

# THE Viśvarūpa(Visvarupa) ICONOGRAPHIC TRADITION

North Indian Images of Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu

5th - 13th Centuries CE

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

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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT

Vaikunṭha-Viśvarūpa Vol. IV : The Spring and Fall Campaigns of 1994 and 1995 - East-Central, Northwestern, and Western India, and Bangladesh

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## KATALOG

DES ARCHAOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

**T. S. Maxwell**

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**01. D. Ref.:DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: 129 x 71 x 34; Viṣṇu H. 65; Garuḍa H. 44

ursprunglich 14 Hande

Bilhari (Puspavati), Madhya Pradesh

## 01.1 DESCRIPTION:

### General

In Later Kalacuri inscriptions Bilhari, in the Jabalpur /District of Madhya Pradesh, in the Baghelkhand region, was known as Puspavati; it possessed temples, at least one large water reservoir, and a fort, which was destroyed during the Mutiny in 1857. The area is famous for the quality of its stone; Puspavati probably supplied the stone for the temples and sculptures of the Later Kalacuri capital, Tripuri (modern Tevar) on the Narmadā.

The Viṣṇu-Varāha temple at Puspavati / Bilhari appears to date to about the 17th century. It was erected on the site of the Later Kalacuri Nohalesvara temple which was erected by Nohala, the wife of Yuvarajadeva I Kalacuri, in the 10th century. A considerable quantity of Later Kalacuri sculpture was found in the sanctum of this temple, built into its front walls, in its mukhamandapa, and on and around the courtyard; fragments probably from the Nohalesvara temple and from other Later Kalacuri structures were found scattered throughout the village, some of them under worship on square earthen or stone platforms. Smaller quantities of archaeological material of similar date were found at the nearby temple complex of Gaya Kund, and also at Kuan, where a reported Vaikuṅṭha image has apparently been stolen recently, along with a number of other ancient pieces according to the villagers, and where now stray archaeological fragments are in the process of being cemented into the side-walls of a renovated step-well.

### Location

The present sculpture, a major cult image, is the only example of multiheaded Viṣṇu discovered during two explorations of the south-eastern Baghelkhand area, which were extended from Bilhari as far as Gaya Kund, Kuan, Rupnath. Tigowa, the Vaiṣṇava site of Sindursi, Majholi, Tevar (the wreck of the Kalacuri capital, Tripuri) and Bheraghat. The sculpture stands on the southern edge of the precinct in front of the Viṣṇu-Varāha (Nohalesvara) temple, approximately 200 meters west of the main village water reservoir, the Laksman-Sagar, which also dates from Later Kalacuri times.

## **Condition**

The image appears as a relief on a rectangular stele which is not pierced at any point. The upper quarter of the stele is diagonally broken off on the observer's left, as are all the extended hands of the main figure. The two principal figures comprising the image, Garuḍa and Viṣṇu, appear above a prominent rectangular projection of the plinth, which is otherwise very narrow. The sculpture as a whole has suffered both erosion and breakage.

## **Figures on the plinth**

A kneeling figure with hands joined in the namaskāramudrā appears on each of the narrow sides of the plinth, with a second figure, evidently a ṛṣi or sadhu, standing behind with hands similarly joined. A third diminutive figure, with one hand resting on the thigh and the other holding an indistinct object, stands beside and partly behind each side of the central projecting plinth, leaning out to the side. Behind this group of three stands a taller female figure on either side, also leaning out to the side. In the remaining top right corner of the stele (facing) are the remains of a flying garland-bearer.

## **Garuḍa**

On the main central plinth Garuḍa appears as a fully- anthropomorphic figure, depicted in a wide and vigorous flying posture facing proper left. The front (left) leg is in a

kneeling position (the lower leg from knee to ankle is broken off), while the trailing right leg is bent up perpendicularly. The left arm is raised from the elbow with the fingertips of the hand lightly supporting Viṣṇu's folded left leg. The right arm, extended backwards, is broken off at the elbow. A pointed loincloth hangs below the belly, reaching to the surface of the plinth. A jewelled girdle and thigh-tassels can be seen, in addition to an ornamented upavita, necklace, armlets and bracelets. Garuḍa also wears a two-strand udarabandha. His face is tilted up so that the right ear touches his shoulder and his hair streams backwards.

### **The main figure**

Viṣṇu is seated in lalitāsana, with the left leg folded, supported beneath the knee by Garuḍa's raised left hand, the foot resting sole-upward behind Garuḍa's head. The right leg is broken off above the knee. The torso and head are held in an upright frontal posture. The vanamālā curves around the left shoulder, across the crook of the front left arm, and hangs forward across the left thigh and ankle. The jewelled upavita is as thick as the garland and loops below the jewelled girdle on the right. There are two necklaces, a broad circular torque and below it a longer and narrower necklace forming a curved V-shape in the centre of the chest. On the chest between them appears the diamond-shaped kaustubha or srivatsa. The kuṇḍalas are long and narrow. The crown, with traces of curls below the rim on the left side, was a kirītā with vertical pearlstrings; it is non severely damaged. Behind the head is a relatively small circular lotus-nimbus, slightly inset into the surface of the stele. The face, broader than usual in this region, shows the high arched eyebrows and enigmatic expression typical of Later Kalacuri sculpture. The eyes are half-closed. The total number of arms was originally fourteen (as in the Solāṅkī images of Gujarat), as can be seen from the remains of seven on the left. The heads of Narasiṃha (right) and Varāha (right) appear as profiles on either side of the central face. These animal profiles, rendered in very flat relief, both slope downward above the shoulders (as in Kashmiri and Candella images of Vaikuṅṭha). They are not shown wearing crowns; the relief is continued diagonally upward, above a lightly incised headband, to the sides of Viṣṇu's crown, and this relief cuts across the

base of the nimbus, but it bears no definite trace of a crown. Both the flatness of the relief and the merely suggested crowns -- apparently incomplete versions of the karanda crowns worn by the animal side-heads of the Candella and Solankī Vaikuṅṭhas -- suggest that this iconography was known but only partially understood in the Later Kalacuri territories.

## Source

The incomplete sloping side-crowns, the fourteen arms, and the presence of anthropomorphic Garuḍa, all suggest that the Solankī concept of Vaikuṅṭha was the immediate model for the iconography of this image, rather than the Candella concept. This implies long-distance political and cultural contact westward with north-eastern Gujarat, along the northern bank of the Narmadā from Puspavati via Tripuri, more than northwestward with the contiguously situated Bundelkand, where Vaikuṅṭha was typically a standing image and where the fourteen-armed Garuḍa-mounted Vaikuṅṭha was unknown. The reasons for this curious state of affairs is examined below in paragraph 01.1.1

### 01.1.1 CHRONOLOGY AND GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION

This is the south-easternmost Vaikuṅṭha image so far discovered, being situated at Puspavati (Bilhari) fairly near the Narmadā, only 60km north of the Kalacuri capital, Tripuri. No Vaikuṅṭhas are definitely known in the eastern part of Baghelkhand, where, on the contrary, variant versions of the Viśvarūpa icon are known (from Antara, Shahdol District: see Nos.2 and 4 in this Report).

The Vaikuṅṭha cult was thus introduced into the eastern part of the Later kalacuri kingdom, near (and presumably in) the seat of political power, Tripuri (south of Khajuraho); while in the eastern part of the kingdom, at Antara near Shahdol (south of Allahabad), it was the older imperial icon of Viśvarūpa, stemming from the declining Gurjara-Pratihāra territories on the Ganges to the north, which was known.

Thus in the kalacuri kingdom of the 10th/11th century, the boundary between the Vaikuṅṭha and Viśvarūpa cults respectively ran north-south between Tripuri and Puspavati on the west, and Antara and Shaḥdol on the east. The political and iconographic connexions of the capital were with Khajuraho in the north and Gujarat in the west (where the Vaikuṅṭha cult flourished); the connexions of the eastern territories were with the easterly vestiges of the Pratihāra empire in the north and the Pala kingdom to the east and north-east (where other Viśvarūpa variants are known. from Badgaon-Nalanda and Panchbethair-Tangail, near Dhaka).

The iconographic similarities between the Puspavati (Bilhari) Vaikuṅṭha and Solāṅkī versions in Gujarat (rather than with the much closer Candella Vaikuṅṭha) poses questions of political and cult contact over a considerable distance, and across a zone of some instability (T. S. Maxwell. Bericht an die DFG vom 14.01.1994: S.xv-xvi, exclusion zone in southern Malwa). The clear implication of the iconography of the Puspavati (Bilhari) Vaikuṅṭha is that an east-west axis existed between Gujarat north of the head of the Gulf of Khambat, and eastward along the Narmadā as far as Tripuri.

The political (and religious) nature of this axis is revealed in the inscriptions of the Kalacuri Kings of Tripuri (Yuvaraja I, Laksmanaraja, and Yuvaraja II) in the 10th and 11th centuries. The most significant of the inscriptions comes from Bilhari itself.

The Bilhari inscription (EI.II:132, undated, late 10th or early 11th century according to Kielhorn) mentions Yuvaraja I Kalacuri entering Lata (= Saurashtra), and also his son, Laksmanaraja, having marched to the "western region", where he had his troops bathe in the sea, before worshipping Somesvara (=Somanatha-Patan) (EI.I:268); and the Gorwa grant of Laskmikarna credits Laksmanaraja with conquering, among other territories, Lata and Gurjara (EI.XI:142).

The official Later kalacuri genealogies trace the descent of the dynasty from Viṣṇu, though most of the surviving inscriptions relate to Śiva, whose worship would have represented the official royal cult. This is a not untypical religious configuration which is paralleled in Kashmir. Exceptionally, Laksmanaraja's son Sankaragana, who appears

to have reigned very briefly in the late 10th century, is said to have been principally devoted to Viṣṇu ("vaisnavaparama": DHNI.II: 768).

Ray (DHNI.II: 764-765) shows that, between AD 950 and 1000, the period accepted for the reigns of both Yuvaraja I and Laksmanaraja Kalacuri, "great confusion prevailed" in Gujarat: Saurashtra (Lata) was held by the Silaharas (feudatories of the Rastrakutas), while northern Gujarat (Gurjara) was still under the weakening control of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras of Kanauj, against whom the first Solāṅkī, Mularaja Caulukya, was engaged in a war. Under these conditions of internal weakness and instability in Gujarat, a westward policy on the part of the Later Kalacuris, initiated by Yuvaraja I and continued with more force by his son Laksmanaraja, resulted in a virtual tradition of royal kalacuri contact with the famous Somanatha temple. The policy, and the tradition, was continued into the late 10th and possibly the early 11th century by Yuvaraja II, who, according to the karanbel (= Karnavati, near Tripuri) inscription (IA.XVIII: 215-216: DHNI.II.768-769, 782) dedicated his wealth to the holy Somesvara.

