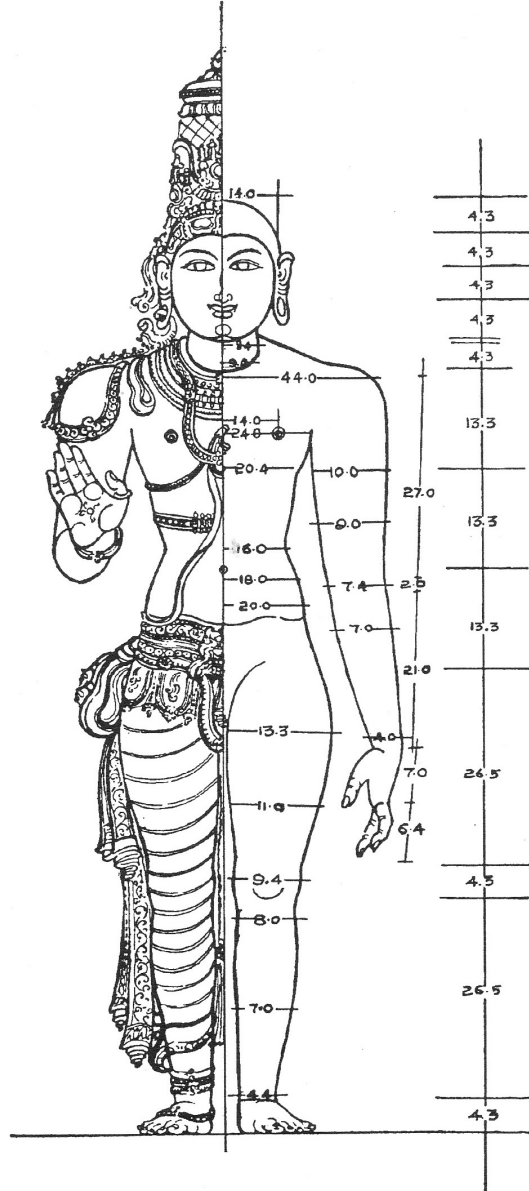


VAIṢṆAVA ICONOLOGY

Based on Pañcarātra Āgama



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INTRODUCTION

Iconology is defined as the study of the symbolism behind sacred images. One of the most prominent tools of devotion in Hinduism is the use of images. These images or icons are made of wood, stone, metal or painted on cloth.

Definition; Icon (*ikon*) is a word derived from the Greek and is defined as an image or representation of a religious figure. Iconology or iconography is the study of icons.

The term generally used by non-Hindus and unfortunately by Hindus themselves when referring to these sacred images is IDOL. This term is actually pejorative — a demeaning, insulting word first used by Christian missionaries who perceived Hinduism in an extremely negative way — describing us as pagans, heathens and idolaters. The use of images is also predominant among Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians who refer to sacred images as ICONS to differentiate them from the idols of the heathens.

An icon can be defined as a sacred symbol which embodies a spiritual truth and is worthy of veneration and contemplation. All Hindu icons are visual representatives of God and the Spiritual Forces which support, sustain and direct the Cosmos. The art and symbology of Icons has been developed to an extremely sophisticated degree by the Hindu mind. Each and every feature of an icon has a profound truth behind it, and all the mystical teachings of the sages is presented to the spiritual seekers through the means of these icons and symbols.

Icons are the most predominant aspect of our faith and yet the study of their meaning is also one of the most neglected aspects of our religious education. Over thousands of years art, narratives, music and dance have been used to convey the highest, most profound and complex spiritual truths. Most often their utility and influence have been neglected or overlooked. In this book I am attempting to revive the study and meaning of the sacred symbols so that we can all appreciate and value what our ancestors and gurus have generated and handed down to us.

How can frail mortal human beings, praise, worship and develop a loving relationship with a Being that we cannot understand, know or feel? So God out of His boundless compassion, condescends to take a material form and to manifest Himself to us so that He may receive our offerings, worship, praise and devotion, and in turn can bestow upon us His Grace and blessings. The icon is the point of meeting, where aspiring mankind meets the descending Godhead.

The Technique of Icons

The icons in which the Godhead manifests itself are thus not merely "representations" of the Godhead but are in fact a "focus" or "locus" of the Godhead. This means that God is actually present in the icons. How is this doctrine justified? Firstly God is omnipresent (all-pervading), omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipotent (all-powerful). The entire creation is pervaded by the Godhead, there is no place or thing in this universe which is devoid of the presence of God. So naturally it follows that the Godhead is also present in the icon. When the icon is properly consecrated according to the prescribed rites — God is

implored to be especially present in the icon out of compassion and love so that we in turn may love and adore Him/Her. Secondly God is the Inner-witness who knows our every thought and emotion, and Scripture tells us that God always responds to our devotion. So God with a small fraction of His limitless being takes up residence in the consecrated icon in a very special and specific way, and because by definition God is omnipotent — all-powerful, this empowering of the icon is certainly no effort on his part!!

