CHAPTER II
NARASIMHA IN AGAMIC AND TANTRIC TEXTS
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An attempt is being made to study Narasimha in agamic and tantric texts. Agama means ‘well-structured and traditionally communicated wisdom’ derived from the root ‘मात्र’ with prefix ‘आ’ and related to the worship of god in an image. Agamas are another class of scriptures developed almost parallel to Vedic texts. The agmas are theological treatises and practical manuals of idol worship. Agamas also deal with the Mantra and the Yantras. These treatises explain the external worship of God in idols. Generally the contents of the agamas are dealt with under four topics viz. 1) jnana (knowledge) 2) yoga (concentration) 3) kriya (construction) and 4) carya (rituals). They also deal with ontology, cosmology, devotion, meditation, philosophy of mantras, mystic diagrams, temple building, image making, domestic observance, social rules and public festivals etc.

The agama tradition is distinguished from Vedic tradition, which preaches the worship of the Almighty through the performance of sacrifices. In the course of time, the worship of the agamas has obtained the acceptance of the people and since it was not antagonist in spirit and nature, it has become a subsidiary culture within the Vedic frame work. Thus the Agamas have become the texts of authority subsequently as that of the Vedas.

It is stated that the conduct of people must be in accordance with the Vedas in the Krtayuga; in accordance with the Smrti texts in the Tretayuga; in accordance with the Puranas in the Dwaparayuga and in accordance with the Agamas in the Kaliyuga.

1 Prof S.K. Ramachandra Rao, Pratima Kosa, vol I P. 112
2 Ibid. p. 112
The Agamas are broadly divided into three schools: The Vaishnava, the Saiva and the Sakta. While the Vaishnavagamas glorify Vishnu as Supreme God, the Saivagamas glorify Siva and the Saktagamas glorify Sakti as Supreme. The Vaishnavagamas are of two kinds: 1) Vaikhanasa and 2) Pancaratra.

1) Vaikhanasa

Vaikhanasas are believed to be a very ancient sect devoted to the cult of Vishnu. They are referred in the Vedic texts also. The Vaikhanasa outlook is remarkable for its reconcilement of the Vedic tradition with the tantric. The Vaikhanasa tradition originated from the teachings of the sage Vikhanasa, who is believed to be the incarnation of Vishnu and taught to his four disciples. Among the four disciples, it is stated that Marici wrote eight books called ‘Samhilas’ like Jaya, Ananda, Samjñana etc; Bhṛgu wrote ten books called ‘Adhikaras’ like Khiladhikarana, Arcadhikara etc.; Atri wrote four books called ‘Tantra’ like Purva, Uttara and Vishnu; and Atreya and Kasyapa wrote three books called ‘Kanda’ viz. Satya, Dharma and Jnana. Though the list appears to be exuberant, now available are very few.

It is note worthy to mention here that these agama texts do not deal with Jnana and Yoga sections separately, but deal with Kriya and Carya sections only. This tradition classifies worship into two varieties: with icons (samurta-rca) and without icons (amurta-rca), but recommends former as better one in view of its easy acceptability and adoptability. In the latter method Vishnu is worshiped, who resides within the sacrificial fire as ‘Antaryamin’, which is rather difficult for common people to conceive.

\[1\] Ibid pp. 115-116
2) Pancaratra

The Pancaratra viewpoint upholds the supremacy of Vishnu and commands the devoted worship as a royal path for salvation. It is as old as the epic Mahabharata, but textual tradition is comparatively recent. The early Pancaratra texts are so comprehensive, elaborative and perfect that it had even influenced Vaikhanasa and Saiveagamas. Different viewpoints are found about the significance of the expression 'Pancaratra'. Prof. K. S. Ramachandra Rao states that Vishnu taught this system to five sages, who were the incarnations of the five weapons of Vishnu daily day and night for five successive days, hence the name. The five disciples, the incarnations of weapons are Sandilya (Disc), Aupagayana (conch), Maunjyayana (Mace), Kausika (Sword) and Bharadvaja (Bow). According to the Vihagendrasamhita the names of recipients of this agama are Ananta, Garuda, Vishvakarna (attendants of Vishnu), Brahma and Rudra. The Pancaratra texts generally deal with Jnana, Yoga, Kriya and Carya as mentioned supra.

The Pancaratra texts are of three types, 1) Divya, (directly communicated by the God) 2) Munibhashita, (composed by sages) and 3) Manusha (written by humans). The Sattvatasamhita, the Paushkarambhita and the Jayakharambhita are of first group; the Isvarasamhita, the Paramesvarasamhita, the Bharadvjasamhita and the Vaihayasamhita are of second group and the Sanatkumarasamhita, the Padmodbhavasamhita etc are of third group. Most of the texts of this tradition are voluminous works and deal with different topics in addition to the normal temple worship, iconography, iconometry, yantra, etc. Apart from these, these agamas contain topics like medicinal herbs, therapeutic procedures, folk cures etc.

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4 Ibid p 116
The worship of a particular deity forms as an integral aspect of religion. In order to obtain long cherished objects, devotees are after worshipping their beloved deities in one form or other. Thus the agama texts prescribe a good number of objects of worship, which significantly represent both the deity to be worshipped and the fruits to be obtained. The images (murtis), a particular word consisting of a respective seed letter (mantra), the diagrams (yantra), the sacred stones (salagrama) and the devotional songs (stotras ) are the different objects of worship. The agamas, the Silpasastras, the puranas and numerous literary forms provide these objects. Here an attempt is being made to deal with the objects of worship related to the deity Narasimha.

