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EARLY INDIAN PAINTED POTTERY

By D. H. GORDON

"Painted Pottery"¹ are words that are in grave danger of becoming what Mr. A. P. Herbert calls "Witch Words", that is to say they are accumulating power of evocation of certain very definite ideas. On all hands one hears of Painted Pottery cultures, Painted Pottery levels, and closely and often erroneously connected with these words is another, "chalcolithic", which is used with increasingly loose abandon. In North-Western India there is a great deal of painted pottery the dating of which ranges from c. 4000 B.C. to 1945 A.D.; a little more circumspection is therefore needed in this matter of Painted Pottery, and, so far as India is concerned, it can be a most dangerous archaeological counter. It is not claimed that these notes do a very great deal towards solving the problems of painted Pottery in India, but what they do purport to do, is to assemble a large body of painted designs on pottery of all periods so that they may be conveniently compared, and their similarity and differences duly noted. With so many styles of pattern it has been difficult to follow very closely any logical coherent plan, but the following arrangement has been adhered to as closely as possible. The oldest designs from the Zhob have been taken first as being in all probability the earliest in date. These are grouped with other similar patterns from Harappa and from many sites of the Early

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¹ I most gratefully acknowledge the permission given me by the Director General of Archaeology in India to make and publish line copies of pottery patterns originally illustrated in the following publications:

Explorations in Waziristan and North Baluchistan by Sir Aurel Stein.
Explorations in Sind by N. G. Majumdar.
Excavations at Harappa by Pandit Madho Sarup Vats.
Historic Period.¹ A number of Harappa designs are grouped for general comparisons and a few Jhukar Period designs are similarly grouped. There is an interesting polychrome group from the Zhob, some of which may possibly be allied to the polychrome of Jhukar, but at the present such an assumption is pure speculation and has no backing in fact. In passing it may be mentioned that North Western India also produces an immense variety of incised and impressed designs on pottery, of which I have a very large collection, but, though interesting these are not of the same far reaching importance, nor have they gathered to themselves the chronological implications of the Painted Pottery.

THE PAINTED POTTERY OF THE ZHOB

It will be best to make a general survey of the knowledge and ideas which have accumulated in recent years about this material, unfortunately they do not amount to the same thing. Inadequate first-hand knowledge of the material available has led to an over-simplification, and authorities have already divided the Zhob Cultures into various periods, which though disposing of some of this material quite satisfactorily, takes no account of a number of complications or of the quantity and diversity of patterns and fabrics which find no mention at all.

The painted pottery of the Zhob has been discussed by Sir Aurel Stein, Prof. Gordon Childe, and Mr. Stuart Piggott, but one of the best accounts which I have read is that compiled by Brigadier E. J. Ross which was very kindly sent to me for my information and comments some three years ago. I am not certain whether this account of his investigations into the sequence of the Rana Gundai mound has been published or not, but it should have been as it is of great value. I have never seen it quoted, but this may well happen as many articles of value are either disregarded or overlooked. I suffer from the considerable disadvantage of having my material from the Zhob at second hand from sites where there has been no scientific excavation of any real scope.² On the other hand I have

¹. The expression The Early Historic Period as used here denotes that period from the commencement of the Mauryas to the end of the Guptas.
². I am indebted to Lt. Colonel and Mrs F. T. Birdwood for all the trouble and care taken by them to gather for me as representative a collection of painted pottery fragments as possible from various mounds in the Zhob.
been able to study the very large number of sherds in my possession at my leisure and make a detailed record of the pattern and fabric of each one of them.

At this point I wish to sound, not by any manner of means for the first time, a note of alarm. Rana Gundai, and I fancy most of the other Gundais, in the same manner as the Dheris of the Peshawar Vale, are gradually and surely but irrevocably disappearing as the result of their exploitation for manure earth. Every mound is not necessarily of the same value, but there are some which produce a complete sequence with lavish examples of every period. Such mounds are Rana Gundai, Periano Gundai and Dabar Kot in the Zhob and Sar Dheri and the Bala Hissar at Charsadda, when these mounds are gone, most of the evidence necessary to disentangle the problems of India's past in these regions will have gone with them.
Ross, with whose investigations must be associated the letter received by Mr. Stuart Piggott from Mr. Basil Grey, as the exposure of a section at Rana Gundai is mentioned at the commencement of his account, divided the strata at that mound into five periods. Neither period IV nor period V, which last is the uppermost, show so far as may be judged from his notes any traces of unequivocal Harappa type sherds. In Ross's Period I which is a deep nearly uniform stratum of ashes, bones and burnt earth, pottery is scarce, coarse and appears to be hand made. Only one sherd of painted pottery was recovered from this stratum, and is painted in black on a darkish red slip; unfortunately I have no record of the pattern. Flake blades and points are associated with the pottery of Period I. Ten feet of this stratum were exposed and there are indications that it extends to at least another ten feet below this again. There are no structural remains in this layer.

Then comes what Ross calls the Bull Layer about which he writes at some length. Ross stresses the abruptness of the occurrence of this very striking pottery fabric, which he describes as pale pink terracotta, well levigated, without any slip, though a few pieces with a dark red slip have been found. He also lays emphasis on the fineness of the brushwork, which is far superior to any of the painted pottery in or around India, and it is not until one encounters the early vases of Susa that one finds workmanship that is equally fine. This layer was called by Ross the bull layer because of the large number of fragments found having part of a design of a frieze of bulls upon them. He rightly observes that the culture producing this pottery did not evolve on the spot, and that from a full-fledged state of excellence in Period II it deteriorated in Period III and disappeared in Period IV.

Period III according to Ross has derivatives of Period II at its lower levels. Fine pottery with a dark red slip, ornamented with geometrical patterns in black and red. He notices an exaggeration of the pot shoulder to the extent of forming a raised projecting rim. In my collection of Zhob fragments there are a number showing this rim. Ross notices that higher in his Period III layer the brushwork becomes poorer, individual

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strokes with the brush and hachuring die out, and the bowl is to a large extent superseded by a narrow vase. In connection with this period Ross mentions scale ornamentation, but without seeing an example it is impossible to say whether this is similar to the Indus scale pattern or not; I have not myself seen a fragment answering to this description. He however admits that this period is complicated and needs more study.

Period IV revealed a number of fragments of coarse large jars, highly decorated both in colour and relief, boldly painted in black and red with rough incised patterns. Ross states that but for the lack of any strata showing a period of prolonged unoccupation this pottery would appear to be of a very much later date. In Period V, that nearest the surface, painted pottery seems to have died out. Full of gaps as this reading of the Zhob pottery is, it is by far the most detailed account which we possess. Sir Aurel Stein deals very briefly with the pottery, merely making men-
tion that painted pottery was found and that a certain amount of it was polychrome, particularly at Sur Jangal. Prof. Gordon Childe, who saw some of this material while on a visit to India, confines himself almost wholly to the pottery of South Baluchistan, i.e. Nal, Kulli and Mehi, which are on the whole better represented and easier to define than the jumble of fabrics which exists in the Zhob. He mentions that—"at Moghul Gundai the accessory red is used as an embellishment for a perfectly typical Indus intersecting-circle pattern,"¹ this fragment will be referred to later and is shown on Pl. VIII fig. (h). Mr. Stuart Piggott equates the zone of animals used as a decoration in the pottery of the Zhob with Hissar Ic, but does not include in his survey similar animal zones from Bampur and Nineveh V. He has also picked upon Sur Jangal as the type site for this pottery, when Rana Gundai could probably be chosen with far greater justification.

Let us now first of all look at the earliest Zhob pottery, some of which almost certainly antedates that of the Indus Valley, and see to what extent the pottery I have had under examination bears out the conclusions of those who have written about it previously. As I am about to use a number of terms, it will be as well to know what I mean by them, particularly the terms slip, wash and glaze which to my mind are used with singular abandon and lack of method by a large number of writers. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines slip as—"Semi fluid clay for coating or making a pattern on earthenware". When I refer to slip I mean a coating of uniform consistency, generally having a certain degree of smoothing or polish, which completely conceals and is possibly of a different colour to the main fabric of the pot. Wash is defined as—"Thin coating of watery colour" (applied to water-colour painting, not to pottery decoration). When I refer to wash I mean a thin watery coating lightly washed into the surface of the pot with a brush, so that the main fabric is barely concealed and the coating far from uniform. Glaze is defined as a vitreous substance or paint fixed on pottery by fusion. Very little pottery which answers to this description can be found on ancient sites; and no piece of

¹. "An Archaeological Tour in Waziristan and North Baluchistan" by Sir Aurel Stein.
it is represented among all the 270 odd painted pottery fragments dealt with here.

Having cleared the ground to a certain extent, let us now examine the fabrics and patterns of the earliest Zhob pottery shown in the plates. The first thing which strikes everyone is the amazing fineness and sureness of the drawing. The finest of the animal drawings as shown in Plate I (a) to (d) are painted, as Ross has described, on extremely fine pottery, but this pottery, and the slips and paint employed have a much greater range of types than has so far been recognised. Ross says—"The normal colour is pale pink terracotta without any slip, though a few pieces with a dark red slip have been found", and—"These bowls are painted in various designs in black," Stuart Piggott, who does not seem to have seen a great deal of this pottery, speaks of—"The North Baluchistan Zhob Culture characterized by red slipped wares with black painted decoration and sometimes
additional red lines." He then speaks of "buff-ware" as if there were a definite period employing solely buff coloured pottery.

The facts as observed by me are not nearly so simple as this. The earliest ware is characterized by pots having a variety of allied decoration and slip. The pottery itself is mostly pale buff or pinkish buff but sometimes pink, with cream, pinkish cream or greenish cream slip, and black, brown, dark brown or red brown decoration. Examples of this are: Pl. I (d) (g), (i) to (l); Pl. II (e) to (m); Pl. III (b); Pl. IV (a) to (c); Pl. XI (a). This style is definitely earlier than the equally well fabricated pots with very dark red slip as shown in Pl. I (e) to (g). These are quite often of buff pottery, but are found also in pinkish buff, pink and grey.

The animal figure as shown in Pl. III (e) has become extremely elongated, and the exaggeration of the pot shoulders, mentioned by Ross as being found in the later phases, is beginning to appear. This style of pottery retaining its dark red slip, but with its patterns in black becoming more and more conventionalised, reaches a point where the shoulder stands off from the pot in a thin rim about quarter of an inch or more deep. The animal figure by this time becomes so conventionalised as to be barely recognisable as will be seen from the example in Pl. III (f). If this exposition, showing as it does a great degree of elaboration over the earlier simplifications, would suffice, matters would still be relatively simple, but this is not so. Animal designs of very similar type are found on all sorts of pottery which cannot readily be fitted in with the accepted fabrics of the Bull Layer. Reference to Plate III will show animals on all sorts of pottery fabrics thick and thin, with sections in bright pink, pale purple, and coarse poorly fired grey. Where exactly these fit in I don't know, but they indicate the need for fewer generalization, more caution and more excavation.

**INDUS VALLEY POTTERY**

I have already made reference to the fragment from Moghul Gundai noticed by Prof. Gordon Childe as having a typical Indus Valley pattern of intersecting circles; Mr. Stuart Piggott also quotes Mr. Basil Grey as authority for a statement that the uppermost level at Rana Gundai produced pottery showing Harappa influence. This is possible, but there is
nothing in Brig. Ross's notes and drawings made at the time to suggest that this is so. Out of the large number of sherds I have seen, only the one quoted by Gordon Childe and the two sherds shown on Pl. VIII, (n) and (o) from Duki have any resemblance to typical Indus patterns. Even so the piece from Moghul Gundai with its polychrome colouring and the ones from Duki of a totally dissimilar fabric to that found anywhere in the Indus Valley have merely approximations to Indus motifs and nothing else to connect them with those cultures.

Just what the Bull sherds of the Zhob owe to Hissar I and Nineveh V is still very far from clear. The animal zones of Bampur and Khurab in Makran have closer affinity with the latter than the former, and but little echo is found in the Indus Valley. It is much too early yet to attempt any dating. Very few animal designs are found on true Harappa sherds; Pl. IX (k) shows a young deer or goat apparently being suckled
by its mother which is made fast by its hind legs to two posts, this is from Chanhu-daro and its buff slip and animal design are far from typical of the Harappa date claimed for it. Figs. (i) and (n) on the same plate show Harappa Period designs of very unusual style from Harappa itself. Fig. (m) shows an interesting piece of the so called Burial pottery, in which animal motifs are quite common.

It is unfortunate that in India in particular certain pottery which was undoubtedly in every day use is labelled as Burial pottery, because it happened to be deposited with some of the relatively few ancient burials of which we have any record. Such pottery is the Burial pottery at Harappa, and the brown and black cairn burial pottery of 2nd. Cent. B. C.—3rd Cent. A. D. from the Deccan and South India. Although Pandit Sarup Vats in his excavations at Harappa records this so called burial pottery from every mound and every trench, he sets it on one side as being definitely Burial as opposed to Household. This must be wholly wrong this fabric being one of a later period used all over the whole area. It is inconceivable that potters should have turned out a wholly different fabric for burial purposes and that this special Burial pottery should have been carelessly broken all over the whole town. It was of course the household pottery of its time, and certain special types and motifs were used in contemporary burial jars. The proper position chronologically of this pottery, for which a name will have to be found, can only be determined when the full evidence of the cemeteries at Harappa has been properly co-ordinated, and that is not yet.

THE PAINTED POTTERY OF EARLY HISTORIC AND MODERN TIMES

This painted pottery is introduced to show that it exists in considerable quantities in the districts of Peshawar, Mardan, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Montgomery on many sites definitely of the Early Historic and possibly of the mediaeval periods, and where painted pottery is produced to-day. Various motifs are taken in turn, Plate IV showing "chessboard" patterns which are found from extremely early times, and have a wide distribution in time and date and therefore small dating value. Plate V shows tapered rim ornamentation. Plates VI and VII show cross-hatching which is so
common in every place and every age producing painted pottery that it can be taken as having no dating value in itself. Plate VIII shows triangular designs and, together with IX, typical patterns from Harappa. Plate X has some interesting designs; firstly there is the bull from Mehri attached to a “cult object” looking more like a microphone than anything else, this object is more closely related in its idea to the “standard” placed before bulls on seals at Mohenjodaro than is the spear-head to which bulls on Mehri pottery are more usually tethered. Squares divided into black and white triangles are of three, possibly four, different periods: Harappa, Burial, Zhob and Early Historic, the last named from Taxila. The definitely Early Historic peacock (m) from Akhkari Dheri, Risalpur is of great interest when compared with those from Harappa.

We now come to a pattern which may prove to be of the greatest
importance in determining the age of painted pottery in India. This is the loop pattern in which loops or series of loops fill one of the zones of decoration. A true loop pattern is a succession of separate loops each fineing off to a point where it meets the next loop and a circumferential line, and should not be confused with the continuous wavy line pattern particularly when this touches a circumferential line and gives an appearance of a succession of loops. It seems that the pottery bearing this loop design is late rather than early. From the Zhob this pattern is found in two, possibly three instances among the examples I have seen from all sources. Pl. VI (a) and (b) show one possible and one definite example from Moghul Kila which are probably late rather than early, and Pl. XI (a) gives the rim of a dish from Rana Gundai which with its external cord decoration and additional impressed pattern is certainly late. I have not been able to trace
this pattern anywhere in the Indus Valley until the Jhukar period, where it appears as shown in Pl. XVII (a), (c), (h) to (j) on Jhukar fabrics from Chanhu-daro and other sites in Sind. In the early Historic Period this pattern becomes one of the most frequent. It is noticeable therefore that whereas such patterns as cross-hatched, chess board, wavy line, and squares divided into triangles have persisted at all times from very remote periods, this does not hold good in the instance of the loop pattern which seems to make its first appearance in the Jhukar period.

Pl. XIII also has examples of patterns of irregular wavy or “squigly” lines; a striking similarity, by reason of a dotted circle appearing in both, being found in (d) Burial Type pottery from Harappa and (g) a pattern from Khingranwala. The latter site, though not far from Harappa, has no Harrappa or Burial Type pottery on it, all its remains being of the E. H.
Period. The remaining Figs. on this plate show how the combination of vertical lines and loops or circles has persisted down to modern times.

Pl. XIV shows a number of plant form patterns. Fig. (b) from Twin Mounds and (c) from Rana Gundai, sites in the Zhob, are both to my mind of E. H. date. There is nothing about the style, appearance or fabric of this pottery that suggests a Proto-historic date; of the same style and fabric as these are (d) and (f) of Pl. XVIII, both from Twin Mounds. There is no striking similarity between the plant form patterns of the P-H. and E. H. periods. Pl. XV shows pottery from the Zhob which does not fit in with any of the normal types as described by Brig. Ross or any of the other writers. It comes from a variety of sites and is mostly of a coarse style especially (a) and (b) from Moghul Kila and (c) from Rana Gundai. These are examples of a multiplicity of sherds which have got to be fitted
in before we can see the cultures of the Zhob as a coherent whole. It is possible that many of such types are late, particularly (k) from Moghul Kila which is typically E. H. in its style and fabric.

Pl. XVI shows polychrome fragments from the Zhob of which (a) to (i), (n) and (p) appear to be of the same style of polychrome as recorded by Sir Aurel Stein who published a number of typical examples, and which seem also to have much in common with the polychrome of the Jhukar period as exemplified by Pl. XVII (b) from Chanhu-daro. Fig. (k) with its dark red and greenish cream slips and its coarse fabric is identical with the coarse fragments with animal patterns shown on Pl. III (b) and (d). The buff and dark red pottery exemplified in (j), (m), (l), (o) and in Pl. V (m) from Rana Gundai and Duki are of a type and period of their own and
would appear to be late rather than early. These also find no place in any present classification.

Plates XVIII, XIX and XX (a) to (g) contain odds and ends of designs which do not find a place elsewhere. The modern pottery, Pl. XX (h), (i), (j), (l) and (o) shown with three examples from Makran and the Zhob are of great interest and require special mention. In (h) one sees a curved semi-swastika design in the centre, which may be compared with the pattern from Khurab below, an intersecting circle pattern and triangles with cross-hatching; (i) has ladder pattern (see also Pl. XVIII), end to end triangles (see also Pl. X) and wavy line; (j) has pipal leaves (see also Pls. IX and X), cross-hatched triangles and a design somewhat similar to (n) on the same Plate; (l) has cross-hatched triangles, wavy line pattern and loop pattern, the distinction between these as mentioned
above being clearly brought out here; (m) from the Zhob and (o) may also be readily compared and show strong similarity. I may say that when shown photographs of the originals of the modern dishes and pots whose designs are given on Pl. XX even the "very elect" were deceived at any rate at first glance.

This short resumé has taken us through the material which I have assembled. The value does not lie so much in my notes which do little except point out the difficulties which beset the study of painted pottery and the dangers of too hasty generalization, but in the designs themselves which represent for my wife and myself, literally hundreds of miles of walking, thousands of miles of motoring and many many hours of searching head downwards in the sun on mounds all over Northern India. It does not set out to be a Corpus of painted pottery designs but it takes us some
considerable distance along the road towards the production of such an record. I wish I had managed to secure even more modern examples, but this can still be done by anyone who cares to take the trouble. I myself picked up at Harappa the fragments of a handsome painted jar which had fallen and been broken only an hour or so previously. If these notes do anything to give pause to generalizations about Painted Pottery and to the use in this connection of the word Chalcolithic, it will have attained part of its purpose. For the rest here are examples of painted designs which may with the detailed descriptions of the fabric of most of them serve as a basis to lighten the labours of others.

NOTES ON THE PLATES

The patterns of Painted Pottery shown in the Plates and described in these notes are from the following sites.

Zhob : Rana Gundai, at 7 M. S. from Loralai, along the Loralai-Dhera Ghazi Khan Road,
Moghul Kila, this is a mound with the remains of a Moghul Fort and is almost certainly the same as Moghul Gundai; 16 miles from Loralai and one mile along the Sandeman road after it forks from the D. G. Khan road.
Small Mound, at 10 M. S. on the D. G. Khan road; also Small Mound (3), three miles from Loralai.
Duki, a large shallow mound one mile on Quetta side of Duki.
Twin Mounds, one mile south of Loralai. Also the site of Sur Jangal.
Baluchistan : Kulli, Mehi and Nandara.
Makran : Shahi Tump, Bampur, Khurab and Spet.
Indus Valley : Harappa, Jhukar and Chanhu-daro. Also sites in Sind referred to by N. G. Majumdar in his Memoir "Explorations in Sind."
Peshawar and Mardan Districts : Bala Hissar, Kula Dhere, Babo Dhere, Chalela Dhere, Akhkari Dhere, Turlandi, and Risalpur.
Rawalpindi District : Budho 2, a site about two miles East of the cement factory at Wah; Taxila and Soan River.
Lahore District : Three sites on the Grand Trunk road between 10 and 20 miles west of Lahore.
Montgomery District: Akbar and Khingranwala (Okara Tehsil), Faquiran near Montgomery and Shah Yakka (Dipalpur Tehsil).

The pottery is classified under three headings—Proto-Historic (PH.), Early Historic (EH.) and Modern. The term Early Historic indicates the period from the commencement of the Mauryas to the end of the Guptas, say from about 300 B.C. to 500 A.D. In the case of the pottery of the Early Historic period unless otherwise stated the pottery is bright red with a clear black pattern.

Plate I.

(a), (b) and (c), Rana Gundai found by Brig. Ross; exact fabric unknown.

(d) Rana Gundai, cream slip on pink surface, dark brown pattern sec. pale pinkish buff.
(e), (f) and (g) pot rims, Rana Gundai and (h) Duki, dark red slip pinkish buff interior and sec. Interior has red slip of varying width from rim down, followed by pinkish buff, pattern black. Slip has appearance of being laid on with the jar on a fast wheel in motion.

(i) Rana Gundai, (j) Twin Mounds, (k) and (l) Duki, pale greenish buff slip, very dark brown pattern sec. pink.

Plate II.

(a), (b), (c) and (d) Rana Gundai found by Brig. Ross, exact fabric unknown.

(e) Rana Gundai, rim, 18 cm. diam., exterior, darkish buff slip smudged with red, pattern partly red partly black. Interior pale buff slip with dark red paint 1\frac{1}{2} inches deep from rim, sec. pinkish buff.

(f) Rana Gundai, creamy buff slip, pattern brown.

(g) Rana Gundai, greenish cream washed on pink, pattern brown.

(h) Rana Gundai, greenish cream slip, pattern brown.

(i) Rana Gundai, exterior creamy buff slip. Interior pale pink with black pattern.

(j) Twin Mounds, creamy buff slip, pattern brown.

(k) Twin Mounds, exterior buff slip pattern brown. Interior, grey brown slip sec. pink.

(l) Unrecorded Zhob site, greyish cream slip, pattern black, sec. pale brown.

(m) Unrecorded site, creamy buff slip, pattern brown.

(n) Harappa, sherd of the Harappa period, polished dark red slip, pattern black.

Plate III.

(a) Twin Mounds, ext. dull pink slip, red brown pattern. Int. brighter pink slip, sec. pale purple.

(b) Twin Mounds, ext. greenish cream slip, brown hachure pattern. Int. pinkish buff slip, brown animal pattern, sec. pink, dull in centre, fired to bright pink at surfaces.

(c) Rana Gundai, greenish cream slip, pattern brown. Thick-sectioned coarse pottery.
(d) Rana Gundai, as for (c), but thicker and coarser.
(e) Rana Gundai, very dark red slip, dark purplish pattern, sec. pale buff.
(f) Rana Gundai, red slip, pattern black, sec. pale red.
(g) Twin Mounds, pale pink slip, pattern dark brown, sec. pale creamy grey.
(h) Twin Mounds, greenish slip, pattern brown, sec. grey.
(i), (j) and (k) Harappa, Burial Type pottery.
(l) Kulli, Baluchistan and (m) Khurab, Makran. Sir Aurel Stein’ fabric unknown.

Plate IV.

(a) Twin Mounds, buff slip, brown pattern.
(b) Rana Gundai, ext. greenish cream slip, brown pattern. Int. buff slip.
(c) Twin Mounds, slip greener on int. than ext., brown pattern.
(d) and (e) Rana Gundai, and Surjangal, Sir Aurel Stein, fabric unknown.
(f) Twin Mounds, pink slip, brown pattern.
(g) Rana Gundai, pale brown slip, dark brown pattern.
(h) Nundara, Baluchistan, Sir Aurel Stein, fabric unknown.
(i) Harappa, Harappa Period, polished red slip, black pattern.
(j) Bala Hissar Charsadda, red brown slip.
(k) Harappa, Burial Type pottery.
(l) Khingranwala, dark red slip.
(m) Lahore, red wash, black pattern clear but thin.

Plate V.

(a) Rana Gundai, pink slip, red brown pattern.
(b) Rana Gundai, red slip, black pattern. It is doubtful whether this piece is of the proto-historic period, it is probably much later.
(c) Twin mounds, red brown slip, thin black pattern.
(d) Rana Gundai, greenish cream slip, brown pattern.
(e) Duki, pink slip red brown pattern.
(f) Faquiran, rim of Dish, red slip, sec. red brown.
(g) Lahore rim of dish, thin black pattern,
(h) and (j) Lahore, pottery grey with a thick red slip.
(i) Faquiran, rim of dish, red wash, purplish red pattern.
(k) Kula Dheri, slight polished red slip.
(l) Chalela Dheri, red wash, black pattern thin and dull.
(m) Duki, shows interior pattern of bowl, black pattern on dark red slip, Below bottom line of pattern—pink pot.

Plate VI.

(a) Moghul Kila, fine pottery, pink slip, red brown pattern.
(b) Moghul Kila, fairly coarse pottery, ext. dark cream slip, red pattern, Int. brown slip.
(c) Rana Gundai, dish with flaring sides, red pottery, no slip, pale thin black pattern, sec. grey.
(d) Harappa, Harappa Period pottery.
(e) Harappa, Burial Type pottery.
(f) Moghul Kila, above horizontal line dark red slip, below pink slip, dark brown pattern.
(g) Khingranwala, dark red slip, sec. pale red.
(h) Khingranwala, slight pale red wash, black pattern very thin and rather smudgy.
(i) Taxila, red slip.
(j) Shah Yakka, no slip except in extreme bottom corner below lowest line where red slip, thin black pattern.
(k) Khingranwala, red wash rough applied, cord pattern.
(l) Khingranwala, dark red slip.
(m) Shah Yakka, pink and red wash as indicated, thin black pattern.

(n) Bala Hissar, Ext. dark red slip, int. light red wash.

Plate VII.

(a) (b) and (c) Khingranwala, dark red slip.
(d) Faqirwan, rim of flat dish red wash, smudgy black pattern, single and double grooves below pattern.
(e) Bala Hissar, dark red slip.
(f) Turlandi, ext. dark plum red slip. Int. light red wash.
(g) Budho 2, brown pottery, dark red slip.
(h) Lahore, pale red pot with darker red wash.
(i) Budho 2, polished red-brown slip.
(j) Kingranwala, reddish brown wash.

Plate VIII.

(a) and (b) Harappa, Harappa Period pottery.
(c) Shahi Tump, Makran, Sir Aurel Stein, fabric unknown.
(d) Khurab, Makran, as for (c),
(e) Faqirwan, pale red slip, dark red pattern roughly and thinly applied.
(f) Soan River, Rawalpindi, pottery reddish brown with slightly polished pink slip on outer undecorated surface. Thinly applied black pattern. Possibly modern.
(g) Budho 2, pink pottery with polished red brown slip, dull black pattern.
(h) Moghul Gundai, (probably same as Moghul Kila) Sir Aurel Stein, fabric unknown.
(i) Site unrecorded, but definitely early historic. Rim of bowl, grey brown pottery with pink polished slip, brown main pattern cross-hatched lines bright red.
(j) Faqirwan, thin red wash.
(k) Khingranwala, red wash.
(l) Bala-Hissar, dark red slip.
(m) Taxila, red slip (Taxila Museum).
(n) and (o) Duki, red and dark red polished slips, pattern black.
Plate IX.

(a) to (i) Harappa, Harappa Period pottery.

(j) Harappa, Burial Type pottery, an unusual plant-form design for this type of pottery.

(k) Chanhu-daro, described in Illus. London News as "Harappa Period, young ibex eating from a tree". As it is a buff slip with matt black pattern, is it far from typical Harappa ware. Also it is not as described, but shows a young animal apparently taking suck from its mother. In any case the large object is an animal and not a tree, though it may possibly be a peacock.

(l) and (n) Harappa, Harappa Period, unusual figure designs.
(m) Harappa, Burial Type pottery.

Plate X.

(a) Mehi, Baluchistan, Sir Aurel Stein, fabric unknown. Animal on right has apparently largely exaggerated testicles.
(b) Harappa, Harappa Period pottery.
(c) Rana Gundai, from Brig. Ross’s Period IV, possibly of Early Historic date, no evidence at present available.
(d) Harappa, Burial Type pottery.
(e) Taxila, red slip, (Taxila Museum).
(f) Bampur, Makran, Sir Aurel Stein, fabric unknown.
(g) Taxila, red slip, (Taxila Museum).
(h) and (i) Spet, Makran, Sir Aurel Stein, fabric unknown.
(j) Small mound, dark red slip, black pattern, as likely to be Early Historic as it is Proto-historic.
(k) and (l) Harappa, Burial Type pottery.
(m) Akhkari Dheri, red brown polished slip. For photo and points regarding this see p. 63 J. R. A. S. B. Vol. VI. No. 2. 1940.
(n) Budho 2, dull red slip, dull black pattern.

End to end triangles are found also at the following places, references are to Plates in Majumdar’s “Explorations in Sind”, Lohri Pl. XXIV (21), Ghazi Shah Pl. XXVII (23), Pandi Wahi Pl. XXVIII (14), also end to base triangles, Amri, Pl. XVIII (17).

Plate XI. All designs on this plate are on rims of dishes or bowls.

(a) Rana Gundai, buff slip, red brown pattern, impressed decoration in top left corner.
(b) Shah Yakka, red brown pattern on orange red slip, with pale orange slip on reverse.
(c) Khingranwala, brown slip on brown pottery, ill executed dark brown pattern.
(d) Site not recorded, red slip, smudgy black pattern.
(e) Lahore, similar to Plate V. (h) and (j), pottery grey with thick red slip.
(f) Khingranwala, red slip with black pattern clear but somewhat shadowed by smudging, pink wash on reverse.
Plate XVI

(g) Site not recorded, pot rim with incised cord pattern on edge, red wash, black pattern faint on original.
(h) Chalela Dheri, pink wash, pale thin red brown pattern.
(i) Site not recorded, dark red slip.
(j) Lahore, brown pottery with pale pink wash, thin black pattern.
(k) Khingranwala, dark brown pottery.

Plate XII.

(a) Akbar, red slip.
(b) Turlandi, brown slip, dull black pattern.
(c) Montgomery Dist., pink pottery, brown slip, dark red pattern.
(d) Mankiala, red wash.
(e) Khingranwala, red brown pottery, cord decoration.
(f) Lahore, dark orange-red polish slip, dark red pattern.
(g) Khingranwala, thin red slip, dark purple pattern.
(h) Khingranwala, red wash, thin black pattern.
(i) Shah Yakka, pink pottery with pink and red wash.
(j) Khingranwala, red wash, badly rubbed black pattern.
(k) Lahore, dull red wash.
(l) Akbar, orange red slip, dull dark red pattern.
(m) Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila, pale brown pottery with red brown polished slip.
(n) Lahore, red wash, with thinly painted white ground in main zone and cord decoration.
(o) Bala Hissar, dark red slip.
(p) Budho 2, brown pottery with brown wash, dull black pattern.

Plate XIII.

(a) Bala Hissar, small necked globular pot, brown wash.
(b) Budho 2, large bowl, no slip.
(c) Risalpur, red wash.
(d) Harappa, Burial Type pottery.
(e) Turlandi, dark red slip.
(f) Site not recorded, brown pottery with red brown slip, thin black pattern.
(g) Khingranwala, dark red wash, black pattern very smudged and indistinct.
(h) Babo Dheri, dark red wash.
(i) Duki, pink pottery with pink wash, pale brown pattern.
(j) Harappa, Burial Type pottery.
(k) Soan River, Rawalpindi, red slip, dull black pattern, probably modern.
(l) Khingranwala, red wash, dull black pattern.

Plate XIV.

(a) Moghul Kila, ext. greenish cream slip, brown pattern. Int. red slip, unevenly fired red and grey sec.
(b) Twin Mounds, rim of dish 32 cm. diam., light grey pottery, dark pattern.
(c) Rana Gundai, dark grey pottery, black pattern. (b) & (c) are
almost certainly of a late date, probably of Early Hist. Period.

(d) Duki, pale brown pottery with pinkish buff wash, brown pattern.

(e) and (f) Harappa, Harappa Period pottery.

(g) Bampur, Makran, Sir Aurel Stein, fabric unknown.

(h) Budho 2, dark red slip.

(i) Bala Hissar, dark red slip.

(j) Chalela Dheri, brown pottery with red slip.

(k) Khingranwala, purplish red pottery with creamy pale brown slip, red brown pattern.

(l) Akbar, streaky red slip.

(m) Akbar, carinated pot, dark red slip, dull black pattern.

(n) Akbar, carinated pot, red wash.
Plate XV.

(a) and (b) Moghul Kila, very coarse pottery some of which has raised cord pattern indicating a late possibly E. H. date. Pink slip, plum pattern, coarse pale grey sec.

(c) Rana Gundai, coarse thick, pottery with pink slip, plum pattern.

(d) Small Mound, thick pale grey pottery with red slip and plum pattern.

(e) Small Mound (3), pink pottery with pinkish grey slip and red brown pattern.

(f) Twin Mounds, polychrome red-brown and black patterns on pink and red slips.

(g) Duki, no slip, ext. half of sec. brown with black pattern, int. half of sec. grey.

(h) Duki, ext. half of sec. brown with black pattern. Int. half of section red, no slip.

(i) Twin Mounds, greenish slip, dark and light brown pattern.

(j) Twin Mounds, buff slip, red brown pattern, pink sec.

(k) Moghul Kila, coarse thick red pottery with red wash and dark plum pattern, possibly of late E. H. date.

(l) Moghul Kila, fairly coarse red pottery with greenish cream slip, red pattern.

Plate XVI. This Plate shows examples of polychrome pottery from the Zhob.

(a) Sur Jangal, red and brown pattern on buff slip. This fragment was given me by Mlle. S. Corbiau.

(b) Rana Gundai, coarse thick brown pottery with red and pale bluish green slips as indicated, brown pattern.

(c) Rana Gundai, greenish cream slip, red and brown pattern on interior.

(d) Rana Gundai, dark brown pattern on greenish cream slip mottled with patches of smudgy pink and blue.

(e) Rana Gundai, ext. pink slip, red and black pattern. Int. dark red rim on pink slip.

(f) Rana Gundai, ext. buff slip, red and black pattern. Int. red slip.
(g) Twin Mounds, slip, above groove, dark red, below, greenish cream, pattern black.
(h) Rana Gundai, alternate rows of red and black ovals on pink slip.
(i) Rana Gundai, pale grey pottery with red slip. Pattern—cross hatching and centre band dark red, rest black.
(j) Mughul Kila, dark red and buff slips, dark brown pattern.
(k) Twin Mounds, thick coarse pottery, dark red and greenish cream slips, black pattern.
(l) Rana Gundai, red and buff slips, pattern—heavy lines plum, shaded line scarlet.
(m) Rana Gundai, dark red and creamy buff slips, pattern black.
(n) Rana Gundai, black portion black, shaded lines and dots—red on pink and red slips as indicated.
(o) Duki, thick pottery red with grey sec., buff and dark red slips, dark brown pattern.
(p) Moghul Kila, cream slip, heavy lines dark brown, shaded lines red.

Plate XVII. This Plate includes pottery from Chanhu-daro, Amri, Jhukar, Lohumjo-daro, Trihni, Lohri, Pokhran and Shahjokotiro, and mention here and in Pls. X and XVIII is made of Khajur, Ghazi Shah, Arabjothana and Pandi Wahi all sites in Sind explored by Mr. M. G. Majumdar. Only a few specimens that are specially relevent have been shown here out of the mass of decorated sherds illustrated in Memoir 48 of The Archæological Survey—"Explorations in Sind." Reference should be made to this work by anyone who is studying early Indian painted pottery.

(a)—(e) Chanhu-daro, Jhukar period pottery taken from Dr. Mackay’s article in The Illustrated London News.
(g) Amri, Harappa Period, dark red slip, black pattern.
(h) Jhukar, Jhukar Period, red wash, black pattern.
(i) Lohumjo-daro, Jhukar Period, red wash, dark brown pattern, cord marks on outer surface.
(j) Trihni, Jhukar Period, pinkish creamy slip, dark brown pattern. Figs. (h) to (j) should be compared with Pl. XI (a) and Pl. XII.
(k) Chanhu-daro, Harappa Period, red slip, black pattern, but compare with Pl. XI (j) classed by Sarup Vats as Burial Type pottery from Harappa.
(l) Chanhu-daro, apparently of Harappa Period but an unique design of stylised stags, red slip, black pattern.
(m) Shahjo-kotiro, uncommon design for this region of a line of ibexes, red slip, black pattern.
(n) and (o) Trihni, examples of the unique floral designs found on pottery at this site, pattern black and reddish brown on a pale red or buff slip. Fig. (j) above from the same
site tends to place this culture alongside the Jhukar Culture.

(p) Lohri, cream slip, pattern dark brown.

(q) Pokhran, buff slip, pattern dark brown, pottery light red. Cheveron pattern is also found at Khajur, Arabjo-thana and Pandi Wahi. See also Pl. XX (d) for example of cheveron in E. H. Period.

Plate XVIII.

(a) Twin Mounds, dark red slip, black pattern.

(b) Twin mounds, pale red slip, smudgy black pattern.

(c) Twin Mounds, pink pottery with apparently reserved slip pattern of black on red slip, probably of late date.

(d) Twin Mounds, red slip, black pattern, probably of late date.
(e) and (f) Twin mounds, grey pottery, black pattern similar to Plate XIV, (b) and (c), late date.

(g) Rana Gundai, buff wash, dark brown pattern, red pottery.

(h) Moghul Kila, pink buff slip, plum pattern, red pottery.

(i) and (j) Harappa, Burial Type pottery. Ladder patterns are also common at Amri, Ghazi Shah, and Pandi Wahi, all sites in Sind.

(k) Shahi Tump, Makran, Sir Aurel Stein, fabric unknown.

(l) Mehi, Baluchistan, as for (k).

(m) Harappa, Harappa Period pottery, scale pattern.

(n) Kolwa, Makran, as for (k).

(o) Taxila, red slip (Taxila Museum).

Plate XIX.

(a) Khingranwala, red wash, thin black pattern, ornamented with rough and smooth bands.

(b) Akbar, red wash, thin black pattern.

(c) Akbar, red wash, dull black pattern.

(d) Lahore, dark red wash, dull black pattern.

(e) Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila, pale brown pottery with dark brown slip, thin white pattern. From in situ 2 feet below foundation level of large court enclosure in the N. W. corner of the D. S. group.

(f) Khingranwala, red wash, dull black pattern.

(g) Shah Yakka, dark red slip.

(h) Site not recorded, pink pottery, thin brown wash, cord ornamentation and dull black pattern.

(i) Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila, red brown polished slip.

(j) Khingranwala, red brown wash.

(k) Akbar, carinated pot, red wash, dull black pattern.

(l) Site not recorded, dark red slip.

Plate XX.

(a) Lahore, red wash.

(b) Mankiala, red slip, plum red pattern.

(c) Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila, reddish brown slip.
(d) Budho 2, pink pottery with polished brown slip, dull black pattern.
(e) Bala Hissar, red brown pottery with red wash.
(f) and (g) Taxila, red slip (Taxila Museum).
(h), (i), (j), and (o), these are patterns from modern pots made in Marden N. W. F. P.
(k) and (n) Khurab, Makran, Sir Aurel Stein, fabric unknown.
(m) Periano Gundai, Zhob, as for (k).
A NEW DOCUMENT OF GUJARATI PAINTING

by Nānālāl Chamanlāl Mehta

Some years ago almost at the threshold of my studies in Indian art, I ventured to designate what were till then known as Jaina paintings as specimens of a distinctive Gujarati school. Most of the material which was then available related to Jainism. The illustrated manuscript of Vasanta Vilās (1451 A.D.) was the first important document of non-Jaina paintings belonging to the western school. The name that I had given to these paintings has been more than justified as a result of the new material which has been discovered and studied during the last few years.

I would have preferred the term ‘Rājasthāni’ to ‘Gujarati’ painting but for the fact that the use of the former has been associated for a long time with the paintings mostly of the 17th and the 18th centuries belonging primarily to Jaipur which have been executed in a style totally different from what I have called ‘Gujarati painting’ from the 11th to the 16th centuries. It should, however, never be forgotten that old Gujarat was integrally a part of Rājasthān and if I have used the phrase ‘Gujarati painting’ it is because the bulk of the paintings of this school were produced in what is now called Gujarat and apparently the word Gujarati was considered a mark of distinction and used by singers, painters, and other artisans, at any rate, during the regime of Akbar. It is also curious to note that in a sixth century Tamil poem, Manimekhalai, there is a reference to the sculptures from Vardhamāna Puri or modern Wadhwan (Kathiawad). So even Kathiawad, which now apparently has but scanty remains of anything which may be called significantly artistic, had once upon a time a vogue and a reputation. On the whole, however, it may be said that Kathiawad does not appear to have played a
part of much importance in the artistic development of Gujarat and this would be borne out by the fact that Kathiawad, despite its inclusion of 'Saurashtra', is an incredibly barren and unproductive region of India, even more arid than the major portion of Marwar and is only important because of the enterprise of its people and the shrewdness of its chieftains. Agriculturally and, therefore, economically Kathiawad could not support any great centres of wealth or learning in the past and there are no traditions of any such centres that one can find.

The nomenclature of Gujarati painting derives added significance from the achievements of the Gujarati school of architecture which flourished for about 250 years beginning from the early 15th century. "With the reign of Mahmud I Begarha (1459-1511) came Gujarat's greatest days, and at the same time the building art of that country also attained its final and most sumptuous form." (Percy Brown, 'Indian Architecture' [Islamic Period] p. 53).

The fame of the Gujarati craftsmen appears to have been on a par with that of the painters, for one of the finest structures in Akbar's Fatehpur-Sikri, Jodhbai's Palace was entrusted to "artisans from Gujarat, one of the groups of workmen brought from distant parts to speed up the production of this vast project" (pp. 98-99, ibid., also see 56-57). They merely continued the great traditions of Solanki if not earlier buildings.

I have always felt that in a country like India it is a mistake to divide art with reference to creeds, for it is well-known that the executants worked for patrons of every religion and that the distinction was really more geographical than theological. Apart from the fact that the local schools generally have their peculiar characteristics, the geographical classification has the further advantage of emphasizing the regional rather than religious characteristics of works of art. The Gujarati school has got certain characteristic features not only as regards paintings but also architecture, sculpture and dance. As a matter of fact, the school is really distinctive of its people; but it must be remembered that what is Gujarat at present is only an administrative arrangement and has nothing to do either with its real and cultural extension in space or time. Some years ago, I also met the well-known Gujars who lead a nomadic
existence on the steppes of Kashmir and graze cattle at a level of 12,000 to 14,000 feet above the sea level. The language of these people is said to be akin to Gujarati and it is perhaps probable that these people may have given their name to the district of Gujarat in the Punjab. A registered 'criminal' tribe in the district of Muzaffarnagar (United Provinces) called the Bāwariās, uses also a 'patois' strangely akin to Gujarati and, curiously enough, is addicted to non-violence in pursuit of its criminal activities! This peculiar tribe believes in non-violent crime—crime which is carried out by an elaborate system of personation and fraud! Whether the old Gujaratis now inhabiting the north and the north-western part of the Bombay Presidency came from these northern and nomadic ancestors, can be only a matter of conjecture. There can, however, be no doubt that they have had the closest affinities with Rajasthan and that the boundaries of Gujarat and the Gujarati culture must be taken to embrace a major part of Rajputana. Historically also the Shrimals and the Porwad Vanias or the Vaishyas who play such a leading role in the commercial life of Gujarat migrated from the well-known historical places of Shrimāl and Prāgvāta. Their close affinity with the fighting clans of the Rajputs is further corroborated by the shining exploits of the rulers and their ministers who have left such enduring monuments of their valour, generosity and good taste. It is also important to note that the two principal creeds of modern Gujarat find some of their most sacred places of pilgrimage in the very heart of Rajputana, Shri Nāθdhwāra for the Vaishnavas and Shri Kesariyaji for the Jains in the Udaipur State. The linguistic affinities as well as the qualities of enterprise, frugality, high-minded charity and piety of the peoples of Rajputana and Gujarat are well known.

The Gujarati school of painting should, therefore, be understood as embracing not only what is known as Gujarat at present but also the major portion of Rajasthan, at any rate up to the end of the seventeenth century when the provincial Courts of Rajputana came to be greatly influenced by the current idiom of the Mughal atelier.

Hitherto the pictorial material representative of the Gujarati school of painting has been, barring the richly illuminated and illustrated Kalpasūtras and Kālkāchārya Kathānkam, limited. Vasanta Vilās had
79 pictures on cloth, the largest being 5.7" by 7.6". A number of Vaishnava and other manuscripts have been recently studied especially by Dr. M. R. Majmudar including the Gitagovinda, Balagopala Stuti, Devi Mahatmya, Rati Rahasya, and some later pictures of Shrimad Bhagavata dated 1610 A.D. The Gitagovinda studied by him refers to six out of the ten avatārs of Krishnā with an introductory one for Sāradā. Other early manuscripts of the Gitagovinda have been published by Stella Kramrisch in the December 1934 number of the Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art. The manuscript that I propose to discuss is perhaps one of the earliest and the most elaborately illustrated version of the Gitagovinda, and of probably the early sixteenth century. The manuscript is in a fair state of preservation and has 159 folios with four missing. The size of the folio is 12½" x 7¼".

As pointed out by Majmudar, the popularity of Jayadeva’s Gitagovinda in Western India within less than 200 years of Jayadeva’s demise is remarkable. Apparently the Gitagovinda heralded the growing tide of Vaishnavism which was to dominate the popular and religious life of the people throughout Hindusthan almost right up to the end of the 17th century. The Gitagovinda apparently became a favourite composition not only with the connoisseurs of Sanskrit and the Vaishnava devotees but also with the illuminators and illustrators right to the end of the 18th and even in the beginning of the 19th century. I have seen stray pages of the Gitagovinda painted in the Mughal style in the collection of Sir Cowasji Jehangir in Bombay belonging obviously to the time of Akbar. There is a magnificent version of the Gitagovinda with the Tehri Darbar, examples of which were reproduced in my book “Studies in Indian Painting”. Another very remarkable version is the one painted by Manaku in the Basoli style and exhibited in the Lahore Museum. This particular version has raised several intriguing questions. The authorship of the paintings is claimed by Manaku, a woman painter, who claims to have produced the illustrated edition in the year 1787 Samvat or 1730 A.D. The verse is illuminated in gold and forms an integral part of the opening picture of the Gitagovinda. It is a pity that the beautiful pictures of Manaku have not yet been adequately reproduced or won a widespread popularity, as they deserve.
I have seen other versions of the Gitagovinda in the later and highly ornate Rajasthani style but none of these pictures rival those in the collections of the Tehri Darbar and the Lahore Museum. A very brilliant series of Gitagovinda pictures executed by a local school of artists working at Kishengarh, near Jaipur, has recently been discovered by Principal Dickinson of Lahore. Some of these pictures are dated as late as 1840, and are ascribed to individual artists. These pictures doubtless belong to the parent stock of the Rajasthani painters working in Jaipur. What is noteworthy, however, is the maintenance of a high aesthetic standard even till about the middle of the 19th century.

The manuscript that I have recently acquired is probably the most profusely illustrated document of Gujarati painting and is interesting in a variety of ways. The illustrations enclosed in a rectangle of red lines cover the entire page with the relevant Sanskrit text inscribed at the top. Only one side of the folio is used and the paper while it has stood the test of time, is not of the same superlative quality as one often comes across in respect of Mughal paintings. The writing, as will be seen from one of the reproductions given here, is good and perhaps above the average of most Sanskrit manuscripts of the period. But here again it cannot compare with either the quality or the care devoted to the writing of Persian manuscripts of the Mughal court.

In style and in the quality of the pictures, the manuscript is remarkable. The drawing is swift, precise and vital, and the artist moves from one incident to another with a sense of confidence and sure improvisation. The figures are more alive than in any of the known examples of Gujarati painting. The colouring is brilliant, warm and striking, though the palette is limited chiefly to the use of reds, blues, whites and greens. There is no attempt at subtle combinations or producing an impression of impeccable or ingenious craftsmanship. The pictures have an atmosphere of intimacy, and the studied simplicity both of line and colour would appear to be understood equally well by the artist and his audience. Almost every picture would have made a magnificent mural. It is as if the art of the wall painter had been abridged into the folios of a manuscript.

The illustrated folios are distributed as follows:
The scene is laid on the banks of the Jumna, but it is not the Jumna of the Pahari painter—rushing down from its mountainous retreats and whirling in swift turns through scenes of verdant glory. The Jumna as seen by the Gujarati painter is but a placid stream winding through the Braj Mandal and all that he could conjure up in his vision—a stream replete with fish and branching trees (probably ‘kadamba’) on its banks. There are none of the magnificent trees, the brilliant creepers or the flowering plants which the Pahari painter associated with its precipitous descent across the Himalayas.

