SECTION 1 A

BRAHMA

In the Puranas Brahma is mentioned as Paramatman, the Creator of the Universe. He is called by various names such as, Visvakarma, Brahmanaspati, Hiranyagarbha, Prajapati, Vindhata, Pitamaha, etc. ¹

In the Satapatha Brahmana, Brahma alone is said to have existed in the beginning. ² Another passage of the same text tells us that Prajapati created Sarasvati, who symbolizes learning and fine arts.

Brahma was one of the three chief deities (Tridevas), the other two being Vishnu and Siva. Gradually Brahma came to be regarded as subservient to the other two gods. The Hindu Triad comprises Brahma, Vishnu and Siva (creator, protector and destroyer) representing the creative, preservative and destructive energies of God. Brahma embodies 'Rajguna', the quality of passion or desire, the cause of creation. Siva is the symbol of 'Tanoguna', the attribute of darkness, and destruction. Vishnu is the embodiment of 'Satguna', the quality of righteousness. He is the deity of mercy and goodness, by which the world is preserved.

Tradition ascribes birth of Brahma to the lotus issuing forth from Vishnu's naval.
Scarcely any temple is dedicated for the exclusive worship of Brahmā. Nor does any sect or class owe special and exclusive allegiance to him. Hence it is believed that Brahmā is offered no Puja on earth now and is not worshipped. Elaborate descriptions of the images of Brahmā are, however, found in several ancient works on iconography.

The Rūpadandana says that the four peaceful looking faces of Brahmā are symbolic of the four Vedas, the four Yugas and the four Vedas.

One of the earliest iconographic descriptions of the god is to be found in the Brhatasamhita. Dr Rao has quoted several shrāvasas of Brahmā from the Amūmādbhedāgama, the Silipatnatā, the Vismupurāṇa, the Rūpadandana and other texts. Brahmā is invariably shown four-handed. The attributes held in the hands are: rosary, srūk, srūvā (both sacrificial implements), and the Vedas. He rides on a swan or on a chariot drawn by seven swans. The latter device is evidently adopted from the seven-horsed chariot of Surya.

Savitri is shown seated on Brahmā's left and Sarasvatī on his right. He is white in colour and wears white garments, jatāmakuta and jewelled ear-rings. In none of these elaborate accounts of Brahmā is there any explicit reference to his face or faces being bearded. The Reis who accompany him in a Brahmāvātana (Brahma shrine) are described as bearded (Smasrula).

All the later images of Brahmā have bearded faces, most of the earlier being shown without this trait. The seated image
of Brahmā are shown in the Yogāsana posture; the standing ones are shown on a Padma Pitha. On his head would be the Ītā-
mukuta and he should be adorned with all ornaments. On his chest there should be a white Yajnopavīta. His body should be covered with a white coat. A Katigutta (Waist band) should go round the loins. There should be Kundis in the ears. The hands of Brahmā may carry the following articles or may be held in the following poses: There may be the Akasamāla and the Kursha (a handful of Kusa grass) in the right hands and Kusa and Kamandalu in the left hands. The front two hands may be held in the abhaya and varda mudrās respectively. The back hands should carry the aksamala and the kamandalu. The front right hand may be placed with the palm facing below on the palm of the front left hand, which faces above. Both should rest upon the crossed legs. The back hands carry an aksamala and a kamandalu, the front right hand may be in the varada pose, the back right hand carrying a aravya and the back left hand a srūk and the front left hand a kamandalu, or the front right hand should keep on aksamala, the back right hand a srūk, the back left hand a nustaka (book) and the front left hand a kamandalu.

According to the Vismapurāṇa the iconographic features of Brahmā should be as follows: His eyes should be closed as in the attitude of śhūnya (meditation). He should be seated in a chariot drawn by seven swans. To the right and left of Brahmā should be his consorts Sarasvati and Savitri respectively. The Rupamandana prescribes a beard for him.
STANDING BRAHMA:

According to the prescribed norms standing figure of Brahma is shown under an artistic umbrella. He has a Prahlavāti behind and wears various ornaments. He carries in the hands an aksamala, a pāśa, āruk or ārya and a kumandalu. On either side of Brahma stands a woman carrying flywisk (shauri). They represent Sarasvati and Savitri.

Some of the earliest representations of Brahma are found in the Buddhist reliefs of Candhāra, his figure is used in the Nativity scene of the Buddha. He has invariably dishevelled hair, beard and moustache, being dressed in the garments of a Brāhmaṇa. One of his two hands holds a water vessel.

A stone image of Brahma in the collection of the Mathura Museum (No. 282) deserves special mention. It is of the Kushāna period. It shows the god with his four faces arranged in a peculiar manner. Three of them are put in one line, the fourth being placed over the central head. None of the faces, however, is shown bearded. 5

Brahma's figure also appears in relief compositions associated with the Vaisnava and Saiva pantheons. Brahma is shown having four faces, four arms, matted hair and the skin of a black antelope as garment. He sits in Padmāsana in a chariot drawn by seven swans. One of his right hands holds rosary and the other a kumandalu. He looks happy and worthy of propitiation. 6 His eyes are closed in meditation attitude.
His four faces are said to represent the four Vedas - the eastern Rigveda; southern Yajurveda; western Samaveda and the northern Atharvaveda.

His four arms represent the four directions. The whole universe evolves out of water. Therefore Brahma carried water in a kamandalu. The rosary which he is counting represents time. The seven lokas (worlds) are represented by seven swans. The lotus arising out of the navel of Visnu represents Kapi, the earth.  

In the Udaigiri Cave No. 13, there is a colossal image of four armed Visnu lying on the coils of the primeval serpent Ananta. From the navel of Visnu issues out a stalk with the full blown lotus blowing at its top. On the lotus flower is the seated figure of Brahmā (Plate IV, Fig. 13).

The earliest images of Brahmā are mostly two armed and three or four faced, the faces being usually shown without beard, and the four armed images are of a later period.

During the early medieval period some temples of Brahma were built. Some such shrines exist at Dubahi and Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh), Vasantgarh (Rajasthan) and Utkal (near Hubli, Dharwar district). The small square temple of the god, first noticed by Cunningham at Khajuraho, indicates that Brahma was worshipped there.

Some of the images of Brahmā obtained from Vidisha are described here. They are made of buff sandstone and belong to
the early Medieval Period.

STANDING BRAHMA (24"x15"x8") Plate III, Fig. 6:

Here Brahma is shown in the standing posture. The image measures 24" 15" 8". He has a beard and holds Śaṅkī and the Vedas. One of his surviving upper hands and the lower hands are broken. Two male and two female figures flank the deity on each side of the pedestal. The upper part of the halo is broken. On each top corner is shown a Vidyadhara (male on left and female on right) holding garland in hands.

BRAHMA (3'-2" - 2.5'-11") Plate III, Fig. 7:

Another stone image of Brahma found at Vidisha is now in the collection of the Cwalior Museum. It represents bearded Brahma in seated posture. Three of his faces are in the front. Three hands are broken. The upper left hand is extant. It holds the Veda. A devotee and a swan are shown on the pedestal.

BRAHMA - Besnagar, Early Medieval
(34", 22", 9") Plate III, Fig. 8:

A third stone image of Brahma in the collection of the Cwalior Museum shows the four faced god. The heads wear high jata-mūkutas. The central face shows the beard, while the other three do not show it. The image wears two necklaces, the upper one is one stringed and the lower one double stringed with pendants all round. The image has Śrīvatsa mark and a sacred
thread on the body. The crown of the head is artistically carved. Two faces of the figure are mutilated.

The medieval images of Brahmā are ordinarily of a subsidiary character. They served as accessory figures in the shrines of the major cult deities, particularly Viṣṇu and Śiva. His figures sometimes appear in the compositions associated with Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva and Buddhist cults. In the Anantaśayana images of Viṣṇu, the birth of Brahmā is shown. In the Śaiva Kalyānasundaramurtis, Brahmā is shown as the priest performing the marriage ceremony of Śiva with Umā.
REFERENCES TO SECTION "A"

1. The following are some of the names of Brähmā collected by Hopkins from the two epics:
   Viśvesa, Lokaguru, Lokavṛddha, Lokabhavana, Lokavāresvara, Adideva, Bhumatsman, etc.
   *Epic Mythology*, p. 192.

2. *Sataratha Brahmana*, XI. 2, 2, 1.

3. *Brahatsamhitā*, Ch. 53, V. 41


5. K.D. Bajpai; *Iconography of Brähmā; Baroda State Museum Bulletin*, No. 5, p. 18.

6. Gupta, R.S.; *Iconography of the Hindus; Buddhist and Jains;* p. 27.

7. *Ibid.;* p. 27.

SECTION 1 B

VISHNU

The Vedic Vishnu became one of the constituent elements of the later composite cult images. He was one of the Trinity (Tridevas). Vishnu was one of the aspects of the Sun-god in the Vedic Period.

In the majority of references to Vishnu in the Vedas, he is introduced as the subject of laudation forming one among a great crowd of other divinities. From this we may conclude that he was regarded as a god who was on a footing of equality with the other deities.

He is stated to have taken three strides over the earth or heavens. This has been explained as symbolising the course of the Sun over the three divisions of the world (earth, atmosphere, and the upper heaven), or in the three phases of rising, culminating and setting. He is often described as an active helper of Indra in his conflicts.

In post-Vedic literature Vishnu is also called Ashyuta, Narayana and Hari. He is regarded as the Supreme Being representing the power of order and stability in Nature. He was often worshipped in a spirit of loving devotion (bhakti).

In due course of time the supremacy of Vishnu was clearly established over other deities.
The Viṣṇhānaś Ārṇa gives details about the images of Viṣṇu and his cult. Vaiśnavism can be said to be the most important Brahmanical cult that came into being some centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. It centered round Viṣṇu. This god did not actually represent Vedic Viṣṇu but the Purānic Viṣṇu, with whom the cult of Viṣṇu was amalgamated. The idea of a regular swift motion, is constantly associated with Viṣṇu in the Vedas. But in the Purānic Viṣṇu the idea of preserver and benevolent deliverer becomes predominant.

In the epics and the Purānas Viṣṇu is often mentioned as one of the Brahmanical triad, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva — the creator, the preserver and the destroyer. With Viṣṇu the major Brahmanical cult grew up, which embodies the three-god concept of the man-god Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa, the Vedic sun-god Viṣṇu and the cosmic god Nārāyana.

As regards Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa, the Satvata hero, was really at the root of the Bhakti cult that came to be designated as Vaiṣṇava. Its three aspects are 'Pārā', 'Vyāha', and 'Vibhava'. 'Pārā' stands for the highest aspect of the god, the supreme cause and the final resting place of everything. His divine will (isēha) is projected towards his consort Śrī-Lakṣmi, who in her dual aspects of 'matter' and 'action' (bhūti and kriyā) receives it. Due to the close combination of the three powers (isēha-sakti, bhūti-sakti and the kriyā-sakti). Six ideal attributes (jñanas) are brought into being. These ideals are
Jñāna (knowledge), Aisvarya (lordship), Sakti (Potency), Bala (strength), Virya (Virility) and Tejas (splendour).

Vasudeva, Samkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, form the four Vyūhas or Chaturmārtis. The concept of the Chaturvyahas seems to have been formulated by the middle of the second century B.C. Later on Samlea was added to the four Vyūhas to form the Pansavṛyā (the five Vyānu Viras). The prevalence of the Vasudeva worship before the beginning of the Christian era is attested to by several evidences - archaeological and literary. Curtis informs us that the soldiers of king Puru (Porus) carried an image of Heracles and installed it in front of the river Vitasta. This image of Heracles, most probably, was the image of Vasudeva-Krāna.¹

Pāṇini refers to the Bhakti cult and also to Vasudeva worship.² Several other literary evidences attest to the popularity of the Vasudeva cult.

The early images of Viṣṇu or Vasudeva bear the traits of the free standing Yaksā images. The Bhāgavatas preferred to symbolise their god through certain emblems and auspicious symbols. The common symbols were lotus, chakra, flower garland, the conch and the Pūrṇahuta. The Narāyana Purāṇa lists one hundred and eight auspicious symbols.³ The usual emblems associated with Viṣṇu are the conch, the disc, the mace, the lotus, the abhaya or the varada-mudrā. The conchshell being a precious object (nidhi or treasure) signifies prosperity. Chakra or disc was a symbol of universality and power. The lotus was
a mark of divine purity. The mace, a prominent weapon signifying strength, was also attributed to Visnu.