Narasimha's iconography varies at large incorporating all the aspects of the legend viz. emerging from pillar; rushing upon the demon; fighting with the demon; tear opening the abdomen of the demon, pulling out the entrails; holding the demon prostrate on his lap and offering protection to Prahlada. He is shown in three conventional postures: Seated (आसीन); standing (स्थानक) and striding (यात्रक). He is shown as ferocious (for wicked) and also benevolent (for devotees). He is alone (kevala) or with his consort or sometimes consorts or with Prahlada or with both.

The Vihagendrasamhita enumerates seventy four forms of Narasimha and states the differentiation is based on the weapons that the Lord hold in his hands. but most of the varieties appear to be just names with some adjectives like Svayamnarasimha, Vijayanarasimha etc. Most of the varieties are with just appears to be epithets and descriptions can not be found.

1 नरसिंह विषयो तंत्र चतुर्वत्ती दिबध । Vīha S. IV. 7a &
इन्माय नवसिंह स्वायत्तुपालन दिबधकम । ebd IV 17a
(cf. Daniel Smith, H. Veishnava Iconography, p 144 )
Iconography:

The iconographical descriptions of the images of Narasimha are found in many Vaikhanasa and Pancaratragama texts, in a few puranas and some other texts like the Shilparatna. The following texts contain the iconographical features of Narasimha and the kinds of different forms of Narasimha.

1) The Vaikhanasagamas,
2) The Hayasirhasamhita,
3) The Sattvatasamhita,
4) The Vishvaksenasamhita,
5) The Vishnulantra,
6) The Padmasamhita,
7) The Markandeyasamhita,
8) The Isvarasamhita,
9) The Parasarasamhita,
10) The Seshasamhita,
11) The Paramesvarasamhita,
12) The Vihagendrasamhita,
13) The Agnipurana,
14) The Vishnudharmottarapurana and
15) The Matsyapurana.

1) The Vaikhanasagamas:

The Vaikhanasagama⁴ classifies Narasimha images into two types: ‘Girija’ and ‘Stauna’. He is called ‘Girija Narasimha’, since he manifested from Giri (mountain) to kill Hiranyakasipu, whereas the stauna is called so as he emerged from pillar.

⁴ Vaikhanasvya Kasyapa Juna kanda, Kasyapa Samhita. K” chapter p 130
(a) The Girija Narasimha:

The Girija Narasimha possesses the leonine face up to neck with manes and claws and ferociously opened mouth. The lower part is like that of human body. He possesses four hands with the conch and the disc in upper two hands and the lower right in abhaya posture, while the other placed on thigh. He is as white as the conch and white lilies in colour. He sits in sukhasana with all ornaments like crown etc. and with or without his consorts. His head is covered under seven or five hooded Adishesa from behind serving as a canopy. Below his seat the images of Brahma and Siva are to be made standing on to right and left respectively with folded hands. Brahma carrying the rosary garlands in two upper hands and remaining two lower hands saluting Narasimha, or one in abhaya posture and the other touching his waist. Similarly on the left side, Siva too holding a rosary in one hand and the axe in other hand and saluting with two lower hands or one in abhaya mode and the other touching the waist has to be made. Siva is to be shown crowned with matted hair. Such Girija Narasimha shall be worshipped for victory over enemies or to prevent other calamities. This image of Narasimha may be included among privaradevatas occupying the vimana of sanctum sanctorum.

(b) The Stauna Narasimha:

The Stauna Narasimha is the one who emerged from pillar to protect his devotee as well as to kill Hiranyakasipu, who was oppressing the noble. The Stauna Narasimha has to be made to seat on the throne without pedestal and with very sharp nails and claws and possessed four lengthy arms with or without the conch and the disc in upper two hands. The lower right hand is to be in protection mode and the left

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1 ibid. pp. 131-132
rested on thigh. Face and other features are like in Girija Narasimha. He is fearful and red in colour. Either side of him on the walls attendants holding the cowries and Hanuman and Garuda are to be placed. Below the throne Brahma and Siva saluting the lord and requesting him to pacify are to be placed (कोपसंहठिति देवतं दक्षिण यज्ञाज्ञानी ब्रह्मरथी घ) . Sri Lakshmi on the right side with folded hands and on the left Prahlada with folded hands and even other attendants or the lords of directions can also be shown. Who wish to get ride of diseases, fear and destructions and wish for victory, fame, longevity are to worship this Stauna Narasimha.

Apart from these, some texts of the Vaikhanasagama furnishes some more details. For instance, the Girija Narasimha may be made with:

1) Possessing the conch and the disc in upper two hands and lower right in protection mode only with four hands. While lower left on thigh there here it can be on thigh or on hip (कष्टवितलकृत्तं व य)

2) He is adorned with all ornaments and a tapering and splendid crown (सर्वविविविषितं कष्टिकाकामकुत्तुं)

3) His body shines in white in colour like moon and jasmine flower and wears red clothes (रक्ष्यस्थितं)

4) He sits on a simhasana with the right leg hanging down and the left leg tucked up and rested on the seat (पाद दक्षिण प्रसारे वामामकुचसेर्वती)

5) Right to him sits Sridevi with left leg bent and right hanging down and with a lotus in her left hand and left hand rested on the seat. She is golden in colour and bedecked with all kinds of ornaments.

6) Left to him sits Bhudevi with right leg bent and left leg hanging down carrying a blue lotus in her right hand and left hand rested on seat. She is blue in colour and bedecked with all ornaments.
7) Otherwise He can sit on the seat with or without his consorts with the left leg hanging down and the right tucked up with two hands resting on his knees, while holding the conch and the disc with other two hands (देवीम्यां सहितं रक्षितं या कारयेत).

T. A. Gopinatha Rao broadly classifies the images of Narasimha into two kinds following the classification found in the Vaikhanasagamaa viz. benign and malignant. Kevala Narasimha (alone) is said to be benign, while the later is terrific. He sits on lotus seat with legs crossed in *utkatākāśāna* and the knees bound by cloth. He is bedecked with all ornaments with four hands carrying the conch and the disc in two hands, while the other two placed on knees. He treated both Girija and Kevala as one and the same.