As usual in pictures of this particular school, the size of the painted object is primarily the function of its importance and not of relative or spatial proportions. For example, a bee or a bird may be painted unusually large because the artist intends to emphasize its prominence. In other words, the whole object of illustrated manuscripts like the Gitagovinda was to give a racy, colourful and easily understandable version of the popular poem. Just as, for instance, the heroes of the ‘Cochin Murals’, a sumptuous publication by the Cochin Government (1940) illustrating the Rāmāyaṇa and of others in the Padmanābhapuram Palace in the Travancore State illustrating the incidents from the Dashāvatāra, the ten incarnations and the Mahābhārata are dressed up in the costumes of the Kathakali dancers, the characters in these early manuscripts of the Gujarati school would look as if they were a part of the popular pictorial show—the
'bhavai' or the 'swang' which the people were used to see on the appropriate festivals.

The 'dramatis personae' are generally outline in red, while the entire landscape of trees and creepers along with the humming bees and the chattering birds are depicted with the brush—a rather uncommon and unusual departure in Indian manuscript or miniature paintings. Colour is literally thrown in and quite frequently overflows the limits of the encompassing lines.

It is unnecessary to repeat the characteristic features of the Gujarati school. It will suffice to draw attention to some special features of this particular Ms. The main interest centres on the treatment of the figures. There is no attempt at making the figures "speak". The emphasis is almost wholly on gestures and movements. The facial expression is generally the same, but it is remarkable how the artist has been able to make his figures live by concentrating on simple gestures and significant poses. Kāmadeva, Cupid, figures quite prominently and is generally shown standing on one foot and shooting the flower-edged dart of desire. Dancing postures seem to be favoured.

Jayadeva, the author of the Gītāgovinda, with his stringed 'ekatāra', or 'vīnā' is depicted in a number of panels attired in 'dhotī, dupāṭṭā' and a cap. It is not a portrait but merely the conventional depiction of the author in a mood of humility and in accord with the ancient tradition. The landscape of conventional trees with broad leaves and spreading branches, humming bees and clamorous birds, furnishes the background for the romantic 'sortie' of Rādhā and Krishna, when the sky was overcast, the night was dark and young Krishna was afraid of walking to his home across the Jumna. The bee and the cuckoo ('kokila') are naturally prominent as the heralds of spring. The emphasis, however, is on the movements of the principal actors in the poem.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature about the background of all these Gītā-govinda pictures is the way in which trees dominate the scene. The trees are, of course, conventional, and the only identification that is possible is perhaps that of the palm and of the 'kadamba'. It is the latter with its pink blossoms, hovering bees and low, trailing branches, which furnishes the poetic background to the various episodes of Jayadeva's
poem. The various characters are outlined against a background generally of pink and green, and sometimes also of light blue, grey and yellow. It should not be forgotten that the scene of the poem is on the banks of the Jumna, and in the groves of Brindaban. The tree often occupies the centre of the picture, and its overspreading branches furnish the canopy of green foliage with humming bees and clamorous birds. The peacock is quite frequently painted in its fully glory; and the bees are almost as prominent as the blossoms. Sometimes the bees form a vital part of the pictorial pattern, as is also the case with the peacock with its magnificent train of feathers resting on the overhanging branches. The entire treatment of the landscape is unusual and original, and it is not possible to trace its origin in any other school of painting yet known; nor is it yet possible to see the exact continuance of these mannerisms in the subsequent periods of Indian painting, except perhaps in the pictures of the Tehri-Garhwal and Basoli Gītagovinda. The entire treatment seems to conform to a conventional and yet informal pattern, and there can be no doubt as to its effectiveness from the pictorial point of view. The foliage is vividly picked out against a monochrome background of yellow, red, or grey as the case may be. The entire pattern is indeed that of the sacred grove of Brindaban alive with the sports of Rādhā and Krishna, where even trees and birds seem to be animated by the breath of Spring.

One of the striking things about these various pictures is the information that is available regarding the costumes of the people in the epoch just preceding the advent of the Mughals. The diaphanous 'jāmā' or the 'aṅgarkhā' with deep angular slits at the ends as also the transparent scarf of the 'chunri' of the ladies are perhaps the most peculiar. This particular type of 'aṅgarkhā' is found in some of the earlier pictures of the Court of Akbar, particularly in respect of the portraits of Hindu personages. It would appear, however, that this type of 'aṅgarkhā' was the prevailing dress of the Hindu gentry, at any rate in Rajputana and that it was adopted with modifications at the new Imperial Court of Agra and Delhi. The ordinary 'deśī' shoe is also to be seen as well as the 'topi,' apart from the 'kamarband' or the waist-band so characteristic in the delineation of the grandees of the Mughal Court at a later period and
still in use in Rajputana. The peaked cap—the prevalent headgear in the pictures of Vasanta Vilās—was probably something of the nature of a 'topi' or a 'mukuṭa'. The word 'topikā' was used in a work of the 12th century called 'Abhilashitārtha Chintāmana' and was particularly commended for monsoon wear. Kāmādeva is generally attired in 'dhōtī' and cap. The masculine beard as well as long coiffure seem to have got out of fashion since the days of Vasanta Vilās. Women folk, on the other hand, cover their heads with the ends of the 'chunri,' tie their hair in a free dangling knot and carry the black wrist band (maṅgala-sūtra) as a safeguard against the 'evil eye' which is not generally found after the end of the 16th century, but is quite characteristic of the paintings of the Court of Akbar. The custom of putting the auspicious mark on the forehead seems to be just coming into fashion. Judging in fact from the costumes worn by the women, one would be inclined to think that the manuscript was really painted at one of the Vaishnava centres in Rajputana such as Nāthdwāra, for the dress of the women is almost like that of the Marwari lady of the present day. The big round ear-rings are also there and appear to have been the weakness of the Gujaratis as alleged by a writer of the 10th century A.D.

Both men and women seem to prefer coloured cloths with check and floral designs and the men are not averse to combining a diaphanous 'āṅgarkhā' with coloured or even striped or patterned pyjamas. The 'duptā' or long scarf thrown round the neck gives a certain amount of scope to the artist to impart movement to his masculine figures, as also the angular ends of the 'āṅgarkhā' and of the headgear, the 'sāfā' or the turban.

The headgear of Krishna as well as Kāmādeva affords a great deal of variety. Kāmādeva is sometimes wearing a turban with the upper end or tassel prominently standing out; while Krishna carries flowers, almost in the fashion of the Scotchman, in his peaked cap. What is, however, specially noteworthy is the holding of a flower in the right hand, a mannerism quite common during the Mughal period. As a matter of fact, there are some very curious features in these pictures, which are reminiscent of the habits of the Mughal Court. It will suffice to mention the angular 'āṅgarkhās,' ornate and elaborate sashes tied round the
waist, and the variety of the pyjamas. The feminine garment has not yet developed into a modern 'sari'; it is still a loose scarf flung overhead with ends loosely hanging on either side. Even the scarf or the 'chunri' has not developed in the conceits of the later period; it is almost a utility garment—loose and baggy and generally in monochrome. It must not be forgotten in this connection that these peculiarities in the details of the costume must not be given too much importance in the matter of dating the pictures, for it is well-known that the habits and fashions in a country of India's continental dimensions change but slowly, and what is even more important is that the fashions of a by-gone age are bound to be found lingering almost in their original, pristine form in isolated localities. One only has to compare the difference in vougues and fashions obtaining in India of today—in the bigger urban centres with those prevailing in some of the inaccessible States in the Himalayan hills and in the plains of Rajputana. In other words, anachronisms in fashion or merely archaic costumes do not indicate an earlier origin in time.

The dating of the Gītagovinda is not wholly free from difficulties. The epigraphical evidence of the top 'mātrās' is not conclusive for ascribing the manuscript to a later period. The style of the paintings is primitive, brilliant and virile and would, 'prima facie,' indicate an earlier origin than the 15th or the 16th centuries and this would not be rebutted merely by the presence of the angular and diaphanous 'āṅgarkhā', the waist band and the flowing 'dupaṭṭās' or the coloured trousers, for it is well known that the pyjamas or breeches at any rate, are as old as the 1st century A.D. The famous statue of Kanishka for instance of the 1st century A.D. shows the great ruler clad in what would be now called breeches and top boots and a long coat. The predominance of the 'āṅgarkhā' and the trousers may be explained by the fact that Jayadeva's poem was acted and painted as a 'yātrā' or a 'bhavai' in which the male characters, at any rate, were dressed like those of the princely order. I would imagine that even in the bygone days there was a differentiation in the costume of the common folk as distinguished from that of the higher classes, just as at present. The latter probably wore the 'āṅgarkhā' and the pyjamas while the rest patronised the 'dhotī.' In some ways the pictures of the Vasanta-Vilās as well as of contemporary Jaina manuscripts look to me to be more
sophisticated, the drawing and colouring more accomplished and deliberate than the pictures of the present manuscript. But mere crudity of execution is quite often a sign of indifferent workmanship or sheer deterioration as, for instance, in the Jodhpur Bhāgavata painted by Govinda in 1610 A.D. The technique of the Gītāgovinda pictures is doubtless old and more akin to that of fresco painting than almost any other Gujarati painting that I have seen; and all I would like to affirm is that the manuscript cannot be later than the 1st quarter of the 16th century. How much earlier it is, it is not possible to say with any degree of accuracy.

My friend Mr. O. C. Gangoly has a feeling that the pictures of the manuscript may "belong to the earlier phase—revealing the style in the making rather than later compositions". I have learnt to be somewhat cautious in the matter of dating Indian paintings as well as sculptures. A Rāgini series, for instance, with all the characteristic marks of the period of Akbar is by a definite inscription a hundred years later, and it is well known that the style of the Jaina manuscripts remains constant over a period of 2-3 centuries. On examination of the existing material I would be content to date this particular manuscript between the later part of the 15th and the early years of the 16th century.

The significance of the ends of the scarf or 'sari' being drawn over the head should also not be lost sight of. This is doubtless a later development and would point, therefore, to the Gītāgovinda being subsequent to the Vasanta Vilās. It is known that the 'sari' as known now came into vogue early in the 16th century.

The bourgeois art of Gujarati manuscript painting seems to have retained its individuality till about the end of the 16th century and though it continued to produce richly illustrated documents, its native characteristics were submerged in the new idiom of the Rajasthani and the Pahāri schools which continued to exist vigorously till almost the first quarter of the 19th century. From a purely pictorial point of view the present manuscript constitutes a valuable, racy, and even elegant interpretation of Jayadeva's masterpiece, which it should not be forgotten, was composed at a time when the emphasis on erotics seems to have been greater in the art of the country than either before or after.

Recently I have come across some further interesting material
bearing on the development of Gujarati painting, thanks chiefly to the
courtesy of my old friend, Muni Jina Vijayaji—the director of the
Bhāratīya Vidyā Bhavan at Bombay, and that famous bibliophile and
scholar, Muni Punyavijayaji Maharaj. The material consists chiefly of
manuscripts illustrating the story of ‘Mādhavānala’, ‘Bilva Maṅgala’ and
‘Chaura Paṅchāshihikā’ as well as some very beautiful ‘Vijñapti-patras’ or
letters written by the Jaina laity. A very interesting wooden panel
depicting an important historical disputation between the two sects of
Jainism has also been found. This may perhaps belong to the reign of
Siddharāja Jayasimha and has been carefully described by Muni Jina
Vijayaji in a recent publication of the Bhāratīya Vidyā Bhavan. The new
material is valuable on account of its rarity and also because of its unusual
aesthetic qualities. Incidentally it appears that the desert kingdom of
Cutch has had some artistic traditions in the past, though at present it is
distinguished only by its outmoded currency of sea shells or ‘cowries,’ and
the almost defunct textile work of exquisite pattern and some rather beauti-
ful traditional silverware. The new material and particularly the variety of
subjects depicted make it clear beyond doubt that the Gujarati school had
a wide geographical extension and considerable and justifiable vogue in the
days of its glory, and that the evolution of Rajasthani as well as the Panjab
Schools of painting, including the Basoli pictures as well as the purely
Mughal school is vitally connected with the older traditions of Gujarati
painting, the origins of which may have to be traced to a much earlier
epoch, for some of the characteristic features such as the pointed nose and
the long drawn out eyes—in fact the entire treatment of the human face
in the Gujarati school seems to find its prototypes in some extraordinary
pieces of metallic cult images, which I have recently acquired. These
images go back to an era when modelling or the casting of images was
unknown, when iconography was a matter primarily of symbolism and
when man had only recently acquired the capacity to work or more
literally hammer his thoughts and ideals into pieces of brass.  

1. The substance of this article is published in the ‘Journal of the Gujarati Research Society’,
October 1945, and I am indebted to the secretary for permission to make use of some of the materials
published therein.
Pl. I. Fol. 110.

In the verses on this page, the end of the seventh canto of the Gita-govinda, Rádhá says:

"The company of the playmates looks like the enemy, the cool breeze seems like fire, the rays of the moon like poison when He (Krishna) is in my mind. Even though, my heart is running towards him who is without mercy. The love of girls whose eyes are beautiful like lotuses will always act against them;—he is uncontrollable.

O cool breeze from the Malay mountains torment me! O Holder of Five arrows [Káma], take away my life; I will not return home.

O sister of Yama [Yamuná as the sister of Yama, Death] with thy waves sprinkle my body with calm, let its heat subside. [O Krishna] what do you care?"

Pl. II.

Part of Picture 93 of the Ms. Krishna carries a 'dúpaṭṭá', and also wears a waist-band with long flowing tassels. On the extreme right, just over the head of the woman seated on her haunches is shown a cobra-like figure, the exact significance of which I am unable to understand.

Here is the substance of the text: (Rádhá says) "My Master does not even think of me though I am pining amongst the reeds of the Jamuna."

The verses on the right are in the form of a benediction: "May the beautiful and charming phrases of Jayadeva, who has sought refuge at the feet of the Master dwell in the heart (of the reader) as the memory of the beloved."

Pl. III.

This is part of the last picture—No. 169—of the Ms. A peacock at the centre, perched on the curving branches, is an important feature of the picture. There is an atmosphere of peace and quiet. On the extreme right is a gentleman, dressed in white, and seated in front of a tripod—a symbol sacred to Jainism, and known as 'sthápanáchárya'. The tripod bears the inscription Śrī Ramakrishna. It would appear as if the gentleman and the two ladies seated opposite to him might well represent the patrons, who were perhaps responsible for ordering an illustrated copy of Jayadeva's Gita-govinda. There is a sense of repose about the entire picture. The person with the bare shoulders is perhaps the family priest, while the three feminine figures on the right may represent the rest of the household. Each one of these three women carries a blossom in a characteristic posture. The flowing braids of hair and the 'mahágala-sútra', the black woolen thread round the wrists, have been woven into a pleasing pattern, while the diaphanous scarfs have been daintily thrown over the head. The peacock throughout the Gita-govinda pictures is treated as an important part of the pictorial pattern, and like the bee hovering over the spring blossoms is as much an integral part of the landscape as the shady trees with long and spreading branches. The group of the three women, each carrying a blossom, is reproduced here.

A careful study of the costumes seen in the various pictures of the Ms. suggests a substantially later date than that of 'Vasanta Vilás' and it is just possible that the Ms. was almost contemporary with the earliest paintings of the 16th century. It should not be forgotten that we have not had hitherto any reliable data of the state of painting during the time of Babar and Humayun; let alone the Courts of the earlier Muslim rulers, though there can be but little doubt that these Courts also gave patronage to painters and calligraphists.
AN IMAGE OF ĀRYA AVALOKITÈŚVARA OF
THE TIME OF VAINYAGUPTA

by AJIT GHose

The Museum of the Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣad was enriched during the period when I was Hon. Superintendent (1926-1930) by the gift of a unique Buddhist sculpture in sandstone of considerable artistic merit and great archaeo logical and iconographic importance. It was found at the bottom of a dried-up tank at Salar, which is in the district of Murshidabad and is a site of undoubted antiquity, where ancient beads and cast coins have been found. For more than one reason this sculpture may be claimed to be unique. It is the only sculpture found in Bengal that I know of, which shows an image in the round facing both ways, for the obverse and reverse are counterparts. Iconographically also the image is unique. The interest and importance of this sculpture are heightened by its early date. Gupta sculptures are of the greatest rarity in Bengal and our sculpture is one of the earliest, if not the earliest. The maximum length of the image, which is broken away just below the knees, one leg being shorter than the other, is 24", while the breadth at the widest part is 18". In its outline, the sculpture was evidently oval but just below the feet there may have been a pedestal; anyway, it must have been so fixed that it could be seen from both front and back. It was thus like the two-faced Janus of old Rome, but the significance of the image was quite different. That side in which the divinity is represented as standing in 'tribhaṅga' pose, holding a lotus stalk in the left hand, while the right arm is akimbo with the palm resting on the hip, must be considered to be the front. The hair is dressed in a topknot. The face has a gentle smile of compassion and the eyes look downward. This and the general configuration and treatment of the body suggest
that the image belongs to the early Gupta period. The upper part of the body is bare, while the lower is covered by a short 'dhoti' reaching to the knees and tied round the waist. There is a belt-like girdle below the hand which rests on the hip. The figure with its clean-cut outline stands out from the stone, which is cut away at both the right and the left sides of it to a considerable depth so that the image is seen in front of the oval halo. The only ornaments are a large ear-ring and a necklace of beads. As I have stated above, the figure on the reverse is the counterpart of the one on the obverse, but it is not so well preserved. On both sides, the deity seems to stand against a large oval surface which has a corrugated appearance, as if it were one mass of rays but ending in clean cut bars, separated from each other and joined to an outer oval rim, the whole having the appearance of an oval-shaped halo (Pl. IV and p. 54).

At first sight one would identify the image as Padmapani Bodhisattva who, as we know, could be represented in any form or attitude. The seal on the Mallasarul copper plate inscription of Vijaysena, which is also in the Museum of the Vaingiya Sahitya Parishad, has on it in relief a representation of a standing figure with the right hand raised above the shoulder. Except as regards the pose of the right hand, the figure appears to be similar to our sculpture. Behind the figure there is what looks like an oval frame with innumerable rays issuing from a central ring. If the artist had been conversant with perspective, this might have been described as a 'chakra' in perspective. N. G. Majumdar was the first to decipher the whole inscription and to publish it in the Sahitya Parishat Patrika1 and in Epigraphia Indica2.

This copper plate was discovered at Mallasarul, a village on the banks of the river Damodar in Burdwan district. It purports to be a grant of land by Maharaja Vijaysena, a vassal of Maharajadhira Gopa Chandra, and is dated in the year 3, apparently of the latter's reign. Vijaysena is evidently the same person who is described as Maharaj Mahasamanta Vijaysena in the Gunagihar copper-plate inscription of

Maharaja Vainayagupta, dated in the year 188 of the Gupta Era, which corresponds to 506-7 A.D. Majumdar inferred that Vijaysena must have been a Sāmanta successively of Vainayagupta and Gopachandra between the latter part of the fifth century and the beginning of the sixth. The script of the Mallasārul copper-plate inscription is also the Northern Brāhmi of the first half of the sixth century A.D.

The Gunaighar grant of Vainayagupta, referred to above, mentions a grant of land to the Avaivarttika Saṅgha of the Buddhist Mahāyāna sect. The monastery of this Saṅgha was founded by Śāntideva as the Ārya-Avalokiteśvara Āśrama Vihāra, after the deity for whose worshippers it had been built, and it had been dedicated by a person of the name of Rudradatta. This inscription establishes the fact that Buddhism was in the early sixth century a flourishing religion in these parts for, besides the monastery above referred to, two others are mentioned, one of which is styled ‘Rājavihāra’, evidently because it received royal patronage, although it appears from the inscription itself that Vainayagupta was himself a devotee of Śiva. The importance of the inscription for us lies in the mention of the image of Ārya-Avalokiteśvara. We have seen that our sculpture and the image on the seal of the Mallasārul copper-plate of Vijaysena are very similar; we have seen, too, that Vijaysena was a vassal of Vainayagupta and that the latter made a grant of land in his Gunaighar copper-plate to an Āśrama Vihāra dedicated to Ārya-Avalokiteśvara. The question that occurred to me was: Could it be that it was the Ārya-Avalokiteśvara to whom a grant of land had been made by Vainayagupta, that was adopted as the symbol on the seal of Vainayagupta’s vassal, the Mahāsāmanta Vijaysena and this seal continued to be used by the latter even when Maharājādhirāj Gopachandra became his overlord? Majumdar thought that the deity on the seal was probably Lokenāth: “The seal bears in relief a standing figure of a two-armed deity (Lokenāth?) with a ‘chakra’ in the background, representing perhaps the wheel of the Law.” The query mark shows that Majumdar was not satisfied with the identification. We venture to suggest what appears to us to be the correct identification of the deity on the seal as well as on the sculpture and this identification explains satisfactorily what was thought to be a ‘chakra’ in the background. What had appeared
to Majumdar and others like the spokes of a wheel seemed to me to be intended to represent rays emanating from the body of a deity; incidentally the elliptical shape did not stand in the way of such an explanation. Dr. B. M. Barua on being consulted, strongly supported my view. He cited passages from the Dīgha Nikāya and the Anupatika Sūtra, the latter of which refers to "rays emanating like the rays of the sun." No doubt other passages may be cited which refer to rays emanating from the Buddha. One such I found in R. L. Mitra's 'Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal', where "golden rays issuing from the glorious person of the Buddha" are mentioned as occurring in the Nepalese manuscript 'Ratnamālā Avadāna'. The question that suggested itself to me was: Was the purpose of the double image facing in opposite directions to convey the idea that the Bodhisattva illumines the four quarters with the lustre of rays which emanate from his body? My surprise was great when I discovered in R. L. Mitra's book just what I was searching for, namely a description of Ārya-Avalokiteśvara and this seemed exactly to fit in with our sculpture and the image on the seal. The 'Guṇakāraṇḍa-Vyūha', a Nepalese manuscript which was translated into Chinese, describes the character, religious teachings and miracles of Ārya-Avalokiteśvara, a Bodhisattva, who was called Saṅgha-ratna or the 'jewel of the Buddhist Church'. We are told in this manuscript how Upagupta gave to Aśoka an account of 'Saṅgha-ratna' as follows, to quote the words of Dr. Rajendralala Mitra: "Once on a time Lord Buddha performed an ecstatic meditation, named 'sarvasamsādhana' or the "purifier of everything." No sooner he sat in that posture than golden rays illuminating the whole province were seen proceeding from some unknown region to that place. Suvarnāvarana Vishkambhi, a saint, struck with wonder at this miracle, asked the Lord, whence did the rays proceed? The Lord said "from Ārya-Avalokiteśvara, who, by the command of Jina, is now preaching the doctrine of Nirvāṇa at Avichi, the Stygian lake of fire. These rays,

2. 'Anupatika Sūtra', p. 16, Pt. I (Dr. Ernst Leumann).
4. Ibid. p. 96.
after having purified the wretched people of that hell, are come here to enlighten the ignorant and sinful." The above passage not only confirms our identification of the image as Ārya-Avalokiteśvara, but makes it quite clear that what had been supposed by Majumdar to be the 'dharmachakra' on the seal are really rays of light emanating from the person of Ārya-Avalokiteśvara, who enlightens the ignorant and sinful.

I cannot conclude better than by giving here a summary of the chain of reasoning by which we have established the identity of our sculpture. The stone image is the same as that on the seal of the Mallasārul inscription of Vijaysena. The latter was a vassal of Vainyagupta and Vainyagupta's Gunaighar inscription mentions the deity Ārya-Avalokiteśvara. A description of Ārya Avalokiteśvara shows that rays emanated from him. This description tallies with the figure on the seal and with the stone image, which is the subject-matter of this paper. Therefore the probabilities are in favour of this being an image of Ārya-Avalokiteśvara. As Vainyagupta's inscription mentions this deity, which, again, figures on the seal of his vassal Vijaysena, the worship of Ārya-Avalokiteśvara must have been popular at the time and as the sculpture, too, is of quite early date, its ascription to the time of Vainyagupta seems to be warranted, although there is a possibility that the image is earlier even. The identification with Lokenāth appears very like: "when in doubt say Lokenāth", and it does not explain the rays. As to why the rays are not shown in the sculpture by radiating lines as in the seal, the reason probably is that the sculptor understood perfectly the nature of his material and that such a course would not have given adequate support to the central figure; the method adopted by him does lend such support and moreover adds an artistic effect to the spiritual beauty of his work.

So far as I am aware no similar image to ours has been published or noticed anywhere. Neither Bhattacharya's 'Buddhist Iconography' nor Bhattasali's book describes Ārya-Avalokiteśvara. The official archaeological reports furnish no parallel to our image. Grünwedel in his work on the mythology of Buddhism in Tibet and Mongolia mentions Āryāvalokiteśvara but only as another name of Avalokiteśvara. Getty describes

an Āryāvalokeśvara with many heads and hands but this does not help us in any way. The Sādhana Prakaraṇa of Ārya-Avalokeśvara is given in the Sādhana mālā to which reference should be made. The deity is of white complexion, wearing a ‘jaṭāmukuta’ and bedecked in jewels; but the important points in the description for us are that the deity is described as “āmitābhakṛṭ śekharam” and his right hand is in ‘varada mudrā,’ while the left holds a lotus. It has been said that Avalokeśvara could be represented in any form or pose and the same must be true of Ārya-Avalokeśvara, for he is but a manifestation of the same deity. This explains the slight variations in the figures on the seal and the sculpture and that described in the Sādhana mālā text.

1. ‘Sādhana mālā’, Gaekwad’s Oriental Series, 1925, Vol. I, p. 46. Thanks are due to Sir Anantaial Thakur, M. A. who kindly supplied me with the relevant text at Dr. Barua’s instance.
Far-reaching changes were introduced in the religious outlook of the Indians in the centuries preceding the Christian era. These were mainly concerned with the formation of various cults centering round man-gods like Vāsudeva, Buddha and Mahāvīra, or mythological divinities like Śiva, Umā and others. The general mass of Indians adopting one or other of these cults felt the need of concrete images of the deities of their respective creeds, and of temples (‘devagṛhas’) in which they were to be enshrined. References to different structural shrines specially those associated with the Bhāgavata or Pāñcarātra cult are found in some pre-Christian inscriptions of the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C., and a few inscriptions of the early post-Christian period. The Besnagar inscription of Heliodorus shows that such was the popularity of the Bhāgavata creed in the 2nd century B.C., that a Greek alien could become a convert to it and erect a votive Garuḍa column (Garuḍa-dhvaja) in honour of the god of his choice, Vāsudeva ‘deva-deva’ (the god of gods). Other fragmentary epigraphs of the Śunga period found at the same place also refer to the construction of excellent palaces of the Bhagavat Vāsudeva (‘bhagavato pāśādottama’). Several Nāgari inscriptions (really different replicas of the same record) allude to the construction of ‘an enclosing wall round the stone (object) of worship, called Nārāyaṇa-vāṭikā (compound) for the divinities Saṁkarsaṇa-Vāsudeva by (the king) Sarvatāta.’ Though no explicit mention of the images of the gods is made in the above records, there is little doubt that it was the images that were enshrined. The Mora well inscription of the time of Swami Mahākṣatraka Sodasa (early part of the 1st century A.D.)
makes a clear mention of the enshrinement of the images of the five holy Vṛṣṇi-virās in a stone shrine. The images are described as ‘five objects of adoration made of stone radiant, as it were, with highest beauty’... (‘ārcādeśaṁ śālāṁ, pāma jvalata iva paramavapuṣā’). These holy (‘bhagavat’) Pañca-virās of the Vṛṣṇis have been identified by me with Saṃkarṣaṇa, Vāsudeva, Pradyumna, Sāmba and Aniruddha on the basis of a ‘Vāyu Purāṇa’ passage where they are described as ‘gods originally human beings’ or ‘gods human in nature’ (‘manuṣya prakṛti devas’). Another fragmentary inscription from Mathura records the gift of a ‘torana’, ‘vedikā’ (railing) and a third object (probably ‘devakula’, temple) in the Mahāsthāna (a large sanctuary according to Lüders) of Bhagavat Vāsudeva, during the time of the same Mahākṣatrapa. The evidence collected from the above epigraphic data fully proves the existence of shrines associated with the Bhāgavata cult in different parts of India in the centuries immediately before and after the Christian era.

Many Guptan inscriptions record the erection of temples in honour of the god Viṣṇu under various names such as Chakrabhṛt, Janārddana, Śārṅgin, Muradviṣ and others. The Udayagiri cave shrine (near Sanchi in central India) appears to have been a Vaiṣṇava one, for the inscription dated G. E. 82, recording the pious gift of one Sanakāṇi-ṇāhala, a feudatory of Chandragupta II, is engraved on the upper part of a smoothed and counter sunk panel over two figures one being of the four-armed god Viṣṇu and the other of a twelve-armed goddess sculptured on its facade. The rock-cut inscription on a steep isolated hill near Tusam, in the Hissar district of the Punjab, palaeographically datable in the 4th or 5th century A. D., contains a reference to the construction of a reservoir and a house for the use of the god Viṣṇu by one Āchārya Somatrāta, the great grandson of Ārya-Sātvatayogāchārya Yaśastraṭa; the wheel engraved about a foot below the last line of the inscription is evidently connected with it and is the wheel of Viṣṇu and not a Buddhist ‘dharmacakra’ or a mere sun-symbol as Fleet has suggested. A red sand-stone pillar, discovered at Bhitari, a village in Ghazipur, U. P., contains an undated inscription of the time of Skandagupta, recording the installation of an image of the same god under the name of Śārṅgin.

('Kācit pratimāṃ tasya Śāṅgīnāḥ... bhagavato mūrttiriyam yaścātra samśhitah'). The Junagadh rock inscription of the time of the same ruler records the erection of a temple of the god Viṣṇu under the name of Cakrabhṛt by one Cakra-pālita, the governor of Surāṣṭra, under Skandagupta (Kāritamavakramatinā Cakrabhrtaḥ Cakrapālitena gṛham') in the Gupta year 138. Mention is made of the construction of a temple of Viṣṇu by one Mayūrākṣaka, a minister of Viśavaranman (Viṣṇosthānamakārayadbhagavatásṛimān-Mayūrākṣaka'), in the stone inscription found at Gangdhar, in the Jhalawad state, Central India, of the year 480 (Mālava reckoning, i.e. 402-03 A.D.). The Erān (Saugor dist. C. P.) stone pillar inscription of Budhagupta of the Gupta year 165 refers to the erection of a 'dhvajastambha' (a votive column—a flag staff) by one Mātrviṣṇu and his brother, Dhanyaviṣṇu, in honour of the god Janārddana, another name of Viṣṇu ('bhagavataḥ puṇyajanārddanasya Janārddanasya dhajastambhobhyucchrtaḥ'). The Khoh (Nagod State, Central India) copperplate inscription of the Mahārāja Jayanātha of Ucchakalpa, dated in the year 177, records the grant of a village by the same Mahārāja to certain Brahmans, 'for the purposes of a temple of the god Viṣṇu, under the name Bhagavat, established by them there'. Another Ucchakalpa king, viz. Mahārāja Sarvanātha granted a village named Āśramaka on the north bank of the river Tamasā, to certain persons for the purpose of repairs in a shrine of Viṣṇu (Bhagavat) as also in that of a god, 'the name of which as written must be a mistake for Āditya, the sun' ('svapraṭīṣṭhāputakabha- gavatpādānāmādītsā-bhāṣṭārayapadānānīca khaṇḍa-puṭṭhā pratisamśkāra-karaṇīya'). A 'dhvaja' (flag staff) of the god Viṣṇu was erected by one king Candra, 'having fixed his mind upon Viṣṇu', on a hill called Viṣṇupāda ('Candrāhvena... bhūmipatinā Viṣṇau matīṃ prāṇśur-viṣṇu-pāde girau bhagavato Viṣṇordhvajāḥ sthāpitāḥ'). Many other inscriptions of the above character can be mentioned which fully prove the great prevalence of the Vaiṣṇavic cult during the early and late Gupta period.¹ The Gupta emperors were devout Bhāgavatas by faith as we

¹ For the above inscriptions, see Fleet, 'Gupta Inscriptions' pp. 22, 270, 58, 68, 74, 89, 121, 126, 140. For mention of other Vaiṣṇava shrines, cf. 'ibid.', pp. 138-39, 202 ('bhavanottamaṃ kṣitiḥsūra Viṣṇu kṛte kāritam'), 292, 368 ('Anantasesmi-pādān pratiṣṭhāpya gandhādhūpa sraṇ... sphūta-pratisamśkāra-karaṇārthāpi bhagavacitrakūṭasvāmipādīya koṣṭha'), etc.
know from their inscriptions and coin legends. The terracotta seals discovered at Bhūta and Basārh which have been noticed in the fifth chapter of my book on 'The Development of Hindu Iconography' establish the importance which this cult enjoyed throughout the Gupta period. In the subsequent religious history of India it never lost the ground which it had won for itself in the earlier times and due to various causes assumed such a position as to become one of the most accepted religious creeds of India.

In the developed form of this great sectarian religion, the principal deity was no doubt named Viṣṇu; but this god was not the same as the Vedic Viṣṇu. Though not one of the great gods in the Vedas,—it is only in five whole and one part hymns that his praises are sung and his name occurs only about 100 times in the 'Ṛgveda' (thus, statistically he is a deity of the fourth rank),—still he enjoyed some importance in the early period. The feat mainly for which his praises are sung in the Ṛg and the other Vedas is concerned with his having taken three steps or strides by which he traversed the whole of the universe ('Ṛ. V.', I, 22, 'A.V.', VII. 26, 4 etc.). This is further emphasised by the attributive epithets like 'urukrama, urugāyaḥ' (of the great strides), 'trivikrama' (three strides) etc., frequently applied to him. Thus, the hymnist sings, 'We praise the virility of Viṣṇu who is lord of all, the saviour, without any enemy, young and active; he, for saving the world, took three strides and thus widely traversed throughout the earthly spaces.'

Sākapuṇi and Aurnabhāva, two ancient interpreters of the Veda offer two different explanations of these three strides; the former 'interprets the three steps as the course of the solar deity through the three divisions of the universe, thus the god being manifest in a threefold form viz. as Agni on earth, as Indra or Vāyu in the atmosphere and as the sun in the heavens, while the latter holds that the three strides are the rising, culminating and setting of the sun.' These three steps later grew into a myth relating to the dwarf incarnation of the god (the

1. Ṛ.V, I. 156, 4: 'Tattadidadaya 'vaṃsayaṃ grīpāmasānaya trāśurāvṛṣkasya mañjuṣaḥ | Ya pārthivāni tribhirid-vigāmabhābirurukramiṣṭorugāyaśa Vivāse'.

fifth one in the list of ten 'avatāras'). The idea of motion—swift, far extending regular motion—is constantly associated with him and at the same time his special character as the preserver, deliverer and the benevolent deity is already outlined in the Veda. But, what is of special importance here is that he is neither the principal solar deity nor a god of such importance in the Vedic period as many other Vedic gods such as Indra, Agni, Sūrya and others. In the period of the Brāhmaṇas, however, we find him enjoying a much more important position. Thus, in the 'Aitareya Brāhmaṇa' (I, 1), he is described as the highest among the gods, while Agni is the lowest ('Agnirvai devānāmavamo Viṣṇurparamah'); but the same 'Brāhmaṇa' (I, 30) in quoting 'R. V.', I, 156, 4, where Viṣṇu accompanied by his friend (Indra) opens the stall states that he is the door-keeper of the gods ('devānāṃ dvārapā'). Yet there is no doubt about the gradual rise to importance of Viṣṇu in the late Vedic period, which was primarily due to his having been identified with the sacrifice; the 'Satapatha Brāhmaṇa' (XIV, 1, 1, ) narrates a myth of Viṣṇu, who as sacrifice, became the most eminent of the gods by first comprehending the issue of the sacrifice, and how his head was cut off by his bow starting asunder (the bow-string was cut by the Aśvins assuming the shape of ants, as they were asked to do so by the other gods who became jealous of his power) and how it became the sun. In the epic and purānic age, he is regarded as the most influential member of the later Brāhmaṇical triad, viz. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Still there is no doubt about the fact that in the period of the Brāhmaṇas he did not appear as the central figure in a cult pre-eminently theistic in character, which would require the construction of his images.

The rise to importance of Viṣṇu as a sectarian deity was due to his identification with Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, the Śātvata hero who was at the root of the Bhakti cult that came to be designated afterwards as Vaiṣṇavism. This Kṣatriya chief who was in some way or other associated with the inauguration of a religious reform in ancient times—a reform not heterodox in character like those inaugurated by two other Kṣatriya heroes, Buddha Śākyamuni and Mahāvīra—was deified by his followers, after his death. Several relations of his, Saṃkarṣaṇa (his elder brother), Pradyumna (his elder son), and Aniruddha (his grandson)
came also to be worshipped as secondary divinities, really so many emanations of him. This pre-eminently theistic religion was at first described by such names as ‘Pāñcarātra’, ‘Bhāgavata’, ‘Ekāntika’ etc., and was not recognised at its earlier stages by the upholders of orthodox Vedic who believed in the efficacy of sacrifices entailing slaughter of animals. But the believers in the sacrificial system of religion thought it prudent to acknowledge the authenticity of this new creed and enlist the sympathy of the followers of the latter, when the rapid growth and development of the other heterodox systems was undermining their position. They accepted Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa as an ‘avatāra’ of their own Viṣṇu who was one of the Ādityas; in the personality of the former, again, was merged the entity of one cosmic god, viz. Nārāyaṇa who appears in some late Vedic verses, Brāhmaṇas and early Smṛti works. To these three, Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa elements, the consequence of whose amalgam was the great creed of Bhakti with all its outspreading and all-enfolding branches, has been added a fourth one, viz. Gopāla Kṛṣṇa element by R. G. Bhandarkar, which according to him was an indirect borrowal from Christianity. H. C. Ray Chaudhury, however, has shown that if the data at our disposal in support of the above view are critically analysed, the case for Christian influence on the myths current about the early life of Kṛṣṇa in the interpolated sections of the ‘Mahābhārata,’ its supplement ‘Harivamśa’ and such Purāṇas as the ‘Bhāgavata’ and others, appears to be very thin. Whatever might have been the truth as regards this, there can be no denying the fact that definite and conscious attempts in incorporating many other elements in the composite creed for its advantage are clearly recognisable in the mythologies that came to be associated with it. The very doctrine of incarnations, as will be shown afterwards, was handy in this respect and the founders of creeds, heretical from the Brāhmaṇical point of view, or their mythical predecessors were assumed by the myth-makers as so many ‘avatāras’ of the cult-god Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva; Buddha and Rṣabha were

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1. The Mora Well inscription referred to above says that Śāmbha, Vāsudeva’s son by Jāmbavatī, was also an object of worship among the early Pāñcarāstrins.
regarded as 'avatāras', though the doctrine of the former was branded as false and delusive,—it is said to have been preached by Viṣṇu in his avatārahood of Buddha for the destruction of the 'asuras' and other evil-minded persons. We cannot be sure about the respective periods when these multifarious elements were incorporated into the ever-expanding creed of Bhāgavatism, but there is no doubt that the three principal elements in it viz. Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa had already come to be associated together in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era. The two sets of epigraphic records, the Nāgari and Besnagar ones, are very important for the study of the early history of this sect. The column which was erected by the Bhāgavata Heliodora in honour of Devadeva Vāsudeva as recorded in the latter had a Garuḍa for its capital and is described as Garuḍadhvaja in the inscription; now, the Garuḍa was nothing but the sun conceived as a bird (cf. the Vedic epithet describing the sun as a bird, viz. 'Suparṇaḥ garutmān'), and Viṣṇu is none other than the sun god himself in one of his aspects—in fact he is the best of all such.\(^1\) The use of the word Nārāyaṇa, in the Nāgari inscriptions noticed above, in association with S. kārṣaṇa and Vāsudeva is interesting for this shows that it had already been incorporated with the Vāsudeva-Saṃkārṣaṇa cult. R. P. Chanda's remarks in this connection are worth noting: 'Nārāyaṇavāta or the enclosure of Nārāyaṇa denotes the compound of a temple or place of worship of Nārāyaṇa. Pūjasilāprākāra for Bhagavats Saṃkārshaṇa and Vāsudeva evidently denotes a smaller stone enclosure round either the images or other cult objects representing Saṃkārshaṇa and Vāsudeva within the Nārāyaṇavāta. As Vāsudeva was already identified with Nārāyaṇa or Vishṇu the place presumably came to be known as Nārāyaṇavāta from the presence of the cult object representing Vāsudeva within it'.\(^2\)

The 'Bhagavadgītā' which is probably to be dated in the 2nd century B.C. if not a little earlier, contains the evidence of the identity of

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2. 'M. A. S. I.', No. 5, P. 169.
Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu. In its 'Viṣvarūpadasanayoga' chapter, Arjuna addresses the lord Vāsudeva several times as Viṣṇu (cf. V. 24, 'Dr̥t̥iṁ na vindāmi śaṃmaḥ ca Viṣṇo'; also 30—'bhāśastavograh pratapanti Viṣṇo'). From this it appears that partial amalgamation of these three elements has already taken place sometime earlier than the 2nd century B.C. The orthodox Vedic element gradually asserted itself and the creed known at first as Pāñcarātra or Bhāgavata gradually came to be designated Vaiṣṇava, though the earlier denominations were not forgotten. The name Vaiṣṇava appears in some late verses of the great epic where we are told: "(By listening to the 'Bhārata') a Vaiṣṇava acquires that merit which is gained by listening to the eighteen Purāṇas. There is no doubt about that". Numismatic evidence shows that the epithet 'Parama-Vaiṣṇava' came into general use only from about the fifth century A.D. The Traikūṭaka king Dahrasena and his son Vyāghrasena invariably describe themselves in their coin legends as 'Parama Vaiṣṇava' and we know from epigraphic evidence that the former flourished in 456 A.D. It is probable that the impetus to give the Viṣṇu element predominance in the composite creed came from the south for we find in the coins of this dynasty which ruled in S. Gujrat and in the Konkan the term Parama-Vaiṣṇava for the first time, while in the coins of the imperial Guptas of the north of an earlier and later date the older name of the creed, viz. Paramabhaṅga, is used.

A brief account of the origin of Vaiṣṇavism as given above is necessary for the correct understanding of the multifarious images that are associated with it. It will also be useful to refer briefly in their proper places to certain doctrinal tenets as well as mythological stories that are intimately connected with this cult for the ascertainment of the true nature of the Viṣṇuite icons. The devout Bhāgavatas and Vaiṣṇavas worshipped their principal god Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa in his varied forms; the images that were enshrined

1. xvii, 6, 67: 'Aśādaśapuṣṭaṁ āravaṇaṁ yat phalaṁ bhavet | Tatphalaṁ samavāpnoti Vaiṣṇavonātra saṁśayāyāṁ.'
in the main sanctum of the house of the god ('devāyatana'), and that were placed in subsidiary shrines in the temple compound or those that appeared as decorative figure-sculptures on the temple walls portrayed not only one or other of these major constituents of the deity but also illustrated various mythological stories connected with him. One particular form of the deity which was in one case placed in the 'garbhagṛha' of a temple might be used as an accessory figure in another. It is a matter of common knowledge that the principal cult object enshrined in the main sanctum of many south Indian Vaishnava shrines of some antiquity is Viṣṇu as Raṅganātha; Raṅganātha, however, is nothing but an elaborate plastic representation of the cosmic god Nārāyaṇa, as will be presently shown. This aspect of the deity is the same as the 'Śeṣaśayana', one of the most commonly represented forms of the Dhruva-beras of Viṣṇu, and both as well as the particular mode of depicting the deity as Vaṭapatrasāyin are based primarily on the concept about the original principle named as Viṣvakarman and described in certain late verses of the 'Ṛgveda' in this manner: 'That which is beyond the sky, beyond the earth, beyond gods and spirits,—what earliest embryo did the waters contain, in which all the gods were beheld? The waters contained that earliest embryo in which all the gods were collected. One (receptacle) rested upon the navel of the unborn, wherein all beings stood.'

1. 'Ṛ. V.', X. 82, 5 and 6: 'Puro divā paraḥ cēnā pṛthivyā paralle devabhīnasurajaśadasti | Kauśī  
svidgarbhan prathamaṇaḥ dadhra ūpo yatra devāḥ samapaśyanta viśva || Tūmīgarbhan prathamaṇaḥ  
dadhra ūpo yatra devāḥ samagacchitaṇa viśva || Ajāṣya nābhavāvṛtakamarpaṇa yasminviśvāni  
bhuvānāni tattvāḥ'. The translation given above is that of J. Muir. The connection of the primary principle with waters is emphasised in some other Vedic passages; thus, 'Ṛ. V.', X. 199, 3 records: 'Tamaḥ āśit tamaśa guṇāṃ āgra apraketaṃ salilaṃ sarvaṃ āh idam || Tuṣṭyānābhavāvṛtakamaṇa  
yatāstapasaumahinājyātikam'; it is thus translated by Muir, 'Darkness existed; originally enveloped in  
darkness, this universe was undistinguishable water; that One which lay void, and wrapped in a  
husk (or in nothingness), was developed by the power of fervour'. The same idea is expressed in the  
passage of the 'Atharva veda', X. 7, 41 vist. 'Yo vetasam hiranyahant salile veda sa vai guhyah Prājapatiḥ';  
T. A. G. Rao finds in this passage an euphemistic allusion to the Liṅga and Yoni emblem. Muir says  
about the use of the word 'vetaśa' here, 'I know not whether this word has here its ordinary meaning, or  
the same sense which is assigned to the word 'vātasa' in 'Ṛ. V.', X. 95, 4, 5; 'Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa', xi.  
5, 1, 1; 'Nirukta', iii. 21; 'Ṛ. V.', iv. 58, 5; 'Sat. Br.', vili. 5, 2, 13 (in these passages the word means  
male organ); 'Original Sanskrit Texts', Vol. IV, p. 19, l. p. 49.
connection of the primaeval waters with one god, the great original principle, is consistently maintained in later texts. The chapters 188 and 189 of the Vanparvan of the ‘Mahābhārata’ describe the condition of things at the time of the dissolution of the universe from which creation takes place; it is stated there that water was everywhere, in it was a child lying on a couch on the branch of a Nyagrodha tree; in him was the nucleus of the whole universe which was shown to Mārkaṇḍeya by the grace of the child god. Now this concept of the one god none other than Vaṭapatrāśayī Nārāyaṇa is the basis of the Vaṭapatrāśayīn image of Viṣṇu sometimes represented in plastic and pictorial art. A ‘Manuṣamhitā’ verse records that the waters were called Nārās because they were the sons of Nara and since they were the first resting place of Prajāpati, so he came to be known as Nārāyaṇa'. The same verse with slight alteration is found in the Nārāyanīya section of the ‘Mahābhārata’ where Keśava or Hari says to Arjuna that he is known as the resting place or the goal of men; evidently one was borrowed from the other. The somewhat elaborate discussion about the underlying concept of Nārāyaṇa as given above has been found necessary by me in order to show the basic idea of some of the important forms of the Viṣṇu images. T. A. G. Rao seems to distinguish the Jalaśayīn image—which he describes as one of the minor manifestations of Viṣṇu from the Śeṣaśayīna types of Viṣṇu images which are incorporated by him in his section on the Dhruvaberas (principal

1. ‘Manuṣamhitā’, I. 10: ‘Āpo nārā iti proktā āpo vai naraśūnavah | Tā yadoṣaśayanaṇi pūrvat taṃnān Nārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ’.

2. ‘Mahābhārata’ XII. 341: ‘Nivṛttilaṅkaṣaṅaṁ dharmmaśrataḥbhāyāyikopipītā parasā | Naraśaṁ ayanaṁ khyātā mahamekapam samātanaḥ | Āpo nārā iti prakā āpo vai naraśūnavah | Ayanaṁ mama tātpūrvavamato Nārāyaṇopahyāham’. Thus, the lord is at the same time the resting place of the ‘naraśa’, which are not only men or men of the heavens i.e., the gods (cf. the Vedic epithets ‘divo naraśa’ ‘nṛpaśa’ referred to in the second chapter of my book, ‘The Development of Hindu Iconography’) whose sons are the waters, but also takes rest himself on the latter i.e., the primeval waters; the idea is similar to the one contained in some late Vedic hymns to Brahmaśaṣṭipati and Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa, where we are told that Dakṣa was the father of Aditi as also her son (‘R.V.’ X. 73, 4-5:—‘Aditerdakaṣo aджyata Dakṣaḥadītih pari | Aditīrha- janiṣṭha Dakṣa yā duḥhitā tava’) and that Virāj springs from Puruṣa and Puruṣa again from the Virāj which must denote the waters in their cosmic aspect (R. V. X. 90, 5: ‘Tasmāḥ’ i.e., ‘Puruṣād virāja- jīyata virājaḥ adhi puruṣah’).
images) of the god; but there is no real difference between the two, and the Vaṣṭrapatrāśāyin image is nothing but a different manner of illustrating the same concept.¹ As regards my previous observation about the different use that was made of such images, I may refer to the Gupta shrine of Deogarh in the Lalitpur subdivision of the Jhansi District in Central India; the shrine is certainly a Vaiṣṇava one, in fact it is locally described as the Daśāvatāra temple and the three ‘Pārśvadevataś’ occupying the side niches of the temple are—Śeṣaśayana, Nara-Nārāyaṇa and Kari-Varada forms of Viṣṇu. The very elaborate relief carved just in the centre of the architrave of the sanctum, however, shows Viṣṇu seated in the ‘ardhaparyāṅkāsana’ on the coils of Ādiśeṣa whose seven hoods are spread over the god’s head and it is presumable that it is a replica of the principal image originally placed in the ‘garbhagṛha’ or the main sanctum of the temple.