This westward invasion route, which was clearly very well known to the Kalacuris through their continuous policy of expansion, must have led from Tripuri along the Narmadā (involving protracted hostilities along the way with the Paramaras of Dhār: DHNI.II: 769; the repeated inroads of the Kalacuris between Dhār and the Narmadā en route to Gujarat could well account for the absence of a Paramara Vaikuṅṭha cult in southern Malwa) to the west coast, and around the Gulf of Khambat to the coast of Saurashtra. The iconography and cult of Vaikuṅṭha were well known both in Malwa and in Gujarat, in the kingdoms of both the Paramaras and the Solāṅkīs across which territories this westward route to Somanatha lay. Paramara Vaikuṅṭha images from Hinglajgadh and Pippaliya-Jatti are preserved at Indore and Bhanpura (T. S. Maxwell. Bericht an die DFG vom 14.01.1994: S.ix, xii-xvi, 203-206, 246-B-250 [Sculpture Nos.56 and 66]), locations which are in north-western Malwa and somewhat remote from the course of the Narmadā: whereas among the many surviving Solāṅkī images of Garuḍa-mounted Vaikuṅṭha, one is still to be found at the Varāha temple at Kadvar, only a few

kilometres from Somanatha itself (T. S. Maxwell, Bericht an die DFG vom 14.01.1994: S.x-xvi, 287-290 [Sculpture No.79]).

Thus the connexion between Puspavati/Tripuri and Kadvar / Somanatha consisted of a traditional westward invasion-route, sanctified by worship at the Somanatha temple which marked the destination of the expedition, established by the Later Kalacuris as part of their expansion policy in the latter half of the 10th century and continued into the 11th century by a succession of kings. The Vaikuṅṭha cult does not appear to have played a highly significant role in the Kalacuri kingdom (as noted above, the kings were chiefly connected with Saivism and with the Śaiva Mattamayuraka sect), unless under the Vaiṣṇava king Sankaragana, who briefly succeeded his father Laksmanaraja, whose name is still preserved today at Bilhari (Puspavati) in the name of the water reservoir near the Viṣṇu-Varāha (Nohalesvara) temple, the Laksman-kund.

The iconography of the Puspavati (Bilhari) Vaikuṅṭha would have been copied from Vaikuṅṭha images seen by the retinue of the royal Kalacuri forces in Gujarat, and it is thus historically related to the Solaṅkī Vaikuṅṭha images, and particularly to the Vaikuṅṭha at Kadvar near Somanatha.

## 01.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The sculpture is a cult-image representing the Later Kalacuri version of Garuḍa-mounted Vaikuṅṭha, with fourteen arms, in Kalacuri style, but its iconography is based on that of a Solaṅkī model of the early 11th century from the vicinity of Somanatha-Patan, probably Kadvar. Made at Puspavati (Bilhari) most probably in the reign of Sankaragana, Yuvaraja II (ca. AD 974), Kokalla II, or Gangeya ('Vikramaditya') Kalacuri (ca. AD 1030- 1041).

MAP OF CENTRAL AND WESTERN INDIA  
THE KINGDOMS OF THE KALACURIS, CANDELLAS, PARAMARAS  
AND THE SITUATION IN GUJARAT  
CIRCA A.D. 975

With the probable westward invasion route  
of the Kalacuris of Tripuri

(after Ray DHNI.II: Maps 2-5 and Schwartzberg HASA: Maps 31.32,146,147)

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## 02. D. Ref.: FUNFKUPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 60 x 32 x 18

ursprunglich 12 Hande

Aus Antnra, Shahdol District, Madhya Pradesh (BiMBh Depot)

### 02.1 DESCRIPTION:

The sculpture was discovered at Antara, approximately 10 km from Shahdol, the District headquarters. It is now preserved in the reserve collection of the Birla Museum in Bhopal, where permission to photograph it was refused.

The piece consists of a rectangular stele of dark stone, broken at the top, with a relief figure of Viṣṇu, which originally had the five heads of Viśvarūpa of which the upper two are damaged. The original disposition of the heads was:

Matsya Kūrma

Narasimha Varāha.

The Narasimha and Varāha profiles are abbreviated, being crammed up against two of the hand-held attributes, the khaḍga and ghanta.

The original number of arms appears to have been twelve, though these as well as the remaining attributes are damaged. The Attributes that can still be partially identified are following:

RIGHT	LEFT
padma(?)	ghanta
khadga	khetaka
talwar (curved sword)	khadga (?)
padma(?)	dhanus/sarpa (?)
-- --	śankha
-- --	-- --

A standing female figure can be seen at the lower left corner, and the head of another figure (the remainder of it destroyed) at the lower right. There are no other figures on the remains of the stele apart from the main Viṣṇu.

## 02.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

This appears to be a late figure, of the 11th century, from the eastern part of the Late Kalacuri kingdom. In view of the number of heads, it was a form of Viśvarūpa, apparently with fewer, if any, emanating figures. It was thus probably related to the late Viśvarūpa variant from Badgaon / Nalanda in Bihar (see T. S. Maxwell, Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: pp.224-227) and derived from the late Viśvarūpa images from the eastern end of the Gurjara Pratihāra empire.

Nr. 02: Antara  
Birla Museum, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh  
(Fotografie nicht erlaubt)

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## 03. D. Ref.: FUNFKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 93 x 50 x 26; Viṣṇu H. 58

ursprünglich 10 Hande

Aus Gurgi, Rewa District, Madhya Pradesh (BaMRe #154)

### 03.1 DESCRIPTION:

The piece was found at Gurgi, and belongs to the archaeological collection of His Highness Maharaja Martand Singh Ju Deo, which now forms part of the content of the Baghela Museum in Rewa.

The sculpture, in buff sandstone, consists of a thick rectangular stele with a dvi-anga base supporting an image of Viṣṇu and Accompanying figures in high relief, with other figures sculpted in lower relief on the base and the face of the stele.

#### The main figure

The figure of Viṣṇu, originally ten-armed, stands in an exaggerated ābhaṅga posture with the left knee bent far forward, and the right hip correspondingly raised. Viṣṇu wears the vanamālā and an almost equally thick upavita, with a broad short torque and a channavīra across the chest, knotted in the centre. From the rolled girdle depend long pearly tassels reaching to the knees. The crown is a tall tapering kirītā rising from a square base. The ear ornaments are large half-disks hanging to the collar bone.

Four animal profiles rise at an angle from behind the ears and the back of the crown. These are disposed as follows:

Varāha Kūrma

Narasimha Matsya.

Behind the crown and the Varāha and Kūrma profiles rises the circular nimbus, carved with an eight-petalled lotus which was pierced around the edges; the proper left half of the lotus has broken off,

Most of the arms and attributes are lost. The front right hand displays the vyākhyāna-mudrā, turned to the left. The front left hand holds the śaṅkha horizontally, its point laid against the left thigh. The fourth left holds the remains of a bow.

## **The figures on the plinth face**

Viṣṇu stands on a raised lotus which occupies the surface of the central plinth projection. The lotus is supported on the hands of a Garuḍa figure in the flying posture: his arms are raised like those of a caryatid. He is flanked by two kneeling figures, that on his right being male, that on his left female, both turned to face the centre and holding their hands in the namaskāra-mudrā.

On the face of the plinth to either side stood two figures side by side, of the which the pair on the left have been broken off. The two remaining figures on the right are crowned males standing in a similar posture to that of the main Viṣṇu figure, but with the left foot turned to the left. The right hand was raised evidently in the abhaya-mudrā, and the left hangs down to hold an indistinct object.

Above these figures stood a larger couple on either side, the male on the left being broken off. The male on the right appears to have held his hands in the namaskāra-mudrā. The two female figures, adjacent to Viṣṇu on either side, place one hand on the thigh and hold up an akṣamālā in the other. Their feet are buried in the plinth surface at the periphery of the central lotus, as if standing in water like Naginis.

## **Figures on the margins of the stele**

The left edge of the stele is damaged, and all sculpture there has been destroyed. On the right edge appear two diminutive figures side by side, the lower part of their anatomy concealed by the head of the male figure standing on the plinth. Above them are two seated male figures of the same size, and two figures above them, one above the other. These appear to hold a large lotus blossom by its stem in each hand, and they are crowned. Together with the now missing figures in the corresponding position on the left margin of the stele, they probably represented the Dvadasa-Ādityas, the twelve aspects of the Sun-god.

## **Figures at the top of the stele**

On the upper part of the stele two rows of figures are carved in relief, the upper frieze of ten figures running continuously across the top, the lower, with eight figures, interrupted by the nimbus of Viṣṇu.

The upper row of ten are all seated, nimbate figures holding various attributes, but most are damaged. The 3rd from the left is crowned and holds a sceptre-like object (possibly a lotus-bud) in the left hand, while displaying the abhaya-mudrā with the right. The 4th holds both ends of a scarf which flies up behind his head in a curve, suggesting that this figure might represent the Wind-god Vayu. The 5th holds an object similar to that of number 3, but in his right hand. The 6th holds a larger club in the right hand.

The lower group, divided by Viṣṇu's nimbus into two sets of four, consists of eight identical figures, also seated. apparently crowned but not nimbate, holding a bow in the left hand and an arrow in the right.

## 03.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The posture of Viṣṇu, the grouping of figures on the centre of the plinth face and upon the plinth, and the frieze-like presentation of figures at the top of the stele, correspond to the same elements in the 10th-century Viśvarūpa from Suhania at Gwalior. This sculpture from Gurgi also represents Viṣṇu Viśvarūpa, and may be dated in the late 10th or 11th century.

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## 04. D. Ref.: FUNFKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 66 x 40.5 x 22; Viṣṇu H. 52.5 (face H. 5.7)

ursprünglich 8 Hande

Aus Antara, Shahdol District, Madhya Pradesh (StaMShah #84)

### 04.1 DESCRIPTION:

According to local officers of the State Archaeology Department, the sculpture was discovered in 1985 in the course of excavating and clearing one of the six mounds behind the Kaṅkālī temple at Antara, and was subsequently brought to Shahdol and placed in the State Museum. The mound in question at Anantara (inspected on 16.03.1994) shows the remains of the jagati of an east-facing temple of considerable size: nearby lie many detached architectural fragments dating to the 10th or 11th century- (Kalacuri period); no other individual sculptures are to be found in situ today except those claimed by the temple authorities and now haphazardly cemented into the compound wall, a number of fragmentary Yogini images among them, but their precise provenance can no longer be established.

The sculpture represents five-headed Viṣṇu standing on a projecting plinth against an unpierced rectangular stele with hatched sides and back. This is not a populated stele. The remains are not seriously eroded, but they have sustained extensive damage: the upper right corner of the stele is missing, as are all but one of the left arms of the image, and the crown, right-hand attributes, a flying figure in the upper left corner, and the plinth-figures, are all damaged

The plinth was intended to represent a projecting bhadrā, with a recess at a lower level on either side. The front, and to a lesser extent the sides, of this projection are carved, while the flanking recessed angles were left plain with some hatching still remaining. The relief-work on the front of the plinth shows an undulating plant-motif (patravalli) with a central kirttimukha from the sides of which the leaf-pattern emerges.