Terminology

In Sanskrit there is a very rich terminology that is used when referring to icons;

- bera* — image
- mūrti* — anything which has definite shape and physical limits, an embodiment or incarnation.
- bimba* — reflection or prototype — the original or model after which a thing is copied (the Original Being of course is God)
- vigraha* — extension, expansion, form.
- pratima* — resemblance, similitude, representation
- pratīka* — symbol
- rūpa* — form, aggregate, a sum total of form.
- arca* — object of adoration and worship

According to the doctrines of the Agamas, the Supreme Being is transcendent and Absolute and beyond the comprehension of the finite human mind. But because of His limitless compassion and love for His creation and by a ray of His divine potency, He takes up abode in the icon which is constructed strictly according to the dictates of the scriptures and consecrated accordingly. Such a descent (*arca-avatāra*) takes place for receiving the devotional service of the devotees and for bestowing grace upon them in return.

The Purpose of Icons

All of human understanding and interaction takes place through the use of symbols. Words are symbols which convey and communicate a universally accepted meanings or idea. In the spiritual science of the Vedas the entire universe is said to comprise of name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*). If one does not have the vocabulary (*nāma*) one cannot understand an experience (*rūpa*) and if one cannot understand and define an experience to oneself, one cannot share it with others. The purpose of the icon is to represent, through a combination of forms and proportions, some fundamental aspect of the cosmos and its presiding consciousness which is not directly perceptible by our senses. Although these cosmic realities cannot be perceived, they can be experienced, the icons are the vocabulary whereby we interpret the experience of the divine to ourselves and convey that understanding to others.

The Supreme Being is all-pervading and intimately close. The entire universe is

pervaded within and without by Him. He cannot be confined to the icon because of His all-pervasiveness but through the power of mantras (sacred formulae) and *mudras* (ritual gestures) the Divine Essence is invoked into the icon and He, through His infinite mercy condescends to take residence in the gross object for the purpose of receiving the worship of His devotees and bestowing Grace. In other words the divine Presence is particularized or focused in the icon. The energy that is already there is awakened, it does not enter from somewhere outside. The image of stone or brass is thus transformed into a living entity. Its actual shape and ornamentation are symbolic and convey meaning in every single aspect. Once the invocation ceremony (*prāṇa-pratiṣṭha*) has been performed, the icon is no longer regarded as merely 'symbolic' but as a *mūrti* which means 'a materialization or embodiment' of the Divine.

Theological and Scriptural support for the use of icons.

na ca rūpaṃ vinā dhyātum kenapi śakyate ||
 sarva rūpa nivṛttā hi buddhiḥ kutrāsyā tiṣṭhati |
 nivṛttā glāyate buddhir nidrayā vā parīyate ||
 tasmād vidvān upāsīta buddhyā sākaram eva tam |
 asti tasya parokṣaṃ tad iti kiñcid anusmaret ||
 sarvathā akāram uddiṣṭaṃ na parityajya paṇḍitaḥ ||

Without a form how can God be meditated upon? If he is completely formless, where will the mind fix itself? When there is nothing for the mind to attach itself to it will slip away from meditation, or will glide into a state of slumber. Therefore the wise will meditate on some form, remembering however that it is an indirect method, a particularization or indication of that which is completely formless. (Vishnu samhita 29:55 — 57)

The theology of the Pañcaratra affirms that the Supreme Being is a *Personal* God but at the same time declares that His form is undefinable (*anirdeśya*), incomprehensible (*acintya*) and infinite — i.e. unconditioned by Time and Space (*ananta*). This seems to be a contradiction because “personality” has limitations whereas the Supreme Being is declared by the Vedas to be free of every form of limitation!

All manifested beings are definable and comprehensible because of the four common characteristics which can be pointed out and understood;

1. *jāti* — genus or species, race, caste etc
2. *guna* — attributes such as black/white, tall/short etc.
3. *kriya* — activity such as walking, crawling, standing etc,
4. *sambandha* — relationship to other things and beings such as father/son, master/servant, possession/owner etc.

- ❖ As far as the Supreme Being is concerned no genus (source) can be postulated as He is the source of the entire creation and pervades it with a fraction of His potency.
- ❖ He is a repository of every positive quality imaginable in an inestimable degree, and He is devoid of every negative quality.
- ❖ His actions are incomprehensible because He pervades everything and therefore every conceivable activity is simultaneously His.
- ❖ His relationship to the universe is essentially inconceivable and can only be described in allegorical terms such as *śarira-śariri sambandha* — the Lord is to the universe as the soul is to the body. But all the allegory possible cannot adequately describe His intimate relationship with the universe

and the individual Self.

It is for these reasons that the Lord is declared to be Personal but inconceivable and indescribable.

In the Vishnu Samhita 29; 49b — 58. It is pointed out that it is beyond the capabilities of an average human being to adequately conceive of the Supreme Being for the purpose of contemplation. The human mind relies on concepts and forms and contrasts, in order to focus its thinking processes. Without a definitive content, the mind wanders and contemplation becomes impossible. So therefore the Agamas have prescribed the use of symbols for focusing the mind and providing content upon which to meditate. This content itself must be meaningful, in order to bring about the required change of consciousness.

