CHAPTER XVIII

SYNCRETIC FORMS
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Trīṃśa — Dattātreyas!

The concept of the Trīṃśa represented by Brahma, Viṣṇu and
Śiva with the three functions of creation, protection and destruc-
tion is a very old one and is known to the Tamils at least as early
as the Śangam age.¹ Such a concept in which a unified cosmic vision
is detectable, marks the coalescing of the earlier streams of thought.
This point is a milestone in the development of philosophical ideas
in a faith. But later, the ideas regarding the universe vis-a-vis
the supreme God remain the same, but the omnipotence is attributed
to the respective gods of differing faiths. Thus while Śiva is held
supreme and powers of creation and protection are attributed to him
in addition to that of destruction by the Śaivas, Viṣṇu is also
claimed as wielding all the three powers, by the Vaishnavas. Thus a
reasoned philosophical system, expressed symbolically at an earlier
period, runs into various moulds under different sub-sects, resulting
in identical pantheons in each of them. Rōygar Āḻvār says that Viṣṇu
is the first among the three Gods. But the other hymnists like
Tirumangai would suggest that Viṣṇu himself assumed the three different

¹. Ēkambra, p. 119.

2. Rōygar Āḻvār and Āḻvār

--- Thirumadī, 18.
aspects to teach the Vedas and to protect the world. In one of the hymns of the Timunaññūpēdakañ, Timunagai visualises the three forms together, indicating, by the metaphors he draws, that he has in mind the three forms of Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu and all three of them combined together to produce the form of Viṣṇu himself. He also expresses in the same hymn the idea that Viṣṇu represents all the different religions. The names of the Trinity are mentioned by Namālvār in several of his hymns clearly as Hara (Viṣṇu), Ayā (Brahmā) and Hara (Śiva) or as Haraṇā, Maṇiṇa (one with four faces - Brahmā) and Haraṇā.  

3. “नैविक मुर्ति मूर्तिमय वेदम् विरूपितः
मुलिद दत्ति — Parivra Timunoli, II-3-8.
नामान्निल मार्गः मुर्ति मूर्तिमय नमः मुर्तिमय निर्मेयम् दत्ति — Ibid., II-6-3.
तप्तेऽ तप्तवृत्त मुर्ति मूर्तिमयः
नामान्निल मार्गः मूर्तिमयः
तप्तेऽ तप्त्वृत्त मुर्ति मूर्तिमयः — Ibid., VI-6-6.

4. नामान्निल मार्गः मूर्तिमयः
नामान्निल मार्गः मूर्तिमयः
नामान्निल मार्गः मूर्तिमयः
नामान्निल मार्गः मूर्तिमयः
नामान्निल मार्गः मूर्तिमयः
नामान्निल मार्गः मूर्तिमयः — V.2.

Also Timunalîśāl, Timunagada, 4; Namālvār, Timunāśīrkan, 3;
Parivra Śivandhana, 72; Timunoli, III-6-2; V-6-6; Haraṇa मुर्ति
उष्णवृक्ष-युण्निल नामान्निलिन्तत्तत्त्वान्तिकम् — VII-1-11; VIII-4-2.
Epigraphy also records the same idea of the supremacy of Vippu among the Trinity by stating that he assumes three different forms by adopting the three qualities in order to accomplish (the work of) protection, destruction and creation. Vippu is here said to be the omnipresent principle, immutable, the highest place of salvation, contemplated on by yapas and extolled by Brahmanas with vision and chanting of the Vedas. The dominating idea of Vippu as the Supreme God of the Trinity appears to have formed the basis of the concept of Dattatreya or Hari-Hara-Pitaruṣa accepted as one of the vihaṇaṇa of Vippu, in the Kāraṇaṭa texts and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In the Mārkandeya Purāṇa, which gives the story of this incarnatory form of Vippu, it is stated that the orthodox Brahmanical triad are manifest in it. According to this story, Kamēka, a leper, living in Pratiṣṭhāna was cursed for some offence by the sage Ani-Naḍāvya to die before he saw the next sunrise. The virtuous and chaste wife of the leper, prevented the dawn of the next day through her great merit. The Gods approached Anamaṇya, the pious wife of the sage Atri to persuade the leper's wife to revoke her curse and this

   "nāraṇaṁ nāḥ maṇiṣaḥ aṁnaṁca ivaṁa" -- Ibid., 7.
   "aṁnaḥ maṇiṣaḥ nāraṇaṁca ivaṁa" -- Ibid., X-10-1.

6. Paṇṭattālmāṅgale Grant of Nandivarman II, as also called

7. F.G. Schrader, fa. sit., p.43.
was achieved after the life of the leper was spared. Kamśika was also cured of his disease and rejuvenated. Pleased with the virtue of his wife, the Brahmanical tried to descend to be born in her womb as Dattātreya in whom the characteristic traits of all of them became manifest.

Dattātreya seems to have been a famous sage in real life and as such he is mentioned in several Purānic works in one of which he is said to be the teacher of Paraśurāma. A Dattāsannita is mentioned as a work composed by Dattātreya and abridged by Paraśurāma. How this sage came to be later apotheosised and incorporated into the Vaishnava pantheon is not known but as representing the Trinity in a single form, the concept is known at least from the period under study.

