

2 The Images

2.1 Predecessors and Earliest Evidence of the Depiction of Directional Deities

According to the results of archaeological investigation, the earliest instances of the installation of directional guardians are found in the Buddhist *stūpas*. While the guardianship of Buddhist structures was later entrusted to the Brāhmanical group of directional deities,¹⁰² the earliest known guardians represent the Buddhist tradition of the four great kings (*caturmahārājas*). Unfortunately, no evidence for the complete group of guardians has survived.

Practices of the foundation of a temple are possibly of greater antiquity than could be proven so far; they include the interment of caskets as foundation deposits and the engraving of symbols on the foundation stones of religious structures. Here, only those cases in which the *aṣṭādikpālas* have been clearly referred to will be selected for discussion.

Possible predecessors of the representations of the *dikpāla* group in the early reliefs depicting assemblies of gods will also be considered. The well-known panels at Udayagiri and Deogaḍh offer early instances of the depiction of particular directional guardians in a more or less well-definable context.

A particular type of Kuṣāṇa panels shows four personages of identical outward appearance who may be tentatively identified as directional guardians. In the discussion of groups of identical or nearly identical-looking deities the question arises, as to how far the development of individual visual types for the *lokapālas*-to-be proceeded in the early centuries A.D. Representations of Indra, Agni, Vāyu and Kubera were fairly popular during this period. As there is clear evidence for the continuation of earlier visual formulas, Indra and Agni have been chosen as exemplary cases. Early figures of Vāyu, particularly this deity's predecessors from outside India, have been analysed recently in a comprehensive article by K. TANABE (1990). The iconography of Kubera, both in early and in later phases, is quite complex and will therefore be analysed in the section dealing with iconography (2.5.7).

2.1.1 Early Sculptures of the Guardians of the Directions from Buddhist Contexts

While there is fairly frequent mention in Buddhist literature of the *caturmahārājika* group of directional guardians,¹⁰³ only very few examples in sculpture still exist. The members of this group are:

Dhṛtarāṣṭra (Pāli: Dhattaraṭṭha)	—	east
Virūḍhaka (Pāli: Virūlhaka)	—	south
Virūpākṣa (Pāli: Virūpakkha)	—	west
Vaiśravaṇa/Kubera (Pāli: Vassāvaṇa)	—	north

Well-known early depictions are the images of Kubera (inscribed "Kupiro yakho") and Virūḍhaka ("Viruḍako yakho") on the corner pillars on the north and south side respectively of the railing of the Bhārhut *stūpa* from the 2nd century B.C. Only from the inscriptions is it known that these guardians were regarded as *yakṣas* (class of semi-divine beings). Possibly, guarding the directions was one of the earlier functions of this class of tutelary deities.¹⁰⁴ At Bhārhut, the directional guardians Kubera and Virūḍhaka are both shown frontally in relief on a pillar face; they are holding their palms together in *añjalimudrā* and wearing turbans. Kubera (BARUA 1937: pl. LV, 60) is supported on the shoulders of a gnomish figure which

has been identified as a *nara* (anthropoid), Kubera's usual vehicle.¹⁰⁵ Virūḍhaka (*ibid.*: pl. LV, 58) is standing on rocks.¹⁰⁶ L.A. WADDELL¹⁰⁷ has attempted to identify two of the other figures on the southern corner pillar as the missing *lokapālas*, but this highly speculative and has not gained acceptance (BARUA 1937: 6). Similarly, the pairs of guardians on the pillars of the gateways of Stūpa no. 1 at Sāñci have been regarded as guardian *yakṣas/lokapālas* by Manjushree RAO (1994: 101; pls. 27–29). But, as she also concedes, "They do not show the characteristic features or attributes given in the texts" (*ibid.*), such an identification is highly hypothetical and therefore not of much value.

Other evidence for the depiction of the early Buddhist directional guardians comes from Sri Lanka. As the directional symbolism is amply testified by the presence of the so-called directional animals¹⁰⁸ at the cardinal points, which are further emphasized by so-called *vāhalkaḍa* structures, some of the relief figures located there may be identified as *lokapālas*. VON SCHROEDER (1990: 58–59) has summarized the results. Here it is only Kubera/Vaiśravaṇa who can be safely identified in several instances.¹⁰⁹ He seems to have been one of the most popular gods of early India and Sri Lanka and certainly was not only invoked in his capacity as the guardian of the north. VON SCHROEDER's attempts to identify an apparently thunderbolt-bearing figure, which is found at the northern end of the eastern *vāhalkaḍa* of the Abhayagiri Thūpa at Anurādhapura,¹¹⁰ as Dhṛtarāṣṭra or Indra cannot be accepted however, due to some components which would not be appropriate in such a case.¹¹¹ The figure has so far been regarded as a Cakravartin (emperor), which seems to be more likely than VON SCHROEDER's suggestion.

¹⁰² For Sri Lanka see A.J. GAIL 1980, U. VON SCHROEDER 1990: 239–240 (sculptural evidence) and the *Mañjuśrībhāṣita-Vāstuvidyāśāstra*, e.g. II.158–165a (textual evidence).

¹⁰³ For references see P.K. AGRAWALA 1989: 74 and notes; see also G. GRÖNBOLD 1984: 364–365, R.E. FISHER 1995, and LESSING 1942: 38–44. The expression *lokapālāḥ* has been used for this group as well, e.g. in the *Dharmasamgraha* (VII).

¹⁰⁴ S.S. PARUI (1976: 60–65) mentions four *yakṣas* who, as *dvārapālas* (guardians of doors or gateways) of Kurukṣetra, guard this place from the intermediate directions.

¹⁰⁵ COOMARASWAMY (1928: 8) writes: "the Naras here in question are not men, but mythological beings variously described". RAVEN 1988 elaborates on this topic and gives the Bhārhut Kubera as an example for Kubera as Naravāhana (125; pl. 55).

¹⁰⁶ P.K. AGRAWALA (1989: 69–70) wonders why Virūḍhaka does not exhibit any peculiar traits of the Kumbhāṇḍa iconography, the pot-bellied dwarfs over which he presides. The same author (1987) has tried to recognize in some of the figures depicted on the *torāṇas* of the Sāñci *stūpas* Virūḍhaka (*ibid.*: fig. 2) and the Kumbhāṇḍa folk.

¹⁰⁷ WADDELL 1912: 137–144. His candidates are Cakavāko Nāgarāja for the west and Gaṅgito yakho for the east. He argues that the conception of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Virūpākṣa had not yet developed. For an objective assessment of the labelled figures at Bhārhut see LÜDERS 1941: 10–20.

¹⁰⁸ Recently, G.V. VAJRACHARYA (1999: 69) has pointed to the supposed origin of the animals of the four quarters "from the atmospheric appearance of cloud animals". Also cf. note 201.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. VON SCHROEDER 1990: pl. 16D. The figure is shown in a shallow relief on a pillar from the northern *vāhalkaḍa* of the Dakkhina Thūpa, Anurādhapura (2nd–3rd centuries A.D.). The deity stands in contrapposto on a circular platform with one hand in *abhaya mudrā* and the other resting on his hip. Below him is a small figure shown pouring out a shower of coins to the left, corresponding to Kubera's line of vision. A figure holding a huge club apparently resting on the floor (*ibid.*: pl. 8B) could be Kubera, who also carries this weapon in Mathurā art (fig. 2). However, he is not shown holding a club of a man's height, as is the case with the fragment from the Abhayagiri Thūpa, Anurādhapura.

¹¹⁰ VON SCHROEDER 1990: 58–59; pl. 11B.

¹¹¹ The thunderbolt (*vajra*) seems to be held in the right hand, which is gracefully raised above the head. On the proper right of the deity the heads of an elephant and a horse (?) are visible. Two other, either animal or human heads, peep into the scene from the left-hand side of the figure. Floating above the figure's head are a square and a round object, the latter of which occurs elsewhere (similar figure, but without "*vajra*", VON SCHROEDER 1990: pl. 12D). These objects have been previously convincingly identified as the gem and wheel of a Cakravartin (cited *ibid.*: 82).

There is some – though meagre – evidence for early predecessors of the warrior-like *lokapālas* which have been popular in Vajrayāna Buddhism.¹¹² Those early examples have appeared in the area of Gandhāra/Pakistan. Several isolated images of standing male figures wearing chain-mail skirts have been found there (M. TADDEI 1962: fig. 21; P. PAL 1997: cat. 191, 192). A similar figure in bronze has come to light in present-day Afghanistan (TADDEI 1970: Abb. 161). One of the warriors (PAL 1997: cat. 191), wielding a mighty club with a roundish top and standing on the back of a reclining lion, has been identified as Kubera or Vaiśrāvaṇa, the guardian of the north. The stucco relief, measuring 71.2x34.3x14 cm, belongs to the 4th century A.D. The tiny bronze image (height: 9.5 cm) could have originally held a spear, which is preserved in another case (TADDEI 1962: fig. 21). The bronze figure has been assigned to the 5th century. A set of four *lokapālas* each holding a spear has been published by R.E. FISHER (1995: fig. 9). The figures are arranged facing the four directions atop the dome of a votive *stūpa* made of bronze, dated c. 5th–6th centuries, also from the Gandhāra area.

A textual mention of warrior-like directional guardians has been made in *VdhP* (III.84.12). Here, the four *lokapālas* appear on a peculiar symbolic structure called *aiḍuka*. They are referred to by their common Buddhist names (see above), carry spears and wear “dresses like the Sun” (*sūrya-veśa-dharāḥ*, i.e. in armour).

2.1.2 Foundation Stones and Deposits

These significant ritual objects surely deserve their own specialized study. Much work on the subject has been carried out by Debala MITRA.¹¹³ Due to the inaccessibility of deposits buried below architectural monuments at varying depths, e.g. twenty-three metres below the sanctuary floor in the case of Añkor Vāt in Cambodia (O’CONNOR 1966: 53), there is only very sporadic evidence, particularly within the borders of modern India. What is relevant to our study is the appearance of the attributes or insignia of the *dikpālas* in miniature form or as engravings, and also the rare finding of small bronze statues of the eight *dikpālas* in a foundation deposit. There are literary prescriptions for some of the practices met with, but as might be expected, these rarely tally completely with the archaeological findings.

Among the cases discussed by O’CONNOR and MITRA, only very few offer a complete set of *dikpāla* symbols or representations of the directional deities. Most revealing, however, is the wealth of evidence from Sagrahawa/Nepal, where the remains of “early medieval” brick structures were excavated in the last century.¹¹⁴ Some of the foundation bricks,¹¹⁵ which were usually found placed above small copper vases, were crudely carved with the pictograms of weapons, the most elaborate layout being a central brick decorated with an eight-petalled lotus surrounded by eight bricks showing the *dikpāla-āyudhas* (fig. 1). Indra’s thunderbolt (*vajra*) should have been placed on the east. Its asymmetric number of prongs is unusual: four prongs are pointing northward and only three are pointing southward. This is followed by the upper part of a spear (*śakti*),¹¹⁶ often described as Agni’s weapon, on the south-east, a staff (*daṇḍa*) for Yama on the south, a sturdy sword (*khadga*) for Nairṛta on the south-west, a loop with a circle below representing Varuṇa’s noose (*pāśa*) on the west, a flag (*dhvaja*) for Vāyu on the north-west, a club (*gadā*) on the north for Kubera or Soma,¹¹⁷ and a trident (*triśūla*) with prongs joining at the top for Īśāna on the north-east. The layout of the bricks does however vary from structure to structure, the only comparable distribution of pictograms being found in Structure 6. The other structures showed eight partly dif-

fering symbols (no. 9),¹¹⁸ only lotuses (nos. 3–5, etc.), lotuses and *svastikas* (nos. 1 and 2), and a somewhat corrupt arrangement of four (no. 13) or seven (no. 10) *āyudhas*.

A unique carved stone slab found at Caṇḍi Ngrimbi, Jombang/East Java combines the characteristics of a *kūrma-śilā* (tortoise stone) with an elaborate lotus pattern showing on its outer petals a complete set of *dikpāla* symbols.¹¹⁹ The stone slab is peculiar for the fact that the symbols could not have pointed exactly in the correct directions, as the dividing lines between the petals must have corresponded to the directions. Thus, Indra’s *vajra* is shown south of the eastern line, followed by some kind of fire vessel (MITRA: *agni-pātra*), from which smoke seems to emerge, for Agni. The other attributes are staff (*daṇḍa*) for Yama, unusually what seems to be a double axe for Nairṛta, a curved snake as noose (*nāga-pāśa*) for Varuṇa, an elephant goad (*aṅkuśa*) for Vāyu, a four-spoked wheel (*cakra*) with emerging flames for Viṣṇu (generally not in the directional scheme), or probably for Kubera as a great king, and the expected trident (*triśūla*) for Īśāna in the north-east.

Two other pieces of evidence from western India have been collected by MITRA.¹²⁰ These two squarish stone slabs, hailing from different places in Gujarat, bear crudely carved symbols, a trident for Īśāna and a sword for Nairṛta, respectively. The former slab was found at the corner of a *jagatī* (platform) in a ruined brick structure of the Chaulukya period, with the trident pointing towards the north-east.

The recovery of miniature weapons in gold and silver foil has been reported from Site no. 16 in the Kedah area/Malaysia by H.G.Q. WALES (1940: 34–36). Among other precious objects, the circular bronze relic casket contained small metal figurines of the directional animals: elephant, bull, horse and lion.¹²¹ The other objects were: a bow, two arrows, a sword, a dagger, a long piece of wire probably symbolizing a noose, a staff, a shield, a *ḍamaru* (hour glass-shaped drum), a rectangular sheet tentatively identified as a

¹¹² GRÖNBOLD (1984: 364): “spätestens zu Beginn des 8. Jh. n. Chr. wurden sie zu Kriegertypen mit erschreckendem Äußeren”. A Japanese set assignable to c. 12th–14th centuries is published in FISHER 1995: fig. 1.

¹¹³ MITRA 1972: 231–247; 1973–74 and n.d. are detailed studies of foundational practices. The former two present interesting and so far unique archaeological evidence from Sagrahawa in the Nepalese Tarai. The second study mainly concentrates on findings from South-East Asia, which can be closely linked to the Indian theory and practice however (cf. also O’CONNOR 1966).

¹¹⁴ The seventeen brick structures were at first considered to be Buddhist *stūpas*, but MITRA (1973–74: 2) states that they “did not yield any specifically Buddhist antiquities.”

¹¹⁵ The laying of the (first) layer of bricks, *iṣṭākā-nyāsa*, has been described in a number of texts. With regard to the treatment of the directions, KRAMRISCH 1946: 105–107 summarizes the evidence: “Five or nine ‘bricks’ are thus laid down, one in the centre of a square, the others in the cardinal and intermediate directions following the course of the sun (pradakṣiṇā) beginning from the east.”

¹¹⁶ Cf. MITRA 1973–74: 4. She offers the alternative interpretation of a flame, but a *śakti*, which is recognized as Agni’s weapon in some of the earlier texts (e.g. *MIP* 261.11; cf. table X), is even more clearly shown on the respective brick of Structure 6 (*ibid.*: fig. 4.1).

¹¹⁷ For the Moon God Soma, the club is not the usual attribute, but it occurs in a few cases, in texts as well as in images (e.g. in the *Agnipurāṇa*, cf. table X).

¹¹⁸ This is the only example of the bricks being arranged in three regular rows of three. The symbol on the east looks like a trident (*triśūla*) without a handle, resting on a socle, while the one on the south-east may represent either a stylized bolt (*vajra*) surmounted by a flame (for Indrāgni?) or a fire-altar. On the south is a staff (*daṇḍa*), on the south-west an axe (*paraśu*), on the west a noose (*pāśa*), a standard (*dhvaja*) on the north-west, a mace (*gadā*) on the north and a flattened ring on the north-east.

¹¹⁹ MITRA n.d.: 47 and pl. 28. For *kūrma-śilā* see *ibid.*: 45–46.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*: 48; pls. 30–31.

¹²¹ The distribution is generally: elephant – east; bull – south; horse – west; lion – north (cf. VON SCHROEDER 1990: pl. 15A–D, Kaṇṭaka Cetiya/Sri Lanka, 1st–2nd centuries A.D.). For the animals which have already been depicted in relief on the well-known Aśoka capital at Sārnāth, see also V.S. AGRAWALA 1964: 60–63.

book, a bell or seal, a lotus, a miniature bowl, a ploughshare and a yoke.¹²² While the presence of a noose would suggest a connection with Varuṇa, as does the sword with Nairṛta and the staff with Yama, it is not as easy to assign the other attributes to particular guardian deities. As the thunderbolt and the trident are conspicuously absent, a full set of *dikpālas* was probably not intended here.

Rare evidence for a set of more than four¹²³ *dikpālas* in the form of bronze figures comes from the Tōpavāva Dāgāba, Polonnaruva,¹²⁴ which is dated c. 9th century. The brick container, which is divided up into twenty-five chambers¹²⁵ inside, was recovered from the dome of the *stūpa* and appeared to have been partly plundered. However, it still contained figures of Indra, Agni, Yama, Nairṛta, Varuṇa and Brahmā, which were identified by their respective positions in the *yantra-gaḷa*. The figure from the northern chamber has so far been regarded as Viṣṇu/Ananta, but, having a fierce expression, a demonic hairstyle, and a sword and shield in his natural right and left hands, it conforms rather more to the image of a fierce protective deity, e.g. Kṣetrapāla.¹²⁶

Textual support for the arrangement of the guardians of the directions at the bases of religious structures has been cited by MITRA.¹²⁷ However, the texts she refers to cannot be dated before the 12th century A.D. She also mentions the comment by P.O. SOMPURA (1960: 177) that the practice of inscribing the *dikpāla* symbols on foundation-stones has survived until the present day among the Sompura architects. Regarding references in earlier texts, a probable indication of such practice is contained in the *Viṣṇudharmot-tarapurāṇa*, which may date between 400 and 650 A.D. (ROCHER 1986: 252). This text describes how an elaborate *maṇḍala* is established as preparation for an ablation rite connected with the directional guardians (*dikpāla-snāna*). In the *maṇḍala*, the *dikpālas*¹²⁸ are installed on the eight petals of a lotus, the centre of which is occupied by the gods Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Rudra (*VdhP* II.104.39–50). The four oceans should be arrayed around this arrangement, and around them again a number of symbols should be “drawn” (*likhet*). These attributes are enumerated in *VdhP* II.104.51–52 as: lotus (*padma*), wheel (*cakra*), staff (*daṇḍa*), thunderbolt (*vajra*), aquatic creature (*makara*), spear (*śakti*), standard (*dhvaja*), trident (*triśūla*). Although the number of these *āyudhas* is eight, they do not fully correspond to the attributes of the *aṣṭadikpāla* group. The latter six symbols obviously stand for Yama, Indra, Varuṇa¹²⁹, Agni, Vāyu and Īśāna, respectively. It is tempting to hypothesize that, as the symbols of Nairṛta and Kubera are absent, *padma* and *cakra* denote Brahmā and Viṣṇu/Ananta.¹³⁰ Moreover, the example of Vāyu, who is here represented by his banner (*dhvaja*), but who elsewhere in the same text carries a billowing garment (*VdhP* III.58.1), shows that the *dikpāla* symbols apparently follow a tradition different from that followed in the iconographic passages on the *dikpālas* (*VdhP* II.104.42–50; III.50–53; 55–58). In any case, a cloth would have been difficult to depict. Regarding *cakra*, it is also found on the slab from Caṇḍi Ngrimbi.

The above passage does not refer to the construction of a building but a ritual shed with an enclosure (*prākāra*) and doors. However, a *maṇḍala* in which deities are installed (*devatā-nyāsa*)¹³¹ is prescribed for the laying of the foundation stone (*śilā-nyāsa*; *VdhP* II.29.71–72). Although there is no actual reference to the engraving of the symbols of the directional guardians on the foundation stone, two preconditions for such a practice can be discerned: the reference to a particular set of *dikpāla* symbols, and the establishment of a *devatā-maṇḍala* at the foundation rite. It is quite plausible that emblems were found to be more easily carved than complete figures of the guardians. They may signify the *devatā-maṇḍala* and even

comprise in them all the other deities (“*pada-devatās*”) which are traditionally located on the foundation grid of a building (*vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala*). This outwardly invisible symbolism of the *dikpālas* in the foundation of a temple could have constituted a pre-ogative for their actual depiction on the walls of the sanctuary.

2.1.3 The Early Depiction of Assemblies of Deities

Two important reliefs dating back to the early 5th and early 6th centuries A.D., respectively, are found at Udayagiri and Deogaḍh, both in Madhya Pradesh. A key article by Debala MITRA (1963) has dealt with the former relief; the identification of some figures in the latter one is proposed in a footnote. Both reliefs, together with some other relevant examples, have been discussed by K. VAN KOOIJ (1985).

At Udayagiri, the upper row of largely identical figures on the proper left side of the colossal Varāha image in Cave 5 includes representations of Indra and Varuṇa followed by ten other *ādityas*, and Agni and Vāyu followed by six other *vasus*, thus completing the two groups of twelve and eight deities, respectively. In each case, only the first two gods are characterized by individual features. Below this row of twenty gods is another row of twenty figures which lack individual traits, but exhibit certain group characteristics. The first eleven figures from the left have been identified as *rudras* (MITRA

¹²² The latter three items quite clearly identify the donor of the temple as a *vaiśya* or *śūdra*, as prescribed by the *Mayamata*: “The deposit proper to a *śūdra* is equally suitable for a *vaiśya* [...] (12.82b); it comprises a seed bowl, a gold plough and a copper yoke” (12.80b). Reference to the directions is made thus: “there is a silver cow at each of the cardinal points and, in the centre, a bull” (12.81a; after B. Dagens).

¹²³ VON SCHROEDER 1990: 239–240 discusses the “Lokapālas of the Brahmanical System” of the Late Anurādhapura Period (c. 300–1000 A.D.). He introduces only sets consisting of the four guardians Indra, Yama, Varuṇa and Kubera, while a larger set from the Tōpavāva Dāgāba, Polonnaruva (see below) is not mentioned.

¹²⁴ BELL 1914: 28–30; pl. LXI, etc.; GAIL 1980: 263; pl. XX/5 (from left to right: Varuṇa, Yama, Agni); MITRA n.d.: 44.

¹²⁵ For the literary descriptions of foundation deposit containers (*garbha-pātra*; Sinhalese *yantra-gaḷa*) see KRAMRISCH 1946: 126–128. “Inside, the casket is divided into compartments, like the Vāstumaṇḍala, and of varying number. [...] the divinities of the Vāstumaṇḍala reside in its compartments. The latter moreover are replete with the wealth of the earth”. Attention has been drawn by VAN LOHUIZEN-DE LEEUW 1955: 376 to an impressive stone *garbha-pātra* from Jalatuṇḍa/Java (later mentioned by O’CONNOR 1966: 58 and MITRA n.d.: 49; pl. 39). Dating from the end of the 10th century, the box contained, among other treasures, pieces of gold leaf inscribed with invocations to Īśāna and Agni.

¹²⁶ Like Brahmā, the guardian of the zenith or centre, who was actually positioned near the centre of the container, Ananta should be expected in a central position. Concerning the attributes of the figure, only sword and shield survive intact. Therefore, it could well be identified as Kṣetrapāla, who is eight-armed in his particularly fierce “*tāmasa*” aspect (e.g. *Mayamata* 36.178–182).

¹²⁷ MITRA 1973–74: 5; *idem* n.d.: 45, 48.

¹²⁸ As elsewhere in the *VdhP* (III.57.1–6), the south-west is occupied by a deity referred to as Virūpākṣa and not by Nairṛta. It is only here, in *VdhP* II.104.39–50, that Virūpākṣa is attributed the sword (*khaḍga*). As this is also Nairṛta’s main attribute, both gods seem to be closely related, their main difference consisting in Virūpākṣa’s *vāhana* camel (*uṣṭra*). For Īśāna, who is described as androgynous in III.55, his regular appearance and name (wrongly “Bhālacandra” in P. Shah’s translation) are given here.

¹²⁹ Although Varuṇa has a goose (*haṃsa*) as his vehicle in this text, a *makara*-bearing flag (*ketum makarasya*) is assigned to him in III.52.3.

¹³⁰ It is an intriguing fact that the *navasanga* group of directional deities, popular in ancient Java and Bali, which shares the emblems with the *aṣṭadikpālas*, also adds the *padma* and the *cakra* for the protectors of the nadir and the centre, respectively (VAN LOHUIZEN-DE LEEUW 1955: 372–373). However, Brahmā and Viṣṇu have been appointed as the guardians of the south and the north, respectively. The author suggests that this group, the other members of which are all forms of Śiva, “undoubtedly [...] goes back to a group which must have existed in India long before that.” (*ibid.*: 382). It is also significant that the *navasanga* group is generally represented only by its attributes.

¹³¹ Most probably these are the deities of the site, *vāstu-deva-gaṇa*, which are mentioned in II.29.73.

1963: 101), the remaining nine as *viśve devāḥ* (VAN KOOIJ 1985: 694).

In his discussion of the Anantaśayana Viṣṇu relief on the southern wall of the Gupta temple at Deogaḍh (fig. 3), VAN KOOIJ (*ibid.*: 698) has suggested that the gods Varuṇa, Indra, Brahmā, Śiva and Vāyu (from the left), who occupy the upper row of the panel, represent particular groups of gods¹³² as is the case at Udayagiri. He also mentions the possibility of a directional symbolism for the five deities. The identification of Vāyu and particularly Varuṇa must remain tentative however, as the attributes are severely damaged in both cases.¹³³ Whereas at Udayagiri, an apparently larger group than the well-known assembly of thirty-three Brāhmaṇical gods has been depicted, it seems likely that the totality of thirty-three gods has been symbolised by the five representatives at Deogaḍh¹³⁴.

It is significant that all the deities which show individual features, and are members or representatives of particular *deva* groups at Udayagiri and Deogaḍh, also belong to the *lokapāla* group. However, the latter group remains incomplete. Regarding the assignment of *devas* to the main groups of cosmic deities, viz. *vasus*, *rudras*, *āḍityas* and *maruts*, in the Purāṇic literature, matters appear quite confused. E.g. in a number of passages of the *Matsyapurāṇa*, Agni is reckoned among the *vasus* (8.4) or the *maruts* (171.52), and Indra among the *āḍityas* (6.4) or the *maruts* (8.4).

The following three observations may thus be noted regarding the evolution of the *dik-lokapāla* representations:

- Some of the *lokapāla* gods were quite popular and possessed individual features by the 5th/6th centuries.
- These gods played an important role in overall views of the cosmos, with a form of Viṣṇu as the lower central element and Brahmā as the upper centre.
- In early depictions of the assembly of deities, the *lokapālas* were not shown as a separate group of gods.

2.1.4 Panels of Four Figures with Identical Features

Although these Kuṣāṇa period panels look like the multiple representation of one particular personage, for which reason they have once been identified as “four *Bodhisattva Maitreya*”¹³⁵, they may actually be counted among the earliest separate and complete depictions of a group of directional guardians.

There are quite a number of small panels showing four figures with identical features in a horizontal alignment, for which an interpretation as *lokapālas* could be accepted¹³⁶. Only those reliefs for which illustrations could be obtained have been considered here. The panels from Noh (1) and from the Mathurā region (2) are complete, while the others survive only in a fragmentary state, with just two figures preserved. The material is generally the typical Mathurā buff-spotted reddish sandstone, with the exception of no. 4, which is a terracotta. N.P. JOSHI (1972: 56) states that such reliefs are not known in the post-Kuṣāṇa period. All the “*Lokapāla*” panels have been dated to the 1st or 2nd century A.D.:

- 1 Noh near Bharatpur, Bharatpur Museum, acc. no. 1071/133, 1959, measurements: 20.3x23 cm, first publ.: *Indian Archaeology – A Review*, 1958–59, pl. LXXVI A.
- 2 Mathurā region, Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta, acc. no. T 1639, measurements not specified, published by R.C. AGRAWALA 1960: pl. III.
- 3 Mathurā region, State Museum, Lucknow, acc. no. 48.193, measurements: 14x12 cm, publ.: N.P. JOSHI 1972: fig. 49.
- 4 “North India”, Linden-Museum, Stuttgart/Germany, acc. no. VL 81–112, fragmented, height: 31 cm, publ.: M. THOMSEN 1982: E 4 (fig. 4).

- 5 Probably Mathurā region, Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde Leiden/Netherlands, acc. no. 2498, fragmented, inscribed: 1. *balavasuputr[ena]*, 2. *[pī]tā priyanta bha...*, height: 28 cm, breadth: 27 cm, publ.: J.Ph. VOGEL 1942 (fig. 5).

The figures are all shown standing in the rigid *samapāda* posture. They are wearing turbans and are clad in a *dhoti* and a sash, which crosses the legs and is supported with the left wrist. The right hand is held in the gesture of fearlessness (*abhaya-mudrā*), the left one rests on the hip, and in the panel from Noh (1), a globular waterpot has been added. The necklace is V-shaped in the former two cases, but round and tight-fitting in the latter three cases. Earrings and bracelets are discernible in most cases. The belly is rendered quite pronounced in the Noh (1) and Stuttgart (4) pieces.

The number four is likely to refer to the four cardinal directions. Four directional guardians were very popular at this early date (cf. SIRCAR 1971: 238–245), a fact which is attested by the Nānāghāt inscription (*ibid.*: 239), by the occurrence of four guardians in the epics (cf. section 1.2), and by the four Buddhist *caturmahārājikas*. The Buddhist directional guardians are known to have been depicted in narrative reliefs as near-identical personages¹³⁷. There are also at least two literary references describing their Brāhmaṇical counterparts with identical features¹³⁸.

Finally, it must be admitted that our present state of knowledge does not allow us to decide if the four directional guardians depicted represent *yakṣas*, the Buddhist or the Brāhmaṇical *lokapālas*. In this connection it may be relevant that a large *yakṣa* statue, not contemporaneous however, was also found at the first-mentioned site Noh

¹³² According to K. VAN KOOIJ (1985: 698–699), Varuṇa is here represented as the leader of the twelve *āḍityas*, Śiva as the leader of the eleven *rudras*, Vāyu as the leader of the eight *vasus*, and Indra and Brahmā, as the foremost representatives of the gods, are counted singly to constitute the number thirty-three, which symbolizes the totality of gods in heaven.

¹³³ A. LUBOTSKY (1996: 76–77) doubts both identifications of Varuṇa and Vāyu, suggesting Kārttikeya and Sūrya respectively, instead. In the former case, he refers to the closely similar Anantaśayana panel of the Varāha temple at the same site (*ibid.*: fig. 11), on which the deity on the extreme left holds a “spear (or a long sword)”. A spear would be appropriate for Kārttikeya, but a sword, which is most probably shown, is atypical for both Varuṇa and Kārttikeya. However, LUBOTSKY’s doubts are justified as nothing remains of the attribute in the god’s hand on the Gupta temple. In the second case, he understands the pendent pieces of cloth as reins, which, in his opinion, point to the chariot-riding Sun God Sūrya. This is absolutely improbable, as the figure is portrayed in the “flying posture” and there are no traces of horses or a chariot. The author tries to identify Varuṇa and Vāyu on the Naranārāyaṇa panel of the same temple (*ibid.*: 73), but the figures he has in view are nothing else than the usual celestial attendants. LUBOTSKY’s hypothesis, that the Gupta temple at Deogaḍh was originally an elaborate *sarvatobhadra* temple (*ibid.*: fig. 2), is at least improbable what the *dikpāla* representation is concerned. In the present state of knowledge, one would not expect a complete set of *aṣṭadikpālas* to have been depicted on a 6th century Central Indian temple (see below).

¹³⁴ Cf. note 31. The question arises, why Agni was not chosen to represent the Vasus, although he is often called their leader (as early as the *Yajurveda*, table II; *MiP* 8.4). In the *lokapāla* classification, Indra, Varuṇa, Śiva (or Īśāna) and Vāyu never form a complete set of directional guardians. For examples of Anantaśayana icons with *lokapālas* see 2.4.1.1).

¹³⁵ R.C. AGRAWALA (1960: 191–192); the author was less convinced of this in a later publication (AGRAWALA 1962: 263–264).

¹³⁶ N.P. JOSHI (1972: 53–54) regards these panels as representations of four *lokapālas* and lists some more evidence, e.g. five slabs in the Mathurā Museum collection.