The Stauna Narasimha is the form of terrific, who sits on *simhasana* with left leg tucked up and right leg hanging down with four hands, holding the conch and the disc with upper two hands and lower right in protection posture and lower left on thigh is same. His body colour, clothes and adorning with ornaments are same. He is very fearful with sharp angry glances and with heavy mane covering his shoulders. To pacify the anger of Narasimha, Sridevi and Bhudevi on right and Prahlada on left in saluting postures are to be made. Narada on right and the lords of all directions on the adjoin walls can also be drawn in saluting postures.

Gopinatha Rao presents another description of Stauna Narasimha from the Vaikhanasagama, where the entire terrific situation was depicted. He states - "The Stauna Narasimha variety is usually in the act of killing Hiranyakasipu and therefore in awe inspiring aspect. This form is frightening for the wicked (दुहानामृतीभीषण) . His mouth is wide

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open and the eyes are round, blood-shot and terrible (रक्तवृत्तों यस्मिन). Narasimha in this form has many arms eight or sixteen. The demon is shown prostrate on the left thigh of the God, while the lord is holding the demon with two hands, other two hands tearing open the belly of the demon and yet another two hands pulling out the intestines of the demon and holding them as a garland round his neck.⁹

The Bhrgusamhita of Vaikhanasagama prescribes five forms of the images of Narasimha viz. Girija, Stauna, Sudarshana, Lakshmi and Patala,¹⁰ where the last three are added to the existing list.

(c) Sudarshana Narasimha:

The image of Narasimha is to be made seated in sukhasina posture in the midst of radiant and lustrous disc (सूर्यरंग चक) glowing thousands of Suns put together. The lord is very fearful and at the same time bestowal of protection to his devotees. He carries only disc in all his hands. Below his seat Brahma and Siva are to be placed standing to pacify the lord.¹¹

(d) Lakshmi Narasimha:

The Lord in this form sits in the sukhasana with right leg tucked up and rested on seat, while the left is hanging down. Lakshmi bedecked with all ornaments sits on the right thigh of the lord with pleasant composition with her legs hanging down. Her body complexion is crystal white similar to that of pollen of lotus. Her two hands are in anjali (folded hands) posture or one hand in protection mode and second holding lotus. The lord holds the conch and disc in upper hands and with lower right hand raps around the waist of Lakshmi from behind.

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⁹ Ibd p 198
¹⁰ Vaikhanasavabhasadcchasatra, Bhrgusamhita, Krisadhikara 11” chapter 27a 29b
¹¹ Ibd 11” 29b 13
and carry lotus in other hand. The text recommends this posture for those who wish for everlasting devotion and salvation. It further states that who wish for immortal benefits (केवलमाधुर्यिकंपेशि) have to make the goddess to sit on the left thigh of the lord, while the lord’s left leg is tucked up and rest on seat and the right leg hanging down. He embraces the goddess with left hand from behind, while the right hand in protection mode. Remaining two hands hold the conch and the disc as usual.

(e) Patala Narasimha:

This type is similar to Lakshmi Narasimha, but only difference is that the Lord is covered over his head with the five hooded Adisesha as a canopy with right hand in the protection mode and left hand placed on his hip.

(f) Puccha Narasimha:

_Prakirnadhikara of Bhrgusamhila_ states Narasimha has to be worshipped for victory and prosperity. It speaks of a new kind of image of Narasimha i.e. Puccha Narasimha. In this variety, the lord possesses a tail, with right hand in protection mode and left is placed on his thigh. _Isvaramsmita_ explains this variety little more elaborately. It describes Puccha Narasimha with two hands (दिमुन्द) and a prominent tail (लांगूलमाघ्युल्ल) and red in colour like red hibiscus flower (अपाकुसुमप्रतीकाश) with blood-shot eyes (रक्ष्मय). He presses both his hands against the ground and is shown as heavily striking the ground with his tail (आस्फोट्य...

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12 _Vaikhanasatyabhagavatadashastra, Bhrgusamhita, prakirnadhikara_ 13.44-72
13 Ibid. 13. 68a-69a
He is terrible in this aspect and appears as if devour all the animate and inanimate with lolling around tongue.  

2) The Hayasirhasamhita:

The Hayasirhasamhita contains Narasimha image at two places and furnishes slight variations as mentioned below.

1) His face is widened and has round eyes. Mouth is ferociously wide opened with sharp white fangs.

2) His eyebrows are closely knitted and twisted with fury and tongue is lolling around.

3) He is bedecked with all ornaments and wearing vaijayanti garland and having srivatsa mark on his body (भूषितं त्रिजयत्वा तु आलया 
श्रीस्वत्सप्रिः)

4) He possesses thin mane hanging over on his shoulders.

3) The Sattvatasamhita:

The sattvatasamhita adds few more details as follows.

1) He is surrounded by the sparks of flaming fire that is emanating from his body and with gigantic figure and appears so ferocious.

2) He has one head and four arms carrying the conch and the disc in upper two hands and lower right hand is a protection mode while the lower left hand placed on his hip. He wears yellow robes.

3) His body colour is pure gold and his form incorporates pure knowledge.

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14 Isvara Samhita IV. 73b-75a (cf. H. Danialsmith, Vaishnava Iconography. p 142)
15 H. S. XXIII 15-21 and 326 (cf H Daniel Smith, Vaishnava Iconography, p 139)
16 S. S. XII 73-11 (cf H. Daniel Smith, Vaishnava Iconography, pp 139-140)
17 ज्यामितिः स्पुतानिगमः स्वर्गद्युस्तनिसर्गद्वितम् SS XII 74
4) The Vishvakse narrative.