In the Pallava cave temples dedicated to the Trimūrti, the image of Śiva is usually enshrined in the central cell as in the one at Mahābalipuram, Vīśṇu and Brahmā, flanking him. The order in which the three deities are usually enshrined may be attributed to the Śaiva predilections of the authors of the temple. It may be noted that in the hymns of the Śaiva Nāyikās, the concept of the Trimūrti

10. There are several cave temples of the Pallava period dedicated to the three Īdā. The order of representation is not always the same and more often Śiva is found to be enshrined in the central cell. In the Mahābalipuram example the figure which was first believed to represent Brahmā is now identified as Brahmānūtā. — See K.R. Srinivasan, Cave Temples of the Pallavas, p.180 and n.1. (contd.)
occupies an equally important place but with the prime position assigned to Śiva. In fact the central theme of the hymns of Tiruvānanamalai is the exaltation of Śiva over the other two in the Trinity. Even as he condemns the "heterodox" sects of the Jains and Buddhists in almost every tenth verse of his hymns, so too the ninth and tenth verses in his hymns are invariably directed to extolling the greatness of Śiva over Brahmā and Viṣṇu. The reference in these hymns of Sambandar is to the concept of Lingodbhava or Lingaparāpadēva, which must have evolved at about this time. The story behind the concept is that Brahmā and Viṣṇu failed to discover the head and feet of Śiva respectively though they attempted to do so in the forms of the swan (hamsa) and the bear (varāha).

In the religious history of the Tamil country the period beginning from the seventh century A.D. heralds an important epoch as it not only marks the beginning of the decline of the rival sects of Jainism and Buddhism but also gives rise to attempts at determining the superiority of Śiva and Viṣṇu over each other. Two important results may be seen. One is the successful attempt at syncretism leading to the concept of Harihara or Śankaranārāyaṇa, while the other is the development of some ideas making one of the Two Gods

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10 (contd.)
The other cave temples for the Trimūrti were excavated at Nārāyanapattu (South Arcot), Kurudgānālīppūr (North Arcot) and Pallēvar (a suburb of Madras).

11. Tirumurai, I, v.188.
12. e.g. Tirumurai, II, 107-9, 141-9, 180-9 etc.
serve the other as the superior. For instance, the Ṫīrūmāra often speak of Viṣṇu's grace in helping Śiva to be relieved of the curse of Brahmatatti, as Śiva cut off one of the heads of Brahmā. On their part the Śaiva hymnists sing the praise of Śiva as one who gifted the aṅkra to Viṣṇu. This interesting theme has led to the most beautiful representations in sculptures, both stone and metal, of Viṣṇu receiving the aṅkra from Śiva and normally, such sculptures are found in Śiva temples. Another remarkable development is the story of Viṣṇu worshipping Śiva with the lotus and taking out his eye and offering it, as it is itself compared to the lotus (Pāḍarpankṣa, an epithet of Viṣṇu). One of the panels on the north side of the court in the Kailāsanātha temple at Śrīvai depicts the scene (Fig. 905). This sculpture shows Śiva and Parvati seated with two attendants (?) above, on the right. Viṣṇu is shown below kneeling. He is depicted with four hands, two of them, holding lotuses. One of the lotuses (left hand) is being offered to Śiva. The other left hand is found touching the left eye, probably indicating that the eye is offered as the flower for pāta. Above him the two attributes jānka and aṅkra are shown. The figure standing to his right in an humble (vinayā) pose is probably that of Gauḍa. 13

15. A. Ren, AR-S115, Pl. XLII, fig.1.
The above references prove beyond doubt that the Śaiva and Vaishnava concepts developed on individual lines with occasional meeting points expressive of syncretism as well as opposition. It is, however, clear that in the individual representations of the Trimūrti in this period, Viṣṇu occupies only a secondary position. Later, different varieties of the Trimūrti form were evolved, besides the representations of the three Gods side by side in independent cells or niches. In such images, the three forms are combined with either Śiva or Viṣṇu occupying the central place. The Ṣūkaṣṭa Trimūrti (three forms on one leg) form is the most remarkable among them.

The other concept of Dattātreya or Harihara Pitāmaha evolving out of the basic Trinity ideas, is however, a Vaishnava development. There are mainly two different types of representations, known both in the North and South of India, one in which the composite character of the deity can be seen by the presence of the three mounts of the triad, Garuḍa, Vṛṣabha and Hamsa (lotus in some instances) on the pedestal of the image, while in the other, the three Gods are depicted either standing or seated side by side. The first type which has subvarieties is generally called Dattātreya, while the second type goes by the name of Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha.

Iconographical texts describe different types of the image. According to the Viṣṇudharmottara, Dattātreya should be made like Vālmiki, should be white in colour, wear matted locks of hair, should be neither lean nor stout and be tranquil and engaged in austerities. The image described here obviously represents Dattātreya, the Sage, thus preserving the original associations of the concept with the

16. **Śrīgaṇgada śāstra**

--- ch.55, v.64.
human element. Dattātreya, according to the Ardī Purāṇa, should be two-armed and have the Goddess Śrī on his left lap, thus showing the apotheosis of this being. In the dangers another description of a joint mode of representation occurs, according to which, a single form is shown on a pedestal, embodying all the three, with four faces and six hands, the right ones holding a rosary, trident and a mace and the left ones holding a water-vessel, a khatvānga and a wheel. These three pairs of attributes stand for the particular members of the Trinity. An image partially answering to the descriptions in the dangers comes from Belgaumi (Chakaripur Taluk, Mysore) and it is found on the banks of a tank near a Śiva temple. The figure is seated in yogasana with two palms one over the other on the lap and has three faces. The upper right hand is broken and the upper left has a lotus. The figure has only four hands and a yanamālā decorates it and falls over the seat. The head in the centre has matted hair, while the other two have kīrtas. The treatment of the ornaments and other details suggest Gōra influence and the figure may be, therefore, assigned to about the 18th or 19th century A.D.

Four illustrations of the two familiar types are given by T. A. Gopinatha Rao. Of these the Pāṇḍāmi figure of late Gōra

17. ch.49, v.27 - "dattātreya duḥkhaṃ ayuṇāmottaraṇa āryā saha"
18. ch.49, vv.32-33.

saṅghārum anuṣṭhitaṃ satyakṣaṇam saṃsāraṃ suhaṃ saṃśāraṃ /
ākṣamātaṃ triśalaṃ an uṣaṃ kuryāca ṛkṣitaṃ /
kaṇṭhalam sa khaṭvāngam sakram vāsahatākathā /
period shows Viṣṇu seated in yogāsana like the above-mentioned image and the figure has four hands but only one face. The front left hand is placed on the lap, while the right is in inānamidrā. The back right and left hands carry the cakra and dhanu respectively. Another interesting feature in this representation is the carving of the ten principal incantatory forms of Viṣṇu, a thing which is common in the North Indian images of Viṣṇu in general, whereas in the Tamil country it is absent. The pedestal carries the emblems, Swan, Garuḍa, and Bull, indicating the identity of the image.