T. A. G. Rao has classified the ‘Dhruvaberas’ of Viṣṇu into as many as thirty-six varieties on the basis of the Pāñcarātra text ‘Vaikhānasāgama’; these are first broadly divided into four varieties viz. ‘yoga’, ‘bhoga’, ‘vīra’ and ‘abhicārika’ on the basis of particular results obtainable by the worship of the individual ones; then each of these is subdivided into three groups based on the principal pose of the images viz. ‘sthānaka’ (standing), ‘āsana’ (seated), and ‘śayana’ (recumbent); lastly every one of these twelve sub-groups is divided into three classes as ‘uttama’, ‘madhyama’ and ‘adhama’ according to the number of accessory figures that cluster round the central deity. Images of the Buddha can also be grouped under three heads viz. standing, seated and recumbent, but in their case particular incidents in the life of the Master are associated with most of these varieties; the earlier specimens of the standing Buddha figures though dignified by calm repose are also frequently shown as stepping forward and thus are not fully static in their poses. But the ‘sthānaka’ varieties of Vaiṣṇava images from the very first were shown in more or less stationary poses without the suggestion of any perceptible movement in them. As regards the ‘uttama’, ‘madhyama’ and ‘adhama’

¹ This interpretation of the Nārāyaṇa aspect of Vāraṇa-Viṣṇu and the ideology underlying the Amantaśayana and Vaṣṭrapatrāśāyin images have already been discussed briefly in my book, ‘The Development of Hindu Iconography’, pp. 301-08.
order, reference may be made to Grünwedel’s interesting observation about
the ‘parallel compositions’ in the Hellenistic art of Gandhāra; he remarks
about the reliefs depicting scenes from Buddha’s life and their replicās,
‘besides slabs where the figures are numerous—a scriptio plena as one
might say—there is often found a defectiva, which retains the main
design but curtails the rest, thus frequently omitting just what is most
important’ (‘Bud. Art’, p. 125). Now, this mode of classification as laid
down in the above Pāñcarātra work is not followed in the other iconogra-
phic texts dealing with Viśṇuite icons, so far known to me. When T.
A. G. Rao says that ‘the materials for the description of the images of
Viṣṇu are not so abundant as they are in the case of the images of Śiva’, he
presumably means that there are not many texts like the ‘Vaikhānasāgama’
oneS dealing with different varieties of the Vaiśṇava Dhruvaberās; for
he himself has collected a number of relevant texts associated with Viṣṇu
under ‘Vaiśṇavamūrttyantarāṇī’ (other varieties of Viṣṇu images) in the
Appendix C to the second part of the first volume of his monumental
work. These texts help us a great deal in identifying and describing
the many varieties of Viṣṇu icons of the early, mediaeval and subsequent
periods found in different parts of northern and eastern India. There
is no doubt, however, that the above mode of grouping them as standing,
seated and reclining would very well be applicable to such figures hailing
from different parts of India, for most of them are shown in one or other
of these poses. The other basis of classification into ‘yoga’, ‘bhoga’, ‘vīra’,
and ‘abhicārika’ varieties is only occasionally followed in the north and
even in the south; even when Viṣṇu is depicted seated in ‘yogāsana’ with
his “natural” hands in the ‘dhyānamudrā’, he is lavishly decorated with orna-
ments and often accompanied by both or one of his consorts, indicating that
those particular types of figures fall under both the classes viz. ‘yoga’ and
‘bhoga’. Rao, himself, could not illustrate the ‘vīra’ and ‘abhicārika’ varieties
from the south Indian Vaiśṇava shrines.¹ A plausible explanation of the

¹. The seated figure of Viṣṇu from Aihole labelled Adhamaśāṇamūrtti in plate XXX of
the first volume of his book can not be described as such without doubt:—the god is seated in the ‘sukhāsana’
pose on the coils of Adīśeṣa and the description which is given of such a type in the text does not at all tally
with the actual relief.
comparative paucity of the last two varieties can be suggested; as the second of them was certainly of an inauspicious character, such a one was most probably not preserved for worship. Rao says: "The 'abhicārika' form which is worshipped for the purpose of inflicting defeat and death on enemies is looked upon as inauspicious and is unfit to be set up for worship in temples built in towns and villages" (op. cit., Vol. I. Part I, pp. 20-1); these were set up in forests, mountains, marshy tracts, fortresses and other such places ('vana giri jala durée rāṣṭrānte śatrudiṃ-mukhe'). The 'bhoga' varieties were the most numerous ones and the reason is obvious; the acquisition of wealth and prosperity is the desire of the majority of such worshippers and the following observation of Rao should be referred to in this connection: "The 'bhoga' form is the form best fitted to have the temple therefore constructed within towns and villages, as it is conceived to be the giver of all happiness to its worshippers and has therefore to be worshipped and prayed to by all sorts of men and women belonging to all conditions of life" (ibid., p. 120). I have identified one black chlorite Viṣṇu figure in the collection of the Indian Museum of the early mediaeval period hailing from Ch航天pur, Burdwan, as standing for an 'abhicārika sthānaka' form of Viṣṇu image and it is so far unique. Definitely recognisable 'vīra' varieties of Vaiṣṇava icons were not found by me in my study of the museum specimens as well as early temple reliefs both from the north and the south of India.

One of the earliest datable iconographic texts dealing with the Viṣṇu image of general nature is the collection of five couplets incorporated in the chapter on Pratimālakṣaṇam by Varāhamihira in his 'Bṛhatśaṁhitā'. These verses can be translated thus: "The holy Viṣṇu should be made with eight, four or two arms; his breast should be marked with the 'śrīvatsa' sign and be adorned with the 'kaustubha' jewel; his colour should be pale green like that of the 'atasi' flower and he should wear yellow garment and have a smiling face; he should be decorated with ear-rings and a jewelled head-dress and his neck, breast, the shoulders and arms should be raised i.e., full and fleshy; his right hands should hold a sword, a club and an arrow, the fourth being in the assurance pose, while his left hands should carry a bow, a shield, a wheel and a conch-shell. If one wishes
to make him four-armed, then one of his right hands should be shown in the assurance pose, the other one holding a mace, while his left hands should have a conch-shell and a wheel. The right hand of a two-armed image should show the assurance pose while the left one should bear a conch-shell. Those who desire to attain welfare and happiness should have the images of Viṣṇu carved in this way. This shows that Viṣṇu images endowed with as many as eight arms were already in vogue by the middle of the sixth century A.D., when the above text was compiled. But eight-armed Viṣṇu images seem to have been known much earlier in the Kushān period; the attributes in the respective hands of one such fragmentary statuette described by V. S. Agrawala do not conform, however, to the above text. Of its four right hands which are preserved, “three seem to carry the mount Govardhana, ‘pāsa’ (or ‘śakti’) and ‘daṇḍa’ and the fourth one doubled at the elbow is stretched towards the breast and also holds an indistinct object. This represents the ‘virāṭa’ form of Viṣṇu and is the only male figure in which such multiplicity of hands is visible.” Reference has already been made to a twelve-armed goddess carved on the right facade of the Udayagiri cave bearing an inscription of the Gupta year 82 (401-2 A.D.), which was correctly identified as the Mahiṣāsura-mardini form of the goddess Durgā, mythologically regarded as the sister of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, in one of her aspects (Fleet was not correct in his criticism of Cunningham’s identification). Varieties of standing Viṣṇu images approximating to the description given in the ‘Bṛhatsamhitā’ have been discovered in large numbers among the extant relief-sculptures datable from the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. onwards; and it must be observed that such images are almost invariably four-armed, rarely eight-armed but seldom two-armed. I have noted in chapters IV and V of my book, ‘Development of Hindu Iconography’, a few representations of the four-armed figures of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu on early Indian coins and seals of the centuries immediately preceding and succeeding the Christian era. Thus, here is a definite corroboration from the archaeological point of view that the tendency to supernaturalise the cult-object, the

main starting nucleus of which was a human hero, was at work from comparatively early times. In the case of the other man-gods like Buddha and Mahāvīra, no conscious attempt was ever made to endow their figures with more than two hands, though the accessory divinities in the pantheon connected with the respective cults were given many more arms than two. It must be observed, however, that in the iconographic presentation of Kṛṣṇa as an incarnatory form of Viṣṇu, he is seldom endowed with more than two arms (for a 15th century A.D. eight-armed image of Madanagopala—a variety of Kṛṣṇa, refer to Rao, op. cit., vol. I, Part I, Pl. LXIII).

The earliest plastic representation of a four-armed standing Viṣṇu is the Kushan relief No. 2520 in the collection of the late Pandit Radha Krishna of Mathura; it contains, among others, such a figure holding a heavy mace and a wheel in the back right and left hands respectively, while "the two normal hands are exactly like those in the Bodhisattva images, i.e., the right in 'abhayamudrā' and the left holding a monk's bottle of long neck and conical bottom". One of the oldest four-armed 'sthānaka mūrtis' of Viṣṇu belonging to the early Gupta period is to be found on the right facade of the Candragupta cave at Udayagiri near Besnagar. It is unfortunately very much damaged, but enough remains to disclose its identity; the figure is well-decorated with ornaments like 'kīrtā-mukūṭa', 'kuṇḍala', 'hāra', 'keyūra', 'vanamālā' etc., and is standing in the 'samapāda-sthānaka' pose; the hands seem to bifurcate—two on each side from the elbow, and the back hands appear to be placed on the Āyudhapuruṣas; the right front hand is broken while the front left one holds a conch-shell; Gāḍa-devī is recognisable on the right while the Cakra-puruṣa on the left is somewhat damaged; D. R. Bhandarkar saw in the device like the so-called Nāga symbol on its breast the 'kaustubha' jewel which has been described by A. K. Coomaraswamy as the 'Śrīvatsa mark (the 'Bṛhatāṃśhīta' text enjoins the carving of both.\(^2\) The Udayagiri image

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1. Agrawala's remark on the above relief is worth noting. 'It shows the transition from a Buddhist to a Brahmanical image'. It is to be dated in the 1st century A.D.; J. I. S. O. A., Vol. V, p. 124, pl. XIV, fig. 2.

of Viṣṇu very closely agrees with the description of the four-armed images of Viṣṇu as given in the ‘Bṛhat samhitā’ passage quoted above. The sculpture No. E6 in the collection of the Mathura Museum depicts a standing male deity, its lower portion being lost. Vogel thought that it might be a Bodhisattva; but its ‘kriṣṭa mahuṭa’, ‘vanamālā’, the ‘yajñopavītā’ and four arms leave little doubt that it is a four-armed Viṣṇu of the Gupta period. Vogel dated it on stylistic grounds in the Kushan period; but Kramrisch’s dating of it in the Gupta period is more acceptable. Agrawala agrees with Kramrisch and remarks about it: “It shows all the highest qualities of the Golden Age, the face revealing the contemplative serenity of celestial ‘saṃādhi’. The elaborate crown is adorned with the jewel (forming a triratna shape with its scroll), lion faces emitting pearl festoons (‘śimhāsyogirīṇa mauktikajāla’) and a ‘makarikā’ ornament consisting of two addorsed alligator heads. The figure wears a ‘vaijayanī’, ‘yajñīya’, ‘suvarṇasūtra’, ‘keyūras’, ‘ekāvalī’ and ‘śatayasāṭika devachanda’ necklace, and also a creased clinging loin cloth (‘sūkṣma vimala kaṭivastra’) held by a girdle technically known as ‘netrasūtra’ in contemporary literature on account of its similarity with the chord round the ‘manthana danda’. The image was four-armed. The fore-arms separated near the elbow, the bifurcating line being still visible on the left side”.¹ For another two-armed standing image in partial agreement with the details of a Dvibhūja Viṣṇu as laid down in the same text, reference may be made to the colossal image lying on the ground (11’9” without the feet), that was discovered by Carlleyle at Rupavas, 10 miles to the south-west of Fatehpur Sikri, U. P. It has been described as follows, “the head is surmounted by a five-sided crown terminating in five angular points (one of the varieties of the ‘kriṣṭa-mahuṭa’, resembling a turreted crown); at its back is a large circular halo (‘śāstračakra’); ears long and pendulous, pointed below and slit and decorated with earrings of extra-ordinary size and form; a necklace with a lozenge-shaped or diamond shaped object pendant from it (this is ‘kaustubha maṇi’); another band or necklace (this is probably the ‘yajñopavītā’) passing

down over the breast in a loop, as far as the waist; the figure of a lotus flower on each breast (are these the 'śrīvatsa' marks?)

the image is two-handed, a 'śaṅkha' is placed in the right hand and a 'cakra' in the left; a band or sash loosely tied round the waist with the ends hanging down in front; another series of bands pass from the loins down over the legs above the knees (these are the folds of the cloth worn by the deity); it is executed in a darkish dingy-coloured red sandstone. After giving this detailed description of the sculpture (its date appears to be fairly early), Carllleyle is evidently wrong when he says, 'It must be a representation of either of the Hindu divinity Buddha or Sūrya.'

There is no doubt that it is a two-armed Viṣṇu image, its special attributes disclosing its identity; the difference between it and the description of two-armed Viṣṇu in the 'Bṛhatsaṁhitā' passage quoted above lies in the fact that the latter's right hand is to be shown in the 'abhaya' pose ('śāntikaraṇā, śāntidāh' has been explained by Utpala as 'draśṭurabhimukha ūrdhvaṅguliḥ śāntidāh karaṇā', i.e., the palm with fingers pointing upwards facing the spectator, which pose is the same as 'abhaya' mentioned in other texts), while its left hand is to hold a 'śaṅkha'. As regards eight-armed standing images of the god, reference may be made to two early sculptures both hailing from the south and both conforming to a great extent to the 'Bṛhatsaṁhitā' description. The Badami stone figure of standing Viṣṇu shows in the four right hands 'cakra', 'śara', 'gadā', and 'khaḍga', and in the four left ones, 'śaṅkha', 'khetaka' (shield), 'kārmuka' (bow), the other hand being in the 'kaṭihasta' pose; the placing of the attributes, it will be seen, closely conforms to the alignment of the same in the above text, the only difference lying in the case of the 'cakra' being placed in one of the right hands, the 'abhaya' pose being not shown and the front left hand being in the 'kaṭihasta' pose. There is a curious bust on the top of the 'kiriṣṭā makuṭa' of the figure (decorated with the usual ornaments and dress of Viṣṇu), which seems to be that of the Narasimha incarnation; this led T. A. G. Rao to describe the composition as that of Vaikuṇṭha which, as the 'Rūpa-maṇḍana' text informs us, is four-faced and eight-armed—the 'gadā', 'khaḍga', 'śara' and 'cakra' being placed in

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the right hands, and 'śaṅkha', 'khetaka', 'dhanu' and 'padma' in the left ones—the central, right, the left and the back faces being that of a man, Narasimha, Varāha and a woman respectively. The Badami relief however does not show the deity really as four-faced and the lotus flower is not shown in any of the hands. The eight-armed Viṣṇu figure from Conjeeveram, reproduced by H. Krishna Sastri shows a similar apportionment of attributes, with this difference only that the natural hands are shown in the 'abhaya' and 'varada' poses; the figure is well-decorated and is attended on its right by Garuḍa with his hands in the 'aṭṭjali' pose, while on its left by a bearded sage, either Brīgu or Mārkaṇḍeeya, with his right hand raised in the praising pose.

Standing Viṣṇu images, endowed with more than eight arms are known, but they generally belong to a period much later than that of most of the above just discussed and they can be identified and given new names with the help of such late compilations as Hemadri's 'Vratakhaṇḍa' and Maṇḍana's 'Rūpamaṇḍana'. But, before a somewhat detailed description of a few such extant reliefs is given, it will be better to give some account of a few more Caturbhujā 'sthanaka mūrtis' of Viṣṇu which were so commonly enshrined in the early and late mediaeval Vaiṣṇava temples of different parts of India—especially in those of northern and eastern India. These images of the god can usually be classed under one or other of

1. T. A. G. Rao, op. cit., Vol. I, Part I, p. 256, Pl. LXXV., R. D. Banerjee, 'Bas-reliefs of Badami', p. 31, Pl. XIV. b. Banerjee identifies it as a representation of 'the Viraṭa Puruṣa or the gigantic form assumed by Viṣṇu in his dwarf or Vāmana incarnation just before measuring the earth and the heaven with two steps'. He criticises Rao's description of it as Valkupṭhanātha who ought to have four faces which are wanting in the Badami bas-relief; besides the figure is not depicted seated on Garuḍa as required in the case of Valkupṭhanātha. But the small bust with a lion's head and four hands (two being placed on the 'kriṣṭa' of the main figure, while the remaining two hold a wheel in the left and a conch in the right) is inexplicable. Banerjee says: 'This is evidently a representation of Narasimha but no connection can be traced in any of the Purāṇas between the Man-lion and the Dwarf incarnations of Viṣṇu, nor does the narrative of the Dwarf incarnation contain any reference about the presence of any abnormal being shaped as a Man-lion'. Mr. Banerjee's suggestion is also not very convincing, the only thing in favour of it being that in the Trivikrama figures found in cave Nos. II and IV, the Viraṭa-rūpa of the transformed dwarf is more or less similarly represented with eight hands and the same mode of placing the attributes in them but without the bust on the top; in the latter there are many accessory figures which illustrate the story of the Dwarf incarnation and which are absent in the relief under discussion.

2. H. Krishnasastri, 'South Indian Gods and Goddesses' p. 17, fig. 11.
the Vyūhas, of which more will be spoken hereafter, or some of the ‘vibhavas’ (incarnatory forms) especially several of the celestial ones, the human incarnations being usually endowed with two arms. One of the earliest four-armed standing Viṣṇus is the relief-like free standing sculpture, discovered at Hankrail, Maldah, and now in the collection of the Rajshahi Museum. The front right and the back left hands as well as the leg of this Viṣṇu figure are partially broken, while its back right and front left hands hold a lotus bud and a conch-shell respectively; its sparse ornaments consist of a low ‘kiriṭa’, ‘kuṇḍalas’, ‘hāra’, ‘aṅgada’ and a ‘yajñopavīṭa’. Kramrisch quite correctly dates it in the 7th century A. D. The black basalt standing image of a four-armed Viṣṇu from Chaitanpur, Burdwan, and now in the collection of the Indian Museum is a unique piece of sculpture and is perhaps the only known specimen of this type. The central figure is practically fully in the round, its head and shoulders are encircled by a ‘śīraścakra’ (halo) partially preserved and its right and left back hands are connected with the knob of the ‘gadā’ (shown also as Gada-devī below with a staff in her left hand) and the rim of the ‘cakra’ (also depicted as Cakrapuruṣa with a staff below) respectively, which are carved behind the top of the male and the female attendants. The front right hand of the central figure holds a lotus-bud, its front left carrying a conch-shell. The figure is very sparsely ornamented, a curious string of amulets round the neck replacing the usual ‘hāra’ and ‘vanamālā’; the loin cloth devoid of any artistic arrangement is treated in a very uncouth manner; the extremely elongated face, the big protruding eyes, the projecting muscles and bones and the partially emaciated belly—all these features endow this Viṣṇu image with a character which requires explanation. The ‘Vaikhānasāgama’ describes the Abhicārikasthānakamūrti of Viṣṇu in the following manner: The “Abhicārikasthānakamūrti of the god is to be shown with two or four arms, smoke-coloured, wearing dark green garments, with emaciated face and limbs, endowed with ‘tamoguna’, eyes cast upwards (i.e. protruding), without any such attendants as Brahmā and other gods.”


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this text could not illustrate the same with the help of any specimen known to him. It has already been suggested by me that such 'abhicāra' images were perhaps destroyed after their purpose had been served. The image now being discussed represents, in all likelihood, such a variety; it is the only such specimen so far known to me. In any case, it is one of the most unique types of Viṣṇu images so far discovered, and R. P. Chanda's description of it as an inferior specimen of the Gupta period requires modification ( 'A. S. I. A. R.', 1925-6, p. 153 ). The iconographic features as well as its seemingly southern style justify us in assigning to it a somewhat later date; probably one in the 8th century A. D. will not be far wrong.1

In the several early specimens of the four-armed standing figures of Viṣṇu noticed above, his two consorts, Śrī and Puṣṭi ( Sarasvatī ) or Śrī and Bhūdevī are not found; in the northern and eastern Indian varieties of such images of the mediaeval period, the two former are almost invariably the attending consorts of the deity. The accompanying figures in the former group of sculptures are 'āyudhapuruṣas' who also occasionally appear as accessories on the later reliefs; but in the latter, the personified representations of the emblems (not always present) are a few among the other attendants and accessory motifs such as the consorts, the vehicle, the two gate-keepers of Viṣṇu named as Viṣvaksena and Vatsadanā, the leogryph, the Gandharva couples performing music, the garland-bearing Vidyādharas and lastly the Kīrttimukha finial on the top centre of the 'prabhāvali' (the back slab or stele). The 'Hayaśira Pañcarātra' describes the 'four-armed image of Vāsudeva in the following manner:—'Vāsudeva the god of the gods should be made with four arms; in his upper right and lower right hands should be placed a wheel and a lotus respectively; in the upper left should be a mace and in the lower left a beautiful conch-shell; an image characterised by such features is auspicious; Śrī and Puṣṭi should be made (on either side) with a lotus flower and a lute ('viṇā') in their respective hands and they should be of the height of

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the thigh (of the central figure) and slightly bent; various Vidyādharas are to be carved as attached to the lustrous circle (‘prabhā-mandala’, ‘bhā-mandala’ or ‘prabhāvali’—the back slab in which the high relief was carved; the technical name of the original stone slab is really the ‘pinḍikā’—but sometimes the ‘pinḍikā’ and the ‘piṭhikā’, the latter meaning pedestal, are used as synonymous terms); the ‘prabhā’ should be carefully decorated by sages with leoglyphs (‘gajavyāla’) and other motifs; the pedestal should be endowed with beauty and be of the lustre (shape) of a lotus (in the edition of the ‘Haribhaktivilāsa’ it is ‘pankābha’; but it is certainly a mistake for ‘pāmabhā’, which not only gives us a better sense but actually appears in the ‘Agnipurāṇa’ passage, based on the ‘Hayāstīra’); (Vāsudeva image) should be made according to different modes current in different countries by good teachers (or people of various localities). The numerous standing figures of Caturbhuja Viṣṇu found in the north and east of India conform to a very great extent to the above description. The difference in most cases lies in the placing of the attributes in the upper hands, the ‘gada’ being placed in the upper right and ‘cakra’ in the upper left, while the lotus is usually a tiny mark on the upturned palm of the lower right hand in the ‘varada’ pose—the attendant figures in some specimens being many while in others only a few. As regards the transposition of the attributes, we shall presently see under Vyūha images of Viṣṇu, that this generally determined their different varieties. Some texts, however, do not insist on the rigid conformity of the sculptor to the manner of placing the emblems. The author of the ‘Matsya Purāṇa’ says, ‘I shall (now) speak about the placing of weapons in the hands of four-armed images. Mace and lotus should be made (placed) on the right (hands) and conch-shell and wheel on the left. In the Kṛṣṇa incarnation, the mace in the left hand is praiseworthy. The conch-shell

1. The above is a free rendering of the following ‘Hayastīra’ verses as quoted by Gopala Bhattachar in his ‘Haribhaktivilāsa’—Vasudevaṃ prakurvetā ca turbbhūṃ suśreṣṭham | Dakṣinopari caṣṭram tu pāmabhā ca ṣādhaḥ prakalpayet | Vāmopari gada kāryā śaṇkhāṃ ṣādhaḥ susūbhanaṃ | Ekalakṣaṇaśaṣṭaṣayuktā pratimā śubhadā bhavet | Śripuṣṭī cāpi kartavye padmavījaṅkarāṅvito | Urumātrochrisāyāme kriṣṇāvajjīre tathā | Nānāvidyādharau kāryau prabhāmaṇḍalasaṃśītī | Pākṣikāṃ viṣṇusayodhvam tābhjajavatādabhirvedhāh | Pākṣikāṃ padalpiṭhānsa tathā sōbhāmārvanam | Desadākṣara-śrīpeṣa kartavyam desikottamalī. The ‘Agni Purāṇa’ verses 47-49 in chapter 34 (Vangavasi edition) are an abridged copy of the above.
and wheel should be made (placed) from the top (upper hand) according to the wish (of the sculptor). It is thus evident that the difference in this respect depends on various factors and one can only guess which particular text was followed in the construction of individual images; where the greatest conformity exists between one particular text and an image, it is presumable to hold that the maker of the latter followed the former. The blue schist sculpture No. D. 35 in the Mathura Museum with a plain parabolic stele slightly pointed at the top represents a four-armed Viṣṇu standing in the 'samapādaśānika' pose between Śrī and Puṣṭi carrying lotus flower and long lute respectively on either side, the upper right, upper left and lower left hands of the central figure holding a 'gadā' a 'cakra' and a 'śaṅkha' respectively, while the lower right is in the 'varada' pose with a tiny lotus mark in the centre of the palm; each of the three figures stands on a 'viśvapaḍma'; the god and his consorts are profusely decorated with their usual ornaments; on and below the central lotus on which Viṣṇu stands are carved the miniature figures

1. 'Maṭsya Purāṇa', Ch. 258, verses, 8–10: 'Caturbhujasya vākyāmī yathāvāyudhacarmasthitih | Dakṣiṇena gadā padmaṁ Vasudevasya kārayet | Vāmataḥ śaṅkhaacakre sa karttavye bhūtimūcchitaḥ | Kṛṣṇāvatare tu gadā vāmahastra praśasyate | Yathavechāyaśaṅkhaacakre copariṣṭāt prakalpayet' | Then many more details are given about the attendant figures like Prithvi (between the legs of the god), Garuḍa (either on the right or just in front), lotus—carrying goddess Laksāmi (on the left), Śrī and Puṣṭi with lotuses (on the sides), the Vidyādhara, divine musical instruments ('deva-dundubhi'), Gandharva couple, leaf and creeper, lion and tiger motifs, 'kalpalata' motif, and praising gods—from the upper part of the 'torāṇa', the gateway or the 'prabhāvali' in this case, downwards—'torāṇākopariṣṭāt'. The Viṣṇu reliefs which are elaborate usually show the latter order of the accessories on the back slab; but in the extant Viṣṇu images Laksāmi is not distinguished from Śrī, Puṣṭi carries a viṇā instead of a lotus, lion and tiger motif is replaced by a lion and elephant motif—'gajavyāla' of the 'Hayasirṣa' text—the earth goddess is not shown between the legs of the god and the praising gods—if we do not take the usually identified donor couples as divine beings—are not shown. But what is interesting in the 'Maṭsya Purāṇa' passage on the iconography of Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva is the fact that the author commences it with the couplet—'Viṣṇa-pravakṣyāmi yadgrūpaṃ praśasyate | Śaṅkhaḥcrandharāḥ śāntāḥ padmahastāḥ gadaḥharam, then refers to eight-armed, four-armed and two-armed varieties of such images ('Kvacaśabhasyāṃ vidyācaturbhujamatha-param | Dvibhujaśaṃ karttavya bhavanāḥ puroḍhāsā—the assignment of the attributes to the right and left hands of the eight-armed variety which are rarely closely follows the same as in the 'Bṛhatasphutatī' text previously mentioned), and after giving the description of the four-armed Vāsudeva image as noted above, ends with the assertion, 'Evamviśāho bhaved-Viṣṇoṣṭribhagenasya piṭhikā'. Thus, it seems that though Kṛṣṇa is distinguished from Viṣṇu, this being regarded as one of his incarnations, no distinction is made between Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu, and this should be noted especially in connection with the remarks which I have made about the origin of the Vaiṣṇava cult.
of Garuḍa and the donor couple. The severely plain ‘prabhāvalī’ and the very few accessories characterise the image as ‘Adhamabhogasthānakamūrti’, if one is to explain it in terms of the ‘Vaikhānasagama’ text; on the same grounds as also on the basis of the style of carving, it is to be dated in the 11th century. A profitable comparison can be made with this graceful relief, of the potstone four-armed figure of Viṣṇu discovered at Taxila a few years ago. This is described by A. D. Siddiqui in this way, ‘Potstone figure of Viṣṇu (ht. 8. 8”), standing with the usual attributes viz. conchshell, discus, club and lotus in the four hands, upper part of Garuḍa below on the pedestal between two legs, wears elaborate head dress, ear pendants, necklace and bangles etc., ‘yajñopavīta’ falls over left side, part of the halo with beaded border missing; rather crude workmanship’. There are some points of iconographic interest, which ought to be noted in this connection; the ‘gāda’ is shown in a manner somewhat similar to that of the club in the hand of Vāsudeva in the Kushan seal and in the hand of Śiva in Maues’ coins and copper seal of Śivarākṣita, noted in the fourth chapter of my ‘Development of Hindu Iconography’, and the back right and left hands rest on the topmost knob of the ‘gāda’ and the rim of the ‘cakra’ as in the case of the Vāsudeva Viṣṇu in the Kushan seal, the front right and left hands hold a lotus by its stalk and a conch-shell; the half-length figure of Garuḍa on the plain pedestal between the legs of the deity distinctly reminds us of the Yakṣa figure below Buddha frontally represented in some Mahābhīniskramaṇa relics of Gandhāra; the head-dress is reminiscent of the turreted crown usually found on the heads of some city deities depicted in the Hellenistic art of Gandhāra; the sculpture is nearly fully in the round and there are no attendant figures. The figure is one of the latest Gandhāra specimens of art.

1. J. PH. Vogel, ‘Mathura Museum Catalogue’ p. 101, Pl. XVIII; Vogel remarked about it, ‘it is a fine specimen of medieval Brahmanical art’. Gopinath Rao reproduced it in his book, Vol. I, Pl. XXI, and named it simply as Sthānakamūrti; in the body of the text, (‘op. cit.’, p. 100), he characterised it as Trivikrama on the manner of placing the attributes in the four hands and remarked, “The chief peculiarities noted in this image are the curious out of the face and the shape of the ‘kirtī’”. The face, according to him, is characteristic of north Indian sculptures in general and shows Mongoloid features.
If one now studies a few mediaeval reliefs of four-armed Viṣṇu in stone or bronze hailing from eastern India, one can not but be struck with the great elaboration and wealth of detail with which such figures were carved by the skilled artists of this region. The iconography has much developed and the technique has attained to a great perfection. In the latest specimens, however, of this group of sculptures, the quality of freshness, vitality and aesthetic beauty give way to the tendency of over-elaboration and profusion of ornaments which mark the sculptures of the later Chalukyas and the Hoysalas in the south; what is gained in iconographic details is lost in the artistic quality. Two hornblende schist reliefs, exhibits Nos. 9211 and 2592 in the Gupta Gallery of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, the former hailing from Rajshahi (north Bengal) and the latter from Sarishadaha, 24 Perganas (south Bengal), will prove the authenticity of my remark. The former is datable in the middle of the 10th century A.D., on account of such undoubtedly early features as the round upper part of the back slab, the twisted rope pattern encircling the halo, the 'Kiriṭa' not yet pointed and without the later 'āmalaka', the separate plastic layers at the back of the attendant consorts, etc. It shows a composition more or less similar to the Mathura Museum statuette, the difference lying in the fact, that the stele does not only contain the figures of Śri and Puṣṭi with raised 'prabhās' of their own, but also the leogryphs, the jewel-vomiting peacocks, the garland-bearing Vidyādharas on either side with the 'kirttimukha' at the top, which are absent in the latter; on the central face of the 'tri-ratha' pedestal, the lotus foliage is embossed and is thus of an early date, while on the right and left faces are Garuḍa and the donor couples respectively. The figure which is partially fully in the round is sparsely ornamented and even in spite of the additional iconographic details is characterised by that simple grace which is special to the sculptures of this period; the plastic qualities of the main figure and its attendants as also of the decorative devices of the 'prabhāvali' show in a remarkable manner the characteristic vigour of early Pāla art. Figures more or less similar to the above have been found in large numbers in eastern India and are exhibits in any museum of Bengal with a representative archaeological collection. The inscribed image of the same variety of standing Viṣṇu
discovered at Baghaura, Tippera, and similar in most of its iconographic details to the preceding specimen, is dated in the third year of King Mahāpāla I, and thus it belongs to the 11th century A.D. On referring to the Sarashadaha image which is also shown partly in the round, one at once sees that it is of great interest though much later, probably by more than a century, though the composition follows the earlier iconographic mode up to a certain extent. Viśṇu, here, stands on a ‘navaratha’ pedestal, with his back hands resting on the knob of a ‘gadā’ and the rim of a ‘cakra’, before each of which is shown its personified representation (the Gadādevī holding a fruit in her right hand and lotus with a long stalk in her left while the Cakrapuruṣa holds a lotus with a long stalk in his left, his right being in the ‘jñānamudrā’ pose), his front right hand holding a globular object with a spiral at the top (probably an artistic representation of a lotus bud) and front left, a conchshell; on the extreme corners of the lower part of the stele are to be found two other Ayudha-puruṣas viz. Śaṅkhapuruṣa, with his right hand in the ‘vyākhyāna’ pose and his left hand holding a lotus with a long stalk on whose pericarp is placed a tiny conch-shell, and the Padmapuruṣa with his right hand in ‘abhaya’ pose and his left holding a long stalk lotus with the lotusbud-like object placed on its ‘karnikā’. The relief does not contain the figures of the divine consorts and its iconographer thought it more expedient to show the personified representations of two other attributes which are not usually shown in sculptures; he was probably following a text which is unknown to us. The omission of the consorts of the god seems to be intentional; the donor, carved on the extreme left corner of the pedestal, is a single figure. From his beard, his peculiar mode of dressing the hair and other features he appears to be an ascetic; thus, the image, though highly decorated, is of the yogic variety and the donor by worshipping this variety of Viśṇu wanted to attain proficiency in his yogic activities. The raised lotus foliage protruding out of the middle of the pedestal shown in two layers, the Garuda in front, the profuse ornaments of the central as well as the attendant figures enable one to date the relief in the 12th Century A.D. If a comparison is made between this image and the other one from Rajshahi just described, and the standing image of Caturbhuja Viṣṇu found at Ganpur, Rajshahi and now exhibit
No. 5008 in the Indian Museum, the contrast will appear to be still greater. In place of the Cakrapuruṣa and Gadādevī on either side appear Śrī and Puṣṭi with their usual attributes, the Śaṅkha and Padmapuruṣas figuring on the extreme right and left corners as in the Sarishadaha sculpture; the normal attributes ‘padmāṅka’, ‘gadā’, ‘cakra’ and ‘śaṅkha’ are placed in the four hands from the lower right onwards, and the central figure and all its accessories as well as the back slab are profusely covered with ornamentation (the very pedestal is an over-elaborate one consisting of as many as thirteen faces). This is undoubtedly a work of the 12th century A.D. and a glance at it as well as similar others of the same period will at once show what a great deterioration in iconographic art has taken place. It will be of interest to refer to one or two metal images of Viṣṇu in this connection. I can not select any better specimens than two of the five bronze images from Runpopur, both of which are exhibits in the Indian Museum (N. S. 2249 and N. S. 2250). The first stands on a lotus on a threestoried ‘paṇcaratha’ pedestal, accompanied by his two consorts, the placing of the attributes conforming to the mode followed in the last-described stone image; there are no Āyudha-puruṣas and the back slab having stylised flames issuing from its side is otherwise severely plain; the ‘śiraścakra’ in the form of a 16-petalled lotus is flanked on its lower side with a peacock or swan-like bird vomiting jewels (?) on either side; in place of the ‘kīrttimukha’ on the top centre we find an ornamental finial which was originally set with precious stones; the eyes and the ‘tilaka’ of the central figure are embossed with silver; Garuḍa is shown in front of Viṣṇu with his hands in the añjali pose and the donor couple appear on the lowermost corner of the pedestal on the left. The other, 2250, shows a similar Viṣṇu, but there are some differences in the composition; the jewelled ‘makuṭa’ of the deity, the lotus ‘śiraścakra’ of thirty-two longish petals without the birds, the absence of Garuḍa and the donor-couple on the pedestal, the lotus held with a long stalk by the left-hand attendant consort of the god (S. Spooner thinks that it can not be Puṣṭi as in the other bronze specimen where she holds a ‘vīna’ and should be described as Vasumati as is laid down in the ‘Viśvakarmāvatāra śilpaśāstra’; it may be so, but we can explain it also as Puṣṭi with the help of the
‘Matsya Purāṇa’ text which, as we have shown before, puts lotuses in the hands of both Śrī and Puṣṭi)—all these features and the less elaborate pedestal differentiate it from the first. In the cases of both, the stele, the pedestal, the separate figures—and in the case of the second one the ‘śiraścakra’ also—are cast separately and put together by means of contrivances. There is no doubt, however, about the artistic excellence of both and the artist or artists who were responsible for the wax models of the two were great masters. Both these images have been dated by Spooner in the 11th century A.D., and it is certainly not a case of ante-dating.¹

A much smaller standing image of Viṣṇu in silver in the same show-case in the Indian Museum, shows the god with many more iconographic details; over and above what we find in the second of the two bronze images just described, one sees here, two atlantes, one on either side, the leogryph above it, the ‘makara’, the gandharva couple (the female dancing on the left, the male playing the lute on the right) and the ‘kīrttimukha’ finial; what is still more interesting is the fact that there are tiny figures of the ten incarnatory forms of Viṣṇu shown on the top part of the prabhāvali,—the correct and stereotyped order is not followed in their presentation and they appear in the following manner: Matsya, Kūrma, Narasiṃha, Varāha, Vāmana, Parāśu Rāma (?), Rāghava Rāma, Balarāma (?), Buddha and Kalkin. The silver image is undoubtedly of lesser artistic merit than the two previous bronze ones, but still it is a very worthy example of metal casting and can not be dated later than the 11th century A.D.

It will be of interest now to refer to a few specimens of ‘Śrānakā mūrtis’ of Viṣṇu in stone, which are of unique importance from the iconographic point of view. Some of them show clear traces of Mahāyāna Buddhist influence and can very well be studied together with several multi-armed standing images hailing from different parts of Bengal, which will be also briefly referred to in this connection. The standing

¹. The bronze images inside a big earthen jar were first discovered by a ploughman tilling his field in a village in the district of Rungpur, north Bengal. Spooner gave a thorough account about them in his article on ‘Viṣṇu Images from Rungpur’, in A. S. I. A. R., 1911–12.
image of Viṣṇu (Trivikrama) from Surohor in the district of Dinajpur, north Bengal, now in the collection of the Rajshahi Museum, falls under this class. The central figure is made to stand under a canopy of seven serpent hoods; the 'gadā' and 'cakra' shown in the back hands are placed on full blown lotus flowers; instead of Śrī and Puṣṭi on its either side are placed two male figures identifiable as Āyudhapuruṣas on account of 'cakra' (or 'padma'? ) and 'śaṅkha' placed on 'nīlotpalas' held by the left hands of the respective attendants; a miniature figure like that of Amitābha (Dhyānī-Buddha) is placed just above the central snake hood and a six-armed dancing figure of Śiva is carved inside a medallion on the middle face of the 'pañcaratha' pedestal below. The relief is datable in the early part of the 12th century A.D. 1 Another very interesting exhibit (No. 661) in the same Museum, originally procured from Kalandarpur in the district of Bogra, north Bengal, is somewhat similar to the above, though there are certain differences. It belongs to the sub-variety of Viṣṇu image named Śrīḍhara (according to the 'Agni Purāṇa' and 'Rūpamaṇḍana' texts), as the 'cakra' and 'gadā' are placed on full-blown lotuses on the back right and back left hands respectively, while the front right and front left ones hold a lotus bud and a conch-shell; the snake hoods are absent; there are two tiny kneeling figures on the lower-most corners of the back-slab, whose identity is not quite clear from the plate; other iconographic features are the same as in the Surohor relief. 2 The dancing Śiva on the pedestal below the two images described above would tempt one to identify the miniature figure on the top as Brahmā; thus, the whole relief may present the Brahmanical triad, Brahmā—Viṣṇu—Śiva, and the snake hoods may be explained as those of Ādiśeṣa, one of the attendants of Viṣṇu; but Brahmā is very rarely represented as two-armed and one-faced and the hands are in a pose unusual in his case. It will be profitable to compare the above with certain twelve—

armed standing images, generally in stone, which have been described by R. D. Banerjee as Lokesvara-Viṣṇu images. The much-mutilated twelve-armed figure originally found in Ghiyasabad, in the district of Murshidabad (Bengal) and now in the collection of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, shows the central deity standing in the ‘samapādasthānaka’ pose, between two plantain trees with several snake hoods (probably seven) spread behind his head; of the twelve-hands a few are broken, while such attributes as are recognisable with difficulty, viz. Garuḍa, a rat, a ploughshare, a conch-shell (on the left hands), and a manuscript (?), a bull, a cup (?) etc. (on the right ones) are all placed on double-petalled lotuses or ‘nīlotpalas’ which are held by their stalks in the respective hands; the figure is decorated with the usual ornaments, a long garland reaching below the knee (the ‘vanamālā’ or ‘vaijayanti’ of the Viṣṇu images); one hand on either side is placed on two attendant figures just as two of some four armed Viṣṇu images are placed on the attendant Āyudha-puruṣas, though the figures on this relief can not be identified as such. A specimen exactly similar to the above type, now in the collection of the Rajshahi Museum, shows Śucīmukha, one of the most common attendants of Avalokiteśvara, on its pedestal which is intact here. Unfortunately, the top sections of the ‘prabhāvali’ with most of the head in both these reliefs are broken, and so it can not be determined whether the miniature Dhyāni Buddha was present there or not. A very interesting comparison can be made between these twelve-armed figures with a similar one hailing from Sonarang and now in the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat Museum, Calcutta. The latter is a well-preserved one and bears a great deal of affinity to the other two; besides, the figure of Amitābha is distinct over the snake-hood canopy; the attendant figures in this image can be recognised as Āyudhapuruṣas, as the ‘cakra’ on the head of the right hand figure is clearly discernible, while the emblem on the head of the other figure, which was probably a ‘śaṅkha’, is broken, and Garuḍa is shown on the right side of the ‘triratha’ pedestal with his hands in the ‘añjali’ pose. M. Ganguly remarks about the image,

1. R. D. Banerjee, ‘The Eastern School of Mediaeval Sculpture in India’, pp. 94-6, 125, pl. XXXVIII.
thus: 'The general features of the image seem to be derived from the ideal Viṣṇu image.... This form of Avalokiteśvara is very rare and as such this image has a unique value; a brief reference to the twelve-armed Avalokiteśvara is met with in 'Karaṇḍa Vyūha'. The six-armed Sāgardighi bronze figure, now in the collection of the same Museum described by Ganguly as Hṛṣīkeṣa, a sub-variety of Viṣṇu, on insufficient data, represents a male deity standing under a canopy of seven three-headed Nāgas; the figure of Amitābha is absent on the top; the attributes of the image in the right hands are a staff surmounted by an elephant, a wheel, the front hand being in the 'varada' pose with the lotus mark on the palm, while a club, a conch shell and a long staff surmounted by a Garuḍa are placed on the left; the two right and left attendant figures are undoubtedly Padma and Cakra puruṣas because they hold lotuses with long stalks, on which are placed a lotus bud and a wheel respectively; the pedestal is ornamented in the centre with the representation of a lotus and shows the figure of the winged Garuḍa on the left side. The date of this sculpture can be fixed on the basis of an inscription at its back as well as on stylistic grounds in the 11th century A. D.² R. D. Banerjee observes about this group of images, 'This particular class of specimens, therefore, indicates a blending of the older Bhāgavata class of Vaiṣṇava images and the Lokeśvaras of the later Mahāyāna school of Vaiṣṇavism' (op. cit., p. 96). Reference ought to be made in this connection to the twenty-armed sculpture, exhibit No. 1492 in the Rajshahi Museum, which shows the deity clad with usual ornaments and 'vanamālā', standing erect on a 'saptaratha' pedestal with Garuḍa in its lower right corner and the donor couple and a pot with heaped offering ('naivedya') in the left, and artistic lotus stem and scroll carved on its middle face; his companions are two pot-bellied figures, with spiral 'jaṭā' on their heads, seated in 'lalitāsana' on 'viśvapadma', their left hands being in the 'vyākhyaṇamudrā' and the raised right hand

1. M. Ganguly, 'Handbook to the Sculptures in the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat Museum', pp. 82-3, Pl. VII. Ganguly was evidently unaware of the Ghiyasabad and Rajshahi counterparts of this image; he also did not notice the tiny figure of Garuḍa on the pedestal.

2. M. Ganguly, 'op. cit.', pp. 132-40, Pl. XXVI.
of the right figure holding a drawn sword, and the same of the left figure, a hammer with a long handle; they have their own 'prabhās' carved behind their back and their attitude is distinctly reminiscent of the pose of Jalini, Upakesini, Candraprabha and Suryaprabha, the four miniature replicas and attendants of the Arapacana form of Mañjuśrī, whose textual descriptions and corresponding mediaeval icons are known; the attributes in the ten right hands of the god are: (1) a broken globular object (probably the lotus bud), (2) lotus mark on the palm (the hand being in the 'varada'), (3) rosary, (4) elephant-goad, (5) assurance pose, (6) hammer, (7) longish thunder bolt, like double-edged trident, (8) drawn sword, (9) arrow and (10) mace, and in his left ones are the following: (1) a conch-shell, (2) a water-vessel, (3) a noose, (4) 'tarjani' (the threatening pose), (5) wheel, (6) circular shield, (7-10) indistinct or broken; the main 'prabhāvali' decorated with lotus petal design and a flat scroll one on its outer rim is broken at the top and it is not certain whether there were any figures like that of the Dhyāni-Buddha above. Here also we find an interesting amalgam of Buddhistic and Brahmanical features, the two gods which contributed to the composition being Viṣṇu and Mañjuśrī, belonging to the two rival creeds. One striking difference exists between this relief and the other four, six and twelve-armed composite icons just described, in respect of the manner of its holding the multifarious attributes in its hands,—these are not placed on lotuses as in the case of the others. I know of no texts which could fully explain the above group of images; but a few couplets contained in the late compilation 'Rūpamaṇḍana' may be mentioned in this connection. The twelve-armed Ananta is described as of the form of Ananta (i.e., the Śeṣanāga—that explains the seven hoods in the twelve and six-armed images), endowed with unlimited divine power ('anantaśaktisamvitaḥ'), having a Garuḍa for his vehicle and endowed with four faces, holding mace, sword, wheel, thunderbolt, elephant goad and 'vara' in his right hands, and conch-shell, shield, bow, lotus, staff and noose in his left hands. The four-faced twenty-armed Viṣvarūpa, on the other hand, will have a flag, a ploughshare, a conch shell, a thunderbolt, an elephant-goad, an arrow, a wheel, a citron and a boon, in the right hands, while the left ones will carry a flag, a staff, a noose, a mace, a sword, a lotus, a 'sṛṅgī'
(this should undoubtedly be ‘sāṅga’, i.e., the bow of Viṣṇu,—an arrow is in one of the right hands), a pestle and a rosary; the remaining two right and left hands should be in the ‘yogamudrā’ pose and the god should be depicted seated on Garuḍa; his four faces (as in the case of Vaikuṇṭha-śaṅkara) should be shown as being that of a man, a man-lion, a woman and a boar. But as will be seen after a comparison with the above texts and the images, the incidence of the number of hands—twelve and twenty in some of the reliefs, several of the attributes in them and a few other minor features can only be explained with the help of the former; some major characteristics like the nature of the attendants are left unexplained and none of the above reliefs are four-faced. Again, the four and six-armed images in the group have no corresponding texts to explain them. These and similar other images, however, show definite and conscious efforts on the part of their makers and worshippers to rise above the well-defined limits of sectarianism and incorporate elements belonging to rival creeds.

