

CHAPTER-VI

SCULPTURAL REPRESENTATION OF GARUḌA

In Hindu mythology particularly in Vaiṣṇavism GaruḌa the mount (*vāhana*) of Viṣṇu seems to have a great importance in religious aspect and as well as in imperial aspects also. It is noteworthy that the national emblem of the Republic of Indonesia contains the figures of the GaruḌa, which is taken from a monumental sculptural representation of Viṣṇu seated on a GaruḌa. It is proposed to make a survey of the archaeological wealth connected with GaruḌa. We have to study in a meticulous way about the sculptural representation of GaruḌa found in different aspects. It is also noted that in the development of Indian art and iconography, the animal motifs played a significant role. From the primitive mythology, in different religions, the characteristic attributes and ability to act in different species of animals have been shown in different ways. For example, in *Mahābhārata* we may trace the story of *Airāvata*.¹ The story related in the epic runs thus “*At length rose the great elephant Airāvata of huge body and with two pair of white tusks. And he took the holder of*

¹ *Mahābhārata*- 1.18.40

the thunder bolt.” In the same epic we find that “Seated on his elephant *Airāvata* Indra Pours down rain”² and *Airāvata*, “draws up water from the under world for Indra to rain”.³

Likewise, as shown in the previous chapters in our scriptures, Garuḍa has been shown as the mount of Lord Viṣṇu and his different activities have also been nicely depicted. These activities of Garuḍa are represented in sculptures also.

We have found the sculptural representation of Garuḍa in the *origin of Viṣṇu worship and images*. To study the development of Garuḍa motif in Indian art, it will be of interest now, to describe some about old Garuḍa images.

An interesting seal impression is found on a round tablet from Mohenjodaro, having the description of an orb with flames shooting forth from it. The growing moon circle resembles the half-risen morning sun appears on the pottery of Amri, a fragment of an earthen vessel of Harappa and also on post-Harappan potteries from Navadatoli, Navasa

² *Mahābhārata* – 6.95.34

³ *Mahābhārata* – 5.99.7

and Lothal. On the Harappan potteries of Mohenjodaro, a lotus like design is found.⁴

Lotus was a cult-symbol of the Sun God in later Hinduism. On the potteries discovered in Kaliabangan, Amri, Kulli, Jhukar, Lothal and Navadatoli, the sun in growing form appears. According to Vedic mythology the Sun-God⁵ is Garutmān. So, in the civilization of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, at that time, the sun god was mostly worshipped by men”.

It has been intimated by some that on the Indus seal a bull with one horn is described and it has been taken as a symbol of the sun god. Significantly the bull symbol is found in association with the sun disc. Viṣṇu, the god of the vedic mythology is called “*ekasriṅga*” and the unicorn of the Indus seal recollect the attribute of the Sun god. The descriptions of the eagle or falcon of the Indus seals and potteries may be thought as the sunbird Garuḍa of later times. It is also noted that a symbol of the sun with a fixed triangular or a circular vase can be found

⁴ *Coins and Icons*, Page-30

⁵ *Rgveda*-1.164.46

on an Indus seal. In the culture of the Indus valley a (*dhvaja*) cult like the bull-cult describing the sun god is seen.⁶

The Besnagar Garuḍa pillar Inscription gives us to understand that Heliodorus, the ambassador of the Greek King Antialkidas of Taxila sent to the court of Suṅga King Bhagabhdra at Vidiṣā, embraced Vaiṣṇavism and set up a Garuḍa Pillar inscription in honour of the deity.⁷

It is also seen that from the folk-cults a considerable number of deities are enlisted and they are described as demi-gods or *Vyantarā devatās*. The Indians generally respect them. In the Buddhist texts Devas, Yakshas, Nāgas, Rākshasas, Asuras, Garuḍas, Kinnaras etc are also mentioned. These similar divinities are found in various sections of the Brahmanical Literature.⁸

From a study of myths and symbols in Indian Numismatic Art by Dr. Bhaskar Chottopadhyaya, it is seen that Vaisnavism was the religious faith of the Gupta Kings. In different types of gold and silver

⁶ *Coins and icons*, Page-30

⁷ *Coins and icons*, Page-3

⁸ *Ibid*, Page-6

coins, the vaisnavite symbols like Garuḍa and *Cakra (Sudarśana)* are found to have extensively used.⁹

Garuḍa, the *vāhana* of Viṣṇu is ascertained for the Yādavas as the emblems of some principal dynasties of the Southern India.

