Before we take up the examination of the evidence pertaining to the cult of Vishnu in the region under study, it would be appropriate to have a background from two angles which provide the necessary prelude to our study. First, to portray a general picture of the story of Vaishnavism, especially in its early phase, as revealed by recent research and of the systems of philosophy which regard Vishnu as the Ultimate. This will help us in correct comprehension of the developments in our region as compared with the already known picture in respect of India. Second, to have a political outline along with general remarks on
the position of other creeds in each distinct period covered here. This will provide the necessary chronological perspec­tive for apprehending the material being handled here.

A. VAISHNAVISM

1. Amalgamation of Different Deities into Vaishnava Fold

The Vaishnava pantheon of today is an amalgamation of different deities who were once worshipped independently and later on identified with Vishnu. As such the process of amalgamation can be understood better by studying the main constituent gods individually.

Vishnu

Vishnu, the deity after whom the religion of his believers derives its name, is as ancient in conception as the Rigveda itself. There he is mentioned comparatively less frequently and only five hymns are addressed to him. From a close study of the references to him, scholars have discerned the following aspects of his original nature:

1. His epithet Śīpivislha reflects on his original phallic nature, his connection with fertility cult and sex life. He may also have been a vegetation deity. The former aspect appears to have been his more ancient aspect which was already being pushed into oblivion in the Rigvedic time.

2. His solar character is implied in his most important
feat of traversing the earth by three strides as well as
by his epithets like urugāya (wide-stepping), evayāvan
(swift-moving), purvya (ancient) and navya (new). His three
strides together with his description as yuva-kumāra provide
the concept behind Vishnu as an Āditya (Sun) on the one
hand and his Vāmana-Trivikrama avatāra on the other.

(iii) Etymologically the word Vishnu may have originally
meant 'the flyer'. He is represented in the Rigveda as the
Sun-bird, who is the same as the beautifully-feathered bird
(Suparnō aṅga savitur-garutmān pūrvō jātah ), the later
Suparna-Garuda, the favourite Vāhana of Vishnu. This again
reflects on his original solar character. (iv) The description
of the third step of Vishnu, his most beloved resort,
as the highest heaven and the conception that the departed
souls (pitris) live in the top of the sky together explain
the later concept of Vishnu as the lord of the Pitri-lōka.
(v) He is described as Gopa (cowherd) and said to be resi-
ding amidst the many-horned swiftly-moving cows. This
conception explains the later Vaishnava belief of Vishnu-
Nārāyaṇa as protector of cows. (vi) He assists Indra in
killing Vṛitra and, on the whole, his subordinate character
to Indra is revealed in the Rigvedic hymns.

In the later Vedic literature the rise of Vishnu is
noticed. In Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, Vishnu is stated to occupy
the highest place among the gods. The *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* personifies him as Sacrifice. In the same work it is stated that, jealous of his rising position, the gods severed Vishnu’s head from his body through his own bow; the head went to the heaven to become the Sun. This reference on the one hand indicates his rise to prominence and on the other establishes his solar character again.

In the meanwhile there appears to have been a tendency to associate with Vishnu several mythical feats originally associated with Prajāpati. These, like Varāha, Matsya, etc., formed the basis of various *avatāras* of Vishnu.

**Nārāyaṇa**

Nārāyaṇa, who is the same as Vishnu in later Vaishnava concept, was merely a *Rishi* in *Rigvedic* times. He is the seer of the famous *Purusha-sūkta* of the *Rigveda* in which the primordial Purusha is stated to have sacrificed himself to attain transcendental greatness. The theme is repeated in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* where, however, Nārāyaṇa himself is the Purusha performing the *pañcharātra-sātra* (five-day sacrifice), but not as yet connected with Vishnu directly. He is mentioned as a distinct deity in the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* (3rd century B.C.) and several passages of the *Mahābhārata*. In the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* (c.5th-4th century B.C.), however, Nārāyaṇa and Vishnu are identified as one
and the same deity. In the Mahabharata Narayana appears as a godly sage and propounder of the Pancharatra religion. He is usually associated with Nara (identified with Arjuna) who is also a sage. The religion taught by him was in accordance with the Veda. As such, the Pancharatra sect of the Vaishnavas may be stated to derive its name from the Pancharatra-satra performed by Narayana and referred to in the Satapatha Brähmaṇa.

The later conception of Śeshaśayī Nārāyaṇa owes its origin to the Rigvedic concept of primordial Viśvakarman: "The waters contained that earliest embryo in which all the gods were collected. One (receptacle) rested upon the navel of the unborn, wherein all beings stood". The same concept occurs in the epic in the context of Nārāyaṇa: "The waters are called Nāra because they were the sons of Nara, and since they were the first resting place of Prajāpati, he came to be called Nārāyaṇa". Here Nārāyaṇa is identified with Prajāpati. In the Mahānarāyaṇa Upaniṣad, Nārāyaṇa is described as the navel of the universe which he supports.

Vāsudēva-Krishṇa

Vāsudēva-Krishṇa is another constituent deity of the Vaishnava pantheon who played an important role in the formulation of early Vaishnavism. He was a deified hero of the Vṛṣṇi clan. He is mentioned in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad
as Krishna Devakiputra. He was the disciple of Ghora-Angirasa, a priest of the Sun. The teaching which Krishna received from him was that penance, almsgiving, straightforwardness, non-violence and truthfulness constituted the dakshinā (fee) of man and his various actions and conditions of life were comparable to the sacrifice (yajña). The teachings he learnt are more or less in conformity with those elaborated by Krishna-Vāsudēva in the Bhagavadgītā. Krishna himself having received initiation apparently in the Sun worship from Ghora-Angirasa must have obviously preached it on a more sound basis of bhakti and his identification with Vishnu-Āditya-Nārāyaṇa was carried out with ease.

Pāṇini mentions Vāsudēva and Arjuna in a way as to signify that "they were hero-gods who were the objects of exclusive worship by their followers and devotees." At the time of Alexander's invasion, the hero-god Heracles (Hari or Vāsudēva-Krishna) was held in special reverence in Mathurā and Krishnapura. The Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad (c. 3rd century B.C.) records the couplet which shows that the identification of Vishnu-Nārāyaṇa-Vāsudēva had been effected by that time (Nārāyaṇaṁ vidmahe Vāsudēvāya dhimahi Tanno Vishnuḥ prachōdayāt). Moreover, the archaeological evidences of pre-Christ period - the Besnagar and Nagarī inscriptions - positively indicate the identity of Vishnu-Nārāyaṇa-Vāsudēva. By this time we notice that the Vedic
Sun-bird Vishnu-Suparna-Garutman has become the Garuda and the emblem of Vishnu-Vasudeva. Again the three immortal precepts of dama (self-restraint), tyaga (self-denial) and apramada (vigilance) conceived as leading to the heaven by the Bhagavatas, which appears in the Mahabharata, are also recorded in the Besnagar record.

**Panchaviras**

Vasudeva-Krishna was not the only hero-god worshipped among the Vrishnis. The Mora well inscription of a slightly later period (1st cent. B.C.-1st cent. A.D.) mentions the five worshipful Vrishni heroes in a temple. These Panchaviras are identified as Samkarshaṇa, Vasudeva, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Samba. The Pancharatra works recognise them as gods invested with propagation of the Ekanta or Sātvata religion and as such indicate them (except Samba) to be preachers of the religion originally. Obviously they propagated the religion of Bhakti as propounded by Vasudeva-Krishna and were deified by their followers in the Vrishni clan to which they belonged. Perhaps the religion taught by the Vrishni-vīras was also Sun-worship. At least Samba is explicitly stated to have been a Sun-worshipper in the Purāṇas.

But among the Panchavīras the position of eminence appears to have been attained only by two: Samkarshaṇa and
Vāsudēva. However, their worship must have continued as late as 4th century A.D. Both Saṁkarshaṇa and Vāsudēva commanded independent as well as conjoint worship in the pre-and post-Christ period. Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra refers to worship of Saṁkarshaṇa in the Maurya country. Saṁkarshaṇa’s attributes - plough and plough-share - however indicate him to be a agricultural deity also. His association and identification with Nāga, and the Pāñcharātra concept of Saṁkarshaṇa only as an emanation of the highest Vāsudēva appear to have contributed to the association of Śeshaṅga with Viṣṇu thus resulting in the iconographic depiction of Śeshaśayana Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu seated on Ananta.

Gōpāla-Kṛishṇa

One more important constituent of the Viṣṇu pantheon is the cowherd god Gōpāla. He is perhaps the last important god to be identified with Vāsudēva-Kṛishṇa. The cowherd child-god Kṛishṇa Gōpāla is attributed numerous miraculous feats and amorous deeds which find elaboration in some Purāṇas. These seem to have derived from the stories of a mythical child-god current among a pastoral tribe, possibly the Abhiras, Gōpāla Kṛishṇa stopped the worship of Indra (vedic god): this probably indicates the non-vedic nature of the god. Reference has already been made to Viṣṇu's
epithet Gōpā in the Rigveda. In the Dharma sutras he is mentioned also as Dāmōdara and Gōvinda. These aspects would help explain the later identification of the cowherd god Gōpāla-Krishna with Vishnu-Vāsudēva.20

The mingling of these different deities was still in process during the time of the great epic, Mahābhārata. Thus we find in it the deities mentioned both as being separate as well as forms of the same Almighty. In a crystallised state, the amalgamation of these is presented in the Purānic literature.

Avatāras

As pointed out above, simultaneously with these developments, the identification with Vishnu of the deeds of some other gods, especially Prajāpati, was also in progress. The one idea which gave strength to this aspect was Krishnā's announcement that whenever the unrighteous becomes more powerful than the righteous and the latter declines, he takes birth to uphold the righteousness.21 In the Mahābhārata time however, different avatāras of Vishnu were not yet fully conceived. At one place it mentions the avatāras as four, at another six and at yet another ten.22 It is only in the Purānic literature that the crystallisation of the avatāras of Vishnu is noticed. The popularity of the avatāras of Vishnu in iconography is found from the Gupta period onwards. The most popular among them are those of Varāha and Narasimha. It was approximately about the
2. Pancharatra Concepts and Practices

Vyūhas

The doctrine of Vyūha propounded by the Pancharatra theologians was an important component of early Vaishnava religion. This is perhaps one of the non-vedic aspects of the later Pancharatra religion with the Tantric element predominating it and it deviated from the Pancharatra religion supposed to have been taught by Nārāyaṇa which was, as pointed out earlier, in accordance with the Vedas. The new Pancharatra modified the Panchavīra worship by deleting Sāmba from the list and rearranging the remaining gods as Vāsudēva (the highest), Saṃkarsaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Each of these, according to the doctrine, emanated from the immediately preceding one; i.e., Saṃkarsaṇa from Vāsudēva, Pradyumna from Saṃkarsaṇa and Aniruddha from Pradyumna. In conceiving its doctrine, the Pancharatra has derived much from the Sāmkhya-yoga notion of Prakṛti-Puruṣa, such as Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, and these have been elaborated elsewhere in the present work. The Vyūha concept of the Pancharatras was probably developed in the early centuries of the Christian era and its iconographic representations are found in Kushāṇa and Gupta periods in the form of a composite deity known as Vaikuṇṭha-chaturmūrti.
Kashmir was probably the locality where the *Vy̱ha* doctrine found its resort at best.\(^{24}\)

**Other Pāñcharatras Beliefs and Practices**

The beliefs and practices of the Pāñcharatras are recorded in the *Pāñcharatra Samhitās*. Numerous *samhitās* of this school of thought are said to have existed once, but only a few have come down to us. They consist of four *pādas* (quarters) which teach: (i) *Jñāna* or knowledge; (ii) *Yōga* or concentration; (iii) *Kriyā* or making; and (iv) *Charyā* or doing. The former two obviously concern the theoretical aspects of the religion while the latter two the practical aspects. *Kriyā* includes construction and conservation of temples and images. *Charyā* includes the religious and social observances (daily rites, festivals, *varṇāśrama dharma*, etc.).\(^{25}\) From the commentary of Śaṅkarāchārya on the *Brahmasūtra*, it can be understood that the Pāñcharatras enjoined upon its followers the following as the acts leading to salvation: (i) *abhigamana* or going to temples with abject devotion; (ii) *upādāna*, carrying or gathering different objects of worship; (iii) *Ījya* or worship; (iv) *svādhyāya* or muttering the eight-syllable mantra (*om namō Nārāyaṇāya*);\(^{26}\) and (v) practice of *yōga*\(^{27}\).

Among the things popularised by the Pāñcharatras was the temple worship. Thus the *abhigamana* included not only going to temple with devotion, but also cleaning the temple premises.
with the same devotion in the sense of a service of god. The 
upādāna included the collection of things loved by god, like 
flowers, scent, etc., to offer him. The svādhyāya comprised 
not only muttering of the mantra but also meditating over it 
to know the Highest; so whatever aided such process of understanding god could also be studied, as for instance the Vaish-
ṇava hymns. And the yōga implied the meditation of God, contro-
lling the senses both internally and externally. The temple 
became the place where all these could be attained in the real sense.

In the Pāñcharātra saṃhitās the branding of the weapons 
of Vishṇu on the arms is recommended at the time of his initia-
tion as a Vaishṇava (Vaishṇava-dīkṣā). This is called mudrān-
kanā. The mudrās (seals) used in this process are the śaṅkha 
and Chakra. There are two kinds of mudrāṅkana: (i) tapta-
mudrāṅkana, i.e., branding the body when the seal (śaṅkha and 
chakra) is hot; and (ii) śītāla-mudrāṅkana, i.e., branding the 
body with seals by means of gōpīchandana (sacred powder used 
by Vaishṇavas to smear their body with sectarian mark). Both 
methods are followed by the Pāñcharātras in Vaishṇava-dīkṣā. 
But the former is done usually by an āchārya.28

The marking of the forehead and various other parts of 
the body with sectarian mark is also a practice among the 
Pāñcharātras. Tirumāq (white-soil) and gōpīchandana are used
by its followers for this purpose. In the Vaikhanasa Sulba sutra the vertical line of the sectarian mark is equated with the atman (soul) and it is stated that marking the body like this would bring about happiness and union with the supreme soul.29

3. The Vaikhanasas

As different from the Pancharâtras, there was another sect of Vishnu worshippers called the Vaikhanasas.30 They were as ancient as the Pancharâtras. The exact meaning of the term Vaikhanasa is uncertain. The Vaikhanasas were the seers of a sūkta of the Rigveda (IX,66). They are differently mentioned as vānaprasthas, and munis while the Šākuntala of Kâlidâsa mentions Vaikhanasa as a vrata. Vikhanasa is Brahmâ; those who understand him through tapas (penance) are the Vaikhanasas: this is another explanation of the term Vaikhanasas. Brahmâ is said to have taken birth as sage Vikhanasa in order to teach the method of worship.

According to the Vaikhanasa beliefs Vishnu is the supreme Being. He is both nishkala and sakala. He manifests himself in both the aspects. Śrī or Lakshmi is His vibhuti or aśvarya. She is ever-blissful grand potential (nityânanda-mūla-prakriti-śakti) and projects the universe of spirit (chêtaia) and matter (achêtana). The latter are eightfold - the five elements, manas, buddhi, and ahaṅkara. Para, vyûha, vibhava, antaryamin
The Vaikhānasas stress on the mode of archā (image) worship of Vishnu and the remaining modes of Vishnu worship are only subordinate. And accordingly "Vishnu" as archāmūrti dominates their conception. The method of worship should be in accordance with the Vēdas. They believed in the varnāśrama dharma, śrauta and smārta rites. They appear to have tried to place the mode of worship (archāvidhi) within the frame of the Vēdas, without giving up the practice of sacrifice. In the Vaikhānasasūtras the vēdic mantras, concepts and rites are inter-woven in the background of archāvidhi. Thus the Vaikhānasas had the support and backing of the Vēdas in the main.

Four Vaikhānasa Samhitās are known: they were compiled by Bhrigu, Marīchi, Atri and Kaśyapa. They comprise the method of temple construction, installation of images, method of worship, festivals, etc., as their subject-matter in two padas viz., kriyā and charyā.

The Vaikhānasas favoured household worship and gave only secondary place to temple worship. A work named Samūrtārchana states that the Vaikhānasas did not mention temple worship much (Vaikhānasena vipulam nōktam ālayapūjanam) in their works.

The Vaikhānasas consider themselves to be garbha-Vaishnava. They do not need to take Vaishnava dikshā as done
by the Pāṇcharātras. In the eighth month of pregnancy, before
the birth of the child, a samskāra called Vaišṇu-oali is
performed to the mother. The mudrās are immersed in the pāyasā
(a sweet preparation) and she is made to swallow that pāyasā;
accordingly the child gets the mudrāṅkana or Vaiśnava-dikṣā
when it is still in the womb.

In the temples of Vaikuṇṭha background it is a rule that
worship of the deity should be performed by Vaikuṇṭhasas or
Gaybha-Vaiśnavas only. Others cannot enter the garbhagriha
(sanctum sanctorum); nor can they be parichārakas (temple
service staff). South India was once the stronghold of Vaikuṇṭha
tradition. The early temples of the Tamil land, like
those at Śrīrāmān and Kāṇchipuram, and Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh)
followed the Vaikuṇṭha mode of worship. However, the Pāṇchara-
trātra school did influence the Vaikuṇṭha beliefs in the early
stages. The inclusion of the Bhāgavata pantheon in the Vaikuṇṭha
nasāgama amply demonstrates this. From the 9th century onwards
at least, the Pāṇcharātras began to gain an upper hand in the
South. Yāmuna, a predecessor of Rāmānuja, tried to provide
agamic value to the Pāṇcharātra. Rāmānuja tried to bring into
vogue the Pāṇcharātra practices wherever he made felt his
influence. Śrīrāmān became the centre of the Pāṇcharātra
system. Among the places where he tried to introduce Pāṇchara-
tra system was Tirupati; there he did not succeed. In Karnataka
too the Vaikhanasa tradition appears to have been prominent initially; certain images were installed in the Lakshmi-Narayana temple at Hosaholalu in Vaikhanasagama tradition recently. 31 In the temple-mathas of Udupi, founded by Madhvacharya (who recognised the sanctity of the Pancharathas), the Vaikhānasā mode of worship is prevalent.

4. Śrī-Vaishnavism of Rāmānuja

Śrī-Vaishnavism, the traditional name of the religion of the followers of Rāmānuja, is the religion propounded in the Vaisēṣṭādvaita philosophy originally conceived in the writings of Nāthamunī and Yāmunāchārya and developed by Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja (Lakshmanā incarnate), born to Kāntimati and Asuri Kēśavaperumāl at Srīperumbudur, studied under Yādava-prakāsa, served God Varadarāja of Kanchi by supplying water for the anointment of the god, accepted Mahāpurṇa as his guru and as a sanyāsin assumed charge of the Śrīraṅgam temple, and reorganised the administration and system of worship in that temple-mathā. He made extensive tours to pilgrimage centres both in the north and south, and in Kashmir he earned the title of Bhāshyakāra and an image of Hayagrīva from goddess Sarasvatī. In Śrīraṅgam, the Vaishnavas began to be persecuted by Chōla king Kulottuṅga (II) which led to his migration to Karnataka where, according to tradition, he spent 12 or 20 years. He is stated to have converted Bīṣṭidēva and
installed Nārāyaṇa at Mēlukōṭe. In Karnataka no references to him occur directly in the epigraphs of the contemporary period, but he is stated to have visited Mithilā-Sāligrāma (Mīrle-Sāligrāma), Tōṇḍanūr (Tōṇṇūr) and Mēlukōṭe where he stayed for long. However, the later inscriptions of these places do attest considerably that his sojourn to Karnataka is a fact.

After Chōla king's death, he returned to Śrīrāgam, completed his Śrībhāṣṭya and passed away after two decades from his return. Rāmānuja probably lived from c.1036 to 1155-56 A.D. or c.1017 to 1137 A.D.32

Śrī-Vaishnava religion is essentially in conformity with the Pāṇcharātra system whose āgamas they regard as divine condensation of Vēdic philosophy; they adopt in its entirety the doctrine that God manifests himself in five-fold forms para, vyūha, vibhava, antaryāmin and archā which are worthy of devotion. The prefix 'Śrī' associated with Vaishnavism is of special significance. The concept of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa is given a place of importance in their worship. "Śrī or Lakṣmī is the Mother-goddess sharing the divinity of her Lord, Nārāyaṇa, and functions eternally and pervasively with Him. The functions of cosmic sovereignty, redemptive compassion and the acceptance of the kainkarya of the released souls are common to both the Deities and in reality they constitute a single principle. Śrī has a distinctive role of Her own, in addition; and she pleads the cause of creatures before Nārāyaṇa and prevails upon Him.
to exercise prasāda. In Her case, the law of mercy wholly supersedes that of justice. The tradition names its inclusive God-head, Śrīman-Nārāyaṇa. Between them, Nārāyaṇa is the substantive, and Śrī is adjectival, translating His compassion to actuality".  

The Viśisṭādvaita as propounded by Rāmānuja holds that "Brahman is the one central transcendent reality and the world of cit and acit belongs to it in an adjectival capacity". Hence the name Viśisṭādvaita. It believes, on the basis of the Vādas, Upanishads, Bhagavagītā, Brahma Sūtra, Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, Vishnu Purāṇa, Pāñcharātrāgama, and the Divyaprābhandham of the Ālvārs, that "Nārāyaṇa abides in all and envelops all. He is the spring and sustaining ground of all finite existence. He abounds in perfections beyond number and utterly beyond every trace of evil. He is such that the finite soul should realize its ultimate good through His paramount instrumentality. It is in the vision of Him, absolute and eternal, that its ultimate good really lies...."  

To attain moksha, the ultimate aim of man, or Brahma-prāpti (integration of the individual with the supreme spirit) as conceived in the Viśisṭādvaita, the devotee has to pursue the sādhana which comprises karmayoga, jñānayoga and bhaktiyoga in its one aspect and prapatti or saranāgati (surrender or taking to God for refuge). Prapatti promises the removal of
and remedy to the impediments in man's nature to start the journey of \( \text{Śādhanā} \). It originates bhakti. But \textit{Prapatti} of another type propounded by Ramanuja is called \textit{svatantra-prapatti}. "When a sādhaka is utterly incapable of launching himself on the pathway of bhakti, even with the supplementation of \textit{prapatti}, he can resort to \textit{prapatti}, itself wholly.... When the surrender is absolute, God takes the situation wholly in His hands, as it were, and releases His redemptive grace in unimpeded abundance". The five accessory factors of \textit{prapatti} are: (i) The person must resolve to be in conformity to the divine will and co-operate in all that God designs; this includes the entire kingdom of souls that are objects of God's compassion and \textit{prapanna} must make love cover the entire universe (ii) Rejection of everything contrary to the above. (iii) Full awareness of utter helplessness and total poverty of means of achieving the goal. (iv) Immense faith in the power and goodness of God to save. (v) Prayer to God that He may take up the role of the Saviour.\(^{36}\)

5. \textit{Vaishnavism of Madhva}

In the 13th century, an Āchārya named Madhava flourished in South Kanara. He was born (1197 A.D. or 1238 A.D.)\(^{37}\) in Pājaka near Udupi, in South Kanara district. After becoming proficient in Vēdic learning and other scriptures he accepted sīnyāsa under Achyutaprōksha and developed his Vēdānta
philosophy popularly known as Dvaita. He travelled widely all over India and is supposed to have visited Himalayas twice to meet Bādarāyana, his spiritual master, who resided near Badarnath. The temple of Lord Krishna in Udupi was founded by him and he made arrangement for propagating the system of philosophy founded by him, by establishing eight mathas. He lived for eighty years. In respect of mode of worship the Madhvaism is no different from the Pāñcharātra which he accepts as completely being in conformity with the Vedic teaching. What differentiates Madhvaism is its philosophy. Evidence relating to the spread of his teachings is wanting in Karnataka of the period considered in this work. But nevertheless, since his period falls within the scope of our work a few words about his philosophy may not be out of place here. Madhva has left behind a body of as many as thirty-seven works which have been appreciated for their brevity and decisiveness of statements. These include his elucidation of Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Rigveda, Upanishads, Gītā, Brahmaśūtra, and his Vishnu-tattva-vinirnaya is the finest statement of his philosophy.

The fundamental orientation of the Dvaita philosophy may be summarized as follows: (i) God and the world are real. The world process is eternal. But a particular world may be destroyed to be replaced by another. Lakshmi, or the universal spirit (chit-prakriti) presides over this creative process. Since the system considers the world as real, it is called
tattvavāda, which describes Madhvaism better than the otherwise commonly used term Dvaita. (ii) Pluralism, i.e. the five-fold difference between the entities between Jīva and Isvara, between Jīva and Jīva, between jada and Isvara, between jada and jīva and between jada and jada — explains the word prapancha. (iii) Theism based on scriptural revelation (that God is to be known only by sound scriptural authority or sādāgama). The sound scriptures are, according to him, the Vēdas, beginning with the Rigvēda, Mahābhārata, Pañcharātrāgama, original Rāmāyana, the Purānas in accordance with these, and all other sacred works in conformity to them. (v) His theism is called Vaishnavism and in his spiritual outlook Madhva identifies the supreme Reality propounded in the Vēdas as Vishnu, Vāsudēva or Nārāyana. Thus Madhvaism "is realism and pluralism supplementing a grand theism; and the theism is founded on the Vedic revelation, which revelation is elucidated to be through and through Vaishnava in character".

Vyāsarāya has summed up the nine gems of Madhvaism as follows:

Śrīman-Madhvamatē Hariḥ parataraḥ satyaṁ
jagat-tattvatō
bhūdō jīva-gaṇā Harer-anucharāh nīchōcchcha-
bhāvaṁ gataḥ
mukti-r-naijasukhanubhutiralamā bhaktiśca
tatsādhanaṁ
hyakshādhitritāyam pramāṇam-akhilām-nāyaika-
vēdyō Hariḥ.
Hari (Vishnu) is the Parabrahman. The world is real. Really there is difference (between the entities). Jīvas are the servants of god. There is gradation of different jīvas (depending upon their worth). The blissful experience of the nature of the self (by the jīvas in the presence of the God) is mukti (salvation). Pure bhakti is the instrument of attain mukti.

Pratyaksha, anumāna, and āgama are the only three pramanas. All the Vedas propound Hari as the highest.

Insofar as the theology is considered we may note the following aspects of the Dvaita. God manifests himself in Vyuhas and Vibhavas and is mystically present in sacred images. His devout consort, Lakshmi, stands only next to Him in the hierarchy pervades without material body, is Nityamukta, witnesses the glory of the Lord through eternity and yet is dependent on Him. God moulds forms out of Prakriti and exists in various forms. Sri, Bhu and Durga are the three aspects of Prakriti. The co-eternal though dependent status accorded to Lakshmi in the Dvaita system has invested the concept of Lakshmi-Nārāyana a place of importance in their worship. The Madhvas worship various forms of Vishnu in the form of image.

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The different aspects of the religion of Vishnu and its ramifications covered in the foregoing pages should be sufficient in comprehending its developmental aspects in Karnataka proper. As a necessary chronological framework for the study,
however, it is essential to know the political outline which is dealt with below.

B. A POLITICO-RELIGIOUS OUTLINE
The Nandas and Mauryas (4th-3rd century B.C.)

At the time when the kingdom of Magadha rose to prominence in North India, man in Karnataka had crossed the stages of savagery, and agricultural communities following Megalithic practices dominated in different parts of the land. Tradition avers that Nandas and Mauryas ruled over this territory and that Chandragupta Maurya, having embraced Jainism, migrated to the South and passed away in Sravanabelgola in accordance with Jaina vows. A major part of Karnataka was definitely included in Asoka Maurya's empire as known from his minor edicts found in Maski, Nittur, Udegolam, Koppal and Brahmagiri. Religious systems and beliefs then current in North India obviously spread to the Deccan and the South far more fluently and on a larger scale than before in the time of Mauryas because of the political unity. Buddhism received unprecedented filip under Asoka and Buddhist missionaries moved into Karnataka, as elsewhere, in the pretext of propagation of Dharma.

The Sātavāhanas (2nd century B.C.-4th century A.D.)

When the Maurya empire passed into oblivion, the important house which assumed the reins of power in the western
Deccan was that of the Sātavāhanas, with their capital at Pratishṭāna. Satakarnī I (c.187-177 B.C.) made them a formidable power and performed āśvamedha and rājasūya sacrifices in token of his supremacy and patronage to Vedic religion. However, religion of the times was already being influenced by apparently non-Vedic cults like the Bhāgavatas, as evidenced in the Nanaghat record of his queen Nāganikā. After Satakarnī I, there were ebs and tides in the rule of the dynasty till Gautamiputra Satakarnī (c.106-130 A.D.) restored the status by his resounding victories over the Śakas, Pahlavas, Yavanas and Kshatrapas. In a record of his successor, he is extolled in glorious terms and compared to deities and heroes of epic fame, thereby showing the impact of epic mythology on the religion of the contemporary society. Yajña Śri (c.172-201 A.D.) strengthened the Sātavāhana hegemony by expansionist policy and in his time Andhra region was already included in the confines of the empire. After his death the Sātavāhana power disrupted and ended in about 224 A.D. giving way to smaller principalities. Under the Sātavāhanas Buddhism prospered because of the patronage of the affluent merchant and ruling classes. Šaivism, like Bhāgavatism, also was among the important religions of the time.

The Ābhiras, Mahābhōjas, Ikshvākus, Kuras and Chutus shared the Deccān after the Sātavāhanas. Of them, the last
two exercised sway over Karnataka from Kolhapur and Banavasi respectively. As under the Ikshvakus in Vijayapuri so in Karnataka under the Chuṭus (3rd century A.D.), both Hinduism and Buddhism flourished. Karnataka maintained sound cultural relations with the Andhra region as revealed by the participation of the king of Banavasi in the erection of the Ashṭabhujaśvāmi Vishṇu temple in Vijayapuri. The early Pallavas, who were the followers of Bhāgavitism, devoured the kingdoms of the Ikshvakus and Chuṭus in course of time.

The Kadamba (c.325-543 A.D.)

Mayūravarma of the Kadamba dynasty carved out a small kingdom by expelling the Pallavas in the fourth century A.D. (c.325-345 A.D.). He performed an asvamedha sacrifice and restored the grants of Brāhmaṇas. His three successors consolidated the position of the dynasty. Kadamba hegemony saw the period of eminence under Kākusthavarma (c.405-430 A.D.) who fostered friendship with the neighbouring kingdoms like those of the Guptas, Vākātakas and Gaṅgas through matrimonial relations. This must have encouraged the cultural ties of Karnataka with central and north India, especially in the religious field. Kākusthavarma was succeeded by Śāntivarman (c.430-455 A.D.), who ruled from Banavasi, and Krishṇavarman I, who ruled from Tripurāvata. Mrīgēśa (c.455-480 A.D.) succeeded Śāntivarman in Banavasi. He erected a Jaina temple in Halsi (Belgaum dist.).
which was a secondary capital, and made grants for its maintenance. In Banavasi he probably erected a Vishnu temple. He made grants to Brähmanas also. Ravivarma (c. 495-519 A.D.), his successor, built a Kama temple in Gudnapur near Banavasi and made grants to Jaina and Buddhist establishments as well as Brähmanas in his reign. Krishṇavarma I (c. 430-460 A.D.) began his career with a victory over the Pallavas which he commemorated by an asvamedha sacrifice. After two more rulers came Krishṇavarma II (c. 516-543 A.D.) who brought to an end the Śántivarman line of Kadambas by defeating Harivarman. Thereafter the Kadaṁba rule did not last long. The Kadambas patronised Saivism, Vaishnavism, Buddhism and Jainism alike.

The Gaṅgas (c. 325-999 A.D.)

More or less simultaneous with the Kadambas, the Gaṅgas founded their kingdom with Kōvalāla (Modern Kolar) as the capital in the south-eastern precincts of the state. Beginning from Kongāṇivarma, (c. 325-350 A.D.) a series of rulers of this dynasty ruled; prominent among them was Durviniṭa (c. 520-579 A.D.) known for his literary pursuits. They were friendly with the Pallavas - some of the rulers were actually coronated by the Pallava kings themselves - and as such their relation with the Kadambas was a strained one. The Ganga line continued through the reigns of the Early Chālukyas as well as the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. With the former they had matrimonial relations.
The Rashtrakutas wanted the Gangas to accept their suzerainty to which the latter were averse. Accordingly often there was hostility between the two. The Ganga kingdom succumbed to the rising Chola and Kalyana Chalukya powers which brought their line to an end at the close of the 10th century. Being influenced by the Pallavas, at the beginning the Gangas were worshipers of Vishnu. Some kings claimed to be devotees of Siva. Nevertheless, they patronised Brahmanism as well as Jainism.

The Chalukyas of Vatapi (c.540-757 A.D.)

The overthrow of the Kadambas of Banavasi by the Chalukyas of Vatapi marks the commencement of the era of imperialism on the soil of Karnataka. Pulakesi I (c.540-556 A.D.), the first independent ruler of the dynasty, defeated the Kadambas, fortified Badami, performed the aśvamedha and hiranyagarbha rite, and inaugurated the era. Under his sons Kirtivarman (566-596 A.D.) and Maṅgaleśa (596-610 A.D.) there was more territorial expansion and prosperity prevailed. Pulakesi II. (610-c.642 A.D.) who in a battle killed his uncle Maṅgaleśa to procure the throne for which he was the rightful heir, led expeditions all around the kingdom, extended the boundaries to the Narmadā in the north and Kāverī in the South, and fetched the status of an empire. Harsha of Kanoj and Pallava Mahēndravarman were among the rulers who tasted defeat at his hands. Hence a large area of South India was once again
brought under one umbrella. Pulakesi, like his predecessors, was a Bhāgavata by religion, but he patronised Jaina, Bauddha and Hindu religion equally. Under Narasimhavarma's leadership the Pallavas, however, defeated the Chālukyas and occupied Vātāpi. (3.642 A.D.). After twelve years, Pulakesi II's son Vikramāditya I (654-681 A.D.) expelled the Pallavas from the capital and restored Chālukya hegemony. An important event in his reign was his conversion to Śaivism (660 A.D.) which took place in Alampur region in Andhra. His own and his son Vinayāditya's records (681-696 A.D.) are found in Alampur region where they erected some Śiva temples. During Vijayāditya's reign (696-733 A.D.) again importance came to their capital. His son Vikramāditya II (733-745 A.D.) conquered Kanchi thrice and his wives Lōkamahādevī and Trailōkymahādevī commemorated the conquests by erecting two Śiva temples in Pattadakal. Kirtivarman II (745-757 A.D.) maintained the status of the empire quite for some time, but the Rāṣṭrakūtas subdued the Chālukyas. After Vikramāditya I's conversion to Śaivism that religion saw considerable patronage from the royal house. Not only numerous temples were erected for Śiva. Countenance was extended to Śaiva preachers from North India like Jhāna-sivāchārya who erected a Triśūla pillar in Pattadakal in between the three prominent temples. Jainism was also patronised. Buddhism, however, was already a less popular religion in Karnataka. Among others, the rise of Śākta,
Ganapatya and Saura cults is noteworthy. The impact from the north, especially Malwa, and from the South is visible in the art of the Chalukyas.

The Rashtrakutas (c.735-973 A.D.)

Dantidurga (c.735-766 A.D.) defeated Chalukya Kirtivarman II, performed hiranyagarbha and became the first independent ruler of the Rashtrakuta line. His uncle Krishna I (c.756-774 A.D.) put an end to early Chalukya rule and consolidated the kingdom by defeating the Gangas and the Veṇgi Chalukyas. He made the famous Kailasa monolith at Ellora. In Dnruva's time (780-793 A.D.) the Rashtrakuta armies crossed the Narmada, routed the Gujjar Pratihāras and Pālas, punished Veṇgi Chalukyas, took the Ganga ruler captive and humbled the Pallavas. Thus the kingdom rose to the status of an empire. Govinda III (793-814 A.D.) repeated the feat and reached the foot of the Himalayas and Kanchi. His son Amoghavarsha Nṛmatunga (814-878 A.D.), a lover of peace, was a man of letters and established the capital at Manyakheta (Gulburga dist.). Under Krishna II (878-914 A.D.) the Rashtrakutas suffered reverses, but under Indra III (914-929 A.D.) and Krishna III (939-967 A.D.) their glory was restored. At the zenith of their power the dynasty ruled over a vast stretch of territory extending from the Narmada in the north and Kaveri in the south, excluding eastern part of Andhra Pradesh and the Tamil land. In the reign of
Karka II (972-973 A.D.) the Rāṣṭrapāla dynasty collapsed. Purāṇic religion was the most popular religion of the Rāṣṭrapāla period. Śaivism and Jainism were patronised by kings. Vedic practices like bali charu, atithi tarpana, etc., continued to exist. Numerous donations were made to the Brāhmaṇas. The movement of the latter from one region to another is also noticed. The danas like hiranyakarbhā, tulāpurusha, etc., were performed by the kings. Grants were made sometimes on eclipses and taking bath in sacred rivers was considered as meritorious. Erection of temples and donations for their maintenance in different parts of the territory became common. Buddhism continued its feeble existence. Jainism improved on account of the royal patronage. Among other cults, those of the Śāktas and the Sauras rose to prominence. The worship of Trimūrtis in single and triple-shrined temples became common feature, especially in the latter half of their regime.

The Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa and Kalachuris (973-1198 A.D.)

Taila II (973-997 A.D.) of the Kalyāṇa Chālukya dynasty overthrew the Rāṣṭrapāla dynasty. He and his successor Īravādaṇga (997-1008 A.D.) established the supremacy of the dynasty by defeating the Chōlas and the Paramāras. Śōṅgavara I (1044-1068 A.D.), a great ruler, fought incessant wars with the Chōlas. Vikramāditya VI (1076-1127 A.D.) was the greatest among the Chālukya rulers, fought three wars against Mālwa,
regained control over Vêngî, subdued the Hoysalas who were trying to become independent and had a peaceful reign of more than fifty years. His court poet Bhilana (from Kashmir) wrote a Sanskrit work called Vikramânkadevacharita which extolls the achievements of the king. Sômeśvara III (1127-1139 A.D.) was a peace-loving king and wrote the Mânasôllâsa, an encyclopaedic work which reflects on the contemporary society. Under Tailâ III (1149-1162 A.D.) the Châlukya power waned and the Kala-churis overthrew them and ruled for a short period of twenty-two years (1162-1184 A.D.). Sômeśvara IV (1158-1198 A.D.) tried to assert himself again but the Seûnas and the Hoysalas had grown too strong for him to recover any more. In the two-hundred years of the Châlukya rule Karnataka witnessed hectic activity in the field of religion and culture. Śaivism was the dominant religion with its sub-sects. Next was Vaishnavism. Jainism also flourished. Śâktism and Saura cult also prevailed. Buddhism survived in a few pockets. Temple building activity was undertaken on an unprecedented scale. Traipurusha temples were built in many numbers. Purânic religion became very popular.

The Seûnas or Yâdavas of Dévagîrî (1173-1324 A.D.)

The Seûnas served as subordinates of Kalyâna Châlukyas and had matrimonial relations with them. When the Châlukyas grew weak because of the Kalachurî usurpation, they, under
Bhillama V (1173-1192 A.D.), declared independence. They had frequent combats with the Paramāras in the north, Kāinatiyas on the east and Hoysalas in the south. Under Śiṅghāla II (1199-1247 A.D.) they reached the zenith of their power. Their kingdom extended from the Narmadā in the north to the Shimoga-Chitrādurga region below the Tuṅgabhadrā in the south. During the rule of Rāmachandra (1271-1312 A.D.) the kingdom and their capital was sacked by Ala-ud-dīn Khiljī and they continued feebly till about 1334 A.D. Northern half of Karnatakā, which was under their sway, saw the continuation of the activity in the religious and cultural field. The esoteric sect of Mahānu-bhāvas, based on the doctrine of devotion to god Kṛishṇa, was founded by Chakradhara. It made no distinction of caste and community. Its unorthodox teachings made its followers live and move incognito. One of the ministers of Mahādeva (1261-1271 A.D.) named Hēmādri wrote an encyclopaedic work entitled Chaturvargachintāmanī.

The Hoysalas (c.1000-1342 A.D.)

The Hoysalas who carved out a small principality near Sosavūr around 1000 A.D. owed allegiance to the Chāḻukyas and ably assisted them in the early stages of their career. With the accession of Ballāla I (1100-1108 A.D.) they began to venture for independence. Vishnuvardhana's long reign (1108-1152 A.D.) saw the hectic political activity against his over-
lord Vikramāditya VI whose authority he defied and even snatch-ched away some territory from him. Gaṅgavāḍi was annexed to his kingdom. Against great odds, Ballāla II (1173-1220 A.D.) raised the Hoysalas to the status of a sovereign power. Their sphere of influence was extended upto Kanchi and Coonare in Tamilnadu. Ballāla III's reign (1291-1342 A.D.) witnessed the attack of the Muslims under the Khiljis and Tughlaks after which he tried in vain to recover and met a sorrowful death at the hands of the enemies. The Hoysala achievements in the cultural field were excelling. They flooded their land with innumerable temples of various sects which are known for their style and decoration. Among these the reign of Vishnūvardhana is memorable one because of the advent of Rāmānuja into Karnataka and his stay at places like Toṇṇur and Mēlukōṭe. The king himself was a Vaishnava and patronised it exuberently. The temple of Keśava at Belur and Vishnu temples at Gadag, Melukote Tonnur and Talakkad are also of his reign. Śrī-Vaishnavism accordingly spread and thrived in the Hoysala country. Śaivism was, nevertheless, the most popular religion. Jainaism also flourished. Vishnūvardhana's queen Santalī was a great Jaina devotee. Religious harmony was maintained by professing the unity of all deities. The Harihara temple at Harihara underwent extensive renovation by the patronage of Somanātha, a general of Narasimha III who also built the Keśava and other temples in Somanathapura. The Hoysala regime also saw the
founding of Madhva's Dvaita philosophy in South Kanara. Since it took its birth at the fag end of their rule, its impact is not yet apparent in the period considered here; but it came out as a major sect of Vaishnavism in the Vijayanagara period and after.

