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**GLIMPSES OF INDIAN CULTURE —
ARCHITECTURE, ART AND RELIGION**

GLIMPSES OF INDIAN CULTURE

by

K.V. Soundara Rajan

Vol. I Archaeology, and History

Vol. II Architecture, Art and Religion

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ABBREVIATIONS

BEFEO—Bulletin de l' Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient

E. Carnatica—Epigraphia Carnatica

Ind. Ant.—Indian Antiquary

JAS—Journal of the Asiatic Society, Bombay

JBBRAS—Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society

JOIB—Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda

JOR—Journal of Oriental Research, Madras

MASI—Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India

DEDICATION

In this volume, the second and companion to the first already published recently, (The Glimpses of Indian Culture—History and Archaeology) a carefully selected bunch of papers by the author out of the fairly large volume of his published papers on art, architecture and religion of India, during the quarter century gone by, is brought together. The author has modest pride in this fullfilment of his passionate cultivation of these sublime facets of Indian aesthetics on the religious side reflecting a measure of the greatly diversified constituents of this grand vista in Indology.

Art has indeed been a prime factor for bringing Indian cultural ethos to the threshold of Occidental as well as Oriental centres of Indian studies, with a greater degree of enthusiasm and animated application than any other. When we are involved in the multiple splendours of Indian temple arts and allied aesthetics, we find ourselves transported to rarer realms where we see that nothing was left untouched and unadorned by the venerable ancient Sthapatis and Sthapakas. Art of the noblest kind, attains consummation in the magnificent Triveni-sangam of Architecture, Sculpture and Bronzes and painting, swirling around the abode of immanence of the Archarupi divinity reigning within, its diffuse, dimlit, etherial interiors. Indigenous, Sanskrit-based as well as other multi-lingual technical treatises of the past had perseveringly promoted these channels and has fostered cultural understanding on a global scale.

This book is therefore, fittingly dedicated by the author, to the ever-growing band of scholars who are applying their critical apparatus and acumen to the unravelling of this profound saga.

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INTRODUCTION

God Universal is the pre-occupation of saints philosophers and intellectuals. But God immanent is the largest single unifying and ennobling of forces known to man. Visual and monumental religious art received the greatest boost in India, for which we owe a mundane debt that will remain virtually irredeemable. The abode of God—beautified by the *śilpis* and *sthapatis* and sanctified by the clergy has a dual and seemingly antithetical slant. The ever expanding spectrum of formal and aesthetic embellishments on its fabric represent the macrocosm, the *rasa*, the gamut of emotional articulations and the didactic concretisations inured to fervid piety; while, the sublimest synthesis of the law inviolate—the *sanatana dharma*—envisioned and consecrated in the heartland—the cella—stands sentinel over the precocious spiritualism and sub-conscious morbidities of human societies, across the stillness of Time. It has an unchanging equilibrium amidst the ever-dynamic forces of the cosmos. It is the *quod erat demonstrandum* for the puzzle of life. Thus, the temples of India become the whetstone of its fundamental ethics and its touchstone as well. No king, patron or commoner in India felt his life complete unless and until it was integrated with the creation, constitution and affiliation to this lodestar of human *ethos* and well being.

ARCHITECTURE

Construction of temples is governed by several considerations. Firstly, it presupposes a thriving village. It involves the nature of worship and cults that found favour with the *elite* of the village. It emphasises the prevailing vogue of regional temple forms and its iconographic filiations. It implies the patron who was interested in the creation of the temple with all the resources by way of raw materials, artisans, *sthapatis* and workers he could command with facility. It underwrites the clergy or the religious leaders who can organise, manage and enjoin

the spiritual requirements of the selection of site, transport of the raw materials by ritual procedures, including the consecration of the idol in worship. It further underscores the administration of the temple in a quasi-religious, quasi-secular day-to-day routine, either by the village committee or by *maṭha* (or monastery) or trade-guilds which will run it with the attendant ministrations and manual services which may confer participatory rights for a host of specialists like priests, musicians, oil-mongers, florists, female servants, menials and perhaps even bankers and bureaucrats. It envisages the wider range of villages which will gravitate towards it during its festivals and periodic renovations. It then places the temple in the administrative and revenue map of the kingdom or political zone and this creates further residuary rights in the temporal and spiritual gains accruing from the temple governance. Thus, the *corporate* character of the temple endeavour which does not give a monopoly of enjoyment of any or all the afore-mentioned facets of the task to *one single social unit* is more than adequately stressed. In other words, it is a vicariously established kingdom of God, with its jurisdiction and boundaries well marked, telescoped within the kingdom of a human king or chieftain and which are parallel and overlapping in scope, with only this vital distinction that the temporal kingdom might vanish but the spiritual kingdom was built to last through successions of rule, till eternity, unless overwhelmed and discarded by the materialistic diversions of man—to await, as possible, a regeneration or resuscitation at a future stage. It thus represents the overall and continuing commitment of the entire societies as the collective conscience of its rectitude and ethical-moral fabric. This changeless aspect explains the mystique of the monumental religions panorama of the countryside in India which inspires generations yet unborn.

The study of ancient temples, therefore, vitally interest not merely the art historian or his cohorts—the archaeologist and epigraphist—but equally potentially and fruitfully, the sociologist, the historian, the philosopher, the *sādhaka*, the environmentalist, the geologist, the chemist and the theologist. It thus envelopes its *organ, organism and organisation* variously—the three viable tissues of any living body and thus the specialists of any living society get themselves involved in the corporeal part of a *past* society through the *living* temple. In this regard, it may even be hazarded that a temple is never dead or decayed—only its *quondam* votaries and governance were extinct. This underscores the perennial interest of a temple for a scholar and scientist alike, as a facile measure of the achievements of whole past societies in a given span of time. The *organs* of the temple concern an art-historian, the *organismic* traits interest a theologist and a ritualist, and the *organisational* aspects, a historian, in the main; but something more ethereal, immaterial and subtle goes into the grain of a given temple. Temple studies, thus, which deal with only the organic part, without reference to the *organismic* and *organisational* aspects; could be taken as essentially stylistic-aesthetic dimensions of the

subject, and would be touching only a part, *albeit* a visually inspiring part-of the temple, as a totality. And the *organisational* part of the temple which the historian deals with is but a histriographic segment which may reveal pretty little about the temple as a self-charging, dynamic, socio-cultural entity.

In the earliest stages of the study of the temples of India, only this last aspect was given precedence because of the plethora of written records garnishing its mundane career. Organic studies of the art and architecture of the temples became not only necessary but indispensable because of a long and continuous recorded tradition of *Sthāpakas*, much of which, though not yet securely dated, are available in substantially documented, *Śilpa*, *Vāstu*, *Pratishṭha* and *Sthāpatya* literature, besides *samhitas*. Even a cursory appraisal of many of these would suggest their regional bias in the delineation of the integral parts of a temple. At the apex, however, would stand the *Bṛihat Samhita* which made some broad generalisations regarding structural and sculptural modulations. It is to be seen also that the ritual parts of the *Śilpa* and *Sthāpatya* manuals have supplementay information to add, which not unoften, like the bulk of the ritual *kriya* and *chārya* chapters themselves, do not necessarily go hand in hand with the *pratishṭha* sections that deal with formal architecture. This would seem to suggest that while the ritual postulations, have indeed been a cogently argued and working state of institutional religion, in the successive stages and regions in the country, the architectural parts are often facile summations and compilations of diverse variant vogues current, the common-factor amidst which is often not highlighted specifically. All the same, the philosophical and theological excerpts of the ritual sections do shed valuable light on the *cult* and *ācharas* current—pointedly sometimes—enabling a fair commentary of the developing studies of religion in the mental make up of the pious and god-fearing segments of society, from which the rest of the people read appropriate signals or received inspiring norms for practising their own variant cults. This *penchant* for an illuminating, candid, if sometimes obscure and strictured format of the *tantra* and *chāryapadas* of these manuals gradually started getting increasing attention of scholars and a stage was reached in the recent decades when their studies gained momentum in the overall assessment of temple ritual art or art-based ritual, because this had the best chance of objective narration, dealing as it did with the diurnal chores of temple-worship schedule. This integrated documentation of and interest in the four-fold facets of temple studies *yoga*, *kriya*, *chārya* and *pratishṭha* in recent decades has formed the most promising probe into the understanding of the significant role that the temples played in their hey day, in various regions of our vast country.

An element which is an inextricable part but which often tends to obscure though not hinder the perception of the correct import of the versified texts, now and then, is the use of a nomenclatural jargon in the format. This, no doubt, had the chief, if not the sole function of achieving brevity without sacrificing clarity,

although there were other attendant aspects as well. Nomenclature is itself the product of consistent applicability and currency of the usages concerned and, in the ultimate analysis, become the verbal image of the formal idiom of the region. The considerable variations of nomenclature, though within the admittedly unified if not unitary structure of temple symbolism and ritual *regimen* themselves lay the foundations for the study of the stylistic range of basic as well as secondary models in temples in the North as well as the South of India. Much has been written and will also continue to be written on the terms *Nāgara*, *Drāviḍa* and *Vesara* but recent researches have clearly made it possible to accept these terms when used collectively, as falling within the plane of enunciation of the *Vimāna* mode of Southern temple style, respectively standing for the square, octagonal and circular (or apsidal) planned temple, which by the magnitude of the structural problems involved were also nominally and residuarily designated by the square, octagonal and circular (or apsidal) shape of the *grīva* and *śikhara* alone. The soundness of the basis upon which the *śikhara* rather than the ground plan has been opted as the diagnostic part is obviously the significant character of the *śikhara* which, with its *grīva* below and *stūpi* above, constitutes the most ritually sacred part of the temple—representing as it does the tabernacle of god who, to bless the mortals has by consecration, been brought down to the womb chamber (cella) at the ground floor in an act of *vibhava* manifestation of the divine role. The corresponding usage in Northern temples *Rekha Prāsādas* with curvilinear *śikhara* mass, which are rooted, primarily in the *Nāgara* category and additionally of the *Vesara*, to the virtual total exclusion of the *Drāviḍa* category, again for specific reasons, have been set out in the works of various distinguished scholars on the subject. The nomenclature, further, in terms of Northern temples, follows the *trivarga* or triple categorisation of the elevational parts of the temple, against the *śaḍvarga* or the six-fold division of the elevation in a southern *Vimāna*. It is enough to state that in the formative or the early stages of temple building in both the *Rekha-Prāsāda* and the *Vimāna* categories, the elevational profile of a temple was the most significant element, with the plan-spread being confined to the sanctum alone, to which a conjoint front porch was often abbreviated into a *prāggrīva*. All axial *maṇḍapa* elements grow gradually only in the subsequent periods, with specific purpose, inner and outer appearance and with or without ornate and embellished *vitānas* or ceiling patterns on the interior and corresponding *samvarana śikhara* roofs for the successive *maṇḍapas* on the exterior forming ultimately a crescendo rise from porch to *mūlamanjari*. The diagnostic differences in these between the Northern and Southern temples are sharp, consistent and organic, notwithstanding the basic unity in the functional use of these *maṇḍapas*. The projection of the temple over a basal terrace, called *jagati* in Northern parlance, and the usual absence of this totally or in this broadly spread out form in the southern *Vimāna* temples, notwithstanding a plinth element termed *Jagati* which has corresponding values and

an *upapiṭha* or surbase in the stages from the 10th century A.D., are again rooted in the variant evolution of the symbolism which seemingly spreads from the north, wherein a personification of the cosmic divinity in the form of the temple itself has been picturesquely enunciated.¹

A factor of importance which has a craft function in the modulations of the structural assemblage of the parts of the temple into an organically unified pile is the derivation of much, if not most of the terms from a putative wooden origin or usage, with attendant fastenings by sheet copper, nails, pins and tenon and mortice arrangements. These not only subscribe to the links between raw materials and style but also afford picturesque evidences of the common technical repository of the carpenter and the metal smith, diversified into aesthetically satisfying or eye-catching patterns on the body of the temple. These hold good for the curvilinear rise of the *Northern* temple as well as the storeyed pyramidal rise of the *Southern* shrines and are refurbished by the display of these wooden prototypes at regular transitional stages in the growth of the style, suggesting that, notwithstanding profuse use of stone, their thinking is attuned basically to wood and metal models.

Notwithstanding the methodical articulation of architecture, it would be legitimate to warn any scholar applying himself to this study that architecture, like art, does not evolve on the lines of Darwin's theory. The reason being that art, whether in quantified volumes as in architecture, or qualified volume as in sculpture, is creative and has to be visually original and provocative, if deserving to receive lasting approbation from the connoisseurs (contemporary and later). This quality is, of course, more truly applicable to sculptural or bronze-casting art but is nonetheless true of architecture also. Although traditional architecture may have to be conformist in its main purpose, the versatile *sthapati* is indeed not fettered or tethered art-wise, and has considerable scope for innovation and inspired presentation. This would, no doubt, be at infrequent intervals in the annals of ritual architecture and religious iconography but the discipline in both these does have certain built-in provisions against inane reproductions. In the *Vimāna* category, it has already been experimented in the *Sāndhāra-nirandhāra* diversifications, the variations of the *vinyāsa-sūtra* line, in the modulations of the *hāra*, in the introduction of the *gavāksha* windows, in the articulation of the *kūdyastambhas*, *kapota*, *nāsika*, etc., on the wall and above all, in the management of the basal dimensions with the vertical stature, irrespective of the total number of storeys set over it. All these, therefore, do not follow a pre-conceived or beaten track, with the result that from time to time the genius of the *sthapati* asserts itself to produce a model which is off the beaten track of linear, dimensional or harmonic evolution. The *Śilpa* texts thus compile the extant modifications of proportionate measurements which are the very soul of *Vimāna* architecturae to variegate the rhythm of the temple or even a *gopura*. In the northern *Rekhā prāsāda*, again, the modulation of the *triṅga* or *chaturṅga* or even *śaḍṅga sūtra*, the parabolic curvature of

the *mūlamanjari*—and the hyperbolic symmetry of the *piṭha* and the *adhṛṣṭhana*, together swinging away from the plumb line of the *bhitti* provide for exciting variations. The superstructural *śikhara* has even more scope for diversification, within the harmony of the miniature parts, with the macro-framework. Indeed, it is this freedom that has resulted in the typical changes of the profile and girth of the *mūla-mandira*, under the *Phāmsana*, *Maru-Gurjara*, *Bhūmija*, *Latina* and *Kalinga* types, in the last of which several elements of the southern forms and motifs interplay with the local base, as in the *Khakara*, *piṭha* and *rekha* categories. While vogues created at each stage are liable to be followed due to the high frequency of temple, which virtually becomes a mass-produced medium, and thus gets tied up with traditions, cross fertilizations and hybridizations of forms adopted from time to time, really recreate them. Formal typology thus, is often liable to run into difficulties, if the original deviations and innovations in any style or substyle are not properly detected and identified. Changes in art-motifs by themselves do not overmuch affect the main format of a temple type (and thus are not true parameters of change) but changes in its significant structural and functional parts would indeed presuppose a change in tradition and inter-regional polarisations. Further an exterior elevation of the temple, in its relation to the interior outlook, can bring breath-taking changes of visual artistry and space-modulations. The challenges implicit in a large sized temple-of the *Mukhyavimāna* category of the south or the *Meru-Mandāraprāsāda* of the north, had been met mainly by the essentially aesthetic understanding of the volume (both solid and void), and for every dozen true-to-type temples, there would at least be one which would stand out as unparalleled in its formal innovations to the degree of perfection. It is in this way that within the southern *Vimāna* order, it has been possible to introduce what is, by and large, regional idioms current in Tamil Nadu, Andhra and Karnataka and a highly stylised and conventionalised format in Kerala of an atypical kind, consistent with its heavy monsoon climatic character, although in its cultural and linguistic separation from Tamil Nadu, from about the 11th century A.D., even Kerala had a common art-pool and architectural watershed with Tamil Nadu. Deccan, however, being open essentially to the northern style and directly in touch the early centres of Gupta art, and marginally to the *Southern*, developed a hybridized or ambidextrous idiom in architecture often. The pristine glory of important Chalukya and Rashtrakuta epicentres had run their logical and richly fruitful courses into that region in a burst of art. Indeed in the whole of south India, Krishna valley was a viable dividing line for the *Rekha prāsāda* and the *Vimāna* style of architecture, the purity and grandeur of that style being essentially confined to the area south of the Krishna, including the prevailing Andhra idiom which was exclusively related to the *Vimāna* style only in its entire coastal region while the inland part allowed free play, besides the *Vimāna* style, not only of the Northern *Rekha* style but also the indigenised *phāmsana* style which last was exist-

ing from west to the east and managed to survive right through the medieval times, essentially underscoring a lesser order of temples on a less costly or less elaborate scale having become a socio-religious necessity in the region, consistent with the sharp rise of religious worship among the masses. This *phāmsana* style percolates as far north as into the southern part of the Chattisgarh (Bastar) area of Madhya Pradesh and the contiguous Orissa in Koraput and other areas. Even among the northern style variants, we observe that the *Bhūmija* mode of *Rekha* temples which was essentially rooted in the Malwa phateau, initiated under the Paramaras, spreads well into the border areas of western Rajasthan and the entire eastern and southern parts of Madhya Pradesh under the Kalachuris of Dahala and also into the whole of Marathwada and Aparanta area of Maharashtra, under the Yadavas and Silaharas (in the earliest contexts for the latter, as at Ambarnath and Nasik). It was to impregnate even a hybridisation with the Hoysala and Later Chalukyas of Kalyana styles of the Karnataka, through political conflicts that the Yadava empire had with them in the 12th-14th centuries A.D. The main trend of the southern Konkana and Canara of the trans-Sahyadri tracts in consanguinity with the Kerala was in its gable-roofed style, in wood and stone architecture, thereby indicative of the part played by climate influencing the structural style of temples which are themselves in turn influenced by residential patterns, in every region the most picturesque early evidence of which is already afforded by the slopy roofed *maṇḍapa* which was part of the styles of the early Chalukyas of Vatapi.

ART

The sculptural art, together with its allied vogues of bronze-casting and mural paintings stands on a pedestal somewhat different from that of architecture, because of their smaller volume, although they are found often integrated with architecture for religious as well as secular purposes. Their roots, however, can be traced backwards to prehistoric times even. Sculpture and painting, in fact, coalesce in stucco art, which in itself can even be an integral part of an architectural setting, wherein the context can be a mere natural cavern or rock-cut cave art or free-standing structure of stone or in its earlier matrix, namely, the brick-built structures. These also have a wooden archetype as well which can lend itself also to a painted veneer. Magico-religious base, cults, fetishes, mascots, etc., are as old as Time and it can thus be stated that human groups and societies, in their very formative periods adopted carved or modelled figurines to lend a visually satisfying symbol of faith which can be cherished for success, fertility and as warders of evils. To this end, they have been freely used in Pre-and Protohistoric times and permit us to identify mass instincts and upsurges of faith in a given society. Organised societies had perfected them into technically well produced terracotta figurines, of the modelled as well as moulded types, the former primarily having the virtue of being original creations and the latter becoming the manufactured

miscellany, by primary moulds, again of a 'relief' or 'in-the-round types' for mass circulations of a need-based kind—the former generally forming the earlier phase. They do have oral or mentally fixed image criteria also for their articulations, though of an unsystematised folk kind. But urban societies had refined the approaches to such religious or fetishistic outlook on mundane aspirations in media like bronze and stone, as we see already as early as in the Indus Civilization sites themselves; and later societies had systematised them in a framework of religious worship of divinities as part of the social avocations in standardized form and substance, constituting the sculptured images a viable department of religious art. *Varttikas* on some of the *sūtras* of Panini make it clear that *archa* the finite mode of worship of divine image by organised groups in society had been in vogue and images on nobler metals like gold and silver besides baser metals like copper and bronze—not to mention stone, wooden and terracotta images,—should have been prolific in this society already in the pre-Christian centuries. The ever-present fertility cult for progeny, prosperity and conjugal felicity had created such symbolic sculptural figurines like *mithunas*, *dampatis*, mother-and-child forms in profusion, to the delectation of the subconsciously or vicariously experienced emotions of the human heart. Suffice it to say that this was a forward looking trend in the social matrix, which culminates already in the early historic times into iconometric treatises like *Brihatsamhita*, etc., and paves the way for Indian sculptural art to blossom in a felicitous fashion. No doubt, religious and secular devices like portrait art, residential or monastic paintings of secular or religious themes like *jātakas* fit into the spirit of the functional usage of the place and had also produced organised application in temples, monasteries, palaces and elsewhere.

Symbolic, syncretic, synoptic and narrative techniques are at the base of the development of linear or sculptural art on all the media, namely, bas-relief, painting and sculpture in the round.

Symbolism is the underlying philosophy of all icons, since it professes to concretise a concept which defies analysis into limited parts. Anything which has only a limited set of parameters can be visualised, and anything that is visualised can be concretised. By this token, elements of iconography despite their capacity to concretise conceptual media, fall short of such a goal when they pertain to concepts on God. In such a situation, synthesis becomes a more handy technique than analysis, because synthesis need not take all criteria necessary and sufficient, which are a compulsory need in an analysis and may take into consideration only certain important or imperative parts for the mode of concretisation. This is exactly what has been achieved under religious iconography after the *archa* concept has been set in motion by the hieratic clergy. By the same token, all material concretisation known to art before *archa* had been postulated, cannot and may not be approximating to God-visualisation, but only specific imposition on that idea, which in some cases, may not indeed be even

divine but only mundane, such as power, fertility, conjugal felicity and so on, as already mentioned and to that extent, these figures are not part of a viable religious iconography but are part of a blissful spiritual existence in a man-made world. Such a world was regulated by *āchāras* and *tantra* which could create *Siddhi* or certain supernatural power realisation by constant application. They do clearly fall short of divinization or a merger with divinity, in the infinite sense, which no formula can indeed relate in material terms. Hence, it must be understood that *archa* of concrete divinization of an idea or ideal has itself been hedged in by an universally accepted set of criteria, more as an improvised synthesis of known dimensions of God than an intellectually acceptable inference of the ultimate. At the base of religious iconography, therefore, lies in a substantial measure the theory of incarnation and descent of God to the earth, which is of the essence of *archa*. *Brahman*, the Vedic seers felt, is not easily accessible but can however, be felt by meditation, concentration and total detached coalescence of human soul with the cosmic soul, in a state of suspended animation which even lead to a flashpoint of Transcendental oneness. This is part of the *analytical* media of monism, philosophically speaking, and has been propounded by thinkers down to Sankara in the Advaita Vedantic system. The other mode, of *synthesis*, is based on the plank of *bhakti* or *fusion* of the individual soul with the universal by acts which are largely and essentially this-worldly which however, by a mystic attunement, effacement of self and detached attachment, acquire the reflected hue of divine glory. Mysticism was surely at the roots of the Bhakti movement, and the concept and rationale of incarnation spurred the prospect of *Bhakti*, enthralling and sublimating the human soul into communion with the cosmic soul. The *Pāncharātra* doctrines were one of the chief motivating agencies in such a consummation, while the Sakta *tantras* seem to have attempted to evolve the same by more esoteric *cum* practical *experiences* and claimed even *Āgamic* monistic validity for the same. Their secret, exclusive and seemingly promiscuous *samāja* form with accent on *indriya-nigraha* by in involvement and not effacement which can lapse, would negate their claim for universal God realisation. This objective was considered as accessible for all those who can achieve an emotional fusion, through *Bhakti*, between God and man and was a way, thus, for the glorification of God, through his chosen icon as a source of attention, affection and articulation of sublime, they gained favour. God was conceived of, under the Vishnu-based *Āgamas*, in five *states* of universal presence, firstly, in his primeval abode *Vaikuntha (Para)*, in his five-fold integrated immanence in the *Bhagavata* framework (*vyūha*), in the theory of incarnation and descent (*vibhava*), in the inherent immanence of god in every sentient and non-sentient being (*Antaryāmi*) and indwelling in consecrated icon (*archa*). The descent of God, in a seeming worldly form, for re-establishing order (*rita*) and destroying aberrant and obscurantist forces, from time to time, has been the central spirit of the Puranas, and *archa* is thus natural corollary of *vibhava*. It makes possible for a

human garb to adorn a consecrated celestial body in a divine icon and is thus a revolutionary experimentation in God-identity. We will deal about aniconic Śaivism a little later.

It may be noted that the *avatāra* or stages of descent of God to the mortal world had been generally counted as ten, from about the 8th century A.D. at least, if not a little earlier. But it is relevant that those of the ten *avatāras* which are human, namely, God's garb in a human frame, had been only the penultimate four of them, viz. Parasurama, Sri Rama, Balarama and Krishna, with Kalki as a perpetual periodic prospective finale. These, on the Puranic basis, form two obvious paired, coeval groups: the *Matsya*, *Kurma* and *Varaha* are indeed integral parts of the 'creation myth', in one aspect or another, while *Narasimha* is indeed the spectacular exposition of the immanence of God in all matter, sentient as well as otherwise and thus is a philosophic generalisation and is, on its own showing, an outstanding syncretisation of divine and mundane elements. It is but apposite that the next stage, that of Vamana—Trivikrama is the most primeval among the myths of Vishnu, adumbrated in the Vedic hymns already and which perhaps is an allegorical version also of the division of the universe into earth, ether and space, on the one hand, and the nether regions, on the other in parenthesis. It has been in its turn the backbone of the postulation of the *sapta-loka* concept of the Puranic times and the *tri-loka* (*Bhū*, *Bhuva*, and *Suvarloka*s) implicit in the most sacred *Gāyatri* hymn. It also substantiates the generic meaning of the name *Vishnu*, the all-encompassing one. It further paraphrases the macrocosmic nature of the divine presence, as picturesquely rendered in the verbal imagery of the Trivikrama-Visvarupa, which, again and again, gets reasserted, as in the *Purushasūkta* hymn of *Rigveda*, in the *Sahasranama Dhyāna* (*Kshirodanvat-pradese... ..tribhuvana vapusham vishnumisam namāmi*), and in the *Bhagavat Gita-Visvarupa* hymn. It is the *summum bonum* of the Vishnu iconography. Thus, after the adumbration of this statement, the circumstance was ripe for the *avatāra* of God duly in human garb and the aforementioned paired entities, appear. It is significant also to observe that Parasurama on the one hand and Balarama, on the other, are *amśāvatāras*—(partial or fractional) manifestations of God-head—and if we accept, therefore, to exclude them (or take them as identified as parts of a whole) and also, of course, the last of the series, namely, Kalki—as a terse prospective digression on the denouement of human existence as already stated, then, we may count the *avatāras* only as seven—and indeed in the early situation only these find place. Be this as it may, it may be relevant to note that Rama and Krishna *avatāras* are the most satisfying and crucial *Purnāvatāras* (or comprehensively human incarnations) and in whom all the hopes, aspirations, love, faith and total dependance of a devotee are all centred, as expatiated in the twin Epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Their story-value, having been semi-historical works both of them, had been one of the *linch-pins* of the Hindu-ethical-moral vehicle and, as far as religious art is

concerned, Sri Krishna who was the prime-mover of the *Mahabharata* epic, is the oldest well established religious cult personage, of the *Bhagavata* mode reflected in the Sankarshana-Vasudeva cult, in prime, and the *panchavīra* cult in *extenso*, including significantly, for the first time, even in religious art, a female divine potential in the pantheon, namely, Subhadra, who, as the embodiment of *Ekānamsa* had been subsequently popular as an iconic imagery along with Sankarshana (Balarama) and Krishna-Vasudeva, in the early historic times. The occurrence in a temple form with an elliptical plan, made of timber primarily and endowed seemingly at a slightly later stage, with a Garuda column, inscribed by Heliiodorus, the ambassador of Antialkidas to the Sunga Court at Avanti, and self-styled as a *parama-bhāgavata*, already by the mid-2nd century B.C., at Vidisa explains how popular the hero-God cult had become even at that time. This, together with reference to Krishna-Vasudeva, and Arjuna in Panini himself much earlier, speaks volumes about the stamina of the Krishna-based iconic worship as an *avant garde* movement in Brahmanical religion in early 1st millennium B.C. Evidence of the other *dhvajās* of Balarama (*Tāladhvaja*), Aniruddha (*Makaradhavaja*), etc., are also noticed at Pawaya (now in Gwalior Museum) indicative of the widespread allegiance to the *Panchavira* cult. By 7th-8th century A.D. or a little earlier, it has virtually diffused down south, well into interior Tamil Nadu, creating original *Panchavira* images in stone, in the sanctum of temples of large sizes for regular worship, at a number of centres like, Tiruvallikkeni, Nachchiyarkoil, Tirualundur, Tiruttangal, etc., most of them sung also by the Vaishnava hymnists (*Alvars*).

Correspondingly, on the Śiva-Bhagavata side, already current in Patanjali's time, a movement was set in motion which was caused by the symbiosis of the Agni-Rudra agencies of the Vedic, in its late Brahmana period, into a post-vedic Śiva-Rudra cult, which worked down the somewhat discrete and fringe character of of the Vedic Rudra into a theistic cult, facilitated by a Trinity emerging by then with well-formed functions with reference to the phenomenal world. The appellation 'Śiva' itself meaning red in Dravidian Tamil speaks well of this transformation and the vedic *skambha-yūpa* symbolism gets consolidated into the aniconic *linga* shaft which was indeed a primeval pillar of fire and became the ubiquitous representation of Śiva, in abstract, around which several new philosophical radical-esoteric manifestations were predicated. The earliest among such was the Śiva-Lakulisa, Pasupata-Mahesvara series, virtually adumbrating an *avatāra* theory on the Śiva side, in the form of the great *Āchārya*. This Lakulisa was represented in the form of an anthropomorphic emanation, shown in facial mould only or with the whole body affixed in three-quarter-trans-substantiated embodiment-relief out of the *Linga*. His birth place, Kayavarohana (Karvan, Gujarat) has many temples and sculptural examples of his, Eklingji in Rajasthan was another. Pawaya of the Bharasiva Naga of Central India was yet another. The

Chalukyas of Vatapi, were themselves as much devoted to him as indeed to Vishnu of Mahesvara Śaivism. By that period (6th century A.D.) this Lakulisa cult has spread virtually over the entire country, through Pasupata ascetic *āchrāyas*, down to the Pallava and Pandya tracts of the South. It was one of the *largest single* potent rivals to Buddhism which then was well-entrenched over extensive parts of India. Together with Bhagavata Vaishnavism, this was a two-pronged attack on the atheistic sects. On the iconographic side, Śiva in the form of Mahesa (aniconically with *mukhalingas*) or iconically (as at elephanta and Ellora), Lingadhara or *Lingin* (Śiva bearing a *linga* on his shoulder and recalling the exultant invocation of the Bharasiva kings whose shoulder have been chafed and scarred by bearing a *linga* and thereby propitiating Śiva, as extolled in the Vakataka royal charters) was well diffused. Śiva-Lakulisa whose *membrum virile* is erect as a measure of the *yogic* continence and along with his other significant forms: Śiva Andhakari, Kalyanasundara, Somaskanda, Tripurantaka, Akshakridamurti, Tandava Śiva, etc., were prolific in this period all over north India, Deccan and the south. Even so, it is to be seen that Śiva's aniconic *linga* form in the sanctum did not have a corresponding *utsava bhera* of an unchanging standardised kind but rather of a variable nature such as Somaskanda, Tripurantaka, Kiratamurti, Kalyanasundara as are shown in the Śiva temple, in the annual round of festivals but *linga* was the *Mula bhera* everywhere. Around the beginning of the 10th century A.D. however, a sea change takes place wherein the *Panchikritya* routine of the cosmic God is read into an iconic embodiment of Śiva, stimulated by the *Pratyabigñā* school of Kashmir Śaivism in theory, and the Nataraja bronze was born in Tamil Nadu and not a single Śiva temple exists thereafter in the entire Tamil Nadu which would not have an image of Nataraja, which would always be located, facing south (being of the same *milieu* as Yama, Dakshinanurti and Lakulisa who all pertain to that cardinal direction). Separate festivals take place for the Nataraja bronze which though not having any *Mulabhera*, other than the *linga* in the sanctum, *does not find itself placed at any time in the sanctum along with the linga*, but only *separately*. This is very much *unlike* the Vaishnava practice wherein the *utsavamurti* is not only standardised in the form of a four-handed *sama-Sthānaka* Vishnu, often with the Sri and Bhū devi consorts on either side, but was liable to be placed in the sanctum whenever it is not in circuit during the festivalas of the year, which are indeed more crowded and varied than on the Śaiva side. This is largely bearing upon the essentially preservative role of Vishnu, by which he is to be cherished and pampered, by all members of society, with birth days, marriage, entertainment, circuits outside the temple around the village, spring festivals on a *swing* (*Hindola*), ceremonial bath in rivers and sea, on important auspicious days, etc., in which the entire village participates on a footing of vicarious joy and fulfilment. The role of Vishnu, besides, as the agent to be propitiated and as the boon-bestower in all sacrifices, *dhārmic* acts and inescapable rituals including *Śrāddha*, places

him on an altogether incomparable pedestal, as the guardian diety of the entire village and his temples are located in the village, facing *into* the communities centre of the living around, while Śiva temple is located in the N.E. corner (*Isāna-kona*) facing *away from* the village. This is conspicuously in tune with the implicit capacity of Śiva to take one away from the vortex of this *Samsāra* (*Bhava*) while, Vishnu's prime and potent role is to bestow upon man prosperity in this world and perennial joy his primordial empyrion in *Svarga*, in his immediate company, like a *nitya sūri* (*Tad Vishnoh paramam padam—sada pasyanti Svrayaḥ*" of the Vedas). Correspondingly, while the chief *utsava bhera* of Vishnu is standardised, his other *utsava bheras* are innumerable as, from child Krishna to Trivikrama and Sri Rama bearing on his various *avatara* myths. Side by side, Vishnu *Anantasayi* (reclining form), as part of the creation myth where Brahma was created by his *Ichha-Sakti* out of Vishnu's navel out a lotus and Brahma exhorted by the *Kiryāsakti*, creates in his turn this phenomenal universe through a series of Prajapatis, like Atri, Bhrigu, Angiras, Kutsa, Vasishtha, Gautama and Kasyapa. Both Vishnu and Śiva also get their *Visvarupa*-macrocosmic forms-adumbrated in a spectacular iconic form.

Mural paintings have been in vogue certainly from the prehistoric times, when in the dim interiors of the caves, the hunting man psychologically boosted his morale against the wild beasts around him—which he had necessarily to hunt for food as well as fend against for survival—by sketching paintings with mineral colours of these animal in movement, ferocious as well as fantastic—and thereby displayed also his subconscious realism and aesthetic potential. At a much latter day, when man was defined as an urban *nagaraka*, well versed in all the arts of a *diletante* connoisseur, he had to learn as well as appreciate a *chitra* (in the sense of a *chitrabhāsa* and not in the 'original' sense of a sculpture) and became the patron of such murals, as are now the marvels of that medium, as at Ajanta and Thanjavur. Paintings in India were of two broad *technical* categories—the *fresco* or the true lime-medium technique wherein the colours were drawn with a brush even when the plaster was wet, so that they fuse with the ground below; and the *tempera* technique wherein the ground was carefully prepared out of thickly made mud and splintered grass on which a heavy coat of carrier plaster was applied and the painted colours, mostly mineral and vegetable, were mixed with glue or other organic resinous adhesives, so that when they are executed in painted designs, they stuck to the *carrier* and last for ever thereafter, subject only to the depredations of man and nature, besides inclement climes leading to their desuetude. We are more concerned here with the topics of the painted mural than with their methods. The Buddhists handled '*jātaka*' stories and other elements of nature, animals, birds and flora. Their formal characteristics partook of classic expressionism, from which, by a surfeit, alike of imagination and of long narrative trends, as in the *miniature* paintings of the medieval times, they introduced impressionism and stylization of

the portraiture, and achieved the label of specific schools like the Pahari, Moghul and the Rajasthani schools. Jainism and Islam took greater advantage of these *media*, although one may say, that as a secular adjunct to royal palaces, mostly in their audience halls and bed chambers, this method became a great favourite and were soon so used in the palaces of almost all kings of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Central India, besides a pseudo-classical richness of formal virtuosity of portraiture and narrative paintings adopted by a whole three centuries in Kerala, alike for temple walls as for as the palaces—the former drawing from a rich and wide repertory of Puranic themes of gods and their worship. Some truly stupendous achievements of the medieval mural artist in temples had been achieved in Lepakshi and Adiyamankottai, displaying an eye for details of the cameos from whole epic stories of *Ramayana*, *Bhagavata*, etc., often with inscribed labels for them also in paint. Unlike sculpture in the round or bronze-casting, the aim in this art was not individual figure-work of classical proportions but a harmonization and distribution of colour schemes and depiction of movement, gesture and group compositions, to produce the dynamic narrative run of the story portrayed against an authentic faunal-floral environment. The miniature illustrated manuscripts of the Epics, Puranas and other fable stories also became a fashion and, besides, colour gilding of these became a separate art well exploited by Islamic artists profusely. Thus the mural and manuscript art became the specialities in post-classical and post-medieval India, as was nursed in the earlier times, even in the soft-lit interiors of residences, as the diversion of cultured women as a pursuit of *liesure* and part of their acquisition of a modicum of the 64 fine arts, among which painting was also included. In religious architecture of the temples, the structural building of the temple was considered as the cosmic *body* of God, the sculpture and stucco as the *bones, flesh, nerves and tendons*, while the painted exterior or interior was considered as the *blood*, coursing through it, coming alive, which the *vital airs*, in the form of the consecrated image in the *sanctum* sustained, as the life-breath. Thus integrated with both the temporal and religious routine of man, painting became full-time and all-absorbing technical skill and produced generations of the highest standards and several texts like *Vishnudharmottara (chitra sūtra)* and *Ablilashitārthachintamani* came to be written. Painted art was essentially secular in India, unlike sculpture and architecture, notwithstanding its cultured dedication and integration often with the premises of the divinity that ruled the cosmos.

Indian art, it should be said, received the well-merited tremendous impacts at the hands of inspired savants, admiring votaries, and academic specialists in the recent past. Architecture and sculpture were indeed highly specialised studies, as they not only were informed by formal harmony and balance, but also by thematic value. While Maya and Visvakarma fathered two major fabled schools of architecture followed by such important treatises as *Visvakarmasāstra*, *Samarāṅga Sūtradhāra*,

Vrikshārṇava, *Pramāṇamanjari*, *Kāsyapaśilpa*, *Mānāsara*, *Mayamata*, *Silparatna* and *Tantrasamucchya*, sculptures, as secular portraits, etc., however, were never much in vogue in India, but were always an inseparable part of religious architecture. This was primarily due to the fact that the glorification of an individual person, body or anatomy was not treated as a wholesome pursuit, while this could be part of a textual *Sāmudrika-lakṣhaṇa sāstra* or *Kāmasāstra* which were, in parts at least, an appreciation of harmony and grace in male and female personality as God's creations, and was part of a romantically inclined mind. It was not expected to become a whole-time pursuit. Anything that was related to the discovery and identity of the beauty of nature constituted in the repertory of which the creation of the human body was also considered as an exquisite example and the identity of the divinity inherent in all these organisations of nature was looked upon as the objective of a trained or educated mind. The perishing body should not be over-extolled but the body of an imperishable god-head of which the spark of human soul (*ātma*) was an infinitesimal part—be it that of a divine mother like Sri, Parvati or Sarasvati, Śiva, Vishnu or other divinities—was to be created out of the science of iconometry or *Tālamāna*, as a most outstanding aesthetic creation, simulating, no doubt, a physical body in terms of its broad articulation, but suffused with much of elemental grace, poise, beauty and positiveness. The approach, thus, was clearly to *negative* mortal beauty of forms and for creating an immortal beauty of gods and goddesses, in the broad likeness of the human being, which is irreproachable. Portrait sculptures did not, therefore, receive much impetus in India, and the few that are of the early period were not the best expressions of that art, technically speaking. In the late medieval times, however, by the contacts with the western world, the art of portraiture, especially in sculpture, of patrons and kings, animals and birds became a favourite avocation of the artist, commissioned particularly in the expansive and majestic *maṇḍapas*, galleries built on the street-front of the temple complex, of a visually arresting nature and architecturally stupendous organisation, as is most spectacularly displayed by the Nayak craftsman and artists of Sri Rangam, Madurai, Thanjavur and Vellore, to mention but a few most impressive specimens of this portrait gallery of men and animals.

Bronze images, on the other hand, because of the medium which was able to present a certain responsive appeal, due to the evocative suppleness of modelling and vigour of stance (much more than even stone sculpture) imparted to them, were able to captivate devotees and connoisseurs alike to an unequalled degree: Bronze casting was known from very early times in India and household icons of small shapes with certain rudimentary and accentuated features were quite common, since the second half of the first millennium B.C.—the era of the second urbanisation and diffusion of highly civilized societies in the Gangetic and other riparian tracts of India. It was bronze-casting (unlike that of the terracotta art) that went

into the rigorous requirements of *pratima-lakshana sastra* of *Tālamāna*, although this iconometric science was indeed propounded for stone or wooden icons as well. The anatomical standardization or, shall we say, *idealisation* was part of the Indian mental make-up which scorned caricature generally and which revelled in factors of symmetry, balance, harmony—as artistic extensions of Truth in abstract and a certain other,—wordly graciousness that master-sculptures, imbued with divine inspiration and spurred to tasks of supramundane serenity, were able to impart to them. The *archa* concept, as already mentioned, tended to light the spark of divinity that is an integral part of a blessed intellect and mind, and no other medium exploited this resource to the sublimation of the iconometric formula into an object of ineffable grace, as the bronzes for *utsavabheras* in temples did. Religious convention, Puranic traditions, technical expertise and artistic inspiration were all geared to this noble objective. While it could be stated that religious art, being ever subject to stylization of the idiom and formalisation of the symbolism, by practice over long stretches of time, during which the religious *function remained a stable constant factor*, there had been this development of stagnation and attrition of responsive artistic stimulus in the industry of religious bronze-making, it should be emphasized, none the less, that especially south Indian temple images in bronze, having been the most prestigious and overwhelming standard-bearers of the creative patronage of this art from the early 10th century A.D. or late 9th century A.D., have been almost always having their bearings right on an aesthetic high purpose of the task-concomittant with the ritual strait-jacket of form-and had always emerged successful in this challenging task. Chola, Pandya, Chera, Kongu, Vijayanagara and Nayak period bronzes had all, *per se*, a special artistic *elan* and aplomb all their own, within the inexorable transmutational spectrum of religious and visual art values, amidst temporal vicissitudes. Art sustained religion in India, as a mother sustains children of diverse capacities, even in adversity and this is the strain of sublimity in Indian art.

1. Jagati pīṇḍikā gñeya prāsā Bhaskara smṛitah Mukham dvāram bhavedasya pratimā Jīva uchchte.

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BEGINNINGS OF THE TEMPLE PLAN

The study of the origin and methods of the architectural plan and perspective in ancient India has always been a fascinating as well as an exacting subject. It involves not merely an actual perception of the techniques adopted but also of the more subtle functioning of the mind behind the productions. Western India and the upper Karnataka country afford the greatest scope for such a study due to the innumerable examples of rock excavations to be found there, including some of the earliest attempts at structural architecture and the corresponding imitations of structural principles in the massive rock. The problems are many, but in the following pages we have confined ourselves to the efforts of the early architects of Western India in the direction of the successive refinement or progression of the layout plan and how far the series of modifications experimented upon were equated with the ritual requirements of the era, until the final finite form of the abode of God—the temple—was arrived at. Inevitably the examples taken for this study are from well-known examples such as those at Ajanta, Ellora, Aurangabad, Badami and Aihole but relevant facts have also been compiled, not only from the lesser known sites such as Junnar, Kuda, Shelarwadi and Karad, but also from those farther afield, and of an admittedly early date, in other parts of India.

At the outset, it must be emphasised that there is a sharp difference between the abode of man, be he a citizen or a recluse, and the abode of God. It is demonstrable that civil residential architecture had not made any phenomenal headway, particularly in the early eras; the concentration having been on building fitting abodes of God. Indeed it is a tribute to the measure of the greatness and spiritual nobility of the Indian mind that while palaces and mansions (which were undoubtedly built in considerable numbers) have perished and gone out of the ken of the enquiring student of architecture, the temples to God, reared up with a mightier effort, have stood the onslaught of time as well as the changing outlook and faiths of the

successive rulers. It would be apparent that the materials used in the construction of human habitations, and even some religious edifices, were more ephemeral than stone. Indeed, it was the very transient nature of building materials like brick and wood¹ that led to a decision in favour of more permanent media such as the living rock or stone. It is thus that the royal artist Mahendravarma Pallava of Kanchi in his Mandagappattu inscription rightly repudiates the use of perishable media of construction for temples, adopted till then, and to give substantiation to his *biruda* of *vichtirachitta*, had started carving out divine abodes in live rock as at Mahendravadi, Mamandur, and the numerous other rock-excavations of the Tamil country. Similarly, it is probable that the attempt to erect stone *stūpas* and *chaityas* was also prompted by the desire to build them in more durable medium than they had been previously. It is inherent in this postulate, however, to note when the builders were familiar with only a brick-and-wood tradition, they would inevitably fumble and falter in the translation of their structural ideas into stone. For decorative carving and for sculpture, wherein only the veneer is involved, no problems would arise, but dealing with the massive rock or heavy stone blocks would seemingly have introduced many imponderables into the assignment. It is obvious that even the monolithic rock-excavations had produced in the minds of their authors an assumed play of structural principles for which provision would have to be made, and it is this reasoning that resulted in the insertion of many false 'functional' devices. At the sametime, since in rock-excavation elevation or stature or external profile is totally inoperative, and only two features count, namely the facade and the interior plan and volume, the variations which have been noticed in surviving examples are best represented in the gradual modifications of ground plan and artistic facade or window-dressing more than in any other architectural feature. In the sequel, despite the valid possibility of many missing links in the progressive adaptation of the plan for the temple, a study of ground plans of these alone tends to yield interesting and significant data.

The earliest Buddhist rock-excavations in India, in which the chapel form and idea had taken root are the Lomasa Rishi and Sudama caves (Fig. 1, Nos. 1 and 2) in the Barabar hills, Bihar. The aspect in which they differ from the rest of the *chaitya* shrines of early Buddhism, is in the placing of the entrance to the side of the chapel, i.e., at right angles to its longitudinal axis. The opening *chaitya* arch also has a unique feature, namely the door jambs are sloping inwards, presumably after the wooden prototype where this would be necessary in order to offset the outward thrust of the superstructure. This feature is also to be noticed in the Bhaja *chaitya* which is the earliest of the Western Indian *milieu*. In the Barabar hills, the interior of the *chaitya* hall was astylar and the extreme rear end had only a circular chamber divided from the rest of the hall by a narrow opening in the thin curved wall of the chamber from the hall side. It is likely that a miniature, portable *stupa* might have been installed and worship-

ped in the centre of the circular chamber, or a standing rock-cut *stūpa* was not provided as the cave was for the Ājivakas. The caves are datable to Aśokan times, namely the 3rd century B.C. We have an almost similar cave at Kondivate near Bombay (Fig. 1, No. 3), except that the entrance is from the front, from the cliff face itself, as in all other cave *chaityas* of India, and the circular chamber at the rear contains a rock-cut diminutive *stūpa* with a path for circumambulation. Thus it represents clearly the next stage from the Barabar hill examples and is the transitional type prior to the regular *chaitya* halls. However, there is no doubt that generally the very earliest Western Indian rock *chaityas* had a rectangular rather than apsidal plan,² were astylar, and only the rear elevation profile took a curvature behind and above the votive *stūpa*. Cave No. VI at Kuda (Fig. 1, No. 4), Cave No. XLVIII (Fig. 1, No. 7) and Cave No. IV (Fig. 1, No. 6) respectively at Karad and Shelarwadi bear out this point, while Cave V at Karad (Fig. 1, No. 8) is an example of the astylar chamber; only the rear roof of which is curved. It is also interesting to note in this connection that even at Ajanta, of the two oldest *chaitya* caves, namely IX (Fig. 1, No. 10) and X the smaller one, which is clearly earlier, has a rectangular plan, although it has the row of pillars in an apse around the *stūpa*. The rear aisle has a flat lower roof, while only above and in front of the miniature *stūpa* does it take the curvature of the roof. It is only in Cave X that both the (lower) rear aisle roof as also the main *chaitya* vault have curved profiles. This is generally the case in all other *chaitya* caves as at Bhaja, Nasik or Pitalkhora, although both at Karle and Bedsa (*vihāra* cave arranged in *chaitya* hall form), we have instances of the rear aisle having a flat roof only.

At Junnar we have even the example, in two instances—one in the Sivneri hill group (Fig. 1, No. 5) and the other in Ganeshlena—of an astylar cave with rectangular plan and a flat roof. Indeed, at Junnar, we seem to have surviving evidences of the different experiments made in *chaitya* architecture, evidences which owing to their comparative plainness, and lack of ornament and presumable early date are of great importance, inasmuch as they are indicative of the rock-cut architecture of Buddhism at a stage just before the evolution of the typical *chaitya* with apsidal plan and elevation and pillars dividing the hall into nave and aisles. In the Tulajalena group at Junnar (Fig. 1, No. 9), we have a circular *chaitya* wherein the pillars are also disposed in a circle around the diminutive *stūpa*; the aisles having a curved lower roof while the nave has the domical higher roof. This would, of course, be clearly a variant of the typical *chaitya* cave mentioned above and might have indeed been a votive *chaitya* shrine in itself. The Junnar group, owing to the commanding situation near the Nanaghat, would have been the clearing house of many art experiments depending upon the nature of the rock and early ideas and equipment. That these caves are all not much later than the 2nd century A.D. is clear, and many of these, at least the *chaitya* cave types mentioned, are clearly of the end of the 1st century B.C., if not earlier.³ Thus,

together with the cave excavations at Kuda, Kondivate, Karad, Shelarwadi, Bedsa and Bhaja, they comprise the earliest group of *chaitya* specimens and could be placed anywhere in the two centuries before Christ. This is not to discount the possibility that some of them could well be more stagnant forms of the *chaitya* shrine and would belong to the opening centuries of the Christian era. Indeed we have many such examples in the lesser known caves, such as the Pancha Pandava group near Shirvel (Bhor), where we get a *chaitya* hall of severe simplicity. It is in the form of a square chamber with flat roof and a diminutive *stūpa* in the centre touching the roof with its stepped *harmikā* top.

An interesting development of the succeeding centuries of the Christian era are the rock-cut shrines wherein the main hall is the most central and ornate feature of the complex while the shrine chamber at the rear is the only individualistic tribute to the presiding deity of the creed. Examples can be found in the later Ajanta group, in the Buddhist group at Ellora and the Brahmanical and Jaina group at Badami and Aihole. The *vihāra* caves at Ajanta (later group, Fig.2, No.1), Ellora and the Vaishnava and Śaiva caves at Badami (Fig.2, No. 2) are indeed more significant to students of architecture than the coeval *chaitya* shrines of Buddhism, since the latter have reached the end of their architectural mode and except for the veneer of ornament, the pillar forms, the change from the earlier aniconism to the iconic fixation on the *stūpa* miniature and the walls and facade, have nothing further to contribute to the fundamental quest of the artisan to evolve a temple plan. A feature of considerable interest, nonetheless, is the ground plan of the miniature *stūpa* in *chaitya* Cave XIX at Ajanta which, unlike its predecessors, has *triratha* (Fig. 1, 11) and not a circular or a sub-circular plan, with a face on each of the cardinal direction and an offset, though hardly regular, in the four corners. This together with the circumambulatory practice common to Buddhists and Hindus, is evidently a prelude to the regular *pradakshinā patha* of the square cella which we will deal with below. This cave is roughly datable to the end of the 6th century A.D. The *vihāra* caves of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism at Ajanta and the early Brahmanical caves and structural shrines on their model, however, are the more positive developments. The rear shrine chamber, by way of physical proportions, is not comparable to the hypostyle hall that was reared in front of it. A concrete structural version of this state of affairs is the Lad Khan temple at Aihole (mid-6th century A.D.) wherein, despite the unique features of the simple roof shrine which were the direct consequences of the imitation of the structural mode which brought on elevational profile and skyline, the main plan is that of a cavern-like, low ceilinged, pillared hall with frontside railings, closed walls carrying a few perforated windows for ventilation and light and the interior rear side shrine on the back wall arranged within the central pillar bay. It is very obvious, on the one hand, that this is a direct derivative from the rock architectural proto-type, namely the *vihāra* caves, and on the other, that the temple-form has not yet taken full shape. It will be readily conceded that the Brahmanical

temple builders at least did not want to imitate the *chaitya* hall of the Buddhists for their shrines and had definitely wanted to associate a pillared hall with the shrine. But that they had not totally ignored the Buddhist formula for shrines is clear by the deliberate attempt seen in the Durga temple at Aihole (end of 6th century A.D.)⁴—the next significant step after Lad Khan—in which the apsidal *chaitya* form has been closely copied, with an outer pillared verandah and the inner aisles and nave through the hypostyle arrangement. The only concession to the change of faith that they made was the *śikhara* form. Aside of that, their clear inability to get at the curvature of the roof above the apse end in stone medium (and not brick), made them provide a simple flat roof for the shrine, over which the present and later *śikhara* arose. The original *śikhara* consisted of a rubble core with stone casing and of *gajapriṣṭha* from as can be deduced from the photograph taken by Meadows Taylor a hundred years ago. It is of no small importance to note that Hindu temple builders gave up this Buddhist formula forthwith as totally unsuitable to their aspirations and requirements, and thus the Durga temple stands out as the solitary landmark of the blind alley of the early attempts at Brahmanical temple architecture. The builders turned once again to the hypostyle hall attached to which is the shrine at the rear, and made the shrine into a separate chamber with a circuit around it. They erected a pillared hall in front of it and an entrance porch, in a longitudinal axis; the whole being enclosed within a walled chamber. This development which represents a first major stage in the fixation of the layout plan of the temple was adopted in Huchimalligudi temple at Aihole which is datable to the early 7th century A.D. An easy next stage is as that of Huchchapayyagudi at Aihole itself (early 7th century A.D.), wherein the cell is evolving further and is taken as an organic projection of the closed pillared hall, the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* is outside the hall in an outer court, and the *śikhara* is now immediately above the cella, at the very rear of the temple. This is the first truly complete form of the Hindu temple. It is of utmost significance to note that in the *Mahāyāna* stages of Buddhism, in the areas where Chalukyan political hegemony was felt (as at Ellora), the *chaitya* caves themselves went out of vogue and the main Buddhist types were *vihāras* with shrine chamber at the rear end, space for circumambulation around the Buddha statue itself being provided in some cases. Correspondingly the shrine caves proper took the form of a rectangular excavation, with a medium-sized pillared hall in front, often with side chapels and with a shrine chamber, which could be circumambulated, in the rear. No doubt this change is the outcome of image worship which had by now become very popular in Buddhism and had ousted the miniature *stūpa* as the object of veneration in the earlier periods. It is also equally feasible that this is no less due to the impact of the ideas of the Brahmanical temple builders as at Aihole and elsewhere (signified by the Huchimalligudi temple), not to speak of the simple Hindu temples of the Gupta terrain, the style and artistry of which were by now diffusing

into the Upper Deccan and Western India. This feature has been noted in Cave VIII of the Buddhist group at Ellora (roughly contemporary with Dhumarlena in pillar forms and datable to the end of 7th century A.D.) and the relatively earlier Cave XXI (Ramesvara, Fig. 2, No. 3), Cave XIV (Ravan-ki-Khai, Fig. 2, No. 4) and Caves XVII, XIX, XX and XXVI of the Brahmanical group and those of the Aurangabad Buddhist group (Fig. 2, No. 5). It is very obvious that the progress made in the adaptation of the shrine chamber had been rapid and phenomenal. Coupled with the fact that *stūpa chaityas* had gone totally out of use after the examples at Ajanta, we have naturally to admit the process of inescapable assimilation of not only the architectural media but also the iconographical diversification and expansion of the Brahmanical by the Buddhist innovators. It has been held by some scholars that the shift at Ellora and Aurangabad, as distinguished from Ajanta, to the square shrine chamber with the *pradakshināpāṭha* around has to be taken as the very end of Buddhist activities at these places, and thus they must be dated to a stage very much later, to the last of the Ajanta caves or the earlier Buddhist groups at Ellora itself. It is reasonable to hold that a clear shift in the architectural plan (wherein Buddhist individuality is all but lacking) has taken place, but at the same time it would not be irrational to premise that in certain stage of art endeavour, a new and useful trend is quickly absorbed by varying creeds both for survival as well as for popularity. It would be an appropriate sequel to the desuetude of *stūpa* worship itself and to the growing necessity for integrating and combining an assembly hall or a *vihāra* with the shrine itself instead of having two different structures for these. The model of the *vihāras* as Caves I, II, IV, VI (ground floor), XVI and XVII (datable from the end of the 6th century to the second half of the 7th century A.D.) at Ajanta have already paved the way for this both by their shrines and sub-shrines in the rear wall as also a space for circumambulation around the Buddha figure in the last three cases. Thus the next stage to this organic trend that we see in Cave XVIII and others at Ellora is unquestionable without much of a time lag and took place certainly in fifty years or so. Further, in this period of transition, we also have both creeds indulging in a give and take.

A matter of particular significance to be noted here is the fact that the Dasavatara Cave (Fig. 2, No. 6) has many features which speak in favour of its being primarily a Buddhist excavation, continued and completed in its present form by Hindu artisans. The shrine, unlike other caves, is situated at an elevation and is approached by a very long flight of steps in front. The ground floor of the cave does not have any typically Hindu features of layout or decoration. There is a plain *vihāra*-like excavation on the side wall of the hill to the left of the open court and to one side of the central pavilion. The front row of pillars in the first floor has Buddha figures on the bracket capital. The other pillars in the interior are undecorated. The *dvārapāla* figures looking out of the first floor edge are put in

and not cut out. As a matter of fact all the sculptured panels are scooped out and do not seem to be the result of a preconceived plan. These features, however, seem to have set a vogue for the same fashionable technique of scooping out into the rock adopted at Dhumarlena and also elsewhere. The Dasavatara upper floor again has a shrine in the back wall which is almost the prototype of that in a Buddhist *vihāra*. Since the cave is datable in its Brahmanical form to the 8th century A.D., one would expect the shrine in the back wall to be a detached one with a *pradakshināpatha* as was universally the case in the shrines of the Brahmanical faith at Ellora of this and even earlier periods like Ravan-ki-Khai (Fig. 2, No. 4), Ramesvara (Fig. 2, No. 3), etc. In fact, as has been already seen this *pradakshināpatha* appealed to the Buddhist so that they adopted it in Cave VIII which is datable to the close of the 7th century A.D. With reference to the Dasavatara, therefore, it seems to be more than probable that the Buddhists, at about the same time the Tin Thāl was being built, roughly excavated the rock chambers both of the ground and first floors, and also the *vihāra*-like cave on the side flank of the court. They also provided for the rearside shrine chamber, as was their wont (all on the model roughly of Tin Thāl), although it is obvious that neither the wall cells nor the shrine facade was completed by them. They only cut out the pillars, the front row also being decorated on the face looking out. At this stage, owing to a great setback of Buddhism at Ellora, the excavation was given up and completed by Hindu craftsmen a little later in the only way then possible, namely by providing a gallery of sculptured panels on the walls of the hall, putting a *liṅga* in the back shrine and providing the *dvārapālas*. It is also obvious that the image of Nandi had originally no place but was introduced only during the Hindu phase. Hence, we do not have any real pedestal for the image, except a faint scratching of the floor in order to give it the impression of being a few inches above the surrounding floor. The question arises as to what happened, in this scheme, to the detached pavilion in the front court of the ground floor. This was probably the structure last to be completed and hence during the earlier Buddhist phase it might have been left as an inert mass of rock, to be scooped out later if necessary but only providing for two side entrances into the court. There is even the faint possibility that the original plan of Buddhist, was to have excavated a two-storeyed structure here, like the Tin Thāl whereby the considerable elevation of the present Dasavatara cave would have been whittled down further in order to make room for the ground floor which would then be in level with the neighbouring caves. The Dasavatara ground floor also is basically not unlike the ground floor of Tin Thāl with its three bays excepting that had the Buddhists continued with it they would have scooped it out on the same pattern, the inner antechamber of six pillars and then the shrine chamber proper. Be this as it may, it is evident that by its outmoded architectural layout, and the evidence of the scooped out panels, the Buddha figures, and the *vihāra* side cave, as also by the nondescript nature of the ground floor, the Dasavatara

excavation represents a process of supercession of the initial Buddhist work by sectarian Brahmanical craftsmen—a transformation achieved without blood and tears, resulting nonetheless, in a retrograde state in respect of the plan. The only positive and forward trend that was achieved is the addition of the detached pavilion in the front court, which is in keeping with the development noted elsewhere. The fact that Dantidurga's inscription, datable to middle of the 8th century A.D., (a little prior to the construction of Kailasa) is engraved on this *mandpa* is significant and it is reasonable to assume that it was carved out in his time and the record affixed to it. The fact that the sculptures of the panels of Dasavatara first floor, with the depiction of elemental and primordial fury and ferocity in the scenes, are different from the sophisticated and sensual appeal of the sculptures carved on the exterior wall of the pavilion in the court (in which we see at least two major sculptures of drinking couples), is enough to vouch for the direction in which the art trends and figure-modelling are moving. These latter sculptures are more in accord, from the point of style, with the sculptures of the Kailasa-complex.

Again, Ramesvara is by far the earliest Brahmanical cave at Ellora and cannot be dated later than the beginning of the 7th century A.D. either on grounds of architecture or sculpture. It clearly precedes the Elephanta cave in its features, and succeeds the Badami cave No. 2, dated to A.D. 579. Thus a brisk pace of development in the layout plan as well as art motifs of the two creeds took place, and we see a clear merging of the media, and art idioms; Brahmanical art playing a clearly dominant part. The trends are also corroborated by the developments noted elsewhere, as at Aihole and even at far off Mamallapuram.

It is also worth noting that hereafter there is no turning back on the longitudinal ground plan of the temple, on the alignment and juxtaposition of the hypostyle hall to the shrine and the antechamber. What is more, the surmounting of a *śikhara* on the shrine, as in the Hindu temple, had also taken its rightful place, and was ready for further fruitful developments. Not only is any further typically Buddhist architectural regulation not seen but when a Buddhist temple was built elsewhere in India, the *śikhara* element was adopted without hesitation as in the case of the Bodh Gaya temple. Indeed it may well be said that the venerated *stūpa* form of hemispherical shape with its *harmikā* and *chattra* which died out in the cave architecture of the 7th century A.D. was regenerated in the form of the developed four-cornered *stūpa* with its pyramidal and conical profile and 'tee' spire as at Bodh Gaya, which can perhaps be dated to the end of 7th or early 8th century A.D. The ground plan that was evolved in the formative stage, as at Ellora, Badami, Aihole and Aurangabad was, however, of fundamental and lasting significance for the finite shape of the Hindu temple.

REFERENCES

1. It may be noted incidentally that the universal practice of painting the images of temples, particularly those in the sanctum, in an approved colour scheme enjoined in the texts also gave rise to images made of brick and mortar (*sudhā*) with stucco finish, as also those of wood (*dāru*) before icons of stone in the round got established in the cella of temples.
2. An instance, however, of the apsidal and astylar early *chaitya* (1st century B.C.) is at Thanala, near Pali, Maharashtra State.
3. A matter of cognate interest is that even most of the *vihāras* of Ajanta and Nasik of the earlier phase are astylar and without a shrine chamber.
4. Another example of this kind, not entirely in stone medium but in mixed brick and stone structural form, is now known from the Pushpabhadrasvami temple near the Krishna ghat at Nagarjunakonda (Lower Deccan) datable to the early 4th century A.D. by inscription. This had the apsidal plan, in which the framework was of stone pillars while the intervening spaces were closed by brick work. Presumably it had the rear side curved backed roof as well though we do not know this for certain as only the ground plan was extant. It is clearly the forerunner of the Durga temple and was the earliest Hindu experiment of an apsidal shrine. But it did use, in the main, a more plastic medium of construction, namely brick, which was in vogue for the earlier Buddhist edifices in the valley.

BRAHMANICAL EARLY STRUCTURAL ARCHITECTURE— SOME ASPECTS

It would be a truism to state that the Gupta period—by which would be meant the period denoting the rise of the Imperial Gupta dynasty with its progenitor Chandragupta the first, from c. A.D. 319-20 and proceeding upto the fall of the same dynasty, and the succession of Sri Harsha of Kannauj or the later Guptas of Magadha, upto the end of the 7th centnry A.D.—spelt an era of resurgence of art, architecture, sculpture and literature for the best part of northern India. The victorious campaigns of Samudragupta (as enumerated in the Allahabad Pillar *Prasasti*) formed the tactical *avant garde* action of a Hindu Imperial House, carried to the larger part of south India, although it strictly remained a campaign and was certainly not intended to be nor resulted in a political conquest. It was almost akin to an *Aśvamedha* campaign wherein a display or show of force was usually made. It may hence be taken for granted that the areas which received the specific impacts of this campaigning early Gupta monarchs were by no means crippled or converted into feudatory status. On the other hand, the normal pace of life was hardly disturbed after the end of the campaign. It could have, however, resulted in desultory contacts—social, political and cultural—which might have continued to be strengthened in the subsequent periods. It did not metamorphose the regional trends of arts into a Gupta *genre* or towards a Gupta orientation.

Now, a dictum very commonly taken recourse to in many art histories of India is to universalise this Gupta period into a national era or epoch, and to speak of a comprehensive period of efflorescence of all the fine arts, in a nexus—nucleating around the basic impetus or genius of the Imperial Gupta art-force. Anyone ready to concede the historical pattern of the southern Indian region particularly, in the period, would not find it difficult to confute this assumption. It may

even be stated that phraseology such as 'artistic unity of the Gupta period' or 'the Gupta art of the Deccan', etc., are *prima facie* jarring to the sense of history, geography and environment of the southern Indian country and is basically untenable. By the same token, it could be stated that there was nothing existing like a 'Gupta India'. The independent dynasties of the South, like the later Andhras, Pallavas, Chalukyas, etc., and their annals would be standing negation of this thesis. Indeed it has not yet been precisely expounded as to what patterns of impact or gift in the realm of fine arts and literature that Gupta dynasties of the north made, for the south Indian region—a process that could be called a Gupta heritage for these far-off principates. A simple instance will suffice to emphasise the limitations of a Gupta norm in an all India context. We have in one of the Buddhist chapels as well as in a Brahmanical temple in Nagarjunakonda, variously datable to the time of Virapurushadatta and Rudrapurushadatta respectively (*circa* A.D. 325-350) two delightful examples of stone epigraphical records in classical Sanskrit, with an elegance and grandeur which leaves us in no doubt as to the fact that Sanskrit might have been the accredited language of the Ikshvaku court. Although Sanskrit was undoubtedly of a northern origin, it spread quite early into the matrix of the western and southern monarchical societies, as evidenced by the Junagadh rock inscription of Rudradaman, the *Mahākshatrapa* of the mid-2nd century A.D., in florid classical Sanskrit, and these Sanskrit epigraphs aforementioned, of Nagarjunakonda. Indeed, it would also appear feasible that Sanskrit was derived in the Krishna basin from Gujarat and Western India, with which rulers of the Krishna valley had a clear kinship, besides artistic and cultural relationship. It well preceded the political rise of the Guptas. With the skill already accomplished in the plastic art as at Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda and a host of other places in the Andhra country, particularly centred around the Krishna-Guntur Districts, it would be seen that the art of this region had not only reached its zenith already, but also on the sociological plane, the flowering of the Sanskrit language had completed the process of art appreciation and sophistication in the aesthetic realm. If this be so, it would be natural to hold that if Samudragupta's campaigns did have any substantial gains, they were mainly in the direction of mustering together all the prevailing mature art trends and treatments in the various regions of the south to receive from these the required inspiration for moulding in the north an art idiom worthy of the imperial status of the dynasty. One would thus be well-advised to concede that the basic stimuli to the formal and architectural art of the early historic and pre-medieval periods of India were to a large extent motivated by the rich traditions to the southern regional kingdoms where they had already crystallised, as from the patently important northern centres of early art also. In this, the Andhras on the one hand and the early Chalukyas on the other contributed the largest. Their early centres of art and architecture as at Sanchi, Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Aihole, Badami,

etc., had been the homes as it were, of the development of architecture and figure sculpture in India in the succeeding periods.

It would be relevant in this context to deal briefly about traditional building materials. We have in the early construction of the north and south, two traditions, the brick and stone. While these had to some extent been a matter of geographic or geological choice, it should be stated that the brick tradition was noted in the early freestanding structural usage. This had indeed been a continuing process right from protohistoric times and had not met with any divergent impulse until the rock architecture of Deccan was followed by an urge to erect structures in stone blocks also. The earliest¹ Gupta temples of northern India such as Ahichchhatra, Bhitargaon, etc., were of brick (c. A.D. 500). Similar was the case at Sanchi of the early Imperial Satavāhanas. But at Amaravati, they had brought in an innovation by which, instead of restricting the sculptural decor only to the *torṇas* and keeping the main *stūpas* as brick masses with plaster, they decided to encase the *stūpa* with stone slabs and to carve in bold relief on these slabs, a series of panels on the drum part as well as the dome part. It may be stated here that a parallel tradition in brick had also risen in Sind early, in the form of terracotta *stūpa* carvings, as at Mirpur Khas. This was well within the zone of diffusion of the Gupta ideas although it was not a case of outright borrowal but built on local moorings. To some extent this Sind art-centre possibly lent even some inspiration for a similar centre of art in the Gujarat, as now known through the Devnimori brick *stūpa*, near Shamlaji, clearly ascribable to late Kshatrapa period, say 4th century A.D.

Owing to the obvious paucity of any stone material for building in the Gangetic basin, a strong brick and terracotta tradition survived to a greater degree in that area and perhaps influenced both Sind and Bengal similarly; but in the areas, where rock, particularly sandstone, had been available in plenty as in the Gwalior, Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand areas, the germs of a stone structural architecture were seen in no uncertain manner. A similar situation obtained in the Lower Deccan where the conversion from the brick to stone was much earlier, although there was also a stage when brick and stone were used simultaneously in the same structure for hearting and veneering respectively, as already noticed. In so far as complete stone building edifices were concerned, it is more probable that such activity was inaugurated earlier in the Deccan rather than in Upper India. This aspect will be dealt with at some length further on.

It should be noted also here that even in the period in *cis-Vindhyān* India temporally related to the Gupta dynasties, rock-architecture was also being pursued side by side with structural stone architecture, and the study of the mutual impacts and handicaps involved reveal to us valuable data helpful in the chronological fixation of the productions of this period. But since most of these cave architectural forms pertained to Buddhism, they do not help us much directly in

the matter of the evolution of the structural Hindu temples, except in the fixation of the ground plans for ritual progress.

An interesting and typical transitional structural mode of this era was the apsidal temple, as at Chezarla, Nagarjunakonda, Sanchi, etc. It was a direct derivative, formally speaking, from the *chaitya* halls of Buddhists. Apart from this mode, the structural temple mode was basically of the two kinds, the first being a longitudinal ground plan with a superstructure or *vimāna* over the cella, which was indeed a further evolutionary product of the Buddhist monastic ground plan. The other mode was a podium-based temple, on a square platform with the shrine occupying the central portion and having pillared *proch-porjections*, and either open on all the four sides or only on one side, the other three sides being, in some cases, distinguished by special panel sculptures on the wall in the central part. A couple of sub-shrines occasionally are found attached to the basal plinth corners on the front side at the outer ground level. The texts that deal with such structures have been dealt with in *Vāstupurusha maṇḍala* sections as also in *Mānasāra*. But these texts are certainly not earlier than the 7th century A.D., and thus they form merely the final compilation of the hieratic structural forms for a Hindu temple, and these further involve geometrical or non-functional schematic appendages which do not obtain in actual structural examples. In any case, it is notable that many such early forms of the first mentioned or second mentioned mode (above) occur mainly in the Vindhyan region of Central India in the Lower Deccan. They would appear to have independent, regional and local genesis and motivation, and excepting where iconography or pillar *motifs* are concerned, are not all of the same structural *milieu*. The question thus legitimately arises as to how one would face the issue of the earliest development of structural ritual architecture of the Brahmanical Hindu religion. We have got a distinctive group of shrine structures at Nagarjunakonda pertaining to the period between early 4th century A.D. to early 5th century A.D. We have another very prolific early group at Aihole in Lower Deccan—apart from many other later types—ranging from early 6th century A.D. to mid 7th century. A.D. We have a few scattered groups in Central Indian regions as at Nachna, Bhumara, Deogarh,² etc., basically of a period later to early 6th century A.D. In such a geographical disposition, it would appear that the prime nucleus of temple origin at least in the *cis*-Vindhyan region is traceable to Lower Deccan, in the region of the Krishna-Guntur Districts, and this basic focus of a firm rudimentary phase of temple architecture shifted without much time-lag to the region of Aihole and Badami—with inspiring contacts, purely on the artistic and craftsmanship plan, from contiguous area like, Ajanta, etc. A similar process but originating relatively later was set in motion in the brick tradition of the North, giving rise to the Vindhyan group, noted above, at a subsequent period and providing thereafter for mutual impacts between this and Aihole group of the Deccan, being broadly coeval. The onus,

from this crucial phase, of having spelled out the fundamental forms—though not the dim beginnings—and evolution of the ritual Hindu temple would seem to have fallen upon Aihole. A significant corroboration of the vital role of Aihole is supplied by the very nature of the basic modes of Temple architecture, namely, the so-called *Drāviḍa* and *Nāgāra* in an early context (leaving aside the *Vesara* sub-mode which is a variation of the earlier *Nāgāra* type of a relatively later eastern context).

The *śilpa* texts which deal with the *Drāviḍa* and *Nāgāra* have now been taken as essentially southern in authorship and codification.³ There is no reference in any of the definitions of the *Drāviḍa* and *Nāgāra* to a north Indian original for the latter or a similar southern original for the former. They essentially seek to elaborate two modes which they chose to call the *Drāviḍa* and *Nāgāra*—the most charitable and least committing explanation of which could be that latter are obtaining in or favoured by relatively more northerly people, with reference to the *Drāviḍa*. This could even hold good for the Lower and Upper Deccan and South. If this is conceded, we may be able to substantiate the fact that at Aihole itself we have both the *Drāviḍa* and *Nāgāra* types of shrines, existing side by side, mainly as the early experimentations, theorised in the *śilpa sāstra* texts. We have also the apsidal plan and elevation there. Nowhere, in such a reasonably early and indubitably Brahmanical context of freestanding structural temple groups, have we got a complex of shrines wherein, the northern, southern, as well as the traditionally Buddhist—floated apsidal forms had been employed side by side. No doubt, the *Nāgāra*, *Drāviḍa* and apsidal aspects will be mainly related to the ground plan and the back elevation including the superstructure over the cella, but it will be well to note that this is precisely what is defined as *Drāviḍa* and *Nāgāra* in the texts.⁴ The *Drāviḍa* or *Nāgāra* style was appurtenant to the cella and superstructure alone—as a microcosm of the evolved temple composition. The structural variations in dimensions and ground plan, of parts other than the main cella and superstructure adopted at a subsequent stage a basic southernness, as a whole, since heterogeneous sub-shrines rose close to the main shrine, whereas in the area influenced by the post-Gupta traditions in the North, Rajasthan and Central India, the pattern was that of a *pañchāyatana* shrine: (a) where the four sub-shrines were located on the high platform, (b) as in the earlier variant or where only two sub-shrines, were located at the lower level adjoining the front side corners of the platform, or (c) where, if the sub-shrines were four, they were located, as in above, all round the platform at the lower level, or (d) where the main shrine is at the centre of a distinctive platform. The early Osian temples are examples of the first kind; the Bhumara temple in Central India of the second kind; Deogarh in Gwalior, of third kind; and the locally called the Brahma temple on the fort of Mandore near Jodhpur of the fourth kind.

The *pañchāyatana* type of (a), however, reached Gujarat in the early medieval

period only, and indeed is relatively rare in southern Rajasthan were the pre-medieval, early medieval temples, as for instance, Badoli, Arthuna, Menal, etc., despite the northern style of *śikhara* often enumerated, partake in their ground plan rather the heterogeneous Deccan and southern layout development as a measure of recognition of the impact, perhaps, from the Rashtrakuta-Chalukya type-reign. In so far as the door opening of the cella had been one or four, a basic style had been to follow the *Mukhalinga* form of Śiva, so that an *ekmukha linga* went well often with a single door opening, and the five-headed aspects of Siva (or Mahesa) could well be synchronised with a four door cella.

The earliest forms of *śikhara* in the examples at Aihole in Deccan, Deogarh in Gwalior or Gop in Saurashtra had all been primarily based on the *chaitya* motif.⁵ The scheme is a simple three-tiered composition with intersecting *chaityas*, and *krañāmālakas*, mounted by a single *āmalaka* and *stūpi*, the stature being affected mostly by the height of the main *bhūmi* between two tiers. The most early occurrence of such a motif on a structural temple can thus be palced only between A.D. 500—650. Indeed the entire evolution of the types of superstructure as at Aihole received a firm crystallisation, in the 7th century A.D. when the *Drāviḍa* forms got consolidated as at Badami (Malegitti Sivalaya or Upper Sivalaya) and the *Nāgara* forms got specialised as at Huchchimalligudi and Huchapayyagudi at Aihole, and were elaborated subsequently into the typical Chalukyan temple, with rather a stellate ground plan bestowed to the *nijamandir* plinths. Side by side, the rudimentary and narrow storeyed forms of Aihole as in Mallikarjuna and Galaganatha shrines there (of the so called Kadamba style) emphasising horizontal lines, and giving a general pyramidal profile, but with the use of *krañāmālakas*, as well as *āmalasara* and *stūpi*, on the crest, led to the final development of the typical later Chalukyan (Hoysala) superstructure in which the *Nāgara* type and the stepped-storeyed type of Aihole were both fused, decorative element alone being the main additional contribution. Dharwar and Lakkundi produce such temples.

In the sequel, it would be plausible to argue that the earliest shrines neither of the Madhyadesa and Vindhyan India, nor of the Deccan, exclusively give the full (later) form of the *Nāgara* type of Hindu temple, but the primary homes of structural architecture situated variously at Aihole, Badami, Nachna, Deogarh, etc., gave empirical shapes to the concepts as adumbrated subsequently in the *Śilpa sāstras* delineating the *Nāgara Drāviḍa* forms; and only by mid-7th or early 8th century A.D. that we have a full-blooded *Nāgara* and *Drāviḍa* temple in north India as well as in south India respectively. Inevitably, therefore, in such a dispensation to speak of a Gupta mode or a Gupta unity in art for the whole of India (except perhaps in the cultural context of some art-motifs or in the highly rarified traditional or literary impacts) would be to magnify the Gupta norm and zone, out of proportions. In any event it might not apply to the regions

south of the Tropic of Cancer, where the most early representatives of structural Hindu temple architecture of the Peninsula, by and large flowered and flourished.

REFERENCES

1. A slightly later period saw the simple stone edifices such as at Sanchi, Bhumara, and of a still later stage more developed forms such as the temples at Deogarh, Nachna, etc., (6th cent. A.D.).
2. To place this temple in the 5th century A.D. as Benjamin Rowland (*The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 135.) has done would seem to be totally unwarranted. See also Percy Brown *Indian Architecture*, Vol. I, pp. 60-61 and M.S. Vats, *Gupta Temple at Deogarh*, M.A.S.I, No. 70, pp. 8-11.
3. Gravely, F. H. and Ramachandran, T.N., *The Three main styles of Temple architecture*, Bulletin of the Madras Govt. Museum, N.S. General, Vol. III, pt. I (Madras (1934) and Gravely F.H., *An outline of Indian Temple Architecture*, *Ibid.*, N.S. General, Vol. III, pt. 2 (Madras 1934).
4. Gravely and Ramachandran, *op. cit.*
5. As elaborated on the flanks of the Visvakarma facade opening at Ellora.

STYLISTIC TRENDS IN AJANTA MAHAYANA CAVE-ART

The intent of the topic would, *inter alia*, underscore the infinite scope of the Ajanta architectural situation for an evolutionary study. This is indeed debatable, for the Buddhist art mannerisms here, springing demonstrably from a timber and brick architecture (as evident from the paintings, as well) though transfused and frozen in rock-cut art-medium, were of a *milieu* not overmuch amenable to any universal or mainstream correlations. In other words, it is feasible to argue that the stylistic trends at Ajanta are not well crystallised and stand out from the movements of structural or cave-art going on in the other regions either coevally or in the succeeding century.

We might well ask ourselves the question as to what were the outstanding art (structural) movements afoot in the classical period about and around upper western Deccan? The Sind (now in Pakistan)-Gujarat tract had, so to say, been at the peak of its bold brick and terracotta experimentation for the gigantic *stūpa* complexes, as seen at Mirpur Khas and Devnimori respectively. The Central Indian—Madhyadesa—area was having its significant, if somewhat modest translation of the *nāligriha* or the womb-temple into a freestanding structural type, as exemplified at Udayagiri, Tigowa, Sanchi, etc., to culminate ultimately in the 6th century A.D., in the highly functional model at Deogarh. In the Lower Deccan we have the great centre of Nagarjunakonda, Ter, Chezarla, etc., where the transitional cross-fertilisation of brick and stone, timber and terracotta were taking place and the forms experimented were themselves a continuance of the early *Mahāyāna* Buddhist predilections in form in Lower Deccan, namely, the apsidal, although square and rectangular plans at least, were admittedly employed side by side. Did any of these either anticipate or foreclose the Ajanta performance? To answer that, we have, as a prerequisite, to collate the empirical range of the Ajanta stylistic trends in *Mahāyāna* centuries. We are briefly having a random sampling of the data hereunder which have possibilities for further elaborations.

The later caves for this purpose, have been taken, to chronologically range from the 5th century A.D. to the 7th century A.D. taking into account some Rashtrakuta record on the cave-walls which, while not necessarily pointing that rock-cut activity should have been on till the end of the latter century, certainly shows how the place, could have been exposed to early Rashtrakuta attention.

(1) The pillars do not show single unified 'order' or pattern but are considerably diverse and carry fluted, plain, square as well as circular forms. *Malasthāna*, *kalāṣa* and *kumbha* are there, but no *tāḍi*. Further, *padma* and *phalaka* are present, but no *virakanṭha*, nor corbels in any of the porches, door frames or pilasters. Where facades show massive pillars with any corbels, they are either of simple doucine curve, or simplified *taranga*, on the underside only with a volute, without a median band, or with a concave upper profile, plain in character. It does not herald the typical Chalukyan corbels that follow.

Inner pillars show *phalaka* over *kumbha* with an intervening corded course, but no *padmā*, although some door pilasters show it. Intersecting corbels are mostly three-armed where found, the outer not being depicted. Cross-beams, run only transversely in the main half, beyond the *ardhamanḍapa*.

2. There is no inclination to show the plinth mouldings in structural profile, but only a simple *vedi* with bold pilastered and recessed eave-front as in Caves XIX and XXIII. In the latter case, the *gaṇa* frieze is noteworthy of the trends common with other regions. Only the *stūpa*, *chaitya* model in case Cave XXVI shows a full plinth, body and superstructure directly paraphrasing the Buddhist *sine qua non* the *aṇḍa*, *harmikā*, etc., without showing evolutionary facets.

3. The door frames stop with the over-doors and do not, invariably show the entablature. The topmost lintel course is often having rearing lion head or *bhāraputras* common to Brahmanical traditions of the latter day. Where the *uttarāṅga* is shown, it is essentially as a series of *nāsikas* over the *kapota* or a *hāra* of *śālas*, (which presupposes both the apsidal and rectangular models) alone, without relieved *kūṭas* or *nāsikas*.

Lalāṭa bimbā as garland bearing *yakshas* is common (Cave I) and Nagaraja as door keeper on the inner *śākhās* of the jambs. These establish a tenuous liaison with what follows elsewhere.

4. They do never show—not even once—a clear-cut *kūṭa śikara*. The square structures, shown in paintings themselves seem to have only flat roofs, over double cornices, as seen in Cave II and elsewhere. Although double storeyed structures are shown, they are also having same top (as in Cave XVII Buddha-in-Kapilavastu scene). They appear to have been fastened by corner *kodungai* or strut brackets—in wooden prototype—as in Cave VII. Cave XVI shows, in Mahamaya's dream narrative scene, what is seemingly a circular pavilion of the freestanding type, whose cave-art precursor is perhaps to be witnessed at Junnar, in the Tuljalena cave. *Śālā śikhara* chambers and gates (*Dvārasālas*) were clearly the most profuse, and one

such in Cave XVII (near the circular tent like apartment) shows a most beautiful model, with a high *mahānāsika* in the central part, anticipating in its structural assemblage the Chalukyan device seen at Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal. The most satisfactory rendering of a superstructural finish, though yet highly incipient, is found in Cave I, in the *Mahājanaka Jātaka* scene displaying entablatures, a compressed *grīva* and flattened top closure. There are two more rock-cut instances in caves No. IV and VII of the quardantal cornices lain over by another cornice with a somewhat curved profile. These should be called a *piḍha-deul* model, in its most rudimentary form.

5. Where *torāṇas* are shown, as in the *stūpa* of Cave XIX, as also on its walls as a framework for carved couples, they do not generally have any top *makara* clasp crest, and the lower *makaras* themselves have well-raised heads and rather short body, much different, for example, from those seen at Jogesvari over the main door. *Hindola torāṇas* of the rectangular profile are indicated in Cave II showing Irandati on swing in *Vidurapaṇḍita Jātaka* scene.

6. The *stūpa* form itself shows here a projection on the front, on the upper level, suggestive of a *sukanāsa* dormer. It is, however, clear from the *torāṇa* forms in Cave XIX and cave II that they had been far from systematised.

7. No Ganga-Yamuna is found on door frames but *vrikshikas* are shown on the *phalaka* on either side, more or less replacing the Gang-Yamuna, as found at the Udayagiri caves. Brackets are found on the door frames as *vyālas*, as well as on the facade pillars and interior pillars where there are *Vrikshikas*, *kichakas* and *mithunas* respectively.

8. One example of an *āmalakaśila* on the corners of the front porch (Cave IV and another apparently over a shrine front, are seen.

9. A *padma Valabhi* is found shown on the side shrine of Cave I.

10. Windows are plain, with a few outer frames, but without facade pillars, or with entablature features.

11. No raftered ceiling is generally shown, not even to the extent the earlier *chaitya* caves, have been consistently showing cross beams, rafter frames, ribbings, etc., on the vault.

The tendency of the entire range of art devices was to reveal that the formative shrine chamber crystallised therefrom would have been having a somewhat flat-roofed and double-corniced chamber with front porch, perhaps crowned by an *āmalaka* ornamentation, forming a community of archetypes, prevalent also in Hindu examples at Sanchi, Udayagiri, Tigowa, Aihole, Mahakut and ranging from 5th to 6th century A.D.

Thus, the essential, continuing and forward-looking features at Ajanta pertain less to the architectural mannerisms and more to the ground plans, and ofcourse, the aesthetic and formal values of the sculptural and mural art. In these latter, they substantiate only an inchoate and local *milieu*, in a studied elimination of

direct links with the mainstream impulses in formal architecture evolving between the 5th and 7th centuries A.D. This was perhaps to be ascribed to the decline of the Buddhist cave-art in the centuries succeeding Ajanta, while Brahmanical art was getting initiated on a progressively finite stylistic orientation and growth. The accent on tantric propensities of the Buddhist religion which were developing in these periods of degeneration of initiative in its formal architecture, i.e., 6th-8th century A.D., was also clearly reinforcing such a *cul de sac* in structural architecture. The advent of *Samhitā*, *Puraṇic* and *Āgama* and *Śilpa* standardisation for Hinduism during this very period, on the other hand, conduced to an orderly evolution of the Brahminical architectural format. The political situation of the Vakatakas in their closing stages had itself no redeeming feature whatsoever, making for stability and peaceful impacts with neighbourhood for art-evolution.

EARLY TEMPLE ORIGINS IN LOWER DECCAN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NAGARJUNAKONDA

A striking feature of the early stages of architecture in India is the paucity of monuments which could be called Brahmanical or broadly Hindu, and the prevalence of both excavated and freestanding stone and brick structures, mainly of the Buddhist faith. It is indeed not inapposite to say that the origins of monumental religious architecture are rooted in the religion that Buddha evolved. Nevertheless, this would not negative the fact that corresponding architectural forms in the Hindu faith were absent, of necessity, and not due to lack of concepts. The ancient *Śulba* texts which laid down many interesting concepts of regular solids in their delineation of the sacrificial altars, with prodigious detail and care, could indeed not have been ignorant of architecture in the abstract. But they did not feel any need for a separate shrine or temple for worship, owing to the fundamental fact that early Brahmanic religion believed strongly in individual worship or *ārādhana* and each person had his own personal theistic conception which he pursued with *mantras* or word pictures adequate to the *sādhana*. On the contrary Buddhism (as also Jainism) derived its very strength from the congregation, its faith and following. The *sangha* was a cardinal factor in Buddhist monastic life and Buddha himself had emphasised the need for its solidarity. The subtle intellectuality of the Brahmanic faith was, in marked contrast with lay ethical content of the tenets of the Buddha and in the *Hīnayāna* context, the life of the laity and the clergy under Buddhism was one of universal brotherhood and group organism. Thus the need for gross physical accommodation for a semi-religious following gave rise to the early monastic edifices namely the *vihāras*, rock-cut assembly halls and *chaityas*. It should, however, be mentioned here that the *chaitya* facade was a lasting contribution of Buddhism to Indian architecture

which found ubiquitous and persistent expression under a variety of circumstances, functional as well as non-functional. The Brahmanic faith with its fire altars, easily erected and as easily demolished (but for the *Gārhapatya* which was permanently kept lit) was very much the personal business of the votary. Thus it was the non-brahmanic, and, paradoxically enough, the heretical sects like Buddhism that inaugurated the erection of sectarian structures. Although the cave excavations had their own importance from the point of view of the regional styles as symbolised by their typical pillar and corbel forms, it was the freestanding structures that were ultimately to lay the foundation for further elaborations in an evolving religion. Thus arose in Madhyadesa, the well-known complexes at Bharhut and Sanchi. Even at this stage, there seems to be three basic conceptions of structural shapes, variously the hemispherical, the oblong or cubical, and the gable-roofed (inverted boat-shaped). The miniature depictions on the Bharhut and Sanchi sculptures leave us in no doubt about this. It is of interest to note that of these, the circular or hemispherical, with its affiliated form of apse-ended, had been the main modes under Buddhism, while much of the architectural essaying under Hinduism is related to the oblong or cubical and the inverted boat or vault-roof shaped. In the areas where Buddhism was reigning supreme, the early architectural modes of the Hindu religion also were mainly imitative of the apsidal *chaitya* halls of Buddhists. Some of the very ancient examples, such as the *chaitya*-shaped temple at Ter and Kapotesvara temple at Chezarla, conform to this pattern. But an immediate and local link with Buddhism and evolution on the very ashes, as it were, of the decline and disappearance of Buddhism, is manifested by a delightful example from Nagarjunakonda (Andhra) in the apsidal temple dedicated to Mahadeva,¹ there called Pushpabhadrasvami. It is datable to the first half of the 4th century A.D, as clearly corroborated by the long and florid inscription in classical Sanskrit on the *dvajastambha* of the temple and is thus much earlier to the earliest Chalukya temple of Lad Khan at Aihole. The temple has many interesting points to its credit. It is surrounded by a compound walling of brick with subsidiary entrances provided at its north and west. The temple is orientated east-west, facing west. The main shrine is of an apsidal plan with, however, the pillars actually planted at fixed intervals on the periphery of the apse. They had thus a direct functional importance and through suitable lintel slabs, were expected to carry the pressure of the superincumbent load. In the construction of Buddhist *chaitya* shrines, it is seen generally that the composition is mainly of brick and mortar, and a plastic form is thus easy of production. But the introduction of stone pillars distributed along the apse-line is highly suggestive not only of the new grounds the architectural style was breaking, but also the new creeds it is being harnessed to serve. The long inscription in classical Sanskrit is packed with the devout

Brahmanical fervour of the donor and the changing religious panorama at Nagarjunakonda then. The inscription refers to epic heroes like Sagara, Dilipa Ambarisha, Rama and Yudhishtira and thus reveal, palpably for the first time, many names of the northern Ikshvaku clan, amidst others. The mention of other names like Skandagopa in the same record reveal, on the one hand, the worship of Karttikeya—of whom many shrines have stood revealed at Nagarjunakonda—and on the other, the popular Pallava suffix gopa as in Vishnugopa, which was significant for this region wherefrom the Pallavas first started their clan.

This apsidal temple, which is dedicated to Mahadeva would *pari passu* be a proof positive of the direct borrowal from Buddhist plan of an Hindu architectural edifice, but with this difference that this was conceivably built of stone beams and slab veneering with brick hearting. It is significant that it is so, since, the main bulk of the Buddhist edifices at Nagarjunakonda are made almost entirely of bricks and in some cases revealing great artistry in their moulded forms which were suitably plastered and even decorated in stucco. Indeed, we may say that the Andhras, whether as the Imperial Satavahanas or as the later descendants, revelled mainly in a brick tradition, as shown by Sanchi, Ter, Chezarla and Nagarjunakonda, although they had produced delightful veneering stones, sculptured profusely, as at Sanchi, Amaravati and at Nagarjunakonda itself. Where massive religious edifices were concerned, they seem to have adopted mainly the brick medium. On the other hand even at Nagarjunakonda,² it is seen that the two Karttikeya shrines, besides the Sarvadeva temple and the Pushpabhadrasvami temple (both dedicated to Śiva) and a temple for Ashstabhujasvami built by Ābhīra king Vasushena, which are the only Hindu shrines in the valley, have been constructed of cut veneer stones, with brick hearting and pillar-lintel framework, and thus, at one and the same place, we see two traditions co-occurring. Considering the very early date of Pushpabhadrasvami temple (early 4th century A.D.) it would be reasonable to hold Nagarjunakonda as at least one of the *nuclei* of the beginning of the structural architecture in the Lower Deccan. In the general context of the other two main styles emerging from around this region at about this period viz. the Chalukyan and the Pallava, this contribution by the structural apsidal stone temple of Mahadeva was of fundamental significance, and was the forerunner to the other similar religious edifices of the resurgent Brahmanical religion in the 5th-6th centuries A.D.

The prevalence of Sanskrit in the inscriptions, despite the Prakritic and indigenous proper names, would vouch for the willingly assumed northern Sanskritic influences and its cultural consequences. It is also to be noted that this happened well before the southern campaign of Samudragupta of the Imperial Gupta dynasty and indeed, by and large, was caused by the Kshatraps³

affiliation and influence over the Ikshvakus at Nagarjunakonda, matrimonially and culturally respectively. An incidental testimony to the mutual influence which arose from this link in the realm of art is the occurrence of exactly identical Karttikeya figures (as found at Nagarjunakonda ; with the cock tucked about the waist of Kumara, the *Saktidhara*) in the Baroda Museum, belonging to the Kshatrapa times. It is also interesting to note that one of the biggest caves, an assembly hall, at the Tulaja (Bhavnagar District) Buddhistic cave group in Saurashtra, is named as the Ehabala Mandapa, which recalls one of the illustrious kings of the Ikshvaku dynasty of Nagarjunakonda, namely, Śri Ehabala Chamāmūla.

It is at the sametime a lamentable fact that the Ikshvaku dynasty which was basically Brahmanic should have disappeared so soon after its glorious reign for nearly two centuries and inspite of the wide contacts it established. It would seem that the re-emergence of Brahmanic Hindu dynasties, big and small, could not brook even any partial parochial patronage of Buddhism and its clergy. Indeed, almost a note of tragic irony attaches to one of the stela inscriptions in a monastery at Nagarjunakonda, wherein a votive shrine had been erected by a king Śri Varma⁴ (bhaṭṭa), possibly of the succeeding Brhatphalāyana clan, in honour of the last Ikshvaku queen Mahadevī (who was a Kshatrapa princess), and stele sculpture above the inscription is taken to be that of Prajāpati-Gotami tending the child Siddhārtha.⁵ It bespeaks in any case a delicate and charming sense of gratitude of the succeeding Hindu king to the last Buddhist patron-queen.

The main reason for the disappearance of Ikshvaku dynasty, as noted earlier, may be the full-blooded renaissance of Brahmanic faith, art and culture. Another may be that in the vaster context of such a regeneration of Hindu faith, the special tolerant role of Ikshvaku can clan from Nagarjunakonda valley got completely superceded and merged in the mainstream. The main arena now gravitated and shifted inevitably towards the *prima facie* of such forces, namely the Chalukyan and Pallava territories.

In the design and layout of the Puspabhadrasvami temple, again, there are many unique features. As already mentioned, there is a surrounding brick walling to the temple with narrow cubicle side entrances. This feature occurs both at the Pushpabhadrasvami temple and the Karttikeya temple situated in the interior of the valley with multiple shrines and a stepped *kund*. This feature would appear to be the hangover from the walled monasteries and *chaityas* of the Buddhists. In the latter temple mentioned above, the stepped well or *kund* probably signified the immediate need of such a water-source for Hindu temple ritual. One of the shrines in this temple-complex had also a closed drain leading from under its side wall, presumably for taking off the *abhisheka* water. The Pushpabhadrasvami temple, on the other hand, was facing the delightful wave-

kissed grand ghat on the Krishna river and this obviated the need for a *kuṇḍ*. This temple had a *dhvajastambha*, upon which the inscription mentioned was engraved. The architecture of the banner shaft does not anticipate in any way features of Chalukyan pillars. It is not massive but rather tall and slender and without any ribbed section or cushion capital. As a *dhvajastambha*, it can be classed among the very earliest, the other outstanding examples being the Garuda pillar at Mehrauli (of iron 5th century A.D.) in the Qutb-mosque courtyard near Delhi, and the Eran pillar of Budhagupta (A.D. 484) erected as a *dhvajastambha* in the Janārdana temple there.

As a combination of the brick and stone tradition, of the plastic and monumental architecture, of the Buddhist form and Hindu features as also of ritual elements like *dhvajastambha*, etc., the Pushpabhadrasvami temple is unique in its composition and was probably epoch-making in its consequences. That Brahmanic architecture of the succeeding Pallavas and Cholas as also the Chalukyas did not entirely discard the circular form is, however, only too manifest by the *vr̥ttāyata* plans, which are basically of the apsidal class, in the Pallava Sahadeva Ratha of Mamallapuram, in the late Pallava Jvarahareshvara temple at Kanchipuram, or the Early Chola achievement at Narttāmalai (Vijayalaya Cholisvaram), Tiruchchi District, Tamil Nadu (belonging to well before the end of the 8th century. A.D.) or the Durga temple at Aihole. It is however, the deification of the *dikpālas* and their ritual import in religion that perhaps resulted in the final adoption of the oblong or the *āyata* order for the Hindu temple plan, where-in the cardinal and subsidiary directions can be well-marked on the outer niches.