The birds such as peacock, owl, parrot, crow etc. are associated with the Mother Goddess, but the human bird Garuḍa is found to be the ‘*vāhana*’ of god Viṣṇu. Garuḍa is personified as the sun god traversing the space and is held to be the enemy of serpents. In Indian mythology, peacock is also supposed as the sunbird and is described in the epic as the eater of snakes. It is also noted that the mythical bird Garuḍa is associated with the male principle.¹⁰

It is also narrated that most probably of the 1st century B.C. a coin of the Vrishni-Rajanya-Gana shows on the face of coin, a pillar surmounted by an animal, intimated to be half-lion and half-elephant which is taken as crude description of Garuḍa, and a Cakra on the opposite.¹¹ Sometimes a wheel is seen on a copper coin which is attributed to King Achyuta of the 4th century A.D. On early Indian

⁹ *Coins and icons*, Page-13

¹⁰ *Coins and icons*, Page-46-47

¹¹ *Development of Hindu Iconography*, P-132, fn-I.

coinage a wheel is symbolized as sun god, because Viṣṇu originally was an evident of the solar energy-covering the universe. In the *Atharvaveda*, Viṣṇu is asked to bestow heat.

*Cf: viṣṇuryunaktu vahudhā tapaṁsyasmin yajñe suyujāḥ svāhā ||*¹²

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* Viṣṇu's cut off head becomes the sun.¹³

In post vedic literature his weapon is a rolling wheel, his vehicle Garuda, the sunbird.¹⁴

It is noticed that during Gupta period, Viṣṇu was represented by his *vāhana*, Garuḍa on coins.

It is also noticed that on the contrary Paramabhagavata Chandragupta II's silver and copper coins¹⁵, Garuḍa is depicted as standing, facing with out-spread wings, with or without human arms, or standing on an alter, or holding a snake in his mouth or merely holding it. More varieties of Garuḍa type copper coins are found than silver coins. On the other hand in Kumar Gupta I's Garuḍa type of coins,¹⁶

¹² *Atharva Veda* (V.26.7)

¹³ *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIV.1.1)

¹⁴ *Coins and icons*, Page-195.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, Page-197

¹⁶ *Ibid*, Page-197

Garuḍa is seen without spread wings. Again Garuḍa is most widely used as a conventional emblem. In Western India Viṣṇu's mount Garuḍa is depicted on Skanda Gupta's silver coins. Garuḍa emblem is found on the silver coins of Chandragupta II also. According to the source of religious history it is found that the extensive use of the Garuḍa symbol on the reverse of the silver coins issued by the imperial Guptas indicate their faith in Vaiṣṇavism.

Till now, we have discussed how Garuḍa is represented in the numismatic art. It is seen that in this kind of art also Garuḍa has been represented as the mount of Lord Viṣṇu, and he is also identified with sun god and solar energy.

In Sanskrit literature some evidence of image worship is found. We must direct our attention to actual sculptures and to references of images occurring in ancient inscriptions. In the time of Yāska, image worship comes forth. In his *Nirukta* he says – “We are now to consider the forms of the gods. One mode of representation in the hymn makes them resemble men; for they are praised and addressed as intelligent beings. They are also celebrated with limbs such as those of men.”