With the end of the Hoysalas and Seunas a new chapter begins in the history of Karnataka. The Muslim onslaught and impact had been made felt in the region. Rejuvenation of the Hindu regime was a necessary outcome and it resulted in the founding of the new empire of Vijayanagara destined for glory in the sequel.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For a detailed account of nature of early Vishnu's aspects see Dandekar R.N., "Vishnu in the Veda", Prof. P.V. Kane Felicitation Volume, pp. 95-111; Gonda J., Aspects of Early Vishnuism; Jaiswal, S., Origin and Development of Vaishnavism; etc.

2. Gonda J., Aspects of Early Vishnuism, pp. 1-11

3. Raychaudhuri H., Materials for the study of the Early History of the Vaishnava Sect, p. 28


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 35


10. Gonda J., Vishnuism and Sivaism - A Comparison, p. 30


13. Ibid.


23. Infra, pp. 212 ff. For more details see Schrader, Introduction to the Pāṅcharātra and the Āhirbuddhnyasamhitā.

24. The composite images of Vaikuntha-chaturmūrti have been found in Kashmir more in number than elsewhere. This image represents the four vyūhas in one. The visits of scholars like Rāmānuja-chārya, who held up the Pāṅcharātra doctrines, to Kashmir and the treatment they received there indicate that Kashmir was a strong-hold of the Pāṅcharātras.

25. For details see Schrader, Op.Cit.

26. Chattopadhyaya (Op.Cit., p. 16), identifies it with the mantra Om namō Bhagavate Vāsudevāya. But this is not an eight-syllable mantra; it is in fact a twelve-syllable mantra. The difference between these two mantras perhaps marked the subtle difference that may have existed between the Bhāgavatas and the Pāṅcharātras.

27. Ibid., pp. 66-67. He takes this as the influence of the Yoga School on the Pāṅcharātra.


32. B.R. Gopal has examined the chronology of Śrī Rāmānuja and his sojourn to Karnataka in his work Śrī Rāmānuja in Karnataka, pp. 6 ff.


34. Ibid., p. 6

35. Ibid., p. 46

36. Ibid., pp. 54-63

37. The date of Madhva is a controversial issue. One school considers 1197 A.D. as the year of his birth while the other holds 1238 as the year.

38. For a life sketch of Madhvācārya, see Bhatt P.G., Studies in Tuluva History and Culture, pp. 373 ff.; Nandimath S.C., Kannada Nādana Charitre, pp. 93-95.

39. There is, however, one interesting reference to Madhva's pushing aside a rock boulder with a single hand in Mavinakere (Mudagere Tk.); EC., Vol. VI, Mudagere 89; an inscription referring to Madhva's disciple Naraharitīrtha is found in Śrīkūrma: ET., Vol. VI, pp. 265 ff.; it refers to setting up of Yōga-Narasimha in front of the Kamatha temple.


42. The outline given here is dependent upon several works: 
Sastri K.A.N., *A History of South India*, (Madras, 1966); 
Panchamukhi R.S., *Karnāṭakakada Itiḥāsa*; Desai P.B., (Ed.,) 
*A History of Karnataka* (Dharwad, 1970); etc.

43. For the chronology of the Sātavāhanas, we have followed 
Nagaraju S., *Buddhist Architecture of Western India* (Delhi, 
1981), pp.15-24. For Nāgānīka's inscription, see *Infra* , 
pp. 60 ff.

44. *Infra*, pp.67 ff.

45. This is indicated by various propernames noticed in the 
western Indian cave inscriptions.

46. *Infra*, pp.70 ff.


48. Gopal B.R., "Gudnapur Inscription of Kādaṁba Pāvivarma", 
*Srikanthikā*, (Mysore,1973), pp.61-72.


50. Ibid.

51. This is indicated by his Meguṭi Jaina inscription and Huien-
tszang's account of the Chālukya kingdom.


(Dharwad,1960), pp.95-97.

54. For instance, the Durgā Bhagavatī (Gauḍaragūḍi) temple, 
Aihole. It appears that some of the temples to the south of 
the Gauḍaragūḍi were also originally dedicated to Durgā: 
e.g., Chakragūḍi, Kontagūḍi (south-east), etc.

55. Numerous icons of Gaṇeśa are found in Aihole and Badami; 
some of these are ascribable to the Early Chālukya period.
56. For instance, the Malegitti Sivâlaya, Badami, and Durga temple and some temples in its vicinity at Aihole were originally dedicated to the Sun-god. The beautiful Durga temple, Aihole, is sufficient indication of the popularity of the Sun cult.

57. Desai P.B., (Ed.,) A History of Karnataka, p.243

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VISHNU WORSHIP IN EARLY SOUTH INDIA

For the simple reason that in the early phase of history there is paucity of material to confine our study to Karnataka region proper, the three main sources, viz., epigraphic, literary and sculptural, that have bearing on South India as a whole, are examined in this chapter with a view to bring into limelight the nature and form of the Vaishnavism from the 3rd century B.C. to the beginning of the 4th century A.D.
A. EVIDENCE OF EPIGRAPHS

Although Asokan epigraphs form the earliest lithic records of Karnataka and the Deccan, they are of little religious significance in that they contain only exhortation of ethical principles. Their subject matter is more or less restricted to the expression of the experiences of the great emperor after his joining the Sāṅgha as a layman and his attempt of elevating the moral standard of his subjects. By their implication it can be surmised that Buddhism was the more favoured religion at least in so far as the royal patronage was concerned. But this does not mean that other religions did not flourish during the time of Aśoka. For, in some inscriptions, he appealed to the people that respect should be paid to the Brāhmaṇas, Śramaṇas, Aṇjivikas and the like.¹ It is thus obvious that other religions did prevail at the time and that one of them was Brāhmaṇism.

But the exact nature of these faiths in the Deccan, and as such in Karnataka, cannot be decided on the available evidence, down to the period of the Sātavāhanas. Though numerous inscriptions of the latter have come to light in the Deccan (including North Karnataka), the information that can be culled from them is more about the Buddhist activities than that of the others.

The first epigraph useful for our study is from a Nanaghat cave.² It belongs to Nāganiṅka, a queen of Sātakarni I, and is assigned to the middle of the 2nd century B.C., when the queen
seems to have been ruling as a regent on behalf of her son Vēdisrī. It recapitulates the many sacrifices performed by her husband and "records the fees paid to the officiating priests including tens of thousands of cows, numbers of elephants, thousands of horses, whole villages and huge sums of money". Apparently, in the estimates of the higher classes of the society, the \textit{Vedic} rituals held an esteemed position in the 2nd century B.C. In Karnataka proper, an inscription of about the 1st century B.C., found in Vadagaon-Madhavapur (Belgaum Dt.), records performance of several \textit{Vedic} sacrifices by a Brāhmaṇa. Such practice continued into the early centuries of the Christian era.

While the epigraph of queen Nāganīkā holds up the triumph of the Sātavāhanas as a viable political power in the Deccan, it also throws light on the nature of the \textit{Vedic} religion in the contemporary society. The more interesting part lay in its preliminary portion which reads:

\begin{verbatim}
Sidham . . . . no Dhammasa namō Īdasa
namō Saṁkaṁsana-Vaśudēvāna Chaṁda-Sūrānaṁ
mahimāvatānam chatuṁ naṁ chaṁ Lōkapālānam.
Yama-Varuṇa-Kuṭēra-Vaśavānaṁ namō
\end{verbatim}

The inclusion of Saṁkarṣaṇa and Vaśuḍevas in the list of gods adored, many of whom disclose \textit{Vedic} character, that too at the commemoration of \textit{Vedic} sacrifices, apparently indicates that the \textit{Vedic} mythology was being deeply influenced by the seemingly non-\textit{Vedic} cultic gods such as those of the Bhāgavatas.
The question now arises: What was the form in which the two gods - Sāmkarśaṇa and Vāsudēva - were invoked? For a clearer understanding of the context, it will not be out of place here to consider the relevant evidence available elsewhere in India of contemporary times.

The famous Besnagar Garuḍa pillar inscription\(^6\) of the 2nd century B.C. refers to the erection of a Garuḍa pillar obviously in front of a temple of Vāsudēva,\(^7\) by Heliodorus, an ambassador of Yavana king Ambikidas and a Bhāgavata who was the devotee of Vāsudēva, the god of gods. While this inscription shows that Bhāgavatism had acquired popularity even amongst the alien people like the Yavanas, it tempts one to infer that Vāsudēva had been accorded the supreme position of god-head which he is in the Vyūha concept of the Pāñcharātrins.

However, the Nagari epigraph\(^8\) of more or less the same period casts a shadow of doubt on such an inference. It records the construction of "an enclosing wall round the stone object of worship called Nārāyaṇa-vātikā (compound) for the divinities Sāmkarśaṇa and Vāsudēva who are unconquered and lords of all, by Sarvatāta, a Gājāyana, and the son of a lady of the Parāśara gotra, who is a devotee of Bhagavat and has performed an āśva- mēdha sacrifice".

The Nagari epigraph proves, in whatever capacity, that Nārāyaṇa had been associated with Sāmkarśaṇa and Vāsudēva. The
fact that the latter two are described as "unconquered and lords of all" may have significance because it seems to throw light on their original character. The two appear to have been worshipped as hero-gods at the time when the record was inscribed. Corroboratory evidence for such a deduction comes from another epigraph.

The Mora well inscription records the installation of the beautiful and resplendent images of the five worshipful heroes of the Vrishni clan in a stone temple by Tōshā, a foreign lady. As pointed out earlier, the five Vrishni heroes (Pañchavīras) are identified as Saṁkarshaṇa, Vāsudēva, Pradyumna, Samba and Aniruddha. The epigraph is assigned to a period between 1st century B.C. and 1st century A.D. As late as that period, as the inscription shows, Saṁkarshaṇa and Vāsudēva were worshipped as hero-gods, and not as the Vyūhas of the Pāñcharātra concept of later times.

From the above evidences the following inferences can be made: (i) Around the 2nd century B.C. and earlier, there existed in North India, especially in the region around Mathura, the Bhāgavata religion whose divinities were the deified heroes of the Vrishni clan, viz., Saṁkarshaṇa, Vāsudēva, Pradyumna, Samba and Aniruddha, designated together as the Pañchavīras. (ii) The Bhāgavata religion was popular among the foreigners also; and these foreigners usually performed the Vedic rituals, such as the sacrifices, also. (iii) Among the five hero-gods of the Vrishni clan the last three, viz., Pradyumna, Samba and
Aniruddha, were not as much popularly known as the first two.

(iv) The two hero-gods held in high esteem were Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva. (v) Vāsudeva as God of gods is already raised to the Supreme status. (vi) The main principles of the Bhāgavata religion which were supposed to lead one to heaven are self-restraint (dama), self-denial (chāga), and vigilance (apramāda), as recorded in the Besnagar epigraph.

To return to the Nanaghat record, the contents of the relevant portion may now be analysed.

To begin with, Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva do not top the list of the gods adored in the epigraph. Nor are they given any specific position in the list. They are just treated on par with the other deities such as Dharma, Indra, Chandra, Sūrya, etc., Secondly, they are mentioned exactly in the same order as they appear in the Nagari epigraph referred to above. Thus it will be pertinent to remark here that no special honour is conferred upon either of the deities except that they are among the invoked; and that in the Deccan also they retained, though as deities, their hero-like character. Both Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva were held in high esteem among the Bhāgavata gods and the remaining three had been relegated to a lesser status so as not to find mention in the list of the gods adored.

Finally, some points concerning the relevance of Nanaghat record to the Karnataka region may be postulated. Queen Nāganikā claims to be the daughter of a Mahāraṇī. At the time the
Manarathis were the feudatories of the Sātavāhanas. It is known that Sātakarṇi I, Nāganikā's husband, wielded authority over a greater part of the Deccan; he is described as the lord of Dakshināpatha. Thus a greater part of North Karnataka must have been under his sway. Mahārathis may have been the subordinate rulers ruling over the southern portions of the Deccan including North Karnataka. It is suggested that 'Nāganikā' may be a Kannada name. It is worthwhile to note in this connection that some Maharathi coins have been found recently in areas of northern Karnataka. Therefore, it may justly be remarked that such religious tendencies as recorded in the Nanaghat record hold good for Karnataka region also. It may also be noted that the early Tamil literature, as will be shortly seen, alludes to deities like Saṅkarṣaṇa and Vāsudēva. The infiltration of the ideas occurring in the Nanaghat record must have begun very early, i.e., before the commencement of the Christian era; and this process must have been obviously through Karnataka-Andhra regions.

It is not until the close of the 2nd century A.D. that a direct reference to Viṣṇu worship occurs again in the Deccan. However, indirect references by way of proper names and comparisons are noticed. The earliest instance of this may be traced in the name Kanha (Skt. Krīṣṇa), the predecessor of Sātakarṇi I. This would be in the 2nd century B.C. The popularity of the name Krīṣṇa in the closing centuries of the pre-Christ period...
period is indicated in Buddhist inscriptions of Western Indian caves. Thus there are references to a Kanha at Kondane, a goldsmith Kanhadāsa at Pītalkhora, and a Kanhaka at Aijanta. Again a Śrīdhārasena is mentioned in a Bhaja inscription. A Śiṅhadatta (has the name anything to do with the Narasimha aspect of Vishnu?) and a Veṅhuvāsa (?) at Karle are also found mentioned.

The Vadagaon-Madhavapur record, adverted to above, calls for some remarks. It records the performance of Vedic sacrifices by a Brāhmaṇa of Kāśyapa gōtra, and mentions a mālābhāgavata the meaning of which term is uncertain. It is likely that this is a mistake for maha-bhāgavata which means a devout worshipper of Bhagavat Vishnu. In that case, the Vadagaon-Madhavapur (Yadugrama?) inscription would be the first positive evidence of the prevalence of Bhagavatism in Karnataka.

For the first two centuries of the Christian era also there is paucity of epigraphical evidence. Again the inscriptions of Western Indian caves have to be depended upon. A Mahārathī Vishṇudatta is known from a Bhaja inscription. A Kanha of Kalyāṇa is known from a Kanheri record. In an inscription from Sannati (Gulburga dt.) in Karnataka a lady Rāmaśiriyā is mentioned. An officer Vishnupālita was in charge of Gōvardhana (Nasik) region under Sātavāhana king Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi in about 124 A.D. He was ordered by the king to issue a grant when the latter was stationed in Vaijayantī (= Banavasi).
More useful evidence can be had from the Nasik inscription of Vāsishṭhipurta Pulūmāvi, dated c.149 A.D. It contains a lengthy eulogy of king Gautamiputra Sātakarnī and records certain grants by his mother Gautamī Balāśri.

The epigraph compares Sātakarnī to Rāma, Kēśava, Arjuna and Bhūmasēna in prowess. Rāma-Kēśava are obviously used here in the sense of Samkarśana-Vāsudēva. For Balarama, the elder brother of Vāsudēva, is referred to in the epic simply as Rāma also. Samkarśana-Vāsudēva are mentioned by Patañjali as Rāma-Kēśava. The fact that the two deities are mentioned in the same order as in the Nanaghat record indicates that their hero-like character continued.

The epithet 'Kēśava' is used in the Deccan for the first time in this epigraph. It is evident that the story of Kṛṣṇa as the killer of the demon Kesi was known to the Deccan about the middle of the 2nd century A.D., if not earlier.

The epigraph further compares the king to Yayatī, Janamejaya, Rāma, etc. in tējas. Possibly this Rāma is the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa, otherwise known as Dāsarathī Rāma.

The king is also compared in the epigraph to Garuḍā, the vāhana of Vishṇu. It is not improbable that the composer of the record was fully conversant with the exploits of Garuḍā narrated in the Mahābhārata and was very much influenced by the great epic and some purāṇas.
Therefore it may be reasonably presumed that most of the ideas appearing in the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas had become popular and influential in the life of the people of the Deccan during the 2nd century A.D.

An epigraph of c.152 A.D. of the reign of king Vāsisthīputra Pulumāvi, son of Gautamīputra Sātakarnī, refers to a Vishṇupāla who made certain donations.

At the end of the 2nd century A.D. a direct reference to Vishṇu worship in the Deccan is met with. This short epigraph discovered in China (Andhra Pradesh) belongs to Yajñāśrī Sātakarnī, and is dated to c.199 A.D. Though it is badly damaged, the identified letters are clear enough to understand its meaning. At the commencement it contains an invocation to Bhagavat Vāsudeva:

Sidhām namō bhagavatō Vāsudēvasa...

The interesting fact about the invocation is that God Vāsudēva is invoked here not in association with any other god - not even Saṁkarshaṇa, who was mentioned almost always along with Vāsudēva earlier. This will help infer that in Bhagavata theology Vāsudēva had been elevated to a position of prominence, superseding the remaining hero-gods. Independent worship of Vāsudēva-Krishṇa as 'bhagavat', the Supreme God, thus appears to have commenced. The worship of Samkarshana had possibly become less popular. But the reference in the inscription is
too brief to know more about the nature of the deity Vasudeva as invoked in this epigraph. There is evidence to show that the Panchavīra worship did not go out of vogue in the Deccan at least as late as the early 4th century A.D. However, such evidence appears in an altogether different context and it will be discussed specifically elsewhere in the present chapter. Although, therefore, it is difficult to rule out the possibility of Vasudeva being worshipped here as a holy hero-god of the Vṛṣṇi clan, it may not be incorrect to state that the China epigraph indicates the Supreme status Vasudeva as god in Vaishnava pantheon was about to assume had he not attained it already.

The name Yajña Sātakarni appears to be significant in view of the fact that 'Yajña' was one of the avatāras of Vishnu according to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.36

Some more names appearing in epigraphs at the close of the regime of the Sātavāhanas may now be noted. Most of these belong to the 3rd century A.D. A Mahāraṭhi mahātalavara Vihṣṇusirī (=Vihṣṇusīrī) of Pukīya family is known to have donated a ayaka pillar at Nagarjunakonda.37 In an epigraph of Kudā Mādhava38 and in another, a Rāmadatta39 are referred. The other names mentioned in the epigraphs are Kaṇha of Kalyāṇa,40 the merchant Viṁhunandin of Kalyāṇa,41 Śaka Viṁṣṭudattā (a lady) of Daśapurā;42 Vṛṣṇī (a lady) of Amarāvatī,43 Viṁṣṭukā (a lady) of Kudā,44 Gopāla at Karad,45 and Govindadāsa of Sūrpāraka at Vaisarga46 and Nanaghat.47
The Chutu kings of Banavasi bore such names as Vishnu-Skanda. \(^{48}\)

At the close of the period considered in this chapter, an important epigraph having direct relevance to Karnataka region is noticed, though outside the boarders of the present Karnataka State, in Nagarjunakonda, the famous archaeological site in Andhra Pradesh. This epigraph is important from various angles and hence a detailed discussion below.

The epigraph, assigned to A.D.278, \(^{49}\) begins with salutation to Bhagavat Nārāyaṇa who is described as "the supreme god of gods" and "Primeval Man". It states that in the 30th year in the reign of king Vāsiṣṭhīputra Vasuśeṇa, the Abhirā, lord Ashtabhujaśvāmin made of uduṁbara wood was installed on Setagiri by mahāgramika mahātalavara mahādaṇḍarāyaka Śivasēpa of Kauśika gōtra and of Peribidēha family, the Yavanarājas of Saṁjayapura, Śaka Rudradāman of Āvanti and Vishnuudrāśivalānanda Satakarṇi of Vanavāsa. Besides this, the record informs, the enclosure of the shrine of the god on the hill was decorated, the well called Mahānanda was cleansed, two new tanks were caused to be excavated on the Setagiri and Mudera and groves of palmyra trees were also caused to be planted by them. The engraver of the record, viz., Vardhamānaka of Seṅbaka family, is eulogised as a man of various virtues. Amātya Tishyaśarman of Bhaṛadvāja gōtra is said to have composed this record "by virtue of god's power". The epigraph ends with wishing good to the herds of cows.
The invocation to god Nārāyaṇa as the "Supreme God of gods" (dēva-parama-dēva) and the Primeval Man (Pūrāṇa Purusha) in the record is clearly indicative of the highest position god Nārāyaṇa was accorded by the sectarian devotees of the period represented and to which expression is given by the composer. It may therefore be inferred that the vēdic and epic ideas mentioned elsewhere in connection with Nārāyaṇa had crystallised in a section of the society and were widely in vogue at the time of composing the record. It also shows that various epithets of god Vishṇu such as Nārāyaṇa, Purusha, Ashtabhujasvāmi, etc. had gained currency in the contemporary society. It may be pointed out in this connection that an inscription of Nāravarman, dated 404 A.D., found in Mandsor, begins with an invocation to Vishnu who is described inter alia as thousand-headed Purusha who sleeps on the waters of the four oceans which constitute his bedstead. Purusha is also one of the several names of Vishṇu in an inscription of Nala king Skandavarman in Orissa, dated in the second half of the 5th century A.D. Our epigraph shows that the concept of Vishṇu as Pūrāṇa Purusha was already prevalent in the lower Deccan in the last quarter of the 3rd century A.D.

The mention of the deity as Ashtabhujasvāmi draws our attention next. From the context, this deity clearly represents a form of Vishṇu. The name indicates that the deity was eight-armed. In this connection it may be noted that there are examples of eight-armed Vishṇu in sculpture at a slightly later period
in Tamilnadu and Karnataka.\textsuperscript{53} It is known that Ashtabhujasvāmi
was praised in a song by an early Āḻvār in the 6th century A.D.\textsuperscript{54}
In Karnataka proper there are at least two early sculptures of
eight-armed Vishṇu: one in Cave-3 at Badami (c.578 A.D.)\textsuperscript{55} and
the other on the Virūpāksha temple at Pattadakal (c.740 A.D.)\textsuperscript{56}

The excavation of a tank in the vicinity of the temple
of Ashtabhujasvāmi indicates that the idea of providing Pushkar-
arāṇi was in vogue in the circle of Vishṇu worshippers. This
practice continued in South India even later.

Further, in the epigraph, the planting of the palmyra trees
by the participants is specifically mentioned. This act, there-
fore, seems to have some significance. It is well known that
palm leaves represent the banner of Saṁkarṣaṇa. Has the act of
planting palmyra trees anything to do with the worship of
Saṁkarṣaṇa? Bāneṛjea associates the representation in sculpt-
ure of fan-palm-capitals with Saṁkarṣaṇa worship.\textsuperscript{57}

The statement by the composer of the record, Tīshyaśāraman,
that he could compose it "by virtue of gods power" next draws
attention. This has to be viewed as significant. For here seems
to be a faint allusion to that principle of the Bhakti school
of the Bhāgavatas, viz., self-denial (tyāga), which comprises
one of the three main tenets leading to heaven as conceived by
them and recorded as early as the 2nd century B.C. in the
Besnagar epigraph.\textsuperscript{58} Says the Bhagavadgītā: "The man of yōga
who knows the truth should think 'I do nothing at all.....'' 
"I am the intellect of persons endowed with intellect....".60
and "whatever you do.....whatever you eat, whatever you make,
whatever you give, whatever penance you perform, commit that
to Me."61

One more point of interest which is relevant to our study
is the mention of a king of Vanavāsa (mod.Banavasi,North Kanara
Dt.), namely, Vishṇuruḍraśivalānanda Sātakarṇi. The fact that
this king actively partook in the construction of the temple
of Aṣṭabhujasvamin is very significant; this is the first so
far known king of Karnataka region to have participated in the
errection of a Vishṇu temple. Whether or not he was connected
genealogically with the other known kings of pre-Kadaṁba Bana-
vasi cannot be ascertained; but his name recalls such names of
the Chuṭu kings as Vishṇu-skanda Sātakarṇi. We may also note
that recently some Śivalānanda coins have been discovered in
Banavasi.62

Further, the use of the names of two most important deities
of the Hindu pantheon together, viz., Vishṇu and Rudra, in this
proper name is reminiscent of the concept of Harihara which
was popular slightly later on in Karnataka.

Significant also is the mention of an Ābhīra king in
connection with Vishṇu worship and in association with kings of
various countries including the one of Banavasi already referred
to above. The Ābhīras were one of the successors of the Sātavāhanas in the Deccan. They are usually considered as an alien pastoral people and are attributed with the contribution of erotic elements to the Kṛishṇa legend. Although some have questioned such a view, it now seems more or less an accepted fact that the identification of the Ābhīra youthful god with Kṛishṇa-Vāsudēva was responsible for the introduction of erotic elements in the Kṛishṇa story, such as his amorous engagements with the Gōpis. At the close of the 3rd century A.D. the Ābhīras, as indicated by the record under consideration, entered the lower Deccan. Obviously with them their beliefs and practices must have also entered into this region and the legends current among them may have, as a result, received wider currency in the lower Deccan, including Karnataka. Compiled as they were about this time and slightly later, the verses clearly alluding to the dance and relation of Kṛishṇa with Gōpis as well as Rādhā in the Gāthāsaptasāti attributed to Sātavāhana king Hāla, may be viewed as indications of the prevalence in the region of such ideas about the youthful god Kṛishṇa. Prevalence of such legends in Tamilnadu at an early period is attested by early Tamil literature also. And Karnataka region may therefore be considered no exception to this.

The fact that the present record ends with well wishing to the herds of cow may indicate the importance given by the Ābhīras to cattle-herding. But it also reminds of the Vaishnava concept of Nārāyaṇa as the protector of cows and Brahmans.
It may be incidentally noted that a conch-shell bearing an inscription reading *Athabhujasāmīsa* was also recovered in the excavations. The association of conch-shell (*pañcājanya*) with Vishnu as one of his characteristic attributes is well known.

There is one more epigraph, ascribed to 3rd or early 4th century A.D., which belongs to the reign of Skandavarman of the Pallava dynasty. It is a copper plate record in Prakrit. It registers a grant of land made by Chārudēvī, the mother of Buddyām-kura and the queen of Buddhavarman. The last mentioned was the son of Skandavarman. The grant was made for the deity *bhagavān Nārāyana* of the temple (*dēvakula*) of Mahatāraka in Dalūra in order to get *āyu* (life-span) and *bala* (strength) increased.

It has been already noted above that god Nārāyana had been accorded very high position in the Nagarjunakonda record. The present record confirms this as it mentions the existence obviously of an image of god Nārāyana. It seems that Mahatāraka was the person who erected the temple. 'Nārāyana' here may have been simply used to connote the deity Vishnu.

The epigraph is of interest because the Early Pallava kings were followers of the Bhāgavata religion. The epithet *parama-bhāgavata* used for some kings of that dynasty testifies to the fact. Some of their epigraphs, it may be noted, begin with an invocation to Vishnu in its abbreviated form: *Jitāṃ bhagavatā*. The names of the kings, such as Simhavarman, Vishnuçopa, etc., also point to this fact.
It has been pointed out that the early Pallavas held sway over parts of Karnataka especially over the eastern part of Karnataka, as indicated by the Hirehadgali record found in the Bellary district. This shows that the Bhāgavata religion must also have been influential at least in eastern parts of Karnataka at an early period.

B. EVIDENCE OF TAMIL LITERATURE

It is difficult to draw a line of demarcation between the earlier and later strata of the Saṅgam literature; but Aham and Puram are usually considered to represent its earlier phase.

In the early Saṅgam Literature, Saṅkarsana-Balarāma, the Sāttvata-Vṛishṇi hero and a brother of Kiṣṇa, appears as a chief deity. He is called Valiyōn because of his quality of bala. Naṃjil (plough-share) is his banner. Kiṣṇa-Vāsudēva appears as a boy and pastoral hero. His uprooting Karuṇḍa (Yamalāṛjuna ?) tree, redeeming the sun concealed by asuras, etc., are referred to.

Kiṣṇa is mentioned as Māyōn, Viṇḍu (Viṣṇu), etc. His epithets such as Nēmiyan and Tigirivān (meaning bearer of the wheel) indicate association of chakra with him. He wears a long garland of tula (tulai). His five weapons viz. chakra, śāṅkha, gada, khaḍga and śāṅgha, formed the motifs in ornaments worn by children.
Vāmana-Trivikrama, Krishṇa and Balarāma are the most popular avatāras referred to. Paraśurāma was known to be the bearer of battle-axe and the exterminater of Kshatriyas. Although Rāmāyana episodes are known, it is difficult to say that Rāma was considered as an avatāra.

Śrī or Lakṣmi, known by her other names Pori and Pon, represents wealth.

There is indication of the concept of Harihara. It is also possible that Sūrya was identified with Vīṣṇu, because Veyyōn is referred to as carrying a Garuḍa flag.

The later part of the Śaṅgam literature is considered in the next chapter.

C. EVIDENCE OF SCULPTURES

Only a few early sculptures of the Hindu deities have come to light so far in the Deccan and the south. So far as Vishnuite icons are concerned, this may have been partly due to the preference of wood to stone in making icons. For instance, the icon of Ashtabhujaśvāmi of Nagarjunakonda was made of audumbara wood. The small number of finds in regard to Brāhmaṇical sculptures may also be partly due to insufficient explorations.

In the Deccan region the representation of Gaja-Lakṣmi as well as what seems to be Garuḍa on the façade of Cave 40...
at Junnar-Manmodi, assigned to c.1st century B.C. is noteworthy. Unfortunately, the religious affiliation of the cave has remained enigmatic. The depiction shows that Gaja-Lakshmi, signifying prosperity and bountiness, had gained popularity in the Deccan. Her appearance in Buddhist context is also known. But it should be pointed out here that the present representation is found exactly above the doorway of the façade. It will be of interest to note in this connection that the representation of Gaja-Lakshmi on the lintel or the architrave of the doorways and gateways of the Hindu temples becomes a rather regular feature in Karnataka from later part of early Chalukya period onwards or perhaps even a little earlier.

The other sculpture, also from the same cave, is of a standing human figure having beak-nose and wings. Apparently he is intended to be a man-bird, perhaps Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu. Interestingly indeed a Naga in human form is shown to his right. An epigraphical reference to Garuda of a slightly later period has been already pointed out above. That Garuda was already associated with Vishnu as early as the 2nd century B.C. is clear from the Besnagar record.

Perhaps the most important and significant of the Hindu sculptures of the early Deccan is the Vishnuite stone panel of Narasimha found in Kondamotu (Guntur Dt., Andhra Pradesh). Details about this sculpture are available elsewhere, and a few points of interest and significance should suffice here.
The panel represents a couchant Narasimha at the centre in complete zoomorphic form but for the two additional arms at the shoulder level which carry gadā and chakra. A Śrivatsa mark is depicted on the chest of the deity. Narasimha is seated on a pedestal of lotus petals. Of more interest is the fact that the deity is flanked by six human figures of whom the one on the extreme right is lost. Of the remaining, the two to the right of Narasimha represent Pradyumna and two-armed Vishnu respectively from right to left while the three on the left in the same order represent Vasudēva, Samkarshana and Aniruddha. Apparently these, with the exception of the two-armed Vishnu, represent the four of the five Vrishṇi-vīras, the lost one being Saṁba. On stylistic grounds the sculpture is assigned to the late 3rd or early 4th century A.D.

This is the earliest so far known sculptural representation of Narasimha, an avatāra of Vishnu. That the iconographic conception of this deity was not yet standardized at the time of carving the sculpture is indicated by the complete zoomorphic form of Narasimha. The additional hands are rather incongruous in depiction. His association or rather identification with Vishnu is suggested by the two characteristic attributes, viz., chakra and gadā. The prominence attached to him in this representation is proved both by his central position and the pītha on which he is couchant. Therefore it is justified to state that the sculpture under consideration implies the rise
of the āvatāra concept in iconography, especially of Narasiṁha āvatāra. It also suggests the rudimentary stage of the iconographic traits of Narasiṁha aspect of Viśnu. Be it pointed out here that Narasiṁha form, as is shown elsewhere in the present work, became very popular in Karnataka region during the succeeding periods.

The presence of Śrīvatsa mark, a symbolic representation of the Prakṛti and Lakṣmi, on the chest of the deity clearly indicates that the concept that Śrī Lakṣmi resided on the chest of Viśnu had already been developed. Again, positive evidence of such a conception can be traced in a Kadamba inscription of Karnataka.

The order of the other deities representing the Vṛiṣṇi-vīras also entails remarks. In the Vāyu-purāṇa the Panchavīras are mentioned in the following order: Saṁkarṣaṇa, Viṣṇu, Pradyumna, Samba and Aniruddha. But in the sculpture in question their representation is as follows: (Samba), Pradyumna, Viṣṇu (after interruption by two-armed Viṣṇu and Narasiṁha), Saṁkarṣaṇa and Aniruddha. This incongruity warrants explanation. On seeing the relief it will at once become obvious that Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu are made to flank the central deity, Narasiṁha. Although Viṣṇu's depiction may be to achieving symmetry in the representations on the panel, Viṣṇu, Narasiṁha and Viṣṇu seem to have been placed in that order not without reason. This is possibly for indicating the nearness of Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu.
to the central deity Narasimha whose identity with Vishnu had been established at the time. For, in later theology, Samba disappears from the Vyūha list and the remaining viz., Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are deemed only as parts of the Highest and the Whole, who is Vāsudeva in his para aspect.

The panel indicates the intermingling of the Pāñchavīrā cult with the avatāra concept, or more correctly, the supersession of the former by the latter. It proves the co-existence of Pāñchavīrā and avatāra concepts on the one hand, and yet implies the asserting trait of the latter concept on the other.

And finally, as to the emblems held by the deities. The association of ikśuṣucāpa and makaradhvaja with Pradyumna and of the Vēṇu (flute) with Kṛiṣṇa-Vāsudeva; Saṅkarṣaṇa's addiction to intoxicating drinks; and Aniruddha's hero-like features indicated by khaḍga and khēṭaka; are illustrated by the sculpture.

Before concluding the examination of the sculptural evidence of this period, one more icon of Vishnu of more or less the same period as the Kondamotu relief needs consideration. At the outset be it stated that this icon is found in Karnataka region proper and that it hails from Kontapala, a village in the Honnavar taluk of the North Kanara district. The sculpture in the round represents a two-armed Vishnu (Fig.1) in samabhānga recalling the description of two-armed Vishnu appearing in the Mahābhārata, Brihadāraṅītī, and Matsya Purāṇa, although the
attributes do not exactly tally with the prescription of these works. However, we may note that the same attributes are prescribed for Mānusha Vāsudēva in the Vaikhānasagama. On stylistic affinities the sculpture may be assigned to the 3rd century A.D. at least. Being the earliest so far known Vishṇu sculpture in Karnataka it is a strong evidence suggesting the rise of worship of Vishṇu in temples in the region, which may be the outcome of the influence of Bhāgavatism.

As mentioned above, in the excavations in the vicinity of the Ashtabhujasvāmi temple in Nagarjunakonda, an inscribed conch-shell was recovered. It was incised with a chakra-on-stand flanked by an ankuśa (hala?) and a chhatra. The chakra-on-stand recalls the Buddhist dharma-chakra. Buddhist religious activities in the vicinity of Nagarjunakonda are well known and it is likely that their mode of representation may have influenced the Brāhmanical, such as the chakra-on-stand.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Sircar D.C., Inscriptions of Asoka, (New Delhi, 1975), p. 87
3. Sastri K.A.N., A History of South India, p. 93
4. Panchamukhi R.S., Twelve Years of Kannada Research in Bombay Karnataka, p. V and pl. III.
5. There are instances of kings performing Vedic sacrifices such as ásvamedha and vajapeya; see supra, pp.
   Manushya-prakṛiti-dēvān kīrtamānān nibodhata
   Saṁkarshaṇāh Vāsudēvaḥ Pardyumnaḥ Sāmba ēva cha
   Aniruddhaścha pañchāīte vāṁśavīrāḥ prakīrttitāḥ

12. In the vyūha concept of the Pañcharātras, Sāmba has no place. Vāsudēva is the supreme god-head and Saṁkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha only emanate from him in that order as subsequent vyūhas. But in early inscriptions, it is always Saṁkarshaṇa who is mentioned first. This would imply that either the two were considered equal or Saṁkarshaṇa held a superior position. This apparently goes contrary to the vyūha concept.


15. Infra p.76

16. Nagaraju S., Buddhist Architecture of Western India, p.345 No.22.

17. Ibid. p.339

18. Ibid., p.346, No.11

19. Ibid. p.328, No.2

20. Ibid., p.329, No.3

21. Ibid., p.337, No.4.

22. Ibid., No.6


25. Ibid., p.336, No.38


28. Ibid.

29. Note the order in which the two are mentioned.

30. Adi,Sa^ha,Vana, Udyoga, etc. Parvas. Cha-pekar, Iconographic Elements in the Mahabharata.


32. Mahabharata, Adi parva.


34. Ibid., EJ., Vol.I, p.96
35. Infra p.78 ff.
36. For the list see part-II, p.335
37. El., Vol.XX, pp.20-21
39. Ibid., p.341, No.16
40. LL., No.1007
41. Ibid., No.1001
43. LL., No.1216
45. Ibid., p.336, No.1
46. Ibid., p.346, No.2
47. Ibid., p.342, No.8
48. LL., No.1195
50. Supra pp.23-24
52. Ibid., p.202
53. See Infra, pp. 308-309
55. See part-II, under Sthānakamūrtis, No.20
56. Ibid., No.21
59. Bhagavadgītā, V, 8-9
60. Ibid., VII, 10
61. Ibid. IX, 27
62. Kind information given by Dr. Raghunath Bhatt.
63. Chattopadhyaya S., Evolution of Hindu Sects, p. 72
65. See Infra, p.
70. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 2
74. Khan A.W., AFGAS., No. 16, (1964)
75. See Infra, Chapter III, pp. 94 ff & 113 ff.
76. Infra, p. 99 f.
77. See above note 11.
79. See for details Part-II, p. 289 ff
80. Ibid.

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VAISHNAVISM IN THE KADAMB-GAÑGA PERIOD

With the rise of new independent kingdoms of the Kadambas and the Gañgas, the material for our study becomes copious. Accordingly, it is not necessary to depend solely on the evidence obtaining from regions other than Karnataka proper. In the present chapter different classes of evidence are examined to throw light on the form of Vaishnavism from the 4th to 6th century A.D., with special stress on the epigraphs and sculptures found in Karnataka. The evidence of Tamil literature and of Gathasapta sûri is also taken note of to get a better picture.
A. EVIDENCE OF EPIGRAPHS

1. Early Pallava, Śālaṅkhāyana and Vishṇukundin Records

As noted above the Pallavas were the rulers of a considerable portion of Karnataka-Andhra region before the rise of the Kadaṁbas of Banavasi. As such it is pertinent to consider here some epigraphs of the early Pallava dynasty which substantiate on the Vishṇu worship. Some evidence will also be gleaned from the epigraphs of the Śālaṅkhāyanas and the Vishṇukundins who were the rulers of the Andhra region during the period, as a background.

The Valavatti grant of Pallava Simhavarma,¹ in which a Bṛāhmaṇa named Vishṇusarma appears as a donee, describes the king as a parama bhāgavata (i.e., a great devotee of bhagavat Vishṇu). More important, the epigraph commences with the most characteristic Vishṇuite invocation of the period: Jitāṁ Bhagavatā (The world is conquered by the worshipful (Vishṇu)). In the Vishṇu Purāṇa, the term Bhagavat is explained:

"The word Bhagavat is a convenient form to be used in the adoration of that supreme Being to whom no term is applicable and therefore Bhagavat expresses that Supreme Spirit which is pure, One only, almighty and the cause of causes of all things. The letter Bh implies the cherished and supporter of the universe. By ga is understood the leader, impeller, or creator. The disyllable Bhaga indicates the six properties:
dominion, might, glory, splendour, wisdom and
dispersion. The purport of the letter va is that
elemental spirit in which all beings exist, and
which exists in all beings. Thus this great
word Bhagavan is the name of Vasudeva, who is one
with Supreme Brahma, and of no one else. 2

It has been pointed out 3 that the complete form of this
invocation (i.e. jitaṁ bhagavatā) is as follows:

jitaṁ bhagavatā tēna Vishṇunā yasya vakshasi
Śrī-svayāṁ bhāti
dēvaścha nābhipadmē Pitāmahaḥ

But it will be observed shortly that some other descriptions
of Vishnu were also used along with the invocatory part -
 jitaṁ bhagavatā - in the epigraphs of contemporary Karnataka.
However, the use of this invocation was common in the inscrip­
tions of the Vākāṭakas, the Pallavas, the Kadambas and the
Gaṅgas.

