश्छन्दो निचृदुदाहृतम् ।
देवता सर्वभूतानां प्रकृतिर्वसुधा मता ॥

The main part of the mantra is:

नमो भगवत्यै धरण्यै ।

Varāha is the ṛshi of this mantra, chhandas is Nichṛt, and the devatā is Vasudhā (viz. Dharanī or Earth which is the original nature of all beings)

Dhyāna :

‘श्यामां विचित्रांशुकरत्नभूषणाम् पद्मासनां तुङ्गपयोधराननाम् ।
इन्दीवरं द्वे नवशालिमञ्जरीम् शुक्रं दधानां वसुधां भजामः ॥

Another dhyāna :

कृष्णाङ्गं त्वतिनीलवक्त्रनलिनं पद्मस्थितं स्वाङ्कग-
क्षोणीशक्तिमुदारबाहुभिरथो शंखं गदामम्बुजम् ।
चक्रं बिभ्रतमुग्रकान्तिमनिशं देवं वराहं भजे
भूलक्ष्मीरतिकान्तिभिः परिवृतं चर्मासिसन्दीप्तिभिः ॥

(vi) Mahā-damshṭra-varāha :

जानोरापादमुद्यत्कनकमिव हिमप्रख्यमाजानुनाभेः
कण्ठादानाभिवह्निप्रभमथ शिरसश्चागलं नीलवर्णम् ।
मौलेर्व्योमाभमाङ्कं करलसदरिशंखासिखेटं गदाख्या -
शक्तीष्ठाभीतियुक्तं प्रणमत वसुधोल्वासिदंष्ट्रं वराहम् ॥

(vii) A dhyāna-śloka for occult benefits :

ध्यातः सन्भूगृहेऽसौ भुवमतुलतरां वारुणे शान्तिमुच्चै-
राग्रेये वश्यजूत्यादिकमनिलपुरस्थोऽयमुच्चाटनादीन् ।
रक्षां व्योम्नोरिभूतग्रहविषदुरितेभ्योऽनिलाग्र्योस्तु पीडाम्
युद्धे वह्नीरयोर्वै जयमपि सुतरां संविधत्ते वराहः ॥

(4) NARASIMHA



One of the ten celebrated incarnations of Vishṇu, Narasimha is a widely worshipped deity in the northern as well as the southern parts of the country. While in the north he is worshipped in several Vishṇu shrines, independent temples to him are more frequently to be seen in South India than in the north. However, the ritual of worship in the celebrated temple at Puri-Jagannāth

(in Orissa) identifies the god here as Narasimha.

The reason for this incarnation given in the purāṇas (as for instance in *Bhāgavata*, 7,8, *Harivaṃśa*, 3,41-47, and *Vishṇu-purāṇa*, 20) is to save the world from the disastrous hold of the demon Hiranya-kaśipu, son of Kaśyapa-prajāpati and Diti: and more especially to protect Prahlāda, the devout son of this demon. Hiranya-kaśipu's brother, Hiranyāksha, was killed by Vishṇu in his Varāha incarnation, and Hiranya-kaśipu had therefore nurtured hatred for Vishṇu. When his son Prahlāda grew up as a devotee of Vishṇu, the demon naturally threatened his son, and subjected him to all kinds of terrible punishments. But Prahlāda was unswerving in his devotion to Vishṇu.



Yogā-Narasimha
(in the temple on Melukote hill)



Vishṇu had to appear in order to protect this young lad. Hiranya-kaśipu, however, had performed penance and obtained from Brahmā the boon that he could not be killed by god, man or beast, by any weapon known to man, during day or night, inside his palace or outside it. Therefore, Viṣṇu had to appear as man-beast (man-lion, nara-siṃha) and tear the demon's entrails with his claws (which were not weapons),

during dusk (which was neither day nor night) and seated upon the threshold of the palace (which was neither inside nor outside).

The legend further narrates that when Hiranya-kaśipu challenged his son Prahlāda to show Viṣṇu whom the boy claimed to be everywhere, in one of the pillars of his palace, Viṣṇu revealed himself as the ferocious man-lion bursting out of that pillar.

Narasimha's iconography incorporates all the details of this legend. The deity is shown variously as emerging from the pillar, rushing upon Hiranya-kaśipu, fighting with him, tearing open the demon's belly and pulling out the entrails, having held the demon prostrate on his lap,



NARASIMHA (from Ahobilam)

and offering protection to Prahlāda. He is shown in all the three conventional postures; seated (āsina), standing (sthānaka), and striding (yānaka). He is shown in his aspect of ferocity (ugra) and also in his aspect of benevolence to his devotee

(saumya, varada). He is alone (kevala) or in the company of Lakshmī, or of Prahlāda, or of both.



MĀLOLA NARASIMHA

Thus, there are numerous forms of Narasimha in vogue and in worship. The *Vihagendra-saṁhitā* (4,17) enumerates more than seventy

varieties of Narasimha. Texts like *Pādma-saṁhitā* (kriyā, 17,22) mention that only a few come in for description (Nṛsimha-mūrtir bahudhā tatra, kāchit pradarśayet). There are iconographic descriptions provided in many texts of Pāñcharātra and Vaikhānasa divisions of the Āgama (like *Pādma-saṁhitā*, kriyā 17,22041, *Īśvara-saṁhitā*, 4,73,75 *Parāśara-saṁhitā* 25,10, *Pārameśvara-saṁhitā*)

23, 48-49, *Sāttvata-saṁhitā*, 17 73-99. *Śeṣha-saṁhitā* Chaps. 24,27 and 28, *Vaikhānasāgama* 58th paṭala) as well as in several purāṇas (like *Vishṇu-dharmottara*, 3,78, *Matsya*, 269, 31-34 and *Agni*, 49,4) However, the descriptions mostly overlap. There are iconometric details given in *Sāttvata-saṁhitā* (24, 180-227),

Īśvara-saṁhitā (17,181-227) and *Śrī-praśna-saṁhitā* (13,96-142).



NARASIMHA (from Śārngapāṇi temple in Kumbhakoṇam)

Most of the varieties of Narasimha given in *Vihagendra-saṁhitā* appear to be little more than names. The text says that the distinction between the forms lies in

the weapons held (chatuhsaptati-vigraham syād āyudhānām vibhedakam). But this cannot be substantiated. Some of the adjectives merely refer to the several details of the Narasimha legend: Stambha-nārasimha (coming out of the pillar), Svayam-nārasimha (catching hold of the demon), Vidāraṇa-nārasimha (ripping open the belly of the demon), Samhāra-nārasimha (killing the demon) and so on.



UGRA-NARASIMHA
(Wood, Kaviyoor temple, Kerala)

Some of the forms included are little more than descriptive epithets: Ghora-nārasimha, Ugra-nārasimha, and Chaṇḍa-nārasimha refer to the ferocious aspect of the incarnation: Jvālā-nārasimha refers to the flames of fire which surround the deity's head; Lakshmī-narasimha is Narasimha accompanied by Lakshmī

(for purposes of pacification of the fury); Prasāda-narasimha is in the benign aspect of protecting Prahlaḍa, varada): Chhatra-nārasimha is decorated by a five-hooded serpent serving as a parasol; Yogā-narasimha or Yogeśvara-nārasimha is the form suited for those who seek salvation; Āveśa-nārasimha is the picture of

frenzy, while Aṭṭahāsa-nārasimha is the form that roars horribly and majestically strides across to destroy evil;



UGRA-NARASIMHA
(wood, chariot, Śuchindram temple)

Chakra-nārasimha, holds only discus in his hand; Brahma-nārasimha, Viṣṇu-nārasimha and Rudra-

nārasimha. Pṛthvī-narasimha, Vāyu-narasimha, Ākāśa-narasimha, Jvalana-narasimha and Amṛta-narasimha represent the five elements earth, air, ākaśa, fire and water respectively. Puṣṭi-narasimha is worshipped for overcoming evil influences; Nava-vyūha-narasimha is the constellation of nine different forms of Narasimha.

Notwithstanding the numerous varieties like those which are standing, riding Garuḍa, alone, in company, benign, ferocious, multi-armed (two to sixteen), some features are commonly to be noticed. The differences between the forms are largely due to postures and actions suggested. But the symbolism is unmistakably one of fighting against evil.



Vishṇu-dharmotta (3,78(2), 5-7) identifies Narasimha with the Saṅkarashaṇa form of Viṣṇu (haris saṅkarashaṇāmśena narasimha-vapurdharah), and explains that the demon Hirāya-kaśipu actually represents ignorance (hiraṇyakaśipur daityah tam ajñānām vidur budhāh) and that Narasimha destroys it (saṅkarshaṇātmā bhagavān ajñānasya vināśanah).

Saṅkarshaṇa in the form of Narasimha destroys the sins of the world, arising from speech, mind and body (vāṅgamānasakāyasaṁbhūtam trividham jagatām malam sadā pāṭayati). Narasimha's form in this text has been described as 'destructive of all ignorance' (sarvājñāna-vināśinī). *Sāttvata-saṁhitā* 1, 80), in a similar vein, explains that the composite form of Narasimha incorporates pure-



from Śārngapāṇi temple, Kumbhakoṇam

knowledge and the undoing of the fear born of karma (śuddhajñānānu viddham cha karma-sambhava-bhītiham).

In keeping with this symbolism, and in accordance with the legends in the background, some features that are common to the various forms may be mentioned. The body is that of a human being, but the head is leonine (*Vishṇu-tantra*, 17,3, 'galānta-nara-rūpam mahāsimham atah para'; 'galād adhastān nara-rūpa-dhāri parata simhānana-bhṛt svarūpam') surrounded by thick and heavy manes resembling a circle of flames (sa-sāṭā-skandha-samāyukta, *Vishṇu-dharmottara* 3, 78(2), 3: 'jvālāmālākula-mukho jvālā-kesara maṇḍalah'). His three eyes, which are large and round (vartule netre) emit sparks of fire (*Śeṣa-*

saṁhitā, 23, 19, 'tryakshair visphurantam') and glow like fire and sun put together (*Vishvaksena-saṁhitā*, 21,60, 'bibharti netrāṇi hutāśanārka-prabhāñchitāni')



The body is a mass of crystal white, resembling a big mountain (*Vishvakṣena-saṁhitā* 21, 60, 'śveta-parvata-saṅkāśam', śuddha-sphaṭika saṅkāśam') and shines like snow, jasmine flower or moon (*Īśvara-saṁhitā*, 4,64, 'hima-kundendu-sannibha). But it is enclosed by burning sparks of fire that emanate from the body itself (*Sāttvata-saṁhitā*, 12, 74, 'jvalad-agni-sphulingābhis svadehotthābhir āvṛtam'). Thus he appears curiously ferocious (mahābhīma, 'bṛhan-mūrtim subhīṣaṇam')

His eye-brows are knitted and twisted with fury (*Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā*, 23, 15 'bhruvau hyākuñchitavakre'). The tongue is thrust out and is eager to lap up blood (lelihāna-jihvā). A tall, tapering and splendid crown

(kirīṭa-mukutojjvala) (or a karaṇḍa - mukuṭa according to some texts) adorns the head; and the form is richly bedecked with all ornaments (sarvābharaṇa-vibhūṣita), especially Śrī-vatsa and Kaustubha on the chest (which are the characteristic jewels of Viṣṇu). There is seen a serpent dangling from the left shoulder, forming the sacrificial cord (sarpa-yajñopavīta). *Pādma-saṁhitā* (17,22-41) prescribes that Narasimha must be shown as wearing a red-coloured bodice (rakta-kañchuka-saṁyukta), while most of the texts only mention that his garments are red in colour (rakta-vastra-dhara). *Viṣṇu-dharmottara* (3,78,2), however, suggests that Narasimha must wear dark blue clothes (nīla-vāsaḥ). And *Sāttvata-saṁhitā* (12,73f0 prescribes yellow, and *Vishvakṣena-saṁhitā*



Sculpture from Kashmīr

describes the deity's body as daubed with red sandal paste ('rakta-chandana liptāṅgam', 'rakta-chandana-charchitam').

Most commonly, Narasimha has but one head. In fact, *Sāttvata-saṁhitā* (12, 80) specifies this detail ('dhyāyed eka-vaktram'). But *Īśvara-saṁhitā* (4,76-81) describes a form of Narasimha with five heads

('pañchānana-suśobhita' 'pañcha-vaktra') and ten arms. There is a head facing each of the four directions, and the fifth head is on top, and is brilliant like the blazing fire ('ūrdhvam agni-nibham mukham'). The heads facing east, west, south and north (purvādi-chottarāntam) are said to shine like



VARADA - NARASIMHA

moon (viz. white), collyrium (black), gold (yellow) and red-coloured insect (indra-gopa) respectively (chandrāñjana-suvarṇābham indra-gopa-nibham tathā). The hands carry rosary, mace, lotus, conch, bow, ploughshare, discus, arrow, gesture of boon-bestowal and sword. This form of Narasimha is called Meru; it is worshipped to get rid of all diseases ('etam merur iti khyātam sarva-vyādhi-vināśanam').

The Narasimha images are usually classified into two broad types: giriḥja (or kevala) and sthūṇaja (sthaṇa) (cf. *Vihagendra-saṁhitā*, 4,7-17). The former expression suggests Narasimha rushing out of a mountain-cave (giri) to protect his devotee; he is shown as a long figure, seated in easy or yogic posture,

bestowing boon or offering protection. The latter expression, on the other hand, signifies Narasimha bursting out of the pillar (sthūṇa) of Hiranya-kaśipu's palace, split into two. He is ferocious in aspect, and is shown as fighting with the demon or as ripping open his belly. He stands or dances, struts about or sits; but the demon is shown along with him. Or to calm his fury, Lakshmī, Prahlāda or Garuḍa are also shown with him.



Vaikhānasāgama which distinguishes between Kevala-narasimha and Sthauṇa-narasimha points out that the former is benign, while the latter is terrific. In the former he is benign, while in the latter terrific. In the former variety, the deity sits on a lotus-seat (*padma-pīṭhopari*), with legs crossed (*dvau pādau vyatyayena nyasya*) or in the 'utkuṭīkāsana' posture. He is bedecked with all ornaments. He has only four hands, upper ones holding discus (right) and conch (left), and the normal hands stretched over the knees (*jānūparishṭhāt prasāritau*). Or, he may sit on a lion-seat (*siṃhāsana*) with the left leg bent and placed across the seat (*vāmam dakṣiṇam prasārya*). In this case, the right hand assumes the gesture of protection (*abhaya*) and the left hand holds the hip

(*kaṭyavalambita*) or is placed on the thigh (*ūru-stham vā*).



NARASIMHA (from Nāmakkal cave temple)

The sthauṇa variety of Narasimha is usually in the act of killing the demon Hiranya-kaśipu, and therefore in awe-inspiring aspect. The form is frightening for the wicked ('*dusṭānām atibhīshaṇam*). His mouth is wide open (*vikāsāsyā*) and his eyes

are round, blood-shot and terrible (rakta-vṛttogra-dṛśhṭikam) Narasimha in this form has many arms, eight or sixteen being most usual (aṣṭābhir dviraṣṭābhir vā bhujair yuktam bhayānakam daitya-vadhānurūpam nṛsimham sthūṇa-jam kārayet). The demon is shown as held prostrate on the left thigh of Narasimha (utsaṅge), secured by two hands of the God,



YOGĀ-NARASIMHA
(with Lakshmi)

another two hands of the god pulling out the intestines from the demon's belly holding them as garlands round his own neck.

Another classification is into two varieties: svatantra (alone) and devī-sahita (accompanied by consort). In the latter variety, it is usual that Lakshmī alone is shown, but there are icons where both Lakshmī and Bhū-devi (viz earth-goddess) are shown on his sides. This latter variety is known as Saumya-narasimha (*Śeṣha-saṃhitā*, 27-6). When Lakshmī alone is shown, she is seated on his lap. This form of Narasimha is known as Lakshmī-Narasimha, and, according to the description in *Parāśara-saṃhitā* (15,160), the deity is imagined to dwell in the midst of the milky-ocean and represent reality, consciousness

and bliss (satya-jñāna-sukha-svarūpam
amalam kshīrābdhi-madhya-sthitam)
He is bedecked with numerous
ornaments (bhūshā-sahasrojjvalam),
and his face is exceedingly pleasant

(ati-prasanna-vadanam). He has three
eyes (tryaksham). His complexion is
white like the moon (indu-dhavalam)
and his brilliance is like that of the
sun. (arka-cchhavam).



Stone icon, in the Tirumalai temple

This text prescribes that Narasimha should be in the yogic posture (yogārūḍham), viz, with crossed and uplited legs held firm by a band (yoga-paṭṭa samāyuktam āsīnam samyag āsane, *Vishṇu-tantra*, 17,7-8). But there are images belonging to this variety where he sits in an easy posture, viz. with the left leg bent and touching the ground. Lakshmī is seated on his left lap. There is above Narasimha's head Ādi-Śeṣha with his hoods spread out as a parasol (chhatrī-bhūta-phaṇīndram). Narasimha is four-armed, carrying in this three hands discus (chakra), bow representing the incorporation of Śiva in the Narasimha icon), and the gesture of protection, the fourth arm embracing Lakshmī.



YOGĀ - NARASIMHA

The presence of Lakshmī, with sometimes the Earth-goddess Bhūdevī also, indicates that Narasimha is benevolent in aspect (prasanna, saumya). *Vaikhānasāgama* explains that the goddesses must be shown at the God's sides for pacifying the fury (kopa-śāntyartham pārśvayoh śrī mahyau). When Prahlāda also is

present, the variety of Narasimha is known as Prahlāda-varada and is included under the 'devī-sahita' variety.



YOGĀ-NARASIMHA

(from a wall-painting in Trivandrum)

It is usual for the Lakshmī-narasimha form, to have Lakshmī seated on the god's left lap. But when both the goddesses are shown, Lakshmī is on the right side and Bhū-devī on the left. Lakshmī is golden-coloured (suvarṇābhā) and is seated

with her left leg tucked up and her right leg dangling down; she holds a red lotus (padma) in her left hand. Bhū-devī is dark-coloured (śyāmābhā), and she sits with her right leg tucked up and the left one dangling down; she holds a blue lotus (utpala) in her right hand.

A well-known and popularly worshipped variety is that of Yogā-narasimha, where he is seated upon a lotus seat in the typical yogic posture, with the two legs held up, crossing each other and with the feet closed together but facing opposite directions (vyatyasta-charaṇa-dvandvam āsīnam padma.viṣṭare') and with a band securing the position of the legs (yoga-paṭṭikā-dṛḍha-bandhanam). The form has three eyes and four arms. The normal hands,

resting on the knees are stretched out ('prasārya jānunoh', 'jānvārūḍha-srasta-bhuja', or 'jānu-dvayopari prasārayet). While it is usual for Yogā-narasimha to be alone, sometimes Lakshmī is also shown, seated on his left knee. This form of Narasimha is said to symbolize omniscience (sarva-jñāna-mayam parah) (cf. *Īśvara-saṁhitā* 4,62-66).



YOGĀ-NARASIMHA (bronze)



YOGĀ-NARASIMHA
(as Vimāna-devata)

The form of Yogā-narasimha is involved in the Sudarśana motif. Located in the centre of the six-angled magical diagram surrounded by a flaming circle, known as Sudarśana (representing Viṣṇu's discus), ('sudarśanasya hṛdaya-visṭitam', *Pādma-saṁhitā*, charyā, 31,259), the form answers to the

description given above. In some texts (*Pādma-saṁhitā* 31, 257-260), he is without Lakshmī. According to *Śeṣha-saṁhitā* (24, 15-16), however, he has four (or eight) hands in all of which he carries only discus. On the reverse of the magical diagram (viz. behind Narasimha) will be a representation of Sudarśana (the personified discus) with eight or sixteen arms, standing or moving. This is known as Sudarśana-nārasimha and is said to symbolize the Viśva-rūpa aspect of Viṣṇu (*Śeṣha-saṁhitā*, op. cit., 'viśvarūpam udārāṅgam', 'viśvatomukham').

Varāha-narasimha is a composite form involving the Varāha and Narasimha incarnations of Viṣṇu, assumed in order to free the world from the terror caused by the two

demon-brothers, Hiraṇyāksha and Hiraṇya-kaśipu. *Śeṣha-saṁhitā* (28, 19) describes this form as fierce (ugra-vigraha) as well as benevolent (saumyam) with eight hands in each of which a discus is held (chakra-aṣṭa-dharam). The famous shrine in Simhāchalam in Andhra Pradesh is dedicated to this form, although the above description is not applicable to the deity here. A reference will again be made to this form later.

Īśvara-saṁhitā (4,73-78)

mentions a form of Narasimha with only two hands and a prominent tail (hence called Pucchha-nārasimha). Here, the god is visualized as having the colour of red hibiscus flower (japāpushpa-saṅkāśa) and blood-shot eyes (rakta-lochana). He has both hands pressed against the ground

(karau bhūmau pratishṭhāpya), and is shown as loudly lashing the ground with his tail (āspotya bhūmau lāngūlam). He is terrible in aspect (sarva-loka-bhayaṅkara) and is about to lap up the whole world of living beings and all matter (lelihanas sa-charācharam).

An account in *Pārameśvara-saṁhitā* (23,48-49) would have this form of Narasimha carry the following weapons in the circumambulatory order beginning with the normal right hand (mukhya-daksha-karādīkiah kramāt): lotus, goad, ploughshare (musala), discus, conch, bow with arrow (sa-śaram chāpam), noose and mace.

Matsya-purāṇa (269, 31, 34) also describes the eight-armed Narasimha, but it insists that the



YOGĀ-NARASIMHA

demon Hiranya-kaśipu must be shown on his lap and as being killed by him ('dārayantam dites sutam', also *Silpa-ratna*, 25th paṭala, 'hiranyakaśipum dārayantam nakhāṅkuraih uror upari). The demon must be represented as vomiting blood, his entrails coming out (vinir-gatāntra-jālam dānavam parikalpayet, vamanam rudhiram ghoram). The demon must hold in his

two hands sword and shield. The disposition of Narasimha's eight hands is described in *Śilpa-ratna* thus: the two hands on top are shown as holding the intestines dug out of the demon's body as a garland (tasyāntra-mālām nishkṛshya bāhu-yugmena), two hands are engaged in ripping open the belly of the demon; the other four hands carry discus, lotus, mace and conch.



Relief on a pillar, Tirumalai temple

Sixteen-armed bronze icons (dvir-ashta-bāhu) of Narasimha are seen in some of the South Indian temples dedicated to Vishṇu; and there are also descriptions available in some āgama texts. The multiplicity of arms is suggestive of various weapons that increase the ferocity of the deity. The icon in this form is characteristically destructive of the demon, Hiranyakaśipu; and hence among the sixteen arms, two secure the body of the demon on the god's left thigh, the right hand holding the legs and the left the head of the demon; two engage themselves with their sharp nails in ripping open the belly of the demon; two other hands pull out the intestines from the demon's belly and throw them as a garland round the god's neck; and one of the hands is about to administer a blow to the demon

(chhapetīkā-mudrā). The other hands carry various weapons.



From temple in Sāligrama near Mysore

If this account occurs in *Vaikhānasāgama*, *Pārameśvara samhitā* (kriyā, 23,45-47) specifies the weapons carried in the sixteen hands of Narasimha, with no mention of the demon. In circumambulatory order (prādakshīṇya-krameṇa), the weapons are: śakti, sword, fire, goad, cudgel, lance, axe, discus, bow, arrow, noose,

ploughshare, vajra, mace, pestle and trident. *Pādma-samhitā* (Kriyā, 17, 22-41), however, prescribes the following weapons: discus, sword, axe, spear, arrow, goad and vajra (in the hands on the right side), conch, shield, mace, śakti, bow, noose and club (in the hands on the left side). The remaining two hands are placed on the knees (śiṣṭau karau sthāpayej jānūnor dvayoh). The description does not include the demon Hiranya-kaśipu. Another description found in *Parāśara-samhitā* (25,10) makes this form assume a standing posture (pratyālīḍha) having three eyes, fierce fangs, and tawny-red hair (piṅga-keśa).

A conjoint representation of the incarnations of Varāha and Narasimha, assumed to kill the demon-brothers Hiranyāksha and Hiranyakaśipu



VARĀHA-NARASIMHA
(of Simhāchalam)

respectively has already been mentioned. Some details are given now. According to *Parāśara-saṁhitā* (30,26) this conjoint form has four hands carrying in each of them a discus ('chaturś-chakra-dharam'), and is accompanied by three consorts: Lakshmi, Bhū and Nīlā ('śrī-bhū-nīlādhipam'). The text, however, does not provide iconographical prescriptions about how the two forms

(of Varāha and Narasimha) are to be conjoined.

The presiding deity of the well-known place of pilgrimage in Āndhra Pradesh, Simhāchalam, is known as Varāha-narasimha. 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 month Vaiśākha), when the original form of the deity becomes visible.

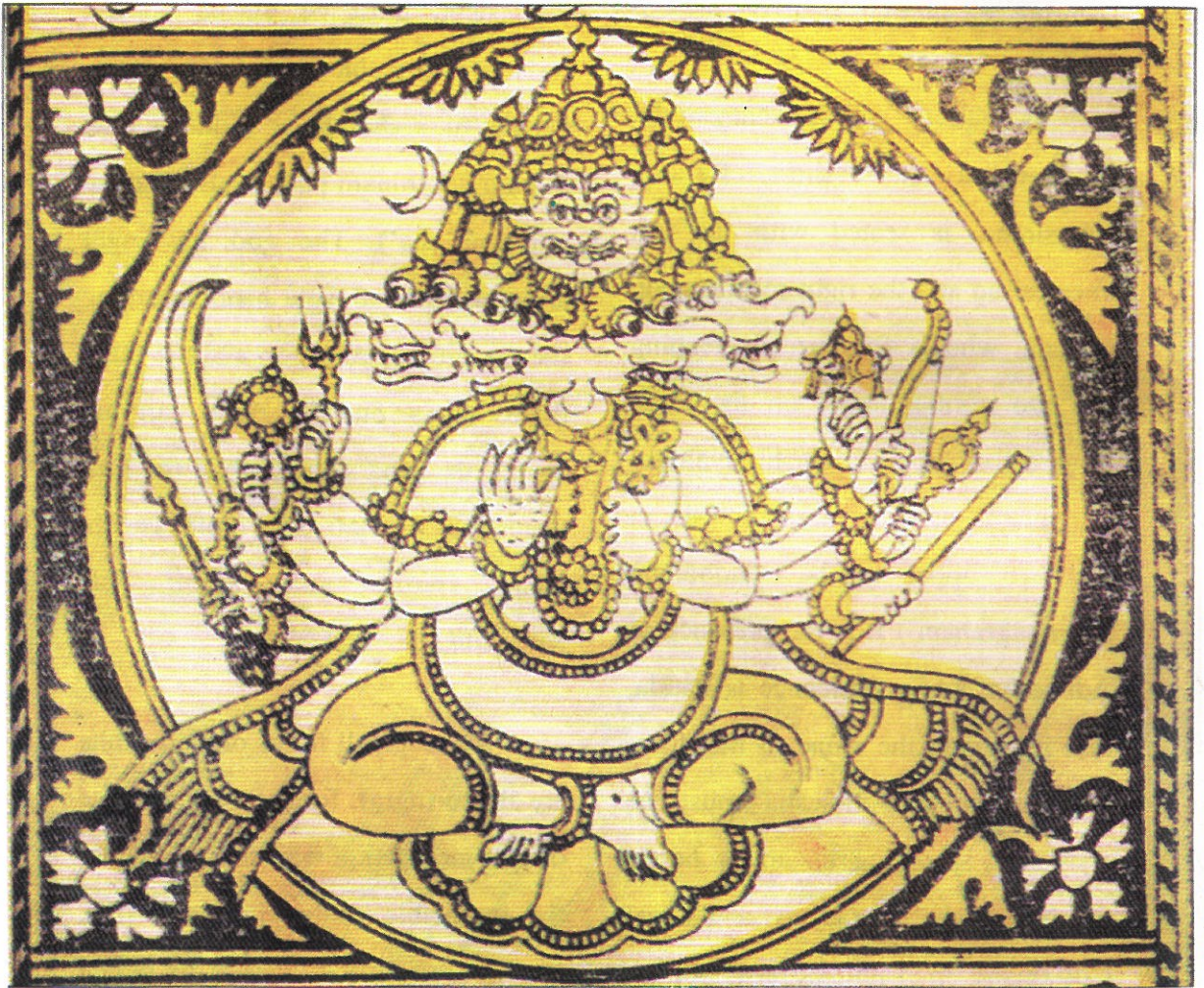
According to *Parāśara-saṁhitā* (30,21), Varāha-narasimha, who has

four hands, carrying in all of them discus, is invoked for victory and for securing kingdom (rājya-jaya-prada):

A variety of the Narasimha incarnation of Viṣṇu, Pātala-Narasimha, is seated with the left knee raised and the right resting upon Garuḍa, who is four-armed, keeping the two normal hands on the chest in an act of supplication ('hrdayāñjali-samyutam') and carrying Ādi-śeṣha in the two upper hands ('dadhānam śeṣha-vigraham') It is the presence of Ādi-śeṣha, whose residence is Pātāla, that has given the name to this form of Narasimha. Ādi-śeṣha must be shown as spreading his many hoods on Narasimha's head as a parasol ('uttamāṅgam samuddhṛtya phaṇā-maṇḍala-maṇḍitam, kalpayet tat phaṇādhasam nārasimham').

Narasimha must be shown as placing his right foot on Garuḍa, but his left foot, bent, must be placed on the body of Ādi-śeṣha ('kuñchitam vāma-pādam tu śeṣha-bhoge nidhāya cha; āsīnam dakṣiṇam pādam viśaskandha prasārya cha'). The god has eight arms, the normal right hand assuming the gesture of protection and the other three hands on the right carrying discus, dart and sword, while the four hands on the left side hold conch, bow, sword and mace (cf. *Kriyādhikāra*, 11,52-58)

Although all forms of Narasimha are fierce (ugra), for the very purpose of that incarnation was to tear asunder the invincible asura Hiraṇya-kaśipu, the show of ferocity was at its height during the encounter with the asura. This is featured in the form known



PANCHAVAKTRA NARASIMHA

as Ugra-narasimha. After the asura was killed, the 'man-lion' became pacific, benevolent to his youthful devotee, Prahlāda (Prahāda-varada).

The aspect of Narasimha as he emerged suddenly from the pillar, with a thunderous roar and sparks of fire darting out of his awesome face, and rushed towards the asura is in a really ferocious form (ugra).

This is technically called 'sthaṇa-narasimha'. There are other forms which are also 'ugra' in character: Jvālā-narasimha, Ghora-narasimha and Āveśa-narasimha, chaṇḍa-narasimha, Aṭṭahāsa-narasimha and Bhairava-narasimha. In this aspect, Narasimha is shown with eight, ten or sixteen arms, seated or standing in an ālīḍha-posture.

(4) Nṛsimha

(i) The one-lettered mantra of Nṛsimha is श्री ॥

मेरु (क्ष) कृशानु (र) संयुक्तोऽनुग्रहे (औं) न्दुसमन्वितः ।
एकाक्षरो नरहरेर्म्मन्त्रः कल्पद्रुमो नृणाम् ॥

Atri is the ṛshi, Gāyatri the chhandas and Nṛkesarī the devatā

Dhyāna :

तपनसोमहुताशनलोचनं घनविरामहिमांशुसमप्रभम् ।
अभयचक्रपिनाकवरान् करैर्धृतमिन्दुधरं नृहरिं भजे ॥

(ii) त्र्यक्षरः सम्पुटः प्रोक्तो मायया प्रणवेन च ॥

The three-lettered mantra:

(a) ह्रीं क्षीं ह्रीं ॥

(b) ॐ क्षीं ॐ

(iii) The eight-lettered mantra (Nilakaṇṭha-Nṛsimha)

अथोच्यते नरहरिर्भीतिहारीष्टसाधकः ।

जयद्वयं श्रीनृसिंहेत्यष्टार्णो मनुरीरितः ॥

जय जय श्रीनृसिंह ॥

The ṛshi is Brahmā, the chhandas is Gāyatri, and the devatā is Śrī-Nṛsimha

Dhyāna :

श्रीमन्नृकेसरितनो जगदेकबन्धो श्रीनीलकण्ठकरुणार्णवसामराज ।

वह्नीन्दुतीव्रकरनेत्रपिनाकपाणे शीतांशुशेखर रमेश्वर पाहि विष्णो ॥

(iv) प्रतिमन्वन्तरं चाऽयमवतारो हरेर्भवेत् ।

द्वीपान्तरे नृसिंहस्तु चतुर्दशसु मूर्तिषु ॥

आकल्पं वसते तत्र भक्तानुग्रहकारकः ।

आदि मन्वन्तरे जातो नृसिंहो वक्ष्यतेऽधुना ॥

द्वात्रिंशद्वर्णको गोप्यो भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदो यतः ॥

(This long mantra of 32 letters is given in *Vishvaksena-samhitā* in a dialogue between Brahma and Nārada. Its eulogy occurs there:)

न नृसिंहात्परो देवो नैतन्मन्त्रात्परो मनुः ।

न तद्ध्यानात्परं ध्यानं संसारभयनाशनम् ॥

अनेक मन्त्रकोटीनां चूडामणिरयं मनुः ।

यथा नृसिंहो भगवान्देवानां शिरोमणिः ॥

The ṛshi of this mantra is Brahmā, the chhandas is Anuṣṭup and the devatā is Śrī-nṛsimha.

Dhyāna :

क्षीराणवे सितद्वीपे कल्पवृक्षवनं स्मरेत् ।
नानापुष्पफलाकीर्णं मुक्तारत्नौघवर्षणम् ॥१॥
विकसद्बालमन्दारे पुष्पामोदमनोहरम् ।
कुसुमान्तर्मधुस्वादमत्तालिकुलसङ्कुलम् ॥२॥
कोकिलालापमुखरं नानापक्षिगणान्वितम् ।
ऋतुषट्केन युगपत्सेव्यमानं सुखास्पदम् ॥३॥
उत्फुल्लाम्बुजकह्लारकुमुदोत्पलशालिभिः ।
हंसकारण्डवाकीर्णैः सरोभिरुपशोभितम् ॥४॥
तस्य मध्ये स्फुरद्दीप्तिं चिन्तयेन्मणिमण्डपम् ।
तदन्तः पद्मरागौघकुट्टिमारक्तभूतले ॥५॥
नानारत्नप्रभोद्भासिस्वर्णसिंहासनोपरि ।
भोगीन्द्रभोगतल्पे च पद्ममष्टदलं स्मरेत् ॥६॥
तत्कर्णिकासमासीनं श्रीनृसिंहं विचिन्तयेत् ।
चन्द्रकोटिप्रतीकाशं भास्वत्पीताम्बरावृतम् ॥७॥
ज्वलत्कालानलप्रख्यज्वालामालिदुरासदम् ।
चक्रं सुदर्शनं चापं सबानं वरमुद्रिकाम् ॥८॥
अभयाख्यां तथा मुद्रां निजभक्तेषु सार्थिकाम् ।
धारयन्तं महाबाहुं चतुर्भिः करपल्लवैः ॥९॥
सोमसूर्याग्निनयनमीषद् ध्यानाननाम्बुजम् ।
स्फुरत्सौदामिनीजिह्वं दंष्ट्राद्भुतमुखाम्बुजम् ॥१०॥
तप्तचामीकरप्रख्यजटामण्डलमण्डितम् ।
हैमं किरीटं बिभ्राणं भास्वन्मणिगणोज्ज्वलम् ॥११॥

श्रीवत्सकौस्तुभोरस्कं स्फुरन्मकरकुण्डलम् ।
 योगपट्टपिनद्धाङ्गं वनमालाविराजितम् ॥१२॥
 हारकेयूरमञ्जीरस्फुरत्काञ्चीगुणादिभिः ।
 भूषितं भूषणैर्दिव्यैर्नानारत्नोपकल्पितैः ॥१३॥
 ज्वलन्मणिशिखादीप्तफणीन्द्रफणपंक्तिभिः ।
 कृतच्छत्रं स्वतेजोभिर्भासयन्तं दिशो दश ॥१४॥
 कल्पान्तकालदहनज्वालाजाल विडम्बिभिः ।
 ललाटनयनज्वालैर्दुर्निरीक्ष्यं सुरैरपि ॥१५॥
 स्ववामाङ्गतां लक्ष्मीं तप्तजाम्बूनदप्रभाम् ।
 शुद्धक्षौमपरीधानां नानालङ्कारभूषिताम् ॥१६॥
 वराभयं पद्मयुग्मं बिभ्राणां करपङ्कजैः ।
 शरन्पूर्णेन्दुवदनां मन्दस्मितमुखाम्बुजाम् ॥१७॥
 आश्लिष्यन्तं कृताश्लेषामानन्दोत्फुल्ललोचनाम् ॥
 भारत्या दक्षिणे देशे स्तूयमानं हि सर्वदा ॥१८॥
 ब्रह्मादिभिः सुरगणैः सनकाद्यैर्महर्षिभिः ।
 योगिभिः सिद्धगन्धर्वैरप्सरसोभिश्च सेवितम् ॥१९॥
 अतिप्रसन्नवदनं भक्ताभीष्टवरप्रदम् ।
 एवं विधमनिर्देश्यमवाङ्मनसगोचरम् ॥२०॥
 दिव्यसिंहं हृदि ध्यायेत्परमात्मानमच्युतम् ।
 एवं ध्यात्वा महाविष्णुं दिव्यकेशरिणं विभुम् ।
 कर्मबन्धाद्विनिर्मुक्तः प्राप्नुयाद्द्वैष्णवीं तनुम् ॥२१॥

There are different forms of Nṛsimha, in accordance with the purposes and desires of devotees :

काम्यप्रयोगसिद्ध्यर्थं ध्यानभेदान्वदाम्यहम् ।
 उद्यत्सहस्रार्कभासं त्रिनेत्रं भीषणाकृतिम् ॥१॥

वज्रतुल्येक्षणं वह्निकान्तिं नानाभुजैर्वृतम् ।
नखैर्दारितदैत्येशं रक्तधाराक्तकायकम् ॥२॥
कूरकर्मादिविषये स्मरेद्वेवं भयानकम् ।
विश्वरूपमयं ध्यानं नृहरेः प्रोच्यतेऽधुना ॥३॥

The mantra that is common to all forms :
ॐ क्षौं नमो भगवते नृसिंहाय ॥

(v) Vidāraṇa-nṛsimha

Dhyāna :

वामे शंखमरिं दक्षे जानुविन्यस्तबाहुकम् ।
ग्रसन्तं दैत्यराजानं कृशानूपमतेजसा ॥१॥
दंष्ट्राप्रदीप्तवदनं ललज्जिह्वं त्रिलोचनम् ।
सुरैश्च मुनिभिर्लक्ष्म्या कृताञ्जलिकया स्तुतम् ॥२॥

(vi) Jvālā-nṛsimha

Dhyāna :

माणिक्याद्रिसमप्रभं निजरुचा संत्रस्तरक्षोगणम्
जानुन्यस्तकराम्बुजं त्रिनयनं रत्नोल्लसद्दूषणम् ।
बाहुभ्यां धृतशंखचक्रमनिशं दंष्ट्रोग्रवक्त्रोल्लस -
ज्वालाजिह्वमुदग्रकेशनिचयं वन्दे नृसिंहं विभुम् ॥

(vii) Five-headed and Ten-armed Nṛsimha

Dhyāna :

नृसिंहं तं महाभीमं कालानल समप्रभम् ।
अक्षमालाधरं रौद्रं कण्ठं हारेण शोभितम् ॥१॥

नागयज्ञोपवीतिनं तं पञ्चाननसुशोभितम् ।
 चन्द्रमौलिं नीलकण्ठं प्रतिवक्त्रं त्रिलोचनम् ॥२॥
 भुजैः परिघसंकाशैर्दशभिश्चोपशोभितम् ।
 अक्षसूत्रं गदां पद्मं शंखं गोक्षीरसन्निभम् ॥३॥
 धनुश्च मुशलं चैव बिभ्राणं चक्रमुत्तमम् ।
 खड्गं शूलं च बाणं च नृहरिं रुद्रगोपनम् ॥४॥
 इन्द्रनीलकनीलाभं चन्द्राभं स्वर्णसन्निभम् ।
 पूर्वोदयोत्तरज्वलदूर्ध्वास्यं सर्ववर्णकम् ।
 एवमुग्रहरिं ध्यायेत्सर्वव्याधिनिवृत्तये ॥५॥

(viii) Sixteen-armed Nṛsima :

Dhyāna :

ध्येयो यदा महत्कर्म तदा षोडशहस्तवान् ।
 नृसिंहः सर्वलोकेशः सर्वाभरणभूषितः ॥१॥
 द्वौ विदारणकर्माहौ द्वौ चात्रोद्धरणक्षमौ ।
 चक्रशंखधरावन्यावन्यौ बाणधनुर्धरौ ॥२॥
 खड्गखेटधरावन्यौ द्वौ गदापद्मधारिणौ ।
 पाशाङ्कुशधरावन्यौ द्वौ रिपोर्मकुटार्पितौ ॥३॥
 इति षोडशदोर्दण्डमण्डितं नृहरिं विभुम् ।
 ध्यायेदम्बुजनीलाभमुग्रकर्मण्यनन्यधीः ॥४॥

(ix) Twenty-six armed Nṛsimha :

Dhyāna :

ध्येयो महत्तमे कार्ये तदा षड्विंशहस्तवान् ।

नृसिंहः सर्वभूषाढ्यः सर्वसिद्धिकरः प्रभुः ॥१॥
 दक्षिणे खड्गचक्रे च परशुं पाशमेव च ।
 हलं च मुशलं सम्यगभयं चाङ्कुशं तथा ॥२॥
 पट्टिशं भिन्दिपालं च खेटतोमरमुद्ररान् ।
 वामभागकरैः शंखं खड्गं पाशं च शूलकम् ॥३॥
 हुताशनं वरं शक्तिं सम्यगमृण्मयकुण्डिकाम् ।
 कार्मुकं तर्जनीमुद्रां गदां डमरुसर्पकान् ॥४॥
 करद्वन्द्वैः क्रमाच्छत्रोर्जानुमस्तकपत्तलम् ।
 ऊर्ध्वीकृताभ्यां हस्ताभ्यां मन्त्रमालाधरं हरिम् ॥५॥
 अधःस्थिताभ्यां हस्ताभ्यां हिरण्यकविदारणम् ।
 प्रियङ्करं च भक्तानां दैत्यानां च भयङ्करम् ।
 नृसिंहं संस्मरेद्विव्यं महामृत्युभयापहम् ॥६॥

(x) Garudāsana-Nṛsimha :

Dhyāna :

अथोच्यते ध्यानमन्यन्मुखरोगहरं परम् ।
 विषरोगहरं मृत्युहरं शत्रुभयापहम् ॥१॥
 स्वर्णोघतुल्ये गरुडे स्थितं पूर्णेन्दुवर्णकम् ।
 सुमुखं विद्युदाभासनेत्रत्रयविराजितम् ॥२॥
 सुभूषं पीतवसनं शंखचक्रवराभयान् ।
 धारयन्तं चतुर्भिश्च करैः क्ष्वेडादिनाशकम् ।
 अपमृत्युमहाकृत्यनाशकं नृहरिं स्मरेत् ॥३॥

(xi) Ghora-Nṛsimha

Dhyāna :

उद्यत्कोटिरविप्रभं नरहरिं कोटीरहारोज्ज्वलम् ।

दंष्ट्राभीममुखं लसन्नखमुखैर्दोर्घरनेकैर्भुजैः ।
निर्भिन्नासुरनाथमग्निशशभृत्सूर्यात्मनेत्रत्रयम् ।
विद्युत्पुञ्जजटाकलापभयदं वह्निं वमन्तं भजे ॥
(सौम्ये सौम्यं स्मरेत्क्रूरकार्ये क्रूरमिमं भजेत् ।)

(xii) Jvālā-māli-Nṛsimha

Dhyāna :

प्रज्वलन् प्रलयानलाभमयुग्मनेत्रमनारतम्
भासुरं शिखिनः शिखाभिरुपदंष्ट्रमुखाम्बुजम् ।
रक्षसां भयदं विकीर्णसटाकलापविभीषणम्
शंखचक्रकृपाणखेटकधारिणं नृहरिं भजे ॥

The mantra : ओं नमो भगवते नरसिंहाय ज्वालामालपिनद्धांगायाग्निनेत्राय
सर्वभूतविनाशाय दह दह पच पच रक्ष रक्ष ह्रीं श्रीं ॥

(तारो नमो भगवते बीजान्ते नरपदं वदेत् ।
सिंहायेति ततः प्रोक्त्वा ज्वालामालापदं वदेत् ॥
पिनद्धांगाय इत्युक्त्वा अग्निनेत्राय संवदेत् ।
सर्वभूतविनाशेति नायेत्युक्त्वा द्विधा दह ।
पच युग्मं रक्षयुग्मं ह्रीं श्रीं रक्षाग्निगेहिनी ।
चतुष्पञ्चाशदर्णोऽयं मन्त्रः प्रथम ईरितः ॥)

(xiii) Lakshmī-Nṛsimha :

Mantra :

ओं क्ष्मीं नमो भगवते लक्ष्मीनृसिंहाय
महाविष्णवे सकलदुरितनिवारणाय

हुं फट् स्वाहा ॥

Brahmā is the ṛshi, anushtup the chhandas and Lakshmī-Nṛsimha the devatā

Dhyāna :

सर्पेन्द्रभोगशयनः सर्पेन्द्रफणाच्छत्रवान् ।
आलिङ्गितश्च रमया दीप्तया चन्द्रसन्निभः ।
पद्मचक्रवराभीतिधरस्त्र्यक्षेन्दुशेखरः ॥

ashtākshara-mantra :

- (a) ॐ श्रीं लक्ष्मीनृसिंहाय मनुरष्टाक्षरो मतः ।
मुनिः प्रजापतिश्छन्दोऽनुष्टुब् लक्ष्मीहरिः सुरः ॥
- (b) जय जय श्रीनृसिंह मनुरष्टाक्षरो मतः ।
ऋष्याद्यष्टार्णवत्प्रोक्तं पूजा चास्य षडर्णवत् ॥

Another dhyāna (Yoga-lakshmī-Narasimha)

सत्यज्ञानसुखस्वरूपममलं क्षीराब्धिमध्यस्थितम्
योगारूढमतिप्रसन्नवदनं भूषासहस्रोज्ज्वलम् ।
त्र्यक्षं चक्रपिनकसाभयवरान् बिभ्राणमच्छच्छविम्
छत्रीभूतफणीन्द्रमिन्दुधवलम् लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं भजे ॥

Another mantra is :

ऐं क्लीं श्रीं ह्रीं क्षः फट् ॥

Atri is the ṛshi, Atijagatī the chhandas, and Lakshmī-Narasimha the

devatā

बिभ्राणं चक्रशंखौ सृणिमुशलगदापद्मपाशांश्च दोर्भिः
लक्ष्मीमन्येन गृह्णन् मदविवशदृशं सव्यभागोरुसंस्थाम् ।
फुल्लद्वन्द्वकपुष्पद्युतियुतविनतानन्दनस्कन्धसंस्थः
चिन्त्यो युष्माभिरीशो नरहरिवपुषा दीर्घरक्तस्त्रिणेत्रः ॥

Still another mantra :

ॐ क्लीं ह्रीं श्रीं क्षौं लक्ष्मीनृसिंहाय सर्वात्मने सर्वैश्वर्यप्रदाय नमः ॥

Dhyāna :

चक्रशंखगदाखड्गमुसलान् सृणिदामनी ।
धनं च बिभ्रत्पत्नीवान् ध्येयो रक्तो नृकेसरी ॥

Another Lakshmī-Nṛsimha-mantra :

ॐ श्रीं ह्रीं जयलक्ष्मीप्रियाय नित्यप्रमुदितचेतसे लक्ष्मीश्रितार्धदेहाय श्रीं ह्रीं नमः ॥

Brahmā (Padma-bhava) is the ṛshi, Ati-jagatī is the chhandas, and
Śrī-Nṛkesari the devatā.

Dhyāna :

क्षाराब्धौ वसुमुख्यदेवनिकरैरग्रादिसंवेष्टितः
शंखचक्रगदाम्बुजैर्निजकरैर्बिभ्रत्त्रिनेत्रः सितः ।
सर्पाधीशफणातपत्रलसितः पीताम्बरालंकृतो
लक्ष्म्याश्लिष्टकलेवरो नरहरिः स्यान्नीलकण्ठो मुदे ॥

(xiv) Mahā-Nṛsimha :

The mantra of ten letters:

ॐ क्षौँ महानृसिंहाय नमोऽन्तो दशवर्णकः ।
वामदेवो ऋषिश्छन्दो विराड्देवो नृसिंहकः ॥

(The ṛshi is Vāmadeva, the chhanddas is Virāṭ and the devatā Nṛsimha)

(xv) Sudarśana-Nārasimha :

The nineteen-lettered mantra is ॐ सहस्रारज्वालावर्तिने क्षौँ हन हन हुं फट् स्वाहा॥

तारं सहस्रारज्वालावर्तिने क्षौँ हनद्वयम् ।
हुँ फट् स्वाहा चोनविंशवर्णो मन्त्र उदाहृतः ॥१॥
मुनिर्जयन्त आख्यातश्छन्दो गायत्रमुच्यते ।
सुदर्शन नृसिंहोऽस्य देवता परिकीर्तितः ॥२॥

(The ṛshi of this mantra is Jayanta, the chhandas is Gāyatrī, and the devatā is Sudarśana-Nārasimha)

Dhyāna :

चक्राणां तु सभामध्ये कालाग्निसदृशप्रभम् ।
चतुर्भुजं विवृत्तास्यं चतुश्चक्रधरं हरिम् ॥१॥
तप्तकाञ्चनसङ्काशं त्रिनेत्रं चाद्यविग्रहम् ।
ध्यायेत्समस्तदुःखघ्नं तादृग्लक्ष्म्या समन्वितम् ॥२॥

(xvi) Abhaya-Nṛsimha :

अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि जातं मन्वन्तरे विभुम् ।
अभयाख्यो नृसिंहोऽयं समस्तभयनाशनः ॥१॥
तारो (ॐ) नमो भगवते नरसिंहाय हृद्वदेत् (नमः) ।
तेजस्तेजस इत्युक्त्वा आविराविर्भवेति च ॥२॥
वज्रनख वज्रदंष्ट्र कर्माशयान् द्वी रन्धय ।
तमो द्विग्रस वह्निस्त्री वदेदभयमात्मनि ॥३॥
भूयिष्ठा ॐ क्षौमिति च द्विषष्ट्यर्णो मनुर्मतः ।
मुनिः शुकोऽतिजगती छन्दः प्राग्वादिवाखिलम् ॥४॥

The mantra of 62 letters for banishing fear of all sorts:

ॐ नमो भगवते नरसिंहाय नमः तेजस्तेजसे
आविराविर्भव वज्रनख वज्रदंष्ट्र कर्माशयान्
रन्धय रन्धय तमो ग्रस ग्रस स्वाहा अभय-
मात्मनि भूयिष्ठाम् ॐ क्षौम् ॥

The ṛshi is Śuka, the chhandas is Ati-jagatī and the devatā Abhaya-Nṛsimha.