The images of gods and goddesses are worshipped by the Hindus not only in temples but also in private households. All the images other

than Viṣṇu might be sculptured as standing or sitting, but the images of Viṣṇu alone could be in all the three postures, standing, sitting and reclining.

We have found seated images of Viṣṇu with the *vāhana* Garuḍa. These images which are worshipped has already been referred to in the *Mahābhārata*.

*Cf: tam vabre vāhanam kṛṣṇo garutmantam mahāvalam |
dhvajam cakre bhagavānupari sthāsyatīti tam ||*¹⁷

Harivaṁśa describes images of Viṣṇu seated on his mount Garuḍa.

*Cf: samkha cakragadāpaṇim garuḍasyopari sthitam*¹⁸

The Gupta temple at Deogarh has a seated image of Viṣṇu of which only the left side has survived. Another image of Garuḍa, on the outer wall of the Harihara temple I at Asian, near Jodhpur, Viṣṇu is seated on the shoulders of Garuḍa who is depicted completely in human form.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Mahābhārata* (1.29.16)

¹⁸ *Harivaṁśa* (11.99.11)

¹⁹ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Ch. Seated images, Page-16-18

Images of Trivikrama form seated on the Garuḍa, are found on the walls on the Kandavia Mahadeva and the Viśvanātha temple at Khajuraho.²⁰

In the Asutosh Museum an image belonging to the 8th century represents Garuḍa with beautifully serrated feathers curved behind his human body. He supports the feet of Viṣṇu with both of his hands.²¹

The eastern Indian images of Viṣṇu on Garuḍa is not depicted in human form. In the Indian Museum an 8th century image shows Viṣṇu seated on the back of a big Garuḍa, with his feathers spread out to support Viṣṇu as well as the *āyudhapuruṣas*, who are shown to be seated on the feathers only. Similar image of Viṣṇu is found in the Cleveland Museum.²²

Harivaṁśa describes a six-handed variety mounted on Garuḍa, holding the conch, the disc, the mace, the dagger, the bow and the arrow, and wearing an armour. A temple of Limboji mata at Delmal has preserved a six-handed Viṣṇu on Garuḍa but unfortunately it is mutilated

²⁰ Agarwal, Urmila, P.31

²¹ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-18

²² *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-18.

and hence the emblems in the hands are not clear. Two of the three right hands have survived. One is in the Varadā-mudrā, one holds the mace. One of the left hands holds the disc and the rest are mutilated.²³

The Gupta temple at Deogarh has a seated image of Viṣṇu, of which only the left side has survived. He sits on a cot like some early Buddha images. Another image of Garuḍa forms a part of the Karivarada relief at Deogarh. It represents Viṣṇu on his mount Garuḍa when he came to rescue of the elephant. But for his feathers, Garuḍa is completely *in a human form*. *Viṣṇu is seated on his shoulders holding the mace in his lower right hand and supporting his lower left hand on his knees. The two upper hands are mutilated.*²⁴ An exactly similar image has come to light from Deogarh fort belonging to the later period. Actually Viṣṇu on Garuḍa indicates that he is flying.²⁵

The Gāndhāreśvara temple at Sirpur has a beautiful image of the four-handed Viṣṇu seated on Garuḍa, who has a human body with curly hair and leaf-like feathers. A serpent is round the neck like a necklace.²⁶

²³ *Ibid*, Page-18

²⁴ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-17

²⁵ *Ibid*, Page-17

²⁶ *Ibid*, Page-17

Some seated images of Viṣṇu come to light from western Indian belonging to the mediaeval period. A panel in the Ajmer Museum describes Viṣṇu seated on his mount Garuḍa. The image is deprived of essential part, only the mace and the disc survive in the upper two hands.²⁷ The multihanded images of Viṣṇu on Garuḍa are also referred to. The *Harivaṃśa* describes a six-handed variety mounted on Garuḍa, holding the conch, the disc, the mace, the dagger, the bow and the arrow and wearing an armour. A temple of Limbojī Mātā at Delmal has preserved a six-handed Viṣṇu on Garuḍa but unfortunately it is mutilated and hence the emblems in the hands are not clear. Two of the three right hands are survived. One is in the *Varadā-mudrā*, one holds the mace. One of the left hands holds the disc and the rest are mutilated.²⁸

