

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE HINDU TEMPLE;
A STUDY IN THE MĀNASĀRA

Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
of the University of Manitoba
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in Religion

July, 1987



BRENDA CANTELO
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

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BY

BRENDA CANTELO

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
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MASTER OF ARTS

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TO MY PARENTS

Let them choose (a place of worship) which lies highest and above which no other ground rises; for it was from thence that the gods ascended to heaven and he who is consecrated indeed ascends to the gods.

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 3.1.1.1.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AU	S. Radhakrishnan, <i>The Principal Upaniṣads: Aitareya Upaniṣad</i> (English translation). All subsequent references to Upaniṣads are from this translation.
AP	M.N.D. Shastri, <i>Agni Purāṇa</i> (English translation).
ApGS	H. Oldenberg, <i>The Grihya Sūtras: Āpastamba Grihya Sūtra</i> (English translation). All subsequent references to Grihya Sūtras are from this translation.
AsGS	Āsvalāyana Grihya Sūtra.
AtV	M. Bloomfield, <i>Hymns of the Atharva Veda</i> (English translation).
BhG	W. Sargeant, <i>The Bhagavadgītā</i> (English translation and Sanskrit text).
BrS	M.R. Bhat, <i>Varahāmiḥira's Br̥hat Samhita</i> (English translation).
BU	Br̥had āraṇyaka Upaniṣad
CU	Chāndogya Upaniṣad
GGs	Gobhila Grihya Sūtra
GP	J.L. Shastri, ed. <i>The Garuḍa Purāṇa</i> (English translation).
HGS	Hiraṇyakeśin Grihya Sūtra
HOS	Harvard Oriental Series
Isa	Īśa Upaniṣad
ISGP	S. Kramrisch, <i>"Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati"</i> (English translation).
Kaivalya	Kaivalya Upaniṣad
Katha	Kaṭha Upaniṣad
Kena	Kena Upaniṣad
KGS	Khādīa Grihya Sūtra

KU	Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad
MU	Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad
MaU	Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad
Maitri	Maitrī Upaniṣad
ManS	P. Acharya, The Architecture of Mānasāra (English translation).
Matsya P	M.D. Basu, ed., The Matsya Purāṇa (English translation).
Mbh	J.A.B. Van Buitenen, The Mahābhārata (English translation).
MM	B. Dagens, Mayamata: Traité Sanscrit d'Architecture (French translation).
Paingala	Paingala Upaniṣad
PGS	Pāraskara Gṛihya Sūtra
Rmn	R.G. Goldman, The Rāmāyana of Valmiki (English translation).
RgV	R. Griffith, Hymns of the RgVeda (English translation).
SamSD	V.S. Agrawala, ed., The Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra of Mahārājadhiraāja Bhoja (Sanskrit text). (Unpublished English translation of Chpt. 1,2,6 by Mrs. Satya Rananatha).
SB	J. Eggeling, The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (English translation).
SBE	Sacred Books of the East Series
SBH	Sacred Books of the Hindus Series.
SED	M. Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary.
SS	P.N. Bose, ed., and trans. Śilpa Śāstra (English translation).
Subala	Subāla Upaniṣad
SU	Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

TS	A.B. Keith, The Veda of the Black Yajus School: The Taittirīya Saṃhitā (English translation).
TSM	N.V. Mallaya, "Studies in Sanskrit Texts on Temple Architecture with Special Reference to the Tantrasamuccaya" (English translation).
TU	Taittirīya Upaniṣad
VV	K.R. Pisharoti, "Vāstuvidyā Chapters 1-6" (English translation).

INTRODUCTION

Stella Kramrisch, in the preface to her monumental work *The Hindu Temple*, writes: "The Hindu temple is the sum total of architectural rites performed on the basis of its myth. The myth covers the ground of the plan on which the structure is raised."¹ It is from such a perspective of myth and ritual that the present thesis attempts to approach and understand the temple. Through the myths which permeate the structure and give it meaning and the accompanying rituals which sanctify these concepts, the temple is raised as the house and body of God. Hindu sanctuaries are based upon an ancient mythology preserved in the rituals of sacrifice and meticulously maintained and transmitted to each generation. Sacrifice embodied Aryan philosophy and it is this underlying mythical-philosophy which is transformed into the sacred structure of the vimāna. The temple is, in this respect, an evolution of Vedic rites and myths, and it is the potency of these themes which have survived and taken new form within the walls of the temple.

One problem in establishing parallels between temple and ancient sacrificial rites lies in the complexities of the technical manuals of ceremony. The very detailed and often obscure nature of the *Brāhmaṇas* (the prose texts which explicate the meaning of ritual) presents a challenge. It is difficult, for the outsider, to follow the elaborate steps, digressions and explanations of the fire sacrifice or

agnicayana solely through texts of the Brāhmaṇas as A.A.

Macdonnell complained almost a century ago:

They form an aggregate of shallow and pedantic discussions, full of sacerdotal conceits and fanciful, or even absurd identifications, such as doubtless unparalleled anywhere else.²

It is now recognized that Macdonnell was clearly mistaken in his assessment of the Brāhmaṇas. Due in no small part to J. Eggeling's masterful translations, the commentaries are now more realistically appreciated. M. Winternitz comments:

If the use of the word "science" may be permitted with reference to theological knowledge, then we can best designate the Brāhmaṇas as texts which deal with the science of sacrifice.³

Unravelling this "science of sacrifice" was further facilitated by the work of Frits Staal whose documentaries were based on actual footage of the agnicayana rituals performed in a twelve day session in 1975 by Nambudri brahmins in southwest India.

As this thesis develops the argument for the authenticity of religious continuity between sacrificial ritual and temple construction, emphasis is placed on a comparative study of select ritual details of the agnicayana ceremonies and the primary constituent elements of the sanctuary. Since the altar forms a crucial link between the older type of sacrificial worship and the temple, texts which elucidate yajña or sacrifice have been used extensively. Information found in these texts is collated and compared primarily with the Mānasāra,⁴ which is used as

the main representative of vāstusāstra or architectural treatise, but is also supplemented with other architectural works and sources which contain isolated sections dedicated to particular aspects of construction.

The inquiry utilizes materials already available and discussed by other writers in the field, and claims neither to be exhaustive in scope nor original in conception. When compared to other studies in the area of Hindu temple architecture the present work relates to that approach taken by Dr. Stella Kramrisch in her classic *The Hindu Temple*, for Kramrisch is primarily interested in discovering parallels in earlier religious expressions and understanding the relevance of these forms, in terms of meaning, in the temple.

While there is nothing unique in the knowledge that the temple is based upon ancient myths and rites (and that the purusa complex is one of the most important themes) what at least may be different about this thesis is the manipulation of the details of the agnicayana ritual (facilitated by Frits Staal's work) in comparison to specific temple rites and images. Although Dr. Kramrisch does utilize this information it is not necessarily the entire focus of her research, and although she does devote several pages to the theme of the "Temple as Purusa" the present study is exclusively interested in these problems and therefore may complement areas of *The Hindu Temple* which are treated in a

more succinct manner. The fact that the *Mānasāra* is used as the standard text to which others are compared also gives this study its own particular structure.

It differs from other important writers such as T. Bhattacharya who offers extensive history and background to the evolution of the temple and the texts which guide its construction, but does not delve into detailed connections between the ritual of the altar and the temple, nor the problems of the meaning of these rites. Texts such as P.K. Acharya's companion to the *Mānasāra*, *Indian Architecture According to the Mānasāra Śilpa Śāstra*,⁵ are concerned only with the relation of specific texts to other architectural treatises as a means of discovering the growth and development of religious architecture in India. Altars or the original evolution of the temple are not addressed.

Studies from the point of view of art historians such as B. Rowland, J. Fergusson, or even E.B. Havell do not offer indepth explanations for the shift between sacrifice and temple worship or explain the continuity of thought it entails. On the other hand, this investigation differs from that of scholars such as Bettina Bäumer, Alice Boner and of course, Ananda Coomaraswamy, who are genuinely and intuitively aware of the profundity of the principles contained in sacred art and architecture, in the sense that it deals extensively with specific details rather than general observations.

The aim is to dismantle the preliminary rites surrounding construction and to compare each phase/theme with parallel aspects of the agnicayana to highlight the mythical and ritual implications and basis of the temple. It is, therefore, the religious significance and spiritual meaning of the place of worship rather than details of art history and the development of various artistic styles which is the focus of this study. Although some pertinent questions of historical development and degree of indigenous and foreign influence are raised, the effects of these elements on the genesis of the temple would require a separate and extensive investigation. They are raised merely to alert the reader to the inherent problems, while the extent and degree of their influence remains open.

Chapter one provides the historical context of temple architecture and briefly deals with the problems of non-Vedic influence on the development of the temple. Chapter two demonstrates the relationship of the temple to the macrocosm through the divine origins of architecture and through the image of the reborn, renewed and resurrected man purusa. Chapter three discusses the importance of site selection and its basis in sacrificial rites. Chapter four demonstrates the significance of the vāstupurusa mandala as the key symbol between man, the sacrifice and the temple, and explores its spiritual implications. The fifth chapter is a detailed analysis of the rites and symbols of the inner square.

In regard to Sanskrit terms, words or phrases integral to the development of the discussion are explained and integrated into the text. Other Sanskrit terms which may be translated in a single word are placed initially beside the English and later appear alone. A glossary of Sanskrit terms is included for the benefit of the reader unfamiliar to this area. The names of Sanskrit texts are used throughout in their abbreviated form. A list of these abbreviations appears on page viii.

Format and method of citation are based on W.F. Achtert and J. Gibaldi, *MLA Style Manual* (N.Y.: Modern Language Association of America, 1985).

ENDNOTES

1. Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 2 vols. (1946; New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977) preface.
2. A.A. Macdonnell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, 3rd. ed. (1899; New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1972) 31.
3. M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, 3 vols. (1927; N.Y. Russel & Russel, 1971) 189.
4. Prasanna Kumar Acharya, trans., *Architecture of Manasāra*, Manasara Series IV (1934; New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1980). Hereafter abbreviated *ManS*.
5. P.K. Acharya *Indian Architecture According to the Manasāra Śilpa Śāstra* (Oxford University Press, 1927).

CHAPTER ONE

Historical Context of Temple Construction

The Early Beginnings of Vāstuvidyā

The early beginnings of vāstuvidyā¹ are difficult to trace and it is plausible to assume that a craft of building existed long before the first written architectural treatises appeared. Most probably, this knowledge, like the rest of Vedic literature, survived in an oral tradition.² Varahāmihira, the author of the 6th century *Br̥hat Samhitā*, begins his work with such an assertion. The art of building, he says, has been preserved in all its purity, "...transmitted from the Creator to our days through an unbroken series of sages."³ This position is also supported by passages such as that found in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, where the names of the eighteen famous preceptors of vāstu are enumerated.⁴ Such information would indicate that already by the Gupta period of the 4th to 6th centuries A.D. vāstuvidyā was a flourishing craft preserved in a living oral tradition passed on from teacher to disciple. Prior to this date, the beginning and development of this branch of study can be inferred only through indirect evidence such as isolated references to buildings, passages that suggest the existence of architectural rituals, and surviving artistic representations of dwellings and city scenes.

The oldest strata of Vedic literature, the *R̥g Veda* (c. 1500 B.C.) enumerates various types of buildings which must

have existed at that time: Mitra and Varuna are said to inhabit thousand-pillared palaces; Indra is praised for crushing the castles of the enemy; fortresses of stone and iron are clearly mentioned; many of the gods are praised by the epithet of "Fort Destroyer"; and finally, village settlements are cited.⁵ The Atharva Veda specifically refers to different parts of the house such as buttresses, supports, connecting beams, the frame, thatch covering and dove-tail joints.⁶

The first indication of a ritual connected with house building is also found in the Rg Vedic period. Two hymns, RgV 7.54 and 55 are dedicated to the god Vāstoṣpati who was worshipped at the time of construction. His presence as "Guardian of the Homestead", "Protector of the Home" and "Guardian of the Dwelling" is invoked to preserve the householder from disease and ill fortune and to grant prosperity and happiness to the family. In the Atharva Veda, blessings and prayers are also linked to the dwelling place.⁷ Thus from a very early time the propitiation of the vāstupuruṣa was a critical element in the process of construction. Even today, homage to the Spirit of the Site remains an essential part of construction: "his worship is desirable while building vimānas of both gods and men."⁸

This same Vāstoṣpati who is invoked as the protector of the site is identified with Indra and Tvaṣṭar the master carpenter and architect of the gods.⁹ The Rg Vedic Tvaṣṭar

fulfills many of the functions later attributed to Viśvakarman the divine artificer. When Viśvakarman is the archetypal craftsman, Tvaṣṭar becomes one of his four mind-born sons.¹⁰

The mythical Tvaṣṭar is, in some places in the Rg Veda, lauded as the Creator God, "the earliest born and wearer of all forms at will," a title also accredited to Vāstoṣpati who "wearest every form."¹¹ Tvaṣṭar is called the "omniform Creator who begets and feeds mankind," "one who formed the two worlds with their forms and every creature," and "the vivifier shaping all forms."¹² As the archetypal craftsman "the most deft of workmen who knew each magic art" he creates all the necessary articles for the gods.¹³ It was he who fashioned the first sacrificial ladle and the bowls to hold amṛta which are the means to immortality, and it was he who created the heavenly thunderbolt by which Indra slew the demonic Ahi, the embodiment of bondage.¹⁴

By the time of the Rg and Atharva Vedas various types of buildings were in existence, the rituals associated with construction and the vāstupuruṣa were known, and the origins of the human arts and crafts established upon a divine model. By the time of the Sūtra period (c. 500 B.C) more direct evidence is available for the existence of vāstuvīdyā. In the Gṛihya Sūtras, the manuals dealing with domestic practices, many topics which later become standard matters in the vāstusāstras are discussed such as site

selection, establishing the proper and auspicious time to begin, the worship of Vāstoṣpati, and the adoration of the central post, main supports and entrances.¹⁵

Evidence of the early existence of various types of buildings are found in the representations of cottages, multilevelled pavilions and cities depicted in the reliefs of surviving Buddhist monuments. Images of cottages and a large palace (Indra's paradise) are found at Bhārhut (c. 250 B.C.), (see plate 1) and scenes of city life may be seen along the toranas or gates of the Great Sāñchī stupa of the 1st century A.D. (see plate 2). As well, the elaborate stone facade of the Kārle chaitya hall (c. 1st century A.D.) imitates the wooden structures which must have existed at this time (plate 3).

Though there are enough references in the Grihya Sūtras to surmise the existence of vāstuvidyā it is in the epic literature that explicit reference to this science and its application are found (c. 400 B.C. to 300 A.D.). The thriving capital city of Ayodhyā is described in the Rāmāyana as:

...a great and majestic city, twelve leagues long and three wide with well-ordered avenues ... provided with markets ... filled with bards and rhapsodists ... having troops of actresses everywhere, dotted with parks and ramparts ... It was a fortress with a deep moat impossible to cross. ... (The city) was laid out like a chessboard ... and adorned with palatial buildings. Situated on level ground, its houses were built in close proximity to one another. The outer walls were well constructed.¹⁶

Texts dealing with specific types of construction such as those dedicated to the science of city engineering and defense were developed by this time.¹⁷ The heavily fortified and guarded cities are described in the *Mahābhārata* as complete with gate towers, mobile ramps, turrets, catapults for firebrands and torches and protected by high ramparts and trenches heavily fortified with spikes. To ensure the proper protection of the inhabitants the cities were strengthened with "all defenses provided for in the texts" which were "prescribed by science".¹⁸

The science of construction also included various other crafts. Tradesmen such as carpenters and goldsmiths are mentioned often in relation to the two most important names connected with architecture, *Viśvakarman* and *Maya*. *Viśvakarman* is the "lordly progenitor of the crafts, the creator of the thousands of crafts and the carpenter to the Thirty Gods" and humans in imitation of him, earn their livelihood by following the crafts he established.¹⁹ It is for this reason all craftsmen and artisans pay homage to him. As architect to the gods, *Viśvakarman* was responsible for building the marvelous palaces and mansions of the various deities and supplying the gods with their divine chariots as well as any small articles they required.²⁰

As *Viśvakarman* is the divine artificer of the gods, so is *Maya* the master of Asura architecture. *Maya* is considered the *Viśvakarman* of the *Daityas*, and it was he who

built the peerless hall for the Pāṇḍavas at Mt. Kailāsa.²¹

While some of these accounts are only intended to be poetical descriptions of mythical places, there is enough evidence to suggest that a science/craft of architecture did exist at this time, and that the two names Maya and Viśvakarman who are later mentioned as authors of architectural treatises were already well known.

Two schools, the northern school of Viśvakarman and the southern school of Maya developed out of this tradition. The northern school prevalent among the Aryans, recognized Viśvakarman as the ultimate authority, while the southern school revered Maya, the traditional architect of the non-Aryan Dravidian peoples of south India. According to Bhattacharya, there was little difference in the two schools concerning underlying principles and measurements until about the 6th century A.D.²²

Early Treatises of Vāstuvidyā

The first existing treatises on vāstuvidyā are contained within larger more comprehensive texts. The later vāstu works treat the subject more fully and in a more detailed manner. The following schema is limited to the sources utilized in this paper.²³

WORKS CONTAINING SECTIONS ON VASTUVIDYA

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>
Bṛhat Saṃhitā, Ch. 53-56	6th c. AD	Northern
Matsya Purāṇa, Ch. 252-257	4th-6th c. AD	Northern
Agni Purāṇa, Ch. 104-106	6th-10th c. AD	Northern
Garuḍa Purāṇa Ch. 46-47	6th-10th c. AD	Northern

VĀSTUSĀSTRA WORKS

Mayamata	10th c.	Southern
Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra	11th c.	Northern
Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati	11th c.	Southern
Tantrasamuccaya	11th c.	Southern
Mānasāra	11th to 15th c.	Southern
Viśvakarman Vāstusāstra	11th to 15th c.	Southern

Opinions concerning the dates of some of these works often differ widely. While it is generally accepted that the Bṛhat Saṃhitā and the Matsya Purāṇa contain some of the first lists of early writers on vāstuvidyā and the first lists of different temple styles, the significance of these points and their connection with other texts especially the Mānasāra is hotly disputed.²⁴

Problems of Defining the Development of the Temple

Up to this point the history of ancient Indian architecture has been described in general terms, but when the discussion focuses explicitly on the development of the Hindu temple the topic becomes much more difficult and complex. The reason for this problem lies in the fact that neither the temple nor the image it housed were originally part of Vedic religion. Image worship and temple construction were gradually recognized as orthodox activities but this was due to many different influences

both indigenous and foreign. As this thesis confines its study to the relations of Vedic culture to the temple the other factors which contributed to the growth of the temple are only briefly highlighted to indicate their presence rather than to assess their degree of importance.

Vedic religion was essentially aniconic, neither the temple nor the image were originally part of Aryan devotions. At one time image worship itself, which later became one of the most prominent features of Hinduism, was considered reprehensible. Havell may be quite right in pointing out there was no initial missionary propaganda among the Aryans and in fact they actively resisted "corruption" from the local inhabitants. He writes,

"... elaborate precautions were taken to prevent the religion of the Aryan household and tribe being degraded by contact with the non-Aryan allies, whose gross idolatry was anathema to the Vedic seers, and whose ignorance of Vedic ritual might spoil the efficacy of tribal sacrifices and bring dire disaster upon the whole community."²⁵

Vedic worship revolved around the sacrifice and the hymns, which, glorifying the deeds and virtues of the gods, accompanied the rites; but nowhere is there mention of actual images of the gods being connected with the sacrifice. Some authors, however, interpreting some isolated verses literally, suggest that image worship was practiced by the Aryans. One example used to support such claims is RgV 2.33.3-9. In these verses Rudra is described as "armed with thunder", he is called the "tawny god",

"fair-cheeked and gracious", "firm limbed, multiformed and adorned with bright gold decoration." While these descriptions most probably contributed to the evolution of the cult gods in later Hinduism, it is extremely uncertain that these passages actually refer to a concrete representation of the deity. This very suggestion prompts J.N. Banerjea to ask,

"What conceivable place could be assigned to the image of the Vedic gods? ... in most of the early authoritative Brāhmaṇas, which lay down with meticulous details the mode of performing the various sacrifices, there is practically no reference to the idols of the gods, which would certainly have been explicitly mentioned if they were found necessary."²⁶

The closest the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa comes to fashioning images for the sacrifice is in the golden man, the effigy of the sacrificer. This figure is not worshipped in the sense of pūjā but is simply immured along with other important articles in the foundation of the agni. (See Foundation Rites).

The conclusion of the aniconic nature of early Vedic culture is generally supported by scholars,

"There is no trace in Vedic times, so far as present known," writes Fergusson, "of Indra, Varuṇa, Agni or Ushas, being represented in word or stone, or of their requiring houses or temples to shelter them."²⁷

Keith is quick to point out the important distinction between the general anthropomorphic nature of the Vedic deities which required no image and other religions, such as indicated by the Greek pantheon, where the gods resembled

the human form.²⁸

Not only did the Aryans refuse to fashion any images of their gods, there are passages in the R̥g Veda which would indicate a definite aversion towards those people who practiced idolatry. Such a term as śísna devah is used in R̥gV 10.99.3 and in 7.21.5 to indicate the idolatrous. In the first instance Indra is said to have seized the enemy's treasure and "slew the lustful demons" -- the śísna devah. In 7.21.5 we read "Let our true God subdue the hostile rabble, let not the lewd approach our holy worship." The "lewd" in this case are again the śísna devah which Muir translates as "those whose god is the śísna".

Although Muir accepts the notion that the indigenous tribes may have practiced some forms of worship which were unpalatable to the Vedic Brahmins, he rejects the conclusion that the śísna devah were the original worshippers of the liṅga the phallic emblem of Śiva/Rudra.²⁹ Banerjea on the other hand, cautiously accepts the existence of phallic worship among the aboriginals at the time of the Vedic ṛsis, supporting his claim with evidence of liṅga worship found in the Indus Valley Civilization such as the seal of the ithyphallic god which is often considered the prototypical Śiva.³⁰ He comments,

"It can very well be assumed that the worship consisted of making sensible representations of the human phallus, which was conceived as symbolising principally the potent force at the root of creation and worshipping them."³¹

It is quite possible that worship of the phallic emblem and other images within local sanctuaries was an archaic practice of the aboriginal people which gradually influenced the smaller Aryan population over time.³² The growing popularity of the Dravidian element may have prompted both 1) the evolution of temples (which may have been originally just small thatch huts which housed the icon), and 2) the evolution of bhakti and the cult of devotion.

1) The local village shrine which in its simplest form is a small square building framed in bamboo and covered with thatch, enclosed the sacred objects and afforded some degree of protection for the icon and worshipper.³³ (Plate 4). If the need arose, an open pillared hall or porch could be placed in front of the shrine to accommodate large numbers of worshippers. These two elements, the square sanctum—the garbhagrha and the pillared hall—the mandapa are the embryonic constructive elements of the medieval Hindu temple. This dyad forms the nucleus of all later building and "was the outgrowth of a necessity to provide a suitable enshrinement for a central cult image of the deity."³⁴ They are seen in quite primitive form in the 5th century A.D. Sāñchī Temple (Plate 5).

2) Vedic sacrifice, in contrast to later Hinduism, was not devotional in nature. Sacrifice, if properly performed, produced the desired result with unerring accuracy, not because of the emotional state of the practitioner, but

because it followed the laws of nature. Das Gupta explains sacrifice in the following manner:

The offerings at a sacrifice were not dictated by devotion with which we are familiar under Christian or Vaisnava influence. The sacrifice taken as a whole is conceived as Haug notes "to be a kind of machinery in which every piece must tally with the other." ... Sacrifice was regarded as almost the only kind of duty and it was also called karma or kriya (action) and the unalterable law was destined to produce their effects.³⁵

In comparison, devotion intimately connected the bhakta and his idol in an intensely personal relationship which must have appealed to certain types of individuals within Aryan society. By the time of the Upaniṣads (c. 800-600 B.C.) an evolution of the principles of Hinduism was in process and by the time of the great epics devotion had become widely accepted.³⁶

The ātman-brahman doctrine of the Upaniṣads displays a much more personal view of salvation than does sacrifice.³⁷ Brahman is to be discovered within the depths of the human soul as the Kaivalya Upaniṣad 16 indicates,

He is the supreme brahman, the self of all, the chief foundation of the world, subtler than the subtle, eternal. That thou art; Thou art That.

In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3.20 the Supreme is spoken of as a more personal god who bestows grace, and correspondingly his loving devotee "has the highest devotion for God". This type of thought provided a link between the prevalent theism of the time and the Upaniṣads by identifying the Supreme with the saviour figures of

Hinduism, i.e., Kaivalya Upaniṣad 8, "He is Brahmā, He is Śiva, He is Indra, He is the Imperishable, Supreme, the Lord himself, He is Viṣṇu ..." Deussen also agrees with the theory that the theism of the Śvetāśvatara is adopted and further developed by the later Upaniṣads with the aim of connecting with popular religions by attaching the ātman of the Upaniṣad doctrine to the cult of Śiva or Viṣṇu.³⁸

Occasional remarks found in the Gṛihya Sūtras would suggest an increasing prevalence (and acceptance) of the use of idols. For example, if a student, going in his chariot, approaches the images of the gods he is instructed to pay his respects by descending from his vehicle before he reaches them. In several places the gods are described as being carried about, worshipped with boiled rice, and placed in huts built for them.³⁹

Such devotion flowers into the path of bhaktiyoga by the time of the Bhagavadgītā where it is proclaimed a legitimate path to salvation as Kriṣṇa explains to Arjuna:

He who offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, That offering of devotion I accept from him whose self is pure.

By devotion to Me he comes to know how great and who I am in truth, Then having known Me in truth, he enters Me immediately.⁴⁰

The whole problem of idol worship hinges on the principle of devotion, for it is to these likenesses that offerings of flowers, light and incense are proffered. The image itself is bathed, dressed and entertained in the

understanding that the god temporarily inhabits the icon for the benefit of the worshipper. Vedantic philosophy was able to accommodate this practice by accepting the two-fold nature of brahman, the unutterable, transcendent Godhead beyond all attributes, brahman nirguna, and brahman saguna, the form of God which can be understood and approached by the human mind through his attributes. "Verily, there are two forms of Brahman, the formed and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the unmoving and the moving, the actual (existent) and the True."⁴¹ In some places the personal aspect of God is said to be higher than the relationship of man to the unmanifest.⁴² Other places man is progressively lead through the conditioned to the unconditioned Godhead. The ultimate form of the icon is, however, to be known personally and interiorly in the union of ātman and brahman, as these two verses indicate:

There is no likeness of Him whose name is great glory. His form is not to be seen, no one sees Him with the eye. Those who through heart and mind know Him as abiding in the heart become immortal.⁴³

The vulgar look for their gods in water, men of wider knowledge in celestial bodies, the ignorant in (images made of) wood and stone, but the wise see the Supreme in their own Self.⁴⁴

The Greco-Buddhist Influence

Although the temple may have developed from local shrines frequented by the native inhabitants and the icons from the images placed within, the Dravidian people represent only part of the mosaic that made up later

Hinduism. It should be understood that although indigenous thought and practice did permeate Vedic culture it was certainly not the only contributing factor. Two major heterodox sects entered the Indian scene in the 6th century B.C., irrevocably changing the face of religion and religious worship. Along with the rise of Buddhism and Jainism, the Hellenistic influence beginning with Alexander's conquest of the plains of North Western India in 327 B.C. had lasting effects.

The first early classical period of the Mauryan dynasty marked by the rule of King Asoka (272-232 B.C.), displays both Buddhist and Greek components. As the first imperial patron of Buddhism he zealously encouraged the spread of the dharma through pillar and rock-cut edicts and through important Buddhist monuments. One such remaining monument, the capital from Sarnath, although promoting Buddhist ideals and images, belies an undeniably foreign style of the imported artisans skilled in Iranian and Hellenistic techniques.⁴⁵

The advent of large numbers of stone sculptors marked a general shift in architecture from a perishable to an imperishable medium. Often the stone works resembled the existing wooden forms. The Lomas R_{ṣi} cave in the Barabar Hills, donated by Asoka, imitates in stone relief a free-standing wooden structure that was most probably an early type of shrine. (See Plate 6). Wooden buildings were also

modelled in later rock-cut sanctuaries such as Kārlē (Plate 3) and Ajañṭā (Plate 7), where the parallels are especially noticeable in such features as the facade, the "wooden" support columns and the arches.

The Emperor Aśoka is also remembered for promoting Buddhism through stupa worship which venerated the embodied relics of the Buddha. The Sāñchī stupa, which was eventually enlarged and elaborated, is one of the earliest illustrations. Here, scenes from the Buddha's life embellish the gateways or toranas, and the emblems which signify the Buddha's presence such as the Wheel of the Law or the Tree of Enlightenment are venerated. The Buddha himself, however, is not depicted in anthropomorphic form until the 2nd-3rd centuries A.D. in the Gandharan region of north-west India under the auspices of another famous Indian emperor King Kaniṣka. The figures of the Buddha and bodhisattvas from this time closely resemble Greco-Roman statues of a similar period.⁴⁶ The portrayal of the Buddha as a man, and the rise of the image of the bodhisattva, vitalized the devotional sects of Buddhism which began to flourish after the Great Council under King Kaniṣka. Although Rowland suggests, "It was this quality of bhakti or devotion in the later Buddhist sects, that demanded a representation of the master in an accessible human form," legend has it that even during the lifetime of Buddha sandalwood images were produced.⁴⁷

The rapid spread of Buddhism was most likely another factor which influenced Hindu acceptance of images and temples.

Vedic Culture and Temple Architecture

Faced with a widespread popularity of images and shrines Vedic culture responded by absorbing and incorporating these features. However, in order for these elements to be considered legitimate, they had to be grounded in Vedic orthodoxy or stem from the philosophy of the Vedas. In other words Aryan culture was called upon to give sanction to the great name of architecture.⁴⁸ Some aspects of construction, such as the ceremonies connected with site selection and the honour of Vāstōpati were already part of the Vedic tradition; equally important, the ṛsis had at their command an entire technical literature devoted to the sacrificial cult which, if necessary, could be applied to the temple.