In connection with the four-faced standing images of Viṣṇu, it must be observed that these are not at all unknown in northern India. In the extreme north, in Kashmir, it seems to have been the common mode of representing the god in the early mediaeval period as is evidenced by the extant Avantipur specimens. But these are usually four-armed; eight-armed similar images are also known in Kashmir, and these hail from temples earlier in point of date than the Avantipur ones. “The statues on the western walls of the ante-chamber in the Mārtanda temple ascribable to the great Kashmirian king Lalitāditya of the Karkoṭa dynasty, who ruled in the 7th century A.D., are those of Viṣṇu; each one is three-faced like the Viṣṇu image in the Avantisvāmin temple, the left being that of a boar and the right, that of a lion; both are eight-armed, their lower hands being placed on the heads of ‘chauri’-bearers, as in the other images of Viṣṇu found in the valley; they both

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1. ‘Rūpamaṇḍana’, Calcutta Sanskrit Series, No. XII, p. 19. The verses here, as well as those quoted by Gopinath Rao from the same text are almost identical, the difference being slight and immaterial.
wear 'vana-mālā', the bust of the earth-goddess is discernible between the feet of one such figure on the north wall; most of the hands are broken, so the emblems in them can not be identified''. The above description is based on D. R. Shahni's account of the sculptures in 'A. S. I. A. R.', 1915-16, pp. 62-3; the images are really four-faced, the fourth one at the back could not be shown as they were relief-representations. Those figures which are in the round never fail to show the fourth head at the back. The fragmentary sculpture No. Aa 21 in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar, has the front and side faces as in the above reliefs, the back face being that of a demon; its mutilated condition does not enable us to be sure about the attributes in all the four hands, but the front right undoubtedly holds a lotus. ¹ The beautiful sculpture, fully in the round, illustrated by R. C. Kak in page 50 and described by him in pages 49-51 of his 'Handbook', however, supplies us with all the necessary details that must have been present in the other sculpture when it was whole. The peaked tiara, the beautiful ornaments, the long garland described by Kak as 'mandāramālā', the 'ūrṇā' on the forehead, the 'śrīvatsa' mark on the breast are all tastefully displayed; a lotus and a conch-shell are in the two front hands of the god, his two back hands resting on the Āyudhapuruṣas, the Gadādevī on the left and Cakrapuruṣa on the right; a half-raised female figure shown between his legs represents Pṛthivī, thus, being strongly reminiscent of Buddha's 'mahābhiniśkramaṇa' scene in Gandhāra. The central figure is not standing erect but is slightly 'dviṃbhaṅga', whereas, the attendant divinities are more bent in their poses; the latter are not mere charie-bearers as D. R. Shahni and R. C. Kak describe them but are really personified representations of attributes, though they are holding yak-tails with long handles in their right hands. An image of this type originally hailing from Mathura and now in the collection of the local museum (2525) shows the lion face on the right and boar one on the left; in artistic decoration it resembles the fragmentary sculpture of the four-armed Viṣṇu

noticed above. Coomaraswamy published the bust of one such Viṣṇu which he procured from Mathura for the Boston Museum and thus remarked about it: ‘The figure exhibits the broad shoulders and slender “lion” waist of the Indian ideal type, with the firmness and fulness of flesh and massive modelling characteristic of the Gupta period; it is an important document equally of art and iconography’.\(^1\) These sculptures are usually shown as three-faced on account of their relievo-character. When they are fully in the round, like many such Kashmirian images, the fourth face, that of a demon very often appears at the back. B. C. Bhattacharya discovered a specimen of the four-faced images of the standing Viṣṇu at Benares. It is very much mutilated; the four faces are, however, quite in tact, all its hands and the portion below the waist being broken. The front face is human, placid in aspect, while the right and left faces are that of Narasimha and Varāha, the back face being horrid-looking with round protruding eyes, lolling tongue, ‘jaṭās’ over the head, etc.\(^2\) Bhattacharya has rightly drawn our attention to the iconographic text as compiled by Hemādri from ‘Viṣṇudharmottara’, which would partially explain this type of image; it says that “Viṣṇu, the god of the gods, should be shown on Garuḍa; he should have four faces and eight hands; the eastern face will be placid in form, the southern one that of Narasimha and the western (i.e., the back face) should be ‘Kapila’ and the other face i.e., the northern or left one should be of Varāha’. It should be noted that a text similar to the above must have been followed in the carving of the Kashmirian four-faced images of Viṣṇu, as it is expressly mentioned by Kak that the back face is demoniacal in character.\(^3\)

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3. The ‘Viṣṇudharmottara’, III. 44, 9-12 reads: ‘Devadvaṃsaṭathā Viṣṇuṇā kārayedgarunasthitam
Kaustubhodbdhasitorasakṣam sarvābharapadharīparam
Sajalambudasaçchyām pitādvīyāmbaram tathā
Mukhānā kāryāstavāro bāhavo dvīgyāstathā
Saumyaṃ tu vadānāṃ pūrvaṃ nārasimhaṃ tu
Kapilāṃ paścimaṃ vaktraṃ tathā vārāhamuttaram’. The above is taken from the Venkatesvara Press edition. Gopinath Rao puts the same with slight alteration: ‘saumyaṃ tu’ is changed into ‘saumyendu’ and ‘kapila’ into ‘kapila’. As regards the objects to be placed in the hands of such an image, the same Purāṇa’ (Venkatesvara press) tells us: ‘Tasya- dākṣīṇahasteṣu bāgāṭṣamusalā-
The Mārtanda temple specimens are eight-armed, but the objects in the hands are indistinguishable; the Avantipur images are four-armed and the Benares specimen also seems to have been so.

The seated (‘āsana’) varieties of Viṣṇu images are not so numerous in the north of India as the standing ones just described. The Āsanamūrtis of Viṣṇu, again, can be subdivided into several varieties, according as they are depicted seated on the coils of Ādiśeṣa in the ‘lalitāsana’ pose, or on the shoulders of Garuḍa in different ways, sometimes singly or at other times along with his consort Lākṣmī, or again in some yogic ‘āsana’ such as ‘padmāsana’ on a double-petalled lotus. The earliest seated image belonging to the north of India, so far known to me, is the relief shown on the central part of the principal architrave in the main sanctum of the Deogarh temple, belonging to the Gupta period; it has been briefly referred to above. The right one of the two attendant goddesses, seated below is shampooing the leg of the deity dangling down the coils of the snake; there is another attendant figure just behind her; the objects in the hands of the god are not quite clear; he wears a square ‘kīrīṭa’ and the seven hoods of the snake are spread canopy-wise over his head; the host of the garland-bearing Vidyādhāras, singly or in couples are shown above flying towards him in a row from either side. The whole composition is very graceful and shows the characteristic vigour of the Gupta art.¹ This form of Viṣṇu seems to have been the prototype of the variety

¹ Carma cītraṃ dhanuśecondraśape ku Vanamālīnāḥ; there is some mistake here. The ‘Casurvaragacintāmati’ (Bibliotheca Indica Edition), Vrataḥ banda, Part I, pp. 110-1, quoting from ‘Viṣṇudharmottara’, puts the above two lines thus: ‘Taṣya daśṣiṣṭahaste śīlārākaratāsamalabhīyaḥ. Carmaśipavāramānī vāme ca Vanamālīnāḥ’; both these versions require correction; the first is more corrupt of the two. If in the second version, ‘bāpaira’ ( Rao puts it as ‘bāpjīri’ and adds that the ‘Vācaspatya’ explains ‘arj’ as ‘cakram’) is read in place of ‘bālārka’, then the right hands are made to hold an arrow, a solar wheel, a pestle, the fourth being in the ‘abhaya’ pose; the left ones, on the other hand, show a shield (‘carma’), a ploughshare (‘āṭra’), a conch-shell (‘indu’) and the ‘varādāmudrā’. This is certainly a much better reading than the one given in the Venkatesvara press edition of the ‘Viṣṇudharmottara’. Most of these attributes are found in the twelve or twenty-armed images noticed above, but I know of no such four-faced image where the hands are well-preserved and which carry the above attributes. The Boston Museum specimen described by Coomaraswamy in the Sculpture Catalogue is also fragmentary. I do not see why Bhattacharya would call this type of Viṣṇu image ‘Śāḥārāṇa-Viṣṇu’; neither Hemadri nor the source from which he quotes names it so.

of Vaiṣṇava images described as Ādiṁūrti in the 'Vaikhānasāgama' text. It enjoins that the god should be shown seated on the coils of Ananta (Ādiśeṣa), his right leg extended and the left one drawn up, right hand resting on the coil of the serpent, in the Gupta relief, the right hand is raised upwards, while the left spread over the left knee, the back hands carrying a conch shell and a wheel, his head shaded by five or seven hoods of the snake; ... Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya kneeling on one knee should be shown on his right and left sides, where also Brahmā and Śiva should be placed (these male attendants generally appear in South Indian Viṣṇu reliefs, which are of yogic variety according to the same text). One of the earliest of the Garudāsana Viṣṇu images is the very unique sculpture in greyish black stone, about 6' 4" in height, which was found near Laksmanakati, Dist. Backerganj, Bengal. It is one of the most interesting types of Āsanāmūrti of Viṣṇu, no other such specimen having ever been discovered anywhere in India, and is remarkable from the point of view of its artistic excellence and its iconographic importance. Viṣṇu is lightly seated in the 'lalitāsana' pose on the outstretched wings of a three-headed Garuḍa who is shown as about to soar upwards; the back right and back left hands hold two lotus flowers by their stalks, on the pericarps of which are depicted miniature seated figures of Kamalā (Gaja Lakṣmī), and Sarasvatī playing on an antique shaped harp, respectively; the right and left front hands of the deity hold a 'cakra' (with the Cakrapuruṣa inside it) and the miniature figure of the Gadādevī; on a squarish 'kiritamakuta' is shown a four-armed deity seated with its front hands in the 'dhyāna' or 'yoga mudrā' and the back hands carrying some indistinct objects, possibly two of the attributes of Viṣṇu (it may then stand for Yogāsana Viṣṇu); on the top and bottom sections of the stele appear the flying Vidyādhāras and the donor couple respectively; the central figure is tastefully decorated with 'vanamāla' and other usual ornaments. The severe simplicity of the whole composition, the squarish makuṭa, the plainness of the 'prabhāvalī' all enable one to date it some time in the 8th-9th century A. D., which will certainly not be too early. 

2. N. K. Bhatiasali, 'Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum', pp. 86-7, Pl. XXXII.
with care in this specimen of religious art is its unique iconographic shape which can not be explained with the help of any known text. It is an uncommon thing in Viṣṇu images to place Śrī and Puṣṭi in the back hands of the central figure; again, the manner of its holding them reminds us of the four-, six-, and twelve-armed standing images of Viṣṇu noted above.¹ The Dhyāni-Buddha like miniature figure on its crown is also strongly reminiscent of the same in the Kalandarpur, Surohor and other reliefs; but here the figure is four-armed and thus may be explained as the original 'prakṛti' of Narāyaṇa-Viṣṇu as mentioned in the Narāyaṇīya section of the 'Mahābhārata'.² The massive stone image of Viṣṇu seated astride on the shoulders of Garuḍa, originally hailing from Bihar and now housed in the Gupta gallery of the Indian Museum is a very striking example of another variety of the Garuḍāsana images. The pose is natural, and the whole composition can be dated in the early mediaeval period. The 12th century A. D. image of Viṣṇu seated in the 'lalitāsana' on the back of Garuḍa as in the Laksmānakati sculpture, found at Deora in the district of Bogra, Bengal, and now in the Rajshahi Museum, shows the same abnormal pose (this was adopted in some Indonesian reliefs as is evidenced by the Candi Belahan sculpture depicting the same motif, which is supposed to portray the figure of the Javanese King Erlaṅga); in this relief, however, Viṣṇu and his mount though carved out of the same slab of stone appear as two separate images combined. Many³ sculptures of the early and late mediaeval periods have been found in Northern India, which portray both these types of Garuḍāsana images. There are other reliefs where Viṣṇu is shown seated in the abnormal pose on the back of his mount with his consort Lakṣmī seated on his left thigh. The Lakṣmī-Narāyaṇa relief at Basta near Dacca is a late specimen of such a variety, where one leg of each of the couple is made to rest on the back hands of Garuḍa, the front hands of the latter.

¹. B. D. Banerjee remarked about this manner of placing the attributes, that 'this peculiar arrangement seems to have been common in the northern part of Rājha (op. cit., p. 96). The Laksmānakati, Surohor, Kalandarpur and other images prove that this mode was also known in eastern and northern Bengal i.e., Vaṅga and Varendra.
being shown in the ‘āñjali’ pose. In other varieties of the same motif, Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu are shown seated on a 'viśvapadma', and the Eshnail sculpture depicting the above type, in the collection of the Rajshahi Museum, is interesting. These groups of seated Lakṣmī-Nārāyana images, however, bear a strong resemblance to the Umā-Maheśvara sculptures, numbers of which have been found in northern and eastern India, and seem to have been based on the latter.

It will be useful here to refer to two beautifully carved seated images of Viṣṇu in the collection of Mathura Museum; these are of unique interest from the iconographic as well as artistic point of view. The sculpture No. D. 37 of buff coloured sandstone, shows the god seated in ‘vaddhapadmāsana’ with his front hands in the 'yogamudrā', his back right and left hands carrying ‘gadā’ and ‘cakra’ respectively; there is a square ‘kiriṭa’ on his head, and the other usual ornaments, the ‘vanamāla’ and the sacred thread are accurately displayed; just beneath the drooping petals of the lotus on which the god is seated and on the front face of the ‘pañcaratha’ pedestal is shown a female figure sitting in the same pose as the central deity (she is probably to be identified as the earth goddess), flanked on either side by a Nāga couple and a female figure kneeling with their hands in the ‘āñjali’ pose; on the second parallel layer of the pedestal are shown one on either side two male figures standing in graceful pose who are the Cakra and Śaṅkha puruṣas, as they hold a wheel and a conch-shell respectively in their hands; on the last parallel layer of the ‘piṭhikā’, are shown a female figure holding a lotus (evidently Gadādevī, for the knob of ‘Gadā’ above her head is distinctly recognisable in the relief) on the proper right and a male figure holding a cobra on the proper left (the last is none other than Garuḍa who is known as ‘Phaniphaṇabhṛt’); on the middle part of the backslab is shown the Gaja-vyāla, one on either side, and over them are the river-goddesses; on the top section of the relief are displayed three miniature shrines, one on the centre just above the head of the central figure and two others, one on each side of it; these contain the seated figures of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva,

1. N. K. Bhattasali, 'op. cit.', p. 88, Pl. XXXIV.
Viṣṇu occupying the central shrine, Brahmā and Śiva, the proper right and proper left ones respectively. Each of these figures is four-armed and holds his usual attributes; on both sides of the central chapel there are flying Vidyādhara couples carrying garlands and flowers in their hands.\(^1\) The whole composition, very full in details, is exceedingly well-carved and the careful and methodical grouping of the accessories in relation to the central deity is praiseworthy. This belongs to the early mediaeval period and is an excellent specimen of the handiwork of the Mathuran artists. Another Yogāsana-mūrti in the collection of the same Museum (Registered number, 379) and of the same period, though not containing so many details and somewhat inferior in artistic merit to the other, is iconographically interesting. The ‘Vanamālā’ is shown in a peculiar way, gracefully carved round the upper arms and disappearing behind the back, it is spread below the legs on the lotus-seat; there are lotus marks on the hand and feet of the god as in the other figure, and the sitting pose, various ornaments, the attributes in the back hands and the ‘yogamudrā’ in the front ones are exactly similar to the above image; on the top proper right and left corners of the square stele are shown Brahmā and Śiva seated, but not inside shrines; no other figures are carved on it; below the drooping petals of the lotus on which the god is seated is a conch-shell, placed sideways in place of the earth-goddess; the couple of female figures in the lower left corner of the pedestal, the first of which holds a lotus with a long stalk can not be the donors, for their hands are not in the ‘aṅjali’ pose—they might represent the two consorts of Viṣṇu. Gṛuḍa with his raised right hand supports the right corner of the lotus seat; the pedestal is plain without any facets. These two sculptures show that the Yogāsana images of Viṣṇu were not unknown in the north. A very interesting sculpture, in the collection of the Khajuraho Museum ought to be taken note of in this connection. Kramrisch was the first to notice it, and her description of the figure is as follows: “Viṣṇu is shown with the fore-finger of his main left hand raised to the height of the lips, a gesture not recorded

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1. J. PH. Vogel, ‘Mathura Museum Catalogue’, pp. 102-06. Vogel described it as ‘the four-armed Viṣṇu apparently in the Buddha ‘avatāra’; but now we can justifiably name the figure as Yogāsana Viṣṇu wearing profuse ornaments.
in any of the varieties of the Viṣṇu image, nor am I aware of any literary reference to the hand raised as if indicating silence, as if Viṣṇu were shown as 'maunavratin'. There are the usual accompanying figures, relatively large figures of donors with 'aṇjali mudrā' to either side of the pedestal, and Garuḍa in its centre. The lotus scroll consists in Candella ornamentation mainly of stalks in full relief (contrast the version in Pāla-Sena sculpture), either smooth, or knotty in more detailed examples'.

If the Khajuraho relief is studied along with the two Mathura Museum sculptures noticed above by me, one can not but be struck with the great similarity between them as regards the facial expression, the ornaments and the general pose of the body, and it appears that all three were the handiwork of the same school of sculptors. The pose of the front left hand of the last is unusual, reminding one of that of the right hand of the bronze statuette discovered by Marshall at Sirkap and identified by him as the child-god Harpocrates ('A Guide to Taxila', 2nd edition, p. 79, pl. XV). T. A. G. Rao reproduces only one sculpture, viz. that from Bagali in the Bellary district of the Madras Presidency in illustration of Yogāsana Viṣṇu and a glance at his plate (XXIV, Vol. I, Part I) shows the difference in style and execution. Like in the second Mathura relief, the accessory figures are not many, but the features present in the north Indian relief are not to be found here; an additional feature found in the Bagali sculpture is the figures of the ten incarnations, most of them seated in the Yogāsana pose in imitation of the central figure. Rao explains this abnormal way of showing the 'avatāras' by observing that it is conventional to show the surrounding figures in the same pose, in which the central one is shown; but this convention, if there was any, is seldom observed in both the north and south Indian reliefs.

This type of the seated image of Viṣṇu, however, is extremely rare in eastern India and I can only refer to one or two specimens hailing from Bengal. A black basalt pedestal of an image found by S. K. Saraswati at Itahar, Dinajpur,

2. Rao, op. cit., Vol. I, Pt. I, pp. 103-04; his reference to Dattātreya figure from Badami reproduced by him in Plate LXXXIII is not happy, for of the ten 'avatāras' there, the three Rāma ones (Jāmadagnya, Rāghava and Balarāma) are shown standing and Kalkin is as usual on horse back.
contains the lower portion of a seated divinity identifiable as Yogāsana Viṣṇu from its front hands being shown in the yogamudrā and the presence of Garuḍa below on the pedestal.¹ A fine large bracket capital of wood found at Sonarang, Dacca, contains a representation of the same variety of Viṣṇu image; it is a very good specimen of the wood carver’s art and can be dated in circa 11th century A. D.² On one of the terracotta plaques of the main shrine at Paharpur we find another figure of Viṣṇu seated; but the deity is in ‘sukhāsana’ and not ‘yogāsana’ as K. N. Dikshit suggests.³

If the Āsanamūrtis of Viṣṇu are rare in comparison with the Sthānaka images of the god, the Śayanamūrtis are rarer still in the north and east of India. It has already been pointed out how the latter is one of the types of Viṣṇu images most frequently enshrined as Raṅganātha in the main sanctum of the Vaiṣṇava temples of the South and how it portrays the Nārāyana element in the composite Vaiṣṇavism, the latter itself being based on the Vedic ideology regarding creation. In the epic and Purānic period, the mythology is no doubt much more developed, but the principal idea is the same. The type which illustrates this elaborate myth, visualises the state of ‘pralaya’ (dissolution) in which the nucleus of creation lies latent in the One alone, from whom, again, creation takes place; we are also told in the Purāṇas that the earth (medinī) was made out of the fat (meda) of the demons Madhu and Kaitabha who were slain by Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa. The earliest north-Indian stone relief depicting the same concept, so far known to me, is the Deogarh one already mentioned. But, a still earlier terracotta plaque, originally decorating the Bhitargaon (Cawnpore, U. P.) temple of the 5th century A. D., and now an exhibit

1. J. R. A. S. B., Letters, 1935, pp. 10, 11, Pl. I, fig. 1. This 12th century A. D. ornate pedestal is iconographically interesting as it bears not only the figure of Garuḍa but also an elephant and a fat, squat figure; Nāga and Nāginī (Adiśeṣa and his consort) support with their raised hands the lower set of petals of the ‘mahāmūra’, reminding us of the Nāga pair raising the lotus of Buddha in the representation of the Great Miracle of Śrīvāsa.


in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, summarily depicts the same motif. The god is shown resting on the coils of Ādiśeṣa, whose hoods are spread over his head, in an half-raised attitude; a lotus stalk issues out of his navel (Padmanābha) on whose blossom is seated Brahmā (Padmānāyaṇi); one leg of the god is drawn up on which one of his hands rests and the other leg is shown stretched forward; near the legs are shown the two figures of the demons, Madhu and Kaiṭabha, in a militant attitude (elaborate mythology in the epic and Purānic literature shows their connection with Nārāyaṇa). The Deogarh stone relief gives a much more elaborate version of the motif; the whole rectangular relief is divided into two unequal sections, the upper larger one contains the figure of the deity recumbent on the coils of the snake; the hoods of the latter shelter his head, which, slightly raised, rests on his front left hand; the other hands without any attributes are at ease; the ‘vanamālā’ and other usual ornaments decorate his body; Lākṣmī is shampooing his right leg which is slightly bent (I have shown that this feature is present also in the seated figure of Viṣṇu in the central part of the lintel of the same shrine); one male and the other female standing side by side near the god’s leg may stand for the Āyudhāpuruṣas (the female figure holding a club with a knob may stand for Gadādevī, the identity of the male one being not certain; Rao thinks that it may represent Dhanus, but the suggestion is not beyond doubt); on the top centre of this section is the three-headed but two-armed Brahmā seated on a lotus, the stalk of which issues from a jar-like object shown near the right hand of the god (the lotus does not issue from the navel, as Rao describes and as is quite clear in the Bhītargaon terracotta plaque); on the proper right of Brahmā are shown Indra on his elephant and Kārttikeya on his peacock, and on his proper left Śiva and Pārvatī on the bull, and a sword and shield bearing Vidyādhara (the mounts of the respective deities, and the Vidyādhara are all shown as flying through the air). On the lower section of the panel is a row of six figures—the one in the extreme right corner is female, the others being male; the two male figures in the extreme left corner carrying clubs and shown in fighting mood probably represent the two demons and the figure next to them in a vigorous pose drawing a sword from its scabbard may depict one of the Āyudhāpuruṣas, the two male and one female figure also probably represent
them (in that case, the last may be Gadādevī); it is to be noted that in the hands of the main figure, no weapons or attributes are placed, and these may well be personified here in actual combat with the demons. The whole composition is exceedingly well carved and does credit to the anonymous Gupta artist who could so beautifully illustrate in plastic form the concept centering round Śeṣaśayi Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu. Smith very ingeniously compares the general pose of the central figure with that of the Greek Endymion, a copy of which enriches the collection of the Stockholm Museum, and utilises the resemblance as one of the proofs substantiating his theory about the indebtedness of the Gupta artists to the Graeco-Roman art. But in this case, the similarity might be a case of coincidence, and in any case it has been shown by me that the whole concept underlying the motif is based on old Indian ideology.¹ A parallelism, in this way, may more appositely be seen between this and the representation of the Mahāparinirvāṇa scene in Gandhāran and later art; but here also the partial similarity of the two compositions is superficial, and no far-reaching conclusions can be drawn on its basis. T. A. G. Rao refers to another relief depicting the same theme, which belongs to Rajputana. The composition partially resembles the above but contains many more figures which have been identified by Rao as being those of Sanaka, Sanatkumāra, the Saptāśis and the five Āyudhapurūṣas; below the cot on which Viṣṇu is lying on Ādiśeṣa are seen a number of figures engaged in fighting. This scene depicts perhaps the fight between the ‘devas’ and the ‘asuras’.²

A brief résumé of the different modes of iconographic presentation of the principal Viṣṇu types in the north and south of India will not be out of the place here. We have seen that the ‘Vaikhānasāgama’ classification seems to have been followed to a certain extent in carving Viṣṇu images.

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¹ T. A. G. Rao does not agree with Smith in placing it in the first half of the 6th century A. D., and dates it about two centuries later; but Smith is undoubtedly correct. For Smith’s comparison of this relief with Endymion, cf. O. Z. 1914, p. 25 and figs. 17 and 18.

in the south, the extant specimens, however, chiefly belonging to the 'yoga' and 'bhoga' varieties; in the north, as regards the Sthānakanmūrtis of Viṣṇu, there is not enough evidence to show whether this distinction was ever adopted—the probable Abhīcārika-sthānakanmūrti from Burdwan, Bengal, being a solitary exception; the standing images almost invariably belong to the 'bhoga' variety. The four-faced standing images of Viṣṇu seem to have been very popular in the extreme north of India, though such types were not unknown in central and eastern India. Four and possibly eight-armed such images go back to the Kushana period and such sculptures have been discovered at Mathura. From the Gupta period onwards, a regular development in the iconography of such images of Viṣṇu can be observed. As regards the seated images, a few reliefs from northern, central and eastern India, seem to prove that different varieties of them, though not as numerous as the standing ones, were known in these regions—a group of them being describable with some justification as the Yogāsana form of the god. 'Sayana' images are, however, uncommon. But whatever may be the form of the images, there can not be the least doubt that they try to symbolise one or other aspect of the composite god, thus emphasising the various traits underlying it; the wheel and lotus mark in the hands and the Garuḍa mount as unmistakably point to the solar basis of the cult-picture, as the recumbent form on the coils of the Nāga in the midst of the primeval waters illustrates its Nārāyaṇa form. In the next chapter we shall see how in the Vyūha images of the god, the Vāsudeva element was emphasised.
II

VYŪHAS AND VIBHAYAS OF VIṢṬU

A general idea about the principal types of Vāṣudeva-Viṣṇu images has been given by me in the preceding chapter; to speak in terms of Pāṇcarātra theology these illustrate the 'Para' or the highest aspect of the god. A distinction was made by Gopinath Rao between Para-Vāṣudeva and Viṣṇu images; but in the principal image of the fully-developed cult wherein all the three elements, Vāṣudeva, Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa, have been merged, it would be futile to distinguish between Viṣṇu and Vāṣudeva forms, for the simple reason that they have become one for all practical purposes. If we differentiate between the two, then for consistency's sake we shall have to separate the Śeṣaśayana images from the others and describe them exclusively as Nārāyaṇa. The texts themselves are not quite explicit in this matter, but they indirectly support my hypothesis. I have already drawn attention to the 'Matsya Purāṇa' passage in the last chapter, which alternately uses the terms Viṣṇu and Vāṣudeva to refer to the descriptions of the same type of images. The 'Viṣṇudharmottara' (Book III), gives an elaborate description of Vāṣudeva icons in verses 2-14 of chapter 85 (Venkateswara Press); in verses 16-20, an explanation is given of the real nature of the attributes in the hands of the god; verses 21 to 26 describe the images of Saṃkaraṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha; then in 29-37 are incorporated the names and real nature of the eight attendants of the four above-mentioned deities; lastly the eight devaṅgaṇas (viz. 'ānimā', 'laghimā', 'mahimā', 'prāpti', 'prākāmya', 'iṣītva', 'vaśītva', and 'kāmāvasāyītā',—the eight yogic 'siddhis', the attainment of which is the desire of every yogin ) are associated in batches of two with each of the four gods in verses 39-41. Then Mārkaṇḍeya tells Vajra that 'what has been narrated to him is the Caturmūrti of the lord; but if the four are combined into one, the composite image should be called Vaikuṇṭha, and it should be four-faced—by making the god four-faced the one god becomes four-formed; the eastern (i.e., central because the deity faces east) face, the most important of the four, should be placid in aspect; the right face of the lustre (form) of a lion should typify
knowledge; the western face should be terrific which is called (typifies) prosperity; another form of the four-faced (image of the lord) is to be made as I have expounded.' The above passage is very interesting; in the last chapter I have discussed another description of the four-faced image of Viṣṇu as given in the same Purāṇa (Bk. III, ch. 44, verses 9-13). Through some mistake or inadvertence, the Varāha face is not explicitly mentioned here and the back face is named 'raudra' in place of 'kāpila' (or 'kapila'). But there can be very little doubt that both descriptions fit in the case of the same types of images, as regards the number of the faces; in the case of the present text the god is named Vaikuṇṭhacaturmūrti who is four-armed, while in the case of the other the deity is Viṣṇu, one of the triad (Trimūrti—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva), but the number of his hands is given as eight. Again, in the same work (Book III, ch. 47, verses 2-17), while the Kṛṣṇa form (evidently Vāsudeva form) of the Lord is being described just after the description of the image of Brahman, the real nature of his four faces, eight hands, 'vanamāla', Gaurūḍa and other accessories is explained, and it is expressly mentioned that 'the four faces of the God of gods are to be known (to typify) 'bala', 'jaṇa', 'aśvarya' and 'sakti' respectively associated with Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣanā, Pradyumna and Aniruddha! Lastly, after a few other observations regarding the real significance of the attributes of the eight hands, each two of which are associated with each one of the four forms, the Purāṇakāra says that 'with such a body, the God, the greatest in the universe, sustains the whole world'; the whole chapter is named as Viṣṇurūpaṇimāna. All these details fully prove that there can not be any justification in distinguishing between Para-Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu images as Gopinath Rao and following him several others have done, and it would be hardly correct to separate Kṛṣṇaism from Vaiṣṇavism as has been done by K. N. Dikshith when he observes in connection with the Paharpur reliefs that 'a large number of

1. 'Viṣṇudharmottara', Bk. III, ch. 55, verses 42-45: 'Etatīc rūpamānaṃ ca tucumārtirmāyānam | Ekamūrtidharṣaḥ kārya Vaiṣṇuḥṣhayabhisabditaḥ | tucumukhāḥ sa karaṇāh prāgukta vadanāḥ | prabhāḥ | Caturmūrtiḥ sa bhavati kṛte mukhacātustāya | Paramānā saunyamukham kāryam yattu amukhyātanam viduḥ | Kārtyavāṃ sīmbhayaktāhām jīvāvakaṃ tu dakṣiṇam | Paścīmat vadanābh | raudram yattadāśvaryaṃ māvatām | Caturvakraṣaya karaṇāḥ rūpamānaṃ satthātāhritam'
these reliefs pertains to the Kṛṣṇa cult which apparently loses its force in the Pāla period when the worship of Viṣṇu was at its highest in Bengal' (op. cit., p. 37). What is still more interesting in connection with the 'Viṣṇudharmottara' passages referred to above is that they collectively help one to explain the four-faced, four-armed (sometimes eight-armed) images of Viṣṇu so frequently found in Kashmir, noticed by me in the previous chapter. A comparison of the text (Bk. III, ch. 85, verses 2-14 and 42-45) with the four-armed images of this nature will show that most of the details of the latter can be explained with its aid, and it is not at all surprising that in Kashmir which was probably the original homeland of many of the authoritative Pañcarātra Saṁhitās, the Pañcarātra element in the composite Viṣṇu image should predominâte.

It will be quite apposite here to take note of one of the essential doctrinal tenets of the Pañcarātra system in connection with the Vāsudeva Caturmūrti and Caturvaktra Viṣṇu; unless we know something about it, it will be impossible for us to understand the true significance of the images of the great god Vāsudeva Viṣṇu conceived in his four primary aspects viz. Vāsudeva, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha and his twenty other secondary ones—making up twenty-four forms in all (Caturviṁśati-mūrttayāḥ). The philosophy of the Pañcarātrins, like that of the various other religious systems, is inseparably bound up with the story of creation. The creation, according to them, takes place in gradual stages; in the beginning Śrī, the great Śakti of Viṣṇu opens her eyes by his command (‘unmeṣa’) and flashes up in her dual aspect of ‘kriyā’ (acting) and ‘bhūti’ (becoming), i.e., Force and Matter. Viṣṇu, the transcendent Lord, himself inactive, indirectly acts through his consort in her two aspects and thus Viṣṇu, Kriyā Śakti (really the Sudarśana portion of Lakṣmī) and Bhūti Śakti are respectively the ‘causa efficiens’ (efficient cause), ‘causa instrumentalis’ (instrumental cause) and ‘causa materialis’ (material cause) of the world. Thus, in the Pañcarātra system, the transcendent aspect of Viṣṇu remains completely in the background, but still the motive force, while the one force (Lakṣmī) which as Bhūti appears as the universe, vitalises and governs it as Kriyā. The first phase of the manifestation of Lakṣmī is called ‘suddhaśrāti’ (pure creation) which consists of the creation of the six ideal ‘guṇas’ (‘guṇonmeṣadaśā’).
These 'gunaś', the attributes of the highest god, are 'jñāna' (knowledge), 'aśvārya' (lordship), 'śakti' (potency), 'bala' (strength), 'vīrya' (virility) and 'tejas' (splendour), and are themselves 'aprakṛta' (not belonging to Prakṛti), like the three 'gunaś'—'sattva', 'rajas' and 'tamas'; they in their totality and by pairs are the material or instruments of Pure Creation. The first three of them connected with the Bhūti fall under one group called 'vīśramabhūmayah' (stages of rest), while the last three under the other, viz. 'śramabhūmayah' (stages of effort), and the corresponding 'gunaś' of each group join to form a pair associated with one or other of some special divine manifestation. In their totality the 'gunaś' make up the body of Vāsudeva, the highest personal god ('Śadgūnyavigrahām devām), as well as that of his consort Laksñī. When, however, they begin to pair—one of the first group pairing with another of the second—begins that process of manifestation, which appears as a chain, as it were, consisting of several manifestations,—each one excepting the first originating from an anterior one; thus, the favourite image of the process has, with the Pāñcarātrins, become that of one flame proceeding from another flame (any creation, up to the formation of the Brahmāṇḍa, is imagined as taking place in this way). The first three or including Vāsudeva, four, beings thus coming into existence are called the Vyūhas which term really denotes that the six 'gunaś' are shoved asunder into three pairs; and the Caturvyūhas (cf. the Caturmūrti of the 'Viśnudhāmottara' passage) are Vāsudeva (in whom all the six 'gunaś' are equally manifest), Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, the last three being the elder brother, the son and grandson respectively of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa according to the epic and purānic tradition. The pairs of 'gunaś' that are connected with the three latter are 'jñāna' and 'bala', 'aśvārya' and 'vīrya', and 'śakti' and 'tejas' respectively; it is however, expressly laid down in the texts that each Vyūha is Viṣṇu himself with his six 'gunaś' of which two only become manifest in each case. Thus appear the four original Vyūhas from each of which descend or emanate three sub-Vyūhas ('Vyūhaṁtara mūryantara') in this way:—(1) from Vāsudeva: Keśava, Nārāyana and Mādhava; (2) from Saṃkarṣaṇa: Govinda, Viṣṇu and Madhusūdana; (3) from Pradyumna: Trivikrama, Vāmana and Śrīdhara; and (4) from Aniruddha: Hṛṣikeśa, Padmanābha and Dāmodara. Another set of twelve Vidyeśvaras (this
term is used in the 'Mahasanatkumāra Samhitā', III, 6,34) emanate from the four principal Vyūhas in the following manner as given in the 'Pādma Tantra' (I, 2,26): from the Vyūha Vāsudeva springs another Vāsudeva, from the latter Puruṣottama and from him Janārdana; similarly from Saṃkaraṇa, another Saṃkaraṇa, Adhokṣaja and Upendra; from Pradyumna, another Pradyumna, thence Nṛsiṃha from whom Hari; and lastly from Aniruddha a second Aniruddha, Acyuta and Kṛṣṇa. These twelve Vidyēśvaras are enumerated after the twelve sub-Vyūhas and are called together with the latter, "the twenty-four forms" (caturvīṁśati mūrtayah) of Viṣṇu.¹

The aforesaid account of the emanatory forms of the one god explains some of the terms used in the 'Viṣṇudarmottara' passages about the four-faced Viṣṇu images; thus, the four faces are said to stand for four principal Vyūhas each typifying one or other among the four of the six ideal 'guna', viz. 'bala', 'jñāna', 'aśvaya' and 'sakti' ('balaṁ jñānaṁ tathaiśvaryaṁ saktiśca Yadunandana | viṣṇeyāṁ devadevasya tasya vaktrāṁ catuṣṭayam || Vāsudevaśca bhagavāṁstathā Saṃkaraṇaḥ prabhuḥ Pradyumnaśca niiruddhaśca balādyāḥ parīkritāḥ || Bk. III, Ch. 47, verses 9-10). It may also be observed that in the Pāñcarātra texts as well as in the 'Viṣṇudarmottara', the allocation of the four faces is done in this manner: the front or the eastern face is that of Vāsudeva, the right or the southern face (lion) that of Saṃkaraṇa, the left or the northern one (boar) that of Pradyumna, and the back or the western one ('Kāpila' or 'raudra'—the terrific) that of Aniruddha. The lion and the boar faces are thus primarily associated with the Pāñcarātra Vyūhas and not with the Nṛsiṃha and Varāha incarnations, though the ideology of the latter might have been to some extent responsible for this concept; it is curious that Saṃkaraṇa, in whom 'jñāna' is particularly manifest and

¹ The above particulars about the Vyūhas and the Caturvīṁśatimūrtis of Viṣṇu is summarised from the lucid account of the same based on authoritative Pāñcarātra Samhitās, as given in F. O. Schrader's 'Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and the Ahirbudhnya Samhitā', pp. 29-42. T. A. G. Rao's description of them appears in pp. 384-388 of the first volume of his work; Schrader's presentation is more comprehensive.
who according to the Great Epic was the expounder of the Sātvata vidhi should be endowed with a lion face, and Pradyumna in whom ‘aśvarya’ is the predominant ‘gūṇa’ should have a boar face.\(^1\) A clue to the terrific face on the back of the four-faced images, which is that of Aniruddha, can be found, if we take into account the descriptions and real nature of the respective attendants of the Caturvyūhas as given in the ‘Viṣṇudharmottara’ on the basis of the Pāṇcarātra texts. The Purāṇa lays down that Subhadra and Vasubhadra, carrying darts (‘prāśa’) in their hands are the attendants of Vāsudeva and partake of the nature of Indra and Agni; that Āśādha and Yajñatāta with hammers in their hands, the two attendants of Saṁkarṣaṇa, are to be known as Yama and Virūpākṣa; Jaya and Vijaya, with swords as their weapons, the attendants of Pradyumna, are Varuṇa and Vāyu, while Āmoda and Pramoda, carrying śaktis and accompanying Aniruddha, partake of the nature of Dhanada (Kubera the lord of the Yakṣas) and Śiva.\(^2\) The association of Dhanada and Śiva with Aniruddha who is also regarded according to a few Pāṇcarātra texts, as representing the Ahaṃkāra (the two others Saṁkarṣaṇa and Pradyumna standing for Jīva and Maṇas), may explain the ‘raudra’ (terrific) and the uncouth Yakṣa-like appearance of the face.

The above account of the evolution of the twenty-four forms of Viṣṇu is intimately associated with certain types of Vaiṣṇava icons which have been found in different parts of India. Among the one thousand names of this sectarian god, which are given in the Anuśasana-parvan of the ‘Mahābhārata’ (the same number of names are also given to Rudra-Śiva in the Great Epic, which is itself based on the Śatarudrīya’ section of the Vaijāsaneyī recension of the white Yajurveda giving hundred names

\(^1\) ‘Mahābhārata’ Bhiṣma Parvan, ch. 66, verses 38-40: ‘Sa eṣa śāsavo devaḥ sarvaguhyaśeṣaḥ śivaḥ | Vāsudeva iti jñeya yanmāṁ prōchaśi Bhārata || Brāhmaṇaḥ kṣatriyairvaśvāyaḥ śudraśe kṛtalakṣaṇaḥ || Sevyate bhyarccaye caiva nityayuktaiḥ svakarmamabhīḥ || Dvāparasya yugasyante śdaś kalyugasya ca | Sātvataḥ vidhimāsthaya gitaḥ Saṁkarṣaṇena va’

\(^2\) ‘Viṣṇudharmottara’, Book III, ch. 85, verses 29-37. It should be noted that most of these are associated with the eight quarters, the nature of whose guardians they partake of; in another place of the same text (Ek. III, ch. 47, verses 7-8), the eight hands of Viṣṇu are regarded as the four quarters and the four sub-quarters (‘Diśaścatusro dharmajña tāvato vidiśastathā | Būḥabo’ṣṭau vinirdhūtaśasya devasya Śrīgīnaḥ’).
of Rudra), twenty-four are specially selected and they are the same as the names of the Vyūhas, Sub-Vyūhas and the Vidyeśvaras (the last name is also associated with certain forms of Śiva) discussed above. It should again be emphasised here that there is really one God, and the varieties of names are regarded by the devotee as representing different manifestations of the same deity; thus, the principle of strict monotheism is never lost sight of by the expounders of the system. Now, Schrader, on the basis of the Śrīvaîśnava work 'Yatindramatastapikā' and the Chapter XXVI of the 'Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā', says that 'they (the twelve sub-vyūhas) are usually represented, for the purpose of meditation: Keśava as shining like gold and bearing four discuses, Nārāyaṇa as dark (like a lotus) and bearing four conches, Mādhava as shining like a gem (sapphire) and bearing four clubs, etc.' (op. cit., p. 41). But in actual representations of the twenty-four forms of Viṣṇu, no such mode is met with; the varieties are distinguished one from the other, on the basis of the placing of the four emblems or attributes, the 'śaṅkha', 'cakra', 'gadā' and 'padma' in the four hands of the same type of image. T. A. G. Rao observes, "All these twenty-four images are very alike; they are all standing figures, with no bends in the body, possessing four arms, and adorned with the 'kirtā'-crown and other usual ornaments; each of them stands upon a 'padmāsana'. The difference between any two of these images has to be made out by the way in which the 'śaṅkha', the 'cakra', the 'gadā' and the 'padma' are found distributed among their four hands. It is worthy of note that the number of possible permutations of four things taken four at a time is exactly twenty-four; and the order in which the permutations of these four articles, among the four hands is to be observed, is in passing, as in a circle, from the upper right hand to the left hand, thence to the lower left hand, and from there lastly to the lower right hand" (op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 227-28). This extract shows that the chief criterion of differentiation among these images, as has been mentioned by Rao, is liable to misinterpretation and thus to confusion in the matter of identifying individual specimens. Again, Rao speaks about these images as all standing figures; but it will be presently shown that seated types of such images, though rare, are also to be found. He utilised only the 'Rūpamaṇḍana' and the 'Padmapurāṇa' (Pāṭalakhaṇḍa) passages for describing the individual
varieties and suggested that the list given in the former is more correct, than the one given in the latter, for “on the basis of the ‘Padmapurāṇa’, Keśava can not be distinguished from Puruṣottama”, and as many as eight among the twenty-four forms disagree with the corresponding forms in the ‘Rūpamaṇḍana’ list. Now, the compiler of the ‘Rūpamaṇḍana’, after referring to each of these names and associating the four attributes with each in this manner,—‘Keśavaḥ kamalaṁ kambūṁ dhatte cakram gadāmapi Nārāyaṇaḥ kambupadmagadācacakraśarhabhavet’ ( i. e., Keśava should hold a lotus, a conch-shell, a wheel and a mace in his hands; Nārāyaṇa should be carrying a conch-shell, a lotus flower, a mace and a wheel)—, puts in the last couplet that ‘such images should be known (as holding these emblems) from their lower right hand upwards and the colour of each six of these (twenty-four) should be like that of Vāsudeva and others’ ( i. e., the respective colours of Vāsudeva, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, white, red, yellow, and black, should be so of each six of the twenty-four forms ).

B. B. Bidyabinod compared the different passages dealing with the same topic as incorporated in the ‘Agnipurāṇa’, the ‘Padmapurāṇa’ and the ‘Caturvargacintāmaṇi’ of Hemādri in his ‘Varieties of the Viṣṇu Image’ ( M. A. S. I. No. 2), but he failed to take note of the fact that all these different varieties of Viṣṇu images are primarily associated with the Pāñcarātra doctrine of the Vyūhas. He, however, rightly drew our attention to the word ‘pradakṣiṇam’ at the end.

1. ‘Rūpamaṇḍana’ passage as quoted by T. A. G. Rao, Vol. I, App. C., P. 64: ‘Etāstu mūrtayā jiśeyā daksinādhaḥ karitkramat | Vāsudevādvaraṇāsyuṣṣaśaṣṣa sa ṣa ṭe tadādāyaḥ’ || This reading is far more correct than that given in the edition of ‘Rūpamaṇḍana’ in the Calcutta Sanskrit Series, which reads : ‘Etāḥ sumurtayā jiśeyā daksinādhaḥ karitkramat | ( Vāsudevādvaraṇāḥ syuḥ sa ṭe tadādāyaḥ’ ?). Whenever I compared Rao’s extracts from this text with the same passages in its Calcutta Sanskrit Series edition, I found the former to be more trustworthy than the latter; it is clear that the Calcutta editor never cared to compare his copy of the manuscript with the portions of the text already published by Gopinath Rao. This will be clear if one refers to the line dealing with Trivikrama. In the Calcutta edition, it appears as ‘Trivikramasatriṣu gadācakra śaṅkhāṃ vibharti yaḥ’, which is certainly incorrect; in Rao’s extract it is correctly presented as—‘Trivikramaḥ bujagadācakrasaṅkhāṁvīl hariḥ yaḥ’. The editor in his edition of ‘Devātmūrtiprakaraṇa’, another text said to have been composed by Maṇḍana, could make no sense out of the cryptic mnemonic verses dealing with the same subject; he did not amend them in the light of other texts and his commentary on them is thus extremely inadequate and misleading (cf. ‘Devātmūrtiprakaraṇam’, Calcutta Sanskrit Series, No. XII, P. 75).
of the first verse dealing with Keśava and Nārāyaṇa images in the 'Agni-
purāṇa' ('Oṁ rūpaḥ Keśavaḥ padmāsaṅkhacakra-dādharah | Nārāyaṇaḥ
saṅkhapadmagadāckri pradakṣinam'), and correctly observed that
"this is the key for the understanding of the whole system, and means
that the various attributes are mentioned in the following order, (1) lower
right hand, (2) upper right hand, (3) upper left hand, and (4) lower left
hand, or as in the 'pradakṣina'" (ibid. pp. 24-5). A glance at Bidyabinod's
tables published in his memoir shows how the various texts differed
in their naming of some of these twenty-four forms.

It has already been pointed out by me that most of the standing and
seated images of Viṣṇu that are found in northern and eastern India
belong to the Trivikrama variety, for these show the lotus mark, mace,
wheel and conch-shell in the lower right, upper right, upper left and lower
left hands respectively. The specimens housed in many of the Museums
here, mostly fall under this group and Bidyabinod has rightly observed
that 'it is a surprising fact that the Indian Museum Collection in Calcutta
is found to possess not a single image of the technically correct Viṣṇu as
such' (acc. to 'Agnipurāṇa' as well as 'Rūpamaṇḍana' such an image would
hold a mace, a lotus, a conch-shell and a wheel in the hands according to
the order mentioned above), 'and to show a preponderance in favour of
the formula P G C S (Padma Gadā Cakra Śaṅkha'), which according to
the Purāṇas, is to be interpreted as Trivikrama, or Upendra, according to
Hemādri' (ibid., p. 33). The designation Trivikrama which is given to
such varieties, on the basis of the majority of the texts, seems, however,
to be the correct one. The preponderance of the Trivikrama form shows
indirectly the influence of the Vedic constituent of the composite
cult picture, the Āditya Viṣṇu one of whose common epithets in the
Vedic texts is Trivikrama. Bidyabinod, however, rightly identified a few
other images in the collection of the Indian Museum in the light of the
texts consulted by him as Janārdana (P C S G), Adhokṣaja (P G S C) and
Śrīdhara (P C G S); it will be interesting to note that the last mentioned
group of Śrīdhara can also be identified 'as Hṛṣīkeśa or Dāmodara
according to the varying authorities'. The Janārdana and Śrīdhara specimens
which are illustrated by him (ibid., plates VII and VIII) are also note-
worthy for other iconographic reasons. The first is almost fully in the
round, his hands and the top part of his head being attached to a flat band like 'prabhā' in the upper half of which are carved the ten incarnations; in its lower half are shown three female figures, two on the proper right (one of them being seated with her hands in the 'aṅjali' pose) and one on the proper left. The two standing figures with probably lotuses in their hands may stand for Śrī and Puṣṭi (after the 'Matsyapurāṇa' text) and the seated figure may represent the goddess Pṛthivī (or she may also stand for the female donor of the image); the sculpture can be dated on stylistic grounds in the 12th century A.D.

The other relief, named Śrīdhara, is much earlier (probably of the 10th century A.D.); it shows the earlier mode of the 'prabhā' (partially damaged), the torso only being in full relief, and the Āyudhapuruṣas, Cakra and Gadā, on whose heads the back right and left hands of the god are placed after the early fashion. A very elegantly carved relief in the collection of the same Museum (exhibit No. 9117), hailing from Radhanagar, Rajshahi, stands for one of the twenty-four forms of Viṣṇu; its back right and left hands carry a wheel and a mace respectively, there being indications that its front right and left hands, though broken, might have shown a lotus mark and a conch-shell. So it can be tentatively identified as Śrīdhara; it is accompanied by Śrī, Puṣṭi and two Āyudhapuruṣas (probably Śaṅkha and Cakra Puruṣas) on either side, and it has a curious assortment of eight miniature figures carved on the right and left sides of its 'prabhā'. The four miniatures on the four sides are all standing Viṣṇu figures as the 'vanamāla' and the attributes show, but belonging to the different varieties for the latter are differently placed; on the proper left, beginning from the top downwards are shown miniatures of a standing Gaṇeśa, another four-armed Viṣṇu figure, Narasimha and Varāha incarnations. This is a very novel mode of filling the side spaces of the 'prabhāvali' and I know of no other sculpture of Viṣṇu where similar miniatures are shown on the side; it can be dated on stylistic grounds in the latter part of the 11th century A.D. Of the seventeen whole Viṣṇu images in stone in the collection of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Museum, Calcutta, as catalogued by M. Ganguly in his 'Handbook', as many as thirteen and fourteen can be definitely identified as belonging to the Trivikrama variety; the only other certain sub-order of Viṣṇu in this list
is that of Śrīdhara, according to the ‘Agnipurāṇa’, ‘Rūpamāṇḍana’ and ‘Caturvargacintāmani’ passages, and Hṛṣīkeśa according to the ‘Padmapurāṇa’. Rao says that the twenty-four images of Viṣṇu are invariably standing ones; but seated images of this type are also not unknown. The four-armed bronze figure of Viṣṇu seated in ‘sukhāsana’ on a double-petalled lotus placed on a two-storied ‘pañcaratha’ pedestal with a separate ‘prabhā’ containing stylised flames and ‘kīrttimukha’, and now in the collection of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Museum, Calcutta, shows the Śrīdhara aspect of Viṣṇu according to the majority of the iconographic texts. The attributes, however, such as ‘cakra’, ‘gada’ and ‘śaṅkha’ are placed on full-blown lotuses held in the three hands of the lord by their stalks while a tiny lotus bud is placed on the fourth hand. This manner of placing the attributes reminds us of the Lokeśvara-Viṣṇu images discussed above; there seems to be a tiny figure of a seated deity on the crown of the image, not noticed by Ganguly, and this feature also places it in the same category with the other group of sculptures.¹

The extant images of some of the twenty-four or the four principal forms of Viṣṇu do not go back to an age anterior to the late Gupta or

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¹ ‘Handbook to the Sculptures in the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Museum’, pp. 188-30, pl. XXV., O (a)².

