

# THE Viśvarūpa(Visvarupa) ICONOGRAPHIC TRADITION

North Indian Images of Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu

5th - 13th Centuries CE

*The Archaeological Reports of Professor T. S. Maxwell*

A scientific collaboration between

CIL (Cultural Informatics Laboratory, IGNCA, New Delhi, India

and

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Fieldwork, written and photographic content

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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS

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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT

Vaikuṅṭha-Viśvarūpa Vol. III : The Fall 1992, and the Spring and Fall 1993 Campaigns -  
Northwestern, West-Central and Western India

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D: Report.nw.hp+kashmir, 1992/F:Report.nw

Feldforschungsprojekt

August 1992 - September 1993

DFG-Az.: Ma 1069/3-1

Kennwort: Vaikuṅṭha-Viśvarūpa

Frotsetzung der Berichte an die D.F.G.

vom 30.06.1990 und vom 30.07.1992

### BERICHT

UBER DIE IKONOGRAPHIE, CHRONOLOGIE UND INTERPRETATION  
DES ARCHAOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

### TEIL 3

DIE ERSTEN ERGEBNISSE DER  
ZWISCHEN AUGUST 1992 UND SEPTEMBER 1993  
DURCHGEFUHRTEN FORSCHUNGSREISEN

**T.S. Maxwell**

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D: Report.nw.hp+kashmir, 1992/F:Report.nw

Feldforschungsprojekt 1992/93

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## TEIL 3

SKULPTUREN DES Vaikuṅṭha-UND Viśvarūpa-TYPUS

IN DEN REGIONEN 3, 4, 5:

HIMACHAL PRADESH

KASHMIR

MALWA

SAURASHTRA

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01. Jhajjar: Vaikuṅṭha

### KASHMIR

02. Devsar: Viśvarūpa

03. Devsar: Vaikuṅṭha

04. Devsar: Vaikuṅṭha

05. Bejbehara: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

06. Avantipura: Vaikuṅṭha

07. Avantipura: Vaikuṅṭha

08. Avantipura: Vaikuṅṭha

09. Avantipura: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

10. Martanda: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

11. Verinag: Vaikuṅṭha

12. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

13. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

14. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

15. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

16. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

17. Pattan: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

18. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

19. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

20. Verinag: Vaikuṅṭha

21. [Kashmir]: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (F)

22. Avantipura: Vaikuṅṭha

55. [Kashmir]: Vaikuṅṭha

62. [Kashmir]: Vaikuṅṭha

63. [Kashmir]: Vaikuṅṭha

80. [Kashmir]: Vaikuṅṭha

## HIMACHAL PRADESH

23. Nirth: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

24. Nirth: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

25. Bajaura: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

26. Bajaura: Viśvarūpa

27. Bajaura: Viśvarūpa (Fragment)

28. Naggar: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)

29. Dasal: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)

30. Dasal: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)

## (HIMACHAL PRADESH, Fortsetzung)

31. Dasal: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)

32. Khakhnal: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)

33. Prini: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)

34. Prini: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

35. Mandi: Viśvarūpa

76. Baijnath: Harihara

37. Baijnath: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)

38. Masrur: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

39. Chamba: Vaikuṅṭha

40. Chamba: Vaikuṅṭha

41. Chamba: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

42. Chamba: Vaikuṅṭha

43. Chamba: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)

44. Chamba: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)

45. Swai: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)

46. Koh: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)
47. [Chamha]: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha) (F)
48. [Chamha]: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha) (F)
49. Brahmor: Viśvarūpa
50. Brahmor: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
51. Chatradhi: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
52. Chntradhi: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
53. Mehla: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)
54. Mehla: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha)

## **MADHYA PRADESH**

56. Hinglajgadh: Vaikuṅṭha
64. Ujjain: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
65. Mandsaur: Viśvarūpa
66. Pippaliya-Jatti: Vaikuṅṭha

## **GUJARAT**

57. Samalaji: Viśvarūpa
58. [Nord-Gujarat]: Viśvarūpa
59. [Nord-Gujarat]: Viśvarūpa
60. [Nord-Gujarat]: Vaikuṅṭha
61. [Nord-Gujarat]: Vaikuṅṭha
76. [Nord-Gujarnt]: Ananta
77. [Nord-Gujarat]: Viśvarūpa
78. Siddhapur: Trailokyamohana
79. Kadvar: Vaikuṅṭha

## **SUD-RAJASTHAN**

67. Cittaudgadh: Vaikuṅṭha

68. Cittaudgadh: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
69. Cittnudgadh: Viśvarūpa
70. Cittaudgadh: Vaikuṅṭha
71. Cittaudgadh: Anantha
72. Cittaudgadh: Vaikuṅṭha
73. Nagda: Vaikuṅṭha
74. Nagda: Vaikuṅṭha
75. Nagda: Vaikuṅṭha

## KEY TO THE MAP

*Note: Only selected sites of the Viśvarūpa and Vaikuṅṭha cults (major and formative sites are circled), and certain relevant museum collections, are shown; the full listing of the archaeological evidence found in 1992/1993 follows this section (from p.xvii).*

1. Avantipura
2. Campavati (Chamba)
3. Brahmapura (Brahmor/Bharmaur)
4. Prini
5. Bajaura
6. Nirth
7. Rohtak
8. Mathura
9. Kanyakuabja (kanauj)
10. Gopadri / Suhania
11. Khajjuravahaka (Khajuraho)
12. Nand
13. Nagahrada (Nagda)
14. Citrakuta (Cittaud)
15. Hinglajgadh
16. Bhanasara
17. Dasapura (Mandsaur)
18. Pippaliya-Jatti
19. Ujjayini (Ujjain)
20. Indore
21. Dhara (Dhar)
22. Mahismati
23. Baroda
24. Samalaji
25. Anahilapataka (patan/Mahesana w. Sandera)

26. Bhuj
27. Jamnagar
28. Rajkot
29. Odadar
30. Kadvar
31. Deogarh
32. Thuvon
33. Tumain
34. Sikar
35. Billaur (Kak IAL 7.2 1933:75)
36. Udampur (ASI)
37. Baijnath (Almora)

SELECTED SITES  
ON THE SOUTH-WESTERN, AND NORTH-WESTERN BOUNDARIES  
OF THE Viśvarūpa AND Vaikuṅṭha CULT-AREAS  
(1992/1993)

The map represents the latest impression of the geographical boundaries of the two cults based on the most recent field research. It should be compared with the map enclosed with my *zwischenbericht* am doe DFG vom 19. April 1993, which was drawn before the most recent fieldwork, on the basis of which the southern boundary has been moved much further to the south primarily on the basis of discoveries made at Pippaliya-Jatti and Kadvar. The western boundary has also now been drawn, and the north-western region mapped out, on the basis of the research results.

The SW and NW corners can be tentatively extended further to the west on the basis of problematical Saindhava evidence from Odadar on the Saurashtra coast (see above) and the limited Śāhi evidence (Spink catalogue 1982:20; Maxwell 1991:122)

representing probable diffusion beyond Udabhāṇḍa. to the Kabul Valley and the Kair Khaneh Pass to the north.

Between these two points, the western border skirts the Rann of Kacch and the Thar Desert on the eastern side. On its southern stretch this conforms approximately to the ancient Mathura-Dvarka trade route as the line of early diffusion but tending southward across the Kathiawar Peninsula from the early Solāṅkī evidence in the Sandera/Anahilapataka area towards Kadvar, thus excluding Kacch and the western half of the peninsula. Toward the north, the important evidence from Rohtak is the turning point. Situated near the north-eastern extremity of the desert, it draws the boundary far to the west of the main trade route, away from Mathura and beyond Delhi, to the southernmost fringe of the Panjab Plain and a location exposed to physically unimpeded (though politically complicated) contact with the opening of all the Western Himalayan valley cultures on the north, including those of the Sutlej, Vyas, and Ravi.

The north-western branch runs along the Himalayan foothills, not deviating into the Salt Range, to Uddiyana and beyond into the Kabul Valley of Afghanistan. Even in antiquity this area, and the connected Central Asian region, represented a combined Hindu-Buddhist culture where Buddhism essentially prevailed, with corresponding absorption and enfeebling of Hindu cults; the returning line passes north and east of the Jhelum Valley and along the Candrabhaga north of the Vyas, and so down to the Almora area, without penetrating farther north.

The southern boundary passes from Kadvar between Ahmedabad and Baroda by way of Kathlal in Gujarat, tending away from the River Narmada, up to Pippaliya-Jatti in the vicinity of Dasapura in Malwa, and from there through Tumain, Thuvon and Deogarh to Khajuraho. The archaeological findings suggest that the greater part of the Malwa Plateau on the south was excluded, although the evidence found on this stretch of the southern boundary dates from the 8th to the 11th century, indicating the existence of the cults in the pre-imperial Pratihāra., Candella, Paramāra, and Solāṅkī kingdoms. This exclusion zone conforms roughly to the area of northward intrusion of political power

from the Deccan, where the Viśvarūpa and Vaikuṅṭha cults did not exist, as charted by Schwartzberg (1978:225). In geopolitical terms, therefore, the existence of this exclusion zone confirms the identity of the two cults as essentially North (or in Schwartzberg's terms, Northwest and North-Center) Indian phenomena which did not flourish in areas prone to repeated invasion from the Deccan. Only beyond the scope of the map to the east does the line dip southward, running SE from Khajuraho virtually down to the Narmada, in the later Kalacuri territories, indicating that in the 10th and 11th centuries the area of political instability may have been wider than Schwartzberg's analysis suggests.

In the Northwest (apart from the Panjab for which archaeological evidence is almost non-existent,) there is no exclusion zone for the purposes of this research project, since the cults existed throughout the Northwest and North-Center regions. The area of interpenetration between the spheres of influence of the Northwestern Utpala Vaikuṅṭha cult (9th-century Kashmir) and the North-Center Pratīhāra Viśvarūpa cult (9th-century Uttar Pradesh) was situated between the lower Vyas and Sulej Valleys, as indicated by the evidence from Bajaura and Nirth. Deeper penetration of both cults across this junction did occur in the 10th century, but the transmission is weak: thus the Viśvarūpa icon in Kashmir (Devsar) is a local formulation, not, derived from the Kanauj type; and similarly the Vaikuṅṭha image on the lower Panjab plain (Rohtak) is essentially Central Indian, showing Northwestern influence only in the subsidiary figures.

D: REPORT/NW. HP + KAB\SHMIR. 1992/F: REPORT . NW  
FELDFORSCHUNGSPROJEKT  
August 1992 - September 1993  
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Kennwort: Vaikuṅṭha-Viśvarūpa  
Fortsetzung der Rerichte an die D.F.G.  
vom 30.06.1990 und vom 30.07.1992

## LISTE 1

### GESAMTAUFLISTUNG DES ZWISCHEN AUGUST 1992 UND SEPTEMBER 1993 UNTERSUCHTEN ARCHAOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

#### **Nr. Fundort und Typus**

01. Jhajjar: Vaikuṅṭha
02. Devsar: Vaikuṅṭha
03. Devsar: Vaikuṅṭha
04. Devsar: Vaikuṅṭha
05. Bejbehara: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
06. Avantipura: Vaikuṅṭha
07. Avantipura: Vaikuṅṭha
08. Avantipura: Vaikuṅṭha
09. Avantipura: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
10. Martanda: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
11. Verinag: Vaikuṅṭha
12. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
13. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
14. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
15. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

16. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
17. Pattan: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
18. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
19. Verinag: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
20. Verinag: Vaikuṅṭha
21. Kashmir: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
22. Avantipura: Vaikuṅṭha
23. Nirth: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
24. Nirth: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
25. Bajaura: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
26. Bajaura: Viśvarūpa
27. Bajaura: Viśvarūpa
28. Naggar: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
29. Dasal: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
30. Dasal: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
31. Dasal: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
32. Khakhnal: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
33. Prini: Vaikuṅṭha
34. Prini: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
35. Mandi: Viśvarūpa
36. Baijnath: dreikopfiger Harihara
37. Baijnath: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
38. Masrur: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
39. Chamba: Vaikuṅṭha
40. Chamba: Vaikuṅṭha
41. Chamba: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
42. Chamba: Vaikuṅṭha
43. Chamba: in Bearbeitung
44. Chamba: in Bearbeitung
45. Svai: Vaikuṅṭha

46. Koh: Vaikuṅṭha
47. Chamba Dist.: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
48. Chamba Dist.: Vaikuṅṭha
49. Bharmaur: garudarudha Viṣṇu
50. Bharmaur: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
51. Chatradhi: dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
52. Chatradhi: Vaikuṅṭha
53. Mehla: Vaikuṅṭha
54. Mehla: Vaikuṅṭha
55. Kashmir: Vaikuṅṭha
56. Hinglajgadh: Vaikuṅṭha
57. Samalaji: Vaikuṅṭha
58. Gujarat: Vaikuṅṭha
59. Gujarat: Vaikuṅṭha
60. Gujarat: Vaikuṅṭha
61. Gujarat: Vaikuṅṭha
62. Kashmir: Vaikuṅṭha
62. Kashmir: Vaikuṅṭha
63. Ujjain: Vaikuṅṭha
64. Mandsaur: dreikopfiger Harihara
65. Pippaliya-Jatti: Viśvarūpa
66. Cittaur: Vaikuṅṭha
67. Cittaur: Vaikuṅṭha
68. Cittaur: dreikopfiger Harihara
69. Cittaur: Viśvarūpa
70. Cittaur: Vaikuṅṭha
71. Cittaur: Ananta
72. Cittaur: Vaikuṅṭha
73. Nagda: Vaikuṅṭha
74. Nagda: Vaikuṅṭha

75. Naqda: Vaikuṅṭha
76. Gujarat: Ananta
77. Gujarat: Viśvarūpa
78. Siddhapur: Trailokyamohana
79. Kadvar: Vaikuṅṭha
80. Kashmir: Vaikuṅṭha

## LISTE 2

### IKONOGRAPHISCHE TYPOLOGIE UND FUNDORTE DES ZWISCHEN AUGUST 1992 UND SEPTEMBER 1993 UNTERSUCHTEN ARCHAOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

#### I: BILDWERKE DES DREIKOPFIGEN VIṢṆU

(6.-9. Jahrhundert)

01. #05. Bejbehara (Kashmir)
02. #09. Avantipura (Kashmir)
03. #17. Pattan (Kashmir)
04. #23. Nirth (Himachal Pradesh)
05. #25. Bajaura (Himachal Pradesh)
06. #34. Prini (Himachal Pradesh)
07. #38. Masrur (Himachal Pradesh)
08. #49. Bharmaur (Himachal Pradesh)
09. #50. Bharmaur (Himachal Pradesh)
10. #51. Chatradhi (Himachal Pradesh)

## II: BILDWERKE DES DREIKOPFIGEN VIṢṆU

(10.-15. Jahrhundert +)

01. #10. Martanda (Kashmir)
02. #12. Verinag (Kashmir)
03. #14. Verinag (Kashmir)
04. #15. Verinag (Kashmir)
05. #16. Verinag (Kashmir)
06. #18. Verinag (Kashmir)
07. #19. Verinag (Kashmir)
08. #20. Verinag (Kashmir)
09. #21. Kashmir (Kashmir)
10. #24. Nirth (Himachal Pradesh)
11. #28. Naggar (Himachal Pradesh)
12. #29. Dasal (Himachal Pradesh)
13. #30. Dasal (Himachal Pradesh)
14. #31. Dasal (Himachal Pradesh)
15. #32. Khakhnal (Himachal Pradesh)
16. #37. Baijnath (Himachal Pradesh)
17. #41. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh)
18. #43. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh)
19. #44. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh)
20. #47. Chamba Dist. (Himachal Pradesh)

## III: Vaikuṅṭha-BILDWERKE

(9.-15. Jehrhundert +)

01. #01. Jhajjar (Haryana)
02. #03. Devsar (Kashmir)

03. #04. Devsar (Kashmir)
04. #06. Avantipura (Kashmir)
05. #07. Avantipura (Kashmir)
06. #08. Avantipura (Kashmir)
07. #11. Verinag (Kashmir)
08. #22. Avantipura (Kashmir)
09. #33. Prini (Himachal Pradesh)
10. #39. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh)
11. #40. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh)
12. #42. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh)
13. #45. Svai (Himachal Pradesh)
14. #46. Koh (Himachal Pradesh)
15. #48. Chamba Dist. (Himachal Pradesh)
16. #52. Chatradhi (Himachal Pradesh)
17. #53. Mehla (Himachal Pradesh)
18. #54. Mehla (Himachal Pradesh)
19. #55. Kashmir (Kashmir)
20. #56. HInglajgadh (Madhya Pradesh)
21. #59. Gujarat (Gujarat)
22. #60. Gujarat (Gujarat)
23. #61. Gujarat (Gujarat)
24. #62. Kashmir (Kashmir)
25. #63. Kashmir (Kashmir)
26. #66. Pippaliya-Jatti (Madhya Pradesh)
27. #67. Cittaur (Rajasthan)
28. #70. Cittaur (Rajasthan)
29. #72. Cittaur (Rajasthan)
30. #73. Cittaur (Rajasthan)
31. #74. Cittaur (Rajasthan)
32. #75. Cittaur (Rajasthan)

- 33. #79. Kadvar (Gujarat)
- 34. #80. Kashmir (Kashmir)

#### **IV: Viśvarūpa-BILDWERKE**

(16.-13. Jehrundert)

- 01. #02. Devsar (Kashmir)
- 02. #26. Rajaura (Himachal Pradesh)
- 03. #27. Bajaura (Himachal Pradesh)
- 04. #35. Mandi (Himachal Pradesh)
- 05. #57. Samalaji (Gujarat)
- 06. #58. Samalaji (Gujarat)
- 07. #65. Mandsaur (Madhya Pradesh)
- 08. #69. Cittaur (Rajasthan)
- 09. #77. Gujarat (Gujarat)

#### **V: VERWANDTES MATERIAL**

(11.-15. Jahrhundert)

- 01. #13. Verinag (Kashmir)
- 02. #36. Baijnath (Himachal Pradesh)
- 03. #64. Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh)
- 04. #68. Cittaur (Rajasthan)
- 05. #71. Cittaur (Rajasthan)
- 06. #76. Cittaur (Rajasthan)
- 07. #78. Cittaur (Rajasthan)

### **LISTE 3**

**CHRONOLOGISCHE / DYNASTISCHE AUFTEILUNG**

DES ZWISCHEN AUGUST 1992 UND SEPTEMBER 1993  
UNTERSUCHTEN ARCHAOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

**I: FRUH-KALCURI(?) KONIGREICH WESTLICHEN MALWAS**

(6. Jahrhundert)

01. #57. Samalaji (Gujarat): Viśvarūpa
02. #63. Mandsaur (Madhya Pradesh): Viśvarūpa

**II: BERG-KONIGREICHE DES WESTLICHEN HIMALAYA**

(8.-10. Jahrhundert)

01. #23. Nirth (Himachal Pradesh): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
02. #24. Nirth (Himachal Pradesh): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
03. #25. Bajaura (Himachal Pradesh): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
04. #26. Bajaura (Himachal Pradesh): Viśvarūpa
05. #27. Bajaura (Himachal Pradesh): Viśvarūpa
06. #33. Prini (Himachal Pradesh): Vaikuṅṭha
07. #34. Prini (Himachal Pradesh): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
08. #36. Baijnath (Himachal Pradesh): dreikopfiger Harihara
09. #38. Masrur (Himachal Pradesh): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
10. #39. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh): Vaikuṅṭha
11. #40. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh): Vaikuṅṭha
12. #42. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh): Vaikuṅṭha
13. #46. Koh (Himachal Pradesh): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
14. #47. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
15. #49. Bharmaur (Himachal Pradesh): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu
16. #50. Bharmaur (Himachal Pradesh): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

17. #51. Chatradhi (Himachal Pradesh): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

18. #52. Chatradhi Vaikuṅṭha

19. #53. Mehla Vaikuṅṭha

### **III: KARKOTA-KONIGREICH KASHMIRS**

(8. Jahrhundert)

01. #05. Bejbehara (Kashmir): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

02. #09. Avantipura Dist. (Kashmir): dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

### **IV: UTPALA-KONIGRRICH KASHMIRS**

(9.-10. Jahrhundert)

01. #02. Devsar (Kashmir) Viśvarūpa

02. #03. Devsar (Kashmir) Vaikuṅṭha

03. #04. Devsar (Kashmir) Vaikuṅṭha

04. #06. Avantipura (Kashmir) Vaikuṅṭha

05. #07. Avantipura (Kashmir) Vaikuṅṭha

06. #08. Avantipura (Kashmir) Vaikuṅṭha

07. #17. Pattan (Kashmir) dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

08. #20. Verinag (Kashmir) Vaikuṅṭha

09. #21. Kashmir (Kashmir) dreikopfiger Viṣṇu

10. #22. Avantipura (Kashmir) Vaikuṅṭha

11. #55. Kashmir (Kashmir) Vaikuṅṭha

12. #62. Kashmir (Kashmir) Vaikuṅṭha

13. #63. Kashmir (Kashmir) Vaikuṅṭha [12. Jh.]

14. #80. Kashmir (Kashmir) Vaikuṅṭha

### **V: UNABHANGIGE RAJPUT-KONIGREICHE WESTLICHEN NORDINDIENS**

(10.-12. Jahrhundert)

01. #01. Jhajjar (Haryana): Vaikuṅṭha
02. #56. Hinglajgadh (MP): Vaikuṅṭha
03. #64. Ujjain (MP): dreiköpfiger Hayagriva
04. #66. Pippaliya-Jatti (MP): Vaikuṅṭha
05. #73. Nagda (Rajasthan): Vaikuṅṭha
06. #74. Nagda (Rajasthan): Vaikuṅṭha
07. #75. Nagda (Rajasthan): Vaikuṅṭha

## **VI: SOLANKI-KONIGREICH GUJARATS**

(11.-14. Jahrhundert)

01. #58. N.Gujarat (Gujarat): Viśvarūpa
02. #59. N.Gujarat (Gujarat): Vaikuṅṭha
03. #60. N.Gujarat (Gujarat): Vaikuṅṭha
04. #61. N.Gujarat (Gujarat): Vaikuṅṭha
05. #76. N.Gujarat (Gujarat) Ananta
06. #07. N.Gujarat (Gujarat): Viśvarūpa
07. #78. Siddhapur (Gujarat): Trailokyamohana
08. #79. Kadvar (Gujarat): Vaikuṅṭha

## **VII: SPATERE BILDWERKE: DES SOLANKI-TYPUS**

(ca. 15. Jahrhundert)

01. #67. Cittaaur (Rajasthan) Vaikuṅṭha
02. #68. Cittaaur (Rajasthan) dreiköpfiger Hayagriva
03. #69. Cittaaur (Rajasthan) Viśvarūpa

04. #70. Cittaur (Rajasthan) Vaikuṅṭha
05. #71. Cittaur (Rajasthan) Ananta
06. #72. Cittaur (Rajasthan) Vaikuṅṭha

## VIII: SPATFRE BILDWERKE DES NORDWESTENS

(12.-15. Jahrhundert+: Identifizierung problematisch)

01. #01. Martanda (Kashmir)
02. #11. Verinag (Kashmir)
03. #12. Verinag (Kashmir)
04. #13. Verjnag (Kashmir)
05. #14. Verinag (Kashmir)
06. #15. Verinag (Kashmir)
07. #16. Verinag (Kashmir)
08. #18. Verinag (Kashmir)
09. #19. Verinag (Kashmir)
10. #28. Naggur (Himachal Pradesh)
11. #29. Dasal (Himachal Pradesh)
12. #30. Dasal (Himachal Pradesh)
13. #31. Dasal (Himachal Pradesh)
14. #32. Khakhnal (Himachal Pradesh) Viśvarūpa
15. #35. Mandi (Himachal Pradesh)
16. #37. Baijnath (Himachal Pradesh)
17. #41. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh)
18. #43. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh)
19. #44. Chamba (Himachal Pradesh)
20. #45. Svai (Himachal Pradesh)
21. #48. Chamba Dst (Himachal Pradesh)
22. #54. Mehla (Himachal Pradesh)

## KEY TO THE MAP

01. Sutlej Valley: Nirth  
Surya narayana Temple: three-headed Viṣṇu  
Durga Temple: three-headed Viṣṇu
02. Sutlej Valley: Rampur-Bashahr
03. Sutlej Valley: Nirmand
04. Vyas Valley: Bajaura  
Visvesvara Mahndeva Temple: Viśvarūpa  
Devi Temple: three-headed Viṣṇu
05. Vyas Valley: Naggar  
Gauri Sankara Temple: three-headed Viṣṇu
06. Vyas Valley: Dasal  
Gauri Sankara Temple: Vaikuṅṭha  
Gauri Sankara Temple: Vaikuṅṭha  
Gauri Snnkara Trmple: Vaikuṅṭha
07. Vyas Valley: Khakhnal

- Karttiksvamin Temple: three-headed Viṣṇu
08. Vyas Valley: Prini  
Phahili Nag Temple: three-headed Viṣṇu  
Phahili Nag Temple: Vaikuṅṭha
09. Kangra Valley: Mandi  
Trilokanatha Temple: Viśvarūpa
10. Kangra Valley: Baijnath  
Vaidyanatha Temple: three-headed Viṣṇu
11. Kangra Valley: Masrur  
Monolithic Temple: three-headed Viṣṇu
12. Ravi Valley: Chamba  
Laksmi Narayana Temple: Vaikuṅṭha  
Votive Shrine: Vaikuṅṭha  
Laksmi Damodara Temple: three-headed Viṣṇu  
Hari Rai Temple: Vaikuṅṭha
13. Ravi Valley: Mehla  
Hidimba Temple: Vaikuṅṭha  
Hidimha Temple: Vaikuṅṭha

14. Rudhal Valley: Brahmapura  
Laksana Devi Temple: three-headed Viṣṇu  
Laksana Devi Temple: Viśvarūpa
  
15. Budhal/Ravi Valley: Chatradhi  
Sakti Devi Temple: three-headed Viṣṇu  
Sakti Devi Temple: Vaikuṅṭha
  
16. Jhelum Valley: Bejbehara  
  
three-headed Viṣṇu
  
17. Jhelum Valley: Martanda  
Martanda Temple  
multiheaded Viṣṇu  
three-headed Viṣṇu
  
18. Jhelum Valley: Avantipura  
Avantisvamin Temple: Vaikuṅṭha
  
19. Jhelum Valley: Srinagar  
Sri Pratap Singh Museum  
Vaikuṅṭha/Viśvarūpa
  
20. Jhelum Valley: Pattan  
  
three-headed Viṣṇu

## NOTES ON THE ICONOGRAPHIC INDEX

### The heads of Vaikuṅṭha and Viśvarūpa

#### 1: THREE-HEADED VIṢṆU versus Vaikuṅṭha

There is a prevailing confusion in some of the recent secondary literature concerning the correct nomenclature which should be applied to, on the one hand, 3-headed Viṣṇu images of the Mathura type, and, on the other hand, to 3-headed or 4-headed images of the Avantipura type. I append some observation and theories which seek to clarify this matter.

#### \$1.

No image of 3headed Viṣṇu, made between the 5th century and circa AD 850 can be prior to AD 850. There is no textual evidence for the application of the name Vaikuṅṭha to the 3 headed Viṣṇu images which existed prior to AD 850; and no authentic canonical name has yet been traced which applies specifically to these images.

#### \$2.

Images of 3headed Viṣṇu, in the Kashmiri style but made prior to AD 850, do not represent Vaikuṅṭha but the Kashmiri version of the Mathura 3headed Viṣṇu.

(It was this icon which circa AD 850 was adapted, by the addition of a fourth face on the back of the nimbus, to represent the 4headed Vaikuṅṭha concept. This was done by Avantivarman of the Utpala dynasty of Kashmir, in his first temple in the city that he founded, Avantipura)

#### \$3

Consequently all 4 headed Viṣṇu images made at Avantipur and elsewhere in Kashmir, (and any which may be found in Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan), after AD 850, must be considered to represent Vaikuṅṭha or a local variation of

Vaikunṭha.

## **\$4.**

Three headed-Viṣṇu images, which were made anywhere after AD 850 could be either:

- a. abbreviated versions of the 4-headed Viṣṇu.
- b. versions of the earlier Mathura 3-headed Viṣṇu.

The style in which these images are made, indicates the cultural tradition from which they emanated; if they are Kashmiri in style, they emanate from Kashmir and ultimately from Avantipura; if they are North Indian in style, they emanate from North India and ultimately from mathura.

### **\$4.1**

Such icons made in Kashmir or Himachal Pradesh, after AD 850 and in the Kashmiri style, were probably intended to be Vaikuṅṭha in abbreviated form, not the Mathura 3headed Viṣṇu.

### **\$4.2**

Such icons made in Himachal Pradesh in the North Indian style are probably intended to represent the older Mathura 3-headed Viṣṇu, not the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha. The Mathura icon of 3-headed Viṣṇu penetrated the Sutlej and the Vyas Valleys, where images of it were made in the local sculptural style, but imitating the Mathura iconography in the representation of the animal heads.

## **\$5.**

Three-headed or 4-headed Viṣṇu images made in the Candella kingdom in Central India after AD 954 are to be identified as Vaikuṅṭha because the first multiheaded Viṣṇu image, which appeared there at about that date, is named Vaikuṅṭha in the Lakṣmaṇ

temple inscription at Khajuraho. The sculptural style of the multiheaded Viṣṇu images Khajuraho is that of the local school. The iconographical style, however, which concerns chiefly the manner of representing the animal heads, is that of Avantipura and Kashmir in general, not of Mathura, Kanauj or North India in general.

## \$6.

There-headed or 4-headed Viṣṇu images made in the Rajput kingdoms of North India (in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana) from the 10th century onward are also to be identified as Vaikuṅṭha. This is because the Rajput images were largely made imitation of the Candella icon of multiheaded Viṣṇu, known at Khajuraho as Vaikuṅṭha. Like the Khajuraho images of Vaikuṅṭha, the Rajput images of this god depict the animal heads in the Kashmiri, not the North Indian manner. I propose two causes for this, one factual and the other hypothetical. First, the three-headed Viṣṇu of the Mathura type no longer existed in North India in the 10th century when the Candellas came to power; multiheaded Viṣṇu was introduced into Khajuraho in the form of kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha. Secondly, the Rajputs' iconographic imitation of the Khajuraho image was a concrete expression of political emulation (whether real or desired) of the Candella achievement; after the Candellas made themselves independent of the Gurjara-Pratihara empire, other Rajput areas of the empire also asserted their independence as separate kingdoms. The icon of Candella Vaikuṅṭha became the symbol of that sense of independence, and in the late 10th centuries it was widely adopted in the Rajput areas beyond the boundaries of direct rule from Kanauj, to the south and west of Khajuraho, in territories as far away as Haryana, Rajasthan, and northern Gujarat.

The fact remains, however, that the larger number of Rajput Vaikuṅṭha images depict the god, not standing (as at Khajuraho), but seated, either on anthropomorphic Garuḍa (as largely in Himachal), or on a lotus (as chiefly in Central India); and this remains to be explained (see \$6.1).

The majority -- are indeed seated images (though they are not all seated on Garuḍa),

and they are more widely diffused than the standing images, occurring in territories extending eastward from Rajasthan to Malwa and beyond, to Daksina Kosala south of Candella kingdom (at Harshnath/Sikar, Shahabad, two at Nilakantha, Nagda, jhalavadh, Candravati, Hinglajgadh, Pippaliya-Jatti, and Bihari). It is quite clear that the Garuḍa-mounted form of Vaikuṅṭha did not stem from areas immediately adjacent to the Candella kingdom and then spread westward into Rajasthan; rather, it arose and remained in Rajasthan (with the exception of the Bilhari Vaikuṅṭha, which represents a singular extension of the Garuḍa-mounted type form Rajasthan into Central India). This implies, of course, that the image of Vaikuṅṭha riding on Garuḍa reached the Rajput feudatories, by way of northern Rajasthan, from Himachal, where the type was already well known. In Malwa, lying immediately to the south-west of the Candellas, the lotus-seated Vaikuṅṭha image was developed, Probably in connection with the existing concept of meditating Viṣṇu as maunavratin, the silent sage; this form also penetrated westward into central and southern Rajasthan, where it overlapped with the Garuḍa-mounted form.

On the basis of these observations, one draws the following conclusion concerning the historical situation and the relationship between the Vaikuṅṭha images and the politics of the time.

The standing Vaikuṅṭha of Khajuraho was taken up first in those areas of Rajasthan which, in the second half of the 10th century, were at that time the most established and politically defined, and therefore already virtually independent; these were the kingdoms of the Tomaras (the standing Vaikuṅṭha from Rohtak), and of the Guhilas of Nagda (the Sas temple doorframe Vaikuṅṭhas) who also acknowledged the seated Vaikuṅṭha form. In the early years of their rise to power around Anahilapataka, the Caulukyias or solankis also represented Vaikuṅṭha as a standing figure (the Sandera Vaikuṅṭha).

At a slightly later date, towards the close of the 10th century and in the early 11th, those kingdoms which consolidated as independent states more slowly in the wake of the collapse of the Gurjara-Pratiharas' imperial power took up the seated forms of

Vaikunṭha, of which those mounted on Garuḍa probably derived from Himachal Pradesh (or possibly from Kashmir itself), while the meditating forms seated on a lotus would have been natural extensions of the silent-sage cult which already existed in the Rajput regions. These rising powers were those of the Cahamanas of Sakhambari (the Harshnath/Sikar Vaikunṭha seated on a lotus), of the Cahamans of Partabgadh in south-east Rajasthan (the Garuḍa-mounted Shahabad Vaikunṭha and the lotus-seated Vaikunṭha of adjacent Candravati), of the Paramaras of Dhar (the lotus-seated Vaikunṭhas of Hinglajgadh and Pippaliya-Jatti near Dasapura, both in Malwa), and of the later Kalacuris of Tripuri (the Bilhari Garuḍa-mounted Vaikunṭha in Central India). The Guhilas of Mewar should also be included here, since the large Garuḍa-mounted image on the south wall of the Sas temple at Nagda clearly represents their primary concept of Vaikunṭha, the smaller standing Vaikunṭhas at the base of the sanctum doorframe being probably a reference to the older cult-form of the god. South of Nagda in northern Gujarat, the Caulukyias or Solankis similarly preserved the earlier standing form in their small Viṣṇu temple at Sandera, but later took up the Garuḍa-mounted Vaikunṭha, as at Valam.

## NOTES ON THE ICONOGRAPHIC INDEX

### II: THREE-AND FIVE-HEADED Viśvarūpa

There is considerable variation in the groups, series, and individual figures represented in the haloes of north Indian Viśvarūpa images. This makes of each of these sculptures a unique work, not only in terms of style but also iconographically. It is this strong individuality which makes the treatment of these images as a group problematical: as whole creations they require individual study. Certain key features of the central Viṣṇu figure have therefore to be identified and isolated to provide the basis for a systematic examination. Since for the most part only the upper part of these images is preserved, and since the hands and attributes are for the most part broken and damaged beyond

recognition, it is the multiple heads of Viśvarūpa which must be examined in order to introduce the first set of iconographical definitions.

## \$1.

The earliest Viśvarūpa images in which the heads are preserved come from the northern axis of imperial Gupta power in the Ganga-Yamuna plain: from Bhankari north of Mathura, and from Gadhwa south of Allahabad. The central figure of the Bhankari image is identical to the contemporary three-headed Viṣṇu icons of Mathura having the side-heads of Narasiṃha (right) and Varāha (left). The Viśvarūpa at the centre of the Gadhwa panel appears to have had the same heads: despite of the erosion of many details, the proper left side-head of Viṣṇu can be seen to represent the profile of Varāha. These images reflect an early phase in the Vaiṣṇava incarnation doctrine and its cult in which the boar and Man-Lion were regarded as the primary avatāras.

### \$1.1

The Samalaji images of Viśvarūpa, produced in the mid-6th century, have human heads. These sculptures represent approximately the same phase in the incarnation doctrine, however, since the secondary emanations from the axis of gods above Viṣṇu's central crown are Narasiṃha (right) and Varāha (left), who are shown arising from the primary incarnation Hayagrīva.

## \$2

The next Viśvarūpa fragment in which the multiple heads of Viṣṇu are preserved almost certain comes from the Mathura region (National Museum No.66.25); on stylistic grounds it can be dated to the late 6th or early 7th century. The number of animal heads has here been increased to four by the addition of the profiles of Matsya and Kūrma, the incarnations, which in the developing avatāra-cult had now been given precedence over the Boar and Man-Lion. These were to constitute the standard four emanatory animal-heads of all Viśvarūpa images made in North India up to the 9th or early 10th century.

But there is variation even within this simple typology, and it is this variation which provides the primary bases for the systematic analysis of Viśvarūpa images.

### **\$3**

In the National Museum fragment of the 6th or 7th century, the Fish and Turtle profiles emerge from the Junction of Viṣṇu's neck and Shoulders, precisely replacing the heads of the man-Lion and Boar, which are moved up to the sides of the crown. The placement of these four heads clearly represents the introduction of an upward sequence alternating from left to right; Matsya (first, right) and Kūrma (second left) on the lower level, followed by Varāha (third, right) and Narasiṃha (fourth, left) on the upper. This alternating ascent is a continuation of the plant-growth analogy, which had been applied to multiple emanation iconography in Kusana Mathura.

### **\$4**

In all known Viśvarūpa images dating between the 8th and 10th centuries, the sequence of heads seen in the National Museum fragment is changed.

#### **\$4.1**

The primary variation takes one of two forms: either (1.) the man-Lion and Boar heads revert to the positions which they occupied in the Bhankari Viśvarūpa of the 5th century, with the Narasiṃha face on the proper right and that of Varāha on the proper left; or (2.) both these heads are transferred to the proper left side.

### **\$5**

The first alternative easily predominates in the archaeological record, but it also shows more secondary variation. While the lateral positions of the Narasiṃha and Varāha heads are now fixed, their vertical location can change in relation to the heads of matsya and kūrma. In the Viśvarūpa images from Tumain, Deogarh, Dalmau, Bhuali,

and Bhuiili, the Man-Lion and boar heads are placed above those of the Fish and Turtle, in Continuation of the disposition first shown in the national Museum fragment of the 6th/7th century.

### **\$5.1**

In the Viśvarūpa sculptures from Manwadhi and Bajaura, however, the Narasiṃha and Varāha heads are returned to the junction of Viṣṇu's neck and shoulder, as in the three-headed Bhankari Viśvarūpa of the 5th century, and those of matsya and Kūrma are elevated above them.

### **\$5.2**

Moreover, in these images the locations of the Matsya and Kūrma heads are interchangeable. Matsya on the proper right and Kūrma on the proper left, the relative position introduced in the National Museum fragment is continued only in the Viśvarūpas from Tumain, Manwadhi, and Bhuali.

### **\$5.3**

In all other extent examples -- the Viśvarūpas from Deogarh, Dalmau, Bhuiili, and Bajaura -- Kūrma is placed on the proper right and Matsya on the proper left.

### **\$6**

The lack of system in the arrangement of the heads in these images makes it clear that the concept of a fixed sequence--whether vertically alternating or circular -- was either forgotten or deliberately abandoned after the end of the 7th century at the latest. The only conscious option appears to have been the lowering of the Narasiṃha and Varāha heads to their old position of Viṣṇu's shoulders, and this was acted upon only at northerly sites of Manwadhi and Bajaura. (The profiles of Matsya and Kūrma meanwhile became so reduced in size and indistinct in feature as to make their lateral location of

very little account.) In the main, throughout the Viśvarūpa sites in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the placement of the Man-Lion and boar heads corresponds to the development introduced -- probably from Mathura -- by the National Museum fragment, which must therefore be seen as representing the dominant tendency from the 7th century onward.

## **\$7**

The second primary alternative, however, is strikingly different. All four extant examples show the Varāha head placed above that of Narasiṃha, both on the proper left side of Viṣṇu's face. Matsya and Kūrma appear on the proper right. This type of Viśvarūpa image appears to have been developed in Kanauj city from earlier forms made to the south in Madhya Pradesh (the earliest example is the Philadelphia Viśvarūpa.

### **\$7.1**

On the proper right, two of these sculptures locate the profile of Matsya above Kūrma: the Philadelphia Viśvarūpa and the Kapoor Viśvarūpa.

### **\$7.2**

Two other sculptures locate Kūrma above matsya on the proper right: the two Viśvarūpas in the Ram-Lakṣmaṇ temple in Kanauj.