The construction of the devālaya or temple, is most closely connected to the two vedāṅgas of kalpa or ritual science and jyotiṣa astronomy/astrology.⁴⁹ The Kalpa Sūtras which relate to the śrauta sacrifices in the Brāhmaṇas are part of the Śrauta Sūtras which derive their authority from śruti literature and contain all the rules pertaining to sacrifice. The Śulva Sūtras are a component of kalpa literature. These manuals contain the exact rules and measurements necessary for the proper construction of fire

altars and represent the oldest works of Hindu mathematics and geometry. Mathematical problems posed by the temple were solved using solutions already outlined in the Śulva Sūtras.⁵⁰

Jyotiṣa was essential both to the sacrificial priest and to the master architect, for it established the most auspicious moment to begin the work and regulated key steps in its completion. Astrology linked man to the macrocosm, for through this science he was attuned to the movements of the celestial bodies.

By tapping resources already available, yajña or sacrifice was applied to the science of architecture, i.e., the knowledge for selecting a proper sacrificial site was transferred to the temple, as well as rituals for purifying the area such as propitiating the local divinities or ploughing and seeding the field. The agnicayana ritual as described in kāṇḍas six to ten of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (SB) offers a wealth of detail concerning the mythical significance of the altar. Through a comparison of vāstu texts (primarily the Mānasāra) with the SB these parallels may be highlighted. Other sources which illumine significant areas, such as the Gṛihya Sūtras the purāṇic and epic literature are also utilized to this purpose.

ENDNOTES

1. Two originally distinct terms "vāstuvidyā" and "śilpavidyā" (which later became almost synonymous) are often used in reference to the craft of construction. See discussions by: Prasanna Kumar Acharya, *Indian Architecture According to the Mānāsara Śilpa Śāstra* (Oxford University Press, 1927) 1; Tarapada Bhattacharyya, *Canons of Indian Art: A Study on Vāstuvidyā* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukopadhyay, 1947) 111; Phanindra Nath Bose, *Principles of Indian Śilpaśāstra* (New Delhi: Bharatiya Publishing House, 1928) 65. According to Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit English Dictionary*. 3rd ed. (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971) (Abbreviated SED), śilpaśāstra is actually a general heading comprising the sixty-four arts and craft, among which such topics as carpentry, architecture, music, dance, poetry and medicine are included, while vāstuvidyā as a branch of the more comprehensive śilpavidyā, deals specifically with that which is built or constructed "vāstu". Eventually more topics than building or the building site were included under the heading of vāstuvidyā. See ManS III. 3. This text enumerates four classes of architecturall objects which together constitute vāstuvidyā: 1. the ground, 2. the edifice and other buildings, 3. the conveyance and 4. the bedstead and couches. A variety of different auxillary subjects are further implied by these distinctions such as: a knowledge of city-planning, road

construction, furniture making and the fashioning of personal ornaments such as crowns and jewellery, (ManS I. 10-40). In the specific case of the temple, vāstuvidyā embraces all aspects of construction from the preliminary concerns of determining the site, establishing a proper design, and selecting building materials, to the intermediate concerns of sculpting and painting of the interior and exterior surfaces to the final consecration of the temple. In fact, in N.V. Mallayya's "Studies in Sanskrit Texts on Temple Architecture with Special Reference to the Tantrasamuccaya," *Annamalai University Journal* 9(1939-40): 117, Patala 1.6 (Abbreviated TSM), it says the work begins with bhūparigraha (selection of the site) and ends with tīrthābhiṣeka (bathing the image in connection with the installation ceremony). In view of the comprehensive nature of construction, subjects originally discussed under śilpasastra were eventually subsumed within vāstusastra and the two terms were identified with one another.

2. See Max Müller, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion* (1882; New York: AMS Press, 1976), 157-161 where he describes the Vedic oral tradition.

3. Dr. K.H. Kern, trans., "Br̥hat Saṃhitā or Complete System of Natural Astrology of Varahā Mihira," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society New Series* 6 (1873): 279, Chpt. LIII.1. Compare M. Ramakrishna Bhat, trans., *Varahā Mihira's Br̥hatsaṃhitā* (New Delhi: Motilal Barnasidass, 1981) 450,

Chpt. LIII.1. Unless otherwise indicated Bhat's translation (BrS) is used.

4. B.D. Basu, ed., *Matsya Purāṇa*, Translated by various Sanskrit scholars, Vol. 17, pt 1 & 2, Sacred Books of the Hindus Series (1916; New York: AMS Prss 1974) Chpt. 252, lists the eighteen preceptors of vāstuvidyā. Abbreviated *Matsya P.*

5. Translations of the *R̥g Vedic* hymns are by Ralph T. Griffith, *Hymns of the R̥g Veda*, 5th ed., 2 vols. (1899; Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1971). Abbreviated *RgV*. See Palaces: *RgV* 2.41.5; 5.62.6; 7.88.5., Castles: *RgV* 7.19.5; 7.99.5, Fortress: *RgV* 4.30.20; 1.58.8; 2.20.8; 4.27.1; 8.89.8; 1.149.3, Fort-Destroyer: *RgV* 7.6.1; 8.1.7; 8.33.5; 8.50.8; 9.48.2, Villages: *RgV* 10.146.1; 1.114.1.

6. Quotes taken from the *Atharva Veda* are from Maurice Bloomfield, trans., *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Vol. 42. Sacred Books of the East Series (1897; New Delhi: Motilal Barnasidass, 1967). (Referred to as *AtV*.) See *AtV* 9.3.1.

7. *AtV* 9.3.19, "The house built with pious word, built by seers... may Indra, Agni and the two immortals protect the house the seat of Soma." and *AtV* 3.12.1 "Here do I erect a firm house, may it stand upon a good foundation dripping with ghee: Thee may we inhabit, O House, with heroes all."

8. See Stella Kramrisch, trans., "*Īśānasivagurudevapaddhati Kriyapada*, Chpt. XXVI, XXVII," in *Indian Society of Oriental Art* 9 (1941): 161, Chpt. 26.126cd-127ab. Hereafter

abbreviated ISGP. cf. ManS VII.253ff. and BrS LIII.51 for descriptions of the vāstupuruṣa of the site and the gods that inhabit the vāstupuruṣa maṇḍala.

9. RgV 7.54.2 and RgV 5.41.8.

10. ManS II.10-12 explains that from the four faces of Viśvakarman, four families of architects were born. From the eastern face was born Viśvakarma, from the southern face Maya, from the northern face Tvaṣṭar, and from the western face Manu. In turn, Tvaṣṭar's son is called vardhaki the designer, "he who knows the Vedic literature and is capable of correctly judging architectural matters" in ManS II.19,

33. The vardhakin or master designer is one of the most prominent figures in the actual construction of the temple.

11. Compare RgV 1.13.10; with RgV 7.55.1.

12. RgV 3.56.19; 10.110.9; 10.10.5.

13. RgV 10.53.9.

14. RgV 10.53.9; 1.161.4; 1.20.6; 1.32.2.

15. Selections from the Grihya Sūtras are found in Herman Oldenberg, trans., The Grihya Sūtras: Rules of Vedic Domestic Ceremonies, Vols. 29, 30, Sacred Books of the East Series (1886; New Delhi: Motilal Barnasidass, 1967). (See table for abbreviations for individual Grihya Sūtras).

Text: Gṛihya Sūtra Mānasāra Br̥hat Samhitā
 Site
 selection: AsGS 2.7ff;2.8.1ff Ch. 4&5 BrS LIII.88ff
 GGs 4.7

Time

selection: PGS 3.4.2 Ch. 6 BrS LIII.98
 HGS 1.8.27

Honor of

Vāstoṣpati: AsGS 2.8.15 Ch. 8 BrS LIII.42ff.
 HGS 1.8.28 as deities who
 PGS 3.4.7,8 inhabit the
 maṇḍala

Adoration

of building

parts: PGS 3.44ff throughout
 HGS 1.8.27 i.e. 18.407

16. See Robert P. Goldman, trans., *The Rāmāyana of Valmiki: An Epic of Ancient India*, 5 vols. (Princeton University Press 1984) Vol. 1: Balakāṇḍa, Sarga 5.6ff.

17. J.A.B. Van Buitenen, trans., *Mahābhārata*, 3 vols. (University of Chicago Press, 1973) 2.20.5.110. (Abbreviated Mbh).

18. Mbh 3.31.16.5ff; 3.42.268.1.

19. Mbh 1.7.60.25-30.

20. Viśvakarman built a divine hall of a hundred leagues wide and long, filled with all wonders for the god Yama. The celestial palace he erected for Varuṇa was built in water surrounded by jeweled trees yielding flowers and fruits. The surrounding grounds were covered with carpets of flowers. See Mbh 2.20.8.1 and 2.20.9.1ff. Among the minor articles he fashioned were: the golden cow as fee for the Brahmin priests Mbh. 3.33.121.10 a regal throne puṣpaka Mbh 3.35.158.35 and a divine golden garland for Śiva Mbh 3.37.218.25.

21. Maya is considered the Viśvakarman of the Daityas, he is called "this Viśvakarman" Mbh 2.20.1.15. The Daityas and Dānavas city of Hiranyapura is said to be "created by Maya in his mind and built by Viśvakarman with no little effort.: Mbh 5.54.98.1. The celestial hall for the Paṇḍavas is described in Mbh 2.20.3.15-20.

22. Bhattacharya 203.

23. See Bhattacharya 174-175; 205-206, and also his summary of "Various phases of Indian architecture" 314ff., and Tables 319ff. for a synopsis of texts, dates and schools.

24. Bhattacharya, who bases his conclusion on an analysis of the list of authorities in the Matsya Purāṇa compared with other texts, believes both the Matsya Purāṇa and the Br̥hat Samhitā relied on previous well known works and that the list of authorities is genuine (107). Acharya understands these lists simply as indication of a floating tradition and not actual works of vāstuvidyā (167). In his

eyes, the Br̥hat Sam̥hitā and the Matsya Purāṇa are both dependent on a previous text, the Mānasāra (5th to 7th. A.D.) which in turn must have drawn from sources now unavailable. He places the Mānasāra before the Br̥hat Sam̥hitā and close to the Purāṇic text because it is a more complete work, being larger, more exhaustive and better classified and systematized. For him, it is the primary source which other writers consulted. The fact that the Mānasāra is strictly an architectural treatise, and that the other two treat the subject less fully is the nucleus of Acharya's argument:

"It is clear beyond a doubt that the Purāṇa and the Sam̥hitā must have consulted an architectural treatise (the Mānasāra) for their information and guidance in architectural matters, just as they have certainly based their references, for instance on medicine, to (sic) a standard medical treatise." (168 cf. 132, 198).

Bhattacharya does not find the above author's reasoning convincing and places the composition of the Mānasāra a late 11th to 15th century. He opposes Acharya on the basis that while the Mānasāra is the most elaborate treatise on architecture, it was surely not the standard work in an early age. It differs in many respects of classification of buildings, number of stories and pillars etc. from the early texts while the similarities it shares with the Matsya

Purāṇa and Br̥hat Saṃhitā are due to the prevalence of a pan-Indian tradition which perpetuated common architectural principles. The absence of any mention of the indebtedness by later authors to the Mānasāra is not overlooked by Bhattacharya. These and other points lead him to assign it to a quite late period of development. See his two convincing chapters on the discussion of the age and date of Mānasāra 183-189, 190-195.

25. E.B. Havell, *The Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India: A Study of Indo-Aryan Civilization* (1915; New Delhi: S. Chand and Co., 1972) 36. By the time of the 6th to 7th centuries B.C., however, Agastya, venerated as the first great teacher of the Dravidian people, had spread Aryan culture and learning throughout the south of India, paving the way for reciprocal understanding and mutual borrowings. See J. Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History and Literature*, 10th ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961). The description of the great sage is found in the iconography of the Viṣṇudharmottara. See Stella Kramrisch, trans., *Vishṇudharmottara (Pt. III): A Treatise on Indian Painting and Image Making* 2nd revised and enlarged edition of 1924 (University of Calcutta, 1928) 95, Chpt. 73.1-51. Abbreviated VDM.

26. Jitendra Nath Banerjea, **The Development of Hindu Iconography**, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: Calcutta Union Press, 1956) 48ff. He deals specially with the problem of the origin and development of image worship in India on pp. 36 to 107.
27. James Fergusson, **History of Indian and Eastern Architecture**, 2 vols. (1876; New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Oriental Publisher, 1967) 1: 40. "No one can accuse the pure Aryans of introducing this form into ancient India," he writes on page 14, "or of building temples at all, or of worshipping images of Śiva or Viṣṇu, with which these temples are filled."
28. See A.B. Keith, **Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas**, vols. 31,32, Harvard Oriental Series, (Harvard University Press, 1925) 31:58 and H.H. Wilson, trans., **Viṣṇu Purāṇa**, 3rd ed. (1840; Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1972) preface ii, "In a word" he says, "the religion of the Vedas was not idolatory". This text is hereafter abbreviated VP.
29. J. Muir, **Original Sanskrit Texts**, 5 vols. (Reprint of 1873 ed.; Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1967). See this discussion on the "liṅga" and the "śiśnadevah" 4: 405ff. especially p. 411, and 5: 452 ff.
30. The question of the relation of Śiva to Seal 420 is discussed in S. Kramrich, **The Presence of Śiva** (Princeton University Press, 1981) 11 ff.
31. Banerjea 63.

32. Keith 31: 30-31. "It is perfectly clear that save in the latest strata of the Vedic literature idols are not recognized in the cult and then only in domestic ritual. ... The use of idols may have been influenced by the non-Aryan population as it became assimilated."

33. Havell 34, "the derivation of Indian temple architecture must be looked for in the simple shrines of the Indian village."

34. Benjamin Rowland, *Pelican History of Art: The Art and Architecture of India*. Revised and updated edition. (Markham Ont.: Penguin Books, 1977) 220.

35. S.N. Das Gupta, *History of Indian Philosophy* 5 vols. 4th ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1957) 1: 21, 22.

36. Rowland 49-50 suggests it was the Dravidian cult of devotion that was responsible for the growth of bhakta and image worship.

37. S. Radhakrishnan, trans., *The Principal Upaniṣads* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953) 138. Quotes from the Upaniṣads are taken from this text. See list of abbreviations for individual Upaniṣads.

38. Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, English translation by A.S. Geden, (1906; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1919) 178. Verses such as *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* 2 may also have been interpreted for these ends, "Seek to know brahman by faith, devotion, meditation and concentration."

39. PGS 3.14.8; ApGS 7.20.1ff; HGS 2.3.8ff; SGS 2.14.5; PGS 1.16.23.
40. See Winthrop Sargeant, trans., *The Bhagavad Gītā*. English translation and Sanskrit text. Revised ed. (Albany: State University of N.Y. Press, 1984) 9.26 and 18.55. Abbreviated BhG.
41. BU 2.3.1.
42. BhG 12.1,2.
43. SU 4.19,20; cf. Katha U 2.3.9 "Not within the field of vision stands this form. No one sees him with the eye."
44. Radhakrishnan 140 quoting the Darśanopaniṣad.
45. Rowland 70. King Aśoka's edicts were carved on stone pillars already in existence. He utilized and reinterpreted their symbolism to fit Buddhist ideals. See also 67.
46. Rowland, Chpt. 9 "Greco-Roman Form and Indian Iconography," 121-148.
47. Rowland 126. See legends quoted by L.A. de Silva 'Worship of the Buddha Image' *Dialogue* 25 (1972):3-6.
48. TSM commentary 185.
49. Bhattacharya 87 agrees that architecture was intimately connected with the rituals of astronomy and astrology.
50. Acharya 7 indicates the construction of altars as outlined in the Śulva Sūtras were based on sound scientific principles and as such were probably the beginning of religious architecture in India.

CHAPTER TWO

The Relation of the Temple to the Macrocosm

I. The Divine Origins of Architecture and the Merits
of Temple Construction

Several versions of the divine origins of architecture are found throughout different texts. Those discussed here are: Viśvakarman, King Prṛṭhu, and the story detailed in the Mānasāra of the four-faced deity.

A) Stories of the Mythical Viśvakarman

As previously indicated, Viśvakarman and Maya were the two archetypal images of the Divine Artificer accepted from an early era. The first mention of Viśvakarman as Creator is found in the Vedic literature where two hymns, RgVeda 10.81 and 10.82, are dedicated to him. In the second hymn, 10.82, he who creates the worlds, designs the cosmos and makes all existing things, ultimately transcends the beings he creates. The ṛsis cannot explain how this mighty being came into existence or how he performed the great deeds of creation. So far beyond created being is Viśvakarman, that the eloquent speech of the seers is silenced: "Enwrapt in misty clouds with lips that stammer, hymn chanters wander and are discontented."¹ The true nature of the Creator is unknowable, it is the nirguna aspect of the Godhead; but when Viśvakarman reveals himself through his creativity he appears as saguna the Creator.

In other places, Viśvakarman is one among many gods,

and in this case his primary function is to supervise the production of the various necessary objects for men and gods. As Prabhāsa's (one of the eight Vasus) son, the renowned architect and builder Viśvakarman was responsible for the construction of mansions, pleasure gardens, statues, ornaments, tanks and wells.² In the Agni Purāṇa he is lauded as the Creator of the Thousand Arts by which men in imitation of him earn their livelihood.³

The legends of the divine origin of architecture often link Viśvakarman with the mythical king of the earth, Pṛṭhu. In an account given in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa the king himself is responsible for taming the unruly earth and providing mankind with the rudiments of civilization, while in the Samarāṅgana Sūtradhāra (SamSD), Viśvakarman is asked to provide his services for the regent. The story according to King Pṛṭhu is first recounted and then the version which introduces Viśvakarman is described.

B) King Pṛṭhu

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa explains there was a king, Vena, who, despite repeated entreaties from the sages, refused to respect the traditional laws of sacrifice, so the pious brahmins, outraged by this impiety towards the gods, took it upon themselves to rid the land of this king and fell upon him. The priests then produced a son through rubbing the right arm of Vena's dead body. This illustrious son, Pṛṭhu, became the rightful heir to the throne and through his own

efforts and with the cooperation of the priests he assuaged the sufferings of his people.

During the interval of his father's death and Pr̥thu's birth the country had been without a sovereign thereby disrupting the natural course of the seasons and causing all forms of calamities. A great famine had descended upon the citizens and the earth withheld all vegetable products. So the first duty King Pr̥thu performed was to restore a source of sustenance to his subjects. Armed with his celestial bow and arrows, and in great wrath, he set forth to assail the Earth who was refusing to feed his people. The frightened Earth, taking the form of a cow, fled in terror. In the end, the exhausted Earth agrees to nourish mankind on the conditions that 1) Pr̥thu will give her a calf so that she may secrete "milk" to nurture all beings and that 2) he also make the earth level and more receptive to Pr̥thvī so that her milk, the seed of all vegetation, may flow everywhere. King Pr̥thu provides the Earth with the calf, Manu, the Father of Mankind. The Earth, now known as the daughter of Pr̥thu (Pr̥thvī), yields to every class of being the "milk" they desire or the object of their wishes. (See plate 8) King Pr̥thu himself uproots the mountains, defines the boundaries of villages and towns, introduces cultivation, pasture, agriculture and highways for merchants, to the earth for the first time.⁴

The story in the SamSD is told differently. Both the

gods and men shared an idyllic existence in the beginning, living in a place that knew no hardship because of the presence of the wish-fulfilling tree, the kalpa druma. The gods eventually tired of the humans taking their good fortune for granted and ascended to heaven taking with them the tree, and leaving the humans to fend for themselves in a now inhospitable land. King Pṛṥhu, as the ruler of mankind, demands the assistance of the Earth and again chases her, but in this instance Pṛṥvī seeks refuge in Lord Brahmā. The Creator settles the dispute sending Pṛṥvī back to the earth under Pṛṥhu's dominion and assigning Viśvakarman the task of creating a civilized earth for mankind to inhabit. Viśvakarman calls his four mind-born sons to assist him in carrying out Brahmā's command to create an hospitable place for men and to teach them the necessary skills for survival.⁵

C) The Four Faces of Viśvakarman

Four different sons of Viśvakarman are described in a story found in the Manasāra. In this case, the science of architecture is traced through a lineage of sages ending with Manasāra and beginning with the Lord himself. Śiva, in his aspect of architect of the universe, is called "this Viśvakarman" a four-faced deity from whom the four families of architects are brought forth.⁶

Table 1

THE FOUR FACES OF VIŚVAKARMAN

I THE FOUR FACES OF THE DEITY

EASTERN	SOUTHERN	NORTHERN	WESTERN
Viśvabhū	Viśvavit	Viśvastha	Viśvasraṣṭar
Progenitor of Universe	Knower of the Universe	Resident of the Universe	Creator of the Universe

II ARCHITECTS PRODUCED

Viśvakarman	Maya	Tvaṣṭar	Manu
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III SONS OF THE ARCHITECTS

Sthapati Master- builder	Sūtragrāhi Draftsman	Vardhaki Designer	Takṣaka Carpenter
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In temple construction each of the four descendant types of professionals, i.e. sthapati, sūtragrāhi, etc. are assigned a different area. The sthapati (stha-pati or master of what stands), is responsible for the overall construction and directs each step of the work. He must be proficient in the Vedas and deeply learned in the science of architecture, endowed with the qualifications of an āchārya and act as the guru of the other three. ⁷ The Vāstu Vidyā declares that not only is the sthapati responsible for the structure and therefore must be knowledgeable, but he must be of a reliable and good character, "virtuous, merciful, void of rivalry and jealousy, well versed in Tantra and nobly born, proficient in mathematics and in the Purāṇas... free from miserliness, well-versed in painting and in the conditions of different places, must be truthful and self-

controlled,... free from all the seven vices, of good name and firm friends."⁸ His son or disciple the sūtragrāhi (sūtra= cord, grāhi = holder), is an expert in architectural drawing and must also be proficient in Vedic literature. The vardhaki is well versed in the literature and capable of correctly judging architectural matters. As his name implies (from the root vr̥dh= to increase) he is competent in all works of measurement. The takṣaka (takṣ= to carve) must understand carpentry and should study the Vedas, but he is also encouraged to be sociable, helpful to his colleagues, faithful to his friends and kind in nature.⁹

The Merits of Temple Building

It is beyond the power of man to enumerate all the merits which a person acquires in the eyes of Heaven, by raising a divine building...

Agni Purāṇa XLI 33-35

The experts mentioned above are employed by the yajamāna to complete successfully the temple on his behalf. In return for payment of their services, the merit of their work is donated to the yajamāna; so it is the patron who accrues the benefits of the meritorious deed. The fruits of temple building are so profound that it expiates all one's sins and generates such virtue that it is preferable even to sacrifice or bathing in all the sacred tīrthas.¹⁰ The Agni Purāṇa says of this:

...One is freed from all sins. He, who has got a temple built for Viṣṇu, reaps the great fruit which one does by celebrating sacrifices every day. By building a temple for the Lord he takes

his family, a hundred generations past and a hundred to come to the region of Achutya....He who builds a temple for him, saves the endless worlds and himself attains immortality. As long as the bricks will last, the maker of the temple will live for so many thousand years in Heaven.¹¹

The underlying reason why temple construction is so beneficial is that the vimāna is the perfect embodiment of the divine; it is said to be identical with and only a different manifestation of the Lord.¹²

The life of the temple is to be imagined as partaking of the nature, and the temple itself is to be imagined as possessing the attributes of the god himself.¹³

In this sense, the temple is not simply a place of worship, but is, according to the Brahmanic conception, the visible outer casement of the invisible deity whose subtle, all-pervading spirit is represented by the central image or emblem in the garbhagrha.¹⁴ The devālaya thus contains a double symbolism and is to be worshipped in two ways. First, it is worshipped as the external visible form of the god through ritual circumambulation and secondly the icon is contemplated in a state of deep meditation or dhyāna until its true nature is understood and the devotee attains a state of final liberation, as the Garuḍa Purāṇa assures,

Contemplating the idol, singing prayers and reciting the names, the devotee, free from desires, shall attain salvation.¹⁵

II. The Importance of Puruṣa as the Mediating Symbol of Man,

Sacrifice and the Temple

The key connection between the patron, the temple and

the mythology of sacrifice is to be discovered in the symbol of puruṣa or Man. While the word puruṣa may also refer to a human being, man, in this sense, refers to the primeval and universal Cosmic Man. It is in the image of man that the temple is founded (vāstupuruṣa maṇḍala) and it is in the image of man that it is raised.

In fact, the Agni Purāṇa declares the temple should be worshipped as an actual form of the Divine Person:

Here me, O Brahman! a temple is nothing but another form of the divine image of Viṣṇu.

Later, this passage enumerates the close analogy between the human body and the innate divinity: the ridge of the vault is the nose, the arched terrace the head, the conical ornaments the hairs, the lime plaster the skin, the door is the aperture of the mouth, etc. The most important part, the life force of the temple, is contained within the image in the central garbhagrha:

...the image of the god Keshava is to be deemed as its soul, seated on the throne of its heart ... Thus the analogy between the god and his temple is complete, the latter being held as identical with and only a different manifestation of the former.¹⁶

Many of the technical names for temple parts reflect this symbolism of the temple as puruṣa as well: akṣa, an eye is the name of a window part; jangha is a leg or pillar; karna is an ear or moulding or a corner tower; nāsa is a nose or upper piece of a door; pāda is a foot or the base of the plinth or pedestal; the garbha is the womb or adytum,

the chamber where the image of the deity is placed.¹⁷

The temple in no way represents an actual figure of a giant man; it is simply a way of expressing the proportion and symmetry of the parts and cohesive functioning of the whole. But who is this puruṣa, and where does the image of the Cosmic Man originate? The answer to these questions lies in the puruṣa-sūkta of the Rg Veda (RgV 10.90) one of the most famous hymns of the tenth mandala.

This hymn declares the world was created by the original sacrifice by the gods of the Primeval Person, and consequently every earthly sacrifice emulates this one. The puruṣa-sūkta explains how the devas immolated the primordial being at the beginning of time and from the different parts of his body, transformed by Agni the sacrificial flame, obtained the various elements of creation: his head became heaven, his navel the atmosphere, his feet the earth, his eyes the sun, his mind the moon, his mouth Indra and Agni, his ears the heavenly regions, and his vital breath the wind. His greatness includes and transcends all possible aspects of being: "all that is, has been and will be". He covers the earth on all sides and yet extends beyond it "the length of ten fingers."¹⁸ So potent is this puruṣa that only one-quarter of his person is sufficient to produce the entire universe, its inhabitants, the proper divisions in society, and the jewels of religion; the sacred hymns, chants and formulae (Plate 9).

It is only this one-quarter of puruṣa in manifest form (now Prajāpati) who is sacrificed by the devas to produce the cosmos. Puruṣa represents the timeless and primeval being while Prajāpati enters into being and time. The last śloka of the puruṣa-sūkta which reads, "With the sacrifice (Prajāpati), the gods sacrificed to the Sacrifice (puruṣa)" is understandable in this sense: it is only the limited or manifest form which is sacrificed; in essence puruṣa and Prajāpati are identical. He may then be simultaneously the sacrificial victim, the sacrifice itself and the goal of the sacrifice.

Eggeling was the first to connect the myth of puruṣa to the sacrificial myth of Prajāpati in the SB.¹⁹ Here, Prajāpati, having created all animate and inanimate beings, became exhausted from his toils and his vitality flowed from his body onto the earth. In this state he is said to be ineffectual, relaxed or even dismembered:

Prajāpati produced creatures. Having produced creatures... he became relaxed. From him when relaxed, the vital air went out from within, then his vigour went out of him. Thus having gone out, he fell down.²⁰

Like puruṣa his body produced the elements of the cosmos: his vital air became the wind, his vigour the sun and the food for living beings flowed from the blood of the enfeebled god. In his weakened state Prajāpati cried out to the gods to be restored, so the devas joined with Agni, the god of fire, to build up and renew Prajāpati in the form of

the altar. Without Agni's participation, the Creator could not be rejuvenated, nor could the gods reach immortality. As a reward, Agni becomes the mouth of the gods by which they receive food (in the form of sacrificial oblations),²¹ and because he revived the fallen god he becomes equivalent to Prajāpati.²² Only when the altar (also known as the agni) was completed and Prajāpati restored to his former glory did the gods too become immortal.²³

The completed altar is Prajāpati's reborn divine self and by analogy it is Agni and also the immortal body of the Sacrificer: "And that Person which became Prajāpati is this very Agni (fire-altar), who is now to be built," "...He is Prajāpati, he is Agni, he is the Sacrificer."²⁴ This great falcon-shaped altar of the agnicayana is composed of one thousand bricks, precisely measured, aligned and consecrated in a particular pattern to reflect this triple identification. The bricks are placed in five layers of two hundred and both the number and position of the bricks (and other ritual accessories) are interpreted in terms of the Prajāpati myth.

One of the more interesting implications of the altar is the concept of time, either viewed negatively as something to be overcome²⁵ or positively as the power of fruition. In the latter sense the altar is the year or the time it takes for the sacrificer or yajamāna to produce his divine body. The yajamāna generates Agni, the embryo of his

immortal self, in the ukhā (the fire-pan or "womb") and carries the foetus for a year (or a twelve day period representing a year) before Agni's immortal form is born and placed in the center of the falcon-shaped altar. The yajamāna must maintain the fire-pan for the gestation period as well as actually carry the vessel for a certain period each day thus establishing a relationship between himself and his fiery counterpart.²⁶ The sacrificer, in this sense, takes Agni into his own self and thereby conceives and carries the divine embryo of his own immortal body.²⁷ In the agnicayana ceremonies the aspect of the altar as time represents the conception and gestation of agni/yajamāna and the birth of the divine form of the sacrificer, synonymous with Prajāpati's new immortal body. This process takes one complete revolution of time -- a year.