According to the Vishvakse narrative:

1) His ferocious three eyes glow like that of the brilliance of the fire and the sun put together. (विभवति नेत्राणि हृदात्मक प्रभवितात्मायेव विभवणा)

2) His adorned with all the ornaments and carry the disc in the right hand the conch in the left hand and remaining two hands rest on his knees.

3) The body is a mass of crystal white like a big mountain (शेतपर्वतसंकुल). 

4) His fangs are pure white like the crescent moon of autumn season. The broad face is ferocious and fearful for the wicked.

5) His sound of the roar is terrible like the sounds of the lightning coming out of the dark clouds (however this character can not be depicted).

5) The Vishnu purana:

1) His body complexion is compared with that of a big white mountain and is smeared with red sandal paste.

2) His leg is like the thick black cloud and he is dreadful to the demons.

3) He is capable of clearing of all the miseries and bestows success to the people.

(g) Yoga Narasimha:

The Vishnu purana clearly speaks of the image of Yoga Narasimha with distinctive features. He is to be made with yogapatta viz., with

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16 Vishvakse narrative XI.58-63(cf H Daniel smith, Vaishnava iconography p 140)
17 Vishnu purana XVII.3-5a and 7b-8(cf ibid )
crossed and uplifted legs held firm by a bond and resting the elbows on both the knees. He is to be made with Sridevi and Bhooodevi and also with Brahma and Sankara. (भूमिलक्ष्मण समोपेतं क्षणकसंपूतम्)

Gopinatha Rao T.A points out the images of this variety, where he sits in an easy posture viz., with the left leg tucked up resting on the seat and the right leg hanging down touching the ground. Lakshmi seated on his left lap and Adisesha with his hoods spread out and covers the head of Narasimha as a canopy.

6) The Padmasamhita: and 7) The Markandeyasamhita:

The Padmasamhita and the Markandeyasamhita state some peculiar characteristics that belong to different sectarian features. A few of them are mentioned here for instance:

1) He has a crown on the head and possesses three eyes (निमले) with curved eyebrows.

2) He shines with Srivatsa sign on the chest and wears a red coloured bodice (रक्ष्यक्षुकसंपुक), whereas in all the other samhitas he wears red coloured garment only.

3) He squats on the seat carrying the conch and the disc in two hands and the other two rests on the knees. (yoga posture)

4) His nails resemble like Vajrayudha.

5) He can be shown as seated or standing. When standing he carries the conch, the disc and the mace. (शक्ययक्रमदाताति)

6) He sits on a seat hanging down the right leg on the ground and the left leg tucked up and rested on the seat along with Sridevi and Bhooodevi. His right hand is in protection mode.

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20 योगादर्शनमुक्तमण्डल समन्यात ।
21 Gopinath rao T.A, Elements of Hindu Iconography p 198
22 Padmasamhita XVII 22-41(cf H Daniel Smith, Vaishnava Iconography pp 140-141)
7) He may be made with eight or sixteen hands:

(a) When he is eight armed, he carries the disc; the sword and the arrow in right hands and the conch; the mace and the saranga in left hands. The remaining right hand in protection mode while the left is rested on the knee or both the hands can also be stretched on the knees. When he has sixteen arms, he carries the disc; the sword; the axe; the trident; the bow and arrow; the spear; and the vajra in right hands and the conch; the shield; the mace; the sakthi; the saranga; the noose; and the goad in left hands the remaining two hands rest on the knees.

(b) When he has sixteen arms, he carries the disc; the sword; the axe; the trident; the bow and arrow; the spear; and the vajra in right hands and the conch; the shield; the mace; the sakthi; the saranga; the noose; and the goad in left hands. The remaining two hands rest on the knees.

(c) Another variety of sixteen arms of Narasimha carries the same weapons the hands but make the demon king prostrate on his lap and actually tearing open the belly of the demon with the blood drenched with the remaining two hands. Siva has to be shown on the right side and Prahlada and Garuda on the other side.

8) The Isvarasamhita:

The Isvarasamhita describes the following features:

1) Narasimha with leonine widened face and long fangs, thick mane and the body shining with the ornaments especially with Srivatsa and Kaustubha. He has eight arms. He has red coloured hair and reddened eyes.

2) He shines like the luster equal to thousands of moons and his colour is crystal white like snow, jasmine and the moon. His radius is equal to thousands of Suns, he has a tall and splendid

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23 यदामुज्जुभु जन्मस्योपरी कल्याणं P. S. XVII 33b
24 उपस्थितं श्रीरामश्चिन्नान्नम् निम्नम् नरमिन्नतादि महायत्वेष्वरन्यम् P. S. XVII 37
25 Isvarasamhita XI 2b-4a, 62b, 66and76b-81 and 4 73b-75a (cf H Daniel Smith, Vaishnava Iconography pp142-143)
towering crown. His face is encircled with shining mane and nails glow red. (रक्तकोशिष्यत्स)

3) He sits in yogapatta posture on the lotus seat with the normal hands holding the conch and disc and the other two resting on the knees. He wears a sacred card and an upper garment. He is bedecked with all the ornaments along with Srivatsa and Kaustubha. This form symbolizes the omniscience (सर्वज्ञतम), while it is usual for yoganarasimha to be alone, sometimes Lakshmi is also shown seated on his left knee.

4) He is very ferocious and frightening. He shines like fire at deluge with five heads and adorned with andamala. There is serpent dangling down from his left shoulder forming the sacrificial card (सर्वयज्ञपूजन). The heads facing each of the four directions and the fifth one is on the top of the head shining like a blazing fire (उपर्यज्ञनितिभ मुख). The faces facing east, west, south and north (पूर্঵ादिकोशिष्यत्स) shine like moon (white), collyriam (black), gold (yellow) and red coloured insect (Indragopa) respectively (यत्रास्तु ज्य नव्यायविभ इन्द्रगोपतिभ तथा). He carry in his strong hands the rosary, the mace, the lotus, the conch, the bow, the ploughshare, the disc, the arrow, the gesture of boon bestowal and the sword. This form is called meru and capable of curing all elements.