On each of the lower flanking angles appears a kneeling male worshipper, that on the right still clearly showing the hands joined in the namaskāramudrā. Two larger figures in the same posture occupy the front corners of the raised plinth surface. Behind them are two female figures standing in an exaggerated atibhaṅga posture, leaning outwards in order to look up at the central Viṣṇu, one arm resting on the thigh and the other raised and perhaps originally holding a cāmara. Behind the smaller kneeling worshippers on the outer angles are two standing male figures, one hand lowered to the thigh, the other

holding a flower below the centre of the chest; these would have been the Vaiṣṇava dvārapālas. The figure on the right extends in height up to the level of Viṣṇu's hip, but that on the left was considerably shorter, presumably to accommodate a large attribute, probably the bow (for which a supporting element remains on the stele, see *infra*) on this side. The damaged relief in the upper left corner of the stele appears to have represented a flying vidyādhara or maladhara with his consort behind.

The main figure stands in a somewhat awkwardly depicted ābhaṅga posture with the right hip thrust out and the weight on the right leg: the bent left knee tends inward toward the axis, producing a slightly pidgeon-toed effect which is further emphasised by the abrupt inward curve of the supporting leg and by the curious shortening of the big toe on both feet. In the case of the left foot, both the tip of this toe and the heel are elevated, suggesting a dance position. The torso however has a stiff frontality, with no turn of the shoulders or head.

Viṣṇu wears a jewelled vanamālā which loops below the knees, a short adhoṃśuka with a jewelled girdle and tassels, a short necklace, ear-ornaments, keyūras, and nūpurās on the ankles. Two long pearlstrings are worn on the torso in the manner of a channavīra, crossing below the centre of the chest. Between their junction and the necklace, a small flower-shaped srivatsa appears on the chest. The front of the crown is severely damaged: remains of carving on the sides indicate that it consisted of a kirītā with a circlet of rosettes connected by looped pearlstrings supporting a taller, cross-hatched element. The enigmatic facial expression of Viṣṇu is typical of Kalacuri sculpture.

The two front hands hold the inverted śaṅkha at waist-height on the left, while the right displays the ahhaya- or vyākhyānamudrā with the akṣamālā at the level of the chest. Of the three remaining arms on the right the lowest was extended downward but is now a mere stump. The hand above held the gadā, and the uppermost a bundle of arrows (both sloping toward the shoulder), indicating that the bow originally appeared among the attributes on the left.

Four small animal-heads, two on either side, project from behind Viṣṇu's ears and the rim of his crown. On the right, angled very sharply upward, the tusked snout of the Varāha appears above the diminutive head of the Kūrma. On the left, at a much flatter angle, the profile of the Matsya (closely resembling that of the Boar) emanates above the head of Narasiṃha which shows clear signs of recutting.

In summary, the available iconographic features are these:

VARĀHA	MATSYA
KŪRMA	NARASIṂHA
BĀṆA	-- -- --
GADĀ	-- -- --
-- -- --	-- -- --
AKṢAMĀLĀ/MUDRĀ	ŚAṆKHA.

Behind these heads on the left, between them and the damaged Vidyādhara-couple, the remains of the inner rim and petals of a lotus-halo can be seen.

Like sculpture no.2 (in the Birla Museum at Bhopal), this image originates from Antara in the eastern Kalacuri kingdom, where the many figures populating the nimbus were abandoned but the four emanating heads of the animal-avatāras retained. (The two kalacuri versions from Antara however represent them in differing dispositions, and the number of hands and attributes also varies.) Both of these late mediaeval icons appear to be related to the late Viśvarūpa variant from Badgaon / Nalanda in Bihar (see T. S. Maxwell; Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: pp.224-227) and to be derived from the late Viśvarūpa images from the eastern end of the Gurjara Pratihāra empire. Of the two Antara Viśvarūpa images, this version, which is stylistically similar to art of the 10th century, is the earlier.

This image has similarities to the Viśvarūpa from Gurgi (No.3, in the Baghela Museum at Rewa), but it is at least a generation later, as iconographic and stylistic changes

indicate: the minor figures on the stele have been omitted, the posture is a travesty of the already exaggerated ābhaṅga in No.3, the channavīra which still gives the appearance of being a piece of equipment knotted on the chest in No.3 has here become a mere ornament of draped pearl-strings, and the iconographic motif on the plinth of No.3 has degenerated into a piece of decoration. Whereas the Gurgi Viśvarūpa (No.3) is a product of the late 10th or 11th century from a major centre of art production, this version from Antara is a markedly provincial variant made by an inferior artist at a slightly later date.

#### **04 .2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

The image represents a late, abbreviated version of the Gurjara-Pratihāra Viṣṇu Viśvarūpa, derived from the Gurgi version. Antara, 11th century.

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#### **05.D. Ref.: FUNRKIPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: ca. 60 x 40

ursprunglich 8 Arme

Aus bhadoli, Shahdol District, Madhya Pradesh

#### **05.1 DESCRIPTION:**

This is a cult-image, a standing figure of Viṣṇu represented in high relief against a broad rectangular stele. The figure was intended to appear standing in an ābhaṅga posture with the weight on the left leg, the left hip being thrown out, and the right foot turned to the side; the legs are however very stiffly represented. The upper torso is turned slightly to the proper left, as is the face, the right shoulder being higher than the left. The figure is broken at the knees and waist, and the whole stele was once broken in half transversely at the latter level. The Viṣṇu figure appears to have had eight arms, all of which are broken off except the upper left, the hand of which wields the cakṛa near the shoulder. The figure wears the usual kuṇḍalas, hara, upavita, mekhala, and vanamālā, the latter being severely damaged. The broad round face wears a somewhat

incongruously narrow kirītā. Behind the crown appears a small ring-shaped nimbus with alternate rosette-and-diamond motifs in relief.

Four diminutive animal-heads project from behind the head, at the level of the ears and of the crown-rim. The lower pair project horizontally, but the upper two are angled upwards as in the Kannauj Viśvarūpa iconography. These animal faces are very small and eroded, and hence very difficult to identify or even differentiate. They appear to represent the following distribution of avatāra heads:

Matsya Kūrma

Narasimha Varāha

The figure stands on a very thin lotus-base at the centre of the plinth. Two flanking lotuses support two pairs of kneeling worshippers facing the central axis of the composition, clearly in the act of paying homage to Viṣṇu. A further seated figure in similar posture appears behind each pair, on the rebates at the corners of the plinth. Behind the seated couples stand a pair of cāmara-bearers, the male to the left of the Viṣṇu figure, the female to the right, and two male dvārapālas, left hands held in front of the chest, stand beside them. Rearing vyālas appear on the margins of the stele. Above them, facing outwards, stand two further figures, apparently nāgas.

Three small standing figures appear on the crosspiece of the throne-back or torana, the nāgas and Viṣṇu's nimbus, on either side: these are manusya-avatāras. The two closest to the nimbus, and facing it, are VĀMANA on the proper right, and PARASŪ-RĀMA on the proper left. They are depicted in the role of priestly attendants on Viṣṇu's heads and crown, Paraśurāma holding a cāmara in his right hand (opposite the axe resting on his left shoulder) and Vāmana a small flower-offering in his right (opposite the parasol in his left hand). The remaining four small figures, two on each side, are shown facing the front. In the present condition of the sculpture, these are impossible to identify individually, but evidently they represent the other four avatāras in human shape, namely Rāma, Balarāma, Buddha (assuming the identity of the Viṣṇu image with Kṛṣṇa) and Kalkin. Together with the heads of the four emanating animal incarnations, all ten

avatāras are thus shown in a line based on the crosspiece of the stele and level with the head of the principal Viṣṇu image.

Two small seated figures (probably Śiva and Brahmā) occupy the uppermost corners of the stele, above the Nāgas. A pair of flying vidydharas then appear, above the two outermost avatāras on either side. These flank a row of six very small seated figures, divided into two groups of three which face each other across the top margin of the stele; their identities are uncertain.

### **0.51.1 HISTORICAL DISCUSSION**

The number and identity of the heads of the principal Viṣṇu image, and the relatively few diminutive figures on the stele, associate this image with the Gurgi Viśvarūpa (No.03 in this Report), the Antara Viśvarūpa (no.02), and the second, later Antara Viśvarūpa (in Bhopal, No.04). These three, plus the fourth from Bhadoli described here, constitute a small corpus of mediaeval Viśvarūpa images from Baghelkhand, testifying to the strength of the Viśvarūpa cult in the later kalacuri kingdom during the 11th century. The iconography, though abbreviated, was clearly derived from the Viśvarūpa images from the eastern end of the late pratihāra empire on the Gangetic plain. The location of this piece, in Shahdol District, further confirms the concentration of the Viśvarūpa cult in the eastern half of the late Pratihāra kingdom (at Gurgi, Antara, and Bhadoli), while the Vaikuṅṭha cult seems to have been prevalent in the western half (Bilhari: No.01 in this Report), where the centre of kalacuri political power was located (at Tripuri / Tewar and Puspavati / Bilhari); the eastern half was thus under the hegemony of the declining Pratihāras, while the western region, adjacent to the Candella kingdom, maintained a political independence, as the presence there of the Vaikuṅṭha cult signifies.

### **05.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION**

An 11<sup>th</sup>-century version of Viśvarūpa from the eastern half of the Later Kalacuri domains directly derived from the later imperial Gurjara-Pratihāra Viśvarūpa iconography of the

Gangetic plain but considerably abbreviated. This image forms a group together with the three Viśvarūpa images of similar date from Gurgi and Antara.

## **06. D. Ref.: DREI-oder VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: 78 X43 X 23

ursprünglich 4 Arme

Bilakesvara-Tempel, Bilavar (Billaur), Jammu Division, Kashmir (Siwalik-Gebirge, Nordlich der Daman-i-Koh-Ebene)

### **06.1DESCRIPTION:**

The image was briefly noticed in a report on a tour of inspection made by Ram Chandra Kak from Basohli to Jammu published in 1933 ("Antiquities of Basohli and Ramnagar (Jammu and Kashmir State)", Indian Art and Letters NS. VII.2, 1933: 65-91; p.75). No further information on this sculpture has been published since 1933 to my knowledge, nor has a photograph of it appeared.

### **Ancient Vallapura**

In his report Kak refers to Bilavar as Ballaur and to its ancient name as Ballapura. Aurel Stein (RT.2 Chapter IV Section 1, Political Topography, Frontiers of Ancient Kashmir: 432) names it more accurately as Vallapura, the modern version of which he transcribes as Ballavar, which accords fairly well with the local pronunciation of the present day (March 1994), Stein (loc. cit.) reports on the region as follows:

"To the west of Camba and south of Bhadravakasa lay the old chieftainship of VALLAPURA, the modern Ballavar. Its rulers are repeatedly referred to in Kalhana's narrative. They retained their independence as petty hill-chiefs till the rise of the Jammu family early in this century, Ballavar was known also to Alberuni. / Of the political organization of the hill territories between Vallapura in the south-east and Rajapuri in the north-west we have no distinct information. The Hindu inhabitants of this tract

including Ballavar call themselves now Dogras and their country Dugar. This name is traditionally derived from Skr. \*Dvigarta. But this term is nowhere found in our historical texts and probably has been concocted in analogy of the ancient name Trigarta. The original form of the name seems to be Durgara. / It is very probably that the region of the lower and middle hills between the limits indicated was already in old times divided into a number of small chiefships. Of these some eleven seem to have existed up to the extension of the Sikh power into the Panjab Kohistan. They were all absorbed in the growing state of Jammu which was originally one of them. / ...these small hill-chiefs of limited territory but ancient descent [Thakkuras] ..."