In the *Īśānaśiva*, an eight-handed variety of seated Viṣṇu on Garuḍa is found to hold the conch, the disc, the noose, the trident, the bow, the arrow, the mace and the sword.²⁹

The Lord, the creator of the universe is to be mediated upon as having four faces *Vaikunṭha*, *Nṛsimha*, *Varāha* and *Kapila* and four

²⁷ *Ibid*, Page-17

²⁸ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-18

²⁹ *Īśānaśiva*, Tribundrum-1920, Pūrvārdha Patal-35, Sl.115

hands holding Saṅkha, Cakra, Gadā and Padma, Lord Viṣṇu mounted on Garuḍa is adorned with ornaments and auspicious marks.

Cf: suklaṁ khageśvarāruḍhaṁ sarvābharaṇabhūṣitaṁ ||³⁰

Another text belonging to Gupta period, *Viṣṇudharmottara purāṇa*³¹ describes the eight-handed variety of the *Vaikunṭha* image.

“Viṣṇu, the god of gods, should be represented as seated on Garuḍa, wearing a celestial yellow garment with Kaustubha brightening his bosom and with all sorts of ornaments.”

In the Śrīnagar Museum, an image from Verinag shows three faced Viṣṇu seated on Garuḍa, who is standing in the *namaskāra mudrā*. The right and left faces are those of the boar and the lion respectively. Two goddesses and two cauri-bearers, for female figures are inset in the leaf-like feathers of Garuḍa. Two figures touching Garuḍa are not identified.³²

The four faced haloed image is seated on Garuḍa on a Square pedestal with a full blown lotus which is like *Śrī-Cakra* or *Śrī-Yantra*.

³⁰ Mahābhārata – V.69.8

³¹ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-39

³² *Ibid*, Page-42

This image is found in the prince of Wales Museum published by Barrett.³³

A stone slab from Himgiri in the Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba, represents a three faced god on his mount Garuḍa.³⁴

A specimen of the eight handed *Vaikunṭha* seated on Garuḍa, who assumes a completely human form is seen in the Jhalwar Museum. It is a 9th century image.³⁵

Another variety of *Vaikunṭha* with sixteen hands called *Trailokyamohana* seated on his Garuḍa is also found.³⁶

In the later texts a very high symbolic significance is attached to these emblems and varied interpretations were given by the authors.

The Suparna-cult has contributed to the iconography of Viṣṇu by acquiring the position of his mount Viṣṇu.³⁷

³³ Ibid, Page-42

³⁴ Vogel, *Catalogue of the Bhuri Sing Museum at Chamba*, Calcutta, Page-7

³⁵ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-44

³⁶ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-45

³⁷ Agarwal, *V.S. Indian Art*, pp.330-331

Garuḍa is referred to as the vehicle and emblem on the flagstaff of Viṣṇu.³⁸

Garuḍa is assigned to a high position that all the gods in the *Mahābhārata* address a prayer to him.³⁹

In the Patna Museum, datable to the 9th century an image of Govinda variety of Viṣṇu on the pedestal with Garuḍa is seen. There are three other images of the same type in this Museum.⁴⁰

In the Lucknow Museum, an image of four handed Viṣṇu, holding the emblem on the left side by a small haloed figure with a snake in his hand. It is supposed to be Garuḍa in his personified form. In the Watson Museum, Rajkot, also this type of image is preserved.⁴¹

In the collection of Baṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad, a bronze image of great iconographic significance is preserved. R.D. Banerji identifies it as