(xvii) Surāśura-Namaskṛta-Narasimha :

The mantra :

ॐ उग्रं वीरं महाविष्णुं ज्वलन्तं सर्वतोमुखम् ।
नृसिंहं भीषणं भद्रं मृत्युमृत्युं नमामि ॥

The ṛshi is Brahmā, the chhandas anusṭup and the devatā Narasimha

Dhyāna :

माणिक्याद्रिसमप्रभं निजरुचा संत्रस्तरक्षोगणम्
जानुन्यस्तकराम्बुजं त्रिनयनम् रत्नोल्लसद्भूषणम् ।
बाहुभ्यां धृतशंखचक्रमनिशम् दंष्ट्राग्रवक्त्रोल्लस-
जिह्वमुदग्रकेशनिचयं वन्दे नृसिंहं विभुम् ॥

(xviii) Nrsimhānushṭub

Dhyāna :

जान्वोरासक्ततीक्ष्णस्वनखरुचिलसद्बाहुसंस्पृष्टकेशः ।
चक्रं शंखं च दोर्भ्यां दधदनलसमज्योतिषा भग्नदैत्यः ।
ज्वालामालापरीतं रविशशिदहनत्रीक्षणं दीप्तजिह्वम्
दंष्ट्रोग्रं धृतकेशं वदनमभिवहन् पातु वै नारसिंहः ॥

Another dhyāna :

उद्यद्भास्वत्सहस्रप्रभमशनिनिभत्रीक्षणं विक्षरन्तम्
वह्नीनह्नाय विद्युत्ततिविततसटाभीषणं भूषणैश्च ।
दिव्यैरादीप्तदेहं निशितनखलसद् बाहुदण्डैरनेकैः
संभिन्नं भिन्नदैत्येश्वरतनुमतनुं नारसिंहं नमामि ॥

(xix) Ugra-Narasimha :

Mantra :

नरसिंह महासिंह ज्वालामालोज्ज्वलानन ।
ग्रहानशेषान्सर्वेश खाद खादाग्निलोचन स्वाहा ॥

(xx) Shadākshara-Narasimha :

Mantra :

ओं ह्रीं क्षौं क्रों हुं फट् ॥

Dhyāna :

अव्यान्निरव्याजरौद्राकृतिरतिविकृतास्योल्लसत्तीक्ष्णदंष्ट्रः
चक्रं शंखं च पाशाङ्कुशकुलिशगदां दारुणाख्यां दधानः ।
रक्ताकारश्च नाभेरध उपरि सितो दिव्यभूषाविशेषो
देवोऽर्काग्रीन्दुनेत्रो निखिलकरो नारसिंहश्चिरं वः ॥

(xxi) Nṛsimha-gāyatri

ओं नृसिंहाय विद्महे । वज्रनखाय धीमहि ।
तन्नो सिंहः प्रचोदयात् ॥

(xxii) Mahā-sudarśana-nārasimha :

Mantra :

ओं सहस्रारज्वालावर्तिने क्षौं मारय मारय छोट्य छोट्य स्फोटय स्फोट्य
हुं फट् स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi is Durvāsa, the chhandas is Jagatī and the devatā is Mahā-Sudarśana-Nārasimha. The bija is Kshraum.

Dhyāna :

चक्राब्जासनमध्यस्थं कालाग्निसदृशप्रभम् ।
चतुर्भुजं विकासास्यं चतुश्चक्रधरं हरिम् ॥

योगपट्टपिनद्धाङ्गं त्रिणेत्रं चोग्रविग्रहम् ।
ध्यायेत्समस्तदुःखघ्नमशोकद्रुममूलतः ॥

Another mantra :

ओं क्षौं हुं फट् नृसिंहाय नमः ॥

The ṛshi is Nārada, the chhandas Bṛhatī, and the devatā Nrsimha.

Dhyāna :

सुसितं सिंहवदनं ऊर्ध्वाभ्यां चक्रशंखिनम् ।
अधःस्थिताभ्यां बाहुभ्यां धृतहेतिं भजेद्धरिम् ॥

(xxiii) Aghora-Nṛsimha

The mantra :

ओं ह्रीं क्षौं उग्रं वीरं महाविष्णुं ज्वलन्तं सर्वतोमुखं स्फुर स्फुर प्रस्फुर प्रस्फुर घोर घोरतर
तनुरूप चट चट प्रचट प्रचट कह कह वम वम बन्ध बन्ध खादय खादय हुं फट् नृसिंहं
भीषणं भद्रं मृत्युमृत्युं नमाम्यहम् ॥

The ṛshis are Aghora and Brahmā, the chhandas are Anusṭup and Trisṭup, and the devatās are Aghora and Narasimha.

(अघोरब्रह्माणावृषी । अनुष्टुप्त्रिष्टुभौ छन्दसी । अघोरनृसिंहौ देवते ।)

(xxiv) Jvālā-Narasimha

The mantra :

ओं क्षौं झ्रौंसौः ज्वालाज्वलज्जटिलमुखाय ज्वालानृसिंहाय लललल गृह्ण गृह्ण स्फुट स्फुट
स्फोटय स्फोटय मट मट मोटय मोटय लोटय लोटय भ्रम भ्रम भ्रामय भ्रामय वल वल
चल चल वल्ग वल्ग गळ गळ गुळु गर्ज गर्ज राज राजहंस राजहंस ज्वल ज्वल प्रज्वल
प्रज्वल जल्प जल्प मथ मथ मर्दय मर्दय हुं हुं हः सर्वदुष्टान् शिरोललाटचक्षुर्मुखोष्ठदन्ततालु
जिह्वाहनुग्रीवा बाहुकरवक्षःस्थलोदरनाभिगुह्यगुदपृष्ठ कट्यूरु जानुजंघ गुल्फपादेषु सर्वाङ्गेषु
छिन्दि छिन्दि भिन्धि भिन्धि त्रासय त्रासय मारय मारय ह्रीं सहस्रार हुं फट् स्वाहा ।

(xxv) Ashṭa-mukha-gaṇḍabheruṇḍa-jvāla-nṛsimha

Eight-faced, thirty-two armed, incorporating Gaṇḍa-bheruṇḍa form),
and vanquishing Śarabha.

The mantra :

ओं घ्रौं क्षौं झ्रौं हुं हां क्षिं प्रौं ह्रीं नमः । अष्टमुखगण्डभेरुण्डनृसिंहाय महाशरभान्तकाय हुं
फट् ज्वल ज्वल प्रज्वल प्रज्वल सर्वशत्रून् छिन्दि छिन्दि भिन्दि भिन्दि हन्दि हन्दि हन
हन फट् स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi is Saṁkarshaṇa, the chhandas is Trishtup, and the devatā is
Ashṭa-mukha gaṇḍa-bheruṇḍa-nṛsimha.

Dhyāna :

वन्देहं गण्डभेरुण्ड-सिंहव्याघ्रहयानन ।
क्रोडवानरखगराड्भल्लूकाष्टमुखं सदा ।
द्वात्रिंशद् बाहुयुक्तं च शंखचक्रगदादिभिः ।
अतिरौद्रं महासिंहं पिङ्गाक्षं भीमविक्रमम् ।
कोटिसूर्यप्रतीकाशं कालानलसमप्रभम् ॥

(5) VĀMANA



Vāmana is referred to in *R̥gveda* (1, 22, 7; 155, 6; 6, 49,13 and 7,100, 4) The background story begins with the rivalry between the devas and asuras for mastery over the earth. The contending parties agreed on a compromise formula to share amongst them the earth. The devas had Vishṇu

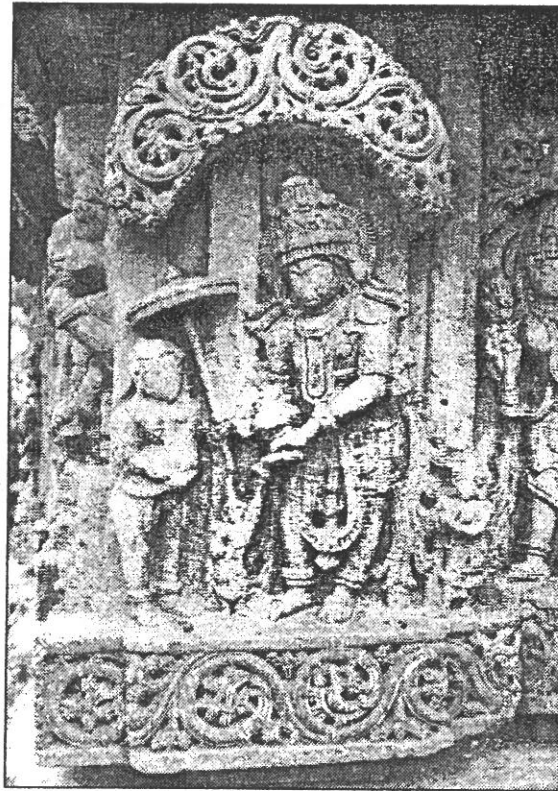
in the form of sacrifice (yajña), and the asuras agreed to let the devas have only as much of the earth as Vishṇu lay upon but no more. Vishṇu who had arrived as a dwarf (Vāmana) was laid by the devas in all the three directions, encompassing the entire earth. The asuras were thus deprived of their share of the earth (cf. *Śatapatha-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 *Pādmottara-khaṇḍa* (chap. 47 ff) is as follows: Bali, the virtuous and mighty asura was the son of Virochana and

grandson of Prahlāda. 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.

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-kunḍasya pṛthivīm dehi'), which might just be covered by three strides ('mama tri-vikramam padam mahīm'). But when Bali agreed to donate this land, the little boy assumed a gigantic form (Trivikrama) and covered the entire earth with his first stride.

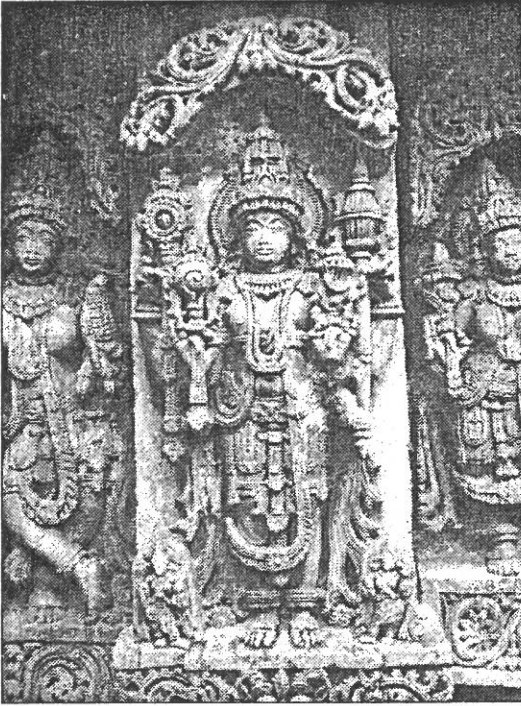
Then Viṣṇu revealed his identity to Bali, who was overjoyed for he was in fact a devotee of Viṣṇu. The second stride encompassed the heavens till the Brahma-loka. The third step was placed upon Bali's head, at his own request, and Bali was sent to the excellent nether world known as Rasātala, where he was allowed to rule ('rasātaḥ 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

(jaṭila), *Devatā-mūrti-prakaraṇa* (5,71) prescribes a small tuft of hair customary for vedic students ('śikhayā yuktaḥ'). *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-gātraḥ') (according to a Pāñcharatra text, like a baby elephant, 'bāla-kuñjara-saṁkāśam' and with broad shoulders, 'bṛhat-skandham') and crooked at the joints ('saṅkaṭair gātraparvabhiḥ'). 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 chaturbāhum ashta-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 (halamusala-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. 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-avāmaṇah').



Several varieties of Vāmana are mentioned in texts, as for instance Dadhi-Vāmana (*Meru-tantra* 26, 341-342 and *Sāradā-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,



DADHI-VĀMANA
(from an old Mysore painting)

(‘jvalan-mayūkha-kanakacchhatrādhah puṇḍarīka-gam’) holding in his right hand a golden bowl filled with cooked rice mixed with curds (‘chashakam dadhat’); Lakshmī and the earth-goddess embrace him from the sides (‘śrībhūmyāśliṣṭa-pārśvakam’).

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 (dadhyannāḍhyam kanaka-chashakam’). It makes no mention of Lakshmī or the earth-goddess. Dadhi-vāmana in both accounts in 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, ‘māyābālaka’, or as *Bhāgavata* has it ‘māyā-

māṇavaka', draped in yellow silken garment as upper cloth, wearing kaupīna, maunji 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 Viṣṇu: crystal white in complexion, he carries in his normal hands conch (right) and mace (left).

Vāmana

अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि वामनस्य शुभान्मनून् ।
मन्वन्तरं तपत्येकं सुरेशं बाधते परम् ॥१॥
पुनर्ददाति हरये त्रैलोक्यं स बलिर्नृपः ।
एकं मन्वन्तरं शक्रः स्वयमेवाभवद्वलिः ।
एवं षड्वामनाः कल्पे तेषां मन्त्रान्वदाम्यहम् ॥२॥

The six forms of Vāmana :

दधिवामन यज्ञेशवामनौ भोगवामनः ।
बालको वामनो विश्वरूपोऽन्यो बलिवामनः ॥

(i) Dadhi-vāmana :

The mantra is as follows :

ॐ नमो विष्णवे सुरपतये महाबलाय स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi of this 18-lettered mantra is Indu, the chhandas Virāṭ and the devatā Dadhi-vāmana.

Dhyāna :

मुक्तागौरं नवमणिलसद् भूषणं चन्द्रसंस्थम्
भृङ्गाकारैरलनिकरैः शोभि वक्त्रारविन्दम् ।
हस्ताग्राभ्यां कनककलशं शुद्धतोयाभिपूर्णम् ।
दध्यन्नाढ्यं कनकचषकं धारयन्तं भजामः ॥

Another mantra is :

ॐ नमो भगवते दधिवामनाय सर्वभूतात्मने वासुदेवाय सर्वात्मसंयोगपद्मपीठात्मने नमः ॥

(ii) Trivikrama-vāmana (Viśva-rūpa)

The mantra is twenty-lettered : ॐ नमो भगवते भूर्भुवःसुवः व्यापकाय त्रिविक्रमाय ॥

मुनयो वालखिल्याः स्युश्छन्दो गायत्रमीरितम् ।
देवता विश्वरूपोऽयं त्रिविक्रम उदाहृतः ॥

The ṛshis are the Vālakhilyas, the chhandas is Gāyatri, and the devatā Viśvarūpa-Trivikrama.

Dhyāna :

दक्षांघ्रिव्यासपातालं वामांघ्रिव्यासभूतलम् दक्षिणं पुनरुत्त्थाय स्वर्गव्याप्तिकरं हरिम् ।
अभयं वामहस्तेन कुर्वन्तं च सुरेश्वरम् गंगौघधौतपादाब्जं ध्यायेद्ब्रह्मादिकिस्तुतम् ॥

ॐ नमो भगवते विष्णवे महाबलाय स्वाहा ॥

(iii) Bhoga-Vāmana

The mantra:

ॐ नमो भगवते विष्णवे महाबलाय स्वाहा ॥

Kapila is the ṛshi, Gāyatri the chaandas, and Bhoga-vāmana the devatā.

Dhyāna:

नीलवर्णश्चतुर्बाहुः शंखचक्रगदाब्जधृक् ।
सर्वान्भोगान्ददात्येष भक्तानां भोगवर्धनः ॥

(iv) Yajñeśvara-Vāmana

The mantra:

ओं क्लीं श्रीं ठं नमो भगवते विष्णवे सुरपतये महाबलाय स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi is Nala-kūbara, the chhandas is Ati-jagatī, and the devatā is Yajñeśvara-Vāmana.

Dhyāna:

मुक्तागौरं नवमणिलेसद् भूषणं चन्द्रसंस्थम्
भृङ्गाकारैरलकनिकरैः शोभिवक्त्रारविन्दम् ।
हस्तस्त्रिभिः कनककलशं शुद्धतोयाभिपूर्णम्
दध्यन्नाढ्यं कनकचषकं धारयन्तं नमामि ॥

(v) Viśva-Vāmana

The mantra:

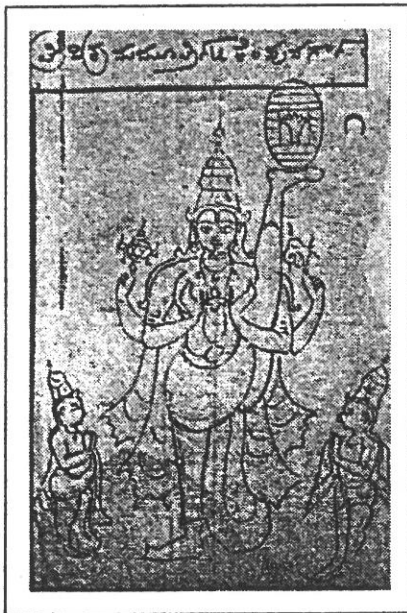
नमो मायाबालक विष्णवे महाबलाय स्वाहा ॥

Brahmā is the ṛshi, Gāyatrī the chhandas, and Māyā-bālaka-vāmana the devatā.

Dhyāna:

पीताम्बरोत्तरीयोऽसौ मौञ्जीकौपीनधृक् हरिः ।
कमण्डलुं च दध्यन्नं छत्रं करे दधम् ।
यज्ञोपवीततत्त्वाङ्गो ध्यातव्यो वामनः सदा ॥

TRI-VIKRAMA



TRIVIKRAMA

Associated with the Vāmana incarnation of Vishṇu this is also one of the twenty-four forms assumed by Vishṇu. In popular imagination, Trivikrama is the dwarfish Vāmana transformed into a mighty and marvellous form filling the three realms, the earth, the mid-region and

the high heavens. The background of this image is to be found in the ṚgVedic hymns where Vishṇu is said to have taken 'three gigantic strides' ('trīṇi padā vi chakrame vishṇoh', *Ṛgveda*, 1, 22, 18 and 8, 12, 27 'tredhā ni dadhe padam', 1, 22, 17 also 1, 155, 6;6, 49, 13 and 7, 100, 4). In fact, one of the derivations of the name Vishṇu is from the strides he took ('vishṇur vikramaṇāt', *Mahābhārata*, 5, 70, 13), thus spreading, entering and pervading (from the root 'viśli, viveshṭi').

The three strides of Vishṇu have become themes of legends in *Śatapatha brāhmaṇa* (1,2,5) and *Taittirīya-brāhmaṇa* (1, 6,1).

But the iconography of Trivikrama is based entirely on the



(TRIVIKRAMA)

from one of the cave of Bādāmi

legends recounted in *Rāmāyāṇa* (1, 27, 12-14) *Bhāgavata* (8th skanda), and the purāṇas (*Matsya* 161-167, *Agni*, 5, *Pādma*, 266-67). The legend has it that Aditi, wife of Kaśyapa and the mother of the gods, was sad because her children were harassed by the asuras, who were the children of Diti, another wife of Kaśyapa. She did penances (payovrata) and sought

Vishṇu's help. Vishṇu was born as her son in the abhijñanmuhūrta when Śravaṇa was the prevailing star, on the twelfth day of the bright half of the Hindu month Bhādrapada. The baby, soon after it was born, transformed itself as a young lad, dwarfish in stature (hence called Vāmana), and engaged himself in study and austerities.

At that time, Mahā-bali, son of Vairochana and grandson of Prahlaḍa, was the chief of the asuras. With Śukrāchārya as his preceptor, he waged a war against the gods, defeated them, and installed himself as Indra. It was then that Aditi sought the help from Vishṇu. When Vāmana was born, Bali was engaged in an aśvamedha sacrifice in Bhṛgu-kacchha on the banks of Narmadā.



TRIVIKRAMA

Vāmana visited Bali, when he was in the midst of his auterities and extracted from him the promise to give as gift three steps of land. As soon as the boon was granted, Vāmana assumed the gigantic form of Trivikrama, and appropriated the entire earth with one step, and the whole of the midregion with another step.

He had nowhere to take his third step, whereupon Bali offered his own head for the purpose. Trivikrama placed his foot on the head of Bali, and pressed him down to the netherworld (pātāla). The gods were relieved, and Indra was reinstated as the master of the heavenly region.

According to *Vishvaksena-saṁhitā* (11, 179) the form of

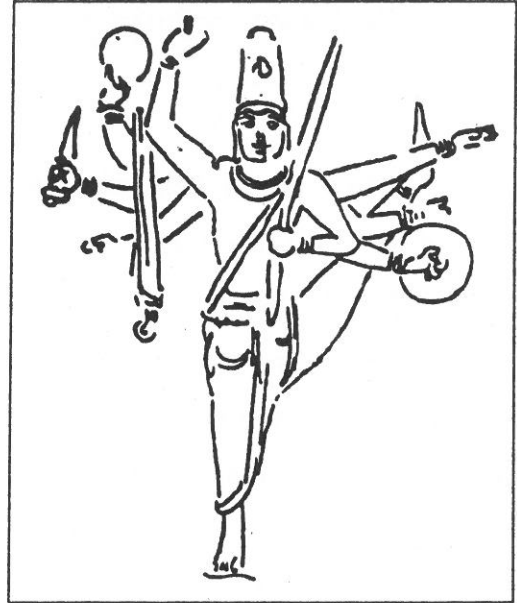


Trivikrama is a variant of Saṅkarshaṇa's. While several Pāñcharātra texts give iconographic prescriptions of the form, the most elaborate account occurs in *Vaikhānasāgama* (ch. 58). Trivikrama is identified by the form of Viṣṇu in the act of measuring out the three worlds by his steps. The act involves lifting up of the left leg to cover the worlds (*prasāritoddhṛtavāmapādam*).

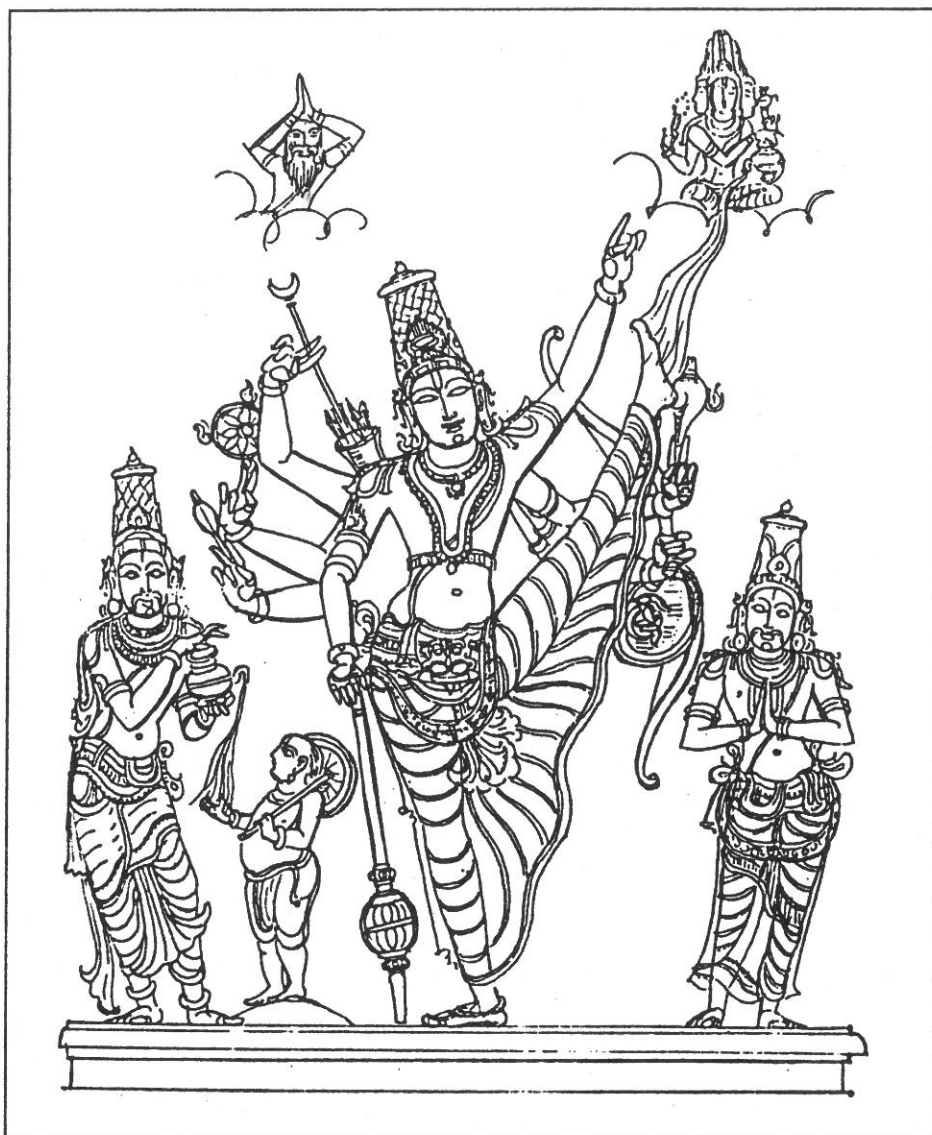
There are three varieties of the Trivikrama form: (1) where the left leg is lifted up and stretched out only to the height of the knee of the right leg (*jānu-mātram*), which is placed firmly on the ground; and this signifies the act of measuring out the earth (*bhū-lokākramaṇārtham*); (2) where the left leg is lifted up and stretched out to the height of the navel

(*nābhimātram*), to signify the occupation of the mid-region by the second step (*antariksha-lokākramaṇārtham*); and (3) where the left leg is raised to the height of the forehead (*lalāṭa-mātram*) to signify the occupation of the heavenly region (*svarga-lokākramaṇārtham*).

The image of Trivikrama, which is prescribed to be made in the



TRIVIKRAMA



VĀMANA AND TRI-VIKRAMA

superior 10-tāla measure may have eight or four arms. If eight-armed, he holds in his hands on the right side discus (chakra), sword (asi), spear (śakti), with the fourth hand held with palm upwards, and in the hands on the left side conch (śaṁkha), mace (gadā), bow (śārṅga) and ploughshare (muśala, to signify that he is an aspect of Saṅkarshaṇa), with the remaining hand stretched out parallel to the leg that has been lifted up (prasārita-vāma-hastam). If the image is four-armed, the upper right hand holds discus (chakra) and the upper left hand conch (śaṁkha); the two normal hands assume the gestures of protection (right) and boon-bestowal (left).

According to *Vishṇu-dharmottara* (85, 55-57), the image

has eight hands, but two of the hands hold the conch which is being blown by the mouth (śaṁkha-saṁchumbitādharah). The text prescribes that the face must be lifted up (ekordhva-vadanah) to blow the conch, and the eyes must be wide open (vishphāritekshaṇah). The hands carry cudgel (daṇḍa), noose (pāśa), discus (chakra), conch (śaṁkha), mace (gadā) and lotus (padma). The four-armed image, according to *Hayaśirsha-saṁhitā* (23, 21-23) carries mace (right upper), lotus (right normal), discus (left upper) and conch (left normal). *Nāradya-saṁhitā* (13, 275), however, does not specify the number of hands, but mentions 'numerous hands like the branches of a tree', and 'holding various weapons' (nānāstra-vara-saṁyuktam bhuja-rāji-rāji-samanvitam).



The well-known image of Trivikrama in Māmallapuram is eight-armed, but what the hands carry are different from textual prescriptions. The weapons carried are sword and shield, bow and arrow, discus, conch and mace; while the eighth hand assumes the gesture of threat (sūcī-mudrā).

It is usual for Trivikrama, as a form of Viṣṇu, to be visualized as

dark in complexion (śyāmābha, śyāma-varṇa-nibha, dūrvā-śyāma) 'like the rain-bearing cloud' (sajalāmbuda-saṅkāśa, *Viṣṇu-dharmottara*, 85, 57) But *Śrī-tattva-nidhi* gives his body colour as red (taptā-hāṭaka-saṅkāśa). *Vaikhāṇasāgama* prescribes that his garment must be red in colour (raktāmbara-dhara) and that he must be decorated with all ornaments (sarvābharaṇa-bhūṣita). (*Nāradya-saṁhitā* (13, 277) would like the image to be so represented as to evoke wonderment ('trivikramam kuryāt samastāścharya-saṁyutam').

While it is usual to represent this image as standing with his right leg firmly planted on the earth, while the left leg is lifted up and stretched out, *Nāradya-saṁhitā* (ibid.) leaves

the arrangement optional ('uddhṛtena tathaikena, tishṭhantam itareṇa vā). *Hayaśirsha-saṁhitā* (23, 21-23) prescribes that the left leg must reach out for the universe ('brahmāṇḍagam vāma-pādam') while the right foot rests on the back of Ādi-śeṣa ('dakṣiṇam śeṣa -pṛsthagam'). According to *Vishṇu-tīlaka* (6, 426-7), the right foot must be placed on the head of Bali, the chief of asuras ('mastake asura-rājasya pādam'), while the other is lifted up.

The iconography of Trivikrama is narrative in its style and significance. Around the main image of Trivikrama, several other deities and chieftains are shown. In fact, even Vāmana (who it was that transformed himself into the gigantic form of Trivikrama) is shown

separately at the bottom of the panel, begging for the land covered by his three steps, along with Bali who gifts it to him ('bali-vachana-saṁsaktam vāmanam chāpy adhaḥ-sṭhitam', *Hayaśirsha-saṁhitā* 23, 23; 'vinyasya yāchate bhūyah dharaṇim dehi dehīti', *Vishṇu-tīlaka*, 6, 427). *Vaikhānasāgama* prescribes that Vāmana with the umbrella, 'sa-chhatram) must be shown to the right of Trivikrama and Bali to the left. Bali is golden-coloured (hemābha) and well-ornamented. He is accompanied by his wife (Vindhyāvali) and is shown joyfully holding with his hands the golden pot signifying the solemnization of his promise ('sapatnīkam harṣheṇa pāṇibhyām haima-kalaśam uddharantam')

Near the right foot of Trivikrama, the demon Namuchi is also shown bowing in reverence, and near the left foot Garuḍa, shown as delivering a blow with his fist to Bali's evil-preceptor Śukrāchārya, who attempted to obstruct Bali's promise ('kratu-vinaśakari muṣṭinā praharantam garuḍam). Sitting in space about the height of Trivikrama's navel, Śiva is shown with hands folded in respectful homage ('nābher ūrdhvam śaṁkaram prāñjali-kṛta hastam').

Above the leg that is lifted up is Brahmā shown as holding the foot by his hands and washing it ceremoniously ('prasārita-pādasyordhvabhāge brahmāṇam, tatpadam pragṛhya hastābhyām prakshālayantam'). Also shown is the

river Gaṅgā in white colour as flowing out of the foot ('tad-srotasīm gaṅgām śvetābhām'). At the back of the main image, the wish-fulfilling tree (Kalpadruma) is represented, along with Indra holding a parasol to honour Trivikrama (Indraś chhatram). At the sides of Indra are the wind-god Vāyu and the water-god Varuṇa ('ubhayoh pārśvayoh chāmara-dhāriṇau javana-jaleśau'), fanning Trivikrama with flywhisks. Above them are Sun (on the right side) and Moon (on the left) ('tad ūrdhve dakṣiṇe divākaram, vāme niśākaram'). Also shown in the panel are the sages Sanaka and Sanatkumāra.

Bali was a mighty monarch of the asuras, son of Virochana and grandson of Prahlāda; he ruled

virtuously (on the advice of Prahlāda), but antagonized the gods and pious folk. Viṣṇu had therefore to appear as Vāmana, son of Kāśyapa and Aditi, to drive him out (cf. *Bhāgavata*, skandha 8, *Mārkeṇḍeya-purāṇa*, ch. 80, and *Vāmana-purāṇa*, chap. 31 and 75). He came as a young brāhmaṇa boy to the place where Bali was performing a sacrifice (on the banks of the river Narmadā), and asked for a gift of three steps of land to enable him to conduct the customary fire-rituals ('mamāgniśaraṇārthāya dehi bhūmim pada-trayam'). As soon as the monarch's approval was obtained, the dwarf boy (Vāmana) assumed gigantic proportions ('vāmanobhūd avāmanah') and covered the entire earth and the mid-region with two of his steps. The pious Bali offered his own head for

the third step that was promised; and Bali was sent to the netherworlds ('sutalam, pātālam adhastād vasudhātalam') where Bali was asked to rule ('baler dattam bhagavatā'). Pleased with his piety, Viṣṇu decreed that he would be the Indra in the coming age (sāvarṇika-manvantara).

Bali is represented in the Trivikrama panels, by the god's side, in the act of making a formal gift of the three steps to Vāmana; his precept or Śukrāchārya, and wife Vindhyāvalī are also shown.

(6) PARAŚU-RĀMA

Paraśu-rāma or Jāmadagni is one among the principal vibhava-forms assumed by Viṣṇu, and one of the ten incarnations. *Ahīrbudhnya-saṁhitā*



(5, 50 ff) which enumerates thirty-nine vibhava-forms, mentions Paraśu-rāma as the thirty-fifth (Kṛṣṇa being the thirty-fourth and Dāśarathi-Rāma being the thirty-sixth). The commentarial work, *Tattva-traya*,

however, says that the vibhava-forms are actually only thirty-six, the other three (Kapila, Dattātreya and Paraśu-rāma) mentioned in *Ahīrbudhnya-saṁhitā* and *Sāttvata-saṁhitā* (ch.9) being only secondary forms (svarūpāveśas). The distinction becomes important in as much as it is only the principal (mukhya) forms that are worthy of worship by those who seek emancipation (mukti), because Viṣṇu appears in them with Aprākṛta-śarīra, while in the secondary (gauṇa) forms Viṣṇu only possesses the human soul in its natural body (hence called āveśa), for a purpose (*Ahīrbudhnya-saṁhitā*, 8, 51). The latter may be worshipped for material benefits. Paraśu-rāma is classed in the latter group with Buddha, Vyāsa, Arjuna and Kubera.



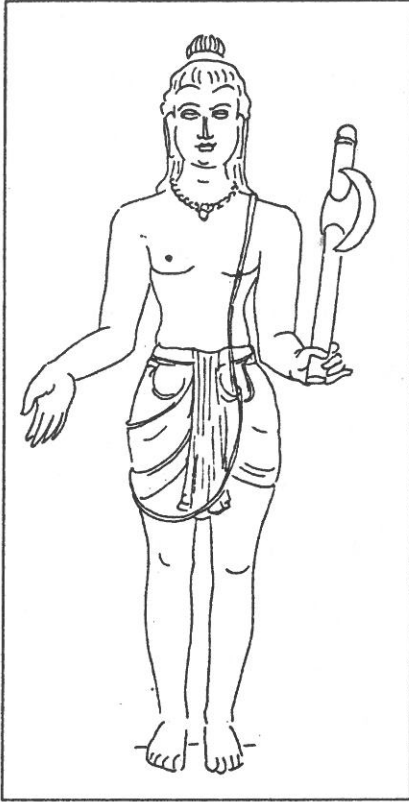
PARASURAMA

(from the temple of Māla in Karnataka)

More often, however, Paraśu-rāma is included (as is done in *Lakṣmī-tantra* 20, 43) among the ten incarnatory forms (avatara) of Viṣṇu, after Kṛṣṇa and before Rāma (although *Śrī-praśna-saṁhitā*, 19, 39 counts Paraśu-rāma after both Kṛṣṇa and Rāma). Paraśu-rāma and Dāśa-rathi-rama (both two-armed and human) are distinguished in the texts

by the flaming axe which the former carries, and the bow carried by the latter ('jvalat-paraśudhṛg- rāmo rāmaś chānyo dhanur-dharah') Sometimes, another Rāma (viz. Bala-rāma, step-brother of Kṛṣṇa), who is Ananta, is counted after Paraśu-rāma (as in *Pādma-tantra* 1,2,32) among the incarnatory forms. But, according to legends, all three Rāmas were contemporaries. And even epics relate the encounter between Paraśu-rāma and Dāśarathi-rāma, in which the former was worsened by the latter.

The purpose of Paraśu-rāma's appearance is given as the vanquishing of the might of the ruling princes who had ignored Dharma and who had been tormenting the good folk. Paraśu-rāma is credited with having toured the country eighteen (or twenty-



PARASURAMA

one) times and subjugated all the princes of the land. He was born a brahmin, but he became a warrior (a Kshatriya himself to attack the kshatriyas) ('brāhmaṇah kshatriyāchāro rāmobhūt krūra-karma-

vit'). The legends relate that even when he was born an axe was in his hand, and that it never left him, for the purpose of his birth was to reduce the weight of the earth by destroying the ruling princes ('bhārāvataranārthāya jātah paraśunā saha; sahajah paraśus tasya tam na jahāti kadāchana').

The story given in several texts (*Bhāgavata*, *Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa*, ch. 58, *Kālikā-purāṇa*, chap. 85, *Padmottara-khaṇḍa*, ch. 50 and *Mahābhārata*, 3, 116) is that Paraśu-rāma was the fifth son of the sage Jamadagni (great-grand-son of the sage Bhṛgu, hence Paraśu-rāma's name Bhārgava-rāma) and Reṇukā (daughter of Prasena-jit, the prince of Vidarbha), who had their hermitage on the banks of the river Narmadā. The four sons

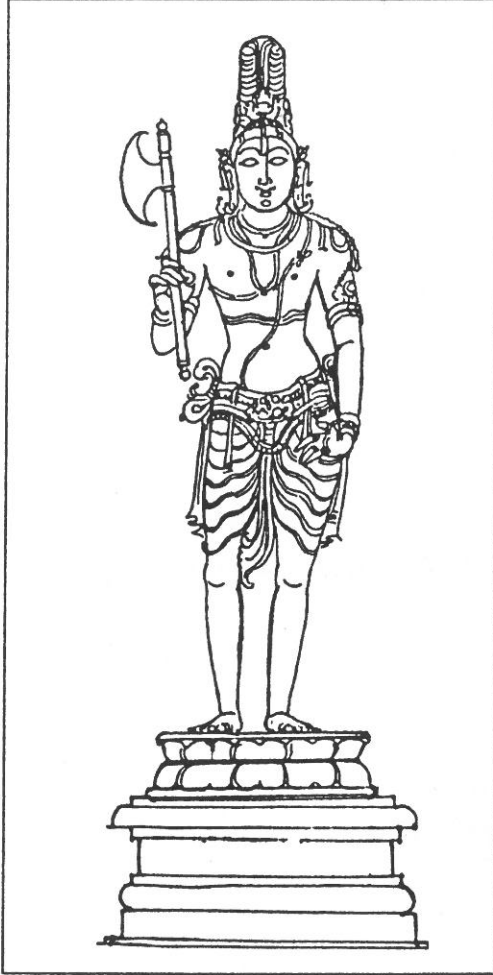
that were born before him were Rumaṇvanta, Sushoṇa, Viśva and Viśvāsu. According to a story that has become popular, Reṇukā while bathing in a river was sexually excited by seeing the amorous play in which the gandharva chieftain Chitraratha was engaged with his wife. When Jamadagni discovered this lapse on the part of his wife, he ordered his sons to kill their mother. The four sons refused to obey; but Paraśurāma without hesitation chopped off his mother's head with his axe. Pleased with his son, the sage offered him a boon; and Paraśurāma immediately sought the revival of his dead mother.

But this is not the story that all the texts recount. The monarch of Māhaishmatī, Kārtavīrya by name who

chanced to visit the hermitage of Jamadagni, was attracted by the wish-fulfilling cow (Kāmadhenu) that the sage possessed. In his attempt to take away this cow by force, the sage Jamadagni was assassinated; and his wife Reṇukā immolated herself in Jamadagni's funeral pyre. Paraśurāma, who was a witness to this tragedy, vowed to avenge the death of his parents by killing not only the offending king Kārtavīrya but all kings in the land.

This is how Paraśurāma began his career of slaughtering the kshatriyas. This gruesome mission was arrested when Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, defeated him in an encounter. Paraśurāma retired to the southern regions and spent the rest of his life performing severe penance

on the mountain Mahendra-giri. (cf. *Harivaṁśa*, ch.40, *Mahābhārata*, ādi, sabha, vana and śanti-parvas, *Brahmaṇḍa-purāṇa*, ch.83).



PARAŚURĀMA

According to *Vishṇu-dharmottara* (3, 85) and *Agni-purāṇa* (49,5), Paraśu-rāma is to be iconically represented as a sage with an axe in his hand; he must wear on his head matted hair done up as a halo ('jaṭāmaṇḍala-durdarśam'), and must be clothed in deer-skin (kṛshṇājīnadhara). *Vaikhānasāgama* (pāṭala 59) prescribes that he must be red-complexioned (raktābha), wearing white garments (śveta-vastradhara) and sacrificial chord. His matted hair must be done up as a crown (jaṭāmukuta). He must be two-armed, carrying axe in his right hand and showing with the other the gesture of warning ('vāmam uddeśya-karma'). The text allows that Paraśu-rāma may also be shown with four hands, as Vishṇu ('tad-rūpam viṣṇum chaturbhujam vā').

(vi) Paraśu-Rāma

अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि राममन्त्रं महाद्भुतम् ।
आकल्पमेक एवायं जामदग्न्यो महाबलः ॥१॥
ब्रह्मक्षेत्राय विद्महे । क्षत्रियान्ताय धीमहि ।
तन्नो रामः प्रचोदयात् ॥
श्रीमत्परशुरामस्य गायत्र्येषा महाद्भुता ।
राज्यकृत्कलिभूपानां सर्वतन्त्रेषु गोपिता ॥२॥
भरद्वाजो मुनिः प्रोक्तो गायत्री छन्द ईरितम् ।
श्रीमान्परशुरामोऽस्य देवता भक्तवत्सलः ॥३॥

Paraśu-rāma-Gāyatri takes this form:

ॐ ब्रह्मक्षेत्राय विद्महे । क्षत्रियान्ताय धीमहि ।
तन्नो रामः प्रचोदयात् ॥

The ṛshi of this mantra is Bharadvāja: the chhandas is Gāyatrī: and the devatā is Śrī-paraśu-rāma. The following are the three forms for dhyāna:

(i) Sāttivaka-Paraśurāma:

सात्त्विकं श्वेतवर्णं च भस्मोद्धूलितविग्रहम् ।
अग्निहोत्रस्थलासीनं नानामुनिगणावृतम् ॥१॥
कम्बलासनमारुढं स्वर्णतारकुशाङ्गुलिम् ।
श्वेतवस्त्रद्वयोपेतं जुहन्तं शान्तमानसम् ॥२॥

(ii) **Rājasa-Paraśurāma:**

ध्यायेच्च राजसं रामं कुंकुमारुणविग्रहम् ।
किरीटिनं कुण्डलिनं परश्वज्जवराभयम् ॥१॥
करैर्दधन्तं तरुणं विप्रक्षत्रौघसंवृतम् ।
पीताम्बरधरं कामरूपं बालनिरीक्षितम् ॥२॥

(iii) **Tāmasa-Paraśurāma:**

ध्यायेच्च तामसं क्षत्ररुधिराक्तपरश्वधम् ।
आरक्तनेत्रं कर्णस्थब्रह्मसूत्रं यमप्रभम् ॥१॥
धनुष्टङ्कारसंघोषसंत्रस्तभुवनत्रयम् ।
चतुर्बाहुं मुशलिनं संक्रुद्धभ्रातृसंयुतम् ॥२॥

(7) RĀMA

One of two most popularly worshipped forms of Viṣṇu (the other being that of Kṛṣṇa) 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. This is included among the

ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. The expression Rāma however signifies Rāma who was the son of Daśaratha, king of Ayodhyā (Dāśarathi Rāma) although two other incarnations of Viṣṇu, viz. Paraśu-rāma (son of Jamadagni and Reṇukā) and Balārāma (the step-brother of Kṛṣṇa) are also known as Ramās ('rāmo rāmaś cha rāmaś cha').

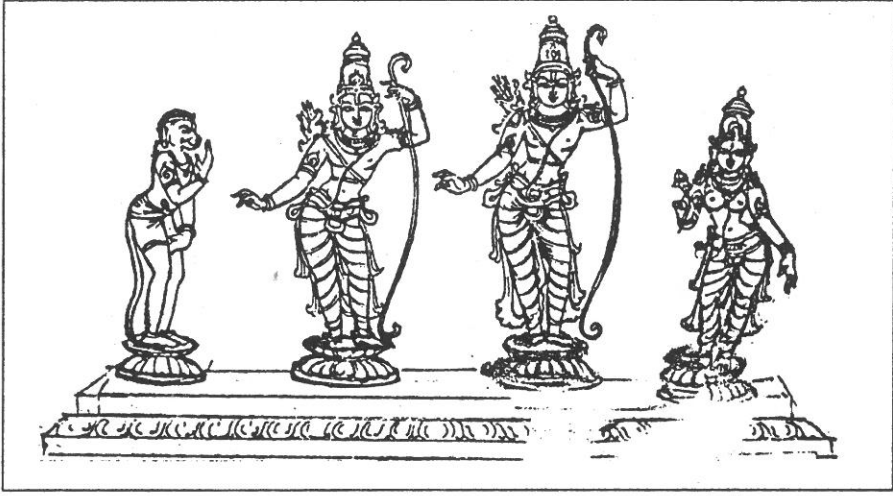


RĀMA

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 most 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 (dakṣiṇe lakshmaṇo dhanvī vāmato jānakī śubhā, purato mārutih).

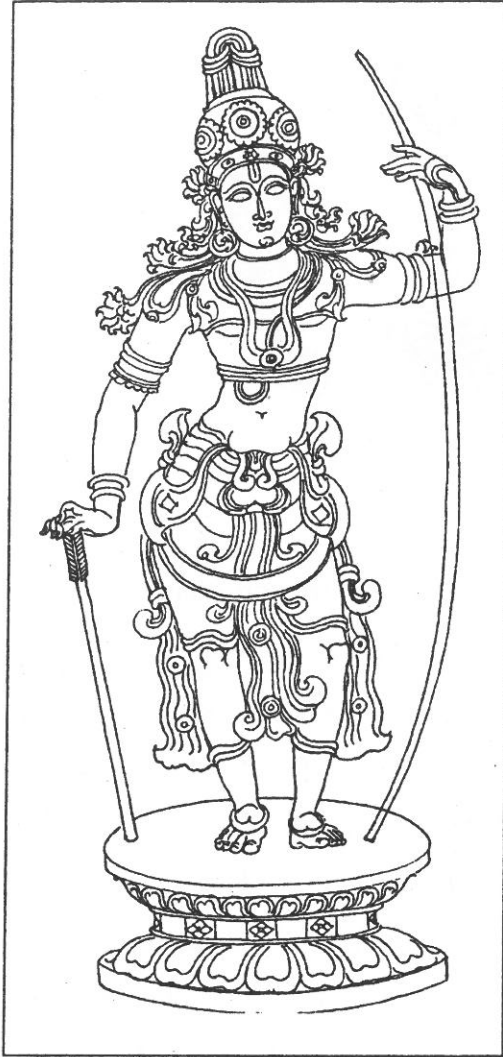
Rāma, like Kṛṣṇa, is shown as two-armed (*Agni-purāṇa*, 45,5) although some texts provide him with four arms. He is of dark blue complexion (śyāmāṅga), resembling rain-bearing cloud (kāla-megha-nibha), and wears yellow garments (pīta-vāsa). He is shown as youthful (yuvā) and handsome (sundara). He wears on his head matted hair done up as a crown (jaṭāmukuta-maṇḍita), or alternately wears a tall crown (kirita-mukuta). 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 samavibhaktāṅga). His long arms reach the knee. In short, he is shown as possessing all the thirty-three marks of a great man (trayas-trimśal-lakṣaṇopeta), but wearing a minimum of ornaments (alpa-bhūṣita).

When two- armed, he carries his bow (kodaṇḍa) with his left hand which is raised to the level of his forehead ('uddharech cha lalāṭāntam

vāmahastam 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 dakṣiṇato bhaṅgam, madhya-kāyam tu vāmatah, kaṭyām dakṣiṇato bhaṅgam'). The image of Rāma is to be made in madhyama-daśa-tāla (viz. 120 aṅgulas)



According to most texts, Sītā is to be shown on the left side of Rāma

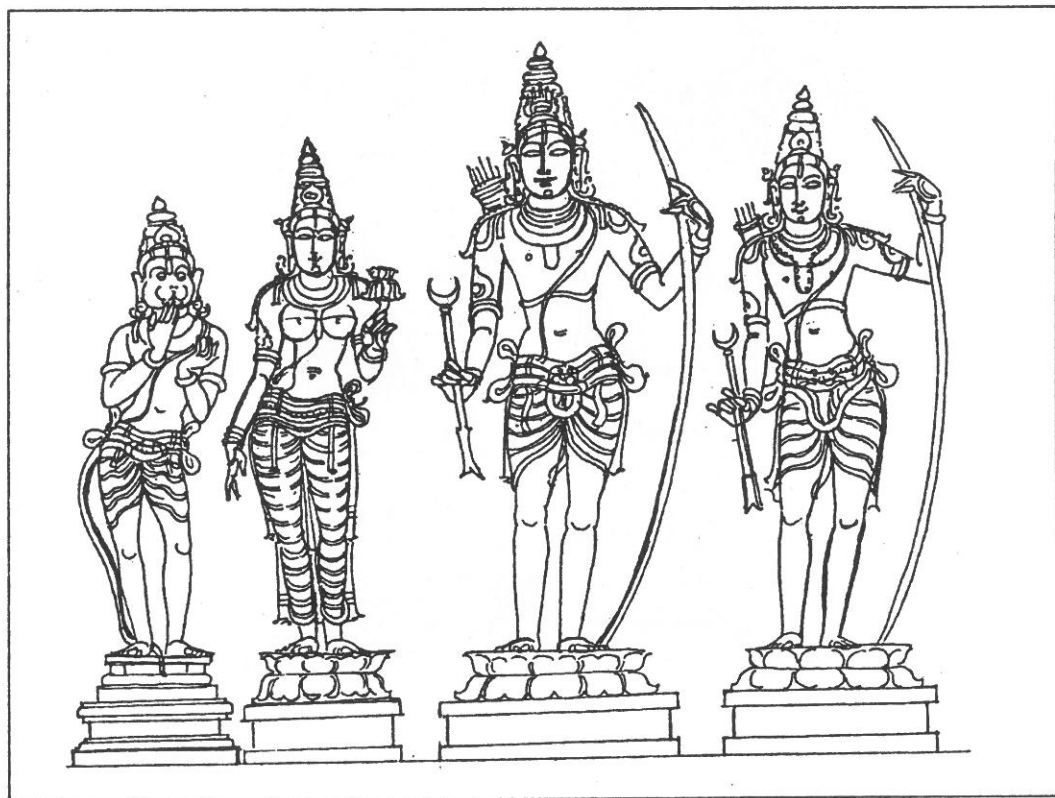
and Lakshmaṇa on the right ('vāme bhūmi-sutā' 'dakshine lakshmaṇe-nopaśobhitam'), although some texts prescribe that Sītā is to be on Rāma's right while Lakshmaṇa will be on his left ('lakshmaṇam kāray ed vāme, jānakīm dakshiṇa-pārśve').