Garuda is referred to as the vehicle of Visnu. The bird is also the emblem on the flagstaff of Visnu. Garuda is assigned such a high position that the gods in the Mahabharata address a prayer to him. On the coins of the Gupta emperors the emblem of Garuda is found. On some copper coins of the Guptas Garuda is shown seated on a high pedestal.

The abhaya and the varada-mudrās are usually found in the iconography of Visnu. The emblems attributed to Sainkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are the pestle, the bow, the sword, the ploughshare, etc. In the later texts a high symbolic significance to these emblems and varied interpretations were attached.

According to the north Indian texts the images of Visnu can be classified into standing, sitting and reclining types. They are further classified on the basis of the number of hands.

The standing image is called a sthānaka mūrti; a sitting image asana mūrti and a reclining image as savana mūrti. The images in each of the three attitudes are classified further into the Vēra, Bhūga, Vīra and Abhisheka varieties with slight differences in their characteristics.

It is enjoined that a Yogi should worship the Vēra form of Visnu. A person desirous of enjoyment should worship the Bhūga form. Those who desire prowess should worship the Vīra
form. Kings and others who wish to conquer their enemies are recommended to worship the Abhieharika form.

A number of two, four and eight armed Athanakasurtis of Visnu have been found at Mathura, Ahishahattra, Vidisha, and other sites. They belong to different periods, from the early centuries of the Christian era to the Medieval times. The dhyanas of such images are found in the Puranas, the Silpa-texts and in the works like Brihatsamhita of Varahamihira. The images of Visnu, seated on his Vaahana Garuda, were also worshipped, though not as commonly as the standing ones. Visnu on Garuda has been referred to in the Mahabharaata and other works. The Harivamsa also describes images of Visnu seated on Garuda.

According to the iconoclastic prescription three of the four hands of Visnu should hold the conch, the disc and the mace respectively. Nothing definite is said about the emblem to be held by the fourth hand.

Some of the early images of Visnu show him seated on an ordinary or lotus pedestal. One such seated Kushana image of Visnu is in the collection of the Mathura Museum.

The images of Visnu are ordinarily four-handed. In the hands he generally holds the conch-shell, symbolical of the eternal Space; the wheel, symbolic of eternal Time and the mace representing eternal Law. The lotus flower is also
associated with Vishnu and in the later images it is generally marked on the fourth hand of Vishnu.

According to the Varaha Purana, Vishnu holds the conch, the discus, the sword and the mace in his four hands. Sword is explained as the eleaser of the darkness of ignorance. The rounding conch is the dispeller of illusion. The discus is the wheel of time. The mace is for destroying the evil. He wears a heavy garland of flowers, called Varanîla.

Vishnu's vehicle Garuda is the wind personified. The loveliness and the richness of the three worlds is embodied in his consort Lakshmi. The sun and moon are his two jewels, Kaustubha and Srivata.

According to the Manasara the image of Vishnu should be furnished with four arms, two eyes and the crown known as the Kiritasukuta. There should be Srivata mark on his chest. The upper one of the two left hands should be optionally in the boon-giving (Varada) pose. Upper one of the two right hands should be in the protection (Abhava) pose. The second right hand should hold the disc (Chakra) and the other left hand should hold the conch shell. He should be adorned with all the ornaments. Vishnu should be accompanied by his consorts (Saktis). On the two sides the images of Lakshmi (Gri) and the Earth goddess (Bhumi) should be optionally on the right or left when they are made in the erect or sitting posture also.
INCARNATIONS OF VISHNU

The most commonly accepted and recognised incarnations (Avatars) of Vishnu are ten in number. They are declared to have been assumed on ten different occasions by him with a view to destroy certain Asuras and to set up law and order on the earth. These ten avatars of Vishnu are: I. Matsya (fish), II. Kurma (tortoise), III. Varaha (boar), IV. Narasimha (man-lion), V. Vamana (dwarf) including Trivikrama, VI. Parasarhama, VII. Raghurama, VIII. Krishna, IX. Buddha and X. Kalki.

Some authorities do not consider the Buddha to be an avatar of Vishnu and substitute in his place Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna as an avatar. The Bhagavata Purana mentions twenty two incarnations of Vishnu. All the avatars are usually referred to in the latter Sanskrit works like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata and the Vishnu Purana.

The ten incarnations are arranged in the order of the modern theories of evolution. First comes the fish, then the amphibious tortoise. Next is the wild boar. The half beast, half-man Narasimha follows the boar. The dwarf man in mentioned next and so on. This arrangement of the incarnations of different stages of evolution of the animal world and civilisation is based on the well-defined principle of evolution. The idea of the personification of the divinity is found in almost all religious systems of the world.
About the incarnations of Visnu, Dr. N.K. Bhattasali’s views are worth quoting here: “Many of the incarnation, figure as the revealer, or chief hero of a Purana. Thus Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Vaman each has one principal Purana attached to his name. The Ramayana may be taken as the Purana of Rama, while the Mahabharata is a Purana of Krishna, whose history is dealt with in the Bhagavata and other Puranas also. Nrisima, Kalki, and Bhargava (Parasu-Rama) each has an upa-purana (minor purana) assigned to him.”

Here we shall first deal with the main forms of Visnu and thereafter shall describe the images of the ten incarnations discovered in the region concerned.

**Visnu (42” 13” 6”) Plate IV, Fig. 10:**

This is a standing image of Visnu in Samabhanga. He wears a highly decorated Kiritamukuta embossed with a Kirtimukha. He also wears necklace and round earings. At the back there is a decorated halo (Prabha-mandala). The right hand is broken. In the left hand the deity holds a lion’s face on his left shoulder. This late Gupta sculpture is now preserved in the Gwalior Museum.

**Visnu, Plate IV, Fig. 11:**

In the Cave No. 6 of Udaigiri there are two figures of standing Visnu. The present image represents Visnu in the Samabhanga posture. He wears a prominent Kiritamukuta and long Vamala. The two natural hands are partly mutilated. It seems that the right hand was in the Varada mudra and the
left held a conch. The upper right hand rests on the end of the heavy ringed club. Likewise, the upper left is placed on a big discus (Chakra) which is kept on a decorated pedestal.

Another image in the same cave is very similar to the one described above showing almost the same iconography. The only difference is that the mace and the disc are not represented in their personified forms.

**TORSO OF VISHNU IMAGE (44"x21"x3") Besnagar, Plate IV, Fig. 12:**

This headless figure of Vishnu wears a thick necklace. Both the hands and legs are broken. On the centre of the chest there is Brihāasa symbol. A thick girdle is tied round the waist of the deity. The two ends of the Katisutra hang on the thighs. This Gupta sculpture is now preserved in the Gwalior Museum.

**SASA NARAYANA, Udaigiri, Plate IV, Fig. 13:**

The association of Vishnu with the serpent Sasa goes back to the hoary antiquity. It has its roots in the concept of Narayana as the Lord of the Waters, referred to in the Mahābhārata and other works. Narayana is said to have His abode on the pramaeval waters. When Vishnu was identified with Narayana he was also conceived to have been resting on the serpent bed placed on the primordial waters. He created a lotus from his naval from which Brahma was born. The serpent Sasa is recognised as a form of omnipotent Vishnu. It symbolises eternity as his name ananta suggests. Dr. Gonda has surmised that
"Vishnu sleeps on Seṣa and Vishnu is Seṣa; Seṣa is the form of Supreme Being". 17 Vishnu reclining on Seṣa represents him in his eternal existence.

The Devatasthiraprakarana gives a detailed account of the Seṣasayi Vishnu. The god Hari is to be carved reclining on the coils of the serpent Seṣa amidst the waters. One of his hands should rest on the thigh and the other near his naval. One of the upper hands is near the head and the other holds Sannama-manjari. Brahmā is to be carved in the lotus issuing out of naval of Hari, while the demons should be shown holding the lotus stalk. 18

The Abhisarakanurtti represents the figure of Vishnu reclining flatly on the coils of the serpent. 19

The theme of Seṣasayi was quite familiar to the artists of the Gupta Period. A very fine example of Seṣasayi Vishnu has been represented at Udaigiri in Cave No. 13. The image is twelve feet long. Vishnu is flatly lying on the bed of serpent-coils, which are shown in receding order. His head rests on the palm of the upper left hand. The lower left hand rests on the thigh. The Vanamāla can be seen flowing down the knees. On the top of the panel are carved the following figures: Garuda in the bird form, the svuṣṣa-parvusā and the demons. 20

The figure is weatherworn and the face is much damaged. What his right hands hold cannot be made out. The lower right hand probably held the Chakra. On the pedestal below are seen two human figures, one behind the other. Here the goddess Laksṇī is absent.
The other notable example of this type of the Sesāsayi images of the Gupta Period is the sculptured scene in a niche of the Dasavatara temple at Deogadh. 21

LAKSMI-NĀRAYANA - Plate V, Fig. 14
24" 21" 8", Badoh, Early-Medieval Period:

Laksmi as a goddess of prosperity, came to be associated with Vishnu. Images of Caja-Laksmi are known from Bharhut, Sanchi and other places. 22

The number of the seated images of Laksmi-Nārayana is more than that of the standing images. The former was more popular. The Parānanda Sūtra gives the following iconographic features of the Laksmi Nārayana images: Lord Hari is to be meditated upon as having the human body with dark complexion and wearing yellow garments. He has four hands and is accompanied by Laksmi. In his right hands he holds the disc and the mace, and in his left ones the lotus and the conch. There should be his Garuda Yāhana, and the god should be adorned with various ornaments. 23

The Skanda Purāṇa describes Laksmi seated to the left of Nārāyana who holds the disc and the conch in his hands, with the other left arm embracing Laksmi. 24

According to the Rūpamandana, Nārāyana holding his usual emblems and Laksmi holding lotus, should ride on Garuda. 25
A sculpture from Badach in the Gwalior Museum depicts a beautiful image of Laksmi-Nārāyana in sitting posture. The four-handed Nārāyana is seated on Garuda with his consort Laksmi on his left thigh. The hands of Visnu are broken. Laksmi embraces Visnu with her right hand. Her other hand holds the lotus. Both of them are adorned with various ornaments. Laksmi has a high head-dress. The pedestal has a panel of seven seated figures. The halo, the upper portion of which is broken, consists of two figures each on both sides.

**VISHNU RIDING ON GARUDA - Plate IV, Fig. 15**
40" 26" 12", Vindisha, 11th Century A.D.

Visnu is riding on his Vahana Garuda. All the four hands are broken. The left leg is also partly broken. The legs rest flat upon the Garuda, the right leg is broken almost completely. Visnu wears all the ornaments and also a Yajnopavita. There is an open rayed halo at the back, and Brahma, Visnu and Siva are shown seated. The exterior is further sculptured with the images of griffins and male and female attendants. Garuda is shown wearing various ornaments including snake. There is an inscription on the pedestal.

There are numerous references to the **ayātāras** of Visnu in the ancient literature. The main incarnations of Visnu are ten

The Matsya and the Kūrma, the first two of the ten incarnations of Visnu, are minor as compared to his other ayātāras. They are not often adored or praised in the religious texts.
But the Fish and the Tortoise forms of Vismu represent his important aspects of evolution.

**MATSYA AVATARA** - Plate V, Fig. 16.
34" 15" 5", Gyraspur, Early Medieval Period.

It does not figure in the Vedic mythology. References to the fish are found in the later literature. Fish was considered a symbol of fertility. Vismu is connected with the waters and creation in his Narayana and several other forms. The main function of the Fish as an incarnation of Vismu is described in the Agni Purana. He was to save Manu from the flood and help him to assume the role of creator. The legend is found in its developed form in the Satapatha Brahmana. 26

According to the Vismu dharma, the image of the Fish incarnation of Vismu is to be made in the form of a fish with a horn. 27

According to the iconographic texts the image of Matsya may be made either like an ordinary fish, or in a form which is half fish and half man. In the later case the upper portion should be that of man and the lower one that of fish. The image is generally given four hands, two of which carry Sankha and Chakra, and the other two are held in the Varada and abhaya poses. The human half is generally decorated with all the ornaments worn by Vismu.

Not many images of the fish incarnation have been found. Those that are available belong to the Post-Gupta Period. At Bandhagarh in the Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh, a shrine
of fish, along with similar shrines of other incarnations, has been found. Its period is about 900 A.D.

A beautiful image of the fish incarnation has been found at Gyraspur. It is depicted on a slab which is supported on two wheels in the form of lotuses, one of which is broken. Four male figures are standing at the top. This sculpture is now housed in the Gwalior Museum.

**Kūrma Avatāra**: 

Kūrma or Kacchapa is usually mentioned in the later Vedas. It is mentioned as "the regulator of the sun" in the Atharva Veda he is connected with the sun. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it is stated that Viṣṇu assumed the form of the tortoise for supporting on its back the mountain which was used for churning the ocean to obtain the ambrosia for the gods.