The extreme preponderance of the Trivikrama sub-order among the standing Viṣṇu figures in the north and east of India shows that they are really those of Viṣṇu par excellence, whose special Vedic characteristic, as we have shown in the last chapter, is that of having taken three strides (‘trivikrama’). The ‘Rūpamāṇḍana’ supplies us with the interesting information that Nārāyaṇa, Keśava, Mādhava and Madhusūdana varieties are auspicious if they are worshipped by the Brāhmaṇas; Madhusūdana and Viṣṇu are so to the Kṣatriyas, Trivikrama and Vāmanas, to the Vaishyas, and Śrīdhara is specially auspicious to the Śūdras; Hṛṣīkeśa is the god who confers benefit on the workers in hide or skins, washermen, actors, ‘varātas’ (?), ‘medabhillas’, and ‘kīrātas’; the worship of Padmanābha is beneficial to the potters, petty traders, women of the town, oilmen and all other people, and that of Dāmodara is so to the Yati (mendicant ascetic) and Brahmacārī (student anchorite); the worship of Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha (same as Dattārṣya), Nara-sīra, Vāmanas and Varāha is auspicious and beneficial to members of all castes (‘Rūpamāṇḍana’, Cal. Sans. Series, p. 13; the reading ‘Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha’ as suggested in Rao’s translation is more acceptable than ‘Hari-Hiranyagarbhasa’ as given by the editor of the text in the above series). It will be noticed that along with some of the twenty-four sub-orders of Viṣṇu images (only about 13 can be recognised), a few incarnatory and minor forms of Viṣṇu like Varāha and Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha are included in the above list.
the early medivial period; but epigraphic and literary references to some of them as incorporated in the Pāṇcarātra doctrine are much earlier. Two of the four principal forms of Viṣṇu, Saṃkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva, are mentioned in the Nāgārī epigraphs noticed in some detail in the first chapter; in the Nanaghat Cave inscription, Nāyanikā, the queen of the lord of Dakṣināpatha, invokes the same gods here named Rāma and Keśava, as well as Dharma and Indra. Patañjali notices these two forms under the names Rāma and Keśava when he states in his commentary on Pāṇini, II, 2, 34, that ‘certain musical instruments are sounded in a gathering in the temple of Dhanapati, Rāma and Keśava’. R. G. Bhandarkar observes, “If the passage in Patañjali under P. VI, 3, 6, ‘Janārdana with himself as the fourth’ (‘Janārdanastātmacaturtha eva’), i.e., with three companions, may be taken to allude to the three Vyūhas, then it must be understood that the four Vyūhas, Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, were known in Patañjali’s time’.¹ H. C. Raychaudhuri has noticed ‘the almost total absence of any reference to the Vyūhas Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha in the inscriptions of the Gupta Age’; he has further suggested that ‘the disappearance of the independent worship of the Vyūhas excepting Vāsudeva was one of the first fruits of the growing popularity of the Avatāras. The ousting of Vyūhas by the Avatāras was one of the characteristic signs of the transformation of Bhāgavatism into Viṣṇuism’.² But there never was any total disappearance, and as he has himself shown in a footnote to the above passage, ‘the adoration of Saṃkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva seems to survive in the worship of Bala, Kṛṣṇa and Subhadrā mentioned in a Bhuvaneśvara inscription (‘Ep. Ind.’, XIII, 153) while Varāhamihira refers to the images of Kṛṣṇa, Baladeva and Ekānamśā (who is none other than Subhadrā and mythologically a sister of Vāsudeva and Baladeva). Again, the independent worship of the Vyūhas might not have been much in

¹. R. G. Bhandarkar, ‘Vaishnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems’, p. 18. But he says that it is doubtful, and two Vyūhas were certainly known. It is interesting to note, however, that Janārdana mentioned in this passage is itself one of the names of the 24 forms.
vogue in the Gupta period and afterwards, but the earliest extant images of some of the Vyūhas date back from the late Gupta period onwards. The Mora well Inscription refers to the enshrinement of the images of five Vṛṣṇi Vīras in a stone temple during the time of the Mahākṣatrapa Sodasa; these Pañca VṛṣṇiVīras are the four principal Vyūhas with Samba added to the list. This is the earliest explicit reference to their images. Their sculptures belonging to the early and late mediaeval periods have been discovered in different parts of India and these represent not only the four primary forms but many of the other secondary ones.

The doctrine of the Vibhavas (Avatāras, i.e., the incarnatory forms of Viṣṇu), was no less a component part of the Pāñcarātra or the Bhāgavata creed than that of the Vyūhas. The difference which existed between the two lay in the fact that we have some evidence regarding the existence of the former in the later Vedic texts, whereas there is none about the existence of the latter. The term Avatāra is applied to the act of a divine being assuming the form of a man or an animal and continuing to live in that form upon the earth; thus, it is quite distinguishable from transmigration, identification (where one deity is identified with the other), or emanation (as is fully displayed in the Vyūha doctrine). It is also not quite the same as possession of one individual by the divinity, in which the latter takes up temporary abode in the former; but this idea of possession has to a certain extent manifested itself in the story of the Paraśurāma avatāra of Viṣṇu. In the Pāñcarātra theology, the Vibhavas i.e., manifestations or Avatāras (descents) belong to Pure Creation, and these incarnations have to a certain extent manifested itself in the story of the Lord Viṣṇu himself, but also of his Vyūhas, Sub-Vyūhas, his Pārṣadas (companions) or even of his attributes or emblems. H. Jacobi says, 'The tenet of incarnation is a fundamental one in mediaeval and modern Hindu religion and specially it is so with the Viṣṇuites' (E. R. E., Vol. 7. p. 193). The reference to the assumption of a particular form by Viṣṇu in battles, in 'Ṛgveda', VII. 100, 6, is taken by some scholars (R. P. Chanda, in his 'Indo-Aryan Races', pp. 110-11) as the earliest one to incarnation; the verse in question means: "Oh Viṣṇu is it worthy of you to establish (to make public) the name 'bald' by which I call you? Do not assume this form, since thou didst assume another form in battle" ('Kimitte
Viṣṇo paricaksyaṁ bhūtpṛā yadvavakṣe śīpiviṣṭo asmi | Mā varpo asmada-

tagüha etadyadanyarūpaṁ samite vabhūtha). But this is not quite to the

point; for there is no explicit reference in this passage to Viṣṇu’s having

incarnated himself in a particular form for some special purpose. The

earliest passage referring to the assumption of some forms by the divinity

for the attainment of certain ends are to be found in the ‘Śatapatha

Brāhmaṇa’ and the ‘Taittiriya Saṃhitā’ where Prajāpati is said to have

assumed Fish, Tortoise and Boar (Matsya, Kūrma and Varāha) forms on

different occasions; when the doctrine of incarnations in its association

with Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa was well-established, all these three

were bodily transferred to that composite god, and were regarded as

some of his celestial incarnations. This idea is first systematically

expounded specially with reference to the god’s human incarnations in

the first part of the fourth reading of the ‘Bhagavadgītā’. When Arjuna

doubts the statement of Kṛṣṇa about his expounding the theory and

practice of Yoga (really the doctrine of the Ekāntika dharma) to the

patriarchs of old, the latter replies, ‘Many births of me have passed, and

of thee, O Arjuna. I know them all; thou knowest them not, Paramātma.

Though unborn and immutable in essence, though Lord of beings, yet

governing Nature which is mine, I come into being by my power of

delusion. For whensoever right declines, O Bhārata, and wrong uprises,

then I create myself. To guard the good, and to destroy the wicked,

and to confirm the right, I come into being in this age and in that’.

The above passage in the ‘Bhagavadgītā’ about the incarnations of

Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, though explicit about the underlying idea, does not

specify their number and refers to it as indefinite and unlimited. Some

1. The above translation of the ‘Bhagavadgītā’, IV. 5-8, is by W. D. P. Hill; cf. his edition of

the work, Introduction, p. 25. It should be noted that these repeated incarnations are those of Kṛṣṇa and

not of Viṣṇu: it has been shown in the first chapter that the identification of the two had certainly well

begun when the work was composed, but as Hill says, ‘Kṛṣṇa himself at no point in the Gītā (not even in

the ‘avatāra’ passage, where we should most have expected it) makes any definite claim to Viṣṇu. His

avatāra is a descent of Brāhma’. But there can be no question of thus distinguishing between Vāsudeva

Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu in the post-Christian period and referring to different cults—one of Kṛṣṇa and the other

of Viṣṇu.
later texts, however, had been at pains to do so, and gradually the exact number came to be fixed at ten (Daśāvatāras). It will be useful to refer briefly to a few of these texts which supply us with different lists of these incarnatory forms; because if we study them together, we shall not only recognise all the stereotyped ten (this list also varies occasionally in the north and south of India) whose icons are commonly found, but also various others many of whose images, though not so common, are well-known to students of iconography. The Nārāyaṇīya section of the 'Mahābhārata' refers in one list (XII, 349, 37) to the Varāha, the Vāmana, the Narasimha and the Man incarnations; probably the last refers to his incarnations as Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, Daśarathī Rāma, and Bhārgava Rāma, for in the chapter 3.9 (verses 77-90) of the same Parvan, not only the stories about the first three in the above list are briefly narrated, but also those about his incarnations as Bhārgava Rāma, Daśarathī Rāma, and Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa are recounted. But in the verse 104 of the same chapter, a fuller list is given, which contains the names of Hamsa, Kūrma, Matsya, Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana. Rāma (Bhārgava), Rāma Daśarathī, Sātvata (i.e. Vāsudeva) and Kālki ('Hamsaḥ Kūrmaśca Matsyaśca prādurbhavad-dvijottama Varāho Narasimhaśca Vāmano Rāmeva ca Rāmo Daśarathiścaiva Sātvataḥ Kalkireva ca'). It should be noted that though the number is ten in this last list, Buddha does not find a place here and Kṛṣṇa occupies the position of his elder brother, Balarāma (Saṃkarṣaṇa, but Sātvata may as well refer to the latter who was also a Sātvata chief). The 'Harivaṃśa' gives the same names as are contained in the first list of the Nārāyaṇīya. In the 'Vāyupurāṇa' the names of several of the incarnations of Viṣṇu occur among those of the different struggles that took place between the Devas and Asuras; cf. ch. 97, verses 72 ff. In the Varāhakalpa, there occurred twelve fights between the gods and the demons, the names of which are, in order of precedence: 1) Narasimha, 2) Vāmana, 3) Varāha, 4) Amṛtamanthana, 5) Tārakāmaya, 6) Āḍīvaka, 7) Traipura, 8) Andhakāra, 9) Dhvaja, 10) Vārtra (Vārtra, from Vṛtra), 11) Halāhala, 12) Kolāhala (in some of these struggles Śiva and Indra were the principal actors, not Viṣṇu). In chapter 98 (verses 71 ff.) of the same Purāṇa, mention is made of ten incarnations of Viṣṇu of which the first three, Yajña, Narasimha and Vāmana are celestial
('Etāstisraḥ smṛtāstasya divyāḥ sambhūtayaḥ śubhāḥ'), but the fourth called Dattātreya, one unnamed called the fifth in the Tretāyuga. Jámadagnya Rāma, Dāśarathi Rāma, Vedavyāsa, Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa and the future incarnation Kalkin are human. In the last list also no mention is made of Buddha, and a few other constituents of the stereotyped list of ten. In the 'Bhāgavata Purāṇa', there are three enumerations of the 'avatāras'; in the first (Bk. I, ch. 3, verses 6-25), 22, in the second (Bk. II, ch. 7, verses 1ff.), 23, and in the third (Bk. XI, ch. 4, verses 3ff) 16 are mentioned. The first list contains the names of (1) Puruṣa, (2) Varāha, (3) Nārada, (4) Nara and Nārāyaṇa, (5) Kapila, (6) Dattātreya, (7) Yajña, (8) Rṣabha, (9) Pṛthu, (10) Matsya, (11) Kūrma, (12) Dhanvantari, (13) Mohini, (14) Narasimha, (15) Vāmana, (16) Bhārgava Rāma, (17) Vedavyāsa, (18) Dāśarathi Rāma, (19) Balarāma, (20) Kṛṣṇa, (21) Buddha and (22) Kalkin. It will be seen that in the above list all the ten appearing in the stereotyped one are included, but in the context, the Purāṇakāra tells us that his 'avatāras' are innumerable ('Avatārāhyasamkheya Hareḥ sattvani-dherdvijāh'). The difference of this list with the other two is immaterial, the last two omitting some included in the first, but none of them omits Rṣabha and Buddha. The 'Varāha' and 'Agni Purāṇas' contain the stereotyped list of ten incarnations, while the 'Matsyapurāṇa' (ch. 47, v. 106) lays down that Viṣṇu was born seven times among men because he was cursed by Bhṛgu for killing his wife, the mother of Śukra ('Yasmāt te jānato dharmma-mavadyah stī niṣūdita | Tasmāt tvaṃ saptakṛtvėha mānuṣeṣūpapatsyasi'). These seven, (1) Dattātreya, (2) Māndhātā, (3) Jámadagnya (Bhārgava Rāma), (4) Dāśarathi Rāma, (5) Vedavyāsa, (6) Buddha and (7) Kalkin when added to three incarnations, Nārāyaṇa, Narasimha and Vāmana, make up the full quota of ten—the constituents of which however widely differ from the generally accepted Daśava-tāras. Before the discussion about the number and nature of these incarnations is closed, a reference to the Ahirbudhnyā list of the Vībhavas will be necessary; this Pāñcaratāra Samhitā mentions as many thirty-nine a short analysis of which will supply us with some useful information. Schrader, thus, enumerates the following 39 principal Vībhavas on the basis of the said text:—
(1) Padmanābha, (2) Dhruva, (3) Ananta, (4) Śaktyātman, (5) Madhu-
sūdāna, (6) Vidyādhideva, (7) Kapila, (8) Viśvarūpa, (9) Vihaṅgama,
(10) Krodātman, (11) Baḍavāvaktra, (12) Dharma, (13) Viṅśvara,
(14) Ekāṃvāsaśayin, (15) Kamaṭheśvara, (16) Varāha, (17) Narasiṃha,
(18) Piṇḍaharaṇa, (19) Śripati, (20) Kāntatman, (21) Rāhuji, (22) Kālan-
Dattātreya, (27) Nyagrodhaśayin, (28) Ekaśṛṅgatanu, (29) Vāmanadeha,
(30) Tri-
Para-
surāma, (36) Rāma Dhanurdhara, (37) Vedavid, (38) Kalkin, (39)
Pāta-
śayana. Schrader remarks: 'This list has been reproduced almost exactly
from the ninth chapter of 'Śattvata Saṃhitā' (pp. 79-80); and to that
work we are, indeed referred to by our Saṃhitā (5.57 ff.) for a com-
prehensive description of the origin etc. of these Vibhavas' (op. cit., p. 43).
In this curious assortment, one can easily recognise not only the accepted
ten names, a few of the sub-Vyūhas, as well as other incarnatory forms
which have been enumerated in the fuller lists of the different Purāṇas,
mentioned above, but also other names such as Viṅśvara (13) and Loka-
nātha (24) can be found, which most probably belong to the Mahāyāna
Buddhist pantheon; Buddha himself is named as Śantatman (No. 25) in the
list.1 The stereotyped ten incarnations appear in the above two lists under
the following names:—I. Ekaśṛṅgatanu (No. 28-Matsya), II. Kamaṭheśvara
(No. 15-Kūrma), III. Varāha (No. 16), IV. Narasiṃha (No. 17), V.
Vāmanadeha—Trivikrama (Nos. 29-30), VI. Parāṣurāma (No. 32), VII.
Rāghava Rāma (No. 36), VIII. Ananta (No. 3)—Schrader observes,
'Ananta is not the serpent Śēṣa but Balarāma, the brother of Kṛṣṇa, who is

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1. Schrader thinks that the epithets 'Vairāja' and 'Śatya-vrata' applied to Lokanātha in the
'Ahīṃsā Sūtra Sūtra Sūtra' 56, 35-6, points to Manu Vaivasvata, while Viṅśvara and Śantatman are really Hayagriva
and either Sanatkumāra (Sanaka) or Nārada respectively: but Lokanātha and Viṅśvara are two
well-known varieties of Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsiṃhī-Bodhisattvas respectively, and Śantatman or its
synonymous epithets are applied to Buddha in many texts. The 'Viṣṇasarṣita' says that the Śākyas
only are the proper persons for the installation of the Buddha image ('Śākyān sarvahitasya Śantamanaśc' );
while describing the image of Buddha the same text refers to him as 'prasannamūrti' ('Padmānītakara-
caraṇañ ca prasannamūrtiḥ suñca (or ta), keśa śaśa ! Padmānānapuṣṭaḥ piteva jagato bhavati Buddhah'.
In the 'Agniśāpūra' (ch. 49, 8) the very epithet Śantatman is used to denote Buddha ('Śantatmā
laknavaraṇaśa gaurāṅgaśeśvaravṛtaḥ i Urddhabadmastaḥto Buddhho varaḥbhaya-adāya kaḥ'); the reference
in this passage to the long ears of Buddha is interesting.
sometimes regarded as an incarnation of Śeṣa rather than of Viṣṇu Himself'), IX. Śaṁtāman (No. 25, Buddha) and X. Kalkin (No. 38).'

Several images illustrating the above ten incarnations of Viṣṇu found in different parts of northern and eastern India will be discussed now, those corresponding to a few other incarnary forms mentioned in the bigger lists being reserved for the next chapter. Stone slabs with the figures of the above ten carved in a row, originally decorating some part of Vaiṣṇava shrines (generally part of the architrave of the main sanctum), are common. The Daśāvatāras are often represented also on the reverse sides of the small stone or metal plaques, denominated as Viṣṇupāṭṭas which are commonly found in different parts of Bengal. Varāha, Narasimha and Vāmana are the only three among these who are very frequently depicted as separate figures, though single sculptures of a few of the remaining ones are not unknown. None of the separate or group representations, however, go back to a period earlier than the Gupta, the few images of Balarāma datable in the Kushana age found in the Mathura region and now in the collection of the same Museum, perhaps depicting the Vyūha Samkarṣana whose other name was Balarāma. Some of the Gupta inscriptions either record the construction of independent shrines in honour of a few of the Avatāras or incidentally refer to the mythological stories underlying them. The Eran Inscription of the time of Toramanā carved on the chest of a colossal red sandstone statue of a Boar

1. Schrader observes that the list of 39 Avatāras occurring in one of the very oldest Saṁhitās ('Sātvata') is older than the smaller lists found in later Saṁhitās and older even than the Mahābhārata and Nārāyaṇiya lists, which appear to be mere selections. The 'Abhirudhnyā 3.' distinguishes between primary ('mukhya') and secondary ('gaṇa', 'āyeśa') Avatāras. The 'Visvaksena Saṁhitā' further explains this by saying that the primary avatāras are like flame springing from a flame i.e., Viṣṇu Himself with a prakṛti body while a secondary Avatāra is a soul in bondage with a prakṛti body which is possessed ('āviṣṭa') for some particular mission or function, by the ākṣet of Viṣṇu. It enumerates as 'gaṇa' avatāras: Brahma, Śiva, Buddha, Vyāsa, Arjuna, Parasurāma, the Vasu called Pāśaka, and Kubera, the god of riches. The text further says that all the Avatāras spring from Aniruddha either directly or indirectly, and they are not confined to human and animal forms only, but the vegetable kingdom is sometimes chosen (e.g., the crooked mango tree in the Daṇḍakāvana), and the images of the God and his various forms also are regarded as his Avatāras. The Aćā Avatāras are exhaustively treated in this Pāñcarātra text (pp. 123 and 143); Schrader, op. cit., pp. 47-9.
refers to Viṣṇu, having the form of a Boar—'who, in the act of lifting up the earth, caused the mountains to tremble with the blows of his hard snout'; the Damodarpur Copper Plates of the time of Budhagupta also mention this aspect of the incarnation of the god (Vāraṇasīswāmī). The Junagadh Rock Inscription of the time of Skandagupta alludes to the Dwarf incarnation when it says that Viṣṇu 'for the sake of the happiness of (Indra) the lord of the gods, seized back from Bali the goddess of wealth and splendour'. H. C. Ray Chaudhury has drawn our attention to the 'Raghuvaṁśa' passage (xiii, 1) where the Rāma Avatāra is mentioned ('Rāmābhīdhāno Hari') by Kalidāsa who probably belonged to the Gupta age (op. cit., p. 174); Varāhamihira, while beginning the description of the different images, states that the image of Dāsarathī Rāma should be 120 aṅgulas in measurement (ch. 57. 30). Lastly, one of the Udayagiri Caves, belonging to the early Gupta period bears a colossal relieve-representation of the Boar incarnation.

The transfer of myths from Prajāpati to Viṣṇu is illustrated in a very significant manner in the cases of the Fish, Tortoise and Boar incarnations. The 'Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa' (I. 8. 1. 1) while recounting the legend of the flood says that a fish saved Manu from drowning; this fish form which was assumed by Prajāpati according to some passages of the 'Mahābhārata' and the 'Manusāṁhitā' was subsequently ascribed in the Purāṇas to Viṣṇu. The 'Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa' again says that 'having assumed the form of a tortoise, Prajāpati created offspring' (VII, 4. 3. 5: 'Sa yat kūrmo nāma etad vai rūpaṁ kṛtvā Prajāpatiḥ prajāḥ asṛjata'); in the 'Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa' (III, 272), Prajāpati is stated to have become a tortoise—Akupāra Kāśyapa (the 'Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa' says that 'Kāṣyapa means tortoise which is the same as Āditya—Kāṣyapo vai Kūrmah...asau sa Āditya') and moved in the primaeval waters, when about to create offspring. The Purāṇas turn the tortoise into an incarnatory form of Viṣṇu assumed in order to recover various objects lost in the deluge or to serve as a support to the churning mountain Mandāra when the gods and demons were churning the ocean (cf. the 'Bhāgavata Purāṇa' passage, I, 3, 16, 'Surāsurāṇām udadhīṁ mathnataṁ mathanācālāṁ (mandārācālāṁ) Dadhre Kamaṭharūpeṇa pṛṣṭhe ekādaśe vibhuḥ'). In order to understand the transformation of the mythology concerning the Boar incarnation,
it will be necessary to refer to two Ṛgveda passages (I. 61, 7 and VIII. 77, 10), in the first of which Indra and Viṣṇu are said to have pierced the boar, according to Śāyana the clouds (‘Muṣayad Viṣṇuḥ pacatam sahiyāṇvidhyadvarāham tiro adrimastā’), and in the second, we find Viṣṇu sent by Indra carrying off a hundred buffaloes and rice cooked with milk which belonged to the boar Emuṣa (‘Viśvettā Viṣṇurābharaṇukramastveṣitaḥ Śataṁ mahiśān kṣīrapākamodanam varāhamimdra emuṣam’); it is, however, probably another version of the slaying of Vṛtra and the mountain, the cloud mountain. In the ‘Taittirīya Saṁhitā’ (VI. 2, 4, 2, 3), the boar keeps the wealth of the Asuras hidden on the far side of the seven hills; Indra picks up a bunch of Kuśa grass and pierces the hills and slays the boar; Viṣṇu, the sacrifice, then carries off the boar as a sacrifice for the gods. But the earlier mythology is transformed in the ‘Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa’ ( XIV. 1, 2, 11) in its application of the ‘Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā’ (37, 5), which says that the boar Emuṣa raised the earth whose lord was Prajāpati (‘tāṁ Emuṣaḥ iti Varāhaḥ ujjaghāna so’syāḥ patiḥ Prajāpatiḥ’), and the ‘Taittirīya Saṁhitā’ (VII. 1, 5, 1) further identifies the cosmogonic boar with a form of Prajapati himself; in the ‘Taittirīya Āraṇyaka’, the earth is said to have been raised by a black boar with a hundred arms (‘varāhenā kṛṣṇena śatabhūna uddhṛtā’). It is an easily understandable step to the making of the boar an incarnation of Viṣṇu himself, a step which is finally taken in the epics and the Purāṇas.

The fish and tortoise incarnations are represented in two ways, either in purely theriomorphic manner or as hybrid forms in which the upper half is human and the lower half animal; these two again are seldom depicted singly. A relief depicting the Matsya avatār, originally from Vajrayogini, Dacca, and now in the collection of the local Museum is extremely interesting. Matsya appears as a four-armed hybrid figure, its upper part being human and the lower fish-like; it carries in its hands the usual attributes of Viṣṇu and is a very beautiful specimen of the art of the late mediaeval period. Among the reliefs found inside a small temple at Pathari, Central Provinces, Beglar recognised all the ten Avatāras of Viṣṇu except the Matsya; the Kurma Avatāra, as represented here, characteristically illustrates the story of the churning of the ocean. A pole is placed on the back of a tortoise with a rope wound
round it, the ends of which are held on opposite sides by human figures representing the gods and demons; Beglar says that the pole here stands for the Mandar hill and the rope, for Vāsuki. The sculpture belongs to the early mediaeval period. The Boar incarnation is represented in several different ways, the principal types being, as in the case of the two previous ones, theriomorphic and hybrid. Both these modes were being used simultaneously by the Indian iconographers as the extant specimens show. One of the earliest sculptural representations of this motif is the relief in the open cutting No. 4 at Udayagiri, 5 miles from Sanchi, already referred to above; the colossal figure of Viṣṇu as the Varāha Avatāra is represented as a man with a boar's head. 'With his left foot he treads on the coils of the Nāga king, who has a canopy of thirteen snakes' heads, seven in front and six in the intervals behind. His right hand rests on his hip and his left on his knee. With his right tusk he raises Pṛthvī, a female figure personifying the earth, from the depths of the ocean, which is represented by long undulating lines on the background of the rock. Behind the Nāga King there is a male figure kneeling, who may perhaps be the ocean king himself. To the left of the boar's head there are some of the heavenly musicians, and to the right and left are four lines of figures filling the whole background of the composition. Amongst these, I recognised Brahmā with his beard, Śiva riding his bull Nandi and numerous other gods with haloes round their heads. Another line is occupied apparently by Asuras, or demons, and a third line by bearded Ṛṣis'.

It is worth noting that the god seems to be represented with two hands and no attributes are to be found on them; ornaments on the body of the god are very few, of which thick 'valayas' (bracelets) and a long, heavy 'vanamāla' are prominent. The contrast between the massive, forceful figure of the deliverer and that of the slender, creeper like goddess, the delivered one, clinging to the right tusk and the upper part of the left arm of the god, is great. A comparison between the above relief and the two in Badami, about a century and a half later than the

2. A. S. R., X, p. 48, Pl. XVIII.
above, will show the difference in treatment of the same motif. The south Indian artists of the early Calukya period introduced more finesse in the delineation of the theme but the success which was attained by them in this respect was counter-acted by the loss of energetic vigour which is so supremely manifest in the earlier sculpture¹. The composition found at Mahabalipuram, about a century later than the Badami reliefs, illustrates the same theme in a very touching manner. The god lovingly holds up the goddess with his front two hands, who is seated on his right knee, the right leg of the god resting on the hoods of the Ādiśeṣa shown issuing out of water with his hands in the ‘aṅjali’ pose; just in front of Ādiśeṣa is a female figure who has rightly been identified by Rao as the earth goddess just rescued from the waters, before she is caressed by her lord; the other accessories are the half-expressed figures of Sūrya and Candra hovering in the sky with their hands in the ‘aṅjali’ pose, Brahmā and Śiva (?) on either side of the god and another with matted locks in his head and a gourd and ‘viṇā’ in his hands which has been identified by Rao as the Rṣi Nārada. There is no doubt about the excellence of the execution of this relief and inspite of the slenderness of its limbs the main figure shows latent strength and vigour². If we now turn our attention to some of the best carvings of the same incarnation belonging to eastern India, which are preserved in the Museum of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad in Calcutta and that of the Varendra Research Society at Rajshahi, we find certain remarkable differences in the representation of this subject. The Jhilli and Chandpara (Murshidabad) images in the former and the Silimpur one in the latter are among the best sculptures in Bengal.

¹ For the two Badami reliefs refer to R. D. Banerjee’s ‘Bas-reliefs of Badami’ (‘M. A. S. I’, No. 25), pp. 16-17, 36, and plate IX (b) and XVII (b). Rao describes the second of these reliefs, thus, “In it great prominence is naturally given to principal figure of Varāha. The attendant deities Brahmā and Śiva are shown with their consorts on the proper right and left of the central Varāha; and certain devas are shown salling in the air. Both Brahmā and Śiva have one of their hands held up in the pose of praise. At the foot of Varāha is Ādiśeṣa’s wife (or is it Pṛthivī before she was raised); on the proper left is standing erect Ādiśeṣa himself, and on the proper right is an attendant woman holding the ‘chaurī’ (op. cit., Vol. I, p. 150).

These early and late mediaeval icons generally depict one mode of representing this incarnatory form; the boar head of the hybrid figure is sometimes shown like a conch-shell placed sideways on the neck of the deity. The Silimpur (Bogra) Varāha, datable in the 10th century A. D., shows this peculiar form of the head; the hilly region is conventionally represented; the earth goddess is placed on the left shoulder of the god, which is unusual. In the north and east Indian reliefs illustrating this theme the goddess is generally placed on the left elbow of the deity one of whose feet rests on the hands of the Ādiśeṣa, which partially corresponds to the 'Agnipurāṇa' description of the Avatāra which is given here: 'Caturbāhur-Varāhastu Śeṣapāṇitale dhṛtaḥ Dhārayan bāhunā Pṛthvīṁ vāmena Kamalādharaḥ' (ch. 49, 18); but in verses 2-3 of the same chapter it is said: 'Naraṅgo vātha kartavayo Bhūvarāho gadādibhṛt | Dakṣiṇe vāmake śaṅkham Lakṣmīrvā padmameva vā || Śrīvāmakūrparamastā tu Kṣmānanta caraṇānugau'. So, according to the 'Agnipurāṇa', the goddess seated on the left elbow is to be identified as Śrī, and the earth goddess and Ananta are near the feet of the god; but the 'Matsyapurāṇa' says that 'Mahāvarāha with a 'gadā' and a lotus in his hands, after rescuing the earth with his sharp tusk, had placed her on his left elbow; his one foot should be placed on a tortoise and the other on the head of the Nāga King' (ch. 260, vv. 28-30: 'Mahāvarāhaṁ vakṣyāmi padmahastam gadādhamam | Tikṣṇadamśtragrāghonāsyam Medinivāmakūrparam || Damśtāgreṇodddhṛtaṁ dāntaṁ Dharaṁinmutpalanavitam ||...........Kūrmopari tathā padamekaṁ Nāgendramūrdhdhāni').

The Indian Museum specimen reproduced by Rao in plate XXXIX, fig. 3 of his book (vol. 1) shows the theme corresponding to the above two descriptions. The 'Viśṇudharmottara' description of Nṛvarāha reliefs fits in with several types of this hybrid form—one in which he is more or less similar to the above, (cf. the express mention that the goddess should be shown on his left elbow—'savvyeratnigatā tasya yośidṛpā vasundharā'), another in which he is shown as about to decapitate Hiraṇyākṣa (who is 'anaisvarya' incarnate, the Varāha form being 'aisvarya' incarnate) with his 'cakra' the demon standing with a raised 'śūla' in front of him; or he should be shown seated like Kapila in the 'dhyāna' pose or his hands may be
so placed as if offering ‘piṇḍas’ (Book III, ch. 79, verses 7-9: ‘Hiranyaksha-
siracchedasakrodyatakaro’thavā| Śūlodyata Hiranyakṣasammukho bhaga-
vānabhavel Mūrtimantamanaiśvaryam Hiranyakṣam vidurbudhāḥ |
Aīśvaryaṇa Varāheṇa sa nirasto’rimardanaḥ Nṛvarāho’thavā kāryo dhyāne
Kapilavatshtitaḥ Dvibhujastvathavā kāryaḥ piṇḍanirvahanodyataḥ’).
The Phalodi (Jodhpur, Marwar) Varāha is a remarkable piece of sculpture;
the body of the god is well-proportioned, the ornaments are tastefully
arranged, and certain additional features as two fully spread lotus leaves,
one serving as the umbrella over the boar head like a conchshell placed
sideways over the neck and the other on which the left foot of the
deity rests and which shelters the Nāgas beneath it and the slight tilt
upwards of its right leg—all these endow the whole composition with
grace.

The Rajshahi Museum image of Varāha (No. 799) shows just below
the leg of the central figure the demon Hiranyakṣa who is being
chased by the god in his theriomorphic form. A description
of several images of the Varāha Avatāra, as given above, fully proves
the fact that the individual artists of the different localities, who were
responsible for them, though following in the main the principal
injunctions about the depiction of the motif as laid down in local texts,
introduced many novel features which gave an ever fresh animation
to the sculptures.

The fully theriomorphic representation of this incarnatory form
was also adhered to especially in the Gupta period. I have already
referred to the inscribed stone boar that was found at Eran; it has been
described by Fleet as follows: ‘The Boar is covered all over with elaborate
sculptures, chiefly of Rishis or saints clinging to its mane and bristles.
It has the earth represented as a woman hanging on, in accordance with
the legend, to its right-hand tusk; and over its shoulders there is a
small four-sided shrine, with a sitting figure in each face of it’.
The sculpture is of great iconographic interest on account of two important

1. T. A. G. Rao, Plate XXXIX, figs. (8) and (9).
2. J. F. Fleet. C. I. I., p. 169. Fleet noticed a similar boar, almost entirely buried, by the roadside
about halfway between Sanchi and Udayagiri; op. cit. pp. 169, f. n. 1.
features, the various miniature figures on its body illustrating that section of the story about this incarnation which refers to the gods, sages and various other beings taking shelter on the body of the Boar when it was about to rescue the earth from the nether regions (the Udayagiri sculptor carved the same miniature figures on the background, for the human body of the latter would ill afford to contain all these miniatures), and secondly the small four-sided shrine on the shoulders of the boar, the four sitting figures on the four sides of which probably represent the four principal forms of Viṣṇu. Reference may be made in this connection to the fine image of the boar incarnation, which R. D. Banerjee saw lying in the compound of the temple of Viṣṇu-Varāha at Bilhari, Central Provinces. This figure has unfortunately lost its legs; its body is entirely covered with figures of gods. ‘On the body we find a row of Gaṇeṣas in the second row from the top; the third row contains the figures of the twelve Ādityas; in the fourth we have perhaps the eleven Rudras, and so on;’ the sculpture can be dated on stylistic grounds in the 11th century A. D. 1 Another figure of a full boar was discovered by Cunningham at Khoh in the Nagode State, whose body is, however, plain; it is of an earlier date. He describes this large statue of the Varāha, 5½' in length and 3' 9” high, in this way: ‘Prone between the boar's legs there is a Nāga, with human head and body and serpent's tail. He is canopied by five snakes' hoods, and holds out two vessels in his hands below the boar's snout’ (A. S. R. Vol. IX, P. 6). The texts while describing the images of Varāha generally refer to the hybrid form already discussed at length; but they sometimes expressly lay down that sometimes the god should be shown ‘wholly as a boar with a thick snout, broad shoulder-blades, long tusks and a big body covered with up-turned bristles’ (‘Athavā sūkarākāram mahākāyaṃ kvacillikhet | Tīkṣṇadamṣṭrāgrhaḥoṇāsyaskandhakaranordhvaromakam’, Rao, op. cit, I, App. c., 30). The former hybrid type, differently described as Ādivarāha, Bhūvarāha and Mahāvarāha in different texts has been correctly named as Nṛvarāha in the ‘Viṣṇudharmottara’ (Bk. III, Ch. 79); this closely corresponds

to the other hybrid image known as Nṛsiṁha or Narasimha to be
discussed next. The fully animal form is simply mentioned there as
Varāha (‘Samagrakrodaru-po và bahudānavamadhyagah | Nṛvarāho Varāhō
và kartavyah Kṣmāvidāraṇe’). Two other types of Varāha, Yajña
Varāha, in which the god is to be depicted seated in ‘lalitāsana’ on a lion
seat, accompanied by his two consorts Lakṣmī and Bhū, and Pralaya Varāha
seated in the same pose but accompanied by one of his consorts,
Bhūdevi, are mentioned by T. A. G. Rao on the basis of the ‘Vaikhānasā-
gama’ text (op. cit. vol. I. pp. 135-36); but no images corresponding
to the two are known to me, nor could Rao illustrate these
descriptions.

The Narasimha images, though not as numerous as those of Varāha
are fairly common in different parts of northern and eastern
India. The image of Narasimha, unlike the other incarnatory form,
is neither mentioned in the inscriptions of the Gupta period, nor is it
found carved in any of the extant early Gupta shrines. The Alina
copperplate inscription of the year 447 (766-67 A. D.) of the Valabhi
king Śilāditya VII, Dhruvabhaṭa incidentally refers to the Man-lion
incarnation of Viṣṇu when it refers to Śilāditya VI as having exceeded
in energy even the god Viṣṇu who assumed the form of the man-lion.
But this paucity of early epigraphic references does not mean that this
incarnatory form of Viṣṇu was not known in the Gupta period or perhaps
earlier. In the tenth book of the ‘Taittiriya Āraṇyaka’, which is,
however, a supplement (khila) to the original text, is given the Gāyatri
mantra of this deity along with those of various other gods who
were members of the later Brahmanic pantheon; many of the
iconographic texts, some of which will be shortly noticed in explaining
a few of the extant types, are of comparatively early date. The
representation of the deity in one of the Gupta terracotta seals
was shown by me in chapter IV of my book on the ‘Development of
Hindu Iconography’ (p. 207). The sculpture of a standing Narasimha
in Cave No. IV at Badami is probably one of the earliest plastic
forms of this Avatāra. The four-armed lion-faced god is shown standing
with his back hands carrying the Cakra and Śāṅkha in their personified
forms shown hovering in the air, with his front left hand placed on a
'gadā' by the side of which appears the personified Gadādevī; to the proper right of the god appears a dwarf-like figure which has been identified by Rao as Padmapuruṣa; the object held in his front left hand is not quite distinct; on the top section of the relief are hovering Vidyādhara couples. If the identification of the accessories is correct, the two other most important persons in the drama of the Narasimha Avatāra, Prahlāda and his father Hiraṇyakaśipu, are nowhere to be found. The substance of story associated with the particular incarnatory form is that Prahlāda who was a devout Viṣṇubhakta could not be tolerated by his father Hiraṇyakaśipu, the brother of Hiraṇyākṣa (killed by Viṣṇu in his boar incarnation); the demon king tried various means to kill his renegade son, but was unsuccessful. In the end when he asked the latter to point out to him the place where the object of his son's devotion lay, Prahlāda pointed out to him a pillar from which when broken open by his irate father issued Viṣṇu as part man and part lion. The story is that Hiraṇyakaśipu previously obtained a boon from Brahmā by practising severe austerities, that no man or beast would be able to kill him, and Viṣṇu out of respect to Brahmā's behest had to assume this peculiar composite form which was neither human nor animal. Then the god felled the demon on his knees and tore open his entrails with his claws and thus killed him outright. It will be seen after a comparison with the two earliest and many later representations of this incarnatory form, that the latter almost invariably portray the essential details of this mythology, while the former, especially the one on the Gupta terracotta seal does not do so. The Bhāta seal impression shows the lion-faced god seated in the 'lalitāsana' posture on a lotus seat; it can be described as Kevala Narasimha on the basis of later iconographic texts, though the sitting posture of the figure is differently given in the latter. T. A. G. Rao refers to several varieties of Narasimha images such as Sthāuna, Girija, Kevala, Yānaka, according to the authority of the 'Vaikhānasāgama', and illustrates the first and third varieties in his book; he also illustrates several extant varieties of Narasimha images which do not belong to any one of these groups and whose descriptions are not found in any of the known Sanskrit texts. Reference is also made by him to one form in
which Narasimha, in a somewhat placid aspect is shown accompanied by his consort Laks̐̄̃mi which he names as Laks̐̄̃mi Narasimha (op. cit. Vol. I., pp. 149-61 and plates). The Badami relief just referred to has been placed by him under the Kevala Narasimha variety; but if we compare the description quoted by him from the text which says that such a type of the god should be shown as seated in 'utkuṭikāsana' on a lotus pedestal with his back hands holding 'śaṅkha' and 'cakra' and his front hands stretched over his raised knees, we see that the sculpture and the textual description do not tally with each other. The stone sculpture of the Hoysala school hailing from Halebidu and reproduced by him in plate XLII of his book (Vol. I) is in thorough agreement with the above text. The beautiful stone relief from the Daśavatara cave, Ellora as well as the one of much inferior workmanship and of later date from Dadikkombu near Dindigul in South India, show the actual combat between the god and the demon (op. cit., Vol.I., pp. 156-9, Pls. XLIV and XLV). E. B. Havell remarks about the former: 'The sculptor has chosen the moment when the terrific apparition of the man-lion rushes forth to seize Hirañya, who, taken unawares and with the mocking taunt still on his lips, makes a desperate effort to defend himself'; Havell emphasises also the technical strength and imaginative power manifest in the treatment of the subject ('Indian Sculpture and Painting', 2nd Edition, pp. 53-4, Pl. XXIII). With regard to the sameness in the depiction of the motif in the two reliefs, Rao observes that this close similarity indicates 'the existence of an authoritative description in some work bearing upon the formation of images and forming the basis of these productions of interest and value'. About the former relief Rao very rightly says: 'The master touch of the work of the artist may be seen in the way in which the interlocking of the leg of Narasimha with that of Hirañyakaśipu is carried out'. The 'Matsya Purāṇa' passage (ch. 260, v. 34-5) describes one type of Narasimha, which seems to correspond with the above two reliefs: the god and demon should be shown fighting with their legs interlocked; the former should appear as being repeatedly attacked by the tired demon who should be shown as holding a sword and a shield;—'Yudhyamaṇaśca karttavyah kvacit ka-(should be 'ca') raṇabandhanaiḥ | Pariśrāntena daityena tarjyamāno...
muhurmuhuḥ = Daityaṃ pradarṣayet tatra khaḍgakheṭakadhārīṇam").

If we compare these south-Indian sculptures with some from north and east-India illustrating the same theme, we find certain iconographic features in the latter which are not present in the former. In these the demon is usually placed on the thighs of the god who is generally shown in the half-standing and half-seated attitude, with his right knee raised and the right leg sometimes placed on the hoods of Ādiśeṣa; Prahlāda is very often absent from such sculptures; the front hands are shown engaged in tearing up the entrails of Hiranyakaṣipu, while the back hands carry two of the attributes of the god. The Gharwa sculpture, described by Cunningham in his Archaeological Survey Reports, Vol. IX. p. 6, very closely corresponds to the above description. The Paikore (Birbhum, Bengal) figure of Narasimha shows the head of the demon placed on his left thigh, while the rest of its body seems to hang on the claws of the deity. Many more similar images from eastern India follow to a very great extent this mode of representation; but there are certain reliefs in the Dacca Museum collection, which show the main figure as six-armed, its front pair of hands thrust into the entrails of the demon, the middle pair taking hold of its head and legs and the back pair shown in two poses, 'abhaya' and 'tarijani'. But the Paikore and some Rampal images (the former in Rajshahi and the latter in the Dacca Museum) show an additional element which is not present in the majority of these reliefs; the artist illustrates the various sections of the mythology underlying this incarnatory form by a repetition of the figures of some of the principal actors in the drama on the backslab. The 10th century A.D. Narasimha relief found by R. D. Banerjee at a place called Manora in Maihar state, Central India, presents the theme differently.

The god is standing, with his left leg on the head of a demon who is lying prostrate on the ground. His right leg is pressed forward; he has four hands; the upper left hand is broken and the object held in the lower is indistinct. The upper right hand holds a wheel while the lower is engaged in tearing the entrails out of the demon king Hiranyakaṣipu who is represented as falling down on the right. Hiranyakaṣipu has two hands and holds a sword in his right
hand and a shield in his left. The face of the god is that of a 'realistic' lion and his head is covered with a long, shaggy mane, out of which two ears project over his forehead. This type of the image of Narasiṃha is unique, as no other specimen is known to exist. Usually, in images of the man-lion, the god is seated and the figure of Hiranyakaśipu is lying prostrate on his knees.¹

It will be of use now to refer to a few iconographic texts, with which some of the usual Narasiṃha sculptures correspond. The 'Agnipuraṇa' says that Narasiṃha should be shown with open mouth, the wounded demon should be placed on his left thigh, the deity with a garland on his neck and a wheel and a mace in his hands should be depicted piercing the breast of the demon (ch. 49, v. 4:—'Narasiṃho vivṛttasyo vāmorukṣatādaṇavaḥ Tadvakaśo dārayan mālī sphuraccakragadādharah'). The 'Hayasirṣa Pañcarātra' gives a summary description of a four-armed Man-Lion; it simply says that the four-armed god is holding 'ṣaṅkha', 'cakra' and 'gadā' or only 'ṣaṅkha' and 'cakra', and should by shown as tearing up the great demon ('Narasiṃhascaturbāhuḥṣaṅkha-cakragadādharah Śaṅkhacakradharovāpi vidārita mahāsurah'). But in another passage, the same text speaks about this incarnary form in fuller details: The vast face of Nṛsiṃhadeva should be a little bent; his eyes should be round, the auspicious shoulders, one 'tāla' in measurement; the eyebrows should be a little contracted, the mouth with fierce tusks should be open; the tongue should be lolling and matted locks should be shown on the head; ... the great demon being torn by him should be placed on his knees; he should wear a 'vaijayanti' and be accompanied by Śrī; one should show Nṛsiṃha as holding a sword and a wheel; such an image should be installed for the destruction of sin and the attainment of victory (both these passages from the 'Hayasirṣa' are quoted by Gopala Bhatta in the 18th Vilāsa of his work). The 'Matsya Purāṇa' (ch. 260, verses 31-35) elaborately describes an eight-armed image of Narasiṃha, which is unusual; I have already referred

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to some six-armed representations of this image type, but no eight-armed form is so far known to me.

These Matsya Purāṇa verses explain the Ellora and Dindigul reliefs. Texts corresponding to them could not be found by Gopinath Rao. The 'Viṣṇudharmottara' account of Narasimha finally explains the real nature underlying this particular conception of the deity. It lays down 'He who is Lord Viṣṇu having the form of a man-lion and who is the increaser of the highest knowledge has been thus described by persons well-up in meditation; his shoulders, neck and waist are fleshy, the middle part of his body as well as his belly is lean, he has a lion face and a man's body, he wears blue garments and is lustrous, he is decorated with all ornaments and is in 'ālīṅha' pose; flames issue from his face and mane, he is shown tearing up the breast of Hiranyakāšipu with his sharp claws; the demon of the colour of blue lotus, who as the sage know him is ignorance personified, is placed on the knee of the god.' Then the text says that the Lord Nṛsimha is really Śaṅkaraśāna in his inner self and is the destroyer of 'ajñāna'; the god Śaṅkaraśāna (who, as we have shown is one of the principal Vyūhas) destroys three kinds of taint arising out of speech, mind and body in this world; Hari assumes the body of man-lion out of the Śaṅkaraśāna part latent in him and is the destroyer of the above three kinds of taint' (personified by the demon).

(To be continued)

1. Viṣṇudharmottara*, Bk. III, ch. 78, vv. 1-7. The last three couplets are:—'Hiranyakāśipūrdayaṃ gopamānās ityādūbhāh | Śaṅkaraśānas bhagavānajñānaḥ a vināśanaḥ || Vāmanaḥkāśa- 

sambhūtaḥ trividhaṃ jagatān malanā || Eka Śaṅkaraśaṇo devaḥ sada pāja-yati dvija || Hari Śaṅkaraśaṇamā Narāsiṃhavapurdharalā || Tamasastṛtrivideṣyāpi nāsano jagatān Hariḥ.