In Kalhana's text, the Hill-Rajas or Thakurs of Vallapura, and of the other hill-territories in the region, are presented as playing a significant role in Kashmiri politics from the 11th century onward. They commanded the difficult terrain which lay between the major powers of the north Indian plain and of Kashmir; Alberuni mentions Vallapura as situated on the route leading specifically from Kannauj to Kashmir (India I: 205). They were thus in the position to levy charges ("blackmail": Stein, loc. cit.) on travellers from India to Kashmir; moreover, those located on the frontiers of Kashmir appear habitually to have profited from payments made by both sides. Stein (RT 2:432) refers specifically in this connexion to the Khasa rulers of the Visalata region on the south side of the Banihal Pass in the Pir Panjal range; "temporarily the chiefs of the hills immediately south of the Pir Panjal Range may have acknowledged the suzerainty of strong Kashmir rulers. But during the greater part of the period which is known to us from historical sources, they appear to have held their own and rather to have levied subsidies, i.e. blackmail, from the Kashmir rulers" (loc.cit., and see *ibid.*, RT.VIII.2283 n.). Vallapura, farther to the south than Visalata, therefore lay well beyond the historical southern frontier of Kashmir.

The Hill-Rajas allied their houses with the royal house of Kashmir through marriage: in the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Kashmiri king Sussala (c. AD 1112-1120, 1121-1128) had a wife named Jajjala from Vallapura (RT.1: 287 n.220; RT.VIII. 1444). The Raja of Vallapura is mentioned as one of the hill-chiefs who presented themselves at the court of King Kalaśa of Kashmir in the winter of AD 1087-1088 (RT.VII 588). Intervention in the

politics of Kashmir is indicated at RT.VIII.539 and VIII.547 sqq., where the king and yuvaraja of Vallapura join a league of hill-chiefs to support the pretender to the throne of Kashmir, Bhiksacara (r. AD 1120-1121), against the Kashmiri king Sussala (c. AD 1112-1120, 1121-1128; RT.1:287 n.220); another prince of Vallapura, the Rajaputra Brahmajajjala, is said to have supported King Sussala (RT.1:287 n. 220). The kings of Kashmir played a correspondingly powerful role in the local politics of the Hill-Rajas, who were subdued by force: in the 11th century King Ananta of Kashmir (c. AD 1028-1063), "who won victories over various kings, uprooted at Campa [Chamba] King Sala, and placed a new ruler on the throne. The king, while rashly making wanton inroads into foreign territories, often ran into danger. When on an expedition against Kalaśa, the son of Tukka, his troops had become worn out, Haladhara [the prime minister of Kashmir] extricated him from Vallapura by cunning" (RT.VII.218-220). Again, in the following century, King Jayasimha (AD 1128-1149) "uprooting King Vikramaraja at Vallapura put in his place King Gulhana, and did thus with other rulers in other [territories]" (RT.1:287 n.220: RT.VIII.2452). These references all concern the 11th and 12th centuries, but it is to be expected that despite the evident strength and independent spirit of the hill-chiefships a not dissimilar state of affairs had also obtained earlier, during the 9th and 10th centuries, under more powerful Kashmiri regimes. The goodwill or obedience of the Hill-Rajas must always have been a desideratum for the kings of Kashmir, in order to regulate contact between themselves and the powers of the north Indian plains.

### **The Bilakesvara temple**

The temple at Vallapura is today (1994) called the Bilakesvara or Bilvakesvara and is dedicated to Śiva (a Śivaliṅga occupies the centre of the sanctum floor). At the time of Kak's visit in the 1930s, however, it was known as the temple of Harihara.

Kak lists no image of this combined deity in his report on the contents of the temple (unless the confused account of No.5 in his list refers to this and some other piece, which he took to be a single sculpture), but in March 1994 I found a large damaged image of three- (or four-) headed Harihara at the back of the sanctum (see No.06 in this

Report) with a Varāha profile emanating from the left side of the head and a Bhairava face from the right, indicating that it is a combined form of multiheaded Śiva and Vaikuṅṭha, an icon that was created in Kashmir.

Other remains found in the sanctum of the Bilakesvara temple show that Vallapura was the centre of a flourishing Viṣṇu cult. The two most indicative are:

1. Bhūdevī, with a fragment of a vanamālā above and Cakrapuruṣa to her left (63 x 60 x 29.5): clearly from the base of an image of Viṣṇu, probably Vaikuṅṭha.
2. Cakrapuruṣa, turned to his right; this is an image of some size (72 x 32 x 29) and clearly belonged to the plinth-figures of a very large Viṣṇu- or Vaikuṅṭha-image.

(Since Kak in his report gives only the briefest of descriptions of the pieces he found, makes speculative identifications, and omits all measurements, it is unfortunately not possible to correlate these two fragments with objects in his list.)

## **The Vaikuṅṭha image**

The royal Vaikuṅṭha cult, which originated in Kashmir in the 9th century under the Utpala king Avantivarman (c. AD 855-883), spread southeastward throughout the hill region. This expansion is represented by consecration of its images in the centres of Thakur power in Chamba, Kulu and elsewhere from the Ravi to the Sutlej valleys. These local cult-images are clearly tokens of the Kashmiri political hold over the Hill-Rajas. The same applies to the present image in the capital of the Vallapura territory, in the valley of the River Ujh (a lower tributary of the Ravi, named by Kak [op. cit.73] as the Bini opposite Ballavar, not mentioned by Stein in his Notes or Ancient Geography).

In his report of 1933, Ram Chandra Kak briefly describes (without illustration), as his No.1, the sculpture that which I have numbered No.05 as follows:

"Viṣṇu in the round; lower half of his body missing; has three heads (man's, lion's, and boar's); wears an elaborately ornamented tiara, lozenge-shaped jewelled ear

ornaments, a jewelled necklace, sacred thread, armlets, waistband, srivatsa and mandaramala (flower garland) - the latter is fragmentary; the halo round his head is partly broken, his forearms are missing. In style the fragment is very similar to the Kashmir sculptures of the ninth and tenth centuries" (loc. cit.).

The similarity should more reasonably be referred to the iconography, which is that of the classic Vaikuṅṭha image of Kashmir, rather than to the sculptural style, which is regional and clearly reflects the distance from the main centres of Kashmiri art at which it was made. That there existed a prolific local workshop in ancient Vallapura, with a strongly pronounced sculptural style of its own, is proved by a dozen more images in the sanctum of the Bilakesvara temple, including a Harihara (No.06 in this Report), also of Kashmir-derived iconography but in the Vallapura style. Avantipura, place of origin of the royal Vaikuṅṭha image, lies some 300 kilometres to the NNW, beyond the hazardous Pir Panjal range. The closest point to Vallapura at which a genuine Kashmiri sculpture has been found, is the extensive temple site of Karimchi (also Krimchi) in the hills above Udampur, some 90 kilometres to the north-west; the sculpture in question is a damaged image of Vaikuṅṭha (No.08 in this Report), clearly brought there from the Kashmir Valley by way of the southern route over the Banihal Pass and through the Visalata area controlled by the Khasas, and installed in one of the karimchi shrines. This and probably other icons exported directly from Kashmir along the same route would have served as models for the sculptors of Vallapura, since the way from there to Karimchi, skirting the lower foothills and passing through the temple centre at Kaladhera and Manwal (see No.07 in this Report), would have presented none of the physical and political difficulties that a journey to Kashmir involved in the 10th and 11th centuries.

The image at Vallapura / Balavar is broken off below the hips, and all four arms and most of the nimbus on the left and lower right sides are missing. The broken vanamālā, which curves behind the shoulders and loops through the crook of the front arms, is of round cross-section and bears the scale-like representation of leaves which is typical of its representation in the art of Kashmir. The upavita is a plain triple cord which loops just below the floral clasp of the girdle. There is some carving near the centre of the chest (it

is displaced somewhat to the left), below the necklace, which evidently represents the srivatsa mark, as suggested by Kak, but it is very indistinct due to the layers of oil which have been applied to the surface; it appears to have the form of a flower. The body ornaments consist chiefly of large round jewels or pearls with superimposed flowers. These form the main motif in the girdle, the keyūras (which consist of double rows of beads or pearls with a frontal blossom-shaped clasp), the large diamond- or lozenge-shaped ear-ornaments, and the broad necklace and the rim of the crown (both with blossoms at intervals). The chief part of the crown consists of the three upright disks (maulicakratraya, RT.V.231) which are characteristic of the crown of Kashmir, also inlaid with round jewels. Above them, against the upper part of the nimbus, as in early Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha images of the 9th and 10th centuries, there hovers a lotus blossom. The flat plain nimbus, which may have extended downward below shoulder-level, had vertical sides, and the top curves inward to meet in a point at the apex, behind the lotus. The sculpture being placed against the side-wall of the sanctum, it was not possible to discover whether there is any carving (a fourth face, for example) on the back of the nimbus; the local people could provide no information, and indeed the pancayat was hostile to all examination of the sanctum contents.

The torso has an unnaturally symmetrical hour-glass shape, nipped in at the waist which is marked by a transverse line, and a cross centred on the navel was incised very formally, without understanding of its anatomical purpose. The neck is rather too tall and carved with the trirekha. The facial features are somewhat blurred, presumably by rubbing in the course of worship; the eyes are open, and a fringe of long curls, parted in the centre, appear on the brow below the crown rim, as in Kashmir.

Two very large animal profiles appear on the sides of the central head, that of the Lion to the right and of the Boar to the left. They project horizontally, well clear of the shoulders (immediately above the top edge of the vanamālā, extending from there up to the lower rim of the crown), as in Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha icons, and not at an angle as in north Indian images. (The corresponding heads in the Kashmiri fragment at karimchi, No.08 in this Report, are severely damaged, but the remains clearly show that they

were equally large and heavy.) The animal heads are not provided with separate crowns, but tall triangular elements lined with round gems appear above them, curiously inserted in front of the side-disks into the main crown rim, which is made to bulge correspondingly at that point. This is clearly a misunderstanding of the Kashmiri iconography, in which the side-heads wear an element of the triple-peaked crown (as in north India they wear the subsidiary karanadamukuta) coalesced with the royal triple disks, The animal faces are composed of large rounded masses, with slightly bulging eyes (complete with eyebrows), opened mouths revealing rows of teeth, and small pointed ears above those of the central Viṣṇu face. They are clearly differentiated, the Lion-head having bulging pads on the upper lip and a long flat nose, the Boar-head being elongated with a square jaw, raised snout, and long tusk extending up to the corner of the eye. Both have a short fringe of human curls high on the brow below the crown rim, and the long curve around the back of the jaw representing animal hair, as in the Kashmiri sculptures.

