"*Parivāradēvatas:*
Iconography and Iconometry"

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"PARIVĀRADĒVATAS:
ICONOGRAPHY AND ICONOMETRY"

Dr Govindu Surendra,

I deem it as a great privilege to preside over the Cultural History Section of the South Indian History Congress held from November 13-15, 2026 at the Department of History and Tourism, Mahatma Gandhi University, Nalgonda, Telangana. At the outset I express my deep sense of gratitude to the Executive Committee and Members of the 45th Annual Session of South Indian History Congress for assigning me the responsibility of the President of Cultural History Section. In a similar vein, I am also grateful to the Local Secretary and the members of the Organizing Committee of the Mahatma Gandhi University. In my own humble way, I shall endeavour my best to come up to your expectations. I have selected the above these, as culture and art not only intertwined but also deeply embedded with human intellectual achievements through customs, social behaviour and ideas.

Esteemed Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. Temples hold a prominent place in the Indian cultural way of life. Generally speaking, a temple is a 'place of worship'. It is also referred to as the 'house of God'. The earliest temples were probably built for the protection of the idols after their installation. The practice of first constructing a temple and subsequently consecrating an idol within it emerged at a later stage. The construction of temples and the making of Hindu deity idols in South

India can be traced back to the era of the Pallava kings, who flourished between the 4th and 9th centuries CE. However, the earliest archaeological evidence for temples datable to ca. 220-350 CE are unearthed in the Nagarjunakonda valley constructed by the Iksvakus of Vijayapuri. But the earliest references for temples are found in the Tamil Sangam literature is well known. The Chola kings, and successive dynasties and their rulers greatly encouraged temple construction and the making of idols in South India. According to the principles of *Silpa Śāstras*, a temple must be constructed for the sake of the idol, but the idol should not be prepared for the sake of the temple. The temple is merely an extension and reflection of the idol. Since it is an ancient practice to worship the deity's retinue alongside the presiding or main deity in a temple, the subsidiary shrines established with in temple complexes for various gods and goddesses are called *Parivāra* shrines and the idols in these shrines are called *Parivāradēvatas*. The significance of temple architecture and the characteristics of the idols are truly remarkable. *Āgamas* are the main sources to know about the various aspects. These *āgamas* are of two types namely, Vedic *āgamas* and non-Vedic *āgamas*. Among these, Vedic *āgamas* are of three types, namely, *Śaivāgamas, Vaiṣṇavāgamas* and *Śākteyāgamas. Avaidika āgamas* or non-Vedic *āgamas* refer to Buddhist and Jain *āgamas*. Not only the *āgamas* but also numerous treatises on *Vastu* and *Śilpaśāstra* describe the characteristics of icons or idols. Among them important *Śilpa* texts include *Aparājitapriccha, Mānasōllāsa, Amśumadhbēdāgama, Rūpamandaḍa, 'Viṣṇudharmōttara Purāṇa, Śilpa Ratna* and *Iśāna-Gurudēva-Paddati*. etc.

Attendant Shrines: *Śilpa Śāstras* state that these *Parivāra* shrines can also be built in the shape of *maṇḍapas* and *griha* (shrine-chamber) structures rising up to six storeys in height. Even if separate subsidiary shrines or temples are not constructed, the associated places; in temples where such installation is not feasible, at least pedestals bearing the names of the respective deities should be set up. The shrines or temples for the attendant deities, or the idols of the themselves, must be constructed within the temple enclosure. The characteristics of temple enclosures (*prākaras*) outlined in the *Silpa Sastras* specify that such enclosures should also be constructed around this subsidiary shrine to ensure both security and aesthetic appeal. *Parivāradēvata* shrines and the respective idols may be installed within the temple complex, extending from the first enclosure up to the fifth. When establishing these attendant shrines, if each is constructed as a separate small temple, the floor level of the attendant shrine must be lower than that of the main sanctum.

According to the *Mayamata Śilpaśāstra*, there are primarily four types of temples are 1. *Uttama* (Superior) 2. *Madhyama* (Medium) 3. *Adhama* (Inferior) and 4. *Kṣudra* or *Alpa* (Minor) Temples. These temples were designed to be aesthetically complete and magnificent, featuring surrounding enclosures. The shrines for the *Parivaradevatas* could be situated within these enclosures or *Prākarams*, even abutting the enclosure walls themselves. The shrines for the attendant deities may occupy half or even one third of the width of the main sanctum sanctorum; in some temples the images of these attendant deities are housed within the inner enclosure,

specifically in structures known as *devakoṣṭha* or *dēvagrihas*. In the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram rows of various shrines have been constructed around the temple within the inner enclosure.

Attendant Deities:

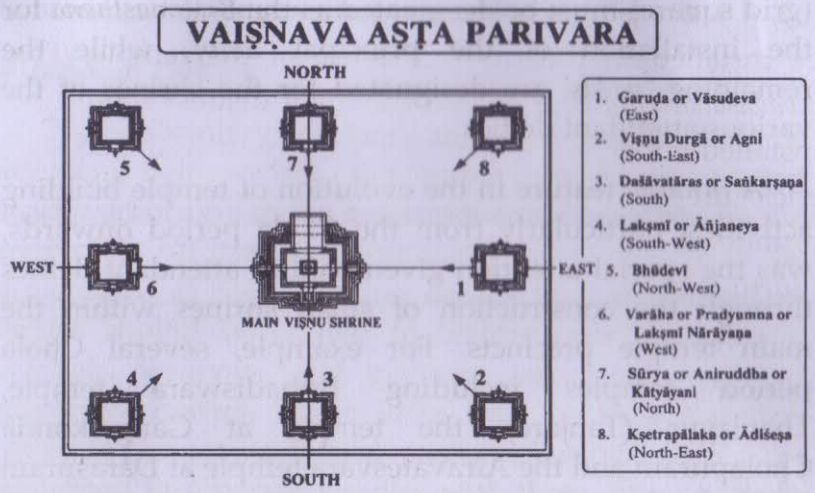
The subsidiary shrines and the heights of the attendant deities within the temple must be constructed strictly according to the measurements prescribed by the scriptures. All these measurements must conform to the dimensions of the presiding deity's idol; the attendant deities should be crafted to feature only the specific symbols, weapons, and postures associated with the respective deities. These idols may be in a standing (*sthānaka*) or seated (*āsana*) posture. Various deities are enshrined in separate temples with three, five, or seven enclosures. If one analyzes the underlying reason for establishing shrines for attendant deities, it becomes evident that Indian culture, characterized by the joint family system and shared customs reflects a unified identity in which distinct traits and features bear a striking resemblance to one another. Similarly, the divine is also understood through its close parallels with human activities and the family system; this is reflected in the establishment of temples where deities are enshrined alongside their divine families featuring idols that represent these specific familial relationships. The scriptures state that all such structures and arrangements must adhere to the principles of temple architecture and the arts. The site for temple construction must be leveled, and the ritual layout (*padavinyāsa*) must be marked out there. Through this process, the *vāstudēvatas* and *pādas* (grid sectors) are identified and the shrine of

the appropriate attendant deities assigned to each specific area. However, in this layout, the central *'pāda'* (grid square) must be designated as the *Brahmasthāna* for the installation of the principal deity, while the remaining *'pādas'* are designated for the shrines of the various attendant deities.