The Question of Human Sacrifice

It is obvious in RgV 10.90 that puruṣa offered himself up as the primeval sacrificial victim. This symbolism is preserved and resolved in the Prajāpati myth where the relaxed or dismembered god is restored through the piling of the altar, but how is the myth applied to the living body of the yajamāna? It is unlikely that the patron of the sacrifice would be willing to undergo death and dismemberment for the sake of some far-off eternal life, therefore another living being was offered in his place. Evidence suggests that human beings were originally

sacrificed as indicated by the puruṣamedha of the SB 13.6.1.1ff, and that this practice was gradually replaced by animal or vegetable offerings.²⁸

The SB states that the sacrificial essence that abides in man was transformed through a series of animals until it came to rest in the goat, the archetypal sacrificial victim and the symbol of Prajāpati.²⁹ Interestingly, five heads (in the Nambudri celebrations the heads were clay representations) of man, horse, bull, ram and he-goat, indicative of the path of the sacrificial essence, are placed beneath the foundation of the altar.³⁰ When the adhvaryu or priest placed the human head in the foundation, exalting and blessing it with formulas reminiscent of the puruṣa-sūkta, the power of the human sacrifice is once again brought into focus.³¹

The altar also reflects the image of man in other ways such as the small effigy of the golden man (hiranya puruṣa) which is placed within the altar (see Foundation Rites), and when the pravargya implements are placed in the shape of man on the northern side of the altar near the end of the ceremonies.³²

Not only is it likely that a human sacrifice was originally required in the puruṣamedha, but the act of creative sacrifice in which blood/life was offered in order to re-create and re-establish life was (even until very recently) directly related to the construction of a sacred

edifice. Tamil folk-traditions offer numerous examples of the necessity of blood sacrifices to establish a shrine.³³ Hubert and Mauss in their important study, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function* observed human sacrifice to be quite a common feature of primitive ideas of building. They write:

In the building sacrifice, for example, one sets out to create a spirit who will be the guardian of the house, altar or town that one is building and which will become the power within it. Thus the rites of attribution are developed. The skull of a human victim, the cock, or the head of an owl is walled up... According as the building is already built or is about to be built, the object of the sacrifice will be to create the spirit of protecting divinity or to propitiate the spirit of the soil which the building operations are about to harm.³⁴

The spirit of the offering may be literally fixed within the foundation or the image of the victim may be drawn upon the temple precincts as the vāstupuruṣa maṇḍala. The term vāstu refers to the remainder or residue of the sacrifice which is left over when the rites are completed. It is from this remainder that new life begins. Vāstu refers to the residue as seed; and the vāstupuruṣa as the slain victim is the foundation or seed from which the temple comes forth.³⁵

This residue of the sacrifice is allotted to the deity of the site Rudra/Vastavya. When Rudra is equated with Vāstoṣpati, as he is in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, he must be propitiated with some share: "Now Vāstoṣpati is Rudra. If he were to go on without offering to Vāstoṣpati, the fire, becoming Rudra, would leap after him and slay him; he offers

to Vāstospati...verily with his own share he appeases him; the sacrificer does not come to ruin."³⁶ Therefore the vāstupuruṣa is always worshipped before any excavation or building of the site begins. (See section on vāstupuruṣa).

Puruṣa as the Measure of the Cosmos

Thus far the cosmos has been depicted in the image of the Primeval Man which is then equated to the sacrificial altar. Likewise, when the syena or falcon-shaped altar is piled up, the yajamāna too becomes commensurate with puruṣa. Quite literally, the sacrifice is the measure of the individual patron, for the scale of the altar and each mathematical calculation is based on certain physical proportions of the yajamāna. The word used to denote the sponsor of the agnicayana and the temple is based on the concept of measure (yaja = sacrifice; māna = measure).³⁷

As puruṣa is the true form of the cosmos, all measurements in the agnicayana must reflect man's image. From the size of the bricks to the distances between the hearths, to the length and width of the mahāvedi, to the size of the fire-pan, etc., --all these measurements depend on the size of the individual patron. They are relative measures which make the sacrifice an extension of his person. Before the ritual can begin, the yajamāna is measured and from these calculations all other aspects of construction are regulated. While he stands with upstretched arms, the priests determine the distance between

his fingertips and the ground, and a measuring rod is cut to duplicate this length. This rod is equivalent to one puruṣa, the most important unit.³⁸

The main altar of the agnicayana ritual must be equivalent to seven and one-half square puruṣa.³⁹ According to legend seven ṛṣis jointly compressed their bodies into the form of Prajāpati (as a bird) to facilitate the creation of the cosmos. The SB indicates, "That Person which became Prajāpati is this very Agni (altar) who is now to be built up and is composed of seven persons (puruṣas) in the shape of the bird."⁴⁰ The seven puruṣas are divided throughout the agni; the most important area is a two by two square (four puruṣa) in the center of the agni which represents the body, or more specifically, the ātman or soul of the bird; the remaining three and one-half puruṣas are divided between the two wings and the tail.⁴¹ (See Diagrams 1 and 2)

The bird-shaped (syena) altar, whether it be called eagle, falcon or hawk, is the heavenly vehicle which transports the sacrificer to the highest realms. The TS suggests that he who desires the sky should pile up the hawk-shaped agni for the hawk is the best flier among all birds, and the yajamāna becoming that bird ascends to the heaven.⁴²

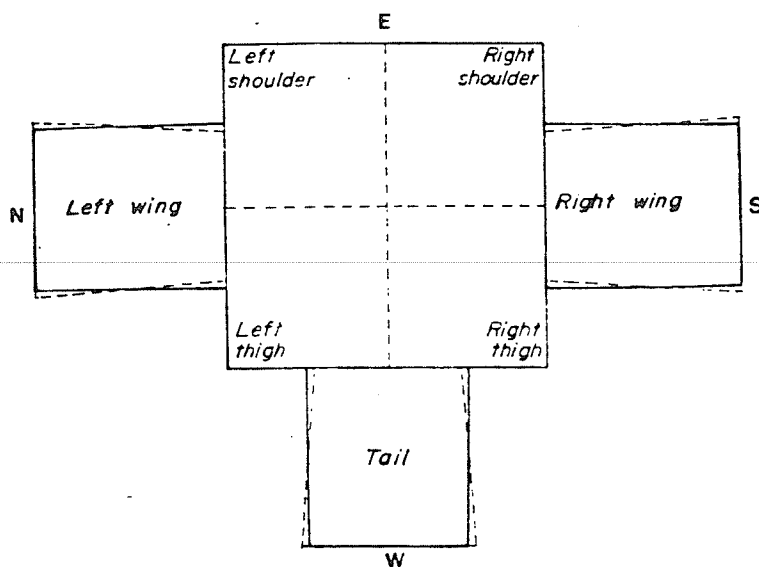


Diagram 1: Fire Altar of the Agnicayana
The seven-and-a-half purusa squares according
to the Satapatha Brahmana. From Eggeling SBE
vol. 41:419.

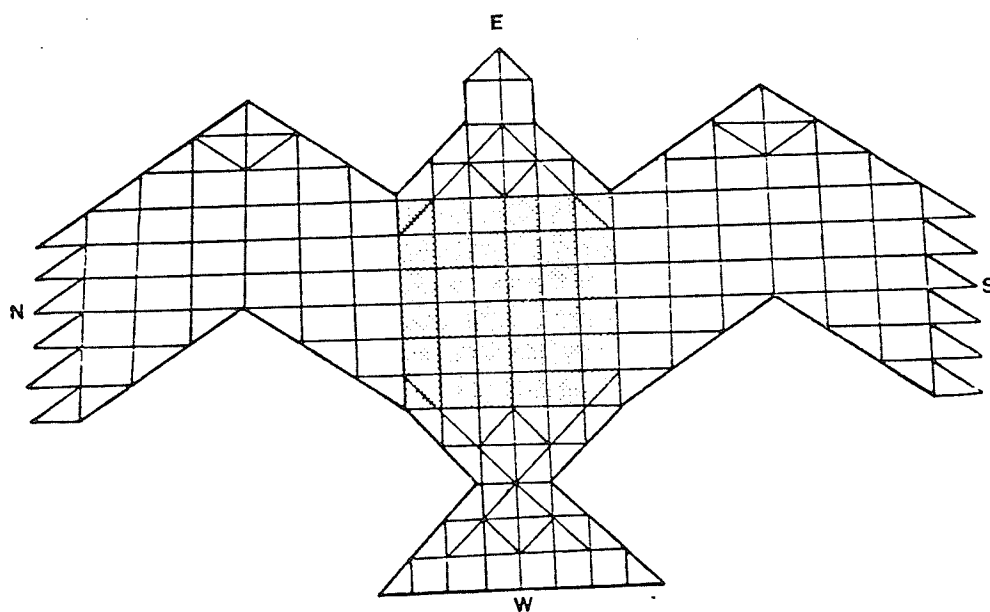


Diagram 2: Bird-shaped Fire Altar of the Agnicayana
The largest square within the altar is its
atman, "body", or "self." From Staal, 1:66.

In summary, puruṣa is the primary symbol which links man to the universe. It is the underlying principle which regulates the construction of the agni, transfiguring that which is limited, restricted and mortal into a liberated, transformed and immortal being. As the dismembered and helpless form of Prajāpati is rebuilt into the seven and one-half puruṣa bird of the agni, so is the yajamāna's divine body constructed:

Now that whole agni had been completed, and the gods bestowed on him immortality, that highest form; and in like manner does this one (the priest) bestow upon him (the sacrificer) that highest immortal form.⁴³

The power of the puruṣa/Prajāpati myth is also transferred to the temple complex by virtue of several identifications and associations. The patron who funds the construction of the temple parallels the function of the yajamāna to the altar. His title even remains unchanged as the "yajamāna" or the measure of the sacrifice. The measurements of the temple are based upon his individual proportions and the merit accrued in building the devālaya is bestowed upon the soul of the yajamāna. The temple is founded on a diagram or maṇḍala of the vāstupuruṣa the symbol of the sacrificial victim. This puruṣa may represent the yajamāna's unperfected and wilful self, while the completed vertical temple represents the divine form of puruṣa equivalent to the rejuvenated Prajāpati. The vimāna/temple exemplifies puruṣa in the technical names of

its parts such as pada or foot; in the overall image as the visible manifestation of the Divine Person; and in the sanctity of the inner cella of the garbhagrha (where worship takes place) which is considered the soul of the deity.

ENDNOTES

1. RgV 10.82.7.
2. Matsya P. 5.28.
3. M.N.O Shastri, ed., Agni Purāṇa , Translated by a Board of Scholars, 2 vols. (1903; Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1967) 1: Chpt. XVIII. 40-41. Abbreviated AgP.
4. Condensed summary of main events of story as told in the VP Book 1, Chpt. XIII.
5. Summary of events of Chapters 1,2,6. See V.S. Agrawala, ed., Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra of Mahārājadhīrājara Bhoja (Baroda Oriental Institute, 1966). Unpublished translation of original Sanskrit by Mrs. Satya Rananatha, Chapters 1,2,6, Wpg., MB., 1986. Abbreviated SamSD.
6. Mans II.3 ff. See also B. Dagens, ed. and French trans., Mayamata: Traité Sanscrit d'Architecture, (Pondichery: Institut Française d'Indologie, 1970-76) 1: Chpt. 5.22B-24 etc.
7. ManS II.26, 31; II.21.
8. K.R. Pisharoti, trans., "Vāstuvidyā: Chapters 1 to 6," Calcutta Oriental Journal 1 (1934): 271-283; 2: 19-21, 41-51, 106-112, 150-156. See Chpt. 1.12ff. Hereafter referred to as VV.
9. ManS II.24-25; cf. VV 1.14-19, "The disciple of the sthapati or his son is the sūtragrahī, always obedient to the stahpati, proficient in all practical work, an authority in sūtra and danda measures as well as in māna and unmāna.

The vardhaki assembles in proper order, one over the other, things wrought by the takshaka. He is a close follower of the sūtragrahī. Takshaka is so called because he fashions things great and small; he must be well versed in masonry, must be good and capable and must possess individuality; must be devoted to his mater; always content and should follow the sthapati and the rest." See also MM 5.14B ff.

10. AgP Chpt. XXXVIII.1-8.

11. AgP Chpt. XXXVIII. 45ff. See also AgP Chpt. XLI 33-35; BrS Chpt. LVI. 1&2, "Let him who wishes to enter the worlds that are reached by the meritorious deeds of piety and charity, build a temple to the gods; by doing which, he shows both piety and charity."

12. AgP Chpt. LXI. 26.

13. AgP Chpt. LXI. 11 and C11.17.

14. Bhattacharya, 225.

15. J.L. Shastri, ed., Garuda Purāṇa, Translated by a Board of Scholars, Vol. 12, Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology Series, (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972), 1.44.15 (slightly revised); cf. 1.14.11. Abbreviated GP.

16. AgP LXI. 18ff.

17. See P.K. Acharya, Dictionary of Hindu Architecture (Varanasi: Bharatiya Publishing House, 1979).

18. Stella Kramrisch, in her article, "Emblems of the Universal Being" in Exploring India's Sacred Art, Barbara Stoler Miller ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

Press, 1983) 131-140, remarks that transcendence is one of the most prominent features of the mahāpuruṣa. She writes (131) "no measure at all can indicate how far it reaches, for it reaches beyond the manifested world in which measure alone counts. Ten āṅgulas...connote...a being beyond the limits. It stands for the mahāpuruṣa as 'nirguṇa'.it does not refer to this world of māyā, to the cosmos which is ordered by number and measure." The emblems of the mahāpuruṣa are exemplified in Buddhist iconography by the thirty-two lakṣaṇas of the Buddha which refer not to the physiological and anthropomorphic form of Śākyamuni, but to the underlying and universal meanings inherent in the different body parts of the Buddha. Dr. Kramrisch deals at length with the significance of the uṣṇisa the protuberance which crowns the Buddha's head, as the image of liberation or nirvāṇa (150ff). See also her discussions on "The Subtle Body" 123-180 in the same volume. Bettina Bäumer in her article "Puruṣa and the Origin of Form" in Rūpa Pratirūpa, ed. by Bettina Bäumer (New Delhi: Biblia Impex Private Ltd., 1982) 27-34 indicates "every form of creation is somehow related to or derived from the archetypal being, the original Man, called Puruṣa." (27) Owing to his dismemberment and his reconstruction, Puruṣa thus becomes the immanent principle of everything.

19. See Eggeling SBE Vol. 43:xiv ff.

20. SB 7.1.2.1.

21. SB 7.1.2.4.

22. SB 7.1.2.9 "And the Prajāpati who became relaxed is the same Agni who is now being built up." cf. SB 6.1.2.21 "... the gods said to Agni, 'In thee we will heal our father Prajāpati.' 'Then I will enter into him when whole', he said. 'So be it!; he said. Hence while being Prajāpati, they yet call him Agni." cf. SB 6.1.2.13.

23. SB 10.4.3.8.

24. SB 6.1.1.5; 7.4.1.15.

25. An important association of the altar is with the concept of time or more particularly limited time as the year and its consequence death. The total number of bricks represent all the fragments of time (or Prajāpati) and when they are combined both time and death are transcended. "Beyond this year lies the wish-granting immortal world." SB 10.2.6.4. Prajāpati/Agni is equated with time and the end of time. ("The Sacrifice is the Year" SB 11.2.7.1 "The Year, indeed, is Man" SB 12.1.4.1) because by the passage of days and nights and the seasons a man reaches the end of his life, "...therefore the Year is the same as death." SB 10.4.3.1 cf. SB 10.2.6.1ff. In the beginning, the gods were afraid of Prajāpati/Year and sought a means to overcome Death. They laid down the 360 enclosing stones, the five seasons, the twelve months, and the days and nights in the altar, (SB 10.4.3.8; SB 6.1.2.18; SB 6.2.2.8; SB 10.4.5.2; SB 10.1.1.3; SB 8.4.1.11ff.). By doing so, the devas

symbolically collected all the divisions of time and succeeded in scaping mortality, or "becoming the food of Death." SB 10.4.3.10.

26. SB 6.7.1.19ff; SB 6.3.3.21.

27. SB 9.5.1.62 "He who carries about Agni becomes pregnant with all beings and with all gods...Agni should be carried for a year." cf. SB 7.3.1.12 "The sacrificer, being indeed born in this world, is really intended to be born in the heavenly world."; SB 7.4.1.1. See also SB 12.9.1.1 "Verily, from this sacrifice the man (puruṣa) is born". See also SBE vol. 43: xv to xxi.

28. See Eggeling SBE v.44; xxxiv ff. cf. Louis Renou, *Vedic India*, Translated by P. Spratt, 3 vols. (New Delhi: Indological Book House, 1971) 3: 96, 109-110.

29. SB 5.2.1.24.

30. SB 1.2.3.6 "At first the gods offered a man as a victim. When he was offered the sacrificial juice went out of him. It entered a horse...an ox...sheep...and a goat." See also SB 6.2.1.5. The actual rituals of the agnicayana (the piling of the agni) were photographed and taped by a group of scholars headed by Frits Staal in 1975. For a detailed account of the Namboudri ceremonies see Frits Staal, ed., *Agni: Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983). The first volume follows the ritual, the second is a collection of essays elaborating important aspects of sacrifice. See vol.

1:395ff for a description of the articles buried in the first and foundational layer of the agni.

31. SB 7.5.2.13ff.

32. See Staal 1:548 where he quotes the words invoked at that time, "You who are shaped like a man... what you are that I am; what I am that is you. Go to heaven jointly with the yajamāna!"

33. David Dean Shulman, *Tamil Temple Myths* (Princeton University Press, 1980) 91ff; 374 n.8.

34. Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*, Translated by W.D. Halls (1898; University of Chicago Press, 1964) 65.

35. SB 1.7.3.1-7; SB 1.7.3.18; cf. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* 3.1.9. All translations from this samhita are from A.B. Keith, trans., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School: The Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, Vols. 18,19, Harvard Oriental Series (1914; New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967) Abbreviated TS.

36. TS 3.4.10.2.

37. Mā is the verbal root which means to measure, mete out, and mark off, while mātra (m) or mātrā (f) the noun, is a measure, quantity, sum size, or duration and māna (m) refers to that which is both measured (i.e. a building, house, or altar) and that which is the means of procuring proper measure (i.e. manasūtra is a measuring cord, and manastiti means right measure). Other words which illuminate the significance of mā are: pratimā: reflected image or icon;

vimāna: that which is well measured, the temple; māyā: art, wisdom, supernatural power, illusion, magic. See SED. Language too is measured sound mita or meter; therefore the hymns and prayers must be perfectly recited and intoned to be effective (SBE 12:80 n.3.) In SB 8.3.3.5 the three worlds are described as variations of measure: the terrestrial world is equated with the root mā for it is the measured world, the mid-regions are measured from this world "pramā"; and the heavenly world combines with the preposition "prati" (reflected, reverted, re-) as pratimā, for it is the counter measure or aerial replica of the earth. As one mathematical treatise states, "... (nothing) can exist apart from ganita (measure and calculations)." Quoted from Ganita Sara Samgraha 1.9-19 in B. Datta, and A.N. Singh, History of Hindu Mathematics: A Sourcebook (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962) pt. 1:6.

38. "He measures the altar by the man with upstretched arms, for the sacrifice is man and by him everything is measured; and that is his highest measure when he stands with upstretched arms, he thus secures for him what is his highest measure, and therewith he then measures it." SB 10.2.2.6 One purusa is divided into fifths to equal one aratni or one pañcami. Among the variations of bricks used in the agnicayana, the square bricks of one pañcami by one pañcami are perhaps the most significant for when the five layers of the altar are laid the body of the purusa (five

times one fifth) is restored. One puruṣa may also be divided into one hundred twenty āṅgulas or finger breadths the smallest unit of measurement in the agnicayana: SB 10.2.1.2 "He measures it (the fire altar) by finger breadths, for the sacrifice being a man; it is by means of him that everything is measured here... the fingers are his lowest measure." See Staal 1: 195ff. section on "Measurement and Bricks." See also G. Thibaut, trans., "Śulvasūtra of Baudhāyana" (Extracts and summaries) in *The Pandit* 9 (1875): 294, "Five aratnis (pañcamī) = one puruṣa = 120 āṅgulas."

39. See A. Seidenberg "Geometry of the Vedic Rituals," in *Agni* 2: 96.

40. SB 6.1.1.5 Legend begins SB 6.1.1.1ff; cf. TS 5.2.5.1ff. See also Bibhutibhusan Datta, *The Science of Sulba* (University of Calcutta, 1932) 34-38 concerning the construction of the bird-shaped altar.

41. SB 10.2.2.5 The $7 \frac{1}{2}$ puruṣa agni is the basic model of the syena but other variants are described as well. The yajamāna may consecutively construct altars of $8 \frac{1}{2}$, $9 \frac{1}{2}$, etc. square puruṣas until he reaches the 101-fold altar which must be fourteen times as large as the original (SB 10.2.3.7; SB 10.2.3.18). The correct proportions must, however, be maintained, for "those who deprive Father Prajāpati of his due proportions will become the worse for sacrificing". See SB 10.2.3.15; SB 10.2.3.7; Seidenberg.

Geometry 105ff. and 113ff. Other altars of different shapes may be constructed for the fulfillment of special desires. These kāmyā (optional) altars, described in the TS 5.4.11.1-3 may be triangular, circular, shaped like a wooden trough or even in the form of a cemetery. Difficult mathematical problems arise when the agnis, created in different shapes, must maintain specific areas and overall proportion. See A. Seidenberg, "Origins of Mathematics", *Archive for History of Exact Sciences* 18, No. 4 (1978): 301-342; and "Ritual Origin of the Circle and Square", *Archive for History of Exact Sciences* 25 (1981): 269-327. The importance of these operations have lead mathematician A. Seidenberg to conclude that religion is the basis and raison-d'être for the sciences. He says, "The equivalence of area was the underlying problem which mathematics was called on to solve, and thus the philosophy inherent in the altars was prior to the solutions, proving religion and sacrifice were the root of mathematics and not that secular practices were later applied to ritual." See Seidenberg, "Vedic Geometry" 113ff. for a discussion on the equivalence of area problem, and his "Ritual Origins of Geometry", *Archive for History of Exact Sciences*, 1 (1960-62): 488-527.

42. TS 5.4.11.1.

43. SB 8.7.4.7.

CHAPTER THREE

Site Selection

General Location

The first step in the actual construction of the temple is the selection of a proper and auspicious site. Many of the techniques and concepts underlying the site selection were originally designed and applied to the construction of the sacrificial complex. The SB begins the third kāṇḍa with a discussion of the sacrificial ground saying,

Verily, this whole earth is divine, on whatever part thereof one may sacrifice after enclosing and consecrating it with a sacrificial formula, there is a place of worship.¹

Even though any place is theoretically a place of worship not all sites are considered equal. The spot where the temple or altar is to be erected must be of a suitable locale and the soil itself must be pure and conducive to the gods. The ground is therefore the first consideration in architecture. As the "chief object for all purposes", it is classed as the foremost among the four groups of architectural objects in the Mānasāra and is specifically mentioned as the most important.² Any miscalculation in selecting, purifying or consecrating the site would offset any merit accrued in construction: "he who commits any blunder out of ignorance will be the source of all evils,"³ it says.

The best location is one of recognized sanctity and natural beauty for the gods are already attracted to such

areas as the TSM indicates,

Let the guru fix a site in a sacred place, on the bank of a river, the shore of the sea, the place where rivers (or river and sea) meet, the top or slope of mountains, in a forest grove or garden, near the abode of the blest, in a village, capital or city or in any other lovely place.⁴

In general rivers and mountains are favorable locations and in fact, the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* goes as far as saying all rivers and mountains are holy places.⁵ Water has a particularly potent attraction for the gods who enjoy its cooling presence and the pleasant environment it creates. The gods, says the *BrS*, used to haunt those spots which by nature or artifice are furnished with water and pleasure gardens. It is on such grounds, it continues, that the gods at all times take delight.⁶

The devālaya and the agni create an environment parallel to those natural places where the gods come down to earth and humans find passage to the divine worlds. Such places are literally fords, or tīrthas to the next world and pilgrimage to these naturally occurring tīrthas is in itself a path to salvation. The holy visitation of sacred fords, says the *Mbh.*, even surpasses the sacrifice.⁷ A tīrtha may be understood on various levels: it may refer to the natural physical location; a symbolic man-made representation as the site of the temple; or it may be understood in the metaphysical sense as the ultimate ford of the mind.⁸

He who takes a holy dip in the tīrtha of mānasa that has the eddy of jñāna (pure knowledge) and the pure water of dhyāna (meditation) that removes the dirt of rāga (passion) and dveṣa (hatred) attains the supreme goal.⁹

The ultimate spiritual significance of the tīrtha is transferred to the mandira/temple so that ritually the site of the temple becomes a tīrtha wherever it is situated.¹⁰

As tīrthas are sacred spots connected with water, so are mountains the holy places connected with land. The prāsāda is erected in the image of the One Mountain the celestial center of the cosmos--Mt. Meru. Like the tīrtha, the Sacred Mountain is the place where heaven and earth meet, and by extension, temples or sacred cities become that sacred mount and thus the center of the world.¹¹

In Hindu cosmology, Meru, the lustrous home of the gods, lies at the center of the cosmos. At its summit it is crowned by the glorious city of Brahmā and to its sides it is buttressed by the lesser but other important mythical peaks: Mt. Mandara, the churning rod used by the devas and asuras to agitate the primordial milk ocean, and Mt. Kailāsa, the snowy abode of Lord Śiva.¹²

It is no coincidence, therefore, that the Bṛhat Saṃhitā and other texts name the first three types of temples as meru, mandara and kailāsa. A meru, for instance, represents a particular type of temple design which is the foremost and highest of the twenty northern and thirty-two southern types of temples.¹³ Other evidence (besides the classification of

temples and the obvious allusion to the physical shape of the superstructure) which associates the temple with the holy mountain is the technical term for the uppermost section of the superstructure the śikhara, literally the peak or crest of the mountain.

The very fact that Hindu temples were erected under the guise of these mountains, and that such terms as śikhara refer to the crest or peak of the mountain is evidence the temple was consciously intended as an architectural facsimile. Occasionally, white-painted plaster, as well as carved stone and terracotta were used in temples such as Kailāsa and Ellūrā to enhance the connection between the temple and the glistening peaks of the Himalayas. The Kailāsanātha Temple at Kañchīpuram even bears an inscription to this effect: "The temple resembling a mountain shines white".¹⁴

The above points support the argument that the temple functions as both a tīrtha and a Holy Mountain.

Examination of the Soil

A level ground, sweet, of good odor, decked with good herbs, trees and plants, smooth, and not full of cavities, bestows happiness on those even who come to rest themselves on it from the fatigue of travel; how much more then for those who have a permanent home on it?

BrS LIII.88

The general location of a devālaya is chosen on the basis of the recognized sanctity and beauty of the surroundings, but as well, each prospective site must meet

with certain specific criteria in order to be judged as suitable. There are auspicious and inauspicious characteristics of a site based upon the slope of the land, the type of soil it contains, the particular type of vegetation it supports etc. which all have to be taken into account. The Śilpasastra suggests all types of sites are suitable for brahmins, but the other castes should choose only those spots which are acceptable to their status or those below them, i.e. the ksatryia may live on three classes of land while the vaiśya only two.¹⁵

Selection of the site actually contains two different aspects, the examination of the external features such as the general shape of the land, the contours and vegetation it supports, and a detailed examination of the soil. In the latter case the earth is checked not only for its colour, taste and smell but other factors which would demonstrate its appropriateness, both from a practical point of view, such as its ability to absorb water, and from a symbolic viewpoint such as the natural fertility of the land.

Some of the tests which appear in the vāstusāstras are taken directly from the earlier Gṛihya Sūtras. A common practice was to dig a pit in the center of the site and then to re-fill the pit with the same earth which had been removed to test the density of the soil. If the earth exceeded the original level, it was excellent, if it was level it was of middle quality etc. The pit may also be

filled with water and the level assessed after one evening.¹⁶

Śilpaśāstra describes one experiment where a lamp is placed within a hole and the colour, direction of the smoke indicates the general prosperity of the site.¹⁷ In other texts, the germination time of a seed placed within some of the earth indicates the fertility and overall value of the site.¹⁸ Thus, the criterion for evaluation is based upon a mixture of common sense principles and the ritual interpretation of some of the signs.

Claiming the Site

When an appropriate place is confirmed the priests take possession of the tract and at a favorable time the land is claimed for the deity.¹⁹ First, tribute is paid in the four directions to all the local nature spirits who may inhabit the land, ponds, and trees etc. contained within the chosen area. The offerings, known as bhūtabali, consisting of curd, barley, paddy, mas and tumeric roots, are distributed and the genii are asked to leave.²⁰ The ISGP explains the process:

Four pegs should be placed in the four corners of the boundary and offerings (bali) to spirits should be scattered in all directions by a fearless man in the night. The preceptor should induce the spirits residing there to go and reside elsewhere. "Om. Let bhūta, rākṣasas, yakṣas, piśācas, brahma-rākṣasas and also those others, go elsewhere from this place." Then he dismisses the band of spirits with "Om haḥ huṃ phaṭ" and again scatters tribute to them as they start as the night draws towards the dawn.²¹

If, for any reason, the ground plans were to be arranged without these offerings, the site would suffer the threat of being destroyed by terrible demons.²² To avoid this defect the sacrificial offerings are made in a way which is suggestive of the repelling of the rākṣasas from the sacrifice. In the SB the sacrificial area must be cleared from evil influences, so first the gods must overcome the demons by force and then appease them with some small share from the sacrifice.

The rākṣasas knew if the gods were able to successfully carry out the sacrifice they would become immortal so they tried desperately to sabotage their efforts, but the gods were able to protect the sacrifice and slay the demons.

The rākshas sought to smite them (the gods), "Ye shall not sacrifice! Ye shall not spread the sacrifice!" Having made those fires, those bricks to be sharp-edged thunderbolts, they (the gods) hurled these at them and laid them low -- then they spread the sacrifice in a place free from danger and devilry.²³

To ensure that the site was and would remain free from the onslaught of other night demons, the priest, the "repellers of the rākshas" offered them tribute.²⁴ The sixth kāṇḍa of the SB mentions that the gods offered them continuous libations and the eleventh kāṇḍa explains that a blood sacrifice ensures protection from the rākṣasas.²⁵

The fact that the demons must be overpowered and then placated with offerings may have implications linking human sacrifice (real or symbolic) with the construction of the

temple. The devas, by performing sacrifice, built up Prajāpati's immortal body in the form of the agni, "The sacrificer having repelled the fiends in every quarter, now restores that body (of Agni) in a place free from danger."²⁶

This concept provides a model for the yajamāna's construction of the temple as the body of god from the subdued and appeased body of vāstupuruṣa.

Purification of the Site

When the priest-architects are in possession of the land they begin a process of purification. One of the best methods of cleansing the earth is to pasture cattle on the precincts, for the very presence of the animals is auspicious says the Mānasāra:

Cows, oxen and calves should be brought there. Consequently the ground stamped with the foot-tracks and the breathing of cattle, resounding with the lowing of the oxen besmeared with cow-dung and then inhabited by cowherds... adorned with the horripilations caused by the foam of chewing the cud and also with the footsteps of cows and the fragrant with the smell of cows.²⁷

This idea may very well stem from the stories of Prṛthvī, who assumed the shape of the wish-fulfilling cow, for the TSM declares the best site is one which is richly abounding in cows. The ground is actually compared to the cow in the Mānasāra, "the ground like the all-productive cow who is good in every way should be selected as a building site in order to secure prosperity."²⁸

The site is tilled and planted with grains which both provide nourishment for the animals and symbolise the

revitalized earth through its germination and growth.²⁹ Likewise, when the priest ploughs the site of the great altar he does so to provide Prajāpati with food, and at the end of his work recites "we have come to the end of this famine".³⁰ The furrow he ploughs is the womb which receives the seed, and the grain, the food of both men and animals, is that same "milk" by which Pṛthvī nurtured all life on earth. The words he speaks as he ploughs highlight this parallel,

With sweet ghee let the furrow be saturated...sapful and teeming with milk, milk means life sap thus teeming with lifesap and food, with lifesap O furrow, turn thou unto us.³¹

This life-sap may be further traced to the story of the successive chain of beings through which the sacrificial essence travelled.... the horse, ox, sheep, goat and finally the earth where it came to reside in rice and barley.³² Thus the temple precincts absorb the symbolism of the life-sap present in the grains and the purifying presence of the cow who feeds upon this pasture.