A group of three images of the medieval period representing Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha standing side by side with their respective attendants and mounts, hailing from Etah, is mentioned by J.N. Banerjea. A similar one from Helabid, overdecorated and of lesser artistic merit than the Etah sculpture, is illustrated by T.A. Gopinatha Rao.

Mention may be made here of a sculptured panel (Fig. 207) in the Vaikunṭha Perumāl temple at Kāṅki, in which there are three figures seated side by side with one of the legs of each figure hanging down and placed on a single lotus pedestal. Below are figures seated and standing in adoration. Two flying figures and a figure in aṅgali between them, are found above. The sculpture is very much damaged

20. Ibid., Pl.LXXIII.
21. JICOA, XIV, p.61.
22. op. cit., I, Pl.LXXII, Fig.1.
and hence the number of heads of each figure and their attributes
cannot be determined. That the panel represents an important form
of Viṣṇu is beyond doubt as the corresponding panels in the same
wall and the other walls of the shrine contain other forms of Viṣṇu.
The only clue is the presence of the seated figures all on the same
level. If the identification of this sculpture as representing
the Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha form is correct, then this would be the ear-
liest known representation of the form in the Tamil country, as the
temple belongs to the period of Nandivarman II -- 8th century A.D.

**Haribara**

The Trimūrti concept served as one of the means of rapproche-
ment between rival creeds and confluence of ideologies. But it also
emphasized the relative superiority of one creed over another, when
it was adopted by the different creeds to popularize their respective
cults. A real fusion of cults in a broader spirit of understanding,
on the other hand, is represented by the concept of Haribara also
called Sankara Narayana and Haryarddhāmūrti. It is not a mere
attempt at reconciliation or rapprochement between two rival sects
but it shows a blend of two concepts in a newly conceived iconographic
form based on tolerance and mutual respect and goodwill in the
religious thought of the two creeds.

Attempts at such a rapprochement were being made from very
early times and may be traced back to the Ṛg Vedic period when

--- 558 ---

**23.** See A. Bea, op.cit., Pl. LXXVIII, fig.1.
the idea was expressed that the one eternally existing principle (Sun God) is called in various ways and the names denoting this principle may be different. To the Vedic seers of a liberal outlook, therefore, the respective Gods chosen for worship by different people were but several aspects or names of the one absolute God who, by himself, was beyond comprehension and description.

Such ideas of reconciliation and fusion resulted in the development of interesting iconographic features which were expressed in a variety of ways in the North and South of India. In North India the attempts at syncretism not merely brought the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava aspects together but absorbed many interesting elements from Buddhism. These ideas travelled beyond the seas and are found reflected even in the contemporary art and thought of Cambodia. This migration of cultures is an interesting and important aspect of the history of Indian religions which deserves separate study.

In the South, the fusion between rival creeds hardly took into account the other rival sects of Buddhism and Jainism. The absence of elements other than Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava may be explained historically for, in the Tamil country the two rival sects of Buddhism and Jainism never reached the heights of popularity that they attained in Northern and Western India. Hence the necessity for reconciliation or rapprochement with them did not arise. So it was only around the two Hindu forces of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism that all

conflicts and conciliations were centered. From about 7th century
A.D., the earlier spirit of amity and mutual tolerance was gradually
replaced by sectarian rivalry at first and active antagonism
later on from about the close of the Cāsa period. It was exactly
during this period that the need perhaps of concurring various
rights to all religious sects was also felt and adjustments were
made in the form of absorption of features of one faith into the
other. The non-mention of the Buddha among the avatāras of Viṣṇu by
the Vaishnavas hymnists may also be explained on the same basis, for
the need for it was not felt, as the successful establishment of the
Brahmanic religions over the other two had been accomplished by the
intense activities of the exponents of the Bhakti movement and by the
great philosopher Śankarācārya, who belongs to the same period. In
North India, however, Buddhism did not disappear completely but
developed in particular regions (e.g. Eastern India — Bengal) in
various forms especially Tantric. Side by side with the development
of the Hindu pantheon, the Buddhist pantheon expanded, each influencing
the other as expressed through various ways of iconographic represen-
tation. The “sculptural message of religious tolerance” is found
in a number of Śiva-Viṣṇu icons, icons representing the Trinity concept
together with Buddhist elements such as the Bodhisattvas, Avalokite-
svara, Lokesvara etc. In fact, the forms of Viṣṇu and Lokesvara
are hardly distinguishable except through some specific attributes
connected with the deities, especially in Eastern India.
The only important icon combining the elements of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava creeds is that of Harihara and the fact that it is more popular in the Tamil country is proved by the frequent references to it in the hymns of both the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava saints and confirmed by actual representations dating from about the 7th century A.D. onwards.