¹³⁷ E.g. from Amarāvati, where four turbaned males attend the scenes of Queen Māyā’s dream, the dream interpretation, and the birth of the Bodhisattva (H. ZIMMER 1960: pl. 90). The figures vary only slightly. The depictions of the gift of the begging bowl by the *lokapālas* show the same feature (e.g. A. FOUCHER 1905: 415–420).

¹³⁸ In the *Nalopakhyaṇa* (V.10) of the *Mahābhārata*, the four *lokapālas*, together with Nala, are described as exhibiting identical features (*tulyākṛti*) in order to deceive Damayantī. In Kālidāsa’s *Kumārasambhava* (VII.45), they appear at Śiva’s wedding devoid of their insignia (*vinīta-veśa*).

(D. SRINIVASAN 1990: fig. 5). If we stretch the available data, the panels of four directional guardians could be regarded either as a “late” version of directional *yakṣas* (as at Bhārhut) or an “early” group of brāhmaṇical gods (as at Udayagiri, mentioned above, respectively).

2.1.5 Some Early Sculptures of Indra and Agni

Both Indra and Agni were fairly popular in the period under survey in this special inquiry (c. 1st century B.C.–5th century A.D.). There is hardly any doubt that the early sculptures treated here do not represent either of these gods in the capacity of a directional guardian. In order to gauge in how far these deities were expected to assume a particular appearance, *i.e.* how far their images were typologically determined, some early images of Indra and Agni will be classified according to their prominent features.

Indra can usually be recognized from his impressive cylindrical crown and a horizontally placed third eye on his forehead. There are some beautiful examples of detached heads of this type¹³⁹. Altogether, there are many more examples among Buddhist reliefs¹⁴⁰, which could not be included here. The following list refers only to broad iconographic types:

I – INDRA

A Without thunderbolt (*vajra*)

In *añjali-mudrā*:

- 1 Jamālpur/Mathurā, State Museum, Lucknow, no. B 208, c. 2nd century, publ.: J.M. ROSENFELD 1967: fig. 40 b. 1967.
- 2 Mathurā Museum, 1st century, publ.: P. PAL 1979: fig. 14.
- 3 Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, 3rd–4th centuries, publ.: A. RAY 1983: pl. 202.

With waterpot:

- 4 Near Charsadda, Samuel Eilenberg, New York, 1st–2nd centuries, inscribed “*Imdraḥ devarājā*”, reconstructed height: 46 cm, publ.: PAL 1979: fig. 1 (commented on by D.C. SIRCAR 1981); CZUMA/MORRIS 1985: no. 57.

On elephant:

- 5 Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, 3rd–4th centuries, publ.: S.K. GUPTA 1983: pl. 17.
- 6 Bhājā (after GYANI 1951–52: king Māndhātā in the guise of Indra), 2nd–1st centuries B.C., ZIMMER 1960: pl. 41 (with turban).
- 7–9 Three terracottas from Candraketugadh, 1st centuries B.C./A.D., heights: 12.5; 12.7; 18.5 cm, publ.: S.S. BISWAS 1981: pl. XIIa, b; Christie’s Amsterdam, Sales Catalogue, 23.10.91, lot 57 (toy cart!).¹⁴¹

B With thunderbolt

With waterpot, l.:

- 9 Sāñci, Stūpa no. 1, northern *torāṇa*, inner side, lowest beam (Viśvanta Jātaka), 1st century, publ.: MARSHALL/FOUCHER 1940: pl. XXIX, 3c.

Torsi, *vajra* in l.:

- 10 Mathurā region, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, 1st–2nd centuries, publ.: PAL 1979: fig. 20.
- 11 Mathurā region, c. 2nd century, publ.: *Indian Archaeology – A Review* 1981–82: pl. XXXIV C (with garland of leaves – *vanamālā*).
- 12 Acquired at Tārṣi, Govt. Museum Mathurā, no. E 24, c. 2nd century, height: 53.3 cm, publ.: J.Ph. VOGEL 1909–10: pl. XXVIIIb (with *vanamālā*).

With small elephant vehicle (attribute broken, most probably *vajra*):

- 13 Sitalāghāṭi, Govt. Museum Mathurā, no. 46.3226, c. 4th century, publ.: R.C. SHARMA 1976: fig. 68 (fig. 6).

II – AGNI

- A Surrounded by flames, gesture of fearlessness (left) and waterpot (right)

- 14 Bhaṇṇa Kalan, Govt. Museum Mathurā, 3rd quarter of 1st century, inscribed “[...] ā[gn]iṣa pra[t]i[m](ā) [...]”], height: 196 cm, publ.: D. SRINIVASAN 1990: fig. 3A/B (right arm broken, ogee-shaped nimbus arising from the head).
- 15 Kaṅkālī Tīlā/Mathurā, State Museum Lucknow, no. J 123 or G 280, 1st–2nd centuries, height: 83 cm (incomplete), publ.: N.P. JOSHI 1972: fig. 43 (right arm broken, flames only behind the upper part of the body).
- 16 Kaṭrā/Mathurā, Govt. Museum Mathurā, no. 40.228, 2nd–3rd centuries, publ.: G. KREISEL 1986: Abb. A 21 (right arm broken, flames extend down to the elbows).
- 17 Probably from Mathurā region, Bharat Kalā Bhavan, Varanasi, no. 23171, 2nd–3rd centuries, publ.: D. SRINIVASAN 1981: figs. 294–296 (stylized flames, same as above, covering the whole back of the figure).
- 18 Mathurā District, Govt. Museum Mathurā, no. 42–43. 3048, 3rd century, publ.: R.N. MISRA 1981: fig. 5 (fig. 7; flames behind the whole body).
- 19 Kaṭrā/Mathurā, Govt. Museum Mathurā, no. 40.2883, c. 3rd century, publ.: M.M. NAGAR 1942: pl. II, fig. 3 (fig. 8; only a few isolated flames arise from behind his head and shoulders).
- 20 Bhaṅkari, c. 430–460 A.D., publ.: J. WILLIAMS 1982: pl. 74 (in the populated nimbus of Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu [for a detail photograph see MAXWELL 1988, pl. 54]; round flaming aureole behind his head).
- 21 Rājghāt/Varanasi, Gupta period, publ.: V.S. AGRAWALA 1984: no. 385 (sealing; flames arising from two aureoles, behind the lower and the upper part of the body, respectively; attendant with spear or trident on each side).
- 22 Ahicchatrā, National Museum, no. 62.262, 5th century, publ.: C. SIVARAMAMURTI 1976: fig. 16 (terracotta; separate nimbus behind the head).

B (doubtful) On a cart drawn by two rams, with or without attendants:

- 23, 24 Two terracottas from Candraketugadh, Asutosh Museum Calcutta, c. 1st and 2nd centuries, respectively, heights: 18.4 and 18.8 cm, publ.: S.S. BISWAS 1981: pl. XIII and XIVa.

The variation in the depiction of Indra may be partly due to his association with the Buddhist tradition. In general, however, both Indra and Agni are characterized by a rather high degree of conventionality during this early period. Indra has been shown accompanied by his elephant from an early period onwards, but a small-size version of his vehicle standing behind him, which corresponds with the later convention, is only known from the early Gupta image from Sitalāghāṭi (fig. 6). It seems to be significant that in this image, his usual cylindrical crown has been replaced by a crown of a different, less individual type. The *vajra*¹⁴² has always been Indra’s undisputed attribute, from Sāñci (9) onwards, but there are also a number of exceptions to this combination, particularly in narrative scenes, where the identity of the god was understood from the context. However, in the later Kuṣāṇa period, “Indra with *vajra*” seems to prevail.

¹³⁹ See K.M. SRIVASTAVA 1986: pl. LIII A, of c. 1st century A.D.; P. PAL 1979: fig. 10, of c. 2nd century A.D.

¹⁴⁰ *E.g.*, the popular theme of Indra’s visit to the Buddha, depictions of which have been studied by T. BLOCH 1898 and A.K. COOMARASWAMY 1928a.

¹⁴¹ The only faint hint at such an identification is the fact that Sūrya with a quadriga also appears at that site (BISWAS 1981: pl. XI a) and thus may complete the pair of Sūrya and Indra which is known from Bhājā (see above).

¹⁴² For a typological study of the *vajra* see A. BANERJĪ 1981.

¹⁴³ Both sculptures have been tentatively regarded as a pair of doorkeepers, which would not speak against this view. The analogues for this figure collected by D. SRINIVASAN (1990: pls. 2; 15; VON SCHROEDER 1990: pl. 11E) seem to suggest that the *yakṣa* aspect is quite pronounced.

In the case of Agni, the *yakṣa*-like build and the enormous size of the earliest known image from Bharṇa Kalan (14) are particularly striking. Its close association in situ with a sword-bearing *yakṣa* of the same size¹⁴³ makes it even more likely that the image of Agni descended from the *yakṣa* type¹⁴⁴. Such a *yakṣa*-aspect can less easily be applied to the other images of the Kuṣāṇa period which all show more modest proportions. However, there is another large, impressive statue of Agni, found in Sārnāth, which can be dated to the 6th or 7th century (fig. 314). Although a number of individual traits are always present, representations of Agni did not vary greatly even in this early, supposedly formative period. One of the few subjects of variation is the way of rendering the flames, but this variation generally persists in later periods¹⁴⁵. Defining the shape and function of the flames, “aureole” (radiating light behind the body) would be an appropriate expression, except in a few cases where only the head is encircled by flames (nimbus). That the flames were not generally perceived as the nimbus of the deity can be also inferred from the fact that a separate nimbus is indicated at Ahicchatrā (22). There is no evidence of an animal vehicle being associated with Agni in the early centuries A.D., if we do not accept the identification of the Candraketuḡadh terracottas (23, 24) as Agni.

Evaluating the evidence gathered on Indra and Agni and considering the iconographical development in the later periods (see sections 2.5.1–2), it becomes apparent that earlier concepts of these deities were drawn upon by those artists who created the *aṣṭadīkṣā* set.

2.2 Centres of Early Development (c. 400–650 A.D.)

The beginning of this formative period is marked by the panel from Pawāyā/M.P., which provides, to our present knowledge, one of the earliest pieces of evidence for the depiction of a group of directional guardians (fig. 9). Subsequently, there are no surviving records for more than a century, until about the second quarter of the 6th century, when the fine *gavākṣa*-framed reliefs of Yama and Kubera from Bhūmarā were crafted.

The period under study is characterized by the fact that the complete set of eight directional guardians (Indra, Agni, Yama, Nairṛta, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, Īśāna) is not known to have been depicted generally, the older concept of four directional deities or an incomplete group was represented. An interesting set comes from Muṇḍeśvarī. This group of now only six, but originally eight deities, which includes Sūrya and Candra, has been referred to as “Manu Lokapālas” here (see section 2.4.1.3). Progress towards the canonical group is most advanced at Ellorā, Cave 29. However, no final agreement on the date of this cave temple, which closely resembles the well-known Maheśa shrine at Elephanta (Cave 1), has yet been reached. Although it is generally considered to date before 650 A.D., a wider range of probable dates has been suggested by the authors¹⁴⁶.

A rather mysterious ensemble is found at Bādāmi, Cave 3 (fig. 10), where the central medallion of the ceiling of the porch consists of eight deities arranged according to the directions, without any distinctions in size. Although Śiva (south-west) and Brahmā (south-east) appear among these, the other deities seem to belong to an early stage of the *aṣṭadīkṣā* scheme. There are also two complete ensembles of the – smaller – group of four directional guardians in the same cave temple, indicating that the development towards the representation of the group of eight had not yet been completed.

It is important to note that even the earliest images of the directional guardians are found on diverse architectural members (lintel, ceiling, wall, cornerstone, *śikhara*), in different arrangements

(frieze, rosette, singly) and functions (as main or attendant figures), with variations from region to region.

2.2.1 The Deccan

The Deccan plateau has proved to be one of the cradles of *dīkṣā* representation. In this region, the guardians’ distinctive vehicles have always been rendered prominently. Thus, it seems that the animals or other carriers of the directional guardians formed an essential part of their symbolism.

In the heartland of the Calukyas, the guardians generally occupied a subordinate, peripheral position, as they remained restricted to the ceiling panels. This treatment started at Bādāmi during the early phase. While the *dīk-lokapālas* also appear in a subordinate position on the great relief panels at Elephanta and Ellorā, their introduction on the temple tower (*śikhara*) at Ālampur (Andhra Pradesh) marks their first occurrence on the outer shell of a temple, probably indicating an increase in their importance. The same site subsequently produced the earliest known complete sets of directional guardians on the temple exterior.

Bādāmi

Caves 1 and 2: These cave temples, which are less elaborate in structure and decoration than Cave 3, are adjoining and are reached in approaching the rock face of the Southern Fort. They have been regarded as the earliest of the Bādāmi cave temples, dating to 560 and 570 A.D. according to TARR (1970: 184). Friezes of intricately carved narrative reliefs embellish the entablature of these two caves, as in Cave 3. Groups of directional guardians seem to have been included in two cases, in Cave 1 among the guests at the wedding of Śiva and Pārvaṭī (R.D. BANERJĠ 1928: pl. IV a), and in Cave 2 among the deputation of gods sent to Devī (*ibid.*: pl. XI c). Both these panels are situated in the porch, on the north side of the westernmost (right) bay and on the north side of the central bay, respectively.

As the crowded panels are not easy to read, it cannot be decided with certainty how many individual *lokapālas* are shown. In the former case, four deities follow on the right side of Indra, who is unmistakably characterized by his thunderbolt (*vajra*) in front of his trunk, depicted on the right portion of the panel. Some of these deities may have once been provided with vehicles. With regard to this, it should be recalled that in the *Mahābhārata* and other texts, Indra plus the four *lokapālas* are sometimes referred to (E.W. HOPKINS 1915: 150).

In the scene showing the gods approaching Gaja-Lakṣmī, a number of deities are depicted on the left side, with and without

¹⁴⁴ The early development of the Agni image has been studied by R.C. AGRAWALA 1965 and B. SAHAI 1967. Even before the discovery of the Bharṇa Kalan image, both authors were of the opinion that “Ancient sculptures of Agni [...] are pretty colossal and follow the early tradition of two-armed Yakṣha statues.” (AGRAWALA 1965: 151; similarly SAHAI 1967: 146).

¹⁴⁵ Agni’s hair appears in the shape of flames in South India (see section 2.5.2). An early piece with a similar features (D. SRINIVASAN 1981: fig. 297; G. KREISEL 1986: Abb. A 22) most probably does not portray the Fire God, contrary to the views of the authors. Here, the features of the face are pronouncedly grotesque, which is never the case with Agni.

¹⁴⁶ C. BERKSON (1992: 198) in her stylistic treatment of the Ellorā caves, comments on Cave 29: “All the sculpture is in a rapid state of decline”, and proposes a chronological position of “some time in the late seventh or early eighth century”. The lower limit is marked by a date short after the completion of Cave no. 1 at Elephanta.

each one bearing individual characteristics: Brahmā of the *mukhamāṇḍapa* is surrounded by four directional guardians (fig. 13); Viṣṇu, the main deity of the shrine, is attended by six *lokapālas* plus Brahmā and Śiva¹⁵⁰ (fig. 10); and Brahmā inside the *maṇḍapa* appears in the midst of four guardians, Kārttikeya being substituted for Yama on the south¹⁵¹ (figs. 14–18). In the *mukhamāṇḍapa* the symmetry is maintained, as all the central figures are surrounded by compartments which are, in the absence of directional guardians, filled with celestial couples, sages and the like. In the *mahāmaṇḍapa*, the medallions “float” in squarish sunken panels. The outer frame of the ceiling consists of a row of lotus petals.

In addition to this, some of the *lokapālas* are included in a battle scene on the *mukhamāṇḍapa* entablature, on the south side of the second bay from the east¹⁵².

Iconography: Apart from the vehicles, which are impressive for being rendered lifelike, relatively few iconographic features of the two-armed *lokapālas* can be recognized. This makes it difficult to identify them in some cases. Beginning with Indra, he tends to be particularly diminutive in comparison to his mighty elephant Airāvata, who dominates the composition. This is most obvious on the eastern panel of the *mahāmaṇḍapa* (fig. 15), which has an impressive counterpart at Aihole, Rāvaṇa Phadi cave¹⁵³. Here, the animal is also shown in motion, in a leaping or flying attitude. There is, however, a better balance in the size of the vehicle on the one hand and the deity and his attendants on the other hand. Indra is in all cases accompanied by one or two attendants carrying an umbrella or a standard (fig. 15). Twice, he seems to be holding his thunderbolt, which is barely discernible. In one depiction, Yama sits with ease on his galloping vehicle, carrying his staff (*daṇḍa*) and attended by a flying umbrella bearer (fig. 13). He appears devoid of his attribute in another depiction (fig. 10). Varuṇa is also rendered once without any prominent attribute (fig. 13), twice with his usual noose¹⁵⁴ (figs. 10, 17), and once with a flower in his right hand, which emerges from a long, curved stalk (fig. 12). In two cases, it seems that Varuṇa is holding a flower or shell in his left hand, close to his lap (figs. 13, 17). The ram-rider in the north-eastern position of the elaborate Viṣṇu panel (fig. 10)¹⁵⁵, as well as in the northern position in the *mahāmaṇḍapa* (fig. 18), most probably Kubera, unfortunately has no attribute. The deity governing the north has a lion for its vehicle in two cases (figs. 10, 13) but no particular device, except perhaps a lotus bud in its right hand in the former example. In the same panel, this deity stands out for appearing not on, but beside his animal. Although there is no extant analogue, it is quite probable that this deity is Soma, who is mentioned repeatedly in the texts as guarding the north. As an argument for such an identification, some authors have suggested that Candramā/Soma is assigned a lion banner (*siṃhadhvaja*) in *VdhP* 3.68.15¹⁵⁶. The reference to a lion banner for Soma is not very significant however, as the same text also assigns lion banners to Kubera (3.53.6a) and Sūrya (3.67.8a).

A personage riding a horse on the north-west in the elaborate eight deity-scheme (fig. 10) could be Vāyu, who later in Central India is characterized by this animal and not by the more usual antelope (e.g. figs. 157, 301). As he is not carrying an attribute appropriate for a wind-god, but probably a fruit in his hand, this remains a hypothesis.

Brahmā, the guardian of the zenith, occupies the central position in two instances and the south-east in the other case. He holds a waterpot (*kamaṇḍalu*) by its neck in his rear left (figs. 10, 13) or front left hand (fig. 14), and a staff-like implement which is curved

below in the rear right hand (figs. 10, 13, 14). In another instance, his rear left hand carries a rosary (fig. 14), while the front left hands in the other images rest on his thigh. There is no variation in the front right hand, which is held in the gesture of “fearlessness” (*abhaya*). His goose vehicle occurs in two cases as a support (figs. 13, 14), and a double-lotus in one case (fig. 10). Kārttikeya, who is included in the *lokapāla*-scheme of the *mahāmaṇḍapa* (fig. 16), appears with three heads astride his peacock vehicle. The left hand rests on his thigh, while the right holds a trident (*triśūla*), which shows a similar composite construction as the weapon of a loose Īśāna image from the vicinity of Mathurā (see fig. 178). Two pot-bellied dwarfs with flywhisks accompany him.

The dresses of the directional guardians vary slightly in the depictions. They wear the brāhmaṇical cord, not too lavish ornaments and high crowns in most cases, although the ram-rider (figs. 10, 18) forms a conspicuous exception with a low, helmet-like crown.

Completing the description of the world guardians in Cave 3, two further images of Varuṇa have to be mentioned. One of these is set in a medallion, carved on the western face of the eastern front pillar of the bay of the *mukhamāṇḍapa*, which has Varuṇa on its ceiling (BANERJI 1928: pl. XXI c). This image resembles very much the one on the *mahāmaṇḍapa* ceiling panel (fig. 17), with the exception that the snout of the *makara* (mythical aquatic animal) is shorter and the noose either badly damaged or originally substituted by a lotus or something similar. In the other, likewise majestic image, Varuṇa is shown guarding the nectar obtained from the mythical “Churning of the Ocean”, surrounded by other deities (*ibid.*: pl. XXIII a). Here, the composition of god and vehicle is again similar to the former image, a very realistically rendered noose being held

¹⁵⁰ The depiction of Brahmā and Śiva, who also flank Viṣṇu in their own panels which neighbour his, has led BUCHANAN (1985: 56–59) to reject the opinion expressed in earlier works (e.g. BURGESS 1877: 361; TARR 1970: 167; SOUNDARA RAJAN 1981: 63) that the eight peripheral deities are basically identical with the *dikpālas*. I have elsewhere (WESSELS-MEVISSSEN 1997) argued that her identifications, which only recognize four of the figures as *lokapālas*, cannot be accepted. My main argument is that at least one directional guardian, Kubera, occurs on the north-east, which shows that the *lokapālas*’ presence was not restricted to the four main directions.

¹⁵¹ BUCHANAN (1985: 59) has proposed that Yama’s presence in front of the sanctum would have been regarded as inauspicious. She reflects further on this: “Possibly Kārttikeya, war god and patron of the Calukya dynasty, here was represented in the role each Calukya king envisioned for himself: lord of the southern quarter. An inscription [...] refers to Pulakeśi II as the lord of the earth’s southern region (*dakṣiṇāpata-prthivīyāḥ-svāmī*) employing the term *svāmīn* (lord) which is used to refer to Kārttikeya” (*ibid.*: 91, n. 156).

¹⁵² This is the battle between *devas* and *asuras* which ensued from the churning of the ocean (BANERJI 1928: pl. XXIII c; cf. BURGESS 1877: plate opp. p. 360). Varuṇa is the best recognizable on the extreme right of the battle scene in Cave 2. Although the diminutive size of the figures makes it extremely difficult to identify the details, it is quite apparent that not more than three *lokapālas* appear on the right behind a massive elephant, which, however, does not carry Indra but an anonymous warrior. They are (from the left): Kubera (?), Yama and Varuṇa.

¹⁵³ The ceiling of the porch shows a central lotus flanked by medallions containing images of Viṣṇu and Indra (R.S. GUPTA 1967: pl. 138), respectively. Indra does not hold an eastern position here.

¹⁵⁴ It is interesting that the representation of the noose varies. In fig. 10, it appears to be staff-like with a small round top. In fig. 17, the loop is extremely large and circular, while the central “hole” seems to be hardly recessed.

¹⁵⁵ Since BURGESS’s (1877: 361) times this deity has been – most probably erroneously – identified as Agni. BURGESS completely disregarded the proper directions and therefore understood this figure to belong to the south-east. Only BUCHANAN (1985: 58) came forward with new ideas, suggesting the god Kubera or a king as possible identifications. One single text, which locates Agni as “Śikhin” on the north-east in a foundation grid of a building (*vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala*; *BṛS* 53.43), is not enough to support an identification as Agni.

¹⁵⁶ T.A.G. RAO (1916: 319 and App. C: 93) erroneously labelled a passage from the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (3.68.15) as “*Matsyapurāṇa*”. This was cited by DE MALLMANN (1963: 136), who first suggested the identification as Soma for the figure.

in Varuṇa's right hand. This scene is situated on the south side of the third bay from the east, on the entablature of the *mukhamaṇḍapa*.

It was probably not accidental that the unusually strong reference to spatial symbolism at Bādāmi, Cave 3, was found in an exceptionally spacious cave temple. It is the only cave at Bādāmi, in which the central part of the *mahāmaṇḍapa* is not supported by columns but has been conceived as an open hall corresponding to nine bays in size. It is somewhat surprising that these nine compartments have not been used to represent more than four *lokapālas* grouped around a central divinity, as it seems improbable that the ceiling reliefs of the large hall were carved prior to those of the *mukhamaṇḍapa*. In any case, the enlarged set of directional guardians in the porch must be regarded as the early apex of a development, which finally led to the representation of the canonical group of *aṣṭadīkṣpālas*.

In the Jaina Cave 4, an isolated image of Kubera is reported to be located on the eave. The figure is pot-bellied and is shown squatting, without a vehicle.

Elephanta

The most elaborate cave temple (no. 1) on the well-known island of Elephanta (or Ghārāpuri), situated in the Mumbai harbour, provides the earliest known images of directional guardians incorporated into monumental relief panels. These carefully composed panels are all centred on *Śivamūrti*¹⁵⁷:

- 1 Ardhanaṛīśvara (southern wall of main hall, left of Maheśa; fig. 19)
- 2 Gaṅgādharamūrti (ditto, right of Maheśa; O'FLAHERTY *et al.* 1983: pl. 45)
- 3 Rāvaṇanugrahamūrti (northern wall of main hall, eastern-most panel; W.D. O'FLAHERTY *et al.* 1983: pl. 70; C.D. COLLINS 1988: fig. 3)
- 4 Nāṭeśa (western annex, south of the *liṅga* shrine; fig. 20)

The complex shrine has been assigned to c. middle of the 6th century¹⁵⁸. It is notable that only some of the directional guardians have been represented here, and that they have been arranged, at least in the main hall, according to the actual directions.

The huge central icon of Maheśa or Sadāśiva on the southern wall is flanked by the panels 1 (fig. 19) and 2. Each of these north-facing reliefs has on its left (eastern) side the god Indra riding a mighty elephant. The Ardhanaṛīśvara panel (1) bears an image of Varuṇa on *makara* in a corresponding position on the opposite (western) side. It is somewhat peculiar that the Gaṅgādhara panel (2) omits Varuṇa, seemingly for want of space, although his presence as a representative of the waters might have been appropriate here.

The ram-riding figure on the right of Rāvaṇanugrahamūrti (3) is most likely Kubera, although this figure has hitherto been identified as Agni¹⁵⁹. While the latter would be the only guardian of an intermediate direction at Elephanta, Kubera's presence would allude to the northern position of the Kailāsa mountain, the mythological scene of the theme.

The image of the dancing Śiva in the western annex of the cave (4; fig. 20) again appears to be flanked by two *lokapālas*, Kubera or Agni (?; south) and Indra (north). The head of the vehicle of the former is somewhat damaged, but there remains little doubt that the depiction represents a ram. While the correct orientation of the directional guardians (Indra – east; Varuṇa – west) is clearly depicted on panel 1, here we are confronted with a strange distribution

of the directional guardians. There is no plausible explanation for the choice and placement of the *lokapālas* on this panel, which faces east (slightly turned northwards).

While the *lokapālas* are depicted on only a few of the relief panels at Elephanta, the recurring arrangement of the attendant deities Brahmā and Viṣṇu provides a good example of a fixed "frame" for the central theme. With the exception of a particular group of panels in the main cave¹⁶⁰, Brahmā is always represented on his goose-vehicle on the left (proper right) side and Viṣṇu on his vehicle Garuḍa on the right (proper left) side. In those cases where the directional guardians occur together with Brahmā and Viṣṇu, they appear inside the frame formed by these attendant deities.

Clearly at Elephanta, the directional guardians were not conceived as a visually inseparable group, but the presence of a few members of the group seems to have conveyed a particular symbolism referring to actual or mythological space.

Iconography: Only few iconographic traits are visible on the less damaged panels 1 and 2. Indra and Varuṇa wear the usual ornaments and a wig-like curly hairstyle. While Varuṇa's noose, hanging down from his left hand, is clearly discernible, Indra's attribute in his right can hardly be identified. It may be a thunderbolt or a lotus. He is, however, characterized by an impressive, intricately decorated cylindrical crown.

Ellorā, Caves 14, 21 and 29

There is a general consensus among scholars that these early Hindu cave temples at the well-known Deccan site Ellorā date from the 6th century and that the relative chronology runs thus: Caves 29, 21, 14¹⁶¹. It is supposed that Cave 29, which is both in layout and sculptural programme largely a replica of Elephanta (Cave 1), is only slightly posterior to the latter, which belongs to c. middle of the 6th century. This assumed posteriority, which seems to be somewhat contradicted by the inferiority in the quality of the sculpture, is nevertheless confirmed by the introduction of "new" members of the *lokapāla* group at Ellorā. It is still possible that Cave 29 post-dates A.D. 600, as there exist no other similarly developed *lokapāla* sets at such an early date. However, it is thrilling to find that an otherwise unidentifiable figure among the *lokapālas* grouped around Nāṭeśa in Cave 29 (fig. 21) seems to have been modelled after the guardian of the north in the eight deity-scheme at Bādāmi, Cave 3 (fig. 10). Therefore, although Ellorā 29 appears to be truly innovative in its depictions of directional guardians, it contains references to the traditions of both Bādāmi and Elephanta.

¹⁵⁷ For the ground plan of the cave temple see O'FLAHERTY *et al.* 1983: fig. 1 (p. 18). HARLE's (1986: ill. 96) indication of the north should be rotated by 180 degrees.

¹⁵⁸ Although the cave had earlier been assigned to the 8th century, the mid-6th century has become the generally accepted date of origin (O'FLAHERTY *et al.* 1983: 5). A close association with the Kalacuri king Kṛṣṇarāja (c. 535–575) was revealed by the find of a coin hoard on the island (S. GOKHALE 1976). S.V. GORAKSHKAR (1981: 250–251) and K. KHANDALAVALA (1990: 19) give a similar chronological assessment, but they prefer the Koṅkan Mauryas as the authors of the cave temple.

¹⁵⁹ O'FLAHERTY *et al.* 1983: XVII. C.D. COLLINS (1988: 43) suggests as a mythological reason the fact that Agni was present on Mount Kailāsa during the birth of Skanda.

¹⁶⁰ On the panels of Andhakāsuravadhamūrti (O'FLAHERTY *et al.* 1983: pl. 59), Pārvaṭi-*pariṇaya*/Vaivāhikamūrti (*ibid.*: pl. 51), and of the gambling match between Śiva and Pārvaṭi (*ibid.*: pl. 27), Brahmā and Viṣṇu do not occur. Interestingly, all these panels belong to the "inner circle" of images, as they are situated at the extreme ends of the inner rectangular space containing the sanctum.

¹⁶¹ Recent research by G.H. MALANDRA (1993: 25) further confirms this. She suggests a time bracket of 575–600 A.D. for these three caves.

Regarding the *dikpālas*' function at Ellorā, D.N. VARMA (1988: 310) has made an observation which holds true for most of their representations, including even the later ones, at this site:

... the *Dikpālas* at Ellora have been portrayed as *dramatis personae* for heightening the intensity of the event portrayed in the sculptural panels and not for guarding individually any particular quarter.

The depiction of the directional guardians as a group may have been the primary concern of the artists, their directional symbolism being explicit only in two cases in the Kailāsa temple (Ellorā 16), which belongs to a later period.

Cave 14: The directional guardians on the left (proper right) side of the *Naṭeśa* image (C. SIVARAMAMURTI 1974: 173, fig. 10) resemble those at Elephanta. The *Naṭeśa* panel is situated in the centre of the five panels on the southern wall of the squarish cave facing the south-west. Four figures occupy a spandrel-like section which is demarcated by the handled object (lance?) held by the central deity. The first figure in the upper row, situated right in the corner, is shown frontally, without any vehicle, holding its hands folded in *añjalimudrā*. To its right is Indra on his elephant, and besides him *Varuṇa* on his *makara*, the head of which is shown in profile. Below this group of three one more deity, who must be Kubera, is depicted in half-profile, apparently on a ram. Having identified three of the four figures on the basis of their vehicles, the first figure in the corner could be identified as Yama, because he is the only deity left to complete the guardians of the four directions. On the right (proper left) side of the dancing Lord, only *Brahmā* and *Viṣṇu* occupy the celestial region.

Iconography: It is impossible to recognize more than the conical crowns worn by all the deities except Indra, and the lively depiction of the vehicles. Regarding the representations of *lokapālas*, two differences between Elephanta and Ellorā 14 can be observed: at Ellorā, the guardians appear irrespective of their canonical direction. The complete group of four has been depicted, aesthetically counterbalancing the attendant gods *Brahmā* and *Viṣṇu*, which are here both situated on the other side.

Cave 21: Here, a similar stage in the development of the *lokapāla* group seems to be reflected. The eastern wall of the southern annex bears a well-known *Naṭeśa* panel of sublime expression. On his right (proper left) side, amidst clouds, four deities form a phalanx, all of them shown in half-profile (fig. 22). From the left, there are: *Brahmā* on his goose (*haṃsa*), *Viṣṇu* on *Garuḍa*, Indra on his elephant *Airāvata*, and, what seems to be Kubera, on a ram. The fur of the ram is signified by a deep hatched decoration of the body. An identification of the rider as Agni is somewhat less probable, as a goat has only straight hair. The depiction of Indra and Kubera may reveal a conceptual parallel with Elephanta (fig. 20), where apparently the same group of regents are depicted on panel 4 showing the same theme in the centre. The directional guardians are clearly portrayed as subordinate deities, as they hold their right hands raised high in salutation near the brim of their crowns. There seems to be no conceptual connection of the *dikpālas* with the four flying celestials on the left side, which include *Sūrya*, the Sun God, and *Candra*, the Moon God.