### **\$7.3**

It would be noted that the two latest images of this group -- the two Ram-Lakṣmaṇ images, very similar to each other in size and style, and clearly representing the fully developed Kanauj Viśvarūpa type -- place the four heads of Viṣṇu in a new disposition (\$7.2) which re-introduces the concept of a sequence. The profile of the Turtle now appears above that of the fish on the proper right, reversing the earlier pattern (\$7.1), so that a clockwise circular order (pradakṣiṇā) is established around the central face of

Viṣṇu: Matsya -- Varāha -- Narasiṃha. As Viśvarūpa images with the heads in this arrangement are known nowhere else, their exclusive association with the emperors of Kanauj in their capital city is virtually certain.

This analysis is set out in Tables 1 and 2.

**THE HEADS OF VIṢṆU IN NORTH INDIAN Viśvarūpa IMAGES**  
**COMPARATIVE ICONOGRAPHIC TABLES**

**TABLE 1**

**Viśvarūpa TYPE I: NARASIṂHA -VARĀHA**

**MATSYA - KŪRMA**

- |     |   |           |  |
|-----|---|-----------|--|
| 01. | MATHURA REGION VR<br>(NATIONAL MUSEUM 66.25): |           |  |
|     | VARĀHA  | NARASIṂHA |  |
|     | MATSYA  | KŪRMA     |  |
| 02. | TUMAIN VR:                                    |           |  |
|     | NARASIṂHA                                     | VARĀHA    |  |
|     | MATSYA  | KŪRMA     |  |
| 03. | DEOGARH VR:                                   |           |  |
|     | NARASIṂHA                                     | VARĀHA    |  |
|     | KŪRMA   | MATSYA    |  |
| 04. | DALMAU VR:                                    |           |  |

	NARASIMHA (KŪRMA)	VARĀHA MATSYA
05.	BHUALI VR: NARASIMHA MATSYA?	VARĀHA KŪRMA?
06.	BHUILI VR: NARASIMHA KŪRMA	VARĀHA MATSYA
07.	MANWADHI VR: MATSYA NARASIMHA	KŪRMA VARĀHA
08.	BAJAURA VR: KŪRMA NARASIMHA	MATSYA VARĀHA

**TABLE 2**

**Viśvarūpa TYPE II: MATSYA KŪRMA**

**VARĀHA NARASIMHA**

09. PHILADELPHIA VR:

MATSYA (VARĀHA )  
KŪRMA NARASIMHA

10. KANAUJ, KAPOOR VR:  
MATSYA VARĀHA  
KŪRMA NARASIMHA

11. KANAUJ, RAM-LAKSMAN 1:  
KŪRMA VARĀHA  
MATSYA NARASIMHA

12. KANAUJ, RAM-LAKSMAN 2:  
KŪRMA VARĀHA  
MATSYA NARASIMHA

D:REPORT.NW.BP+KASHMIR,1992/F:REPORT.NW

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vom 30.06.1990 und vom 30.07.1992

## KATALOG

### DES ARCHAOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

(August 1992 - September 1993)

**T. S. MAXWELL**

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#### **01. D.Ref.: ROHTAK JHAJJAR #01-36**

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 79.25 x 46 x 17.6

4 Hande

Rohtak, Haryana (Gurukul Ashram, Jhajjar, Haryana).

#### **01.1 DESCRIPTION:**

The sculpture is in the private possession of Svami Omanand Sarasvati; it is not kept in the museum of the Gurukul Ashram, but in a locked chamber elsewhere. It was documented, along with other pieces of interest from a separate storeroom, with the permission of Svami Omanand and the cooperation of his staff. I was informed that the piece was recovered from Rohtak. A handwritten ink inscription on the back of the stele bears the name Gokarna and the date 16.11.65.

The sculpture consists of a rectangular stele with a half-*pañcaratha* base and a semicircular top which is inset a few centimetres from the vertical sides. One of the earliest examples of the resulting hipped outline occurs in the 10th-century *Viśvarūpa* sculpture from Suhania at Gwalior (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1990: S.178-217, figs. 3, 12, 13). On the base stands a figure of *Viṣṇu*, 60.5 cm high, with flanking figures. The back is plain.

The *Viṣṇu* figure stands on a single lotus pedestal slightly *ābhaṅga* to the right, with the weight on the out-turned left foot. Body-ornaments include the long *vanamālā* reaching to below the knees, its surface bearing a continuous disk-and-diamond design; tassels on the thighs, suspended from the waistband: two necklaces of the *Candella* type, the shorter having long pendants, the longer curving inward at the centre of the chest and enclosing the *śrīvatsa*; a chunky *kirīṭa* with a broad flat top; and pendant ear-ornaments. From behind the right side of the head emerges a large profile of *Narasimha*; on the opposite side protrudes a smaller profile of the *Varāha*, of which the snout is broken. Behind the heads, the nimbus is formed by a large eight-petalled lotus, centred on the top of the crown. The upper right hand holds a large circular lotus blossom on a triple stalk, the upper left a large *śaṅkha*, upright. The two rear arms are lowered, and the hands rest on *Gadādevī* (right) and *Cakrapuruṣa* (left).

Between the feet of *Viṣṇu*, directly under the central clasp of the garland, *Bhūdēvī* emerges from the surface of the lotus pedestal. The goddess is apparently shown in the flying posture, her left knee bent and the toes of her foot merged into the base, her trailing right leg hidden, apart from the very top of the thigh, partly in the base and partly

behind the right foot of Viṣṇu. The head is turned upward to the left. The right arm is stretched out horizontally to the side, resting on the instep of Viṣṇu's right foot, with the hand curled over its edge; the left arm is held stiffly downward at forty-five degrees, the hand turned and the fingers held under the arch of Viṣṇu's out-turned left foot. This diminutive image thus retains aspects of the Garuḍa figure (the flying posture), which can also appear in this position in North Indian sculpture, but is anatomically female and thus to be identified as the Earth Goddess, as in Kashmiri iconography. The location of this sculpture -- northwest of Delhi, between the Punjab plain at the foot of the Western Himalaya to the north and the desert regions of Rajasthan to the south -- accounts for the ambivalence in the depiction of this base-figure, which shows both Kashmiri and North Indian traits.

The two weapon-personifications stand on the pratibhadras to left and right of Viṣṇu. Gadādēvī (proper right) stands in an exaggerated ābhaṅga posture with the left hip thrown out, the right hand hanging loosely at the side, and the left raised to hold the handle of a cāmara, the top of which is hidden behind her head. The knurled top of the gadā; can be seen above her head. Her counterpart on the proper left is Cakrapuruṣa, standing in an equally exaggerated ābhaṅga to the right, left hand on his thigh, right raised to hold the cāmara-handle. A portion of the spoked cakra is visible between the handle and his face.

On the left and right bhadras of the base stand the two consorts of Viṣṇu. Lakṣmī stands on the proper left, behind Cakrapuruṣa, in a slight ābhaṅga posture with the right hip thrown out. Her left arm hangs down loosely, the right is raised to hold up the śaṅkha. On the proper right, behind Gadādēvī, stands an almost identical goddess; the object held in her raised left hand cannot be ascertained.

Four small figures appear on the left and right margins of the stele, each seated on a lotus, the stalk of which emerges from the surface of the stele immediately below it between two curling tendrils. Two of these figures appear at the level of Viṣṇu's heads, the lower two at the level of his waist.

The figure in the upper right position, beyond the Narasiṃha head, represents Brahmā, three-headed, his beard tied in a knot beneath his chin, wearing the upavīta, and seated in ardhaparyāṅkāsa on the curved top of the lotus. The right front hand is held in abhayaṃudrā, the front left supports the kamaṇḍalu. The rear right held a long object now damaged, presumably the large sacrificial ladle, and the rear left the manuscript. Behind the top of the pustaka appears an agnikuṇḍa, a small fire-place, presumably indicating the god's ritual function.

His counterpart on the proper left, beyond the Varāha-head, is Śiva, seated similarly on a lotus, his front hands identical to those of Brahmā.

The rear right hand holds the triśūla (damaged), and the rear left originally held up a snake, the details of which are obliterated, although its serpentine outline is preserved.

The figures in the middle of the two margins are human and virtually identical, being seated on smaller lotuses, facing toward Viṣṇu, with one leg loosely curved in front, and the other bent with the foot placed on the opposite thigh. Their heads are slightly bent forward over their hands, which are joined in the aṅjalimudrā. They have short matted hair conforming to the shape of the head, and appear to represent the mortal devotees of Viṣṇu who have attained a higher state of being, halfway between the earth (Bhūdēvī and heaven (Brahmā and Śiva).

The stele is pierced beside the figure of Viṣṇu, from the level of his upper arms down to his feet. The back of the stele is opened up behind this to form a rectangular opening in which the visible parts of Viṣṇu's anatomy and ornaments have been cursorily carved.

## **01.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

The sculpture represents the form of Viṣṇu Vaikuṅṭha which resulted from the convergence of influences from the east (Candella kingdom in Central India) and from the northwest (Karkota kingdom in Kashmir, and the Kashmir-influenced regions of the

Western Himalaya) on this boundary zone between the Punjab plain and northern Rajasthan. The dominant influence is Candella.

The image represents a late penetration of the Vaikuṅṭha concept from Central India into the southernmost extension of the Punjab plain, possibly within the territories of the Tomara kings, combined with some influence from the Northwest (Bhūdēvī), and it may be dated to the late 10th or early 11th century.

Nr. 01: Jhajjar  
Gurukul Asram



Visnu Vaikuntha, Rohtak Haryana

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02. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(I) DEVSAR #0I-23

## SIEBENKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Bronze: 21.5 x 11.5

10 Hande

Devsar, Anantnag District, Kashmir (SPS): Figur an der Spitze eines Bronzerahmens.

### 02.1 DESCRIPTION:

This multi-headed image dominated a series of originally thirteen deities contained in circles, including ten preserved forms of Viṣṇu, on an arched framework (186 cm high) apparently intended to surround a large seated figure, now lost. Among the lower figures on the frame are two seated three-headed Viṣṇu Images, which are also dealt with in this Report (Nos. 3 and 4).

The iconography of this apical standing figure is basically that of Vaikuṅṭha, having the side-heads of the Nṛsimhā and Varāha, emergent

Bhūdēvī between the feet, two of the hands lowered on to the heads of Gadādēvī and Cakrapuruṣa, and the padma and śaṅkha held in the two front hands. The remaining six attributes have to be divided into three pairs. These are khaḍga and khaṭvāṅga, sruk and pustaka, and two disks representing the sun and moon.

The skull-staff, and presumably the sword opposite, refer to Śiva as decapitator of Brahmā; the three heads in human form above the Vaiṣṇava faces thus have to be considered as those of Śiva. This arrangement of the heads of Śiva (omitting the apical head of Īśāna placed above those of Viṣṇu accords with the description of Viśvarūpa in the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa 3.83.3-4a:

ādau devasya kartavyāś catvāro vaiṣṇavā mukhā

teṣām upari kartavyās tathā māheśvarāḥ punāḥ

Īśānavaktrahinās te yathā proktā mayā purā.

The ladle and manuscript in North Indian tradition refer to Brahmā, of course, but in this Kashmiri image they were transferred to Hayagrīva, as can be seen in the image of this deity in the 3rd position on the left side of the frame.

Hayagrīva there clearly takes over the conventional attributes of Brahmā, who is represented in a circle below, with Śēṣaśāyyin Viṣṇu, as a single-headed figure.

The mythology regarding horse-headed appearance of Viṣṇu (as Hayagrīva/Aśvagrīva/Turaṅgamūrdhan) as rescuer of the Vedas and slayer of the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha is depicted on the Devsar frame, where Śēṣaśāyyin and Hayagrīva appear in adjacent circles at the bottom left; this tradition originates in Kashmir, since reference is made to it in the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa (3.80.5-6):

aśvagrīveṇa devenā purā vedāḥ samuddhṛtāḥ

vedā hṛtā dānavapuṅgavābhyāṃ rasātalād devāvareṇa tena

samuddhṛtā yādavavaṃśamukhya turaṅgamūrdhnā puruṣottamena.

Nevertheless, there may a degree of ambiguity in the identity of the three heads in the second row, above those of Viṣṇu. They might represent Brahmā, as well as Śiva, since the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa, in its description of Viśvarūpa, states at 3.83.3b that the heads of Brahmā appear above those of Śiva:

teṣāṃ upari kartavyā mukhā brāhmā yatheritāḥ.

The solar to belong to the iconography of Śiva in some Kashmiri bronzes (Pal 1975: nos. 6 and 7), while the two disks raised in both rear hands are known in a Śaiva goddess bronze from Himachal Pradesh (Pal 1976: no.91) and in the iconography of multiple Śiva even in Kuṣāṇa times at Musanagar and Rang Mahal (Maxwell 1988: pls.17 and 30). However, in the 3rd position on this side of the Devsar frame itself, these two disks are held by Hayagrīva, and there can be no doubt that here, like the ladle and manuscript, they refer to Hayagrīva, not Śiva.

The seventh head at the apex of this image is that of a horse, which can only refer to Hayagrīva, thus confirming the predominance of Viṣṇu in this image. The attributes of Hayagrīva held by this image are the ladle and manuscript, and the two disks.

Hayagrīva is one of the apical figures in the multi-headed stone images of Viṣṇu Viśvarūpa produced in Gurjara-Pratihāra areas of North India as early as the 8th century (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1990, S.172-177: Tomain): this suggests mutual iconographical influence between Madhya Pradesh and Kashmir in the 8th century.

The image (probably 10th century) has its closest Kashmiri parallel, and its most immediate prototype, in the eroded stone relief flanking the entrance to the 8th-century Martanda temple on the left (northern) wall of the maṇḍpa, opposite another representing multi-headed Śiva. It therefore belongs to a definite Kashmiri Hindu cult tradition which is represented in the archaeological record, however, only by the Martanda relief and this bronze image: further examples from the 8th-10th century period in Kashmir may therefore be expected to come to light in the course of time. The Martanda relief is dealt with below in this Report.

The icon is shown standing on a lotus base placed between two octagonal pillars, the wedge-shaped abaci of which support a trilobate arch crowned by an āmalaka. This is the typical Kashmiri temple entrance construct, so that the image is made to appear standing in the doorway of its temple; North Indian Viśvarūpa images of the 10th/11th centuries (e.g. Suhania, Bhusawar) are also depicted in front of a temple doorframe, and this suggests that there was iconographical contact between certain schools of Vaiṣṇavism in northern Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Kashmir during that period. It is therefore possible that this image represents the Kashmiri version of the Viśvarūpa icon, though it is unlikely to have been known by that name in Kashmir.

## **02.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION:**

This is primarily an image of Viṣṇu, consisting of the combination of four-armed Vaikuṅṭha with four-armed Hayagrīva, to which the heads and the skull-staff of Śiva are

added. It is thus not a syncretistic image in which Viṣṇu and Śiva are equally represented (Hari-Hara), but an augmentation of Viṣṇu through the incorporation into his iconography of the powers of the lesser god. The resultant magnified deity is not Vaikuṅṭha in the conventional Kashmiri Pañcarātra sense, because the additional heads and attributes do not represent an interpretation of the Vaikuṅṭha form. It is closer to the Viśvarūpa concept: though its iconography does not conform to representations of this cosmic form as they were known in North India, it can only represent the Kashmiri equivalent of Viśvarūpa, particularly as the disposition of the heads corresponds to some extent with the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa description of this supreme form.

The bronze frame (Pal 1975: No.11a) is usually dated to the 10th century on stylistic grounds. A certain degree of interaction between the kingdom of Kashmir and the rising Candella power in Central India at this time is indicated by the iconographical parallels between this Kashmiri image and Stone sculptures at Khajuraho. The sanctum of the Lakṣmaṇ temple at Khajuraho (AD 954) contains a version of the Vaikuṅṭha image (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: S96-113). Reliefs on the outer side of the sanctum walls there show Narasiṃha, Varāha, and Hayagrīva (not Kapila), while the large 10th/11th-century Vaikuṅṭha image in the Archaeological Museum at Khajuraho has the face of a horse, presumably representing the head of Hayagrīva, carved on the back. The importance accorded to Hayagrīva at Khajuraho is seen also in the Devsar frame, where Hayagrīva is shown holding the emblems of Brahmā: and his horse-head appears at the apex of the image of Para-Viṣṇu, which also holds the attributes of Brahmā (sruk and pustaka) that are transferred to Hayagrīva. Moreover, the Lakṣmaṇ temple inscription at Khajuraho explains the appearance of animal-faced

Vaikuṅṭha in terms of demon slaying, and the Devsar frame from Kashmir prominently depicts Viṣṇu as demon-slayer (in the fourth, seventh, ninth, and tenth circles, as Madhusūdana and Kaiṭabhajit, twice as Varāha, and as Narasiṃha). Not only the Vaikuṅṭha iconography, but also the Daityārāti mythology referred to in the Lakṣmaṇ temple inscription, which is unknown in North Indian Sanskrit literature, could thus have been derived from Kashmir. It may well have been a Kashmiri cult that was partly

related to that represented by the Devsar bronze frame -- particularly by the Hayagrīva figure and this apical deity -- which was introduced into Khajuraho in the 10th century; it was not the conventional and older Kashmiri Vaiṣṇavism of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās.

Nr. 02: Devsar

SPS Srinagar



Visvarupa, Devsar, Anantnag Distt., Kashmir

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### 03. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(1) DEVSAR #24-29

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Bronze: 15.5 x 12.5

4 Hande

Devsar, Anantnag District, Kashmir (SPS): Figur Nr.6 von unten an der linken Seite eines Bronzerahmens.

### 03.1 DESCRIPTION:

The implication of the archaeological evidence is that at least four varieties of the four-headed Viṣṇu image must have been created in the 9th century for the corner-shrines of the Avantisvāmin temple at Avantipura (Maxwell 1991: 115-125, The Royal Image of Vaikuṇṭha). This miniature bronze Viṣṇu, the 6th from the base on the left side of the Devsar frame, along with the adjacent 5th image, demonstrates that at least two different forms (or three, if the apical figure is taken into account) were known at the time this bronze was made (c.10th century).

The image shows Viṣṇu seated on a lotus base, left knee raised and right knee bent with the foot presented to the left. Viṣṇu wears the long vanamālā, the upavīta, keyūras, a short pearl necklace, flower-shaped ear-ornaments, and the tripartite crown. The large profiles of the Nṛsiṃha (right) and the Varāha (left) emerge from the sides of the central head. In the raised rear hands, Viṣṇu holds the padma (right) some distance in front of the Nṛsiṃha face, and the śaṅkha immediately before the mouth of the Varāha face (left). The front right hand displayed a mudrā; the hand is broken. The front left arm is broken off at the elbow.

The figure kneeling with hands joined in the añjalimudrā at the left side of the lotus on which Viṣṇu sits, though damaged, is clearly female, and presumably represents Lakṣmaṇ, the chief Śakti of Viṣṇu, possibly receiving the Vaiṣṇava teaching from the god (compare miniature image no.5 in this bronze: No.4 in this Report).

### 03.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

There can be no doubt that this image represents either Vaikuṇṭha himself, enthroned and accompanied by his chief Śakti; or a variant form of Vaikuṇṭha whose precise identification, in the absence of one of the attributes and part of the mudrā, is

impossible. The probability is however that it represents a conventional image of Vaikuṅṭha VIṢṆU seated at ease with his usual consort, Lakṣamī.

Nr. 03: Devsar

SPS Srinagar



Vaikuntha Visnu, Devsar, Anantnag Distt., Kashmir

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#### 04. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(1) DEVSAR #30-37

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Bronze: 17 x 11.25

4 Hande

Devsar, Anantnag District, Kashmir (SPS): Figur Nr.5 von unten an der linken Seite eines Bronzerahmens.

##### 04.1 DESCRIPTION:

This miniature figure appears in the 5th position from the base on the left side of the Devsar bronze frame, immediately below the image no.3 in this Report.

In some ways it is the mirror image of the figure above it: it is here the left leg which is lowered, the foot of which is presented to the right; a kneeling figure appears here on the right edge of the base lotus. The body-ornaments of the Viṣṇu figure are the same, with the exception of the vanamālā, which is here omitted.

The rear right hand holds the padma in the same position, in front of the Nṛsiṃha face. The rear left, however, is raised to the Varāha face with the extended index finger placed on the snout just above the mouth, clearly in the maunamudrā signifying silence; this appears to signify the opposite of the meaning suggested by the other image, in which it is the śaṅkha, the trumpet-shell, which is held before the Boar's mouth. The front left arm is broken off at the elbow. The front right resting on the right knee is extended and the hand, in the varadamudrā or gesture of granting a boon, holds under the thumb a manuscript which is clearly being offered to the kneeling figure.

This small figure is male, with long hair piled up on the head and his eyes directed at the proffered manuscript. He has four arms. The two lower hands are joined in the worshipful anjalimudrā, as in the case of Lakṣmī in the image above, though here the gesture is directed at the manuscript. The raised rear right hand appears to hold an akṣamālā looped around the fingers; the rear left, also raised, appears to hold a short stick-like object (manuscript?). though this is more likely to be merely a thin supporting bar of the kind seen elsewhere in this bronze frame.

There is nothing in the iconography of this kneeling figure to indicate that it represents anthropomorphic Garuḍa. The figure is identical, in hairstyle, robe over the left shoulder, folds of the dhotī on the thighs, kneeling posture, and gesture of obeisance, to the two priestly or ascetic figures which flank the seven-headed Viṣṇu at the apex of the frame. Being a four-armed priest or ascetic, this figure could be identified as single-headed Brahmā, the apotheosis of the brahman priesthood, receiving the manuscript containing the Vaiṣṇava scriptures to replace the book of the Vedas, which Brahmā conventionally

holds in his upper left hand. Indeed, the god Brahmā is shown as a single-headed and four-armed figure with the same hairstyle and a robe over the left shoulder in the miniature image of Śeṣasāyyin in the 2nd position on this side of the frame. If the iconography of these two figures in the 5th position does indeed represent the conversion of Brahmā to Kashmiri norms, this kneeling figure would be the representative of the new priesthood of Kashmiri Vaiṣṇava Brahmans (the 'Kashmiri Paṇḍits'). In the mythology of Kashmir Nīlamatapurāṇa, "the standard religious text of the Paṇḍits" - H. Sender, *The Kashmiri Paṇḍits*, Delhi, 1988: 6), the Kashmir brahmans are descended from the ṛṣi Kaśyapa, who is there said to have been instructed in the indigenous forms of Kashmiri religion (the Nāga cult) by the serpent Nīla; here, certain of the descendants of Kaśyapa, the Kashmiri Vaiṣṇava brahmans, represented by Brahmā, are shown being instructed instead, within the Vaiṣṇava cult, by Vaikuṅṭha, the Kashmiri Viṣṇu.

## 04.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents Vaikuṅṭha Viṣṇu as teacher, the role which he assumes in the Kashmiri Vaiṣṇava Saṃhitās, where the doctrine is taught by Viṣṇu Viṣvātman (=Vaikuṅṭha) to Nārada (Jayākhyasaṃhitā) or Śiva Ahirbudhnya (Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā). The means of communication of the doctrine are the scriptures themselves, represented by the manuscript proffered in the god's right hand. The kneeling figure is the god BRAHMĀ, whose birth is shown below, is the Śeṣasāyyin image, as apotheosis of the Kashmiri Vaiṣṇava priesthood, whose semi-divine representatives kneel the feet of Para-Viṣṇu at the apex of the frame.

Nr. 04: Devsar

SPS Srinagar



Vaikuntha, Devsar, Anantnag Dist., Kashmir

## 05. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(1) BEJBEHARA #38-75

DREIKOPPIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 59 x 29

4 Hande

Bejbehara (Bijbiara Taluk, Anantnag District: Bijbiara < Vljabror < Vljayeśvara(-pura/ Vijaya-bhaṭṭāraka[īśvara] > bror): Stein RT I (trans.): 9: I.38, n.38), 10 miles SE of Avantipura, Kashmir South (SPS).

### 05.1 DESCRIPTION

This image was acquired by the museum from Bejbehara. It represents the god Viṣṇu, three-headed and four-armed, and is aesthetically one of the finest of all Kashmiri sculptures. The lower part of both rear arms and of both legs, along with the base and any figures located upon it, are broken off. The remainder is in very good condition, having sustained only superficial damage and virtually no erosion; the smooth polish of the greenish stone and all sculptural details are preserved.

The anatomy is smooth and unmuscled, with the exaggeratedly massive shoulders typical of the Gupta style and of early Kashmiri sculpture. The figure is slightly ābhaṅga to the right, with the weight originally on the right leg. The only item of clothing is a dhoṭī with a short fold in front, curved folds over the left thigh, and long central pleats between the legs; a scarf is slung diagonally across the legs from the right hip. Viṣṇu wears the plain upavīta and the vanmālā curving around the back of the shoulders and over the elbows of the front arms. The śrīvatsa takes the form of an upright, diamond-shaped flower in the centre of the chest. The body-ornaments are long ear-pendants, a short peal necklace, a slightly longer triple-strand pearl necklace with a large central oval jewel, a twisted multi-strand pearl necklace with floral ornaments at the centre and at the slides, tied-on armlets with large floral plaques, studded bracelets, and a girdle consisting of square jewels and fastened at the centre with two round bosses.

The crown consists of a studded headband with a diamond-shaped jewel at the centre, surmounted by three crescents linked from central rosettes by looped pearl-strings, and filled with lotus-tendril and bud designs. (This would be the cakratrayāṅkita mauli, the royal crown of Kashmir with three disks, alluded to by Kalhana as representing fortune, rank and love, in his ironic description of the favours bestowed by the amorous other of King Gopālavarman on the opportunistic Prabhākaradeva: Stein, Rājatarāṅgini V.231; in describing the 11th century King Ananta in the hands of a creditor, Kalhana also mentions, along with the royal lion-throne or *siṃhāsana*, a form of the royal crown having five crescents, *pañcacaṅdrakaśobhāṅkamauli*: Stein, Rājatarāṅgini VII.195). Within the crown, an eight-petalled lotus, with a prominently raised seed-case at the centre, rests upon Viṣṇu's head. Long spiral curls of hair curve down from under the lotus and emerge from under the rim of the crown to hang upon the forehead and on to the shoulders.

The head of the Narasiṃha and of the Varāha emerge from the proper right and left sides of the central head. These side-heads are sculpted in very high relief, almost in the round, and are clearly differentiated from each other in shape and feature. Both animal faces have their mouths stretched open, revealing teeth and fangs, and the strained shape of these mouths can only be described as a ferocious snarl; the eyes, wide open and bulging, the eyelids jagged, the pupil contracted to a single point, are equally intended to express ferocity. There can be no doubt that these faces were never intended to be naturalistic representations, but are attempted depictions of aggressive ferocity expressed through animal features. It is reasonably clear that in these faces the artist was trying to express the violent transformation of the placid central face.

Both the animal heads are crowned with a single crescent, filled with a diamond shape framed in foliage, placed well back on the head between the ears. The three heads are backed by a circular halo outlined with a single beaded band.

The rear of the image is fully carved, though only in flat relief or simple engraving, showing the back of the *upavīta*, and of the long pearl necklace (with an ornate central

clasp), armlets, girdle, dhotī and scarf. The back of the nimbus, flattened at the base so that it appears to rest on the shoulders, is polished like the rest of the sculpture, and completely plain.

The two rear arms, broken off at the elbow, are lowered; almost certainly the hands would have rested on the heads of the personified weapons, Gadādevī and Cakrapuruṣa. The right front hand holds the stem of a large ten-petalled circular lotus with a prominent seed-case, on the surface of which the individual seeds are represented by lightly inscribed circles. The left front hand supports a large conch shell, upright; the direction of the spiral is clockwise (Pradakṣiṇa).

## 05.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The sculpture represents VIṢṆU in the typical three-headed form which originated in Mathura in the 5th century ad became the standard icon of the god in his highest state throughout the western Himalaya from the early 7th century (Brahmapura) onward. Although the piece is stylistically a brilliant example of Kashmiri art, and very well preserved, it is iconographically unexceptional. It is however important to note the pronounced, even exaggerated, ferocity in the depiction of the faces of the two animal avatāras; this appears to accord with the belief in these deities specifically as demon-slaying transformations of Viṣṇu, the aspect which was to be emphasized in the Devsar frame and in the mythology current at Khajuraho, both in the 10th century.

The absence of the face of Kapila on the back of the nimbus indicates that the sculpture was produced, evidently for a wealthy (possibly royal) patron, in the Avantipura region, before this feature was introduced at Avantipura itself by Avantivarman in the mid-9th century. The quality of the sculpture and its polish, however, suggest that it comes from a period not much earlier than that date, though this is by no means the immediate predecessor of the Avantipura style. It is later than the Parihasapura sculptures of the reign of Lalitāditya in the first half of the 8th century, since the style has become more elaborate and lost all trace of Gandhara and central Asian influence. Within the 125 years between the two kings, a date toward the end of the AD 750-800 period, two

generations after Lalitāditya and two generations before Avantivarman, therefore seems probable.

Bejbehara (Vijabror, modern Bijbiara), late 8th century.

Nr. 05: Bejbehara

SPS Srinagar



Visnu, Bejbehara, Avantipura, Kashmir South

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## 06. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(I) AVANTIPURA #76-87

VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 77 x 37

urspr. 4 Hande

Avantipura, Kashmir South (SPS)

### 06.1 DESCRIPTION:

The sculpture represents Viṣṇu, standing, with four faces: the legs below the knees, and the arms are broken off. The material is a dark-grey stone, polished to a glossy black. The main figure has curls, parted in the middle, on the forehead, and longer curls lying on the shoulders. A round tilaka mark appears on the forehead. The figure wears round floral ear-ornaments, a single-strand necklace composed of large beads or pearls with a central floral piece having three small pendants, the diamond-shaped śrīvatsa below this in the centre of the chest, floral armlets and a flower at the centre of the waistband, the yajñopvīta looping just below the waistband, a dagger in the waistband on the right, and a sash looped across the thighs and over the dagger. The remains of the vanamālā can be seen on the shoulders only. The tall crown consists of the three crescents filled with a central flower surrounded by tendrils; its base is a wide band ornamented with circular flowers and a central diamond-shaped motif.

The horizontal side-faces of Viṣṇu represent the Nṛsiṃha (proper right) and the Varāha (proper left). These faces are not fully carved on the back, where the lower part of the animal-head carving consists of a plain curved support only.

The face at the back of the central Vāsudeva head represents Kapila. It is carved in flat relief, but projects considerably behind the crown of Vāsudeva. The hairstyle is the ascetic jaṭākālāpa, the jaṭā drawn back from a central lenticular parting, through a band to stand up in the centre, while longer tresses loop down at the sides. The band around the central part of the hair consists of a garland, which also hangs across the top of the head behind the central projection, covering the connexion between the backs of the Vāsudeva and Kapila heads. The face had a double-knobbed frown above the nose and three furrows above it on the brow; the nose itself is very flat, and the nostrils wide. The eyes are large and bulging, with creases in the skin at the outer corners, and widely spaced high eyebrows. The mouth is a straight line, slightly open, showing even teeth and upward-pointing fangs at the corners, beyond which small curling moustaches appear. The large ears have wisps of hair curving across them and large circular ear-ornaments. The throat bears the trirekha but has no necklace; on either side, the throat

is framed by long pendant jaṭās. The baseline of the Kapila depiction is marked by the back of the vanamālā which belongs to the main Vaikuṅṭha figure on the front.

The plain, curving supports at the back of the animal side-heads effectively shield these from view when the image is seen from the back; the side-heads of the avatāras were deliberately separated from the Kapila face. The intention evidently was to prevent the avatāras being mistakenly regarded as emanations of Kapila. (The Kapila head is also shielded from direct connexion with the back of the Vāsudeva head by means of the garland mentioned above.) The yajñopavīta is hidden at the back of the left shoulder by the pendant jabs of Kapila. It is therefore clear that the Kapila face was as far as possible to be seen as isolated from the main three-headed image.

However, at the same time the iris and the pupil of the eyes of all four heads are incised on the eyeball, indicating that all four aspects of the god were intended to be invoked and worshipped.

### **6.1.1 DISCUSSION:**

The prevention of all contact between the orthodox brahmanical three-headed image of Viṣṇu and the face of Kapila, while simultaneously presenting his face for invocation indicates the power of ritual contamination which the Kapila face was considered to generate in the context of orthodox Vaiṣṇavism. That the presence of Kapila was nevertheless considered essential for the new Vaikuṅṭha cult is shown by the fact that his eyes, like those of the other three aspects, were 'opened' at the consecration of the image. The introduction of the Kapila face thus involved considerable ritual danger, and so the reasons for introducing it must have been of overriding importance. This must have introduced into the ritual performance a strong element of tension, which finds expression in the iconography.

The fact that the iconography is apparently still in the process of adapting to the introduction of the Kapila face indicates that the image was made soon after this four-headed image of Vaikuṅṭha was created for the Avantisvāmin temple at Avantipura.

## 6.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

There can be little doubt that this is one of the original images of Vaikuṅṭha installed in the Avantivāmin temple. It can therefore be dated to ca. AD 850.

Nr. 06 : Avantipura

SPS Srinagar



Vaikuntha, Avantipura, Kashmir South

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## 07. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(1) AVANTIPURA #88-95

VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 66 x 33

urspr. 4 Hande

Avantipura, Kashmir South (SPS: Ac/20)

### 07.1 DESCRIPTION:

This is a damaged and partly eroded torso with the four Vaikuṅṭha heads. The left arms are broken off at the shoulder the right arms survive only down as far as the keyūra. Both legs are broken off above the knee. Traces of a former high polish remain only in the abdominal region, the rest of the sculpture presenting a worn grey appearance. The sculpture was washed before being photographed. As it is fixed into a large concrete block to prevent theft and kept against the wall, the rear face can only be seen and photographed at an oblique angle.

The central face of Vaikuṅṭha has open eyes under high arched brows; between them is a circular ūrṇā. The hair is arranged in long curls, parted in the middle, on the forehead, and others lie upon the shoulders. The central head wears the crown consisting of three disks with a row of large blossoms around the rim and a large six-petalled lotus design filling each of the disks, the large head of the Nṛsiṃha emerges horizontally on the proper right, that of the Varāha on the proper left, just above the shoulders. Damage to the snout of the Varāha face makes them almost indistinguishable. Around the neck hangs a single-strand pearl necklace with a small floral centre-piece having three very small pendants. Below this at the centre of the chest appears the diamond-shaped śrīvatsa. The one-remaining keyūra, on the stump of the right arm, consists of a plain band and a floral boss. Part of the vanamālā survives behind this keyūra, below the curls spread along the shoulder.

The waistband is plain and drawn very straight across the hips. At the centre it has a small blossom, from which pleats fall between the legs. A shallow loop of the upavīta which descends vertically from the left shoulder, hangs below the waistband, and a larger scarf curves across the upper thighs. The blade of a large horned dagger is thrust into this scarf at the right hip.

The flattening of the animal faces at the back, and the garland binding the hair of Kapila, are features seen also in No.6.

## 7.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Stylistic similarities show that this Vaikuṅṭha mage almost certainly does come from the Avantipura area, though It cannot be shown whether it originally stood in the Avantisvāmin temple. There are variations in the design of this piece as compared to No.6 -- for example the absence of the diamond at the centre of the crown rim, the positioning of the loops on the sash across the thighs -- but they are minor. The conception and style is identical, and both sculptures share certain important features, such as the flattening of the avatāra-faces at the back to disengage them from the Kapila face. The minor variations of design appear to be related to an increasingly mechanical reproduction of stylistic features, which indicates a date later than that of the Avantisvāmin temple.

Avantipura area, c. AD 875

Nr. 07: Avantipura

SPS Srinagar



Vaikuntha, Avantipura, Kashmir South

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## 08. D.Ref.: KASHMIR VK SPS(I-2) AVANTIPURA # 96-113

### VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: H. 58

urspr. 6 Hande

Avantipura, Kashmir South (SPS)

### 08.1 DESCRIPTION

This is a Vaikuṅṭha image of unique iconography. The stone has a high black polish like that of No.6, but this is a more intricate piece of sculpture. The intricacy and elements of the style place it close to the early Bejbehara sculpture (No.51, though this is undoubtedly a later piece, from a period when the elements of the Bejbehara image were already beginning to become standardised and somewhat summarily treated. The expression of the central face, with eyes rather more than half-closed and slightly downcast, expresses a contemplative mood, which has been all but lost in No. 7. Stylistically the sculpture is contemporary with No.6.

The central face of Viṣṇu has long curls on the forehead, clearly parted at the centre, and others are arranged on the shoulders. Both ear-pendants are in the form of elongated floral designs. The crown, consisting of three disks, has a studded headband for a rim, with a central diamond-shape. The disks are contained within high curved crescent-moon shapes (as in the Bejbehara piece, No.5), outlined with pearl borders, and filled with an abstract floral design. Above the crown curves a series of seven cobra-heads (only two of which are fully preserved), forming a canopy. The head of the Nṛsiṃha emerges horizontally from the proper right side, that of the Varāha from the proper left; the animal heads are elevated well above the shoulders (as in Nos.5 and 6, from Bejbehara and Avantipura). The necklace consists of a double row of pearls, separated by a plain central string; it has a floral centre-piece with three small pendants. The diamond-shaped śrīvatsa sign occurs beneath it, below the centre of the chest muscles. The position of the navel is marked by a cross-shaped line. The waistband has

a pearl girdle with a central floral clasp. Narrow pleats fall between the legs, sculpted adhering the inside of the right leg and a swathe of pleats also falls on the front of the left thigh. The scarf curving across the tops of the thighs is rather stiffly represented, and it is incised with pairs of vertical lines, suggesting that its folds are tied or stitched together: the loop on it occurs adjacent to the dagger, on the right side. Part of the vanamālā is preserved beside and below it.

The front right hand holds by the stem a large circular ten-petalled lotus containing a relief of a crowned figure seated with ankles crossed and holding up what appear to be two large fruits or gourds, one suspended from each hand. The corresponding front left hand is broken off at the elbow. The second right arm was lowered and the hand probably rested on the head of Gadādevī. The second left hand rests on the head of the Cakrapuruṣa, who is shown wielding a cāmara in his right hand; behind his head like a nimbus is part of the spoked cakra, and between this and the back of his head emerges a single cobra-head, emphasising his affiliation to the form of Vaiṣṇava represented by the main image, with its canopy of seven snake-heads. The attributes held in the raised rear hands are damaged, but it is clear from the remains that both were stick-like objects: possibly the musala and hala (pestle and plough) of Saṅkarṣaṇa, the aspect of Viṣṇu who bears the serpent-canopy.

The back of the image shows that the bands of the keyūras are triple-wound' with curving ends. The nimbus is very large and represented so as to appear superimposed upon the shoulders and heads of the main figure, which are thus completely shielded from view; the upavīta cord disappears underneath it. This method of depicting the nimbus achieves the same object as the flattening of the back of the animal-avatāra faces in Nos.6 and 7, that is, to isolate the face of Kapila from the rest of the Vaiṣṇava symbolism. The large face of Kapila is represented in the lower part of the nimbus, as usual in a much cruder style. The usual features appear -- the thick eyebrows and bulging eyes, the frown at the base of broad flat nose -- here augmented by the vertical third eye on the forehead, and fangs growing vertically from the corners of the mouth. The face has a beard and moustache (represented only to either side of the fangs),

swept-back jaṭās terminating in three knob-like topknots, large circular ear-pendants and necklace of beads (rudrākṣa seeds?).

## 8.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents Vaikuṅṭha based on the image, not of Vāsudeva, but SAṆKARṢAṆA. It probably originates from the Avantipura area, quite possibly from the Avantisvāmin temple, since the iconography suggests that it belonged to a series of images set up for Pañcarātra worship (see T. S. MAXWELL, "Vaikuṅṭha", in G. Bhattacharya (ed.), *Akṣayanīvī* Delhi 1991: 113-151). Stylistically it is close to No.6, though it probably did not belong to the same set of icons.

Avantipura area, c. AD 850

Nr. 08: Avantipura

SPS Srinagar



Vaikuntha, Avantipura, Kashmir South

## 09. D.Ref.: KASHMIR VK SPS(2) AVANTIPURA #114-116

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (FRAGMENT)

Stein: 14 x 12 x 6

Avantipura, Kashmir South (SPS)

### 09.1 DESCRIPTION

This small black stone fragment, consisting of a bust of Viṣṇu with the proper left side-head of the Varāha, was recovered in 1913 from the Avantipura area by J. C. Chatterji (author of the standard work, Kashmir

Shaivism, 1914, repr. Patna, 1978).