In the Parama Samhita 3:7 it is stated;

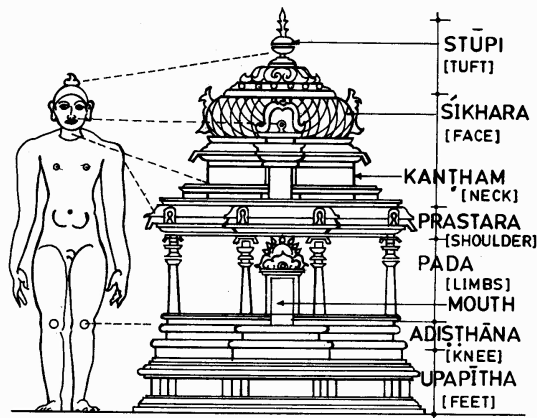
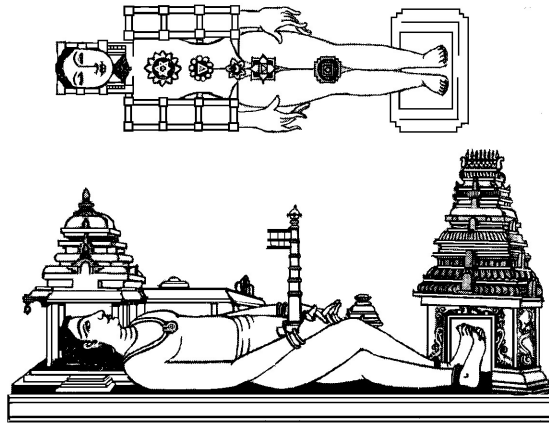
nirākāre tu deveśe na arcanam sambhave nṛṇām ।
na ca dhyānam na ca stotraṁ tasmāt sākāram arcayet ॥

It is impossible for the human being to worship, meditate or praise a deity without form. Therefore the Lord should be worship through an icon.

The Sriprashna Samhita 18:1 affirms that the descent of the Lord into a permanent iconic abode is due to His Divine Initiative alone, for bestowing grace and blessings upon the devotees.

The Temple Structure and Icons

The human body is the temple for the Indwelling Spirit of God (*Antaryāmin*). All the various parts of the temple structure correspond to various parts of the human body. The temple is the physical body which houses the presence of God. So the actual building of the temple itself is a symbol of the presence of God in the world. The temple with all its intricate imagery represents the universe in all its variety and just as on the macrocosmic scale the universe is the *body* of the Lord so on a microcosmic scale when the icon represents the manifested Lord; the temple is His Body.



TEMPLE AS PURUṢA

The Forms of the Icons

In the Parama Samhita 3:6 it is pointed out that the Icons of the Lord have to be human in form. Because when the Lord wishes to grant His mercy to humankind He takes the form of a human being.

athā puruṣa-rūpeṇa kalpayitvā tam acyutam |

Therefore the Imperishable One should be conceived of in a human form.

Each particular deity is shown in various ways with different paraphernalia, several arms, heads, weapons, ornaments and animal vehicles, accompanied by their consorts. Each and every one of these objects has an esoteric significance as is explained in the various Puranas like Vishnu Purana, Srimad Bhagavatam and the Agamic literature as well as the Upanishads such as Gopala-

uttara-tapini Upanishad. The number of hands represents various attributes, the nature of which are indicated by the weapon (*āyudha*) held. In general a large number of hands indicates a more rajasic character — for example Sudarshana, and the fewer the hands the more sattvik is the nature of the deity depicted.

Types of Icons.

Two types of icons are encountered in the temple. There is the main deity which is usually carved out of stone or sometimes in the case of very large icons such as in Srirangam temple they are molded out of plaster. This is known as the **mula vigraha**, and once installed can never be removed — this icon receives all the daily services. The second type of icon is known as the *proxy icon* (*utsava vigraha*). It is smaller than the

main icon and is usually constructed of an alloy of 5 metals (*pañca-loha*). During festivals the Spiritual Energy (*śakti*) from the main icon is transferred temporarily into the proxy icon which is then taken out in procession and receives particular services.

The icons for use in the home for daily worship are either pictures or metal images. Metal images, when used for worship should be about 14 cms high.

Classification of Icons

Agamic Icons fall into three broad groups they are;

citra	sculptured in the round.
citrārdha	base-relief
citrabhāsa	painted

Those that are sculptured in the round can be classified according to movability as;

cala	movable,
acala	immovable,
calācala	both movable and immovable.

They are also classified according to temperament;

śānta or saumya	those of a peaceful demeanor
raudra or ugra	those of a terrifying nature.

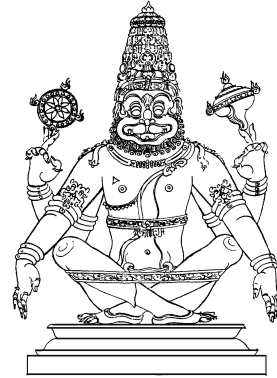
The immovable icons are known as dhruva-bera or mūla-vigraha and are the main deity of the temple, they are almost always sculptured out of either stone, or if very large (like in the temple of

Srirangam) they are molded out of plaster, and are classified by posture;—

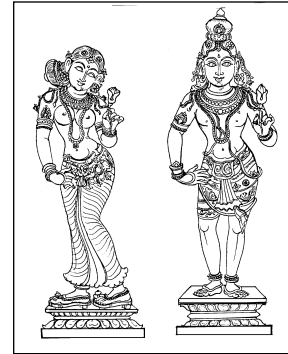
sthānaka — standing, *āsina* — sitting, *śayana* — reclining

These *mula-beras* are further classified according to the purpose for which they are worshipped, different results being obtained from each type.