The Hirehadagali plates of Pallava Śivaskandavarman 4
records in Prākrit the grant of a village to Brāhmaṇas of
various gōtras among whom were a Dattaja and a Dāmaja. The
record concludes with wishing good to cows, Brāhmaṇas, etc.,
Nārāyaṇa's association with the well being of cows and Brāhma­
ṇas has been already mentioned above. 5 Be it noted here that
inclusion of a statement of this type in contemporary copper­
plate charters is a common feature.
The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta refers to a king Vishnugopa of Kanchi who is identified as a Pallava prince. It is remarked that the name Vishnugopa indicates the popularity of Vishnu as the Gopa or 'protector of cows' as well as his identification with Krishna. Vishnugopa is known to have given away lands in Uruvupalli village (in Andhra) to the temple of Vishnuhara built in Kandukura by his general Vishnusarman. It may passingly be noted here that an early Gaṅga king of Karnataka also bore the name Vishnugopa.

Some of the Pallava kings had such names as Simhavaranman, Simhavishnu, Kumāravishnu, etc., which are worth noting. D.C. Sircar has pointed out that the names such as Śīhadatta (=Śīhadatta) or devoted to Simha), Simhavaranman, etc., indicate the popularity of the cult of Narasimha from a very early period. These, according to him, refer to the Narasimha incarnation of Vishnū. The name Simhavishnu, i.e., Vishnū in the form of Simha or lion, is very clear in its connotation: it is Narasimha avatāra. Thus it appears that in earlier concept, Narasimha was only conceived as Simha or lion; in later iconography the avatāra found expression as partly man and partly lion. We may note in this connection that Narasimha is described many times as being more or less complete "lion form" in the Matsya Purāṇa. At oneplace in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa he is addressed by Prahlāda as "the Marvellous Lion". That about the 3rd century A.D. the iconographic concept of Vishnū-
Narasimha was as yet only a Simha (Lion) is proved by the Kondamotu Narasimha relief discussed above.\(^\text{13}\)

The name Kumāravishṇu is both interesting and puzzling. It is not clear if it indicates a syncretic concept comprising Kumāra (Skanda, Mahasena) and Vishṇu or Vishṇu as Vāmana. It may be recalled here that one such name viz., Vishṇu-skanda occurred already in the 2nd century A.D.\(^\text{14}\)

Of the records of the Śālāṅkhāyanas, the one that is particularly noteworthy is that of Hastivarman. This Prākrit record\(^\text{15}\) in characters of early 4th century A.D. states that the king aged a hundred years was a great devotee of god Nārāyaṇa and to please that deity he granted a village to Brahmachārins.

Some Śālāṅkhāyana kings are described as the worshippers of god Chitrarathasvāmin.\(^\text{16}\) This god is usually identified with the Sun-god. In a record of Vishākhavarman,\(^\text{17}\) a Vishṇuśarman is mentioned among the donees.

But for the names of some kings of the dynasty such as Mādhava, Gōvinda, etc., there is no mention of Vishṇu as a deity in the records of the Vishṇukundins. Some kings of the dynasty are expressly stated to have been worshippers of Śiva. But controversy has centred round the identification of Śripapārvatasvāmin whose worshippers the Vishṇukundins were according to some of their inscriptions. Some have presumed him to be
God Śiva of Śrīśaila. Recently doubts have been raised about the validity of such an identification. It is the view of some scholars that Śrīparvata was the Nagarjunakonda region and that its 'lord' (svāmin) should be identified with Buddha. They have gone to the extent of suggesting that Buddha - Śrīparvatasvāmin - had been already deified and incorporated as an avatāra of Vishnu. Another view asserts that Śrīparvatasvāmi was the deity Śiva of Nagarjunakonda. But it may be noted that Buddha's identification with Vishnu and his inclusion into the avatāra fold had been complete in South India at least about the 6th-7th century A.D. as confirmed by a Pallava inscription.

2. Karnataka : Early Kadaṁba Records

The earliest so far known inscription of the Kadaṁbas of Banavasi, namely, Chandravalli inscription of Mayūravarman, contains only a list of kingdoms he claims to have conquered and records the excavation of a tank. Among the kingdoms mentioned, that of the Ābhīras is noteworthy in view of their earlier contacts with Karnataka as noted elsewhere.

From the period of Kākusthavarman we get direct references to Vishnu in the epigraphs of the Kadaṁbas. The dynasty had by then attained a paramount position so much so that the contemporary kings of the North like the Guptas tried to befriend the Kadaṁba king by matrimonial alliances. "The Guptas did for Bhāgavatism what Asoka had done for Buddhism" and the
Vākātakas were following the suit. The healthy relations of the Kadaṁbas with the Guptas and Vākātakas must have been of considerable consequence for the prospects of Bhāgavatism in Karnataka region. Viewed in this perspective, the increasing number of references to Viśṇu in the epigraphs of the Kadaṁbas from the time of Kākusthavaranman onwards become significant.

The Halmidi inscription of the time of Kākusthavaranman, which is regarded as the earliest known Kannada epigraph, begins with a Sanskrit invocation to Viśṇu:

Jayati śrī parishvaṅga śyāṅga-ṃānati)r-Achyutaḥ
Dānavākṣṇoryugāntāgniḥ (śishtānāntu) Sudarśanah

This is for the first time in the epigraphs of Karnataka that epithet Achyuta is used for Viśṇu. For the first time Viśṇu is said to have been embraced by Śrī, i.e., Lakšmī, which shows that the identification of Lakšmī as the consort of Viśṇu had been recognised. Again for the first time he is described as the bearer of Sarṅga, a characteristic bow of his. We notice this bow as one of his attributes in the iconographic representations of the subsequent periods.

Here Viśnu is looked upon as an enemy of demons who represent evil forces. But he is a god who looks pleasing to good people, i.e., his devotees. The term Sudarśana is here used possibly symbolically also to connote the discus or chakra - otherwise called Sudarśana or Sudarśanachakra - the character-
istic weapon of Vishnu. In this context, it is interesting to observe that the invocatory portion of the epigraph in question is inscribed around what looks like a lotus relief at the top of the inscribed slab. This is comparable to the chakra painted below the inscription of Kappe Arabhatra at Badami (c. 8th cent. A.D.). It is therefore possible that the lotus-like relief carved on the Halmidi inscription slab is in fact a representation of Sudarśanachakra.

During the Gupta period in North India, iconography reveals personified representations of Sudarśanachakra. The same tradition is followed also in Chalukya iconography to a considerable extent. The Badami cave III inscription of Maṅgalēśa gives a description of Vishnu's chakra. This, together with the one in Halmidi record, may be taken as indicating the rise of Sudarśanachakra as a weapon par excellence of Vishnu in Vaisnāvite concept. It may be regarded as a stage in the evolution of symbolism of Sudarśanachakra which ultimately resulted in his independent worship, so elaborately recorded in the Āhirbudhnyasamhitā.

The description of Vishnu as a terror to the demonic spirits and pleasing or benevolent to devotees reminds the Narasimha avatāra; in that form he proved death to Hiranyakāśipu and a benefactor to his son Prahlāda. It will be of interest to note that in the later iconography of Sudarśanachakra, Narasimha
is usually depicted on one (rear) side of the icon. This seems significant in view of the term Sudarśana used in the Halmidi epigraph. The popularity of Narasimha form in the Kadambas period is also noteworthy in this context.

The Banavasi pillar inscription of Mrigēśavaran(c.460 A.D) although fragmentary, happens to be an important epigraph of the Kadambas as it is the only one of theirs found so far in their capital. The epigraph has a well-preserved Sanskrit invocatory portion which reads:

Svasti jitaṃ bhagavatā 
   jyōtirmayāṃ brahmavidāṃ śaśrayam viśvasya karttāram-
   anēkarūpaṃ vibhumpatim sthāvarajaṅgamānām 
   Vishnunamsasyāmi tadēkachittām. 

Very clearly, the composer of this record has considered Viṣṇu as the deity par excellence. Viṣṇu’s description as anēkarūpa indicates that he was known to the people of the times by his various forms such as his avatāras. The author expressly states that he performs obeisance to Viṣṇu with single-minded devotion (tadēkachittām). This is an unambiguous reference to the ekānta bhakti to which the Bhāgavata religion attaches much importance. The god is adverted to as the all-powerful and maker of the universe (and apparently the unmaker also) as also the master of the moveable and immovable thereby alluding to his creative, preserving and destructive powers. This seems to be an indirect reference to the Narasimha form which is capable of doing good
as well as bad to the world. The Brihajjabalopanishad describes Narasimha as a divinity able to protect or injure men. 30

In this connection we may note some statements in the Puranic literature regarding the Narasimha form of Vishnu

In the Narasimha Purana 31 "Narasimha, though a form of Nārāyaṇa or Vishnu, is himself the principal god also. It is this supreme deity called Nārāyaṇa (or Vishnu or Narasimha) who takes the forms of Brahmā and Rudra for the sake of creation and destruction respectively; and for the work of preservation he takes the forms of (the inferior) Vishnu, Narasimha, etc".

In the Matsya Purana 32 the celestials are said to have uttered: "O Deva! Your Narasimha form is adored by the learned knowing the highest and the lowest". In the same work, 33 Brahmā says to Narasimha: "O Lord! Thou art Brahmā, Rudra, Mahendra; Thou art the foremost among the Devas. Thou art the creator the destroyer, and the ultimate source of power to all beings."

Prahlāda addresses Hiraṇyakṣiṣṇu in the Bhāgavata Purana 38: "The strength, not merely of me O king, but of yourself and all others, too, who glory in their strength is He in whose power are the highest and the lowest, the worlds of the moving and the non-moving, Brahmā and all the rest of them. He is the permanent lord, functioning as all-powerful time. He manifests himself as vital energy, vigour of mind, courage, strength and
the efficiency of all the faculties. He, the all-highest, the controller of the three gunas, creates, protects and destroys the universe by his own powers.

Thus the Purānic and other evidence shows the concept of Narasimha as dispeller of evil or the darkness, i.e., ignorance, which form thereby stands for jñāna or knowledge. Early iconography of Narasimha reveals the presence of a lotus crowning the head of Narasimha which seems to symbolise knowledge. Only surrender to this Ultimate would lead one to enlightenment and salvation.

It has been noted above that names like Sinhadatta, Sinhavarman, etc., may connote their dedication to Narasimha. The name Mrigēśavarnam also seems to imply the same meaning. It was mentioned above that the invocatory portion of the 3anavasi epigraph may contain an allusion to Narasimha avatāra. The editor of the epigraph informs that there was a huge Śivalinga adjacent to the pillar on which the inscription is found and suggests that the pillar might have been set up in front of the Śiva temple in which this linga was enshrined. But the epigraph commences with invocation to Viṣṇu and it is difficult to expect a pillar inscribed with an invocation to Viṣṇu in front of a Śiva temple. It is more probable therefore that the pillar had been set up in front of a Viṣṇu temple. Elsewhere in the present chapter, the presence of a two-armed Narasimha
image in a shrine in the vicinity of the Madhukeshvara temple in Banavasi has been pointed out. This icon, though stylistically of Vijayanagara period, seems to be an imitation of an earlier image of two-armed Narasimha of considerable antiquity, now lost. Instances of such imitation are known. In view of these, it is possible that the original image probably belonged to the Kadamba age, or more correctly to the reign of Mrigesa-varman, and it was before the temple of this deity that the inscribed pillar once stood.

The epigraph under consideration also refers to two more avatāras of Vishnu rather indirectly. These are Bhārgava or Jāmadagnya Rāma and Dāsarathi Rāma. The relevant portion of the epigraph reads:

ṣajanmatassāñchita duḥkhalabdham jayaśīyaṃ
Pallava-pārtthivasya jahāra Rāmasya yathaiva Rāmaḥ

It means that king Mrigesa (name lost in the broken part) snatched away the Jayaśīri of the Pallava king which had been earned by him after experiencing a lot of trouble; just as Rāma (Dāsarathi) (snatched away all the regions earned by ascetic austerities) from Rāma (Jāmadagnya). This episode occurs in the Rāmāyana.37

The Hunsur plates38 of Mrigēśa-varma (c.462 A.D.) commences with an invocation to Brahma. The king is compared in this
epigraph to Vishṇu in being a Brāhmaṇa (Vishṇuriva Brahmanyah). Interestingly, the king is called Śiva-Mṛgēśavarma here. This seems to be significant. Śiva means 'auspicious', 'benevolent', 'benign', etc. Thus Śiva-Mṛgēśa might mean auspicious Narasimha or benign Narasimha. In the discussion on the sculptures of the period it is made clear that Narasimha form was represented only in his calm posture and not in fierce aspect in this period. Thus the name Śiva-Mṛgēśa seems to imply the nature of the concept of Narasimha of that period.

The Hebbetta grant of Kadamba Vishṇuvarma,39 son of Kṛishṇavarman I, begins with an invocation to Vishṇu:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Jitaṁ bhagavatā tēṁ Viṁṣṭunā yasya vak̐haśi} \\
\text{Śrīśvayāṁ bhāti} \\
\text{dēvaścha nābhipadēṁ pitāmahah}
\end{align*}
\]

This obviously proves that the concept of Śrī as resident in the breast of Vishṇu - as a shining spot - had already been conceived. The significance of the appearance of the Śrīvatsa mark on the chest of Narasimha in the Kondamotu relief has been noted above. The Halmidi inscription indicates that Śrī or Lakshmī had been recognised as the consort of Vishṇu. This concept that Lakshmī resided in the chest of Vishṇu was probably the reason why Lakshmī's representation beside Vishṇu is scarcely found in early iconography.
The other concept revealed by the verse is that of Padma-nābha. The description is apparently of reclining Viṣṇu with Brahmā seated in the lotus issuing from the navel. However, this is not the first reference to this concept in Karnataka epigraphs: early Gaṅga records do begin with an invocation to Viṣṇu-Padmanābha.

Another record of Viṣṇu-varma which, however, is regarded as spurious, mentions a Haryārya among the donees, and begins with an invocation to the traid:

Siddhāṁ Hara-Nārāyaṇa-Brahmā tritayāya namassadā sûla-chakra-akshasūtr-odghabhāvabhāṣita pāṁyē

In a grant of Kadamba Śāṇḍhātrivarman (c.482 A.D.) a Dāmōdaradatta is referred to as the rahasyādhikarita.

The Nilambur plates of Ravivarman (c.490 A.D.), registers a grant to Gōvindasvāmi, a brahmana expert in Yajurveda. This record ends with well wishing to the cows, Brāhmaṇas and subjects.

The Gudnapur pillar inscription is an important epigraph of Kadamba Ravivarman. It commences with an invocation to a god who is described as a cupid to women:

Jayati suravadhūnāṁ Manmathaḥ Kāminīnāṁ....

This considerably lengthy record refers to the installation of god Bhagavat Madana in a temple in the vicinity of the royal
palace. An icon of Rati (Ratīvīgraḥa), the consort of Manmatha, is also referred to. It is stated that in the Madhumāsa or the Spring, eye-pleasing festivals were to be held in this temple. This was not, however, compulsory because it was meant only for enjoyment of the subjects. The grants are said to have been made into the hands of Brahmachārins for this as well as another Kāmadēvālaya. Grants are also recorded for the temples of Padmāvatī.

The editor of the record has identified this deity Kāma with Bāhubali of the Jainaś. In support of this identification, he cites instances from Jain literature wherein Bāhubali is also said to have had other names such as Kāma, Manmatha, Madana etc. The mention of Padmāvatī, a Jaina Yakṣī, is also a strong support for his view.

However, such a view is not accepted by some scholars. They are inclined to identify the Kāma of the epigraph with the one appearing in the Hindu mythology.

In the inscription it is expressly stated that eye-pleasing festivals were to be held in the Spring, a season associated with Kāma in Hindu mythology. Kāma is the harbinger of Spring. It may be mentioned that the practice of performing 'hōli' has come down to this day in India. This is celebrated in Spring in respect of Kāma. In one of Harsha's dramas, there is a reference to the worship of Kāma in Spring.
were of Bāhubali, the king would have laid down the festivals as compulsory. But it is specifically stated in the epigraph to the contrary. Further, the epigraph mentions the icon of Rati also. It is difficult above all to expect a Jaina temple in the vicinity of the palace complex of the Kadambas who claimed to be Brāhmaṇas. The mention of Padmāvatī may just be incidental. Thus it appears that the deity installed was Kāma, the son of Kṛiṣṇa, and not Bāhubali. In Hindu mythology Kāma is considered the 'god of Love'.

Though this proves that independent worship of Kāma was known to Karnataka region in about the 5th-6th century A.D., it is difficult to establish his relation with vyūha ādyumṇa and, therefore, with Viṣṇu worship, for lack of clear-cut evidence. The new thing to be noted is the mention of his consort Rati.

In the Davanagere copper-plate inscription, which is a Buddhist record, Ravivarma is described as Viṣṇu, the conqueror of Daityas, incarnated in the form of a king but without his chakra. Viṣṇu's characteristic ornament kaustubha is referred to and Lakṣmī abiding in the breast of Hari, also called Murāri, is said to be looking red on account of rays of that gem. Goddess Lakṣmī herself is said to have showered water of variegated hues due to the lotuses (in her hand) from golden pots on the king's head to confer sovereignty upon him. Thus
Lakshmi apart from being the consort of Vishnu was also regarded as symbolising wealth.

Kadamba Krishavarman II (c.516-40 A.D.), was probably a worshipper of Vishnu. He is compared to god Krishna, his... Bennur copper-plate record which commences with the invocation to Vishnu (jitam bhagavatā) and winds up with an obeisance to Vishnu (namo Vishnave).

The Banahalli record of the same king begins with another invocation to Vishnu (Hari):

    jayaty-udrikta daityendra bala-vīrya-vimardanaḥ
    jagat-pravṛtti-samhāra-sṛishti-māyādharo Hariḥ

This is a reference to one of the two avatars or both, viz., Narasimha and Vāmana-Trivikrama. The daityendra whose power was increasing unabated was Hiranyakashipu, who at one stage even began to decline the very existence of the Almighty by considering himself all-powerful. It was Vishnu in his Narasimha form who put an end to his power by killing him. Similarly, another daityendra whose rising power Vishnu curtailed was Balīndra. Vishnu in his Vāmana-Trivikrama avatar went down to the nether world.

It may be noted that the record registers a grant of village to Vishnuśarma at the instance of Haridattaśrēśṭha.
Kadamba Harivarma was a devotee of Śiva (Parama-mahēśvara) according to his Sangolli plates (c.545 A.D.). However, among the twenty-three Brāhmaṇa donees in the record were Vaikunthaśarma, Vishnuśarma and Prajāpatiśarma. More interesting is the fact that the record ends with obeisance to the triad:

namō Hari-Hara-Hiranyagarbhebhyaḥ

Thus it becomes clear that though independent worship of Brahmā, Śiva and Vishnu was in vogue there was no polarisation of these sects as such and these deities were considered on par with one another.

In an epigraph of Kadamba king Madhuvarma a Nārāyaṇaśarma appears as a donee. Similarly, a Kadamba king Dāmodaraṇipa is mentioned in the Konnur (near Gersoppa) rock inscription. Both records are of about the 6th century A.D. In these, the Vaishnava names of the persons are noteworthy.

3. The Epigraphs of the Early Gaṅgas

The inscriptions of the early Gaṅgas are not as informative about Vaishnavism as those of the Kadambas. Since their relation with the early Pallavas was friendly, there must have been influence of Bhāgavatism on the kings of this dynasty.

Most of the Gaṅga inscriptions begin with an invocation to god Vishnu as Padmanābha:
This invocation is common to almost all their copper plate charters. The fact that they retained this particular invocation for a very long period in their charters indicates that they may have been originally worshippers of Vishnu. Although some of their later records claim that the early rulers like Dadiga and Madhava were Jains by faith, the available evidence implies to the contrary. Their copper-plate inscriptions are very clear in suggesting that they were followers of Brahmanical faith.

The invocatory part of their epigraphs cited above is introduced right from the 4th century A.D. It expressly indicates that the idea of blue-coloured Vishnu-Narayana as having a lotus issuing from his navel and apparently reclining on the serpent couch in the oceans was well known to the region. This concept had found iconographic expression in contemporary North India as in the Gupta Vishnu temple at Deogarh.

The second king of the dynasty was named Madhava (I), while the third had various names: Harivarma, Krishnava, Aryavarma. The latter king was a contemporary of Pallava Simhavarma. In a record of his son and successor Madhava II, it is stated that Harivarma was an expert in śāstras, itihāsa, Purāṇas, etc. This is a sure indication of the fact that the Purāṇas had become not only popular but were also recognised
as authentic religious documents during that period as far down as the valley of Kaveri.

The Hassan copper plate record of Mādhava II alias Simhavarma (c.400-420 A.D.) begins with the usual invocation to Padmanābha and states that the king established Saṅgamapura town in the Sēndraka vishaya and granted five villages in Vallāvī province which was filled with subjects who were engaged in religious penances and sacrifices. The interesting point is that he also gave away twenty-two bronze vessels, a bull (for carrying things?), two copper vessels and an image of Viṣṇu and several ornaments. The grant was made on the Fūrmīmā of the Vaiśākha month.

In the Matsya Purāṇa various vratas are prescribed in order to procure particular boons from the gods. On some such occasions the god of whom the boon was expected was to be worshipped for a specified period in prescribed way. Then the icon of the deity so worshipped was to be given away to Brahmānas along with metallic vessels, etc.

The description available in the record under consideration, however, is insufficient to pin-point that a particular vrata was performed by the donor on the occasion. In any case it does show that the practice of giving away icons of god Viṣṇu, obviously metallic, as dāna along with vessels, etc. was in vogue in Karnataka of the period.
The Chukuttur plates of the same king mention Vishnusarma and Dattasarma among the recipients of the grant. Interestingly, the grant was made for the aurdha dēśikārtha of king's brother yuvarāja Viravarman, i.e., on the occasion of the funeral rites.

In the Penugonda plates, the king is referred to as Simhavarma Madhavamahārāja, the former part being obviously derived from the name of the king of the Pallava dynasty.

The brother of Madhava II was Vishnugopa, the significance of which name has been pointed out above. This king is described in the Ganga records as devoted to the worship of Brahmaṇas, gurus and gods and as praising the feet of God Narāyaṇa (dvijagurudēvatāpūjanapaścamānānudhvataḥ śrīman-Vishnugopamahārājādhirajāh).  

Madhava III (c.440-469 A.D.), son of Vishnugopa, was a devotee of god Triyambaka (Śiva). In the Kudur grant, he is stated to have been equal of Kṛishṇa in protecting (palane kṛishnatulyena). In the same record, Pallava Skandavarmen is stated to have equalled Hari in prowess (Haritulyasya vikramē).

The Śrīngērī plates of Ganga Avanīta (c.471 A.D.) record two grants. The donees were Kēśavaśarma and Gōvinda-śarma. The donee of the Bangalore Residency plates of the same king was Mādisarma.
In the Gummareddipura plates of Gaṅga Durvinita (c. 569 A.D.), the king is eulogised as belonging to Krishṇakula, and stated to have been equivalent in strength to Krishṇikulantaka Krishna.

B. EVIDENCE OF LITERATURE

1. Early Tamil Literature

The later stratum of early Tamil literature, which is generally assigned to the period commencing from the 4th century A.D., alludes to the Vaishnavite beliefs of the period in the far South. Since the lower part of Karnataka was actively in contact with the Tamil region during the period, their consideration is appropriate here. The Peripādai, Śilappadhi-kāram, Manimekhalai, etc., are usually considered to represent the later stratum of the Saṅgam literature.

Of the avatāras those of Vāmaṇa-Trivikrama, Narasiṁha, Rāma, Balarāma and Krishṇa are well-known. Paraśurāma is referred to, but his identification as an avatāra is not suggested. Mohini and Viśvarūpa are the other known forms of Vishnū.

Vishnū is usually referred to as holding the discus in the right hand and the conchshell in the left. Gadā, Khadga and śārṅga are the other weapons associated with him. Vishnū’s three main postures, viṣṭhāpana, śāna, and sayāna are known, but there is no direct reference to the first two. Vishnū is said to reside in the sacred hills of Veṅgaḍam and Irunkunṭram.
He stood in Vengadam holding chakra, śāṅkha and padma, and wearing golden dress and long garland. There are clear references to śayāna aspect and some Anantaśayana temples such as those at Śrīraṅgam and Tiruvanantapuram are mentioned. Vishnu is stated to recline on the thousand-headed serpent. Brahmā in the navel of Vishnu and the clashes of Madhu and Kaitabha with Vishnu are alluded.

Vāsudeva, Baladeva, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Sāmba are all mentioned. Therefore, it may be surmised that the Pañchavīra worship was well known in Tamilnadu during this period. It is, however, difficult to decide whether the concept of the four vyūhas had been developed or not.

Balarāma is associated with Krishṇa and Piṇṇai in Kuruval dance performed by them in Dvārakā.

Vāsudeva-Krishṇa’s boyhood sports are well-known: His love for butter, upturning the cart, killing the mallas, cutting the head of the elephant, uprooting the Karuṇḍa tree (Yamalarjuna?), killing the horse-demon Kēśi, releasing Aniruddha by destruction of ‘So’ (the fire fortress of Bāṇāsura), helping the Pāṇḍavas, lifting the Govardhana hill, etc., are mentioned.

Krishṇa’s love for Piṇṇai or Nippanai is cited as an example of true love. Kuruval dance, in which Krishṇa dances with Gopis and Nippanai, reminds similar rāsa dances mentioned in the Harivamśa, Vishnu Purāṇa, Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Gāthā
Saptasati, etc. His love for Nippani is stated to have made Mayon (Krishna) indifferent to Sri who resided in his chest. Nippanai of the Tamil classics is identified with Radhā.

Worship of Kāma in temples was known. He was especially worshipped in the Spring. This is significant when we take into account the Gudnapur inscription of Ravivarma discussed above. Kāma's banner was makara and his bow was made of sugarcane.

Multiple-armed Vishnu is also referred to in early Tamil literature. The six-armed variety was possibly of Dattātrēya. The thousand-armed form was obviously of Viṣvarūpa or Virātapurusha.

Śrī or Gajalakshmi resided in doorways or entrances to houses, palaces, gates, etc.

Durgā is referred to as the sister of Vishnu probably in her aspect as Subhadra. Her usual attributes are chakra and śankha.

The concept of Trinity was well known. Pillar worship was also prevalent. The pillar was believed to house a frightful god. This probably led to the concept of Narasimha emerging from the pillar as recorded in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

The story of amrita and the exploits of Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu, are recorded. The episodes from the Mahābhārata and the Ramāyana were well known.
Vishnu' was believed to assume multiplicity of forms for protecting the world. He is known as the pervader of the universe. Its components and functions are ascribed to his will and motives.

2. Gāthāsaptasati

The Gāthāsaptasati, ascribed to Sātavāhana king Hāla, is an important work composed in Prākrit. It is a collection of gāthās which were probably compiled and incorporated between the 3rd and 7th centuries A.D. Numerous ideas and concepts having the bearing on the socio-religious life of contemporary times are recorded in this work. The concepts throwing light on Vaishnavism are considered below.

The concept that Lakšmī resided in the breast of Vishnu is known to the Gāthāsaptasati:

Bow to Him in whose breast is lit the face of Lakšmī by the rays of the kaustubha gem......

Thus the kaustubha was an ornament peculiar to Vishnu.

Vishnu's Vāmana-Trivikrama forms are clearly referred to in the work:

Victorious is that Hari who in his Vāmana form brings happiness to the world of gods by exhibiting his intelligence in the formation of sentences while speaking to Bali (the lord of demons).
Bow to that 'third step' of Visn̄u (Hari) which having overflowed the earth was worshipped through flowers in the form of stars by its longer presence in the skies.\textsuperscript{70}

Yet another gāthā alludes to the Balibandha (confinement of Bali) by Visn̄u who succeeded in achieving it by growing from his dwarf form to his unfathomable size.\textsuperscript{71}

Krishnā is a well acquainted figure in the Gāthāsaptasatī. He is referred to as Dāmōdara, Mādhava and Hari. The references are, however, mostly connected with his relation with the Gopīs. His mother was Yāsōdā and she delighted in the sports of her son.\textsuperscript{72} His dance and relations with Gopīs are referred to.\textsuperscript{73} One gāthā even alludes to his association with Rādhā.\textsuperscript{74}

C. EVIDENCE OF SCULPTURE

The period considered in this chapter is the one in which numerous sculptural representations of deities begin to appear. It will be our purpose here to note the general features and significance of such representations, avoiding detailed description of each individual sculpture, as it will be adverted separately elsewhere in the present work.

The sculptures of Visn̄u and his forms include iconic representations in stone of Narasiṁha, Visn̄u, Anantaśayana and Harihara.
Among these, the representations of Narasimha far exceed others in number and hence deserve first consideration. Most of these are in the round, the deity being represented usually two-armed and seated in sukhamana posture. They are assigned to the period on stylistic grounds.

The two-armed Narasimha sculptures are found in the following places: Halsi (Belgaum Dist.), Kuppatur (Shimoga dist.), Kuppagadde (Shimoga Dist.), Kudali (Shomiga Dist.), Saligram (South Kanara dist.), Ganganadu (South Kanara Dist.), Polali (South Kanara Dist.), Bengane (North Kanara Dist.), Banavasi (North Kanara Dist.), Mahakuta (Bijapur Dist.).

In Talagunda (Shimoga Dist.), there is a four-armed seated Narasimha with early features.

Halsi was an important place in the early Kadaṁba period. In fact it was one of the capitals of the Kadaṁbas where some of their copper plate inscriptions have been found. The Narasimha temple here enshrines Bhū-Varāha and Yōga-Nārāyaṇa in the sanctums and clearly belongs to the Goa Kadaṁba period. From an inscription of king Śivachitta of that dynasty (1169 A.D.) it is known that the deity called Ananta-Vīra-Vikrama-Narasimha was installed therein by one Matayōgi. The name is an innovation apparently because the sculpture did not belong to that period. It was thus a re-installation of an earlier image of Narasimha. The fact that though the main deities of the temple
appear to be Varāha and Yoga-Nārāyaṇa, the grants were given in the name of god Narasiṃha would also clearly indicate that even in the 12th century the deity was considered an inheritance. The sculpture (Fig.56) is stylistically assigned to c. 5th century A.D. 76

That Kuppatur was also an important place of antiquity is suggested by an inscription of Kādaṁba Kṛishṇavarman mentioning the grant of that village. 77 The Narasiṃha sculpture here is also enshrined in a temple of later period. It may belong to the 4th-5th century A.D. 78

In Kuppagadde, the Narasiṃha icon is enshrined in a modern temple. This was a place of considerable antiquity. A Gajalakshmī panel bearing an inscription of c.6th century is found in this village. 79 The Narasiṃha sculpture here may also be assigned to the 5th century A.D. 80 A 14th century inscription 81 records a grant to god Narasiṃha of the place.

The Narasiṃha icon in Kudali is enshrined in a Hoysala temple. 82 It is comparable to the one in Hāl-1 and may belong to circa 5th-6th century A.D.

Mahakuta was a place of religious activity from a very early period. Although it appears to have been a place of Śaiva activity, it is not very unlikely that there existed a Narasiṃha (Figs.57-58) and a Viṣṇu (Fig.2) temple of Pre-Chālukya times.
Saligrama, Ganganadu and Polali have hardly any evidence in respect of their antiquity but for the Narasimha sculptures; however, they are likely to have been places of religious importance from early period. No remark is necessary in regard to Banavasi's importance as a cultural centre: it was the capital of the Kadañbas. Again Talagunda is also known to have been a place of antiquity. For there exists an early Kadañba inscription referring to a Āiva temple which had been worshipped by Sātakarni, obviously a Sātavāhana king. The sculpture here may be of about the 6th century A.D.\textsuperscript{83}

The antiquity of the different places where early Narasimha sculptures are found has been stressed here because this evidence shows that Vishnu worship in temples was gaining more popularity in urbanised or semi-urbanised places of antiquity. Apparently temple worship was being patronised by the economically well-to-do class of the society. The specific popularity of Narasimha form may also have been fostered by the fact that the Kadambas being the first independent rulers of Karnataka, had lion as their emblem.

Now as to the Narasimha sculptures found in Ganganadu\textsuperscript{84}, Polali,\textsuperscript{85} and Bengane.\textsuperscript{86} In each of these places two two-armed Narasimha sculptures are noticed. Stylistically, there seems to be a considerable period-gap in the production of the two icons of each place. It is therefore likely that one of the two of each place was produced after the model of the earlier
one of the same place. This may have been due to mutilation of the earlier sculpture. Clear indication of such imitation is noticed in the sculpture of Narasimha in Bengane. Here owing to mutilation of an earlier sculpture, another one was sculpted out after the earlier model though not very successfully. This later sculpture produced about the 16th century A.D. is now in worship, while the older sculpture which had served as the model is also found there but discarded.

The two-armed sculpture of Narasimha (Fig. 61) now worshipped in a temple in the vicinity of the Madhukēśvara temple in Banavasi is, in fact, stylistically of Vijayanagara time. One has to explain on proper grounds how such an icon of antiquated iconographic traits came to be carved at so late a period. Since it has already been shown that imitation on the model of an earlier icon, because of the more conservative cultural tendencies inherent in the Malnad region, was not infrequent, the sculpture at Banavasi may also have been an imitation of an ancient icon, probably of the early Kadamba period. As discussed above, the pillar bearing the inscription of Kadamba Mrigēśavarman at Banavasi, beginning with invocation to Vishnu, once stood possibly in front of the temple of this Narasimha. In that case, it is also probable that the temple of Narasimha was erected by Kadamba king Mrigēśavarman.
In Narasipura and Kota (both in South Kanara dist.), there are bronzes of two-armed Narasimha of c.11th century A.D. They may indicate the existence of early stone sculptures of the style in those places. The same may be true of the two-armed sculptures of the deity at Irodi (South Kanara dist.).

When we look at the geographical locations of the find-spot of the sculptures, it will at once become apparent that all the places, except Mahakuta, are located in the Malnad-coastal tract. This would imply that Narasimha worship was very popular in this region than elsewhere. The places are not far removed from the Kadamba capital and were situated within the boundaries of their kingdom.

One more aspect of these Narasimha sculptures is that all of them represent the benevolent aspect. He is invariably shown in normal disposition having completed the mission for which he had assumed that form. He was thus a benevolent and benign god capable of bestowing boon on his devotees.

Of the remaining sculptures of Vaishnava affiliation the first that deserves notice is the Vishnu icon found in Mahakuta (Bijapur dist.). It is a beautiful but badly damaged sculpture of four-armed Vishnu (Fig.2) and is stylistically assigned to 5th-6th century A.D.

There is an icon of Anantaśayana Vishnu in Kuppagadde (Shimoga Dist.) which is doubtfully assigned to early 6th
century A.D. on stylistic grounds. Mutilated though it is, the knowledge of the many of Vishnu's avatāras is implied by it since it also depicts some of them - Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, etc. 92

Two more sculptures of importance are of the composite deity Harihara, representing Vishnu and Śiva in one. The first is from Gokarna (North Kanara Dist.) 93 It is very akin to the Gupta style in execution (Fig. 124). This icon exactly tallies with the description of Harihara given in the Matsya Purāṇa and Brihatsamhitā. 94 The sculpture is assignable to the 5th century A.D.

The other sculpture of Harihara (Fig. 125) is from Harihara (Chitradurga Dist.), now worshipped in the Hariharesvara temple. The temple received extensive renovations in the regime of the Hoysalas during whose period the activities in the temple reached their peak. 95 The main icon of Harihara is badly mutilated, all the original arms being lost. At a later stage hands have been added together with attributes. The most striking feature of the icon which helps its dating is the presence of a single beaded necklace and the absence of the yajnopavītta; both the features are noted in the Gokarna Harihara. Harihara is referred to as Hariśapura in one of the early Chālukya records and must have been a centre of Harihara cult from an early period.

The last sculpture to be considered here is that of Gajalakshmi from Kuppagadde. 97 It is difficult to point out
its definite ties with Vishnu worship. For it is found in front of a stone sculpture of buffalo head, locally called Konanatale (meaning the head of he-buffalo). Such stone representations seem to have been used to be kept in front of the image of Durga Mahishamardini, made possibly of perishable material. The Gaja-lakshmi sculpture from Kuppagadde served as an auspicious deity on the torana of a Durga temple. The sculpture bears an inscription of c.6th century A.D. mentioning the names of the persons who made it. In the subsequent periods, it may be noted here, to have Gajalakshmi on the lintels of the Hindu temples, gateways and entrances, is a regular feature.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. EI.Vol.XXIV, pp. 296 ff.
2. Vishnu Purana, (Wilson's tr.), VI, 5, 74.
   The donated village was Chillarekōṭa in Sātavāhanarāṣṭa.
5. Supra, p. 23 ff.
8. Somasundara Rao C., (Unpublished work), History of Andhra upto 1336 A.D.
9. EC.Vol.IX (Old), Db.67
10. Sircar D.C., "The Narasimha Cult", Dr. Satkari Dukkerji Felicitation volume, pp. 42-44.
11. Matsya Purana, CLXI to CLXII.
13. Supra, pp. 78 ff.
14. Ibid., p. 70.
17. Ibid.Vol.XXI, No.5.
21. MAR, 1929, p.50
22. Supra, p.73f
23. Desai P.B., A History of Karnataka, p.58
24. MAR, 1936, p.73. Translation:
"Victorious is Achyuta who is embraced by Śrī but has
the bow sārṅga bent (ready for use) and who is a fire
occurring at the end of the Yugas to the eyes of the
Dānāvas (demons) but looks pleasing (is a defensive
discuss) to good people"
25. See part-II, eight-armed Sthānakamūrtis
26. MAR, 1936, p.73 see plate.
27. Schrader, Introduction to the Pāñccharātra and the Ahir-
budhnyasamhitā, pp.94 ff.
28. Begley W.C., Vishnu's Flaming Wheel: The Iconography of
the Sudarśana Cakra, figs. 62–63; 64–65; 66–67 and 68–69.
History and Culture (Dharwad, 1971), pp. 57–61 Translation:
"Be it well. The world is conquered by the worshipful
(Vishnu)! To that Vishnu do I bow down with single-
minded devotion who is radiant, the refuge of the
knowers of the supreme Being and the maker of the
universe, who has manifold forms and who is all
powerful and the master of the moveable and immovable".
30. Gonda J., Aspects of Early Visnuism, p.106
p.119 ff.
33. Ibid, 97 ff.
After the marriage of Rāma with Sītā, while Dāsaratha accompanied by his companions was en route Ayōdhya, Rāma the son of Jamadagni appeared before him in terrific form. With all his pride he asked Rāma the son of Dāsaratha to prove his strength by bending the bow of Vishnu and fixing an arrow in it. Dāsarathi Rāma did so and asked Parasurāma which of the two alternatives - his aerial course or the high state attained by him by asceticism - he would give up to be destroyed by the arrow. Rāma the son of Jamadagni recognised the strength of his adversary and gave up the regions earned by him by austerities to be so destroyed. He honoured Dāsarathi Rāma by going around him and retreated to Mahendra mountain.

38. EC.Vol.IV (old), Hs.18
39. MAR,1925, p.98, Translation:

"The world is conquered by that worshipful Vishnu in whose breast goddess Śrī herself shines, and (in whose) lotus of navel (shines) the god Pitāmaha.

40. EC.Vol.VI, Kd.162, Translation:

"Be it well. Obeisance to Hara, Nārāyaṇa and Brahmā who bear śūla, chakra and akṣasūtra".

42. EI., Vol.VIII, p.146 ff.
43. Gopal B.R., Gudnapur Inscription of Kadaṁba Ravivarman, Śrīkanthākā, pp.61-72. Translation:
"Victorious is he who is a Manmatha to the celestial women."


45. Ratnāvalī, Ast I.

46. The epigraph mentions the location of royal ladies' apartments, etc. in the complex. It cannot be claimed on the basis of a few records of Ravivarma which register donations in favour of Jainas that he was lenient towards Jainism.

47. EI, Vol.XXIII, pp.87 ff. MAR, 1933, pp.106 ff.

48. EC, Vol.V, Belur, 245

49. Ibid., Belur, 121; EI, Vol.VI, p.12 ff. (2B) Translation: "Be that Hari victorious who is the destroyer of the rising might and power of the king of demons and who is the wielder of the illusion of the maintenance, destruction and creation of the universe".

50. EI, XIV, pp.163 ff.

51. EC, Vol.VII (old), Sk.66

52. IA., Vol.XXI, p.93


55. EI, Vol.XIV, p.331

56. MAR, 1930, p.114 ff.

57. Matsya Purāṇa, LXII ff.

58. MAR, 1924

59. EI, Vol.XVI, p.331
60. Supra p. 90
61. EC. Vol. IX (old), Db. 67
63. Ibid. 1916
64. Ibid. 1911, p. 142 (Ed. by S. Settar, Dharwad, 1976)
65. Ibid., 1912, p. 62 (Ed. by S. Settar, Dharwad, 1977)
68. Gatha, II, 51.
69. Ibid., V, 6
70. Ibid., V, 11
71. Ibid., V, 25
72. Ibid., II, 12.
73. Ibid., II, 14
74. Ibid., I, 89
77. KI., Vol. II, No. 1
80. Ibid.
81. EC., Vol. VIII, Sb. 186
82. EC, Vol. VII, Shimoga 78
84. Bhatt P.G., Studies in Tuluva History and Culture, pl.210(b)
85. Ibid. Pl.212(a).
87. Ibid., pl. III-3
88. Bhatt P.G., Op. Cit, pl.214(a)
89. Ibid., pl.214(b)
90. Ibid., pl.213(a)
91. Sundara A., in Karnataka Historical Review, Vol. XIII/1, pp.9ff
93. Ibid. p.11
94. See part-II, under Harihara
95. Infra, under Harihara (Part-II)
96. Infra, p. 140f.