A second and perhaps more important ploughing takes place after the site has been purified to level the area for construction. All aspects of this ritual are carefully regulated--the oxen must be specially selected and ornamented with gold, the plough must be of a proper type of wood and of the correct dimensions, and then with the guidance of the astrologer who determines the auspicious moment and zodiacal conjunction, the ploughing commences.

Both the oxen and the chief architect, the sthapati, are tastefully ornamented with perfumes and flowers as the first three rounds of ploughing are performed to the benedictions of the brahmins and the auspicious sounds of the crowd. It is the sūdras, the traditional farming caste, who complete the tilling.³³

The ground must be made absolutely level, "as far as the boundaries of the temple (it) should be made even like the face of a mirror and besmeared with water mixed with cow dung,"³⁴ for only upon a smooth and level surface may construction begin. This was a preliminary condition given to King Pr̥thu who was required to make the earth more hospitable for Pr̥thvī's milk in Viṣṇu Purāṇa. In the SamSD version Viśvakarman and his sons had to make the land more uniform and flat before they could begin to construct roads and cities.³⁵ Two of the appellations given to the Earth in the SB reflect this same concept, she is both the prepared underlying foundation and the wide-spreading extension of the surface,

This earth has indeed become (bhū) the foundation! Hence it became the earth bhūmi. He spread it out (prath) and it became the "broad one" of the earth prithivi.³⁶

The tilled even area of land should be measured off as a quadrangle with equal sides to each of the four directions say the Gṛihya Sūtras.³⁷ The square vāstu site suggested in the sūtra literature is carried on in the vāstusāstra tradition where it is said the earth should be dug out in a

quadrangle as extensive as the building site.³⁸ The importance of this and other squares is reflected in the agnicayana in several different ways. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa seems to suggest that it is not the entire bird-shaped area in the mahāvedi which is ploughed but only the body, that two by two square in the center of the falcon, for it says "only the body he ploughs not the wings and the tail;"³⁹ while in the Nambudri celebration documented by Staal the field of agni is tilled from the tail to the head and the center is avoided.⁴⁰ In either case, it is obvious the central square is the most sensitive area. This area is known as the ātman of the agni, and here many of the most important rituals take place.

This inner square is also the site of the uttaravedi or high altar. Even though the uttaravedi relates to the celestial worlds, it draws its primary symbolism from the vedi and the earth. The vedi is the original place of worship and the uttaravedi is its heavenly replica.⁴¹ The vedi is the symbol of quaternity and of the earth as archetypal altar. As such it is said to have derived its name from a myth relating to the first sacrifice. In this story the vedi is square because the gods enclosed Viṣṇu on all four sides and by so claiming the four directions they gained the entire earth: "By it they obtained (sam-vid) this entire earth and because they obtained by it this entire earth therefore the sacrificial ground is called

vedi the altar."⁴²

Another similarity is found when a small mound of earth is heaped up in the shape of a square upon the uttaravedi. This mound is understood to be the navel of the altar and is therefore known as the uttaranābhi, but in respect to its symbolism and function it shares many similar features of the vedi. The nābhi is invoked in the TS to "extend wide" and to "lie firm", both functions of Pr̥thvī as the "broad one" and "the foundation."⁴³ Like the vedi, it is also protected in all directions through efficacious mantras.⁴⁴ The vedi, besides symbolising the square and the earth, also functions as the mythical peak from which the gods ascended to the celestial regions. The uttaravedi is heaped up with earth to symbolize such a "high, even and firm" place from which the devas rose to svarga.⁴⁵ It becomes, through this analogy, the highest point on earth, for it is said, "let them choose a place which lies highest and above which no other part of the ground rises, for it was from thence that the gods ascended to heaven."⁴⁶

ENDNOTES

1. SB 3.1.1.4.
2. ManS III.3, 4. The four classes of architectural objects are: the ground, the edifice and other buildings, the conveyance and the bedstead and couches.
3. ManS IV,38-39.
4. TSM 1.7.
5. GP 1.81.26.
6. The beauty of the site is expressed in BrS LVI. 3-8.
7. Mbh. 3.33.80.35-40. The "Tour of the Sacred Fords" mentions that pilgrimage is a method whereby the poor who lack the means to offer sacrifice may acquire merit equal to sacrificial acts. Numerous purifying and holy places (tīrthas) across India are also mentioned in this section. See also 3.33.80.1ff.
8. Kramrisch, Temple 5.
9. GP 1.81.24 cf. Mbh. "Anuśānaparva" CLXX.2-3 as quoted in Kramrisch, Temple 4: "There is one tīrtha where one should always bathe and that is the tīrtha of the mind (mānasatīrtha). It is deep, clear and pure, its water is truth (satya) and metaphysical knowledge (brahmajñana). Those who take this bath see the Principles, the true nature of things (tattvadarśin)."
10. Kramrisch, Temple 5.

11. Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Translated from French by W. R Trask (1954; Harper & Row, N.Y. 1959) 12-17. These points are implied in Mabett, I.W., "The Symbolism of Mt. Meru", *History of Religion*. 23, No. 1 (1983-84): 64-84.

12. See VP 2.2ff. and 1.9. See also Stella Kramrisch *The Presence of Śiva* (Princeton University Press, 1981) 341-9 for a wider account of "Lord Mountain."

13. In BrS LVI.20-22 Varahāmiḥira describes a meru temple as hexangular, having twelve stories and being thirty-two cubits wide; a mandara as hexangular with ten floors and thirty cubits wide; and a kailāsa as eight floors high and twenty-eight cubits in width. According to Śukranti, as quoted in P.N. Bose, *Principles* 73ff. meru and mandara are the first two types of temples. A meru is described as having one thousand domes. Bose also notes (pp. 74-75) that according to the Oriyan text, the *Bhuvanapravesa*, the first three names of temples are again mahāmeru, mandara and kailāsa. For a similar discussion on meru see Kramrisch, *Temple*, 161, 271, 191, 277.

14. Kramrisch, *Temple* 123(78n); cf. Rowland 276.

15. Phanindra Nath Bose, ed. and trans., *Śilpa Śāstra* (Lahore: Motilal Banarsidass, 1928) 1.10ff. Abbreviated SS. cf. ManS III.33-34. In the MM 3.1ff the characteristics of suitable and unsuitable sites are listed without reference to each individual castes. MM 3.10A says

"Un tel site convient à toutes les castes auxquelles il amène le succès."

16. AsGS 2.8.1-5 cf. BrS LIII.92,93; Matsya P. 253.10ff: ManS V. 32-35.

17. SS 1.13-15; BrS LIII 94; TSM 1.15; Matsya P. 253.

18. SS 1.8-9; Matsya P. 253.

19. ISGP 26.70: ManS V.2-4.

20. ManS V.4-7; AgP. XXXIX. 14-17.

21. ISGP 27.73ab(14ff); MM 4.1-3.

22. ManS VIII. 62-64.

23. SB 7.3.2.5; SB 6.3.1.29.

24. SB 1.1.4.6.

25. SB 6.3.1.5; SB 11.7.4.2.

26. SB 7.4.1.33; SB 5.2.4.11, 14.

27. ManS V. 10ff cf. BrS LIII. 98 Compare Kern's translation: "At a period indicated by the astrologer, let the houseowner go to a piece of ground which has been ploughed abounds with seeds grown up, has served as a resting place for cows, or has got the approval of brahmins." See also MM 4.4-8A.

28. ManS V. 37; TSM 1.9.

29. The whole process is to be repeated again after one year suggests the ISGP 26.78. Quoting another source it says, "Now it is said in the Mañjarī: Again after one year one should make there a resting place for bulls....One should again sow pulse there etc., and paddy in the previous

order. One should get these eaten by the animals..."

30. SB 7.2.2.14 and 21.

31. SB 7.2.2.10.

32. SB 1.2.3.6,7.

33. ManS V. 38-87.

34. ISGP 26.79.

35. Compare VP 1.13 "make also all places level, so that I may cause my milk the seed of all vegetation to flow everywhere around".

36. SB 6.1.1.15.

37. AsGS 2.8.9.

38. ManS V.20-22.

39. SB 7.2.2.8.

40. See Staal's documentation of the actions and hymns recited at this time in Agni 1: 388ff.

41. The uttaravedi is clearly defined as both the sky and the womb of the yajamāna's divine body in SB 7.3.1.27 and 28.

42. SB 1.2.5.7.

43. TS 1.2.12f,g; cf. SB 6.1.1.15.

44. TS 1.2.12,i.

45. SB 3.1.1. 1 and 2.

46. SB 3.1.1.1 cf. SB 8.5.2.16.

CHAPTER FOUR

Significance and Implications of the Vāstupuruṣa MandalaThe Vāstupuruṣa Mandala

Once the proper location has been selected, purified, levelled and surveyed, one may begin the worship of the vāstupuruṣa.¹ To do so, a square is first inscribed upon the temple precincts as the vāstupuruṣa mandala or figurative diagram of the puruṣa.² The mandala itself is divided into a grid of lesser squares concentrically arranged around a central block called the brahmasthāna. The two most important arrangements are the mandalas of sixty-four and eighty-one squares, known respectively as the mandūka and paramaśayina mandalas. The corresponding areas of the brahmasthāna are a two by two and three by three square in the center. Each small square (or portion of a square) is assigned to a particular deity who covers an area on the body of the vāstupuruṣa, the being who inhabits the site.

The number of squares assigned to each deva and the relative positions of the gods differ in various texts, but the primary relationship between the central squares of the brahmasthāna and the overall size of the mandala remains constant. In the following figures the proportions of the brahmasthāna to the mandala as a whole are consistent, but the surrounding deities which cover the mandalas and the areas they represent vary.³ (See Diagram 3: Examples of

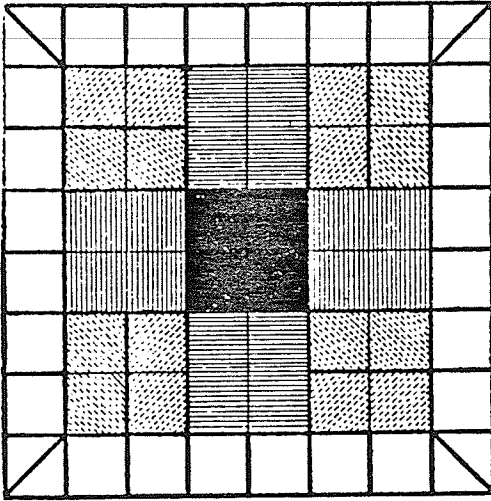
types of vāstupuruṣa maṇḍalas).

The descent of the vāstupuruṣa can be linked to the original sacrifice of the puruṣa sūkta. The puruṣa of the RgV 10.90 voluntarily accepted self-immolation, and that same sacrificial essence which originally resided in him passed through a series of animals until it came at last to the body of the sacrificial goat the symbol of Prajāpati/Agni/sacrificer, "for truly the he-goat is no other than Prajāpati."⁴ By analogy, whenever the goat is sacrificed it is a re-enactment of the original sacrifice of the Rg Veda, and the creation of a new divine order is once again established.⁵ The goat is the emblem of the lower nature or the finite form of Prajāpati which is consumed in the fire of the altar. When the agni is re-built and Prajāpati takes on his immortal form, the goat, as the symbol of the sacrificial victim, reveals his true nature as the a-ja or unborn, or immortal self.⁶

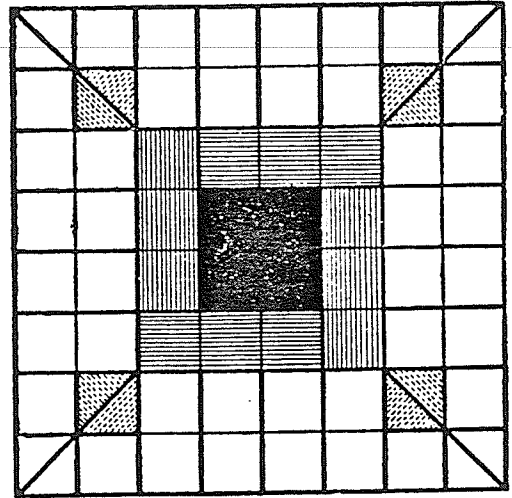
The vāstupuruṣa of the maṇḍala is none other than the goat form of Agni/Prajāpati. The ISGP explains that the vāstupuruṣa was a goat-headed being produced by the wrath of Bhṛgu the preceptor of the demons. Ultimately, the goat was subdued by Śiva and the prostrate goat-demon was then granted a boon from the generous Lord. He asks,

"May you pardon me the evil deeds perpetrated by me through ignorance so that I may dwell on the earth with the concurrence of the gods....The gods, Brahmā and the rest should be worshipped while residing in me." Lord Śiva replies, "As you have asked me for [thing (vastu)], a residence as

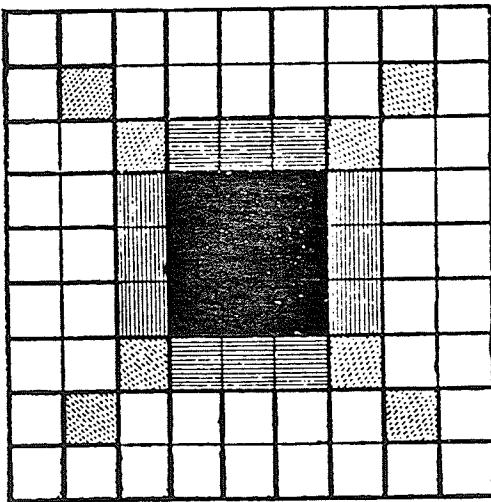
a boon, your name will be vāstupa (protector of a vāstu). Deities like Śatānanda (Brahmā) and the rest will be pleased to reside in you. Henceforth whosoever builds a divine or human residence to dwell on this earth, should worship you first with flowers, incense, lights and special tribute."⁷



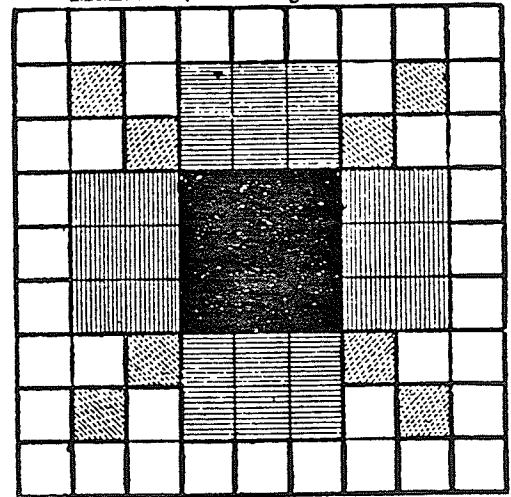
MAṆḌUKA : C
Vāsturājavallabha, II. 13.
Śāradātilaka, III. 8-9.



MAṆḌUKA : D
Mayamata, VII. 43-57.
Vāstuvīdyā, IV. 36.
Mānasāra, VII. 83-110.



PARAMAŚĀYIN : A
Viśvakarmaprakāśa, V. 54-65.
Bṛhat Saṃhitā, LII. 42-54.
Matsyapurāṇa, CCLIII. 25-35.
Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati, III.
ch. XXVII. 35.



PARAMAŚĀYIN : B
Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra, XI. 1-14.
Tantrasamuccaya, I. 1. 60-67.

Diagram 3: Examples of the relative proportions of the brahmasthāna to the overall size of the maṇḍala. From Kramrisch, Temple 87. She notes the sources for each drawing below.

In other places the vāstupuruṣa is not directly identified with the goat, rather he is described as a powerful and unruly being who is eventually pacified. Only then does he act as the protector of the site. The Vāstu Vidya offers this version of the myth:

There was of yore a cruel asura, exceedingly haughty on account of the strength of his arms and hence a terror to all the worlds. He was felled down to earth and conquered by the devas and has now become peaceful.....as he lay the devatas seated themselves on his limbs.⁸

In his unredeemed and demonic form he is the "hump-backed, crooked and lean" creature who must be restrained at all costs.⁹ The Agni Purāṇa describes the asura in unflattering terms as "a fierce-looking demon with curled locks dancing about his shoulders, and lifting up his diabolical head from underneath the ground, with his face turned towards the north."¹⁰

When the vāstupuruṣa is laid down in the square mandala, each deva is responsible for a different part of the asura's anatomy, i.e. Agni holds the head, Āpa the mouth, Brahmā covers the heart or in some texts the region of the navel.¹¹ (See Diagram 4: The vāstupuruṣa). Both the gods who reside on the being and the demon himself must receive proper tribute to ensure the safety of the building.¹² This tribute was one of the concessions the devas granted the imprisoned vāstudeva, perhaps analogous to tribute of rākṣasas.¹³

The conquered asura lies facedown on the mandala with

his head in the north-east and his legs towards the south.¹⁴ In this position his head faces the "quarter of gods and men, the gate of heaven."¹⁵ Even though he faces the heavenly quarter he cannot reach heaven because he lies prone upon the earth. In transformation, the puruṣa turns and faces upwards towards heaven (north-east) in a position of submission and reverence, "lying with palms together in an attitude of prayer on his heart."¹⁶ When the god lies face upwards (uttana) he is no longer constrained by the gods, instead they become the components of his form. As Kramrisch comments, "in his resurrection the gods are his body and life."¹⁷ In this final form he functions as the Cosmic Man who contains all forms of existence.

VĀSTU-PURUṢA MANDALA

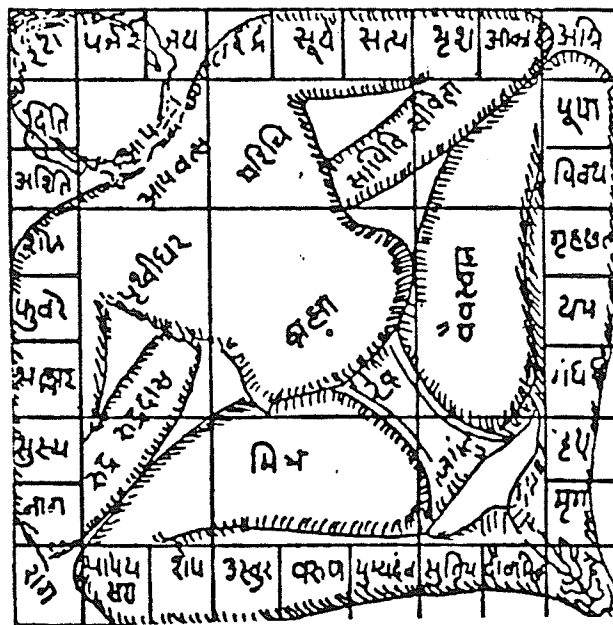


Diagram 4

Fr. Andreas Volwahren's *Living Architecture: India*. From the *Living Architecture* series. Edited by Henri Stierlin (N.Y., N.Y.: Grosset & Dunlap 1969) 44. Volwahren does not specify from which text the diagram is taken.

Although the deva with his face towards the "gate of heaven" is the usual description, in some texts the head of the vāstupuruṣa is said to lie in an easterly direction rather than to the north.¹⁸ In this situation the vāstudeva parallels the agni and the direction of heaven as indicated by the rising sun, "the quarter of the gods--the faultless (direction) where the gods ascended to heaven." By association, when the sacrificer faces east he is one with the gods: "by means of the golden light the sacrificer goes to the heavenly world."¹⁹ The easterly-facing deva has its image in the golden-man placed face-upwards with his head towards the east upon the altar.²⁰ Like the redeemed asura, it is the image of the divine puruṣa, "He is made of gold for gold is light... gold is immortality."²¹

The Protector of the Site is not only connected with the human-likeness of the hiranyapuruṣa, but also with the agni as a whole, for the altar is by analogy another form of the yajamāna. When the sacrificer piles the agni in the form of the syena, the bird's head lies to the east, thus he attains the world of the gods, "becoming a hawk he flies to the world of heaven."²²

The image of the transformed deva of the temple site interprets symbols previously revealed in sacrificial ritual, so whether the head of the vāstupuruṣa lies to the north-east or to the east he faces heaven.

Brahmasthanā

The square is of particular importance to the symbolism of the temple and the agni. In the agnicayana ceremonies the square represents the perfect figure, the measure of any object times itself: the main measurement of one puruṣa is as "high as he is broad";²³ the ukhā or fire pan where the divine embryo is conceived is a square receptacle one span by one span; the most important area of the agni is the ātman of the altar a two by two square in the center of the agni. In the central block of the brahmasthanā in the mandala, the square is the abode of Lord Brahmā, where the Lord of Creation resides, covering and protecting the heart and vital organs of the puruṣa.

The vāstupuruṣa mandala and the brahmasthanā in particular, can be understood on different levels:

1. As an image of the macrocosm--the universe as the Cosmic Man with the center as the source of creation, energy, light and time.
2. As an image of the microcosm--the causal body of the sacrificer with the center as the point of interior transformation referred to in the Upaniṣads as the lotus or cave of the heart.

A. MACROCOSM.

The puruṣa sūkta RgV 10.90 declares the entire universe evolved from the body of the Cosmic Man. As a whole, the mandala represents the primeval puruṣa and is so arranged

that all important aspects of creation can be understood as functions of puruṣa. Furthermore, these symbols are strategically structured to meaningfully revolve around the central block of the brahmasthāna.

One of the most obvious features of the mandala is the large number of deities which are assigned to specific squares. Textual sources indicate that in mandalas of eighty-one or sixty-four padas, forty-five devas are to be worshipped.²⁴ This number breaks down into thirty-two in the outer ring, and thirteen (Lord Brahmā and the twelve ādityas) in the inner square. The thirty-two deities along with Brahmā constitute the thirty-three gods of the Vedic pantheon who preside (three times eleven) over the three regions.²⁵ In the mandala, the thirty-three are divided into eight deities of the four directions plus one in the center. The sequence of thirty-three, three and one is used in the BU 3.9.1ff when the sage Yājñavalkya suggests that the large number of manifestations of divinity (3306) can be reduced to the thirty-three deities of the sacred texts and further again to the Lords of the Three Worlds and finally be reduced to One. "Which is that one God? ...He is Brahman. They call him tyat (that)."²⁶ This passage suggests the forces and powers which rule the universe (devas) are manifestations or faculties of the One God. As the Vāstu Vidyā indicates, the devas are the limbs or aṅgas of the Cosmic Man or puruṣa.²⁷

Special consideration is due the twelve inner deities or ādityas the sons of Aditi.²⁸ One opinion put forth by scholars such as Keith and Müller is that the goddess Aditi represents the expansiveness of space and by relation the light which shines forth from heaven.²⁹ "Dawn is Aditi's form of glory" says the *Rg Veda*.³⁰ The sun as Aditi expresses space, light and the ordering and promoting of life from above; she is said to uphold the air, support the regions and rule all beings.³¹ Diagrammatically therefore, Aditi is represented as the center of the four directions surrounded by her sons.³² (See plate 10)

Six sons of Aditi are named in the *RgV* while the number is twelve in both the *SB* and *BU*.³³ In both of the latter situations the ādityas are related to the cycles of time and the year. They are the solar deities marking the progress of the sun along the ecliptic.³⁴ "Verily, the twelve months of the year are the ādityas, for they move carrying along all this", says *BrUp* 3.9.5. The brahmasthāna at the center of maṇḍala surrounded by the twelve ādityas, replaces the image of Aditi but retains the symbolism as the source of celestial light and the abiding presence of eternity untouched by cycles of time.

In a similar way these ādityas may be correlated with the twelve houses of the zodiac and the revolution of time on a grander scale. In this case, the center is not ruled by Aditi but by the center of the night sky the dhruva or

Pole Star. The dhruva is the motionless pivot of the cosmos, "All the stars are presided over by dhruva and circumambulate Him. This pole is the best support and sacrificial pillar of these stars... the Three Worlds are tied on to this dhruva."³⁵ Man is able to observe the movements of the stars, and even to see the pole star, but he cannot know the true nature of the Center.³⁶

In summary, when the brahmasthāna is read as an image of the macrocosm it is the source of light and time, but not conditioned by either. It represents eternity and infinity.

B. MICROCOSM.

As much as the altar is the body of Prajāpati/yajamāna, so is the maṇḍala the subtle body of the vāstupuruṣa and by extension the patron. The meeting points of longer diagonals in the figure and the very centres of the compartments in the maṇḍala are considered to be the vulnerable spots of the vāstudeva, and care must be taken to avoid any injury to these "wounding points".³⁷ Any injury incurred by misplacing a pillar, stone or vessel etc. would produce suffering in a corresponding member of the patron's body, or it may create more widespread misfortune which would include his kinsmen, the architect, brahmins, and kings and even extend to the surrounding animal life.³⁸ Care is taken to avoid harming the vāstupuruṣa in any manner, and the subtle body of the deva is seriously considered during several phases of construction:

1. during the purification ceremonies śalyas or extraneous materials are removed from the earth³⁹
2. during the laying of the first bricks no stone is allowed to oppress the devas⁴⁰
3. during the deposition of the garbha the limbs of the vāstudeva are avoided⁴¹
4. during the actual construction of the building stones, pillars and walls are placed to avoid injuring the body of the god.⁴²

Not only is the mandala as a whole the body of the puruṣa, but it is also composed of the bodies of other deities. These divinities form the aṅgas (limbs), marmās (vitals) and sirās (veins) of the vāstupuruṣa.⁴³ Thus the two images of puruṣa as the emblem of the cosmos containing all the gods and of the Sacrificial Man coalesce.

Inasmuch as the vāstudeva serves as an image of the sacrificer, the image of the appeased and tranquil vāstupuruṣa who lies upon the earth with his hands in the mudrā of anjali or obsequence parallels the submission of the soul of the bhakta to god in theistic terms.⁴⁴ Basically, this point of re-generation and transformation indicated by the brahmasthāna as the heart reflects an interior change and fresh insight. The asura, recognizing the supremacy of a higher power, humbles himself and seeks the protection and benevolence of the deity, and from that point he is transformed and raised upward. Architecturally, the

ultimate image of the immortal man is seen in the upright image of puruṣa as the temple and the all-important center of the brahmasthāna shifts from the square of the horizontal maṇḍala to the three-dimensional cubical garbhagrha of the vertical devālaya.

The connection between the individual soul and brahman is expressed in another aspect of the brahmasthāna. When the image of Brahmā (masc.) presides over the center it represents the active, creative and manifest aspect of the unconditioned Supreme brahman (neuter). The brahmasthāna, therefore, is the center both as the point of universal expansion Brahmā or brahman as he experiences the world as ātman, and as the point of ultimate fulfillment -- the unqualified neuter brahman -- brahman in itself.

Furthermore, if this symbolism of the two-fold nature of brahman is interpreted into Upaniṣadic philosophy, the brahmasthāna becomes another symbol for that mysterious place of transformation which lies at the center or heart of man. This space yields a unique type of knowledge which is discovered within the innermost depths of the human soul. Hṛdayavidyā or knowledge of the heart is knowledge of the true nature of reality, brahman.⁴⁵

The Center as the Upaniṣadic Cave of the Heart

The cave of the heart is a crucial symbol in understanding the spiritual meaning of the temple, since the garbhagrha or adytum is the physical expression of that

interior and ultimate sanctum known only within. In the completed prāsāda the cella becomes the manifest form of the cave of the heart, the meeting point between man and God. In view of the critical nature of the symbol some background is provided before the metaphor is discussed.

Important Underlying Concepts of the Upanisads

The word upanisad (according to native authorities) refers to that knowledge which is the key to human existence; for it alone may dispell the darkness of nescience by revealing the brilliance of the Supreme Spirit within. It therefore, also implies a mystical understanding and esoteric doctrine by which that knowledge is discovered and transmitted.⁴⁶

The treatises which comprise the category of upanisads often speak of a certain type of knowledge which is hidden, secret and mysterious, i.e. guhyā adeśā or hidden teachings; paramam guhyam, supreme secret; vedānte paramam guhyam, the highest mystery in Vedanta; tat veda guhyopanishatsu gūḍham, that which is hidden in the Vedas and in the Upanisads; and guhyataman or secret doctrine.⁴⁷ The key words are the verb guha meaning to cover, conceal, hide or keep secret, and the noun guhā literally a cave or by extension a secret place. The cave of the heart combines these two meanings for it is in this secret place where this highest and secret knowledge is known, as the Kaivalya Upanisad 23 testifies:

"Knowing the nature of the Supreme Self, dwelling in the cave of the heart...he obtains the pure

nature of the Supreme Self."

The Ultimate Reality of Brahman

Brahman is said to have two different forms: brahman the transcendent Godhead beyond all attributes (nirguna) and brahman as the pervading and sustaining Ground of Existence (saguna).⁴⁸

BRAHMAN NIRGUNA: Beyond all the changing appearances of phenomenon there lies an immutable, invariable Reality whose nature, beyond all positive definitions and human concepts, may only be hinted at through negation--the apophatic unknowability of neti neti "Not this, not this". It is described as an absence of qualities ... "without sound, touch, form, ... it is undecaying, without taste, eternal, without smell, without beginning, without end, beyond the great."⁴⁹

BRAHMAN SAGUNA: While the Godhead lies beyond the bounds of human concepts, brahman saguna illustrates the positive form of the Lord immanent within creation. There is nothing beyond Him, nothing smaller nor greater, "by Him, the Person, is this whole universe filled."⁵⁰ As the inner controller (antaryāmin) which regulates this world, the next and all things he represents an inner power too subtle to be perceived yet nonetheless the real source and support of existence.