The torso is broken off below the chest, the arms are broken just below the shoulders, and the proper right side-head (of Narasiṃha is missing. There is no Kapila face on the reverse, and stylistically the piece is akin to No.5 (the classic sculpture from Bejbehara, which thus deserves to be considered a fragment of an early sculpture from the Vijayeśvara/ Vijabror (Bijbiara) - Avantipura region of Kashmir South. Within the crown, the jaṭās curve downward from a central lotus in much the same way as they can be seen to do in No.5, although the central lotus is much larger and more prominent there and the jaṭās are correspondingly less visible. The crown consists of a studded band with a jewel at the centre (damaged) and on the sides, supporting three disks ornamented with abstract tendril-designs: this abstract patterning on the crown is also a feature of No.5. The pearl necklace has three strands, and the śrīvatsa is positioned at the centre of the chest. The Varāha head is damaged, but its elevation high above the shoulder is quite pronounced.

### 09.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

This is a fragment of an image of VIṢṆU with the side-heads or Narasiṃha Varāha, in the Bejbehara style of the 8th or early 9th century.

Nr. 09: Avantipura  
SPS Srinagar



Visnu, Avantipura, Kashmir South

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## 10. D.Ref.: KASHMIR VK SPS(2) MARTTANDA # 117

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (FRAGMENT)

stein: 19 x 19

Marttanda, Kashmir South (SPS)

### 10.1 DESCRIPTION

This lightly polished black stone fragment was discovered near Marttanda in 1970. It consists of a damaged nimbus with relief-work on the front representing the face of Viṣṇu (severely damaged) flanked by the projecting heads of the Nṛsiṃha and Varāha incarnations (both damaged). This

belonged to a three-headed image of Viṣṇu; there is no face on the reverse of the nimbus. The style, insofar as it can be determined from the remains, is so crude - it cannot be regarded as an unfinished early sculpture - that a late date has to be assigned to this piece. The customary period to which such late pieces are assigned is the 12th-13th century, though no thorough comparative study of these pieces, alongside a study of Muslim-Hindu relations during that phase, has as yet been undertaken. It is known, however, that Hindu and Muslim shrines existed side by side in Kashmir, especially outside the capital (for a summary of religious and political evidence, see Sender, *The Kashmiri Pandits, A Study of Cultural Choice in North India*, Oxford, Delhi 1988: passim, esp. g-27), and it has to be presumed that there was no absolute cut-off point in the manufacture of mūrtis, but that some Hindu images were made for local mandirs during the 600 years of mixed Hindu-Muslim Kashmiri culture. In view of the undoubtedly late date of this fragment, one has to assume that it was set up at Marttanda because it was a sacred centre in general terms: no original connexion between the Marttanda temple of Lalitāditya in the 8th century and the cult of three-headed Viṣṇu or of four-headed Vaikuṅṭha can be established. The presence of this fragment might however suggest that one or both of these cults were introduced there subsequently, as indeed might seem almost inevitable in view of the prevalence of such images in the Kashmir valley and throughout the Western Himalaya.

## 10.2 PROVISIONAL IDENTIFICATION

Fragment of an image of three-headed VIṢṆU Marttanda, c. 14th century.

Nr. 10: Marttanda

SPS Srinagar



Visnu, Marttanda, Kashmir South

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## 11. D.Ref.: KASHMIR VK SPS(2) VERINAG #118-124

VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

stein: ca. 104 x 40

4 Arme

Verinag, Doru Taluk, Anantnag District, Kashmir South (SPS 6018)

### 11.1 DESCRIPTION

This is the most elaborate of six late images of multi-headed VIṢṆU recovered from Verinag and now in Srinagar.

Verinag (Vernag) is situated at the southernmost end of the Kashmir Valley, at the Poet of the Banahal Pass on the northern edge of the Pir Panjal Range, well south of Avantipura, Marttanda and Anantnag, near the source of the River Jhelum (Vitasta); it is

the most famous of Kashmiri fīrthas, the abode of Nīla-Nāga, son of Kaśyapa, as which it was traditionally known as Nīla-kuṇḍa, Vitasta, or Śūla-ghāṭa (cleft by Śiva's trident to release Pārvaṭī in the form of the River Vitastā: Stein, RT I (trans.) 1.28ff and note 28). The name Ver(i)nag appears to be a combination of Ver, the old designation of the Shahabad pargana, with -Nāga. Administratively Vernag is today in the southern part of Kashmir South, in Anantnag District; the nearest Taluk headquarters is at Doru.

The image represents four-headed, four-armed Viṣṇu flanked by the usual āyudhapuruṣas and backed above the shoulders by a circular nimbus. The sculpture is pierced beside the figure of the god and on either side of the crown. The nimbus is made to resemble a wheel divided by radial studded lines into 9 visible compartments, each containing alternately one of the auspicious emblems śaṅkha and a forked plant resembling the triratna sign (tulasi?). The crown of Viṣṇu consists of three high pointed facets with curved sides, edged with flame-like fringes and containing flower designs, rising from a studded headband. Within the crown, jaṭās rise to meet under an apical lotus (cp. Nos.5 and 9). The hair hangs in a fringe, parted at the centre, on the forehead, which also bears a large circular ūrṇā. The ear pendants are of an elongated floral design; the necklace consists of a double pearl string and a plain string with many small pendants, all gathered at the centre by a floral clasp. Immediately beneath the central pendant appears the śrīvatsa, under the line of the chest muscles. The side-heads represent the Nṛṣiṃha on the proper right and the Varāha on the proper left; they are carved in a later version of the classic style seen in No.5 from Bejbehara and are clearly differentiated - their style closely resembles that of the late fragment from Marttanda (No.10). The central Vāsudeva has the mask-like appearance, with narrow elongated eyes, of the so-called Pahari Style seen throughout the Western Himalaya. The upavīta curves below the navel but above the waistband of the lower garment, which is circled by a dead straight girdle with two rows of pearls and a central floral clasp. A dagger is stuck into the girdle at the right hip. The scarf across the upper thighs has a knot at the centre and a loop to its left. The vanamālā with feathery foliage punctuated by round blossoms, loops just above the ankles and behind a damaged object between the feet which presumably represented the Earth-goddess. Beneath the

lowered left hand, Cakrapuruṣa holds up a small round shield (kheṭaka, in place of the expected cakra) in the right hand, and holds the left in kaṭyavalambita; in the corresponding position on the proper right, Gadādevī holds a large cāmara in her right hand, and raises her left to her cheek. The proper left hand of Viṣṇu is damaged; it probably held the śaṅkha. The proper right holds the stalk of a large round twelve-petalled lotus. The back of the sculpture is flat and crosshatched. The face of Kapila has been outlined with shallow incised lines on the reverse of the Vāsudeva face; the crown-like outline of the jaṭābhāra, the vertical third eye, and the fangs were marked out, but no relief work was executed. It is probable that the face of Kapila was becoming ritually less important in the later period; in some late sculptures and fragments it is not represented at all.

## 11.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

A late version of the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha image that was created in the Avantipura area in the 9th century. Probably installed in a minor shrine at Verinag in the 12th century.

Nr. 11: Verinag

SPS Srinagar



Vaikuntha, Verinag, Doru Taluk, Anantnag Distt., Kashmir South

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## 12. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(2) VERINAG #125-131

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: ca 104 x 40

4 Arme

Verinag (s. § 11.1), Doru Taluk, Anantnag District, Kashmir South (SPS)

### 12.1 DESCRIPTION

This is a simplified version of No.11, in a closely similar style. An over-all stiffening of the style seen in No.11 is, however, evident, effecting all the curved surfaces, which earlier had derived from north Indian (non-Kashmiri) prototypes. The nimbus is here elongated, plain, and not pierced. The sides of the pointed facets of the crown are here straight, not curved; they are edged with similar flame-like fringes, but the design on

their surfaces now consists of creepers and leaves, quite possibly based on Islamic patterns, with an upright diamond-shape near the centre, while the circlet is a simple string of pearls or beads. The jaṭās appear to be treated similarly within the crown, but the apical lotus is shown vertically above the head, as in very early multi-headed Kashmiri Viṣṇu's of the 9th century or even earlier. The side-heads of the Nṛsiṃha and Varāha, although differentiated, are greatly reduced in size. The ear pendants are rings of pearls, and there are now two separate necklaces, one a simple string of pearls, the other a longer band of what appear to be petals. The śrīvatsa is again below the line of the chest muscles. The vanamālā is completely preserved; it retains the old scale-like leap design of the more classical images. The keyūra visible on the upper left arm consists of a single band with a large abstract floral design. The torso, though elongated, is made to appear slightly corpulent, now with an udarabandha above the navel. The upavīta curves at the level of this band. Below it, the waistband of the lower garment curves under the rather prominent belly, and the sash across the thighs is very stylized, with a central fold of cloth, and the same vertical lines noted in No.8. The figure noted in a damaged condition between the feet of Viṣṇu in No.11 is here preserved: it is a small crowned female figure wearing a necklace and emerging from the level of the waist from the surface of the pedestal. She is half-turned to her proper left and her arms disappear beneath Viṣṇu's feet, implying that she is supporting him on her hands. This is clearly Bhūdevī the Earth-goddess. The lowered rear hands of Viṣṇu rest on the heads of the āyudhapuruṣas, who are quite crudely depicted; each holds a cāmara in the right hand, and Gadā-devī is twisted at a somewhat unnatural angle to look up at the figure of the god. There is no fourth face on the back.

A better proportioned stylistic predecessor of this piece is in the Musee Guimet (Postel, Neven, Mankodi, Antiquities of Himachal, Bombay 1985: 97, Fig.115). That piece is not of the 9th century, however, as stated by

Postel et al., but of the 11th or 12th. (Nor is it "Vaikuṅṭhanātha" as the authors identify it, since it lacks the Nṛsiṃha and Varāha side-heads.)

## 12.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents three-headed VIṢṆU at a point in time when the fourth face of Vaikuṅṭha had become ritually superfluous; even the visible side-heads of the Narasiṃha and Varāha are much reduced in size. The sculpture evidences a late continuation of the classical Kashmiri Sculptural style, which was essentially north Indian, and the beginning of a transition to the local stylistic idiom, along with a decline in the representation of classical iconography. The sculpture would have been produced for a votive shrine at Verinag probably in the 13th century.

Nr. 12: Verinag

SPS Srinagar



Visnu, Verinag, Doru Taluk, Anantnag Distt., Kashmir South

## 13. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(2) VERINAG #132-135

### ZWEIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

stein: ca 104 x 40

4 Arme

Verinag (s. \$11.1). Doru Taluk, Anantnag District, Kashmir South (SPS)

### 13.1 DESCRIPTION

This sculpture represents a further transitional phase in the late period. Sculpture No.11 illustrates the classic Vaikuṅṭha image the local or so-called Pahari style; No.12 represents a further advance in the predominance of the local style, along with abbreviation of the classical iconography; this image, No.13, shows a still greater stiffening of the classical Indian style in local forms, along with a further reduction of the ancient iconography.

All the stylistic features described under No.12 are also present here. Certain modifications, indicative of a later date, can however also be observed: (1.) the tendril-patterns on the facets of the crown have been yet further geometricised; (2.) instead of the udarabandha, three lines are incised across the stomach, as if they were supposed to be the trirekha normally occurring the throat as a sign of beauty; (3) the dagger is here thrust into the lower loop of the upavīta cord; (4) the Earth-goddess is more frontally presented; and (5) Gadādevī now holds her hand under her chin, instead of to her cheek, and the tilt of her head no longer indicates that she is looking up at Viṣṇu. Variations 2, 2, and 5 represents a misunderstanding of the original iconography This is confirmed by the fact that, although Viṣṇu is shown with one face, the face of Kapila is nevertheless represented on the back of the nimbus. (In fact, at certain stage the Kapila face became a 'floating' iconographical element. Capable of being attached to various images such as those of Śiva; its appearance on the reverse of a single-headed Viṣṇu particularly underlines the degree to which the older iconographies had been forgotten and misunderstood.) The Kapila face itself is represented only in outline, as in No. 11;

moreover, although the bulging eyes, the broad nose and the large circular ear pendants are retained, the third eye and the fangs are omitted.

## 13.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The sculpture represents VIṢṆU, with out the side-heads of the animal avatāras, yet retaining an incomplete face of Kapila on the reverse. It would have been made for a votive shrine at Verinag in the 13th century.

Nr. 13 Verinag

SPS Srinagar



Visnu, Verinag, Doru Taluk, Anantnag Distt., Kashmir South

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14. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(2) VERINAG #136-137

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: H. 84

4 Arme

Verinag (s. \$ 11.1), Doru Taluk, Anantnag District, Kashmir South (SPS)

## 14.1 DESCRIPTION

This sculpture represents a still later phase in the development of the multi-headed Viṣṇu image. The iconographical elements are exactly the same as in Nos.10 -13, but the local style no longer achieves a synthesis with the classical north Indian style; both are virtually dead, resulting in a lifeless icon, full of iconographical misunderstandings. The facets of the crown are now leaf-shaped, and the patterns on their surfaces are no longer even symmetrical. The jaṭās within the crown are no longer represented. The padma and śaṅkha in the two front hands are very poorly depicted. The dagger is again suspended from the upavīta, apparently implying that even the twice born thread was not understood. The folds of the dhotī are also carved so unrealistically that it appears this garment had also fallen into disuse. The Gadādevī and Cakrapuruṣa have become meaningless effigies. The Earth-goddess is still present. There is no Kapila face on the reverse of the nimbus.

## 14.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The sculpture represents a very late image of VIṢṆU with the side-heads of Nṛsiṃha and Varāha, probably made for a votive shrine at Verinag in the 14th century.

Nr. 14: Verinag

SPG Srinagar



Visnu, Verinag, Doru Taluk, Anantnag Distt., Kashmir South

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## 15. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(2) VERINAG #138-144

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: H. 71

4 Arme

Verinag (s. § 11.1), Doru Taluk, Anantnag District, Kashmir South (SPS)

### 15.1 DESCRIPTION

Although this is a late version of the multi-headed Viṣṇu image, it is enlivened by the tilt of the head and shoulders to the proper left; the movement is scarcely continued in the torso and legs, however, which are shown virtually straight, in the samabhaṅga posture (though the placement of the central pleats of the dhoṭī against the right leg may have been intended to indicate a slight flexion of the left leg). The plain nimbus is elongated

laterally, rather than vertically as was to become customary, presumably to balance the massive breadth of shoulder and the two side-heads of the Nṛsiṃha and Varāha, which are small and rather low, just clear of the shoulders. The tripartite crown consists of large crescents enclosing a single circular lotus design and resting on a fairly wide floral band. The jaṭās on the forehead are parted in the middle, but they have become very solid, rope-like elements. The corpulence noted in No.12 is seen already in this image, emphasized by the forward-tilting girdle curving under the belly and the wide lateral crease in the skin across the navel. The dagger is here held against the hip by the upavīta which runs parallel to the girdle and just above it, so that the dagger blade passes under the sacred cord but over the pearl girdle. The āyudhapuruṣas are becoming mere ciphers, but Gadādevī still holds her left hand to her cheek (not her chin). Bhūdevī appears in a frontal position, emerging from the surface of the pedestal from the level of her girdle, and her hands are clearly placed palm-upwards under the feet of Viṣṇu.

A very similar piece in the Musee Guimet is published by Postel, Neven and Mankodi in *Antiquities of Himachal Pradesh, Bombay 1985: 97, Fig. 114*, where it is identified as "Vaikuṅṭhanātha" and a 9th century date is attributed to it; this is not possible in view of the many late stylistic and iconographic features that it evidences.

## 15.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

This sculpture represents three-headed VIṢṆU, iconographically complete (there is no Kapila face) and stylistically still fairly lively within the limitations of a rapidly declining art tradition. It can most realistically be dated to the late 11th century. (A date in the same century is suggested for the Musee Guimet piece, which may however be a generation earlier in view of the more intelligent treatment of the faces of the āyudhapuruṣas).

Nr. 15: Verinag  
SPS Srinagar



Visnu, Verinag, Doru Taluk, Anantnag Distt., Kashmir South

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## 16. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(2) PATTAN #145-146

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: H. 79

4 Arme

Verinag (s. \$11.1), Doru Taluk, Anantnag District, Kashmir North (SPS)

### 16.1 DESCRIPTION

Stylistically this sculpture represents an even later version of the three-headed Viṣṇu than No. 12, with which it shares most features. Though an attempt has been made to adhere to Indian conceptions of anatomical modeling, the treatment of the eyes of the Vāsudeva face, the gesture of the right hand of Gadādevī, and the anatomical proportioning, all indicate a very late date.

## 16.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The sculpture represents three-headed VIṢṆU, no doubt made for a votive shrine at Verinag, probably in the 13th century.

Nr. 16: Verinag

SPS Srinagar



Visnu, Verinag, Doru Taluk, Anantnag Distt., Kashmir South

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## 17.1 D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(2) PATTAN #147-166

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 77 x 30

urspr. 4 Arme

Pattan, Baramula District, Kashmir North (SPS)

## 17.1 DESCRIPTION

Chronology: Pattan is ancient Śaṅkarapura, the capital city founded by Śaṅkaravarman (Cr. AD 883-902), the successor to Avantivarman who founded Avantipura ca. AD 855 in the southern part of the Kashmir Valley where the Vaikuṅṭha cult was established as a royal religion. Pattan Śaṅkarapura is situated at the halfway point on the highway between Srinagar and Baramula (Varāhamūla) in the northern part of the Valley, and seems always to have been a commercial centre. Śaṅkaravarman's known temples were Śaiva: the Śaṅkaragaurīśa and the Sugandheśa (named after his queen, Sugandhā). However, Śaivism was the official royal cult at this time, and the example of his predecessor Avantivarman shows that kings could follow a private (Vaiṣṇava) religion while publicly acknowledging the official cult of Śiva:

"At the site called Viśvaikasāra, which procures the final beatitude for those who die [there], the king (Avantivarman) Pounded the [town of] Avantipura, an abode of abundant enjoyments. Having built there, before his accession to the throne, the [shrine of Viṣṇu] Avantisvāmin, that wise [king], after obtaining sovereign power, erected then the [temple of Śiva] Avantīśvara. ... When he was attacked by the illness, which was to cause his decease, he proceeded to the site which adjoins the [shrine of Śiva] Jyeṣṭheśvara situated at the Tripureśa hill. Having there become certain of his [near] death, he disclosed to Śūra (his minister), at the end of his life and with folded hands, his attachment to the worship of Viṣṇu, which he had long hidden. Listening to the end to the [recital of the] Bhagavadgītā, and thinking of the residence of Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha) he cast off this [earthly] life with a cheerful mind."

(Rājatarāṅginī V.44-45, 123-125: Stein RT I: 191-192, 202)

The Śaiva affiliation of Śaṅkaravarman's known public buildings in his capital (his minister Ratnavardhana is also credited with the building of a temple of Sadāśiva under the name of Ratnavardhaneśa: RT V.163) does not therefore by any means exclude the possibility of royal patronage being extended to master sculptors for the making of cult images of other deities, particularly Viṣṇu.

The present very fine sculpture may be a case in point. Śaṅkaravarman's son, who ruled for two years (AD 902-904) after his death, was given a Vaiṣṇava name, Gopālavarman: and his wife Sugandhā; during her brief reign from AD 904 to 906, is said by Kalhana to have built a town called Gopālapura, a Vaiṣṇava maṭha (Gopālamaṭha), and a temple for Viṣṇu under the name of Gopālakeśava (RT V.244). These references clearly indicate the existence of a strong private Vaiṣṇava sympathy in the royal family, at least on the wife's side, and the erection of a royal Gopālakeśava temple means, of course, that a Viṣṇu image of that name was installed in it. The present sculpture of Viṣṇu, of very fine quality and discovered in Śaṅkarapura/Pattan, must be dated to the period of this family's supremacy while the town was in receipt of their royal patronage, which can be dated between AD 883 and 906.

**Style and iconography:** The sculpture is a damaged grey stone image of Viṣṇu, standing, with three faces and four arms. The arms are broken off at the elbow, the legs below the knee. The nimbus is broken off to each side and above the heads, but a large segment of it remains visible from the back. The central face is disfigured, perhaps deliberately, and the torso and limbs are pocked. The left leg was bent at the knee, but the hips show no dehanchement.

The crown consists of three crescents containing an abstract pattern of tendrils with a central oval jewel; the peak of each facet is connected to the others by a looped pearl string. These facets rise from a fairly wide studded or pearl headband, with a diamond-shaped jewel edged with pearls at the centre and at the sides. At the back of the crown, rising in high relief from its centre, is a pointed element. Below the crown rim, coiled locks appear on the forehead, parted in the middle, and longer locks hang down behind the ears and spread along the shoulders. The long eyes and the high arched brows were delicately outlined with incised lines. The ear ornaments consist of a small ring passing through the slit lobe, with a rectangular jewel at the base from which hangs a small pendant circled with a band of pearls. The necklace is elaborate, consisting of four pearl strings with a plain band between the two pairs, which are linked below the ear pendants on each side by a small flower-shaped clasp; the lower three strings are

joined at the base by a wide diamond shaped jewel with three small pendants. The śrīvatsa appears below the central pendant, between the chest muscles. The keyūra's, worn high on the upper arms, consist of a fairly wide band edged with pearls, with a boss of abstract tendril design centred on a round jewel. The heads of Nṛsiṃha and Varāha, angled outward from the nimbus so that much of the far side is also carved, and elevated well above the shoulders, emerge on either side of the central face. Both animal faces are damaged, and seem originally not to have been very clearly differentiated, but they appear to be disposed in the reverse of the usual arrangement: a whiskered profile, which seems to be that of Nṛsiṃha, is on the proper left; that apparently of Varāha, with a large fang protruding from the corner of the mouth, is on the proper right. Both are surmounted by tall stiff jaṭās fronted by a single crown-crescent containing a round floral design. The frown above the nose is enclosed by a large V- or U-shaped mark which appears to represent the Vaiṣṇava forehead-marking. The vanamālā emerges from behind each of these profiles and curves down behind the shoulders of Viṣṇu.

The large segment of the nimbus which is preserved at the back is completely plain, with no trace of the Kapila face.

The waistband of the lower garment is encircled by a narrow belt made up of rectangular plaques fastened at the front by a clasp in the form of two round flowers. Attached to this at the right hip is a horned dagger in a Jeweled scabbard. The upavīta cord loops just below the clasp of the belt and continues parallel to it, passing underneath the scabbard. A narrow cluster of pleats hangs from the belt clasp between the legs, a part of it curving around the left thigh. A folded scarf is draped across the thighs and knotted on the outside of the left thigh.

## 17.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Although this is unquestionably a very fine sculpture, the work of an accomplished master craftsman, the treatment of the animal faces -- and the apparent confusion between them -- shows that this is not a 'classical' sculpture of the 8th century, or even

of the mid-9th century style as represented at Avantipura. The ancient city of Śaṅkarapura (Pattan) in the north of the Kashmir Valley, where it was found, was the capital of Śaṅkaravarman, the immediate successor of Avantivarman who had founded the cult of four-headed Vaikuṅṭha at Avantipura as a royal religion in the south of the Valley circa AD 850. Nevertheless, in the absence of the fourth face of Kapila on the back, this image cannot be identified as Vaikuṅṭha; it represents VIṢṆU with the side-heads of his Narasiṃha and Varāha avatāras. For the reasons given above (§17.1), it must have been made within the period of royal patronage in Śaṅkarapura, that is during the reigns of Śaṅkaravarman, his son Gopālarman, and his wife Sugandhā: AD 883-906.

Śaṅkarapura/Pattan, c. AD 900 (early 10th century, rather than late 9th).

Nr. 17: Pattan  
SPS Srinagar



Visnu, Pattan, Baramula Distt., Kashmir South

## 18. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(2) VERINAG #167-169

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 65 x 33

4 Arme

Verinag (s. \$11.1). Doru Taluk, Anantnag District, Kashmir South (SPS)

### 18.1 DESCRIPTION

A very late three-headed Viṣṇu. The crown has three peaks, containing simple triple-leap motif, with a small round blossom on the central point; it has a beaded rim, with a similar rosette at the centre. A lotus on a thick stalk is shown in relief on the otherwise plain circular nimbus, growing from the top of the crown. The large central face of Vāsudeva is in the mask-like 'Pahari' style, and has what appears to be an elongated third eye at the centre of the forehead. The side-faces of the animal-avatāras are differentiated (with the Varāha on the proper right and the Nṛsimha on the left, the reverse of the usual placement) but remarkably pinched, and the lion-head has a Pang at the corner of the mouth like that of the boar. The conch is held in the front proper left hand, the lotus in the corresponding right; these attributes are large. The rear hands are lowered and placed on the heads of the flanking āyudhapuruṣas. Beneath the double necklace, the central śrīvatsa appears to be held in position by a band encircling the chest. The figure wears the udarabandha, but no girdle: the waistline of the lower garment curves beneath a somewhat protuberant belly. The dagger appears near the right hip, with the upavīta cord passing diagonally over it. A simplified vanamālā; can be seen behind the left shoulder and curving at the level of the ankles. The crowned Earth-goddess, facing the front, emerges from the pedestal between the feet. The āyudhapuruṣas retain a certain liveliness of posture, but the tilt of Gadādevī's head, and the hand of her cheek, have now vanished.

### 18.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The sculpture was doubtless one of the many votive figurines of three-headed VIṢṢU offered to the Verinag complex in the 13th century.

Nr. 18: Verinag

SPS Srinagar



Visnu, Verinag, Doru Taluk, Anantnag Distt., Kashmir South

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**19. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(2) VERINAG #170-173**

**DREIKBPFIGER VIṢṢU**

Stein: 64 x 36

4 Arme

Verinag (s. § 11.1), Doru Taluk, Anantnag District, Kashmir South (SPS)

**19.1 DESCRIPTION**

A crude copy of No.18. The points of difference are the following: the nimbus is here pointed, no longer round; only the handle of the dagger is shown, the scabbard being concealed beneath the folds of the udarabandha, which however is only depicted beside the right hip; the śrīvatsa is diminished in size and made into an appendage of the necklace; the attributes conch and lotus are primitively carved; and the three base-figures (āyudhapuruṣas and Bhūdevī) are now lifeless, doll-like figures. The most striking variation is the rendering of the proper right side-head as the profile of a horse or donkey. This probably has no specific iconographic meaning, In view of the deterioration of the classic forms evident in the rest of the sculpture, the horse-head is almost certainly a case of mistaken identity, indicating that the already poorly differentiated side-faces of slightly earlier images of this type (e.g. No.18) were copied by inferior artists (or artists now working in the local style and unfamiliar with the classical north Indian iconography), without reference to descriptive texts, and often misunderstood.

## 19.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

One of the latest of the votive three-headed VIṢṆU figurines offered to the Verinag complex circa end of the 13th century, or possibly later.

Nr. 19: Verinag

SPS Srinagar



Visnu, Verinag, Doru Taluk, Anantnag Distt., Kashmir South

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## 20. D.Ref.: KASMIR VK SPS(2) VERINAG #174-184

### VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU AUF GARUḌA MIT ŚAKTIS

Stein: H. 76

4 Arme

Verinag (s. \$11.1). Doru Taluk, Anantnag District, Kashmir South SPS)

#### 20.1 DESCRIPTION

This sculpture gives material shape to the meditational form (dhyānamurti) of Viṣṇu found in the Jayākhykasamhitā (6.73ff.):

73. anādinidhanaṃ deveṃ jagatsraṣṭāram īśvaram

dhyāyec caturbhujam vipra śaṅkhacakraḡadāidharam

74. caturvaktraṃ sunayanam sukāntaṃ padmapāṇinam

Vaikuṅṭhaṃ narasiṃhāsyam varāhaṃ kapilānanam

75. śuklaṃ khageśvarārūdhaṃ sarvābharaṇabhūṣitam

sarvalakṣaṇasampannam mālyāmbaradharamvibhum

76. kirīṭakaustubhadharam karpūraliptavigraham

suryāyutasahasrābhaṃ sarvadevanamaskṛtam

77. laksmīḥ kīrtir jayā māyā devyās tasyāśritās sadā..

85 . ekavaktrā dvinetrās ca dvibhujās cārukunḍalāḥ...

89. pāsāṅkuśadharā devyah sarvakāmārthasādhakāḥ

90. pūrvādidigvibhāgasthāḥ keśarāreṣu nārada

baddhapadmāsanaś caiva devadevasya sammukhāḥ..

The image does not follow this meditational conception precisely in the disposition of the four Śaktis, who are named in the text as Lakṣmī Kīrti, Jayā and Māyā; they are shown seated (though not in the baddhapadmāsana posture) on individual lotuses, to which a semblance of unity is given by their positioning in the foliage-like plumage (possibly in origin a visual pun: Skt. parṇa, feather, refers also to foliage, regarded as the plumage of a tree) of Garuḍa (Khageśvara). The anthropomorphisation of Garuḍa is assumed by the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa, where it states that, as the vehicle of four-faced Viṣṇu, the eagle should make the añjalimudrā (garuḍaś ca tathā kāryo dharmajña racitāñjaliḥ: Vdh.3.85.47ab); however, this text also assumes that Garuḍa-mounted Vaikuṅṭha will be accompanied both by Lakṣmī and by the weapon-personifications Gadādevī and Cakrapuruṣa, which is clearly not the case in this sculpture. The Jayākhyasaṃhitā meditational description of four-headed Viṣṇu, himself, however --

though not as objectively detailed as an art-historical description -- is clearly the basis of this sculpture. (A formal comparison between dhyāna-description and art-historical description, or between both and the text-sections on mūrti-mantras, is highly instructive as an exercise in intra-cultural and extra-cultural perception.) The 'iconographical' description of four-faced and Garuḍa-mounted Viṣṇu in the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa (Vdh. 3.85.46-48), is further removed from the reality of this sculpture than the far older conception of the Jayākhyasaṃhitā. This suggests that the older Saṃhitā text had more central relevance to the culture of Kashmir than did the Purāṇa text which, in its final redaction at least, appears to be no later than the 9th century (see Maxwell, "Vaikuṅṭha", Aksayanivi, New Delhi 1991); this in turn explains how this almost archaic form of Viṣṇu, named Vaikuṅṭha, could appear suddenly in mediaeval Kashmiri sculpture, with no known earlier developmental phases in the archaeological record: it appears to have continued to survive as a meditational image in the oral and literary tradition of the Saṃhitā:-religion -- apart from the royal temple-cult of standing Vaikuṅṭha originated by Avantivarman at Avantipura In the mid-9th century -- and to have emerged only later as a Garuḍa-mounted icon. The usual date attributed to this sculpture is 10th century, which on stylistic grounds appears to be correct.

The front of the image has the high polish characteristic of the most accomplished sculptures of Kashmir, in contrast to the roughly hatched rear surface. Viṣṇu, with four faces, sits astride the standing anthropomorphic Garuḍa. The sculpture is pierced around the heads and arms of Viṣṇu, and beside the legs of Garuḍa. The central face of Vāsudeva conveys a strong rather than a gentle character: the eyes, wide open and without eyelids, and the eyebrows, are deeply incised, and the mouth is almost straight. A large circular tilak mark appears above the centre of the brows. On the forehead hang rope-like jaṭās, parted at the centre, and also on the shoulders. The crown consists of a bold beaded rim supporting three crescents containing a pointed gem encircled by pearls. Above it, carved in relief on the ring of the nimbus, appears a large eight-petalled lotus. Small circular blossoms appear at the sides, below the crown rim. The side-faces of the animal-avatāras (Nṛsiṃha on the proper right, Varāha on the left) are large, clearly differentiated profiles, bulging with the abstract mass characteristic of

mediaeval Kashmir. The necklace consists of a double string of jewels with a central gem having three small pendants. Directly beneath it, at the centre of the chest, appears the śrīvatsa. The kuṇḍalas consist of elongated flower-shapes, the keyūras of narrow jewelled bands. The right front hand of Viṣṇu holds an eight-petalled lotus; the broken left hand would have held the conch. The rear left holds the disk, while the rear right holds a sword, inverted, by its jewelled scabbard. The lower loop of the vanamālā; hangs between Viṣṇu's thighs and disappears behind the head of Garuḍa. Garuḍa is an anatomically compact and powerful figure, his face containing several features taken from demon -iconography, while his nose is rendered as a beak; his hair is also shown in the form of jaṭās resembling those of Viṣṇu. The lower part of his anatomy is that of a bird, with bulging plumed thighs, narrow shanks, and clawed feet. His front hands are held in the aṅjalimudrā; his rear hands, scarcely visible, support the feet of Viṣṇu. His wings, shaped like long leaves, hang beside him; the rest of his foliage, spread out on the stele to either side, provides a unifying background for the four Śaktis (see above). The iconography of the Śaktis is unfortunately very unclear, as is that of the two flanking figures seated on either side of the lotus pedestal. As embodiments of desire, they may hold the pāśa and aṅkuśa, the snare and the goad of passion, as indicated by the Jayākhyasaṃhitā; but the shallow relief on the stele does not preserve these details clearly. On the back of the Vāsudeva head appears, at the centre of the ring-like nimbus, the face of Kapila. Some of the Kapila characteristics are shown -- the bulging eyes and wrinkled eyebrows, the short broad nose and the partly open mouth, along with the jaṭākālāpa of the ṛṣi and the large circular kuṇḍalas -- but their ferocity has clearly been toned-down: the third eye, the knotted frown between the eyebrows, even one of the fangs, are absent. The result of this abbreviation, and the softer, less primitive execution, makes the face almost friendly of aspect; this pronounced stylistic change marks a definite new departure, and may indicate a change in cult practice at Verinag.

## 20.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

This sculpture is a variation, stylistically and iconographically, of the more usual Vaikuṅṭha image of Kashmir, which may have originated at Verinag in the 10th century. The iconography is that of the meditational description of the Jayākhyasaṃhitā.

Nr. 20: Verinag  
SPS Srinagar



Vaikuntha, Verinag, Doru Taluk, Anantnag Distt., Kashmir South

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**21. D.Ref.: KASHMIR VK SPS(2) KASHMIR SOUTH #185-190**

**DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (FRAGMENT)**

Stein: 28.5 x 20

Kashmir South (TSM): genaue Herkunft unbekannt (SPS 5164)

**21.1 DESCRIPTION**

The fragment consists of a head of Viṣṇu with part of the right shoulder and, above it, the profile of Narasiṃha, backed by the narrow segment of a nimbus. The material is a pale schistose stone partially retaining a darker polish on the faces. The crown consists of a broad rim with beads or pearls between clearly defined margins, with a square gem framed in pearls at the centre; this supports three crescents containing large circular rosettes done in an abstract pattern and connected from their centres by looped pearl strings. Half of a ten-petalled lotus is shown flat on the head within the crown. On the forehead and along the shoulders are long, carefully carved curls. The eyes and eyebrows are deeply incised, the mouth small and pursed. The Narasiṃha profile -- heavy and rather low beside the central face, and with ill-defined abstract modeling -- is angled away from the nimbus so that the far side is also carved to some extent. It displays a certain stylistic hesitancy, which suggests a late date. The kuṇḍalas were of the round, or slightly elongated, flower design; all other jewellery is unfortunately lost, limiting the scope of stylistic comparisons. The reverse of the nimbus is plain: this was a three-faced image, without the Kapila face.

## 21.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

This was a three-faced image of VIṢṆU, probably made in the southern part of the Kashmir Valley (below Avantipura) in the 10th/11th century.

Nr. 21: Kashmir South

SPS Srinagar



Visnu, Kashmir South

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## 22. D.Ref.: KASHMIR AVANTIPURA #01-08

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (RELIEF)

Stein: 60 x 55

Relief, Innenseite (rechts) der inneren Trennwand des Torbaus,  
Avantisvāmin -Tempel, Avantipura, Kashmir South.

### 22.1 DESCRIPTION

This is the most vital piece of archaeological evidence concerning the chronology of the Vaikuṅṭha cult in Kashmir to have been discovered since Daya Ram Sahni's Excavation Report of 1914, since it is the only piece still in situ. It is a damaged Vaikuṅṭha relief in the double gateway of the Avantisvāmin temple, and it appears not to have been noticed by any of the previous archaeologists who explored the site (Sahni, Kak, Mitra). It is placed

above head level on the inner surface of the inner wall, on the right as one enters. All traces of a possible counterpart on the left have been obliterated by erosion. The gateway walls and their reliefs are in an extremely poor condition; this relief, although damaged, is an important piece of evidence since it can be dated fairly precisely to the few years before Avantivarman Utpala ascended the throne of Kashmir, ca. AD 850-855. The positioning of this image beside the last of three doorways which framed the devotee's view of the central shrine as he entered the complex, is appropriate to Avantivarman's temple, in which he elevated the religion centred on the standing image of four-faced Vaikuṅṭha to the status of a royal temple cult. The royal family was officially Śaiva, but it is known that their private religion was Vaiṣṇavism; Avantivarman erected this Viṣṇu temple while he was still a prince.

The image is shown standing upon a moulded plinth within a rectangular opening with a trefoil arch, which is flanked by two pillars with moulded bases, spiral pearl string ornament on the shafts, the āmalaka-like capital, and the rhomboid abacus with horizontal bands of decoration, which are characteristic features of Kashmir architecture. Shrines of precisely this type once lined the platform on the inside of the temple peristyle: some examples are still preserved, both at Avantipura and at the earlier (Karkota) site of Marttanda, along with a few of the image-plinths which are equipped with a praṇāla.

Despite the damage and erosion which the wall surface has suffered, the following fourteen features of the image itself can be recognized:

1. the image has no nimbus (the field enclosed by the trefoil arch serves effectively as a virtual triple-nimbus for the three heads, but there is no incised circle);
2. a large eight-petalled lotus was carved above the crown, in the field enclosed by the main central arch;
3. the Varāha head, with bulging eye, flat snout, and upright tusk, was on the proper left, the Narasiṃha head (only the sloping outline of which remains) was therefore on the

right; the Jean lines of the Varāha profile give it a remarkable similarity to the same face in the three-headed Viṣṇu from Bejbehara (No. 5 above).

4. the crown and face of Vāsudeva are unfortunately completely lost; traces of the long curls beside the left side of the face, between it and the Varāha profile, are preserved;

5. part of the vanamālā is poorly preserved on the edge of the left shoulder:

6. the kuṇḍalas appear to have been circular with a round centre; they may well have been in the form of flowers, but the details are lost;

7. the abdominal musculature was prominently sculpted, as the patterning of the damaged surface within the curve of the upavīta clearly shows:

8. the girdle consisted of a string of pearls or round jewels;

9. the doubled upavīta cord loops precisely over the centre of the girdle, and continues across the handle of the dagger:

10. a small horned dagger was thrust under the girdle in front of the right hip;

11. the front hands almost certainly held the conch and lotus: the conical shape of the śarikha can be seen level with the stomach on the proper left, the round outline of the padma in front of the right shoulder;

12. the rear hands would have been lowered to rest upon the heads of the weapon-personifications Gadādevī and Cakrapuruṣa, since the legs of these figures are partly preserved on either side:

13. the remains of some figure between the feet of Viṣṇu suggests that the Earth-goddess was represented there;

14. the vanamālā seems to have looped just above the ankles, behind the Earth-goddess.

Such details are of value primarily for detailed iconographic analysis, and they tend to confirm that the Vaikuṅṭha sculpture discovered by Sahni in the courtyard of the temple was contemporaneous with the erection of the temple, since all these details are the same in both images (with the exception of the lotus above the head, which does not appear on the image found by Sahni, as it is a three-dimensional figure with no nimbus).

Aesthetic considerations can scarcely be weighed on the basis of such fragmentary evidence, of course. Huntington's remarks on the quality of 9th-century Kashmiri sculpture, although extremely general, are accurate and entirely relevant to this relief: "An overall flatness is suggested by the arrangement of the figures and the sameness of the depth of carving across the entire surface. Stylistically, the figures are fuller in form than earlier examples, have shorter proportions, and reveal a new stiffness, demonstrating that the Kashmiri idiom, like many other Indic styles of the ninth century, had abandoned the soft modeling of the Gupta and post-Gupta heritage. The male figures in particular have flattened, broad torsos with a taut, muscular appearance, still reminiscent of the Hellenized heritage of the region" (Huntington 1985: 366).

## 22.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

This image in a miniature shrine-niche on the gateway of the Avantisvāmin temple undoubtedly represents the Vaikuṅṭha of the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa and presumably by Avantisvāmin - Viṣṇu of Avantivarman. It dates to ca. AD 850, and is the only surviving Vaikuṅṭha image in Kashmir to which this date and provenance can be assigned beyond any shadow of doubt, since it forms part of the fabric of the temple itself.

Nr. 22: Avantipura

Avantisvamin - Temple



Vaikuntha, Avantisvamin-Tempel, Avantipura, Kashmir South

## 23. D.Ref.: NIRTH SŪRYA-NĀRĀYANA #51-63

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 85 x 41

4 Arme

Nirth, Himachal Pradesh (Tal des Sutlej): im Maṇḍapa des Durgā -Tempels.