1. yoga mūr̥ti; These icons depict the Supreme Being in various meditational postures. They are worshipped by the aspirant desiring self-mastery or Yoga (unification with God). These icons should be established and consecrated on the banks of rivers, in forests or on top of mountains, it should be quite far from human habitation, the reason being quite obviously in order to afford a peaceful and undisturbed environment in which the aspirant can practice yogic meditation.



2. bhoga-mūr̥ti; These icons depict the Lord along with His consorts in a domestic situation. This is the best suited form for worship in temples constructed in towns and places of habitation. These icons are conducive of enjoyment and happiness and can be resorted to by all classes and by people of all temperaments. The images of Radha-Krishna and Lakshmi-Narayana are of this type



3. vīra-mūr̥ti; These icons depict the Lord in a heroic posture such as Rama defeating Ravana. The eight-armed forms of Vishnu and Lakshmi are also considered as Vira-murtis.

This type of icon bestows achievement of ambitions and goals, power and victory over enemies (such as anger, greed, delusion etc.), it can be established either in the town or outside of it.



4. ugra-mūr̥ti; This is the form which is used for protection against enemies (either real or spiritual in the form of anger, delusion, desire etc.). They are characterized by sharp teeth and a large number of arms carrying various weapons, wide eyes and a flaming halo around the head. This icon may only be set up in the North-eastern corner of the settlement or village. The setting up of an *Ugra-murti* in the midst of a town or city is prohibited. If it is established then a *santa-murti* must be placed directly in front of it, or a tank of water should be constructed in front of the temple. The Vishvarupa, Narasimha, Sudarsana and the Vata-patra-sayin are of the Ugra type.



5. abhicārika-mūrti; used for the purpose of inflicting death and destruction on one's enemies or confounding his purposes. This form is only set up far from a town and never in a place of human habitation. (This form is purely theoretical as there are no temples of this type and no Vaiṣṇava would have anything to do with them).

Orientation of Icons

The standing and seated icons are orientated either facing the east or the west. The *sayana bera* (reclining) can face any of the four cardinal points, if facing North then the head is to the East, if facing South-the head is to

the West. If facing East or West then the head is to the South. Depending on the direction of the head of the Icon differing results are obtained;

East — <i>śāntidam</i> (peace)	West — <i>puṣṭidam</i> (vigour)
South — <i>jayadam</i> (victory)	North — <i>abhicārikam</i> (depredation)

The *Ugra-rupa* can only be established in the North-east of the settlement where it will give prosperity and happiness, the incorrect establishing of the *ugra-rupa* in a town or village leads to the following results;

In the East — destruction of village
 In the south-east — destruction of the settlement
 In the South — degradation of the womenfolk
 In the South-west — population will be decreased through disease
 In the west — bad conduct, depression and mental anguish
 In the north-west — delinquency amongst the populace
 In the north — various types of afflictions.

Narasimha — usually the yoga form — is always set up to the west of the main sanctorum, even in Siva temples.

Karma Bimbas.

A karma bimba is a *proxy* image of the main Icon which is used for a variety of practical purposes. The life force (*prāṇa*) from the main Icon is transferred into the karma bimba for a short duration for serving the particular purpose. Thereafter it is transferred back into the main Icon. In a temple consecrated according to the Agamas there should be three, five or six such karma-bimbas. Five are most common and are known as the **Pañca-bera**.

dhruvam tu grāma rakṣārtham arcan artham tu kautukam |
 snānārtham snapanam proktam balyartham baliberakam |
 utsava cotsavartham ca pañca-bera prakalpitaḥ ||

1. *dhruva-bera* — the main icon in the sanctum sanctorum which is of the immovable kind, constructed of stone and permanently fixed. It protects the town
2. *kautuka-bera* — the movable image used for daily offerings .
3. *snapana-bera* — the icon used for the daily bathing ceremony.
4. *bali-bera* — icon used for the daily *bali* offerings in the courtyard of the temple.

5. *utsava-bera* — the icon which is taken out in procession on festivals.
 6. *śayana-bera* — the icon used for putting to rest at night

Few temples are opulent enough to possess and to handle all these five *beras* so the general situation is to have two *beras* only; the **mula-bera** and the **utsava-bera**. The *utsava-bera* fulfills the function of all the other 4 types. These *karma-bimbas* have to correspond in certain iconical forms to the *dhruva-bera*. If the *dhruva-bera* stands they stand, if the *dhruva-bera* sits they sit, but if the *dhruva-bera* reclines then the *karma-bimbas* either stand or sit. They also have to correspond in the number of arms and various other paraphernalia.

karmārcā sarvathā kāryā mūla-bimba anusāriṇī | Viśvaksena Samhita 17; 11.
The karma-bimbas must correspond in every way to the mula-bimba.