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VAISHNAVISM UNDER THE CHALUKYAS OF VATAPI

Under the Chalukyas of Badami, religion and art saw an unprecedented filip. There are not only numerous epigraphs of their regime but also a number of monuments especially in Badami, Pattadakal, Aihole and Alampur, which are known for their architecture and sculpture. In the present chapter are examined the two main classes of evidence bearing out on Vaishnavism during their rule, viz., epigraphical and sculptural.

A. EVIDENCE OF EPIGRAPHS

The first epigraph of the Chalukyas hails from their capital Vatapi (mod. Badami, Bijapur dist.). Dated in Saka 465.
(=543 A.D.), this short inscription records the construction of an invincible fort at Vatapi by Chalikya Vallabhesvara, identified with Pulakesi I, who had performed the sacrifices such as the aśvamedha, etc. Although the record is silent about the religious inclinations of the king, it does show that he was a follower of a Brahmanical sect. Of interest is the fact that he is described as hiranyagarbhasambhuta.

The hiranyagarbha (i.e. the golden womb) is one of the mahādānas referred to in the Matsya Purāṇa. The mahādānas according to this work, were first enumerated and explained by Lord Vishnu in connection with exposition of the righteous ordinances. "It is the dispeller of all the ills and the effects of bad dream". The mahādānas are stated to be sixteen in number, the first of them being the Tulāpurusha while the hiranyagarbha stands second in the list. These were first performed by Bhagavan Vāsudeva, Ambarīsha, Bhārgava, Prahlāda, and others, who, accordingly, got rid of all the obstacles that came in their way.

If one of the mahādānas could be accomplished without any obstacle through the favour of Lord Vishnu, then even Indra was not able to do any injury to the devotees. "So the devotee should adore Lords Vishnu, Gaṇeśa and then with the advice of the Brāhmaṇas should commence the performance of sacrifices". The mahādānas could be performed at the time of sacrifice in a sacred place, in temples, cowsheds, near a well or a
garden or a serene tank etc. The Matsya Purāṇa describes the hiranyagarbha mahādāna in considerable detail. First the devotee is expected to invoke Vishnu and Lokaṭalas. Frequent allusions in it indicate that the main deity to whom many addresses were made was Vishnu himself. The performer would go to Brahmaloka and be worshipped there. Whoever heard this would go to Vishnu-loka.

Now, to return to the inscription of Pulakesi I. The king performed several Vedic sacrifices the most important of which was the aśvamedha. It is therefore, possible that the hiranyagarbha mahādāna was made at the time of aśvamedha. The place of performance may have been the Agastyatirtha (now known as Bhūtānātha tank) at Badami, since the Purana prescribes that it could be performed near a serene tank.

An important indication of the epigraph is that the Puranic rites had begun to assume more and more popularity while the Vedic ritual also still held its ground. An early Gaṅga record also implied this to lesser degree in the preceding period.

The above inscription is, however, not revealing about the personal god of the kings of the Chāluṣya dynasty. It is the Mudhol copper plate record of Pūgavarman, the elder son of Pulakesi I, that provides definite indication of the inclination of the early kings of the dynasty for Vishnu worship. It records the renewal of the grant of village Malakhēṭaka,
Malkhed in Gulburga dist.) to god Varāhīdēvasvāmin by prince Pūgavarman.

The god referred to in the epigraph is apparently Varāha, the third avatāra of Vishnu. This is the earliest so far known dedication to Varāhī in Karnataka. That the god Varāha is referred to as Varāhīdēvasvāmin is the chief interest of the record. It will imply that goddess Vārāhī was held in high veneration and was regarded as the consort of Varāha. Vārāhī is one of the seven Divine Mothers (Saptamātrikas) and, in Chālukya inscriptions, the kings of the dynasty are claimed to have been protected by the Mātrikas. It is possible that Vārāhī has been accorded a higher status in the Mudhol record because her consort, Varāha, was their royal emblem, which, they believed, had been bestowed on them by guru Narāyaṇa himself.

In any case, it is clear that the deity mentioned in the epigraph is Varāha. Therefore, there must have existed a temple of god Varāha in or near Malkhed, the donated village. Because the grant was given the second time, i.e., renewed, it may be easily surmised that the Varāha temple there existed considerably earlier than the time when the grant was given. The epigraph is dated to the middle of the sixth century A.D. and the temple may have existed at least from the beginning of that century. Since the god is described as Varāhīdēvasvāmin, it is likely that an image of Vārāhī was also enshrined in the temple.
Another noteworthy aspect of the Mudhol record is that it commences with an invocation to Brahmā, and not to Varāha as one would expect. It should be noted in this connection that although the Chālukyas had chosen Varāha for their emblem, none of their records prior to the reign of Pulakesi II begin with invocation to that deity. This would indicate that the tradition of including invocation to Varāha had not gained currency yet. However, it should also be noted that in the initial stages of development of Varāha myth, the feat of uplifting the Mother Earth is ascribed to Prajāpati (Brahmā) who was later on identified as an avatar of Vishnu. It is possible that the idea may have lingered on faintly as late as the 6th century A.D.

The Badami Vaishpava Cave III inscription of the reign of Kirtivarman I is the next important record for our study. It is dated in the 12th regnal year of the king, Śaka 500 (=578 A.D.), and is inscribed to the left of the great Varāha relief of the cave.

Commencing with an eulogy of the Chālukyas and of Maṅgalēśa, the younger brother of Kirtivarman I, this record informs that a cave-temple of Vishnu was got made by Maṅgallēvara, a great devotee of Bhagavat (parama-bhagavata). On the full moon day of the Mahākārtika month, on the occasion of the installation of the icon of holy Vishnu in that temple, he gave
away the village named Lanjigesvara to meet the cost of Narffyana-bali and of feeding of sixteen Brāhmanas daily in the saṭtra; whatever remained of this was to be given for feeding the parivraja-akas (ascetics) of the temple. The merit of this great deed was to go to the donor's elder brother, king Kirtivarman.

The fact that Mangalesa is described in the record as parama-bhagavata indicates that he was a Bhāgavata. It has been noticed above that the epithet was used by the Pallava kings denoting their inclination to Vishṇu worship. However, so far as the Karnataka dynasties are concerned, it is in this record that we come across the epithet for the first time. Although we do find references to Vishṇu worshippers among the Kādaṁba and Gaṅga kings, in none of their records the epithet parama-bhagavata has been used of them. It is not clear if there was a separate group of Vishṇu worshippers different from the Bhāgavatas. However, if there was one, in what way they differed from each other is difficult to ascertain.

The icon installed in the cave temple was of Mahā-Vishṇu who is described as "the destroyer of hosts of enemies with his chakra which has the form of the sun rising on the dissolution of the universe". (pralayodit-ārka-mandāl-ākāra-chakra-kṣapit-āmarāri-pakshasya Vishnoḥ pratīmā....). In the previous chapter, it has been pointed out that the Sudarṣana-chakra of Vishṇu had been slowly gaining a higher position in
the theology, as indicated by the Halmidi inscription invocation.
The present epigraph also describes the chakra, thereby provi-
ding another example of the case in point. It may also be noted
that personified depictions of Sudarśana-chakra occur freque-
ntly in the Chālukya period. In the huge Nārāśāna relief
(Fig. 48) of Cave III in Badami, for instance, chakra is shown
in a personified form.

Of late, a controversy has come to the fore in regard to
the interpretation of the term Nārāyana-bali used in the epi-
graph under consideration. The Grihyasūtras explicitly refer
to Nārāyana-bali as a funerary rite. The different interpre-
tations postulated by different scholars is discussed in an
appendix to this work where it is attempted to show that the
term Nārāyana-bali is not used here in the sense of a funerary
rite but simply in its literal sense, i.e., an offering to god
Nārāyana, a routine to be performed every day in the temple.
The revenues of the village granted were therefore to be uti-
liised not only for feeding sixteen brāhmaṇas in the sattra but
also for the daily offerings for the deity installed in the
temple.

It is obvious that a sattra was attached to the Vishnu
cave-temple in Badami. This is a feature frequently met with
in the temples of the seqyal. There was also provision for
feeding the parivrājakas (ascetics).
Maṅgaleśa wished that the merit of the deed of excavating the Vishnu cave-temple, etc. should go to his brother Kirtivarman, and not merely, be it noted, of the Nārāyana-bali. What factors guided this extraordinarily magnanimous wish of Maṅgaleśa is a debatable point which need not be discussed here.

It is suggested that the icon mentioned in the epigraph may refer to the figure of Varāha carved to the proper right of the inscription or to the one of the Vishnu on Ananta near it. The inscription says that the icon of Vishnu was installed; and the garbhagriha of the cave-temple has pīṭha for installing an image. Therefore, the above view is not correct.

Of interest is the fact that there is another record of Kirtivarman I which is also dated in the 12th crennal year of the king, Mahākārtika Paurṇimā: the same day as the Cave III inscription. This is the Godachi (Torgal Tk.Kolharur Dt., Maharashtra) plates of Kattiarasa, registering the gift of land in Nūlgalagrāma village by the king to a Brāhmaṇa named Krishṇa-svāmin.

The Nerur copper plate record of Maṅgaleśa (Savantavadi, Maharashtra) eulogises the members of the Chālukya family as conversant with Manu, Rāmayana, Bhārata, etc. Maṅgaleśa is described as delighted in worshipping the gods, Brāhmaṇas and spiritual preceptors (deva-dvija-guru-pujānimrataḥ) and a staunch worshipper of Bhagavat Vishnu (para-bhāgavataḥ).
This record registers the grant of Kundivataka in the Koṅkaṇa district to Piriyasvāmi of Kāśyapa gōtra, thoroughly conversant with Vādas, etc. and of honourable family. The donor was king Mangalēśa himself and the donation was made on the 12th day of Kārtika month after duly worshipping god Vishnu (Kārtika-dvādaśāṁ kṛtōpavāsan-ārchipa Vishnunā...).

Noteworthy is the fact that the grant was made on the Mahākārtika dvādaśī which the epigraph describes as the most sacred day in the year. The month of Kārtika itself is considered auspicious by Vishnu-worshippers. The Skanda11 and Padma12 Purāṇas devote separate chapters describing the rewards of worshipping Vishnu in that month, especially of lighting lamps in Vishnu temples. Vishnu is supposed to go to rest on Ashādha Sukla Ekādaśī and would end it on Kārtika Sukla Ekādaśī. The dvādaśī of Suklapaksha of the Kārtika month is considered the day of waking of Lord Vishnu from his yoga-nidrā and hence looked upon as the most auspicious day. The previous day i.e. Ekādaśī, Vishnu worshippers observed fast. Accordingly, the king, being a parama-bhagavata, did observe fast and after duly worshipping Vishnu he made the grant. The first instance of this sort of ritualism is found in the Gangadhar Stone inscription of Viśvavarm (c.423 A.D.).13 In this context, it would be interesting to note that many grants of the earlier kings were made in the month of Kārtika.
Another record of the same king, connected again with the
Vaishnava Cave III at Badami, is inscribed to the left of the
cave.\textsuperscript{14} Referring to Maṅgaleśa as the ruling king, it records
gift of half a \textit{visa} to the garland-makers of the stone abode
got excavated by him.

The Mahakuta pillar inscription of Maṅgaleśa, dated 5th
regnal year (601-02 A.D.),\textsuperscript{15} records the gift of the booty
accumulated at the time of the invasion of the Kaṭachuri area
by the king to the god Maṅkureśvara, at the request of Durlabha-
dēvī, mother of Kīrtivarman I. The king as usual is described
as parama-bhāgavata. The record shows that whatever the personal
leanings of the king, no distinction was made in regard to
other religious sects.

Inscriptions of Pulakesi II are interesting in that some
of them begin with invocations to Vishnū, especially his Varāha
form. The most noted of these goes as follows:\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{verbatim}
Jayaty-āvishkritam-Vishnōr-varāham-kshōbhitārpavām
dakshīṇānāta-daṃśṭrāgra-viśranta bhuvanām vapūḥ
\end{verbatim}

This particular verse in praise of Varāha-Vishnū becomes the
most characteristic of the Chālukya records henceforth, irres-
pective of their religious inclination. It continues to be the
feature of most of the records of the Chālukyas of Kālyāṇa
also.
The Lohner copper plate record of the same king contains the following invocation to Varaha (c. 630 A.D.).

Jayaty:-amalabalendu kōṭiprapāśa-daṁshṭrōtkaṭaṁ
rasātalapāṅkāṁkita skandhadēśa-mutkāśaram
jalālulitagōṇagramukta prabhāṇjanōtsārita-
dhvāner-jaladhi madhy-ōpalabdhōrvvīl Kōḷa-
rūpāṁ Hārēḥ

Besides this, the inscription is the only known record of Pulakēśi II to refer to him as a devout worshipper of Bhagavat Vishṇu (parama-bhāgavata). We may note here that a mutilated lithic record ascribed to Pulakēśi II also describes the Chālukyas as parama-bhāgavatas.

The Nerur record of Pulakēśi II begins with another invocation to Varāha-Vishṇu:

Jayatī vīmāla-damshṭrā-rājitaṁ lōkabharttuḥ
praśamitar-ārēḥ avanī-tāla-vīghā (?)tābhinna-pātāla-
mūlam svabhuja...d-ūṛddhavam-urvvīn-dadhānaṁ

Here is one more vivid description of Varāha which appears at the commencement of the Moulimb plates of the same king:

Jayatī jalada-brīnda-vyōma-nilōtpal-ābhaḥ
sphurad-uru māṇi-ratna-srak-samāviddhā-kaṇṭhaḥ
jalandhara īva vidya(dydu)dhvra(d-vṛi)tta-madhy-aika-
dēśō dharaṇidhara-nirūbhāssvī( t = svī)nna(h)vaktrō
Varāha(h)
The above account clearly shows that in the reign of Pulakési II invocation to Varāha form of Vishnu became very frequent. The reason for this is perhaps not far to seek. For one thing, Varāha was the royal emblem of the Chālukyas. Vishnu in the form of Varāha raised up the earth from the nether world and thus protected her. The Chālukyas had similar claim to their credit. The kings of the dynasty called themselves 'Prithvī-vallabha' of 'favourite of the Earth'. The very choice of Varāha for royal emblem was possibly inspired by their religious inclination. As per their records, Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa himself had given them the Varāha lāṃchhana. This statement reflects that they were worshippers of Vishnu in the early stage of their career. Religious considerations usually had a say in the selection of the royal seal. Secondly, it was during the reign of Pulakési II that the Chālukya power saw much of its expansionist activity. Pulakési met with success in almost every battle he fought and unified the major part of South India under one umbrella. Like Varāha, figuratively, he saved the 'Earth' from the enemies by defeating and subduing them. It is perhaps these historical events that linger behind the Varāha invocations contained in his epigraphs.

It may be noted however, that in none of these invocations allusion is made to the demon Hiranyāksha, who according to some Purāṇas, like the Bhāgavata, was killed by Varāha before he lifted up the Earth.
The Chiplun record of Pulakesi II, however, begins with a different invocation to Vishnu, unlike the previous records:

Jayati jagatāṃ vihātus-trivikram-ākrānta-aśakala-
bhuvaṇasya
nata-na...ṇa...ṇa. nakhaṁśu jatilāṃ padaṁ Vishṇoḥ

The allusion here is apparently to the Trivikrama form of Vishnu in which he traversed the whole Universe by subduing the demon king Bali. While considering the sculpture of the period, it will become evident that the Trivikrama form was, like Varāha, one of the most popular themes in Chālukya sculpture. Our epigraph in addition, considers Vishnu as the creator of the worlds also.

In the Ganjagatti (Holalkere Tk., Chitradurga Dist.) record of Chālukya Abhinavāditya, son of Ādityavarman and grandson of Pulakesi II, there is the following invocation to Lord Hari:

Jayatya-abhinav-āditya-ruchi pāda talaṁ Hariḥ
uditaṁ-mātasaṁ-avānaṁ sur-ārāti-tamo pahāṁ

The epigraph apparently alludes here to the step of Hari in his Trivikrama form, the purpose of which was to push down the demon Bali, who symbolised, as clearly indicated by the above invocation, darkness or ignorance.

Some significant changes seem to have occurred in the reign of Vikramāditya I, the son of Pulakesi II. An important record of his, viz., Āmudalapādu plates (Alampur, Andhra Pradesh)
dated 660 A.D., which commences with the noted Varāha invocation that we first noticed in the epigraph of his father's reign, refers to the king as making grant of a village in favour of Śrī Mēghāchārya as a guru-dakshina on the occasion of the king's śivamandala-dikṣā. It was noted above that Pulakesi II has been described as parama-bhagavata in one of his records. In view of this it is not impossible that Vikramaditya I, like his father, was also a parama-bhagavata till 660 A.D., when as per the record under consideration, he became a convert to Śaivism. In the Nausari record24 of 671 A.D., he is described as parama-mahēśvara (a great devotee of god Mahēśvara = Śiva) meditating on the feet of Śrī Nāgavardhana, thereby indicating that he had become a staunch devotee of Śiva by that time. The magnitude of the effects of this conversion on the prospects of Vaiṣṇavism at least in royal circles cannot be gauged. But the overall impression carried from the evidence available is that even the successors of the king were more lenient towards Śaivism than any other religion. This becomes apparent if the number of temples dedicated to Śiva is compared with that of other deities. Thus Vijayāditya erected a temple for Śiva at Pattadakal and named the deity after himself as Vijayēśvara; Vikramaditya II made munificent grants to the two temples of Śiva, Lōkēśvara and Trailōkēśvara, erecred by his queens at Pattadakali26 and Kirtivarman II made donations to the Śaiva ascetic migrant from the North, residing at Pattadakal.27
In any case, it is a fact that even after this significant and palpable change in religious inclination, the Chalukya records, whether Jaina or Saiva, continued the tradition of including the noted Varaha invocation at the commencement of almost every record as also the statement that the Varaha lanchhana had been given to them by Bhagavan Nārāyaṇa himself. This is obviously only reminiscent of the earlier Chalukya dedication to Vishnu worship, now retained only as a 'tradition'.

However, interestingly, the Savanur (Dharwad dist.) copper plate record of Vikramaditya I, dated 675 A.D., winds up with salutation to god Nārāyaṇa (namō Nārāyanāya).26 The donees bear Vaishnavite names. This aberration may be explained as due to the personal god of the composer of the record, who was probably a devotee of Vishnu.

In the records of Vinayaditya (681-696 A.D.) the king is often compared with Vāsudeva, Yudhishthira, Parasurāma, Bharata, etc.29 Of interest is also the fact that Vyāsa is described as Bhagavatā Vēdavyāsa,30 thereby indicating that Vēdavyāsa had been recognised as a divine person, apparently an avatarā of Vishnu. It may be pointed out in this connection that the Harivamsa and the Bhagavata Purana mention Vyāsa in the list of avatarās.

In the record of the same king, dated 694 A.D. and found in Harihara, Chitradurga Dist.),31 the king is said to have
camped near Harisapura while donating a village to a Brahmana. This Harisapura is no other than modern Harihara. The name of the place as such (Hari+ īsa) indicates that it had been associated with Harihara cult from early times. It has been mentioned elsewhere in this work that the Harihara icon of this place (Fig.125) belongs to about 5th-6th century A.D.\(^{32}\)

The most important and significant of the records of Vijayaditya (696-733 A.D.) for our purposes is the Badami Jambulinga temple inscription of 699 A.D.\(^{33}\) This epigraph informs that the Trinity - Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara - were consecrated in this temple on the specific date by the king on behalf of his mother Vinayavatī. Taxes and incomes in kind were made over to the temple. The temple contains three shrines each of which originally enshrined one of the deities of the Triad. However, it is known that the central shrine of the temple housed Śiva.\(^{34}\) This is the first example of a triple-shrined temple in Karnataka housing the Trinity.

It is known that Pallava Mahendravarman vichitrachitta, in his venture to create a temple without using brick, timber, metal and mortar, had excavated a cave-temple for the Trinity earlier at Mandagapattu (Tamil Nadu, 6th century A.D.).\(^{35}\) However, it is difficult to ascertain if the beginning of this trend of installing the Trinity in a single temple in Karnataka has to be traced to Tamilnadu. But in some of the pre-Chalukya records
of Karnataka, salutations to the Trinity have been noticed. In any case, the Jambulinga temple is the first known example of the installation of Trinity in a single triple-shrined temple indicating the equality of the three important deities of the Hindu pantheon. It inaugurated a new trend in the religion of that and the succeeding periods - that of enshrining the deities of the Triad in a single temple. An off-shoot of this tradition was enshrining of Vishnu, Shiva and Surya in temples of trikūta variety, a feature noted more strikingly in the reigns of Kalyāna Chālukyas and Hoysalas.36

It will now be pertinent to consider the names of persons appearing in the various inscriptions of the period. They are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Ruling king</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Narāyaṇasvāmin</td>
<td>Brāhmaṇa</td>
<td>Pulakāśi II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Vishṇusvāmin</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Pāndaraṅgasvāmin</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Gōpesvāmin</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Dāmadīkshita</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Krishṇasvāmin</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Vāmanasvāmin</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Vikramāditya I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Kēśavasvāmin</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Dāmōdarasvāmin</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Madhuśarman</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Vishṇusarman</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Mādiśarman</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Trīvikramaśarman</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Vinayāditya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Haridatta</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to these, a Narasimha Bāṇādhīrāja of Bali family, a Gōpaladēva of Pallava family, a Vāsudevaguru and Madhavattirasa, the last two being Jains, are known from contemporary records.

B. EVIDENCE OF SCULPTURE

What remains unexpressed in the inscriptions of the Chālukya period is brought to lime-light by the numerous sculptural representations found on their temples which are clustered in the regions of Badamī, Pattadakal, Aihole and Alampur. An
analytical study reveals otherwise unknown facets of the Vishṇu cult during the period in Karnataka.

Comparatively the temples that can be classed as dedicated to Vishṇu are few in number. There was a time when all the Chālukya temples were considered to be originally dedicated to Vishṇu merely on the basis of the presence of Garuda on their doorways. Such an assumption is now proved untenable beyond doubt. Garuda-and-Nāgasākha images on the doorways of temples was just an architectural tradition without any religious connotation and its use is known to have persisted in Assam and Bihar during late Gupta period, also in decidedly Śaiva context.

The important temples on which Vishṇu's significant sculptural depictions are found may be classified basically into three phases chronologically.

Phase-1 : Circa 540-650 A.D.
Phase-2 : Circa 650-725 A.D.
Phase-3 : Circa 725-760 A.D.

The first phase represents the political ascendancy of the Chālukya power, during which time they inaugurated a surge of activity in construction of stone temples. The second phase begins with the clearing of the 'dark clouds'
that had gathered round Vātāpi when Vikramāditya expelled Pallava forces from the capital and reinstated the Chālukya rule about 654 A.D. Nearly twelve-thirteen years (c.642-654 A.D.) of the Pallava occupation of Badami may have instituted certain new trends in temple building activity and religious influences from the south. This must have been a slow process and extends over the remaining part of the Chālukya rule. However, the conquest of Kanchi by Vikramāditya II during his father Vijayāditya's reign seems to have rejuvenated this trend of influence from the south. This was possibly about the last part of Vijayāditya's reign, around 725 A.D. and precisely at this time the third phase of structural activity may be regarded as begun. Thus the above classification is essentially based on considerations of political happenings and their possible non-political consequences; and it should not be mistaken for any break in cultural activity.

The following is the list of temples grouped in the appropriate phase along with the plausible religious affiliation of each temple wherever it has been possible to decide:

Phase-1

Cave-I (Śaiva); Cave II (Vaishnava); Cave III (Vaishnava, 578 A.D.); Upper Śivālaya (Vaishnava); Lower Śivālaya (Vaishnava or Gānapatyā); Māligīti Śivālaya (Saura) all at Badami; Rāvalphaqi cave (Śaiva) at Aihole.
Phase-2

Jambulinga temple (Traipurusha - Brahma, Siva, Vishnu 699 AD.); and Bhutanatha (Eastern group) temple (Saiva) at Badami. Chikkigudi (Saiva), Ladhkhan (Saura?) temple Durga temple (Saura), Huchhappayamaṭha (Saiva), Huchchappayagudi (Saiva), Kontagudi group Śākta), Huchchimalligudi (Saiva) and Mallikārjuna temple (Saiva) at Aihole. Sangamēśvara temple (Saiva) at Pattadakal. Mahākūṭēśvara and Mallikārjuna temples (both Saiva) at Mahakuta. Viśva-Brahmā temple at Alampur.

Phase-3

Virūpaksha, Mallikārjuna, Pāpanātha and Kāśīvīśēśvara temples at Pattadakal (all Saiva). Gaḷaganātha temple and group (possibly Vaishṇava) at Aihole and smaller temples at Mahakuta.

The different forms of Viṣṇu and related aspects represented in each of the above three phases may now be noted without attempting the iconographic details which are dealt with separately in part II of this work.

Phase-1

1(a) Sthānaka Viṣṇu: Four-armed (Mālegitti Śivālaya Badami) and eight-armed (Cave III, Badami).

(b) Āsanamūrti: Viṣṇu on Ananta (Cave III, Mālegitti Śivālaya - chaitya-kūḍus, Badami); Garudārūḍha Viṣṇu (Caves II, III, Mālegitti Śivālaya, Badami; Rāvalphad Cave, Aihole).
(c) Śayānamūrti; Vishnu reclining on Ananta (Cave II and III in narrative bas-reliefs, Badami).

ii) Avatāras: Kurma (Caves III and III narrative bas-reliefs, Badami); Varāha (Caves II, and III, Badami); Rāvalphadi Cave, Aihole); Narasiṁha (Cave III, Upper Śīvālaya, etc. Badami); Vāmana-Trivikrama Caves II and III, Badami); Rāma-Dāsarathā (Upper Śīvālaya, Badami); Balarāma (Caves II and III, Upper and Lower Śīvālaya in narrative reliefs, Badami).

iii) Stories connected with Vishnu in narratives:
Krishṇacharita (Cave II and III, Upper and Lower Śīvālayas, Badami); Rāmāyaṇa (Upper Śīvālaya, Badami); Pārijātaharaṇa (cave III, Badami); Garuda and Amṛita (Cave III, Badami).

iv) Composite Images: Harīhara (Cave I and III, Badami; Rāvalphadi Cave, Aihole).

v) Associated deities: Garuḍa as the mount of Vishnu is noticed in most sculptures. Independently he is found in the cornice of Cave III, Badami, facing the Garbhagriha. Two more icons of Garuḍa, supposed to be from Mahakuta, are now preserved in Govt. Museum, Kittur (Belgaum Dist.). He also occurs on the doorways of Chālukya structural temples (Mālegitti Śīvālaya, Badami), of course, without religious significance.

(b) Lakṣmī as Śrī Gajalakṣmī (Cave I, Badami) as Vishnu's consort (Cave I, Badami).

(c) Dvārapālas, two-armed, noticed in Caves II and III at Badami.
Phase-2

1) (a) Sthānaka Vishnu: Four armed Vishnu in Samapāda posture (Lāḍ Khān, Durga and Kontagudi temples at Aihole; Bhūtanātha temple, Badami; Mallikārjuna temple, Mahakuta).

(b) Āsanamūrti: Vishnu on Ananta (Huchchappayyamath, Aihole); Garudarūḍha Vishnu (Jambulinga temple, Badami, Durga temple, Huchchimalligudi, etc. Aihole)

(c) Śayānamūrti: Vishnu reclining on Ananta (Konta group, Aihole, Chikkigudi, Aihole, etc.)

ii) Avatāras: Varāha (Durga temple, Huchchappayyaguḍi, Aihole, Saṅgamēvara temple, Pattadakal); Narasiṁha (Durga temple, Huchchappayyaguḍi, Aihole); Vāmana-Trivikrama (Huchchappayyaguḍi, Chikkiguḍi, Konta group, Aihole); Rāma-Dāsarathī (Durga temple narrative reliefs, Aihole).

iii) Stories connected with Vishnu: Rāmāyaṇa (Durga temple, Aihole); Gajendra Mahākāla (Viśva-Brahmā temple Alampur).


v) Associated Deities:
   (a) Garuda as mount of Vishnu as well as on doorways.
   (b) Lakṣmī (Śīl) as consort of Vishnu flying beside Vishnu (Huchchappayyamath, Aihole)

Phase-3

1) (a) Sthānaka Vishnu: (Viṭūpāksha, Mallikārjuna and pāpanātha temples, Pattadakal).
(b) **Asanamūrti**: Vishnu on Ananta (Small temple near Ravalphadi Cave, Aihole). Garudarudha Vishnu (Virupaksha, Mallikarjuna, Papanātha temples, Pattadakal; Galaganātha temple group, Aihole).

(c) **Sayānamūrti**: Vishnu reclining on Ananta (Papanātha temple, Pattadakal).

**ii. Avataras:**

- **Kurma**: (Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples in narrative reliefs, Pattadakal; Varāha (Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples, Pattadakal); Minor temples, Mahakuta); Narasimha (Major temples, Pattadakal and minor temples Mahākūta); Vāmana-Trivikrama (Virupaksha, Mallikarjuna, Papanātha, Kaśīvisvēśvara temples, Pattadakal); Rāma-Dāsaratha (Mallikarjuna, Virupaksha and Papanātha temples, Pattadakal); Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa (Virupaksha, Mallikarjuna, Papanātha and Kaśīvisvēśvara temples, Pattadakal), usually in narrative reliefs on pillars but Kṛṣṇa's some feats are shown as major sculptures on pillars of Papanātha.]

**iii. Stories connected with Vishnu:** Krishnacharita, (Virupaksha, Mallikarjuna, Kaśīvisvēśvara temples, Pattadakal) Pañchatantra (Virupaksha, Mallikarjuna temples, Pattadakal), Rāmāyaṇa (Virupaksha, Mallikarjuna, Papanātha temples, Pattadakal) Gajendramoksha (Virupaksha, Mallikarjuna temples, Pattadakal).

**iv. Chaturvimsati form:** Śrīdhara: (Rāmalāṅgēśvara, Hungund, and Galaganātha temple, Aihole).

**v. Composite Images:** Harīhara (Almost all temples in Aihole and Pattadakal).

**vi. Associated deities:** Garuda as mount of Vishnu.
From the foregoing analytical account it may at the outset appear that not much change is discerned in each phase. However, a critical study of these themes reveals that there are in fact vital differences in style and theme of sculpture of each phase.

Phase-1

In the four-armed Vishnu (Fig.3) on the Malegitti Sivalaya, Badami, the attributes of Vishnu are fruit, chakra, sankha and katihasta. In addition the noteworthy feature is the presence of gada, personified as a lady, recalling the representations of Vishnu with ayudha-purushas in central India of the Gupta period.48 The figure to the right of Vishnu in this sculpture is wrongly identified as personified Chakra, but it is in fact of Garuda, left unfinished.

Vishnu reclining on Ananta does not occur as a major sculpture at all and is confined to narrative bas-reliefs. Note-worthy, again, is the presence of personified weapons of Vishnu.50

Vishnu as Garudavahana is shown usually with chakra and sankha in the upper hands. The lower right hand is in kataka pose in Cave II ceiling relief, while a gada is shown in the Malegitti Sivalaya example which also appears to indicate northern Indian influence.
Of the avatāras the Matsya-avatāra has no representations and the Kurma-avatāra hardly a major or even a frequent depiction. Varaha representations in Caves at Badami (Figs.38,39) show how this form of Vishnu was held in high veneration by the Chalukyas. Their epigraphs profoundly corroborate this evidence. Narasimha is depicted both in sthāna and kēvala aspects. The figure on the pillar in Cave I at Badami indicates the continuation of the Talagunda seated Narasimha example, implying in addition attachment of that form with yogic aspects. In the standing Narasimha of Cave III (Fig.48) we see again the personified āyudhas held in the upper hands. The seated two-or four-armed Narasimha appears to have been a popular form continuing from pre-Chalukya period. The Vāmana avatāra has a partially narrative depiction in major reliefs of Trivikrama in Caves II (Fig.66) and III in Badami. Being one of the early feats associated with Vishnu, Trivikrama carvings occur in profusely during the Chalukya phase. Rama-Dāsarathī's independent sculptures are wanting on the walls of the temples of this phase. Only in upper Śivālaya his depiction is seen in narrative context. Thus, though the Rāmayana theme was popular, the concept of Rama as an avatāra may not have gained popularity during this phase. Balarāma occurs only as an associate of Krisha in Krishnacharita narratives. Krishna, however, significantly finds representation not only in narrative context, but also in major wall sculptures of Upper Śivālaya, Badami, in his feats of Gōvardhanōdādhāra (Fig.78) and Kiliyadamana (Fig.76). Thus
it may be surmised that Krishna-Vasudeva had an important status in the religion. In fact, the recurring representation of Krishna-Vasudeva on the Upper Śivālaya indicates it to be a temple originally dedicated to him. Their significance in this regard becomes obvious when one compares them with those found on the Mālegitti Śivālaya, Badami, where Vishnu and Siva appear on the north and South walls respectively. We should also take into account the fact that early kings of Chālukya dynasty are expressly described as parama-bhāgavatas indicating the prominence given to Vasudeva in the Vaiṣṇava (Bhāgavata) religion of Chālukya time. We have noted elsewhere in this work that the term Bhāgavata is scarce in the later records. The presence of Upper Śivālaya within the area of the inner fortifications is also significant indicating direct royal patronage.

In regard to the Krishṇa-charita scenes (Figs. 79-84) on the Upper and Lower Śivālayas, it should be remarked that among others the killing of a small bird (crow?) by Krishṇa when he was still a babe is included. So far as our knowledge goes, this is not to be found in any Purāṇa. But it may be the same as Śakuni, said to have been killed by Krishṇa when he was still a babe. Otherwise, as in Cave II and III bas-reliefs, the depiction never goes beyond the Vishnu Purāṇa and Harivaṃśa traditions of Krishṇa-charita. It may be added that the Pārijatā haraṇa scene in Cave III may have derived from the Vishnu Purāṇa
version, while the samudramanthana and amrita stories may have been inspired by the Mahābhārata.

The Ashtabhujasvāmi relief in Cave III is supposed by some scholars to have been influenced by the Pallava traditions. One scholar has even remarked that it could be the work of Narasimhavarman I, the conqueror of Vatapi.53 The small relief of Narasimha over the tiara of the deity symbolises, according to him, Narasimhavarman himself. It has been noted in a previous chapter54 that in the erection of the Ashtabhujasvāmi temple in Nagarjunakonda in the third century A.D., a king of Karnataka has actually participated. It is therefore not proper to consider the idea of Ashtabhujasvāmi as essentially 'southern'. Though it is admitted that the sculpture in Cave III may have been a later audition,55 there is no reason, it is argued in recent times,56 to believe that it was added so late as Narasimhavarman's time. It has also been pointed out that there can be two-headed Vishṇu image also,57 and this sculpture may be one such example.

Phase-2

In this phase depictions of Four-armed Vishnu in samapāda posture are common. Usually, as in the previous phase, his attributes comprise phala, chakra, śāṅkha and kaṭihasta. However, at times, gadā is shown, of course personified as a lady, to the right of Vishṇu, as in the examples of Lāṇkhān (Fig.7) and Durga temples(Fig.28),Aihole. In many cases the absence of gadā is noteworthy.
Vishnu seated on Ananta or Sesha is often found flanked by two ladies who represent his consorts Bhudevi and Lakshmi. The seated form is altered to something like *virāsana* (Fig. 23). In a rare case, Vishnu is shown carrying pearl-necklace in his front pair of hands, a feature frequently noticed in the Nāgarāja representations of the same phase. This may indicate the form of Vishnu as Sesha which is considered to represent Balarama in literature. In this context we may note that in one of the representations of Krishnacharita scenes (Fig. 85), Balarama is actually shown with serpent-hood canopying his head. The sculpture under consideration may also represent Vishnu as Lord of Water and its wealth.

Another noteworthy feature of the phase is that the Sayānamūrti begins to assume prominence. It finds representation in ceilings (Chikkigudi (Fig. 30), Aihole). The presence of the weapons of Vishnu as āyudhapurusha significantly indicates the continuation of the earlier tradition revealed in Cave examples at Badami; it might indicate the Vaikhānasāgama tradition. Of Garudarūḍha Vishnu, there is a unique example in the devakōśa of the Durga temple (Fig. 28) Aihole. In this Vishnu has one of his hands in varadamudrā and is accompanied by personified gadā. This sculpture has been shown to be the hand of an artist from north India. Some identify the image as that of Karivarada which would link it with the Gajendramoksha story.
Of the avatāras we see rather infrequent representation of Varāha, the royal emblem of the Chālukyas. It is not known if this has to be attributed to the conversion of the Chālukya monarchs to Śaiva religion as noted in their epigraphs. However, this is probably owing to the less chance for the artist to represent the theme because the temple walls of this phase were usually bereft of sculptural decor. As in the previous phase, the Narasimha āvatāra has its representation both in sthauna and kēvala form. In the Durga temple, Aihole, he is depicted standing alone with Vishnu's attributes. (Fig. 49) The depiction of Sthauṇa Narasimha on a pillar in the same temple (Fig. 51) as well as of seated two-armed kēvala Narasimha on a pillar in the Mallikārjuna temple, Aihole, recall the Bhāgavata Purāṇa idea of Vishnu Narasimha residing in a pillar. The Vāmana-Trivikrama theme is found in the ceiling sculpture of Chikkīgudi (Fig. 67) as well as the Huchchappayyagudi in Aihole. The Chikkagudi specimen retains the features found in the Caves in Badami. On the other hand, the Vāmana-Trivikrama relief in the Huchchappayyagudi exhibits a new feature - that of Garuḍa belabouring Śukra, the guru of the asura Bali. Also, in this specimen, Trivikrama's leg is raised above the shoulder level. The prescription for these items is found in the Vaikhānasāgama which tradition seems to have been in vogue widely in the Tamil Nadu area under the Pallavas. Rāma is again found represented in narrative Rāmāyana reliefs in the Durga temple, Aihole.
The representation of Gajendramoksha in a major panel on the Visva-Brahma temple in Alampur (Andhra Pradesh) is a significant one. We have dealt with the significance of the theme elsewhere in this work. Of the Harihara sculptures, there is one unique example (Fig.128) with eight arms found in the devakoshta of the Durga temple, Aihole. This seems to have been influenced from north India. The presence of personified gada is a noteworthy feature.

It appears that the standardization of four-armed sthana-kamurtis took place in this period. Hence forth, till the arrival of the chaturvimśatimurti concept of Vishnu, we find that phala, chakra, saṅkha and kaṭihasta are the regular attributes of Vishnu in samapāda posture in Karnataκa with the addition of gada either on the right or the left, almost invariably in weapon form. The significance of the phala - a pear-shaped ball-like object - is not clear. But it may symbolise benevolence. Or, if it is taken to be pinda then it may reflect on the contemporary concept of Vishnu as the god of pitris.

Phase-3

The most noteworthy feature of the phase is the discontinuation of the tradition of representing weapons of Vishnu as ayudhapurushas. The eight-armed Vishnu (Aṣṭabhujaśvāmi) which we first noticed in Cave III at Badami in Phase-I recurs once again in one example (Fig.19). In the Garudarudha Vishnu
images of Galaganātha temple, Aihole, and Rāmalingēśvara temple, Hungund, the appearance of padma is significant change. Both the sculptures show the continuation of the inflow of a northern Indian hand from phase-2 sculptures of the Durga temple, Aihole. In the Śayānāmūrti, the disappearance of śyudhapurushas is noted. Again the example of Śayānāmūrti in the Pāpanātha temple ceiling (Fig.33) seems to depict the yogśāyana form.

Of the avatāras, Kūrma finds representation in narrative context. Varāha also is depicted but infrequently. Narasimha is mostly found in his sthaunā aspect on the pillars. In Vāmana Trivikrama image there is the prominent depiction of Garuḍa belabouring Śukra (Fig.68). Rāma-Dāśarathī gains a somewhat prominent place because, for the first time, his representations are found on the walls along with his consort Sītā. However, the derivation of the themes is essentially from the Ramāyana. There are not only striking depictions of Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇa-charita scenes but also of his individual feats like Gōvardhanōddhāra and Kāliyadamana on pillars. He is often depicted with more than two hands, with characteristic attributes of Viṣṇu.

Again, in the Kṛṣṇa-charita scenes, a new feat of Kṛṣṇa, viz., killing of Baka demon is introduced (Fig.85). Besides, a Panchatantra story in which Viṣṇu is involved also occurs. The prominent depiction of Gajendramāksna Viṣṇu on the pillars of Virūpāksha (Fig.117), Mallikārjuna(Fig.118) and Pāpanātha temple at Pattadakal for the first time in Karnataka is noteworthy.
The specific feature of Harihara of this phase is his representation in tribhanga (Fig. 130). It seems to have derived from the concept of union of Prakṛti and Purusa as in the case of ārdhanārīśiva. In a very rare representation (Fig. 129) Vishnu is shown with a sarpa in his lower right hand. The Garuda-and-Nagaśākhā scheme on the doorways becomes less frequent.