### 23.1 DESCRIPTION

The image is one among a number of loose sculptures which have been set up in a row against the south wall inside the maṇḍapa of the small Durgā temple in the precincts of the small Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa complex on the south bank of the Sutlej river. The sculpture is fairly well preserved, though the two rear arms are broken off below the elbows, the left leg below the knee, and the right leg above the ankle. It was not possible, in view of

the ritual context in which the image stands, to turn it round and view the back: the priest, however, was certain that there is no face on the reverse of the nimbus, and indeed the style suggests a strong connexion with Mathura at a date prior to the creation of the Pour-Paced Vaikuṅṭha in Kashmir.

This is a three-headed Viṣṇu, with the Narasiṃha profile on the proper right, and that of Varāha on the left. These animal heads are large, and placed low down beside the central Pace. They are intended to appear emanating from the skanda -- the junction between neck and shoulder of Viṣṇu -- as in the Gupta-period sculpture of Mathura. The manner of representing the heads is also the same as at Mathura: the lion-head angled slightly outward from the surface of the nimbus, the Varāha profile angled at forty-five degrees upward from the skanda junction. This stylistic feature is so pronounced and so clearly copied from Mathura originals, that it must be a post-Gupta and pre-Gurjara Pratihāra piece. The remainder of the image, stylistically and iconographically, is clearly post-Gupta, executed in an accomplished local style having clear Kashmir associations. The face of Vāsudeva has long, slightly protuberant eyes, the eyelids partly lowered, and somewhat pouched below: the mouth is small and pursed, with a plump divided lower lip typical of post-Gandhara workmanship with its Hellenistic undertones, and similar to sculpture of the time of Lalitāditya Muktāipīḍa (Karkota) in Kashmir, for example at Pandrethan in the 8th century. The crown consists of three facets, the central one at the front higher and apparently pointed, supported on a headband having round projections (probably blossoms, as in Kashmiri art) on the sides. The tabs of the headband are shown in relief on the nimbus, curving upward above the animal side-heads. The kuṅḍalas are circular and quite small, the necklace is a solid-looking torque, and the śrīvatsa appears directly below it, as if attached. The armlets and wrist-lets appear to have been thin plain bands. The right front hand holds a large lotus in the umbrella-shape characteristic of the Northwest, while the front left holds what appears to be a large, egg-shaped fruit (not the śaṅkha). The rear arms are lowered, and the hands would undoubtedly have rested on the heads of flanking weapon-personifications, Cakrapuruṣa and Gadādevī, these figures are lost. The thick vanamālā emerges, as in the Mathura versions, from behind and beneath the animal-heads,

curves over the upper arms and falls through the crook of the elbows, to loop below the knees; at the centre is a single small blossom. The single cord of the upavīta descends from the left shoulder to the waistband of the dhotī, left of the navel, in a straight line, and loops below the right hip. The lower garment is a short dhotī its hem well above the knees: it has a rolled waistband which is apparently tied at the centre, with the free end hanging to the right, over the curve of the upavīta. There is no scarf across the thighs.

## 23.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The sculpture represents three-headed VIṢṆU. It belongs to the post-Gupta phase of Northwestern sculpture, before the arrival of Gurjara-Pratihāra influence from the south-east; the two dominant influences are those of Gupta-period Mathura and early mediaeval Kashmir, combined into a successful blend by an artist working in the intervening territory of Himachal. The piece is to be dated to the late 7th or 8th century.

Nr. 23: Nirth

Durga-Temple



Visnu, Durga-Tempel, Nirth, Himachal Pradesh

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## 24. D.Ref.: NIRTH SŪRYA-NĀRĀYAṆA #64-72

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 55 x 33

4 Arme

Nirth, Himachal Pradesh (Tal des Sutlej): Sudbhadranische des Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa-Temples

#### 24.1 DESCRIPTION

The image is a relief on a flat stele with a rounded top. It does not belong in the south bhadra of the Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa temple where it is at present: the temple is not as old as the sculpture, and the niche is rectangular and too large.

The curved top of the stele represents part of the circular nimbus, the lower curves of which are represented in low relief, springing from below the shoulders of the Viṣṇu figure. The animal side-heads are large, and emanate horizontally from the sides of the central Vāsudeva head; the Narasiṃha profile appears on the proper right, that of the Varāha on the left. The crown consists of three low peaks, containing a flower design, supported on a thick studded rim. The face of Vāsudeva is damaged but shows rather heavy stylistic features. The kuṇḍalas are circular, the necklace is rather thick with a central jewel. The upavīta descends from the left shoulder in a straight line to a point above the navel, then curves above the right hip. The lower garment has a thick rolled waistband and hangs in narrow pleats between the legs; a folded scarf crosses the upper thighs. The vanamālā emerges below the animal side-heads at the back of the shoulders, hangs through the crook of both elbows, and loops below the knees. The front left-hand supports a rather X-shaped conch the front right holds a large round lotus. The lowered rear hands hold the cakṛa, represented as a ring with two spokes crossed in an X-shape, on the left, and on the right rests on the base of a long inverted

ringed gadā. Between the feet of Viṣṇu, Bhūdevī emerges from the pedestal her hands joined in the añjali-mudrā. The base of the stele provides a base; the deity stands on a projecting half-lotus.

The regional character of this sculpture should not be mistaken for signs of great antiquity. Although showing many Kashmiri and more general North-western traits, it also evidences North Indian features (the animal heads are late copies of the Mathura types, not of Kashmiri originals) and is obviously based upon earlier local mixed versions of three-headed Viṣṇu of the kind found in the maṇḍapa of the adjacent Durgā temple (No. 23). The Sulej Valley clearly preserved this mixed style until a fairly late date. This image must date from the 10th century at the earliest.

## 24.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

In the secluded Sulej Valley, the southern most of the high Western Himalayan valleys, the three-headed Viṣṇu may never have been developed into the four-headed Vaikuṅṭha of Kashmir, In all probability this sculpture is a late copy of the earlier three-headed type made in the Sulej Valley, an example of which is in the nearby Durgā temple at Nirth, and represents VIṢṆU. Its combination of Kashmiri and older North Indian iconographic features strongly suggests this. The total iconographic schema, which omits the weapon-personifications but includes the image of the Earth-goddess at the base, combined with a still fairly accomplished style, indicates a date in the 10th century.

Nr. 24: Nirth

Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa-Temple



Visnu, Surya-Narayan-Tempel, Nirth, Himachal Pradesh

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## 25. D.Ref.: BAJAURA VK #01-18

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 127 x 50

Westseite des Nordflügels, Devi-Tempel, Bajaura (Vyas-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

### 25.1 DESCRIPTION

Bajaura is in the Lower Vyas Valley, a situation which provides access from the Kangra Valley and the Punjab Plain, in theory facilitating the ingress of influence from both North India and Kashmir. The Kashmiri influence clearly predominates in this image. This grey stone sculpture is eroded, damaged, and overgrown with lichen. The arms are all broken off at the shoulder (it was almost certainly a four-armed image) and the legs are broken off below the knee. The back is roughly hatched; there is no fourth face.

The crown consists of three large crescents containing a disk which appears to have taken the form of a flower (erosion and lichen make this uncertain); the three centres of these disks are interconnected by looped strings hanging from their centres. These are supported by a wide headband studded with large round jewels, with a larger laterally elongated gem framed with pearls at the centre. There are no prominent gems at the sides of the band. The animal side-faces are crown with a single crescent-and-disk. Short curls are shown beneath the crown rim on the forehead of Vāsudeva, with a slight central parting. The features of this face are severely chipped and damaged: the remains show a round configuration, with the eyelids apparently half-lowered, and a thick lower lip. The faces of the animal-avatāras (Narasimha on the proper right, Varāha on the left) are angled downward beside the central face, well clear of the shoulders, in the Kashmiri manner. They are clearly differentiated and crowned as described above. The ear-ornaments are also damaged; they appear to have consisted of elongated pendants, perhaps with small circular flower adornments. There appears to have been a short necklace at the throat. The main necklace consisted of two pearl strings, the lower longer than the upper, with a triple pendant at the centre. The diamond-shaped śrīvatsa appears immediately below this, as if it were attached. The girdle consisted of a double string of pearls or jewels, with a laterally elongated oval gem in a floral design at the centre as clasp. The upavīta cord descends in a straight line from the left shoulder, loops immediately below the girdle and continues parallel to it to the right, passing under the sheath of the dagger. The dagger itself is a large weapon with wide horns near the top of the haft, mounted on the girdle in front of the right hip. The scabbard has a prominent diamond-shaped jewel at the centre, and a finely knurled edge at the top. A central swathe of pleats falls from the clasp of the girdle, narrowing to hang between the legs. A wide flat scarf is draped across the upper thighs, and is looped or knotted on the right side, below the dagger.

## **25.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION**

This is one of the earliest three-headed VIṢṆU images in Kashmiri style to appear in the Vyas Valley. There is no direct influence from Mathura. In view of the absence of a

fourth face at the back, but the simultaneous absence of any direct Mathura or other North Indian stylistic influence, and the classic proportions and modeling, the sculpture can be dated to the early 9th century, to a pre-Avantivarman phase of Kashmiri influence spreading down the Western Himalaya, possibly as early as AD 800.

Nr. 25 : Bajaura

Devi-Temple



Visnu, Devi-Tempel, Bajaura, Himachal Pradesh

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**26. D.Ref.: BAJAURA VR #01-82**

**FUNFKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: 159 x 76 x 20.5

urspr. 4 Arme

Ostliche Innenseite der Umfassungsmauer, Viśveśvara-Mahādeva-Tempel (Baseshar Mahadeo), Bajaura (Vyas-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

## 26.1 DESCRIPTION

The image is carved in medium relief on a round-topped stele, the damage to the lower edges of which has been built up with cement. Until recently, the sculpture was the subject of a legal dispute over ownership between the pañcāyat of Bajaura and the Archaeological Survey of India; for many years it was kept locked in a wooden crate beside the temple. The case has now been settled in favour of the villagers, and the image set up against the east wall of the Viśveśvara Mahādeva temple, without a shrine of its own as yet but with a flag flying above it. The sculpture was broken from its pedestal at some point in time; the legs have been cemented back on to the feet, but the legs are much shorter now than they would originally have been, giving a false impression of the proportions.

The surviving upper part of the stele is edged with a series of 19 heads, which enclose six horizontal registers carved in flat relief on the surface of the nimbus. The figure of Viṣṇu stands in a formal straight samabhaṅga. The crown consists of a flat half-cylindrical facade rising to a slight peak at the centre. The vertical sides are trimmed with a narrow fringe of flames the upper and lower edges with round pearls or jewels. The surface is ornamented with a diamond-shaped jewel at the centre and a square jewel on either side; these are surrounded by dense foliage motifs. The block behind the crown is cut straight back to the surface of the stele, its surface smooth. At each side, the crown rim is ornamented by a circular blossom. Beneath the rim of the crown appears a row of very narrow curls, not parted at the centre. The long curls of Vāsudeva spring from the block behind the crown at an unconvincingly high level and hang down to the shoulders in five stages. The face is damaged.

The forequarters and head of Hayagrīva, in full animal shape, appear above the crown. The front legs are bent up and the hooves rest upon the surface of the crown behind the central peak. The impression given is that of a horse standing on its hind legs behind the crown and resting its front hooves on it. A flying figure (vidyādhara or gandharva) emerges from behind the vertical sides of the crown on either side, each holding the two

ends of a scarf which billows up above his head. Below them, the heads of two animal-avatāras emerge at an upward angle: that of Kūrma on the proper right and of Matsya on the proper left. Below them, the heads of Narasiṃha (proper right) and Varāha (proper left) emerge. They are presented in the ancient Mathura manner (not in the Kashmiri fashion), the Narasiṃha head angled slightly outward from the nimbus, the Varāha head angled upwards at forty-five degrees. The very large head of Narasiṃha is carved as far as possible on both sides, while the Varāha head remains a flat profile. The Narasiṃha head wears a pearl-studded headband with a large floral diadem at the centre, and an attempt was made to represent a similar band on the sloping head of Varāha, in both cases above the ears. The Viṣṇu figure is thus five-headed, or six-headed if the Hayagrīva emanation is included.

The ears of the Vāsudeva head are pointed. The ear-ornaments consist of rings studded with pearls or gems. The necklace is a thick cluster of three or four pearl strings. The large-leaved vanamālā begins under the Narasiṃha and Varāha heads, curves over the elbows, and loops just below the knees; it is ornamented at the elbows and between the knees with a large lotus blossom. The dhotī ends above the knees. The upavīta cord loops well below the waistband, which is a double fold or cord tied to the right. The keyūras are simple studded bands.

The front right hand holds a lotus in the umbrella-like shape of the Northwest, and the left holds the conch at the level of the hip. The rear arms, now broken, were lowered and may have rested on the heads of the weapon-personifications, although the example at the Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa temple in Nirth (No.24) shows that in the lower Western Himalaya these flanking figures could be omitted in later sculpture of this kind.

The peripheral heads are placed around the curved top of the stele, but also curve inward toward the shoulders of Viṣṇu at the lower ends, marking the boundary of a circular nimbus. The heads are carved with rudimentary Jaṭās and beards, indicating that they were intended to represent Bhairavas, although their number (a total of 19, nine on each side and one at the apex) does not conform to North Indian standards.

The eighteen faces on either side are presented as profiles, that at the apex only faces the front. The surface of the nimbus has six horizontal registers separated by thin plain bands. Each register contains a row of seated, apparently haloed figures which are virtually impossible to identify with certainty because of erosion and the flaking of the brittle micaceous stone. The figure at the centre of the upper row, above Hayagrīva, can however be identified as Brahmā with a corpulent figure and three faces.

The headless and armless torso of a diminutive figure emerges from the centre of the pedestal between the feet of Viṣṇu; this may be presumed to have represented the Earth-goddess.

For a discussion of the chronology of this and the next image, see §27.1.1 below.

## 26.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The figure represents Viśvarūpa in the North Indian sense of the term. This is indicated by the four animal heads emanating from the central head of Viṣṇu, and by the arrangement of them, as well as by the apical figures of Hayagrīva and Brahmā above the crown, and by the multiplicity of diminutive figures on the nimbus with its periphery of Bhairava heads. These features are all North Indian and could not have come from Kashmir. The style of the sculpture is not consonant with a Gupta or post-Gupta date: the iconography and the style indicate Gurjara-Pratīhāra influence, which means a date in the 9th century or later, since the Pratīhāras were not in a political position to extend their influence into the Western Himalaya prior to their taking of Kānyakubja and the establishment of their empire in Uttar Pradesh in that century. The image is not a direct copy of a Gurjara-Pratīhāra original, but gives every appearance of being an image made by a local sculptor from reports or written descriptions of the Kānyakubja type of Viśvarūpa iconography brought into the Vyas Valley, probably from the Almora area where a Viśvarūpa image of the Kānyakubja type has been found. The probable date of the image is between the late 9th and mid-10th century, since the full Viśvarūpa iconography was clearly still known, and this would have ceased to be the case in the course of the 10th century, when the Pratīhāra empire collapsed.

Nr. 26. Bajaura

Viśveśvara-Mahādeva-Temple



Visvarupa, Visvesvara-Mahadeva-Tempel, Bajaura, Himachal Pradesh

## 27. D.Ref.: BAJAURA VR-FRAGMENT #0I-08

### FUNKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (FRAGMENT)

Stein: 64 x 71. An der linken Seite der Eingangstreppe, Devi-Tempel, Bajaura (Vyas-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

### 27.1 DESCRIPTION

This is a worn and damaged fragment of a sculpture very similar to No.26. The curved top of the stele is partly preserved, along with the outlines of the central Viṣṇu face with

its crown and ear-rings, and the profiles of the Kūrma, Matsya, Narasiṃha and Varāha avatāras. The shallow relief on the surface of the nimbus has disappeared entirely. There is of course no doubt that this was a Viśvarūpa image with the same iconography as that of No.26.

### 27.1.1 CHRONOLOGY

The fragment is significant in that it indicates that Bajaura, despite its distance from the new Gurjara-Pratīhāra kingdom in Uttar Pradesh, and despite the difficulties of communication which are so evident in the sculptural style, was nevertheless a Viśvarūpa cult-centre. The reasons for this cannot now be known with certainty. The fact that the place had in earlier times (ca. AD 800) been a focus of the Kashmiri three-headed Viṣṇu cult (as No.25 demonstrates) may well have made the priesthood in Bajaura more receptive to the Viśvarūpa form of Viṣṇu, since the two are iconographically closely related. That direct Pratīhāra political influence was felt at Bajaura is very doubtful: the tenuousness of the link between the North Indian plains and the Western Himalaya is clearly suggested in the eccentric interpretation of the iconography in No.26. However, in the marked absence of direct Northern Indian artistic influence -- these sculptures were not produced by an artist from the North Indian plains, nor did an image from there serve as the model -- the most convincing explanation for the appearance of at least two large Viśvarūpa images of Kānyakubja iconography at Bajaura is a political one: namely that this region in the Lower Vyas Valley turned its back on Kashmir in the north and aligned itself to the south, to become a (no doubt self-governing) tributary or ally, either of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra empire itself or, as would seem more probable, of one of its feudatories in north-western Uttar Pradesh, at some point in the late 9th-10th century. This connexion with the North Indian plains may have by-passed the Sutlej Valley, since no Viśvarūpa remains were found there, although there is a serviceable pass over the mountains between the Vyas and the Sutlej from near Bajaura to Nirmand and Rampur above Nirth. Despite the existence of this pass, the older three-headed Viṣṇus at Bajaura and Nirth -- both datable to ca. AD 800 -- nevertheless come from two different sources: the Nirth

example (in the Durgā temple: No.23) is North Indian in inspiration, while the Bajaura version (No.25) is Kashmiri in character. This strongly suggests that the mountain range between the Sutlej and the Vyas was the cultural and political boundary between North India and Kashmir at the end of the 8th century. The Bajaura Viśvarūpa image and fragment would then represent a temporary penetration of the Kashmiri culture-area from the south about a century later (late 9th or early 10th century), when the Pratīhāra empire was at the height of its power. That this penetration was ideological rather than political or cultural in any formal sense is shown by the fact that the iconography of the religious emblem of Pratīhāra power, the Viśvarūpa icon, was interpreted and formulated wholly in the local stylistic idiom of the Vyas Valley. The concept penetrated, but neither political rule nor cultural contact, in the form of administrators posted to the region or immigrant guilds of craftsmen, are likely to have been its vehicle; an ideological realignment among the rulers of Bajaura therefore seems to be the explanation. The situation here has an approximate historical parallel at Khajuraho in the mid-10th century, when the Candella rulers adopted the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha and re-interpreted the image in their own terms (a. T. S. Maxwell, Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: S.96-113).

The southward alignment postulated here seems to correspond to the period of "Pratīhāra Renewal" suggested by Pastel, Neven and Mankodi (*Antiquities of Himachal*, Bombay 1985: 90-92, 105-111):

"With the foundation of the town of Chamba at the end of the first quarter of the tenth century, Kashmiri influence seems to have been replaced at least partially by a classical north Indian Pratīhāra current. Par about one century after which this Pratīhāra renewal merged with later classical artistic tradition" (*ibid.*, 90).

"With the foundation of a new capital, that is Chamba town, at about the end of the first quarter of the tenth century, the State of Chamba seems to have gained a new sovereignty, and, without definitely discarding Kashmiri culture, became permeated (by) North Indian aesthetic patterns of the Pratīhāra dynasty. As is evident in stone

architecture in Chamba and elsewhere (Bajaura, Jagatsukh) a new local stylistic idiom mingled Kashmiri and Pratīhāra styles...The third Period is marked by a progressive shift from Kashmiri to Pratīhāra influence, as if Kashmir has slowly lost its political power while Chamba was gaining a new independence and, plausibly also, new territorial gains (such) as Kullu (Bajaura) and the Kangra valley...The earliest group, perhaps, of sculptures belonging to the Pratīhāra Renewal is to be seen in the Bajaura temple in Kullu. We date it - although in a perspective of relative chronology and without any absolute certainty - to the tenth century and, taking the datable Gaurīśaṅkara group (the Śiva and Pārvaṭī bronzes) of about the end of the first quarter of the eleventh century in Chamba into consideration, we may surmise Bajaura to be much older, not later than the mid-tenth century, and possibly even earlier" (ibid., 105).

The Viśveśvara Mahādeva temple at Bajaura is more plausibly dated by Krishna Deva (Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture, 11.2. OUP and AILS Delhi 1991: 114-116) to "c. the first half of the ninth century. The Viśvarūpa sculpture and the fragment are later than this temple, and my dating of these sculptures (below, §27.2) fits in rather with Krishna Deva's earlier dating of the temple, in the precincts of which the image now stands, than with the later dating of Postel et al.

## 27.2

### PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Fragment at Bajaura of a Viśvarūpa image of North Indian type, similar to No. 26 and also datable to the late 9th or 10th century.

Nr. 27: Bajaura

Viśveśvara-Mahādeva-Tempelbezirk



Visvarupa, Devi-Tempel, Bajaura, Himachal Pradesh

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**28 D.Ref.: V.K. NAGGAR #20-25**

**DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU MIT LAKṢMĪ AUF GARUḌA**

Stein: ca. 60 x 45

Sanktum des Votiv-Temples vor dem Gaurīśaṅkara-Temple, Naggar, Himachal Pradesh

### **28.1 DESCRIPTION**

This is a severely damaged, late version of the three-headed Viṣṇu seated with Lakṣmī on anthropomorphic Garuda. It is included here for the sake of completion of the archaeological record. There is no direct evidence that the small votive temple, on the high slope in front of the Gaurīśaṅkara temple, in which it now stands, was its original location.

The image consists of a roughly round-topped stele with a projecting base and pillars in relief on each side. Viṣṇu sits on anthropomorphic Garuda with Lakṣmī standing to his

left. The deity seems to hold a long mace or pestle in one of his right hands. Damage to the surface of the stone precludes any more detailed analysis of the iconography of this late piece.

## 28.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Three-headed VIṢṢU with Lakṣmī on Garuḁa. Naggar, ca. 15th-16th century.

Nr. 28: Naggar

Gaurisankara-Tempel

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## 29. D.Ref.: VK DASAL #07-09

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṢU AUF GARUḁA

stein: ca. 30 x 20

4 Arme

Abakusrelief, rechte Saule, Eingang des Gaurīśaṅkara-Tempels, Dasal (Vyas-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

### 29.1 DESCRIPTION

The Gaurīśaṅkara (Śiva) temple at Dasal, an elegant example of a towered shrine based on the Indian model but in a fully local style, has two detached round pillars on either side of the entrance to a narrow porch in front of the sanctum doorway. The two abacus blocks carry depictions of miniature towered shrines on the front, each containing a seated deity. Brahmā appears on the left, Viṣṣu on the right. Their purpose is clearly to serve as attendant deities on the central god in the sanctum, who is Śiva represented by the Liṅga.

The Viṣṇu figure is shown seated in lalitāsana on anthropomorphic Garuḍa. The crown is of the late, straight-sided triple-peaked type, but with interposed extra peaks. The Varāha face is on the proper right of the central Viṣṇu head, the Narasiṃha face on the left, which is the reverse of the usual arrangement. The front hands hold the circular lotus on the right, and support the conch on the left; the raised rear hands have the mace on the right, the ring-shaped disk on the left. Garuḍa is depicted as a dwarf-like anthropomorphic figure holding a pot in both hands and a long serpent.

## 29.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Three-faced VIṢṆU on Garuḍa, without Lakṣmī, in the local style of the Western Himalaya of ca. late 12th - 13th century.

Nr. 29: Dasal

Gaurīśānkara-Tempel



Viṣṇu, Gaurisankara-Tempel, Dasal, Himachal Pradesh

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30. D.Ref.: VK DASAL #16-17

## DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU AUF GARUḌA

Stein: ca. 70 x 35

4 Arme

Linke Innenwand des Sanktums, Gaurīśaṅkara-Tempel, Dasal (Vyas-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

### 30.1 DESCRIPTION

This is a very late, crudely carved, roughly rectangular stele depicting three-faced Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa without Lakṣmī. Its iconography is similar to that on the entrance pillar abacus (No. 291. of which it may well be a later copy. The relief is flat and the iconography had been only partly understood (Garuḍa is shown with pronounced female breasts, for example). The crown has been carved in rectangular shape, widening at the top, on which the triple peaks have been incised. The side-faces of Narasiṃha and Varāha are incised on the back-slab and scarcely distinguishable from each other. The front right hand holds a lotus bud, the left a semicircular object which presumably represents the conch. The rear right, which almost resembles a trident, the rear left the disk which looks rather like the small round shield (khetaka). The feet of Viṣṇu rest on the shoulders of the diminutive Garuḍa, who holds a pot in his front hands, and a large serpent in his rear left, and a parasol in his right, which evidently indicates an iconographical confusion between the diminutive Garuḍa figure and the dwarf (Vāmana) incarnation of Viṣṇu. The short legs of Garuḍa are still shown in bird-like form.

### 30.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

A late 'Pahari'-style three-headed Viṣṇu on Garuḍa, without Lakṣmī. It can safely be dated after the 15th century, perhaps as late as the 17th century.

Nr. 30: Dasal

Gaurīśaṅkara-Tempel



Visnu, Gaurisankara-Tempel, Dasal, Himachal Pradesh

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### 31. D.Ref.: VK DASAL #18-26

#### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU AUF GARUIḌA MIT LAKṢMĪ

stein: 103 x 54

4 Arme

Linke Seite des Mandapa, Gaurīsankara-Tempel, Dasal (Vyas-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

#### 31.1 DESCRIPTION

This is the second of two loose sculptures of three-headed Viṣṇu which have been placed inside the Gaurīsankara temple at Dasal. It is a late image, but despite erosion it can be seen to be of relatively good craftsmanship as compared to No.30. The stele is rectangular with a rounded top, the edges of which have been cut with precision. The image, in fairly high relief is supported on a projecting semicircular lotus-base.

The crown is of the triple-peaked type, with a half-lotus above it on the stele. The remaining iconography of Viṣṇu, and of Garuḍa, is the same as in No.30, except that the lotus in the front right hand of Viṣṇu is of the round type. The tail and wing feathers of Garuḍa are still visible on the stele. Lakṣmī is typically shown as a far smaller figure than Viṣṇu, squatting on his left knee with her back to the god and her face turned towards his.

### 31.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents three-headed VIṢṆU on Garuḍa, with Lakṣmī in the local style of the Western Himalaya. It can be dated to ca. 15th century.

Nr. 31: Dasal

Gaurīśaṅkara-Tempel



Visnu, Gaurisankara-Tempel, Dasal, Himachal Pradesh

32. D.Ref.: VK KHAKHNAL #0I-12

## DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 62 x 42

4 Arme

Sildostecke des Kārttiksvāmin-Tempels, Khakhnal (Vyas-Tal), Hlmachal Pradesh.

### 32.1 DESCRIPTION

This is much eroded, pale grey stone rectangular stele, hipped below a rounded top. The relief shows three-headed Viṣṇu, standing and supported by the Earth-goddess, in the local style. The hips on the edge of the stele are level with the shoulders of Viṣṇu, so that the rounded top forms the nimbus. The crown was of the triple-peaked type, with slightly curved sides to the facets, supported by a studded band with round projections (blossoms?) on the sides; the ear-ornaments were rings with pearls around the edges. The head of Narasiṃha appears to the proper right of the central face, that of Varāha to the left; these are large profiles, clearly differentiated despite the somewhat crude carving. Long curls fall behind the ears to the shoulders. The vanamālā loops just above the ankles. The dhotī is a simple cloth wrapped around the hips. The front right hand of Viṣṇu holds a circular lotus, the front left the conch. The rear arms are lowered, the hands resting on the heads of diminutive flanking figures which originally were the weapon-personifications, but their iconography has been almost forgotten; they now appear as a male figure with a short dhotī on the proper right (the opposite side to the usual arrangement) having a spoked disk behind his head (Cakrapuruṣa), while on the proper left stands Gadādevī in a long flared skirt. Both flanking figures face squarely to the front and have their hands joined in the añjalimudrā. The feet of Viṣṇu rest upon the hands of a small female figure representing the Earth Goddess represented from the hips upward on the front of the base; the loop of the vanamālā passes behind her head.

### 32.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Although this image retains the old iconography of three-headed VIṢṆU standing alone above Bhūdevī, the style is not ancient. The piece demonstrates that this iconography was preserved locally into the 16th century or later.

Nr. 32: Khakhnal

Kārttiksvāmin-Tempel



Visnu, Karttiksvamin-Tempel, Khakhnal, Himachal Pradesh

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**33. D.Ref.: VK PRINI #17-28**

**DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: 72 x 38 X 11

4 Arme

Rückwand des Sanktums, Phahili-Nāg-Tempel, Prini (Vyas-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

**33.1 DESCRIPTION**

The village of Prini stands high up on the eastern side of the Upper Vyas Valley. The temple of Phahili Nāg, a centre of the ancient indigenous snake-cult, has a pitched roof and a carved wooden facade, and faces west across the valley. The sanctum has a doorframe carved with serpents and contains an image of Śiva with Pārvaṭī and two images of three-headed Viṣṇu, the larger of which is worshipped as Phahili Nāg. In the maṇḍapa the rath of the deity is stored under the roof on the north wall.

The main image (Phahili Nāg) is a stone image of standing three-headed Viṣṇu, now blackened by applications of oil. The sculpture stands on 8 large rectangular base, is pierced around the legs and feet of Viṣṇu, and has a large circular nimbus. The crown consists of three rounded peaks; more specific detail cannot now be seen due to erosion and the applications of oil. The profiles of Narasiṃha (proper right) and Varāha (left) are rendered in rather flat relief to either side of the central Viṣṇu face; they emerge horizontally and well above the shoulders, in the Kashmiri style, and are not clearly differentiated from each other. There is no sign of the usual long hair hanging beside the face and on to the shoulders. The upavīta cord is also absent. The ear-ornaments are rings encircled with pearls. The anatomy of the torso, and solid torque, are treated similarly to the same elements in the North Indian type at Nirth (No.23). The lower garment has a narrow beaded girdle, into which a horned Kashmiri dagger is thrust at the right hip; the dagger is carved, not as a separate element, but as a low relief on the curve of the flank. The dhotī has folds on the right thigh, and a narrow swathe of pleats falls between the legs, attached to the right leg. A narrow scarf loops over the upper thighs. The vanamālā loops just above the ankles. In the front right hand Viṣṇu holds the stalk of a large round lotus, the blossom being curiously bent backward, and supports a slightly curved conch in the front left. The rear arms are lowered, the hands resting on the heads of Cakrapuruṣa (proper right) and Gadādevī (left); this is the reverse of the usual disposition of these flanking figures. The bust of a very small figure, presumably representing the Earth-goddess, appears on the front of the base at the centre, its head rising between Viṣṇu's feet, and its hands joined in the añjalimudrā.

The sculpture thus combines North Indian and Kashmiri stylistic features, but it was the iconography of Kashmir that was followed. It preserves classic stylistic forms, but such characteristics as the stiffening of the limbs of the weapon-personifications indicates a fairly late date.

### 33.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The sculpture represents three-headed standing Viṣṇu with Kashmiri iconography. It appears to have been made at a time when the influence of Kashmir was still paramount, with North Indian stylistic influence of the Mathura type still evident, and with no specific Pratihāra features. It can reasonably be dated to ca. AD 900, and could therefore be identified as the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha.

Nr. 33: Prini

Phahilli-Nāg-Tempel



Vaikuntha, Phahili-Nag-Tempel, Prini, Himachal Pradesh

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34. D.Ref.: VK PRINI #29-32

## DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 44 x 27 x 11.5

4 Arme

Rückwand des Sanktums (rechts). Phahili-Nāg-Tempel, Prini Vyas-Tal),  
Himachal Pradesh.

### 34.1 DESCRIPTION

This is the second of two three-headed Viṣṇu sculptures against the ear wall of the Phahili Nāg temple at Prini. It stands to the right of the main image (No.33). It is a rectangular stele with a tenon under the base, bearing a standing figure of three-headed Viṣṇu cut in very high relief. The sculpture has an archaic appearance, partly because of the very large size of its components, particularly the animal side-heads and the attributes. The Viṣṇu figure itself, however, is weak and lacking in presence.

The crown consists of three rounded facets, the smaller side-elements overlapping the larger central one; these are ornamented with a foliage design and are supported on a band with incised blossoms. This design appears to be a local copy of Gupta-style crowns. The central face is damaged. The necklace of the Viṣṇu figure is a small torque, the bracelets appear to be plain. The vanamālā curves around the outside of the shoulders and loops over the knees. The dhotī has regular folds lying horizontally across the thighs and a central vertical strip. The upavīta appears to loop, and to continue to the right, at the level of the waistband. (The lowering of the upavīta loop below the waistband is in Kashmiri sculpture, a general indicator of date.)

In comparison to the size of the side-heads and attributes, the torso appears remarkably slight. The side-faces represent Narasiṃha on the proper right and Varāha on the left. The lion-face, looking forward over the right shoulder, must have been copied directly from Gupta (or early Post-Gupta) period statuary from Mathura. In the same way, the Varāha profile is angled upward at forty-five degrees from the skanda-junction, and was equally clearly copied from Gupta-period sculpture from Mathura. The object held in the

front right hand (the lotus hand) is damaged. The front left hand supports a large conch which leans to the side. The rear arms are lowered. The rear left hand rests on a short massive mace fashioned like a squared pillar with a pot-shaped base. The rear right hand rests on a very large spoked disk standing on a square pedestal.

### 34.1.1 CHRONOLOGY

Viṣṇu figures dated throughout the 5th century which hold the mace and disk in this manner are known from sites across northern India (Udayagiri, Jhusi, Varanasi); indeed, the form of the mace is virtually identical to that held (In the upper right hand) of a very early Vāsudeva image from Mathura which is dated by Hartel to the Kuṣāṇa period, ca. AD 300 (H. Hartel, "Zur Typologie einer Kaschmir-Skulptur", *Elinblicke-Einsichten-Aussichten*, Berlin 1933: 95-113). The absence of the Earth-goddess between the feet of Viṣṇu also suggests a very early date for the prototype: this diminutive figure occurs already in the early 7th century in a three headed Viṣṇu bronze from the Swat Valley (also in the *Museum fur indische Kunst Berlin*, No. I.24). The existence of this bronze proves that the Gupta Mathuran concept of the three-headed Viṣṇu had probability of the image being the result of a local sculptor copying a piece of early Gupta-period statuary from North India is therefore very strong.

The sculpture shows neither Kashmiri nor Pratihār; features. On the other hand, it has a multiplicity of Gupta characteristics, and even one Kuṣāṇa trait. The aesthetic -- especially the proportions and the treatment of the anatomy -- is however not Gupta; but neither is it Kashmiri or Pratihāra, or even Gandharan, and so it must be considered local. It would be possible to argue that this is a late archaizing piece, were it not for the fact that sculptors in the Western Himalaya could not have copied the Gupta features which appear in this image so faithfully in later times. At least one small sandstone image of easily portable size from 5th-century Mathura representing three-headed Viṣṇu is known; such pieces could have found their way into the Western Himalaya, where copies such as the present example could have been made. An early date, probably before the conquests from Kashmir led by Lalitāditya in the 8th century, therefore has to

be attributed to it. (Postel, Neven and Mankodi attribute a 6th- to 7th-century date to a dvārapāla figure and other stray pieces at Nirmand in the adjacent Sutlej Valley: 1985: 60).

### 34.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The sculpture represents a local Western Himalayan version of the Gupta-period three-headed VIṢṆU created in Mathura in the 5th century. The piece may be dated to the 6th or 7th century. It appears to be one of the earliest Western Himalayan images of three-headed Viṣṇu so far discovered.

Nr. 34: Prini

Phahill-Nāg-Tempel



Visnu, Phahili-Nag-Tempel, Prini, Himachal Pradesh

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35. D.Ref.: MANDI VK TRILOKANĀTHA #02-10

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 156 x 76 x 17

4 Arme

Rückwand des Maṇḍapa, links vom Sanktumeingang, Trilokanātha-Tempel, Mandi (Kangra-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

### 35.1 DESCRIPTION

The image does not belong to the Trilokanātha temple in the maṇḍapa of which it now stands. It is carved from a block of soft whitish stone and is fairly well preserved except at the base, where it is eroded. The proportions show that it was conceived as an aṣṭatāla figure within an ekādaśatāla composition. Viṣṇu is shown standing in samabhaṅga, with four arms holding the standing four emblems in the following disposition: the rear right hand, raised above shoulder level, holds the disk which is shown with an inner rim but no spokes, the corresponding left hand holding the upright conch; the front right hand holds a small lotus at chest level, while the front left is lowered to knee level and rests on the base of an inverted mace. The long vanamālā is thin where it hangs where it hangs over the god's shoulders and passes through the crook of the front right arm and over the upper forearm on the left, thickening where it sweeps out in a wide arc around the hips and thighs to form a loop just below the knees. Around the neck is carved a simple, double-strand necklace. The girdle hangs low on the hips, curving under the belly, with a fold of cloth between the legs to indicate the lower garment and three tassels suspended from it on each thigh. There is no upavīta across the torso. The figure is crowned with a rather narrow kirīṭa from behind which, more than halfway from the lower rim, a square tab projects on either side. Thick, circular kuṇḍalas pierce the lobes of the ears which curve outward to allow the ear-disks to be presented frontally.

From behind the head, at the level of the crown rim, project two faces. On the left side appears the profile head of the Varāha, while on the right is carved, almost in the round and with its face slightly raised and turned to the front, a small human head with hair piled in a large chignon bound at the hairline; shallow, vertically incised lines suggest

that this was intended to represent a jaṭābhāra, the piled matted locks which conventionally characterise ṛṣi figures. This combination of side-heads -- those of a man (or woman?) and of the boar avatāra -- is unique in the iconography of multi-headed Viṣṇu.

The structure which surrounds the central figure is unusual and merits a brief description. The front of the plinth, some 10cm in height, provides a straight base for the icon, and about 7.5cm from the extremities a square rebate is cut back to a depth nearly flush with the base of the back-slab above. This device ensures that the deity stands out from the background; there are no mouldings to suggest its architectural origins. The projection is backed by a low wall of equal length, which rises to height of about 15cm to end behind the calves of the Viṣṇu figure; this uncut portion may have been left to strengthen the base of the main image within its frame. An impression of flanking pillars was created by piercing the stone from the top of the low 'wall' reinforcement at the back of the plinth as far up as the elbows of Viṣṇu. Two holes are roughly cut through the block beneath the side-heads; they serve no artistic purpose but are located at a suitable height to permit bolts to be knocked through into a masonry backing and so prevent the image toppling forward. Each pillar is provided with two narrow steps as bases for the small figures which appear on the front. These false pillars, as noted above, end at the waist level of Viṣṇu, but their straight outer edges continue to a height of 117cm, somewhat higher than the main figure. From this point, but inset about 5cm and so giving a hipped outline to the stele, the two sides curve inward without forming a complete arc, meeting in a rather pointed apex. The background against which Viṣṇu is represented thus appears to be a late derivation from a makatoraṇa (the uprights being suggested, but without the vyāla's, and the horizontal bar terminating in makara-heads being omitted) standing on a moulded plinth (the plain base with the corner rebates) and surmounted by a large nimbus (the pointed arch). The nimbus is here reduced to a small ring imprinted with a lotus design behind the crown; the side-heads project beyond it.

At the centre of the plinth, beneath the feet of the god, a small standing figure is carved in low relief. Although severely eroded, it evidently has four arms, two lowered with the hands at hip level, and the other two raised to support the feet of Viṣṇu, between which the head of this diminutive figure rises. Traces of horizontal projections on either side which appear to have been stiff, formal representations of wings, and a thickening of the legs which terminate in claw-like feet, suggest that this is a depiction of Garuḍa, in the original perhaps holding the amṛtakalaśa between his front hands.

A better preserved, small male figure stands on the projecting portion of the plinth to the right of Viṣṇu. With a tall, ornate jaṭābhāra and a long triśūla held upright in the right hand, this is evidently a two-armed representation of Śiva. The corresponding space on the left is occupied only by the head of the mace. Above the rebate in the plinth at either end, on the front of the false pillars and at the same level as Śiva, are carved two standing female figures who may represent the consorts of Viṣṇu, Lakṣmī to his right adjacent to Śiva and holding in her right hand a long-stemmed lotus, while the figure beside the mace may be Puṣṭi. Above these goddesses, a male figure stands on either side facing inward and presenting a garland.

On a level with the waist of Viṣṇu, immediately above the two male attendants, a flying figure appears on either side, facing outward and holding a long streaming scarf in a loop overhead. These figures seem intended to mark a definite boundary between the sculpture below and above them. The baseline on which they are represented is half the height of the total composition and defines the upper limit of the piercing of the sculpture; whole figures appear below them, only heads are seen above.