REFERENCES

1. *Indian Archaeology 1957-58—A Review*.
2. *Ibid.*
3. The Junagadh inscription of Śaka Rudradaman of the mid-2nd century A.D. is noted, as we know, for its high watermark of literary excellence.
4. *Indian Archaeology 1956-57—A Review*.
5. It is, however, quite likely that the sculpture represents the queen Mahadevi herself, whose *Chāyākhamba*, the pillar was, according to the inscription.

KAUSTUBHA PRASADA—NEW LIGHT ON JAYAKHYA TANTRA

It is well-known that Vaishnavite canons of temple rituals have two broad and somewhat divergent categories, the *Vaikhānasa* and the *Pāncharātra*. The former was Veda-based and is clearly the earlier of the two. However, it is the latter that had become more popular and is the basis for application in an overwhelming majority of Vishnu temples, particularly in the South. It is considered that, in *Pāncharātra* literature, there are three gems, namely, *Sāttvata*, *Paushkara*, *Jayākhyā Tantra* (or *Samhitā*). While the orthodox view is that these works should be of measurable age, the editors of the *Jayākhyasamhitā*¹ have themselves come to a conclusion on the basis of certain features appealing to them, that the age of this particular *Samhitā* should be about A.D. 450. This paper is not directly concerned with the views of the editors, or the age arrived at by them, but is intended to focus our attention upon the architectural chapter of this *Samhitā* and to derive as much factual and technical information as possible from this chapter. Incidentally, the age of the text itself would be discussed in its relevant context.

It would be appropriate to mention first that this *Samhitā* has 33 *paṭalas* wherein mainly the 20th *paṭala* dealing with *pratishṭhā vidhi* informs us about architectural details. This section has a uniqueness not available in any other known or published *Pāncharātra* or architectural literature. Before we deal with it, we may state that the first chapter of this *Samhitā* has, what has been considered by the Editors themselves as an interpolated section (*Adhikāṣa pāṭhaḥ*). The editor says that this supplementary chapter is not available in many of the ancient *kośas* and could be an interpolation at the end of the *paṭala* and is being published as found. This part contains verses reproduced at the end under References.²

This interpolation, is indeed, a minor text by itself intended to eulogise the Varadarāja temple at Kanchipuram. Its detailed description of the 10-day

Vaiśākha festival, as is being observed to this day, would bestow upon it the antiquity of these festivals themselves. It is important to note that this text refers to the original *bimba* of the Varadarāja temple of Hastīśaila, as of *dāru* or wood. We have only a stone *bimba* today in the sanctum, but we have a wooden figure of standing Vishnu which is called '*Attivarada*' and is kept in an under-water chamber in the temple tank, and is taken out once in a blue moon. Obviously the text is referable to a time when this wooden *bimba* stood in the sanctum. The fact that the text describes all the accretionary remains of the temple in the form of the *sopānas* of the *garbha*, *ardhamandapa* and outer chamber, upto the *gopura*, as we find them today, would show that it was written at a time when the temple-complex has already enlarged well beyond its conceivably restored original nucleus to its present state, including the largest outer *gopura* mentioned in the text and the *Anantasaras* (also mentioned). It mentions that all these were erected at one and the same time by Viśvakarmā, the celestial architect. Obviously the *gopura* mentioned is not the innermost *gopura* on the plinth of which we have the oldest known inscription found in the temple today, namely, that of Kulottunga (c. A.D. 1070) but the outermost which is of the Vijaynagara period (c. 14th-15th centuries A.D.).

The text thus is clearly an open and stark interpolation of a medieval and extraneous matter on what is apparently a homogenous ritual or tantric matrix with its own architectural bias. It should, perhaps, be taken as of the time from which *Jayatantra* of *Pāncharātra* mode had already become current in three of the four important temples of the Tamil country. The main text, no doubt, fails to include any scrappy clue even of its geographical or topographical setting, but it is decidedly northern by its architectural data. The interpolated section was probably added in the 14th century A.D. One of its unusual features is that it does not refer even once to *Hastīśaila* as *Kāñchīpura*, although by the time of this interpolation, the place was a quite illustrious as Kanchipura. It is just likely that this was a traditional inhibition, in the same way as throughout 4000 *Divyaprabandha* verses of the Vaishnavite saints, we do not have even a single reference to this place as Kanchipura or Kanchi, but only as Kachchi—which is indeed its true local Tamil name. Obviously Vaishnavites and even early Śaiva hymnists continued to call Kanchi (its Sanskritised form) as Kachchi, true to its original form, while only Sanskrit compositions used the form Kanchi. This is a deliberate preference born of continuous usage. The fact that Attiyur and Kachchi are themselves used independently of each other may be taken as implying that the original Kachchi as a municipal configuration included the suburbs at Tiruvehka, etc., but not Attiyur which stood as a village by itself beyond the east end of original Kachchi. Thus, even as late as at the time of this interpolation of *Hastīśaila vaibhavam* in the *Jayākhyā Samhitā*, the name of the place has been consciously confined to the traditional usages. Needless to say that the divisions of Kanchipuram as Vishnu

Kanchi, Śiva Kanchi and Jina Kanchi is of the time of the Nayakas (16th-17th centuries A.D.) and today's configuration of Big Kanchipuram and Little Kanchipuram with Hodgesonpet in between is even later, but surely corroborates the separate entity that Vishnu Kanchi (or Old Attiyur) formed from the Metropolitan Kachchi of yore which also included a few very old Vishnu temples like Anantaśāyī temple at Tiruvehka, etc. Apparently the temple of Varadarāja which might have been a rather small shrine in early times came into real prominence only in the 11th century A.D. when the polarisation of Vaishnavism and Śaivism at Kanchi had to seek an exclusive centre of faith for the former, detached from the latter. What the temple of Varadarāja looked like when Bhutattalvar (one of the early *Ālvars*) sung it as *Attīyūrān*, we are not vouchsafed to infer from the positively medieval elaboration that we observe today. But enough is perhaps suggested by the nature of the present layout that the original temple site might not have had any physical relationship with its grandiose medieval counterpart.

This interpolated section is of universal importance for many reasons. Firstly, it informs us that *Pādmāsāṃhitā* is to be considered as the *vyākhyāna* or detailed exposition of *Jayākhyasāṃhitā*. Thereby it implies the former's chronological posteriority to the latter, but anteriority to the interpolation itself. We know that *Pādmāsāṃhitā* in its section *Pāncharātra Prāsāda prasādana* deals with architectural details. This is a part-conventional treatment of the various early temple forms, etc., and partly following strictly a southern temple architectural technical nomenclature. *Jayākhyā*, however, is not, by any means, in its architectural chapter, likely to be a guide to southern temple style, since it describes mainly a northern (or *Nāgara rekhā prāsāda* as it is called in later texts) type. Thus we may surmise that there is no co-ordination on the architectural side between *Jayākhyā Tantra* and *Pādmāsāṃhitā*. Obviously, the latter drew on the *mantra* and *prayoga* traditions of the former and adapted this for application in southern temples. The *prayoga* aspects, alone then entitle their usage in the southern temples, of which three outstanding examples are mentioned in this interpolated section itself.

Here, the text refers to four most sanctified temple sites in the south namely, Śrīraṅgam, Venkaṭādri (Tirumalai-Tirupati), Hastisaila (modern Kanchipuram) and Nārāyaṇādri (Melkote or Tirunārāyaṇapuram in Mysore). Of these, the text goes on to state, three places follow the *Pāncharātra* practice. The exception is that of Tirumalai or Venkaṭādri. The *sāṃhitā* followed in these three places is also mentioned viz., *Sāttvata* at Tirunārāyaṇapuram (called in this text Yaduśaila), *Paushkaram* at Śrīraṅgam, and *Jayākhyam* at Hastisaila. It would be pertinent to point out here that Śrīraṅgam was originally in *Vaikhānaśa* worship and was converted to *Pāncharātra* mode during the time of Ramanuja. Ramanuja was also directly concerned with the systemation of worship at Kanchipuram and Tirunārāyaṇapuram (Melkote). Even at Tirumalai, it was Ramanuja who organised the daily ritual on a sound footing, although in consonance with the age old *Vaikhā-*

nasa form of worship there, he acquiesced himself in the continuance of that mode, though being a *Pāñcharātrin* himself. All this would seem to imply that this interpolated section dealing with these four places and the names furnished to these places would most probably have been composed and added in the south after the time of Ramanuja. Until that time almost, the name of modern 'Little Kanchipuram' had been Attiyūr, and even inscriptional references to Chola endowments to the temple call the god as Attiyūrālvār, from the end of the 11th century A.D. and later. It got its special ornate names Hastiśaila or Satyavratākshetra in traditional Sanskrit usage from a subsequent period.

To return to our main study. The architectural passage in *Jayākhyasamhitā* is more relevant to our discussion than its *mantra* or *prayoga* chapters. This material, contained in the 20th *paṭala* is, as mentioned at the outset, unique, because it does not give too many architectural forms in vogue then, but only one single form and call it the *Kaustubha prāsāda*, although detailing some variant features. It may be added at once that this name does not occur in the list of twenty temples mentioned in *Bṛīhat samhitā*, LV, and repeated in *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra*, *Viśvakarmā prakāśa*, *Matsyapurāṇa*, etc., or the 45 varieties of *prāsādas* as given in *Agnipurāṇa*, CIV, *Garuḍapurāṇa* and *Prayōgamañjarī* or in the 64 kinds of temples under the five *vimāna* types, as found in *Samarāṅgaṇa sūtradhāra*, ch. XLIX. Considered from that point of view, the age of the temple type *Kaustubha* should be actually approximating to the age assessed by the editor of the *Jayākhyā-samhitā*, namely, around fifth century A.D. But it is just possible that originally temples were constructed mostly in bricks, and were later re-erected in stones, and thus we do not have any extant examples of this kind of temple. We also note that type of *maṇḍapas* in front of a temple, as mentioned in various early and late texts, are also not referring to any arrangement as described for the *maṇḍapa* of this *Kaustubha prāsāda* in our text.

We observe that this temple type is relatively of a simple kind, and thus might have a chance of representing an early type. Before we can actually arrive at any sound basis for judging the age of the text as different from the age of the temple model it presents, in so far as the architectural chapter is concerned, we may perhaps familiarise ourselves with the data employed in the text for the *Kaustubha prāsāda*.

1. The description calls the temple model *Kaustubham nāma prāsādam* and not a *vimāna*.
2. It is, not mentioned in the 20 or 45 names of the old list.
3. It is, inferentially, a *rekḥā nāgara* temple, though this term has not been used.
4. No *Mahānāsika* or *śukanāsa* is mentioned or described.
5. No *ardhamāṇḍapa* or *aṇṭarāla prāgrīva* is mentioned.
6. It has a *maṇḍapa* immediately in front of the temple proper, and borne

on a series of 12 pillars and three openings.

7. The main temple itself could be of one door, or of four doors (*dvāraṃ, dvārāṇi vā*).
8. The text refers under the sub-section *Prāsāda bhedaḥ chaturaśra* (square) with *chatur-dvāra*, *ṛitta* (circular) and *Ashṭāśra* (octagonal) of *eka dvāra* (single *dvāra*) or *vichitra* (unusual or imaginative), and of the permitted orientation of long axis (*yathābhimata-diggatam*). Thus, it is mentioning the three basic shapes, namely, square, circular, and octagonal, but not the terms *Nāgara*, *Vesara* and *Drāviḍa*. It suggests that four doors are almost as normal as single door.
9. It has a foundational terrace which is, however, not called a *jagati* but an *upapīṭha*—a southern terminology.
10. It has an *āmalasāraka* on the top—the form of the word (which is not *āmalasara*) may be noted.
11. It has an 'ushnisha,' below *āmalasāraka* with a low conical shape and projecting beyond the edge of the *bhūmikā* and just like a *chchādāna* or eaves. (*Bhūmikāgrāchcha nishkrāntam īśachchādāna vat*)
12. It has a *kapotapāli* (cornice) on its body.
13. It has the *śikhara* rising above the *kapotapāli*—apparently of the *ekāṇḍa* type.
14. It has at least five *bhūmi* divisions on its *śikhara*.
15. The *prāsāda jaṅghā* has eight pillars (*stambhas*) and are decorated with creepers (*patralatā*) and flower bunches (*pushpa-stabaka*).
16. The plinth of the *prāsāda* is called *pīṭha*.
17. The *pīṭha* has figural motifs of *siddhas*, *vidyādharas*, *devas* and *dvijag-aṇas*, *gaja*, *aśva*, *nṛpa*, *simha*, *mṛiga*, all in *yūtha* (or groups).
18. There is a *mekhalā* on three stages of the *śikhara*, with its numbers reduced from 3 to 1 in these. The *mekhalā* should be decorated with *patra* (leaves), *pushpa* (flowers), etc., and should be well integrated, or should be solitary, and again could be circular (*suṛitta*) or with offsets (*aśra-bhūshita*).
19. The terms, *manjarī*, *kaṭi*, *kūṭa*, etc., are not found used.
20. The *jaṅghordhva rachanā* sub-section suggests a string of *vimānas* of different shapes (*nānā-rūpāṇi vimānāni devāyatanāni cha chaturdikshu-prakalpayet*). The use of the word *vimāna* may be noted.
21. The part above the *śikhara* comprises the *ushnisha*, *kaṇṭha*, *daṇḍāsana* and *āmalasāraka*.
22. On the top of the *āmalasāraka*, the following details are mentioned: there should be a wheel (*chakra*) of 12 spokes and complete with *dhvajadaṇḍa* and secured by bitumen (*dhātujam*).
23. At the *bhūmi koṇas* (probably corners of the *bhūmis* of the *śikhara*)

sūkshma prāsādas (probably miniature *prāsāda* models) 100 in number (*dvipanchāśataka saṁkhyayā*), or in 10 groups of hexades (*dvipanchāśadka* should be provided.

24. *Dvāra śākhā* (jambs) for the sanctum, and the sill and lintel pieces should be of *udumbara* wood.
25. *Prāsāda kshetra* is desired to be equal to the front *maṇḍapa* area, and should be square.
26. The height of the *maṇḍapa* should be upto the level of the *bhūmi* just above the *kapota*.
27. The *maṇḍapa* should have 12 *bhitti* (or wall) sections.
28. The *pīṭha* of the *bimba*, worshipped in the cella, is said to be of *Brahmaśilā*, and it is liable to be bathed on festive occasions.
29. The *pīṭha* is called the *ādhāraśakti* (compare this with the *Agnipurāṇa*, 61.25—“*Tachchaktim piṇḍikām viddhi prakṛtīm cha tadākṛtīm*”).
30. The practice of a *paṭa* (painting) for *bimba vidhānam* is referred to as *sarvasiddhikaram*, *nirdosham*, and *nātivisravam*. The painting should be on a cotton (*kārpāsa*) or linen (*kshauma*) textile of white colour, and of new and unbleached character (*anāhatam*).
31. In the delineation of the *bimba*, even the *prajanana* (*membrum virile*), and *vṛishāṇa* (testicles) are mentioned with their dimensions, thus indicating the influence on this text of Jaina usages, because the male organ is not depicted fully or clearly in any Vishnu image.
32. The material of the *bimba* can be golden (*sauvarṇa*) or of silver (*rājata*) and the *ārādhanā bimba* (*utsava bhera*) can be of brass (*ārakūṭamayam*) as well. [The interpolated section of the first chapter records that Varadarāja is said to be originally of wood (*dāru*), his *kautuka bhera* of silver and *utsava mūrti* of copper]. The *bimba* could be of *śilā* (stone) terracotta (*mṛit*) or wooden (*dāru*) or *yathā sambhavataḥ* in the sense apparently *svayambhū*.
33. While describing the *bimba* proportions, reference to *liṅgākṛti* is made in comparison with the fingers. The *bimba* is taken as a *mantramaya vṛiksha* (tree).
34. It is stipulated that in a structural stone temple, a *bimba* of *dāru* or terracotta should *not* be consecrated. This would imply that wherever we have extant wooden figures or references to them, their original temples would have been of materials other than stone, and this suggests the reason why so many such temples have perished, along with their *bimbās* as well.
35. The *bimba pīṭha* can be square or rectangular. The sides of the *pīṭha* should be equal to the height of the *bimba*, and the height should be half that of the height of the *bimba*. This is when the *pīṭha* is square;

when it is rectangular, its width is equal to half the height of the *bimba*. Its height also is similar. Its length should be equal to the height of the *bimba*.

36. The *bimba pīṭha* should also have an *upapīṭha*. It should have a *praṇāla* of one-third the width of the *pīṭha*. It should be partly inside the wall, and partly outside, and should have a *makara* face on its end. It could also have the face of *varāha* or *kūrma*. The square *upapīṭhā* should have mouldings in nine parts, of which two parts would be basal (*bhūsparśa jānvaṅghri*). Then occurs a bell-shaped and curved, *padma*-like moulding in one part, followed, by a *kaṇṭha* of two parts. Then follows a *mekhalā* slightly projecting out, and it should have a *kumbha*-like upper part. This is followed by the *jaladhārā*, *tūlā pīṭha* and *kamala*, neither too flat nor too tall. The *devatā* should be carved on this, shown as standing on the *dala* (or *petals*). The *bimba* and the *pīṭha* should be *sajātīya* (of the same material), in order to entail unlimited fruits (*anantaphalam*), welfare, health and prosperity. A golden image should have a silver pedestal; for silver image a copper *pīṭha*; for a copper image a stone *pīṭha*; for stone image a stone *pīṭha*; for a wooden image a wooden *pīṭha*; for a terracotta image, a wooden *pīṭha*; alternatively a wooden image can have also a stone pedestal.
37. The *prāsāda upapīṭha* should have width, four times of the demension of the *garbhagriha*. It should not have a *pāda*, and can be square or circular. It should have *sopāna padavī* on its four sides. The *pīṭha* itself of the *prāsāda* should be of double the width of the *garbha* (inner). The door of the *prāsāda* should be 1/10 more than the height of the *pratimā* and its width should be half its height. It should have nine *śākhās*.
38. The *adhivāsamaṇḍapa* of the temple where the deity is temporarily stationed during festivals, outside the sanctum, should be to the east or south of the temple, and of thirty cubits length. Its width should be of twelve cubits. There should be five *vedī* units of five cubits circuit, and one cubit among one another and from the inner sides of the *maṇḍapa*. The ceiling (*vītāna*) of the *maṇḍapa* should be well-decorated.
39. The five *vedī* units are intended variously for the *kuṇḍa* on the northern side for sacrifices, another for the waking hours, the middle one of circular form having single lotus design, the fourth one of sleeping (*śayana*), and the fifth for *snāpana*.
40. There is also a section on *rathayātrāvidhāna*.

These details are as interesting as they are unique. None of the nomenclatural expressions for the parts of the *prāsāda* get employed in this way or in this

combination, in any of the texts known hitherto. No other text has given the *kaustubha* type of *prāsāda* till now. Since, in the texts known to us dealing with *vāstu*, *sthāpatya* and *śilpa*, *Bṛihatsamhitā* is the oldest, we may perhaps be justified in dating this architectural chapter to a period not much later to *Bṛihatsamhitā*. It is interesting, however, that the terminology is a mixture of southern and northern usage. New terms like *ushnīsha* are employed. There is no *ardhamanḍapa* provided for this *Kaustubha* type. There is no *śukanāsa* or *mahānāsikā*. There is again the absence of any direct reference to *Nāgara*, *Drāviḍa* and *Vesara*, although pertinently enough the square, circular and octagonal forms of temples alone are mentioned. While the rectangle is indeed employed in another context of the *pīṭha*, the elliptical totally left out. Even the rectangle which is ideal for Anantaśāyī deity has not been mentioned. The specific vogue of *sarvatobhadra* or four-door temple mentioned in the text, by itself suggests a range of usage between A.D. 600-850 alike in the Chalukyan as in the Central Indian region. The absence of a *vitāna* other than a presumable *samatala vitāna* for the temple type described, is again early rather than late. The presence of an *upapīṭha* (equivalent to *jagatī* terrace) outside the temple and provided with flight of steps would recall the temples like Vishnu temple, Deogarh. The arrangement of the superstructure would seem to be *ekāṇḍa*, without *chādyā*, and of a type different from the *aṅga śikhara* 'Lata' type or *uraḥśṛṅga*, Chandella type or *śṛṅga-hāra* Paramara type. It does seem to think in terms of a *karṇatīlaka*, and a *jālaka* with *bhūmikā* clearly divided into five parts. The reference to the *āmalākā śilā*, consistently as *āmalasāraka* and not *āmala* would itself suggest an archaic employment of the term derived from *amala* (meaning pure), rather than *āmalaka* or *āmala* fruit. It is thus of formative stage. The indirect reference to the *nara*, *gaja*, *aśva* and *vyāla* and *mṛiga* courses on the plinth would recall *tharas* of these motifs found in the Western and Central Indian temples around and after A.D. 900. Above all, the fact that unlike other texts, this *Jayākhyāsamhitā*, in its 20th *paṭala* refers to *only one* type of *prāsāda* namely the *Kaustubha* would suggest two possibilities; first, that this was one of the most important types of *Vishnu* temples known in the region and age in which this text was compiled; and second, that it might have described similar other temple types, but we have lost these references in the extant manuscripts. The fact that the *bimba* details refer to the usage of stone *pīṭha* for a wooden *bimba* recalls a truly early example of such a usage at Nagarjunakonda, in the Aṣṭabhujasvāmī temple, where significantly the inscription on the stone pedestal refers to the *udumbara* wood as the material for the image of the god; and coupled with this is the fact that this temple was of brick—another information agreeing with the text.

Thus, we may perhaps arrive at certain tentative conclusions, as a result of this analytical study. Firstly, that the age of this architectural text and, therefore, the entire text itself (except the interpolated part) as likely to range between

A.D. 600-850; secondly that it has been written in Central India or Upper Deccan area where both the southern and northern style of temples were in concurrent vogue in an early stage; thirdly, that it had some relationship with Jain usages (as found in its *bimbamāna* section) and Buddhist as in the circular outer *upapīṭha* (*jagati*); fourthly, since it does not mention the *Nāgara*, *Drāviḍa* and *Vesara*, and at the sametime even mentions the terracotta images and structures other than of stone, they should have been in an area which was relatively rich in both terracotta and brick and only additionally of stone architecture, like southern U.P. bordering on Madhya Pradesh or Lower Deccan; finally since it refers to wooden, stone, golden, silver, copper and even brass images in the sanctum under worship, these would pertain to a time perhaps relatively on the latter part of the age presumed for the text.

We know that the *Pāncharātra* text like *Hayaśirsha* were themselves written around the ninth century A.D. or slightly later. We also know that *Vaikhānasa* modes and rituals were relatively earlier to the *Pāncharātra* mode in any given place. We further know that temples like Rājivalochana temple at Rājim reflect a truly *Vaikhānasa vyūha* worship, involving a *pañchayatana* unit for Varaha, Narasimha, Trivikrama and Badrī-Nārāyana sub-shrines and, a central shrine for Vishnu as Rājivalōchana. Even at Śrīrangam in the South, *Vaikhānasa* worship was changed into *Pāncharātra* during the time of Ramanuja. We may surmise that the diffusion of the *Panchavīra* cult had pretty much to do with the development, subsequently, of the *Vaikhānasa* and *Pāncharātra* schools, and that Ābhīras on the west, Guptas in the middle and the Nalas of Dakshinakosala country on the east provided the jumping-off boards for the dispersal of these pristine *Vaishnava* cults and doctrines to the different parts of Central and southern India.

In the sequel, we seem to have a very valuable and unique text in *Jayākhyā-samhitā* and its architectural chapter, unravelling a new, hitherto unknown, type *Kaustubha prāsāda*, and we find that the supposedly related *vyākhyāna* to this *Tantra*, in the *Pādma Samhitā* (in its *Pāncharātra Prāsāda Prasādāna*) has not ostensible connecting link in stylistic architecture or nomenclatural unity. This is, of course, so because only for *mantra* and *prayoga* purposes, the *tantras* and the *vyākhyānas* had served each other, but in respect of their respective architectural evidence, they stand apart distinctively disparate. A chronological gap between the two is also implied perhaps in this situation.

The *Pāncharātra* text generally are not overly keen in elucidating architectural details and take much for granted in this regard. A comparative study of *Sāttvata* and *Paushkara Samhitās* as well, in their architectural sections is, all the same bound to be useful in giving a general perspective. For that purpose, we are appending herewith (Appendix I & II) *differentiae* gleaned from these two aforementioned texts in their *Pratishṭhā* sections, although they are rather of a disorganised character in comparison with the *Jayākhyāsamhitā* text in the *Paushkara*, but

more organic in the *Sāttvata*.

It reveals, broadly that all the three *Samhitās* deal only with northern temple types, and that perhaps *Jayākhyā* is the earliest of the group, although, on the evidence at hand, no definitive architectural archetypes could be firmly advanced, notwithstanding their rudimentary and empirically incipient elevational composition.

Appendix I

A note on Paushkara Samhitā³

Only the last three extant chapters deal with *Prāsāda vāstu*, particularly in the last chapter, but not in a well-organised pattern from base to top. No names of temples occur.

1. Reference made to the importance of *bhadrāpīṭha* for *ārādhana*.
2. Reference to *Ratha yātra* in *Vaishnava utsavas* found.
3. *Ketudaṇḍa* or *dhvajadaṇḍa* on long poles on the *śīras* of the *śikhara* to ward off evils, as well as thunder and lightning stroke (*aśanipāta*) is mentioned.
4. The *pratimā* can be of painting, stone, terracotta or stucco (the word used for the last is *mṛit* and not *sudhā*), *dhātu* (mortar) and *dāru* (wood).
5. A *bhinnapīṭha* or a separate *pīṭha* for *chala-archa* is *śubha-prada* and makes also for easy manipulation. The text comments here that the entire basis of stipulation in rituals is based on *chala* and *sthira vibhāga* (*chalasthira vibhāgena vihitam sarvameva vai*).
6. The *bhadrāpīṭha* should have four legs and *praṇāla*.
7. The *nāḷa* should be made like the ladle handle (This is rather suggestive of a late practice).
8. The differences of forms are *aṣṭāśra* (octagonal), *ṣaḍāśra* (hexagonal), *vartulāśra* (circular), *chaturāśra* (square). No terms like *Drāviḍa*, *Nāgara*, etc., are used.
9. The structure of the top part of a temple is divided into three sections with *ushnīsha*, *padma* and triple *mekhalā*. When it is in four parts, the *mekhalā* is in six parts.
10. The *prāsāda* is of the *rūpa Bhagavān*.
11. The *yāgamaṇḍapa* should be located to one of the three directions, other than the southern where, only in an inevitable case it should be selected.
12. The *antarāla* should be provided with *koṇastambhas*.
13. The pillars should be rising out of a large lotus or *padmapīṭha* of 1/3 parts with *torāṇas* on the four directions. (This again is rather a 10th century feature).
14. The pillars should have square basal section, octagonal middle shaft, and circular-sectioned upper third, all of equal height (This is also a pre-medie-

val development).

15. The temple should have a *prākāra*, with door entrance (*dvāra*), pierced window (*gavāksha*), door leaves (*kavāṭam*), and wooden bolt for fastening the door (*argalam*). The *prākāra* wall should be well clear of the *kshetra* (area) of the *prāsāda* and should be all round. Eight *kuṇḍas* with *mekhalā* and *pīṭha* should be dug around the temple. On the eastern side, the shape of the *kuṇḍa* should be like a pair of *gadā*; on the south like a *chakra*; on the west, like a conch, and on the north like a *padma* (lotus), on south-east, like a pipal leaf, on the south-west triangular, on the north-west octagonal and semi-circular on the north-east.
16. The *prākāra* should leave a space in all directions. It should have four doors. The height of the door is related to the height of the deity and his *pīṭha*. The door should be conducive to easy entry (*sukhapravēśa*).
17. The *antara-bhittis* (inner walls) of the *prāsāda*, as well as the ceilings, should be painted. On the eastern and southern side, Vishnu seated on a *pīṭha* is beneficent to show the god seated on Garuḍa. On the three cardinal directions, *Nṛisimha*, *Kapila* and *Kroḍa* (pig or boar) should be depicted. On the *vidiks*, horse-faced (*Hayagrīva*), lion (*Nṛisimha*), tortoise (*Kūrma*), fish (*Matsya*), pygmy (*Vāmana*) and *Trivikrama*, *Paraśurāma* and *Śrī Rama* should be displayed.
18. In the front of the *dvāra*, there should be a *maṇḍapa* with a flight of steps.
19. The space between *pāda* of the *prāsāda* upto the *aṇḍa* of the superstructure there should be many *bhūmis*—one above the other. (The word *aṇḍa* for the *śikhara* of a *prāsāda* is to be noted here). The nature of the decorative motifs to be employed in the various parts, plinth, wall and superstructure are mentioned. These are to comprise the immovable and mobile *siddhas*; they should show groups of *mañjarī* (standing apparently for *uromañjarīs* or *uraḥ-śringas*), there should be elephants (*nāgas*), lotus, bunches linked by chains and festoons, creepers of different descriptions, fauna of hills, forests and elsewhere. There should be elephants and hunters, geese with lotuses in association, conch, *svastika*, white lily and many types of lotuses, with ornaments like *kinkīṇī*, *chāmara*, umbrellas, *dhvajās*, etc. They should depict the seven celestial worlds in stratification in a temple *jaṅghā* (the *satya*, *tapa*, *jana*, *maha*, *svar*, *bhuvar* and *bhū*). The tower should have *nāsikās* on all the (four) directions.
20. The ceiling of the *garbhagriha* should be decorated with lotus medallions, and provided with relief of Brahma, etc., and *Vidyādhara gaṇas*. It should have *mālavāhakas*, *chāmara* and *vyajana*-bearers. There should be the depiction of *vanamālā*, *gadā*, *śaṅkha*, *chakra*, *padma*, etc., and of Garuḍa. The inner wall should be carved with gods, demons and *gaṇas* of musicians, and dancers, like Narada, etc.

21. In the seven-*loka* sequence of a temple, the ground plinth is *Bhūloka*, *Prāsāda pīṭha* is *Bhuvārloka*, *jaṅghā suvarloka*. The *bhūmikā* of the *śikhara* is *Mahāloka*, the *vedī* is *Janoloka*, *Tapoloka* is the *daṇḍaka*, and *Satyalo* is on the *śikhara* or spire.
22. A synonymous (*paryāyapadas*) group of words for pillar is mentioned, like *stambham*, *talapam*, *charaṇam*, *jaṅgham*, *sthūṇam*, *sthānam*, *pādam*. Such a statement usually occurs in most of the *Āgamas* of the South, after ninth century A.D.
23. The term *jagati* is specifically mentioned in the text and is said to be provided with *sopānas*, and to form the *pīṭha* of the *prāsāda*.
24. There is an unusual reference to *Anantaśayana* and *Dārḥa*, where Hari or Nārāyaṇa in *Dvādaśākṣara mantra* should be remembered. (This is apparently a reference to Trivandrum and Tiruppullanai. But the portion is not very clear).
25. *Asṭāṅga Vedikā* is mentioned.
26. The dimensions of the *garbhagrīha* and the temple ground is mentioned in some detail, one of the proportions being that a *garbhagrīha* of *Daśahasta* square, should have a height of the cella as six cubits.
27. *Chaturmukha mūrti* with *chaturdvāra* is mentioned or with single door also.
28. The orientation of the temple varies according to the material aims of the patron : facing east gives longevity; south fame; west progress in one's own profession; and north prosperity and wealth.
29. The three variant *vyūha* formulae are referred to namely, *Vāsudeva*, etc., (the rest, perhaps, being *Aniruddha*, *Sankarṣaṇa* and *Achyuta*), or *Varāha*, etc., (the rest perhaps being *Narasimha*, *Trivikrama* and *Badarīnārāyaṇa*), or *Keśava*, etc., (the rest perhaps being *Ananta*, *Hayagrīva* and *Śrīdhara*).
30. There is no reference to *āmalasāra*, but only *śikhā* or *śiras*, but *ushnīsha* is mentioned. There is, however, reference to *jagati*, *antarāla*, *nāsikā*, ceiling designs, wall decorations, *mañjarī*, form and sections of a pillar, different shapes of temples, different materials of statues in cella (except brass).

The text on the whole seems to be later to *Jayākhyā*, though it has like the latter, earlier as well later passages. The core of the text in the latter was perhaps earlier than *Vishnudharmottara*, while the core of *Paushkara* could be later to the same, the latest from being attained by around 9-10th centuries A.D.

Appendix II

A note on *Sāttvata Samhitā*⁴

The 24th *Parichcheda* which is *pratimā-prāsādalakṣaṇakathanam* supplies the information on iconometry, architecture, etc., in a reasonably condensed form.

1. It refers to a type of *Prāsāda* called *Anantabhuvanam*.
2. It talks about a *chatusprākāra prāsāda* complex.
3. It gives the medium of the object of worship as painting, earth (terracotta or stucco), wood (it uses the word *kāshṭha* and not *dāru* for this), stone (it uses the word '*śaila*') or metal. The *chitra* or painting could be *bhitti-āsrita* (on wall) or *kāshṭhāsrita* or on wooden board, or *ambarāsrita* (on a cloth); or, this may mean, 'on a cloth fastened to wood and fixed to the wall'. When on cloth it could be cotton, (*kārpāsaka*), silk (*kauśeya*), linen (*kshauma*) of hemp or flex *śāṇa*. Ordinarily, for liberation or eternal bliss, the *pratimā* could be of stone (*aśma*), or *mṛit* (stucco or terracotta), or silver (*tāra*), *Hātaka* (gold) *tāmra* (copper) or *ārakūṭa* (brass).
4. It also refers to the proportionate measurements of *membrum virile* and testicles, in relation to body dimensions while elaborating the *tālamana* of a deity.
5. It gives a detail picture of the *chaturmūrti* with horse, boar, *nṛisimha* and *saumya* aspects on four sides. However, it speaks of 3, 4 and 5 faces with or without the upward face.
6. A seated figure may have a square *pīṭha*, or it could be rectangular, or circular, or elliptical, or apsidal.
7. The various names of gods on *pīṭhas* are given, like *Anantāsanam*, *Pakshamandiram*, *Kamalāṅkam* and *chakrabhūṣaṇam*.
8. Terms *ālayapīṭha*, *bhūmikā*, *ushnīsha*, *āmalosāraka*, *mañjarī* are mentioned.
9. It describes the *śikhara* as constituted of nine *bhūmikās*.
10. It talks about *Śikharamañjarī* as shining like lotus petals.
11. It mentions the *daṇḍa*.
12. It wants nine parts of *ushnīsha* and four *vedikās*, three parts wide *kaṇṭha*, five parts of *aṇḍa*. The *garbhagṛiha* should be of five-fold or seven-fold or nine-fold parts (apparently *pancha*, *sapta* or *navaratha*, type), and it is added here in the text that in this reckoning of the *garbhagṛiha* dimensions, the extreme end offset should be left out and only the middle ones are to be counted.
13. It talks about the *prāsādanālikā* coming out of the *garbha* at half height.
14. It talks about *maṇḍapas* of pillars, decorated with *Garuḍa*, *balimaṇḍapa*, etc., and four entrances on four directions, and states that three such *maṇḍapas* should be provided or of three entries in each.
15. On the four sides of the *śikhara*, it wants a *nāsikā mañjarī* with *rathaka* and of equal dimension.
16. It deals with the various types which it calls *chaturāyatana* (four-fold temple), *Panchāyatana* (with shrines on the corners of the *jagati* and centre), *Ashṭāyatana* (when three more are added to *Panchāyatana*); *Daśāyatana* (when paired temple on the points of the compass and one more in the centre); which will

become *Ekādaśa* (when one more is added to it); *Dvādaśāyatana* (when one on each side close to the *pratoli* (pathway) is added, counted along with the central one).

17. Subsidiary temples could be erected close to the gateway and facing each other, or facing main temple from the three directions, or in pairs in the corners. (This is apparently stating the rationale of data mentioned in the last para).
18. In the *Anantaprāsāda*, there could be doorways in any direction, without objection.
19. A *chaturāśra pīṭha* gives *bhū-lābha*; rectangular wealth; circular all worldly desires; and elliptical or apsidal *nirvṛiti* (bliss).

On the whole, it would seem that the *Sāttvata Samhitā* is different from both the *Paushkara* and the *Jayākhyā*, in its outlook on architecture, but would, however, from a rudimentary stage of its elaboration. Its delineation of the complexes form the *chaturāyatana* to the *dvādaśāyatana*, on the other hand, would suggest a positive development whose iconic basis has not been furnished. The text is clearly northern in architectural and iconographic content, and was perhaps a product of the period ranging between A.D. 500-800. It was like the other two *Samhitās* written perhaps in Central India in the Malwa or Vindhya or Dakṣiṇa-kosala tracts.

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2. Jayākhyasyāsya tantrasya vyākhyānam Pādmamuchyate, (8)
 Śrī Raṅgam Venkatādriścha Hastīśailas tataḥ param. (9)
 Tato Nārāyaṇādriścha divyaschānathathāṣṭayam,
 Venkatādrim Vināyeshu devadevasya dhāmasu. (10)
 Sātvatam yaduśailendre Śrīraṅge Paushkaram tathā. (12)
 Hastīśaile Jayākhyam cha sāmrājyamadhitishṭhati,
 Pādmatantram Hastīśaile Śrīraṅge Pārameśvaram. (13)
 Īśvaram yādavādrau cha kāryakāri prachāryate,
 Śrīraṅgād yādavādreścha Hastīśailo viśishyate. (14)
 Gaṅgāyā dakṣiṇe bhāge yōjanānām śatadvaye. (37)
 Tīrāntam pūrvavārāseḥ sarvaiḥ sumahitam guṇaiḥ. (38)
 Siddhi kṣhetram mahāpuṇyam Śrīśaśyābhimateḥ param,
 Satyavratamiti khyātam yathārthākhyavabhāsakam. (39)
 Tatra sarvātare kalpe diggajāḥ Viṣnumavyam. (41)
 Kasyachit girivaryasya śikhare paryapūjayan,
 Teshāmāvirabhud devaḥ karuṇāvaruṇālayaḥ. (42)
 Tataḥ prabhṛti śailendro yayau karigiripratham. (43)
 Vimāne Puṇyakoṭyākhye Śrī-bhūmirahitaḥ prabhuḥ. (65)
 Hastīśailasya mātāmāmyam varadasya kṛpārasam. (21)
 Pāśchimābhīmukho diptakirīṭamakūṭajīvalaḥ,

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Urdhvapuṇḍrolasatphālapaṭṭo rājivalochanaḥ. (66)

Pañchāyudhollasad bāhuchatusthaya-manoharaḥ,
Sapadmena karenochchairvahannabhayamudrikām. (69)

Gadām chāpaṁ cha vāmena pāṇinā paribhūshayan,
Kaṭibandhe dharandivyaṁ nandakaṁ khadgam uttamam.

Ataḥ sthalamidam puṇyam tyāga maṇṭapomuchyatām,
Yogamaṇṭapa saṁjñā tu Śrīraṅgasya mayā kṛitā. (100)

Pushpamaṇṭapamityākhyā Veṅkaṭādrer virājatām,
Anyanyadugiristhānaṁ Vidyāmaṇṭapamuchyatām. (101)

Divyālayasya nirmāṇaprākāro viśvakarmaṇe. (126)

Mūlamanīra trayātmavāddevadevasya sannidhau,
Prajāvena samam pūrvam sopānatrayamāsa tat. (128)

Shadāksharasya mantrasya smaraṇāya ramāpateḥ,
Ardhamaṇḍapabhāge shaṭ sopānāni chakāra saḥ. (129)

Chaturvīṣati tattvātmā Chaturvīṣati saṁkhyakā,
Gāyātrisammitā paśchāt sopānāvali rābabhau. (130)

Atha dvayākhyām paramām mantrājāmanusmaran,
Sopānayordvayam dīpram nirmame nirmamāntaraḥ. (131)

Jayākhyatantra mārgaṇa pratishṭhā vidhimādiṣat (135)

Dāruṇā mūlaberam tu karmārchām rājatena vai,
Autsavam chaiva tāmreṇākāryadvīśvakarmaṇā. (136)

(v-v 140 to 156 deal with the 10 day festival in *Vaiśākha* month,
with change of *vāhanas* during and night exactly as is being
observed to this day).

Evametāt samākhyātām Hastīśailasya vaibhavam, (161)

3. *Paṇḍura Saṁhitā*, Ed. His Holiness Sree Yati Rāja Sampath Kumara Ramanuja Muni of
Melkote, Bangalore, 1134.

4. *Śāstramuktavali No. 15*, Anantachariar, P.B. (ed.) *Sāttvata Saṁhitā*, Kanchi (1902).

MAIN AND PARIVARA SHRINES—SOME ASPECTS

It is well-known that temple architecture evolved in magnitude in direct proportion to the growth of temple rituals. Whether in the north or in the south, the temple unit had in the main only the cella and front porch to start with. While the evolution of the superstructure of the *vimāna* or the *prāsāda*—as the temple is apt to be called in the south and the north respectively—is an entirely independent development, the enlargement of the temple dimensions had always been dictated by the larger and yet larger number of subsidiary deities that adorned the various parts of the temple and it is the fixation and consolidation of the role of these subsidiary *devatas* variously called *parivāra devatas* or *āvaraṇa devatas* that ultimately resulted in the provision of separate, if subordinate to the main, shrines to them in the temple premises. The ritual that made for an early multiplication of the temple units in the north at least by the 8th century A.D., if not earlier, was called the *pañchāyatana* form of worship. This envisaged the syncretisation of the divinities—albeit orbiting around the main focus of a major member of the Trinity—and its earlier symbolic form was aniconic, with the five gods, namely, Vishnu, Śiva, Ganesa, Devi and Surya represented by black stone, red stone, metallic ore and crystal respectively. It was clearly understood in such a *pūja* which was a *smārta* development, that there was no narrow loyalty to only one of these gods but these were rather considered as the five major emanations of the universal principle. It was this that was reflected in the multiplication of the sub-shrines in the temples in early periods. The tradition on the Śaiva side was characterised by the central main shrine being that of Śiva, the four peripheral shrines that were located on the four corners of the large plinth terrace were those of Ganesa to the south-east, Surya to the south-west, Vishnu to the north-west and Durga to the north-east. It is such an arrangement that we see in the most finite and classical early *Pañchāyatana* temple at

Osia, near Jodhpur datable to the last quarter of the 8th century A.D. It is however, to be noticed that we did have multiple temple units even earlier in the north, as at Bhumara wherein the main shrine in the centre of the terrace contained an *ekamukha liṅga*, while there were two sub-shrines, located at the level of the outer ground, flanking the entrance flight of steps and facing the same direction as the main temple. This temple is definitely earlier even than the famous Desavatara temple at Deogarh and should thus be datable to the first half of the 6th century A.D., if not slightly earlier. The Deogarh temple had only four prominent porches in front of the main shrine door as well as that of the large panels on the centre of the remaining three sides. The temple further had flights of steps on all the four sides of the plinth terrace, at the central points. At Nalanda had been excavated four miniature shrines at the four corners of a main temple. Coming in the wake of Śiva *pañchāyatana* shrines in the north, the Vishnu *pañchāyatana* forms got evolved further into *navāyatana* and *Dvādaśāyatana*. The *Hayaśīrshapāñcharātra* text (*Ādikāṇḍa*) gives reference to such and in this scheme the *pañchāyatana* comprises Vishnu-Vasudeva in the centre, Vamana to the *Agnēya* (south-east), Narasimha to the *Nirṛitya* (south-west) and Hayagrīva to the *Vāyavya* (north-west) and Nṛivarāha to the *Isānya* (north-east) or alternately with Narayana in the centre, and Ambika to the south-east, Surya to the south-west, Brahma to the north-west and *liṅga* or Rudra form to the north-east. The fact, on the one hand that this option involves both a purely Vishnu oriented, as well as a mixed complex and, on the other, that in addition to these the *Dikpālas* are also expected to be shown in their respective parts of the main shrine, would indicate that this was a fairly evolved stage and the consensus of evidence tends to place such a usage in the 9th-10th centuries A.D. This is all the more attested by the composition of the *navāyatana* from which would have Purushottama in the central main shrine, Chandika on a south-east corner sub-shrine, Ambika in the south-west, Sarasvati in north-west and Pādma in the north-east. In addition to these, it would have Lakshmi Vaiśravaṇa on the valabhi zones on the east, *Matrigaṇas* with Skanda, Isāna and Ganesa on the south, *navagrahas* on the west and Dasavatāra on the north. This would show that corresponding to the *Vishnu vyūha* there would be Śrī or *Śakti vyūha* also and such a development of the Śrī or Śakti or Amba cult had not grown before mid-10th century A.D. which would probably be the most reasonable date for *Hayaśīrsha pāñcharātra* text. It is interesting to note in this connection that this text indicated the prohibited zones from which *āchāryas* for ritual consecration of Vishnu temples should not be drawn. These areas include Kachcha (Kutch in the present Gujarat State) Kaveri, Aṅga (South-east Bihar), Kamarupa (Assam), Kanchi, Kashmira and Kosala. It is not clear what was the basis of this zoning. It would however, be plausible to associate these places with areas where Śivaite worship had been deeply entrenched at the time this *Pāñcharātra* text came

be compiled in the north. It is significant that it almost excludes a large part of Western India, South and Eastern India and North West thus making the Gangetic valley as the most favoured zone under the implications of the text.

Multiple shrine units dedicated to Vishnu had been prevalent at about this time in the north in Rajasthan and Gujarat-Saurashtra in an evolved pattern. At Nagda (the ancient Nāgahrada) near Udaipur, very close to the famous Śaivite centre of Eklingji, we have a considerable group of shrines going under the name of Sas-Bahu temples, and reared upon a common *jagati* terrace. In addition to the two main shrines dedicated to Vishnu, we have a string of sub-shrines, many of which, however, had all but disappeared. They are variously dedicated to Brahma, Durga, Śrī, Nrisimaha, etc., and the main shrines themselves show on their walls the sculptures of composite forms like Brahma, Iśana, Arka as also all the three Ramas namely, Raghava Rama, Parasurama and Balarama in one and the same temple, in the niches and the *valabhi* zones. It is very significant particularly that one of the subsidiary temples shows on all three main niches the figure of Sarasvatī, holding combination of her *āyudhas* such as *viṇa*, *pustaka*, *akṣhamāla*, *kamaṇḍalu*, etc. It is obvious that this temple was largely influenced by the *Pāncharātra* text of the Vishnu *vyūhas*. At Delmal in Gujarat, we have again an arrangement of a main shrine with sub-shrines essentially of the Vishnu *pañchāyatana* type of the four corners. Of these, particularly the south-west and north-west sub-shrines dedicated respectively to Lakshmi Narayana and Surya are significant. The main shrine had been very extensively renovated in later periods and is now considered as a Devi shrine. We have many other Vishnu *pañchāyatana* shrines in Gujarat as at Asoda in Jasmalanathji temple. The celebrated Vasudeva temple at Dwaraka in Saurashtra near Okha port, going by the name of Rana-chodra Ji temple, has again the *pañchāyatana* form of temple dedicated variously to Pradyumna, Purushottama, Trivikrama and Veṇi Madhava, apart from Devakiji and other minor shrines and even Śiva shrine known as Kusesvar Mahadev. In the north the *pañchāyatana* pattern of temples had been extensively adapted to the Jain religion also in the medieval periods, the subsidiary shrines in such cases being dedicated to the chief *tīrthankaras* like Adinātha, Parśvanatha, Neminatha and Vardhamāna and are indeed a variation of the *Chaumukh* shrine, with doors on four sides and showing the four important *tīrthankaras* in the centre facing four directions and providing space for circumambulation around it, which becomes an invariable adjunct of any Jain shrine.

In the South, however, early temples had always been unitary in character without any subsidiary shrines for minor gods until the early Chola period. We have no separate Devi shrine until this period and whatever form of the female Śakti of the Universal principle is embodied in, it is generally shown side by side with the main deity and not in a separate shrine. We have of course separate shrines for Durga almost from early Pallava times at Mamallapuram. But we do not find such

a shrine as an adjunct to the main temple until the Chola period. On the Śivaite side we have the replacement of Somaskanda group by aniconic *linga* by the end of Rajasimha's reign (early 8th century A.D.) and thereafter Durga becomes established on the outer northern wall of *ardhamāṇḍapa* of the main shrine, a practice which continues well into the Chola period. It is not clear if a separate shrine for Devi was well established, say, before A.D. 1050, although the existing shrine complexes in many places have a Devi shrine closely juxtaposed to the main Śiva shrine on its north, often integrated with the outer *mahāmaṇḍapa* of the main shrine. The fact, however, is that their architectural style as also, their relative posteriority to the main shrine unit which most often did not have a very large *mahāmaṇḍapa* until A.D. 1000 would tend to suggest that the main shrine itself incorporated the Dēvi form. This is, of course, not to say that Dēvi forms were never worshipped independently earlier than this period. We have indeed considerable volume of structural evidence in this direction. The earliest Chola temple namely Vijayalayacholiśvaram (c. A.D. 875) at Narttamalai had a string of seven subsidiary shrines around it, of which only a few are in good repair and indeed none preserves the original affiliation of its deity. It is at the same time noticeable that in this case, the sub-shrines are facing almost all the directions, the general underlying principle perhaps being that every one of these sub-shrines should be looking towards the main shrine and not away from it or in the same direction as the main temple—a practice which obtained in the Pallava shrines like Kailasanatha and Panamalai although these sub-shrines were integral parts of the main shrine structure. The temple at Tirukkattalai again, going by the name of Sundaresvara, has seven subsidiary shrines (not to mention a later Devi shrine facing south) which appear to be built abutting against the *prākāra* wall, thus inevitably oriented towards the main shrine in each case, and excepting that the Narttamalai sub-shrines are freestanding, is largely paralleled by them. This temple was built by Aditya I (A.D. 871–907), who was probably the son of the author of the Narttamalai group. The Tirukkattalai sub-shrines are dedicated to Surya on the south-east, saptamatrs on the south, Ganesa on the south-west, Subrahmanya on the west, Jyeshtha on the north-west, Chandra on the north and Chandikesvara on north-east. It is by no means certain if the arrangement of the sub-shrine goddesses are actually following their original disposition. Significant, however, is the presence of Jyeshtha. This goddess of ill-luck is usually relegated to an unceremonious spot within the temple premises, in later shrines. But in this and some earlier temples at Tirupparankunram, she had been deliberately consecrated. She is an invariable concomitant of female potentials as adumbrated in the later *Lingapurāṇa*, etc. The arrangement of the sub-shrines at Tirukkattalai could be usefully compared with a similar but an almost *navāyatana* shrine around the temple inside the village at Mukhalingam in Srikakulam District of Andhra Pradesh. Here the sub-shrines in the four corners are usually dedicated to Śiva in different

names, such as Indresvara (south-east), Āgnēya (south-west), Yamesvara (north-west), Varuneśvara (north-east), while the three rectangular *śāla śikhara* shrines placed in the centre of each of the *prākāra* walls are dedicated variously to Ganesa (south), Karttikeya (west) and Durga and Saptamata (north). The *Dikpālas* are shown in sculpture on the main walls of the temples or on the *rathakas* of the *maṇḍapa* which show externally the aspect of a corner shrine on two adjacent faces. The Mukhalingam temple is approximately of the same date as those at Tirukkattalai.

At a slightly later date, as in the Kodumbāsur temples of Aivar Koil, the sub-shrines are at the corners of the main shrine but the interesting feature about the former is that they are facing the direction in which the wall in which they are set is facing in each case, but all the four invariably have a short balustraded flight of steps which has either an easterly or westerly aspect, thus approaching the sub-shrines in each case either from the east or west. This seems to be a compromise between an independent and an interdependent alignment for these sub-shrines. Muvar Koil, however, contains three main shrine units and the *prākāra* around it has as many as fifteen minor shrine chambers and is doubtless a very much more evolved stage than the Aivar Koil or any of the earlier stages. The Muvar Koil temple of Bhuti Vikrama Kesari is datable to the second half of the 10th century A.D. In the arrangement of the minor shrines placed in the cloister of the *prākāra*, it recalls the temples at Draksharama and Bhimavaram of the time of Eastern Chalukya Bhima in the first half of the 10th century A.D.

It is obvious that even in the Muvar Koil set up, there was no provision for a major and associate Devi shrine. This comes up, perhaps for the first time, only in Gangaikondacholapuram in the Brihadiśvara group, but is fairly common from the time Kulottunga Chola. The Vaishnavaitic usage of the shrine for Śrī or Tāyār (holy mother) has an almost parallel evolution, with this difference that while in many of the later Chola temples, the Devi shrine is facing south into a common vestibule with the main shrine—the Vaishnavaitic Tāyār shrine is almost always located in the south-west corner of the temple premises facing, as the main shrine does, east. Only where there was no devi shrine to start with and an independent shrine had been provided subsequently, the location is sometimes improvised, as at Śrikurmam where the Tāyār shrine is located abutting on the south-east corner wall of the *maṇḍapa*, just outside it, and is facing west while the shrine is facing east. The Vaishnavaitic arrangement of the sub-shrines is that of Śrīdevī on the south-west side, Narasimha facing west, behind the main shrine and Goda or Andal on the north-west corner. The superstructural niche figures in a Vishnu shrine should, according to *Hayasirsha Pāñcharātra*, contain Mahavaraha with Śrī on his lap on the eastern side, Narasimha on the southern side. Śrīdhara on the west and Hayagrīva on the north; correspondingly on the south-east, it should be Paraśurama, on the south-west it should be Śrī Rama, on the north-west it should be Vamana and on the north-east it should be Vasudeva. Always the

ground floor or the lowest floor should have Anantaśāyī, the next floor seated Vishnu and the third standing Vishnu and the fourth should be flying, fifth *Yogamudra*, sixth, *Yogāsana* and seventh a *yoga sthanakamūrti*. It is to be noted that this tradition is being only partially followed in the south. A peculiar feature of this *Pāncharātra* text is that while it is generally using architectural terminology like *jangha*, *manjari*, *śikhara*, *jagati*, *piṇḍika*, *bhramana*, *sukanāsi*, etc., which accords more with the northern or *Nāgara rathaka*, *rēkha śikhara* style, its description of the superstructure is actually conforming to southern style where there could be a shrine in every *bhūmi* (or *tala*,). It however, restricts the number of *bhūmis* permissible to seven. It also gives affiliatory names for temples with different number of *bhūmis*. For *Nāga*, it should be *ēkābhūmi*, for *Agni* cult it should be two, for *Indra* cult, three, for *Varuna*, four, for *Surya* five, for *Chandra* six and for *Vishnu* cult it should be seven *bhūmis*. It also stipulates that *Garuda* should be placed at the four top corners. Thus it is obvious that this text is by implication, intended for southern usage also, although it had apparently been compiled in the north, and indicates a stage when seven *bhūmis* or *talas* were the highest achieved. We have shrines which rise to more than seven *talas* in the Tamil country, but mostly dedicated to *Śiva*. The practice of the *pāñchāyatana* worship together with the *talachchanda* and its affiliations would show that it pertains to a period when the temple structure was itself in a stage of flux, evolving a formula for subordinate shrines. By this token also, the age of the text cannot be earlier than the late 9th or early 10th century A.D. The arrangement of the sub-shrines for *navagrahas* does not accord with the actual usage extant in Tamil country of the *navagrahas*, namely placing this group at the north-east corner of the shrine *mahāmaṇḍapa* or outer vestibule. The *Pādmasaṁhita Pāncharātra* states the *avarāṇa devatās* which should take the place of their counter parts in *Śaiva* scheme, thereby indicating that the usage closely followed the fixation of the *Śaiva parivāra devata*. It says that *Purusha* and *Achyuta* should replace *Surya* and *Chandra*, *Hayagrīva* should be in the place of *Sura* (*Indra*). *Sankarshana* should be in the place of *Brahma*, *Varaha* in place of *Ganesa*, *Pradyumna* in place of *Karttikeya*, *Ananta* in the place of *Katyayini* or *Durga* and *Aniruddha* in place of *Nirrtuti*, *Narasimha* in place of *Śiva*. As regards *Śrī* by which is apparently meant *Lakshmi*, the consort of *Vishnu*, in all her *śaktis*, *Pādmasaṁhita* states that she is to be placed on the south-west *ankaṇa*, while on the southern *ankaṇa* *Saptamātris* are to be placed. Since that is apparently not the procedure that obtains in any of the *Vaishnava* temples today, we have to take it that this prescription has been older than a later one by which *Lakshmi* is placed in a separate shrine on the south-west of the main shrine (without violating the direction already given in *Pādmasaṁhita*) but so *Śaiva* deities like *Saptamātris*, etc., were included in a *Vaishnava* temple. We may almost be sure that this systematisation would definitely have been a post-Ramanuja phenomenon and thus we are led to the conclusion that a separate *Devi*

shrine, even on the Vaishnava side, might not have materialised very much earlier than mid-11th century A.D.

What could have been the reason for a relatively late appearance of a separate shrine for Devi as a female counterpart of the main God? The answer has largely to be discovered in the multiplying rituals and legends that enveloped temple activities. The existing pattern of having a name for the God (be he Śiva or Vishnu) specific to the place and a corresponding name for the Goddess would itself have been one of the vogues that started only from the time of separate shrines for them. The earlier temples neither had divergent names for the main God and Goddess nor separate shrines for them. The idea that the Goddess was an inclusive feature of the God was more current. The postulate of an *Ādya Śakti* or *Prakṛiti* which operates the God Himself, in abstract, was applied to temple rituals at a relatively later day. It was given momentum only after Śankara and Ramanuja propounded their cosmic philosophies. The earlier *pañcāyatana* worship whether Śaiva or Vaishnava essentially inculcated a diversity of the extant pantheon and did not reflect any deep sectarian polarisation. The representation of Durga as a concomitant, as much of Śaiva iconography as Vaishnava, is a case in point. Similarly, the reference in *Pādmasaṃhita* of *Saptamātrīs* which are shown along with *Śrī* in the *ankaṇas* surrounding the temple reflect such a liberal attitude. The advent of Ramanuja thus is largely to be taken as having brought about a new lead in the disposition of shrine units in the temple-complex and a separate and important shrine for *Śrī* or *Tāyār* was part of such a movement. It is just possible that even on the Śaiva side, the movement was of a like character and was preceded by the temple-complexes like those of Vijayalayacholisvaram, Tirukkattalai, Kilappaluvur. In the last mentioned place where the main shrines Agastīsvaram and Cholisvaram would seem to be datable to the time of Aditya, we have a separate Amman or Devi shrine (in the name of Kuntalambika) to the north-west of the smaller main shrine—both the main shrines face west and the other sub-shrines are aligned as follows: Surya to the east, Saptamatrikas to the south, Ganesa to the south-west, Subrahmanya to west and Chandikesvara to the north-west. It is to be seen that the position of the sub-shrines for the above deities is *directionally* identical with that at Tirukkattalai except that the temple itself at the latter place is facing east, as is most common. Thus it would appear that the position of the sub-shrine is fixed irrespective of the orientation of the main shrine. The only aberrant factor at Kilaiyur are the Surya and Devi shrines, the latter of which is not to the south-west of the main shrine attached to its *mahāmaṇḍapa*. It is however, significant to note that as in the Devi shrine at Tirukkattalai, this also is facing south and this orientation in both the places was perhaps deliberate, as it operates irrespective of the differing orientations of the main temples in both places. Since both the temples are built during the reign of Aditya that of Kilaiyur being slightly later to that of Tirukkattalai, we may presume that this period, namely the close of the 9th century and early 10th century

A.D. saw a sea change in the disposition of the Devi shrine *vis-a-vis* the main shrine and in relation also to the other sub-shrines. We do not know, however, if the separate Devi shrines in these two places were coeval with the main shrines or not. This was obviously a stage, just prior to the location of the Devi shrine as adjoining the *mahāmaṇḍapam* of the temple which came into being, approximately from mid-11th century A.D. It is interesting to note that even temples of the time of Parantaka and later upto the Imperial Chola line do not have any Devi shrine well-aligned to the main temple in the original conception, although most of the temples now show a Devi shrine integrated with *mahāmaṇḍapa* of these temples. It is needless to say that in most of these cases, the *mahāmaṇḍapa* is not part of the original layout wherein only the main *vimāna* with an attached *mukhamāṇḍapa* (now called *ardhamāṇḍapa*) existed and thus the question of taking the existing Devi shrine in original is largely negated. Even in some of the temples of the time of Rajaraja, we have Devi shrines either not existing separately, or occurring separately on the north-west side of the main temple, and facing the same direction as the main shrine.

Thus, by and large, we are drawn to the view that the diversification of temple units within the main complex providing for separate ritual worship of many deities other than the main deity, the fixation of the Devi shrine as that of the chief and immanent consort of the main deity, the giving of names to the main god and goddess in a manner different from the earlier practice of calling it after the *biruda* of the patron king had all coeval and almost concomitant initiation and could not have been earlier than the first quarter of the 10th century A.D. This is, however, only a preliminary stage to the still later and almost consolidated practice of the Amman shrine facing a common vestibule with the main shrine; and having the sub-shrines like Ganesa, Subrahmanya, Chandesa to the south-west and north respectively. It is no less interesting to perceive that in the process of the differentiation of the minor deities including the main goddess, Subrahmanya and Ganesa, and in the shedding of the Trinity affiliation almost for every (except in the Dakṣinamurti icon combining the concepts of Brahma and Śiva, in a way not offensive even to Vaiṣṇava usage as seen later) the *Sāptamātrika* shrine disappeared, and was not seen occurring beyond mid-11th century A.D. in the Tamil country. The conceptual elements inherent in the Saptamatrika group had been virtually distributed among the main and the sub-shrines of the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temple units after this period, resulting in the dissolution of this concept.

A significant difference between the main *garbhagrihas* of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples in this context would be that while in the former, the invariable presence of a *Nirguṇa Linga* on a *pītha* without any ostensible Devi association would make a separate shrine for Devi quite rational, in the Vaiṣṇava case, the occurrence of the original consorts *Śrī* and *Bhū* alongside the main deity in the cella whether

standing, seated reclining would make the separate Devi shrine, as arose later, appear redundant. But in this would lie the internal evidence that the earlier stages showed the female consorts alongside (both materially and conceptually) and thus did not need any separate Devi shrine. In the case of the *linga*, the fact of the female presence is predicated almost from this period, by the disposition of the *linga pīṭha*, which by the invariably circular shape it assumes from this time, was looked upon as the *yōni* or the *ādhārā Śakti*, a character which was not given to the *pīṭha* in its earliest occurrence, or to the word *yōni* in its earliest architectural currency. The fact remains that this was brought about by the ramification of rituals and the persistence of the Bhakti cult which made Śāṅkara and Ramanuja alike aside of their philosophies, give preference to Sri Amba as the very *Dhātṛi* or sustainer of the universe and the repository of all graces.

ON THE CHRONOLOGY OF ELLORA CAVES

The extensive and extraordinary rock-excavations at Ellora, named anciently variously as *Elāpura* (during the Rashtrakuta Krishna's reign) and *Charanadri* (perhaps at the time of its later association with Jain monks-*chāraṇās*), form an important chapter in the cultural and art-history of Deccan, and indeed of India and Asia. Unlike Ajanta, where the caves were appropriated by the Buddhist creed entirely, at Ellora, there are the varied efforts of all the three ancient Indian religions, viz. Buddhism, Brahmanic Hinduism and Jainism, while, broadly speaking, this was also the order in which the cave-shrines were scooped out; there are undoubted mutual overlaps among these, which actually provide some basis for the chronology of the architectural stages. While it has generally been held that the Buddhists first carved out their caves roughly between A.D. 600 and 800, the Hindus between A.D. 600 and 900 the Jains from about A.D. 900 to 1200, still this would not only be an oversimplification of a complex issue, but indeed partly debatable too. Before any detailed consideration of choronological developments can prevail, we should state what are the aspects of art, architecture, sculpture and history upon which we draw in sustenance of the choronology broadly adumbrated. It may also be mentioned here that the following account does not cover Jain caves owing to their clearly later development, and being outside the scope of the issues detailed.

At the outset, it may be stated that inscriptional records of a major and clinching nature, as at Ajanta, are lacking at Ellora; the only outstanding source being the *Dasavatara* cave-inscription of Rashtrakuta king Dantidurga. The other minor helps are from the creed slogan of Buddhism on the facade of Cave X, apart from some of the donative records from Jain caves of Indra and Jagannatha Sabhas. Thus, virtually one has to lean heavily on the stylistic evolutions, as seen in the architectural and formal art here. However, certain dependable landmarks can also

be fixed up first, to which the developmental features of the individual caves could be reasonably securely fastened.

The rock-cut technique noted at Ajanta and Aurangabad caves yields significant assistance to the beginning point of the similar efforts at Ellora. These are the practical disappearance at Ellora of the *chaitya* chapel, excepting, to some extent, for the Visvakarma Cave (X), in the form found at Ajanta, consequent upon the willing assimilation of the iconic fixation of Buddha for worship and replacement of the *stūpa*. Indeed, it was largely because the *stūpa* base was circular in plan that a concentric plan had perhaps to be worked out for the *chaitya* chapel also, for the sake of elegant symmetry, and this inevitably resulted in the apse back for the early Buddhistic type plan for chapels. However, in the *Mahāyāna* context, already at Ajanta, notwithstanding and side by side with the *chaitya* cave, a tendency to locate a handy chapel shrine in the *vihāra* itself in the form of a chamber on the back wall with a colossal Buddha image, had taken root. This had the natural effect of nullifying the *chaitya* apsidal cave as an entity in the sectarian layout of Buddhist ritualistic structures and conceivably provided a corresponding germ-idea for the Hindu temple plan itself. Thus, as between what is witnessed at Ajanta in the later *Mahāyāna* group, what is displayed by the earliest edifices of Buddhism at Ellora constitutes a dynamic diversion in tradition, which might be taken as a legitimate chronological succession. A working initial date for the earliest Buddhist caves at Ellora would then be in the neighbourhood of the middle to the end of the 6th century A.D. It would be patently irrational to make it much later, depending upon the facade form of Cave X at Ellora alone since the *chaitya* apse had been kept even in that cave, and, besides, given the relative closeness of Ajanta and Ellora (and other factors like the earlier group of Aurangabad caves occupying chronologically and artistically a middle position between Ajanta and Ellora) which had no potentiality for impediments, we may take the evolution from Ajanta forms to early Ellora forms as smooth, continual and functional, rather than abrupt and innovatory. Taking into account the fact that, despite the tendency towards double or treble-storeyed caves, which were merely grandiose, the layout plan of the monastery had, as a rule been kept reasonably identical except perhaps in Caves V-VI—to the later *vihāra* caves of Ajanta, it would be seen that the *Mahāyāna* period was, by and large, a stage of relative stagnation of architectural plan but of a relatively brisker development of iconographic and ritual pantheon.

It is thus not necessary to dilate upon the fact that from a standpoint of the evolution of the Buddhist pantheon, Ellora Buddhist caves indicate a stage subsequent to that of the latest caves of Ajanta. It may not, however, be out of place to point out that in the place of only two Bodhisattva attendants to the Buddha of Ajanta, we have as many as six sometimes at Ellora and Aurangabad. The Tara manifestation had also increased and such specialisations as the Maha-



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mayuri and Bhrikuti Tara have appeared, not to mention the proliferation of the less divine attendants in the panels. Nonetheless, as a rule, both at Ajanta as well as to a lesser extent at Ellora, the *Mahāyāna* Buddhist pantheon had not so developed or so indubitably got fixed up as to signify the subtle development of *vajrāyāna* ideas. For instance, the Cave IV at Ajanta in the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara litany situated to the right of the door, the Bodhisattva carries the *dhyāni* Buddha in *Dharmachakrapravartana mudra*, in his *makuṭa*, which is not the appropriate symbol. In a similar way, at Ellora also, in many caves we have *chaitya* emblem on the crown, indiscriminately used for more than one type of Bodhisattva. Thus, it would be quite consistent to argue that while indeed the progress made in iconographic canons as between Ajanta and Ellora is real and substantial, it might not have been markedly later in the chronological and stylistic sense. The evolution was certainly rapid and purposeful, a sequel to the competitive circumstances then prevailing in the Deccan with the resurgence of Brahmanic Hinduism, and Buddhism had to join the fray to catch and thrive on the popular mind. We may thus concede a partial overlap even between the latest caves at Ajanta and the earliest at Ellora.

Now, to the details. Cave No. I, has clearly no place in the developed hypostyle set up of the *chaitya* monastery types at Ellora, and was thus obviously an early *Mahāyāna* excavation and was probably the earliest selection of the Ellora ridge for rock-cut sectarian establishments under Buddhism. With its astylar and simple *vihāra* structure and late occurrence, this cave, together with Cave No. IV, will have to be placed not later than the last quarter of the 6th century A.D.

Cave No. IV, again is clearly much earlier to Caves VI, II and III, owing to the simplicity of the pillar styles and lack of ornamentation of capital, excepting for *vyālas* along the end-sections and owing to the linear arrangement of the shrine cells at the back of the cave and absence of many carved deities. It would be taken as approximately coeval with Cave No. I, but earlier to Cave V and could pertain to the end of the 6th century A.D. Cave No. V has pilasters, closely recalling similar richly carved examples from the *Mahāyāna* cave of Ajanta. It has also capital features similar to Elephanta pillars. The two side wings of this cave are clearly subsequent to the original excavation of the main cave. Cave No. VI, despite the multiplicity of the figures of Buddhist pantheon, has, indeed, in its modelling of forms, a striking similarity to Ramesvara (No. XXI) in the sculptured figures, in hairdo and physiognomy, and could not thus be far removed from the date of the latter. Coming to Cave No. II, it is approximately analogous in pillar style with Cave No. VIII on the one hand and Dhumarlena on the other. But its general layout and the stylobate structure and lack of uniformity in pillar profiles, would indicate a date roughly prior to the aforementioned two. It is perhaps not much removed from Cave No. XVIII in plan and features. This cave (No. XVIII) is an evolutionary development over Ramesvara and could be later to it

by about fifty years at the latest. All this reasoning would yield a date such as the last quarter of the 7th century for Cave II. Cave No. X is very important for the dating of the Ellora group, in more than one respect. In its modelling and pilaster forms occurring in the Bodhisattva panels, it has very close parallels with Ramesvara. Alike thus in its cathedral form and sculptural style, it is to be placed in the first quarter of the 7th century A.D.

This is as regards the Buddhist caves. As for the roughly coeval Hindu caves, such as Ramesvara, etc., we have to note the earlier experiments in temple plan and pillar styles at Aihole and Badami (particularly Cave No. 3 of the latter place, with inscription dated A.D. 579) and we will not be far wrong if we fix up Ramesvara within the first quarter of the 7th century A.D. at the latest. Actually, we have between Badami Cave No. 3 and Ramesvara, a middle stage of the same stylistic mode, in Cave XX at Ajanta which should be datable in the closing decades of the 6th century A.D. After Ramesvara, the typical bracket figures and facade mode is itself seen non-existent at Ellora. Creative art, particularly for Hindu temple-plan fixation, was progressing by leaps and bounds in this stage and should temper us towards a judicious telescoping of the developments without unduly pushing the dates late.

As Ramesvara has a regular rock-cut *pradakshinapatha* which practically none of the Buddhist caves of Ellora has, except No. VIII, it is a reasonable guess that the continuity from Ajanta Buddhist activity was seen in the Buddhist caves at Ellora, while the Brahmanic Hindu traditions from the Chalukyan centres like Badami and Aihole, were mainly worked out in the Brahmanical caves at Ellora side by side. Thus, we have obviously to take into account two art-guilds, catering variously to Buddhist and Brahmanic traditions, which were simultaneously at work at Ellora; the former, due to the organic nearness to Ajanta; being a probable earlier inhabitant at Ellora. In the sequel, the earliest Buddhist excavation at Ellora may be taken to have antedated Ramesvara, the earliest Brahmanical cave here, and may perhaps be placed in the last quarter of the 6th century A.D.

Now we may consider the same question from another angle. The most significant Buddhist and Brahmanical cave monument at Ellora, whose dating we must be sure about, are Cave Nos. V, VIII, X (Visvakarma XI, Do Thal), XII (Tin Thal), No. XIV (Ravan-ki-Khai), No. XV (Dasavatara), No. XVI (Kailasa), No. XXI (Ramesvara) and No. XXIX (Dhumarlana); the first five being Buddhist and the rest Brahmanical. From a purely empirical gradation of layout plan, proceeding in the reverse direction from the latest development, we may state that Kailasa is evidently and unquestionably the latest, both by obvious temple-complex unit as well as by the admissible ascription of Krishna's date to it, namely the second half of the 8th century A.D. (inception). The Dasavatara cave is clearly its immediate predecessor being undoubtedly of Dantidurga's date, at least as far as the pavilion goes. The main cave, however, evidently has been of two stages; an ear-

lier Buddhist skeletal layout superseded by Brahmanical completion of sculptural and sectarian elements. This is perhaps of the first half of the 8th century, A.D. The decisively next earlier in rank is Dhumarlena wherein we have a layout of a temple but with a spacious vestibule and comfortable circumambulatory fixation of the shrine circuit as would justify the date of end of the 7th century A.D., spilling, if need be, into the first quarter of the 8th century A.D., but preferably the former scope. On the side of cult delineations and their artistic merit, even a cursory review of the sculptured panels of Dhumarlena and those correspondingly of Ramesvara will reveal the very clear and significant lacuna between these two, the latter unmistakably reflecting in its art-idioms of the glory that was Badami (Cave No. 3) and also convincingly anticipating in its pillar forms, etc., the grandeur that is Elephanta. Thus, the lacuna between Ramesvara and Dhumarlena is adequately filled up by the far off Elephanta, of the same cultural and political domain in its days, as Ellora. This would mean that while Elephanta main cave can be put in the first half of the 7th century A.D., Ramesvara has necessarily to be not later than the first quarter of the 6th century A.D., preferably in the very opening of that century. It may be recorded here that the difference between Dhumarlena and Elephanta main cave is too all embracing that it will be untenable by any disingenuous argumentation to make the latter, later to the former. It has been suggested by some writers (*Marg*, Elephanta Number 1960) that it could be so, particularly since, according to them, at Elephanta, Mahesa panel is clearly exposed to the gaze of the visitor entering from the main entrance, and the *linga* shrine is to one side, whereas at Dhumarlena, the *linga*, shrine is facing the main entrance, the implication being that it is an improvement of planning the Mahesa panel far easy visibility and thus a later innovation and development. One is at loss to understand how the two could be compared in this way, since in both the cases the cardinal orientation of the entire layout, as an organic whole, is across the clear moonstone entrance at one of the open ends along the longitudinal axis and not along the transverse axis. If this is borne in mind, the question of the existence and good view of the Mahesa panel in one, and its absence and a panel-less back in the other will not arise at all. The visitor's entrance in both cases had been a matter of exigencies, of rock formation, ventilation, etc., but their orientation is not to be influenced by this. The Mahesa panel is no doubt the *piece de resistance* of the Elephanta cave-temple, but it does not mean that its absence should have any import at Dhumarlena. Indeed, coupled with the fact that the sculptures of Dhumarlena, except perhaps for Kalyanasundara panel, indicate a general decadence, with lack of proportions, lack of sensitivity and a general corpulence, it would suggest that in its later context, the significance of the Mahesamurti had itself become all too common and familiar to merit a special panel. In any event, not only the less inspiring note of the panel carvings but also the many examples of cut-in sculptures, such as the Lakuliṣa panel at

Dhumarlēna, in addition to the greater evolutionary similarity of its halls with Caves VIII and II and Ellora rather than of Elephanta, would tend to indicate a decidedly later developed context of its excavation. The fluting in the cushion of Dhumarlēna pillar carries a down-turned terminal row of petals above the middle band, which is not at all to be seen in any of the Elephanta pillars but is clearly enough noted in the two pillars in the front *maṇḍapa* of Cave No. VIII shrine, and in some of the pillars of Cave No. II. In the latter, however, some other pillars are without it also, such as to suggest that the variations were being experimented upon and had not got fixed and might perhaps give this Cave (II) a date slightly earlier than Dhumarlēna. This should be considered as the most developed idiom of the pillar cushion known, and this would incidentally make Cave No. VIII not far removed in time from Dhumarlēna and it is a reasonable assessment that both could be placed in the end of the 7th century A.D. or, at worst, in the opening quarter of the 8th century A.D., but more possibly the former, since it is sufficiently earlier to Dasavatara cave, in modelling of its figures and its structural features. Dasavatara cave is nearest to Tin Thal and to a lesser extent to Do Thal, in every respect despite the difference of the creed.

The Visvakarma cave (No. X) and Cave No. V has already been mentioned. Of these two, it is presumable that the former is earlier than the latter for the very simple reason that it is the only Buddhist *chaitya* chapel at Ellora, despite its evolved and rather incongruous storeyed layout, while the latter is a *vihāra-cum*-chapel and that too of a special type for collegiate discourse, with also a later addition in the form of the two central lateral wings (making the so called cruciform plan). Its similarity with Darbar Cave at Kanheri has been familiar to all scholars and its general lack of elaborate ornamentation might make it earlier than the Do and Tin Thals and later to Visvakarma. Now, as regards Visvakarma cave facade, we have two further criteria for guessing its date; the first is the creed inscription "*Ye Dharma...*" etc., on its facade which could be perhaps later to its original excavation by its script and thus might not be a sure basis; and the second is that an almost exactly similar facade type is met with in a number of temples at Aihole of the early mid-7th century A.D. including Huchappayagudi (in one of the sections of its architrave of its inner nave). This last mentioned temple could be dated to early 7th century A.D. from its layout plan, and from its relationship to Huchimalligudi here. Hence owing to the sure interchange of ideas that would have existed between the various contemporary seats of Chalukyan power and patronage, like Aihole and Badami, with Ellora, it would be a firm link to fix up the date of Visvakarma cave as early 7th century A.D. The limited culmination of the *Mahāyāna* pantheon at Ellora, as convincingly displayed in Do Thal and Tin Thal, would show that together they form the latest productions of the Buddhists, and, as already indicated, are not far removed in time, from Dasavatara cave i.e., they could be in the neighbourhood of mid-8th century A.D. with a decade's margin one way or

the other, but more eligibly on the earlier side.

Thus, in concise compass, the conspectus of the Ellora excavations and their chronology would have to hang on a framework such as it given hereunder:

End of the 6th century A.D.—Caves I and IV.

First quarter of the 7th century A.D.—Caves VI, X and XXI.

Mid-7th century A.D.—Caves V, XIV and XIX.

Last quarter of the 7th century A.D.—Caves II, III, VIII, XVIII and XXIX.

First quarter of the 8th century A.D.—Caves XI, XII and XV.

Mid-8th century A.D.—Cave XVI (inception).

While one cannot be too dogmatic about the actual dates, it is a sure guess that the architectural evolution and the interplay cannot be much off the lines indicated above.

ROCK-CUT TEMPLES AT MASRUR

The spectacle of beauty that suddenly unfolds itself before the tired trekking tourist about 11 km south-west of the Railway Station of Guler (famous in its own right in the 18th-19th centuries A.D. as a centre of art and painting) amidst a series of linear rocky ranges of the Kangra Valley is as much aesthetically satisfying as it is geographically unusual. Here on the crest of a hillock, is the village of Masrur with its monolithic shrines excavated out of live rocks round about the 8th-9th centuries A.D. While rock-cut temples are very common in Southern, Eastern and Western India in the hilly regions, this is almost a unique specimen in the sub-Himalayan ranges and its solitary sequestered grandeur more than compensates for the arduous hiking across a chain of hillocks and valleys that one has to put before reaching it.

The rock-cut shrines at Masrur are seven in number and are all carved on one single rocky bluff, adjacent to each other. They represent the indigenous *Nāgara* style of temple architecture, with their tall curvilinear *śikhara*s capped by the *āmalaka* stone and finial. All these shrines are pleasingly fringing a large rectangular artificial tank which is also scooped out of live rock and fed by rain water periodically. The main and the most elaborate shrine is located in the centre and there are three smaller shrines to its north, two to its south, and a seventh separate one is located on the south-west close to the other. This last shrine has a curious cruciform plan. All the shrines face west.

The main shrine alone has the inner sanctum also excavated into a spacious hall, entered through a doorway with attractive frieze and jamb carvings. Just outside this is an open court, enclosed on the north and south but without roof which would represent the *jagmohan* chamber. From the inner northern side of the *jagmohan* wall, an excavated flight of steps leads one to the terrace, where on a common flattish roof, all the *śikhara*s of the various shrines are arrayed in

slender elegance. Outside the *jagmohan* is a very small enclosed area, also open to the skies which corresponds to the *mukhamandapa*. It is obvious that owing to the inadequate extent of the carving area and height of rock, the *jagmohan* also could not be excavated to form a roofed chamber. All the shrines have a common front court limited by the bank of the water tank. Outside the *jagmohan* wall on the north and south there are extensive sculptural carvings and big niches are also scooped but never completed. It is these niches that in the course of the next three or four centuries evolve into the oblong, pillard balconies of the *jagmohan* side walls, as at the famous temple of Baijnath. While the pure architectural decorations here are of a simple but effective nature, it is the variety of sculptures that attract our admiration and cast a mysterious spell of charm over the place. We have the sculptures of the various deities of the Brahmnical pantheon like Śiva, Durga, Vishnu, Kartikeya, Ganesa, Indra, Varuna, Kubera, etc.; for these are Hindu rock-cut shrines. Of these, the sculptures of the Trimurti aspect of Vishnu would deserve particular mention. This is a three-headed image with the boar-head to the right, lion-head to the left and the serene human head in the middle. These depict the three aspects of creation, preservation and destruction respectively as suggested by the Varaha incarnation and the Narasimha incarnation of Vishnu and this, is an extremely popular and distinctive feature of the iconography of the temples of the sub-Himalayan regions like Chamba, Kangra, Kulu and Mandi.¹

Of the other secular sculptures, the *mithuna* attendants along the panels and the musical *gandharva* group carved on the capital stones of pillars are outstanding by way of the witchery wrought on them by the sculptor, who had made these mute carvings pulsate with life. Despite the fact that many of these carvings had been rounded off and weathered at the cruel hands of Time and Nature, we still have lingering traces of the subtlety of expression and gesture in these sculptures. There is a ravishing example of an osculating couple, which despite of its effaced and mutilated contours, could have borne in its original state very agreeable comparison with similar ones either of the Kailasa Temple at Ellora, or of the later Kandarya Mahadeva Temple at Khajuraho. The *mithuna* attendants, only one pair of which has escaped total mutilation, bring before our minds the myriads of such attendants found on either side of the *Jātaka* panels of the *stūpas* at Nagarjunakonda or Amaravati. The self-complacent smile playing on the lips of the voluptuous couple bespeaks of a period of intense artistic activity aided by the craftsmen enjoying prosperous patronage at the hands of the royal builders of the day.

The most appealing carvings are, however, the musical groups on the capitals of pillars which, unfortunately detached from the parent pillars are now fallen loose pieces, and have been stacked in order in the courtyard of the shrine itself. There are two groups in the opposite faces of one of the four-sided capital pieces. The perfect harmony of the figures and their postures depicted here is something unrivalled by later sculptures in temples of Himachal Pradesh. The dancing

damsel seated gingerly upon the backward-extended leg of the *gandharva*, the cymbal, the drum and the *vina* players are all in an ecstatic world of their own. It is an artistically exciting scene.

"Vain, transitory splendours, could not all relieve the tottering mansion from its fall". These poignant words of Goldsmith in this *Deserted Village* come to our mind when we behold the havoc that Nature had wrought here. The rocks out of which the temples are excavated belong to a particularly soft and friable variety of Siwalik sandstone, and they are, besides, very obliquely laminated, and are susceptible to detachment in big blocks or slices. So indeed they had left the parent structure in blocks, many of which lie in unweildy chunks at the base of some of the temples. For the same reason the sculptures have lost their sharpness due to erosion and wind action.

Meanwhile, while this vision of evanescent beauty lasts, its delicate charm, its solitary grandeur and the uniqueness of these rock-cut temples in this part of the country are compelling arguments for the tourist to pay his homage to it, not minding the physical rigours the trip would involve.

REFERENCES

1. Elsewhere, they are also popular in parts of Rajasthan, and an early unique specimen of this of about the 5th century A.D. from Mathura is now kept in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and described and illustrated in Ananda K. Coomarswami "*Portfolio of Indian Art*".

RAJASIMHA'S TEMPLES IN TONDAIMANDALAM

I

The period of Pallava rule starting from Narasimhavarman II Rajasimha had been eventful in many respects. To the students of art and architecture particularly, this fairly sustained and peaceful reign was epoch making in the sense that structural temples in stone were reared up for the first time on an extensive scale and iconography also did not lag much behind and indeed reflected the state of religious belief of the age to a remarkable degree. That Rajasimha was inclined perhaps as a measure of traditional continuity and also the indication of his own calibre to excavate a few rock-cut *maṇḍapas*, both religious as well as secular around Mahabalipuram itself, is seen in the Atiranachandamaṇḍapam and Yālimaṇḍapam (Tiger Cave) at Śāluvankuppam, immediately north of Mahabalipuram on the coast. Of these, the former is in the general pattern of the earlier rock-cut *maṇḍapas* and comprised a shrine cell at the back with a projecting front plinth aligned to the two freestanding facade pillars beyond its *ardhamāṇḍapa*, with corresponding end-pilasters which are deeper on their inner face. The pillars are plain like those of Mahendra's caves, but it is the Somaskanda panels—of which there are as many as three—and the central fluted *linga* (fixed in the cella later than the cave) that give out the authorship of the cave, not to mention the fact that two inscriptions in the cave about its excavation reveal the title *atiranachanda* which, as we know, was one of the *birudas* of Rajasimha. The Somaskanda panel in the cella, is accompanied by the figures of Brahma and Vishnu by its side. The depiction of Somaskanda thrice in the same cave is apparently in vindication of the deep royal attachment to Śiva, on whom the inscriptions in the cave are composed with considerable fervour and literary flavour. The other cave, known as the Tiger Cave was indeed designed for a temporal purpose and was ostensibly utilised for

ceremonial appearances of the king at the seaport and for such other royal occasions. Recent scrutiny of the set-up of the monument seems to reveal that this cave-*maṇḍapa* possesses some acoustical proprieties for which the rolled forward tiger heads ringing the cave-front, the appreciable height of the actual rock-cut chamber, and the relatively low level of the stretch of sandy area in front with a small conical boulder outcrop in the centre, would seem to have contributed much. Whether it is by accident or design is not, however, so obvious, but Rajasimha is pointedly eulogised for his musical talents in his inscriptions at Atiranachanda cave by the composer Kālakala, a title incidentally sported by the king himself, who, it would seem, was over-fond of assuming or receiving titles and had a plethoric multitude of such, giving to his otherwise deservedly celebrated personality, certain hyperbolic dimensions.

These two cave excavations constitute a fitting epilogue to the rock-architectural phase that was unceremoniously departing, ushering us into a more rational and meaningful era of the structural vogue in the Pallava domain, under the direct patronage of Rajasimha himself. The importance of this new development need not be overemphasised. In the monoliths of Mamalla's and Parameśvaravarman's time, there was no knowing : (1) as to how real concepts of solids and voids were actually tackled by Pallava craftsmen in practice, and what if any, were the adjustments that inevitably to be introduced into the structural assemblage; and (2) how the actual aspects and what were the architectural dimensions that spelled out the storeyed composition, so characteristic of the style the Pallava kings were fostering.

II

The temple activity of Rajasimha could be conveniently divided into three major groups for facilitating a better perception of the organic growth implicit in the process. The first group would comprise Mukundanayanar of Mamallapuram and Piravataneśvara, Airavateśvara and Kailasanatha at Kanchi. The next will be Iravatana and Tripurantaka and Valiśvara. The third will be Panamalai, Shore Temple and Olakkanneśvara. It may be stated here that by Shore Temple, although the twin temples on the seashore with a rock-cut Ranganath sandwiched in between is implied, the inherent understanding would be that the Rajasimheśvara would be relatively, earlier than the bigger Kshatriyasimheśvaram facing the sea; the first of above groups differs from the others not so much in general size alone but in the composition of the plinth and the proportion of the body and superstructure. It had invariably a bold *upāna*, a vertical *jagatī*, followed by a *tripaṭṭa kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, and *paṭṭikā* capped by a *prati*. The *kaṇṭha* in Airavateśvara at least has the elephant frieze in relief, continuance of the freestanding monolith tradition of Mamalla and Parameśvara. It has the body or *pāda* of the shrine starting almost over the *prati* and it would seem generally to rise not more than

two storeys or *talas* in height. It is necessary to find out first why, if at all Rajasimha did not try his hand in monolithic shrines at Mamallapuram, where as he did excavate two cave monuments as at Śāluvankuppam. If a mere hangover of the traditional medium of temple creation was the avowed reason for this, then it would require some explaining as to how rock-cut excavations were re-started by Rajasimha, notwithstanding the fact that already by the time of Mamalla and Parameśvaravarman the rock-cut medium had been given up and monolithic medium started, as in the *Rathas*. If still, Rajasimha wanted to display his skill as an equal adept in rock-cut art, it would be unreasonable to conclude that he did so only in the *maṇḍapa* type of excavations and not the freestanding type. The negative reason that he might not have had the proper rock to create monolith would be admissible, even for consideration only after extant monoliths have been carefully examined in this light. As he did create the rock-cut *maṇḍapas* we may have to see if, after all, he might have been the author of any of the freestanding *ratha* type as well. In this, the most likely criterion could be any evolutionary element or *anga* of the *vimāna* which by its very nature is past the earlier Mamalla stage. Of course, it would be feasible to argue that there would be no knowing if any such evolved *anga* or feature was the innovation of the earlier period of Parameśvarman himself or of Rajasimha. In other words, we may have to see if there is any unity of concept and composition in the monolithic creations of the time of Narasimha I and Parameśvara I, and if correspondingly there is any unity feasible to be established between any of the freestanding *ratha* types and the subsequent structural creations of Rajasimha.

III

A significant aspect to be aware of in this connection is that almost all the monolithic *rathas* are not greater than three *talas* in stature. Dharmaraja Ratha is the biggest unit of the group, the rest being almost invariably two *talas* or one *tala* in height, whether square, rectangular or apsidal in plan. In the case of Dharmaraja Ratha, we find that the lower storeys were most probably completed during the time of Parameśvara I who succeeded Mamalla who started this *ratha*. Thus, the elevational composition of this *ratha* has already been predetermined by Mamalla, and Parameśvara at best only was responsible for the arrangement of the superstructures working downwards and the front porch *maṇḍapa* integral with the ground floor main *vimāna*. In this he has shown certain method of perspectives; and the telescoping of the *śāla* and *kūṭa* into single *kūṭa-śāla* piece, 'L' shaped, at the angle of the front porch roof of the first *tala* of main *vimāna* is one such which is quite faithfully reproduced in the lesser of the two Shore Temples, namely, Rajasimheśvaram, at the same part of the *vimāna*. It would show that there was perhaps a degree of continuity between what Parameśvara I achieved on the monolith and what Rajasimha displayed on a structural medium.

The style of elevational composition of the two Shore Temples, however, are fairly alike, and this is apparently attributable to Rajasimheśvara having come first and later when the king was planning Kshatriyasimheśvaram, he wanted to harmonise the profiles as much as possible to avoid incongruity in a pair which are so close to each other. Indeed the very conception of the twin shrines which are back to back with each other and have the same god, is itself as unconventional as it was unique, and the fact that both have their *stūpi* intact and in separate type of stone show that they had been duly consecrated as temples. The smaller of the two has an additional special feature, namely, the placement of nandi, north-south on the roof of the *ardhamanḍapa* behind the *hāras*. Probably this was not installed on the larger temple, since the corners of the last *tala* of these temples, particularly the smaller, have conch-blowing *gaṇas*. It depicts a stage when nandi had been definitely known.

Of Rajasimha's own shrines, Mukundanayanar at Mamallapuram, and Iravatana, Piravatana, Airavata and Kailasanatha do not show on the plinth the *padma*, and have on the other hand the earlier form of vertical plain *jagatī* between the *upāna* and the *kumuda*, while the Shore Temples, Panamalai and Olakkanneśvara shrine alone show the *padma* instead of plain *jagatī*. It is of course, liable to be argued that Rajasimha merely diversified the plinth type at one and the same time and no stratification need strictly be employed in studying them. In addition to the above feature, the topmost moulding of the *adhishṭhāna*, namely, the *paṭṭikā* shows a like evolution among his temples in structural medium; one group, perhaps earlier, showing a lineal affiliation with what has gone before on the monolithic medium and the other provided with an additional *kanṭha* pedestal for the operating of *vyālas* of the walls, in feeble or in bold fashion. A postulation, empirically speaking, of organic developments of the structural fabric is admissible in this.

IV

An important compositional feature of the freestanding monoliths of Mamallapuram is that almost all of the series invariably show the *hāra* of *karṇakūṭās* and *bhadraśālas* in each of the *talas*, including the topmost. The significant modification of this rule is the ending of the last *tala* of the *vimāna* with a *kapota* and *prastara* above, but without the *kshudra alpa śikhara* above them in their respective places along the periphery of that *tala*. This latter becomes the norm in all the structural temples of post-Mamalla period which further show a secondary variation by replacing the *hāra* of miniature *śikharas* by the nandis placed in the corner. Early *āgamas*, like the *Vaikhānasa*, *Mayamata* and *Isānaśivagurudēva Paddhati*, speak of the *vāhanas* like Garuda or nandi being placed on the topmost *tala* below the *grīva*. *Vaikhānasa* also speaks of the *kūṭa-koshṭhas* on the first *tala* itself. Some of Rajasimha's temples have lion on the corners of the first *tala* top,

but not on the topmost *tala*. This lion was apparently the symbol of Rajasimha Pallava and not of ritual significance. It would thus signify the advent of ritual usages in the shrine, in howsoever semi-systematised manner. The point to be noted would indeed be that the arrangement of the miniature *śikhara*s over the *prastara* of each *tala* including topmost *tala* is to be construed as the temporal developmental stage of architecture in the early Pallava period irrespective of whether this is seen in a monolithic *ratha* type or a regular structural type.

The monolithic *rathas* are after all petrified specimens of the extant temple mode and would be homonymous with structural examples, perhaps of perishable materials equally prevalent in that age. Indeed structural counterparts to the *rathas* of Mamallapuram had already been developed elsewhere in the Chalukyan country as at Mahakutēśvar and Badami which, not only show the *hāra* of *kūṭās* and *śālas* upto the topmost *tala* but even show an additional four *kūṭa vimānas* attached to the diagonal facets of the *grīva* and rising upto the lower edge of the *śikhara* itself. Their age is attributable to the first quarter of the 7th century if not slightly earlier still, and they had apparently been the earliest structural (or other) examples of a *Drāviḍa vimāna* known in south India. A succeeding and variant stage seems to have these top *alpa vimānas* and *hāras* of *śāla* and *kūṭa śikhara*s absent in all the *talas* except the lowest, exemplified by Upper Śivālaya at Badami and Śangameśvara at Pattadakka. It is from these early efforts that undoubtedly the norms of standing temple styles in the Pallava country had been evolved, probably from the Mamalla stage onwards, leading to entirely structural temples found for the first time during Rajasimha's reign.

It is here that we find a piece of evidence namely that of Piḍāri Ratha (north), which is a *samachaturāśra dvitāla vimāna*, with a *mukhamanḍapa* (or *ardhamanḍapa*) and which but for its *chaturāśra* instead of *ashṭaśra śikhara* is an almost exact prototype of the Mukundanayanar structural at the same place. Would it go to show that perhaps Rajasimha, apart from the two cave-temple types at Śāluvankuppam, might have attempted a monolith as well as in the Piḍāri (north),¹ but could not complete it and gave up the rock-cut (whether of the excavated or freestanding) shrines, as too time consuming, and inhibitive space value within the shrines and initiated structural phase? This, if admissible, would indeed explain rationally what Rajasimha did. He had excavated the caves at Śāluvankuppam where rock suitable only to caves were available. The Śāluvankuppam caves contribute only: (1) the multiple Somaskanda panels on the one hand, as if confirming that this was the most indubitable object, of worship, and (2) the secular *ranga śāla* or stage-like *manḍapa*, in the form of the Tiger Cave.

The continuity of the shrine composition without a *hāra* of *kūṭas* on the top *tala*, without any bull either on these, is to be seen in the Pīrvātana temple of Kanchi, which is a *dvitāla vimāna* like the Piḍāri Ratha and has almost the same type of layout and size. It is unfortunate that we do not know the exact nature of

the top *tala* of Mukundanayanar since the conservation measures adopted, after old feature were lost, have tended to give an unsatisfactory *ākāra* to its elevation. It should be noted that these are very small structural compositions suggesting the incipient stage. These would indeed have to be deemed as the earliest of the Rajasimha structural shrines but perhaps succeeding the Mukundanayanar temple at Mamallapuram, which has a *hāra* at the lowest *tala*, unlike other Rajasimha shrines. These were apparently the organic extensions of the Piḍāri Ratha (north) on the structural medium. There is no definite evidence to show if Piḍāri Ratha (north) could have been cut by Rajasimha but the break from the previous models as seen in Mamalla's and Parameśvaravarman's Ganeśa Ratha and Ādivaraha temple facade² would seem to show that the lack of the *hāra* on the top *tala* in Piḍāri Ratha (north) would tend to place it indubitably in the *transitional* period. The next finite development, as could be seen further below, was the dropping of the *hāra* in almost all Rajasimha temples around the lowest *tala* as well, except on the *mukhamaṇḍapa* roof.

V

An interesting sequel to the ritual development of temple worship was the emergence of the Lingodbhava cult, on the iconographic side, by the same time. No doubt Rajasimha, conceivably in self-adulation, continues the Narasimha panel even in Kailasanātha shrine, but the proliferation of Śivaite sculptures, particularly the main *Śivatāṇḍava* forms, *Chakradāna* and *Lingodbhava* in them would show the precedence that Śivaite worship took, perhaps, as a mark of royal preference. It is equally educative to note that the Lingodbhava panel is shown on the south wall of Kailasanatha and not on the (western) back side of the shrine as is generally obtaining in the slightly later more systematised *āgamic* context.³ It is just possible, further, that the larger of the Shore Temples was under construction when the *prākāra* shrines of Kailasanatha were being completed in the last years, since both of them show Ganesa figure which does not make its appearance at all till the time of Rajasimha in any of the Pallava rock-cut compositions, whether of Parameśvara, Mamalla or Mahendra in Tondaimandalam. This Ganesa figure occurs, apart from the Shore Temples, in Piravatana, Iravatana and Kailasanatha temples of Rajasimha; on the superstructure in the former two and on the body in the latter two. The Ganesa figure is a signature-icon of the Chalukyas and it required some lapse of time perhaps after Mamalla when the first impact of the political rivalry would have ceased and more gainful art-dispersal would have been taking place. Since Ganesa and Kubera are found in ritual form on the *prākāra* shrine-complex of Kailasanatha at Kanchi, in addition to the presence of *Saptamātṛkas*, it would be quite legitimate to infer that these were cultural elements for which the Pallavas might have been obliged to the traditions of the Chalukyan (Western as well as Eastern) country.