This panel provides only few **iconographic** details. The crowns of both Indra and Kubera (?) are as heavy and broad as those of the other deities of the celestial region. They also wear similar ornaments. The curly hairstyle closely resembles that of Indra and

Varuṇa at Elephanta (fig. 19). The most exceptional feature of this panel is the fact that the two directional guardians form a visually coherent group with *Brahmā* and *Viṣṇu*.

Cave 29: The *Naṭeśa* panel on the extreme north-west (facing east)¹⁶² of the main hall is attended by probably eight directional guardians, with one associated personage below (fig. 21). The relief is executed in a strangely rough style, partly unfinished, and replete with empty space – thus, the background of the composition is not crowded with figures. The upper sphere seems to be occupied exclusively by the supposed directional guardians. On the left (proper right) side of *Naṭeśa*, a homogenous group of four deities is depicted, while the right side shows five strangely scattered figures. The following identifications are proposed here¹⁶³:

		Vehicle	Attribute	Deity
left side:	1	man-like	lotus?	Nairṛta
	2	ram/goat	lotus	Agni or Kubera
	3	ram	lotus	Kubera or Agni
	4	elephant	thunderbolt?	Indra
right side:	5	(lotus)	bowl?	Soma (?)
	6	makara	noose?	Varuṇa
	7	deer	standard	Vāyu
	8	buffalo	staff (short)	Yama
below:	9	–	staff (long)	Daṇḍapāṇi?

Surprisingly, *Īśāna* is missing among the *dikpālas*, while the likely occurrence of both Kubera and Soma (5) recalls the set at Bādāmi 3 (fig. 10). The presence of what seems to be the rarely associated deity *Daṇḍapāṇi* (9; see section 2.5.10) among the *lokapālas* is particularly striking, however. If one doubts the identification of its attribute as a staff, rather regarding it as a string instrument, this can be easily compared with the one held by the musician on the extreme left below. There, the sound-box at the upper end of the instrument is clearly visible. Apart from Ellorā 29, images of the guardian of the site *Daṇḍapāṇi* are not found in the Deccan (cf. section 2.5.10).

In comparison to the eight deity scheme at Bādāmi (fig. 10), some substantial differences can be noted. Both *Brahmā* (south-east) and *Śiva* (south-west), who are not directional guardians, have been omitted. Agni (2 or 3) and Nairṛta (1) have been included in their place, as they represent those directions which the former occupy at Bādāmi. The horse-rider on the north-east seems to have been replaced by Vāyu (7), while the “double representation” of Kubera (2 or 3) and Soma (? 5), both representing the northern direction, appears to persist.

The second relief showing *lokapālas* is situated across the *maṇḍapa*, at the south-east corner (facing west). It depicts the wedding of *Śiva* and *Pārvatī* and is compact and well-composed (VARMA 1988: figs. 144–148). The directional guardians share the celestial sphere with other beings, mainly pairs of divine musicians (*gandharvas*). Their arrangement is as follows:

¹⁶² For the ground plan see W.M. SPINK 1983: pl. 25. The given date of “c. 465–475 A.D.” must be a mistake for “c. 565–575 A.D.” (cf. *ibid.*: 253: “disruption of the cave’s patronage late in the sixth century”).

¹⁶³ An attempt at identifying the *dikpālas* has been made by VARMA (1988: 311). However, he incorrectly describes 1 as Kubera, 2 as *Īśāna*, and 5 as *Brahmā*. 1) Kubera’s human vehicle is uncommon in southern India, and he quite clearly appears on one of the two goat/ram vehicles; 2) the vehicle is a goat/ram and not a bull; 3) there are no indications that this is *Brahmā* except for the lotus seat. The last figure (9) has not been mentioned by him.

	Vehicle	Attribute	Deity
left side above:	1* buffalo	staff	Yama
below:	2* antelope	flag	Vāyu
	3* goat	rosary (?)	Agni
	4* ram	– ? –	Kubera
right side (2nd row):	5* elephant	thunderbolt	Indra
	6* makara	noose	Varuṇa

Iconography: Some significant differences among the figures 2*–4* of the guardians have been detected by M.A. DHAKY (1988: 441). He observes:

The Deccani Dikpālas [1*, 5*, 6*] are in higher relief, wear broad, elaborate crowns, each figure looking as though only ‘symbolically seated’, more on a throne than over the mount, with legs widely spread out. Their right hand is raised straight up to the lip-level, whether just wielding an attribute or simultaneously hinting at the gesture of praise in the northern fashion. Their serene godly faces are squarishly round. The three Dikpālas in lower series on the left [2*–4*], on the other hand, exhibit very different mannerisms. Their legs travel down, tightly clasping as they do the mount’s body, as is done in real life. Their left hand is raised in the gesture of praise with spread out palm in the typically southern fashion; their faceted, or whorled, somewhat narrow and tapering conical crowns likewise are Calukya in mode and mould, sharply contrasting with the broad and elaborately bejewelled crowns of their opposite companions. While the rest of the figures are rendered in very high relief, in some instances seeming almost freed from the rock-matrix, these three Dikpālas are in medium relief and seem rock-bound in the typical southern fashion. Ethnically, too, they diverse widely from the general type seen here with the majority of the minor figures. For they clearly look early Karṇāṭan.

DHAKY’s arguments are absolutely convincing. In looking for similar traits on the Naṭeśa panel (fig. 21), it is interesting to find both types largely merged, *e.g.*, the riding posture is rendered realistically in most cases, but, in the salutation gesture, the palm is not shown as separated from the thumb, although this gesture seems to be carried out in the lower, southern fashion¹⁶⁴. Considering this discrepancy, it may be suggested that the Deccani sculptor has used sketches of the “southern” type or has worked on the basis of southern models.

Ālampur, Kumāra Brahmā temple

Ālampur in Andhra Pradesh (cf. section 2.3.1.1), situated on the river Tuṅgabhadra, was the eastern outpost of the Western Calukyan dynasty. It must be regarded as an important discovery that BUCHANAN (1985: 122) has noticed small relief images of Yama (fig. 23) on the south and Kubera (?)¹⁶⁵ (fig. 24) on the north close to the top of the tower (northern type *śikhara*) of the Kumāra Brahmā temple. The images are framed by *gavākṣa* arches, which crown the top of the tower’s middle portion (*madhyalatā*). According to her, the construction of this temple took place during the reign of Pulakeśin II, probably in the period 618–630 A.D.¹⁶⁶. The lack of a *śukanāsa* (antefix above the roof of the vestibule) is a clear sign of its antiquity.

The figures of Yama and Kubera have counterparts on the east and west side of the tower. However, these are not directional guardians. It should also be noted that images rarely occur on temple towers of the northern type. BUCHANAN (*ibid.*) gives the following, accurate description of this situation:

The Naṭeśa on the east side of the Kumāra Brahma temple tower is found within a multiple *nāsika*/trefoil frame. The god is only four-

armed, but the pose of his legs and the front left hand thrown across the chest in *gaja-hasta* recall the Naṭeśa of Cave 1 at Bādāmi. In a comparable frame and position atop the tower’s south side is Yama, *dikpāla* of the south, riding on his buffalo; on the north side is a seated male figure. Since three later Calukya temples at Ālampur feature an image of seated Kubera on the north exterior, this figure probably represents the same deity, *dikpāla* of the north. The comparable trefoil on the west side contains an unidentified *samabhaṅga* standing figure; it seems to hold [its] right hand at its waist, to grasp a staff-handled attribute (axe?) on the left, and to be flanked by two crouching creatures. Certainly it does not appear to be Varuṇa, *dikpāla* of the west, but even its sex is uncertain. Naṭeśa’s position at the Kumāra Brahma temple was not repeated in Calukya art; later he typically appeared on a *śukanāsa* at the base, rather than at the apex, of a *śikhara*’s front side, and without figures of comparable importance on the north, south, or rear.

Among the few iconographic details which can be recognized are the prominent, broad crowns of the deities. Those of Naṭeśa and Kubera taper slightly towards the top, while those of Yama and the western image broaden at the top. The heads are also relatively large, which may be due to considerations of perspective and the angle from which the figures would have to be viewed.

The unique ensemble of Naṭeśa, Yama, Kubera and the western – most probably female – figure is open to different interpretations. However, it seems logical that Śiva as the presiding god and his spouse should together occupy the main axis of the temple’s orientation. Yama and Kubera just serve to symbolize the guardianship over the four main directions, two of which they represent. Iconographically, it is important to note that the image of Yama, squatting above his couchant vehicle, has a probably contemporaneous parallel at Bhubaneswar, on the Paraśurāmeśvara temple (fig. 42).

The importance of the Kumāra Brahmā evidence can hardly be overestimated, as it shows the first appearance of the *lokapālas* on the exterior of a temple in this part of India (contemporaneous with Muṇḍeśvari/Bihar in the north) and because it provides the earliest example of directional deities on a temple tower.

2.2.2 Central India

In Central India there are two examples of *lokapāla* representation from the Gupta period. The earlier evidence¹⁶⁷ (c. 400–410 A.D.) from Pawāyā includes the depiction of a group of three or four *lokapālas* witnessing the mythological “Churning of the Ocean” (in Sanskrit mostly referred to as *amṛtamanthana* – churning for the elixir of immortality). At Bhūmarā, only three single representations of directional guardians (c. 520–530 A.D.) have survived. Due to this lack of evidence, no conclusions can be drawn as to whether the directional guardians were conceived as a complete group at this site.

¹⁶⁴ An exceptionally high hand position occurs in the case of Soma (?). But even here, the arm is held at an angle from the body, as is the case with most of the other depicted deities. Moreover, as has already been argued, he is almost a replica of the guardian of the north in the eight deity scheme, Bādāmi 3 (fig. 10), however with the addition of a lotus seat and without the protome (forepart) of a lion.

¹⁶⁵ The possibility remains that the figure represents Soma, considering the probable presence of this deity on the northern side of the central medallion at Bādāmi (fig. 10).

¹⁶⁶ BUCHANAN 1985: 119. This opinion had already been expressed by O. DIVAKARAN (1971: 59; 73). B.R. PRASAD (1988: pl. 635) dates it towards the end of his reign, at c. 640, and C.E. RADCLIFFE (1981: 567) later than this, in the period of c. 654–660 A.D.

¹⁶⁷ The dates are cited after J.G. WILLIAMS 1982.

Although both these modes of representation had no direct successors, they offer extremely valuable evidence for the early iconography, context and probable placement of the *dikpālas*.

Pawāyā

At Pawāyā/M.P., the ancient town Padmāvati, a pyramid-shaped heap of debris is what remains of a brick structure of the Gupta period¹⁶⁸. One of the most important relics found here was a fragment of a gateway (*torāṇa*) lintel, on both sides of which mythological scenes are depicted in relief. The better preserved side (WILLIAMS 1982: pl. 50) is now displayed in the Archaeological Museum Gwalior, where the reverse side remains almost inaccessible (fig. 9). The lintel is broken just above the outstretched legs of the deity Trivikrama (obverse) at its centre. The adjoining scene on the left, which is horizontally divided in two registers, also belongs to the Vāmana-Trivikrama episode. The reverse, which shows at least two of the *lokapālas*, was centred around the *kūrma* (tortoise) *avatāra* of the god Viṣṇu. Unfortunately, the portion which once showed this is now lost, and even the central figure in the upper register has been almost completely effaced. From the left of the lower register, four deities are extant. They are engaged in pulling a rope, which is actually the hind part of the serpent Vāsuki or Śeṣa¹⁶⁹. Below the rope, a tiny female figure carrying a bottle and a four-legged animal can be seen proceeding towards the right. They represent some of the treasures gained through the “Churning of the Ocean”. The animal must be either Uccaiḥśravas, a divine horse, or Surabhi, a divine cow¹⁷⁰, while the woman could be the goddess Śrī, a nymph or the goddess Vāruṇī. The latter is the most likely identification, as the vessel she carries is probably meant to contain *surā* (liquor). To the right of the last of the four gods in action follows a god sitting on a low throne¹⁷¹ with his legs splayed. His right hand is held in the protection-bestowing gesture *abhaya mudrā*, his left hand rests on his thigh and holds a noose which emerges from a stiff handle. Judging from the noose, this deity must be Varuṇa. The next figure is rather enigmatic, as only the upper part of its body is visible between the two throning deities. He wears an elaborate crown. The third figure, whose throne is not in line with the first one, sits in the same position as Varuṇa and holds a mighty staff in its left hand. It seems most likely that Yama is represented here. This would make it the earliest portrayal of the God of Death. Above him are two designs in low relief which might represent heavenly bodies. The throne of the fourth figure is partly hidden behind Yama’s seat. This figure is seated in the same fashion as the others, but the arms are held differently. His left hand at shoulder level holds an object that seems to be a rather large pot, while the right hand is kept in front of the breast as if pointing towards the attribute. A possible identification for this figure is Kubera, although his attitude would be quite unusual (cf. section 2.5.7). Alternatively, the figure could be meant to represent Dhanvantari, carrier of the pot of *amṛta* (elixir of immortality)¹⁷².

In the upper register of the panel, supposedly forming a part of the same scene, a typical Gupta representation of the divine bird Garuḍa can be seen on the extreme right. To its left, four more throning figures are lined up before the central, fragmented one. The first two of these are haloed and equipped with prominent *upavītas* (brāhmaṇical cords worn across the trunk), while the one placed slightly off-centre appears to be characterized by a snake-hood.

The general concept behind the “Churning of the Ocean” is to demonstrate the common effort of the gods and the demons. Spectators are generally not depicted. The upper row of celestials could represent an assembly of gods preceeding the churning process, an

exhibition of the treasures obtained through the common effort¹⁷³ or a group of subordinate deities.

Although, to our knowledge, the directional guardians are not mentioned in any of the descriptions of the “Churning of the Ocean”, their presence on the relief may have served to enhance the cosmic significance of the churning act. The central mountain which is used as a churning stick is established as the *axis mundi* during the process¹⁷⁴. A reference to the four directions in space may therefore be regarded as appropriate. Although presented in a crowded manner, the group of four *lokapālas* is most probably shown here. It is unlikely that more members had been depicted on the missing left side of the relief, since it must have represented the realm of the *asura* demons, the antagonistic party in the cosmic act.

Besides his *lokapāla* function, Varuṇa, as lord of the waters, has a particular connection with the “Churning of the Ocean”¹⁷⁵. There is explicit mention of Yama in the *Matsyapurāṇa* (250.46), where he is described as being dismayed by the emerging poison Kālākūṭa. Indra has an important role in the myth, as his elephant Airāvata is produced from the ocean, and it is an original aspect of the myth that it confirms Indra’s supremacy over the world (RÜPING 1970: 8). These particular connections of the individual *lokapāla* deities with the plot are, however, quite arbitrary.

Bhūmarā

Bhūmarā, Dt. Satna/M.P., is one of the few sites of partially preserved Gupta temples. Nowadays, only the plain walls of the cella, with an impressively decorated doorway however, and the remains of a pillared hall (*maṇḍapa*), a modest superstructure and the mouldings of the plinth survive¹⁷⁶. The images relevant to the present study are three reliefs framed by *gavākṣa* (“cow’s eye”) arches depicting Yama (fig. 25), Kubera (figs. 26, 27), and Daṇḍapāṇi (fig. 28). These three images resemble those from Pawāyā in that

¹⁶⁸ M.B. GARDE 1924–25; WILLIAMS 1982: 52.

¹⁶⁹ The different versions included in the epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* and some of the later developments of the *amṛtamanthana* story have been outlined by K. RÜPING 1970.

¹⁷⁰ The short neck points to the latter identification. It is interesting to note that Surabhi does not appear in the epic versions, but she is mentioned in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and in the *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* of the *Padmapurāṇa* as the first of the treasures, and Vāruṇī as the second (RÜPING 1970: 31).

¹⁷¹ For the simple throne see the remarks below (under *Bhūmarā*).

¹⁷² This motif, which is often depicted in sculpture, appears in the *Mahābhārata* (I.16.37) and, e.g. in the *Matsyapurāṇa* (251.6).

¹⁷³ This is the case with the upper register on the much later panel from Baḍoḥ (K.S. DESAI 1973: fig. 57). Curiously, Cakrapuruṣa (personification of the wheel) seems to be included, as the second figure from the left. Cakrapuruṣa is also the most likely identification for the figure to the left of Garuḍa at Pawāyā. However, he is not regarded as a product of the churning in any of the versions of the myth known to us. Garuḍa also does not belong to the emerging treasures.

¹⁷⁴ The “uprooting” of the mountain is always included in the story of *amṛtamanthana* (RÜPING 1970: 6, 8, 9, etc.). It is probably another reference to the spatial symbolism that Ananta, guardian of the nadir, is given the role of lifting mount Mandara (*Mbh* version, *ibid.*: 9).

¹⁷⁵ The ocean (also referred to as *varuṇālaya* – seat of Varuṇa) is the scene of the theme in earlier versions of the myth (*Harivaṃśa* and *Rāmāyaṇa* versions, RÜPING 1970: 6–8). In later versions, it is replaced by the milk ocean (*kṣīroda*), but even in these cases, Varuṇa is the first god to be approached for help (*MṛP* 249.14).

¹⁷⁶ See R.D. BANERJĪ 1933 (plan: pl. XVII) for an early documentation, and WILLIAMS 1982: 117–122 (plan: p. 119) and DEVA 1988: 40–44 for a recent assessment. WILLIAMS assigns it to c. 520–530, while DEVA prefers a date close to 500 A.D.

they are seated on low, simple thrones, of the type which often occurs with tutelary deities¹⁷⁷.

Some misconceptions about the identification of these deities still persist, particularly regarding Yama¹⁷⁸ and Daṇḍapāṇi¹⁷⁹. These have only arisen as a result of the unique concept which is expressed here at Bhūmarā. To understand this concept, it is relevant to discern the different categories of *gavākṣa* images found at the site. The following list has been compiled by WILLIAMS (1982: 120), with nos. 4 and 8 being emended here, as well as highlighting:

Large ¹⁸⁰	1 Kumāra, holding spear, seated on peacock
	2 Mahiṣamardini, four-armed, grasping the buffalo's tail
	3 Sūrya, arms raised to hold lotuses, with Daṇḍin and Piṅgala
	4 Daṇḍapāṇi , seated on a throne with legs pendant, holding a staff across his knees
Medium size	5 Gaṇeśa, four-armed with axe and rosary
	6 Brahmā, four-headed and four-armed, seated with ascetic's band, with lotus and curved stick
	7 Kubera , corpulent, legs pendant, with three pots, holding a lotus [proper r.]
	8 Yama , two-armed with club (l.) and fruit (r.), wearing a cylindrical crown
Small	9 Śiva dancing, six-armed
	10 Dancing figure, possibly a <i>gaṇa</i> [gnome, associated with Śiva]

Regarding the original placement of the framed reliefs on the temple, the author remarks (WILLIAMS 1982: 118):

... the superstructure of the shrine proper can be reconstructed with more security on the basis of the similar temple at Marhiā. Bhumara's long friezes of *gaṇas* alternating with ornament would seem to have formed *bhūmis* or upper stories resting on the flat roof. It is possible that *candraśālās* [= *gavākṣa* frames] decorated each side, for these have been found in three sizes, corresponding to the three types of roof frieze. On this in fn. 57: Since none of the roof friezes indicates a break in the design, it is possible that the *candraśālās* were attached to the top of the lower level and overlapped the frieze.

This interpretation seems reasonable, as it explains the different types of ornamented slabs and *gavākṣas*. A piece decorated with lotuses and framed by *gavākṣas* was probably a corner element of the original superstructure (DEVA 1988: pl. 75, cf. BANERJĠ 1924: pl. VIb).

Yama (fig. 25; 8) is shown broad-shouldered and with mighty arms. Short locks of hair stick out from underneath his tall cylindrical crown. He wears the usual ornaments and an *upavīta* across his breast, which has a chain-like appearance. A large halo and his serene face account for a highly dignified expression. A part of his lower garment hangs down from the throne, which, together with the high crown and the mighty staff (*daṇḍa*)¹⁸¹, strengthens the vertical aspect of the composition. The emphasis of the vertical axis is enhanced by the symmetrical arrangement of two relatively tall female flywhisk bearers. Stout lathe-turned legs support Yama's throne, which slopes to the right in the same manner as those of the two other deities under discussion. The legs of the throne continue above the seat level, forming knobs at its corners. The conspicuous sloping of the throne, which violates the symmetry of the composition, may be explained by the intention of the artist to create a perspective view.

Kubera (figs. 23, 24; 7) at Bhūmarā is corpulent, but not potbellied, as he is often depicted. His head with long, curly hair is adorned by a diadem. His lips are fleshy, his expression calm. His ornaments are similar to those of Yama, with the exception of the *valayas* (upper arm ornaments), which are spiral-shaped. His right hand holds the gracefully curved thick stem of a lotus bud. While the vertical axis dominates in the depiction of Yama, there is here particular emphasis on the horizontal axis, which is enhanced by two globular pots placed on the throne on both sides of the god. Even the throne and its legs are especially broad. A halo is visible behind Kubera's head. A third pot appears to be squeezed in underneath the throne, which again slopes to the right. The left hand, the left leg and the portion above the head have all been destroyed.

Daṇḍapāṇi's (fig. 28; 4) head, from which rows of curls reach down to his shoulders, is adorned by a simple headband. His features and those of his two male attendants have been blurred by water erosion. Of the ornaments they wear, only the necklace and a cross-ribbon are still discernible. The throne slopes in the same manner as the other two described previously. This feature is complemented here by a similar sloping of the attribute, a staff which is held close to his knees. Both hands clasp it on either side from above. Daṇḍapāṇi's attendants have wig-like hairstyles and stand in different attitudes, the one on the right holding a bowl in front of his chest. The heights of the attendants actually echo the sloping of the throne and the staff, which once more reinforces the hypothesis that a perspective was intended to be shown.

Without any clue as to the original position of the framed images, it is impossible even to propose a hypothetical distribution of the images. One would naturally expect Kubera to have been located on the northern side and Yama on the southern side of the temple. However, the examples from Muṇḍeśvarī Hill and from Bhubaneswar (see below) indicate that matters were not always that predictable during the period under discussion. At Muṇḍeśvarī, Yama and Kubera appear on two sides of a cornerstone (figs. 40, 41), while

¹⁷⁷ VON MITTERWALLNER (1989: 373), in commenting on this type of throne with "baluster-like feet", refers to similar ones upon which the early 5th century *mātrkā* goddesses at Besnagar are seated (cf. J.C. HARLE 1986: ill. 73). In this connection, she discusses a figure, called a "*yakṣa*" by an inscription, supposedly from Kaṅkālī Tīlā (K.D. BAJPAI 1947: from Maholi!) of the Kuṣāṇa-Gupta transitional period, which, in her opinion, squats in front of his seat. There are four more interesting analogues for deities squatting on a throne, two of which certainly represent Kubera, since they hold a purse in the proper left hand (fig. 321; F.M. ASHER 1980: pl. 187, from Rohoi). The other two deities hold a fruit in their right hand, while the left hand rests on the thigh (PAL 1978: fig. 12, from Bhubaneswar) or holds a damaged, indistinct object (Sotheby's, New York, catalogue, 17.06.93, lot 113). In our opinion, these four examples date from the 6th or early 7th century. With the exception of the one illustrated here (fig. 321, helmet-like hairstyle), the hair of the deities is curly and reaches down to the shoulders. If any crowns or diadems are depicted at all, they are of a rather modest type.

¹⁷⁸ Although this image has often been correctly identified as Yama (e.g., MEISTER/DHAKY/DEVA 1988: pl. 74), WILLIAMS (1982: 120, no. 8) calls it "Viṣṇu". This was probably because she intended to identify no. 4 as Yama. LOBO (1992: cat. 121) leaves the question of its identity unresolved.

¹⁷⁹ For the recent definition of Daṇḍapāṇi by myself and others see section 2.5.10. So far, "Indra (?)", introduced by BANERJĠ (1924: pl. XIVc), and the above-mentioned identification as Yama were the only attempts to interpret this image.

¹⁸⁰ One of the large *gavākṣas*, now in a highly fragmented state (BANERJĠ 1924: pl. XIIIc), has been omitted in the list. Only a crouching bull is preserved in the lower section.

¹⁸¹ The staff (*daṇḍa*), which is prescribed for Yama in iconographic texts, has here assumed the appearance of a thin club (*gadā*). It is faceted, tapers below and is topped by an onion-shaped element. A similar feature can be found at Bhubaneswar, in the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, where the identity of Yama is determined by the presence of his buffalo *vāhana* (fig. 42, centre).

Daṇḍapāṇi is only represented by a larger image which belongs to different set of figures (fig. 35). At Bhubaneswar, Daṇḍapāṇi is shown in a line together with an uncertain number of directional guardians on the south side of the vestibule of the Paraśurāmeśvara temple (fig. 42).

2.2.3 Eastern India

Some of the ancient roots of the canonical *aṣṭadikpāla* group can be traced in Eastern India. The evidence for two differently composed sets of directional guardians from Muṇḍeśvarī Hill in Bihar is particularly striking and is discussed here for the first time.

The temple base seems to have been often used for the depiction of *dikpālas* in this part of the country. Their introduction on the “frieze” (*jaṅghā*) portion of the wall, which represents an important innovation, also probably occurred for the first time – as far as can be inferred from the remains – at Muṇḍeśvarī Hill.

Nālandā

Although this well-known site in Patnā District does not provide much indisputable evidence on *lokapāla* representation, some aspects revealed by the Brāhmaṇical Stone temple no. 2 are relevant to the present study.

At this site, which is situated near the remains of Buddhist monasteries, the roughly square plinth of a temple now lost has been well preserved. A remarkable series of 220 sunken stone panels¹⁸², separated by pilasters, serves to decorate the plinth. Their average size is c. 30 x 30 cm. On stylistic grounds they have been assigned to the 7th century, “c. 650 A.D.” being the date recently favoured by Krishna DEVA (1988: 112). There is a wide range of subjects depicted, summarily characterized by DEVA (*ibid.*: 111) thus:

The themes depicted in the niches comprise gods and goddesses, vidyādhara, gandharvas, a kinnara and suparna [celestial beings], scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, miscellaneous secular subjects like animal fables, cock-fight, musicians and dancers, acrobats, ascetics, teacher and disciple, mother and child, and amatory couples. Among gods and goddesses (represented with two-arms and showing simple iconographic features) are Śiva, Gaṇalakṣmī, Kubera, Balarāma, Kārtikēya, Agni, and probably Hārītī.

Those panels, which belong to an incomplete¹⁸³ set of *lokapālas*, will now be described. The panels are referred to by the numbers introduced by DEVA (1950: 202–212), which start at the (south)-east corner and proceed anticlockwise:

- 1 **Agni** Panel 7 (fig. 29), east, southern portion: he is half-squatting, pot-bellied, with a coiffure resembling flames, has flames behind head and shoulders, earrings, a simple necklace (*hāra*), wears a broad, ornamented brāhmaṇical cord (*upavīta*), holding a bottle in his proper left hand and a rosary with the right hand in *cinmudrā* (the thumb touches the index finger) in the corner below.
- 2 **Kubera** Panel 14 (fig. 30), east: he is half-squatting, pot-bellied, with hair reaching to the shoulders (head damaged), with a purse held near the left thigh (l.); his right arm is supported by his right knee, the right hand probably holding a rosary; the god is on the left side separated by a plant from a couchant sheep, described as a bull by DEVA (1950: 200, 203).

3 **Vāyu** Panel 19 (fig. 31), east (features eroded): the figure is shown in the “flying” posture with the proper right leg raised besides the trunk; he wears a helmet-like hairdo, the proper left hand holding a rope-like cloth which encircles the head; the right hand is extended below, obviously showing in the gesture of bestowing boons (*varadamudrā*).

4 **Indra?** Panels 22–23 (fig. 32), east: he is seated in an awkward position almost like squatting, has a wig-like hairdo, large earrings, holds a thunderbolt¹⁸⁴ (only half visible) or bud (l.); his right hand is resting on the lower leg; Panel 22 to the right of no. 23 is a half-panel (proper right half), but recessed from it, showing the head of an elephant which proceeds to the (proper) right.

5 **Kubera** Panel 200 (fig. 33), south(-east): he is half-squatting, pot-bellied, has large earrings and a *hāra*, wears a helmet-like hairdo with a central diadem, holds a purse (l.) near the left ankle and a fruit near the lower leg on the right; two globular pots are shown floating in the space on both sides, just below the angles of the framing horseshoe arch.

The second image of Kubera (fig. 33; 5) is relevant insofar as Panel 200 interestingly shows an arrangement of pots which bears some resemblance with the one at Bhūmarā (fig. 26). It is quite unlikely that Kubera was regarded as a directional guardian at Nālandā. There are 17 more images of corpulent males of the “Kubera” or “*yakṣa*” type (Panels 27, 35, 38, 42, 48, 49, 80, 88, 100, 109, 124, 129, 140, 183, 195, 198, 205), so that the role of Kubera as guardian of the north is not clear.

At Nālandā, Stone temple no. 2, a few members of the *dikpāla* group are depicted, however in an irregular sequence. Regarding the positions, only Agni (east, south of the entrance) and Indra (east, north of the entrance) have been placed according to their directions, with the identity of the latter being somewhat uncertain. On the extreme ends of the eastern side of the temple are images of the god Śiva. It is possible that the one at the north-eastern corner represents Īśāna. However, this cannot be conclusively proven.

Muṇḍeśvarī Hill (*Rāmgaḍh*)

The Muṇḍeśvarī temple¹⁸⁵ is a well-known ruined structure in the Rohtas district (formerly Shahabad) of western Bihar, which is surrounded by a large number of architectural and sculptural remains, now partly removed to the Patna Museum. The site must have been an important pilgrimage centre, as it is situated on a hill (c. 180 m high) the rocky ascent of which is studded with pilgrim-records. Two parts of a loose foundation inscription, dated in the year 30 of an unspecified era, have been recovered from the ruins. It records:

¹⁸² A description of the panels is given in K. DEVA/V.S. AGRAWALA 1950; cf. also DEVA 1980 and 1988: 110–112.

¹⁸³ Although the number of directional guardians remained incomplete here and at other early sites, it should not be implied that the full *aṣṭadikpāla* set was unknown during the period of construction. Literary evidence has been reported from the 6th century A.D. On the particular features of *dikpāla* sets incorporated in friezes see section 2.4.1.3.

¹⁸⁴ It may be relevant to note that the Muṇḍeśvarī Indra carries a similar “flexible” thunderbolt. There it is completely shown however. The matter cannot be finally resolved at Nālandā, as the typical crown of Indra is also missing.

¹⁸⁵ There are a number of recent publications, some of which contain summaries of earlier contributions: WILLIAMS 1982: 166–168; G.S. GAI 1985; DEVA 1985; 1988: 118–121; P.R. SRINIVASAN 1991. A stylistic analysis of the sculptures has been made by ASHER 1980: 38–42.

... there was a temple of Viṣṇu or Sūryanārāyaṇa (*Nārāyaṇa-devakula*) called *Maṇḍaleśvarasvāmin* which was an old establishment [...]. To that temple was appended a Śiva temple (with monastery?) called *Vinīteśvara-maṭha* to which the foundation inscription specifically refers. (DEVA 1985: 126)

It is difficult to connect these facts with the extant structures:

The hilltop has not space enough to accommodate two temples, unless it is assumed that the little shrine measuring about 2 m 43 cm square with a Śivaliṅga, immediately to the southwest of the main temple was the Vinīteśvara temple. But this shrine, besides being insignificant, is definitely a later votive shrine (*ibid.*).

Therefore, questions arise concerning the era of the inscription, its palaeographic analysis, and finally, the date of the temple remains. The era has generally been regarded as the Harṣa era starting in 606 A.D. A recent palaeographical analysis, however, does not corroborate the resulting date of 636 A.D., but points to a 6th century date¹⁸⁶. The sculpture obtained from the site has been so far dated to the 7th century. The stylistic differences have been chronologically interpreted by ASHER (1980: 40–42), while DEVA (1988: 120) prefers to state “several idioms and levels of workmanship [...] all stylistically of the early seventh century A.D.”