The remainder of the back-slab is edged with human heads. There are six on either side above each flying figure, facing the front and continuing to the top of the vertical sides of the composition, where there is a definite break in their continuity, forming the hip in the outline; from the inner side of each topmost head, six more heads line the arcs of the upper margin on either side, facing obliquely upward and outward, to be seen in profile.

At the apex, a single head faces the front. Each of these 25 heads is similar in appearance to the human head projecting from behind the central face of Viṣṇu.

Upon the surface of the stele thus enclosed, between the apical head and the top of Viṣṇu's lotus-halo, appears in high relief the head of a horse facing the front; the base of this head touches the rim of the nimbus below it. The remainder of the surface has been roughened with a chisel, and some engraved lines can be detected which appear to represent flames running in a curve from behind the disk on the right and the conch on the left to the horse-head at the centre. These suggest that the arched area between the rim of the nimbus and the rows of heads, above the heads and raised attributes of Viṣṇu, was to have been treated, perhaps with a thin layer of plaster, and painted.

The most-immediate connecting link between North Indian Viśvarūpa Iconography and this image at Mandi is the sculpture of Viśvarūpa at Bajaura (see above, No.26). Above the crown of the Bajaura Viśvarūpa, Hayagrīva emerges as a theriomorphic figure: the horse rests its head and fore-hooves on the top surface of the crown in such a way that one imagines the animal rearing behind it; this appears to be the origin of the horse-head, its base resting on the rim of Viṣṇu's halo, in the Mandi sculpture. In both the Bajaura and the Mandi sculptures, the marginal profile heads converge on a single, forward-facing, slightly larger head at the highest point.

The faces on the periphery of the Mandi stele and the emanating human side-head are of similar appearance; in North Indian Viśvarūpa iconography the marginal faces represent the Aṣṭa-Bhairavas. In the Mandi sculpture, therefore, the marginal faces presumably still represent the Bhairavas, though they are numerically too many, and the human side-head of Viṣṇu is most probably that of the Bhairava aspect of Śiva.

Multi-headed Viṣṇu with a Bhairava side-head should indicate a Harihara form; and such an icon is indeed known from Kashmir, namely the unique 9th-century sculpture in the Museum für Indische Kunst Berlin (No. MIK I.58351, which has the boar face on the left and that of Bhairava on the right of the divided head of Śiva-Viṣṇu, along with the trident-personification at the base beneath one of the deity's right hands. At Mandi, too,

the human face on the right is complemented by a figure holding a trident on the right side of the plinth. In terms of existing sculptures this kind of Harihara image is the only known art-historical connection which would go some way to explaining the presence of both the human side-head and the Śaiva plinth-figure in the right half of the Mandi image. Another source, much closer to Mandi, is the Vaidyanātha temple at Baijnath, where a seated Harihara occupies the main niche on the northwest corner (see below, No.36). There are many other differences in the iconography apart from the seated posture, but the side-heads are the same: Varāha to the left of the split Śiva-Viṣṇu face in the centre, and Bhairava to the right. The concept of Harihara in which the Hari or Viṣṇu half is represented by the left side of three-headed Viṣṇu with the boar's head was thus a major deity at Baijnath in the Kangra Valley as late as the 11th century; the Mandi image is no doubt in part a magnified version of this combined god. The apparent iconographical confusion at Mandi (for the main deity here holds exclusively Vaiṣṇava emblems) evidently resulted from a late attempt to combine the two principal gods in a single icon which was intended to represent, not Harihara, but the ferocious omniform god Viśvarūpa, incorporating a Śiva-Bhairava element while not losing sight of his predominantly Vaiṣṇava character.

This sculpture at Mandi evidently represents a late experiment, combining inherited iconographies from North India, Kashmir and, more locally, the Kangra Valley itself, probably together with painted figures and emblems on the upper part of the stele, to produce a unique version of Viśvarūpa. The style suggests a date between the 13th and 15th centuries.

## 35.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image is one of the latest known sculptural versions of Viśvarūpa, produced in the Kangra Valley in this form through a combination of North Indian, Kashmiri, and Himachali iconographies and incorporating the concept of Harihara, of Viṣṇu combined with Śiva. It is to be approximately dated to the 13th or 14th century.

Nr. 35: Mandi

Trilokanātha-Tempel



Visvarupa, Trilokanatha-Tempel, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh

### 36. D.Ref.: BAIJNATH HARIHARA #03-07

#### DREIKOPFIGER HARIHARA

stone: 52 x 33

4 Arme

Westbhadra des nordwestlichen Maṇḍapavorsprungs, Vaidyanātha-Tempel, Baijnath (Kangra-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

#### 36.1 DESCRIPTION

The image is one of a pair flanking the maṇḍapa facade of the Vaidyanātha temple at Baijnath (Himachal). Each image is shown installed in the sanctum of a miniature towered shrine at one of the front corners of the maṇḍapa. That on the observer's left

(NW corner) represents Harihara, that on his right (SW corner) the androgynous form Vāsudeva-Kamalajā mounted on Garuḍa.

The Harihara image is seated in pralambapādāsana on an hour-glass shaped stool or throne, holding a mace across his knees: the raised rear hands hold the trisūla of Śiva (right) and the cakra of Viṣṇu (left). The ornaments and headdress are divided on the central axis as is usual in combined images of this type.

The point of iconographical relevance to Vaikuṅṭha stūdes concerns the three heads. Whereas the proper right side-head, facing the trident, represents the Bhairava aspect of Śiva, the proper left side-head is a profile of the Varāha-avatāra of Viṣṇu. This clearly indicates that the form of Viṣṇu which is integrated with Śiva in this image is that of three- (or four-) headed Viṣṇu; this iconography originated in Kashmir in the 9th century (see above, No.35: cp. Museum fur Indische Kunst Berlin, Nr. MIK.I.5835), appears here in a prominent position on a temple of Vaidyanātha diva in the Kangra Valley in the 11th century, and was perpetuated in modified form at Mandi in the 13th or 14th century (No.35 above).

### 36.1.2 ICONOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The counterpart of this Harihara image on the SW corner represents single-headed, eight-armed Vāsudeva-Kamalajā (the androgynous Viṣṇu/Lakṣmī mounted on anthropomorphic Garuḍa. Here, the dominant (right-hand) side of the combined icon represents Viṣṇu in his single-headed form.

Both of these images flanking the maṇḍapa facade represents Viṣṇu combined with a different deity, in the one case Śiva, in the other Lakṣmī.

It is when he is combined with multi-headed Śiva that Viṣṇu assumes his three- or four-headed form, in the 11th-century iconography of Baijnath as in the 9th-century iconography of Kashmir. As the Berlin Harihara shows, it is the krodharṣi aspect both of Śiva (as Kāmadahana) and of Viṣṇu Vaikuṅṭha (as Kapila) which in Kashmiri

iconography was seen as, the point of unity between the two gods: in the Baijnath Harihara, which is a relief on the back wall of a niche, the face of the angry sage is of course not capable of being represented, though its presence is implied. The Kashmiri origin of this Harihara image is stylistically indicated by the profile of the Varāha sloping downward, unlike images of Mathuran origin, in which the profile is angled upward.

## 36.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents HARIHARA, in which the three- or four-headed Vaikuṅṭha form of Viṣṇu is integrated with multi-headed Śiva (Sadāśiva). It is to be dated to the 11th century, since there is no doubt that the sculpture, along with the corner-shrine that encloses it, is original to the Vaidyanātha temple.

Nr. 36: Baijnath

Vaidyanātha-Tempel



Harihara, Vaidyanatha-Tempel, Baijnath, Himachal Pradesh

## DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU -MIT LAKṢMĪ- AUF GARUḌA

Stein: 68 x 41.5

4 Hande

Rückwand (Nordostecke) des Sanktums, Vaidyanātha-Tempel, Baijnath (Kangra-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

### 37.1 DESCRIPTION

The image is placed against the rear wall of the sanctum of the Vaidyanātha temple, in the NE corner, behind the praṇāla of the Śivaliṅga. It is a well preserved relief on a rectangular slab of grey stone which has been blackened by ritual applications of oil and water.

Viṣṇu is shown seated in lalitāsana on anthropomorphic Garuḍa; Lakṣmī sits on his left knee. In the front hands, Viṣṇu holds a large round lotus (right) and the upright conch (left). The crown is of the triple-peaked type, surrounded by the upper half of a small plain nimbus. The large profile heads of the Narasiṃha (right) and Varāha (left) are clearly differentiated and slope slightly downwards, parallel to the shoulders. The style of these animal profiles, and of the central Viṣṇu face, is that of local 'Pahari' work, while the iconography is still fully North Indian, suggesting a date considerably later than that of the temple, in the 13th century, slightly later than the pillar-relief on the Gaurīśaṅkara temple at Dasal (above, No.29) in the Vyas Valley.

### 37.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Three-faced VIṢṆU on Garuḍa, with Lakṣmī, in the local style of the Western Himalaya of ca. 13th century.

Nr. 37: Baijnath

Vaidyanāthan-Tempel



Visnu, Vaidyanatha-Tempel, Baijnath, Himachal Pradesh

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**38. D. Ref:**

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein:

Masrur, Kangra-Tal, Himachal Pradesh

= IN BEARBEITUNG=

Nr. 38: Masrur

Felstempel

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**39. D.Ref.:**

## DREI-/VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Weisser Marmor: H. ca. 140

4 Hande

Sanktumikone. Lakṣminārāyaṇa-Tempel, Laksmīnārāyaṇa-Komplex, Chamba, (Ravi-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

### 39.1 DESCRIPTION

This important image has never, to my knowledge, been photographed without its ritual coverings of metal and cloth. (Plates 8b and 8c in Pratapaditya Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*, Graz 1975, are of course incorrectly labeled as representing this image; they illustrate the bronze image in the Hari Rai temple in Chamba. Plate 8a shows this icon with its usual coverings.) Despite my prolonged efforts with the Commissioner of Chamba and his officers of the civil administration, as well as with the hereditary priesthood of the Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa temple complex, this still could not be achieved in 1992. The image is unclothed, bathed, and re-clothed at periodic intervals, and at such times photography of the sculpture beneath is theoretically possible, particularly since the process takes one full day with several priests in attendance. During the period of my stay in Chamba, such an opportunity did not present itself; the next snāna-ceremony was due in October 1992. However, I was permitted to spend a considerable amount of time in the temple in order to observe the routine pūja ceremonies, and to photograph them, but not to enter the sanctum; this is the prerogative of the male members of the hereditary priesthood of Chamba. An arrangement was reached with a local professional photographer in consultation with the senior priests, to have the image photographed in October 1992 and the negatives forwarded to me in Bonn, the films and prepayment being left with the photographer for this purpose. Unfortunately, the photographer failed to honor the agreement.

The image stands in a large sanctum, the back wall of which is draped with cloth hangings. As the image stands against this wall, it cannot be seen whether or not there is a fourth face at the back; but I was told emphatically by several of the priests that

there is a rear face, that it is that of a demon, and that no one normally looks at it. This clearly confirms the fact that it is an image of four-faced Vaikuṅṭha with the face of the krodharṣi Kapila (not a demon) at the back.

The doorframe of the sanctum, the high pedestal on which the image stands, the toraṇa behind it, and the image itself, are all covered with thin layers of metal worked with repousse motifs. The toraṇa covering, of gilded silver, bears an inscription naming the artisans (carpenters, painters, goldsmiths, coppersmiths) who prepared the frame which is dated August AD 1747 (Vishwa Chander Ohri in Lalit Kala 13: 50). This makara-toraṇa has figural panels on the uprights and on the arch (done in the style of contemporary painting of the 18th century: Ohri, *loc. cit.*), and five miniature parasols on the top. The doorframe has dvārapālas at the base of the jambs and a figure of seated Gaṇeśa on the centre of the lintel. The pedestal is a later version of the pīṭha types seen in Kashmiri temples of the 8th and 9th centuries (Martanda and Avantipura), with architectural mouldings at the base and rim, and a praṇāla projecting to the right; at the front corners stand two figures of lions facing forward, making the pedestal into a siṃhāsana, and between them on the flat front of the pedestal appears anthropomorphic Garuḍa between two flanking devotees. Except for the central face, hands and feet (which are painted red with sindhur), the image itself is also covered with jewelled repousse metal-sheets, in addition to being hung with red clothes, metal amulets, and framed portraits of benefactors and miniature paintings of religious groups. The metal coverings made for the image, which are gilt, and intricately patterned, are possibly older than those of the toraṇa, but without access to the sanctum no final assessment of their age and function can be made. The following description of the image is based on such direct observations as were possible under these conditions, from my photographs, and on a comparison with a smaller white marble image in one of the votive shrines in the same Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa complex (see below, No.40).

The metal covering on the crown has three pointed peaks, but the original crown may consist of the three disks or crescents seen in No.40; that the pointed crown was more popular at the time the metal coverings were probably made is indicated by such

crowns being worn by the dvārapālas on the doorframe, and by the devotees on the pedestal, and by similar crowns being shown on the heads of the repoussé figures of both Gaṇeśa and Garuḍa. A metal disk above the central peak of the crown may indicate that a lotus is represented in that position on the original sculpture, as on other Kashmiri stone images of three- and four-headed Viṣṇu of the 8th and 9th centuries. The profiles of the heads of the animal-avatāras (Narasimha on the proper right, Varāha on the left) are large and project laterally from the sides of the central face, well above the shoulders, in the Kashmiri manner. The features of the central face, without a metal mask, are concealed by black paint on the eyes and eyebrows, and by red paint on the hairline, ears, and mouth. The nose appears uncharacteristically thin (perhaps as the result of remoulding damage to this notoriously vulnerable feature). The strings holding the metal masks in place on the avatāra-faces can be seen to run from the corners of the animal's mouths to the edge of the large ear-rings, indicating that holes are drilled in the original sculpture at these points, as they are in several other sculptures from Kashmir and Himachal, presumably for the express purpose of fixing such masks in place. This may be an ancient practice, perhaps as old as the sculptures themselves. The ear-rings appear to have been made in the form of floral motifs.

The image is evidently four-armed, holding a large round lotus by its stalk in the front right hand, and the upright conch in the front left. The rear arms are lowered with the hands resting on the upper rim of the haloes of the two flanking āyudhapuruṣas. In the metal coverings, both haloes are treated identically, as disks containing a floral pattern with intricate foliage edging. The figure on the proper left, who would normally represent Cakrapuruṣa, has the right arm raised, in the hand of which the handle of a cāmara is held, sloping down behind his head. The corresponding figure on the left, who should be Gadādevī has the left hand raised to a position near the left cheek, corresponding to the same gesture seen in Kashmiri images. The faces of both figures are turned toward the god and tilted slightly upward. Between the feet of Viṣṇu emerges the small figure of Bhūdevī, turned slightly to her left, as in Kashmir. The position of her hands in relation to the feet of Viṣṇu cannot be seen due to the offerings and votive figures placed on the pedestal. The left foot of Viṣṇu appears to be slightly advanced, suggesting a slight

ābhaṅga to the right. Bhūdevī appears to wear a beaded or jewelled headband possibly supporting a tiara, and a necklace which hangs down which hangs down between her breasts. (This figure of the Earth-goddess is understood by the temple priests to represent Lakṣmī: hence their reference to the image, and to its temple, as Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa. that is, Viṣṇu accompanied by his consort Lakṣmī)

### 39.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image seems to represent Viṣṇu as VAKUṆṬHA, in the style and iconography of Kashmir. The correctness of this identification is made more probable by the affirmation of the Chamba priests that there is a further face, with a demonic expression, on the back of the image. If this is correct, the sculpture cannot be older than the 9th century, when images of this kind were first made in Kashmir. Minor stylistic features, such as the posture of the Earth-goddess, and the position of the raised hands of Cakrapuruṣa and Gadādevī, suggest that the sculpture belongs to the mid-9th century, or was copied from an original of that date.

Nr. 39: Chamba

Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa-Tempel



Vaikuntha, Laksminarayana-Tempel, Chamba, Himachal Pradesh

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## 40. DREI- / VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Weiber Marmor: 61.5 x 38

4 Hande

Sanktumikone, Votivschrein gegenüber vom Lakṣmī-Dāmodara-Tempel im Hofe des Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa-Tempels, Chamba (Ravi-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

### 40.1 DESCRIPTION

Iconographically, this image appears to be a miniature version of the major sculpture in the Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa temple (No.39 above), and is made of the same material (white marble). It is quite seriously eroded.

The crown consists of three disks or crescents, the animal side-faces are large and project well above the shoulders, the ear-rings consist of a floral design, the lotus and

conch appear in the right and left hands respectively, and the rear arms are lowered with the hands resting on the nimbus of Gadādevī (right) and Cakrapuruṣa (left). The figure of Bhūdevī emerges from the pedestal, her body turned slightly to her left, her head raised, and her hands placed under the feet of Viṣṇu, whose left foot is advanced. The faces of all three plinth-figures are tilted upwards more than in No.39. The Earth-goddess has her left hand raised to her face, but with the index finger extended to the corner of her mouth. The latter two stylistic features could indicate a later date.

The Viṣṇu-figure wears a short necklace and the upavīta, which loops on a level with the eroded remains of a studded girdle. A dagger appears to have been represented in front of the right hip, where the line of the upavīta ends. Below this, a scarf with parallel folds hangs across the upper thighs, with a loop on the right, below the dagger. The adhotṃśuka ends at knee-level, with a row of folds hanging down the inside of the right leg, and smaller pleats on the left thigh. The left foot is slightly advanced. The vanamālā emerges from behind the long hair spread along the shoulders, passes through the crook of the front arms, and hangs down beside the legs to loop well below the knees, behind the head of Bhūdevī. The original pedestal was carved in one piece with the image (unlike the separate pedestals of Kashmir), and is now set into the stone altar of the votive shrine in which it stands. The back of this small sculpture cannot be seen, as it is set against the rear wall of the sanctum, and so the presence of the fourth face at the rear cannot be confirmed. The plain arch behind the image is not part of the original sculpture.

The top of the nimbus of Viṣṇu has been damaged, so that the presence of a lotus there cannot be confirmed. The nimbus is large, rising from the edges of the shoulders and enclosing both the animal-side-faces. Drill-holes, now plugged, can be seen in the sides of the crown, at the top of each animal side-face near its junction with the central face of Viṣṇu, in the corners of the mouths, and just above the ear-rings: these indicate that in Chamba, as in Kashmir, coverings of some kind were tied on to the crown and the avatāra-faces, as they still are in the case of the larger image in the Lakṣmī--Nārāyaṇa temple (see No.39) which appears to represent the only survival of this ritual practice.

## 40 .2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image appears to represent Viṣṇu Vaikuṅṭha in the style and iconography of Kashmir. It may be dated to the late 9th century.

Nr. 40: Chamba

Votivschrein gegenüber vom Lakṣmī-Dāmodara-Tempel



Visnu, Vaikuntha, Laksmi-Damodara-Tempel, Chamba, Himachal Pradesh

41. D. Ref.:

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU MIT LAKṢMĪ AUF GARUḌA

Stein: 69 x 45

4 Hande

Nordbhadranische, Lakṣmī-Dāmodara-Tempel, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa Komplex, Chamba (Ravi-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

## 41.1 DESCRIPTION

In size, style, and iconography, this relief corresponds closely to the description of No.37 in Baijnath (Kangra Valley). The chief difference lies in the treatment of the back-slab, which here, instead of being a plain rectangle, has a double flame-edged nimbus rising to a slight central peak behind both Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, between reliefs depicting śikhara-shrines behind the raised mace and disk. The hands of Garuḍa here hold the amṛtakalaśa between the palms.

## 41.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Three-faced VIṢṆU on Garuḍa with Lakṣmī, in the local style of the Western Himalaya of about the 13th century.

Nr. 41: Chamba

Lakṣmī-Dāmodara-Tempel



Visnu, Laksmi-Damodara-Tempel, Chamba, Himachal Pradesh

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## 42. D.Ref.:

### VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Messing: H. 117

4 Hande

Sanktumikone, Hari-Rai-Tempel, Chamba (Ravi-Tal), Himachal Pradesh

#### 42.1 DESCRIPTION

This "bronze" (brass) image was stolen in the 1970s and recovered by police in Bombay, after which it was photographed by the Archaeological Survey of India and published (Sadashiv Gorakshkar, *Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India* 11 (1971): 33ff.). Under present-day circumstances it is impossible to see or photograph it in the Hari Rai temple in Chamba without its ritual trappings. Nor has the image ever been photographed without the black eye-outlines which radically alter the original facial expression: beneath the paint, the eyes as depicted in the metal are of course smaller, and half-closed in contemplation. This would originally have produced the striking contrast between the serenity of the central face and the ferocity of the animal side-faces, which is so marked a feature of the 8th-century Kashmiri Viṣṇu with three heads from Bejbehara (above, No.05).

There is no doubt that the iconography, and to a lesser degree also the style, of this four-faced Viṣṇu image (the fourth face of Kapila on the back is a masterpiece of *krodhārṣi* iconography) stems from Kashmir. The style is a combination of influences, chiefly of Kashmiri stone and metal sculpture of the 9th century, along with local elements developed in wood and metal at Brahmapura and Chatradhi on the Budhal tributary of the Ravi to the east of Chamba between the 8th and 9th centuries (see below, Nos.50, 51). There is considerable stylization, especially in the treatment of the animal-faces, which have all the abstract modelling of surface volumes that is such a powerful feature of the Śakti-Devī doorframe at Chatradhi (for which I suggest a 9th-century date: below, No.51). Since this quality of abstract form as a genre is not seen

developing to the same degree in Kashmiri stone or metal sculpture, the origins of it might well lie as much in the medium itself, and in wood-carving as a technique, as in the relative inaccessibility of the upper reaches of the Ravi: although damaged and worn, the smaller side-faces of the three-headed Viṣṇu on the left-hand jamb of the 7th-century Lakṣaṇā-Devī doorframe at Brahmapura show a similar tendency to reduce the animal profiles to the rounded volumes of masks; in the 8th century, the Bejbehara stone sculpture of three-headed Viṣṇu in Kashmir (above, No.05) shows a far greater attempt at resisting the slide into abstraction, and more retention of post-Gupta 'realism': in the depiction of the lion and boar faces. Both before and after the introduction of the four-faced Vaikuṅṭha iconography from Kashmir in the 9th century, the valleys of the Ravi-Budhal and the Jhelum witnessed two different developments of post-Gupta North Indian style; these were to merge into a more or less uniform "Pahari" style only with the decline of the North Indian aesthetic itself, from about the 12th century onward (see Nos.10, 16, 18, 19, and 29-32), coinciding with the collapse of indigenous political control of the Yamunā and Ganges plains.

The iconography of this image is that of the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha of the mid-9th century, and as such need not be treated further here.

## **42.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION**

Four-faced Vaikuṅṭha of Kashmiri type, produced in the Chamba area (Ravi Valley) in the second half of the 9th century.

Nr. 42: Chamba

Hari-Rai-Tempel



Vaikuntha, Hari-Rai-Tempel, Chamba, Himachal Pradesh

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43. D. Ref.:

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein:

Votivshrein, Chamba, Himachal Pradesh

= IN BEARBEITUNG=

Nr. 43: Chamba

Votivschrein

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44. D. Ref.:

## DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein:

Votivshrein, Chamba, Himachal Pradesh

= IN BEARBEITUNG=

Nr. 44: Chamba

Votivschrein

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### 45. D. Ref.:

## DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU AUF GARUḌA

stein: 58 x 41 x 10

Swai (Swaim), Hemgiri Churah tehsil, Chamba District (Ravi-Tal), Himachal Pradesh  
[BhS Chamba]

### 45.1 DESCRIPTION

This remarkable late image depicts Viṣṇu seated on the back of anthropomorphic Garuḍa, who supports the god's feet on the palms of his raised hands while the weapon-personifications stand upon his outstretched wings. The stele is trilobate in shape, providing a halo around the head of Viṣṇu, and a second nimbus enclosing his body and the remaining figures. The style is a very localized version of the generalised "Pahari" aesthetic; the iconography is basically Kashmiri, but it has been partly forgotten and misunderstood. In terms of the general developments in Vaikuṅṭha iconography observed throughout the Western Himalaya it cannot reasonably be considered older than the 13th century. It provides an excellent example of the indigenous artist's attempt

to understand and depict a deity belonging to an extinct tradition; the North Indian aesthetic and iconography were no longer living forces when this sculpture was made.

Viṣṇu wears a version of the triple-crescent crown of Kashmir, within which rises a high coiffure of Jaṭās, the long rolled locks of hair characteristic of ascetics and iconographically a hallmark of Śiva. The side-faces of Narasiṃha and Varāha, scarcely distinguishable from each other, project from the level of the headband, well above the face of the god, so that they appear as attachments to the crown; this upward displacement of the animal profiles can be seen beginning already in the 7th-century woodcarving of three-headed Viṣṇu on the left-hand door jamb of the Lakṣaṇā temple at Bharmaur, and can therefore be regarded as a local interpretation of the North Indian (originally Mathuran) concept of multi-headedness (in which the extra heads emerge from the angle between neck and shoulder) which was peculiar to the Ravi-Budhal valley from the 7th century onward, and which both pre-dated and survived the better known Kashmiri convention of placing the heads adjacent to the central face. The face of Viṣṇu is elongated, with correspondingly high arching brows and long staring eyes stretching back to the tips of the ears; the length of the nose and ears, and the depth of the lower lip continue this elongation. The vertical third eye, like the hairstyle a characteristic of Śiva, appears in the centre of the forehead. Voluminous ringlets cascade in layers below the side-faces to the shoulders. The front arms rest on the thighs -- Viṣṇu is seated in pralambapāda with his knees played -- and the hands hold what appear to be the disk (right) and conch (left). The 'disk' is in fact a victim of the thorough iconographical misunderstanding from which this image results: it is essentially a combination of the circular lotus, which Viṣṇu conventionally holds by its stalk in this hand, and the spoked disk or cakra which in the later sculpture of Himachal sometimes occurs with only four spokes in the form of a cross, as here and, for example, also at Nirth (see No.24) in the 10th century. The conch, too, has lost its semblance to the real object by having its spiral markings reduced to a series of superimposed rings, so that it now rather resembles a fir-cone. The trirekha on the throat has similarly been misunderstood and reduced to two thick bands encircling the neck like ornaments rather than folds of flesh, below which two very similar plain necklaces appear, followed by two

more pearl-strings. The upavīta traversing the torso is doubled and curves just above the waistband of the dhotī which is shown above the knees. The vanamālā is omitted altogether. The rear arms are stretched -- with the elasticity of limb typical of the local style -- down to the very margins of the stele, nearly to the level of the feet, where they rest upon the heads of two diminutive female figures, each holding a cāmara hanging down from one hand, and a ribbed mace in the other. These accompanying figures are clearly derived, imprecisely and without iconographical understanding, from figures of Gadādevī; Cakrapuruṣa, as one might expect in view of the confused cakra-padma attribute, does not appear.

In contrast to the attenuated anatomy of the god he carries, Garuḍa is a bulky, dwarf-like figure, his hands raised like those of a Kashmiri caryatid to support the feet of his master. The face, with round bulging eyes, a thick continuous eyebrow, a diamond-shaped beak in place of his nose, and festoons of hair, comes close to resembling an asura, which again is typical of the "Pahari" representations of Garuḍa in general. A lotus is placed flat on his head, He has neck-bands and necklaces similar to those worn by Viṣṇu, and a string of chunky beads worn like an upavīta and slung under his belly, which conceals any lower garment. The thick short legs are striped with plumage, and terminate in three enormous toes with pointed claws. The wings, descending from behind the raised arms, are scaly with feathers that are rounded rather than leaf-shaped, as in the Kashmiri tradition. His figure is framed in a ribbed band, perhaps representing a garland.

The low pedestal has lotus-petals on the upper margin, and a simple pointed pattern on the lower.

## 45.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Viṣṇu as Garuḍa-mounted Vaikunṭha, without Lakṣmī; made in the Chamba Valley in the 13th or 14th century.

Nr. 45: Svai / Svaim

BhS Chamba



Vaikuntha, Swai, Hemgiri, Chamba Distt., Himachal Pradesh

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#### 46. D. Ref.:

#### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU MIT LAKṢMĪ AUF GARUḌA

Stein: 68 x 31 x 11

6(?) Hande

Koh, Chamba tehsil (Ravi-Tal), Himachal Pradesh [BhS Chamba]

#### 46.1 DESCRIPTION

This appears to be one of the earliest surviving images in Himachal of three-headed Viṣṇu accompanied by Lakṣmī and riding on anthropomorphic Garuḍa. The style clearly derives from Kashmir, but the sculpture represents a point of departure for a number of later Himachal images, of similar iconography but in the local style of the hill-country

(see Nos.37 from Baijnath, 41 from Chamba, 28 from Naggar, 31 from Dasal. in the Kangra, Ravi and Vyas Valleys). As this sculpture is so manifestly a copy of a Kashmiri original made in the Chamba area, it can be assumed that this iconographic type spread from there to the Kangra and Vyas valleys in the course of the 11th to 13th centuries.

The piece is unfortunately eroded and badly damaged; in its present form it consists of two fragments, recovered at different times from Koh and now joined together. The arms and attributes of Viṣṇu on the right-hand side are missing.

Viṣṇu is seated in lalitāsana above anthropomorphic Garuḍa, the right leg hanging down, the ankle and instep of the left foot resting on Garuḍa's head. Lakṣmī stands on his left, leaning against his arm.

The crown of Viṣṇu is the triple-peaked type with a thick jewelled headband. The profiles of Narasiṃha (right) and Varāha (left) emerge horizontally and well clear of the shoulders from the sides of the central face. They are large, clearly differentiated animal profiles, copied from an imported Kashmiri original; they are not derived from the more abstract local style of the Ravi Valley which is seen in the Chetradhi doorframe (No.51) and the Hari Rai metal image (No.42).

The ear-rings are small circular kuṇḍalas of floral design. The upavīta hangs straight down the left side of the torso: its lower curve is lost because the fracture-line occurs at waist-level. The vanamālā is omitted. The right hands and arms are lost. On the left, the rearmost arm is raised behind Lakṣmī's head, and the hand can be seen holding the mace upright. The second left hand is placed, in a most tender gesture, on the back of her head. A third arm extends downward behind Lakṣmī and the hand is seen at the edge of the stele near the feet, resting on what may be a diminutive seated figure.

Lakṣmī stands on a small projection, perhaps intended to be a lotus, protruding from behind Garuḍa's left shoulder. She stands in a relaxed posture with her weight on the right leg and the left ankle crossed over the right. Her arms are damaged, but the left appears to have been lowered, the right raised in the abhayamudrā. She appears to

wear anklets, armlets, bracelets, a single jewelled necklace, and a low pointed tiara of the kind worn by the Gandharan city-goddesses (Tyche; nagaradevtā); long hair, or more probably a cloth head-covering, falls to her shoulders. A long, thick rolled vanamālā of Kashmiri type passes through the crook of her left arm and loops across her ankles. Her head and shoulders are turned slightly toward Viṣṇu, near his Varāha-head, and on a level with the god's central face. She is intended to be seen as leaning back against the outstretched left arms of Viṣṇu. The half-standing, half-leaning posture recalls the position of Pārvaṭī adjacent to multi-headed Śiva in the 4th-century image from Rang Mahal in the Bikaner museum.

The stocky but well proportioned figure of Garuḍa, has a low crown. The face is nearly obliterated, but traces of the large round eyes and the beak-like nose can be detected. He wears a simple necklace, armlets and bracelets, and a long upavīta. He is a two-armed figure, without the extra pair of hands that were added in later images to support the feet of Viṣṇu, His left hand supports an amṛta-kalaśa in front of his chest, while the right hand steadies it at the side; this gesture re-occurs in the later image at Baijnath (no.37). His legs are birdlike, tapering to three claws. Behind him, his feathers, in the shape of leaves, curve downwards to the base, and also upwards to support the god and goddess above him.

The base has a pot-like form, the neck of which represents the seed-case of a lotus whose petals hang down around the bulbous lower part.

## 46.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents three-headed VIṢṆU (since the original which inspired it was almost certainly an icon from Kashmir, the four-headed Vaikuṅṭha is probably intended) in Kashmiri style, seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa with Lakṣmī standing at his side. It was made in the Ravi Valley near Chamba in about the 10th century, and represents the arrival there of a Kashmiri icon-type which later spread to the Kangra and Vyas valleys, where it was made in the indigenous style up to the 14th century and probably later.

Nr. 46: Koh  
BhS Chamba



Visnu, Koh, Chamba, Tehsil, Himachal Pradesh

#### 47. D. Ref.:

#### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (FRAGMENT)

Stein: 19 x 21.5 x 7.5

Chamba District -der genaue Fundort ist unbekannt- (Ravi-Tal), Himachal Pradesh [BhS Chamba]

#### 47.1 DESCRIPTION

This piece is a damaged stone bust, the upper part of a three-headed Viṣṇu image having no fourth face on the back of the nimbus. Very few details are preserved on this fragment. The central face is obliterated, and the left side-face (which would have represented the profile of the Varāha-avatāra) is lost.

However, the triple-peaked crown, the large diamond-shaped ear-ornaments enclosing a smaller diamond surrounded by round gems or pearls, and above all the large abstract forms of the Narasiṃha profile, which are all in evidence on this fragment, are features of the wood-carving style exemplified by figures on the doorframe of the Śakti-Devī temple at Chatradhi (No.511 and also of the metal image in the Hari Rai temple at Chamba (No.42). It can be dated to the 10th century or slightly later. This fragment therefore provides evidence for the existence of multi-headed Viṣṇu images in the indigenous Ravi Valley style being produced in stone, as well as in wood and metal, at the time when images were also being made there in the Kashmiri style (No.46).

## 47.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Stone bust, part of a three-headed VIṢṆU (probably intended as four-headed Vaikuṅṭha) made in the Chamba region in the 10th or 11th century, in the local Ravi-Valley style.

Nr. 47: Ravi-Tal

BhS Chamba



Visnu, Chamba Distt., Himachal Pradesh

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## 48. D. Ref.:

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (FRAGMENT)

Stein: 21.5 x 23 x 12

Chamba District -der genaue Fundort ist unbekannt- (Ravi-Tal), Himachal Pradesh [BhS Chamba)

#### 48.1 DESCRIPTION

This is a late bust of three-headed Viṣṇu. The chest and most of the central face are severely damaged. The profiles of Narasiṃha (right) and Varāha (left) are preserved, along with the neck, part of the crown, and a fraction of the nimbus. The animal profiles slope downward in the Kashmiri manner, like the profile of Narasiṃha in No.47, and, despite a clear degeneration in the earlier style, signs of the abstract treatment of volumes in these animal-faces still linger. The crown was triple-peaked, and the nimbus was carved with a lotus design. The central face has elongated ears with large jewelled ornaments hung from the lobes. The neck is stretched and ringed (the late misunderstanding of the trirekha), and there is a small beaded necklace. The remains of a cruciform keyūra-ornament are seen on the left upper arm.

#### 48.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Stone bust of three-headed VIṢṆU, a late version of the 10th-century types (e.g. No.471) which were probably intended to represent the four-headed Vaikuṅṭha of Kashmir in the indigenous Ravi-Valley style of Chatradhi and Chamba (Hari Rai bronze). This piece appears to date from the 13th century or possibly later.

Nr. 48: Ravi-Tal

BhS Chamba



Visnu, Chamba Distt., Himachal Pradesh

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#### 49. D. Ref.:

#### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU AUF GARUḌA

Holz: ca. 90 x 120

10 Hände

Vordere Giebelspitze, Lakṣhnā-/Lakṣanā-Devī-Tempel, Bharmaur/ Brahmapura (Brahmor) (Budhal-Tal), Himachal Pradesh

#### 49.1 DISCUSSION

This woodcarving, on a flat-based, trilobate slab of deodar wood, represents Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa. It has been erected behind a triangular frame with a large trilobate section cut away. This frame is erected on a separate wooden beam, carved with nine figures. The apex of the triangle is fitted into the gable-end of the temple, but the angle is more acute than the pitch of the roof: the intervening space has been inexpertly filled by the insertion of two long beams, of which that on the left is too

short and has had to be supported on a wooden block. The trilobate shape of the cutaway in the frame does not exactly match the size or proportions of the somewhat smaller Viṣṇu panel. What appear to be loose pieces of wood can be seen in the gaps between the two apparently serving as ties or packing. It is doubtful whether the triangular frame is original to the temple, and the Viṣṇu panel is clearly also a separate piece that was inserted in to the frame later; both are presumably from other temples of the same pitched-roof style though of slightly different dimensions. Goetz suggests as much (1955: 66, 84-85, 101), theorizing that the metal Narasiṃha once stood in a wooden temple having the Viṣṇu panel on its facade.

In his book, *The Early Wooden Temples of Chamba* (Leiden 19 publishes mostly photographs taken by Ghulam Nabi, Jean-Philippe Vogel's photographer, during the latter's tours of the Chamba region between 1902 and 1908, as Vogel is careful to mention in his Foreword (*ibid.*, ix), and as Goetz acknowledges, adding that many of Vogel's negatives had been lost in India during Partition (*ibid.*, xiii), No close-up illustration of the Viṣṇu panel on the Lakṣaṇa-Devī temple appears, either in this book or in Vogel's work. although there are detail photographs of interior details such as pillar capitals. Goetz writes that he did visit Brahmor during a protracted stay at Chamba in 1939: this appears to have been his only visit to the village (*ibid.*, xi), and his descriptions of the iconography of the images there were not published until some fifteen years later. On the other hand, all Vogel's notes, "especially detailed notes on Brahmor, Chatrarhi and Marul-Udaipur", were placed at Goetz's disposal (*ibid.*). Based presumably on his experience at Brahmor in 1939, Goetz emphasizes the difficulties in identifying the iconography of the figures on the facade, "for the snow and rain of thirteen centuries have utterly corroded even the resistant deodar wood, so that only the stronger fibers of the carved surface remain. Thus, from some distance the figures, deeply carved, appear quite distinct, but if one approaches in order to study the details, the definition becomes more and more indistinct" (*ibid.*, 75). This is certainly true; and it applies not only to the doorframe and pediment, but also to the Viṣṇu panel ensconced high under the eaves of the gable. Nevertheless, his description of the doorframe is curiously vague as regards iconography. On the inner śākhā, he recognises one figure

which "seems to represent a three-headed diva, another Vishnu with human, boar and lion head, and a third possible Sūrya"; while of the figures on the other rūpaśākhā, he claims that "they are so badly damaged that they can no more be recognized" (ibid., 76). It is difficult to explain why during his examination of this doorframe Goetz should have failed to notice such figures as six-headed Brahmā, Durgā with her lion, and Durgā Mahiṣāsurmardinī. They are identifiable despite the condition of the wood. These oversights unfortunately suggest that his apparently precise, yet erratic descriptions of the figure on the Viṣṇu panel -- which is awkwardly located, as severely eroded as the door-jamb, and always in poor light (since it faces north across the narrow valley, never receiving direct sunlight, and is overshadowed by the protruding eaves)) -- should be treated with a degree of caution. For many years, scholars have had only the rather poorly reproduced plate in the 1955 publication (PL.II), and Goetz's exceedingly sketchy description, at least partly based on Vogel's notes from the turn of the century (the notes, that is, of an excellent epigraphist, not of an art-historian), from which to assess the iconography of this temple facade. Krishna Deva's description of the Viṣṇu carving, for example, published as recently as 1991, appears to be based on an interpretation of Goetz's descriptions (Encyclopaedia of Temple Architecture II.2, Delhi 1991:100): "...a figure of 12-armed Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu seated on Garuḍa (a typical specimen of ninth-century Kashmir art)". Compare this passage with Goetz 1955:66 "At Brahmor the upper gable of the Lakṣaṇā Devī temple is a characteristic Kashmiri product", and 1955:77 "Viṣṇu, with three faces (boar, human and lion) amidst a mass of ringlets, once had twelve arms [sic]...", and 1953, repr.1969:134 "... Vishnu in his Kashmiri aspect as highest godhead three-headed and fourteen armed [sic], in a trifoliated arch in the best style of Martand and Avantipur".

I was able to study and photograph this Viṣṇu panel at Bharmaur at close quarters by standing on a ladder placed against the gable. On the proper right side of the face, below the crown rim and behind the ear, which is where the profile of the Narasiṃha-head would normally appear if present, only long coils of hair are to be seen, descending diagonally to the right shoulder. The head of Narasiṃha, however, is not placed there but higher, emerging from, the level of the rim of the crown; and the same

applies to the Varāha-head on the proper left.

My observations do not confirm Goetz's view that this figure of Viṣṇu has twelve (according to his 1955 description) or fourteen (in his 1953 article, reprinted in 1969) arms. In my observations, there are ten arms. An iconographical comparison with another ten-armed Viṣṇu figure from Kashmir now becomes possible. The attributes of ten-armed Viśvarūpa on the 10th-century Devsar frame (No. 02 in this Report) are the following. Padma and śaṅkha are held in the two front hands, and two others rest on the heads of personified cakṛa and gadā. The remaining six attributes have to be divided into three pairs. These are khaḍga and khaṭvāṅga, sruk and pustaka, and two disks representing the sun and moon.