The hymns of the Vaiṣṇava Āḻvārs attest to the popularity of the Harihara concept. The conceptual imagery depicted in them clearly establishes the inseparable nature of Viṣṇu and Śiva. Poyai Āḻvār sings the praise of the combined form of Hara and Hariyāna with their respective vāhana, the bull and Garuḍa, and with the spear and x x wheel as the emblems in their hands, with their complexions, resembling the red fire and dark cloud. Elsewhere, he also speaks of the golden complexioned Śiva wearing locks of hair (jaṭā) and Viṣṇu as Trivikrama representing the two halves of the same God. The same combination of Śiva and Trivikrama-Viṣṇu is also described in the Kāṭākkudi Plates of Ṣanḍivarman II. Verse 4 of this copper plate record gives the following description of the II form of Harihara: "May Trivikrama and Hara protect you, whose distinct (but united bodies (respectively) bear on the neck the supreme splendour of two ornaments, the kaurubha (jewel) and the black poison (kālikā), hold a discus and a spear (nāṭṭā) for the destruction of the Daityas . . . . . blank and white in colour, (and) thrill with joy

--- 361 ---

25. Tīrūvāndāli, 5 and 93.
at the expansion (of the eyes) of Śrī and Gaurī (which seem) conquettish glances (resembling) arrows.²⁶ The description of 

is particularly important as it has often been quoted by scholars as referring to the famous God Venkatesa of Tirupati (Vāngaḍam in literature). Indeed, it is in one of his hymns addressed to the God of Tirupati that the saint describes the Harihara form of the two Godheads. The combined forms of Śiva and Viṣṇu according to this hymn show on one side the matted locks of hair (lāta) and the high crown (kirta or mūrd) on the other side of the head, holding the axe (māla) and wheel (cakra) as weapons, wearing the snake (śāraṇa) and golden thread (pāṇi-ṇāp) on the respective sides of the body.²⁷ Tirumangai clearly states that Viṣṇu had Śiva on his right side or gave the right half of his body to Śiva. In one of his hymns he implies that he gave the right half of his body to Lākaṇḍa as well as Śiva, for Lākaṇḍa in the form of the Īrīvatē symbol resides on the

²⁶. G.I.I., II, No. 731 v. 4:

kanṭṭhē kaustubba kālikābhāranāśchāyāmgarāmbhabhranta dāityaddharmānacakraṇāṭaśadharaś āyamāvadātānu mūḍh/

dāityaddharmānacakraṇāṭaśadharaś Śrī gaurī vilāśakākṣaśāvīśikhavyāvāyāmaraśāntaś pavaśāmbhavatasastrivikramaharaś /></p>

²⁷. "Tālādaṇāyikānu niśsidhāw vajamukum cakkaramūr

Śāharaṇaṃ pāṇi-ṇāpum tōṇumūlī — Śūlum

tīrpaṇāvīśāyum tīrpa-tāla mālandaikum

irṇaṇumṣoṣṭviśāsindu" — Tiruvandādī, 63.

For a discussion on God Venkata, see, MARCA, p. 461 †
right side of Viṣṇu's chest and Śiva takes the same half in the Harihara form. Again, he mentions the hermaphrodite form of Ardha-nārīśvara and the Harihara form together in yet another hymn.

The Tripurāntaka aspect of Śiva is mentioned by Nammālvār while describing the Harihara form, in which Śiva takes the right half. Śiva with the crescent (moon) on his head forming a part of Viṣṇu is referred to in another hymn of the same saint. Literary and epigraphic evidence establishes beyond doubt that the syncretic concept of Harihara was well known in this period and was probably evolved considerably early in the history of iconographic development.

The concept of Harihara has been translated into sculptures, some of which rank as the most remarkable artistic representations.

28. "Piraitanu āṣāiyanaul vaḷatē vaṁtē"  

"... alar masāpfum arārikum
kūṟākkoṇṭamalum tiruvandavan..."  
   -- Ibid., 9—3.

Vaḻvār kulalē kalaimayal tan
paṉcanaḻ pendi vaṁtēvandāṉ tappal"  
   -- Ibid., VII—10—3; Also Ibid., IX—10—4.

29. "Vaḻattanaṉ triṇumurittalovan īḻandara"  
   -- Tiruvāmoli, I—3—9.

"māḻittalamadivan kārum āṣāiyāṇal
hāṇattu vaṁtēn tan nādam naṉindēnē"  
   -- Ibid., X—4—6.
in the Tamil country dating from the Pallava and early Pandyia periods. In this connection, attention may also be drawn to the sculptural representations of Harihara in Cambodia as early as the Chen-la period --5th-8th centuries A.D. The occurrence of such early sculptures in the distant land of Cambodia where Indian cultural and religious traditions must have travelled quite early in the centuries immediately before the beginning of the Christian era, would indicate that the evolution of syncretic concepts in India itself is an ancient phenomenon. Definitely datable representations in India, however, do not go back to a period earlier than the 7th century A.D. The early cave temple at Pillaiyarpati, Madurai district, contains a bas-relief identified as that of Harihara (Fig. 208) and it is further stated, on the presence of an early inscription of late Brahmi characters in the cave, that the temple is earlier in date than the Pallava cave temples of the 7th century A.D. in Tondaimandalam. The image of 'Harihara' found here is, however, only two armed and does not hold any attributes or weapons, the only clue to the identity being the jatamakuta of Siva seen on the right and the kirita-makuta of Vishnu seen on the left sides of the head of the figure. Besides, there are two attendants on either side of the figure, supposed to represent Cakravasa and Garuda associated with Siva and Vishnu respectively.  

30. Lawrence Br Tighe, The Ancient Khmer Empire, pp. 79-80, Fig. 15. 
The identification of the Pillaiyarpaṭṭi image as that of Harihara bristles with many difficulties. It was at first wrongly believed to represent the portrait of a Pallava king and as Śiva or Subrahmanya, though the presence of the ājmānakaṭṭa would make the first one more correct. A closer examination of the various features would suggest that it is the image of Harihara, as observed by R. Nagaswamy, in spite of the fact that the image has only two arms, a rare feature in Harihara images or for the matter of that, in any icon of this and later periods. If the view is correct, then the image would be a unique one with two arms. The figure stands in assabhāmakaśā. The left hand rests on the hip in kṣapyavalūkā position, while the opened right hand makes the vahāna or boon-bestowing gesture. The figure is flanked by two attendants, standing. On a close study certain differences in the treatment of the headdress may be seen on the two sides. The right side is a beautiful ājmānakaṭṭa, high-piled hair, while the left has an elegant kirtī-crown. "Only two representations familiar to Indian iconography justify such a composite headdress. One is the figure of Ardhanarīśvara, the half-male, half-female manifestation of Lord Śiva. There, however, though the right side of the head bears the ājmānakaṭṭa, the crown on the other side has the karandamakūṭa form, composed of inverted potshapes, rather than the kirtī. In addition, of course, the left half of the body is conspicuously female. It is the other