Placement of the Pañca-Beras

The five *karma beras* have their specific places around the *Mula-bera* in the sanctum.

mūla berasya purataḥ utsavaṃ saṃniveśayet |
 tat pūrvaṃ karma-beraṃ tu baliṃ dīpaṃ ca dakṣiṇe ||
 tasya dakṣiṇa pārśve tu snapanam sanniveśayet |
 utsavasya ca vame tu tirthaṃ śayanam eva vā ||

The Utsava-bimba should be kept in front of the Mula-bimba. The Karma-bimba (for daily offerings) should be kept in front of that. The Bali-bera should be kept along with the lamp and the Snapana-bera to the right. The Tirtha-bera and the Sayana-bera should be kept to the left of the Utsava-bera. (Aniruddha Samhita 15; 41-42.)

Construction of Icons

In the Agamas and Silpa Sastras (canons of architecture) there are *dhyana slokas* (visualizations) which are given; describing the exact features of the particular Deity and the paraphernalia in great detail for the purpose of meditation. It is according to these *dhyana slokas* that the icons are constructed.

Certain proportions having symbolic significance, are essential features of icons as well as of temple architecture. The image is made in strict conformity to the original canonical texts and concentration and visualization is extremely important. Any omission, error or oversight is attributed to imperfect concentration and slacking of

attention, in this case the image is discarded and the process is deferred.

The Agamas insist on the necessity of making the icon as beautiful as possible but actually even an ill-shaped image made strictly according to the Agamic directions serves the same purpose as a very artistic and beautifully executed one.

The construction is always begun upon a date set according to astrology, being an auspicious day and in harmony with the nature of the deity. The Silpi or craftsman is expected to maintain his ritual purity during the process of construction and there are several disciplines which he has to undertake until the completion of the task.

Materials of Construction

kṛtvā pratinidhiṃ samyag dāru loha śilādibhiḥ |
tat sthāpayitvā māṃ sthāne śāstra dṛṣṇa vartmanā ||

Padma Samhita Kriya Pada 1;5

According to the Agamas, icons can be constructed of stone, wood, metal, clay, *kadi-sarkara* — a kind of mortar, precious stones or painted on cloth. Those made in metal are usually sculptured first in wax and then cast in metal.

Iconometry — Measurement of Icons

Dhruva Bera

The height of the *Dhruva-bera* varies. It is either taken in proportion to the temple super structure or the temple measurements are taken from the *dhruva-bera*.

Example 1

The whole Icon consists of three parts; 2 parts are the Icon proper and 1 part is the pedestal. Multiply the whole length of the Icon by 4 and divide by 8. One 8th is the width of the doorway into the sanctum.

Example 2

The whole length of the Icon including pedestal should be 7/ 8th of the height of the doorway. (i.e. height + 7 x 8 = doorway). If the Icon is made 2 meters in height then the following measurements are calculated;—

Doorway =	2 .28 mtrs high x 1.14 mtrs in width.
Sanctum =	4.57 mtrs square
Vimana =	9.14 mtrs high
Mandapa =	9.14 mtrs wide
Plinth =	3 mtrs high

Proportional measurement of Karma Bimbas

mūla-bimba samucchrāyāṃ dvidhā vāpi tridhāpi va |
caturdhā vā saṃvibhajya eka bhāgena kalpayet ||
utsavārcāṃ tad ucchrāyāṃ dvidhā vāpi tridhāpi vā |
caturdhā vā vibhajya eka bhāgena parikalpayet ||

Īśvara Samhita 17; 242, 243.

The *karma-bimbas* should be either a quarter, a third or half of the height of the mula--bimba.

Nitya Sūris

Every image of Vishnu must be accompanied by the *Nitya Suris* which are the effulgent paraphernalia of the Lord. Each one possesses an aspect of the power of the Lord. Kashyapa points out that if they are absent then some negative reactions will take place, the reason would be due to neglect.

Goddesses	— yajamana will lose wife or children.
Munis (sages)	— loss of dharma.
Viśvakṣena	— destruction of family.
Garuḍa	— increase of enemies.
cakra (Discus)	— life-span shortened.
śaṅkha (conch)	— insanity.
Dhvaja stambha (flag-pole)	— loss of status and prosperity
Yutheśa (rod)	— employees will be unfaithful

Position of the Deities in the Sanctum

The sanctum sanctorum is called the *garbhalaya* and is divided into half. The half should again be sub-divided into 10 parts. The deities are established as follows;

Śiva Lingam in the 10th part i.e. in the centre.

Brahma is placed in the 9th part.

Viṣṇu is placed in the 8th part.

Śaṅmuga is placed in the 7th part.

Sarasvati in the 6th.

Sūrya in the 5th.

Ganeśa in the 4th.

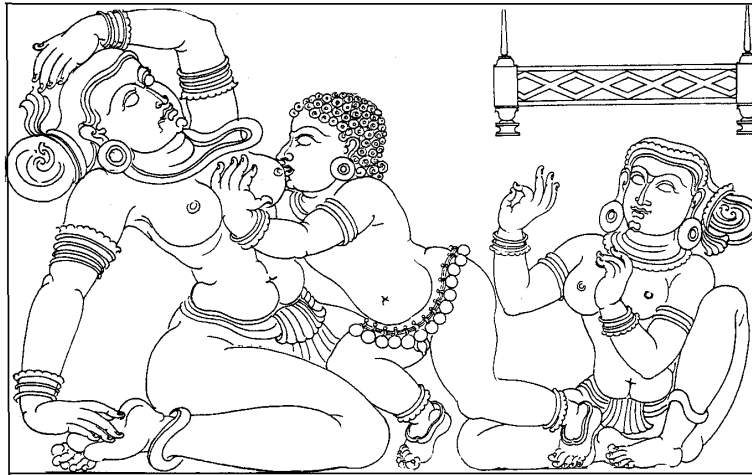
Bhairava in the 3rd

śakti in the 2nd place from the rear wall.