He is never seen but is the seer, never heard but is the hearer. He is never perceived but is the perceiver. He is never thought but is the thinker. There is no seer but he, no hearer but

he, no thinker but he.⁵¹

The significant point of brahman antaryāmin is that this same inner controller is none other than one's own self, the immortal ātman.⁵² Macrocosmically, brahman saguna is the sum total of all existence; microcosmically he is the center or self of each living being.⁵³ It is because of this relationship that when one knows the ātman abiding in his own heart he knows brahman, and knowing the Supreme brahman he becomes brahman himself.⁵⁴ Likewise, when the devotee grasps the truth that his own self is none other than brahman he recognizes the same principle in all creation, "becoming one with God, he becomes the self of all beings."⁵⁵

The search for the Absolute as "the supreme object to be desired and the highest beyond the reach of man's understanding" begins with man's search for his own self which lies hidden within.⁵⁶ Many terms such as the space of the heart (ākāśa hr̥dyam), the cave of the heart (guhā hr̥daya) the abode or city of brahman (brahma pura), the hidden or secret place (nihitam gūhayam) and the lotus of the heart (hr̥t puṣkara), suggest an inner secret place which is the spiritual center of man and the chief seat of the Supreme. In the deepest recess of the heart man discovers a creative point of contact and unification with the divine which utterly transforms him--knowing brahman he becomes brahman:

Here, in this city of brahman is an abode, a small lotus flower; within it is a small space. What is within that should be sought, for that, assuredly, is what one should desire to understand."⁵⁷

The symbol which links these metaphors is ākāśa or space. The Maitrī Upaniṣad 6.38 describes brahman as being hidden in the highest space which is pure being, immortal and indestructible. Like the mathematical point at the center of a circle, brahman has position but not magnitude.⁵⁸ It is without dimensions, yet all pervading, encompassing the infinitestimally small and the infinitely large.⁵⁹ Paradoxically, the inner space of the heart has the same dimensions as the outer space containing the cosmos:

As far as this (world) space extends, so far extends the space within the heart. Within it, indeed, are contained both heaven and earth, both fire and air, both sun and moon, lightning and the stars. Whatever there is of him in this world, and whatever is not, all that is contained within it.⁶⁰

Ākāśa is the zero point from which all begins and to which all returns. It includes physical space, but refers to the more primary concept of a purely ideal space without dimension, the source of all creation and the ground of the cosmos as these lines from CU 1.9.1 suggest, "What is the goal of this world? Space, for all these creatures are produced in space. They return back into space. For space is greater than these, space is the final goal". As Coomaraswamy, in his article, "Kha and Other Words Denoting 'Zero' in Connection with the Indian Metaphysics of Space",

points out, the term "kha" refers to a cavity or hole in the nave of a wheel through which the axle runs, analogous to the "empty" center of the ātman.

It corresponds to the center of the circle, the point without dimensions and a principal space not yet expanded. The navel, kha or nābhi of the world wheel is regarded as the receptacle and fountain of all order, formative ideas and goods."⁶¹

Betty Heimann takes a similar position:

It is the All and simultaneously the None, and thus the term sūnya, zero is adopted for the metaphysical concept of nirvāṇam; the Buddhist reabsorption point and of brahman-nirvāṇam the reabsorption and also emanation point.⁶²

It is this inconceivable form of divinity analogous to ākāśa which abides in the center of the lotus of the heart.⁶³ It is described as the motionless center around which all else revolves; it is actionless and beyond the flux of phenomena.⁶⁴ In spite of being completely aloof from the world, he is nonetheless the unborn source of creation, the source of Brahmā and the Father of Living Creatures.⁶⁵ He is the resplendent source of all light and all which that implies: knowledge, consciousness and being.⁶⁶

In architecture ākāśa is symbolized by the center of the mandala which covers the heart of the vāstupuruṣa and by the empty center of garbhagrha. This brahmasthāna contains the double images of the unconditioned brahman as the motionless center and as the abode of Brahmā the source of creation.

When one comes to know the self (as the ātman) which abides within his own heart, he experiences the bliss and knowledge of brahman. References are also made to the correlation of an awareness of brahman and the experience of inner light. The self within the human heart is said to be a shining immortal person, pure and of the nature of light, consisting of mind or knowledge, and this interior light is the same as the light which shines above,⁶⁷ again reflecting the image of center as source of light and being.

There is no separation between ātman and brahman. In fact the union of the soul with the Lord often finds its expression in terms of spiritual marriage:

As a man when in the embrace of his beloved wife knows nothing within or without, so the person when in the embrace of the intelligent self knows nothing within or without. That, verily, is his form in which his desire is fulfilled in which the self is his desire, in which he is without desire, free from any sorrow.⁶⁸

Knowing brahman he becomes brahman. The individual's consciousness is transfigured and a new center of life is established. He has a new orientation to the world which may not be apparent to an outside observer. Even though outward aspects of his life may appear unchanged, he has reached the goal of life: "For the yogin satisfied with the nectar of the knowledge of brahman there is nothing whatsoever that has yet to be achieved." The jīvanmukta (one who is released but living) continues to exist in the mundane world "remaining in the body, yet not of the body,

the innermost self becomes the all-pervading brahman."69

In summary, the cave or space of the heart represents the most subtle and most genuine aspect of human beings--the soul or ātman, which is also the hidden dwelling place of the divine. Plunging into its own depths, the ātman, realising its true nature, becomes brahman. Within this secret place of one's own being the aspirant undergoes the final metamorphosis, he is transformed and liberated... tat tvam asi, Thou art That. This is the true significance of the brahmasthāna, the central square which covers and protects the heart of the puruṣa. It is the ātman of the vāstupuruṣa, the abode of Lord Brahmā, and the unqualified center of existence, brahman nirguṇa. The meaning of the brahmasthāna is transferred in the completed temple to the garbhagrha which acts as the heart and the meeting point between man and God.

ENDNOTES

1. ISGP 26.93.
2. The maṇḍala need not cover the entire building site in order to fulfill its purpose. As it reflects the presence of the archetypal man, the existence, and not the size of the maṇḍala is the important factor. See Kramrisch, Temple 51.
3. Various types of maṇḍalas are discussed in ManS VII. 76ff; BrS LIII. 42ff; Matsya P 253.18ff; ISGP 27.4ff; VV 4.34ff. See R.P. Kukarni Nasik "Vāstupāda-maṇḍala," Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda, 28(1978-79):107-138 for a discussion of the arrangement of different gods in various types of maṇḍalas. He also describes the relationship between the maṇḍalas and city planning, 113ff..
4. SB 5.2.1.24; SB 6.5.4.16 "the goat sprang from Prajāpati's head and Prajāpati is Agni."
5. SB 13.2.7.13 "Agni was an animal, they sacrificed him and he gained that world wherein Agni ruleth."
6. The goat, aja, is the animal form of Prajāpati which is offered up and transformed into that which is unborn a-ja and immortal. It is, says, SB 7.5.2.36, the means of attaining heaven, "thereby the gods at first (agre) went to the godhead; the he-goat (aja) doubtless is speech and from speech the gods doubtless first went to the godhead, to the summit (agram); thereby they went to the height.. the heavenly world, the wise."

7. See ISGP 26.93ff.
8. VV 4.47ff. Other stories are found in BrS LIII. 2-3; AP XL; Matsya P 252.4ff.
9. ManS VII. 265 and Matsya P 252.5-10.
10. AP XCIII. 1-3.
11. Matsya P 253.19-33 and BrS LIII.54 indicate Brahmā is seated on the heart of the vāstupuruṣa. ISGP 27.62 (35-38) and VV 4.49-52 indicate he resides on the navel region. ManS VII. 254 says center.
12. "Thus the deities resident in the body of the vāstu if properly worshipped, bestow success in that undertaking and peace." ISGP 27.34 cf. ManS VIII. 5 and VIII. 60-65.
13. Matsya P 252.15-19.
14. ManS VII. 255; ISGP 26. 125cd-126ab. The BrS LIII. 51 indicates he faces the north-west.
15. SB 6.6.2.1ff.
16. AP XCIII. 3-4 cf. VV IV. 47-48, "He now has become peaceful. He lies flat on his back with his head in the Īśa (NE) his palms on his breast and as he lay thus the devatas seated themselves on his limbs."
17. Comment by Kramrisch, ISGP 183. As D.N. Shukla says in his article "Philosophy of Vāstu-Brahma and its Impact on Hindu Temple Architecture" the vāstupuruṣa maṇḍala is far more significant than just a site-plan of a building, town or temple. He writes (476) "...its (the maṇḍala) correct import and implication, however, have transformed this

Science of Architecture, into a Metaphysics".

18. "The head of the vāstupuruṣa lies to the east in the site of 64 squares." SamSD 14.11 as quoted in Kramrisch, Temple 79.

19. SB 3.1.1.1,7; SB 9.4.2.14; SB 7.4.2.21.

20. TS 5.2.8.2.

21. SB 7.4.1.15.

22. TS 5.4.11.1. There are several connections between the Agni, yajamāna and the bird: Agni is called "Bird Celestial" in the Rg Veda 1.164.52; fire is proclaimed a bird in the TS 5.7.6.1; the bird is the heavenly vehicle which transports the sacrificer SB 10.2.1.1ff and if he, the sacrificer, partakes of the flesh of birds he would be eating fire and would go to ruin says TS 5.7.6.1.

23. "Let the altar measure a fathom (vyāma) across... that is the size of a man and the altar should be of a man's size." SB 1.2.5.14. One vyāma is the same as one puruṣa. SB 7.1.1.37 cf. Seidenberg, "Geometry of Vedic Rituals" 114.

24. Matsya P 253. 19-33.

25. The thirty three Vedic gods are mentioned in many places, i.e. RgV 8.28.1; 8.30.2; 8.35.3; 8.39.9; 9.92.4.

26. BU 3.9.1ff. See also Alain Danielou, Hindu Polytheism (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964) 79ff.

27. VV 4.46.

28. Praises of the ādityas, the sons of Aditi, are seen for example in RgV; 10.63.2; RgV 8.18.

29. Müller, 235ff. See also Keith, Religion and Philosophy 31: 215-218 where he offers a synopsis of the various views on these points, i.e. quoting Hillebrandt, Vedic Mythology "She is connected with light and the highest heaven. ...she is the light of day in its imperishable aspect."

30. RgV 1.113.19.

31. SB 8.2.1.10.

32. "The sun is the connecting link (hinge, hook) for to the sun these worlds are linked by means of the quarters." SB 6.7.1.17. cf. SB 8.2.1.8,9. In the sacrificial cult of the SB, Agni (fire), Vāyu (wind) and Aditya (sun) are the three forms of Agni corresponding to light, might and glory; the R̥g, Yajur and Sama Vedas (SB 12.3.4.8&9); and the head, body, and heart of fire altar (SB 9.1.2.35ff). Aditya is the face of the rising sun, the Divine Agni which manifests the highest form of fire. Aditya is known both as the "heart of Prajāpati" SB 9.1.2.40 and the "first born brahman," as he (the Sun) is born day by day in the east" SB 7.4.1.14. When he rises he fills and nourishes the earth, mid-regions and the heavens with his rays and thus Surya the sun is called the soul of everything movable and immovable SB 7.5.2.27. Aditya as the sun is also the symbol of immutability represented by the highest of metals-- gold, and by the power of reality itself-- "sat", "Now that truth is the same as yonder sun." SB 6.7.1.1&2.

33. RgV 2.27.1; SB 11.6.3.8; BU 3.9.5.

34. "Who are the ādityas? The twelve months of the year, these are the ādityas, for they pass whilst laying hold on everything here." SB 11.6.3.8.

35. Matsya P 127. 24-29.

36. "All these locations of the stars and planets are assigned by the Supreme Being; no one can exactly describe the vastness of the infinite nature of the universe. No human being with fleshy eyes can know exactly its true nature." Matsya P 128. 84.

37. BrS LIII. 57ff; cf. VV 6.8ff.

38. See VV 6.17 ff. Any injury to the subtle body of the vāstupuruṣa would cause a corresponding complaint in the yajamāna. The VV 6.17ff enumerates evil effects of sthānavedha: "If sthānavedha is on crown of face or neck or heart death ensues; if there be vedha on breast, heart disease; on legs, quarrel; on forehead, loss of brothers...etc."

39. Matsya P 253.48ff; and 256.16ff. MM 3.6-10A describes the śalyas which should be removed.

40. ISGP 27.62ff.

41. ISGP 27.15.

42. ISGP 27.60ff; VV 6.17; 6.8-9.

43. ISGP 27.62ff.

44. This submission is seen in the story of the goat-headed demon who prostrates himself before Lord Śiva and is granted a boon of forgiveness of sin and the assurance that he may

dwell on earth as the vāstupa. See ISGP 26.113ff.

45. A certain ritual is carried out on the completed altar which interprets this same concept. The adhvaryu chants a special hymn called the prajāpati hṛdaya (the heart of Prajāpati) over the center or heart of the altar. By doing so, he makes Agni, the Father of Offspring, and also the offspring (or the sacrificer) immortal. SB 9.1.2.40-43.

46. SED.

47. CU 3.5.2; Katha 1.3.17; SU 6.22; SU 5.6; Maitri 6.29.

48. "Verily, there are two forms of Brahman, the formed and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the unmoving and the moving, the actual (existent) and the true (being)." BU 2.3.1.

49. Katha Up 1.3.15. See also BU 3.9.26; 4.2.4; 4.4.22; 4.5.15; MU 2.1.2.

50. SU 3.9; see also Kaivalya 19: "From me all proceed, in me all exist, and to me all return. That Brahman without a second am I." cf. CU 3.14.3; SU 3.7.

51. BU 3.7.23. See also BU 3.7.1 and Katha 1.2.21 "Sitting he goes far, lying he goes everywhere."

52. BU 3.7.23.

53. MU 2.2.1.

54. Indian philosophy makes the distinction between two types of knowledge: knowledge of things and knowledge of the ātman. Lower knowledge, which is nonetheless valuable and authentic, is an understanding of the Vedas and the

sciences via human reason--aparavidyā. Higher knowledge, on the other hand, or parā vidyā is "that by which the Undecaying is grasped." MU 1.1.4,5. The self cannot be perceived either by logic or analysis, but only through spiritual contemplation. (Katha 1.2.23). Only the highest level of truth leads to Liberation. Although the student must ultimately experience this truth first hand, the true teacher is an indispensable link to Freedom. (CU 4.9.3). This knowledge is not simply memorization and regurgitation of facts, and unless taught by a knower of brahman, the subject remains beyond one's grasp, "subtler than the subtle" (Katha 1.2.8). It cannot be known through reasoning, but taught by a Knower it is well understood. (Katha 1.2.9).

55. Paingala 4.3.

56. MU 2.2.1.

57. CU 8.1.1.

58. The self has "position" in the dimensionless depth of the heart; likewise it has "extension" visualized in a form of a person the size of a thumb abiding within the heart. It is a meditational aid (rather than a literal description) which eventually precipitates the experience of Oneness. (Maitri 6.38). Instructions state one should meditate on the self seated in the heart like a lamp inside a vessel, of the size of a thumb and of the form of smokeless flame, then the self is said to manifest Himself. (Paingala 3.3).

Through this exercise, one is lead to understand "This is That". (Katha 2.1.13).

59. SU 3.20; MU 3.1.7.

60. CU 8.1.3.

61. A. Coomaraswamy, "Kha and Other Words Denoting 'Zero' in Connection with Indian Metaphysics of Space," Coomaraswamy, R Lipsey ed., 3 vols. (Princeton University Press, 1977) 2: 223.

62. Betty Heimann, *Facets of Indian Thought* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964) 103. Chpt. 7 "Indian Mathematics" pp. 95-104 contains two interesting sections: "The counter-tension of the Zero Point" and "The Discovery of Zero and its Philosophical Implication in India." See also D. Seyfort Ruegg, "Mathematical and Linguistic Models in Indian Thought: The Case of Zero and Śūnyata", *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 22 (1978): 171-181.

63. Kaivalya 6 and 7.

64. SU 3.20; BU 4.4.22.

65. Subala 7.1; BU 5.5.1; Kaivalya 6.

66. TU 1.6.1; MU 3.1.7-10.

67. BU 2.5.10; MU 3.1.5; BU 5.6.1; BU 4.3.7; CU 3.13.7.

"The golden person within the sun is the same as the ātman who entered into the lotus and eats food" (Maitri 6.1). There is an obvious parallel between the golden man who represents the human sacrificer, and the golden disk of the sun which is placed on the agni. In fact, the SB indicates

the golden purusa of the heart as the point where these two symbols collapse "that self of the spirit is my self." SB 10.6.3.1,2. cf. BhG 13.17 "The light of lights beyond all darkness is seated in heart of all."

68. BU 4.3.21.

69. Paingala 4.9.

CHAPTER FIVE

Rites and Images of the Inner Square

I. Rites of the Foundation

Following the propitiation of the vāstupuruṣa, the actual excavation of the site begins. At an auspicious hour¹ a square pit is dug to the depth of a man's height with uplifted arms (one puruṣa) or until water or bedrock is reached.² When the digging is completed the excavated pit is purified by placing in it a layer of earth from different types of important locations, followed by a maṇḍala formed from various plants and topped with a sprinkling of eight kinds of seeds.³ After these preliminary rites are performed the pit is filled to a level of three-quarters with a mixture of sand, water and firm stones and pounded with stampers (shaped like elephant feet for strength and stability) until the foundation is solid and firm.⁴

When one-quarter of the pit remains the main foundation rites begin.⁵ The iṣṭakānyāsa or laying the first bricks and the ādhāraśilā or foundation stone rituals śilānyāsa are then performed. Individually, either rite may be sufficient, or as sometimes the case, the ādhāraśilā rites are followed by the first bricks.⁶ The two activities differ in several respects. In the ādhāraśilā rituals one square stone is laid in the center of the foundation and above that stone various ritual implements, the most important being the nīdhikalaśa, are placed. When bricks

are used in the foundation they must be purified and worshipped before the four plus one or eight plus one bricks are placed in square formation to the right hand side of the door-frame beneath the door posts and the pit is filled in. Following this, a square copper casket, the garbhapātra, representing the germinal state of the life-force, is deposited in the night into the womb of the earth (the pit) in the final ceremony of garbhādhāna which precedes the actual construction of the temple by artisans.

A. ĀDHĀRĀŚILĀ RITES OR ŚILĀNYĀSA

The person who performs the consecration ceremony of the foundation stone is purified of all sins and resides in Heaven in perfect felicity.

Agni Purāṇa XLI. 32

1. The Material

Unlike fired bricks which are used in the piling of the agni and the iṣṭakā rites, the ādhārāśilā (ādhāra=support, śilā=stone), must be taken directly from the earth, and because of this it contains important properties.

Special natural rocks and precious stones, have, since antiquity, been held in high regard. For example, śālagrāma stones (worshipped for enjoyment in this world and salvation in the next) are understood as the real and physical manifestations of Viṣṇu.⁷ Stones, as aniconic representations of the deity, are in many cases particularly potent and sacred emblems of the god. In fact, the self-wrought or svāyambhūva līṅga is the highest form and

measure for all other līṅgas. Bannerjea explains that these aniconic objects were held in greater veneration than the images made by human hands as demonstrated by the claims put forward on behalf of man-made Śiva līṅgas to be regarded as svāyambhūva ones.⁸ Not only is the svāyambhūva līṅga a prototype, but naturally perforated stones may also have been imitated. Evidence of stone rings have been discovered at early excavation sites of Mohenjo-Dara and Harappā as well as Taxila.⁹ These may very well have been replicas of svāyamātrrṇa stones found in some rivers which were later sacred as well the Aryans and used in the agni rites.¹⁰

Barring objects of veneration which are discovered in their perfected form, all stone articles must actively be quarried and later shaped by artisans. Stone objects retain the symbolism of the medium from which they are brought forth. Stone is a fragment of living rock synonymous with the Earth itself.¹¹

As the earth is the foundation and support of life, so is the ādharaśilā the foundation of the temple as the embodiment of the living god. The earth is explained as the mythical foundation of the three worlds in the SB. When Prajāpati lay exhausted and drained of his vitality the world was inhospitable to life for "There was no firm foundation whatever."¹² Only when the devas restored Prajāpati's vigour, making him (as the terrestrial world) the foundation of all the worlds, did life become possible.

"Having made him entire and complete they raised him upright."¹³ In a similar way, the temple must be secure in its foundation before it is raised in the image of purusa. The ādhārasilā represents the same point of concentrated energy (the re-vitalized body) which provides the support for the rest of the temple. The stone square symbolises the earth as The Foundation through its substance and its shape, "The earth is four-cornered for the quarters are her corners."¹⁴

2. The Ādhārasilā Ritual

The sequence of implements used in this particular rite is as follows: In the center of the pit a square support stone is placed. In the top center of the stone there is a small depression which is filled with grains. On top of the stone and above the grains a stone or copper treasure jar called the nidhikalaśa is placed, followed by a stone lotus, a stone tortoise and a funnel shaped nāla of copper.¹⁵

The ādhārasilā serves more as a metaphysical foundation than as an actual physical support to the structure as it lies below the (almost) empty space of the garbhagrha. Its purpose, according to the Prajāpati myth, is to function as a center which draws together the dismembered or ineffectual powers of the purusa and from that point of integration everything is supported and made firm.

The grains placed in the low space in the center of the stone represent the food and vigour which flowed from the

body of the god and were restored when the devas built up Prajāpati.¹⁶ Grains play a similar role in the rites of the fire altar when they are blessed in the foundation ceremonies of the agnicayana. In this situation, the altar site is seeded and watered to the accompaniment of RgV 10.97 in order to re-build and heal the god. "Herbs rich in Soma, rich in seeds, in nourishment, in strengthening power. All these have I provided so that this man may be whole again." Seeds also indicate the potent and concentrated essence of life which lies latent in the seed awaiting the moment of germination, "ye the seed...teeming with life-sap and food."¹⁷ Finally, the most sublime properties of seeds and plants are concentrated in the soma plant (the King of Plants) and the liquid extracted from the same is believed to transport the participants to the realm of the gods.¹⁸ This correlation between the seeds and soma is supported by the fact that the nidhikalāśa or vessel of treasure/amṛita/soma is placed directly above the seeds in the ceremony. By placing the seeds in the adhāraśilā or by seeding the altar life is fostered and the sacrifice or the temple becomes not merely an object but a living being.

The nidhikalāśa or nidhikumbha is a treasure vase or vessel made either of copper or stone. It is filled with precious gems and the goddess Śakti is invoked therein as the embodiment of the nurturing and procreative aspect of the divine.¹⁹ Its form as a receptacle indicates the power

of the feminine as the womb of life, paralleling the ukhā or fire-pot and the garbhapātra. Its name nidhi explains the nature of its contents--treasure, but it is treasure in the highest sense as the nectar of immortality amṛta, the Water of Life. This Water is equated with the very basis of reality, sat translated as either being or truth²⁰ and the nidhikalaśa in turn reflects the unending abundance of the fountain of life, "the Real which is absolute, unqualified, underlying and freely evolving itself out into the phenomenal world."²¹ The nidhikalaśa is pictured throughout Indian art as the vessel of plenty and has its architectural counterpart in the pūrṇakumbha at the base of the doorway. (See section on garbhagrha and also plate 11).

Above the nidhikalaśa a stone lotus (śilāpadma) is placed. Another synonym for the lotus is "ambu-ja" or "born from the waters" which perfectly portrays the relation between the nidhikalaśa which supports and bears the śilāpadma the emblem of creation, and the Lord of Creation ambujabhu.

A śilakūrma or stone tortoise is ceremonially held to the right of the grains and then placed above the lotus.²² The tortoise is most obviously identified with Viṣṇu's incarnation kūrma who supported the great churning rod Mt. Mandara at the beginning of creation. Therefore, as Viṣṇu's presence underlies and supports universal creation, so does it support the creation of the temple. The shell of the

creature is also a symbol of the three worlds, its feet the earth, the body the mid-regions and the arched shell the heavenly realm.²³ Thus it is a metaphor for attaining the three regions and the ultimate ascent to heaven as the TS suggests, "the tortoise alone knows the way to heaven."²⁴

Above the śilākūrma a funnel shaped yoganāla, the image of the unification and the upward channelling of the collected symbols, is placed in the last of the series of articles before the pit is filled with stone and sand up to the level of the plinth.

3. Comparison Between Key Elements in the Foundation of the Agnicayana and the Ādhārasilā

By comparing key elements of foundation ceremonies between the altar and temple the underlying meaning of both may be better understood.

In the center of the first layer of the agni (the foundation layer) in the two by two square known as the ātman a handful of darbha grass is laid down and a lotus leaf is placed upon it. This is followed by a golden disk which has been worn by the yajamāna from the beginning of the rites, and above this is placed the golden man with his face upwards to the east. Upon the golden man the adhvaryu places the first of the three naturally perforated stones. A living tortoise is later set down to the east of the golden man with its head facing this hiranyapurusa.

In the fire ritual the most sacred precincts of the

agni are designated by the word ātman or soul/self. The objects and formulae which accompany the implements buried within the ātman are highly symbolic for they endow the soul of the yajamāna (or the dismembered body of Prajāpati) with food, strength, life, breath etc. so that he rises in the image of the transformed and divine purusa, the image of the cosmos.²⁵

The first object placed upon the foundation of the prepared ātman is the handful of darbha grass representative of all forms of food and the underlying source of life.²⁶ Upon the grass a lotus leaf is placed which is at once the earth floating upon the primordial waters, the womb of Agni Born of the Waters, the foundation of earth, the fortress of Indra, the establishment of truth, the immortal element and the shining light.²⁷

The adhvaryu then places the golden disk which the yajamāna has worn around his neck above the lotus leaf. The circular disk has twenty-one knobs (twelve + five + three + one) representing the twelve months, the five seasons, the three worlds and the yajamāna's own immortal self.²⁸ This golden plate parallels the immutable and resplendent center of the brahmasthāna. For here too, it is the power of Aditya the sun who presides over time (twelve months=ādityas) and the rays (knobs) of the sun are the active extensions of that which is essentially beyond time.²⁹ The disk, as the yajamāna's immortal self, becomes

the image of the perfected man.³⁰

Originally, the golden plate allowed the sacrificer to carry the ukhya agni or embryonic fire during his initiation without being scorched by the divine fire, "for the human form is unable to sustain that fire; it is only in this solar or divine form that he bears the divine form."³¹ Therefore, when the priest finally places the golden disk upon the lotus leaf, he is placing the divine embryo of the yajamāna in the womb of immortality.³²

Upon the golden disk the attendant priest places the golden man the emblem of the re-constituted Prajāpati and the ultimate form of the sacrificer.³³ The effigy is laid upon the disk while the hymn to hiranyagarbha RgV 10.121 is chanted.³⁴ At this point the golden embryo latent in the circular disk is now grown and transformed into the immortal and golden puruṣa.³⁵ This golden man, however, lay inert, without vigor or breath, "suchlike as yonder dry plank."³⁶ The gods, seeking a means to quicken hiranyapuruṣa, placed a naturally perforated stone upon him to endow him with food and air.³⁷ They placed a living tortoise to the east of the man with its head facing him to give him the everlasting assurance of breadth, life-sap, and dominion over the three worlds.³⁸

In general, foundation rites of both the altar and temple display the hierarchical nature of existence. They are grounded on the earth (either by the square stone

ādharaśilā or the lotus leaf) and use the images of seeds, food, water and air to indicate a sense of upward growth from the earth. While the image of the perfected man is clearly evident in the agni (golden disk and man) it is treated in a different manner in the temple. In the latter case the ādharaśilā rites mark the transition between the reclining image of the vāstupuruṣa (in the maṇḍala) and the upright image of the puruṣa of the temple without actually using the likeness of a human being. In the temple, the focal point (which is contained in the two golden images of the self in the altar), is replaced by the nidhikalāśa or treasure vessel. Like the golden disk/man it portends immortality through the power of nidhi, the treasure of amṛta. The lotus of creation, śilāpadma, flowering above the vessel, is latent in the figure of hiranyapuruṣa as the emblem of the Cosmic Man who contains all aspects of creation. The tortoise appears in both rites as the power of Viṣṇu and the image of the three worlds. The three svayamātrnnā pebbles are the only 'bricks' of the agni which are of the same stone substance as the ādharaśilā, and by their key positions they connect the three worlds (with the earth as The Stone as their foundation). The overall images of the foundation rites are of life, growth and transformation.

B. IṢṬAKĀNYĀSA: THE RITES OF THE FIRST BRICKS

1. The Material

The bricks used in the iṣṭakānyāsa ceremonies derive their symbolism from the aśādhā brick of the agnicayana. The aśādhā is called the Invincible Brick because it was formed from the earth saturated with the life-sap of Prajāpati, and by the power of this brick the gods drove their enemies, the asuras, from the universe.³⁹ It is the One Brick on which all others are modelled as the aśādhā models the earth itself.⁴⁰ The symbolism between the aśādhā (and all successive bricks) and the earth is displayed in the notions of quaternity, femininity, and solidity: 1. The four corners of the bricks represent the four quadrants of the earth, "Now this earth is four-cornered, for the quarters are her corners; hence the bricks are four-cornered; for all the bricks are after the manner of this earth."⁴¹ 2. The goddess Pr̥thvī is the Earth and it therefore must be the wife of the sacrificer, the yajamānī, who forms the brick from the clay, "The consecrated consort (mahiṣī) forms it, for the earth is a mahiṣī (female buffalo, cow)."⁴² 3. The yajamānī makes the brick one foot long and one foot wide because, "the foot is (literally) the foundation and this earth is also a foundation."⁴³ Even though the aśādhā is the symbol of the earth, it, like all bricks, must be fired, for the simple mixture of clay and water is the mortal form of a brick or of the earth, but

when the bricks are baked with fire they are immortal, and it is Agni's immortal form which is desired.⁴⁴

The asādhā is also defined as the power of speech, "The wife makes it first, for this speech is foremost of the body. She makes it from that same clay, for this speech is of the body."⁴⁵ The three lines inscribed on the brick correspond to the three aspects of sacred sound, the Rg verses, the Yajus formulas, and the Saman tunes.⁴⁶ Through the power of speech contained in the asādhā the gods conquered their rivals, and in like manner, does the sacrificer assure victory over his enemies.⁴⁷ The asādhā (as speech) contains the breath and vital airs, which, when installed upon the altar, charges Agni with vitality.⁴⁸ When placed upon the altar it (as well as other important bricks) is settled with the sādhana formula, "with the help of that deity, lie thou steady, like Āṅgiras."⁴⁹ The sādhana verse reinforces the attributes of breath and speech, for "that deity" is later identified as Vāc or Speech, while "Āṅgiras-like" is known as The Breath.⁵⁰

The asādhā therefore condenses several symbols which are transferred from the agni to the bricks of the temple foundation. It is firm, steady, invincible to evil, the foundation and support of all beings, the all-inclusive (four quarters), the essence of sacred sound and the power of breath in living beings.