The way the *prākāra* outline of the larger Shore Temple is harmonised with a front *dvāra* on the *seaside*, in alignment with the larger temple facing east, shows that the *prākāra* itself is an index of the development of the temple-complex. That this *prākāra* does not cover the lesser Shore Temple facing west reinforces the argument that the latter is relatively earlier than *prākāra* and, indeed, than the larger temple too. The two Shore Temples are, in fact, not even aligned, the smaller shrine being more to the north of the east-west axis of the larger shrine, the superstructure of the sandwiched Ranganatha *maṇḍapa* having been properly aligned with the larger Shore Temple and thus suggesting its elaboration as a shrine at the stage of erection of the larger Shore Temple.

The most significant part of the Shore Temple-complex is the rock-cut Vishnu figure in reclining posture that is found between the two temples, erected here by Rajasimha. This rock-cut figure has so much dislocated the layout of the two structural shrines on either side of it, that it would be only appropriate to take it as having existed already. On the one hand, we do most clearly observe the phenomenon of the smaller Shore Temple (facing west) having been reared for its plinth partly on the rock containing the Vishnu figure, vouching for the Vishnu carving having already been there when the structural temple was reared over the rock mass at the back, and on the other, the east-facing larger Shore Temple has itself been completed in such a way that this Vishnu figure comes within its back *prākāra* and is actually provided with a decent cella and *mukhamāṇḍapa*, both rectangular with the inscriptional label "*narapatisimha Pallava Vishnu griham*" bestowed on it by Rajasimha. If the Vishnu figure was the handiwork of Rajasimha, the question arises as to why he selected such an inconvenient place for the carving, which makes the layout of his own structural temples look so improvised in both alignment and propinquity. The fact that the smaller Shore Temple was erected relatively earlier to the larger would not very much affect this argument. The nature of the Vishnu sculpture itself bears sufficient evidence to negative its later origin. It is a very unconventional figure of reclining Vishnu without *Ananta*, *Bhūdevī* or *Āyudhas*. Its orientation also, is north-south, with head to the south. It is thus more aptly designated as Narayana (he who has the waters for his abode) rather than *Anantaśāyī*. Any sculptor of Rajasimha who had seen already the sedate figure of *Anantasāyī* in Mahishamardīnī cave would not have carved such an aberrant, unconventional image. Even the plinth mouldings on this rock itself are of the earlier type in relation to the smaller Shore Temple near them, and this again reflects its relative anteriority to the Shore Temples. It is thus to be taken as having perhaps preceded even Mamalla, or at least pertaining to the earliest part of his reign. The fact that has already been there prevented Rājasimha, notwithstanding his intense Śaiva leanings, to do away with it and it perhaps served his purpose well if he gave this Vishnu figure a local habitation, in the *prākāra* of the larger Śiva temple, thus making Vishnu subordinate to Śiva. The texts like *Vaikhānasāgama* speak of an

Ābhichārika form of reclining Vishnu who is devoid of many of the conventional diagnostic features. The classification was apparently warranted by such aberrant or erratic early specimens of reclining Vishnu as the one found at Shore Temple.⁴ The hymns that the early *Ālvār* Bhutam sang about the god at Mamallai were perhaps not addressed to this god. This is particularly vindicated by Tirumangai's hymn which alone associates the Śiva shrine and the Vishnu shrine here in his imagery and thus Tirumangai obviously sang it after the Shore Temples, as we see them to day, had become accomplished facts. We have thus an interesting evidence for the iconography of an early Narayana or *Sthalaśayana* god (literally reclining on the ground or *jalaśayana* or resting over water level of the shore) which turns out to have been pre-Rajasimha and perhaps pre-Mamalla as well, since we cannot reconcile this example and the Anantaśāyi panel in the Mahishamardini (Yamapuri) Maṇḍapam as the handiwork of the same king's, namely, Mamalla's reign. It might be earlier to the other and perhaps of early Mamalla age. The credit, in any event, for having fostered this vestige for posterity is certainly Rajasimha's, who sandwiched it between his two lofty shrines here.

VI

Let us consider what the ground plan of many of these important edifices of Rajasimha have to reveal to us. The earlier smaller group is essentially the reproduction in a freestanding and structural medium of the monoliths except that the front *maṇḍapa* is without freestanding pillars. It is only Kailasanatha and Panamalai temples that are most educative in this regard and from the earlier pseudo-*sāndhāra* type, lead later to the *nirandhāra* shrine layout⁵ with *prākāra*, as in the form of the larger Shore Temple at Mamallapuram. Both Kailasanatha and Panamalai shrines have additional sub-shrines disposed of in the cardinal and diagonal points of the compass, the former containing seven such and the latter three such. Structurally the relatively later stage of Panamalai temple over that of Kailasanatha confirmed by the fact that the superstructural mode and the concept of the *śala śikhara*s with bold, deep *nāsikas*, are almost exact replicas of the *śikhara* form of Mahendravarman's Varagṛham at Kailasanatha shrine of Kanchi, pertaining to the time of Mahendravarman III, the crown prince of Rajasimha who perhaps predeceased his father, by a few years. Thus, they would be ascribable to the very last year of Rajasimha's reign. The disposition of the seven sub-shrines, in addition to the main cella at Kailasanatha is the structural elaboration of the layout plan of Arjuna Ratha where the *bhadra* and *karṇa* projection of the *vīṇyāsa sūtra* are well-marked out. These instead of having relief sculptures had been converted at Kailasanatha into regular subordinate shrines. Indeed, the projection of the point of these, in an example like Arjuna Ratha, complete from *adhishṭhana* to the *hāra* of *kūṇas* and *śālās*, is itself but an abbreviation and schematic presentation of the sub-

shrines that each of these projections really stand for. From seven sub-shrines to three, on the cardinal point alone, except the east, is next step and this gets ossified subsequently into a simpler shrine layout, wherein there is a mere projection of the plinth on the *bhadra* alone making it a weak *triratha* plan. The fact, however, that both at Kailasanatha and Panamalai, the sub-shrines are also facing either east or west and never north or south, shows that they merely form part of the structural scheme of dimensions of the pseudo-*sāndhāra vimāna*, having been laid in the wall thickness, and thus not liable to have a different layout affecting their length and breadth. This proves their closeness in evolutionary form. A similar interesting analogue between Panamalai temple and the larger Shore Temple at Mamallapuram is in the depiction of the *gaṇas* blowing horns shown in the corners of the *ālingapaṭṭi* above the *kapota* in both, and, indeed, in Olakkannēśvara Temple also. This feature is met within the *Chaumukh* of the Indrasabha rock-cut cave at Ellora datable to the 8th century A.D. and there, perhaps slightly later to Rajasimha's time.

A patently striking feature of the temple is the superstructure which are so unlike any of the other structural shrines of Rajasimha. The heights of the *talas* were conspicuously raised in accentuated relationship to the basal dimensions of each storey on plan, resulting in a very slender and tall elevational profile for the composition. If we compare Kailasanatha with the Shore Temple, despite the former being *chatustala* and the latter *tritala vimānas*, the former, because of its larger basal width and relatively lesser heighted upper *talas* is rather subdued in its skyline whereas the latter despite its restricted plan area is rising steeply to considerable height in same three *talas*.

In the matter of inner arrangement of the shrine, it is to be seen that there is considerable similarity between Shore Temple (larger) and Panamalai while the Shore Temple (smaller) is more akin to temples like Piravatana and Airavateśvara. Kailasanatha alone is pseudo-*sāndhāra*. But as seen already the pseudo-*sāndhāra* layout of Kailasanatha was born out of a structural necessity in order to provide a wider base wall for the superstructural load and thus it did not show any special trend in this direction. It was followed later by Vaikunthaperumal temple Kanchi for a grand *tritala*, triple shrine-complex, at Kailasanatha, Tiruppattur again for basal support, both latter in Nandivarman Pallavamalla's time. In all these cases, the *sāndhāra* feature is actually *not* intended for a regular inner *pradakṣiṇa* or *bhramāṇa*, as in the typical *sāndhāra* shrine in the Deccan and north India, and this non-ritual and functional character is well-brought out by the fact that the wall of the *ālinda* are not bestowed with any mouldings or niches. Thus they are not to be deemed of the *sāndhāra prāsāda* class. It is here that the textual specification⁶ that *Nāgara* shrines are generally *sāndhāra*, finds its substantiation.

An interesting fact about the structural effort of the master masons of Rajasimha is that almost invariably they show an assemblage of coursed masonry, even

to represent vertical components like pilaster and pillars. While it is true that this is one of the inevitable reflexes of an artisan steeped in the wood tradition, we are yet not left without any misconception about their glaring incompatibility with heavy stone-quarrying for heavy beams, plinth slabs, etc. Where it is only a cantilever principle, as in the case of a *devakoshtha* with a *kapota* of its own, well within the main cornice of the lowest *tala*, they are able to place a smaller *kapota* for the *devakoshtha* in one piece and let it sufficiently into the wall to be pressed by the top load. But where the question of *spanning* comes, the difficulties are more obvious and it was apparently this that forced them to adopt two of the early devices namely the pseudo-*sāndhāra* layout and the side shrines integrated with the wall. Both these have an essentially functional bearing upon the relationship of standing wall and superstructural load, wherein the unit had been relatively medium sized slabs and cut-stones assembled in courses. The *sāndhāra* layout, with its *kadalikakaraṇa* method particularly was mainly forced on them, as this feature of an inner circuit is not germane to the *Drāviḍa* styles of temple construction but rather of the *Nāgara*, as profusely employed in the Chalukya-*Nāgara* shrines of the Deccan. The *sthāpatīs* of Rajasimha soon got rid of it and wanted to show that they could erect fairly tall shrines even without the *sāndhāra* and sub-shrine layout. It is this which is perhaps reflected in the Shore Temple which, for its height, has a rather poor commensurate basal dimensions. It is a tussle between height and basal width in fact, wherein, the grading of the *tala*s or *taiaichchhanda* was accentuated by the *hāra* of the ground floor dispensed with, and the *ālinda* between the *hāra* and the wall of the next *tala* immediately behind it severely reduced, leading to the *arpita* class of superstructure, as different from the *anarpita hāra*, fully cut in the round, with a perambulatory passage on each *tala*. The experiment had apparently been particularly useful, as we find in the time of the later Pallava king Nandivarman for the erection of a *tritāla* three-shrine type of Vishnu temple, as in the Vaikunthaperumal temple, and similarly of Dantivarman in the Sundaravaradarāja temple at Uttaramerur which is also similar to Vaikunthaperumal in form.

VII

Another interesting feature that was reflected in Rajasimha's structural temples is the change in the raw material from granite to sandstone. Owing to the fact that granite quarrying had perhaps been found very taxing and no adequate craft knowledge to control the size required to any limit was yet available; the result was that while sandstone was freely used for the entire temple owing to its easily tractable nature, granite in small thin slabs and blocks was invariably introduced as interleavings in the *adhishṭhāna* mouldings, particularly as *upāna*, and as *paṭṭika* in order to reinforce the superincumbent load. This is very clearly

seen in many of the earlier temples and in Kailasanatha temple and even in the later Pallava shrines like Mukteśvara and Mātangeśvara. For the Mukundanyanar temple at Mamallapuram, however, a hard granitic gneiss was utilised and it had very satisfactorily withstood the ravages of time. The Panamalai temple is the only one where the entire plinth and body is almost employing granite slabs of reasonably good sizes, though not of thickness, and this is perhaps due to the good rocks of granite available nearby.

VIII

The buildings of Rajasimha, almost all of them, thus have a common characteristic in that the ground floor or the first *tala* has its *prastara* ending with the *kapota* and *ālingapaṭṭi* and the second *tala* standing on it immediately with no *hāra* of *kūṭas* and *śālās* on the first *tala* periphery, except on its extension in front of the *vimāna* proper, namely, the *mukhamanḍapa*. This *mukhamanḍapa* has the *hāra* of *kūṭas* and *śālās* on its top, which is sometimes slightly at a lower level than the corresponding level of the first *tala* top and also in some cases slightly lesser in the gross dimensions of the *kūṭas* and *śālās* than what obtains in the *talas* of the main *vimāna*. The slightly lowering of the *hāra* on the *mukhamanḍapa* is a feature which we have already noticed in the most of the monolithic examples of Mamalla and Parameśvaravarman as well. But the absence of the *hāra* on the first *tala* top is a rather *fresh* development. The continuity of the normal tradition of the *hāra* going all around the first *tala* including *mukhamanḍapa* is itself preserved in a few of Rājasimha's own shrines, as at Mukundanyanar at Mamallapuram and Kailasanatha at Kanchi. Thus we have some basis to hold that these two might have been relatively the earlier compositions of his. This is because, while the addition of some new elements may or may not be significant, the dropping of some important features on the other hand mark a definite phase in structural formulae. The effect of this new structural scheme of Rajasimha was that while the first and the third *tala*, were fairly tall, the second *tala* was rather an interleaving, although with its own *hāra* of *kūṭas* and *śālās*. Since Rajasimha's temples except Kailasanatha and Shore Temple (larger), where the shrines are *chatushthala* (four *tala*), are generally *tritāla* type, in these the first and last *talas* have no *hāra*, and the last *tala* in order to be more conspicuous along with the *grīva* and *śikhara* that further surmounts it has been made taller than the immediately lower one. In the case of Shore Temple (larger), we see that the second and third *tala* have been made almost of equal elevation and slightly lesser than that of the ground *tala*. This east-facing Shore Temple has also other differences from the west facing one, in its *not* having any *śālā* on the *mukhamanḍapa* of the main *vimāna* but only two *kūṭas* at either ends and two *nāśika-pañjaras* in the middle. Kailasanata, however, has a row of three *śālās*, the middle set a little for-

ward, and two *kūṭas* at the end, consistent with its layout containing sub-shrines in the middle and corners of each side on the first *tala*. Thus, again Kailasanatha would seem to be schematically an earlier composition than the Shore Temple.

The smallest temple of Rajasimha was Piravatana and next was perhaps Airavateśvara. The former does not have its *mukhamāṇḍapa* roof in original condition and thus we are not sure if it contained a *hāra* of *kūṭas* and *śālās*, but the strong presumption is in favour of its having had one, and this is particularly due to the fact that this is one of the very few shrines of Rajasimha which do not show any ritual or other corner figures on the topmost *tala*, such as *nandi* or conch-blowing *gaṇa*. It has thus every ground, alike on the nature of its *adhishṭhāna* and the composition of its superstructure, to be deemed as one among his earliest. It is certainly earlier to the *mileu* of diminutive shrines found arrayed around the *prākāra* of Kailasanatha, since despite their superficial similarity with the Piravataneśvara, it would be seen that the former do not have any *hāra* on either of their two *talas*. Indeed it is notable that even Mahendravarṃśavaram in front of Kailasanatha, which is an *āyatāśra* (rectangular) *dvīṭala vimāna* with a *śālā śikhara* on it, does not have any *hārā* on either of its two *talas*. In the light of this deliberate and consistent absence of the *hāras* of miniature *alpa vimānas* on the *tala* edges in the closing part of Rajasimha's reign, we may perhaps take Talagiriśvara temple at Panamalai as rather closely succeeding Kailasanatha, and perhaps preceding the *prākāra*-complex at the latter (including Mahēndravarmēśvaram), as also the Shore Temple. That Olakkaneśvara is the latest in the series, whose superstructure is unfortunately lost to us, would seem to be without doubt.

IX

The *prākāra* of the Shore Temple is certainly based upon the *prākāra* of the Kailasanatha on one side and Vaikunthaperumal on the other, although it was showing only a continuous row of *śālās* on the *prastara* of its *prākāra* wall. The fact that Panamalai temple was not provided with a *prākāra* wall would readily show its having been built at a stage when the *prākāra* wall was not the vogue. Thus the series would seem to have started with Mukundanayanar, Piravatana, and Airavateśvara, and followed by Kailasanatha during, whose period of construction rose perhaps Iravatana, and Tripuranataka. This was closely succeeded by the *prākāra*-complex and Mahēndravarmēśvaram at Kanchi, Talagiriśvara shrine at Panamalai, the Shore Temples, and later Olakkaneśvara shrine at Mamallapuram. Owing to the fact that these three places are widely apart from one another and, in each case, there was need to utilise the local raw material and even slightly variant local guild mannerisms, they resulted in three mildly divergent forms of layout plan and superstructure, profile and dimensions. The extension of the

prākara-complex at Kailasanatha inevitably carried the sandstone-granite judicious combination for the superstructure. The Panamalai effort was much alike except that granite of very good quality was locally available and thus there was a spurt of technological evolution there resulting in a more consistently granite using plinth unit. The Shore Temples, on the other hand, were wedded to the local granite which had fully been exploited in the earlier rock-cut and monolithic stages, and thus while following the use of harder-granite for the *adhishṭhana*, it copiously used gneiss for the superstructure, cutting sculptures and figure work also, on it. It is significant to note that for the Somaskanda panel they invariably used a better stone.

X

The evolution of style as exemplified in Rajasimha's structural temples was so organic and at the sametime selective, that arguing for his authorship of the entire series of monolithic models at Mamallapuram would be retrograde in conception, a charge that could hardly be placed at the doors of Rajasimha. When it is seen that even Parameśvaravarman made some indifferent and feeble effort to erect a structural stone temple, as perhaps signified by the ruined apsidal shrine at Kuram and Kalambakkam, the utter futility of thinking of Rajasimha undertaking all the monoliths at Mamallapuram would be patent, even if he were to have the time enough time for achieving what took both of Mamalla and Parameśvara, well nigh six decades.

It is further important to note that of all the Pallava kings, it was Mamalla alone who had taken his army not only into the Chalukyan capital Badami, but even garrisoned it for nearly twelve years. It would be most reasonable to surmise that these 12 years of Mamalla were the most rewarding ones for him and enabled him to plan out his monolithic compositions at Mamallapuram, apart from the *maṇḍapa* types for which he has already inherited the tradition from his illustrious father. It would be legitimate to infer that much of what characterises the manual of architecture at Mamallapuram had been based upon the early structural temples at Badami and Mahakuteśvara seen perhaps by Mamalla personally and certainly by his artisans, resulting in the importing of the architectural norms and idioms and components. Rajasimha's phase saw no war and thus there is hardly any evidence to hold that he made extensive outer contacts. He nurtured essentially what was bequeathed to him by Mamalla and Parameśvara, not to mention the all too brief and almost uneventful interlude of Mahendravarman II. Rajasimha certainly gave further impetus to the structural erections and the architectural formulae, and his period particularly formed the threshold, as it were, of the *āgamic* phase, when ritual needs were increasingly becoming apparent in a temple, thus multiplying the sculptural themes and disciplining the focal point

of the temple, namely, the sanctum sanctorum to the high purpose of the temple erection, and systematising the divinities under worship in a manner that gave place later to a gradual polarisation of the main sects of Brahmanical or Pauranic Hinduism. Decentralisation of the Trinity concept had set in during his time and promised much varied ritual and architectural fare in its further evolution.

The fact that Rajasimha did not mean to waste his time unduly in the rock-cut enterprise is shown by what little he himself excavated, as at Śāluvankuppam. It is important to observe in the case of these two that they were both unconventional, atypical specimens of rock-cut *maṇḍapa* types, and were not intended to follow the main line of evolution in both the cases, but rather as an aberrant effort to pander to his own versatility. It has to be conceded, however, that they furnish evidence of his leanings. The Atiraṇaṇḍamaṇḍapa has only simple facade pillars of the older type, with square lower and upper blocks and octagonal middle section. The entablatures above the cornice are of a highly abridged and perfunctory character, and even the total depth of the cave excavation from the facade pillar inwards is not more than 12 feet (3.6 m). The same is the case with the Tiger Cave which is even shallower than the Atiraṇaṇḍamaṇḍapa. The triple Somaskanda panel, on the cella as well as the *ardhamāṇḍapa* walls, alone are novel, as also the eulogistic inscription in double script. This would suggest that the cave was excavated more as a casual whim of the king and was not expected to be lavishly embellished by the sculptural themes of the day, but was only to be the carrier of his glory engraved there, and the over-dose of Śaivism that he had displayed there was to be the herald of his more purposeful and more extravagant structural achievements that followed. Thus even judged by this norm, the more elaborate monolithic *Rathas* of Mamallapuram could not be fathered on him.

XI

These discussions thus particularly show that almost all of the rock-cut and monolithic creations at Mamallapuram would pertain to pre-Rajasimha period, and any theory that would confer upon Rajasimha the authorship of the totality of rock-cut and monolithic creations at Mamallapuram would be fraught with serious discrepancies and would not commend itself for any organic evolutionary scrutiny of its claims. Rajasimha's structural temples are themselves considerable to have kept him fairly fully engaged, after an initial and passing rock-cut phase at and around Mamallapuram; and his temples show an idiom and evolutionary character that are at variance with the style, content and degree of interior concept and iconographic differentiae of the rock-cut *maṇḍapas* and monoliths of Mamalla's and Parameśvaravarman's time.

Even Rajasimha's dabbling at Śāluvankuppam and, if at all, in one of the monoliths, namely Piḍāri Ratha (north) were steps in the retrograde direction and

he apparently did well to retrace his steps on the onward path, well in time, and provided us with a rich heritage of early structural temples which, by their very diversification, indicate a formative period, indeed the crossroads of the early south Indian architecture and of ritual *āgamic* manuals.

REFERENCES

1. The Piḍāri Ratha (south) which is a *Drāviḍa vimāna* with octagonal *grīva* and *śikhara* and with *hāra* on the top *tala* as well is clearly earlier, perhaps of the time of Paramesvara and was succeeded by Valayankuttai Ratha which, though showing a change in its square *grīva* and *śikhara*, for the first time, still continues to have the *hāra* on the top *tala*. These two thus stylistically antedate Rajasimha's time.
2. If the portrait sculptures in this cave represent Simhavishnu and Mahendra—as is most feasible—then we may take it that the facade of this cave alone had been completed last. We note further that Paramesvaravarman I was an ardent devotee of Śiva while Mamalla did not have any specific bias of this kind. In that case, the cave would have been the work in Mamalla's time.
3. Even the Pandyan rock-cut shrines as at Tirumayyam and Kunnakkudi show Lingodhbb have in such a way that they follow a systematised *āgamic* mandate.
4. It is interesting to note here that *Vaikhānasa* dealing with the four types of seated, standing and reclining forms of Vishnu has to state that *Ābhichārika* type of any of these three forms is intended for kings overcoming enemies (*Rajñām śatru jayārthicha Ābhichārikam*). It further states that the location of this *ābhichārika* type will be forest fort, water fort, in another's kingdom, in the enemy's direction, etc. (*Vana-giri-jala durgā rashtrantarē śatrudikshu dinnukhā cha ābhichārika sthānam*). As regards the characteristics, the form would be classifiable as the *adhama* class of *ābhichārika* (*sarpadeham vinā samasthala śayanamadhamam*). Since there was comparative peace in Rajasimha's time, and considerable bad blood was created, on the other hand between Pallavas and Chalukyas during Mahendra's and Mamalla's time, this figure, if the purpose was as mentioned in the texts for such a class, should be pre-Rajasimha.
5. The techniques is of the *antara* (inner) and *bāhya* (outer) *bhitti* (wall) to carry the heavy superstructural load, as mentioned in the *Voikhānasāgama*.
6. *Kāmikāgama*, LXV, 12-13.

MAIN TRENDS IN THE HOYSALA TEMPLE STYLE

It would perhaps be well nigh incontrovertible if it is declared that in the vast and varied realms of medieval temple architectural exposition, one style has carved a special niche of its own, so implicitly, so spell-bindingly and so unforgettably as the masterpieces of the Hoysala temple craftsmen (11th to the 14th century A.D.) in the southern Mysore zone. Ravishing charm, such as is the Rajarani temple of Bhubaneswar (Orissa) is not uncommon; virility and vigour such as the shrines of Khajuraho are not unknown; grandeur such as the Kailasa of Ellora, or the Great Temple of Thanjavur is not unfamiliar. But what holds us closely involved with the Hoysala experimentations is more than its artistry, its studied exercise in a beguiling architectural symphony, blended with conformity to the *vimāna* composition and the coherence of the *Rekha-Nāgara Prāsāda*. Alike in the realm of religion—where they achieved a becoming dignity by equal patronage to Jainism and Hinduism—as in the province of temple-building and its ancillary arts, the Hoysalas showed a convincing potentiality for formal coalescence. The aesthetic movement espoused by the Hoysalas signified more a synthesis than an empirical union of traditions, leading them even towards, unconventional excursions beyond the confines of canonical stipulations. In the sequel, they remained an iridescent but affected phenomenon in the annals of hieratic Hindu architecture, neither claiming a cogent parentage nor bequeathing any enduring progeny. It was the rise of the Vijayanagara empire that practically ended its spell, both, aesthetically and politically, and we do not discern any recrudescence of its art-*metier* after the 14th century A.D.

What then, is the range of the Hoysala architectural spectrum that should have made it truly great despite its ostensible unconventionality and admittedly vivacious, despite its cloying exuberance—a long-lost but yet lingering aroma of artistic candour? The times, the zone, the medium and the mettle had gone into the composition of the unique bequest that is Hoysala art.

THE TIMES

When the Hoysala dynasty spurted on the political horizon, it was heir to the pedigree of Chola-Pandya splendour, across the Kaveri on the south, the Nolamba-Ganga array of art virtuosity to the west and south and Kadamba-Alupa exercises in structural manipulation and sculptural garnishing, and was a witness to the Kalyani Chalukya-Yadava plenitude of pompous hybridization. It could have followed any one of these, and become an anticipated successor-style to one of these regional schools. But it chose to tread the path of bold innovation combined with a cleverly smothered conventionality, of an avowed display of axial and elevational overtones while yet not daring, nor caring to expand its physical frame into anything more than medium sized model; of scintillating intricacy of surface ornamentation and absence of any claim to originality in elevational or interior structural profile. In short, it was as much its prodigality as its arrestingly new trend in the temple style that characterised its efforts. That it should have managed at all to persist in its spider-web sophistication, and continue its well-concealed architectural conformism for nearly two centuries, would certainly make it eligible for the highest praise and plaudits.

THE ZONE

It is very clear that the heart of Hoysala empire lay in the upper Kaveri, and the Hagari valley, and well-quarantined between the 14th and the 12th parallels, following a north-west—south-east strike of hillocks of the Mysore upland and its inner plains. Thus its architectural heredity was well-integrated with the archetypal southern *vimāna* order. The immediate mentors of its art-reflexes were, to a very large extent, the Western Gangas, on the one hand, and Kalyani-Chalukyas on the other. Both these had themselves an honourable ancestry in structural art; both had the necessary range of architectural components that were amenable to simulation or emulation; both had an *āmbidextrous* propensity of displaying puritan plainness as well as profuse surface-decor, and both had a marked expertise in soft as well as hard stone craftsmanship. It is these two that had largely impacted on the outlook and elan of the Hoysala craft-repertory, when this dynasty was on the threshold of political supremacy in the south Mysore region at the close of the 11th century A.D. The enthusiastic local guilds were loath to copy the solid and sublime stateliness of the Chola models on the south bank of upper Kaveri valley, nor the demur daintiness of the Nolamba *milieu*—neighbours around their own mainland zone. It could be proved that the Hoysala style generously partook of the Deccani idioms from the Kalyani Chalukyas and the peninsular phraseology of the Ganga enterprises. But that it added to these and subtracted from these were its own special impulses, uninhibited and yet disciplined, extravagant and yet regimented. The southern *vimāna* order was closely hugged to their heart by the Hoysala *sthapatis* in all their

experimentations; thus proving that regional moorings are inalienable.

THE MEDIUM

The Hoysala style, again, was very much the product of the raw material medium it chose. The stone was a light greenish talc-schist or chloritic schist, which could be adequately dealt with by sensitive chisel work and carpenters' implements. The preparation of embellishments was generally in three stages, firstly the bold dummy relieve outline of proposed carving, next the roughly 'picked' details of physiognomy, body and ornamentation, shaped out of this dummy, and finally the careful finish with sharp outlines, fully cut-out ornamentation, and perfectly imparted polish. It should have been a basically familiar process for the artisans to put this through, considering the eagerness and constancy of ornamentation noted in all Hoysala temples which for them, was not seemingly a task to be merely performed, but an ideal to be consummated, and that ideal was an aesthetic maturity—as vivified by the supple blend of flesh and bone in Hoysala figure sculpture, and the arresting perspective of the three dimensional values of the models, apparel, and jewellery, and the liveliness of the entire temple exterior plane, where placidity is absent. We might as well concede that an exacting task in glyptic art was accomplished with notable success and the carvings verily hang about the temple walls and quoins like ethereal disembodied fairy visions of the panorama and the traditions of the Hoysala hey day.

They were, withal, the captives of time and (cultural) tide, which wait for no man, and in their very feverish vigour, aesthetic surfeit and ornamentational extravaganza, form mute witnesses to the trend of stylization that had overpowered them convincingly, though, may be, with some suavity. The Hoysala art is, by and large, an integral part of medieval mannerism, and its reflexes were not designed to recapture elemental power, say, of the Rashtrakuta or early Chola art-*metier*, the spirit of its architecture and art was more earth-bound than transcendental, more hide-bound than original; its modelling aimed at a sensualism and a theatrical stance rather than an inner, soulful sublimation of life. Its products, thus, when the machinery of technical confidence was set in motion, were custom-made, impeccable proto-types of a single evocatory anatomical rhythm, without differentiation. Variety and richness were there, but not diversity and depth. Did the categorical shift in the king's patronage from Jain to Hindu art vista and ideal, almost overnight—that was the predominant event of its formative years—have something to do with this art metamorphism? One wonders. Their own Jain temples before and after Vishnuvardhana's historic conversion, which did not affect the queen Santala Devi's own eclecticism, continued to reflect an austere simplicity and architectural clarity.

The Hoysala temples, however, were not all of this soft, building or sculpting medium. Well in tune with the extant specimens of the southern *vimāna* tradition

in its southern and eastern periphery it also built occasionally in granite. Obviously, such efforts were through guest-artisans, or by the local craftsman who had sufficient familiarity with the granite workmanship of the Kaveri valley zone of Mysore, under the Cholas or the Gangas. Such rare and exceptional examples in the harder rock-material, as seen at Talkad, Hedatale, etc., prove only the rule, and were clearly not hearty or sustained, nor part of its basic commitments.

We have tried to place the physical dimensions of the Hoysala architectural *denouement* in its own true environment, in the earlier pages. One should not, however, run away with the notion that the Hoysala architecture could be so summarily dealt with. Indeed, one of the greatest virtues of this regional school of architecture was its zest and its deliberate attempts at cross-fertilization of the contemporary ideas, norms and art-motifs. It presented also the urge to initiate a model optically different from that known either in the southernmost Mysore area under the Gangas, or the northern Deccani tradition of the Kalyani Chalukyas. The Hoysala school, thus, fully in keeping its enterprising penchant for innovation, while basically drawing from these schools around, simultaneously set in motion, three or four novel trends in temple-design.

It thus, plumped for the *jagati* terrace as the basal setting of the temple, quite unlike the true southern *vimāna* usage. In this, it was primarily following the optional usage of this element in the Kalyani Chalukyas, and the almost consistent usage in the Yadava, Kakatiya territories. Its purpose, however, was clearly rational and not traditional in this regard, since such *jagati* terrace would have been quite essential for highlighting the stellate ground plan and elevation of the main *vimāna* that was its chief claim to individuality in temple art.

This stellate plan was admittedly the most original and unconventional trend ever introduced in Indian temple architecture. The stellate plan did not have any gradually developing earlier stages and was clearly a sudden blossoming of an idea representing vigour, diffusion and cultural flavour. It was clearly based upon a gyrating core-structure, orienting itself, during its gyrations, successively towards all the points of the compass. It had a still underlying purpose of simulating the northern *rekha-prāsāda*, while still retaining the southern model. Thus, the vertical ribbings run right up from plinth to the *grīva* almost uninterruptedly, creating an illusion of a partially closed royal umbrella. This did have a symbolism of its own of the centripetal focus of the temple organism. The horizontal stratification running like a warp across this convergent vertical rhythm, was mere abstraction of the southern *vimāna* storeyed division. It is of interest to note here that the Kalyani Chalukya style of architecture, in its southern category, had already established an archetype, wherein the *talas* get somewhat stunted or compressed, the individual element of the *hāra* stylised, and their horizontal lines emphasised, and the *grīva* and *śikhara*, undistinguishably merged with the total mass of the

tower design. The wall portion also was abbreviated into the *tala* and *upari jangha* division of the northern style, heightened also by the expansive *chāḍya* cornice—again a northern feature. With such a head start already given by the Kalyani Chalukyan guilds, and with a deliberate intention of fostering a model different either from the basic southern proto-types of the Gangavadi and Chola-mandala, it is indeed speaking high of the originality of the Hoysala guilds for having been still in a position to introduce innovations to erect a model, whose main idioms in drapery were as follows :

(1) The superposing of the well-known northern device of *vyāla-thāra*, *gaja-thāra*, *aśva-thāra*, *nara-thāra*, etc., of the plinth, against the truly southern or Deccani southern plinth, *milieu* of *padma*, *karṇika*, *kapota*, and *vedī*, resulting in a complete camouflaging of the inner integrity of the plinth mouldings by a series of bonds of equal height, and set vertically into an edge-to-edge fitting, virtually giving an impression of a filigree outer encasement.

(2) A stellate plan which goes away with cardinal points, as well as *karna* or *bhadra*, and gives greater wall space for figure sculpture. In the early examples, this stellate main temple mould was not reflected in the *jagati* terrace below, nor so meticulously consummated on the *jangha* itself—keeping a fair balance of the carvings and architectural wall elements and motifs. *Jagati* itself was dispensed with in some of the later examples, as at Mosale, where an elevational setting for the temple was otherwise available.

(3) The element of *sukanāsa* being made ubiquitous for all Hoysala temple.

(4) Side *proches* for the *navaranga*.

(5) *Vitana* diversification of the interior ceiling with all the accomplished dexterity already imbibed from the Deccan.

(6) Avoiding any obligatory *prākāra-bandha* for the temple, nor indeed any *parivāra* or ancillary shrines, and in the sequel, not overcaring for a regular *gopura-dvāra* entrance for the complex. Such a *gopuradvāra* is primarily a post-Hoysala introduction, wherever we find them now.

(7) The stylization of the miniature *vimāna* motif on the niches shrines on the *jagati*, *jangha*, etc., into a deliberately hybridised model, a *via media* between a northern and southern temple tower forms. In an equally conscious basic conformity with the southern *vimāna* order, it kept all temple towers—main or miniature—storeyed, and capped by a *śikhara* and kept its roof from *sukanāsa* to *mukhamanḍapa* flat.

(8) It eschewed the use of either stucco or painting in its art composition, in glaring contrast to the southern established practice, but maintained *dvārapāla* figures on the *ardhamanḍapa* door-flanks.

The most realistic factor in the Hoysala style dissemination was obviously the circumscribed zone of its provenance. This hardly ever crossed the Tungabhadra and was indeed appreciably to the south of it. It did not transgress into

the Kadamba territory on the Sahyadri upland (like the present day Shimoga District) or the coastal tract, nor too flagrantly into the Nolamba zone in Kolar, Bangalore, Chitradurga and Tumkur districts of today. It clearly respected the Kaveri as the southern cultural border. In effect, it was confined to Mysore, Mandya and Hassan districts, and it is needless to say that this was the home-zone of the Hoysalas, and at once involved the hill-and-valley basin. The Hoysala patronage was, at the same time, culturally ambidextrous; since a non-Hoysala and truly southern *milieu* was also simultaneously, coevally, and coexistingly set in motion in this very territory—some of the outstanding examples of which are at Srirangapatna, Melkote, Tonnur, Gandlupet, etc.

The Hoysala style was thus a resplendent case-in-point for the motivating factors which underlay regional temple architectural schools in India, namely sustained political supremacy, a religious revival, and local cultural regeneration and a penchant for synthesis.

In creating a trend, the local guilds whose celebrated artisans like Malli Tamma, etc., had left their names engraved on many temples they devotedly fostered, were clearly working down the alley-of-no-return in architectural styling. The natural counter action to this was the restoration of the main line devolutions in the southern *vimāna* style, in the subsequent Vijayanagara era, with a sharpness, freshness and promise, into a dedicated commitment to, and elaborate annotation of the southern *vimāna* personality, vertically and axially.

THE POLYMORPHISM OF THE HOYSALA PARENT-MODEL

Within the somewhat conspicuously extravagant uniformity of their basic modulations, the Hoysala guilds did vary the phraseology and the layout mode, resulting in a considerable range of differentiation of which about eight variants appear to be discernible. They are primarily typological or morphological, though a broad chronological progression also could be argued out. These types are :

(a) Single cella and tower with *ardhamandapa* and *navaranga* alone.

Single tower with three niches on the outer wall and two more in *navaranga* (Maddur—A.D. 1150). There are some without even the *navaranga*, but there were perhaps degeneration of the main type rather than variants (Madapura, Hemmargala, Aggunda, etc.)

(b) Single or double-cella with towers with *navaranga* and temple porch (Belur, A.D. 1117., Talakad, A.D. 1117 and Tenginaghatta).

(c) Triple-cella, but with only one tower and *ardhamandapa* only for the main cella (Hosaholalu, A.D. 1120 and Nagamangala, A.D. 1135).

(d) Single, double, triple or quadruple towers with *ardhamandapa*, *navaranga*, and a *mukhamandapa* (Koravangala, A.D. 1173, Doddagaddavalli, A.D. 1113, and Basrhal.)

(e) Double (in a row or at right angles), of five shrine cells with *ardha-*

maṇḍapa (for each), common *navaranga* and a *mukhamaṇḍapa* combined with *Nandi* *maṇḍapa* side entrances (Halebid, A.D. 1145, and Govindanahalli, A.D. 1150).

(g) Single- or triple-shrines with all axial elements plus separate *śringara chori maṇḍapa*. (Hedatole, Amirtapura, Arsikere, Suttur, etc., 13th century A.D.).

(h) Single- or triple-shrines with the full axial unit complete for the chief cella, and the sub-shrines added thereafter, with *mukhamaṇḍapa* and outer *śringara chori maṇḍapa* (Belavadi, 13th century A.D.)

TWO UNUSUAL TEMPLE MODELS IN MYSORE AREA

The Kannada-speaking region can boast of the most vigorous, varied and rich heritage in the realms of architectural and sculptural art. The Kadambas and the Nolambas, the Gangas and the Chalukyas, the Rattas and the Hoysalas, the Vijayanagara and the Nayaka rulers had all fostered these arts with their discerning patronage. It is, therefore, generally feasible to follow the evolution of structural architecture from phase to phase in any part of this region, even when local mannerisms have become important elements. The Kannada-speaking region itself, at the sametime, had been unofficially and traditionally divided into two zones, of the Karnataka and the Mysore respectively, with the appropriate cultural, linguistic and art undertones. The basic unity was certainly not vitiated, but distinctively enriched. It is to be noted that the Karnataka zone had the adventurous context for imbibing the cultural impacts from (Late) Gujarat, Central India, Malwa, Deccan (*Dakshināpatha*), as well as vital ingredients of the southern India, thereby staking its claims for having been the cradle of new experimentations in structural styles from the 6th century A.D. onwards. The Mysore area, was nonetheless dynamic in its architectural expression, but its modulations, owing to its somewhat insular set up, were liable to represent modifications of a single major style, namely, the southern *vimāna* order, and whenever strikingly new variations were articulated, these were mostly intelligent and imaginative hybridisation of elements seeping into its cultural matrix from the northern Karnataka and Deccan tracts. The early medieval period had particularly been noted for its bold innovations and structural modulations, which while yet seeming to be novel, do not do violence to the architectural order to which the region and the age pertain. It was this period that gave the marvellous exposition of the hybridisation of the said southern *vimāna* order and the pulsating Deccan (Later Chalukyan) structural layout, especially the bold emphasis of the vertical corrugations, from the plinth upwards, and the

suffused persistence of the horizontal division of the superstructure especially, consistent with its southern architectural moorings. This Hoysala exposition almost worked itself out by a prodigious turn-out of temple models, almost of custom-made uniformity and indigenous surface ornamentation stylised to meet the requirements of the special layout and elevational scheme. We thus do not have any new vogue of structural display after the end of the Hoysala period, registering a new impetus or rejuvenation. This comparatively stagnant phase, which was to be re-enthused by the early Vijayanagara craftsmanship, indulged in a few aberrant experimentations to revivify the architectural scene, before it fell into even strides after a while, to produce massive and dignified structural models of great virtuosity and elevational clarity, marking as it were a sharp break with the Hoysala exuberance and shimmering surface intricacy. The two (perhaps some more might be there as yet unrecognised) models which filled the vacuum between the Hoysala highnoon and the Vijayanagara resurgence, are the Vidyasankara temple at Sringeri and the Sadasiva temple at Nuggehalli. They are, even mutually, sharply different and in their setting also varied; the former nestling among the sylvan altitudes of the watershed, while the latter is on the low plains of the eastern part of Hassan district. It is to be observed that both these examples are not faltering expressions, but assured and confident manipulations of the architectural components. They are, even in their gross size, larger than any average Hoysala temple gone by. What distinguishes them from the erstwhile traditions is liable to go unnoticed due to what common features exist between them and their *quondam* archetypes. Firstly, the *jagati* terrace below the plinth continues and is itself of no mean merit. Secondly, the elevation is still a blurred compendium, as indeed even the Hoysala tower was, in relation to its body and base. Thirdly, its longitudinal axis showing the full compliment of the *navaranga* and *mukhamandapa* does not have any cloistered *prākāra* wall closing around. With these features of the past, they involed some strikingly new components and idioms, which even, in the medieval set up, was liable to be treated as novel, if not positively outlandish.

It is extremely interesting that in these two examples preserved for us, we have two broadly varying types of approach. The Vidyasankara temple aims at a continuity of the Hoysala tower arrangement by the emphasis of the horizontal divisions of the tower and the vertical divisions of the story. The aim is not a deliberate exercise but only a make-believe, since the elevational inspiration is seemingly form an entirely different quarter. The Nuggehalli Śiva temple on the other hand, also wants to perpetuate the pre-occupation of the Hoysala master builders with the stellate plan, but wants to graft a seemingly innocuous but an admittedly atypical tower format to it, and gets away with it, owing to the *śikhara* or capping element producing a general feeling of unity with the prevailing tradition of the south. In the sequel they form a conscientious subversion of the extant temple proto-type, along its horizontal and vertical coordinates, harmoni-

sing foreign mannerisms and components into a scheme, and producing two excellent, if somewhat piquant architectural creations. We might now describe the two structures individually in their architectural format, before staking comments upon the sources of their inspirations, but it might not be too rash to indicate that these had seemingly come for the *Bhūmija* model of the Upper Deccan and Central India, and the Kadamba-*Nāgara* model of the coastal Karnataka.

The Vidyasankara temple is, it should be marked at the outset, a creation in the granite medium. The Hoysalas generally preferred softer stones, but Vijayanagara composition always revelled in massive granite blocks—the evidence of which is all too impressive at Hampi. The temple at Sringeri is an excellent example in the stone-cutter's art, since the desire was to divide the layout into a *saptaratha* type, and in that process an almost circular outline is imparted to the structure on the front and on the rear, resulting in an elliptical form divided by a central cross corridor. While the western part contains a *sāndhāra garbha* itself divided into *saptaratha* in its main part and a linear projection on the frontal (eastern) side comprising a massive *ardhamandapa* and a slightly widening *mahāmāṇḍapa*, although in both cases, they are divided into a central nave and two side sub-shrine chambers, one on each side. The main *garbha* also has on its cardinal niches sub-shrines, corresponding to the door openings on the *bāhya bhitti* (outer wall), in addition to three more on the cardinal points of the front half of the temple structural which, though externally in *saptaratha* plan, is internally replacing the *antara bhitti* of the *garbha* half of the temple by a series of 12 pillars in a *navaranga* scheme with the central *ankaṇa* showing an elaborate circular lotus medallion with pecking parrots on its rims. The twelve pillars again carry the twelve zodiacal signs, and thus the entire front half of the temple representing the *mahā* or *rangamāṇḍapa*, would stand for solar immanence. The *garbha* part is divided into five shrine-chambers, including the main central one carrying a *linga*, going by the name Vidyasankara, the remaining showing Brahma with Sarasvati on the south, Vishnu as Lakshmi-Narayana on the west, and Umamahasvara on the north, all seated figures, Ganapati on the southern of the two front sub-shrines, and Durga on the northern sub-shrines, all taken as indicating the six fold cults in Hinduism prevalent at the time of Adi Sankara, a harmony among which he strove for, thereby acquiring the appellation *śaṣṭatācharya*. If so, we seem to be missing Subrahmanya or Kartikeya in this. Besides the uniqueness lies in showing the Trinity with their consorts, especially Brahma with Sarasvati which is rather rare. The positioning of Ganesa and Durga on the south and north of *ardhamāṇḍapa* need not call for any answer, as this is absolutely in conformity with the *āgamic* injunctions. Thus, what is appearing to be square lay out, is by the multiplication of the *ratha* offsets is turned into a diagonally placed cella and further by the fact that the offsets are all of equal divisions except the *bhadrās*, has almost become a semi-circular or apsidal sweep of plan, a feature which is all

the more emphasised by the abrupt ending of the cella on the front side in a *triratha* stretch alone, whereafter the *ardhamandapa* represents a straight line broken only by the projection of the balustraded flight of steps, and with the *mahāmandapa* the exact reproduction of the *garbha* and the *ardhamandapa*—in its apsidal spread and with three entrances into it, as is indeed found in the main *vimāna* part as well. In fact, it is also manifest that the necessity for introducing the *saptaratha sūryamaṇḍala* within the circumscribing a *dvādasa rāsi* (zodiac) formation in the *rangamandapa*, has been as fundamental to the architectural symbolism of the temple conservation as was the vertical fretwork which tended to convert what was to have been a plain wall part into a scintillating chiaroscuro of light and shade and, in the bargain, could also berth more divinities that would otherwise have been possible. The analogues for such a device do obtain in the Kakatiya architecture, and the introduction of an attic or a clerestory rise above the *talachāḍya* or main cornice over which rests the upper cornice or the *uparichāḍya* is to be seen especially in the Kalinga and Eastern Ganga territories on the east coast. The Kakatiya device of introducing a wide set projecting door cornice is seen on all the six door openings. The Hoysala devices have thus been almost completely disowned and a new perspective and archetectonics have been attempted in the introduction of the *sukanāsa* over the *ardhamandapa* and showing its elevational rise as integrated with that of the second *tala pāda* and *prastara*, and its crest or *mukhapatti* with *sakti-dhvoja* corresponding to the *pāda* of the third *tala*. The full employment of the non-southern matrix, but a clear transmutation of the prevalent Hoysala norm into something which is a profound were restatement of the Kadamba-*Nāgara* of coastal area form or the *piḍha deul* type of the *jagmohanas* of the Kalinga or the Eastern Ganga temples (as in the Bhimesvara temple of Mukhalingam) and in the sequel tending to rias the stature of the temple which under Hoysala aegis tended to get somewhat stunted and compressed into something which is lofty and empirical, would certainly speak volumes of the prevalent mood of the embryonic early Vijayanagara artisans striving to evolve a style of their own. While they had certainly been only partially successful in adumbrating any new vogue through such an effort, they had clearly aligned themselves in favour of certain features of the temple architecture. They want the *sukanāsa*—a device which the Vijayanagara style almost constantly used in the Kannada country and even outside in the South.

It may be stated that the Vijayanagara mannerism unmistakably opted for a dichotomy wherein the superstructural tower was either of the southern *vimāna* type with the *sukanāsa*, or the *piḍha deul* or Kadamb-*nāgara* type without the *sukanāsa*, and used the latter profusely even in secular architecture, as could be seen as widely separated areas forming a summation of the best known among the early medieval mannerisms in the Karnataka-Deccan and the eastern coast. But one should not easily forget that the place is located or almost poised on the *ghats*, and thus it would have been natural for the superstructural style to be conditioned by the

design repertoire of the heavy monsoon Konkana-Kanara littoral. And in the ultimate analysis, it is the superstructure that becomes the index and the touch-stone, as it were, of any architectural reorientation or innovation, and one could safely aver that the Sringeri *vimāna* tower has been quite consistent with a style that had been constantly and persistently mentioned in the monsoon area of Kadamba and Chalukya Maṇḍala hugging the ghats. This idiom does away with the formal or progenitor elements of the entablature of a southern *vimāna* type, by eschewing alike the *vyālavari*, *vedi*, *grīva* and the *hāra* by simply patternising these moulded courses into a rising series of horizontal and vertical steps. It had also kept a high degree of visual perspective in view and thus had reduced the entablature moulding successively reduced in odd numbers in the three upper *talas*, as 7, 5, and 3, before the *grihapīṇḍī* moulding is reached, upon which are squatting on the corners the nandi mount of Śiva. The ribings are continued, however, even on the quadrantal splay of the *sikhara*, its sequattish bulbous upper part, but while the *bhadrās* on the four cardinal directions show the vertical festoon-like rise of their faces hugging the *sikhara* in a schematic *nāsika*, *mukha paṭṭi* type, capped by a *simha lalāṭa*, supporting a *pūrṇaghaṭa*, (the feature being a stylization of the later Chalukyan as at Gadag or Lakkundi) the nandis themselves are only in the diagonal corners or *vidiks*. The southern *vimāna* format in the *sikhara*, the Kadamba-nāgara or *piḍha deul* or *phansanakara* format for the entablatures are found in places as the Lotus Mahal in the Zenana Enclosure at Hampi and the Kalyana Mahal in the lower fort of Rajagiri at Gingee. It is indeed, therefore, not too unorthodox for the architects of the Vidyasankara temple at Sringeri erected in 1338 (Śaka 1260), barely two years after the establishment of the Vijayanagara kingdom at Hampi, to adhere to the indigenous concept of the superstructural scheme and in the very technical drainage pattern of the slopy roof with its ridge and channel stones for easy discharge of the heavy monsoon storm water. The absence of a regular astylar corbel vaulting for the shell of the *sikhara*, but replaced by a bold system of pillars and cross lintels rising like a wooden scaffolding is not after either the truly southern form where it is in masonry reductions square into circle by cross struts or the typical Kalinga form where it is a truly astylar corbelling. Such interior supporting schemes with rough dressed skeletal frame inside but fully dressed and finished veneer outside, obtained in certain parts of southern Rajasthan and Central Indian territories. This feature certainly did not continue in the later Vijayanagara times when a near synthesis of its elevational and layout schemes with in the southern *vimāna* order was achieved.

Reverting, in passing, to the *saptāṅga* outer plinth (standing for the seven wheeled 7-horse chariot of Sun) with its 12 zodiacal pillars centred on the ceiling by a *saroja* or lotus—a Sun symbol, we may perhaps surmise that as against the representational forms of God indicated in the Brahma, Vishnu, Umamahesvara, Ganesa and Durga, representing respectively the Gnaskanda (Kaumara), Vaishna-

va, Śaiva, Ganapatya and Sakta form, the Surya form in the front, in a non-representative pattern would stand for the *Brahma tejas* or the source of all illumination. An incidentally interesting sculpture that seems to have missed the attention of scholars before, in this temple, is the occurrence of Hanuman *dvārapāla* to the main sanctum door. It cannot fail to recall the only two other unique representations of exactly similar kind, one in Tamil Nadu (at one of the Kunnathur group of Pandyan cave-temples, south-east of Madurai), and the other in Kerala (at Kottukoil cave-temple near Anchal). It is to be noted that Hanuman is called-*Rudra-Vīrya-Samudbhava*—and had also been imagined for Nandi by Ravana (*kimesha-Bhagawān Nandi bhavet sākshadihagataḥ-yena 'saptosmi Kailase maya sanchalite purā'*), when Hanuman meets Ravana after Indrajit had subdued him. The fact that such a *recherches* iconic feature should be selected for this temple would show how a synthesis of religious cults or syncretisation was the penchant of certain stages, and Sringeri specimen seemingly was influenced by Kottukal carving tradition.

In subtle but marked contrast is the Sadasiva temple, at Nuggehalli which again, from its elevational features of the main *vimāna* as well as the front *maṇḍapa* extensions, did not stand under obligation to any other region. But it is on the tower that the impact of new-found ideas began. This tower carries the star-shaped plan of the *jagati* terrace, plinth and wall above and consistently with it provides for a string of towers in the stellate projections—the towers being like *urah śringas* or *anga-hāras* applied to the *bhadra* and *karṇa* facets (carefully encased on the front and side corners by *patralatā* designs), though these facets are not in one plan but facing radially different directions. There are three points of the stars on each of the sides, the western side showing it fully and the northern and southern sides having the third merging with the *karṇatilaka* and the *sukanāsa* that is beyond. The recession between the *bhadra* and *karṇa* also shows a recessed tower miniatures in vertical strings, until the *vedi* and *grihapīṇḍi* level is reached whereon are placed four nandis in the four oblique corners (*vidikas*) followed by an intensely oblate (*āmalaka*-like) *śikhara* overlain by a rising *ratna pīṭha*, *kalaśa* and *stūpi*. It is the models of the miniature *śikhara* or *anga-hāras* that concern us especially. These are of the *piṭha deul* type, or the Kadamba-*nāgara* type, showing a series of *kapota* like *bhūmis* capped by a *śikhara* unit, and the recesses between cardinal points provided with *latās*. There are thus two significant departures from the accepted norms of the southern temple in this case, firstly, that a northern type of tower (*śikhara*) arrangement, strongly recalling the *Bhūmija* pattern of a series of *urahśringas* on the various parts of the *śikhara* periphery, hanging like festoons are there, and secondly, the very *śikhara* model (miniature as well as the macrocosm) is not the *rekha-nāgara prāsāda* type but rather the Kadamba-*nāgara* or *phānsankara* or *piṭha-deul* type, met with variously in the coastal Kadamba-early Chalukya examples, of the West Coast, the Maitraka shrines of the Saurashtra

area, or some of the Eastern Ganga temples of Mukkalingam and its neighbourhood. The storeyed division of the southern *vimāna* has all but been crowded out and, on the other hand, a gradually reducing sized vertical string of tower units are mounted, one upon the other, collecting together near the *grihapīṇḍi*, like a festooned umbrella. The earliest known example of the *Bhūmija* type of Malwa and Central India which is nearest to the Hoysala country could be only in the lower Deccan; as reared under the Yadavas of Devagiri, at Sinnar near Nasik, Jhodga, Kokamthan, etc., but these do not necessarily call for a stellate plan. They, however, make use of the multiple *angas* or *rathas* of the *bhadra* and turn the layout into almost pointed or projecting *bhadrās*, on the cardinal points, twisting the normal square plan by 90°, with the sides of the temple facing *vidiks* and not the *diks*. The already evolved stellate plan of Hoysala temples, had been quite conducive to the string of *hāras* of miniatures on each of the stellate projections, in diminishing sizes, as one goes up. Thus it could be said that this Sadasiva temple was only a culmination of the aberrant Hoysala temple model taking note of Later Chalukyan devices and productions as at the Doddabasappa temple, Dambal and should be placed towards late 13th or early 14th century A.D. The design of the *śikhara* that has inspired it, namely, the *Bhūmija* type, makes it a somewhat aberrant variant in the central Hoysala style. It is very likely that the temple belongs to the twilight of the Hoysala days when it might have been overwhelmed by the Later Chalukyas (of Kalyana) and was susceptible to various Deccan influences. The remaining part of the temple also carries forward the elements which have a greater relevance in the Deccan terrain rather than the true to type Hoysala, and these are the almost featureless and plain walling showing only a series of pilaster elements; the *sukanāsa* which is more similar to the Later Chalukyan type, notwithstanding the continuing motif of prancing lion with warrior in front on the ridge of the *sukanāsa*, the entrance or *nandi maṇḍapa* integral with the *mahamaṇḍapa* though with a lesser width and enclosed on the eastern side and access given only from the north and south—which again is not an established Hoysala mode; and a separate entrance into the *mahamaṇḍapa* from the south, through a separate *agramaṇḍapa*, which shows the ceilings flat on central nave and somewhat slopy on the side aisles, which is often a Chalukyan hallmark in roof design. There is no doubt that the temple represents a feeble dragging of feet by the Hoysala style in its artistic embellishments and sculptures inside the *maṇḍapa*, but what it puts on as not confirming to its norm is of extremely important stylistic interest. While still looking forward to the revival of the solid respectability and assumed granite workmanship of the Vijayanagara days in yet to begin, this temple is a landmark indeed in southern Mysore area, of the type of metamorphism that overtakes an effete temple style, under the temporal pressures and artistic liberalism.

If the Vidyāsankara temple at Sringeri is an autochthonous model but under

the confident initiation of the Vijayanagara overseers, the Sadasiva temple at Nuggehalli is an outlandish variant of the Hoysala architectural spectrum, and though not sitting well in the interior of south Mysore, has the credit of belonging to an early medieval politico-cultural watershed, covering the Late Hoysala, Kalyani Chalukya, and Yadava art mannerisms, adapted into an atypical mould. The former is a resurgent and ebullient new vogue, while the latter is a non-descript and make-shift improvisation of an era passing away.

JAINA ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN TAMIL NADU

INTRODUCTORY—HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL

The oldest copper plate charter of the early Pallavas of Kanchi, namely, the Pallankoil grant of Simhavishnu (6th year) is dedicated to the grant of Pallichchandam village in the Perunagar area (near Wandiwash) which had consequently been the most important Jaina settlement till today, and the grant was made to Vajrandi, *Guru* of *Tirupparuttikunram-Amaṇserkai* (Jina Kanchi) across Vegavati river, at Kanchipuram, and would show how respectable and important status had been enjoyed by Jaina teachers in the metropolitan centres of Tamil Nadu already in and before the 6th century A.D. Dharmasena (later on becoming Appar, one of the four early Śaiva saints or *Nāyanmārs*) who is said to have been a contemporary of Pallava Mahendra, Bhavanandi (Pavanandi), the author of *Nannūl*, a Tamil gramatical work, who lived in the 12th-13th century A.D., at Vijayamangalam in Coimbatore district and was patronised by Amarabharana Siyaganga—a feudal of Kulottunga III—were a few other important leaders of Jainism. The author of the greatest aphoristic literature, *Tirukkuraḷ*, namely, Tiruvalluvar who lived at Mylapore (Madras), in the Pallava period, invokes Adinatha or Vrishabhanatha in his very first aphorism. The oldest and most important grammar of the Tamil language, namely *Tolkāppiyam*, *Neminātham*, *Yapparṅgalam* and its commentary, *Silappadikāram* authored by the Chera prince Ilango Adigal, *Jivaka Chintāmaṇi*, *Chūḍāmaṇi Nighaṇṭu*, *Perungadai* (a Tamil version of Gunadhya's *Brihatkathā*, written by Konguvelir of Vijayamangalam), *Nāḷaḍiyar* and several other important works, owe their origin to Jaina thinkers and leaders of the early Tamil history.

The entry of Jainism into the capital of the northern Tamil country, namely, Kanchi, was made through the western periphery of the State, from the neighbouring Ganga territory of Karnata where Śravanabelagola and other centres

were located, and that is why we find North Arcot, (besides Coimbatore and Western part of Tiruchchi district) of Tamil Nadu, containing of the largest number of Jaina vestiges till today, like Vallimalai, Tirunarungonrai, Tirunathankunru, Arpakkam, Ārmamalai, Tirumalai, Perunagar, Venkunram, Piridiyur, Vijayamangalam, Arachchalur, Pugaliyur, Ratnagiri, etc., having continuous Jaina traditions extending even upto today in most of these places. The clustering of the main series or ancient natural cavern beds with early Tamil-Brahmi records and sundry vestiges of their life in these caverns was mainly around the old capitals of the Tamil kingdoms of the Pandyas, Cholas, and Cheras as at Madurai, Tirunelveli, Uraiyr and Karur-Vanji and the other metropolitan centres as, Kanchi. It is also interesting that in one of the early settlements, in the *Sangam* period (c. 3rd century A.D. to 5th century A.D.), the name was given as Patalipura—for the modern Tirupparippuliyur in the coastal part of South Arcot district, between Cuddalore and Chidambaram—doubtless after the ancient and primary Mauryan capital of Patalipura (Patna) in Bihar. An old *Dramila Sangha* or academy of the Jinas is said to have existed here. The southern groups of Jainism in the Karnataka and the Tamil country had been mainly of the *Digambara* order, as against the dominant *Svetambara* order of the Western Indian groups in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Delhi, and had spread south in the Satavahana times, when there was the largest movement of trade and commerce and of people from the very borders of Bihar to almost the very tip of the Peninsula—a movement which spread the teachings of Jainism and Buddhism to the far corners of the Deccan and the south, without in any way conflicting with the sedate evolution of post-vedic Brahminism.

The spread of Jainism in south India is one of the most important sociological developments that took place in the history of that region. It had impacted upon several spheres of the then existing religio-cultural activity, no less than the economic situation, and brought to bear upon the whole society, a new awareness, a stimulus for material and ethical enrichment, and ultimately, an invigorating spurt in the literary and scriptural traditions of the land. It has sometimes been considered by scholars that this was a 'partial attempt to Aryanise the Dravidian races. This might probably be an over-stretching of the implications of the terms Dravidian and Aryan beyond their mere linguistic confines. All the same it suggests the near-profound character of the event. In Tamil Nadu especially, the introduction of Jainism was fraught with epoch making consequences, in almost every field, especially literary and cultural. Kanchi became important under the *Digambara* mission of Viśakhacharya, which, with several groups of emigrants—in the wake of the earlier Kālakacharya and still earlier Bhadrabahu I and Chandragupta Maurya of traditional fame—entered the Chola and Pandya countries and Kundakundacharya—the first in all the southern Jaina genealogies—is referred to with distinction in the *Kural* of Tiruvalluvar, and the twin epics, namely,

Silappadikaram and *Manimekhalai*. Hieun-Tsang had gone on record that in the city of Kanchi and Madurai, the majority of the *Devakulas* belong to *Digambaras* living in those cities. When we consider in this context, the fact that some of the very earliest known natural caverns with polished beds and early Tamil-Brahmi records in different parts of Tamil Nadu aggregating to as many as 75 have been caused by patronage of Jainism, the signal contribution of Jaina thought and culture on the matrix of the Tamil country becomes more than obvious. Pallava Mahendravarman I and Kun Pandya (or Nedumara) were said to have been Jainas first and restored to Brahmanism by the early Śaiva saints, Appar and Jñānasambandar. This process ended only with Hoysala Vishnuvardhana who was an ardent Jaina having been converted to by Sri Ramanuja, the founder of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* *Vaiṣṇavism*. His royal queen Śantaladevi continued to be an active Jaina patron throughout her life. The Ganga kings who had nurtured Jainism with such eternal glory as has been reflected by the nerve centre of the Jaina activity in Karnataka like Śravanabelagela, had, in their territories along the borders of the Tamil country, as at Vallimalai, excavated such Jaina beds and images under Rajamalla I (A.D. 817-828.) and his son Nitimarga who was also a Jaina. The Vijayanagara kings had been discerning patrons of Jainism as the *abhayaśāsana* compact between Jainism and Vaishnavism caused by Bukka I (A.D. 1357-1378) and the erection of Ganigitti Jinalaya at Hampi, and the Sangita Maṇḍapa by Iruguppa, the General of Bukka II (A.D. 1385-140) at Tirupparuttikunram prove.

EARLY PHASE

The architecture of early Tamil country had received certain important assignments at the hands of Jainism and its patrons, the oldest among these being the innumerable natural caverns and beds of these ascetic votaries of the Jaina religion, living in the remote corners of the country, alone as recluses, and mediating upon the feet of Vardhamana, the twenty-fourth *Tirthankara* and their founder.

The most important thing that *prima facie* arrests our attention in respect of these cave beds, is the extremely smooth *polish* the stone in the bed areas has received. It would not be too far afield to attribute this to the admitted knowledge of polished stone as in the Mauryan columns, that could be boasted by the first Jaina immigrants into south India in the centuries before Christ—among whom no doubt had been some craftsmen as well. It may be looked upon as an archaeological and architectural proof of their Mauryan importation in the deep South.

Of the upwards of 75 cave-Brahmi records, a very great majority relates to

Jaina endowments and would support the theory that these Jaina mendicants were sought after especially by the trading class for wholesome advice, blessings and religious services. A whole series of craftsmen, comprising goldsmith, cloth-merchant, iron-monger, salt merchant, lapidiar, etc., are found endowing several cave beds in their individual capacity in the largest cluster of such beds around the metropolitan city of Madurai, and these form, as it were, an ancient Chamber of Commerce. The early Tamil-Brahmi records themselves give interesting names like Aritan (Harita), Kuviran (Kubera) Chen-Kuviran (Red Kubera), Ariyti (Hariti), Ven Kašipan (White Kašyapa), Tavirai (Sthavirai), Ila Kutumpikan (householder from Ceylon), Chaiyalan (from Simhala), Chen Kayapan (Red Kašyapa), etc., which are of great interest; considering their time of dispersal in Tamil Nadu. Especially may be noted the distinction of two colour-systems, the red and white in some of the names above. In the medieval times also, the Jains employ the attribution of Red and White colours to their groups, temples, etc., in northern India. A situation, thus, not unlike that which prevailed in northern India in the early days of the Gautama Buddha and Vardhamana and their disciples, with the non-Brahmin communities mustering around the new credo which made religious thinking and god-heads ever so simpler and down to the earth, had also prevailed in the period between the 2nd-1st century B.C. and 5th-6th century A.D., in Tamil Nadu. By the very ethical nature of its teachings at that time, early Jainism in Tamil Nadu had not created for itself *visible* structural models of shrines and *devakulas*. This development by which the inevitability of the inclusion, into Jaina religion, of minor divinities that were always revered by the masses, and the emphasis on the supremacy of Mahavira and the other earlier *Tirthankaras* before him, starting from Adinatha, came to existence, is to be ascribed only to the *next* important phase, approximately from around the 5th-6th century A.D. onwards and led not only to the very earliest rock-art examples in Tamil Nadu in the form of cave-temples, but also those of individual sculptural carvings that stud the rock face at or near the very caverns which were the earlier traditional resort of the Jaina ascetics. These are represented by the vestiges at Pechchiparai, Sittannavassal, Nagamalai, Kilavalavu, Uttamapalayam, Kalugumalai, Vallimalai, Armamalai, Tirumalai, Chithral (Tiruchcharranarmalai) and several other places. The patterns of this rock-art would seem to suggest that the art and architectural models adopted by Jainism were not any the different from those of their coeval Brahmanical compeers but, at the same time within the development of Jaina art and iconography, showed significant stages of growth. The earliest of these as could be seen either at Pechchiparai (Chokkampatti near Kadayannallur, Tirunelveli district) and Sittannavassal, did not show the formula of Mahavira, Parśva and Gommata but only two of the main *Tirthankaras*, namely the first two, and boldly introduce several other pontifical leaders as also the *yakshas* and *yakshīs*, the former in forms which should be taken as portrait sculptures. The nearness of ponds or

natural tarns to the cave beds, sometimes larger than the immediate needs of these mendicants, coupled with the fact that atleast in two of these, namely at Sittanavasal and Armamalai, we have the painted vestiges of the *Samavasaraṇa* showing the lotus tank and the *bhavyas*, would suggest that these large tanks nearby were to stand for the *Samavasaraṇa* symbolism. The holy Śravanabelagoḷa itself, by its very name, substantiates the significance of the tank of whiteness (*Beligula*), for the *śramaṇas*. Such tanks exist everywhere, as at Nagamalai, Saranarmalai at Chitharal, Kalugumalai, etc.

Pechchipparai and Malayadikurichi in the Pandyan country together with the Arivar Koil cave-temple at Sittannavasal would comprise the most well-planned Jaina cave-temples in Tamil Nadu. Otherwise, most of the vestiges of Jainism in this region have only a natural cavern location with sculptural carvings alone representing the *Tirthankaras* and *yakshī* figures typical of the Jaina religion, substantiated by records also. This would show that well-organised Jaina architectural enterprise with royal patronage was mainly in a short period in the seventh century A.D., but otherwise, earlier as well as later, the several Jaina teachers who had spread over the Tamil country were content with the individual patronage of tradesmen and disciples. Only from the 8th century A.D. onwards, sculptural carvings of *Tirthankaras*, and *yakshīs* find a place in these sites. The earlier trend was in favour of meditation and mortification of the body by exposing it to the elements,¹ and ritual Jainism, with the detailed worship of the *Tirthankaras*, *Pañcha-parameshṭis*, and other external artistic symbolism not yet consolidated.

The Sculptural Style

Jaina art in Tamil Nadu follows essentially the trends of the art pool of Brahmanical architecture of the historical period. This art-tradition was to some extent moulded by the Satavahana craftsmanship, but had only this major difference that the latter operated on soft stones while those of Tamil Nadu, had no option but to opt for the hard granite rocks which are plentiful in this region. On this basic outlook, the guilds that worked in the land of Tamils belonged to the Pallava and Pandya territories, and, at a later stage in the 10th century A.D., they were exposed to the Rashtrakuta mannerism, but were otherwise subjected to the Chola norms. It is, however, generally found that the style and idiom were, by and large conservative in the early stage (c. A.D. 600-1000) and given to a suppleness of face and heftiness of body which had seemingly been invented in the Pallava phase, but had continued to prevail with a degree of consistency and monotony even upto the early medieval times, when the rise of the Vijayanagara vigour heralded a new outlook in the Jaina art as well, informed alike by a certain ornamentation and bias, reflecting folk urges. The earlier norm was regulated by the repetitive and ethnic uniform character of the icons, most of which were mainly the *Tirthankara* figures standing and seated (variously of Mahavira or *Jina*), Parśvanātha, Siddhayika,

Matanga and Bahubali. It would seem to reflect the essential conservatism of Tamil Nadu Jainism which did not in full measure participate in the ritual and iconographic inflexion and ramifications elsewhere in the Karnataka where Jainism for long continued to be a stable and dominant faith of the masses, with profuse royal and commercial patronage. The Vijayanagara and Nayaka phases, however introduced the new trend of vivacity and group composition in contrast to the stoney stillness of the earlier sculptures. The only concession to any warmth in the carvings would, perhaps, have been the full lips which invariably adorned these figures all along in the early period. This brought about a modicum of universal compassion to the figure that is so characteristic of the Jaina credo.

The important centres under the Pallavas, Pandyas and the Cholas steadily helped in the growth of Jaina ritual and art, and by the eighth century A.D., at least, we have the variations of the several *Tirthankara* forms in the structural temples, and also separate individual shrines or temples for them and for the *yakshīs*. The Late Chola and early Vijayanagara period was undoubtedly the most eventful period in the expansion of Jaina iconography in Tamil Nadu, and we see for the first time, after an earlier heritage between ninth and the twelfth centuries A.D., of acrimonious relationships between Jainism and Brahmanism, a close and pervasive role played by Jaina art throughout in the Tamil society. Jaina patronage, however, did not diminish all through the period, and several structures like Kundavai Jinalaya of the time of Rajaraja, attest to this. A list of the various personalities and names that had enriched the Jaina communities in Tamil Nadu right from the earliest times of the cavern beds upto the Vijayanagara periods, if compiled, would make impressive reading.

CAVE-ART PHASE

Pandinadu

Pechchiparai (Chokkampatti)

About 4.8 km from the village of Kadayanallur, on the higher slope of the mountain is found an early rock excavation which has architectural features that relate it to the layouts adopted for early Brahmanical cave-temples, as at Lower Rock-cut cave, Tiruchchi, or Tiruvellarai, not far away from the former, datable to the very end of the seventh century A.D. The exterior scarp is left undisturbed except to show a finished edging for the cornice of the facade in the form of a smooth band decorated with circular nailhead motif for the cave-board on the wood architectural proto-type. The interior shows two end-shrines facing each other across a common hall, with the body of the chamber cut into at least two bays, though left partially finished. The side shrines show the door frame and well-formed cornices, and within the cells have incomplete figures that could be attributed to Jainism by the details available like cobra hood (for Parsvanatha)

and outlines of the figure chiselled out. It is likely that the back wall might have carried provision for a niche figure.

Malayadikurichi

The other example is at Malayadikurichi where a finished cave with inscription of the seventeenth year of Maran Chendan (who is the same king of the Vaigai bed inscription of Madurai, and was the father of Arikesari Maravarman, and was called Cheliyan in some early records) is also found. Here the niche figures on the back wall of the rock-cut hall appear to have been completely obliterated by being deliberately chiselled off in a stage of conflict, and could have been for Jaina religion originally, and was converted into Brahmanical subsequently. The sanctum does not have rock-cut feature of the original character that vitiates against this hypothesis, nor does the inscribed record itself have any direct import that the cave-temple had been excavated for Brahmanical gods, but simply calls it the stone temple cut by a local chieftain in the seventeenth year of Maran Chendan.

Rock-cut temple—Arivar Kovil—Temple of Arhats

Plan comprises an inner shrine 3.94m square and 2.27m high, an *ardhamandapa* in front, measuring 6.8 × 2.27 × 2.58m. A doorway measuring 1.67 × 0.75m approached by *suruṣ yāli* flanked steps, leads into the inner shrine. In the facade are two massive square pillars and end pilasters. Beams are also indicated with flexed cornice and fluted horizontal, roll ornamented corbel below. The ceiling of the *garbha* shows wheel with hubs, representing the *Dharmachakra*. Lotus medallions adorn pillar and pilaster faces. In the niche on the northern wall of the transverse outer hall is a figure of Jaina *āchārya* seated in *dhyāna* pose, cross-legged, palm on palm. A single *chhatra* is over the head to indicate that he is not a *Tirthankara*. An inscription on a pillar near it designates him as *Tiruvāsiriyan* or the venerable teacher or *āchārya*. The opposite wall has a niche, with a Parsvanatha figure seated, with five-hooded serpent above. The sanctum carries three images in high relief, the northern central, representing Adinatha and Mahavira, have triple umbrellas, while and the southern has only a single umbrella and was perhaps an *āchārya* or *arhat*. The entire surface of the walls, ceiling, pillars, etc., were painted originally.

Especially delightful is the depiction of the *Samavasaraṇa* with the souls of the *bhavyas* inhabiting it, for hearing the *Tirthankara* discourses. Before reaching the heaven, the souls are said to pass through several regions, including one of a lotus pool with birds, fish, animals, like *makaras*, elephants and bulls and men sporting there. The *bhavyas* are represented in colours (*leśyā*) like deep red (*padma*) orange (*pīta*), etc., which along with white (*śukla*) are considered as the colours of pure souls, as different from black (*krishna*), indigo (*nīla*) and grey, of the wicked souls. The paintings on the northern and southern facade pillars, of

dancers with a pose of *ḍaṇḍahasta* or *latāvriśchika* is even more beautiful and impressive, and the natural hairdo and facial features, recall the best classical values near to the Ajanta paintings of the first six centuries A.D., or the Sigiria (Ceylon) paintings of the 5th century A.D. The technique employed is of the *fresco secco* type, on a lime medium. The colours used are black, green, yellow, orange, blue and white.

The side face of the cave rock carries an inscription of the Pandya king Avanipasekhara (Śri Mara Śri Vallabha) during whose time the *mukhamanḍapa*, apparently structural in stone, was added to preserve the main cave. The style is of the Pandyan cave-art, as found in several centres elsewhere, in southern Tamil Nadu.

BAS-RELIEF PHASE

Pandyan Country

Kalugumalai

At a distance of 20.8 km from Koilpatti R.S. lies Kalugumalai, already well-known for its Pandyan monolith, Vettuvankoil and cave-temple for Subrahmanya (*ARE* 1894, 18-117). Inscribed records on the rock in Vatteluttu and dedicatory in character (*S.I.I.*, Vol. V, 1926, No. 307-406) mentions several names of Jaina personages involved at Kalugumalai which should thus have been one of the most active Jaina centres in the period between the eighth and the tenth century A.D.

These carvings and inscriptions show how important the place had been for Jainism in the ninth-tenth century A.D., and how it had kept its contacts with several other Jaina centres in Tamil Nadu like Chitalar, Tirupparuttikunram, Tirunarungonrai, and Kottaru. It is also interesting to see that a hierarchy of disciples is recorded here and cross-checked by other records elsewhere in the region which was a typical feature of the *Digambara* Jainism of Tamil Nadu.

Aivarmalai at Ayyampalayam

Several caverns and Jaina carvings of the ninth-tenth century A.D., and very important inscriptions of the same period are found here. These records refer to the hill as Aiyiraimalai and one of them, of the time of Pandya king Varaguna II dated to A.D. 870, reckoning his regnal year from 862—historically important in fixing a Varaguna-Nripatunga synchronism—deals with a Parsvanatha sculpture and *yakshīs*, got renovated here by one Santiviraguruva, disciple of Gunaviraguruva. It is likely that this very Gunaviraguruva was the author of the famous Tamil work *Neminātham*. Other inscriptions refer to the famous saint Ajjanandi, Indrasena, Mallisena Periyar, Parśvabhattachara, Perumbattiyur Pattinikkuratti, her disciple Purva Nandi Kuratti, etc. All these names and records belong to ninth-

tenth century A.D., and are referred to elsewhere also in Tamil Nadu as at Kalugumalai.

Uttamapalayam

A small rock outcrop called Karuppannasvami rock here with a tarn below, occurring outside the village was selected for Jaina carvings and records. The carvings represent Mahavira, Parśvanatha and some religious teachers with their names. The cave beds and carvings around Madurai, the capital of the Pandyan country form the most important group, historically and for the bas-relief, those from Nagamalai (Samanarmalai), Kilakkuilkudi and Karadipatti and Kilavalavu.

Nagamalai

This has two important groups, one on the hill and other on the rear slopes. The former has a series of carvings, in a row, of seated Jina, standing Parśvanatha, Padmavati and those of some pontiffs. The carvings reflect a high degree of artistic skill and uniformity of style with other similar carvings from Kalugumalai, Chitalar, etc., and are of the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. Inscribed records occur from several of these.

Karadipatti

This group of carvings is on the inner face of a hemispherical cavity caused by an exfoliation and fall of the rock on the slopes of the hill here and has *Yakshi* Ambikā on her lion mount, almost similar to that of Chitalar and Matanga at the other end, with Mahavira and Parsvanatha in between. Outside, on the brow of the scarp is another and larger figure of Mahavira which has been carefully carved with *pīṭha*, *chauri*-bearers, hovering *gandharvas*, and with the scroll work with foliage above the triple umbrella not yet deeply relieved and somewhat incomplete. Inscribed records in Vatteluttu occur under all the carvings referring to their context and character.

Kilavalavu

Here close to a cavern with early Tamil-Brahmi record and smooth beds on the the rock floor are found a series of Mahavira and Parśvanatha figures, complete with *pīṭha* and other details of attendants, *makara* architecture for the seat-back, etc. It also carries vestiges of a fine painted plaster over and around them showing floral and figural details in them, in green and ochre colours.

Tirumurtimalai

There are several Jaina sculptures at this place located at the foot of the Anamalai hills. These consist of a *Tirthankara* flanked by two attendants. An inscription near these carvings refers itself to one Ettulappa Nayakka (in A.D.

1793), according to which an agreement was made for granting four gold pieces as marriage tax for the Amanesvara temple here, from the head of Amanasamudram village and to prevent the transfer of the ownership of this land at any time.

Tondainadu

Vilapakkam

This place near Velur contains also an unfinished early Pallava cave-temple on the Panchapandavarmalai, at one end of which close to the road but on the higher slopes of the hill is a boulder with a tarn below and some natural caverns. It contains inscribed records of the 50th year of Nandippottarasar (Nandivarman II) and refers to the figure of Ponni Yakshī whose image is also carved on the rock-face.

Vallimalai

There is a natural cavern with images carved on the inner slopy ceiling and back wall of the rock and four inscriptions of the Gangas and Banas recording the founding of a Jaina shrine, setting up of Jaina images, etc. The Ganga king was Rajamalla, son of Bana Vikrama, grandson of Śrī Puruṣa, and the great grandson of Śivamara, as given in the record. He improved the cavern for a *vasatī*. A Jaina image of Devasena, a pupil of Bhavanandin who was a spiritual preceptor of a Bana king is also found here. This image and another *Tirthankara* carving, were set up by a Jaina preceptor Aryanandin. Even the back wall of the Subrahmanya cave-shrine at this place contains Jaina carvings.

Kudagumalai

In the Kudagumalai, adjoining Ammachatram village, there are several natural caverns with vaulted ceilings and traces of polished beds on the floor, and drip-ledge on the rock scarp face. Some Jaina images, damaged, including a standing figure of *Tirthankara* and circular stone pedestal with carvings (which might have been part of a *mānasthamba* pedestal) are also found, ascribable to the eighth and ninth century A.D. Records from here of the fourth and the fifth year of a Rajakesarivarman (9th or 10th century A.D.) refer to gifts of land in honour of the *Tirthankara* of the Tiruppallimalai in Vadasiruvai-nadu.

Pandyan and Ay Country (Venad)

Chitharal (Tiruchchanattumalai)

By the side of the overhanging rock forming a natural cave, are found sculptured figures of *Tirthankaras*, which are votive images carved by visitors to this holy shrine here from distant places in the past. The figures are those of Parśva-

natha, Mahavira and other *Tirthankaras* and of Padmavati devi. The place seems to have been sufficiently famous in the past to have attracted Jains from such distant places as Tirunarungondai in Tirukkoilur taluk of South Arcot district, Kudavasal in Thanjavur district, etc. Archaic vatteluttu records below the figures on the seat refer to Ajjanandi, Uttanandi of Kattampalli at Tirunedumbarai, Pattini Bhatariar of Tiruchchharanam and Viranandi Adigal of Melaipalli at Tirunarungondai. One of the other records is important inasmuch as it is pertaining to the Ay king, Vikramaditya Varagunavarman in his twenty-eighth year, and refers to a grant to God for certain services at the temples endowed by Gunantangi Guravis, disciples of Arishtanemi Bhatara for the Ambika at Tiruchchharanam. The figure of Ambika especially has been carved carefully and vigorously like Durga, with her lion mount with a female *gana* at the right carrying something in a bowl.

This earlier rock-cut reliefs had been supplemented by a regular shrine in the medieval times of a simple nature, along with a *gopura* entrance for the precincts suggesting the development of architectural forms coeval with those for Hindu temples in the region.

STRUCTURAL ARCHITECTURE AND ART

Early Stage

Tiruparuttikunram (Jina Kanchi)

This place, which was also called Amanserkkai, contains two temples, one for Chandraprabha separated, and another large complex dedicated to Vardhamana but containing several sub-shrines, inside a high *prākāra* and a *gōpura* entrance. The Chandraprabha temple faces east. It is a very unique structure of the later Pallava style of Nandivarman II, not unlike, in many respects, as that of Vaikunthaperumal of Kanchi, and has the shrine located only in the upper storey or *bhūmi* of the temple, the lower being essentially comprised in its *ardhamandapa* part of a transverse passage with access to the upper floor at the northern end. The inner wall carries the typical Pallava pilasters without the rampant lion motifs which are found on the exterior and has recesses on it, with the deepest in the centre. In the original disposition it might have had an ambulatory around and steps leading to the upper floor as in Vaikunthaperumal temple. The upper floor is at a height of 3.6m. above ground and carries the sanctum and its own *ardhamandapa* leading to the ambulatory landing of the flight of steps from below. The superstructure externally carries the *hāra* parapet around, which is *sāndhāra*, and could also be circuited from outside, and, is overlain by the square *grīva* and *śikhara* in the centre. Internally, the sanctum carried a fairly large image of Chandranatha of stucco as the principal figure, and two smaller images of Kunthunatha, the seventeenth *Tirthankara*, and Vardhamana, all seated in *paryankāsana* and in *dhyāna*

pose. Two *chāmara dhārī devatas* of stucco are found on either side of Chandranatha. The two flanking *Tirthankara* images above, are found to be recent additions, although they could be on the basis of ancient vestiges here. The lower chamber at ground floor, directly below the upper sanctum appears to have been filled up.

The upper granite *paṭṭikā* moulding of the outer plinth of the temples, (above a lower sandstone *kumuda* mouldings and divided by a *kanṭha*), though mutilated badly, contains two records, both of the time of Rajendra Chola I. This structure with the assuredly later Pallava character of the edifice itself, is in contrast with the Vardhamana temple-complex which had not come into being before the time of Kulottunga I (A.D. 1070-1120), whose record is the oldest of the many there. The fact, therefore, is clear that the Chandraprabha temple existed much earlier to the erection of the Vardhamana temple, and is admittedly Pallava in architectural details like the sandstone *pratibandha* class of *adhishṭhāna* with the *paṭṭika* above of granite and without the *vedi* above—a feature which does not occur in Tamil Nadu before Parantaka I (A.D. 903-954); by the multiplicity of *bhittistambhas* dividing the wall space, and having *simha stambhas* only at the corner as on the other outer wall; by the showing of niche pilasters which do not have any feature above their beam or *uttara*, which is particularly a Pallava feature seen at other shrines at Kanchi, etc. *Makara toraṇas* with profuse details, above niches are found only from the mid-third quarter of the ninth century A.D., in early Chola times; by the open plain niches in the outer wall of the upper *tala*; by the most well-formed and well-spaced *hāra* elements; and by the general pleasing, though somewhat subdued, proportions of the *grīva* and the *chaturāsra śikhara* with its flanged rim. Above all, the location of the temple shrine proper on the upper *tala* has also some earlier analogues, as in the Kailasa cave at Ellora where over a solid lower *magnum*-plinth, the main temple rises apart from the nearer examples like the early Pandyan Vishnu temple of Tirukkoshtiyur. The later Pallava origin of the temple also fits to a nicety with the tradition that Akalanka (who is more closely connected with Kanchi than any other earlier sage) is traditionally said to have, in about A.D., 788 confuted in discussion the Buddhists at the court of king Sahasratunga Hima Śitala at Kanchi and besides converting the king to Jainism caused the expulsion of the Buddhists from Kanchi for good to Ceylon.

Armāmalai remains at Malayambattu, North Arcot Dt.

The ancient cave site is located at Armamalai about 1.2 km from Malayambattu village. The site is a large natural cavern facing south, and into a horse-shoe valley. There is an accumulation of cultural deposit on the cave floor relating to the Iron Age, funerary remains of which times are found in the valley in the form of Black-and-Red ware pottery, urn-burial fragments, etc.

The top of this deposit has been securely sealed by a mud and earth flooring

in the historical period, at the time of Jaina monks re-utilised the cavern, There are mud brick walls, rising above this floor and upto the rocky ceiling and forming a shrine-complex with a near sanctum cell that does not touch the rock-wall behind but is well ahead of it. In front of this sanctum is an *ardhamandapa* leading into a transverse and wider *mahāmandapa* without any distinctive line of separation with the *ardhamandapa*. This transverse hall gives access to two subsidiary shrines which are located on either side of the main sanctum. There is an outer walling providing a narrow passage all around the shrine in such a way that it could be used for circumambulation. Some subsidiary corner shrines which have existed originally on the rear part of the cavern have been almost obliterated now. Towards the eastern end of the cavern, there is a rock spring in a low crevice. The mud-bricks have sizes of $38 \times 22.8 \times 7.6$ cm laid in mud mortar and plaster over by red murrum upto 1.27 cm and plastered over by a fine plaster layers of mud and lime respectively. The *mahāmandapa* wall also shows ventilator windows on the front. It is likely that the entire walling might have been painted over, as layers of pigments are seen attaching to the front face of the *mahāmandapa*. Remains of granite stone pillar shaft, capital, etc., are scattered on some parts of the cave floor. These pillar types show flattened octagonal section with middle facts wider than the other, and carrying a *mālāsthāna*. Some pedestal fragments having the blossomed lotus medallion over the basal course is also found.

There are also two *dvārapāla* slabs one of which has the head missing, but is otherwise similar in style and dimensions to the other. It is cut out of the thick slabs in low relief. It has a *karaṇḍamakūṭa* type of *jaṭābhara* with a writhing cobra shown, a sparsely ornamented body with an *yajñopavīta* and necklet and an arched *udarabandha* and hand ornaments, *ardhoruka* for the loins, tied by a *kaṣi vastra*. The body is turned in three quarters profile in *prishṭha-svastika* pose and is an *ābhāṅga-lalita* leg stance. The facial feature carry a broad similarity with Pallava and Pandya *dvārapāla* types, except in respect of the writhing eye-brows. The figures are both two armed. The detached slabs character of the door-guardian which might have intended to be fixed to the mud and plaster wall is interesting and is not in conformity with the Pallava tradition.

The rocky ceiling of the front part of the temple had been carefully plastered in lime, 0.68 cm thick with capping fine plaster and carries multicolour paintings, figural as well as floral, and with bird designs, in which geese are prominent. The figures seem to have been panelled out and surrounded by wide decorated margins and, in the preserved portion, depict *mithuna* figures riding on certain animals as mounts, of which two using bull and buffalo could be observed. These might be the grid pattern depiction of *dikpālas* on the ceiling, as is very common in the Chalukyan country and in this case, above, could represent *Īśana* and *Yama* respectively. The style appears to have affinities with Rashtrakuta mural art. On the western end of the ceiling are found a large area decorated with floral designs with lotus as a

dominating motif. There are other painted patches, one of which shows a standing lady with other members. These are of assured brushwork. It is likely that the floral pattern might have been the reproduction of the *Samavasaraṇa* themes, as at Sittannavassal. The triple-chambered temple in the cave would indeed be a *trikūṭāchala*, perhaps, intended for Mahavira, Adinatha and Parsvanatha (or for Bahubali, as the case may be). The date of the paintings, stone fragments and *dvārapālas* might not be later than the tenth century A.D., but could be appreciably earlier. There are some inscribed pedestal fragments in the valley nearby, which also palaeographically corroborates this date, and the village of Malayambattu also has a stone plinth of a Jaina temple, of which only the figure of a seated *Jina* alone has survived. In style, this temple could perhaps be of the late Chola times.

The Rashtrakuta invasion into Tamil Nadu entered through this Vaniyambadi gorge of Palar, and the famous town of Udayendram is also only a few kilometres from this site. The site should have been an important landmark from early times, as it is mentioned even in the Udayendram copper plate of the time of Nandivarman II Pallavamala, as on the boundaries of the donee village, and is designated there as the Lohita-Guha.

LATER STAGES

Tirupparuttikunram

The Vardhamana or Trailokyanatha temple at Tirupparuttikunram enables one to arrive at its age, on the basis of its architectural stages, as from its inscriptions—which are many—the oldest being of the time of Kulottunga I, as already stated. The records refer variously to tax-free land grant to the temple from the villages of Kannipakkam, Ambi (the modern Anbil near Kanchi), etc. One of the earliest Vijayanagara inscriptions is of the time of Iruguppa, the General of Bukka Raya, son of Harihara II, dated in A.D. 1382, and purports to the construction, at the instance of Pushpasena, a *mahāmaṇḍapa* in front of the *Jina* temple, for holding musical concerts and paved it with granite slabs all around. It also grants a village of Mahendramangalam in Mamandur division for this temple. The compound or *prākāra* (and perhaps the *gōpura* also) was constructed by one Alagiya Pallava, (most probably standing for Kadavarayan Kopperunchinga) after c. A.D. 1243, as shown by a record.

The temple-complex comprises the apsidal shrine of Vardhamana or Trailokyanatha standing in the middle of a court, with two shrines, one on each side, dedicated variously to Pushpadanta (also aspidal), the ninth *Tīrthankara*, and Dharmādevī (also called Ambikā and the *Yakshi* of Neminatha, the 22nd *Tīrthankara*) respectively. A transverse hall occurs in front of the three temples, and there is also a *mukhamāṇḍapa* in its front. Adjoining this main group of three on the south are two more shrines, with a third sandwiched in between them fortuitously,

together called the *Trikūṭabasti* and dedicated variously to Padmaprabha, Vasupujya and Parsvanatha, the 6th, 12th and 23rd *Tirthankaras*. This *Trikūṭabasti* has also an *ardhamandapa* and *mukhamandapa*, and the columnar *Sangīta mandapa* (already referred to) becomes a common *Kalyāṇamandapa* for the two series of shrines referred to above. It is interesting that by local tradition, the Dharmādevi image and shrine is said to have been inducted into this temple in the thirteenth century A.D., from the Kamakshi temple which is regarded as an original Jaina shrine for this *Yakshi* of Neminātha. There is an ambulatory, with several structures all around like the kitchen on south-east, Brahmadeva shrine on south-west, Munisuvrata and stores on the north-east, and a comparatively later Rishabhadeva on the north-west corner.

The bronzes in the temple include Brahma Yaksha with his consorts Purna and Pushkala. *Yakshī* Padmāvatī with her hooded *nāga* head, representations of Nandīśvara in metal (apart from stone also), Sarvahna Yakshi, Dharanendra Yaksha with *Yakshī* Padmāvatī, a Dharmādevi bronze, another standing Dharanendra and standing Padmavati, a Parsvanatha on a massive bronze pedestal, Vardhamana standing, his *Yaksha* Matanga (standing) and his *Yakshī*, and 12-armed Siddhayika also standing, Jvalamalini, 8-armed and seated in *ardhaparyankāsana* on a pedestal placed on a buffalo, Sarasvatī (four-armed), Bahubali, *Pancha Parameshthi* or Navadevata-*Yantra* mounted on a pedestal and borne by *vyālas*, and a standing Anantanatha bronze.

The large scale mural paintings on the ceiling of the *mukhamandapa* and *sangīta mandapa* in the temple of Trailokyanatha at Tirupparuttikunram illustrating the life story of three out of the 24-*Tirthankaras*, namely, Rishbha, Vardhamana, Neminatha as also Krishna, deserve some comments not only because they one and all of them, bear labels in Tamil under each meticulously, but also from the conventional representations of paintings, almost on a folk style, in free sketching though with considerable fidelity in respect of dress and other decorative elements. They derived their story source from the *Śrī-Purāṇa*. This donor General Irugappa was the same as the person who endowed the Ganigitti Jinalaya at Hampi.

Tirumalai

This important Jaina centre situated in Polur taluk contains on the top of the hillock, at middle level (in the form of caverns) and at the foot (in the form of two structural temples) one of the richest historical and art materials, by way of records, carvings and paintings of Jainism, dating from the Rashtrakuta times to the late Vijayanagara period. The hill is called Vaigaimalai, presumably from the name Vaigavur to the Jaina village at the foot. Even works like that of building a sluice to the tank nearby was done at the times of Rajaraja I, by a certain Gunaviramamunivan, and was named after his teacher Ganiśekhara maru-porchu-

rian (the second golden Surya Ganiśekhara). Another record of the time of Rajendra Chola in his 12th year records gift to temple at the top of the hill which it mentions by the name Tirumalai and this temple on top is called Kundavai Jinalaya, apparently named after Rajaraja's daughter, and thus of his time itself (even if it stands for Rajaraja's own elder sister of the same name). The record of Rajendra informs that Chamundabbe, the wife of a merchant Nannappayan living in Perumbanappadi, gave a perpetual lamp to this temple on the hill top and also grant for sacred food. Another, also in the 12th year of Rajendra, refers to the gift of lamp by one Ilayamani Nangai and the lord of the temple is called Arambhanandin. Money was endowed for the lamp by one Sinnavvai, a queen of a Pallava king.

A record on the wall of a *mandapa* at the base of the Tirumalai hill, dated in the tenth year of Ko Maravarman Tribhuvanachakravartin Vira Pandyadeva, refers to the building of a sluice at this place from the Madageri tank by one Ambala Perumal or Sinattarayan, a headman. A record of the twelfth year of Rajanarayana Sambuvarayan mentions the setting up of a Jaina image on the hill by one Nallattal, daughter of Mannai Ponnadai of Ponnur for Viharanayanar Penneyilnathan (synonymous for *arhat*). A small record on the lower temple *mandapa* refers to the pious gift of well by the sons of Idaiyaran Appan for merit to accrue to one Sirrinangai. A long record of the time of Śaka 1296 in the reign of Ommana Udayar, son of Kambana Udayar forms a registration receipt for gift of land for the temple, bought by one Vishnu Kambuli Nayakar, by the people of the village for which the land was brought, represented by one Ankarai Śrīdhara Bhatta.

A record in a small shrine below the painted cave refers to the image of a *Yakshi* (which is seen also there) having been caused to be made by one Arishtanemi Ācharyan of Kodaikottur and a pupil of Paravadimallan of Tirumalai. An interesting record on the outer wall of the doorway leading to the painted cave refers to gifts made by one Vyamukta-śravanajvala or (in Tamil) Vidukaduragiya-perumal alias Atigaiman of the Chera race, with his capital at Takata (Tagadur), who was the son of Rajaraja and descendant of a certain Yavanika (Erini) king of Vengi. This king repaired the images of a *Yaksha* and *Yakshi* made by Yavanika and placed them on the hill and presented a gong and constructed a channel. The hill here is called Arhasugiri (Engunavirai Tirumalai).

The remains on the hill (Tirumalai) comprise a large monolithic image of Neminatha on the hill top and a series of caverns converted into abodes, with paintings of various geometrical and other designs, besides *Samavasaraṇa* scenes. Besides these, of the two structural temples, one of them, with an intact *gopura* entrance, at the lowest length, has painted panel scenes displayed in the sanctum on the drum-like circular zone above the wall proper and at the base of the *śikhara* shell. These two temples, dedicated to Vardhamana and Neminatha respectively,

are typical southern *vimāna* types of the late Chola and early Vijayanagara period respectively, the larger and later being on the upper terrace of the hill relatively close to the cavern series. A large *prākāra* wall skirts the whole complex at the foot of the hill. The Vardhamana temple rises in *tritala* with a circular *grīva* and *śikhara* at the top. The interior plan is that of *garbhagriha*, *ardhamanḍapa*, *mahāmanḍapa* all closed and an open *mukhamanḍapa*, with a common flat roof terrace.