Placement of the Vyūhas

In the placement of the Vyūha forms around the sanctum they are arranged as follows;

east; vāsudeva	south; sankarṣana
west; pradyumna	north; aniruddha



THEOLOGY OF THE PAÑCARĀTRA

The Absolute Reality in the Pancarātra is same Brahman revealed through the Upaniṣads and characterized by bliss and devoid of all negative qualities.

ānanda lakṣaṇam brahma, sarva heya vivarjitam (J.S. 4:60 & P.S. 1;5;29 40.)

All schools of Hindu theology are *pan-en-theistic* which affirms that the material universe (which is nothing but energy) is the physical body of the Godhead and it is also pervaded in the form of consciousness by that same divine nature. In other words — what we refer to as “God” (Brahman) is the totality of Being — a combination of both the physical universe as well as spiritual realm.

The word ‘Brahman’ used in the Upaniṣads is derived from the root *bṛh* which means ‘to expand’ or ‘to grow’ and as such indicates that Immensity which includes everything which is conceivable.

The Vedas declare — *sarvam khalvidam brahma* — ‘all this is Brahman’.

This Immensity Brahman is beyond the comprehension of any being. Out of this transcendental Being there issues forth the first form of Godhead known as the Para-Vāsudeva in a subtle form with two arms, crystal in complexion and clad in yellow garments. This form is identified also as Nārāyaṇa (which means “the ground of all being”).

In the Pañcarātra, Paramātmā, Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, Bhagavān and Vāsudeva are the various names by which Brahman the Supreme is known.

The term Bhagavān indicates the one who possesses *Bhaga* — the *ṣaḍguṇas*, or the group of six blessed qualities. They are *jñāna* (knowledge), *aiśvarya* (sovereignty), *śakti* (ability, potency), *bala* (strength), *vīrya* (virility, unaffectedness) and *tejas* (splendour).

The first phase of the manifestation of the universe is called "*Śuddha sṛṣṭi*" or "pure creation". The transition from absolute transcendence of the Godhead to physical manifestation begins with the Highest Brahman — Vāsudeva, whose nature consists of Existence (*sat*), Consciousness (*cit*) Bliss (*ānanda*), Eternality (*ananta*) and Impeccability (*amalam*).

It is during this phase that the six attributes of the Supreme Being make their appearance. These six attributes together form the "body" of the Supreme Being who gets the name vāsudeva thereby.

1. The ṣaḍ guṇas. The Six Incommunicable Attributes.

1. *jñānam* (Knowledge, omniscience) this is the essential attribute of the Supreme Being.
2. *aiśvarya* (sovereignty) *iccha shakti* this attribute can be described as activity based upon total independence, or unimpeded activity.
3. *Śakti* (Energy) this is the potency or the ability to become the material cause of the universe as well as the efficient cause. This guṇa is also defined as the "accomplishing of the non accomplished" i.e. the ability to produce something, the cause of which can not be accounted for by empirical methods.
4. *bala* (Strength) this is omnipotence; defined as the total absence of fatigue, and the power to manifest and sustain all things.
5. *vīrya* (Creative Potency) defined as immutability unaffectedness or changelessness in spite of being the material cause of the universe the Lord is in no way changed or effected by this.
6. *tejas* (Splendour) absolute sovereignty, defined as the power to defeat all others and Total self sufficiency the Lord is complete in Himself and needs nothing outside of Himself.

In their totality these six qualities form the "body" of the Highest Being — God Vāsudeva and His consort Lakṣmī. (*ṣaḍ guṇa vigrahaṁ devam*).

The Pancarātra teaches a chain of other emanations proceeding from these six qualities, each one originating from the one before, just as one flame proceeds from another flame.

The primary emanations are known as *Vyūhas* which means the "splitting" of the six qualities into three pairs. This does not mean that each emanation has only two qualities; each emanation is Viṣṇu himself together with all the six qualities, of which only two become outwardly manifest and the other four remain dormant.

2. Description of the Vyūhas

1. **Saṅkarṣaṇa** — with this vyūha the "non pure" creation becomes dimly manifest like an embryo without internal distinctions. The guṇa concerned is **bala**, (omnipotence). Balarama is connected with this aspect, also described as ""Aśeṣa", "bhuvana ādhāra" (the support of the universe Ananta Śeṣa).

2. **Pradyumna** — with this Vyūha the duality of Spirit (*Puruṣa*) and Matter (*Prakṛti*) makes its appearance, by means of the **aiśvarya** (absolute independence) guṇa.