Sītā is golden-complexioned (hiraṇya-varṇā) and two-armed, carrying a red lotus in her left hand (vāma-haste sarasikuḍmalam' *Pādma-saṁhitā* 'kriya-pāda', 17,60ff) or a blue lotus (nilotpala) in the kaṭaka posture. Her garments must be green in hue. Her hair is tied in a knot, with curls showing above the forehead (kabarīvalakair-yuta); she wears a karaṇḍa-makuṭa (karaṇḍikā-mauli). Her right arm hangs down, touching the thigh. This is 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 *Vishvakṣena-saṁhitā* (10, 116f), Rāma and Lakshmaṇa are in actuality Nara and Nārāyaṇa, while Sītā is the personification of māyā ('triguṇātma-





RĀMA AND SĪTĀ

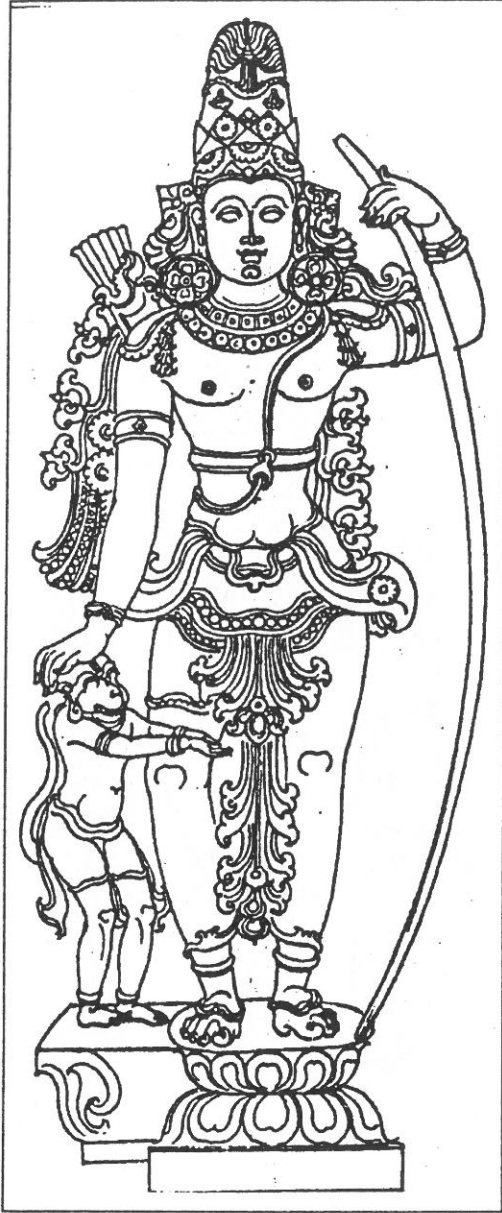
mayī māyā mūla-prakṛti-saṁsthitā). Both Rāma and Lakshmaṇa are to be shown as exceedingly handsome (atīva rūpa-sampannau), calm in aspect (saumyau) and slightly smiling (prahisitānanau); their eyes must be large and long (karṇāntaka-lochanau); and they must be visualized as being in the prime of their 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 dhanushpaṇī'); 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-mahābāla) 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



RĀMA GROUP
(stone from Sārṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbhakoṇam)



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

loyalty, his left arm hanging down and tucked in. His image is to be made in sapta-tāla.

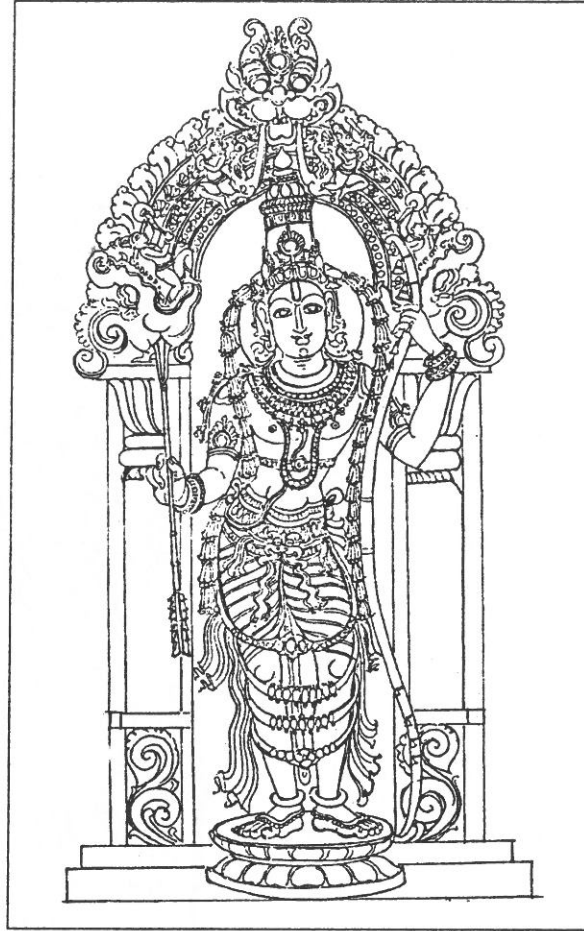
Pādma-saṁhitā (op.cit) which prescribes that a shrine to Rāma must be located in south-eastern corner of a Viṣṇu temple, suggests that the group may include Rāma's other two brothers, Bharata and Śatrughna. According to this text, Rāma and Lakshmaṇa must have the śrīvatsa mark and kaustubha-jewel on their chests. Rāma is dark blue in colour, but Lakshmaṇa is golden-hued (kanaka-prabha). Lakshmaṇa stands on Rāma's right, carying, like Rāma, bow and arrow. Bharata also is on Rāma'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 ('maulivivarjitāḥ; *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-pradeśanta), Śatrughna's height must reach the middle of Rāma's neck (kaṇṭhamadhyānta). The brothers may be accompanied with their wives, Sītā,



RĀMA WITH HANUMĀN
(wood-carving from Kulattupuzha temple)



Ūrmilā, Māṇḍavī and Śruta-kīrti respectively.

Rāma may also be represented as seated in vīrāsana or on a throne

(bhadrāsana). While seated, he does not carry bow and arrow; his right hand will assume the gesture of protection, and his left hand the gesture of boon-bestowal. The bow-



SRI RĀMA PAṬṬĀBHISHEKAM



may be carried on his left shoulder. Sītā should be comfortably seated (sukhāsīnā) either on his right side (dakṣhiṇe pārśve) or on his left lap (vāmāṅka-sṭhitā). 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

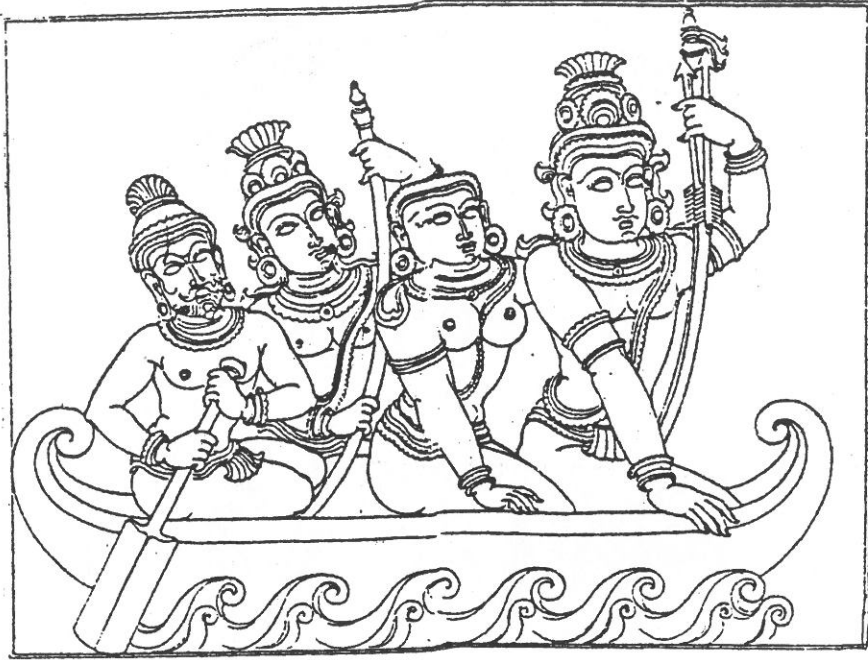




RĀMA TRYING ON ŚIVA'S BOW BEFORE MARRYING SĪTĀ
(wood-carving from Śuchindram Temple)

Rāma seated on the throne. He sits in Vīrāsana, showing the gesture of wisdom in his right hand (mudrāma 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,



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

when Rāma's left hand holds her in embrace ('vāma-pārśvasthayā devyā vidyunnibhāṅgayāstishṭan', 'sītālāṅkṛta-vāmaṅgah, vāma-hastena sītāyas sparśayan stana-maṇḍalam'). Lakṣmaṇa stands by the side of the throne, holding bow and arrow in his

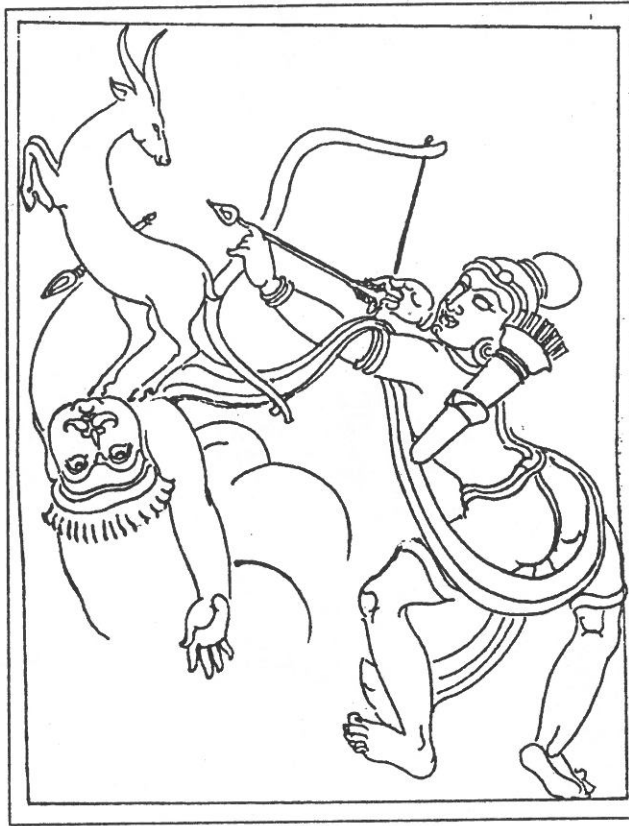
hands. Hanumān sits in front of the throne, in the posture of supplication and service (hanūmat-sevitam chāgre).

According to *Vāyu-purāṇa* (chap.2), Rāma seated upon the throne must be shown as surrounded by sages

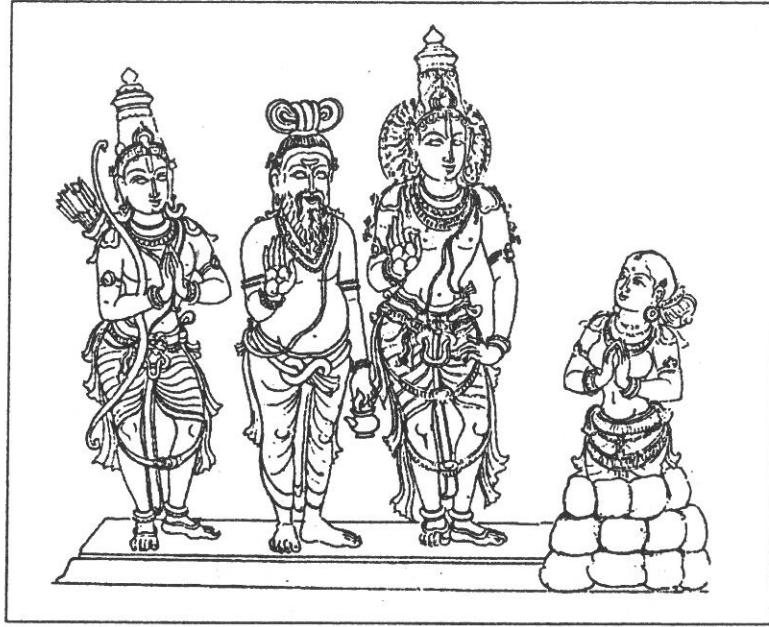
headed by Vasishṭha, and as attended not only by all his brothers and Hanumān, but also by Vibhīṣaṇa, Aṅgada and Sugrīva. And Rāma may be represented with four arms, carrying in the upper hands conch

and discus (which are emblems of Viṣṇu).

There is also a provision for representing Rāma as recumbent (mahārha-śāyane, recalling his days



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



AHALYĀ BEING DELIVERED



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



AHALYĀ BEING DELIVERED
(wood-carving from Kaviyoor temple)

in the forest). In such an image, Sītā sits by his side at the back, near his head ('prshthato mauli-pārśve tu jānakī syāt sukhāsanā'). Other figures of his entourage may be shown as reliefs in the wall ('kudiyasthāh'). 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,



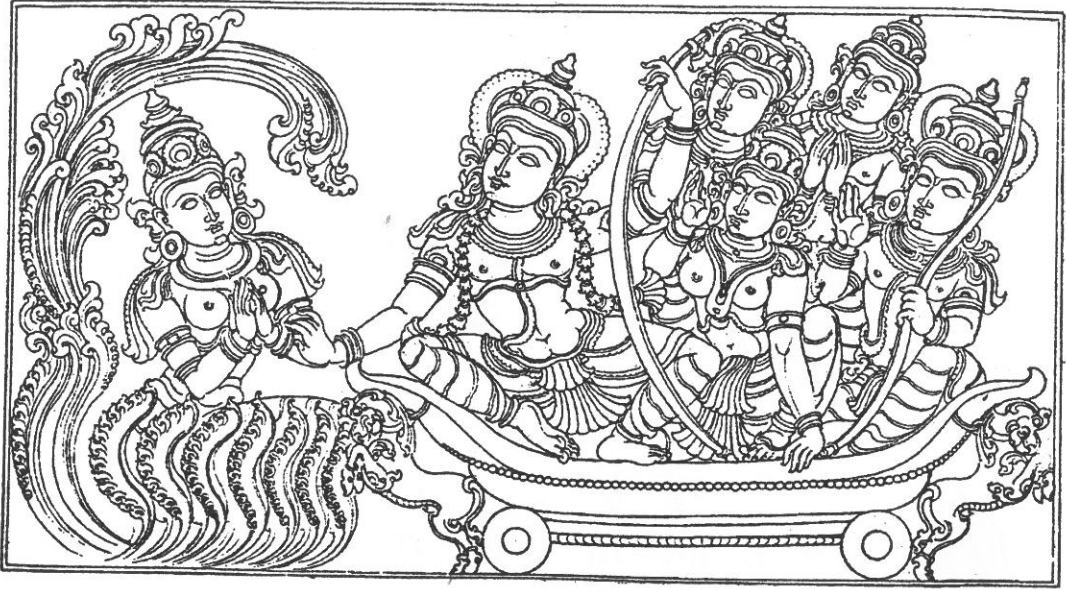
RĀMA AND HANUMĀN

pressing his brother's legs with care
and fondness ('tat kāle lakshmaṇa-
devam pādasarṁvāhane ratam, hasan-

mukham rāghavasya pīḍayantau
padāmbujau').



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



SĪTA'S AGNI-PRAVEŚAM
(wood carving from Kaviyoor temple, Kerala)

Or, Rāma may be shown as being carried by Hanuman 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 country.

(vii) Dāśarathi-Rāma

अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदायकान् ।
राममन्त्रान् स भगवान् प्रतिमन्वन्तरे ह्यभूत् ॥१॥
युगानां परिवर्तेन कल्पे शक्रावतारकः ।
तत्राद्यस्य प्रवक्ष्यामि मन्त्रराजं षडक्षरम् ॥२॥
रामाय नम इत्येष राँ क्लीँ ह्रीँ ऐँ तु पूर्वकः ।
ब्रह्मा संमोहनः शक्तिर्दक्षिणामूर्तिरिव च ॥३॥
अगस्त्यः श्रीशिवः प्रोक्तो मुनयोऽनुक्रमादिमे ।
छन्दो गायत्रसंज्ञं च श्रीरामो देवता मतः ॥४॥

The ṛshis for this six-lettered mantra (रां रामाय नमः) are Brahmā, Kāma (Sammohana), Śakti, Dakṣiṇā-mūrti, Agastya and Śiva respectively for the six letters. The chhandas is Gāyatrī and the devatā is Śrī-rāma.

Dhyāna:

- (a) ध्यायेत्कल्पतरोर्मूले सौवर्णमण्डपं मुने ।
तन्मध्ये पुष्पकाख्यं च विमानं दिव्यमुत्तमम् ॥१॥
मध्ये सिंहासनं तस्य नानारत्नविभूषितम् ।
तन्मध्येऽष्टदलं पद्ममुद्यदादित्यसन्निभम् ॥२॥
श्रीराममेनं तन्मध्ये समासीनं महामुने ।
ससीग्ज्ञानमयीं मुद्रां दधानं दक्षिणे करे ॥३॥
तेजः प्रकाशनं वामं जानुमूर्धनि चापरम् ।
जानकीवल्लभं देवमिन्द्रनीलसमप्रभम् ॥४॥
उद्याननिरतं देवं द्विभुजं रघुनन्दनम् ।
वसिष्ठवामदेवादि मुनिभिः परिवारितम् ॥५॥
वामभागे समासीनां सीतां काञ्चनसन्निभाम् ।

भजतां कामदां नित्यं रक्तोत्पलकराम्बुजाम् ॥६॥
लक्ष्मणं पश्चिमे भागे धृतच्छत्रसुचामरम् ।
पार्श्वे भरतशत्रुघ्नौ तालवृन्तकरावुभौ ॥७॥

- (b) वीरासनसमारूढं व्याख्यामुद्रोपशोभितम् ।
वामोरुन्यस्ततद्धस्तं सीतालक्ष्मणसंयुतम् ॥
- (c) कालाम्भोधरकान्तिकान्तमनिशं वीरासनाध्यासितम् ।
मुद्रां ज्ञानमयीं दधानमपरं हस्ताम्बुजं जानुनि ॥
सीतां पार्श्वगतां सरोरुहकराम् विद्युन्निभां राघवम्
पश्यन्तं मुकुटाङ्गदादिविविधाकल्पोज्ज्वलाङ्गं भजे ॥

- (d) अयोध्यानगरे रत्नखचिते सौवर्णमण्डपे ।
मन्दारपुष्पैराबद्धविताने तोरणान्विते ॥१॥
सिंहासनसमारूढं पुष्पकोपरि राघवम् ।
रक्षोभिर्हरिभिर्देवैर्दिव्ययानगतैः शुभैः ॥२॥
संस्तूयमानं मुनिभिः प्रहृष्टैरुपसेवितम् ।
सीतालंकृतवामाङ्गं लक्ष्मणेनोपशोभितम् ॥३॥
श्यामं प्रसन्नवदनं सर्वाभरणभूषितम् ।
ध्यायन्नेवं जपेन्मन्त्रं वर्णलक्ष्मणन्यधीः ॥४॥
(रां रामाय नमः । इति मन्त्रः ।)

- (e) अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि शत्रुघ्नोपासितां पराम् ।
जयदां रामगायत्रीमुपास्यां सूर्यवंशजैः ॥

Rāma-gāyatrī is as follows:

दाशरथाय विद्महे । सीतावल्लभाय धीमहि ।
तन्नो रामः प्रचोदयात् ॥

(f) राजाऽयोध्यानगरविलसन् मण्डपे रत्नभित्तौ
 तत्तद्विधु स्थितसुमनसस्तोरणे दिव्यगन्धे ।
 नानादिग्भ्यो धनपतिधनो दिव्यसिंहासनस्थो
 दिव्याकारैरनुजनिवहैः सेवितः स्वर्द्धूमूले ॥१॥
 दिव्यैर्माल्यैर्दिवि च सततं स्तूयमानः सुरौघैः
 प्राज्ञैः प्रान्ते दृढमुनिवरैर्वामदेवादिभिश्च ।
 राकाचन्द्रोपमितसुमुखः श्यामलश्चारुलक्ष्म्या
 ध्येयः सद्यो विरचित महाराजराज्याभिषेकः ॥२॥
 (रामदशाक्षरी मन्त्रः । हुँ जानकीवल्लभाय स्वाहा ॥)

(g) तप्ताष्टापदाभां विदेहतनयां रामाङ्गपीठस्थिताम्
 तद्वक्त्रेक्षणतत्परामनिमिषां हस्तस्थिताब्जोत्पलाम् ।
 रामं दाशरथिं रमाकुचलसद्वस्तं ध्यायेदभीष्टाप्तये ॥
 (सीताराममन्त्रः । ॐ क्लीं श्रीं श्रीं रां रामाय नमः,
 श्रीं सीतायै स्वाहा । रां श्रीं श्रीं क्लीं ॐ ॥
 ॐ नमः सीतापतये रामाय हन हन हुं फट् स्वाहा ।
 (Rāma shodāśāksharī-mantra for which Agastya is the ṛshi,
 anushtup the chhandas and Sītā-rāma the devatā)

(h) ॐ रामभद्र महेषवास रघुवीर नृपोत्तम ।
 दशास्यान्तक मां रक्ष श्रियं मे देहि दापय ॥

(i) नमो ब्रह्मण्यदेवाय रामायाकुण्ठतेजसे ।
 उत्तमश्लोकधुर्याय हस्तदण्डार्पितांग्रये ॥

(j) ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं द्रां दाशरथाय सीतावल्लभाय त्रैलोक्यनाथाय नमः ॥

(8) KṚSHṆA

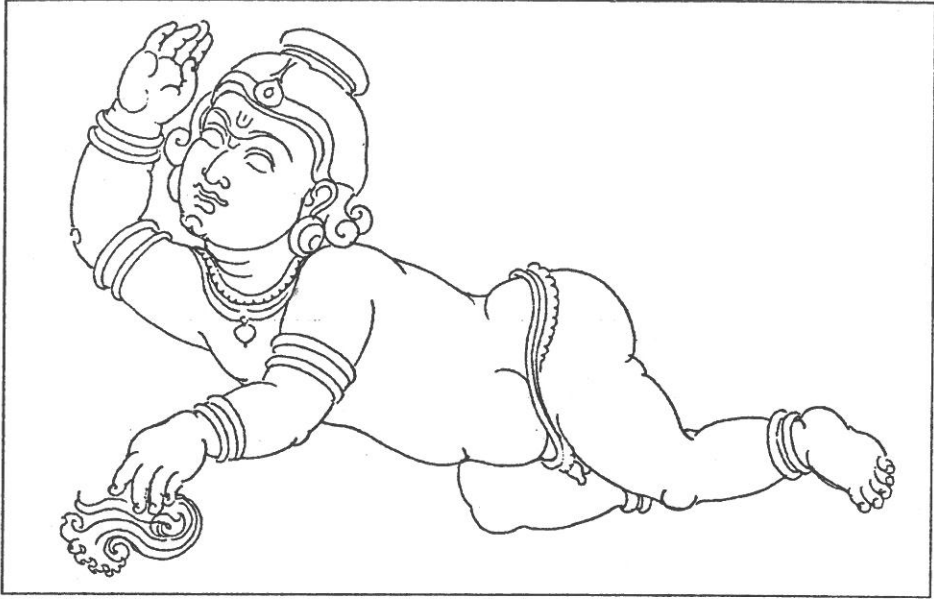
An incarnation of Viṣṇu, Kṛshṇa is widely worshipped in the country. He is the most popular theme for play, painting and sculpture. His



KṚSHṆA

greatness and glory are described in great detail in numerous works, including *Mahābhārata*, *Bhāgavata* and other purāṇas.

Kṛshṇa in his human form belonged to the Yādava tribe, and was born as the son of Vasudeva (son of the chieftain Śūrasena) and Devakī (sister of Kāṁsa, who had usurped the throne of Mathurā, after imprisoning his father, Ugrasena). He was hence known as Vāsudeva. Vasudeva had another wife, Rohiṇī. Rohiṇī became the mother of Saṁkarshaṇa (also called Bala-bhadra or Bala-rāma). Fearing that Vasudeva's son would be his killer, Kāṁsa imprisoned both his sister Devakī and Vasudeva. Kāṁsa took charge of the babies that were born to them. The first-born (Kīrtimān) was not harmed, for it was not predicted that he would



BALAKRISHNA
(from Kailāsanātha-Kāñchī)

be Kāṁsa's killer. The five babies that were born subsequently were put to death soon after their birth. On the Seventh occasion, Devakī's womb was miraculously transferred (by Viṣṇu-māyā or Māyādevi) to the womb of Rohiṇī (and was born as Balabhadra); and Māyādevi (Viṣṇu-māyā) herself took birth as the daughter of Yaśodā and Nanda, who were friends of Vasudeva and Devakī

in Gokula (and hence came to be known as Nandā, one of the names of Durgā). Viṣṇu incarnated himself as the eighth child. And immediately after delivery, (viz. at midnight on the eighth day of the dark half of the Śrāvaṇa month) Vasudeva took him across the river Yamunā, and placed him by the side of Yaśodā in Gokula, who had given birth to a baby-daughter at the same time as Kṛṣṇa



YAŚODĀ KṚSHṆA
(Wood carving, Sučeendra temple)

was born. He brought back Yaśodā's baby with him, for Kāṁsa would kill only his sons and not daughters. The

next morning, when Kāṁsa came to the prison and took the baby to examine, the baby miraculously slipped from his hand and flew to the sky assuming the form of the eight-armed Durgā. She warned Kāṁsa that his killer was growing up elsewhere, and that he would surely kill Kāṁsa.

Kṛṣṇa (so called because he was dark in complexion) and Bala-bhadra grew up together in Gokula, and had many exploits during their boyhood days. Kṛṣṇa's killing of numerous asuras are recounted in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. Pūtanā (who came to suckle the baby Kṛṣṇa with her poisoned breasts), Śakaṭa (who came like a terrible cart running over the baby), Tṛṇāvarta (who came like a whirlwind), Vatsa (who came like a calf), Baka (the brother of Pūtanā,

who came like a huge crane with a fierce mouth), Agha (another brother, who came like a venomous serpent), Dhenuka (in the Kadali-forest on the banks of Yamunā), Kāliya, Pralamba (who came disguised as a cowherd), Arishta (who came like a bull), Keśī



(who came like a serpent) and Vyoma (who disguised himself as a goat).

Among other exploits, which have become themes for graphic, plastic and literary representation, are the abstraction of garments of the cowherd damsels who were bathing in the river Kālindi (gopikā-vastrāpaharaṇa) and the lifting up of the Govardhana-hill to shield the people and cattle of Gokula from the torrential downpour caused by the wrath of Indra (Govardhā-noddhāraṇa).

Iconographically, Kṛṣṇa as a baby delighting in breaking the pots of curds and butter, as dancing with a ball of butter in his hand (navanīta-tāṇḍava), as crawling about or moving on fours (Bāla-kṛṣṇaṇa), as being fondled or fed by his foster-mother (Yaśodā-Kṛṣṇaṇa), and as dancing on the hoods of the Kāliya serpent in the waters of the river Yamunā

(Kāliya-damana or Kāliya-tāṇḍava) are popular.

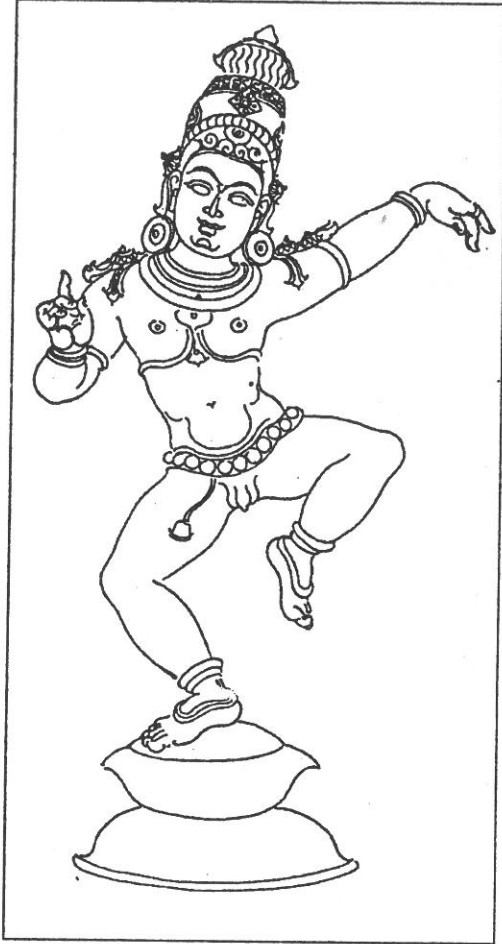


NAVANĪTA-KṚṢṆA
(stone)
(Padmanābha-svāmi temple,
Kulashekharapuram)

After leaving Gokula, Kṛṣṇa along with Balabhadra, went to

Mathurā, where he met the good-natured Sudāma, favoured the crooked-backed Trivakrā, broke the bow in the sacrificial hall of Kāṁsa, tamed the violent elephant Kuvalayāpiḍa, and finally killed Kāṁsa, and restored the throne to Ugrasena.

Later, the brothers went to the hermitage of Sāṇḍīpanī and had their schooling. They then went to Dvārakā, where they cultivated friendship with their cousins, the Pāṇḍavas. Kṛṣṇa's association with the Pāṇḍava brothers, especially with Arjuna, was eventful. If Kṛṣṇa was regarded as an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, Arjuna was Nara reborn. *Mahābhārata* is full of Kṛṣṇa's help in numerous ways to the Pāṇḍavas, and of his effort to

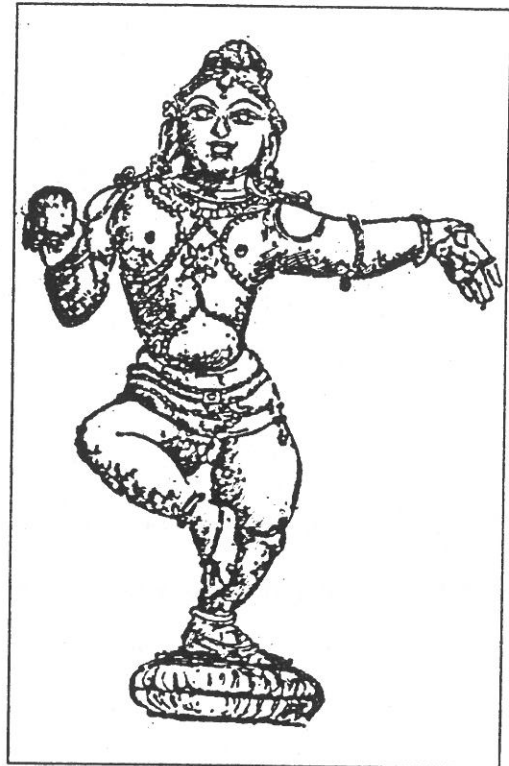


BĀLA KṚSHNA
(Trivandrum Museum)

undo evil and support righteousness.
Bhāgavad-gīta is Kṛṣṇa's teaching
delivered to Arjuna on the battle-field

on the event of the celebrated fight
which gave the epic its name. This
is iconographically represented as
Pārthasārathi.

Bala-bhadra married Revatī, and
Kṛṣṇa Rukmiṇī (daughter of





Bhīshmaka, chieftain of Vidarbha). Their son was Pradyuma, who married Rukmavatī (daughter of Rukmī, son of Bhīsimaka), and Aniruddha was his son.

Kṛṣṇa also married seven others. Jāmbavatī (daughter of the ṛksha chieftain Jāmbavān), Satyabhāmā (daughter of the Yādava chieftain Satrājita), Kālindī, Mitravindā, Satyā (daughter of

Nagnajit), Bhadrā (or Kalikeyī, daughter of Śrutakīrti, sister of Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa's father) and Lakṣmī (daughter of the king of

Madra). These eight wives of Kṛṣṇa are collectively known as aṣṭa-mahishī, and are worshipped separately in the 'maṇḍala' worship of Kṛṣṇa



KṚSHNA (bronze)
(National Museum, Delhi)

After the Mahābhārata war, Kṛṣṇa returned to Dwārakā, and witnessed the destruction of his entire tribe (viz. Yādava) in an internal strife. Soon after, his elder brother, Balabhadra, gave up his life, and Kṛṣṇa too was killed accidentally by a hunter Jarā by name.

According to *Vaikhāṇasāgama*, the iconographic forms of Kṛṣṇa are countless (kṛṣṇa - rūpāṇyā sarmkhyāni) and can hardly be enumerated. Therefore, the text suggests, the devotee may visualize Kṛṣṇa's form in whatever way he



BĀLA KṚSHṆA with Yaśodā
(from Padmanābha-svāmi temple, Trivandrum)

desires (yatheshṭarūpāsu kārayet). However, some forms have been stylized and iconographically represented more often than other forms.

The general textual prescription is that images of Kṛṣṇa must be

made in the 'Madhyama-daśa-tāla' measure (viz. one hundred and twenty aṅgulas in height) and shown in the three-bend stance (tri-bhaṅgi). The image must be two-armed (dvi-bhuja), dark-complexioned (śyāmābha), bedecked with all ornaments (sarvābharāṇa-bhūṣhita), and draped

in red garments (rakta-vastra-dhara)
On his head may be a crown (kirīṭa),
or hair done into a top-knot (keśa-
bandha). His right hand holds a stick
for sport (krīḍā-yasṭi), and his left
hand bent at elbow and lifted up
(vāmodiyata-kara-kūrpara-hikkāsūtra-
dhara).

On his right must be shown
Rukmiṇī, golden-coloured and two-
armed. She must carry red lotus
(padma) in her left hand, and her
right arm must hang down straight
(prasārita-dakṣhiṇa-hasta). To the right
of Kṛṣṇa must be shown Satya-
bhāmā, dark-complexioned and two-



PŪTANĀ-VADHA



BĀLA-KṚSHṆA killing BAKĀSURA
(wood, from Śuchindram temple chariot)



BĀLA-KṚSHṆA killing BAKĀSURA
(from Padmanābha-svāmi temple, Trivandrum)



BAKĀSURA-VADHA

armed. She must carry blue lotus (utpala) in her right hand, her left arm hanging down. Both of them may wear karaṇḍa-makuṭa on their

heads, or the hair dressed into a 'dhammilla'.

The *Vaikhānasāgama* which gives the above details prescribes that



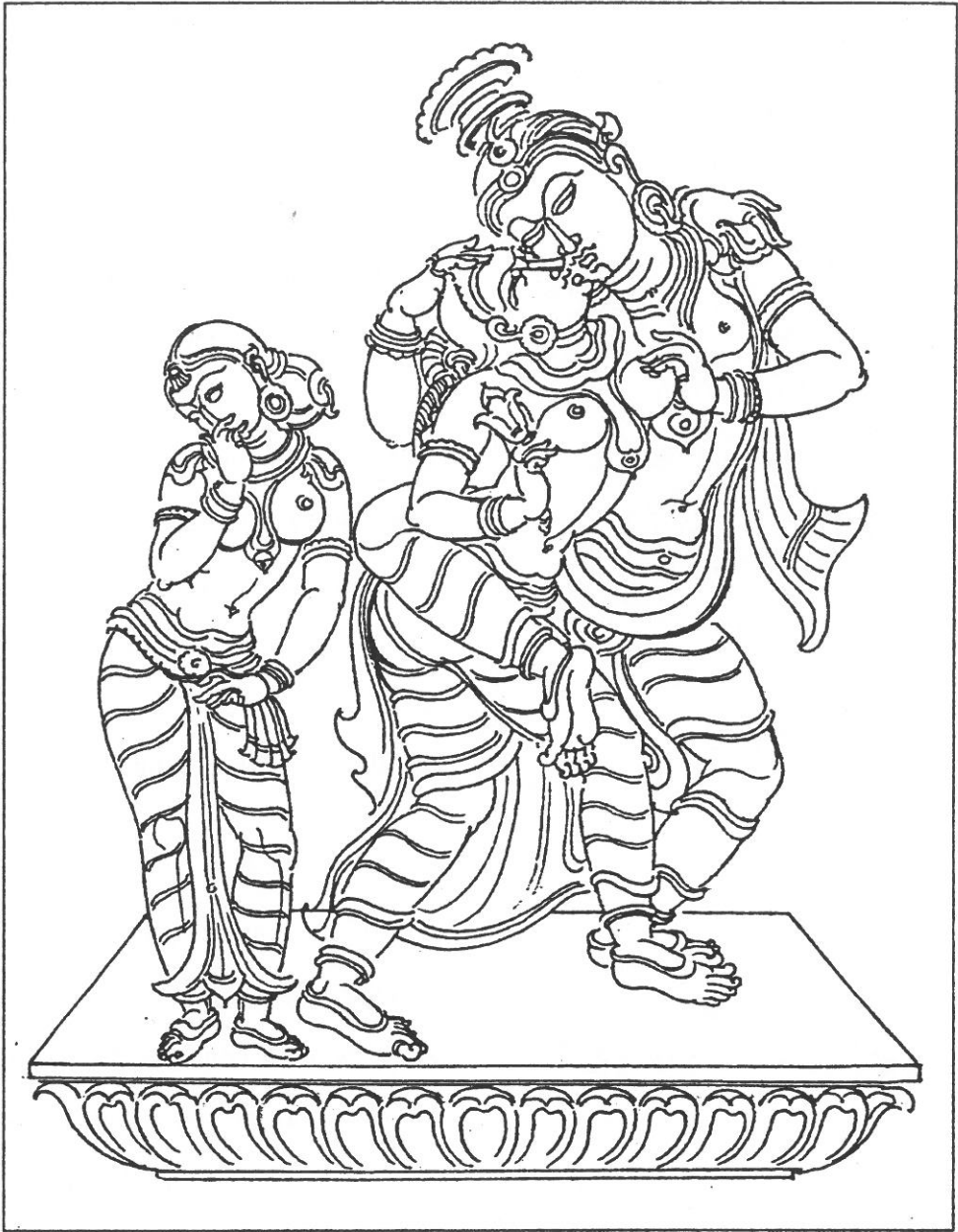
BĀLA KR̥SHṆA KILLING DHENUKA

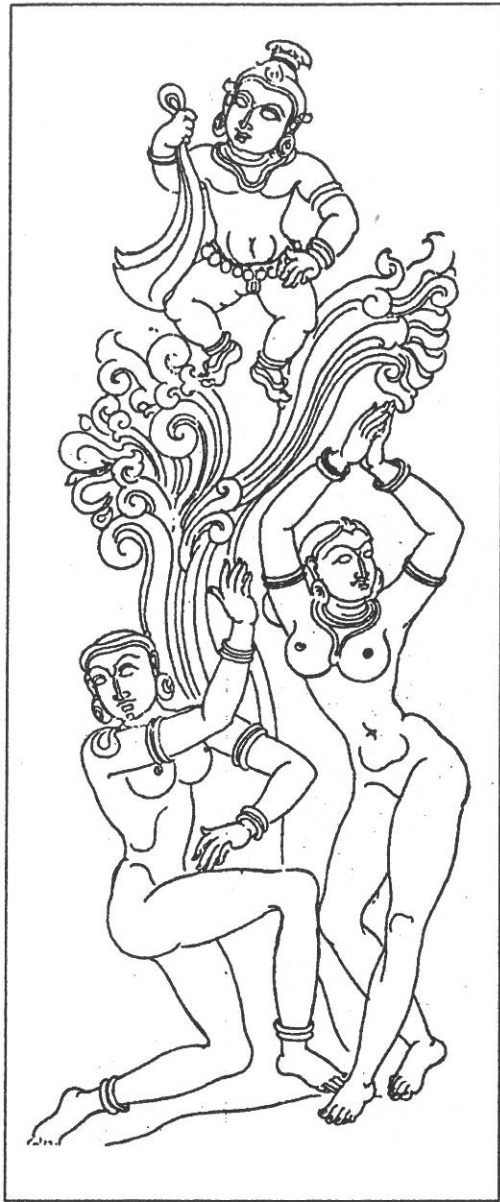


BĀLA KRSHṆA with a Gopi
(from Devarāja temple, Kāñchipuram)

the processional metallic image (kautuka) of Kṛṣṇa must be that of the four-armed Viṣṇu, carrying the usual emblems (conch, discus, lotus

and mace; or conch, discus and the gesture of protection or boon-bestowal).



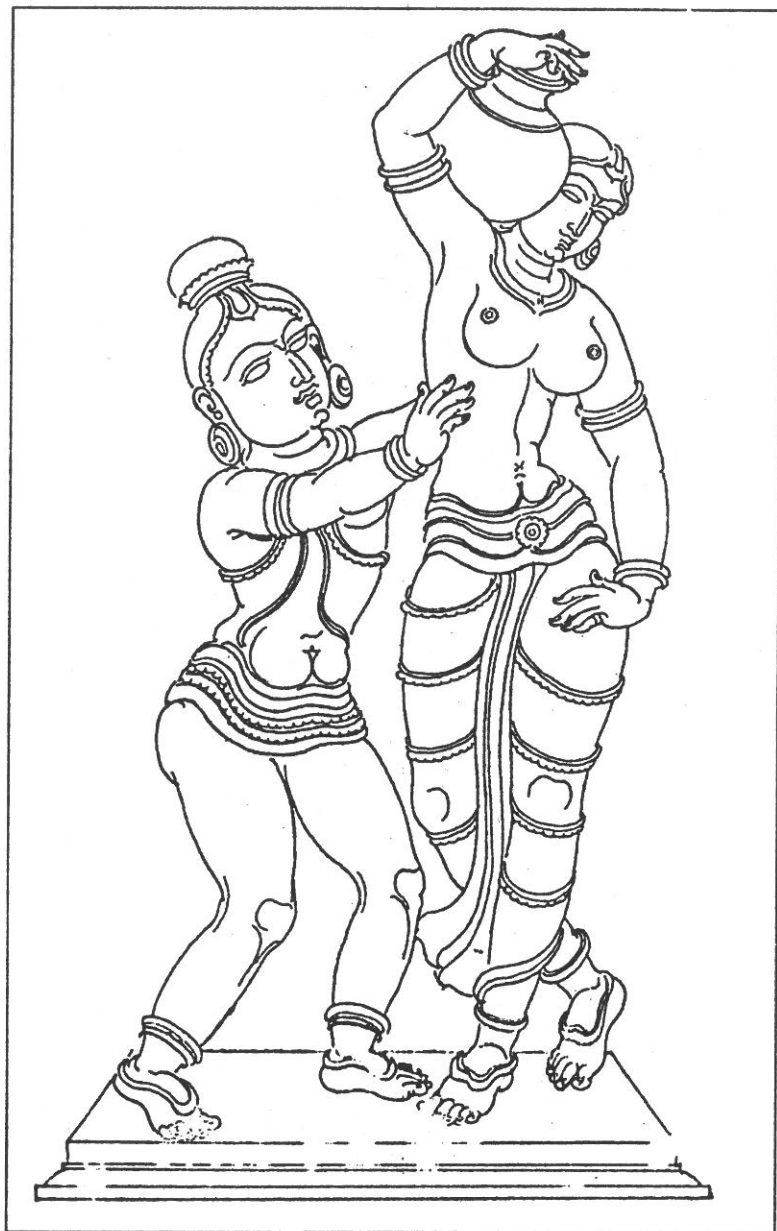


BĀLAKṚSHṆA

(from Sārṅgapāṇi Temple, Kumbhakonam)

In *Vishṇu-dharmottara-purāṇa* (3,85,74), Kṛṣṇa is prescribed to be distinguished by the discus that he carries (kṛṣṇaś chakra-dharah kāryah), and to be represented as dark like the blue-lotus (nīlotpala-dalacchavi). Apparently, he is two-armed, and he holds the discus in the right hand. Rukmiṇī, dark in complexion, (śyāmā), and holding a lotus in her hand, (indīvara-karā) and Satyabhāmā, lovely in her form, (surūpiṇī) are to be shown with Kṛṣṇa.

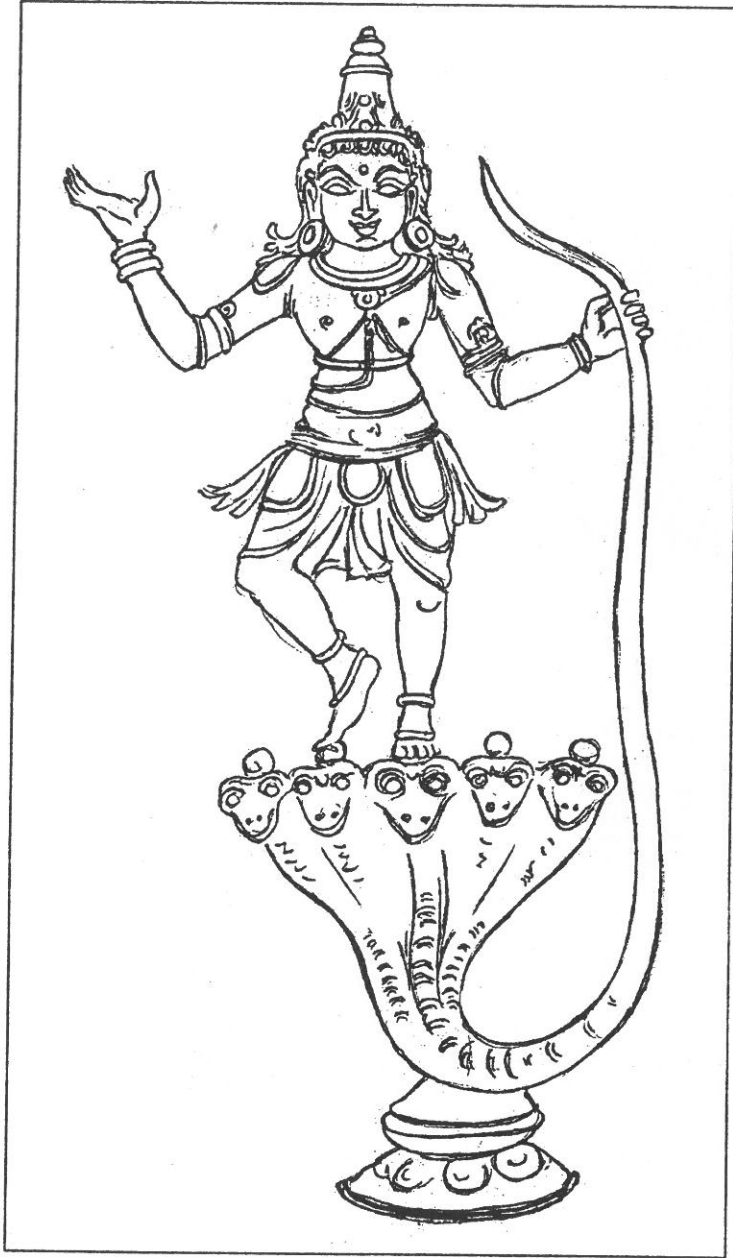
The *Pāñcharātra* texts, however, mention that Kṛṣṇa may be represented with two arms or four, alone or with consorts (Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā), seated (āsīna), standing (sthānaka) or moving (yānaka). His complexion must be that of dark



BĀLA KṚSHNA
(from Devarāja Temple, Kāñchīpuram)



KĀLIYA-TĀṆḌAVA (stone relief from Lepākshi temple)





KĀLIYA-MARDANA
Kattu Edayār, South Arcot District

clouds (megha-śyāma). His eyes must be large (viśālāksha), and his garments must be yellow in colour

(pīta-vastra). If he is shown as standing, his left leg must be slightly bent (īshatkuñcha-vāmānghṛi) and the other leg firmly planted on the ground (susthitetaram). When he is seated, he must have Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā on his sides. He must be shown as wearing vanamālā.