A notable feature in the evolution of temple building activities, particularly from the Chola period onwards, was the special attention given paid to attendant deities through the construction of small shrines within the main temple precincts. For example, several Chola period temples including Brihadiswara temple, Thanjavur (Tanjore), the temple at Gangaikonda Cholapuram and the Airavatesvara temple at Darasuram feature shrines dedicated to attendant deities. We can observe shrines dedicated to attendant deities in the Kakatiya era temples at Ganapuram and Palampet, as well as in Vijayanagara era temples such as those at Tirumala, Tadipatri, Markapuram, Srisailam, Lepakshi and Kadiri.

The forms of idols evolved at different stages throughout history is comparable to the scale of temple architecture. *Pārshva* and *Parivāra* deities were installed alongside the principal deity in various temples. Jaya, Vijaya, Vishvaksena, and Narada serve as the attendant deities of Lord Visnu, while Lakshmi, and Garuda are the flanking deities. Depictions of Prahlada, Narada, and their entourage alongside Lord Narasimha, one of the ten *avatāras* of Visnu. In the Vamana *avatāra,* figures such as Vindhyavalli, the wife of emperor Bali, Shukra, and Narada were among the accompanying divine personalities. Similarly, in the Rama *avatāra,* Bharata,

Lakshmana, Shatrugna, Hanuman, Narada and Vibhishana were the key figures in Viṣṇu entourage.



In the Śāktēya tradition, while worshipping Sakti as the presiding deity, goddesses such as Saptamatrikas Chandi, Kali, Bhairavi, Chamundi, etc. have been enshrined as *Pārsva* and *Parivāra* deities. These attendant deities they are called *Dēvagaṇas*. Those associated with Lord Visnu they are called *'Viṣṇu Gaṇas'*, while those associated with Lord Siva, are called *'Śiva Gaṇas'* or *'Rudra Gaṇas'*. Those associated with the form of Sakti are known *'Śakti Gaṇas'* or *'Mātrikas'*. In the tradition of village deities, the *Mātrikas* such as Indrani, Kali, and Varahi those belonging to the retinues of Siva and Sakti, can be regarded as particularly significant.

According to Kashyapa's *Śilpaśāstra*, attendant deities can be classified into three groups: *Aṣṭa* (8), *Dwādaśa* (12), *Dwatrimśth* (32). The eight attendant deities should be installed in the first enclosure of the temple. The *dwādaśaparivāra* (the twelve attendant deities) should be installed either in the central enclosure or in the second enclosure of the temple. The *'dwatrimśathparivāra'* (the retinue of thirty-two deities) should be installed in the fourth enclosure.

According to the *Mayamata Śilpaśāstra*, a principal deity may be accompanied by eight, twelve, sixteen, or thirty-two attendant deities. According to the *Vaikhānasāgama*, a temple featuring the presiding deity along with attendant deities is classified as the best (*uttama*), a temple containing images of the group of temples dedicated to Brahma, Siva, and Sakti is considered intermediate (*madhyama*), while a temple dedicated exclusively to Lord Visnu is regarded as the lowest (*adhama*). *Āgama* and *Śilpa* scholars, having thoroughly studied the scriptures on iconography and temple architecture (*Vāstu Śilpaśāstras*) have identified the deities belonging to the Saiva pantheon based on authoritative criteria.

The *Vaikhanasāgama* states that there may be approximately 88 different deities who serve as the attendant deities (*Parivāra Mūrtis*) of Lord Visnu. The *Śaivāgamas* describe three categories of attendant deities: *Aṣṭa Parivāra* (eight attendant deities), *Ṣōḍasś Parivāra*

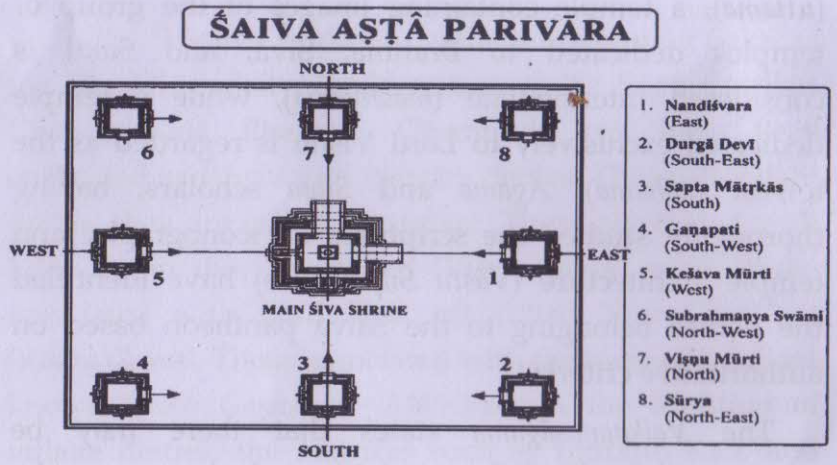
(sixteen attendant deities), and *Dvatrimśat Parivāra* (thirty-two attendant deities).

***Aṣṭa Parivāra* (8)**

1.Nandi 2. Fire God or Agni Durga 3. Sapta Matrikas with Virabhadra on the right 4. Vinayaka on the left 5. Visnu 6. Subramanya Swamy or Jeshtha Devi 7. Visnu Durga or Katyayini 8. Surya

***Ṣōḍaśa Parivāra* (16)**

1. Indra 2. Ashwini Deities 3. Agni 4. Pitru Deities 5. Yama 6. Rohini 7. Nirrti 8. Apsaras 9. Varuna 10. Rishis 11. Maruts 12. Rudras 13. Soma (Moon) 14. Kshetrapala 15. Isha 16. Adityas



***Dwatrimśat Parivāra* (32)**



1.Ananta 2. Arku (Demon) 3. Bhava 4. Maruts 5. Apsaras 6. Gauri 7. Sarva 8. Brahma 9. Siva 10. Bhrigu 11. Ishan 12. Agastya 13. Kaushik 14. Ekanetra 15. Vinayaka 16. Saraswati 17. Lakshmi 18. Ekaksha 19. Eka Rudra 20. Pashupati 21. Vashu 22. Trimurti 23. Dhanaku 24. Indra 25. Kalagni Rudra 26. Sri Kantha 27. Naga God 28. Bhima 29. Bhumi or Gauri 30. Sikhanda 31. Ugru 32. Saneshwara

Attendant deities of Siva:

In a Siva temple, the *Mūlabēram* (principal deity) is almost always represented by a *Liṅga*. In Saivism, the deities accompanying Siva are also worshipped. Information about these Saiva attendant deities can also be obtained from texts such as the *Pūrvakaraṇāgama* and *Manasara*.

In front of the Siva temple stands Nandi, while Durga and Agni (the fire god) are located in the southeastern section. The Saptamatrikas, are situated to the south, with Virabhadra on their right and Vinayaka on their left, in south western direction. Visnu is positioned on the side, while Subrahmanya or Jestadevi is located in

the northwest, Visnu Durga or Katyayani should be installed in the north, and the Sun God in the northeast. Nandi, Bhringi, Bhairava and Virabhadra are the attendant deities while Parvati, Ganapati and Skanda are the accompanying deities of Siva.