The Neminatha temple has again another *prākāra bandha* with a *gopura* entrance. The tower of this temple is missing. The *garbhagriha* is square and has an *ardhamanḍapa* of similar width but a widening closed *mahāmanḍapa* and an open pillard *mukhamanḍapa*. The cornices of the *mukhamanḍapas* of both the temple are massive, with *koḍungai* ribbings underneath in a typical Vijayanagara style. The topmost terrace also carries a small shrine which is attached to the bulge of the rock scarp here and is in alignment with the cavernous recession containing other caverns. Excavations occur at different levels vertically, with partially structural floor and staircases, rising three storeys high, with the topmost resting immediately under the horizontally projecting and overhanging rocky bluff. The storeys are characterised by corner cantoning pilasters but the top two *talas* also carry wall pilasters and niche figures of Ajitanatha, within a *makara toraṇa* niche flanked by Maha Yaksha and Rohini, and with two standing elephants laterally shown carrying garlands on their slightly lifted trunks, against the *varimāna* and *vedī* courses in applique stucco technique. The interior shrines at different levels show rock-cut carvings of the Chola and Vijayanagara times. Of these the Dharmādevi shrine with Gommata and two male attendants of the Imperial Chola times (11th century A.D.) deserve attention, although the figure of Dharmādevi is itself of the Vijayanagara times. The main shrine is, however, for Neminatha and is known as the Araikkoil (or the covered chambered temple) and is distinguished by extensive Vijayanagara and Nayaka paintings.

Jaina vestiges in the Pudukkottai District

In the Pudukkottai area, Tenimalai, Sittannavasal and Annavnsal were important centres of Jainism between the ninth and the fourteenth century A.D. Three Jaina temples had even been brought to light at Chettipatti, formerly known as Tiruvennayil, with the fragmentary inscriptions there calling the temple as associated with Udaiya-matisakara arukar-āchārya a famous Jaina *āchārya* of the tenth century A.D., and appears to be of the time of Rajaraja I (late 10th—early 11th century) alike by record as by architecture, and has several Jaina images, including an attractive Parsvanatha figure. The monastery attached to this temple was called Ainnuruvaperumpalli endowed by Jayavira Perilamaiyar, a merchant of the noted guild of the 500.

Sembattur, on Palli-urani channel (itself associated in its name with a *palli*) had yielded the remains of a Jaina shrine containing a *Tirthankara* and *Yakshi*

images, pillar-shafts with a lion base. Narttamalai had two flourishing monasteries, at Alurutitmalai (anciently called Vada-tirupalli-malai also) and another at Bommaimalai (anciently called Ten-tirupalli-malai). An unidentified inscription of Sundara Pandya, possibly of c. 14th century A.D. (P.S.I. 474) names two *āchārya* Dharmadeva *āchārya* of Tirupallimalai monastery and his preceptor Kanakachandra Pandita. A Tenimalai inscription (P.S.I. 1-9) mentions that Malayadhirajan, a Jaina ascetic lived there and an Irukkuvel chief gave him rent free *avippuram* or land endowment for maintenance. In a *maṭha* there, called Andar-madam, a Seruvotti made an image of *Jina* Mahavira, as indicated by another record here.

Alurutimalai has a natural cavern on its northern hill with four polished beds, two forming a double bed with a *Tirthankara*-carving on the rock with triple umbrella above them. A record of Maravarman Sundara Pandya refers to this place as Tirumanaimalai or Tiruppallimalai. It also mentions two *āchāryas*, Dharmadeva and his *guru* Kanakachandra Pandita.

Pudukkottai town

The bronze images of Jaina *Tirthankaras* now exhibited in the Government Museum at Pudukkottai were found on the site on which the Raja's college, Pudukkottai stands at present. They indicate that there was a Jaina habitation at the place. Sadayapparai near Tirugokarnam had a Jaina temple and monastery. At Sadayapparai, there is a *Jina* image with a record dated in the twenty-fourth year of an unidentified Sundara Pandya in which land free of tax was granted for offerings, etc., to the *Ālvar* of Perunarkilli-Chola Perumpalli shrine in the monastery of Kallarru-Palli forming part of Tenkavi-Nadu.

Velavanpatti

An image of a *Tirthankara* discovered at this place, seated in *dhyāna* pose, under triple-umbrella with attendant deity on either side. The whole group is surmounted by scroll work. As the *lāñchana* is defaced, it is difficult to identify this figure.

Alattur

Mahavira image, cut in high relief, found in front of the local Śiva temple. It is seated on a *padmapīṭha*, attended by *chauri*-bearers and having the triple umbrella. There are two *yālīs* on either side of the pedestal.

Annavasal

Together with Sittannavasal, it was an ancient Jaina centre. Two *Tirthankara* images occur to the west of Palli-urani channel in the village, the head of one of which was found broken. It is a figure of Mahavira seated on a pedestal with

attendants, Matanga and Siddhayikā, with scroll work decoration over the head and flying divinities on the sides and with rampant lion motif for the architrave beam of the seat back.

Nanjur

To the west of the *agrahāra*, and north of the water tank, an idol of *Tirthankara* (Mahavira) occurs representing in *dhyāna* pose with the triple-umbrella and *chaurī*-bearers on either side.

Kongu Country

Vijayamangalam

This is one of the most important centres of Jainism in the western Tamil country which is traditionally called Kongudeśa. One of the localities at this place was called Bastipura and contains the interesting structural temple of Chandranatha or Chandraprabha. The various sub-shrines of the temple contain the images of Adinatha, Anantanatha, Mahavira and Kushmandini *Yakshi*. There are also friezes representing the events of Adinatha's life on the beams of the *maṇḍapa* which should perhaps belong to the early Vijayanagara times. The ruins of a separate temple intended for Adinatha is also found on the north-west part of the temple compound. The oldest inscriptions of the temple refer to the *nishidhikā* of Puliyappai, sister of the Ganga General Chamundaraya (in the time of Ganga Rajamalla, c. late 10th century). In the Chola period, this temple was known as Virasanghata-perum-palli, as referred to by a record of the time of Kulottunga II, dated A.D. 1163. *Virasanghata* is considered as the military title of the chief who would have endowed this temple in the Chola period. A record datable to A.D. 1412 in the reign of Harihara II of the Vijayanagara dynasty is also found, referring to land grants.

The innermost main original complex comprises the *garbhagriha*, *ardhamāṇḍapa* and *mahāmāṇḍapa* of less than medium size, capped by an octagonal *śikhara* over a single *tala*. This structure is entirely of brick, plastered on the outside and is datable to the late 9th century A.D. The *garbhagriha* contains (as was the practice in the late Chola and early Vijayanagara times in some other temples of Tamil Nadu also, as at Tirumalai) mural paintings, both figural and vegetal, in several rows of bands over the deity on the side walls of the *garbhagriha* shell.

The widening large *mahāmāṇḍapa* which gives an exit towards the north and has also a sub-shrine for Kushumandini *Yakshi* on the southern side, was erected during the Chola times while the still wider and much larger open pillared outer *maṇḍapa*, along with the very lofty *gopura* a little beyond on the eastern side and the tall granite *mānastambha* column outside the *gopura* were of the times of Vijayanagara kings. The Chola and Vijayanagara structures are also of granite.

Tingalur

There is a temple of the ninth *Tirthankara* Pushpanatha here, and is referred to in the records as the Chandra-vasati, and it is revealed that a new *mukha-maṇḍapa* was added to the temple in the Konattan Vikrama Chola (in A.D. 1045) whose title Simhalantaka is mentioned. This king was apparently, a vassal of the Imperial Chola kings Rajendra and his successors. The actual donor was one Kanita Manikka Chetti, grandson of Arattulan Devan.

Dharmapuri

Jainism was well patronised here in the time of Mahendradhirāja Nalamba and his successors in the ninth-tenth century A.D. A Jaina temple was built here in the ninth century A.D. by two tradesmen Nidhiyanna and Chandiyanna and land grants were given in A.D. 892. A grant of the village Mulapalli for the maintenance of the temple was also made, and was placed under the custody of one Kanakasena Siddhanta Bhattara, disciple of Vijayasena Siddhanta Bhattara. These records are found on the pillars of the Brahmanical temple now going by the name of Mallikarjuna. It is just possible that the temple itself was originally intended for Jainism.

A temple called Nagara-Jinalaya was also located in a place known as Mudi-kondan, datable to the twelfth century A.D.

Tondaimandalam

Tirunarungondai

The site had been a famous centre of Jainism. In its records, it is referred to as the Nārpatenṇyirapperumpalli (or the great shrine of the 48,000). In the ninth year of the reign of Kulottunga, gift of taxes to the temple by one Viraśekhara Kadavarayan is found, and another record of the tenth year of Rajadhirajadeva refers to the gift of money for a lamp to the *Yakshi* in the western temple (melir-palli). The money was made over to the chief priest Pushpasenadeva. The main shrine structure, as it stands today goes by the name of Appandanatha temple with shrine chambers for Chandranatha and his *Yakshi*. It is to be noted that one Viranandi of the western shrine (of *Yakshi*) of this place had visited Chitalar and got some images engraved on the rock there.

Venkunram

The area around Wandiwash has been an ancient zone of Jaina colonisation in Tamil Nadu, coming under Perunagarnadu, from the early Pallava times (6th century A.D.). The Arugar temple at Venkunram is part of a Jaina village, and has a degenerate medieval garb now, but historically is rich in its associations. It is a *dvitala* temple with circular *śikhara* and a simple wall section over a *mancha-bandha* plinth. A sub-shrine for Dharmādevi carrying a fine stone sculpture of this

Goddess of the Vijayanagara style in its sanctum, occurs at right angles to the main sanctum across its common *mahamandapa*. It carries a *śālā śikhara*, a Vijayanagara hallmark for Devi or Amman shrine in Tamil Nadu.

The Pirudiyur temple has an early stone image of Vardhamana (mutilated and kept in the front *mandapa*) and a later image in the main sanctum. The devishrine is built on the north-east corner facing south. The plinth of the main shrine is of stone and its body rises to a *dvitala* structure with a circular *śikhara*. The *vimāna*-tower shows on the *koshthas* of the first *tala-prastara* the images of the *Tirthankaras*, namely, Vrishabhanatha, Sambhavanatha and Chandranatha along with their respective *Yakshas* flanking them. They are all rendered in stucco.

Nagarkoil (Śrī Nagarkoilpalli)

The important Jaina vestiges at this place are found in the Nagaraja temple of the town. It appears to have become a Naga shrine for Hinduism only after the time of king Bhutalavira Udayar Mardanda Varmaraja, until which time even the officiating priest carried typical Jaina names like Kamalavahana pandita and Gunavira pandita. Six Jaina images in worship are found here, including three seated figures of Mahavira, a seated and a standing figure of Parsvanatha, and another of Padmavati devi. One of the Vardhamana images and those of Parsvanatha and Padmavati are carved on the pillar of the *mandapa* in front of the central shrine, and two others in the central shrine itself. There are two brass images of a later period, also of Parsvanatha standing and Padmavati standing, with hooded cobra for both of them. The gateway to the temple, now in typical Kerala style of wood work, lofty stone pillars and tiled roof, is called Mahameru Maligai and should itself have its connections with Jaina mythology.

REFERENCES

1. Tirunathankunru record (c. 5th-6th century A.D.) near Singavaram close to Gingee (South Arcot Dt.), accompanying a crowded depiction of the 24 *Tirthankaras* in a stereotyped way mentions that, 'this was the place of penance of Chandiranandi, the monk who (died) observing 57 days of fasting.

CULT PATTERN OF EARLY INDIAN ART

A study of Indian iconography reveals that many elements have gone into the making of the early cults as transformed into icons. It would be unscientific to consider these, again, as always indigenous or always external. The reasoning, thus, is inevitably controlled by the social stimuli, impacts, borrowals, and tolerance. It is a truism to say that India had always welcomed fresh trends and approaches to cultural issues over the centuries. But it is not so readily conceded that early Indian formal art is itself the convincing fusion of non-indigenous initiative, or when in the indigenous context, of non-Aryan character. Lest it should be cavilled at as an over-simplification, one may state that what are considered today as pronouncedly orthodox, ritual concepts in Hinduism, have been, in the pristine context, purely local or non-priestly ideas, outside the pale of doctrinaire religion. But since religious mutations were as much the products of socio-cultural impact, as economic and material changes, we would do well to infer a degree of compromise and metamorphosis, brought about by the permeation of ideas, tending towards a fusion in ideal circumstances. The Hindu pantheon is an eloquent example of this phenomenon, and in its formative stages, is highly suggestive of such cross-fertilisation.

The Vedic Brahmanism did not permit any well-organised pantheon in iconic or architectural sense. It was a highly systematised personal religion, which took the naturalistic and animistic elements of this phenomenal world at their face value and imbued them with a supernatural aura and, by appropriate gestures of both ritual and recitational forms, expected to turn these phenomena into benefactor agencies. Even so, on a purely literary plane, a multiplicity of divinities were, thus, created with rich imagery, and a degree of internal unification of this group was also attempted. Mitra, Varuna, Aryama, Indra, Brihaspati and Vishnu and Agni¹ were important deities, and among female concepts, Aditi was perhaps, the

most popular; Ushas, Yami, etc., being lesser fries. Vishnu, in the early Vedic context, was not an all too important deity that he turned out to be in the post-Vedic religion. He was often associated with Mitra or Surya, while correspondingly Rudra, who was hardly heard of much in Vedic times, was to receive his main stamina from the Vedic Agni. Indra was undoubtedly the most powerful of the cosmic deities and most assiduously cultivated in the hymns. Further, the philosophy of creation, preservation and destruction on which the Hindu Trinity is based was unknown then. In such a situation, the hymnal imagery was not having, indeed, any iconographic significance, but was only a purely wish-obtaining chant, whose faithful and meticulous observance, in the sacrificial ritual, was the most worthwhile material pursuit. The symbolic and gesticulatory elements of sacrifice, together with the overt expression of one's deep inner desires and urges in the form of the hymn, together were expected to produce a mutual liaison between the divinity and sacrificer, and these were private and individual, and hardly ever congregational or social, in the basic sense. A cosmic philosophy entailing the aspirations of whole societies was not perceivable in these Vedic practices, and thus, they were not productive of a broad-based supernatural pantheon that could be taken as a social transformation. The exclusive character of the Vedic religion helped this situation. But Vedic society was not destined to nor could be a closed one, for any great length of time. Two broad trends overtook its structure. An inner dichotomy or schism, wherein the more intellectual and evolving brains vigorously cogitated upon the ultimate character of this phenomenal world, its motive, cause, etc., while outside, the less favoured of groups of non-ritualist members of society, asserted themselves more and more and brought about a physical affiliation and cult-intermixture with the ritual oriented orthodox or sacredotal groups. This was of great significance, and for the first time, a mingling of not merely hearts but of bloods as well, was taking place, fraught with inevitable genetic consequences. Indra's supremacy was questioned, Vishnu's mythical valorous deeds were more and more emphasised, and Surya or Mitra was fused into Vishnu cult, the process of creation of the cosmos was dissected, and a *Prajapati* or *Hiranyagarbha* element was formulated, and since every material thing that is born would also decay, an agency of destruction was also, in due course, postulated. The visible growth of society was raised to the pedestal of regular fertility symbol, and Mother Goddess or Aditi was duly considered as the supreme deity, and verily of the soil and indigenous. The changed character of the sacrifices and the evolution of totem poles or *yashṭis* or *stambhas* resulted in the transformation of a part of the Agni-cult into the Rudra-mould and fire-producing woods were associated with Rudra. The close of the Vedic period, further organised the divine role that preservation, on the one hand, was considered as the prime role of the super-God, and creation could not be divested from this God, who could, however, delegate this power to his associate. Thus was born the *Purusha* of the tenth *maṇḍala* of *Rig Veda*, with the implied relationship of the

society with this primal god. Caste divisions, based on vocations or apportioning of social duties, were written into the hymns for the first time, as of the very essence of the universal being. The sophistication of the concept of this illusory world and the impermanence of this material life as propounded in Śaiva philosophies of the later day, were unheard of. Vishnu, as a *Viśvarūpa* entity, with a dynamic and macrocosmic personality, and static recumbent and slumbering forms, was bisected, and the entire cosmic creative myth was rationalised as his manifestation and his *Ichchhā-sakti*, converted into *Kriyā sakti*. A remarkable sculptured panel from Changunarayan in Nepal has epitomised and captured for us, this ancient situation, and is, thus, of great significance, notwithstanding its age which is likely to be around the sixth-seventh centuries A.D. This figure shows the binary character of Vishnu, and combines the standing *Purusha* form with the reclining form. Apart from the magnificent range of the multitude of divinities or semi-divine figures which are carved on it, calling for a detailed study due to its unparalleled adherence to Vedic concepts, the two most interesting features of the panel would be, firstly, that it is the unique instance of the *Purusha Sūkta*², a hymn having been made familiar to the sculptor, who had faithfully displayed the four-fold caste classifications associated with four limbs of Vishnu or *Purusha*, as narrated in the *Sūkta*; secondly, the reclining Anantaśayi Himself combines elements of Vishnu as well as Aniruddha, while the figures around the standing type supply some more elements of the *Panchavīra* cult, with the result that it is a good cult-cum-art landmark when the diversification of the god into the *Panchavīras* on the one hand, and the apotheosis of *Purusha* into *Vishnu-Narayana*, had already taken place in the art-world. The added feature of the Changunarayan panel is the depiction of Bhū (Earth goddess) as bearing the very feet of the standing *Viśvarūpa* Vishnu (in accordance with the *Purusha Sūkta* description—*Padbhyam bhūmih*) and the non-depiction of any other consort of Vishnu like Sri. This is fully corroborative of the fact that at the earliest phase of the Vishnu cult, it is the Bhū and not the Sri that is physically consorted with Him, the deification of Sri as a regular consort of Vishnu in a shrine having taken place much later around the ninth century A.D. and later, although most of the early sculptures represent Sri by the *Srivatsa* symbol separately, or on the chest of Vishnu and Sri's inextricable association with Vishnu is well adumbrated. Indeed, this is the reason why Bhū alone is shown as a separate consort in early stages. And only Vishnu or Narayana is entitled also to the *Srimat sabda* and not any other god truly and etymologically speaking. For the development of the Bhū or Mother Earth cult, we should, perhaps, seek Aditi the Vedic goddess-Earth, herself apparently not unconnected with *Mater Megas Ida* or Mother Ida of the Greeks. This Mother Earth cult born of a fertility symbolism is very very ancient, and takes us back, through the mists of the past, to the Mother Goddesses, almost of the Late Palaeolithic times, in the Aurignacian and Magdalenian phases of prehistoric Europe. There discovery of a large number of statues

called *venuses*—in association with the remains of the cave-dwellers, bring forcefully to our attention their primitive cult character by their obesity with belly hips and breasts emphasised and what is, perhaps, most unusual but consistently marked, namely, the lack of any regular facial mould to the heads but mainly an anonymous lump of head with the hair alone stylistically rendered. This would go to show that the cave-community looked upon the women of the stock of an *archetype* in these statutes, and, thus, they emphasised only the maternal characteristics—called for in the enlargement of the family—and raised this characteristic to a regular cult. This cult ramified into the terracotta figurines in Crete, Asia Minor and upto India in the protohistoric setting, and in the early historic times are seen to occur in many parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. This last link in this chain has a particularly significant feature of showing a blossomed lotus on the neck, in place of the head. These figures are called *nagnamātas* and are especially worshipped by married girls for progeny, by applying clarified butter in the exposed public region of the figures. These figures have been found in large numbers in terracottas as well as in stone in the Nagarjunakonda valley, and there is a fairly large sized stone example in the Alampur Site Museum as well. The element of anonymity imparted to the object by eliminating the head shows that it is a folk-cult, and has a universal character, and in this respect it is an archetype which is of the same *genre* as the prehistoric statuettes about which reference has been made earlier in this paper. This Mother Goddess cult with its universal symbolism gets narrowed down to a Goddess-mother in the form of Bhudevi—mother Earth in early art. It is interesting to note that early Vaishnava art does not show us any examples of Sri or Lakshmi duly consorted with Vishnu. We do, indeed, have Sri either as a concept or a symbol like *Srivatsa* (or as Srimadevta of the Buddhists) and have both reliefs as well as symbols of this goddess available to the centuries between second century B.C. and fifth century A.D. But this is certainly a far cry from the direct application of Sri with Vishnu anthropomorphically. Bhudevi, on the other hand, had this unique privilege of being a regular consort of Vishnu from early times, although this too was partly symbolic as well. The concept of *Sri*—as probably standing for plenty and prosperity—kept her out as having any exclusive relationship with Vishnu. Bhudevi or earth, on the other hand, by her direct liaison with Vishnu in Varaha incarnation, Trivikrama incarnation, as Sita, and in *Matsya* or fish *avatara* continued to enjoy this role of having been protected by Vishnu; and Vishnu Himself filled the bill of *Virāt purusha* better than any other god. His character of preserving and protecting the good people, *dharma*, etc., got for him a more fundamental place in the Trinity than others, and thus even the very idea of incarnations, was primarily ascribed to him alone and not either Brahma or to Śiva. We have already narrated how in the cosmic myth Vishnu as Narayana, sleeping on primeval waters, is the original creator of all things, including Brahma. With this '*Purusha*' and '*Narayana*' personality

and with Krishna having seriously challenged the Indra leadership of the Aryan clans, the decks are cleared for a new vogue in Hindu religion. This vogue took into consideration the benign and sublime elements of Vishnu, and vesting them in full in the Krishna myth, produced the Sankarsana-Vasudeva or Bhagavata cult, whose earliest remains are known from the second century B.C. in Rajasthan, Mathura, and Malwa. The integration of the earliest folk vestiges like the *Naga* cult, successively the with Buddha, the Jina and Vishnu and Śiva (later), speaks for the deep rooted character of snake worship in ancient India, and Sankarshana or Balarama is none but Adishesha of Vishnu, and is indeed shown with a hooded cobra over his head. The Bhagavata cult, as well displayed by the Heliodorous pillar and elliptical temple remains at Bhilsa, in the temple of Narayana Vatika at Nagari in Rajasthan, in the Taladhwaya vestiges recovered from Pawaya, an early centre of the *nagas*, was a purely Vishnu cult dedicated to both Sankarshana-Vasudeva, as well as the *Panchavīras* or the Vrishni heroes of the above two and Aniruddha, Padyumna and Samba. It has no relationship to the *Bhakti* cult of the early medieval times when a spatial ingredient of *saraṇāgati* or abject surrender of one's being to Vishnu, was postulated as the best means of overcoming the ills of this *Samsāra* or phenomenal world. The *Bhagavatism* of the early historic times was simply meaning all that pertained to *Bhagavan*, which exclusively referred only to Vishnu. The presence of the Bhagavata cult indirectly suggested that there was a Śaiva cult also gaining ground. Śaivism in this period is largely dormant, albeit with a growing complexity of its rituals and symbolism. Lakuliśa's early provenance, as in Mahtura inscriptions would indicate this, but the integration of Lakuliśa and Śiva had not yet taken place and was to happen only in the sixth century A.D. in Gujarat, at Karvan. The earliest deep-rooted Hindu cult was, thus, Vaishnava in character, and thus was indeed the most indigenous of the god-heads evolved in Brahmanism. Surya, Śiva, Varuna, Indra and others had all some degree of extra-Indian or transformed Indian elements. They do impinge, at some stage, on Vishnu cults also. For instance, we have a merger of Mitra or Surya and Vishnu both conceptually as well as iconically since we see the flat cap, so typical, of early Surya images of the north-western tracts and Mathura, being conferred on Vishnu images of these regions as well. Further the earliest Vishnu figures in the northern plains, datable to third-fourth centuries A.D. are devoid of *yajñopavīta*, but display *vanamāla* often and the characteristic weapons like conch, discus and mace. *Yajñopavīta* is, indeed, of more than passing significance. Its original character and varieties have an import of their own and mark in the stages in the evolution of the rituals in individual life. It was obviously the ossified successor to a *Krishnajina* which was wrapped across the body for ritual propriety. It is equally apparent that, in the formative stages of iconography, there was no *yajñopavīta* supplied to gods even of the Aryan group, mainly perhaps to differentiate them from mortals who have to wear the sacred thread. Only at a late stage, when gods themselves had been given a role intimate

with men, as incarnations that, in consonance with *Śrauta* requirements, *yajñopavīta* was bestowed upon the gods as well. The *nivīta* type of Pallava, Chalukya and Pandya *yajñopavīta* on gods is a class by itself, and was probably intended to sustain the thesis that gods do not really need to wear the sacred thread and that, too, in the *upavīta* fashion but it is enough if they wear it on their body almost like a garland. But in order that it might not also include *prāchīnāvīta* or on right shoulder and across the body, the *nivīta* form was given. As a religious creed, Vaishnavism drew greater votaries, earlier than Śaivite concepts although there was the provenance of Śaivite forms, largely anthropomorphic and where symbolic, devoid of any relation with the phallic association which it acquired almost ineradicably in the early medieval times. The Sankarshana-Vasudeva cult expanding into the *Panchavīra* cult swamped the entire country and we have extant vestiges of this trend, datable within a range of second century A.D. to the eighth century A.D. in all parts of south India, as at Ellora, Bhokardan, Nagarjunakonda, Tiruchchanur (near Tirupati), Madras, Srivilliputtur, etc., to mention a few. It is this *Panchavīra* cult that we see tending to modify into the traditional Vishnu *vyūha* pattern of *Vaikhānasa* and *Pāncharātra* temple layout corresponding to the *pañchāyatana* worship of Śaivism, in relatively later times.

It is now fairly well-known that Śaivite iconography of the aniconic type had its moorings in the Vedic ritulas related to the sacrificial pillar or *skambha*. The Agni-cult of the Vedic period merged with the Rudra cult in the late and post-Vedic times resulting in a mutual osmosis, and Śiva in *linga* form, was sequel to it. The *linga* form of Śiva is nothing but the pristine sacrificial pillar or symbolically the pillar of fire, as described even in *Mahābhārata*, and its esoteric overtones linking it with the phallus was a much later phenomenon. Like the Mitra-Vishnu equation, the Agni-Rudra equation also had its repercussions in the Skanda cult. Skanda or Karttikeya, though considered as having been born to Śiva, out of Parvati is essentially an *ayonijā* (not born out of a womb), and Kalidasa stands to the tradition even in the fifth century A.D. of Agni having received the *retas* of Rudra to nourish it in the form of Kumara ultimately. Thus this unique 'test tube baby', Kumara, carries his Agni association, and is shown with the ram sometimes—taken as the plaything presented to him by Agni, whose vehicle it is. Kumara or Skanda was a divinity, in his own account, from quite early times. Kausalya is mentioned as having worshipped Skanda in Valmiki's *Ramayana*—from the first century A.D. onwards along side the early occurrence of Śiva and is similarly found on coins as of the Ayodhya kings. It is interesting to note that Skanda or Karttikeya has a multiple nexus with Agni, Indra, Śiva, Saptamatrs and Vishnu (through Durga or Narayani or Parvati). His close contemporaneity, if not even a relatively earlier independent existence, as a god is significant, and makes the Skanda cult indigenous and outside the Aryan pale. It is, therefore, not surprising that this cult is found in the oldest stratification of urban life and literature of the Tamil country in the south as well.

Presumably the Dravidians, who had developed it already, while they were in the north, had carried it southwards gradually and expanded it into the hill-tribe-cult in deep south, almost exclusively presenting it as a god unmixed with the northern Brahmanic cults. This hardening of the cult is obviously indicative of the long journey it had already made from its original region, although the votaries and authors of this cult continued primarily to be more or less of the same ethnic stock. His consorting with Devasena in the north and with Valli distinctively in the south is another indication that this indigenous character was desired to be well adumbrated. Vishnu's own relationship with Durga as big brother was a product of the early historic times and the result of a desire to see in Durga the built-in manifestation of the primeval female, since the *ādyasakti* in the form of *Bhū* was conceptually wedded to him already. Since Vishnu's role was essentially that of preservation and the cosmic mother or *jananī* could not, thus, be attributed to him, it was made into a sister or binary feature of Durga or Narayani, in whom were vested Parvati, etc. This entity was actually called Mahalakshmi, as different from Sri and was to be the consort of Narayana. But she was, indeed, hypothetical entity, out of whom Durga, Sri and Sarasvati polarised in the cult parlance. But in essence, Vishnu continued to be without an explicit consort till early medieval times. *Bhū* as an inherent characteristic of Vishnu did not involve him in any regular male-female equation. This overtakes him only in the early medieval times, iconographically speaking, although it had overtaken Śiva relatively earlier. This is because Śaivite cult was on a footing fundamentally different from that of Vishnu, and the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy applied more to his plane and not Vaishnava cults. The Sakta development in Śaivite doctrines led to this and were indeed indirectly responsible for resuscitating Sri or Lakshmi from her conceptual and symbolic form, and for making Vishnu consort with her in later times. That is why the word Śakti or Amba almost firmly stuck to Durga rather than to Lakshmi, and when Durga herself was conceived as an inevitable part or *amsa* of Vishnu as Narayani, the contradiction was eradicated. The fact remains, however, that Vishnu alone, primevally and later, continued to be inherently and inextricably vested with Earth goddess, goddess of prosperity and even goddess of wisdom and was, thus, the fundamental drop of Trinity structure, and also its central feature. He was in fact, the *yajñapurusha*, the very goal of sacrifices, while the *yajña* itself could be personified as Śiva (*yajño-vairudrah*). Thus the representation of Śiva by the pillar is the most appropriate. The very first time the word Śiva is indeed, associated with the word *linga* (in the sense of Śaivite) symbol is in the *prasasti* part of the Vakataka inscriptions where their ancestors, the Bharasiva Nagas, are extolled as having carried the emblem of Śiva on their shoulders (*amsa bhāra sannivesita Śiva lingodvahan Śiva paritushṭa*, etc.) The clan which ruled from Padmavati in the early centuries of the Christian era called Bharasiva, owing perhaps to the above ritual habit of theirs. In any case, that Śiva was pleased is more than attested to by the contagious adoption of Śiva Himself

carrying his *linga* on his left shoulder, as seen in a very large number of instances, all over south India, the farthest north side being Ellora, the intermediate ones being at Aihole, Pattadakal, and the farthest south, Kanchi, Kodumbalur and Kilappaluvur—the chronological range being from the sixth to the tenth centuries A.D.

Śiva, indeed, got the specific title *Sthānu*, mainly from the pillar concept of the *linga*—his symbol and is so-called in the fourth-fifth centuries A.D. in literature and epigraphy. He had not yet assumed the cult nuances of Pasupata or Kapalika sects, and was considered almost on a plane identical with Vishnu in his cosmic characteristics. Kalidasa's *Mangalaśloka* in *Vikramorvasiya Nāṭaka* refers to the *Eka puruṣa*, *Isvara*, *Sthānu* and *Sthira-bhakti yogaslabha*. The last phrase is somewhat interesting because of its reference to *Bhaktiyogas*. At the sametime, applied to Śiva, particularly as the very ultimate of *Vedānta*, to which also Kalidasa's verse refers—it is rather contradictory because neither Śiva doctrine nor *Vedānta* ever believes in *Bhaktiyoga* as a very effective vehicle for self-realisation. Of course, we are yet far back in time from Sankara who expounded the *advaita vedānta*. But it is indicative of the unsystematised state of affairs when Śiva, Vishnu and Brahma were still more or less of interchangeable parts, although Vishnu as Narayana had become well-established as the most rewarding and the more cardinal representative of the universal god-head. What more, it is corroborative of the *Bhakti* tenet's greatest efficacy (as emphasised by the word *Sulabha*) a thing that was put on proper philosophic basis by Ramanuja who succeeded Sankara. *Sthānu* itself is one of the synonyms of Vishnu as in *Sahasranama*—*Nityah Sarvagatah Sthānuh Achalayah Sanātanaḥ*.

Another interesting feature related to the Trinity symbolism was that while the younger son of Śiva, Skanda and putative elder son in the form of Ganesa are talked of, there is no corresponding Vishnu-*parivara*, although in the *pañchavīra* cult the family of Krishna is included in the form of Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Samba. But *pañchavīra* cult was duly superseded by Vishnu, in the standing, seated or reclining forms—a thing that got standardised in due course.

We may now consider some unique features of early icons of Vishnu, Śiva, Skanda also. Among the earliest group of Vishnu images from Mathura³ (U.P.) and Udaygairi (M.P.) we have quite a few which show the disc or *chakra* as placed on a separate pedestal by the side of Vishnu. This practice is also later imitated in the Rashtrakuta period of Upper Deccan, where the weapons of Vishnu are not held in hand, but kept on the ground. A corresponding device is adopted sometimes on the bronzes of Tamil Nadu, and wherein only the appropriate hand pose is shown, and the votary is left to guess the nature of the weapons to be held in the hands. An interesting combination of Vishnu as *pañchavīra* entity probably a prelude to the Vishnu-*vyūha* arrangement was in the unique example, wherein the central figure is Vishnu with Sankarshana springing from his body and

only half-exposed and hooded by a naga, Pradyumna on top of Vishnu, Anirudha below Sankarshana and perhaps Samba on the other side (but unfortunately mutilated there). This is of a stage prior to the other composite Vishnu form wherein Varaha head on one side and Nrisimha head on the other and peaceful Vishnu head in the centre is carved. This recalls the Mahesa aspect of Śaiva formulation, and was apparently almost conceived on a similar philosophical basis of *srishṭi*, *sthiti* and *samhāra*. Brahma has already been concerned with four heads and, indeed, was mythically held to have a fifth one which was cut off by Śiva. Thus we have the multiple or specifically five-head concept of all the three members of the Trinity. In the case of Śiva, a third eye was conceived in Indian art and cult crystallising the Agni trait. This was usually depicted in the forehead in a vertical position. But a very unique instance of Śiva (now in Boston Museum and datable to the fifth—sixth centuries A.D.) shows Śiva with a third eye located along the centre of the forehead, in normal position like the other two eyes. This is undoubtedly indicative of an early attempt in providing the third eye.

A very interesting canonical fixation also prevails in the ascription of female consorts to gods. The provision of two goddesses to all gods is a feature which is very characteristic of Indian art and religion. While, indeed, the entire range of gods and goddesses is largely mythical, imaginative, and conceptual, it is particularly significant that the dual consorts to Gods has a rationale. The most outstanding example is that of Vishnu and this is, indeed, the primary example creating analogues in other cases. In the case of Vishnu, Sri and Bhū are shown as consorts, the latter usually physically shown in earlier examples while the former is only symbolically inverted. Further, in the fully systematised stage, Sri as the etherial goddess is imparted certain distinguishing characteristics of colour, ornamentation, dress and objects held in hand. For instance, she is always red in colour, should have *kuchabandha*, is to be placed to the proper right of Vishnu, and is associated with lotus. Bhū, on the other hand, representing mundane fertility, is to be dark in colour, is to occupy the *vāma* or left part (the preferred part in matrimony and affection), is not to have the *kuchabandha*, but bared breasts, and is generally shown as sporting a lily. This antithetical arrangement of the two goddesses¹ is applied in almost other cases where Vishnu took his incarnations also, for example, as Krishna, he has Rukmini and Satyabhama (standing for Lakshmi and Bhū respectively in all respects), while as Rama, since he was an *ekapatnivratin* and was a king, Bhū in the form of Sita was depicted and is to be shown always to his left and without *kuchabandha*. Sita was, indeed, born out of the earth to Janaka and is thus *Bhūmisuta*. In the case of the other gods also, a similar formula came to be applied, and, thus, we have Brahma being endowed with Gayatri and Sarasvati; Ganesa being the lord of both Siddhi and Buddhi, not to mention Vallabha Ganapati, Lakshmi Ganapati and Uchhishta Ganapati; and Karttikeya hav-

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A very interesting canonical fixation also prevails in the ascription of female consorts to gods. The provision of two goddesses to all gods is a feature which is very characteristic of Indian art and religion. While, indeed, the entire range of gods and goddesses is largely mythical, imaginative, and conceptual, it is particularly significant that the dual consorts to Gods has a rationale. The most outstanding example is that of Vishnu and this is, indeed, the primary example creating analogues in other cases. In the case of Vishnu, Sri and Bhū are shown as consorts, the latter usually physically shown in earlier examples while the former is only symbolically inverted. Further, in the fully systematised stage, Sri as the etherial goddess is imparted certain distinguishing characteristics of colour, ornamentation, dress and objects held in hand. For instance, she is always red in colour, should have *kuchabandha*, is to be placed to the proper right of Vishnu, and is associated with lotus. Bhū, on the other hand, representing mundane fertility, is to be dark in colour, is to occupy the *vāma* or left part (the preferred part in matrimony and affection), is not to have the *kuchabandha*, but bared breasts, and is generally shown as sporting a lily. This antithetical arrangement of the two goddesses⁴ is applied in almost other cases where Vishnu took his incarnations also, for example, as Krishna, he has Rukmini and Satyabhama (standing for Lakshmi and Bhū respectively in all respects), while as Rama, since he was an *ekapatnivratin* and was a king, Bhū in the form of Sita was depicted and is to be shown always to his left and without *kuchabandha*. Sita was, indeed, born out of the earth to Janaka and is thus *Bhūmisuta*. In the case of the other gods also, a similar formula came to be applied, and, thus, we have Brahma being endowed with Gayatri and Sarasvati; Ganesa being the lord of both Siddhi and Buddhi, not to mention Vallabha Ganapati, Lakshmi Ganapati and Uchhishta Ganapati; and Karttikeya hav-

ing Valli and Devasena. The last mentioned is particularly stilted because it is a case of an abstract concept having transformed into a personage. Kumara was intended, when he was born, to lead the divine groups, as the commander-in-chief. Thus, he was *Devasenapati*. By a trick of etymology, he was soon made to espouse Devasena as he was already Devasenapati. There was even an attempt to foist a *Daityasena* on him, corresponding to Devasena. Devasena, thus became his celestial consort. Apparently, this dual consort formula took place in the case of gods, other than the Trinity, only when they graduated from *parivāra devatas* into *svayampradhāna devatas*, which, perhaps, did not take place earlier than the 10th century A.D. In the case of Subrahmanya, we find that he is shown with only one consort, in the most authentic rock-cut cave (Ladan Koil) of his at Anaimalai, datable to the end of the eighth century A.D. This goddess was most probably Devasena, since she is shown with *kuchabandha* and since in all later cases, both in stone and bronze, where both Valli and Devasena are shown, the former is shown without the covering for the breasts. She is further customarily placed to the proper left of the god in such a sequence, corresponding to Bhudevi in the case of Vishnu. The consort of Ladan Koil is, however, to the left of the god, perhaps on the analogy of Śiva-Parvati in *ardhaparyankāsana* in Kailasa—an instance which, doubtless, was being imitated in the Ladan Koil specimen.

A well-known early *parivāradevata* in *ashṭapariivāra* formula was Jyeshtha. She is *Alakshmi* and was a cult-goddess, but in considerable popularity in the Pandyan country. She goes out of vogue from the beginning of the tenth century A.D. and, indeed, the *ashṭapariivāra*-complex itself changes into a more unitary temple for each of the gods and goddesses, except in the original region of its popularity, where it continues as a 16 or 32 *parivāra*-complex, side by side with polarised temple units for each. Jyeshtha is reasonably close to Śitala as a rural goddess and, although mentioned in *Vishnudharmottara*, is not found prevalent in sculpture in the North, and is almost exclusive to Tamil Nadu in the South, where she is first known in Pandyan rock-cut caves. Her folk-organ is obvious and she is somewhat analogous to Hariti in iconographic stance. Her association with Śiva temples in *parivāra* form although she is taken as the elder sister of Sri, is again significant. Her bovine son and crow banner also bring her near Saturn, one of the *Navagrahas* and held as wielding great potentiality for evil on men. With disappearance of Jyeshtha-cult which coincides with the initiation of the *Navagraha* cult in Tamil Nadu, we see a shift from village goddesses to cosmic concepts.

A significant external mark of the *linga* is the provision of the *madhyanāḍi* and *pārśvasūtras*. This is obviously to confer on what is otherwise a round object, a fixed orientation ritually. It is, however, held sometimes that this is the abstraction of its similarity with the *membrum virile*. But this may not necessarily be so, since we find often these lines descending very low almost upto the bottom of the *linga*

shaft in which case its analogy with the genital organ is considerably lessened. We have *lingas* without these marks prevailing upto the end of the eight century A.D. Thus we may take it that whatever be the reason, the ritual character of these lines is obvious, and these apparently came into existence, from the time of the *Āgamic* texts and proper consecration of regular cylindrical *lingas* in Śiva temples. It is to be noted that in the case of *Dhārā lingas* or *Sahasra lingas*, these lines are absent. The closest analogue to genital organ is in the Gudimallam *linga*, but the very anthropomorphic character of the *linga* is on a different footing and, perhaps, its Lakuliśa association might have something to do with its peculiarity. It is datable not earlier than 700 A.D.

The concept of Ardhanari, again, is full of significance. The preferred left side is already mentioned. Even in Harihara figure, Hari occupies the left side. This is very much due to the fact that Hari as Mohini was espoused by Hara resulting in Harihara putra or Sasta. Here, an interesting social custom is also ossified. It is known that during marriage or *pāṇigrahaṇa*, the spouse or bride is to stand to the left of the bridegroom. Actually in most of the later rituals, the position is reversed and modern practice also is showing bride to the right of the bridegroom. If the bride is to the right, the right hand of the groom makes the hold somewhat cumbersome.⁵ If she is to the left, the groom can hold her right hand by his left hand, although modern practice recommends avoidance of the use of left hand for this by the groom. The original significance of the bride with reference to the groom is apparently based upon the position of safety, she will have in relation to the groom who might have to encounter hostility from other claimants to the bride's hand. If the bride is to the right of the groom, she is vulnerable and could be dragged away, whereas the positioning of the groom to the right of the bride makes him, shield her. There are instances as in one of the Kalyanasundara sculptures at Ellora, where the right hand of the groom holds the right hand of the bride who is placed to his left. This is, perhaps, the indication of the sanction in favour of this usage in early society. It is thus, an indigenous, non-ritual and tribal custom. Even in iconography, when there is only one consort, she is invariably placed to the left of the god and not to the right, suggestive of the natural place of the spouse.

It would be no exaggeration to say that in the post-Brahmana period, when *Itihasas* and *Puranas* came to be written, these were two major forces operating. The first was in favour of a synthesis of all the heterogeneous divinities who sustained themselves on their individuality hitherto. The synthesis took note of the collective responsibility involved in the predominant members of the pantheon, namely, the Trinity. Nonetheless, the synthesis was essentially one of interchangeable potential. These were, later, to get hardened, under the sectarian grouping of society. This mutually transferable divine potential began to be reflected clearly in the myths and legends of the age. The other force was that of

subordinating a series of cults to a primary god-head and considering the *prima facie* disparity in affiliation, to a cyclic process of pre-birth or past incarnations. This phenomenon is, indeed, partly responsible for the apparent anachronism that we sometimes meet with in the *Puranas*, like two *avatars* such as Parasurama and Rama meeting in a seemingly hostile context, and the gods themselves pitted against each other, sometimes, by the fervant loyalty of the devotees and the consequent acquisition of boons from the former by the latter and their subsequent misuse. While the power to bestow boons was undoubtedly vested in each member of the Trinity, in the ultimate analysis, for the universal welfare any boon misused by the recipient met with its inevitable neutralisation at the hands of the remaining member(s) of the Trinity. This is a clear proof in favour of an acknowledged collective responsibility among Trinity. The story of Ravana's prosperity and later downfall is a case in point. While Brahma gave him virtually limitless boons and Śiva gave him weapons, he was vanquished by Vishnu in the guise of Rama ultimately when his vices tilted the scale of his virtues.

The second force can be exemplified by the most unusual and interesting semi-divine entity that we meet with in *Puranic* lores, namely Hanuman. Although, his primary role was in the Epic *Ramayana* we are left in no doubt that he is none else than an *amsa* of Śiva, and indeed he is called *Rudra-vīrya samudbhava*. We are told that when the time for Rama incarnation by Vishnu came the celestial beings duly transformed themselves into different mundane entities to be the *dramatis personae* of Ravana-vadha enactment. Indra is said to have become Sugriva, Surya became Vali and Angada, Agni is said to have been Nila and Śiva converted a part of himself into Hanuman. This very interesting genesis had been apparently well-taken by the devotees, and the tradition, thus, became established linking Śiva with Hanuman. A slight variation of the same tradition saw the dual manifestation of the same Śiva potential as Nandi and Hanuman, and we have Valmiki's own *Ramayana* informing us that Ravana, on seeing Hanuman face to face, was so struck by his power that he was set to ruminating the past, and wondering if Hanuman was not, after all, Nandi Bhagawan himself whom he once reviled at Kailasa and attracted duly a curse—*Kimesha Bhagavan Nandi bhavet sakshādihāgatah*, "*Yena saptosmi Kailase maya sanchalite-purā*"—*Sundara-kāṇḍa*. That this was not a mere textual tradition but well absorbed in to the society is most illuminatingly, and uniquely, as it were, displayed in two cases of rock-cut temples in the Tamil country and Kerala, at Kunnattur and Kottukkal respectively. These caves are datable to c. second half of the eighth century A.D. or little earlier. In both the cases, the treatment is almost identical, leading one to surmise that they had been mutually influenced. The theme took the shape of one of the *dvārapālas* of the Śaivite cave-temples in either of the places, wherein instead of showing the normal *Pratihari*, corresponding to the right side of the door jamb, the figure of Hanuman himself in standing form is substituted for the *dvāra-*

pāla, thus making Hanuman, one of the Śiva *prasādas*. Further, in order to leave the identity of the Hanuman—Nandi equation in no doubt, in the Kerala example, the monolithic *nandi* which is cut on the front floor of the temple excavation is oriented, not to the *linga* in the shrine, as it should have been, but to the Hanuman *dvārapāla* and is set very close to him in an unmistakable manner. Since Nandikesvara is taken as one of the door keepers of Śiva, and since Hanuman here is not only shown in the former's place but with this transfer of duties well-reinforced by the figure of Nandi himself close to him and directed towards him, we are strongly impelled to recall this tradition of Śiva having bequeathed his power to Hanuman. That is why Valmiki even compares the destruction of Lanka by Hanuman to the destruction of Tripuras by Rudra (*Rudreṇa Tripuram yathā*). In *Ramayana* this story itself, occurs in disguise twice. Once in the early part of the narrative, he comes as the Śiva's *dhanus* or bow with express purpose of getting strung and broken, only by Rama and none else, so that he may wed Sita (the world mother) and again later in the story, as Hanuman, he is once again instrumental in bringing Sita and Rama (separated by an unkind fate), together by his miraculous deeds of valour. The grand design and the *didactic undertone* of these events is all too patent to the discriminating mind which would see in *Ramayana*, more than a mere narrative of the biography of exemplary man. Iconography has, indeed vindicated this divine polymorphism in the examples quoted above. Hanuman emerges as a very efficacious minor god out of this, and is seen in bronze, stone, paint and on coins from the pre-medieval times. The stone inscription in the Chandella kingdom in the Harsha era 316 (A.D. 922) of the time of Sallakshana Varman was, perhaps, the earliest reference to Hanuman worship as such that we have. Prithvideva A.D. 1065-1190 and Jajalladeva (1090-1120) Kalachuris have Hanuman on their copper coins. Later, Yadavas and Kalachuris of Kalyani have this type of coin profusely. The earliest textual reference to Hanuman as a *parivāra devata* is in *Vaikhānasa Āgama* and he is called there by the name Akshahanta (the destroyer of Aksaha)—as an echo to one of his valourous deeds in Lanka in the *Ramayana* story.

Mention had been made of the special place of honour given to *chakra* or *sudarsana* in early Vishnu sculptures in north India by placing it on a pedestal. It is suggestive of fairly early cult importance attached to Vishnu's *chakra*. We have the association of fire or Agni, with *sudarsana*, and, indeed, that is the element of destructive power ascribed to it. From the seventh-eighth century onwards, we have an explicit attribution of orbs of flame on the spoke ends of the *chakra*. Devotional and hymnal Tamil literature also attests to this by referring to Vishnu's disc as *Śuḍar-āli* the flaming ring. We have in the north the *puranic* legends, though reasonably late, like that of royal sage Ambarisha and how the *Sudrasana chakra* protected him. The early worship of *chakra* thus, appears to have been well-adumbrated, and its affiliation to Agni is equally so.

It is interesting in this connection to note that a number of legends have sprung about Vishnu's *chakra*, some of which are of the pre- and some of the *Āgamic* times. For instance, we have the reference in *Ramayana* to Ravana's chest having been tested by the *chakra* of Vishnu. Obviously, this implies Ravana's existence outside the narrative of *Ramayana* proper when he had occasion to be the target of *Sudarsana*. Since Ravana was a devout *Śiva Bhakta*, it was possible he had shown scant respect to Vishnu's weapons and, thus attracted con-dign punishment. On the contrary, we have the *Āgamic* legend by which Śiva is said to have conferred *chakra* on Vishnu who, according to *Amsumagbhedāgama*, had worshipped Śiva with 999 lotuses and owing to the paucity of the 1000th, plucked out one of his lotus-like eyes in its place, and offered to Śiva. We have one of the earliest and the most beautiful and important narration in sculpture of this scene in the Airavatesvara temple at Kanchipuram which should be dated to Rajasimha's period (c. A.D. 725). Thus we have the currency of this legend already in the early *Āgamic* period, and this would mean that in this period, Śiva cult had stood to gain showing Vishnu as having been under obligation to Śiva in his primary weapons, we have certainly sufficient sculptural and literary evidence to show that this is merely a sectarian myth in so far as the origin of *chakra* is concerned. But the more interesting aspect that we might well take note of is the fact that *Sudarsana chakra* being the embodiment of Agni, has itself a primary Śiva association with it, since Rudra himself was equated with Agni in the later Vedic times. Thus, Vishnu's disc was early concession of the destructive element in the Trinity symbolism, lotus and the *chakra* correspondingly represent, even in Vishnu, the creative and destructive characteristics. We know already that Kaumodaki *agda* is feminine in conception and, thus, part of the *Vishnu maya*. The conch is the exclusive characteristic of Krishna symbolism and legend, Krishna having acquired it from the Panchajanya demon, while on a trip to their world in search of Muni Sandipani's lost son. The conch, moreover, is the primeval sound or *śabda brahma* and 'rita' (or eternal truth) and is indicated in Brahma by *Pustaka*, and Śiva by the *damru*. The fire, on the other hand, is again indicated by the *Sruk* or the *havana* ladle in Brahma, and tongues of fire (*Malu* in Tamil) themselves in Śiva's hand. The close association, thus, of Brahma (who is the *Adhvaryu* of the gods), Vishnu and Rudra, with Agni, in one aspect or another, is primarily due to the great importance given to rituals in the post-Vedic period, even to a greater degree than in the Vedic stage. Only in Vishnu, the multiple elements of creation, preservation and destruction had been harmonised at the earliest stages, resulting in the standard form with *Sankha*, *Chakra*, *Gada* and *Padma*, consistent with the highly important role of Vishnu as the very *samrakshaka* of all rituals.

Indeed, so much was Vishnu identified with the fruits of rituals that he was called as the embodiment of the sacrificial wood like *Nyagrodha* (banyan), *Udumbara* (*Ficus glomerata*), *Asvattha* (pipal—*Ficus Indica*), in *Sahasranama*. These are

worthly of being used for sacrifices. What is more, although these trees are partially overlapping with the trees that are to be used for churning fire, and for the sacrificial *yūpās* namely *Vaṭa*, *Vilva* (*Aegle Marmelos*) and *Vanhi* (*Plumbago ceylanika*, *Vaṭa* or citrus), the trees are particularly affiliated to Vishnu instead of Śiva, to whom two of the latter there are. Thus Vishnu is directly associated with *Vata* as the child lying on the floating banyan leaf in primeval waters, when there is deluge at the end of an aeon; with *udumbara*⁷ as the wood, of which his images are made (as, for instance, the Nagarjunakonda inscription of the Abhira king-*bhagvato Udumbarabhava*, and a separate form of Vishnu called the *Asvattha Narayana* is known, relating him to the *Asvattha* tree. This only goes to show how much the cult of the sacrifices had become ramified in the post-Vedic times, and how much, notwithstanding the growing prominence of Rudra-Śiva, as the very transformation of the Vedic Agni, the central and, indeed, *Sāttvic* character of Vishnu has made him the god *par excellence* for prosperity in this world and fruits in the other world, giving rise to the famous verse.⁸

In the process of the sophistication that overtook the Rudra Pasupati into the classical Śiva, many other collateral elements also got metamorphosed. One of them was Ganesa or Vighnesvara. Notwithstanding the dubious claim of his existence as a God in the Vedic period—as indicated by the hymn *Gaṇānām tvā Gaṇpatim Havāmahe*, which could well be of a later character, the fact remains that, by and large, we do not have any Ganapati in ritual iconography, much earlier than the fourth-fifth century A.D. Before that, we do, indeed, have the occurrence of different *gaṇas* or the *pramathā* groups, affiliated to Śivaite *parivāra*, but only by the fifth century A.D. we see the rise of Ganesa as the chief of the *parivāras*, and by virtue of the coalescence of all the *Tāmasic* and other powers, belonging to Śiva and his becoming the very embodiment of these powers. The *Vināyaka-purāṇa* of a very much later (probably medieval) times ascribed 12 different incarnations of the God, beginning with Siddhi and Buddhi as his consort and ending with Vallabha Ganapati. Much synthesis of Śivaite and Sakta energy into this God has been enunciated in this process. We have certainly no evidence of Ganapati in the south before the fifth century A.D., and in Tamil Nadu before A.D., 700 notwithstanding the contacts that Pallavas had with Chalukyas in wars. Even in the Chalukyan country, the predominance of Skanda or Karttikeya over Vinayaka is patent and fundamental, where the former comes to be shown as a regular God and is directly associated with the Chalukyan clan prosperity itself. Another interesting feature is that Ganesa as the lord of obstacles, becomes very important in serial documentation, where the schematic replica of his trunk in the form of letter 'U' (Tamil) is written at the top of a document for auspicious prosecution of the contents of the writing. Apparently, this is the modification of the Sanskrit letter 'U' which in its sound value stands for *Sri* in the *pranava* formula of *Aum*. If this is so, then we have the case of displacement of the

chronogram *Sri*, as represented by the letter 'U', by the same letter representing Ganesa, at a later stage, suggesting the polarisation of Vaishnava and Śiva elements in iconography and daily life.

REFERENCES

1. *Samno Mitrāḥ sam Varuṇaḥ Samno bhavatyāyama Samna Indro brihaspatih Samno Vishnu rurukramah* and *'Agnimīde purohitam yajñasya devam, rītvijam.*
2. *Puruṣa śakta, Purva anuvaga*, hymns 1-15; in fact, it would actually seem that this carving is already familiar with *Puruṣa Samhita* and *Ahīrbudhnya Samhita*, since it expounds the evolution of *Aniruddha vyāha* of *Puruṣa*, in the form *Narayana* and that is why the reclining *Narayana* in this sculpture is having the *makaradhvaja* on his left upper arm as well as bow and arrow in other hands. This is, indeed, the exposition to the *Puruṣa śukta* hymn *Tripadār-dhava udait puruṣah; Padosyehabhavat punah*, as seen in *Puruṣa Samhita*.
3. J. Ph. Vogel, *La Sculptur du Mathura, Arts Asiatique*, XV, Paris, 1930.
4. We have this number multiplying into three, namely, *Sri*, *Bhū* and *Nila* in the traditional early Vaishnavite cults of south India and *Nila* (supposed to have been the daughter of the original Chola king of Uraiyur) is also equated with *Goda* or *Andal*. We have unique example of four consorts shown in actual sculpture to *Vishnu*—all standing in a temple above the cave shrine at *Tiruttangal* (*Ramanathapuram District*) and the names of the consorts are taken to be *Sri*, *Bhū*, *Nila* and *Jambavati*. There are figures of *Varuna* and *Garuda* also there. It is probable that this is one of the ramifications of the *Panchavīra* cult.
5. The oft-quoted *Ramayana* reference at the time of *Rama's* marriage with *Sita* mention only *pāṇim grīṇhisva pāṇina* and does not specify which hand of the groom, is to take hold of which hand of the bride though assumably the right hand is implied in each case.
6. *Magha* in his *Sisupala Vadha* gives expression to the prime role of *Vishnu* in sacrifices in no uncertain manner:
*Achyutohyakhila karmābhīh samārādhanīya iti gāyati srutih/
Vishnureva sa Jagāma Krishnatam Vrishṇi Vamsaiti visrutam hi nah||*
7. *Yama* is also called *Audumbara* and the *Audumbara* tribes in the north-west U.P. and adjoining areas of the early historic times were Śiva worshippers and performers of the *Aivamedhayajnas*, etc.
8. *Ālotya Sarva sāstrāṇi, vichārya cha punah punah/
Idamekam sunishpannam dhyeyo Narayaṇo Hariḥ ||*

THE CHAKRAVARTI CONCEPT AND THE CHAKRA

It is not clear as to how and when the concept of royalty as signified by the word *Chakravarti* originated. More obvious, however, is the fact that in the earliest known societies in which the germ of royalty was existing, the association of such chieftains with chariots was quite significant. Indeed the chariot has formed one of the distinguishing features of status in such societies. As archaeological vestiges of pre-literate societies are, often enough, more carefully preserved in the sepulchral rather than habitational edifices, we find very elaborate graves in which the chieftains (so indeed they ought to be) are buried in all pomp and paraphernalia, with the full war chariot and horse-trappings, in order, apparently, to connote the inseparable nature of the chariot and the chieftain. It would be worthwhile to give a brief picture of such societies and graves in this connection.

Here, we can do no better than quote Gordon Childe, whose thought provoking analytical approach to the material evidences of archaeology for the reconstruction of ancient societies and social evolution had been the single major factor in the redemption of prehistoric and protohistoric studies from the stagnant morass of mere *disjecta membra*. Talking about the Mycenaean Greeks, he remarks that, "A priori, one would expect that the possession of horses and chariots was confined to a few who absorbed the social surplus and enjoyed at least the prerogatives of the armoured knight in medieval Europe. Archaeology confirms these expectations. The citadels round which population was grouped were little more than castles, largely occupied by palatial apartments". Again, of the Early Iron Age societies of the Danube basin he says that, "The villages contained about a dozen farmhouses, each with stable and granary, and a large timber hall in strongly fortified *inane enciente*, evidently the castle of the local chief. Funerary record confirms this. In many cemeteries excavations disclose three grades of interments, the majority poorly furnished (and generally after cremation) under small barrows; a

much smaller number of extended skeletons, accompanied, if male, by swords and other accoutrements, but always by rich gear, under large barrows; and a very few shaft-graves or mortuary houses under huge barrows and containing the body of a warrior buried in a four-wheeled hearse and accompanied by the trappings of a war horse, treasures of precious metal and Mediterranean imports. These royal tombs provide the first conclusive evidence for the effective political unification of local communities into still tiny kingdoms."

We are thus in a position to glimpse in a faint manner the basis for the royalty—chariot cult. Even in the Vedic society, and generally given to battles as a matter of daily activity, we see a prominent place for carts and chariots in the descriptions supplied in the Rigvedic hymns. Very detailed accounts of individual components of the chariot machinery are also given, which go to show how much they set store by this vehicle of both defensive and secular utility. While in the Vedic times, the chariots or carts could have been used for collecting and bringing such material as *Soma* plants, twigs for *homa* and other *sāmagrī*, it is quite probable that the chariot's distinguished place was in the field of battle too, of which we have quite realistic accounts. Further, the chariot of the Sun with the seven steeds yoked to it is a very ancient and familiar Vedic concept. We have poetic accounts of the daily traverse of the Sun across the firmament and the darkness of the night on the earth due to the course of the Sun in the netherworlds. The Egyptian version of Osiris is similar to the Vedic in general, though the former is more closely associated with royalty; but the vehicle of passage there, however, is a boat and not a chariot. The Vedic Aryan concept of the solar chariot, however, has its own bearing upon the King, the extent of his domain, and metaphorically the Sun may well be compared with the King who rules the earth and sheds benevolence upon the living creatures. In any case, it is fairly clear that the word *Chakravarti* is etymologically traceable from the revolutions of the chariot wheels, perhaps of the Sun in his apparent diurnal movement. In its developed form, in the classical times, the wheel and the chariot had become a powerful symbol of temporal suzerainty and has thus come to be portrayed extensively in art, sculpture, and of course, literature.

The wheel is indeed the most suitable channel through which the idea of a central authority which controls and commands a network of peripheral forces, is effectively brought out. The wheel with its hub, spokes and tyre provides the most natural analogy to the relationship between the subjects and the King, how the revolutions of the centre are briefer compared to their outer tyres. However, we find that archaeologically considered, spoked wheels are relatively later inventions and the most ancient documented wheels of the vehicles in many parts of the world were tripartite discs. It should also be conceded that the tripartite wheel is the most efficient form of solid wheel but at the same time it was not the only feasible form. It is thus interesting that in so many distinct areas the first attempts

by wheelwrights produced this form—which naturally points to the diffusive nature of this device. As Childe had so comprehensively catalogued, wheeled vehicles are known from Mesopotamia in 3000 B.C.; Indus valley 2500; Central Asian Steppes, 2500; Northern Syria and Upper Euphrates, 2200—100; Greece, 1550—30; South Russia, 1430—200; Northern Italy, 1100—200; Britain, 500—100 B.C., thus suggesting a probably single-centred diffusion from lower Tigris.

As mentioned earlier, by the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C., in Mesopotamia we have the burial of wheeled vehicles clearly and characteristically associated with royal graves. This very association is also evidenced in the earliest contexts of wheeled vehicles in the entire North East Europe, South Russia and Greece. We are led to remark that this intimate association of wheels and royalty again supports the view of single centre diffusion.

It is of fundamental significance further that the evolution of a wheeled traction is directly based on a previous stage of the plough which is drawn by two animals yoked to the central pole. We know also that the invention of the potter's wheel is also neolithic in age and origin and further was first attested in Mesopotamia, although only centuries later than wheeled vehicles, was it adopted for making a living in the professional field. We are thus tempted to conclude that the direct development of the potter's wheel and the plough out-fit of the neolithic stage was the wagon on wheels of the succeeding stage of urban civilization as at Sumer and Indus Valley. That it could be so is further conditioned by the fact that the requirement based on a large-scale demand for wheeled vehicles would have implied adequate supply of metal, not only for the wheels and its gadgets themselves but also for the carpenters and wheelwrights for making the vehicles. This could have occurred only with the advanced knowledge of the sources of metal ores and of metalcraft or metallurgy itself in a Bronze Age or early Iron Age setting.

Besides, any new technique or innovation gains a foothold in a foreign soil or, in other words, diffuses, only when the conditions are such that the adopting society had evolved to a stage which allows the acceptance of the ideas, or when it satisfied the socially approved need of the adopting culture. Mere competition or impact is not enough. In the case of protohistoric India at least, it is demonstrable to some extent, that the adoption of the chariot was directly influenced by a socially approved need; namely the fighting chieftains who made common cause with one group or another for certain not necessarily aggrandizing purposes. The germs of a division of society into the warriors, ritual-minded Brahmins, and craftsmen or artisans has already existed in the 2nd-1st millennium B.C. which was to develop into more rigid patterns in the late Vedic times. Thus the chariots were popular not merely as a fighting armour of the kings, but also as the symbol of a socially and technologically evolving society. Further the geographical conditions of the river plains was suitable for the propulsion of the horse-drawn chariot and, as

we see in Vedic literature, the complete familiarity with even the troubles that beset a charioteer is quite amply evidenced.

Thus we are led to infer that wheeled vehicles and chieftainship (either a monarch or a priest-king) have a close relationship; that these could have originated at the earliest in the Bronze Age communities of West Asia and Indus Valley; and that the basic utility of the wheeled vehicles was not merely restricted to military purposes but could have been extended largely to ritual and miscellaneous secular occasions. In the sequel, the wheel became, with specific emphasis in India, the symbol of a State, whether of a theocratic hierarchy of priests or of religious or ritual-minded king becoming the patrons and saviours of the priestly class as obtained in the Epic and Classical times.

In the realm of Indian art and literature the concept of royalty or *Chakrvarti* has become crystallised in the performance of sacrifices signifying temporal power, such as the *Aśvamedha*. It was not a mere formality or showmanship but, on the other hand, however restricted by the geographical terrain of the king, a comprehensive exercise in valour and heroism, and from the point of view of archaeology, the finest evidence for the physical existence of the kings, their exploits and their vicissitudes. It is not unusual thus, for instance, for a king to strike special issues of gold coins on that occasion (as the great Chandragupta II did) or to erect sacrificial altars on which to perform the *yajña* part of the ceremony with the bricks (rarely) inscribed with the record of the performance of the sacrifice by the king (as king Śilavarman of Kalsi area had done).

It is interesting that one of the architectural forms or orientations of the sacrificial altars prescribed in the *Śulba Śāstra* texts is called *Rathachakra Chiti*. This takes the form of a wheel with tyre, spokes and hub complete and in which apparently there can be a variation in the number of spokes from a minimum of four to sixteen or more. Now, this idea is at the root of two devices which were adopted by early Buddhism in two significant contexts. Firstly we have the *Dharmachakra pravartana* or setting in motion of the Wheel of Law by the Buddha at Sarnath. This is based on the idea of a perennial rotation of the wheel, given that smooth and ardent adherence to *Dharma* by the devotees. It is the most symmetric symbol of the harmonious promulgation of a campaign for the pious and compassionate way of living that the Buddha initiated and the shape of the wheel is most aptly fitting the ideology. The other aspect which is indeed allied but is fitted to a different context, namely funerary, is the *Stūpa* concept. The plan of the *stūpa* is wheel-shaped and the spokes can range from four to sixteen or more. While, we do indeed have *stūpas* which have only a hard earthen or pebble core in a brick casing and without segremental spoke-walls, the most characteristic type of *stūpa* is always wheel-shaped in plan. The wheel-shaped *stūpa* is for corporeal relics of the Buddha or the Bodhisattvas or any saints or *Chakravartins* or *Mahārājas* or even lay devotees sometimes, or is merely a memorial, or having associative articles enshri-

ned. The references to *Chaityas* in *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* together with the Buddha's own references to *stūpas* built over his predecessors shows a sufficiently early prevalence of the practice. In any case, the use of the wheel-plan is as much the result of traditional importance of the wheel-symbol as a basis for a ritual altar, as the practical utility and efficiency of this plan for a structural monument of hemispherical shape. While the wheel had later become the characteristic material or structural manifestation of Buddhist art and ritual in India, we will do well to bear in mind that the origins of the wheel-symbol stretch far back into time and in India we have the earliest archaeological application in the wheeled representations of the Indus Valley culture, and the earliest literary form in the Rigvedic hymns. Even in the early medieval time, with the revival of Hinduism, we have the happy application of the very Buddhist word *Dharmachakra* to a patently *Puranic* context as in the case of Vedanta Desika's *Abhītiṣṭava*, stanza 23, applying to Vishnu in the role of the resplendent Disc-bearer and the preserver of order and *Dharma* :

स्ववृत्तिवशवर्तिता त्रिदशवृत्ति पुनः चक्रं ।
प्रवर्तयतु घाम्नि ते महति धर्मचक्रस्थितिम् ॥

THE TYPOLOGY OF THE ANANTASAYI ICON

Iconographic evidence reveals that the reclining form of Vishnu known as Anantaśayi or Śeṣhaśayi is one of the oldest among Brahmanical ritual forms. Its examples are found throughout the country, in stone, stucco, and wood. Indeed, the theme of the sleeping god on the primeval waters is one of the most ancient puranic concepts of creation, revealing a rare combination of the attributes and consorts of Vishnu in pristine forms. The growth of the Anantaśayi concept marks the development of the undivided Trinity family, the comprehensive array of all the Vedic gods, major, and minor in an assemblage that spells dynamism amid primordial clam.

Treatment of the theme has varied in different regions, reflecting the rise of the *Āgamas* with their emphasis on one or another aspect of the original Vishnu myth. The greatest number of examples are found in Tamil land. Those in stone may be either sculptures in the round or rock-cut; the latter occurring both inside excavated shrines and in the open. A well-known example of the latter type is the small Ranganatha carving between the two Shore Temples at Mahabalipuram (covered with a shrine in the time of Narasimhavarman II). Similar but larger examples are found in Orissa, as in Dhenkanal District where there are two sculptures of Śeṣhaśayi type at Sarang and Rasol, the former on the bank of the river Brahmani and the latter in a forest; the images, nearly fifty feet (15 m) long, being sculptured out of low rock outcroppings.

The version of Puranic cosmogony found in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* tells that just before the deluge God Narayana was engrossed in introspective contemplation. Consequently the illusory creative spectrum produced by the play of the three *guṇas* or qualities, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* (i.e., lucidity, energy, and density) was blacked out. After two aeons, the intuitive creative urge, *ichchā śakti*, overtook the god. The spell of illusion was broken and the power of *kāla-*

śakti, cosmic manifestation, with its gamut of *karmas* and *guṇas* reappeared and began to function. The immediate result of the divine will was the creation of the directions and other gods. It further produced, by the preponderance of active or kinetic *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, the *antaḥkaraṇa*, *indriyas*, and *śabda* (inner organs sensory organs, and sound respectively). The last by logical diffusion gave rise to *akāśa* and *vāyu*, ether and air; and through those to *sparsa*, *rūpa*, *rasa* and *gandha* (touch, sight, taste, and smell).

These, however, were still not equal to the task of creating the macrocosm. Hence God Himself motivated the creative power within Him, *kriyā śakti*, to produce the cosmic shell or egg, *Brahmāṇḍa*. After this *aṇḍa* had rested for a millennium upon the cosmic waters, there emerged from it *Virāt*, the Cosmic Being, in the form of the Fourteen Worlds. At the top of these worlds, in the Satyaloka, God Himself was converted into Brahman. During the preceding *pralaya* or period of dissolution, when there had been only water, these two had been merged. At the end of the *pralaya*, God asked *kāla śakti* to invoke Him. When this was done, God cast an inward look, and a beautiful lotus arose, its petals and bud representing all creation. This lotus, growing from God's body on a tall stalk, shed lustre all around it; and when it blossomed, Brahma appeared.

Brahma, seated on the lotus, looked all about him through the four directions to discern the origin of the marvellous lotus; and to facilitate this received four heads and pairs of eyes. He could not, however, perceive the original root of the lotus in God Himself; and ultimately realized this only by deep concentration and meditation. Then he prayed to God for the blessing of reserves of power for creation, and with this power brought into being the Three Worlds with their flora, fauna, birds, and divine beings like *Yakshas*, *Gandharvas* and *Kinnaras*. Next were born the four precocious child-seers or Sanakādi *Yogis*. These last were asked to procreate men but declined, being engaged in asceticism.

Then Rudra was born from between the brows of Brahma, to be differentiated into eleven elements and provided with eleven consorts. Brahma further engendered the *Rishis*; the group of nine demiurges or Nava Prajapatis,¹ Marichi, Atri Angiras, Kratu, Pulaha, Pulastya, Bhrigu, Vasishtha, and Daksha, and the divine sage Narada; who subsequently created this world. He further engendered Dharma, Kardama and Sarasvati. From his face he evolved the four Vedas, the six Vedangas or auxiliary Vedic sciences, and the Puranas. These he taught to his sons, the Prajapatis. Then, with further blessings from God, Brahma subdivided his own body into two forms, the male Svayambhuva Manu and the female Śatarupa: the first couple, through whom the human race was procreated.

A variant of this legend, found in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* and its interpolated episode, the *Devī* (or *Durgā*) *Māhātmya*,² introduces important subsidiary characters. Markandeya appears as the chief *Rishi* performing

worship of Śeṣhaśayi; while Madhu and Kaitabha are demons who attempted to attack Vishnu while He was in meditation, and were foiled by the serpent Ananta, who sent fumes of poison against them. A further addition is the personification of Vishnu's weapons in *Pañchajanya*, *Sudarsana*, *Nandaka*, *Kaumodakī*, *Śarṅga* (the conch, discus, sword, mace, and bow respectively).

The *Vaikhānasāgama* text³ and its variant the *Vimānārchanakalpa* go a step further in subdividing the Anantaśayi form into four iconographic variants of *śayana*. He who seeks *yoga* will worship the *Yogaśayana*; he who asks for mundane bliss will worship the *Bhogaśayana*; he who aspires to *vīra*, strength, will be a devotee of the *Vīraśayana*; while a king who wishes to vanquish his foes will worship the *Abhichārikaśayana*.

In the first of these, Vishnu is to be depicted with two arms, half-reclining, with eyes half-open, one leg slightly flexed and the other fully stretched out. The right arm is stretched backward; the left hand either rests on the thigh or is raised at waist level in the *kaṭaka* pose (a conventional, non-symbolic gesture). The sages Bhrigu and Markandeya worship, while the demons Madhu and Kaitabha threaten from the direction of the God's legs. Brahma is shown seated on the lotus rising out of Vishnu's navel. On the upper part of the rear wall will be shown Garuda, Viśvakshena (Vishnu's gatekeeper), the personifications of the Five Weapons, and the Seven *Rishis*; while a second representation of Brahma and Śankara (*i.e.* Śiva) are seated on right and left respectively. This most complete combination stands as *uttama* or topmost class. The intermediate, *madhyama* class involves the omission of the *Rishis*, Viśvakshena, etc.; while the lowest, *adhama* class brings the omission also of the worshipping sages and the two demons.

In the *Bhogaśayana* the God is shown four-armed, half reclining, with the legs as in the *Yogaśayana*. The two lower arms are stretched along the thighs; the right upper arm is stretched backward, while the left is raised in the *kaṭaka* pose. Near the head is Śrī Devī touching the god's hand; one of her hands hold a lotus the other makes the *kaṭaka* gesture. Bhū, or Mahī Devī, massages the God's left foot, carrying a blue lily in her right hand. Markandeya and Bhrigu, seated at the level of the serpent's lowest coil, worship on right and left respectively. The demons are shown at the foot end as if rushing at terrific speed, their legs immersed in the ocean waves, while their whole persons are scorched by the poisonous fumes emitted by Ananta's mouths. On the rear upper wall are shown Brahma, Śankara on the left, with Ganesa further to the right and Durga to the left. At this stage the representation will be of the *madhyama* class. For the *uttama* class the forms on the rear wall should be supplemented by the personifications of the Five weapons to the right of Brahma, with Surya and Chandra to right and left; the *Gandharva* Tumburu and a youthful form the sage Nārada further on the right, and on the left the Aśvins, the Eight *Lokapālas* and *Apsaras*. Without

any of these, or the worshipping sages, the representation will be of the *adhama* class.

The *Vīraśayana* form shows the God with four arms, two holding the conch and discus while one hand supports head and the fourth arm is stretched along the thigh. Śrī and Bhū enclose the divine feet; the demons attack from the foot end; while Markandeya and Bhrigu worship on right and left respectively. Above sits Brahma on the lotus, accompanied by the personifications of the Five weapons, Garuda, Surya, Chandra, the Seven *Rishis*, the Twelve Adityas or light deities, the Eleven Rudras, Tumburu and Narada, the Four Sanakadi *Yogis*, *Apsaras* and *Kinnaras*. Appropriately diminished, this *uttama* grouping may be reduced to the *madhyama* or *adhama* classes.

The fourth form, *Abhichārikaśayana*, shows Vishnu lying in deep slumber with scanty clothing and thin limbs, his head to the north. He is blue-bodied and four-armed; there are no attendant deities. The *uttama* version shows a Śeṣha with two hoods and two body coils. With a single hood and body coil the form is *madhyama*; while the *adhama* version omits Śeṣha entirely, placing the recumbent Vishnu on bare ground.

The reasons for some of the principal differences between these four iconographic categories are quite natural. The *Yoga* type lacks representations of Śrī and Bhū, presumably because a god in deep meditation should not be disturbed by consorts massaging his feet. The latter feature is appropriate in the *Vīra* type, with a full complement of assembled gods, etc. The *Bhoga* type is more formal and so places the two goddesses according to protocol, with Śrī at the head and Bhū at the feet. The *Abhichārika* category, finally, is a highly specialized and exclusive one, conceived under the influence of strong taboos.

The *Āgama* text admits an exception to the *Yogaśayana* canon, in that Bhū Devi may be shown in place of the worshipper Bhrigu, at the foot-end. She is found there, for example, at Mahabalipuram in the Anantaśayi relief of the Mahi-shamardinimandapa.

The *Bhoga* type with Śrī at the head and Bhū at the feet is found in both northern and southern India. The *Vīra* type with both consorts at the feet is the most prevalent in later representations. The *Yoga* type, omitting the two entirely, relatively rare, is not always strictly observed, and is perhaps the earliest. As a general rule the most monumental group compositions are the earliest, particularly in stone. In stucco as well most later examples of the Anantaśayi theme are relatively small and compact. On the other hand, full iconographic completeness, to the extent permitted by the *Āgama* text, is unknown, except perhaps in the two sites of Tamil Nadu, Tirumayam (in stone) and Srivilliputtur (in stucco). The reason for this is probably that the theme was conceived essentially in Puranic terms, which permitted a bare minimum, to which additions might or might not be made. The *Āgama* seems to attempt to reconcile this fact with its own elaboration by admitting

in each of its four types the progressively simpler *madhyama* and *adhama* classes. In practice, again, there may be surprising omissions even when the composition is relatively restricted, e.g., most early examples omit Śrī Devi; and Brahma is absent from the Mahabalipuram relief in the Mahishamardinimandapa.

The appended Table attempts to summarize the iconographic characteristics of the best known Anantaśayi representations both northern and southern.

It is natural to study these data in an attempt to establish a chronological succession on iconographic grounds. The criteria should not of course be evaluated without taking into consideration the provenance of each example and its degree of importance in the original scheme of worship, i.e., whether it was the main representation of the deity or an accessory panel. The medium used also has a bearing. There are four traditional materials, stone, wood, stucco, and paint; and Āgama texts normally permit an image to be either, *chitra*, *chitrārdha*, *chitrābhāsa* or in the round, in relief, or in paint (the alternatives being apparently required as much for economic as for ritual considerations). At the same time we know that, broadly speaking, stone and wood were used long before the vogue for stucco came into prominence. There are cases in which stone images were later covered over with layers of plaster or *punuguchattam* as it is called in Tamil, and so give the impression of being stucco sculptures (of course at some sacrifice of the proportions and clarity of the original).

Speaking of the southern examples first, we may note some basic features of their compositions. Almost all, except at Mahabalipuram, include Brahma. Most show Bhū Devi but not Śrī. All include the demons Madhu and Kaitabha; place the *Āyudha Devatās*, the personifications of the weapons, on the rear wall; and have one or two sages at the foot end. Most give the serpent a maximum of three coils, which are rendered horizontally. Mahabalipuram in general is sufficiently aberrant to warrant closer attention.

Both examples, at the Shore Temple and the Mahishamardinimandapa, are known to date prior to the reign of Rajasimha, i.e. Narasimavarman II (c. 700-728); the former may be even prior to Narasimhavarman I (c. 630-668), and so pre-Mamalla. It is unique in omitting the serpent, the *Āyudhas*, Bhū, and Brahma; and in this respect satisfies the *Vaikhānasāgama* description of the minimal, *adhama* stage of the *Abhichārika* version of the theme.

The relief in the Mahishamardinimandapa corresponds to the *Yogaśayana* version in giving its Vishnu only two arms. It is exceptional in omitting the figure of Brahma, and in reducing the hovering demigods to two, probably the personifications of the conch and mace. Thus the more widely destructive weapon types, the sword, discus, and bow, are absent. The conch is primarily a commemorative symbol, given to Krishna-Vasudeva as a reminder of his having slain the dwarfish sea demon Panchajanya; while the mace had been Vishnu's arm in his earlier boar *avatāra*.

Speaking parenthetically, it is impossible that the two small figures kneeling at front centre, facing each other, should be two more *Āyudhas*. Both extant representations limit the positions permitted these personifications to the rear wall. Both of the kneelers wear their hair in the *jaṭāmakūṭa*, but differ in other ways. The one on the viewer's left wears a *yajñopavīta* of flowers, or perhaps of skulls, and legs are hidden below mid-thigh, as if immersed in water; thus he may represent Varuna. The other, wearing an ordinary sacred thread and kneeling at the level of the serpent's bottom coil, is perhaps Markandeya. Representation of these two are cited in the texts, and are almost always found in similar positions in the southern examples; elsewhere often with folded hands. It is interesting that Bhū Devi should be found here on the same level—that of the earth, which she personifies—kneeling and facing the god; in most of the later works she sits near the feet and massages them.

The two tall figures at the extreme right are the demons.

This panel has sometimes been considered as inspired by the *Devī Māhātmya* version of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*: an interpolation into the Puranic text which in the north cannot go back much beyond A.D. 608 (a verse from the *Devī Māhātmya* is quoted in an inscription so dated at Goth in the Jodhpur district of Rajasthan: the Dahimati-mata inscription of Dhruhlana, of the year 289: to be reckoned by the Gupta era, on the basis of the symbols used for the numerals). We may assume that this text would have been available in the Pallava realm say within fifty years after it became prevalent in the Gupta-controlled areas of the north. It is not so easy to deduce from this that it would have been actually applied. Even in an area of undisputed Gupta control, Deogarh, we find in the Vishnu temple a Śeṣhaśayi panel which is not of the conventional type nor any nearer to the *Devī Māhātmya* version.

The applicability of this text to the Mahabalipuram relief is based on two controversial assumptions. First, two flying figures are called *Yoganidrā*, personified illusion, and her attendant. Second, it is pointed out that in the shrine the Anantaśayi panel is placed just opposite to the relief showing Durga attacking the demon; and that these two themes are similarly juxtaposed in the first two chapters of the *Devī Māhātmya*. Against the first claim stands the fact that the two flying figures are shown just as they appear in the full *Āyudha* group of four or five, with the mace symbolized by the female Kaumodaki and the conch by the dwarfish demon Panchajana.

As to the second argument, it may be pointed out that a general association of Durga with Vishnu is common in the Tamil country, there, and nowhere else, she carries the conch and discus of the god. This is not necessarily a support for the *Devī Māhātmya* theory in its entirety. The identification of Durga with Narayani, Vishnu's sister, is a well-known early tradition, and probably the source from which the *Devī Māhātmya* was subsequently elaborated.

With greater credibility the Mahabalipuram relief may be described as an incipient *Yogaśayana* example which still corresponds to the earlier Puranic stage of imagery : say, to that of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* retold at the start of this paper. The panel, one of the most abbreviated known, is quite unlike most of the other versions of the Anantaśayi in south India. In one specific respect, the treatment of the serpent's upper coils, which are suggested by a series of erect parallel curving lines, the relief is related instead to the north. A similar device may be seen in examples from the north-east e.g. at Kotah, Deogarh, and Udayagiri and from the Chalukyan region, e.g. at Aihole, Ellora, Bhokardan, and Undavalli. The last three of these may be regarded as later than Mahabalipuram; and Undavalli, indeed, may have been influenced by the Pallava relief, since it too presents the god as two-armed, with Bhū Devi kneeling on the lower level. (Its *Āyudha* personifications, however, are the full five, shown hovering against the rear wall, so that in that respect it is somewhat more evolved.). The other examples cited however, are clearly earlier than Mahabalipuram, and so suggest that the Pallava sculptor may have worked under a degree of northern influence.

This treatment of Ananta's upper coils may be seen in other later works in the Tamil land, as at Tirumayam and in the medieval mural painting at Mattancheri Palace, Cochin; thus demonstrating that a northern tradition could linger in the deep south alongside the standardized southern form adumbrated in the *Vaikhānasāgama*, almost universally followed after A.D. 800.

A third Mahabalipuram version, the Ranganatha carving between the two Shore Temples, follows the *Ābhichārika* canon, employed to bring the defeat of the king's enemy. This suggests that it was executed in the last years of Mahendra I, after his humiliating reverses at the hands of the Western Chalukyan armies; at a time when the Pallava domain was so shrunken that Mahabalipuram might almost have had to serve as the king's last *jaladurga*, or water citadel.

OTHER SOUTHERN EXAMPLES

There is another, unfinished Ranganatha rock-cut relief at Tondur on the boulder known as Vinnamparai. It is noteworthy that the god is shown lying in the reverse direction. Ananta's hoods have been blocked out, but the body coils are not worked. The type of drapery and ornaments, and the style of the inscription on the rock make possible an ascription to the Pallava period. The *Yoga* canon is followed.

The more evolved specimens found in Tamil Nadu at Tirumayam, Namakkal, Malayadippatti and Singavaram may be ascribed to various petty chieftains who ruled parts of the Tamil country, the Muttaraiyars, and the like; all of whom were post-Mamalla while most post-dated Rajasimha Narasimhavarman II, as well. This group has certain common characteristics. The typical composition includes :

all five *Āyudha* personifications; Garuda, Brahma, and Daksha; Narada and Tumburu, the Seven *Rishis* and *Apsaras*; the demons Madhu and Kaitabha; and Bhū Devi without Śrī. As one can see in the light of the cosmogony already narrated, the assemblage combines beings from two stages of creation, the first by Narayana through His *ichchā śakti* and the second by Brahma. In the former process, Varuna, Agni, Surya, Chandra, the Aśvins and Rudra are named amid others. In the latter were born the Sanakadi *Yogis*, the *Apsaras*, and the Nava Prajapatis. All of these are found in the post-Rajasimha representations on the scene and are mentioned in the *Vaikhānasa* text as well.

A curious exception to this unanimity is the figure of Daksha, who is prominent in the sculptures but is omitted from the *Āgama* lists. This is true in the early south Indian stages, and recurs in the latest phase in Kerala: a region in which Vaishnava traditions were preserved in some areas with remarkable fidelity to the pristine Puranic basis, unaffected by the latter developments in the sect brought about by the teachings of the great Viśiṣṭādvaita philosopher Ramanuja (c. 1100). Daksha, as one of the Prajapatis (as that group was finally consituted) was clearly intended in the old Puranic scheme to play a role in the procreation of the species. In addition his inclusion in the Anantaśayi iconography as an accessory figure is doubly justified when he is found along with Agni, as at Tirumayam. The Vaishnavite version of the familiar story tells that when Daksha by insolent behavior had provoked Śiva to obliterate the sacrifice he was making, he prayed to Vishnu that the ritual might be completed. Vishnu gave His blessing, and Agni was reinstalled as the sacrificial flame.

At the Vatapatraśayī shrine at Srivilliputtur one sees around Narayana a group that corresponds almost exactly to the specifications given in the *Vaikhānasaṅgama* for the complete *Vīraśayana* category. This temple must have been one of the earliest to follow the *Āgamic* canon so scrupulously; as was common in its time, the later eighth century, it was executed entirely in stucco. A little less close to the text and more typical for southern usage is the panel in the Ranganatha cave at Namakkal, where the original iconography may be checked by an inscription, naming all the beings represented.⁴ Daksha is present. On the other hand one important personage in the *Āgamic* list is omitted, Śrī Devi. It is not clear why this goddess should so often have been omitted in the Tamil region, when she shares the prominence of Bhū in the northern panels, and even in some of the Early Chalukyan ones. A possible explanation may be that Vishnu was conceived in Tamil land as Śrīnivāsa, i.e. with Śrī resident in His body and an inherent part of His person; whereas Bhū, the Earth, was physically separable. In addition may have been drawn between this concept of a not fully emergent Śrī and the more palpable goddess Lakshmī who came to be her *alter ego*. The latter arose out of churning the ocean during the second *avatāra*, the *Kūrmāvatāra*, and so was not yet in existence during the Anantaśayi period. It is interesting to see that it was

approximately at the time of Ramanuja that the composition of the *Vīra* class was modified by habitually adding the figure of Śrī, Lakshmi to that of Bhū, as a female consort massaging the divine feet.⁵

In the developed stage of Anantaśayi iconography, Śrī and Bhū will be present not only in the main shrine but as consorts on the processional image, the *utsavabhera*; and in addition will have their own separate sub-shrines, Sri's at the south-western corner of the temple and Bhū's at the north-western corner. The latter is usually shown in the form of the female saint Andal or Goda,⁶ the foundling child of Perialvar of Srivilliputtur, who came to be considered for various reasons as a divine bride and an incarnation of Bhū. In this role she replaces Jyeshtha, who had been assigned the north-western corner in earlier usage in the Pandyan country.

The most remarkable omission is that of the great serpent itself, since in the Anantaśayi he is in principle as important as Vishnu. He may be omitted in the *Abhichārika* version of the group, as Śrī is not shown in the more normal form. This parallelism implies the typical Vaishnava concept of an intimate correlation between the two, through their shared protective role over Narayana.

The omission of Brahma, as at Mahabalipuram, is presumably the result of a decision to represent an earlier moment in the legend, prior to the emergence of the cosmic lotus. At Tiruttangal, Brahma is not present in the sculpture, but appears painted on the rear wall, presumably as a later addition. This usage is sanctioned in *Vaikhānasāgama*, which speaks of the permissibility of using painted substitutes in the proper places when the figures of Brahma and other gods cannot be carved on the rear wall.⁷

In general the Puranic galaxy of subsidiary divinities tends to be systematised in all Ranganatha temples from about the ninth or tenth centuries onwards; e.g. at Koviladi, Tirukkoshtiyur and Tiruvallur in the Tamil land and at Srirangapatna in the Mysore zone. In a very late representation, such as at Trichur in the murals of the Mattancheri Palace, one finds exceptional additions; the ten incarnations or *Dasavatara*, the Asvin twins, and even Suka Brahma, the legendary narrator of the *Bhāgavata Purana*, all northern influences, as partly found at Kotah and also at Badami.

An interesting development occasionally found in the South is the provision of triple, three-storeyed shrines to Vishnu. These usually celebrate, in ascending order, the seated, reclining, and standing forms, the god being referred to by a different epithet for each. This sort of temple is found at Tirukoshtiyur, the Kudalalagar shrine at Madurai, and Mannarkoil, all in the Pandyan country; and at Kanchipuram (the Vaikunthaperumal temple) and Uttiramerur in the traditional Pallava domain. Apart from their distinctive architectural formula, these represent the Anantaśayi in standard groupings, with attendant figures in the earlier and few in the later temples. The materials used are also varied, stone,

stucco, or even wood, as in the last case.

The attempt to assign approximate dates to the southern Anantaśayi panels that are not covered by inscriptions, may in some cases be aided by references to them in the hymns composed by the *Ālvārs*, the Vaishnavite poet-saints of the Tamil land. For example one of the earliest of these, Bhutatalvar, who was probably a contemporary of the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I sang of the god-head as worshipped at a dozen cult centres, including several in our Anantaśayi group. The character of his hymns makes it likely that these had recently been completed when he saw them (though what he saw was not necessarily what is visible today). Comparing his accounts, one can see that they share a common iconographic character; which in the works themselves has been partly obscured by later alterations.

At the Sarangapani temple at Kumbhakonam, for example, one finds today a reclining Vishnu figure whose exterior is plaster, added over the stone original. In this present state the god has no accompanying *rishis*; instead there are two large stucco goddesses, Bhū and Sri, seated at the base facing each other, and presumably later additions since their material and their size correspond to the altered state of the Vishnu. Originally neither the goddesses nor Brahma seem to have been represented: a link to what must have been the more or less contemporary rock-cut version at Mahabalipuram. The absence of the goddesses and the position given the divine figure, whose, upper body is slightly raised, conform generally to the requirements stated in the *Vaikhānasa* text for the *Yogaśayana* type.

The example at Tiruppullani was celebrated in a hymn by a saint of the latter half of the eighth century, Tirumangai, presumably close to the time of its making. There the god, who is of stucco, is two-handed. Stucco figures of Bhrigu and Markandeya occupy the base, and there is a stucco Garuda at the proper right. Somewhat undersized figures, variously in stone and in stucco, cover the rear and proper right walls: Brahma, the five *Āyudha* personifications, Surya and Chandra, the *rishis* and the *nidīs*. Sri and Bhū are absent. Thus, from the *Āgamic* point of view, the original deity at Tiruppullani would probably have been of the *Yoga* type, with Bhrigu, Markandeya, and Garuda. Whether or not the other diminutive figures existed from the outset is not very clear, but there is a strong probability that they did not. In particular two unique minor features, the presence of a tiny Hanuman at the god's feet and figures of Vibhishana and Varunaraja with his queens stationed on the *antarāla* walls facing toward the cella are clearly medieval improvisations intended to harmonise the Anantaśayi theme with the *Ramayana* legend that sanctified the place.

The rock-cut temple at Tiruttangal near Srivilliputtur was celebrated by both Bhutatalvar and Tirumangai. There again the original assemblage around the god seems to have been very limited, and was supplemented by painting on the rear wall at a somewhat later period.⁷ If we suppose that the original shrine was in

existence in the later seventh century, we must account for the fact that its type is represented elsewhere by at least one example dated a century or so later *i.e.* the Narasimha shrine in the cave at Anaimalai, which carries a dedicatory inscription of A.D. 770 by the Pandya king Maranjadayan. That, however, is so much more expertly laid out and executed than the Tiruttangal cave than the two may well have been separated by a fairly wide interval.

A relatively late relief with pronounced northern iconographic characteristics is found at Badami in a shallow, semi-circular panel on a rocky outcrop on the northern bank of the tank. The ten *avatāras* are shown at the top, with the Buddha taking the place of Krishna: a northern preference of the period after c. A.D. 700. The first two *avatāras* are given zoomorphic forms; both Bhargava Rama and Sri Rama carry bows and arrows; while Balarama holds *hala* and *musala*. Of the *āyudhas*, the conch, discus, and mace are placed on the ground beside the God, while his left upper hand holds a *padma*. The lower hands are in *dhyāna* or *yoga mudrā*.

Bhū is at Vishnu's head, seated on a slight lower pedestal than Śrī's; the latter is at the opposite end, supporting the God's left leg on her lap and massaging it. The Ananta has seven hoods instead of the usual five, representing a mighty *Karkoṭaka* or superior Naga type.

The northern versions of the Anantaśayi theme, as seen at Deogarh and Udayagiri,⁸ for example, shows the God as four-armed, with a quite different, less systematic assemblage from that adumbrated in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*: both Sri and Bhū, Brahma, and occasionally Śiva and Skanda.

The latest of the three analysed in the Appendix, the panel in the Kotah Museum originally from Badoli, is unusually elaborate. The serpent's coils are themselves supported by a legged cot, and beneath this there are *devatās*, perhaps including Varuna. The god is four-armed; one hand props up his head, while the upper pair hold club and discus. Bhū Devi is shown prominently at the feet, while Brahma, the demons Madu and Kaitabha, and other gods—perhaps Surya and Chandra—appear on the background in a middle register in a rather small scale. In a separate panel above them is a continuous row of figures, the ten *avatāras* and the Seven *Rishis* (or Nine *Prajāpatis*? the missing two in the now mutilated corner?). This work, not later than the ninth century, is more in keeping with the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* tradition than the earlier examples.

SOUTHERN SITES																					
ICONOGRAPHIC ELEMENTS	DATE	Aihole (Ceiling sculpture)	Badami II, III (frieze)	Badami (exterior, near tank)	Bhokardan	Ellora XV	Ellora XXVII	Patalesvar cave, Poona	Kumbakonam	Mahabalipuram (Shore Temple)	Mahabalipuram	(Mahishamardimandapam)	Malayadippatti	Namakkal	Singavaram	Srirangam	Srivilliputtur	Tirukkoshiyur	Tirumayam		
		C. 625	C. 575	C. 800	C. 700	C. 750	C. 700	C. 800	C. 675	C. 650	C. 660	C. 775	C. 745	C. 700	C. 650	C. 775	C. 775	C. 775	C. 750		
Vishnu, arms		4	4	4	4	4	4		2	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
Weapons held		2	0	4	2	0	2		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Markandeya		0	(3)	0	0	0	0		0	0	x	x	x	x	0	x	x	x	x		
Bhrigu		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	x	x	x	x	0	x	0	x	x		
Agni		0	x	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	x	?	0	0	0	0	0	x		
Garuda		0	x	x	0	0	0		0	0	0	x	x	x	0	x	0	x	x		
Brahma		x	0	x	x	x	x		x ¹	0	0	x	x	x	0	x	x	x	x		
Varuna		0	0	0	x	?	0		0	0	0	0	x	x	0	x	0	?	?		
Bhū Devi		x	0	x	0	x	x		x ²	0	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Śrī Devi		x	0	x	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	x	x	0	0		
Śiva		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Daksha		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	x	x	0	0	0	0	0	x		
Narada, Tumburu		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	x	x	0	0	x	0	x	x		
Seven Rishis		0	0	0	0	0	0		x ¹	0	0	x	x	0	0	x	0	x	x		
Asvin Twins		0	0	0	0	0	0		x ¹	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Sanakadi Yogis		0	0	0	0	0	0		x ¹	0	0	0	0	0	0	x	0	0	0		
Surya, Chandra		0	0	0	0	0	0		x ¹	0	0	x	x	0	0	x	0	x	x		
Five Āyudha gods		0	x	0	0	x	0		x ¹	0	(2)	x	x	(4)	0	x	x	x	x		
Madhu, Kaitabha		x	x	0	0	0	0		0	0	x	x	x	x	0	x	x	x	x		
Kinnaras, Vidyadharas, etc.		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	0	x		
Śuka Brahma		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	0	x		
Ten Avataras		0	0	x	0	0	0		0	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		

(Rashtrakuta, almost totally broken, but similar to the above Ellora cases perhaps)

										NORTHERN SITES		

REFERENCES

1. In the *Rāmāyana* period the Prajāpatis were numbered as six only. Obviously this earlier tradition excluded Dakṣa, Vasishṭha, and Bhrigu. The appearance of nine in the *Srīmad Bhāgavata* legend is an argument for the latter's relatively late date. As we shall see below, the figures of Bhrigu and Dakṣa are omitted in most of the early representations of the Anantaśayi theme in the north, as well as in some from the south.
2. Sir C. Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, London 1921, p. 279, n. 4.
3. *Ibid.*, II, p. 190, n. 190. The *Vaikhāṇasa*... seems to be the ritual of those Bhāgavatas who worship both Śiva and Viṣṇu. It is said to exist in two recensions, prose and metrical, of which the former is perhaps the oldest of the Vaishṇava *Āgamas*. On p. 118 Eliot discusses a whole class of Sanskrit religious literature... [with] the titles *Tantra*, *Āgama*, and *Samhitā*, which taken in a wide sense are practically synonymous... the common character of these production is that they... boldly state that, since the prescriptions of the Vedas are too hard for this age, some generous deity has revealed an easier teaching.
4. *Mārkaṇḍeya-maharishī parva varuṇa brahm-eśa-dakṣa-śaśī suryaś tumburu-nāradau guru bhrigu sārṅgeṇch-kaumodakī chakranāntoka pañchajanya sahitaḥ kartre dīśantu śrīyam bhrājante-madhukaitabha-kṣayikritāśayā grhe-dṛed-vṛtāh*. Cf. *Epigraphia Indica*, XXXVI, iv, 1965, p. 131, 8.
5. *Padmā-dhātṛī karābhyām parichīta charaṇam rangarājam bhajeham*.—*Rangarājastava* 1. This is the composition of Bhattar or Paśrara Bhatta (early 12th cent.), who was the son of Kureśa, a contemporary of Ramanuja. He spent his whole life as the chief priest of śrī Ranganatha temple at Śrī Rāgam, and among other religious compositions wrote the *Guṇaratnakōśa*.
6. Vedāntadesika (12th cent.) in his *Godāstuti* calls her :
Śrī Viṣṇuchitta-kulaṇandana-kalpa-vallim
Śrī rangaraja-hari-chandana-yoga drisyam
Sākṣhāt kṣhamam Karuṇāya kamalāmivaṇyam.
 By this we see that the regular worship of Goda had already started in his time.
7. *Athavā...brahmādidevānām bhittimāśrītya sakalam ābhāsam va kārayet*—*Vaikhāṇasāgama*, xvii, p. 52.
8. The date of c. A.D. 500 given to the Udayagiri version in the Table is based on my belief that group of caves there contains more than one stage of work. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain the evolution implicit in its various features; the differences, for example, between the Varaha and Anantaśayi panels should represent a considerable time interval. I am unable to deal with this topic *in extenso* here.