The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa discusses the symbolism of the tortoise. It is identified with the life-sap of this world, the whole universal and the sun.

In the Mahābhārata, the gods and the demons wanted to churn the ocean in order to obtain Amrīta. They wanted mountain Mandra as support for the churning staff. The gods approached the tortoise to lend his back or shell as a support to the mountain and the serpent Viṣṇu as the churning rope. The churning of the ocean and the tortoise, connected with the creation myth, were assimilated in our legend.
In the Vīṣṇu Purāṇa it is said that Viṣṇu assumed the form of Kūrma at the time of churning of the ocean. 33

The image of this avatāra is generally marked out in a form which is half man and half tortoise, the lower part being that of the tortoise. In most of the cases the Kūrma-vatāra is shown in the form of an ordinary tortoise. The image has four hands two of which carry the Sankha and the Chakra, while the other two are held in the Varada and Abhaya poses.

Kūrma Avatāra - Plate V, Fig. 17
45° 30' 9", Badoh, Early Medieval Period:

There is a panel in the Gwalior Museum showing the churning of the ocean. The mountain Mandara is supported on a big tortoise with a rope consisting of the serpent Vasuki, wound round it. On the right side of the mountain stands Viṣṇu holding the disc in his upper left hand, the rest of the hands being broken. On the left side of the mountain appears Surya. On the top is Indra on his mount Airavata. There are six other figures accompanying him who may be identified as the moon, sun, Lakṣmī(?), Kubera or Dhanvantari, the cow and an unidentified female figure. A similar scene of Samudra-māntana is carved on the door jamb of the Laksmana temple of Khajuraho. 34

Varāha Avatāra:

This avatāra may be regarded as the most important incarnation of Viṣṇu. Professor Canda and M.P. Shastri have suggested that the cult must have existed in the vedic or even the pre-vedic period. 35
In the Mahābhārata, Varāhas has been incorporated in the avatāra cycle of Viṣṇu. It is stated that Viṣṇu assumed the form of Varāha Simha (Nṛsiṁha) and Tri-Vikrama. The first detailed account of the Varāha myth is found in the Harivamsa. They indicates that by the time this work was composed, the Varāha incarnation had become quite popular.

In the Brahmanical literature, the relation of Varāha with the Earth is fully established. The boar becomes a personified form of the great deity Prajapati. The Kapisthala Katha Samhita thus describes the legend concerning the origin of the cosmos.

In the beginning there were primal waters - once lord Prajapati, taking the form of a boar plunged into it and he brought up the soil exactly of the size of his snout. The soil became this very earth. A similar legend appears in the Taittiriya Samhita.

One of the earliest references to the Earth having been lifted up from the depths of the lower regions by a boar is found in the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, wherein it is stated that Emuna, a boar, raised the Earth up.

The sculptured figures comprise three different conceptual types of the avatāra, namely (1) Bhūvarāha, (2) Ādivarāha (or Nṛivarāha), (3) Yajnavarāha, and (4) Pralaya Varāha.

Viṣṇu took the form of a boar to save the Earth-goddess (Prithvi) from the clutches of the demon, Hiranyākṣa. During
the flood, the earth was submerged under the water. This posed an imminent threat to all life on earth. At such moment, Viṣṇu took the form of a huge boar. Living into the deep water he slew the demon after a long struggle and rescued the earth.

In the plastic representations the Earth-goddess is shown in the human form being elevated on the tusk of a man-boar. This symbolizes the "extraction of the world from the deluge of sin by the power of the Supreme Being." The iconography of the boar incarnation is described in several texts.

According to the Śilpa texts the Varāha avatāra should be represented with the face of boar and the body of a man.

The right leg should be bent and should rest upon the jewelled hood of the serpent Adisesha. Varāha should be carved four-handed. His two hands should hold conch and wheel. One left hand should support the Goddess Earth, seated on the Lord's arms. One right hand should be placed round the waist of the goddess.

According to some Śilpa texts Goddess Earth should be decked with flowers and ornaments. She should be seated on the right leg of the Lord with both legs pendant. Her uplifted face should be turned towards the Lord. Her face should express great joy at her deliverance. The top her head should reach the chest of the Lord. According to other texts, the Earth should rest on the tusk of the Boar.
Several images of Varāha belonging to the Gupta and Medieval Period found in the Vidisha region, testify to the prevalence of Varāha worship in that Period. The important images of Varāha and Varāhi are described here.

**MAHA-VARĀHA AVATĀRA** - Plate VI, Figs. 18, 19, 20, 21

Udaigiri Cave No. 5, Gupta Period:

This most important image of Maha-Varāha is carved in the Udaigiri Cave No. 5. The colossal Varāha image is well known one.

Its size and powerful execution furnish a happy contrast to the scenes of lesser dimensions forming the background.

The figure stands in a niche 12'8" in height. On his right tusk rests Prithvi, the Earth goddess raised from the depths of the primaeval sea. His right leg rests on the gathered up coil of Sesa. His right palm rests on the waist and the left on the left knee. This posture is natural for raising up a heavy load. The hybrid figure of the god is shown as having raised the Earth with the help of his right tusk.

The god wears a dhoti a long scarf, a broad torque. Two thick Valavas are on each wrist and a long Yanamala.

The arduous achievement of Varāha is expressed through his Valarous Posture. Prithvi, with her creeper like right arm rests on the hook-like tusk of Varāha. Her middle part is lightly posed on his left arm. The feet of the Earth are preched on a half blossommed lotus. The stalk of which is issued from the water indicated by wavy lines, lotuses, buds
and lotus leaves. Prithvi is draped in transparent garments. She is adorned with a chain shaped Girdle, a necklace, anklets and a cylindrical ear ornament in her ear.

On Varāha's right and standing on a lotus flower is Lakiṣmi, holding the long stalk (nāla-danda) of a fully blossomed lotus. Over Varāha, is seen Śesa with a canopy of thirteen hoods in two layers. Śesa is in a worshipful attitude with palms held in anjali-mudrā. Behind him and holding a garland is a kneeling male with spirial locks of hair. There is a smaller figure behind him, standing and wearing a peculiar necklace.

On the right and left side of the niche is carved a very interesting scene (Plate VI, Fig. 19). It represents descent of the rivers Geṣa and Yāmuna from the heaven. The two rivers eventually join the ocean. The left hand composition is complete preserved. Here on the upper portion the heaven is shown by the flying Devas. Below them are seen a group of fine Apsarasās, the one at the centre dancing and the others playing on musical instruments. The figure of Geṣa stands on a crocodile and that of Yāmuna on a tortoise. The river goddesses are holding water vessels in honour of god Varāha. Later on two rivers join together and enter the sea (Plate VI, Fig. 20), where the god of ocean Varuna is standing in the water above his knees (Plate VI, Fig. 21). He holds a Kalaśa in his hands. The god Varuna wears a simple mukuta, waist band, a loin-cloth and an upper garment.

In the bottom are shown thirty-two Nīlās standing in two
rows holding rosary in the right hand extended in the pose of praise of Varāha. In the left hand they held a long necked water pot with a conical bottom.

It is in Gupta art as in literature of this period that the two great rivers make their appearance in the human form for the first time in the scheme of the temple architecture.40

The lovely composition over the south west and north walls of Cave 5, seems to represent Vīṣṇu in the Visvarupa form.41

VARĀHA AVATĀRA - Plate VII, Fig. 22
44"x24"x8", Badah, Early Medieval Period:

The figure is preserved in Gwalior Museum. The image has human body with bear’s face. It stands trampling the Ṛṣa under his left foot. He holds a club in his upper right, the other right rests on the thigh. The upper left hand holds the female Earth who is seen seated in a graceful pose. The Māga stands near the right foot of the deities with his hands clasped. The Māni sits near the left foot. A dagger is attached to the waist band of Varāha. He wears profuse ornaments and a Vanaśāla.

VARĀHI, Plate VII, Fig. 23
18"x18"x8", Badh Medieval Period:

Only the bust of the figure is extant. The deity faces to her right. The human body is shown with prominent breasts. Her coiffure is tastefully done. She wears a crown on her head, torque and a stringed necklace.
UPPER PART OF VARĀHA - Plate VII, Fig. 84
22" x 18" x 9" Badoh, Medieval Period:

The deity has faces to her right. The curly hair-do is very artistic. She wears a torque and necklace. Behind the head there is an ornamental halo.

PASU-VARĀHA, Plate VII, Fig. 25
Badoh, Early Medieval Period:

The figure of Varāha in the zoomorphic form is from Badoh. It is a colossal figure of the boar in the animal form. The boar is lifting Earth on his right tusk. The figure of sun, moon and other gods, goddesses are carved on the body. The Varāha stands on a rectangular pedestal, which has ten avatāras on its surface. Serpent Sesa is shown below along with a demon in his front.

NRSIMHA AVATĀRA:

The early Brahmanical literature has not preserved any of the symbolic significance of Nṛsimha avatāra. Dr. Coets suggests that Nṛsimha worship in India is the result of the Scythian influence.42

In the Mahābhārata, Nṛsimha is considered to be one of the incarnation of Viṣṇu. The first complete exposition of the myth of the Nṛsimha avatāra is found in the Harivamśa.43

The Vīmudharmottara gives the following iconographic details of the image of Nṛsimha.
"The Nrisimha image has strong shoulders, waist and neck. The middle part of his body and belly are lean. He has the face of a lion and the body of a man and his face is halosed. His ornamented image in ardha pose, wears a blue garment. He is represented as tearing the bosom of Hiranyakasipu with his sharp claws."

According to the Puranic versions Visnu took the form of half-man and half-lion to destroy the demon Hiranyakasipu, who was harassing the god Visnu. He tore Hiranyakasipu with his claws, at the time of twilight, sitting on the door-sill of the demon's palace. Narasimha images are of three types: 1. Giriya Narasimha, II. Sthauna Narasimha, and III Yanaka Narasimha. He is generally shown four-handed. The upper two hands should hold the disc and the mace respectively. The lower hands should be striking the bosom of the demon lying on his left thigh. 44

NARASIMHA AVATAR - Plate VIII, Fig. 26
66" 37" 15", Besnagar, 5th Cent. A.D.

This is one of the early images of Nrisimha in the standing form. Similar images have been found at Bran (dist. Sagar) and Tigowa (dist. Jabalpur). From the point of view of iconography these are of great significance. These images are carved in the round.

The image from Besnagar has a human body and lions face. The god wears a thick torque. Around his waist he wears a well
rolled heavy scarf. He also wears a long Vanamala. Both the hands are broken. His long wavy hair fall on both shoulders. It is now exhibited in the Gwalior Museum.

**ÜRŚĪḤA AVATĀRA** - Plate VIII, Fig. 27

40° 12° 9', Badsh, Early Medieval Period:

This image of Śrīśa with human body and lion's face shown tearing the abdomen of the demon held on his left thigh. The upper hands of the god are broken. He wears a beautiful stringed necklace and other ornaments. The head-gear and curly hair are shown very tastefully. At the back there is a lous halo.

**VĀMĀNA TRĪVĪKHĀNA**:

In the Rig Veda there is a reference to this incarnation. The development of the myth starts from the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa. The gods and the Asuras, had a perpetual fight between them for supremacy. The asuras thought that they were the masters of the world. The Devas became afraid of the growing power of the Asuras and approached Viṣṇu for help. Then Viṣṇu took the Vāmana avatāra. He subdued Bali, the king of the Asuras. Vāmana measured the world with his three steps. He extended his steps to the three directions to obtain the possession of the entire world.

This myth of Bali and Vāmana is also referred to in the Ramāyana.

The iconographical representation of Viṣṇu in this avatāra is mainly done in two ways. He is often sculptured as
Vasana or dwarf, depicting the earlier part of the story. In other cases his image is made in the Trivikrama form, the dwarf grown into a gigantic stature, measuring the three worlds with his three strides.

VAMANA AVATAR - Plate VIII, Fig. 28
39° 20' 8", Badon, Early Medieval Period:

This is beautiful two handed image of Vasana holding a rosary in the right hand, the left hand is broken. He wears a Yajnopavita (sacred thread), necklace, armlets and the other ornaments. On his curly haired head there is a Parasol (Chhatra). The knot of the lion cloth is hanging down between the legs. There are two attendants one standing on each side. At the back there is a lotus halo.

KALKA AVATAR:

According to the Brahmanical traditions Kalki is the future incarnation who is still to appear at the end of the Kalki age. The Agni Purana, says that he will be holding the sword, the conch, the disc and the mace. It further says that to punish the thoughtless people Visnu will appear as Kalki, riding on a white horse, with a drawn sword. He will destroy the barbarians and will usher a new era of purity, righteousness and peace. He will then return to Heaven.