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26 Iśvarasamhitā IV. 76a-81
9) The Parasarasamhita:27

According to the Parasarasamhita:

1) He is in the midst of milky ocean and represent reality consciousness and eternal bliss (सत्यज्ञानसुखस्वरूप). He is bedecked with numerous ornaments and his face is exceedingly pleasant (अतिप्रसन्न). He is with lakshmi (but sometimes with Bhooodevi also). He is brilliantly shining like the sun and white coloured like moon. His head is covered by the hoods of Adisesha as canopy. He has three eyes (यंत्र). He holds the disc, the trident and one hand in the protection mode.

2) He is in standing posture (प्रत्यालौंडः) having three eyes, fierceful fangs and tawny red hair (विन्यमलसितं पिङ्गलेशं). He holds the weapons; the sakthi, the sword; the fire; the goad; the cudgel; the lance; the axe; the disc; the bow; the arrow; the noose; the ploughshare; the vajra; the mace; the pestle and the trident and he is sixteen armed28

10) The Seshasamhita:

(h) Varaha Narasimha:

The Seshasamhita mentions29 the image of Varaha Narasimha with a peculiar characteristic of having three eyes, which is usually associated to Siva. He is ferocious and possessing eight hands carrying discs in all of them. Though he is mentioned as ugramurti, he is also considered as compassionate towards his devotees. However no detailed iconographical features are enumerated in the Samhita. The

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27 Parasarasamhita XV 160 and XXV.10(cf. H. Daniel Smith, Vaishnava Iconography, pp 142-143
28 Ibid. XV.160
29 Sesh Samhita XXIII. 19 (cf. H. Daniel Smith, Vaishnava Iconography, P 142)
presiding deity of Simhacalam, A. P. is Sri Varaha Narasimha, but the features described above does not suit to it. The image of Varaha Narasimha is having a head of a boar with two hands in standing position.

The Seshasamhita also refers Sudarshana Narasimha. It is seen on the reverse side of Narasimhayantra, the representation of Sudarshana (the personified disc) with eight or sixteen hands standing or moving, which symbolizes the Visvarupa concept of Vishnu. It simply states that the Sudarshana Narasimha is universal with an appealing body (विष्णुपमुदरारघुम) and possessing series of burning flames around (व्यालालापरे).

At another place it is said that the image may be adorned with all ornaments and made seated along with Sridevi, Bhudevi and Neladevi in the benevolent posture. It is also stated that he may be bedecked with all ornaments, holding all kinds of weapons. In all these places the Narasimha form must be in benevolent form when he is either with his consorts or Prahlada.

11) The Paramesvarasamhita

Generally when the lord is described with sixteen arms, he is in the act of tearing open the abdomen of the demon Hiranyakasipu. But here in this Paramesvarasamhita and Parasarasamhita XXV.10 such act is not found. The Parasarasamhita even describes the lord the standing posture (प्रत्यासीच्छे).
Here also he is sixteen armed and the weapons are also like parasara samhita XXV.10. In edition it is stated here that he can have eight arms and in that case he holds the lotus, the goad, the pestle, the disc, the conch, the bow with arrow, the noose, and the mace.

12) The Vihagendrasamhita:

The Vihagendrasamhita enumerates seventy four kinds of Narasimha images, but the features are not elaborated.

13) The Agnipurana:\footnote{The Agnipurana 49.11}

Narasimha has wide opened mouth and has two hands each holding the shining disc and the mace in the act of tearing open the belly of the demon Hiranyakasipu.

14) The Visnudharmottarapurana:\footnote{V.D.P. III. 78 Ch.}

This purana states that Narasimha manifested from samkarsana form of Vishnu (ह्रि: संकार्यांशेन नरसिंहश्वः धर:). It states that the demon represents by thick mane resembling the fire (ज्वालामालाकुलमुखोज्वालाकेशरसमुखः).

15) The Matsyapurana:\footnote{M.P. 259.31-35}

It states Narasimha has eight hands; ferocious; ignorance and Narasimha dispelled such ignorance in all the worlds arising out of mind, speech and body(सर्वायानात्मानशाहीः). He is surrounded widened lion’s face and large eyes. He has thick and erected mane; attractive ears and the act of tearing open the abdomen of the demon with the entrails.
coming out; the demon with vomiting blood and synchronizing eyes and face. Sometimes he may be depicted as fighting with demon and holding sword and shield.

The Silparatna:36

It describes Narasimha with eight arms. The demon is to be depicted as vomiting blood and his entrails coming out. The demon holds sword and shield in his two hands. He holds the entrails of the demon dug out from his body as garland round his neck with topmost two hands and the lower two are engaged in tearing open, while other four hold the disc, the lotus, the mace and the conch.

The Mayamata:37

Mayamata describes Narasimha with very sharp fangs and nails; white in colour; strong tongue and adorned with all the ornaments wearing red garments. He, with eight or ten arms the actual act of killing the demon has to be depicted. Such icons should be installed on the mountains or in the caves or in the forests. If installed in midst of enemies(battle field), the destruction of the enemies is certain. The specific point mentioned here is that while killing the demon, Narasimha should not have any weapons in the hands but both hands are to be engaged in killing the demon (हर्ष्ट्व युद्ध तिरायुधी अति... विदरणकर्दय). While installing Narasimha in the towns or villages, he has to be shown with four arms holding conch and the disc in two hands while another one hand offering protection mode and another rested on the seat. He is adorned with all the ornaments and wearing yellow garments. He can be in standing or sitting or in yoga posture with knees raised up and bound with a cloth.