Nandi:



Nandi is regarded as an important figure in the Vira Saiva tradition. In a Siva temple, Nandi or bull is commonly to installed a opposite the sanctum. It is customary to place Nandi in front of the principal deity. Nandi or Nandikeshwara when represented as a form of Siva, has three eyes and four hands. The two rear hands, hold a mace (*gada*), and a deer (*mriga*), while the two front hands *anjalimudra*. This idol may be represented either in human form with an ox-like face or in the form of a bull. In the human form, the figure bears a *jatāmakuta* adored with the Ganga and the crescent moon. Some *Śilpaśāstra*s describe the Nandikeswara, as having a bull's head, a human body and four arms. The rear hands hold the drum and the antelope which are emblems associated with Siva. The front hands are usually depicted playing a long type of drum called *matalam*. This form of Nandiswara is regarded as the Lord of Siva's *gaṇas* and his vehicle. This

idol is also known as Basavadu, Basavayya and Basavanna.

Agni or Agni Durga:



Since the *Rigvedic* period, the god Agni holds the highest place among *Yagnas* and sacrifices. In Indian literature, Agni is described as the ruler of the southeast direction. According to the *Viṣṇu Dharmōttara Purāṇam*, Agni when installed among the attendant deities of a temple, is described as having two heads, four horns, six eyes, seven tongues, seven hands, a large belly and three legs. He ears red garments and *yajnōpavīta*, and is described as having braided hair and attendants. His consorts, Svaha and Svadha are depicted on either side of Agni. Smoke serves as his banner (*dwaja*), and the ram as his vehicle. Agni chariot should be depicted as being drawn by four parrots, with Vayu as the charioteer.



Sri Agnidurga may also be installed as the presiding deity associated with of fire. Having a

lion vehicle, with eight arms, on the four arms on the right, from bottom to top, in order the trident, the discus, the sword, the bow arm and also on the four arms on the left, from bottom to top in order the *varada, aṅkuśa*, the *khēta*, and the bow are kept as weapons.

Durga:



In the *āgama* scriptures, the nine different forms of Goddess Durga are mentioned. They are 1. Neelakanti 2. Kshemamkari 3. Hara Siddhibi 4. Rudramsha-Durga 5. Vana-Durga 6. Agni - Durga 7. Jaya - Durga 8. Vindhya - Vasi - Durga 9. Ripumari-Durga.

Having a lion as its vehicle, and sharp vision, bearing a crescent moon and a *karuṇḍa-makuta* of a crow on his head, having three eyes with a radiance like lightening having eight hands and, in those hands, a *cakra*, a sword a cane of combo, an arrow, and a bow bearing an *aṅkuśa* and the *varada* and *tarjanī mudra*s.

These idols standing on a lotus *pīṭha* or on a buffalo head or seated on a lion. For this deity's idol, two apsaras wearing swords and shields stand humbly, and remain there. The *Supraḥēdāgama* mentions her as Visnu's

beloved sister, as a manifestation of the supreme power, born from Adishakti. According to the *'Rupadhyāna Ratnāvaḷi'*, Goddess Durga has four hands, *karuṇḍamakuṭa* and it wears all kinds of ornaments. The hand that is on the right side below with the *aḥayamudra* in the left hand, holds the *kaṭimudra* with the hand that is below. With the hands above, hold the *cakra* on the right hand and the *śankha* on the left side, and position the figure as standing in the *samapāda* posture on the *padmapītha*.

Saptamatrikas:



Texts like *Varāhapurāṇa, Kūrmapurāṇam* and *Suprabhēdāgama* mention there is a story about Saptamatrikas i.e. Seven Mother Goddesses. According to *Durgā Sapta Śati*, one of the primary texts concerning the Mother Goddess tradition, when Kausika was fighting a demon called Durga Rakta Bija, a demon emerged from every drop of his blood. On that occasion Kausika Durga emanated seven powerful goddesses. These are called Saptamatrikas. They are known as Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Chamundi, and Indrani. Descriptions of these idols appear in *Dēvī Mahātyam* and the *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇam*.

Sri Brahmi Devi: This idol has four faces and six arms. The three right hands hold *Varadamudra, Pāśa,* and *Sravam,* respectively, from bottom to top. The three left hands hold *Abhayamudra,* a book, and a *Kamaṇḍalam,* respectively, from bottom to top. The goddess should be mounted on a swan.

Sri Maheshwari Devi: Sri Maheshwari Devi seated on the bull she has five faces, each with three eyes, wears a crescent moon as a headdress, has ten arms and possesses a white complexion. The five right hands display the *abhayamudra.* The other four hands hold an axe, a spear, a *vajra,* and a sword. The left hand displays the *varadamudra,* while the other four hands hold an *ankuśa,* a serpent, a bell, and a *pāśam.*

Sri Kaumari Devi: Sri Kaumari Devi has six faces, a white and red complexion, twelve arms, and *Mayura* (Peacock) as her vehicle, her right hands hold *varadamudra, śakti,* a sword, a staff, a vessel, and an arrow. Her left hands display the *abhayamudra* and axe, *kukut,* a lotus, a bell, and a bow.

Sri Vaishnavi Devi: Sri Vaishnavi Devi is adorned with a *Vanamāla* and has six arms. Her right hands display the *varadamudra* while the other two hands hold a *gada* and a *padma.* Her left hands display the *abhayamudra* and hold a conch *(śanka)* and a *cakra.*

Sri Varahi Devi: Sri Varahi Devi is mounted on *Mahiṣa.* She has a dark complexion, a Varaha face, a

prominent belly, six arms. Her three right hands display *varadamudra* and hold a sword and a staff. Her three left hands display the *abhayamudra,* and hold a shield and a vessel.

Sri Chamundi Devi: The idol of Sri Chamundi Devi has a dark complexion and a fierce appearance. She is surrounded by ghosts, wears snakes as ornaments, and has ten arms. Her five right hands hold a sword, an *ankuśa,* a pestle, a wheel, and a *chāmara.* Her five left hands hold a shield, a *pāśa,* a staff, an axe and a bow.

Sri Indrani Devi: The idol of Sri Indrani Devi has a golden-green complexion and six arms. Her three right hands display the on the *varadmudra,* and hold a *sutra,* and a *vajra.* Her three left hands display the *abhayamudra,* and hold a vessel, and a *padma.*

Sri Virabhadra:



According to a legend in the *Kūrmapurāṇa,* Lord Siva created Virabhadra at the request of Parvati to destroy the *Yagna* performed by the demons. Parvati also created Bhadrakali to assist Virabhadra. *Srī Tatva Nidhi* and *Kāraṇāgama* describe the form of Virabhadra Murthy. According to the *Srī Tatvanidhi,* Virabhadra Murti has four arms, three eyes

and a fierce face with fangs. He holds a bow and a *gada* in his left hands and a sword an arrow in his right hands. He wears a garland of skulls around his neck and *padukas* on his feet. On the right side of Virabhadra is an image of Dakshini in the form of a goat, while an image of Bhadrakali is placed on his left side. The *Kāraṇāgama* provides a somewhat different description of the form of Virabhadra Murti. Virabhadra has four arms, three eyes, a *jaṭājūṭa* resembling flames of fire, and fangs. He wears garlands of bells, skulls and scorpions around his neck. He standing in a posture associated with the worship of a serpent, with his legs adorned and sandals on his feet. Virabhadra's body is red in color, and his appearance is fierce and terrifying. He holds a sword, a dagger, a bow and an arrow as weapons.