³⁸ *Mahābhārata*, 1.2.365

³⁹ *Ibid*, 1.20

⁴⁰ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-11

⁴¹ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-15

Garuḍa dhvaja, but as the figure on it is a female figure, it is supposed to be Lakṣmī.⁴²

An image of Śeṣāśāyī Viṣṇu has been preserved on the Gupta temple at Deogarh. His right leg is stretched on the lap of Bhūmidevī, to her left appears Garuḍa, having a beaky nose. He is seizing a serpent, wound round his neck.⁴³

A Śeṣāśāyī Viṣṇu image of the 6th century is found on the top of the gateway of the main Shrine of the Rajivalocana temple at Rajim. Brahmā is seated on the lotus issuing from his navel. Garuḍa is shown on the panel holding two snakes in his hands and touching him are the Nāgas in the *añjali-mudrā*.⁴⁴

The Parananda Sutra gives a description of the image of Viṣṇu in which Viṣṇu is to be meditated upon having as the human body with his Garuḍa vāhana.⁴⁵

⁴² Banerji, R.D. *Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture*, p.96

⁴³ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-27

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, Page-27

⁴⁵ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-32

According to Rupamandana, Nārāyaṇa holding his usual emblems and Lakṣmī a lotus, should be riding on Garuḍa.⁴⁶

An early image datable to the 8th century A. D., from Pindara is preserved in collection of the Jamnagar Museum. This image is much mutilated, only preserved Viṣṇu seated on Garuḍa with Lakṣmī on his left thigh.⁴⁷

A 9th century image in the Śrīnagar Museum shows Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa flying on Garuḍa. Garuḍa's pot belied figure is in human form, his feet are those of a bird. His feathers are serrated in leaf-like pattern, on one of which Viṣṇu supports his feet. Garuḍa holds a pot in his hand, his forehead bears the mark of a serpent head and has a beak-like nose.⁴⁸

Burgess has reproduced an image of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa on Garuḍa from Kasara, datable to the 11th Century A.D. Nārāyaṇa holds in his

⁴⁶ Rupamandana, *Devamūrti. Prakāśana and Rupamandana*, Calcutta-1936, IV-34-36

⁴⁷ Subramanyam, R. *Pindara and its antiquities J01*, Vol-XIV, March, 1965, p.431

⁴⁸ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-33

upper hands the mace and lotus and his lower left arm embraces his consort.⁴⁹

In the Lucknow Museum a Laxmī-Nārāyaṇa image of excelled workmanship in black stone is preserved. Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa, richly ornamented, are seated on a pedestal with their feet supported by the hands of Garuḍa seated in front.⁵⁰

In Saurashtra from Unza, a three faced god with six-handed composite image seated on Garuḍa has come to light – indicating Viṣṇu to be the main deity.⁵¹

In the Jhalawar Museum an image of three faced and eight-handed composite deity is mounted on Garuḍa and indicates that the main God is Viṣṇu. The *Ham̐sa* and *Nandī* are curved below the Garuḍa.⁵²

On the west face of the Limbojī Mātā temple at Delmal, a similar image as described above, is seated on Garuḍa wearing an armour and boots; touched by the other *vāhanas* of Śiva and Brahmā. Regarding the

⁴⁹ Burgess and Cousens, *Architectural Antiquities of Northern Gujarat*, London-1903, Page-106

⁵⁰ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-34

⁵¹ Dave, K.B. *Gujaratnu Mūrtividhāna*, Page-314

⁵² *Iconography of Viṣṇu* (composite images), Page-56

main deity, Dr. Sankalia thinks that Sūrya is more emphasized,⁵³ but a big figure of Garuḍa supporting the main would indicate an emphasis on Viṣṇu also in the image in the Jhalawar Museum.