He should either have horse face and body of a man or should be like an ordinary deity. He should hold a conch, wheel, sword, and a shield (Khetaka). When he rides a horse, he carried a bow and arrow.
KALI AVATARA - Plate VIII, Fig. 29
27" x 27" x 8", Badah, Early Medieval Period:

In this figure Visnu rides on a horse facing right. He holds the reins of the horse in his left hand. A sceptre hangs down from the left. Two attendants are also shown. The one in front holds a sceptre. The other attendant behind holds an umbrella. The deity wears akavali, kundalas and other ornaments. The two back legs of the horse are damaged.

Images of the remaining incarnations of Visnu have not been found in and around Vidisha.

From the above discussion it is clear that Vidisha was a great centre of Vaishnavism. The existence of a Visnu temple in this locality during the Maurya-Sunga Period indicates that this religion had its strong centre at Vidisha at a very early stage. The numerous Brahmanical images at Udaigiri and several other ancient sites in the Vidisha district eloquently prove the growth of the Vaishnava pantheon here.
REFERENCES TO SECTION : B

   Also see Banerjea, op.cit., pp. 53-54.

2. Astādhvāyi, IV, 3, 95


4. Mahābhārata, 1, 2, 365.

5. Ibid., 1, 20.


7. Desai, Kalpana; Iconography of Vishnu; p.7.


9. Maharaja, 11, 99, 11


11. Yaraka Purāna, Ch. 31, p. 105.

12. Architecture of Manasara; Vol. IV.


15. Ibid., 111, 127, 10.


17. Gonda, Aspects of Early Vaishnavism; p. 152.


19. Vaikhanasārāman; Patala 60


21. Banerji; Age of the imperial Guptas, Pl. XXXVII.


30. *Bhagavata Purana*, 1, 3, 16.

31. *Saparatha Brahmana*, VI, 1, 1, 12.


33. *Vishnu Purana*, 1, 9.

34. Agrawal, Urmila; op.cit.; pp. 36-37.


40. Agrawala, V.S.; *Gupta Art*, p. 36, Fig. 7.

41. *Bhagavadgītā*, Ch. 11, 21-22.

42. Goetz, Hermann; *The Early Wooden Temple of Champa*, p. 85, n. 34.

43. *Harivamśa*, 111, 41-47.

44. *Matara Purana*, 269, 31-34.

45. *Rig-Veda*, 1, 22, 17.
46. Satapatha Brāhmaṇa; 1, 2, 5.
47. Ramāyana; 1, 27, 12-14.
49. Ami Purāṇa, 49, 9.

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SELECTION : G

ŚIVA

Śiva is an influential member of the Brahmanical triad.

Dr. Radha Kamal Mukerji makes the following observations about Śiva, "Śiva is the symbol of the Absolute". In art Śiva combines the antinomic attributes of complete silence and playful activity of life, mind and cosmos. He is both Mahākāla or Eternity and Kāla-Saṁśāra who destroys time. Śiva-Bhairava destroys the demons, who recurrently disturb the order and harmony of the cosmos. Śiva Nataraja personifies the five-fold activities of the self and cosmos. Śiva comprehends as well as transcends all the opposites in the dialectical march of the human self (Śivatman). Often he has no representation, except the aniconic immovable and fundamental form (Mūlavigraha) of the Phallus.¹

Among the Trinity Śiva is associated with the act of Saṁśāra (destruction) or Pralaya (absorption). He is transformed from the destroyer to the creator, for to destroy in one form is to create in another. Besides these, several other activities are also embodied in him. He represents the dynamic force in life, the essential vitality that makes all nature live. His five recognised activities are the following:

1. Srishti (Over looking creation, evolution),
2. Sthiti (Preservation and support),
3. Samhara (Destruction, evolution),
4. Tirobhava (Veiling embodiment, illusion, and also giving rest), and
5. Anugraha (Release, salvation, grace).

These separately considered are the activities of the deities, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Maheswara and Sadasiva.²

The above mentioned qualities collectively make up his five-fold activities (Pahāsakṛtyas), and his numerous manifestations. Śiva is described in the early and medieval Brahmanical texts as the originator and the best exponent of various arts and accomplishments, such as Yoga, Sangita, Natya, etc. According to the tradition, various āgamas were revelations from him. He has also been conceived as the lord of all created beings, and is often described as Paśupati and Bhūtānātha. He is the greatest of the gods (Mahādeva), the husband of Uma, the great Mother-Goddess (Deśānti). He is also called the chief possessor of Māya (Mayin).³ There are various aspects and attributes of Śiva which gave rise to different names of this deity. The names are sometimes incorporated in different sections of the epic and Puranic literature. The Mahābhārata (XIII, 17,) enumerates more than one thousand names of Śiva (Śiva sahastrānamā).

The epic or Purānic Śiva undoubtedly had his Vedic and pre-Vedic prototypes. Rudra was the Vedic counterpart of Śiva, and the Vedic Brahmnic characterisation of Rudra is inherent
from the one hundred names. Rudra is associated with hills and forests. He is called Girija. He uses animal-hide as his garment (Kśiśivasa), the crown of snail-shells like Iśāna on his head, etc.

His names of Rudra Siva are elaborately narrated also in the Purānic literature. The Amarakosha gives a list of his forty-eight names.

The worship of a god similar in some respects to the Puranic Siva seems to have been well in vogue among the early Indus Valley people. The Sankhyāya, Kausitaki and other Brāhmaṇas use such names as Śiva, Rudra, Śiva, Mahādeva, Maheśvara and Iśāna for denoting this God. Weber suggested that such epithets like Mahādeva, Iśāna, etc. of this god "involving quite a special prominence of the deity as compared with the other gods indicated a sectarian worship". Considering the myths about the origin and growth of the concept of Rudra, Aufrecht also observed that the period of the Brahmanas was one when the old polytheism was in a condition of decline and the faith which presents itself in Indian religious history as Śaivism was gaining ground.

The Atharvaveda presupposes the rise of Rudra to the position of a supreme god. It assigns various such epithets to him, such as Bhava, Sarva, Paśupati, Ugra, Mahādeva and Iśāna. The Śatapatha and Kausitaki Brāhmaṇas add Asani to this list, thus making their number eight (inclusive of Rudra). Each four of the above typify his two aspects, ghora (terrific) and
saumya (peaceful). Rudra, Sarva (arrow-wielder), Ugra and Aśātī, characterise his destructive aspect, while Bhava, Pāsupati, Mahādeva and Isāna, his beneficent one.

The process of the evolution was gradual. Panini in one of his Sutras (IV, 1, 112), refers to the followers or worshippers of Śiva. The aphorism 'Śivādibhyam' means that 'the offsprings come in the sense of a descendant, after the names 'Śiva', etc. The word Śaiva, thus formed may be presumed to denote "a worshipper of Śiva". Rudra is also called Āyabhūlika. According to Dr. J.N. Banerji there lived in parts of Northern India exclusive worshippers of Śiva even long before the time of Patañjali. 

In the Rigveda, the Yajusneyi-Samhita of the Yajur-Veda and in the Atharva-Veda the word Śiva, meaning the suspicious, occurs as an epithet of Rudra. It is only Rudra (not Śiva) who is praised in all hymns. The physical description of Rudra with his āyudhas is found in a number of hymns. He carries in his hands a bow and arrows and is described in some hymns as wielding the thunderbolt. Throughout the Vedic period he is identified with Agni and is also said to have given birth, by his contact with Prithvi (the earth), to the Māruts (winds).

According to the well-known story of Samudra-mānthana, when the ocean of milk was churned for obtaining ambrosia for the gods, the first thing that came up from it was poison. Śiva because of his sympathy for the gods, took up the poison and swallowed it. Pārvatī, who was near Śiva would not permit the
poison to get into the stomach of Śiva that it should kill him. She pressed the throat of Śiva and the poison remained there. From that time the blue poison became visible through the fair skin of the throat of Śiva, and lent it a blue colour. Śiva was thus known as Nilakantha.

TRIŅETRA:

Śiva has three eyes. According to the Purānic anecdote, once Śiva was sporting with Parvati on the slopes of the Himalayas. She playfully closed with her hands the two eyes of Śiva. Immediately the whole universe was submerged in darkness and all activity was suspended causing a lot of distress to the living beings. Mahādeva dispelled the darkness by the fire bursting out of his forehead, in which a third bright eye was formed.

The iconographic texts give details about images of Śiva. His images can be white or yellow smeared with the ashes of burnt cowdung. His hair is braided in a conical pile on the top of which is the crescent moon and the goddess Gāṅga. Śiva carries a garland of skulls, a trident, a small hand-drum (damaru), the akṣaḥ-mālā (rosary). He wears a necklace of serpents, etc. He lives with his playful attendants (ganas) on Kailasa mountain. He is the master of dance (Natarāja).

His wife is Uma who is also known as Parvati, Chamunda, Chamba, Kamakshi, Gauri, Kali or Durga in her various forms. She is the daughter of the Himalaya. Uma is regarded as a
goddess of sublime beauty and sweetness. In her other aspects she is furious, delighting in blood-shed and death. In the Tantric cults she is conceived as the Sakti or cosmic energy by which the power of the supreme Śiva is replenished in the universe. Umā is often worshiped along with Śiva, both in the human forms. The linga (image of the male organ of generation) and yoni (image of the female organ) are also worshiped as symbols of Śiva and Parvati respectively.

According to the Manasara the image of Śiva should have four arms and three eyes. It should be adorned with the matted hair and a crown. Śiva should wear tiger skin cloth above the knee and thigh. The image should be decorated with a piece of suspended cloth round the waist. The face should be furnished with the third eye in the middle of the forehead. The image should be in the erect or the sitting posture, and the feet should be adorned with anklets. He should be accompanied by the image of Parvati on the left side. The lotus seat (Padmapītha) and the Mahapītha types of pedestals should be made for the two deities.11

LINGA:

Linga worship is also connected with Śiva. The linga and the yoni represent the great generative principles of the universe, Purusha and Prakriti. In its earlier stages linga worship was purely phallic. The Śiva linga is the closest approximation to the cosmic purusha and the phallic worship which existed almost in all the ancient civilizations.
Existence was conceived as being the result of the union of the male and female principles. The phallus, symbolic of generative power, was considered the cause of creation, animate and inanimate. So when Śiva came to be regarded as the cause of creation the linga became his emblem.

The symbolic meanings of some of the chief symbols of Śiva are as follows:

**Danda** (Staff) represents punishment.

**Trisūla** - the three sulas represent the three guṇas sattva, rajas and tamas.

**Jatajuta** (Matted hair) the variegated Brāhmaṇa, the Absolute.

**Chandra** (Moon) Symbolises his Divinity.

**Yasuki** - His anger which subdues evil (Vyaghra-sharma).

**Tiger skin** - Desire.

**Nandi** (Bull) - It symbolizes Dharma.

The earliest known Śiva Linga is from Bhita and is now preserved in the Lucknow Museum. The top of it is shaped like the bust of a male holding a vase in his left hand, while the right is raised in the abhava-mudrā posture. Below this bust, there are four human heads, one at each corner. The heads show well arranged hair. Large rings are worn in the lobes of the ears. The upper part of the male head is broken, only the portion below the nose being extent. In front immediately below the heads of the two females, the phallus is marked by deeply drawn lines. To the proper left of this is a Brahmi inscription. The lower part of the stone has been shaped as
a tenon to fit it in a mortise. Sri R.D. Banerji has rightly
called it a mukhalinha having fine faces corresponding to the
Isana, Tatrurușa, Ashāra, Varadeva and Sadrūsita aspects of
Siva.

According to the Śilpa-śāstras the face representing Isana
should be on the top, while the other should face the east,
south, west and north respectively. This Linga has been assigned
to the first century B.C.

The chief image in the central shrine of a Śiva temple
is usually the Linga. The Lingas are broadly divided into two
classes:

(1) Chala Lingas - movable lingas.
(2) Aghala Lingas - immovable lingas.

The Mukhalinha distinguished from all other lingas in
that it bears one or more human faces sculptured on it.

About the making of a Mukhalinha all the Āgamas and
Tantras have detailed descriptions. They say that a Mukha-
linga might have one to five faces corresponding to the five
aspects: Vāmadiva, Tatrurușa, Ashāra, Sadrūsita and Isana, of
Siva. In the case of the four faces carved on the four sides
of the Mukhalinha they should be attached to bodies which ought
to be represented only up to the chest. Lingas are always set-
up in pedestals known as the Pindikā or Pithas. These may be
square, oblong, hexagon, elongated and so on.
MALE IMAGES OF ŚIVA:

There are several types of Śiva images in the male form.