2. The Ritual of Laying the First Bricks in the Temple Foundation

The preliminary explanation of the ritual begins with an introduction to the various types of building bricks to be utilized.⁵¹ They are classed by material, dimension and gender. The two most usual types of first bricks are those of stone "stony brick" and those of the usual clay, simply referred to as "brick".⁵² A third, or wooden brick is sometimes added to the list. The different types of bricks are used respectively in stone, brick and wooden structures.⁵³ The dimensions of the bricks retain the proportions of length = 1 unit; breadth = 1/2 length; thickness = 1/4 length, while the total number of bricks used in the foundation is a factor of the overall size of the structure.⁵⁴ The iṣṭakās or bricks are also classed into the three genders of male, female and neuter.⁵⁵

The plot for laying the bricks is to the right-hand side of the door frame beneath the door-posts, and not, as with the ādhārasilā, in the center of the pit. This plot is purified, pounded, examined and measured before the bricks are laid.⁵⁶ A square is etched on the ground with a nail from the sacred peepal tree in preparation for the bricks. As well as the site, the bricks themselves must first be purified, consecrated and worshipped.⁵⁷

Part of the ceremonies connected with the bricks involve the utilization of an equal number of copper

pitchers or ghaṭas which are filled with water and gems. Into these vessels the power of the "watery treasures" and the protection of the lokapālas the protectors of the directions are invoked.⁵⁸ Special attention is paid to the ghaṭa which represents the central brick, for it is said to be filled with śakti, the creative female aspect of the divine, to be established on Ananta the Infinite, and to have Brahmā the Creator at the top.⁵⁹ The purified bricks are ceremonially placed on top of the pitchers to absorb the essence of the corresponding divinities invoked in the vessels and a formula which recalls the sādhana mantra is recited while the bricks are immersed,

Oh, thou Brick, the beautiful, full-bodied and youthful daughter of the Muni Aṅgira, I establish thee. Grant me my desired object.⁶⁰

The (four plus one or eight plus one) bricks suggested in the ISGP, are then carefully and evenly laid in the pit beginning with the first brick to the east.⁶¹ Consecutive bricks are placed to the south, west and north following the path of the sun, while the central and crowning brick is assigned the last position in the square.⁶² When the square is completed the pit is filled with earth to the level of the plinth.⁶³

At this point, the foundation is considered to be pure and receptive to the seed of the temple. The feminine principle, śakti present in the jars and the watery treasures they contain, pervades the bricks and enables the

foundation to support the life of the temple. The earth, as symbolised in the brick square of the foundation, remains the receptive and fertile foundation of the prāsāda, but it is not actually considered to be impregnated until the rite of garbhanyāsa is performed.

C. GARBHANYĀSA

1. The Garbhapātra

The special garbhapātra vessel used in this rite is one of the most important objects utilized in the pre-construction rituals. It is literally the embryo of the temple, and thus the time, place and manner or its implantation are closely regulated.⁶⁴ It is described as the seed or bīja of the building to which prakṛti (often translated as material nature or the mother) gives prosperity.⁶⁵ All castes should deposit the garbha to the south (right) of the door between the east and south-east, but the level at which the casket is set in the earth may vary with the caste of the individual patron.⁶⁶

The vessel itself is a square copper receptacle whose dimensions vary with the proportions of the temple.⁶⁷ It is divided into a series of compartments analagous to the vāstupuruṣa maṇḍala. In the center of the garbhapātra, corresponding to the brahmasthāna, the main compartment is dedicated to Lord Brahmā. It is surrounded by an inner ring of eight, and an outer ring of sixteen deities. Specific types of jewels, grains etc., are placed in each compartment

dedicated to the various respective gods, but in the central compartment dedicated to Brahmā several golden articles such as a crescent moon, bull, bow, lotus etc., the emblems of the immutable (golden) nature and the manifestations of the power of the Supreme are laid.⁶⁸

The vessel and pit are purified by the five products of the cow and the hrdaya or heart mantra is recited over them. The figure of the serpent Ananta the "Endless" or "Infinite" is drawn upon the ground with powder and the garbhāpatra is placed upon its hood. On the top of the copper casket a diagram of the earth with its continents and mountains is drawn with white sand from the sea and the vessel is then ready to be placed into the womb of the temple.⁶⁹ On an auspicious night chosen by astrologers, the priest meditates upon that casket, invoking and worshipping the Earth as mother.⁷⁰ The priest lauds the Earth several times with the following formula to consecrate and steady the embryo:

Om, Oh thou who maintainest all beings, O Beloved,
decked with hills for breasts, O Ocean Girt, O
Goddess, O Earth, shelter this germ (garbha).⁷¹

This important ceremony of steadying and consecrating the embryo marks the final stage before construction and the first stage in the growth of the temple.

2. Garbhādhāna: The Rite of Steadying the Embryo

The rituals involved in steadying the embryo invoke the images of stability and firmness to prevent any miscarriage of pregnancy and to insure the proper gestation and

successful parturition of the infant. Garbhādhāna may be applied to the conception of the human child, to the creation of the universe, to the spiritual initiation of a disciple and of course to the temple itself.

The earliest evidence for this rite is found in the RgV 10.184 which contains a hymn dedicated to the consecration and blessing of the unformed child. These exact words are explicitly used in the garbhādhāna of the Gṛihya Sūtras.⁷² In the charms of the Atharva Veda, the mantras to prevent a miscarriage are discovered in AtV 6.17. Here, as in the temple, it is the power of the Earth as the archetypal Mother which is invoked, as every pregnancy imitates the ability of the earth to bring forth and sustain life:

As this great earth conceives the germs of beings... holds these trees... these mountains... these animals, thus shall thy embryo be held fast to produce this child after pregnancy.

Whereas the AtV uses the image of "holding fast" the embryo, other texts use concrete images to stabilize the foetus. The pole star used in the Gṛihya Sūtras links the conception and gestation of the child to the immovable pole and the center of the universe. Among the sūtras which codify the numerous ceremonies applicable to the domestic life of man, the rite of steadying the embryo is found as one of the sacraments (samskāras) performed at various crucial points of development. One section of the PGS indicates a sequence which shifts the earthly events of marriage and the desire for family from the human realm to

the macrocosm. The groom declares to his bride, "I am Heaven, thou art the Earth, let us beget offspring."⁷³ The newly married couple, it continues, upon entering their new home, must perform preliminary ceremonies to prepare and bless the womb of the woman. One passage suggests the husband must show his wife the pole star on the first evening so that she would conceive and the embryo would grow strong and secure, "He shows her the pole star with the words, 'Firm be thou, thriving with me!' to which she replies, 'I see the pole star; may I obtain offspring'."⁷⁴ In another source, the husband first worships the four directions and then the central star which he praises as the immovable brahman the source of all offspring and wealth, "He who knows the pole star as the firm immovable brahman with its children (Prajāpati) and its grandchildren (the thirty-three gods) with such a man children and grandchildren will firmly dwell... long life, safety, glory, etc., May all these things firmly and immovably dwell in me!"⁷⁵

The pole star as the navel of the universe functions as the unmoving center of existence, yet this center which in itself does not act, is cited as the source of the Creator, the thirty-three Vedic deities, and all one's descendants and resources. It corresponds to the abode of Brahmā in the garbhapātra casket and to the golden emblems of immutability placed within. It also parallels the meaning of the

brahmasthāna of the maṇḍala, and on the larger scale of the temple, of the garbhagrha itself. The pole star is interiorly conceived as the point of perfect stillness in the heart where ātman is known as brahman.

Garbhādhāna, used in connection with human birth and the creation of the universe, is also applied to the concept of the spiritual birth of the devotee. The relationship between guru (teacher) and sisya (disciple) is explained in terms of mother and child in the AtV where the teacher receives the brahmacārin as a disciple and (mentally) carries him within his body for three days, "as an embryo in the womb of immortality".⁷⁶ On the third day the new body of the disciple is brought forth in all its glory, "when he is born the gods gather about to see him."⁷⁷ The Agni Purāṇa corroborates this idea, explaining the rite of garbhādhāna in relation to the devotee signifies the elevation and conversion of the soul of the disciple.⁷⁸

As the pole star is related to the steadying of the human foetus, so is the heart as the spiritual center related to the new birth of the bhakta. The preceptor, in a state of meditation, brings about a state of union between the Lord and his own soul within his heart and then psychically transfers this power by means of the hrd or heart mantra into the lotus of the disciple's heart. Through this initiation, it is said, the inner man of the disciple takes a new spiritual birth and is to be looked

upon as a spiritual infant.⁷⁹

When the garbhapātra casket is placed to the right of the doorway to the wombhouse (garbhagrha) on a "night of flawless stars" the associations and implications of the garbhādhāna rituals are brought into play. As the seed is implanted into the woman whose womb is steadied by the sight of the pole star, so does the firm earth receive the seed of the temple in the garbhapātra. The center of this vessel, the abode of Brahmā, is symbolically the pole star and the center of the universe which reflects the temple as an image of the macrocosm. The prāsāda is charged with life which issues forth from the darkness of the womb, the garbhagrha. The temple as Cosmic Man grows forth from the navel of the horizontal vāstupuruṣa centered in the inner cella, to the towering and immortal form of puruṣa who contains and transcends the Three Worlds. In the completed form the inner sanctum functions as the place of spiritual re-birth for the devotee. It is his womb of immortality.

3. The Golden Embryo of the Altar: Hiranyagarbha

The symbolism of establishing the embryo, in the case of the altar, can be focused on two main aspects: the ukhā pot which is the earth and womb, and the fire as the golden embryo hiranyagarbha which is conceived, nurtured and brought to life on the altar as the divine body of the sacrificer. As far as parallels are concerned, the garbhapātra is more closely related to the ukhā pot, while

the central compartment in the vessel used in temple rites, can be correlated to the golden embryo (i.e. the central square as the abode of Brahmā is filled with golden images of divinity).

(i) The Ukhā Pot

Basically, the ukhā, fashioned from the same lump of clay as the asādhā brick, is a small square pot which serves as the womb of the divine fire in the agnicayana. During the one year, or a symbolically equal period of twelve days, required for the completion of the sacrifice, the sacred fire contained within the ukhā must be carried about by the yajamāna for a specific amount of time each day; for Agni, the sacrificial fire and the patron's divine self, requires a gestational period of one complete cycle of time before he can be "born" at the moment when the ukhā is placed upon the center of the completed bird-shaped altar.

The shape, size and meaning of the container are regulated by the myth operant in the agnicayana. It must be made on span high and wide for Viṣṇu when an embryo was a span long and therefore the womb must be made the size of the divine embryo.⁸⁰ Along the rim of the pan, clay nipples are shaped to imitate the udders of Pṛthvī the Earth who assumed the shape of the wishfulfilling cow; thus the sacrificer too receives all his desires.⁸¹ The ukhā is the image of the completed cosmos for it contains the three worlds in its form: the bottom is the terrestrial world,

the sides are the mid-regions and the upper part is the sky. Each of the worlds are protected by the sādhana mantra of "Thou are steadfast, thou art firm," similar to the first brick and the garbhanyāsa.⁸²

The ukhā pot is the womb of the fire, and the Earth, therefore, is the mother of Agni.⁸³ As the garbhāpatra is settled and placed within the care of the Earth in the foundation of the temple, so is the child Agni fostered within its mother the earthen fire pan of the altar. When the yajamāna is ritually purified and initiated as the dīkṣā, a fresh fire is kindled in the pot with firewood and ghee to represent his new embryonic divine Form. The presiding adhvaryu then chants hymns similar to those recited at the time of the garbhanyāsa for the protection of the mother and child. During the kindling he encourages the Earth (pan) to bear up bravely to support the fledgling Agni.⁸⁴ At the completion of the ceremony he recites TS 4.2.5.2e "As a mother her son, the earth the pan hath borne Agni."⁸⁵ The earth, therefore, is the womb which shelters the embryo (garbhāpatra) of the temple, and the womb (ukhā) which nurtures the divine form of Agni and the yajamāna.

(ii) The Fire

As the ukhā is the nurturing womb of the woman, so is the flame the vivifying seed of the male, and the fire fed with ghee and firewood is the growing foetus or the divine hiranyagarbha the golden embryo.⁸⁶ The image of the flame

as the father stems from the Prajāpati myth where it is said that when Prajāpati became the sacrificial puruṣa and his vital powers flowed into the earth, the gods gathered this energy and poured it into the ukhā as seed into the womb. The body formed from the union of the seed of the god and the Earth is the altar which takes one year to be piled up (or born). It is, by extension, the immortal forms of Prajāpati, Agni and the yajamāna.⁸⁷

The fire established in the pan and fed for the duration of the agnicayana is the embryo of that divine puruṣa known as hiranyagarbha.⁸⁸ Since for the sacrificer, the most important objective of the ritual is to produce his own immortal body beyond the reach of time and death, hiranyagarbha of the fire-pan must be equated with the patron's own self. For a certain time each day during the ceremonies the yajamāna carries the ukhā pot to allow the divine form of the fire to enter his body and be brought to life at the end of the ritual. Precautions are taken to see that no harm comes to the "child" or the yajamāna during this time.⁸⁹ The adhvaryu places a necklace, on which is strung the golden disk, the emblem of the sun, around the neck of the consecrated sacrificer to ensure a divine gestation.⁹⁰ It would be useless for an ordinary human to carry Agni for he could only generate another human and limited form, and he would not be able to sustain the resplendence of Agni; only the sun, the immortal fire as the

golden disk could sustain and generate another divine being.

The SB comments,

Being about to build Agni, he takes him up into his own self; for from out of his own self he causes him to be born, and wherefrom one is born, suchlike he becomes. Now, were he to build up Agni without taking him up into his own self, he would beget man from man, mortal from mortal, one not freed from sin from one not freed from sin; but when he builds up Agni after taking him up in to his own self, he causes Agni to be born from Agni, the immortal from the immortal, the sinless from the sinless.⁹¹

The golden man which lies below the first layer of the agni is the most obvious analogy to hiranyagarbha for when the golden effigy is placed on the altar he is eulogized with the very hymn RgV 10.121.⁹² Although the fire and the effigy represent the immutable form of the yajamāna the final form is not considered to be complete until all the bricks of the altar are piled and the fire is placed thereon in the center of the top layer. On the finished agni one thousand chips of gold reminiscent of the thousand forms of puruṣa RgV 10.90 are scattered upon the top as a token of the final form of hiranyagarbha as hiranyapurusa:

Prajāpati then finally made a golden form for his body... the golden Prajāpati, and in like manner does the sacrificer now finally make a golden form for his body... the agnikit is born in yonder world as one made of gold.⁹³

II. Important Images of the Garbhagrha

As the brahmasthāna is the pivot of the maṇḍala, so is the garbhagrha the center of its physical manifestation, the temple. It is, as a rule, a small cubical chamber with a

flat roof, one entrance facing east, no windows, plain undecorated walls and only sufficient room to allow the devotee to perform communion via pradakṣiṇa or circumambulation around the image or liṅga. This cella is the most sacred part of the temple and ultimate focus of worship, for it contains the emblem of the deity, the inner essence of the divine whose outward physical form is manifest in the structure of the prāsāda. The icon or aniconic liṅga is the "soul, seated on the throne of its (the temple as puruṣa) heart."⁹⁴ It is equivalent to the ātman in the cave of the heart in the individual.

A. THE SADA

The cubical cella is exemplified in Vedic rites by the sada or shed of initiation, a wooden or thatch shed constructed in the mahāvedi with only one door facing east. While the garbhagrha is always cubical, the sada may be so, or it may be rectangular with proportions of 1:2 or 1:3.⁹⁵ In the latter case it is the height of the central post of one puruṣa which represents the square of the interior dimensions...one puruṣa being as tall as he is wide.

The central post of udumbara wood in the sada is cut to the height of the individual sacrificer, so it specifically represents the patron.⁹⁶ Not only is the post of the sada the yajamāna, but it is also equated with the cosmic pillar which supports the three worlds and functions as the yūpa or sacrificial post by which one attains heaven.⁹⁷

The analogy between the garbhagrha and the initiation shed is seen in the importance of the dimensions and also in function as the place of initiation and conception. The sada is considered to be a darkened and secluded spot where man and wife may privately conceive a child.⁹⁸ For this reason the sada is called the "site of conception" and the "womb", and the yajamāna who is consecrated in the ceremony of initiation is the "foetus."⁹⁹ Indeed, the yajamāna imitates the foetal position by sitting with clenched fists during particular portions of the ceremonies. It is said, "...he who is consecrated becomes an embryo... hence he has his hands closed, since embryos have their hands closed."¹⁰⁰ The central pillar in the shed is the source of strength and food which feeds the newly-conceived or initiated yajamāna.¹⁰¹

In terms of the symbolism of the temple, dīkṣā/initiation translates into the action of spiritual rebirth in the dark and secret chamber of the interior sanctum where the devotee in a state of inner contemplation enters into union with the deity and is reborn. The requisite darkness and secrecy of the inner chamber of the temple is very real, for the image of the deity is not lit by any other light save that which is reflected and diffused through other parts of the temple.¹⁰² It remains in darkness until the moment of worship when the pūjārī passes a lamp before the image bringing forth that which was unseen

(and unmanifest) into the world of the visible and the manifest. Although the garbhagrha may represent the physical location of the site of transformation, each individual must experience the birth of his new self within his own (as it were) garbhagrha, a place designated in terms of interior geography as the cave or lotus of the heart.

B. THE DOORWAY

Many of the architectural symbols surrounding the garbhagrha reinforce the idea of re-birth. The doorway, itself important as a point of entry, is decorated with several images of life and growth. On the center of the threshold a full-blown lotus is carved and to either side of the bottom of the entrance pitchers of water or pūrṇakumbha (pūrṇa=full kumbha=vessel/jar) decorate the panels. A lush profusion of vines and creepers stream forth from the mouth of the pūrṇakumbha and reach upward along the side-panels. The place of the pūrṇakumbha may alternately be occupied by the goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā upon their respective vehicles the crocodile, makara and the tortoise kacchapa, surrounded by luxurious vegetation. Instead of either the goddesses or the vases, the bottom of the panels may be adorned with the images of the dvārapālas or guardian deities. Above the door in the center of the lintel either the image of the main deity, the consecration of Śrī-Lakṣmī, or the divine couple mithuna is carved.

1. The Threshold

A long-stemmed full blown lotus is engraved upon the threshold as the emblem of purity, evolution and the created world.¹⁰³ Such a flower is seen in the figure of Viṣṇu śeṣayati where the lotus of creation which is Lord Brahmā's throne grows from the navel of the sleeping god. (Plate 12) The lotus in this example is the abode of Brahmā, but it is also equated with the ātman of man in BU 2.3.6. When the devotee crosses the threshold to the adytum, it marks his evolution into a purified and higher level of consciousness.

2. The Side Panels

(i) The Pūrṇakumbha

At the bottom of each of the side panels it is common to see a pūrṇakumbha.¹⁰⁴ (See Plate 13) Above the pūrṇakumbha a rich growth of lotuses, leaves and creepers gracefully reach up from the jar along the sides of the entrance.¹⁰⁵

Like the nīdhikalāsa the pūrṇakumbha is a common symbol of auspiciousness and a sign of overflowing abundance and prosperity. This jar has, from an early date, been related to the craft of building. Along with the water vessel, aquatic plants and the presence of a water supply are described as integral parts of house construction in the Gṛihya Sūtras. A special water plant, according to one sūtra, must be laid at the bottom of the pits which contain the uprights of the edifice to ensure protection from

fire.¹⁰⁶ The water barrel, as part of the housing complex, is dedicated to the Lord of Waters, Varuṇa, whose presence is said to protect and to bring prosperity to the inhabitants.¹⁰⁷ Thirdly, the building must be ritually sprinkled with water from a ghaṭa before the structure is considered a safe and happy dwelling place.¹⁰⁸ Thus the image of the pūrṇakumbha which appears on the doorway to the garbhagrha, as well as the water it contains and the life it supports, have been related to architecture since the time of the Gṛihya Sūtras.

Other aquatic images related to the God of Water, Varuṇa, later become familiar themes around the entrances. While Varuṇa is not usually depicted on the doorway to the sanctum, his vehicle the swan may represent his presence. The iconography of the VDM describes Varuṇa as being driven in a chariot of swans, and the BrS suggests that birds of good augury (such as the swan) embellish the side panels to the cella.¹⁰⁹ As already discussed, one of the most auspicious sites for the temple complex is near water and lakes where the thriving presence of water plants and fishes, and the pleasant sounds of swans, ducks and other water birds provide an environment in which "the gods at all times take delight".¹¹⁰ The carvings of the side panels replicate a site which is pleasing to both men and gods and is sanctified by the presence of Varuṇa.

(ii) The Nadīdevatās or River Goddess

When the Waters are personified in the figures of the doorway they are shown in feminine form. In this case, the two lovely wives of Varuṇa, Gaṅgā and Yamunā represent the two most holy rivers of India.¹¹¹ (See Plate 14). Both of these deities must be honored before proceeding through the entrance to the main image.¹¹²

These nadīdevatās may take the place of pūrṇakumbha in the carvings along the entrance, but, in either case, both symbols indicate the importance of water as the basis of life as the SB declares: "From the waters this universe is produced" and "Water is the foundation of the earth."¹¹³ Gaṅgā and Yamunā are key symbols of the entrance and some important aspects of their presence such as purification, growth and transformation are highlighted below.

a) Purification

The Ganges is the symbol par excellence of the purifying and benevolent effects of water. It is distinguished as the most important waterway in India, because it alone has its origin, not in a glacial ice-cap to the north, but in heaven. It's pathway is not bound to the Gangetic plain of India, but the Ganges, River of the Three Courses, pervades heaven, earth and the netherworlds.¹¹⁴ The greatness of the Ganges is legendary, there is nothing which cannot be achieved with the aid of the river Gaṅgā: sins are expiated, virtue is engendered, and even liberation

may be attained. If a devotee is unable to reach the sacred river, its benefits may be conferred by the mere hearing, seeing, desiring, touching, praising or repetition of its name.¹¹⁵ It is in the above sense that the image of the goddess at the entrance to the cella functions, for her presence signifies and bestows the same benefits as bathing in the holy waters. Contact with this water suggests not only forgiveness of sin, but also confers the sense of a new beginning or initiation on the bhakta.¹¹⁶ Therefore, to bathe either physically or visually in the Ganges becomes equivalent to purification and initiation. It is the necessary preparation and preliminary for the state of union and realization which is focused in the holy of holies of the prāsāda.

b) Growth

In terms of position, Gaṅgā and Yamunā occupy the lower one-quarter of the panel where they function as dvārapālas, protecting the entranceway and shielding the garbha from any possible harm. They protect the growing embryo within and at the same time display the general theme of growth. The upward movement and proliferation of life is depicted by the wealth of flowers and vines which surround the figures and weave their way up the sides of the carving. When Gaṅgā stands upon her vāhana makara, flowers, buds, leaves and animals pour forth from his jaws indicating the goddess' ability to support and give birth to all forms of life.

(See Plate 15). She is the source and mother of existence: "When the waters flow, then everything whatsoever is produced here." An example of Gaṅgā's power to fertilize and nurture is seen in the figure at Amarāvati (2nd century) where a woman stands upon a crocodile holding a platter heaped with food and carrying a water jar. (See Plate 16).

This fertility is the same force which quickens and supports the embryo placed to the right of the doorway in the garbhanyāsa rites. The foliage which rises from the bottom of the panel signifies the growth of the garbha in the temple. In fact, another name for the curvilinear superstructure which crowns the garbhagrha (usually called śikhara) is "mañjarī" which literally means "shoot".¹¹⁷ Obviously, the connection intended between the garbhapātra, the garbhagrha and the mañjarī are based on the symbol of growth fostered by water, here personified as Gaṅgā.

Similarly, in the rituals of the agnicayana, water is sprinkled over the herbs strewn on the agnikṣetra to bring new life to the fallen god.¹¹⁸ The adhvaryu, praising the power of growth, sprinkles the seeds.¹¹⁹ Through the powers of the medicinal herbs awakened by the water, Prajāpati is ultimately healed and made whole. The divine puruṣa is raised upwards.¹²⁰ There is, therefore, a correlation between the waters and the newly formed embryo to the temple and the divine and re-constituted body of Prajāpati who is the temple as the Body of God.

c) Transformation

Whereas the notions of growth and purification are related to the innate nature of water, the power of transformation is perhaps better illustrated by considering the dual images of the nadīdevatās. When the two great rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā appear together we have a visual representation of the tīrtha at Prayāga. It is one of the holiest places of pilgrimage in India, "There is no place in the three worlds that is holier than Prayāga."¹²¹

Tīrthas, such as Prayāga, are the meeting points or "fords" between the worlds, creating a path to salvation open even to the poor who cannot afford the expense of sacrifice.¹²² Thus, when the worshipper stands at the doorway to the garbhagrha he reaches the tīrtha of Prayāga. He is spiritually submerged in the waters of the site and reaps the same rewards of inner transformation, the "highest mystery of the seers".

3. The Lintel

In the center of the lintel above the door images may be carved of either the divinity to whom the temple is dedicated, of the goddess Lakṣmī or of the divine couple or mithuna.

The first of the three options is easily understood. The second, the abhiṣeka of Śrī Lakṣmī functions in the sense of consecration, ordination or anointment where the purified devotee is represented by the image of the goddess.

(See Plate 17).

Ritual consecration is intimately tied to the presence of water as shown in the examples where both the king and the altar are ordained by a stream or a shower of blessings. When a king is consecrated with holy water he is endowed with the essence and vigor of Varuṇa and pervaded with the power of the Waters.¹²³ In the agnicayana rituals when the altar is completed the priests pour forth a continuous stream of libations, the vasodhārā or shower of wealth, upon the agni. It is equivalent to the consecration of the altar: "it is Agni's abhisheka."¹²⁴

In like manner, the symbol of auspiciousness, Śrī Lakṣmī, indicates the most exalted and blessed state of completion and perfection. The image is placed in the center of the lintel as the crowning symbol of the perfected self. It is both the last figure to be accounted for before the bhakta enters the sanctum and the first symbol to signify the exit and new life in the spirit.

The third images which may decorate the center of the lintel is that of the divine loving couple or mithuna.¹²⁵ Originally, male and female are said to have evolved from the body of the Creator, who, finding no delight in his creation without companionship, split himself into man and woman.¹²⁶ Only through the reunion of those two principles is wholeness one again attained. In fact, the wife is described as one-half of the husband's own self, and without

her he can not be regenerated and remains incomplete.¹²⁷ The Upaniṣads use such a symbol of union to portray the state of final emancipation where there is no separation between ātman and brahman. It is expressed in terms of spiritual marriage where the human soul is fulfilled in divine communion.¹²⁸

Mithuna is the supreme image of union decorating the entrance to the womb house (garbhagrha). When one crosses the threshold into the sanctum the imagery shifts from that of the loving embrace to the image of birth.¹²⁹ In spiritual terms the human soul (traditionally symbolized as feminine) merges with the divine in the innermost depths of one's being and from this point there is a complete transformation of being, a genuine re-birth and total re-orientation, "The seeker after God, becoming one with God, becomes the self of all beings."¹³⁰ Architecturally, the garbhagrha contains and collapses all the symbols of the center as the point of re-integration and re-generation. It is the physical form of the center of the mandala, the abode of Brahmā, the heart or navel of the vāstupuruṣa, and the creative center of the universe, "Mighty navel of divine order, ...mighty navel of truth...bestower of all life."¹³¹ It marks an important shift between the vāstupuruṣa who lies horizontally upon the mandala and the risen puruṣa who stands as the manifest form of the god as the temple. When the devālaya is piled up in the form of the divine puruṣa,

the adytum becomes the soul of the temple, the symbol of the secret inner chamber known in the Upaniṣads as the cave or lotus of the heart, the center of transcendence and immortality.

ENDNOTES

1. According to ManS XII. 214 the best time is during the night.
2. ManS XVIII. 6-9; ISGP 27.40cd-41; TSM 1.23; MM 12. 3B-5.
3. ManS XII. 9ff indicates the seven kinds of earth to be from: rivers, mountains, ant-hills, crab-holes, sea-shores, tops of trees (hills?), and from near a cow shed. The five kinds of plants are: white lotus at the center, blue lotus to the east, root of water lily to the south and saugandhi (grass) to the east and kākali (gunja plant) to the north. Symbolically, the seven different types of earth represent the sum total of all forms of Pr̥thvī. The plants, placed clockwise above this layer in the four cardinal directions and the center, follow the course of the sun and indicate increasingly complex phases of development from water plants to grasses. All growth, however, is subsumed under the emblem of the white lotus which presides over the center of the square. The eight sorts or seed which follow are the powers of growth and food. See also MM 12.5-8. The ISGP 27. 42-45 suggests the pit is to be purified by the astra (weapon) mantra and the deposition of eight āṅgulas of pure earth.
4. ISGP 27.42-45; TSM 1.23; ManS XVIII. 6-9.
5. TSM 1.23 recommends a vedi be first constructed in one corner and homage be paid to the vāstudeva before the main foundation rites begin.

6. The 12th chapter of the *ManS* discusses only the laying of the first bricks while the *TSM* discusses both rites 1.23-30.

7. *AgP* XLVI. 1ff.

8. Jatendra Nath Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography* (University of Calcutta, 1956) 82-84.

9. Banerjea. *Development* 170-73. See also Staal "Naturally Perforated Stones" *Agni* 1: 139-166.

10. It is also significant that when old stone images in a temple are to be replaced they must be disposed of by being immersed in sacred streams or in the confluence of rivers, thus returning the stone material to its proper resting place. See *Pratimāmanalakṣana* (English translation) 137-140 by Banerjea in *Development* 616.

11. In consequence, it is said that by constructing a statue or phallus of stone one insures a great acquirement of ground. *BrS* LX 4-5.

12. *SB* 7.1.2.1.

13. *SB* 7.1.2.6 cf. *SB* 7.1.2.8 "That same foundation which the gods thus restored is the foundation here even to this day and will be so even hereafter."

14. *SB* 6.1.1.15; *SB* 6.1.2.29.

15. *TSM* 1.24.

16. *SB* 7.1.2.6.

17. *SB* 7.2.2.5.

18. Soma is called the King of Plants in RgV 10.97.18. It is also the means to immortality: "We have drunk Soma. We have become immortal. We have attained the light the gods discovered." RgV 8.48.3.

19. Commentary to TSM 1.24-25 by Mallayya 218.

20. SB 7.4.1.6. "Now that truth is the same as the waters, for the waters are the truth."

21. AgP XLIX. 27.

22. First mention of the kūrma śilā is found in the Matsya P 266. 5-10 where it is suggested that a stone tortoise be placed under the liṅga in the consecration rites.