The dagger, which is usually worn at the right hip in Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha icons (as is the case in No.08, the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha at Karimchi), is omitted from this Vallapura Version.

## **06.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

The image of Vaikuṅṭha at Vallapura / Bilavar, like its probable Kashmiri archetype at Karimchi, is to be dated late in the 10th century, which accords fairly well with kak's suggested date for the Vallapura temple, ca. AD 1000 (loc.cit., p.76).



Nr. 06: Vallapura (Bilavar)  
Bilakesvara-Temple, Bilavar, Jammu, Kashmir

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### 07. D. Ref.: Bilavar 43- # 57 DREI- oder VIERKOPFIGER HARIHARA

Stein: 134 x 56 x 44

ursprünglich 4 Arme

Bilakesvara temple, Bilavar (Billaur), Jammu Division, Kashmir (Siwalik-Gebirge, nordlich der Daman-i-Koh-Ebene)

#### 07.1 DESCRIPTION:

The image stands against the back wall of the sanctum of the Bilakesvara temple in Vallapura / Bilavar, near the north-west corner. (On the territory of Vallapura and its history, see 06.1 in this Report.) It has suffered considerable damage, the face and the central disk of the crown, the right half of the nimbus, the forearms, most of the vanamālā, and the feet, all being broken off. The broken ends of the legs have been set into a rectangular pitha of Kashmiri type, with moulded sides and a water-spout at one

end, which may well be the original pedestal for this image. The nimbus is pierced, forming a wide flat ring around the multiple heads of the deity, and rises to a point at the apex. It is there carved with a crescent supporting a motif, conceivably in imitation of a Buddhist maṇḍala, which consists of four disks or round petals, surrounding a central circle in the shape of a cross, against a square background. From this there curves down across the face of the nimbus a remarkable version of the patralata, almost resembling more an ornamental baldric than a leafy vine. Below it, rising from behind the shoulder of the deity and perhaps also deriving from Buddhist art, is a cloud-like billow of cloth.

The sculpture represents a male figure standing in a light ābhaṅga posture with the hips slightly deflected to the left and the right leg advanced. The anatomy is similar to that of No.05, but carved more decisively in imitation of the Kashmiri style; the belly is rounded and slightly protruberant, the top of the abdominal region defined by a sharp sloping line to either side under the chest. But the elongation, both of the trunk and of the neck, which was noted in No.05, is also in evidence here, contrasting with the heavy shoulders. The figure wears an adhoṃśuka or dhotī, the folds of cloth represented by curving doubled parallel lines on the thighs. Over this garment is slung an animal skin, apparently that of a lion or tiger, the head of the animal appearing on the right thigh. The corresponding covering on the left thigh spangled with six star-like flowers scattered on its surface. A long folded scarf curves down from the waist over these coverings, above the knee, with a subsidiary loop on the left side. A belt, studded with two rows of pearls or other round gems and held by a central floral clasp, is slung low on the hips and tilted to the right to conform to the ābhaṅga posture. The upvita cord loops in the centre, behind the top of the belt-clasp. A broad necklace with attached flower-ornaments, in form very similar to the belt, hangs on the chest, and a longer necklace, consisting of a thin cord or chain, supports a floral pendant hanging on the upper abdomen. The ear ornament on the right is a diamond-shaped plaque edged with pearls, as in No.06, but that left is a solid disk with a raised rim. The figure wore a vanamālā of the kind seen partly preserved on No.06, with scale-like leaves and superimposed blossoms; it does not appear along the top of the shoulders, however, but emerges lower down, from

behind the upper arms, to curve briefly forward below the biceps and under the forearms, at which point it is broken off, on both sides, As there are no fragments of this garland on the remaining portions of the legs, it must have looped near the ankles. The face, as noted above, has been broken off; the missing features are crudely replaced today by cup-shaped silver eyes (inlaid with turquoise) and a flat silver nose-plate attached to the stone. The right half of a third eye seems to be clearly visible on the forehead, but rubbing and the application of sindhur make this observation uncertain. Long strands of coiled hair hang from the back of the head behind the ears and spread along the shoulders, some reaching as far as the keyūras on the upper arms. Curls also appear on the brow beneath the rim of the crown, parted at the centre. The crown itself is of the same triple-disk type seen in No.06, with small blossoms at the side of the head, as often in Kashmiri images. A large lotus flower, with finely carved filaments, appears above the damaged central disk of the crown.

Two side-faces emerge laterally from the central head, that on the left being mostly broken off. This damaged face was that of an animal, as can be seen by the small pointed ear, the line of bristling hair curving around the back of the jaw, and the whiskers appearing near the corner of the mouth. In all probability (see below) this was the profile of the Boar or Varāha incarnation of Viṣṇu, whose head appears in this position in the Vaikuṅṭha image (no.06). Here, however, its crown is fully represented, consisting of a jewelled headband supporting a central disk of the kind which appear in the crown of the principal head. The other side-head, on the right, is intact apart from the nose (it is also free of the oil which blackens the rest of the sculpture, showing the material to be a soft, brownish white stone), and clearly represents the Bhairava aspect of Śiva. This is not merely a profile but a complete face, as can be seen when the sculpture is viewed from the side, its demonic features quite obviously copied from Kashmiri iconography, The divided lower lip, the ends of curled moustaches, thick bushy eyebrows arching over furiously bulging eyes and ending in the twin knobs of a frown above the root of the nose, are typical of the face of Bhairava, and of Kapila on the reverse of Vaikuṅṭha images, in the sculpture of kashmir. A large third eye divides the low forehead, its tip piercing the central parting in the vertical jatas. The crown

consists of a coiled snake (its scales indistinguishable from the leaves of the vanamālā on the right arm below it) whose tail is carved at the side of the head so as to be visible from the front of the image, and whose three heads rise in the shape of a trident above the eye on the forehead, Above this, the chief part of the crown consists of five grinning skulls. This right side of the image, with the head of Bhairava and the lion-skin, represents Śiva, and the left side must represent Viṣṇu with the head of one of his animal-avatāras, most probably of the Varāha. (The difference in shape of the ear-ornaments, noted above, is typical of combined Indian images of this sort; in this case, however, the disk or large ring would normally be associated with Śiva and the diamond-shape with Viṣṇu, as in the Vaikuṅṭha image (No.06). Their reversal in this sculpture can probably be seen as an iconographical error on the part of the Vallapura sculptors, working as they were in relative isolation both from the north Indian plains and the Kashmir valley where the norms were set.) The piece corresponds iconographically to the Harihara from Kashmir in the Museum für indische Kunst in Berlin (MfIK No.I.5835), consisting of the combined forms of Māheśvara Śiva and Vaikuṅṭha Viṣṇu. The back of the image, where the Berlin sculpture shows the split features of two krodharsis (kapila and Durvasas?), could not be examined for the reasons mentioned above in connexion with No.06.

The religious context in which this image was made at Vallapura is indicated by the other remains found in the sanctum. As shown in 06.1, in discussing the Vaikuṅṭha image there, the place was clearly the centre of a thriving Viṣṇu-cult. Further pieces, executed in the same style, show that a Śiva-cult existed alongside it. Kak mentions a "Liṅga, five-headed, very much defaced" (No.3 in his list) which was not there at the time of my examination of the sanctum in March 1994 (unless it is hidden beneath the metal covering of the Liṅga which is under worship), but two seated Ganesas that he describes (Kak Nos.2 and 11) were still to be seen, and the remains of a stone Nandi (Kak No. 13), stood in the forecourt. The Harihara image thus represented the coalescence of these two cults. (The identity of the three "finials", which are also clearly cult-objects, and which Kak describes under Nos.4 to 6, is uncertain.)

## 07.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

The sculpture represents Harihara, combining the two multiheaded forms of Śiva and Viṣṇu, māheśvara and Vaikuṅṭha, in the style of Vallapura but derived from the iconography of Kashmir.

Vallapura, 10th century.



Nr. 07: Valapura (Bilavar)

Bllakesvara-Temple, Bilavar, Jammu, Kashmir

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## 08. D. Ref.: DREIKOPIGER VIṢṆU

Steinrelief: Block 51.5 x 40.5 x 23.5

Buste

Wahrscheinlich aus Kaladhera; archaologisches Depot in Manwal (Nr. MWL-44 (12), Jammu Division, Kashmi (Siwalik-Gebirge, nordlich der Daman-i-Ko-Ebene)

## 08.1 DESCRIPTION:

This is a large, battered block from a temple wall, It is carved with a shallow niche based on a plain shelf and flanked by two round pilasters with rings, The relief within the niche, severely eroded and damaged, represents a three-headed bust. The main head has a necklace, pendant ear-ornaments, and a high crown, perhaps of the triple-disk type. From the right side of the face there projects a small lion-head with a bulging eye and open mouth, surmounted by a single-peaked crown. On the left, a small protruberance with a round eye and a tilted front evidently represented the Boar-head with a similar crown.

There is no new iconographical information to be gleaned from this battered relic. The fact that in later times, presumably as the cult declined and the iconography lost its importance, the side-heads of Vaikuṅṭha could be greatly reduced in size and deformed in order to fit them into too small a space, is already known from other late images.

It is however of considerable interest to note that Vaikuṅṭha, like multiheaded Śiva, could appear as a bust at least in the role of a subsidiary deity on temple walls, and possibly as a lintel-figure above a temple entrance signifying the identity of the chief deity to be worshipped within. No cult-image of this type has yet been discovered.

## 08.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

Vaikuṅṭha in the form of a bust, occurring as a subsidiary deity in a niche on a temple wall.

Manwal or kaladera, ca, 11th century.



Nr. 08: Kaladhera oder Manwal  
Archäologisches Depot, Manwal, Jammu, Kashmir  
(Devi Bhagavati-Templebezirk)

#### **09. D. Ref.: DREI-oder VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: 75 x 50 x 27

Arme abgebrochen

Aus dem Kashmir-Tal; archäologisches Depot, Karimchi, Jammu Division, Kashmir  
(Siwalik-Gebirge, nördlich der Daman-i-Koh-Ebene)

#### **09.1 DESCRIPTION:**

This is a mere limbless male trunk, the four heads of which were also broken off at a single stroke but fortunately recovered, from the temple-complex at Karimchi. The two parts were found in the course of restoration work on the temples and deposited, along with several other fragments of less significance, in the sculpture store at the site.

The two pieces together constitute the torso and heads of a Vaikuṅṭha image. The central part of the crown, most of the middle and right faces, the whole of the left face, all the arms and both legs are lost. The extensive fractures show that the material is a dense black stone, now overlaid on the surface of the sculpture by a dusty reddish-brown patina.

The powerful torso is well modelled, with a thick waist, clearly delineated abdominal musculature, and heavy shoulders. A narrow girdle with a small floral clasp is slung around the hips. The thin upavita cord falls almost vertically from the left shoulder, loops just below the clasp, and passes around the right hip behind a large dagger with a horned pommel. A small diamond-shaped srivatsa appears at the centre of the chest. The figure wears a short single-strand necklace and, very high on the arms, equally simple keyūras. Both ear-ornaments are broken off. Long rolled curls appear on the brow, parted at the centre, below the jewelled crown-rim with its central lozenge-shaped crest-jewel. The chief part of the crown consists of three disks, on the front and sides, of which the central element is mostly lost. The nimbus, which appears to have been small and set well back, is broken off.