36 The Silparatna 25* patala (cf. Gopanathrao T A. elements of Hindu iconography P 202)
37 Mayamata 36.15-24
Iconometry:

The Agamas provide even iconometric details for preparing the icons of Narasimha. Several talamana systems are available in the agamic texts for the same. The following agama texts contain the iconometric descriptions of Narasimha images:

1) Satvatasamhita: 24.180-227
2) Isvarasamhita: 17.181-227
3) Sri prasnasamhita: 13.96-142
4) The Matsya purana: 257th chapter and
5) Vimanarohanakalpa, 57th patala

The Matsyapurana enumerates the harm to be caused by preparing defective images. Different bad effects are stated for different defects of bodily limbs.

The Kapinjalasamhita treats Visvarupa, Narasimha, Vatasayi and Parasurama as ugramutris and prohibits the consecration of such in the townships and facing townships. It recommends installing such murtis in the temples facing the mountains or on the banks of rivers, facing them. It also states that such ugrmurtis can be installed as per one's choice, when installed on the top of the hills or in the forests.

Tantric Aspect

Inspite of the advancement of the scientific investigation, it appears that everyone is slowly finding that behind all the material phenomena, there are subtle spiritual forces. This spiritual force has its own laws. The saints are religious investigators of this field develop the knowledge to apply is subtle laws to create spiritual evaluation of the man. This kind of practical application of laws forms the science of...
tantra. The main purpose of this science is to invoke the god through mantras and yantras. It is viewed that tantric practices are traceable to the period of the Harappa and Mohanzodaro civilization. There is mention of tantric practices in the Ramayana and in the santiparva of the Mahabharata, when Bhisma enumerated many branches of knowledge to Dharmaraja. ⁴⁰

The word tantra is often misunderstood because of prevalence of a mode of practice called Vama marg in which sex, meat, fish, wine etc., have a place. Besides this, there are some black magics which bring disharmony to the others are also included in this heading tantra. Such are degrading practices and are said that they ruin the practitioners. This can be compared to the use of present powerful atomic energy for destructive purposes. Just like atomic energy is not responsible for the degrading/destruction, so also tantra practices.

The word tantra is derived from ‘तन्’ -to spread and ‘जान्’ -to move. Hence the general definition of tantra may be said as “It spreads matters including the tatvas and mantras and offer protection”. ⁴¹ The tantras mainly deal with mantra, yantra and worship of a deity by which one can invoke the deity by his spiritual perfectness.

Mantra:

The word ‘Mantra’ is derived from ‘मन्’ to think and ‘जान्’ to protect. So mantra protects one from dangers. Mantra can even be a single letter can extend to many letters. The Pranava (ॐ), which is considered as the first and foremost mantra can be divided into two kinds i.e. ‘sabdhatmaka’ and ‘dvanyatmaka’. It is consisting of three letters ‘ॐ’, ‘ॐ’, and ‘ॐ’ and can be recited by any person and is known

⁴⁰ Temple India, Vivekanandakendra patrika, feb’81 p 32
⁴¹ Kane, HDS vol II part II pp 1048-1049
as 'sabdatmaka' like any other letters. The second 'dvanyatmaka' is spiritual and only worshippers (sadhakas), who contemplate on that '3' can realise the meaning of pranava by their spiritual power which leads them the abode of Vishnu (तद्विष्णु: परमपद). The tantric texts enumerate several mantras relating to several deities, which are capable of invoking them. The sounds produced are called aksharas and when they are written, they are called varnas. The mantras are evolved from the varnas and those are supposed to be living conscious sound powers. The mantras are mere letters. They assume different forms such as Bija, Sakti, Kavaca, Hrdaya, Netra and Astra. They are not language and do not convey any meaning. They are the devatas imparted to the worshipper by a qualified teacher (Guru) at the time of initiation.

All mantras are endowed with super-natural power of the God. The worshipper has to awaken the power with full concentration. The essentials of worshipper are the God, the Mantra and the Guru. He has to treat that the three are as inseparable for achieving the desired object and has to contemplate and realise. All the texts prohibit the worshipper of any mantra to practice it on his own. The Nyasa that on come across in the sadhana method of mantra, means mentally invoking the deity and the mantra to occupy certain places of the body of the worshipper to make it pure for meditation. The perfection of the mantra depends on Purascarana.

Gayatri mantra is the single most repeated mantra from Vedic period. It reads thus:

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42 Kane, P.V., H D S VOL. V Part II p 1099
43 Purascarana mainly consists of dyana, japa of mantra and tarpana

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“Om! Let us contemplate on the wondrous spirit of the divine creator (savitri) of the earthly, atmospheric and celestial spheres. May He protect us.”

After the primitive Vedic period, when the worship of Vishnu and Siva grew, there arose gayatri mantras for all the varied forms. Thus it was that a Narasimha gayatri was evolved and found in Taitiriya Aranyaka as traversed already. It runs thus:

उ च नरासिंहाय विद्येः तीव्रकमाद्याय धीमहि तनं नारसिंहः प्रणोदयात्

"Let us meditate on Lord Narasimha, who is endowed with sharp teeth and nails as strong as a Thunderbolt. May He protect us."