Among the iconographic forms that are popular are :

(1) Bāla-Kṛṣṇa: represented as an infant lying on the lap of his mother, or on the leaf of the banyan tree (Vaṭa-patra-śāyin), with one of his feet brought near the mouth; or as moving on all fours with the right hand holding a ball of butter (this is sometimes known as Santāna-gopāla-Kṛṣṇa); or as standing in a

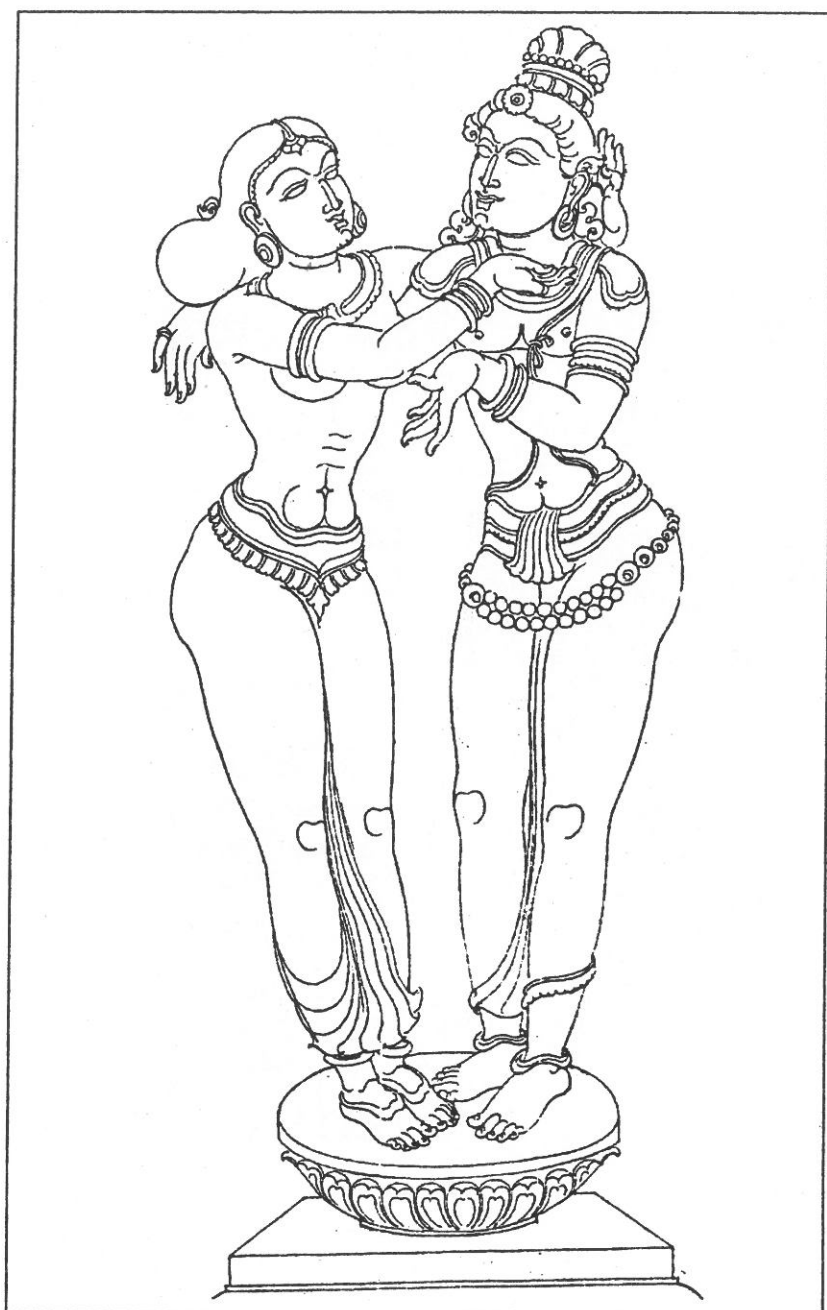


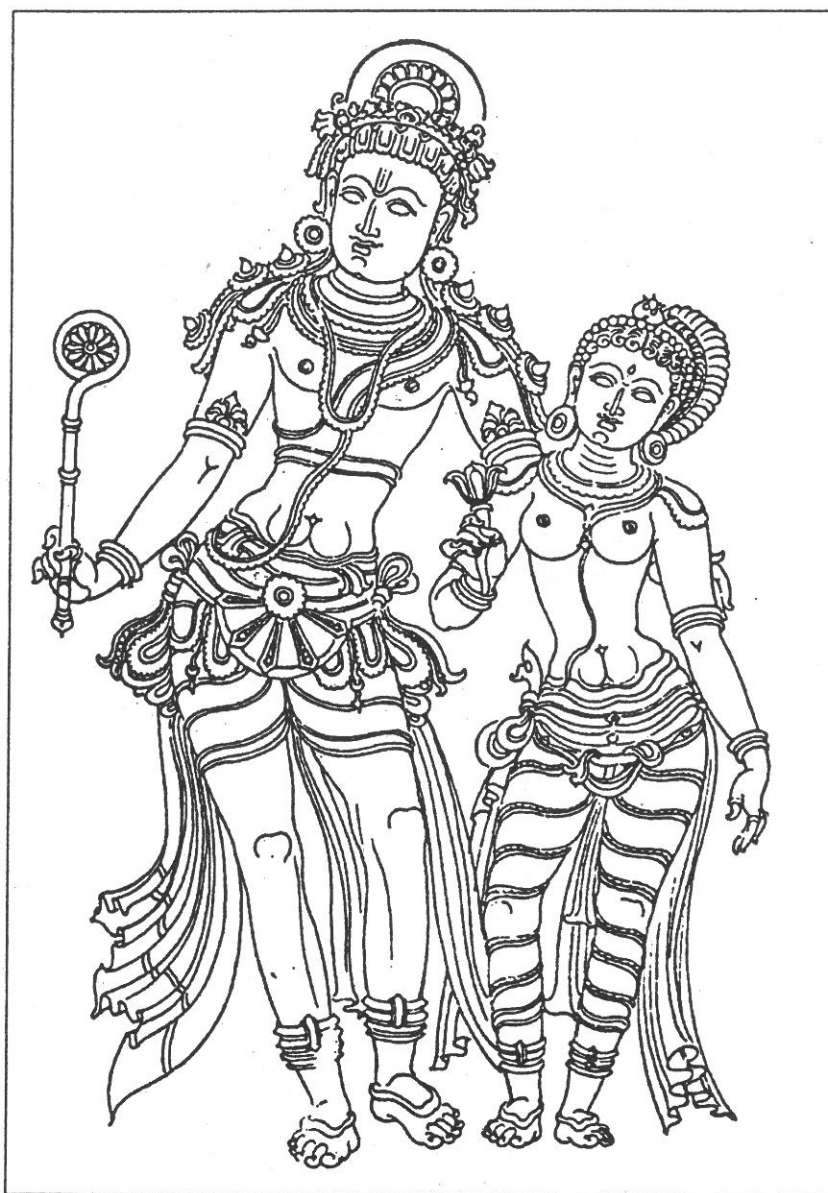
KRSHNA WITH RUKMINI



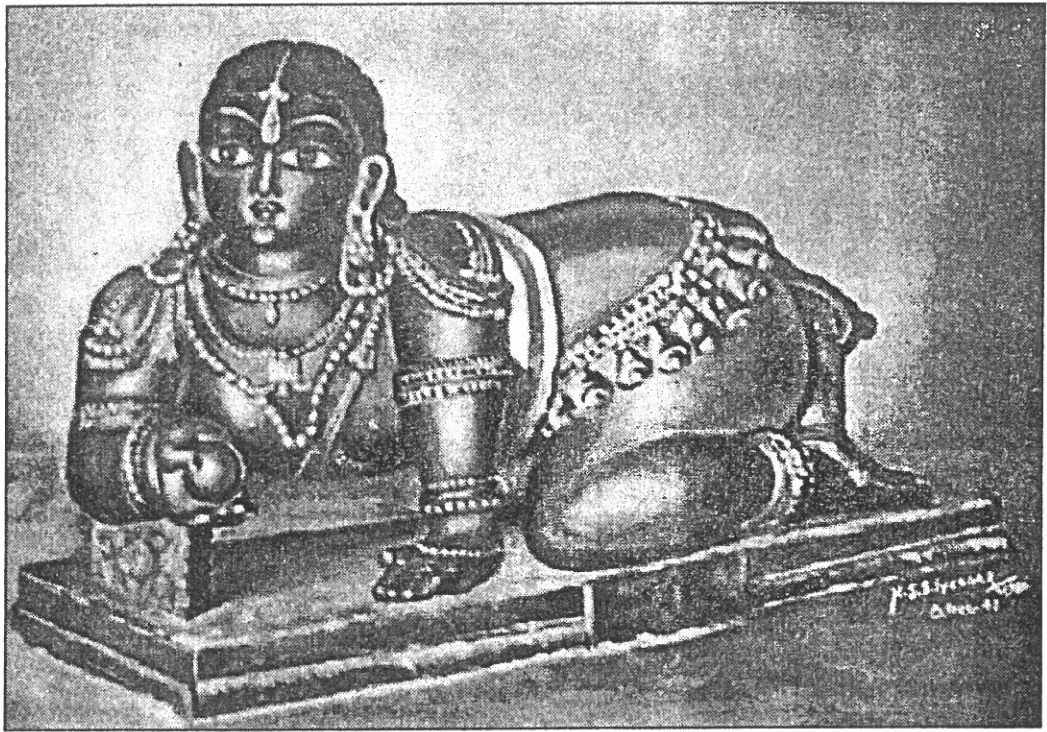
three-bend posture with the right hand holding a stick for sport (krī-ḍāyashṭi), and the left hand placed on his hip. He is blue in body-colour, and, among the ornaments, the tiger's claw (vyāghra-nakha) is prominent.

(2) Navanīta-tāṇḍava: represented as a three year old boy standing on his left leg which is slightly bent (ākuñchita) in a dance posture; the right hand holds a ball of butter (navanīta), while the left arm is stretched across (prasārya); his





KRSHNA WITH RUKMINI
(stone, Chidambaram temple)



ICON IN APRAMEYA TEMPLE, MAḢŪR

body is devoid of any clothes (am̐bara-hīnam), but decorated with ornaments (sarvābharaṇabhūshita). The right hand may show, instead of the ball of butter, the gesture of protection (abhaya) (cf. *Vaikhānasāgama*).

(3) Kāliya-mardana (or Kāliya-tāṇḍava) : represented as a boy dancing (nṛtyantam) on the hoods of the Kāliya serpent, the right hand being shown in the 'patāka' gesture, and the left arm stretched across but



GOVARDHANA-DHARA

holding the tail of the serpent ('vāma-kareṇa ahi-puccham sangṛhya')

(4) Govardhana-dhara: shown as a boy holding aloft with his right little-finger the mountain, Govardhana

by name, in Gokula. He is seen standing in an easy posture. With the right hand lifted up and the left arm hanging down; surrounded by cowherds, damsels, and cattle.

(5) Madana-gopāla (also called Veṇu-gopāla) : represented as a cowherd boy (go-pāla) playing on flute and entertaining his companions and cattle. He may be represented with two, four, eight or ten arms. When he has only two hands, both holding the flute (veṇu) across, touching his lower lip, the form is called Veṇu-gopāla: His fingers must be placed on the holes of the flute (aṅgulīshu veṇu-vivarān sarmyojya), and he must be shown as singing also (gāyantam). He stands in a three-bend posture (tribhaṅga-bhaṅga), and on his head must be a bunch of peacock-feathers (barhi-pīḍa) stuck into the top-knot of his hair.

When he has four hands, and the upper hands hold the discus and conch, however, he is celebrated as

Madana-gopāla (viz. comprehending the form of the god of love, Madana, Manmatha or Kāma). He may also have eight hands, while playing on the flute, carrying besides the usual emblems of Viṣṇu (discus, conch, mace and lotus), sugar-cane stalk (ikshu-daṇḍa) and flower-darts (pushpa-bāṇa); or ten hands, carrying in addition to the above, noose (pāśa) and goad (aṅkuśa). He may be seated on a hexagon (Shaṭ-koṇa) on a lotus with eight petals, and surrounded by cowherd-damsels. He must be bedecked with all ornaments (sarvālankāra-bhūṣita), and his lotus-like face lit up with a charming smile (mandasmita-mukhāmbuja)

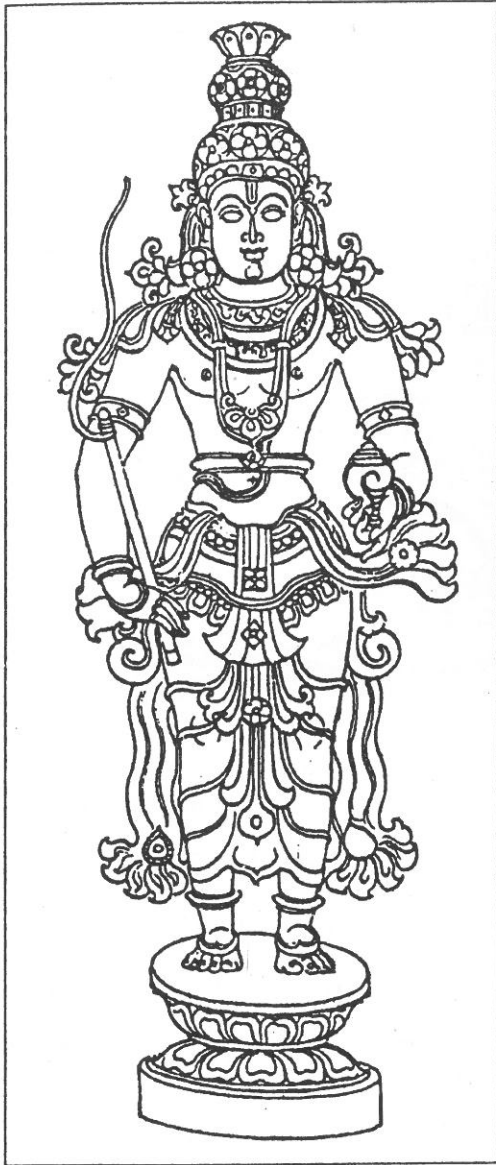
Veṇu-gopāla, while standing, is shown as erect with the left foot



VENU-GOPĀLA

firmly planted on the ground, the lower part of the right leg crossing the left leg either in front or at the back, touching the ground with his toes.

(6) Pārtha-sārathi: representing Kṛṣṇa as a teacher of Arjuna on the battle-field. Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, both two-armed, are shown here alongside a chariot (ratha). Kṛṣṇa is shown as

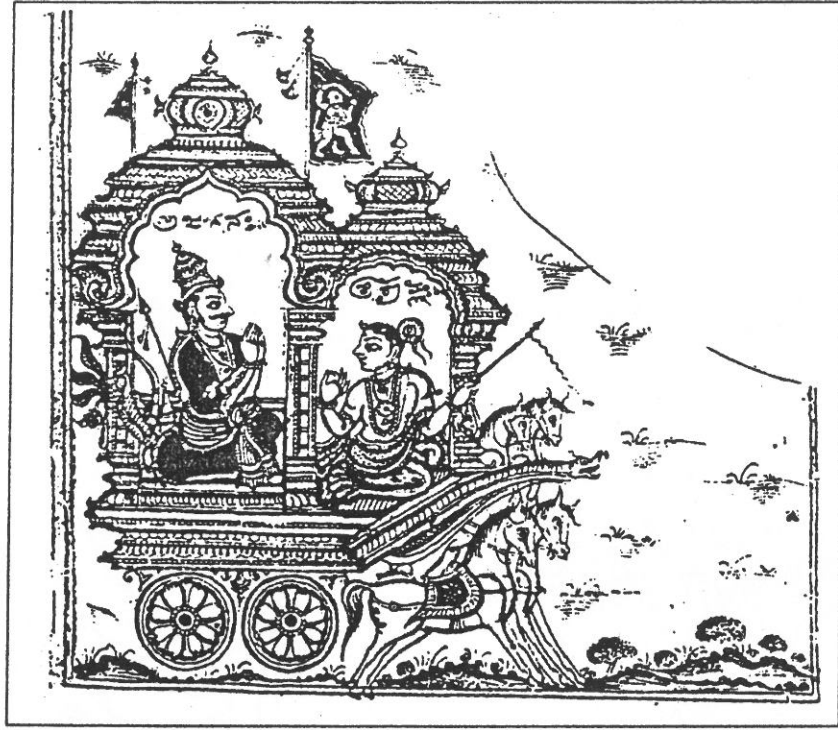


PĀRTHASĀRATHI (stone)
(from Thali temple,
Kozhikoḍu Dist)

about to get into the chariot; his right leg planted on the ground (daksha-pādam sthitam), and the left leg lifted up and placed on the rampart of the



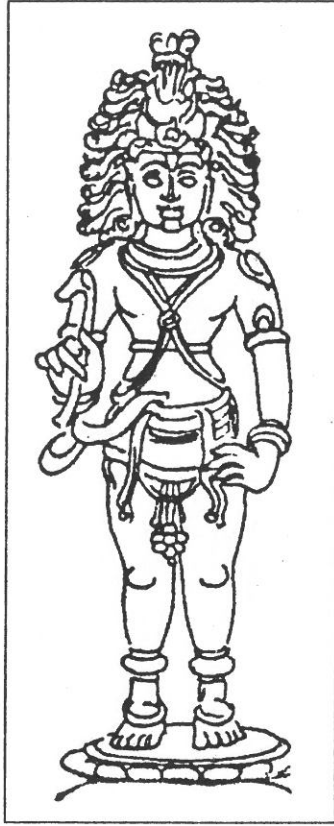
PĀRTHA-SĀRATHI
(from the Ananthapur temple, Kumbh[e])



chariot (vāmam-uddhṛtya ratha-bhittau samsthāpya). He has his right hand in the posture of teaching or exposition (vyākhyāna-nirṇāyaṅguli-mudrā). Or he may be shown as holding the whip in one hand and the reins of the horses in the other (yasṭi-pāśān grhītvā).

Arjuna is shown as standing on the ground with his hands in the gesture of supplication; a bow is tucked up in his arms (pārtham sachāpam prāñjalīkṛtya adhah-sthale sthitam).

There are of course few iconic representations of this form in



PĀRTHASĀRATHI
(from Viṣṇumūrti temple, Koḍipāḍi)

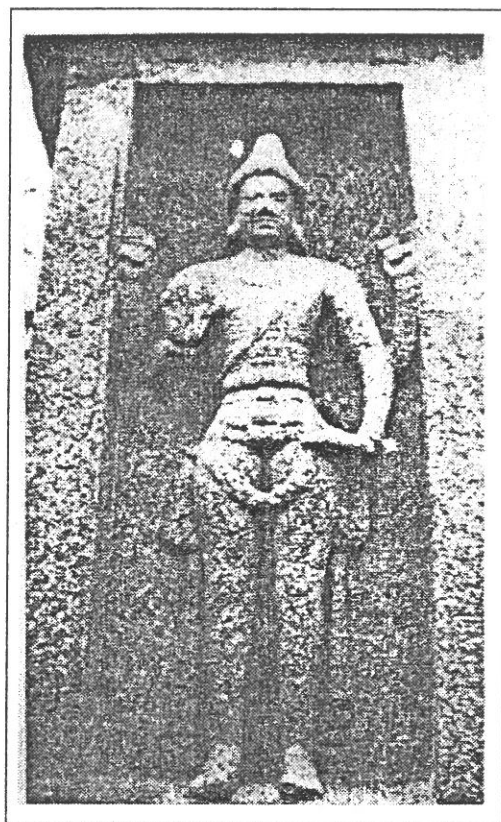
sculpture, although as a theme for painting the form has been popular. Some Kṛṣṇa figures known as Pārthasārathi, however, do not answer to

the textual specifications. The well-known Pārthasārathi temple at Thiruvellikkēṇi in Madras has in the sanctum a two-armed figure of Viṣṇu with conch in the right hand, the gesture of boon-bestowal (varada) being shown with the other. The image of Kṛṣṇa here is surrounded by those of Rukmiṇī, Sātyaki, Bala-bhadra, Aniruddha and Saṃkarṣaṇa.

Sometimes, Kṛṣṇa is represented alone with his brother, Bala-bhadra, with the form of Durgā known as Ekānamśā, standing betwixt them; she is their sister.

According to *Śrī Vidyārṇava - tantra*, Kṛṣṇa is represented differently according to the worship

conducted in three periods: morning, afternoon and evening. In the morning worship, he is seated on a jewel throne (ratna-simhāsana) in the lotus posture (padmāsana) : he is then shown as a small boy, blue in body-colour, and holding a ball of butter in hand; he is surrounded by cows, cowherds and maidens. In the afternoon, he is a grown-up boy, wearing peacock-feathers on his crown (śikhi-piñchha) and bejewelled earrings (ratna-kunḍala); his body is draped in yellow-coloured silken garments (pītāmbara), and decorated by the vanamālā garland. He holds a flute in his right hand, and a conch (or a stick, vetra) in his left. In the eventide, he is the crowned monarch



of Dvārakā, seated in an elegant pavilion surrounded by water. He wears on his head a crown, and his body is adorned with all ornaments. He is four-armed, carrying the usual weapons of Vishṇu: conch, discus,



GOPĀLA-KṚSHNA

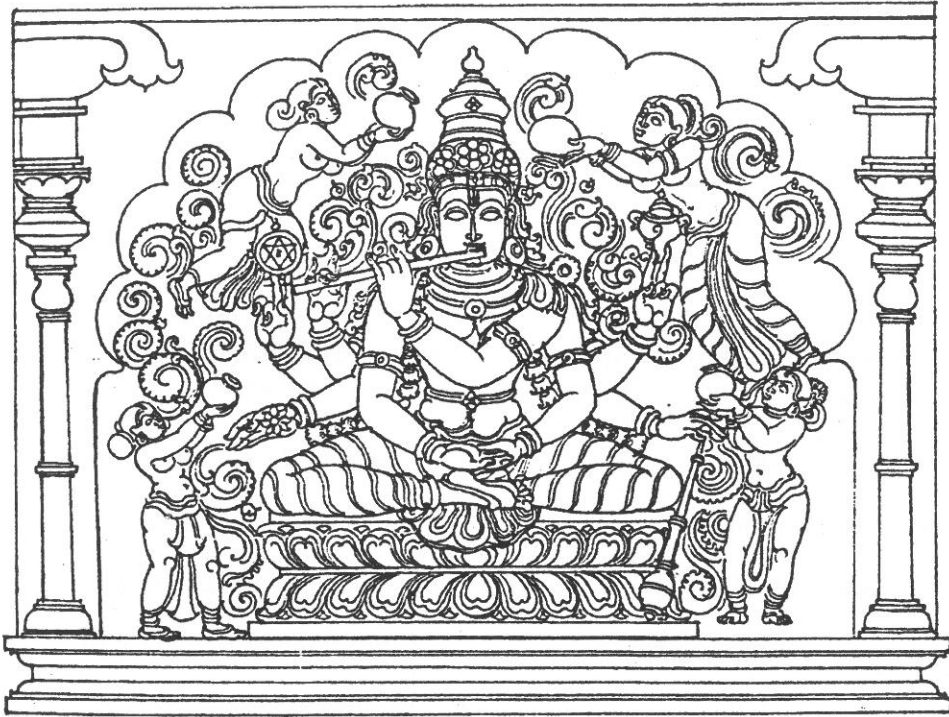
mace and lotus. He is surrounded by damsels and sages.

Frequently, young Kṛṣṇa is shown as holding a ball of butter in one hand and a bowl of sweet rice-pudding (pāyasa) in the other, either standing on a lotus or seated in a swing under the wish-fulfilling tree (kalpa-vṛkṣa). There are representations as Gopāla, seated on a yoga-pīṭha and red lotus of eight petals. He is playing on flute, regaling cowherd-maidens who surround him. He is decorated with the kaustubha jewel and śrīvatsa mark on his chest, and svastika mark on his feet

Or, he may be seated with Rukmiṇī on his lap; or he may stand, with Rukmiṇī to his right. In this

form, he may carry in his hands a golden rod and conch. In some forms, he is shown as four-armed (carrying the usual weapons of Viṣṇu), seated on a jewel-throne; or standing, with Rukmiṇī to his right and Satyabhāmā to his left, both of whom he is embracing. The four hands may alternatively be shown as playing on the flute with his two normal hands, and carrying conch and discus in the two upper hands. He may also have eight hands.

In the form known as Jaganmohana (or Jagatsammohana), he is seated on a jewel-throne in Vṛndāvana with his left foot on the shoulders of Garuḍa. Lakshmī is seated on his left lap. He has eight hands, carrying in them discus, conch



KṚSHNA AS RĀJAGOPALA
(stone relief from Kṛṣṇa temple, Thali)

elephant-goad, noose, flower-arrow, sugar-cane bow, lotus and mace. Lakshmī is shown as embracing Kṛṣṇa with her right hand and holding a sugar-cane-bow in her left.

The Trailokya-mohana form may have eight on sixteen hands, the

additional hands carrying śakti, pot (kumbha), horn (śṛṅga), pestle (musala), arrow, and gesture of boon-bestowal; the two remaining hands are joined in the meditative posture on his lap. *Rūpa-maṇḍana* (3,62), which describes this form, suggests also a variant form with four faces.

Madana-goṇāla is red in body-colour, and his garments are also red. He is seated on a red lotus. He has four hands, carrying noose (pāśa), elephant goad (aṅkuśa), sugar-cane bow (ikshu-chāpa) and flower-arrows (pushpa-baṇa)

Kṛṣṇa as a boy growing up in Gokula is a favourite theme for poets, sculptors and painters. Most of his exploits as an infant and as a boy are visualized in varied images. In fact, most of the representations of Kṛṣṇa relate to his boyhood period.

But among several stylized forms of Kṛṣṇa, Bāla-Kṛṣṇa is represented as two-armed, standing in a three-bend posture (tribhaṅga-sṭhiti-samyutam), and carrying a sport-stick

(krīḍāyasṭi-yutam). His right hand is in the kaṭaka posture, holding the stick as a support, or holding the rope to be tied to the stick (used in churning curds) (dakṣiṇe kaṭakam haste yasṭyādhāra-samanvitam')

Other forms like Santāna-gopāla (baby with a ball of butter in hand, crawling), Navanīta-nṛtya (three-year old boy dancing with a ball of butter in the right and, the left arm stretched across), Kāliya-mardana (subjugating the serpent Kāliya in the waters of Yamunā), and Govardhana-dhara (lifting up the Govardhana Mountain to protect the cowherds and cattle from the torrential rains caused by Indra) are also forms which involve Bāla-kṛṣṇa.



AS VENUGOPĀLA (stone)
(Aṭṭagar-Koil, Madurai)

The form of Kṛṣṇa as charioteer (sārathi) to Arjuna (Pārtha) during the Mahābhārata War has already been mentioned. This form, as also mentioned earlier, is celebrated for the *Bhagavad-gītā* that appeared on the occasion. As could be expected, the iconic representation must not only be two-armed, carrying a horse-whip and holding the reins in one hand, while the other hand assumes the gesture of exposition (vyākhyāna-mudrā), but must involve Arjuna in the posture of supplication (añjali) and the chariot in the background. *Vimānārchanā-kalpa* (Paṭala 79) prescribes that Kṛṣṇa as Pārthasārathi must be represented as two-armed, holding the reins of the horses and a whip (chāpa- yantra-yasṭi-pāśam grhītṛvā) mounted upon

a chariot (rathārūḍham); but the right foot is firmly placed on the floor of the chariot, while the left foot is raised and placed on the railings of the chariot ('dakṣiṇam pādām sthitam vāmam uddhṛtya ratha-bhittau samsthāpya'). His right hand is in the gesture of counselling ('dakṣiṇa-hastena vyāsa-nirṇayāṅguli-mudrayā samyuktam'). Arjuna must be shown to the god's left, sitting on the floor of the chariot, joining his hands in supplication ('vāme prāñjali-kṛtyādhas-sthale sthitam')

The expression Gopāla, a name of Kṛṣṇa in his role as a cowherd (goh pālayati) in his boyhood, signifies also that he is the guardian of the Vedic lore (gāh, meaning scriptural speech), or he is the one who has



VEṆU-GOPĀLA
(Padmanābha-svāmi temple, Trivandrum)



control over his sense-organs (gauh, also meaning sense-organs, indriya).

Bhāgavata (10th Skandha) relates numerous stories of the boyhood of Kṛṣṇa relating to the protection he offered to the cows and cowherds of Gokula: subduing the



ĀDIKEŚAVA-PERUMĀL TEMPLE AT THIRUVATTĀR



venomous snake Kāliya in the river Kālindī; slaying Aghāsura, Vatsāsura, saving the cows and cowherds from the wild fire on the banks of Kālindī, and from the deluge caused by Indra, who was annoyed because the customary worship was denied to him, and killing Kamsa, his wicked uncle and tyrant-monarch of mathurā.

Padma-Purāṇa (Pātāla-khaṇḍa) relates that Gopāla-kṛṣṇa must be visualized as a cowherd-boy (bālam gopam), laughing along with cowherd boys (hasantham gopa-bālakaih), and surrounded by cowherd maidens (gopa-kanyāvṛtam). He must be imagined to be seated or standing under the Kadamba tree (kadambamūlam āsīnam), and wearing yellow garments (pīta-vāsasam). The grove in which he sports is known as Vṛndāvana, full of fresh sprouts on trees and plants (nava-pallava-maṇḍitam) and delightful with the cooing of the kokilā-birds and the humming of bees (kokilā-bhramara-rava-manobhava-manoharam). He plays on flute and brings happiness to the cows and cowherds (gopāla-sukhāvaham).



VENUGOPALA

According to *Kūrma-purāṇa*, Vāsudeva (viz. Viṣṇu) assumed the role of a cowherd boy on the eighth day of the bright half of the month

Kārtika (tad-dine vāsudevobhūd gopah). And this day is celebrated by the Vaiṣṇavas as Gopāṣṭamī, when cows are worshipped (go-pujā), fed sumptuously (go-grāsa), circumambulated (go-pradakṣhiṇā), and followed (gavām anugamanam)

The significance of Gopāla-Kṛṣṇa image is suggested in *Vāyupurāṇa* (98, 100-102), *Hari-varṇśa* (58, 76-78), and *Bhāgavata* (2,7). *Bhāgavata* prescribes that the body of this form of Kṛṣṇa must be dark blue like the rain-bearing cloud (abhra-vapu), and he must be adorned with the peacock's feathers, round which the guñjā-seeds are strung (guñjāvataṁsa-śikhi-piṇccha). He wears round his neck, garlands of wild flowers (vanya-sraja). He is four-



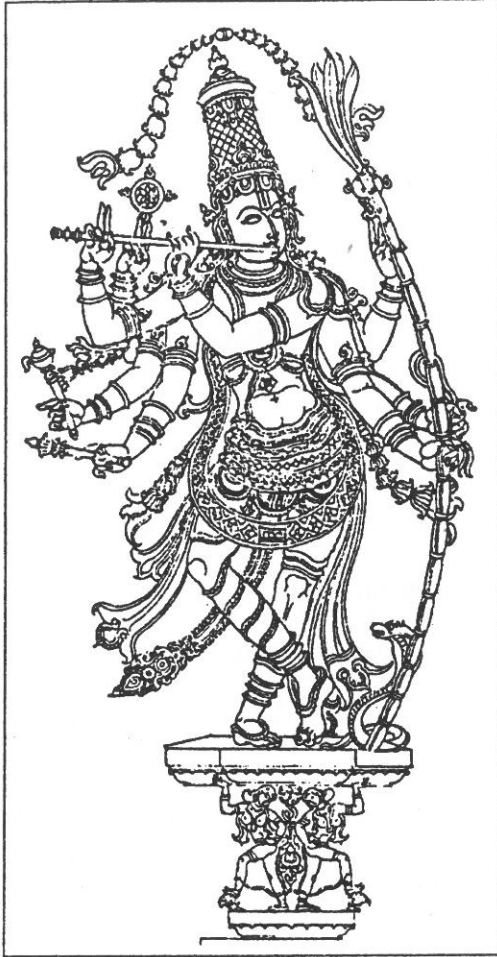
VEṆU-GOPALA

armed, carrying a ball of rice (kabaḷa), a small stick (vetra), a horn (vishāṇa) and a flute (veṇu) in the hands. He

is surrounded by cows, cowherds and cowherdresses (go-gopa-gopi).

It is usual for Gopāla-kṛṣṇa to be represented as standing in the three-bend stance (tri-bhaṅgi): the head to the right, the torso to the left, and the waist to the right. ('vaktram dakṣiṇato bhāge; madhyakāyam tu vāmatah; kaṭi dakṣiṇato bhāge bhaṅga-trayam udāhṛtam.' *Vishvakṣena - saṁhitā*, 11,122,123).

Rāja-gopāla is a variant of the above form, but with eight arms, two of the normal hands playing on the flute, and other hands carrying lotus (padma), axe (paraśu) and discus (chakra) on the right side, and the sugar-cane stalk (ikṣhu-daṇḍa), noose (pāśa) and conch (śaṁkha) on the left



RĀJAGOPĀLA

side. He is represented here as the 'Prince' of cowherds.

Madana-gopāla, already mentioned, is described as red in

complexion (rakta-varṇa) with ten arms (daśa-bhuja), bedecked with all ornaments (sarvālaṅkāra-bhūshita), and with an enchanting smile on his lips (manda-smita-mukhāmbuja). The form is distinguished by Kṛṣṇa's role as the god of love (madana, or kāma-deva), carrying the usual emblems of that god, viz. sugar-cane stalk as the bow (ikshu-chāpa) and flowers as arrows (pushpa-bāṇa). In two of his hands, he holds the flute (veṇu). He is shown as casting a spell on the cowherd maidens who flock round him, gazing at him intently (gopībhirādarādīkshitah). In his other hands, he carries conch (śaṁkha), discus (chakra), mace (gadā) lotus (padma), noose, (pāśa) and goad (aṅkuśa)



Govardhana-dhara is actually a variant form of Gopāla-kṛṣṇa as the protector of cows and cowherds (go-pāla). The background story is told in *Harivaṁśa* (76,1) and *Bhāgavata* (10th Skandha). Govardhana-giri (so called because cows were nourished by that hill, 'gāvo vardhante atra'), was a mountain in the neighbourhood of Vṛndāvana (Gokula), the township of cowherds, where Kṛṣṇa spent his boyhood days. The townsfolk used to worship Indra, the god of rains, for success in agricultural operations. But Kṛṣṇa dissuaded them from worshipping Indra, and suggested they offer adoration to the mountain Govardhana, which was beneficial to them in various ways, including making the rain-bearing clouds hang

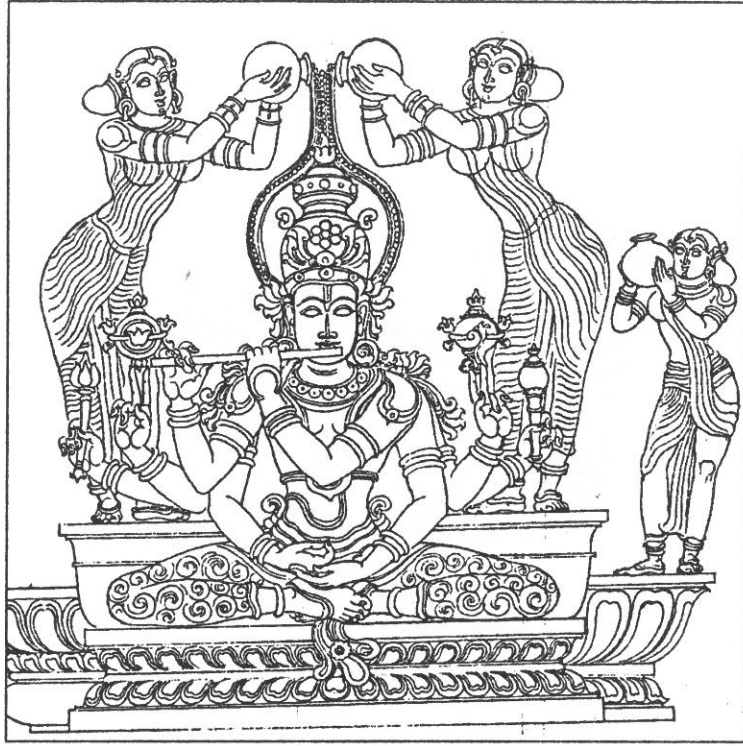
over the settlement of cowherds and pour down. Indra thereupon grew indignant and caused a heavy and torrential rainfall with thunderstorms on Gokula. The people and cattle became panic-stricken; and Kṛṣṇa lifted the mountain with his little finger, and held it as a parasol over the cowherd-settlement so that not a drop of rain fell on the settlement.

This episode in which Kṛṣṇa protected the residents of Gokula is represented in the form known as Govardhana-dhara. Kṛṣṇa is shown here as standing gracefully with one of his hands, according to *Padma-purāṇa* (pātāla-khaṇḍa) with his left hand, lifted up supporting the mountain on a finger-tip. Around him are gathered cows, calves, cowherds

and cowherd-maidens, happily sheltered from the downpour of Indra's anger. Kṛṣṇa in this form is always represented as two-armed and as boyish in appearance.

The time and day on which the event occurred are given as the morning of the first day of the bright half of the month Kārtika (śukla-pratipadi prātaḥ kārtike).

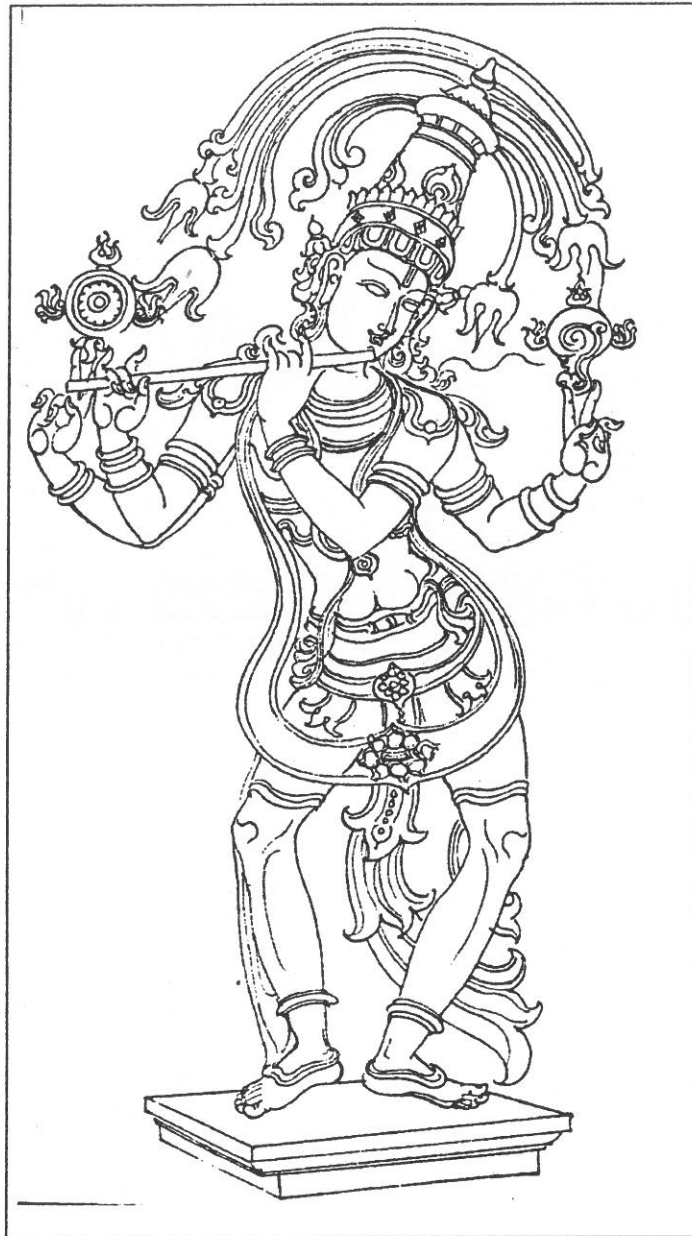
The expression Govinda is synonymous with Go-pāla, a form of Kṛṣṇa. But more importantly, it is one of the twenty-four forms of Viṣṇu. The form is described in several texts (like *Agni-purāṇa*, *Skānda-purāṇa*, *Tantra-sāra* and *Nirṇaya-sindhu*) as moon complexioned (śaśi-varṇa, viz. white)



and four-armed. The hands carry the usual weapons of Vishṇu in the circumbulatory order beginning with the right normal hand (adharam dakshiṇa-hastam ārabhya pradakshiṇam): discus (chakra), mace (gadā), lotus (padma) and conch (śaṃkha).

The form of Lakshmī accompanying this form is called Padmā-devī. According to *Hayaśirsha-saṃhitā*, the form known as Govinda is a variant (bheda) of Saṃkarshaṇa.

The expression 'Govinda' is explained in *Brahmavaivarta-purāṇa*



CHATHURBHUJA VENUGOPALA



ASHTA-BHUJA VENUGOPALA (Wood, Suchindram temple Car, Tamil Nadu)



MADANA-GOPĀLA
(an old drawing from Mysore)

(prakṛti-khaṇḍa, chap. 240) as one who recovers and protects the Vedic lore, which gets lost in every age (yuge yuge praṇashṭām gām vindati

tattvataḥ), and in *Mahābhārata* (21, 12) as the god who is the object of all scriptural texts (vedanāt gavām, śāstramayīnām vāṇīnām).

(ix) Kṛṣṇa

अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि कृष्णमन्त्रान्महाद्भुतान् ।
कृष्णः स एव भगवान्कलिद्वापरसन्धिगः ॥१॥
वर्धयेत्कलिधर्माणां भक्तानां तारणाय सः ।
एकसप्ततिरूपोऽसौ प्रतिमन्वन्तरे भवेत् ॥२॥
तदुक्ताचरणान् मोक्षस्तत्कृतचरणाच्च्युतिः ।
इति तत्त्वं समाख्यातं विभवस्य भवस्य च ॥३॥
जातश्चाद्ये कलियुगे नानागोपीरते रतः ।
तत्कर्म कुर्वतां पातस्तत्सामर्थ्यं विभाविना ॥४॥
स्वधर्मनिरतानां तु कलौ जन्म प्रजायते ।
तस्य मन्त्रं प्रवक्ष्यामि भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रसाधनम् ॥५॥

(i) Govinda (Trailokya-mohana)

कलीं हृषीकेशाय नमः ॥

Sammohana-Nārada is the ṛshi, Gāyatrī is the chhandas, and
Trailokya-mohana-govinda is the devatā.

Dhyāna:

कल्पानोकहमूलसंस्थितवयोराजोन्नताम्
संस्थितं पौष्पं बाणमथेक्षुचापकमले पाशाङ्कुशे बिभ्रतम् ।
चक्रं शंखगदे करैरुदधिजासंश्लिष्टदेहं हरिम्
नानाभूषणरक्तलेपकुसुमं पीताम्बरं संस्मरेत् ॥

**(ii) Go-vallabha (Bāla-kṛshṇa)
(as a boy of five):**

The mantra is

क्लीं गोवल्लभाय स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi is Brahmā, the Chhandas is Gāyatrī and the devatā Kṛshṇa.

Dhyāna:

हरिं पञ्चवर्षं ब्रजे धावमानं स्वसौन्दर्यसम्मोहितं स्वर्गयोषम् ।
यशोदासुतं स्त्रीगणैर्दृष्टकेलिं भजे भूषितं भूषणैर्नूपुराद्यैः ॥

(iii) The ten-lettered mantra:

गोपीजनवल्लभाय स्वाहा ॥

नारदोऽस्य मुनिः प्रोक्तो विराट् छन्द उदाहृतम् ।
देवता नन्दपुत्रः ... ॥

or

कृष्णाय गोविन्दाय गोपीजनवल्लभाय स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi is Nārada: the chhandas is Virāṭ and the devatā is Kṛshṇa, son of Nanda.

Dhyāna:

स्मरेद् वृन्दावने रम्ये मोहयन्तमनारतम् ।
गोविन्दं पुण्डराकाक्षं गोपकन्याः सहस्रशः ॥१॥

आत्मनो वदनाम्भोजप्रेषिताक्षिमधुव्रताः ।
 पीडिताः कामबाणेन चिरमालिखनोत्सुकाः ॥२॥
 मुक्ताहारलसत्पीनतुङ्गस्तनभाराननाः ।
 स्रस्तधम्मिल्लवसना मन्दस्खलितभाषणाः ॥३॥
 दन्तपंक्तिप्रभोद्भासिस्यन्दमानाधराश्रिताः ।
 विलोभयन्तीर्विविधैर्विभ्रमैर्भावगर्वितैः ॥४॥
 फुल्लेन्दीवरकान्तिमिन्दुवदनं बर्हावतंसप्रियम्
 श्रीवत्साङ्गमुदारकौस्तुभधरं पीताम्बरं सुन्दरम् ।
 गोपीनां नयनोत्पलार्चिततनुं गोगोपसंघावृतम्
 गोविन्दं करवेणुवादनपरम् दिव्याङ्गभूषं भजे ॥५॥

- (iv) Twelve-lettered mantra (om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya), the ṛshi of which is Nārada, the chhandas Gāyatri and the devatā Śrī-Kṛṣṇa:

द्वादशार्णो मनुः प्रोक्तो नारदोऽस्य मुनिर्मतः ।
 गायत्री छन्द इत्युक्तं श्रीकृष्णो देवता मतः ॥

Dhyāna:

कल्पद्रुमतले रम्ये रत्नसिंहासने शुभे ।
 सर्वलक्षणसम्पूर्णं निविष्टं नन्दनन्दनम् ॥१॥
 प्रस्तुतस्तनभारेण गोवृन्देन युतं स्मरेत् ।
 मेघश्यामं करे दण्डौ हस्ताभ्यां बिभ्रतं तथा ॥२॥
 पद्मायताक्षं शक्रस्य हस्तिकुंभामृतस्य तु ।
 धारया सिच्यमानं तु ध्यातव्यो विष्णुरव्ययः ॥३॥

- (v) The mantra:

ओं श्रीं भगवते रुक्मिणीवल्लभाय स्वाहा ॥

तापिच्छच्छविरङ्गां प्रियतमां स्वर्णप्रभामम्बुज -
प्रोद्यद्ब्रामभुजां स्वबाहुलतयाऽऽश्लिष्यत्सचित्तास्मयम् ।
श्लिष्यन्तीं स्वयमन्यहस्तविलसत् सौवर्णवेत्रश्चिरम्
पायाद्बोऽशनसूनपीतवसनो नानाविभूषो हरिः ॥

(vi) Santāna-gopāla-mantra :

ओं नमो भगवते जगत्प्रसूतये नमः ॥

Brahmā is the ṛshi, Gāyatri the chhandas and Śrī-Krishṇa the devatā.

(for procuring progeny)

ओं श्रीं ह्रीं क्लीं ग्लौं देवकीसुत गोविन्द वासुदेव जगत्पते ।
देहि मे तनयं कृष्ण त्वामहं शरणं गतः ॥

Dhyāna:

शंखचक्रगदापद्मं दधानं सूतिकागृहे ।
(शंखचक्रगदापद्मं धारयन्तं जनार्दनम् ।)
अङ्गे शयानं देवक्याः कृष्णं वन्दे विमुक्तये ॥

(vii) Gopāla-sundara-mantra

ह्रीं श्रीं क्लीं कृष्णाय गोविन्दाय गोपीजनवल्लभाय स्वाहा ॥

Twenty-three-lettered mantra, visualized by the ṛshi Brahmā (Vidhātā) and the ṛshi Ānanda-bhairava, in the chhandas Gāyatrī.

Dhyāna:

कमलावसुधायुक्तं ध्यायेच्छ्रीचक्रं हरिम् ।
क्षीराम्बोधौ सितद्वीपे वने कल्पद्रुमादिभिः ॥१॥
व्याप्ते तस्मिन्स्वर्णमयं चिन्तयेद्रत्नमण्डपम् ।
तत्र श्रीपीठमध्ये तु स्थितं विधिमुखैः स्तुतम् ॥२॥
पद्ममष्टदलं शंखं वर्णान् वंशीश्च दक्षिणैः ।
भुजैर्दधन्तं वामैस्तु चापं पाशं तथाऽङ्कुशम् ॥३॥
विपश्चीं चारक्तवर्णं नानाभरणभूषितम् ।
पीताम्बरधरं गोपीसमूहैः परितो वृतम् ॥४॥

(viii) Vidyā-gopāla-mantra

The mantra:

कृष्ण कृष्ण महाकृष्ण सर्वज्ञ त्वं प्रसीद मे ।
रमारमण विश्वेश विद्यामाशु प्रयच्छ मे ॥

Nārada is the ṛshi for this mantra, Anusṭup is the chhandas,
and Śrī-Kṛṣṇa is the devatā.

Dhyāna:

दिव्योद्याने विवस्वत्प्रतिममणिमये मण्डपे योगपीठे
मध्ये यः सर्ववेदान्तमयसुरतरोः सन्निषण्णो मुकुन्दः ।
वेदैः कल्पद्रुपैः शिखरिशतसमालम्बिकोशैश्चतुर्भिः
न्यायैस्तर्कैः पुराणैः स्मृतिभिरभिवृतास्तादृशैश्चामराद्यैः ॥१॥
दद्याद् बिभ्रत् कराब्जैररिदरमुरलीपुष्पबाणेक्षुचापान्

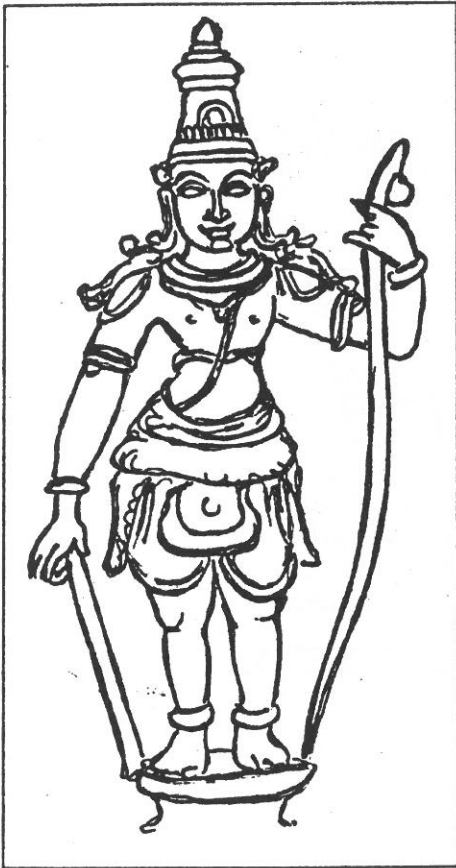
अक्षस्रक्पूर्णकुम्भौ स्मरललितवपुर्दिव्यभूषाङ्गरागः ।
 व्याख्यां वाचे वितन्वन् स्फुटरुचिरपदाम् वेणुना विश्वमात्रे
 शब्दबहोद्वेन श्रियमरुणरुचिर्वल्लवीवल्लभो नः ॥२॥
 वामोर्ध्वहस्ते दधतं विद्यासर्वस्वपुस्तकम् ।
 अक्षमालां च दक्षोर्ध्वे स्फाटिकीं मातृकामयीम् ॥३॥
 शब्दब्रह्ममयीं वेणुमधः पाणिद्वयेरितम् ।
 गायन्तं पीतवसनं श्यामलं कोमलच्छविम् ॥४॥
 बर्हिर्बर्हकृतोत्तंसं सर्वज्ञं सर्ववेदिभिः ।
 उपासितं मुनिगणैरुपतिष्ठेद्धरिं सदा ॥५॥

(ix) The mantras of Kṛṣṇa in common use are:

क्लीं कृष्णाय स्वाहा ॥ (6-lettered)
 क्लीं हृषीकेशाय नमः ॥ (8-lettered)
 श्रीं ह्रीं क्लीं कृष्णाय स्वाहा ॥ (8-lettered)
 गोपीजनवल्लभाय स्वाहा ॥ (10-lettered)
 श्रीं ह्रीं क्लीं कृष्णाय गोविन्दाय स्वाहा ॥ (12-lettered)
 ॐ क्लीं ह्रीं श्रीं गोपीजनवल्लभाय स्वाहा ॥ (14-lettered)
 ॐ नमो भगवते रुक्मिणीवल्लभाय स्वाहा । (16-lettered)
 ऐं क्लीं कृष्णाय ह्रीं गोविन्दाय श्रीं गोपीजनवल्लभाय
 स्वाहा सौः ॥ (22-lettered)
 ॐ क्लीं नमो भगवते नन्दपुत्राय बालादिवपुषे श्यामलाय
 गोपीजनवल्लभाय स्वाहा ॥ (33-lettered)

(9a) BALA-RĀMA

Also called Bala-bhadra or Bala-bhadhra-rāma, he is in legends the elder brother (or step-brother) of Kṛṣṇa, the better known incarnation of Viṣṇu. The story in *Bhāgavata*



(10th skandha) has it that Ananta (the serpent deity, Śeṣha), appeared in the womb of Devakī (wife of Vasudeva and mother of Kṛṣṇa) as the seventh child, and was magically through māyā transported to the womb of Rohiṇī, another wife of Vasudeva, in order to save the child from the designs of Kāṁsa. Because the foetus was 'dragged' from one womb to another, the baby born to Rohiṇī was named Saṁkarshaṇa, and because the baby was strong and charming, it became known as Bala-rāma. As the son of Rohiṇī, he was known as Rauhiṇeya.

Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa grew up together and participated in many exploits, which made them together famous. They were also deified together as the heroes of the Vṛṣṇi clan. Saṁskarshaṇa and Vāsudeva



BALARĀMA AND REVATI



BALARĀMA
(from National Museum, New Delhi)

were deities worshipped even in the centuries before the Christian era. Patañjali, the author of the *Mahābhāshya*, knew both the deities (2, 4, 26), and he knew Saṁkarshaṇa as Rāma (1,436), Rauhiṇeya (2,115) and Lāṅgali (having ploughshare as

weapon, 3, 225). Inscriptions of first century B.C. speak of 'saṁkharshaṇa-vāsudevābhyam' as revered persons (bhagavat) and as lords of all (sarveśvara). (cf. D. C. Sircar, *Selected Inscriptions*, PP. 91-2).