The Bharmaur wood-relief has the same number of hands, according to my observations, and in six of them Viṣṇu probably holds the same attributes (padma and śaṅkha, personified gadā and cakṛa, and the two disks). The remaining two pairs are different, although there is a possible similarity in one point, viz. that one of Viṣṇu's attributes is paired with what might be a Śaiva symbol: sword and khaṭvāṅga in the Devsar bronze, parasol and possibly the triśūla in the Bharmaur wood-panel.

The image as I observed it consists of the following elements.

#### **49.1.1 DESCRIPTION**

Viṣṇu is seated in pralambapādāsana above and behind anthropomorphic Garuḍa, who is flanked by two standing figures. The axis of the main central arch thus consists of Garuḍa surmounted by Viṣṇu, and the remainder of this arch is filled with the many arms and attributes of Viṣṇu, including two accompanying figures. This is flanked by two additional figures in graceful and energetic dancing postures, placed in the lobes of the arch.

Garuḍa is represented as a stocky but not corpulent figure with two arms and the tapering legs of a bird, a fold of cloth hanging between them. The arms are lowered, the

forearms held out nearly horizontally with the hands supporting Viṣṇu's feet. The head is large and rounded, with protruding eyes: the beak-like shape of the nose is not detectable. The hair is arranged in a flat jaṭābhāra, bound across the middle and looping down at the sides. From the ears hang large vṛttakuṇḍalas, lying diagonally between the ear lobes and the shoulders. The plumage takes the form of long tail and wing feathers, spreading diagonally upward from behind his legs and hips, passing behind the two standing figures within the main arch, and extending out to the dancers at the extremities of the side-arches. Photographs taken from ground level do not show the majority of these details, because at that angle the edge of the beam below the panel obscures them.

Viṣṇu is seated behind Garuḍa's head with his knees splayed and slightly raised to the sides. The folds of the lower garment can be seen on the thighs, and its hem appears below the knees. The upavīta is shown hanging vertically from the left shoulder to the left thigh. The face is oval shaped, and the eyes are half or fully closed; the remainder of the facial features are damaged. The headband below the crown can be seen to consist of horizontal lines on the sides of the head, with short vertical incisions on its underside apparently representing the hairline. Some motif, now damaged, originally appeared at the centre of this band. Above it, the crown consisted of three oval elements with detailed ornamentation, now blurred and broken, on the central one. The ear lobes are long, with pierced slits from which ornaments of indeterminate shape but modest size hang down to the shoulders. Long braids or coils of hair hang diagonally from the crown rim, behind the ears, to the shoulders.

The question of the multi-headedness of the Viṣṇu figure has been settled on the basis of two sources: (1.) my own observations at Brahmapura, where I stood on a ladder at the height of the gable-panel, and (2.) a detailed study both of my own photographs and of the best available professional photograph, taken from the level of the courtyard, from the archives of the American Institute of Indian Studies in Varanasi. The large carved areas adjacent to the central face of Viṣṇu, although severely weathered, in that position can only represent side-heads. The profile on the proper left is shaped like the

head of the Varāha, and is tilted upward as in the Mathura representations of three-headed Viṣṇu. The snout, eye, and whiskers can be seen. The larger object on the proper right is no longer recognisable beyond doubt as the head of a lion, but its size accords with the usually fairly massive depiction of the Narasiṃha face opposite that of the boar in the Mathura images. The upward angle of the Varāha-head suggests that this image of Garuḍa-mounted Viṣṇu, although in concept probably stemming Kashmiri iconography, still retains elements deriving from Mathura. This could argue for an early date, but the connexion with Kashmir is against this. The retention of Mathura influence in the depiction of the side-heads could equally well be the result (a) of early stylistic factors being preserved for long periods in the isolation in these remote mountain areas, or (b) of influence from the Gurjara-Pratīhāra areas of North India, chiefly Kanauj, where the upward angle of the side heads (in images of Viśvarūpa) was retained.

The attributes are somewhat better preserved and can be identified. The objects held in the most prominent positions, that is, in the hands raised on either side of the heads and crown, are the chatra or ātapatra (parasol) on the proper right, and either the tridaṇḍa (it has a pronounced V-shape, unlike the triśūla) or a miniature tree (since the three prongs are leaf-shaped) on the proper left. On either side of these, somewhat lower, there are two disks, representing the solar and lunar symbols that occur in the hands of Viṣṇu in Kashmiri art (cp. the Viśvarūpa at the apex of the Devsar bronze frame, No.02 above). Each is held by the lower rim in one of the hands raised behind the uppermost pair. Below these, there are two more pairs of arms. The upper two must have held the bow and arrow, since the curve of the bow, tightly coiled at the top, is clearly visible in the proper right hand; this is unusual, of course, the dhanus usually appearing in the left hand. The lower two arms are stretched downward to the sides, the left hand holding the disk, and the right holding the top of a ringed mace. These weapons, two of Viṣṇu's primary emblems, appear immediately above the heads of two small figures standing to either side, as Goetz describes (1955:77), and who therefore represent the personified weapons, disk and mace (Cakrapuruṣa and Gadā-devī). These figures lean backward to look up at the deity, as in the Viṣṇu compositions of both Kashmir and Himachal. Each raises the hand which is closer to Viṣṇu toward the

face in the vismaya-mudrā, the other being lowered to hip-level and holding the long handle of a cāmara against the shoulder, the yak-tail hanging down over the elbow. Viṣṇu's remaining two hands, at the front, are lowered on to the thighs: the right hand appears to have held a round padma by the stalk, while the left lies palm-upward to support an indistinct object which was probably the śaṅkha. The image thus seems to have been ten-armed, holding the following symbols (numbered from front to back):

Right	Left
1. padma	śaṅkha
2. gadā(-devī)	cakra(-puruṣa)
3. dhanus	cāpa
4. disk	disk
5. chatra	tridaṇḍa / tree.

Reading these from front to back, the first two pairs of hands therefore hold the customary symbols of Viṣṇu (śaṅkha, padma, cakra, gadā), the third pair holds the customary weapons, bow and arrow, and the fourth pair holds the sun and moon symbols which are not unusual in the northwestern iconographic context. But the brahman's parasol and the ascetic's forked staff, or tree, are unusual and specific to this image. Both could be emblems of Vāmana, the brāhmaṇa - Dwarf incarnation of Viṣṇu. In most sculpture the chatra is his customary attribute as a member of the priestly class, but in iconographic theory so is the staff, the daṇḍa (here, perhaps, the tridaṇḍa), which marks him as a sannyāsin, an ascetic who has renounced the world. The Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa (3.85.54d) describes Vāmana as daṇḍin, possessed of a staff, not defining which kind of ascetic's staff is intended, but making it his primary identifying attribute, since the parasol is not mentioned. In the description of the giant form of Viṣṇu which grew from the dwarf, in the next section of the same text (Vdh.3.85.55b-57b), the ascetic's staff is still included among the attributes of Trivikrama (daṇḍa: ibid. 56a), which may be of significance in identifying the figure on the Bharmaur wooden panel.

If this emblem is not a forked staff but -- in view of the leaf-like shape of the 'prongs' -- a tree, on the other hand, then it would represent the pārijāta-tree which Kṛṣṇa, riding on Garuḍa, stole from Indra's heaven. This interpretation explains the presence of Garuḍa as Viśvarūpa's mount in the Bharmaur image. The story is told in Viṣṇupurāṇa 5.30.28ff., at the end of which Indra refers to the victorious Kṛṣṇa as Viśvarūpin (ibid., verse 78) -- the creator, destroyer, and sustainer -- to Suffer defeat at whose hands is no shame. In the sequel (Viṣṇupurāṇa 5.31.14- 20), the purāṇakāra ties in the Viśvarūpa aspect of Viṣṇu with Kṛṣṇa as the plunderer of Indra's heaven and the thief of the hypnotic pārijāta-tree. He terminates the Naraka story with an etymology of the name Viśvarūpa: Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa brings the women of Naraka to his city of Dvārakā, and marries them all. They number 16,100 and so Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa assumes this number of different forms (rūpa) at their respective weddings. During the nights at Dvārakā, Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa (here given the epithet 'begetter of the world', jagatsraṣṭā), sleeps in all their houses at once; thus it is as universal lover and husband that he bears the name "Universal Form" (Viśvarūpadharo hariḥ). The note of sensuousness introduced into the Brahmapura icon by the dancing figures placed in the side-arches might thus be explained. The image would therefore represent the gigantic form of Viṣṇu through the allusion to Trivikrama and simultaneously his universal form through the allusion to Kṛṣṇa the thief and universal husband in Indra's heaven and at Dvārakā.

It is clear that the image, without Lakṣmī has an intimate connection with the Vāmana-Trivikrama and Kṛṣṇa-Viśvarūpa incarnations, since the attributes of the Dwarf/Giant and of the Multi-formed Subduer of Indra are held up in the highest pair of hands. The side-heads of the Narasiṃha and Varāha incarnations iconographically conform to this identification, for the multi-headedness means that the image represents Viṣṇu either as Vaikuṅṭha in a magnified form, or as Viśvarūpa. In view of the identification proposed above for the ten-armed Kashmiri figure from Devsar (No.02), which is also located at the apex of a large composition, and since the pārijāta-tree appears as one of the dominant emblems, I am inclined to think that Viśvarūpa was intended. This is not the destructive Viśvarūpa of the Bhagavadgītā, however, but Viśvarūpa the Universal Lover

and Cosmic Creator.

The tendency in the iconography of Kashmiri Viśvarūpa to incorporate the powers of incarnations and other deities (in the Devsar Viśvarūpa, No.02, these are Hayagrīva, Śiva, and possibly Brahmā) is therefore seen at work also in this Bharmaur image, though only two Vaiṣṇava aspects, Vāmana-Trivikrama and Kṛṣṇa-Viśvarūpa, are involved here.

Iconographically, the Bharmaur image must be derived from Kashmiri iconography, and it can therefore not be dated earlier than the mid-9th century, when the Vaikuṅṭha icon was first established, and is probably considerably later, late 9th century at the earliest. The surviving evidence from Kashmir clearly suggests that the Viśvarūpa image, (10th century at Devsar) was derived from the Vaikuṅṭha image (9th century at Avantipura). This panel may not thus be as much as 200 years later than the doorframe below it (ca. AD 700).

## **49.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION**

The image represents ten-armed Viśvarūpa, the gigantic form of the cosmic god being implied by the incorporation of Vāmana-Trivikrama and Kṛṣṇa Viśvarūpa iconography, riding on Garuḍa. The icon is derived from imagery originating in Kashmir, but the specific iconographic formulation may be peculiar to Brahmapura.

Brahmapura, late 9th century.

## **49.3 LITERATURE CITED**

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Vr. 49: Bharmaur Brahmor (Brahmapura)

Laksana-Devi-Tempel, Giebelfeld



Visvarupa, Laksana-Devi-Tempel, Bharmaur, Himachal Pradesh

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**50 D. Ref.:**

**DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Holz: 40 x 18

Linke Seite der inneren rūpaśākhā am auberen Turrahmen, Lakkhnā- / Lakṣaṇā-Devī-Tempel, Bharmaur (Brahmor) / Brahmapura (Budhal-Tal), Himachal Pradesh

## 50.1 DESCRIPTION

The wooden doorframe at the entrance of the Lakṣaṇā-Devī temple at Brahmapura in its present form has two rūpaśākhās (see DIAGRAM), constituting the third and fifth of a total of six Śākhās. The outer rūpaśākhā may not be original to this doorframe, as the uppermost figures have been shortened to accommodate the lintel. The inner rūpaśākhā, however, appears to be in its original position. The third deity from the base on the left-hand side of this represents three-headed Viṣṇu.

The figure stands in an ābhaṅga posture, with the hips deflected to the left and the torso to the right, on a high lotus-pedestal. An arch-shaped element above the head originally represented the foliage of a tree. The wood has been severely worn down by exposure to the weather, so that only the most deeply cut of the original forms remain. Nevertheless, the elongated, almost attenuated aspect of this figure derives essentially from the style itself.

Of the clothing, ornaments and attributes very little can now be seen. The vanamālā, of which only a fragmentary detail remains, between the right arms and the body, is shown with a central spine from which spring feather-like leaves; the outline of the garland below this point can be seen hanging straight down beside the right leg and looping sharply well below the level of the knees (it appears to pass behind the legs, which I presume to be a quirky effect of the weathering). A long garment seems to hang behind the legs and under the right arms, almost like a Buddhist robe, an effect that is heightened by the remains of a transverse line running from the left shoulder to the right side of the torso. A long staff or similar object seems to be held in one of the right hands; all other attributes are lost. The head is much elongated, as is the crown; both have suffered damage and no individual details remain. The crown appears to have been of the high triple-peaked variety, and tabs project to the sides at the level of the

rim. Below them the long hair characteristic of Viṣṇu images is shown in two ridged layers, one falling straight down behind the ears, the other curving out over the shoulders. No doubt the weathering has simplified this but the strong impression remains of a heavy and formal coiffure somewhat resembling a judge's wig. The misshapen remains of what appear to have been large circular ear-ornaments hang beside the throat.

From behind the mass of hair, below the tabs of the crown, two small animal profiles, scarcely recognizable, project horizontally. They are so high above the line of the shoulders, and so far below the top of the crown, that their appearance is as startling as that of the very late images of Himachal in which these side-heads project from the sides of the crown (see No.45, 12th/13th century) is the Varāha-head of a damaged three-headed Viṣṇu moulded in relief on a terracotta plaque, of Gupta date, now in the Mathura museum (see T. S. Maxwell, *Viśvarūpa*, Delhi 1988: Pl.45); it has the same curious air of unreality, the same incised lines around the throat, and -- unusually for the boar-head in an early image -- it projects from the face of Viṣṇu at the same abrupt right-angle. (In Gupta art, the boar-head usually emerges from the junction between Viṣṇu's neck and shoulder at a forty-five degree angle, depicting the characteristic upward lunge of the Varāha as he rescues the earth from the ocean, which is how he is depicted in his cult images; the horizontality of the head on the terracotta plaque was probably caused simply by the exigencies of the square frame in which the Viṣṇu image is shown.) This single comparison does not, of course, prove an immediate connection between the terracotta art of Gupta Mathura and the early woodcarving of Brahmapura: but the close iconographical similarities between Gupta imagery and the earliest three-headed Viṣṇu sculptures of the Himachal region (see above, Nos.23 and 34 at Nirth and Prini in the lower Sutlej and upper Vyas valleys) do suggest that portable artifacts in terracotta or stone were carried into these Western Himalayan valleys from Mathura, and probably elsewhere, as early as the 6th and 7th centuries, and that it was these, rather than large-scale icons, which provided the models for the temple images carved in the local style from wood or stone. The peculiarities of the miniature art might then be expected to manifest themselves on an expanded scale in the northwest, as in the case

of the lion and boar heads of this Viṣṇu.

It might be noted here that four of the six deities shown on the jambs of this rūpaśākhā are three- or six-headed (Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Skanda), indicating the early predilection in this sub-Himalayan region for the multi-headed forms of the north Indian gods. Some kind of selectivity was evidently being exercised in the early formation of Hindu temple-cults in these remote valleys, even if it was based merely on the assumption that deities with multiple heads were more powerful than others. Intense multiplication of a given feature is seen also in the repetition of auspicious motifs on the lintel crowning the inner rūpaśākhā (eight Vidyādhara bearing seven crowns) and on the facade, which has ten mithuna couples, eleven surasundaris as pillar-figures, ten gaṇas, and seven seated figures -- all in long colonnades, ranged one above the other. This intensity of multiplication is not normally seen in the figural sculpture on north Indian stone temples of the 6th and 7th centuries, where it is particular geometrical motifs which are more often repeated to build up architectural forms. In this context, it would perhaps be erroneous to assume that there existed at Brahmapura, Nirth and Prini in the 6th and 7th centuries a cult of three-headed Viṣṇu which had some specific religious significance of the kind that one would expect it to have in, say, Mathura of the 5th century or Avantipura of the 9th century. There is no evidence at all for the existence of an avatāra cult or a pañcarātra doctrine influencing the iconography of the early wooden temples of the Ravi and Budhal valleys. The cultural cause behind this generalised predilection for multiple and multiplied forms in these valleys is a matter which cannot be dealt with by art history, since we have no art-forms from this region which are earlier than the local versions of Hindu concepts from north India.

The suggestion in this weathered image that it represents Viṣṇu dressed in a Buddhist robe is equally difficult to explain. If the combination of such different iconographies is too bizarre to be the result of mere oversight, what was the intention behind it? If one regards the Buddhist robe purely as an emblem of asceticism, or at least of celibacy, its meaning here may become clearer. The appearance of erotic couples on the austere rock-cut architecture of Buddhist monastic buildings, the juxtaposition of sensuous and

ascetic figures on Hindu temples, and the integration of chastity-symbolism with erotic imagery (the erect phallus of Śiva is the supreme example), all indicate the preoccupation of the Indian mind the earthly power or the senses and simultaneously with the spiritual power of the denial of the senses. Knowledge of one heightens the perception of the other's intrinsic potency. The symbolism of the Lakṣaṇā-Devī doorframe expresses this same ideology in its repeated depiction of gracefully entwined couples on the facade and the upright figures of isolated deities on the doorframe. The two worlds of power complement each other at the temple's entrance, the point of transition from physical to spiritual realities. The robe of Viṣṇu is thus probably to be seen as the robe of sannyāsa, the abandonment of the world of the senses, rather than specifically as the tricīvara of the Buddhist order. It may well be that the north Indian (and, from the 8th century onward, the Kashmiri) ability to embody spiritual ideals in sensuous forms was an aesthetic too sophisticated for the valley cultures of the Western Himalaya in the 7th century. On the other hand, they would have been able clearly to see the connection between celibacy and spirituality, a concept already known to them through the Buddhism emanating from Gandhara. Cloaking the body of a Hindu god in the robe of a Buddhist world renouncer would for them satisfactorily have symbolised the god's spiritual nature. We see the same emphasis on celibacy and asceticism in the unusual attributes of Viṣṇu on the panel at the apex of the facade (see No.49).

## 50.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

A three-headed form of VIṢṆU, based on north Indian (Mathuran) prototypes, created in Brahmapura in the 7th century in the local style, apparently with an element of borrowed Buddhist iconography.

LAKSANA DEVI TEMPLE, BHARMAUR  
ICONOGRAPHY OF THE DOORFRAME

**Upper lintel:**

vidyadhara couples with floral crown in centre

**Lower lintel:**

single vidyadharas, each carrying a floral crown and a continuous garland, with a single crown at centre

5	- ? - corpulent male figure	SIVA three-headed, with bull	SKANDA six-headed, with mayur:	MAHISASURAMARDINI
4	- ? - standing female figure not crowned	VISNU standing, three-headed	- ? - crowned male figure with animal vahana	- ? - standing female figure not crowned
3	- ? - standing male figure not crowned	BRAHMA standing, three-headed	DURGA standing, with lion	- ? - standing male figure not crowned
2	- ? - standing male figure crowned	YAMUNA	GANGA	- ? - standing male figure crowned
1	GANA squatting	GANA crouching	GANA crouching	GANA squatting

Nr. 50: Bharmaur / Brahmor (Brahmapura)

Laksana-Devi-Tempel, Tūrrahmen

## 51. D. Ref.:

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Holz: H. 40

4 Hande

Linke rūpaśākha des inneren Turrahmens, Śakti-Devī-Tempel, Chatradhi (Budhal-Tal), Himachal Pradesh

#### 51.1 DESCRIPTION

This image of three-headed Viṣṇu is the same size as that on the Lakṣaṇā Devī temple at Brahmapura (No. 50), and appears on the same side of the doorframe, but is here raised to the highest location on the jamb, above Durgā Mahiṣāsoramardinī.

Since the doorframe here is inside the temple, it is much better preserved. It is clearly complete and not built up of assembled elements from two different doorways, as is the Brahmapura doorframe. In view of the close similarities between the two, this doorframe at Chatradhi must have been copied (with iconographical adjustments) from the Brahmapura doorframe after the latter had been assembled in its present form. One must therefore expect the Chatradhi frame to be considerably later than the Brahmapura version; although most art-historians assume them to be virtually contemporary (c. AD 700 and AD 710, for example), there must in fact have been a far longer period of time between them.

The statement --

"The same craftsmen were undoubtedly responsible for the carving on this temple and at Brahmaur; the carving here [at Chatradhi], however, shows greater elegance and fluidity and may be a decade later, from the latter part of Meruvarman's reign, c. AD 710." (Krishna Deva, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*, 11.2, Delhi 1991:102)

-- is certainly wrong.

The image of three-headed Viṣṇu on the Chatradhi doorframe is iconographically and stylistically far more advanced than its counterpart in Brahmapura (No.50). There is no question here of a Buddhist or sannyāsin's robe: Viṣṇu wears a knee-length dhotī with a triple-folded waistband and central pleats, encircled by a folded scarf across the thighs which is looped on the left side. His torso is bare, with the upavīta cord hanging vertically from the left shoulder and curving slightly in at the waistband. The god stands under the foliage of a tree in a confident ābhaṅga posture with his weight on the left leg, his face turned slightly to the left, and his right shoulder higher than the left. The right foot is turned out to the side. The vanamālā is represented in the same way as at Brahmapura, with a central string and feathery leaves, but here it loops across the lower legs in a continuous curve, not at a sharp angle. The body-ornaments consist of large ornamental keyūras with a jewelled peak reaching to shoulder-level, a solid-looking necklace with pendant disks, and chunky diamond-shaped ear ornaments edged with round gems.

The front right hand is held palm-outward in front of the abdomen and holds the long stalk of a large lotus flower, shown from the side with drooping petals and a prominent pericarp. The left front hand, which must have been held forward at about waist-level, is broken off. The rear right arm is lowered, the hand resting on the base of an inverted mace, ringed and studded, the head of which rests on the ground behind the out-turned foot. The rear left hand, with all the fingers extended downward, rests on the upper rim of a very large, stands angled away from Viṣṇu. Its periphery is edged with small projections, and it has thick, petal-shaped spokes.

The central head of Viṣṇu is tilted to the left, and the face is half-turned in that direction. The features are bold, with a projecting chin, divided lower lip, long nose, and prominent, fully opened eyes. The hairline is indicated by a row of short curls on the brow beneath the thick rim of the crown, which is damaged. The crown has three pointed prongs edged with curling tendrils and containing a diamond-shaped jewel

above a square gem outlined with pearls. In place of tabs, small flower-shaped ornaments project from the sides of the rim, as in Kashmiri art of the 8th century onward.

The animal profiles on either side -- that of Narasiṃha on the right and of Varāha on the left -- are large, each wearing a single-peaked crown; they slope downward, the jaws resting on Viṣṇu's shoulders above the vanamālā. The volumes of the animal faces are reduced to large, convex abstractions. They are completely different in positioning to the heads of the Viṣṇu on the Brahmapura doorframe (No.50), and are the result of stylistic influence from Kashmir, not Mathura.

In other words, all the elements of these three heads are derived from Kashmiri art, in a style not far removed from that of the four-headed Hari Rai bronze in Chamba (No.42). Ten years (AD 700 to 710) is far too short a span of time to allow for this degree of influence from Kashmir to have changed the visual concept of the avatāra-heads so radically. On the other hand, the size and position of the cakra, and the shape of the lotus, still recall the late-Gandharan style of the Swat bronze (ca. 7th century) in the Berlin museum. The Chatradhi doorframe seems to reflect the beginning of the Kashmiri cultural influx affecting a change in the older Gandharan- and north Indian-based style, and the spearhead of this influence, or one of its earliest vehicles, appears to be a Viṣṇu-cult. The Kashmir influence is only partially felt -- it affects the heads of the avatāras, but not yet the hand-held attributes -- indicating that this doorframe was made during the actual process of cultural change. If the Bajaura three-headed Viṣṇu (No.251) may be dated to ca. AD 800, when Kashmiri influence in the lower Vyas valley was evidently very strong, this Viṣṇu at Chatradhi would have been made earlier, in course of the 8th century, and most probably during Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍa's conquests which would account for the first major southward extension of cultural influence from Kashmir, ca. AD 725 - 750. A date for the Chatradhi doorframe in the mid-8th century, a full generation later than the Brahmapura doorframe, therefore seems realistic.

## 51.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Three-headed VIṢṆU, with anatomy and attributes of post-Gandharan style, but combined with heads of the pre-Avantivarman Kashmiri type. Made at Chatradhi ca. AD 750 by the descendants of the Brahmapura craftsmen during Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍa's expansion of Kashmiri power and influence.

Nr. 51: Chatradhi

Śakti-Devī-Tempel, Turrahmen



Visnu, Sakti-Devi-Tempel, Chatradhi, Himachal Pradesh

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52. D.Ref:

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Holz: H. ca.35

4 Hande

Nischenfigur auf Balken über Holzpfeiler, nordliche Außenwand, Śakti-Devī'-Tempel, Chatradhi (Budhal-Tal), Himachal Pradesh

## 52.1 DESCRIPTION

The woodcarving is located on the outer face of a beam on the north side of the Śakti-Devī temple at Chatradhi. The beam, part of the roof of the pradakṣiṇāpatha, was supported by a series of wooden pillars with purnaghata capitals and rectangular abaci. On the beam, directly above the abacus of this pillar, a small trilobate arched shrine was carved, supported by small ribbed pilasters inside the niche, and larger square pilasters on the front, very like the shrines of the peristyle in Kashmiri temples of the 8th and 9th centuries such as those at Martanda and Avantipura.

Within this shrine-niche appears the worn and damaged figure of a four-armed deity, seated with the right foot lowered and the left leg bent outward resting on a support. The upper right hand appears to have held a small cakṛa, and the right front hand, resting on the right thigh, may have held the śaṅkha; the other two hands are lost.

The deity has three heads, apparently, of Viṣṇu with the triple-peaked crown in the centre, flanked by the side-profiles of Narasiṃha and Varāha crowned with single peaks. The image, clearly one of a series originally encircling the temple's pradakṣiṇāpatha at roof level, presumably resembled the two small seated Vaikuṅṭhas in the 10th-century Devsar bronze frame (Nos.03 and 04) from Kashmir. Another very close iconographical parallel is found in the 11th-century seated Vaikuṅṭha from Hinglajgarh (No. 56), which was also a parivāradevatā, though on a larger scale.

## 52.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The carving represents the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha as a seated peripheral deity (parivāradevatā) in a niche resembling the shrines of the peristyle at Avantipura. As a peripheral figure it is similar in concept to the Vaikuṅṭhas of the bronze parikara from Devsar, Kashmir. Made at Chatradhi ca. 9th century.

Nr. 52: Chatradhi

Śakti-Devi-Tempel, Kolonnade



Vaikuntha, Sakti-Devi-Tempel, Chatradhi, Himachal Pradesh

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### 53. D. Ref.:

#### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: H. 45.75

4 oder 6 Hande

Rückwand (Nordwestecke) des Sanktums, Hiḍimbā-Tempel, Mehla (Ravi-Tal), Himachal Pradesh.

#### 53.1 DESCRIPTION

This small cult icon, found in the village of Mehla in Chamba District, has been placed with other stray pieces on the altar of the Hiḍimbā temple, in the northwest corner of the sanctum, to the far right of the brass image of the goddess. Although not severely broken, the features of the central face appear to have been chipped off, and it is in poor general condition due to erosion and scarring of the surface. It consists of a rectangular round-topped stele, on which the image is sculpted, in relief, with a heavy curved base.

The figure of Viṣṇu stands in ābhaṅga to the right, the left-foot slightly advanced. Little of the clothing and ornamentation can now be seen, but enough remains to suggest that the upavīta was worn, together with a dhofī encircled by a scarf tied transversely across the thighs, and the vanamālā looping below the knees. The circular nimbus is carved in the form of a lotus, apparently conceived as having twelve petals. The details of the crown, together with features of the heads, have been obliterated. The right side-face can be recognised as that of Narasiṃha; that on the left would have represented Varāha, though it is somewhat shortened, possibly by breakage. These animal profiles emerge horizontally from the sides of the central face, well above the shoulders, indicating Kashmiri rather than north Indian influence in the iconography, although the lotus-halo probably came from north India (see No.01). The front right hand seems to have held the lotus; the front left is broken. The rear hands rest on the heads of the two diminutive figures, presumably the āyudhapuruṣas, of whom that on the right holds a cāmara upright in the right hand and is probably Gadādevī her head being tilted back to look upward and the left hand raised to her face. The tiny figure of the Earth-goddess emerges from the pedestal between Viṣṇu's feet, half turned to her left.

## 53.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents Vaikuṅṭha, essentially of the Kashmiri type, as interpreted in the Chamba region of the Ravi Valley, but with a lotus-halo probably of late-Pratiḥāra north Indian origin. It is almost certainly to be dated to the 10th century.

Nr. 53: Mehla

Hiḍimbā-Tempel



Vaikuntha, Hidimba-Tempel, Mehla, Himachal Pradesh

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#### 54. D. Ref.:

#### DREKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (FRAGMENT)

Stein: Breite 25.5

Nordbhadranische, Hiḍimbā-Tempel, Mehla (Ravi-Tal), Himachal Pradesh

#### 54.1 DESCRIPTION

This severely damaged, but not eroded fragment of a three-headed Viṣṇu image was found in Mehla village, like No.53, and subsequently placed in the bhadrā-niche on the north vimāna wall of the Hiḍimbā temple. The piece consists of a laterally elongated rounded nimbus engraved in flat relief with crudely shaped lotus petals, against which were carved the three faces of Viṣṇu. The central face, and most of the animal profile to its left, are broken away. The very large animal face preserved on the proper right is not recognisable as that of Narasiṃha, resembling rather the head of a rodent. The side-

face on the proper left was probably intended to be that of Varāha, being more elongated. The elevation of the horizontally projecting animal heads, the cylindrical shape of the crown, and the lotus-halo, leave no doubt that this is part of a locally made image based on the older sculpture in the village (No.53). These two pieces thus represent two periods in a highly localised continuous sculptural tradition based in Mehla as a Vaikuṅṭha cult centre. When complete, the image was probably about 75cm in height, larger than the older version which is now inside the temple (No.53).

## 54.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The fragment is part of a very late image of Vaikuṅṭha, sculpted at Mehla in imitation of an older (10th-century) icon (No.53) of the same type in the village, perhaps as late as the 18th century.

Nr. 53: Mehla  
Hiḍimbā-Tempel



Vaikuntha, Hiḍimba-Tempel, Mehla, Himachal Pradesh

55. D. Ref.:

VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU AUF GARUḌA

Bronze: 23 x 14.5 x 9

4 Hande  
Kashmir (PMMWI # 44)

### 55.1 DESCRIPTION

This small image represents four-headed Vaikuṅṭha in the round, seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa and flanked by his four Śaktis. It was clearly in use for centuries, and is consequently very rubbed, with the result that all detail is lost. This evidently occurred during the time of its use for worship, as it was then incised, very crudely, with new features and ornaments, and the chest and eye-sockets were drilled, probably to receive small gems or silver inlay. In this connexion it is significant that all four faces of Vaikuṅṭha -- including the Kapila face at the rear -- and that of Garuḍa, and all four Śaktis, are equally rubbed, indicating that the form of worship performed entailed touching all these aspects. This was clearly a different ritual from the kind of pūjā offered today before Vaikuṅṭha images (in Chamba), in which the Kapila face is never seen.

Viṣṇu is seated in pralambapādāsana above the shoulders of Garuḍa, his dhoṭī spread over the back of Garuḍa's head and his feet supported by the upturned palms of the latter's awkwardly stretched rear arms -- this difficult arm-position is well portrayed. From the back, the god is shown seated within the upward curve of Garuḍa's tail-feathers. Of Viṣṇu's facial features nothing can now be said. The crown appears to have been of the triple-peaked variety, though even this is uncertain (it might have consisted of three disks surmounted by a pointed ornament) and the main central prong is missing. The heads are surrounded by a nimbus in the form of a flat ring attached to the back of the shoulders. A bracket projecting forward from the top of the nimbus, and another (which seems to have been disguised to look like a piece of drapery) rising from the top of the god's head, supported a small lotus blossom intended to be seen hovering above the crown; this concept of the suspended or hovering lotus was presumably the intention behind the lotus flower carved either flat behind the prongs of the crown, or upright on the surface of the nimbus, in many stone images of Vaikuṅṭha in Kashmir. The Varāha face (on the proper left) retains the flatness of its snout, and also an upward-curving fang, but there remains no other feature to differentiate it from the Narasiṃha head on the other side. The animal heads wear single-peaked crowns, which seem to have been as tall as the central crown.

The rear hands of Viṣṇu are raised toward the mouths of the animal -faces. The rear right hand, in front of the Narasiṃha face, holds a sword point-upward by the blade; the pommel is wedged between the upper arm and the inside of the forearm. The corresponding hand on the left, in front of the Varāha's open jaws, holds an object that today resembles a crescent moon, which may be a smoothed segment of the cakra. The front right hand, held level on a level with the abdomen, appears to have held the padma, though both hand and attribute are now a virtual amorphous mass with crude engraving on it. The front

left, held palm-up in front of the left thigh, supported the śaṅkha, evidently inverted, with its point balanced on the middle finger.

Viewed from the back, the Kapila face appears ringed by the halo, the sides of which (before it was broken on the left) concealed the faces of both avatāras; this isolation of the wrathful human aspect of Viṣṇu from his divine incarnations was common practice in the iconography of Vaikuṅṭha in Kashmir (see Nos.06, 07, 08). The features of Kapila, as already mentioned, are completely effaced: only the remains of the silver inlay in the eyes can still be seen. Horn-like projections appear above the ears, and instead of the usual ascetic hairstyle, the face in this case is surmounted by a crown consisting of three flame-shaped projections, which could also have been the form of the crown worn by the central Viṣṇu head on the front. Each of these crowns, front and rear, conceals the other. The necklace below Kapila's face overhangs the inner rim of the nimbus at its base.

Garuḍa, with a large head set on a powerful body, has the usual avian legs and large taloned feet. His hair appears to have been swept back in two or three curving layers from a central tuft or diadem. His large circular ear-ornaments are preserved, and his thick beaded necklace. His front left hand supports the amṛtakalaśa, the right resting on the lid. His wing-feathers sprout from his armpits on the front and flow back over his shoulders something like a cape, to reappear at the level of his waist, from where they descend stiffly to the sides of the base, ending in points; a third "wing" (evidently a disguised strut) appears at the back, under the tail-feathers, and is anchored to the middle of the rear side of the base: the whole figure is thus supported on a tripod of "wings" at the sides and back. This functional purpose behind the form of the wings in Kashmiri images was evidently misunderstood in Himachal, where the wings were copied in the same curious position in stone images and reliefs, although obviously having no supporting function in such cases. Bronzes from Kashmir thus appear to have served as the models for the design of Garuḍa-mounted stone images of Viṣṇu in the valleys of the Western Himalaya. But the wings in this bronze have further ramifications. They also fan out behind Garuḍa's shoulders to support the lower two Śakti figures on either side of Viṣṇu's legs; and a further set of wings spring from Garuḍa's shoulders, further back beneath Viṣṇu's thighs, to support the upper two Śaktis who, because of the arboreal spread of the wings and the manner of depicting the plumage as foliage, appear to be seated in the branches of a leafy tree. The Jayākhyasaṃhitā says that these goddesses should be disposed around Viṣṇu in the four directions (purvādidigvibhāga-sthāḥ, 6.90a), and their symmetrical arrangement in this bronze presumably attempts to show this. The Śaktis appear to be of identical iconography: they all sit with their ankles crossed (baddhapadmāsana in the Jayākhyasaṃhitā, 6.90c), they are turned toward Viṣṇu (devadevasya sammukhāḥ, ibid. Sod), and each holds a cāmara in her right hand, while raising the left to the side of her face. Here it is not the text, but the iconography of the standing figure of Gadādevī the goddess of the mace in Kashmiri Viṣṇu images, which has been followed. The Saṃhitā indeed states that they are all of identical iconography, but describes them as holding the noose and the elephant-goat

(pāsāṅkuśadharā devyaḥ, ibid. 89a) to express their captivating qualities as "ardent students of all the erotic arts" (sarvakāmārthasādahakāḥ, ibid. 6.89b).

The base of the figure consists of a repousse rectangle raised in the form of an eight-petalled lotus, on the prominent pericarp of which Garuḍa stands, and edged with a raised border which projects as a praṇāla (a spout for draining off the water of lustration) to the right.

## 55.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The figurine was a domestic, or at any rate a portable image, regularly worshipped over a long period of time, representing Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha complete with his vehicle, the eagle, and his four Śaktis. Since there are no evident late features, abbreviations or misunderstandings in the iconography, and since peculiarities such as the seven wings and the projections above the crown are not the result of misunderstandings, but have clear functional purposes, the figurine must almost certainly have been made in Kashmir not later than the 10th century.

Nr. 55: Kashmir  
PMMWI Bombay



Vaikuntha, Kashmir

## DREIKOPFGER VIṢṢU

Stein: 39.5 x 45 x 29

4 Hande

Hiṅglājgaḍh, Madhya Pradesh (Indore CM)

### 56.1 DESCRIPTION

The image is carved in relief on a block which formed the principal part of an image-niche conceived as a miniature shrine on a salient (bhadra) of a temple wall; the block would have rested on the pīṭha-mouldings at the top of the temple base, and have been crowned probably with a small chādyā and a triangular pediment.

The two pillars of this miniature shrine divide the relief into three sections, of which the image occupies the central one. The pillars themselves are round, with highly stylized pot-and-foilage bases and capitals. The two outer sections contain a standing cāmaradhāriṇī in a pronounced ābhaṅga posture, and above her an elephant surmounted by a rearing vyāla.

The main panel in the centre shows three-headed ViṣṢu seated in lalitāsana on a large lotus with a triple stalk. He sits with the right leg lowered, the foot resting on a smaller lotus flower springing from the base. ViṣṢu wears projecting jewelled kuṅḍalas, a short heavy necklace and a longer one curving in toward the centre of the chest, a long jewelled upavīta, pointed keyūras, bracelets, an anklet on the right ankle, a jewelled girdle, and a long vanamālā hanging over the thighs and looping well below the level of the lotus-seat.

The raised right hand holds a large mace, the rear left a tasseled disk. The front left hand rests on the left calf and supports an inverted conch-shell; the front right hangs over the right knee, where it appears to have held a kamaṅḍalu (vgl. Nos. und 21 im Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990: two Vaikuṅṭha images at Nīlakaṅṭha, Alvar, Rajasthan).

The central face of ViṣṢu has been almost entirely obliterated; the eyes seem to have been half-closed. The tall crown has been almost destroyed. The relatively small profiles of Narasiṃha (right) and Varāha (left) project from behind the central head, well above the shoulders; they are partly obscured by the ear-ornaments. The animal profiles are clearly differentiated but rendered without particular attention to detail.

The lion-face has a large bulging eye, the boar a more human-looking eye, complete with eyebrow.

#### 56.1.1 HISTORICAL NOTE

The temples at Hiṅglājgaḍh appear to have been built in the 11th century during the rule of the Paramāra dynasty in the area located immediately to the west of the Candella territory, where the Vaikuṅṭha image was well known under this name in the 10th and 11th centuries (s. Nos. 23 and 29 im Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992, at Khajuraho and Kalanjara, both with adjacent inscriptions), and also in the western Candella borderlands (No. 27, *ibid.*) at Thuvon, 225 km due east of Hiṅglājgaḍh. The Hiṅglājgaḍh image represents the spread of the Vaikuṅṭha image from the Candella kingdom westward into a contiguous Rajput kingdom in the wake of the collapse of the Gurjara-pratihāra empire. Although this particular relief shows Vaikuṅṭha as a peripheral god (*parivāradevatā*), perhaps from the temple of another deity, the discovery of an independent cult-image of similar date further to the south, from Pippaliya-Jatti in Garod District (only 45 km south of Hiṅglājgaḍh; see No. 66 below, at Bhanpura), indicates that not merely the iconography, but also the cult, moved south and west from the Candella area in the 11th century.

Hiṅglājgaḍh is known to have been a centre of the Yoginī cult (see Vidya Dehejia, *Yoginī Cult and Temples*, New Delhi 1986: 153-154 and plates). The association of the Vaikuṅṭha image with Yoginī cult has clear implications for the rise of images of tantric goddesses with the side heads of varāha and Narasiṃha such as that at Bijoliam (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992, S.98-110 and Plates 1-9) rather further to the west in the same century.

Needless to say there is no Kashmiri stylistic influence in this sculpture; the immediate influence is Candella. Seated in Vaikuṅṭha of similar iconography as an āvaraṇadevatā is however known in the Western Himalaya (on the pradakṣiṇāpatha of the Śakti-Devī temple at Chatradhi: see No. 52 above) in the 9th century.