CULT IN THE PALLAVA TEMPLES

The cultural handi works of the Pallavas of the Simhavishnu line, during their days of glory are there for all to see at Mamallapuram and a dozen other places like Mandagappattu, Pallavaram, Vallam, Kuranganilmuttam, Mamandūr, Śiyamangalam, Dalavanūr, Upper Cave at Tiruchchirapalli rock, Panamalai, apart from Kanchi, their capital. In addition the later Pallavas, from Nandivarman onwards upto Aparajita, had also their own architectural creations at Kanchi, Tirupattur and other places. What we are directly concerned with is the inner content of the cult manifestations that prevailed in the Pallava times primarily at Kanchi, from the last quarter of the seventh century A.D. to the middle of the ninth century A.D. Examples from elsewhere and of the immediately preceding phases would be cited to the extent called for.

It would be legitimate to remind ourselves that the Pallavas from their earlier entrenched presence in the southern Andhra country have been the heirs to the cultural heritage of that tract and had later cross-fertilised this further by their historic impact upon the Chalukyas of Badami, not to mention the more subtle impulses now steadily drifting southwards from Aryavarta to find a new and welcome haven in the virile and transformed local scene in the Tamil country. The main elements of the cult worship still centred around the Trinity, but already not only a polarisation but also a resultant syncretisation had been manifest on the pantheon. The earlier Pallavas closer to the progenitor had favoured a mixed patronage to Śiva as well as Vishnu, particularly the latter of whom, however, they were to emphasise only the Varaha and Trivikrama forms and the Gajalakshmi type. The advent of the Nrisimha form was not to be seen prior to Mamalla stage, although Durga in an essentially Vishnuite garb had already for some time found ready favour. It would seem that Durga in all rock-out examples, whether in the early Pallava examples or in those of the Muttaraiyars, Pandyas or Adigamans was to

display a direct nexus with Vishnu forms of the standing, seated or reclining type.¹ What is of greater importance, however, is the act that from the time of Narasimhavaraman II *alias* Rajasimha, we have a dominating Śaiva cult receiving royal patronage.² At Kanchi and Tirupattur at least, the succeeding later Pallava reign also continued this Śaiva creed, although it could not be denied that there was again a recrudescence of Visnuite worship. It is to the mode of Śivaite ritual worship and the monument which was to form its venue that we would now revert. Before doing that we may summarily outline the state of affairs prior to Rajasimha. The set up at Mamallapuram and elsewhere of the Mahendra and Mamalla periods including that of Parameśvaravarman I shows that :

- (i) the main object of ritual worship was mainly the panel of Somaskanda on the rear wall of the cella in a niche, or as a separate *stela* as in the completed top storey of Dharmaraja Ratha of Parameśvaravarman's time;
- (ii) there was no provision for any *linga* to be fixed in the centre of the shrine chamber;
- (iii) there was a likelihood that where the Somaskanda panel or any such group was not engraved in relief on the back wall, such a figure was probably done up in stucco plaster and perhaps painted also;
- (iv) in addition to the main cell containing as above, the other panels displayed on the exterior and side walls, despite their diverse sectarian affiliations were equally to be deemed as consecrated objects fit for worship, as long as each of them is flanked by *dvārapālas*. Only where such a condition does not exist they are to be dealt with as subsidiary divinities in relation to the main one;
- (v) except perhaps for salutations (as shown by hands in *añjali*) offer of flowers and chanting of hymns, these objects of worship were not subjected to any other ritual mode like purificatory bath, dress, etc.; and
- (vi) the shrines in which they were placed were both rock-cut as well as monolithic but in either case, the main deity was in relief or otherwise in a cella with a *maṇḍapa* in front and did not have any practice of circumambulation around it. The cella and *maṇḍapa* projection as that of Tiruchchirapalli Upper Cave (where the projection is incipient) or Dalavanur and Siyamangalam (where the *mukhamāṇḍapa* is well evolved) had the same basic composition as that of Dharmaraja Ratha or Arjuna Ratha or Sahadeva Ratha or the Pidari Rathas—only, in these latter cases the temple was freestanding with the exterior decorated all around and with a *maṇḍapa* integrally part of and in front of the temple proper.

It is only for the first time in the period of Rajasimha that a regular structural temple evolves, as with the Shore Temples,³ but even here there is no clear integration of the central object of worship with a ritual bias for *athisheka*, etc. Although *lingas* are found in most of the temples of Rajasimha, as we see them today, there

are strong grounds in favour of their being later insertions. The most outstanding among the reasons is the fact that the *vārimārga* and *praṇāla* for carrying out the *abhisheka* water from the cella to the outside through the wall, is not at all deliberately placed at the time of construction but improvised later in one and all of them. The fact that neither the way in which the *linga* and its *pīṭha* are relatively fixed and placed on the cella floor, nor the cutting of the water drain into the topmost moulding (*paṭṭika*) or the next lower recess of the *adhithana* or cutting in the bottom of the lowest course of the wall and allowing water to run over the *paṭṭika* would show that they were not envisaged appropriately at the time of construction. It is also to be seen that the extant *lingapīṭha* is in most cases round in cross section unlike the square *pīṭhas* that had been prevailing in the earlier times, prior to the examples of Pandyas, or as mentioned in the early texts, and are thus obviously later. As for the *lingas* themselves, many of them either have the faceting usually 16 sides, as in some of the specimens, or do not conform to texts, with square lowest part, octagonal middle part (both of which are to be hidden within the *pīṭha*, showing only the circular-sectioned shaft above it). Some of the Rajasimha and later Pallava examples which give the faceted *linga* are at Shore Temple facing east, Panamalai, Kailasanatha at Kanchi and Tirupattur and these are in fine polished black stone, faceted into 16 flutes. But even these would have any significance only if the *abhisheka* water has proper exit. Some of these do not have any *pīṭha* to this day. At best we may take it that these alone were fixed probably at a date subsequent to the erection of the temple itself, and perhaps it was at that time that the narrow drain through the wall was provided but without any regular gargoyle projecting outside. How long after the erection of the temple were there *lingas* raised and drain hole given is just anybody's guess. At least in the case of Kailasanatha and Tripurantakeśvara of Kanchi, the clumsy way in which the drain cut through the wall has been diverted along the sides of the inner narrow circuit (*Sāndhāra ālinda*) and taken through the outer walls against the recessed part near the north-west corner (between *kārṇa* and *bhādra*) face of the north wall, so that the side shrine on the wall may be avoided here, is a tell-tale sign of its being an afterthought. In the case of Tripurantaka, it is seen that the *lingapīṭha* brought inside to be fixed into the *linga* was so much outsize that the north wall of the cella has been scooped on the inner face to some extent, most arbitrarily, to provide projection space for the *pīṭha* channel, the whole affair being so much a contrivance, not warranted at all on its pristine condition. Even the *pīṭha* of Iravatana temple could have been taken into the cella only side ways and not in its natural position, since the doorway is much less broad than the diameter of the *pīṭha*. We note that invariably in the later temples from early Chola times, the *praṇāla* gargoyle is fixed between the *kumuda* and *paṭṭika* in the *antarapatra* or *kanṭha* provided here, and not in a purely *post facto* and utilitarian manner as described above. But in most of the Pallava cases, the *vārimārga* alone is cut and a regular *praṇāla* as

enjoined in *Āgama* texts has not been provided. It is thus pretty certain that the *linga* and much more so the *pīṭha* in all the Pallava temples of Kanchi was not original.

If so what was the object of worship for which the temple was erected? The answer would seem to be that the Somaskanda panel itself was worshipped. Let us see if this is an adequate answer both by internal as well as external evidence.

Taking internal evidence first, we note :

- (i) that the Somaskanda panel in a niche is itself reared over a pediment with a projecting moulding found only on the back wall enclosed within flanking pilasters and a regular *prastara* above, complete with *kapota* whose side turnings corresponding to the pavilion-like character of the panel-niche is all too deliberately worked out;
- (ii) the provision of *dvārapālas* to the niche panel on either side of the pilasters would further indicate that it was a regular shrine by itself;
- (iii) the depiction of the other two members of the Trinity both in the panel itself in a subordinate position, as also on the side walls of the cella, or the transept (as at Shore Temple and Panamalai) would show that the object of worship in the temple was the Somaskanda panel;
- (iv) the depiction in some of the later Pallava temples like Mukteśvara, Airavateśvara, etc., of a team of worshippers on both the side walls of the cella, facing as well as gravitating towards the Somaskanda panel and close to the *dvārapālas* would further emphasise the above point. These worshipper teams should have been shown outside the shrine chamber, if they were to be taken as worshipping a *linga* in the cella.
- (v) the fact that even one and all of sub-shrines in the temples like Kailasanatha at Kanchi or Talagiriśvara shrine at Panamalai also show Somaskanda panel on the back wall would show that this was a ritual formula, complete in itself;
- (vi) the fact that in the sub-shrines integral with the main shrine, either at Kailasanatha or at Panamalai, there could not have been a uniform provision for *vārimārga* and *praṇāla* indicates the absence of such an element; and
- (vii) the rock-cut shrines of the earlier phases either of the time of Mahendra or his successors before Rajasimha do not seem to have any provision for the *linga*, and have been built in such a way that the entire cult orientation is incipient and sculptural, and not symbolic.⁵ No *Āgama* had then been apparently known which enjoined modes of establishment of the central figure for which the temple is excavated or erected. The Trinity, though getting compartmentalised, had not yet lost their liaison completely. Actual sculptures and not mere symbolic representations have been consecrated for the worship at the temple and the ritual perhaps

mainly consisted of *nivedana* and nothing much more. The offer could have been *patra*, *pushpa*, *phala* or *toya* in the spirit of the *Gīta*, but no daily *abhisheka* was obviously well-established. We may also note here that *Āgamas*, the earliest of them at the *Mayamata* (not to speak of the *Vishnuite Vaikhānasa*) mention *linga* and *pīṭha lakṣaṇas* and how to fix them and the *praṇāla* in the cella. They also speak of the circular, octagonal and square *pīṭha* perhaps an early polarisation of architectural forms like *Drāviḍa*, *Nāgara* and *Vesara*, and on the basis of the actual provenance of such three-fold types in non-Pallava caves we may validly place the earliest *Śaiva Āgamas* as posterior to these caves. Representations of *lingas* on *pīṭhas* usually square are of fairly early origin, some of the earliest being found in coins of Audumbara and Kushana kings which could be dated to the first-second century A.D. Thus the mere knowledge of *linga* with *pīṭha* is not the same as a consecrated use of it in a temple sanctum for which proper canonical injunctions would be required. Personal *ārādhana* of *linga* on a *pīṭha*, however, would not be bound by such restrictions.

When did the *linga* arrive then? This would be a legitimate query. We may first consider when we have actual representations of *linga* and how we have them, before we find the answer to the date of actual ritual use of *linga* in the sanctum.

We may, in passing, consider here the existence of the rock-cut pits found in Tiruchchirapalli Upper Cave and also at Dalavanur before we deal with other more direct examples. Besides, we may first note that we have the earliest representation of Pallava Śiva Himself in the Gangadhara form at Tiruchchirapalli, where we have the by now famous inscription, felicitous and at once enigmatic with its lines *Anēna liṅgēna liṅgini jñānam*—having been the bone of contention of south Indian researchers. In dealing with this reference, however, two points have to be conceded first. To begin with, *linga* as well as *liṅgin* used by the royal author of the epigraph should at once put us wise about the *gūḍhārtha* rather than the *vyākṛta* character of the nomenclature. If Mahendra meant a physical *linga*—the object of worship—he would have certainly been more explicit and less pedantic. That he did not imply the material *linga* is also borne out by the sentence, which also indulges in denominational jargon of *vipakṣa vṛtti*, etc. Further, the use of the words *sailīm Harasya tanum* is certainly indicative of a carving of Śiva in stone rather than a *linga* although versification could have admitted of semantic adjustments. The record further is nearer to Gangadhara panel than to the shrine where the pit is scooped. This may seemingly be explained by the fact that by *anēna liṅgēna* he only meant the *linga* in the cave. The double pit one at right angles to the other of differing dimensions is again, not in favour of its being a *linga* pit. We do know at least that at Dalavanur also the disposition of the pits is quite similar. There the epigraph talks of a house or residence for Śiva and not of a *linga*. The

negative argument that if no *linga* was originally there, there was nothing to worship in the temple could not be true if we know Mahendra's caves as at Mandagappattu, Pallavaram and elsewhere. Hence it is likely that a Śiva relief figure, apparently with Paravati, was placed in the pits.

If we take it that the square and oblong pits cut into the shrine cell were to fix a figure, the question arises why he could not have cut it in rock. It is clear that this was not Pallava vogue and what more, if any stone figure was fixed, it would not have been of granite but perhaps of a softer stone like sandstone and this explains why it has perished. If it was a *linga* figure in the cell, it does not stand to reason why his successor Mamalla did not fix any *linga* in any of the shrines but again put Trinity in relief on the back wall. We are thus led to conclude that the *linga* got introduced into the sanctum only from the time when there was an Āgamic mandate for such consecration and *abhisheka*, and this does not appear to have happened before c. A.D. 750, by which time perhaps we have some of the earliest Āgamas. If however, the *lingasthāpana* as given in *Vishnudharmottara* and other *Purāṇas* of the North could have been known by the time, we see no reason why the *bhādrapīṭha* prescribed therein should not have been provided. Contrariwise, the fact that we do have such *lingas* with *bhādrapīṭhas* carved out of the same rock and an improvised arrangement for collection of *abhiheka* water in a pit nearby in the cella itself in the caves of the Pandyas and Muttaraiars, as elsewhere, would show that these Pandya caves are themselves perhaps not earlier than A.D. 750 and fall in the Āgama period.

All the *vārimārga* holes provided in the cella in the Pallava structural examples are leading towards the north. Āgamas, however, state that the *vārimārga* and the complementary *praṇāla* should be placed above the *prati*, in the *gala* or in *kumuda*, according to different texts. It further enjoins that the *vārimārga* should be to the left of the *linga* which usually faces east. In the case of Mukteśvara and Matangeśvara, which face west, we find the *vārimārga* let into the north wall which is unconventional but only follows as incipient stage when northward orientation of the *vārimārga*, in relation to the eastward axis of the temple was superceding the fact that it is to be to the proper left of the *linga*, and thus does indicate a well-consolidated cult-practice to be followed integrally with the construction of the *adhishṭhana* and *cella* floor and before erecting the body and superstructure of the temple. The fact, however, that none of these cases also shows a *praṇāla* would indicate that they were not actually following rigorously and Āgama mandate wherein *vārimārga* alone is never specified, but a *praṇāla* as well. The typical method of actually laying the *linga*, *pīṭha*, *vārimārga* and *praṇāla*, all according to the temples from the Āgamic mode, is found occurring only in the end of the eight century A.D. onwards, and between this and the actual construction of the Pallava structural temples was a intermediate stage, when Āgamas had called for a *vārimārga*, and temples already constructed had to introduce this in a make-shift manner. Since

this contingency would not have arisen before the initiation of the structural temples by Rajasimha, starting perhaps with Mukundanayanar (and latest the Shore Temple) we may consider that the early eighth century A.D. brought the priestly class and the *Sthapatis* on the threshold of the *Āgama* period when temple ritual was systematised and regulated on an even keel, with ostensible this-worldly and other-worldly gains for the adherents. Let us now approach the cult practices from the angle of the iconography of the temples.

Rajasimha's inscriptions leave us in no doubt that he was a staunch devotee of Śiva and the versatility of executions of Śivaite iconography as in the temples of Kanchi of this period, for the first time is quite phenomenal. Amidst these we have *Samhāra* forms, *nrīta* forms, *anugraha* forms, and indeed more fundamental symbolic forms also. Of these latter, we have two instances, one at Kailasanātha itself and other at Airavateśvara. As, I believe, the latter is chronologically anterior, if slightly, to the former, we may take that first. The representation of Śiva in *linga* form here in the panel on the northern wall of the *mukhamandapa* is significant in more than one respect. Firstly it is the first sculptural representation of Vishnu offering worship to *linga* form of Śiva. The sculptor has taken care to depict even the flowers offered by the worshipper. Vishnu has been shown with 8 hands and a *kirīṭamakuṭa*, one of the hands holding a flower and the other holding a plucked-out eye, in the process of being offered to the *linga* in front of Him. We may note, however, that none of the typical *āyudhas* of Vishnu like, *chakra* and *sankha* has been depicted on his person. In this respect, though not in depicting Vishnu as plucking out (*padmapushpam sambhyarchya Hariṇā nētrapūjitam*) an eye of his to worship Śiva, it is dissimilar to the figure from Kailasanatha which seems to follow the *Uttarakāraṇāgama* type of Vishnu *Anugrahamurti* or *Chakradānamurti* almost completely. Vishnu is said, according to this legend, which is also alluded to in *Mahābhārata*, to have got his *chakra* from Śiva. The *linga* of Airavateśvara Vishnu *Anugraha* panel is very elaborately erected in three tiers, the lowest badly worn-out being borne by rearing lions forming the cantoning pilasters of the *pīṭha*. The next tier or *tala* is a cubical *bhadra pīṭha* with central and end pilasters and a *prastara* comprising *kapota* and *vēdika*, over which is raised the actual *linga* form in the nature of a pillar with a *padmabandha* in the middle with *ūrdhva* and *adhōmukha* lotus petals, and the zone immediately above this showing a series of circular medallions in a panel. The topmost part has the curvature of the crest of a *linga*, upon which flower petals of *adhōmukha* type are shown, apparently the offerings. This is the most satisfactory representation of a *linga* (as a pillar, incidentally) and as if to show that this symbol is the same as Śiva, the god is shown with Parvati on the top. We may presume from this representation that *linga* form as a symbol of Śiva had already been known to the Pallava society. The other figure at Kailasanatha is that of the Lingodbhavamurti himself. In this the interest, apart from other details, attaches primarily to the upper end of the *linga* which has been very smooth-

ly finished off in a curvature. Thus, it is not the representation of Śiva as a pillar of fire without root or terminal, as mentined in the *Lingapurāṇa*, but as *linga* which is *sthāṇu*. We have the third figure of *linga* in the Mukteśvara panel where Śiva, seated with Parvati carries on his left shoulder a replica of a *linga* which is a plain cylindrical shaft with curved top and without a *pīṭha* or any workings or faceting on it.

When we have such representations of Śiva *linga* form on the panels of the temples, why could it not have been shown inside the cella itself? This may be a fair query. The reason would apparently be that the Pallava kings, particularly Rajasimha, could not shed off on the one hand, Somaskanda formula for ritual worship, and, on the other, might not have had the means of procuring a *linga* in granite commensurate with the proportions of the temples they were constructing, as mentioned in the *Āgamas* by which the height of the *linga* should have a relationship to the width of the cella and the width of the *pīṭha* itself—both being taken as of equal dimensions.⁶ It is just feasible that quarrying sandstone was deferent from quarrying granite for a sizeable *linga*. Indeed even a monolithic carving of *linga* as in the Pandyan examples is not so difficult as quarrying a separate block for *linga*. Aside of this, it would seem that whereas in the representation of the *linga* in Airavateśvara, we have a square *pīṭha* for it, we do not have square *pīṭhas* but only round *pīṭhas* in many of the extant cases at Kanchi (which thus were later insertions). Thus, the very question whether the *pīṭha* and the *linga* were themselves coeval would bear serious scrutiny and perhaps at least in early cases would elicit a negative reply. We are thus led to postulate three stages in the ritual worship of the main deity in the cella in Kanchi temples and of coeval temples elsewhere in the Pallava period; firstly, when only the Somaskanda panel existed as the object of worship in the sanctum; subsequently when there was a *linga* alone erected perhaps without even a *bhadrāpīṭha*. This must have been in the late Rajasimha period and later Pallava Nandivarman phase; and later, when the *pīṭha* by then usually circular was added to it, either by slipping it into the *linga* or by assembling the *yōnipīṭha* in parts around the *linga*. This should have happened only in the post-Pallava stage coinciding with the early Chola or transitional phase when Śivaite worship definitely got well-consolidated and dominated the priestly classes of Hindu society.

The use of regular *praṇāla*, as we see them, came into ritual use by about the end of the eighth century A.D. We may thus take this period (with a margin of 25 years both ways) as the time when regular *linga* and a *pīṭha*, usually circular by that time, well proportionate to each other according to the *Āgamas* came into worship. Where did it first come into use, inside the Pallava dominion or outside? We do not seem to have a ready answer to it now, but if the surface indications in the cella, nature of the *linga* itself with carvings on it, and the historic background of Paraśurameśvara temple at Gudimallam is any guide, we may perhaps see in it the

immediate precursor to the regular *linga* usage in the sanctum, though in a therioanthropomorphic form, and since Gudimallam *linga* cannot itself be of a date later than A.D. 700, we may see the intrusion of *linga* worship in the sanctum of Tamil Nadu temples within half a century therefrom in favoured places, and this explains the occurrence of these *lingas* even in the cella in the Pandya caves, none of which can be earlier than about the second quarter of the 8th century A.D. The appellation of *yoni* for the circular sectioned *pīṭha* with a projecting spout is essentially of an extra-*āgamic* and esoteric significance, and even on literary evidence we do have such a conception of *linga* and *yoni* only from the post-Sankara stages. The early *Āgama* texts do not have any word like *yoni* for the *linga pīṭha*, and indeed *yoni* was an entirely different and highly technical term which derives the orientation of the *linga* or the main deity of the temple, the determination of which along with five other such factors like *Vyāya*, *Āya*, *Riksha Tithi* and *Vāra* called *Āyadī Shaḍvargas*, involves arithmetical formulae laid down in the *Āgamas*, in the *Āyadilakṣhaṇa* section.

Before we close, we may indicate that the occurrence of Śiva himself carrying the *linga* on his shoulders, which we referred to earlier, as found depicted in one of the panels of Mukteśvara *mukhaṃḍapa*, and which finds preferred and recurrent usage in the Chalukya-Rashtrakuta zone as at Aihole, (c. A.D. 600.), Pattadakal (c. A.D. 675.) and Ellora Kailasa cave (c. A.D. 750), is in itself a trend indicating the diffusion of the *linga* cult-worship; a thing apart from *linga* concept which could be much earlier, even in Tamil Nadu. The occurrence of exactly similar Śiva with *linga* on shoulders at Kodumbalur (c. A.D. 850) in Muvar Koil on the upper *tala*, would only show that Kodumbalur temples themselves would bear a close further study.

As regard the temples of Vishnuite persuasion like the Vaikunthaperumal temple, built during the time of Nandivaraman Pallavamalla (c. A.D. 750), we find that even here the arrangement for the take-off of the *abhiṣheka* water from the cella is most artificial and unplanned, indicating the lack of any regular *praṇāla*. Of course, Vishnu worship in early times had not called for *abhiṣheka*, as insistently as in *linga* worship. Even so the trend is significant. The fact that no regular *praṇālas* were fixed in most cases shows that these were improvisations, and where *praṇālas* were actually found, it is obvious that they follow the injunctions of the *Āgamas*, and thus might not be earlier than the ninth century A.D., which was much later to the erection of the temples themselves. The north Indian and Deccani practice was somewhat different, and *lingas* were fixed in temples fairly early, but here the introduction of the *pīṭha* was not coeval and generally only a low *piṇḍika* on the floor around the *linga* served this purpose, except in the early Chalukyan cave-temples (as at Badami and Aihole).⁷

The fact that, despite the references to Paśupatas, etc., in his *Mattavilāsaprahasana*, Mahendra Pallava did not enshrine any regular *linga* in his rock-cut

temples dedicated to the Trinity, or individually to Śiva, is reflective of the incipient stage of cult worship then, nor is any evidence forthcoming of any such *linga* erection in the time of Mamalla. Rajasimha's large-sized temples show Somaskanda panel in the cella in which according to religious canons, normally only *one* exclusive object of worship is to be installed. The main *Āgama* period (from the early ninth century A.D.) perhaps called for the introduction of *lingas* themselves in the sanctum and the *linga pīṭhas* followed suit in due course. The early *Āgama* period when we had *Vaikhānasāgama*, *Kāmikāgama*, *Mayamata*, etc., perhaps formed the vanguard of the well-systematised mode of daily worship of the deity in a duly consecrated manner. The earlier texts which give the necessary direction to the earlier temples, say, from the second century A.D. mainly comprised the *Purāṇas*, *Samhitas*, etc., of which *Vishnudharmottara* (c. 6th-7th century A.D.), *Bṛhat-saṁhita* (c. 5th-6th century A.D.), *Āgṇipurāṇa* (c. 10th century A.D. to six century A.D.) with its predecessor, the *Hayaśirsha-pāñcharātra* text which it closely follows, are outstanding, and these were followed up by the *Āgamas* in the South and in the Deccan, and by the end of the ninth century A.D. there was a considerable degree of consolidation and uniformity in the different regions on the basic *norms* of image worship in temples.

APPENDIX I

*Conspectus of the Pallava structural shrines
at Mamallapuram, Kanchi and Panamalai.*

1. SHORE TEMPLES—KSHATRIYASIMHEŚVARAM AND RAJASIMHEŚVARAM

These are *chatustala* and *tritāla vimānas* with octagonal *śikhara*, the shrine cell having a *mukhamanḍapa*. Cella has Somaskanda panel in niche in both cases, and faceted *dhārālinga* without *linga pīṭha* in the former; holes provided for outlet of water at the base of north wall. The former temple has, apart from the Somaskanda panel, Brahma and Vishnu panels on side walls separately while the latter has Brahma and Vishnu in the Somaskanda panel itself. *Dvārapālakas* present.

2. MUKUNDANAYANAR

Dvitala vimāna with cella and *mukhamanḍapa*. Somaskanda panel in cella wall. Cylindrical polished *linga* in the centre. No regular *praṇāla* but only a hole. No lion pilasters. Rock is local granite-gneiss. *Dvārapālakas* present.

3. PIRAVATANA

Dvitala vimāna with octagonal *śikhara* cella and *mukhamanḍapa*. Somaskanda panel with Brahma and Vishnu on a raised pediment and within a *manḍapa* relief. No sculptures on the side walls or exterior. Water conduit is scooped over the *paṭṭika* across the wall. *Linga* with large circular *pīṭha*, large in diameter than the shrine door. *Dvārapālakas* present.

4. IRAVATANA

Dvitala vimāna with square *śikhara*. Cella and *mukhamanḍapa*. Somaskanda panel with Brahma-Vishnu in the back wall within a *manḍapa* relief. Gajalakshmi on *lalāṭabimba* in a *makaratoraṇa*. *Dvārapālakas*. Sculptures of Ganesa, Dakshinamurti, Nataraja, Gangadhara, Ganesa, Durga, etc., in lower exterior wall. *Praṇāla* cut into the *paṭṭika*. *Linga* alone extant in cella on a small raised platform. Water hole in the wall. *Mukhamanḍapa* has Ravana shaking Kailasa and *ūrdhvatāṇḍava* on side walls.

5. AMAREŚVARA (TRIPURĀNTAKA)

Somaskanda panel over double pediment. *Linga* with *pīṭha* too large, and wall scooped partly for the sake of its projecting part. Side walls of *mukhamanḍapa* without sculptures. Gajalakshmi on *lalāṭabimba* within *Makaratoraṇa*. *Vārimārga* below *kampa* on the north wall. Outer walls contain *ūrdh-*

vatāndava, Vishnu, Varuna, Brahma, etc. *Dvitala vimāna* with square *śikhara*.

6. AIRAVATEŚVRA

Without superstructure. With cella and *mukhamāṇḍapa*. Sculptures as usual, on external walls; *mukhamāṇḍapa* wall having *Vishnuanugrahamūrti* (showing a *linga* replica of considerable interest) and *Urdhvatāndava*. In the cella Somaskanda panel in *mukhamāṇḍapa* relief with ends of *kapota* merging with wall corner. In addition to Brahma and Vishnu in Somaskanda panel, Brahma and Vishnu are also shown on north and south walls along with worshippers. Later than the other temples above and nearer to Kailasanatha. Water hole in the north wall cut into the *paṭṭika*.

7. KAILASANATHA

Sāndhāprāsāda Granite stone used at 3 levels. *Vārimārga* over *paṭṭika*. Kubera, Ganapati, Varuna, Lingodbhava, etc., on the walls. Saptamatrikas. Somaskanda panel of very small size with Brahma and Vishnu, on a high pediment in a plain niche panel. No *maṇḍapa* relief. Faceted *linga*; *vārimārga* in a circuitous way. *Pīṭha* of different stone and of three pieces assembled together. All wall shrines and sub-shrines in the main temples have Somaskanda panel on back wall.

8. MUKTEŚVARA

Temple over an *upapīṭha*. Divided into a cella and front *maṇḍapa* in two *ankaṇas*, whose architectural features would seem to suggest an incipient ternary division of the temple into an *ardhamāṇḍapa* and *mahāmāṇḍapa*. Somaskanda panel occupying most part of the wall and on a pediment. Worshippers on the side walls of cella. Brahma and Vishnu behind Somaskanda in the panel. Cornice of the panel *maṇḍapa* is shown higher than the *uttara* components on the side walls showing an evolution. The relief is rather shallow. The *mahāmāṇḍapa* left wall panel shows Śiva-Parvati figure, wherein Śiva carries in the upper left arm a *linga* supported on the shoulder. This feature is very rare, earlier examples being at Aihole, Pattadakka and Ellora (Kailasa) and the later examples being at Kodumbalur and Kilayur. *Vārimārga* is cut over the *paṭṭika* through the northern wall. *Dvitala vimāna* with circular *grīva* and *śikhara*. Cylindrical *linga* with *pīṭha*.

9. MATANGEŚVARA

No *upapīṭha* but only an *adhishṭhana*. The *alingapaṭṭi* or *gala* between *kumuda* and *kampa* is comparatively much taller. Unit of temple cella, and front *maṇḍapa* in two *ankaṇas* similar to that of No. 8 above. *Tritala vimāna* with circular *grīva* and *śikhara*. Sculptures on walls incomplete and only roughed

out or space alone provided in some cases. Their relief is also very weak. *Dvārapālas* on exterior, side panels of cella door, unlike the occupation of these side walls by carved reliefs in Mukteśvara. Cella shows Somaskanda panel with boldness and evolution in figure style, in the middle of the wall but on a very low pediment. *Prastara* of panel pavilion well spelled out, right upto the *saraphalaka* of the first *tala*. The originally extent *saraphalaka* slabs are found in end-sections still visible. Above this, the *śikhara* shell is seen rising in receding square tiers, upto *kalaśa* level. Sixteen-faceted *linga* with sandstone *pīṭha* (later added) with *vārimārga* on proper right is improvised over the *paṭṭika*. Skanda absent in the Ravana-Kailasa relief in the *maṇḍapa* wall.

10. VALIŚVARA TEMPLE

The entire *vimāna* appears to be later renovation in brick and stucco, though simulating the Pallava style. The stone walled cella shows *linga* sixteen facted in upper part, eight-facted in lower part and thirty-two facted on the tip and without *pīṭha* and with a panel relief of Śiva-Parvati on the back wall similar to the temple of the Pallavas at Tiruvadigai (South Arcot), and in Pudukkottai cave-temples. This temple might belong to the very close of the Pallava period i.e., c. late eighth century A.D. if not later.

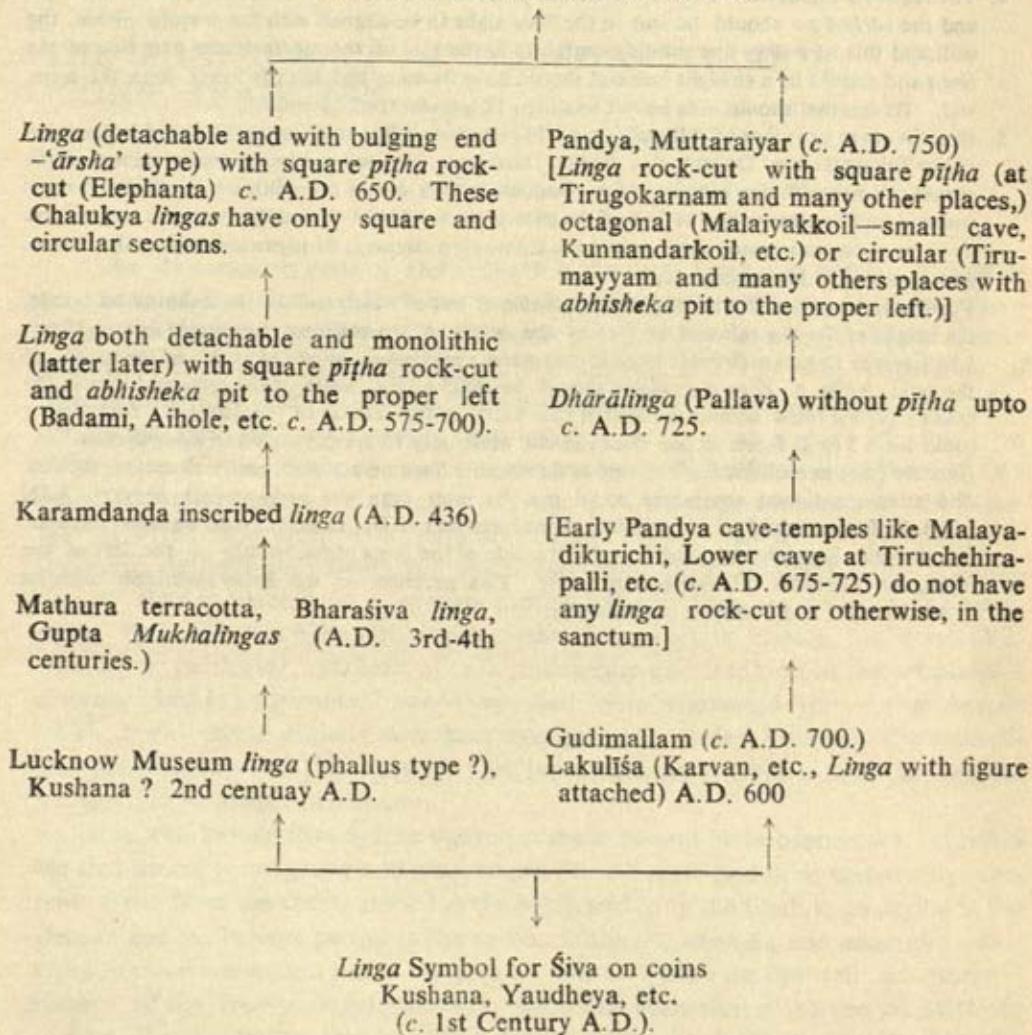
11. PANAMALAI (SOUTH ARCOT DISTRICT) :

Tritala temple with three additional side shrines on north, south and west, the former two aligned east and the last towards west. Main shrine shows Somaskanda panel on back wall of cella and Brahma and Vishnu panel on the transept walls. *Linga* with *pīṭha* installed in cella later. Mouldings of the *adhishāṭhana* bolder and thicker than anywhere else and similar to that of Shore Temple.

APPENDIX II

DISPERSAL OF LINGA FORMS

Linga with *pīṭha* always circular in Chola country and invariably square in Pandyan country, in two pieces upper and lower, or in three pieces with regular *praṇāla* (c. 800) onwards. These *lingas* have square, octagonal and circular sections.



1. The chart is neither conclusive nor exhaustive, but only indicative and tentative.

REFERENCES

1. e.g. (a) Ramanuja Mandapam; (b) Tirmurti cave; (c) Varaha cave of Mamallapuram, and (d) Singavaram cave.
2. e.g. Shore Temple, Panamalai, Iravatana, Piravatana, Tripurantaka and Airavatesvara and Kailasanatha of Kanchi.
3. The *dhārālinga* found in the eastward-facing larger Shore Temple seems to have had its original height much more than its extant dimensions. It does not have any *linga pīṭha*.
4. The *Āgamas* enjoin that the *prapāṭa* should project out as much as its hidden part in the wall and the *vārimārga* should be cut in the floor slabs to be aligned with the *prapāṭa* within the wall and this *vārimārga* line should be slightly to the east of the north-south axis line of the *linga* and should be a straight line and should have its outer end slightly lower than the inner end. Its channel should also be not less than 12 *angulas* (or 22.9 cm).
5. Even in caves or *rathas* of Māmalla's or Parameśvara's line the *lingas* now found in them, as in the Trimurti cave. Dharmaraja Ratha third *tala*, etc., are not in the exact centre of the shrine cell nor with any regular *pīṭha*. Besides, in rock-cut or monolithic excavations, if *linga* worship had become vogue at time of the enterprise we should normally expect a monolithic *linga* on *pīṭha*; as in many such case in the Chalukyan country, Pandyan and Muttaraiyar zones and others as at Melacheri, etc.
6. For instance, in the case of the *Sarvasamalinga*, out of which a *dhārālinga* should be made, the height of the *linga* should be 5/16 of the width of the cella, as mentioned in the *Uttarakāmikāgama*; again a *Draviḍa linga* should have a maximum height of 13/21 of the width of the cella while a *Vesara* similarly should be 16/25 of the width of the cella and thus in the case of *nāgara linga* should be 6/10 of the width of the cella as in *Mayamata*. *Dhārālingas* could have 5 to 28 facets as per *Suprabhāṭa*, while only 16 are stipulated in *Kāraṇāgama*.
7. Here we have monolithic *linga* as well as detachable *linga* on a *pīṭha* usually of square section. The latter mentioned specimens could not be later than the early seventh century A.D. while the former could be of mid-late seventh century A.D. In both cases, we have circular, scooped-out depressions on the floor by the side of the *linga pīṭha*, usually to the left of the *pīṭha*, for collection of washed-out water. This practice, as we know invariably obtains in Muttaraiyar and Pandyan cave-temples.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SIVA-NATARAJA ICONIC TRADITION

The Nataraja bronze of Tamil Nadu is the most familiarly popular iconographic form of Śiva. In fact, such has been the variety of studies¹ made of its representations in stone and especially in bronze that it would be considered as rash to expect any fresh data to be adduced on the subject. But the very popularity of this bronze icon had also been responsible for many overdrawn assessment of its art-idioms desiccated of the cult-undertones that are so much a part of this type. Added to this is a widely current misconception that all dancing figures of Śiva could be brought under the category of Nataraja. Although the *tāṇḍava*² of Nataraja is often mentioned as a characteristic and the *pañcakṛitya* (of creation, preservation, destruction, illusory veil and benediction) are attributed to this posture, yet no data to place it on a separate footing has ever been sought from its antecedents. The result has been almost disastrous, since what is clearly the crystallisation of a particular synthesis of cult, philosophy and tradition in the art plane—circumscribed in its gamut of operation—had been converted into an archetype which could mean entirely divergent iconographic entities. Owing to the remarkable phenomenon that this Nataraja icon represents, an attempt is made to present the topic in its proper orientation.

It is well-known that Śaivite figures in stone as well as in bronze are classifiable into *samhāra*, *anugraha* and *tāṇḍava mūrtis*. All these had been extensively current right from the Gupta period in the north and from the Chalukyan period in the Deccan and the Pallava period in the south. While the *samhāra* and *anugraha mūrti* types become a common factor for Śiva as well as Vishnu on the well adumbrated pattern of the Trinity nexus, the *nṛtta* form had been almost the special attribute of Śiva. It is interesting that in Vishnu forms, only the Krishna *avatāra* has the dancing posture in the Kaliyadamana episode. On the other hand, Śiva's penchant

for dance is directly related to the joy born out of the destruction of challenge to the evil forces that had been let loose from time to time across the aeons. It was also Śiva's prerogative to close the aeons or *yugas* with a destructive dynamism, even including the pulling down of the Sun to the ground. In all such acts, the dominant element is a delirious joy in the process of destruction for a further creation. The *tāṇḍava lakṣhaṇas* were codified in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* which directly have their inspiration from Śiva's dance in the presence of Uma, with Nandi on the drum and many divinities, sages and *gaṇas* taking part in the *fete*. Of the many *tāṇḍava* types *ānanda tāṇḍava* is one. Tradition in Tamil Nadu attributes this as having taken place at Chidambaram (Tillai) in the *Podu* or Common. Indeed, in the Chidambaram temple, the Nataraja shrine is structurally, as we see it today, much later to the rest of the complex, the main *mūlasthāna* shrine being further to the south, the *gopuras* aligned only to this *mūlasthāna* shrine, and the Nataraja shrine itself not properly oriented to this *mūlasthāna* shrine, if it is to claim coeval status with it. All the same, the fact remains that Śiva's *ānanda-tāṇḍava* was traditionally taken as performed in Tillai *Podu*. The very term *podu* would suggest mainly an open air assembly place, and the mention of the *Tāṇḍava Śiva* as having been associated with this place from the time of the Śaivite *Nāyan-mārs*, had later got entangled into the skein of the early medieval cult epoch and circumstance. In order to separate the *generic* from the *specific* evidence, about Nataraja's cosmic dance, we should accept the historical and the chronological sequence of the temple layout which had been overwhelmed by extensive rebuilding and renovations and accretions. It could, however, be easy to hold that the term *Tillai-ambalam* was a fairly early term, current already perhaps from the 7th-8th century A.D. This term *ambalam*, though in the latter day, had struck to Chidambaram or Tillai, is a term extensively adopted in Kerala for its temples and does signify nothing more than a temple or any adjunct of it (such as the *nālam-balam*, *etirambalam*, *Chirrambalam*, *kūttambalam*, etc.). That priests from Malayalam region had repaired to certain parts of the Tamil country and had been in charge of worship there, according to the *Vaidika* traditions already implicit in the hymnal of Śaivite as well as Vaishnavite saints like Sambandar, Tirumangai and Kulaśekhara. It was not special only to Chidambaram, but to quite a few other places, as well such as Melappaluvur (the temple of Tiruvalandurai Mahadeva) in Tiruchchi district. The Vaishnava name for Chidambaram is Chitrakuta. It could very well be a synonym for *Chirrambalam*, *kūṣa* and *ambalam* being of identical import in their respective languages. Thus the term Chidambaram (*Chit* plus *ambalam*) in the sense of *Chidākāśasvarūpa* of Śiva's immanence here, even if taken as a later tradition, had nothing to do either with Nataraja temple or with the icon at Tillai. Available historical evidence indicates that the *Pancha-bhūtakshetra* (Kanchi Ekāmra—*Prthvī*; Jambūkeśvaram—*ap*; Aruṇāchala—*Tejas*; Kālahasti—*Vāyu*; and Chidambaram—*Ākāśa*) tradition and its adumbration is quite a late

event in the medieval times, predicated upon the accomplished popularity of the temples in these places by that time. That the *lingas* in these places have no nexus with this philosophic principles is a matter that would be subject to factual elucidation.

Adverting to the tradition of the *Tāṇḍava* aspects of Śaivite iconography, it is quite acceptable that the early icons of dancing Śiva do not show any *saumya* or peaceful display of dance but rather the terror-striking type; highlighted by multiple use of weapons and adjuncts like axe, *khaṭvāṅga*, *śūla*, *nāga*, *ghaṇṭā*, etc., which certainly are a far cry from the sublimity of the *ānanda-tāṇḍava* pose of Śiva as crystallised in a bronze icon.

The very composition of this dance, thus, makes it a rare type of self-introspection and attunement with the cosmic spell and of evolution that surround him.

The *ānanda-tāṇḍava* has some particular stipulations in its form :

- (1) The god should have only four hands—no more, no less.
- (2) Of these, the two upper hands should hold the drum on the right and the fire on the left. The two lower hands would be in *abhaya* and *danḍahasta*.
- (3) The raised leg has to be almost parallel to the crossed left lower arm. There should be an *apasmāra* dwarf below his planted legs.

(4) Ganga is often represented in the *jaṭābhāra*.

(5) The dance is said to be in the presence of Uma as Śivakami while the dance by itself is quite unself-conscious and without any external stimulus; the bipolar character of Śiva and Uma (forming the *Śakti* and the *Purusha*) makes it a well-known cult entity accepted by Śaivism and Vashnavism, and reduced to iconographic form already from the 6th century onwards in the Chalukyan temple sculptures of the Karnataka and Deccan.

In so far as Nataraja concept is concerned, the god being known in Tamil parlance as Āḍavallān, there is no evidence, sculptural or otherwise, to suggest that it had existed in any consistent role, earlier than the 10th century A.D. Before we unfold the significance of this averment, we should briefly give a background to the rise and diffusion of the Śiva cult in Hindu religion, along with what concomitantly happened to Vishnu in the vedic, upanishadic, and epic-puranic periods of Hindu thought.

The process of synthesis and analysis of the godhood identity and personification, was a recurring phenomenon in Hindu religion. It went only to show that, to the Hindu mind steeped in its quest for god-realisation, the periodic integration and differentiation of the various members of the pantheon, was only an exercise in mental concentration for the *ārāḍhanā* or the *sādhana*. The vedic period in its late stages had its cogitations on the shape, form, character and magnitude of the universal principle. The upanishadic period dissected and co-ordinated this unseen but unmistakably felt and inherent divine spark. Thereafter, the *Gita* elaborately paraphrased it and presented its quintessence. On the cult side, the symbiosis of

of Mitra-Vishnu, Agni-Rudra as well as Hari-hara forms, and the adumbration of the iconic range therefore were the sequel. The late Vedic Rudra continued to carry forward his terrific aspects upto the early historic times. The exclusive character of the Rudra worship resulted in the Lakuliṣa—Paśupata cults which, by the fusion of Aryo-Dravidian thought, had metamorphosed into the Śiva of the Puranic times. The term 'Śiva' as applied to Rudra, is itself a comparatively late occurrence and Śiva or Śankara only was able to become the Mahadeva. The Gupta, Chalukya and Pallava Śiva forms do not show any example of the *ānanda tāṇḍava* types, but rather of ferocious or kinetic energy representations.

The fact that at Chidambaram, the *Ārdrā darśana* in the month of Magh has been an important indigenous festival of the Tamils, and the star *Ārdrā* (*Betalguex—Triuvādirai*) has been traditionally ascribed to Śiva, and is a red-star of first magnitude (called the 'rival of Mars' in Western astronomy) and was once the initial star of reckoning in the stellar chart by the Tamils, would show that there is an indigenous and initial base for considering this dancing of Śiva at the *pradōsha* time, watched by Uma and others. The association of Uma is not, however, special to Tamil Nadu alone, since all over India, as already mentioned, from the earliest sculptural context, the presence of Parvati during the dance of Śiva had been depicted invariably. The indigenous tradition of Śiva's *Ārdrā* star is similar to the equally indigenous association of *Tiruvoṇam* (*Srāvaṇa—Altair* of Western astronomy) with Vishnu, in early Tamil Nadu, and the celebration of the festival of *Tiruvoṇam* had been attested to in the early hymnals of the *Ālvārs*, though this festival is not in vogue now in Tamil Nadu, but is most famous in Kerala today as the *Oṇam*. It should also be noted that in the *Sangam* classics, no mention of Śiva is to be found, although Vishnu, Balarama, Muruga (or Karttikeya) are to be freely found. Thus, the inception of the Śiva myth into Tamil Nadu is comparatively later and came mainly in the form of the Paśupata and other sects of the early Pallava times, and perhaps got softened and systematised only by the work of the early Śaiva *Nāyanmārs*, leading to a resurgence of *Āgamic* Śaivism by the Imperial Chola times, shorn of all its dark (*vāmāchāra*) and orgiastic excrescences, and given an artistic sublimity.

The singling out of the *ānanda tāṇḍava* as the befitting type for Nataraja was thus a historic circumstance which is not to be underestimated. It was coeval with the decline of the Paśupata and Maheśvara cult in Tamil Nadu from the time of Mahendravarman I Pallava, and the rise of Puranic Hinduism where Śiva as an equal among the equal members of the Trinity had, by the association of Uma, been transformed into a most endearing type, easily accessible to the devotees. The rise of the Somaskanda type, extolled and made widely prevalent form of Śiva in times of Parameśvaravarman and Rajasimha Pallava between A.D. 668 and A.D. 728 was an epoch-making mutation of the earlier Rudra concepts and it is no wonder that, in the Tamil Nadu, even the *linga* cult is only an introduction into

the sanctum subsequent to the Somakanda cult. The rise of the early Śaiva *Nāyan-mārs*, closely followed by Śankara Bhagavatpada gave a further boost to the *saumya* form of Śiva, and a broad-based *bhakti* plank for the *Jivātma-Paramātma* relationship under Śaivism was mooted. In fact it could be stated that the true Śaivism as different from *Tāmasic* Rudra-Lakuliśa-Paśupata-Maheśvara nexus was itself born only in the pre-medieval times, thanks to this early sublimation of Rudra into Śiva, and certainly the concepts of Ardhanari, Hari-hara and Maheśa forms which prevailed in the 6th-7th centuries over a large part of India contributed not a little to this consummation. This endured the tests of centuries, notwithstanding the adumbration of a monastic philosophy—highly intellectual in its overtones—by Adi Śankara, who all his life, was himself such a passionate bhakta of Vishnu on the one side and Amba on the other. It is no wonder, thus, that the rise of the Nataraja-Śiva with his *ānanda tāṇḍava*, was standardised into the four-armed icon with *abhaya* and *anugraha* aspects for the two lower hands, and creation and destruction for the two hands carrying drum and the fire. This standardisation follows that of Vishnu, already achieved, with *chakra* (having orbs of fire)—originally an insignia of Chakravarti or *Mahāpurusha* type (and felicitously) mentioned by Vedanta Deśika in his *Abhīti stava* as also a *Dharma-Chakra* of Vishnu), later converted into a fierce weapon, as the embodiments of the Mitra and Agni power, and with the *śankha* producing sound when blown and representing the *rita* or *satya* as a symbol of primeval matter which is *sanātana* (immutable). While Vishnu with his four hands has the seated, standing, the reclining, and the dynamic poses, the last mentioned in the Trivikrama form (representing—*nirra*, *irunda*, *kiṇḍa* and *naṇḍa* of the early *Ālvārs*), the corresponding variety of forms for Śiva are the Somaskanda, the *Linga*, the Dakshinamurti and the Nataraja types. It is indeed interesting that the Dakshinamurti type with its accent on silence, penance and *yogic* contemplation was a development of Śiva as *Mahāyogi*, sculptural examples of which are widely prevalent in the Deccan in the 6th 7th century A.D. The representation of the Śiva-Dakshinamurti in a manner integrated with Śiva-Lakuliśa in the eastern Chalukyan art of Andhra Pradesh in the 8th-9th century A.D., and the rise and expansion of the Dakshinamurti cult and iconography in Tamil Nadu in a unique and rich pattern, stand testimony to the under-current of change that was taking place in Śaiva imagery. Having finally established the *triṇṇātmaka linga* (with its Brahmā-Vishnu and Śiva *bhāgas*) and the *yōga* Dakshinamurti, the genius of the Tamil Nadu cross-fertilised by the Puranic lore and the philosophic adumbrations already afoot, could find only in the *ānanda tāṇḍava* form of Śiva's *nritta* type, a most satisfying harmonious and impeccable synthesis of the essence of the Hindu religious heritage. Formal balance of the most perfect kind was predicated upon an amalgamation of concepts. The proper stimulus and context for this was doubtless, rendered by the renascent Hinduism, rising over the ashes of its own heterogenous past, with

Āgamic traditions giving a fillip to the advent of *utsava bheras* in bronze to deputise for the *mūlasthāna* deity which, apart from not being amenable to be shifted—being of an *achala* foundation—has a dignity to be maintained by its immanence in the sanctum. A socio-political context, conducive to this, we find only in the middle of the 10th century A.D. It coincides with the rise of the Imperial Cholas, under the banner of Rajaraja I, and the *ādvallān* of Tillai-ambalam was given an iconographic finiteness in the form of Nataraja *tāṇḍava* from its halting beginnings from the turn of the 10th century A.D. under Parantaka and his successors and never been altered thereafter. That we are told by scholars researching into the quantitative assessment of dancing Śiva forms in stone and more especially in bronze in the early 10th century A.D. that only by the 3rd and the 4th quarter of that century, we have the standardization of the bronze Nataraja achieved in its completeness and ineffable grace and balance, need not occasion, therefore, any surprise nor would it call for any special pleading. Even in respect of certain small details like the representation of Ganga on Nataraja-Śiva's locks of hair, that a well-thought out symmetry and harmony is envisaged, is shown by the occurrence of Ganga on the proper right side locks of Śiva in most of the Nataraja bronze images of the late 10th century A.D., whereas in the earlier ones in stone, Ganga was of to be shown on the proper left.³

Thus, by all tokens, the Śiva-Nataraja icon, especially in bronze, shaping into finiteness mainly from the time of Rajaraja I Chola or a little prior to that, was a perfect product of its age and locale, and is to be carefully distinguished from the myriads of dancing Śiva figures in various postures that stud the walls of countless temples in India. That this *ānanda tāṇḍava* bronze form is so assiduously and effectively and permanently retained in the succeeding centuries till today, in all Śiva temples on the northern part of the *māhamaṇḍapa* is another proof that it is a special variety, and is the only icon that should be called Nataraja. North India or Deccan does not have any such parallel. That Tillai-ambalam should claim this Nataraja is also appropriate, since the place whose god in the *mūlasthāna* temple there had received the prostrations and adorations of so many saints and royal predecessors of Rajaraja I, and where a regular description of a cosmic dance in the *Podu* (common) had been existing, should merit a crystallization of these precious traditions, and thus the first *ānanda tāṇḍava* Nataraja bronze which would have existed at Tillai Chirrambalam temple or *Chitrakūṭa* (which only later became *Chidambaram*, with its semantic nuances) was merely to be considered as the *utsava bhera* to the south of Chirrambalam, and facing east. That Nataraja should face south here is again appropriate, as it is the direction of Dakshnamurti and of Yama, both of whom are but the substantiations of the Rudra-Śiva-Mahadeva *tattva*.

It is seen from the *Āgamas*, like *Amsumadbheda*, *Kāraṇa*, *Kāmika* and others, that only nine types of dances are described out of the traditional one hundred and eight, of which the first corresponds to that of Śiva-Nataraja, although it is called

Bhujangatrāsa there, which differs from the Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, as commented upon by Abhinavacharya. The same Nataraja pose is sometimes called also *Nādānta* dance at Chidambaram, on literary evidence. It is clear that while Bharata's 108 *nāṭya* poses were intended as a treatise for the art of the dance expression, Śiva's association with it was primarily to bring out the *Nṛttamūrti* that Śiva was. It should be stated here that from the earliest time, there are many iconographic examples of Śiva in temples where, even as *Samhāramūrti*, he is following one or the other of the dance poses. It is equally obvious that when the Śiva-Nataraja's *ānanda tāṇḍava* dance at Chidambaram came to be interpreted, the question of a terrific aspect of Śiva with multiple arms would not have arisen.

Even among the 9 modes of dance mentioned in the *Āgamas*, there are many which have eight or six arms, but the first mode has only four arms. We are able to identify many other types of dances of Śiva in the Chalukya and Pallava and early Chola carvings, of the period earlier to the time of the first adumbration of the Śiva-Nataraja stone sculpture in the 10th century A.D. These earlier dance models include among others *lalita*, *chatura*, *bhujangatrāsa*, *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*, *talasamspōṭhita* and *kaṭisama*, and the finesse, balance, brevity and sublimity implicit in the Nataraja *ānanda tāṇḍava* do not appear in these figures. It is not also accidental that this Nataraja dance has been found as the *first* to be described by the *Āgamas*. While certainly the *Āgamas* might have been codified at successive periods, the earliest of which could have been much earlier than the 10th century A.D., the fact that notwithstanding the 108 dance poses of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, they chose to describe as associated directly with Śiva, only 9 poses and of these gave the first place to *ānanda tāṇḍava* pose would show that all the other types do not satisfy the requirements of the form they had in mind among the *Nṛttamūrtis* that would exalt Śiva *tattva* on the highest pedestal. Among these nine, it is found that the first four types are more or less similar: except that the third type appears to be *mārukāl* or transposed legs, with right leg raised instead of the left. Of the remaining, again, four 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th are of the same type, namely, *ūrdhva tāṇḍava* type actually, with one leg raised vertically up to the crown. The ninth type is like the first four, but of the *chatura* type with legs in *pādasvastika* pose. It is quite interesting that these nine poses primarily divide themselves into the *Ānanda tāṇḍava* type, *ūrdhva tāṇḍava* and *chatura*, of which the two latter get eliminated from the type of Nataraja *par excellence*, where there is no scope for any competition with Kali (as was the case of the genesis of the *ūrdhva tāṇḍava*) and the *pādasvastika chatura* type of Tiruarankulam is more a choreographic act than a regular dance pose. It would thus be boiling down to the first four types alone which are similar.

A significant element is the introduction of the *mārukāl tāṇḍava*, that is, legs changed (right leg raised) not only in one of the first four, but also in one of the next four of the *ūrdhva* type. This would mean that the mind of the *Āgama* compiler is obsessed with the legend of the change of legs. It is well-known that there

is a Pandyan tradition by which Śiva, to gladden the heart of a Pandyan king, had shifted his legs for a change, and raised his right leg in *Ānanda tāṇḍava*. This is picturesquely sung also by Ramalingaswamigal in his *Tiruarutpā*.⁴ It has a link with the pre-medieval tradition of the Chola and Pandya kings vying with each other in glorifying and beautifying the Nataraja Sabha at Chidambaram. There is an excellent bronze from Tirumangalam, now Madras Museum, of this type with right leg raised in *ānanda tāṇḍava*, which stylistically is certainly datable to about the 10th century A.D., and which would additionally show that notwithstanding the fierce wars between Cholas and Pandyas and the supremacy of the former, for the time being, cultural pursuits went on unhindered to the extent of creative artistic activity.

In so far as the incidence of *ānanda tāṇḍava* images of stone or bronze are concerned, it could almost be conclusively stated, as had been attempted with some success by Barrett,⁵ that these examples could not be placed much earlier than the halcyon years of Parantaka and certainly get into their zenith only in the last quarter of the 10th century A.D., if we take the celebrated examples such as Konerirajapuram stone (c. 969-976); Tirunaraiyur—stone—c. A.D. 987; Tiruvarur—c. A.D. 992; Konerirajapuram bronze—c. 970-990; Tiruvarur bronze—c. A.D. 987; Vriddhachalam—c. A.D. 981. Nataraja bronzes just subsequent to these, but yet relatable to the period of Rajaraja I would be Tandantottam, Tirukkaraivasal, Tiruvedikkudi, Semangalam, Thanjavur, Tiruppalanam, and Punjai. One should hardly fail to mention the celebrated Nallur Nataraja, in this connection, which is generally felt by scholars as datable somewhat earlier than the early to late 10th century A.D. It would be difficult to make an exception to this example which appears to be having special guild mannerism of its own and is somewhat too angular which is certainly not an early feature. Nor can the ascription of 8 arms as given to this image makes it really classifiable as Nataraja *Ānanda tāṇḍava* that we have been trying to isolate in the above pages. Even if it is to be placed in the very beginning of the 10th century A.D., it is to be deemed only as a precursor to the Nataraja *ānanda tāṇḍava* and not certainly its progenitor. It is rather significant to note that in the 85 extant *karāṇa* poses in the Thanjavur temple, there is none which would strictly be of the *ānanda tāṇḍava* type, although No. 41 would come nearest to it of the *Mārukāl* type. This indicates that the Nataraja bronze has indeed a very exclusive import.

The foregoing brief excursion into the realms of the *ānanda tāṇḍava* modes of the true Nataraja in stone or bronze reveals that :

- (1) it is quite unlike the earlier dancing Śiva figures in any part of India which were primarily *tāmasic* in character;
- (2) it gets a ritual fixity *only in Tamil Nadu* and in the 10th century A.D.;
- (3) it gets wrought in bronze as an inevitable *utsava mūrti* in high frequency only by the 3rd quarter of the 10th century A.D., and continues its status there-

after till today in all Śiva temples of Tamil Nadu;

(4) it has only to be four-handed and Ganga on his locks is optional;

(5) Chidambaram's association with the dance had been responsible for its cult fixation from the early Chola times, and traditionally it is a Chola-Pandya heritage and is not associated with the Pallava period or region;

(6) *Āgamic* standardisation of this stone or bronze icon would be somewhat, later than the actual inception of the prevalence of the images, but the type was given priority in the *Āgamic* description of the *Nritta* images, though under a different appellation.

It is not without meaning that this *ānanda tāṇḍava* form was called the Nataraja or *Āḍavallān* (the king among dancers) as different from Natesā (the dancing God)—a distinction that should be well-maintained by art historians.

REFERENCES

1. Rao, T.A. Gopinatha, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, Parts I and II.
2. Sivaramamurti, C., *South Indian Bronzes, Lalit Kala*.
3. The significance is obviously that as long as Uma is not explicitly there, Ganga could occupy the *vāmahāga* (left side) of Śiva, but with Uma present in the Nataraja bronze, as the Śivakami icon, propriety demanded that Ganga (the *sa-patni*) should be taken to the opposite side, to avoid jealousy or rivalry. It is to be noted further that generally in all early sculptures of *Gaṅgāvataraṇa*, Ganga is shown only on the proper right side, even from the Pallava period (as in the Gangadhara panel of the upper rock-cut cave at Tiruchchi of the time of Mahendaravarman I) and are some exquisite examples (as at Kodumbalur, Muvarkoil, third quarter of the 9th century A.D.), of the Gangadhara sculptures where Śiva, which yet receiving the tumbling Ganga in his spread-out hairlocks, is gallantly placating Parvati standing to his left side, by fondling her chin.
4. *Vān—mārinum—moli mārā—māraṇ manam—kalikka—kānmāri—āḍiya karpagame*.
5. Barret D., *Early Chola Bronzes*.

LAKULISA AND LINGA POLYMORPHISM

The representation of Śiva in a formless yet formal state (*arūpa-rūpa*) as a *linga* has been of fundamental importance to the Śivaite rituals and iconography. It has been widely held, though not acceptably, that this *linga* form represents the male potential and should have direct relationship with the Śiśnadeva(s) mentioned in Vedic literature as the gods of the Dasyu(s). It cannot be denied that a correlation of the basic idea produces some such genesis for this view. It is obvious that a re-orientation of the structure of social groups took place in the post-Vedic period and that many of the earlier tribes and groups which had been frowned upon by the Vedic society were absorbed into it owing to the powerful intellectual and social impact of these tribes in the Upanishadic period which was a stage of great cultural and philosophical ferment and resurgence.¹ The result of this devolution is seen in the reinstatement of many gods, ideas, practices and rites into the Brahmanic society and indeed even the perception of new merits and values in these revived notions. One such is undoubtedly Śiva, who was not known during the Vedic period except as Rudra or Paśupati.

Of the so called Śiśnadeva(s), we have the authority of Sayana and Duragacharya to show that the term did not necessarily imply any direct relationship to the worship of *śiśna* as the male organ or phallus, but rather as a metaphorical implication of "those whose god is carnal pleasure and who have forsaken the Vedic sacrifices and taken to a licentious life." This is a reflection on the fact that in the Vedic society itself, we have two groups, one of which held on to the Vedic observances while the other took to *laukika* practices. The fact that the Vedic Rudra was rather an unorthodox deity and quite in the opposite camp, in relation to Indra who was the god *par excellence*, is indicated further by the fact that in the later periods, particularly during the *Epic* times, not only is Rudra more and more firmly established and, in unison with Vishnu, stole all the popular attention,

whereas both Prajapati or Brahma and Indra were to occupy a relatively lesser pedestal. Indra is openly flouted, as shown by Krishna appropriating to himself at Mt. Govardhana all the oblations due to Indra, thus bringing the wrath of Indra to bear on the local people in the form of torrential rains from which he (Krishna) saved the people and cattle by lifting the Govardhana mountain by his fingers and keeping it aloft for seven days. Thus during later periods, particularly the Upanishadic and Epic times, not only did a clear depolarisation between the Vedic groups or the orthodox and the unorthodox or *vṛātya(s)* take place, but Vedic concepts such as Skambha² also came to be attached to the later Śiva. Śiva came to be represented as a Śthānu-Īśvara by the *linga*, and a further amalgamation of philosophic aspects of the *linga-lingin* symbolism (as constituting the *Purusha* and *Prakṛiti* of the *Sāṅkhya(s)*) was also made with the re-established Vedic Rudra-Agni-Skambha equation, producing subsequently the fully consolidated *linga-yoni* form of representation for Śiva. The subsequent texts³ tended to extol the inextricable nature of the conjoint Śiva-Śakti aspect which produced not only the *ānanda* of the world, but also the resurgence of the universe by the procreative role of such a symbolism. Iconic representation of this syncretisation followed in the shape of the Ardhanariśvara and the Harihara or Haryardha form. It is significant to note that the sequel to the Mohini form of Vishnu (in the churning of the ocean myth in the *Bhāgavata*, etc.) which captivated the poison-consuming Śiva and produced Hariharaputra or Śāstā as a result, involved Vishnu as having been identified with the female generative principle, and thus Ardhanariśvara and Harihara have both a basic male-female aspect.

It is indeed a measure of the basic force of the Śiva conception that collateral concepts amplifying the same aspect in metaphorical media had risen. In the Epic period concepts like *Sthānu* and *Achala* have been evolved mainly to indicate the imperishable nature of the universal principles of God-head (cf. *nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthānur achalo'yaṁ sanātanaḥ*). *Sthānu* had indeed come to stand subsequently for Śiva alone and we have Kālidāsa's *nāndīśloka* of *Vikramorvaśīya*⁴ as a case in point.

That *Sthānu* and *Achala* should be concretised by the *linga* is a reasonable proposition. From the 1st cent. B.C.—the date of the Bhitā *Mukhalinga* on the basis of the inscription on it—upto the 4th-5th cent. A.D., we have a well-established *linga* morphology, with both the *sthānu-linga(s)* as well as the *mukhalinga(s)*. It was, however, still a far cry from the perfection of the joint concept of the form and formless, which it was given only to Lakuliṣa for the first time to initiate. Lakuliṣa was taken as an *avatāra* or a substantiation of Śiva in this world and was characterised by the cross-legged seated *yogi* figure with a *lakuṣa* or short stick in the left hand and a *mātulīṅga* fruit in the right, and with his *membrum virile* emphasised. He is shown also as seated back to back with a regular *linga*-form. The Lakuliṣa concept took form apparently in Gujarat, since he is taken to have been born at Kayavarohana, the

present village of Karvan⁵ near Baroda. It should be noted that the Lakuliśa cult which apparently took its genesis in Gujarat and spread east, south and north to become a co-efficient, later, of the Paśupata-Kalamukha cults of the medieval times, produced two distinctive features. First, unlike the *mukhalinga(s)* which are invariably, the conjoint conceptions of the faces or aspects of Śiva applied to the *linga*-stem, the Lakuliśa figure shows the *linga-dhātu* always as a separate entity with the stated figure of Lakuliśa in front of it. In some later cases, the Lakuliśa figure, when shown on the walls of the temples, does not have the *linga-dhātu* behind the figure, but is a seated figure in cross-legged pose, possibly a continuation of the *Yogīśvara* or *Mahāyogi* tradition as represented at Elephanta to the proper right flank at the entrance to the main cave. This Elephanta *Mahāyogi*, however, does not have the *membrum virile* and is thus clearly earlier to the Lakuliśa concept. Be this as it may, this is an important variation between the *mukhalinga(s)* and the Lakuliśa figures, and tends to concretise the concept that whereas the former are the iconographic forms of Śiva himself or their amplifications as of the Sadāśiva or Maheśa form, the latter are the manifestations of Śiva's power and in that sense, may only be the *āveśa* or *aśa* of Śiva, inasmuch as Lakuliśa represented in no uncertain form the virile cosmic potential that the Śiva concept constituted. The second and indeed a derived trait of the Lakuliśa figure is the representation of the *membrum virile* in the seated figure. The conception no doubt draws its sustenance from the Vedic imagery of *ūrdhvareta* (cf. *ūrdhvaretam virūpāksham—Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, 10,12,1) and would seem to be the progenitor of the ramified esoteric Śivaite *āgamaic* creeds that were to spring up soon. The metaphorical disquisitions on the Śiva-Śakti equation also have their roots in this concept. Chronologically speaking, we do not have any Lakuliśa figure before the 6th cent. A.D. and we have, on the other hand, the termination of the *mukhalinga* cult also well before this time. The intervening period was presumably represented by the Maheśa-Śadaśiva iconographic concepts.

That Lakuliśa cult not only spread widely but caught the imagination and ritual avidity of the Śivaite within an incredibly quick span of time is well shown by the remarkably extensive nature of its provenance and the occurrence of the figure, in many instances, on the very *lalāṭabimba* of shrine lintels and on the main niches of the *bhitti* of the exterior walls of the shrines. That, besides those at Karvan, there were regular temples of Lakuliśa elsewhere also is shown by the existence of fine, if slightly later, temple of Lakuliśa at Badami, on the other side of the local tank in the temple group there. The temple is not liable to be dated later than the 9th cent. A.D. In Gujarat and in the neighbouring Rajasthan tracts, however, the growth of the Lakuliśa cult had been vigorous, consistent and extensive in the period between the 6th and 8th cent. A.D., a period which also saw the *acme* of Śiva worship and Śivaite iconographic development, and the collateral Matrika cult.

At the renowned centre of the Lakuliśa cult in south Rajasthan at Eklingji

near Udaipur, we have a temple to this God, which by epigraphical evidence from the record in this temple of the time of Naravahana of the Guhila clan could be placed not later than late 10th cent. A.D.⁶ The image of Lakuliṣa in the sanctum is nearly of life-size. It seems to have been repaired in cement mortar in recent years which, however, has bestowed on it a grotesque aspect in the grossly disproportionate nose and the entire left arm which is left with badly ill-formed and shortened fingers. The figure is, otherwise, quite an arresting example of Lakuliṣa in stone and carries a rosary in the right hand, and might have carried a *daṇḍa* (or *lakuṭa*) in the left which is shown in the reconstruction as resting on the left thigh, with palm down. The erect *membrum virile* is present. There is no *linga* behind the figure. This figure is more or less in consonance with the Lakuliṣa figure cut out in the Dhumarlena Cave at Ellora, although it is clearly later than the Ellora example. The important point to be noted, however, is that the figure is free from any connective *linga* at its back, which is a development subsequent to the originals available at Karvan which should date from about the 6th-7th cent. A.D. Even the Badami Lakuliṣa figure has a *linga* at its back and, as already mentioned, should be dated not later than c. A.D. 900. Thus we are able to see how from the emanation of Lakuliṣa form the *linga* as the *āveśa* or *amśa* of Śiva, the stage was subsequently reached when the *linga* was eliminated and the full anthropomorphic seated figure of Lakuliṣa became the vogue in the northern regions adjacent to Gujarat. In a subsequent context the cult was modified in such a way that seated Lakuliṣa figures were shifted to the main niche of the outer walls of the temples in these areas and the sanctum contained only the plain *linga* as usual. This is an automatic result of the completion of the process of canonisation of Lakuliṣa and giving it a place in the niches of the temple walls. We shall note later what metamorphosis *linga* representation underwent in the Deccan.

In the deep South the *linga* form of Śiva was not merely identified with *Sthāṇu* but also with the entire creation or universe and it was in a subtle way epitomised as the five vital elements of the universe, *prithvī*, *ap*, *tejas*, *vāyu* and *ākāśa*, on the *pañcīkaraṇa-prakriyā* of *prapancha*. Thus Śiva was identified with one and all of these five elements, and the *prithvī-linga*, *ap-linga*, *tejo-linga*, *vāyu-linga* and *ākāśa-linga* were adumbrated. Examples of all these are to be observed in Tamil Nadu and Andhra areas in temples of the pre-medieval times, and this particularly gave a special significance to the *linga* or Śiva as *ākāśa*, as at Chidambaram, where the sanctum sanctorum is a *rahasya* or cosmic mystery, and is filled only with *ākāśa* or void, which revealed the cosmic immanence of God and is the most esoteric sublimation yet known of formal and formless universal God-head within the hieratic framework of *Devāyatana(s)*.

It is important to note that the Lakuliṣa concept is the first to transform idolisation of Śiva into a pointedly cult-orientated sect. Apparently at the time of its genesis Śivaite worship had already been so deeply imbedded in the ritual

matrix of Gujarat that an emergence of an esoteric cult from it was an inevitable corollary. Quite unlike the other two members of the Trinity, it was Śiva alone that symbolised the cosmic power as the God in charge of the destruction, not only of evils like ignorance or *avidyā*, but also of the processes of growth, for a recreation at the end of a *yuga*. Personified into a deity, the power or strength of God had been depicted in the form of a *linga*, which, as already stated, stood for unshakable power, both physical as well as philosophical. The combination of Śiva as a *yogin*, as well as the universalised male principle had been first propounded, perhaps, in the Lakuliśa concept. It is interesting to observe here that whereas Lakuliśa has been conceived as a seated figure with the *ūrdhva medhra* emphasised we do seem to have intermediary or variant stage of the development, although not in this region, but in the South. The *linga* in the Parasurameśvara temple at Gudimallam, near Renigunta in the Andhra Pradesh is clearly of this class. The God here is represented as the very personification of the *linga* and shown applied to it in bold relief in standing posture. The *linga* has foliated markings of the *Brahmasūtra* and the *Pārśvasūtra(s)* as per *linga* iconometry, and the splayed nut part on top which simulates the male organ. The Gudimallam *linga*⁷ has been ascribed to the 1st cent. B.C. on the alleged basis of certain drapery, physiognomy and decorative features which were reproduced in the Sanchi-Bharhut milieu. But this would be rather farfetched and what more, it does not clearly explain the evolutionary and diffusionary stages, either of the decorative devices adopted or of the basic concept itself. It would be possible, on the other hand, to explain the Gudimallam *linga* as a complementary and almost coeval variant development with reference to the Lakuliśa conception, and this would tend to place the Gudimallam *linga* in c. 6th cent. A.D. On the basis of the possibilities of architectural and sculptural developments of the Śivaite pantheon in this region, namely the border zone of Tamil and Andhra country, this chronological evolution seems to be more likely.

It is relevant to point out here that Gudimallam *linga* is without a *yonipatta* integral to it, since where it is found fixed, a quadrangular *piṇḍikā* has been cut in the form of a low ridge, which would show that it was clearly an after thought, thus leading one to the assumption that the *linga* itself might not be *in situ*. Aside of this, the representation of a goat as held by the hind legs would tend to give the figure the aspect of Virabhadra—the goat standing for Dakṣa-prajapati, Śiva's petulant father-in-law and Sati's father. This is largely a southern tradition and we have invariably a humble goat-faced Dakṣa standing with *anjalihasta* by the side of Virabhadra-Śiva figures in the south. The *paraśu* in the right hand might have led to the God being named as Parśaurameśvara at Gudimallam. The oblique eyes suggest clearly that he is Virupakṣa and thus both the *ūrdhva-retas* concept in the form of the *linga*-shaft itself and Virupakṣa-Virabhadra Śiva in the anthropomorphic form had been combined in this figure and make it not only indigenous

to the region where it is found, but also not much earlier than the date suggested above. It is no wonder that while in the region of its origin, namely Gujarat, Lakuliṣa represented seated Śiva with concentrated emphasis upon the potent and erect *membrum virile*, the rest of the figure being of a relaxed and calm *yogi*, in the Gudimallam *linga*, the very inversion of the above concept by which the *linga* which is the background (as in early Lakuliṣa forms also) is of almost equal dimensions to the anthropomorphic relief figure of Śiva on it, and additionally the standing figure of great vigour astride the shoulders of a demon (*apasmāra*?) and the concentrated mobility of the stance indicates the direction the cult had been taking in the South, namely towards a dynamic and dancing role for Śiva as Nataraja, which indeed was the sublimest religio-cultural contribution of the southern Śivaite cosmogony.

Indeed we may say that around the 5th-6th centuries A.D., two basic impulses appear to have spread southwards from Western and Central India. One was the Lakuliṣa cult which spread faster and wider and was apparently organised by a regular ecclesiastical sect like the *Pāsupatāchāryas*; this had its main centres at different parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Deccan and the South, like Eklingji, — where, as we know, the records proclaim that the Guhila king Bappa (Khommana I) received the royal insignia from Haritarāsi, the *Pāsupatācharya* of Eklingji,⁸ in the middle of the 8th cent. A.D. — Karvan, Ellora, Badami, and as far south as in the Pallava capital, Kanchipuram. The other and contemporary Śivaite cult was that of the *Lingadhāri(s)*. Initially this was prevalent in the 4th-5th cent. A.D. in the Bhāra Śiva Nāga dynasty of Padmavati, whose glory has been repeatedly mentioned in the Vakataka inscriptions “as having pleased Śiva immensely by having carried a Śiva-*linga* constantly on the shoulders to the extent of pressing hard on it.” This practice took a cult form later in the Deccan and resulted in Śiva himself being shown as carrying a *linga* on his shoulders. This form has been repeatedly represented in sculpture at many places in the Deccan, as for example, at the Kailasa cave at Ellora, at the Virupāksha temple at Pattadakal, etc., and represented Śiva as the *Lingin*⁹ or the sustainer of the *linga* as adumbrated in the *Linga Purāṇa* which states that *pradhāna* (or nature) is the *linga* and *paramēśvara*, the sustainer of nature, is the *lingin*. This is particularly and emphatically depicted when Śiva with Uma or Parvati is shown seated together in the *devakoshṭha* of the walls of the temples mentioned above. Śiva here, bearing a *linga* on his shoulder and with Uma by his side, cannot signify anything except the sustainer *par excellence* that he is, as shown by his bearing the *linga*. Thus a mere metaphorical imagery had been concretised to the extent of Śiva himself propagating the cult. This gave place in due course to the regular Lingayat sects in the Karnataka who are Vīra Śaivas and who, whether male or female, have to carry around their neck¹⁰ a locket, with a *linga-on-yōni pīṭha* inside it. In any event, we do note this dual development of *linga* cult symbolism, viz. the Lakuliṣa representing the emanated (*āveśa*) anthro-

potomorphised concept of the potent cosmic role of Śiva, and the *Linga dhāra* or *Linga dhāri* concept popularising the merit accruing by wearing the *linga* emblem constantly near one's heart. Specifically, the Lakuliśa and Gudimallam *Linga* are demonstrably of the same *milieu* of cult-morphology and would have been caused by a similar, if not unitary, cult-diffusionary trail. Thus we note that the embryonic *Skambha* of the Vedic cosmogony developed into the *Sthānu-Īśvara* of the Epic period, and from that time changed from a mere conceptual aspect to a perceptual form of a *linga*, and metamorphosed iconographically into the *eka-mukha-linga* and the *pancha-mukha-linga* of the Maheśa-Sadāśiva norm, and developed further to evolve cult-images like the Lakuliśa and the Gudimallam *Linga*.

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2. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. II, pp. 56-57.
3. For instance *Ānandānuhava* and *Vātala Suddhāgama*, and Rao, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
4. वेदान्तेषु यमाहुरेक पुरुषं व्याप्य स्थितरोषसि
यस्मिन्नीश्वर इत्यनन्य विषयः कब्दा यथार्थाक्षरः ।
अन्तर्यं च मुमुक्षुर्भिनियमित प्राणादिभिर्मृग्यते
स स्वाणुः स्थिरभक्तियोगमुलभो निःश्रेयसायास्तु वः ॥
5. Cf. *Karma Purāna*, ch. 53, verses 1,9-10; also *Siva Purāna*, *Tṛtīya-Śatarudra Saṁhitā*, ch. 5.
6. Bhandarkar, D.R., (ed) *JBBRAS*, 22(1908) 166-67; Bhandarkar D.R., *Ind. Ant.*, 39 (1910) p. 189.
7. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-69 and pl. II-V.
8. See Keilhorn, Mt. Abu Stone Inscription of Samarasimha, *Ind. Ant.*, 16 (1887), pp. 345 ff.
9. Sen Gupta, R., Two sculptures of Śiva as *Lingīn* from the Kailasa Temple at Ellora, *JAS. Bombay*, 1 (1959), pp. 141-45.
10. This custom was so widespread and rigid, particularly among the Lingayat women, that Srinatha, the great medieval Telugu poet and ardent devotee of Śiva, has a mild dig (in the form of *ninda stuti*) at Śiva finding a choice haven between the ample bosom of the Jangama damsels.

THE ART SPECTRUM OF THE EASTERN SEABOARD OF INDIA

The eastern seaboard of India had a continuous maritime and coastal history and art impact admitted from the early historic times upto the late medieval period. The art spectrum of this tract, therefore, was of a wide and disparate special disposition, but was still not a unitary problem, qualitatively or geographically. On the other hand, it was a centrifugal issue to some extent, and perhaps bipolar too, in so far as its basic or focal centres were concerned. To elaborate, the areas involved would be all along the eastern seaboard of India from Tamil Nadu, along Andhradesa and Kalinga (Orissa) to Bengal and should despite its emphasis of the term eastern, include within the scope the art of Burma, Malaysia and Indonesia; in their broadest terms. In effect, thus, it was the art of the Bay of Bengal consortium. This art, it is known, had, in India, been the reflection of the motivations from two major sources the northern Gupta and post-Gupta norms and the southern Peninsular norms with the progenitors as the Satavahanas. The former appears to have reached the shores beyond in Greater India by land as well as sea, and the latter, again, was felt in a big way on the east Indian archipelago and south Burma, by almost entirely maritime or marine routes. These two discrete art sources—by art here is meant architecture also—mainly did not interact in the foreign shores, but developed into visually diverse entities while yet retaining the main features of the original sources. In terms of cults, themes and iconography, they were innovative and creative, to suit the local talent, tradition and the already extant Buddhist matrix. This resulted in a variegation of both cult and form into specialised moulds. The degree of assimilation and innovation manifest in this process was varying from region to region. Burma and Indonesia had expressed this in firm terms, and had variously stuck to the progenitor scheme in architecture,

after the Buddhist archetypes in Burma and after the Hindu in Java and Indo-China.

Within India, the art of the apex of the Bay of Bengal and Orissa had followed chiefly a collective pattern; and the peninsular shores of Andhra and Tamil Nadu had been, again, unitary, in their mutuality.

In the first place, we might consider the religious context of the art motivation in each of the Indian regions of this eastern seaboard, down the centuries. This might be best represented in the form of a schematic chart.

	Tamil Nadu	Andhra-Deccan	Orissa	Bengal
12th	— — —	—	— —	—
9th	Buddhist —	Jain	Hindu Hindu	Buddhist
6th	Hindu Jain —	—	—	—
3rd	— —	Hindu	—	Jain —
0 A.D. —		— Buddhist	— —	Budhist
3rd B.C.		— —	— —	— —

The above chart tends to indicate that while Buddhistic and Jaina art had been dominant in Andhradesa and Kalinga, Hinduism gets the pride of place, though with a somewhat later beginning, in Tamil Nadu, and to some extent in Bengal also, with the pre-and early-medieval times witnessing a revival of Buddhism and Jainism. We may thus conclude that for the sake of art hegemony, Andhra-Kalinga form one zone for Buddhism/Jainism, while for Hinduism, the parent zones had interlocked with Andhra and Kalinga respectively from either side viz., by Tamil Nadu and Bengal, and have subsequently developed their own stamina, thanks to the Pallava-Chalukya-Gupta rise variously.

The Satavahana power and period in the Deccan and South had been unique in several respects because its art legacy had a certain uniformity of tradition and universality, owing to the political stability that was implicit in their rule, from coast and from practically the Central Indian zones to the northern Tamil Nadu. The trade enterprise which was a chief feature of the Satavahana entity, had equally been responsible for widening the zone of familiarity of the art tradition. The east coast, with Amaravati as its focal centre in Andhra, had been the most uniform,

unitary, and widespread art zone in the 2nd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D., period, practically from Srikakulam district in the north to Nellore in the south. Architecture and sculpture were going hand in hand. This art which continued till about the early 4th century A.D., in the focal zones was on soft limestone medium generally in its religious edifices of stonework and of brick and stucco tradition in its main residential monastic constructions.

The brick tradition had been universally adopted in early Buddhism and mixed with stone veneering and carvings where stone craftsmanship also existed. The art devices had a certain direct link with the religious and cult lore that were getting systematised then, and had been to a large extent having a popular appeal, by their folk base. Massive temple architecture in any medium had not been even born, and both Hinduism and Buddhism had more or less certain common art ideologies based upto secular ideals, although Buddhism had a dominant role in its having been anti-ritual and had the patronage of the mercantile community in good measure. The Chalukya-Pallava movements which started politically by the 5th century A.D., in the Karnataka and Andhra areas reacted to this art pool in a divergent manner, the former practically representing a continuation of the idiom, while the latter—essentially because they switched on to the granite hard rock medium—had variegated and changed the mannerism of the art modulation, tending towards slight elongation of the face and body and sparse ornamentation of the limbs and tapering of the legs. The nearest inspiration to such an art outlook seems to have been available only in the Ajanta paintings of the 5-6 centuries A.D., which, seemingly, through Vakataka links with the Vishnukundins, had become current in the lower Krishna valley, and could have been imbibed and translated into granite art by the Pallavas who also hailed from this region. This tradition had been also maintained to some extent by Eastern Chalukyas in the Andhra country, from the 7th century A.D., and by the Rashtrakutas in the 2nd half of the 8th century A.D., in their rock-art—as divergent from the Chalukyan vogue before that—and was also to be imitated by the early Pandyas in their rock-cut art in the lower Tamil Nadu. Thus, we might say that, in terms of art traditions, the coastal Andhra and Tamil Nadu areas broke from the earlier Satavahana pattern, from about the 4th-5th centuries A.D., and maintained a new trend till the 9th-10th century A.D., whereafter the style got thoroughly systematised and became an unitary tradition in that region, under the Cholas. The western part of the Deccan under the Karnataka Chalukyas which continued the Satavahana tradition, held on till about the 8th century A.D., and the other dynasties and regional styles in this western zone that were coeval with or succeeded these had, in diminishing degrees, been keeping the link, until ultimately they were overwhelmed by the Rashtrakuta art. The medieval mannerisms of the Deccan (east and west) under the Late Chalukyas, Yadavas, Kakatiyas, Hoysalas, etc., are not our concern here. It should, however, be noted that the entire lower Karnataka, under the Gangas

and Nolambas owed their art allegiance to the early Chalukyan norm which was the successor to the Satavahana traditions. Thus, to some extent, there was a dichotomy in art pool in the Deccan in the post-Satavahana period, as between the eastern half and western half, broadly speaking, and the unitary mould, as prevailed under the Satavahanas, and their immediate successors, between 2nd century B.C. and 3rd century A.D. was not to continue. The rise and proliferation of cults had been, to a large extent, responsible for this transformation, notwithstanding the fact that mass contact was the easiest in that period, as from one place to another, by highways and trade routes. North of Andhradesa, on the Kalinga coast, the temple art was, again, showing a contiguous influence of the Eastern Chalukyan developments, as at Sri Kurmam of the southern *vimāna* style, and Madhukēśvara and Bhimeśvara temples at Mukhalingam of the *rekha-prāsāda* type, while the Orissan influence was equally represented though at a relatively later date, from around the 10th-11th century A.D., as in the Someśvara temple at Mukhalingam. The phenomenon of the Kalinga art style in temple building was the direct result of the assured temporal prosperity witnessed by this region in the period between the 8th-12th century A.D., under the various kingdoms for Hinduism, and equally for the *Vajrayāna* Buddhism, as at Ratnagiri. From the point of cult usage, it would seem that certain Paśupata and Kālmukha practices, had permeated into the Orissan and the neighbouring Ganjam and Srikakulam tract of Andhra Pradesh already by the 9th-10th century A.D., and this, when it gathered momentum, resulted in a landward nexus and liaison of the temple cults with the neighbouring zones of Madhya Pradesh. At Mukhalingam which received the erotic art impact directly from Kalinga, the main temple carries *ūrdhava-medhra* for even figures, other than Lakulīśa, as for example, *Tāṇḍava Śiva*, *Kārttikēya*, etc., indicating the impregnation of the *sākta* mystique in the matrix of art. The full impregnation of these cult devices is to be seen displayed in the great Konarak temple for Sun which, notwithstanding its poised position on the sea—mainly for its aptness from the sun cult—was of entirely an inland cult family and, otherwise, for its device of mobility, in stillness in the form of massive chariots and horses had definitely been indebted to the Later Chola chariot and horse type of *mukhamāṇḍapas* as at Darasuram, etc., and the matrimonial alliance of the Cholas with the Eastern Ganga family had helped it. Thus their access was along the coastal littoral all the way down to Tamil Nadu but, in essence, this link was not spatial but conceptual, and the Orissa style was otherwise well and truly moored to its own local anchor of the Kesari and Gajapati heritage.

That it could have been a two way traffic also in certain adventitious, though later, medieval contexts is shown by the dainty though diminutive *ratha* or temple car of stone that Vijayanagara king Krishnadeva Raya erected at the Vithala temple at Hampi—apparently the aftermath to his Orissan campaign—as indeed was done by him at Maharnavami Dibba also where the outermost stone carved veneer of

his times was of greenish chloritic schist (after the raw material of the Orissan monuments), while the two earlier stone veneer had both been of granite (which was an indigenous material). But here it was not an immediate and direct impact but essentially the subjective reaction of a later ruler to an earlier art model and its material. Even the Eastern Ganga idiom had been well received in the interior of the coastal Andhra region, as at Chebrolu, where the Adikesava temple represents the southernmost available *rekha-nāgara* temple, with some elements of the Ganga idiom, as in the elephant and lion pillar motif of its *mukhamandapa* and the *kakshāsana* parapet and dwarf pillars on its side entrance. It also introduces erotic sculptures on the temple tower, as is found in the Jagannath temple at Puri, and not generally found common in the south in pre-medieval times, and found mostly as miniature frieze carvings on pillars and *mandapa* bases of separate structures like *Kalyāṇamandapa*, *Vasantamandapa*, etc., in the Vijayanagar period.

Thus, while the northernmost part of the coastal Andhra tract is liable to absorb the direct impacts of the Kalinga-Ganga art metier, the middle Andhra Pradesh was open to this as well as to Chalukyan and Tamil Nadu art influences, in equal measure, which in the medieval times, was best prompted by the Chola and Vijayanagara Imperial powers. However, it is to be noted that in terms of cult usages, the Kalinga tract, with its neighbourly areas of Madhya Pradesh and Andhra, was a centre of esoteric *Sākta* and Pasupata Śaiva groups, but this itself is not perceived in such overtones in the rest of Andhra Pradesh and is least manifest in the religious cult fabric of Tamil Nadu although it does appear in the form of the Mahesvara and Somasiddhanta cult and was patronised in important Chola and coeval centres, as at Tiruvorriyur, Kodumbalur, Chidambaram, etc. It gave place, by an inevitable assimilation with the indigenous brand of Śaivism, to the mass based Saiva Siddhanta tradition of the medieval Tamil Nadu, as different from the *Āgamic* Śaivism followed in many of the temples.

This shows that the religion which fostered the temples and other institutions was, where gradually controlled by the clergy entirely, in one form or other, apt to present extremely individualistic trends, while those where a democratic administration of the temples by village assemblies, etc., was prevalent, the cult motivations were tempered with aesthetic, functional and other biases, so that the resultant picture presented of the temple and art institutions was of a sober and dignified type and was well affiliated to the mass ethos rather than to esoteric complexes isolated from folk programmes.

A UNIQUE RAVANA-THEME SCULPTURE FROM LAKKUNDI

It is a well-known legend that Ravana, the villain of *Ramayana*, had received such superhuman powers as to have made him bold enough to challenge the very sources of such powers. He is said to have sportively attempted to shake the Kailasa *śikhara*, the very abode of Śiva and Uma, after applying his shoulders to a cavern beneath it. This was, for him, a way of testing the strength of his arms. It should be realised that Ravana was a devout Śiva *Bhakta* and would certainly have done nothing that would have been positively disrespectful to God Śiva. But such indeed was his overweening conceit at his own might that he easily lost all consciousness of the venue of his muscle-testing exercise. The sequel had indeed brought out the primary piety in him for Śiva and he is held to have sung the *Sāma gāna* and a special hymn of praise on Śiva, with which the God Himself, after his initial anger, was so mightily pleased that he favoured him with a sword of victory, in reward for his deep devotion.

This legend had been a favourite of the poets and sculptors. The excellent and breath-taking relief carvings of this scene at Ellora in the Kailasa cave, besides its representation at many other centres of art, bears out its popularity. But not so indeed is the more subtle and figurative legend of Ravana's conquest of the tough elephants—the *dik-gajas* in the eight directions of the globe. It is customary in literature to represent the eight quarters of the globe as the seat of the *dik-gajas* or elephants of the eight quarters, so that whoever conquers the eight directions of the globe is held to have indeed achieved the impossible.

Ravana is actually supposed to have, in the hey day of his youth and valour, confronted and wrestled with infuriated elephants and in the course of the fight the tips of the tusks of those elephants are said to have got stuck up in his broad and bronze-like breast, resulting in the tuskers losing the tips of their tusks which had

got broken there in the act of retrieving them. The tusk-tips which got embedded into Ravana's chest are said to have beautified his chest to no small extent. The poetic and metaphorical allusion here is patent, namely, that Ravana was the invincible conqueror of the eight quarters of the globe. That this would have been used by the poet is admittedly reasonable. But that even the sculptor should have used it, as a panel theme, as he had done on the back wall of Kaśivīśvesara temple at Lakkundi (Dharwar), is indeed a unique example.

The village of Lakkundi which was anciently a capital town of the Hoysalas from A.D. 1193 was indeed adorned with several temples in the 11th-12th centuries A.D. and after. Of these, however, the Kaśivīśvesvara temple is the finest replica of the very consummation of several innovations which were introduced in the Hoysala style in this region by grafting Chalukyan and Dravidian architectural forms.

The elevation of the temple within its twin towers at either extremity over two shrines, the larger one being at the western end; the deeply recessed pattern of its basal plinth mouldings; the bold character of the *vimānas* wherein foliated trefoil motifs had been introduced flanking the central niches on each of the sides, at each diminishing tier; the highly rich ornamentation of the door frames and the lathe-turned pillar-bases and shafts with embossed intricate carved patterns on them; all these are fully representative of the strength, vigour and effective richness of the temple construction.

Being dedicated to Siva, the temple formerly had undoubtedly, evidences of Śaivite persuasion. Actual sculptural representations are meagre in the temple at this stage, and such as are there, apart from what would have been contained in the main niches of the outer wall, were of miniature compositions flanking the niches. On the back wall is thus shown the scene of Śiva as Gajāntaka on the right side and Ravana fighting the elephant (*dik-gaja*) on the left. The latter is the subject of our present study. The elephant-fighting theme, however, would appear to be the one and only known example of sculptural representation in the whole range of Brahmanical art in India.

The age and date of the temple invariably make us turn our attention to the well-known literary composition mentioning both the Ravana-themes stated above. This is the *Rāmāyaṇa champū Kāvya* of Bhoja, which could well be placed in the 11th-12 centuries A.D. In the Sundarakāṇḍa of this *champū*, the scene of Hanuman confronting Ravana in his court is narrated in three verses, with vigour and grandeur, in which the element of *Atiśayokti* necessarily enters. Of these the two verses pertaining to the two Ravana themes mentioned earlier deserve to be quoted in full.

So' yam dadarśa daśa-kandharam andhakāri-

līlādri-tolana-parīkṣita-bāhuvīryam |
bandīkritendrapuravāravadhū-karāgra-
vyādhūta-chāmara-marut-chalitottarīyam ||

*samgrāma-keli-Parighaṭṭana-bhagnamagna-
dig-danti-danta-kṛita-mudra-bhujāntarālam |
chhāyātmanā prati-taranga-virājamāna-
śītāmśumaṇḍala-sanāthamivāmburāśim ||*

The Gajāsura-mūrti episode finds a place in the *Kūmapurāṇa* associated with the description of a *linga* called *Kṛittivāseśvara* at Kaśi although it is found in variant versions in *Vāraḥapurāṇa* and *Suprabhedāgama*. Since this sculpture finds a place in Kaśi Viśveśvara temple of Lakkundi, we may take it that the *Kūmapurāṇa* tradition was taken by the Lakkundi master-mason. The sculpture appears to be almost a compromise between the Hoysala versions of Gajāntaka as, for instance, in the case of Amritapura and Halebid specimens, and the southern versions, as for example, from Darasuram and Tiruchengattankudi in the Tamil country. The figure is neither in *chatura* pose of the former group, nor in the *utkuṭikāsana* pose of the latter, but is a half-gyrating posture with the loins turned to the front. The figure has ten hands, and unlike the northern versions, elephant-head is shown in its natural position at the right of Śiva, the skin forms a *prabhāmaṇḍala* around the God, and its tail is hanging down on proper left of Śiva. Most of the hands are broken but those that are in tact, carry on the right of the image, the trident and tusk, while some hands on either side support the edge of the elephant skin. Below the dancing Śiva on its left are shown, according to tradition, Parvatī (but without Skanda) and Ganesa, while to the right stands a figure, probably Brahma, but too damaged to be identified. Broadly the specifications of *Aṃśumadbhedāgama* appear to have been subscribed to, although, the northern and eastern versions of Bhairava-Gajāntaka would seem to have influenced the elephant disposition. The dedication of the temple to Śiva as Kaśiviśveśvara would thus be appropriate in more than one respect.

It is clearly seen here that, on the one hand, the sculptors or at least the master-builders of great temples were great connoisseurs of art as well as literature and were endowed with the talent of incorporating imaginative details into the ornamental masaic of the temple, and, on the other, they were sufficiently free from any narrow prejudices which would have prevented any delineation of the exploits of Ravana. Indeed, not a little subtlety and didactic spirit are infused into the two panels on either side of the main rear-side niche of the cellar, one showing the recognised valour and might of the arms of Ravana and the other depicting Lord Śiva himself as the venquisher of the elephant demon. Thus the very apposition of the two *Gajamardana* themes, one by a mortal and the other by God, would constitute a pithy delineation of the *Bhakti-Sakti* equation and would thus be unique from the ethical or the cultural view-point. It is quite conceivable that the artist chose these two together deliberately for indicating how ephemeral was Ravana's conquest of the *dik-gaja* while how gracious and protective (for *loka-kalyāṇa*) was the act of Śiva as the killer of Gajāśura.