23. SB 7.5.1.2.

24. TS 5.2.8, 4, 5, and TS 5.7.8b "the tortoise is put down for the world of heaven."

25. Like the ātman of the agni, the square ādhārāśilā lies in the centre of the square foundation below the garbhagrha, the soul of the temple as puruṣa. AgP LXI. 23-26 "the image of the god (in the garbhagrha) is to be deemed its soul".

26. SB 7.2.3.2 cf. the legend of the grasses SB 1.1.3.4-5.

27. See SB 7.4.18; SB 7.3.2.14 and SB 7.4.1.12; SB 10.5.1.5.

28. SB 1.3.5.11.

29. SB 6.7.1.2.

30. Compare SB 1.3.5.11, "the twenty-first is the very (sun) that here shines; he is the resort, he the stay; thereby he (the Sacrificer) obtains this resort the stay;" and "he the yajamāna is the twenty-first." SB 6.7.1.2. The

sun is a symbol of the divine and immortal form of man.

31. SB 6.7.1.1-3.

32. SB 7.4.1.10-11.

33. SB 7.4.1.15.

34. "Hiranyagarbha came first into existence, for the golden child did come first into existence, born he was the one lord of being...ka (who) is Prajāpati". RgV 10.121.

35. "Inasmuch as the gods were pleased (ram) with that pleasing form (ramya) of his; it is called hiramya, hiramya being what is mystically called hiranya (gold) for the gods love the mystic" SB 7.4.1.16.

36. SB 7.4.1.22.

37. SB 7.4.2.1 seq.

38. SB 7.5.1.7; SB 7.5.1.1; SB 7.5.1.2.

39. SB 6.1.2.29 cf. SB 7.4.2.33.

40. SB 6.5.3.1. The asādhā is created from the same piece of clay as the ukhā, Agni's womb, and by being the first object created it imitates the earth. See also SB 7.4.2.32-34.

41. SB 6.1.2.29.

42. SB 6.5.3.1.

43. SB 6.5.3.2.

44. SB 6.2.1.9.

45. SB 6.5.3.4.

46. SB 6.5.3.4.

47. SB 7.4.2.34,39.

48. SB 7.4.2.36.

49. SB 7.1.1.30 cf. SBE 41: 301 note 3.

50. SB 6.1.2.28.

51. The deposition of the first bricks and the implantation of the garbhapātra are described in the chapters ManS XII, ISGP 27 and TSM 1.26-30. The TSM give the fullest account of the details, as well it indicates that both the rites of ādhārasīlā and the first bricks may be done in succession.

52. ManS XII. 194; cf. ISGP 27.70, "in stone temples the first 'bricks' are of stone," and AgP XLI 1-4 which describes fired and stone bricks.

53. Commentary by Mallayya 220 on TSM 1.26-27. the ManS XVIII. 136-140 adds a fourth type of material, iron, to the list of edifices. It declares the best architecture should preferably be built with one material only (śuddha), but buildings of two materials (miśra) and of three (saṁkīrṇa) are also permissible.

54. TSM 1.26 also mentions alternate proportions of 12 āṅgulas length: 8 breadth: 4 thickness. cf. AgP XLI. 2-3, "Bricks should be 12 āṅgulas long and 4 in width and breadth." The total number of bricks in the foundation are according to the size of the structure. TSM 1.26 suggests 4, 8, or 12 bricks while the ISGP 27.64 suggests either 4+1 or 8+1 bricks to be arranged in square formation.

55. ISGP 27.67-70. Those bricks with a larger base are female, those larger at the top are neuter, while the male brick is of equal thickness throughout. It suggests male bricks be used for male patrons and female for female patrons. However, male bricks are considered to be universally good, "they fulfill the desires of everybody". See also SB 10.5.1.2 the three sexes of bricks.

56. TSM 1.28,29.

57. Descriptions of the consecration and worship of the bricks are found in ISGP 27.71 (42-45) and AgP XLI 3-9 and AgP XCII. 36ff.

58. AgP XLI. 15 lists the eight watery treasures as "padma, mahāpadma, makara, kacchappa, kumadam, nanda, saṅkhyā and padmini." Some of the names are different in the ISGP 27.71 (59-69).

59. ISGP 27.7(59-64).

60. AgP XLI. 16-20 cf. ISGP 27.71(70-71).

61. Special care is taken to avoid harming the vāstupuruṣa or any of the deities which inhabit his form, for if through ignorance or mistake one places a stone on an āṅga of the vāstudeva loss of position, distress or death will befall the maker. ISGP 27.62(39-40).

62. ISGP 27.71(72-75).

63. A sacrifice is performed and later the pit is cleared of the various articles and purified once again before it is filled with earth. Mallayya's commentary 224; ISGP 27.71 (76-78).

64. ISGP 27.102ff.

65. ISGP 27.72.

66. ISGP 27.73-74. It is placed on the topmost moulding of the base (prati) for brahmanas, on its lowermost moulding (upāna) for kings, and for vaiśyas and the fourth class on the ground (bhūmi).

67. For the sequence of events involved in implanting the garbhapātra vessel see ISGP 27.79ff; TSM 1.27-30; Kramrisch, Temple 126ff.

68. ISGP 27.90.

69. ISGP 27.78-80.

70. ISGP 27.102ff. "On a night with flawless (literally unhurt, akhaṇḍa) stars ...he should meditate on that casket, the goddess Earth,...as seed, (bīja) and womb of the specified buildings."

71. ISGP 27.102 (80ab-106).

72. RgV 10.184 uses this formula, "May Viṣṇu form and mould the womb, may Tvashtar duly shape the forms. Prajāpati infuse the stream and Dhatar lay the germ for thee....That germ of thine we invoke, that in the tenth month thou mayst bear." See SGS 1.19.5ff.

73. PGS 1.6.3.

74. SGS 1.17.3,4; cf. PGS 1.8.19.

75. HGS 1.7.22.14 The quote begins, "Firm dwelling, firm origin. The firm one art thou, standing on the side of firmness. Thou art the pillar of the stars." cf. HGS 1.7.23.1.

76. AtV 11.5.7.

77. AtV 11.5.3.

78. AgP LXXXII. 9ff.

79. AgP LXXXII. 20.

80. SB 6.5.2.8.

81. SB 6.5.2.16,17. "...For the gods, having formed these worlds, the fire pan, drew forth for themselves from these nipples all objects of their desires, and in like manner does the sacrificer....This fire-pan is indeed a cow, for the fire-pan is these worlds and these worlds are a cow."

82. SB 6.5.2.3 The meaning of the pot can be traced to several different origins. In one case it is called ukhā because the gods once dug out the worlds (ut-khan) and since the clay for the pot is dug out "it is called ukhā for the gods love the mysterious." Another place the lump of clay is called Makha's head, the head of the sacrifice. SB 6.5.2.1.

83. SB 6.5.2.21 cf. SB 6.5.1.11 "He makes the fire-pan representing the earth."

84. TS 4.1.9.1c "Be not broken, nor come to harm. Be firm and enduring; O Mother, daringly show thy heroism; with Agni thou wilt do this deed."

85. TS 4.2.5 cf. Staal's translation in Agni 1:323 "Let the earth ukhā carry Agni of the mud in her own womb like a mother her son." See also SB 6.6.2.5 The symbolism of the woman and child is also carried through in the shape of the vedi and the function of that part of the uttaravedi known as the nābhi or navel. The vedi or main altar is a trapezium shaped figure composed of earth which is slightly narrower through the center. This shape is compared to that of a woman, "broad about the hips, somewhat narrower between the shoulders and contracted in the middle" which makes the altar pleasing to the gods SB 1.2.5.16. The feminine vedi is passive and accepting of the masculine fire and thereby produces offspring SB 1.2.5.15. Therefore, when the ukhā is placed on the nābhi of the uttara or heavenly vedi, (SB 7.3.1.27,28) Agni is brought to life at the navel or source and connecting point of the three worlds, SB 6.6.3.9. Like the symbol of the brahmasthāna or the cave of the heart it marks the point of evolution, "I know the navel of the world (I know heaven, and earth and the air; I know the place of the Great Sun and I know the Moon whence it was born)," SB 13.5.2.20,21.

86. SB 6.6.2.8ff "The fire-pan is female and the fire is male...that fire imparts growth to the seed in the shape of the kindling stick (embryo).

87. SB 10.4.1.1,2 "When the gods restored the relaxed Prajāpati, they poured him as seed into the fire-pan as the womb, for the fire-pan is a womb. In the course of a year (the fire altar) becomes his (Prajāpati's) body.In like manner does the Sacrificer pour seed into the fire pan..."

In such a manner did Prajāpati generate an immutable body from his own self. SB 10.4.2.26 cf. SB 10.4.2.28; SB 7.2.1.6.

88. When the fire is first established in the pan, the ukhā is placed upon a special stool and the priest recites lines indicative of Agni/hiranyagarbha: TS 4.1.10 L. "Shining like gold, he hath become widely resplendent, for glory shining with immortal life, Agni became immortal in his strength." Originally hiranyagarbha referred to the golden egg of creation floating mysteriously on the primordial waters, RgV 10.121. This mysterious Who or ka is later identified with Prajāpati. The story of the birth of the cosmos from a golden egg is also repeated in the eleventh kāṇḍa of the SB. SB 11.1.6.1ff. indicates Prajāpati was born from the cosmic egg after a period of one year, just as the fire is brought to birth on the altar after a similar length of time. Prajāpati calls existence into being when he utters the three words, "bhūh, bhuvah, and svah," (earth, sky, heaven) SB 11.1.6.3.

89. SB 9.5.1.62 "He who carries about Agni becomes pregnant with all beings, and with all the gods, but if he does not carry him for a year...he destroys the embryos of all beings and should therefore be despised."

90. The golden plate also stands for the Truth that is able to sustain the fire (SB 6.7.1.1.) and protect one from the evil desires of the rākṣasas SB 6.7.1.5. As well, when the yajamāna wears the ornament about his neck he puts into Prajapati the very vigour which had gone out of him, SB 7.1.2.10. These ritual associations make it possible for the human yajamāna to carry and bring to life a divine replica.

91. SB 7.4.1.1 cf. SB 6.7.1.3 "only in his solar or divine form he bears the divine form."

92. SB 7.4.1.19 cf. SB 7.4.1.43. Of the golden man it is said that he is Prajāpati, Agni and the sacrificer. "He is made of gold for gold is light, and fire is light; gold is immortality and fire is immortality. It is a man (puruṣa) for Prajāpati is the Man," SB 7.4.1.15.

93. SB 10.1.4.8-9.

94. AgP LXI. 25.

95. The SB 3.1.2.2.n.1 suggests a square building covered on all sides with mats and a door to the east be constructed. SBE 26: 140 note 3 discusses the proportions of 1:2 and 1:3. Dr. Kramrisch, in her article "The Four-Cornered Citadel of the Gods" in *Exploring India's Sacred Art* 249-252 discovers precursor of garbhagrha in the rituals

of aśvamedha or horse sacrifice of the Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra. A four-cornered citadel of gods "etām caturaśrām devapuram" was erected during the ceremonies as the focal point of aśvamedha. This small building is the prototype of the garbhagrha and ultimately of the entire temple. On page 251 of her article she writes "The devapura, the fort of the gods, as set up in aśvamedha, though it did not bequeath its name to Hindu temple, passed on to it the underlying idea that was to shape its form."

96. TS 6.2.10.3.

97. The three parts of the wooden post are blessed as earth, air and sky, and when the pillar is placed upright it fills the three worlds, SB 3.6.1.6,15. It is understood as the central post of the universe, "the fixed point of Indra". The sada which houses this post, the sum total of existence, is presided over by the King of Heaven.." ..it has Indra as its deity," TS 6.2.10.6.

98. "Quite secretly shall be carried on that generation!...for improper indeed is the generation which another sees." SB 4.6.7.9,10.

99. TS 6.2.5.4.

100. SB 3.2.1.6.

101. TS 6.2.10.5 "The sada is the stomach, the udumbara is strength. In the middle he fixes a post of udumbara wood; verily he places strength in the midst of offspring." cf SB 3.5.3.5.

102. It represents the original darkness described in RgV 10.129.3 "Darkness was concealed in darkness. All was indiscriminate chaos. All that existed then was void and formless." The inner sanctum also reflects the image of the womb as a function of the overall size of the prāsāda. As the womb and embryo are proportionate to the size of the fully developed human, so is the sanctum related to the complete size of the devālaya as the body of god. The two most important features of the garbhagrha i.e. the doorway to the adytum and the image placed within, are also commensurate with the whole. BrS LVI 11-13 says the height of the temple should be twice its own width... the adytum measures one-half the width of the temple and has separate walls. Its door is one-fourth the adytum in width and twice as high. The side frame of the door has a breadth of one fourth the altitude. Correspondingly, the size of the idol is also proportionate to the dimensions of the doorway. The figure is made slightly smaller to create a visual effect of the icon being framed by the doorway. The idol, along with the seat, ought to have a height of that of the door, diminished by one-eighth, of which two-thirds are apportioned to the image and one-third to the seat. BrS LVI. 16.

103. Kramrisch, Temple 314.

104. The BrS L111.29 and Matsya P CCLV. 4-6 describe how the side panels are to be divided into nine different parts with the lowest of these the vāhana or support, followed by the "ghata" or pot and then by a padma or lotus section etc. The commentary to the BrS indicates the names ghata and padma are used because they are actually shaped in that form.

105. The ManS XXXIX. 82 suggests the bottom of the entrance be decorated with pitchers (as if) full of water and mirrors. Above the ghatas lush scenes of growth should be carved to indicate the procreative power of the water of life. See ManS XXXIX. 113-114; ManS XXXIX. 77; Matsya P CCLV. 18-19.

106. AsGS 2.8.14.

107. AsGS 2.9.5 "Hither may king Varuṇa come with the plentiful waters; at this place may he stay contented; bringing welfare and dripping ghee." In the PGS 3.5.2ff. Water is invoked with these words, "The sea thou art, thee waters, rich in wealth, ye possess goods. ye bring us good insight and immortality. Ye are the rulers over wealth and blessed offspring. May Saraswatī give strength to him who praises her."

108. He sprinkles the site three times with water while reciting RgV 10.9.1 "O Waters, ye are wholesome." See AsGS 2.9.6ff.

109. VDM III. 52; cf. BrS LVI 15.

110. BrS LVI 4-8.

111. His wives are described in VDM III. 52.

112. AgP XXI. 9 "When worshipping Śiva, one should first worship Nandi and Mahākāla then Gaṅgā and Yamunā".

113. SB 6.8.2-3.

114. One version of the descent of the Ganges to earth is described in the VP 2.8. In this case Gaṅgā is said to have fallen from the sky after issuing from the great toe of Viṣṇu's left foot as he pierced the shell of the cosmic egg. The river fell upon the mountain at the mythical center of the world, Mt. Meru and from here it flowed in a pattern of the auspicious symbol the svastika. In Śaivite mythology Gaṅgā is very often associated with Śiva (Śiva/Gaṅgādhara) where she appears as an ornament in Śiva's hair or as a female companion to Hara. The legend of Gaṅgā's descent through Śiva's intervention is described in the Mbh 3.33. 107-108.

115. For the benefits of bathing in the river Gaṅgā see VP 2.8.

116. When a student is initiated into the life of brahmācārya he must bathe, sip water, touch water and be blessed by water. Water, transferred from the joined hands of the guru into the receptive hands of the śiṣya, symbolises the transference of merit and purity to the disciple. Rites describing dīkṣā in the Gṛihya Sūtras follow a basic pattern. See AsGS 1.20.2ff.; PGS 2.2.5ff.;

GGs 2.10.15ff.; KGS 2.4.7ff.; HGS 1.2.5ff.

117. Kramrisch, Temple 165; cf. Acharya's Dictionary.

118. The power of growth contained in the life-sap is due to the presence of Agni, Born of the Waters. Agni hid himself in the waters and through the pervasive power of his fiery essence he pervades all living beings. "In the waters, O Agni, is thy womb... Thou art the child of all the herbs, child of all the trees, the child of all that is, O Agni, thou art the child of the waters-- the child of this entire universe," SB 6.8.2.4.

119. SB 7.2.4.27. The priest chants the RgV hymn 10.97 over the seeds, i.e. 10.97.2, "Ye Mothers have a hundred homes and a thousand are your growths."

120. SB 7.2.4.28.

121. Mbh 3.33.83.70ff.

122. Mbh 3.33.80.35-40 "Hear to what injunction even the poor can rise, equaling the holy rewards of sacrifice. This is the highest mystery of the seers-- the holy visitation of the sacred fords which even surpasses sacrifices."

123. SB 5.4.3.2 "This rājasūya is Varuṇa's consecration" cf. SB 5.4.1.17; SB 5.4.2.1ff.

124. SB 9.3.2.2.

125. BrS LVI 15. AgP CIV. 29-30 "The ends of the ornamental branches overhanging the doors would be made to culminate in the images of the fairy twins (mithuna). See comments by Tarapada Bhattacharya, "Some Notes on the

Mithuna in Indian Art," Rupam: Journal of Oriental Art
(1926) 22-25.

126. BU 1.4.3.

127. SB 5.2.1.10; SB 10.5.2.8.

128. BU 4.3.21.

129. SB 9.4.1.5 "Birth originates from a pair."

130. Paingala 4.3.

131. SB 14.3.1.18.

CONCLUSION

This study has drawn on a diversity of sources: Vedic myths, the explanations of the Brāhmaṇas, the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, the domestic rites of the Gṛihya Sūtras, the legends of the itihāsa and the purāṇas and of course the texts of the vāstusāstra, all in an attempt to more fully comprehend the meaning of the temple. Ancient myths and symbols, re-interpreted and transferred to the temple, in theory if not in actual detail, concretized previous images in a new form, but the power of those underlying concepts, particularly the transformation and re-birth of puruṣa were maintained.

Man, in the sense of the ultimate primeval principle, is the common denominator which links the sacrifice and re-constitution of the cosmic puruṣa of RgV 10.90, the Father of Living Beings, Prajāpati of the agnicayana, and the vāstupuruṣa of the maṇḍala, to the temple as the body of god. Since the flesh of puruṣa became the very substance of creation, he is immanent within all created things, and since he is revived in the form of the thousand bricks of the altar or the shape of the vimāna he transcends creation. Spiritually, man is transformed when he sacrifices his limited, egotistical self and recognises his own innate divinity. BU 2.5. 10 reads: "That shining immortal person who is in the space of the heart, he is just this Self, this is immortal, this is Brahman, this is all." In architecture

this transformation takes place within the holy of holies in the temple, the inner chamber of the garbhagrha. As the heart is the spiritual center of man, so is the garbhagrha the spiritual center of the temple.

Hindu temple architecture is religious architecture and its highest purpose is to transmit a religious truth. The vimāna as a manifestation of puruṣa gives form to that which is essentially formless, creating a visible and tangible design which human senses can apprehend. This representation of puruṣa, however, is not only to be outwardly seen and touched, but is to be ultimately known within as Coomaraswamy points out: "... the principle involved is that true knowledge of an object is not obtained by merely empirical observation or reflex registration (pratyakṣa) but only when the knower and the known, seer and seen meet in an act transcending distinction (anayor advaita).¹

In terms of what this study has done and what remains to be done, the materials and method of presentation were limited by necessity to the very basic elements and preliminary steps of construction. One of the most obvious proposals to complement this research would be a systematic analysis of larger parts of the temple complex. In a more extensive project certain other themes which could not be properly addressed here could be examined. Two other important symbols contained in the temple besides puruṣa

include that of the mountain (the superstructure) and cave (the inner sanctum), and the world pillar based upon the archetypal yupa or sacrificial stake. A larger study could also incorporate other significant rituals which had to be overlooked. One such ritual is that of establishing the center of the site by erecting a gnomon. It contains the key to the Hindu solution of the mathematical problem of squaring the circle and it also transposes the cyclical movement of the sun into the image of the square, or that which is fixed, immobile, and thus eternal--the center of the site as well as the cosmos.

On the other hand, several avenues of study which would supplement this inquiry in quite different ways are also possible. One approach would include Indian aesthetics particularly that of sculpture which adorned the temple, dance which set the norms for sculpture and was an integral part of temple rituals, and painting which decorated the temples with images of the deities. These, like architecture, fall under the general category of śilpavidyā or the knowledge of arts and crafts and therefore maintain a basic continuity. More importantly, sculpture, dance and painting are all related aspects of sacred art, the language of form connecting outward sight and inner vision. Titus Burckhardt in his *Sacred Art in East and West* writes to this effect:

Through its qualitative essence form has a place in the sensible order analogous to that of truth

in the intellectual order... Just as a mental form such as a dogma or doctrine can be an adequate, albeit limited, reflection of Divine Truth, so can a sensible form retrace a truth or reality which transcends both the plane of sensible forms and the plane of thought.²

What is true of sacred art is also true of sacred architecture, for the sanctum is a manifest form of a spiritual truth. In a more general sense, the Hindu temple is but another example of architecture based on a particular set of metaphysical principles. The place of the Indian temple in relation to other sacred structures such as the Christian church, the Moslem mosque, the Chinese Temple of Heaven or the pyramid or ziggurat would provide a good point of departure for a comparative study of the theology of space and form. Such a study need not be definitely confined to the structure as the image of transcendence per se, but could be applied to the sacred city, the terrestrial model of the cosmos, as well. It could also address the more universal questions of environment and human responses and interpretations of it. As much as the sacred structures of the prescientific era bespeak an understanding of man and his place in the world, so too, does a modern city reflect man's attitudes towards himself, his fellow man and the world he inhabits.

ENDNOTES

1. Ananda Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature in Art* (1934; N.Y.: Dover Publication, 1965) 6.
2. Titus Burckhardt, *Sacred Art in East and West*, Translated by Lord Northbourne, 2nd ed. (Bedfont, Middlesex: Perennial Books Ltd., 1976) 8.

Glossary

<u>abhiśeka</u>	consecration, annointment
<u>āchārya</u>	teacher
<u>ādharmaśila</u>	central square stone of the foundation rites
<u>adhvaryu</u>	one of the attendant priests of the fire sacrifice
<u>ādityas</u>	the sons of Aditi
<u>agni</u>	fire
Agni	God of Fire
<u>agnicayana</u>	the fire sacrifice
<u>ākāśa</u>	space, ether
<u>ambuja</u>	born from the water, a lotus
<u>amṛta</u>	nectar of immortality
Ananta	Endless or Infinite
<u>āṅga</u>	limb
<u>āṅgula</u>	measurement of one fingerbreadth
<u>anjali</u>	hand gesture of prayerful attitude or obeisance
<u>antarāyamin</u>	inner-controller
<u>aparāvidyā</u>	lower knowledge or knowledge of the phenomenal world
<u>aratni</u>	a measurement of one-fifth <u>puruṣa</u>
<u>asādhā</u>	the first or Invincible Brick of the altar the symbol of the earth
<u>asura</u>	demon, enemy of the gods
<u>ātman</u>	soul, self, also the inner square of the bird-shaped altar
<u>bhakta</u>	a devotee

<u>bhakti</u>	devotion to a deity
<u>bhūtabali</u>	tribute paid to nature spirits before the priests take possession of the site
<u>bīja</u>	seed
<u>Brahmā</u>	Lord of Creation
<u>brahman</u>	The Absolute
<u>brāhmanas</u>	ritual texts of early Hinduism
<u>brahmasthāna</u>	inner square of the <u>vāstupuruṣa maṇḍala</u>
<u>brahmin</u>	Hindu priestly caste
<u>danda</u>	a rod
<u>darbha</u>	type of grass
<u>deva</u>	a god
<u>devālaya</u>	temple
<u>devapura</u>	city of the gods
<u>dhruva</u>	firm, the Pole Star
<u>dhyāna</u>	state of meditation
<u>dīkṣā</u>	initiation
<u>dvārapālas</u>	door protectors
<u>dveṣa</u>	hatred
<u>ganita</u>	counting or mathematics
<u>garbha</u>	foetus, womb
<u>garbhādhāna</u>	settling of the embryo
<u>garbhagrha</u>	inner sanctum of the temple, literally womb-house
<u>garbhanyāsa</u>	the rite of impregnation of the temple
<u>garbhapātra</u>	vessel which contains the life or seed of the temple
<u>ghata</u>	pot or vessel

<u>guha</u>	to hide or conceal
<u>guhā</u>	a cave
<u>guṇa</u>	quality
<u>guru</u>	teacher
<u>hiranyam</u>	gold; <u>hiranyagarbha</u> is a golden embryo; <u>hiranyapurūṣa</u> is a golden man
<u>hrdayam</u>	heart
<u>hrdayavidyā</u>	knowledge of the heart, the highest knowledge
<u>iṣṭakā</u>	brick
<u>iṣṭākanyāsa</u>	ritual of laying the first bricks in the foundation
<u>itihāsa</u>	the two epics of the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana
<u>jīvanmukta</u>	one who is released while still living
<u>jñāna</u>	knowledge
<u>jyotiṣa</u>	astrology, one of the vedāṅgas
<u>kacchapa</u>	tortoise, vehicle of the goddess Yamunā
<u>kalpa druma</u>	wish-fulfilling tree
<u>kalpa sūtras</u>	technical rules governing ceremony
<u>kāmyā</u>	desires, or in the sense of rites optional performance
<u>kāṇḍa</u>	part or division (in this case) of text
<u>karma</u>	action
<u>kha</u>	space, ether
<u>kriya</u>	that which should be done, ritual
<u>ksatriya</u>	princely or warrior caste
<u>kumbha</u>	vessel or jar
<u>kūrma</u>	tortoise, also an incarnation of Viṣṇu

<u>lakṣana</u>	mark
<u>liṅga</u>	phallic emblem of Śiva
<u>lokapāla</u>	protector of the world
<u>mahāvedi</u>	the great altar space of the <u>agnicayana</u>
<u>mānasa</u>	mind
<u>maṇḍala</u>	cosmographic diagram
<u>mandapa</u>	porch
<u>maṇḍūka</u>	<u>maṇḍala</u> of sixty-four squares
<u>mañjarī</u>	"shoot", synonym for spire or tower of the temple
<u>mantra</u>	speech, sacred text or speech, prayer, song of praise, sacrificial formula
<u>marmas</u>	wounding or delicate points of the <u>vāstupuruṣa</u>
<u>mithuna</u>	couple
<u>mudrā</u>	hand gesture
<u>nābhi</u>	navel
<u>nadīdevatā</u>	river goddess
<u>nāla</u>	copper funnel-shaped article used in foundation rites, also called <u>yoganāla</u>
<u>nidhikalāṣa</u>	treasure jar
<u>nirguṇa</u>	without qualities
<u>nirvāṇa</u>	ultimate emancipation
<u>pada</u>	foot or square
<u>padma</u>	lotus
<u>paramasāyina</u>	<u>maṇḍala</u> of eighty-one squares
<u>parāvidyā</u>	highest knowledge, knowledge of <u>brahman</u>
<u>prakṛti</u>	material nature, matter

<u>prāsāda</u>	temple
Pr̥thvī	the Earth, daughter of Pr̥thu
Pr̥thu	Lord of the earth
<u>pūrṇa</u>	full, i.e. <u>pūrṇaghata</u> , <u>pūrṇakumbha</u> , <u>pūrṇakalasa</u> all refer to full vessels
<u>puruṣa</u>	man or in the highest sense Cosmic Man; in terms of measurement the height of a man with upstretched arms
<u>puruṣamedha</u>	human sacrifice
<u>rāga</u>	passion
<u>rājasūya</u>	royal consecration
<u>rākṣasas</u>	demons
<u>sadas</u>	hut of initiation of the <u>agnicayana</u> rites
<u>saguna</u>	with qualities
<u>śālagrām</u>	sacred stone usually discovered in rivers
<u>śalya</u>	impurity
<u>śikhara</u>	spire, tower
<u>śila</u>	stone, i.e. <u>śilāpadma</u> , stone lotus; <u>śilākūrma</u> , stone tortoise
<u>śilpāsāstra</u>	Hindu canons of iconography, sculpture and painting
<u>sirās</u>	veins
<u>śiśnadevah</u>	those who worship the <u>śiśna</u> , perhaps original worshippers of the phallic emblem of Śiva/Rudra
<u>śiśya</u>	disciple, student
<u>sruti</u>	that which is heard, sacred literature
<u>sthānavedha</u>	injury to the subtle body of the <u>vāstupuruṣa</u>

<u>śūdra</u>	farming or serf caste
<u>śūnya</u>	zero
<u>svarga</u>	heaven
<u>svayamātr̥ṇṇa</u>	naturally perforated stones used in the <u>agnicayana</u>
<u>svāyambhūva</u>	self-wrought
<u>syena</u>	falcon, eagle
<u>tīrtha</u>	ford
<u>ukhā</u>	fire pot
<u>ukhya agni</u>	fire contained in the <u>ukha</u>
<u>uttaranābhi</u>	center or literally the navel of the high altar
<u>uttaravedi</u>	high altar
<u>vaiśya</u>	merchant class of Hinduism
<u>Vāstoṣpati</u>	guardian of the site
<u>vastu</u>	a created thing
<u>vāstu</u>	site
<u>vāstupuruṣa</u>	the being who inhabits the site
<u>vāstupuruṣa maṇḍala</u>	ritual diagram containing the form of the <u>vāstupuruṣa</u> which underlies the temple site
<u>vāstuvidyā</u>	craft or science of building
<u>vendāṅga</u>	limb or auxillary sciences of the vedas
<u>vedi</u>	altar
<u>vidyā</u>	knowledge
<u>vimāna</u>	temple
<u>vyāma</u>	measurement equal to one <u>puruṣa</u>
<u>yajamāna</u>	measure of the sacrifice, the patron of the <u>agnicayana</u> and the temple

yajña

sacrifice

yoganāla

see nāla

yūpasacrificial post, also a symbol of the
axis mundi

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Plate 1: The paradise of Indra from Bhārhut c. 100 B.C.
From Rowland plate 35.



Plate 2: Sāñchī, east gate. The Return to Kapilavastu. Early Āndrha period (c.32 B.C.-50 A.D.). From Rowland plate 15.