The chief forms are:

1. Chandrasēkharāmūrti,
2. Umāmohāsvarāmūrti,
3. Śaṁhāramūrtis, and

According to the Saiva Siddhāntins there are three Śatvas (realities) called Śiva, Sadāśiva, and Mahēśa. According to Gopinatha Rao, "There are five saktis related to Śiva."

These are:

I. Prāśakti - Śāntyatitasakti
II. Adiśakti - Śāntisakti
III. Ichchhāsakti - Vidyāsakti
IV. Jñānasakti - Pratishthāsakti
V. Kriyaśakti - Nivrittisakti.

These five 'Saktis' come in the technology of the Saiva philosophy. Because it produces the faculty in souls of the enjoyment of Kāmas (good and bad) actions and the Saktis called so on:

I. Parasakti is called Śāntyātita.
II. Ādiśakti is called Śānti.
III. Ichchhāsakti is called Vidyā.
IV. Jñānasakti is called Pratishtha.
V. Kriyaśakti is called Nivṛtti."
MAHAŚAMŪRTI :

This mūrti represents three acts of (a) Spriṣṭi (creation), (b) Sthiti (Protection) and (c) Laya' (Reabsorption). Mahēśamūrti manifests itself to the devotees in different forms performing several sports (lilas) in seated, standing or dancing postures or riding up on vehicle.

Mahēśa has one face set with three eyes. The head is adorned with Jata-makuta, four arms. Śiva either standing or seated on a Paḍmāsana. In two of his hands he holds the ṇriga and the pāramu and the remaining two hands are held in the abhaya and the varada poses.

The Lalitamūrtis of Mahēśa are twenty-four in number. These are:

1. Chandraśkhasamūrti
2. Umā sahitamūrti
3. Nṛttta mūrti
4. Vrīshabhārudha mūrti
5. Kalyāṇasundra mūrti
6. Kāmāntaka mūrti
7. Kalāntaka mūrti
8. Tripūrāntaka mūrti
9. Jalandharavadha mūrti
10. Virabhadra mūrti
11. Gajāsura mūrti
12. Śankara-Nārāyana mūrti
13. Ardhanārisvāra mūrti
14. Kirāta mūrti
15. Chandesasnugraha mūrti
16. Kantala mūrti
17. Vishāpaharava mūrti  
18. Chakradava mūrti  
19. Vighnāśvarānugraha mūrti  
20. Sāmāskanda mūrti  
21. Īkapāda mūrti  
22. Sukhasana mūrti  
23. Dakshinā mūrti  
24. Lingodbhava mūrti

Sadasiva is regarded as the highest and the supreme being, formless, beyond the comprehension of any one, subtle, luminous and all pervading.

Now the main Siva images known from the Vidisha region are described here:—

EKAMUKHA SIVALINGA - Plate IX, Fig. 30  
2' 5" 2", Udaigiri, Gupta Period:

Here one human face is carved on round linga in Udaigiri Cave No. 4. The face is round. The arrangement of the hair is a striking feature of this sculpture. The top is shown tied round with a fillet with the hair curling out of the knot. The hair are flowing down in locks on the shoulders. The decoration on the figure consists of an ornamental precious stone at the centre, a necklace and long earrings.

EKAMUKHA SIVALINGA - Plate IX, Fig. 31  
12" 11" 9" - Besnagar, Gupta Period:

The figure is carved rather roughly. The face faces the front and has a high thick head-dress having a decorated crescent above and circles below. He wears round Kundalas.
It seems that god Śiva is represented here in a meditative mood. This figure is now in the Gwalior Museum.

EKAMUKHA ŚIVALINGA, Plate 30, Fig. 32
14" 12" 10". Besnagar, 5th Century A.D.:

The figure is damaged. The eyes are wide open. On the head is a crown. In the ears are long lobes. This is also in the Gwalior Museum.

CHATURMUKHA LINCA, Plate IX, Fig. 33
28" 13" 13", Badsh, Early Medieval Period:

It represents lingodbhava-mūrti. According to the iconic texts, the lingodbhava mūrtis should show Śiva on the front of his four hands, one should be in the protection attitude, another in the boon-giving attitude, the third should carry a battle-axe while the fourth should carry a black deer (Kriṣṇa-pātra).

Brahmā should appear on Śiva’s right, near the top, in the form of a Swan (Hansa). Viṣṇu on the left at the foot of the linga. Brahmā and Viṣṇu should be sculptured in their anthropomorphic forms on the right and left respectively of the linga, facing it, in an attitude of adoration.

The figure found from Badsh, and now placed in the Gwalior Museum, shows four standing figures of Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahmā and Sūrya, one on each side of the linga. The Linga rises above all. All the figures are standing on a pedestal and wear various ornaments. On their body they are wearing yajñāpavita. There are some small figures standing below near
the feet. These are not recognised. The hands are broken and faces damaged. They wear Kirita-mukta. The image is a good example of the Gaurjara Pratihara art.

Another form of Śiva is the Chandrasekharasmūrti which has Chandra (the moon) as its head ornament. The image of Chandrasekharasmūrti is divided into three classes, namely, the Kāvalamūrti, the Umaśhitamūrti and the Alīnganasmūrti. All these three classes are found in the temples and their descriptions are given in all Āgamas.

The third variety of Chandrasekharasmūrti is known as Alīnganasmūrti. In this form, Chandrasekha is to be represented as embracing the Devi with one of his left arms. Sometimes the Devi holds in her right hand a red lotus flower. The right hand of the Devi may embrace Śiva. In this case the hand of the Devi should rest on the right side of Śiva a little above the waist portion, and her left hand should carry a flower or the two figures of Śiva and Uma may be embracing each other, the one with the left and the other with the right hand. Thus there are three modes in which the figure of Alīngana-Chandrasekha may be sculptured. All the figures of Śiva has the Prabhā-mandala.

There are two forms of this type. One is standing and the other is in sitting posture. From Vidisha, images of Chandrasekha Śiva have been found in sitting posture.

UMA-MAHESVARA MURTI, Plate X, Fig. 34
Udaigiri, Gupta Period:

At a short distance south of the Cave No. 19 at Udaigiri
is a small medallion on the open rock surface. The sculpture in the medallion is slightly defaced. It represents Siva and Pārvati seated in the Ālingana Mudra. Siva has four hands, one of which is held in the Varada pose while the other is holding something indistinct. One of his left hands is apparently thrown around Uma’s shoulders. The god is sitting with his left leg bent and resting upon the seat while the right leg is hanging below it. He wears a jewelled crown. Uma’s right hand is thrown in embrace round Siva’s right shoulder. The faces of both the deity are disfigured. Below them are seen dancing ganas. On each side of Śiva and Pārvati are seen two figures, the one to their right sitting on an ordinary stool and the other to the left on a lotus seat. There are also some flying figures on the upper portion of the medallion.

The description of this form of Śiva agrees to a great extent with the details found in the Vīmaṇadharmottara, the Rūpamandana and other works.  

ŚIVA AND PĀRVATI, Plate X, Fig. 35  
39” 12” 14”, Vidisha, 11th Century A.D.  

The figure is carved on a high and decorated pedestal. There is a prominent Prabhā-saṃdala around the figures.

Pārvati is sitting on the left leg of Śiva. Nandi is sitting below facing front. The lion is sitting to the left with Pārvati’s left foot over its head. Both the right hands of Śiva are broken. Śiva is wearing a highly decorated crown. The left hand of Pārvati is placed on her left knee and Pārvati’s
head-dress is elaborate. Both the figures are wearing heavy ornaments. Exterior sides of the pedestals are decorated with the figures of griffins. On the halo are carved the images of Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu. On the pedestal are seen the two animals bull and lion. Between them is dancing Bhringi holding a long sword.

This image is now in the Gwalior Museum.

ŚIVA AND PĀRVATI, Plate X, Fig. 36
29" 19" 9", Vidisha, Mediaeval Period:

Seated Śiva and Pārvati with their hands thrown round each other. Pārvati is holding a stalked lotus in her left hand. Her right hand is placed on Śiva's shoulder. He is holding a snake in his upper left hand. The lower left is placed on Umā's breast. In his upper right hand he is holding Trisūla. The lower right hand being broken. He is wearing highly decorated Kiritamukuta, Kundala and Necklaces. Pārvati is having a tastefully done head-dress.

Kumara and Ganesa are standing one on each side. Brahmā and Viṣṇu are seated on the left and right sides of the corners of the halo. They hold their usual āyudhas. At the top of the halo is seen a beautiful lotus. On the pedestal is dancing Bhringi. A scorpion is seen on the belly of Bhringi.

ŚAŅHĀRAMŪRTIG

In plastic art Śiva is represented either as a terrific, destructive deity or a pacific and polite deity.
Several stories are connected with his specific acts of destructions. Śiva is said to have destroyed demons like Gajasura (elephant formed Asura). His Kālārimūrti shows Śiva as having killed Kāla, the god of Death. His Kāmāntakamūrti represents him destroying Kāma, the god of love.

GAJASURA-SAṂHARA-MŪRTI, Plate X, Fig. 37
1" 44" 12", Gyraspur, Medieval Period:

The story of the destruction of an elephant asura by Śiva is found in the Kūrmapurāṇa. According to it once while the Brāhmaṇas were seated round a Śiva linga, offering prayers, a demon appeared in the form of an elephant and began to harass the Brāhmaṇas. Śiva came out of the linga and killed the elephant and wore his skin as his upper garment.

Descriptions of the images of Gajahamūrti or Gajasura-saṁhāramūrti are found in the Śilpa-ratna, Śaiva-gamas and Amśumadbhēdāgama.

Amśumadbhēdāgama says that an image of Śiva may possess four or eight arms. In case of four arms, one of the right hands should hold the pasa and the other the skin of the elephant, while the two left hands should hold the tusk of the elephant and the skin. If there are eight arms, three out of the four right hands should carry the trisūla, the damaru and the pāśa and the fourth hand should hold the skin of the elephant. One of the left hands should be held in the Viṣṇu pose, another catching hold of the skin of the elephant and the remaining two
should carry a Kapāla and the tusk of the elephant respectively. The left foot of Śiva should be kept firmly on the head of the elephant, while the right one should be bent and lifted up above the thigh of the other leg. The tail should be visible over the crown of Śiva. The image should be adorned with all the ornaments. The skin of the elephant should be so arranged as to look like a Prabha-mandala of the image of Śiva.

In the present image Śiva is four armed, three hands are broken, and the remaining fourth holds a sword. Surrounding the figure of Śiva at the back is the elephant’s skin in the form of a Prabha-mandala. Śiva is standing in tribhanga and is slaying the demon trampled under his foot. The figure is wearing a thick long garland of bones and skulls. He is also wearing a Yaiñē-pavīta. Śiva wears Jaṭamakūṭa and several other ornaments. Kali is seated on a corpse to his left.

**N A T A R Ā J A :**

Another form of Śiva is that of Natarāja. Śiva is regarded as the Lord of dance and music parexcellence. His dance is the dance of creation. Dancing is associated with other deities also.

Vishnu danced on the cosmic waters in the Primeval silence of darkness and the cosmos manifested itself. Similarly Śiva danced and the cosmos dissolved into him.

The pulsating life, energy and rhythm of this initial force is found embodied in the conception of the motif of
Natarāja to which the experience of the Divine Reality of this age gives birth. 18

The Bharata-Nātyaśāstra mentions 108 different kinds of dance poses. In the Saivāgamas it is stated that Siva danced in 108 modes.

The Saivāgamas of dancing actually describe only nine forms. All the one hundred and eight kinds of dances are sculptured. On the gopuram in the Natarāja temple at Chidambaram along with their descriptions in Sanskrit as they are found in the Bharata's Nātyaśāstra.

Among the one hundred and eight varieties one is that of Natarāja described in the Amśumabhidāgama. According to this work the front left hand of the dancing Lord should be held in the gajahasta pose across the body. His left hand should carry fire either in a vessel or upon the palm itself. The front right hand should be held in the abhaya pose, the top of the middle figure of which should be touching the hīkka-sūtra. On the fore-arm of this hand there should be the Sarpavalava (serpent coils). The back right hand of Natarāja should hold a damaru. The right leg should be slightly bent and place up on the back of the Apasmarapursha and the knee should reach the nābbhisūtra. The left leg should be lifted up, and turned towards the right leg and kept across it. On the head of Śiva there should be the āṭāmakūṭa adorned with flower garlands, a snake, jewelled ornaments, and a garland of human skulls, and the crescent moon tied on the left side. The body of Śiva should wear a Yajñānīnavita chest band, rings on all fingers except the
middle ones, on all toes except the middle one and anklets. The chest should be smeared with saffron paste and the rest of the body with ashes. The garment must be made of tiger skin.