THE ICONIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE EARLY TAMILS

Early religion in India was restricted to certain totemistic beliefs. The idea of a dark grove or forest (*kāvu*) exerted a profound uncanny influence upon the people as also the natural phenomena like thunder and rain. Later, cult objects and fetishistic figurines, mostly of terracotta, came into existence and these slowly developed into plastic forms which received impetus in the wake of the plastic representations that were being evolved in the north in the late Mauryan period. Naga cult particularly was popular all over India. When the Aryan cultural traits infiltrated into south India the eclecticism of Tamils led to an assimilation of unsystematised and systematised cults and this marked a stage of religious stabilisation in the country. Naga cult was extensively adopted in the South. It was attributed to Murugan the hill God (Karttikeya of the Aryans). It had well-known associations also with Śiva; Vishnu and even Buddhists and Jains adopted it. In the Tamil country there existed already in the early times a crude pantheon related to the five-fold geographical division of the country into *Kurinji* (hill tract), *Mullai* (pastoral tract), *Marudam* (the plains), *Neydal* (coastal tract) and *Palai* (desert). Each had its own specific God, such as Murugan (Śeyon), Māyon (Kannan), the Sky God, the Sea God and Korravai respectively. No iconic fixation had been attempted at this stage.

When the Aryan cults migrated into the Tamil country, the indigenous gods mentioned above were identified with their Aryan counterparts so that Māyon became Krishna-Vishnu, Śeyon or Murugan became Subrahmanya, the Sea God was Varuna, the Sky God, Indra and Korravai was easily equated with Durga.

In early Tamil works like *Aham* and *Puram* (*Sangam* works of about the 2nd century A.D.) Śiva is referred to occasionally—associated usually with the banyan tree—as Tripurantaka,¹ Neelakanṭha,² etc. Śiva, Balarama, Krishna and Murugan are described on one occasion with their respective weapons and features.³ Śiva

is spoken of as riding on his bull, with matted locks blazing like fire, his battle-axe and blue throat; Balarama is described as having a body of chank-white colour with a plough and a palmyrah banner; Krishna as having a blue complexion holding aloft a bird banner (Garuda) and Subrahmanya as having red colour and mounted on a peacock. Krishna is referred to in a few places. Rama is alluded to once in *Aham*⁴ and once in *Puram*,⁵ in which certain incidents in *Ramayana* are mentioned. In the later group of the Ten Idylls (*Pattu-p-pāṭṭu*) ascribable to about the 5th-6th centuries A.D. Vishnu as Trivikrama⁶ is mentioned and at another place in the same, Surya⁷ with seven horses yoked to his chariot is mentioned. In *Tirumurugāṟṟupadai* (6th century A.D.) devoted to Murugan, Śiva as Ardhanari and as Tripurantaka are mentioned.⁸ In the great Tamil epic *Śilappadikaram*⁹ itself (5th century A.D.), the two Vishnu shrines at Srirangam and Vengadam (Tirupathi) are described, whereas, in *Aham*, Vengadam is mentioned as belonging to both Tirayar and Kallar, but no mention is made of the temple on it. At *Śilappadikaram* time, the shrine was sufficiently famous as to evoke the appellation Neḍiyōnkunram (the hill of Vishnu) by its author. Further the Āychchiyarkuravai (about the episodes in Krishna's *Avatāra*) of the same epic, the featuring of a Jain nun Kavunti Adigaḷ in this epic, the clearly Sanskritic names like Madhavi, Vasantamalai, Bhavakarini, etc., occurring in this epic all indicate the gradual assimilation of the Aryan culture into the indigenous one.

The spirit behind image worship in India seems to have an antiquity which is pre-Buddhistic, coeval perhaps with the prevalence of *yogic* practices to which Buddha himself was initiated in the early stages of his quest after-knowledge. The actual worship of icons may have become established by the time of Patanjali, the author of *Mahābhāṣya* and the great exponent of the *yogas*, whose date has been assigned to 2nd century B.C. It is with the dawn and spread of *Bhakti* cult that a well constituted assemblage of personal gods was found necessary. In *Svetaśvatara Upanishad*¹⁰ is made the first mention of this *Bhakti* relationship. Even in south India we find that the *Nāyanmārs*, the *Ālvārs* and Ramanuja, even though they were cultured persons themselves who could have delved into the labyrinths of absolute *Brahmaghāna*, preferred to have this special medium of *Bhakti* to propagate their dear doctrines.

In Panini's grammar, we find words like *pratikṛiti*, etc., and Patanjali's exposition of Panini's *Sutra* (IV-3.99) is specially important since it mentions a few of the gods like Śiva, Skanda, Vishnu whose images were being made for worship at this time and that Mauryas devised the method of filling royal coffers by selling images also¹¹ which would indicate a great demand for them. It is equally significant that none of these three gods mentioned is distinctly vedic in character.

The *linga* cult has almost been a pre-Aryan cult as we may glean from the Indus Valley cult objects. In south India the *linga* of Gudimallam seems to be the oldest of Hindu aniconic sculptures. Śiva is worshipped both in the form of the phallic symbol,

an extremely exceptional type of which being mentioned above, as well as in anthropomorphic forms. Even in the case of the *linga* itself, oftentimes we find a tendency to anthropomorphise it, by supplying it with eyes, mouth etc. In *lingas*, we have many varieties, many of which are plain cylindrical ones with a convex top such as the *achalas*, or *ashtottaras* with as many divisions on them marked or the *Dhara linga* of faceted ones, or the *mukhalingas* i.e., phallic forms with divine physiognomy sculptured on them, which may be single or multiple. The *panchamukhalinga* has the five aspects of Śiva namely *Isāna*, *Tatpurusha*, *Aghora*, *Vamadeva* and *Sadyojāta*. The first, or the highest is not represented usually and the orientation of the faces relates to the four cardinal directions and the plan of the central shrine of the temple. All the four faces need not be carved; it may be three or two or one. A fine representation (7th or 8th century A.D.) of the three-faced Śiva is at Elephanta, in the so-called Trimurti cave.

The main forms of Śiva as we see represented in the Pallava shrines of the Tamil country are *Somaskanda* (i.e. Śiva and Parvati with baby form of Subrahmanya in between), *Umasahitamurti*, *Gangadhara*, *Dakshinamurti*, *Ardhanari*, *Gajantaka*, *Urdhvatandava*, etc. This shows how as early as the 7th century A.D. an iconic determination has been evolved and also how by that time Subrahmanya cult also has struck roots in Hindu iconography. But in the Pallava era Śiva and Vishnu images have not got isolated into water-tight compartments but actually the shrines and the sculptures of Vishnu and Śiva are found side by side at every place and the early *Ālvārs* (Vaishnavite saints) prior to Tirumangai (8-9 century A.D.) sing in their hymns about the inseparable nature of Vishnu and Śiva god-heads. As a matter of fact, the first *Ālvār*, Poigaiyar (5th-6th century A.D.) gives an exquisite and clear conceptual imagery of the Harihara form.¹² Besides, such syncretisations or composite forms like Harihara, Ardhanari, etc., had such wide repercussions that some waves reached as far as Java and Cambodia where these and further composite forms like Śiva-Buddha and Bhairava-Ganesa¹³ were also formed.

In the Chola period a slight change of the religious atmosphere particularly in the outlook and activities of the Sivaite saints singing mainly in praise of Śiva took place and we have the appearance of the Lingodbhava form. This form shows at one stroke the superiority of Śiva over Vishnu and Brahma, though in a mild manner. The Lingodbhava sculpture took its place on the western (outer) wall of the main shrine of every Śiva temple from the Imperial Chola period onwards. Here Vishnu and Brahma, as boar and swan are depicted as if in search of *Śivatattva* and Śiva is shown exposed within a *linga*. But in the early Chola period, Vishnu usually occupied the central niche in the western (outer) wall.

It was in the Chola period also that the division of the Śivamurtis into *Anugraha*, *Śānta*, *Nṛīta* and *Samhara* types was completed. Thus Lingodbhava, Chandraśekhara, Umasahita and Somaskanda are of the *Śānta* type. Chandikeśa

Anugrahamurti, of the *Anugraha* type, Nataraja of the dancing type and Gajantaka, Kalari, Bhairava, etc., of the *Samhāra* or *Aghora* types. In the late Chola period, controversy and bickerings between Śivaites and Vaishnavites for religious supremacy led to certain rabid sectarian representations of Śiva's greatness over Vishnu, like the Śarabhamurti and Vishnu Anugrahamurti at Darasuram and Tribuvanam temples and the depiction of Kachchhapeśvara at Kachchhapeśvara temple, Kanchipuram.

The Nataraja sculpture of Śiva is a class by itself. It is represented in the great Śiva temple at Chidambaram dedicated to this God. The Nataraja conception or the Lord performing the cosmic dance had probably been evolved in the Chola times, as the earliest depictions in stone and metal belong to this period. There are five different types of this *Tāṇḍavamūrti* which have all been harmonised in the *Ānanda Tāṇḍava*. The Dakshinamurti aspect of Śiva as an omniscient sage comprises essentially four different types namely the *yogamūrti* (with knees high and crossed and bound by *yogapaṭṭa*), *Vyākhyāmūrti*, *Jñānamūrti* and *Vīṇādharamūrti*. The Dakshinamūrti icon is quite an early form, often occurring in the Pallava shrines and more frequently in the Chola period. Of the four types mentioned above, the last one achieved a high watermark of excellence in bronze in medieval times and the supreme elegance and slender rhythmic pose of this form, represents Śiva as a protector of art and letters. In the Gupta period (A.D. 450-650) of the north, at Ahichchhatra¹⁴ we have a Dakshinamurti terracotta plaque. This has the requisites of Dakshinamūrti image namely the *jaṭā*, *akṣhamālā* and *amritakalaśa*, and the *sandarśanamudrā* and probably represents a *Vyākhyāmūrti*.

Bhairava is taken to be the terrific form of Śiva and has the dual aspects of *Bharaṇa* (protection) and *Bhīṣhaṇa* (terrifying) as the name implies. He is supposed to have a flabby belly, round eyes and serpent ornament (as enjoined by the *Vishṇudharmōttara*) as also *Muṇḍamālā*, canine side-teeth and many weapons. There are in main eight forms of Bhairava such as *Vaṭuka*, *Atiriktāṅga*, etc. He is not a very popularly worshipped deity since he has a dismal aspect unpleasant to contemplate upon, but is favoured by tantric worshippers. He finds a place generally in every Śiva temple of the later times in the Tamil country. One of the earliest specimens of Bhairava from north India is from the brick temple of Śiva at Ahichchchhatra¹⁵ ascribable to the Gupta period between A.D. 450-650. It is a terracotta plaque of Bhairava which would appear to belong, from the unconformity of its details with the later conventional icons of Bhairava in the South, to the formative period of Śivaite iconography in the north. The *Aghora* forms of Śiva like Bhairava came to the fore due to the tantric devotees of the Paśupata and Kalamukha cults of north, from Ahichchhatra and Lata country and these when they came to the south evolved the Bhairava representation for their *sādhana*s deriving inspiration from the *Pratyabhigñā* school of Kashmir tantrics on the one hand and by the conception of loving self-surrender to God of the *Nāyanmārs* of

Tamil country on the other.

Virabhadra is another terrific form of Śiva manifested at Daksha's sacrifice where he was uninvited. The erection of this image is generally supposed to possess great expiatory and curative effect upon the doer. Generally Virabhadra image is depicted as standing on the prostrate figure of Daksha or the latter is represented in the form of a goat-headed man who along with his daughter—Śiva's spouse—stands by. There are beautiful representations of Virabhadra at Tiruvenkadu (where He is a principal deity), Madurai, and Ammankurichi image (now in Pudukkottai Museum) is also fine specimen of it.

The earliest extant evidence of Vishnu or *Bhāgavata* cult is furnished by the Garuda pillar found at Besnagar, contemporaneous with Antialkidas and belonging to the middle of the second century B.C.,¹⁶ proclaiming Heliodorus—the ambassador of Antialkidas—who set up the pillar, as a *Bhāgavata* and the name of the God honoured by him as Vasudeva. It is this early Vasudeva cult which when it travelled south probably merged with the Krishna-Balarama cult mentioned in the *Sangam* works and formed ultimately the basis for the *Vaikhānasā-gama* of the early Vaishnavaites.

In Vishnu images we have the standing, sitting as well as the reclining postures. He is the only deity that is represented in the *śayana* pose. In the Vaishnavism of the Tamil country, there are two reclining gods worshipped, namely the *Vaṭapatra-śayin* Balakrishna and the *Anantaśayin* Narayana. In the latter either Lakshmi or Bhudevi is depicted as shampooing the legs of the God and Brahama is poised on a lotus sprung out of the navel of the God and two demons Madhu and Kaitabha are shown in a defiant mood by the side. The sleeping pose is peculiar to the Tamil country and has the special name of Ranganatha as at Srirangam near Tiruchchirapalli or Padmanabha as at Trivandrum. There is a fine early sculpture of Ranganatha belonging to the early Pallava period at Mamallapuram. A special and rare type of Vishnu seated on Seshanaga is Vaikunthanarayana where he is seated at ease (instead of reclining) on the narrowly piled up coils of Sesha whose hoods form a canopy above his head. A representation of this is found at Namakkal and belongs to the Pallava period. The hymns of the early *Ālvars* also repeatedly mention the standing, sitting and sleeping poses of Vishnu.

Among the incarnations of Vishnu, the Varaha, Narasimha and Trivikrama had captivated the minds of the early *Ālvars* and the people. The first two are half-human, half-animal forms and the third is the titanic form of the God. The *Varāha* incarnation has a few sculptural varieties like Bhuvaraha or Adivaraha, Yagnavaraha, Praḷayavaraha, etc., the first being the most popular. It is shown in the standing pose where one of the God's legs, usually the left, is kept raised and resting on Nāgaraja (representing *Pātāḷa*) and on the thigh of the raised leg Bhudevi is seated with hanging legs and hands in *angjali* pose and face towards the God, one of whose hands is put around the waist of the Goddess. A very fine

sculpture of Bhuvārāha is found in the Adivārāha cave of Mamallapuram belonging to the early Pallava period. There is a gigantic specimen of this God at Udayagiri near Ujjain in Central India, belonging to the Gupta period. A seated variety of this God, as a *Bhogamūrti* with his two consorts is depicted in the temple at Srimushnam in South Arcot District.

The Trivikrama concept was a very favourite one with the early Tamils and recurs continuously in the hymns of the early *Ālvars* (5th-7th century A.D.). Its remotest origin is in the Vedas themselves where God Vishnu is described as having taken the three great steps as Trivikrama (*Trēdha nidadhē padam*). The Trivikrama icon is carved in three forms *i.e.*, with the raised left foot (since invariably the right foot is shown as planted on the ground) reaching the level either of his own right knee or the navel or the forehead, conceptually denoting the God measuring the earth, *antariksha* and the heaven respectively. But the first form is very rare. A beautiful example of Trivikrama of the third stage is found in the Adivārāha cave at Mamallapuram belonging to the early Pallava period and an equally exquisite piece of the second stage is seen in the Daśavatara cave at Ellora.

The Narasimha concept has given birth in south India to some of the most vigorous pieces of sculpture comparable in quality and anatomical details to the Hellenic plastic art. Narasimha is represented in *Yoga*, *Sthūna* (in the pillar) and *Ugra* forms. The first has the *utkuṭuka* pose or knees bent crosswise and belted around by the *yogapaṭṭa*. The *sthūna* type shows the God as emerging out of the kicked pillar (*sthūna* — *tūn*—Tamil) and is very ferocious in aspect. A vigorous representation of Narasimha killing Hiranyakaśipu is depicted in a panel sculpture at Kailasanatha temple, Kanchipuram belonging to the Pallava period. In Ahobilam, Kurnool district, which is a Vaishnavite centre, the God is Lakshminarasimha, *i.e.* the stage after Lashmi had intervened and brought down the tempo of his anger. This type of God is popular all over the South among the Vaishnavites. In such a case, the Goddess is seated either by his side or on his lap.

Among Krishna images which are some of the earliest iconic ideas of Tamils, the Venugopala, Balakrishna. Kaliyamardana forms are more popularly worshipped and these gained currency in the Chola period. In most of these, the God has only two hands and wears *kiriṭamakuṭa*, *channavira*, *aṅgada* (bracelet) and in the case of the last, *udarabandha* also. An arresting sculpture of Krishna as Govardhanadhari belonging to the Pallava period occurs in the Krishnamaṇḍapa at Mamallapuram. A fine illustration, though of the medieval times, of the unusual pose of Krishna as Parthasarathi occurs in the *prākāra* of the Keśavaswami temple at Pushpagiri in the Andhra country.

Skanda is known by various names as *Śaravaṇabhava*, Guha, Subrahmanya, Kumara, Karttikeya, Tarakari, etc. The most characteristic weapon he wields is

Sakti hence he is known as *Śaktidhara*. The worship of Skanda is as ancient as Patanjali's time as we have already shown. Later we see Kalidasa making him the subject matter of his *Kumārasmbhava kāvya*. We have a fine sandstone panel sculpture of Karttikeya, seated on his peacock and wielding the *Sakti* or spear in one of his two hands, belonging to the Gupta period (6th century A.D.) coming from Uttar Pradesh, now at Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Benaras. During the Pallava period we have numerous Somaskanda sculptures as at Mamallapuram. A post-Sangam Tamil work *Tirumurugārūpaḍai* deals entirely with the six divine abodes of Skanda. One of the important forms of Skanda is as Guha or the Deśika where he gives exposition, though yet a child upon the sacred *Praṇavamāntra* to his own divine father Śiva. We have got these at Tirupalatturai and Kumbhakonam, both in Thanjavur district. We have an early specimen of a Kalyanasundara Subrahmanya at Tirupparankunram near Madurai and of the Shanmukha at Pattisvaram in Thanjavur District. The earliest representation of Skanda and the earliest dedication of a separate temple to him was at Kannanur (Pudukkottai District) belonging to the early Chola period. Owing to his unique position as the symbol of Aryo-Dravidian synthesis, Murugan or Skanda has a large following both among the non-brahmins as well as the Brahmins of the Tamil country, more in the former group.

The popularity and importance of Ganapati, the *pūrvaja* to Subrahmanya is second to none in the Tamil country and any orthodox brahmin or non-brahmin invokes the blessings of this God before initiating any ritual or embarking on any literary, or artistic undertaking. He is the Lord of obstacles (*Vighneśvara*) and is variously known as Heramba, Ekadanta, Lambodara, Balachandra, according to the different mythological episodes associated with him. We have the earliest examples of this God in the Pallava period in the *devakoshthas* of temples but all the Pallava Ganesas are invariably of the *valampuri* type i.e., with the trunk turned to the right. But generally the trunk of this God is shown as turned towards the left. He may be sitting, standing or dancing. His weapons are the *pāśa*, *ankuśa* *daṇḍa*, etc., and he often holds on his right hand a *Modaka*. There are various types Ganapati images like Heramba, Balaganesa, Lakshmiganapati, etc. In some of these, *Śakti* is seen sitting at his left, often on his lap. In the case of *Ucchishta* type the proboscis of the God is resting on the private parts of the Goddess. This image has obviously some *tantric* significance.

Heramba has got five heads, four facing the four cardinal directions and one on the top. The God is seated on a ferocious lion. An example of this type in bronze, though belonging to the late medieval times, is at Nagapattinam. We have a fine example of dancing Ganeśa in one of the niches at the Brihadiśvara temple, Gangaikondacholapuram. Ganesa, though apparently a celibate, is invested conceptually with two spouses, Buddhi and Siddhi, begotten of whom are the offsprings Kshema and Labha. Thus he is the Lord of wisdom and prosperity.

VAISHNAVISM AND ITS IMAGES

Introduction

In the religious chronicles in India, one always witnesses a conscious mental and intellectual effort displayed towards the comprehension of the multi-faceted personality of the universal principle that wise men call God.¹ The pattern of this exposition was drawn largely from the qualities of the human being himself who was his creation, but who certainly was an image or reflection, infinitesimal though, of the Maker; and, like the image in a mirror, derived his very existence and presence only by the clear adumbration of the Maker. In such a patternisation the inherent human propensities for the triple states of mind, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* were given prime importance in organising the cosmic functions, since they constituted the very essence of the biological evolution, growth, life and verily form the spectrum of the patterns of the life cycle.² The seed and tree, the *kshetra* and *kshetragña*, the *sesha* and *seshi*, the *jīva* and the *brahma*, the *purusha* and the *prakṛiti*, were similarly the grammatical positions by which the comprehension of the mutuality of creator and creature was desired to be achieved. Icons or images were one of the tools by which abstract ideas and cult concepts could be concretised. The need for them was justified by the tendency of human mind to stray, when without the lodestar, and to prefer always to be led than to lead, and to accept visual reality more easily than the inherent or invisible reality. While every religion of the world had always its symbols, mascots and fetishes, like the cross of the Christian or the *qibla* (or the sacred orientation towards Mecca) for the Muslim, the *Śrīvatsa* symbols for the Buddhist, or the *Śrīpada* symbol for the Jain, it was to the lasting credit of Hinduism that it invested the forms of its sacred symbols with fully concrete anthropomorphic features which the word picture or the *Vedas* and *sāstras* and *āgamas* described and inspired. It also varied these forms into infinite range so as to paraphrase the unity in diversity and to escape the

situation of considering any one image as the exclusive representation of the reality called God, and missing the wood in the trees.

Early phase

These images thus implied both an analysis and synthesis of the divine will. In terms of scientific jargon, it asserted the potential and kinetic energy in matter and withal the indestructability of matter. The potential part was *purusha* and the kinetic part was *prakriti* respectively; the electron and proton of the atom. The synthesis was represented in the aniconic *Śālagrāma* and the *linga*, while the analysis was presented in the icons through their multiple *āyudhas* and *bhāngas* and *mūrtibhedas*, forming the constituent elements of iconography. Inasmuch as they are only the variegations of the *mantras* and *Brahmanas* extolling God, they too are *āgamas* (or what emanate from HIM), and not mere man-made derivations or illusions. Thus, *triguṇātmakakriya*, the *śeṣa-śeṣitva*, the *avyayatva*, *visvarūpatva* and *āgamatva*, were all adumbrated as the chief features of *archa*, and the proper performance of the worship, with faith in this God-head and adherence to *dharma* was extolled as the prime duty, and God's own work.³

Vaishnavism and its iconography is primarily the gradual elaboration and summation of this many splendoured God, from the *purusha* of the *Vedas*, the *Urukrama*, the Mitra Vishnu or the Sipivistha, the Krishna-Vasudeva of the *Epics*, to the Rangantha Varadaraja and the Srinivasa and the Jagannatha of the *āgamas* and *Puranas*. Our attempt in this essay would be mainly to present His iconographic forms and adjuncts as the purely evolutionary stages of the Indian mind, and to affirm the direct correlation between religious and social transformation of the Vaishnava cults, stage by stage.

By far the most popular among the vedic aspects of Vishnu was the triple strides (*Rv.* I. 22, 18, etc). The two strides were of the earth and the third was the *paramapada* which was known only to *Sūris* (*Tadvishnoḥ.....sūrayaḥ—Rv.* I. 22, 20—the immortal seers. The *paramapada* concept of the latter day Vaishnavism, is thus, well-rooted in the *Vedas* and the *Sūris* or *nityasūris*, a class favoured by Vishnu when for the first time, perhaps, the theistic concept of God—as different from the father-God and Mother-Goddess pattern of the early Vedic as well as pre-Aryan pattern was adumbrated. It is likely that theism and *Bhakti* trend was itself a non-Aryan institution, adopted by the *nityasūris* for *Paramapada*—the sheetanchor in Vaishnava religious objectives. This goal has already been extolled also in the *Maṭrayani Upanishad* (VI-13) as well as *Kaṭhopanishad* (III, 9). Vishnu's association with the cows, again which reached its best in the Krishnavatara, is also fairly early in *Rig Veda* (I, 22, 18; X, 19, 4) as well as in the *sutra* period, as mentioned in the *Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra* (II, 5, 24) which calls Him Govinda and Damodara. The *Bhakti* cult, with the goal of *Paramapada*, was thus a pre-Aryan and perhaps

The *modaka* in his hand is itself explained in *Padmapurāṇa* as the expression of *mahābuddhi*.

Ayyanar or Hariharaputra or Sāstā is essentially an indigenous deity of the Tamil country and very popular in south Tamil Nadu particularly in Kerala, Tirunelveli and Thanjavur regions. He is not known to north India. In Kerala, every temple contains an Ayyanar or Sāstā shrine in the south-west corner. He is supposed to be the guardian deity of land and his temples are usually situated on mountain tops as also on the bunds of irrigation tanks (as in Tirunelveli district). That Sāstā seems to have had the same popularity with the early Tamils as now is seen by the fact that in the early grammatical treatises we find constant occurrence of the name Sāttan for a proper name used as the hypothetical subject of a sentence (just like 'this is the house that *Jack* built' of English grammar, or Devadatta occurring in Sanskrit grammar). As for the puranic origin or association of the deity, the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and *Suprabhēdāgama* tell us that Sāstā was born of Mohini—the form that Vishnu took during the churning of the ocean, to entice the *Asuras*—and Śiva who fell in love with the Mohini form. Sāstā images are usually seated in *padmāsana* pose and armed with *khaḍga* and *kheṭaka* and when the image has only two hands the right hand holds a crooked stick (*śeṇḍu* in Tamil). He is also represented as riding on an elephant and is known on that score as *Gajārūḍha*. Some of the best known Sāstā figures are from Sattan-kottai in north Travancore, and Tiruppalaturai and Valuvur in Thanjavur district.

Jyeshtha appears to have been worshipped, though by a minority, for a long time in Tamil Nadu from Pallava times upto about the 12th century, since we find references in literature and inscriptions to her. Her shrines were exempt as were those of seven *pidāris* or *Saptamātrikas*, from taxation as mentioned in early Chola records. Tondaradippodi Ālvar, one of the later Vaishnavite saints deprecated the worship of this disreputable deity. She is mentioned in inscriptions and in other places as Tirukkettaikkilatti and Goddess of ill-luck. Tamil *Nighaṇṭu* has many names like Moodevi, etc., for this minor goddess. She can be seen in some temples relegated to a corner and not worshipped or as in some cases pulled out of her pedestal. She is considered as the elder sister of the bounteous Lakshmidēvi. Her *vāhana* is ass, weapon broomstick and banner-bird, the crow. She is usually depicted with hanging breasts, flabby belly, a single knotted braid (She is thus called *Ekaveṇi*) drooping lower lip and thick thighs. She is often accompanied by her bovine-headed son and beautiful daughter at her side. An early specimen of Jyeshtha is found in Mylapore in one corner of the temple tank and held as belonging to the Pallava period, as also in Kumbhakonam temple and Tiruvellavayil temple. She seems to be essentially a non-Aryan deity who had latterly come into the Aryan pantheon as a minor manifestation of Śakti.

In contrast with this ugly Goddess, we have some inspiring representations of the Śakti group of goddesses like Saubhagyabhuvaneśvari as at Daraśuram (late

Chola period), Rajarajeśvari, Tripurasundari, etc. The worship of the latter two is usually associated with some mystic geometrical drawings known as *Śrichakra* or *Srīpīṭha*. The most energetic representative of this female pantheon is, of course, Durga or Mahishamardini, widely worshipped in India and who got equated in early ages with the indigenous Koṭṭavai of the Tamil country. Her sculptures are some of the earliest found in the Tamil country (7th-9th century A.D.). At Mamallapuram, we have a huge awe-inspiring panel sculpture of Durga on her lion killing Mahishasura.

Another group of Mother goddesses is the Saptamatrikas, a group which consists of Brahmi, Maheśvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Mahendri and Chamunda and are found with Ganeśa and Virabhadra on either side. These are typical of early Chola period and extended sporadically upto the late medieval times.

All the village deities of Tamil Nadu which have, mainly, a protective role over people from diseases, epidemics, etc., like Māriyammā, Ankāḷammā and others, though indigenous, found wider worship and iconic fixation through fusion of some sort with the Śakti group of goddesses mentioned above and continued, upto the present day, to be the objects of popular worship.

REFERENCES

1. *Puram*, 55 ll. 1-5.
2. *Ibid.*, 91, ll. 56.
3. *Ibid.*, 56, ll. 18.
4. *Aham*, 70, ll. 13-16.
5. *Puram*, 378, ll. 18-21.
6. *Mullaipāṭṭu*, ll. 1-3.
7. *Kurinjipāṭṭu*, ll. 215-216.
8. *Triumurugāṟṟuppaḷai*, ll. 150-156.
9. *Silappadikāram*, XI, ll. 35-51.
10. *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, VI-23.
11. *Mauryair-hiranyārthibhīhi-Archā prakalpita'*
12. Poigaiyār, *pāsuram*, 5 and 98.
13. There is a sculptural depiction probably of Bhairava-Ganesa in low relief on the rock on the northern side below the Mahāstupa, near to an underground cave at Sankaram (*Sanghārāma*), a Buddhist site near Anakapalle. This figure may be much later to the occupation of the place by Buddhists and may indicate presence of the Pasupata cult there.
14. V.S. Agrawala, *Ancient India*, No. 4, pp. 104-179.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 167 and pl. LXIII.
16. R.P. Chanda, *Memoir of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 1, 1919.

non-Aryan vogue, and along with that the *pada* or foot print (the *pāduka*) cult of Vaishnavism was also born. In the Gupta records and in Kalidasa's *Meghasandesa*, we have reference to the *pādas* of Ramagiriswami or Raghupati. The worship of the *pādas* had been a common legacy for Hindus; Buddhist and Jains alike. But it had been institutionalised only in southern Vaishnavism, in daily life as well as in temple ritual, as the *Saṭāri* or *Satagopa*, which is nothing but the sacred feet of Vishnu-Narayana.

It is interesting that even in the medium of icons, Vishnu or Narayana had been delineated in two stages, over the centuries, earliest by a single image in which Śrī is symbolic and Bhū is separately in physical form, and in the latter stages when both Sri and Bhū had been given equal position in consort image from in the iconic unit. The former, in effect, underscores only the cardinal tenet of Vaishnavism that Narayana with Sri is the *Para Brahma* and he carries the *chetanāchetana* articles of life in an inseparable whole, of which *jīvātma* is self-luminous and merges with God after *moksha* or release. *Prakṛiti*, *Suddha satva* and *Kāla* are three inert *achetanās* characterised by the three *guṇās*.

The best exposition of the *purusha* is already in the *Purusha Sūkta* of the 10th *Maṇḍalā* of *Rig Veda*. It is no wonder, therefore, that this Vedic hymn had itself been crystallised into an icon. A rather unique example of this is found at Changu-Narayan in Nepal. This sculpture is verily the paraphrasing of the *Purusha Sūkta*, especially those parts beginning with *Tasmāt jāta-ajavayah—yat purusham vyadadhuh.....tatha lokam akalpayan*. The sculpture shows a standing figure of *Virat*-Vishnu displaying the various creations emanating from various parts of his body. Below the standing figure is also a reclining Anantasayi icon shown which, amidst its *āyudhas*, is having the *makaradhvaja* in his left arm, bow and arrow in the right arm. Thus, it is a further expression of the *Purusha Samhita* which explains *Purusha Sūkta*, as the evolution of the *Aniruddha vyūha*.

VISVARUPA OR VIRAT FORM

The *Viśvarupa* or *Virat Purusha* of the vedic times is also repeated in the later times, in two distinctive patterns one in Vishnu as Ashtabhujsvami, so much extolled by the early *ālvārs* and crystallised in the Ashtabhuja temple also at Kanchipuram. This creation had apparently closely followed the epic literature and is first referred to in the 4th century A.D. Prakrit inscription at Nagarjunakonda, wherein Abhira, king Vasushena is noted as building a temple and establishing the icon of Bhagavan Ashtabhujasvami, out of *udumbara* wood—the most appropriate wood for Vishnu icons. That this was a cult icon which continued to be popular for several centuries is shown by the Ashtabhujasvami sculpture in rock-cut art at Badami Cave No. 3 of Mangalesa, datable to A.D. 578, and a sculpture on one of the niches of the structural temple of the early Chalukya Vikramaditya I, at Pattadakal Virupaksha temple A.D. 744 besides the word picture of Bhudattalvar's

hymn in the *Iyarpā* (c. 6th century A.D.)⁴ The eight hands are to hold eight-fold weapons like bow and arrow, sword and shield, besides conch, disc, mace; and ploughshare. It continues to be described in Tirumangai hymns also. The other *Viśvarūpa* scene is from the *Bhagavat Gītā* (11th chapter) wherein Krishna shows his true form to Arjuna and displays the entire gamut of life on this universe, part and parcel of his body. An extremely faithful and large-sized theme is found painted on the ceiling of the outer *maṇḍapa* of the Chennarayaperumal temple at Atiyamankottai near Dharmapuri, datable to the Nayak times (c. A.D. 1600).

BHAGAVATA RELIGION—PANCHAVIRA AND PANCHAYATANA PUJA

Vasudeva Krishna of the Vrishni clan is the earliest formal apotheosis of a seemingly para-historical figure. The cult took two stages of development, firstly when Sankarshana or Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna, together with Krishna-Vasudeva, was deified in the Sankarshana-Vasudeva cult, exemplifying the Vishnu-Ananta combination. But since the scions of this Vrishni Vasudeva clan, like Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Samba (or Satyaki variantly) together with Subhadra, were also subsequently unified in one basic cult nexus, the *Panchavīra* cult was born which was indeed *Vishnu parivāra* cult, analogous to the corresponding adumbration of the *Śiva parivāra* constituting Śiva, Uma, Skanda, Ganapati, and Nandi. The *Panchavīra* cult was having a basis in the *pañchāyatana puja* of a poly-theistic character, wherein Vishnu, Śiva, Surya, Ganesa and Durga were worshipped. The *Panchavīra* and the subsequent *Vyūha* pattern of Vishnu, worship seemingly the developed form of Purusha, Aniruddha, Achyuta, Trivikrama and Ananta, or even in the *nava vyūha* scheme. The *Hayasirsha Pāncharātra* text (*Adikanda*) indicates that the *Pañchāyatana* comprises Vishnu-Vasudeva in the centre, Vamana at the *Āgneya* (south-east), Narasimha to the *Nirrutya* (south-west), Hayagriva to the *Vāyavya* (north-west) and Nrivaraha to the *Isanya* (north-east). An alternative arrangement was with Narayana in the centre, Ambika to the south-east, Surya to the south-west, Brahma to the north-west and *Linga* or Rudra to the north-east. This option, thus, involves a purely Vaishnava, and a *misra* or mixed grouping, and appears to have been in vogue around the 9th-10th centuries A.D. in the north. However, that the Vaishnava alternative was already prevalent in the 8th century A.D., or earlier is shown by the above first mentioned grouping of the *Pāncharātra* school being typically followed in the Rajivalochana temple at Rajim in Madhya Pradesh. A further evolution is also that of the *navāyatana* type wherein Purushottama was to be fixed in the central or main shrine, Chandika to the south-east corner, Ambika to the south-west corner, Sarasvati to the north-west corner and Padma or Lakshmi to the north-east. This type also envisages in addition, Lakshmi Vaisravana on the east, *Mātri ganas* with Skanda, Iśana, Ganesa on the south, navagrahas on the west and Dasavatara on the north. Such temples were indeed very common in Rajasthan and Gujarat. They indicate that

there was, indeed a *Sri* or *Sakti Vyūha*, corresponding to *Vishnu vyūha*. The main temple at Dwaraka, shows the *Vishnu Panchāyatana* form with Vasudeva in the centre and Purusha, Pradyumna, Trivikrama and Veni Madhava on four sides, and with a temple each for Devaki and Śiva as Kusesvara Mahadeva.

The *Panchavīra Bhagavata* cult was first seen in the north, as in Rajasthan at Madhyamika Nagari (the capital, of Sibi Janapada in the temple of Narayana Vatika) or at Vidisha near Bhopal in the temple for which Heliodorus, the Scythian ambassador at the Avanti court erected a *Garudadhvaja*, calling himself a *parama Bhāgavata*. It became quite popular and is seen widely prevalent in the Kushana and the Gupta periods both in the simplified Sankarshana-Vasudeva cult having only Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra or the *Panchavīra* cult, having Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Samba (or Satyaki) along with Subhadra. The simplified version forms the presiding deity at Puri Jagannath, called there as Krishna, Balarama and Rukmini, but in fact only Subhadra who, as the female *amsa* (Narayani or *Vishnu māya*) was none else than Durga or Sakti. *Panchavīra* temples were known in the Pallava period in Tamil Nadu, as at the famous Parthasarathi temple, Tiruvallikkeni, and the Venugopala temple at Tiruchchhanur (just adjacent to the famous Padmavati temple at this place within the same premises) and become more and more popular as seen by the Nachchhiyarkoil temple, Gosaka temple, Teralundur, Sundararaja temple, at Tiruttangal, where the Sri, Bhū and Nila concept of Vishnu was also integrated by three female consort forms. It became the basis of much that was significant in the outlook of the Vaishnava iconic cults, in the latter day *vyūha* pattern.

SRI TEMPLE

The *Panchāyatana* became in the north a common property for Vaishnava, Śaiva, Sakta and even Jaina cults. But in the south, the *Vaikhānasa* (*Marīchi Samhita*) and the *Pāncharātra* texts (*Pādmāsamhita*, for instance), suggest that Lakshmi should be placed in the third *ankaṇa* at the south-west corner (a method which is actually seen followed even at Srirangamt) and from all the internal evidence in Vishnu temples, prior to the 10th century, A.D., it would seem that a systematisation of the Sri temple begins only in the post-Ramanuja era. Unlike the *nirguṇa* *linga* in the sanctum of a Śiva temple which rationalises the *saguṇa* Devi shrine separately, the Vishnu temple has already Sri and Bhū, placed by the side of the sanctum and in addition has the separate *Tāyar* and Andal shrines as well. In this, the *Tāyar* and Andal are none but the manifestations of Sri and Bhu respectively, and correspond to Rukmini and Satyabhama in Krishna group. In Rama context however, it permits Sita (who is equally the *amsa* of Bhudevi and Sridevi) to be fixed, either to the left or to the right of Rama variantly, the former being, however, the pristine method.

WEAPONS OF VISHNU

It is interesting that the weapons of Vishnu worshipped by Vaishnavas, are the *chakra*, *sankha*, and *gada* had themselves been acquired at different stages. We have the Gadadevi or Kaumodaki, utilised already in the Varahavatara against Hiranyaksha, but *chakra* and *sankha* (later got through vanquishing the Panchajanya demon and hence known as Panchajanya) are both seen employed first only by Krishna variously. His utilisation of *chakra* against Sisupala, and for hiding the sun to bring out Jayadratha, to redeem the vow of Arjuna, are well known. The destructive propensity of the *chakra* is clearly part of the protective, mantle that was cast upon Vishnu in the Puranic times when in personal worship ritual and for symbolic *samrakshaka* concept, Vishnu became the most important deity. He had been necessarily to be bestowed with destructive weapons especially signifying the Rudra aspect of the Trinity work schedule. It is clear that, alike by the Agni-Sudarsana connection and Puranic and *āgamic* sources like Chakradanamurti concept wherein Vishnu's *chakra* is said to be a present form Śiva-Rudra, Vishnu, in the *chakra*, is carrying only Śiva's *amsa* in the same way as in *sankha*, which represents *nāda-brahma*, he carries the creative aspect of Brahma. The development of the *āgamic* principles of consecration of gods in temples in various parts of a village, harmonised also with this vogue, and expected a Vishnu temple to be built in the centre of the village, bestowing its benedictive look on the inhabitants, while the shrine for Śiva was desired to be kept at the *lśānyakoṇa* or north-east corner, looking away from the village. This clinched the role of Vishnu as the preserver *par excellence*. In fact, the evolution from the polytheism on to a mono-theism and finally to a monism and *vice versa*, is the device by which the identity of all in one and one in all is established in Hindu thought. We have the Vishnu-Spivishta of the Vedic times, emerging as an important theistic element and coalescing not only with the svadha and svāha pati, namely, Agni, but also the Rudra-Pasupati god and Aditi—Mother Goddess and Prajapati Hiranragyrbha, emerging as the single effulgent entity conducive to worship in a *kāmya* or wish fulfilling trend in religion. The most ancient other element of Vishnu in the Vedas like the Urukrama and Emusha or Varaha were, later, to re-crystallise in the *avātara* legends, from the triune and syncretic manifestation like Harihara-Pitamaha, or Aja-Ekapada-Trimurti whose images we get in the Chalukya and Pallava periods, coeval with the *ālvār* stage, we go to the consolidation of the sects, at the advent of the *Ācharya* stage, and we have to witness the exclusive branching of the members of the Trinity (with only tenuous and putative links). It is, thus, we have the Lingapurānadeva or Śiva as the pillar of fire (crystallised in the *linga* thereafter) making Varaha-Vishnu and Hamsabrahma as a subordinate divinity. But since Vishnu, as Varaha, is already a vedic divinity, and was in a creative mantle (*Mahī mahāvārāheṇa lohītāt uddhrtod-adheḥ*), his pre-eminence was inherent. As the very stage was that of particularisation than consolidation, the iconic trends of the period, doubtless, reflected the

trend. But the standardisation of the *Āgamic* outlook, again, brought a certain balance, and re-established the Trinity nexus in the religious lives of the people, in persuasive and unobtrusive and metaphoric manner. Fundamental to this change in outlook was the fact that creation, preservation and decay are the order of life and are cyclic, of which the preservation was certainly the most positive and purposeful chapter, and thus benedictive aspects of all the gods was to become a common factor, and infra-structures of creation, preservation and destruction was established for each divinity only to emphasise the inevitability of the cycle.

It is interesting, in this context, that the most ferocious *avatāra* of Vishnu, namely Narasimha, was personified as Agni-Sudarsana in the *Ahimbudhnya Samhita*, and the Sudarsana image which was expected to be fixed in the south-west side of a Vishnu temple) to be visible from the front and back as well, carrying in the front face the 16-handed Sudarsana-purusha in *ālīdha* pose, while the rear side showed the Yoganarasimha with all the four hands carrying *chakra*. Such images are found at Kanchi Varadaraja temple, in the Chakrattalvar *Sannidhi*, at Pundarikashaswami temple at Tiruvellarai, and several other places. Nrisimha-Śiva-Agni link, thus, is well-established, and it is because of this that the Nrisimha incarnation, as having come out of a pillar (made out of wood)—which was verily the *Yūpa* pillar and which personified Agni which came out when struck—is not generally depicted thus, in the earliest carvings of this theme. It is only after about the end of the 8th century A.D., that Narasimha's coming out of the pillar is depicted freely, and by that time the Agni-Rudra-Nrisimha symbiosis has already taken place. There is no image Narasimha coming out of the pillar in the whole series of Pallava sculptures. This is what Vedanta Desika also indirectly suggests in his reference to '*ya kachit sahasā mahāsura griha—sthūṇa pithamahyabhūt*' in the *Dasa-avatara śloka*, by which he emphasises how the pillar (in feminine gender) had to take the role of a creatrix (*pitāmahī*) and create the Agni-form of Narasimha, out of the pillar of wood.⁵

It would be appropriate to mention yet another indication of the Vishnu-Śiva combination which had forged a well-fused iconic imagery so much popular among the Vaishnavas and Śaivas alike, namely, the Hanuman image. Hanuman is considered as *Rudra-vīrya Samudbhava*, and the personification of Nandikesvara, and is Śiva-amsa. Sculptural evidence for this is available from even the 8th century A.D., as at Kunattur cave-temple near Madurai and Kottukal cave in Kerala. Hanuman is revered by Vaishnavas as *siriya tiruvaḍi*, as against Garuda who is *peria-tiruvaḍi*. They confer immortality and power. Hanuman's personification of intellect (*nava-vyākaraṇa paṇḍita*) and yogic control (*gambhīra brahmachāri*) show respectively the affiliation to *yoga* and *medha*-Dakshinamurti form of Śiva.

CONSORT ARRANGEMENT

A reference was made to Sri and Bhū as becoming the consorts of Vishnu at

later stage, whereas in the earlier stages, it was only Bhū that was associated with Vishnu always and Sri was inherently shown as *Srivatsa* mark on His chest. The Bhū concept, as remarked already, stood for the Andal, Sita and Satyabhama variants. Of these, it is particularly interesting that the early text like *Vaikhānasa* shows Krishna as Rajagopala or Rajamannar (the cowherd *par excellence*) as primarily accompanied by Satyabhama, always to be placed to his left side in such a way that his left elbow is to the right shoulder of Satyabhama. This concept is what is depicted in the *utsava* image at the famous temple at Mannargudi where, Satyabhama, is shown to the left appropriately. We have stone sculptures of this from Shermadevi and elsewhere. Rukmini introduced in the *utsava* bronze of Mannargudi is, therefore, clearly a later innovation of the Sri-Bhū complex. But that it was not in the original idol even upto the time of Vedanta Desika is clearly proved by his significant description—almost in a precise reference to the *Vaikhānasa* specification of Rajamannar—of Krishna, as Gopala, in his *Gopalavimsati* poem.⁶ By this, the right hand of Krishna is to have the shepherd's crook and the left to be placed on the thrilled and horripulating shoulders of the devi (here Satyabhama, who is always to the left).

VISHNU IN HIS VAIKUNTHA AND MILK OCEAN

The *paramapada* of Vishnu finds the God in two postures; the Ranganatha or the reclining and the Vaikuntanatha or the seated pose. In either case, he is on the coils of Ananta or Adishesha. The Vaikuntanatha figure, in its earlier stages presented Bhudevi kneeling before the god, and a Bala-Nrisimha standing to one side—an indication of the *avatāra* concept of God prospectively presented. Such a figure is found in places as far removed as the Vishnu temple at Deogarh, in Central India (of about the mid-6th century late Gupta setting) as well as in the panel carving of the Ranganatha cave-temple at Namakkal (Salem District of Tamil Nadu), datable by its inscriptions to the forties of the 8th century A.D., of the reign of Atiyanatha Gunasila, the Atiyaman king ruling over this area. This in king, in his records here refers also to the *sayyāgriha* that he got carved on the brow of the hill, for Anantasayi, who was surrounded by Markandeya, Garuda, Varuna, Brahma, Isā (or Śiva), Daksha, Moon, Sun, Tumburu, Narada, Bhṛigu and the five *āyudha devatās* of Vishnu, namely, Sarnga, Kaumodaki, Sudarsana, Nandaka and Pāñchajanya. This is the most satisfying inscribed evidence showing the Anantasayi presentation in the 8th century A.D., which corroborates the *Vaikhānasa* specifications of this deity. But several varieties of Anantasayis are known in text and usage, divisible into the *yoga*, *bhoga*, *vīra* and *abhichārīka* forms. The more outstanding among the other examples in Tamil Nadu of these are at Mahabalipuram, Tiruvehka, Tirumayam, Srivilliputtur (Vatapatrasayi) and Tiruppullani. The *sthalasyana* god at Mamallapuram, sung by Bhudattalvar earlier and, later, by Tirumangai, is now to be seen in between the two

Shore Temples for Śiva on the beach here. A later copper plate charter from Chittoor, of the time of Nripatunga, refers to the stone temple constructed by Narasimha I Mamalla to reclining Vishnu at the brink of the sea (*Yassāyyāgriham asmabhir jalanidhauchakre mahāchchhakrinah*). It was, by its own internal characteristics (among which the absence of *Sesha talpa* and hence, the *Samasthala sayana* is the chief trait) answer specifically the *abhichārika* form of this deity which could be located only on the tops of hills in the middle of the forest, in a desert and, on the sea, and here follows the last alternative, and was seemingly for off-setting the enemies of the Pallava empire.

The Kanchi Tiruvehka temple is mentioned in the *Sangam* work viz., *Perumbānāruppaḍai*, as having been located near the very entrance of the metropolis from the south, and has this speciality of having the head towards the east and also the body half raised, answering the requirement of a *vīra sayyā*. The other example at Mahabalipuram in the Mahishamardinimandapa, which is relatively later to the Sthalasayana at the Shore Temple, though essentially of the same king's reign, is significant for its lack of depiction of Brahma. The variations in the *āgamic* specifications of the *Yoga*, *Bhoga* and *Abhichārika* are due to rational contextual basis. For instance, the *yoga* type is without Sri and Bhū, as god is in deep meditation. The *vīra* type, however, shows the consorts massaging the feet.

The *bhoga* type is the most formal and comprehensive, placing all the other divinities around Anantasayi according to protocol, with Sri at the head and Bhū at the feet. The above mentioned Mahishamardinimandapa example is of the *Yogasayana* type and shows Markandeya and Varuna (standing in knee-deep water of the sea) at the base and Bhū at the feet and on the ground level only. The Tirumayam example shows even the poison fumes that Sasha sent when Madhu and Kaitabha disturbed the meditating God. The carving is datable to the late 7th or early 8th century A.D. The Vatapatrasayi of Srivilliputtur follows the specifications given for *Vīrasayyā* category in *Vaikhānasāgama*, and belongs to the second half of the 8th century A.D. The Tiruppullani example datable to the mid-8th century A.D., and is of stucco, shows Bhrigu, Markandeya at the base, Garuda, Surya, Chandra, Brahma, *Āyudhas* and the *rishis* are also there. Sri and Bhū are both absent. It is most probable of the *yoga* type, but has been integrated to Rama legend, and is called the *Darbhasayana*.

STANDARD STHANAKA VISHNU FORM

The acceptance of a standard form of Vishnu *sthānaka* (four-armed) for *āgamic* worship was the important terminal point of a formative period, during which the worship trends had themselves been widely variant, both in respect of the object of veneration, as well as method of deputation. The Vaishnavite *ālvārs*, Poigai, so pithily explains it in the *Iyarpā* verses.⁷ What he is obviously referring to, is : (1) that the God of worship is a matter of comprehension and glorification by

the individual saints and the learned; (2) that the personal gods of each group had varied, each claiming this is my supreme God; (3) the method of worshipping such a God was by applying a stucco figure on the wall (in brick and mortar) or placing a stele or relief image against wall of a shrine, as in a niche; (4) that the Trivikrama concept received such an honour of a supreme deity *first*. This means that the concept of Trivikrama which is rooted in the Vedic times was the basis for most of the further expansion and elaboration of the Vishnu worship, as he was represented in the Trivikrama form, as the most pervasive divinity, and was at once abstract as well as concrete. That the early *Ālvars*, however, were eclectic enough to consider Śiva and Vishnu as a complementary divinity, is well brought out by the popularity of the Harihara concept (Poigai *Iyarpā*, 1st *andādi*, v.5, and v. 98 and Pey 3rd *Tiruvandādi*, v. 63). But they gave primacy among the Trinity to Vishnu by his already well-established protective role (v. 15). In fixing the form of such a God, the multitude of powers he possesses called for multiple arms and was so fixed in some concepts like the Vishnu-Ashtabhuja or *Virāṭ* form. But the standardisation for the purpose of the *āgamas* showed that the basic principles of the Hindu religion were adumbrated in them, in the four-handed image. This four-handed standardisation was adopted, be it noted universally, in Śaiva, Śakta and other forms as well, but in the case of Vishnu, it had a special interest. The earlier divine forms of worship were mostly two-armed in which one showed *abhaya mudra* and the other *kaṭi mudra*. By this, the acceptance of responsibility was shown by the latter, and the requisite power was implied by the former. But when the Trinity concept was itself consolidated into the *Vishnu tattva*, it called not only for a symbolic adjustment but also more hands, in the minimum to depict the ideal. In this the disc, conch, mace and lotus were selected as the most appropriate *āyudhas* and *lakṣaṇās*. In fact, it would be difficult to conceive of a better or more aesthetically satisfying archetype than the above for the supreme deity and the standard Vishnu form is thus corresponding to what was similarly attempted and fulfilled for Śiva also by about the 9th-10th century A.D., in the *Ānanda-tāṇḍava* Nataraja form, representing the *Panchakṛitya* concept.

CHAKRAVARTI CONCEPT OF VISHNU

The four-handed Vishnu form depicted in its *chakra*, two entirely complementary concepts merged together, namely, the Chakravarti or *Mahāpurusha* concept, and the concept of the destruction of evil by its fire content. The *Chakravati* concept which was one of the oddest in Hindu thought and art was already known and adopted in the Buddhist period and art also. It exemplified the legitimate attributes of a universal sovereign, like fly-whisk, umbrella, the divine elephant, horse, *kalpakavrikhsa*, *kāmadhenu*, etc. Indeed, in this ideal, several existing *Smṛiti* trends like kings on earth being considered as representations of Vishnu, Indra's immortal possessions like *Kalpataru*, etc., being considered as the claim of any

who is the very embodiment of great wisdom, power and compassion and protector of godly rituals and *dharma*, how the *Dharmachakrapravartana* (which in art was attributed to Buddha) was itself a duty of Vishnu.⁸

It is interesting that some of these symbols like *Kalpavriksha*, *gada*, *sankha*, *chakra*, lotus or lily, *ankusa*, (or goad), *vajra*, double carp, *pūrṇaghaṭa*, etc., became *mahāpuruṣa lakṣaṇas*, and *aṣṭa mangalas* variously, and were to be engraved on the *pāda* or feet of these divinities, as in a *Bhuddhapāda* or *Vishnu pāda*. Thus Vishnu's *chakravartinva* had been an important concept and *chakra* represents the concept best. It also symbolises the power of destruction and is appropriately placed in the right hand ready for discharge. *Sankha* being the producer of *nāda* or sound is a creative symbol and is in the second hand. *Gada* has been well-taken as the weapon representing intelligence or knowledge by which the inertia or ignorance could be dispelled, something corresponding to the *mudgara* for dispelling *moha* and is so symbolised in the *Gadadhara* form of Vishnu. Thus, *gada* in the third lower left hand symbolised knowledge, while the fourth hand holding the lotus expresses the accessibility, softness and the beauty of God. The multi-petalled lotus was also the seat of Sri or Sakti, and was thus clearly an exposition of the inherent feminine part of the universal principle.

MULA AND UTSAVA BHERAS

Such a standardised Vishnu form is known mainly from the time *utsava bheras* came to be employed. Before that stage, the image in the sanctum was in different forms, which explains one or the other myths of Vishnu or Krishna, such as seated, reclining, or dynamic forms of the God (*Ninrān*, *Irundān*, *Naṇḍandān*, *Kiṇḍandān*) for whom vertically arranged multiple shrines were even built to emphasise their identity, as at Paramechchura Vinnagaram or Vaikunthaperumal temple at Kanchipuram, or Sundaravarada temple at Uttiramerur. It was such forms in the sanctum that was actually worshipped by the early *ālvārs*. The *utsava bheras* came into being primarily, after the bronze casting was mastered around A.D., 900 (although for personal *ārādhana*, for already, about a century earlier, small bronze figures appears to have been extant). In fact among the conservative groups of *Vaidīkas* in society, it was not customary for a long time to proceed to a temple to worship god, but only perform personal *ārādhana* daily for the *Iṣṭa-devata* or *sālagrama* and *linga*. The temple worship is a direct result of the establishment of the *Āgama prāmānya* or the validity of the *āgamas*, and brought together a certain degree of fusion among several racially and socially stratified groups, particularly in Tamil Nadu, in the post-Sangam period.

The advent of the *utsava bhera*, was one of the sequels to the consolidation of the *āgamic* mode of worship, by which a mobile god for festivals, *abhisheka*, etc., which became the necessary concomitants of the *śoḍaśopachāra* ritual for God, in temples was required. It is these *utsava bheras* that were given resplendent

names by devotees, culled out of the *Ālvars* hymns where they had been hallowed. Thus, Sarngapani of Kumbakonam is the *utsava bhera*, whereas the *mūlabhera* of that temple was the reclining Vishnu (*Kuṇḍandai-kkiṇḍandān*); and in a similar way, at Tiruvallur, Viraraghava is the *utsavabhera* while his *mūlabhera* was there again, a reclining Anantasayi (*Evṇul-kiṇḍandān*); Rajamannar or Rajagopala of Mannargudi was the *utsava bhera*, while the *mūlabhera*, here, is a seated god.

The universal monarch or *Chakravarti* that Vishnu was, received further emphasis by his acquiring additional consorts, like Niladevi, Malayala Nachchhiyar, Tulukkanachchhiyar, etc., as and when some new conquests of a region is made symbolically. This was a development that rationalised the political events, and fused them with the Vishnu myth. Such a development does not take place for Śaiva and other cults for obvious reasons. But the double-consort formula (Lakshmi and Bhudevi), however, was predicated for all gods, almost invariably from the *āgamic* period, as Valli and Devasena for Subrahmanya, Siddhi and Buddhi for Ganesa, Sandhya and Savitri for Surya, and Gayatri and Sarasvati for Brahma and so on, though Śiva was never given such a double consort. In his case, Uma or Parvati was primarily a personification of Bhudevi, and is iconographically also having identical delineation. In those which had already been built and consecrated in the periods earlier than the advent of the *utsava-murtis* in bronze, there is only the image of Vishnu in the centre, while, consistent with the double-consort of Sri and Bhū for Vishnu, as standardised by the *āgamic* practice, the temples erected from and after the *utsavabhera* advent, that is around c. A.D., 900, show the consort sculptures in the sanctum also.

It is also interesting that even in the matter of the ritual, Vishnu who was considered as the very *Yajñapurusha*, *Yajñapati*, *Yajva*, and *yajña* itself and was to be provided with the *angas* of the ritual, the most important part of it was the *yajñopavīta*. We have Vishnu forms in the early Kushan period around the very opening of the Christian era, which do not show the *Yajñopavīta*. This feature, in the next formative stage, for major divinities, becomes a *nivīta* form, as seen in the hundreds of the early Chalukya and early Pallava forms of gods (both Vishnu and Śiva). The means that while the *upavīta* for *yajña* that was indeed what sacred thread was—(whose earlier version was the tying of the entire *krishnajina* or deer skin, with head and horns complete, across the body from left shoulder to the right hip) was the proper form there was no *prāchīnāvīta* (or right shoulder to left hip, as in *śrāddha* rituals) for divinities, and hence their *upavīta* was tentatively shown as neutral (*nivīta*). But subsequently the *upavīta* form was universally adopted, both in the stone figures in the sanctum and the bronze *utsavamurtis*.

Vaishnavism, as a religion and a way of life, has clearly exerted a profound influence from the earliest stages, in moulding Hindu religious thought into salubrious, wholesome shapes (shorn of *vāmāchāra* perversities). It has also presented

itself as the very central plank of iconography and philosophy of the Bhakti school which can be said to be the most singular constituent of Hindu religion and ritual, sublimating God man, as well as man and fellow man, into one indivisible communion.

REFERENCES

1. *ekam sad—vipra—bahudhā vadanti*
2. *Rajo-jushe Janmāni sattva vrittaye Sthito prajānan pralaye tamasprihe/Ajaya sarga-sihiti-nāsa hetave Tryimayāya trigunaya sannatih.* ||
3. *Sarvāgamanam acharah prathamam parikalpate / Ācharah-prabhavo dharmah dharmasya prabhurach-yutah.* ||
4. *Tottapadayettum tolada venriyan Attabujakarattān Tālmudale nangaiku-chchhārru.*
5. There is a delightful legend narrated about the Ahobila-Narasimha, for whom Prataparudra Kakatiya ordered an *utsavamurti* from his camp Rudhararm. The earlier royal intention, it is said was to have a *linga*, but every time the *sthapati* started fashioning it, it is said to have resulted in the Narasimha form, the pillar. The king realised the divine will and said to have enthusiastically ordered Narasimha icon for the Ahobila deity. The inherent symbolism in the story is interesting and revealing. Of equal interest is the relatively later anecdote about God Vittala of Pandharpur and Narahari the goldsmith showing how god alternatively appeared as a *linga* and Krishna. A *stotra* attributed to a Sankaracharya describes Panduranga as *Para brahma-linga*.
6. *līlā-yashṭim—karo kiṣalayaiḥ dakṣiṇe—nyāsyadanyam amṣe devyah pulaka ruchro—sanni vishṭānyh tānuh.*
7. *Avaravar-tamtam-Arindavaretti Ivar-ivar—emberumān enru Suvarmisaichchharttiyam vaittum toṭur ulagalānda mārṭi-uruve-mudal.* V.14 of Tiruvandadi.
8. Vendanta Desika mentions this in *Abhīṭistava* verse.

THE ETERNAL CHARMER: KRISHNA AND HIS MANIFESTATIONS

The name Krishna has stuck with distinction to the wonderful child-God of *Gokula*, although it is apparent that he was called in the earliest times mainly as Vasudeva and Devakiputra, being the son of Vrishni Vasudeva and Devaki, sister of Kamsa. Bhagavan calls himself in the *Gita* itself, *Vrishṇīnām Vāsudevosmi*. The appellation Krishna, however, had also been attached to other celebrities like Krishna-Dvaipayana—Vyasa, and in the feminine gender to Krishna, for Draupadi and was thus a common noun signifying various traits such as black, or one who churns the mind (*Karṣaṇāt Krishṇaḥ*). In view of the fact that there was originally no term for black colour in Sanskrit and only *sīta* and *asīta* were used to represent white and non-white (and by implication dark or black) and terms suggesting black colour were *nīla* and *kāla*, which both meant only the dark, it is proper to hold that Krishna for Vrishni-Vasudeva was a secondary name which became a permanent synonym at a subsequent period. It would be interesting also to note that in olden times, it was customary to call the son, after the father's name or his *gotra* or his special clan name, and this practice gave rise to several identical names for what were obviously distinctive personalities among kings, sages, etc., and where the father had two wives, after the mother's name, as in Devakiputra for Krishna and Rauhineya for Balarama, both of whom were the sons of Vasudeva through two wives, Devaki and Rohini. Elsewhere, a common noun, like the term Rama for instance, was accepted with facility, and according to context, for Rama Dasarathi (Raghava), Haladhara (Balarama) and Rama Jamadagneya (Parasurama).

It is a moot point if the *Rigvedic* reference (VIII, 85, 3, 4) to one Krishna whom its *anukramaṇi* calls Krishna-Angirasa who is again mentioned in *Kausītaki Brahmana* (XXX, 9) and Krishna-Harita mentioned in *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* (III. 2-6),

all refer to Krishna Devakiputra. *Chandogya Upanishad* (III, 17.6) explicitly mentions Krishna Devakiputra as a Vedic seer and the disciple of Ghora Angirasa, whereas *Epic* and *Puranic* traditions of Krishna not only do not mention such association, but also make Sandipani and Garga as his teachers. That, however, *Chandogya* refers only to Krishna Vasudeva, there can be no doubt.

The shadow of the personality of Krishna is cast over the entire *Mahabharata* Epic and although the Epic deals with the Kuru-Panchala clan conflict resulting in the Great Battle, the story becomes charged with a spark of ethical-moral rectitude and with a halo of divine aura, by the seemingly unobtrusive presence of Krishna-Vasudeva who plays many statesmanly roles in the course of the *saga*. His own home stretch is, however, Mathura on the Yamuna and, subsequently, Dvaraka in Saurashtra. Notwithstanding the mediator's role which he assumes in the story, one is never left in doubt about where his affiliations, grace and commitments lie. He identifies himself with the Pandavas and with Arjuna especially (*Pandavānām Dhananjayaḥ—Gita*) and Sanjaya's valedictory utterance *Yatra yogesvaraḥ Krishna yatra Partho-dhanurdharaḥ, Tatra-Srī-Vijayo-bhūtiḥir Dhruvanītir-matirmama*, clinches it. This virtually leads to the iconic crystallisation of Arjuna and Krishna as Nara-Narayana pair who dwell in Badarikasrama and who form the *par excellence* divinities of Bharata Varsha in Jambudvipa. By this time, his role as an incarnation of Vishnu-Narayana becomes an accomplished fact (*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, X. 1.6—*Nārāyaṇāya Vidmahe Vāsudevaya dhīmahi tanno vishnuḥprachodayāt*).

It is interesting that Krishna who belonged to the *Sātvata* sect of the Yadavas, a lunar dynasty and 94th removed from Manu, is represented by some Puranas as hailing from the Solar dynasty (*Harivamsa*, II, 38, 35—*Evam Ikshvāku vamsāt yaduvamso vinisritaḥ*) Panini (c. 8th century B.C.) refers to Vasudeva and Arjuna as objects of worship; apparently the earliest hint of the Nara-Narayana cult referred to in the earlier paragraph, while Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador (4th century B.C.) records Krishna as already a divinity and relates him to the Pandavas. The *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali (2nd century B.C.) makes a direct reference to Krishna and Kamsa as opponents. We have fortunately clear inscriptions proving the prevalence of Krishna-Vasudeva temples in the centuries before the Christian era. The most spectacular among them are the Heliodorus pillar record at Vidisha, according to which Heliodorus, the ambassador at the court of Avanti (2nd century B.C.) built a Garuda column to the Samkarshana-Vasudeva temple at Vidisha, and called the God as Deva-deva and himself as *Parama Bhagvata*; and the Ghosundi and Nagari records from Rajasthan referring to the Samkarshana-Vasudeva worship at Narayana Vatika. It is important to note that the Vidisha temple whose remains have also recently been excavated presents an elliptical plan and probably made of wood and of about the 3rd century B.C., which had provision for not only Krishna and Balarama (Samkarshana) whose

tāla dhvaja fragment had also been found near the temple, but also for Pradyumna (with his *Makaradhvaja* fragments which have also been recovered), Aniruddha and Satyaki—indeed the five-fold Vrishni-Yadava heroes who had been apotheosised from historical to divine figures, along with the lone female member, Subhadra, also deified—to form what is known as the *Panchvīra* cult worship—the earliest vestige of any kind of regular cult worship in India, and directly related to Krishna-Vasudeva. We have *Panchvīra* cult images in Tamil Nadu at the Tiruvallikeni temple at Madras, at the Venugopala temple, Tiruchanur near Tirupati, at the Srinivasa temple at Nachchhiyarkoil (near Kumbhakonam) and several other places already by the 8th century A.D. Krishna, the real historical person of the Yadava-Satvata clan and probably datable at least to the 12th century B.C. in the pre-epic literature and in the early parts of the epic *Mahabharata*, got apotheosised as *Para*, then converted into *vyūha* form, with Balarama and other Vrishni heroes then into the *Avatāra* concept in the Puranic period, credited with the *antaryāmi* in the *Gita* doctrines, echoing upanishadic teaching and combined with the cow-herd Gopa Damodara and child god of Gokula, into *archa* in the *Āgamic* period, and in the 9th-10th century A.D. when the *Bhāgavata Purana* came to be finalised became Lord of Nappinnai, beloved of Andal, *Gopi-Jana-vallabha*, and *Radhalola* variously, with supercharged element of mysticism that were to inspire, in the succeeding centuries, Jayadeva, Lila Suka, Chaitanya, Mira and Vallabhacharya into rhapsodic communion with this God-Lover and impelled in the early medieval times, Madhvacharya to predicate *Krishna bhakti* on to the *Dvaita* doctrine. When we start the *samhita* and *Āgamic* stage of the elaborate ritual, of worship from the 4th—5th century A.D., we have impressive crystallisations of regional models of Krishna cult in *archa-rūpa* in the north, south, east and west of India, respectively by the Nara-Narayana form, the Rajamannar or Rajagopala form, the Sankoddhara and Gadadhara form, and the Krishna-Balarama-Subhadra form the delineation of some glimpses of which would be appropriate at this stage.

It is extremely interesting to note that Arjuna (Nara) has a very complementary and crucial role to play in our traditions, and several legends and myths wrap him up with certain basic features of the theistic formulations of Hinduism. One of the finest carvings of Nara-Narayana is to be found at the Vishnu temple (called the Dasavatara temple) at Deogarh, Madhya Pradesh, ascribable to the mid-6th century A.D. and to the Gupta art *genre*.

Proceeding clock-wise, we may take the eastern region where the myth of Krishna has been most romantically associated with Jayadeva of Kenduli and Chaitanya. The prototype god was obviously Purushottama Jagannatha at Puri—an early medieval temple of great magnificence, a seat, of the deep rooted vaishnava tradition and of mass piety, as reflected in the *Rathayātra* held there. The deity enshrined there is of the Samkarshana-Vasudeva-Subhadra cult-(though the last mentioned is here as Rukmini)—one of the oldest Vaishnava cult ramifica-

tion of our country, as referred to earlier. It is especially interesting to note that images in worship in this temple are of wood. This preserves not only the oldest mode of carving images, before stone or brick and mortar or bronze images were created for worship, and is also at the very root of our ritual outlook which considers *dāru* or wood as unpoluted, being a natural product and hence most appropriate for consecrated images and also for much of the ritual equipment and utensils as well. The Krishna cult with Rukmini on the one hand and Satyabhama on the other, is indeed unified in the Puranic period when Krishna-Vishnu merger results in the ascription of Sri Devi (Lakshmi) and Bhudevi, as the consorts of Vishnu, reflected in the two consorts of Krishna, mentioned above. It is, however, significant to remember that from the earliest stages of both Hindu thought or philosophy and art, it is Bhudevi who is inextricably associated with Vishnu, and Sri Lakshmi is part of a developed Vishnu symbolism wherein Sri—as churned out of the ocean—was accepted by Vishnu, as the *Chakravarti-Mahā Purusha* of the Indian thought. The entire concept of kings (irrespective of their denomination) in this world representing the manifestation of Vishnu, and how auspicious symbols or *lakṣhaṇas* like *gada*, *sankha*, *chakra*, *kalpalata*, lotus, *ankusa*, *vajra*, etc., forming the marks on the feet of *Vishnupāda*, and how Sri is the manifestation of material prosperity which is a concomitant of king as Vishnu as the preserver of the *rita* or moral order in this earth, draws itself from this lore. Hence, we have Sri (who was even worshipped in early Hinduism as essentially a goddess of agricultural wealth and as the guardian of riches, and later even by Buddhism as *Sirimadevata*—a folk-goddess of material affluence) legitimately and permanently ascribed to Vishnu who became the *par excellence* god to be worshipped for all this worldly aspirations and even a happy state (Paradise) in the life beyond—the crux of the *Paramapada* or *Vaikuṇṭha* concept which is a basic ingredient of developed Vaishnavism, already in the post-Vedic times.

In the Krishna equation, Rukmini represents the Lakshmi or Sri segment and Satyabhama the Bhudevi segment. This gets perfectly consolidated in *Āgamic* Vaishnava iconography, not only by the positioning of Sri and Bhū also the corresponding prototypes of Rukmini and Satyabhama, with reference to Vishnu. On this basis Sri is always shown to the right hand side (*dakṣiṇa*) of Vishnu, while Bhū is to the left hand side (*vāma*) of the god in image worship. Correspondingly Rukmini is to be shown in figure to the right of Krishna and Satyabhama is to be on the left side of Krishna. By the same token when Rama form of Vishnu is to be shown, Sita as Bhudevi *amsa* is to be shown to his left (*Vame Bhūmī suta*); and when the foundling-beloved of God Ranganatha, namely Andal or Godadevi of the south (towards which we may now move for our Krishna-pilgrimage) is to be shown, she is to be on the left of Vishnu. Even her sub-shrines in all the Vishnu temples of the south are invariably found located on the left side which is the northern side of the generally east-facing

Vishnu temples. A basic truth embedded in all this symbolism is to be seen : (i) in the earliest Anantasayi or Seshasayi images having only Bhudevi, shown suppliant before the God and located at ground level, at his feet end. (Sri is added only from the later Pallava or early Chola times around the early 9th century A.D.) and (ii) the Krishna—Rajamannar images of Tamil Nadu which, as we have mentioned at the outset, is one the most distinctive and special iconic forms of Krishna in Tamil Nadu also show only Satyabhama in the earlier stages and is so crystallised in *Vaikhānasāgama* (c. 8th century A.D.) which stipulates that the cowherd god Krishna as Rajamannar should be depicted as standing, with his right hand holding a shepherd's crook (*līlāyashṭhi*) and his left hand elbow should be gently resting on the right shoulder of Satyabhama who is positioned there. We find that even Vedanta Desika, in his '*Gopala Vimsati*', recaptures this speciality with all its *āgamic* stipulations and adds a touch of poetic charm to it by suggesting that Krishna's left elbow is placed on the horripulating right shoulder of the devi (*amse-devyāḥ-pulaka-ruchi-ro-Sanni-viṣṭanya-bāhu*). This clearly proves that even as late as Desika's time in the 13th century A.D., the Rajamannar or Rajagopala deity, as in the celebrated temple at Mannargudi in Thanjavur district, showed only Satyabhama to the left and the addition of Rukmini in the bronze *utsava murti* as found today, should have been a Vijayanagara period standardisation. In fact, the Vijayanagara period saw the renewed burgeoning of the Krishna cult, and no wonder that Sri Vyasaraya and Sri Madhva went into raptures over this cowherd-god of ineffable charm and made Him the central figure of their *credo*.

We may now wend our way towards the homeland of this *pūrṇāvatāra* or Vishnu namely Dwarka, in Saurashtra part of Gujarat. This was the country of the Yadavas as attested to even today by the shepherd communities of the Kathis and Ahirs who, from the earliest times in the first millenium B.C., had lived here and developed the Krishna-Vishnu cult, and combining the other scions of the Yadava or Vrishni clan like Balarama, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Satyaki and Subhadra in the *Panchavīra* concept were turning this concept into a *Panchāyatana* form in temple layout and iconography, making the central deity of this framework as Krishna, in the form of *Sankhoddhara* (conch-holding) or alternatively, as the *Gadadhara*. The former form is found in the present important Ranachodrai temple of Dwarka, wherein, sub-shrines on the four corners around the main shrine represent Purushottama, Pradyumna, Trivikrama and Veni-Madhava which are variants of the *Vishnu vyūha* concept. The latter manifestation of Gadadhara as found in the Gadadhara kshetra of Shyamalaji in mainland Gujarat, represents the god as standing in the youthful form with a short *dhoti* adorning the loins, just covering the upper thighs, and having a fetching headgear of plaited peacock features and with the right arm of this two-handed figure holding a very tall shaft, whose upper end is shaped like a *gada* or mace-head. Symbolically this is taken as standing for wisdom and even the presiding deity of Gaya in Bihar is 'Gadadhara', (apparently

Krishna the divine teacher of *Jñāna-yoga* to the world). There is such a striking resemblance between the Gadadhara manifestation of Gujarat (several models of which even in terracotta medium are known as early as the 4th-5th century A.D. and upto the 9th-10th century A.D. in this region) and the Krishna from the South Kanara at Udipi, the *Kadagolu* Krishna, that one should legitimately think that along with several other iconic forms of Vishnu, Śiva, Skanda-Kartikēya and Ganesa which diffused down along the coastal tracts of Konkana and Kanara from the Lata (Gujarat) country, this Gadadhara Krishna form should also have come to Udipi. There, however, in order to evolve the iconic manifestation further, they combined the *Damodara* concept of Krishna with the *gadadhara* form and made the resultant image approximating to *kadagolu* to which the strands of rope are tied. This is clearly the most satisfying embodiment of Krishna, alike for his youth, his capacity to shepherd the human souls, his (*Jñāna*) *Yogisvara* form represented by *gada* transformed here as the churning stick¹ (*Kadagolu*), and altogether the most magnificent consummation of the Krishna cult. There is no denying the fact that this God is the most enthralling of all divinities of the Hindu pantheon and has sublimated Hindu thought, religion and philosophy and mysticism into the most soulful sanctuaries for the devotees. No wonder, Lilasuka said *Krishnā-param-kimapi-tattvam-aham-najāne*, a confirmation again that he is at once a reality and a *tattva*, as adumbrated in the *Dvaita sāmpradāya*.

REFERENCES

1. Because he churns the mind and gets the name 'Krishna' as stated at the outset.

A DEVI CULT NUCLEUS AT JAGAT, RAJASTHAN

The Amba Devi temple at Jagat, 56 kilometres to the south-east of Udaipur, is a unique architectural landmark in Rajasthan. Built about the early 10th cent. A.D. it is a functionally finite structure dedicated to the Devi cult. Indeed the name of the place and the nature of the cult have been so adventitiously blended that we may call it the very *Jagat* of Amba cult, and also Jagadamba (or the World Mother) having been consecrated here. It may be said without reservation that from the iconographic point of view, it is unparalleled in that we have a pure, unadulterated and idealised nerve-centre of worship of the universal divine Mother. Indeed no comparable temple exists wherein the Goddess potential is so deliberately elaborated and where the counterparts of the pantheon are all but non-existent. It could be said that the temple expresses a sublimated apotheosis of the destruction of ignorance by *jñāna-śakti*, and the exultant ramifications of the architectural and iconographic growth thereof.

The temple-complex has two parts, the entrance *maṇḍapa* in two storeys and the main shrine situated separated from it by about 38 m. The present article is not directed towards a full description of the temple-complex, which should well-nigh be a special assignment, but is designed to bring out the iconographic and ritual inflexion of the divine Mother-cult displayed in it.

The main temple is constituted of an entrance *maṇḍapa* with a short flight of steps and side parapet with pilasters and *kakshāsana* top resting on which four dwarf pillars in corbel-brackets carry the *chajja* of the porch and its gable roof. From here access is got to the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* which is resting on the four squarely placed central pillars and is having a flat inner ceiling which has been divided into several compartments in a decorative way, each of this containing sculptural embellishments of divinities and secular themes. This hall has two-side-wings, the roofs of which are of ribbed and curved vaulted character on their interior, not unlike that of the road-side temple

of the Osian group, facing east, or the front corridor roof of the so-called Triple shrine, north of the Mahānāleśvara temple at Menal, which is also datable on stylistic grounds to the 10th cent. A.D. The western ends of both these wings have a door opening to let one for circumambulation outside the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* into the open court around the main shrine. From the *sabhāmaṇḍapa*, one has access to the narrow *mukhamaṇḍapa*, and a still narrow *antarāla* across the high door sill, within which is located the cella. The central parts of the walls of the two wings of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* carry a large *jālī* window each, of the dimensions, of a door, which have an external aspect of a false niche flanked by two engaged pillars, and forming in elevation the *janghā* pilasters of the central *ratha* of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* exterior.

The main temple is *triratha* on plan which is connected to the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* also of *triratha* plan, by a median major inset carrying the *antarāla* and *mukhamaṇḍapa* within and an overlapping triple-gable projection above forming the front extension of the main tower, and similar in this respect to the front porch roof of the temple. The *sabhāmaṇḍapa* has a stepped pyramidal roof ending in a *padma-dala* slab and *āmalasara*, with miniature *śikhara*s resting on the four exterior corners of the projecting wings side of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa*. Both the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* roof and the porch roof, have on their main facets on the sides, raised niche screens on the top; and in the case of the porch roof two diminutive *śikhara*s one above the other in a receding manner, at each of the four corners, tend to give it a miniature verisimilitude with the main tower. The main tower is of the *Nāgara* style, with a flattened *uruśringa* applied to the main face of the *śikhara* upto about half the height from the triple series of cornices on the roof level; the side or corner offsets of *śikhara* being marked out by *karṇāmalakas* into different *bhūmis*. The lower level of these corner facets, however, has a diminutive *śikhara* each at the four angles, while the second *ratha* of the ground plan itself projects under the main face of the *śikhara*. Another still more diminutive *śikhara* covers the third cornice and the *mattavārṇa* or projecting balcony frieze. The main facets of the *śikhara* exterior with recurrent minute *chaitya* decorative detail picked out on their face are carried right up to the *āmalaka*, thus ending in a cusp outside toe *grīvā* and touching the *āmalaka* over which is the *kalāśa* finial. The temple, thus has a typical *Nāgara-vimāna* and *sabhāmaṇḍapa* roof and is, despite the narrow plinth mouldings and elaborate under-cornice and friezes, is of a dignified exterior and top composition. At the sametime the nature of the circumambulation arrangement in the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* is unlike Gujarat style but is an organic evolution from the covered pathway around the cella, as at Modhera in Gujarat and Kera in Kutch on the one hand, and Khajuraho, etc., in Malwa on the other. This cannot make this temple, even on stylistic grounds, earlier than the early part of the 10th cent. A.D., which the inscriptional records on the pillar of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa*, the earliest of which would pertain to the early tenth century, would only confirm. The slenderness and the

flat-faced nature of the main *śikhara* also reinforces a development over the more squattish and thick-set *Nāgaravimāna* of the earlier times. The inset pilasters of the *jangha* of the main shrine as well as the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* with the *vyālī* riders and *alasanāyikās* form the typical *milieu* of the early-medieval architectural trend in which an impact of the Gurjara, Malwa and post-Gupta trends have all combined.

While thus the temple, in its architectural garb is an amalgam and at the crossroads of the firm evolution of the medieval temple structure in south Rajasthan, it is indeed its sculptural and iconographic wealth that claims our dominant attention. Quite in time with the typical stage of its architectural composition, in its iconographic excellence also one is able to note a clear distinctive entity that makes this temple stand out as a unique creation of its times. Here, on its exterior walls, are depicted the major manifestations of *Amba* or the Universal Mother, and the way in which no quarter had been given to any male *mūrtis* excepting for the *Dikpālas* leaves us in no doubt towards considering this temple as an exclusive preserve and ritual focus as it were of the *Devī* or *Amba* cult. Before we should deal with the finite nature of the delineations on its walls, we may categorise the sculptural themes of this temple.

The major niche projections of the exterior of the main shrine carry *Durga* in one form or another. The porch roof on its three top facets displays the female counterparts of the Śivaite order with attendants, in panel slabs, *Dikpālas* are shown in the niches at *jangha* level, on the pilasters close to the third or corner *ratha* of the main shrine back walls but we note only *Agni*, *Yama*, *Nirriti*,¹ *Varuna*, *Vayu* and *Kubera*, thus omitting *Indra* and *Iśana*. At the foot of the main *ratha* projection of the plinth are three diminutive roofed cells which carry the seated representations of the female principles of the Trinity. We do not have any representations of Śiva (excepting at one inconspicuous place on the southern circuit, at the level above the *janghā* and below the under-cornice, in the inset where seated *mithunas* or *Rish-nāyikā* pairs) have been usually represented in bas-relief.

Grotesque or cruel aspects of the Goddess like *Kalī Shodaśī*, etc., are not generally depicted in this temple, but we have a standing *Chamuṇḍa* facing south, shown on the southern circuit and a symmetrically disposed standing *Bhairavī* facing north, on the northern circuit, which are both finding their worthy places in an *Amba* shrine and are undoubtedly appropriate.

Saptamatrikas are totally absent in the main shrine. These are actually found in a very miniature form on the door jambs of the entrance *maṇḍapa* or *Dvāra-maṇḍapa* of the temple situated about 38 m to the east of the main temple and totally detached from it. The topmost friezes over the cornices of the main temple are full of musicians or dancing groups, wherein musical instruments of all kinds, group dances, etc., form the dominant topics. This is actually a developing character of the early medieval temples, where these preponderate. In the Jagat temple, however, they all have a chaste and vigorous resemblance to post-Gupta art

motifs, and are fully in tune with the various appellations of Amba as *sangītarasikā*, *vīṇa-veṇu mridaṅga vādya rasikā*, *sangita mātrikā*, etc., extolling Amba as the very presiding deity of the musical lore. The nature of the Goddesses and the exclusion of both the Gods (excepting the *Dikpālas*) and the Saptamatrikas would be significant and indicate the basic affiliations of this Devi cult. It is not orgiastic, it is not Saptamatrika orientated, but it is Durga-Lakshmi-Sarasvati based. It is benign and protective, and not terror-striking and destructive. It is also to be noted that owing to the association of the Matrika cult with Virabhadra, Śiva-Andhakari and Karttikeya, these three forms of Gods also might have been excluded in this temple. It is well-known that the Durga-Lakshmi-Sarasvati conception is of cardinal and fundamental significance in Devī cult, and in this temple we have the sculptures of all the three, although Durga manifestations are supreme. It is also relevant to observe that even the Durga manifestations are all of the Mahishasuramardini complex. They do not involve either the Kali aspects or the esoteric *Yogini* aspects. The *Yoginī* element enters into architecture and iconography mainly from early the 11th cent. A.D. and this temple being nearly a century earlier does not anticipate it, nor belongs to its *milieu*. Upto the end of the 8th cent. A.D., the Devi cult was associated mainly with six *Yoginīs*,² but it became a sixty-four *Yogini* cult, and many temples, as the celebrated Chaunsath-yogini temple at Beraghat, etc., sprang up introducing also a circular plan for *Yoginī* shrines.

The Durga-Mahishamardini theme is a very elaborate and ritually complex one and we have indeed a remarkably extensive variety of representation from different parts of India or even in the self same region. While some of the forms have been undoubtedly amenable to chronological pattern of development, it is not unusual for many forms to occur in almost the same period from different sites in the same region. But, on present knowledge, the Amba temple at Jagat is the only one wherein we have as many as five representations of Durgā, in the same temple. From the *āgamic* point of view, we have many varieties of Durga and it may be concluded that the delineation of varied Durga forms in the same temple would imply the knowledge and development of all the Durga manifestations by the early-mid 10th cent. A.D., the period to which the temple under study is to be assigned.

On the back side wall of the shrine the central niche shows Durga as a youthful figure with prominent and high breasts,³ as stipulated in the *Āgamas*, with an elaborate *karaṇḍa mukuṭa*, *grāiveyaka hārās* and a long *mālā*-like *uttariya*, the figure standing in *ālīḍha* pose with sword, arrow, *trisūla* and *ankusa* held in her four right hands and with *ghaṇṭā* (or *vajra* ?), bow, *pāsa* on three of the left hands, while the fourth left hand is holding the tuft of a hair of a diminutive human form of the Mahishasura shown emerging from the cut-end of the neck of the buffalo form. The severed buffalo head of the *asura* is shown lying on the ground below the animal body. The *trisūla* of the Goddess is planted firmly on the upper neck

of the animal form of the *asura*. The right leg of the Goddess is resting on the back of the animal body, while the left leg is stretched slantingly, in typical *ālīḍhāsāna*. The entire carving is depicted on a large *padma pīṭha* below. A little above the head, to proper left, is shown detached, in hovering fashion, a head-on-relief of a parrot.

The main niche on the south wall of the temple shows a very attractive young female form of the Goddess with eight hands, the four right hands respectively holding the arrow, the sword (in the act of striking), *trisūla* (thrust on to the upper neck of the Mahishasura), and flower in *kartatri hasta*, while the four left hands hold the shield (*kheṭaka*), *ghaṇṭā*, bow, and in *abhaya hasta*. The right thigh and knee of the Goddess are well flexed and the feet are squarely planted on the back of the buffalo and the demon is shown entirely of animal form with the buffalo head turned up and mouth wide open in the agony of death. The lion-mount's head alone is prominently seen at proper right end, gnawing at the tail end of the animal demon's body. The forelegs of the animal are both raised up and flexed in dynamic action, while the tail is shown in a twist, to indicate anger and frustration. This niche composition also is laid on a *padma pīṭha*.

The northern side main niche shows the Goddess in the most dramatic and unusual stance, with the right leg planted on the ground behind the *Asura* and the left leg flexed and placed on the demon, who, curiously enough, is shown in entirely human form but in a crouching position, almost on all fours, with legs almost straight but with hands flexed and held close to the right leg which is planted a little forward. The lion of Durga is as usual mauling the demon figure at his hind portions. The Goddess is eight-armed, the right arms carrying the drawn sword, the arrow, the *trisūla* and the *vajra*, and the left hands holding the *ghaṇṭā*, bow, and the upper stretch of the *trisūla*, the fourth hand having been mutilated at the elbow level. The breasts and face of this figure had also suffered mutilation. The *trisūla* in this case, as can be seen from above, held steadily down by both the hands. This composition also is shown as resting on a *padma pīṭha*.

We have two more representations of Durga as Mahishamardini which are situated respectively on the south-east corner pilaster of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* wall, facing south, and north-east pilaster of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* wall, facing east. We notice in these that, in the first instance, the *padma pīṭha* is lacking, thereby tending to suggest that only the three main niche figures of the main temple walls were properly consecrated and of ritual use, while the other two are only the artisan's own further variations of the theme. This would also explain why these are not symmetrically disposed to each other, but face south and east respectively on the opposite sides, as mentioned above. In the one that is facing south, we have an eight-armed Goddess standing with right leg resting flexed on the back of the animal Mahisha, with left leg planted on the ground. The right arms hold the drawn sword, arrow, *trisūla* and *vajra*, while the left hold the *ghaṇṭā*, *kheṭaka*, bow and

in *tarjanī hasta* respectively. The demon is shown also in human form as standing in full stature in more or less a *pratyālīḍha* posture, with drawn sword in hand and left thigh and knee flexed and raised and right leg firmly placed on the ground, in front of the severed neck of the animal form. The forelegs of the animal are fully flexed double in the posture of kneeling down, while the hind legs are erect and tail twirled. The lion is, as elsewhere, mauling at its back. The human *Asura* is having his hands flexed and raised in revolt against the Goddess. The *irisūla* of the Goddess is planted well on the neck of the animal demon below.

The other Durga figure, facing east, is again unique in that no buffalo form of the *Asura* is shown, but here again, the demon is shown entirely in human form and in standing position challenging and combatting with the Goddess who is having the weapons in her eight hands, respectively the drawn sword, arrow, *vajra* on three of her right hands, and the *ghanṭā*, cobra and bow on three of her left. The remaining two hands are engaged gripping the outstretched left hand of the demon at the arm and his poised right hand (holding a mace) at the elbow respectively. The stance of the Goddess is also very dynamic, her left leg straight like a pillar, rooted to the ground, and the right thigh and knee raised high upto navel level and flexed acutely with the foot pressing down the demon at his belly. The demon himself has been depicted as having slightly lost his balance and caught firmly with his right leg obliquely planted on the ground and left leg flexed and raised to loin level. The lion-mount of the Goddess is also correspondingly shown in a most unusual pose more or less seated on its hind legs and holding the left leg of the demon at the knee with its claws and mauling him with its teeth. The Goddess is wearing an *uttariya* in the form of a long garland running down upto the knees where it turns up and is held behind her hands along with the *ghanṭā*.

Of the present cases, we note that the back wall niche figure is nearest in approach to the description given to the central figure in the *Navadurga* composition, as given in *Skanda yāmala*, the date of which, however, is uncertain. The specification of the figure holding by the tuft the demon emerging in a human form from the severed neck of the animal form is particularly common, and thus we are led to believe that this figure particularly in this form had come in for ritual worship at the early medieval times in south Rajasthan region, and this would justify its position in the main back niche of the temple, immediately behind the cella. A very interesting additional feature in this figure, as already referred to, is the depiction of a fluttering parrot at the top left (proper) above the Goddess. This could not but be anything else except the conception of Ambika as sporting with a parrot (*līlāsukapriyā*,⁴ or rivalling the parrot in her mellifluous voice—*jītasukagīrvāṇīm*,⁵ or being the parrot in the cage of *Omkāra*, the cosmic cage—*Omkāra pañjaraśukīmt*).⁶ We have instances of Mahishamardīnī where one of her hands is sporting a parrot, from the Ravulaphadi cave panel sculpture at Aihole which could be dated to the end of the 7th cent. A.D. Thus it is apparent that the same idea must have been

introduced in an abbreviated form in this niche sculpture this unless represents the Garuda which is said to be the banner of Amba (*garuḍa dhvajā*); but this seems to be less appropriate, particularly in view of the sculptural analogue mentioned above from Aihole, for the parrot feature. The fact, again, that it is on the main back wall shows that all the aspects of Ambika proper were desired to be incorporated into what was clearly a Mahishamardini figure, perhaps of *Nava durga* ritual affiliation.

We may now proceed to the depiction of the *ugra* aspects of Devi in this temple. As stated already, there is a Chamuṇḍa on the south wall and Bhairavi on the north wall. The former is the *atiriktāṅga* form with emaciated limbs, with scorpion shown in the hollow abdomen with *kapālamālā* adorning her body, and the figure itself standing on a dead body (*pretāsana*) whose face is held by its left hand at its parietal region and is looking up at Chamuṇḍa. She has the prescribed weapons in her arms of which one of the left is flexed with fingers held at the corner of the lip; on the whole, a typical Chamuṇḍa delineation, but for its considerably mitigated look of horror and terror. The corresponding figure on the northern side is a little more interesting. It is a standing figure of the youthful and comely goddess, also standing on the *pretāsana* in the same way is Chamuṇḍa, with her eight arms variously holding a drawn sword held erect, shield, *pāśa*, *ankuśa*, *ḍamaru*, with the remaining three arms engaged variously in holding a severed head by the hair, and in *abhaya* and *varada* *hastas*. It is likely that this figure represents either Bhairavi or Yogesvari. It is the only figure at this place which has *ḍamaru* in one of its hands and also has a *muṇḍa* carried by another hand. Usually Bhairava or Virabhadra has this *muṇḍa* held in one of his left hands. As this is the direction of *Isāna*, it is perhaps appropriate that a female counterpart has been shown here.

We may now deal with the other goddesses in this temple. Here we may first mention Parvati shown on the eastern wall of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* to the proper right of the entrance porch. The goddess is shown as prescribed in the *āgamas* standing in slight *abhaṅga* pose with hands holding Ganesa and *linga* on either side, with *pāśa*, *ankuśa*, *varada* and *abhaya* *hastas*, *akṣhamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu* and with four of the *pañcāgnis* shown on either side of her, and with an iguana shown at the pedestal (*godhāsana*).

We have a fine standing representation of Sarasvati on the northern wall of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa*. She has *vīṇā*, *pustaka*, *akṣhamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu* in her four hands and is in *abhaṅga* pose.

Besides these, we have the standing figures shown at terrace level on the south and the north on the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* and on the south, east and north on the entrance porch roof of the main temple and the seated figures in small shrines located at the plinth, of the *cyma recta* and the *vyālathāra* moulding, three of them on the main shrine and two on the north and south of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa*. The last mentioned seated ones show Lakshmi on the south, Brahmi (or Sarasvati) on the west

and Devi on the north plinth of the main shrine, and seated Durga both on the north and south, on the plinth of the *sabhāmāṇḍapa*. The standing roof-figures mentioned earlier, however, all represent Amba or Ambika, four hands with *śūla abhaya*, cobra and *varada hastas* in the case of those facing north and south. But the one just above entrance roof, facing east, is unusual. It shows Amba with *śūla*, *pushpa*, *akṣhamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu* and with a double lion-mount at the foot. The *Vishnudharmottara* stipulates such a figure to be *Sarvamangalā*. As the figure forms more or less the *lalāṭabimba* of the whole temple, being oriented eastwards above the very entrance to the temple, we may have to take it that it is Amba as *Sarvamangalā*, that is consecrated in this temple. The double lion,⁷ however is not explained. It is, perhaps, to indicate the primary lion mount of hers and secondary lion which was supplied to her by Himavān at the time of the quelling of Mahishasura. In any event, it suggests the propitious and benevolent aspect of the Universal Mother that is crystallised in *Sarvamangalā*, and hence in this temple.

We had mentioned earlier that Saptamatrikas had not at all been given a place in the main temple but had been shown only in the door jambs of the *dvāramāṇḍapa* situated separate from the main shrine on the east. The entire door frame sculptures call for special attention. The jambs depict in their upper parts, Brāhmī, Kaumārī, Vārāhi and Chamuṇḍa on the left, and Maheśvarī, Vaishnavī, Indranī and Bhairavī on the right sides, respectively, it is very significant to note that in this complex, the Chamuṇḍa aspect has been duplicated in the form of Bhairavī which perhaps occupies the place of Śiva as Virabhadra, the traditional accompaniment of the Saptamatrikas along with Ganeśa, as mentioned, for instance, in *Rūpamaṇḍana*. This is in consonance with the absence of all male Gods in this temple. It, however, does not hold good in the case of Ganeśa, since he is shown not only in the *lalāṭabimba* of the innermost door frame of this *dvāramāṇḍapa*, but also in a fine dancing pose in the *vimāna* of the main temple. As he is the ubiquitous warder of all obstacles (*Vighna vārāṇa*), he has an honoured position in all Śiva temples. What is specially interesting in this door frame, however, is that above this Ganeśa and at the centre of the traditional Navagraha panel, is shown a seated Goddess, with the couchant bull-mount shown under her, and with the Goddess playing by two of her four hands on a *viṇā* held diagonally across her body. We know that Amba is described⁸ as playing dexterously on the *viṇā* in the aspect of Matangī—an integration of the Sarasvatī trait into her make-up—and thus it is very pleasant to see that in the same manner as *Sarvamangalā* was consecrated on the crest of the entrance roof of the main shrine; *Rajamatangi* had been consecrated on the door frame of the *dvāramāṇḍapa* of the temple. It is worthwhile also to note here that in order to accommodate this figure at the centre without in any way upsetting the symmetry of the depiction of the Navagrahas, Rahu and Ketu figures have been shown above and below in the same *koshṭha* at the right end, a device not often adopted by *sthapatis*. It shows incidentally that Rahu and Ketu are

complementary deities and perhaps their combination may not do them any ritual injustice.

The Ambaji temple at Jagat is thus a veritable microcosm of the Devi cult as prevalent in the early 10th cent. A.D. in south Rajasthan. It crystallised the female potentials of the Trinity, particularly of Ambika, especially in the aspects of Durga-Mahisamardini. It deliberately and ritually avoided the delineations of the *ugra* and *ghora* forms of the Universal Mother as Kālī, Śivadutī, Rakta-Chamuṇḍa, etc., and this would indicate, therefore, a benevolent cult refreshingly free from the orgiastic, esoteric and exclusive forms of Sakta, Paśupata or Kalamukha cults, which during this period undoubtedly held considerable sway over many parts of north Gujarat, south Rajasthan, Malwa and further east. It would also seem to be so patently dissociated from the Andhakari, Karttikeya-Saptamatrika affiliations and so clearly affiliated to the Durgā-Lakshmi-Sarasvati conception of the divine Universal Mother, the focus of the most popular festival from time immemorial, namely the *Navarātri* or *Durga Pūja*. As expounded in the *Devi Mahātmya*, a part of a later *Mahābhārata* recension, this is the festival wherein the first three days and nights were appropriate to Durga to Lakshmī and the concluding three days and nights to Sarasvati, and during the entire period, the Universal Mother or Mahalakshmī, who is said to be *Brahma-Vishnu Śivātmika* is worshipped mainly as Mahishamardini Durga, but with the clear and admitted coalescence of the triple female cosmic principles into one universal, original and perennial source of causative power. It is thus very likely that the Ambaji temple at Jagat had been dedicated to this concept of Devi and thus, for the period of its erection, was a unique and ennobling instance of hieratic iconographic evolution.

REFERENCES

1. Sometimes Nirruti is replaced by Virabhadra, as done in the ruined ancient temple at Balamraso behind the Delwara group at Mt. Abu, which seems to belong to late 9th cent. A.D.
2. *Shaṭtārāgaṇa-dīpikāṃ Śivasatīm śaṭyoginī-veshṭitām—Bhramarāmbikā Stotra* of Sankara verse 5.
3. *Ghanastana-bharonnatām kalita-chūlikām Śyāmalām—Tripurasundari Stava*.
4. Cf. *Jaya līlātuku-priye—Śyāmalā-daṇḍaka*.
5. *Vāgīm jītasukagīrvāṇīm—Ambānavamaṇimālā Stotra*.
6. *Omākara-panjararīṭakīm upanishadudyāna-keli-kalakāṇṭhīm I Āgama-vipinamayārīm āryām antar vibhāvaye Gaurīm II—Ambāpancharatna Stotra* of Sankara.
7. This becomes a recurrent feature of all Ambika or Durga forms in the Śirohi region in Medieval times.
8. *Vīṇāvādanavelākampitāśīrasaṃ namāmi Mātangīm—Ambāpancharatna Stotra* of Śaṅkara.