The octagonal shape is an exceptional feature of the ground plan of the Muṇḍeśvarī temple (ill. 2). The four doors are situated on the – narrower – walls facing the cardinal directions¹⁸⁷, while the walls facing the intermediate directions each bear a large, central niche flanked by two smaller niches. The niches are now empty. The walls are extremely massive and were apparently designed to support a towering *śikhara*. Regarding the first set of directional guardians, it most probably occupied the eight lateral niches (*devakoṣṭhas*), as has been suggested by DEVA (1988: 120). Although their squarish shape is hardly compatible with the oblong shape of the niches (the width being adequate, however), two sculptures in the Patna Museum most likely belong to this series:

1 **Agni (fig. 34)**: seated on a low throne encircled by a mandorla of flames, the (proper) right leg drawn towards the torso, the left one pendant with the foot resting on the socle; he is wearing a flattened hair-crown (*jaṭāmukuta*), a double-row necklace and a shawl partly covering the corpulent torso, supporting an oblong vessel (with lid?) with the left hand resting on the left knee and a rosary in the right one resting on the right lower leg. The god exhibits clear-cut features with a solemn expression.

2 **Daṇḍapāṇi (fig. 35)**: seated on a throne like Agni, but with both legs pendant, a halo behind the head, corpulent, with a serene expression, wearing a headband, having a curly hair-style, a double-row necklace, cross-ribbon, *valayas* (upper arm ornaments) and a long *dhōṭī* covering the legs. He holds a staff with both hands, apparently from below, horizontally over his knees.

What is striking at first sight is the similarity of the second figure with the Daṇḍapāṇi image from Bhūmarā, common characteristics being the open hair and the cross-ribbon (*channavīra*). Furthermore, he is shown in a perfectly symmetrical manner. With Agni represented here, the novel situation arises that a *lokapāla* of an intermediate direction has been included. The occurrence of Dāṇḍapāṇi, However, undoubtedly one of his counterparts, indicates that the later canonical group of directional guardians had not yet been formed. Unfortunately, there are no remains of the other – probably six – members of the group.

The second set of *lokapālas* is represented on loose cornerstones, which have remained almost unnoticed hitherto (ill. 2). The arrangement in pairs on the adjoining faces of the stone blocks reveals a very unusual directional assignment. The only limitation is the fact that their original orientation is unclear. It is also unclear to which building they once belonged. Three cornerstones are extant, showing Soma/Candra (fig. 36) and Sūrya (fig. 37), Agni (fig. 38) and Indra (fig. 39), and Kubera (fig. 40) and Yama (fig. 41), respectively. Although the fourth one is missing, there can be hardly any doubt that it showed Varuṇa and Vāyu (cf. section 2.4.1.3). The most plausible reconstruction of the directional arrangement is given here (ill. 2). It is also probable that they had been employed in the interior of a structure, which would mean that the orientation of the depicted deities differed from the reconstruction suggested here. With the temple base remaining intact, the only probable positions for the second set, according to our present knowledge, could have been the cornice or the superstructure of the temple or its now lost hall.

The six guardians of the second set are carved in shallow niches framed by pilasters. They do not have thrones but cushions to sit on and are shown in varying half-squatting poses like the Nālandā images. Only Sūrya (fig. 37) is depicted on a lotus throne on which he is seated in the upright lotus-posture (*padmāsana*). His symmetrical posture stands out in contrast to the fluid body shapes of the other guardians. The latter along with the serenity of the faces, at first glance, recalls the spirit of the Gupta period. According to ASHER's (*ibid.*) arguments, however, the extremely sturdy figures with delicately modelled features, are posterior to the boldly conceived, vivid images, to which the first set belongs. The fact that the folds of the *dhōṭī* have been indicated by incised wavy lines¹⁸⁸ also supports this interpretation. Thus, there may have been a chronological gap of a few decades between the first set (in niches) and the second set of directional guardians¹⁸⁹. The height of the cornerstones is 30 cm.

1* **Soma (fig. 36)** has a coiffure resembling a knitted beret, and a crescent behind his head; he wears earrings and a simple necklace (shared by all the others). His legs are covered by a pleated *dhōṭī* (common to all of them, except for Sūrya), and he holds a waterpot covered by a lid in his left hand just below the knee and a rosary in his right hand held at shoulder level.

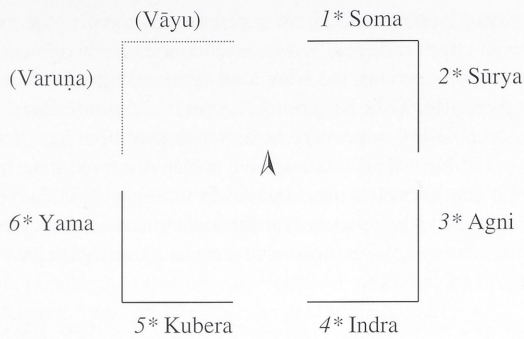
2* **Sūrya (fig. 37)** wears a cylindrical crown (relatively low as compared to Indra), below which the hairline is visible. He is seated in the lotus-posture on a lotus throne, holding the curved stalks of lotus flowers in both hands, the flowers being almost covered by the palms.

¹⁸⁶ GAI (1985: 130) proposes the first half or middle of the 6th century, a date based on inscriptions of the Maukhari dynasty. According to DEVA (1985: 126), the latter has to be assigned to the later half of the 6th century A.D.”

¹⁸⁷ It is a noteworthy fact that the sculptural programmes of the doors are clearly differentiated: east – Gaṅgā and Yamuna; south – Daṇḍī and Piṅgala; west – *śaiva dvārapālas*; north – female doorkeepers.

¹⁸⁸ ASHER (1980: 42) mentions this characteristic for the group of standing images (*ibid.*: pls. 57–59) which he regards as later, probably dating from the late 7th century.

¹⁸⁹ If this is true, it becomes even more likely that the second set belonged to the pillared hall (*maṇḍapa*). The latter has been regarded as posterior to the octagon (ASHER 1980: 39), as its construction obscured some of the niches of the sanctum. ASHER already suggested that the *maṇḍapa* was added “perhaps when the latter [posterior] group of sculptures [...] was installed” (*ibid.*).



III. 2: Muṇḍeśvarī Hill, reconstructed arrangement of cornerstone lokapālas

- 3* **Agni** (fig. 38) wears a hair-crown (*jaṭāmukūṭa*) with boldly carved strands, flames behind head and shoulders; he is corpulent, with the usual ornaments, a brāhmaṇical cord (*upavīta*) or shawl across the breast, supporting a vessel (with lid?) with his left hand held above the knee and a rosary at shoulder level in his right hand.
- 4* **Indra** (fig. 39) wears a high cylindrical crown. He has a horizontal eye on the forehead (?) and holds a slightly curved thunderbolt (*vajra*) in the left hand at shoulder level, his right arm and right leg being damaged.
- 5* **Kubera** (fig. 40): with a hair-crown or a helmet, the head slightly tilted to the (proper) left, he exhibits a paunch. He holds an elongated money-bag in his left hand at shoulder level, and a vessel with a slightly constricted neck in his right resting on the knee.
- 6* **Yama** (fig. 41) has his hair arranged in the raised, demonic fashion (*ūrdhvakeśa*). He is corpulent and holds a staff topped by a human head in the left hand and an indistinct object (fruit or pot?) in the right, above the knee.

The composition of this group is remarkable, as it represents the earliest known combination of directional guardians with the Sun and Moon Gods, which is referred to here as “Manu Lokpāla” set (see section 2.4.1.3). It is difficult to decide if any directional symbolism was connected with this group.

It is quite certain that the first set did not include Sūrya and Soma/Candra, because these deities belong to the well-defined group of Manu Lokapālas, of which the staff-bearer Daṇḍapāṇi is not a member.

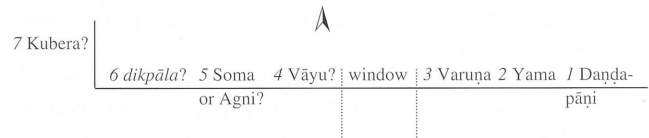
With Agni belonging to both sets of *dikpālas* or *dikpāla*-related deities, one can assume that a conscious experimenting with this group was in process at Muṇḍeśvarī.

Bhubaneswar

The Paraśurāmeśvara temple at Bhubaneswar in Orissa, a remarkable, well-preserved piece of early architecture, shows a row of male deities on the southern side of its vestibule, the so-called *jagamohana*. The lavishly decorated temple most likely dates from the first decades of the 7th century¹⁹⁰.

Images of three deities, belonging to the group of directional guardians or associated with it, can be easily recognized. They are situated between the door and the window, in neighbouring niches separated by pilasters and crowned by pediments (*udgamas*) in low relief. They are, from the left (ill. 3; fig. 42): Varuṇa (1), Yama (2),

and Daṇḍapāṇi (3). To the left of Varuṇa’s niche, a window interrupts the row of seated images. Two figures and a small fragment of a third one are extant to the left of the window. Here, however, their vehicles are absent. It cannot be decided with certainty if these three deities were originally conceived to be a part of the *lokapāla* group. T.E. DONALDSON (1985: 55–56) in his comprehensive work on Orissan temples has argued that an alignment of the original eight *dikpālas* was disturbed by the later insertion of the window. The width of the grilled window nearly corresponds to the breadth of two *lokapāla* niches. Furthermore, he suggests that the southernmost image on the western wall of the *jagamohana* represents one of the two relocated figures of the set (fig. 44, right).



III. 3: Bhubaneswar, Paraśurāmeśvara temple, south-west corner of jagamohana

DONALDSON’s version seems to be quite convincing, but he disregards the peculiar sequence and composition of the group. His identification of the deity on the extreme right (1) as Indra is definitely incorrect¹⁹¹. However, the better preserved figures on the left side of the southern wall could be Soma or Agni (5)¹⁹² and Vāyu (4; fig. 43)¹⁹³. Based on the facts described so far, it is unlikely that an *aṣṭadikpāla* set was originally depicted. It could have been a rudimentary or an intentionally incomplete set, perhaps with Daṇḍapāṇi replacing one of the other guardians. There is also the possibility that the original concept was that of a Manu Lokapāla set, as neither Nairṛta nor Īśāna of the *aṣṭadikpālas* can be identified, who would, in that case, have been replaced by Sūrya and Candra. Images of these deities are nowadays located in the north-east section of the *jagamohana*.

With the present sequence of images, no particular system of reference to the directions can be discerned nor hypothesized. These are the particular features of the seven surviving figures or figure fragments:

- 1 **Daṇḍapāṇi** (fig. 42, right): largely damaged, sitting with pendant legs on a throne like Varuṇa’s, with an elaborate hairdo of cascading curls, holds a staff in both hands which rest on his knees (right portion completely damaged).
- 2 **Yama** (fig. 42, middle): squatting on a reclining buffalo, – crown damaged –, wearing a small earring in his right ear and a large stud in the left, two strands of beads around the neck, *keyuras* and a short sacred thread similar to Varuṇa’s, and a

¹⁹⁰ T.E. DONALDSON 1985: 51; MITRA 1988: 256. A description of the temple follows in both cases.

¹⁹¹ In that he seems to follow BANERJĪ (1924: pl. XIVc), who tentatively suggested this identification for the image of Daṇḍapāṇi at Bhūmarā.

¹⁹² Near the north(-east) corner of the *jagamohana*, besides a standing Sūrya, Candra/Soma is shown in very similar way (DONALDSON 1985: fig. 79). Agni, who is characterized by the same attributes, at Bhubaneswar has always flames behind the body (DONALDSON 1976: figs. 9–10).

¹⁹³ The figure carries a staff which may have formed a part of a banner. In this part of India, however, and particularly at this early date, Vāyu should be expected to carry an inflated scarf (cf. section 2.5.6).

girdle made of metal (?) sheets with a square buckle (hardly visible in the case of Varuṇa), holding a fruit (?) in the right hand and a long faceted staff or sceptre in the left hand; the buffalo has a bell around its neck; its back is covered with a blanket.

- 3 **Varuṇa** (fig. 42, left): sitting cross-legged (legs damaged) on a low throne with lathe-turned supports, wearing a diadem, pendent earrings, a simple necklace, pot-bellied, holding a fruit in his right hand and the end of a large, circular noose in the left hand; below the throne is his vehicle, the goose, standing in profile. This figure was identified and first discussed by MITRA (1960)¹⁹⁴.
- 4 **Vāyu?** (fig. 43, right) is seated with his feet on the ground. The coiffure seems to have been a simple topknot, the earrings are asymmetrical like those of Yama (2). The left hand holds a rod, which seems to extend to the top of the panel. It might have been part of a standard (*dhvaja*) or goad (*aṅkuśa*). The right hand probably holding a fruit rests on his right thigh.
- 5 **Soma or Agni?** (fig. 43, left). The figure is seated in a manner resembling his neighbour, but is even more obese. He wears his matted hair in a simple hairstyle tied on the head with a few strands hanging down. He holds a waterpot with incised decoration in his left hand and a rosary in his right hand which is unproportionally large. The god's ascetic aspect has been especially emphasized since he wears no ornaments, has elongated earlobes and wears a particularly long sacred thread. A similar figure of the Moon God Soma/Candra, but executed in a somewhat less refined manner, is found on the north(-east) of the *jagamohana* (DONALDSON 1985: fig. 79).
- 6 **Dikpāla?** (*ibid.*: fig. 75). Only a tiny portion remains, consisting of a part of one leg (knee) and a part of one arm or hand above this, probably holding an attribute. This is sufficient to let one surmise that the figure is seated in the same cross-legged posture as the neighbouring deity. It is quite likely that the fragment has been preserved in its original place.
- 7 **Kubera?**¹⁹⁵ (fig. 44) wears a hair-crown and asymmetrical earrings like Yama, but interchanged. His ornaments resemble those of the *dikpālas* Yama and Varuṇa, but the sacred thread is absent. An *udarabandha* ("belly band") is worn around the slightly obese belly. Like Yama and Varuṇa, this figure also holds a fruit in his proper right hand. Only a small portion of the left arm survives, as also part of the lower right leg which is drawn up towards the torso. In the latter feature he resembles Yama.

On the *jagamohana* of the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, a set of more than four directional guardians doubtlessly existed. It cannot be decided whether the *dikpālas* or the Manu Lokapālas were depicted, and whether it was a complete set at all. In any case, a Daṇḍapāṇi guardian figure was an associated member.

2.2.4 Other Early Evidence

Terracotta Soma from Uttar Pradesh

An interesting piece of early evidence is the recently published terracotta image of Soma (thus inscribed), reportedly from Uttar Pradesh¹⁹⁶. The image is noteworthy both for its aesthetic quality and the uniqueness of several of its features, particularly the fact that

it is inscribed. Its height of 27 cm conforms largely with the usual size of c. 30 cm of other early *lokapāla* representations (Nālandā, Muṇḍeśvarī cornerstones, the New York Varuṇa, fig. 177, and the Mathurā Īśāna, fig. 178). Regarding its date, the 5th or 6th century has been proposed. It appears to be a predecessor both in size and concept to the New York/Mathurā set, which seems to date from the 7th–8th centuries, leaving a rather big time gap. It is therefore possible that such loose panels of directional guardians had a more continuous history than is known at present. The image has the following characteristics:

Soma (fig. 45): orange-coloured terracotta; the figure sits with splayed legs and crossed feet¹⁹⁷ on the lower part of a raised frame, which is horseshoe-shaped above and profiled on all sides by a simple groove; he wears his hair tied in a topknot above layers of short spiral curls, is adorned with pendent earrings (not discernible on the left) and a simple necklace (only three central jewels or pendants are visible); the face is damaged; the torso with a slight paunch is well modelled; a sash crosses the torso like a brāhmaṇical cord; the legs are covered by a *dhotī* extending below the knees, which is held below the navel by a knotted cord; he holds a rosary in his right hand at shoulder level and a bottle held at the neck in the left one resting on the left knee. The small horizontal inscription is located on the frame to the (proper) left side of the figure. An interesting feature is that the figure projects out of its frame, as if emerging from it.

If this Soma figure originally belonged to a set of *lokapālas*, it must have represented the guardian of the north, as Soma is mentioned in this capacity in some of the Purāṇic texts. It most likely formed part of a temple, perhaps situated at the base or roof. Such a position would conform to that of other early pieces, mostly from the 6th and 7th centuries.

2.3 Further Development in the Different Regions

Towards the middle of the 7th century, a threshold seems to be crossed, which leads to a phase that fully knows and employs the complete set of eight directional guardians. Ālampur in Andhra Pradesh is the site where this transition is attested most clearly. For the Kālikāmāta temple at Cittaūḍgaḍh/Rajasthan with another complete set, a late-7th century date has been proposed, which may be questioned on the basis of its advanced architectural and iconographic features, however. Thus, Ālampur can still be regarded as the main site for the beginning of the theme's period of early maturity. It must be noted that during this period the sets are some-

¹⁹⁴ Varuṇa is not regarded as a directional guardian by her, but as a "deity other than a *dikpāla*" (MITRA 1960: 2).

¹⁹⁵ The other remaining deities Indra, Agni, Nairṛta and Īśāna are less likely candidates for an identification. In the case of Indra, a cylindrical crown would be expected, as Agni, he would have to hold a rosary in his proper right hand, Nairṛta wields his sword exclusively in the right hand, and as Īśāna, he should be carrying one of Śiva's attributes in his right hand. The identification as Nairṛta has, only on the basis of the – actually secondary – (south-)western position of the deity, been proposed by K.C. PANIGRAHI (1961: 70).

¹⁹⁶ G. BHATTACHARYA (1993: fig. 1). I should like to thank the author for kindly putting the original photograph at my disposal.

¹⁹⁷ G. BHATTACHARYA has compared this peculiar sitting posture with that of Brahmā from Bhūmarā (BANERJĪ 1924: pl. XIIb). Apart from some minor differences, however, the latter wears a *yogapaṭṭa* to keep up this strenuous pose. Other details of the rendering also indicate that Soma's posture is somewhat formalized and is not meant to be realistically portrayed.

times not yet purely canonical in their composition. A peculiar feature in this connection is the loose association of the Sun and the Moon God with the *dikpālas*.

For the later phase of this development, much evidence comes from Osiān in Rajasthan, where a cluster of temples, as at Ālampur, shows both uniformity and diversity in the treatment of the theme and the shaping of the individual sculptures of the directional guardians. At other Gurjara-Pratihāra sites also, *dikpāla* images were part and parcel of the sculptural programme of the temples. Their popularity apparently spread over large parts of North-west and Central India and the Deccan during this phase.

2.3.1 Early Phase (c. 651–750 A.D.)

It is a striking fact that the Calukya region of the western Deccan, which already provided quite early evidence for the portrayal of four *lokapālas*, conservatively clung to this restricted number¹⁹⁸ until c. 730 A.D. The more common placement on the temple ceiling was only temporarily supplemented by the placement on the temple wall in the western region. Further east, at Ālampur, *lokapāla* ceilings were first unknown, but the wall niches contained directional guardians from c. 660 A.D. onwards (Bāla Brahmā temple). Whether the concept of four or eight *lokapālas* was depicted probably did not depend on the founder of the temple, as may be inferred from the fact that Vinayāditya's queen seems to be inscriptionally connected both with the Svarga Brahmā temple at Ālampur featuring eight *lokapālas* and with the Jambuliṅga temple at Bādāmi presenting four world guardians¹⁹⁹. Another significant aspect concerns the often close architectural affinity of particular temples or temple groups, which are linked by similarly designed *lokapāla* sets.

Many of the sets from this phase are at present incomplete. In these cases, it has to be decided if the extant set represents the original concept. The sites which preserve complete sets appear to be distributed over a large part of South India, however excluding the extreme south (for the latter see section 2.3.2.5). As the dates for 8th century temples are almost exclusively estimated ones, they have to be treated with caution. An upper limit for the earlier phase of c. 750 A.D. seems to be most reasonable. In the Deccan it coincides with the end of the Calukya hegemony, while in North-west and Central India it marks the time just before the ascent of the Pratihāra dynasty, which must have flourished in a region with a rich artistic tradition.

2.3.1.1 The Deccan

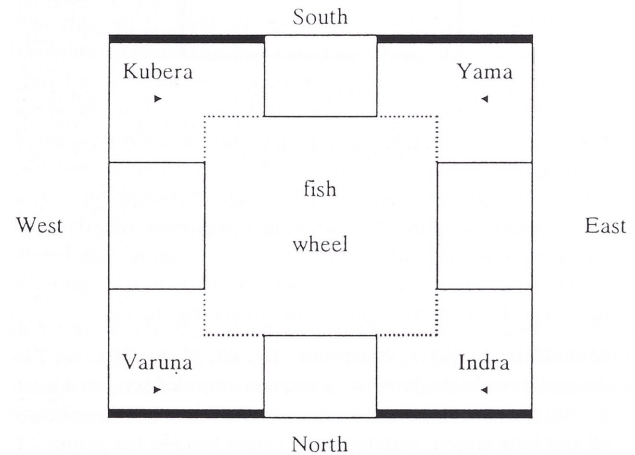
The depiction of Indra without any other members of the group has already been mentioned for the Rāvaṇa Phadi cave temple at Aihole (GUPTÉ 1967: pl. 138). During this phase, such an isolated Indra occurs in the nearby Huccimalli temple. Contrary to the former temple, he is – correctly – placed on the east in the latter one, while Viṣṇu, Śiva-Pārvatī, and Brahmā are shown on the south, west, and north, respectively (C.E. RADCLIFFE 1981: ill. 716–718).

Bādāmi (Jambuliṅgeśvara temple), Nāgaraḷ (Nāganātha temple), Mahākūṭa (Mallikārjuna temple)

For the Nāgaraḷ and Mahākūṭa temples with ceiling panels of the four *lokapālas*, dates around 700 A.D. have been considered in the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*²⁰⁰. The Jambuliṅgeśvara temple at Bādāmi is similarly dated by an inscription of

A.D. 699. The panels at Nāgaraḷ and Mahākūṭa are very similar to one another. They are both arranged around a central panel of a seated Brahmā (figs. 47, 48), while the Bādāmi ceiling has a central fish-spoked wheel (fig. 46).

These three *lokapāla* ceiling panels are the earliest ones with the four directional guardians in a square arrangement. The re-occurrence of the rather uniform motif of only four world guardians more than a century after Bādāmi 3 is particularly remarkable insofar as the latter already contained an extended set of more than four *lokapālas* (fig. 10). Later, the group of eight becomes the standard programme for rectangular ceiling panels.



III. 4: Bādāmi, Jambuliṅga temple, ceiling of bay in front of northern sanctum (bold bar – bottom of sub-panel; arrow – direction of movement of the figure)

Bādāmi, Jambuliṅgeśvara temple (fig. 46; ill. 4): A somewhat flattened wheel with fish-spokes (which originally numbered 24) and a lotus centre is circumscribed by a rectangle, with the spandrels remaining empty. The raised outer border is decorated with lotuses of various designs, alternating with small figures. The four *lokapālas* Indra (NE), Yama (SE), Kubera²⁰¹ (SW), and Varuṇa (NW) occupy the four corners in such a manner that Indra and Varuṇa are seen moving towards one another on the northern side, while Yama and Kubera are shown riding towards an encounter on the southern side. Their vehicles

¹⁹⁸ BUCHANAN (1985: 444) states this fact in an amazingly simple way, just referring to the names of the modern states: "A set of four *dikpālas* seems to have been standard in Karnataka, a set of eight in Andhra Pradesh". The now ruined Gaḷaganātha temple at Paṭṭadakal/Karnataka was most probably an exception, as it was obviously designed to contain a larger set. However, what remains of the temple closely resembles the developed Ālampur temples, which must have directly served as models.

¹⁹⁹ "The Svarga Brahma Śiva temple [...] was made in honor of the Mahādevī (queen) of Vinayāditya by Lokāditya Elā-arasa. An inscription on the Jambuliṅga temple at Bādāmi, dated three years after the end of Vinayāditya's reign, states that Vinayavati, who was the widow of Vinayāditya and mother of his successor Vijayāditya, installed Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara at that place [...] it is not certain that Vinayavati was identical with the Mahādevī mentioned in the Svarga Brahma temple inscription" (BUCHANAN 1985: 174).

²⁰⁰ K.V. SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: 49 (Mahākūṭa, Mallikārjuna temple), 57 (Nāgaraḷ, Nāganātha temple). The temple at Nāgaraḷ has been described in detail by J.C. HARLE (1969). The earlier assigned date was later modified to "third or fourth quarter of the seventh century" (HARLE 1986: 169). In a more recent article on Mahākūṭa by TARTAKOV (1985: 149), a date of c. 715 A.D. for the Mallikārjuna temple has been proposed. For further chronological considerations see below.

²⁰¹ O. DIVAKARAN (1970: 28) was under the erroneous impression that the ram-riding god is placed on the south-east, and hence identified it with Agni.

and attributes are: Indra (without crown, wearing a topknot) – elephant, standard; Yama – buffalo, club; Kubera – ram, club; Varuṇa – *makara*, noose. The figures partially overlap the empty spandrels of the rectangle.

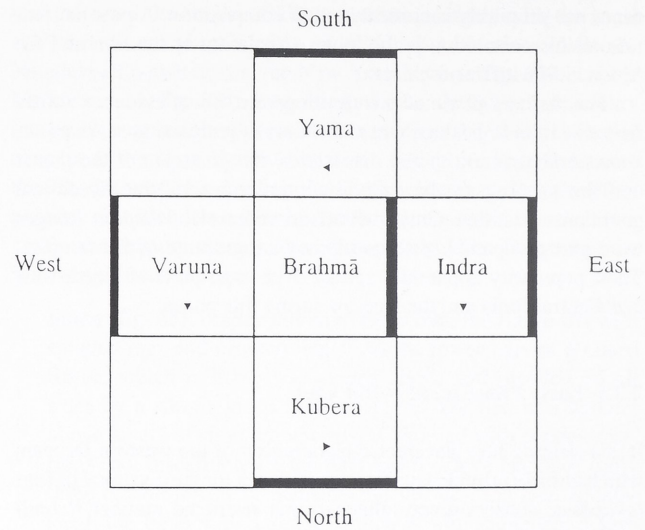
Nāgaraḷ, Nāganātha temple (fig. 47, ill. 5): Unlike the Bādāmi panel, which is composed of only two slabs, the one from Nāgaraḷ and all its successors (with directional guardians) are composed of three slabs, which easily allows for the division into a nine panel grid. In this case, the panels are occupied by Brahmā (centre), the four *lokapālas* in their correct directions (centre of each side) and four celestial couples (corner panels). Brahmā is shown three-headed and four-armed, seated on a double lotus and encircled by worshippers. Indra is the only one who proceeds in the clockwise direction, seated on his elephant along with two servants, accompanied by three sword-and-shield bearers, and like the other *lokapālas* wields a club in his right. Yama is seated on a galloping buffalo and is accompanied by four club-bearing warriors. Varuṇa is seated on his *makara*, a mythical aquatic creature with a huge branching tail, from whose mouth a figure emerges. Kubera is shown seated on his galloping ram, accompanied by five club bearers. The bands which divide the panels are particularly wide in the east-west direction. They are decorated with undulating creepers.

Mahākūṭa, Mallikārjuna temple (fig. 48, ill. 6): The panel is divided into nine sections with rosette-decorated borders. Ornamental lotuses occupy the corner panels. Brahmā is three-headed and four-armed, with his proper right hand in the gesture of fearlessness. He is seated on a double lotus, which has broader petals than the corresponding one at Nāgaraḷ, and he is worshipped by two bearded *ṛṣis* (above) and other figures (below). Indra proceeds anticlockwise like all other *lokapālas*, seated on a galloping elephant, holding a short club, and accompanied by five warriors with clubs and swords and another figure. Yama is seated on a mighty buffalo, holding a staff or club (damaged), escorted by three warriors. Varuṇa is seated on a *makara*, holding a large club, accompanied by three sword-and-shield bearing warriors. Kubera, on a mighty ram, has no visible attribute, and is escorted by three warriors.

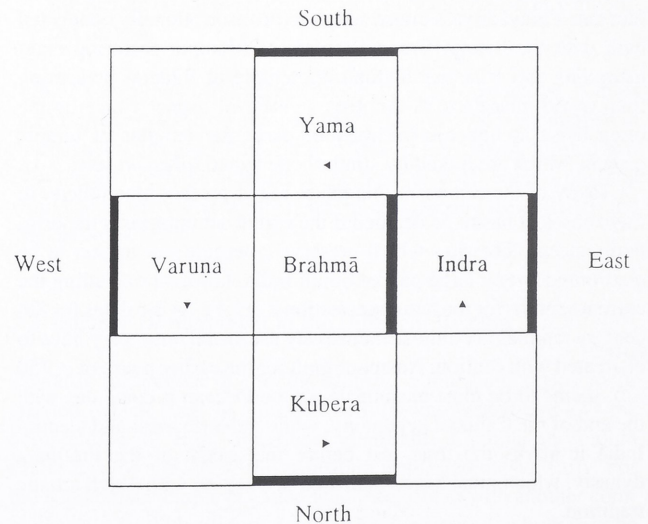
On the two latter panels, the heads of the *lokapālas* are directed towards Brahmā, so that they can be properly seen by the temple visitor when proceeding in the respective direction. The ceiling panels have been placed in the centre of the pillared hall (*maṇḍapa*) in the latter two cases, and directly in front of the northern sanctum of a triple temple at Bādāmi. Additionally, the Mahākūṭa Mallikārjuna shows a procession of the four *lokapālas* holding clubs with warriors on the eastern basement of its *maṇḍapa* (BUCHANAN 1985: 232).

After comparing the typological features of the panels, it shall be proposed that Bādāmi is the earliest, followed by Nāgaraḷ and Mahākūṭa in this order²⁰². The chronological order of the temples as suggested by BUCHANAN (1985: 236), however, is the exact opposite of this. According to her, the temple at Mahākūṭa is the earliest of the three, as the so-called Hindu Trinity is not yet represented on its ceiling. She assumes that the Nāgaraḷ temple postdates it, but predates the one at Bādāmi. TARTAKOV'S (1985: 149) dating, however, tallies better with the proposed sequence of *lokapāla* panels. He places the Mahākūṭa Mallikārjuna relatively late, in the middle of Vijayāditya's reign (c. 715 A.D.).

Although the exact dates for the respective temples are unknown, a clear impetus to resume the *lokapāla* motif on the temple ceiling can be observed in the latter part or the end of the 7th



III. 5: Nāgaraḷ, Nāganātha temple, central ceiling panel of *maṇḍapa*



III. 6: Mahākūṭa, Mallikārjuna temple, central ceiling panel of *maṇḍapa*

²⁰² The *lokapālas* are not placed in their correct positions on the Bādāmi panel. This placement seems to be the most archaic of the three specimens discussed here, since their arrangement in the rectangular space is apparently not yet standardized. Their heads point to the north (Yama, Kubera) and south (Indra, Varuṇa), respectively. At Nāgaraḷ, the couples in the corners also have their heads oriented towards the north or the south. Indra does not conform to the anticlockwise direction of his fellow gods, and Brahmā is strangely rendered with some figures squeezed under his lotus seat. Only at Mahākūṭa is the layout of the panel well-planned and regular, with strips of uniform borders dividing the inner sections. On the Mahākūṭa ceiling, the danger of the continuity of the patterns at the beam joints being interrupted has been ingeniously prevented: The strips running parallel with the slabs are completely carved on one slab; in the cases of the crossing strips, a short stretch starts on the adjoining beam.

century. The four directional guardians re-occur on the central *maṇḍapa* ceiling in the Mallikārjuna temple at Paṭṭadakal (fig. 326; c. second decade of 8th century)²⁰³ and on a ceiling on one of the temples of the Jyotirlinga group at Aihole (c. fourth decade of the 8th century)²⁰⁴, as well as on the walls of the Pāpanātha temple at Paṭṭadakal (*ibid.*: 361; 397; 278; see below).

The visual pairing of the gods of opposite directions only occurs at Bādāmi (fig. 46). This unusual arrangement could indicate an experimental handling of the *lokapāla* concept.