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33. C. Sivaramamurti, Kaluvaṉmaiḻi and other stone-cut temples of the Pāṇḍya country, p.37.
representation, Harihara, the composite of Vīśnu and Śiva, that seems to have been intended here, since the kīrāṭa is always Vīśnu's headgear." The image here wears a lower garment reaching down to the ankles on both sides. The attendant deities, according to the same writer, are Cāṇḍēśa for Śiva and Gāruḍa for Vīśnu. At Mādam, the Harihara figure is flanked by the respective consorts of the two Gods and also by Nandikēśvara and Gāruḍa, shown almost as dwarfs. The presence of the two attendants in Pāḷḷiāyarpattī thus seems to be well attested. "The left hand figure of Gāruḍa is readily identifiable as a Gāruḍa, even though it lacks wings and a pointed beak. The hands are held across the chest in an attitude of submission; there are many Gāruḍāntikāmārtti representations where Gāruḍa is shown in almost the same pose." But Nandikēśvara is distinguished by his horned crown and is familiarly known as the horned Dvārapālaka. Since the figure to the right has no such attribute, it has been identified as the South Indian saint Cāṇḍēśa, to whom was granted the unique privilege of being always by the side of his Lord, as the guardian deity of Śaiva temple property. The above elaborate description is necessary in order to show that the figure, in all probability, represents the composite Harihara form and considering the earlier date (4th or 5th century A.D.) that the cave temple may have to be assigned, as mentioned above, the significance of the figure in the development of iconography is unique. It would thus be the earliest known representation of Harihara.

The earliest among the Pallava sculptures of Harihara is perhaps the one in the Adivarāha cave temple in Mahābālipuram (Fig. 209). Here the figure of Harihara stands below a parasol in saṃbhanga over a padmaṇā. He is four-armed holding in the upper right hand a paraśu, in the upper left hand a cakra in prayag, while the lower right is in abhaya and the lower left in kṣatvāvalambita. There are two devotees below, kneeling in adoration as in the other panel of Viṣṇu found in the same cave temple. The lower garment of the figure appears to be a tiger-skin down to the thigh on the right half representing that of Śiva and a silken (?) garment down to the ankle on the left half representing that of Viṣṇu. The crown is shown as a jatā on the right and kirtī on the left. The figure wears an elaborate girdle (nattigall). Harihara figures are also found with the lower garment treated alike on both the sides, as found in the northern face of the Bhāmarāja ratha in Mahābālipuram (Fig. 210). Sometimes the śāṅkha takes the place of the cakra in the upper left hand of the Harihara images as for example in a panel in the first cave at Kumbakonam (Madurai district), where the figure bears the same features as in that of the Adivarāha temple with the exception of the attribute in the upper left hand. This image is one of the earliest representations of the God from the Pāṇḍya country. Figures of Śāṅkaraṇārāyaṇa are shown sometimes

36. L.R. Srinivasan, Cave Temples of the Pallavas, p. 170, pl. XLIII, B.
37. R. Nagaswamy, op.cit., p. 273 and fig. 6.
carrying an aksamālā in the upper right hand, śankha in the upper left and nārāyaṇa in the lower right hand while the lower left is shown in kātyāvalambita pose. The presence of the aksamālā suggests the identity of such figures as a form of Trīṃśṭi. An early image of this type is found in a Śiva temple in Arakāṇḍanaḷḷīr in the South Arcot District (Fig.211).

An eighth century representation of Harihara or Śankara-Nārāyaṇa comes from Nāmakkal in the Salem District (Fig.212). It is found in the cave temple of Mānnaṭhā at this place on the north wall of the ardhamāṇḍapa. Apart from the beauty of its modelling it is a fine specimen of the composite deity showing the two distinct forms clearly by the jāmakuta and the kīrtimakuta. An additional feature, which is not found elsewhere is that it holds a serpent in the lower right hand, which is realistically treated. The upper right hand, which carries the deer, an attribute of Śiva and the left holds the conch of Viṣṇu. The flames of the conch seen clearly here would show that even from this period the practice of showing the flames was in vogue. The details of ornamentation and other attributes distinguishing the two forms of the God are executed remarkably well. The bull and the Garuḍa are also seen on either side in their usual places. The identification of the subsidiary

figures, said to represent the river goddesses, is however, difficult.

The fine image of Harihara in cave I in Bādāmi (close of the 6th century A.D.) is represented with the two distinguishing head-gears combined over the head behind which is a halo. The upper right hand holds the axe with a snake around it and the lower right hand, which is broken, is probably in abhaya. The upper left hand holds a conch and the lower left hand is placed on the katiśātra in the usual manner. To the right of the Śiva part stands the figure of Pārvatī holding a flower in her left hand and slightly turned towards the Šiva. Between the main figure and Pārvatī stands the small figure of Nandi, a combination of human and animal forms, with a trident in the right hand. To the left of the figure stands Laksāmaṇī with a flower in her right hand and turned like Pārvatī, towards the chief figure. Between her and the Šiva stands Garuḍa with hands folded over his breast. The composition of this sculpture recalls to our mind the beautiful description of the Harihara form in the Kādaṇkudi copper plates mentioned earlier. Curiously enough, the presence of the two consorts looking coyly at the respective gods as mentioned in the above copper plate is not found anywhere in the contemporary sculptural representations of Toppaimapālam.

The Bādāmi bas-relief corresponds to the description given in the 22nd natāla of the Śilparatna quoted by T.A. Copinatha Rao, according to which, the right hand of the figure should be in the posture of giving protection (abhaya) and the left in the katiśātra.