Then in the next few verses two other types of this incarnatory form are mentioned; in one the god is depicted seated at ease on a 'ālīṅha' holding his usual attributes and his feet resting on the earth personified; in the other his four hands are adorned by his four emblems, flames are issuing out of his body which is either endowed with all ornaments or devoid of them. These two types are purely cult-deities—in which the mythological element has been largely eliminated.
AN ILLUSTRATED RĀMĀYĀNA MANUSCRIPT OF TULŚĪDĀS AND PĀṬS FROM BENGAL

by D. P. GHOSH

In 1942, during the course of my tour in the Murshidabad district in Bengal, I came across an illuminated ‘Rāmacarita Mānasā’ or Hindi Rāmāyāna by Tulsīdās. To my knowledge this is the only fully illustrated Rāmāyāna manuscript found in Bengal. Containing 152 multicoloured illustrations the manuscript of 342 pages is complete in 8 Kāṇḍas except the last few pages. Written on paper by Dwija Ichchharam Misra for the study of Rani Janaki Devi of Mahisadal Raj Estate, Dr. Midnapore, we learn from the colophons at the end of each of the cantos that the work took three years to be completed from Saka 1694 to 1697 (1772-75 A. D.). Although written in Hindi by the Prayag Brahman, apparently the Kula Purohita, for the edification of his princely patron, the illustrations are undoubtedly the work of local Midnapur artists. Some of the last pages subsequently replaced, in a decadent handwriting, are without pictures. The style of the paintings shows a marked variety in the earlier and later groups denoting the employment of more than one artist. The script on each page (size 9¼“ x 12¼“) fills varied geometric patterns within the coloured borders as in Mughal manuscripts.

Seven illustrations are reproduced here. Pl. V. representing the frontispiece, envisages the opening passage of the Ādikāṇḍa when the sage Nārada on his usual round of paying homage to Viṣṇu visits Vaikuṇṭha-

1. I was successful in persuading Sri Ramdas Aulia, Mohant of the famous Valṣṇavite establishment (Ākhaṭī) of Sādhakāṅḍa, the owner of the manuscript, to present it to the Asutoah Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University. I am grateful to the Mohant for the generous gift of this remarkable record.
puri and is surprised to find there instead of Viṣṇu, Rāma enthroned and attended by his three brothers, Sītā and Hanumān. Apparently perplexed he seeks the help of Śiva who explains that this peculiar manifestation of Viṣṇu foreshadows his impending birth on earth as Rāma Avatār to free the world from the depredations of Rāvaṇa.

In this scene Rāma is seated in the Vīrāsana on a throne in the form of a Piṭha with Sītā behind, an attendant in front presumably Lakṣmana holding the royal fan and Hanumān seated in adoration at his feet. Bharata and Śatrughna are missing. The setting denotes a royal pavilion with three towers and flags proudly fluttering in the wind across and beyond the frame in a vigorous way. The composition recalls a similar contemporary Orissan palm-leaf painting.1 Very few colours, indigo, dull green, yellow ochre, and light red produce a sober tone. Indication of the drapery by double and triple lines is a noteworthy feature.

The familiar legend of Bhāgiratha is illustrated on Pl. VIa. Bhāgiratha was successful in spite of heartbreaking obstacles in persuading the goddess Gaṅgā to descend to earth from heaven to resurrect by a touch of her sacred waters sixty thousand of his predecessors turned into ashes through a curse. He is seen here proudly leading the way in the chariot of Brahmā, blowing the conch-shell (here represented as a horned bugle) and ringing the bell with Gaṅgā docilely following the chariot wheels. This panel is set in the middle of the respective page. A forceful compositional sweep describes the descent and forward movement of the procession. In the chariot portion, pink and light red predominate, interspersed with indigo, dull green and yellow ochre. The river waters at the back are depicted by waves in a gradation of shades of indigo merging into pink and white with a thin ribbon of light red connecting the two portions of the picture.

An interesting episode in the third day’s battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa is shown in Pl. VIIb. The chariot specially sent by Indra for the occasion and supporting the divine brothers Rāma and Lakṣmana rushes furiously at Rāvaṇa’s which is without horses but is adorned with a

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1 J. I. S. O. A., vol. IX, 1941, Pl. XVII.
Makāra-head. Rāma makes desperate efforts to kill Rāvana apparently an invincible and aiming a javelin against him. He cuts all his heads and hands hundred times, but each time the decapitated limbs go up and rejoin the trunk of Rāvana through the boon granted by Brahmā making him immortal. The towering figure of the demon king hurling defiance at the futile attempts of his diminutive adversaries, the chariots, the string of magic heads encircling Rāvana like an enormous halo, decapitated hands surging upwards, violent gestures of the contending parties, all go to make the picture a piece of mighty movement.

The happy reunion between Bharata and Rāma on the way to Ayodhyā is the theme of Plate VII. Rāma tenderly stoops down to lift up the sorrowing Bharata, who at the sudden return of his exiled brother, has fallen at his feet. Sitā and Lākaśmanā, standing behind followed by Hanumān, raise their arms in greeting. A rambling, flowering plant emphasises the diagonal composition of the figures.

A continuation and elaboration of the reunion scene, after the return of the exiled party, is shown on Pl. VIII. It is a full page illustration divided into three horizontal panels filled with standing figures. The figure of Rāma, repeatedly shown, and yet clad in his exile dress, alternates with the adoring figures of his brothers and other dear and near ones whom he joyously greets. Vivacious couples are pitted against each other, princely figures in flowing spotted robes, yellow or dark indigo, bare bodied yellow figures clad in dark indigo clothes are contrasted with the green body of Rāma.

The humiliation of invincible Rāvana—flushed with vanity at the boon of immortality conferred upon him by Brahmā—at the hands of Bali, the king of monkeys, is depicted with great vigour in Pl. IXa. Bali grapples with the demon king, fastened in his tail, and ducks him heartily in the four oceans, the waves of which are probably indicated by the conventional patterns fringing the panel. Sharp jagged and diagonal lines denote the powerless form of Rāvana and the striding figure of Bali. A shallow sweeping arch above unites the rugged movements of the component parts of the picture.

A miraculous incident in the life of Rāma as a child with reference to the hoary crow Bhūṣandī, is illustrated on Pl. IXb. The grada-
tion of colours as in the case of the water, Pl. VIa, holds good also for the sky.

The paintings of the manuscript by the Midnapur artists are fore-runners of the indigenous Paṭ style of Bengal. Although betraying strong Orissan influence and reminiscent of Mughal and ancient Indian conventions, all the elements of folk art are present, story telling, vivid colours, determined brush strokes and broad summary execution. The bold Devanāgari characters of the text play their part in the general scheme of the pages. The figures are outlined against a white background; they form part of groups. Broad, undulating curves of the Sari drawn around the heads of women outlining their projecting chignons, recall the convention found in the Amaru Śataka manuscript from Mayurbhanj, an Orissan State close to the borders of Midnapur. Elliptical eyes extended to the ear, correspond to contemporary renderings on palm-leaf and paper in Orissa and do not follow the Western Indian mannerism. The figures here are also shown in combined profile and front view. But instead of the supple and Orissan forms they are compact and firm. The strength and vitality of the Orissan style is blended with the suavity of Bengal in this remarkable series of manuscript paintings.

Bengal Art however is not something which is past; it is a continuous and living process. Contemporary scroll paintings or Paṭs of rural Bengal show that traditional art, in its popular version, is still alive in remote regions unaffected by westernised urban culture. It is a matter of no little regret that like all other vestiges of traditional culture it is also fast decaying before the onrush of modern mechanised civilization.

Painted usually on paper, often of the cheapest variety, sometimes on newspapers too, none of the “Jarano-paṭ” or rolled paintings are older than hundred or hundred and fifty years. Most of the Paṭs in the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art and G. S. Dutt’s collection—the only public institutions in India where these records of popular art are represented—were painted during the last eighty years. Their average

length varies from twelve to sixteen feet; they are one or two feet broad. The subject matter is invariably religious and devoted to epic cycles, e.g. the Kṛṣṇa līlā, Rāma-līlā, Behula legend and the Chaitanya līlā. Paṭs are confined mainly to western Bengal. Ghazi-Paṭs or Paṭs pertaining to the Ghazi legend are in vogue among the Muslims in Comilla and Barisal in Eastern Bengal. The long rolls with 10 or 12 separate pictures are arranged in rectangular panels one below the other, “each picture being exhibited by the Paṭua at a time as the roll is gradually unfolded and as the story of each picture is being chanted to the accompaniment of the traditional ballad composed by the Paṭuas themselves”. The rectangular panels are either demarcated by plain bands in lighter colours or by floral borders in which rosettes and leaves alternate. Flanking continuous decorative borders at the same time emphasise the interrelation of specific panels.

Unlike the Kanthās, the Paṭs of Bengal are more or less representational and but rarely symbolic. It is obvious that scrolls were painted in the narrative style. The story-telling capacity of ancient Indian art is retained here. We find in the gradual unfolding of the story a continuation of the peculiar technique of Barhut and Sanchi. But in the Paṭs the head is shown in profile, the eye in full view, the trunk also in front view, the legs and feet again in strict or three quarter profile, and the “conformation and movement of the figures and their parts are limited to a few typical shapes.”

The Paṭs are distinguished by vigorous lines and vivid colours, such as we have seen in the illustrated Rāmāyana manuscript of Tulsiyās. The Paṭua generally used primary colours, red, blue and yellow. Green and brown were sometimes employed, the former particularly in paintings in the Dumka Sub-Division (Santal Parganas) and the latter in Manbhum district, both areas in Bihar, but culturally part and parcel of Bengal.

Indian red, indigo, burnt sienna and yellow ochre predominate.

The colours are laid on in flat washes. The classical Indian modelling quality of the line is nowhere apparent except in the Kalighat drawings.

In the earlier scrolls extraneous influence can be detected. An indigenous idiom and freedom of action distinguish only those executed in recent times. Not only in dress, treatment of trees and floral borders but also in their architectural setting too, some of the early nineteenth century Paṭs betray Rajput influence.1 The Mughal idiom, on the other hand, is distinctly perceptible in at least one old Rāmāyaṇa Paṭ from Bankura, dating back perhaps to the end of the 18th century. There almost the entire design and colour scheme are reminiscent of Mughal conceptions. The panel representing the marriage procession scene of Rāma is typically Mughal in its spacing, movement and grouping.

The Western Bengal Paṭs, in the different districts, show peculiarities in design and colour. It has already been pointed out that the Santhal Parganas prefer figures silhouetted in green, blue and yellow against a white background. Manbhum products are easily recognised by their preference for one particular shade—burnt sienna, relieved by white and yellow patches and a densely packed composition. In Midnapore scrolls, the overcrowded panels have elaborate decorations and a minute finish is given to the scenes, but the seated figures crowning these scrolls are impressive and monumental. It is to be noted that Birbhum, Bankura and Burdwan invariably favour an Indian red background and Hoogly a dark brown. The abstract linear treatment moreover of the Hoogly Paṭs is peculiar. Although neighbours, subtle differences also exist between the Bankura and Birbhum varieties. Linear reduction into straight pleat-like folds of drapery often floriated (Plate X) is a characteristic peculiar to Bankura and present from the earliest times. Moreover the head is seldom represented other than in a sharp and angular profile. Birbhum, on the other hand favours a three quarter view (Plate XII). Another unique feature invariably employed by the Birbhum Paṭua is the conventional

1. J. I. S. O. A. Vol. I. Pts. IV V, Fig. 1 and 2,
double eyebrow. These and several other traits and stylistic elements help in identifying the products of the many districts.

An examination of some details of the different varieties of Paṭs will now be undertaken. Let us first take up the two panels of a Rāmāyaṇa Paṭ (Pl. X) from Bankura (Asutosh Museum Collection) executed more than fifty years ago. The upper scene represents Rāma, attended by Vibhīṣaṇa, Sugrīva, Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān worshipped Durgā on the eve of his victory over Rāvana. Set against a flat empty space, the heavy figure of the Goddess dominates the scene by her sudden appearance and animated gesture, contrasting with the rigidly vertical poses of the attentive figures on both sides. The movement and arrangement of her ten hands is followed by the semicircular sweep described by the heads of Rāma and his retinue. Contrary movements of the two distinct groups divided by the Maṅgala Kalaśa, balance the simple but effective composition. One of the critical moments of Rāma’s life has found here a dramatic illustration.

The lower panel represents a scene of the epic fight between the Monkey friends of Rāma and the Rākṣasas. It is full of dynamic action seldom excelled by the Paṭa anywhere. Two advancing gigantic monkeys, one white, and another dark blue, form the two sides of a triangle an intricate pattern is woven on Indian red ground; dark colours are pitted against light along the diagonal. In the bustle and din of battle, it is difficult to single out the contending parties of soldiers, they are all mixed up in a confused hurly-burly, some charging, others flying, here and there single combats are going on at a distance from the main battle. The men are in every conceivable attitude, running, standing, kneeling, crouching or turning sharply round in the middle of the fight to face the enemy once more. What spaces are left are filled by decapitated heads and detached limbs.

In the Śakti Paṭ from Birbhum, (private collection; Pl. XII) a round Chalachitra controls the upright movement of the Goddess Durgā striding upon a ‘super-human’ lion and a fallen demon, flanked by Lakṣmi, Saraswati, Ganesa, Kārttikeya and pillars in the background.

Unlike her counterpart from Bankura, the figure of Durgā is tall and rests monumentally on a pyramidal pedestal. Billowing draperies of the
background harmonise with the parallel movement of the numerous hands and vertical pillars act as a foil to the multiple curves of the design. The colour scheme is also noteworthy. The blue garment of the Goddess, between heavy bounding lines, freely applied, lends particular emphasis to the figure of the Goddess, dwarfing all other figures in the group. Shades of blue, indigo, Indian red, yellow, yellow ochre, green and white are all skilfully applied to make this picture vibrate with energy.

A Behulā Paṭ from Midnapur, in the Asutosh Museum collection, with a mastery of spacing and craftmanship shows on a white ground, patterns in light blue, bounded by curves (Pl. XIIIa).

A Kṛṣṇa-līlā Paṭ from Midnapur, also in the Asutosh Museum (inset on p. 138) is remarkable for its composition. It shows the river Jamunā meandering through the centre of the panels cutting right across miracle scenes performed by Kṛṣṇa in Vrindaban. Crossing herds of cattle and the projecting wings of the Vakāsur interconnect the panels. The peculiar way of showing the river is reminiscent of the Śuṅga technique in stone, on a Sanchi gateway, representing the Niraṅjana river and the Māhākapi Jātaka.

Three pert milkmaids, proceeding in uniform style, with pots balanced on their heads (Pl. XIIIb), constitute a delightful scene from a Kṛṣṇa līlā scroll from Dumka, Santhal Parganas (Asutosh Museum collection). It is a matter of no little significance that this was painted only a few years ago and the Paṭua is still living. Drawn on a white background the sharp, clear cut outline is bordered by running dots—a characteristic not noticed elsewhere. The stiff cylindrical, lower portion of the figures supports the circulatory movements of the hands and of the mode of wearing the Sari so that it frames the head in a charming manner; forms like this are to be found only in the Santhal productions from Midnapur and the neighbouring regions. The green of the Saris is matched by the yellow of the bodies and by the green blouses, the middle one being light pink.

A more sophisticated painting is represented by the Kirtan scene from Burdwan district in the Asutosh Museum collection (Pl. XI). The ecstatic figure of Chaitanya occupies the centre of both the front and back rows. Yellow ochre flesh colour shimmers on an Indian
red surface. Brown musical instruments (Dhol) add depth to the colour scheme. Solid round bodies, delineated by gliding curves and intersected by swaying limbs create a rhythmic pattern of intense emotional fervour.
THE MYSTERY OF THE ALL-POWERFUL GODDESS
(SR̥I BHAGAVATĪ TATTVA)

BY SR̥I SWĀMĪ KARAPĀTRI-JĪ (HARIHARĀNANDA SARASVATI)

adapted translation by Śhīva Śharaṇa (Alain Danielou)

सत्ये वे देवा देवीपरमपत्यः कालिका त्वं महादीवी सात्रवीधेः भ्राह्मणी
मतः प्रकृतिपुरुषात्मकं स्त्राद्
(Devi-atharvā-Śhirā)

"The Gods approaching the resplendent Goddess asked her 'who are you?' the Arch-Goddess replied 'I am the form of the Unqualified Principle, the Brahman; from me the world arises as Nature and Person (Prakṛti-Puruṣḥ)."

अथ हो न भ्राह्माण्डे भ्राह्मणोपामरति, भुवनविधाश्वरी दुव्यायता 
(Bhuvanesvārī-Upaniṣad)

"In the Principal Aperture, Brahmarandhrā [behind the forehead], a man finds me the Lady of the Spheres who am the shape of the Principle, beyond the fourth, [the unmanifest], stage."

The dual form, unqualified and qualified, of the All Powerful Goddess is indicated in the first hermetic utterance (Mantra) of the Devi Bhāgavatā:

सच्चिदानन्देः तमायाः विद्याः धीमहि
भूक्षिः वा न: प्राकृतियाः

"She is the Universal Consciousness, the Origin of all, She is Sapience, too, the intelligence which instigates intellect."

सा च भ्राह्मणसा च नित्यः सा च समानतः
यथात्मा च तथा शक्तिः पञ्चान्नी दाहिः सङ्कृतः
अतपवः च योगीः: श्रीपुमेश्वरे न मन्यते

1. English revised with Ethel Merston.
“She is the intrinsic shape of the Principle, the Brahman, She is eternal, without beginning. Just as the power to burn obtains in fire, so Energy (Šakti) dwells in the Self, the Atman. Hence the masters of Reintegration, the yogis, do not consider their difference as that of man and woman.”

अहेमेवास पूर्ववर्तु नान्यतिकान्निगमविष्णु
तवाधिकारः चित्तसिद्धसः परवर्तीयेन कामकंकु

“I was before all that exists, O King of the Mountains! before me there was nothing. Hence Consciousness, Faculty of Knowing, Supreme Principle, are but the names of the shape of my one Self.”

सत्तवेदांतवेदां निरिक्तवेद श्रावश्विमः
एक सत्वगतं सुधमः कृतस्यमचलः भूमे
वेदान्तस्यमपश्चाति महावेद्याः परे देशम
पराभवतरं तत्वं शाश्वतं शिवामच्चुतम्
अन्तः प्रक्ती ठीनं देव्यास्तत्परं पद्मम
शुद्धं निरंजनं शुद्धं नित्यं ब्र्यवानिंतम
आत्मोपपत्तिविदेशः देव्यास्तत्परं पद्मम

(Kūrmā Purāṇā)

“That essence which the knowers of the Principle see asserted throughout the Eternal Wisdom (the Vedā) and in the End of wisdom (Vedāntā), that essence which the seekers of Reintegration, the yogis, can perceive as issued from the one all pervading, subtle, changeless, motionless, Arch-Goddess, ever fixed in one point, that supreme stage, far beyond the beyond, everlasting, is the Lord of Sleep, Śiva.

This limitless transcendent stage issued from the All-Powerful Goddess dissolves into Nature (Prakṛiti).

This supreme stage issued from the Goddess is white, without disguise, pure, without qualities, sorrowless; it is the object gained by the Self.”

THE ALL POWERFUL GODDESS AS EXISTENCE-CONSCIOUSNESS-BLISS

Existence, development, and power of enjoyment found throughout the Spatial Universe are the gifts of the All-Powerful Goddess who is intrinsic Existence-Consciousness-Bliss and is the support of the whole
of manifestation and its countless millions of universes. In Her, the Spatial Universe arises, in Her it stands, in Her, in the end, it dissolves.

In a mirror we see reflected the vault of the sky, of the clouds, the globes of Sun and Moon, the movements of the planets, the Earth itself, and, indeed, all that is manifest. Yet, if we try to grasp them, we meet nothing but the glass. Similarly, in the mirror which is the All-Powerful Goddess, the universe appears to exist, and without this mirror of the indivisible, eternal changeless, self-dependent Arch-Consciousness, the Spatial Universe could not be seen.

परा तु सत्त्वित्वान्तत्त्रात्मिकृतिः जगद्भिर्मिकाः
सत्त्वनित्वानुपत्त्वा स्त्रास्तःस्त्रात्मिकितिरिस्त्रात्मिकितमि ||

( Skandā Purāṇā )

"The support of all is the Transcendent (Parā) World Mother (Jagat-ambikā) whose shape is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. She is the Self of Consciousness in whom appears the fictitious appearance (śānti) which is the moving Universe."

Some believe that Energy pertains only to the Unconscious, but the word Śakti (Energy), sometimes used for the Unconscious, can also be used for Transcendent Nature; similarly, the word Bhagavatī (All-Powerful Goddess) can convey the notion of the Pure, qualityless power of Consciousness (Chit-Śakti). Neither the Energy, nor the All-Powerful Goddess, worshipped by her devotees should therefore be understood to be merely Nature, or Power of Illusion; it is the All-Powerful Goddess, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss who is the object of worship.

The Dāmarā-tantrā explains the meaning of the Navārṇā hermetic utterance.

निर्मृत तत्त्वित्वान्तत्त्रात्मित्वान्त्वस्त्रात्मितिः क्रान्ति
अघेज्ञात्वाचार्यां चित्तस्त्रात्मितिरक्रान्ति
अनुस्वर्णाहिं निल्य वर्य त्वां हृदयासु जै

"O Destroyer of all darkness, Ever liberated, who transcends beyond the beyond. For the sake of impartible Principal-Sapience (Brahmā-Vidyā) I search for thy shape as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss in the lotus of my heart."

Bliss, upon which all experiences depend, is the supreme aim of man.
“All love is desire for the Self”, says the Eternal Wisdom.

Therefore Bliss, the intrinsic shape of the Self, is that of which all love is an echo. All this world is an echo of Bliss. That Bliss, too, of which the bliss of men, of celestial musicians (Gāndharvā-s) and the gods among those musicians (deva-gāndharvā-s), of the angels which were from the beginning (ajanajā deva-s), of the ritual angels (śhrautā deva-s), of the King of Heaven (Indrā), of Brīhaspati, the teacher of the Gods, of Prajāpati, the Lord of the Universe and of Brahmā, the Creator, is but a drop—although the level of joy obtained by each one of these is a hundred times that of the one preceding—that Bliss is called the supremely transcendent Bliss-shape of the Principle.

NĀDA BINDU

When cogitation (vimarśhā), illumination (prakāshā) and energy respectively appear in the Lord of Sleep, Śhivā, then point-limit (bindu), feminity, and principal vibration (nāḍā) (masculinity) respectively come into being. When the fusion is complete like that of milk and water, the united point-limit comes into being. This united point-limit is known as the Primordial Hermaphrodite (Ardha-nara-Iśvarā). The mutual attraction towards one another of its two components is called Lust (Kāmā).

“From the splendour of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss and by the will of Supreme Divinity, Energy, Śhakti, arose, from Śhakti the principal vibration, from the principal vibration the point-limit from which the manifest begins”.

The power of action which is found in the principal vibration is the ‘I wink’ (aham nimeshā) of the point-limit Bindu. The ‘I’ (aham) is the stage previous to universal dissolution and is the condensed desire of Energy for creation. In that in which knowledge (i.e. the ascending tendency, Sattvā) is predominant, the expanding tendency Rajas takes the form of Energy-action and the descending tendency takes the form
of the point-limit Bindu. The letter 'A' is the symbol of Śhīvā, Lord of Sleep. 'H' is the symbol of Energy (Śhakti). The Belle of the three cities (Tripura Sundari)\(^1\) is pervaded by the I (Aham) (which is the union of A and H, the first and last letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, 'am' being only the inflexion). All creation is filled with individuality and "I"-ness.

The union of the Lord of sleep (Śhīvā) and Energy (Śhakti) is the principal vibration, Nāḍā.

\[ \text{वद्यमन्तसरम्मुत्तिः निःश्चित्या विशेषविच्छिन्न चन्द्रम्।} \\
\text{पर्याप्ते सहिन्दः प्रथमं शिवतत्वमृत्तिः तत्त्वेऽः॥} \]

"That essence, that transcendent embodiment which by its own will created this world which was the first to vibrate with vibration, knowers call the Lord of Sleep."

The Lord of Sleep embraced by Energy is the seed of the spatial universe. In the radiance of the I, the Lord of Sleep remains still and energy is active. She is thus the opposite of Kāli, the Power of Time, and is known as the Lustful, Rati. When the Energy which is cognition (vimarśā) dissolves into the Lord of Sleep this is the state of excitement (उत्तमाः). When she rises again from Him this is the state of calm (समन्तं).


In the Scriptures she is spoken of not only as the Energy but as the very form of the Principle.

\[ \text{अचिन्त्यांनताकाराशःक्रमम्,} \\
\text{प्रतिवर्ष्णित्यविद्यानसैंक्रमम्॥} \\
\text{गुणातीतिभिन्दन्वेकीचयम्,} \\
\text{त्वमेका परिवर्त्तर्पण सिद्ध॥} \]

"Thou art the One, realised in the shape of the Principle. Thou art the intrinsic Energy whose form is the Inconceivable and the Infinite. Thou art the embodiment of Existence which is the basis of each individual being. Thou art beyond quality, beyond oppositions, reached only through thought-less knowing (Nirvikalpaśavodhā)".

1. The Consciousness dwelling in the triple body (causal, subtle and gross) of all beings.
In the Kena Upanishad, the All-Powerful Goddess is described as the shape of Principal Sapience. Through her mercy Indra, the king of Heaven, and other Gods know the intrinsic shape of the Principle. When the Principle disappeared from before him, Indra, with a feeling of shame, remained standing in the emptiness of space and began to perform austerities. After a long time the Goddess, satisfied, appeared.

स तस्मानेवाचारं स्वयमाजगाम बहुशोभभमानसमस्यां हैमवतीम्।

“In this space, spreading everywhere, Uma the goddess, shining like gold, appeared as a woman of marvellous beauty”.

Indra in the emptiness of space saw the Goddess in the shape of Principal Sapience adorned with golden ornaments and, through her mercy, he realised the Brahman. For those who worship Energy, Energy is everywhere present but those who worship other deities have likewise to worship her.

Without worshipping Energy devotees can never realise the shape of their chosen deity. The Sanmohini tantrā says that he who merely worships the dark light Krisna without worshipping the white light Radha will, in the end, fall.

THE ALL-POWERFUL GODDESS AS THE CONSORT OF THE SUPREME PRINCIPLE

In many places the All-Powerful Goddess is described as the Consort of and the giver of enjoyment to the Supreme Principle.

निर्गा: प्रसीधाता तु स्वतद्यत्वायत्तीथ्यतः।
तत्क्ष्य महात्माकासि तव सुनिश्चित भोगता।

“The qualityless Supreme Self takes shelter in thee. Thou art the princess whence he derives pleasure, the Lady of the Spheres.”

Living beings, Divinity and all other things are the children of this Goddess.

Just as Fire and its power to burn are ever related, as one another’s inner nature, so also the Supreme Principle and the Supreme Energy are ever the inner self of the other.

It is from this point of view that she is called Chandikā or Chandī, the Wrathful. In such expressions as चण्डीमातृ: चण्डीवातः, ‘a wrathful sun, a wrathful wind’, the word ‘wrathful’ (chandā) is used to express
exceptional qualities in things. By being made an attribute of Sun, of wind, the meaning of the word is, however, narrowed. It finds its full scope only when applied to the thing in which there are no distinctions of place or time, and no division, that is, in the Supreme Self.

Etymologically the word Chadā means anger (चादा कीचे).

क्षय विफ्यति देवाद्र सतिरास्थ संयुगे

"Who is it whose anger even the gods fear."

The man whose anger bears fruit is called ‘chandā’ (violent). The most fearful anger is also called ‘chandā’ and this fearful anger belongs to Supreme Divinity.

नमस्ते रद्द मर्यादे

"I salute thee, wrath of the Lord of Tears."

In the world, all fear anger, all fear destruction, all fear death which destroys all. So Śivā, the destroyer, is called too Chadā, the wrathful.

भीषातां ततो भीष्यदेति सर्वः |
भीषागमाया सर्वोदयो मेवार्म्रति पञ्चम: ॥

"By fear of Him doth the wind blow, by fear the sun rises, by fear Fire and Indrā do their work, and death (whom all fear) fears Him." He is called the death of death, the Time of Time or the Arch-time (Mahā-kālā). It is he who destroys all. He alone is not counted amongst the millions of the destroyed, and it is only because Brahmā, the Creator, and Viṣṇu, the Preserver, are aspects of Him, that they too are indestructible. He is called:

महाकल्व वंचलितम्

"The great fear, the brandished thunderbolt," and the Power which is the intrinsic form of his wrath is his consort Chadīkā.

But always, alongside the fearful, lies the peaceful aspect of Divinity,

वोराण्या च शिबार्ण्या च

"The one is fearful, the other auspicious";

Wherefore the All Powerful Goddess has two shapes, the one fierce the other peaceful.

Some say that the one supreme Principle, through his power of Illusion, appears in a dual shape as Law and Law-giver.
"He thought: May I become Many and have subjects."

He desired

he created that heat

We hear, in these revealed utterances, of knowledge, desire and action as the beginning of creation. This is called the triple 'law of the nature' (dharma) of the Principle. This law is not distinct from the Brahman the law-giver himself. And the revealed utterances speak of it as the law of

"Spontaneous knowledge, strength and action". This (dread) law of the Supreme Nature is called His 'Energy' (Shakti) and is identified with Chandī, the Wrathful. It is she who is the Arch-Power of Time Mahā-Kāli, the Arch-Divinity of Fortune, Mahā Lakṣhami, and the Arch-Divinity of Knowledge Mahā Sarasvatī according to the work she performs. Truly to see in this Supreme Wrath a male or a female character depends only upon the inclination of the worshipper. In male terms she is spoken of as the Arch Lord of Tears (Mahā-Rudrā), etc., in female terms as the Wrath (Chandī), the 'Goddess-Beyond-Reach' (Durgā), etc.

THE THREE TALES IN THE HYMN TO THE GODDESS-BEYOND-REACH (Durgā Saptāṣṭāti)
THE FIRST TALE

Knowledge of the essence of things is obtained by the mercy of the All-Powerful Goddess. Knowledge (jñānā) is everywhere praised. Where is knowledge, ignorance, delusion, etc., disappear. To attain knowledge one listens and ponders. Repetition of sacred formulae, austerities, sacrificial rites, all have but one object; the attainment of knowledge. But this knowledge is not what is ordinarily meant by the word. Knowledge of the objects of words and (the senses) is common to all living creatures. Men have, relatively to all other beings, a greater aptitude for knowledge, yet ignorance too dwells in them. That knowledge of proper behaviour is found in animals just as in men, that birds like men, even when hungry themselves, will bring
food to their little ones, is a matter of common knowledge. But the basic ignorance of the world is not thereby lifted.

It is the influence of the Arch-Power of Illusion (Māhā Māyā) which prevents the basis of all, the self-illumined Principle from being cognized. She forcibly deceived the minds of even Vaśiṣṭha, Bharatā, Viśvāmitrā and other seers who were soaked in the knowledge of the Upaniṣhads. She manifests the world, animate and inanimate. Being pleased, she, in the guise of Sapience, is the giver of liberation, while, shaped as Ignorance, she is the cause of worldly ties. She is said to be the sleep of Reintegration (yogā-nidrā) of the All-Powerful Viṣṇu when, at the end of the Aeon, he splendidly rests on the Lord Remainder (Śeṣhā). The Earth, which rests on the back of the tortoise, was then sinking into the primeval waters and becoming soft as butter. Thinking that this earth could no longer support living beings when the time of creation were to come the All-Powerful Goddess by her Power called the 'Sleep of Reintegration' put the Pervader Viṣṇu to sleep. She then took some dirt out of his left ear with the end of the nail of her little finger and, with it, made the genie (daityā) Madhu (Honey). With the dirt of his right ear she made the genie Kaitabhā. At first these two genii appeared like worms but later they became very powerful. When the resplendent Goddess disappeared having granted them a boon, both saw the Lord Creator Brahmā in the lotus springing from the navel of the Pervader Viṣṇu. Seeing Brahmā they said: "We shall kill you. If you want to live you must wake up Viṣṇu. Hearing this Brahmā began with many hymns of praise, to pray to the Sleep of Reintegration. The All-Powerful Goddess, being pleased, told him to ask for a boon. Brahmā asked that the Lord be awakened and the two genii trapped. The Mother woke up Viṣṇu who thereafter fought fiercely with these genii for five thousand years. Misled by the Arch-Power of Illusion these two genii, intoxicated with pride, told Viṣṇu to ask for a boon. Viṣṇu said—"I ask as a boon that you both may be killed by me." They answered. Be it so, you can kill us, but only on such soil as is not permeated with water. Viṣṇu, placing their heads at the joint of his thigh, cut them off with his discus. Later, making an ointment with their fat (medā) he applied it to parts of
the Earth which then became solid. That is why the earth is also called Medini.

In this way the All-Powerful Goddess, appearing under all sorts of shapes, sustains the world. She it is who creates, protects, destroys. She, becoming the sleep of Reintegration, gives rest to the Preserver Viśnū. She it is who satisfies the Gods (Devatā) the Fore-Fathers and the Ritual Angels (Śrautā Devā) by taking the shape of the Utterances of offering (śāha, śāha, vayākār) respectively connected with them. She is most fearful, holding a sword, a spear, a mace, a discus, a conch, a bow, an arrow, a missile (bhuṣhundī) and an iron club. But she is also the supreme peace-giver. She is a leader of soldiers (sānyātā), yet she is the most beautiful of all things beautiful. She can truly appear most lovely to her devotees, although infinitely horrible and cruel to the Demons (Dāityā-s). She is most beautiful among all that causes joy. She is higher than the Creator Brahmā and all the gods. Verily, in the world, wherever and whenever something is—whether real or unreal, conscious or unconscious, effect or cause—and has an energy, that energy is the All-Powerful Goddess.

यत्र किष्किष्किक्षितत्वतः सदस्याशिवालयम् ।
तत्रत्य सर्वस्था तथा शिष्णि सा स्त्री किं स्तूयसि तदा।

"How canst thou praise this Energy which dwells in whatever exists, in all things whether real or unreal."

When the Supreme Divinity (Paramā Iśvara), who, through Arch-Energy, brings forth, protects and destroys the moving universe, is himself in the power of the All Powerful Goddess, who can hymn the qualities of this Energy which is the sleep of Reintegration? It is through the greatness of this Energy that Viṣṇu and the other gods take a body. This All-Powerful Goddess who possesses an infinitude of powers, who is predominantly joy, is described under the shape of the Arch-Power of Time (Mahā Kalī).

THE SECOND TALE

Sometimes the Goddess appears as the Arch-divinity of Fortune (Mahā Lakṣhmi). Once, for a full hundred years a fearful war was
fought between the Gods and Titans (Asurās). The King of the Titans was Mahiśāsurā, the Buffalo-Titan, and the King of the Gods was Indrā, the Resplendent. Mahiśāsurā having defeated all the gods himself became king of Heaven. The Gods, vanquished, then went, led by Brahmā, to Viśnū and Śiva and explained in detail the victory of Mahiśāsurā and their defeat. Hearing the story of the Gods, both the Destroyer of Madhu (Madhusūdanā = Viśnū) and the Giver of Peace (Śaṅkarā = Śiva) were incensed and a great flame sprang from their mouths. A similar flame sprang from the mouth of Brahmā too. From the bodies of Indrā, Varuṇā and the other gods a divine light shone forth. In this way, the Arch-flame coming out from the bodies of all the gods looked like a mountain. And all the points of the compass were pervaded with its radiance. This incomparable light condensed itself and took the shape of a woman. Her brilliance filled the three worlds. This light, sprung from all the gods, had many limbs. Seeing the wonderful Goddess, made of the radiance of the gods, all rejoiced. All the gods, gave her their weapons and armaments. All honoured her as the Mother. She, pleased, began to roar like a tiger. Her fearful roar filled the whole heavenly sphere. At its echo the worlds shrank and the sea trembled. The gods in their delight shouted ‘Victory Victory’ and the sages sang her praise. Seeing this, the Titans seizing their weapons and missiles made ready for war. Mahiśāsurā, the Buffalo King surrounded by many Titans faced the Goddess who stood filling the three worlds with her radiance, forcing the earth to give way under the strength of her feet; her diadem reached to the vault of space, she made the nether world shrink at the twanging of her bow, and filled the directions of space with her thousand arms. The Titans then began the war. A fearful battle followed. The earth was so littered with fallen elephants, horses and Titans it was impossible to move. A river of blood frightful to behold began to flow. As the battle went on the biggest weapons, missiles and energies were brought into play. Many the Goddess destroyed with her weapons and many too simply with her war cry (Houn!) alone. The Goddess’s lion in a strange battle, killed Chāmarā and other Titans. After many of his warriors had been killed, Mahiśāsurā himself, in his
buffalo shape, showed wonderful prowess. Chandikā snared him with a noose but he changed himself into a lion. While Chandikā was attempting to cut his head off with her sword he became a man, sword-in-hand. When the Mother ran at the man, he became an elephant. As an elephant he began to drag away her lion with his trunk. The Goddess cut off the trunk with her sword. Then again changing into a buffalo he began to terrorise the three worlds. Finally the Goddess climbed onto his back and, striking him with her feet, pierced him with her spear. Then in the shape of a Titan (Asurā) half issuing from the mouth of the buffalo he began to fight. In the end, the Mother with an enormous sword cut off his head. Great laments then rose from the army of the Titans. But the Gods rejoiced greatly and, in humble respect, began to praise the Mother, saying: "O Mother! Thou art the energy soul of the moving universe. The whole Spatial universe is pervaded by thee. Thou embodiest the combined power of all the gods. What thou canst achieve neither the Pervader Viṣṇu, the Creator Brahmā nor the Resorber of the World (Harā=Śiva) can do, let alone others. In the shape of Fortune, thou dwellest in the homes of those who act righteously, but in the houses of the sinful thou dwellest in the guise of poverty. Thou art the good intellect of the intelligent, the modesty of noble women. Thou art Nature (Prakṛiti) called, too, the Unmanifest (Avyakṛita). It is thou in the shape of the ritual utterances of offering, who satisfiest Gods and Fore-Fathers. It is thou whom ascetics, seekers of Liberation, worship as Principal Sapience (Brahmā Vidyā). For the spatial universe to progress and attain beatitude, thou appearest in the three forms of Divinity. Thou dwellest in the heart of the Pervader Viṣṇu as the Arch-divinity of Fortune (Mahā Lakṣmī). And, in the heart of Him who has the moon on his forehead (Jāhāni Viṣṇu), thou dwellest in the shape of the Fair Lady Gaurī. Having greatly praised her, the gods begged the goddess for boons. Saying: 'be they granted', the Mother disappeared.

**THIRD TALE**

When, through the valour of the Daimons Śumbhā and
Nīśumbhā, the three worlds were snatched from Indrā, the king of Heaven, the Daimons began to take a share from all ritual sacrifices. They also attributed to themselves the posts of Sun and Moon and those of guardian of the treasure (Kuberā), Lord of the Waters (Varuṇā). Then the gods, defeated and misruled, began in their hearts to call upon the never-defeated All-Powerful Goddess. The Mother had once granted them the boon that, whenever in their troubles they thought of her, their troubles would at once disappear. Remembering this, they all went to the Snow Mountain the Himā-achala and began to praise her who is the Power of Illusion of the Pervader Viṣṇu.

While the gods were praising her, the daughter of the mountain Lord, the Lady of the Mountain, Pārvatī, came to take her bath in the Ganges. She asked the Gods “Which deity are you praising”? The Gods had no time to answer. From the body of the Lady of the Mountain, the All-Powerful Lady of Sleep (Śivā) sprang forth and said “Having been dethroned by Śumbhā, they are all praising me.” Because she sprang from the body-sheath of Pārvatī, the Mother became known in the world as Kauśikī “the Sheathed”. When Kauśikī came out of her, Pārvatī became black. Hence is she called Kālikā (the black one).

Once Chaṇḍā (Impetuous) and Muṇḍā (Mean), servants of Śumbhā, and Nīśumbhā, saw the Mother Kauśikī looking marvellously beautiful. They went to their masters, praised her form, and suggested that they should catch her. So Śumbhā and Nīśumbhā sent a messenger to her saying: “Our orders are nowhere disobeyed. All the jewels of the world as well as the royal elephant (Airavatā) and royal stallion (Uch’ aśhravā) are in our possession. You are the jewel of women, we hunger for jewels, come to us and enjoy supreme magnificence.” The Goddess with a grave smile replied:

यो मां यथिति संग्रामे यो मे दुपू ब्यपोधः।
यो मे प्रतिवक्त्रो विका ए मे मंता भविष्यति।
तदागलक्षु हुम्पोखय मिशुमय या महासुरः।
मां जित्वा किं विरुप्तिकर्षन्त पारिः गृहान्तु मे छु।

“He who defeats me in battle, who abates my pride, who is in the world my equal in strength, he will be my Lord. Let Śumbhā come
here, or Niśumbhā the great Asurā. Why does he delay his conquest of me. They should find it easy to gain my hand”.  

The messenger did his best, but the Goddess said: “What can I do? That is my vow.” The messenger returned and repeated all that had been said. Then Smoke-eyed (Dhumrā-lochanā) was sent and was killed after a fierce combat. Then Śumbhā sent Chaṇḍā and Muṇḍā, and a great fight ensued. The Mother became angry and, from her forehead, the dark Kālī of fearful features appeared, and began to eat the army of Daimons. Throwing into her mouth the largest elephants, horses, chariots and warriors she began to crunch them up. Seeing the disaster, Chaṇḍā came forward to shower upon Kālī all sorts of missiles, but only to see all his.discusses disappear into the mouth of the Goddess. With her Arch-sword the Goddess cut off the head of Chaṇḍā. Muṇḍā came forward to fight, but shared the same fate.

Kālī took the two heads of Chaṇḍā and Muṇḍā and went to give them to Kauṣhikī. Because she had brought the two heads of Chaṇḍā and Muṇḍā, Kauṣhikī named Kālī Chāmūṇḍā1. Hearing of the death of Chaṇḍā and Muṇḍā Śumbhā commanded all his army to fight. The most fearful Daityās of the greatest families came, and a terrible war began. The Goddess filled the earth and the sky with the twang of her bow. The roar of the Lion and the clanging on gongs spread everywhere. The great Kālī opening wide her mouth gave a terrible cry. Hearing this cry, the Daityās surrounded her on all sides. But, so that the Daityās might be destroyed and the gods uplifted there sprang from the bodies of Brahmā, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Indrā, and all the gods their energies who raced to the rescue of the Goddess. Rudrā, the Lord of Tears, approached, surrounded by all these Energies and said to the wrathful Goddess Chaṇḍikā ‘To please me kill these Daityās, every one’. When the Goddess

1. The Name Chāmūṇḍā given to the Goddess describes the mental state which exists in the principle beyond change (विनिर्विकल्प अस्तित्व) and which is the cause of liberation. That which, destroying the army (चमु) of misfortunes, etc., takes the form of the Self is the Principal Sapience (Brahmā Vidyā) called Chāmūṇḍā. This All-Powerful Goddess controls the demons Chaṇḍā and Muṇḍā who are ‘Root-ignorance’ and ‘ignorance of relative values’ (tulā-ajñāna).
heard these words a most fearful energy appeared from her body and spoke to the Lord of Tears: “Go as our ambassador to Śhumbhā and Niśhumbhā and tell them to give back the three worlds to Indrā and to let the gods enjoy the offerings given in sacrifices. Tell them that if they care to live they should go to the nether world. But if in the pride of their strength, they wish to fight, they may come and let our jackals feed on their flesh.” The Goddess made Śivā, the Lord of sleep, her messenger, hence is she called Śivādūti (She whose messenger is Śivā). The Daityās, hearing from Śivā the message of the Goddess were incensed. They came up to her and hurled their weapons and missiles at her. As if it were child’s play, the Goddess destroyed them all. Walking in front of Kauśikī, with spear and skull-club, Kāli destroyed her enemies. (The energies of the Gods), Brahmāṇi (the Power of Brahmā), Mahēśvarī (the Power of Śivā), Vaiśṇavī (the Power of Viṣṇu), Kaumari (the Power of the Lord of War Kārttikeyā), Aindrī (the Power of Indrā) etc., with their weapons began to kill the Daimons by the thousand. The four points of the compass were filled with the noise of the killing. Having been decimated by the Mother, the Titans were fleeing when a great Asurā named Blood-Seed (raktā-bijā) arrived on the scene. Whenever a drop of the blood of this Blood-Seed fell to the ground another Blood-Seed sprang up. Seizing his club, Blood-Seed began to fight the Energy of Indrā. There was a fearful battle. The world became filled with countless Blood-Seeds. Than the Goddess spread her tongue on the ground and started to lap up the blood, and the Daityā, thus losing all his blood, in the end succumbed.

Then Śhumbhā and Niśhumbhā themselves fiercely fought the Goddess. After a great battle Niśhumbhā was killed. Then Śhumbhā came up to the Goddess and threatened her.

“Ho there! Durgā, Goddess beyond-reach! be not so proud. You fight with the power of others”. The Goddess then retorted:

एकैवा जम्मत्यय विद्तीया का ममापर 
पशयेतातु दुष्ट मद्येव विश्वन्तीयो महिम्भुत्तय: || 
तत: समस्तस्त्त देव्यो वाहाणीप्रमुखा झयम्। 
तत्त्वः देव्यापस्त्री जन्मुरेकैवासीवासिनिविवर्तका ||

“I stand alone. Who besides me exists in this world. Behold,
villain, all these, who are my display dissolve into me. Then Brahmāṇī and all the Goddesses dissolved. And when all the Goddesses had re-entered her body, the mother stood alone."

The Goddess said "To my own glory I existed in many forms. Having now resorbed all, I stand alone for battle. Beware." And there, before all the Gods, a great battle took place between the Goddess and Śumbhā. The greatest and most supernatural weapons were brought into play. This most astounding of wars took place, sometimes in the sky, sometimes on the earth. And at the end of the great fight the All-Powerful Goddess, piercing Śumbhā's heart with an enormous spear, brought him down, dead, upon the earth. The Gods and Seers praised the Goddess. "O Mother, thou removest the troubles of all beings, thou art the mother of the egg-shaped Universe, thou art the divinity of all the spatial Universe, animate or inanimate. Taking the shape of the earth thou art the support of all. As water thou refreshest the world. Thou art the Energy of Viṣṇu of limitless virile power. Thou art the Power of Illusion seed of the Universe. The whole world exists deluded by thy magic. Pleased thou becomest the cause of liberation. All the Sciences (Vidyā) of the world are part of thee. All women too are part of thee. The whole world is filled by thee alone. Who therefore can praise thee. The means of praise, the Voice (Vāk) itself, unmanifest (parā) or manifest (aparā), is but thine own self. Thou art the giver of heaven and of liberation. In the form of Intellect thou art the giver of the four aims of human life. In the form of Time thou art the giver of results. When all dissolves thou alone remainest as the Night of Time (kālā-rātrī). Thou art the giver of all happiness, the means of all realisation, devoted to those who come to thee for shelter. Thou art the maker of creation, etc. Everlasting, in whom dwell all qualities Thou art made of qualities always willing to remove pain and misery, from those who seek thy protection. The Remover of suffering thou art the Power of the Creator, the Power of the Arch-Lord (Śivā), the Power of Viṣṇu the Pervader, the Power of the Lord of War (Kaumārī), the Power of the boar (Varāhī), the Destroyer of misfortunes (Chāmuṇḍā), the Divinity of Fortune (Lakṣṭmī), thou art
Modesty (Lajjā), Sapience (Vidyā), Respect (Śhraddhā), Health (Puṣhti), the Offering to the Father (Svadā), the Arch-Night (Mahā rātri), Arch-Sapience (Mahā-Vidyā), Power (Medhā), the Polar Star (Dhruvā), the Divinity of Learning (Sarasvatī), the Best (Varā), Existence (Bhūti), (i.e. the ascending tendency), the expanding tendency (Vābhṛavī = Rājaśī), and the Descending tendency (Tāmasī). Thou art the Law-giver (नियम). Wherever words may reach thee, thou art the shape of all, the coordination of all energies. Mayst thou and thy weapons preserve us from all fear. Thou dwellest in all meanings, fulfil all desires, deserve all praise. Those who shelter in thee know not misfortune. Those who shelter in thee are the shelter of others. Thou art the Divinity of the spatial universe (Viśveśvarī), the Protector of the Universe (Viśva-Pālinī), the very shape of the Universe (Viśva-rūpā). To thee the Lord of the Universe bows. Those who bow to thee are the refuge of the Universe."

The Goddess was pleased, and told them to ask for a boon. The Gods replied: "O Goddess of all that exists, for ever free the three worlds of obstacles and from time to time destroy the Daimons as thou hast now done." The Goddess said: These, Śhumbhā and Niśhumbhā and the other Daimons, will again appear in the 28th cycle of 4 Yugas. Then, too, in the house of Nandā the Cowherd, born of Yaśhodā, I, in the shape of she who dwells in the Vindhyā hills, shall destroy them. Under that shape, I shall kill all the Demons assembled, and devour them. My teeth will be so full of blood that I shall be called Raktā-dantikā. She of the blood-stained teeth. Again after a hundred years of drought, I will appear this time as the Hundred-eyed Goddess Śhaṭākṣhī and will show mercy to the Sages (munis). Because I shall protect the world with leaves sprung from my body to sustain life, I shall be called Śhākāmbharī, The leaf-bearing Goddess. In that incarnation I shall kill the Daityā Durgamā and thus be named Durgā. Then, taking a terrifying shape I shall devour the Daityās who dwell in the snow mountains (Himāchalā), and I shall be named Bhīmā, the Terrible. Next taking the shape of a bee I shall kill the Red Demon (Aruṇāsurā) and be named Bhramaṛī (the bee). In this way, whenever the Dānavās make any difficulties I shall incarnate and weaken the enemies of
Eternal Law and of the Gods. Whoever praises and worships me with this hymn I will remove his troubles and give him all he desires.