The anasmāra-purusha who is trodden on by Śiva should have his head on the right side and his legs on the left side of Śiva. He should be shown playing with a snake by keeping all his fingers in a cuplike shape, and resembling the hood of a snake (nāga-mudrā).

All the attributes in the Nataraja figure have some meaning. The drum produces sound, the vehicle of speech. Sound is associated with Ether. When the process of manifestation begins, it is with sound and Ether. He carried Fire. The drum is symbolic of the act of creation, the flame or fire is suggestive of destruction.

Śiva dances on the prostrate body of the dwarf Anasmāra-purusha, who symbolises ignorance or darkness. The figure of Nataraja is encompassed by a ring of flame and light, which is symbolic of the holy syllable 'Om'. This is symbolic of creation.

DANCING ŚIVA, Plate XI, Fig. 38
34° 30" 10", Udaipur, 11th Century A.D.

This image is now placed in Gwalior Museum.

The central figure is that of Śiva dancing. He is flanked by two Ganas, one on each side playing on damaru and drum. Śiva holds triśūla, serpent, bow and bell in his hands. Śiva dances
with the left foot, the right is fixed firmly on the ground. The image is carved in relief inside a well-carved circular niche, decorated with lotus twigs and buds.

Śiva is thus the cosmic dancer and manifestation of eternal energy in its five-fold activities - creation, maintenance, destruction, concealment and favour.
REFERENCES TO SECTION : C.

1. Mukerji, Radhakamal; Cosmic Art of India, p. 191.
2. Coomaraswamy; Dance of Śiva, p. 59.
4. Vaiśnava Sāmbhota, Ch. 16.
6. Indische Studien, 11, 302
SECTION D

G A N E S A

Ganesa, the elephant headed son of Siva and Parvati, has been one of the most popular figures with artists. He was the general of Siva's army of ganas. The elephant head is the symbol of sagacity and fecundity.

According to the tradition the Divine couple Siva and Parvati had two sons, Ganesa and Karttikeya. The latter became commander of the forces of the gods. The incidents accompanying his birth are narrated by the immortal poet Kalidasa in his work Kumāra-Sambhava.¹ Ganesa, the elder son, is said to have lost his head through some unfortunate accident. An elephant, which was found sleeping with head to the north was decapitated and the severed head was fixed by Siva to the trunk of Ganesa. In order to compensate him for his uncouth appearance, Siva made him to be the chief of the Ganas, the attendants of Siva. Thus he received the name Ganesa, the lor of the Ganas. It was also ordained that no worship or religious ceremony would be valid or efficacious in which Ganesa was not first worshipped. The bestowal of success in any undertaking would also depend on the pleasure of Ganesa. The other name of Ganesa is Vighneshvara. As the name indicates Vighneshvara is the deity presiding over obstacles. He came to be regarded as the deity who either puts obstacles in the way or removes them. He had the capacity for doing both these things.
Several interesting episodes about the birth and achievements of Ganesa are found narrated in the Purāṇas and other works. He was regarded as the representative of prowess, wisdom and riches.

The Silpa texts, give details about the images of Ganesa.

The Brahukāvya describes the earliest variety of the image of Ganesa thus: "The lord should be elephant-faced, pot-bellied, holding a hatchet and a radish, and should have 'one tooth'".

The Rūpamandana states that in a temple dedicated to Ganesa, the image of the main deity should be in the centre. On its left should be the figure of Gajakarna, on the right of Siddhi, to the north of Gaurī, to the east of Buddhī, to the south-east Bālachandra, to the south of Sarasvatī, to the west of Kubera, and the back of Bhūmrākā.

All these images are to be dwarfish in stature and should possess terrific looks, one of their hands should carry a danda and other two hands should, in the case of Avighna and Vighnaraja, carry the Parāndu, the Pada and the Ankusa.

Vighnesvara may be represented as sitting or standing. The seat may be a Padmāsana or a mouse or, in rare instance, a lion. If the figure is a standing one, it should have a few bends in the body so as to be of the dvibhanga or tribhanga type. The standing image of Ganapati may also be of the asamabhanga type without any bend. In the case of the sitting image,
the rule laid down is that it should have its left leg folded and resting on a seat while the right leg has to be crossed so as to rest on the left thigh. In majority of cases, the belly of Ganesā is shown too big. His legs cannot be shown to cross each other in front. Therefore the right leg only is shown as bent.

The trunk of the elephant-head of this god may be shown as turned towards the left or the right. Generally it is turned towards the left. Only in rare cases figures with the proboscis turned to the right are formed.

Vighnēśvara is figured in most cases with only two eyes. The āgamas, prescribe three eyes to him in certain particular aspects. His image may have four, six, eight, ten or even sixteen arms. Majority of such images have only four arms. The belly of this god, Lambodar, as he is often called, has to be very capacious. On the chest has to be thrown a snake in the form of the Yajñopavīta, and another snake should serve as a belt going round the belly.

In the Śilpa texts several varieties of Ganeśa images are narrated. These are:

I. Bāla Ganapati  II. Taruna Ganapati
III. Bhakti Vighneśvara, IV. Vīra Vighnēśa
V. Sakti Ganeśa  VI. Vehehhishta Ganapati
VII. Mahā Ganapati  VIII. Ürdhvā Ganapati
IX. Pingala Ganapati  X. Meramba
XI. Prasanna Ganapati
XIII. Dhanga Ganapati
XV. Bhuvanesa Ganapati
XVII. Haridra Ganapati
XIX. Surpakarna Ganapati
XII. Unmatta Ganapati
XIV. Vighnaraja Ganapati
XVI. Nritta Ganapati
XVIII. Bhalachandra Ganapati
XX. Ekadanta.

Only a few of the above mentioned forms have actually been found. The important images of Ganesa from the Vidisha region are described here:

GANESA, Plate XI, Fig. 39
Udaigiri, Gupta Period:

An early Gupta relief depicting seated Ganapati is preserved in the facade of the Chandragupta Cave at Udaigiri. This is one of the rare early images of Ganesa and is of unusual iconographic interests. The two armed god is sitting on a raised seat in the ardhanarishvara pose, holding a cup in the left hand containing modakas to which his trunk (now broken) was applied. The right hand is partly broken. The image is crudely carved. His Vahana mouse is absent. It is interesting to note here that this pot-bellied deity is carved here in the urddhvaratna form.

GANESA, Plate XI, Fig. 40
800 A.D., Vidisha:

One of the finest standing image of Ganapati is known from Vidisha. The four armed god is standing on a square pedestal in a slightly bent pose (abhanga), holding trident
and pāśa in his upper right and left hands respectively. The lower right is raised in the abhayamudrā, while on the left lower rests his long trunk. He is having only one tooth (Ekdanta). He wears Vaññopavita. The god stands between two trees shown inside a pilastered niche.

GANESA WITH SAKTI, Plate XI, Fig. 41
2'-1" x 1/2'-10", Udaipur, 11th Century A.D.

The sculpture shows Ganesa with his consort or Sakti (Nidhi), seated on a large lotus. Nidhi is sitting on his left thigh. All the hands of Ganesa are broken except Ganesa's lower right hand which is holding a Parasu. The deity has only one tooth (Ekdanta). Both Ganesa and his Sakti wears various ornaments. The carving shows a great deal of skill. The ornaments and the design of the garments though not lavish, are tastefully displayed.
REFERENCES TO SECTION : D


SECTION II

DEVĪ

In the early Vedic literature references are found to several goddesses such as Aditi, the Divine Mother, Ushā, the goddess of dawn, Prithivi, the mother earth and Rātri, the goddess of night. The hymn associated with Rātri came to occupy a prominent position in the Śākta ritual of later times. J.N. Banerji has rightly observed about the evolution of the Devi cult: "The developed Śakti worship of the epic and Puranic times was not a little indebted to these goddess concepts, the very idea underlying the word Śakti being based on the central theme of the Devī - Śaktā." The names of several Devīs such as Durgā, Kālī, Ambikā, etc. are found in the later Vedic texts.

Prakṛti, is the female energy of Purusa. It is she who is the dynamic principle. Śiva is powerful and active only with Śakti. In the Rig-Veda, many of the gods appear as provided with their consorts, Indra has Indrāni, Varuṇa Varunāni, and Rudra has Rudrāni.

The Brahmanical Devī Pantheon is found mainly divided into two groups; the Vaishnavis and the Śaivas. It is a known fact that Śaktism is often considered to be related more to Śaivism than to Vaishnavism.
The common dhyāna of Devī is found in the Uttara-Kāmikāgama. It says that the Devī should have four arms and three eyes and a pacific countenance. She should wear a Karandamakuta. In two of her hands the pāsa and the ankusa should be carried, while the remaining two are to be held in the varada and the abhaya poses.

If the image of the Devī stands by the side of her consort, it generally has only two hands, one of these is made to hold a lotus or is kept in the kāataka pose, the other hand is allowed to hang down freely by the side. It has only two eyes.

Figure of Devī may also be sculptured with six arms. In four of her hands she holds pāsa, ankusa, sāṅkha and chakra. Her remaining hands should be in the varada and abhaya poses.

If the image of the Devī happens to be an independent figure or in association with the image of Śiva, in either of these cases, the body of the goddess may have two bends (dvibhānga) or it may be perfectly erect and be of the (sambhanga) pose.

The Suprabhedāgama says that the image of the Devī should have large and prominent breasts and it should be adorned with all ornaments.

Here we describe the main Devī images known from the region concerned:
MAHISAMARDINI - Plate XII, Fig. 42
Udaigiri Cave, Gupta Period:

Mythologically speaking Mahisamardini is one of the earliest and most important forms of Devi.

It is beautifully described in the Devimahatmya. Various texts describe different iconic types of the goddess. The difference mainly lies in the number of her arms. A large number of eight or ten armed images of the Mahisasuramardini have been discovered in Eastern India.

In the Matsya-Purāṇa, she is described as being born out of the union of three goddesses. The Markandeyya Purāṇa says that she is made up of the essence of all the gods. The Amarkosā regards her as a form of Pārvatī.

The figure of goddess Mahisamardini carved on the facade of the Chandragupta Cave at Udaigiri shows much animation. Although damaged, this important image is ranked among the best specimens of Gupta art. The goddess here has twelve arms, some of which have been broken. In one hand she holds a small sword and in the other a shield. In two of the other hands she holds an arrow and a bow. The surviving parts of a broken trident (trishula) can still be seen the end of which is shown pierced into the body of the buffalo demon. The demon is represented here in the purely animal form. With her foot the goddess is trampling the head of the buffalo and with one of her hands she holds one of the hind legs of the animal. She is wearing on her
body necklace, armbands and anklets. The elaborate head gear is formed by a godna, held up by two hands of the goddess.

That the worship of the goddess Durgā and the seven mothers was fairly common in the Gupta period is known from the Gupta inscriptions. In the beginning of Śakta worship this goddess was worshipped usually in her normal form having two or four arms.

**SIX ARMED GODDESS - Plate XII, Fig. 43**

8' x 4'1", x 1/2'. Besnagar, 10th Century A.D.

The tall form of the goddess is shown here standing erect. She has prominent breasts and swan waist. Her sari is tied with a thick waist band. She also wears a double necklace, earrings, anklets, decorated Kiritamukuta and armbands. She is standing on a pedestal, formed of a buffalo's miniature body in the middle and two lions seated back to back. The demon is standing on the left attacking one lion with a dagger. The three right hands of the goddess held up are preserved. Those on the left are broken.

**AMBİKA - Plate XII, Fig. 44**

60\(\frac{1}{2}\) x 36" x 20". 10th Century A.D., Gyraspur.

Ambika has lion as her Vāhana. She should have three eyes and various ornaments should adorn her body. She should carry mirror, sword and shield. One of her right hands should be held in the varada-mudrā.
The present image from Gyraspur is seated on a lion pedestal. She holds a baby in her left lap. The other left hand holds a lotus. In her upper right hand she holds a trisula, the other right hand is broken. There is a simple halo behind her head. She wears a torque and a necklace which hangs between her prominent breasts. She also wears round earrings, armlets and a decorated waistband and anklets. The hair-dress is elaborated.

**MOTHER AND CHILD - Plate XII, Fig. 45**
76″x55″x30″, Badoh, 7th Century A.D.

This sculpture of the Mother and Child has been interpreted as Krishna and Yasoda, Buddha and Maya.