According to the *Rūpadhyāna Ratnāvaḷi*, Sri Virabhadra Murthy has a dark complexion, four arms, three eyes, a *jaṭājūṭa*, and a fanged face. He wears garlands of skulls, and displays the *karāḷamudra* on his chest. Bhadrakali Mahadevi is also mentioned in this description. From bottom to up, the right hands hold a sword and an arrow, while the left hands hold a drum and a vint. On the right side of Sri Virabhadra Murthy, an image of Sri Daksha Pratima, with a goat face and two eyes, should be depicted saluting Sri Param Siva.

Ganapati:



Ganapati, or Ganesha, also known as Vinayaka, is one of the most widely worshiped deities among Hindus. Ganesha is the head of *Gaṇas*. Ganapati has an elephant's face, a single tusk, and four hands holding a *pāśa*, an *ankuśa*, and a *mōdaka*, with one hand displaying the *varadamudra*. In addition, he wears a snake around his waist and is adorned with various ornaments. Bells are attached to the ears and trunk of the Ganapati idol. He has a mouse (*Mūṣika*) as his vehicle. The idol should be adorned with a *kirīṭamakuṭa*, *karuṇḍamakuṭa* or *jaṭāmakuṭa*. The idol of Ganesha should be sculpted with a large body and a prominent belly. According to the *'Rupdhyāna Ratnāvaḷi'*, Ganapati is depicted in 32 different forms. The *'Brahma Vaivartha Purāṇam'*, *'Śiva Purāṇam'* and *'Vāmana Purāṇam'* also mention Ganapati.

Ganesha is worshipped in various religious traditions. In the Vaishnava tradition, Ganesha is regarded as a manifestation of Lord Narayana. He has an elephant's face, four arms and three eyes. He wears the serpent Vasuki as an ornament and holds a *Śanka* and a *cakra or a pāśa*. According to the *'Viṣwaksēnasamhita'*, the idol should be depicted in a seated posture, with a gada in the lower right hand and the *abhyamudra* displayed by the lower left hand.

Visnu:



Visnu is another prominent deity in the Hindu trinity. He is the lord of *Vaikunṭha*. Images of Visnu are found not only in Visnu temples but also in Saiva temples. The most common form of Visnu idol has four arms holding a *śanka, cakra, gada* and *padma*. He wears a garland known as the *Vaijayanti* and bears the *Kaustubha Ratnam* and *Sri Vatsam* on the left side of his chest. Visnu has five weapons (*panchāyudha*): the bow, sword, *gada, śanka,* and *cakra*. According to '*Kasyapa Śilpa Śāstra*', Visnu's lower left arm may rest freely on his waist, without displaying the *varadamudra* (boon-bestowing gesture). It is not always necessary to place the devis alongside Visnu. If they included, Sridevi and Bhudevi should hold blossomed lotuses in their hands. Images of Lord Visnu may be depicted in the *Sthānaka* (standing), *Asina* (seated), or *Sayana* (reclining) form.

Subrahmanyaswami or Karthikeya:



Karthikeya, who is regarded as the chief commander of the gods and *Mardhangika* in the Nataraja *Tāṇḍavam*, is also known as Subrahmanyaswami, Kumaraswamy, Shanmukha,

Skanda, and Sri Karthikeya. He has a peacock as his vehicle. Subrahmanyaswamy may be depicted with six faces or one face, in the *sthānakamūrthi* (standing) and *āsinamurthi* (seated) form. Some idols of Lord Subrahmanya are depicted with two. Four, eight, or twelve hands. The attributes associated with Lord Subrahmanya include *abhaya, varadam,* Sword, *śakti, khētakam, akṣamāla, bāṇa, dhanasu, padma,* and *pāśa*. The *Kumāratvatvam* describes sixteen different forms of Kartikeya. The *Srī Tattva Nidhi* describes six types of Subrahmanya Swamy idols. Devasena and Sri Valli are the consorts of this deity.

Katyayini:

She is known as Katyayini because she was born as the daughter of a sage named '*Kata*'. This goddess is considered the embodiment of the three divine energies. The description of this goddess is very similar to that of Mahishasuramardhini or Goddess Durga. The incarnation of Goddess Durga is described in various *purāṇas*, and the many stories about her battle with Mahisasura continue to appear in literary works. According to the *Matsyapurāṇa*, an image of Goddess Katyayini should be sculpted holding



weapons found in the hands of Brahma, Siva and Visnu. The goddess should have ten hands, and a moon-like face. Her head should be adorned with a *jaṭājūṭa* and a crescent-shaped ornament. she should have three eyes, described as shining like *Athasi* flowers, and beautiful eyes. She should be installed in accordance with these characteristics. According to the *Vāmanapurāṇa*, Goddess Katyayini is said to have been born with restless eyes. Through yogic practices, she purified her body and acquired three eyes that shine like fire, resembling those of Siva. She is also described as having ring-shaped hair, eighteen arms, a beautiful bosom, and a well-proportioned body. The idol should be sculpted in accordance with these characteristics.

Surya:



Suryamurthy is described in Vastu-*Śilpa Śāstra* texts such as *Anśumadbhēdāgama*, *Suprabhēdāgama*, *Viśwakarma-Śilpa*, and *Śilpa Ratna* as well as in other sculptural texts. Surya should be depicted in a seated posture, holding lotuses in both hands. He wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa* and is depicted with a halo around his head and a radiant face. He rides a chariot drawn by seven horses. Ushas is depicted on the right side of

Surya, and Pratyushas on the left. Surya has four wives, namely Rajani, Suvarna, Suvarcha and Nikshubha. On either side of the idol are the guardians *daṇḍa* (Yama) and *Pingaḷa* (Agni) who hold swords. According to other sources, the Sanjna and Chaya are associated with Surya. According to the '*Śilparatna*' Surya's crown is made of *Puṣya Rāgas*.

Visnu Attendant deities:



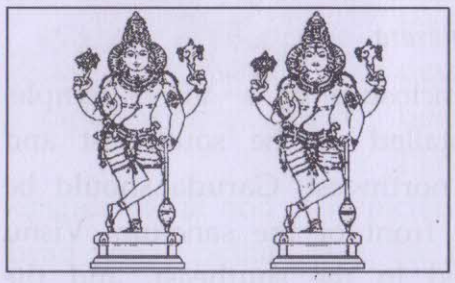
Vaishnava temples were built and images were installed in accordance with the *Vaikhānasa* and *Pāncharātrāgamas*. In Vaishnavism along with many forms of Visnu, the Sun is the most popularly worshipped deity. Ananta, Garuda, Viswakshena, Jaya and Vijaya are regarded as the attendant deities of Lord Mahavisnu and are depicted alongside him near the main sanctum. Information about Visnu's attendant deities is found in texts such as the *Padmasamhita* and the *Manasara*.