Aihole (Huccappayya temple)

With this temple (BOLON 1988: 309) and the Pāpanātha at Paṭṭadakal, both datable well after 700 A.D., the *aṣṭadīpālas* become a standard iconographic programme for temple ceilings in the Deccan. Their placement in the Huccappayya temple is once more an unusual one, as they appear on the sides of the massive cross-beams which support the ceiling slabs, in the centre of the pillared hall of the east-oriented building. Although they must have originally numbered eight, only six images are still preserved. The central ceiling panel, which showed Brahmā or Umā-Maheśvara (Śiva with his wife Pārvatī), is not *in situ* any more (BUCHANAN 1985: 391). The Huccappayya temple exhibits another special feature that is rare in the western part of the Calukya kingdom: namely an image of Varuṇa on the western side of the tower (*śikhara*), near its top (*ibid.*). No counterparts survive on the other sides. On the Kumāra Brahmā temple at Ālampur, about a century earlier, Yama and Kubera occur on the *śikhara* (figs. 23, 24).

Indra (fig. 49): centre east, seated on a huge elephant together with his consort, his four-tusked elephant rising from a mass of clouds; Indra wears a cylindrical crown and has a halo, is two-armed and holds his thunderbolt (*vajra*) in his right hand raised to the shoulder level.

Agni (?) (fig. 50): on the (south)-east, seated on a galloping horse together with his consort, wearing a conical crown, probably with a halo, two-armed, holding an indistinct object (probably a rosary) in his raised right hand; the background is filled by cloud or rock formations. The vehicle horse would be unique for Agni.

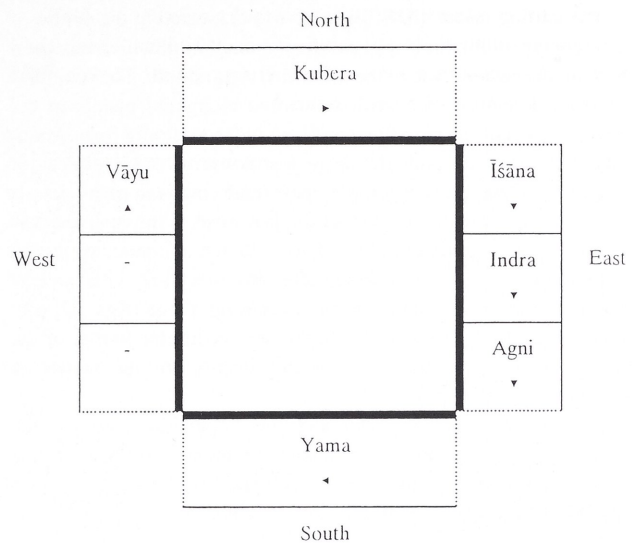
Yama (fig. 51): centre south, is seated with his consort on a mighty buffalo. The animal is well integrated into the architectural frame and conspicuously throws up its head. Yama wears a conical crown, earrings, a necklace, and a brāhmaṇical cord (*upavīta*). He is two-armed, holding a long, thin staff in his right hand close to his waist.

Vāyu (fig. 52): (north)-west, is seated with his consort on a leaping long-necked antelope, that turns towards the onlooker. Vāyu wears a high, somewhat conical crown, has a halo and is two-armed. He holds a standard in the left and an indistinct object near the chest in the right hand. A mass of undulating clouds can be seen below the antelope.

Kubera (fig. 53): centre north, is seated on a galloping ram with large horns, wearing a conical crown, earrings and *upavīta*. He is two-armed, the left one casually resting on the curly mane of the animal, the right one holding a club of medium proportions.

Īśāna (fig. 54): (north)-east, – considerably obliterated –, is seated with his consort on a mighty bull.

It is significant that only the reliefs of Kubera and Yama, facing each other and each being isolated on their respective beams, have an ornate frame of split *gavākṣa* arches, while the others are bor-



III. 7: Aihole, Huccappayya temple, central bay, *lokapālas* on the beams

dered by simple rectangular ridges. The *lokapāla* panels, as far as can be judged from the less encrusted surface, are all carefully designed and sensuously modelled, with the graceful movement and the controlled power of the animals being accentuated.

Paṭṭadakal (Pāpanātha temple)

The Pāpanātha temple at Paṭṭadakal (BOLON 1988: 305–307), which reveals different phases of building activity, bears the unique evidence of a set of four *lokapālas* on its exterior (western side) and a set of eight on its ceiling (eastern pillared hall). As the western hall (*maṇḍapa*) must be the older one²⁰⁵, it can be stated that the subsequent stages of four and eight directional guardians have been recorded on this temple in a singular manner.

²⁰³ Here, the directional guardians have been incorporated into a Nāṭeśa panel. Śiva is eight-armed and accompanied by Pārvatī and his bull vehicle (P. BANERJĪ 1985: ill. 12 [mirror-image]; also RADCLIFFE 1981: fig. 857; BUCHANAN 1985: fig. 549). There are two vertical rows of divine attendants: on the left (from top): Viṣṇu, Indra, Yama (?); and on the right: Brahmā, Kubera (?), Varuṇa. BUCHANAN (1985: 352) suggests an earlier date for the Mallikārjuna temple, which had been assigned to c. 740/5 A.D. She regards it as the earliest of the three large southern-style temples at the site and assumes that its construction started “in the middle of Vijayāditya’s reign”, i.e., c. 715 A.D.

²⁰⁴ BUCHANAN (1985: 397, n. 183) identifies this panel as “the first indisputable Calukya ceiling representation of Śiva surrounded by *dīpālas* formally positioned in their directional domains.” Śiva is said to be accompanied by Pārvatī, Gaṇeśa, and Kārtikeya. BUCHANAN suggests that the composition is “almost certainly inspired by Huccappayya temple iconography”. See also RADCLIFFE (1981: 409, and fig. 798). TARR (1969: 225) in his description mentions eight *dīpālas*. However, the corner figures are *gandharvas* according to the former authors.

²⁰⁵ According to G. MICHELL (1973: 200), the *maṇḍapas* are coeval, dating from c. 750 A.D., and the cella shortly before that. BOLON (1988: 305) and BUCHANAN (1985: 275–6; 409) suggest different versions of a three-phase chronology. In both, the western *maṇḍapa* would be earlier than the eastern, annexed hall. BOLON’s proposed time brackets for the subsequent phases of construction are: I. 720–30, II. 730–4; III. 735–50 A.D., while BUCHANAN suggests: I. 690–2; II. 692–700; III. 740/5–? A.D. MICHELL has observed that the eastern wall of the western *maṇḍapa* was, surprisingly, not designed as an outer wall. This fact is neglected by BOLON, while BUCHANAN incorporates it by assuming that the building activity had stopped after the construction of the first niches east of the porches, on the north and south respectively. It is difficult to believe that this state was maintained for about 40 years, and that the design of the pediments, etc., was reproduced on the eastern part of the building after such a considerable lapse of time.

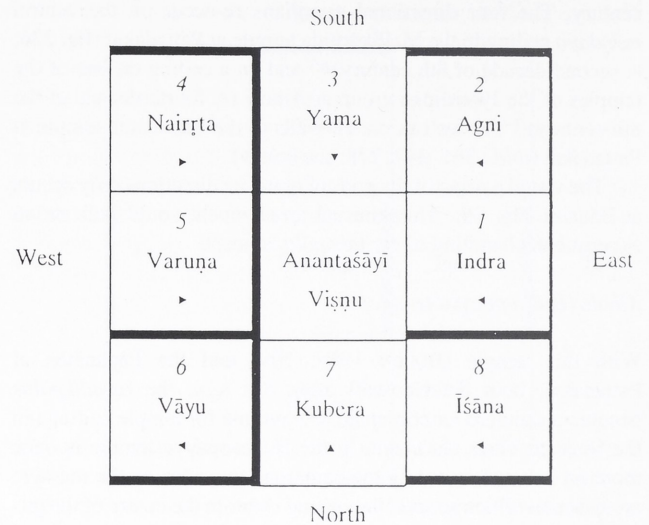
The ceiling panel (ill. 8; figs. 55–61) is located at the centre of the larger, approximately square-shaped *maṇḍapa*, which has been added on the eastern side of the *sāṇdhāra* type temple. The relief has the unusual feature of a grid with three elongated panels in the centre, as its central space houses Viṣṇu in his reclining form Anantaśāyī. Although the vehicles have lost some of the liveliness of those of the Huccappayya temple, their rendering is in many details similar to the latter. A special feature, however, is the realistic portrayal of the riding posture of the deities, which compares well with the Jambulinga temple at Bādāmi (fig. 46) as well as with the earlier set of four on the same temple, excepting Yama (figs. 62, 63). Yama's buffalo with its head thrown back is similar to that of the Huccappayya temple and was probably inspired by the Mahākūṭa ceiling relief²⁰⁶ (fig. 48).

Both in the Huccappayya and the Pāpanātha temples, the *lokapālas* are represented with their canonical attributes, in this deviating from the tradition of the Nāgaraḷ and Mahākūṭa panels (figs. 47–48), where they all hold only clubs.

- 1 **Indra** (fig. 55): east, rides his striding elephant (four-tusked). He wears a tiered crown and holds a goad (*aṅkuṣa*) across the elephant's head in the left hand and a pointed attribute (?) in the right hand.
- 2 **Agni** (fig. 56): south-east, rides on a ram. His hair rises in a flame-like manner. He has a moustache and a pointed beard and holds a bottle in his right hand.
- 3 **Yama** (fig. 57): south, riding a buffalo with mighty horns, with its head thrown up. He wears a tiered crown, spiral-shaped earrings, and an elaborate necklace and holds an impressive club in his right hand.
- 4 **Nairṛta** (fig. 58): south-west, riding on the shoulders of a flying *nara* (anthropoid) with a tight cap or coiffure, who clasps the rider's legs with his hands. Nairṛta wears a conical crown, earrings and a simple necklace and holds a sword in his right hand and a lotus in his left hand.
- 5 **Varuṇa** (figs. 58–59): west, riding on his *makara*, which is reduced to a head and a floral tail only. He wears a tiered crown and holds an indistinct object (the end of a noose?) in his right hand.
- 6 **Vāyu** (fig. 59): north-west, riding his leaping antelope (*mṛga*) characterized by massive straight horns. He holds his left hand on his chest and his right hand raised; both hands probably hold a flowing scarf, which can, however, only be assumed here, however.
- 7 **Kubera** (fig. 60): north, riding on his mighty striding ram with a massive neck and curved, but not spiral-shaped horns, wears a tiered crown and the usual ornaments and holds a club (*gadā*, thinner than Yama's) in his left hand.
- 8 **Īśāna** (fig. 61): north-east, rides a bull with a stout triangular head and wears a tiered crown. He is the only one with four arms, but of the attributes, only a trident held in the upper right hand is visible.

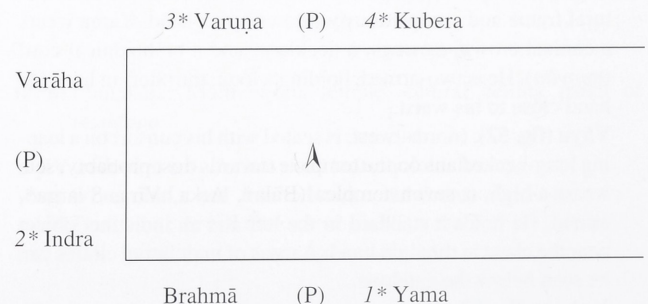
The *dikpāla* figures Indra, Īśāna, Varuṇa, and Vāyu can be recognized as one approaches from the south, Agni and Nairṛta, when approaching from the north, and the large rectangular panels of Yama and Kubera can be perceived when coming from the east. Such an irregular positioning is only paralleled by the similar ceiling panel in the Kāśīviśveśvara temple at the same site (ill. 24).

The *lokapālas* belonging to the set of four are sculptured in high relief directly on the exterior walls beside the false porticos on the south, west and north sides of the east-oriented temple.



Ill. 8: Paṭṭadakal, Pāpanātha temple, eastern *maṇḍapa*, central ceiling

- 1* **Yama**: on the south(-east), has as his corresponding figure a seated Brahmā – south(-west). He is seated in *rājālīlāsana* (posture of “royal ease”) on a throne, with a buffalo crouching in front of it. The damaged right arm rests on his right leg.
- 2* **Indra**: on the (south-)west (BOLON 1988: pl. 627), facing left, corresponding figure: Varāha – (north-)west. He is riding on a relatively huge elephant; only the right hand is raised, probably holding an elephant goad (*aṅkuṣa*). He wears an elongated crown.
- 3* **Varuṇa**: north(-west) (fig. 62), facing left, riding on a *makara* with its body almost merging into the scrollwork; his right hand raised in the gesture of salutation (*vandanā-mudrā*), the left carrying an angular unidentified attribute.
- 4* **Kubera**: north(-east) (fig. 63), facing right, riding on a well-proportioned ram, holds a club in his right hand (broken at the shoulder) and with the left hand in the gesture of salutation. A halo is faintly visible behind the head.



Ill. 9: Paṭṭadakal, Pāpanātha temple, western portion, outer wall
P – false portico (*bhadrāgāvākṣa*)

²⁰⁶ There, however, all animals have their heads raised. On the Huccappayya and Pāpanātha temples, this is a feature of only some of the *vāhanas*.

The directional guardians of this series are – except for Yama – also shown in riding postures. They are again two-armed. The gesture of salutation (*vandanamudrā*), not observed on the ceiling panels, is seen in the case of Varuṇa and Kubera on the exterior. This is quite puzzling, as the only difference between the ceiling set (1–8) and the ceiling panel of the later Kāśīviśveśvara temple (fig. 129) at the same site lies in the presence of this gesture in the latter case. Thus, there remains a serious doubt about the posteriority of the ceiling panel to the wall sculptures²⁰⁷. The gesture of salutation later became a common feature of the ceiling images of the *dikpālas*.

The peculiar distribution of the directional guardians on the wall, which is incorrect in more than one case (Indra, Varuṇa), can hardly be explained. A possible reason could be a general uncertainty regarding their correct placement in the early years of the reintroduction of the *lokapāla* theme in the Deccan region, i.e. around 700 A.D. Regarding the combination with the other deities, the figures of Brahmā and Varāha that occupy the remaining space, could also be associated with the directional order of the cosmos. The boar Varāha would symbolize the nadir and Brahmā the zenith. Such an expanded set would be quite singular and it definitely recalls the Vedic notion of the six directions (see section 1.1.1.2).

Ālampur (Navabrahmā temples)

Ālampur on the Tuṅgabhadra river in the Mahbubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh looks back on a glorious history of building activity. The so-called Navabrahmā group of nine temples bears vivid testimony to this fact²⁰⁸. Their present names are, proceeding clockwise from the north-east: Viśva Brahmā, Vira Brahmā, Arka Brahmā, Kumāra Brahmā, Bāla Brahmā or Brahmeśvara, Garuḍa Brahmā, Svarga Brahmā, Padma Brahmā, and Tāraka Brahmā²⁰⁹. Today, *śivaliṅgas* are enshrined in nearly all of them (that of the Tāraka Brahmā has been shifted), with the one in the Bāla Brahmā temple still under worship. The Kumāra Brahmā temple with images of two *lokapālas* on its *śikhara* has already been mentioned as belonging to the previous phase.

All the temples have a *sāndhāra* plan, with integrated spacious *maṇḍapas*, with the exception of the Drāviḍa-style Tāraka Brahmā, which is *nirandhāra*. There is no break in the line of the wall surrounding the ambulatory path (*pradakṣiṇāpatha*) and the adjoining *maṇḍapa*. Therefore, the outer appearance of the building must have called for an unusual decoration. Windows of various sizes, different numbers of niches, floating *udgamas* (pediments), wall sculptures and pilasters were employed here.

Ālampur belongs to the sites with the earliest surviving images of directional guardians on the temple exterior. Most probably, sets were fashioned on seven temples (Bāla*, Arka, Vira, Svarga*, Viśva*, Garuḍa*, Padma)²¹⁰, excepting the Kumāra and the Tāraka Brahmā temples, which are without any appropriate niches. At Ālampur, the canonical group of eight seems to be supplemented by the Sun and Moon Gods on the east and north, respectively²¹¹, judging from the allotment of the deities in the niches on the Svarga Brahmā (ill. 11). This is the only temple with all its images surviving. Images of two forms of Śiva are associated with the Sun and Moon Gods and the eight *lokapālas* in its outer wall niches. This combination may symbolize, as BUCHANAN (1985: 186) puts it, “the subordination of the earth and time to Śiva”. Alternatively, the Sun and Moon Gods could have been portrayed in allusion to the supposedly popular Manu Lokapāla theme (see section 2.4.1.3).

The absolute chronology of some of the temples is quite secure, as the Arka Brahmā bears an inscription of Vikramāditya I (A.D. 654/5–681) and the Svarga Brahmā preserves a record of the time of Vinayāditya (A.D. 681–696; PRASAD 1988: 322; 330). The relative chronology is not entirely fixed²¹², but the chronological sequence of the temples with surviving *lokapāla* images hardly remains open to question (in the following chronological sequence): Bāla Brahmā, Svarga Brahmā, Viśva Brahmā, and Garuḍa Brahmā. Concerning the sizes, the slabs with the guardian images have average heights of 81 cm on the Bāla Brahmā, 95 cm on the Svarga Brahmā, and 87 cm on the Viśva Brahmā temple. The considerable height of the Svarga Brahmā slabs is due to the integrated “floating socles” of the images, which are a peculiar feature of this temple. The shaping of the figures varies from temple to temple, sometimes considerably, so that they can be easily distinguished (table XII).

The conceptions of proportion and style must have changed rather rapidly during this time of an extraordinarily rich art production. However, a comparison of the images from the Ālampur temples shows that distinctive types of *lokapālas* have been created here, which, as in the case of Vāyu, sometimes combine both North and South Indian features (billowing cloth and standard, respectively).

²⁰⁷ In this light, MICHELL’s opinion (1973: 200) is probably correct. According to him, the western and eastern *maṇḍapas* have been constructed at the same time. Modifying his theory to fit the present findings, I would postulate that the carving of the outer walls continued for some time after the completion of the interior.

²⁰⁸ O. DIVAKARAN (1971) has devoted an excellent article to the Ālampur temples. It gives a detailed analysis of their significant architectural and iconographical features. The directional guardians have for the first time been correctly identified by her (*ibid.*: 61; 66). However the less intact buildings, like the Padma Brahmā temple, have been somewhat neglected. For other publications see the following footnote.

²⁰⁹ Much confusion has been created by inadvertently mixing up the names or positions of the buildings. In the earliest description published in the *ADNDAR* (1926–27: 7–12), however, the same names, which are already known from a 16th century source (BUCHANAN 1985: 116), may have been assigned to the temples differently. There, the Svarga Brahmā temple is referred to as Solka Brahma, the Padma Brahmā as Taraka Brahma, the Vira Brahmā as Arka Brahma, and the Viśva Brahmā as Vira Brahma. Some plans are incorrectly labelled in P.R. RAMACHANDRA RAO (1977: 25–28): it must be Vira instead of Arka Brahma, and Padma instead of Garuḍa Brahma. M. RAMA RAO (1961: 369) inadvertently mentions the “Arkabrahma” twice, “Svarga Brahmā” being correct in the first instance, as forming a group with the Padma and Garuḍa Brahmā temples. In the recent publication by MICHELL (1989: 344) the positions of the Viśva and Vira Brahmā temples have been erroneously interchanged. In the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture* (BOLON 1988: 338, fig. 133) the ground plan of the Garuḍa Brahmā temple goes under the guise of “Panyam. Śiva temple”.

²¹⁰ An asterisk indicates, where images of *lokapālas* still remain. Even if the niches never contained the actual images, they were most probably designed to hold them. The supposedly earliest temples with a number of exterior niches are the Arka and Vira Brahmā temples. Their ten niches seem to have been planned for the same ten deities as on the Svarga Brahmā (ill. 11).

²¹¹ G. MICHELL (1973a: 84), who first described a set of the Ālampur *lokapālas*, comments on this fact: “That Sūrya and Candra are also included with the *dikpālas* recalls the pre-*Purāṇic* texts where these deities were considered themselves as *lokapālas* rather than as ‘planets’. This suggests that the iconographic scheme at Ālampur may belong to a transitional stage before the stereotyping of the *lokapāla* lists in the *Purāṇas* had occurred.” The author unjustifiably presupposes that the sculptures were directly dependent on the scriptures.

²¹² The Navabrahmā group seems to be a classic example for the transition from the simple to the intricate form. The less evolved temples of those under discussion are the Bāla, Arka and Vira Brahmā temples, the most evolved ones the Viśva, Padma and Garuḍa Brahmā temples. The Svarga Brahmā temple holds an intermediate position. DIVAKARAN (1971: 73) proposed the following chronological sequence: Kumāra, Bāla, Arka, Vira, Svarga, Viśva, Garuḍa Brahmā, however omitting the Padma Brahmā temple. Later scholars expressed different views, e.g. placing the Bāla after the Vira Brahmā (PRASAD 1988: 326), or placing the Garuḍa and Padma after the Viśva Brahmā (RADCLIFFE 1981: 567). Sometimes the decision about the actual sequence has been avoided by proposing overlapping or identical bracket dates, which is also acceptable.

Table XII – Sulptural typology of *dikpālas* at Ālampur

ĀLAMPUR		A – Arka Brahmā; B – Bāla Brahmā; G – Garuḍa Brahmā; S – Svarga Brahmā; V – Viśva Brahmā	
Deity	Attributes	Vehicle	Characteristics
Indra (B, S)	small <i>vajra</i> (bolt) r.; B: flower l.; S: <i>akṣamālā</i> (rosary) l.	elephant; B: frontal	high crown; S: large decorated halo; S: horizontal third eye
Agni (B, S)	<i>akṣamālā</i> (rosary) r., <i>kamaṇḍalu</i> (waterpot) l., standard floating behind left arm	–	flames behind the whole body, crown of flames, long hair, sash worn like <i>upavīta</i> (sacred cord)
Yama (B, V, S -damaged-)	B, S: staff r.; V: staff l.; S: ? -damaged- l.	buffalo; S, V: with raised head	high crown; B, S: two trees/one tree in the background, no <i>upavīta</i> , Citragupta on the right; V: Citragupta on extra socle to the left, holding manuscript
Nairṛta (S, loose in A ²¹³ , fig. 83)	club or sword r.; A: sword r.	skeleton, standing frontally	S: peculiar hairstyle, faintly resembling <i>ūrdhvakeśa</i> (hair standing on end); no <i>upavīta</i> ; A: crown
Varuṇa (B, S)	<i>pāśa</i> (noose) r., <i>śaṅkha</i> (conch) l.	–	no <i>upavīta</i> , halo, moustache? B: <i>jaṭāmukuta</i> (hair crown)
Vāyu (B, S)	B: billowing scarf r., flag l.; S: scarf in both hands, streamer r.	–	moustache; B: curved portion of scarf visible, halo; S: curve of scarf not visible
Kubera (B, S, V)	<i>gadā</i> (mace) – staff with bulging top r.; S also: neck of of the sack l., on which he is seated	–	wearing a draped garment below the breast, halo, disc earring r.; B: moustache, no <i>upavīta</i> , long hair? S: asymmetrical face, petalled halo, throne behind sack; V: only throne
Soma (S, V, G?)	<i>akṣamālā</i> r., <i>kamaṇḍalu</i> l.; V: broken r.**; G: additional standard behind right shoulder (like Agni)	–	S: large halo with inscribed crescent, waterpot held from below near the shoulder
Īśāna (S) -damaged-	4-armed: handled object lower r., <i>triśūla</i> (trident) upper r., serpent? upper l.**	–	<i>jaṭāmukuta</i>
Sūrya (S) ²¹⁴	holding a bud in each hand	–	rectangular breastplate, extra large halo, boots

** The other hand rests on the hip or thigh.

The partly surviving Gaḷaganātha temple at Paṭṭadakal conforms closely to the Ālampur type. It may have been known under the name Lokapāleśvara, as mentioned in an inscription at the site (BUCHANAN 1985: 344). Unfortunately, no images of *lokapālas* have survived here at Paṭṭadakal.

Bāla Brahmā:

The Bāla Brahmā temple dates from the middle of the 7th century or slightly later²¹⁵. The remaining images show that it must have been originally provided with a full set of eight directional guardians plus sun and moon (ill. 10). It is the earliest of the Ālampur temples with such an iconographic programme, which was repeated on all of the later temples, as far as it can be inferred from

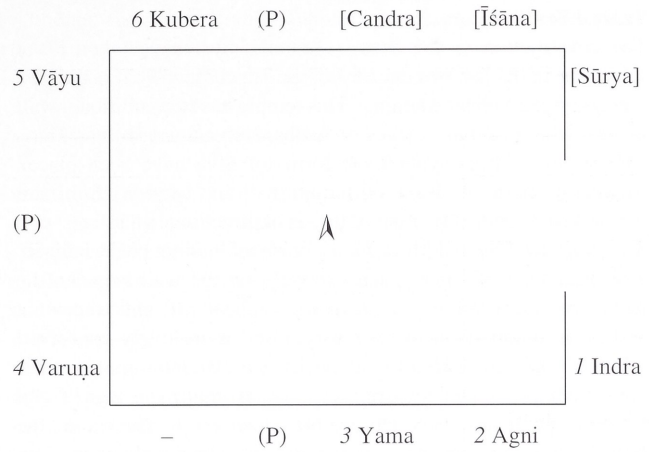
²¹³ BUCHANAN (1985: 272) tentatively assigns this image to the Viśva Brahmā temple, along with an alleged image of Indra image kept in the same place. RADCLIFFE (1981: 259) regards this and other images (*ibid.*: ill. 456, 457, 459–461) as probably belonging to the Garuḍa Brahmā. One of the images in the site museum most probably represents Īśāna (*ibid.*: ill. 457).

²¹⁴ The Sūrya image of the Bāla Brahmā temple has been regarded as a later replacement. However, this still conforms with the original concept. An image assigned to the Viśva Brahmā temple by M.R. SARMA (1972: 51) with its height of 110 cm (A.W. KHAN 1973: no. 7) is too large to fit into a niche only 87 cm high.

²¹⁵ The dates suggested for the Bāla Brahmā temple are: middle of 7th century (DIVAKARAN 1971: 73); 660–690 (RADCLIFFE 1981: 567); 660–670 (BUCHANAN 1985: 184); 670–681 A.D. (PRASAD 1988: 326). The Arka and Vīra Brahmā temples have the same number of niches which may have contained the *lokapālas*. Only few scholars, however, regard these temples as predecessors of the Bāla Brahmā (e.g. PRASAD 1988: 326).

the number of niches, now mostly remaining empty. The *dikpāla* images which are extant on the Bāla Brahmā temple (Indra, Agni, Yama, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera; the images of Īśāna and Sūrya are probably not as old²¹⁶) exhibit sturdy proportions. Their features, postures, attributes, and particularly the absence of vehicles in the majority of cases reveal a remarkable originality. In fact, no direct predecessors are known for most of them. It appears as if every deity was treated in a consciously innovative manner:

- 1 **Indra (fig. 64)**, seated astride his crouching elephant, frontally faces the viewer. The only known parallel, also quite close in time (7th–8th centuries), is the enigmatic elephant rider in the centre of the eastern wall of the Arjunaratha at Māmalla-puram/Tamilnadu²¹⁷. Although the elephant is given much more space in the latter example, there may be some formal relationship between the two images, as the rider's right hand is rendered in a similar position and the lower part of the elephant's trunk also curves to its right. This similarity between the two sculptures does not necessarily imply the same identification of both images. The Bāla Brahmā Indra wears a high cylindrical crown, the usual ornaments and the brāhmanical cord. In his frontally shown hands he holds a small, horizontal thunderbolt (proper right) and a small fruit or flower (left).
- 2 **Agni (fig. 65)** conforms basically with the much older Kuṣāṇa/Gupta concept of the deity (fig. 7) in that he is standing without a vehicle, surrounded by flames, and holding a rosary and a waterpot. Some novel features, however, are the flame-crown, long, flowing hair, and the standard (smoke-banner?) emerging from behind his left arm. Similar to Varuṇa's attire, sashes are visible on either side of his legs.
- 3 **Yama (fig. 66)** is shown seated on his buffalo. This type has occurred earlier in the Deccan (figs. 10, 13, top). Here, two new features have been added, viz. two palm trees (a symbol of the south?) on either side in the background, and his scribe Citragupta on the right side of the panel. Citragupta appears to be emerging from behind the buffalo's head. He most probably holds a stylus in his raised right hand. The much smaller figure has been skilfully incorporated into the composition. Later depictions of Citragupta at Ālampur (figs. 72, 80) and at Kuḍaveli (fig. 85) show him – rather clumsily – floating in the background or standing on a small socle above/behind Yama. The buffalo wears a bell on his neck.
- 4 **Varuṇa (fig. 67)** represented without a vehicle is very rare²¹⁸. He is seen standing in the same rigid *samapādasthānaka* posture like Agni and Vāyu. A unique feature is the introduction of the conch shell as his attribute in the left hand. Another notable detail is that the inner part of the loop of the noose, which he holds in his right hand, is not hollow, but remains solid. This recurs on the Svarga Brahmā temple and in Pratiḥāra art as well.
- 5 **Vāyu (fig. 68)** is also represented without any vehicle. The well-known Vāyu image from Pāhārpur (fig. 236) offers an interesting parallel. Here, a unique combination of “North Indian” (billowing cloth – *vāyavāpūrta-vastra* [VdhP III.58.1]) and “South Indian” (standard) attributes²¹⁹ occurs. The image is more consistent than its successor on the Svarga Brahmā temple (fig. 75) in that each hand holds only one attribute. The individuality of Vāyu has been further emphasized by a helmet-like crown and a demonic face, resembling Varuṇa and Kubera, with large, bulging eyes and a big moustache.



III. 10: Ālampur, Bāla Brahmā temple, outer wall niches

- 6 **Kubera (fig. 69)** has broad lips and seems to smile gently, in spite of his large bulging eyes and moustache like Vāyu. His prominent belly is further emphasized by a curtain-like drapery. The latter probably represents the “northern” style of dress as prescribed in some texts. Kubera's left leg is supported by a drapery-covered pouf. Such a seat often occurs in North Indian images of Kubera. The club (*gadā*) as his weapon, on the other hand, is very rare during this period in North India, but is found in South India.

The most significant characteristics of the early *lokapāla* set of the Bāla Brahmā temple are the variation of postures and the seemingly arbitrary inclusion or absence of vehicles. In some cases, the particular concept of the deity was determined by earlier images that must have served as models. In two cases, i.e. Indra seated frontally on Airāvata and Varuṇa standing without *makara*, no earlier model could be traced. In the cases where earlier models are known to us, some modifications have been introduced at Ālampur.

²¹⁶ BUCHANAN 1985: 186–188. The Īśāna image is described as “somewhat smaller than the others [...] He holds a long-shafted attribute in his rear right hand, and perhaps his rear left hand holds a rosary. A pot is placed at his lower left.” For an illustration see RADCLIFFE 1981: ill. 327, labelled “Dhatri?”.

²¹⁷ The identification of the figure, which is devoid of any attributes, as Indra has been questioned long ago. L'HERNAULT (1978: 141; pl. 124) has proposed an identification as Skanda, although slightly hesitant. S.L. HUNTINGTON (1981: 63) argues for an interpretation of the deity as Aiyāṇār-śāstā. Presently, it is impossible to find an undisputable solution. This is probably what HUNTINGTON (*ibid.*: 60) wanted to indicate when she referred to the “frequent use of double-entendre [ambiguity] in Pallava art and epigraphy”.

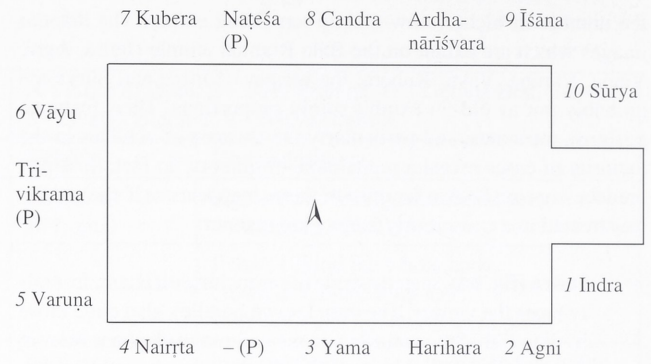
²¹⁸ At Osiān/Rajasthan, Varuṇa has been shown without a *vāhana* in two cases (figs. 221, 222), which could probably have been due to a lack of space. In the first case, Varuṇa stands with his legs crossed – the left leg behind the right; in the second case, he stands with his feet placed on the belly and brim portions of a waterpot lying on the side, which occurs instead of a vehicle here.