In this image a lady is lying down on a couch which has ornamental bedsheet and pillows. She holds a lotus in her right hand. The left hand rests on the pillow and supports the head on her palm. She wears a sari, uttariva and various ornaments, including elaborate beaded mekhalas. Her head-dress is tastefully done. The legs of the lady are placed one upon the other. A smiling child, whose feet rest on a lotus, is shown lying down by the left side of the lady. The halo behind the head of the mother shows her divine character. Four female attendants gracefully stand on her right. They hold a fly-whisk, a satchel and swords. One female body-guard stands behind the mother with a sword in her hand.

This beautiful image was originally enshrined in the cell of the Gadarwul temple at Badoh. It is now placed in the
Cwalior Museum.

THE SAPTA-MĀTRKAS (SEVEN MOTHERS)

The seven Divine Mothers constitute an important part of Hindu iconography. Aditi was the Divine Mother as mentioned in the Vedic literature. She was married to Kasyapa. From them were born two sons Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu. They were killed by Visnu in his Varaha-avatāra and Nrisimha-avatāra respectively. Hiranya-kaśipu’s son, Prahalada, became a devotee of Visnu and renounced the worldly life. After him Andhakasura began to rule over the Asuras and obtained several boons from Brahmā. He then began to cause annoyance to the Devas, who complained to Siva. Meanwhile Andhakasura appeared at Kailasa to carry away Pārvatī. A fight between Siva and the Asuras ensued. A demon named Nila took the form of an elephant to kill Siva. Siva’s son Virabhadra took the form of a lion and killed Nila and presented its skin to Siva. Siva shot down the king without an arrow. The demon began to bleed profusely and with every drop of his blood another Andhakasura appeared. Siva and Visnu killed the demon again and again. In order to dry up the demon’s blood and thus prevent it from falling on the earth, Siva created a Sakti called Yogēśvari. Brahmā, Visnu, and other gods followed suit and created Brahmāni, Mahēśvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varāhi, Indrāni and Chāmunda, the female counterparts of Brahmā, Mahēśvara, Kumāra, Visnu, Varāha, Indra and Yama respectively.
Eventually the forces of the demons were annihilated by the seven goddesses (Sapta-Mātrikas) after drying up the blood of Andhaka.

The Varāha-Purāṇa mentions eight Mātrikas and says that they represent eight mental qualities. They are as follows:

1. Yogesvari represents Kāma (desire).
2. Māhesvari represents Krodha (anger).
3. Vaishnavi represents Lobha (covetousness).
4. Brāhmaṇi represents Mada (pride).
5. Kaumari represents Moha (illusion).
6. Indrāni represents Matsarya (fault finding).
7. Chāmunda represents Paśunya (laity-bearing).
8. Varāhi represents Asura (envy).

The Sapta-Mātrikas are often carved together on a stone slab in the order given above. Separate reliefs of the Mātrikas and their 'guardians' have also been found. A slab bearing the Sapta-Mātrikas was found at Besnagar in the year 1910. They are now in the Gwalior Museum. The figures were described by Lake and later on by D.R. Bhandarker.

The Mātrika figures from Besnagar are shown seated on simple four-legged stools with their legs hanging down (Paryankasana). All the figures are carved in the round, unfortunately their hands are broken and no clues are left as to what they originally held.
Before describing the Mātrikā images found in our region it would be worthwhile to give their iconographic details as found in the Āgama texts.

Mahēśvarī should be made like Mahēsvara, Brahmanī like Brahmā, Vaishnavī like Viṣṇu, Vārāhi as a short woman with an angry face bearing a plough as her weapon, Indrāṇī should be like Indra, Chāmunda as a terrific woman should have untidy hair and possess a dark complexion and have four hands, she should carry in one of her hands trīśūla and hold a kānāla in another. All the Mātrikās should be in the seated posture. They should have two of their hands held in the Varada and abhaya poses, while the other two hands should carry weapons appropriate to their male counterparts.

The Śilpa texts give the following prescriptions about the different Mātrikās.

**BRAHMĀṇI:**

She should have four faces and four hands. In the back right hand she carries the ṛśula and in the back left hand an aksamala, the front right hand is in the abhaya pose and the front left in the varada. She is seated on a red lotus and has the handsa as her Vahana. Hansa is the emblem of her banner.

**VAISHNAVI:**

She carries in one of her right hands the chakra and in the left hand the sankha, her two other hands are held in the
abhaya and the varada poses respectively. She has lovely face. Her head is adorned with Kirita-makuta. The emblem of her banner as well as her Vahana is Garuda.

INDRANI:

The figure of Indrani has three eyes and four arms, in two of her hands she carries the Vajra and the Sakti, the other two hands are held in the varada and abhaya poses. Her Vahana is elephant.

CHAMUNDA:

This goddess has four arms and three eyes. Her hair is abundant and thick and bristles upwards. She has in one hand the Karala (skull) and in another the Sula; in other hands she holds fire and snake and her mouth should be open. Like Siva she wears on her head the digit of the moon. Her Vahana is an owl and the emblem of her banner is eagle.

MAHESVARI:

She has four arms. Two of them are in the varada and the abhaya poses respectively, while the other two carry the Sula and aksamala. Her vahana is the bull.

KAUMARI:

She is the female representative of Subrahmanya who is also known as Kumara. She has four arms. In two of them she carries the Sakti and the Kukuta, the remaining two hands are
in the abhaya and the varada poses. Her vāhana is peacock. This bird forms the emblem of her banner.

VĀRAHI:

Vārahi has the face of a boar and she carries hala and ākṭi in her hands. Her vāhana and the emblem on her banner is the elephant.

The images of the seven mothers obtained from Besnagar have only two hands. Some of them have a baby with them. They belong to the Gupt Period.

MOTHER GODDESS WITH CHILD - Plate XIII, Fig. 46
4' x 2' x 1', Besnagar:

The Mātrika is seated on a pedestal with her left leg hanging down. Her both hands are broken. A nude child is standing by her left side resting on her left knee. She wears a sari, heavy earrings, a broad necklace, mekhala and anklets. Her hair is arranged artistically. It is arranged in two parts and then carried right over the scalp of the head in two folds with a central knot. It is then made to fall down on both the shoulders behind the ears.

MOTHER GODDESS - Plate XIII, Fig. 47
4' x 2' x 1', Besnagar:

Seated on a high pedestal with hands and feet broken. She is wearing a dhoti with folds shown in the front. The thin uttariya is shown covering her prominent breasts. She wears
usual ornaments including a prominent lalatika over her borehead. Her third eye is clear.

**MOTHER GODDESS, Plate XIII, Fig. 48**

It is similar to fig.no. 47. The hair style is different. The face and arms are badly damaged. The rectangular couch is clearly shown.

**MOTHER GODDESS, Plate XIII, Fig. 49**

In this figure the body below the bust is broken. She wears a skävali (beaded necklace). Her hair dress is different from others. It has its two sides shaped like balls which take a round curve from the forehead in front. The figure has an enchanting smile.

**MOTHER GODDESS, Plate XIV, Fig. 50**

This is another smiling figure of a MātriKa. Both the legs and arms are damaged. She wears a torque. The tresses of hair are made to fall on her left shoulder.

**MOTHER GODDESS, Plate XIV, Fig. 51**

The MātriKa is seated on a large size pedestal. She is holding a stalked lotus in her left hand. The hair style is lovely. She wears the usual ornaments.

Between Badoli and Pathari on a small hill are extant the figures of the Septa-MātriKas. They are interesting figures showing the bulkiness of the Kushana art. They can be assigned
to the early Gupta Period. They seem to have been carved a little earlier than those from Besnagar described above.

Near Udaigiri Cave No. 4 are preserved figures of the eight Saktis, six of them are carved in one row and the remaining two are shown seated on the right and left of the row.9

Later another Santa-Mātrika figurines are usually found accompanied by Ganesa and Virabhadra.

The sculptures of the Santa-Mātrakas from Udaigiri, Besnagar, and Badol-Pathari are important from the point of view of the early iconography of the Sakta Cult.
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SECTION : F

ASTADIKPĀLAS

The concept about the dīkṣālas or Lokapālas, the guardian of the quarters, is very old. According to the Brāhmaṇical belief the eight quarters of the universe are governed by the eight guardian one assigned to each direction. These deities are known by the name of Dīkṣālas. The different directions have thus been allotted to them. Indra the lord of the east, Yama of the south, Varuna of the west and Kubera of the north; Agni, Nirṛuti, Vāyu and Isāna are the respective guardian deities of the south-east, south-west, north-west and north-east.

Dr. Banerji has pointed out to the variety in the enumeration of the protectors of the various quarters or the worlds. The early Buddhist and Jaina texts have different versions about the characterisation of the dīkṣālas.

Sūrya, Chandra, Vāyu, Agni, Yama, Varuṇa, Indra and Kubera, the eight Devas of the early epic literature, are grouped in some later texts as the guardians of the four chief and four minor quarters. According to Manu, 'a king embodies in his self all the eight Lokapālas, Soma (Chandra), Agni, Arka (Sūrya), Anila (Vāyu), Indra, Vittapali (Kubera), Apapati (Varuṇa) and Yama'.

In the Mahābhārata the Lokapālas are assigned their deities thus: "Gods living in the East have Agni as their
leader, Yama of noble deeds guards the Pitra in the south, the west is guarded by Varuna, who also guards other gods, the north is guarded by Bhāgavat Soma and the Priests. 3 Hopkins observes that the original grouping was of Agni, Yama, Varuna and Indra. Later on Kubera was substituted for Agni. 4

In the Buddhist mythology a group of four divine beings are associated with the four principal quarters. They are: Dhṛtarāstra, the Gandharva King (east), Virudhaka, the king of the Kumbhandas (south) Virupākṣa, the Nāga, monarch (west) and Vaisravana, the Yakṣa King (north). 5 The Jaina literature refers to a group of the Dikpālas, most of whose names are similar to those of the later Hindu mythological texts. 6 Out of the eight Dikpālas, Indra was originally the most prominent.

Indra is the lord of the east direction and therefore his image is to be placed on the east of a temple or fort. According to the Āgamas and other texts, the colour of the image of Indra should be dark. He should have two eyes and two arms. He should be adorned with the Kirtita and other ornaments. He should carry in his right hand the Sakti and in the left the Ankuśa. He should be seated on a Sīhāsana or on his elephant Airāvata. To his left should be made the image of his consort Indrīni, decorated with ornaments and carrying an Utpala flower in the hand. 7 On either side of this pair should be represented two Gandharva women waving Chāmaras.

Other authorities describe four handed images of Indra. In one hand he should carry the Yaïra and in the others conch
shell, bow and arrow, a hook and ankusa. Sometimes Indra is shown with a third eye lying horizontally in the middle of the four head.

Image of Indrani should be of the golden colour and be clad in blue garments. She should carry a Santana maniari. The Vinsudharmottara adds that she should be seated on the left lap of her husband. The elephant Airavata should have four tusks, two on either side.

**BUST OF INDRA - Plate XIV, Fig. 58**

22" x 18" x 8" : Badoh, 8th Century A.D. :

This beautiful bust of Indra shows him with Vajra in his right hand. He wears a high ornamental crown or Kirita and Kundalas. There is a highly decorated halo behind his head bearing flower patterns. On its each corner is shown a Gandharva carrying a garland. In the centre there is a lotus flower. Indra wears a double beaded necklace and a three stringed thread on his body. The left hand is broken.

**AGNI**

Like Indra Agni was also a very important deity in the Vedic Age. With Indra and Surya he formed the triad of that period. A large number of hymns are addressed to Indra and Agni in the Vedas. Agni represents light and heat in the three worlds.

The \\textit{myana} of Agni is found in the later texts. His wife was called Svaha. According to the Harivamsa Agni is
draped in black clothes and carries a flaming spear. His chariot is drawn by horses of red colour and the winds are the wheels of his chariot.

The Āgamic description of Agni is as follows:

Agni should be of red colour, with four arms and three eyes and the hair or Īītā on the head which should also be a red colour standing on end and forming a sort of Prabhamaṇḍala on the back. He should be held in the Varada and Abbaya poses. In the back left hand he should hold the Sakti.

YĀMA

Yama is the first among the mortals. In the Rigveda he is mentioned as the son of Vivasvat and of Saranyū, the daughter of Tvashtri, with a twin sister named Yami. This sister forced him to become her husband, but he refused the offer. Yama presides over the dead. He presides over his court and as the dispenser of justice he is known as Dharmaśīla.