A three faced standing image is found in the Sikar Museum. On the left side of the pedestal, the goose and the horse and the Nandī and Garuḍa on the right side indicate the presence of the four deities.⁵⁴

Rajkot Museum has also a fine image of Ādivarāha found from Wardhavan. Several figures of the *munis* and deities are carved round his body as in the Eran Boar. Just below the mouth of Varāha appears Garuḍa with the snakehood around the head.⁵⁵

Another image of Nrisimha is represented at Vikrampur. He is standing on a demon on the lotus pedestal. Below the lotus seat is carved the figure of Hiranyakaśipu kicking the pillar out of which emerges the small figure of Nṛsimha. Prahlāda in worshipful attitude stands to the

⁵³ Sankalia, H.D. Page-164

⁵⁴ Agarwal, R.C. Sikar, Marg, Vol-XII, March-1959

⁵⁵ *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, Page-80

right of the Pillar. On the right side of the pedestal appears Garuḍa with folded hands.⁵⁶

The Vāmana figure flanked by the goddesses of Śrī and Sarasvatī is described in the Kālikā Purāṇa.⁵⁷ It says – “Fair like the moon wearing yellow garments, standing on Garuḍa, the four-handed god holds in his upper right hand the mace, in the lower right hand the pot of water in the upper hand the flaming disc, and in the lower left the conch.”⁵⁸

We have found another beautiful image in which below on the pedestal is a small figure of Garuḍa with folded hands. This image is of Paraśurāma which is standing in the Tribhaṅga pose is a fine specimen of the 11th century art of eastern India.⁵⁹

Another interesting image on a projecting pillar of the temple NO. 7 at Osian is found. Balarāma seated on Garuḍa under the canopy of the

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, Page-90

⁵⁷ *Kālikā Purāṇa*, Venkatesvara Press, Bombay, 1908, 83, 16-21

⁵⁸ Rūpamaṇḍana also prescribes a water pot in his hand.

⁵⁹ Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Scriptures in the Dacca Museum*

five hooded cobra, is represented. The representation of Balarāma on Garuḍa is very rare.⁶⁰

Garuḍa in Indian Numismatic aspect –

The different sovereigns use the various religious objects as their royal insignia (*mudrā*). Thus the imperial Gupta ruler Samudragupta, who was a devout worshipper of Viṣṇu used Garuḍa as royal his special *rājāṅka* (royal mark or emblem). It is known from a passage on his privileges in the Allahabad pillar inscription (*Garutmadāṅka – Svaviṣayabhukti – Śāsanayācanādyupāya – Sevākṛta*); on most of the gold and silver coins of the imperial Guptas, this Garuḍa emblem is being depicted.⁶¹

Mahasamanta Śrīmad Dommana-pala was a local ruler of Southern Beṅgal. He gave the copper-plate grant in which a very beautiful outline drawing of Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu riding on a chariot and his

⁶⁰ Bhandarkar, *Temple Osian*, ASIAR, 1908-09, Page-106

⁶¹ *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Page-10

bird Garuḍa on its opposite side, the iconographic details are also interesting.⁶²

As Samudragupta was a paramabhāgavata (a devout Bhāgavata or Vaiṣṇav), he wanted to replace the trident-battle-axe standards of the prototypes of his coins with the Garuḍa emblem sacred to Viṣṇu.⁶³

On most of their coins the Paramabhāgavatas, however, invariably used the Garuḍa emblem showing their cult affiliation.⁶⁴

The Garuḍa of the epic and purāṇic literature and ancient and mediaeval Indian art of the historic period comes into consideration, the base of which is undoubtedly Vedic in character (*Garuḍa – Garutmān*), sun conceived as a bird in the *Rgveda*.⁶⁵

According to Marshall a seal bearing Gaja-Lakṣhmī depicts the elephants dousing her being placed on lotuses; the right hand of the

⁶² The copper plate grant is in the collection of the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta University. It was covered in the Sundarbans and presented to the Asutosh Museum by Dr. Devaprasad Ghosh, its curator.