²¹⁹ This division occurs in the period under discussion (until c. 900 A.D.), with only few exceptions. The Orissa region conforms to the Deccan and the rest of South India. In looking for parallels, it may be significant to observe that in the Pratiḥāra region in the north, a few images occur in which Vāyu's cloth has been combined with a staff held in the other hand, with the cloth winding round the staff (fig. 318). Even the helmet-like crown resembles that of the present example. However, the figures do not appear to be related in any way.

Svarga Brahmā:

The construction of the Svarga Brahmā must have taken place sometime in the last two decades of the 7th century²²⁰. It is the best preserved example at Ālampur. This temple has two additional wall niches, which contain images of Ardhanārīśvara (north) and Harihara (south). These syncretistic forms of Śiva have been placed between Candra and Īśāna on the north²²¹ and between Agni and Yama on the south. The order of the set of directional guardians with the associated Sun and Moon Gods, however, has not been changed. The placement of some images directly on the wall between the niches is an innovation. The *lokapālas* appear stiff and somewhat archaic in comparison to these larger and more lively conceived figures. When compared to the earlier Bāla Brahmā images, their bodies are pronouncedly slim; so much so that even Agni's and Kubera's paunches are hardly visible. However, on the whole, the Bāla Brahmā concepts have been followed. The development seen in relation to the respective images on the Bāla Brahmā temple (if extant) can be gathered from the following comparative description of images:

- 1 The image of **Indra** (fig. 70) differs significantly from its counterpart on the Bāla Brahmā temple. He is not shown riding frontally as on the Bāla Brahmā temple, but stands in front of his vehicle which has been reduced to a moderate size. He has a large, decorated halo and wears a band across his belly (*udarabandha*) like Īśāna on the same temple. He holds the thunderbolt in his right hand and a rosary in his raised left hand.
- 2 **Agni** (fig. 71) closely resembles his Bāla Brahmā counterpart. His left arm is extended downward, holding a larger waterpot, but in this case, the standard (smoke banner?) behind this arm touches the ground.
- 3 The image of **Yama** (fig. 72) is also very similar, with only a few differing details: he appears to be sitting above the buffalo instead of properly riding on it; the buffalo's head is raised; and only one tree is shown in the background.
- 4 **Nairṛta** (fig. 73) faces frontally and is shown seated on his anthropomorphic vehicle. The corresponding image is missing on the Bāla Brahmā temple. This figure is reminiscent of the image in Cave 29 at Ellorā on the Nāṭeśa panel, where Nairṛta is also depicted on an anthropomorphic vehicle (fig. 21, extreme left). The only difference is that Nairṛta wears a flat coiffure instead of a high crown at Ellorā. Nairṛta's traditional weapon, the sword, can be seen at Ālampur, but not at Ellorā.
- 5 **Varuṇa** (fig. 74) holds the conch (*śaṅkha*) in a manner different from that of the Bāla Brahmā temple. Here, he grasps its mouth instead of holding it from behind. Besides, his crown is not made up of braids as on the earlier temple.
- 6 With only marginal alterations, the image of **Vāyu** (fig. 75) has been modified to portray his element, air, more convincingly. The deity stands on a narrow socle. The extension of the loop of the billowing cloth beyond the framework creates the illusion of lifting the image from its base. Parts of two attributes, cloth and standard, are quite inconsistently held in the right hand.
- 7 In **Kubera's** (fig. 76) case, the absence of a prominent belly is the most apparent difference, although a slight paunch is visible. Apart from a much less opulent appearance of the deity, other changes are the introduction of a treasure sack instead of the pouf under his left leg, leaving a part of the low throne visible, as well as the distorted face with a tilted line



III. 11: Ālampur, Svarga Brahmā temple, outer wall niches

of the nose. The throne with lathe-turned feet reveals that the artists were familiar with the Central Indian/Orissan tradition (cf. figs. 25, 26, 42). Whether the slight distortion of the face was actually intended is somewhat doubtful, but the descriptions of Kubera often mention that some of his features are asymmetrical or even deformed.

- 8 **Candra/Soma** (fig. 77) exhibits a calm, transcendental expression. His large halo with a crescent inscribed in the lower part, is positioned such that the crescent is directly behind Candra's head. The crown is of medium height. The double-row pearl necklace and the *upavīta* studded with gems seem to hint at the pearl-white lustre of the moon. The vessel held in his left hand near the shoulder creates a perfect equilibrium in his stance.
- 9 The image of **Īśāna** (fig. 78) has been badly damaged. He is shown without a vehicle, four-armed, and clad in a *dhotī* with the typical – for Ālampur – sashes hanging down on both sides.
- 10 **Sūrya** (fig. 79) is characterized by a large undecorated halo. His face and body are unusually broad. Even the niche itself is comparatively wider. In the case of the body this is emphasized by a flared lower garment with a sash hanging down on both sides. Sūrya wears a high crown, an elaborate necklace with a breast ornament reminiscent of a breastplate, a chain girdle like Candra (8) and boots.

The set of directional guardians with the – structurally, but not necessarily conceptually – associated Sun and Moon Gods on the Svarga Brahmā temple represents an impressively homogeneous series of individually conceived deities. Their stiff postures form a marked contrast to the lively shapes of the sculptures placed directly on the wall surface. The miniature flanking figures on the innermost band (*śākhā*) of the door-like niches generally do not have any affinity with the deity contained within it. Busts of praying serpent deities are most often depicted in this zone. The fact that the set on the Svarga Brahmā is completely preserved makes it one of the most outstanding testimonies of early temple decoration.

²²⁰ The following dates have been suggested for the Svarga Brahmā temple: after 680 (DIVAKARAN 1971: 73); 690–696 (RADCLIFFE 1981: 567); 682–690 (BUCHANAN 1985: 243); 681–696 A.D. (PRASAD 1988: pl. 658). For inscriptional evidence cf. note 199.

²²¹ The adjacent positions of Ardhanārīśvara and Īśāna has led MICHELL (1973: 85) to the hypothesis that the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, in which the former seems to replace the latter, was known to the architects.

Viśva Brahmā:

The three extant images of *lokapālas* on the highly embellished and probably later (late 7th century) Viśva Brahmā²²² temple still betray the ancestry of the Bāla Brahmā iconic types. The modifications, as on the Svarga Brahmā, mainly concern the stylistic treatment of the figures (more plasticity and better proportions) and the layout of the sculptural panels. The type of niche conforms to that of the Svarga Brahmā temple.

In the 22 niches of the Viśva Brahmā temple, 14 images must have been added to the group of *aṣṭadīkṣpālas*, thus clearly outnumbering them. Most probably, the corner positions of Indra/Agni, Nairṛta/Varuṇa, Vāyu/Kubera (the latter still in that position) and Īśāna/Sūrya were maintained, while Yama and Candra (the latter still remaining in this position) would have occupied the central niches of the longer sides. Only Yama (fig. 80) seems to have been subsequently moved from his place, which is also indicated by the damaged border of the panel.

- 1 The layout of the **Yama** panel (fig. 80) is a mirror image of the Svarga Brahmā panel (fig. 72). Apart from this, some minor differences can be noticed in the leaping attitude of the buffalo, the position of Yama's remaining, damaged arm, the absence of the palm, and the manuscript held prominently by Citragupta (damaged on the Svarga Brahmā), whose body is shown in a slanting position.
- 2 **Kubera** (fig. 81) is characterized by a protruding paunch as on the Bāla Brahmā temple (fig. 69). The garment draped over the belly is similar to the two preceding images. However, here the hand holding the club is raised to the shoulder in a threatening attitude. The throne with curved feet is a novel introduction here. Kubera's seated posture with a pendent right leg (*dakṣiṇāpralambapāda*) also differs from those of his predecessors.
- 3 **Candra/Soma** (fig. 82), whose much smaller halo has again an inscribed crescent, stands rigidly, with the left hand resting on his hip. The water vessel appears to be missing here. The right hand is raised to the shoulder and shows traces of a rosary.

Although the Viśva Brahmā exhibits an extremely elaborate wall decoration, there was again little innovation with respect to the *lokapālas*. However, the images of Yama with his leaping buffalo and Kubera with his raised right arm are more dynamic in expression than their known predecessors.

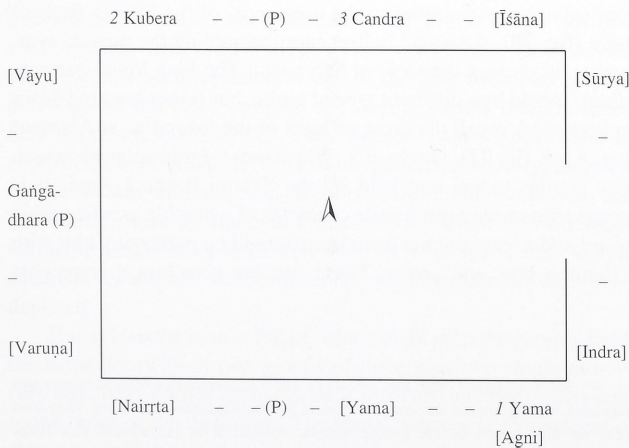
Garuḍa Brahmā:

The Garuḍa Brahmā temple dates from c. 700 A.D.²²³ and is the southernmost of the Navabrahmā group. Only one niche image survives on an inaccessible part of the building. Although the panel is considerably smaller than the niche, it was probably not added much later (fig. 84). With the visible attributes being a rosary (r.) and a waterpot (l.) and located on the north side, one would naturally expect this figure to be a representation of Soma. However, there is no halo. Moreover, an object emerges behind the figure's left arm, recalling the manner in which the standard is shown behind Agni. As the latter is characterized by the same attributes, it could also be a representation of Agni. Therefore, with neither halo (Candra) nor flames (Agni) present, no indisputable identification is possible.

It seems to be a sign of decadence that one of the latest temples of the Navabrahmā group at Ālampur has produced only a lifeless, somewhat hybrid image of a directional guardian.

Kuḍaveli Saṅgameśvara temple, Reconstructed at Ālampur

The Saṅgameśvara temple probably dates from the late 7th century²²⁴. It was formerly situated at the confluence of the rivers Kṛṣṇā and Tuṅgabhadra, but has recently been rebuilt at Ālampur (re-consecrated in 1990). Its *sāndhāra* layout (with integrated ambulatory path) and its Northern type superstructure compare well with the basic temple type at Ālampur. However, there are also major differences, like the southern (Drāviḍa) niche type, the absence of large windows and false porticos, and the absence of a *śukanāsa* (antefix) on the tower. The well-preserved enclosure wall which encircles the temple has two integrated shrines on the north(-east) and south(-east) and is decorated by a frieze of sculptural panels²²⁵.



III. 12: Ālampur, Viśva Brahmā temple, outer wall niches

²²² The proposed time brackets are: 681–696 (DIVAKARAN 1971: 73); 690–696 (RADCLIFFE 1981: 567); 691–700 (BUCHANAN 1985: 264); 696–734 A.D. (PRASAD 1988: pl. 673).

²²³ There is a clear tendency to date this temple in the early 8th century: after 696 (DIVAKARAN 1971: 73); 681–690 (RADCLIFFE 1981: 567); 700–710 (BUCHANAN 1985: 264); 696–734 A.D. (PRASAD 1988: pl. 669).

²²⁴ The date of this temple is even more disputed than those of the Ālampur temples. It combines both early (lack of *śukanāsa* and large windows) and somewhat later features (e.g. a large number of niches). The proposed dates are: early 7th cent. (I.K. SARMA 1993: 352, 355); founded some time after 631 (BUCHANAN 1985: 127–128); middle of the 7th cent. (DIVAKARAN 1971: 73); 665–681 (PRASAD 1988: pl. 652); 690–696 A.D. (RADCLIFFE 1981: 318). The latter author discusses some sculptural features this temple shares with the Durga temple, Aihole, which support her relatively late date, in a separate article (published under a different name, BOLON 1986). However, the sculptures appear to have been inserted in the niches and could be posterior to the main structure itself.

²²⁵ BUCHANAN (1985: 257–258) dates the *prākāra* wall later (Vinayāditya's reign: 681–696 A.D.) than the main building (*ibid.*: 127–128: founded in the 630ies). She also places some of the sculptures of the main structure, among which are the Yama and Kubera figures discussed below, in the later period. BOLON (1986: 51) does not assume such a large time gap between the temple (c. 700) and its enclosure wall (c. 700–720 A.D.).

Regarding the depiction of directional guardians, the evidence is rather meagre. Most of the niches contain standing male figures, which cannot be identified. They most likely do not represent *lokapālas*. In the second niche from the east on the southern side, a small, later inserted image of Yama survives (fig. 85). In height (90 cm) and also in some other details, the sculpture conforms closely with the Yama images at Ālampur. Yama's crown with a hatched design resembles that of the same god on the Bāla Brahmā temple (fig. 66). The layout of the panel and the separate socle of the record-keeper Citragupta are strongly reminiscent of the Viśva Brahmā temple (fig. 80), however. Its sculptural style (stout figure, soft, sensuous modelling of the features) and the ornaments of the deity are shared by the other niche figures at Kuḍaveli²²⁶, thus suggesting that it was no import from Ālampur. The same characteristics are also shared by a fragmented Kubera (fig. 86)²²⁷ at the Ālampur Site Museum, which has already been attributed to Kuḍaveli by BUCHANAN (1985: 257). The single-row pearl necklace, the spiral-shaped *keyuras* (upper arm bracelets), the brāhmaṇical cord, the band across the belly (*udarabandha*), and the semicircular line which indicates the paunch are similarly rendered on the Yama icon. Only the backslab is partly missing in Kubera's case. Kubera's attributes are the club (r., broken) and a sack (l., broken).

After having identified Yama and Kubera as matching pieces, a possible reconstruction of their original positions will be attempted. BUCHANAN (*ibid.*) speculates that they may have belonged to another temple in the vicinity. I am inclined to believe that Yama and Kubera were the only directional guardians present on the Saṅgameśvara temple, as on the Kumāra Brahmā temple, Ālampur. Their place may have been either in the smaller niches flanking the entrance, where the *nidhis* (dwarfs symbolizing particular treasures) would have been later inserted, or they may have belonged to the separate shrines on the south and north, attached to the enclosure wall.

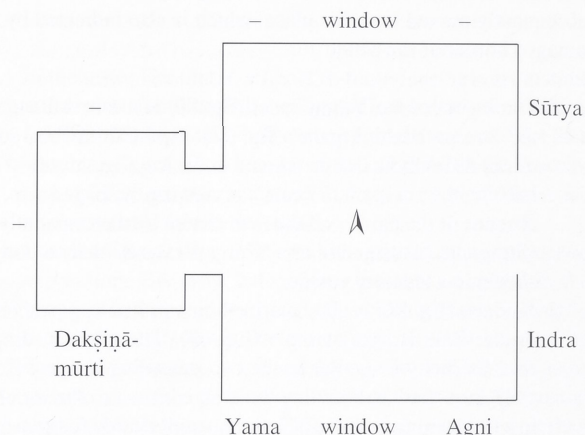
On this wall, the only member of the *lokapāla* group is a small Kubera (fig. 87) on the northern face near the north-western corner, which corresponds to the position of Kubera on the Ālampur temples. Kubera's attributes are a club (r.) and a sack (l.). His coiffure of "Buddha-like" curls also resembles that of the Ālampur Museum piece (fig. 86), where the curls are visible behind the diadem. More *dikpālas* were not depicted on the compound wall, which once more confirms the rudimentary stage of this sculptural theme on the Kuḍaveli Saṅgameśvara temple. This feature may well be subsumed under the other "early" features of the temple, like, e.g. the absence of a *śukanāsa* (see above).

Satyavolu, Rāmaliṅgeśvara temple

Satyavolu lies to the south-east of Ālampur and Kuḍaveli in District Prakasam. It preserves the only examples of *latina nāgara-śikhara* (Northern type) temples with *nirandhāra* plan (without ambulatory path) in Andhra Pradesh (BOLON 1988: 335). RAMA RAO (1959-60: 78) dates this temple on the basis of an inscription in 7th century characters on a nearby smaller shrine. However, the unusual layout of the temple (ill. 13), with an oblong pillared hall (*maṇḍapa*) in front of the porticus (*antarāla*) and the sanctum (*garbhagrha*), may suggest a successive construction of the temple components in the early 8th century²²⁸.

What is left of the six images on the *maṇḍapa* shows that a rudimentary set must have been represented, which followed a similar distribution of images on the of the Svarga Brahmā *maṇḍapa*. However, the ambulatory path (*pradakṣiṇāpatha*) is missing, and

it seems that Nairṛta, Varuṇa, Vāyu and Kubera were not included in this set. Only Indra, Agni, Yama, and Sūrya still survive intact. Regarding the rendering of the figures and the composition of the panels, some individual variations have been introduced. As on the Svarga Brahmā temple at Ālampur (fig. 70), Indra stands in front of Airāvata, but female attendants have been added (BUCHANAN 1985: 261); Agni (fig. 88) is uniquely shown with bow and arrow; Yama (DIVAKARAN 1971: fig. 43) rides his buffalo to the right as observed at Ālampur, Viśva Brahmā temple (fig. 80), and Kuḍaveli (fig. 85), but has one extant female attendant; Sūrya is also shown in the company of other figures, riding his chariot (*ibid.*). On the sanctum walls, an intricately conceived Dakṣiṇāmūrti Śiva panel (DIVAKARAN 1971: fig. 44) also survives.



Ill. 13: Satyavolu, Rāmaliṅgeśvara temple, plan (without later *maṇḍapa*)

Agni (fig. 88) stands in the rigid posture *samapādasthānaka*, with a raised right hand (damaged) and an extended left arm holding a huge flaming bow. Near the right arm, which should have held a rosary, is a floating arrow, pointing upwards. Agni wears a crown of flames with large encrustations of gems. The broad necklace, the band across the belly (*udarabandha*) and the thick brāhmaṇical cord (*upavīta*) are similar to the ornaments of the Svarga Brahmā Indra (fig. 70). A second belt, meant for holding the quiver, symmetrically crosses the torso at Satyavolu. The long lower garment (*dhoti*) is held by a different type of girdle, but sashes hanging down on both sides recall the dress of most of the *lokapālas* at Ālampur (e.g. Agni, fig. 71). On Agni's right stands a large spouted vessel, very similar to the one held by the Svarga Brahmā Agni. It is remarkable to see how Agni's character of a humble ascetic with a rosary and a waterpot has been transformed by portraying him with a flaming bow and arrow. These devices give him a somewhat

²²⁶ See B. DAGENS (1984: Pls. 399-411). The thick snake-like *keyuras* (upper arm bracelets), coiling around the arm, are typical for the Kuḍaveli sculptures. They also occur on the images of the Durga temple, Aihole. It is remarkable that Indra (fig. 70) and Agni (fig. 71) on the Svarga Brahmā temple wear a similar type of jewellery, but with a thinner section.

²²⁷ So far, the image has been identified as *yakṣa* Rakṣakabhaṭa (M.A.W. KHAN 1973: 9, no. 42), a protective spirit.

²²⁸ BUCHANAN 1985: 261. For the date, the end of Vinayāditya's, A.D. 696 (*ibid.*: 259; DIVAKARAN 1971: 73), or Vijayāditya's, A.D. 733/34, reign have been favoured (BOLON 1988: pl. 676). The ground plan is published in PRASAD 1983: fig. 10 (left).

warrior-like character. The niche and socle of the panel correspond to the Ālampur idiom, the only difference being the lack of any decoration at Satyavolu.

Unfortunately, the images of Indra and Yama could not be studied with all their details.

2.3.1.2 Central India

The evidence for complete sets of directional guardians from the period under discussion is rather meagre. So much so that it is doubtful, whether the scheme of eight deities (*aṣṭadīkṣpālas*) had already gained popularity during this period in Central India. It has often been hypothesized that temples earlier than or contemporary with those at Ālampur, possible models for them, must have existed²²⁹. A further speculation could be that extant monuments in Central India merely exhibit the “provincial” development, with the exception of the grand Telī-kā-mandir, which may have contained the directional guardians in its wall niches. It is very likely however, that a separate development occurred in the Gurjara-Pratihāra region, starting with the directional guardians over the door at the very beginning (Palārī), subsequently occupying the *kapilī* (vestibule) walls (at Amrol), which is still in the entrance zone, and finally leading to the fully developed distribution of *aṣṭadīkṣpālas* in the corner niches of the „Harihara no. 1“ at Osiāñ (Western India). Several temples with incomplete sets of directional guardians in the Gurjara-Pratihāra region seem to testify to the relatively late development of *aṣṭadīkṣpāla* representation in Central India.

In contrast with the groupings encountered so far, neither the staff-bearing deity Daṇḍapāṇī, as in the eastern parts, nor both the Sun and Moon Gods, as at Muṇḍeśvarī and Ālampur, seem to have been associated with the Central Indian *lokapāla* sets. The Śiva temple at Indor, Dt. Guna, preserving the earliest full set of *aṣṭadīkṣpālas* in its exterior niches as well as the *kapilī* niches, has been plausibly dated to after 750 A.D. From the architectural remains of the 7th–8th centuries, it can be inferred that Western India was more progressive than Central India.

Palārī, Siddheśvara Temple

The site is located on the Mahānadī river in the Raipur district, south-eastern Madhya Pradesh. The west-facing Siddheśvara temple²³⁰ has been regarded as one of the later examples (c. A.D. 675–700) of the brick temples of Dakṣiṇa Kosala that are dated between c. A.D. 600 and 725. The “stellate” (star-shaped) plans of some of these *nirandhāra* (without integrated ambulatory) temples, viz. at Palārī, Kharod, and Dhobinī, are highly complex and innovative. It is an important negative evidence that on those surfaces, which more intricately interact with space than simple square or rectangular walls, the directional guardians have not been depicted.

This is also the case at Palārī, where eight *dīkṣpālas* simply flank the stone doorway in two groups of three plus two single ones²³¹ (fig. 89). They do not appear in their ideal arrangement, according to the order of the directions. The visual concept is reminiscent of the way in which directional guardians are employed on figural panels, particularly at Ellorā. Their characteristics and identification are as follows (from the proper right to the left side)²³²:

Position	God	Attributes	Vehicle
1 outer <i>śakhā</i> , r.	Vāyu	standard?	two addorsed antelopes
2 outer <i>śakhā</i> , r.	Īśāna	staff, top broken	bull
3 outer <i>śakhā</i> , r.	Kubera	(probably broken)	bird chariot
4 innermost <i>śakhā</i> , r.	Yama	? (diminutive size)	buffalo
5 innermost <i>śakhā</i> , l.	Indra	? (diminutive size)	elephant
6 outer <i>śakhā</i> , l.	Agni	flower?	sheep
7 outer <i>śakhā</i> , l.	Varuṇa	noose	<i>jalebha</i> (water elephant)
8 outer <i>śakhā</i> , l.	Nairṛta (?)	sword or staff	bird (?) chariot or throne

The obliteration due to erosion or whitewash, as well as the intricate, fine carving have resulted in the fact that many details cannot be clearly identified. The headdresses in most cases seem to be turbans. Kubera (3) with his left arm complete, but his right arm broken, can be identified by his large, obese figure. It could be considered significant that he rides an aerial chariot similar to the one of Nairṛta (?; 8), with whom he shares demonic affiliation. The addorsed, leaping antelopes of Vāyu (1) also belong to an aerial chariot (*vimāna*) or a throne. All animal vehicles are shown in a leaping or “flying” attitude with their legs pulled towards the torso. Yama’s (4) buffalo is characterized by mighty ribbed horns.

Yama (4) and Indra (5) are depicted flanking the doorway on their leaping vehicles, below the two groups of three guardians. They are located directly above the parasols held by the attendants of the river deities, while the other *lokapālas* are situated above the parasols of the river goddesses. Since the figures of the two pairs of females are exceptionally large, relatively little space has been provided for the directional guardians. The other themes included in the door decoration at Palārī are associated with the god Śiva: Naṭeśa; the wedding of Śiva and Pārvatī (Śiva Vaivāhikamūrti); Andhakāsuravadha; and Lakulīśa surrounded by four disciples, which are on the outside flanked by Brahmā (1.) and Viṣṇu (r.).

With regard to the Palārī group, two important factors should be noted: The complete canonical *aṣṭadīkṣpāla* group is represented here, however, only four of its members (2, 4, 5, 6) ride their traditional vehicles. The particular deviations in the mode of conveyance are unique and were not followed in the later Central Indian tradition. The “split alignment” of deities on both sides of a central group above the entrance has a parallel in the roughly con-

²²⁹ E.g.: “a conspicuous similarity is noticed in the Pratihāra temples of central India and the group of Nava-Brahmā temples at Ālampur [... The latter] are quite similar to the temples of the first phase of the Pratihāra period” (R.D. TRIVEDI 1990: 3). Naturally, one would expect an influence in the architecture of Northern type temples to run from the north to the south. Therefore, some North Indian or Central Indian antecedents for the Ālampur temples in the south would be expected.

²³⁰ D.M. STADTNER 1981; DEVA 1988: 243–346. STADTNER (1981: 49) assigns a rather narrow time span for the temple, c. A.D. 675–85, which is extended to 700 by DEVA (1988: 246), while DONALDSON (1985: 192) is of the opinion that “stylistically [...] the Siddheśvara and related temples] could date from the 8th century”.

²³¹ DEVA (1988: 246) is not aware of the fact that two more guardians have been separately depicted, when he writes: “above the heads of the river-goddesses have survived six figures of the Dīkṣpālas, three on each side.” STADTNER (1981: 52) recognizes only one of the separately depicted *lokapālas*, i.e. Indra.

²³² STADTNER (1981: 52) commits several errors in the identification of the directional guardians, which seem to be mainly due to the fact that he ignores the attributes. Only Vāyu (1) and Indra (5) have been correctly identified by him.

temporary wooden Śakti temple at Chatrārhi/Himachal Pradesh, but it has not yet been conclusively determined if they are actually *lokapālas*²³³.

Amrol, Rāmeśvara Mahādeva and Dānebābā Temples

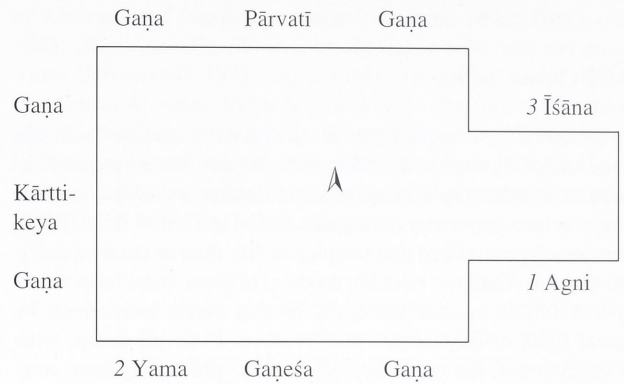
The historical remains at Amrol, District Gwalior, were first noticed in 1929/30 (ADGSAR 1929-30: 13). The better preserved Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple²³⁴ (ill. 14; figs. 90, 91) is situated 2 km to the north-west of the present village, while the ruined so-called Dānebābā temple²³⁵ (ill. 15; figs. 92–97) lies 1 km to the east of the latter. The Dānebābā temple, which has completely lost its vestibule portion and the major part of its superstructure, obviously postdates the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple by a few decades.²³⁶ We would prefer to date both temples in the first half of the 8th century, the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva to the beginning and the Dānebābā temple to the end of that period.

The sculptures of the Dānebābā temple are inferior in quality and tend to be stiff and lifeless. A development of the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva scheme is seen in the increase in the number of *lokapālas* from three to at least five plus Sūrya, who appears to be incorporated in this group.²³⁷ A further development is also the introduction of *karṇa* (corner) niches adjoining the *kapilī* (vestibule) wall, the latter now lost is suggested by the shape of the plinth. It would have been of considerable assistance to know whether the *lokapāla* images also occupied the *kapilī* niches. The omission of even one of them would have rendered the *lokapāla* group incomplete. However, such an incomplete set does occur on a similar temple at Dāṅg (ill. 26; figs. 145–151), where the *kapilī* niches do not contain the directional guardians.

On the basis of the temples at Amrol, a hypothetical development of the representation of the *aṣṭadīpālā* theme can be postulated. The structural predecessor of the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple is most probably the temple no. 23 or Durgā temple at Naresar, Dt. Morena/M.P.,²³⁸ the only one at that site with *karṇa* and *kapilī* niches – with dancing *gaṇa* figures (dwarf followers of Śiva). Except for the dimensions and the orientation (the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva is larger and faces east instead of west), the plans of both temples are almost identical. However, in the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple, three of the dancing *gaṇa* figures have been replaced by directional guardians, while on the west-facing Dānebābā temple, all formerly *gaṇa*-containing niches, as far as they are extant now, exhibit directional guardians plus Sūrya. In all the above cases, Gaṇeśa (S), Kārttikeya (E or W), and Pārvatī-*pañcāgnitapas* (performing penance amidst five fires, one being the sun; N) occupy the *bhadra* (central offset of the wall) niches. The probably slightly later temple at Dāṅg still has a rudimentary set of *lokapālas*, that are, however, confined to the *karṇa* niches only. Thus, we can trace an independent development of *aṣṭadīpālā* representation in Central India that differs from the concept found at Ālampur, particularly the tendency to accommodate the regents only in the *karṇa* niches. Moreover, a development from the seated (Rāmeśvara Mahādeva) to the standing (Indor, Dt. Guna/M.P.: ill. 27; figs. 152–159) type of *lokapāla* can be traced, the intermediate stages being manifest in the Dānebābā temple, Amrol, the temple at Dāṅg, and the Sūrya temple no. 1 at Osiāñ.

During the earlier explorations by the Gwalior State Department of Archaeology under D.R. Patil, most of the *lokapālas* were correctly identified: Agni, Yama, and Īśāna for the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple, and Vāyu, Īśāna, Sūrya, Indra, and Agni for the Dānebābā temple (ADGSAR 1942–46 [1949]: 20–21). Here and in subsequent descriptions of the latter temple,²³⁹ the still extant

Kubera image in the (north-)west *karṇa* niche has not been mentioned. Starting with the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple, the characteristics of the directional guardians are as follows:



III. 14: Amrol, Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple, plan

- 1 **Agni (fig. 90)**, southern *kapilī* niche: seated on a couchant goat in *dakṣiṇāpralambapāda* (right leg pendent), wearing *jaṭāmukūṭa* (hair-crown) and a broad decorated sash across the obese torso, holding a water flask in the proper left arm resting on the knee; he most probably held a rosary in the damaged right hand. His body is tilted to the (proper) right, and the usual flames – here in “bundles” – appear behind his head and shoulders. Agni, like Īśāna, wears a twisted sash around his knees. This portion is damaged in the case of Yama.
- 2 **Yama (fig. 91)**, south(-western) *karṇa* niche, squatting on a couchant buffalo with knees turned outwards, is badly damaged. He holds a staff (*daṇḍa*) in the left hand (damaged).
- 3 **Īśāna** (VIENNOT 1976: ph. 54; originally four-armed?), northern *kapilī* niche: seated on a couchant bull in *vāmapralambapāda* (left leg pendent), with the face damaged like the other *lokapālas*, wearing *jaṭāmukūṭa*, necklace, earrings, and a brāhmaṇical cord; a sash of twisted cloth is visible near the right hip and extends to the left knee. He holds a trident in the proper left hand which rests on the left knee. The right hand held near the right shoulder is badly damaged.

²³³ DEVA 1991: 102; pl. 209. The two groups of deities are shown seated on both sides of a set of eight planetary deities, i.e. two on the left and three on the right side. Only the second figure from the right is identifiable as Vāyu, since he holds a billowing cloth. Below the figure on the extreme right, Indra is depicted as the uppermost figure of a vertical alignment of standing deities, the remainder are however not directional guardians. Apart from Vāyu and Indra, no other *lokapālas* can be identified. The probable date of the temple is 710 A.D.

²³⁴ ADGSAR 1929-30: pl. III; ADGSAR 1942–46: 20–21; R.D. TRIVEDI 1990: 70–75; DEVA 1991: 12–15.

²³⁵ ADGSAR 1942-46: 21; TRIVEDI 1990: 86–89; DEVA 1991: 15.