The sculptures of phase-3 thus follow a different tradition from those of phase-1 and phase-2, especially the former. The new tradition appears to be that of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. This Purāṇa is admittedly a composition of South or, to be more specific, of lower Karnataka and Tamilnadu region. The killing of the demon Baka by Kṛishṇa is to be found in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, and the Vishnu Purāṇa and the Harivamśa are devoid of reference to that incident in Kṛishṇa's exploits. Similarly the Gajendramoksha story, though not unknown to some other Purāṇas like the Vāmana, Varāna, etc., finds a most exhaustive treatment in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa only, giving to it a thoroughly south Indian character. It does not at all occur in the Vishnu and the Harivamśa Purāṇas. The ascendency of the Kṛishṇa themes in sculpture is also perhaps an indication of the influence of the new tradition. The frequent depiction of Narasimha on pillars instead of on walls may also signify the same trend. For, it is only according to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa that Narasimha-Vishnu emerged from the pillar.
In the above paragraph we attempted to show the new wave from the south. This does not mean that the flow of ideas from the north died out. The most significant of the influence from the north is the depiction of padma on the palm of Garudārūḍa Vishṇu in Aihole Gaḷaganāṭha sculpture and likewise in the Rāmalingēśvara temple sculpture of Hungund. This completes the cycle of the characteristic attributes of Vishṇu, indicating the progress towards the Chaturvīṃśatī forms in which padma, chakra, śaṅkha and gada play a key role in deciding identification of the particular form of Vishṇu. Some of these forms are known to occur around 6th-7th century A.D. in north India. The Aihole and Hungund sculptures seem to correspond to Śrīdhara form of Vishṇu carrying padma, chakra, gada and śaṅkha in that order from the lower right hand clockwise. It will be shown below that two centuries later the Chaturvīṃśatimūrti idea almost completely sweeps aside the earlier sthānaka Vishṇu form by replacing the latter.

The steady decrease of the representation of Garuḍa in the lalāṭabimba of doorways of Chālukya temples which was a regular feature of temples of Phase-1 and Phase-2 should also be viewed as significant. It appears that Garuḍa on lalāṭabimba began to connote religious dedication slowly as the temples of Gaḷaganāṭha group seem to imply.

Lakṣmi's representations in Vishṇu icons is scanty in all the three phases. Except in the Harihara image in Cave I in
Baḍamā, her large-size depictions are absent in Chālukya period. The reason for her infrequent depiction may have been the concept that she resided in the chest of Viṣṇu. Gajalakṣmi images are also not many. And as yet her regular appearance on the doorway dedicatory blocks as a sign of prosperity and auspiciousness is not noted. In the Gauḍaraguḍī, Aihole, which is known to have been the temple of Durgā-bhagavatī (Phase-2), her representation seems to have cultic significance. Slightly later, her large-sized depictions are noticed in the Ellora caves. From the Rāṣṭrakūṭa period onwards her regular depictions on lalāṭabimbas are found irrespective of religious affiliation of the temple.

The defeat of the Kaṭachuris in c.601 A.D. at the hands of Maṅgalēśa opened the way for free cultural interchange between central India and the Chālukya homeland. The first clear reflection of this is noted in the sculpture of the Mālegitti Śivālaya, Baḍamā. The wide conquests of Pulakēśa II in western and central India only consolidated the ground for cultural interchange. His defeat at the hands of the Pallavas and the occupation of Vātāpi by the latter for considerably long period of twelve/thirteen years was another landmark. It brought with it the wave of influence from the Tamil region. The second phase which considers this as its basis shows rather slow progress till the Chālukya power was soundly reinstated again in the reign of Vikramāditya I. From a close study of the
epigraphs it appears that the kings succeeding Pulakēśa II developed a strange attachment with the Andhra region. It is in the Alampur temple sculpture (District Karnool) that we discern the first elements of the influence from the south. However, during the reign of Vijayāditya the temple building activity was given importance in Badami, Pattadakal and Àhole also. The direct influence from the Andhra region into Karnataka is noted clearly in the example of Gałąganātha temple at Pattadakal. On the other hand, establishment of the Chālukya ruling house in Lāṭa (Gujarat) and the adventurous exploits of Vijayāditya in the north when he was still a prince helped regularise the impacts of northern ideas reflected in the Durga temple dēvakāshthā sculptures. When the third phase commenced, the temple building activity in Pattadakal under royal patronage had been firmly established. The wave from the south was only to be invigorated. The conquest and reconquests of Kanchi by Vikramāditya II materialised this. Thus the arrival of new themes in sculpture in southern style can be explained. The temple style of the Virūpāksha and Mallikārjuna stand live testimony to this fact. The Rāṣhtrakūṭas only carried it away to Ellora.

Before we close the discussion of the sculpture of the Chālukyas, it would be advantageous to consider a few more images of Vishnu found elsewhere in Karnataka and datable in their period.
One of the sculptures is that of Four-armed sthānaka Vishnu, now preserved in the Police Headquarters of Dharwad, and it was probably brought from Lakshmesvara. It conforms to the usual Chālukya type, standing in samapāda and holding fruit, chakra, śākha and katāhasta. The type of the spoked prabhāmanḍala recalls sculptures in Cave III - Asṭabhujavāmi and Trivikrama, and is datable to middle of the 7th century A.D.

The other sculpture is from Hiremagalur (Fig.4) in Chikmagalur District. It closely follows the above example in so far as the attributes in the hands and the stance are considered, but it may date from early 7th century considering its style, etc. It is a good example indicating that the iconic features of the Vishnu images remained uniform throughout Karnataka during the Chālukya reign. Since it is found in the region close to the Gaṅga area of control, it may be ascribed to them.

A third image is from Banavasi, the capital of the Kadambaśas (Fig.9). It is a unique image in many respects. For one thing, it has the miniature depiction of the daśavatāras on the prabhāvalī and, as such, it is the first icon in Karnataka to have the feature. Secondly, it has the depiction of three female figures attending upon Vishnu, all of whom are seated. These, identified on the basis of the attributes in the hands, represent Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Bhūdevi. Although Lakṣmī and Bhūdevi are known to be the consorts of Vishnu from other sculptures of the period, it is strange to find Sarasvatī also
with him. In sculptures of eastern India - Bihar and Bengal - we find Sarasvatī as consort of Vishnu in images. In the Banavasi sculpture therefore Sarasvatī is probably represented as Vishnu's consort. In addition to these, Garuḍa is also depicted in the Banavasi icon. The attributes follow the usual Chālukyan examples with the addition of gada in the right lower hand. The image may be assigned to the 8th century A.D.

The so-called Janārdana images of South Kanara, indicating the prevalence of Vishnu worship there, follow again Chālukya model with the exception that gada is more or less regularly shown near the lower left hand, but emulate Pallava style in execution. It may be noted that in the Chālukya homeland this becomes a feature in the last phase, in the examples found on the wall of the Pāpanātha temple Pattadakal.

On the whole it may rarely be remarked that the iconographic traditions in Karnataka at the end of the Chālukya regime were uniform all over, but the religious concepts present were slowly being enlarged owing to influences from other regions.

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1. *KI.* Vol. II, pp. 4-6
2. *Matsya Purāṇa*, CCLXXIV.
3. *Supra*, p. 106
14. *IA.* Vol. X, pp. 59 ff. Fleet's interpretation that Lāṅgājēśvara means the deity of the cave temple, i.e. Viṣṇu, is obviously incorrect. Lāṅgājēśvara was the village granted for maintenance of the temple.
16. "Victorious is the Boar form of the resplendent Viṣṇu, which dispersed the waters of the ocean and bore up the peaceful earth on the tip of his strong right tusk." *IA.* Vol. XIV, p. 330. This record, however, is in corrupt language and character.

18. KI. Vol. I, No. 1

19. "Victorious is (the form which was that of a boar of) the lord of the world, who allayed...the hostile...enemies of the gods - which was adorned by spotless tusk; which had the unbroken foundations of hell...the surface of the earth; which...by its own arms; and which lifted up the world on high". IA., Vol. VIII, pp. 43 ff.

20. "Victorious is Varāha who possesses the complexion of the blue lotus and the sky covered with a group of clouds, who is adorned with the garland made of splendid precious stones around his neck, who is having his waist encircled with a shining belt as the cloud which is covered with lightning and who has his face full of sweat due to the burden of carrying the earth like the cloud which emanates water when it is confronted with a mountain". EI. Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 215-218.

21. "Victorious is the footprint, interspersed with the brightness of two nails...bowed down, of (the god) Viṣṇu, the creator of the (three) worlds, who traversed the whole universe in three strides!" EI. Vol. III, pp. 50 ff.


26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. EI. Vol. XXVII, No. 20, pp. 115 ff. The donated village Kuvva-
Ilpāḷu was near Kukkanur in Raichur District.


30. EC, VIII, Sb. 571; EI, XIX, p. 62 ff.


32. See Chapter III above and under Harihara in Ps: “-II.

33. IA, Vol. X, p. 60


36. Infra, p. 225 ff


40. IA, Vol. XI, p. 69

42. Asher F.M., the Art of Eastern India, 300-800, (Minneapolis, 1980), pls.115, 116.

43. The chronology of the early Chalukyan temples is still a debated subject. Opinions differ from scholar to scholar. But in recent times, many scholars do not accept the dates provided by Cousens and Percy Brown. Noteworthy work in fixing the dates has been done by A. Lippe, (1967, 1969-70, 1970-71, and 1972), J.C. Harle (1972), and Carol R. Bolon (1981). The last mentioned, being the latest, provides ruler-wise chronology. A discussion on the chronology of Chalukyan monuments falls outside the scope of this work. Roughly, we have followed the chronology provided by Carol R. Bolon; though some change here and there may be apparent. Absolute dates have been deliberately eschewed.


47. A sort of grouping appears possible in the temples of Aihole: from Durga to Lādkhān all are of Saura affiliation; from Gaudaragudi to Konta group most temples appear to be Sākta in affiliation. Further study in this respect is awaited.


49. Beasley W. "Vishnu's Flaming Wheel: The Iconography of the Sudarśana Cakra", p. 52. That the figure is of Ārauḍa is proved by the presence of wings. This is more clear in another example of Vishnu (Fig. 5) of more or less the same period, now preserved in Badami Museum.
50. Banerji, R.D., in his detailed study of the bas-reliefs of Badami caves, does not appear to have taken note of the ayudhapurushas; MASI.No.25.


52. In the Mahābhārata, Śiśupāla while disapproving divine recognition to Kṛṣṇa states: "If in his childhood he slew Śakuni (or the bird)....who had no skill in fighting, what is the wonder ??.." Mahābhārata II,41.6 ff.cited by Chattopadhyaya, Evolution of Early Hindu Sects,p.70


54. Supra, pp.70 ff.


57. Agrawal R.C., in Lalit Kala No.16, p.11. He says that the Pāñcharātra Rakṣā refers to the god characterised by saumya (placid) and lion faces having two,three or more faces.

58. The icon (fig.24) is preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi.

59. This sculpture is found on a pillar in the context of Kṛṣṇa Charita scenes wherein Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are depicted stealing butter; Kāśivīvēśvara temple, Pattadakal, (Fig.85).

60. See part II, Under Śayānamūrti


63. See part-II,under Narasimhā
64. See part-II under Gajendramoksha, Karivarada or Varadaraja.

65. Stella Kramrisch, (Indian Sculpture, p.204), identified the icon as Kapila. But K.V. Soundara Rajan is obviously correct in identifying the image as Ashṭabnajas Śāmil, JIM, Vol. XIV-XVI, p.26 ff.


69. See part II under Gajendramoksha.

70. Desai K. Op.Cit, p.11

71. Infra, p.213 ff

72. Supra, p.99


76. For illustrations, see Bhatt P.G., Studies in Tuluva History and Culture.

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The change in the political scene effected by the rise of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas as masters of the land in the western Deccan resulted in the translocation of the centre of activity to that region. Their regime was marked by continual wars with the neighbouring kingdoms as has been already pointed out. However, there was obviously no break in cultural activity. The nature of information gleaned from the records of the period is different from the preceding period and, as such, needs separate consideration. Similarly, the sculpture of the period also furnishes certain new features. These two sets of evidence are examined separately in this chapter.
A. EVIDENCE OF EPIGRAPHS

The Rāṣṭrakūṭas had Garuḍa for their banner and seal (Garuḍadhvaja, Garuḍalāṭchana) and were probably the devotees of Vishṇu at the beginning of their career. In fact, one of their early records, viz., Sagalocda plates of Nararāja (683 A.D.) discovered in Madhya Pradesh, describes the king as Parama brahmaṇya and parama-bhāgavata. Govinda, Kṛishṇa, Dhruva, and Indra were the favourite names of the members of this family but no religious implication can be attached to these. For, when Dantidurga defied the authority of Kīrtivarma II he was already a devotee of Śiva; in his reign a Buddhist cave at Ellora (the so-called Daśāvatāra Cave) was converted into a Śaiva cave-temple. His successor Kṛishṇa I was the maker of the famous Kailāsa monolith dedicated to Śiva. The kings were more inclined to Śaivism and Jainism than to Vaishṇavism. The number of references to Vishṇu temples is feeble compared to that of the succeeding period and, as such, disappointing. After the shifting of the capital to Mānyakhēṭa (Malkhed in Gulbarga Dist.) in the reign of Amōghavarsha Nṛpatuṅga (814-878 A.D.), many places in Karnataka appear to have begun to prosper with temples.

1. Invocations and Allusions

The striking characteristic of most of the copper-plate records of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas is the combined invocation to Vishṇu and Śiva.
This invocation occurs considerably early in their regime, continues through and extends even to the period of the Yādavas of Devagiri and Śilāhāras. It no doubt indicates the catholic outlook of the kings of the dynasty. But, perhaps it also indicates the faint feeling of sectarianism that might have prevailed in the contemporary society for which no direct evidence is forthcoming. The ruling class has always tried to be ecletic in order to bring harmony among the followers of different sects. The extension of this sort of eclecticism to two more religions – Jainism and Buddhism is instanced in the epigraphs of the succeeding period considered in the next chapter.

In the same spirit, some Rāṣṭrakūṭa inscriptions invoke the Trimūrtis:

Jayati bhuvanakāraṇam svayambhūr-
jayati Purandharanandanaḥ Murāriḥ
jayati Girisutāniruddhadēhō durīta
bhayāpaharō Haraścha devah

The description of Murāri (Vishnū) as Purandharanandana, translated as the son of Indra, is enigmatic. The intention of the composer was probably to visualize Murāri as a delight to Purandnara (Indra); Vishnū had saved the latter from Bali by assuming Vāmanāvatāra; he had also helped him kill Vṛitra. These feats of Vishnū have fetched him the name Upānanda (brother of Indra).
The Alas copper plate record of Yuvarāja Gōyninda (770 A.D.) commences with an invocation to Viṣṇu (Sa ṛṇād-Mahāviṣṇu). Although invocations to Viṣṇu and his forms are contained in the Rāṣṭraṅga records, it may be noted that invocation to a single deity is scarcely found; usually other deities are also invoked along with in the same records. For instance, the Nīlūndra record of Amogha-varsha Nripatunga (866 A.D.) which begins with an invocation to the Trīmūrtīs, winds up with another invocation to Hari:

Jayati sthiti-samhāra-sṛishti-kāraṇa-karaṇam
Harir-dditija-kant-asya-kuśe(sayā)-hima-gam.

This repeats the earlier concept of Viṣṇu as the destroyer of demons (evil) and the cause of creation, continuance and destruction of the world.

The Sanjan copper plate record of the same king (871 A.D.) has, in addition to the invocation to Viṣṇu and Śiva, the following invocation to Viṣṇu-vāraṇāyaṇa:

May that Viṣṇu-vāraṇāyaṇa himself protect you hero, who is all pervading, who rests on the hood of Ananta, who is the rising mountain of valour, character and greatness, and who is the progenitor of the lofty sons of the good Rāṣṭraṅga.

It may be noted here that names like Viṣṇu-vāraṇāyaṇa, Kārtikeya-vāraṇāyaṇa, etc. associated with Viṣṇu gain popularity from this period.
Vishnu as Murari and Krishna is also invoked in some records of the Rashtrakutas.  

The Varaha invocation contained almost invariably in the records of the Chalukyas of Vatapi, is found very scantily in some late Rashtrakuta records, while the Ganga records of the south Karnataka region continue to invoke Vishnu as Padmanabha.

The invocations and allusions to Vishnu accompanied by Sri (Lakshmi) are interesting. In the Manne record of Govinda III (802 A.D.), Krishnaraja is compared to Krishna:

His broad chest shining with the arms of Sri around his neck as if the garland of kaustubha, possessed of virtue, having by his long arms subdued the circle of his enemies (or by the teeth of the discus), but not of dark character... (Sri kaustubhayatakarairupagudha kanthah styanvito vipula bahu vinirjitari chakrapy- akrishnacharitoh bhuvu Krishnarjah...)

In the Cambay plates of Govinda IV (930-35 A.D.) Vishnu as Kesava is invoked as follows:

May that Kesava protect you, on whose person horripilation was caused by the waves, which sprung up in the milky ocean agitated by the revolution of the Mandara mountain and which were reddened by the dense washings of red chalk of the best of the elephants, emerging (from the ocean) - (washings) which were mixed with the saffron of the numerous marks of female crocodiles on the full breasts of Sri.
The Karahad copper plate record of Krishna III (959 A.D) invokes Murāri accompanied by Lakshmi:

Salayati jagadutsavapraśaprathamapraṇakapallavā
Murāreḥ
lasitāmritapayaḥ kanaṃkalakshmīstanakalaśānanaladbha-
saṃnvēśaḥ

In another record Śrī Lakṣmī is stated to have been taken by Vishnu in a śvayamvara in the assembly of the gods and demons. Thus, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa records, especially of the latter part of their rule, invoke and allude to a form of Vishnu in accompaniment with Lakshmi. This form may well be described as Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa which became popular in the iconography of the succeeding period. The significance of this ever-united embracing universal couple - Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa - has been discussed in the next chapter.

Now a glimpse of the mythological allusions found in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa records which have bearing on the subject may be had.

The episode of the demon pair Madhu and Kaitabha was well-known during this period. Vishnu, is called Madhuripu (enemy of Madhu) in an epigraph.

Of the avatāras, Varāha is mentioned in the records. An epigraph of Gaṅga Raṇāvīkrama (c.980 A.D.) eulogises Rāchamalla's achievement as follows:
As Hari in the form of Boar rescued the earth from pātāla, so, seeing that the earth had been for a time seized by the Raśṭrakūṭas, that race of lion form, he rescued the land and took possession of it, the dēva having conquered them....Rācharāmalanripendra.  

Here appears to be an indirect allusion to the episode of Hira-ṇyāksha demon stealing away the earth. This is significant as it indicates the wide prevalence of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa versions of the myths connected with Vishṇu. The evidence of sculpture also substantiates this point.

Vishṇu’s subduing Bali is alluded to in the contemporary records. The Manne plates describe Boppayya:

Boppayya was like Vishṇu in destroying the power of Bali (Vishṇoṇiva Balipratapa nirvāpanojyata parākramasya).  

Similarly the Cambay plates describe the king as having become Vikrānta-Nārāyaṇa (as Vishṇu became Vikrānta-Nārāyaṇa, i.e. striding Nārāyaṇa when intent upon doing good to the earth occupied by his single stride).  

Of the legends connected with Praṣurāma, the following from the epics are mentioned: (1) Praṣurāma cutting off the thousand arms of Sahasrarjuna and (11) Praṣurāma making a gift of the earth to Kaśyapa.

Similarly, apart from the comparisons of kings with him, Dāśarathī Rāma’s breaking the bow of Rudrā and Rāvaṇa’s conflict...
with Sahasrārjuna are noticed. In regard to Krishṇa, it may be mentioned that the Rāṣṭrakūṭas traced their lineage to the Yadu clan to which Krishṇa also belonged. The kings of the dynasty are compared to Krishṇa. His name was popular among the members of the dynasty. His Gōvardhanottāraṇa is mentioned.

Thus the evidence suggests that most of the avatāras of Vishṇu were popular during the period.

Among the deities associated with Vishṇu, the rise of Īśrī Lakṣmī as his consort has already been adverted to above. Simultaneously, it is also noticed that Mahālakṣmī held an esteemed position in the contemporary society. The Sanjan record of Amoghavarsha delineates the event of sacrifice of a finger by him to Mahālakṣmī to ward off a calamity that had befallen his kingdom:

Son of Jīmūtakētu gave away his own body in order to protect a serpent; Śibī, again, to a hawk to save a dove; Dadhīchā to his supplicator. But they, we are told, gratified each a single individual, whereas the illustrious Vīraṇārayaṇa presented his left finger to Mahālakṣmī for the pacification of a calamity to the whole people.

The incident seemingly indicates the practice of sacrifice associated with Mahālakṣmī, whose worship as a Sākta deity appears to have taken a deviation from the Vaishnava concepts. Her possible connection with Īkānāṁśā-Subhadra-Durgā has been pointed out in the discussion on the sculpture of the period.
As such, her description as Viralakshmi - in the context of dead heroes - appears to be significant. 37

The thousand-headed Śesha is also invoked in the Cambay record but he is described there as residing in the hair of Śambhū (Śiva). 38

Vishnu as Garuḍa is invoked in the Sālōṭgi inscription:

Jayat-āvishkṛtam Vishn-ōr-vvinatāpatyam-uttamam dhṛita-lōka-trayātmiyanubhrīt-tanubhrīd-varām 39

This recalls the Vedic description of Vishnu as the (Sun-)bird, equated with the beautifully-feathered Sun-bird Garuḍa. 40 Perhaps the Vedic concept of Vishnu as the sun-god, culminating in the Sūryanārāyaṇa composite icons of the later Chālukya period, 41 lingered on in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa period also.

Lastly, here the invocation contained in the Konnūr record ascribed to Amoghavarsha may be considered:

May that beloved of fortune (Śrī), with whom all forms are conjoined, who with his discus destroys the concept of adversaries, the infinite being before whom bow down the lords of the immortals, the primeval Jīna, grant to me Supreme bliss. 42

The description of Vishnu as Jīna here is interesting because Vīrābhadra, the first tīrthāṅkara of the Jainas, is considered an avatāra of Vishnu in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. It is significant
to note that recently an image of seated Vishnu as Jna, ascribable to late Rāṣṭrakūṭa period, has come to light from Vasana, a place near Konnur.  

2. Installations of Vishnu Icons in Temples

As already stated, references to installation of Vishnu images are a few in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa period. But what little information we have from these is significant and has been detailed below.

A Vishnu temple was erected in Agali (Anantpur Dist., Andhra Pradesh) under the Nolamba-Pallavas. Ballaha's (i.e. Rāṣṭrakūṭa king) commander Kōṭayya obtained certain land from the king and made it over to the Mahājanas of Agali for the service of the god and the livelihood of the priest (archaka) of the temple.

(Ballahana daṇḍanāyaka Kōṭayya Nolambarallī maṇṇam paṇḍēdu daṇḍanāyakani Vishnugrihamanettisi Vishnubhāṭarage kōṭa maṇṇu). The god is also referred to as Bhagavabhaṭāraka.

The Kavajageri (Dharwad dist.) inscription of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Gōvinda IV (933 A.D.) refers to the erection of numerous temples. They were of Bhāṭarī (Goddess, obviously Durgā), Vināyaka (Gaṇeśa), Kēśava (Vishṇu), Ṛditya (Sūrya), and Siddheśvara (Śiva). This recalls the panchāyatana worship popularised by Śankarāchārya. In the inscription gifts are recorded by Ballajja, the Gāmunda of Kovujugere, to the temples and mathas constructed by him at Kovujugere, Bēvaṇige and Ėvāṃgal. He is stated to have erected
a Gavikallu for himself and the stone structures for his sons. The purpose of the latter is not clear. The provision of gift in cash was also made for persons (sculptors?) who made the structures and icons. Significant for our purpose here is the mention of the image of Kesava, the first of Vishnu’s chaturvimsati forms, which attained great popularity in the period of the Chalukyas of Kalyana and the Hoysalas as will be seen in the next chapter.

In the reign of Rāṣhṭrakūṭa Krīṣṇa (938 A.D.) Nākiya Chaṭṭaya, the pergade of Edēnāḍ erected a temple in Ötūr (mod. Otturu in Shimoga dist.). A matha and a well were also constructed by pergade Poleyamma. His wife Gōmabbe set up the images of gods Kesava and Aditya (Poleyammana pergāti Gōmabbe Kesava Adityarkalam pratishtheyaṁ geydu). Poleyamma also made grant of lands washing the feet of Īśvarayya. We may again note in this record the installation of the Kesava form of Vishnu.

A Nolamba-Pallava inscription of the time of Nolambadhiraja (c. 959 A.D.) discovered in Madhud (Anantapur Dist. Andhra Pradesh) records in Kannada the land grants made by different persons for a Vishnu temple. The temple was possibly erected by one Nārāyaṇa, son of Bedamayya, who received the grant (Karuka-kōḷara Bedamayyanā maga Nārāpyya paṇḍu tanna Vishnugrihakke kottam...). It is interesting to note that the grant was made in the presence of the Mahājanas and the young and aged persons.
of the place 'Mahājanaru...bāḷa-vṛiddha-sahitam heredu) with the purpose that Pittavayya and Chāvayya might gain the Vishnupada. This obviously means that the two persons were dead and that the grant was made with the intention of procuring Vaikuṇṭha to them (Pittayyanum Chāvayyanum Vishnūvina Śri-padaṁ-eydug-endu...). Apparently it indicates that their relatives were devotees of Viṣṇu. It also reflects the belief of the Viṣṇu-worshippers that Viṣṇu was the lord of the pītṛs. We may passingly note here that the record also mentions the offerings (naivedya) to the god.

Another inscription of 965 A.D. from Narasalgi (Bijapur Dist.) belonging to the reign of Kṛiṣṇa III, records the gift of certain taxes in kind, like ghee and curds, to a god, probably Viṣṇuvarman. This indicates the use of these items for offerings to the god.

Of about the same period is the record from Kalkunda (Mysore Dist.) referring to the grant of land for god Nārāyaṇasvāmi by Duggayya.

The Kolagallu (Bellary Dist.) epigraph of 967 A.D. records the installation of the images of Kārtikeya and other gods, including Viṣṇu, by Gadādhara Brahmachāri. He is probably the same as Gadādhara of the Kudatmi (Bellary Dist.) records of 971 A.D. and 976 A.D. In the latter place also he set up
A Kartikeya image. He was the devotee of Svāmī (i.e. Kārtikeya) and was the chief of tapovana (Śrīmat-Svāmudēvarā-pāda-padm-ôpajīva tapovanādhipati).

Apart from the reference to Mahālavāṣmī contained in the record of Amōghavarsha referred to above, which is probably the same as Mahālavāṣmī of Kollapura, one more mention is found in an epigraph from Devavinda (Chikmagalur Dist.). The deity is called Śrīvanitā and the grant was made to the priest of that temple (Śrīvanitālaya-Ālvanār).

3. Some Points of Interest

We may consider here a few other points of interest which have bearing on our study.

Gavaganabbe, the ruler of Madarikal and wife of Paramēśvara Pallavāḍi (the ruler of Nolambalige-1000), is stated to have been a devotee of Viṣṇu but she made a grant for a Śivālaya (Viṣṇu-pādamoludu...Śivālayakke etc.) In a record of 966 A.D., Dadiga, the son of Ganga Gachchi is stated to have died and joined vaikuṇṭha (Ganga Gachchiya puriyamagaś Dadigam vaykontha-vasiyādode etc.). But the same record also states that a temple of Daṅgēśvara (obviously Śaiva) was erected after his name in his memory.

These records indicate that there was a class of eclectic Viṣṇu-worshippers who can be equated with the first category of the devotees mentioned in the next chapter.
The second point of interest is that in some records the purānic myths are associated with certain places. For instance, a record of 962 A.D. on the Jatīnga-Rāmēśvara hill at Rāmasagāra (Chitradurga Dist.) mentions the traditional belief that Jātāyu fought Rāvaṇa and died there and that Rāma set up a linga in memory of Jātāyu.\(^{58}\) Obviously this was an attempt to attribute that place with epic antiquity. The numerous places where Rāma-lingas, Rāmēśvaralingas and Rāmēśvara tīrthas exist are all supposed to have been once visited and worshipped by Rāma en-route his conquest of Lāṅkā.

A third point of interest is the continuation of the Āditya worship and its popularity. There were shrines of the god Āditya in Alampur (Andhra Pradesh),\(^{59}\) Mevundi (Dharwad District),\(^{60}\) Shiggaon (Dharwad Dist.),\(^{61}\) Kambaduru (Anantapur Dist., Andhra Pradesh),\(^{62}\) Maragalate (Shimoga Dist.),\(^{63}\) Savadi (Dharwad District),\(^{64}\) Kurtakoti (Dharwad Dist.),\(^{65}\) Bagali (Bellary dist.),\(^{66}\) and Kelasuru (Mysore Dist.),\(^{67}\) to mention a few. On the other hand, individual references to the installation of Brahmā in temples is wanting. He finds mention only in invocations. The popularity of Āditya worship is significant in view of the installation of his image in the Traipurusha group, replacing Brahmā. This is evidenced already in the 973 A.D. epigraph from Madinur (Raichur Dist.): here the Traipurusha group comprised Śiva, Vishnū and Sūrya.\(^{68}\) The popularity of Sun worship is implied also by the fact that a shrine of sun-god was added to the already existing Rāshṭrakūṭa Śiva temple at Bagali.
4. The Vaishnava Names of Persons

Here are enlisted the names of persons with Vaishnivite affinity (excluding kings) appearing in the epigraphs of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gōvinda</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>EI.XI,p.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narasiṅgha</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhattachāsudēva</td>
<td>Brāhmaṇa</td>
<td>EI.XIII,p.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śrīdhara</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>EI.VI,p.208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kēsava</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madana</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>EI.XIV,p.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vāmananāga</td>
<td>Scribe</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vāsudēvabhaṭṭa</td>
<td>Brāhmaṇa</td>
<td>ASI.AR.1934-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gōindapoddī</td>
<td>Harlot</td>
<td>IA.XI,p.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vāsudēva</td>
<td>Scribe</td>
<td>EI.XXII,p.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śrīdhara</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>IA.XI,p.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dāmōdarabhaṭṭa</td>
<td>Brāhmaṇa</td>
<td>IA.XI,p.157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhattachādāmōdarā</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>EI.XII,p.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nārāyaṇa</td>
<td>Scribe</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gōyindamma</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>MNR.1932,No.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nārāyaṇa</td>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mādarasa</td>
<td>Gaṇḍa</td>
<td>SII.XI,pt.1,No.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mādīgūndā</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mādara</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kṛṣṇa</td>
<td>Scribe</td>
<td>EI.III,p.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanna</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gōindabbe</td>
<td>Queen of a chief</td>
<td>ASI.AR.1930-34,p.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narasiṅhadākṣhita</td>
<td>Brāhmaṇa</td>
<td>EI.XVIII,p.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gōvindabhaṭṭa</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhattadamodara</td>
<td>Brāhmaṇa</td>
<td>EII.XVIII,p.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trivikrama</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vishnubhatta</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaśava</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haribhatta</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaśavadīkṣānita</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>IA. XII,p.249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viranārāyaṇa</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kannāpīra</td>
<td>Brāhmaṇa</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baladēva</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid,No.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gōvaṇayya</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narasīṅgha</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bīttiga</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gōṇātha</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaṇa</td>
<td>Ruler</td>
<td>Ibid,IX,pt.i,No.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narasīṅghayya</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>EC.VI,Chikmagalur 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kēśavayya</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhukammoja</td>
<td>sculptor</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parasūrāma</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>SII.XVIII,No.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gōvinda</td>
<td>Ruler</td>
<td>EC.IX,Devanahalli 42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narasīṅgha</td>
<td>administrator</td>
<td>EI.XXXVIII,No.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mādhavarāja</td>
<td>Ruler</td>
<td>EC.VI,Chikmagalur 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mādiśvara</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>Ibid.No.129</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rāmagayunda</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narāyaṇa</td>
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<td>EC.III(New),Heg.Kt.106</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gōyindamma</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rāma</td>
<td>Hero</td>
<td>Ibid.No.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narasīṅgha</td>
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<td>EC.IX,Hosakote 106</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nāṇṇapa</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid,Channapatna 141</td>
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<td>Kaṇṇapa</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narasīṅghayya</td>
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<td>EC.III (New),Gundlupet 175</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jannayya</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
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<td>EC.II,Śravanabelgol.12.</td>
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<td>Viṭṭarasa</td>
<td>Ruler</td>
<td>Ibid.VIII,Sorab 88</td>
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<td>Kesimaṇa</td>
<td>Hero</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bittīga</td>
<td>Ruler</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
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<td>Trivikramabhaṭṭa</td>
<td>Brāhmaṇa</td>
<td>JBBRAS.XVIII,p.253</td>
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<td>Parasūrāmaya</td>
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<td>EC.V,Arakalagud 5</td>
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<td>El.XXXII,p.45</td>
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<td>EC.V,Arakalagud 35</td>
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<td>Gaṇḍa</td>
<td>MAR,1935,No.33</td>
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<td>Brāhmaṇa</td>
<td>PI.IV,p.57</td>
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<td>Nārāyaṇa</td>
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<td>EC.VIII, Sorab 202</td>
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<td>-do-(Writer)</td>
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<td>Brāhmaṇa</td>
<td>JBBRAS,(New series)</td>
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<td>Gadādhara</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>El.XXI,p.263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhusūdana</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
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It is clear from the above study that the inscriptions of the Rashtrakūṭa period, like those of the early Chālukyas, do not shed enough light about Vishnu worship. Another difficulty confronted with in the study is that even the sculptures and temples of the period are not very many, especially so in Karnataka region. This necessitates to take into account the evidence of some of the Cave temples of Ellora (Maharashtra) - a potential centre of activity in the early stages of the imperial Rashtrakūṭa rule.

Most of the Brāhmaṇical caves at Ellora are Śaivite and not all belong to the Rashtrakūṭa period. Cave XIV, probably dedicated to Durgā, is assigned to the Early Chālukya phase.
In Caves XV, XVI, and XXVII are major Vishnuite representations. These caves are ascribed to the Pāshṭrakūṭa period.69

Cave XV (the so-called Daśāvatāra cave) is of Śaivite dedication but its earlier Buddhist dedication is indicated by Buddha reliefs on the front row of pillars. The conversion of dedication was, however, effected in the reign of Pāshṭrakūṭa king Dantidurga (735–756 A.D.).70 The cave contains representations of both Vaishnava and Śaiva themes, though the latter are more in number than the former.

Cave XVI, popularly known as Kaallisā, is a magnificent rock-cut temple endowed with numerous representations of various Brähmanical deities. The excavation of the cave is known to have been executed in the reign of Krishna I (756–774 A.D.), the successor of Dantidurga. Thus both the caves belong to the latter half of the 8th century A.D. and present the continuation of the earlier Chālukya phase which is more or less confined to the first half of that century.

Cave XXVII contains exclusively Vaishnava representations. It is supposed to belong to the earliest phase of the Brähmanical excavations at the place, but the beautiful and peculiar Vaishnava reliefs in it are held to indicate later intrusion. The tradition followed in them is basically different from the others of the place. On stylistic grounds the sculptures are assigned to the 9th century A.D.72
With this chronological framework, the Vishnuite representations appearing in each of the three caves may now be enumerated.

The Daśavatāra Cave (śa ...):

1. Anantaśayana
   ii. Story connected with Viṣṇu: Gajendramoksha

In addition, the pitha provided in the recess of the south wall was possibly meant for Viṣṇu. Thus there may have been a sthānaka-mūrti also.

The Kailāsa (Śaiva)

I. (i) Sthānaka-mūrti
   (ii) Asana-mūrti
   (iii) Sayāna-mūrti

II. Garuḍavāhana Viṣṇu

III. Avatāras: Kūrma, Varāha, Narasiṁha, Vāmana-Trivikrama Rāma-Dāsaratha, Kṛiṣṇa, Buddha and Gajendramoksha.

IV. Stories: Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Krishnālīlā, Samudramanthena, Hiranyakṣavadha by Varāha, Hiranyakasipu-vadha by Narasiṁha and Gajendramoksha.

V. Composite Deity: Harihar

VI. Garuḍa

VII Chaturvimsati forms: Mādhava, Vāsudeva, Trivikram(?)
Cave XXVII (Vaishnava):

i. Sthanaka murti
ii. Ananta&ayana
iii. Avatara: Varaha
iv. Baladeva-Ekanamsa-Vasudeva group
v. Brahma-Vishnu-Siva group
vi. Two-armed dvārapālas

We may now pause to point out the significance of the representations of each cave. The above analysis shows that most of the forms of Vishnu known to the last phase of the Chalukya period continue to be represented as evident in Cave XV. But the point of interest is that prominence is given to certain themes which had just been gaining importance in the last period. Two instances in question are those of Kṛishṇa-Govardhana-nadhāri and Gajendramoksha. These themes assumed such a popularity that full panel-reliefs were allotted for their representation in this cave. It is already pointed out that this position may be owing to the spread of the ideas of the Bhagavata Purana tradition from the south.\footnote{73}

While some earlier iconographic features noticed in the last phase of the Early Chalukya period do continue to occur in certain representations, some changes are, however, to be noticed in others. In the Vāmana-Trīvikrama relief of the Cave, for instance, Garuḍa belabouring Śukra is noticed. This we already discerned in the sculptures of group III in the Chalukya period. But in Kṛishṇa-Govardhanadhāri relief we notice the
deity with multiple arms. What is of more interest is that he has a new and prominent attribute, viz., padma (lotus).

Perhaps more significant are the representations of Buddha. The west face of all the pillars of the first row have seated Buddha with one of his hands in bhūmisparsamudrā. There can be little doubt that these indicate the earlier Buddhist dedication of the cave. But what interests one is that at the time of its conversion to Śaiva dedication, the sculptors had been meticulous about obliterating the Buddhist representations but for the front row of pillars. They could not have possibly missed them because the two huge Naṭarāja reliefs flanking the cave which are beyond this row of pillars, must have consumed considerable time. It seems likely that the omission was deliberate. Buddha had been assimilated into the avatāra fold by the time the Brāhmaṇical sculptures of the cave were executed. The idea that Buddha was an avatāra of Viṣṇu possibly lingered in the minds of the sculptors executing the work of conversion of the cave. Hence the Buddha representations on this row of pillars were left unobliterated. It will be seen that in cave XVI, which we are to consider in the sequel, are Buddha representations in small reliefs. In independent sculptures of Viṣṇu of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa period, mostly from Karnataka, we do notice Buddha as avatāra on the Prabhāvali of the icon.\textsuperscript{74}

Cave XVI, by far the most well known and important in the place, though Śaivite, has many representations of Viṣṇu and
his forms. While the picture that can be had from the major sculptures remains more or less the same, the minor reliefs prove more important and informative. Anantasayana, Garudavahana Vishnu, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana-Trivikrama, Rama-Dasarathi, Krsna etc. continue as major sculptures. There are at least two major Gajendramoksha (fig.119) representations. The syncretic deity Harihara retains his former position. In iconographic details, however, there are some differences.

Some new features are noticed in the small sculptures on pillars. We find Buddha seated with his hands in yogamudra. More important and significant is the representation of Yoga-Narayana on the pillars of "Lankesvara". This new iconographic expression gains a prominent position subsequently, especially during the reigns of the Chalukyas of Kalyana and of the Hoysalas. The earlier tradition of two-armed seated Narasimha is found to continue in this period also: a small relief (Fig.50) on a pillar in the "Lankesvara" indicates this.

One more important minor relief is noticed on a pillar in the "Ranganahal". It seems to represent the slaying of demon Hiranyaksha by Varaha, to which an epigraphical allusion has been pointed out above. The reference to this story is found in the Hariyamsa and the Bhagavata Purana, while the Matsya, Varaha and Vishnu Puranas are silent about the episode. It is possible that the sculpture was influenced by the Bhagavata Purana tradition. This will help us explain the presence of Gajendramoksha.
moksha theme, representation of Buddha as an avatāra of Vishṇu etc., in the sculptures of the complex. Because, the Harivamśa neither contains the Gajendramoksha story nor refers to Buddha as an avatāra of Vishṇu.

We may therefore remark that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa tradition which was probably formulated in the south, as mentioned above first exerted its influence into the region of the southern Deccan and slightly later spread to the northern Deccan.

This does not, however, mean that there was no intrusion of other traditions. Some northern traditions are certainly apparent in some representations. Sūrya, for instance, is shown wearing shoes in one of the representations in the 'Lankēśvara'. Similarly Gadādēvī is shown in front of the weapon held by Vishṇu in some representations. The interchange of attributes in the upper hands of Vishṇu (Fig. 10) which we scarcely noticed in the earlier Chālukyan phase is again a note-worthy feature. And the presence of padma as an attribute is also to be noted. In Chaturvīṁśatī forms of Vishṇu, padma is one of the essential attributes (others being chakra, śaṁkha and gada) to decide which particular form an icon of Vishṇu represents.