SHE WHOSE SHAPE IS NIGHT

In the 'hymns to Night' (Rātri Suktā) the meaning of the Divinity of night is set forth.

There are two Divinities of night, related the one to the mortal being, the other to the Divine being. The one is experienced by all the spheres and, in relation with her, all activities come daily to rest. The other night is that in which the activity of Divinity also comes to rest. It is called the Arch-destruction, the intrinsic form of the Power of Time. Nothing then remains except the Principle, the Brahman, chequered with His 'Power of Illusion' (Māyā). This state is also called 'the Unmanifest' (Avyaktā).

प्रभुमयात्मिका राति: परमेश्वरात्मिका ||
तद्विद्याविद्वाति तु मृत्युक्तिः प्रकटिता ||

(Devi Purāṇa)

“Night has for her substance the union of the Supreme Principle with His Power of Illusion, i.e. Night has for substance the dissolution of Supreme Divinity. Her presiding deity is celebrated as the Goddess of the Spheres (Bhuvanā-Īṣṭi).”

The gist of the passage beginning with

राति व्यक्तिगती पुर्वा देशविज्ञ: विख्याः ||

etc., is that the All-Powerful Power of Consciousness, cause of all things, seeing the immaturity of living beings—i.e. the tendency of their good and bad actions to give results—and that the time is not yet come for their bearing fruit, dissolves into itself the universe, the manifestation of Divinity. Later, when the time comes, this very Power of Consciousness, whose shape is night, remanifests the Universe beginning with the Arch-Principle (Mahat), the Intellect Totality. Clearly and individually She sees the former deeds of each being and then only can she give to each the fruits of his actions. Thus does the All Powerful Goddess in her shape as night show her all-knowingness.
This immortal Goddess fills with her form the spatial Universe (Viśvā) limited by the sphere of space. She fills the humbler species with basic ‘faculty of consciousness’ (chaitanyā) the creepers and shrubs as well as the lofty trees, and this very Goddess, who is transcendent Consciousness (chit) through the light of the faculty of Consciousness, which is the reflection of the tendencies of her own nature, brings to light the manifest universe (prapañcāḥ) based upon darkness.

The coming night whose nature is play (विवेचनशील) disregards the twilight (Uśhā) which is but a reflection of the Power of Consciousness, that is the veiling power (Avarāṇa-śakti) of Ignorance (Avidyā). It seems impossible that Night can drive away twilight, whose nature is light, but she is Absolute Night, shape of Consciousness itself, supremely resplendent. By comparison with her twilight and dawn are but obscurity: Just as dawn disappears on the rising of the Sun so the veiling power of Ignorance dissolves when illumined by the Power of Consciousness. When the Veiling power is consumed to its root, and the ‘previous deeds’ (prārabdhā) have ceased to act, then darkness which is the root of Un-knowing (mulā-ajñānā) is for ever destroyed.

May this Divinity of Night this transcendent Power of Consciousness, be pleased with us, so that we may nestle in happiness as birds in their nests at night. Dwellers in the village, their cows and horses, the birds of the air and those men who travel on many a business, jackals and wild beasts, all enter this night and joyfully nestle in her; for to all beings misguided by the journey of the day she brings happiness. Then all comes to rest. Even those beings who have never heard the name of the Lady of the spheres (Bhuvanā-Iśvari), come, to her lap, where, by the mercy of the kind mother, they sleep happily as any healthy, unconscious child. Merciful art thou, Oh Power of Consciousness! O enfolding Darkness (Ūrmyā)! O Divinity of Night, Supremely merciful! Overlook our deeds, withdraw us from the killers who would harm us, the he-wolf that is sin and the she-wolf that is never-ending desire. Remove us from lust and the other passions which rob us of wisdom and wealth, and be unto us as a ship of gladness to bring us to the opposite shore and lead us to beatitude.
We are surrounded by un-knowing. Its dark colour spreads over all things. O Divinity of dawn! redeem us from this un-knowing as if it were a debt. Thou who remittest the debts of those who praise thee, remove thou our ignorance. O Divinity of Night! Power of Consciousness! thou who, like the cow of abundance, art the giver of all that is desired to thee, I turn praising thee and repeating thy name. Thou art the very shape of light, and daughter of the Supreme Self."

THE ALL-POWERFULL GODDESS AS ENERGY (ŚAKTI)

From the point of view of the theory of non-dual energy (Śakta advaita), light whose shape is pure knowing is considered to be the Lord of Sleep (Śivā tattvā). The cogitation (Vimarśha) that takes place in this light is Energy (Śakti): Together with light, the existence of an energy of thought-form is a necessity. Without light there could be no thought and without thought no light, thought must remain at every stage. This is the theory of non-dual Energy but from the point of view of the End of Wisdom (Vedānta) there can exist limitless, changeless light even without thought. This theory of non-dual energy however, goes so far as to say that, even when the veils of ignorance and the mental notion arising from the Arch utterances in the shape of the Supreme Principle, are removed thought remains of itself as an oriented motion.

The All-Powerful Goddess who is Energy (Śakti) is the innermost nature of the All-Powerful.

निष्णान्ति: परा ज्ञेया श्रेयस्तुलाभ्या तथापरा।
अविधा कम्वसतुमाण्या तस्तीया शक्तिरिषय्यते॥

"Viṣṇu is the transcendent energy; he who is called the knower of the field is the non-transcendent; the third, the energy to act, is called Ignorance."

The Pervader Viṣṇu and the 'Knower of the field' are here also called Energies, Energies are many, but the principal ones are the Power of

1. The field is the body.
Delight (Ahladini Śakti) which dwells in the Bliss part of the Supreme Principle, the Power of Perception (Samvit) which dwells in the Consciousness part, and the power of coordination (Sandhinī) which dwells in the Existence part. The knower of the field stands on the dividing line (between inner and outer energy) and the Power of Illusion is the outer Energy.

The great Teacher Śaṅkarāchārya says—The Divine giver of Happiness Śaṅkarā has but an old bull to ride on, only bhang (hashish), dhaturā and other poisons to eat, the open spaces for his dwelling, cremation-grounds for his playground, an elephant-hide for his garment. All the splendours of his Divine Power he owes to his association with the All-Powerful Goddess. The Divine magnificence of the Giver of Happiness he owes to the grace of the goddess.

भवानि स्वत्पाणिसत्सांवपरिपादीमदिवम्

(Śaṅkarāchārya; Devistotra)

"By taking thy hand, O Lady of the Spheres, he gained this".

The purport of such teachings is that without Energy the motionless Brahman can do nothing, has not even any magnificence.

शत्रुः सत्यभानामचित्तालालोधरा!
भोजेतो भ्राणस्वास्तु सर्गांवा भावशत्रुः

"Energies unknown to all the worlds are realized through knowledge. In creation and other states they exist as the Energies of the thoughts of the Principle."

The Energy and he who possesses it are inseparable.

It is usual, to respect power itself more than him to whom it belongs. The intelligent without his intelligence, the powerful without his power, the craftsman without his craft are of no value. There is no interest in sugar without sweetness, in a flower without fragrance, in a lovely woman without beauty, or a noble woman without nobility of character.

Without Energy the whole manifestation would remain as a dead shell. An individual without strength, a society without strength, a race without strength, a country without strength, are a dead weight;
strength, energy, are everywhere worshipped. In every thing in the world there is the energy to perform its function. In this lies the value of things. Supreme Divinity has the energy to give rise to an infinitude of things. Divinity is in itself devoid of energy; and in proportion to its association with energy life springs forth. The quality of being Divine appears in that in which there is most energy. It is only when the qualityless, shapeless, motionless Supreme principle, the Brahman becomes spotted through and through by the Arch-Energy, which is the centre of limitless energies, that he is able to create, maintain and destroy the universe. If he is not acted upon by energy then Śhivā, the Lord of Sleep, remains unable to create or destroy, powerless as a corpse. Thus, the divinity of Divinity has its root in Energy. Who can describe the greatness of that Energy in contact with which motionless Consciousness becomes Divinity?

एवत्मशक्तिः पश्चा विभवमेधिनी “She is the Energy of the Self, She it is who enchants the world.”

There are limitless energies. Amongst them some are considered to be more important than others and to deserve special worship. These have great purpose both in this life and for transcendent realisation.

In the dense ocean of creation the All-Powerful-Goddess is the ruler of countless energies: of felicity (nirāsīti), of support (pratiṣṭhā); of sapience (vidyā), of peace (śānti), of radiance (indhikā), of light (dīpikā), of splendour (rochikā), of Freedom (mochikā), of the Beyond (parā), of the subtle (sukṣhmā), of subtle ambrosia (sukṣhmāmrito), of nectar of knowledge (jñānāmrito), of ambrosia (amritā); of penetration (apayinī), of pervasion (vīgopinī), of the sky shape (vyomā rūpā); of sharpness (tikṣhṇā), of limitlessness (Anantā); of creation (Srīṣṭi), of debt (Riddhi); of remembrance (Srīti), of mental imprint (medhā); of glow (kānti), of fortune (lakṣhmi), of light (dyuti), of duration, (sthiti), of attainment (siddhi), of the unconscious (jaḍā), of protection (pālini), of magnificence (ṣhhyavaryā), of lust (rati), of lustfulness (kantā), of the granter of boons (varādā), of rejoicing (ahladini); of love (priti), of length (dirghā), of fearfulness (raudrā), of sleep (nidrā), of drowsiness (tandrā), of hunger (kṣudhā), of anger (krodhini), of satisfaction (tuṣṭi), of strength (puṣṭi), of fortitude (dhṛiti), of moonlight (chandrikā) etc.
Some speak of an inner aspect of Energy as opposed to the Power of Illusion (Māyā), Nature (Prakṛiti), Ignorance (Avidyā), etc., which are its outer forms. The inner aspect of divine energy would form the divine world, divine personifications, etc., while the outer would manifest the moving Universe.

THE ALL-POWERFUL GODDESS AS THE MERCIFUL

Mercy is found in the Lord of Sleep Śivā, in the Pervader Viṣṇu, and in all deities; but the supreme giver of happiness, the supremely merciful, is the Mother, our Lady, Ambā. She is merciful even to her ungrateful sons.

"Although she sometimes gives birth to bad sons, she is never a bad mother."

Although she may fight her enemies with skill mercy yet remains in the heart of the Mother towards them. Purifying them with her arrows, she sends them to heavenly worlds. Verily all are the sons of the Mother. Who can be her enemy?

(Durgā Saptashati)

"Thy mind shows forth thy mercy, battle thy skill."

Even the ill-behaved Rāvaṇā was given advice by the Mother, in the form of Sītā, the daughter of Janakā, to seek shelter in the Lord. It is but proper that the Mother disregarding the ill deeds of the evil doer should attempt to lead him to the way of truth. If by the fire of her penance, the Mother was able to cool the fire which was burning Hanumān:

Could She not, indeed, reduce Rāvaṇā to ashes? But she said:

(Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa Sundarā Kāṇḍa)

"Since I did not ask the advice of my Lord Rāmā, and because I
am practising austerities, O Ten-headed one, I shall not reduce thee to ashes with my fearful fire.

After the victory of Lāṅkā, Hanumān brought to the Daughter of Janakā the good news and asked permission to punish the Demonesses who had tormented her. But the Mother said:

कार्यं काश्यमार्ग्यं न कविचालनापराध्यति

"The duty of the well-born is mercy; none is guiltless. While they were in the power of Rāvaṇā they tormented me, now they trouble me not. We must be kind to them".

पतेतेष्व त्वत्ये यांजयनि परिपूर्णमिति जने, विद्वितोच्चतया भविष्य च क्रदिकितं कृत्यादि:।
कृमितलयं शं: क इह जगतीयति त्वमैविते-रूपाविविषयापि लजनयासि माता तदविनन्ति ।

"You, O Mother! are able to appease the Father when for their sake he is angry with your guilty but beloved sons. You appease him, saying, with good reason, 'who is without fault in this world?' This is because you are our mother".

निन्यं विशं वशयति हरिनिम्हाः अवहायम्।
आचे शक्ति विदग्धयति ते हन्त कारणपूर्व:।

"The Remover of Pain (Hari) keeps the world under his control, but your mercy ever keeps under control the power of chastisement. The flow of your mercy annihilates this power."

शैलपल्यकासित हद्वेषहु शरीरमाज्जः,
तस्यापि त्रेयद्वयं त्वमुनिर्विभिः।
पत्रं तवापि हद्वे प्रवते द्वेषः,
त्वामेवं जापमुबिभावतिशयनं भयाम:।

"In the hearts of all those who have a body the Dark Lord Kṛṣṇā is ever present. But you dwell in his divine heart and the lotus of your heart is prime mercy. Therefore we come for shelter to you who transcends all."

THE ALL-PowerFUL GODDESS THE LEAFLESS CREEPER

The great Teacher Śaṅkarāchārya tells us that in this world many pay great respect to and honour the creeper of the aeons with
its numberless leaves (Saparnā); but, he adds, there exists another creeper without leaves (Aparṇā), which is the Lady of the Mountain Pārvatī covered by which the old dry tree trunk (the Supreme Person) becomes the giver of the unrivalled fruit of Beatitude. It is this leafless creeper which should be worshipped.

The worship of the Leafless Goddess (Pārvatī) brings even more extraordinary results than that of the many leafed creeper of the aeons, for the creeper of the aeons though it may yield fruits, cannot give liberation, whereas the leafless Goddess covering the old dry tree trunk, gives even the fruit of liberation itself. What greater thing can be said of her?

**THE ALL-POWERFUL GODDESS AS THE ENERGY OF DELIGHT**

According to the Agastyā Samhitā, the All-Powerful Lord of sleep Śivā to obtain sight of Rāmā the Charming performed great austerities and did worship. Pleased, the Lord Rāmā said to him: If thou wished to know my inner nature, thou shouldst worship my transcendent Energy of Delight (Āhładini Śakti); without her I stand nowhere.

अह्लादिनी परं शक्ति स्तूया: सात्वतंसंभंतम्,
तद्वरत्राध्यदारास्तिद्वीनस्त्यया विना ।
तिच्छामि न क्षणे शामो जीवनं परमं मम ॥

"O Śambhu, giver of peace! Thou shouldst ever worship my transcendent Energy, the Giver of Delight, so deserving of worship. Rāmā is dependent upon her. Without her I could not for an instant remain in existence, she is my transcendent life".

Hearing this, the Lord of Sleep worshipped this All-Powerful Goddess, who showed kindness to him and appeared. Seeing her marvellous form, he praised her with intense devotion.

बन्द्रे विशेषनयापादपुरुपरोक्षः,
केश्वपरस्तरसमाहितांगिणिचित्रम् ।
हल्लं द्वितापमितिः मुनिहस्ते न्यम्,
सम्मानसाहित्यपरिपोष्परापुनुषम् ॥
"I bow to the lotus feet of the daughter of Videhā, whose youthfulness and fragrance attract the minds of yogis. Incessantly destroying the three kinds of burning pain, ever attended upon by the sages, who are the swans of knowledge, she is the store of pollen from which the bee of true intellect ever drinks."

THE ALL-POWERFUL GODDESS AS THE SPOKEN WORD

The All-Powerful Goddess is also that Energy by which articulate sounds convey ideas.

There are four stages in the manifestation of the word, which are called the four stages of the voice:

The place, the means, the attempt, the self-radiant light, wherein is no differentiation into letters, is the 'voice beyond', parā vāk; the mental energy first evolved, like a shoot springing from an invisible seed, is the 'perceptible voice', paśhyanti; the sound conveying a definite thought is the 'intermediary voice', madhyamā; and the manifest articulate sound in the form of letters, etc., is the 'manifest voice', vaikhari.

वैक्हरी शब्दनियापचिमध्यमा श्वरितिपोषराः

धारितीकारः पश्यांति सुक्ष्मा श्रृवैव भेदवन

"Vaikhari manifests the word. Madhyamā is seen through memory. Paśhyanti enlightens the meaning. The subtle voice is the Principle alone."

The Goddess ever dwells resplendent in the three pitches of the spoken sound. She dwells in all syllables, short, long or extra long, and even in the syllable of obeisance A U M itself, as the indestructible shape of the letters. She is established in A U M as she is in the gross, subtle and causal bodies of beings which the three letters symbolize. She dwells, too, in a final unmanifest half-syllable which represents the support of both name and thing named.

1. Viśvā, Taḷja, Prajñā.
"The letter A, the letter U and the letter M, are the three letters. And these three letters are the three tendencies, the ascending, the expanding and the descending. In addition there is also a half-letter representing the Unqualified, and perceived only by the Reintegrated, the Yogi." (Dattātreya Sāmhitā).

The first letter is the manifest, the second the unmanifest, the third is the power of Consciousness, the half-letter is the supreme unmanifest stage. This half-letter represents the basis of all, and this basis is not straight (कुटल्ल), i.e., is not within reach of mind and word.

In the Tripurā Tāpanīyā and the Sundāri Tāpanīyā, as well as in other Upanīshads, the voice-seed 'Hrim' found in the fourth hemistich of the Gāyatri sacred utterance is said also to represent the Unqualified Principle, the Brahman.

The voice-seed 'Aen' represents the shape of Consciousness, Sarasvatī, Goddess of Knowledge. It is through knowing (jñānā) that one becomes freed from un-knowing. Reflected upon the mental movement (वृत्ति) which represents the shape of the Supreme Principle and is born from the Arch-utterance, this All-Powerful Goddess removes Ignorance.

The voice-seed 'Hrim', seed of Illusion, also represents the Arch-Divinity of Fortune, Mahā Lakṣmī, shape of Existence. She is the basis from which develops the illusory ether and other elements which form the manifest Universe. She is perpetually liberated; that which is not bound by the triple aspect of time is said to be eternal (nityā).

The voice-seed of desire 'klim' represents the Arch-power of Time, Mahā Kālī who is transcendent Bliss.

THE ALL-POWERFUL GODDESS AS THE POWER OF ILLUSION (MĀYĀ)

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatā, 'Illusion (Māyā) is defined as that state in which things appear where nothing is, and nothing appears where
something is, for example, the world of a dream, the silver of mother of pearl, the rope mistaken for a serpent.

ॐते, यशमण्डित न प्रतीत चाचमनि।
तब्रशाहवानी मायां यथा मासी यथा तमः।

"Truth is where reality appears, that which does not appear of itself is illusion of itself. The one is like light the other like darkness."

It has been maintained that "the sacred texts which speak of the All-Powerful Goddess as the Power of Illusion (Māyā) contradict those which describe her as the Unqualified Principle."

This is however to take only a superficial view. The Vedāntā, the metaphysical End of Wisdom, sometimes speaks of Illusion as 'error' (मिथ्या). Now, error is of necessity based on some reality for no illusory thing can exist without a supporting entity and the reality of the supporting entity always remains pervading the illusion. Hence, in worshipping the All-Powerful Goddess, the illusion, one is worshipping the Principle, the Brahman, intrinsic Reality (sattā).

नाहं चुलुष्य मायायं उपस्थतं ब्रह्मेद कृतितात।
मायाप्रियान्त्यमुपास्येन कृतितात।
मायाशचाहविद्यमनो विशेषविश्वेषका।
तस्मान्मायाप्रियाश्रेष्ठेऽहृद वोपास्यवेष्टते।

"O Lovely faced! I never said that Illusion was to be worshipped. It is the conscious support of Illusion which is known to deserve worship. Illusion, Energy, and other like words, point to a particularized state. Hence it is the Principle, the Brahman, whose worship is aimed at through such words as Illusion."

Illusion, Māyā, exists only through its relation with this All-supporting principle, the Brahman, and in describing the shape of Illusion of the All-Powerful Goddess, it is always the Principal shape that is described, and her worship should be understood to be the worship of the Principle of all.

The sacred utterances which envisage Illusion as 'error', differentiate it, however, from 'pure Illusion', because, in the Principle, there is no room for error.

The Brahman, which is the real object of all worship, forms the
substance of the power of Illusion and remains ever interwoven with her, even in the state of liberation. This is why the form of the object of worship need not be abandoned even by the liberated.

Being pervaded by the Principal Inner Ruler (अन्तर्वर्ती इलेक्ट्रा) all things, from the Earth to Illusion, are spoken of as divinities, since they always remain linked with the Universal Consciousness.

In the Eternal Wisdom, the Vedā, it is therefore said सबं शतिव श्रुत्स्थ “All this (Universe) is but the Brahman.”

In other words, all such expressions as Illusion, Energy, Digit (Kalā), etc., which appear in the sacred utterances referring to the All-Powerful Goddess, should all be understood to refer indirectly to the Principle, particularized by Illusion, Energy, etc. Hence, when we speak of the All-Powerful Goddess, this always implies the Brahman qualified by his power of Illusion.

This same Power of Illusion envisaged as the power of Viṣṇu, the All Pervader, is the seed of all existence.

तेन कैकीभुक्तज्ञानमाह विश्वस्यविद्य प्रसादे मायाः

“Thou art the Energy of the Pervader (Vaishnavi-Sakti) of boundless procreative powers, thou art the seed of the Universe, the Supreme Power of Illusion.”

These and similar sayings make it clear that the All-Powerful Goddess has Power of Illusion for her nature.

The way of her worship is explained in different scriptures.

WHY THE DIVINE POWER OF ILLUSION SHOULD BE WORSHIPPED

Some say that, according to the Vedāntā, this Divine Power Māyā is but delusion; to follow her cannot lead to Liberation, and the worship therefore of the All-Powerful Goddess is not worthy of respect.

But in the Tāpaniśā Upaniṣad it is said:

माया वा एवा भारतिन हिसतं सचमतं सुजतं, सचमतं रक्षतं, सचमतं संहरतं, तस्मान साक्षरतं शक्ति विद्याय पता मायाः शक्तिः वेद, स सुतस्वं जगति, त स पाप्यानं तरति, सोस्युते स्वर्गभेद महति विश्वभूते।
"This Man-lion's Power of Illusion (Nārasimhī Māya) gives birth to the whole manifest universe. It protects all, and also destroys all. A man should aim to know this Power of Illusion.

He who knows it conquers Death, crosses beyond sin, reaches immortality, and attains Great Fortune (Mahatī Śrī)."

The Principal quiddity (Brahmā-tattvā) is everywhere equally pervasive. The teachers therefore speak of a Supreme Causality found in everything. For those who seek pleasure or those who seek Liberation the worship of the All-Powerful Goddess is supremely essential. She is Principal Sapience (Brahmā-Vidyā); she is the Mother of the Universe. By her the whole world is pervaded.

बो न पूजयेते निलय चरिकां भक्त्वस्यामु।
मस्मीत्वार्थम पुष्पासि निम्न हेत्तमेश्वरी॥

"Who does not ever worship the fearful Goddess devoted to her devotees, his merits the Goddess reduces to ashes and burns him too."

The Worship of the All-Powerful Goddess, representing the Unqualified Principle, the Brahman, is advocated in the Kāli and Tarā Upanishads.

अतः संसारनाशय साक्षियामातमन्यो--
माराध्वेतु परा शकि' मपश्वोल्लासवंजिताम्।

(Sūtā-Samhitā)

"To be freed from the world one should worship the Witness of All, the Transcendent Energy whose shape is the Self and in whom exist neither the manifested world nor its pleasures."

निम्नुण सगुण वैतिष्ठितद्विभक्तममनोबिज्ञिनः।
सगुणा रागिनिः सैन्य सिगुणा तु निरागिनिः॥

(Devī Bhāgavatā)

"She is said by the learned to be of two kinds, Unqualified and qualified, those bound by attachment should worship her qualified form and those without attachment her Unqualified form."

THE ALL-POWERFUL GODDESS AND CREATION

When, through their being enjoyed, the fruits of action have become ripe and begin to wither, the universe dissolves and all manifestation
is merged in the Womb of Mâyā, the Divine Power of Illusion. Then Mâyā herself dissolves into the qualitiless Principle, her support.

The Unmanifest (Avyaktā) dissolves into the qualitiless Principal Person.

These words of the Viṣṇu Purāṇā make it clear that the traditional scripture considers that even the Unmanifest (Avyaktā) dissolves into the Principle, the Brahman. The 'Unmanifest', is but a synonym of Mâyā. When the time comes for all beings to enjoy the fruits of their actions, then, in the All-Powerful Goddess, arises the 'desire to create' (सिकृत्या) or a 'particularized desire to act' (विविक्षिता). This 'particularized desire to act' is the non-existence previous to existence (प्रागभाव). It is the result of destruction and is due to the maturing of actions. In the state of equilibrium of the three fundamental qualities there is no process such as maturing of actions, and it is very difficult to see why this state of equilibrium should ever be broken. We know however that by the strength of a decision to wake at a certain time, taken before going to sleep, we can wake at that given time, the decision to wake having remained outside the realm of the state of sleep; so, similarly, by the strength of the Divine resolve taken before the Universe is dissolved, the state of equilibrium comes to an end at a given time and the previous actions bear fruit and the state of non-existence previous to existence comes to an end. Then the fruits of actions having ripened the tendency called 'Creative Illusion' (Mâyā Vṛitti) arises. The Principle, the Brahman, when qualified by this Power of Illusion arising from matured actions, is called 'Bindu', 'the point limit' [whence manifestation arises]. Being indivisible this point-limit is called Avyaktā the Unmanifest. It is a state of Mâyā and is therefore also spoken of as Mâyā, and, since it has not, like the 'Arch-Principle of existence' (Mahat), issued from another principle, it is considered, although born from a special state of Mâyā to be Mâyā itself.

Causation cannot be attributed to the Brahman alone. We have to realize that the possibility of causation pertains to the Brahman qualified by the Power of Illusion in the subtle state. This Unmanifest (Avyaktā) state can be understood by comparing it with the state of
germinating potentiality (उज्ज्वलत्व) intermediary between the seed and the sprout, when the seed begins to develop through contact with earth, warmth and moisture. The equality of the three qualities is the 'seed' stage, pure Māyā. When the seed sprouts we have the 'resultant stage' (Kāryā-avasthā). Pure volition (Iksaṇa) and "I-notion" (Aham-kārā), are respectively the Arch-principle of existence (Mahat-tattvā) and the Principle of individual existence (Aham-tattvā). In the individual world we may take the state of sleep as the 'seed' stage. The inclination to awaken is the Unmanifest (Avyaktā) state. The Conscious deprived of its analytical faculty is the Arch-Principle of existence (Mahat-tattvā). From the Arch Principle of Existence and the Principle of Individual existence the multiplicity of the gross resulting world arises. When the Unmanifest state (Avyaktā) is inwardly directed this is known as the fourth stage (Turiyā). When it is outwardly directed it is known as the 'causal body' (kāraṇā dehā). From the Unmanifest outwardly directed arise subtle and gross bodies, the whole of the spatial universe inclusive. The principle which rules the gross body whether individual or universal as well as the senses of perception the inner faculties is known as the Creator Brahmā united with the Lady of the Lake (Sarasvatī). The distinctive body (Liṅgā dehā) (or transmigrating body) is ruled by the Pervader Viṣṇu with (his consort) the Divinity of Fortune (Lākṣmī). The Principle ruling over the causal body is the Lord of Tears Rudrā (Śiva) with his consort the Fair Lady Gaurī (Pārvati). The entities personifying the as yet individualized fourth stage are the Lady of the spheres (Bhuvanesvarī) and the Arch Divinity of Fortune (Mahā-Lākṣmī).

THE DUALISM OF NATURE AND PERSON

In the Devī-atharvā-śirṣā, the Goddess speaks of herself as:

अहे ब्रह्मसूक्तिविभा कस्म प्रकृतिपुलक्षरं जगत् शृवात्ससःः

"I am the intrinsic shape of the Principle. From me arises the world which is Nature and Person, and the void and the non-void."

Thus, those who say that the Goddess is only the stage of Nature
are wrong. To show that she is the Self of all she describes herself as Joy and non-Joy, knowing and unknowing, Principle and non-Principle. The Unborn Goddess said: I am the whole moving universe अहमबलिंगर जगत। She is Eternal Wisdom, Sapience and non-Sapience, the unborn and the not-born.

शक्ति: पुरुष: सबूँ सिद्ध: सबूँ महेश्वरी
विषयो महवानाशो विषय: परमेश्वरी॥
मान: स एवं विश्वात्मा मन्तव्यस्तु महेश्वरी ।
अकाश: शक्तिर देव: पूर्विकी शक्तिप्रया॥

“All that is male is the giver of Happiness, all that is female is the Arch-Goddess. Thought is the Divine Lord, the perceived the Divine Lady. Thought is the Self of the world, the object of thought is the Arch-Goddess. Ether is the giver of Happiness, the Earth is his beloved.”

This dual principle manifests itself in many ways as ocean and shore, tree and creeper, word and meaning, substance and energy, male and female, ritual and object of worship, action and resulting quality, manifested and manifesting, planning and result, understood and understanding, Eternal Law and conforming behaviour, satisfaction and its feeling, desire and its enjoyment, light and lamp, night and day, flag and staff, thirst and greed, desire and attachment. By the word Šakti (Energy) many merely understand Power of Illusion (Māyā) or Ignorance (Avidyā), but the word Šakti also refers to the Energy of Delight (Āhaldinī Šakti), which is the intrinsic nature of the All-Powerful, and to Transcendent Nature whence living beings arise. Just as sweetness is the intrinsic nature of sugar, raisins or honey, so Energy is the intrinsic Nature of the All Powerful.

NATURE (PRAKRITI) AND HER THREE QUALITIES

In the Glorious (Virāt), totality of the gross Universe, in the Embryo of Splendour (Hiraṇyāgarbha) totality of all Supersensible states, in the Unmanifest (Avyākṣṛitā) the total causal state, which states are also spoken of as the Creator (Brahmā), the Pervader
(Viṣṇu) and the Lord of Tears (Rudrā = Śiva) one of the three basic tendencies (gunaśās) respectively predominates. The Power of Illusion represents the state of equilibrium of these three basic tendencies, dependent only on the Pure Unqualified Principle, the Brahmaṇ. In the worship of the All-Powerful Goddess, it is the Fourth stage Principle (Turiyā Brahman) particularized by Creative Illusion which is aimed at; to show this the All-Powerful Goddess is called by such names as Illusion (Māyā), Nature (Prakṛiti), etc.

तमो वा इत्मेक्षमप्र आविशिली तत्परे स्वात्तारे गृहुरितं विषमत्वं प्रयातपेतः रजः
	तद्रजः बलवीरितं विषमत्वं प्रयातपेतः सत्यम्।

"First there was only darkness, the descending tendency. Then, instigated by the Supreme Principle it became unbalanced and the expanding tendency appeared. And in turn this expanding tendency became unbalanced and the ascending tendency appeared."

(Maitrāyaṇī Śruti)

Nature (Prakṛiti) which represents the state of equilibrium of these three fundamental tendencies dwells in the Supreme Principle, the Parā-Brahman. These tendencies are her constituent parts. The Principle, the Brahmaṇ, when particularized by this or that tendency is but a part of Itself. Only when characterized (upalaksitaḥ) by Root Nature (Mūla-Prakṛiti) as a whole, does the Principle, the Brahmaṇ, represent the fourth transcendent impartible stage.

Although, according to sayings in the Primordial Revelation (Śruti) सारं कलिवेन प्रायं “All this Universe is but the Brahmaṇ”, for example—, the Principle, the Brahmaṇ, which is pure Consciousness, is said to be everything, yet to conform with the mental inclinations of devotees, all kinds of shapes are named. The teachings relate to the impure, pure, purer and purest attributes of the Brahmaṇ. According to the relative purity of the mirroring surface, there is a relative improvement in the reflection, similarly, according to the relative purity of the attributes, there is a relative betterment in the manifestation (prakṛtya) of the Principle. It is to show this that the Scriptures describe the ever greater and greater splendours of (divine) magnificence (viṣṇūti). In comparison with any one tendency or quality the stage of equilibrium of all the tendencies or qualities is higher, and the worship of
the All-Powerful Goddess is the highest. Moreover, the first relation of the Principle, the Brahma is with the Creative Power of Illusion. His relation with qualities exists only through Māyā. Therefore the relation of the Principle with the state of equilibrium of the qualities, is one of non-differentiation.

In the Completive Scriptures, the Purāṇas the word 'Nature' (Prakṛiti) is said to mean that which in Creation is transcendent (Paramā).

प्रकृत्याचक: प्रकृत स्वतिष्टाचल: स: प्रकृतिःत्ता।

स्त्रोणि यां परमं देवी प्रकृतिः सा प्रकृतिः।

"The syllable 'Pra' means higher (Prakṛṣṭa); 'kṛiti' (the deed) stands for the Creation (Sriṣṭi). Hence, She, who in Creation is transcendent, is the Goddess celebrated as Nature (Prakṛiti)."

THE UNBORN AJĀ

मायान्तु प्रकृति बिद्यामायिन्तु महेश्वरम्

"Illusion is the Nature (Prakṛiti) (of the spatial universe, Viśvā); and the [Principle, the Brahma,] particularized by Power of Illusion, is Arch-Divinity."

Elsewhere this Power of Illusion is spoken of as the Unborn or the she-goat, Ajā.

अजामेकान्त द्विद्विक्कल्पानं बद्धं: जान: सुजानानं स्वप्नः।

अजोकान्तः ज्ञाताभिरुचिते जातायथानः सुकामोगाम्यः।

"One single she-goat (Ajā) red, white and black gives birth to many small ones which look just like her. One he-goat enjoying pleasure at her side follows her; the others having enjoyed her abandon her."

Like the she-goat, Nature, of triple quality, gives birth to the world. First begotten is the Arch-Principle, Mahat, the Universal Intellect. In it too are found the three fundamental qualities. Its black quality is the descending tendency (Tamo guṇa) whose nature is to veil. Its white quality is the ascending tendency (Sattvā guṇa) whose nature is to illumine. Its red quality is the expanding tendency
(Raja gunā) whose nature is to please. Some of the goats, after enjoying the spotted she-goat, whose children are likewise spotted, still follow her, while others, having enjoyed her, abandon her. So also some living beings after enjoying Nature follow her who, spotted with her three qualities, procreates the world, while others, having finished enjoying her, abandon her. Thus this Un-born, this she-goat Ajā is the Power of Illusion.

To perform any action, Divinity (Īśvarā) must act through her who is his Nature (Prakṛti).

प्रकृति स्वामबह्य संभवायात्ममायाय

"Taking the help of her who is my own, Nature I take birth through my Power of Illusion."  (Bhag. Gītā 9, 8)

Thus Divinity incarnates itself with the help of Nature (Prakṛti) and Nature, under the control of Divinity (Īśvarā), manifests the perceptible world.

मयायव्यक्तं प्रकृति सूक्ते सच्चाचरयाम

"Under my control Nature gives birth to the world of moving and unmoving things."  (id. 9, 10).

मम योजिन्महत्र तद्वित्यात्मम् वर्धामधम्

संवेशः सवं भूतानां ततो भवति महाति

"O Scion of Bharata! Nature is a womb for me: therein I set the germ; thence spring forth all born beings."

सबं योजितं कौलिन्य मुखयः सम्भवति या: ।

तासां वह महाधानिरघे वीजग्रहः पिता

(id. 14, 3)

"O Son of Kunti! the beings born in all species are divine images. Nature is the womb and and I am the father that gives the seed."  (id. 14, 4).

To pass beyond Nature and her three qualities is most difficult. Only by witnessing the supporting principle, the Brahman, can Nature be transgressed.

1. Nature (Prakṛti) is the 'Principle' or cause (Brahmā) of Universal Intellec (Mahāt).
"My Power of Illusion is divine and of great virtue. It is hard
to pass beyond it."

"Only those who know the nature of existence and of liberation
can pass beyond them."

KNOWING AND UNKNOWING

Māyā, the Divine Power of Illusion, is sometimes spoken of as
Ignorance (Avidyā) or as Un-knowing (Ajñānā). Unknowing in this
connotation is not mere absence of knowledge, but is beyond Knowledge
and that unspeakable state which is pure 'Being'. Only from such
transcendent Un-knowing can arise the veiling which is the first cause,
अज्ञानेनावलंत्वत्वम् and "Knowledge be veiled by Un-knowing."

In this utterance Knowledge is the intrinsic form of the Principle,
the Brahman veiled by Un-knowing. This is only possible if Un-knowing
be the very form of existence itself, because the non-existent cannot
veil. Like Un-knowing, the power of Illusion, Māyā, is also compared
with a veil.

Although Self-illumined,

नाहें प्रकाशः सर्व स्थ सोमायात्मस्माहः;

"None can see me who am surrounded by the reintegrant power
of Illusion."

'Me', here, means the "I", the very first notion of individual existence
(asmāt), which is not distinct from the Supreme Principle the Parā-
Brahman.

अहमः "I am the Unknown."
मामहः न ज्ञानम् "I do not know myself."
स्वामहः न ज्ञानम् "I do not know you."

It is in this way that the main Un-knowing can be experienced.
If Un-knowing were mere absence of knowing, such experience could
not take place, for

वाणात्मक्षा वाणात्मक्षा वा सर्व वस्तु साध्यमात्मक्षम्.
“In the form of knowing or of un-knowing, all things are illumined by the Witness.”

Thus, whether we say घटो जातः “The pitcher is known”, or whether we say घटो न शास्ते “The pitcher is unknown”, the pitcher, in one case the object form of knowing, in the other of un-knowing, is in either case illumined by the Witness.

THE VEIL OF IGNORANCE (AVIDYĀ)

“Ignorance is the Perishable and Sapience the Immortal. He who rules over Sapience and Ignorance is other.”

“Young, well-shapen, with her four plaited locks, and the golden glow of melted butter, she conceals knowledge. Near-by, where the Gods receive their share, two mighty birds are seated.” (Ṛg Veda X, 114, 3).

This hermetic utterance describes the ignorance aspect of the All-Powerful Goddess, who as power of Illusion, appears under four shapes: gross, subtle, causal and undifferentiated (samādhi). Divine and and mortal beings, here compared to the two birds, are both connected with her.

[As the Veiling Power, the Goddess is likened to Primordial] Darkness, the descending tendency, covering the inner Reality (tattvā).

“Erstwhile, everywhere upon these formless waters, was Darkness deeper than darkness”.

“This essence of Darkness was ; unknowable, without characteristics, unspeakable, indefinable, it spread everywhere as if asleep.”

THE BIRTH OF THE ALL-POWERFUL GODDESS

The power of consciousness is an emanation from the Supreme Self, The Divine birth of the All-Powerful Goddess expresses this. [ Her
appearances within the manifest world are too, spoken of as her births.]

"She, the embodiment of the Universe, is eternal, by her all is pervaded. Yet I heard many tales of her rise. When she manifests herself to accomplish the work of the Gods, she, although eternal, is said by the world to have arisen."

**THE AVATARS OF THE ALL-POWERFUL GODDESS**

Veiling herself with her own power of Illusion (Māyā Śhākti) she appears as the 'Belle of the three cities' (Tripurā sundari), the 'Lady of the Spheres' (Bhuvaneśhvari), and also as the 'Pervader' (Viṣṇu), the 'Lord of Sleep' (Śiva), the 'Dark Prince' (Krīśṇa), 'Prince-Charming' (Rāma), the 'Lord of the Numbered' (Gaṇāpati), the 'sun' (Sūryā) and under many another shape.

It is the Consciousness, witness of all, dwelling inside the three Cities formed by the gross, subtle and causal body, which is the 'Belle of the Three Cities'. When this inner Essence (tattvā) becomes particularised (विशिष्ट) by the power of Illusion, 'Descents' (Avatārās) take place, like Rāma the Charming and the Dark Śhri Krīśṇa. The Arch-Divinity of Fortune (Mahā Lakṣmī), the Arch-Lady of the Lake (Mahā Sarasvatī), the Arch-Fair Lady (Mahā Gaurī), indeed all such Divine aspects, are also 'Descents' of this eternal All-Powerful Goddess.

The All-Powerful Goddess shines forth in all shapes. She, the mother, stands in the twilight rituals (sandhyā), in the Solar hymns (sāvitrī); as root-nature, she is the Mother of the world; at the time of creation, she creates, at the time of preservation she preserves and in the end she destroys. She is Arch-Sapience (Mahā-vidyā), that is, she is the Principal Sapience (Brahmā-vidyā) manifested in 'Thou art
that' (tat-tvam-asī) and other arch-utterances. She is Illusion in the shape of body, of self, of intellect. She is the faculty of memory (medhā) on which all meaning depends. She is arch-tradition (Mahā-smṛiti). Through her alone can the countless past aeons be remembered and creation take place in accordance with them. She is arch-delusion (mahā-mohā) which is the desire for vulgar pleasures. She is too, the Arch-Goddess, the Energy of Indrā, Lord of the Angels, and of other deities. She is the power of the Golden-eyed Hiranyakṣī and of the other Titans (asurās). She is Root-Nature of which the three fundamental qualities (guna’s) are the display. She is the Night of Time (kālā rātrī), the Night of Death (maranā rātrī), the Night of the Lord of Sleep (Śivā rātrī). She is the arch-Night (mahā rātrī), the Night of Destruction (Pralayā rātrī). Incarnated on the eighth day of the moon when Kṛṣṇā was born, the All-Powerful Goddess beguiling Kansā and his assistants, helped to bring the child Kṛṣṇā to the house of the cowherd Nandā. She is Fortune (Śrī), she is Divinity (Īśvarā), she is Modesty (lajjā), and she is Intellect (buddhi).

THE ICON OF THE ALL-POWERFUL GODDESS

यत्स्याः स्वरूपं ब्रह्माद्यो न ज्ञानिति तस्मादुच्छ्यते अहो यथया अन्तो न दर्शते
तस्मादुच्छ्यते अनन्तः…………एकैव सर्वं व विद्यते तस्मादुच्छ्यते |

"She whose shape even the Creator and the other Gods cannot know, is called the Unknowable. She whose end cannot be found is called the Endless. She who is everywhere present is called the One."

शाननां विक्रमातीता शृंगारां शृंगारपिणी |
यत्स्याः परतरं नास्ति दैव दुर्गा प्रकृतिभाव |
यतो वाची निवर्तन्ते अभ्राय रमस् सह |

"Of all knowledge she is transcendent Consciousness, of all voids the Void. She, beyond whom there is no beyond, is sung as Durgā, the Goddess-beyond-Reach", "whence words and mind fall back, having no hold."
The root of the whole manifest Universe (prapañchā) and of the divine 'descents' (avatārās) is in the First Goddess (Prathamā) the Arch-divinity of Fortune Mahā Lakṣhmī. She represents the equilibrium of the three fundamental qualities and is the feminine aspect of Supreme Divinity. She has a dual shape, being either definable or indefinable (alakṣhyā).

In every thing five aspects are found, three which pertain to the Principle, the Brahman, and two which pertain to Illusion Māyā; the three pertaining to the Principle are Existence (asti), Radiance (bhāti) and Lovability (priyā), and the two pertaining to Illusion are Name (nāma) and Shape (rupā).

It is, verily, for the sake of her devotees, that the qualitiless, true, eternal, All-Powerful Goddess, who is the shape of all that exists, appears in qualified form.

Of her innumerable shapes, the following nine are also predominant:

(1) The Daughter of the Mountain (Śhailā putrī), (2) the Chaste (Brahmachārīni), (3) the Moon-bell (Chandrā ghanṭā), (4) the Spell (Kuşmāṇḍā), (5) the Mother of the Lord of War (Skandā Mātā), (6) Daughter of Kātyāyanī (Kātyāyanī), (7) the Night of Death (Kālā rātrī), (8) the Arch-Fair Lady (Mahā Gaurī), (9) the Giver of Attainment (Siddhidā).

कार्याप्रि सगुणा त्वं च वहनुरू नित्यं श्रयम
परम्भुस्कृतां त्वं सत्त्वा नित्या समातनी ||
सर्वं स्कृतां सर्वं शी सर्वं धाराराम्या पेतारा ||
सर्वं नीत्यस्कृतां च सर्वं मुखा नित्याश्रया ||
सर्वं झं सर्वं शब्दोभद्रा सर्वं मल्लक्कुल्ला ||

"For the sake of action thou art qualified although thyself unqualified. Thou art the intrinsic form of the transcendent principle (Parā Brahman), true, eternal, ancient. Thou art the shape of all things, the Ruler of all, the support of all, beyond the beyond, Thou art intrinsic shape of all seed, the root of all, resting on none, all-knowing, ever-auspicious, the felicity of all felicities."
The Descending Tendency

The Primordial Arch-Goddess, the Arch-Divinity of Fortune, Mahā-Lakṣhmī, seeing the whole Universe devoid of support, entered the sole descending tendency and took upon herself a new and wonderful shape.

Many were the names and shapes and corresponding works assigned to the Arch-Divinity of Fortune when she entered the descending tendency; for she is always impersonating the conditionings of time. Thus, within the unstable state of unmanifest Nature, she took amongst others, the shape of the Arch-power of Time, Mahā Kālī, and, as such, was both the measure of the existence of Brahmā and the other Gods and their destroyer. When she appeared, this Arch-power of Time asked of the Root-Goddess, the Arch-divinity of Fortune: "Pray tell me my name and work." But Mahā Kālī is not really distinct from Mahā Lakṣhmī the Root-Goddess, although there is a difference in their representation. Mahā Kālī is depicted as black like collyrium, with splendid teeth and lovely face, long eyes and a slender waist. She holds a sword, a pitcher, a skull and a shield, and wears a garland of gems and skulls, or sometimes of skulls only.

Since she could delude the Creator Brahmā and other Gods, the Arch-divinity of Fortune, Mahā Lakṣhmī, was also named Arch-Illusion, Mahā Māyā; always ready to devour all things, she was named Hunger, Kṣudhā; ever desirous of drinking in all knowledge and of gaining the devotion of devotees, she was Thirst, Trīṣhṇā; being of great prowess she was the single-handed Hero Ekā Viśā.

The Ascending Tendency

When, however, the Arch-divinity of Fortune entered the infinitely pure ascending tendency, she took upon herself another lovely form, shining softly like the light of the moon. She appeared as a beautiful divine woman holding a rosary, an elephant-hook, a lute (vīnā) and a book. Again names and corresponding works were given to her. She was Arch-Sapience (Mahā Vidyā), Arch-Word (Mahā Vānī), Eloquence (Bhāratī), Voice (Vāk), the Lady of the Lake (Sarasvatī),
the lady of High lineage (Āryā), the Knower of the Principle (Brahmī),
the cow of Abundance (Kāmā Dhenu), the Womb of the Seed (Bīja-
garbhā), the Guardian of Wealth (Dhanesīvarī).

The Expanding Tendency

But, since the Arch-divinity of Fortune embodies the state of
equilibrium of all the three fundamental qualities, she therefore also
entered the expanding tendency. We then hear her described as red
in colour, the colour of the expanding tendency. Having thus entered
the expanding tendency, Mahā Lakṣīmi addressed Mahā Kālī, the Arch-
Power of Time, and Mahā Sarasvatī, the Arch-Lady of the lake and
said to them: “Each one of us has now to manifest as man and woman
in the embrace of love (rūpā mithūnā).”

Having spoken, the Arch-divinity of Fortune gloriously enthroned
on the pure lotus of knowledge, became bi-form as man and woman.
The names of the male form were Brahmā (the Vast), Dhātā (the
Support), etc. while the female names were Śrī (Fortune), Padmā
or Kamalā (Lady of the Lotus), Lakṣīmi (Divinity of Fortune) and
many others.

Arch-power of Time also became bi-form, of which the man had
a blue throat, red arms, fair thighs and the moon as a diadem; the
woman, beautiful, was white. The man’s names were Rudrā (Lord of
Tears), Śaṅkarā (Giver of Happiness), Sthānu (Dry Tree Trunk),
Kapardī (Matted-Haired), Tri-lochanā (Three-eyed); the woman’s
names were Trayī-Vidyā (Triple Sapience), Kāmā Dhenu (cow of
Abundance), Bhāṣā (Language), Akṣharā (the Lettered), Svarā (the
Syllabled), etc.

Of the pair which sprang from the Lady of the Lake, the male
names were Viśnū (the Ever-pervader), Kṛiṣṇā (the Dark Lord), Hṛiṣhi-
ka-Īśā (Lord of the Senses), Vāsudevā (Indwelling Divinity), Janārdana
(Tormentor of Men); the female names were Uṃā (Peace of the
Night), Gaurī (Fair Lady), Satī (Faithful), Ćaṇḍī (the Wrathful),
Sundari (the Beautiful), Subhagā (the Fortunate), Śhivā (the Lady
of Sleep).

The Arch-divinity of Fortune gave the Creator Brahmā in marriage
to the Lady of the Lake Sarasvatī, the Lord of Tears Rudrā to the Fair
Lady Gaurī, and In-dweller Vāsudeva to the Divinity of Fortune
Lakṣmī. Brahmā with Sarasvatī made the Universe, Rudrā with
Gaurī destroyed it and Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī maintained it.

In creation, motion and power to know are necessary. The motion
of the expanding tendency and the Power of knowing of the ascending
tendency can create. Therefore it is through Sarasvatī that Brahmā
creates.