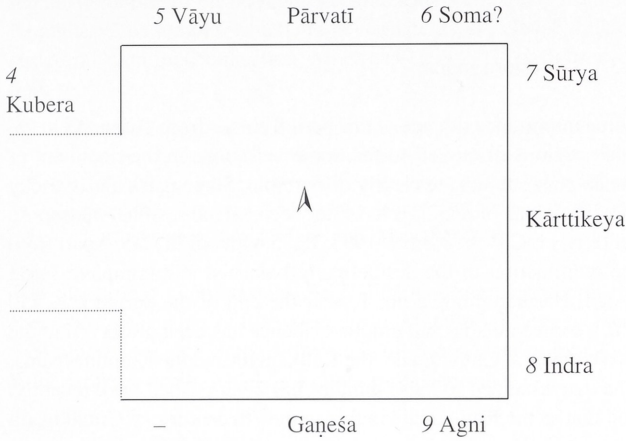
²³⁶ DEVA (1991: 15) believes that both temples belong to the first quarter of the 8th century, while TRIVEDI (1990: 75; 89) dates the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple to the middle and the Dānebābā to the end of the 8th century. VIENNOT (1976: 247) also assigns the Dānebābā temple (“T. ruiné ou no. 2”) to a later phase of her relative chronology.

²³⁷ For reflections on the incorporation of Sūrya or Candra into the group of directional guardians see C. WESSELS-MEVISSSEN 1994: 607–609.

²³⁸ TRIVEDI 1990: 59–63; DEVA 1991: 11–12.

²³⁹ TRIVEDI (1990: 88) describes the deity as a “standing Varuṇa”, while DEVA (1991: 15) fails to mention it at all. He starts with Vāyu in the adjoining niche.

On the Dānebābā temple, the deities are arranged in the following manner:



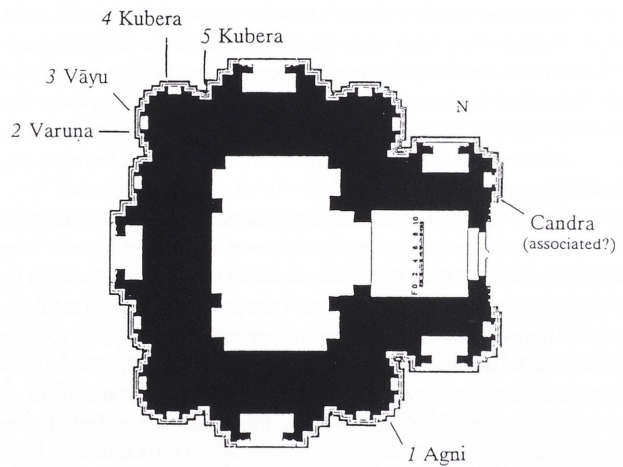
III. 15: Amrol, Dānebābā temple, plan

- 4 **Kubera** (fig. 92), (north-)western *karṇa* niche: standing in *ābhaṅga* (body slightly flexed), with a damaged face like all the other *lokapālas* and a badly eroded body, has an obese, stout figure. He wears a *jaṭāmukūṭa*, earrings and necklace damaged, and *keyuras* (upper arm ornaments); with an elegantly swinging money sack held in the proper left hand near the left thigh, and the right hand resting on the belly probably holds a small cup, attended by an animal-headed small figure (probably his vehicle) standing on his proper right side.
- 5 **Vāyu** (fig. 93), north(-western) *karṇa* niche: badly eroded, seated on a crouching antelope (?) in *vāmapralambapāda*, wearing *jaṭāmukūṭa*, and holding a billowing cloth (*vāyu-āpūritavastra*) in both upraised hands.
- 6 **Soma?** (fig. 94), north(-eastern) *karṇa* niche: seated on a couchant quadruped in *dakṣiṇāpralambapāda*, wearing *jaṭāmukūṭa* (damaged), earrings, necklace, and *keyuras*; the proper right hand is raised, holding a rosary, and the left one resting in the left knee, holding a waterpot.
- 7 **Sūrya** (fig. 95), (north-)eastern *karṇa* niche: standing in a rigid *samapāda* posture, with the high crown damaged, wearing ornaments, the long sash typical for Sūrya, a breastplate over the breast, a long lower garment, and boots, holding two lotus flowers, accompanied by his usual attendants Daṇḍa (proper left) and Piṅgala (proper right).
- 8 **Indra** (fig. 96), (south-)eastern *karṇa* niche: seated stiffly on his couchant elephant in *vāmapralambapāda*, with his cylindrical crown damaged, adorned by a thin necklace, earrings and *keyuras*. The raised proper left hand must have held the thunderbolt, raised to the shoulder, and the right hand is resting on the right knee.
- 9 **Agni** (fig. 97), south(-eastern) *karṇa* niche: seated on a comparatively small goat in *dakṣiṇāpralambapāda*, with neatly arranged flames encircling the head, has a *jaṭāmukūṭa*, and ornaments like the other guardian deities, a broad *brāhmaṇical* cord, and a *yogapaṭṭa* ("yogic band") around the knees, holding a small bottle in the proper left hand resting on the left knee and probably a rosary in the damaged right hand held at shoulder level.

As a general rule, all the seated deities, except for Vāyu who raises both hands, raise the respective hand, which is opposite the vehicle's head. This concept was obviously employed in order to create a visual balance.

Gwālīor, Telī-kā-mandir

The well-known, earliest extant temple at Gwālīor, now known as Telī-kā-mandir, overlooks the Gwālīor fort on the Gopagiri Hill. Unfortunately, it is bereft of most of its sculpture, and nothing has been preserved elsewhere. Only small relief figures remain on the building, the most interesting ensemble being a frieze of 113 figures on the basement (*adhiṣṭhāna*) portion. Relying on the palaeography of some inscriptions on the temple, among other indications, the Telī-kā-mandir has been assigned by DEVA²⁴⁰ to about the middle of the 8th century A.D., and by TRIVEDI²⁴¹ to the latter part of that century.



III. 16: Gwālīor, Telī-kā-mandir, plan (after DEVA 1991: fig. 7)

There is no indication whether directional guardians once occupied the corner shrines, which form a special feature of the temple. The images of the frieze on the *antarapaṭṭa* moulding are the only source of information as to whether directional symbolism was intended at Gwālīor. Among the 113 figures, which are all in a fairly good state of preservation, four or five *lokapālas* can be identified: Agni (1), Varuṇa (2), Vāyu (3), Kubera (4, 5; depicted twice); and probably Soma/Candra (6). It is a noteworthy fact that the *lokapāla* group, which also included guardians of the intermediate directions, remained incomplete. The guardians' positions are generally correct, but they have been placed in a rather irregular and unsystematical manner. It is unlikely that Candra was regarded as a genuine member of the group of directional guardians at Gwālīor, but the deity may be regarded as associated with the group here. The

²⁴⁰ DEVA 1985: 162; 1991: 17.

²⁴¹ TRIVEDI 1990: 95. As in the case of Amrol, TRIVEDI here prefers a later date. In the opinion of most scholars, the Telī-kā-mandir should be posterior to the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple at Amrol, although there is no actual evidence other than its monumental size and intricacy in structure and decoration to substantiate this. Keeping in mind that the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple was "seemingly built by a guild related to the one which constructed the Telī-kā-mandir" (DEVA 1985: 162), both temples could be more or less coeval.

guardians are all shown standing, with the exception of the additional Kubera (5). The figures show a sensuous modelling of the body. Even the roll of fat just above the lower garment has been depicted, similar to that on the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple, Amrol. This feature also occurs on the Dānebābā temple at Amrol. The sash worn around the legs by Agni (1) and Kubera (5) is again paralleled by the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva *lokapālas* Agni and Īśāna. The genuine directional guardians on the Telī-kā-mandir (1-4) all occupy *karṇa* positions. Their faces are damaged.

- 1 **Agni (fig. 98)**, *antarapaṭṭa* frieze, no. 19, south(-east): standing in *ābhaṅga* (slightly flexed) with his body tilted to the proper right. He wears *jaṭāmukuta* (hair-crown), a simple necklace, earrings, a faintly visible brāhmaṇical cord and a sash tied around the legs with an ornate knot. Agni seems to hold a water bottle (l.) and a rosary (r.; both damaged); bundles of flames are visible behind the head; the goat vehicle sits to his proper right.
- 2 **Varuṇa (fig. 99)**, *antarapaṭṭa* frieze, no. 69, (north-)west: badly damaged; Varuṇa's posture is similar to Agni's, but it already represents an extreme flexion of the body (*atibhaṅga*). He stands in front of a large goose (*haṃsa*), which he is feeding with grass. In his raised right hand is a noose that curves to his proper right. Varuṇa resembles Agni in his coiffure and the modest ornaments, among which are *keyuras* (upper arm ornaments).
- 3 **Vāyu (fig. 100)**, *antarapaṭṭa* frieze, no. 70, (north-)west: This is the most dynamic representation. Vāyu stands in an extremely flexed (*atibhaṅga*) posture, the flexion being in the opposite direction to that of Varuṇa. His lower garment and his ornaments correspond to those of Varuṇa, but his coiffure is the demonic *ūrdhvaśeṣa* (raised) hairstyle. Both hands are raised and grasp the cloth floating over Vāyu's head. A caparisoned horse stands behind the god, with its head turned towards him.
- 4 **Kubera (fig. 101)**, *antarapaṭṭa* frieze, no. 75, north(-west): The figure is also badly damaged. He can be identified only on the basis of the remaining outlines of a long sack which he holds in his proper left hand. The posture resembles that of Agni and Varuṇa. The hairstyle may have been *jaṭāmukuta*. The proper right hand is raised and holds a dish or cup.
- 5 **Kubera***, seated (fig. 102), *antarapaṭṭa* frieze, no. 80, north, facing west: The deity has a paunch. He is seated in *dakṣiṇāpralambapāda*, with his left leg on a cushion. His hairstyle is the demonic *ūrdhvaśeṣa*. The necklace is longer and more ornate than that of the above figures. An elegant sash is wound around the right leg. The proper left arm rests on the lower leg, while the right hand, which is raised, holds a drinking bowl.
- 6 **Candra (fig. 103)**, *antarapaṭṭa* frieze, no. 113, east, north of entrance: stands in a rigid posture, wearing a cap or crown, large earrings, a double-row necklace, *keyuras*, and the brāhmaṇical cord. A rather thin crescent appears behind the head. His proper left hand may have held a waterpot, his raised right hand could have held a rosary (both damaged). A stylized shrub can be seen on his proper right.

We cannot conclusively state whether this incomplete, haphazardly positioned set of directional guardians on the Telī-kā-mandir still belonged to the early phase of a gradual introduction of the *lokapāla* set, in view of the evolved and carefully planned structure of the temple. The general course of development in Central India makes

it very likely, however, that the depiction of the complete group of eight directional guardians had not yet become a common practice in the region.

2.3.1.3 Western India

Some important evidence of this period comes from Osiāñ. As in the other regions discussed so far, some variations in the treatment of the *dikpāla* subject are clearly discernible. Some particularly tricky identifications of *dikpālas* have not been solved by other authors so far (e.g., cf. C.P. ATHERTON 1997: fig. 5 with our **ill. 21**). Apart from the culmination in the aesthetically balanced and complete set at Osiāñ, Harihara temple no. 1, near the end of the period (i.e. 750 A.D.), some valuable and unique evidence has been preserved in the two temples at Cittauḍgaḍh, the Kālikāmātā and the Kumbhaśyāma. The date assigned to these temples has been pushed back recently, and that of the Kālikāmātā in fact to the 7th century.²⁴² Cittauḍgaḍh most probably represents a more genuine regional development than Osiāñ and Pīpāḍ, which appear to have received impulses from Central India. The three images of directional guardians still remaining at Bīṭhū resemble those at Cittauḍgaḍh. They are all shown standing, unlike most of the *dikpālas* of Central Indian inspiration.

Cittauḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā and Kumbhaśyāma Temples

The Cittauḍgaḍh fort in Rajasthan preserves some early evidence of temple architecture. The large *sāṅdhāra* (with integrated ambulatory) temples, nowadays known as Kālikāmātā and Kumbhaśyāma, contain an impressive wealth of architectural and sculptural forms,²⁴³ including representations of the directional guardians. The size of the temples and some of their features which appear to be more developed,²⁴⁴ make it difficult to believe that the Kālikāmātā temple belongs to the latter part of the 7th and the Kumbhaśyāma temple to the first half of the 8th century, as they have been assigned recently.²⁴⁵ However, the fragments of the rather securely dated (636/37 A.D.)²⁴⁶ temple at Kusumā show that the art formulas

²⁴² The period of 643–742 A.D. (based on the Śaṅkar ghāt inscription, MEISTER 1975–76: 44; 1991: 273) forms the time span for the construction of the Kālikāmātā. In this publication, the author narrows this period to the latter part of the 7th century which, in his opinion, is corroborated by mason's marks on the temple wall (*ibid.*: 291). LIN-BODIEN (1980: 60) suggests that the temple was built "probably in the second quarter of the eighth century", on the – rather shaky – basis of some observations on the general stylistic development.

²⁴³ MEISTER 1991: 285–297. In a later publication, the author compares the ground plans of both temples and discusses some points of particular interest (1993: 346–350; fig. 9).

²⁴⁴ VIENNOT (1976: 248), on the basis of particular architectural features, lists three temples at Cittauḍgaḍh as belonging to the sixth period of her scheme. Most of the other temples assigned to this period belong to the 9th century. VIENNOT's categorization is rather inexact, as is revealed by the fact that the third temple at Cittauḍgaḍh, the Kṣemaṅkari ("temple au bord bassin devant le Kālikā Mātā"; MEISTER 1991: 302–304), which is clearly later than the Kālikāmātā and Kumbhaśyāma temples, is reckoned under the same category. HARLE (1986: 145), who refers to the assignment of the latter temples to the second quarter of the 8th century, sceptically remarks: "If so, the new kind of niche [with round pilasters and an awning] appears here at least three quarters of a century earlier than at Osiāñ."

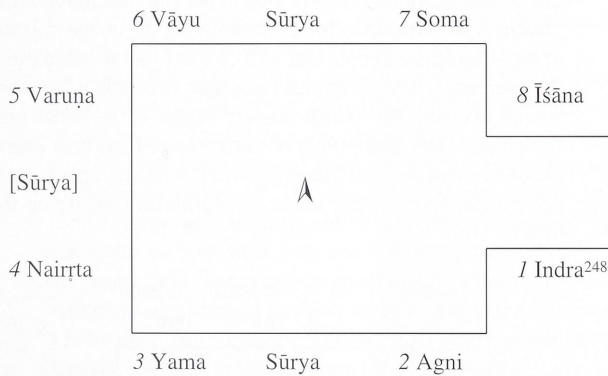
²⁴⁵ MEISTER 1991: 291, 297; cf. also 273. Cf. note 141.

²⁴⁶ The connection between the dated "Kutśāsrama inscription", preserved at the Maṇḍor Museum, and the extant Rāmacandrajī temple, however has been doubted by C.G. LIN-BODIEN (1980: 50). She tentatively assigned the temple, on stylistic grounds, to the latter part of the 7th century (*ibid.*: 60).

particularly reflected in the Kālikāmātā,²⁴⁷ both in sculpture and architecture, were prevalent in Western India during the early 7th century. It is a remarkable fact that a number of differences, including the rendering of the *dikpālas*, separates the Kālikāmātā from the Kumbhaśyāma temple, which are nevertheless very closely related structurally. In this connection, MEISTER (1993: 347) has observed that:

In plan and architectural detail, to some degree in iconography, and to a much lesser degree in sculptural typology, these two temples exemplify a distinction made some years ago by M.A. Dhaky between styles in parts of western India to which he gave the geographic names, 'Mahā-Maru' and 'Mahā-Gurjara'.

The directional guardians on the Kālikāmātā temple occupy the *kaṇṇa* (corner) niches of the *garbhagrha* (sanctum). They represent a complete group of eight, however with Soma/Candra replacing Kubera on the north, which is a rather rare occurrence.



III. 17: Cittaūḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā temple, *garbhagrha* plan

Additionally, some of the *dikpālas* appear in a symmetrical arrangement above the *garbhagrha* door (see below).

The Moon God Soma, according to some traditions is the sole guardian of the north (see section 1.3). This fact as well as the fact that the temple was originally dedicated to Sūrya, who is likewise regarded as a “planet”, could explain the preference for Soma instead of Kubera.

Most of the directional guardians are two-armed, except for Agni and Īśāna, who are four-armed. A characteristic feature of the Cittaūḍgaḍh *dikpālas* is that they stand with their feet apart when they are not represented in the rigid *samapāda* posture. Vāyu (fig. 108) is a particularly good example for an extreme form of this posture. The free leg is stiffly stretched to the side, the foot turned outwards. This posture is typical for Western India.²⁴⁹ In Central India, the legs of *lokapāla* images tend to be placed close together. The above posture, which could be referred to as *tribhaṅga* (triple-flexed, if one accepts this expression), has been somewhat modified in the Kumbhaśyāma sculptures. Here it is even more exaggerated, resulting in a kind of mannerism. The free leg in that case is stretched out at a wider angle and has to be bent in order to reach the ground, creating a rather inelegant effect.

- 1 The image of **Indra** on the (south-)east is unfortunately not documented.
- 2 **Agni** (fig. 104), south(-east), is shown four-armed, wearing *jaṭāmukuta* (hair-crown), a moustache and goatee, and stands in the rigid *samapāda* posture. He is adorned with heavy ear-

rings, a necklace, bracelets and a *vanamālā* (garland of leaves and flowers) reaching down to his knees. Strangely, his *upavīta* (brāhmaṇical cord) seems to be wound around his belt buckle. Behind Agni's head are two concentrically arranged, elongated, flaming haloes. His upper right hand holds a fan, which was used to kindle the fire. The lower right hand is damaged; it may have held a fruit. The lower left hand holds a pot with handle, and the upper left hand holds a long-handled attribute resting on the ground, possibly a standard. On Agni's lower right is a ram crouching on the ground. Two plants symmetrically flank the god.

- 3 **Yama** (fig. 105), on the south(-west), stands in the characteristic posture described above. He has a curly hairstyle, probably representing the demonic *ūrdhvakeśa* (upraised hair). A perfectly round halo is visible behind his head. His ornaments are similar to those of Agni, except for the presence of anklets. In addition, he wears a string of pearls around his neck, with chains hanging down from the girdle over both legs. He also wears *keyuras* (upper arm bracelets), and a sash that falls down across the thighs. The *upavīta* is worn in a regular way. Yama holds a staff topped by a skull in his right hand, and in his raised left hand a large lotus flower with a bird perched on it. A massive *vanamālā* extends down to the knees. The diminutive buffalo is depicted standing behind its master.

- 4 **Nairṛta** (fig. 106), (south-)west, is a mirror-image of Yama's posture. He wears a high crown with an intricate halo behind. On the whole he resembles Yama, however, he has a third necklace with little bells, and the *vanamālā* extends even further down. The god wields a sword in his right hand, and the left hand is resting on the sash which runs across his thighs. A tiny figure of a worshipper on his right probably represents his anthropomorphic vehicle, while a female attendant is standing on the other side.

- 5 **Varuṇa** (fig. 107), (north-)west, whose head has been completely destroyed, resembles the other *dikpāla* images (here only one necklace), except for one unusual characteristic: his *upavīta* extends from the right shoulder down to the left side. The brāhmaṇical cord is worn in this way, as opposed to the regular manner, only during rites connected with the dead, a connection which cannot be established for Varuṇa. The staff-like attribute in the right hand is badly damaged, but it seems to be a specific type of noose. Where the old surface is preserved on the “handle”, a twisted structure is discernible. The upraised left hand holds a lotus flower, which is curved towards the face of the deity. On the bottom, on the proper left, the gaping mouth of a *makara* (mythical aquatic creature) is clearly discernible. Except for one visible paw, the rest of the body is made up of large scrolls, seen on Varuṇa's left.

- 6 The image of **Vāyu** (fig. 108), north(-west) is particularly impressive for its beautifully flowing shawl attribute. Unfor-

²⁴⁷ MEISTER (1975–76: 44) writes: “Overriding points of similarity exist between Kusumā and the Kālikā-mātā temple at Chittor [...], yet in terms of idiom they are far apart.” He does not specify the points of similarity. Concerning the sculpture, the soft, flowing contours of the bodies, the squarish faces, and the seemingly boneless, elastic fingers (*ibid.*: fig. 30), clearly connect both temples.

²⁴⁸ Unfortunately, the image of Indra could not be studied.

²⁴⁹ In the following, it is assumed that the posture with the foot of the free leg sharply turned to the side originated in Western India. Some early examples are illustrated in SCHASTOK 1985: pl. XIII, figs. 21, 22 (doorkeepers from Śāmalājī, dated c. 539 A.D.); pl. XXXI, fig. 52 (Śiva, next to Brahmānī, perhaps from Tīnṭoi, dated c. 550 A.D.).

unately, his head has also been completely damaged. Vāyu's right hand, raised to shoulder level, holds the broad piece of cloth, which flows behind his crown and is wound around the left forearm. The ends of the cloth are attached to the pillars flanking the niche, in the form of volutes. The left hand rests gracefully on the thigh of the free leg, just above the horizontal sash. On Vāyu's right is an antelope with straight horns standing frontally. On the other side, a kneeling worshipper is visible.

7 **Soma (fig. 109)** on the north(-east) has a serene expression. He stands in the rigid *samapāda* posture, the right hand holding a rosary. Behind the huge *jaṭāmukha* coiffure is a large, undecorated halo. He wears enormously large circular earrings. A peculiar feature is the unusually long *upavita*, even covering the sash behind which it disappears. The sash worn over the legs is tied in a big knot beside his right thigh. Soma's left hand extends downwards, grasping the neck of a pot (gesture and pot are similar to that of Agni, **fig. 104**). Tiny figures of worshippers kneel on both sides of the Moon God. Just above the figure on the proper right side is the head of an animal, probably a dog. The body of the animal is unnaturally elongated, as the hind legs are visible on the left beside the god's legs. A predecessor of this image of Soma at the related site of Kusumā²⁵⁰ was originally paired with a Sūrya image (MEISTER 1975–76: fig. 32).

8 **Īśāna (fig. 110)**, on the (north-)east, is again four-armed. He wears *jaṭāmukha*. In posture, ornaments and the position of his *upavita*, he resembles most of the other *dikpālas*. The lower right hand elegantly holds a small flower or bud and is uncharacteristically placed in front of his chest. The upper hand grasps a trident, with its upper part visible behind the pilaster capital, echoing its form. The upper left hand holds a serpent, the lower part of which is wound around the wrist. The lower left rests on the sash falling over the thighs. Two dwarf figures flank Īśāna on both sides. The one on the right seems to carry an offering for the god, while the one on the left feeds the bull vehicle with balls of sweets. Among the pilasters flanking the deities described so far, Īśāna's are the most lavishly decorated ones. In contrast to the other ones, the shafts are completely covered by ornamental leaves, and below the upper ribbed zone a row of lotus petals embellish the capital.

In the Kālikāmātā temple, a few images of directional guardians appear amongst a large number of figures on the *garbhagrha* (sanctum) overdoor relief (MEISTER 1991: 290; pls. 655, 657). Here, Yama is found paired with Kubera, who is excluded from the group of *dikpālas* in the niches. On the opposite side, Varuṇa appears together with Vāyu, and Indra seems to appear twice, *i.e.* once on both sides. Both pairs correspond to those generally found among the group of Manu Lokapālas (cf. section 2.4.1.3).

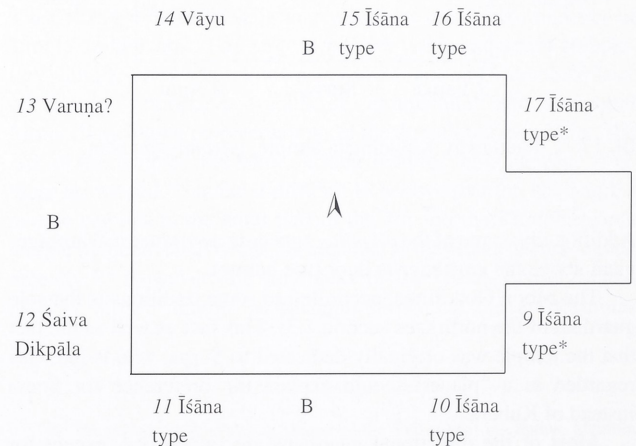
On the Kumbhaśyāma temple, two differently composed sets of directional guardians probably illustrate an incipient stage in the development of the theme. The interior set in the *karṇa* niches of the sanctum, consisting of nine directional guardians, represents a unique scheme. Only three *dikpālas* show individual characteristics, thus distinguishing them from the “Īśāna type” which is rendered with or without a bull vehicle. This puzzling set has been commented on by MEISTER (1991: 295–296) as follows:

Both of the east-facing *dikpālas* have no *vāhanas*. All have four arms and hair tied into a *jaṭāmukha*. Only Nirṛti, Varuṇa, and Vāyu have been differentiated by attributes and *vāhanas*. The remainder

take a form suggestive of Śiva-Īśāna [...] The intention of this imagery would seem to be to suggest that all *alaṅkāra-dēvatās* [“ornamental” attendant deities] are manifestations of Śiva – including *Dikpālas* and *apsarasas* [heavenly nymphs] – as well as the “*īṣṭadēvatās*” on the *bhadrās* (a fact further emphasized by the repetition of Īśāna on the northeast *pratiratha*, where elsewhere only *apsarasas* have appeared).

The author further suggests that the original concept must have been that of a Śiva temple, which was converted to that of a Viṣṇu temple, after a temporary suspension of work some time in the first half of the 8th century (*ibid.*: 297). The identification of the guardians in the western *karṇa* niches as Nirṛti and Varuṇa is rather doubtful, as their sets of attributes do not follow those traditionally described for these deities. All the guardians have been portrayed with relaxed postures, the free leg almost invariably directed towards the corner.

9,17 The *karṇa* niches of the east wall are hardly accessible. The directional guardians there belong to the simple variant of the “Īśāna type, without vehicle”, resembling the image of Īśāna of the Kālikāmātā temple (**fig. 110**), except for the vehicle and the attendants. The sculptures have been executed in a rough, simple manner. The (north-)eastern image is the better preserved one. The distribution of attributes and gestures seems to be the same for both images: lower r. – lotus; upper r. – trident; upper l. – serpent; lower l. – *kaṭihasta* (resting on the hip).



III. 18: Cittauḍgaḍh, Kumbhaśyāma temple, *garbhagrha* (sanctum) plan

(B – central *bhadrā* niche [empty]; * without vehicle)

10,11, On both the south (**figs. 111, 112**) and the north walls 15,16 (MEISTER 1991: pl. 676, 1st and 3rd image from the right) of the sanctum are found two **Īśāna type** *dikpālas*. The southern ones have an additional attendant with a trident on their proper left. Their postures are exactly symmetrical (*i.e.* mirrored by the counterpart on the opposite side), and the detail of the lower garment being shorter on the side of the free leg

²⁵⁰ The figure was erroneously identified as Kubera by MEISTER (1975–76: fig. 33). Both Sūrya and Candra are shown in situ on an earlier photograph (MEISTER 1973–74: fig. 12). The Moon God resembles his counterpart on the Kālikāmātā temple with respect to his coiffure, round halo, and the attributes (there must have been a rosary in his right hand). The *vanamālā* is also present. The deity is seated without vehicle and holds the vessel from below. The form of the pilasters flanking the niche has survived in the architecture of the Kālikāmātā and Kumbhaśyāma temples.

also occurs in both cases. The distribution of attributes in the upper hands (r. – trident; l. – serpent) is the same as for the other “Īśāna type” *dikpālas*. The head of the bull always appears on the proper right side. In ornaments and dress the guardians largely resemble those of the Kālikāmātā temple. The south(-eastern) guardian (fig. 111) has his front right hand raised, and holds a rosary and lotus. The front left hand is held in *kaṭihasta*. The south(-western) *dikpāla* (fig. 112) has his front right in the latter position, his left hand being raised and gracefully holding a small lotus.

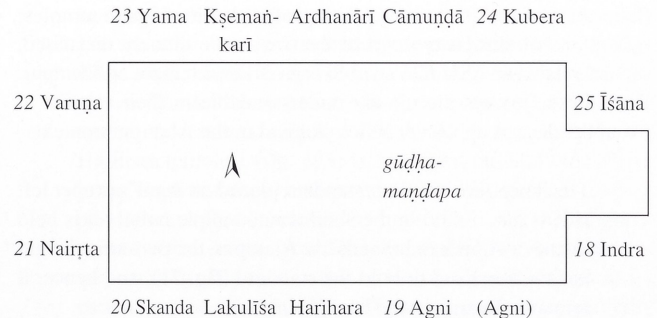
- 12 The Śaiva *Dikpāla* (fig. 113) on the (south-)west is four-armed and wears *jaṭāmukuta* (hair-crown), like all other *dikpālas* on the sanctum. The lower right hand is partly broken. It could have been held in the rather unusual gesture *varada* (bestowing boons). The upper left hand holds an indistinct object, probably *ḍamaru* (small drum), the upper right grasps a snake, reminiscent of the “Īśāna type”. The lower left hand holds a trident (with an additional skull like his attendant on his left?). A lion vehicle in a relaxed, attitude crouches on his proper right.
- 13 *Varuṇa*? (fig. 114), on the (north-)west, is characterized by a *makara* or fish. However, there is no other clear indication of his identity. The coiffure also seems to be *jaṭāmukuta*. The attributes are: lance (lower r.); lotus (upper r.); rosary (upper l.); *kaṭihasta* (lower l.). The absence of a noose makes the identification as *Varuṇa* doubtful. The deity is flanked by attendants on both sides with one behind the fish vehicle on the proper right. The relatively small mouth of the animal and also its strange vertical position suggests its identification as a fish rather than a *makara*. This has also been mentioned as *Varuṇa*’s vehicle in the literature (*MtP* 286.9a).
- 14 The information available on *Vāyu* could only be taken from MEISTER (1991: 296). The deity probably has an antelope vehicle as in the Kālikāmātā temple. He holds a flag here, unlike the image in the latter set.

The outer walls of the temple which is now roofed by a much later superstructure, preserve the original set of eight directional guardians. It is unusual in that it incorporates Kārttikeya, probably originally on the north(-west).²⁵¹ The figures are (clockwise, starting from the [south]-east): Indra, Agni²⁵², Kārttikeya, Nairṛta, *Varuṇa*, Yama, Kubera, Īśāna. Some of the images appear to have been partly recut in the 15th century (MEISTER 1991: 294). The images of this set so closely resemble those of the first one, that chronologically, both sets do not seem to be far apart. However, there is a slight tendency towards some awkward features like squarish faces, narrow shoulders and an unnaturally flexed free leg. The background of the panels is often blank. The generally simpler conception is also visible in the fact that all deities except for Kārttikeya and Īśāna are two-armed.

- 18 *Indra* (fig. 115) stands in a posture similar to that on the Kālikāmātā temple and wears a large cylindrical crown. He holds a large *vajra* (thunderbolt) with the right hand at waist level and has his left resting in *kaṭihasta* (hand on the hip). A miniature elephant on his left is the only attendant figure.
- 19 *Agni* (fig. 116), who is – at least at present – placed irregularly on the south(-west) *karna* (corner) niche of the *gūḍhamanḍapa* (pillared hall and ambulatory), seems to have a recut face. He is bearded and wears *jaṭāmukuta* (hair-crown). His right hand at waist level holds a staff-like attribute, which may represent a *tridaṇḍa* (triple staff, attribute of ascetics). The left hand rests on the hip which is the usual

posture of the guardians of this set (except for *Varuṇa*). A goat’s head is peeping out from behind his proper left side, while a tiny male attendant stands on the other side. The god’s head is flanked by two large leaves. Vertically arranged flames are visible above these.