## 56.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The relief represents Vaikuṅṭha as a secondary deity on an unknown temple in the 11th-century Paramāra temple-complex at Hiṅglājgaḍh, which was also a centre of the Yoginī cult.

Nr. 56: Hinglajgadth

CM Indore



Vaikuntha, Hinglajdagh, Madhya Pradesh

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**57. D. Ref.:**

**DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (FRAGMENT)**

Stein: 95 x 69

8 Hande

Samalaji, Gujarat (MPG Baroda)

**57.1 DESCRIPTION**

This is a fragment of one of the several early (6th-century - Viśvarūpa images from Samalaji. It should be classed together with Nos. 01, 02, 03 (im Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: S. 18-25) from Samalaji, Ognaj and Kathlal, and with another fragment from Samalaji formerly in the collection of Nirubhai Desai, now in the National Museum, New Delhi (s. T.S. Maxwell, "The Evidence for a Viśvarūpa Iconographic Tradition in Western India, 6th - 9th Centuries AD", *Artibus Asiae* XLIV.2-3, Ascona 1983: 213-220, pl. 1-20).

The persistence of this type of image in N. Gujarat emphasizes the intense religious importance of the cult of Viśvarūpa in this form in the region of its origin; it is this, apart from political events, which must account for the widespread importance that such icons were to have. The Samalaji images mark a very significant turning-point in Viśvarūpa iconography, introducing a new alternative which was widely

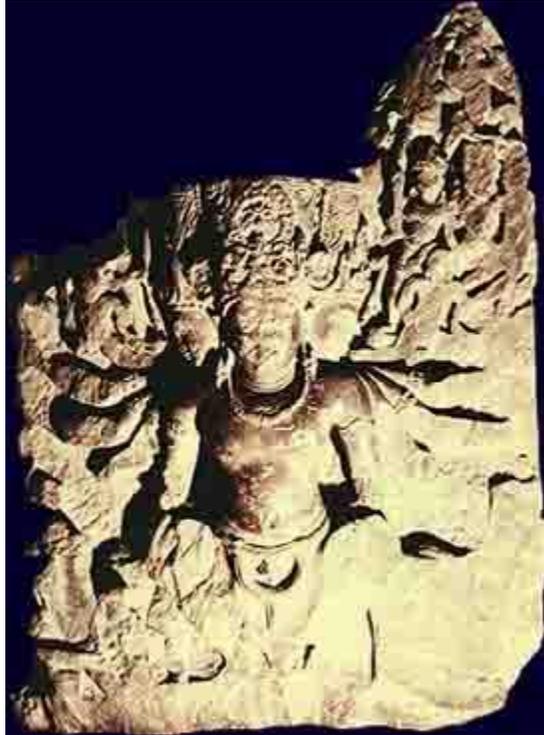
influential in the succeeding centuries (s. T.S. Maxwell, *Viśvarūpa*, Oxford-New Delhi 1988: 186-187, 233, 237 etc.), for example at sites as widely separated as Parel and Deogarh. The impact of the Samalaji school on the sculpture of Malwa in general in the 6th - 8th centuries was noted particularly during my field researches in the region between Bhanpura and Indore in 1993, and also its further repercussions as far south as the Bombay area through the southward migration of the Kalacuris of Mahismati from the Narmada to the Konkan coast in the mid-6th century. The Samalaji conception of the *Viśvarūpa* image had a marked effect, moreover, on the formation of the Gurjara-Pratihāra iconography of *Viśvarūpa* during their migration northeastward toward Kānyakubja in the 8th century, and hence on all subsequent N. Indian versions of this deity.

The present sculpture, damaged and fragmentary as it is, has lost several of the most significant iconographic features of the type, such as the chain of vertically emanating gods above the crowns of *Viṣṇu* and the *nāgas* beneath his feet. Simultaneously heavier and narrower in conception than the image which is still in situ at Samalaji (on *Viśrāmaghāṭ*, s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: No.01), this piece, although bearing many traces of a high polish, may have been left unfinished, as there are several deep chisel-marks remaining untreated on the areas below the arms of the *Viṣṇu* figure.

## 57.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The damaged fragment represented *Viśvarūpa* in the Samalaji conception of the 6th century.

Nr. 57: Samalaji  
MPG Baroda



Visvarupa, Samalaji, Gujarat

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#### 58. D Ref.:

#### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU AUF GARUḌA

Marmor: 58 x 30.5 x 18

20 Arme

Nord-Gujarat (MPG Baroda)

#### 58.1 TYPOLOGY

This is a Solaṅkī-style image in polished white marble. The lion and boar side-heads on three-headed images of this type are usually adequately differentiated, though in flat relief and compressed into the narrow space between the sides of Viṣṇu's central face and the multitude of attributes held in his hands; they are therefore always rather difficult to see, but if studied closely they can be seen to conform to the usual arrangement, the Narasiṃha profile appearing on the proper right and the Varāha face on the proper left. Such images are typically sculpted in high relief on a round-topped stele having a triratha or pañcaratha base. The deity appears above the central salient, and his attributes are ranged vertically at the sides above the flanking recesses, at the base of which a small accompanying figure appears. Sculptures of this kind have been treated in my previous Report (Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992:

p.24 -42, Nos.04 - 10, and p.49 - 61. Nos.13 - 18) concerning the images found in Mahesana district.

## 58.2 DESCRIPTION

Viṣṇu is seated in pralambapādāsana with the knees turned outward, above anthropomorphic Garuḍa, on a cot-like throne, the legs of which are held up by two kneeling devotees, and his feet resting on the thighs of Garuḍa. Both the seated posture and the simple form of the throne closely resemble the same features in the Samalaji Viśvarūpa-images of the 6th century (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: S.18 - 23, Nos. 01, 02; fur Thron-Details s. T. S' Maxwell, Viśvarūpa, Oxford/New Delhi 1988: pl.57, 58). Indeed, this is a 20-armed figure, which identifies it in terms of Solāṅkī-period iconography as Viśvarūpa; the possibility that these two iconographic elements were deliberately copied, in Solāṅkī times, from the ancient images of Samalaji therefore exists, despite the intervening period of some six centuries. The presence of the throne was evidently considered imperative, despite the presence of Garuḍa, so that Viṣṇu appears twice elevated.

The Viṣṇu figure wears a short single-strand pearly necklace, a slightly larger double-strand necklace with a rhomboid central clasp, and a third long necklace which curves inward at the centre of the chest and has attached strings which loop laterally to the sides of the chest in Candella fashion. The śrīvatsa mark appears high on the centre of the chest. The pointed keyūras on the upper arms are turned to the front. Bracelets, anklets, and nūpurās also appear. The vanamālā hangs down in front between the legs, looping across the chest of Garuḍa, and it can also be seen crossing the front upper arms above the elbows and below the keyūras.

The central face of Viṣṇu has large circular ear-ornaments, turned to the front. The crown is a tapering cylindrical kirīṭa rising from a tripartite rim and terminating in a broad flange topped by a semicircular projection. The side-profiles of Narasiṃha and Varāha, by contrast, wear crowns of the karaṇḍa type.

The twenty hands of Viṣṇu display the following attributes or gestures, listed from front to back:

	Right	Left
01.	patākāmudrā	patākāmudrā
02.	khaḍga	kheṭaka
03.	gadā	hala
04.	[broken]	aṅkuśa (?)
05.	vajra	musala(?)
06.	śara	śārniga

07.	bījapūraka	daṇḍa (?)
08.	cajra	śaṅkha
09.	varadamudrā with akṣsmālā	kamaṇḍalu
10.	yoga-	-mudrā

The 15th-century text Rūpamaṇḍana (3.55-58ab) contains the following description of 20 -armed Viśvarūpa:

viṃśatyā hastakair yukto Viśvarūpaś caturmukhaḥ

patākā halaśaṅkhau ca vajrāṅkuśaśarāṃs tathā //55

cakraṃ ca bījapūraṃ ca varo dakṣiṇabāhuṣu

patākā daṇḍapāśau ca gadāśāṭṭopalāni ca //56

śṛṅgo musalam akṣam ca kramāt syur vāmabāhuṣu

hastadvayaṃ yogamudrā vinateyopari sthitaḥ //57

kramān naraṅsiṃhastrīvarāhamukhavān mukhaḥ (58ab)

which means:

"Viśvarūpa has four faces and twenty arms.

His left arms show: patāka/-mudrā/, the plough, conch, thunderbolt,

elephant-goad, arrow, disk, fruit, and the vara (da-mudrā).

His right arms should show: patākā [-mudrā], staff, noose, mace, Strip of cloth [śāṭa: Majumdar translates as 'sword']', lotus, bow, pestle, and

rosary, in this order.

Two of his hands show the yoga-mudrā

He is mounted on Garuḍa

His faces are, in order: man, man-lion, woman (-strī-), boar".

The earlier (13th-century) text, Aparājitapṛcchā (219.28-32). has a

slightly different description of Viśvarūpa:

viśvarūpo mahātejā viśvajñāḥ sṛṣṭikāraḥ

tasya cānukramaṃ vakṣye bhujānāṃ viṃśatis tathā // 28

patākā halaśankhau ca vajrāṅkuśasarās tathā

cakraṃ ca bījapūraṃ ca varo dakṣakareṣu ca // 29

patākā daṇḍapāśau ca gadāsārṅge tathaiva ca

padmaṃ śṛṅgī ca musalam akṣam vāmabhujēsu ca // 30

karayugme yogamudrā vinateyopari sthitaḥ

naraś ca nārasimhaś ca śṛīmukhaḥ sūkarānaḥ // 31

sraṣṭā viśvasya jagato viśvamūrti mahodbhavaḥ

śaktiviṃśatisaṃyuktaḥ kartavyaḥ sarvakāmaḥ // 32

iti Viśvarūpaḥ

This is to be translated as follows:

"Viśvarūpa is of great brilliance, omniscient, the cause of creation; and

I will tell you of his twenty arms, in order.

In his right hands there is: the patākā [-mudrā the plough, conch,

thunderbolt, elephant-goad, arrow, disk, fruit, and the vara [-da-mudrā].

His left arms show: the paṭākā [-mudrā ], the staff, noose, mace, bow, lotus, sṛṅgi (sic), pestle, and rosary.

Two of his hands are in the yoga-mudrā.

He is mounted on Garuḍa.

He has the faces of a man, of Narasiṃha, of Śrī [Lakṣmī], and of a boar.

[He,] the creator of all, the great source and the image of all the world, is to be made [as an icon] furnished with his twenty Śaktis (or powers), granting all desires.

This is [the image of] Viśvarūpa."

The sequence in which the attributes and gestures are named in both texts begins with the rearmost pair of hands, which are held up like standards in the in the paṭākā-mudrā, and ends with the front pair, which are joined in the yoga-mudrā. The arms are thus to be understood as being numbered sequentially from 1 to 10, starting from the back or top and working forward or downward in twos, not proceeding one at a time in the impractical clockwise or pradakṣiṇā sequence.

There follows a tabular comparison between the iconography of the sculpture itself and the two descriptions.

(58=Sculpture No.58; RM=Rūpamaṇḍana; AP=Aparāṅgitapṛcchā.

The yoga-mudrā in tenth position is omitted.)

Right Hands:

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
58.	patākā	khagḍa	gadā	padma	vajra	Śara	bīapūra	cakra	varara+akṣa
RM :	patākā	hala	Saṅkha	vajra	aṅkuśa	Śara	cakra	bīapūra	vara
AP:	patākā	hala	Śaṅkha	vajra	aṅkuśa	Śara	cakra	bīapūra	vara

left hands:

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
58.	patākā	khēṭa	hala	aṅkuśa	musala	Śāringa	daṇḍā	Saṅkha	kamaṇḍalu

RM :	patākā	daṇḍā	Pāśā	gadā	Śāṭā	utpala	Śārṅga	musala	akṣa
AP:	patākā	daṇḍā	Pāśā	gadā	Śārṅga	Śāṭā	padma	Śṛṅgi	akṣa

Both texts and the sculpture agree on the position of the hands at the beginning and end of iconographic sequence (the Paṭākā - and yoga -mudrās). Although most of the attributes listed in the texts can be found in the image (not the padma, which was presumably in the 4th-right position, now broken off, nor the pāśa), their disposition differs. This reflects the usual distance that existed between iconographic theory and sculptural practice, but a brief enquiry into the nature of the relationship between text and image is of interest.

One of the most striking differences involves iconographic balance. The sculptor of the image evidently thought of the Vaiṣṇava emblems and weapons logically, in terms of pairs. Thus he places the sword and shield (not mentioned by either of the texts), bow and arrow, conch and disk, in the 2nd, 6th, and 8th pairs of hands (the object in the 4th-right is unfortunately damaged). In the 3rd pair, the sculptor places the mace opposite the plough, which suggests that this was a matter of aesthetic symmetry, since both are long objects (they are depicted as the most prominent of the attributes). The 1st and 10th pairs consist of one duplicated and one combined mudrā (paṭākā and yoga). The only two attributes between which the symbolic or visual relationship is obscure, therefore, are the bījapūra fruit and the miniature staff in the 7th pair of hands.

The system employed by the artist is both intelligent and sensitive, whereas in the texts every one of these pairs is broken up in a seemingly random manner. This clearly results, in part, from faulty transmission. Thus śāṭa in the Rūpamaṇḍana description of the 5th pair of attributes is clearly a scribal error in copying the word śārṅga from an Aparājitapṛcchā MS. The words śṛṅga and śṛṅgī in the descriptions of the 7th pair might both be mistakes for śaṅkha (opposite cakra) in some earlier text; the sculpture itself retains the older and more coherent relationship between disk and conch as two of Viṣṇu's primary emblems. Similarly, elements of the 3rd and 4th pairs in both texts have probably been transposed: śaṅkha would be more appropriately placed opposite gadā,

and vajra opposite pāśa. It is also indicative of the gap between written theory and sculptural practice that the varadamudrā and akṣamālā are said in both texts to be separately displayed, by different hands, in the 9th pair; in both large and small images it had been traditional to show the boon-granting hand with the rosary strung across the palm for centuries, as seen in the Solāṅkī icon. The placing of the kamaṇḍalu opposite this gesture was also an established factor in sculptural practice, unknown to these texts. (Regarding the published version of the Aparājitapṛcchā, the editor of the GOS edition of the text -- GOS CXV, Baroda 1950 -- Popatbhai Ambashankar linnknd. notes in his Preface that it is written in a highly condensed sūtra-style, that in regard to temple architecture this compression led to the neglect of several important aspects, further that only two MSS were available to him, and that these he found ""full of mutilations, interpolations and glaringly faulty phraseology"", many of which in the iconographic passages dealt with above were evidently not emended.)

Regarding the multiple heads, the total change in the identity of the fourth face on the back of the image (Śrī, the consort of Viṣṇu, in the Aparājitapṛcchā more vaguely, or erroneously, strī in the Rūpamaṇḍana) indicates that the original meaning of the Vaikuṅṭha icon, from which the (entirely theoretical) four-headedness of Viśvarūpa in the śāstras of Gujarat must have derived, had been deliberately altered from a depiction of the demoniac wrath of Kapila to express the serenity of Śrī- Lakṣmī as Viṣṇu's female counterpart. In practice, the rear face was never intended to be seen, all the extant images being high reliefs, not sculptures in the round; a theoretical fourth face was mentioned in the texts, presumably, to lend a dimension of theological depth to the concept of the deity which the icons were intended to express.

The one positive message which comes across both from the sculpture and the two texts, is that the iconography of Balarāma is integrated with that of Viṣṇu to create the image of Viśvarūpa This appears to derive from the very ancient association of Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) and Balarāma (Saṅkarṣaṇa) as hero-cult figures and brothers. Their combined iconography was known as early as the 8th century at Tumain, in the pre-Kanauj Viśvarūpa imagery of the Pratihāras, where the serpent hoods of Balarāma rise

behind the five heads of the god (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: No.20, S.76-86). Despite the radical changes in style, and despite the poor quality of the śilpaśāstric texts, a degree of iconological continuity can therefore be seen to have been traditionally handed down between Central India in the 8th century and Northern Gujarat in the 12th century.

Garuḍa is mentioned but not described in the texts. In the image, he appears as a man with a long (beak-like) nose and pointed beard and moustache, kneeling with legs apart, his hands resting on his thighs, to support Viṣṇu's feet, while the two devotees beside him hold up the legs of the throne.

## 58.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents 20-armed Viśvarūpa in the Solankī understanding of the concept, seated on a throne behind anthropomorphic Garuḍa. Made in N. Gujarat in the 12th century.

Nr. 58: Nord-Gujarat

MPG Baroda

## 59. D. Ref.

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU AUF GARUḌA

Marmor: 60 x 35 x 16

14 Arme

Nord Gujarat (MPG Baroda)

## 59.1 DESCRIPTION

This is a Solankī-style image in polished white marble, a high-relief figure on a round-topped stele with a triratha base. Viṣṇu is seated in lalitāsana on a solid curved throne

above anthropomorphic Garuḍa, his left foot resting against the back of Garuḍa's head, his right foot on the base. The ornaments and crowns are virtually identical to those in No. 58. The seated figures on the recesses of the base are here devotees seated in lalitāsana, their hands joined in the namaskāramudrā.

Garuḍa is anthropomorphic, in the flying posture, his left hand raised to support Viṣṇu's left leg, the right lowered behind the god's right foot. A snake hangs round his neck.

The gestures and attributes displayed by the fourteen hands of VIṢṆU are the following (listed from the top downward):

	Right	Left
1.	pāśa	kheṭaka
2.	Cakra	gadā
3.	daṇḍa	śaṅkha
4.	śara	śārṅga
5.	khaḍga	bījapūra
6.	vara+akṣa	kamaṇḍalu
7.	yoga -	-mudrā

The known śilpasāstras of Gujarat -- the 13th-century Aparājitapṛccā and in the 15th-century Rūpamaṇḍana -- contain no mention of a fourteen-armed Viṣṇu figure. The twelve-armed Ananta form of Viṣṇu, and the sixteen-armed Trailokyamohana, are described, along with the eight-armed Vaikuṅṭha. My researches show, however, that a number of fourteen-armed Viṣṇu images of the Solāṅkī period are still in existence, and that at least two of them are inscribed on the base with the name "Vaikuṅṭha" (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1993: S.3-15). It is therefore self-evident that in actual sculptural practice the Vaikuṅṭha image was fourteen-armed and not eight-armed as the texts recommend. No multi-headed, eight-armed Viṣṇu images have been definitely

documented. This discrepancy appears to be one more example of the social and intellectual distance that prevailed between the brahman-authors of the texts and the guilds of practicing sculptors: śilpa and śilpaśāstra were two entirely separate professions between the practitioners of which there was little or no communication. Such textual descriptions of multi-headed Viṣṇu-forms as exist should, however, be briefly examined here, to see whether they yield results useful in interpreting the fourteen-armed images.

Both texts, though slightly differently worded, describe the same iconography for eight-armed Vaikuṅṭha. I cite from the earlier text, the Aparājitapṛcchā (219.25-27):

pravacyāmy atha Vaikuṅṭhaṃ so 'ṣṭabāhur mahābalaḥ

garuḍasthaś caturvaktraḥ kartavyaḥ śāntim icchatā // 25

gadā khaḍgo bāṇacakre dakṣiṇe 'stracatuṣṭayam

ṣaṅkhaḥ kheṭo dhanuḥ padmaṃ vāme cāstracatuṣṭayam //26

purataḥ puruṣākāro narasiṃhaś ca dakṣiṇe

apare śrīmukhākāro vārāhāsyas tathottare // 27

""Now I will tell you about Vaikuṅṭha the mighty, with eight arms. He should be made four-faced and mounted on Garuḍa by one who desires peace.

On the right his four weapons are: the mace, sword, arrow, and disk. On the left his four weapons are: the conch, shield, bow, and lotus. His front face is man-like, on the right the face of Narasiṃha, at the back like the face of Śrī, and on the left the Varāha-face."

This is a clear and logical description of an eight-armed Viṣṇu image, with the four chief attributes disposed in the four cardinal hands (mace and conch in the upper pair, disk and lotus in the lower), and the super added weapons (sword and shield, bow and arrow, in the correct hands) arranged between them in the 2nd and 3rd pair. The faces

of the animal avatāras are also correctly located (Boar on the left, Man-Lion on the right); the rear face, however, as in the Viśvarūpa description (see above, No.58), remains that of, Śrī (Lakṣmī) instead of Kapila. The fact that few, if any, images of this kind existed in the temples of Gujarat in the Solāṅkī period<sup>1</sup> suggests that the śātric texts were following an older tradition inherited from other texts, rather than drawing their material from their own contemporary culture (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: S.B-.10). Consequently, there is nothing in this description which is of relevance to the fourteen-armed image under examination here.

The twelve-armed form of Viṣṇu, named Ananta is described as follows in Aparājitapṛcchā 219.35-37:

gadā khaḍgaś ca cakram ca vajrāṅkuśavaras tathā

bhujeṣu dakṣiṇeṣv evam astraṣaṭkam tathottamam // 35

śaṅkhaḥ kheṭo dhanuḥ padmaḥ daṇḍapāśau tathaiva ca

bhujeṣu caiva vāmeṣu hy astraṣaṭkam itīritam //36

naraśyo nārasimhāsyah śrīmukhaḥ sūkarānanaḥ

tejaḥpuñjamayaḥ kāryo hy ananto nāma nāmataḥ //37

"His six weapons on the right are: the mace, sword, disk, thunderbolt, elephant-goad, and vara[da-mudrā].

His six weapons on the left are: the conch, shield, bow, lotus, staff, and noose.

He known by the name of Ananta, a mass of light, should be made with the face of a man, of Narasiṃha, of Śrī, and of the Boar."

Here, too, there is no discernable pattern in the arrangement of the attributes, which relates to the fourteen-armed Vaikuṅṭha image. The list of attributes omits mention of

the arrow (to go with the bow on the left).

The Aparājitapṛcchā (219.38-41) description of sixteen-armed Trailokyamohana is as follows:

trailokyamohanam vakṣye saṃsāre mohakāraḥ

sa ṣoḍaśbhujair yuktas tārṣyasthaś ca mahābalaḥ // 38

gadā vajrāṅkuśau bāṇah śaktiś cakram tathā kramāt

varadaś ceti hasteṣu hy astrāṇi dakṣiṇeṣu ca // 39

mudgaraḥ pāśāsārngo ca śaṅkaḥ padmaḥ kamaṇḍaluḥ

śṛṅgī vāmeṣu hasteṣu yogamudrā karadvaye // 40

narāsyo nāraśimhāsyah sūkaraḥ kapilānanaḥ

dviraṣṭaśaktisaṃyuktaḥ kāryas trailokyamohanaḥ // 41

"I will speak of Trailokyamohana, the cause of illusion in the changeable world. He, of great power, has sixteen arms and is mounted on Garuḍa. In his right hands are these weapons, in order: the mace, thunderbolt, elephant-goad, arrow, spear (Śakti), disk, and the varada[-mudrā]. In his left hands are: the hammer (weapon), noose, bow, conch, lotus, water-pot, and a horn (śṛṅgī, for śṛṅga ?).

Two of his hands are in the yoga-mudrā.

One should make Trailokyamohana with the face of a man, of Narasiṃha, of the Boar, and of Kapila, and with twice-eight weapons."

The fourth face of Trailokyamohana, alone of the multi-headed Viṣṇu iconographies described here, is said to be that of Kapila, not of Śrī Lakṣmī Eight of the attributes listed in this description are the same as those which appear in the fourteen-armed image

(mace, bow and arrow. disk, the varada-mudrā, noose, conch, and water-pot), though two of them (mace and noose) are transposed. The remaining six (thunderbolt, elephant-goad, spear, hammer, lotus, and horn) do not appear in the sculpture. Sword and shield are omitted from the text; they appear in the image.

One is therefore forced to conclude that a direct connexion between the symbolism of this image and that employed in the text does not exist.

## 59.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The fourteen-armed form of Vaikuṅṭha in the Solankī sense, made in N. Gujarat in the 12th century.

Nr. 59: Nord-Gujarat

MPG Baroda



Visvarupa, Nord-Gujarat

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60. D. Ref.:

## DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU AUF GARUḌA

Marmor: 87 x 44 x 27

14 Arme

N. Gujarat ( MPG Baroda: Depot #AR.510/519)

### 60.1 DESCRIPTION

Solankī-style image in polished white marble, a high-relief figure on a stole with a slightly curving top and a pañcaratha base.

The front of the central salient on the base is inscribed with the name *Vaikuṅṭha*. Viṣṇu is seated in a *lalitāsana* posture very similar to that seen in No.59, above anthropomorphic *Garuḍa*, on a small curved throne. Again, the ornaments are very much the same as those worn in Nos.58 and 59. The seated figures on the recesses of the base are (royal?) devotees with their hands joined in the *namaskāramudrā*.

The attributes and gestures displayed by the fourteen hands of Viṣṇu are the following (listed from the top downward):

Right	Left
1. pāśa	kheṭaka
2. cakra	gadā
3. daṇḍa	aṅkuśa
4. ----	śaṅkha
5. ----	śārṅga
6. vara+akṣa	kamaṇḍalu
7. Yoga--	-mudrā

The first, second, sixth, and seventh pairs of attributes correspond precisely to those in

sculpture #59. The third pair corresponds partly (staff and elephant-goad, instead of staff and bow in #58). The fourth and fifth right hands are broken off in this sculpture, but the bow in the 5th-left position shows that at this level the bow and arrow were displayed. The missing 4th-right would have held the sword. The chief difference lies in the exchange of the conch for the bījāpura-fruit in #58.

Garuḍa is anthropomorphic, depicted in a stretched flying posture, his left hand raised to support Viṣṇu's left leg, the right is raised under the right thigh, behind the varada-plus-akṣamalā hand.

## 60.2 FINAL IDENTIFICATION

The image represents 14-armed Vaiḥaṅṭha, in the Solaṅkī understanding of the name, seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa and a throne. North Gujarat, 12th century.

Nr. 60: Nord-Gujarat

MPG Baroda



Viṣvarūpa, Nord-Gujarat

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## 61. D. Ref.:

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU AUF GARUḌA

Marmor: 69 x 47 x 19

14 Arme

N. Gujarat (MPG Baroda, Depot # A.2.3/ST.III.29)

#### 61.1 DESCRIPTION

Solāṅkī-style image in polished white marble, a high-relief figure on a stele with a broadly curving top and a pañcaratha base.

Viṣṇu is seated in lalitāsana on anthropomorphic Garuḍa, similar to Nos.59 and 60, on a small curved throne. The ornaments are very similar to those worn in Nos.58, 59 and 60. The standing figures on the recesses of the base may have been conceived as āyudhapuruṣas.

Garuḍa is anthropomorphic, in the flying position with his left hand raised to support Viṣṇu's left leg, the right lowered behind Viṣṇu's right foot.

The attributes and gestures displayed by the 14 hands of Viṣṇu are the following (listed from the top downwards):

Right	Left
1. cauri (?)	kheṭaka
2. cakra	gadā
3. daṇḍa	śaṅkha
4. ----	śārṅga
5. ----	----
6. vara+akṣa	kamaṇḍalu

## 7. Yoga- -mudrā

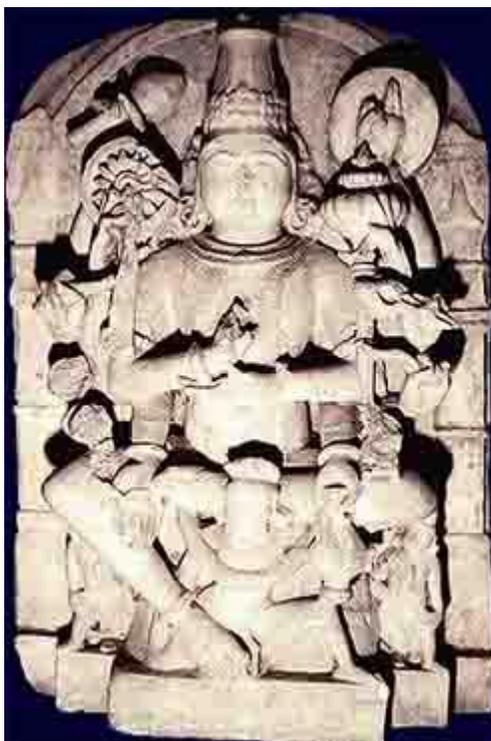
The iconography of this figure was apparently almost the same as that of No.59; the broken 4th-right hand would have held the clutch of arrows, and the missing 5th pair of hands most probably held the sword and bījapūra-fruit. The 1st-right hand at the top, however, here holds an unusual object resembling a large cāmara; this replaces the pāśa (noose) which occurs in this position in No. 59.

### 61.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents a version of 14-armed Vaikuṅṭha, in the Solaṅkī understanding of the name, seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa and a throne. North Gujarat, 12th or 13th century.

Nr. 61: Nord-Gujarat

MPG Baroda



Visvarupa, Nord-Gujarat



Visvarupa, Nord-Gujarat

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## 62. D. Ref.:

### VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 57 x 31 x 17

Arme und Beine abgebrochen

Kashmir (PMMWI Bombay, Depot #73.4)

### 62.1 DESCRIPTION

The sculpture, of grey stone, is broken off below the hips; most of the nimbus and all the arms have also been broken off; the surface of the stone is pitted and scarred, especially on the front.

The deity represented was Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha, standing, with four faces and almost

certainly four arms. The shoulders and heads have a distinct tilt to the proper right, suggesting that the stance was a pronounced ābhaṅga to the right (cp. the Vaikuṅṭha on the doorframe of the Śakti-Devī temple at Chatradhi, No.51 above).

The torso has a triple-strand upavīta descending almost vertically from the left shoulder, curving over the jewelled girdle and passing below the central flower-shaped clasp. A large horned dagger is attached to the girdle in front of the right hip. A short section of the scale-like foliage of the vanamālā is preserved on the right upper arm, curving over the biceps behind a broken portion which probably represented the lotus in the front right hand. Above this, encircling the same upper arm at the level of the armpit, is a pointed keyūra, its peak reaching the curve of the shoulders. The diamond shaped śrīvatsa is carved in the centre of the chest. Above this hangs a short torque-like necklace with floral designs and a central blossom. The ear-ornaments are straight tapering pendants, rectangular at the top above an āmalaka-like circle of jewels or pearls.

The throat is incised with the trirekha; the facial features, especially the nose and mouth, are damaged, the eyes are long and half-closed beneath high arching eyebrows indicated by single incised lines. Short ringlet-curls hang on the brow beneath the rim of the crown; they are parted at the centre. The crown consists of a jewelled band with a lateral diamond-shaped centre piece above the parting of the hair; above this the crown has three pointed disks, ornamented with an intricate design of tendrils radiating from a central oval jewel ringed with pearls; each disk is supported on a plain crescent. The interstices between the crescents are filled by a triangular plant motif. A lotus, now damaged, was carved on the surface of the broken nimbus above the centre of the crown.

The heads of Narasiṃha (right) and Varāha (left) emerge horizontally from behind the ears of the central face, clear of the long ringlet curls spreading along the shoulders. The animal profiles are fairly small, ferocious portrayals, well executed in the style of the 8th-century Bejbehara piece (above, No.05). The manes of the lion and boar heads,

which appear at the points of junction between the ears of Viṣṇu and the animal profiles, are here still differentiated: the lion has large petal-shaped locks, the boar fine bristling hairs. Each profile is surmounted by a flat triangular crown.

The back of the tilted nimbus shows that it was originally round, its somewhat flattened lower rim being indicated by a single incised line behind the shoulders. The pointed keyūra ornament seen on the side of the right upper arm from the front, from the rear is found to be mounted on a triple-wound band curling outward at the ends.

The face of Kapila on the reverse of the nimbus is set to the proper left of the axis and tilted to conform to the attitude of the torso and the line of the shoulders. Although possessed of all the conventional raudra features of Kapila iconography, the treatment of the face is exceptionally refined, greatly reducing the crude, almost primitive aspect usually given to it in the sculpture of Kashmir and Himachal. The tendency to fanciful exaggeration of the demoniac features, so common in the art of the Northwest, rendering the face a rigid and mask-like parody of wrath (CP. No.64. for example), is here restrained so that something of a sympathetic portrayal emerges. The face is still effectively screened from the avatāra-faces by the sides of the nimbus, but the chin is not cleft, the lips are of a normal thickness and closed, not parted to reveal fangs, there is no bristling moustache, and the eyebrows, though sinuous with emotion, are not thick and beetling but done with a single incised line; the cheeks are not bunched up in a tormented grimace but relaxed, giving an air of calmness to the features despite the bulging eyes and broad frowning nose. The long hair is combed back from the brow in the usual manner, leaving a lenticular aperture in the centre, and gathered by a band, above which it rises to a tripartite topknot. This conventional ascetic's coiffure seems to have been executed by a hand less gifted than that which carved the face; it is even set at an awkward angle, tending too far to the vertical to match the tilt of the head. The loose jaṭās however, which are often shown escaping from the restraint of the hair-band and falling straight down beside the face, are here shown as a cascade of curls, further softening the effect. This is a remarkably individual treatment of the krodharṣi theme, all the more unusual on the reverse of a Vaikuṅṭa image. The sympathy evident in the

portrayal suggests an early date, at a time when this face was still to be worshipped along with the other three, rather than, as now, being the secret hidden aspect, which is seldom if ever seen in ritual practice.

For iconographical as well as aesthetic reasons it is therefore regrettable that so fine a sculpture was mutilated.

## 62.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The sculpture was a cult-image of Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha, probably produced in the Bejbehara area in the mid-9th century when the cult was still young.

Nr. 62: Kashmir  
PMMWI Bombay



Visvarupa, Kashmir

## 63. D. Ref.:

### VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 41 x 16.5 x 9.5

Arme und Fusse abgebrochen

Kashmir (PMMWI Bombay, Depot)

#### 63.1 DESCRIPTION

This is a small stone figurine of Kashmiri *Vaikuṅṭha*, intended for use as a domestic or portable icon. It is a late piece, well proportioned and with some good detail workmanship done by an expert craftsman, but remarkably crudely conceived in places. It is in fairly good superficial condition, retaining an original polish, but the feet and lower legs, all the arms, and most of the nimbus have been deliberately broken off.

The figure stands in a slight *ābhaṅga* posture to the right. The triple-strand *upavīta* hangs from the left shoulder, tending toward the navel and conforming to the rather exaggerated curves of the torso (the pectoral and abdominal muscles are far too large and more convex than in Kashmiri sculptures of the 9th century) to loop on the top of the jewelled girdle and follow it round to the right. The girdle has a double row of gems or pearls with a central round clasp edged with more pearls than usual, from beneath which the narrow central folds of the *dhotī* fall, clinging to the inside of the right leg. A straight-horned dagger is thrust at an angle under the girdle in front of the right hip. The loops of the *dhotī* material and of the folded sash across the thighs both appear on the right. The necklace is a widely curving string of beads or pearls with a central pendant -- to which the *śrīvatsa* mark is attached like a jewel. The ear-ornaments consist of diamond shaped clusters of bulbous gems, hanging on either side of the thickly ringed throat. The central face of *Viṣṇu* is carved in a style of great crudity, the upper lip forming a shallow V-shape immediately beneath the nostrils and the eyes appearing bulbous and slitted, giving the face a petulant, sneering expression. Part of the *vanamālā*, of the late type consisting of a central stem with narrow feathery leaves on

either side, is visible on the right shoulder, beneath the Narasiṃha head. The hairline on the brow is a uniform row of pointed ringlets without a central parting. The rim of the crown is an equally uniform series of large round gems, with a blossom at each side. The three crescents above it enclose large, rather clumsy plant motifs: a central diamond shape standing in a half-oval with radiating petals.

The horizontally projecting animal heads are very large and indistinguishable from one another, the earlier abstract treatment being cursorily and poorly imitated. They wear small round crowns similar to the elements of the triple crown of Viṣṇu.

The Kapila face on the back of the nimbus is a fantastic and elaborate mask. The chin is bulbous and cleft, the mouth gaping open to reveal teeth, fangs and tongue. Pointed moustaches curl over the cheeks under the protruding eyes, the frown at the root of the nose is stylised to the point of abstraction, More emphasis is given to the hatched hair-band than to the hair itself, which rises to a featureless knob on the top of the head. Looped jaṭās hang from it and continue as long straight ringlets straight down on either side of the face. The trirekha is here represented as rings even thicker and more extensive than on the throat of Viṣṇu. The ear-rings contain a rough cruciform flower motif and have three pendants, A fringe below the thick lower rim of the nimbus appears to represent a row of jaṭās, similar to the hairline on Viṣṇu's brow.

## 63.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The figure represents the Vaikuṅṭha Kashmiri, made in Kashmir at a time when both the style and the iconography had greatly deteriorated, probably in the 12th century.

Nr. 63: Kashmir

PWMWI Bombay



Visvarupa, Kashmir

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#### 64. D. Ref.:

#### DREIKBPFIGER HAYAGRĪVA

Stein: 103 x 56 x 36

4 Arme

Maṅgalanātha-Tempel, Ujjayini SM Ujjain), Madhya Pradesh

#### 64.1 DESCRIPTION

This late-mediaeval image is carved in a dark-grey stone and represents Hayagrīva, with a horse's head on a human body, seated in dhyānāsana on a featureless rectangular throne, on the front corners of which are two diminutive seated figures. The stele is a plain rectangle. The narrow torso is crossed near the centre by the curving upavīta cord, from which two further doubled cords diverge, looping across the chest.

The vanamālā curves over the crook of the front arms, passes between the legs, and hangs in a long loop on the front of the throne, bisected by the folds of the dhotī, Keyūras, their peaks turned to the front, are shown on the front pair of arms. The śrīvatsa appears as a diamond shape at the centre of the chest. The short necklace has pendant disks or pearls.

The front pair of arms rested on the thighs; both hands are broken off The rear right hand holds the mace, the rear left a tasseled disk. A small figure holding a garland is shown seated above both mace and disk.

The central face of Hayagrīva is damaged but still recognisable as that of a horse. It does not have horse's ears, however, as at Bijoliam (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990: S.98-118), but elongated human ears with pierced lobes from which hang small ornaments. The crown has three levels, of which the upper two appear to consist of coiled jaṭās with a central jewel. The side-faces are human in form, and crowned, but they lack any distinguishing characteristics.

## **64.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION**

The image seems to represent an amalgamation of the Hayagrīva aspect of Viṣṇu with the four-faced Brahmā as a seated sage, perhaps related to the Nara-Nārāyaṇa form of Viṣṇu. The style, as well as the iconography, place this piece in the 12th century at Ujjain, in the time of the Paramāra dynasty.

Nr. 64: Ujjayini

Mahgalanātha - Temple, SM Ujjain



Visnu, Mangalanatha-Tempel, Ujjayini, Madhya Pradesh

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65.

## DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 44 x 30

6 Arme

Fort, Mandsaur (Mandasore), Madhya Pradesh

### 65.1 DESCRIPTION

The relief showing multi-headed Viṣṇu occupies one panel on a square column (142 x 44 x 421, the other panels representing a mithuna couple with Viṣṇu, Gaṅgādhara Śiva, and a second mithuna scene with Śiva Bhairava. The symbolism of the column is thus equally divided between the two supreme gods, each of whom is shown once alone as a cult-figure and once in an erotic scene with his consort. Assuming that the panels are to be viewed in pradakṣiṇā sequence, either Viṣṇu or Śiva could be seen as the

principal deity, In their cult image, each appears in his sustaining role, Viṣṇu as Viśvarūpa with a number of heads above his crown and shoulders, Śiva receiving the personified three rivers (Gaṅgā with Yamunā and Sarasvatī on his head. The equality of status accorded to each of the gods is confirmed by the presence of Gaṇeśa. son of 6va, beneath the Viṣṇu panel, and of Varāha, the incarnation of Viṣṇu, beneath the S5va panel. (These two lower reliefs are now buried.)

The depiction of Viṣṇu derives directly from Samalaji Viśvarūpa iconography, that of Śiva from the panel representing the Gaṅgādhara theme or Elephanta Island, thus confirming simultaneously that Samalaji formed part of the greater Malwa culture-zone to the west, and that the Kalacuri conception of Gaṅgādhara was brought back to Malwa from the Konkan coast in the south by the rulers of Mahiṣmatī This iconographic symbolism could well have a political-territorial intention, showing cult-forms of the supreme gods which were characteristic, at the time, of regions at the western and southern extremities of the Kalacuri kingdom. The column is therefore to be dated between ca. AD 575 and 600.