There were two large faces projecting laterally from the sides of the central head. That on the left is completely missing, but the black area of the clean fracture has the clear and unmistakable outline of an animal-head with pricked ears. Above it the single peak of its crown appears near the back of the side-disk of Viṣṇu's crown, a conjunction which is copied in the Vallapura Vaikuṅṭha (No.06). The battered remains of the right side-head are little more than a shapeless mass, but a small pointed animal's ear is preserved above Viṣṇu's right ear, as are the curve of the jaw, the brows and the single-peaked crown. On the back of this block, shielded from the side-heads by the remains of the nimbus, appears the large Kapila-face, carved in flat relief. The face is round and grinning, with the wide short nose, the bulging eyes and bulbous frown typical of these Kashmiri Kapila-reliefs. One of the disk-shaped earrings is preserved on the right. The hair rises in thin jatās, with loosened horns of hair on both sides, and passes through a band to form a wide-spreading topknot.

These are the remains of a typical Vaikuṅṭha image from the Kashmir valley, where it was made probably in the 10th century, and transported south over the Pir Panjal range through the Banihal Pass to Karimchi, where it would have been installed in one of the four major temples. There it would inevitably have become the focus of pilgrimages from the plains, and have contributed thus to the spread of the Vaikuṅṭha cult to northern India. An example of its influence in other parts of the hill-region is surely the Vaikuṅṭha image at Vallapura / Bilavar (No.06), sculpted in the local style but clearly copied from a Kashmiri original.

## 09.2 IDENTIFICATION:

Vaikuṅṭha image from the Kashmir valley, ca. 10th century.



Nr. 09: Kashmir-Taj  
Archaeologisches Depot, Karimchi, Jammu, Kashmir

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## 11. D. Ref.: Holz: Rahmen, 35 x 19 / Figur, 20 x 14.5

4 Arme

Linke Seite des Sanktumturrahmens, Markula Devi Temple, Markula / Udaipur,  
Himachal Pradesh

### 11.1 DESCRIPTION:

This small relief occupies the fourth panel from the base of the left-hand (southern) rupasakha of the 11th-century sanctum doorframe in the wooden temple of Markula Devi at Udaipur/Markula. The sakha is dedicated to the depiction of the ten avatāras of Viṣṇu, and in this position the relief occupies the seventh position as the third of the incarnations in human form, between Paraśurāma and Rāma Dāśarathī. The avatāras, as usual in such doorframe series, have to be read from left to right on each level; on the left-hand doorpost, Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva appear between Vāmana below and Buddha above. The disposition of these figures is as follows:

<b>(Left)</b>	<b>(Right)</b>
Buddha	Kalkin
Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva	Rāma Dāśarathī
Vāmana Bhargava	(Paraśu-) Rāma
Narasimha	Varāha
Matsya	Kūrma

The carving shows a four-armed figure, wearing the Kashmiri-style crown, kuṇḍalas, short hara, upavita and mekhala, seated on the pericarp of a circular lotus. The attributes are padma and upright śaṅkha in the lower hands, and a spokeless cakra and ribbed gadā, held by the middle of the shaft, in the upper.

The side-heads are scarcely distinguishable from each other, as is usual in Kashmiri images of the 11th century. Only a narrowing and slight elongation of the proper left

profile confirms that the differentiation was still understood, and that the Varāha-head is conventionally placed.

By virtue both of its iconography and its location in the sequence of the daśāvatāras, therefore, there can be no doubt that this figure represents Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva as the Vāsudeva as the avatāra of Viṣṇu as Vaikuṅṭha.

## 11.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The carving represents KṚṢṆA VĀSUDEVA as the AVATĀRA OF VIṢṆU Vaikuṅṭha. Markula, 11th century.



Nr. 11: Candrabhaga-Tal  
Markula Devi Temple (Sanktumturahmen), Udaipur/Markula,  
Himachal Pradesh

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## 12. D. Ref.: DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (FRAGMENT)

Stein: 16 x 22 x 9.5

Fragment eines 8-armigen Bildwerkes

Aus Ajmer District, Rajasthan (Rajputana Museum Depot 1076)

### 12.1 DESCRIPTION:

This is a damaged fragment in grey stone representing the three heads of Vaikuṅṭha encircled by a lotus-nimbus with a pearl border and an outer frame of lotus petals. The central face and the lower part of its crown is smashed; the remains of the crown at the top show it to have been a straight-sided cylindrical kirītā. The animal side-heads project from behind the sides of the central face, below the crown rim, Narasiṃha on the proper right and Varāha on the left; they are both angled downwards in the Kashmiri manner, not upwards as in the Mathura tradition. The side-heads wear the sloping karanda-mukuṭa. The end of the sword-blade, originally held in one of the right hands, is preserved on the proper right side of the nimbus, indicating that the image was eight-armed, holding the sword and shield, bow and arrow, in addition to the standard four Vaiṣṇava attributes. The style is consistent with a date in the latter half of the 10th century, by which time the Vaikuṅṭha cult had clearly been established in the Ajayameru (Ajmer) area, which was in a region controlled by the independent Rajputs. The complete image would have been about 60 cm in height if seated on Garuḍa, or about 100 cm if standing.

### 12.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The fragment represents the heads of the Rajput Vaikuṅṭha of the 10th century in the Ajayameru region of Rajasthan.



Nr. 12: Ajmer, Rajasthan  
Rajputana Museum, Ajmer (1076)

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### 13. DREIKOPRIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 41.5 x 30 x 13

Ursprünglich 8 Arme

Makarmandi Tempel, Nimaj, Raipur Taluk, Pali District, Rajasthan

#### 13.1 DESCRIPTION:

The image was found in the sculpture store at the site of the Makar or Makarmandi temple near Nimaj, south of the River Luni, 35 km west of Beawar on the road to Jodhpur. The temple site lies about 2 km across fields to the south of the branch-road to Nimaj.

The damaged sculpture shows three-headed Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuda against the remains of a rectangular stele. The elongated figure of Viṣṇu is sparsely

ornamented with a fairly plain kirītā, broader at the top than at the rim, small but prominent kuṇḍalas, a double-strand pearl necklace, a thick upavita, keyūras, mekhala, and a long vanamālā looping around the face of Garuḍa. One of the raised right hands holds a large fluted mace upright in the right thigh, and the lowest hand on this side appears to have displayed the varadamudrā. The corresponding left hand rests on the left thigh and supports a large inverted śaṅkha. The remaining hands are broken. The figure of Garuḍa, broken off below the waist, supports Viṣṇu's right foot behind his own head, and the left knee.

The side-faces of Viṣṇu show a marked departure from the usual iconography. The Varāha head appears on the proper right, instead of the more usual left, and is angled downwards in the Kashmiri manner. The face on the proper left side is clearly intended to represent Narasiṃha, but is more human, or anthropoid, than leonine in appearance, conveying the distinct impression of being a depiction of a monkey, and this observation applies equally to the features of the anthropomorphic Garuḍa. The bulging eyes are hooded by heavy lids, and they have thick arching brows; the nose is small on an enlarged upper lip, and the mouth is open, revealing a double row of square teeth. Although considerably more effort has gone into the modelling of this face than into the rather characterless boar profile, it is clearly the work of an artist untrained in the representation of animal faces, and who evidently had never seen a Vaikuṅṭha image but was attempting to give shape to the deity on the mere basis of an iconographical description. The predominantly human form of the Man-Lion face suggests that even the concept of Narasiṃha might have been misunderstood. Nevertheless, it is not possible to say that this is an early attempt at formulating the Vaikuṅṭha image in the independent Rajput states in the mid-10th century; the style is late, with a curiously sinuous and attenuated angularity somewhat reminiscent of the Later Kalacuri manner, and must be dated to the late 10th or 11th century (for Kalacuri contact with Solāṅkī territory and the introduction of Solāṅkī influence, see No.1 above, Bilhari, 01.1 and 01.1.1.); for similarities of posture, ornament, and iconography, but without Garuḍa, compare 11th-century examples from the Paramara regions to the south-east (T. S.

Maxwell, Bericht an die DFG vom 14.01.1994, S.206 and 250, Nr. 56 and 66:  
Hinglajgadh and Pippaliya-Jatti).

### 13.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

Garuḍa-mounted Vaikuṅṭha of exceptional iconography, produced 75 km to the south-west of Ajayameru in the 11th century.



Nr. 13: Nimaj, Pali District, Rajasthan  
Sculpture store, Makarmandi temple

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### 14. D. Ref.: DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 74 x 36 x 21

Arme abgebrochen

Ramaji Tempel, Kusuma, Rajasthan

#### 14.1 DESCRIPTION:

The image is a late sculpture which has been installed in the left-hand interior niche of the rebuilt maṇḍapa of the ancient temple of Sadasiva (now called the Ramji ka mandir) at Kusuma, 5 km from Varman, to the north-west of Abu on the road to Bhinmal. It is a Solāṅkī-style image, severely damaged and eroded, now smothered in red sindhur powder. The stele is round-topped with a pancaratha base. Upon this appears three-faced Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa. The figure is flanked, on the edges of the stele, by small avatāra-panels, above which an arch of diamond-and rosette motifs frames a nimbus with pointed rays. The Viṣṇu figure has the typically round face and narrow kirītā of the Solāṅkī style, and the side-faces of Narasiṃha and Varāha are extremely narrow. The number of arms cannot be definitely determined due to the damage, but appears to have been either twelve or fourteen. The two front hands are held in the conjoined dhyāna and vyākhyāna postures, forming the so-called yogamudrā.

## 14.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

A Solāṅkī image of Vaikuṅṭha seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa, dating to the 12th of 13th century, from the area west of Abu.



Nr. 14: Kusuma, Abu region, Rajasthan  
Ramaji ka mandir (Sadasiva Temple), Kusma

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**15. D.Ref.: Stein: 19.5 x 11 (Saulenrelief)**

8 Arme

Westseite der nordostlichen maṇḍapa-Saule vor dem Sanktum des Somesvara-Tempels (Nr.1), Kiradu, Barmer District, Rajasthan

**15.1 DESCRIPTION:**

Kiradu (classical Kiratakupa) is situated 16 miles NNW of Barmer and 2 miles from the village of Hatma, in the District of Mallani. The earliest official notice is in the Report for 1907-08 of the Archaeological Survey of India, Western Circle, pp.40-42, 48-54. Temple 1, the Somesvara, stands in the desert at the eastern end of the temple complex facing due west, parallel to the range of hills which form the northern horizon. Kiratakupa was a major centre of the westernmost branch of the paramara dynasty (DHNI.2: 842-843, 925-930; see also Schwartzberg, HASA: 32, 147); local Paramara occupancy of the place seems to date between ca. AD 995-1161, after which there is no further information, but the main Paramara lines (in Lata, Malava, Candravati and Arbuda) endured until ca. AD 1300. The images in the bhadrā-niches and the doorframe iconography clearly indicate that this was a Śiva temple. Dhaky dates it on the basis of his stylistic analysis to ca. AD 1020 (Pramod Chandra, *Studies in Indian Temple Architecture*, New Delhi 1975: pl.60, 92 and captions); an inscription in the temple contains the date V.S. 1210 (AD 1152 / 53), which may however refer to a temporary Cahamana conquest, rather than to the date of construction.