In the first outer enclosure of a Visnu temple, Lakshmi should be installed in the southwest and Bhudevi (*Āṇḍaḷ*) in the northwest. Garuda should be installed to the east, in front of the sanctum. Visnu Durga, should be placed in the southeast, and the Saptamatrikas in the south. Virabhadra should be placed

to the right of the Saptamatrikas and Vinayaka to their left. Narasimha should be installed in the west, Katyayani in the north, and Kshetrapalaka in the northeast.

In the second enclosure of the temple, Lakshmi Narayana, Lakshmi or Varaha should be installed on the western side. Surya should be placed on the northern side, and the ten incarnations of Visnu should be depicted on the southern side. In a Vaishnava temple, images of twelve Vaishnava devotees, along with the associated divine figures, should be sculpted according to the *Uttama Aṣṭatala* pattern described in the text *Viṣṇutatvam*. According to the *Padmapurāṇa*, the divine powers associated with Lord Visnu include Sridevi, Bhudevi, Saraswati, Preethi, Keerthi, Shanti, Thusti and Pushti. Each of these deities has four hands. The *abhayamudra* should be displayed in the lower right hand and the *varadamudra* in the left hand. The upper hands should hold lotus flowers.

Jaya and Vijaya:



Jaya and Vijaya are the gatekeepers, or *dvārapālakas* of Lord Mahavisnu in *Vaikunṭa*. They should be depicted in a standing posture, with four arms holding Visnu's weapons: the *śanka*, *cakra*, sword and

gada. They should wear *kirīṭamakuṭas* and be positioned as gatekeepers at the entrance to Visnu's shrine.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, contains a story about Jaya and Vijaya. While they were serving as the gatekeepers of Lord Visnu in *Vaikunṭha*, the great sages, including Sanaka and others, arrived to have *darśana* of Lord Visnu. Jaya and Vijaya stopped the sages at the main entrance and did not allow them to enter. Angered by this incident, the sages cursed Jaya and Vijaya to be born as *asuras* (demons) in three successive lifetimes. Realizing their mistake, Jaya and Vijaya pleaded with the sages to release them from the curse. In their first birth, they were born as Hiranyakasha and Kiranyakashipu and were killed by Lord Visnu. In their second birth, they were born as Ravana and Kumbhakarna and were killed by Lord Mahavihsnu in his Sri Rama *avatāra*. In their third and final birth, they were born as Shishupala and Dantavakra and were killed by Lord Visnu in his Sri Krishna *avatāra*.

Garuda:



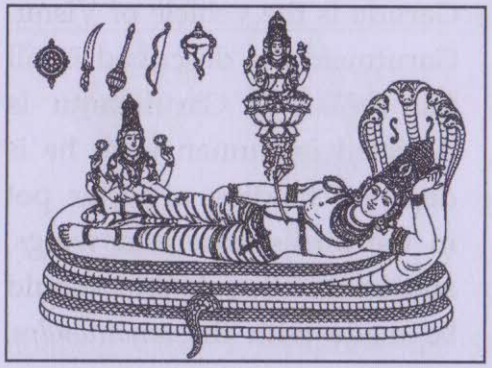
Garuda is the vehicle of Visnu. Garutmantu is described in all four *vēdas*. If Garutmantu is depicted in human form he is depicted holding a nectar pot in the bird's nose and wings, and in both hands and should be made with the *anjalimudra*.

Garuda is also known as Suparna and Vainateya. Visnu's vehicle should be depicted in a form that is half human and half bird. Installing a Garuda idol in Vaishnava temple is a common practice. In a Visnu temple, Garuda is also regarded as a symbol of Visnu on the *dwajasthambha*. Garuda may be depicted supporting Visnu's feet with his raised palms. The Garuda idol may also be sculpted in kneeling posture. Garuda should wear a *karuṇḍamakuṭa*, with a serpent depicted on the front of the crown. Two curved fangs should protrude from the upper part of Garuda's mouth. He wears eight serpents as ornaments, arranged at various places on his body. They are positioned as follows.

Head–*Śankhu*, Left ear–*Mahāpadma*, Right ear–*Padma*, Neck–*Karkōṭaka*, Yajnopavita–*Vāsuki*, Bracelets – *Ananta*, Waist bracelet–*Takṣaka*, Shoulders–*Gulika*. Thus, this Garuda idol must be made according to the *utthama Navatalamāna* in the Iconometry.

disesa:

Adisesa should be depicted reclining on a serpent. The



name *Śēṣa* means "the permanent one", while Adisesa or Ananta means "the eternal one". These are alternative names for the serpent deity.

Adisesa is regarded as a form associated with Visnu's origin. When creating and idol of Adisesa, Sridevi and Bhudevi should be depicted seated at his feet. Adisesa's right hand should rest on his head, and the deities should be placed near the pillow on the *Sesapanpu*. The idol of Adisesha is usually depicted with two hands. If it is depicted with four hands, a *śanka* and a *cakra* should be placed in the additional two hands. Likewise, a lotus stem should emerge from Visnu's navel, with Brahma seated on the lotus flower.

Narada:



According to the *Vaiṣṇavatantra* and the *Pancharātrāgama* Narada is regarded as an early founder and promoter of *Vaiṣṇavadharma*. Narada is depicted as a sage who also serves as a messenger and teacher. The idol of Narada, who is a divine sage, has a *jaṭāmakuṭa* and has two hands. He plays the *'Mahati' Vīna* with one hand and performs Vaishnava *sankīrtana* with the other. Narada is famous as a mischief-maker. In India, his name is often used to describe a person who playfully creates mischief among gods and goddesses. Several hymns of *Rigvēda* are attributed to Narada, who is also the author of the *'Nāradiya Dharma Śāstra'*, an important work on law and moral conduct.

Viswaksena:



'Viswaksena' is mentioned in dictionaries such as the *'Amarakōśa'* as a synonym for Visnu. Just as Lord Ganesha is worshipped in the Saiva tradition to remove obstacles, Sri Vaishnavas worship Viswaksena before auspicious events and religious ceremonies for the same purpose. Viswaksena is also recognized as a *Vaiṣṇava Parivāra* deity. This idol is designed to face south and is installed in Vaishnava temples as a protective *Parivāramūrti*. The idol has four arms. Three hands hold the Vaishnava emblems- a *śanka*, a *cakra* and a *gada*, while the fourth hand displays the warning gesture known as *Tarjanī*. The idol should be sculpted accordingly. The idol of Viswaksena should be depicted seated on a *pīṭha* in the *āsīna* posture, with the right leg hanging down and the left leg folded crosswise on the same seat.

Anjaneya:



Anjaneya is also known as Hanuman, Maruti and Kapiraju. The idol of Anjaneya should symbolize valour and devotion. be installed as symbols of warrior and devotion. Anjeneya's image should also be represented as

Sri Lord Rama's Vehicle. Hanuma was a great devotee of Rama. The monkey god, Hanuman is also is green in colour. This son of Pavana is sometimes depicted with folded hands, sometimes seated on his tail, which is coiled into a spiral, and sometimes carrying the *Sanjīvi* Hill to cure Rama and Lakshmana.