Cave XXVII, the only Vaishnava cave at Ellora, is important because of peculiarity in theme and execution of sculptures. Though Varāha and Anantaśayana are common to other caves, those of Brahmā-Vishṇu-Mahēśvara (in that order) and of Baladeva-
Ekānamsā-Vāsudeva in a group are certainly rare to the Deccan. So far as our knowledge goes, no other representation of the latter (Baladeva-Ekānamsā-Vāsudeva) is known from the Deccan. The cult of Ekānamsā has an interesting history which may be summarised as follows. 75

According to the Harivamsa Ekānamsā was the daughter of Nanda and Yaśođā. She was an incarnation of Vishnu’s Yoganidrā who on being dashed against stone by Kamsa rose in the sky assuming her divine form and informed him of Krishna’s birth. She was worshipped by the Vṛishnis for having protected Kesava (Krishna). The Vāyu and Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas as well as the Lalitavistara refer to her as Ekādaśā while the Mahābhārata identifies her with Kuhu, a dark goddess. Yōgamāyā of Vishnu was a manifestation of goddess Durgā; the Mārkandeya Purāṇa mentions Nārāyaṇi as an epithet of Durgā. As such, in the Krishnallīla narrative reliefs she is prominently represented (Fig. 80) on the Upper Śivalaya at Badami. The Kaumudimahotsava, a Sanskrit play ascribed to Vajjikā, the daughter-in-law of Chālukya Pulakēśa II refers to Ekānāngā, as the tutelary deity of the Yadus. It is suggested that the correct reading should be Ekānamsā.

Ekānamsā was thus a tribal deity of the Vṛishnis who worshipped her along with Krishṇa and Baladeva. She was regarded as their sister. Works like the Brihat Samhitā and the Vishnu-dharmottara gave iconographic details in which she is required to be shown in between Baladeva and Krishṇa. In the Hayasirā
Pancharatra, Ekanamśa is identified with Subhadrā, who was also considered as Krishṇa's sister. This identification seems to have been accomplished about the 8th century A.D. The early Purāṇas do not allude to any marital connection between Ekanamśa and her brothers. But the Skanda Purāṇa while referring to the worship of Subhadrā with Baladeva and Vāsudēva at Jagannātha Puri in Orissa, states that Subhadrā is both the sister and wife of Vāsudēva and embodies his energy, thus almost establishing her identity with Lakṣmī, the full-fledged Vaishnavīsaktī. Perhaps this identification explains the description of Lakṣmī later as Simhavahīnī (Durgā), Nārāyaṇī etc. This development of Ekanamśa cult may thus be the outcome of the assimilation of Śaktī and Śaiva aspects into the fold of Vaishnavism.

The antiquity of the representation of Baladeva-Ekanamśa Vāsudēva goes back to the Kushāṇa period. But the cult seems to have been more popular during and after the Gupta period as indicated by the many representations of the deities in north India. But the knowledge of the cult in the Deccan is indicated by the Kaumudīmahōtsava and its prevalence, by the lone representation we have in Cave XXVII at Ellora. The importance of the Ellora relief is thus obvious.

It has been already stated above that the sculptural wealth of the Raṣṭrakūta period in Karnataka is scanty. Whereas in some parts of the state thorough explorations have brought
to light fund of information, other parts have not been surveyed so thoroughly as to enable us to know some facts about the Vishnu worship during the period.

The South Kanara region is more or less thoroughly surveyed and we have the following analysis of the representations; the sculptures are assigned variously to the period between 8th and 10th centuries:

Sthānaka Mūrti

Most of the representations of the region are of Vishnu standing in samapāda posture and are addressed as either Janārdana or Vishnūmūrti. They have been noticed in Agrahāra Brahmavara (Udupi Tk.), Kota (Udipi Tk.), Pangala (Udipi Tk.), Kudli (Bārakuru Tk.), Koravadi (Kundapur Tk.), Manila (Vittala Tk.), Yermala (Udipi Tk.), Udyavara (Udipi Tk.), Puttur (Mangalore Tk.), etc.

Āsanamūrti: Vishnu on Ananta at Parkala (Udipi Tk.),

Avatāras: Narasimha at Polali (Bantwal Tk.), and at Megarāvalli (Tirthahalli Tk. Shimogā Dt.),

Krishna, as Veṇugopāla at Udipi, and as Navaṇītachōra at Bilānnele (Puttur Tk.), and Kumbale.

Chaturviṃśati form: Janārdana

The most important point to be noted about the above sculptures is that all of them are icons enshrined for worship.
Sculptural representations on temples is lacking in this region and hence it is very difficult to mention anything about the other Vaishnava themes and myths then current there.

The above representations, however, call for some remarks. First, as to the sthānaka mūrti. These are almost always addressed as Janārdaṇa in this region. It is well known that Janārdaṇa, at least slightly later, was one of the twenty-four forms of Vishṇu and his representation as such is required to have padma, chakra, śankha and gada as attributes in that order. But in the representations of the period, the padma is invariably absent, as in the earlier ones; instead of padma, a ball-like object is shown. And the remarks registered for the earlier similar sculptures of the region hold good here also.⁹¹

The concept of Vishṇu seated on Ananta is not a new one, and was already noticed in the Early Chālukya representations. The difference, however, is iconographic.

Of the two Narasiṁha representations, the one at Polali continues the earlier tradition of benevolent two-armed Narasiṁha. But the second in Megaravalli (Fig.55) is interesting in that it is in complete zoomorphic form (i.e. lion). We have noted earlier that in the iconographic concept, Narasiṁha originally may have been just a lion. Recently a typical example of this is discovered in Norva (Goa) with an inscription in box-headed characters.⁹²
The representations of Krishna are really significant. They are pointers to his rising popularity as a deity in this region, destined to become the centre of a cult centred round Krishna worship in the subsequent period.

Passingly it may be noted that there are some sculptures of Durga which are almost identical to those of Janardana icons but for the feminine features: Karanje (Bantwal Tk.), Inavalli (Mangalore Tk.), etc. Perhaps more interesting is the fact that many of the Janardana temples are situated near or associated with the temples of Durga. This is probably an indication of the belief that Durga represented Vaishnava sakti, as we noted above; and the iconographic similarities between the Durga and Vishnu may become significant when viewed from this angle.

Lastly, some of the above sculptures are akin to those of the far south. Many of them emulate the late Pallava or Early Chōla types. Thus, like the other regions of Karnataka or perhaps more so, the region of South Kanara was being influenced from the Tamil country.

So far as the remaining part of the state is concerned we have the following forms:

Sthānaka Viṣṇu

Sayāna Viṣṇu

Narratives: *Krishṇa Līlā, Bali-Vāmana-Trivikrama.*

Trimūrti group

Some of the Chaturvimsati forms like Janārdana, Madhava etc.

Many of the above icons are icons meant for worship in shrines. Some of the sthānakaṁurtis compare well with those of South Kanara region. The icons of Janārdana and Madhava, respectively from Abbali (Kumtha Tk.) and Ārge (Karwar Tk.), both in North Kanara District, are particularly noteworthy because they display the influence of Chōla style in this far off region. This influence may have been through the South Kanara region where, as we have seen above, such influence is discernible.

In the southern part of the state we have an interesting early icon of Viṣṇu in relief (meant for worship) in Suttur (Nanjangud Tk., Mysore District). Of the four hands the lower two are respectively in the abhayamudrā and varadamudrā. The deity is called Nāgakēśava in an inscription of c.1169 A.D.

There are some more icons of Viṣṇu as Janārdana in the southern part of the state in places like Belagola (Mandya District), Bannur (Mysore Dist.), etc. Of the other sculptures, the one from Narasamangala (Mysore Dist.) and the other from Haledyanavanahalli (Fig.12, Chitradurga Dist.) are noteworthy.

In North Karnataka Viṣṇu sculptures from Belur (Bijapur Dist.), Mudhol (Fig.11), Koppal (both in Raichur Dist.), etc., are significant as they indicate the increasing popularity of
Vishnu worship in temples in the region. We may note that they preserve the early Chalukya tradition in depiction.

An icon of Vishnu-Anantasayi (Fig.34) is noticed in a Traipurusha temple of Rashtrakuta age at Savadi (Ron Taluk) in Dharwad district. It indicates that the sayana form of Vishnu was also worshipped in the region. It may be noted that the central deity of this temple is Siva in the form of Linga.  

All the ten avatāras - Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vāmana, Parasurāma, Rāma-Dāsarathi, Balarāma, Buddha and Kalki are found depicted on the prabhāvalī of some Vishnu icons both in north and south Karnataka. The avatāras though depicted on the prabhāvalī of the Vishnu icon at Banavasi (Fig.9) were not clearly identifiable but for the first four. In the icons of Mudhol, Haledyamavahanahalli and Narasamangala, referred to above, the depiction is unambiguous. This indicates that the concept of dasāvatāras had come to be crystallised and widely gained currency in all parts of Karnataka.

This apart, we have some sculptural representations of some of the avatāras meant for worship. There is a rare image of Varaha at Kavalakki (Fig.43) (Kadageri karva, Honnavar Tk. North Kanara Dist.), which depicts the two-armed deity as standing in samapāda posture. Of Narasimha we have a representation in relief in the devakोṣṭha of a traipurusha temple near Bachanagudda (near Pattadakal). A shrine image of Varaha of this
period is preserved in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. The Vāmana-Trivikrama theme is represented on a Rāṣṭrakūṭa pillar in Kadur (Chikmagalur Dist.).

Kṛiṣhṇaḻilar themes are depicted on the Rāṣṭrakūṭa pillars at Kadur. Though brief, their implication is very clear. They contain the representations of birth of Kṛiṣṇa, crossing of the river Yamunā, Yamaḻārjunabhāṅga, Bakāsuravadh, Kāliya-damana and Kuvalāyapīḍadamana. These apparently imply the influence of Bhāgavata Purāṇa tradition.

An interesting feature noticed in this period is the representation of traiipurushas (Brahmā-Viṣṇu-Śiva) and their worship in a single temple. In some of these temples as in Belur (Bījampur Dist.) (Fig.Ill), Jalihal, etc., Viṣṇu is in the central position while in others as at Savadī (Dharwad Dist.), Śiva is in the centre.

Lastly, the representations of some of the Chaturvīṁśatī forms. Many of these are of Janaṁdana while others, of Mādava. But it should be noted that Padma, as an attribute is not traceable in these. At best we can discern a small flower mark on the palm of some of the icons as in the Sutturu image referred to above.

However, there is at least one icon which must have had padma as an attribute: Unfortunately three of the four hands
of the deity are mutilated. This icon (Fig.13) hails from a Rashtrakūta temple near Mahākūta (Bijapur District). It must have represented one of the six forms - Trivikrama, Gōvinda, Śrī Krishña, Adhokshaja, Upendra or Aniruddha. The most noteworthy point about this icon is the fact that it differs in style. Its style recalls the sculptures of central India of about 9th-10th centuries A.D., especially of Mālwa area. While studying the early Chālukya phase it had been noted that the depiction of padma may have been the result of the intrusion of ideas from North India. The present icon supports our reasonable supposition. The concept of Chaturvimsāti forms, under the circumstances, may have to be viewed as the outcome of the influence from the North.

*****
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. SII. Vol. IX, pt. i, 59

2. EI. Vol. XXIX, No. 14, However, it should be pointed out that the different families of the Rashtrakūtas were ruling in different parts of the country during the time of the Chālukyas of Vatāpi. Nannarāja of the present epigraph is not yet connected genealogically with the Dantīvarma line. In spite of this, since the Rashtrakūtas had Garuḍa for their seal, they may well be supposed to have been inclined towards Viṣṇu worship at the beginning.


5. EI. Vol. XIII, pp. 275 ff. 768 A.D. Translation: "May you be protected by him whose lotus-like navel Brahmā made his own abode as also by him whose head is adorned by the crescent moon".


7. EI. Vol. III, p. 271


11. Ibid. No. 11

12. Ibid. Vol. XVIII, pp. 235 ff. This is in fact an invocation to the king himself.

13. Ibid.

16. eg. EC. Vol. III (new) Nanjangudu, 262
17. Ibid. Vol. IX, Nelamangala 61
19. Ibid. IV, pp. 278 ff. translation: "Triumphant is the leaf-like hand of Murāri, which being placed on the jar-like breast and face of Lakshmi that are marked by shining particles of nectar water, proclaimed the entrance of the world on a joyous festival".
21. Infra, p. 212
22. EI. Vol. IV, p. 281
23. EC. Vol. IX, Nelamangala, 61
24. EC. Vol. IV, Yadatore, 60
25. Ibid. IX, Nelamangala, 61
27. Ibid. Vol. IV, p. 281
28. Ibid. Vol. IX, p. 33
29. Ibid. Vol. IV, p. 281
30. Ibid. Vol. IX, p. 29
32. EI. Vol. VI, p. 231
33. As many as three kings of the dynasty bore the name Krishna
34. EI. Vol. IV, p. 281
37. e.g. Hari-Virakshmi-naravāgire - Atkur herostone inscription of 949 A.D., EI. Vol. VI, pp. 50 ff.
40. Supra, p. 22
41. Rea Alexander, The Chalukyan Architecture (1972 rep.), fig. 2, of pl. LXVI.
43. S. V. P. Halkatti discovered this image. My thanks are due to him for the kind information.
44. SII. Vol. IX, pt. i, 33, of Nolambēdhirāja.
45. SII. Vol. XI, pt. i, 35.
46. Infra, p. 217
47. EC. Vol. VIII, Sorab, 70
48. SII. Vol. IX, pt. i, No. 28
49. Ibid. Vol. XI, pt. i, No. 40
50. EC. Vol. III, (New), Nanjanagudu, 249
51. El. Vol. XXI, No. 40
52. SII. Vol. IX, pt. i, No. 70
53. Ibid. No. 72
54. EC. VI, Madagere 26, (c. 10th century A.D.)
55. Ibid., Vol. XI, Challakere, 33
56. Ibid. IX, Magadi, 75 (Bangalore Dist.)
57. Infra, p. 228
58. EC. Vol. XI, Molakalmuru 27
59. ARE, 1959-60, B-110
60. SII. Vol. XI, pt. i, No. 11
61. ARKR. 1939-40, No. 13, El. VII, p. 201
The study presented below is essentially based on field data collected during my visit to Ellora. However, views expressed by different scholars have been taken note of. This is indicated by the presence of an inscription of Dantidurga on the monument.


Supra, p.158 ff.

See part-II, Sthanakamurtis, Figs.9, 11, and 12.


Bhat P.G., Studies in Tuluva History and Culture, pl.178(b)

Ibid, pl.181 (c)

Ibid. pl.179 (b)

Ibid. pl.182 (c)

Ibid. pl.243 (a)

Ibid. pl.245 (c)

Ibid. pl.245 (d)
83. Ibid.pl.245 (a)
84. Ibid.pl.250 (b)
85. Ibid.pl.259 (b)
86. Ibid.pl.212 (a)
87. Ibid.pl.380 (b); This may be a later imitation of an earlier sculpture (fig.55)
88. Ibid.pl.220
89. Ibid.pl.226 (a)
90. Ibid.pl.374 (c)
91. Supra, p. 163
92. Kind information by Dr. A. Sundara.
94. Ibid.pl.164 (a)
95. For description of some of these icons, see part-II, Sthānakamūrtis.
96. MAR,1944,Pis.V,p.25
97. Ibid.Pl.I,Fig.1, and p.19
98. Ibid.pl.XI,Fig.1,p.33
99. Dr. A. Sundara has kindly informed me of this, for which I am indebted to him.
100. Sundara A., "Uttara Kannada Jilleya Kelavu Ṛpvra Śīlpagalu" Mānavika Bhārati, Vol.I/2, pp.112 ff. It appears that this image is an imitation of an early image.
101. MAR,1944,Pl.V,p.25
102. Ibid.Pl.V,p.25

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Six

ASPECTS OF VAISHNAVISM DURING 10th-14th CENTURIES A.D.

Under the Kalyāṇa Chālukyas and their successors, Karnataka witnessed hectic activity in religious and cultural field. The epigraphs are numerous and informative. The picture of Vaishnavism is clearer than any time before. The three dynasties who ruled during this period were the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa, the Seunas and the Hoysalas. After the down fall of the first, the latter two followed and shared among themselves roughly the northern and southern halves of Karnataka. Unlike in the previous periods, the cultural particularly the temple-building activity is not confined to capital towns, but is seen even
in interior villages. In this chapter, essentially epigraphic sources of North and South Karnataka are examined under different heads with occasional reference to sculpture to understand different aspects of Vaishnavism. Lists of dedications to Vishnu and his forms as known from epigraphs, are also given in chronological order for North and South Karnataka separately.

A. VISHNU'S FORMS AND CONCEPTS IN NORTH KARNATAKA
(UNDER THE CHALUKYAS OF KALYANA AND SEUNAS)

1. Vishnu - The Deity

Vishnu, as conceived by his devotees in North Karnataka, is the Lord of the whole Universe (Lōkēśa, Samasta-bhuvanēśvara). He is omnipresent and the whole Universe is provided by him.

Jalē Vishnu(ś) sthāle Vishnu-Vishnuḥ-parvata-mastakē
Jvālā-mālā-kūṭē Vishṇu-sarvvaṁ Vishṇumayaṁ jagat

Vishnu is in the waters, Vishnu is on the land, Vishnu is on the mountain top, Vishnu is on the multitude of lines of fire; the whole Universe is composed of Vishnu. He is worshipped by gods (Surarchita), He is eternal enjoyer of bhōga (ananta-bhōgakāra). His colour is blue. He is endowed with innumerable ornaments like kaustubha, kēyura, etc. His attributes are śāṅkha, chakra, gadā and padma. He has various forms and names: Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa, Achyuta, Purushottama, Vāsudēva, Kamalanabha Śrīkānta, Lakshmī-kānta, Jagannātha, Lōkēśa etc. and is invoked by various names. He wears yellow garment.
From Him does this Creation take place, by him is it sustained, and in him does it disappear ultimately. He protects the world. Grace is his characteristic; his heart is wet with the fluid of grace (karunārasārdra-hridaya). As such he is repeatedly invoked to protect persons and people. He is gracious (prasanna). He confers boon on his devotees, protects them. He grants victory, health, wealth and son. As such, bhakti is the essential approach to him.

2. The Forms of Vishnu
(a) Sthānaka, Asana and Sayāna murtis

Vishnu, during this period was represented in all the three postures, viz., sthānaka (standing), asana (sitting), and sayāna (reclining). The preference, however, was to the sthānaka form. Vishnu's chaturvimsatimurtis (twenty-four forms) were always sculptured in standing posture.

In seated posture, principally two forms were known: (1) Yogeśvara, and (2) Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa. The Yogeśvaramūrti of Vishnu is described in the epigraphs as 'Yogeśvara'. The Chaturvarga chintāmani of Hemādri also describes a form of Vishnu therein called 'Yogeśvara'. A Badami epigraph of 1141 A.D. provides some useful information about this particular form. It records a grant for god Yogeśvara by an officer. Its invocatory portion is as follows:
Namah Śrī Vāsudevāya Bhoginē Yōgamūrttaye
Haresvarāya satyāya nityāya paramātmāne

Thus Vāsudēva is here conceived not only as a Bhōgin but also as Yōgamūrti, the lord who is the Truth, the Eternal and the Supreme. Noteworthy is the fact that Paramānandadeva, the erector of the temple, is himself described as a great yōgin: Śrīmad-yōgijanahridayānanda. Therefore, it is possible that Yōgēśvara was favourite of that class of devotees of Vishnu who practised yōgic austerities with yōgi Vāsudēva as the Supreme lord. The Halsi epigraph of 1169 A.D. 20 which records the installation of Ananta-Vīra-Vikrama-Narasimhadēva, contains information about a Matayōgi: this is significant because one of the icons enshrined in the temple of Narasimha at Halsi was of Vīshnu-Yōgēśvara (Fig.20). It will be of interest to note that the āgamas also enjoin that this form of Vīshnu is fit to be worshipped by Yōgins, because it bestows the salvation of souls from the bondage of birth and death. 21

The second form of seated Vīshnu conforms to what is described in contemporary epigraphs as Lakshmi-Nārāyana. Iconographically the Lakshmi-Nārāyana image depicts Vīshnu-Nārāyana with his consort Lakshmi or Śrī seated on his left lap whom he embraces (Fig.29) In short it is the Bhōgamūrti of Vīshnu. Although Lakshmi had been identified as the consort of Vishnu at a very early period, it is surprising to note that her representations in accompaniment with Vishnu are not found in iconography of
pre-Kalyāṇa Chālukya period. However, such representations do occur from about c. 8th century A.D. in north India. This may be due to the fact that Lakṣmī was supposed to reside in the Vakshasthala (Heart) of Viśnu. Numerous inscriptions of the 10th century onwards expressly associate Śrī or Lakṣmī with Viśnu in invocations:

Śrī Kāntādhīśavaro bḥāti samasta bhuvanēśvarah
Yastasmaī dānavaṇīka jīnṇa ve Viṣṇavē namaḥ

Conceptually, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa image seems to purport the Sāṁkhya ideology of Puruṣa and Prakṛti - the everunited and inseparable pair - which provides the basis of much of the Pāñcarātra theology of Pure Creation (suddha srishti) leading to the Intermediary or Mixed Creation (Madhyā srishti or misra srishti), and ultimately to the Lower Creation (Adhah Srishti). This has been explained below under Chaturvīṁśatimūrtis.

Both epigraphic and iconographic evidences corroborate the continuation of the concept of Śāyānamūrti of Viṣṇu. In epigraphs, this aspect of Viṣṇu is described in a variety of epithets like Jalāśayana (Fig. 35), Anantaśayana, Padmaνbha, Kamalābha, Raṅganātha, etc. Anantaśayana-Nārāyaṇa is conceived as reclining on Ananta (śeṣa), floating in the ocean of milk, wearing the kaustubha, with Abjagārbha (Brahmā) seated on the lotus issuing from Nārāyaṇa's navel, and attended by Kamalā (Lakṣmī) and Bhūkānte (Bhuṛdevī). Here is the invocation from an epigraph of 1161 A.D. from Huli:
Kshīrāmbodhīyōḷ-ipp-anantaśayanam Nārāyaṇam
Kaustubhadhīram tāṁna samakshamadīḷ-Kamaleyen
Bhūkānteyum nābhīyōḷ-sārāṃsāmbaḍed-Abja garbhasahitam
Śrī Pūliga-erttamdu nind-ārādnyam Karuṇā-rasārdra-
hridayam rakshike sāmirvaram.

(b) Vyūhāntaras or Chaturvīṁśatimūrtis

Reference has been made above to the Pāṇcharātra theology concerning Pure Creation (Suddha srīṣṭi). We may elaborate this aspect here because it has relevance to the Chaturvīṁśatimūrtis (twenty-four images) which constitute the principal characteristic element of Viṣṇu worship during this period in Karnataka.

Para/Vyūha, Vibhava, Antaryāmin and Aćca are the five-fold forms of the Lord as conceived by the Pāṇcharātrins. Para-वासुदेव is the absolute and supreme god-head, unconditioned by any guṇas - nirvikalpa, nirguna. As the Nādoni epigraph of 1121 A.D. delineates him, he is sad-asad-ādi-vikalpa-śūnya:

Yasmādīdām jagadājāyata yatra
tīṣṭhatyantē samastamadām-astamupaiti yatra
tasminamah sad-asad-ādi-vikalpa-śūnya
chalitanyā mātravapushē purushottamāya

Paravāsudēva's will (ichchhāśakti) projects into the entity of his consort Lakṣmī (Śrī) who has double aspects of bhūtisakti (material cause) and kriyāśakti (instrumental cause). As a consequence of the combination of these three āśaktis (viz., ichchhā, bhūti and kriyā), the six ideal guṇas viz., jñāna, bala
vīrya, aśvarya, sakti and tējas, come into being. And this act is termed as suddhasrishti or Pure Creation. The ideal gunas, mentioned above, characterize Vyūha Vāsudēva. They fall into two groups: (1) Visrāmabhūmi comprising jñāna, aśvarya and sakti, and (ii) śramabhūmi comprising bala, vīrya and tējas. Each of the first group combined with another of the second group thereby pairing together as follows: (1) jñāna with bala; (ii) aśvarya with vīrya; and (iii) sakti with tējas. These three represent Vāsudēva's successive emanations, viz., Vyūha Saṅkarshaṇa, Vyūha Pradyumna and Vyūha Aniruddha respectively.

Each of the three Vyūhas is allotted a definite function to perform. Thus, Saṅkarshaṇa creates and bears the Universe in its embryonic phase and reveals the Īkānta religion; Pradyumna creates Mānavasarga (jīvātmas) and Vaidyasarga (primordial matter) for pañchabhūta creation and propagates the Īkānta religion; Aniruddha causes the growth of body and ātma (soul) and awards the rewards of the Īkāntic way of life by procuring salvation (mōksha).

In iconographic parlance, the four vyūhas are represented in North India by a composite image of Vishṇu, called Vaikuṇṭha-Chaturmūrti. Such images have an antiquity going back to the last part of Kushaṇa age and continue to occur frequently in late and post-Gupta times. In the Deccan, however, this form was either unknown or hardly popular.
What is of interest and relevance to our study is the fact that the Pancharātras speculated a curious set of twenty more secondary Vyūhas out of the principal four. From each of the four principal Vyūhas came out three vyūhāntaras (or murtyāntaras) thus resulting in twelve primary vyūhāntara emanations. They are the presiding deities of the twelve months. They are essentially dhyānamūrtis and protect devotees. Again there issue twelve more vyūhāntaras (sub-vyūhas) evolving out of secondary emanation from each of the vyūhas. This process of evolution of the primary and secondary emanations are briefed in diagrammatic form in the following page. The resultant twenty-four vyūhāntaras, or chaturvimsatimūrtis as they are called in contemporary epigraphs, are the best known forms of Vīṣṇu in the Karnataka of the period.

The concept of twenty-four forms of Vīṣṇu is as old as the Mahābhārata. The universe is said to be made of twenty-four elements; the supreme being, Vīṣṇu, is beyond these elements. Through these elements he creates the universe. Therefore, they are his vyaktarūpas or visible forms. The twenty-fifth he himself, is form-less (avyakta) and so, cannot be represented in any way. All the twenty-four names of the chaturvimsatimūrti list are included among the thousand names of Vīṣṇu in the Anuśāsanaparvan.
DERIVATION OF CHATURVIMŚATI FORMS OF VISHNU

VĀSUDĒVA THE SUPREME BRAHMAN

PARA VĀSUDĒVA

FOUR-FACED VĀSUDĒVA

NĀRĀYĀNA

VYUHA VĀSUDĒVA ——— (14) VĀSUDĒVA

(1) Kṛśava (2) Nārāyana (3) Madhava

(17) Purushottama

(21) Sanādhana (22) Upendra (23) Hari

VYUHA SAMKARSHAṆA ——— (24) Kṛishṇa

(13) Saṁkarshaṇa

(18) Adhokshaja

(4) Gōvinda (5) Vishṇu (6) Madhusūdana

VYUHA PRADYUMNA ——— (15) Pradyumna

(19) Narasimha

(7) Trivikrama (8) Vāmana (9) Śrīdhara

VYUHA ANIRUDDHA ——— (16) Aniruddha

(20) Achyuta

(10) Hṛishikēśa (11) Padmanābha (12) Dāmōdara
It is difficult to speculate as to when exactly the concept of Vyūhāntaras arose to prominence in iconography. Padma as an attribute of Vishṇu begins its appearance in iconography in North India from the post-Gupta period only, and not before the 8th century in the Deccan. Since all the four recognised attributes of Vishṇu, viz., padma, śaṅkha, chakra and gada, play the key role in the iconography of the Chaturvimśatimūrtis, it may be remarked that before the 8th century the concept of Vyūhāntaras was either unknown or it had just commenced to be incorporated in Vaishṇava beliefs in the Deccan. The comparative chart showing the names from the Chaturvimśatimūrti list occurring in the epigraphs of different periods appended in the succeeding page also indicates that most of the names (if not all) were current during the Rāshtrakūṭa period and not before. As late as the 10th century epigraphs preferred to call the sthānaka-mūrti by the name Vishṇu and not by any other. But from the 10th century onwards the best known form of Vishṇu installed in temples was that of Kēśava, the first of the Chaturvimśatimūrtis, and was addressed by that very name.

During the 10th-14th centuries worship of Chaturvimśatimūrtis easily acquired popularity in Upper and Lower Deccan. However, a few peculiarities may be taken note of here. During this period in this region, more than 30 per cent of the dedications are to the Kēśava form. Between 1026 and 1127 A.D. there was a consistent rise in number of dedications to this form.
### CHATIRVIJMŚATI NAMES OF VISHNU IN DECCAN

Period-wise comparison on Epigraphical Grounds (2nd cent. B.C. to 10th cent. A.D.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>2nd cent. B.C.</th>
<th>4th cent. A.D.</th>
<th>543 A.D.</th>
<th>750 A.D.</th>
<th>10th cent. onwards</th>
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<td>1.</td>
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<td>Kesava</td>
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<td>Narayana</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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<td>Madhava</td>
<td>Madhava</td>
<td>Madhava</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Govinda</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
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<td>6.</td>
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<td>Madhusudana</td>
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<td>Maishusudana</td>
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<td>Vāsudēva</td>
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<td>15.</td>
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<td>Pradyumna</td>
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<td>16.</td>
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<td>Aniruddha</td>
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<td>17.</td>
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<td>Purushottama</td>
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<td>Adhokshaja</td>
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<td>Narasimha</td>
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<td>20.</td>
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<td>Achyuta</td>
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<td>Janardhana</td>
<td>Janardhana</td>
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<td>22.</td>
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<td>Upendra</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Hari</td>
<td>Hari</td>
<td>Hari</td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
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<td>Krishna</td>
<td>Krishna</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Prepared on the basis of names of persons/deities occurring in epigraphs.
But thereafter it steadily decreased. The reason for this popularity of Kesava may be that this form is the first to have issued from the first Vyūha. Interestingly, the two other forms emanating from the same Vyūha, viz., Narāyaṇa and Madhava secure the 2nd and 3rd place respectively in dedications known from epigraphs. Janārādana, the 21st in the list, is also considerably well known, possibly because his is also a subsidiary emanation from Vasudeva.30

The Gadag epigraph of 1037 A.D.31 refers to Bārahanārāyaṇas, i.e., 12 Narāyaṇas. But who are these 12 Narāyaṇas? In our opinion, they are the same as the first twelve Vyūhāntaras beginning with Kesava and ending with Damodara. There appears to have been an icon of each of the 12 emanations. To at least two of them donations are distinctly recorded. In this connection, it may be of interest to note that the contemporary records prefer to designate the first 12 primary Vyūhāntaras and the second 12 Vyūhāntaras separately.32

(c) Vibhavas or Avatāras

The Pure Creation concept of the Pancharātras enwraps not only the Vyūhas but also the Vibhavas or avatāras. Although the popular belief recognised ten avatāras only, the number of avatāras as well as their names differ from work to work. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa mentions twenty-two34 while the Ahirbudhnyāsamhitā enlists as many as thirty-nine.35 The contemporary
epigraphs maintain that avataras are ten. They usually exclude
Krishna, and list Buddha as the 9th incarnation. The
list is usually briefed by the statement: Matsyāda dasāvatāra. However, so far as worship in shrines is considered, not all the
ten avataras were enshrined for worship. From the available
evidence it may be stated that Varaha (Fig.44), Narasimha (Fig. 56) and Krishna avataras were worshipped in temples.

Like the early Chālukyan records, most of the Kalyāna
Chālukya inscriptions also invoke Varaha. But inscriptions hardly refer to installation of Varaha image, though sculptural evi-
dence indicates the prevalence of such a practice. The legend that the Varaha avatar was prompted because dāitya Hiranyaksha carried away the mother earth to the nether world is expressly alluded to. For instance, here is the invocation from an epi-

graph:

Srī Śrīdātām kṣiravārāśīyōl-ātumudad-īmdippinam
daiyanaṁbham Bhūdevīkāmteyam vamchisiy-avanitaabh-
oydudam-kēlū tānand-Ādikrōdhasvarūpāṁ-īleyan-eeva-
daṁstrągradimd-ettā nimdirdd-a-dēvam Kēśavam etc.

Narasimha was by far the most popular of the avataras. His three forms were known: (1) Sthauṇa Narasimha (in the act of killing Hiranyakāsipu, as in Bagali, Bellary Dist.); (2) Lakshmi-
Narasimha (seated with Lakshmi on his left lap, as in Mankani, Bijapur Dist.); and (3) Yōga-Narasimha (in the attitude of yōga). Although direct evidence is wanting for the Yōga-Narasimha worship in North Karnataka, it is difficult to deny its
prevalence for the reason that in contemporary South Karnataka it was very popular. The existence of a Yoga-Narasimha temple in Chinnatambulam (Andhra Pradesh) near Bellary also suggests this conclusion.

The other avatāras probably did not have worship in temples. But the Mānasollāsa of Śomēśvara mentions the first six avatāras and their iconography. There is a faint indication of worship of Paraśurāma in Aihole, where a subsidiary image of Paraśurāma is noticed (Fig.70).

An inscription of 1157 A.D. includes Kṛishṇa as an avatāra in place of Balarama. The appellations used to designate Kṛishna are Gopālakṛishṇa, Gopinātha, Vēṇugopāla, etc. Only a few dedications to him are known in North Karnataka and they begin to obtain from the last quarter of the 12th century A.D. His votaries appear to have been specifically termed as the Bhāgavatas. Compared with the evidence from South Karnataka it appears that Gopāla-Kṛishna worship was less popular in North Karnataka and that probably it entered this region from the southern precincts of the State.

(d) Other Manifestations of Viṣṇu

Among other interesting references in epigraphs are Jagannātha, Pandaraṅga and Viśvarūpadēva. From an epigraph of 1106 A.D. in Tengli (Gulbarga Dist.) we come to know of a dedication to Jagannātha. That Jagannātha was considered one
of the epithets of Vishnu is evidenced by the fact that a Kannada poet, Rudrabhatta, chose the title Jagannāthavijaya for his kavya extolling the exploits of Krishna. The Manasollāsa also refers to Vishnu as Jagannātha. However it is difficult to assert whether the deity mentioned in the Tengli epigraph was simply Vishnu or his specific Jagannātha form known to the Puri region in Orissa, where Vasudēva is worshipped together with his sister Subhadrā and brother Balarāma.

The reference to the installation of Pandaranga in Balambid (Dharwar Dist.) is also ambiguous because it cannot be ascertained whether or not this is allusion to Pānduranga Vitthala. It may, however, be noted that Vitthala was already a popular deity in this period. There are numerous references in epigraphs to persons bearing that name. Sculptural representations of Vitthala are found on ornate Hoysala temples. An epigraph of Hubli (Dharwar Dist.) dated 1228 A.D. mentions a grant made by Kaluvara Śingagaundṛa for charities to be maintained on periodical pilgrimages to god Vitthala of Pandaraṅge. Going on pilgrimage to Pandhasapura continues to be practised today.

The reference to the installation of god Viśvarūpadeva occurring in an epigraph of 1245 A.D. from Hole-Anveri (Dharwar Dist.) is also not clear. It is difficult to identify this deity with Vishnu. Iconographically, the Viśvarūpa form is known
to have four or more heads and numerous hands. An invocation to Vishnu-Viśvarūpa is contained in an inscription of Yadava Krishna:

Om namō bhagavate Vasudevāya ! namaḥ-stribhuvanotpatti-
sthitisāṁhṛiti hētave | Vishnave parasaśāra-pārātta-
ranasētave 1 Brahmā Dakshah Kubēro Yama-Varuna-Mirud
Vahni Chāindrāndra Rudrā Śailā nadyaḥ samudrā grahana
manuja daitya nāgendra nāgah | dvipa-nakshatra-tārā-
Ravi-Vasu-minayō-Vyōma-bhur-aśvinau cha samlina yasya
sarvē vapushi sa bhagavān vō Viśvarūpah 2

The Viśvarūpa form is supposed to have been revealed to Arjuna by Krishna before the great Bhārata war, at the time of Gitōpadēśa. 48

(e) Composite forms and Traipurushas

The composite form of Viṣṇu and Śiva continues to be popular in this period. The epigraphs of the post-10th century period expressly announce the identity of the two deities, especially those from South Karnataka. 49 No fewer than fourteen dedications to him are noted from the epigraphs. He is sometimes mentioned as Śankara-Nārāyana. First references begin to obtain from Bellary region (1032 A.D.), and thereafter in Dharwar (1080), Gulbarga (1154 A.D.) and Raichur (1177 A.D.) regions in that order. As already mentioned, Harihara in Chitradurga District was an early centre of Harihara worship. It is therefore possible that independent dedications to this composite form may have diffused from Harihara region.
The other composite form, called Dattātreya or Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha, purports the unity of the Trinity. Invocations to trinity in Kadamba records and dedication to them in triple-shrined temples of early Chālukya and Rāṣṭrakūta period have already been noted above. From the last part of the Rāṣṭrakūta period they are called Traipurushas. But conceived as union of Trinity no reference occurs to Vishnu in epigraphs. The solitary ambiguous mention of Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha as one deity is found in a Badami epigraph. This may be an allusion to the beautiful Dattātreya image now enshrined in a modern temple of the same place.

Between the 10th and 14th centuries the worship of Traipurushas in single or triple-shrined temples was familiar in North Karnataka. As many as 26 dedications are noticed to the group from epigraphs alone. The dedications consistently increased in number till the middle of the 12th century and thereafter set on the decline.

As late as the 10th century, the Traipurusha group invariably comprised of Brahmā, Vishnu and Śiva. But in the post-10th century period, Brahmā was generally replaced by Āditya (Sun god), while the earlier tradition also lingered on feebly, as in Salotgi (Bijapur Dist., 1121 A.D.) and Syed Chincholi (Gulbarga Dist., 1122 A.D.). The reason for this apparently sudden change is difficult to postulate. It appears that the
the remarkably increasing popularity of Vishnu worship from the 10th century onwards and of the legends that Brahmā was the son of Vishnu and does his duties of creation by the latter's grace (which reduced him only to a subordinate position) on the one hand and that of Aditya as an aspect of Vishnu on the other brought Aditya in place of Brahmā in the group. The popularity of Aditya worship in Karnataka from the period of early Chālukyas is well evidenced in the epigraphs.\(^{53}\)

While Vishnu's position in the Traipurusha group remained unaltered, it would of interest to note that the form in which he was sculptured in the group differed from temple to temple. Thus, as Kēśava he was represented in Malghan (c.1100 A.D., Bijapur Dist.) and Syed Chincholi (1122 A.D.,Gulbarga Dist.), as Janārdana at Nidoni (1170 A.D., Bijapur Dist.), as Narāyaṇa at Kotageri (c.1178 A.D.) and Hubli (Dharwar Dist.) and as Anantasayana at Devarnavadgā (1140 A.D., Bijapur Dist.).

(f) Associated and Attendant Deities

Lakshmī

As noted already, Lakshmī as the consort of Vishnu rose to prominence in worship from the latter half of the Rāṣhtra-kūṭa period. Simultaneously the worship of Mahālakshmī as a great ṣakti also vigorously gained currency. Some inscriptions of the period in this region refer to Mahālakshmī of Kolhapura. She is described as Simhavāhmī, Rudrārdhāṅgottumāganivāsimā.
(dwelling higher up in the half body of Rudra) and supreme among the deities of the Mahātīrtha and Adipūtha surrounded by seven hundred tīrthas headed by Śrī Vishāla and the assembly of sixty-four yoginīs and Siddhas. An epigraph from Soratur describes her as follows:

\[\text{anantānanta kālābhyanṭara tamatamandhakaravimirgga}\]
\[\text{Mahāākātisvarūpasamudbhūta trijugadyāptakīrtte}\]
\[\text{paramaudārika mahāmūrtte Viśālādi Saptaśatātīrthha-}\]
\[\text{pavitrkritiotttame Śrīmat-Kollāpura Mahālakṣmīdēvi...}\]

Installation of Mahālakṣmī is referred to in an epigraph of 1206 A.D. from Devara Hubballi. Another icon of Mahālakṣmī designated as Kamalā was installed in the temple of Kamala-Nārayana at Degaon (Belgaum Dist.) by Kamalādevī, the queen of Goa Kadamba king Śivachitta. Curiously, there existed ambiguity as to the identity of Mahālakṣmī, whereas in the Degaon temple she is obviously conceived as the consort of Viṣṇu, in the Sirur example she is described as Simhavāhini, etc. connoting thereby that she is conceived as Rudra's consort. One more dedication to Mahālakṣmī is known to have been made in Haverī (Dharwar Dist.).

**Hanumān**

Dedication to Hanumān is found in at least two epigraphs. The earlier of them is of 1049 A.D. (Sirur, Bijapur Dist.). The other is an inscribed image from Sangollī in Belgaum District. Although Hanumān is depicted in the Ramayana as a great devotee
of Rāma, the reference in the Sirur epigraph seems to be purely in a Śaivite context. Some Purāṇas regard Hanumān as the son of Śiva. In the Śiva Purāṇa he is stated to have been born when the semen discharged by Śiva, whose erotic feelings were excited by the sight of Mōhini, was received by the Saptarishis and deposited in the womb of Anjana. The Rāmāyana states that Hanumān was blessed by Śiva with invulnerability. Later iconography identifies Hanumān with Śiva, calling him Hanūbhairava. It is possible therefore that the present record has nothing to do with the votary of Rāma. However, viewed from the popularity of Hanumān in the post-13th century A.D. period, it may safely be remarked that Hanumān worship began in Karnataka very scantily during this period. The Hanumān image form Sangolli may be regarded as an indication of this fact.