The relief appears on the west face of the pillar standing at the north-eastern corner of the octagonal maṇḍapa, in front of the sanctum on the left-hand (northern) side. The upper image in the sculptured bands on this side of the pillar, below the capital, represent Vaisnavi holding gadā and cakra in her two upper hands; the somewhat

larger image of Vaikuṅṭha appears directly beneath it. This relief depicts three-faced Viṣṇu seated on an ornamented cushion behind winged anthropomorphic Garuḍa, as in Solāṅkī images. The legs of Viṣṇu are broken off, but they were clearly raised in a squatting position with the feet supported on Garuḍa's hands. The vanamālā of Viṣṇu loops around Garuḍa's waist like a thick girdle. Viṣṇu has a large round face with backward combed hair, on which is placed a small tapering kirītā. The other body ornaments are kuṅḍalas, a triple-strand pearl necklace, a longer necklace hanging between the breasts, and further strings which loop around them, pointed keyūras, and a beaded mekhala. All the hands and attributes are either damaged or missing, but the following iconography can be reconstituted from the remains:

(Right)	(Left)
khaḍga	kheṭaka
gadā	cakra
dhanus	sara
yoga-	-mudrā

This is iconographically very close to the classic Solāṅkī image, of course, but the style is earlier, and this applies also to the side-heads, which project from behind the sides of the central face, angled downwards; they are almost concealed by the weapons held adjacent to them in the upper hands, but are not as narrow as they were to become in later Solāṅkī images. The style and iconography are both very similar to those of the early Solāṅkī standing Vaikuṅṭha on the wall of the Viṣṇu temple at Sandera in Gujarat, which is also dateable circa AD 1025-1050 (see T. S. Maxwell, Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992, S.48, Nr. 12).

## 15.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

Vaikuṅṭha mounted on Garuḍa, a minor image in the context of a large and important Śiva temple of the most westerly branch of the Paramara dynasty in the mid-11th century.



Nr. 15: Kiradu, Barmer district, Rajasthan  
maṇḍapa, Somesvara Temple, Kiratakupa

## 16. D. Ref;: DREIKOPFIGER VIŚṆU

Stein: 90 x 78

Ursprünglich 10 Arme

Westbhadranische des Viṣṇu tempels, Kiradu / Kiradu / Kiratakupa, Barmer District,  
Rajasthan

### 16.1 DESCRIPTION:

The image is located in the image-niche of the jangha on the west bhadra of the east-facing Viṣṇu temple at the western end of the Paramara temple complex at Kiratakupa (Kiradu). This temple stands opposite the Śaiva Somesvara at the other end of the complex (see No.15 above). The tower and the north and east walls, of the vimāna have collapsed, only the south and west walls, and the separate octagonal maṇḍapa, are preserved. It is dated to the late 10th century on stylistic grounds by M. A Dhaky

(Pramod Chandra, *Studies in Indian Temple Architecture*, New Delhi 1975: 152, *Chronology of Maha Gurjara Temples*); it is thus contemporary with Sasbahu temple, Nagda (T. S. Maxwell, *Beicht an die DFG vom 1401.1994: S.267-278*) and both are examples of the Maha-Gurjara architectural style. The image is illustrated in Aschwin Lippe, *Indian Mediaeval Sculpture*, Amsterdam etc. 1978, p.18 and pl.66.

The relief is an adaptation of the typical Garuḍa-mounted Vaikuṅṭha icon. It is here mythologically interpreted to illustrate the theme of Viṣṇu Gajendramoksa or Karivarada. The male elephant stands in the lower right corner of the panel and Viṣṇu, conceived as descending to the rescue of Garuḍa, directs his glance towards it, while the smaller female elephant stands apart in the lower left corner. Garuḍa appears at the base of the composition in dynamic flying posture with the serpent prominently shown hanging from his neck, his face (now obliterated) turned upward to look at Viṣṇu's inclined countenance. Viṣṇu is seated in lalitāsana, his right leg over Garuḍa's right shoulder and his left foot against his throat in an extremely dominating posture. All the hands and attributes are broken off, and only the extended uppermost right arm is to any extent preserved.

Viṣṇu is three-headed but the smaller side-aces, instead of appearing in the form of animal profiles (Nṛsiṃha and Varāha), are both in the human shape. The proper left side-head appears rather more elongated than the right, but this is probably a technical device to ensure its visibility, since the central head of Viṣṇu is tilted to that side, and its features are clearly human. The expression on both side-faces is tranquil, the eyes being closed unlike those of the central face, and this doubled image of serenity effectively enhances the general impression of vast untroubled condescension. There appears to be no specific cult significance to these identical aspects, as there is to the differentiated animal-faces of Vaikuṅṭha, but the concept of omniscience and the awoken compassion of the deity to a specific misfortune -- his grace or prāsāda -- is clearly conveyed. The relief does not represent Vaikuṅṭha, but is based upon the conventional image of that form.

## Note:

The ASI Western Circle Report for 1907-08 notes that "Vishnu has three faces of which one has a tusk and is consequently that of Varāha" (p.42, 54). I was unable to detect the tusk. If it is indeed present, it must be an extremely small feature of one of the side-faces and therefore not considered by the artist to be of significance, for it cannot be seen at such a distance from the ground; nor are leonine features to be detected in the other face. Importance was clearly given to rendering the side-heads in human, not animal, form; and it is to this face that weight must be given in interpreting the intention of the sculpture.

## 16.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image shows VIṢṆU GAJENDRAMOKSA in a form adapted from the Vaikuṅṭha icon for a mythological panel on the vimāna wall of a major Paramara Vaiṣṇava temple of circa AD 1000.



Nr. 16: Kiradu, Barmer District, Rajasthan

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## 17. D. Ref.: DREIKOPRIGER VAISNAVI

Stein: ca. 40 x 30

8 Arme

Rechte Seitenwand des antarāla, Sūrya Temple, Ranakpur, Rajasthan

### 17.1 DESCRIPTION:

The Sūrya temple stands apart from the main Jaina complex at Ranakpur. It is a misrajati temple, combining elements of the nagara and bhumiya types, and belongs to the great revival of Indian architecture which took place in the 15th century (Krishna Deva in Pramod Chandra, *Studies in Indian Temple Architecture*, New Delhi 1975: 107-108 and pl. 46, 47). In the antarāla between octagonal maṇḍapa and sanctum, the side-walls have a prominent central niche in the form of a miniature shrine, and at the junction of walls and ceiling a band of relief sculpture which is continued across the architrave above the sanctum doorframe. The main deity at the centre of the friezes on the side-walls is feminine, representing a combined form of female Hari-Hara-Brahmā-Sūrya on the left, and on the right a female form of Vaikuṅṭha.

This 'Vaikuthi' sits in bhadrasana, both feet on the pedestal, on a small figure of female Garuḍa who emerges from the pedestal in a frontal posture and puts her right arm round the right leg of Vaikunthi, while her left hand supports the left foot. The vanamālā of Vaikunthi curves down to the pedestal. Her side-heads are elongated but their features are indistinguishable.

She wears three karanda-mukuṭas and the usual ornaments, but no long necklace or upavita. The eight hands appear to hold the following attributes:

(Right)

gadā

sara

khaḍga

varadamudrā

(Left)

kheṭaka

dhanus

cakra(?)

śaṅkha.

## 17.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A 15th-century female version of Vaikuṅṭha, perhaps to be termed VAIKUTHI, with eight arms, as a minor deity flanking the antarāla of a Sūrya in a Jaina context.



Nr. 17: Sūrya Temple, Ranakpur, Rajasthan  
Rechte antarāla-Wand

Marmer: 126.5 x 64 x 28 (H. der Viṣṇu figur: 94)

4 Arme

Hoftempel, Jaigadh

## 18.1 DESCRIPTION:

This image was first referred to in my initial report (T. S. Maxwell, Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990, S,56-58). On that occasion I had been unable to make very detailed observation, or to measure the image, because of the robes and ornaments in which it had been dressed for purposes of worship. During my more recent visit to the temple (07.11.1994), with the cooperation of the Director of the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum in the City Palace at Jaipur and Director of the Jaigadh Public Charitable Trust, Mr. Yadnendra Sahai, and of the temple priest, it was possible to study and photograph and image without these obstruction. This has led to a reassessment of the sculpture, which is contained in the following description.

This stele is rectangular with the upper arc of the nimbus paralleled by a curve at the top; the base of the curve is inset by a few centimetres, giving a hipped outline to the stele. The plinth is pancaratha, with a lotus (on which Viṣṇu stands) on the top surface of the central salient. The backslab is pierced behind the figure of Viṣṇu, from the plinth up to the curved base of the nimbus.

The sculpture represents the five-headed, four-armed figure of Viṣṇu standing in an ābhaṅga posture, the weight on the right foot with the hip thrown out and the left foot slightly advanced. The rear arms are lowered and held away from the body, while the right hands are lowered to a level with the upper thighs. The rear hands hold, against the two sides of the stele, a bow on the left and a sheaf of arrows, points upward, on the right. A large śaṅkha is held in the lower left hand, its point tilted toward the hip. The corresponding right arm is bent outward while the hand is turned inward, palm down, with the fingers on the hip and the palm resting on the grip of the inverted gadā.

Below the śaṅkha in the lower left hand, on the first step of the plinth, stands the Cakrapuruṣa. On the opposite side stands the Śaṅkhapuruṣa balancing a small conch upright on his left palm at waist level. On lotus brackets attached to the front of these steps sit two miniature worshipping figures, male on the proper right and female on the left. The two goddesses on the second steps to left and right may be presumed to represent Sri Lakṣmī and Puṣṭi or Bhūdevī, the two consorts of Viṣṇu. At the outer extremities of the plinth, on the third steps, stand Balarāma / Saṅkarṣaṇa on the right side, with a canopy of six cobra-heads over his crown, and a figure with coiled hair, perhaps Bhairava, on the left. Immediately above the heads of the goddess and Bhairava on this side, carved in relief on the backslab, is the unsupported cakṛa of Viṣṇu, bisected by the bow which is held in front of it. This separate depiction of the disk was necessary because, in a four-armed image holding the bow and arrows, one of the main Vaiṣṇava emblems was bound to be displaced; but the reason why the bow and arrows were represented in the hands of Viṣṇu in preference to --rather than in addition to -- the disk and lotus is not immediately clear.

These specific five attributes as a group -- conch and mace, bow and arrows, with the separate disk -- and their arrangement are not mentioned by any of the existing silpasastra texts as identifying a particular form of Viṣṇu. On the basis of Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa 3.47.11-16, however, the mace and disk represent the sun and moon, and signify Puruṣa and Prakṛti in the hands of Vāsudeva, while the bow and arrow are the specific attributed of Pradyuman and represent Yoga and Sankhya. A syncretistic intention is perhaps indicated by the identity of the matching image in the same shrine, which is Harihara (in which the identifying attributes of Hari are disk and conch).