Both were at one time regarded as partial incarnations of Viṣṇu, and Bala-rāma was more important, not



BALARĀMA
(stone, Mathura)



BALARĀMA
(from Lucknow museum)

ony because he was the elder brother to Kṛṣṇa (hence the early form 'Saṁkarshaṇa-Vāsudeva') but also because he represented the powerful Nāga-cult. And according to *Bhāgavata* (6,16,33-460 it was Bala-

rāma who taught the Bhāgavata-dharma according the Sāttvata-śāstra (cf. also *Mahābhārata*, 6, 62, 42). Bala-rāma is said to have expounded the Sāttvata-vidhi at the end of the Dvāpara age. The stone idol of Saṁkarshaṇa-Balarāma (dating back to the second century B.C) discovered near Mathurā and now kept in the Lucknow Museum is considered to be the earliest extant image of a non-Buddhist deity (cf. V. S. Agarwal, *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, 1937, P 126, plate XIV). The image has a parasol of a hooded serpent, and holds a ploughshare in the hand. During the Kushāṇa period, the worship of this god became prevalent, and we have several iconic representations belonging to this period (cf. see N. P. Joshi, *Iconography of Balarama*, Abhinav Publ., New Delhi, 1979).

Bala-rāma has as his consort Revatī, the daughter of King Revata (or Raivata) (cf. *Vishṇu-purāṇa*, 5,25,19). And Revatī was the goddess who afflicts children (cf. *Mahābhārata*, 3, 219, 28,), and was closely connected with Rudra-śiva. *Vishṇu-dharmottara* (2,118,12-13) relates the worship of Bala-rāma with agricultural operations, as suggested by the characteristic weapons that this deity carries: ploughshare (hala, lāṅgala) and club with which paddy is husked (muśala).

Bala-rāma is usually shown as two-armed, sometimes as four-armed. His body-complexion is given as fair (like the Kunda flower or moon, (śuddha-kundendu-sannibha) or like the Kailāsa peak, (kailāsa-śikharopama); but his garments are blue in colour (nilāmbara, nīlāmbara,

nīla-kaūśeyavasana, nīla-chela-dhara). His distinguishing ornament is the golden ear-ring (kuṇḍala), which he wears only in one ear. His curly hair is tied up (udbaddha-kuntala).

He stands with his head slightly turned to the left (kiñchit-savyāpāvṛtta-mauli), and over his head is a serpent with hoods. According to *Mahābhārata* (1,67,151), he is a partial incarnation (amśāvatāra) of Śeṣha; and the serpent over his head is identified with Ananta (*Harivaṁśa*). *Vishṇu-dharmottara* (3,35) mentions that the serpent here has many hoods, and the central-most hood is the charming Earth-goodess (vasudhā). And Balarāma is said to be standing in the three-bend posture (tri-bhaṅgi), which again is characteristic of the serpent. Thus Balarāma and Śeṣha form a composite image.

When he is two-armed, he carries in his right hand 'mushala' (or musala, which signifies, not a pestle as frequently given, but a weapon or club with which the paddy is pounded) and in his left hand 'hala' (or lāṅgala, ploughshare). This is the usual description, but sometimes instead of 'mushala', the mace (gadā) is suggested for the right hand (cf. *Agni-purāṇa*, 49 'gadā-lāṅgala-dhāri'), According to *Vishṇu-dharmottara*, (3, 47, 14), the ploughshare symbolizes the principle of time, and the club suggests death ('kālam cha lāṅgalam viddhi mṛtyum cha mushalam tathā). *Śrī-tattva-nidhi*, which mentions Balarāma as only two-armed, makes him carry only ploughshare, but in his right hand (dakṣiṇe haladharah), while his left hand, which is stretched out, falls at his side (pralambā-vāma-hastakah).

Agni-purāṇa and *Vishṇu-dharmottara*, however, mention a variant form with four arms. According to the former text, the extra left hand carries ploughshare (lāṅgala) and the extra right hand club (mushala), while the normal hands carry conch and discus respectively.

It is also usual to represent Balarāma with a wine-flask in his left hand, and as inebriated (madhu-pāne sadāsakta). He is shown with protruding eyes (mada-ghūrṇita-lochana). One of texts suggests that he carries the wine-flask in his left hand and ploughshare in his right ('madya-pātram cha sīram cha vāma-dakṣiṇayoh kramāt').

Among his ornaments, vana-mālā is described variously as a long

garland of wild flowers and leaves (kunda, mandāra, abja, pārijāta and tulasī), as a garland of lotus flowers, and as a necklace made up of five varieties of precious stones: emerald, pearl, blue-stone, ruby and diamond. The explanation given in *Vishṇu-dharmottara* (3, 35, 17) is that it represents the serpent which supports the earth ('prithvī dhāryate tena'); and the earth is suggested by the central hood ('pr̥thivī tena kartavyā phaṇe tasya tu madhyame') of the

serpent which is seen above the head of Bala-rāma.

Bala-rāma has another distinguishing feature, and that is his association with the palmyra or palm-tree (tāla-vṛksha). He is either shown under this tree, or he has this tree as his standard (tālāṅka, tāla-dhvaja). And further, some texts prescribe the tree as his standard must be three-forked, like a trident (trident) (triśūla), again bringing out his relation to Rudra-śiva.

(ixa) Bala-rāma

Dhyāna:

शुभ्राभ्रगौरं नीलाभं वसनं रेवतीप्रियम् ।
दधानं सीरमुशले बलरामं समाश्रये ॥

(Note : In some accounts of Daśāvatāra, Bala-rāma is counted instead of Buddha. Three Rāmas are enumerated (rāmo rāmaś cha rāmaś cha): Paraśu-rāma, Dāśarathi-rāma and Bala-rāma. Paraśu-rāma was contemporaneous with Dāśarathi-rāma: and Bala-rāma with Kṛṣṇa.)

(9b) BUDDHA

The earlier and more traditional list of the ten incarnations of Vishṇu, includes Buddha as the ninth, unlike the later and more sectarian list which has Bala-rāma instead of Buddha. The understanding is that Bala-rāma is only a partial avatāra (amśāvatara) and not a complete incarnation (pūrṇāvatāra). A popular verse of eulogy of the ten incarnations runs as follows



श्रीमत्स्यकूर्माख्यवराहदेवा नृकसरीवामनजामदग्न्यौ।

श्रीरामकृष्णावपि बुद्धकल्की कुर्वन्तु सर्वे

मम सुप्रभातम् ॥

Jayadeva's great poem *Gīta-govinda*, which articulates the widespread Vaishṇava-ideology in Bengal and also in the South, also includes Buddha as the ninth incarnation. But



BUDDHA
(Chinese bronze)



BUDDHA

this is not instead of Bala-rāma but along with him. Kṛṣṇa as an avatāra is omitted here, but all the ten avataras are really of Kṛṣṇa alone (1,12):

वेदानुद्धरते (मीन) जगन्निवहते (कच्छप)
भूगोलमुद्विभ्रते (सूकर)

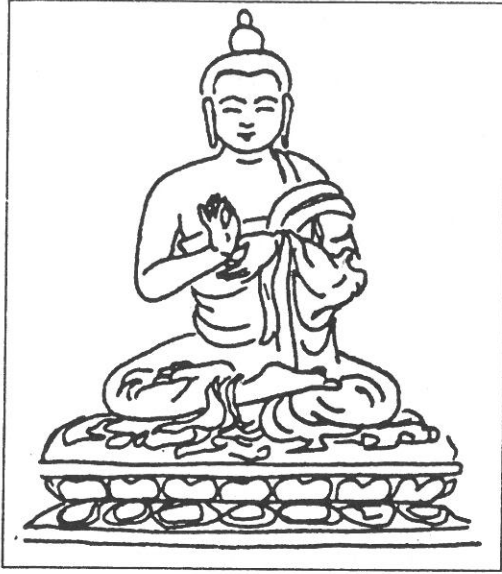
दैत्यं दारयते (नरहरि) बलिं छलयते (वामन)
क्षत्रक्षयं कुर्वते (भृगुपति) ।
पौलस्त्यं जयते (राम) हलं कलयते (हलधर)
कारुण्यमातन्वते (बुद्ध)
म्लेच्छान्मूर्च्छयते (कल्कि) दशाकृतिकृते
कृष्णाय तुभ्यं नमः ॥

And the Buddha that Jayadeva recognizes is the same as the historical Buddha and not the purāṇic personality. His description of the



BUDDHA

(from Tibetan painting)



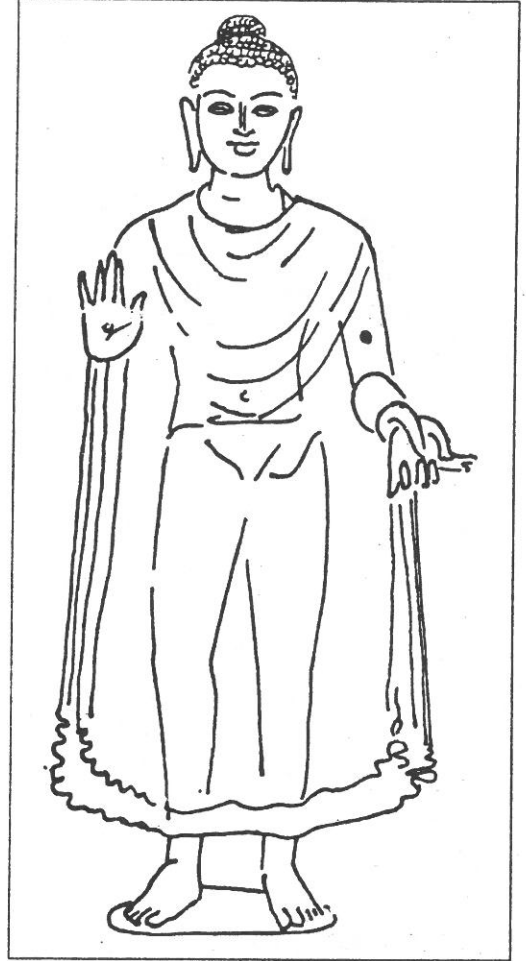
BUDDHA
(from Tibetan painting)

Buddha as the personification of compassion, and as opposed to the animal-sacrifices is significant:

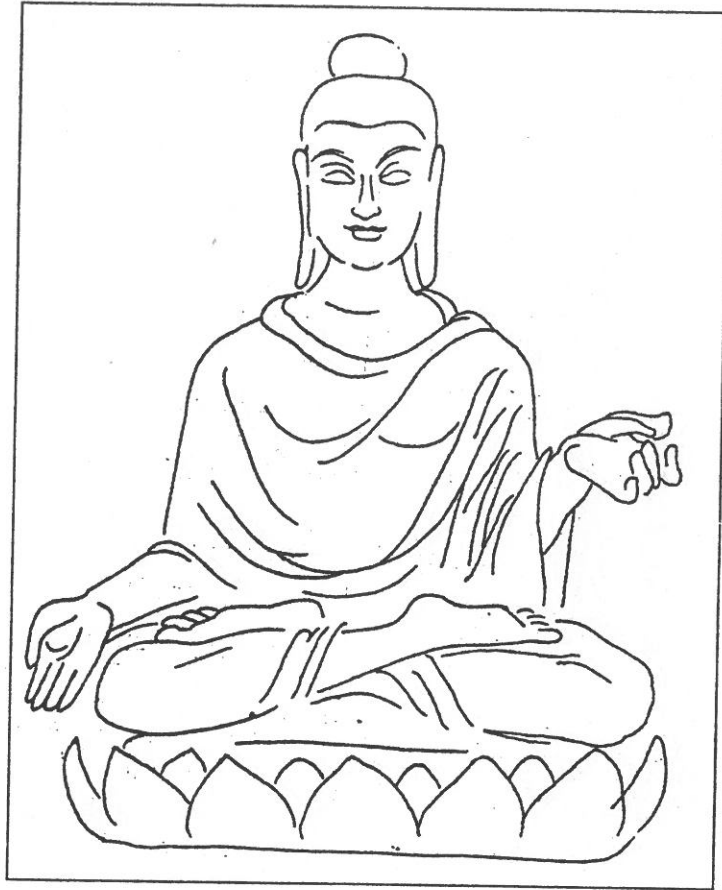
निन्दसि यज्ञविधेर्गृहह श्रुतिजातम्
सदयहृदय दर्शितपशुघातम् ।
केशवधृतबुद्धशरीरं जय जगदीशहरे ॥

The Buddha as a cult-hero was a human being who was deified, at

first honoured and later worshipped. Early representations of the presence of the Buddha was only symbolic (the bodhi-tree, the wheel of dharma,

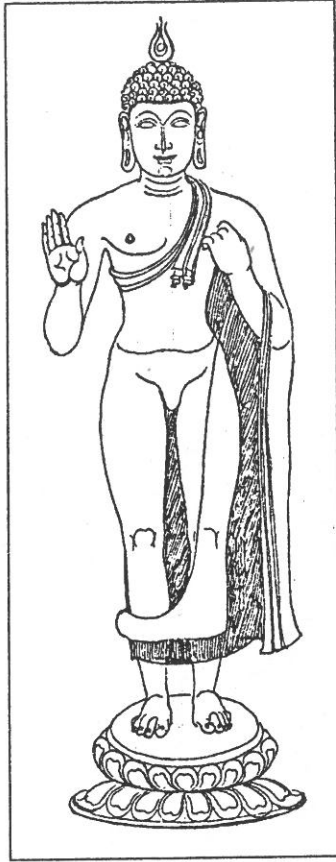


BUDDHA
(bronze from Sultangung, Bihar)



the throne of exposition, sacred foot-mark and so on). But soon the perfect and ideal human form was provided for the Buddha, and it was meant not only to remind the devotee of the great teacher that once lived, but to

suggest the continued presence of the buddha-hood as the ideal for the devotee to follow. The image was designed to please the eyes, but more importantly to generate pious and noble thoughts. The Buddha signifies



enlightenment, compassion, wisdom and tranquility. The artist seeks to give expression to all these.

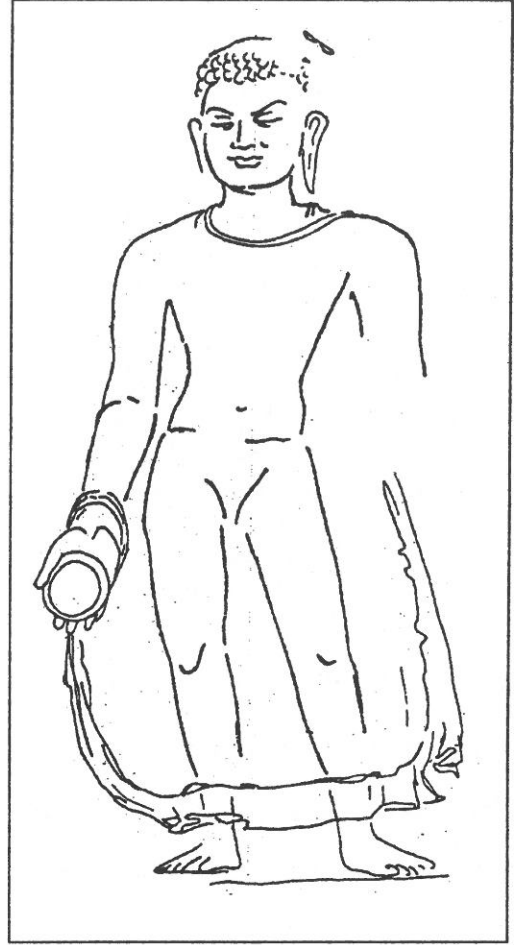
The popularity enjoyed by the Mahāyāna division of Buddhism

occasioned the making of Buddha icons for worship; and in the wake of vajra-yāna, the Buddhist pantheon became large and spectacular. The ideas of Ādi-buddha, the dhyāni-buddhas, the bodhi-sattvas, the pāramitās and the powers, along with the incorporation of folk-deities pushed the historical Buddha almost to the background and encouraged visualizations of numerous deities and divinities.

The life of the historical Buddha (died 486 B.C.) is too well-known to need recounting here. And in the early representation of the Buddha's life in the stūpas like those of Sāñchi, Bārhut and Amarāvati, narrative sculptures depict his life and career. But the early devotees and followers did not

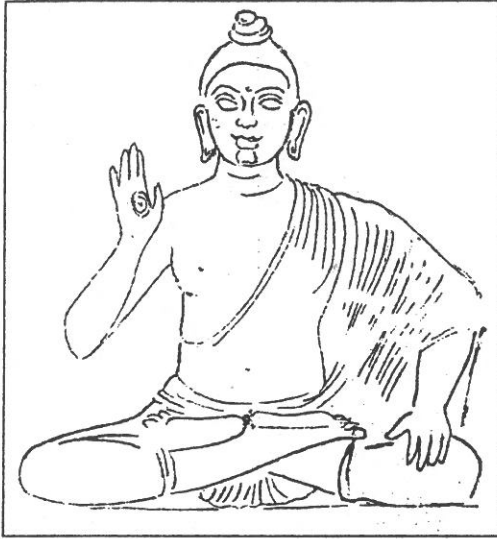
emphasize the historical aspect of the Buddha. They extol (even to this day) not the historical Gotama who became known as the Buddha, but the ideal of Buddhahood; their prayer mentions the numerous Buddhas who lived in the past ('ye cha buddhā atītā cha'), the numerous Buddhas that have yet take shape in future ('ye cha buddhā anāgatā'), and the numerous Buddhas that live now without our knowing ('pratyutpannācha ye buddhā').

Like the Jainas, the Buddhists also have a notion of twenty-four Buddhas who were responsible for the spread and stability of Dharma amidst mankind, before Gotama appeared as the twenty-fifth (see 'Buddha-varṇa' section in *khuddakapāṭha* of the Pāli Tripiṭaka). The last



BUDDHA
(from Nālandā)

seven have been remembered and honoured : Vipassī, Sikhi, Vessabhū, Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, Kassapa and Gotama. The Mahāyāna accounts

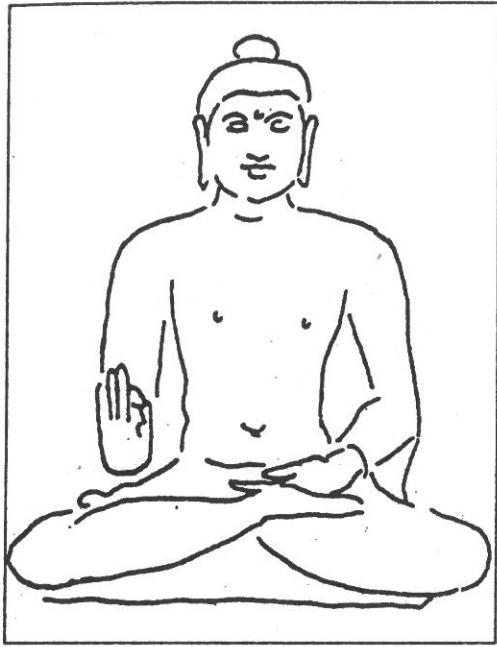


BUDDHA
(from Mathura Museum)

mention 54 Buddhas (*Lalita-vistara*) or a hundred Buddhas (*Mahāvastu*). The Buddhas that follow Gotama and will appear in times to come also find mention. *Chakkavatti-sihanāda sutta* enumerates ten of them headed by Metteya (Maitreya). A Buddha, however, is always born in Jambūdvīpa (in which the Indian subcontinent is included, forming a

major part), and he preaches Dharma. In his capacity as a human personification of the eternal and universal Dharma, the Buddha that appears among human beings is known as 'mānushi-buddha'.

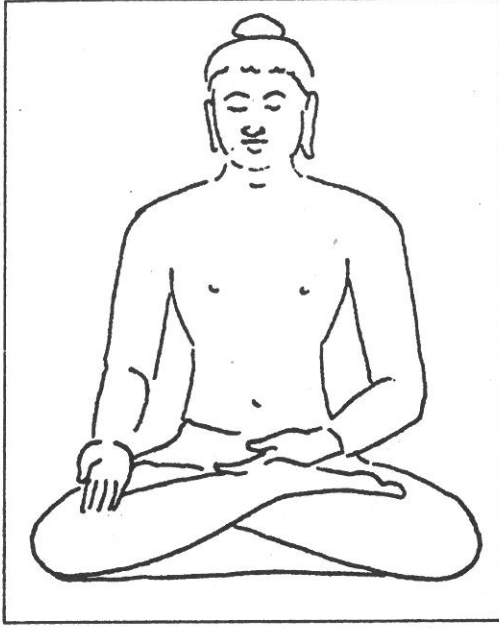
The Buddha was absorbed in the more orthodox and conventional pantheon as an incarnation (ninth) of Vishṇu. We are now said to be living in the dispensation of this incarnatory form of Vishṇu ('Bauddhāvatāre'), and we will do so, until the appearance of the Kalki incarnation. But the Vaishṇava description of this Buddha is at variance with the historical accounts. In *Bhāgavata*, (1,3), for instance, we read that this Buddha was born in the Kīkaṭa country, as the son of Añjanā, and that the



purpose of his appearance was to delude and confound the enemies of gods ('sammohāya sura-dvishām'); he is said to have been born at the commencement of the Kali age ('kalau saṁpravṛtte'). Later texts have shown him as nude (digambara) and in an obscene posture (for he is said to have taught the philosophy of lust

and satisfactions to lure the rākshasas into self-destruction).

But iconographic manuals like *Hayaśirsha samhitā* (23,24-36) do better justice to the image of Buddha as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. He is prescribed to be represented as seated in the lotus-posture ('padmāsana-gaṭam'), covered in the clothes of an ascetic ('chīvarālaṅkṛtam'). His face must be like lotus, and his eyes also lotus-like ('padmāsyam padma-lochanam'). He must be shown as deeply absorbed in meditation, but with one of his hands lifted up ('samādhisthottāna-pāṇim). His ears must be long (pralamba-karṇa). The image is commended to be made in ten-tāla measure.



Nāradiya-saṁhitā (1,60) describes Buddha as a great sage with self-restraint ('muni-varo-vaśī') and as an emanation of Pradyumna ('pradyumnāṁśāt samudbhūto'). The same text lays down that he must be two-armed, showing the gestures of boon-bestowal and protection (varābaya-kara-dvandva), and seated

in a bound-lotus posture (baddha-padmāsana). He must be lustrous like gold (śāta-kumbha-maya-prabha), and his eyes must be closed in contemplation (dhyānonmīlita-netra) (op. cit, 13, 301-302)

The stylized Buddha images outside the confines of conventional āgama texts, have been most significant in Indian iconography. He is always shown in a human form highly idealized, with a face perfectly tranquil, and with postures that suggest composure, contemplation and concern for the suffering folk. He is either standing in equipoise, but relaxed, or is seated in meditational absorption. He is sometimes portrayed as lying down (especially in the posture that he assumed when he passed away).



Some of the incidents in his life have provided inspiration for hand-gestures (mudrā), as, for instance, his calling earth to bear witness to his integrity, charity and piety (bhūmi-sparśa). More often, however, his hands are joined in front of the chest in the act of turning the wheel of Dharma (dharma-chakra-pravartana), or placed on his crossed feet in a contemplative stance (dhyāna). Sometimes his right hand is lifted up in a gesture of

teaching or exposition of dharma (vyākhyāna).

The images of the Mahāyāna cults have a pot of ambrosia (amṛta - ghata) in the left hand, placed upon crossed legs, while his right hand is lifted up in a gesture of protection (abhaya). The right hand may also occasionally assume the gesture of boon-bestowal (varada).

The hair on the head is stylized: closely cropped and in ringlets. On top of the head is the protuberance (ushnīsha), which is one of the characteristic marks of the great personage (mahāpurusha-lakṣhaṇa); likewise there will be a small protuberance in the middle of the forehead or between the eye-brows. Most of the Buddha images have hair on the head tied into a top-knot; sometimes it is given a flame-like



look. In some Cambodian forms of the Buddha, a serpent with hoods shields his head like a parasol (Muchalinda-buddha).

While the Buddha is usually depicted as an ascetic of the Śākya clan (śākya-muni), the tāntrik cults have greatly influenced the Buddha iconography, especially in Tibet. Several forms of the Buddha unknown to the Indian texts have found expression under this influence.

According to *Mānasāra* (Ch. 56), the Buddha image may be shown as standing or seated. He may be seated upon a throne or under the aśvattha-tree, or in the vicinity of the wish-fulfilling tree (kalpa-vṛksha). His body-colour is pure white, and his face is large (viśālānana). His ears are long and hanging (lamba-karṇa), eyes long (āyatāksha) and nose aquiline (tuṅga-ghoṇa). He has a smile on his face (smitānana). He has long arms and wide chest, his body is muscular (māṁsala), and well developed (susaṁpūrṇa). He is always two-armed and two-eyed; and has on his head a brilliant 'ushṇīsha' (ushṇīshojjala-maulikam). He must be shown as wearing yellow garments, (pītambara-dhara). According to this text, the Buddha image is to be made in the superior ten-tāla measure ('uttama-daśa-tālena kārayet).

(ixb) Buddha

(The Buddha referred to here is the purāṇic version of Vishṇu's incarnation)

अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि बुद्धमन्त्रं महाफलम् ।
सत्यत्वान्न द्विजादीनामधिकारो हि कर्हिचित् ॥१॥
वाममार्गरता विप्राः कुण्डका जातिविच्युताः ।
हीना वैदिकसंस्कारैः प्रमादात् स्वेच्छतां गताः ॥२॥
गोलकाश्च तथा जात्या कायस्थादय एव च ।
बौद्धं विष्णुं समाराध्य भुक्तिं मुक्तिं प्रयान्ति ते ॥३॥
नमो भगवते बुद्ध संसारार्णवतारक ।
कलिकालादहं भीतः शरण्यं शरणं गतः ॥४॥

The mantra:

नमो भगवते बुद्धाय ॥

Dhyāna:

(The Buddha eulogized here is the historical Buddha)

पद्मे पद्मासनस्थं तमूर्वोर्न्यस्तकरद्वयम् ।
गौरं मुण्डितसर्वाङ्गं ध्यानस्तिमितलोचनम् ॥१॥
पुस्तकासनहस्तैश्च नानाशिष्यैश्च शोभितम् ।
इन्द्रादिलोकपालैश्च नुतं श्वेताम्बरावृतम् ॥२॥

10) KALKI

Kalki is the tenth incarnation of Viṣṇu on earth to uphold virtue and righteousness (dharma) and vanquish the evil-doers during the Kali-age, when it is usual for vice and wickedness to flourish. The earth, owing to the influence of Kali-purusha becomes burdened by evil and harassed by violence, and trembles and suffers, and begs Viṣṇu to interfere and ease her condition. Viṣṇu thereupon will be born as Kalki in the household of a Brahmin named Viṣṇu-yaśas in the Śambhala country. He is distinguished by the mighty sword which he holds in his right hand, and the war-horse on which he rides. He will ride through the length and

breadth of the earth, protecting the good folk and destroying the wicked. He will put an end to the Kali-age by eliminating the Kali-purusha.

However, this tenth incarnation of Viṣṇu is yet to appear; we are still under the dispensation of the ninth incarnation (Buddha); and the Kali-age is yet in its first quarter. Unrighteousness will increase further, until the mother Earth can bear it no longer. Kalki will appear red in complexion (raktābha) or tawny-coloured (pinga); his hair and beard are reddish in hue. His matted hair is coiled up as a crown (jaṭā-makūṭa), flowing out in all directions. He wears yellow garments (pīta-vastra). He has round and wide eyes (suvṛttāksha). He wears a garland of wild flowers (vana-mālā).



VISHNU
(as Kalki)

Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa, *Pādma-samhitā* (18,38-39) and *Hayaśīrsha-samhitā* (23,28) describe Kalki as two-armed, holding sword in his right hand and shield (khetaka) in his left. *Hayaśīrsha-samhitā* elsewhere (23,381) describes four-armed Kalki, carrying in the upper hands conch and discus (typical weavens of Vishṇu) and in the normal hands word and bow; his back is adorned by a quiver of arrows. *Pādmāsamhitā* (18,38-39) also suggests a form of Kalki with four arms: conch and discus in the upper arms, as above, and sword and shield in the normal hands; or the two normal hands will assume the gestures of protection and boon-bestowal. An other text provides in the normal left hand a black-

coloured noose (pāśam kṛṣṇa-nibham), and in the corresponding right hand an inverted death-dealing cudgel (kāla-daṇḍam tvadhomukham).

All the texts prescribe that Kalki must be shown as riding a horse ('hayārūḍham'), and wearing garments of leather (charma-vasana). According to *Pādma-samhitā*

(op.cit.), the sage Nārada or Yājñavalkya is seen on his right side, as Kalki's officiating priest (purohita). Kalki is figured as engaged in a battle (with evil) and always victorious (yuddha-virājitam). Often, Kalki is represented symbolically by a horse on the back of which stands a sword bolt upright. Alternately, he is a human figure with the horse's head.

(x) Kalki

अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि कल्किमन्त्रं महाफलम् ।
कं कल्किने हृदन्तोऽयं प्रोक्तो मन्त्रः षडक्षरः ॥

The mantra:

कं कल्किने नमः ॥

Dhyāna:

ध्यायेन्नीलसमारूढं श्वेतोष्णीषविराजितम् ।
महाप्रतोदहस्तं च कौस्तुभोद्दामकञ्चुकम् ॥१॥
मर्दयन्तं म्लोच्छगणं कोधघूर्णितलोचनम् ।
अन्तर्हितैर्देवमुनिगन्धर्वैः संस्तुतं हरिम् ॥२॥

CHAPTER THREE

OTHER FORMS OF VISHṆU

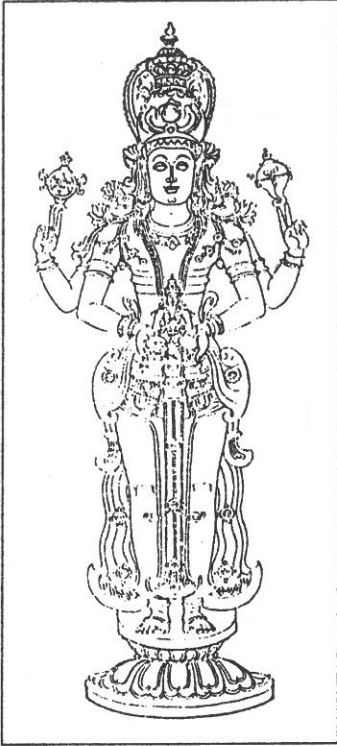
(1) MOHINĪ



A female incarnation of Vishṇu, mentioned in *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* (1,3,6-22), after Dhanvantari and before Narasimha. The background story is given in *Bhāgavata* (8th

skandha). During the churning of the milky ocean by the gods and demons for the obtainment of ambrosia, the two contending parties began fighting with each other when ambrosia came out. Vishṇu thereupon assumed the form of a lady of bewitching beauty and offered to distribute ambrosia equally to the gods and demons. Charmed by her, the demons lost all interest in ambrosia, and did not notice that Mohinī gave all of it to the gods. This is how the demons were cheated out of the power to be immortal. They could eventually be killed by the gods.

Another detail of the legend is that as the charmer (Mohinī) was



VISHṆU-MOHINĪ

distributing ambrosia to the gods, Śiva fell in love with her, and sought union with her. The iconographic representations of Śiva as 'Hari-Hara' and 'Ardha-nārī (half-female)' is ascribed to this detail. The right half of the icon represents Śiva, and the left Vishṇu as mohinī. The folk-god

Śāstā is described as the offspring of the union of Śiva and Mohinī

Mohinī is represented as youthful (bālā), blue in complexion like the blue lotus (nīlotpala-sama-prabhā), three-eyed and four-armed. She is bedecked with all ornaments, and draped in yellow silken garments. She is surrounded by gods and demons



MOHINĪ

(after a temple sculpture from Kāñchīpuram)

who worship her. She carries in her normal right hand a pot full of ambrosia (pūrṇa-kumbha) and in the corresponding left hand blue lotus (utpala). Her upper hands carry noose and goad. She is the charmer of the whole world (loka-mohinī) (cf. *Mūrti-dhyānam*, Tanjore, P. 96).

Mohinī is also a nityā-goddess, according to *Śāradātilaka-tantra*. She is three-eyed, dawn-complexioned (aruṇā), and has crescent moon on head; she is draped in red garments, and decorated by red ornaments.

(2) PADMA-NĀBHA

A form of Viṣṇu in the reclining posture (śayāna), with a lotus (padma) springing out of his navel (nābhi), and Brahmā the creator seated

upon the lotus. He is shown as lying down upon the coils of the snake Śeṣha (hence śeṣha-śayana), which is also called Ananta (hence Ananta-śayana or Ananta-padmanābha). Viṣṇu is the only major deity who is represented in all the four postures: standing (sthānaka), sitting (niṣaṇṇa), recumbent (śayāna) and moving about (yānaka). However, the recumbent icons are rare, the celebrated specimens being the one at Śrīraṅgam (Raṅganātha) and at Trivandrum (Ananta-padmanābha).

The story narrated in *Devī-purāṇa* (skandha 1) makes Mahā-viṣṇu lie on a banyan leaf that was afloat on the primaeval waters when nothing phenomenal had yet taken shape. He symbolized sattva-guṇa, and from his navel sprang up a lotus

flower, on which Brahmā, symbolizing rajo-guṇa appeared. Brahmā performed severe austerities before Mahā-vishṇu, whereupon Mahā-vishṇu bestowed upon Brahmā the ability to create all things. And from the middle of Brahmā's eyebrows Rudra, symbolizing tamo-guṇa, flashed forth. Thus Brahmā became the creator, Vishṇu the preserver and Rudra the destroyer of the universe in every cycle of existence. Brahmā first created with his mind the great sages and then the lords of creation (prajāpatis), who brought into being all the worlds and all the beings in them.

When Mahā-vishṇu lay on the banyan leaf that was floating on the primaeval waters, he was called Bāla-mukunda. But, when he is immersed

in yoga-nidrā periodically at the end of an aeon, he settles down on the snake Ananta, which signifies the principle of time. Then he is known as Ananta-śayana or Padma-nābha.

The recumbent image of Vishṇu has four major varieties: 'yoga', 'bhoga' 'vīra'; and ābhichārika'. In the yoga variety the God has two arms, one of them held near the head. The upper part of the body is slightly raised, and of the two legs that are stretched out, one is slightly bent, with the knee showing prominently. The god is surrounded by sages (Bṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya), demons (Madhu and Kaiṭabha near the feet), the weapons personified (āyudha-purushas) and attendants (Garuḍa and Vishvaksena). Brahmā is shown on a lotus which emanates from Vishṇu's

navel. When the entire assembly is shown, it is the superior (uttama) category; when only the sages and demons are shown, it is the midling (madhyama) category. And when even they are absent, it is the inferior (adhama) category.

The Bhoga-śayana type is distinguished by the presence of Lakshmī near the head of the recumbent figure and of Bhū-devī near the feet. In addition to the images of sages and demons, āyudha-purushas and Garuḍa, are shown the celestial nymphs, Tumburu, Nārada, Gaṇapati, Chandra, the Aśvins and the dikpālakas as surrounding Viṣṇu, from whose navel the lotus carrying Brahmā has sprung forth. If this answers to the 'superior' category, the 'midling' category omits Tumburu, Nārada and the dikpālakas. If the celestial nymphs

and sages are all of them absent, then it is the 'inferior' category.

The Vīra-śayana type has a much larger assembly surrounding the recumbent Viṣṇu; Lakshmī as well as Bhūdevī are seated near the feet in this type; the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha are shown surrendering themselves to the god; and the five weapons personified (āyudha-purushas) are also represented. The five weapons of Viṣṇu (called pañch-āyudha are discus (Sudarśana), conch (Pañcha-janya), mace (Kaumodakī), sword (Nandaka), and bow (śārṅga). In the assembly the eleven Rudras, the sages Sanaka and Sanandana, besides the seven well-known sages (saptarṣhi), and Brahmā are included in the 'superior' category. The omission of Rudras, ādityas, the seven sages and the celestial nymphs

would answer to the description of the 'midling' category; and the further omission of the kinnaras and the other sages would indicate the 'Inferior' category.

In all the above types, the god is shown as only reclining his head being held up. In the ābhichārika type he is lying flat as if in deep sleep. If the serpent on which he is recumbent has five or seven hoods in the other types, the ābhichārika type has a serpent with but two hoods in the 'superior' category and with only one hood in the 'midling' variety; and in the 'inferior' category there is no serpent at all, the god lying flat on the ground. There is no assembly surrounding the god in the ābhichārika type; Viṣṇu is all alone and asleep.

According to *Hayaśirsha-saṁhitā* (11,10-12), the god must be shown as lying down on his left side ('vāma-pārśvena śayitam'). The description of the primaeval waters on which Viṣṇu reclines on the Ananta-couch (ananta-śayana) as given in the Pañcha-rātra texts involves the milky-ocean ("kshīra-sāgara-śāyinam", *Parama-saṁhitā*, 1, 156). The colour of the god is uniformly given as blue-black (śyāmala), and the colour of his garment as yellow (except in the ābhichārika type, where the colour is black). *Īśvara-saṁhitā* (24, 259) prescribes that Lakshmi must be shown pressing the sleeping god's legs, while Prīti fans him and Vidyā sings for him ('vijyamānam hi vai prītyā, gīyamānam hi vidyayā'). He is usually prescribed to be made as having four hands, carrying in them

(or shown separately) the usual weapons: conch, discus, mace and lotus.

Vishṇu-dharmottara (3rd khaṇḍa, chap 81) prescribes that the image of Padmanābha must be visualized as recumbent upon Śeṣha, the serpent with hoods, the jewels on which dazzle the eyes of the beholder ('phaṇā-puñja-mahāratno durṇirīkshya-śīrodharah'), in the midst of an ocean (jalamadhya-gatah). He must be shown as asleep (supta). He has four-arms, one of which is stretched till the knees and two others held near the navel; the fourth hand must be under the head serving as a pillow (śīrodhara). One of his legs is placed on the laps of Lakshmī ('lakshmyutsaṅga-gatah'), and the other leg resting on the body of the snake ('śeṣha-bhogāṅka samsthitaḥ').

On the lotus that springs from his navel must be shown the creator (pitāmaha); and holding the lotus-stalk must be the two demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha. In the vicinity of the serpent-couch must be represented the weapons of the god in human form ('nṛrūpadhārīni-āstrāṇi samīpe').

The form of Vishṇu as recumbent upon the śeṣha-couch is of three varieties; *uttama* (superior), *madhyama* (midling) and *adhama* (inferior). In all three varieties, Vishṇu is pale blue in complexion (*gaurā-śyāma-nibha*) or blue with a yellowish tinge (*pīta-śyāma-nibha*). He is two-armed and abounding in *sattva-guṇa*. He is blissfully absorbed in yogic slumber (*yoga-nidrā-sukhāsakta*).

In the superior variety, he is surrounded by the sages *Bhṛgu* and

Mārkaṇḍeya as devotees, the five weapons personified (pañchāyudha), and the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha.

In the midling variety, the two devotees (Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya) are absent, and in the inferior variety along with them the two demons (Madhu and Kaiṭabha) too are absent.

(3) ANANTA-ŚAYANA



ANANTA-ŚAYANA

Meaning 'Reclining on Ananta', this is the recumbent form of Vishnu (śayāna-mūrti), which is rather rare form even for Vishnu, and almost non-existent for other gods and

goddesses (except for the Tāntrik forms of Śiva under the feet of Kali, or serving as a cot for Rājarājeśvarī, and for Gaṇapati under the feet of Gaṇapati-samākrāntā, a vajrayāna deity). Ananta here symbolizes the principle of Time and the operation of tamas.

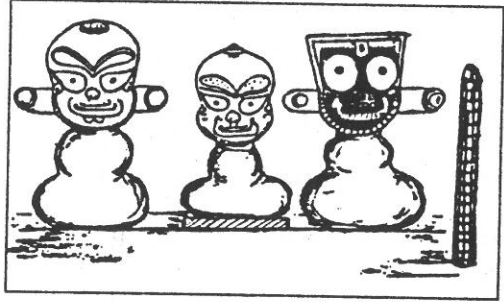
Iconographically, Viṣṇu is here represented as reclining on the coils of a five or seven-hooded serpent (Ananta, Śeṣha, or Ādi-śeṣha); the hoods of the serpent are spread over the head of Viṣṇu as a canopy (chhatra). He may be two-armed, or four-armed; and carries the usual emblems of Viṣṇu, viz., conch, discus, mace, and lotus. From his navel, a long stalk of lotus emanates, and on the lotus is seated Brahmā, the creator. Hence, the name Ananta-padmanābha (Ananta, viz., Viṣṇu,

whose navel has the lotus). Seated at his feet is his consort Śrī-devī (Prosperity), sometimes with Bhū-devī (Earth-goddess). Represented below the recumbent Vishṇu in some sculptures (for instance, the terra cotta plaque in the Indian Museum at Calcutta or in the Deogarh stone relief) are the demons, Madhu and Kaiṭatha (whom Vishṇu killed after battling with them). It is the encounter with these demons that fatigued Vishṇu, and made him lie down.

While the recumbent form of Kṛṣṇa is rare in the north, there are many shrines in the South: Śrīrangam (Ranganātha). Thivandrum (Ananta-padmanābha) Chidambaram (Govinda-rāja-perumāḷ, Tillai-tiru-chittirakūṭam), Tiruppulanguḍi (near Tinnevely), Kapiṣṭhalaṃ

(Champakāraṇya), and the Shore-temple at Mahābalipuram (thirty seven miles from Chennai).

(3) JAGANNĀTHA



JAGANNĀTHA ICONS (Balabhadra, Subhadrā, Jagannātha and Sudarśana)

A form of Vishṇu, also known as Purushottama, which is worshipped in the famous temple on the sea-shore at Puri (Purushottama-kshetra) in Orissa. The original installation of the shrine is ascribed to an ancient monarch of Purī, Indra-dyumna by name (*Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa*, Prakṛti-khaṇḍa, utkala-khaṇḍa). The pious king is related to have performed

a penance, as a result of which Vishṇu appeared in his dream (or vision) in a four-fold form (chatur-mūrtiś sa bhagavān): Purushottama (Vāsudeva), Bala-bhadra (Saṁkarshaṇa), Subhadra (Kātyāyanī) and Sudarśana. As he contemplated getting his vision translated into iconic representations, a huge log of madder-red (mañjishṭha) colour came floating on the sea, and there also arrived on the scene an old sculptor-carpenter (vardhakī) who volunteered to carve out of the log the images exactly as the king saw them. The wooden images that he carved, working in seclusion for fifteen days, were installed on a stone platform (called ratna-vedī), and a temple was built in due course.

The images that are now worshipped in the temple are also

wooden ones, but not the original images of the days of Indra-dyumna. Every twelve or nineteen years, the old images are discarded (and buried) and new ones installed in their place in an elaborate ritual known as 'navakalevara'. However, the new images are sculpted and prepared for worship every time in exactly the same manner as the original images are said to have been sculpted and prepared. The group of images in the temple are reproduced in cloth-painting (paṭa-chitra) and miniature wooden models, and made available to the pilgrims.

The descriptions of these images occur in the ancient texts but they differ in details from what the images are made to appear now. *Brahmapurāṇa* (42,14-15), for instance, says that the image of Jagannātha

(Purushottama) is four-armed (the present image, however is only two-armed) carrying conch, discus, mace and lotus, that the image is draped in yellow silken cloth (pīta-vastra), that its chest is covered by the garland of wild flowers (vana-mālā-vṛtoraska) and adorned by the Śrīvatsa gem (śrīvatsorah-samāyukta), and that the crown and armlets can be seen (mukutāṅgada-śobhita). More interestingly, the description in *Śāradā-tilaka* (17,31) is that Purushottama has Lakshmī seated on his lap and is embracing her, and that she holds a lotus, and that he looks amorously and intently at her.

Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa (op.cit.), while narrating the dream (or vision) of Indra-dyumna, the four images are described as follows :

“Janārdana was stationed on a divine throne (divya-simhāsana-gatah) along with Bala-bhadra and Sudarśana. He had four hands, and held in them were conch, discus, mace and lotus. Bala-bhadra also had four hands in which he carried plough (hala), pestle (muśala), discus (chakra) and lotus (abja). He was of the form of a serpent (pannagākṛti), and seven-hooded snake raised its hoods over him like a parasol (chhatrīkṛta-phaṇās-sapta). He had gorgeous ear-rings (ujjvala-kunḍala) and a crown. Subhadrā, pretty-faced, carried in her hands the gestures of boon-bestowal and protection and lotus (varābjābhaya-dhāriṇi). She was verily Lakshmī, who manifested herself as the life-force of all beings (sarva-chaitanya-rūpiṇi). Sudarśana, the discus in the hand of Viṣṇu,

was inside a pillar (staṁbha-madhyastham).

The accounts given in *Skandapurāṇa* (Purushottama-māhātmya, 27,98 to 29, 4) identifies Jagannātha with Viṣṇu, Bala-bhadra with Śiva (śeṣha), and Subhadra standing between Jagannātha and Bala-bhadra (tayormadhyasthitām bhadrām Subhadrām) with Lakshmī (or Kātyāyanī, Bhuvaneśvarī, or Ekānamśā). Subhadrā, in this account, stands separately (prthak-sthitām), is red-complexioned (kuṁkumāruṇā), and two-armed, carrying in the hands the gesture of boon-bestowal and lotus (varābja-dhāriṇī).

The four images now seen in the temple are all on a common stone platform (known as ratna-vedī). Apart

from these main images, the platform also accommodates small metallic images of Lakshmī (to the right of the Jagannātha image) and Viśva-dhātṛī (Bhū-devī) (to the left of Jagannātha), a wooden replica of Jagannātha (representing Nīlāmādhava). All the images face the eastern direction.

All the four images are wooden, and there are prescriptions about the colour of the tree, number of main branches the tree must have, and the characteristic marks of identification. The wood for the Jagannātha image must be dark red (mañjiṣṭha) in colour, and the tree must have four main branches, and also marks of conch and discus. The wood for the Bala-bhadra image must be light-brown or white in colour, and the tree must

have seven main-branches, and marks of plough and pestle. The wood for the Subhadrā image must have an yellowish tinge, and the tree must have five main branches, and the mark of a lotus with five petals. The wood for the Sudarśana image must have reddish bark, and the tree must have three branches and mark of a wheel (Chakra).

The images are not merely wooden in nature. Although wood forms the main material, it is covered with several layers of resin (niryāsa) of the sāla-tree, sandal-wood paste (chandana), camphor (karpūra), musk (kastūri) and sandal (chandana). Red-cloth known as Netra-paṭa is wound round all the parts of the images; and the images are also painted. The texts contain the prescription that the images

must be coated with many pastes (bahu-lepa-vilepitah).

The height of the images of Jagannātha, Bala-bhadra and Sudarśana is the same: 84 yavas (a 'yava' being the length of the middle digit of the middle finger): but that of Subhadrā is 52.1/2 yavas. The image of Jagannathā, as that of Bala-bhadra, consists of a trunk surmounted by a large head; and two arm-stumps are separately added. The image of Subhadrā does not have the arm-stumps (which are believed to be hidden); it consists merely of trunk and head. The head of Jagannatha is flat on top; and there are large round eyes which dominate the face. The head of Bala-bhadra, as also that of Subhadra, is oval-shaped; and the eyes in both cases are almond-shaped.

The image of Jagannātha which has a height of 84 yavas has arms (which project on the left, right and in front), also 84 yavas, in length, so that the figure is said to have the shape of a wheel or discus (chakrākṛti). But the arms of the Bala-bhadra image (which is 84 yavas in height) have a total length of $73\frac{1}{2}$ yavas, so that the figure assumes the form of a conch (śaṁkhākṛti). The image of Subhadrā is visualized as a lotus on a thin stalk (padmākṛti).

The height of the Jagannātha image is traditionally divided into five parts each made of 'bhāgas' of the total height:

(i) The face (śrīmukha,) 14 bhāgas ($36\frac{3}{4}$ yavas)

(ii) The neck (grīva), 5 bhāgas (12 yavas)

(iii) The heart-region (hṛdaya), 3 bhāgas (9 yavas)

(iv) The waist (paridhāpana), 4 bhāgas ($10\frac{1}{2}$).

(v) The legs (pāda), 6 bhāgas ($15\frac{3}{4}$)

The height of the Bala-bhadra image is divided into four parts as follows:

(i) The snake-hood on top of the head (phaṇa) and the face (śrīmukha) together: 12 bhāgas ($31\frac{1}{2}$ yavas)

Snake-hood	: 6 yavas
forehead	: $1\frac{1}{2}$ yavas
rest of the face	: 24 yavas

(ii) The neck (grīva), 4 bhāgas ($10\frac{1}{2}$ yavas)

(iii) The heart (hṛdaya) and waist: (paridhāpana)



(iv) The legs (pāda): 10 bhāgas
(26 yavas)

The height of the Subhadrā image is divided into four parts as follows:

(i) The face (śrīmukha), 12 bhāgas (19.3/4 yavas)

(ii) The heart (hṛdaya), 2 bhāgas
(9 and 3/4 yavas)

(iii) The waist (paridhāpana), 12 bhāgas (19.3/4 yavas)

(iv) The legs (pāda), 6 bhāgas
(9 & 3/4 yavas)

The height of the image of Sudarśana, which stands to the left of the Jagannātha, is divided into four parts, each of the parts measuring 8 bhāgas. It is a wooden pole with cloth-strips wrapped round it. There is, however, no visible representation

of discus (chakra) on it. But the pole is said to contain hidden inside it a small discus made in gold and weighing 16 palas. *Pratishṭhā-pradīpa*, a text used for the temple worship here, claims that this image represents the Narasimha form of Viṣṇu.

Each of these four images has a cavity in it, and a mysterious soul-substance called 'brahma-padārtha' is hidden inside it in a secret ritual at the time of the installation of the images during the 'nava-kalvara' ceremony (renewal of images). This is said to provide spiritual continuity for the deities despite the periodical change of images.

(4) PĀNDURĀṄGA

This celebrated god of Paṇḍharpur (in Mahārāshtra), is more



ABHAṅGA-VIṬHALA
(stone, Pandharpur temple in Maharashtra)

popularly known as Viṭhala (said to be corrupt form of the Sanskrit Viṣṇu). The name of the famous place is derived from the Kannaḍa word 'paṇḍarige', and the cult of Viṭhala was wide-spread in the southern region. The Hoysaḷa ruler Viṣṇu-varḍhana (Bittiḡa 1117-1137 A.D.) is credited with having been responsible for the celebrity of the shrine in Paṇḍharpur.

According to the *Pāṇḍuraṅga-māhātmya* section of *Padma-purāṇa*, Śachī (Indra's consort) once approached Viṣṇu with amorous intentions, and when Śachī incarnated herself as Rukmiṇī during Kṛṣṇāvatāra, she became jealous of Rādhā, and began performing austerities. To win her love, Kṛṣṇa also stood in front of Rukmiṇī in penance. This is the posture in which Pāṇḍuraṅga-viṭhala is seen today.

Another legend, more popular, associates the god here with a devotee, Puṇḍalīka by name, who in his deep devotion to his aged parents, did not rise even to receive the god who came to visit him. Engaged in administering a bath to his father, Puṇḍalīka pushed a brick near the

god for him to stand upon. And till today, the god stands upon this brick. The samādhi of the devotee is also to be seen near the temple.