3. The Devotees

From the epigraphic references, three kinds of devotees of Vishṇu can be distinguished: (a) Eclectic, (b) Vaishnava and (c) Bhāgavata.

(a) The Eclectic Devotees

A majority of devotees of Vishṇu may be classed as belonging to this category. Their personal inclination may have been devotion to Vishṇu or Śiva, but they made no distinction in respect of the other deities. The administrators and the merchant community were prominent among these devotees. For
instance, Rāyabhāri Īśvaradēva, a devotee of Śiva, established temples of various gods including Viṣṇu. Some times, in a single family there were persons devoted to different deities. Marchant Sarbbasetti, for instance, was a Vaishnava while his brother Virūpākshasetti was a Māhēśvara. The general approach of these devotees to god appears to be polytheistic: an epigraph of 1142 A.D. invokes Prasanna Kesava, Hara-Gaurī, Viṣṇēśvara, Bhagavati and Kumāra.

(b) The Vaishnavas

In the contemporary records, some persons are described as Vaishnavas. The Mahājanas of Lakkundi were Vaishnavagiti-manōh-arat. Sarbbasetti, mentioned above, was a Vaishnava. A Vaishnava Manchayappana and another Vaishnava Kandarpabhatta are also mentioned. Mahāmandalēśvara Hollarasa is eulogised as Śrī-Mahā-Vaishnava-kalpataru and his wife is described as Vaishnava Rabbaladēvi. Thus it may be stated that there existed a class of Viṣṇu devotees who called themselves Vaishnavas. However, it should be noted that they did not look down upon the other deities though themselves were votaries of Viṣṇu.

(c) The Bhagavatas

Another set of Viṣṇu devotees mentioned in the records are the Bhagavatas. How far they differed from the Vaishnavas in their beliefs is difficult to postulate. But they appear to have been worshippers of Gōpāla-Krishna.
### Chronological List of Dedications to Vishnu in North Karnataka

(Inscriptions from 973 A.D. to 1310 A.D.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year A.D.</th>
<th>Place/District</th>
<th>Deity Ref.</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>973</td>
<td>Madinur/Raichur</td>
<td>Traipurusha - Vishnu, Siva Surya</td>
<td>HAS.18, No.11; ARE 1953-54, B.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>981</td>
<td>Kanchagara - Belagali/Bellary</td>
<td>Vishnu Temples</td>
<td>SII. IX, pt. 1, 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1007</td>
<td>Lakkundi/Dharwad</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
<td>Ibid. XI, pt. 1, 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1018</td>
<td>Bagali/Bellary</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
<td>Ibid. IX, pt. 1, 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1018</td>
<td>Javur/Raichur</td>
<td>Traipurusha</td>
<td>ARE, 1958-59, B.693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1022</td>
<td>Bellatgi/Raichur</td>
<td>Traipurusha</td>
<td>ARE, 1961-62, B.534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1028</td>
<td>Mulgund/Dharwad</td>
<td>Traipurusha</td>
<td>SII. XI, pt. 1, 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1032</td>
<td>Teligi/Bellary</td>
<td>Sankara - Narayana</td>
<td>Ibid. IX, pt. 1, 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1033</td>
<td>Bijapur/Bijapur</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
<td>Ibid. XVII, 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1037</td>
<td>Gadag/Dharwad</td>
<td>Traipurusha; Barhanarayana</td>
<td>SII. XI, pt. 1, 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1040</td>
<td>Belur/Bijapur</td>
<td>Traipurusha</td>
<td>Ibid. 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1041</td>
<td>Sivapada/Bellary</td>
<td>Narayana</td>
<td>Ibid. IX, pt. 1, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1044</td>
<td>Huli/Belgaum</td>
<td>Kesavaditya</td>
<td>EL.XVIII, 22B, pp. 17 ff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1049</td>
<td>Hombal/Dharwad</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>SII. XI, pt. 1, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1049</td>
<td>Sirur/Bijapur</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>Ibid. 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1049</td>
<td>Kalkambhag/Bellary</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>Ibid. IX, pt. 1, 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1054</td>
<td>Tambragundi/Dharwad</td>
<td>Vrishnudova</td>
<td>Ibid. 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th Cent. Nandivadgge/Bijapur</td>
<td>Traipurusha at Kohalli</td>
<td>Ibid. 103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1058</td>
<td>Rangapuram/Bellary</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
<td>Ibid. 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1068</td>
<td>Bagali/Bellary</td>
<td>Narayana</td>
<td>Ibid. 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Deity</td>
<td>Divinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1074</td>
<td>Nidagundi/Dharwad</td>
<td>Traipurusha;</td>
<td>Narayana, Siva, Surya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1076</td>
<td>Kalkeri/Dharwad</td>
<td>Vishnu-graha</td>
<td>(Kesa-vaditya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1080</td>
<td>Yatnur/Gulburga</td>
<td>Sira-Dadgada</td>
<td>Kulkarni 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1080</td>
<td>Somapur/Dharwad</td>
<td>Vishnu Temple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1080</td>
<td>Devaguri/Dharwad</td>
<td>Harihara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1082</td>
<td>Siraguppi/Dharwad</td>
<td>Traipurusha;</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1082</td>
<td>Huli/Belgaum</td>
<td>Narayana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1050-82</td>
<td>Mudhol/Raichur</td>
<td>Harihara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1083</td>
<td>Ambal/Bellary</td>
<td>Kesava-deva</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1086</td>
<td>Tumbigi/Bijapur</td>
<td>Traipurusha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1087</td>
<td>Kurtkoti/Dharwad</td>
<td>Biralakesava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1088</td>
<td>Balambid/Dharwad</td>
<td>Pandara-kesava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1088</td>
<td>Devaragennur/Bijapur</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1090</td>
<td>Huvinahadagali/Bellary</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1095</td>
<td>Gabbur/Raichur</td>
<td>Traipurusha-Vishnu-deva</td>
<td>ARE, 1958-59, B. 661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1095</td>
<td>Karigudari/Dharwad</td>
<td>Rama-kesara, Traipurusha-Saikara, Kesava Bhaksara</td>
<td>IA, X, p. 249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1097</td>
<td>Huli/Belgaum</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1097</td>
<td>Kavalur/Raichur</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1098</td>
<td>Bagali/Bellary</td>
<td>Vira-kesava</td>
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<tr>
<td>1098</td>
<td>Mudenur/Dharwad</td>
<td>Shankara-narayana</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1099</td>
<td>Dastapur/Gulburga</td>
<td>Adikeshava</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Trilokpurusha</td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100</td>
<td>Malghan/Bijapur</td>
<td>Traipurusha Aditya, Kēśava, Vaṁeśvara</td>
<td>KI,VI,15, SII,XX,64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1110</td>
<td>Gadag/Dharwad</td>
<td>Nārāyaṇa</td>
<td>KRI,1942-43,39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1103</td>
<td>Hosur/Dharwad</td>
<td>Vīraṇārāyaṇa</td>
<td>SII,XI,pt.ii,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Yewur/Gulburga</td>
<td>Kēśava</td>
<td>Kulkarni,34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1106</td>
<td>Tengali/Gulburga</td>
<td>Jagannātha</td>
<td>ARE,1960-61,B.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1106</td>
<td>Arasibidi/Bijapur</td>
<td>Vīṣṇu-Kēśava</td>
<td>SII,XI,pt.ii,190; SII, XV,5; Ibid.242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1108</td>
<td>Mulgund/Dharwad</td>
<td>Vīraṇārāyaṇa</td>
<td>SII,XI,pt.ii,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1113</td>
<td>Holkunda/ Gulburga</td>
<td>Kēśava</td>
<td>ARE,1962-63,B.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1113</td>
<td>Abbigeri/Dharwad</td>
<td>Channakēśava</td>
<td>SII,XI,pt.ii,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1115</td>
<td>Nidoni/Bijapur</td>
<td>Kēśava</td>
<td>Ibid.XVIII,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1115</td>
<td>Basavakalyana/Bidar</td>
<td>Nārāyaṇa</td>
<td>Kulkarni,50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1117</td>
<td>Jakkali/Dharwad</td>
<td>Kēśava</td>
<td>SII,XI,pt.ii,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1117</td>
<td>Kalkeri/Bijapur</td>
<td>Kēśava</td>
<td>Ibid.XX,75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1119</td>
<td>Kuradi/Raichur</td>
<td>Vāsudēva, Mahādēva, Kēśava</td>
<td>ARE,1961-62,B.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1119</td>
<td>Mashal/Gulburga</td>
<td>Kēśava</td>
<td>Kulkarni,54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1119</td>
<td>Nidagunda/Gulburga</td>
<td>Kēśava</td>
<td>Kulkarni 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1119</td>
<td>Hunsagir/Gulburga</td>
<td>2 Kēśavas</td>
<td>ARE,1959-60,B.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1121</td>
<td>Salotagi/Bijapur</td>
<td>Traipurusha- Brahma, Vishnu, Isvara</td>
<td>SII.XVIII,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1121</td>
<td>Sogi/Bellaray</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
<td>Ibid.IX, pt.i,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1121</td>
<td>Lakkundi/Dharwad</td>
<td>Harihara</td>
<td>Ibid.XI,pt.ii,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1125</td>
<td>Gugikatti/Dharwad</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
<td>SII.XI,pt.ii,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th-12th cent. Talkod/North Kanara (Vishnu Temple*)</td>
<td>Kis.3,pt.1,1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th cent. Hosaritti/Dharwad</td>
<td>Narasimha*</td>
<td>SII.XVIII,129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Kardi/Bijapur</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
<td>Ibid.XV,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Soratur/Dharwad</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>Ibid.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Shiggaon/Dharwad</td>
<td>Trikuta</td>
<td>ARKR,1939-40,20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Balgeri/Belgaum</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
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<td>-do-</td>
<td>Gobbur/Raichur</td>
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<td>Gadag/Dharwad</td>
<td>Hrishikesa</td>
<td>SII.XVIII,138</td>
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<td>Nargund/Dharwad</td>
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<td>Hangal/Dharwad</td>
<td>Madhava</td>
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<td>Trikuta- Mallikarnjuna, Aditya, Jalaruhanabha</td>
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<td>Muttugi/Bijapur</td>
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<td>ARE. 1961-62 B. 564</td>
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<td>Ambalgi/Bellary</td>
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<td>SII. IX.pt. ii, 242</td>
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<td>Bada/Bellary</td>
<td>Harīhara</td>
<td>Ibid. 244</td>
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<td>ARE. 1953-54, B. 231</td>
</tr>
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<td>Belur/Bijapur</td>
<td>Nārāyaṇa</td>
<td>SII. XV, 30</td>
</tr>
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<td>1147</td>
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<td>Ibid. IX, pt. i, 249</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kirtinārāyaṇa</td>
<td>Ibid. XVII, 150</td>
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<td>SII. IX.pt. i, 251</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mādhava</td>
<td>Ibid. XVII, 152</td>
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<td>Ibid. IX, pt. i, 258</td>
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<td>SII. XVIII, 178</td>
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<td>Ibid. XV, 105, KI. V, 23</td>
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</tr>
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<td>SII.XV,125</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Ibid.XV,242</td>
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<td>Ibid.XX,174</td>
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<td>BI.XV,p.32 ff.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>-do- Hirehadagali/Bellary</td>
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<td>Ibid.IX,pt.1,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-do- Kondaguli/Bijapur</td>
<td>Traipurusha</td>
<td>Ibid.XX,302</td>
</tr>
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<td>-do- Umargi/Bijapur</td>
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<td>Ibid. 311</td>
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<td>TA.VII,p.303</td>
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B. THE FORMS AND CONCEPTS IN SOUTH KARNATAKA (UNDER THE HOYSALAS)

1. Vishnu the Deity

Vishnu as conceived by his adherents, in South Karnataka (under the Hoysalas), was essentially a sāttvāc deity. In certain records, for instance, though he is identified with the Trinity, he is described as being free from the qualities of rajas and tamas. He is omnipresent and the whole world is pervaded by him (Vishnumayam jagat). He is the target of devotion of great ascetics like Sanaka and others (muni-mātra-chāta-svastha; Sanak-ādi-muni-dhyāyanta). He is the ultimate meaning of all the Vēdas (sakala vēdātīrttha). His throne is śruti (i.e. Vēda) he is the sole tree of plenty in the world. He is the lord of the world (Jagannātha), the best primordial) Male (Purushottama), the great Male (Mahāpurusha) the raison d'être of the moveable
and immoveable (char-āchara gurum). He creates, perpetuates and destroys the universe. He has manifold forms and is called by numerous names: Vaikuntha, Sūkara, Jagannātha, Vitthala, Guru-Rāmakrishna, and so on. He is the highest among the gods (na ādīvām Kēśavat-param) and god of gods.

Vishnu is a great boon-conferring god and a protector of his devotees. His invocations are always intended for protection and prosperity. He is a lover of devotion (bhaktipriya), an ocean of mercy (kārūnya-āmbodhi). He is the lord of the good and an ocean of fame (Śrīmat-kīrtti-samudra-saṅjana-patiḥ).

He has always an appeasing face (prasanna-vadana) and silences hindrances and evil spirits (vighnas). Even in his yogic and fierce aspects like that of Narasimha, he is still a grace bestowing god (varada-Narasimha). He bestows victory (vijaya-Nārāyaṇa). By his grace one accumulates wealth. He grants salvation to his devotees.

As Anantaśayana, he becomes introvert in deep yoga on a serpent couch in the ocean of milk and from his lotus navel springs Brahmā. In his service sits Lakshmi. He is Pannagaśayana and Garuḍa-dhvaja. "The śrutī (Veda) being his throne the lightning glances of Lakshmi being like flashing chāmaras, the clusters of bright jewels of the myriad gods bowing before him being like the ārati. Nārada reciting in the assembly praises of the excellence of his glory - Padmanābha shone forth the sole tree of plenty in the world".
He is chaturbhuja, the wielder of chakra (Chakri). His attributes are śaṅkha, chakra, gadā and padma. The first three are called pānchajanya, sudarśana and kaumūdakī. He sometimes wields his characteristic bow - the śārnga - and khadga - the Nandaka: "Clothed in glistening raiment of the beautiful colour of gold; his crest radiant with the variegated rays from the shining kaustubha, holding in his four hands the conch, the discus, the sword and the mace; mounted on Garuda; black as the new rain cloud; Hari may he protect you". He supports the earth (ilādhara). His foot is the source of Mandākini.

2. The Forms of Vishnu
(a) The Sthānaka, Āsana and Āyāna mūrtis

As in the north Karnataka region, Vishnu's representations in the Hoysala region also conform to the three main postures viz., the sthānaka, the āsana, and the āyāna. The majority of the sthānaka icons are of the chaturvimsatimūrti. However, in the south-east precincts of the state, comprising portions of the Bangalore, Mysore and Kolar districts, epigraphs indicate the prevalence of a form of Vishnu, often designated as 'Varadarāja' or 'Allaḷaperumāl', and usually characterised iconographically by the absence of padma and sometimes, of gadā, the hands being poised in gestures of varada or abhaya or both. This part of the region was under the sway of the Chōlas as attested by inscriptions, and as such, it may be remarked that the images here were produced under the spell of Tamilian influence.
Vishnu as the bearer of sword and bow is also mentioned in some epigraphs (śrī sārṅga-chakra-asi-gadā-dharāya); and such descriptions are of relevance perhaps to the multiple-armed Vishnu icons, such as those found on the Kēśava temple Sōmanātha-pura (e.g. Fig.17).

The āsana posture has its examples in Vishnu’s yogic aspect, which concept has been already explained. References occur in epigraphs to Yogeśvara,109 Yōga-Mādhava,110 Yōga-Nārāyaṇa,111 and Yōga-Narasimha.112 Some other seated forms of Vishnu known from epigraphs and icons are those of Ādimūrti (Para Vāsudeva)113 and Allālaperumāl (Varadarāja).114 Examples from the Hoysala region illustrated here are of Yōgeśvara (Fig.21), Yōga-Narasimha (Figs.62 and 63), and Ādimūrti(Fig.25).

Of the śayāna form, the Yōga-śayāna aspect is delineated beautifully in a Balligave epigraph of 1159 A.D.115

Amṛt-āmbhōrāśi śayā śadanadōl uruvichīsam
uttuṅga maṅch-āgrāśa śēsh-ānalpa-talpa sthaladōl
agaharan Śrīdharān yōga nidrōdyamadīṁd-irdīrdīdu
viśvōjja vidhige chitram-daral tamna sāmartyamē
rūpādante-nabh-āmburuhadīn-ogedam chinmayam Padmasadmath

A concise description of Jalāśayana, whose image was got made by Gōvindarāja daṇḍanāyaka, an officer under Chālukya Vikramāditya VI, is attempted in an inscription of the same place.116 The Jalāśayana image is perhaps intended to be a Bhūgaśayananūrti, whose invocation is contained at the beginning in the same inscription:
Vishnu reclining on the serpent, whose head was resplendent with jewels, while Brahmā shone in the lotus of his navel like its ovary, and Lakshmī sat gently smiling, the spray from the waves of the sea enfolding her like a garment of kētāki blossoms....

(b) Vyūhāntaras

The worship of chaturvyūhāṁsatimūrtis, the background for which has been provided previously, was also a feature of the south Karnataka. The twenty-four forms of Vishnu (Figs. 87-110) among others, are expressly referred to in inscriptions, and the concept of primary and secondary emanations from the vyūhas is clearly revealed. Thus, the twenty-four forms are mentioned as 'twice twelve varied forms of Vishnu' or as 'Kēśava and others twelve and Samkarshaṇa and others twelve.' An inscription from Ambale, dated in 1178 A.D. discloses the curious fact of Hoysala Vīra Ballāla's making donations to a set of 'twelve' Bṛāhmaṇas bearing the names 'Kēśava and others' (i.e. the names of the first twelve primary sub-vyūhas) at the time of installation of god Kēśava there. This apart, the twenty-four images of Vishnu carved on some of the Hoysala temples like those at Arasikere, Hullekere, etc., bear, on their pedestals, small label inscriptions revealing their identity.

So far as independent worship in temples is considered, the maximum dedications in the Hoysala region were to Kēśava. The worship of Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudēva, Janārdana, and Mādhava
prevailed, in that order, to a lesser degree. The total number of dedications, however, outnumered those of the Chalukya region of the same period.

(c) Vībhavas or Avatāras

The celebrated list of the avatāras occurring in epigraphs of Hoysala region conforms to ten and, as such, it is referred to as 'daśāvatāra' frequently. The avatāras are generally mentioned while extolling the personality of royal personages, but the references are nevertheless informative:

Anavadyeśkhaṇa Matsya-amghri Kamaṭhaṁ grīva Varāham
sumadhya Nṛsiṁham kshitiṁpaṇḍiśkramaṇa kele Vāmanam
śatruśāṣana Rāma-tritayam svayogabala Buddham duhprajōṇmata
Kalki nijādhīṣa dasāvatāran-ogedam Ballāla-bhūpālakam.123

Thus, the ten avatāras included Matsya, Kamaṭha (=Kūrma)
Varāha, Nṛsiṁha, Vāmana, the three Rāmas (=Bhāṛgava Rāma, Dāśarathi Rāma and Balabhadra Rāma), Buddha and Kalki. However, sometimes, Krishna is also described as an avatāra.124 It also appears that the dasāvatāras were sometimes extended to twelve (dvādaśa) by adding Krishna and (Nara-?) Nārāyaṇa to the sterile-type list.125

Though the avatāras were well-known, it is evident from the epigraphs that not all of them were enshrined in temples for worship. There was a great bias for enshrining Narasiṁha, Rāma Dāśarathi, and Krishna. However, in one instance, all the
The avatāra forms as well as many other aspects of Vishṇu were installed in prākāra shrines for worship.¹²⁶

Now, briefly the references to avatāras occurring in epigraphs are enumerated below with remarks whenever called for.

The Matsya avatāra is invoked in an epigraph¹²⁷ from Anekonda (Chitradurga Dist.) dated in 1166 A.D.

"Victorious are the valiant doings of Hari in the form of the great fish, whose tail lashed the ocean in commotion".

Interestingly, in an inscription of 1157 A.D. from Kottagere (Tumkur Dist.),¹²⁸ the feat is attributed to Aja (=Brahmā) :

"As Aja assumed the Fish incarnation to save the world so did king Vishṇu in Kali Age".

In fact, the Mahābhārata ascribes the Matsya avatāra to Prajāpati Brahma¹²⁹ and in view of this the above reference is significant.

No invocation occurs in respect of the Kūrma avatāra. However, in an epigraph of 1129 A.D.¹³⁰ from Balligave (Shimoga Dist.) the maṭha attached to the Kēḍārēśvara temple is compared to the tortoise: "the maṭha of Kēḍārēśvara temple shines like the Kammaṭha in supporting all people (kammaṭhanante sakala janadhāramam). Major representations (Figs.36-37) of matsya and Kūrma on temple walls are scarce in Hoysala region. So far as the Varāha incarnation is considered, numerous allusions occur in epigraphs by way of invocations, descriptions and comparisons
The two well-known invocations to Varāha\(^\text{131}\) found in early Chālukyan records are noticed in Hoysala region also. Among the others the one quoted below is probably citation of the first verse of the Varāha Purāṇa (I,1):

\[
\text{Namas-tasmai Varāhaya līlayōddharatē mahīm}
\]
\[
\text{khura madhya gatōyasya māruh khanakhaṣyate}\text{132}
\]

Again, it may be pointed out that in the Varāha legend as known to sculpture (Fig.45) and inscriptions, the demon (Hiranyāksha) has role of carrying away Mother Earth to the nether regions:

"Taila was in the might of his strong arms like Vishnu who crushed in battle the Asura that had carried off the Earth to the infernal regions, and brought it back"\(^\text{133}\)

Although inscriptions are silent about any temple dedicated to Varāha, it should be noted that there is at least one temple of Bhū-Varāha in Varahanatha Kallahalli.\(^\text{134}\) The sculptures found on Hoysala temple walls indicate that the Varāha avatāra was a popular theme in the Hoysala country (Figs.45-47).

Numerous invocations and dedications to Narasimha are known from epigraphs. There were basically four modes of his representation: (1) As one of the Chaturvimśatimūrtis (in this form he is represented on some Hoysala temple walls (Fig.104) );
(2) Sthuṇa Narasimha (Fig.54); (3) Lakṣmī-Narasimha (Fig.64);
(4) Kēvala or Yōga-Narasimha(Figs.62-63). Of the known examples
the last two mentioned were more familiar so far as enshrining in temples is considered.

Now as to the aspects of Narasimha myth. The legend pertaining to Narasimha incarnation is summarised in an epigraph of 1234 A.D. from Arakere (Hassan Dist.):

```
sumanassim Prahladan-atyadhikanam visvatmanam raudra
vikramanam torvve nam Hiranyakane niim noq-embubbudom
stambhadimdaya-ugrogra Nrasisihanage tutisai Prahladanam
noq vikramamam-mamd-upasantanaa1 siiriaam taaldirddan-
utsahadum.135
```

This delineation is the indication of the significant fact that the Narasimha legend in its well developed form was known to the people of the region. Or, to be more precise, they knew it in the form known to the Bhagavata Purana. For, it is only in the Bhagavata Purana version that Narasimha comes out of a pillar in Hiranyakaśipu’s court when Prahlāda pleads the omnipresence and omnipotence of Vishnu.136 The other aspect of the delineation is that it reveals the benevolence of the Almighty towards his devotee Prahlāda at whose praise he is stated to have turned benign after accomplishing the mission of his avatāra, and to have taken the form of Lakshmi-Narasimha. The benign and boon conferring aspect of Lakshmi-Narasimha is expressed in the invocation of Kittanakere (Hassan Dist.) inscription137 of 2164 A.D.

```
hamho dhira varam grihana rujina pritoham-ityeva te
pritir-bhaktir-upattabhavanataya paramparaho mayi
```
No temple of Vāmana Trivikrama avatāra of this period is known. However, the myth is not unknown. An inscription of 1181 A.D. from Balligave narrates that the Rākṣasā Bali dwelt in Balipura (=Balligave).\textsuperscript{138} Representations of Vāmana-Bali-Trivikrama (Figs. 65, 69) myth are found on numerous Hoysala temples.

Although Paraśurāma avatāra was well-known, only one temple is known to have been dedicated to him.\textsuperscript{139} Nevertheless, another record from Balligave delineates the following story connected with Paraśurāma:

"In Kṛityugā, to the accomplisher of his desires Jamadagni the husband of Rēnuki was born the axe-bearer (Parasu-bearer), the slayer of Kārtavīrya, who murdered the guru. But considering that he should not dwell in the property of the Brāhmaṇas he turned back the sea with the tip of his bow, the son of Rēnuki, praised by the learned. Having left not even space for a drop (kana) in the place occupied by the western ocean that lord obtained from the favour of Phanikaṅkara (Śiva) the seven Koṅkaṇas as his abode."\textsuperscript{140}

His representations are found on Hoysala temples (Fig.71)

At least three temples of Rāma-Dāsarathī are known to have existed in Hoysala region. Two of them are known from epigraphs\textsuperscript{141} - one in Mālur (Bangalore Dist.) and the other in Belgola (Mysore Dist.). The third one, also of the Hoysala period, is in Hīremagalur (Chikmagalur Dist.).\textsuperscript{142} Except for donations,
details are known. However, from the available evidence, the trend seems to have been to represent Rāma accompanied by his brother, Lakshmana, and spouse, Sītā. (Fig. 72).

Balarāma's worship in temples is not attested by epigraphs but sculptures on temple walls are known (Fig. 73). References occur to Śrīśa—the seat of Vishnu and the supporter of the earth. An interesting fact is that some of the Gopāla images are designated in epigraphs as 'Rāma-Krishna'. Balarāma was after all, the brother of Krishna-Vāsudeva and took his incarnation alongside him. Perhaps, owing to this reason, the people of the Hoysala region regarded Krishna-Gopāla as embodying Rāma (=Balabhadra) aspect of incarnation also. This explains the proper names of persons—'Rāma-Krishna)—occurring to the present day. In the popular concept of the present day, however, Rāma-Krishna is conceived as Daśarathī Rāma and Krishna.

Therefore, it is no surprise that sometimes Krishna replaced Balabhadra Rāma in daśavatāra list. Krishna-Gopāla's worship in temples was becoming increasingly popular from the very early phase in Hoysala region and numerous dedications to him are known. He is almost invariably found in the form of Vēṇu-Gopāla (Krishna plying on flute, (Fig. 75). An inscription of 1157 A.D., from Kottagere (Tumkur Dist.), narrates in a nutshell the feats of Krishna incarnation:

....Kshirābhiinātham Śrī-Krishṇāvatāravam mādi Pūtaneya prāṇam beresi moleyanumdu sakaṭavananude mattipam muridu
Krishna's lifting the Govardhanamountain and his 'rejoicing' in the sound of the words of Akrūra (Vāsudevanant-Akrūr-okti-
śravana-ramāṇīyamum) are also alluded to. Gopālakrishna, installed in one of the shrines of the trikūta temple in Arakere is described in an inscription of the same place, dated in 1234 A.D.:

amarorviruhamam malamgi cheluvim traibhangiyam vēgünā-
daman a göpiyaram nirikshita tamadūtāt-aqutām īlleyimāmē
Gōpālaka mūrttanāgi naqetand-ānaṁdadiṁ śrīmad-Uttama
Sarvvašajnapuraṁ karam cheluvindirdām maraṁurāgaḥimā

Gopala-Krishna's relations with gopis is well expressed in his epithets like 'Gopinātha', 'Gopijanavallabha', etc. found in the epigraphs of the period.

The ninth avatara viz., Buddha, is again devoid of any independent worship in temples. But his representations do find a place on Hoysala temple walls; and at least in one temple, he had been installed in prākāra shrine, as the Somanathapur epigraph of 1268 A.D. indicates.

The Kalki image, like the Buddha, was also enshrined in a prākārakoshta of the Kesava temple at Somanathapura.
Apart from the stereotype list of the dasāvatāras, there are certain works which, as pointed out earlier, give a more comprehensive list of avatāras, which sometimes number to twentytwo or thirtynine. The twentytwo avatāras according to the Bhāgavata purāṇa are:

1. Purusha  
2. Varāha  
3. Nārada  
4. Nara and Nārāyaṇa  
5. Kapila  
6. Dattātreya  
7. Yajña  
8. Rishabha  
9. Prithu  
10. Matsya  
11. Kurma  
12. Dhanvantari  
13. Mōhinī  
14. Nāmasiṁha  
15. Vāmanā  
16. Paraśurāma  
17. Vedavyāsa  
18. Rāma  
19. Balārāma  
20. Kṛṣṇa  
21. Buddha  
22. Kalki  

It appears that, all these icons had been installed in the prākara shrines of the Somanathapura Kesava temple. The list of prākara deities given in the Somanathapura and Davanagere records is too epitomised to mention all these individually, and only suggestion is made as to the deities enshrined. It can, however, be speculated from the available details the following information:

Matsyaṁyāda dasāmūrtayo Murahara-Nārāyaṇa dvādaśa prākārēśhu cha etc.

Matsyaṁda dasamurtis are clearly of dasāvatāras (i.e., the celebrated ten incarnations). The doubt is about "Murahara-Nārāyaṇa dvādaśa" (Murahara-Nārāyaṇa, etc. twelve). If any significance is attached to total number so obtained, i.e., twentytwo, it has to be observed that the reference is to the twentytwo avatāras.
enlisted in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In this context it may also be stated that Purusha and Yajña as epithets of Vishnu do occur in contemporary records.  

Of the other aspects of Vishnu mentioned in the same record Vishvakṣenā may be noted.

(d) Other Manifestations of Vishnu

The Vitthala form of Vishnu was considerably popular in Hoysala region. Devotees of Vitthala are expressly referred to in the records. In 1217 A.D., Daśavanta daśaṇāyaka is described, in an epigraph of Udri (Shimoga Dist.), as the worshipper of the holy lotus feet of Śrī-Vitthala: Śrī-Vitthaladēva-dīvya-śrī-pāda-padmārādhaka. God Vitthalaśa was installed in a temple in Sogane Agrahāra (Shimoga dist.) in 1216 A.D. for whom grants are recorded. This apart actual icons of Vitthala are found on Hoysala temples. Also a merchant Kondanambi is stated to have erected a Sattra in Pandhranga (=Pandharpur).

Vishnu as Jagannātha is referred to in some inscriptions. But no dedication in temple is known. Therefore it is difficult to attach any significance to this epithet.

A curious reference to installation of Jaita Nārāyaṇa or Jaitanātha occurs in an inscription of 1218 A.D. from Heragu (Hassan Dist.). The temple was erected by Jayabhaṭṭayya, an officer and worshipper of Jaitanātha (which may be the same as Kīrtinārāyaṇa). The invocatory portion of the epigraph also praises god Jaitanātha:
Erat trailōkya nirmāna-trāna-saṃhṛiti-kāraṇam
Śrīmat Śrī Jaitanāthasya śāsanam śāsvatam paraṁ

One of the inscriptions invokes Viṣṇu mounted on Garuḍa:

snigdḥottirṇa suvarṇa ruchira...yavasanam-paraṁ
bhasvat kaustubhakānti karbhura pariḥbra jishnu
vakṣhaṣṭhalaṁ chakram-ch-asi-gadā...tah chaturbbhiḥ
karair-ārūḍho Garuḍam navina jalada śyāme Harirpātuvāh.162

This may be an allusion to Viṣṇu-Gaṇendramākṣa, which is also a minor avatāra of Viṣṇu (Fig.120). This is, however, not to say that such form of Viṣṇu was worshipped in temples.

(e) The Composite Forms and Traipurushas

The composite form of Śiva and Viṣṇu viz., Harihara, was considerably popular in Hoysala region. A number of dedications are known to this deity who is sometimes referred to as Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa also. The best known concepts behind the Harihara form are recorded in epigraphs of Harihara (Chitrādurgā Dist.). An inscription of 1168 A.D.162 begins with the following invocation:

Jayanti sthāṇu Dharayar-advaita-dyōtānādyayaḥ
askamāla-trīśūlārī pāṁchajanya dharaḥ karaḥ

Another record of 1224 A.D. states the reason for the composite form taken by the Almighty:
Worship of Harihara both in iconic\textsuperscript{165} and aniconic\textsuperscript{166} form (i.e. in the form of linga) was prevalent.

The reason for the popularity of Harihara worship during the period was definitely the attempt of the religious leaders to tranquilize the animosity between the votaries of Śiva and of Viṣṇu. This is attested by numerous inscriptions which begin with the following invocations:

\begin{quote}
Śrīmat-trailokya puṣyaya sarvva-karma-susākhśine phaladaya namō nityam Keśavaya Śivaya cha\textsuperscript{167}

Śāṅkham saṁāharaṁ taṁ kapālaṁ-athāvā kime bhēdaka prakrayaiḥ chakrāhasta tālē triśūlaṁ-apī vā kīṁ nāyuḍhavyatyaṁ tat pratyayayitaṁ vibhinna hriyā-vāṁśaṁ vahantau tanum pātam kautuka śalinu Harihara śāvatam\textsuperscript{168}
\end{quote}

The Traipurushas (Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha) are invoked in a good number of epigraphs. The following is from an epigraph of Balligave dated in 1019 A.D.:

\begin{quote}
Śrīpati Chakradhāri Garudāsanam-āmburuhākshan Adrijāpatai śūladhāri Viṣabhāsanabhyadhī- kēkṣhaṇam Vācāśrīpatai pasādhari kalahamsagan-ashtiṃalkshan-emduva-traipurusha trilokajānapūjitaṁ īgemag-īṣṭasiddhiyam\textsuperscript{169}
\end{quote}
The Viradevarahalli (Hassan Dist.) record invokes the Trimūrtis in the guise of Śrī Viraṇāraṇaṇa (1186 A.D.):

Śrīman Vāgvinītpriyah priyatamomadrim-manovallabhā-sasthit-yutpattōpamhrīti kramkarta sākshāt svayaṃ dakshatāṃ prāpta rajas-tamas trijagatim pāyād-apāyāt sadā Vishnu-Brahma-Śiva-trimūrti viditas-Śrī-Viraṇāraṇaṇah

Compared to evidence from the Kalyāṇa Chālukya region, dedications, to the Trimūrtis in temples are feeble in number. Only seven dedications are noticed in the Hoysala region. Again, in the Traipurusha group, Brahmā is replaced by Āditya, as in contemporary north Karnataka. Their worship in group was confined, it may be noted to the northern half of South Karnataka.

(f) Triple Forms of Vishnu in Temples

A new feature of Vishnu worship during the Hoysala period was developed: The installation of his three forms in triple-shrined temples which is not known to have existed in North Karnataka. The more familiar of the combinations comprised Kēśava Lakshmī-Narasimha, and Vēṅgūpāla (Anekannambadi, Nāgamangala, Pushpagiri, Arakere, Harnahalli, Nuggahalli, Vighnasanta etc.). The other known combinations were: Vēṅgūpāla, Yōga-Narasimha, Kēśava; Nārāyaṇa, Gōpāla, Yōga-Narasimha; Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, Gōpāla, Purushottama; Lakshmī-Narasimha, Gōpāla, Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa; Kēśava, Gōpāla, Jānārdana; Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, Gōpāla, Mādhava; Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, Narasimha, Gōpāla. The invariable presence of
Gopala-Krishna in the group may be noted. In one exceptional case, the combination consisted of Lakshmi-Narayana, Venu-gopala and Sarasvati (Adaguru).

(g) Associate and Attendant Deities

Lakshmi as the consort of Vishnu was represented in accompaniment with Narayana (Fig.30) and Narasimha very frequently. Her well-known temple (independent) at Doddagaddavalli (1113 A.D.) is clearly Saktite in affiliation, the other three principal deities installed therein being those of Kali, Siva(Linga) and Vishnu. Lakshmi is considered in some inscriptions as the refuge of the deceased heroes.

No independent shrine of Garuda is known from records. But there are some beautiful icons, as in Belur, of his attendance upon Vishnu. His dutifulness and heroism are well recognised in contemporary records and, at times, dead heroes are identified with him.

Lakshmana and Hanuman worship was probably begun in the Hoysala times, along with that of Sri Rama. At least one direct reference to installation of an image of Lakshmana occurs in an epigraph of the period. As to Hanuman worship, however, the contemporary records are silent. He is regarded among the best devotees of Vishnu. There is an unidentified image of Vishnu with monkey's face (Fig.123), perhaps representing deified Hanuman.
(h) Desikas

A new religious development is the worship of the Desikas probably owing to the advent of Sri Vaishnavism. This appears to have been in vogue in the Hoysala region. Details are not available.

3. The Devotees

In inscriptions of South Karnataka, the devotees of Vishnu are called bhaktas or bhaktapanas. They may be grouped into four categories: (a) Eclectic (b) Bhagavata; (c) Vaishnava; and (d) SriVaishnava. All the four are referred to in contemporary records.

(a) The Eclectic Devotees

There was a section of devotees who made no distinction between Siva or Vishnu. They believed in both, and denied the existence of neither along. For instance, Virayya danadanayaka, an officer, made in Viradavanahalli a stone temple for gods Viranarayana and Achyutesvara. Numerous tanks constructed by the same person were variously named as Rudrasamudra, Vishnu-samudra, etc. Another record of 1255 A.D. from Hiriyur (Hassan Dist.) refers to a family of merchants who belonged to Maleyalada Desis. Darmadarasetti of this family was excelling in devotion to Vishnu any of his greatest devotees; but yet he installed both Vishnu and Siva. Kunja of the same family was a great devotee of Siva. Such examples can be multiplied.
There was another section of devotees who believed in the identity of all deities. They saw no distinction between Vishnu and Siva. Many records of the period argue for oneness of form of the supreme and were eclectic enough to recognise that only his names were different. Most common among such invocations goes as follows:

\[ \text{Śrīmat-trailōkya pūjyāya sarvakarma-susākshiṇe} \\
\text{phaladāya namō nityāṁ Kesāvāya Śivāya cha} \]

Dedication to the composite deity, Harihara, were numerous and they attracted considerable number of devotees. There was clearly an attempt to silence and settle the animosity between the adherents of Vishnu and Siva, some of whom were probably too dogmatic about the superiority of their own god. Such a belief is echoed in statements such as: there is no deity superior to Kesava (na daivam Kesavatparam). Fanaticism was always to be avoided if the kingdom were to be in peace, and, obviously, the role of the administrators was to be very prominent as to stall any unhealthy developments in the religious atmosphere. Hence, we find that much of the support for eclectic ideas in religion of the times came from the ruling class. The best example of the position is witnessed in the installation of Kesava images in the Channakēśava temple at Belur by Vishnudevadhana and his queen Santalā; the latter was a follower of Jainism. Another example is that of Somanātha who erected temples of various forms of Vishnu and Siva in Somanathapura, and crowned the
gateway of Harihara temple in Harihara with golden *kalaśas*.

Yet another example, rather more comprehensive of eclectic religious ideas, is of Sāmanta Bāchi in whose record of 1151 A.D., he is stated to have built Jaina, Śaiva and Vaishnava temples; the invocatory part is of interest and relevance:

```
Jayanti yasyā vadatōpi Bhāratī
vibhūtayastīrtha kṛtōpi naihṛitē
Śivāya Dhatre Sugatāya Vishṇavē
Jināya tasmai sakalatmanē namaḥ
```

One more invocation, from a Vaishnava record from Belur, is also similar in its connotation:

```
Yam Śaivāḥ samulātē Śiva iti Brahmeśti Vedaṃtinō
Bauddha Buddhēḥ iti pramāṇapaṭavah kartēti Naiyāyikāḥ
Araṃśchēti Jainaśasanamatiḥ Karmēti Mīmāṃsakāḥ
sōyam vō vidhadhātu vāṃchhitaphalam Śrī Kesavēḥ sarvadā
``` 

(b) The Bhāgavatas

The second category of votaries of Viraṇa, viz., the Bhā- 
gavatas, are specifically, though infrequently, mentioned in 
records of the region. As has been previously pointed out, 
the Bhāgavatas were votaries of Kṛishna- Vāsudēva. But, by the 
Chālukya-Hoysala period, the Vaishnava theology had evolved to 
the extent of enveloping and engulfing all its sub-ordinate 
cults into one fold. And, as such, there hardly existed any 
distinction between the Bhāgavatas, the Pāñcharatras and the 
Vaishnavas. This in view, it is not surprising that the term
parama-bhāgavata, which was the epithet of the devout worshipper of Vishnu-Vāsudēva-Krishna, is scarcely met with in the post-Badami Chālukya epoch. The tradition of installing three forms of Vishnu— one of these invariably of Krishṇa-Gopāla—in triple-shrined temples, so common in Hoysala region as has already been noted, should also be viewed in this perspective only.

(c) The Vaishṇavas

Reference to 'Vaishṇavas' without the prefix 'Śri' probably other than the Rāmānuja followers, recurs very frequently in contemporary epigraphs, especially in the upper portion of south Karnataka. Allusion to numerous persons by such epithets as 'Vaishṇava-chakravarti', Vaishṇava-chūdāmaṇi a joy to Vaishṇava sect', etc. are found in many records. In 1114 A.D., for instance, an officer, Govindarāja, who made donations to the images of Jalaśayana and chaturvimśatimūrtis patronised by him, is described as 'Vaishṇava-chūdāmaṇi'. Hoysala Ballāla is eulogised as 'Vaishṇava-chakravarti' in a record of 1217 A.D. Similar praise occurs of Polālva in 1224 A.D. A merchant, Dāmōdara setṭā, was a great devotee of Vishnu. Manchaya was 'a joy to the Vaishṇava sect'. The Brāhmaṇas of Kellavarti (Hassan Dist.) were 'parama-Vaishṇavas'.