A MAGNIFICENT SAPTAMATRIKA GROUP AND PARVATI FROM VADAVAL

[The sculptures under study are located in a modern shed with brick walls and corrugated sheet roofing, situated on a knoll in the village common of Vadaval village about 6.4 km from Deesa downstream on the western bank of Banas river in Banaskantha District of North Gujarat. They were first noted by Shri R.T. Parikh during 1959-60. A Vishnu and a Surya sculpture also found here had already been described by him elsewhere.¹ He brought the nature of the other sculptures to my notice. However, owing to administrative exigencies, I was unable to pay a personal visit to Vadaval. This materialised recently and I am indeed obliged to Shri Parikh for realising the distinctive nature of this sculptural group and bringing it under my scrutiny.]

The sculptures, excluding that of Parvati, which will be dealt with separately in the following pages, number ten in all, of which there are seven Matrikas, Ganeśa, Chamuṇḍa or Kālī, Kāla and a Vinadhara Vrishavahana Śiva. It would at once be seen that excepting for the absence of Karttikeya, this represents one of the most comprehensive assemblage of the Matrika group known, and constitutes a patent fusion of more than one regional tradition in the delineation of the group. Quite apart from the intrinsic merit and captivating charm of each member of the assemblage as a convincing index of the Western Indian school of pre-medieval art, we are fortunate in getting other links of the causative chain in the unique composition of the group from other places. We are, however, unfortunate in not knowing where these images originally came from, nor how is it that they come to be installed in comparative desuetude and pitiable disarray at Vadaval village. No information is forthcoming from the villagers on this point. Nevertheless, as would be apparent in the following pages, the sculptures are characteristic

products of the later phase of the Western Indian sculpture nurtured at Shamlaji and other places in Sabarkantha District and could be placed in the first half of the ninth century A.D., if not slightly earlier. They are thus valuable additions to our knowledge of this phase of early Gujarat iconography and should join the company of other earlier and later specimens of this kind known to us already from Shamlaji, Kotyarka (Mahudi), Tintoi, Roda, etc. They, nonetheless, possess a distinctive cohesion of more than one iconographic tradition and in this lies this special claim to our attention.

The Saptamatrika tradition is indeed, hieratically, as old as the evolution of the god Karttikeya, since the Saptamatrikas were the divine foster mothers to the baby Skanda.² They represented in effect, the cumulative strength of the female potentials of the outstanding gods of the early Brahmanical pantheon, and they were represented particularly in Śaivite shrines from comparatively early times. The *Āgamas* and the ritual texts which deal with the Matrikas state that they should be generally seven in number—although we have rare cases of eight Matrikas also as at Elephanta—and should be flanked by Bhairava and Ganeśa. The present Saptamatrika group also conforms to that regulation and we have fortunately, Ganeśa and Bhairava (as an *Atiriktāṅga*) available with this group. We, however, propose to deal with unique features of this group first and then try to place the actual zones from which these features were derived.

A matter of primary interest in the group under study is that all the figures are standing in full stature. Most of the Saptamatrika groups of the medieval times are invariably seated and even *Āgamas* describe them as seated in their respective *āsanas* and mention the typical features of each. The fact that these figures are standing would indicate an early period. The Western Indian rock-cut specimens from Ellora, Elephanta, etc., show only seated figures, and though they are admittedly earlier, we are tempted assume that Vadaval Saptamatrikas are not influenced by them. It may, however, be noted here that the unique rock-cut dancing Saptamatrikas at Aihole are standing and bear resemblance to the present group. These Saptamatrikas carry invariably, except in a few cases, a child on their hip or in their arms and are shown fondling them. Thus, their Mother Goddess aspect is brought out although Saptamatrikas are the protective divinities to Skanda-Karttikeya and did not have originally any Mother Goddess aspect. The figures are described below. The descriptions will help us to compare them with Saptamatrikas in and outside this region.

GANESA

The two-armed Ganeśa standing in *abhanga* pose with the left elbow resting on the head of a standing male attendant is simple in conception. The right arm in *kartarihasta* (the fingers are damaged) is presumably holding a flower. The god wears a necklet, a chest-band, part of which is descending across the

belly to the proper right, armlets, wristlets and anklets. He wears a tight loin-cloth and an *uttariya*. One tusk is broken in keeping with his traditional name *Ekadanta*. A mouse—his mount—is to the proper right of the image and is looking up.

BRAHMI

The first of the Saptamatrikas stands in *samabhanga* with a female attendant to the proper right and her mount, the goose, to the proper left. She has four arms and is holding a child in the left lower hand while the two upper arms carry the ladle (*sruk*) and the water-jug (*kamaṇḍalu*) respectively. The lower right arm is in *varadahasta*. She has three heads each adorned with a *jaṭāmukuta*. She wears ear rings, necklet, a pearl-necklace,⁹ armlets, bracelets and a zone. The dress comprises a lower garment coming down to the ankles and tucked in at the waist firmly, the hem lying to the right side of the centre. The upper garment or *uttariya* is simply lying in a curved and folded layer across the knees and the upper ends rest around the elbows.

MAHESVARI

This is a very rare specimen and has many features which do not usually occur in Maheśvari figures. The image shows a young woman standing in *abhanga* pose. Her hair is neatly combed and tied into a bun at the back and decorated with pearl strands, gold clasps, etc. She wears *patra-makra kuṇḍalas* in the right and left ears respectively—a typical feature of Śiva-Parvati association. She also wears a necklet, a pearl necklace and bracelets, anklets and a zone. The lower hands are unfortunately broken but a *daṇḍa* stretching across the belly, carries a corpse. The position of the *daṇḍa* clearly shows that the two arms must have held the *daṇḍa*. Now this *kankāla daṇḍa* is associated with Bhairava who had to carry the skeleton of Viśvaksena in atonement of his sin. It is interesting to note that Maheśvari has been identified with this aspect of Śiva-Bhairava. It seems the nudity of the figure had been deliberately emphasised to ensure its importance for the *Śāktas*. Her *vāhana*, a howling jackal, also accompanies Chamuṇḍa or Bhairavi. A seated male attendant with his face looking up is shown to the left. The representation of a male instead of a female attendant to Maheśvari is again significant. This is perhaps a unique feature and may indicate that the temple to which this image belonged must have been a *Tantric* place of worship of some importance.

KAUMARI

The two-armed figure is in *samabhanga* pose, and represents a beautiful lady. The ornaments and dress are almost similar to that of Brahmi excepting the casual and elegant twist that has been given to the *stanaśūtra*—as an index perhaps of youthful abandon. The hair style is distinctive. The proper right arm carries the spear, the weapon of Karttikeya, while the proper left hand

holds the diminutive cock, a distinctive feature of Karttikeya sculptures of Gujarat. We have the peacock mount, again of Karttikeya also at the base.

At this stage we have to pause and introduce another distinctive feature of the Saptamatrika group, namely, the appearance of Śiva as the central figure. It may be pointed out that Śiva as a central figure in a Saptamatrika group appears at least in three places, namely, the rock-cut dancing Saptamatrikas from Aihole, wherein Śiva is also dancing in *chatura tāṇḍava* pose in the centre of the group; in a similar rock-cut Saptamatrika panel from Mandore wherein again, Śiva is the central figure and in *chatura* pose and lastly in the structural temple of Śiva at Kera in Kutch, where in the Saptamatrika group on the lintel of the door frame Śiva is shown seated in the middle of the seated goddesses. While the import of these sculptures will be dealt further on, it should be noted here that the sculpture from Kera (Kutch) represents Śiva in a similar way as in the Vadaval sculpture under reference.

SIVA

The standing four-armed Śiva of the Saptamatrika group from Vadaval wears the *jaṭāmakuṣa*, *patra* and *makara kuṇḍalas*, a necklet, armlets, bracelets and anklets and a cobra garland. The dress comprises a lower garment covering the entire lower body upto the ankle and tucked securely at the waist in a loop by a folded upper garment. The bull-mount is shown at the base located just behind Śiva while a diminutive male attendant with folded hands stands to the right. The god is holding in his two upper hands a trident and a cobra respectively and in the lower hands a *vīṇā* or lute. The figure thus a Vinadhara Śiva. This is another rare feature, which, however, appears in the Kera sculpture as well.

AINDRI OR INDRANI

This together with the figures of Vārāhi and Vaishnavī is shown in cross-legged stance with the child on the right side of the body, and little aloft, as if the mother is playing with it. Her dress and ornaments are almost exactly as those of Kaumari, except that the upper garment at the back ends in a pleated array. This arrangement of the drapery is in tune with the rhythmic movement of the stance. The upper two arms hold a flower and thunderbolt (*vajra*) respectively. The child in the lower hands stretches out its left hand playfully to reach and grasp the flower held by the mother. The *vāhana* of the goddess, namely, the elephant is shown crouching at the base, behind the standing figure.

VARAHI

Unlike the *Āgamic* injunction that Vārāhi is to be shown with a fierce face, the sculptor has carved this figure in a mild and gracious mood.

Perhaps beset with the difficulty of representing a young lady with the face of a sow, he achieved a remarkable success by emphasizing the beauty of the body and the joys of the motherhood. The four-armed figure holds the child with the two lower arms, the right upper arm is free, and the left one holds the hem of the *uttariya*. The finely braided hairlocks of the mane fall down the back and are fastened with chords at intervals. The female attendant of the deity is standing to the right of the figure. The raised left hand is holding the right foot of the child. A buffalo, the vehicle of Varahi, is also shown.

VAISHNAVI

This figure is in *tribhanga* pose, and in cross-legged stance. The costume and ornaments are the same as those of Kaumārī. The child is held on the left hand, while the lower right hand restrains the mischievous pranks of the child who is having a go at the left ear ring of its mother. The upper hands hold the *gadā* (mace) and *chakra* (discus), the weapons of Vishnu. The original mount at the foot, which should have been Garuda, is missing, but a female attendant as in other cases is shown on the right side.

CHAMUNDA

This is unlike the usual representations of Chamuṇḍa though ferocious and dynamic as usual. The four-armed figure is in *samabhanga* with the usual *atiriktāṅga* or emaciated ribbed chest, the prominent spine and neck, the pendulous skinny breasts, the sunken eyes, the cavernous abdomen and the body. The *jaṭāmukuta* is tied with a *nāgabandha*. She wears a necklet and a girdle of snakes and a clinging lower garment and a skull-necklace (*muṇḍamāla*) running right below the kness. Only two arms are reasonably intact; the left hand is held at shoulder level, and the little finger at the lip expresses the eerie pleasure of the goddess. She is standing over a corpse (*pretāsana*), while a howling jackal stands nearby. The figure is almost a prototype—except for its lesser number of hands—of the Ellora-Kailasa (Yajñśālā) Chamuṇḍa from the Saptamatrika group or that in Ramesvara cave. An interesting similarity is that Bhairava is also in an *atiriktāṅga* form and is similar to that at Ellora in the two aforementioned cave shrines. They are taken there as representing Kāla and Kālī. They also appear in an identical way, in life size, on the either side wall of the old entrance gate to Mahakutesvara temple-complex near Badami. It is possible, therefore, to suggest that the iconography of Chamuṇḍa and Bhairava at Vadaval owe their origin to an original Chalukya-Rashtrakuta idiom.

BHAIRAVA

This standing figure of four-handed Bhairava with a cadaverous face, shrunken neck, ribbed chest and bony body wears a snake girdle. He is shown as

standing on a corpse with a howling jackal rearing on its hind feet.

The above descriptions of the Matrikas and the attendant Ganeśa and Bhairava images should impress us that here we are dealing with an interesting and important group. It is unfortunate that we are not in a position to trace its original provenance, but its style is so close to the kind of work witnessed at Shamalaji, Roda, Tintoi, Mahudi, etc., that require much persuasion to place it in North Gujarat, perhaps not far from Banaskantha District where it is now located. It might have come either from Sabarkantha area in which Shamalaji, Tintoi and Mahudi are located, or it might have come from the neighbouring border area of Sirohi and the vicinity of Jagat. The stone employed in the sculpture is not the patchy schist (dark blue or greenish blue) utilised in the carvings of Shamalaji, but is a fine quality sandstone. The possibility is that the source of the stone for the Vadaval sculptures is the same as those of Roda and Jagat sculptures. We have, however, sitting Matrika sculptures dated to A.D. 600-700 by U.P. Shah,⁴ made of green schist, from as far distant as Delwada, Mt. Abu and the Dungarpur-Ratanpur area. Even Jagat had some loose Matrika sculptures of green schist of the Shamalaji school although the entire Jagat temple is made of the fine brownish grey sandstone. It is likely that there was a marked preference for schist in the early phase of the Western Indian sculpture, lasting upto about A.D. 700; thereafter there appears to be a marked preference for sandstone in Gujarat and Saurashtra.

On stylistic grounds, we note that the sculptures of the earlier group from Shamalaji are notable for their expressiveness and heavy body, elaborate head jewellery and a slight disproportion in the limbs such as the stumpiness of lower parts of the legs, etc., which is, however, camouflaged by the aesthetic appeal of the sculptures. In the next stage, as perhaps seen at Roda, a certain degree of refinement appears to impart a romantic appeal to the sculpture. These developments are said to be due to the fusion of Gupta and Maitraka traditions, and we are asked not to look beyond the geographical limits of Gujarat for artistic influences. However, it may be pointed out that in the neighbouring area in the south, the Chalukya-Rashtrakuta art forms were in their prime between A.D. 600-800 and it would be futile to talk in terms of an insulated Western school in Gujarat unaffected by the various art forms flourishing in the Deccan. As a result we have to look for Chalukya-Rashtrakuta art forms which influenced the Gujarat school of sculpture. Needless to say, we do have instances of such a fusion and the Saptamatrikas under study may be cited as an appropriate example. While on one hand, we have the size, the stance and the style of the Gujarat school, there is no doubt of the Chalukya iconographic traditions which have imparted to it a powerful cult symbolism, and a dynamic physical charm. This should have happened in Gujarat around the ninth century A.D.

Some outstanding variations between the early Shamalaji school and the ninth century school represented by the Saptmatrikas⁵ under study may be noted here.

Among sculptures of the Shamlaji group, male figures do not wear a necklace hanging upto the abdomen nor do female figures have a garland hanging between the breasts and down the navel but wear only a heavy necklet, sometimes more than one in number. Secondly, while the figures of Śiva in the Shamlaji group often wear a tiger skin with the head of the tiger, the later sculptures of Gujarat eschew this convention. The Saptamatrikas in Shamlaji group are often shown standing, their lower garment is prominently shown in many fan-like pleats, falling between the legs—almost hiding the outline of the body. This improved in the later stage when the ornament are fewer and the body outline receives considerable emphasis. We have however, the device of the child playing with the ear rings of the mother both at Shamlaji and in the Vadaval sculptures.

Coming to iconographic differences between the earlier and later Saptamatrika groups, we find that Chamuṇḍa is represented in a less ferocious form in the earlier stages as at Roda⁶ and Shamlaji.⁷ The lion-mount is shown but the jackal does not appear. Vārāhi from Shamlaji has the boar as her cognizance while it is buffalo in the Vadaval Vārāhi as specified in the *Āgamas*. In Shamlaji sculptures the child is invariably held on the left hip, while in the Vadaval images this rule does not hold good. Some of the Matrikas do not hold a child while some others hold it on either side in a playful attitude. The animal and bird mounts are prominently displayed in the Shamlaji images, while in the Vadaval groups they appear unobtrusively on the base. It appears that in the images of Vadaval group here is a conscious attempt to improve the composition. The method of the representation of Chamuṇḍa, Bhairava, and Mahesvarī and the appearance of Śiva as a central piece are conscious attempts in this direction.

We have already mentioned that Chamuṇḍa and Bhairava of the Vadaval group have close similarity with the similar figures at Ellora and Mahakuteśvara. It may be noted that in the Matrika figures at Ellora a child does not invariably accompany all the figures. The appearance of a child only emphasises the motherhood. We have in the Ellora and Vadaval groups, the *pretāsana* and howling jackals associated with Chamuṇḍa and Bhairava, a feature which otherwise is absent in the sculptures of Gujarat. We have a unique Mahesvari, whose iconography is totally at variance with the known examples from Gujarat. The *kankāladaṇḍa*, her complete nudity, her male attendant, and her being without a child, should all go to mark her out as a cult-goddess of some significance. It is very likely that this Maheśvari had a specific ritual purpose in the worship of the group. It would be interesting to know if the Pasupatats or Kalamukhas had anything to do with this iconographic peculiarity. It may be noted here that in the early tenth century, we have an elaboration of the Mother Goddess cult at Ambaji temple at Jagat, where the gods are conspicuous by their absence. The Ambaji temple, however, does not give any importance to the Saptamatrikas, who are relegated to a secondary and unimportant place on the door jambs without any connection with the Ambamata cult.

Thus we are tempted to suggest that there were two forms of Sakti cult, one of which was the Saptamatrika cult associated with Śiva-Chamuṇḍa-Karttikeya group and the other the Amba or the Universal Mother cult associated with Durga-Lakshmi-Sarasvati group.

As regards the presence of Śiva in the midst of the Saptamatrikas in the Vadaval group may be suggestive of role the goddesses played in the Andhakasuravadha. As we have already pointed out three such examples are known. At Aihole, rock-cut panel in Ravalphadi cave amidst the dancing Saptamatrikas Śiva is shown dancing the *tāṇḍava* and we have here both Gaṇeśa and Karttikeya represented as young boys. In the second example at Mandore again the Saptamatrikas, as at Aihole, are standing but unlike the Aihole ones, they hold children and Śiva is shown dancing *tāṇḍava*. Karttikeya also appears in the Ashtamatrika panel in the main cave at Elephanta. All these may be dated to the mid-seventh century A.D. We have examples of sculptured lintels of Saptamatrikas from structural temples such as at Kera in Kutch District already referred to. Here among the seated row of the Divine Mothers, Śiva also appears. The similarity between the Kera Śiva and the Śiva of Vadaval group lies in the fact that both are Viṇādhara and Vrishavahana, which is not the case in the two rock-cut specimens noted above. Besides, on a comparative basis of the structural architecture of the times in Kutch, the Kera temple in Kutch may be dated to the tenth century and the similar but slightly evolved kind of temple at Manjal also in Kutch is slightly later in date to Kera temple. The Vadaval sculptures would, on the other hand, seem to precede the Kera temple sculpture, not only on common features, but also on account of the elements directly drawn from the Chalukya-Rashtrakuta region. The sculptures should certainly not be later, in any event, than ninth century A.D. They, as succeeding the Roda temple, could not be earlier than about c. A.D. 800., and could not be later than Kera temples of about A.D. 900. Thus they are fairly and squarely to be placed in early mid-ninth century A.D., and this would meet all the requirements. It would give sufficient time for the Chalukyan and the Rashtrakuta impulses from Aihole and Ellora and Elephanta to spread northward into Gujarat, and would also give time for the development of the Western school of art at Shamlaji, Mahudi, Kotyarka, etc., and later on at Tintoi, Roda, etc. The Śiva-Parvati image from Karvan in Central Gujarat dated by U.P. Shah in the seventh century as a matter of fact shows later features and, therefore, may be dated to the end of the seventh century A.D. or even later, though the origin of our Matrika group may be traced in the Karvan sculpture which had acented Chalukyan influence. In any event it may be confidently stated that the Vadaval sculptures show a synthesis of the later North Gujarat school and the southern Chalukyan school, whose intermediary links may perhaps be found at Karvan in South Gujarat and other places. It is also significant to note that the unusual iconographic representation of Mahesvari of our group may have something to do with the

renowned centre of Paśupata cult such as Karvan—the hallowed birth place of Lakuliśa—a part of Śiva himself.

Before we may conclude the evaluation of the Saptamatrikas at Vadaval, attention may be drawn to the Parvati figure. This figure is in *samabhaṅga* pose with the feet firmly planted on the ground. She carries a *Śivaliṅga* on a lotus stalk in the upper hand and the diminutive Ganeśa on a staff with crooked end. The lower right hand is in *varadahasta* and the left holds *kamaṇḍalu*. The drapery is almost like those of the Saptamatrikas described above. She wears a necklace and *jaṭāmukuta* since the figure represents Parvati performing *pañcāgni tapas* to attain Śiva as her husband. The four fires are shown at the lower part on the side pilasters. Two attendants, one male and the other female, with folded hands sit with their legs flexed. An iguana (*godhā*), the vehicle of the goddess, is shown on the *padmapiṭha* on which the goddess stands. The eyes of the goddess are downcast and closed in deep meditation (*samādhi*). The *prabhāvalī*, shows the navagraha heads. The figure, iconographically fixed by *Vishnudharmottara* and other texts, is Parvati performing the penance prior to her winning Śiva as her lord.

We have several examples of Parvati practising penance from Ellora, in Lanke-svara cave, in the cave adjacent to Kailasa and in one of the Rameśvara panels. These mostly belong to mid-ninth century A.D. except in the case of the last which perhaps is as early as the seventh century A.D. and is in a narrative panel. We have a correspondingly Parvati in figure of preaching penance shown at Roda.⁸ These depict the scene in a rigid form. In the first example, the *liṅga* and Ganeśa are shown on the side pilasters and not in her hands and she has no attendants, but all other features including the navagrahas are there. This may perhaps be datable to late eighth century A.D.

From the evidences produced above, the unique Saptamatrika group from Vadaval may be assigned to early ninth century A.D., while the age of Parvati figure, referred to above should be approximately c. A.D. 800. These Saptamatrikas undoubtedly belong to a glorious but as yet unidentified centre of art. It was probably from such a centre that architectural and artistic influences travelled to Kutch.

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2. *saptaloka - mātribhiḥ-sapta-mātribhiḥ-abhivardhitānām-Kārttikeya-parirakṣaṇaprāpta-kalyāṇa-paramparānām* in early Chalukyan grants.
3. *Muktāhāra-vi-lambamāna-vilasat-vakshojha-kumbhān-dharīm—Annapurnāstotra* of Sankara. V. 2, and *Kokākāra-kucha-dvayopari-lasat-prālamba-hārānchite—Minakshi stotra* of Sankara, V. 3.

4. U.P. Shah, *Sculpture from Śāmlāji and Roḍā*, Baroda 1960.
5. These Saptamatrikas from Vadaval have now been acquired by the Museology Department of M.S. University, Baroda.
6. U.P. Shah, *op. cit.*, Fig. 67.
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8. *Ibid.*, Figs. 66, 72.

HINDU EPIC AND PURANIC TRADITIONS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

One of the most distinctive and edifying phenomena of the classical period, alike in Europe as in Asia, was that very large spheres of cultural influence were assiduously created, established and fostered, undeterred by the virility of any of these colonial zones, oriented as these influences seem to have been, towards sophisticating and tempering the cultural slant of these autochthonous people. This acculturation, as sociologists might choose to call this, was not an imposition but a dynamic reception to ideas which were neither sold nor canvassed for.

Fusion of Indian and South East Asian Thought and Culture

In such a context, there is hardly any surprise that the Indian heritage was imperceptibly blended with the local *elan* in South East Asia, to enable it to become almost the common pool of ancestral heirloom for all these peoples. Sensitive and sympathetic art historians have labelled the ambit of this temporal efflorescence as variously the Greater India or the Indian Asia. At the root of such a transaction lay the already achieved fusion of Indian and South East Asian thought and culture producing the kaleidoscopic variations patternised out of the absorption of our *Epics*, *Purāṇas*, cults and beliefs into their religio-cultural pool. Sanskrit was, doubtless, a powerful medium of expression for this cultural well-being; it was in fact a universalised ingredient in the literary, cultural and artistic cross-fertilisation afoot in that age. The entire South East Asia, came more effectively under the spell of south Indian kingdoms from a comparatively early times, and the Gupta and post-Gupta forces working from Bihar and Bengal in the wake of the peripatetic programmes of Buddhism first and the nascent Hinduism subsequently, ably participated in this process. South India, by and large, stood out as the most favoured foster-mother for these South East Asian

principates. The assimilation was so complete ultimately, that the medieval manifestations of this process were so thoroughly transformed in the indigenous content, as to make them a positive though subtle transfusion of the local with the peripheral. The spirit of oneness so engendered was however moored to last, and stayed on even after the late medieval advent of Islam into these shores, or the still later inroads of Western culture.

Indian Mythology in South East Asian Inscriptions

We might record at this stage, some important historical details that would link India with South East Asia more than anything else. The Kamboja record of Mahendravarman¹ mentions the setting up of a *linga* of Giriśa on the mountain, as a symbol of his victory. Again, the Mi-son² record states that one Kaundinya planted at Bhavapura, the trident given to him Aśvatthama, son of Drona, and marrying a *nāga* princess, founded a royal family there. We know that in Pallava genealogy alone, Aśvatthama is mentioned and Skandaśishya, according to Velurpalayam³ and Rayakotta⁴ plates, was born to a *nāga* princess (*Phaṇindra-sutā* and *Dvijihvāṅgī*) through Aśvatthama.

The Sambor Prei Kuk pillar⁵ record (A.D. 627) again, mentions Išānavarman I as installing a *linga* of Kadambeśvara and another⁶ from the same place, refers to a king as *Dakshinapatha-janma*. The Tan Kran record⁷ of Jayavarman I (A.D. 657-580), a successor to Išānavarman, records a *Kanchīpura-ṇṇipa*.

The Epigraphs are incised in Southern Alphabet

The inscriptions of South East Asia again are, where specified, generally in Śaka era, and not the Vikrama Samvat, as followed in the north. A fragmentary Tamil record from Takua-pa⁸ in Thailand, registers the digging of a tank to be called Avani naranam by a chief of Nangur (in Thanjavur District), and placing the tank jointly under the famous seafaring guild of merchants called the Maṇigrāmattār, the Senāmukattār (or a military unit), and another body respectively. The record is palaeographically datable to early 10th century A.D., or earlier, and the title Avani naranam was generally held by Tellār erinda Nandi of the latter Pallava line. Chola King Rajendra's records mention Talai Takkolam (doubtless the same as Takua-pa) in his campaign route, and places it on the way between Malaya and Kamboja in the direct route. The Sanskrit records of the South East Asian countries follow also the southern form of Pallava script mostly and not the Nāgarī form. Even more revealing is the fact that Nandivarman II, who ascended the Pallava throne at Kanchi after the death of Paramēśvaravarman II (A.D. 728-731), is found, on a close study of the contemporary inscriptions and reliefs at Vaikunthapuram temple at Kanchipuram, to have arrived from the Indo-Chinese territory, from a collateral overseas Pallava Branch. Evidence also exists for the closely linked kinship between the royal family of Champa and the Western Gangas of

Talakkad, as mentioned variously in the damaged record⁹ at Phnom Bayan of Bhavavarman (c. A.D. 561-539) referring to a Konguvarma or Gangarāyan as the founder of the Champa line, and the Mi-son record¹⁰ (c. A.D. 708-717) of Prakāśādharmā-Vikrāntesvara, calling him as of the family of Gangeśvara (*Śrī-Gangeśvara-vamśajah*), and another record, also from Mi-son¹¹ of Śambhuvarman (c. A.D. 499-577) calling him as *Śrī-Prasastadharmā-ḍiṇḍika*. The term *ḍiṇḍika*, it is to be noted, is a familiar personal name employed by Gangas of Talakkad, one of the earliest such usage is seen in the Śravanabelagola¹² record of the 7th century A.D.

India and Ceylon

Ceylon, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Siam, Annam and Champa, all these were the glorious collaterals of this cultural polyphylum, the saga of each of which shows the under-currents of a traditional homogeneity. Ceylon being too close to India, its links were the direct indices of the motivations afoot in the mainland. There are only very few representations of the early historic times in sculpture from Ceylon which would be advantageously compared for their style and spirit, but two such are the so-called Kapila¹³ and Parakramabahu figures;¹⁴ the latter from Polannaruwa with a swarthy body, clad in a Hindu *kachchā* and with bearded partiarchal mien, reading a book—seemingly a palm-leaf manuscript. This would persuasively recall the corresponding figures of Kubera or Agastya or Dhanvantari or such like obese and corpulent delineations of the Imperial Chola period from the second half of the 10th century onwards. While bearded *rishi* figures are quite well-known in the earlier cave-temple contexts, they tend to be less pot-bellied and of more sharpened features of mien and body than the later ones. The rock-cut Kapila figure from Isurumaniya in *mahārāja līlā* posture, with horse inset in relief, recalls for sheer stance, the figure of Māndhātā in such a pose in *Māndhātā Jātaka* scenes in Andhra country (c. 3rd century A.D. and the relief of horse in the background, might compare with the *yūpa* horse shown in the Ranganatha cave-temple, Namakkal (Tamil Nadu) in the Trivikrama panel (c. mid 8th century A.D.). In Ceylon, in fact, the later stages of Buddhism did not involve any direct borrowal from India, excepting that the Sigiria cave paintings are sometimes taken to be under the spell of Ajanta or Amaravati depictions. Only the early Pandyan and, subsequently, the Imperial Chola era brings a direct participation of northern Ceylon with Tamil Nadu. The Buddhist popularity, on the other hand, had always been restricted to the central and southern Ceylon, in the hallowed locations at Polannaruwa, Mihintale, Anuradhapura and, later, Kandy. It is, in fact, somewhat enigmatic that despite so much that makes Lanka play a major role in terms of *locale* and events, in the epic of Valmiki, there is nothing very much more than a memory and floating traditions to link the places of Lanka with the actual scenes of the *Ramayana* story. This is probably because the overlapping layers of contrastive traditions, in which Buddhism was certainly dominant, from at least about

the 3rd-2nd century B.C. to 5th-6th century A.D., had rarified the Hindu traditions into memory myths mostly.

In Malaysia, Indonesia and Indo-China (Siam, Annam, Cambodia and Champa) however, the legend lingers as an evergreen heritage of the soil, notwithstanding the fact that not one single incident of *Ramayana* could have had any direct or indirect association with these insular and archipelago lands except for the globe-trotting involved in the search for Sita. It would be plausible to hold that while in these sea-kissed lands, groups of men imbued with these Hindu traditions, not only colonised but infused their *elan* into the local people as well. In Ceylon for instance, the early Buddhist activity was purely indigenous and it borrowed only ideas and not people. Except Mahendra and Sanghamitra, legendarily said to have brought the Bodhi tree-sapling to Ceylon, we do not find Indian Buddhist scholars in Ceylon but rather Ceylonese *Theravādins* and *Vibhajyavādins*, etc., in various Buddhist centres of India, whether in Andhra Pradesh or the northern India. In a measure, the essentially *Hīnayāna* hue of Sinhala Buddhism prevented also a spectacular iconographic and cult efflorescence steadily with *Mahāyāna* developments in India, in the classical and pre-medieval times.

Language and Literature

This colonisation and assimilation of the Greater Indian tracts by Hindu immigrants, with Sanskrit serving as the *lingua franca*, was indeed a phenomenon doing credit to the immigrant as well as to the domicile. There can be no doubt that in this was also a mingling of bloods occasionally and an ethnic blend, an acquisition of pedigree to own and evolve the parental heritage. The deep involvement of the Javanese, Annamites and Cambodians towards the legends of the Indian *Epics* and *Purānas* have been most nobly integrated in their temple arts. But, then, the temple institutions themselves had been of Hindu religion and anciently manned by Indians mostly, and the cults of the Trinity, of Ganeśa, of Narayana, or Rama, Hanuman, Garuda, Hayagriva and Harihara abounded, both in the Hindu-colonial and post-colonial local stages of the indigenous metamorphism.

Fusion of Hinduism and Buddhism

It is interesting also to record that while in Cambodia, as in Java and Bali, Buddhism which reached from north India mainly, and Hinduism which was drawn from the south Indian kingdoms mostly, had themselves achieved a mutual fusion instead of supplanting each other or creating rivalry. Even the charters present invocations to Buddha as well as to Śiva; Śaiva pantheon was itself amalgamated into the emanating scheme of Dhyanī Buddhas; Śaiva structures even often resemble Buddhist *dagobas* and *vice versa*. Buddhist temple like Chandi Kalasan resembles any other Hindu temple in Java. In Bali, some types of priests were

even given the appellation *buda*. It should be noted, however, the Śaiva religion (in which Śiva—as indeed Vishnu and Brahma—was regarded as one of the manifestations or *Surya*) ultimately scored over any lingering Buddhist vestige. The full compliment of Hindu *usages* though not of all the Hindu *gods* is seen in the archipelago, as for instance, the Tirta Mpul of Bali which is a sacred spring, ordered at the behest of king Chandrabhaya Simhavarmadeva in A.D. 962. It is the successor of this king that married his son to one of the daughters of a Javanese king, called Mahendradatta (and Gunapriya Dharmapatni, after marriage)—the couple giving birth to the famous Erlangga who united Bali and Java under one royal banner, about whom we shall have to say more later.

Adaptation of the two Epics

It should be stated that the *Epics* had especially been absorbed and imbibed by the Annamites and the Javanese. The versions that had been adapted and redacted from the various sources make interesting reading, and not only show the sense of belonging generally evinced in the heritage, but also follow the pattern guided by the local myths and predilections. The Annamite version of Rama legend¹⁵ is, for instance, entitled 'the king of demons' and there Rama and Sita received fanciful names, although Dasaratha and Ravana were exactly synonymous to their Sanskrit names and are called the ten-chariots and ten-headed. The last redaction of the Rama legend in Champa from Annamite sources is as late as the 18th century A.D. It is interesting to compare here the fact that in the Tibetan version of the Rama legend also, we fail to connect any corresponding derivative source of the *Ramayana* in India, but the version generally appears to have followed the narration of the Rama story in the *Vanaparvan* of *Mahābhārata*.

The Epics and Purana recited in Temples

Epigraphical sources inform us, that the *Epics* were caused to be read also in temples, as is usually the case in south Indian temples. A Kamboja record¹⁶ (c. A.D. 600), shows that Śrī-Somaśarma, apparently a Brahmin, presented *Ramayana*, the *Puranas* and a complete *Bhārata* to a temple, and made arrangements for their recitation. Even more striking is the information gleaned from an inscription from Tra-kien in Champa,¹⁷ by which Prakāśadharma (A.D. 653-79) dedicated an image and temple to Valmiki himself.

The Indonesian Version of the Ramayana

In so far as the Indonesian situation is concerned, it had been the view of some scholars like Stutterheim¹⁸ that the local *Ramayana* version was based rather on the Indian versions; written and traditional—and perhaps more primitive—and not so much on Valmiki. The *Ramayana* reliefs from Prambanan (West Java) were the most celebrated and ancient (9th century A.D.) and though clearly

Indian in character, are not based on Valmiki's work. On the other hand, strangely, the later Panataran (East Java) scenes of the 14th century A.D., in Indo-Javanese style are more coherent in following Valmiki.

The Legend of Ekaśringa Pingala

A valuable insight into the remarkably early context of the assimilation of the *Ramayana*, even including the controversial *Uttara kāṇḍa*, is gained by the unique though undated record,¹⁹ again of the king Prakaśadharma, which refers to the cult of Ekaśringa Pingala—about how Kubera got one eye burnt yellow owing to the impertinence of his having gazed at Parvatī, soon after he had brought both before him by hard penance. The legend is narrated in *Uttarakāṇḍa* 13, 21-31 of *Ramayana* and, curiously, even the phraseology of the versified account as found in the Champa record of Prakaśadharma is quite close to the above source. In the Musée Khmer at Phnom Penh,²⁰ there are to be found ten groups of delightful and ancient paintings of *Ramayana* episodes, got from Kamboja version of *Balakanda*, including Janaka's discovery of Sita, Rama breaking the bow, Paraśurama's encounter with Rama after the latter's marriage, etc. Again at Ben Mula,²¹ sculptured scenes exist of the *Yuddhakanda*, depicting the fighting of Ravana, after Prahasta the commander had been killed by Nila (*sarga* 54), and the restoration of dead monkeys to life by the help of Indra (*sarga* 120). Again, at the famous edifice of Angkor Vat²² (10th and 12th century A.D.) bas-relief portray the fight between Vali and Sugriva, the death of Nali, and the consequent expression of grief by the womenfolk, the meeting of Vibhishana and Rama the fire-ordeal of Sita after the war was over, etc.

Of the other Indian legends, Angkor Vat again depicts the *Kailāsa-tolana* by Ravana—a favourite theme of Indian sculptors and immortalised at the Kailasa cave, Ellora. Of some local stylistic interest in this context, is the depiction of Ravana's heads arranged like a Pyramid, and manner of display his full score number of arms. It is unique in form.

Depiction of the Hindu Trinity

The Puranic content of the South East Asian countries closely reflects the Indian tradition, especially in the formative stages, absorbing the most salient elements of Hindu iconography. Concepts like Trinity, Harihara, Anantaśayi, Garuda-vahana Vishnu are the most distinctive products of the genius of hieratic Hindu art. Especially the images which are consecrated in worship, as different from those which beautify the temple exterior in formal carvings and the like, would be the real test of the degree of permeation that had been effected of the Hindu Puranic themes. The Trinity temple at Prambanan in Java, is a case in point. The polarisation of the Trinity takes place in India by at least the 10th century A.D., and it is pleasing to note that the integrity of this concept at Pram-

banan had dovetailed with a southern Indian architectural format also. Even more deeply embedded in the local matrix was the Harihara or Śankaranarayana (as mentioned in the record of Glai Lemo²³ in Indo-China in the valley of Phanrang—Panduranga?—dated to A.D. 801 of the time of Indravarman) concept, as reflected in a pretty large number of icons of this type variously from Simping, Phnom Penh, Hanoi, etc. An interesting innovation seen in some of these examples is the reversal of position of Hari and Hara. In Indian examples Hari is invariably on the left part of the body. This aspect is seemingly based upon the Mohini form that Vishnu took as a sequel to *Samudra manthana* and whose bewitching charm led to Śiva begetting a child out of her, called Hariharaputra or Sasta. In some of the Javanese examples, Hari is on the right. These examples, further, do not make studies in bold artistic embellishment, but rather in a subtle amalgamation of the gods, a few details of apparel and facial moulding alone, by and large, eking out the dichotomy. This is, of course, a pre-medieval and early medieval trend, mostly, but one that would, nevertheless, differentiate the art-outlook of the countries concerned, the Indo-Chinese area show in a plain and subtly moulded body features and dress. The Javanese figures are, on the other hand, generally informed by richness of drapery and ornamentation, and close to the Chalukyan in this respect than even the Pallava. The Singasari Durga and Ganeśa from Bara are good instances of this. The luxuriant surface decoration of these two figures generally recalls to our mind the latter day Hoyasala crafts even, but they are certainly of a much earlier period in Java. The stance of the two deities, again, is less indebted to the Pallavas and more to the Chalukyas and Gangas. Here again, they have introduced many artistic innovations, as for instance, the child or *gana* attendant of Durga (taken by some as the human form of Mahisha demon) in the Singasari specimen, which is not usually known from any Indian examples, and the integration or combination of Ganeśa with Bhairava on the same sculpture on its two faces, front and rear. Bhairava-Ganeśa is a combination which, like Gajantaka—Andhakari is not unknown in India, and is seen in the Deccan and in the Kalinga coast, but the variation of the idiom consists in the carving of it separately on the two opposed faces, instead of on the same face.

The Rama reliefs from Prambanan, Java, form a substantial expression of the artistic calibre of early Javanese art, as well as its indebtedness to the Indian Epic. The inception of the story has been fittingly made with the invocation of the Lord of Vaikuntha by Brahma and the *devas* for being born as an incarnation in the world and exterminating the evil spread by Ravana and other similar *rakshasas*. This panel is indeed a Vaikunthanatha panel, since the God here is not truly reclining, but is more in the seated posture of *Viralalita*. By his side to the proper left is shown Garuda. The importance of showing Garuda—which is indeed the national symbol of Java—is to be noted elsewhere also in the Erlangga figure of Belaha. The God in the Vaikunthanatha panel at Prambanan is intently hearing

the petitions presented by Brahma, and by his lower left hand, giving the *abhayadāna* also, while the sage's party are in rapt attention following the dialogue. The oceanic setting of the scene received capable treatment at the hands of the similar craftsmen of Java. The figures to Vishnu's proper left with the sage-like person were considered by Dr Groneman as representing Daśaratha and his queens, praying to Vishnu. But the presence of four male figures with *kirita mukuṭa* and a sage-like main leader with *jaṭābhāra* seems to show that this is not correct. Even Havell¹⁴ did not consider the four accompanying figures as female and observed that they could be Rama and his brothers along with Vasishtha or Viśvamitra, praying to God. Since they are males, the greater probability is that they could be Brahma and the *Dikpālas* four in number, namely, Kubera, Varuna, Indra and Yama. This would seem to be the most satisfactory answer.

Of a class different both in form and in content, belonging as it does to the Indo-Chinese region, is the Hayagriva figure from Cambodia. The utterly naturalistic and vigorous presentation of the horse-God form assumed by Vishnu when he retrieved the *Vedas* from the nether waters, is a very appropriate theme for the overland colonials to imbibe and adapt. The representation of Hayagriva with a completely equine head also reveals a traditional kinship of these craftsmen with their early Indian counterparts who had also revealed in the presentation of Varaha, Narasimha and Hayagriva forms of Vishnu in a similar way. Hayagriva being the special presiding deity of wisdom and knowledge in the south Indian Vaishnava iconography and *Āgamas*, this confirms the thesis that it is primarily the southern tradition that had found a harmonious heaven in these Far Eastern shores. The Hayagriva figures, however, in the Indian parallels, are never made to stand, but are only seated. The Cambodian and Laotian examples, including one in the Musée Guimet, Paris, are all of the standing and two-armed type, and show perhaps an early absorption of the cult and a local translation thereof.

Personification of the Temple as God

Two outstanding examples of Indian themes seen in the Far East should now be recounted before closing this brief treatment on the South East Asian Hindu tradition. These two are respectively, the spell-binding churning the ocean tableau in magnificent proportions, on the southern avenue of the Bayon, Angkor Thom temples, and the Vishnu on Garuda figure from Belaha in Java (dated to A.D. 991). The former is verily a clever integration of architecture and sculpture and alike in vigour and proportions, as in the highly suggestive local ethnic format, the figure is unparalleled. In the first case, the temple itself is rendered as the cosmic form of the Buddhist deity—as it is said to be Jayavarman, the god king's sepulchral temple following the Devaraja cult—gigantic faces of this Bodhisattva Lokeśvara Samantamukha composed on the four veneer faces of the *śikhara* towers. Though it strongly recalls the ponderous but emotional figures carved at

Elephanta caves, near Bombay (including the Maheśa panel often called the Trimurti), the Cambodian example apotheosises the temple as God even more effectively than had been attempted anywhere in India, and is in fact a sure testimony to the fact that the *Āgama* traditions had already received wide and willing acceptance in these regions and even for Buddhist and sepulchral contexts. The textual personification of the temple as God, here the god-king, had, in effect, received sculptural fulfilment in these remarkable temples. The temples, as also the Chandi temples of Java, have their parallels in the *Paḷḷippaḍai* temples in honour of dead kings as founded under the Cholas at many places like Melpadi, Tiruppurambiyam, Tondaimandu, etc. That kings are considered in India as temporal manifestation of Vishnu is an old *Manu dharma* concept. Incidentally, it discloses the deep involvement of the artists in the work, as it is indeed a prodigious task to carve *in situ*—as it would seem to have been the case here—the whole elevational profile of the temple towers into mammoth divine busts, maintaining harmonious proportions, modulations and symmetry.

The Belaha examples²⁵ of Garuda-vahana Vishnu had been freely interpreted as representing the embodiment of king as God and the figure of prince Erlangga who had consolidated the new kingdom in Java and Bali together in the 10th century A.D. This application of a facet of the Devaraja cult of South East Asia, seemingly made in this issue, is *prima facie* valid. But it cannot be denied that truly symbolic, and as it turns out in the medieval times, specifically sepulchral traits of the sculptures like hands in *anjali*, calm face, etc., which should represent royal ancestor worship, would be lacking in this Belaha figure. There is no doubt that the treatment is that of Garuda bearing Vishnu, both of whom have, following the stylised depiction of the body and face, a somewhat unconventional appearance. The representation of Garuda especially, with human face of only bird-beak is also drawn from the south Indian tradition where, at least by the 14th century A.D. it had become a common event in temples of Vishnu to have Garuda in the posture of a bearer, kept as a mobile unit, for use during festivals. The earlier tradition of Vishnu riding the Garuda is only in the Gajendra-varada type, and not found in any other myth, and thus it would be feasible to argue that the Belaha figure is also an extension of the trait of readiness to come to succour that characterises Vishnu and which, in turn, could have been ascribed to kings also who are noble and gracious.

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MANIPRAVALA FORM—ITS CONTEXT IN DRAVIDIAN LITERATURE

The process of assimilation of the usages between two divergent linguistic traditions for producing a 'spoken' dialect-tradition, or a written canon-tradition is not only very interesting, but fraught with influences of the environment, nature of the context and the type of community that is exposed to it. In India, this process is largely to be studied, as related to the evolution of Sanskrit from the early Vedic to the medieval evolved, written and spoken traditions for literature and the stage variously, on the one hand, and the non-Sanskritic (Prakrits) and non Indo-Aryan tongues and languages impacting upon or impacted by Sanskrit, for both secular and religious media.

In fact, it is a prevailing and broadly accepted theory that the local usage of vocabulary, morphology and phonology of an intrusive language is largely contingent upon the familiarity of the spoken idioms and words to the audience receiving them, and even foreign or non-local words are often easily assimilated into the local dialect, after their intelligibility or familiarity is assured. This was certainly a natural process of mutual enrichment of the languages, but in each stage of such assimilation, it had adopted certain norms or models, that we might conclude that the assimilation was deliberate and functional, and was not merely a borrowal but appropriation of the word or phrase into ones own language.

In so far as poetical literatures are concerned, such a development from time to time claimed no great speciality and was imperceptible and unconscious adoption of words. But, in prose composition, it snow balled in due course to such an extent that separate linguistic dialects (or speech-forms) had emerged which had a functional necessity in the given society for mutual understanding in talk or writing. In comparatively recent times, one type of such, devolution had been termed as the '*manipravāḷa*, style of speech or writing.

It should be immediately stated the this word, in its sense-picture had been adopted in a purely ornamental context, and not in truly linguistic terms. For instance, we have Valmiki himself using it in *Ramayana*. *muktāpravāla sikataiḥ sphāṭikāntara kuṭṭimaiḥ*, where the first term is only a synonym for *maṇipravāla*. We have, again, the use of *maṇi-miḍai-pavalam pol*, etc., as an imagery in Tamil, where *maṇi* or jewel and *pavala* which is coral are contrastively strung in a necklace. But they do not stand to indicate any linguistic jargon that *maṇipravāla*, as it is currently understood, signifies, and this therefore would call for examining whether this jargon had been identified, as an entity, before, in prose literature, and what had been the divergent spoken or written forms similar to this in the past centuries. We should note that in such a situation, it should be necessary to consider the literature in which they had been used in their own context.

Where such usages are employed, in inscribed records of the past, they had been used to some extent as technical terms whose paraphrasing or translation in the language of the inscription or the donor, would destroy the very connotation of the term and defeat the purpose. These could be connected with administrative, revenue, architectural or craft nomenclature and are best understood when employed in the form in which they were current in society. It was employed whether in Sanskrit or Tamil contexts, retaining the opposite in original, as in *miyāṭchi-karanmai-sahitam* in the Sanskrit portion of early Pandyan charters referring to the land tenancy stipulations in a grant. Here, a twin Tamil revenue term is retained in the Sanskrit version, and is not translated.

The other major usage, which is in spiritual or religious contexts, either of philosophic disquisitions or oral expositions of the canon, however, calls for a conscious employment of the jargon for denominational or sectarian individuality of context, although as a mere linguistic or dialectal form, it could be construed as merely representing the use of known words, and intended for the community that is familiar with it. The Śrī Vaishnava community in Tamil Nadu had particularly favoured this flowery and picturesque use of phrases of Sanskrit incorporated into the running prose narrative in Tamil, and this had given rise to a trend in both written and spoken dialect among them. This is known as the *paribhāṣhā* or ornate and courteous jargon, and has a certain oriental felicity of expression about them that is very much missed in the coarsened work-a-day world.

We propose to discuss some trends of the hybrid-usage of words borrowed as assimilated into one's own dialect, over the centuries, in Tamil Nadu. Before doing that, it should be clarified as to what had been the outlook in the assimilation of Sanskrit words into the other southern Dravidian tongues like Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam, since in all these cases, after the advent of the Sanskrit word, the usage had not changed grammatically, by way of syntax, etc., but only the form of the Sanskrit word had been slightly modified similarly, to fall in line with the usage in one or the other of these languages. While in Tamil the closing of the

terminal consonant of the Sanskrit word by 'ai' *mātrā* where 'ā' *mātrā* was in original word, or ending in an *anusvāra* was common, in Telugu, it was also similar and with an *u*; in Kannada and Malayalam has short *e* or short *a* ending variously in place of 'closed' words. The compound words in Sanskrit, where used, were maintained in that very form, except for terminal changes. All the three languages again had accepted this introduction of Sanskrit vocabulary not as a mere high-brow usage or as a compulsory ornamentation, but as an essential development in the language itself, for clear and precise expression of the sentiment desired to be expressed in particularised contexts, as for canon usage.

It is to be noted here that the earliest usage in inscriptional contexts was to employ Prakrits as they were found understood by the local people, and there was no attempt to purify it in any academic jargon or style. This usage was thus brief, business-like and to some extent brusque. This held good whether in the north or in the south, as in Aśokan edicts, and in the south, under all the Dravidian languages also. It is interesting to note here that certain difficulties had been confronted with, in the evolution of a canon or a spiritual vehicle of exposition of the thoughts and utterances of original saints and leaders of the moral and religious order. When the Buddha was giving exposition to his enlightened declarations on human well-being, the disciples of his were hard put in carrying it to the masses in different parts of the country where they were operating. The question was, mainly to convey to the people exactly what the Buddha preached, without paraphrasing or modifying its form and content.

Here, one cannot do better than summarise, as far as necessary in his own words, the excellent outlines of the situation by Edgerton in his *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*. He gives the examples of the original references in *Cullavagga* (5.33, *Vin.* ii. 139) where two ascetics complain that the 'people were corrupting Buddha's words by repeating them in their dialects. Let us put them into Vedic'. Buddha is said to have rebuked them and authorised them to learn the Buddhist words each in his own dialects. He is said to have even felt that to commit it to Vedic is sin. In the periods that followed the time of the Buddha, the Buddhist canon and thought were expressed in three different forms: firstly, the standard Sanskrit, as in Aśvaghosha's works of the 2nd century A.D., secondly, Middle Indic, as is the case with Pali which is the sacred language of Southern Buddhism: and thirdly, dialects of the Prakrit *Dhammapada* which is approximately of a north-western Middle Indic. No original canon dialect is preserved for us.

The Chinese rendering of the now 'lost' *Vinaya mātrikā* also supports this tradition of the Buddha, as quoted earlier. Buddha's emphasis was that in the religion, fine language is not recognised. All he wanted was that the meaning and reasoning is correct. The monks were to preach according to a pronunciation which people can understand. Therefore, it is proper to behave according to the

different countries, in the use of the language'.

When the canon was being brought from outside by missionaries into peripheral regions or widely separated zones, some dialect mixture was inevitable. This resulted in an increasing modification of the text in the dialect or standard Sanskrit, while still retaining evidence of its middle Indic origin. Sanskritisation was in phonology and morphology. In vocabulary, the prose was just as Middle Indic, as that of the verses. Even if its grammar was virtually Sanskrit or entirely so, its vocabulary decided the relationship of the Buddhist hybridised Sanskrit to the underlying Prakrit. While it had some common Pali features, its morphology as a whole was definitely unlike Pali in many respects. It had a few special features common with *apabhramśa*.

The most striking peculiarity of this Buddhist Hybridised Sanskrit language was that it was increasingly modified in the direction of Standard Sanskrit. This was not mere loaning of words and forms. Quite early, the north Indian Buddhists abandoned the original principle of using only the genuine vernaculars and partially yielded to the prestige of the classical and learned language of the brahmin neighbours. This existed for centuries as a 'religious language', and seems to have become the prevalent language used by north Indian Buddhists generally for religious purposes. Nearly all such works were composed of a mixture of prose and verse. The earliest, as in *Mahāvastu*, has a relatively slight and somewhat imperfect Sanskritisation.

In many other works of the hybridisation, as in the Middle Indic Pali canon the verses are presented in a relatively Middle Indic form linguistically, similar to *Mahāvastu*, but the prose is far more Sanskritic in appearance, to such an extent that superficially, in its phonology and morphology, it looked almost like standard Sanskrit. However, even the prose showed its middle Indic base : (1) by showing more Sanskritic forms; and (2) by its vocabulary being just as Middle Indic as that of the verses. That is, it contained a large number of words which never occurred or do not occur with the same meaning, in Sanskrit. They were words of Buddhist (*i.e.* Middle Indic) traditions, even though they may appear to be in Sanskrit garb. They included many technical terms of Buddhist religion, but the great majority were non-religious terms—words applicable in secular language. They stamp the language of the works containing them as based upon another dialect than Sanskrit.

The inscriptional Prakrits also did not refine the usage for formal occasions in any way, but employed them with all their regional and local divergencies. This continued during the Satavahana period in the South and almost in the subsequent successors of the Satavahana in Lower Deccan such as the Ikshvakus, the Salankayanas, etc. But there had been the usage of Sanskrit also, side by side in society and the influence gets strengthened in due course to result in an almost compartmentalised simultaneous usage of Sanskrit and the Prakrits in the inscriptions, for archival and

popular purposes respectively. The vogue is followed, especially in early Tamil records like copper plate charters, etc., where it is very common to have a Tamil portion and a Sanskrit portion, of the same gist, separately engraved. This usage continued as far as the 10th century A.D., even in some early Chola or Pandya charters. But, beyond this period, it takes a new turn and Sanskritic standardisation is thereafter restricted mainly to religious or canon usage and is not found in inscriptions generally.

The literary vogue for prose composition in Tamil language, was similarly for committing in the Tamil language itself the Sanskrit Epics, etc., rather than hybridising them in their original morphological usage. In Telugu as well as Kannada, the process of creation of Epic versions in their own languages was the stage for the full assimilation of the Sanskrit words and usages in appropriate contexts, and the result was that not only the vocabulary was enriched but also the morphology and phonology of the loaned Sanskrit words underwent a modification to suit the local Prakrit or non-Sanskritic forms. In Malayalam, owing to its common pool of tradition with Tamil, the trend of hybridisation of the Sanskrit form into the martix of the local special form took place, somewhat later, around the 14th and 15th century A.D., by which time alone the true and full usage of pure Malayalam syntax, morphology, and phonology had hardened. At the same time, the arrival of Puranic traditions into the South and the need for committing the various myths and legends in local dialects already by the 7th-8th century A.D., resulted in a gap between the *currency* of the Puranic traditions, in popular usage oral or written, and their *committal* in standardised Sanskrit, in due course. That is why we find that the actual *written* versions of the Puranas in the South are comparatively later mostly between the 8th-13th centuries A.D. It was no doubt helped by the ascendancy of Brahmanic Hinduism in the lower south India ousting Buddhism and Jainism which generally promoted Prakrits and shunned hybridisation by Sanskritisation. The position thus was different from what happened in the Deccan or in the north.

The medieval period from the 13th century A.D., again, brought a challenge for preserving Hindu and largely Sanskritised traditions, from the onslaughts of alien and iconoclastic religions, and thus the language of the first two (if not the first three) caste-groups in society, reflected a greater hardening of the standardised hybrid Sanskrit usage in Tamil written compositions, especially in religious contexts. This was also the period of diversification of the philosophic status of the sects, in their vernaculars where, however, Sanskrit technical words as assimilated into the martix had already become fully consolidated. The Viśhitadvaita, Śaiva Siddhānta, Dvaita and Smarta traditions between the 10th and the 15th centuries A.D., thus show a very insistant and rich hybridised usage of Sanskrit in such a way that the words had become owned by the vernaculars and were not just loan words. What has been analysed by Edgerton for the Buddhist Hybridised Sanskrit, thus

becomes a common rationale, equally valid for certain traditions in the Dravidian languages also, especially Tamil (owing to its much richer vernacular or Prakrit grammatical structure already existing), and thus what the present day scholars mean by *maṇipravāḷa* is not a separate style or vogue, with its peculiarities outside the structure and grammar of the language, but a mere hybridised dialect of the language to suit certain spoken and written usages already recognised by social groups.

Regarding Malayalam especially, there had been a position held by scholars that Malayalam had been influenced by Sanskrit to a degree greater than Tamil had been. In view of the fact that almost till the end of the 10th century A.D., there had not emerged any linguistically independent Malayalam, it should be noted that the influence of Sanskrit on Malayalam should have become very prominent only from about this time. Early Sanskrit pioneers from Kerala like Prabhakara Miśra of the dissident *Mīmāṃsā* school (opposed to the *Bhāṭṭa* school) should have found the situation in Kerala sufficiently congenial for study and specialisation in Sanskrit. But Tamil admixture in written Malayalam has been persistent almost upto the 14th century A.D., especially in south and central Kerala. A device by which Malayalam not only tried to accelerate its individuality but also shake off its utter vocabularial indebtedness to Tamil, was introduced in what the Malayalam scholars call the *Maṇipravāḷam* style, in their literature. This is said to have been largely confined between the 12th-14th centuries A.D., and, by the time it ended, the earliest Malayalam grammar, mainly *Līlātilakam*, had been written in the style of a Sanskritic grammatical treatise. This, seemingly, was responsible to some extent for the so-called *maṇipravāḷa* style of Malayalam becoming defunct as it had been a hot-house plant essentially. The themes of this Malayalam '*maṇipravāḷa*' style had been mostly of the *śringāra-rasa*. The important morphological features of this style was that the rules of Malayalam language and grammar were not followed in the absorption of the Sanskrit words, but these Sanskrit words have their forms, whether in noun, pronoun or verbs, fully retained. This means that the *maṇipravāḷa* style of Malayalam was mainly a transitory stage, when it was still functioning under Tamil grammar but Sanskrit vocabularial preference and it was no wonder that such an artificial structure could not last long. But what came to be called as *maṇipravāḷam* in Tamil Nadu and were primarily employed in a religious context and was not intended to be merely an urge to be influenced by Sanskrit, and which was fully and functionally operating under the Tamil grammar (which had already around the 5th century A.D., or so been codified in *Tolkappiyam*) was of a different milieu, and it is comparable to a great extent to the situation under which the Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit emanated from the canonical usages in the regional vernaculars or the Prakrits. We should do well to note that Vedānta Deśika had been one of the earliest exponents of this so-called '*maṇipravāḷa*' style, as come down to us which was indeed a hybrid Sanskrit in Tamil syntax that was

consciously adopted and refined for specific audiences in Tamil Śrī Vaishnava circles, perhaps already prior to the time of Vedānta Deśika. A brief historical account of the development of the spiritual and religious literature in Tamil Vaishnavism would not be out of place here. The early *Ālvār* saints, ten in number (later increased to thirteen after the 13th century A.D.) had given out their hymans in local and strongly indigenous Tamil without any visible Sanskrit vocabularial admixture. This period should be approximately placed between the 6th and the 9th centuries A.D. Immediately succeeding these *Ālvār* saints rose the *āchāryas* like Nadamuni, Yamuna (also called Alavandar), etc., who had delved deep into the great ocean of spiritual wealth left by the *Ālvārs*, especially Nammalvar (or Sata-gopa of Kurugur) and had considered these as *Drāviḍa-Veda-Sāra* and having equal status with original *Mantra* literature. Ramanuja who followed them and imbibed fully the Sanskritic and Dravidic traditions of these, as well as the highly rarified dialectal propositions and conclusions made by Śankara Bhagavat-pada in his Advaita school of thought, had largely been influenced by the core of the teachings of the *Ālvārs* and *Āchāryas* for establishing the Vishishtadvaita. Apparently, scoffers were not wanting, among orthodox Vaishnavites who assailed the competence of the, *Dīvyā prabandha* of *Ālvārs*, especially *Tiruvāimoli* of Nammalavar, to be considered on a par with the sacred Vedic lore. This criticism was continuing during the time of Vedānta Deśika himself in the 12th-13th centuries A.D., and should have become more hardened in the subsequent centuries. Deśika squarely believed that the *Ālvārs* numbering ten, then, had almost been an *abhinava daśāvatāra* (re-incarnation of the *ten avatāras*) of Vishnu and declared in his *Rahasya-traya-sāra* while dealing with *Guru Parampara* (or preceptorial hierarchy), that in the same way that the clouds draw up the saline sea-water and re-offer them in the form of life-sustaining potable water, these ten *Ālvārs* had offered the quintessence of the Veda texts in a language understandable to all the people and had also ordained themselves to be born in the Tamil country, which had been blessed by Agastya, so that the path of right shown by them may not be reviled by overt and covert heretics. He reinforces, thus the reference in *Bhāgavata* (11.5.38-39), wherein it is stated that in the Kali Age, great souls who consider the attainment of the feet of Narayana as the ultimate goal would be born here and there, but in good number in Tamil Nadu, on the banks of Tamraparni, Kṛitāmālā (Vaigai), Payasvīni (Palar), Kaveri, and the Periyar river (in Kerala). The significance of this utterance is its reference indirectly to the ten *Ālvārs* who had been born in these very riparian tracts, thereby making this part of the *Bhāgavata* text atleast later to the age of *Ālvārs*.

When Vedānta Deśika himself composed his *Rahasya traya-sāra* in the style which is loosely called now *maṇipravāḷa*, but which is indeed hybrid-Sanskrit in Tamil syntax and a purely religious and philosophical vehicle as understood by his disciples and followers, we see that this mixed or hybridised style, though diffi-

cult for common people to follow, was however, not entirely a refined high-brow dialect but only a deliberate attempt at the familiarisation the philosophic and other expository sources to the audience who were to learn it by heart and get it explained by their *Gurus*. It was not involving any need to study Sanskrit language, more especially since it was committed in the Grantha script that was fully and easily read by one and all, men and women, and committed to memory. It, therefore, was in its own way, a short-cut to the assimilation of the sacred Vaishnava lore, in the same way as the *Ālvār* saints, hymnals in simple Tamil verses themselves were intended to be accessible to all the common people.

That the Tamil lore of the *Ālvārs* was assailed by some (as indirectly indicated by Vedanata Deśika in the passage quoted earlier) was referred to already, in a much earlier period (c. 11th-12th cent. A.D.), by the commentators on the *Tiruvāimoli* hymns of Nammalvar, such as Nanjiyar, Nampillai Periaavachchhan Pillai, etc., wherein an apparent quotation about the heretical opinion, even among *Vaidikas*, occurs. This quotation implies that 'as Nammalvar's hymns are in reproachable or non-sacred language, and these verses are being learnt by even ladies and *sūdras* and as he himself was born in the fourth class who have no entitlement to knowledge, and as they are in a dialect or spoken tongue and style, and as it deals often with *śringāra* mode of *bhakti* which is violation of *śruti* and *smṛiti* tradition; they should not be true *pramāṇas* (authentic sacred lore)'. The reply to this stand is also furnished in these commentaries, namely, that the language taboo at best operates only for contexts, other than divine; and the *Ālvār* was overwhelmed with compassion for the lowly and weak, like the *sūdras* and women, and did not want them to miss the essence of Vedas, simply because the sacred language was beyond their claim to learn : and since the manner of expression of the hymnal was so mellifluous and appealing to even the meanest understanding that even those who are well versed in Sanskrit envy their impact upon the people, and since their substance is not dealing with *śringāra* of the baser kind but god-oriented *bhakti* as enumerated in the Upanishads they are wholly acceptable as much as the Vedas'.

These commentaries which thus extol the *Ālvār* hymnals especially Nammalvar's *Tiruvāimoli*, are themselves composed mainly in this hybrid-Sanskrit composition with Tamil structure and, here again the attempt is not stilted, but one that was well-recieved and understood by the audiences for which they were intended, and certainly were also open to be fully interpreted and explained by preceptors to their disciples.

These two situations of this so-called *manipravāḷa* composition differ from the Kerala *manipravāḷa* style of the 12th-14th centuries A.D., in that the former do not have the Sanskrit words, roots and pronouns being retained as they are, but getting duly changed in the endings to merge with the Tamil syntax and grammatical usage. They are again different from the later in their aim not being the

adoption or encouragement or assimilation of Sanskrit vocabularial strength, but rather an unconscious conversion into *apabhramśa* of the known sanskrit words, in order that the regional philosophic and religious treasures which are out of reach for the lay-devotees could be converted into an understandable hand book of spiritual guidance, and could be resorted to without strain by all devotees.

As such it would be seen that these Tamil composition : (1) are not a *manipravāḷa* style, but rather Tamil canonical hybrid-Sanskrit forms for easy communicability to the audience to lay and the learned; (2) were not sectarian adoption of Sanskrit jargon for exclusiveness or separatism, but natural evolutionary development of the dialect, by the constant articulation of its utility; and (3) their purer or indigenous Tamil precursors of the hymnals had the same objective as early Buddhist canonical teachers, and disciples of the Buddha had, in transmitting Buddha's teachings to the laity. They resulted, as in the Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit—so brilliantly analysed by Edgerton—in a hybrid religious Sanskrit in Tamil language for Sri Vaishnava devotees, lay as well as the learned, of the southern (*Tengalai*) as well as the northern (*Vaḍagalai*) tradition and, to that extent was a vehicle, more of consolidation of the spiritual tenets of the regional Vaishnatite milieu, than any artificial and exclusive device.

PADUKA SAHASRA — THE CROWN JEWEL OF VISHNU DHARMA¹

Paduka Sahasra, considered by any standards—be they academic, religious, literary or ethno-cultural—is a *magnum opus* of the age and of the author, Sri Venkatanatha—the Vedanta Desika of Vaishnavite south India. It would be difficult to conceive of either a more challenging task or a more comprehensive and encyclopaedic treatment of the theme. Traditional accounts of its genesis apart, one would have a firm feeling that it was Desika's deep and fundamental commitment to the glory of the Lord's *Pādukā* that had crystallised in this magnificent poetic achievement. Its chief merit, besides, notwithstanding what has been said above, lies in the fact that the literary, technical, epic and spiritual lore, so lavishly and so coruscatingly displayed in the verily gem-set *Nātha-pādukā* organised in a manner that might have shamed the lapidiar or the expert gem diviner, could be equally alluring to a conventional Vaishnava devotee or to a *Sahridaya* who is seeking a synthesis of culture and religion, or to an art historian who is investigating the technical temper and the artistic ken of the century which Sri Desika adorned by his physical presence. It would be true to say of this work that there is nothing ephemeral about it, there is nothing exclusively sectarian in it and that there is enough to explore and derive utmost satisfaction in the decidedly expansive canvas of literary and artistic statements and understatements that stud it, chapter after chapter.

Appropriately beginning the first verse in *anushṭup* metre—hallowed by the Adikavi Valmiki as well as by the *chchhanda* of the 1006 petalled *Pārijata* called the *Vishnu Sahasranama* of Vedavyasa—and concluding with *ārya* metre, fittingly with the composition which is the glorification of Paduka devi—the work, in its thirty-two *paddhatīs* is a veritable *udyāna* or garden of the choicest oriental blossoms. It would be quite unavailing, short of embarking upon a virtual com-

mentary, verse by verse, of the work—which indeed many worthies in the traditional and literary spheres have already undertaken to their own eternal merit and to our unfailing satisfaction—to extol the details of the composition. But it would still be appropriate to record some of the more unusual and unrivalled perfections of the piece. Conceptual elegance of the versification is one such, wherein each idea is made to lead logically to the next. It more than vouches for the perfectly patterned image of the entire work that should have virtually imprinted itself on the mental screen of Sri Desika before he set out to roll out the verses in well ordered felicity. It bespeaks the academically methodical outlook of the scholar-saint and how his own encyclopaedic control on data is not allowed to oppress or overpower the devotee-reader but to enable him to adjust himself to the slowly and purposefully unfolding spectacle of the infinitely satisfying details of the *Nātha Pādukā*, both as an object of adoration and as an ideal of spiritual concentration. One is neither hurried nor hustled but one has to hasten, as it were, slowly to match the thousand and more felicities of the *Pādukā* with the severely limited and challengingly fleeting nature of the time factor against which, as the well-founded tradition would aver, Sri Desika was racing on that memorable evening.

A second sound feature is the unity of the theme. There is no pardonable or unpardonable diffuseness or irrelevance in the versified panorama, no flippancy, no lackadaisical lip service to convention, no tiring repetitions of concepts or concretisations. Indeed, considering the giant sized task that was apparently not lightly undertaken in a composition like this, much more so by the ardent and conscientious votary alike of the muses and of the honeyed feet of Lord such as Desika was, it is certainly nothing short of a magical spell that the compact unity of the theme casts on us and we are made to imbibe the graces of the *Pādukā*—as an object, as a *credo*, as a visualisation of a personality of impeccable femininity; as a mascot of spiritual glorification and literary artifice; as a material receiving the choicest ornamentation and gem-set composition; as the witness to the numberless devotees, divine, royal, mystic, romantic and sophisticated, who had laid their own modest head at the sandaled feet of the Lord craving benediction; and as the eternal security for the unnumbered events of model rectitude with which the *Pādukā* had been connected, of a Bharata, of a Bali Vairochana, or a Brahma. In fine, the *paddhatis* or chapterisations themselves reveal the inspired artist and craftsman that Desika was, who could fit facts into a finite form, charming in presentation and moving in import.

A third aspect of the work is a special competence which Desika displays in having picturised the *Pādukā* as a female and having been, therefore, called upon legitimately to delineate the natural urges of the Paduka devi towards her liege, lord and king namely Ranganatha, and how she, as a *nāyika* rises to the most sublime heights not only in a purely temporal sense, but also as a prototype of the ideal Hindu woman towards her husband. It would be difficult to pick on

Desika's unerring analysis of the mental make up of a *mugdha* and *pragalbha nāyika* towards her all-knowing lord—a penchant which he disclosed with equal facility in some of his other compositions like the *Hamsasandesa* and *Drāmiopanishadsāra* and others.

As we had occasion to state elsewhere this only stands testimony, not merely to the well graded competence of Sri Desika in the purely rhetorical and *alankara* media, but also to the more wholesome fact that his *grihasthāśrama*, notwithstanding the seeming anonymity and simplicity that masked it from a material point of view, should have been entirely satisfying, mature reciprocally with his spouse and should not have missed most of the romantic or native nuances that a well bonded conjugal felicity should, according to classical poets, have afforded during the impressionable and emotional years of one's life. This is not to make Sri Desika mundane, by any means, but to eke out the perfect satiety and wholesome stride implicit in his delineations connected with Paduka devi which are singularly without either a literary *faux pas* or emotional distortion. Romantic poetry did not sit well in medieval times, when the entire psyche of man was ridden with casuistry, hypocrisy and cant of which none was more aware than Desika, so much that he had to cry out '*Nirasta ripusambhave kvachana Ranga-mukhye Vibho. Paraspara hitaishinām parisareshu mām vesaya*'. Hence, when he dealt with sweet and requited love, he was able to bring the required degree of balance, poise, elegance and appropriateness, mainly due to the undistorted and even-paced tenor of his own mundane life.

A high point of the composition is bestowing a double role for God, both as Ranganatha and Rama—and the most clever *sūtradhāra* that he was, Desika brings out this double role with a theatrical perfection and with the supreme omniscience and omnipotence of God unimpaired in the process of this contrivance. He has himself stated in v. 119 of *Samarpaṇa paddhati* that Ranganatha himself took the role of Rama.² While from the opening gambit itself, it was obvious that Bharata's adoration of the *Ramapādukā* was to be the soul of the composition and in several *paddhatīs* like the *Prabhāva*, *Pratīprasthāna* and *Abhisekha paddhatīs*, he is keeping the narrative unflinchingly close to *Ramayana*. He has no difficulty in showing that original inspiration for the same was in Sri Rangam where the great lord is reclining in regal splendour, presiding over the *Rangasthala* or the arena and holding audience to celestials, mortals and all. Making several overtures to show that Rama had indeed deliberately allowed the *Pādukā* to be left behind with Bharata and comparing the plight of Paduka devi who had always been the closest to the *Nāthapāda* and to the events that crowd around it, in having to be separated for 14 years from Rama, with that of Sita who after all was only separated for about ten months, he alienates the *Rama Pādukā* and glides into its identity with Ranganatha *Pādukā*. The dexterity displayed by Sri Desika in making the *Pādukā* the common property of Rama and Ranganatha and introducing a make-

believe difference between Sita, who was Bhudevi *amsa*, with Paduka devi—who he himself otherwise shows with unimpeachable Vedic and other evidence as none else but an *amsa* of Bhudevi (*Padbhyām bhūmīḥ—Purushasūkta*) leaves us in no doubt that Sri Desika is a veritable magician in swapping thoughts, concepts, artifices, etc., in his poetic compositions.

A remarkable strategem is also played by Sri Desika in comparing the status of three savants who are wedded to the feet of the Lord namely Garuda, Hanuman and Paduka devi herself. The first two are known to traditional Vaishnava *bhaktas* as *Peria* and *Siria Tiruvaḍi* and making a virtual pun on the word *Tiruvaḍi*, he is alluding Paduka devi as even closer to the feet than these two great adherants of the Lord.

The non-Vaishnava symbolism of the *Pādukā* in several places brings out the healer and harmoniser that Desika was and never a begotting sectarian and for whom a single manifestation of the supreme lord is enough to be dedicated to. In fact, it is very difficult to find any outstanding personality of Vaishnava hagiology, except of course, Nammalvar or Maran Satagopa of Kurugur who had so unflinchingly and yet with such unimpeachable integrity interlaced divinities other than Vishnu constantly in his works, thereby creating, a shining, living, practising symbol of the *Pūrṇa* character of God. The great might, of course, of Sri Desika is in weaving such gracious patterns of a divine nexus, in such a respectable manner and without offending the canons of literature, tradition or philosophic thought. The poet and artist that he is, first and last, any dramatisation of a personality that exudes drama in every turn of its being, is of great appeal and attraction. His descriptions, therefore, of Śiva are by far the most gracious and felicitous which do ample justice to his *sahridayatva* notwithstanding his passionate attachment to the Lord or Sri Ranganatha as the be-all and end-all of his faith. The point to be noted is indeed that in almost all the situations that he introduces Śiva and juxtaposes him with Lord Ranganatha, he is using an orthodox convention of the superiority of Vishnu to destroy sectarianism itself by the inoffensive, harmonising, integrated and essentially sublime visualisations which underscore his spontaneity of thought, word and deed and *chitta suddhi*.

A spectacularly prodigious expression of his intellectual make up is revealed by the deliberate manner in which in several *paddhatis*, he scintillates with the well-cut facets of his wide knowledge of gem stone art, colour science and therapy. The subject is so much of a sophisticated exercise which normal mortals do not have either opportunity or inclination to acquire. But Sri Desika who was neither born in affluence nor should have, except by conscious assimilation of the art and science of gem stones acquired it from written as well as visual traditions—not easily accessible to all generally, should have revealed such a fantastic insight into the gem and colour science is bound to be ever enigmatic. It can only be ascribed to his all encompassing intellectual thirst and fervour.

There is no doubt that Desika has revealed a many splendoured personality of his self through this work. Had he been a Western potentate or Elizabethan intellectual, his knowledge, poetic talents, forceful personality and simplicity of living would have created a whole world of literature around him by his admirers and adherents. Desika's works are first and foremost an external expression of the intellectual elite that he always was and unlike devotional compositions wherein, it is normally not likely to expect glimpses of the inner metabolism of the author (except perhaps his well sorted out views and ideals one always finds in almost all the devotional works of his) for he essentially wrote nothing which was not devotional and did not fail to adorn anything that he wrote with the resplendant tints of his inner being.

It is likely to be asked as to why he selected *Pādukā* as the subject of this major composition of his—a veritable *magnum opus* in extent and diversity. A *prima facie* possibility is certainly that of *Vishnu Pāda* or *Pādukā*, as has now become translated in Sri Vaishnava parlance, after *Saṭāri* or Satagopa of Kurugur had immortalised the concept. It might be that the theme was so fundamental for the Hindu religion whose devotional shop-window *Vishnu Bhakti* had become over the centuries, and Desika might have liked his mind to wander amidst the maze of colourful rays which are illuminated by *Nātha-pādukā*. However, one is tempted to think that it was the combined impact of three different factors that should have enthused him to compose this saga on the *Pādukā*. These would have been : (1) his clear intuition which told him that none has so far expatiated on what is clearly the quintessence of *Bhakti*, namely to clutch not merely at the *pāda* of lord but if that were not possible, on the *Pādukā* at least, which was what Bharata did than whom there was no prior votary of *Bhakti* according to Sri Desika (*Prathamodaharānāya bhakti bhajam*). In fact, Valmiki expresses these sentiments when he equates *Pāduka* with *Pāda* (*chhatram dhārayata Kshipram, ārya pādavimau matau*). Hence, by extolling *Pādukā* in a full length *kāvya*, Sri Desika had virtually become an *apara*—Bharata in stature—which is more precious than any other act of piety. Secondly, his great attachment to Ranganatha had created in him a desire to visualise the *paricharya* that Paduka devi also would be rendering his and her reclining lord, in a *nirvikalpa yoga* mentioned in the *Yogasāstra*—about which he himself alludes in v. 288 in the *Sanchāra paddhati* (*Tenāpi mūnamavikalpasamādhi योग्या*). The *lakshya* is also in *yogasamādhi*, the *lakshana nāyika* is also in *bhakti yoga*, but she makes the reclining lord move metaphorically all over the *prapancha* reflecting the kinetic energy of the dormant lord. The Lord who was already attended to by Sri, Bhū and Nila had another confidante—in the most aesthetic sense who followed him wherever he went (as an *agrima-sākshinī* or *mitha sakhi* as he calls her), unlike the others who had their allotted duties. This was a novel and unique way of expounding the *dvaya* philosophy, the inextricability, though with a separate *aprākṛita sarira*, of Lord and Jaganmata.

A third factor that should have prevailed with Sri Desika was that by bringing *Vishnu pāda* and Ranganatha *Pādukā* together and extolling it, at Sri Rangam—the stage—not only are the masses rendered a great service so that it might entertain the masses irrespective of status (*Rathyantareshu charaṇāvani sangi vātsalya nighnamānasa janasat kritosau*, v. 289). He himself reveals in v. 401 of the *Nāda-paddhati* how it was a solemn duty for him to compose this work and continues the thought by saying that *Pāduka* reflects the Vedic evolution of the *Vishnu pāda* as the most appropriate divine manifestation which was the very source from which the fourth *varṇa* and Nammalvar (Satagopa) himself were stated in the *Purusha Sūkta* (*padajāta vamsa*, as he calls it) as created. Hence it was virtually a common heirloom of the entire society and hence the degree of participation in it for any class of *Bhakta* would be unqualified, spontaneous and close. It does not require any knowledge, ritual profundity or *tantric* merit. It is verily the supreme credo of surrender—*saraṇāgati sāstra*.

The *kāvya*, thus distinguished by several independent and unquestionable terms of reference, is also the personal vindication of Sri Desika, the lyricist. It would therefore, be necessary for us to join Sri Desika in his wholesome poetic mead of praise to *Nātha-pādukā* and live the several graces of this unique composition. Firstly, for the dignity of expression. The very title *Pādukā sahasra* is provocative. It was not termed as *Pādukāsāhasrī* or *Pādukā-Sahasraka*. The clear import of the title is the infinitude of the Lord who had lent such dignity to his *pādukā*. It also is a token of the limitless dedication of Sri Desika towards the *Pādukā*. It is also an expression of how there will not be just a *Pādukā* but *saahasra* or countless *padukas* suggestive of the Sri Vaishnava fraternity in the conventional manner of accosting or enquiry. Every way, it is crisp, compact and comprehensive.

In v. 67, in a beautiful *nindā stuti*, the poet explains how for those who are devotees of *Vishnupādukā*, neither Śiva nor Brahma is seen but are submerged in the form of Vishnu

*Iha te bhavatim bhajanti bhaktyā
Kṛtinaḥ kesava pādukā niyuktah |
Kathayamba tirohitaṁ tritīyam
Nayanam triṇi mukhāni va kimesham ||*

Explaining the circumstance under which the *Pādukā* is designated as *Nātha-pādukā* and how this ownership attribute should not mitigate the universal supremacy of the *pādukā*, he suavely states that the reason is that the slur that it is a woman's rule should not attach to the *Paduka* devi and here she is mentioned as *Nātha-pādukā* (*strīrājya-dosha prasamaya mūnam nirdisyase Nāthavisheshanam*). In another flash of lexicographic skill in the same *paddhati*—*Prabha paddhati*—(v. 85) where several *pariyāpadas* of *bhūmi*, with *Pādukā* also is identified, he mentions how she is none other than Bhudevi.

Bhūmi srutīnām bhuvanasya dhātṛ

Guṇai rananta vipula vibhūtya
Sthirā svayam pālayitum kshamānaḥ
Sarvam sahā saurī padāvaṇi tvam v. 85

Glorifying the superiority of *pāda* of Vishnu to other positions that Vishnu can bless one with, he says the *apeta kāmas* who place faith in the *pādukā* and *pāda* are entitled to *Satyakamatva* state of permanent bliss (*Nityasūri* state). This reflects the Vedic statement *Tadvishnoḥ-paramam padam sadā pasyanti sūrayaḥ*.

In two consecutive verses (106-107) in *Samarpaṇa paddhati*, Desika reaches the peak of his technical skill where sound and sense are both evocative. He argues that if *Pādukā* also refused to part from Rama (that is, if Bharata did not take you from Rama) in the same way as Sita refused to part from Rama for *Vanavāsa*³ what would have been the miserable state of the Kosala people. As it happened however, by the fact that Bharata was able to take you as the mortgage⁴ to ensure the safe return of Rama and Sita—shows how you had an inherent value which was most superior (even superior to Rama). This is a thought identical to that of Perialvar (4-9-1) “*Maravaḍiyo tambikku vanpaṇayam vaittuppoi Vānor vāzha cheruvuḍaiye disakkaruman tiruthi vandulankaṇḍa tirumāl koil*”. Desika’s reverence for the *pūrvācharya sūktis* is also patent in this.

Comparing the purificatory and expiatory role of Ganga on the *jaṭa* of Śiva and *pādukā* on the *jaṭa* clad head of Bharata, Desika aptly argues that both the objects borne on the head truly expiated and purified the stigma attached to the person. This is indeed a sweet verse.

Padāmbujāt vīgalitam paramasya pumsaḥ tvāmadareṇa vinivesya jaṭakālāpe
Angīchakāra Bharato maṇipādarakshe Gangādhruḍha siraso girīsasya kaṇṭim.

In *Pratiprasthana paddhati* (v. 124) Desika dares to compare again Sita and *Pādukā* and even to decree that the latter comes out with flying colours in the comparison. He says that the implicit obedience of *Pādukā* to Rama is such that unlike Sita who fought her way to the forest with Rama at the very start, *Pādukā* agreed to be wrenched away from Rama even after having followed him far into the forest. As elsewhere called by Desika, *Pādukā* was indeed ‘*Rama pāda sahadharmachārīṇi*’ (*Parichari paddhati*, v. 79). Sri Desika as a poet was indeed not merely highly imaginative but also a great extrovert in a forceful presentation of his considered judgement tactfully avoiding the culpability for conventional impropriety (*apachāra*). It is in such circumstances, he rises high in the world of letters—as indeed he had risen high in the world of spirituality already.

The poet proceeding in this strain, again redeems (in v. 125) Bhūmi who expected to be held in administration, on the competent shoulders of Rama, but having irrevocably lost this chance, got indeed something which was a far greater and closer physical association, namely the *Pādukā* when it ruled the earth for 14 years. The *amsādhirohaṇa* which was lost was well compensated by ‘*sparsam pādena*’.

With the same type of perspicacity and originality Sri Desika in a series of sentiments placed in the mouth of Hanuman, in the *Niryātana paddhati* avers that *Pādukābhisekha* had been the *denouement* for the entire series of actions ending with *Ravana nigrāha* and crowns it by saying that Ravana who had crushed Kailasa like a camphor cake (the simile is for the silvery effulgence of Kailasa peak) was crushed himself by Paduka devi seated on a *bhadrāsana* throne, and the *astras* of Rama were only the *nimittamātra* (much the same as Savyasachi was only *nimittamātra* for Krishna to destroy the Kauravas). The verse (No. 227) is a magnificent thumbnail sketch of Ravana's earlier achievement and the central idea of the verse is clear proof of the high individuality and credibility of Sri Desika to emphasise a point by a challengingly variant interpretation of a known traditional fact. His intellectual freshness and conceptual freedom alike are imprinted in such versification. With the same integrity and daring he alludes to the fact that his versification of the glories of the *Pādukā*, if they fall short of the grandeur as is likely, would be fully overpowered by the enchanting and varied notes emanating from the *Pādukā*. These two stanzas (477 & 478) in the *Nāda Paddhati* not only have an allusion to the circumstance which caused this composition by Desika but also to the utter modesty and dedicated devotion to the will of God (here Paduka devi) that Sri Desika had always evinced in the vicissitudes of his life of exemplary rectitude.

The opening verses of several *paddhatīs* are excellent examples of brevity, pun depth and understatement. Desika's organisation of his sections are most lucidly anticipated by his initial verse. A passing but typical example will suffice. Commencing the *Mūktā paddhati* (v. 611), he presents a delightful pun on the well-known terms and categories like *Baddha nitya* and *mūkta* and *sesha-seshitva*, in the simplest versification which deserves to be quoted in full.

*"Baddhanam yatra nityānām mūktānāmiśvarasya cha I
Pratyaksham seshaseshitvam same sidhyatu pādukā II*

We might verily, lose ourselves in this *Ratnakara* in the search of gems of purest ray serene. We may, therefore, reluctantly leave this aspect and proceed to the non-Vaishnava imagery of Sri Desika in this work. A word of caution is perhaps advisable at this juncture on Desika as a poet. His scholarly preparations in his early boyhood and youth should have indeed been comprehensive and covered alike purely Vaishnava or Visishtadvaita literature but also the best of Sanskrit and vernacular literature of the country and his native region respectively. A certain degree of refreshing freedom to go for the apt even if it would introduce very flattering or gracious references to other sectarian gods marks Desika's works. It must be remembered that the age of Desika, in one sense, saw the climax of sectarian prejudice, clash and narrow mindedness. It was only possible for exemplars and emancipated souls like Desika to offer himself on the one hand unswervingly—true to the codes of *Dharmasāstra* and Visishtadvaita traditions—to the feet of the lord at Hastisaila; and at the same time, to place his poetic ken and

literary perceptions several rungs above those of the merely brilliant versifiers or conventional devotees, and to introduce, in the sequel, a certain fullness, verbal fidelity to the rich puranic traditions of divinities and adherence to connoisseurship wherever his mature intellect is drawn by appropriate theme-ideas. He has occasion to mention Śiva in more than a dozen places in the work. In each place, it may be claimed that he had not cheapened the use, had introduced depth, iridescent glow and a certain formal integration of ideas of god-head which do indeed add stature to his magnanimous and gifted personality, since he achieves these naturally and without any clumsiness. The task might have been easy for an intellectual of the 20th century but was verging on the impossible for a Sri Vaisnava leader of the 13th century A.D., and deserves special appreciation for the breadth of vision involved.

We might begin with the first of these occurrences which is seen in v. 37 where the occasion of the greatness of the *Pādukā* is all but tenderly smothered by the lyrical outburst of the *jñāni* turned *bhakta* namely Śiva whose matted locks flaunting the *aragyadha* (*Konrai*) flowers. The *jaṭa* of Śiva is closely described as with many *nidas* a technical term in *Vāstusāstra* standing for the *kūḍu* or the pent-house window of the entablature of a temple and here standing for the projecting cavities in the matted locks. The mental and intellectual stature of the divine *bhakta* (Śiva) is also delineated in a manner tending to heighten the object worshipped in the sequel. The *śabdālankara*, above all, of the occasion which is vividly portrayed, is a testimony to Sri Desika's completeness as a poet. He explains the credentials of this divine *bhakta* in v. 48 by not flinching to call him '*Mahatī devī*'—the Mahadeva, mainly to establish the *sarvakarma samārādhyā*-hood of Vishnu and introduces the *arghya* ritual in the Ganga on Śiva's head, trickling over the jewel-studded *Pādukā* while offering obeisance. The highest traditions of *bhakta*-hood are displayed here. Again, in v. 554 where the main purport of the stanza is only to describe the rainbow radiance of colour created by the hairdo of Śiva when he offers his obeisance at the moving feet and *Pādukā* of Ranganatha, the verse acquires poetic character by Sri Desika's suggesting that this multicoloured flash of brilliance converts the *jaṭa* of Śiva into a peacock feathered head-gear, which perfectly fits him, who was the hunter in the Kiratajuniya story to tease Arujna. Desika verily enters into the idea with zest when he added the attribute of *māyā-kīṛāta*-the god (Śiva) who was an illusory *Kirata* (hunter) only to tease his *bhakta* Arjuna. A variation of this very idea but again as a pleasant compliment to the thought process of a *Grihastha* which is the always mentally tied up with the memories of his own wife and children is introduced in v. 578, wherein, proceeding to describe the multiple coloured glory of the gem-set *Pādukā* which Śiva touches with his head, he makes Śiva recollect his own private apartment where one can see the dense-feathered peacock mount of his darling child Shanumukha. As one glorifies one's own child by carrying it on one's head, Śiva pays homage to *Nātha-pādukā*. In

another felicitous left-handed tribute to the deep attachment of Śiva to Parvati, he picturises Śiva as wanting to wash off by Ganga's waters the possible patches of lac-ornamentation of Parvati's feet (which might have got fixed to his *jaṭa*, during his private pleasure with her) when he refers to the glow from the red stones of Paduka devi while offering his salutations to *pādukā*-clad god Ranganatha. Here at one stroke, his Śiva's perfect sense of courtesy to Raganatha and his own relationship with Parvati are both brought out with an element of mellifluous suggestion.

With an even more justified touch of appropriateness Sri Desika compared *Pādukā* to celestial river Ganga (v. 618) because she is extolled and honoured by the Chandrachuda (who also extols Ganga by keeping her on the head), she is white with pearls set in it, and she is associated with Ranganatha's feet. This verse had a word-jingle which is like the ankletted steps of a dancer.⁵ He gets involved in an elaborately imaginative suggestion covering both Śiva and Vighnesvara (v. 657) and describes an illusion created by the pearly lustre on the *Pādukā* which spreads like the cataracts of Ganga over the entire *jaṭa* of the saluting Śiva; and Ganesa who was near by was immediately attracted by this water-illusion, attempts to collect this water by his short and tender proboscis, again and again, and finds that it is elusive. The verse is a master piece of the virtuosity of Sri Desika as a fond parent and delightful freedom from sectarian feelings and the feelings only as an inspired poet. The second half of the verse deserves to be quoted here—*Mudarambhati Kumbhasthalam anukalam Sinchati yatha Nirālambo lambodara Kalābha sunḍāra chūlakāḥ*.

His freedom of expression as an uncommitted poet, though yet a committed Sri Vaishnava, seemingly crosses the Rubicon of privileged communication when he virtually manages to have dig at the romantic situation of Lakshminatha above and Umakanta below the Paduka devi—both having the vestiges of the tell-tale red lac impression on their heads—but contrives to escape impropriety making Paduka devi verily laughing it away. As a *narma hāsyā* which poets were entitled to introduce, and here put in the mouth of the *narma sakhis* of Paduka devi and condoned by the pearly laughter of Paduka devi herself as a '*jalpa*' of the *sakhis*, it is an exquisite specimen of dignified imaginative insight (v.659). He rises to an equally gracious height of suggestive poetry when (v. 671) he presents Śiva in an iconic form, with *mṛiga* (young deer)—called by Sri Desika as '*Ena-sāba*'—held in his left and *paraśu* on the right hand, (not mentioned here) and poses that this young deer took the strands of emerald glitter emanating from the *Pādukā* and spreading the head of Śiva, as *Durva* grass and wanted to graze on it. It would be difficult even to find from non-Vaishnava poets, imagery so touchingly intimate and so magnificent in its appropriateness. Sri Desika excels in such imagery, the main purpose of which is the praise of the facets of brilliance and beauty of the *Nātha-pādukā*.

We may now, with some legitimacy, present Sri Desika as that unique phenomenon in medieval sectarian literature, namely the romantic poet. It should be stated that the imagery adopted by Sri Desika is invariably traditional, conventional and admitting full approbation. But in his hands, they also receive that tantalising allure which tends to convert them into a classical mould without the artificiality of medieval poetic conventions. He makes Paduka devi as the 'approver' (*agrima sakshini*) for the various clandestine escapades of Vishnu in his several *avatārās* especially with the *gopis* (*abhirakanyāsu* v. 302). In the several succeeding verses, Sri Desika scintillates with his enormous powers of creative imagery, when for instance, some of the *devis* of Sri Ranganatha deliberately pledge (*glahayati*) *Nātha-pādukā* during the *aksha kṛidā* play in the with Lord, so that the Lord can be prevented from proceeding to another Devi later in the night. They knew that the Lord was capable of taking several forms to delude them all. In the next verse (v. 304), he finds that the *mahāpurusha lakṣhaṇas* found on the *Pādukās* of Ranganatha (as indeed on his *pāda* also) leave imprints on the sands of Yamuna bank and help the the love-lorn maidens in tracing out and following his actual track. Again, (v. 319) he extols the *Nātha-pādukā* as the *upāya* and *upeya*, because through her, even Sri or Bhū or Nila or other *nayikas* of Lord find out, with whom the Lord had been spending his time, and the perfumed *Pādukā* became by the special floral tributes paid by each of the *devis* to *Nātha-pādukā* when the Lord was with them. The *antah-pura sanchāra* is elegantly integrated with the *Prapya-prapaga* duality of Paduka devi for reaching Ranganatha. Desika again adopts the classical posture on the sound, the dress and looks of the *Devis* who wish to be with the Lord or who are desirous of knowing the whereabouts of the Lord. He states that the jingling sound of the sandaled feet of Ranganatha will not only announce in advance about his unscheduled entry into their private apartments but also teach them by its enticing sweetness of note the lessons of intimacy *madana upanishad-rahasyam* (v. 424). He looks at the same theme from another angle and observes that the Devi had placed the gems given during her marriage with Lord, and had them incorporated into the *Pādukā* of the Lord, so that his arrival at the Kaveri—who is the mother-in-law of Ranganatha (being a part of the Sea Lord—*Samudraraja* whose daughter was Lakshmi—*samudra tanaya*), so that the mother-in-law could render all attention to the son-in-law. Sri Desika's total merger with the spirit of the Paduka devi's relationship towards Ranganatha is beautifully portrayed (in v. 444) elsewhere, when the *Purusha* goes to sleep the dutiful wife that Paduka devi is, she with her single minded devotion to Him (*eka viharasila*) suspends her sweet notes and lapses into silence at his feet, in order not to disturb the Lord. He is, in a later context in *Sesha Paddhati* (v. 736) seen portraying Paduka devi, with exemplary dignity of concept, as a *kulavadhū* who is always resting at night at the feet of her Lord and sheltering her tender children who are resorting to her, as a comparison to Paduka devi having still the *Seshatva* and being resorted to by the *āgamas* (like

Pāñchārātra). The sweet tinkling notes of *Pādukā* about which the poet waxes eloquent earlier when the Lord was represented as the *Bhogi*, has merged into the *yoga nidra* of the Lord himself and lost her identity. In order to accentuate this palpable silence assumed, the poet describes in several consecutive verses of the *Nāda Paddhati* what the Lord thinks of the sweet notes of the *Paduka* devi (vv. 445-456). He variegates the mental wish of Lord as keen on hearing the tinkling notes without their merger into the music and the Vedic chants by mentally shutting out the latter (*lilāgateshu vinivārayati svatantratah*) and as a sequel makes the wise devotees understand the Vedic hymns against the touch stone of the *Pādukā* notes, making a delightful pun on the word *naigamika* and *suvarna* -; then he reflects on his own deficient compositions which make *Paduka* devi sound her notes by way of reproof, or for truly multiplying the poet's verses thousand-fold, to vindicate him, although even *Narada* the notes of whose *Vipanchi* Vina is infinitely superior to his compositions, has himself to suspend it for listening to the *Pādukā-nāda*, and imagines, again, that the ringing notes of the *Pādukā* have their *prativachana* in the ladies of the city who hasten to salute the *Nātha-pādukā* to the accompaniment of their jingling bangles. He then compares the tune of *Pādukā* who introduces the Lord to the *Sāmagas* and in the *yagña sālās* when they chant both with and without the details of the *devatāgana-varṇana* and in that process precedes the *Vedas* (*anugata nīgamam*) and shows how the same precedence happens during the procession of the Lord also when Vedic chants follow the Lord; and proceeds to consider the precedence of *Pādukā nāda* as the *praṇava sankha nāda* which is certainly prior to the *Vedas* which is its *anuvāda* and perorates with the dictum that although *Veda* is an *anuvāda* *Dīvyā-Prabandha* of *Vakuladhara-tamu* (*Nammalvar*) is not so, as it is essentially a *pādukā-nāda*, since *Satagopa* is *Pādukā*. Thus, in a chain of verses like the waves of the sea on the full moon, he exalts the *Pādukā*, *Satagopa*, the *Vedas* and the *nityasūris* as on the same footing, thus displaying his great capacity for inter-relating ideas in a persuasive sequence and composing them with words and idioms carrying *double entendre*.

Resuming our treatment of the poet as a romanticist, we see how even in simple circumstances, he manages to introduce imaginative explanations which are at once possessed of an artless sensuality as well as conventionality. The *Paduka* devi who supports the Lord's feet with its marks of *mahāpurusha lakṣaṇas* like the lines of *vajra*, *ankusa*, *dvaṛja*, *padma*, *chakra* and others is looked upon as intent on a private pleasure of a close embrace untrammelled by ornaments (*aslishya nīrbhara-ruchim maṇi pāduke tvām asidanābharana sundaram anghripadman* (v. 499). Again (v. 693) the intellect of *yogis* is clamped in contemplation in the stillness of the night on the feet of the Lord. Our poet envisaging the *matī* of sages as a *nāyikā* covered all over by the blue sapphire cloak of the gems of *Nātha-pādukā* is reaching in the stillness and darkness of the night with the *Purusha* of her choice as the *abhisarikā* does. Again, he raises *Pādukā* to a special pedestal of favouritism

among the consorts of the Lord by showing that while Krishna has only been managing to take an individual form for each of the sixteen thousand wives of his in Dwaraka for *kriḍā yoga*, in the case of Paduka devi multiplied through the facts of her brilliant gem-set *Pādukā*, Vishnu's myriad reflections, is always enjoying or having privacy with the Paduka devi. He adopts a classical stance about the scene from the Kaveri banks where, when the Lord is arriving for his bath, the golden veil of effulgence spread by the *kanakasari* or river of the golden sand namely Kaveri or Ponni, together with the golden lustre of the *Pādukā*, shines on this Chola consorts in *dishabille* engaged in *jalakriḍa* and makes their besom of a mellow turmeric hue. The verse deserves to be quoted for its *vyanghya* aspects.