The shrine on the banks of the river Bhimā or Chandrabhāgā is an ancient one, inscriptional reference to it going back to the sixth century; but the god Viṭhala is not referred to in the inscriptions until 1236 A.D. The Mahārastrian Saint Nāmdev is intimately associated with this shrine. The Vārkarī pilgrims congregate here in large numbers and with intense devotion, and fulfil their vows, during the Hindu months Āshāḍha and Kārtika.

In the sanctum, Pāṇḍuraṅga-viṭhala stands upon a square stone pedestal (resembling a brick).

The image, carved out of black stone, is less than four feet (three and a half feet) in height; it is two-armed, both hands resting on the loins; the right hand holds a flower and the left a conch (emblem of Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu). On the head is a plain crown, resembling a līṅga; and on the chest is an ornament identified as Kaustubha, or as Śrīvatsa attached to a single necklace (kaṇṭhi). There are plain bangles on both wrists. There are ear-ornaments suggesting the makara-kunḍala variety; and the wrists are adorned with simple bracelets. There is a strip of cloth covering the waist and hanging in front. Otherwise, the image is devoid of ornaments and garments.

(5) DATTĀTREYA



Regarded as a minor incarnation (amśavatāra) of Vishṇu, Dattātreya (Datta, the son of Atri) is the central figure in several cults like Datta-saṁpradāya, Nātha-siddha-saṁpradāya and mahānubhāva-pantha. His human appearance has been celebrated in several purāṇas (like

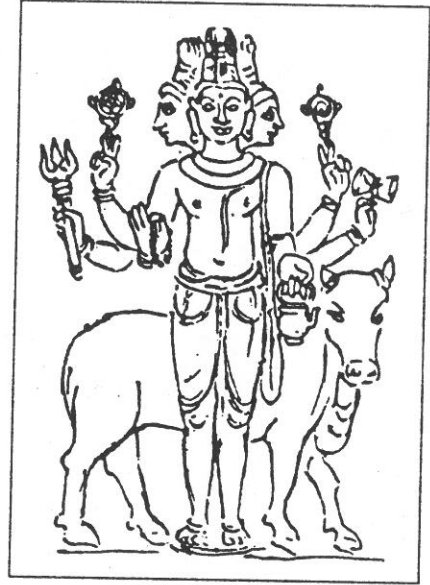
Bhāgavata, 1,3,6-25; *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*. Ch.17-18; *Vāyu-purāṇa* Ch.70; *Matsya-purāṇa*. Ch. 47 and *Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa*. Ch.213; and also in *Mahābhārata* (2,48,24) and *Harivaṁśa*. Ch.41) According to the accounts in these texts, Viṣṇu appeared on earth as Dattātreya to restore 'dharma' and 'jñāna' amidst mankind (viṣṇoḥ prādurbhāvo mahātmanah, Dattātreya iti khyātaḥ kṣamayā parayā yutah).

The legend in the purāṇas makes him the son of the sage Atri and his wife Anasūya. One of the accounts narrates that Atri was childless, and did penance for obtaining children. When the three gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, appeared before him, pleased with his penance, he begged them to become his sons. Accordingly, Brahmā

in one of his aspects was born as Chandra, Vishṇu likewise as Datta, and Śiva as the sage Durvāsa. Datta became an ascetic and performed austerities for a great length of time on the banks of river Gomatī. He obtained enlightenment (satya-jñāna) and began to teach others. One of his disciples was the great king of Māhishmati, Kārta-vīrya.

He was celebrated as a great sage proficient in Yoga and magic. He is regarded as one of the seven great sages (saptarshi) in the Svārochisha-manvantara. *Bhāgavata* (1,3,6-25) counts him as one of the twenty-two incarnations of Vishṇu. He is hailed as the ascetic who inaugurated the avadhūta-sampradāya in India. He is familiar to the votaries of the Datta-cult as 'Śrī-guru'. He is

believed to reside in the audumbara-tree.



His iconographic representation is rather recent. He is shown as Vishṇu seated in lotus-posture, with two normal hands locked in contemplation; he has braided strands of hair coiled up as a crown, and wears on one ear the sarpa-kunḍala (characteristic of Śiva) and on the other makara-

kunḍala (characteristic of Viṣṇu). He is six-armed, and in the four upper hands he carries trident (Śiva's emblem), discus (Viṣṇu's), waterpot and rosary (both Brāhmā's). Alternately, he is represented as a deity with three heads (Brāhmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva) and four hands, surrounded by four dogs (symbolizing the four Vedas), and a bull (which is Śiva's vehicle and represents dharma).

(6) KEŚAVA

Keśava is one of the forms of Viṣṇu, the first among the twenty four celebrated forms (chaturvimśati-mūrti). The name is derived from the legend that Viṣṇu killed the asura named Keśi (cf. *Mahābhārata*, Vana-parva, 134, 20 and *Nāradya-saṁhitā*,



KEŚAVA

25,371). In this form, Viṣṇu stands erect without bends (samabhaṅga sthānaka), is benign in aspect (saumya) and has the usual attributes of Viṣṇu (like kirita, vanamālā, śrīvatsa, and makara-kunḍala). He carries in his four arms the characteristic emblems

in this particular order, according to *Hayaśīrsha-saṃhitā* (19, 4-5): lotus (pāṅkaja) in the normal right hand, mace (gadā) in the normal left hand, conch (pañcha-janya) in the upper right hand, and discus (chakra) in the upper left hand. The mace in this form is kept with its head downward (adho-mukha).

Keśava is golden coloured (suvarṇābha), but wears white garments (śuklāmbara); his consort is the form of Lakshmī known as Śrī-devī.

Keśava is the name of the presiding deity in Dvāarakā (dvāravatyām, of *Nāradya-saṃhitā* 9, 152).

(7) MADHUSŪDANA

This name of Viṣṇu is derived from his having killed the two demons, Madhu and Kaiṭabha by name. Kaiṭabha, along with his brother Madhu, were born, according to one legend (cf. *Harivaṃśa*, 52 and *Devī-Bhāgavata*. 1 and 10) from the ear-wax of Mahā-Viṣṇu as he was lying down in yoga-nidrā in the midst of the undifferentiated ocean (ekārṇva) during Padma-kalpa, at the end of the aeon; or (according to *Mahābhārata*, Śānti-parva, 348) from the two drops that fell from the lotus flower that emerged from the navel of Mahā-viṣṇu as he lay down in yoga-nidrā. The latter legend has it that one of the drops was sweet in taste like honey and intoxicating (hence called Madhu) while the other was hard

(Kaiṭabha); and the two symbolized the tamas and rajas respectively, as distinguished from Viṣṇu who personified sattva.

Viṣṇu had to kill them, as they became terrors to the creator Brahmā, and snatched away the four scriptures (Veda) that came forth from him for the benefit of creation; and Viṣṇu was roused from his slumber to accomplish this task by Devī, to whom Brahmā had appealed (cf. *Māraṇḍeya-purāṇa*, *Devī-māhātmya*, 81)

Madhu and Kaiṭabha are represented as two-armed, and carrying clubs, in the vicinity of the recumbent form of Viṣṇu in its superior (uttama) and midling (madhyama) varieties.

Another legend relates that they were formed out of the ear-wax of Viṣṇu, while he was fast asleep on the surface of the waters, during the great deluge (pralaya). It was discovered that the earth supported on the back of the tortoise was slipping, owing to the rush of the waters and there was need to awaken Viṣṇu. Mahāmāyā put her left little finger into Viṣṇu's left ear and scooped out the wax; it was like honey. She fashioned a demon out of it, and named it Madhu. Then she put her right little finger into Viṣṇu's right ear and scooped out the wax; It appeared like a fly (kīṭa). She made a demon out of it, and called it Kaiṭabha. She set them to battle with Viṣṇu, also granting a boon to them that they would be killed only when they approved of such killing. They

became denizens of water, and were invincible in water.

They began running over the body of Vishṇu which lay on the water, and found Brahmā, sitting upon the lotus that sprang from the navel of Vishṇu. They attacked Brahmā, and Brahmā pleaded with Vishṇu to help him. This woke up Vishṇu, who began to battle with the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha. The fight went on for a great length of time, and the demons got the upper hand. They arrogantly condescended to favour Vishṇu with any boon that he sought. Vishṇu asked that he be allowed to kill them. They agreed, but bargained that the fight should be on dry ground.

Vishṇu lifted up one of his thighs, and this became the battle-

field, removed from the water. The demons were at length killed by Vishṇu, and the fat (medas) that poured out of their bodies helped the earth to remain firm (hence the name of the earth, medinī)

If this is the story related in *Devī-bhāgavata* (10,11) and *Kālikā-purāṇa* (chap.61), the epic *Mahābhārata* (Śānti-parva, 347) gives a different account. During the great deluge, Mahā-vishṇu was asleep on the surface of the waters. From his navel sprang a lotus, and on the lotus was seated Brahmā, the creator, representing sattva. He discovered that on the lotus were two drops of water produced by Vishṇu himself. One resembled the drop of honey (Madhu) and represented tamas, and the other was hard (Kaiṭabha) and represented

rajas. Two demons in due course emerged from these drops (12,347,24-26)

(8) VARADA-RĀJA

Saving of the great elephant (Gajendra-moksha) is one of the acts of Vishṇu which are exceedingly popular among the devotees of Vishṇu.



VARADA-RĀJA



The episode, which occurs principally in *Bhāgavata* (8th skanda), is told and retold times without number in Sanskrit and in the dialects of the country; it is also rendered in painting and sculpture all over India.

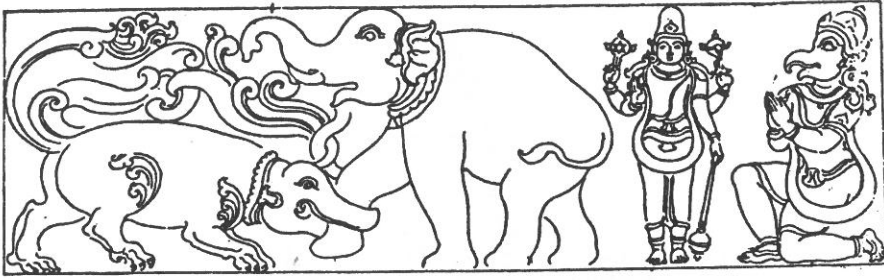
The story concerns an elephant (gajendra), which was rescued (moksha) by Vishṇu from the jaws of a crocodile. The elephant, in its



KARI-VARADA

previous existence was Indra-dyumna, ruler of the Pāṇḍya realm and a great devotee of Viṣṇu. It so happened that he was cursed to become an elephant by Agastya, whom the king ('engaged in penance in the Malaya

mountain') inadvertently slighted. Becoming an elephant, he roamed about the forest as leader of a large herd. When he arrived at the lake in mount Trikūṭa to appease his thirst, a crocodile (which was in reality a

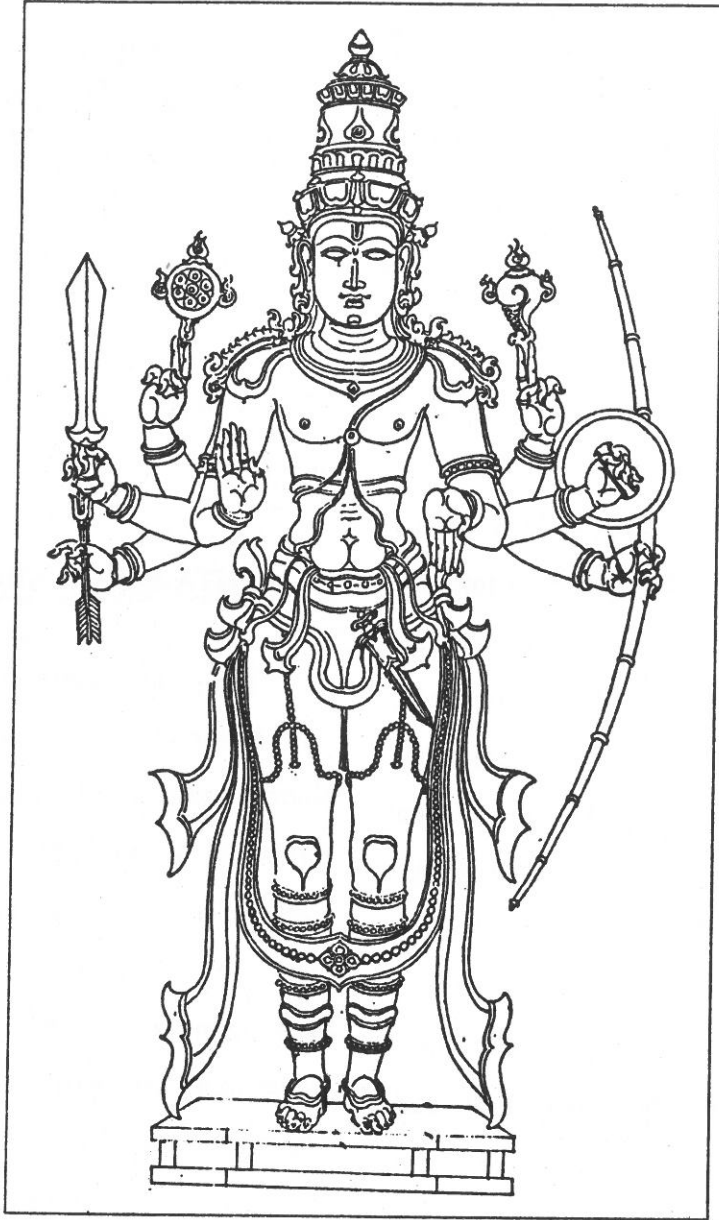


gandharva, Hūhū by name, who had been cursed to become a crocodile by sage Devala) caught hold of his leg and began dragging him into the lake. Unable to extricate itself from the powerful jaws of the crocodile, the elephant raised its trunk and offered a prayer to Vishṇu. Vishṇu at once appeared and killed the crocodile with his discus (chakra). The God thus removed the curse which haunted the royal sage Indradyumna, also the curse that had befallen the gandharva. There is an interesting sculptured panel in the fifth-century Gupta temple at Deogarh,

which is the earliest representation of this theme.

(9) ASHṬA-BHUJA-SVĀMI

The eight-armed form of Vishṇu, worshipped in a temple at Kāñchipuram (Tamil-nāḍu). Several forms of Vishṇu (like Trivikrama, Narasimha and Rāja-gopāla) have eight arms; especially so are variant delineations of Kṛṣṇa as a flute-player and cowherd (Veṇu-gopāla). The eight-armed Vishṇu (standing) in the Devarāja-svāmi shrine in Kāñchīpuram carries in six of his



ASHTA-BHUJA-SVAMI (DEVARAJA-SVAMI TEMPLE, KANCHIPURAM)

hands arrow (bāṇa), sword (khaḍga), discus (chakra), conch (śaṁkha), shield (charma) and bow (chāpa); the two front hands are in the protection (abhaya) and boon-bestowal (varada) gestures. Another image (seated), in the Archaeological Museum at Hyderabad, shows mace (gadā), an object that looks like arrow, lotus (padma), elephant-goad (aṅkuśa), noose (pāśa), conch (śaṁkha), an object that looks like bow (or a part of discus (chakra)). When Veṇu-gopala (a form of Kṛṣṇa) is represented with eight arms, he carries the usual attributes of Viṣṇu (viz., discus, conch, mace and lotus) in his four hands, and two hands are engaged in playing flute, the other two being held together in a dhyāna-posture.



(10) VEDA-VYĀSA

According to *Sāttvata* (12,154-156) and *Paushkara-saṁhitā* (34,63), Veda-vyāsa is an incarnation of Viṣṇu. He is to be shown as seated in yoga-paṭṭa, and two-armed. The right hand assumes the gesture of scriptural exposition ('dakṣiṇena śāstrārtham ādiśan'), and the left

carries the scriptural text ('vahan vāma-hastena sarva-śāstrārthapustakam'). He is of the complexion of 'ataśī' 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 Vaiśampāyana.

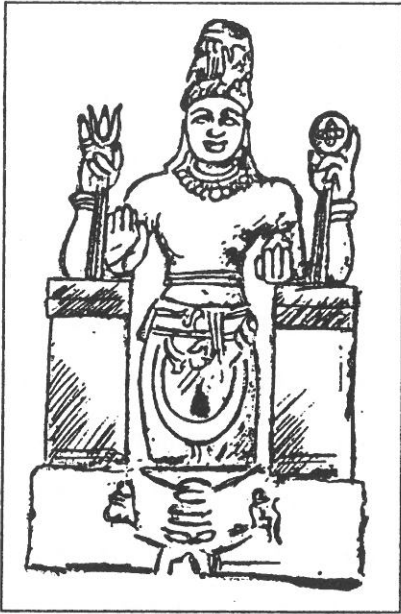
(11) VENKATEŚA

The most popular Vishṇu shrine in the country is Tirumala in Andhra Pradesh, formerly called Veṅgaḍam. The deity in this shrine is called Veṅgaḍattān or Veṅgaḍavā (meaning the lord of the hills, Tirumala is a cluster of seven hills); and the Sanskritized form of

this name is Venkatesvara. The god, a magnificent figure with a bewitching smile, stands about eight feet in height. He is four-armed. The two upper hands carry conch (left) and discus (right). The normal right hand is in the boon-bestowal gesture (varada) and the corresponding left hand in the posture of holding the hip (kaṭyavalambita). On his chest is Vyūha-Lakshmī, and hence the god, who is alone in the sanctum, is also called Śrī-nivāsa. (For details see the author's *The Hill-shrine of Vengadam*).

(12) HARI-HARA

This composite form of Vishṇu and Śiva, is also called Haryardha. The right half of the god's body is red and represents Śiva: the two hands



HARI-HARA (from Harihareśvara temple,
Harihara, Karnataka)

on that side carry hammer (ṭanka) and the gesture of protection. The right part of the forehead shows a part of the third eye (phālārdhe lochanārdham, kiñchillalāṭa-netram'); the part of the body is bedaubed with ash, decorated with the rudrāksha seeds, and clad in tiger-skin. The left half of the body is dark-coloured and represents Viṣṇu, with the two-hands

on that side holding conch and mace.

Matsya-purāṇa (260, 22-27) prescribes conch and discus in the two left hands, but allows mace to be a substitute for discus ('chakra-sthāne



SANKARA-NARAYANA
(from Padmanabhapuram Palace, Trivandrum)

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-nārayaṇa.

Devatā-mūrti-prakaraṇa (6,35-41) recognizes the right half as Sadāśiva and the left half as Hṛshīkeśa ('dakṣiṇārdhe 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 hand. Bull must be shown by the side of Sadāśiva, and Garuḍa by the side of Hṛshīkeśa ('dakṣiṇe vṛshabhah pārśve, vāme vihaga-rāḍ iti').

Icons of this form have a great antiquity; the earliest specimen dates to the Kushāṇa period.

Also known as Śankara-nārāyaṇa it is more usually regarded as one of the līlā-mūrtis of Śiva. It is a variant of Ardha-nārīśvara-mūrti, the left half of the body being substituted by Viṣṇu. The right half is coral-red (vidrumābha) in colour, and represents Śiva, wearing matted hair as crown to which crescent moon is stuck. The left half is dark-blue in complexion (śyāmalābha) and represents Viṣṇu, wearing a bejewelled crown on the side.

The form has four hands, the upper right hand carrying ṭaṅka and the normal right hand showing the gesture of protection, while the upper

left hand holds conch, and the normal left 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 lochānārdhakalita').

The form is often represented in a standing posture (sthānaka), with both feet drawn together in a balanced position (sama-pāda).

(13) HAMA

A swan-like 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, and is

reputed to be capable of separating the Soma juice from water, when the two fluids mixed up. In the purāṇic period, it became the mount for Brahmā, Sarasvatī, and Brahmāṇī.

Hamsa was one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu 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' gāyatri articulation, the soul is constantly engaged in articulating 'ham' and 'sa' when breathing out and breathing in respectively.

(14) HAYA-GRIVA

The form which Viṣṇu is believed to have been assumed to kill



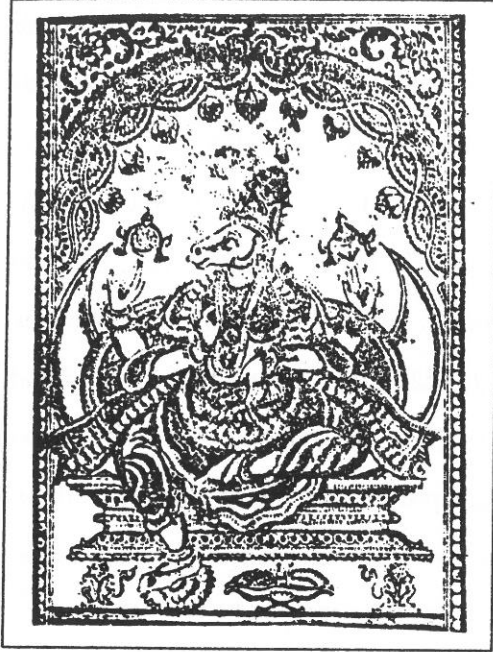
a horse-headed demon named Haya-grīva (*Devī-bhāgavata*, 1,5), or the demon-brothers Madhu and Kaiṭabha, or to recover the Vedas which were stolen and hidden under the sea by the demon Hiraṇyāksha. It is also a tāntrik deity, incorporated in the Vajrayāna pantheon.

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 in human forms, with faces of horses ('*vāji-vaktrās sthitā-vedāḥ sampūrṇa-naralakṣaṇāḥ*'). Therefore Viṣṇu as the presiding deity of Vedic learning must be imagined as a man with horse's face ('*kalpayet puruṣhākāram aśva-vaktram*')



HAYAGRĪVA
(Hoysala sculpture)



The god is stationed upon the lunar orb (śaṣi-bimbastha), 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 ('śvetātāravindāsana') within the lunar orb ('chandra-maṇḍala-madhyastha')

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-hastesya kurvīta vedāśchatvārah', *Haya-śirsha-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-couch, with hoods rising up behind him ('bhogi-bhoge samāsīnam, pṛshṭhah phaṇa-maṇḍalaih'). *Hayaśīrsha-saṁhitā* (ādi, 22,24-26) makes the god's left foot rest on Śeṣha (śeṣha-nāga-dhṛtam pādam vāmam'), and the right foot on tortoise ('dakṣiṇam kūrma-pṛshṭhastham'). According to this text, he is accompanied by two goddesses, viz. Lakṣmī and Bhū-devī ('devī-dvīṭaya-saṁyuktam').

Haya-grīva, the Vajrayāna god, is an attendant or companion of the Khasarpaṇa and Loka-nātha 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-pingala-keśa); his moustache and beard are even tawnier (pingala-taraśmaśru). 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. It is probable that this



Hayagrīva is the demon, whom Vishṇu vanquished into submission.

There is, however, in the Vajrayāna ideology, an independent form of Hayagrīva (more like the form of Vishṇu) known as Hayagrīva-Lokeśvara. Here he sits upon a lotus in vajra-paryāṅka 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).

(15) DHANVANTARI

The patron-god of physicians and surgeons in India, Dhanvantari is regarded as a minor incarnation of Vishṇu. He is counted in *Bhāgavata* (1,3,1) among the twenty-two incarnations of Vishṇu. However, the



story in *Hari-varṇśa* (29, 1523) makes him a devotee of Vishṇu. He emerged from the Milky ocean when it was churned by gods and demons; he begged Vishṇu to assign a portion of the sacrificial offerings (yajña-bhāga) to himself. Vishṇu told him that the portions of the sacrificial offerings had already been allotted to the gods, who were all there much before Dhanvantari made his appearance. But

he advised Dhanvantari to appear among human beings in his next birth, when owing to his meritorious deeds he would become eligible to a portion of the sacrificial offerings.

Rāmāyaṇa (Bālakāṇḍa, 45, 31) also relates that Dhanvantari emerged from the ocean during its churning. According to the epic, he appeared two-armed, holding a sacred water-



pot (kamaṇḍalu) in one hand and the mendicants's staff (daṇḍa) in the other. *Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa* (Kriṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa, 51), which traces Dhanvantari's origin in the same way, adds that even when he appeared he was proficient in the entire Vedic lore (sarva-vedeshu niṣṇātaḥ) and expert in mystic science (mantra-tantra viśāradaḥ), and that he was a disciple of Vainateya (viz. Garuḍa).

The account in *Bhāva-prakāśa* (pūrva-khaṇḍa, 1st section), makes Dhanvantari originally a physician of the gods in heaven. Indra, the king of the gods, once chanced to observe the misery that human beings were prone to on earth; overcome by compassion, he directed Dhanvantari to visit mankind and eliminate the sufferings. As the human beings were

beset with numerous diseases, Dhanvantari appeared among them as a physician. According to this text, Dhanvantari was born in the royal household of Kāśi (Banaras) in the family of Bāhuja. He developed ascetic tendencies even as a boy and performed severe austerities. But Brahmā with great difficulty managed to make him accept the lordship over the city of Kāśi, and since then the youth was known as Kāśi-rāja. As a king, he prepared a treatise (samhitā) on medicine for the benefit of humanity (hitāya dehinām).

The lineage preserved in *Vishṇu-purāṇa* (4,8,4) begins with Purūvas, and goes through Āyus, Kshatra-vṛdha, Kāśa, Kāśi-rājā (name, and not designation) and Dīrgha-tamas before coming to Dhanvantari. Dhanvantari's

son was Ketumāna and Ketumāna's son was Divodāsa (who was also named Dhanvantari). The account in *Harivaṁśa* (29th chap.) begins with the lineage with Suhotra, who was the king of Kāśi in the second Dvāpara age. Suhotra's line continued with Śāla, Arshtīsheṇa, Kāśa and Dīrgha-tapas, who was also called Dhanvā and whose son was Dhanvantari. Dhanvantari's son was Ketumān, and Ketumān's son was Bhīma-ratha, whose son was Divodāsa.

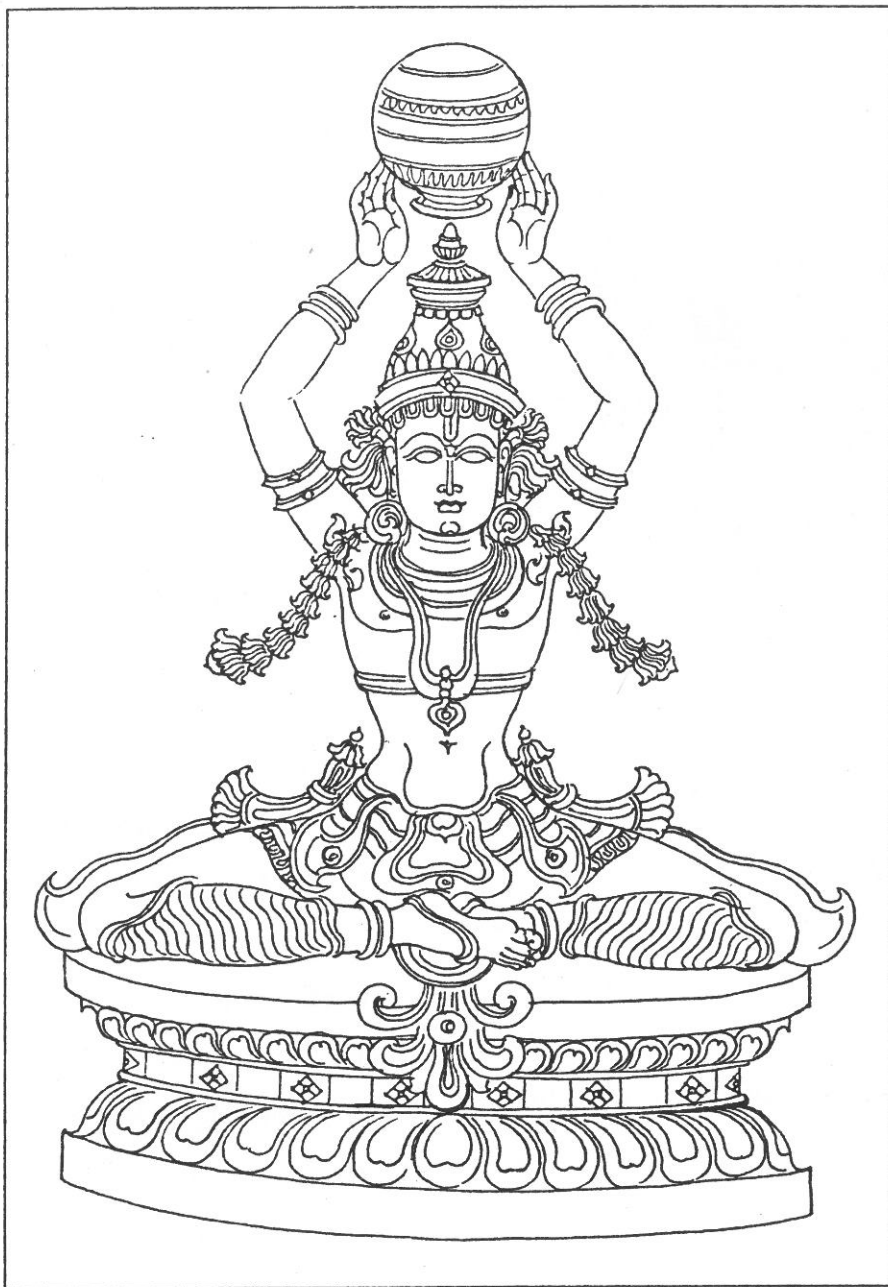
Often, Dhanvantari is identified with Divodāsa and Kāśirāja. While Dhanvantari, god or man, is of ancient celebrity, we do not find the name mentioned in *Ṛgveda*, where however Divodāsa is frequently mentioned (e.g. 1,116,18; 6,16,5 and 6,31,4), Divodāsa is associated with the gods



of healing, the Aśvins, Agni and Indra. *Śāṅkhāyana-grhya-sūtra* connects Dhanvantari and Bhāradvāja. Dhanvantari is said to have learnt the science and art of medicine (āyurveda) from Bhāradvāja, who in turn was taught by Indra (who was taught by Aśvins). There is also an account

which makes the sage Atreya teach medicine to Bhāradvāja. Thus the identification of Dhanvantari with Divodāsa is not altogether unfounded.

Dhanvantari, according to *Vishṇu-dharmottara* (1,73,41), is to be represented as handsome (surūpa) and pleasant-looking (priyadarśana), with two hands, carrying with both of them a pot filled with ambrosia (kara-dvaya-gatam chāsya sāmṛtam kalaśam bhavet). But more frequently, the icons of Dhanvanari are four-armed, carrying in the upper hands conch and discus (to suggest his being an aspect of Vishṇu), and one of the normal hands holding a leech (jalauka, suggesting blood-letting and surgery) and the other a pot of ambrosia (amṛta-ghaṭa, suggesting medicine). He may be shown as standing, or as seated, on a lotus.





The dhyāna-sloka given in *Prapañcha-sāra-saṅgraha* mentions that he is dark-complexioned (kālāmbhodojjvalāṅgam) and four-armed, carrying conch, discus, leech

and pot of ambrosia; he wears yellow silken garments at the loins (kaṭitala-vilasacchāru-pītāmbarāḍhyam). Another dhyāna-śloka makes him reside in the solar orb (ravi-bimbastha), and describes him as handsome (manoharāṅga) and with a tranquil face (prasanna-mukha-kamala). According to this text, he is only two-armed, carrying leech and pot of ambrosia. Still another dhyāna-śloka (also cited in the *Prapañcha-sāra-saṅgraha* describes the god as bathing himself with ambrosia holding with two of his hands pots from which the liquid is poured on his head. The devotee is to visualize Dhanvantari in this form, and as seated on his own (devotee's) head, or as situate within the lunar orb on a full-moon night.

The mantra of Dhanvantri has
forty-one letters, as follows :-

ओं नमो भगवते धन्वन्तरये अमृतकलशहस्ताय
सर्वामयविनाशाय त्रिलोकनाथाय विष्णवे स्वाहा ॥

The dhyāna-śloka is :

शंखं चक्रं जलूकां दधदमृतघटं
चापि दोर्भिश्चतुर्भिः
सूक्ष्मस्वच्छातिहृद्यांशुकपरिविलस-
न्मौलिमम्भोजनेत्रम् ।
कालाम्भोदोज्ज्वलाङ्गं कटितटविलस-
च्चारुपीताम्बराढ्यम्
वन्दे धन्वन्तरिं तं निखिलगदवन-
प्रौढदावाग्निलीलम् ॥



ASHTA-BHUJA-SVAMI

CHAPTER FOUR

VISHṆU - PARIVĀRA

(1)

LAKSHMĪ



The word 'lakshmi' signifies the sign of beauty, the token of good fortune, the mark of royal power

splendour'; and is synonymous with luck, prosperity, grace, happiness and royal domain.

She is widely worshipped in the country by all sects, and her eulogy is to be found even in *Rgveda* (e.g. 1,45, 40-43 and *Śrī-sūkta*, the supplement or Khila portion). Her iconic representations go back at least to the second century before Christ: We have Lakshmi 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, Śuṅga, Gupta and Kushāṇa divisions in the early centuries.

She is identified not only as the wife (śakti, 'energy') of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa as is well-known, but as the consort of Sūrya (the sun-god identified with Viṣṇu), Prajāpati (the creator), Dharma (the primaeval 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 Dakṣa-prajāpati (the primal creator), who gave her to Dharma as his wife; and in this role as the mother of Kāma. *Mahābhārata* (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-

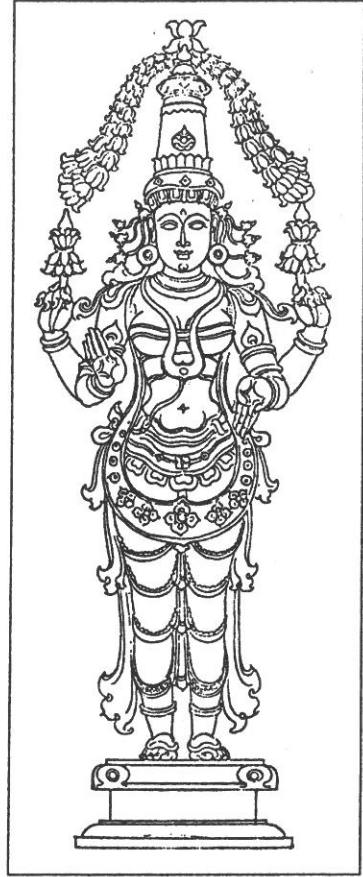
varṇām hariṇīm suvarṇa-rajata-srajām'). The brāhmaṇa texts narrate that Soma won her as the result of penance. He became 'King' (rājā), thanks to her.

Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa (11,4,3,off) 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 mythical 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 splendour 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



MAHĀ-LAKSHMĪ (stone, Aṣṭa-Lakshmi Maṇḍapam, Mīnākshī temple, Madurai)

went to Brahmā, and he took them to Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu suggested churning the Milky Ocean for nectar so as to 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 (vakshahsthala-vāsinī) of Viṣṇu.

According to *Jayākhya-saṁhitā* (8,77), Lakshmī heads the list of divine qualities abiding in Viṣṇu: Lakshmī (the lordship, aiśvarya), Kīrti (celebrity), Jayā (success) and Māyā (creative power) ('devyās tasyāśritās sadā'). In Pāñcharātra ideology, the will (icchā) 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 (icchā, 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 transcendental absolute. She is celebrated in many Pāñcharātra texts, especially in *Lakshmī-tantra* and *Śrīpraśna-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



MAHĀ-LAKSHMI (Tanjore Art Gallery, Tanjore)

with the Lord. Thus she becomes an object of adoration (cf. *Lakshmī-tantra*, 50, 110)

She symbolizes power, prosperity, 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).



VAISHNAVĪ (from Māmallapuram)

Lakshmī attended by elephants (gaja-lakshmī) is a very old idea. The early Maurya and Śuṅga representations of Lakshmī 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-varṇā); her complexion is that of lotus (padma-mālini); 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



KĪRTI-LAKSHMI

the lotus with a thousand petals (suggesting the expanding universe): It is indeed the world itself in all its variety and glory.

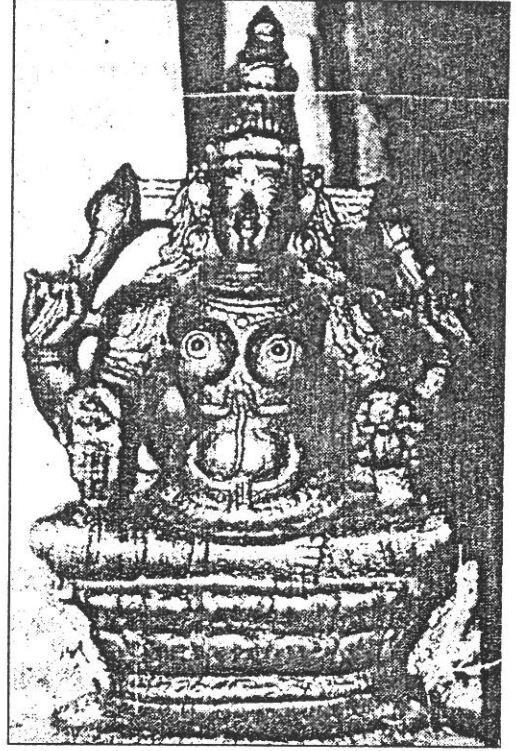
Lakshmī's association with the elephants also is ancient, as already mentioned. The elephant has always represented to the Indian mind royal splendour and authority; richly

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 *Ṛgvedic* Śrīsūkta along with the inspiring call of the elephants (hasti-nādapra-bodhinīm), the horses (aśva-pūrvām), the chariots (ratha-madhyām) and gold (suvarṇā, hema-mālinī).

Vishṇu-dharmottara (3,82,10) explains that the two elephants attending upon Lakshmī represent the two treasures known as śaṁkha and padma ('hasti-dvayam 'vijānīhi śaṁkha-padma-śubhau 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-puṣṭām karīṣiṇīm); 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').



SANTĀNA-LAKSHMI
(Nelliappan Temple, Tirunelveli)

It is usual to enumerate eight forms of Lakshmī: 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.

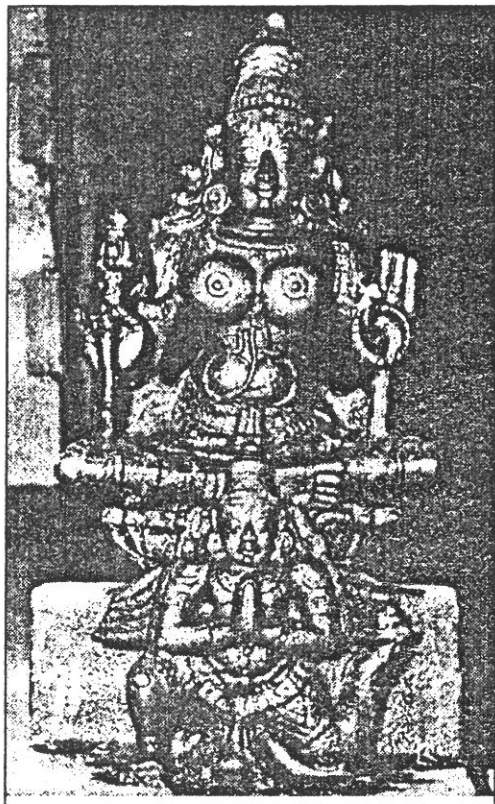
The eight forms are sometimes differently named: Ādi-lakshmī, Gaja-lakshmī, Sāmānya-lakshmī, Indra-lakshmī, Mahālakshmī, Vīra-lakshmī, Prasanna-lakshmī, and Dhanada-lakshmī; or dhairya-lakshmī, Kīrti-lakshmī, Vijaya-lakshmī, Sthairya-lakshmī, Dhana-lakshmī, Dhānya-lakshmī, Santāna-lakshmī, and

Bhāgya-lakshmī; or again Ādi-lakshmī, Santāna-lakshmī, Gaja-lakshmī, Dhana-lakshmī, Dhānya-lakshmī, Vijaya-lakshmī, Aisvarya-lakshmī and Vīra-lakshmī.

Īśvara-saṁhitā (7,7,62)

distinguishes between three forms of Lakshmī: 1) Yoga-lakshmī (resting in the Śrīvatsa on the chest of Viṣṇu, 'śrīvatsa-gā), (2) Bhoga-lakshmī (standing by the side of Viṣṇu 'pārśva-gā), and (3) Vīra-Lakshmī. The last form is to be installed separately (prthag-gehe) in the first, second or third enclosure of the Viṣṇu temple, and worshipped independently (svātantryeṇa), while the first two forms receive worship along with Viṣṇu. 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.



JAYA-LAKSHMI
(Nelliappan Temple, Tirunelveli)

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 (sarvābharāṇa-bhūshitā), wearing splendid ear-rings (chāru-kuṇḍalā), with prominent breasts (pīnonnata-payodharā), with a smiling countenance (su-smitānanā), with eyes wide and long like a well-blossomed blue lily (prabuddhotpala-vistr̥talochanā), showing lovely curls of dark hair above the forehead, resembling the fluttering bees (chalad-dvirephapaṭala-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-padmasanā', 'padmasanopavishtā', 'padmasanāsīna', 'padma-patrasamāsīnā'), that her large breasts are

covered by a 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 (mukutottama-śobhitā).

Her complexion is usually given as that of burnished gold ('tapta-kāñchana-sannibhā', 'tapta-jāmbūnadamayī', *Vishvaksena-saṁhitā*, 18,48 and 20, 255), although sometimes she is described as having the colour of red lotus ('padmābhā', *Pūrva-kāraṇa*, 12th paṭala) or that of coral ('pravālaprabhā', *Chandī-kalpa*), or again as being fair-complexioned ('gaurāṅgī', *Śilpa-ratna*; 'gaurī', Hemādri'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', *Vishvakṣena-saṁhitā*, 20, 256; 'pravāḷa-sadṛśaṁbarā' *Īśvara-saṁhitā*, 9,10 and *Pārameśvara-saṁhitā*, 11,9), or yellow ('pīta-vastram') *Vishvakṣena-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 (dvi-bhujām), 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'). *Hayaśirsha-saṁhitā* (18,1) speaks of Lakshmī with two arms, carrying lotus in the right hand and wood-apple (śrīphala) in the left. *Pūrva-kāraṇa* (paṭala 12) and *Aṁśumadbhedā* (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-lakshmī 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 (aṣṭa-bhujā), 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-Vrata-khaṇḍa 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 (aṣṭa-

patram) placed upon a throne ('siṃhāsana-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-pṛshṭhe kuñjara-dvayam, devyāś 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 pañkaja-dhāriṇau), suggests that she must be shown seated like Gaṇapati (vināyakavad 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-padmāsana).

Vishvaksena-saṁhitā (20,255-261) provides in the four hands of the goddess discus (right upper hand), conch (left 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 bijapūra fruit, golden chalice and golden lotuses in the hands.

Mahālakshmī, 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* (9,1-12) 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-karām').



ĀDI-LAKSHMI

Now, a description may be given of the eight varieties of Lakshmī (ashta-lakshmī). However, details vary according to texts, as regards number of hands and what the hands hold.

1. Ādi-lakshmī; two-armed, with lotus and gesture of protection in the hands, wearing flower-garlands and



SANTĀNA-LAKSHMĪ

having an aureole (prabhā-maṇḍala-maṇḍitā).

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

3. Gaja-Lakshmī: having complexion like lac (lākṣhā-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-makuṭa, and bedecked with all



DHANA-LAKSHMI

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-śāli), basket of plantains (droṇikām kadalīphalaiḥ), sheaf of paddy, and the gestures of protection



DHĀNYA-LAKSHMI

and boon-bestowal, she is an embodiment of compassion (kṛpāmūrti) and she rides upon an elephant (gajāruḍhām).

6. Vijaya-Lakshmī: seated upon a throne ('simhāsana-saṁsthitā) and having swan as her mount (hamsa-vāhanā); has eight arms, carrying sword, noose, discus, gesture of



VIJAYA-LAKSHMI

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



VĪRA-LAKSHMI

other hands discus, arrow, spear, bow, conch and skull-cup.

There is another form of *Lakshmī* known as *Āryā* (or *Yoga-nidrā*), mentioned in *Sanatkumāra-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



BHĀGYA-LAKSHMI

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 flywhisk, Jayā and Vijayā at the back; and on her right side stands Pushkalā carrying

betel-leaf (tāmbūla-patra-hastā), and on her left Pūrṇā, 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.

We find in Bhṛṅgu's *Khilādhikāra* (15,98-99) the iconographical details regarding Śrī (Lakshmī) as follows :

पद्मपीठे समासीनां मण्डले चोर्ध्वकर्णिके ।
तथा प्रसारितकरां देवीं धृतकुशेशयाम् ॥१॥
शातकुम्भमयैः कुम्भैः सिच्यमानां दिशां गजैः ।

अथवा शयनारूढां क्रीडन्तीं सह विष्णुना ।
मानोक्तेन तु मानेन श्रीदेवीं कारयेत्सुधीः ॥२॥

The most popularly worshipped form of Lakshmī is Mahālakshmī. There are many shrines in the country for this form of the goddess, the most celebrated of them being in Kolhāpur (Karavīra-kshetra) in Maharāshtra. Indeed, *Viśvakarma-śāstra* asserts that the real form of Mahālakshmī can be seen only in Kolhāpura; and that in other places it is only Lakshmī even when called Mahālakshmī (kolhāpuram vinānyatra mahālakshmīr yadochyate, lakshmīvat sā sadā kāryā).

The *Prādhānika-rahasya* (supplement to *Durgā-sapta-śatī*) explains that Mahālakshmī was the first to appear before everything (sarvasyādyā) and was of the nature of the three guṇas. She was both



MAHA-LAKSHMI
(old drawing from Mysore)

manifest and unmanifest. When she looked at the void (śūnyam), she assumed the form which was purely tāmasa. Mahālakshmī called her Mahā-kālī (Mahāmāyā, duratyayā). Then Mahālakshmī assumed a second form, which was purely sāttvika; and

Mahālakshmī called her Mahā-sarasvatī (Mahāvidyā, Mahāvānī, Bhāratī, Vāk, Sarasvatī, Āryā, Brāhmī, Kāmadhenu, Veda-garbhā, Dhīśvarī (4-16).

Mahālakshmī then directed Mahā-kālī and Mahā-sarasvatī to create pairs according to their own guṇas (tamas and sattva respectively). And she herself created the pair, one male and the other female; and she called them Brahmā (Vidhi, Viriñchi, Dhātā) and Lakshmī (Śrī, Padmā, Kamalā, Mātā). Mahā-kālī created Śiva (Nīlakaṇṭha, Rakta-bāhu, Śvetāṅga, Śaṁkara, Sthāṇu, Kapardi, Triochana) and Sarasvatī (Trayī-vidyā, Kāma-dhenu, Strī, Bhāshā, Aksharā, Svarā). Mahā-sarasvatī created Kṛṣṇa (Vishṇu, Hṛṣhīkeśa, Vāsudeva, Janārdana) and Gaurī (Umā, Satī,

Chandī, Sundarī, Subhagā, Śivā) (17-23).

Mahālakshmī thereupon gave Sarasvatī as consort to Brahmā, Gaurī to Rudra (viz. Śiva) and Lakshmī to Vāsudeva (viz. Kṛṣṇa). Brahmā with the help of Sarasvatī created the primordial egg (aṇḍa); and Śiva with the help of Gaurī broke it open. Then the entire universe came out of it. Vishṇu with the help of Lakshmī nourished it and protected it. Śiva with the help of Gaurī undertook to dissolve it at the end (26-29).

Mahālakshmī herself is all things (sarva-sattva-mayī) and governs all things (īśvarī). She is both devoid of form (nirākārā) and filled with forms (sākārā), and is known by various names (nānābhidhāna-bhṛt).

According to this text, Mahālakshmī herself was of the colour of molten gold (tapta-kāñchana-varṇābhā), and decorated with golden ornaments (tapta-kāñchana-bhushaṇā). She was four-armed, carrying in her hands mātuluṅga fruit, mace, shield and bowl of liquor; she bore on her head serpent, liṅga and yoni (5-6).

Mahālakshmī thus is to be regarded not as the consort of Viṣṇu, but as the primordial energy manifesting herself as Mahāsarasvatī (sattva), Mahālakshmī (rajas) and Mahākālī (tamas), from whom the three gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra took shape to create, preserve and dissolve the universe.

The cult of Mahālakshmī (as we find it in Kolhāpur in Mahārāshtra

and places like Doḍḍa-gadda-vallī in Karnāṭaka) is essentially Śākta in orientation and tāntrik in practice. Inside the temple at Kolhāpur, there is the shrine to Mahālakshmī in the East, another to Mahākālī in the North, and still another to Mahāsarasvatī in the South. It is also claimed that Kaṅkāla-bhairava had his shrine in the West (although it is not to be seen now; there is however a representation of Bhairava-chāmuṇḍā in the Gaṇeśa-pavilion in this direction) (cf. S.K. Prabhu-Desai, Mārāṭhi *Devī-Kosha*, Vol.II, p.264.).

It is also to be noted that in the *Mahāpīṭha-nirṇaya* (which gives an account of the fifty-one śakti-pīṭhas in the country, the presiding form of Devī in Karavīra (viz Kolhāpur) is called Mahisha-mardini-

(‘karavire triṇetrā devī mahisha-mardini’), a form of Durgā.

Karavīra is an important śakti-pīṭha, extolled in several purāṇas (like *Matsya*, *Pādma*, *Brahmāṇḍa*), *Devī-bhāgavata* identifies this centre as that of Lakshmī (‘kolāpuram mahāsthānam yatra lakshmī sadā sthitā’). But the iconographic details of the main image in the Kolhāpur shrine do not suggest that it is a form of Lakshmī; They would rather indicate the aspect of Durgā. The same is the case with the Mahālakshmī image in Doḍḍa-gadda-vallī (in Karnāṭaka).

According to *Durga-sapta-śatī* and *Skanda-purāṇa* (Sahyādri-khaṇḍa, 2) Mahālakshmī is to be shown as possessing eighteen hands, carrying

in them rosary, axe, mace, dart, vajra, lotus, bow, small water-pot (kuṇḍika) śakti, sword, shield (charma), conch, bell, bowl of liquor (sudhāpātra), spear, noose, discus and the gesture of boon-bestowal. *Chaṇḍī-kalpa*, which gives almost the same iconographic detail, further mentions that she must be seated upon a lotus (saroja-sthitā) and that her complexion must be that of coral (viz. red, ‘pravāla-prabhā’).

However, the image in the temple at Kolhāpur does not answer to this description. It is a standing figure (carved out of black stone, and about three feet in height), with only four hands; a crouching lion can be seen at the back with its head to the left of the goddess. The description of this image in Hemādri’s *Chaturvarga-*

chintāmaṇi specifies that the normal right hand carries a bowl ('dakṣiṇādhah kare pātram'), the upper hand on the same side holds the mace (ūrdhve kaumodakīm'); the left upper hand holds a shield ('vāmordhve khetakam'), and the normal left hand carries the sacred fruit (śrīphalam tad adhahkare').

But in actuality, the details of the two normal hands are reversed in the image at Kolhāpur. The mace is a huge one, its head touching the ground.