⁶³ *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Page-117

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, Page-154

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, Page-163

goddess is raised above elbow, while the left rests on a bird, which may be Garuḍa.⁶⁶

Another seal shows on its upper part the same goddess standing on a full-blown lotus, her both hands being raised above the elbows, her right hand holding Saṅkha, while her left probably Garuḍa.⁶⁷

Sometimes containing interesting emblem, the armlets were adorned with plaques. In the Mathura Museum, it is found worn by a seated Bodhisattva figure, as embellished with plaques on which we observe a human figure riding on a conventional bird probably a Garuḍa or a peacock.⁶⁸

Viṣṇu, (a Vedic Āditya) has his mount Garuḍa, an aspect of the sun god fully emphasized for the same deity in his theriomorphic form.⁶⁹

The Development of Hindu Iconography – refers to a book called Manasara. This work in its section of Yakṣa – Vidyādharaḍilakṣaṇaṁ describes the Gāṇḍhārvas and Kinnaras together. In this description it

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, Page-196

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, Page-197

⁶⁸ *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Page-292

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, Page-305

seems to characterize both as having animal like legs the upper part being human in form with a face like that of Garuḍa, their arms are endowed with wings (they wear) lotus crown and (have) the colour of the shade of a flower, they are also associated with sweet songs and musical instruments.⁷⁰

One pair of Gandharva or Kinnara from Deogarh (Lalitpur Sub-division, Jhansi district, Madhya Bharat) of the late Gupta period, stand facing each other on either side of a tall tree inside a beautifully designed arc of medallion. Their upper part is human with wings, the legs below the knee are also human, the feet only being those of a bird, they have *google eyes*; like those of a Garuḍa as depicted in early and late mediaeval art.⁷¹

It is found among the Mathura Sculptures, a class of demons named *Kumbhāṇḍas*, one of these groups e.g., the Garuḍas have clear mythological and ideological association with Viṣṇu and Sūrya.⁷²

Seated varieties of Viṣṇu images are as depicted on the shoulders

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, Page-351

⁷¹ *Ibid*, Page-353

⁷² *Ibid*, Page-368

of Garuḍa in different ways.⁷³

One unique sculpture earliest *Garuḍāsana Viṣṇu* image in grayish black stone about 6'4" in height is found near lakshankati. Viṣṇu, the four armed god sits in *lalitāsana* on the outstretched wings of his mount Garuḍa, shown as about soar upwards.⁷⁴

While we have to trace back to Vedic age, we find that Ṛgvedic hymns to *Sūrya* contain many epithets which had a great influence in the post Vedic age. Sometimes he is described as "the beautiful winged celestial bird 'Garutmān' (*divya Suparṇa Garutmān*) while in one verse, he is described as a white brilliant steed brought by *uṣās*, the concept of *Garuḍa*, the mount of Viṣṇu originated from such description and *Tārṅṣya*, the horse-mount of the sun god himself.⁷⁵

It is also narrated that the early concept of the sun bird is found attached to the figures of *Sūrya*. In later art it had no necessity because the sun bird was transferred to *Garuḍa*, the bird mount of Viṣṇu.⁷⁶

⁷³ *Ibid*, Page-404

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, Page-405

⁷⁵ *Rgveda*, VII.77.3

⁷⁶ *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Page-434

The four armed figure of Vaisṇavī with Garuḍa beneath her seat is found in Kiching (fixed in niche in the Khandiya Deul there).⁷⁷

The evolution of the hybrid Garuḍa figure of mediaeval Indian art can be traced with the help of Gupta coins. The sun bird Garuḍa invariably appears in the form of a plump bird with beautiful coins, as the capital piece of column (*Garuḍadhvaja*) in most of the gold coins of the imperial Guptas. According to Vincent Smith Garuḍa on the standard was copied from the Roman Eagle; but Allan has observed that there is no reason for this thinking and 'the resemblance is quite a coincidence and *Garuḍadhvajās* were common objects in India', on the opposite side of Chandragupta II's silver coins Garuḍa stands facing with outspread wings as a full-fledged bird, but on some varieties of his copper coins, he is enriched with a new and strange features.⁷⁸