3. **Aniruddha** — this Vyūha by means of the **Śakti** (ability to become the material universe) guṇa, causes the evolution of the atoms of Manifest matter and of gross Time out of the earlier "Primordial matter" and "Subtle Time". This allows the evolution of the "Matter" and "Spirit" resulting in the "mixed creation" (*miśra sṛṣṭi*) of the jīvātmans. Aniruddha becomes the ruler of the Cosmic Eggs (*brahmāṇḍas*) and their contents.

3. Sub-emanations of the Vyūhas.

From each of the 4 Vyūhas three sub-Vyūhas emanate called *vyuhāntaras*. These entities have the function of presiding over the divisions of Gross Time as the Lords of the months through the medium of the Sun in the 12 signs of the Zodiac.

Vyūha	Vyuhāntaras			
1. Vāsudeva	⇒ 2 Keśava	⇒ 2 Nārāyaṇa	⇒ 2 Mādhava.	
2. Saṅkarṣaṇa	⇒ 2 Govinda	⇒ 2 Viṣṇu	⇒ 2 Madhusudana	
3. Pradyumna	⇒ 2 Trivikrama	⇒ 2 Vāmana	⇒ 2 Śrīdhara.	
4. Aniruddha	⇒ 2 Hṛṣīkeśa	⇒ 2 Padmanābha	⇒ 2 Damodara.	

In addition to the above 12 manifestations there arise another set of 12 emanations called the *vidyeśvaras* the Lords of wisdom, these are;

Vyūha	Vidyeshvaras			
1. Vāsudeva	⇒ Vāsudeva II	⇒ 2 Puruṣottama	⇒ 2 Janārdana	
2. Saṅkarṣaṇa	⇒ 2 Saṅkarṣaṇa II	⇒ 2 Adhokṣaja	⇒ 2 Upendra	
3. Pradyumna	⇒ 2 Padyumna II	⇒ 2 Nṛsiṃha	⇒ 2 Hari	
4. Aniruddha	⇒ 2 Aniruddha II	⇒ 2 Acyuta	⇒ 2 Kṛṣṇa	

Altogether these manifestations are known as the *caturvimśati murtayaḥ* — The 24 manifestations.

4. Vibhavas & Avatāras - Manifestations and Incarnations

To the "Pure creation" belong the Vibhavas and Avatāras of God. There is a distinction between the primary (*mukhya*) and secondary (*gauṇa/āveśa*) incarnations. The primary Avatāras are Viṣṇu Himself with a transcendental body, while the secondary Avatāras are souls in bondage with a natural physical body which is possessed or pervaded by the Lord for fulfilling some purpose or particular mission. e.g. Vyāsa, Arjuna, Paraśurāma, Buddha etc.

The Viśvakṣena Samhita declares that all the Vibhavas (Manifestations) originate directly or indirectly from Aniruddha.

5. Arca - Iconic Manifestation.

When a stone image (bera) is fashioned according to the principles laid down in the Agama, and is consecrated according to the rules and rites, then the Supreme Being by dint of His omnipotence and Omnipresence is capable of descending into such an icon with a tiny ray of His Potency (Śakti) in a subtle body known as a "*divya maṅgala vighraha*". This is technically known as the Arca Avatāra or Iconical descent in which the Lord manifests Himself out of compassion for the embodied beings in order to bestow His blessings upon them and to receive their offerings.

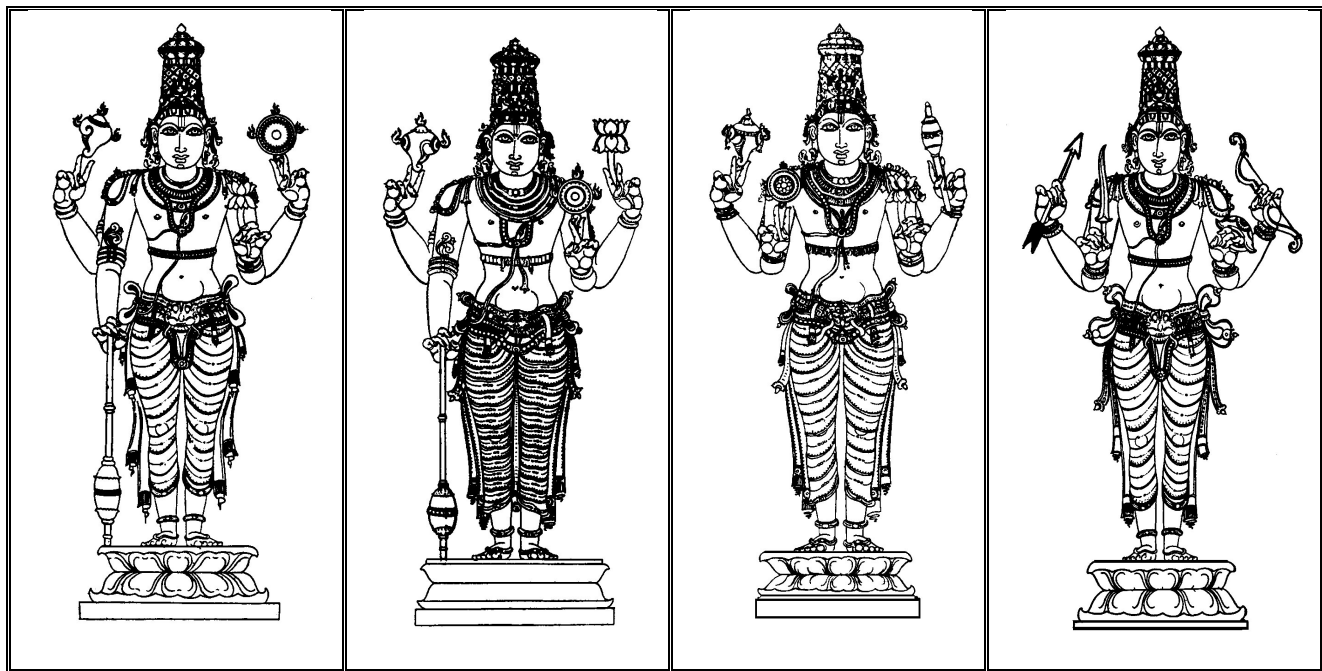
These Icons are said to be of three types;