It is through the inertia of Tamas and the movement of Rajas that
maintenance exists. Therefore with his spouse Lakṣmī Viṣṇu protects.
Destruction takes place through the light of the ascending tendency
and the inertia of the descending tendency. Therefore, it is with his wife Gaurī
that Śiva destroys.

As Mahā Lakṣmī:

The All-Powerful Goddess, who sprang forth from the body of
all the Gods, has a thousand, indeed, countless arms, although adepts
worship her image with but eighteen arms. Her face is white, made
from light streaming from the Lord of sleep, Śiva. Her arms made
from Viṣṇu are a deep blue, her rounded breasts made of Somā, the
sacrificial elixir, are pure white. Her waist is Indrā, the King of Heaven,
and therefore, red. Her feet sprung from Brahmā are, therefore, also
red, while her calves and thighs, sprung from Varuṇā, the Lord of
Waters, are blue. She wears a gaily coloured lower garment, brilliant
garlands and a veil. Starting from the lower left hand, she holds in
her hands the following attributes: a rosary, lotus, arrow, sword, hatchet,
club, discus, axe, trident, conch, bell, noose, spear, stick, hide, bow,
chalice and water-pot. He who worship this Arch-divinity of Fortune,
Mahā Lakṣmī, becomes Lord of all the worlds.

As the Arch-power of Time, Mahā Kāli:

In this shape, the Arch-divinity of Fortune is the sleep of reinte-
geration (yogā nidrā) of Viṣṇu. To awaken Viṣṇu, Brahmā praised
her. She has ten faces, ten arms, ten feet and thirty-three great eyes.
Terrifying to her enemies, to her devotees her shape is the very essence,
basis of all.
As the Lady of the Lake, Sarasvati:

In this shape, the Arch-divinity of Fortune is sometimes described as having eight arms bearing the attributes: arrow, mace, spear, discus, conch, bell, plough and bow. He who worships her thus acquires universal knowledge.

**THE ALL-POWERFUL GODDESS AS THE TEN ARCH SAPIENTES (MAHĀ VIDYĀS)**

The Arch-Power of Time (Mahā Kāli):

Mahā Kāli is connected with the time of destruction and is therefore black in colour. She stands upon a corpse because she stands upon the dead, powerless universe. The power which destroys enemies inspires fear. The laughter of the warrior who has killed his opponent makes him the more terrifying. The All-Powerful Goddess, having abased the pride of the powerless world, laughs too. That which is complete is symbolised by the square she has therefore four arms. Four arms are always used to represent totality. She knows no fear, those who shelter in her likewise know no fear, therefore the All-Powerful Goddess shows the hand-gesture of allaying fear. Worldly happiness lasts but an instant, transcendent happiness is the All-Powerful Goddess herself. She is the support of both the living and the dead universes, She alone can succour the dead. The garland of skulls round her neck bears witness to this. The Universe is the vesture of this All-Powerful Goddess, shape of the Principle, the Brahman. At the time of destruction all dissolves and the Goddess stands naked. Passing beyond the funeral pyre of all the worlds, all beings reach this Goddess made of the descending tendency (tamas), and who is said, therefore, to dwell in cremation grounds.

शवार्धं महाभिमां चोरतं तं हस्तमुखीम्।
चन्द्रश्च जाम जागुरुस्वरामायकरं शिवाम्॥
मुद्राक्षापारं पदं लक्ष्मीं बिगम्वरम्।
एवं संज्ञास्येत् कालं शमानालयवासिनीम्॥

"Standing on a corpse, fearful, with her terrible teeth and laughing mouth, she has four arms. Two of her hands hold a sword and a head,
the other two show the gestures of allaying fear and granting boons. She is the auspicious Divinity of Sleep. Wearing a garland of skulls the resplendent Goddess, her tongue lolling out, is clad only in space. Thus should the shape of Kālī, the Power of Time, who dwells on cremation grounds be meditated on."

The shape of this Arch-Power of Time Mahā Kālī is that Bliss beyond the beyond, which is the supremely transcendent Bliss-shape of the Principle the Brahman.

The Star ( Tārā ):

In the Embryo of Splendour ( Hiraṇyā-garbha ), the universal supersensible world, there exists light. In the Night of Time, which is the state of universal dissolution, this light appears, like a star, giving both knowledge of the supersensible world and the means to this knowledge. This Energy, or light, of the Embryo of Splendour is called Tārā.

Because of hunger, the Embryo of Splendour was at first terrible, but having found his food he was pacified. The Energy of this terrifying aspect of the Embryo of Splendour is the Star Tārā. When pressed by hunger, the Embryo of Splendour becomes the destroyer, and his Energy, therefore, is also destructive.

"Standing firmly with her left foot forward resting on a corpse, she laughs aloud, transcendent, her hands holding a sword, a blue lotus, a dagger and a begging-bowl. She raises her war-cry: Houn! Her matted yellow hair is bound with great poisonous blue snakes. Thus the terrifying Tārā beats the three worlds on the head."

Her four arms, too, are entwined with snakes, suggestive of destruction, while the serpents in her matted hair show how frightful are her poisonous emanations. When she is depicted as holding a head and a chalice, this suggests that in her fearful mood she drinks the sap of the world.
Jainās and Buddhists worship this Goddess, but it is the Buddhists mainly who know the secret of her worship.

"The proper way of my worship is the Buddhist way. O Janārdana. Tormentor of men! That way one man alone knows, none other knows it."

(Lalitā Upakhyanā)

It is chiefly under the guise of Sutārā, the Good Star, that she is worshipped by the Jainas.

Representing the Imperishable (अभोग्यं) she is also called the ‘Visible Lord’, Avalokitāśīhvarā.

"O great Goddess! Without perishing, Śiva, the Lord of Sleep, drank the Halāhala poison hence is he known as the Imperishable. The Arch-power of Illusion, who plays ever lustfully with him, is the Star Tārā."

The Girl of Sixteen (Śhodāshī):

The peaceful aspect of the Embryo of Splendour, subtle body of the Universe and identified with the Solar Principle, is called Śiva, the Lord of Sleep. His visible icon has five faces and in him the sixteen digits of total being are fully developed. He is therefore also called ‘the lad of Sixteen’ and the Energy of this five-faced One is called the ‘Girl of Sixteen,’ Śhodāshī, who

"shines like the orb of an infant sun, with four arms and three eyes, holding a noose, an elephant-hook, an arrow and a bow. I salute thee, auspicious Goddess."
The Lady of the Spheres (Bhuvanesvari):

The Support of the universe conceived as a developing entity is the three-mothered (Tri-ambakā). His Energy is the ‘Lady of the Spheres’.

उद्यनिद्वु तिमिन्दुकरीठा तुक्तुचा नवनवधवलाम।
स्मरस्वीती बर्दाऍहुशपाशा स्वातिकरा प्रभुमै शुभनिषायम्॥

“Shining like the risen day, with the moon as thy diadem, high breasted and two eyed, smiling, thy hands granting boons, allaying fear, and holding an elephant hook and a noose, I salute thee, Lady of the spheres.”

With the ambrosia made of Lunar essence, the sacrificial offering Somā, she quenches the thirst of the world. This is why the All-Powerful Goddess has placed the moon on her diadem. She takes care of the three worlds and feeds them, so one of her emblems is the gesture of granting boons (Varā mudrā). The sign of her kindness is her smile. The emblems of her ruling powers are the elephant driving-hook and the noose.

The Lady of the Spheres is also represented with other attributes. On the lower of her right hands she then holds a chalice, in the upper a mace, in the upper left a shield, in the lower the bilvā fruit (śrī phala) or fruit of Fortune. On her head are a serpent, a lingā and a yoni. Preciously coloured like molten gold, the All-Powerful Goddess wears a divine garland and ornaments of the same colour.

Her marvellous radiance illumines the Universe. The fruit in her hand represents ‘action’, her club the ‘power of action’; the ‘power of knowing’ (Jñāna śakti) is her shield, ‘tendency towards the Fourth Stage’ (turiyā-vṛitti) is the chalice. The lingā on her head is the ‘Person’ (puruṣā tattvā), the yoni is ‘Nature’ (prakṛti tattvā), the serpent is ‘Time’. The fruit in the hand of the Goddess signifies that she is the giver of the fruits, results of all actions; the club shows her to be the basis of the power of dispersion (vikṣepa śakti), i.e., the power of action (kriyā); the shield shows her to be the basis of the power of knowing, the chalice signifies that she is the sap of existence which is delight in the Self. The serpent,
the liṅgā and the yoni show her to be the shape of the Supreme Principle, the Parā-Brahman, support of the trilogy: Nature, Person and Time.

The Lady of the Spheres also represents the collected verses of the Eternal Wisdom, and she and the Arch-divinity of Fortune are one, although their attributes are different.

As the Beheaded (Cṛhinnā mastā):

The Consciousness which presides over the evolving universe is represented as a headless body (Kabandhā), whose Energy is the Beheaded Cṛhinnā mastā. Progress and regress constantly take place in the world, but when the measure of regress is small and that of progress great, the Lady of the Spheres appears, whereas when progress is small and regress great, the Beheaded rules. Her 'meditation' is as follows:

प्रत्यालीप्पम् सदैव दुःखी चिन्त शिरः कथा का,
विद्वस्तः लक्षणवशोषितम् ययां रिवन्नति मुद्यात्
नागान्धिरशीरोवरः बिनयाः हतुपत्तलङ्कुटाम्,
रस्यास्तक मनोमोचपरिध्वः ध्यायेमप्पस्येश्चामाम्।

"Her left foot ever forward in battle, she holds her severed head and a knife. Naked, she drinks voluptuously of the flow of the nectar of blood flowing from her beheaded body. The jewel on her forehead is held by a serpent. She has three eyes, her breasts are adorned with lotuses. Attracted to lust, she sits erect above the God of love. She looks like the red China-rose."

Her eyes are blue. On her heart lies a garland of blue lotuses.

The Fearful Goddess of the three Cities (Tripurā Bhairavī):

The presiding deity of the world's decline is the Southern icon (dakṣiṇā mūrti), or the Fearful Lord Time (Kāla Bhairavā). His Energy is the Fearful Goddess (Bhairavī). Her description for meditation is:

उद्नाटुसहस्वकार्तिमण्डलाम् शीरोमलिकाम्,
रक्ताङ्कुष्योपधारं जनवरी विघामरीं सर्वम्।
हस्तालौं दुःखेन द्विविलिसहस्त्यांविन्द्रधिशयम्,
द्रवीं बद्रहिंया मुददसुतदा बन्दे समन्दशितम्।

(Bhairavī tantrā)
“I bow to thee, who softly smilest with a glow crimson as that of a thousand risen suns, who wearest a silken veil and a garland of skulls. Blood smears thy breast, three voluptuous eyes adorn thy lotus face, the moon is in thy diadem. Thy lotus hands show the gestures of ‘victory’, sapience, the granting of boons and the allaying of fears.”

The Vaporous (Dhūmāvatī):

The Energy presiding over the total misfortune of the universe is the Vaporous ‘Dhūmāvatī’; because she has no male counterpart she is deemed a widow. The male element, the Person (Puruṣhā), here remains unmanifest. Consciousness, knowledge, are completely hidden. ‘Meditation’ (Dhyāna) on her is as follows:

विवर्ण चस्तिला दुर्धा दीया व मक्षामराः
विवुल्कस्त्यता वै च सा विचव्या विरुल्किता
कालक्षज्ञताः प्रस्थाति पवित्रत्वत्राश्वाः
पृथ्वी हस्तादेवाक्षाशी पुत्रहस्ता वराहनाः
प्रभुदयोपनाः तु भृत्यं कुटित्या कुटंतेक्षण
शृवणप्राचारिता निंथ्यं भयं भयं कल्हास्पदाः

“A woman of unhealthy complexion restless, wicked, tall, with a dirty robe and flying hair; with toothless gaps, she looks like a widow, and rides a chariot flying a pennon with a crow. With flaccid breasts, a winnowing basket in her hand, her eyes are cruel, her hands tremble, and her nose is long; she is deceitful in behaviour, and sly in looks. Insatiably hungry and thirsty, she inspires fear and is an instigator of quarrels.”

As the Deceitful (Bagalā):

The Energy presiding in the individual being over the desire to destroy his enemies, and in the Universal Being over the wish to destroy, is the Deceitful Bagalā. She should be meditated on thus:

विद्वामस्वयं करवेण द्वेबी वामेव श्रवणपरिपृड्यतान्तरम्
गदालितानां च उद्धृतोऽर पीताम्बरादेव विषुवा नामांति

“I bow to the two-armed goddess who with the right hand grasps the tongue of her enemy and with her left tortures him. She holds a mace and is clad in yellow.”
The Elephant Power (Matangi):

Matangi, the Elephant, is a name of the Lord of Sleep Shivā. His Energy is Matangi. Meditation on her is as follows:

"We meditate on Matangi, the Elephant-power, delight of the world. Dark, the white crescent in her garland, with her three lotus eyes, she sits resplendent on a jewelled throne, and fulfils the wishes of the devotees. Her two feet are honoured by the hosts of the Gods, she glows like the blue lotus, looking like the forest-fire which consumes the forest of demons. Holding in her four beautiful lotus hands the noose, sword, shield and elephant-hook, she gives to those who invoke her all they desire.

As the Lady of the Lotus (Kamalā):

The Energy of the Person, who is Shivā the Eternal (Sādā Shivā Purushā), is the Lady of the Lotus, Kamalā. Meditation on her is thus:

"With golden complexion bathed in the stream of ambrosia flowing from golden vessels held in the trunks of four white elephants, she looks like the Himalayas. Her hands grant boons, allay fear, and hold two lotuses; she has a brilliant diadem. Her hips, like ripe fruits, are loosely draped in a silken garment. We bow to her who stands upon a lotus."
OTHER SHAPES OF THE SUPREME GODDESS

The Amorous, Lalitā:

The favourable aspect of the Supreme Being is Lalitā, who is the Universe.

The Lady of Lust, Kāmeshvari:

The favourable aspect of the Supreme Being without attributes is called the Arch-left-hand Lord, Mahā Vāma-Iṣhvarā; while the favourable aspect of the Supreme Being with attributes, which pervade his limbs with the joy of existence, is the Lady of Lust, Kāmeshvari.

The qualitiless Lord of Sleep, Śivā, when united with the Lady of Lust, can do even such acts as the manifesting of the Universe. But,

श्रवणन्य युक्तो बिदं सतति शान् प्रभवितां,

नतेवेदेव देवो न खलु कुशलं स्पन्दितमपि।

"The Lord of Sleep, when separated from his Energy has no power even to move."

Without their Energies, the Creator Brahmā, the Pervader Viṣṇu, the Lord of Tears Rudrā, as well as their totality, the Supreme Lord, Iśhvarā, and beyond it, the Eternal Lord of Sleep, Sadā Śivā, are spoken of as the Great Ghosts. The first four Gods are conceived of as the four bed-posts of the Goddess of Lust, Kāmā-Iśhī; the Eternal Lord of Sleep is imagined as the bed-planks.

In the divine hand of the Lady of Lust, who takes shelter in the unqualified Principle, the Brahman, are a noose, an elephant-hook, a bow made of sugar-cane, and an arrow. Attachment is said to be the noose, enmity the elephant-hook, the mind the sugar-cane bow, words and objects of the senses the arrows of flowers. Another version has it that:

इष्के शक्तिसर्वार्थो वर्णसुधार्यो हरि।

विषयशक्तियो बाणमयुगी धनुजवलयो॥

"The noose is the power of desire, the elephant-hook represents knowledge, the brilliance of the bow and arrow is the power to act."
THE DESCRIPTION OF THE GODDESS IN THE DEVI SUKTA

The Devi Suktā aims to show that it is the absolute Supreme Principle, the Para-Brahman, which is known as the Goddess, the Devi.

The Goddess herself is made to say:

"I it is who roam as the Lord of Tears (Rudrā) or the In-Dweller (Vasu), I am the Sun (Ādityā) and the Gods who guard the world (Viśvā devā). Indrā the king of Heaven, Fire (Agni), and the Horse headed twins (Aśvinikumāra's) are under my control. I am the giver of the fruit of action to the performer of Ritual Sacrifices which nourish the Gods with offerings.

I am the Ruler, the giver of wealth, the knower of the essence of things. I come first in all Ritual Sacrifices, the manifest universe is my shape, [therefore] the Gods have backed me. They wished to enter the Sun. The shape of the Spatial Universe is my shape. Whatever is done anywhere, belongs to me in every way in every place.

From me comes the food you eat, all that you see, to which you bow, as well as the words you hear. Those who do not acknowledge me are destroyed. O thou learned in the Sacred Scripture, hear with respect that which I tell to thee.

It is I who govern that Principle of all, the Brahman, whom men and Gods worship. I become whatever I wish to become, fearful or great. I become the Creator Brahmā, the Seers, and the knowledge beautiful. At the time of the conquest of the three cities, it is I who pull the string of the bow of the Lord of Tears against the murderous Brahmadvit Titan. To gladden those who praise me, I fight their enemies, I become the sphere of space, highest form of the Supreme Self. As cloth is made from thread, so Ether and all the world is made of the Supreme Self. I am the primeval Waters (Ap), pervading the ocean-like Supreme Self like a thought. And I, the All-Powerful

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1. "Samudrītā prābhavato bhāviniḥ samudraḥ: pratayā
   "Living beings dissolve together in Him, hence the Supreme Self is called an Ocean (Samudrī)."

(End of page 191)
Goddess, am the endless conscious cause of the Spatial Universe which spreads within without and in the midst of this ocean. I dwell therefore in all beings, pervading them. Touching the end of space (duy-loka) and all other boundaries with my body whose substance is Power of Illusion, I stand as the causal state of all. Above the Earthly world, it is I who create the Father (Pitā), that is, Ether. The Seer, my cause made of water (jala), dwells in the midst of the water of the Ocean. Becoming his daughter I see in a vision this Devī Sukta. In other words, in the Ocean, that is, in the Intermediary sphere of space, (antarikṣa) dwells my cause, the Principal faculty of Consciousness (Brahmā-Chaitanya) in the body ‘made of water’ of the Gods. I am the beginning of all existing things and of all action. Like wind which acts of itself without instigation; so I, as transcendent Energy, perform all actions at my own pleasure. I exist beyond space and beyond earth. I am Principal Consciousness, aloof from all things, unconcerned.”

The Ritual of Worship

The Water:

The water offered to wash the feet (padya) of the Divine Mother symbolizes the perception of the divine Trinity Existence-Consciousness-Bliss pervading all the forms and names which constitute the moving Universe. The water-offering (arghya) symbolizes the perception of the Ultimate Principle Brahman, pervading the subtle world. Perception of the Principle as pervading perception itself is the water said to be offered to rinse the mouth. The bathing of the image symbolizes the perception of Consciousness and Bliss pervading the three fundamental qualities. To meditate, seeing in the Lady of Lust, Kāmeshvari, who embodies Consciousness, the object of all mental movements, is the consecration of the water.

The Ornaments:

The different ornaments offered symbolize qualities (of the Supreme Divinity), namely, to be without disguise (nirāñjanātvā), to be
incorruptible (ajarātvā), ignorant of sorrow (aśokatvā), immortal (amṛitātvā) and so on.

The Perfume:

The offering of perfume is the perception of Pure Consciousness pervading the earth element of which one's own body is made.

The Flowers:

The flower-offering is the perception of Pure Consciousness pervading the ether element.

The Incense:

The offering of incense is the perception of Pure Consciousness pervading the air element.

The Lamp:

The lamp-offering is the perception of Pure Consciousness pervading the fire element.

The Edibles:

The food-offering is the perception of the principle of immortality.

The Rice:

The rice-offering is the perception of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss in all things.

Lauds:

The offering of praise is the dissolution of words into the Principle, the Brahman.

The Waving of Lights:

The waving of lights is the discarding of the object of thought which is the inanimate world.

The Obeisance:

The obeisance is the dissolution of all thought into the Principle, the Brahman.
PRAISE OF THE GODDESS

"Singing thy praise, I halt through lassitude or find not words for thy qualities, not that thy qualities have an end."

All must persistently ask from the Mother the things they desire.

"Give me beauty, give me success, give me fame, defeat mine enemies."

"O Mother! Gods and Titans brush thy feet with the jewels of their diadems."

"O Mother Goddess! ever praised with devotion by the Dark Lord."

The All-Powerful Goddess is unknowable, limitless, one and multiple, everything. The Great Teacher Śaṅkarāchārya in beautiful words expressed the dual shape of the All-Powerful Goddess, qualified and non-qualified. Saying—

"O Daughter of the king of Mountains! the saints say that through the closing and opening of thine eyelids the universe arises or is destroyed. This world in its totality is destroyed at the closing of thine eyelid, hence in fear of destroying, thou remainest for ever without closing thine eyes."
"Thou art called Speech, the Goddess, daughter of the Creator. O Lady of the lotus! thou art the consort of the Remover of pain (Hari = Viśṇu). Thou wanderest with the Remover of sorrow (Harā—Śivā). Daughter of the mountain! Thy body is the fourth stage, the Unmanifest, difficult to attain. Thy greatness is beyond reach. O Great Illusion! Thou makest the world to move round and art the consort of the Supreme Principle."

The importance of devotion towards her is great. By the link of devotion, the devotee gets the All-Powerful into his power. This devotion is also itself the form of the Goddess. Besides being Energy, Devotion and Transcendent Knowledge, Supreme Bliss, the sweetness of the Supreme Principle, ocean of ambrosia, is also the form of the Goddess. Some explain in the following way the mystery of the five M's, the five practices of the left-hand way, the names of which all begin in Sanskrit by the letter M, and which are connected with wine (Madyā), meat (Mansā), fish (Matsyā), gesture (Mudrā) and copulation (Maithunā).

"Drinking the wine which flows from the lunar womb of the Centre of the thousand petals (at the summit of the head), killing with the sword of knowledge lust, anger, greed, delusion and other demoniacal beasts, and cooking the fish of deceit, calumny, envy, etc., showing the gestures of hope, desire and contempt, and enjoying the lustful beauties found along the spinal chord, a man attains to equanimity (Samā rasyā)."

"He who knows this crosses beyond sorrow."
"A TEMPLE UNDER CONSTRUCTION"

by NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

The road which leads from Puri to the temple of Konarak crosses the railway line about half a mile to the east of the Indradyumna Tank, in the eastern portion of the town. About one furlong, or a little more, from this crossing is situated the temple of Siddha Mahāvira. The temple is of the Bhadra order, and tradition says that it was built by King Indradyumna himself. But that apart, there is nothing in the building itself which can give any hint of its antiquity; except the image of Mahāvira which is worshipped within and a few stray pieces of sculpture set in the walls, here and there; these sculptures have in them the appearance of antiquity. Some of the pieces have been set in niches, or merely stuck to the walls by means of plaster. Among them, a remarkable piece was noticed some time ago by Shri Suryanarayan Das of Puri; and he drew my attention to it when I was in Puri in October last.

The sculptured panel referred to above, is about a foot long, and set in plaster in one of the corners of the northern face of the temple of Mahāvira. It shows a temple in process of construction; and as such, it possesses very great importance from the point of view of architectural history. The only other pieces of sculpture of a like nature, with which I am acquainted, come from the temples of Khajuraho in Central India. In one of them a mason is engaged in blocking out a piece of stone while he sits upon the ground, while six labourers are shown carrying a carved block slung from the middle of a long wooden pole. Just beside that is shown the picture of a man and woman locked in amorous embrace. But we have not hitherto seen any represen-
tation showing how blocks of stone were actually lifted to the top of temples, which often reached great heights; the panel in Siddha Mahâvira shows how that was actually done (inset on p. 198).

The temple depicted in that panel, has been constructed up to the end of the 'bāra'; the construction of the 'gândi' has proceeded to a slight extent; and two masons are shown working at the edges of the construction. A person, with a projecting coiffure, stands a little away in front, with one hand raised; probably in the act of giving some direction to the masons. A much weathered image of a man appears at the foot of the temple, near the king; and it is not unlikely that this may be the image of the chief architect receiving instructions from the king. An attendant holds an umbrella over the head of the king, from behind. On the farther side of the temple, where a piece of stone is being carried up an inclined plane, there stands a Sâdhu, with a 'kamanḍalu' slung from his left arm, while his right hand is apparently raised in a pose of benediction. The weathered image of a soldier, carrying a shield and arms, comes after that; while above the whole scene, is a frieze containing pictures of a number of ducks; this being technically known as a 'hamsalahari' (not shown in the reproduction).

The most interesting portion of the relief consists of the inclined plane, which reaches from the ground to the top of the 'bāra.' One end rests on the ground, while the other is on the highest part of the construction itself. It has three pillars to support it, each pillar being broader at the top than below.

The block of stone, which is being carried up, is rectangular in shape. It has a long pole tied with ropes to its upper surface. Each end of that pole is slung by means of ropes, through whose upper end carrying poles have been inserted. The two carrying poles rest on the shoulders of two workmen each, who are shown labouring their way up the inclined plane. The block of stone in question has actually been lifted off the ground while being carried up. This means that it cannot be a very heavy piece, for four men are able to lift it off the ground by their unaided strength. The question is, how were still heavier blocks actually carried up to great heights. It is not unlikely that such blocks of stone were dragged over wooden rollers or stone balls laid along the
inclined plane for the time being. But there is nothing in the present sculpture to show how that was actually done.

Anyway, the importance of the present piece lies in the fact that it tells us how the inclined plane was actually constructed. There is a tradition current in Orissa that, as a temple was gradually built up, a solid earthen slope was built up on one side of it from the ground to the top of the construction; and stone blocks were carried up this solid slope in course of the work. The panel in Siddha Mahāvīra tells a different story; and that much is solid gain for our purposes.

Now for the age of the sculpture. The carving itself is crude; and as it is in coarse sandstone, the piece has suffered considerably from the effects of weathering. Personally I have a suspicion that it came originally from the temple of Konarak; Siddha Mahāvīra is, as we have said, nearly on the way from Puri to Konarak; and it is also well-known that a large number of carved pieces of stone have been carried away from the latter place, from time to time, and set in the face of small village shrines in the neighbouring villages. The present piece seems to be one like that; and if my suspicion is justified, it gives an added interest to the panel described above. The stone is of a coarse variety; and belongs to the celebrated Athgarh Series, and of a texture with which we are familiar in the temple of Konarak itself. The amount of weathering to which it had been subjected before it was brought to the temple of Siddha Mahāvīra, is exactly equal to what we are accustomed to associate with carvings near the ground at Konarak, reached easily by blasts of wind and sand, before the protective ring of pines was planted there by the Public Works Department. Of course, all this is no proof; but it is well to remember that the rest of the temple of Siddha Mahāvīra does not at all show any evidence of weathering, such as we find associated with the piece of sculpture in question.

In any case, although we may not be able to assign a definite date to this piece of sculpture, it throws new light upon the actual work of construction of a temple.
A Deed of Adoption and Its Reliefs

by St. Kramrisch

A light yellow metal tablet (H. c. 10½") cast in relief on its front side and having a Telugu inscription engraved on its back (Pls. XIV-XV), records an adoption which was effected in Golconda, near the present Hyderabad, in the year 1294 A. D. (Śaka 1217) on Thursday, the 30th November.

Five craftsmen being Brāhmaṇaṣ by their calling and caste, collectively adopted as their son a young man, a Seddi of the Komadi class, a Vaiśya, and set him up as a goldsmith. As their adopted son however he had to retain his own caste. The reasons which led to this adoption were: The young Seddi, Baccumalli by name, had lost 12,700 Varāhas over some money transaction. This sum, equivalent to 44,450 or 50,800 Rupees he was unable to repay. None of his relatives or friends helped him. He fell at the feet of the five Ācāryas who represented the “Five Faces” or “Five-Brahmās”, the community of craftsmen. They raised the amount; paid off his debt and contributed towards his livelihood which he was to earn as a goldsmith. It is to be assumed that the young man had lost the money through no fault of his and being abandoned by friends and relatives the “Five-Brahmās” or “Five Faces” succoured him on his proving his readiness, if not his talent, for the calling of a goldsmith.

This profession, as the designation Bangāru Seddi proves, was one of the traditional callings of the Seddis (śreṣṭhī) and Baccumalli.

1. In the collection of Matapraasad Sitaram, Benares.
2. Photographs by R. Burnier.
3. In the Telugu country the goldsmiths are Bangāru Seddis.
might have been a goldsmith by training although the monetary side of this profession seems to have attracted him prior to the calamity which befell him in this connection, as much as the exercise of his craftsmanship. The deed of adoption proves a raising of status of a profession practised by the Seddis, who are Vaiṣyas, to that of the “Five Faces” or the totality of craftsmen whose ‘origin’ from Viṣvakarman, had established them as Brāhmaṇas.

This adoption took place at the time of Mallika (Maulika) Vibhurāma Pakṣāvān, “the best of the race of Rāma,” who may have been Pratāparudra II\(^1\).

The 5 Ācāryas, whose names are given in the inscription, represented the “Five Faces” in the city of Golconda.

The origin and meaning of this designation is given in the first 32 lines of the inscription which has 56 lines altogether.

The “Five-Brahmās” have their origin in the Supreme Brahman, manifested in the five faces of the Supreme Śiva, who is Viṣvakarman, the architect of the Universe. The five faces of Śiva are Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa and Īśāna; from these five faces are ‘born’ five prototypal architects and craftsmen: Manu, Maya, Tvaṣṭara, Śilpaka and Viṣvajīna, respectively. Five arch-craftsmen, born from the five faces of Śiva, these “Five-Brahmās” as “Five faces”, are represented by the five Ācāryas of the city of Golconda at the time of the inscription.

The direct ‘face-born’, mind-born origin of the architect and craftsman from the Supreme Principle is thus ‘illustrated’. This derivation has a close analogy in the account of the ontological origin of the architect, etc., in the ‘Mānasāra’, II. 1-20\(^2\). There the four faces of the Supreme Śiva, Viṣvakarmā, represent Viṣvakarmā, Maya, Manu and Tvaṣṭr, and their sons are: the Sthapati, the master architect, the Sūtragrāhini or surveyor, the Takṣaka or sculptor and the Vardhakī who is also a

\(^1\) ‘Epigraphia Indiae,’ vol. VI, p. 112; cf. ‘Pratāparudrayaśobhāṣaṇa,’ Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series, LXV, Introduction.

\(^2\) The ‘Mānasāra,’ a South Indian Vāstuśāstra, appears to be approximately of the same age as the Golconda inscription also ‘The Hindu Temple,’ p. 270.
painter. While the first four of the Pañcabrahmās might have practised their crafts in a similar division, the domain of Viṣvājña, 'the knower of the all' remains undefined; this name however and his position as the fifth and upward face seem to designate him as the Sthāpaka, the architect priest or craftsman priest.

The deed of adoption, engraved at the back of the copperplate is surmounted by a Liṅga. The "Five-Brahmās" practised the pure Śaiva rites (śuddhaśivācāra); they were Vīraśaivas or Liṅgāyatas. Less crudely drawn than the Liṅga above the inscription is the scroll border at its bottom (Pl. XV). Howsoever conscious of the high origin of their calling the Five-Brahmās were, the craftsmanship of the reliefs on the front of the copperplate does not show it (Pl. XIV).

The tablet is surmounted by a Face of Glory (Kīrttimukha) from whose open mouth appears to have issued the five-cusped arch which comprises the width of the tablet. This symbol of the 'Five-Brahmās' enshrines as it were the images in the top panel which are shown in lively attitudes. The tablet is divided into five zones; they are separated from one another by a thin fillet which, together with the rim of the copperplate, frames the five rows of figured scenes. The tablet has been broken immediately below the top panel where four circular holes have been made subsequently for the purpose of keeping in position the two broken parts.

The mask of the Kīrttimukha, with its lateral peaks and lolling tongue corresponding to the knobs of the lateral arches, is the centre of their fluid curves. While they sum up the entire tablet they are particularly the frame of the top panel in which sun and moon, and the images of Śiva together with Nandin, Viṣṇu and Brahmā are displayed on the flat ground on which are incised Garuḍa and Hamsa. Śiva is shown as Naṭarāja; while there is little of the dance in his movement it points towards Brahmā, whose figure on the right is shown approaching, and as responsive by the movement of its arms as is the figure of Viṣṇu, on the left.

In the centre of the second panel the image of the Goddess, seated on a lion throne, her upper hands holding the trident and Damaru, is approached by a devotee carrying a Karanḍa and holding a Kamaṇḍalu.
He wears high wooden sandals on which are placed also Śiva's dancing feet. Sages of the Vīraśaivas put on high wooden sandals when worshipping and thus they enter the shrine. This figure might depict the Viśvajñā. Behind him, the hands joined in ‘ānjali-mudrā' is the ape-faced Hanumān (?). Between the Devī and the dancing Gaṇeṣa a large and round mirror is placed on the right of the panel.

In the two following rows the craftsmen are shown at work. The one seated on the left appears to be polishing a metal image with the help of a wheel which rotates on a horizontal axis fixed at the ends. The second figure kneels over a nearly complete, three-faced image and appears to chase the lines on its neck.

The following figure is seated near an anvil on which it seems to have placed the red-hot iron which the figure standing opposite is going to strike. Above the seated figure, an axe is shown and a kind of hoe or 'plough'; the right half of the panel depicts the work of a blacksmith and the left half that of a metal smith, who chases and polishes the cast image.

In the next panel too, a metal smith is shown working on an image, which is a standing one, while a seated image of a goddess confronts the spectator. It is surrounded by the tools used by goldsmiths, a fire vessel, a stamper, a hammer and various chisels. This part of the panel shows the establishment of the adopted son, and himself at work as a goldsmith.

The horseman brandishing a lance, on the right of this panel, the swordsman in the bottom row and the two animals (horses ?) are not referred to in the inscription. Do they represent the Kṣatriyas and their horses for whom the Pañcabrahmās made lance and sword as well just as they made the plough and axe, chisels and mallet, etc., and ritual implements, such as the mirror in the second row as well as the images of the gods ?

The square panel in the extreme right of the bottom row has a seated figure below a tree, the hands folded in 'ānjali-mudrā'. Does it show the donor, the Pañcabrahmās collectively, and is it their standard Hanumān, who represents them? The figure is seen in front view, the proper view for the gods and their images (excepting Gaṇeṣa's
head, in the second panel) while the human figures in their actions are represented in profile, on the tablet.

The following five classes of craftsmen are recognized in the Andhra country: The goldsmith, Vardhakī; the carpenter, Takṣaka; and the workers in bell-metal, copper and iron.¹ This present day classification appears, from the tablet, to have been valid at the time of the deed of adoption, in more than one respect. Tvaṣṭaka and Śilpaka, to whom correspond, in the ‘Mānasāra,’ the Takṣaka and Vardhaki, are the two classes of craftsmen who have their established position in the hierarchy of craftsmen in Vāstuśāstra, the architectural tradition. The Vardhaki, however, as shown in the tablet and also by the present day use of the word in the Telugu country, has been identified with the goldsmith, the Svarṇakāra.

The high origin of the five classes or craftsmen appears to have been their birthright from the days when they made the ritual implements for Vedic sacrifices; it remained their privilege when they made the images and ritual objects required for worship (pūjā) and also the tools of peace and war for the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas.

A plough or a mallet are carved on many a memorial stone (Vīragal) in the Deccan². They indicate the caste or profession of the hero thus commemorated. Sun and moon, and the Face of Glory, the Kṛttimukha, from whose mouth issue many cusps and scrolls crown these memorial stones. The heroic death and the life of the person commemorated are illustrated in animated and crowded compositions within parallel compartments. Though made with a different object and in a different material the metal tablet (Pls. XIV-XV) with its sparse, squat figures in relief, and other figures as well as a few leaves, etc. incised on the gleaming ground, is a humble member of the family of Vīragals, frequent in the Deccan from the tenth Century.

¹. The ‘Andhravīkasapatiya’ gives the following five classes of craftsmen: Vaṭṭangī or Vardhaki or Svarṇakāruṇa; 2. Kāṭhataksudu, the carpenter; 3. Kāpyakāruṇa, the worker in bell metal; 4. Tāmrakuṭākudu, the coppersmith and 5. Lohakāruṇa, the blacksmith.

TRANSLITERATION OF THE INSCRIPTION

1. Śrīmatparaśivavīśvakarmapañcānanaṃ
2. khodbhavulaină cataṣṭgāraparyantamrakṣakodhana
3. vulaină nityaṃ vibhūturdrakṣaṃālimanarākundalām
4. durmdharulaină śrīmadvedoktaṣajjanasuddhāśivārāsaminaṇaṃ
5. pañcagāḍhīśa
6. oddhāra Anantavedāsastraśapuraṇapāravāvā gāmbhīryadhīradhirodhunā jagatihi
7. takarunya ghanaghana vāhana anumaddhava vijayābhirāma
8. kanakakundalābharaṇa rana
9. mukha viśvakapęṣuni anumanta Pedhoṭiputivarādhiśivarulaină
10. śrīmatkālikādevi Kamareśa
11. ra devara divyaśripādapadmārādhurulaină pariccamokasabrahmāku pañcabrahmālu vutti.
12. na kramaṃ. Mano pūrvamukamaiva mayānām dakṣanastadhā
13. vaśtakam pañcamuṣaiva Silpakāvu
14. tarastādā Viśvijnāvurdhamma (śma) kam caiva pañcasabattubrahmanah. Tūṛpūrvadiśabhāgam
15. buna sajjōjātamukambuna pu (vir) divarundina va (sa) sa devatvambuna sivakalādisam
16. Varusagotrodbhavulaină Manubrahmāvudbhavimce Dakṣinadīśabhaftabhaminva Vāmadeva
17. Mukhambuna Āpahatatvambuna adhinārāyanasta (tta) mbhagulaină Sanātarusīgotrodhā
18. vuni Diṣākabrahmāvudbhaviṇce Paścimadiśabhagambhuna Aghoramukhamulaină Ta
19. ................Pādbrahmaṇa udainā abhubanasarūṣīgotrodhavulaină
20. ................taruvadabrahma........nakadainā Abhuvina para Saruviojodbhavaină
21. Ina Aṣṭabrahmāvudbhaviṇce vuttaradiśabhāgambhuna Tatpurusabhagambhuna vā

1. by Pandit K. Sankara Sarma.
19. yutatavambuna Indramsubhavu.........pratnasarūṣigotrodhavul-aina śilpi
20. brahmāudbhaviṇce ṛurdhvadiśābhāgambuna......... āśānyamokambunagaganatavāmbuna
22. varṇaṁ ca Śilpiṇaṁ Dhūmra (Sabhra) varṇaya viśvajnā ye (hema) mavarṇaṁ ca Paṇcarupapraṅkirti
23. taḥ. Mano rajatasūtraṁ ca Mayāṇaṁ padmasūtrayoḥ Tvaṣṭakaṁ tāmrasūtraṁ ca Śi
24. lpināṁ kārpaṇātrayoḥ Viśvajnā suvarṇasūtraṁ ca panchasūtraṁ tu brahma
25. naḥ. Mano trikoṇaṅga (nopm) dhaṁ ca Mayāṇaṁ catuṣkoṇayoḥ Tvaṣṭakaṁ vaṭṭalākāraṁ
26. satkoṇaṁ Śilpiṇaṁ (dhā) Viśvajnā aṣṭakonaṁ ca paṇcagūṇa (koṇa) pratiṅkiraḥ. Manuḥ (no)
27. Bilvavrksaṁ ca Mayāṇaṁ Vataravrksayoḥ Tvaṣṭa Aśvaddhavrksaṁ ca Paḷasa
28. Śilpaṅkascasc (stadhā) viśvajnā Arkaṇaṁ ca Paṇcavrksa Praṅkirtaḥ. Mano (sruta) syūta
29. homaṁ ca Mayāṇaṁ ru (da) dhi (di) bhūmayoḥ Tvaṣṭakaṁ maduvomam ca Śilpokṣurasam
30. tadhā Viśvijnā ikṣirasmaṁ ca panchāṁça pratiṅkirtaḥ. Rgvedaṁ ca Ma
31. nuśaiva Yarvedaṁ Mayāstatdha Tvaṣṭakaṁ Samavedaṁ ca iadharvaṇa Śilpakast (a) thā
32. Viśvijnā Prāṇath (dh) aṁ ca paṇcavedaṁ tu brāhmaṇaṁ. Paṇcabrahmālu Paṇcasa
33. kṣ (ty) ālu suvivāṁ sesukunāru. Svastiśrīvijayābhayaśāliva-hanaśaka
34. Varāśambhalu 1216 Aguneti asminvarmaṇānā vyāvahārike cāndramāna İśvara namu varṣara Kārtika Śuddhadaśaṁ Ārya Gulkonda Patnāmaṇda
35. MALLIKE VIBHURĀMPAKṢĀVU kālamonduna VĀNUG-
36. ANŢI KĂMĂKSĂCĂRI SILAMBADRPPA Ā
37. CĂRĪ CITTĀRŪ VĪRAPPĀ ĀCĂRĪ MŬNIGANDĪ APPAV- UĂCĂRĪ DHĀVALESUMAKŎNDA
38. ĀCĂRĪ ivaru ayaidāyī PĂNCĂNANĀM vāru ganiṃuka (kha ) īvunda ga KOMADĪBA
39. nūru varahālu naṣṭam voccindī gãńuka vāri suttapakkalu bandhugulu evarinnu ādarincaleka poynāru gãńuka
40. appudu PĂŅCĂNANĀM vāri (ru) Pāḍāluṇṭṭukum
41. de pannāṇdu Veyalu (a) nnūru varahālu icci Vedipīṇci pi (e) śuṇi hanuman
42. tamudraṇēśi aidingamula okkapedu uṇči vibhūtirudrākṣamuchitama
43. aṭṭike (ge) śuṇḍina panasakūṁrūni ga cesugunnāru vādu bratikēṇi ke atha
44. svasinnāru SAMVATSARA 1 ki GATTALA Kolamike 1 ki VARAHĀ SAMVATSARA 1 ki Mudukoli
45. miki Māda Samvatsara 1 ki Dāyike Māda pendali Māda vas- tramiccedi
46. odugurmūrtam 1 ki pāvu vastramicceti (di) pamsparmāṇi koṭṭa- rādu tiṭṭārādu
47. divānardaallato ceppi Uḍa(ida) Sāsanaṁ sesinattalaaide (te) vādu panasakattī topo
48. codusukunina vāni raktam cūdarādu cusina vāri illu nagaladu pana
49. saṭadaiava varṇam tappi marivaka varṇani adagarādu Saliven- taralovuta
50. kam saṃtakam Saṃtarppanamulo annamu mottarādu i Panasakūṁruni
51. vāṇivādu arудāyivādu idi evaru tappiṇcina pitru mā
52. tulakuttappinattulu Kāśilo gorātyā śiśubhatyā brahmahatyā striḥatyā
53. cesina pāpana peduru i šasanamandu unde prakāraram catussāgarapa
54. riyantamulo unde Viśvabrahmā lu paka kannadipinče divāniki så
55. kṣi hariharādule sākṣi Kālikādevi pādame sākṣi i akkacapro
56. lu Pañcabrahmālu cevrālu iti kālikādevi rakṣiṇcavalantu.

TRANSLATION:

[LINES 1-10] The origin of the “Five-Brahmās” [is] in Para-
Brahman, through the five faces of Paraśiva who is Viśvakarman, Pro-
tector of the [whole earth] bounded by the four oceans, who is always
[besmeared] with ashes, holds a rosary and wears Makara earrings,
the Lord of Serpents. [The “Five-Brahmās”] are the followers of
the pure Śaiva rites (Śuddha-Śivācāra) given in the Vedas; they
have spread [the Vīraśaiva principles] in all the well-known, auspicious
places and elevated [thereby] the Three Worlds; they have crossed
to the other shore of the ocean of the Veda [which has neither begin-
ning] no[r] end, the Śabdāśāstra [Vyākaraṇa] and Purāṇas, they
possess deep knowledge, are the bravest amongst the brave, and kind
to all [beings].

They have Hanumān, the air-borne, in their flag and daily worship
the lotus feet of the Goddess Kālikā, Kāmareśvara [Kuvera] of the
city of Pedhoṭi,—Hanumān who is beautiful by his conquests, always
victorious, wears golden earrings, [is] fierce looking and the best amongst
the monkeys of this world.

[L. 10-11] Manu from the eastern face, Maya from the southern
face, Tvaṣṭaka from the western face, Śilpaka from the northern face,
Viśvaiṣṇa from the upward face, these are the “Five-Brahmās.”

[L. 11-13] The Manubrahmā [the Manu brahmins] was born
from the eastern direction, the face of Sadyojāta, from the Tatva of
Prthivi and from the Gotra of the Sage Gakusa [Sanāga]; they are
16 in number.

2. Sanāga, Sanātana, Ahobhuna, Prajāna, and Suparṣa are the founders of the five Gotras;
their origin is from Bhṛgu and Aṅgiras (‘Mahārāja Jhānakośa’).
[ L.13-15 ] The Diśakabrahmā (Maya) was born from the southern direction, the face of Vāmadeva, the Tatva of water, 'adhinārīyaṇastambhagulainā'......from the Gotra of Sanāta [Sanātana].

[ L. 15-18 ] Aśṭabrahmā (Tvāstā), was born from the western direction, the face of Aghora............from the Gotra of the Sage Abhuvina (Ahobhuna).

[ L. 18-20 ] The Śilpibrahmā was born from the northern direction, the face of Tatpuruṣa, the Tatva of wind (Vāyu)............from the Gotra of Sage Pratna [Prāśna] who is descended from Indra [Aṅgiras].

[ L. 20-21 ] The Viśvajñā-brahmā was born from the upward direction, the face of Īśana, the Tatva of Ākāsa (ether) from the Gotra of the Sage Suparnā, twelve in number.—Verse:

[ L. 21-23 ] The colour white is for Manu, smoke colour (dhūmra) for Maya, red like copper for Tvāstā, a variegated colour for Śilpin and a golden colour for Viśvajñā, these are the five colours (rupa).

[ L. 23-25 ] A silver thread for Manu, the fibre of lotus for Maya, thread made of copper for Tvāstā, cotton thread for Śilpin and thread made of gold for Viśvajñā, these are the five threads for the Brahmās.

[ L. 25-26 ] The triangle for Manu, rectangle for Maya, circle for Tvāstā, the hexagon for Śilpin, and the octagon for Viśvajñā; these are the five shapes (kona).

[ L. 26-28 ] The trees Bilva, Vaṣṭa, Aśvattha, Palāśa and Arka are the five trees proper to Manu, Maya, Tvāstā, Śilpin and Viśvajñā respectively.

[ L. 28-30 ] These are the five nectars (amṛta): ghee, curd, honey, juice of sugarcane and milk, for Manu, Maya, Tvāstā, Śilpin and Viśvajñā respectively.

[ L. 30-32 ] Rg-veda, Yajur-veda, Sāmaveda, Atharvaveda and Prāṇaveda [Purāṇa] are the five Vedas for the Brahmās, Manu, Maya, Tvāstā, Śilpin and Viśvajñā.

[ L. 32-33 ] These five Brahmās were intermarrying in these five classes [only].

1. This passage could not be translated.
2. Lines 21—32 are in verse.
[ L. 33-34 ] [ In ] the auspicious year 1217 of the Śaka era of Śālivāhana, in the cyclic year Īśvara, month Kārtika, on the tenth day of the lunar fortnight, Thursday, at the time of Mallika Vibhurāma Pakṣāvū in the city of Golkonda,

[L. 34-37] Vānuganti Kāmākṣācārī, Silambadrppa Ācārī, Cittāru Virappa Ācārī, Munigaṇḍi Appāvu Ācārī, Dhavalesumakonda Ācārī. these five were respected and regarded as the "Five Faces".


[L. 39] Neither his near relatives nor his friends helped him; he
[L. 40] then fell at the feet of the "Five Faces".

[L. 40-44] They raised 12,700 Varāhas and saved him and kept him [under the protection] of the seal of Hanumān for five days and a quarter and adopted him after putting ashes and a Rudrākṣa bead on his breast; they provided for his livelihood and [undertook to] help him:

[L. 44-46] For the maintenance of a fire pot on the hole where fire is put for melting gold, 1 Varāha per annum; for the maintenance of the place where the metals are beaten and shaped, ½ Varāha [a Māda] per annum; 1 Māda [½ Varāha] per annum for a maid-servant; 1 Māda [¼ Varāha] and cloth for his marriage, and for his thread marriage [the Upanāyana rite] one Pāvu [¼ Varāha] and cloth must be given to him. None should beat him or find fault with him.

[L. 46-53] Should any one dishonour [this and harm] him by bringing this matter to court, he should kill himself with the knife by which generally jackfruits are cut; none should see his [that man's] blood: the house of the men who see his blood will not prosper.

This adopted son should not ask for another caste, he should not touch the water in the watering shed, and he should also not touch the rice kept for feeding Brahmins; [Even so] by this [deed] he is included as the sixth [amongst the "Five Faces"]: Who [amongst the Five-Brahmās] fails to act [according to this deed] will be outcasted on both his father's and mother's side and will commit a sin equal to the sin incurred by killing cows, children, Brahmins, and women at Kāsi [Benaras].
[L. 53-54] This must be observed as long as the four oceans surround the earth in the four directions. Viśvabrahmā, [the community of craftsmen] is bound to observe this.

[L. 54-56] The Gods Hari, Hara, etc., are witnesses to this and also the feet of Kālikā. This is signed by the Pāñcabrahmās. May the Goddess Kālikā protect all.
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