Narasimha mantras with different number of letters evolved. The Padmasamhita states that there are sixty four mantras of Narasimha, but categorically stating dealt wit few mantras only. Among the mantras, Narasimha anustubhmantra is considered as Mantramraja. Besides Narasimha poorva tapaniyopanished, almost all the Vaishnavagama texts explain this mantra, which runs like this:

उ नरासिंह भेषणं भवेत् मृत्युमृत्यु नमः

This means ‘I salute Narasimha, who is terrible, mighty, blazing in all directions, fearful as well as compassionate and death to death himself.’ It is just sabdattmak meaning as said already. The said Upanishad mentions that the recitation of this mantra is to be followed by the four ‘angamantras’ (ancillary mantras) viz. Pranava, Yajuralakshmi, Gayatri, and Narasimha Gayatri. The said Upanishad, Ahirbudhnya Samhita,

1 P.S., carya pada 27 30.
Parasara Samhita etc.; tantric texts discussed this mantra elaborately with its bija, sakti, kavaca, hridaya etc. subsidiaries and declared that this is the powerful of all. The bijakshara for this Narasimha mantra is ‘śra’ (kshroum) and it itself is a single letter mantra.

The modern tantric texts like Saradatilakam, Prapancasarasarasangraha delineated the mantras explained in agamas and handed over to the society. The Saradatilakam,\(^1\) mentions the following mantras pertaining to Narasimha:

1) Narasimha Mantra with 32 letters (matraraja)
2) Jvala Narasimha
3) Lakshmi Narasimha
4) Sudarshana Narasimha and
5) Cakra

In addition, Prapancasarasarasangraha\(^2\) mentioned some more types. They are:

1) Narasimha mantra with 6 letters.
2) Narasimha mantra with 10 letters.
3) Lakshminarasimha mantra with 6 letters,
4) Lakshminarasimha mantra with 18 letters and
5) Aghoranarasimha mantra

The Padmasamhita stated one more namely ‘Darodara Narasimha mantra’. Many agamic texts elaborately discussed these mantras along with their ancillaries.

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\(^1\) Lakshmana desukendra, saradatilakam, XVI ch
\(^2\) Girvanendra saraswati, Prapancasarasasangraha, 23 and 24 chs
Yantra:

Along side mantras, yantra is also evolved by the tantric sastra. Yantra is a diagram engraved, drawn or painted on a metal, stone, paper, or other material. This yantra, in its loose sense is some times called ‘cakra’ also. This is a developed product of mantra. It is believed that the deity worshipped on yantra yields immediate effect. The yantra is of two kinds’ viz. *Nitya yantra* and *Bhavayantra*. In nitya yantra, by nature itself, the deity exists for ever in salagrama sila, narmadesvara sila, lotus are few among Nityayantra.

The second is Bhavayantra. The qualified preceptors scribe certain diagrams and mantras on a plate and consecrate divine power of certain deity on that. These yantras are said to have power to remove hindrances of the people.47

Sri Paramesvaramahita discusses about Sudarshana Narasimha *yantra* in detail as to how to this yantra, where and how to consecrate and as to how to worship in three chapters.48 It is stated that this yantra was first narrated to Siva by Vishnu himself to see that Siva get rid of his sin of cutting down the head of Brahma by worshipping this yantra.49 It is also stated that Indra and other gods got this mantra from Siva and by worshipping ruled over their respective regions effectively. The kings, who worship this mantra do not face instability of their sovereignty, it is said.

*Narasimhashatcakropanishat* mentions six types of *Narasimhacakras* viz. *aacakra*, *sucakra*, *mahacakra*, *kalalokarakshenacakra*, *dyutacakra* and *surantakacakra* explains

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*note*:

47 *Hindu Sanskruti Anka, Kalyan*, p.463
48 *Sri Paramesvaramahita Ed by Sri Govindascarya*, chs 23-25
49 *सपाताध्यायोऽस्मिनः तद्विन्दुः विदितं दुमश्चत॥ अर्यवर्धनम्॥ ते विन्दुः समुदायः॥*
their formation. There are four more yantras of Narasimha mentioned in Saradatilakam like tantric texts. They are:

1) **Narasimha Yantram**,  
2) **Ripudvamsa Yantram**,  
3) **Apannivaraka Yantram** and  
4) **Cakra Yantram**.

**Salagrama:**

Salagramas, which are often called also as Saligramas, are found in the sacred river Gandaki in Nepal, where Vishnu known by name Saligraman. These salagramas are believed to be the direct representative of Vishnu and it is said that even no need for separate consecration as in the case of icons or yantras. Salagramas are available for all Vishnu forms and they vary from each other based on the marks on them like whorls, spirals visible through a hole on the surface of the stone. The emblems of Vishnu, the conch and the disc are visible on these salagramas. An expertise is required to distinguish and to identify the variety of these salagramas based on the characteristics mentioned above. These salagramas are worshipped individually or in a group of salagramas, but it requires strict regimen, while worshipping. It is said that Narasimha salagrama is tawny red in colour and in the inside of which is seen a broad chest like cavity with three or five dots generally.

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60 Narasimhasahasakropanshat, 108 upanishats, pp 401-404  
61 Dr M S Rajjee, Sri Narasimha Avatara, p 26
Sri Purushottamasamhita describes different varieties of Narasimha salagramas thus:  

1) **Lakshmi Narasimha**: Black in colour with a dot and the mark of a cakra on left is called Lakshmi Narasimha salagrama. This is said to be cable of bestowing prosperity and salvation.

2) **Vira Lakshmi Narasimha**: Tawny red in colour and shining like gold with big cavity (mouth) and with marks of two cakras is called Vira Lakshmi Narasimha salagrama. This is fit for worship by bachelors only.

3) **Vidarana Narasimha**: Tawny red in colour and a dot and marks of sakti at a corner: a dot and a hoof mark and wide opened mouth with the marks of mane, cakra and fangs are called Vidarana Narasimha. It is also worthy to be worshipped by bachelors.

4) **Jvala Vidarana Narasimha**: A cakra mark and mark of fangs inside is called Jvalavidarana Narasimha. It is stated that it destruct the worshiper other than bachelor.