Skānda-purāṇa (mūrti-rahasya) refers to the fruit as mātuluṅga and to the bowl as the bowl of liquor, and provides the same details for the four hands ('mātuluṅgam gadām khetam pāna-pātram cha bibhratī').

Rūpa-maṇḍana, which also mentions the four-armed Mahālakṣmī, provides the gesture of boon-bestowal, trident, shield and bowl of liquor for the four hands.

Hemādri's book cited above mentions that the goddess carries a liṅga on her head ('bibhratī mastake liṅgam'), while the purāṇa referred to adds to the liṅga on the head a serpent and the vagina ('nāgam liṅgam cha yonim cha bibhratī nṛpa mūrdhani'). *Rūpa-maṇḍana* also says that hood of a snake (nāga-phana) must be shown over the head of the goddess.

The actual photograph of the image in the sanctum of the Kolhapur shrine is reproduced here; and it may be seen that the details



MAHĀLAKSHMI IN THE SANCTUM OF THE TEMPLE AT KOLHAPUR

mentioned by Hemādri and *Rūpa-maṇḍana* are not present in the stone-image.

Mahālakshmī is sometimes added in the sculptural representation of the seven mother-goddesses. In *Pūjā-paddhati*, eight mātṛkas are

counted, and Mahālakshmī is described as celestial-limbed (divyāṅga), seated upon the lunar orb (chandra-saṁsthāna), riding upon a bull (vṛsha-vāhani) and two-armed, carrying the gesture of boon-bestowal and trident in her hands (triśula-vara-dhāriṇi)

Lakshmī

(i) Lakshmī:

The mantra:

नमः कमलवासिन्यै स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi is Daksha, the chhandas is virāt, and the devatā is Śrīh.

Dhyāna:

पद्मस्था पद्मनेत्रा कमलयुगलवराभीतियुग्दोः सरोजा
देहोत्थाभिः प्रभाभिस्त्रिभुवनमखिलं भासुरा भासयन्ती ।
मुक्ताहाराभिरामोन्नतकुचकलशा रत्नमञ्जीरकाञ्ची
ग्रैवेयोर्म्यङ्गदाढ्या धृतमणिमकुटा श्रेयसे श्रीर्भवेद्वः ॥

(ii) Ramā-vidyā:

The mantra:

श्रीं ॐ नमो भगवति सर्वसौभाग्यदायिनि श्रीविद्ये महाविभूतये स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi is Brahmā, the chhandas Gāyatri,
and the devatā Ramā-vidyā.

Dhyāna:

तटिच्छोभापूर्णं तपनशशिताटङ्कयुगलां लसद्ग्रीवां क्षौमांशुकविशदनाभीसरसिजाम् ।
दरस्मेरां धीरां करकलितपद्मां त्रिनयनां रमाविद्यां वन्दे वरपुरुषवामोरुनिलयाम् ॥

(iii) **Mahā-lakshmī:**

The mantra:

ओं श्रीं ह्रीं श्रीं कमले कमलालये प्रसीद प्रसीद श्रीं ह्रीं श्रीं महालक्ष्मि नमः ॥

Daksha is the ṛshi, Virāṭ is the chhandas, and Śrīh is the devatā

Dhyāna:

हस्तोद्यद्वसुपत्रपङ्कजयुगादर्शस्फुरन्नूपुरा
ग्रैवेयाङ्गदहारकङ्कणमहामौलिज्वलत्कुण्डला ।
पद्मस्था परिचारिकापरिवृता शुक्लाङ्गरागांशुका
देवी दिव्यवसुप्रदा भवभयप्रध्वंसिनी स्याद्रमा ॥

Another Dhyāna:

अमलकमलसंस्था तद्रजःपुञ्जवर्णा करकमलधृतेष्टाभीतियुग्माम्बुजा च ।
मणिमकुट विचित्रालंकृताऽकल्पजालैः भवतु भुवनमाता सन्ततं श्रीः श्रियै वः ॥

(iv) **Gaja-lakshmī:**

The mantra:

ऐं ह्रीं श्रीं क्लीं सौः पङ्कजहस्ते नमः ।

The ṛshi is Bhṛgu, the chhandas Anusṭup, and the devatā
Mahā-lakshmī.

Dhyāna:

कान्त्या काञ्चनसन्निभां हिमगिरिप्रख्यैश्चतुर्भिर्गजैः
हस्तोत्क्षिप्तहिरण्मयामृतघटैरासिच्यमानां श्रियम् ।
नानारत्नसमुज्ज्वलां करलसत् पद्मां किरीटोज्ज्वलां
क्षौमाबद्धनितम्बबिम्बलसितां वन्देऽरविन्दस्थिताम् ॥

(v) Saubhāgya-lakshmī:

The mantra:

ओं श्रीं ह्रीं क्लीं महालक्ष्मि महालक्ष्मि एह्येहि महासौभाग्यं मे देहि स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi is Deveśa (viz. Indra); the chhandas Gāyatrī, and the devatā Saubhāgya-mahā-lakshmī.

Dhyāna:

या सा पद्मासनस्था विपुलकटितटी पद्मपत्रायताक्षी
गम्भीरावर्तनाभिः स्तनभरनमिता शुभ्रवस्त्रोत्तरीया ।
लक्ष्मीर्दिव्यैर्गजेन्द्रैर्मणिगणखचितैः स्नापिता हेमकुम्भैः
नित्यं सा पद्महस्ता मम वसतु गृहे सर्वमाङ्गल्य युक्ता ॥

Another Dhyāna:

माणिक्यप्रतिमप्रभां हिमनिभैस्तुङ्गैश्चतुर्भिर्गजैः
हस्ताग्राहितरत्नकुम्भसलिलैराषिच्यमानां सदा ।
हस्ताब्जैर्वरदानमब्जयुगलाभीतीर्दधानां हरेः
कान्तां कांक्षितपारिजातलतिकां वन्दे सरोजाननाम् ॥

(vi) Kamalā-lakshmī:

The Mantra:

ओं कमलरूपिण्यै नमः ॥

Daksha is the ṛshi, Virāt the chhandas, and Śrīh the devatā

Dhyāna:

आसीना सरसीरुहे स्मितमुखी हस्ताम्बुजैर्बिभ्रती
दानं पद्मयुगाभयं च वपुषा सौदामिनीवल्लभा ।
मुक्तादामविराजमानपृथुलोत्तुङ्गस्तनोद्भासिनी
पायाद्वः कमला कटाक्षविभवैरानन्दयन्ती हरिम् ॥

(vii) **Sāmṛājya-lakshmī:**

The mantra, two-lettered, is

ईं हं

The ṛshi is Hari (viz. Viṣṇu), the chhandas Gāyatri and the devatā
Mohinī-lakshmī-sāmṛājyadā (who is eight-armed)

Dhyāna:

अतसीपुष्पसंङ्काशां रत्नभूषणभूषिताम् ।
शंखचक्रगदापद्मशार्ङ्गबाणधरां करैः ॥१॥
षड्भिः कराभ्यां देवेशीं वरदाभयशोभिताम् ।
एवमष्टभुजां ध्यात्वा त्रिलक्षं प्रजपेत्सुधीः ॥२॥

(viii) **Saundarya-lakshmī:**

The mantra

ओं श्रीं कमले कमलालये प्रसीद प्रसीद महालक्ष्मि नमः श्रीं ॥

Dhyāna:

सिन्दूरारुणकान्तिमब्जवसतीं सौन्दर्यवारां निधिम्
कोटीराङ्गदहारकुण्डलकटीसूत्रादिभिर्भूषिताम् ।
हस्ताब्जैर्वसुपात्रमब्जयुगलादर्शो वहन्तीं परा-
मावीतां परिचारिकाभिरनिशं ध्यायेत्प्रियां शार्ङ्गिणः ॥

कल्पोक्तलक्ष्मीस्तोत्रम् ॥

अङ्गं हरेः पुलकभूषणमाश्रयन्ती भृङ्गाङ्गनेव मुकुलाभरणं तमालम् ।
अङ्गीकृताखिलविभूतिरपाङ्गलीला माङ्गल्यदाऽस्तु मम मङ्गलदेवतायाः ॥१॥

मुग्धा मुहुर्विदधती वदने मुरारेः प्रेमत्रपाप्रणिहितानि गतागतानि ।
माला दृशोर्मधुकरीव महोत्पले या सा मे श्रियं दिशतु सागरसंभवायाः ॥२॥

आमीलिताक्षमधिगम्य मुदा मुकुन्दं आनन्दकन्दमनिमेषमनङ्गतन्त्रम् ।
आकेकरस्थितकनीनिकपक्ष्मनेत्रं भूत्यै भवेन्मम भुजङ्गशयाङ्गनायाः ॥३॥

बाह्वन्तरे मधुजितः श्रितकौस्तुभे या हारावलीव हरिनीलमयी विभाति ।
कामप्रदा भगवतोऽपि कटाक्षमाला कल्याणमावहतु मे कमलालयायाः ॥४॥

कालाम्बुदालिलडहोरसि कैटभारेः धाराधरे स्फुरति या तटिदङ्गनेव ।
मातुः समस्तजगतां महनीयमक्षि भद्राणि मे दिशतु भार्गवनन्दनायाः ॥५॥

प्राप्तं पदं प्रथमतः खलु यत्प्रभावात् माङ्गल्यभाजि मधुमाथिनि मन्मथेन ।
मय्यापतेत्तदिह मन्थरवीक्षणार्थं मन्दालसाक्षि मकरालयकन्यकायाः ॥६॥

विश्वामरेन्द्रपद विभ्रमदानदक्षमनन्दहेतुरधिकं मधुविद्विषोऽपि ।
ईषन्निषीदतु मयि क्षणमीक्षणार्थं इन्दीवरोदरसहोदरमिन्दिरायाः ॥७॥

इष्टा विशिष्टमतयोऽपि नरा यया द्राक् हृष्टस्त्रिविष्टपसदश्च पदं भजन्ते ।
दृष्टिः प्रहृष्टकमलोदरदीप्तिरिष्टाम् पुष्टिं कृषिष्ट मम पुष्करविष्टपायाः ॥८॥

दद्याद्वयानुपवनो द्रविणाम्बुधारां अस्मिन्नकिञ्चनविहङ्गशिशौ विषण्णे ।
दुष्कर्मधर्ममपनीय चिराददूरात् नारायणप्रणयिनीनयनाम्बुवाहः ॥६॥

गीर्देवतेति गरुडध्वजवल्लभेति शाकम्भरीति शशिशेखरसोदरीति ।
सृष्टिस्थितिप्रलयसिद्धिषु सुस्थितायै तस्यै नमस्त्रिभुवनैकगुरोस्तरुण्यै ॥१०॥

श्रुत्यै नमोऽस्तु शुभकर्मफलप्रसूत्यै रत्यै नमोऽस्तु रमणीयगुणाश्रयायै ।
शक्त्यै नमोऽस्तु शतपत्रनिकेतनायै पुष्ट्यै नमोऽस्तु पुरुषोत्तमवल्लभायै ॥११॥

नमोऽस्तु नालीकनिभाननायै नमोऽस्तु दुग्धोदधिजन्मभूम्यै ।
नमोऽस्तु सोमामृतसोदरायै नमोऽस्तु दामोदरवल्लभायै ॥१२॥

नमोऽस्तु देव्यै भृगुनन्दनायै नमोऽस्तु विष्णोरुरसि स्थितायै ।
नमोऽस्तु लक्ष्म्यै कमलालयायै नमोऽस्तु नारायणवल्लभायै ॥१३॥

नमोऽस्तु हेमाम्बुजपीठिकायै नमोऽस्तु भूमण्डलनायिकायै ।
नमोऽस्तु देवादिदयापरायै नमोऽस्तु शार्ङ्गायुधवल्लभायै ॥१४॥

स्तुवन्ति ये स्तुतिभिरमूभिरन्वहं त्रयीमयीं त्रिभुवनमातरं रमाम् ।
गुणाधिका गुरुधनधान्यभागिनो भवन्ति ते भवमनुभाविताशयाः ॥१५॥

पद्मप्रिये पद्मिनि पद्महस्ते पद्मालये पद्मदलायताक्षि ।
विश्वप्रिये विष्णुमनोनुकूले त्वत्पादपद्मं मयि सन्निधत्स्व ॥१६॥

(2) GARUḌA

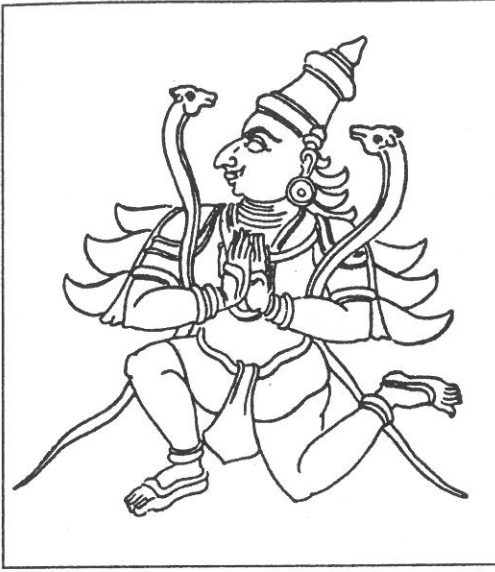


This golden eagle (suparṇa) of Vedic celebrity is known by several descriptive epithets like 'the chariot of Viṣṇu' (Viṣṇu-ratha), 'carrier of nectar' (amṛta-haraṇa), 'golden bodied' (suvarṇa-kāya), 'the lord of the skies' (gaganeśvara), 'quick-moving' (rasāyana), long-lived (chirād), 'dwelling on earth at pleasure' (kā māyu), 'serpent-devourer'

(uragāśana), 'the lion among birds' (pakshi-simha), 'the winner over Indra' (surendra-jit), 'one who assumes all forms' (viśvarūpadhara), 'the king of birds' (pakshi-rāja, vihagesvara, khagendra), 'great hero' (mahāvīra) and 'dweller on the Śālmali tree (Śālmali-stha).



The legends concerning him in the epics *Rāmāyaṇa* (Aranya-kāṇḍa, 15th canto) and *Mahābhārata* (Ādi-



parva, 16 and 13) make him the son of Kaśyapa (son of Marīchi, and grandson of Brahmā) and Vinatā (daughter of Daksha). Kaśyapa had two wives, Kadrū and Vinatā. Kadrū became the mother of one thousand serpents (nāga). Vinatā layed two eggs, one of which did not hatch. She broke open the egg in haste, and out came a half-developed baby (vikalāṅga), Aruṇa, who later became

the charioteer to the Sun-god, Sūrya. Aruṇa cursed his mother for his misfortune, and she had to serve as a slave to her co-wife Kadrū. The second egg was allowed to hatch in due course, and Garuḍa was thus born.

As soon as Garuḍa was born, he was fully grown (pravṛddhah sahasā); he was possessed of extraordinary power, and he illumined all the directions by his brilliance. He could fly anywhere at will, and assume any form that he desired. He shone like a heap of fire (agni-rāśi), and was terrible of aspect. When he learnt that his mother was in slavery, he resolved to bring nectar from the celestial regions to liberate her, for that is what the children of Kadrū wanted as price for Vinatā's release.



He flew to the heavens with great might and blazing light, and covered the solar orb with his wings; his own body shone like the Sun. He fought with the guardians of nectar (Soma) and brought the pot to where the children of Kadrū resided.

While bringing nectar from the high heavens he caught and devoured on the banks of the lake Alarnha, a

large elephant called Supratika and a huge tortoise called Vibhāvasu. He saved also the Vālakhilya sages who were engaged in severe austerities. Vishṇu was pleased with his valour and made him not only his mount (vāhana) but crest on his banner (dhvaja).

The golden-winged eagle (suparṇa, śyena) bringing Soma down to earth is a Vedic legend (cf. *Ṛg-Veda*, 4,26-27), and the bird is the symbol of the Sun. The expression Tārکشya, the name of Garuḍa, is also to be met with in *Ṛg-veda* (1,89,6). The expression refers to the lineage of the sage Tṛksha (tṛksha-muner-gotrāpatya) and the offspring of Tārکشya, viz. Kaśyapa. The word Garuḍa means one who soars in the sky with his wings (garudbhyām pakshābhyām ḍayate uḍḍiyate).

It is usual to represent Garuḍa as a human being with powerful and outstretched wings. There are some sculptural representations with a human torso, but with a bird's head with prominent beak and the legs of a kite. In the Viṣṇu temples, the image of Garuḍa is installed in a separate enclosure, in front of the sanctum, facing the main icon (mūlārchābhīmukham, *Śrī-praśna-saṁhitā*; 'sammukham deva-devasya', *Īśvara-saṁhitā*, 9,25). He is then in the standing posture, usually two-armed, the hands being folded in the attitude of supplication, and wearing on his head the karaṇḍa type of crown ('prāñjalim dvibhujam vīram karaṇḍamakuṭṭānvitam', *Śrī-praśna* (15,15). Or, he may be represented on the pedestal (pāda-pīṭha) of the Viṣṇu's image, when he is shown

as seated, kneeling on the left knee, and the other leg drawn back ('savya-jānu-gato bhūmau', *Śrī-tattva-nidhi*; 'akuñchitam savya-pādam aparam prsthātas-sthitam', *Śrī-praśna*, 33,7), as if he is ready to fly ('gamanoddyuktam', *ibid*). He may be installed in a pavillion in the first or second enclosure surrounding the sanctum.

According to *Viṣṇu-dharmottara* (3,54,2-5), Garuḍa has the body of the colour of emerald (marakata-prakhya), with a prominent eagle's nose (kausikākāranāsikā), a slightly bulging belly (kiñchit lambodara), bedecked with all ornaments (sarvābharaṇa-bhūṣhita), and eyes and face perfectly round (vṛtta-netra-mukha). His form has the eagle's breast, knee and legs (gṛdhoru-

jānu-charaṇa). He may be shown as four-armed, carrying in his upper arms a parasol (chhatra), a ceremonial pot filled with nectar (pūrṇa-kumbha), his two normal hands being joined in supplication (rachitāñjali). When, however, Viṣṇu is seated on his back, Garuḍa's two normal hands support Viṣṇu's feet (deva-pāda-dharau ubhau).

The *Pāñcharātra* texts prescribe that he should be white like snow (tuhinābha) in body-complexion, and standing on a white lotus (śveta-varṇam śveta-padmopari sthitam', *Śeṣha-saṁhitā* 49, 8) or molten golden in lustre ('tapta-kāñchana-sannibham', *Īśvara-saṁhitā*, 9,22), tranquil in aspect (saumya or śānta), wearing red garments and garlands of red flowers (*Pārameśvara-saṁhitā*, 11,116). The body must be human (nara-tulyam

bhaved aṅgam) and two-armed (nara-tulyam, dvibhujam) but the nose shaped like a beak (nāsikā-chañchu-sannibha); the hair on the head must be wavy (mastake kuṭīlam keśam), and the eyes round (netre vartule); he must wear serpents as ear-ornaments (sarpa-kuṇḍala), and there must be fine wings perched behind the arm-pits (*Haya-śīrsha-saṁhitā*, 18,1-5). *Pārameśvara-saṁhitā* (11, 115-117), however, prescribes that he must be shown as fierce-looking with terrible fangs in his mouth and with knitted eye-brows (subhīṣhaṇa, daṁśhṭrā-karāla-vadana, bhrukuṭi-kuṭīlekshaṇa) with a long tail and spread out wings (dīrgha-puccha-paksha-maṇḍala-maṇḍita).

His head wears a crown draped with serpents (maulau mālāyitam nāgam), and the eight celebrated

serpents are used by him as ornaments. The red serpent Padma adorns his right ear as the kuṇḍala; Mahāpadma, tawny-coloured serpent, appears as the kuṇḍala of the left ear. The cloud-hued Guḷika is his necklace (kaṇṭhābharāṇa). The red-hued Vāsuki, the terrible serpent, is the sacrificial chord (brahma-sūtra) on his body. The smoke-coloured Karkoṭaka is a garland (hāra) round his neck. The yellow Takshaka is the girdle (kaṭisūtra). Ananta, silken-textured serpent, is the bracelet (kaṭaka) on his right wrist, and Mahā-śveta, the white serpent, is the bracelet on the left wrist (*Śrī-praśna*, 33,8-17).

Śilpa-ratna contains a curious account of Garuḍa as multi-coloured. From feet upto his knees, he is golden yellow (tapta-hema-prabha); from

knees till his navel snow-white (hima-prakhya); from navel till his neck scarlet (kumkumābha); from neck upwards, he is black like a swarm of bees (bhramara-kula-sama-śyāmala). His eyes, according to this text, is yellow, but beak blue (nīlāgranāsa). *Pārameśvara-saṁhitā*, (11,115-117) however, prescribes that his beak must be red in colour (rakta-tuṇḍa).

In most of the texts, Garuḍa is two-armed, and the hands are in the attitude of supplication (aṅjali). But *Śilpa-ratna* describes an icon of Garuḍa which is eight-armed, and specifies what six of the hands must carry the pot of nectar (amṛta-ghaṭa), mace (gadā), conch (śaṁkha), discus (chakra) and sword (khaḍga). The other two hands are presumably joined in supplication (aṅjali). *Īśvara-saṁhitā*

(5,11) describes a four-armed icon of Garuḍa, the two normal hands joined in supplication and carrying flowers of offering (pushpāñjali-dhara), and the other two hands carrying the pot of nectar (sudhā-kumbha) and a serpent (phaṇeśvara).

Garuḍa is also called Veda-mūrti, signifying that he is an embodiment of Vedic lore and wisdom. In this aspect, his complexion is that of burnished gold (tapta-hāṭaka-sannibha). He is clothed in the garments of the hue of parrot's feathers (śuka-piñchchāmbara-dhara). His crown resembles the slanting crown of Kubera. He rides in a chariot drawn by horses (aśva-ratha-vāhana). His limbs represent several aspects of Vedic learning, like his head representing tri-ṛtta, his eyes sāma-

gāyatra, his soul Soma-sāma, his body Vāmadevya-hymns, his organs chhandas, and his tail yajus.



The representation of Garuḍa on the flag (called 'paṭa-garuḍa') must also be two-armed, the palms joined in supplication (dhṛtāñjali-puta, dvibhuja). The figure must be drawn in five colours in the central portion of the banner (dhvaja-madhye likhet pañcha-varṇena), and must be shown

as flying about in the sky with wings spread out (gagane gamanārambha-paksha-vikshepa-śobhitam) (*Aniruddha-saṁhitā*, 20, 38-40).

One of the names of Viṣṇu Garuḍa-dhvaja, is distinguished by the



ŚRĪKARA-MŪRTI

banner containing the representation of Garuḍa. Kṛṣṇa's chariot is said to have been surmounted by a flag bearing the image of Garuḍa. When Garuḍa flew to the celestial regions, and procured the pot of nectar to free his mother Vinatā from bondage, Viṣṇu was pleased with him and offered to grant him a boon. Garuḍa asked to be accepted as Viṣṇu's mount (vāhana). Viṣṇu not only agreed, but promised to have Garuḍa on top of himself, viz., as his banner flying aloft (dhvaja).

More often, however, the expression refers to the flag that is hoisted in Viṣṇu temples on ceremonial occasions (utsava). *Nāradiya-saṁhitā* (18-22-29) prescribes that the flag must be hoisted in front of the temple on the very



ŚRĪ-KARA-MŪRTI
(Pallava depiction)

day the utsava begins. The cloth that is used for the flag must be fresh and clean, and in extent it must be equal either to the door of the sanctum (prāsāda-dvāra-mātram vā) or to the height of main icon in the sanctum. The figure of Garuḍa, two-armed (dvi-bhuja), equipped with wings (paksha-bhūshita), sharp fangs (tikshṇa-daṁshtra), big body (bṛhat-kāya) and

blue coloured and hooked beak (nīta-kuñchita-nāsikā) must be drawn on the flag, so that Garuḍa's height reaches the navel or the tip of the arms of the main image in the sanctum (mūla-bimbasya nābhyanto bāhvanto garuḍocchrāyah). Garuḍa must be shown as kneeling on his left knee, with the right leg on the ground. The hands must be folded in an attitude of supplication (kṛtāñjali-putam); he must be calm of aspect (saumya) and a slight smile must be shown on the face (īshat-prahasitānana). The colour of Garuḍa must be that of burnished gold (tapta-kāñchana-saṅkāśa), and the measurement for drawing his image must be in terms of nine-tāla .

Śrīkara-mūrti, one of the forms of Vishṇu, is shown as seated on the shoulders of Garuḍa, with Garuḍa

supporting with his hands Vishṇu's feet.

From Bhṛgu-prokta *Khilādhikāra* (15,56-64):

वेदानामुत्तमां मूर्तिं गरुडं नवतालकम् ।
कुर्याद्वाटकवर्णं च शुकपिञ्जरवाससम् ॥१॥
झल्लरीमेखलाबद्धकिङ्किणीजालशेभितम् ।
अङ्गदे कुण्डले कुर्याद्वस्तयोः कर्णयोरथ ॥२॥
छत्रवीरोत्तराबन्धं कौबेरमकुटं तथा ।
बाह्वोराकुञ्चितौ पक्षौ पञ्चवर्णैश्च सुन्दरौ ॥३॥
पक्षयोः कीटकान् कुर्यादधायामसुसंयुतान् ।
आमध्यबन्धसंयुक्तान् विवृतान्कोर्पराश्रितान् ॥४॥
बिन्दुपिञ्जरवर्णाक्तान् पञ्चवर्णैश्च मिश्रितान् ।
तथा मरकताभां च नासिकां चित्रकृच्चरेत् ॥५॥
तिम्रशूडाः समाख्याता मकुटस्य तु शोभनाः ।
उपर्युपरि संछन्ना युक्त्या बन्धूकसन्निभाः ॥६॥
आसने चासनं तस्य यत्र वज्रपीठमुदाहृतम् ।
एकं जानुनि पीड्याथ ब्रह्मासनमथापि वा ॥७॥

शैशवं नागराजस्य बाहुलम्बितमाचरेत् ।
आमूलश्यामलं रम्यं कुञ्जरं तत्र शैषिकम् ॥८॥
तमाभरणवत्कुर्यात्स्मयमानं च गर्वितम् ।
वाहनानां च सम्पत्तिः गरुडस्थापनाद्भवेत् ॥९॥

Garuḍa on the Flag (15,182-189):

तस्माद् ध्वजस्य स्थानं च कुर्याद् बिम्बं यथाक्रमम् ।
ध्वजस्थं गरुडं कुर्यादासनेऽर्पितपादकम् ॥१॥
आकुञ्चितं वामपादं सुप्रसारितबाहुकम् ।
दधतं दक्षिणे हस्ते पद्ममुत्पलमेव वा ॥२॥
अष्टांगुलं पुष्पनालं प्रभूतप्रतिभं महत् ।
पुष्पप्रेक्षमुखं कुर्यात्सानन्दं स्मेरगर्वितम् ॥३॥
एष ग्रामहितः प्रोक्तः जयार्थं चान्य उच्यते ।
जानुनाऽपीड्य पीठं तु सव्येनान्येन वा तथा ॥४॥
बज्रं वा विजिघृक्षन्तमुग्रदृष्टिं चरेदिति ।
पद्मे पद्मासनासीनं सुखं ध्यायन्तमव्ययम् ॥५॥
ऋषीणां च हितार्थाय कुर्यादिवं विचक्षणः ।
अशक्तस्तु ध्वजविधेः मण्डपे सम्यगर्चयेत् ।
गर्भस्थं स्वामिनं दृष्ट्वा ध्वजं कुर्यादिति स्थितिः ॥६॥

Garuḍa

(i) Visha-hara-pakshi-rāja:

The mantra:

क्षिप ओं स्वाहा ॥

Kāśyapa is the ṛshi, pañkti is the chhandas, and Garuḍa is the devata.

Dhyāna:

अमृतकलशहस्तं कान्तिसंपूर्णदेहं सकलविबुध वन्द्यं वेदशास्त्रैरचिन्त्यम् ।
विविधसुलभपक्षैर्धूयमानाण्डगोलं सकलविषविनाशं चिन्तयेत्पक्षिराजम् ॥

(ii) Tattva-Garuḍa:

The mantra:

ओं नमो भगवते तत्त्वगरुडाय अमृतकलशोद्धवाय विष्णुवाहनाय बालखिल्यानुजाय
हंससहचराय वासवोद्यानसंहननाय वज्रनख तुण्डवज्रपक्षालंकृतशरीराय विनतानन्दनाय
दुष्टसर्पगर्वविषहननाय नागान्तकाय असुरान्तकाय यौ म्यौ दुष्टविषं छिन्दि छिन्दि
आवेशय आवेशय दुष्टग्रहं छिन्दि छिन्दि छिन्दि आवेशयावेशय असुरग्रहं वा यक्षग्रहं
वा देवग्रहं वा ग्रथनग्रहं वा विनायकग्रहं वा सोमग्रहं वा सूर्यग्रहं वा यदि रुद्रलोकग्रहं
वा शीघ्रमावेशयावेशय हन हन दह दह मथ मथ विध्वंसय विध्वंसय चट चट
प्रचट प्रचट हुं ख फट् रुद्र आज्ञापय स्वाहा ॥

(iii) **Nāgāri-Garuḍa**

The mantra:

ज्वलज्वल महामते गरुडचूडामणे उग्ररूपधारक सर्वसर्पभयङ्कर भीषय भीषय सर्पान्
दह दह भस्मीकुरु अप्रतिहतशासन हुं फट् स्वाहा ॥

(iv) **Bhūta-nigraha-Garuḍa**

The mantra:

ओं श्रीं श्रीं गरुडाय गरुडाय महागरुडाय समस्ताण्डाण्डवबहिस्त्रैलोक्यनायकाय
नागशोणितदिग्धाङ्गाय ॐ पक्षिराजाय विष्णुवाहनाय सर्वसर्पान् संहर संहर मठ मठ
मर्दय मर्दय मोटय मोटय लोटय लोटय त्रौटय त्रौटय भ्रामय भ्रामय मुञ्च मुञ्च आकर्षय
आकर्षय आगच्छ आगच्छ आवेशय आवेशय सिद्धय सिद्धय शीघ्र शीघ्र
समस्तभूतवेतालान् नाशय नाशय सर्वग्रहान् नाशय नाशय सर्वशत्रून् विनाशय
विनाशय संहर संहर स्वाहा ॥

For this mantra Śankara is the ṛshi, Jagatī is the chhandas, and
Āśu-tārکشya the devatā. This is also called Āśu-gāruḍa-mantra.

Dhyāna:

आजानोस्तप्तहेमप्रभममल हिमप्रख्यमानाभि तस्मा -
दाकण्ठं कुंकुमाभं भ्रमरकुलमिव श्याममामूर्धकेशम् ।
ब्रह्माण्डव्याप्तदेहं द्विभुजमहिवरैर्भूषणैर्भूषिताङ्गम्
पिङ्गाक्षं तीक्ष्णदंष्ट्रं वरदमभयदं तार्क्ष्यमुग्रं नमामि ॥

(3) SUDARŚANA

Vishṇu's discus is often personified and worshipped, both as an āyudha-purusha and as an independent deity. In early sculptural representations, 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



Vishṇu-Kosha

suns (sahasrāditya-saṁkāśa), having a thousand faces (sahasra-vadana), and thousand arms (sahasra-doh) and with a thousand spokes (sahasrāra) (*Śeṣha-saṁhitā*, 24,6). The personification of this Sahasrāra is Sudarśana (chakrābhimāni-deva, heti-rājā).

Within the circle is a six-angled figure (ṣaṭkoṇa), representing the śhāḍguṇya-yantra which illustrates the vyūha ideology of six divine qualities; and it is in front of this that the deity is accommodated.

The deity is visualised 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, *Purushotama-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, *Lakṣmī-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-chatusṭaya). 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).

Śrīpraśna-saṁhitā (30,197,ff) describes Sudarśana as decorated with śrīvatsa-mark, kaustubha-jewel and vana-mālā; he is an emanation from the Saṁkarshaṇa aspect of Viṣṇu (saṁkarshaṇa-samudbhava), and thus shares the characteristics of Rudra. His eight hands carry noose, goad, ploughshare, discus, conch, mace, bow and arrow. He will frighten even fear ('bhayasyāpi bhayañkaram,').

According to *Vihegendra-saṁhitā* (op.cit), Sudarśana-mūrti may be in a standing posture (sthānaka), or in the mobile posture (yānaka) in the āliḍha 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 ('krodha-rakteskshaṇam nṛtyantam madamattam').

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-chakra.

Sudarśana-mūrti is prescribed to be made in nava-tāla.

Sudarśana-nārasimha is a composite image of Sudarśana, having

on one side of the ṣaṭ-koṇa (six-cornered figure) within the flaming discus, and that of Nārasimha on the other side (pūrvam sudarśanam devam apareṇa nṛsimhakam'). While Sudarśana is in the standing posture or in the moving (yānaka) posture, Nārasimha here is always shown in a seated posture (āsīna), often in yoga-paṭṭa. Nārasimha 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-Nārasimha, also declares that the two forms are really one ('sudarśane nṛsimhe vā eka-rūpam ihochyate').

According to *Pādma-saṁhitā* (31, 257, 261), Nārasimha who is to be located in the heart of Sudarśana

(sudarśanasya hṛdaye viśṭitam nṛharim') is like a mountain of crystal (sphatikāchala-saṁkāśa), covered with countless manes, and roaring like the thunder of dissolution ('pralayāmbudā-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. Narasimha 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-viśṭare').

Known also by the Tamil name Aḷahiya-siṅgar ('sundara-simha'), this icon is popularly worshipped by the Śrīvaiṣṇava devotees in South India. There are fine metallic images of

Sudarśana-Nārasimha in the temples of Kāñchīpuram and Śrīraṅgam.

Sudarśana is the name of the discus in Viṣṇu's hand; and the discus is of the design of a wheel.

The antiquity of the wheel and its symbolism goes back to the Vedic period. The Sun was said to move on a chariot with a single wheel



(representing the time-principle, and more especially the year), with twelve spokes (representing the months). The wheel that moves without rest and without changing its speed or direction was identified with the ever-recurrent and uniform aspect of the phenomenal universe. The wheel is symbolic of life, ever-renewing itself in a cycle (bhava-chakra) of time as producer and consumer of everything (kāla-chakra), of the invariable law governing matter and energy in the nerve-channels (nāḍī-chakra), of the cyclical progression of zodiacs (rāśī chakra), and of the fortunes of human beings (bhāgya-chakra).

The idea was represented sculpturally and iconically in several ways; the wheel of dharma that the Buddha sets into motion, the wheel

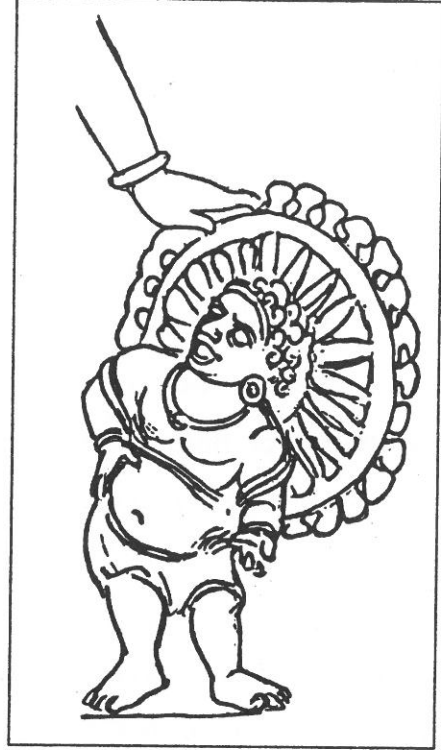
of the Sun transformed into a temple, the wheel of the radiance that surrounds a deity (prabhāchakra or prabhāmaṇḍala), the small ornamental wheel that turns round behind the head of the deity (śīraś-chakra) and the wheel personified as the person (chakra-purusha).

The wheel was also a weapon used in warfare (āyudha), and it may be seen in the hands of deities who are multi-armed. It is a weapon especially carried in one of the hands (usually the upper right hand) of Viṣṇu, along with another weapon, viz., mace (gadā). The other two hands carry conch (śaṁkha) and lotus (padma) which are strictly not weapons. The early representations of the wheel in the hand of Viṣṇu are large in size, suggesting the weapon

actually used in battles. But later, the wheel was stylized into a small, ornamental weapon, gracefully carried in the hand or held with two fingers (the fore-finger and the middle-finger, cf. prescription in *Nārādīya-saṁhitā*, 13, 179; 'tarjanī-madhyamāmadhya kuryāc chakram suśobhanam').

Vishṇu's weapons have special names, like Sudarśana for the wheel (discus), Pāñcha-janya for the conch, Kaumodakī for the mace, Nandakā for the sword, and Śāṅga for the bow. The chakra in the hand of Vishṇu is described as beautiful of aspect (hence the name Su-darśana), and extraordinarily powerful (mahābala); it has flames around (jvālā). It has twelve spokes, three concentric rings, a design with six corners and an inclination to the right (dvādaśāram

shaṭ-koṇam valaya-traya-samyutam, chakram syād dakṣiṇāvartam..).



In icons of Vishṇu the disposition of the chakra held in the upper hand is either facing the viewer fully on its flat surface, when it is called 'sama-sthiti' (stationary position), or the edge of the wheel

facing the viewer, when it is called 'prayoga-chakra' (ready to be hurled at the enemy).

It is usual for Vaishṇava temples to have independent icons of chakra, either as mere wheels or wheels with human representation of the deity representing the weapon called Chakra-purusha or Sudarśana. In Śrīvaishṇava temples, a metallic image of chakra mounted on a shaft and resting on a pedestal is sometimes used as *bali bera*, as the representative deity presiding over the ritual of offering food to the attendant divinities within the temple premises and is also used to officiate in the ceremonial bath after a festival (*avabhṛta-snāna*) in a tank. In Vaishṇava temples of northern parts of the country, it is customary to set up a metallic chakra

on top of the finial of the superstructure above the sanctum.

Besides Viṣṇu, the images of Durgā too have chakra in the upper right hand, and conch (*śaṅkha*) in the corresponding left hand. Durgā is believed to be an aspect of Viṣṇu (*vaishṇavī-śakti*). Several forms of Durgā with multiple hands always carry chakra in one of the hands. Multi-armed images of Gaṇapati, Bhairava, Śarabha and Devī carry chakra along with other weapons of warfare.

Vairochana, a *dhyāni-buddha* related to the sun-god in Mahāyāna Buddhism, is distinguished by the chakra emblem in white colour (*śukla-chakra-chihṇah*) Two of the sixteen *Vidyā-devīs* in the Jaina pantheon

(Vajrāṅkuśī and Chakreśvarī) carry chakra in their hands. The latter is especially recognized by the chakra-emblem. Among other goddesses in this pantheon, twenty-four-armed Padmāvatī carries chakra in one of her hands. The yaksha Gomeda also holds a chakra.

Vishṇu is distinguished by two weapons in his hands, discus (chakra)



and mace (gadā). The form is significant as much as the weapons are symbolic of the principle of mind (manas-tattva) and the principle of deliberate reflection (buddhi-tattva). And it is said that Vishṇu (who is the divinity whose function is preservation of the universe (sthiti), carries these weapons to protect the world, and that he is hidden from the view of the mortals (dhāraṇa loka-rakṣārtham guptaś-chakra-gadādharaḥ).

Chakra is Vishṇu's characteristic weapon and emblem. As explained earlier, it is represented sometimes as a two armed, or multi-armed divinity in human form. This is known as Chakra-purusha or Sudarśana. In the early sculptures of the northern parts of the country, especially Bengal and neighbouring areas, Vishṇu's extra hands are seen resting on the mace

personified as Gadā-devī and discus personified as Chakra-purusha. These weapon-persons are two-armed, standing in posture, sometimes in the attitude of supplication; they are shown as bearing the weapons they represent. The mace is feminine, but discus is masculine.

In South India, the deity representing discus more familiarly known as Sudarśana is multi-armed, and in a moving posture. He is accommodated within the rim of the discus. When, however, the discus is held in the hand of Vishṇu, it is never personified. The discus-person (chakra-purusha) is always an independent icon. In the north, on the other hand, the weapon and the weapon-person are always parts of the Vishṇu icon.

There is an interesting representation of Vishṇu as Chaturmūrti from Kashmir, now

preserved in the Berlin State Museum (Indische Kunstabteilung, Staatliche Museen). This is said to be a work of the late Gupta period (fifth or sixth century). Vishṇu here has placed his left upper hand on the Chakra-purusha, who is shown as a two-armed yaksha (short, stout and pot-bellied), round whose head a large discus is seen as a sort of śiraś-chakra. It is of interest to note that the crown on Vishṇu's head is surmounted by a discus which is prominent (instead of the usual kirīṭa-mukūṭa). The normal right hand holds a lotus, while the upper right arm hangs down (like the upper left arm, which is placed on the Chakra-purusha), probably placed on the mace, which is now missing. The normal left hand holds a conch (śaṁkha). The figure, which is evidently influenced by the Gandhāra model, may represent Vishṇu as Chakra-dhara.

Sudarśana-Chakra

- (i) तारो भृगुर्वियद्भूयस्तदाद्यं वह्निदीर्घयुक् ।
पावकः कवचास्त्रान्तो मनु सप्ताक्षरः स्मृतम् ॥१॥
अहिर्बुध्न्यो मुनिः प्रोक्तश्छन्दोऽनुष्टुबुदाहृतम् ।
देवता मुनिभिः प्रोक्ता चक्ररूपी हरिः स्वयम् ॥२॥

The seven-lettered mantra

ॐ सहस्रार फट् ॥

has Ahirbudhnya as its ṛshi, anushtub as its chhandas, and
Vishṇu in the form of Chakra as the devatā.

Dhyāna:

कल्पान्तार्कप्रकाशं त्रिभुवनमखिलं तेजसा पूरयन्तम्
रक्ताक्षं पिङ्गकेशं रिपुकुलभयदं भीमदंष्ट्राट्टहासम् ।
चक्रं शंखं गदाब्जे पृथुतरमुशलं चापपाशाङ्कुशान् वै
बिभ्राणं दोर्भिराद्यं मनसि मुररिपुं भावयेच्चक्रसंज्ञम् ॥

- (ii) **Sudarśana-mahāviṣṇu:**

The mantra is :

ॐ सहस्रार फट् ॥

The same details as above.

Dhyāna:

अव्याद्भास्करसन्निभाभिरखिलाभिर्दिशो भासयन्
भीमाक्षः क्षरदट्टहासविकसदंष्ट्राप्रदीप्ताननः ।
दोर्भिश्चक्रदरौ गदाब्जमुसलांस्त्रासांश्च पाशाङ्कुशौ
बिभ्रत्पिङ्गशिरोरुहोऽथ भवतः चक्राभिधानो हरिः ॥

- (iii) **Saudarśanī-gāyatrī**

सुदर्शनाय विद्महे । महाज्वालाय धीमहि ।
तन्नश्चक्रः प्रचोदयात् ॥

(4) ANANTA

Ananta is the primordial (or first-born) Serpent or dragon, also called Ananta. It is regarded as one of the progenitors (prajāpatis), evolving from Brahmā, who in turn evolved from Viṣṇu. This is also considered as the tāmasic form of Viṣṇu, abiding in the bottom of the netherworld (pātāla) and worshipped by the gods and sages. He is iconically represented as a thousand-hooded serpent, illumining the entire universe by the lustrous gems which crown his thousand hoods. He is two-armed, and carries a plough-share (lāṅgala) and pestle (muśala) in his hands (suggesting the kinship of the concept of Ādiśeṣha with that of Balarāma or Saṁkarshaṇa). He supports the world on his head. His energy is so great and overflowing that

his eyes rotate all the time. He wears garlands of bright and white gems, and wears blue garment. He is also identified with the first-born child of Kaśyapa (son of Marīchi) by Kadrū (daughter of Daksha-prajāpati). Kadrū had one thousand serpents as her children, of whom Śeṣha was the eldest; important among the other children are Vāsuki, Airāvata, Takshaka, Kārkoṭaka, Kāliya, Kalmāsha, Nahusha, Kuñjara, Kumuda and Kumudāksha.

Meaning “endless” (or infinite), Ananta is also one of the names of Viṣṇu as it is the name of the mythical dragon, Śeṣha. This is Viṣṇu’s tāmasic form, which resides in Pātāla (netherworld, mythically thirty thousand yojanas wide). He has

as said earlier, a thousand heads, carrying a thousand gems which illumine the three worlds. His eyes constantly revolve to keep a watch over everything in the universe. His form is syncretic, human and serpentine. He wears the sacred svastika-mark as an ornament. The entire earth rests on his head like a crown. Śrī-devī and Vāruṇī-devī (both forms of Lakshmī) serve him in this form. At the time of the great deluge (pralaya), Rudra is believed to emanate from the mouth of Ananta, and consume the three worlds. Kṛṣṇa's half-brother, Bala-rāma, is regarded as a partial incarnation of Ananta.

He supports the entire universe, along with six others (Dharma, Kāma, Vasu, Vāsuki, Kapila and Takshaka). He is pictured as possessed of a

thousand hoods (phaṇā-sahasra). An account in *Kālikā-purāṇa* (ch.27) relates that he approached Viṣṇu, reclining on the waters of Kṣhīra-samudra and offered his services to the great god. He employed his body as a cot for him, and spread his hoods on his head as a cover. Viṣṇu then went into deep trance (yoga-nidrā).

Kūrma-purāṇa (ch.48)

distinguishes between two forms of Ananta: Vāsudeva, whose nature is transcendental wisdom and who is beyond the guṇas, and Śeṣha or Kāla (the principle of Time), which is the tāmasic counterpart of Vāsudeva, and which devours all things.

Bhaviṣya-purāṇa has provided an iconographic account of Ananta, as a form of Viṣṇu: "With a thousand

hoods, he is four-armed and carries conch, lotus, discus and mace (emblems of Vishṇu); he wears a splendid crown, a grand yellow garment, and several ornaments; his eyes and hair are tawny red. He resides in the middle of the Kshirāb̥dhi (the legendary Ocean of Milk).

Ananta is also one of the forms of Śiva. He is in this form represented as tranquil (śānta), pleasant (saumya), seated on a red lotus and bedecked with all ornaments (sarvābharaṇa-bhūṣita). He has a tiered crown (karaṇḍa-makuṭa) and spear (śūla), and showing in the other hands the gesture of protection (abhaya) and boon-bestowal (varada).

द्वारस्य वामभागे च अनन्तं परिकल्पयेत् ।
सुवर्णवर्णं तं शेषं शंखक्षीरनिभं तु वा ॥१॥
आनीलाम्बरसंवीतं सर्वाभरणसंयुतम् ।

एकजानुसमासक्तमूर्ध्वं मकुटसंयुतम् ॥२॥
सिंहासने वा कुर्वीत तथा पद्मासनेऽपि वा ।
द्विभुजं नागराजं तु रक्तेत्रासिपाणिकम् ॥३॥
सुरया सहितं देवमप्सरेभिस्तथैव च ।
फणं तु मध्यमं तस्य भवेत्पश्चाङ्गुलायतम् ॥४॥
अष्टाङ्गुलसमुत्सेधं फणानामानुपूर्व्यतः ॥
(खिलाधिकारे भृगुप्रोक्ते १५, ७०-७४)

(5) 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 centuries before Christ, refers to three leaders of the Vṛshṇi clan; Vāsudeva, Baladeva, and Vishvaksena (on Pāṇini, 4,1,114).



VISHVAKSENA (in the temple at Tirumala)

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 Sṛī-Vaiṣṇava line of teachers (guru-paramparā), he occupies the third place (the first teacher being Viṣṇu himself and the second Lakṣmī). He is installed in all Viṣṇu temples of this sect and worshipped. He is regarded as the custodian of the worn flowers of Viṣṇu ('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 Viṣṇu in all details except that he does not have the sṛī-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 Viṣṇu, 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-purāṇa*, 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*') 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 dakṣiṇam pādāṁ vāmam prasārya*'). Another dhyāna-śloka, however, reverses the position of his legs ('*pīṭhād hastat prasārita-dakṣiṇa-pādāḥ ākuñchita-vāma-pādāḥ*'). He wears yellow silken garments (*pīta-dukūlakah*), and is lustrous like fire ('*agni-*

sarṇnibha'). Sometimes, he is accompanied by his consort ('jayayā sārddham āsīnah') and his consort's name is given as Vārāhī ('vārāhī vishvakṣena-priyā', *Kālikā-purāṇa*, op.cit.).

Khilādhikāra (15,52-55) provides the following details about Vishvakṣena:

अतः परं प्रवक्ष्यामि विष्वक्सेनस्य लक्षणम् ।
 नवतालायतं बेरं किरीटेन समायुतम् ॥१॥
 ब्रह्मसूत्रं विना सर्वाभरणैरुपशोभितम् ।
 आकुञ्च्यं दक्षिणं पादं वामं पादं प्रसार्य च ॥२॥
 जयया सुखमासीनं भार्ययाऽग्निसमप्रभम् ।
 शक्त्यायुधं दण्डपाणिं पुष्पपाणिं प्रजाहितम् ॥३॥
 कृत्याऽर्चयेद्भक्तार्थी तु पूज्यमानं सदाऽमरैः ।
 स्नानस्यैवाभिवृद्ध्यर्थं विष्वक्सेनं प्रचक्षते ॥४॥

(5) HANUMĀN

There 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 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 left and 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 narrate many legends about his origin; his parenthood is shared by

Śiva, Vāyu and Viṣṇu; and by his mother Añjanā and her husband Kesari; 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, 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.

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 noises like 'kim-kila', 'bhūm-bhuka'.

He is shown in several postures. He may be standing in sama-bhaṅga or tribhaṅga, with his hands joined in an attitude of supplication (añjali), when 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 chinmudrā, and the left 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-mukhi. The heads are those of monkey (front or east), lion (south, Narasimha), eagle (west, Garuḍa) boar (north, Varāha), and horse (above the front head, Hayagrīva). For details, see the author's forthcoming volume Hanumān-Kosha.

Hanumān

(i) Hanuman-mālā-mantra:

हीं ओं नमो भगवन् प्रकटपराक्रम आक्रान्तदिङ्मण्डल यशोवितानधवलीकृतजगत् त्रितय
वज्रदेह रुद्रावतार लङ्कापुरीदहन उदधिबन्धन दशग्रीवकृतान्तक सीताश्वासन
अञ्जनागर्भसम्भव रामलक्ष्मणानन्दकर कपिसैन्यप्राकारक सुग्रीवधारण पर्वतोत्पाटन
बालब्रह्मचारिन् गम्भीरशब्द सर्वग्रहनाशन सर्वज्वरोत्सादन डाकिनीविध्वंसिन् ओं ह्रीं हा
हा हा हंस हंस एहि सर्वविषं हर हर परबलं क्षोभय क्षोभय मम सर्वकार्याणि साधय साधय
हुं फट् स्वाहा ॥

Dhyāna:

स्फटिकाभं स्वर्णकान्तिं द्विभुजं च कृताञ्जलिम् ।
कुण्डलद्वयसंशोभि मुखाम्भोजं मुहुर्भजे ॥

(ii) Vidyā-Hanumān:

The mantra:

ओं नमो भगवते हनुमते मम मदनक्षोभं संहर संहर आत्मतत्त्वं
प्रकाशय प्रकाशय हुं फट् स्वाहा ॥

Dhyāna:

आञ्जनेयमतिपाटलाननं काञ्चनाद्रिकमनीयविग्रहम् ।
पारिजाततरुमूलवासिनं भावयामि पवमाननन्दनम् ॥

(iii) **Āveśa-Hanumān**

The mantra:

कशिं कुक्ष वरवर अञ्जनावरपुत्रं आवेशि आवेशि ओं ह्रीं हनुमन् फट् ॥

Details and Dhyāna as above

(iv) **Yogāñjaneya**

The Mantra:

ओं नमो भगवते आज्ञनेयाय आत्मतत्त्वं प्रकाशय स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi is Vasishṭha, the chhandas is Anusṭup and the devatā Āñjaneya.