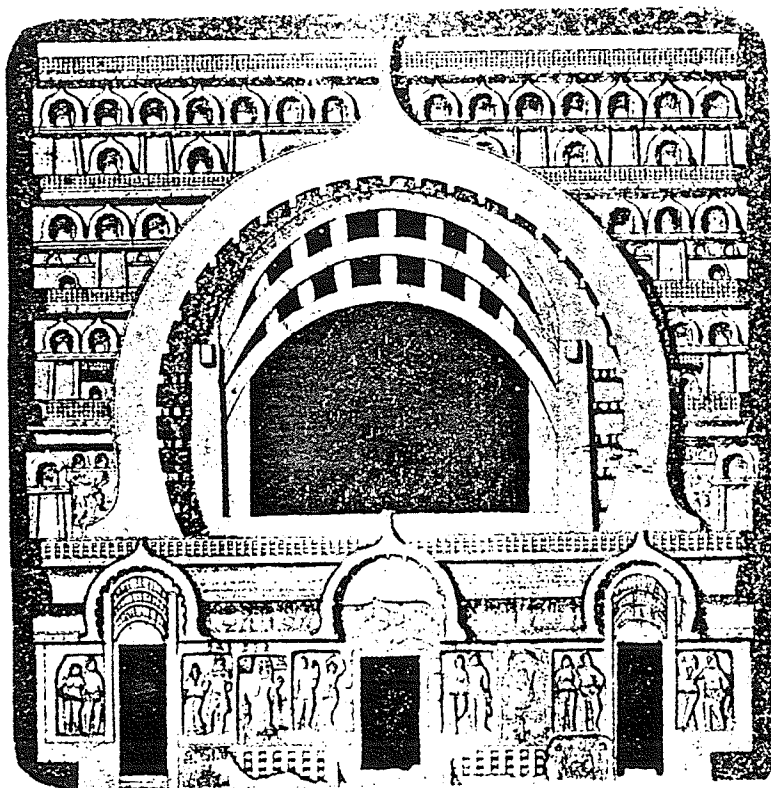
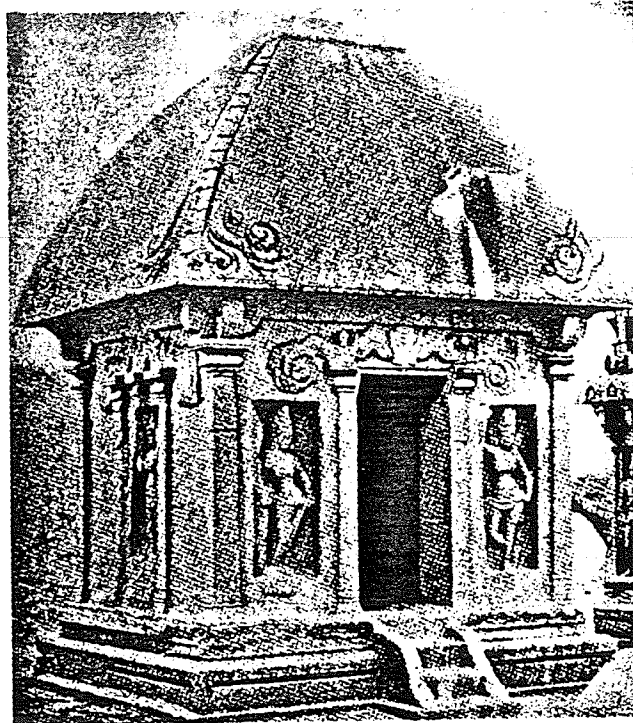


Plate 3: Facade of Kārlē chaitya-house. 1st c. A.D.
From Havel plate XVIII.



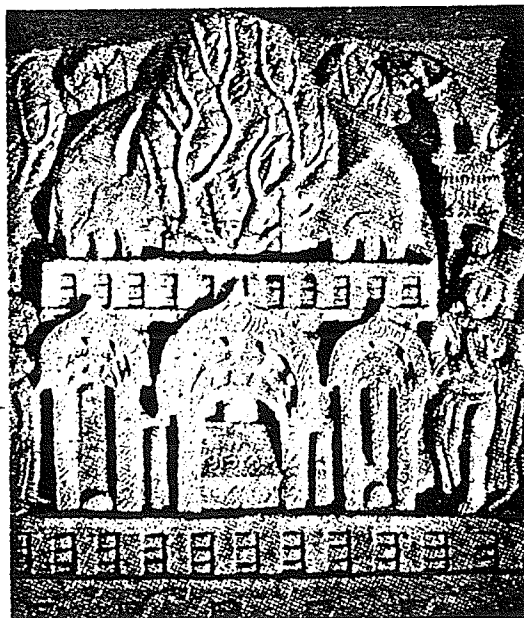
A. FROM THE BHARHUT SCULPTURES



B. DŪRGĀ SHRINE, MĀMALLAPURAM



C. FROM THE BHARHUT SCULPTURES



D. FROM THE BHARHUT SCULPTURES

Plate 4: Comparison of buildings from Bhārhut sculptures c. 100 B.C. with stone Dūrgā shrine at Māmallapuram. 7th c. A.D. From Havell plate 9.

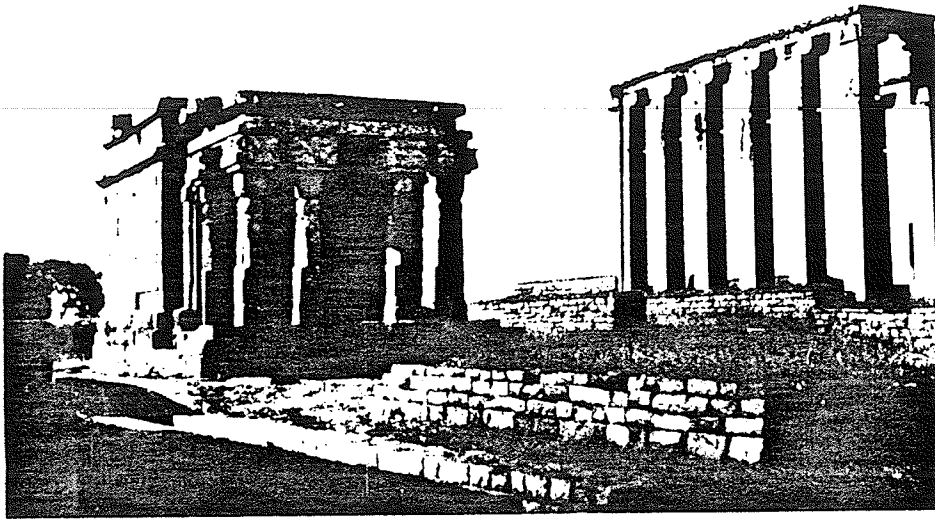


Plate 5: Sāñchī temple. c. 5th century A.D. depicting the two important elements of the garbhagrha and mandapa. From Rowland plate 155.



Plate 6: Lomas Rṣi Cave, Barabār. Asokan dynasty 3rd century B.C. Stone imitation of free-standing wood and thatch structure. From Rowland plate 18.

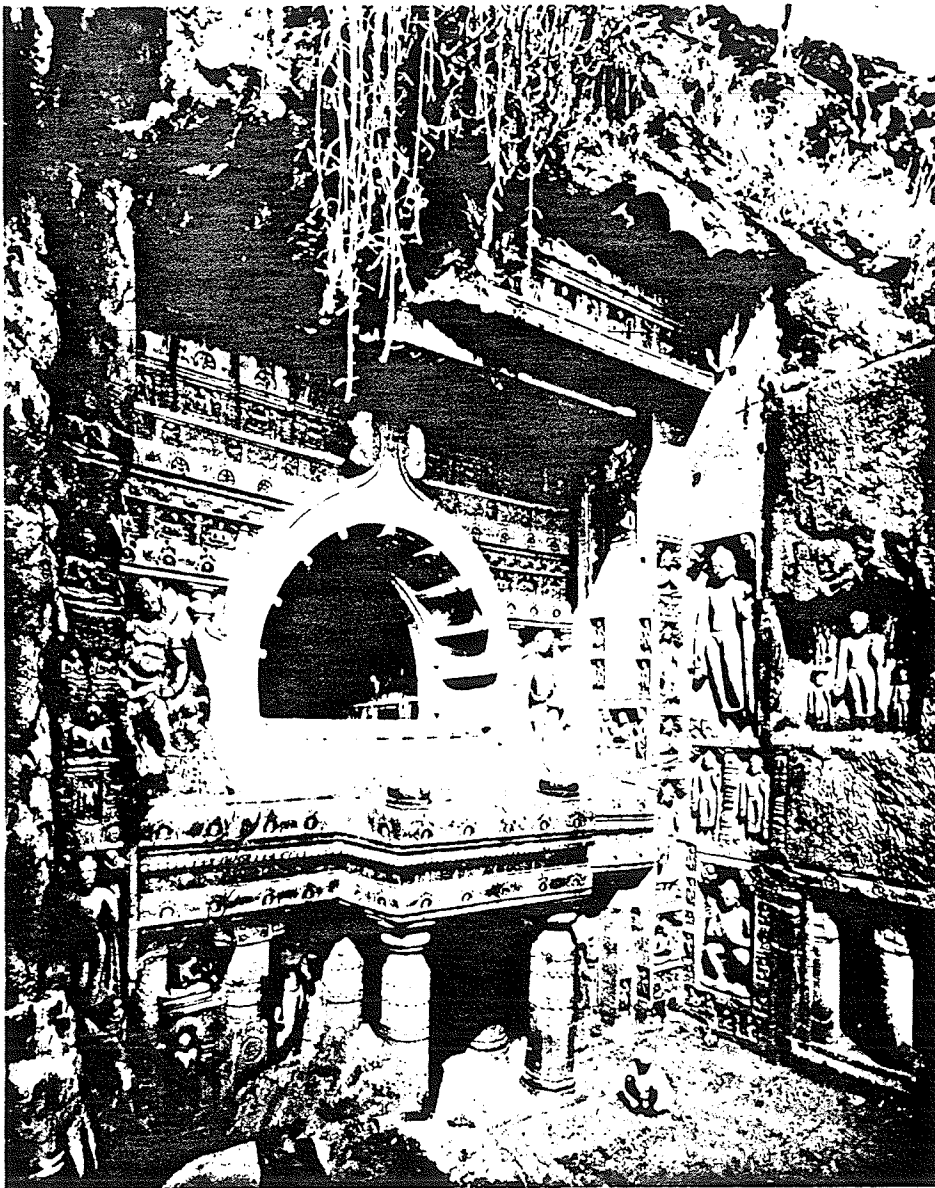


Plate 7: Ajanta cave CIX exterior. Gupta period. From Rowland plate 152.



Plate 8: Earth as cow joins the celestials in prayerful attitude to Śeṣasayi Viṣṇu. (Viṣṇu appears in a cloud to the left of the cow). Kāṅgrā school, 18th century A.D. From C. Sivaramamurti *Śrī Lakshmi in Indian Art and Thought* (New Delhi: Kanak Pub., 1982) Fig 93.

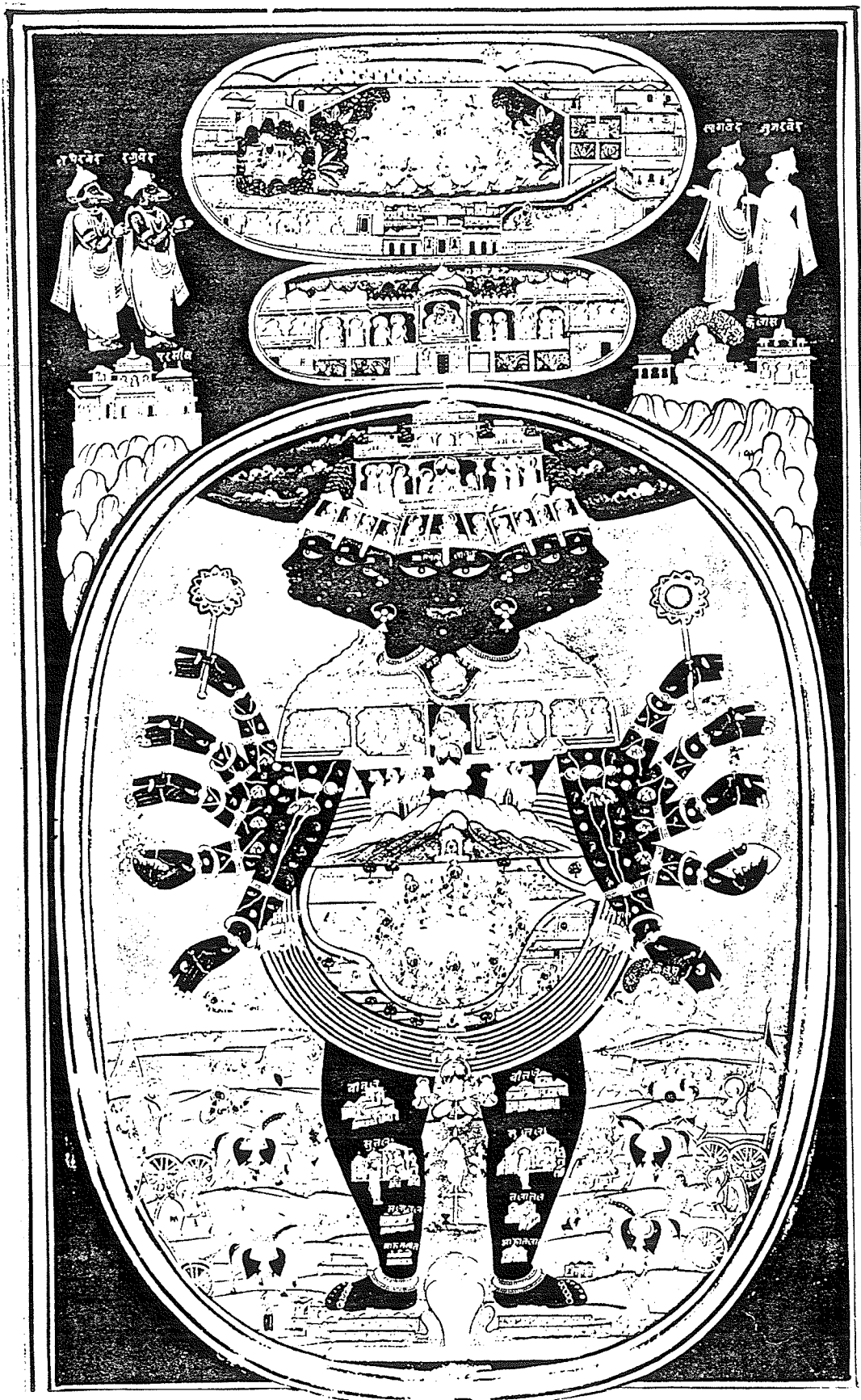


Plate 9: Krishna displaying his cosmic form. Rajasthan, 18th century. Gouache on cloth 21 x 4 in. From P. Rowson, *Tantra* (N.Y.: Bounty Books, 1973) plate 48.

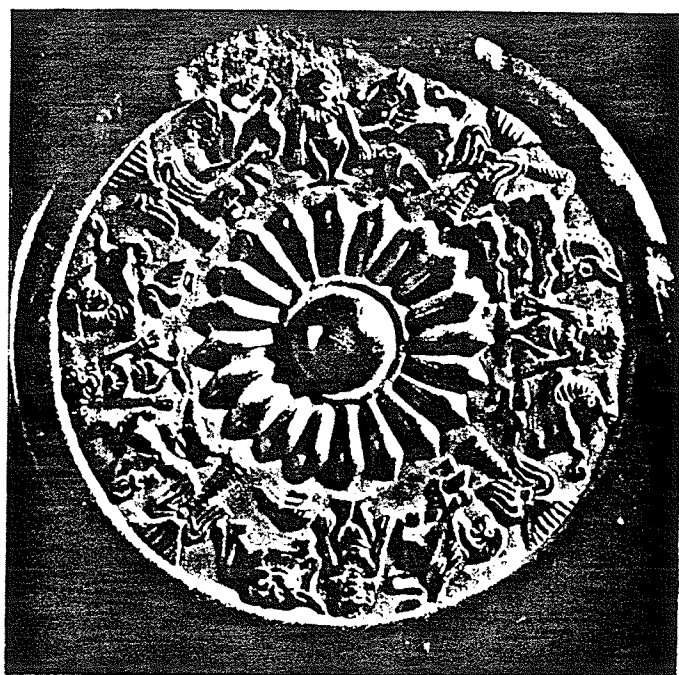
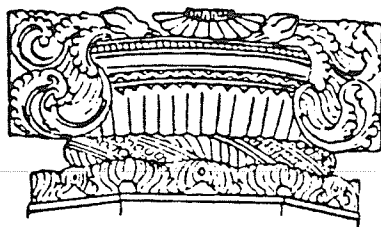
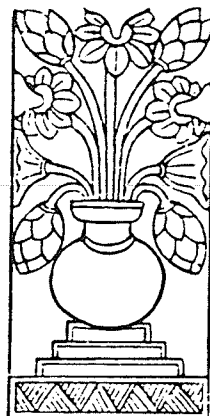


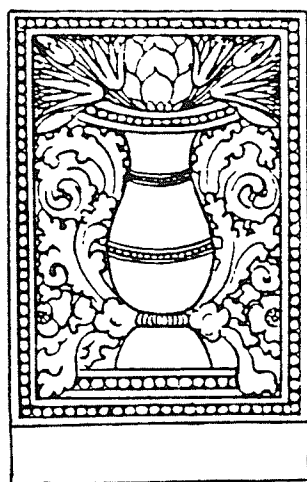
Plate 10: Aditi plaque, Mauryan, 3rd century B.C. From
C. Sivaramamurti, *Śrī Lakshmi in Indian Art and
Thought*, Fig. 32.



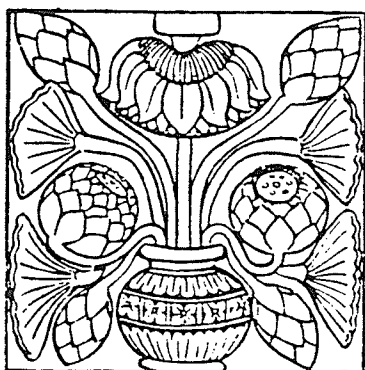
1. Deogarh.



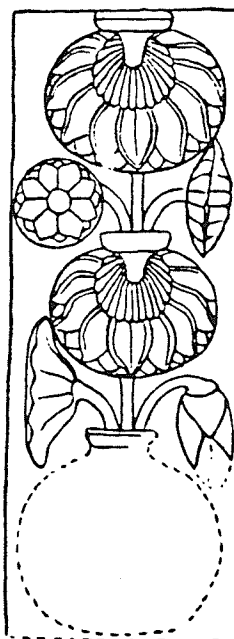
2. Sarnāth.



3. Amarāvati.



4. Sāñcī.



5. Sāñcī.

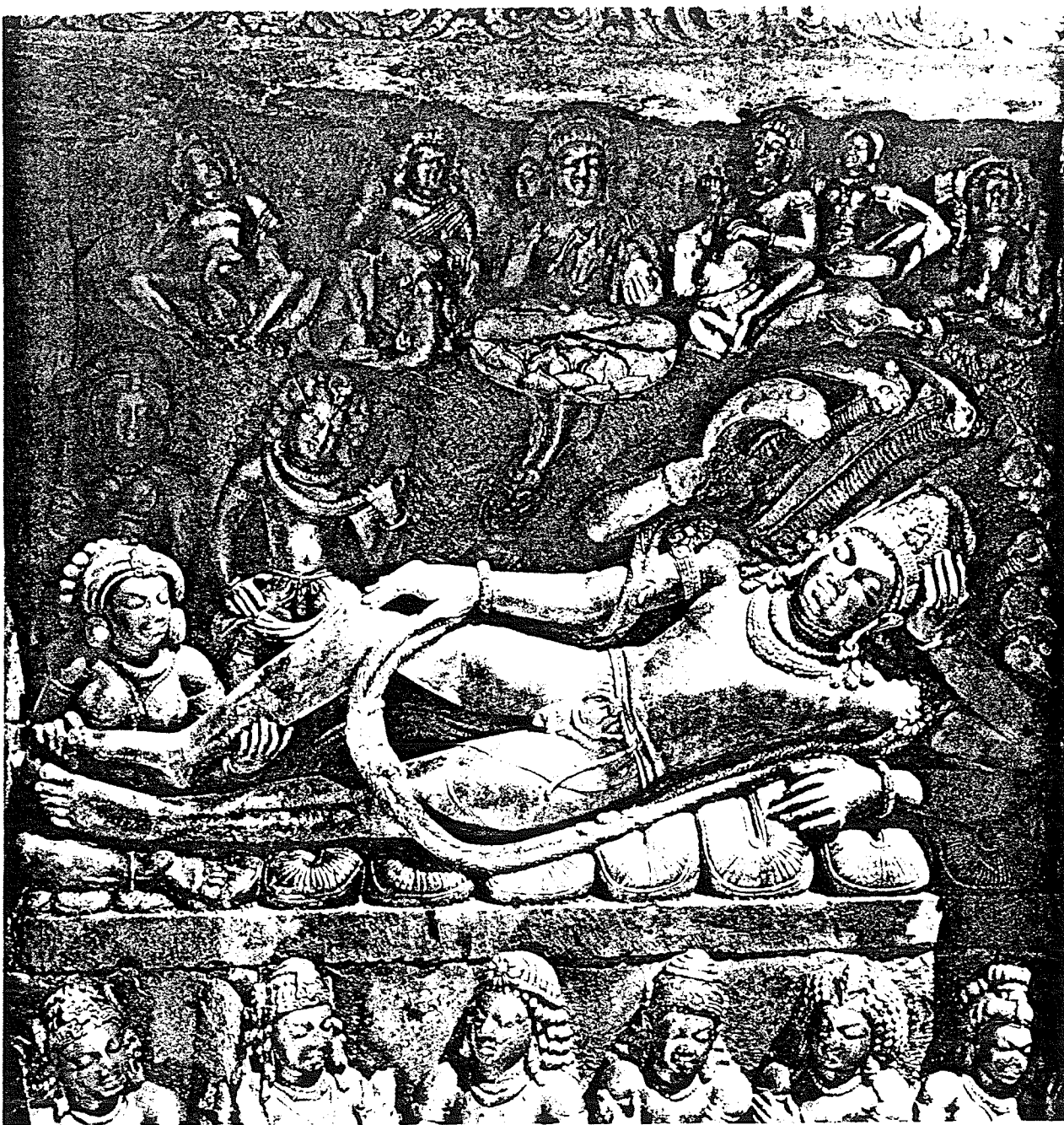


Plate 12: Sesaśayanamūrti of Viṣṇu: Viṣṇu sleeping on the serpent Śeṣa. Daśāvatara temple, Deogarh (Central India), 7th century. Brahmā seated on the lotus above Viṣṇu issues from a long-stemmed lotus which grows from navel of the sleeping god. From Danielou frontispiece.

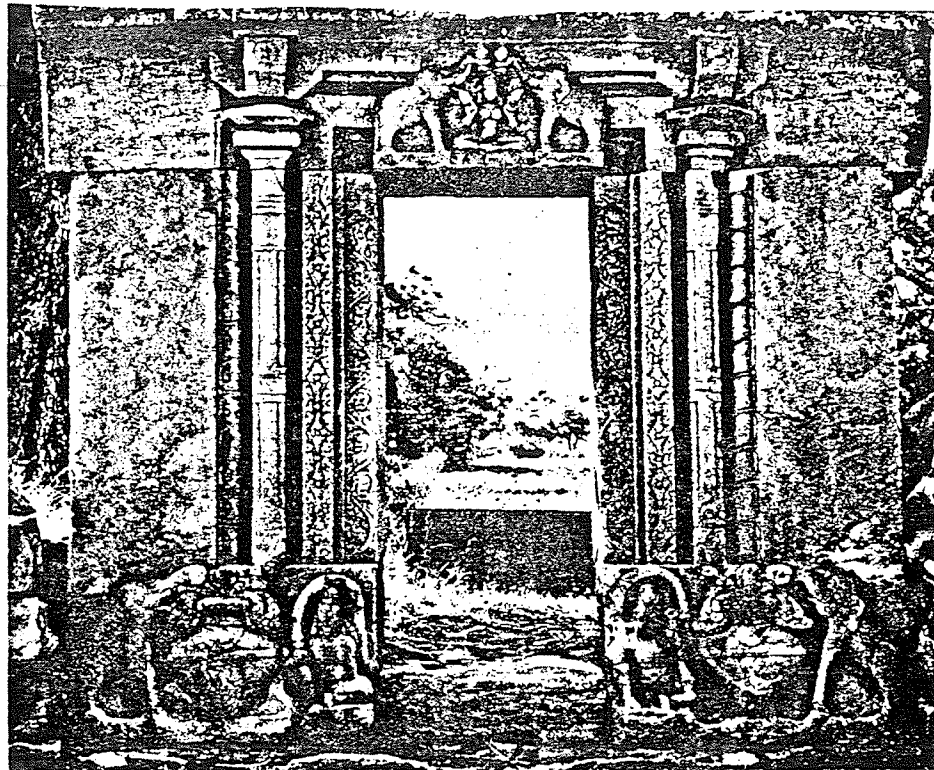


Plate 13: Doorway flanked by pūrṇakumbha suggesting Gaṅgā and Yamunā. In the center of the lintel above the door is the image of the abhiṣeka of Śrī. Western Chalukya, 6th century A.D., Aihole, Western India. From Sivaramamurti, **Some Aspects of Indian Culture** (New Delhi: National Museum, 1969) Fig. 8



Plate 14: Gaṅgā and Yamunā guarding temple doorway, Gupta, 5th century A.D. from Buxar, Bihar, Indian Museum. From Sivaramamurti, *Some Aspects of Indian Culture*, Fig. 6.

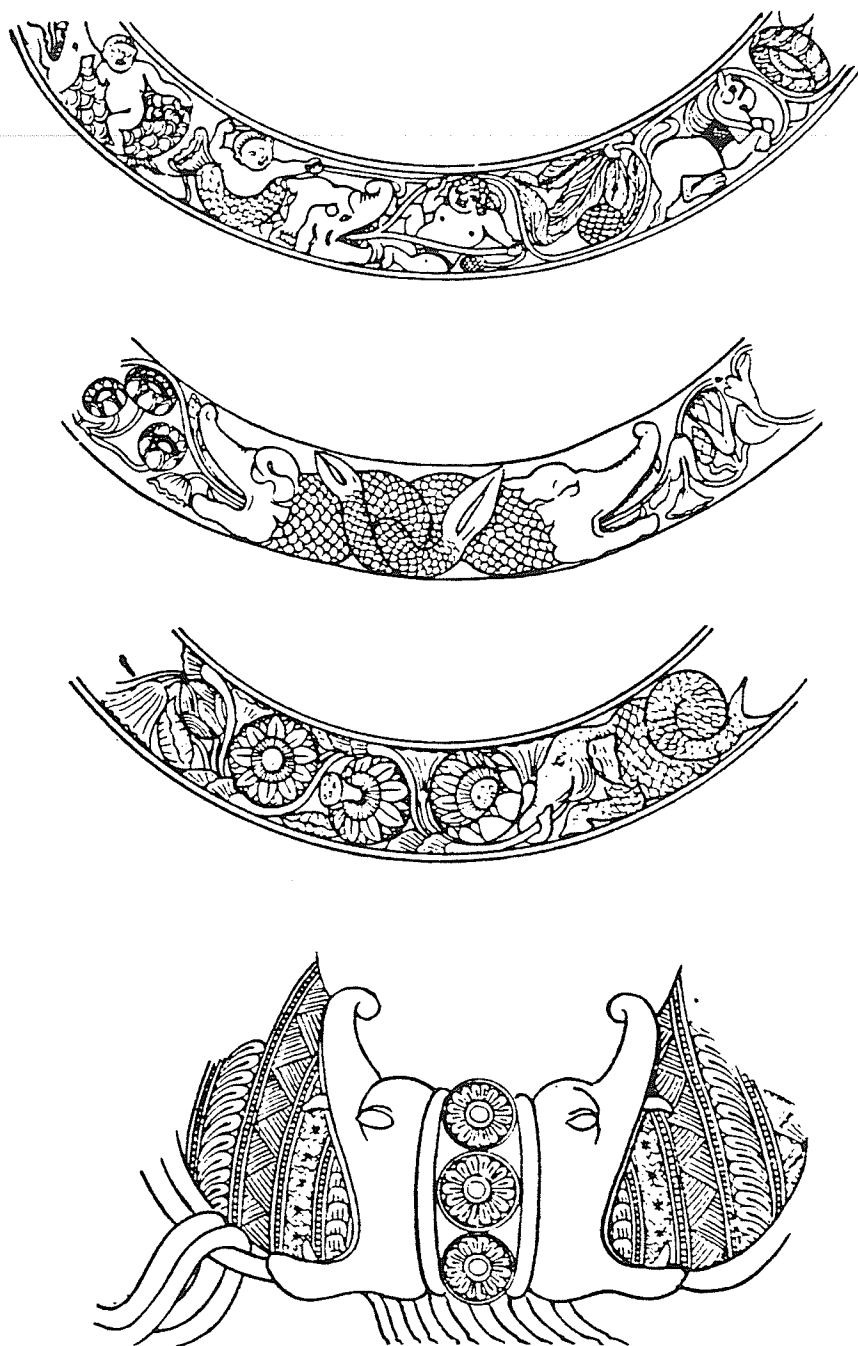


Plate 15: Vegetation flowing from the mouth of makara.
 Amarāvati c. 200 A.D. From A. Coomarswamy
 Yakṣa, pt. II, plate 3.



Plate 16: Nāḍimātrika, goddess with jug and tray, Kushana, 1st century A.D. From C. Sivaramamurti, *Sri Lakshmi in Indian Art and Thought*, Fig. 36.

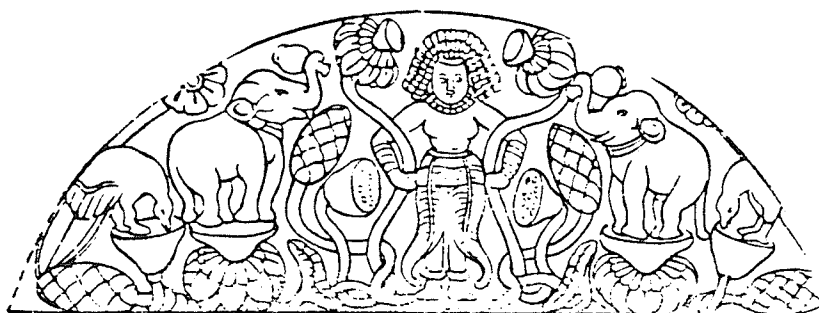


Plate 17: Abhisheka of Sri. Udayagiri, Orissa 1st century B.C. From A. Coomaraswamy Yakṣas, pt. II, plate 44. The image of Sri also decorates the center of the lintel in plate 13.