The Vīṣṇudharmottara states that the colour of Yama's garments is golden yellow. On his left lap, should sit his consort Dhumorna. Yama has four arms, while his consort only two. In his right hands Yama keeps the danda and the khadga and in the left hands a flaming triśūla and the aksamāla. On the right of Yama stands Chītragupta carrying in his right hand a stile and in the left a palm leaf for recording the acts of the mortals. On the left of Yama stands Kāla, of terrific
appearance, armed with Pāśa. Yama should be adorned with a
Kirita-makūta and with red garments. He may be seated either
on a Simhāsana or on a buffalo (mahāsa). According to some
texts he should hold in his hands a Khadga and a Khētaka or a
fruit and tender leaves or danda and pāśa.

VARUNA

Varuṇa was another important deity of the Vedic Period.
He is the chief of the Ādityas, inviolable, imperishable and
eternal. He is the lord of the rain, the water and the sea.
In the Purānic literature Varuṇa, becomes merely god of the
ocean and loses his early importance. According to the iconic
texts, Varuṇa is represented as a white man, draped in yellow
garments. His head should be adorned with a Karanda-makūta.
He wears Yaṃkāpa-vīṭa. He is seated or standing upon a fish or
makara (crocodile). He may be represented by two or four arms.
I shown with two arms only his one hand should be in the varada
pose and the other should be carrying a pāśa. If with four,
one of the hands should be in the varada pose, while the remaining
ones should carry the pasa, a snake and a Kamandalu.

The Vīśnudharmottara has a different description of
Varuṇa. It states that Varuṇa should be seated in a chariot
drawn by seven hāmas (Geese). He should be draped in white
garments and adorned in garments set with pearls. He should
have a slightly hanging belly and four arms. Over his head
there should be a white umbrella and on his left the fish
banner. In the right hands of Varuna there should be padmā and in the left hands rāja, sāṅkha and the ratha-pātra. His good-looking consort should be seated on his left lap with a nilotpala in her left hand and with the right arm embracing Varuna.

To the right and left respectively of Varuna should be standing the two chief river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna. Ganga in white colour stands on a matava or makara with a chāmara in one hand and a padmā in the other; Yamuna, having the colour of a blue lotus should be standing on Kacchapā (tortoise) with a chāmara in one hand and a nilotpala in the other.

GAṅGA FROM BESNAGAR - Plate XIV, Fig. 53:

This rare image of the river goddess Ganga from Besnagar is now exhibited in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, U.S.A. She is shown standing in tribhanga upon a makara under the shade of a mango tree. Her left elbow rests upon the shoulder of a female attendant. The right hand holds a flower. Ganga is wearing akāvāli, kundalas and armlets and anklets. She has a high head dress. The upper portion of the body is bare. The workmanship of Ganga is exquisite.

The figure of makara is carved very artistically. The reptile is trying to devour a fish in the wide open mouth. A child is holding the upper snout of the makara into the left hand and with the right he is trying to strike at it. The
other boy attendant stands on the tail of *makara*, holding a basket of flowers.

**NIRRUTI**

Nirruti is also a Vedic deity. In the later Hindu mythology he becomes the guardian of the south-western quarter.

The description of his divinity is given in the *Agamas*. Nirruti is said to be of blue colour, with a large body draped in yellow garments, seated either on *bhadrapitha*, a lion or riding on the shoulders of a man. According to the *Vishudharmottara*, he should be seated on an ass, bearing a *danda* in his hand. He should have a terrific look surrounded by *Rākṣasas* and seven *apsaras*. He should have two arms; in the right hand there should be a sword and in the left one a shield. In the *Vishudharmottara* Nirruti's four consorts are mentioned *vis.* Krishnāngī, Devī, Krishnasundarā and Krishnapāsa. The *apsaras* who accompany him must be pretty, have smiling faces and must have well developed breasts, thick thighs and slender waists.

**VĀYU**

Vāyu or Marut, a Vedic deity is one of the five chief elements. In early literature, Indra appears as the father of the Maruts, the deities of the wind.

In the *Mahābhārata*, Vāyu is called the father of Pandava Bhima and also of Hanumān.
The iconographic texts say that Vāyu should be made youthful and powerful person having two or four hands. In his right hand there should be a dhvaja (banner) and in the left a danda. He may be seated on a sīhāsana or on a deer. The Visnudharmottara states that the colour both of the body and of the garment of Vāyu should be sky blue and he should carry in his hands the dhvaja and the chakra. To his left may be seated his consort.

KUBERA

In Indian mythology, Kubera occupies an important position. He was the God of wealth. Kubera is mentioned as the guardian deity of the northern region of the universe. His image is shown in a stout form with prominent belly. To the right and left of Kubera should be carved the two Nidhis. The two goddesses Vibhavā and Vriddhī embrace Kubera with one hand and carry in the other a bowl containing jewels.

Kubera may have two or four hands. In the two-handed figures, one hand is in the varada mūdrā and the other in the abhaya. Sometimes the left hand carries a mace.

In the case of four hands Kubera embraces his consort Vibhavā with one hand and the other consort Vriddhī with the other hand. These two ladies sit on his left and right laps respectively. Kubera is generally seated on a lotus pedestal or on a chariot driven by men. Sometimes Kubera has elephant
as his vehicle. In his hands he is enjoined to carry a mace, a purse of money, a pomegranate fruit and a vase.

Kubera as the lord of the Yaksas is discussed in Chapter VII.

ISANA

Isana is the Lord of the north-eastern region. His name indicates that he represents a particular aspect of Siva. The texts describe him as having a Jatamukuta, Vajñopavita. He holds a Sula and Kapala in his right and left hands respectively. He rides on a bull and wears a tiger skin garment.

ASHTA DIKPALAS - Plate XV, Fig. 54
12" x 7'3" x 4'8", Badoh, 9th Century A.D.

The guardians (dikpalas) are shown here with their vehicles. This stone slab is in two parts. This slab is now preserved in the Gwalior Museum.

ADITYAS AND THE NAVA-GRAHAS

References to the Adityas are found in the Vedas.

In the Satapatha-Brähman they are said to be eight or twelve in number. The Purānas call them the Solar deities. The nine planets are Sūrya, Chandra, Bhauma, Buddha, Sukra, Brihaspati, Sani, Rāhu and Ketu. Their images are found set up in temples in the order in which they are in the zodiacal circle.

The worship of the Nava-grahas was and is still much in vogue in different parts of India.

The Purāna and Āgamas describe their forms. Stone slabs with the figures of these grahas, usually standing and rarely seated, were used as architectural patterns in the mediaeval Indian temples.
A few Nava-graha shrines have also been discovered in India. There are remains of a Navagraha-shrine at Garhwa in the Allahabad district. Another interesting Navagraha temple is at Gauhati. It is situated near the Kamakhya temple on the top of a beautiful hill. In the Sūrya temple at Somnath, figures of the nine Grahas are carved on the panel above the shrine door. All the figures are in the standing pose. The Navagrahas carved on the outer door frame of the Sūrya temple at Than and some other places are in seated posture.

SŪRYA

Sūrya is the chief of the planets. Sun worship has been popular in India since the pre-Vedic time.

In the Vedic literature he is mentioned as Sūrya, Savitr, Pushan, Bhaga, Mitra, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, Āryaman, Vivasvat and Aniśa.

Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata inform us about the Sun worship, the concept of the deity and about the popularity of Sun-cult.

The Mahābhārata gives more information about Sun-worship. One verse in this work describes him as Devesvara (lord of gods).

During the Kushāna Period, worship of Sūrya became popular in north India. The Greco-Iranian influence can be seen on the early images of Sūrya. The Kushāna Sun images found in Gandhara and Mathura show the seated deity holding a stalked lotus and dager. The number of horses gradually grows from 2 to 4 and then to 7. The Gupta Age voluted a new variety of the standing type of the Sun images.
The twelve Ādityas now came to be recognised as regular Sun gods. The period from the 7th to the 12th century A.D. was the richest for the developments of the Sun cult in India.

The prevalence of the Sun cult in Central India is confirmed by the epigraphical evidence.

Vidisha (Bhilasa) was an ancient centre of sun-worship. The name 'Bhilasa' is after the Sun-god, Bhāillasvāmi, whose shrine existed here. The earliest references to the deity has been found in a stone inscription from Vidisha dated V.E. 935 (876 A.D.). It records the grant of an aksayanika, made in favour of the temple of Bhāillasvāmi. Another inscription of the time of the Rāstrakuta king Kṛṣṇa III (Circa 936-68 A.D.) also mentions Bhāillasvāmi. A third local inscription of the 10th century A.D. also praises the Sun god.

A ruined temple situated to the east of the hill, behind the old city of Gyaspur, was dedicated to the Sun-god and was erected during the reign of the Paramaras.

According to the Śilpa texts the figure of Sūrya should have two hands, each holding a lotus. His head is to be surrounded by a halo (Kāntimandala). His body should be adorned with all the ornaments. He should wear a Karanda-makūta and his garments should be of red colour. The figure of Sūrya should be made to stand on a Padmā-pītha by itself or should be placed in a hexagonal chariot drawn by seven horses. The chariot should have only one wheel. On the right side of Sūrya there should stand Uṣha, and on the left, Pratyūṣha.
According to the Matsya-Purāṇa, the figure of Śūrya should have fine moustaches and should be dressed in the Udīṣṭhavāya (fashion of northerners). In the right and left hands he should hold the sunbeams as bridles.

Some texts prescribe four arms for Śūrya. On the left of Śūrya there should be a good-looking figure of Danda, and on the right the dark coloured figure of Pingala, both dressed in the North Indian fashion. Two of the hands of Śūrya should be placed upon the heads of these figures. Pingala should carry in his hands a palm leaf and a stile; sometimes two of the hands of Śūrya carry a shield and a Śula. The symbol on the banner of Śūrya is the lion. His banner is to be placed on the left of Śūrya. Yama, Révanta and two Manus, are said to be the sons of Śūrya. They should stand on each side of Śūrya. 22 It is also enjoined that as Śūrya is the lord of the planets, he should be surrounded by the planets.


c h a n d r a

Chandra (moon) also called Soma, is represented either as standing or sitting. In sitting posture he should be seated on Śīkhāsana. He has white colour and a halo (Prabhāmandala) is shown behind him. He is adorned with ornaments. In his two hands he holds a white Lily (Kumuda).

The Śilparatna says that the figure of Chandra should be shown as seated in a chariot drawn by ten horses and should
hold a gada in the right hand. The left hand is held in the Varada pose. In the Matsya Purana his consorts are named Kanti and Sobha. The Purva Kāranāgama gives the name of Rohini as his consort.

MOON-FACE, Plate XV, Fig. 55
21" x 12" x 7", Vidisha, 600 A.D.:

This bust of Chandra shows him with eyes open and the face with moustaches. He wears a beautiful crown on his head and heavy earlobes. There is a halo behind the head.

BHUMA (MARS)

Bhuma is shown seated upon a goat or on a simhāsana. It has red colour and has four arms. One of the right hands should be in the abhaya or the varada pose, while the other should carry the Sakti. In the left hands should be held the gada and the jula. He should be adorned with red flowers and clothed in red garments.

BUDDHA

Buddha, son of Chandra, is called grahamati. His vehicle is lion. His colour is yellow and he is adorned with yellow garlands. He should have four arms; one of the right hands should be in the varada pose and the other three should carry Khadga, Khetaka and Gada.
BRIHASPATI (JUPITER)

The colour of Brihaspati is said to be golden yellow. According to the Vismudharmottara, he should have only two arms. In his two hands he should carry a book and the akshamāla.

SUKRA (VENUS)

The colour of Sukra should be white and he should be clothed in white. In the Vismudharamottara, he is called the son of Bhṛigu. He has two arms, in which he should carry a nidhi (treasure) and a pustaka (book). He should be seated in a silver chariot drawn by eight horses.

SANISCHARA (SATURN)

The complexion of Sanischara and his clothe is black. He is usually small statured. He should have two arms, in the right hand he holds a danda, and the left is in the varada pose. His vehicle is an iron chariot drawn by eight horses.

RĀHU

According to the Vismudharmottara, Rāhu of smoke colour should be seated upon a silver chariot drawn by eight horses. He has two arms, in the right hand he holds a book and a woolen blanket while the left hand is blank.
KETU

Ketu is to be of dark colour. He has two arms; one of his hands is to be in the abhaya pose and the other should carry a gada. According to the Rūpamandana, Ketu has his arms folded as in the añjali attitude. The lower portion of the body of Ketu should be that of a snake.

In several early Medieval sculptures of the Navagrahas found in the Vidisha district the representation of Rāhu and Ketu are in interesting manners. Sometimes the Navagrahas are shown along with their vehicles and attributes.
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