40. P.R. Subrahmanya, op. cit. p. 109; HER, 1905-06, part II, p. 35.
pose attached to the thigh. There should be a battle-axe (paramā) in the other right hand and a conch in the other left. The dress, headgear and other ornaments to be worn by the two parts of the God are described in the Śaivāsanaṃ and other texts also quoted by Gopinatha Rao.

41. atha sukaṇḍa-harbho maṣṭhitam samātādaḥkam
   daksināya tṛṇabhayam vāsā nātakaṁ tūraśayuṇaṁ
   nāgaṁ daksināya vāsanā āyaṅkham tu naraṁbhaṅkā
dvāmamardhan harin kuru-vāda-samāvādharanārāt //

42. Pitāmhaṛaṇdharan vibhūna vyāharacāndrasvāhāren haran ś
   vyāpasūn kriṣṭaśrayuktaṁ āṇkarān tu jagatvītaṁ
   -- Kūrabhūśākāna, Ibid.

Dvānaḥ harbharaṁ vakṣyā vastupātesakaśāhena
   daksināya āṇkarastu dharmānhiṁ vāsāḥ sūrataṁ
   būrṇānubhīteṇa kṛṣṇo jagatvītastu daksinā
dvāparatamāya dravyo-kriṣṇa-vāsabhiṁgetap
   daksināya samarpājena bhūṣitaṁ kampādaṁśhott
   sakarākāraṁ dikṣam kūpale vāsakampetaṁ
   varada daksino hastāṁ daksipya saṁdaṅgakṣaṁśad-
   kartikvak vāsabhiṅga tu āṇkha-dakṣa-sarejedotaraṁ
   daksino vasantam kṛṣṇo dhipbhasamāyam śabhaṁ
   pitāṃbhramaṁhyāmaḥ kṣaṇam jadhanām mṛt-gāvyālikāṁ
dvānānubhīte prakartavyā ujārātma virāgipatā
daksinānubhīte prakartavyā dharmāṅghra-vīrgipatā
   dvāmarāsāvalīkā kṛṣṇa-vāsabhiṅga vicakṣapati
   evaṁ pāṇavasakaṁ vāsābhiṅga virāyatā //

-- Gūparaṇa, Ibid., p.17.
In the iconographic texts the two main attributes held by the upper hands are stated to be the axe and conch, Cakra or wheel is hardly mentioned. Another interesting feature is that in one of the Śilpaśāstra passages the Śila or spear is mentioned in the place of the axe. The same weapon also figures as that of the Śiva part of the Harihara form in one of the hymns of Poygai Alvar referred to earlier. He also mentions the cakra, which we find in the early Harihara image from Mahabalipuram. The triśula and cakra are also mentioned as the two chief attributes of the figure in the Vayu- dharmottara. The Caturmātra gives a similar description in which the upper right hand is stated to hold a spear (Śila) and the upper left a wheel (cakra). But the text adds the conch as the attribute held in the lower left whereas the lower right hand is to be held in the abhaya pose. An image of Harihara with twelve arms and various additional attributes is also mentioned in the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa. Another type of the same God is described in the Matya Purāṇa which gives additional attributes like the gadā and a book of the Vedas. Thus the extant images always do not strictly correspond to

44. See R.D. Banerji, op.cit., p.5.
45. ch.61.
46. An image with a gadā held in the upper left hand, belonging to the late Gānukya period is illustrated and described by T.A. Gopinatha Rao, op.cit., Vol.II, Pt.I, p.336 and Pt.C.
the textual descriptions. However, in the case of dress and ornaments, the Śiva part usually wears the tiger skin and has the jaṭāmukta with the crescent, the skull and snake, the latter found either adorning the body or the leg, or held in the lower right hand or seen coiled around the axe held in the upper right hand, the last two features being depicted in the Nāmakkal and Bādāmi images respectively. The left half of the figure representing Viṣṇu wears a silken garment and is adorned with the kūṭamukta, necklaces, kayāra and other jewelled ornaments especially the mārakupāla invariably mentioned in the texts. Thus the dress and ornamentation of the figure more or less closely follow the prescriptions of the iconographical texts. It may be noted that the Śiva part of the figure is almost identical with that in the Archanā image.

The attendant deities, Garuḍa and Nandi, are to be represented in their respective places according to the Viṣṇudharmottara. This feature is found in the Bādāmi image, and with a slight variation in the Pillaiyarappāṭṭi image, having Camōṣa in the place of Nandi. 47

The discussion on the synchronic concept of Haribara and its representations in the Tamil country cannot be closed without a reference to the famous temple of Naṭarpāla, the dancing Śiva, in Chidambaram in the South Arcot District. The synchronism which is at the basis of this concept is perhaps better illustrated in this

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47. Varuṇaṛilaṇakrabhidhārīnaḥ Bāhavah kramāt
dakṣina vyābhaḥ nārāyaḥ vyāmabhāḥ vibhavavāt.
temple by the presence of two shrines within the inner court of this temple. The one dedicated to Viṣṇu in the Śayana form called here Govindarāja, faces east and the shrine of Naṭarāja faces south. Particular mention must be made of the presence of two flag staffs (dhwajastambhas) in the temple for the Govindarāja shrine and the Natarāja shrine, the lines of vision intersecting each other at right angles so that form a particular point in the mahāmandapa in front of the Govindarāja shrine, both the Gods can be seen and worshipped by the devotees. This phenomenon which is not easily explained may contain the clue to the positions occupied by the two shrines. It has already been noticed that the Śayana form represents the Nārāyaṇa or the Para aspect of Viṣṇu, in which he plays the role of the Creator while reclining (passive) on the serpent couch in the midst of the Ocean at the end of an aeon and from his navel issues the lotus with Brahma on it. The two main attributes of Viṣṇu are the ākāra and gāthra which may be understood to stand respectively for the nāma (dhvani or sound) and the ākāra (form) of Creation itself. For the ākāra is blown to create the dhvani or the nāma which is heard, and the gāthra with its rays like those of the sun denotes the perceptible form. The Naṭarāja form Śiva, the divine dancer, represents, on the other hand, the active role of this God-head in creation. The 'cosmic dance', as it is often interpreted, leads not only to the destruction (of evaṁ) but also to creation. Again, the two attributes invariably associated with this form are the fire (āgni) and the āgnimitra. The former no doubt represents the
visible form and the latter the sound (adyānti or nāma) of creation.