*Viharati pulineshu tvatsakhe Ranganathe
Kanakasaridiyam tē pāduke hemadhāma |
Vahati salila kelisrasta cholavarodha
stanakalasa haridra pani pīngamavastham ||*

v. 742.

The same classical convention makes him look upon some of the bruise marks on the *Pādukā* (caused by the scratching of the *makara* clasp of the crowns of the divinities who have laid their heads on the feet of the Lord Ranganatha) as the external marks caused on the body of the *nāyikā* during *bhoga* (*Sauripāda paribhoga lakṣaṇam*). The classical poets were fond of representing the *nakha kṣata maṇḍala* on the *nāyika* during the company with her *nāyaka*. He follows the same idea in another occasion in *Prakīrṇa paddhati* when a visual picture of a *nāyikā* in *bhoga* with her Lord, having drops of sweat accumulated on the horripulating hair ends and with the rasping sounds of the gems on the *Pādukā* to the excited hisses emitted during the *bhoga*. *Padena ranganripate paribhujyamāna muktāphala pratīta srama vāri binduḥ Utkan taka maṇimayukhasatai rudagrāhiḥ sitkariṇīva charanavani sinchitaistvam* v. 837. They recall the utterances of Kalidasa in *Kumarasambhava* and *Raghuvamśa* as between Parvati and Śiva and Aja and Indumati. Even a rousing of romantic feeling in the minds of the consorts of *Śauri* (namely Sri, Bhū, Nīlā and others) at the sound and light emerging from the *Nātha pādukā* is imaginatively compared to the spark and rasping sound emanating from the arrow (of Cupid here) when it is sharpened against a whetstone (v. 865). He eventually idealises the Paduka devi as the ultimate model (*mātrikā*) for women to be created by Brahma (v. 898) by possessing all the virtues of celestial women by being of charming looks, gracious gait, of coral lips, of narrow waist, of pearly laughter and of perennial youth.

We may now proceed to another aspect of the work, namely the encyclopaedic character of Sri Desika's intellectual assimilation. It may be stated that the precious nuggets of information particularly on the Vedic lore and the ritual and other iconic practices prevalent in his times, are so prodigious that there is no effort on his part to fit them deliberately into the verses. The details themselves fit into

his line of thought and the particular section of the work and become more meaningful by the currency afforded thereby.

Virtually upto the *Paraga paddhati*, he had been dilating upon the *Vibhava*, *vyūha* and *archāvatāra* concepts but from the *Nāda paddhati* onwards, gives an inspired exposition of the *Para*, *antaryami* and *Vaidika* concepts of Vaishnavism. In the very opening verse of this *Paddhati*, he gives out how the Vedas are contending with one another to praise and worship the Lord Sri Ranganatha. Then he refers (in v. 401) about how Paduka devi involved him in the assembly of wise men in to the composition of the greatness of the feet of the Lord and the *Pādukā*. He refers to the *Praṇava abhyāsa* (v. 433) which is done in three *mātras*, namely in single *mātra* for *Rikmantras* for this-worldly gains, in two *mātras* for *Yajur* hymns for *svargaloka* and in three *mātras* for *Sāma* verses for *Vaikuntha* or *nityasūri* hood and hence *Pāduka's nāda* is the support to right knowledge, it is the preface to the *Vedānta* and it is as sweet as the liquid sealed inside the ripe grape fruit; how the *mumukshu's* path as stated in the *upanishads* towards *Brahmaloka*, after the vital airs had left his body through the *Sushumna nāḍi*, is guided by the rays of the Sun which are but the sheen of *Pāduka's* gems (v. 483); how the disc of brilliance caused by the *Pādukā*, with the lotus feet within it is recalling the *chakra-abja-maṇḍala diksha* of the *Pancharātra āgama* performed by those devotees who cannot do *bhaktiyoga* (v. 500); how *Pādukā* as the *mūla prakriti* which has three colours according to *upanishads* '*Ajamekam lohita sukla krishnam*', similar to which *pādukā* has its three varieties of gems (v. 538); how the pair of *pādukās* verily representing the *mantra* but its diverse *varnas*, by its *chchhandomaya* (freedom of movement) by its *Sāma veda* relationship, by its being worshipped by *rishis* and by its bringing out the identity of the Lord, (v. 543); how by its ruddiness and bluish brilliance at the same time, it is like *Surya* and *Yamuna* his daughter (v. 559); how again with its ruddy glow of the *Padmarāga* gems (v. 583); and the flame created by it look as if the Lord Ranganatha is reclining in *Agni* (as stated in the *Pāñchārātra* that *Vishnu* lies in fire while producing *Rudra*), and (*Tasya madhye vahnī sikhā ; tasyah sikhaya madhya paramātma vyavasthitah—Taittiriya*); how *Paduka devi* is by her dark complexion created by the blue stone is like the night of the *Krishna paksha* of *Dakshinayana* which according to *Brahma sutra* is not a bar to *moksha* when the *ātma* goes by the pathway of smoke (v. 702); how she synthesises within herself the *navagrahas* located in the *Vishmupāda* (namely sky)—by the golden hue of hers she is *Angaraka*; by being sung by *kāvya*s like *Ramayana*, she is *kavya* or *sukra*; by her gentle gait she is *sanaischara*; by being praised by *gurus* (*ācharyas*) and *budhas* (learned men) she is *Guru* or *Brihaspati* and *Budha*, by her great effulgence she is *Surya*, by her being worshipped by the *brahmanas*, she is *Chandra* (who is *dvijādhipa*); hence by worshipping her, one can get the effect of worshipping the entire *grahamaṇḍali* (v. 749); how the pair of *Pādukā* are like the *para* and *apara vidyās* represented by

Bramagñana and *Bhahtiyoga* (as explained in *Vishnupurana* and *Mundakopanishad* v. 768 ; how together the two *pādukās* would represent also the *Lila vibhuti loka* which is *Vaikuntha* as explained in *Purushasokta* “*Pādūsyā visvā bhutāni, tripādasyāmrtam divi*, (v.771); how it is her shape and form that is borne by the *Sri Vaishnavas* who abide by *Vaikhānasa* and *Pāncharātra* codes in the form of *haripādākāra urdhva puṇḍra* (v. 785); how the *Sudarsana chakra* which has the *shat-koṇa rekha, padma maṇḍala* around and tongues of fire on the periphery, produces the *pādukā* forms within as mentioned by the experts in this *yantra* (v. 787); and many such cameos of religious activities around him are dexterously dovetailed with the theme on hand.

The most pervasive nuance of the entire work—notwithstanding its *klaido-*scopic dispersal of verbal, ritual, aesthetic and ear-filling sweetness of the cascading sequence of the verses—is its dedicatory appeal. There is a strong reason to think that *Swami Desika*, as he undertook the challenging assignment—perhaps the very ultimate and valedictory contribution in his long, exemplary and uncompromising service at the feet of *Lakshmiramana*—would have been overpowered by the palpably eventful stroke of destiny that had moved him to embark on this final stint of servitude to the lotus feet of Lord of *Sri Rangam*. The determination, purposive patterning of the *paddhatis*, the stunning display of prosodic mastery in the *chitra paddhatis*, which are all writ large on the imperious flow of the theme, section after section, all show clearly that he was in the mellow evening of his life when his integrity as a polymath had been sought to be eroded by the contentemporary coterie and a now-or-never spirit had entered the argument. The draconian character, according to tradition, of the challenge leaves this in no doubt. It should have strongly affected the heart strings of *Sri Desika* and should have roused him to sublime heights, as yet unscaled by him. In as many a dozen verses, his rich and ripe intellect is expectantly visualising the day when his mortal coils would have to be left behind and his soul would be soaring to *Brahmaloka* and there on to *Vaikuntha*, to take its rightful place amidst the galaxy of *nityastūris* who stud that august assembly. His heart verily yearns for that twilight moment and wistfully picturises the sequel. He feels even a tinge of tiresomeness, not of *ennui* but of an effort well-consummated, when he fires the first volley of such a thought in v. 406, when hearing talks about his expectation, of the *dulcet* notes of *Paduka devi*, as a prospect to the divine benediction when his tired mortal frame would on the threshold of shuffling it off. He draws a picture of the note of confidence and faith with which highminded devotees of the Lord reside in *Sri Rangam* to be near at hand for Lord's grace when the time for quitting this birth came. As he moves into the last century of his composition, this feeling accelerates and in v. 901, he submt is prayer categorically *kala tasmin karena vigamaklesa jatam vihanyah. Sāntapam nastarunatulasi gandhino gandkavākaḥ*, and expresses his *sāntapa*. He dwells on this urge further in v.909

and expands his wish into a firm proposal that wherever he might be when the final ringing down of the curtain arrives, the lotus eyed Lord should grant him the interview, in full panoply accompanied by Sri and Paduka devi and wafting the celestial fragrance of the tender *Tulasi* leaf garland as an advance insurance of this grace (*ajighran-nigamanta gandha tulasi damotthitam saurabham. Kale kutra chidagaatam karunaseryahdham twayachagrathi*). He persists in the abjectness of his position in v. 915-916 and again implores God to vouchsafe him His presence in his *paschimavastha* (death). His mind is chasing the same thought practically in the entire *Nirveda paddhati*, the very positioning and title of which section is self-explanatory. He assures that his hands are intended only for the *saparya* of *Nātha Pādukā* and will shun the company of the pleasure-loving rich where he might have to compromise himself, so that he might not have to hear the racuous clamour of the servants of Yama but should deserve to be called to paradise for further service to Lord (v. 969).

In the last (32nd) *paddhati* which he calls *Phala paddhati* most meaningfully for himself, he has overcome the lurking thought of not rising to the level of worthiness of Lord's grace and confidently strides forth, being aware of the fact that as a famous servant of *Pādukā* he will have his place assured in divine assembly (v.972). He had also put behind any thought of the destiny after death. Even the *Karma* of this birth, in its 13 aspects (of *kāyika* 5: *vāchika*-34 and *mānasa* 5) would be infinitely greater than birthlessness. He could be permanently wedded to the feet of the Lord by placing the *pādukās* on his head and hopes to be blessed with the company of the *Bharata parishad* (vv. 990-91). In fact he desires to merge even in the subtle soul with the *Pādukā*, and wants to be resident at Sri Ranganam until this grand consummation is achieved (*Sahyasindhoḥ pulinamadhi vasesyam punyama-brāhmalābhat*) because service to *bhagavatas* in his view is even superior to service to Bhagavan.

As Sri Desika reaches with such a confident note the 1000th verse, Sarasvat danced with joy at Srirangam—meaning that one of the greatest literary garlands of a thousand *nigama parimala* flowers was gloriously composed—*Mamāpyevam janaya madhujit pādayorantarangam. Rangam yāsau janayasi guṇair bhārati nrīttārangam*—and Desika avers that by this poem, the one and only great gain was for himself that he has fulfilled his birth in this life.

Such a sublimation of his thought word and deed towards the unequalled glory of service to *Pādukā devi* has definitely an undertone that *Padukāsahasra* was his last composition and was a dedication, a resolute refusal of submission to the tyranny of mind and matter and a dissolution of the self in a ceaseless colloquy with God, through perpetual service at his feet. Hence, the note of valedictory dedication of himself was the dominant feature of *Padukāsahasra* and, doubtless, was the reason that impelled *Nigamānta* Desika to select Ranganatha's *pādukā* the

object of this 'tyagayagñā' and that is why one should consider *Pādukā-sahasra* as the crown jewel of *Vishnu Dharma*.

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4. *Pratyayanam Paripanam bhavati bhavitri* |
5. *Chandra-chūḍa makūṭena lālita chāru mauktika mayūkha-pāṇḍarā Ranganātha padapadmason-ginī lakṣhyase surudhunīva pādukā* |

DRAMIDOPANISHADSARA OF VENKATANATHA

Vedanta Desika was a rare scholar among the saintly leaders of southern Vaishnavism. His works as much reflect rhetorical and prosodic vogues of his time as the philosophic and ritual propensities. He revelled in approaching religious poetry from unusual angles. In one such rare exercise, he chose to dwell on the religious contribution of the one and only Satakopa, more endearingly known as Nammalvar (our own Saviour)—called *Tiruvāymoli* by the Tamil Vaishnavites. He selected Sanskrit as the vehicle of expression for this purpose, apparently with certain valid reasons which we might only guess from the ardour of the exposition and pattern of his composition. In the religious world of his times in India, excluding the Vaishnavites, the rest, by and large, absorbed ideas and concepts with greater facility in Sanskrit than in the vernacular. That language had already established itself as the court language right across the country, and with a rich legacy. He wanted the non-Tamil knowing scholarly multitude to realise what they were indeed missing in the Tamil *Tiruvāymoli* of 'Maran Satakopan'. He expected to convey to the brother-savants of Tamil Śaivism what a mine of Upanishadic lore, in the sweetest Tamil ever drafted by a devotee that *Tiruvaymoli* possessed, meriting the name of *Dramidopanishad*. He was impelled by the feeling that compact and direct treatment of this lore had not so far been made by anyone for the edification of the religious, and perhaps he was convinced, as he declared in the very second and third verses, that there was a clear appropriateness in his having accomplished this task of collecting the gems of divine attributes from Satakopa-Upanishadic ocean (in the manner of churning of ocean to get *ambrosia*), alike by divine ordinance as by the fact that Satakopa himself wanted *desikas* (leaders of religion) to be the messenger between him and God—in the *Bhakti-Sringara* equation. And finally Tamil as a language was capable of being used by all—and

hence Satakopa chose it—and what he conveyed in his *magnum opus* was fit to be rendered into Sanskrit for the the simple purpose at least of yielding the primary place only to Tamil.

Starting his opening gambit thus, in the initial verses of the first decad, he goes on to dissect and analyse the inevitably symbolic import of the numerology of the Tamil original, in becoming the aggregate of the essential structural part of the four Vedas—of which it was the very cream in terms of the total verses, namely, 1122—divisible into 21, 1000, 100, and 1 (eight parts) constituents, respectively standing for the number of *Rik*, *Sama* and *Yajus* and *Atharva sākhas* or branches. This is a kind of pattern that Desika perceives by his sheer intellectual precocity, though he calls Nammalvar a *yogi*, in the process. He proceeds, then, to state Satakopa's doctrine in the briefest manner (which even Ramanuja, Desika's illustrious predecessor-*āchārya* himself had not done, of his own doctrine) namely, that the Lord Srinivasa of Trumalai hills is the means and end of all attainment. He explains the ten elements of this status of *Śrīpati* (Vishnu) namely : (1) fitness to be served, (2) fitness to be enjoyed, (3) beauty of form, (4) extremely pleasant experience, (5) end as well as cause role, (6) accessibility, (7) pain-killer, (8) hope-fulfiller, (9) unqualified friendship to all, and (10) self-appointed guide for release. Desika crowns this summation of anticipatory Visishtadvaita by the statement that God's qualities are numberless, but Satakopa, without the defect of reiteration, had packed Vishnu's innumerable qualities into his mere decads and centuries of *Tiruvāymoli*, and thus achieved unblemished success.

He concludes this prologue with the claim that he (Desika) had composed this garland of the noble qualities of God enumerated by Satakopa, voluntarily, in much the same manner Krishna became, of himself, the charioteer of Arjuna, to expound the *Gita*, whose central idea was fearlessness in God's service. There is a diffusion of almost a vigorous self-expression in these sentiments of Desika which make us feel that he might have penned this composition, as a shattering reply to the petulant and parochial scoffers around him in his community who found his such ardent espousal of Satakopa's Tamil hymnals hard to bear.

He starts the main theme, in its first decad, with a royal sweep of words, affirming the universally operative power of Lord, by two concepts: (a) of His being the in-dweller of Śiva and Brahma, and (b) of His being the *cause* of the views alike of devotee as of the sceptic; and that Satakopa, envisioning such a Lord in his *Yogic* ken, surrendered his inner being to him, in his *Tiruvāymoli*. These two sentiments, along with other such reiterations by Satakopa in his further decads, bring a parallel between him and Desika who *also* had kept a refreshing freshness of view and lack of bias towards Śaivism—two features which distinguished other sectarians of his times from him, and led to his finding discerning admirers in Śaiva and Advaita camp like Appayya Dikshita. In giving a summation of each decad in a single verse and adding a summary of each hundred by a verse, and

writing a separate compression of his whole work by another *mini-Tiruvāymoli* essence, called *Dramidopanishadsara*, Desika amply illustrates his concentration on the detail, and tenacious adherence to the fundamental tenets of Sri Vaishnavite *credo* (Nammalvar-brand); and the extrovert that he was, freely gifted it also to posterity unstintedly through his prodigious works.

A duty was cast upon this author without considering his worthiness to it, for writing a special foreword to an unusual rendering of this unusual work—an English rendering, essentially in blank verse, of this brilliant Sanskrit poetry, itself the most pithy condensation known of the most sacred lore of the Tamils—the *Tiruvāymoli* of Satakopa of Kurugur. Conveying into Sanskrit, in an analytical-*cum* synthetic patternisation typical of *his* times, what Satakopa poured out in mellifluous Tamil several centuries earlier, would have been a task fit only for a prodigy and a *muni* like Desika. To render it again into a mundane and materialistic language such as English would have required alike sturdy courage, inspiration and an indifference to the vehicle of expression in the service of God. It is a moot question if Indian spiritual thoughts, when rendered in English, could convey truly the ineffable religious fervour of the Indian tongue or breathe that natural fragrance of its God-lore. But, in the words of Desika himself, *Pasyan Yogi param tat padakamalanata vanvagat ātmachittam*, the English version under reference is, as it were, a dedication of the surcharged mind, to the *Bhogyabhava* of the Lord that might not brook language differences.

Notwithstanding this, in the world that we live in (for the same reason that impelled Desika to garnish the Tamil *Tiruvāymoli* nectar with a Sanskrit versification), it would be considered as an appropriate service to carry the message of this doubly-blessed Tamil *upanishad* into the world of English-speaking scholars and votaries—not to mention such unfortunate men in India—who are not a few—for whom a message to be truly intelligible should be rendered in English first, rather than in their own mother-tongue. Thus, we are bound to admire and respect the *elan* that was at the root of this vigorous English versification of Desika's *kāvya*. The Tamil original is such an *extempore* recitation that it does require a guide of the calibre of Desika to expound its natural graces in Sanskrit. And Desika's Sanskrit works are of such compactness and display such an acumen that they are apt to become favoured themes for translation into English which has vocabularial richness. The publication¹, thus, is liable to receive the plaudits, as having been the *first* English version of the *Tiruvāymoli* lore; and it is futuristic thought that it might fill a need as well.

The limitations of the scope of the English versification would not admit of any unscheduled departures from the original and one is bound to state that it is indeed fair to the original, and fair to the illustrious Sanskrit rendering of it, and that the English version clings sweetly close to the traditional phraseology, and also redeems the work from being loaded with jargon and *tattvārthas*. Its direct-

ness in some places is striking, and sounds almost like an original (and was, no doubt, penned in an inspired moment) caught by the magnificent simplicity of the original epigrams (cf. *śloka* 88 of Century VII—Decad 8). The author takes the privilege of referring to this verse, because even in the original it was a purple patch.

It is interesting that Desika refers in the *Dramidopanishadsara* and his *Tātparyā Ratnāvali* to it, to the *Truvāymoli* variously as *Dramidopanishad* as *Samhita*, and especially as *Dramida Nigama*. It only shows in what indubitably profound respect the contemporary Vaishnava elite should have held Satakopa's works, and how the work contained the fertile seeds of spiritual fellowship—among all Hindus alike—whether Vaishnava or Śaiva. There are certain aspects of the work of Desika that require some explanation, owing to their not reflecting the religious vogue of his times. This is indeed natural and appropriate, as he was only presenting the thoughts of Satakopa's *Tiruvāymoli*, without ornamenting it in anyway and thereby violating the historiographic value of the concepts. One should realise that there was a gap of as much as five long centuries between the times of Satakopa and Desika. Much water had flown down Tamraparni and Kaveri since then, and it would have ill-suited Desika's genius and objectivity to have edited Satakopa's concepts and narrative. The times of Desika had seen the consolidation, in their fullness, of the ritual and canonical formulations of Vaishnavism, whereas the age of Satakopa was on the threshold of an era when Vedic ideas yet prevailed and rituals, in temples particularly, had not become compulsory, complex or formal. Thus, while rendering Satakopa's several references to the easy accessibility and mode of worship of Vishnu, as in Century I, Decad 6, he presents the idea without any reaction. In fact, he strives to emphasise the points with an easy familiarity. अक्रीतं रच्यं भावात् अनियत-विविधाभ्यर्चनात् अलतुष्टेः ।

This is not only the most faithful rendering of the ritual situation, as it existed in Satakopa's age, but also the display of the most characteristic talent of Desika to compare and contrast his age and the earlier, by the very choice of the negatives अक्रीतः and अनियतः । The latter day temple worship or divine worship, even at a personal level, involved materials which have to be क्रीत and the rituals have to be नियत and अविविधः । It thus redounds to the credit of Desika to have assessed the realistic situation without any recourse to subtlety of expression, as was the hall-mark of his age, generally. At the same time, by his equally penetrative analytical talent, he is able to highlight the other evolving facets of spiritual, philosophical and credal manifestation of the Vaishnava faith in the age of Satakopa, as pointed by that savant himself in the *Tiruvāymoli*. We have the example of *śloka* 29—summerising Century II, Decad 7, where the *Kesavādi* names with the inherent features of each is mentioned. The 12 and 24 and 36 names of Vishnu have been adumbrated with certain iconographic and ritual speciality by the 9th century A.D. Thus, the type of mention that Satakopa makes

of Kesava, Madhava, etc., is of the *Smṛiti* tradition of the 12 forms of Vishnu, and not the *Āgamic* traditions, as was following the *Agnipurana*, etc., of the 12, 24 and 36 forms. We find that this latter situation is reached by the time of Kulasekhara, another Vaishnava *Ālvār* who, in his *Mukundamala*, starts a significant and summarised series of traditional Vishnu names starting from Kesava and ending with Adhokshaja, which is reflecting the *Agnipurana* series (*Jihve kirtaya kesvam... nāmadhokshajam*).

Again, when in the third Decad of the 6th Century, Satakopa is talking of unity in diversity of God, his being the container, his universality and his omnipresence, Desika renders justice to these straggling thoughts of the *Ālvār* in verse after verse, by a tidy single verse, as only he could, and highlights the real import of each of the verses of the Decad without committing the error of literal translation. One example of this in this Decad would suffice. The 7th verse talks of God being of pure, effulgent body (*Parañjuḍaruḍambai*) and of body steeped in impurity (*Alukkupaḍittauḍambai*). Desika's compression of these key Tamil words in this verse is by the terms दिव्यादिव्याङ्गनत्वात् । The term *adivyaṅga* or *Alukkupaḍitta uḍambai* is most striking, as it is to God's immanence both in the mundane world as much as in the celestial world that it clearly implies, following strictly the original Tamil word suggesting the world full of *karma-mala*. In a similar sweep of expression in the 9th Decad of the same Century, he integrates the five-fold form of Vishnu manifestations as patternised by the Puranas, namely, the *Para Vyūha*, *Vibhava āraha* and *antaryāmi*, by the terms,

परत्वाद्यभिमत-द्वैतया पञ्चधावास्यितत्वात्

Satakopa's corresponding verse the 5th of this Decad mentions Vishnu's abode at heaven, on the hill, at the sea, on the earth, and indwelling in all the above, and this certainly does not express directly the *Para-Vyūha* terminology. It is only Desika that could comprehend this in the verse, especially the significance of the hill as the *vyūha* concept of Tirupati, the sea (for the *vibhava avatāras*, starting with *Matsya* form) particularly. The *archa* concept had certainly not been fully expanded in *Āgamic* pattern by the time of Nammalvar, but the concept of icon worship in various forms had already become very extensive. The English translation, here, be it noted, carefully maintains the strict order of the five-fold manifestations referred to here, putting *archa* penultimate, unlike the existing Tamil translation of *Dramidopanishad Tātparya Ratnavali*, which sticks to the traditional order putting *archa* last.

The work, which is now being published, will surely, may it be expected, expand the sphere of Satakopa school of Vishnavism—which is pristine and undiluted and had already been scintillating, all the more thanks to the craftsmanship of Swami Desika bestowed on it. It has the chance of becoming in the hands of a worthy modern Hindu devotee, a handy primer of the early Vaishnavism of Tamil Nadu, which was the fountainhead at which such saints as Yatiraja

(Ramanuja) and Vedantacharya (Venkatanatha) drank deep, and were thus freed from the defect of being mere sectarian intellectuals, and were indeed to become *Yugapurushas*, who could strike a chord of spiritual and poetic integrity in any *Bhakta's* heart, and mingle him in the lofty company of mystics and seers, of Hinduism.

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SACHCHHARITRA RAKSHA OF SRI VEDANTA DESIKA —A STUDY

The great and inspiring aspect of Sri Desika's erudition and power of exposition is that while pressing into service an extensive range of religious, literary and canonical authorities and quoting them appropriately, he does not read into these statements any shade of significance that they did not envisage, or could not imply on semantic grounds. He is, in effect, a purist in logical thinking and does not accept anything but facts (of traditional as well as other usage) and he uses these tellingly in establishing his line of reasoning. He is, a gracious academician and a blessed evangelist rolled into one. As the name of this work—*Sachchharitra Raksha*—itself indicates, it is to be the guide-line to a life of integrity and religious rectitude and the three dissertations therein shed much welcome light on the then religio-cultural outlook on these noble objectives.

The first *adhikāra* is on *Sudarsāna-pāncha-janyadhāraṇa vidhi* (the procedure for wearing the *Chakra* and *Sankha* symbols on one's person). The opening gambit of Sri Desika is to present the *pūrvapaksha* and then to resolve it. He raises the issue of the very act of branding of these symbols. These are certainly not mentioned in the *śrūti*s or *smṛiti*s, but *āmnāya* or traditional usage or code has established its efficacy, and not being against the *smṛiti*, is considered as good as a *pramāṇa*. As a *karmāṅga* it has been enjoined as beneficial thing and considering the fitness-test of a *samskāra* on the basis of the *pramāṇa* it has been accepted. Marshalling a diverse range of authorities like, *Atharva mahopanishad*, *Yajus (Kata) Sākhya Rīg*, *Bashkala Samhita*, *Sudarsanopanishad* and *Rigveda khila*, he establishes the consensus of the acknowledged merit of the mark of the *sankha* on the left arm and *chakra* on the right arm, at shoulder level. Entering into the disquisition of the Agni-base of *Sudarsana*, he mentions how Agni is a purifier, how it is thousand-spoked and is thus a synonym of *chakra*, and he who is marked with *chakra* on his

body reaches the state and world of God. In all the three Vedas, there is reference to *Ātapa tanurana tadamo asnute srutasa idva hantas tatsamassate* about the efficacy of being a *tapta-tanu* or branded body with ceremonial and auspicious symbols. Whenever *sruti*, *smṛiti* and *āmnāyā* exit, they should operate without mutual contradiction, on the same analogy, for example, that while the indivisibility and premeability of God is adumbrated, this has not prevented the different *sākhās* from developing their disciplines. Desika buttresses this argument by the statement of Sandilya that, not having got concentration in the Vedas or its *angas*, he applied his mind to the *Pāncharātra Sāstra*. This is not certainly to be taken as derogatory to the Vedas. On the contrary, it should be taken as the further expansion of divine worship, as enjoined by the *Paramesvara Samhita* dealing with appropriate symbols for appropriate worship. Thus the *paratva* of Sudarsana is established by the *sanjñāna* approach and followed in rituals. *Kālottara Samhita* even says that on the *śikhara* of the *prāsāda* (temple), *chakra* should be established of 12, 8 or 6 spokes. Thus, on the same lines as the *Yajñopavīta mantras* promoted by the *kalpasūtra* writers, the *Veda khilās* also are to be taken as valid as the *srutis*. When it is said that a *brahmana* should be performed his *upanayana* in the 8th year and put to learning under a *guru* it is not meant to debar others like Kshatriyas and Vaisyas from learning after *upanayana*, since this is equally well admissible. But since the distinguished and vocational practitioner of learning was the *brahmana* by common consent, his not doing it by the age stipulated was fraught with deleterious consequences for the rest of the society, as he gave them a lead in certain matters.

Katha sākha says that *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* and wearing of the *sankha* (left side) and *chakra* (right side) marks are of the same category as *angas* of *dhyāna*. The consecrating character of the *chakra*—*sankha lānchana* is extolled and clinchingly borne out, by the *sruti* itself—*Tena pavitreṇa suddhena putaḥ* and *Nighaṇṭu* is quoted by Sri Desika as taking Sudarsana and *pavitra* and *charaṇa* as all synonymous (*Sudarsanamaram chakram pavitram charaṇam*). The famous *Kathaka* passage (*charaṇam pavitram vitatam purāṇam.....suddhitam dadāti*), is annotated, *in extenso*, by Sri Desika at this context to assert how Sudarsana and other *lānchanas* on the body of a devotee enable God to come and rest there, and how *chakra*, being equivalent to *Agni* and *jyoti*, confers immortality (*amṛitasya dhāra*). On the basis of the *nyāya* that *all* is not remembered and laid down by *all*, the fully authoritative usage of the *sankha-chakra* markings is further correlated by Desika briefly, to the *pramāṇas* of the *sāstras*—pertaining to ancillary *vidyās* like *ayurveda*, *dhanurveda*, *gandharva veda*, *arthasastra*, *ratna sastra*, *śilpa sastra*, etc., apart from *Itihasas* and *Puranas*. He quotes *Sandilya smṛiti* as suggesting that all household *upakaraṇas* (articles) as well as cattle, children, etc., should be marked by *sankha* and *chakra* symbols. The *pañcāyudha* (five-fold weapons of Vishnu—*Aim-paḍai* of Tamil hymnal), made of gold, should be worn around the neck of children and tied on the door lintels of delivery (*prasūti*) chambers. These divine

symbols should *not*, it is enjoined, be carved on the seats, or on the floor. They could be erected on a pillar, however, in the central court of a residence. Men and women should make and wear on their persons, ornaments of the shape of the five *āyudhas*. It is very significant to note here that in the early Sunga-Kushana-Satavahana art of India (c. 2nd century B.C.—1st century A.D.) we find actual examples, in sculptures, of these symbols being strung in a row and worn around the necks of ladies, etc., as auspicious mascots or talisman. They were also considered among the categories of *aṣṭamangalas* in which were included also double carp, elephant goad, water vessel, etc. This would give a rough dating for *Sāṅdilya smṛiti*. *Vasiṣṭha Saṃhita* makes a provision for wearing these mascots around the necks of children only upto the 16th day of their birth, but insists that branding of their body with the symbols when they grow old is called for. The *Itihāsa* evidence is best represented by *Vishnu dharma* (82 chapter—Yama—Kinkara samvada) and *Mahabharata* (Bhishmaparva—4th day). The former contains a passage which avers that 'there is no scope for Yama or his men being found within the sight of people who are branded with Vishnu's *lāṅchanas* on the body'. The latter specifies that Vāsudeva is to be worshipped by all the four castes, duly having the *lakṣhaṇas* or marks, on the basis of the *Sāttvata* manual. Sri Desika establishes here that the word *lakṣhaṇa* does not mean anything except the *lāṅchanas* to be worn on the body and do not refer to *yajñopavita*, etc., since *yajñopavita* is to be worn by men at all stages of life, and since lack of it reduces one's station, it has to be done. The additional injunction that *all* the four castes are to have the *lāṅchanas* is something preciously significant.

Paramesvara Saṃhita, *Pratistha* chapter—is then quoted and explained in detail for the mode and manner of *lāṅchana*-wearing ritual for all the classes, and on all the objects used for daily worship. An incidental piece of data it supplies is that where the *murti* (image) of Gods—other than Vishnu—does not have such *lāṅchanas*; they should not be imparted to them afresh, but left as such. *Vishnu tattva* (3rd *pada* 1st *paṭala*) strengthens the efficacy of wearing these *lāṅchanas* by saying that *chakrāḍi lakṣhaṇas* on the body make the devotee become Vishnu himself, and not simply his *bhaktas*, implying the godly spark in the *ātma* of all sentient beings. These *lakṣhaṇas* should be moulded in gold, silver or copper and the *chakra* should be eight-spoked with a good hub and well-rounded tyre, with four tongues of flame on the cardinal points of the tyre, and having treated them in fire, they should be impressed on the body, according to proper procedure and with devotion.

Harivamsa, 147th *adhyaya*—*Yatrāmbha*, further sustains the beneficial character of the *lāṅchanas* by stating that entry should be refused in 'my' (God's) places without the *lāṅchanas* being worn by devotees, since for the *rakṣa* of habitations also, they are recommended. Desika explains here the *lohitoshnisha nyāya* and states that this does not signify any ban on the entry of certain castes or sects, but only an inclusive reference to devotees in all castes and walks of life as having existed

and the devout in all these castes would be wearing these *lānchanas*; and others are forbidden. *Agnipurana* stipulates that the five *āyudhas* should be worn in the following manner; *gada* on the *lalāṭa* which is the reason why the *tilaka* or *dipa-sikha*—like *Śrī-chūrṇa* is worn in the centre—*Gada* is further *kaumodaki* and a female, like *Srī*; *chāpa* (bow) on the crest of the head; *nandaka* (sword) on the chest; and *chakra* and *sankha* on the shoulders; after consecrating them in fire with appropriate rituals. These are applicable to *bhaktas*, as well as *Siddhas* and *muktas*. Other puranic authority quoted is that of *Bhavisya Purana*, *Brahma Vaivarta*, *Varaha* (which gives *aśvamedha phala* for the *lānchanas*); *Vamana* which exhorts that even a sportive (*līlāyapi*) wearing of Sudarsana symbols on the arms would end the cycle of rebirth and take one to God; *Garuda* (which equates Visvakṣena and *chakra* and says that he enters the body of those who wear this symbols and makes the body pure-*pavitra*, and that in *Srāddhas*, those without such *lānchanas* should never be invited, as this defiles the *havis* offerings to the *pitrs*); *Aditya* and *Matsya puranas*.

Having surveyed these in an encyclopaedic sweep, Swami Desika condenses the approach to the universality of the practice, by the existence of countless textual *pramāṇas* insisting on its adherence, although it would be obvious that some practices might not be fully in vogue in all the regions to the same degree. It is the *vivechana* (discriminating or discerning scrutiny) and acceptance of the *antahkarana-pramāṇa* (inner conscience) in cases of doubt, as exhorted by Kalidasa (*satam hi sandeha padeshu vastushu pramāṇam antahkarana pravrittayah*) that is elegantly quoted by Sri Desika, for an indisputable validity of the Vishnu *lānchana dhāraṇa* on the body, and he finds the spirit of the act more valuable than the detail, as for instance, when he allows those who, seemingly because they are prone to be affected by heat, but still want to wear these marks with zeal, do it with white clay, on their body, or by wearing the stamped symbols made of *Tulasi* wood or copper or gold, etc. *Anuṣṭhāna* (performance) is a matter of variant usage but the *rationale* behind the *anuṣṭhāna* should be grasped and appreciated. Thus, winds up Desika, for *brahmanas* and others as well, it is essential to wear Sudarsana and other Vishnu symbols, and for those hankering after release of the body, all the more so.

Swami Desika deals in the *Urdhvapuṇḍra dharana* section with the custom of the forehead mark applied by *brahmanas* and others and particularly dwells on the Sri Vaishnava tradition and code in this respect. He divides the topic broadly into five sections variously of: (1) the need for the *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* mark, (2) the material of which it is made; (3) the colour and design, (4) the method of application, and (5) basic form and its iconographic import. He winds up with an epitomisation of the entire the chapter in one single verse.

The author almost exhaustively quotes all the authorities bearing upon general brahmanical and specific Vaishnava usage in the case, upto his times (13th

century A.D.).

He opens with the obligalory use of *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* for *dvijanmas* (Brahmans), in the way as the use of—*śikhā* (tuft of hair) and *upavīta* (sacred thread). He goes on to state how *dhyāna* (meditation), *homa* (fire offering) *japa* (chant), become fruitless without the wearing of the forehead mark by the person, and how this mark could be of sandal or incense for Kshatriyas, of *bel* (*bilva*) root for Vaisyas and of grass or vegetable ash by sudras (*Parameshṭya samhita*). For Vaishnavas, it should be of white earth and according to proper rules, with interstice, and on 12 parts of the body.

Brahmaṇḍa states that for accepted materials (in ritual) the benefit is also based on colour scheme and thus black is said to be productive of *sānti* (peace), blood red of attraction or control (*vaśya*), yellow of prosperity and wealth (*Śrī*) and white of liberation or unity with God Vishnu (*mukti*).

Bhāṭadhvaṇya Samhita states the earth for *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* should be free from blending or intermixture, should be dense white and bright and fragrant. It should not be yellow or coloured or black or red or ash coloured or hard or lacking in good smell.

Agni Vaisyagrihya informs that for Vaishnavas only *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* is prescribed and even out of sport, a learned brahmin should not wear *tripuṇḍra*.

Bodhayana also specifically refers to *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* for brahmins both positively and negatively, by using *na chānvatha* (not in any other manner). Sri Desika comments here that *anyatha*, etc., mean that *tripuṇḍra* wearing is as much to be censured as *ūrdhvapudḍra* non-wearing.

Brahmaṇḍa states that he who wears clear white *ūrdhvapuṇḍras* with interstices (between the strokes) and with heavy arms, he provides a haven or temple for 'Me' (God) and 'I' dwell in the centre of such an *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* wide and pleasing, with Lakshmi, and sport there permanently.

Marichī adds the point that for a Vaishnava, *ūrdhvapuṇḍra* without gap is bad. He who makes no gap in his *ūrdhvapuṇḍra*, he expels the resident Vishnu and Sri from there. Sri Desika dwells then on the question of use of *bhūti* (or ash) for forehead mark and states that he is aware of the various practices in this respect and how the Pasupata devotees of Śiva even hold that "one who drinks wine, co-habits with his *Guru's* wife, who steals, who kills a brahman, but who smears ash on his body, lies on ash and meditates on Rudra, becomes absolved of all his sins".

Sri Desika discusses how ash, like bone and similar other objects is such as calls for immediate purificatory bath along with the cloth worn as well, as adumbrated in the *sāstras*. However, ash collected during sacrifices from the *homa-agni* is taken sometimes as quite pure and worthy of being applied on the forehead. But Desika says that this is not an injunction or a *Kriyāṅga* and does not take away the basal impure character of ordinary ash and this is to be eliminated for forehead marks by Vaishnavas.

Vridha Jabali states that wearing of *Triyak puṇḍra* or strokes in different directions (and not upwards as in *ūrdhva-puṇḍra*) by a Brahman makes him equal to an untouchable. *Satatapa*, *Matsya* and *Nāradiya* uphold such taboo conversely, as *Nāradiya* states in the same way as a person is terror stricken on seeing a cobra the assistants of Yama shake with fear when they see a person used to *Urdhva-puṇḍra* mark. As regards the method of application, excepting for the long middle finger, all other fingers could be used applying it to the forehead. Here again, benefits vary according to the different fingers used. The normal usage is that of the ring finger.

The form the *ūrdhva-puṇḍra* is then discussed—*Varaha* makes it *pādakṛiti* like the feet. *Skānda* makes it *daṇḍakṛiti* or like a staff; *Brahmaṇḍa* wants it to be *sāntarāla* with gap; *Sāttvata* wants it to be *dīpaśikhākṛiti* like the flame of a lamp-wick. *Brahmarātra* wants it to be with gap in the middle, like *Brahmaṇḍa*; *Pāramesvara* states that they could be of 12, 1 or 4 in number. The details of the *ūrdhva-puṇḍra* are given in other texts also, with the tip up and with the middle clear or well shaded, and with the edges thickened with the disposition like that of the feet of Hari, and with gap inbetween. *Isvara Samhita* adds that it should be beautiful and of *dīpa śikha* shape or the shape of lotus bud or lily. *Matsya* text states that it could be of the shape of *Kurma* or tortoise, or that of the conch or that of the leaf of bamboo. It states that the tortoise shape is established as the best. This tortoise shape apparently explains the *ūrdhva-puṇḍras* of the *Tengalai* Vaishnavites. Other texts like *Nāradiya* prescribe for Kshatriyas the crescent shape, for Vaisyas the circular shape, for Sudras the *Tripuṇḍra* shape. It could be for *Brahmanas* the dagger shape, or discus *chakra* shape, or the staff shape. It is stated that since on all the *archāvatara*s of Vishnu, mostly the *dīpaśikha* type is seen, this should be the best. Desika comments that what the Lord did should not be taken as the standard for practice by men. Therefore the *Haripāda-Samasthāna* or shape of Hari's feet, as prescribed in the Vedas is the best to be adopted by Vishnu *bhaktas*. Then texts like *Brahmarātra* giving the iconographical details of the 12 *ūrdhva-puṇḍras* in different parts of the body are mentioned. In forehead it is Kesava, in the naval Narayana, in the heart Madhava, in the neck Govinda, in the right stomach Vishnu, in the right upper arm Madhusudhana, on the right neck Trivikrama, on the left stomach Vamana, on the left arm Sridhara, on the left neck Hrishikesa, on the back hip Padmanabha and on the back of the head Damodara. The iconic forms are those of God, with 4 *chakras*, 4 conches, 4 *gadas*, 4 *dhanus*, 4 *halas*, 4 *musalas*, 4 *khaḍgas*, 4 *vajras*, 5 *āyudhas* and *Pasahastas* respectively.

Finally, the whole situation is summarised in one verse stating that by brahmanas (Vishnavas as well as others), *tripuṇḍra* and the like are to be rejected and only *ūrdhva-puṇḍra* is prescribed, as an *anga* of *Karmas* and always earth is the best material over all others, and this earth should belong to a Vishnu-kshetra and should be white and of agreeable fragrance and should be applied on the body, by the

ring finger and of a shape with gap, either of the tortoise form or that of the feet of Vishnu and the important feature should be it is large.

The third and very important section of *Sachchharīra Raksha* deals with the rules governing the disposal of offering made to god. The thesis is divided into three main stages; firstly, the qualifying or the mandatory provision regarding the consumability or otherwise of offerings made ritually. This is summarised giving the *Purvapaksha* in this. Earlier scholars like Yamunacharya (in his *Āgamapramāṇya*) and Varadaraja Pandita (in his *Sanmārga-Dīpikā*) have dealt with the topic, which is acknowledged by Swami Desika at the very outset.

The general law seems to be that offering to God, being in the nature of consumable offerings are pollute and thus should not be partaken by devotees, and is forbidden on the authority of *Manu* and others. The popular concept as explained by Desika, is that since the *Uchchisṭha* (or partaken *naivedya*) or left over is liable to be considered as that of the father or *Guru* or husband or master, and since there is a consent for the partaking of the *uchchhisṭha* by the son, *sisṭha*, wife or servant respectively, and since God is proclaimed in many *sāstras* as the father, *guru*, husband and master of the mortals his *naivedya* is not *uchchhisṭha* and can be partaken. Desika rejects this facile and unscientific claim as inadmissible because, even ritual injunction forbid the partaking to Brahma and Rudra, whereas only in the case of Vishnu or Narayana, the offerings could be considered as benedictions and consumed by devotees. Otherwise, since Brahma was created by Vishnu and on that score became the eldest brother of all since the eldest brother is considered as equal to father in status, his *uchchhisṭha* would also become acceptable to devotees for consumption. Quoting *Mahopanishad*, he recalls how the learned accept the offerings received by Vishnu and if such offerings are not available, it has been recommended, in the *Rahasyāmnaya Brahmana*, that one should create such in the food, by consecrating it first to Vasudeva, in the first few morsels of the food that one eats—it is this that has become the basis of the *prāṇāhūti* that is enjoined while taking ones daily food. The great and unrivalled efficacy of the offering made to Narayana and then partaken, is closely established then by Desika by a multiplicity of textual authorities like *Sattvatasamhita*, *Paushkara Nāradiya*, *Pādma*, *Vishnu Tattva*, *Mahabhartā* (Jñānakanda, 3 chapters), *Bodhāyanīya Vishnu Kalpa*, of which the *Mahabhartā* quotation is furnished for its topical value :

‘*Hrdi Dhyāyan Harim tasmai nivedyannam samāhitāh
madyāmanamikāngushṭhaih grihītvannam samāhuta
prāṇāya chetyapānāya vyānāycha tatah param
udānāya samānya svaheti juhuyāt kramāt*’

Desika takes us into an exposition of the negative and positive, inclusive and exclusive implications of the word ‘*naivedya*’ and ‘*nivedana*’. He considers first that a *nivedana* is called *nirmālya* (in *Sanatkumara Samhita*) and whether it is flower or fruit or any other article, it should be discarded and not eaten. Sin attaches not

only to the eater but also to the giver of such according to *Paushkara*. But all these and other authorities make a qualification necessary for the recipient that he is to be a proper *pātra*—a *bhakta*, *sāstrānīṣṭa*. *Isvara Samhita* states actually that *Bhāgvatabhaktas* are very rare and those with *bhāva* (or godly feeling) are even rarer, and it is to *abhaktas* and *bhāvahīnas* that the *naivedya* should not be given. These are categorised into *nāstika* (atheist), *durātma* (bad man), etc. *Nārādīya* clarifies the situation tersely by stating that Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and devoted Vaishnavas and not others are eligible to partake of the *naivedya* of God. This takes one to the point that there is an admitted difference between *naivedya* of Vishnu and of other gods like Rudra, etc. Since the latter has already been upheld by their own *sāstras* (as not consumable), one need not be at pains to establish their validity. *Brahmapurana* says that Vishnu's *naivedya* is pure, fit to be used by *munis*, other *naivedyas* are *nirmālya*. What are the categories of *nirmālya* itself? They are six in number; *devasvam* (the villages connected with the *deva*), *devadravya* (like cloth or ornaments), articles prepared for offering, that given to Chanda (*Chanda dravyam*), that which is thrown or placed outside, all these six varieties of *nirmālya* articles should not be either smelled, or crossed or given or bought, and if done, he will be born as carrion eater or low-born or wolf or impotent or hunter. Considering these injunctions, the recommendation of *Isvara Samhita* that *kunkuma*, *chandana*, *karpūra* and other unguents associated with Vishnu's body, these are thrice sanctified, and similar statements in *Padmodbhava Brahma* indicate that the *naivedya* of Vishnu stand on a pedestal all its own. *Atri Samhita Brahmana* and finally *Bhagavata* say that the *pādodaka* or the water which has washed Vishnu's feet, is the highest type of *prasāda* and when taken gives unlimited blessings. The last authority explains that only knowing this, Śiva kept Ganga who had washed Vishnu's feet, on his head. Further, it is enjoined that Vishnu's offerings, wherever and whenever got, should be unhesitatingly accepted and consumed. It is even further clinched by *Pādma*, *Paramesvara*, etc., that the food offered to Vishnu can be offered to other devatas, as well as *Pitrs* during *antya*, for *Vaisvadeva*, etc., *Mahabharata* (*Jñāna kānda*, 3rd chapter) specifies that, following the *Sattvata* procedure, that which was accepted by Narayana as offering, was further offered to Indra, *Pitrs*, *Rishis* and Brahmanas.

Winding up the dissertation, Desika avers on the basis of *Āgamaprāmānya* text that 'in the regulation of the eatable and the non-eatables, the authority or guide is *Sāstra*. If it states that the *prāṇāhūti* offered to Vishnu and eaten thrice a day, during meals by all devotees, is proper, what is there to be questioned? In the same way as for *anushṭhāna*, there is a discipline (*tantra*) dealing with *nitya karma kāmya karma*, *agnihotra*, etc.; in the same way, for *prāṇāgnihotra*, there is the *tantra* of consuming that which is the *naivedya*. Thus, Desika establishes that a preliminary to all vaidic action like *Vaisvadeva*, *prāṇāgnihotra*, etc., is the daily offerings to be made to Vishnu.

The triple topics constituting *Sachchharitra raksha* of Swami Desika are thus

not sectarian ritual for a conservative Vaishnava group but a universalised, highly synthesised interpretation of the foundational truths of the scriptural and other texts, and are the most acceptable and the most dignified rationalisation of the principles governing the marking one's body by a *bhāgavata*, of the symbols of Vishnu like *chakra*, *sankha*, etc.; of the wearing on the twelve parts of the body, the *ūrdhvapuṇḍra*; and of the merit of consuming the offerings of Vishnu. They do not seek extenuating circumstances, but persuasively seek the meanings of a wide range of holy texts, and above all, they reveal the prodigious intellect of Sri Desika, and make him stand out as one of the most uncommitted religious leaders of India, a person who was only committed to truth, godliness an intense devotion to the heritage of the scriptures.

THE SAPTA-DVIPA CONCEPT IN INDIAN HERITAGE

The *Sapta-dvīpa* concept is a special feature of Hindu India. Its origins are seemingly very ancient and may involve geographical areas which may only partly fall within the present boundaries of India, that is Bharat. It would be useful, therefore, to know about the trend of the extant information on it, as supplied by the *Puranas*, *epics* and the *Bhāgavata*.

It is customary to call India as Jambudvīpa. This term was in wide currency already in the Aśokan times, as noticed by the use of this term in his inscriptions. The *sankalpa* rigmarole of the pious Hindu of today, prescribed for performance of all *Sastraic karmas* on auspicious as well as inauspicious occasions enjoys the specification of the *kalpa manvantara*, *yuga*, the *dvīpa*, the *varsha* (and *khaṇḍa*), the area where the *karma* is performed, together with the era, year, *ayana*, season, month, fortnight, *tithi* and *nakshatra*. This tradition has an early part and a later part. The earlier one would be represented by the *dvīpa* and *varsha* element, and the later by the calendar details systematised subsequently, arising out of the *Vedāṅga jyotiṣa* in the *Brahmana* and *Sūtra* stages. The *sapta-dvīpa* (with its allied categories of *sapta-tala* and *sapta-sagara* concepts) appear to form the flash-back, as it were, of the Vedic communities before or at the time of their advent into Bharatavarsha. The *dvīpas* enumerated in the old Puranic texts are Jambudvīpa, Plaksha dvīpa, Salmali dvīpa, Kusa dvīpa, Krauncha dvīpa, Saka dvīpa and Pushkara dvīpa (*Padma Purana-Kriyāyogasara*, ch. I). It is interesting that many of these *dvīpas* are placed by linguists and conventional academic scholarship in the areas outside of, but adjacent to India, in the classical *Ariana*, upto the Caspian and Eral seas to the North and Mesopotamia to the West. For instance, the Plaksha dvīpa is taken as the area of Mongolia and the *Udakārṇava* or sweet water river, associated with it, is said to flow through it, and is identified

with Tchadun river. The presiding divinity of this *Dvīpa*, according to *Bhagavata*, is Surya. The Salmali dvīpa is equated with Chaldea where the rivers Nivritti and Vitrishna (standing for the Euphrates and the Tigris) were flowing. It is the same as the Assyrian or Mesopotamian region (*Brahmāṇḍa purāṇa*, ch. 53). The presiding divinity here was Chandra, according to *Bhagavata*. Saka dvīpa is equated with Tartary, including Turkestan in Central Asia, the country of the Sakas. *Mahābhārata* has several references to it which are correspondingly borne out by those of Ptolemy, the Egyptian geographer. Its special deity is taken as *Vayu*. The Pushkara dvīpa is a part of Central Asia, again, towards the north of the Oxus river, including western Tartary. It was later forming part of Scythia of the Greeks. The city of Bokhara (Bushkara) seemingly had some connection with this region. Its presiding deity was taken as Brahma. The Kusa dvīpa which was said to be located near the Eral sea (*Varahapurāṇa*, ch. 88) has its main deity as Varuna, the lord of the waters. It is likely that these divinities who are the *loka-pālas* and *dikpālas* of the subsequent Hindu iconography, served to indicate the direction or the point of the compass in which these zones were located, with reference to Brahman of the Pushkara dvīpa which might have been the most Central zone among them.

The *sapta sagaras* were clearly of a geographical and ethnic connotation, with *Lavaṇa* or salty sea, taken as the Indian ocean surrounding Jambudvīpa; *Kshīra* or milk ocean ascribed to Shirwan (an ancient name for Caspian sea); *Sura* (or wine) was taken as the Sea of Sarain (another name for the Caspian); *Ghrīta* (or ghee) was considered as the Erythrean Sea or the Persian gulf which formed the boundary of Salmali dvīpa (*Varaha purāṇa*, ch. 89); *Ikshu* (or *gud*) was taken as standing for the Oxus river (*Vishnu purāṇa*, pt II ch. 5) and formed the southern boundary of the Pushkara dvīpa. *Dadhi* was related to the area of the Eral Sea and formed the boundary of Krauncha dvīpa. As mentioned earlier, *udaka* or sweet water was flowing through Plaksha dvīpa in Mongolia.

The above geographical, historical and linguistic traditions would seem to show that the Vedic people should have occupied many areas before and even after their arrival into Brahmavarta in the Punjab, and had contacts with other ethnic groups with whom they had linguistic, cultural and even religious ties. It is connected with the ancient home of the Aryans, which was called as *Airyān-vejo* (*Arya-vija*) in the *Avesta* of the Zoroastrian Iranians (reflected in the modern Azerbaijan in U.S.S.R.). It was said to be a cold country, situated north and north-west of India, including the Pamir plateau, from where sections of the same groups are said to have branched off to Europe, West Asia and India. The separation, especially of the Indian and Iranian groups is taken as having been caused by disparities and divergent views on agricultural and religious concepts, particularly centering around the dethroning of Varuna who was till then holding supreme place in the pantheon, and the enthroning of Indra as a Supreme

deity—a trait which was a characteristic feature of the early vedic hymns of India. The Varuna-based groups got separated from others and leaving Central Asia, the common earlier home, migrated to and settled in Iran and later established the Zoroastrian religion. The Indra-based groups entered the valley of the Sarasvati and Drishadvati in the Punjab and Haryana (itself reflecting the term Ariana of the classical geographers).

As mentioned earlier, there was an interesting part of the *Dvipa* concept which served as an iconographic manual of the important cults of Hinduism introduced into Jambudvipa. The Jambudvipa was divided into nine *khaṇḍas*, or *varshas* which are Bharatavarsha; Kimpurushavarsha, Ketumalavarsha, Harivarsha, Bhadravarsha, and Havritavarsha. The Bharatavarsha, in which we now reside, is stated to have the nucleating cult form of Nara-Narayana, as distinctly assumed by God, worshipped by Narada and others, and located at *Badarikas-rama* or the modern Badrinath—which is by far the most cherished place of pilgrimage in India today for the pious Hindu, and where Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada attained *videha Kaivalya*, according to tradition; and the *uttaramnaya* seat of the *Advaita Matha* is established since then there. It is interesting to note that the other three *Advaita mathas*, taken as installed by Adi Sankara respectively at Dwaraka (*Paschim Gujarat*), Govardhan Matha Puri (Orissa) and Sringeri (Karnataka) apart from other seats that are also claimed as directly associated with Sankara, have the association of Vishnu, in one form or another either as *mūrti* or *yantra* in the conservation of the seats, either as Krishna or Nrisimha—two forms which had received personal adoration distinctively from Adi Sankara himself—notwithstanding their general Śivaite slant in the organisation. This and its chief divine form, like each of the other above mentioned *varsha* and their gods, is given an associative *mantra* also in the Puranic period, as compiled in the *Bhagavata*, which is as it were, the canonical text for the worship of these forms. The *mantra* for Nara-Narayana is :

Om namo bhagavate...

Rishirishabhāya naranārāyaṇa Paramahansa

paramagurave atmārāmadhipataye namo namaḥ (Bhag. 5-19-11)

The Kimpurushavarsha has Rama, accompanied by Sita, as the prime deity worshipped by Hanuman. The *mantra* is :

Om namo bhāgavate, uttamaślokāya namaḥ;

āryalakṣhaṇa sīlavrataṇā namaḥ

Brahmanyadevayā Mahāpurushāya Mahārājāya namaḥ (Bhag. 5-19-3).

The Uttarakuruvarsha (which according to some other sources is the same as Harivarsha) has Yagnavaraha as the prime divine form, worshipped by Bhudevi. The *mantra* quoted is :

Om namo bhagvate mantra tikṅgāya yagña krātave Mahādīvarāvayavāya Mahāpurushāya namaḥ Karmasuklāya Triyugāya namaḥ (Bhag. 5-18-35).

The *Hiranmadyavarsha* has Kurmamurti as the chief divine manifestation as worshipped by Aryama, and the *mantra* quoted is :

*Om namo bhagvate akūparāya, sarva satvagūṇavisheshaṇāya
nopalakshitasthāpanāya namaḥ, varshmane namo Bhumne namo
namo avasthānaya namaḥ. (Bhag. 5-18-30).*

The *Ramyakavarsha* has Matsyamurti, as worshipped by Vaivasvata Manu, and the *mantra* is :

*Om namo bhagvate Mukhyatamāya namaḥ
Mahātmatyāya namaḥ (Bhag. 5-18-25)*

The *Ketamalavarsha* glorifies Manmatha or Kama, as worshipped by Mahalakshmi. The *mantra* is :

*Om hrām hrīm hrūm, Om namo Bhagvate Hrishīkesāya...shoḍasakalāya
chchandomayāya,...kāmāya namaḥ (Bhag. 5-18-18).*

The *Harivarsha* celebrates Narasimha, as worshipped by Prahalada, with the *mantra* as :

*Om namo bhagvate Narasimhāya...karmasayān randhaya randhaya manogrā-
sagrāsa-om svahā (Bhag. 5-18-8)*

The *Bhadravarsha* praises Hayagriva, as worshipped by Rishi Bhadrava, one of the sons of Dharmadevata, with the *mantra* :

Om namo bhagvate Dharmāya ātmavisodhanāya namaḥ (Bhag. 5-18-2)

The *Ilavrila varsha*, which is said to be inhabited by ladies only, affiliated to Parvati, has Sankarshana as the main divine form, as worshipped by Paramesvara. The *mantra* is :

*Om namo bhagvate Mahāpurushāya, sarvagūṇasamkhyānāya anantāya
avyaktāya namaḥ (Bhag. 5-17-17).*

It is very significant that together, these divinities answer for a variant set of Vishnu, wherein Kama and Nara-Narayana find a place and Vamana is absent. They represent the earlier stage of 7 incarnations of Vishnu, excluding Kāma and Nara-narayana, which ultimately led to the ten.

The seemingly fantastic and imaginative scheme of the *sapta-dvipa*, *sapta-sagara* and *navakhaṇḍa* or *varsha* iconographic features acquire meaning only when the geographical factors in the areas involved are taken into consideration, as they had gone through stages of transformation, traditional hardening and even mutations—both linguistic and cultural from what had been originally their topographical legacy, in regard to ancient cultural geography of India. It should be added that in no country its traditions had so systematically or imaginatively preserved the ancestral history of the communities, though in a transmuted grab, as had been done in India, by the Vedic people and their Puranic successors. It is like a code language, the proper key and decoding through which would unravel the

migratory patterns of these communities and tie them up with other exotic ethnic groups (such as the Iranians, Sakas, Kushanas, etc.) who had also chosen, over the early centuries, to enrich the culture, religions and art of India in various ways and had tended to claim a significant share in shaping what is today considered as an essentially Hindu Heritage of India.

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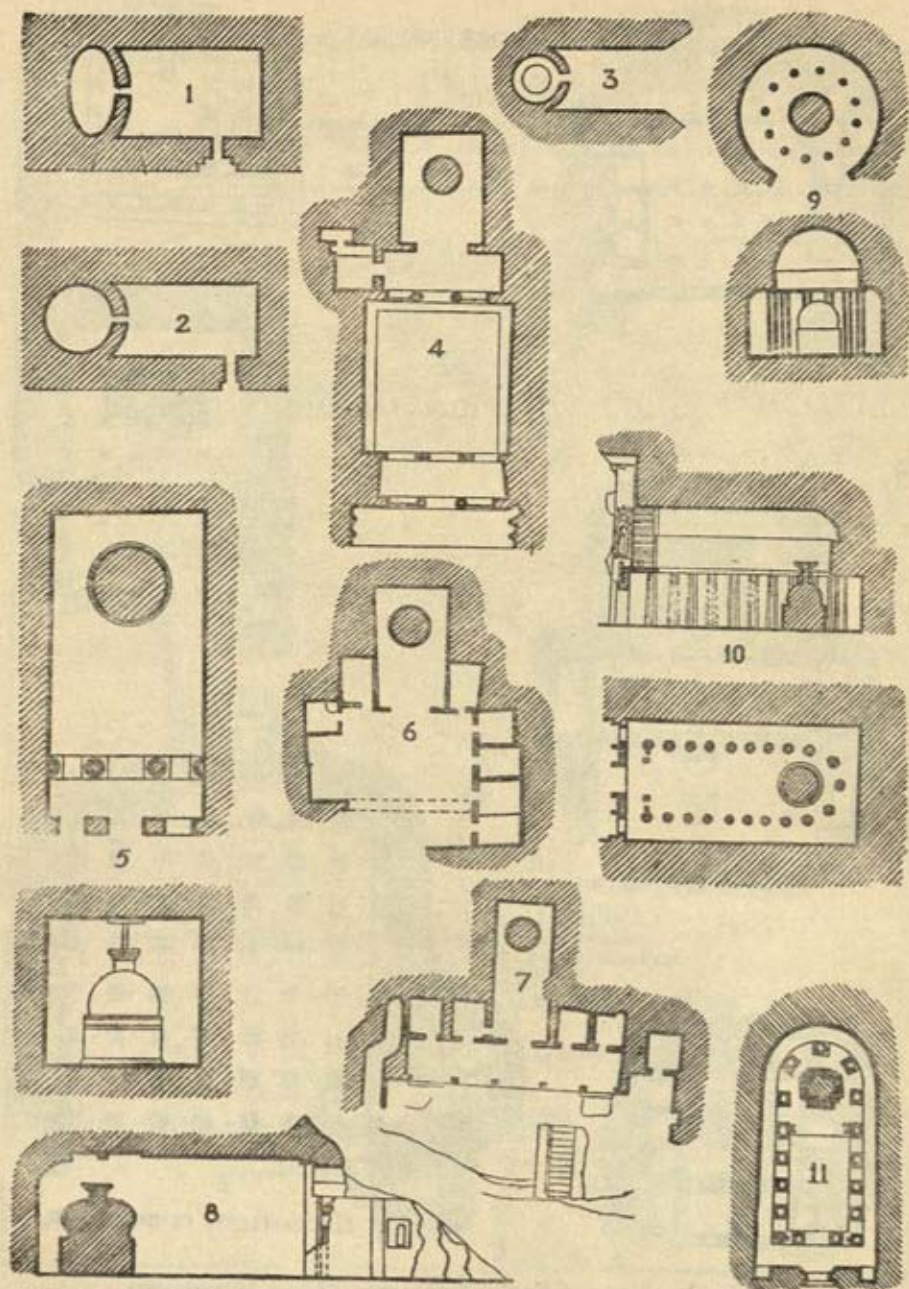
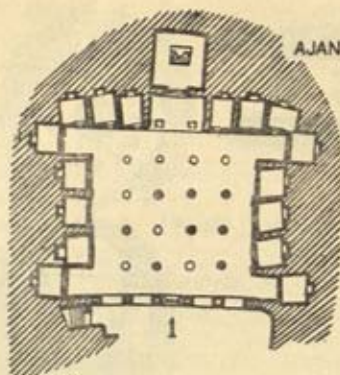
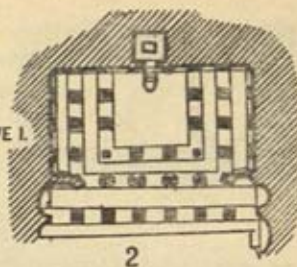


Fig. 1. Plans and Elevations of Early Buddhist Cave Monuments (Not to relative Scale): 1. Lomas Rishi Cave; 2. Sudama Cave; 3. Kondivate Cave; 4. Kuda Cave; 5 & 9. Junnar: Buddhist Caves; 6. Sailarwadi: Cave; 7. Karad Buddhist Cave; 8. Karad : Cave V; 10. Ajanta : Chaitya Cave IX and 11; Ajanta : Cave XIX



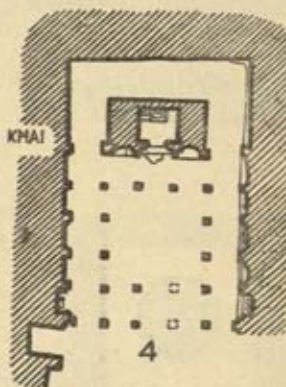
AJANTA: LOWER STORY CAVE VI.

BADAMI: CAVE I.

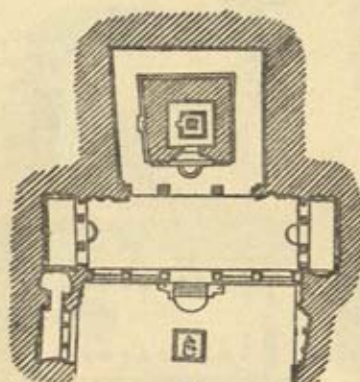


2

ELLORA: RAVANA KI KHAI

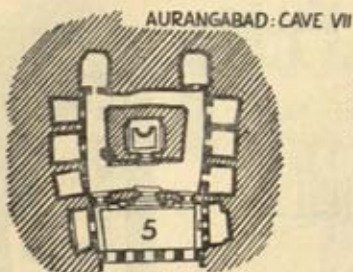


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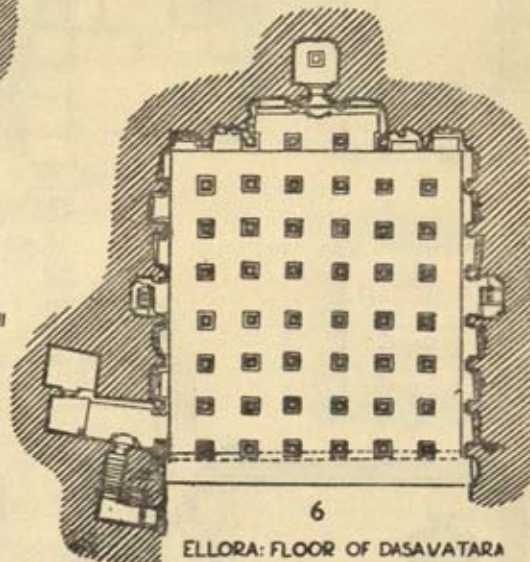


3

ELLORA: RAMABHADRA CAVE



AURANGABAD: CAVE VII



6

ELLORA: FLOOR OF DASAVATARA

Fig. 2. Plans of Early Brahmanical Cave Monuments

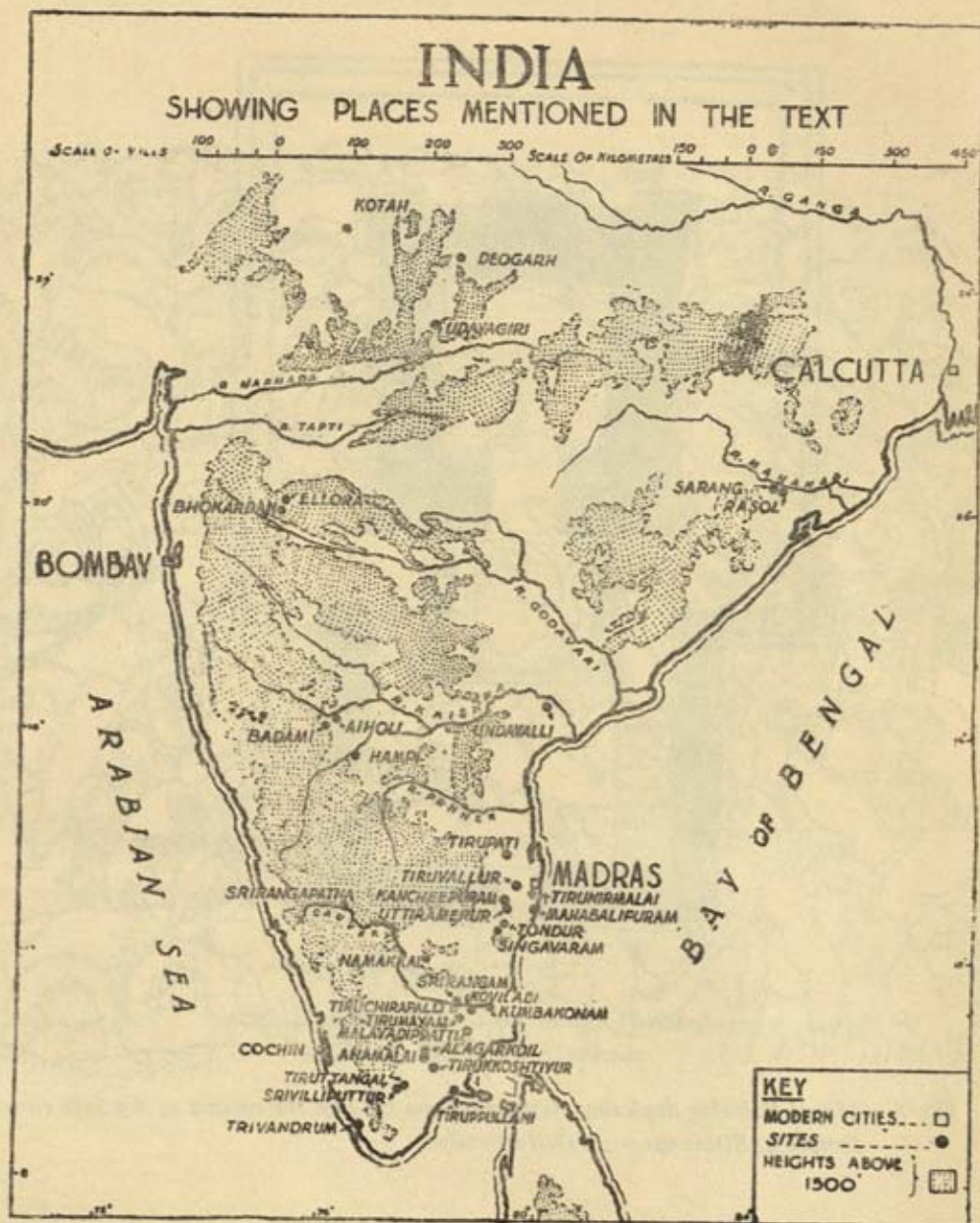


Fig. 3



Fig. 4. Mural Painting depicting Samavasarana lake on the ceiling of the Jain cave temple at Sittannavasal (Early Pandya)

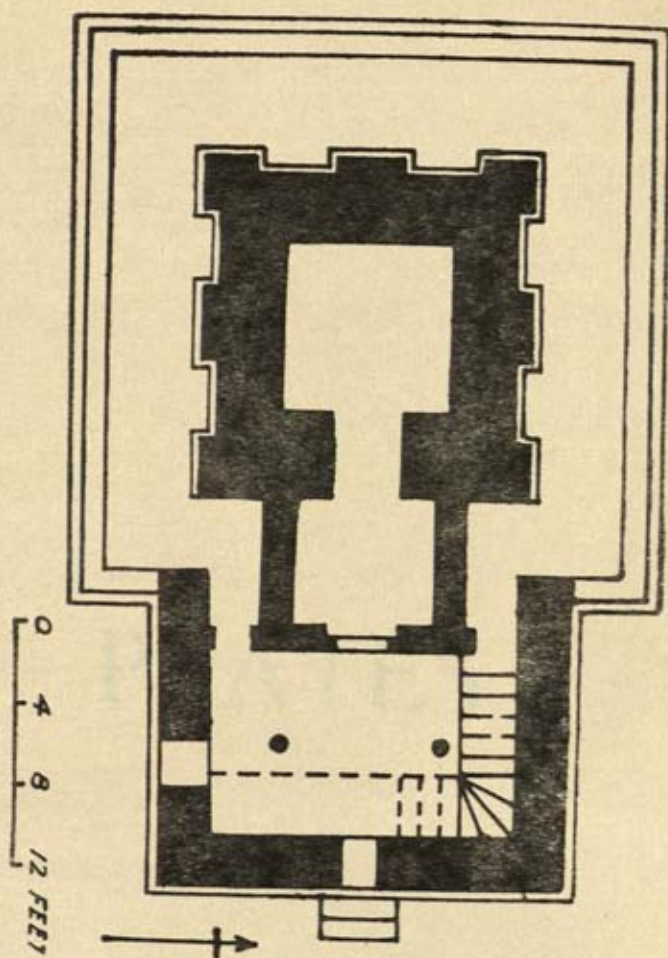


Fig. 5. Plan of Chandraprabha (Tirthankara) temple, Tirupparuttikunram

PLATES



Plate 1. [Nachna (M.P.)—
Parvati temple, general
view showing the early
double-storeyed
construction of
the Gupta Period.



Plate 2. Nachna (M.P.)—
Parvati temple,
door frame of the cella.



Plate 3. Deogarh (M.P.)—General view of Vishnu temple.

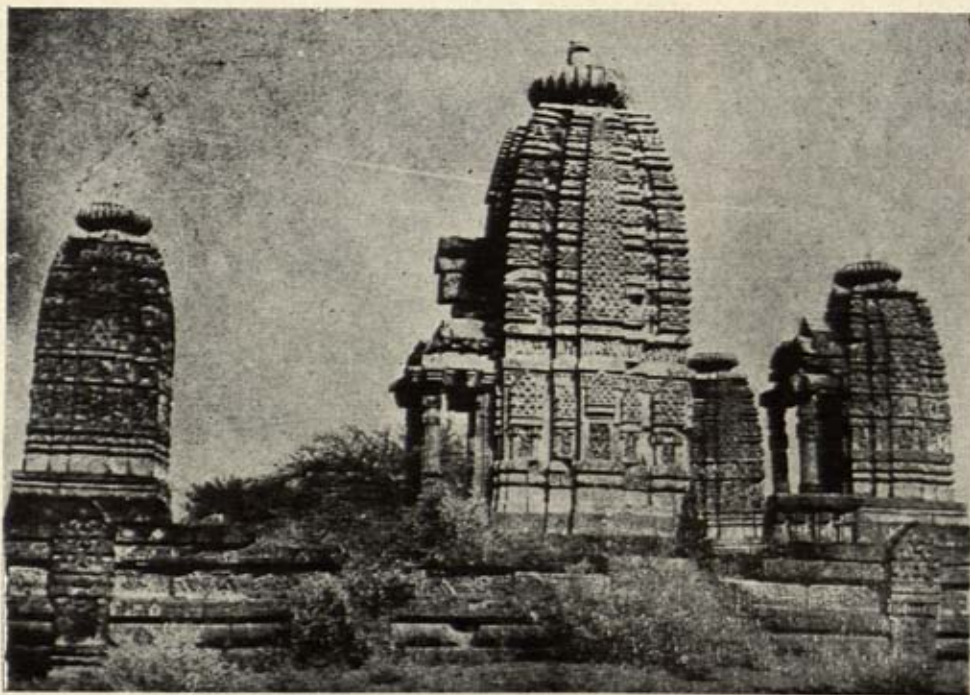


Plate 4. Osian (Rajasthan)—Vishnu *Panchāyatana* temple.

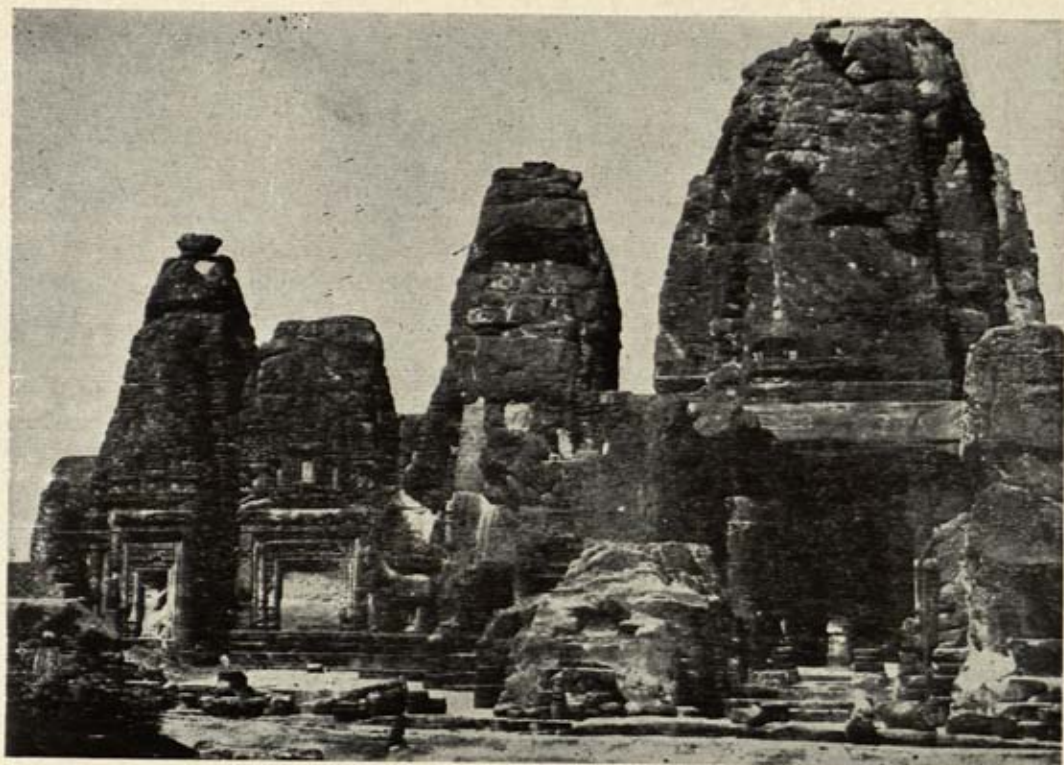


Plate 5. Masrur (H.P.)—General view of the series of rock-cut temples of the Pratihara style of *Rekha* temples.



Plate 6. Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu)—Kailasanatha temple of Pallava Rajasimha's period.



Plate 7. Panamalai (Tamil Nadu)—Talagirisvara temple, view of the main *vimāna*.

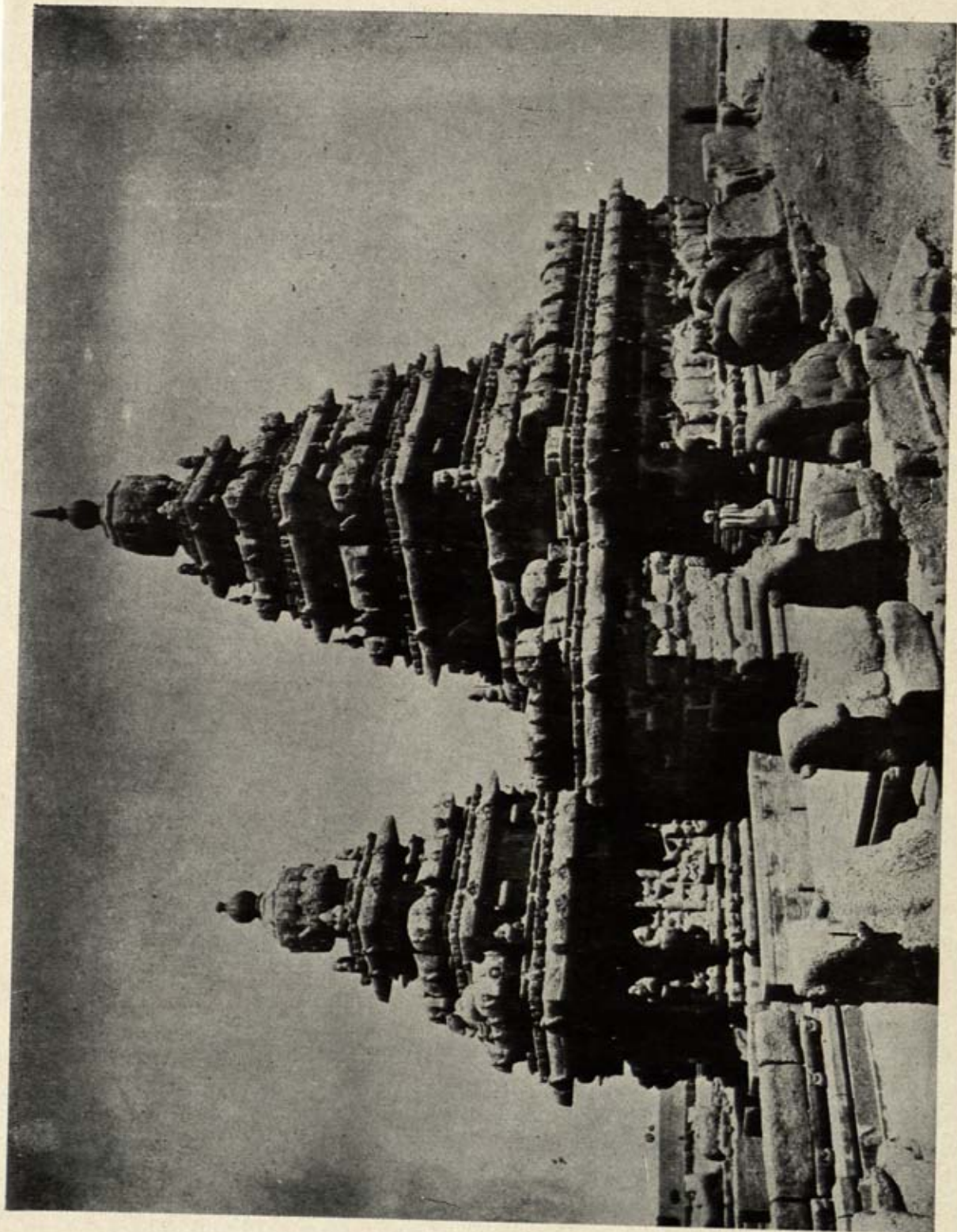


Plate 8. Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu)—A view of the two Shore Temples, smaller facing west and the larger facing the sea; both of Rajasimha's time.



Plate 9. Sittannavasal (Tamil Nadu)—Jain cave-temple, Parsvanatha figure in the northern niche of the outer *mandapa*.

Plate 10. Kalugumalai (Tamil Nadu)—Carved reliefs and niches with inscriptions of Jaina religion on the rock.

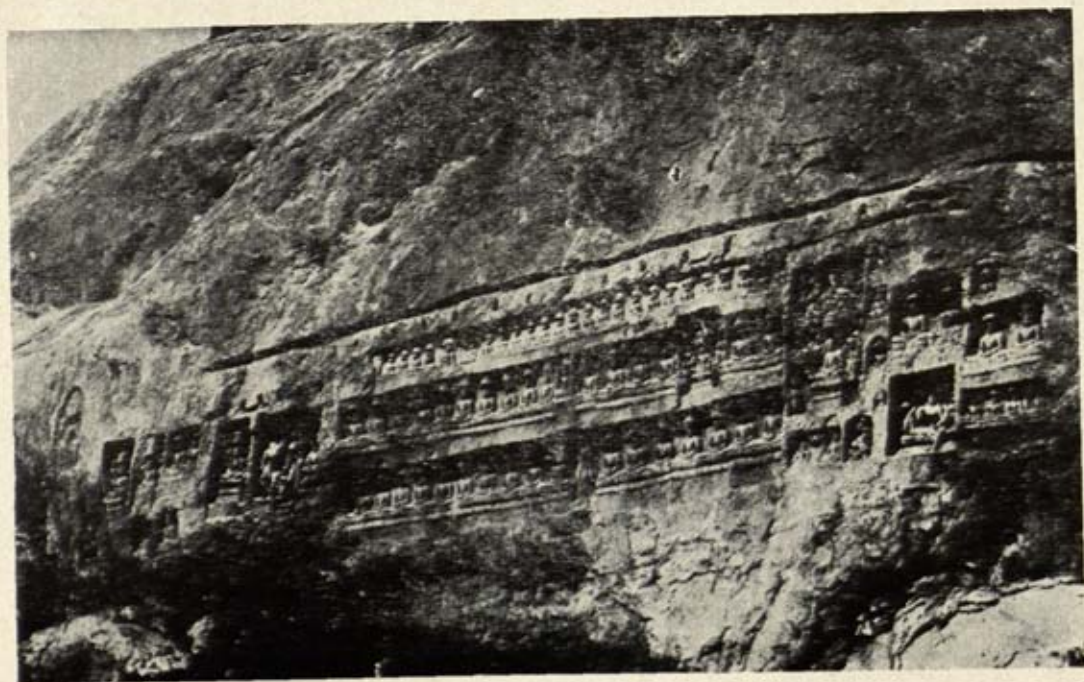




Plate 11. Aihole (Karnataka)—*Tandava Śiva*
in the centre of a Saptamatri panel
alongwith Ganesa and Kartikeya.



Plate 12. Changu Narayan temple, Kathmandu
(Nepal)—Visvarupa Vishnu with
Anantasayi (*vyūha*) below.



Plate 13. Deogarh (M P.)—Seshasayi panel on the wall of the Dasavatara temple.



Plate 14. Tirumayam (Tamil Nadu)—Sanctum of the cave-temple of Vishnu (Satyamurti) shrine of early Muttaraiyar patronage.

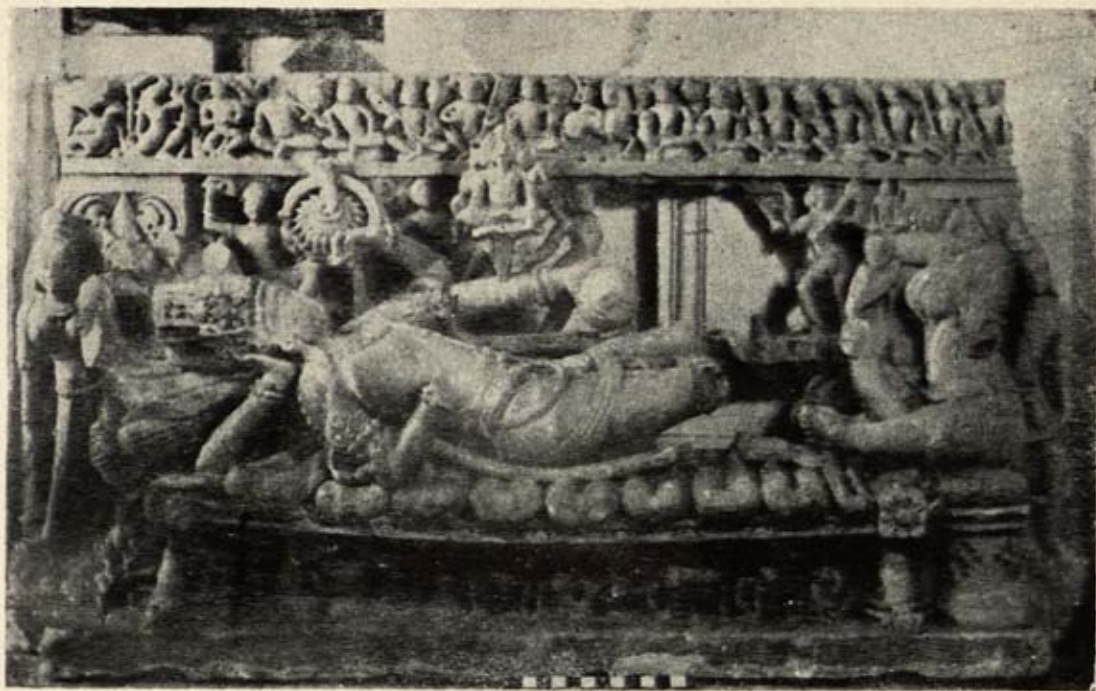


Plate 15. Kotah Museum (Rajasthan)—Seshashyi Vishnu (stone) originally from Badoli, Chittorgarh District.

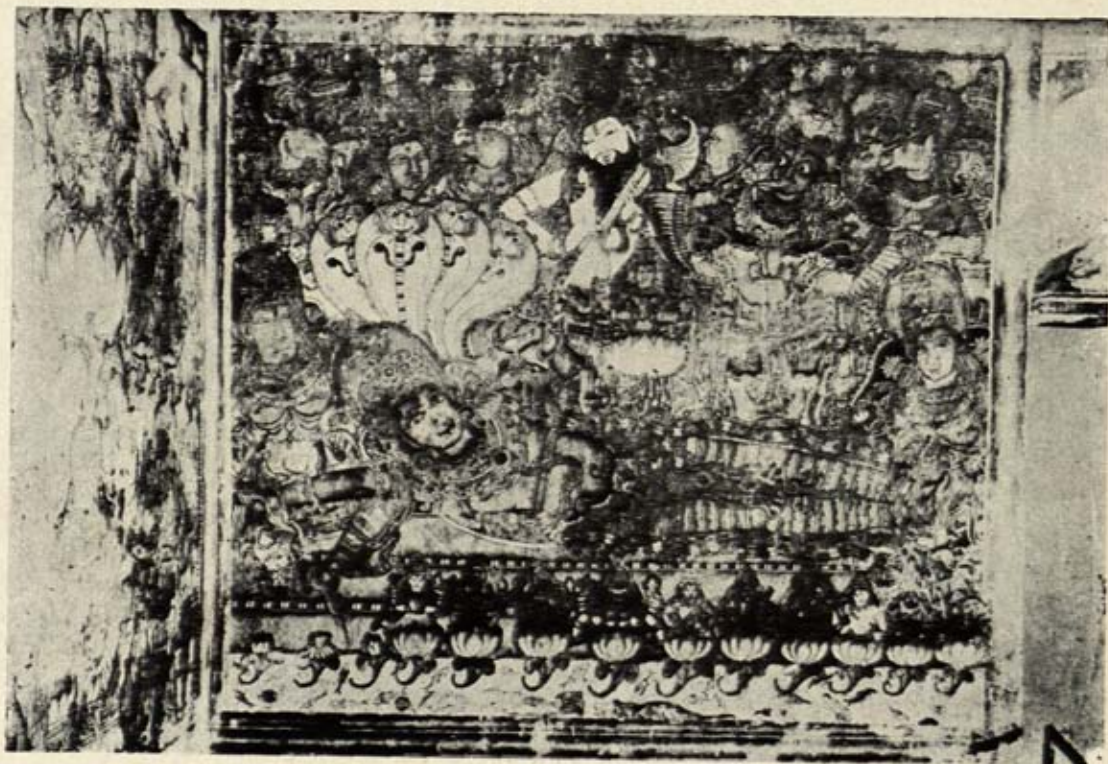


Plate 16. Cochin (Kerala)—Mattancheri Palace, mural panel of Anantasayi with divine and saintly personages around.



Plate 17. Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu)—Piravatanesvara temple showing the absence of regular *pranala* arrangement for *abhisheka* water within the original plinth construction.

Plate 18. Tiruvalisvaram (Tamil Nadu)—Valisvara (Śiva) temple showing *Ananda Tandava* Nataraja on the main south face of the upper *tala*.



Plate 19. Gangaikondacholapuram—(Tamil Nadu)—Nataraja niche sculpture on the exterior wall of ground floor of Brihadisvara temple.



Plate 20. Chitorgarh (Rajasthan)—Lakuliṣa panel on the eastern wall of Kumbhashyam temple.



Plate 21. Prince of Wales Museum (Maharashtra)—Śiva as *lingin* bearing *linga* on his shoulder from Aihole, presently in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.



Plate 22. Ellora (Maharashtra)—Śiva and Parvati together supporting a *linga*, Cave 16, north corridor.



Plate 23. Lakkundi (Karnataka)—Kasivisvesvara temple, general view.

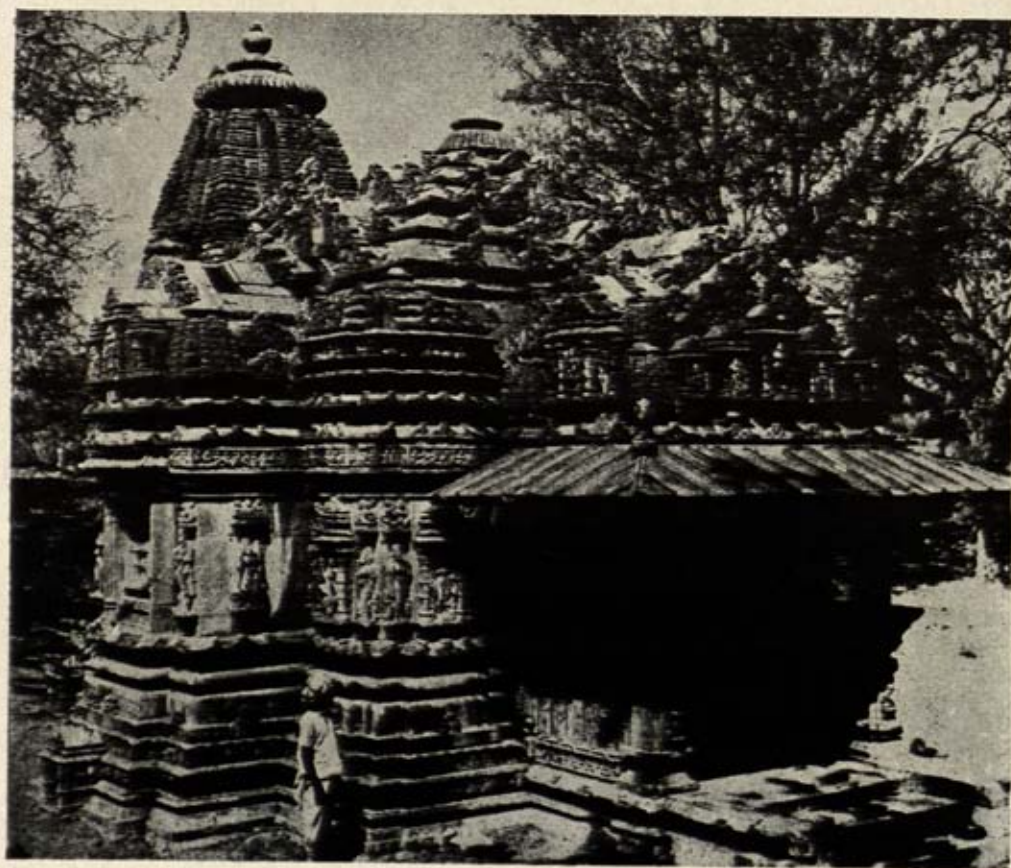


Plate 24. Jagat (Rajasthan)—Ambaji temple, general view.

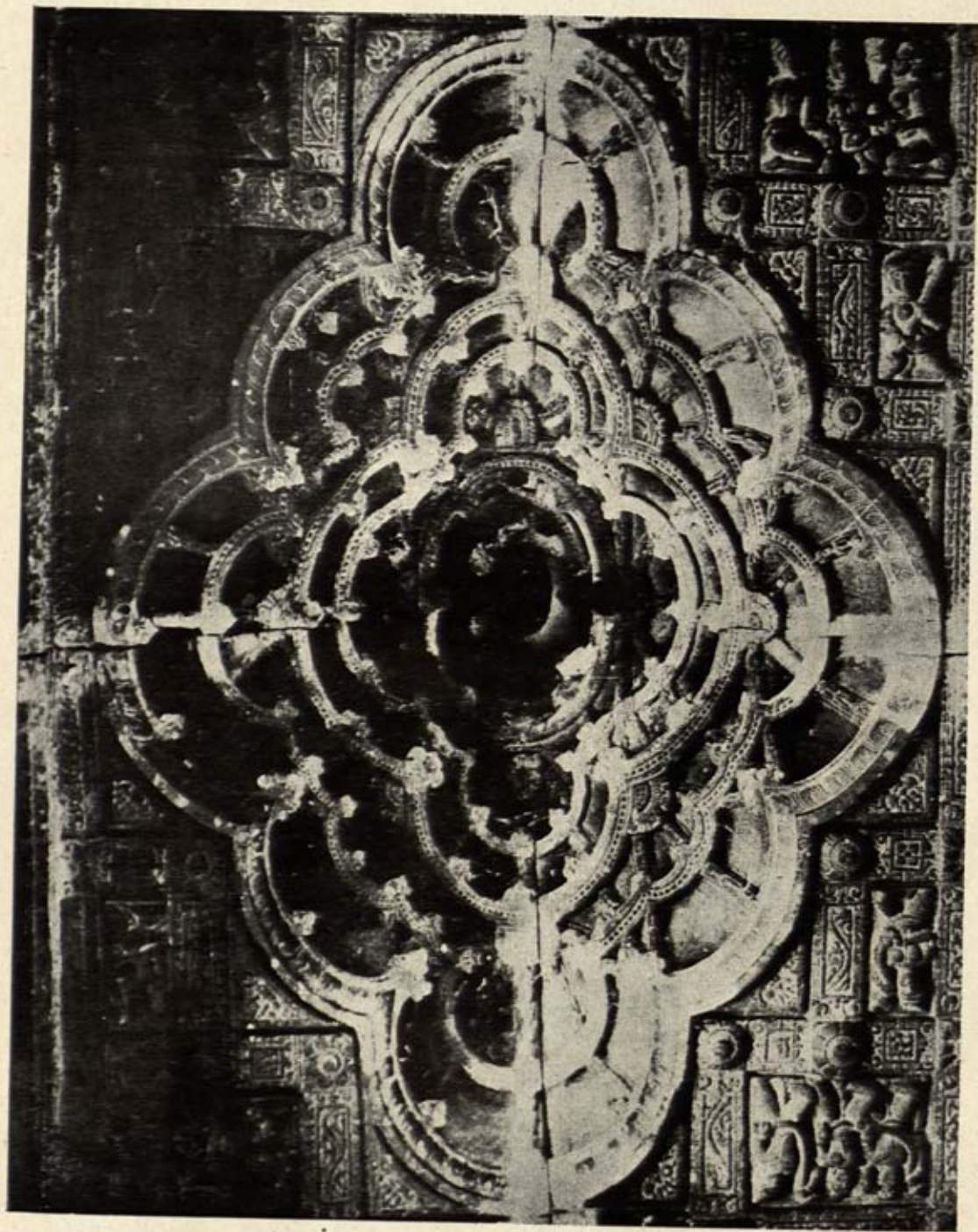


Plate 25. Jagat (Rajasthan)—Ambaji temple, details of the *Sabhāmaṇḍapa* ceiling.



Plate 26. Jagat (Rajasthan)—Ambaji temple, Durga Mahishamardini on the wall of the main temple.



Plate 27. Jagat (Rajasthan)—Ambaji temple, Durga fighting Mahisha demon, on the exterior wall of main shrine.

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