This apart, there were persons who had accepted a particular form of Vishnu as their favourite. In 1095 A.D., a lady, Mēchaladēvi, is eulogised as pāṅkajanaṁbhāṅgati bhakte.
The Brāhmaṇas ofŚrīdharapura are described as Jagannātha-pāda-yugārādhakar.193 The Brāhmaṇas ofAraśikere are referred to as Kesava-Śrī-pādabjamōda bhringer.194 Daśavanta dandanāyaka is depicted as Śrī-Viśthaladēva-dibya-pāda-padmārādhaka.195 Paṭta-sāhana Mādiyanna is praised as Śrī-Lakṣmi-Nārāyanadēvara-divya Śrīpādārādhakar.196 Perunāledēva is described as Śrī-Guru-Rāma-Kṛishṇa pādayugmāmbhoja pūjāratam.197 Mahāmaṇḍeśvara Ekkaladeśa was Śrīmad-Achyaṭa-charanā-lipta-chandane-charhitāṅga... Vishnu Śrīpādōdaka pavitrīkṛita gātra...Vaishnavagamāchāra niyamāsakta.198

Devotion to god, erection of temples, renovation of temples, making provisions in cash or kind for maintenance of worship in the temple - these are the main features of Vishnu's votaries as gleaned from contemporary records. Perhaps it would be appropriate here to cover glimpses of a couple of devotees.

Mēchaladevī, the mother of Dayāsimharaja, is stated to have erected a Vāsudeva temple in Agrahāra Hāruvabeluhur in 1095 A.D. A devotee of Paṅkajanaṁba, she entertained herself in hearing meritorious stories and purāṇas (Pūnyakatho.purāna praśange) A more vivid description occurs of another devotee in an epigraph of 1255 A.D. from Hāriyur (Hassan Dist.): Lāmodeśaraseṭṭi was a member of the Maleyāladeśi merchant community. Here is his depiction:

Hariya kathe Hariyakathanaṁ Hariyarchane Hariyabhakti Hariyānaṁdaṁ neredire Dāmodeṇā ḍ Harimayavene negalda
nambinava praharajam mattam Rukmânga Śuka Nadîja
Vibhīśhanan-Arjuna Hiranyâkasuta Hanûmanta Garuda
Dhruva Byâsa Nâradar-ëmbanâka Vishñubhartara bhaktîyîm
migilâda bhaktînîdhānanum... etc. 200

(d) The Śrīvaîśnavaîs

From the early part of the eleventh century onwards, epigraphic records in the south-eastern precincts of the Karnataka state introduce another sect of Vishnu worshippers called the Śrīvaîśnavaîs. 201 These records have a Tamilian bias and belong to the region which formed part of the Chôla territory. It appears therefore that, Viśishtādvaita ideas propagated by the immediate predecessors of Śrî Râmânuja had already gained ground before his contact with Karnataka. However, it was in the reign of Hoysâla Vishñuvardhana that Śrīvaîśnavism received unprecedented fillip, especially because of Śrî Râmânuja’s active presence in Karnataka. Numerous records, especially those from Tonnur, 202 explicitly indicate that with Śrî-Râmânuja accompanied a band of his followers of Tamil land and established themselves in South Karnataka, vindicating Śrīvaîśnava theosophy far and wide in southern part of South Karnataka. A few strongholds of Śrīvaîśnavas are enlisted in a record of 1270 A.D. 203 : Tîrûnârâyapapura (=Melukote), TonDanûr (=Tonnur), Nâgamangala, and Dadiga.
### CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF DEDICATIONS

#### TO VISHNU IN SOUTH KARNATAKA
(Inscriptions From 1000 to 1340 A.D)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year A.D.</th>
<th>Place/District</th>
<th>Deity Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1007</td>
<td>Malurpatna/Bangalore</td>
<td>JayagrāndasaVinnagarālvar EC. IX, Chen. Ptn. 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1008</td>
<td>Honganur/Bangalore</td>
<td>Kurtāvavinnagarālvar Ibid. 42a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1014</td>
<td>Malur/Bangalore</td>
<td>AppiramaVinnagarālvar Ibid. 88c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1027</td>
<td>Tagarti/Shimoga</td>
<td>Narāyana (Janārdana*) Ibid. VII, Skr. 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1032</td>
<td>Sarekoppa/Shimoga</td>
<td>Gōpāla Ibid. Sb. 191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1048</td>
<td>Kodaganur/Chitradurga</td>
<td>Vishnu EC. XI, Dg. 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1048</td>
<td>Balligave/Shimoga</td>
<td>Vishnu EC. VII, Skr. 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1059</td>
<td>Isamudra/Chitradurga</td>
<td>Beḷdale Gōpi's temple(Gōpāla?) EC. XI, Ch. Dg. 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. 1060</td>
<td>Bada/Chitradurga</td>
<td>(Trikūta*); Narāyana, (Allālēśvara, Syayambhū*) Ibid. Dg. 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1065</td>
<td>Balligave/Shimoga</td>
<td>Keśava EC. VII, Skr. 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1067</td>
<td>Helebbennur/Shimoga</td>
<td>Vishnu MAR. 1929, Smg. 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1071</td>
<td>Balligave/Shimoga</td>
<td>Harihārāditya EC. VII, Skr. 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. 1071*</td>
<td>Malalkere/Chitradurga</td>
<td>(Trikūta-Shiva, Janārdana, Sūrya) EC. XII, Dg. 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1072</td>
<td>Balligave/Shimoga</td>
<td>Narasimha EC. VII, Skr. 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1076</td>
<td>Kuruva/Shimoga</td>
<td>Keśava Ibid. Honnal. 1, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1079</td>
<td>Achapura/Shimoga</td>
<td>Trikūta-Maheśvara, Vishnu, Āditya EC. VIII, Sg. 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1082</td>
<td>Hiriyangala/Chikmagalur</td>
<td>Singapperumāl EC. VI, 241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1087</td>
<td>Oblapura/Chitradurga</td>
<td>Vishnu (Parāvāsudēva) Ibid. XI, Dg. 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1092</td>
<td>Āśinda/Chikmagalur</td>
<td>Narasimha Ibid. VI, Kadur, 155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Deity</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Chikka Bemmatti/Hassan</td>
<td>Nārāyaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1095</td>
<td>Helebelur/Hassan</td>
<td>Vāsudeva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1098</td>
<td>Beguru-Agrahara/Shimoga</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Anekannambadi/Hassan</td>
<td>Trikūṭa-Kēśava</td>
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<td>Lakshmi-Nārasiṁhā,Vēṇugopāla</td>
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<td>Halladamadahalli/Mysore</td>
<td>Mādhava</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Agagur/Hassan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lakshmi-Narayana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1103</td>
<td>Nyamati/Shimoga</td>
<td>(Narasimha*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1106-07</td>
<td>Hedatale/Mysore</td>
<td>Mūlāsṭhānami-udaiyār(Vishnu?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1113</td>
<td>Kodaganur/Chitradurga</td>
<td>Vishṇu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1114</td>
<td>Balligave/Shimoga</td>
<td>Anantaśayana, Chaturvimāsati mūrtis</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Talakad/Mysore</td>
<td>Kirtinārāyaṇa</td>
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<td>1117</td>
<td>Alur/Chitradurga</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Belur/Hassan</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Marale/Chikmagalur</td>
<td>Kēśava</td>
</tr>
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<td>C.1131</td>
<td>Parasurampura/Chitradurga</td>
<td>Channakeśava</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.1132</td>
<td>Halagur/Mandya</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
</tr>
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<td>C.1135</td>
<td>Nagamangala/Mandya</td>
<td>Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kēśava, Vēṇugopāla</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Bannur/Mysore</td>
<td>Vishṇu</td>
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<td>No.</td>
<td>Place(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1140</td>
<td>Sivagange/Bangalore</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1141</td>
<td>Udduru/Hassan</td>
<td>Harihara</td>
</tr>
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<td>1142</td>
<td>Channagiri/Shimoga</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1143</td>
<td>Harihara/Chitradurga</td>
<td>Narayana</td>
</tr>
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<td>Harihara/Chitradurga</td>
<td>Yoganarayana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1144</td>
<td>Kudlapura-Mysore</td>
<td>Parasurama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1148</td>
<td>Harihara-Chitradurga</td>
<td>Shankaranarayana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1149</td>
<td>Honnavara/Hassan</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1149</td>
<td>Areyatti-Bagalatti/Kolar</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1149</td>
<td>Aranimale/Kolar</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1149</td>
<td>Kantapura/?</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1149</td>
<td>Halasur/?</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1149</td>
<td>Tamarecharu/?</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1149</td>
<td>Kunigal/Tumkur</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Balligave/Shimoga</td>
<td>Narayana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1150</td>
<td>Sgaganahalli/Bangalore</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Tonnur/Mandya</td>
<td>Lakshmirayana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1151</td>
<td>Kadidala/Tumkur</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1152</td>
<td>Tonnur/Mandya (Yogam Narasimha)</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1153</td>
<td>Belluru/Kolar</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kottagere/Tumkur</td>
<td>Padmanaabha,Kesaava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Tonnur/Mandya</td>
<td>Vittirundapprumala(Krishna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Balligave/Shimoga</td>
<td>Virakesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1160</td>
<td>Bennegere/Shimoga</td>
<td>Narasimha*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1161</td>
<td>Kallangere/Hassan</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1162-63</td>
<td>Nitre/Mysore</td>
<td>Vasudeva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Page 1</td>
<td>Page 2</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1163</td>
<td>Hullekere/Hassan</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1163</td>
<td>Sivara/Tumkur</td>
<td>Channakesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1164</td>
<td>Sasuvehalli/Shimoga</td>
<td>Lakshmi-Narasimha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1164</td>
<td>Kittanakere/Hassan</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1166</td>
<td>Honnudike/Tumkur</td>
<td>Janardhana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1166</td>
<td>Gorur/Hassan</td>
<td>Vasudeva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1167</td>
<td>Haralukote/Mysore</td>
<td>Kesava* (Vishnugriha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1167</td>
<td>Betamangala/Kolar</td>
<td>Manavaliyvar (Vishnu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1168</td>
<td>Sutturu-Mysore</td>
<td>Nagakesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Brahmasamudra/Chikmagalur</td>
<td>Vishnu-Sriyana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1172</td>
<td>Vithaladevanahalli/Tumkur</td>
<td>Govinda &amp; Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1173</td>
<td>Belur/Hassan</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1173</td>
<td>Arasikere/Hassan</td>
<td>Lakshmivara-Kesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1175</td>
<td>Belur/Hassan</td>
<td>Kirtinaraya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1177</td>
<td>Kudlur/Hassan</td>
<td>Harahara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1178</td>
<td>Ambale/Chikmagalur</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1179</td>
<td>Sindhaghatta/Mandya</td>
<td>Nakshminarya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1180</td>
<td>Belagutti/Shimoga</td>
<td>Kesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1180</td>
<td>Bandalike/Shimoga</td>
<td>Shankaranarya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1181</td>
<td>Byadarahalli/Bangalore</td>
<td>Singhapperunnal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1181</td>
<td>Haleyur/Chikmagalur</td>
<td>Prasanna-Kesava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1185</td>
<td>Tarikere/Chikmagalur</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1185</td>
<td>Kandy/Chikmagalur</td>
<td>Janardhana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1186</td>
<td>Virahevanahalli/Hassan</td>
<td>Viranaraya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1188</td>
<td>Beratahalli/Mysore</td>
<td>Vasudeva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1188</td>
<td>Algod/Mysore</td>
<td>Abhayavallabhadēva:Hebsur,p.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1189</td>
<td>Mudigonda/Mysore</td>
<td>Dēśipperumāl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1191</td>
<td>Anekere/Hassan</td>
<td>Channakēśava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1194</td>
<td>Bommenahalli/Hassan</td>
<td>Trikūta-Mallikārjuna Mallikārjuna, Madhusūdana, Sūrya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1195</td>
<td>Malur/Bangalore</td>
<td>Śārjuna-Rāma-ppperumāḷ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1198</td>
<td>Belur/Hassan</td>
<td>Harīhara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1200</td>
<td>Bommenahalli/Bangalore</td>
<td>Alagapperumāḷ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1200</td>
<td>Chatchattahalli/Hassan</td>
<td>Trikūta*-Chatteśvara, Vishṇu,Sūrya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talagunda/Shimoga</td>
<td>Madhava</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sattihalli/Chikmagalur</td>
<td>Beṭhedēva (Rangaswāmi)?</td>
</tr>
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<td>C.12th cent.</td>
<td>Haralukote/Mysore</td>
<td>(Janārdana*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mulluru/Mysore</td>
<td>Vishṇu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Agara/Mysore</td>
<td>Śiṅgapperumāḷ (Atkondapillai Yn.68 Lakshminarasāmi*)</td>
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<td>Kollegal/Mysore</td>
<td>Vinḍuvaripperumāḷ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1206</td>
<td>Belavadi/Hassan</td>
<td>Viḍanārāyaṇa, Gōpāla,Yoga-Narasimha(Trikūta*)</td>
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<td>1207</td>
<td>Bandalike/Shimoga</td>
<td>Vishṇu (Gōvinda?*)</td>
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<td>1209</td>
<td>Dindigur/Hassan</td>
<td>Kēśava</td>
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<td>Holalkere/Chitradurga</td>
<td>Padma-nārāyaṇa</td>
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<td>C.1210</td>
<td>Agraharabelguli/Hassan</td>
<td>Kēśava,Īsvara (Dvīkūta*)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.1211</td>
<td>Talālur/Hassan</td>
<td>Madhusūdana</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.1214</td>
<td>Talatore/Hassan</td>
<td>Kēśava,Gōpāla</td>
</tr>
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<td>Albur/Tumkur</td>
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<td>Santigrama/Hassan</td>
<td>Yoganarasimha</td>
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<td>Kulagana/Mysore</td>
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<td>(new), Yn. 88</td>
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<td>1273 Abbani/Kolar</td>
<td>Dāmōdarapperumāḷ</td>
<td>Ibid.IX.Kl.242</td>
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<td>1273 Sagade/Mysore</td>
<td>Kēśava</td>
<td>Ibid.IV.(new) Cn.318</td>
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<td>1275 Hangalā/Mysore</td>
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<td>Ibid.III.(new) Gpt.198</td>
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<td>Tīruvengadapurumāḷ</td>
<td>Ibid.X,Mb.245</td>
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<td>Ibid.XI,Dg.59</td>
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<td>Virrīvunda-pperumāḷ (Gōpāla?)</td>
<td>Ibid.X,Mb.218</td>
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<td>-do- Basavapatna/Mysore</td>
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<td>1284 Belluru/Mandya</td>
<td>Prasanna-Mādhava, Rāmakrishṇa, Allālānātha</td>
<td>Ibid.IV.Nmgs.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1284 Bellur/Kolar</td>
<td>Vaḷavanda-pperumāḷ</td>
<td>Ibid.X,Kl.98</td>
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<td>Ibid.III.(new) Njd.207</td>
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<td>1286 Chitrādurgā/Chitrādurgā</td>
<td>Kōti-Nārāyaṇa Harihara, Gōpinātha, (Witness gods)</td>
<td>Ibid.XI,Cd.21</td>
</tr>
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<td>1286 Hulgunda/Chitrādurgā</td>
<td>Rāmakrishṇa</td>
<td>Ibid.XI,Cd.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>1286 -do- Raṅganātha</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
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<td>1286 -do- Kōti-Nārāyaṇa Gōpinātha (Witness gods)</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
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<td>Vaguvyavanda-pperumāḷ</td>
<td>EC.X,Kl.27</td>
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<td>Vignasante/Tumkur</td>
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<td>Laṅgha-Narasiṅha Gopāla</td>
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<td>Vishnu (Renovation)</td>
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1322 Kyatanahalli/Mysore Lakshminarayana EC.III(new)Hg.24
1224 Singapura/Chikmagalur Narasimha Ibid.VI.Tk.6
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1334 Varanathakallahalli/Mandiya Varaha* EC.VI(new)Km.103
1336 Vagala/Bangalore Varadaraja EC.IX.Hkt.134
1338 Chitradurga/Chitradurga Rama_krishna- Gopala EC.IX.Cd.6
1338 Belgola/Mandiya Rama_Lakshmana EC.VI,(new)Sr.70
(Sarvap-namasyad- agraḥāram
Dakshina-Vāraṇāsi
Udbhava-Sarvajña-
deva-vara-ppperumäl)

14th cent.Hindinakere/Tumkur Kesava EC.XVI,Ck.66
-do- Panditanahalli/Hassan Lakshminarayana EC.XV,Bl.375
-do- Kuduragundi/Hassan Kshetra EC.V,Hn.186

C.TEMPLE WORSHIP DURING 10th-14th CENTURIES

It is during this period that for the first time information about temple worship in detail can be had from a study of epigraphs. Here certain aspects of temple worship special festivities, temple staff, etc. are elaborated. Since the nature of information for both the south and north Karnataka are similar, the evidence of both the parts are considered together.
The records of the period are informative about nitya-pūja although naimittika-pūja is also referred to. The nitya-pūja is mentioned as nityārdhanē or nitya-pūja-vidhāna, etc. Religious texts enjoin upon performance of worship at different times ranging from one to sixteen in a day. Usually all āgamas agree that offering worship thrice a day is the best. Not surprisingly, the contemporary records refer to trikālā-bhōga offered to the god, i.e. in the morning, at noon and in the evening. At the time of installation of the deity in a temple, usually provision was made for daily worship, renovation, etc. by the patrons and the common devotees, depending upon their economic status, so that the process of worship was perpetuated without hindrance. Donations were also given from time to time by the votaries visiting the temple both in cash and kind. The patronage was essentially from the merchant community and ruling class.

The daily worship or nitya-pūja of the deity consisted of the shodashopachāras (sixteen services): dhyāna (invocation), āvāhana (invitation), āsana (offering a seat), pādya (offering water for washing the feet), arghya (offering arghya water), snāna (bath), vastra (cloth), sacred thread, gandha (perfumes), kusuma (flower), dhūpa (incense), dīpa (lighting lamp), naivādyā (food, cooked rice), salutation, circumambulation (pradakśīma) and dispersal.
In the records a general term, अंग-रंग-भोग, is used for connoting the upachāras. The अंगभोग pertains to the upachāras made by the archakas or pūjāris in the garbhagriha, while the रङ्गभोग appears to imply the services offered by the remaining temple staff, outside the Garbhagriha, in the rangamandapa. Some records mention only अंगभोग. An inscription from Kurtakoti (Dharwad dist.) mentions the items included in the अंगभोग: गंध-पुष्प-धुप-दीप-निवेद्य-अदिगालम अंगभोगाक्कां द्राव्यपुर्वकां पासदिसि. Another record includes स्नान in the list.

Sometimes the devotees made individual provisions for different items. For instance, grant was made in cash or kind for the स्नान, धुप, निवेद्य, पुष्प, etc. Provision for burning perpetual lamps in temples was a common feature. Separate provisions were made for lamps before the god in the morning and in the evening everyday which sometimes numbered to as many as a hundred. There is reference to suspended lamps hung near the face of the deity. Tulasi leaves being considered sacred for Vishnu by Vaishnavas, provision was often made for growing tulasi plants in separate gardens. Similarly arrangement was made for regular supply of flowers either through garland-makers or by maintaining flower-gardens. For नायवेद्य, various items were offered thrice a day. These included, among others, cooked rice, बादकाय (dry coconut ?), तंबूल (betel and betel-nuts), फळा (plantains, fruits)
hālu-mandāge (milk-and-sweet pāpad), ghee, curds, etc. At the time of waving the lamp (ārati) the pūjā was accompanied by vādyā and dindige (blowing musical instruments and beating drum) devotional songs were sung in the temple, and separate staff appears to have been maintained for singing songs.

A few special festivals celebrated in the temples are also mentioned in the records. Of these, Chaitra and Pavitra are almost invariably referred to. The former was obviously a festival celebrated in the month of Chaitra (March-April). The Pavitrotsava was celebrated once in every year, between the full moon day of Āshādha month and the full moon day of the Kārtika or any of the four months commencing with Jēṣṭha. Garlands of sacred thread made of cotton or silk were put on the holy image. Hoysala king Narasimha I is stated to have been on his way to attend the Pavitrotsava ceremony of god Nārāyaṇa of Belur in the month of Āshādha. The Pavitrārōpaṇa was accompanied by the recital of Vedas.

Of the other festival occasions mention may be made of Davana-parva falling in the Āsviṇa month (October-November), Dhamu-parva (December-January), Śrījayanti, Śrīmalakrishna Janmāśṭamī, Dīpavali, and Tiruvadhyayana, etc.

The temple Staff

The number of temple service staff depended upon the income of the temple. It consisted of Śrīvaiṣṇava Brāhmaṇas,
learned men (vidyavantara) pujari, puranakaras, vedapathakas singers, cooking staff, temple cleaners, lighters of lamps, garland-makers, musicians, reciters of tiruvaiyoli.

The Yatis

There are certain interesting epigraphs which mention yatis attached to some temples. In a record of Santigrāma (Hassan Dist.), Achalaprakāśa is stated to have erected Varada-Narasimha temple (c.1173-1220). King Vīra Ballāla II is stated to have heard a discourse on Vasishtha yoga from this person. He was disciple of Paramahamsa and an advaitin. He is eulogised in glorious terms in the epigraph. According to the Bhagavata paramparā, a yogi named Achalananda, a Vaiṣṇava devotee, is said to have flourished near Turuvekere long ago. It is possible that this is the same as Achalaprakāśa.

A record of 1265 A.D. from Ingalesvar (Bijapur Dist.) mentions Yogichakravarti Prakāśaprabhu. He appears to have been attached to the Gopāla temple of the place.

In a record from Belur (Hassan Dist.), dated 1277 A.D., Yati Kamalanābhatīrtha is referred to. A certain amount of money was deposited as bhikshā for offering bali thrice a day to this yati. If he went out of station, the same had to be offered to the pilgrims from other regions (desantarās).

This in brief is the information we get about the temple worship from the records of Karnataka.

*****
NOTES AND REFERENCES

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8. Ibid.No.111
9. Ibid.No.24
10. Ibid.Vol.XVIII,No.110
14. SII.Vol.XV,No.135,Especially, Kesava is mentioned with pre-fixes - Chenna(beautiful) and prasanna in epigraphs.
15. SII.Vol.XV,No.111
16. Ibid.
17. Bhaktiyin-uttama Vishnu pratishtheyam mādīsī, SII.Vol.XV,No.24
20. KRISI.1943-44,No.11
22. Desai K., Iconography of Visnu,figs.26,27,etc.
23. SII.Vol.XI,pt.1,No.84
24. *EI*.Vol.XVIII,pp.212-ff: "May Nārāyaṇa who rests upon Ananta in the milk ocean and who wears the kaustubha jewel, worshipful, with heart moist with the liquor of grace, coming to blest Pūrṇi and dwelling there in company with Kamalā and the lady Earth and the lotus-born Brahman who enjoys his essence in his navel, protect the thousand."

25. For details of this aspect see Schrader O.F., *Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā*, pp.27 ff.


28. *Ibid.*, Note 76


30. The Janārdana form of Viṣṇu was considerably popular in South Karnataka, during this period. The aberration appears to be due to the fact that Viṣṇu icons with chakra and śankha as attributes in the upper hands were the order of the day in pre-10th century times. But for the absence of padma, these images conform, should we take into consideration the order of the emblems held, to either Mādhava or Janārdana. (Allowing scope for interchange of the attributes in the upper hands, we get two more forms viz., Keśāva and Vāsudeva). Due to the reason, by chance, that Mādhava and Janārdana hold in their upper hands the most characteristic emblems viz., chakra and śankha, it is likely that these forms continued to be popular in this region.


33. *Infra*, p.240

34. *Infra*, Part-II, under Avatāras.

36. EC. Vol. XI, Pl. 36

37. For instance, one of the deities of the Narasimha temple at Halsi (Belgaum Dist.) is Bhu-Varaha (Fig. 44)

38. SII. Vol. XX, No. 174

39. SII. Vol. IX, pt. 1, No. 367

40. See Appendix B.

41. EC. Vol. XI, Kunigal 1

42. Cf. evidence in Infra, pp. 245 f.

43. ARE., 1960–61, B. 515

44. Ibid. 1953–54, B. 76

45. SII. Vol. XV, No. 187

46. ARSIE., 1934–35, E. 24

47. EI. Vol. XXVIII, pp. 312 ff.


49. Infra, pp. 249–51

50. e.g., Jambulānga temple, Badami, Nāganātha temple, Nagaral; North-west temple of Konta group, whole etc. have Brahmā, Śiva and Vishnu in the ceilings. Also the Trimūrti temple Badami, 699 A.D.

51. IA., Vol. VI, p. 142; SII. Vol. XV, No. 573

52. Annigeri A. M., A Guide to Badami, (Dharwad, 1982 Edn.), Fig. 14.

53. At least from Chalukya times, Sun worship was considerably popular in Karnāṭaka. Mālegitti Śivālaya (c. 625 A.D.), Badami, Durga temple (c. 700 A.D.), Aihole etc. are known to have been Aditya temples. In fact, what occurs in the epigraphs of North Karnataka as Keśavāditya is likely to have been a composite deity showing Śūrya and Vishṇu in one.
54. SII. Vol. XV, No. 531
56. Ibid. Vol. XV, No. 232
57. See JBBRAS. Vol. IX, pp. 282ff
58. This is indicated by an icon of Mahālakshmi there. JORM., Vol. XXVIII, pp. 17 ff.
59. SII. Vol. XI, pt. i, No. 84
60. Sundara A., in JUK, Vol. XIII, p. 95, pl. II, 4
61. Vettam Mani, Puranic Encyclopaedia, p. 307
62. Ibid., p. 309
64. SII. Vol. XVIII, No. 89
65. HAS. No. 18, 15
66. SII. Vol. XV, No. 24
68. HAS., No. 18, 15
69. ARE. 1958-59, p. 93
70. HAS. No. 18, 15
71. SII. Vol. XVIII, No. 235
72. EC. Vol. VI, Kadur 66
73. Ibid. Vol. V, Bl. 175
74. Ibid., 171
75. Ibid. Vol. VI, Kadur 66; Ibid. Vol. V, Åk. 114
76. Ibid. Vol. V, Åk. 118
77. Ibid. Vol. VI, Kadur 66
78. Ibid. Vol. XI, Dg. 25
79. Ibid. Vol. XII, Tiptur, 48
80. Ibid. Vol. III (new), Gpt. 6
81. Ibid. Vol. VII, Skr. 137
82. EC. Vol. VII, Sg. 5
83. Ibid. Vol. VIII, Sorab 135
84. Ibid. Vol. XI, Cd. 12: this aspect is the same as Gopalakrishna
85. MAR, 1929, Hassan 8
86. EC. Vol. V, Ak. 68 (Surēśa).
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid. Vol. V, Ak. 8 (I)
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid. 68
91. Ibid. Vol. XII, Tiptur 78
92. MAR, 1943, Hassan 3
93. EC. Vol. V, Bl. 20
94. Ibid. Hn. 66; Ibid. Bl. 112
95. Ibid. Hn. 66
96. Ibid. Vol. VII, Skr. 123
97. Ibid. 137
98. Ibid. 16
99. Ibid. Vol. XI, Dg. 25
100. Ibid. Vol. XII, Tiptur 78
102. Ibid. Vol. XI, Dg. 2; Ibid. Vol. VI, Kadur 66
103. Ibid. Vol. VI, Cm. 137
104. Ibid. Vol. XI, Dg. 2 also Ibid. Vol. XII, Tiptur 48
105. Ibid. Vol. VI, Kadur 66
107. e.g., EC.Vol.IV(new) Yn.88; EC.Vol.V,Hn.101; EC.Vol.IV,Nagamangala 38; EC.Vol.III,Njd.207; EC.Vol.IX,Hoskote 136
MAR,1929,Sivarapatna (Kolar),p.96; MAR,1929,p.112,etc. Of these the 'Allalaperumal' appears to have been represented sometimes in āsana posture also: e.g. Nuggehalli,HV,p.118
108 EC.Vol.XII,Tiptur 48
109. Harighara (Chitradurga Dist.),EC.Vol.XI,Dg.61
110. Settikere (Hassan Dist.),HV,p.182
111. Somanathapura (Mysore Dist.)EC.V,(New),T.Narasipura 88
112. EC.Vol.VI,(new) Pandavapura 119; HV,p.83 etc.
113. HV,p.118
114. Ibid.
115. EC.Vol.VII,Shikaripur 123; "On the summit of the waves of the Milk Sea does he (Śrīchāra) repose on his extensive couch the serpent Ādiśeṣha, and while thus the destroyer of sins was reposing in the deep of yōga his mind being directed to creation of the world, as if his power had assumed a separate bodily form, from the lotus of his navel sprang in submission Brahmā".
116. EC.Vol.VII,Shikaripur 137
117. Śrīkānta Śāsvata Lakshmīkāntam nīja tāloḍarasthitam lōkām lōkaṁ bagegomdāṁ nata naukakan-ananta Bhōgaśayanan-anantām.
118. Balligave, EC.Vol.VII,Shikaripur 166
119. EC.Vol.VII,Shikaripur 137
121. Ibid.Vol.VI,Chikmagalur 21
122. Ibid.Vol.XV,Ak.221
In his clear eyes the Fish, in his feet, the Tortoise; in his throat, the Boar; in his waist, Mrīśimha; in the sport of acquiring the world, Viṁśata; in subduing his enemies, the three Rāmas; in the force of his own yōga; Buddha, in putting down the evil, Kalki; hence was Ballāla, the ruler of the earth, really daśavatāra. 

They are:

(i) jayayāvishkritam Viṁśatr-Vārāham kshobhitarnavam
dakshinottara daṁstragra viāranta bhuvaṁ vapuh
(ii) namas-tasmai Varāhaya līlayā charatē mahīṁ
khurīntaragatōyasya mēru-khaṇa-khaṇēyatē

When, with a clear mind Prahlāda invoked the highest and the soul of the Universe (Viṁśatu), to show his omnipresence, even from (that very) pillar did come out Ugra-Narasimha, who having accomplished his mission and seen Prahlāda, cooled down with to the form of Lakshmi-Narasimha.
136. **Bhāgavata Purāṇa** VII, 8, 10

137. **EC. Vol. V, Ak. 68**: "He who said, - behold, brave one, take a boon, I am pleased with your (endurance of) troubles; your love, devotion and worship of me are unlimited; - the lord of the good who are of an ocean of fame, Lakshmī-Narasimha, - as granted to Prahlāda all his desires, so may that lord ever grant yours".


139. **Ibid. Vol. III, (new), Njd. 322, Kudlapura (Mysore Dist.)**

140. This legend persists to the present day in the coastal area of Western India. **EC. Vol. VII, Shikaripur 99, 1113 A.D.**

141. **Malur, EC. Vol. IX, Channapatna, 110 and 111; Belgola (Mysore Dist.), MAR, 1944, No. 11 (c. 13th century)**

142. **HV. p. 5**

143. **EC. Vol. VII, Skr. 100**

144. e.g. **EC. Vol. IV, Nagamangala 38; Ibid. Vol. XI, Cd. 32, Ibid. Cd. 6**

The doubt about the identification is cleared by an epigraph from Belur (**EC. Vol. V, Bl. 3**) which mentions "Rāmakrishnā janmāśṭami".

145. **EC. Vol. XI, Kunigal 1**

146. **Ibid. Vol. VII, Skr. 105**

147. **Ibid. 100**

148. **Ibid. Vol. V, Ak. 82**

149. **Ibid. Vol. V, (new), Tn. 88**


151. **Bhāgavata Purāṇa**, I, 3, 1 ff.

152. **EC. Vol. V, (new), Tn. 88**

153. **EC. Vol. XI, Dg. 36**

154. **Ibid.**
155. EC.Vol.VI, Kadur 66
156. Ibid.Vol.VIII, Sb.135; Deleury, The Cult of Vithoba, p.175) takes this as a reference to the existence of the temple of that god at that place. Evidence does not warrant such a deduction.
157. EC.Vol.VII, Sg.54
158. Ibid.Vol.V, Ak.108
160. EC.Vol.XI, Kunigal 1
161. Ibid.Vol.V, Hn 61; The deity is obviously Nārāyaṇa form of Vishnu, now designated as Kirtinarāyaṇa.
162. Davanagere, 1124 A.D., EC.Vol.XI, Dg.2; "Clothed in glistening raiment of the beautiful colour of gold; his crest radiant with variegated rays from the shining kaustubha; holding in his four hands the conch, the discus, the sword, and the mace; mounted on Garuḍa; black as the new rain cloud: Hari may be protect you".
163. EC.Vol.XI, Dg.39, "Victory be to Sthānu and Dhara - whose hands bear the rosary and trident, and discus and conch".
164. Ibid.Dg.25; "Some saying that beside Hari there is no god in the earth, and some saying that there is no god beside Hari in the earth; in order to remove the doubt of mankind, was assumed with glory in Kūḍalūru the one form of Hari-hara - may he with affection preserve us".
165. As in Harihara.
166. As in Nagamangala,
167 e.g. EC.Vol.VI, Cm.137; Ibid.Vol.V, Hn.116; Ibid.Vol.IV, Hunsur, 137, etc.
168. EC.Vol.VI, Cm.137 (1130 A.D.), "Whether holding the āsāṅka or the kapāla why make any difference? Whether the chakra is in the hand or the trisula why distinguish between the weapons? In token of which they assume one form with two
hearts, the joyful Hari and Hara - may they ever protect.

169. EC.Vol.VII,Skr.125

170. Ibid.Vol.V,Bl.175, "Possessor of Sri, beloved of Speech goddess, favourite of the eyes and heart of Umâ - able himself to uphold, create and destroy - free from the qualities of rajas and tamas - may Vîranârâyaṇa, in the triple form of Vishnu, Brahmâ and Śiva, ever preserve the three worlds".

171. HV.p.179

172. EC.Vol.V,Bl.112

173. Ibid

174. MAR.1944,No.11

175. EC.Vol.V,Ak.108

176. Ibid.Bl.161

177. Ibid.175

178. Ibid.Ak.108

179. E.g. Ibid.Vol.V,Manjrabad 18, Ibid.Bl.16, etc.

180. Ibid.Vol.XI,Dg.25; is clearly expressive of this theme.

181. MAR.1929,Hn.8

182. EC.Vol.V.(new),Tn.88; Ibid.Vol.XI,Dg.36

183. Ibid.Vol.XII,Tk.9

184. Ibid.Vol.V,Bl.3


186. Ibid.Vol.VII,Skr.137

187. Ibid.Vol.V,Bl.224

188. Ibid.Vol.XI,Dg.25

189. Ibid.Vol.V,Ak.108

190. Ibid.114
200. Ibid. Ak.108: "Dāmārā was delighting in the story of Hari, in repeating the name of Hari, in devotion to Hari - a blend which virtually made him Harimaya. And his devotion to lord (Vishnu) excelled the devotion of many Vishnu bhaktas like Rukmāṇga, Śuka, Nadija, Vibhilshaṇa Arjuna, Hiraṇya's son (=Prahlāda), Hanumanta, Gaura, Dhrvā, Vyāsa and Nārāda".

201. Ibid. Vol. IX, Channapatna 88c (Maluc, Bangalore Dt.); Ibid. 129

202. Application of Tamil names for Vaishnavite gods and use of Tamil language for records in this place as well as numerous places of Mysore and Bangalore Districts is a strong indication of this fact.

203. EC. Vol. IV, Nagamangala 49

204. The information from the epigraphic records is necessarily about the temple worship. How far it differed from household worship is difficult to postulate. However, it can only be stated that the temple worship was more elaborate than the household worship. There is positive evidence in the records to the prevalence of the latter. For instance SII. Vol. XI, p.t. i, No. 118: mane-mane-Samkar-Āchvāta-budhāthā-pujeyin....
205. Performed usually once in a year on the day of installation of god or in any particular month considered sacred and important for the god. Details are not available in the records. They simply mention nitya-naimittika-pūjā, e.g. EC.Vol.V, Bl.175; Ibid. 71; Ibid.Vol.XII, Tiptur 78, etc. However, it may be surmised that the ceremonies and rituals were done more elaborately and with grandeur than usual.

The other type of worship called kāmya-pūjā, for which no direct reference is traced, consists of worship done for attaining certain goal by the grace of god, usually mundane. Most of the donations must have been made possibly as kāmya-pūjā.

206. SII.Vol.XV, No.222
207. EC.Vol.XIV, Sr.221
208. Rāmachandra Rao Tirupati Timmappa, pp.283-84
209. e.g. SII.Vol.XVIII, No.71
210. EC.Vol.XI, Dg.43
211. Smritichandrika, Anhikakānda , p.332, Also Gonda J., Visnuism and Śivaism - A Comparison, p.186, note 196
212. e.g. EI.Vol.XVIII, pp.178 ff.; SII.Vol.XVIII, No.90; Ibid. IX, pt.1, No.158.
213. SII.Vol.XI, pt.11, No.134
215. EC.Vol.XIV, Sr.221; Ibid.Vol.V, (new) Tn. 88; Even coconut oil was provided for the god's bath; EC.Vol.V, Bl.155
216. SII.Vol.XV, No.62
217. Ibid.No.61
218. ARSIE.,1934-35, E 24
219. EC.Vol.V, Ak.174
220. Ibid.73, - Sandhyā-dīpotsava
221. EC.Vol.VI, Kadur 58
222. Tulasī-vrindāvana, EC.Vol.V, Bl.155; tolasiya-bana, EC.Vol. VI, Cm.22; tungabhādrā tīradalu mādisida Śrī tolasiya vrindāvana, EC.Vol.VI, Cm.78; vanamāle, EC.Vol.VI, Koppa 12 etc.
224. SII., Vol.XV, No.111
225. EC.Vol.XV, Bl.248; and 249
226. Kēśavadēvara hālu-mandagē, SII.Vol.XV, No.177
227. A Narasimhadevara trīkālada bhogavu dināigevu vādyavanu bārisuvantāga maddaleya Kallaya tanna tammanu kūdi ibbarū kūdinadesuvantāga etc. SII.Vol.XVIII, 271,
228. SII. Vol.IX, pt.i, No.33
229. Ibid.Vol.XV, No.135
231. EC.Vol.V, Bl.176
232. SII. Vol.XI, pt.11, No.189
233. EC.Vol.VI, (new), Kr.86 and 90
234. Ibid.Vol.V, Bl.66 and XV Bl.248: Provision was made for special worship throughout the month of Dhanu every day. Usually in that month the temple appears to have witnessed hectic activity. Food is taken very early in the morning.
235. Śrījayanti appears to have been the day of birth of the god. In a temple in Tonnur provision was made for the Śrījayanti of god Krishna, Gopal B.R., Śrī Rāmānuja in Karnataka, No.5; similarly provision was made for special worship of god Narasimha on his Śrījayanti day in Narasipura; EC.Vol. XV, Bl.159.
This is apparently the birth day festival of Krishna, falling on the ashtami of the month of Simha (Aug.-Sept.). The reference is a later one. EC.Vol.V, Bl.3, and Bl.28. It is mistaken sometimes for Rama's birth day and Krishna's birth day separately; but it has been pointed out above the Rāmakṛishṇa is the same as Krīṣṇa and Baladeva.

ARE.1958-59, B.693: Special illuminations were made during Dīpavāli.

Special mention of this is made in a record of Narasipura. Narasimhadevara tiruvadhyayanada habbada...ārādhaneya etc. Possibly it pertains to the special recitations such as Narasimha Purāṇa or recitation of Tamil songs, etc. EC.Vol. XV, Bl.160. Some more festivals are mentioned in the records, for instance ēkādaśi, dvādaśi etc. on which days of the month special worship was conducted in temples.

EC.Vol.V, Bl.58. However this is applicable to Southern part of the state only, where Śrīvaishnava impact had been felt.

Ibid.  

EC.Vol.V, Hn.102, SII.Vol.IX, pt.1, No.133, ARE.1958-59, B.668. SP.No.19, etc.


SII.Vol.XI, pt.1, No.189


Āratikottapa, EC.Vol.V, Bl.71

Mālakaras, Ibid.

SII. Vol.XVIII, No.271.

Gopala B.R., Op.Cit. No.20 and 21. This is applicable for temples influenced by Śrīvaishnavas only. Tiruvāy-mōli consisted of Tamil devotional songs to which Rāmānuja gave sanctity. Its recitation originally was probably confined
to the places which Rāmānuja visited in Karnataka, as in Tonnur and Melukote, but perhaps spread later on to other places of Śrīvaishnava dominance.

249. MAR, 1940, No. 1. This is indicative of the fact that the Adhvaita concept must have been very prominent among the Vaishnavas in Karnataka, prior to the advent of Śrīvaishnavism and Madhvaism. Śaṅkarāchārya himself was somewhat lenient to Vaishnavism.

250. Ibid.

251. SII. Vol. XV, No. 196

252. EC. Vol. V, Bl. 53.

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