5) **Narasimha**: Tawny red in colour with widened cavity and three dots; fearful with fangs and wide opened mouth is called Narasimha salagrama. It can also be with the marks of four heads in the cavity and a cakra along with a mark of fish or the fangs besides cakra is also Narasimha salagrama. It is worthy to be worshipped by the ascetics only.

6) **Kapila Narasimha**: Two big cakra marks in middle with red coloured bead mark and another mark of cakra is just visible than it is called Kapila Narasimha. It is worthy to worship for salvation or victory.

7) **Sarvatomukha Narasimha**: Seven cakras with many cavities and golden streaks and besmeared mouth with cakra mark on left and also round in shape with tawny red colour is called
Sarvatomukha Narasimha. It is capable of bestowing salvation.

8) **Bhitakhya Narasimha and Patala Narasimha**: Ten cakras with big cavity with multiple colours and openings is either called Bhitakhya Narasimha or Patala Narasimha.

9) **Kukshi Narasimha**: Small and minute cakras and with less wait with very big cavity is called Kukshi Narasimha. It is worthy to be worshipped by hermits.

10) **Rakshasa Narasimha**: Two cakras with multiple cuttings and cavities and dark gold in colour is called Rakshasa Narasimha. It is stated he destroys the houses if kept in the houses.

11) **Vidutjihva Narasimha**: The shining mouth with two cakras and an elevated head is called Vidyutjihva Narasimha. It deserves to be worshipped by the poor and said as capable of bestowing wealth.

12) **Adhomuka Narasimha**: Three cakras located on either side of the mouth and behind is called Adhomukha Narasimha. It is capable of bestowing salvation to the worshippers.

13) **Bala Narasimha**: Two cakras with a small hole and decorated with the mark of vanamala is called Bala Narasimha. It is said that it can clear off all the worldly attachments.

14) **Vibhishana Narasimha**: Widened cakra with widened shape and very big mouth is called Vibhishana Narasimha. It gives miseries if worshipped, it is stated.

15) **Astabhuja Narasimha**: Four cakras or eight cakras with elongated mouth and elevated shape is called Astabhuja Narasimha. It is worthy to be worshipped by sages.
In this connection Sri S.K.Ramachandra Rao in his work Salagramakosa mentions twenty four varieties of Narasimha salagramas. They are:

1-3) Lakshmi Narasimha (three varieties)  
4) Yogananda Narasimha  
5) Bala Narasimha  
6) Vidyutjihva Narasimha  
7) Vibhisana Narasimha  
8) Adhomukha Narasimha  
9) Patala Narasimha  
10) Sarvalomukha Narasimha  
11) Raksasa Narasimha  
12) Vidarana Narasimha  
13) Kuksi Narasimha  
14) Bhatti Narasimha  
15) Vijaya Narasimha  
16) Kapila Narasimha  
17-19) Jvala Narasimha (three varieties)  
20) Mahajvala Narasimha  
21) Sudha Narasimha  
22) Buddha cakra Narasimha  
23) Damshtrakarala Narasimha and  
24) Vakra damshtra Narasimha.

In brief the Narasimhasalagrama is generally red in colour and denotes power. The Laksminarasimhasalagrama has a cakra on the left side on black in colour with dots is said to bestow worldly prosperity. Certain varieties of Narasimha salagrama as seen above are not suitable for worship by ordinary people. All agama texts prohibit the sale or purchase of salagramas.

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S.K Ramachandra Rao, Salagramakosa (cf Dr M S Rajap, Sri Narasimha Avatara pp.26-27)
Tirtha:

All the Puranas glorify the teerthas are ponds which have an association with the god because of which they become supremely sacred. There is a direct reference of Narasimhatirtha in the Skandapurana, wherein Sanatkumara narrates to Vyasa that there is Narasimhatirtha, the best among all and can eliminate all the sins. It also speaks that it is located in Avantidesa. The Brahma Purana says that there is no god equal to lord Narasimha and no tirtha is equal to Narasimha tirtha.

Yajna / Homa / Vrata:

The Narasimhapurana gives procedure for performing Narasimha homa to get rid of all sorts of troubles. Srimannarayanasamhita describes yajna by name ‘Grahabaddhanivarakanarasimhasti’ to get rid of the adverse influences of planets and evil spirits. The Varahapurana explains Narasimhadvadasi vrat. Dharmasindhu gives a vrat of lord Narasimha which is to be observed on Narasimhayanti which falls on Vaisaka souda chaturdasi. Another vrat of recent origin by name Sri Narasimhavratkalpa of T.V.Ramakrishnamurthy is also available.

Thus the agamic and tantric texts evolved different methods of Narasimha worship as discussed supra.
Mudra:

Mudras are the hand postures or gestures of the fingers extensively used not only in daily life but also in poetry, drama, dance, agamas etc. In agama and tantric texts different mudras are enumerated for different deities and for different purposes. The Mudrasnighantu explains two types of Narasimha mudras (positioning of fingers in specific order) thus:

"Sitting on the ground by placing both the hands between the thighs and the chin and lips touching each other and than shaking the hands repeatedly and than bring the mouth in normal position the tongue extending forward like lelihana mudra is called Narasimhi mudra which is loved by Vishnu very much".

"With the palms facing downwards, both the thumbs and little fingers be extended downwards is another Narasimha mudra."

Sri Kapinjalasamhita explains another Narasimhamudra:

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अहंगुणें कलिनाळ्व नमगंि त्वांगुणित्रयम् ।
उद्धि कृत्वा चम्मुश्च वृतिः समुदाहलम् ॥
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So far the objects of worship related to the deity Narasimha as found in the different agamic texts in the form of images are dealt with. It also mentions the iconometry of the images of Narasimha found in the Shilpasaatras. The other objects used in the process of the worship of Narasimha like mantra, yantra, salagrama, home, yagna and mudras are also dealt with.