Dhyāna:

वामे जानुनि वामबाहुमपरं ज्ञानाख्यमुद्रायुतं
हृद्देशे कलयन् वृतो मुनिगणैराध्यात्मदत्तेक्षणः ।
आसीनः कदलीवने मणिमये बालार्ककोटिप्रभो
ध्यायन्ब्रह्म परं करोतु मनसः सिद्धिं हनूमान्मम ॥

Prayoga:

आदाय दोष्णा सलिलं प्रसन्नं प्रजप्य मन्त्रं प्रबिपेत् त्रिवारम् ।
रागादिदोषप्रशमाय बुद्धिः ज्ञानोदयाय प्रशमाय वृत्तेः ॥

NOTE ON ŚĀLAGRĀMA

Ammonite fossil stones, recovered from the Gaṇḍakī river-bed in Nepāl, are regarded as exceedingly precious and sacred. Viṣṇu 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 (śālā 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 ('śilākuhare chakram karishyanti'). Such marks alone make the stone eligible to be called a śālagrāma and worshipped. Legends describe that Viṣṇu himself enters into these stones in the form of śāla-creatures and makes his presence felt by the discus-marks ('chakra-chinhair-alamkṛtāh'). Thus a śālagrāma is verily the image of Viṣṇu (śālagrāmo harer mūrtih').

Śālagrāmas occur in as many as 89 varieties. They are said to represent so many forms of Viṣṇu. They include the twenty-four well-known forms, the ten major incarnations and their variant forms, 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 'śilādvāra', 'the gate by which the śāla had entered), but also lines, scratches or holes on the surface suggesting several emblems of Viṣṇu, 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 (dhautāṅgara-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 (śrīprada), and umbrella-shaped stones will secure sovereignty (sāmrājya): cart-like stones (śakaṭākara) 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 (madhye-gadākṛti-rekhā); another account prescribes two lines.

3. Viṣṇu: size and shape of bilva fruit, black in colour, a hole at the back (pṛsthā chhidram).

4. **Śrīdhara:** very small in size (ati-kshudra) and shape of a kadarnba flower, five lines suggesting vanamālā and mace (pañcha-rekhā, vanamālā-gadāṅkita); two chakras.

5. **Nārasimha:** wide opening like an open mouth (ati-vistṛtāsyā); 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 chatuś-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 (indra-nīla); without any lines (virekhā).

9. **Matsya:** long and lotus-bud-shaped (dīrghāmbujākāra); golden-hued; line at the opening; three spots (bindu-traya).

10. **Haya-grīva:** 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 cakra 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 (bluish hue (nīla); yellow line at the opening; chakra in the middle (madhye

chakra); small holes; no vanamālā line.

17. Vāmana; round in shape (vartula); deep-blue in colour like atasī 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 (vistrāśya); 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 (dakṣiṇāvarta).

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); 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-garbha: moon-shaped; whitish hue and golden lines.

28. Brahma: large (pṛthu); many holes (sushira); one chakra and lotus mark (eka-chakrāmbujah); a long line (sudīrgha-rekhā).

29. Yogīśvara: a liṅga-like protuberance on top (śikare liṅgam)

30. Raṇa-rāma: round in shape (vartula); medium size (madhyama); two chakras (dvichakra); 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. Gadādhara: not bright, only one chakra.

For worship in the household the following four śālagrāmas are considered meritorious; Vāsudeva, Hayagrīva, Lakshmī-nṛsimha, and Sītārāma śālagrāmas. Some Śālagrāmas are regarded as 'ferocious' (ugra) (like narasimha-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 grhe-nārchyam').

(For details see the author's *Śālagrāma-kosha* in two volumes)

NOTE ON ŚRĪ-VATSA

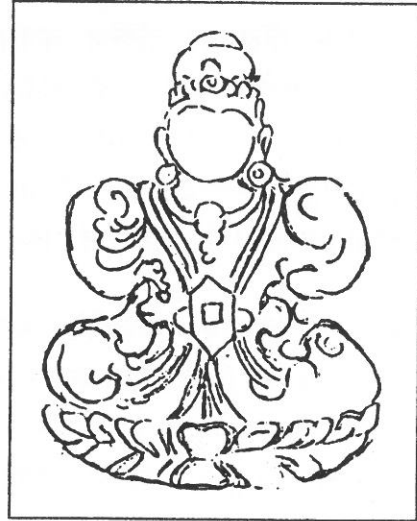
The distinguishing and auspicious mark on the chest of Viṣṇu, composed of a small mass of white-coloured, hair, with rightward inclination ('vakshastha-śukla-varṇa-dakṣiṇāvarta-romāvali'). It is also identified sometimes with the Kaustubha jewel; but the identification is erroneous. Kaustubha is a jewel

worn on the body, whereas śrīvatsa is a congenital mark on the body, one of the marks of a great person. Viṣṇu is described as Śrīvatsāṅka.

Śitopanishat (hymn 7), narrating the three aspects of ichhā-śakti, describes śrīvatsa as the form assumed by yoga-śakti (one of the three varieties of ichhā-śakti, the other two being bhoga-śakti and vīra-śakti) as a mark on the right chest of the lord (bhagavato dakṣiṇavakshas-sthale śrīvatsākṛtir bhūtvā viśrāmyati'), during the period of dissolution of the universe (pralayāvasthāyam viśramaṇārtham).

In early icons of Viṣṇu, 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-lakshmī) is accommodated stylistically. The śrīvatsa 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 śrīvatsa as the 'emblem' or 'banner' (viz. distinguishing mark) of the tīrthaṅkaras ('arhatām dhvajah'). The same mark is also to be found in some of the icons of Buddha.



APPENDIX - I

The following extracts from *Kāśyapīya-Jñānakāṇḍa* (chapter 37) provide iconometric, iconographic and other particulars concerning the ten avatāras of Viṣṇu. The chapter is called Daśāvatāra-vidhi. And among the incarnatory forms enumerated here, Buddha is omitted and substituted by Balabhadra-Rāma.

दशावतारस्वरूपम् ॥

मत्स्य कूर्म वराह नरसिंह वामन जामदग्न्यराम दशरथराम बलभद्र कृष्ण कल्किन् इत्येतान् बृहद्वृत्तविमाने गर्भागारं द्वादशधा विभज्य आग्नेय्यां पूर्वभागे तप्तहाटकसन्निभं रक्तपद्मारुढं वितस्तिविस्तृतं मत्स्यरूपं, पश्चिमे अञ्जनाभं षोडशाङ्गुलविस्तृतं तदर्धोच्छ्रयं कच्छपं चतुरश्रपीठसंस्थितं, वराहवदनं श्यामलं चतुर्भुजमुर्व्याश्रितोत्सङ्गं पीताम्बरधरं शङ्खचक्रयुतं नरवराहरूपं, दंष्ट्राकराल सिंहास्यं सटाऽऽटोपं मुक्ताभकं चतुर्भुजं वीरासने संस्थितं नरसिंहं, वामनं श्यामाङ्गं ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितं, जामदग्न्यं दूर्वाभं रक्तवल्कलसंवृतं टङ्कहस्तं जटाधरं, रामं रम्यविभूषणं चापबाणधरं सीतादेव्याः समन्वितं सिंहासनसमारुढं, हलिनं शङ्खाभं नीलाम्बरं सीरिणं बलभद्ररामं, कृष्णं यौवनशालिनं नीलकुञ्चितकुन्तलं लीलायष्टिधरं, कल्किनं रक्तसप्त्यधिरुढं भिन्नाञ्जनाभं कवचोज्ज्वलसन्नाहं करवालकरम् एवं आग्नेयादीशानान्तं द्वारपादं विहाय नवभागेषु दशावतारान् संस्थाप्य पश्चिमे भागे अनिरुद्धमादिमूर्तिमनन्ताऽत्मानं स्थापयेत् एतेषां पृथक् पृथग्वा विमानं कल्पयेत्। एकत्र स्थापिते सर्वदानफलं सर्वयज्ञफलं प्राप्य विष्णुलोके महीयत इति विज्ञायते।

अथ पर्वतोत्सङ्गे नदीतीरे विष्णुच्छन्दविमाने मत्स्यकूर्मौ सहैव पूर्ववत्। ब्रह्मेशाभ्यामर्चितं सर्वतोभद्रे अङ्गनाकारे सोमच्छन्दे वा अरण्ये वाराहं मह्याश्लिष्टं शयानमासीनं स्थानकं वा वीशवासुकियुतं पुण्यधर्माभ्यां पूजितं पुष्टिकाकुमुद्वती व्याजने कुड्यद्वारोभयतः ब्रह्मश्रीः राजश्रीः चत्वारो वाहनं वेदाः शैषिकस्तु पुलिन्दाख्यो मुनिः। शेषं युक्त्या कारयेत्।

पर्वताकारे नन्दावर्ते सर्वतोभद्रे पौष्टिकोर्जालपत्रस्वस्तिकान्यतमे उपरितले नृसिंहं स्फटिकोपलमध्ये वा उत्कुटिकासने स्वस्तिकासने वा आसीनं जानुप्रसारितोत्तम्भद्विबाहुं शङ्खचक्रधरं वामदक्षिणोत्तम्भजानुस्थैकहस्तं प्रसारितावलम्बितोरुस्थैकहस्तं शङ्खचक्रधरं आसने कुञ्चितैकाङ्घ्रिं प्रसारितान्याङ्घ्रिं ऊरुसम-वरदैकहस्तं शङ्खचक्रधरं वा सिंहासने चतुर्भुजं ब्रह्मेशाभिष्टुतं वा देवीभ्यामृषिभ्यां यज्ञतीर्थाभ्यां ब्रह्मेशाभ्यां सामभूतीशाभ्यां वाहनशैषिकाभ्यामासीनं, गारुडभौतिकसोमच्छन्द चतुःस्फुटाद्यतया वामनं त्रिविक्रमं श्यामलाङ्गं द्विबाहुं ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितं वामहस्तधृतछत्रमन्यहस्तधृताषाढं कनकशङ्खिलाभ्यां मुनिभ्यां युतं वामनाकारं, त्रिविक्रमं जानुसमं नाभिसमं वा उद्धृतैकपादं स्थितदक्षिणचरणं चतुर्बाहुं द्रुहिणक्षालितालम्बजहुकन्यायुतोद्धृतचरणं बलि वामनयुतं वीशार्दितं भृगुं चन्द्रादित्यनमस्कृतं, श्रीप्रतिष्ठितके महाशङ्खे वा जामदग्न्यं, श्रीप्रतिष्ठितके महाशङ्खे वा रामं सीतासौमित्रियुतं हनुमद्भरताभ्यां, स्वस्तिके चतुःस्फुटे वा बलभद्ररामं, गणिकाविहारकुम्भाकारत्रिकूटमहाहंसान्विते रुक्मिणीवीशाभ्यां वा संयुतं श्रीदाम्ना मायूरके कूर्मे चत्वरे वा, कर्किणं पूर्वतः स्थापयेत्।

वैराग्ययोगैश्वर्येप्सुः मत्स्यकूर्मौ राजराष्ट्रविवृद्धये वराहं शत्रुदस्युविनाशाय-पराजितत्वकाङ्क्षी नृसिंहं राज्यलाभाय विद्यार्थं वामनं त्रिविक्रमश्च जामदग्न्यं धर्मवृद्धिसुखाकाङ्क्षो रामं योगार्थी सार्वभौम (त्व?) कामो बलभद्ररामं भोगैश्वर्यसुखप्रीत्यै कृष्णं पापौघविघ्नाय कर्किणं पूजयेदिति विज्ञायते॥

Kāsyapīya-Jñāna-Kāṇḍa contains a detailed account of the ten avatāras: The account is prefaced by a short introduction:

अथ प्रादुर्भावाणां पृथक्विमाने बेरकल्पनं पूर्वं संक्षेपादुक्तम्। इदानीं विस्तरात्सुव्यक्तं सविशेषमेतेषां पृथक्पृथक् भेदं प्रतिष्ठां च ब्रवीमि। मत्स्यः कूर्मो वराहो नारसिंहो वामनो जामदग्न्यरामो राघवरामो बलरामः कृष्णः कल्की इति दश प्रादुर्भावान् सर्वेऽप्याहुः॥

Then follows prescription about the installation of these forms in the vimāna and the fire-rituals connected with it. The account of the ten avatāras is covered in chapters 79 to 85.

(१) मत्स्यः ॥

महाजलैः सर्वचराचरप्रलये सम्भूते जगत् पुनः स्रष्टुं तज्जलोपसंहारार्थं देवेशो महामत्स्योऽभूत्। अस्य नैव भेदः। पूर्ववदेव रूपम्।

(२) कूर्मः ॥

प्रथमो द्वितीयश्चेति द्विविधो भवति कूर्मः। स्वस्थानाचलित जगदण्डभरणार्थं प्रथमः। अमृतमन्थने मन्थराचलभरणार्थं द्वितीयः। तयोश्च तु रूपं पूर्ववत्। मत्स्यकूर्मयोः ध्रुवबेरमेव। कौतुकं विम्बं विष्णुं चतुर्भुजमेव कारयेत्। तद्विपरीतमित्येके। तयोः पूजकौ ब्रह्मेशौ। प्रतिष्ठायां विशेषो वक्ष्यते। मत्स्यस्य पौण्डरीके प्रधानाग्नौ हौत्रं प्रशंस्य मूर्त्यावाहनजुष्टाकार-स्वाहाकारप्रधानहोमांश्चाऽचरेत्। मत्स्यं जलजं भद्रं क्रीडात्मकमिति मत्स्यस्वावाहनादि। पारमात्मिकमन्त्रेषु मन्त्रानन्यान् विना यस्स्वयं सृष्टमिति मन्त्रेणैकेनैव अष्टाधिकशतमावर्त्य जुहुयात्। कूर्मस्य गार्हपत्ये प्रधानाग्नौ हौत्रप्रशंसनादीनि कुर्यात्। अकूपारं जलजं कूर्मं कच्छपमित्यस्यावाहनादीनि। रायामीश इत्येकेन अष्टाधिकशतमावर्त्य जुहुयात्। अन्यपरिवारदेवानामावाहनादीन्यन्यान्यनुक्तानि सर्वाणि च पूर्ववदेव। एष विशेषः। वैराग्यैश्वर्याभ्युदयप्रतिष्ठाकामः मत्स्यकूर्मो सहैव कुम्भाकारे त्रिकूटे हस्तिपृष्ठे सोमच्छन्दे नन्द्यावर्ते वा विमाने प्रतिष्ठाप्यार्चयेदिति।

(३) वराहः ॥

अथ वराहः त्रिविधो भवति। आदिवराहः प्रलयवराहो यज्ञवराह इति। महाभारनिपीडितां रसातलमग्रां महीमादाबुद्धुं देवेशो महावराह रूपोऽभूत्।

तस्मादादिवराहः । स तां रसातलादुद्धृत्योत्थितः । तस्मादुपलालनवराह आसीत् । तस्य मुखं वराहवदन्यद्रूपं नरवत् । वर्णो नीलाम्बुदवत् सस्यनिभो वा । भुजाश्चत्वारः पादौ द्वौ, दक्षिणो भूमौ पीठे स्थितो वामो रसातलादुत्क्रमणायाऽकुञ्चितः । तदूर्वोर्ध्वयोः पञ्चतालमानेन महीं श्यामाभां प्राञ्जलीकृतोभयहस्तां प्रसारितोभयपादां पुष्पाम्बरधरां देवमुद्वीक्ष्य क्रीडाहर्षयुतां देवीं च कारयित्वा, देवस्य दक्षिणहस्तेन देव्याः पादौ गृहीत्वा देवस्य परपार्श्वे बाह्वोरधस्तात् वामहस्तमाधारवत्कृत्वा महीमुद्धृत्य अन्यहस्ताभ्यां चक्रशङ्खधरं देवीं मूर्ध्नि मुखेन जिघ्रन्तं सर्वाभरणभूषितं देवं, तत्पूजकौ श्यामाभौ पुण्यधर्मौ प्रथमद्वारपालौ, श्वेताभां ब्रह्मश्रियं रक्ताभां राजश्रियं च, वाहनं श्वेताभं चतुर्वेदं शैषिकं, श्यामाभं पुलिन्दं च कारयेत् । एवमादिवराहं सर्वतोभद्रे अङ्गनाकारे सोमच्छन्दे कुम्भाकारे त्रिकूटे हस्तिपृष्ठे वा विमाने राजराष्ट्रविवृद्धिकामो बहुभूमिधनसस्यादिप्राप्तिकामो वा प्रतिष्ठापयेत् ।

अथ अवान्तरे महाजलैः जगत्प्रलये प्राप्ते तज्जलमुपसंहर्तुं महावराहः अभवत् । स प्रलयवराहः । तज्जलं रोमकूपेषूपसंहृत्य जगत्पुनः स्रष्टुं नरवराहः आसीत् । तस्यापि भुजाश्चत्वारो द्वौ शङ्खचक्रधरौ दक्षिणो न्यस्ताभयहस्तो वामः कट्यवलम्बितः पीतवर्णमम्बरं नीलं वा । अन्यानि पूर्ववत् । एवं सुखासनेनासीनं देवं कारयित्वा दक्षिणपार्श्वे देवीं हस्तेन दक्षिणेन पद्मधरां वामेन कट्यवलम्बनकरां आसीनां महीं च तत्सिंहासनादधस्तादुत्तरपार्श्वे द्विहस्तं वीणाधरं रक्ताभं नारदं, दक्षिणोत्तरयोः पूजकौ पीताभौ मार्कण्डेयभृगू च कारयेत् । एवं प्रलयवराहमपमृत्युजयकामः स्वकुलवर्धनकामो वा पूर्वोक्तविमाने प्रतिष्ठापयेत् । सर्वयज्ञविप्रेषणकरं हिरण्याक्षं हत्वा यज्ञस्थापनार्थं तथा नरवराहः । तस्यापि प्रलयवराहवदेव रूपम् । श्वेतवर्णो विशेषः । तथा देवीभ्यां श्रीभूमिभ्यां सह सिंहासने सुखासीनं देवं कारयित्वा, पूजकं कनकाभं यज्ञं श्यामाभं तीर्थं च कारयेत् । देवं यज्ञवराहं यज्ञादिब्रह्मवर्चसकामः पूर्वोक्तविमाने प्रतिष्ठापयेत् । एतद्वराहत्रयस्यापि सभ्ये प्रधानाग्रौ हौत्रप्रशंसनादीनि । वराहं वरदं भूमिसन्धारणं वज्रदंष्ट्रमित्यादिवराहस्य गां पृथुलां महीमुर्वी, मिति मह्याः, पुण्यदं शुभं सुकृतं धन्य मिति पुण्यस्य, धर्मं परमं वृषं सत्य मिति धर्मस्य, ब्रह्मश्रियं धर्ममयीं विद्यांगीं शुद्धात्मिका मिति ब्रह्मश्रियः, राजश्रियं महाभोगां नीतिमयीं सुदीप्ता मिति राजश्रियः ऋद्धभयं यजुर्मयं साममयमथर्वमय मिति चतुर्वेदस्य, पुलिन्दं सुप्रसन्नं तपोमुख्यं पुण्यनिधि मिति

पुलिन्दस्य, प्रलयवराहं भूमीशं जगन्नायक मिति प्रलयवराहस्य। देव्याः पूर्ववत्। नारदं मुनिवरं वीणाधरं सर्वज्ञ मिति नारदस्य, यज्ञवराहं वेदमयं यज्ञेशं यज्ञवर्धन मिति यज्ञवराहस्य यज्ञं क्रतुवरं यज्ञाङ्गं यज्ञमुख्य मिति यज्ञस्य, तीर्थं पापहरं वरदं कामरूपिण मिति तीर्थस्य, तथा अन्यपरिवारदेवानामावाहनादीनि। क्षमामेका मित्यादिवराहस्य स्वयमा दिरिति प्रलयवराहस्य यं यज्ञै रिति यज्ञवराहस्य पारमात्मिकमन्त्रेषु एकमेकमेवाष्टाधिकशतमावर्त्य जुहुयादिति विशेषः। अन्यानि पूर्ववदेव। यथेष्टं वराहं प्रतिष्ठाप्यार्चयेत्।

(४) नारसिंहः ॥

अथ नारसिंहश्च गिरिजः स्थूणजश्चेति द्विविधो भवति। धर्मतपःक्षयकरस्य हिरण्यकशिपोः वधार्थं नारसिंहरूपी गिरेः प्रादुरभूत्। स गिरिजो नारसिंहः। तं दैत्यवधं दृष्ट्वा देवाः देवेशस्य अहो बल मित्यूचुः। तस्मादहोबलमित्येनं प्रशंसन्ति। तद्देवस्य मुखं सिंहस्येव केसरसटामण्डलसहितं चतुर्दंष्ट्रं करालं विवृतास्यं सिंहस्येव कण्ठश्च नरस्येवान्यद्रूपम्। भुजाः चत्वारो द्वौ शङ्खचक्रधरौ दक्षिणोऽन्यो दानकरो वामोऽपि तदूरौ न्यस्तश्च। एवं देवेशं शङ्खकुन्देन्दुधवलं किरीटमकुटाद्याभरणयुतं सिंहासने सुखासनेन वीरासनेन वा समासीनं देवीभ्यां सहितं रहितं वा कारयित्वा तत्पृष्ठपार्श्वं अनन्तस्य सप्तभिः पञ्चभिर्वा फणैः छादितमौलिं चतुर्भुजं द्वाभ्यां चक्रशङ्खधरं अन्याभ्यां स्वकर्णौ स्पृशन्तं अनिरुद्धं अथवा विना तथैवानन्तफणैश्च छादितमौलिं नारसिंहदेवं कारयित्वा, सिंहासनादधस्तात् दक्षिणतः तथा वन्दमानं नवतालमानेन ब्रह्माणं चतुर्भुजं द्वाभ्यामक्षमालाकुण्डिकाधरमन्याभ्यां प्राञ्जलीकृतं अभयकट्यवलम्बनकृतं वा जटामकुटयुतं, वामे च तथा वन्दमानमीशं चतुर्भुजं द्वाभ्यामक्षमालापरशुधरमन्याभ्यां प्राञ्जलीकृतं वा अभयकट्यवलम्बनकृतं जटामकुटयुतं, पूजकौ यज्ञतीर्थौ च पूर्ववत्। एवं मार्कण्डेयभृगू वाहनं सामवेदं श्यामवर्णं शैषिकं रक्ताभं भूतीशश्च तत् स्थाने कारयेत्। एवं गिरिजं नारसिंहं शत्रुदस्युविजयार्थी पराजितत्वसर्वोपद्रवनाशकामो वा पर्वताकृतिके श्रीप्रतिष्ठितके नन्द्यावर्तके सर्वतोभद्रके स्वस्तिके वा विमाने तदुपरितले प्रतिष्ठाप्यार्चयेत्।

जगतामिन्द्रादिदेवानाञ्च पीडाकरहिरण्यवधार्थं भक्तरक्षणार्थञ्च स्थूणादाविरभूत्
 स्थूणजो नारसिंहः। तत्काले च हिरण्यवधं दृष्ट्वा देवा देवेशस्य महाबल मित्यूचुः।
 तस्मान्महाबलमित्येनं प्रशंसन्ति। उपधानरहिते सिंहासने समासीनस्य
 अतितीक्ष्णनखयुतदीर्घपाणियुताः भुजाश्चत्वारः द्वौ चक्रशङ्खधरौ विना वाऽपि तथोद्धृतो
 दक्षिणोऽन्यो दानकरः वामः प्रबद्धः तदूरौ न्यस्तः। मुखमन्यद्रूपञ्च पूर्ववत्। महाकोपयुतं
 देवं तन्मकुटोपरि छत्रं रक्तवर्णं भित्तिपार्श्वे पूर्ववच्चामरधरौ किष्किन्धसुन्दरौ च कारयित्वा
 सिंहासनादधस्तात् दक्षिणवामयोश्च प्रभो कोपमुपसंहरति देवेशमुद्वीक्ष्य वन्दमानौ ब्रह्मेश्वरौ
 च पूर्ववत्कारयित्वा दक्षिणे प्राञ्जलीकृतां श्रियं देवीं, वन्दमानं द्विहस्तं प्रह्लादञ्च वामे, पूर्ववत्
 तत्तत्स्थाने अन्यपरिवारांश्च कारयेत्। अथवा श्रीदेवीं प्रह्लादनारदलोकपालान् भित्तौ
 समुल्लिखेत्। एवं स्थूणजं नारसिंहमाधिव्याधिभीतिविनाशार्थं जयकीर्त्यायुष्यकामो वा
 महापद्मे स्वस्तिके पद्मभद्रके वा विमाने तदुपरितले प्रतिष्ठाप्यार्चयेत्। एतयोर्नारसिंहयोः
 आहवनीये प्रधानाग्नौ हौत्रशंसनं आवाहनादीनि च कुर्यात्। अहोबलं सर्वबलं
 बलातिबलमनन्तबलमिति गिरिजं पुरा ब्रह्मा समर्चयत्। सुधृतिं सर्वाधारं कामबलममोघजेतार
 मित्येनं रुद्रः। कर्मबलं अनाथबलमनन्तबलमचिन्त्यबलमर्दन मितिन्द्रः, अन्ये
 मुनयोऽप्यपूजयन्। तस्मादेतैः द्वादशनामभिः गिरिजनारसिंहस्यावाहनादीनि। नारसिंहं
 तपोनाथं महाविष्णुं महाबलमनन्तबल मिति स्थूणजं सर्वेऽप्यपूजयन्। तस्मादेतैः
 पञ्चनामभिरेवं स्थूणजनारसिंहस्यावाहनादीनि। ब्रह्मेशानिरुद्धश्रीनारदयज्ञतीर्थलोकपालाद्यन्य
 परिवारदेवानां पूर्ववत्। प्रह्लादं दैत्यपतिं विष्णुभक्तं महामति मिति प्रह्लादस्य सामवेदं
 शान्तिसुखं गुरुपूर्वमुदारधिय मिति सामवेदस्य, भूतीशं दिव्यराशिं सर्वलोकसुखावहं
 सर्वविघ्नविनाशन मिति भूतीशस्यावाहनादीनि। पारमात्मिकमन्त्रेषु यो वा नृसिंह
 इत्यष्टाधिकशतमावर्त्य जुहुयात्। अन्यानि पूर्ववत्। हविर्निवेदने बलिदाने च पायसं श्रेष्ठमिति
 विशेषः ॥

(५) वामनः ॥

त्रैलोक्याधिपान्महाबलेः देवार्थं त्रैलोक्यं छलेनाऽदातुं वामनोऽभवत्। देवस्तदादाय
 महारूपी त्रिविक्रमणेन त्रिलोकमानं कर्तुं त्रिविक्रमोऽप्यासीत्। तौ सहैव स्थापयेत्। वामनं

पृथगेवेति केचित्। त्रिविक्रममष्टभुजं चतुर्भुजं द्विभुजं वा कारयेत्। भुजेषु दक्षिणेषु चक्रासिगदाशक्तिधरं वामेषु शङ्खशरशङ्खखेटकधरं अन्यवामहस्तमुद्धृतपादेन प्रसार्य तथैव स्थितं वामपादमुद्धृतदक्षिणेन सुस्थितं महावेगयुतं किरीटाद्याभरणभूषितमेवमष्टभुजं, अथवा द्विहस्ताभ्यां चक्रशङ्खधरमन्येन दक्षिणेन जलादानपरं वाममुद्धृतपादेन प्रसार्य तथैव स्थितं महाहर्षयुतमेवं चतुर्भुजं, अथवा दक्षिणेन जलादानपरं वामहस्तमुद्धृतपादेन सह प्रसार्य स्थितमेवं द्विभुजम्। त्रिविक्रमं केचिद्विभुजं नेच्छन्ति। क्रमात्पादोद्धरणात् त्रयोऽपि त्रिविधा भवन्ति। प्रथमो द्वितीयस्तृतीय इति। भूलोकमानाय वामपादे जानुमात्रमुद्धृते प्रथमः। अन्तरिक्षलोकमानाय नाभिमात्रमुद्धृते द्वितीयः। स्वर्गलोकमानाय ललाटमात्रमुद्धृते तृतीयः। त्रिविक्रममेवं कारयित्वा तदुद्धृतपादतलं प्रगृह्य प्रक्षालनपरं पद्मस्थं ब्रह्माणं ततः संस्रवद्रूपां स्वर्गान्तरिक्षगामूर्ध्वावलम्बिनीं नाभेरूर्ध्वं शरीरिणीमधः स्रोतोरूपां प्राञ्जलीकृतद्विहस्तां श्वेताभां गङ्गामुद्धृतपादपार्श्वो भ्रममाणं दैत्यं श्यामाभं नमुचिं भेरीताडनपरं कपिमुखं नररूपं नीलाभं जाम्बवन्तं अपरभित्यूर्ध्वभागे छत्रधरमाकाशस्थमिन्द्रं पार्श्वयोः चामरधरौ यमवरुणौ च स्थितपादाद्वामे अतिशयेन प्रह्वयमानं शुक्रं तदूर्ध्वं मुष्ट्या प्रहरन्तं गरुडं त्रिविक्रमस्य दक्षिणे श्यामवर्णं वटुरूपं द्विभुजं दक्षिणेनोदकादानपरं वामेन छत्राषाढधरं कौपीनवाससं वामनं दक्षिणे जलदानाय पाणिभ्यां कलशमुद्धृत्य स्थितं सुमुखं सर्वाभरणभूषितं सुवर्णवर्णं महाबलिं पूजकं कनकाभं कनकं शङ्खाभं शङ्खिलश्च मार्कण्डेयभृगू वा कारयेत्।

विद्यार्थी वामनं भूलोकविजयार्थी त्रिविक्रमं प्रथममन्तरिक्षजयार्थी, द्वितीयं स्वर्गलोकजयकामः, सर्वलोकजयकामः तृतीयं, अष्टभुजं सार्वभौमत्वकामी, चतुर्भुजं राज्यार्थी, ब्रह्मवर्चसकामः द्विभुजमेवं, त्रिविक्रमं सोमच्छन्दे दीर्घशालायां त्रिकूटे गोपुराकारे छत्राकारे चतुःष्पुटे वा विमाने सहैव स्थापयेत्। त्रिविक्रमस्य कौतुकं विम्बं विष्णुमेव कारयेत्। पृथक् चेत् वामनं हस्तेन दक्षिणेन दण्डधरं वामेन छत्रधरं देवं कारयित्वा पूजकौ कनकशंकिलावेव कारयेत्। द्वयोः प्रतिष्ठायामन्वाहार्ये प्रधानाग्नौ हौत्रशंसनादीनि त्रिविक्रमं त्रिलोकेशं सर्वाधारं वैकुण्ठ मिति त्रिविक्रमस्य, वामनं वरदं काश्यपमदितिप्रिय मिति वामनस्य कनकं मुनिमुख्यं सुतपसं दयापर मिति कनकस्य शङ्खिलं महामुनिवरं धर्मं तपोधिक मिति शङ्खिलस्य असुरेन्द्रं महाबलिं सुखदं वैरभोजन मिति महाबलेः जाम्बवन्तं नीलाभं चिरञ्जं त्रिलोकपर मिति जाम्बवतः पूर्ववदन्यदेवानां चावाहनादीनि। पारमात्मिकेषु मन्त्रेषु यो वा

त्रिमूर्तिं रित्येकमष्टाधिकशतमावर्त्य जुहुयात्। विष्णुसूक्तेन प्रतिष्ठामाचरेत्। आकाशस्थदेवानां तानुद्दिश्य अधस्तात् पीठेऽर्चनमिति विशेषः। अन्यानि पूर्ववदिति।

(६) जामदग्निरामः ॥

महाबलबहुक्षत्रियवधात् भूमिभारनिर्हरणार्थं जमदग्निरुद्भूतो जामदग्निरामः। तं देवं द्विभुजं दक्षिणेन परशुधरं वामेनोद्देशकरं नीलाम्बरधरं वीरमार्गेण स्थितमासीनं वा कारयेत्। देवं जमदग्निरामं फेलाकारे अङ्गनाकारे श्रीप्रतिष्ठितके महाशंखे वा विमाने तपोज्ञानजयार्थं स्थापयेत्। अस्यावसन्त्ये हौत्रप्रशंसनादीनि। रामं जमदग्निसुतं भद्रं परशुपाणि मिति परशुरामस्य। परिवारदेवानां पूर्ववत्। पारमात्मिकेषु मन्त्रेषु, विष्णुर्वरिष्ठ इत्येकमष्टाधिकसप्तशतं जुहुयादेष विशेषः। अनुक्तं पूर्ववदिति।

(७) राघवरामः ॥

इन्द्रादिदेवानामृषीणां हिंसनकरं रावणं हन्तुं रघोरन्वये राघवरामः अभूत्। एष सायुधो निरायुधश्चेति द्विविधो भवति। सार्धनवतालेन मानेन राघवरामं श्यामाभं द्विभुजं दक्षिणेन पाणिना तीक्ष्णशरधरं वामेन धनुर्धरं किरीटमकुटादिसर्वाभरणभूषितं त्रिभगं सीतां दक्षिणे अष्टतालमानेन देवीं द्विभुजां वामेन पद्मधरां दक्षिणमधः प्रसार्य तथैव स्थितां, देवस्य वामे लक्ष्मणं पीताभं रामवत्तथा शरधनुर्धरं किञ्चिद्दामे स्थितं, प्रमुखे वार्ताविज्ञापनपरं कपिरूपं द्विभुजं दक्षिणेन पिहितास्यं वामेन स्वाम्बरावकुण्ठनपरं हनूमन्तश्च कारयेत्। एवं सायुधं रामं सार्वभौमत्वकामः श्रीकामो वा फेलाकारे अङ्गनाकारे त्रिकूटे स्वस्तिके चतुःष्फुटे विमाने मण्डपे वा प्रतिष्ठाप्यार्चयेत्। सिंहासने वामं पादमाकुञ्च्य दक्षिणं प्रसार्य हस्तं दक्षिणमभयं वामं कट्यवलम्बनपरमासीनं देवं तद्दक्षिणे पार्श्वे देवीं द्विभुजां वामेन पद्मधरां दक्षिणं कट्यां न्यस्य पादं वाममाकुञ्च्य दक्षिणं प्रसार्य देवं किञ्चिदुदीक्ष्य सहर्षमासीनां सीताश्च तत्सिंहासनादधस्ताद्द्वामतः प्राञ्जलीकृत्य स्थितं लक्ष्मणं दक्षिणे तथा हनूमन्तमेवं निरायुधम्। भरतशत्रुघ्नाभ्यां श्यामपीताभ्यां तथैव स्थितं लक्ष्मणं सिंहासनादधस्तादासीनं वेति केचित्। एवं निरायुधं राघवं देवं सत्पुत्रदयासत्यतपः श्रीकामः स्थापयेत्। रामस्यान्वाहार्ये प्रधानाग्नौ हौत्रशंसनावाहनादीनि। रामं दाशरथिं वीरं काकुत्स्थ मिति रामस्य

सीतामयोनिजां लक्ष्मीं वैदेही मिति सीतायाः रामानुजं सौमित्रिं लक्ष्मणं लक्ष्मिवर्धन मिति लक्ष्मणस्य भरतं रामप्रियं कैकेयीसुतं सद्वृत्त मिति भरतस्य शत्रुघ्नं सुमनस्कं लक्ष्मणानुजं दशरथोद्भव मिति शत्रुघ्नस्य कपिराजं हनूमन्तं शब्दराशिं महामति मिति हनूमतः। परिवारदेवानां पूर्ववत्। पारमात्मिकेषु मन्त्रेषु स्वौजसा सर्व मित्येकाधिकसप्तभिर्जुहुयात्। एष विशेषः। अनुक्तं पूर्ववदिति विज्ञायते।

(८)(९) बलरामकृष्णौ

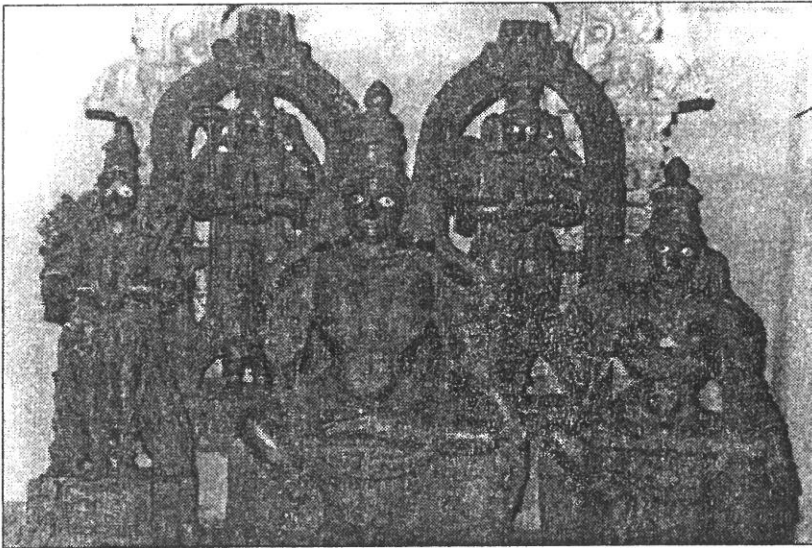
बलात् दुराचारदैतेयवधार्थं वसुदेवाद्वलरामः, नरकाद्यसुरान् शिशुपालादिनृपान् हन्तुं कृष्णोऽप्यभवत्। तावपि सायुधौ निरायुधौ चेति द्विविधौ भवतः। दशतालमानेन बलरामं शङ्खाभं नीलाम्बरधरं द्विभुजं दक्षिणेन मुसलधरं वामेन हलधरमेवं सर्वाभरणभूषितं बलभद्रं सायुधमेकबेरविधिना महाबलकामः सोमच्छन्दे हस्तिपृष्ठे वा विमाने स्थापयेत्। तथा सिंहासने राघवरामवदासीनं बलभद्रं सीतावदासीनां रेवतीमञ्जनाभां, अथवा तत्सिंहासनस्यार्धे सह समासीनं कृष्णं वा कारयेत्। एवं निरायुधं बलभद्रं कामभोगशुभार्थं स्थापयेत्। एतस्याहवनीये प्रधानाग्नौ हौत्रशंसनादीनि। बलरामं वीरं यदुवरं हलायुध मिति बलरामस्य, रेवतीमन्दिरां लक्ष्मीं रामप्रिया मिति रेवत्याश्वावाहनादीनि। पारमात्मिकेषु रायामीश इत्येकविंशतिमावर्त्य जुहुयात्। अन्यानि पूर्ववदिति। नवतालमानेन कृष्णं श्यामलाङ्गं पीतवाससं द्विभुजं दक्षिणेन क्रीडायष्टिधरं वामेनोत्क्रीडनकरं त्रिभङ्गस्थितं कुन्तलमकुटं सर्वाभरणभूषितं दक्षिणे सीतावत् स्थितां रुक्मिणीं कृष्णाभां वामे सत्यभामां पीताभां दक्षिणेन हस्तेन पद्मधरां प्रसारितवामहस्ताञ्च कारयेत्। अथवा वामपार्श्वे देवहस्ताधारदक्षिणस्कन्धं द्विभुजं प्राञ्जलीकृतं गरुडं कारयेत्। एवं सायुधं कृष्णमैश्वर्यभोगार्थं गणिकाविहारे कुम्भाकारे गोपुराकारे विमाने वा स्थापयेत्। तथा सिंहासने राघवरामवदासीनं कृष्णं दक्षिणे सीतावदासीनां रुक्मिणीं वामे दक्षिणपादमाकुञ्च्य वामं प्रसार्य तथाऽऽसीनां सत्यभामाञ्च कारयेत्। एवं निरायुधं कृष्णं महाभोगसुखप्रीतिकामः स्थापयेत्। यद्यद्रूपेण देवो यद्यत्कर्म कृतवान् तत्तद्रूपं यथाभक्ति कारयेत्। पीठे पादेन वामेन कुञ्चितेन स्थित्वा समाकुञ्चितं दक्षिणमुद्धृत्य हस्तं दक्षिणं नवनीतयुतमभयदं वा अन्यमुत्तानं प्रसारितं कृत्वा बहुग्रन्थियुताम्बराधारयुतमम्बरहीनं नवनीतनटं देवमथवा सप्तभिः पञ्चभिर्वा फणैर्युक्तस्य कालीयनागस्य फणोपरि पूर्ववत् नृत्यन्तं प्रसारितवामहस्तेन गृहीतकालीयनागपुच्छमेवं

कालीयमर्दनं कारयेत्। कृष्णरूपाण्यनेकानि तेषु यथेष्टरूपं कारयित्वा स्थापयेत्। एतस्य पौण्डरीकाग्रौ होत्रप्रशंसनादीनि। कृष्णं पुण्यं नारायणं वटपत्रशायिनं त्रिदशाधिप मिति कृष्णस्य रुक्मिणीं सुन्दरीं देवीं पद्मा मिति रुक्मिण्याः शतरूपां सतां सन्नतिं क्षमा मिति सत्यभामायाश्च, अन्यपरिवारदेवानामावाहनादीनि पूर्ववत्। पारमात्मिकेषु मन्त्रेषु यं त्वां सर्वं पालना येत्येतेनैवाष्टाधिकशतमावर्त्य जुहुयादिति विशेषः ॥

(१०) कल्की ॥

युगान्ते सर्वदुष्टसंहारार्थं कल्की च भविष्यति। तस्य नैव भेदः। पूर्ववदेव रूपं कारयित्वा स्थापयेत्। तस्यापि पौण्डरीकाग्रौ होत्रप्रशंसनादीनि। कल्किनं कामरूपं सर्वेशं सर्वसंहार मिति कल्किनश्चऽवाहनादीनि। पारमात्मिकमन्त्रेषु धूर्नो वहन्ता मित्येकविंशतिकृत्वो जुहुयात्। एवमवमाननाशार्थं कल्किनं मयूराकारे कूर्माकारे भूताकारे वा विमाने प्रतिष्ठाप्यार्चयेत्।

अथवा देवेशस्य विष्णोः पार्श्वे दक्षिणतो मुखमण्डपे तदावरणे विनैव परिवारैः सायुधं रामं सीतालक्ष्मणाभ्यां हनूमता च सार्धं वामतः कृष्णश्च सायुधं देवीभ्यां गरुडेन च युक्तं अन्यप्रादुर्भावरूपं वा यथेष्टमेव स्थापयेदिति ॥



APPENDIX - II

(i) Hayagrīva

अथोच्यते हयग्रीवमन्त्रः सर्वसमृद्धिदः ।
हसावुकार संयुक्तौ बिन्दुना परिशोभितौ ।
त्रिष्टुप्छन्दो मुनिर्ब्रह्मा हयग्रीवोऽस्य देवता ॥

The ṛshi of the mantra is Brahmā, Chhandas Trisṭup, and the devatā Hayagrīva.

Dhyāna:

कमलं जपमालां चाभयं पुस्तकमेव च ।
श्वेतपद्मस्थितं गौरं श्वेतवस्त्रानुलेपनम् ।
भक्तप्रियं हयग्रीवं वन्देऽहं दानवान्तकम् ॥

(ii) Vāgīśvara-Hayagrīva

उद्गिरत्पदमाभाष्य प्रणवोद्गीथशब्दतः ।
सर्ववागीश्वरेत्यन्तं प्रवदेदीश्वरेत्यथ ॥१॥
सर्ववेदमयाचिन्त्यपदान्ते सर्वमुच्चरेत्
बोधय द्वितीयान्तोऽयं मन्त्रस्तारादिरीरितः ॥२॥
ऋषिर्ब्रह्माऽस्य संदिष्टश्छन्दोऽनुष्टुबुदाहृतः ।
देवता स्याद्धयग्रीवो वागैश्वर्यप्रदो विभुः ॥३॥

The mantra of 42-letters is:

हंसः सोऽहं विश्वोत्तीर्णस्वरूपाय चिन्मयानन्दरूपिणे ।
तुभ्यं नमो हयग्रीव विद्याराजाय विष्णवे स्वाहा ॥
हंसः सोऽहम् ॥

Brahmā is the ṛshi, anusṭup the chhandas and
Hayagrīva the devatā.

Dhyāna:

शरच्छशाङ्कप्रभमश्वक्त्रं मुक्तामयैराभरणैरुपेतम् ।
रथाङ्गशंखार्पितबाहुयुग्मं जानुद्वयन्यस्तकरं भजामः ॥

(iii) Hayagrīva-Vishṇu

The mantra of 11-letters:

ॐ हयग्रीवाय नमः स्वाहा ॐ ॥

Dhyāna:

धवलनलिननिष्ठं क्षीरगौरं करोग्रैर्जपवलय सरोजे पुस्तकाभीतिदानैः ।
दधतममलवस्त्राकल्पजालाभिरामं तुरगवदनविष्णुं नौम्यविद्याग्रसिष्णुम् ॥

(iv) Hayagrīva-Gāyatri:

वागीश्वराय विद्महे । हयग्रीवाय धीमहि ।
तन्नो हंसः प्रचोदयात् ।

(v) Dadhi-bhakta-Hayagrīva:

The mantra:

ॐ नमो भगवते हयशिरसे अन्नाधिपतये अन्नदायाक्रूरायाक्रूरकर्मणे
भगवन्भक्ष्यभोज्यान्नदानमावहावह स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi is Brahmā, the chhandas is Ati-chhanda,
and the devata Hayagrīva.

Dhyāna:

सव्येन हस्तेन सुधाकरीरमन्येन दध्योदनमादधानः ।
शशाङ्कमध्ये सितपद्मसंस्थं पायात्सिताभस्तुरगाननो नः ॥

(vi) Ekākshara-Hayagrīva:

The bija of Hayagrīva is रः and the mūla-mantra is

हसूम् ॥ हसौं ॥ हसूं हयशिरसे नमः ॥

Dhyāna:

पद्माक्षमालालिखितेष्टदानि दधानमम्भोरुहसंपुटस्थम् ।
कर्पूरभङ्गाधिकगौरकान्ति हयाननं सौम्यमिह स्मरामि ॥

(vii) Another Mantra:

ॐ हसूं हंसः विश्वोत्तीर्णस्वरूपाय चिन्मयानन्दरूपिणे तुभ्यं नमो हयग्रीव
विद्याराजाय विष्णवे स्वाहा सोऽहं हसूं ॐ ॥

(viii) Jñāna-Hayagrīva

Dhyāna:

व्याख्या मुद्रां करसरसिजैः पुस्तकं शंखचक्रे
बिभ्रद्भिन्नस्फटिकरचिते पुण्डरीके निषण्णः ।
अम्लानश्रीरमृतविशदैरंशुभिः प्लावयन्मा-
माविर्भूयादमितमहिमा मानसे वागधीशः ॥

Other dhyānas:

- (i) वन्दे पूरितचन्द्रमण्डलगतश्वेतारविन्दासने
मन्दाकिन्यमृताब्जकुन्दकुमुदक्षीरेन्दुभासं हरिम् ।
मुद्रापुस्तकशंखचक्रविलसत् श्रीमद्भुजामण्डलम्
निर्यन्निर्मलभारतीपरिमलं विश्वेशमश्वाननम् ॥
- (ii) तुषाराद्रिसमच्छायं तुलसीदामभूषितम् ।
तुरङ्गवदनं वन्दे तुरङ्गसारस्वतप्रदम् ॥
- (iii) ऋग्यजुःसामरूपाय वेदाहरणकर्मणे ।
प्रणवोद्गीथवचसे महाश्वशिरसे नमः ॥
- (iv) उद्भिरत्प्रणवोद्गीथ सर्ववागीश्वरेश्वर ।
सर्ववेदमयाचिन्त्य सर्व बोधय बोधय ॥

APPENDIX - III

Dhanvantari

(i) Roga-śāntikara-Dhanvantari

The mantra:

ओं नमो भगवते धन्वन्तरये अमृतकलशहस्ताय सर्वामयविनाशाय
त्रिलोकनाथाय विष्णवे स्वाहा ॥

The ṛshi is Apāntara-tamā, the chhandas is Trisṭup, and the devatā is Dhanvantari.

Dhyāna:

शंखं चक्रं जलूकां दधदमृतघटं चापि दोर्भिश्चतर्भिः
सूक्ष्मस्वच्छातिहृद्यांशुकपरिविलसन्मौलिमम्भोजनेत्रम् ।
कालाम्भोदोज्ज्वलाङ्गं कटितटविलसच्चारुपीताम्बराढ्यम्
वन्दे धन्वन्तरिं तं निखिलगदवनप्रौढदावाग्रिलीलम् ॥

Another Dhyāna:

पयोधर्मध्यस्थं दशशतभुजादण्डविलसत्
घटौघास्यान्निर्यत्सुविमलसुधासारसलिलैः ।
सदा स्नान्तं साध्यं सुरुचिरममुं जपतात्
भवेदायुर्दिर्घं दुरितविषरोगैर्विरहितम् ॥

Prayoga:

यद्वा विचिन्त्य निजमूर्ध्नि मनोहराङ्गं दोर्द्ध्वसक्तघटवक्त्रगलत्सुधार्द्रम् ।
स्वात्माङ्गयष्टिमनया परिषिच्यमानं ध्यात्वा जपेदुपरि रोगविषादशान्त्यै ॥

(ii) **Amṛtātmā-mahā-vishṇu**

The mantra:

ओं अं अच्युताय नमः । ओं सं अनन्ताय नमः । ओं ठं अमृताय नमः ।
ओं ऐं गोविन्दाय नमः । ओं वं विष्णवे नमः ॥

The ṛshi is Roganāśana, the chhandas is Pañkti: and the devatā
Amṛtātmā Mahā-vishṇu.

Dhyāna:

क्षीरोदन्वत्प्रदेशे शुचिमणिविलसत् सैकतैर्मौक्तिकानाम्
मालाकलृप्तासनस्थस्फटिकमणिनिभो मौक्तिकैर्मण्डिताङ्गः ।
शुभ्रैरदभ्रैरुपरिविरचितैर्मुक्तपीयूषवर्षै-
रानन्दी नः पुनीयादरिनलिनगदाशंखपाणिर्मुकुन्दः ॥

Another Dhyāna:

मकुटकनकमालाहारकेयूरकाञ्चीकनकमणिविचित्रं चन्द्रकोटिप्रकाशम् ।
ललितललितमाद्यं मन्दहासेन्दुभासा मुदितमुनिचकोरं चिन्तयेदम्बुजाक्षम् ॥