The temple of Chidambaram with its two shrines must have been in existence since the days of the Vaippava Ṭhārs and the Saiva Kāyaśārs, who have sung the praise of the two Gods Viṣṇu in Citrakāla and Śiva dancing in the golden hall (rāmpālam). It is not till much later in the times of the late Cōla rulers that sectarian rivalry led to acts of destruction, some of which are said to have centered round the Chidambaram temple, particularly against the Viṣṇu idol, which Kulottunga II (1138-1150 A.D.) is said to have removed from the court yard of the Sacred Hall of Tillai. Several ancient temples appear to have had shrines both of Śiva and Viṣṇu, and there seems to have been at one period a deliberate attempt to harmonize the relations between the followers of the two creeds, an attempt which probably gave rise to the cult of Bānkaranañāyana. The sectarianism of a later age proved itself intolerant of the eclectic

48. Kulaśekharālār, Parimāḷa Tirumoli, X-1 to XI; Tirumangai, Pariyam Tirumoli, III-2-1 to 10; 3-1 to 10; Pariyam Tirumagal, 124; Sāyājan Hymns of Appar, Mī Santandar and Sundaramūrti on Tiruccittigambalam.

49. Kulottunārajanunulā, 11.75-78. An inscription from the temple seems to begin with a reference to this act of the king but this part of the inscription appears to have been wantonly damaged as the rest of it is in excellent preservation — 363 of 1907. The image was, however, later reconsecrated in the Vijayanagar period. Perhaps the earliest reference to the relative positions of the shrines of Śvindarājā and daśarājā in Chidambaram is that of Mānikkavaṉagar in his Tirukkāvaiyār. (v.96)
arrangements of an earlier period. It is quite probable that the incident of the Čidambaram temple assigned to Kulottunga II's period was one of a series of events beginning with the persecution of the Great Vaippava teachers like Rāmānuja mentioned in the biographies of the Vaippava teachers vi.e., the Diyyaśiricarita and the Yatirāja-vaiśbhava.

Independent temples dedicated to Harihara or Sankara-Mārya are very few in India and only a few temples exist in the Tamil country such as the one in Sankaranāyāṇarkoyil in the Tirunelveli district, where the composite form of the God is enshrined and worshipped. Much controversy has raged over the correct identity of the God Venkaṭēsa of Tirupati and there are quite a few, who believe that it is the combined form of Śiva and Viṣṇu that is worshipped in this temple.

Section 2: 900-1300 A.D.

Syncretism in religion continued to find expression in most of the Čola and Pāṇḍya monuments of the period 900-1200 A.D. While images of Harihara are found in the niches of the Śiva temples, the worship of Viṣṇu remained an essential part of the temple ritual in the Śaiva shrines. Epigraphic evidence of the existence of the Čola

80. See K.A. Nīlakanṭha Sastri, Cidambaram, p.348 and f.n.49.

81. Ibid., p.295.

of a shrine dedicated to Śankaranārāyaṇa is afforded by the Cōla inscriptions in the temple of Vrahabdra Tiṣṇukāmāvara in Kāppalūr in the North Arcot district. The inscriptions belong to the 3rd year of a Parakasavarman identified with Parāntaka I (910 A.D.) and in the 8th year of Tribhuvanacakravartin Kājarāja-deva (II). The Cōla inscriptions in this temple refer also to a Viṣṇu temple called Kaliyāditta viṇṇagar which was probably built during the time of Kītāja II Karīkāla, after whom it was named. A temple of Śankaranārāyaṇa is mentioned also in an inscription of the 10th year of Kājarāja I (998 A.D.) from the Viṣṇu temple at Ukka, in the Chingleput district. The famous Śrīmūnātha Trimūrtī temple in Sucindram also dates from the 9th century A.D., as the earliest inscriptions of the temple belong to the early Pāṇḍya rulers. The sculptures of the Sucindram temple assignable to a later period (15th century A.D.) are interesting as they depict Purānic stories of Kṛṣṇa, Subhrahmapya and other deities, significant of the traditional importance of the temple intended for the worship of the Trinity. As if in confirmation of the origin and significance of this temple, a bas-relief of the Viśvarūpa form of Kṛṣṇa is depicted on the walls of the śāmara of the temple dated in the 15th century. It is

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63. 286 and 288 of 1938-39.
64. III, III, 2.
notable for its unique iconographic features combining the three forms of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Brahmā with their weapons and attributes (Fig.213). The theme chosen for representation is drawn from the Gîtapadêśa of Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna i.e. the Viśvarūpa assumed by Kṛṣṇa at the request of Arjuna. The figure of Viśvarūpa-Kṛṣṇa dominates the composition and is unique in having three heads, the central one being that of Viṣṇu, the faces on the sides being those of Brahmā and Śiva as indicated by the dvipamakâta of the two latter ones and the pratipamakâta of the former. The figure is shown with eight hands, the upper-most pair holding the japa and sakra, the second pair holding the mûla (deer) and pariva (axe of Śiva), the third pair, the karandâria and akṣarâla of Brahmā. Of the fourth pair of hands, the right is in abhaya and the left in the simhakarna attitude. The image is represented as standing on chariot drawn by horses. The figure of Arjuna is shown lying at the feet of the God and he is seen holding a bow under his arm. The chariot has a flagstaff, with the figure of Hanumâ as the emblem on the flag.