He has two arms, one holding the *abhyamudra* and the other hand with *vajrāyudhaṃ*. The image is adorned with ear ornaments and a *jandhyam* (*yajnōpavīta*), along with a garment secured by a belt around the waist, a bell, and round anklets on the legs. When Sita, Rama and Lakshmana, the idol of Hanuman should be shown in *anjalimudra*. The idol Hanuman should be made to a height of 84 inches according to the *madhyama Saptatalamāna* measurement, with its height corresponding to the level of Lord Rama's heart. Anjaneya's image is also depicted on temple flags. He is very popular in South India, and even small villages have shrines dedicated to Hanuman.

Balarama or Sankarshana:

Balarama is also known as Sankarshana. Balarama, who is known as the elder brother of Sri Krishna, occupies a prominent place in the worship of the *Panchavīras*. He is regarded as the embodiment of wisdom and strength. Balarama has four arms. His upper right hand holds a *śanka*, his upper left hand holds a *padma* (Lotus), his lower right hand holds a *gada* and his lower left hand holds a *cakra*. According to the

'*Agnipurāṇa*', Balarama's image should be made with two hands, holding a *gada* in one hand and a plough in the other. According to the '*Patalakhanḍa*' of the '*Padmapurana*', Govinda, Visnu and Madhusudana are said to have manifested from Balarama. Balarama's wife Revati Devi, should be depicted on his right side. Sri Saraswati Devi is regarded as his Shakti.

Pradyumna:

Pradyumna, who is said to be the son of Lord Krishna, he has four arms. His upper right hand holds a conch shell (*śanka*), and his upper left hand holds a *gada*. His lower right hand holds a *cakra*, while his lower left hands hold a *padma*. Preeti is his Devi (*Śakti*). Pradyumna, which is listed among the twenty-four names of Visnu, is mentioned in the Sanskrit lexicon '*Amarakōśa*' as a synonym of the god Kamadeva or Mamatha. Trivikrama, Vamana and Sridhara are said to have emerged from Pradyumna. He is the lord of wealth and heroic strength.

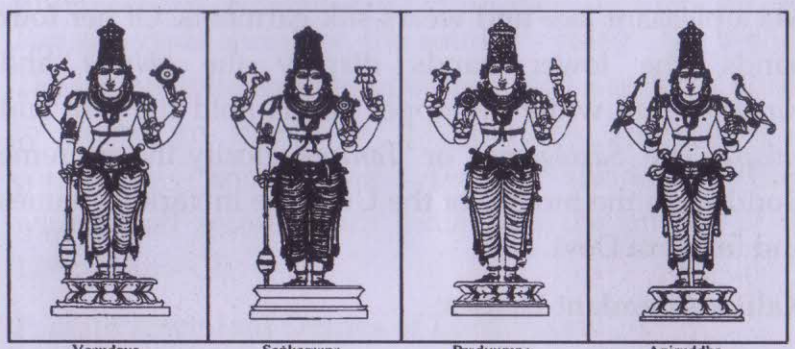
Aniruddha:

Aniruddha, popularly known as grandson of Lord Krishna, has four arms. His upper right hand holds a *gada*, and his upper left hand holds a *śanka*, His lower right hand holds a *cakra*, while his lower left hand holds a *padma*. Rati devi is his Shakti. According to the Ahirbudhnya Samhita, Hrishikesa, Padmanabha, and

Damodara arose from Aniruddha. He is the lord of *śakti* and *tējas*.

Sambudu:

Sambudu is considered a famous hero among the heroes of the *Vaiṣṇava Panchavīra* worship. In the '*Bruhat Samhita*' text Aniruddha is not listed among the Vaishnava family deities. However, it mentions Sambudu in place of Aniruddha and describes him. The son of Krishna and Rukmini, alternatively the son of Visnu. He is described as the younger brother of the god Kama and consort of Indukari.



Sakteya Attendant deities:

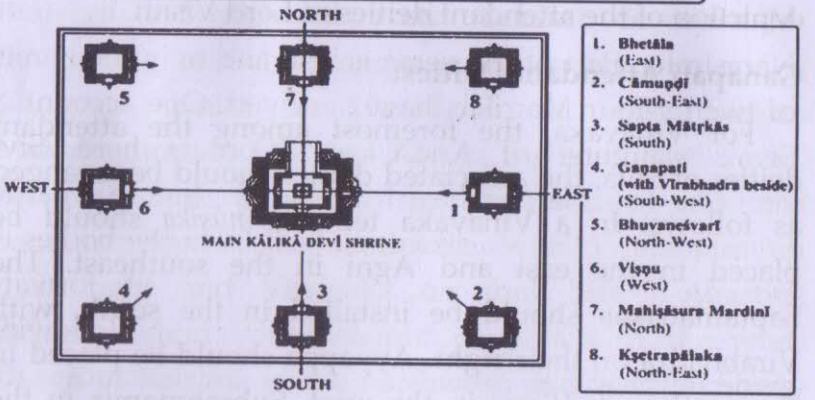
All female deities are referred to as '*Śakti*' or '*Dēvi*', while their male counterparts are referred to by their respective names. The goddesses are regard as the divine powers of their male counterparts. It should be understood that the Sakteya tradition is more closely related to Saivism than to Vaiṣnavism. According to the

Viṣṇudharmōttara Purāṇa (c.400-500 CE) thirty-two Matrikas are said to have been created by Lord Narasimha. Part of the verse is lost, and only the names of twenty-four Matrikas have survived. One account of Siva's slaughter of Andhakasura occurs here. Siva prayed to Narasimha for assistance in battle. Subsequently, the Matrikas emerged from the bodies of Siva, Visnu and Narasimha. The Matrikas came forward and joined the battle against the demon. The following passage provides a list of names that includes the goddesses Kali and Mahakali. In the '*Uttara Kāmikāgama*' the general form of idol of Devi, the consort of Siva is described. This deity has four arms and three eyes. She has a pleasant face and wears silk garments. Of her four hands, the lower hands display the *abhaya* and *varadamudras*, while the upper hands hold the *pāśa* and *ankuśa*. The '*Śāktāgamas*' or '*Tantras*' glorify the supreme Goddess as the mother of the Universe in various names and forms of Devi.

Kalika Attendant Deities:

The attendant deities in a temple of Goddess Kali should be arranged as follows: Bethala in the east, Chamundi in the southeast, the Saptamatrikas in the south, Virabhadra to their right, Vinayaka in the southwest, Visnu in the west, Bhuvaneshwari in the northwest, Mahishasura Mardini in the north, and Kshetrapala in the northeast.

ŚĀKTEYA PARIVĀRA (KĀLIKĀ DEVĪ)



From the 8th century CE onwards, the Saptamatrikas were included in the iconographic programmes of South Indian Saivite temples. They were usually enshrined in a *Parivāradēvata* shrine on the southern side of the temple. The later Saivite temples often included a separate shrine to house an image of the goddess. Devi temples, commonly known as *Amman* shrines, became widespread across South India after the middle of the 12th century CE.