Above the disk, behind the bow and arrows on either side, two bhaktas kneel on lotuses and pay homage to the god. At the top on either side sit Brahmā on the right and, on the left, Śiva cross-legged on a lotus holding in his raised hands the trident on the right and a rearing cobra opposite, with the kamaṇḍalu in the lowered left hand and the right in varadamudrā. The nimbus behind the heads of Viṣṇu consists of an eight-petalled lotus,

with detailed band of stamens surrounding the large pericarp which is engraved with numerous seeds, encircled by a ring of the diamond-and-rosette motif and, outside this, a further ring lightly incised with lotus petals. It is not pierced. The crown is a kirītā composed of staggered facets rising from a high diadem, with prominent splayed tabs on either side, and the ear-ornaments are makara-kuṇḍalas.

From behind the sides of Viṣṇu's face, below the crown rim, emerge four heads in profile. The larger of the two represent the head of Narasiṃha on the proper right and Varāha on the left, both projecting downward parallel to the slope of the shoulders. Above them, superimposed on the sides of the sloping crowns of the Man-Lion and Boar, project the heads of Matsya on the proper right and Kūrma on the left. The Fish has a band of scales behind the face, and the Turtle's head is shown emerging from its shell.

These four side-heads are derived from the Kanauj iconography of Viśvarūpa, though neither the number of arms of the main figure nor the figures on the stele conform to Viśvarūpa iconography. In terms of conventional iconography the image therefore represents neither Viśvarūpa nor Vaikuṇṭha.

## 18.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The image appears to represent a combined form of VĀSUDEVA and PRADYUMNA, characterised respectively by the attributes of mace and disk, bow and arrows; in symbolic terms this would make it an apotheosis of the Puruṣa and Prakṛiti elements of the Sankhya system, and of the Sankhya itself combined with Yoga. The heads of the image, however, are those of the Kanauj Viśvarūpa, It is a late icon, probably of the 12th century, which does not correspond to the Vaiṣṇava Solankī imagery Gujarat at the same period.



Nr. 18: Hoftempel, Jaigad, Rajasthan

## 19. D.Ref.: VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 43 x 21 x 20.5 (Fragment)

Arme abgebrochen

Aus Sankhadhara, Banaras (Varanasi); Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi, Bangladesh (2891)

### 19.1 DESCRIPTION:

I have discussed this fragment on the basis of published photographic evidence in my Report of 30.07.1992: 131-137. In March 1995 I was able to study and photograph the image myself in the Varendra Research Museum at Rajshahi, and the following discussion is based upon the first-hand observations made at the time; this should be compared and eventually merged with my earlier report.

The fragment consists of the armless torso and four heads of a Vaikuṅṭha image. It was discovered by B. C. Bhattacharya who referred to it as Sadharana Viṣṇu, at Sankhadhara in Banaras circa 1920 (Bridavan C. Bhattacharya, *Indian images* Part 1, 1921: 8 and n.3, 10 n.6, pl. IV; and JUPHS 1921), Bhattacharya's photograph, taken in situ at Banaras, shows that it had already sustained the damage which it now shows before discovery; some fragments lying nearby on the platform may have belonged to it, but these appear not to have been recovered and Bhattacharya makes no mention of them. The piece was later taken to Rangpur, where it was added to the private collection of Nalini Mohan Ray Chaudhuri, Zamindar of Tapa (Niradbandhu Sanyal, "A Tour in Dinajpur and Rangpur", *Varendra Research Society's Monographs* No.4 Rajshahi, July 1930: 30-31: "a four-headed bust of Viṣṇu"); of the sculptures in this collection "most of them, I hear, are obtained from Benares and its neighbourhood" (*ibid.*). Sanyal refers to the notice of this image by D. C. Bhattacharya in his book *Indian Images*, but omits to acknowledge that it was the latter who discovered it despite his several published claims to have found it personally. Subsequently the image was acquired by the Varendra Research Museum at Rajshahi, which then came under the administrative aegis of Rajshahi University. The university has no separate record of this piece, and the museum appears unaware of its Indian provenance. No doubt in view of its transfer from the Tapa collection, its museum label names Rangpur as its source and it is assumed to have originated there despite its Central Indian style.

This is the only known example of a Vaikuṅṭha image in which the four heads were carved almost in the round.

Seen from the front, the fragment shows the head and torso of Viṣṇu with the large profiles of the Narasiṃha head (proper right, largely broken) and Varāha head (left) projecting laterally from behind the central face. The torso of Viṣṇu wears a heavy quadruple hara consisting of a simple pearl necklace, followed by twisted torque with pearls, and a third necklace with long pointed pendants; a cruciform jewel (the Kaustubha) is affixed to the centre of the latter two. A fourth, longer necklace outlined in pearls hangs between the breasts, with a second cruciform jewel (representing the

srivatsa mark) placed inside it at the centre of the chest. The upavita curves down the left side of the fourth necklace, parallel to it. This is the typical body ornamentation of the Candella style. In the elongated ear lobes are circular kuṇḍalas, half turned to the front. A broad curving band of hair, combed back in wavy lines, ornamented with a small cruciform jewel at the centre and with blossoms at the temples, surmounts the forehead. Above this rises a tall, thin, tapering kirītā. Its base consists of a diadem with a central grasamukha from the mouth of which hang pearlstrings with pointed pendants and a further central jewel. The tapering upper section has facets at the sides and back ornamented with an inverted chevron motif and vertical chevron motif and vertical pearlstrings between them. The face of Viṣṇu is somewhat square. The mouth shows a slight smile and the eyes are contemplative, half-open and glancing downward' the irises are incised.

The side-heads of lion and boar project horizontally from between the backs of the two heads of Viṣṇu and Kapila, between which there is a space of several centimeters. The animal side-heads wear long flat tapering crowns based on a diadem and ending in a point; they consist of central spine of five lozenges with spiral lobes at the sides.

The head of Narasiṃha has been severely damaged, the whole of the upper jaw having been broken off from a point below the eyes. The remaining features are strenuously bulging eyes with a stylised frown between them beneath a creased brow, and the lower row of teeth and the tongue, indicating that the mouth was shown wide-open. The Varāha head is intact, though the upper part of its crown has been broken away. This is a long heavy head, smooth-skinned, with forward-projecting hooded eyes under human eyebrows, a long snout beneath which the mouth is open to reveal a lower row of teeth and incisor fangs, and tusks protruding upward at forty-five degrees from the corners of the mouth.

At the back appears the separate head of Kapila. It grows from between the shoulders of the Viṣṇu torso at the back, on its own separate neck; it is moulded to show the trirekha. Around the neck, below the throat, hang the rear section of the necklaces

which appear on the chest of Viṣṇu; under them curves the back of the upavita. The face of Kapila is ascetic, being somewhat sunken especially around the mouth which is twisted in a rictuslike smile and partly concealed by broad curving moustaches. A short beard of the kind often seen on Bhairava images covered the jawline. The nose, broken at the tip, was short and squat, with a stylised bulging frown at the root, between the eyes. The eyes, also damaged, were set aslant in the face and protruded ferociously under high thin eyebrows beneath a wrinkled forehead. The extended lobes of the ears contain very large circular kuṇḍalas. The hairline is similar to that of Viṣṇu face on the front, but the diadem above lacks the grasamukha, which is replaced by a cruciform jewel. Above this rises a tall and intricate jata-mukuṭa culminating at the top in a bell-shaped cluster of locks. This crown of jatas is considerably lower than the kitita. The position of fracture marks on the back of the shoulders could suggest that the Kapila aspect had its own pair of arms, projecting backwards; but the marks could equally indicate the bases of rear arms which were extended forward for the Viṣṇu figure. A fragment which appears to have been an arm from this image can be seen in Bhattacharya's original photograph taken in Banaras, but unfortunately this fragment seems not to have been recovered.

### 19.1.1 HISTORICAL DISCUSSION

Despite its fragmentary and damaged condition, this is one of the most remarkable and important of all Vaikuṇṭha images. It is clearly executed in the Candella style, yet its iconography conforms precisely to kashmiri standards, which is not the case at Khajuraho. In Kashmir itself, however, there is no known model for the wide separation of the Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva and Kapila heads that is seen here, with the Narasiṃha and Varāha aspects emerging from the space between them and the point at the centre of the four heads left hollow. There can be no doubt, however, that this image would have provided a perfect focus for worship of the four aspects of kashmiri Vaikuṇṭha, and that it must have been designed in this form, and used, for this purpose.

The question now arises as to why the most Kashmiri of Candella Vaikuṅṭha image should have been made in, or transported to, Banaras, when iconographically altered forms were worshipped in the Candella heartland, at Khajuraho. The style of this piece indicates that it must have been made in the late 10th or 11th century, and it was in this period that the candellas took and held Banaras; The Candella king Dhanga, son of Yasovarman styled Kalinjaradhipati who installed the 'Laksman' temple inscription concerning Vaikuṅṭha to the made in 954 AD also issued the Nanyaura copper plate grant from Kasika (Banaras) in VS 1005 (=AD 998) (DHNI,II.679-685). Dhanga committed religious suicide "in the waters of the Ganges and Yamuna" (jahnvi-kalindyoh salile: presently at Banaras) at a date between AD 1002 and 1019 (DHNI.II.682-684). This Vaikuṅṭha image from Banaras would certainly have most relevance to the reigns of Yasovarman and Dhanga, for it was in their time that the Vaikuṅṭha cult was established in the Candella kingdom, that allegiance to the Gurjara-Pratīhāras was withdrawn, and that the northern boundary of that kingdom was extended up to the Ganges and of course Banaras along with it. Carrying the Vaikuṅṭha cult as a symbol of independence to the very boundaries of the erstwhile supreme power, and implanting it in Kasi where the Viśvarūpa cult of that power had formerly been established (see T. S. Maxwell, Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: 187-189, 213-216, Nos.34 and 39, the Gurjara-Pratīhāra Viśvarūpa images from the Mirzapur District around Banaras), would obviously have been a political gesture of great significance for the Candellas. Finally, the fact that the iconography of the four heads distinctly relates to the Vaikuṅṭha cult of Kashmir -- more clearly than do the heads of the Vaikuṅṭha images that survive at Khajuraho -- also suggests an early date, when the cult was newly imported from the Northwest and its tenets still clearly understood. Although the artistic style of this fragment is fully Candella in character, the iconography of these heads strongly implies that the image is likely to have been copied or adapted from a Kashmiri original which the sculptor had seen with his own eyes, while possibly on image brought to Khajuraho on Yasovarman, as Dhanga temples in his hahma temple inscription (see T. S. Maxwell, Bericht an die DFG vom 30.07.1992: 96-131,

No.23, esp. p.103, the inscription of Dhanga of AD 954 in the Laksman temple at Khajuraho).

## 19.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION

The Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha executed in Candella style ca. AD 1000



Nr. 19: Sankhadhara, Banaras (Varanasi)  
Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi, Bangladesh (2891)