1. *Svayam vyakta* — Self manifested; uncreated by human hands.
2. *Purva sthāpita* — Those established and worshipped many years ago by great sages and gods.
3. *Pratiṣṭhita* — And those presently established by wealthy Beings.

Chart of the Vyūha Correspondances

	Vāsudeva	Sankarṣaṇa
Objective	Brahman — the Absolute Godhead.	Īśvara — the Supreme God
Subjective	The Supreme Self	The cognizer of the unmanifested, latent objectivity.
Qualities — Guṇas	All six	Jñāna/bala (wisdom/power)
Phases of manifestation	Viśrānti — latent	Udaya — emerging
States of consciousness	Turīya transcendence	Suṣupti /Prajña Deep sleep/conceptual
Antaraṅga - Yoga	Samādhi	Dhyāna
Cognition	wisdom (<i>jñāna</i>).	mind (<i>āśaya</i>)
Sonic	Para - transcendental	Pasyanti – mental visualization
Elements	Vāyu-tattva (air)	Tejas-tattva (fire)

	Pradyumna	Aniruddha
Objective	Hiraṇya-garbha — the World-self. The collection of jīvas.	Virāj — the manifested cosmos.
Subjective	The experiencer of the subtle levels of possibility.	The experiencer of gross things
Qualities — Guṇas	Aiśvarya/vīrya (perfection/virility)	śakti/tejas (energy/brilliance)
Phases of manifestation	Vyāpti — pervading	Vyakti — individuation
States of consciousness	Svapna /Taijasa Dreaming/imaginative	Jāgrata /Viśva Waking/perceptual
Antaraṅga - Yoga	Dhāraṇa	Pratyahāra
Cognition	senses (<i>indriya</i>),	external objects (<i>artha</i>),
Sonic	Madhyama – internally audible	Vaikhari – articulated sound.
Elements	Apa-tattva (water)	Bhu-tattva (Earth)

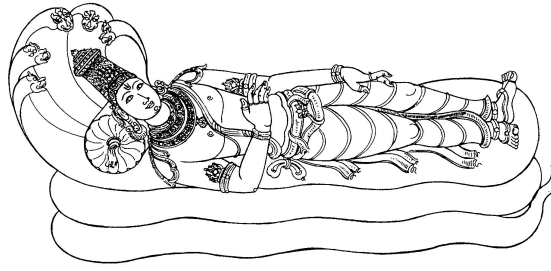


Vasudeva

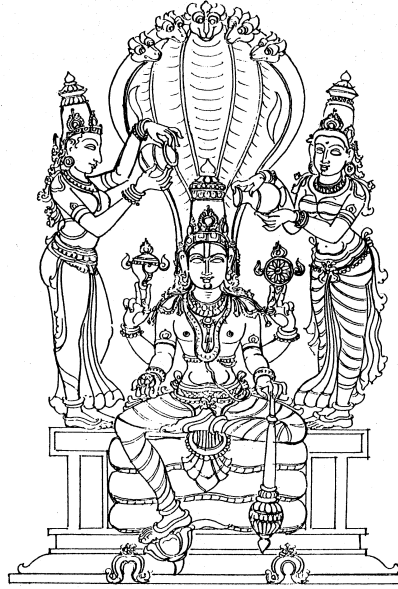
Saṅkarṣana

Pradyumna

Aniruddha



Nārāyaṇa



Para Vāsudeva/Vaikuṇṭha Nātha with Śrī-devī and Bhū-devī



Vāsudeva



Saṅkarṣaṇa



Pradyumna



Aniruddha

vyūhāntaras. These sub-emanations of the primary vyūhas have the function of presiding over the divisions of Gross Time as the Lords of the months through the medium of the Sun traversing through the 12 signs of the Zodiac.

Keśava	Govinda	Trivikrama	Hṛṣīkeśa
Nārāyaṇa*	Viṣṇu*	Vāmana	Padmanābha
Mādhava	Madhusūdana	Śrīdhara	Dāmodara

In addition to the above 12 manifestations there arise another set of 12 emanations called the **vidyeśvaras** the Lords of wisdom,

Vāsudeva II	Saṅkarṣaṇa II	Pradyumna II	Aniruddha II
Puruṣottama	Adhokṣaja	Nṛsiṃha	Acyuta
janārdana	Upendra	Hari	Kṛṣṇa

* These are sub-emanations although known by the same names as the Supreme Being.