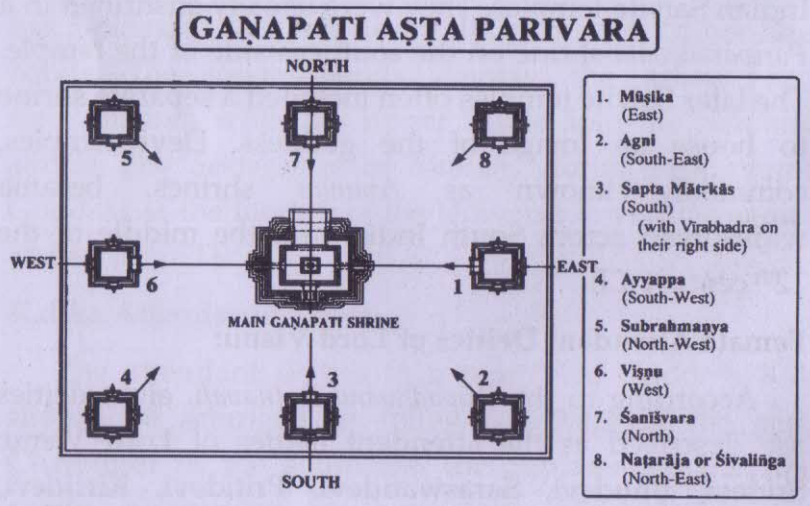
Female Attendant Deities of Lord Visnu:

According to the *Rūpadhyāna Ratnāvaḷi*, eight deities are described as the attendant deities of Lord Visnu: Sridevi, Bhudevi, Saraswatidevi, Pritidevi, Kirtidevi, Kantidevi, Tushtidevi, and Pushtidevi. The next specifies that these deities should be installed in their prescribed positions. The text also describes their complexions, crowns, hand positions, and attributes including the *abhayamudra*, the *varadamudra* and lotus flowers. These

descriptions constitute important and sculptural depiction of the attendant deities of Lord Visnu.

Ganapati Attendant Deities:

For Vinayaka, the foremost among the attendant deities of Siva, the associated deities should be arranged as follows. In a Vinayaka temple, *mūṣika* should be placed in the east and Agni in the southeast. The Saptamatrikas should be installed in the south, with Virabhadra on their right. Ayyappa should be placed in the southwest, Visnu in the west, Subrahmanya in the northwest, and śani in the north. In the northeast, an image of Nataraja or a Sivalinga should be installed.

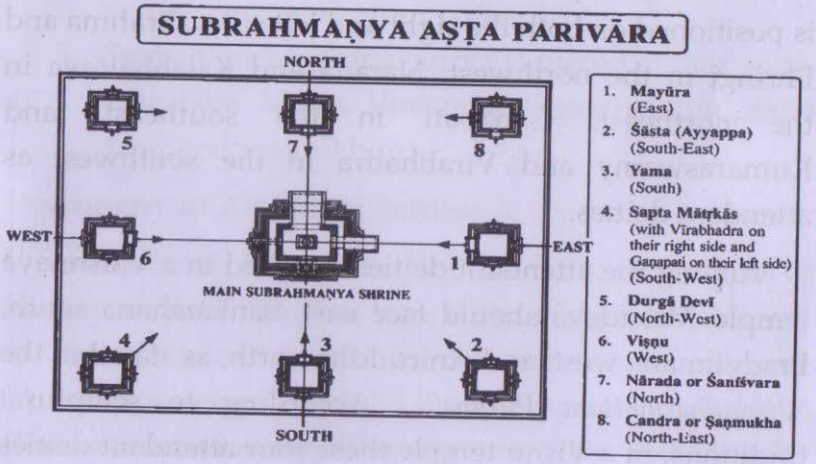


Subrahmanya Attendant deities:

Subrahmanyaswami is another important deity among the attendants of Siva. According to the scriptural text known as the '*Kumāra Tantra*', the attendant deities of

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Subrahmanyaswami should be arranged as follows. In the eight-and twelve-deity arrangements described for the temple of Subrahmanyaswami, a peacock and a Ganapati should be placed in the east; Sastha, Mahalaskhmi, or Goddess Kali in the southeast; Yama, Brahma, and Saraswati in the south; and the Saptamatrikas in the southwest, with Virabhadra on their right and Vinayaka on their left. Agastya, Brihaspati and Visnu should be placed in the west; Durga or Krishna in the northwest; and Narada, Shani, Nataraja, or Dakshinamurti in the north. In the northeast Sumitra, the Moon or Shanmukha should be installed.



Directions of Attendant deities:

The attendant deities located in the northeast and southeast should face west. The idols located in the southwest and northwest should face east. The idols in the north should face south, while the attendant deities in the south should face north. The idol of Veerabhadra

should be placed on the right side of the Saptamatrikas, facing west, while Vinayaka should face east. In the northeastern area outside the sanctum, a *Sōmasūtra* or *Gōmukha* should be placed. Chandikesa *griha* or idol should be installed next to it, facing south. facing south. The *Sōmasūtra* or *Gōmukha* is made in various forms and should be arranged to facilitate the drainage of water from the sanctum.

According to '*Kāraṇāgama*', when Siva is depicted as Umamahesvara, Umadevi is placed on Siva's left in the Saiva entourage, while Vrishabha is positioned in front and Indra and other deities are placed behind. Narayana is positioned on both the right and left sides, Brahma and Bhringi in the northwest, Narada and Kalabhairava in the northeast, Ganapati in the southeast, and Kumaraswamy and Virabhadra in the southwest as attendant deities.

Among the attendant deities installed in a Vaishnava temple, Vasudeva should face east, Sankarshana south, Pradyumana west, and Aniruddha north, as stated in the '*Viṣṇudharmōttara Purāṇa*'. According to sculptural traditions, in a Visnu temple these four attendant deities are the primary ones.

Panchayatana Arrangement of *Parivara* Devatas:

1. **Siva Panchayatana:** Siva is placed at the centre. Visnu is placed in the northeast, Surya in the

southeast, Ganesha in the southwest, and Sakti in the northwest.
2. **Sakti Panchayatana:** Sakti is placed at the centre. Visnu is placed in the northeast, Siva in the southeast, Ganesha in the southwest, and Surya in the northwest.
3. **Visnu Panchayatana:** Visnu is placed at the centre. Siva is placed in the northeast, Ganesha in the southeast, Surya in the southwest, and Sakti in the northwest.
4. **Ganesha Panchayatana:** Ganesha is placed at the centre. Visnu, Siva, Surya, and Sakti are placed successively at the four corners.
5. **Surya Panchayatana:** Surya is placed at the centre, with Siva, Visnu, Vinayaka (Ganesha), and Sakti arranged around him.