The description of Garuḍa is shown with outspread wings and long human arms adorned with bracelets, on the Chatra type copper issues of the Gupta Kings. In some other types of copper issues, he is figured with

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, Page-506

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, Page-531

outstretched wings, though without human arms, holding a snake in his mouth.⁷⁹

It is also found at Nalanda and in the collection of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, an engraved leaked clay seal of Kumaragupta and it emphasizes in a striking manner the hybridity of the motif. The plump bird stands facing on a sort of pedestal, but it has the face of a man.⁸⁰

In mediaeval period the still existing image of Garuḍa can broadly be divided into two classes – one is placed as Viṣṇu's mount, the other where the bird man is placed in front of a Vaiṣṇava Shrine. In both, the narration of the mount and emblem is like that of a round eyed human being with the wings of a bird and a beak like nose, and sometimes with the legs with the claw of a bird, he is usually two-armed, his hands being in the *añjali* pose. On some late mediaeval sculptures of Eastern India, Garuḍa is endowed with four arms, the back hands supporting the legs of his lord those of the divine couple, Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa. As Garuḍa is placed in front of the Vaiṣṇava Shrine, he is depicted as Janiform, the

⁷⁹ J. Allan, Introduction, P-LXX, pp.52ff. On type I of the copper coins of Chandragupta II, Garuḍa is nimbate and type V, he is placed on an altar ; all these features imply his divine character.

⁸⁰ *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Page-532

whole figure (not face alone) being double sided and facing opposite ways. Such two armed figures with the hands in the *namaskāra mudrā*. In the Indian Museum such Garuḍa capital is illustrated, and it is a mediaeval sculpture in Eastern India.⁸¹

Viṣṇu in *Yogāsana* is found in the Mathura Museum, Garuḍa is shown as a standing human being with tiny wings behind his back, holding a small snake in his hand (cf-his epithet *Phaṇīphaṇābhṛt*) Rao illustrated two images of Garuḍa, the first of the two earned on front gable of cave No.III at Badami, shows the mythical bird man with a flabby belly (cf-the textual description *Kiñcillambodara*) holding in his right hand a big snake and flying in the air. The other image is a 17th century wooden sculpture of Palar Travancore. One kind of ceiling piece used to be hung by means of a chain. This sculpture illustrates the mythology of the forcible abduction of Vibhāvasu and Supratika (the elephant and the tortoise) by Garuḍa, it holds the two in his hands. In cave No.IV at Badami, it is described the theft of the jar of ambrosia by Garuḍa which episode is depicted in the *Āstika Parvādhyāya* of the *Ādiparva* of the *Mahābhārata*.⁸²

⁸¹ *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Page-533-34

⁸² *Ibid*, Page-534

A unique sculpture carved on both sides is found in the collection of the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta University. It described a four armed figure of Viṣṇu dancing on the shoulders of Garuḍa in the centre of a finely carved wheel. Garuḍa and the two emblems, i.e. *Cakra* and a *Gadā* prove that the figure inside the wheel is *cakrapuruṣa* who is certainly a representation of Viṣṇu.⁸³

Another tiny figure of Amitābha over the central hood of the snake hood canopy and Garuḍa is on the right side of the triratha pedestal is shown with his hands in the *añjali* pose. It is found the collection of the Baṅgīya Sāhitya Parishat Museum, Calcutta.⁸⁴

It is also noted that the whole Universe is idealized by the concrete form of Lord Viṣṇu. It is very important to speak that the mount Garuḍa of quick and powerful motion is to be known as mind present in all rational beings of (*manastu garuḍa jñeyaḥ sarvabhūtasarīragam*).⁸⁵

⁸³ *Ibid*, Page-538

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, Page-556

⁸⁵ *Viṣṇudharmottra Purāṇa*, Ch-47, Page-164, Verse-7