Harihara images are known from several temples of this period and the most remarkable among them are those in the Cōla temples at Tiruvâlamûr, Tanjavûr and Gaṅgaikōṇaśõlapuram. The image from Tiruvâlamûr seems to belong to the early Cōla period and exhibits the usual features such as the parâjñâ in the upper right hand and jânâkha in the upper left (Fig.214). The one at Tanjavûr represents the Śiva half carrying the axe and the Viṣṇu half carrying the sakra (Fig.215). In Gaṅgaikōṇaśõlapuram the Viṣṇu half of the figure carries the jânâkha (Fig.216).
One of the invocatory verses addressed to Viṣṇu in the 
Udayendiran Plate of Pṛthvīpati II dated in the 15th year of 
Parāntaka I (982 A.D.), describes Viṣṇu as the Lord of Prosperity 
and Master of the Universe of whom the eight-bodied Śiva (Aṣṭamūrti) 
himself became one half of the body (Maṅghara).

Śūrya Narāyaṇa

Besides the Hindu Trinity, Śūrya is also often included in the 
scheme of representation. The Śūrya-Narāyaṇa concept was evolved 
out of this and it emphasizes the mantra repeated in the Gāyatrī 
that Narāyaṇa is in the solar orb. That Śūrya and Narāyaṇa often 
represented one and the same principle is proved by the close asso-
ciation of Viṣṇu with Aditya even in the Rg Veda. A medieval sculp-
ture from Bihar, now in the Indian Museum, represents Śūrya on the 
one side and Viṣṇu on the other, exemplifying the above synthesis bet-
ween the Paramabhaṣagavatams and Paramādityabhaktas. Śūrya Narāyaṇa

56. SII., II, No. 76.

57. C. Sivaramamūrti, "Sculptural Manifestations of Religious Tolerance, 
Arkt Asiatiques, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1954, p. 115; for other represen-
tations of the combined Hindu and Buddhist elements and of the Śaiva 
Vaishnav and Solar elements see J.N. Banerjea, A.I., pp. 540-63; 
The great Advaita philosopher Śankaracārya himself attempted a 
large scale synthesis through the introduction of the Brāhma-
vatarn niṣa in every household represented by symbolic specimens 
of Śivalinga (pebble). Balagrāma (ammonite stone), red jasper for 
Gopapati, a fragment of glittering dolomite for Ambikā and a 
(contd.)
forms are rare in the Tamil country whereas 18-je more common even in the Kaspada and Andhra countries especially in the late medieval period. Though the worship of the Sun has been prevalent in the Tamil country from at least the early centuries of the Christian era, the cult of the Sun became more widespread with the impetus was given to it towards the end of the 11th century A.D. The earliest known epigraphic record which indicates the spread of the cult in this region is a Gahaḍavala inscriptions belonging to the close of the 11th century. It comes from the Cōla temple at Gangaikondachōlapuram. The presence of the inscription is attributed to the contact which was definitely established for the first time between the Cōla monarch Kuloṭtunga I and one of Gahaḍavala rulers, the latter being great worshippers of the Sun. The name of the king is unfortunately not known, as the inscription stops abruptly after giving the Gahaḍavala praśāati. Possibly, the increased emphasis on Sun worship due to the above contact, also led to the building of independent temples for the Sun. The only temple dedicated to Śūrya in the Tamil country is the one at Śūryanārkōyil (the name of the place being derived from

57 (contd.) piece of crystal quartz for Śūrya expressing the five aspects -- Śiva, Viṣṇu, Gaṇapati, Śakti and Śūrya. While the linea and the Ṛṣilāgrama form, even today, the most sacred symbols of Śaivism and Vaishnavism worshipped in every orthodox Śaiva and Vaishnava household respectively, it is not known whether the other symbolic forms are as common as the above two. Śakti worship has manifest itself in a variety of ways and yantras are also used for symbolising the various deities.
the name of the God) in the Tanjavur district, believed to owe its existence to Kulottunga I and called in inscriptions as Kulottungasūla-mattupālayam. The king may have built the temple particularly as a result of his contacts with the Cānāḍavālas of Kannuji who were devout worshippers of the Sun-God. Earlier, however, Sūrya is either assigned a place among the nine planets (navagrahas) as is done even now or his sculptures are enshrined in larger temples dedicated to Śiva. Occasionally he is given a small independent shrine in the courtyard of a temple as, for example, in the Nagēśvarasvāmi temple in Kumbakonam dating from the early Cōla period. It may be noted here, that while Sūrya is identified with Viṣṇu, he is not associated with Śiva. In the Pallava period on the other hand, we do not meet with independent representations of Sūrya and hence also the absence of syncretic icons of Sūrya Narāyaṇa. Even when the cult of Sūrya developed here, the reprobation between Viṣṇu and Sūrya is not commonly expressed in sculptural representations.

39. M.E.R., 1907-08. Pt II, para - 60
Fig. 206 - Viṣṇu worshipping Śiva by offering his lotus eye - Kāñci - Pallava - early 8th century. A.D.

207 Hari-Hara Pītāmaha (?) - Kāñci - Pallava - 8th C.H.D.
Fig. 208 — Harihara with G. ruja and Caṇḍesā (?)

Pillaiyarpatti - Caṇḍya - 5th c. A.D.(?)

209 — Harihara - Mahābalipuram - Pallava - 7th c. A.D.
Fig. 210  -- Harihara -- Mahabalipuram - Pallava

7th C.A.D.

211  -- Harihara (or Trimūrti ?) - Aragāṇḍanallūr

7th century A.D.
Fig. 212  Harihara — Namakkal — Adigaiman —
8th C.A.D.

213  — Kṛṣṇa — Viśvarūpa — in the Trimūrti
form — Sūcīndra — 15th C.A.D.
Fig. 214 -- Harithra -- Tiruvengambur -- Cōla -- 10th C.A.D.

215 " Tanjavur -- Cōla -- 11th C.A.D.

216 " Gangaikondacōḻapuram -- Cōla -- 11th C.A.D.