Iconometry of Attendant deities:

In the South Indian temples, there are three types of images or idols. The first type is the *mūlabēram* (Primary or Presiding deity), the second consists of *Parivāra* (Subsidiary deities); and the third comprises *utsavabēram* (Processional deities). The various *Śilpa* texts specify several ways by which the measurements of such images can be determined. The science of idol measurements known as *talamāna,* deals with the proportional measurements of the various parts of a deity's body. *Vigrahaśāstra* (the science of Iconometry) deals specifically with the rules governing the forms of deities,

their weapons, ornaments, and other attributes. The *Āgamaśastras* and *Śilpaśāstras* do not permit *śilpis* or temple sculptors, to create idols solely according to their personal preferences. This composition of deity images should differ from the forms of ordinary humans, animals and birds in order to convey divinity. Traditional authorities have prescribed different sizes and forms for different types of idols, while allowing for certain variations. These rules and regulations must be followed by temple builders, sculptors and other artisans involved in creating the idols.

The creation of divine images follows a specific system of measurement known as *'talamāna'*. The science of idol measurement, or *talamāna*, is based on the proportional measurement of different parts of a deities' body. The *'Śukranīti'* also describes several *talamāna* systems, along with details concerning the classification of images, the materials used to make them, and related matters.

In Iconometry, a standard unit of measurement is called *'tala'*. It serves as the principal unit of measurement. One *'tala'* is defined as the distance from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the middle finger when the hand is fully extended. The key feature of the *'talamāna'* system is that the measurements of the various parts of an image are determined in proportion to the overall size of the image. In this *talamāna* system, the principal unit is called *'tala'*. it is also referred to as

Vitasti, Arka, Mukha, Yama, Rāsi and Jagati. When *tala* is taken as a unit and subdivided into inches (*anguḷas*), one inch (*anguḷa*) is defined as the width of the middle finger. According to this system, one *'tala'* consists of 12 inches (*anguḷas*). All measurements specified in the *Silpa Sastras* follow this *'talamāna'* system of measurement.

Particularly the *Vaikhānasāgama* of South India describes six methods for measuring different parts of an idol's body. They are as follows:

1. *Māna*: The statue's length (Hight) and size
2. *Pramāṇa*: The width measurement of the statue.
3. *Unmana*: The thickness of the image.
4. *Parimāṇa*: The circumference or perimeter of the image.
5. *Upamāna*: The measurements between different parts of the image.
6. *Lambamāna*: The method of determining the height of an idol using a try Square or plumb line.

Some other *Śilpa* texts describe the methods for making images of attendant deities according to measurements ranging from *daśatala* to *panchatala.* According to this *āgama*, the *uttamadaśa tala* is 124 inches or *anguḷas*, *madhyamadaśa tala* is 120 inches or *anguḷas* and the *adhamadaśa tala* is 116 inches or *anguḷas.* These measurements form the basis of the classification.

Attendant Deities and Types of *Talamana*:

Sl. No	*Talamāna* Measure	Attendant Deities	Measurement- Inches/ *Aṅgulas*/ *Amśams.*
1.	*Daśatala (uttama, madhyama, adhama)*	*Uttama*: Brahma, Visnu and Maheswara allied attendant deities. *Madhyama*: Sridevi, Bhudevi, Uma, Saraswati Durga, Saptamatika, Jeshtadevi *Adhama*: Surya, Sesha, Virabhadra, Agni, Subrahmanya, Images of Sapta rishis, Sasta, Indra, Lokapalas, Chandra, Bhrigu, Markandeya, Chaandesa, Kartikeya, etc.	124-116
2.	*Navatala (uttama, madhyama, adhama)*	The Navagraha, Kubera, Manmatha, female deities, Garuda, and the Asta murtis,	112 -104
3.	*Aṣṭatala (uttama, madhyama, adhama)*	Alvars, Nayanmars, devotees, Brugu, Human idols, Nandiswara.	100-92
4.	*Saptatala (uttama, madhyama, adhama)*	Bhairavas, and some Rishis,	88-80
5.	*Sattala (uttama, madhyama, adhama)*	Hanuman, Dvarapalakas.	76-68
6.	*Pancatala (uttama, madhyama, adhama)*	Ganesha, Bala Subrahmanayam, Viswaksena	64-56

The height of the *Dhruvabēram* or *Mūlamūrti* varies from temple to temple. Its height is determined in proportion to the main structure of the temple above ground level. The dimensions of the temple are determined with reference to the *Dhruvabēram* or

Mūlamūrti or Presiding deity. In the case of *Parivāramūrtis*, the total height is divided into three parts: two parts for the image and one part for the *pīṭha* or pedestal. The idol's total height is multiplied by four. The width of the sanctum doorway is then determined according to the prescribed proportion. Generally, the images of *Pārśva* and *Parivāradēvatas* in temples are made according to the *madhyama* and *adhamadaśa talamāna* systems.

Conclusion:

Thus, the study of *Parivāradēvatas* provides an important perspective on the religious and artistic traditions of South Indian temples. The construction of temples and the installation of deities have been important aspects of the religious and cultural traditions of South India. Temples were developed not only as places of worship but also as centers of religious, artistic and architectural expression and also economic activity and social mobility. The installation of *Parivāradēvatas* alongside the presiding deity forms an important part of this tradition. Their presence within the temple complex reflects the religious beliefs, ritual practices and architectural principles associated with different forms of Hindu worship.

The *āgamas* and *Śilpaśāstra* texts provide guidelines regarding the forms, attributes, postures, ornaments, weapons and prescribed locations of attendant deities. The examples discussed in this paper, drawn from Saiva,

Vaishnava and Sakti traditions, demonstrate the diversity of *Parivāradēvatas* and their distinctive iconographic features. Deities such as Nandi, Virabhadra, Ganapati, Subrahmanya, Garuda, Jaya and Vijaya, and the Saptamatrikas illustrate the range of divine figures associated with the principal deities in South India temples.

The above discussion provides a comprehensive detail of attendant shrines in South India. The Bhilaiyur temple associated with Aditya I, the Siva temple at Melappur associated with Parantaka, and the Sudereswara temple at Thirukkattalai are mentioned in connection with the Chola period. The Sri Parasurameshwara temple at Gudimallm, near Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, is another example discussed in this study, where images of deities such as Surya, Kumaraswamy and Nandi are reported within the temple complex. These examples illustrate the importance of examining attendant deities in their specific historical and architectural settings.

The Sri Ranganatha temple at Srirangam provides another example of attendant shrines within a major temple complex. The original account notes that the entrances of these shrines face the main sanctum. Similarly, the account of the Moovarkoil temple complex at Kodumbalur, in Pudukkottai district of Tamil Nadu, refers to sixteen small shrines dedicated to attendant deities. Such examples indicate that the arrangement and

architectural treatment of *Parivāradēvata* shrines. But these features were not identical in every temple but varied according to the traditions and plans of individual temple complexes and their location.

In conclusion, the study of *Parivāradēvatas* is essential for understanding the relationship between religious traditions, temple architecture and sculptural practices in South India. The examination of *Agamic* and *Śilpaśāstra* prescriptions alongside historical temple examples helps explain the iconographic features, proportional principles and architectural placement of attendant deities. Further documentation and systematic study of these shrines and images can contribute to a better understanding of South Indian cultural heritage and support its preservation for future generations.

I once again thank all of you for the patient hearing.

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