The relief of Viṣṇu represents the god as in the Samalaji images: with three crowned human heads, seated in pralambapādāsana (the throne and the nāgas are absent), his arms extended, a mass of figures (represented by their heads) above his shoulders, and other figures emanating vertically from his central crown. The main figure of Viṣṇu has a flat rectangular base, as if it were indeed intended to be a copy in relief of a well-known sculpture. The vanamālā loops between the thighs, hanging down nearly to the base. Viṣṇu's side-heads are much smaller than the central face, and their crowns are lower. There appear to have been six arms: two, now broken, rested on or near the thighs, and may have held the lotus and conch; two more were extended with the hands resting on two diminutive flanking figures, probably representing the personified disk and mace; and a third pair held the sword and shield. The sword is preserved, held upright on the right.

Above the sword-point appear seven disembodied heads, all turned toward the heads of Viṣṇu. The corresponding space in the upper left corner is filled with six heads. None of these thirteen heads is crowned, and their hairstyles appear to consist of jaṭās, the rope-like tresses characteristic of religious ascetics. They are given no individual characteristics by which to identify them and, apart from the difference in their number, there appears to be no distinction drawn between those on the left and the right. Their presence here clearly attempts to convey in simplified form the far more sophisticated pattern of overlapping gods and incarnations in the nimbus of the Samalaji Viśvarūpa sculptures. The incompleteness of these abbreviated figures, and the lack of symmetry in their disposition, suggests that this relief was made by a local Daśapura artisan, purely, on the basis of report; it was not copied directly from an original Samalaji work.

Above Viṣṇu's central crown emerges a bust of Hayagrīva with a horse's head, his left hand holding a water-pot and the right seemingly raised in the abhaya mudrā, Above him emanates Narasiṃha with a large lion-head, his hands in the same positions. These two axial figures are clearly intended to stand Par the three deities in this position in the Samalaji Viśvarūpa images, where Hayagrīva occupies the first position, as here, but is followed, in an eloquent expression of cosmic evolution, by Brahmā and then by Śiva.

There is thus no doubt that this is an inexpert copy of one of the famous Samalaji sculptures (ca. AD 550), made near the ancient city of Daśapura (modern Mandsaur) during the eastward spread of the Viśvarūpa cult's renown, no doubt attracted thence by the return of Kalacuri political power from the Konkan coast and the Deccan to western Malwa. The obvious lack of iconographic understanding of the superbly conceived and designed Samalaji images, however, suggests that it was the fame alone of the Viśvarūpa cult on the River Mesvo, not the cult itself (and certainly not the Samalaji guild of sculptors), which by AD 575 had reached the River 6rprl and the city of Daśapura.

## 65.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The relief is a copy made in the Mandasore area ca. AD 575-600, of one of the famous mid-6th century Samalaji images of Viśvarūpa.

Nr. 65: Mandasaur / Mandasore (Daśapura)

Fort, Mandasaur



Visvarupa, Fort, Mandasaur, Madhya Pradesh

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**66. D. Ref.:**

**DREIROPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: 89 x 51 x 17

8 oder 10 Arme

Pippalyā-Jaṭṭī, Garoḍ (Garoḥ) tehsil, Mandasaur District, Madhya Pradesh  
(Sthānīya Purātattva Saṁgrahālaya Bhānpurā [sthāpanā 1943] #597)

**66.1 DESCRIPTION**

Pippalīyā-Jaṭṭī is a village of north-western Malwa on the River Carmanvatī (the modern R. Chambal). Administratively it is located in Garoḍ tehsil (Mandsaur District) which today lies on the east bank of the Gandhisagar irrigation-lake near its southern extremity.

The image is carved in high relief on a straight-sided stele with a curved top and a narrow triratha base. Viṣṇu is shown seated in lalitāsana on a lotus growing on a dense cluster of tendrils, his right foot lowered and resting on a smaller lotus-footstool. The stele is pierced around the sides of his torso, leaving at the back a rectangular aperture with a downward curve at the top representing the lower rim of the nimbus. The central face of Viṣṇu and the figures on the lower right side of the stele have been smashed and all but one of the (eight or ten) arms broken off.

Viṣṇu's body ornaments consist of nūpurās, a rolled waistband to the dhotī with straight knee-length pendants hanging on the thighs, a flat pearl-edged upavīta which hangs straight down from the left side of the chest and loops well below the waist, a broad flat vanamālā like an embroidered band passing over the crook of the surviving left arm and hanging down across the front edge of the lotus-seat, tripartite pointed keyūras worn on the upper arm, a triple necklace and jewelled ear-ornaments. The front left hand was shown hanging over the calf of the raised left leg and holding a large conch-shell, its aperture pointing obliquely downward. The crown of the central face is a tall square kirīṭa with triplicated 'corners and a simple floral device on the front. The side-profiles of Narasiṃha (right) and Varāha (left) wear crowns of the ringed karaṇḍa type, indicating their inferior status; they slope markedly downward but are elevated well above the shoulders. The animals' ears overlap the crown rims. The juxtaposition of the kirīṭa and karaṇḍa crowns, and the overlapping of the rims by the animals' ears, appears first at Khajuraho, in the mid-10th century Lakṣmaṇ temple of the Candella kings (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: S.96-113). A large circular nimbus is centred on the apex of the central crown, its lower rim on a level with the cūḍāmani, so that it backs the crowns but not the faces of the god. The nimbus was originally carved in the form of a fairly complicated lotus, but much of the surface has flaked off, leaving only a semicircle of

seeds around the pericarp and the two outer rings of petals. A small figure of seated Brahmā supporting a large amṛtakalaśa on the front left hand, appears on a flat lotus, its tendrils springing straight out of the surface of the stele, on the right of the nimbus above the Narasiṃha head. On the opposite side sits Śiva, similarly holding a large vase of nectar, with the trident and snake in his upper hands. On the front left corner of the plinth-bhadra a small corpulent figure sits opposite the lotus-footstool, beneath the conch-shell, looking up at the god. On the left-hand recessed section of the plinth stands a two-armed male figure, bejeweled but with an ascetic's hairstyle. The corresponding figure on the right-hand extremity of the base is damaged, but appears to have been female. Their positioning suggests that they are the weapon-personifications Cakrapuruṣa and Gadā-devī but this is most uncertain. The style is angular and the figures lack grace. The top of the stele is rounded to conform to the top of the nimbus, and this arc is flanked by reverse- curves toward the sides, a shape always associated with a late date (here, ca. late - 11th century).

The presence of this cult-image in the vicinity of Mandsaur in the late 11th century indicates the persistence of the Vaikuṅṭha cult in north-western Malwa after its expansion westward beyond the frontiers of the Candella kingdom, which had begun a century earlier.

## 66,2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The sculpture is a cult-image of Vaikuṅṭha made a few kilometres northwest of Mandsaur in the late 11th century.

Nr. 66: Pippalīyā-Jaṭṭī

SPS Bhānpurā



Vaikuntha, Pippaliya-Jatti, Mandsaur Distt., Madhya Pradesh

## 67. D. Ref.:

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Sein: H. ca.100

8 Arme

Sudseite des sudlichen upabhadra, Ostwand, Śṛiṅgāra Cauri-Tempel,  
Cittauḍgadh, Rajasthan

### 67.1 DESCRIPTION

The image is a relief on the wall of the Jaina Śṛiṅgāra Cauri temple on Cittaur fort, placed above the high wall-plinth about 10 feet above ground level. The interior pilasters beside the main west door carry inscriptions, which date the consecration of the temple to AD 1448, in the reign of Mahārāṇā Kumbha; the temple was erected by his treasurer Velaka who dedicated it to Śāntinātha. The Vaikuṅṭha image is located on the south east corner of the structure, facing south, opposite east-facing Brahmā'. Other Hindu

deities integrated into this Jaina context are Viṣṇu and Narasiṃha on the north-west corner, between the west and north doors, and Śiva on the east side of the north-east corner. A number of these parivāradevatā figures are severely damaged.

The post-Solaṅkī style is crisp and workmanlike in execution but the relief is flat and stiff, the anatomy disjointed and expressionless. The iconography is partly carried over from that of the Solāṅkī period, though the posture of the earlier images -- seated on Garuḍa -- has been abandoned. Viṣṇu stands bolt upright in samabhaṅga, wearing ornaments deriving from the post-Candella Solāṅkī style. The side-faces of Narasiṃha and Varāha, compressed between the central head and the raised attributes, are scarcely visible from ground-level, and difficult to distinguish. The attributes held in the eight hands of the god are:

- |            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| 1. musala  | śārṅga    |
| 2. daṇḍa   | akṣamāla  |
| 3. bāṇa(?) | aṅkuśa    |
| 4. cakra   | kamaṇḍalu |

This is an eight-armed figure contemporary with the composition of the Rūpamaṇḍana, so that a close correspondence between text and image might be expected. But its iconography does not correspond to the text description of eight-armed Vaikuṅṭha (3.52-531, nor of course to the passage in the earlier Aparājitapṛcchā (219.24-27); the written and the sculptural traditions thus appear never to have come into contact with each other throughout the whole of the later mediaeval period in Gujarat (11th - 15th centuries).

This lifeless image appropriately enough represents of Vaikuṅṭha in the tradition of Indian temple art, a career, which had begun in Kashmir in the mid-9th century and spanned more than six hundred years in the Western Himalaya and Central and Western India.

## 67.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents VAIKIJNTHA as a parivāradevatā contributing to the iconographic programme of a 15th-century Jaina temple constructed under the last great Rajput ruler of Mewar in his stronghold of Cittaaur.

Nr. 67: Cittaudgadh

Śṛṅgāracauri-Temple



Vaikuntha, Sringara Gauri-Tempel, Cittaudgadh, Rajasthan

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68. D. Ref.:

DREKOPFIGER HAYAGRĪVA

Stein: 43.5 x 28

4 Arme

Nordseite des Westbhadrā, Mira-Tempel, Südwestecke des Kumbhaśyāma-Tempelhofes, Cittaūḍgaḍh, Rajasthan

## 68.1 DESCRIPTION

The 'Meera' temple, still today an active shrine of Kṛṣṇa (like many temples of various dates, it is named after the saintly consort of the Mahārāṇa of Udaipur in the late devotee), stands in the south-west corner of the courtyard surrounding the Kumhhaśyāma (Varāha) temple in the fort at Cittaūr. The image appears on the north side of the central western bhadrā of the "Meera" temple as part of an iconographic programme in which aspects of Viṣṇu predominate, especially on the south and west walls. The west bhadrā, for example, in addition to the present image, has Garuḍa-mounted Viṣṇu (single-headed) on the corresponding south side, and in the cardinal position on its west face, as the main icon, four-armed standing Viṣṇu -- holding the same attributes in the same disposition as in this three-headed image.

The quality of the sculpting is as crude as that in No.67, though the raised left foot of the lalitāsana seated posture lends a slight touch of dynamism in this case. The hands and feet, and also the weapons and the side-heads, are disproportionately large, contrasting with the narrowness of the crowns and of what remains of the central face.

Viṣṇu is four-armed, holding the heavily tasseled disk in the raised right hand and the upright mace in the left; the lowered front hands show the varadamudrā on the right and the inverted conch-shell on the left. The central face, severely damaged, was clearly that of Hayagrīva: the horse's pricked ears overlap the crown rim. The side-faces are in the reverse of the usual disposition, that of Narasiṃha appearing on the left and of Varāha on the right; they are large profiles, clearly differentiated. A tiny kneeling figure, possibly anthropomorphic Garuḍa, with its hands joined in the namaskāramudrā, appears on the base beside Viṣṇu's lowered right foot.

A virtually identical figure, also of very late date, is stored in the locked depot of the Archaeological Survey of India in Cittaour fort (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990: No.11, S.28-29; cp. the Bijoliam figures, ibid., Nos.13 and 14, S.32-35, 98-119).

## 68.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

This is a small image of HAYAGRĪVA with the side heads of Vaikuṅṭha, in the reverse of their usual positions, serving as a subsidiary deity in a mainly Vaiṣṇava iconographic programme. The whole temple may date to the time of Mahārāṇa Kumbha in the 15th century.

Nr. 68: Cittaudgadh

Mira-Temple



Hayagriva, Mira-Tempel, Cittaudgadh, Rajasthan

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69. D. Ref.:

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor: H. ca.100

Nordseite des Maṇḍapadachrandes, Kumbhśyāma-Tempel, Cittaudgaḍh, Rajasthan

## 69.1 DESCRIPTION

This is one of a 'set' of five white marble images (of which four are of relevance here, Nos. 69 - 71; I shall refer to this as #1) which were placed in large shrines on the edge of the roof of the Kumbhśyāma temple in Cittaaur fort when it was repaired by Mahāraṇa Kumbha in the latter part of the 15th century. Due to their elevated situation they are somewhat difficult to study in detail, but on the occasion of my visit in 1993 I was able to make use of a telescopic lens to photograph them. It is possible, and on the basis of their style most likely in my pinion, that they were made at Kumbha's direction expressly for placement on the temple roof; attractive though the idea may be, they do not appear to me to be Solānkī-period marbles retrieved from another, despoiled temple and reinstated here.

Image #1, above the bhadra kakṣāsana on the north side of the maṇḍapa, is seated in lalitāsana with the left foot raised and the right lowered. It is the work of an artist superior, for example, to the sculptor of the standing Vaikuṅṭha on the Śṛṅgāra Cauri temple (above, No.67), but the style is essentially the same. Viṣṇu is shown with the side-heads of the Man-Lion and Boar incarnations, and has twenty arms. The higher attributes especially cannot be positively identified in view of the vertical perspective and the low lintels of the roof-edge shrines. However, the identity of some fourteen of the weapons and gestures can be proposed:

Right	Left
01. patākā-mudrā	patākā-mudrā?
02. --?--	--?--
03. --?--	--?--
04. padma	--?--

05. aṅkuśa	pāśa
06. bāṇa	śārṅga
07. gadā	--?--
08. vajra	daṇḍa?
09. vara+akṣa	kamaṇḍalu
10. yoga-	mudrā

## 69.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Disregarding the textual descriptions of the individual attributes, which as we have seen do not seem to tally with most of the extant images, this twenty-armed figure represents the Viśvarūpa of Solāṅkī iconography.

Nr. 69: Cittaudgaḍh

Kumbhaśyāma-Temple # 1



Viśvarūpa, Kumbhsyama-Tempel, Cittaudgaḍh, Rajasthan

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## 70 .D. Ref.:

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor: H. ca.100

14 Arme

Nordseite des Vimānadachrandes, Kumbhaśyāma-Tempel, Cittaūḍgaḍh, Rajasthan

### 70.1 DESCRIPTION

This is #2 in the series of probably 15th-century marble images installed in shrine-niches on the roof-edge of the Kumbhaśyāma temple in Cittaour fort, placed in the niche on the north side of the sanctum. It has the lion and boar side-heads and fourteen arms:

01. gadā	muḍgara (?)
02. padma	śṛṅga (horn)
03. aṅkuśa	pāśa
04. śara	śārṅga
05. vajra	śaṅkha
06. vara+akṣa	kamaṇḍalu
07. yoga-	-mudrā

The śṛṅga (horn), mentioned in the texts, makes its first unmistakable appearance in this sculpture (2nd-left). In the Aparājitapṛcchā and Rūpamaṇḍana, however, it is described only as an attribute of twenty-armed Viśvarūpa, in the 5th-left position.

### 70 .2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

In view of the side-heads of Narasiṃha and Varāha, and the fourteen arms, this image most probably represents a version of Vaikuṅṭha in the post-Solaṅkī understanding of the name.

Nr. 70: Cittaudgaḥ  
Kumbhaśyāma-Temple # 2



Vaikuntha, Kumbhsyama-Tempel, Cittaudgadh, Rajasthan

**71. D. Ref.:**

**DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṂU**

Marmor: H. ca.100

12 Arm

Westseite des Vimānadachrandes, Kumbhaśyām-Tempel, Cittaudgaḥ, Rajasthan

### **71.1 DESCRIPTION**

This is #3 in the series of probably 15th-century marble images installed in shrine-niches on the roof-edge of the Kumbhāśyāma temple in Cittaaur fort, placed in the niche on the west (rear) side of the sanctum. It has the lion and boar side-heads and twelve arms:

01. gadā	kheṭa
02. khaḍga	pāśa
03. vajra	aṅkuśa
04. cakra	śārṅga
05. śara	daṇḍa
06. varada	śaṅkha

(The yoga-mudrā is not shown.)

This array of eleven weapons plus the varada-mudrā is the same as those in the list given in the Aparājitapṛcchā (219.35-37) for twelve-armed Ananta, though they are differently distributed.

## 71.2 PRELIMINARY

In view of the side-heads of Narasiṃha and Varāha, and the twelve arms, this image almost certainly represents ANANTA.

Nr. 71: Cittaḍgaḍh

Kumbhaśyāma-Temple # 3



Ananta, Kumbhsyama-Tempel, Cittaudgadh, Rajasthan

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## 72. D. Ref.:

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor: H . ca.100

14 Arme

Sudseite des Vimānadachrandes, Kumbhāśyāma-Tempel, Cittaudgaḥ, Rajasthan

### 72.1 DESCRIPTION

This is #4 (N.B.: #5. on the south side of the maṇḍapa is a single-headed and two-armed image of Viṣṇu) in the series of probably 15th-century marble images installed in shrine-niches on the roof-edge of the Kumbha-śyāma temple in Cittaur fort, placed in the niche on the south side of the sanctum. It has the lion and boar side-heads and, like No.70 on the north side of the sanctum, fourteen arms:

01. cakra	hala
02. khaḍga	śārṅga
03. bāṇa	kheṭa
04. śrṅga (horn)	gadā
05. vajra	śaṅkha
06. varada	kamaṇḍalu
07. yoga-	-mudrā'

The ploughshare (hala), symbol of Balarāma Saṅkarṣaṇa, which is an attribute of twenty-armed Viśvarūpā according both to the texts and extant images (see above, No.58. esp. p.70-71). appears here as an emblem of a fourteen-armed Viṣṇu-figure. In the iconography, of Solaṅkī Gujarat. 14- armed 'Viṣṇu is to be identified as Vaikuṅṭha, as we have seen (above. No.59. p. 78 and reference, No.60, p.83. inscription, No.61, p.86 ff): and in 9th-century Kashmir, Vaikuṅṭha (with six arms) can be shown with the serpent-hoods of Balarāma (above, No.08, p.33-35).

There is no doubt, therefore that Vaikuṅṭha was intended here, integrated with Balarāma, in a variation not foreseen by the texts: again, existing iconography shows that actual sculptural practice was more creative and flexible than the texts suggest.

## 72. 2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

In view of the side-heads of Narasiṃha and Varāha, and the fourteen arms, this image most probably represents a version of Vaikuṅṭha in the post-Solaṅkī understanding of the name.

Nr. 72: Cittaūḍgaḍh

Kumbhaśyāma-Temple # 4



Vaikuntha, Kumbhsyama-Tempel, Cittaudgadh, Rajasthan

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### 73. D. Ref.:

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 50.5 x 34.3 (Nische: 94 x 21 / Innen: 56.5 x 34.5)

10 Arme

Sudbhadra des maṇḍapa, Sās-Tempel, Sāsbahū-Komplex, Nāgḍā, Rajasthan

### 73.1 DESCRIPTION

A brief notice of this large relief was given in an earlier Report (Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990: No. 08, S.22-23). A more complete description can now be introduced into this Report following my return to Nagda under more favourable conditions in 1993.

The Sāsbahū temples, as prime examples of the Mahā-Gurjara style identified by Professor Dhaky, date of the late 10th or early 11th century, and are thus connected

stylistically and also iconographically to contemporary works in Gujarat. At about this time or perhaps a generation later, in the first half of the 11th century, Vaikuṅṭha iconography in northern Gujarat was relatively speaking in its infancy (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1992: No.12, Sandera, S.45-48) and much simpler than this highly elaborate image. Only later in Solāṅkī territory did Vaikuṅṭha and Viśvarūpa images reach their full complexity (ibid., S.26-42, 49-63), again demonstrating the historical south-westward movement of the mediaeval Vaikuṅṭha/Viśvarūpa cults out of Central India and towards Gujarat. The Sās Viṣṇu temple at Nagda is one of the most resplendent testimonies to the passage of the Vaikuṅṭha concept through southern Rajasthan circa AD 1000; the Sandera Viṣṇu temple testifies more modestly to its arrival in northern Gujarat shortly thereafter.

The several small shrines surrounding the Sās temple may have been dedicated to the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, according to an ingenious theory propounded by A. J. Gail ("Viṣṇu-Tempel und Avatāra-Tempel als daśāyatana -Komplex? Eine Hypothese zum Sās-Tempel in Nāgḍā, Rajasthan", Berliner Indologische Studien 6, Reinbeck 1991: 101-107). The association between Vaikuṅṭha, bearing the side-heads of two of the animal incarnations, and the Daśāvatāra cult, would thus be hypothetically established in Rajasthan circa AD 1000. This association became definitely established further south, in Gujarat, during the Solāṅkī period. An early Solāṅkī example of this is the small Viṣṇu temple at Sandera, where the outside wall of the sanctum has images of Narasiṃha, Varāha, and Vaikuṅṭha on the three sides (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: No.12, S.46-48); the association is extended in the later Kṛṣṇa temple at Valam (ibid., No.09, S.38-39). The most remarkable instance of the strength of this association, however, is Kadvar: an 11th-century Vaikuṅṭha image was brought a great distance from the northern heartland of the Solāṅkī Vaikuṅṭha cult around Mahesana to Kadvar on the southernmost tip of the Surastra peninsula, and there integrated with the ancient worship of the Ten Incarnations in a temple of the 7th century (see below, No.79).

The presence of Vaikuṅṭha at the Sās temple in Nagda is emphasised not only by the large external relief on the south bhadrā of the hall, but also by the fact that two more

images of Vaikuṅṭha were carved on each side of the sanctum doorframe inside (see below, Nos.74 and 75). This shows that the power of the cult in Rajasthan had by AD 1000 reached a point at which Vaikuṅṭha could be variously conceived, with differing sets of attributes, and assigned to multiple and important locations on the same temple.

His exterior location, on the south bhadra of the maṅḍapa, makes Vaikuṅṭha the first deity of the pradakṣiṇāpatha. Here he takes precedence over the triumvirate of Śiva - Viṣṇu - Brahmā and the accompanying three human avatāras Paraśurāma, Balarāma, and Dāśarathi Rāma on the sanctum wall, and over Garuḍa-mounted Viṣṇu as Gajendramokṣa on the north side of the hall.

His interior location, at the base of the main rūpaśākhā on each side of the garbhagrha doorway, places Vaikuṅṭha at the start of the series of incarnations and deities shown on these jambs: on the left Vaikuṅṭha precedes Varāha, Gajendramokṣa, and Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī; on the right, he precedes Narasiṃha, Vāmana with Trivikrama, and Śiva with Pārvati.

The integration of Vaikuṅṭha with the gods and incarnations in the iconographic programme of the Sās temple is thus complete, on both the exterior and interior of the temple, in a horizontal and a vertical sequence, and in both cases he is placed in the leading position at the beginning of the series.

The external image, on the south salient of the maṅḍapa, is mounted on

anthropomorphic Garuḍa and has ten arms:

- |            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| 01. (bāṇa) | cakra     |
| 02. sruk   | Śārṅga    |
| 03. musala | pāśa      |
| 04. gadā   | kamaṅḍalu |
| 05. khaḍga | śaṅkha    |

The arrow in the uppermost right hand is not shown clearly but the feathered flights of a clutch of arrows are shallowly carved in the recesses of the high relief, above the right shoulder, emerging from the quiver. Three of the primary Vaiṣṇava emblems (mace, disk, conch-shell) are prominently displayed, but not the lotus. Thus, of the usual superadded weapons, the bow and arrows appear, and also the sword, but not the shield. The remaining attributes are the sacrificial ladle of Brahmā, the pestle of Balarāma, and the noose of Yama. The ascetic's waterpot held behind the left knee could, together with the ladle, refer to Brahmā: but directly beneath the waterpot kneels an emaciated ascetic, his ribs showing through his side, bowing with his hands joined in the namaskāra-mudrā, worshipping Vaikuṅṭha. The clear implication of the juxtaposed of kamaṇḍalu and ascetic is that Vaikuṅṭha is revered by the holiest of men.

On the other side of the plinth, in the triangle formed between Vaikuṅṭha's right leg and the pestle standing beside it, appears a second miniature Garuḍa figure in the flying posture; a wing curves up from behind his right arm. He too holds his hands in the gesture of homage, demonstrating that even Garuḍa, greatest of the suparṇas, who carries the Vaikuṅṭha through the heavens on his back, is also -- no less than the mortal ascetic -- a devotee at the foot of the god. (By the same token, of course, the sculpture implies that the withered ascetic, by virtue of his penitential devotion to Vaikuṅṭha, is spiritually akin to the sun-eagle)

The distribution of the hand-held attributes is evidently based on aesthetic considerations at least as much as on iconographic requirements. The aesthetic which is at work here is one of strict division rather than symmetry. All the straight objects (sacrificial ladle, battle mace, sword, pestle, and the concealed arrows) appear in the right hands, while curved or round objects (disk, noose, bow, conch-shell, and waterpot) are grouped on the left. Anything which might have violated this precise division, such as Viṣṇu's lotus in one of the right hands, or the manuscript of Brahmā on the left, is omitted. (The round shield, kheṭa, is also omitted from the left-hand group of weapons, of course, but another notionally round object, Yama's noose, is substituted for it.)

The waterpot is also an emblem of Agni, god of the sacrificial fire. The fire-god himself, as Lord of the South-Eastern Quarter, holding the waterpot on his lowered left hand, stands to the proper left of Vaikuṅṭha, in a shrine-niche at the eastern end of the south bhadra. The noose, in one of Vaikuṅṭha's raised left hands, appears again in the front right hand of four-armed Yama, God of Death but also Lord of the South, in the corresponding niche at the north end of the same salient. The attribution of kamaṇḍalu and pāśa to Vaikuṅṭha in this image therefore integrates him with the directional symbolism of the whole temple, associating him specifically with the protection of its southern side, at the centre of which he appears, and of its south-eastern corner. (Indra and Nirṛti, Lord of the East and Lady of the South-West respectively, appear on the narrow eastern and western sides of the south bhadra; their emblems are not held by the Vaikuṅṭha image. The remaining four directions are ritually protected by images of Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, and Īśāna on the north bhadra; the degree to which their symbolism was integrated into the Garuḍa-mounted Viṣṇu image at its centre is not known, since all but one of the arms are broken.)

When apparently intrusive attributes such as the vajra, pāśa, and kamaṇḍalu occur in the hands of Vaikuṅṭha elsewhere in southern Rajasthan or subsequently in Solaṅkī Gujarat, therefore, they are to be interpreted as directional symbols relating to the original placement of the icons on the temples from which they came.

## 73.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Vaikuṅṭha Viṣṇu integrated with the iconographic programme, and particularly with the directional symbolism, of the Sās temple at Nagda, circa AD 1000.

Nr. 73: Nagda

Sās-Temple, Sudbhadra



Vaikuntha, Visnu, Sas Tempel, Nagda, Rajasthan

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#### 74. D. Ref.:

#### (DREIKOPFIGER) VIṢṆU

Stein: 23.75 x 15 (Nische: 33.5 x 21)

4 Arme

Linke rūpaśākhā, Sanktum-Turrahmen, Sās temple, Nagda, Rajasthan

#### 74.1 DESCRIPTION

This small image was briefly noticed in one of my previous Reports (Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06,1990: No.10, S.26-27). It was re-examined under more favourable conditions in 1993, and on that basis will be further discussed here.

The sanctum doorframe of the Sās temple at Nagda consists of five śākhā's:

01. patravallī, with a standing female figure at the base on each side: 02. nāgāsākhā, with a female lotus-bearer at the base on each side;

03. rūpaśākhā, with Śaṅkhapuruṣa at the base on this side;

04. gandharvaśākhā, recessed;

05. vyālaśākhā, with a male attendant at the base on each side.

The small framed figure under discussion here appears above Śaṅkhapuruṣa and before Varāha, Gajendramokṣa, and Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī on the chief left-hand doorjamb. Downward-sloping protrusions on both sides of the central face were clearly intended to be carved with the features of Narasiṃha and Varāha, as they were in the case of the corresponding figure on the right side of the doorframe (No.75). These minutely engraved details might have been omitted here, in the context of a large and elaborate frame, through an oversight on the part of the artisans, or they could have been damaged, since this image in particular is in poor condition. A comparison of the two figures at the base of the rūpaśākhā shows conclusively that they were both intended to be three-headed.

The figure has eight arms:

01.	bāṇa	padma
02.	gadā(?)	śārṅga
03.	varada	cakra /akṣamālā (?)
04.	khaḍga	śaṅkha

The principle of dividing the attributes into straight objects on the right and curved or rounded objects on the left seems to have held good here, as on the large Vaikuṅṭha relief on the south bhadra (No.73).

The image stands in a straight samabhaṅga posture. At its feet a tiny female figure squats on the proper right, behind the mace, and a male figure with a tall pointed cap on the proper left.

## 74.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The figure represents a form of Vaikuṅṭha associated with the śaṅkha, and with the Varāha incarnation, Gajendramokṣa, and Viṣṇu together with Lakṣmī. Sās temple, Nagda, ca. AD 1000.

Nr. 74: Nagda

Sās-Temple, Turrahmen links



Vaikuntha, Sas Tempel, Nagda, Rajasthan

75. D. Ref.:

DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 23 x 15 (Nische: 33 x 21 )

4 Arme

Rechte rūpaśākhā, Sankturn-Turrahmen, Sās temple, Nagda, Rajasthan

## 75.1 DESCRIPTION

This small image was briefly noticed in one of my previous Reports (Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06,1990: No.09, S.24-25). It was re-examined under more favourable conditions in 1993, and on that basis will be further discussed here.

The small framed figure under discussion here appears above Cakrapuruṣa and before Narasiṃha, Trivikrama together with Vāmana, and Śiva with Pārvaṭī on the chief right-hand doorjamb.

The figure has eight arms:

- |    |         |        |
|----|---------|--------|
| 1. | Khaḍga  | kheṭa  |
| 2. | bāṇa(?) | cakra  |
| 3. | gadā    | śārṅga |
| 4. | abhaya  | śankha |

The faces of two animal incarnations project from the sides of the central head; their features are shown in minute relief but on such a small scale are scarcely to be distinguished from each other. The position of these side-heads accords with the uncarved projections to either side of the central head in the corresponding figure on the left-hand side of the doorframe (No. 74).

The image stands in a straight samabhaṅga posture. At its feet a tiny female figure squats on the proper right, behind the mace, and a male figure on the proper left. They are not shown in the attitude of worshippers.

The principle of dividing the attributes into straight objects on the right and curved or rounded objects on the left seems to have held good here, as in the corresponding panel on the left (No.74) and in the large Vaikuṅṭha relief on the south bhadra (No.73).

There are only two clear iconographical differences between the two rūpaśākhā images: that on the left replaces the round shield with a long-stemmed lotus: and the left-hand figure displays the varadamudrā with one of the right hands, while the right-hand one shows the abhayamudrā. They both appear to hold the mace and conch-shell, and both are armed with the sword and bow.

## 75.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents a form of Vaikuṅṭha associated with the cakra, and with Narasiṃha, Vāmana and Trivikrama, and Śiva together with Pārvatī.

Nr. 75: Nagda

Sās-Temple, Turrahmen rechts



Vaikuntha, Sas Tempel, Nagda, Rajasthan

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## 76. D. Ref.:

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor: 57 x 28 x 15 (Stele: 66 x 41 x 15)

urspr. 10 Arme

Privatsammlung, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

#### 76.1 DESCRIPTION

This is a battered and severely damaged Solankī-style Viṣṇu image in white marble. It is in private hands in Ahmedabad, but registered with the Government of India. I signed a statement (13.09.1993) confirming that I had photographed it.

The image consists of a round-topped stele with a triratha base, originally having two rectangular wings, against which a figure of Garuḍa-mounted Viṣṇu appears in high relief. The right wing of the stele has been cut off and lost. The top of the stele is damaged on the right, as is the crown, face, every arm of the Viṣṇu figure, and the head of Garuḍa.

The central face and crown are smashed. The lion and boar-heads are accurately differentiated and crowned with karaṇḍa-mukuṭas. The attributes are either lost or unrecognisable, with the exceptions of pāśa in the uppermost right hand, kheṭa in the uppermost left, and the varada-or possibly vyākhyāna-mudrā displayed by one of the lower left hands, which rests on the left leg; the front right arm is extended across the abdomen displaying half of the dhyāna-mudrā, which was originally probably part of the yoga-mudrā. There appear to have been ten arms originally. Anthropomorphic Garuḍa, in the flying posture, supports Viṣṇu's legs with his hands. Above the noose in the raised right hand appears seated Śiva holding the trident and snake; above the shield on the left is seated Brahmā, bearded and single-headed, holding up the two sacrificial ladles. Three rectangular panels on the surviving wing of the stele frame: Varāha, Vāmana, and Rāma Dāśrathi; above them is a stylised pūrṇaghaṭa pillar-capital.

Two short male figures stand on the pratibhadras of the base in an atibhaṅga posture, one on each side of Viṣṇu; they appear to be the equivalent of dvārapālas.

The total height of Viṣṇu is 57cm including the original extent of the crown, the height of his face 7cm, making this roughly an aṣṭatāla image, despite its being shown in a seated posture; this proportion was achieved by lengthening of the torso.

The style is that of about the 13th century.

## 76.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

A Solāṅkī-style image of twelve-armed ANANTA, probably dating to the 13th century.

Nr. 76: Nord-Gujarat

Ahmedabad



Ananta, Privatsmmlung, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

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77. D. Ref.:

## DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor: 68.5 x 61 x 29 (Stele mit Sockel: H. 86.5)

urspr. 20 Arme

Said to be from Banaskantha District, N. Gujarat (Ketch Museum, Bhuj)

### 77.1 DESCRIPTION

This is a large Solāṅkī-style image of Viṣṇu. It is severely damaged, especially on the right side (facing) where nearly all the arms are lost, and the stone is discolored. A separate fragment probably comes from the top right part of the stele; a hand in patākā-mudrā appears in relief on its surface. The stele has a pañcaratha base.

The side-faces of Narasiṃha and Varāha are represented as narrow profiles, accurately differentiated but not prominently shown.

The proper right hands hold the following attributes:

01. patākā-mudrā

02. khaḍga

03. gadā

04. bāṇa

05. --?--

06. pāśa (?)

07. śṛṅga (?)

08. cakra

09. varada-mudrā

## 10. yoga-mudrā

The image is iconographically unusual in that anthropomorphic Garuḍa is shown in the flying posture head-on, not from the side. Unfortunately the head has been smashed. His arms are outstretched behind the legs of Viṣṇu, whose feet rest on Garuḍa's thighs. Garuḍa appears on the central bhadra of the base, his feet on the first offsets, and two small devotees or dvārapālas on the second offsets. Viṣṇu seems to be seated on a straight-sided throne behind Garuḍa, as usual in Solāṅkī images.

## 77.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

In view of the lion and boar side-heads and the twenty arms, the image must represent Viśvarūpa in the Solāṅkī sense. It appears to date to the 13th century.

Nr. 77: Nord-Gujarat

KM Bhuj



Visvarupa, Banaskantha Distt., Gujarat

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## 78. D. Ref.:

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor: 86.5 x 47 x 11.5 (Stele: H. 106)

16 Arme

Siddhapur, Siddhapur taluka, ),fahesana District, Gujarat (Watson Museum, Rajkot)

### 78.1 DESCRIPTION

The iconography of this image has been treated in a previous Report Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: N0.16, S.66-57).

Three remarks can be added here, following my visit to Rajkot in 1993.

1. The method of representing Garuḍa head-on, instead of from the side, is seen also in the image of Viśvarūpa at Bhuj (No. 77).
2. The seated posture of Viṣṇu is a version of that seen in the 6th-century Viśvarūpa images from Samalaji; it here replaces the usual lalitāsana.
3. The height of the Viṣṇu figure being 88.5 cm, and the height of his face 12.75 cm, this is a saptatāla image, despite being shown in a seated posture.

### 78.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Sixteen-armed TRILOKYAMOHAṆA, probably to be dated to the 14th century.

Nr. 78: Siddhapur

WM Rajkot

## 79. D. Ref.:

### DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 71 x 38 x 29

8 Arme (?)

Āsanapattākaebene, sudlicher Ostvorsprung, Varāha-Tempel, Kadvar, Gujarat

## 79.1 DESCRIPTION

The image has been cemented to one of the front dwarf-pillars of the east salient on the south side of the stairway, in front of the entrance to the so-called Varāha temple at Kadvar, near the southernmost point of the Surāṣṭra peninsula. It is battered, severely damaged, and eroded, the face, all the arms, and the right leg being lost.

The sculpture is a cult-icon of Vaikuṅṭha seated in lalitāsana on a cylindrical throne above anthropomorphic Garuḍa. It is sculpted in high relief on a flat stele, the top of which appears to be broken off around the three heads. The side-faces of Narasiṃha and Varāha, clearly differentiated, are narrow and slope sharply downward beside the central head. The crowns are severely damaged; but the difference between the high kirīṭa on the central head, and the karaṅḍas on the side-heads, can still be seen. Viṣṇu wears a circular, multi-strand necklace, another which curves in at the centre of the chest, with attached strings to the sides, and a multiple girdle of the Solāṅkī type. The style, therefore appears to have been typical of the Solāṅkī period.

Iconographically, however, there are certain unusual features. There appear to have been eight arms, all broken off. In the area of the abdomen, there is no evidence of the front pair of hands having been held in the usual yoga-mudrā. The front right hand was held forward on the right thigh. The right leg, which was lowered, is broken off above the knee; the left leg was doubled up with the foot resting on the right thigh, well clear of Garuḍa's head. The vanamālā looped across the upper chest of the Garuḍa figure.

Garuḍa wears the same pectoral jewelry as Viṣṇu. He was shown pacing to the proper left in the flying posture: the left leg, with its foot on the pedestal, is now broken off, as are the arms.

An attenuated figure, apparently female, stands on the base to either side of the throne.

This Vaikuṅṭha image, probably of the mid-11th century, was no doubt brought to the already ancient (7th-century) temple at Kadvar because of the daśāvatāra cult to which it was dedicated: Vaikuṅṭha, with the side-heads of two of the animal-incarnations, seems in Gujarat to have been sometimes associated with the daśāvtāra-cult (Valam, with the avatāras round the inside sanctum walls, for example). The integration of Vaikuṅṭha with the avatāra-cult seems also to have occurred also, perhaps half a century earlier, in the S& temple at Nagda in southern Rajasthan: the complex may have been dedicated to the avatāras, according to a theory proposed by A. J. Gail (see above §73.1).

The tendency to associate the cults of Vaikuṅṭha and of the Daśāvatāras evidently led to the extension of the Vaikuṅṭha cult from the north of Solankī Gujarat where it first took root, around Anahilavada (Patan, Mahesana District), to Kadvar on the southernmost point of the Surastra peninsula. This southward extension of the cult appears to have taken place fairly early in the Solankī period, if the unusual iconography of the Kadvar image (eight arms and the absence of the yoga-mudrā) is an indicator of early date.

## 79.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image represents Vaikuṅṭha, probably eight-armed, without the yoga-mudrā. It is likely to have been made in or near Kadvar itself, since the stone appears to be local and is certainly not the white marble typical of the northern areas. Kadvar, ca. AD 1050.

Nr. 79: Kadvar

Varāha-Temple



Vaikuntha, Varaha-Tempel, Kadvar, Gujarat

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## 80. D. Ref.:

### VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Metal: 34.5 x 24 x 6.25 (H. des Sockels: 6)

4 Arm

Kashmir (NM New Delhi #80.1210)

### 80.1 DESCRIPTION

This metal image, in some respects an impressive piece was acquired by the National Museum, New Delhi, in 1980 with the assistance of Dr. Jawaharlal Bhan, who published it in 1985 ("Chsturānana Vishṇu of Kashmir in the National Museum, New Delhi", *Lalit Kala* 22: 9-13). I disagree with many points in Dr. Bhan's article but this is not the place for a full treatment of the matter. The date attributed to this piece, 8th century, is quite definitely wrong in terms of conventional scholarship, and its origination in Kashmir

might also be called into question. With the cooperation of my colleague Dr. R. C. Sharma, Director General of the National Museum, I was able to study this image in detail during my brief visit to Delhi in September 1992, between my journeys to Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. Although iconographically the bronze represents Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha, it has many stylistic peculiarities of which are not found in the icons which I have studied, either in Kashmir or Himachal Pradesh. I have many doubts and reservations about it, and have therefore decided to omit it from my final analysis of Vaikuṅṭha cult-images. It is registered here for the sake of completing the Report.

## **80.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION**

Iconographically the bronze represents Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha.

Nr. 80: Kashmir

NM New Delhi