- 20 *Skanda* (fig. 117) on the south(-west) is here also described, although this deity rarely appears among the *dikpālas*. He is shown three-headed and four-armed. His flexion at the hip is particularly strong (*atibhaṅga*). His three heads wear *jaṭāmukuta*s. His front right hand holds a long-shafted spear and the rear left hand an object with a handle, probably a mirror. His rear left hand is held close to the floral capital of the pilaster and grasps a fruit, probably a mango, which looks like a part of the capital. His lower left hand rests on the hip. A female figure, probably his wife *Devasenā*, stands on his left side. On the right side beside Kārttikeya’s lotus socle are the remains of his peacock.
- 21 *Nairṛta* (fig. 118), located on the (south-)west, probably has a recut face and crown. He holds a – largely broken – sword in his right hand. His anthropomorphic vehicle kneeling on his proper right side looks up at him with its hands folded in *añjalimudrā*.
- 22 *Varuṇa* (fig. 119), like *Nairṛta*, remains in his proper position on the (north-)west. His face and *jaṭāmukuta* seem to have been recut. In his right hand he holds a stiff object, obviously a stylized noose. It is not complete on the left side, and it seems to have been cut to the proper size after the completion of the panel.²⁵³ His left hand does not show *kaṭihasta*, but is gracefully held beside the hip, probably in the process of offering food to the *makara* with open jaws visible beneath.



III. 19: Cittauḍgaḍh, Kumbhaśyāma temple, simplified plan of outer wall

²⁵¹ Both this sculpture which is now on the south(-west) and the image of Yama, now on the north(-west), violate a rule which appears to have been implemented on both temples under study: When the statue is not shown in *samapāda* (feet together), the free leg is always directed towards the nearest corner of the structure. Only Kārttikeya and Yama of the Kumbhaśyāma are exceptions to this rule. Therefore it seems likely that they have been placed on the temple in positions other than those originally planned.

²⁵² A “15th century” figure of Agni now occupies the south(-eastern) *karna* (MEISTER 1991: 293) niche which must once have belonged to that deity. However, the old sculpture of Agni is located on the south(-west) *karna* of the *gūḍhamanḍapa*. Probably, this inconsistency testifies to a change in the concept of the temple during its construction. A number of errors have occurred in MEISTER’s distribution table of images (*ibid.*).

²⁵³ From the images on the exterior of the Kumbhaśyāma temple it is clearly visible that the niche figures have been carved together with the right pilaster, the left pilaster being most probably affixed later, *in situ*. In such cases, there are often considerable morphological differences between the left and right pilaster. In one example from the Kālikāmātā temple (fig. 107), the left pilaster is completely missing.

- 23 **Yama (fig. 120)**, north(-west), was most probably intended to occupy the south(-western) niche. He also has the typical squarish face and a *jaṭāmukuta*. His right hand holds a *khaṭvāṅga* (skull-topped staff). A relatively large buffalo stands with its head almost squeezed between the pilaster and the *vanamālā* (garland of leaves and flowers), to the right of the deity.
- 24 **Kubera (fig. 121)** on the north(-east) generally resembles the other guardians. He wields a large ribbed *gadā* (club) with a protuberance at the top. Near his left foot is an indistinct object, probably not a representation of his vehicle. Thus, Kubera is the only *dikpāla* at Cittaūḍgaḍh without any vehicle. This feature has been continued at Osiāñ. A club as an attribute of Kubera rarely occurs in North India.
- 25 **Īśāna (fig. 122)** on the north(-east) closely resembles the “Īśāna type” images inside the temple. His upper attributes are trident (r.) and serpent (l.), his lower attribute is probably a lotus (damaged; r.), and the lower left hand rests on the hip. The bull’s head appears to the left of his master. An unusual element is the large bowl with sweets in front of the animal.

It is quite difficult to interpret the intricate, somewhat puzzling evidence from Cittaūḍgaḍh. A regular *dikpāla* scheme, like the one on the sanctum exterior of the earlier temple, the Kālikāmātā, does not appear in the Kumbhaśyāma temple. Moreover, the latter temple contains two differing sets of *dikpālas*. The interior set seems to be characterized by the multiplication of Īśāna/Śiva, while the positioning of the guardians is also irregular in the case of the exterior set. The choice of Kubera as guardian of the north in the exterior set seems like a conscious departure from the Kālikāmātā scheme, where Soma has been represented in his stead.

There are some striking facts which support MEISTER’s early (latter half of the 7th century) dating of both Cittaūḍgaḍh temples: two points of similarity connect them with the already discussed, securely dated (c. 681–696 A.D.) Svarga Brahmā temple at Ālampur. Both these features are clearly understandable in their context at Cittaūḍgaḍh, but appear to be less logical in the Ālampur context:

- The lance-like object or standard placed on Agni’s proper left side is also found in the Kālikāmātā temple, where it is held in one of Agni’s four hands. At Ālampur, the two-armed Agni has no free hand to hold the standard (fig. 71), and hence, it remains floating in the background.
- The syncretistic deities Ardhanārīśvara on the north and Harihara on the south are both represented on the Svarga Brahmā (ill. 11) and on the Kumbhaśyāma (ill. 18) temples. On the latter, their presence suggests a visual “pun”, referring to the meeting point of two architectural elements. These images do not have the same function at Ālampur,²⁵⁴ since there is no unevenness in the structure of the wall.

The second of the two points was elaborated earlier by MEISTER (1979: 228):

There seems to be little doubt that the priest or architect at Chit-taur, searching for a schema within which to place his images, saw the relation between his conjoint images of Śiva-Pārvaṭī [Ardhanārīśvara] and Śiva-Viṣṇu [Harihara] and the juncture between *prāsāda* and *maṇḍapa* in which he put them.

Just like at Amrol and probably also at Muṇḍeśvarī, Cittaūḍgaḍh preserves two temples with *dikpāla* (or related) sets. At all these

sites, the later temple significantly deviates from the earlier one in the composition of the *dikpāla* group as well as the distribution of the figures on the temple walls. This phenomenon seems to be restricted to the experimental phase in the development of the *dikpāla* scheme.

Uniquely during this earlier phase, on the sanctum of the Kumbhaśyāma temple at Cittaūḍgaḍh, all the *dikpālas* are depicted with four arms, combined with a strong Śaiva aspect.

Bīṭhū, Mahādeva temple

The Mahādeva temple at Bīṭhū²⁵⁵ is particularly interesting for its unusual ground plan. The site is located in the Pali district, Rajasthan. With an estimated date of c. second quarter of the 8th century (MEISTER 1991: 170), the temple might postdate both temples at Cittaūḍgaḍh. The *dikpāla* images at Bīṭhū resemble those of Cittaūḍgaḍh, however, sufficient differences exist to suggest that they were not executed by the same school of craftsmen. The frames of the niches are different here, and the only feature which is reminiscent of the Cittaūḍgaḍh temples are the lotus brackets. Unfortunately, only three directional guardians survive in the directional scheme at Bīṭhū.

- 1 **Varuṇa** (MEISTER 1982: fig. 8) occupies the (north-)west *karṇa* niche of the outer face of the wall enclosing the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* (ambulatory). The deity stands in a naturally flexed *ābhaṅga* posture with the legs held together and not apart as at Cittaūḍgaḍh. It is unclear as to whether he wears a crown or *jaṭāmukuta*. Some ornaments are discernible, but he seems to lack the *upavīta* (brāhmaṇical cord). The squarish face is reminiscent of the Cittaūḍgaḍh sculptures. In his right hand Varuṇa holds a staff-like, twisted rope as at Cittaūḍgaḍh. The left hand rests on the hip. An attendant is seen on Varuṇa’s right side. On his left side, the outlines of a *makara* can be faintly discerned.
- 2 **Vāyu** (*ibid.*: fig. 9) on the north(-west) exhibits the same relaxed *ābhaṅga* posture as Varuṇa. A piece of Vāyu’s billowing cloth is visible where it is wound around his right forearm. It is probably wound around the left forearm as well, but the shapes are indistinct. It is a rare feature that both his hands are held in a low position (l.: *kaṭihasta*). As in Varuṇa’s case, a round halo is still faintly visible. An elegant, long-necked antelope can be seen behind Vāyu’s legs. He is flanked by two attendants, who appear to be miniature replicas of himself.
- 3 **Soma** (*ibid.*: fig. 10) on the north(-east) also occupies a position corresponding to the Kālikāmātā set. He stands in *samapāda*. The ends of a crescent moon project from Soma’s shoulders. His right arm seems to be raised. He is flanked by two, probably female, attendants. The rest of the image is very badly damaged and does not reveal any details.

The sculptural style of the Bīṭhū *dikpālas* is less “monumental” than at Cittaūḍgaḍh and is characterized by softly flowing contours, representing a rather independent idiom. However, with regard to the layout of the panels and their iconographic features, they can be

²⁵⁴ BUCHANAN (1985: 49) regards a combination of Harihara and Ardhanārīśvara as “popular with Calukya patrons”.

²⁵⁵ MEISTER 1991: 167–170; MEISTER 1982 has analyzed the temple and illustrated the remaining three *dikpālas* (figs. 8, 9, 10).

clearly grouped with their counterparts at Cittaūḍgaḍh. The placement of Soma on the north is particularly reminiscent of the Kālikāmātā temple.

Pīpāḍ, Piplādmātā temple

Like Bīṭhū, Pīpāḍ and the following site of Osiāñ are located in the Jodhpur region, Rajasthan. The Piplādmātā temple has a *nirandhāra* (without ambulatory) plan, with projecting *kapilī* walls (enclosure of the vestibule). The original superstructure is lost. The *karṇa* (corner) niches contain an incomplete, partially substituted set of directional guardians. Unfortunately, the images are in a bad state of preservation. The temple has been assigned to the second quarter of the 8th century by MEISTER (1991: 139).

Several factors indicate a Central Indian influence on the Piplādmātā temple, such as the broad *kapilī* walls and the motif of paired geese appearing in a cloud formation (*ibid.*). The rendering of some of the *dikpālas*, particularly that of the north(-eastern) image (fig. 128), is strongly reminiscent of a Central Indian model, i.e. on the Telī-kā-mandir image at Gwālīor (fig. 100).



III. 20: Pīpāḍ, Piplādmātā temple

- 1 **Indra** (MEISTER 1991: pl. 326), on the (north-)east, occupies a different position than at Cittaūḍgaḍh (Kālikāmātā *garbhābhīṭṭi*; Kumbhaśyāma outer wall; *ills.* 17, 19), which can also be assumed for Bīṭhū. On these temples, the sequence starts with Indra on the (south-)east. Here, at Pīpāḍ, the god is portrayed as seated on his elephant, with his consort gracefully seated behind him, partly turned to the rear. It is not clear whether Indra has an attribute in the raised right hand. The left hand is resting on the thigh.
- 2 **Sūrya**'s (fig. 123) position on the (south-)east is noteworthy. The only parallels for a combination of Indra and Sūrya on the east wall are found at Ālampur (ill. 11) and Amrol (ill. 15). As in the case of Indra, some space has been left empty. The Sun God stands in *samapāda* and wears a prominent sash at the height of his elbows, which extends down to his knees. All other features have been destroyed beyond recognition. Only the remains of a large round halo can be seen. Two attendants, apparently Daṇḍa and Piṅgala, stand in relaxed postures at some distance on either side of Sūrya. The image seems to strongly resemble the one on the Dānebābā temple at Amrol (fig. 95).
- 3 **Kubera** (fig. 124) on the south(-west) has an unusual position. The figure is comparatively large. The god is seated in

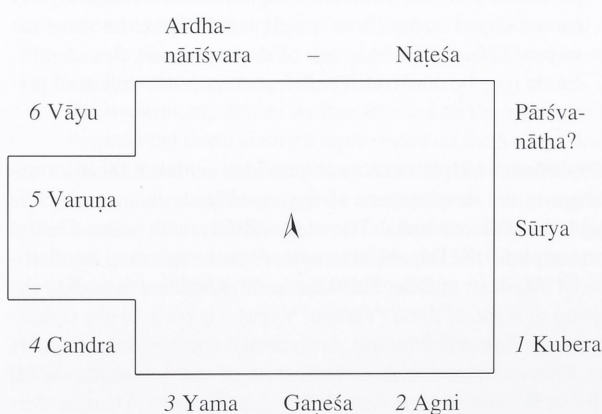
a relaxed posture, wears a large crown and holds a bag in his left hand resting on the knee. He resembles the Kubera images at Osiāñ (cf. 2.3.1.3).

- 4 **Dikpāla**? The figure on the (south-)west (fig. 125) probably does not belong to the *dikpāla* scheme. It is shown in a crouching posture and seems to be animal-headed. The left hand is resting on the left thigh and the other touches the right knee.
- 5 The deity on the (north-)west (fig. 126) is most probably **Varuṇa**, although the graceful posture with the right arm held parallel to the body creates the impression that it is a female. The posture mirrors that of the Telī-kā-mandir image of Varuṇa (fig. 99) however. The deity stands in *ābhaṅga*, with the pivot leg on the left. Its left hand is raised and most likely holds the loop of a noose. Perhaps the right hand originally held some grass as fodder for his vehicle as at Gwālīor. This would make sense only when the vehicle was the goose (*haṃsa*). However, nothing remains of a vehicle on the proper right side of the god. An indistinct fragment in the left corner could be either the remains of a vehicle or a floral ornament.
- 6 **Vāyu** (fig. 127) on the north(-west) can be easily identified. Although the upper portion of the image is completely damaged, there is no doubt about its identification, as the upper contours are still visible and the vehicle is preserved. The Vāyu image on the Telī-kā-mandir (fig. 100) could have served as a model for it. The figures of Vāyu and the relatively large horse behind him are rendered in the same way, except for a few details, like the raised right front leg of the animal and the raised, now missing head of the horse. At Gwālīor, the horse is tilted to the right, while at Pīpāḍ, the god himself is quite unnaturally tilted to the same side. He must have held a billowing cloth in his hands.
- 7 The severely damaged, seated figure on the north(-east) (fig. 128) can be identified as **Īśāna** or it could possibly be a misplaced Yama. It is not clear whether it was originally four-armed. A certain similarity with the Īśāna image at Osiāñ, Harihara temple 1 (fig. 195) is, however, quite obvious. The latter's rare feature of a serpent held on the right side may be paralleled at Pīpāḍ, where the figure holds a long, slightly curved object in the (front?) right hand. However, since the serpent is usually held in one of the rear hands, this identification may be doubtful. The left portion is not very well preserved.

The Piplādmātā temple once more provides evidence for a formative stage in the development of the *aṣṭadikpāla* theme, which is traceable in Western India. The clear affinity with some Central Indian temples – the Dānebābā temple, Amrol, regarding the distribution of *dikpālas*; and the Telī-kā-mandir, Gwālīor, regarding the rendering of some of them (Varuṇa, Vāyu) – is particularly significant. On the Dānebābā temple, both seated and standing *dikpālas* occur. This combination is an indication of the formative period which can be witnessed at Amrol, Pīpāḍ, and also at Ālampur during the latter half of the 7th and the first half of the 8th century. It is surprising however, that a complete set of *aṣṭadikpālas* is found in the Kālikāmātā temple, presumably before 700 A.D. A plausible explanation could be that the large, royal temples at Cittaūḍgaḍh had sources of inspiration other than the Central Indian influence found at Pīpāḍ. A clear difference also exists between the *horror vacui* treatment of space at Cittaūḍgaḍh and Bīṭhū and the images which “float” in the empty space as at Pīpāḍ and in Central India.

At the important temple site of Osiāñ, Jodhpur district/Rajasthan, temple construction started some time around 700 A.D. As in Central India, several stages of the formation of the *dikpāla* theme can be observed here. Sūrya temple no. 1, presumably the earliest of this series, does not yet have a full set. A complete canonical set occurs for the first time in the Harihara temple no. 1, where the *aṣṭadikpālas* appear in seated (Vāyu: riding) postures in the eight *kaṛṇa* (corner) niches. Until this stage, a strong Central Indian influence is traceable, particularly in the goose (*haṃsa*) vehicle of Varuṇa. While on the Harihara temple 1, some of the *vāhanas* are clearly related to Central India (quadruped for Nairṛta, *haṃsa* for Varuṇa, horse-like antelope for Vāyu), the postures of some of the *dikpālas* (Vāyu, Varuṇa) on Sūrya temple 1 with nearly parallel but tilted legs are strongly reminiscent of Central India and clearly differ from those of the other figures shown in similarly relaxed stances.²⁵⁶

Like most of the other temples of the 8th–9th centuries at this site, Sūrya temple no. 1²⁵⁷ has no ambulatory. It has its own plinth and an open *maṇḍapa* (hall) in front. It faces west like most of the other temples at Osiāñ. This orientation was not altogether unknown in Central India during that period, as the Dānebābā temple at Amrol shows. While there is no definite clue regarding the absolute date of the temple, the recently proposed date accommodates it shortly before or after 700 A.D.²⁵⁸ Concerning the directional guardians, it is extremely unusual to find them rather regularly positioned on the western and southern walls, but practically absent from the eastern and northern walls. The seated Kubera (*I*) in the (south-)eastern *kaṛṇa* niche most probably does not belong to the *dikpāla* concept on Sūrya temple no. 1. However, it has a similarly placed counterpart at Pipāḍ, where the *aṣṭadikpāla* concept is likewise irregular. It is a significant fact that all the “true” *dikpālas* on the temple are shown standing. The most likely explanation for the absence of *dikpālas* on the east and the north would be that the design concept of the temple had been changed during its construction. In any case, these images have apparently been sculptured separately and inserted into the niches.



III. 21: Osiāñ, Sūrya temple no. 1, plan

- 1 The image of **Kubera** (fig. 182) on the (south-)east has some rare features. He is shown squatting on a cushion or sack. His headdress consists of thick rows of *ūrdhvakeśa* (upright standing hair) curls, which are held together by a diadem or

ribbon. His face is damaged. His ornaments are earrings, *keyuras* (upper arm ornaments) and a necklace hanging well below the neck. The brāhmaṇical cord is depicted as a broad band (*vastropavīta*). Kubera's belly is pronouncedly big. His proper right hand holds an unusual object resembling a short staff. The left hand holds an elongated purse. Flanking him in the lower corners is a pot turned upside down with something issuing from it. Above on both sides, branches of mango trees with bunches of mangoes are visible.

- 2 **Agni** (fig. 183), positioned on the south(-east) in a rigid posture, doubtlessly acts as the guardian of the south-east. He has an unnaturally short torso. Small, neatly carved flames emerge from behind the head and shoulders. The headdress is *jaṭāmukūṭa* (crown of hair), and he wears simple ornaments. The broken right hand raised to shoulder level must have held a rosary. The broken object just below the left hand must have been a water vessel. It seems to rest on a small plant below. On Agni's right is a small, damaged image of a goat moving towards the front.
- 3 **Yama** (fig. 184) also occupies his canonical place, the south (-west). He is seated on a striding buffalo. The tangled *ūrdhvakeśa* curls are held together by a ribbon. A sash is wound around Yama's staff and arms and flows behind his shoulders. The left hand rests on the left leg, and the right hand resting on the right knee holds a damaged staff. The face is damaged.
- 4 The figure in the narrow (south-)west *kaṛṇa* niche (fig. 185) has been recently identified as **Candra** by me.²⁵⁹ It exhibits no specific feature of Candra, but no other identification of this deity seems to be possible. Candra resembles Agni in many ways. The posture and coiffure are the same. The position of the arms are likewise identical with the latter, and the attributes (most probably a rosary – r., water-bottle – l.) also seem to be the similar. A brāhmaṇical cord has been clearly indicated. A tiny vehicle stands behind the god. It appears to be a rather fragile antelope. In view of his unusual position it is unclear whether Candra functions as a *dikpāla* here.
- 5 The image in the northern *kapilī* niche (fig. 186) has also recently been identified as **Varuṇa**.²⁶⁰ The occurrence of

²⁵⁶ The difference becomes particularly conspicuous when comparing two juxtaposed illustrations in MEISTER 1991: Ardhanārīśvara on the north(-west) (*ibid.*: pl. 309) stretches the free leg stiffly to the side, with the foot strictly parallel to the socle. The same posture, which has also been chosen for the doorkeepers (*ibid.*: pls. 314, 317, 318), is already familiar to us from the *dikpālas* of the Kālikāmātā temple at Cittaūḍgaḍh (e.g. fig. 108). Varuṇa (fig. 186) stands in a slightly flexed posture (*ābhaṅga*) like Ardhanārīśvara, but the legs and feet are kept in an almost parallel position. Although with the extremely short torso and the broad face it resembles the latter image, the knees and the thick lower end of the short garment are much more naturally modelled. Vāyu (fig. 187) shows an extreme version of this stance with parallel legs and feet, which is common in Central India (cf. fig. 99).

²⁵⁷ MEISTER 1991: 132–137; BHANDARKAR 1912: 110; HANDA 1984: 55–58. Strangely, the temple has not been included in VIENNOT's study (1976).

²⁵⁸ MEISTER in the text of the *Encyclopaedia* (1991: 137) assigns it to the first quarter of the 8th century, but in a plate caption (pl. 303) the date is given as “c. late seventh-early eighth century A.D.”.

²⁵⁹ WESSELS-MEVISSSEN 1994: 599.

²⁶⁰ MEISTER (1991: 310) identified the deity as Kārttikeya. In that case, the bird would have to be a peacock. However, the noose attribute is unknown with Kārttikeya. Identifying the god as Varuṇa (WESSELS-MEVISSSEN 1994: 600) on the other hand leaves the peacock-like bird unexplained. With its crest it does not represent the typical goose which is found with Varuṇa in Central India. Perhaps, a misconception about the bird had occurred, which would not be the only instance in the case of unusual vehicles. On the slightly later Harihara temple 1, Varuṇa's goose has been rendered lifelike (fig. 192).

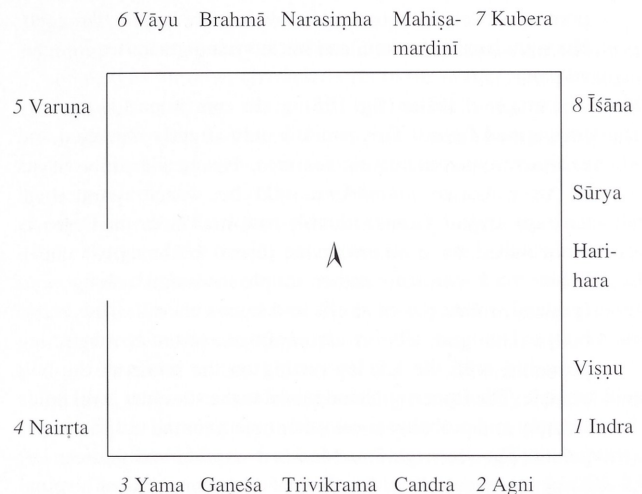
a *dikpāla* in a *kapilī* niche is elsewhere only found at Amrol (ill. 14) and Indor (ill. 27). Varuṇa has a stout figure, a broad face, and mighty hands and feet. His *ūrdhvakeśa* curls are held together by a ribbon. Small earrings, a simple necklace and bracelets are his only ornaments. A decorative sash is wound around both his arms. His right hand is raised and holds a large noose with a solid centre (cf. fig. 99). His left hand rests on the hip. The lower garment ends above the knees. On Varuṇa's left side, a large bird is shown moving away from the deity in a graceful posture which probably represents courtship dance. On the proper left side, the leaves of a shrub balance the carefully conceived scene.

- 6 **Vāyu** (fig. 187), the Wind God, appears to be uncomfortably squeezed into the narrow (north-)western *karṇa* niche. His coiffure is very simple. His posture is an unnaturally flexed *ābhaṅga*. A sash is tied around his thighs, just above his knees. The Agni image at Gwālior also wears a sash in a similar position (fig. 98). In his two raised hands, Vāyu holds a billowing cloth. A small jumping antelope can be seen to his proper right.

Harihara temple no. 1²⁶¹ (ill. 22) represents a culmination in the early temple art at Osiāñ. The temple has been constructed as a *pañcāyatana* complex, consisting of one central and four laterally arranged shrines. With the Harihara temple 1, *kapilī* walls cease to be constructed at this site. *Pratiratha* niches have now been introduced between the *karṇa* (corner) and central *bhadra* niches on the exterior wall. The distribution of deities in the niches has been made in a more careful, conscious manner, with the complete *aṣṭadikpāla* set starting on the (south-)east with Indra. It is a peculiarity of the Harihara temples nos. 1 and 2 at Osiāñ, that the Sun and Moon God, Sūrya and Candra, who are found associated with the *dikpāla* sets at some of the early sites,²⁶² have been shifted to the *pratiratha* niches and thus structurally separated from the group of directional guardians. It seems that after this development, the inclusion of Candra and/or Sūrya in the group of *dikpālas* ceased in North India and the Deccan.

- 1 **Indra** (fig. 188) on the (south-)east resembles his counterpart on the Dānebābā temple, Amrol (fig. 96), in that he is seated on a reclining elephant with its head in profile. Both images of Indra wear a simple necklace and exhibit a roll of fat above the lower garment. Indra wears his typical cylindrical crown. His right hand resting on the knee must have originally held a thunderbolt, his left hand rests on the left knee. Some interesting details are a tight sash that holds Indra's right leg in a slightly upright position, and a saddlecloth and a headband for the elephant.
- 2 **Agni** (fig. 189) on the south(-east) has many features in common with his counterpart at Amrol (fig. 97). The positions of the hands and legs are largely identical. The sash used as a kind of *yogapaṭṭa* (band to keep the legs in place during meditation) occurs in both cases. Agni has a *jaṭāmukuṭa* (hair-crown). His attributes are a rosary (?) in his raised right hand and a decorated water-bottle in his left hand held near the lower part of his leg. A departure from the Amrol example are the long flames that completely fill the background, and the figure of the goat covering the breadth of the panel. The lower garment hardly reaches the knees. The brāhmanical cord is absent.
- 3 **Yama** (fig. 190) on the south(-west) squats on a couchant buffalo. He wears a ribbon around the *ūrdhvakeśa* curls. Two

rows of beads serve as a necklace and as *keyuras* (upper arm ornaments). Yama wears asymmetrical ear ornaments. He holds a staff with a bulging top (skull?) in his left hand. His right hand is damaged. It must have rested on the right knee. An important detail is the small bird (cock?)²⁶³ shown between the feet of the reclining buffalo.



III. 22: Osiāñ, Harihara temple no. 1, central shrine, simplified plan

- 4 The figure of **Nairṛta** (fig. 191) appears to be squeezed into a very narrow niche on the (south-)west. He wears *jaṭāmukuṭa* and a necklace with two rows of beads like Yama. His right hand holds a long sword, and his left hand rests on the respective knee. In the lower section of the niche, parts of the body and the head of the quadruped vehicle are visible, which seems to be a dog or jackal.
- 5 **Varuṇa** (fig. 192) on the (north-)west has been allotted a narrow niche like Nairṛta. He wears *jaṭāmukuṭa*, a double-row necklace, and a short lower garment. He squats on a goose (*haṁsa*). His right hand is raised and holds a noose made from a rope. The left hand holds an indistinct object, which may be a fruit.
- 6 **Vāyu** (fig. 193) on the north(-west) appears riding on his antelope. He wears his hair in upright or *ūrdhvakeśa* curls. His earrings seem to be asymmetrical, and he wears a simple necklace. Vāyu's symmetrically raised hands hold an inflat-

²⁶¹ MEISTER 1991: 158–167; BHANDARKAR 1912: 101–103; KALIA 1982: 3–4; HANDA 1984: 29–31.

²⁶² Both Sūrya and Soma have been structurally treated as *dikpālas* on the Svarga Brahmā (ill. 11) and other temples at Ālampur. Only Sūrya appears among the *dikpālas* (i.e. in a corresponding *karṇa* position) on the Dānebābā temple at Amrol (ill. 15) and at Pipād (ill. 20). Soma/Candra is probably included on Sūrya temple 1 at Osiāñ (ill. 21). On the Kālikāmātā temple at Cittauḍgaḍh (ill. 17) and at Biṭhū (see above) however, he has a regular function as a guardian of the north. Both Sūrya and Candra are essential members of the group of “Manu Lokapālas” (see section 2.4.1.3), where they replace Nairṛta and Īśāna.

²⁶³ This detail has also been noticed by HANDA (1983: 55). He identifies the bird as a cock, which has been mentioned as Yama's attribute in some texts. Parallels from Central India also show a similar position of the bird in front of the buffalo (figs. 147, 154). It should also be noted that a closely similar bird forms part of the Yama image of the Kālikāmātā temple at Cittauḍgaḍh (fig. 105), where it is placed on the lotus held by the god.

ed cloth which curves around his head. The god sits astride a stiffly conceived, fat antelope. It resembles a mule rather than a swift animal. This is an interesting feature, since the contemporary Central Indian models depict Vāyu on a horse.

- 7 **Kubera's image (fig. 194)** is placed on the north(-east). He wears his hair in nicely dressed curls, but has no crown or diadem. Kubera's ornaments, particularly his necklaces, are unusually lavish and intricate. His face and that of his anthropomorphic vehicle squatting below him are largely damaged. His right hand is broken, and his left hand grasps an elongated purse.
- 8 The image of **Īśāna (fig. 195)** on the (north-)east is the only four-armed figure. This panel is only slightly damaged and exhibits some interesting features. His headdress consists of an elaborate *jaṭāmukuta*, and he wears symmetrical earrings. Apart from a double-row necklace, the torso is embellished by a *vastropavīta* (broad brāhmaṇical cord). While the *keyuras* are rather simple in design, a long *mālā* (garland) made out of skulls and bones encircles the entire body. The god sits in *dakṣiṇāpralambapāda* (right leg pendent), with the left leg resting on the hump of the bull vehicle. The front right hand raised to the shoulder level holds a rosary and probably some other object (or the tail of the serpent?). The rear right hand holds a serpent, and the rear left hand grasps a trident, the shaft of which consists of a spinal column. The front left hand rests on a part of the garland.

No other temple shows such a close relationship between the development of *dikpāla* representation in Central and Western India as Harihara no. 1. However, in the following phase, the supposedly indigenous Western Indian tradition, as it is iconographically reflected in the *dikpālas* at Cittauḍgaḍh and Bīṭhū, became dominant. This will be demonstrated by the evidence of the temples subsequently constructed at Osiān.

Lāmbā, Old Temple

Only four of the originally six *karna*-niches of the temple at Lāmbā,²⁶⁴ which is located south-east of Jodhpur and north of Bīṭhū, survive. Of these, only one contains a *dikpāla* image: namely Vāyu on the north(-east). An image of Sūrya on the (north-)east could have belonged to an early configuration of *dikpālas*. However, the present sculpture has probably been inserted later (MEISTER 1991: 173). The temple has been regarded as “contemporary with the oldest temples at Osia” by DHAKY (1966: 145) and tentatively dated to the “second or third quarter of the eighth century A.D.” by MEISTER (1991: 170).

Vāyu (*ibid.*: pl. 387) sits on, or rather, above, a large, realistically rendered antelope with its head raised. His left knee is visible above the snout of the animal. The wind god is shown frontally, holding the usual billowing cloth. The arrangement consciously makes use of the rather elongated niche format. Inside the temple, there is another depiction of Vāyu which is included in a frieze of Manu Lokapālas (cf. section 2.4.1.3) shown in procession (*ibid.*: pl. 393c; **ill. 31**). Here, the deity is less stiffly rendered, the billowing cloth swaying gracefully sideways behind his crown. He is seated directly on the back of the antelope, which leaps forward in an elegant manner. The stylistic differences suggest either a chronological gap between the two images of Vāyu, or they may have been the work of two different schools of artists. It is also important to note that Lāmbā is the westernmost outpost with regard to the depiction of the the Manu Lokapālas.

2.3.1.4 Eastern India and Bangladesh

The only site with spatially arranged directional guardians in the eastern part of the subcontinent in this period is Dev Baraṇārak (Shahabad district) in north-western Bihar. Rather unusually, a group of only four members is represented here. What may be regarded as the legacy of the nearby site of Muṇḍeśvarī with its cornerstone set of Manu Lokapālas continued only in a number of friezes of this particular group of deities, some of which may belong to the period under discussion (see section 2.4.1.3).

Dev Baraṇārak (Deo Baraṇārak)

Unfortunately, this unique arrangement of directional guardians is not well-published, and therefore, a detailed and analytical description cannot be given here. The *lokapālas* are carved in high relief on an isolated pillar carrying

... two sets of sarvatōbhadrīkā images [facing the four main directions, respectively] – at the base representing Śiva, Pārvatī, Sūrya (?), and Gaṇēśa, at the top, four Lōkapālas. The pillar shows square, octagonal, and circular sections and small standing figures of aṣṭagrahas [planetary deities] in low relief. (DEVA 1988: 122)

An old Archaeological Survey photograph, re-published by ASHER (1980: pl. 125), shows that they appear seated above their vehicles. It is clearly visible that Varuṇa has *haṁsa* as his vehicle, which is his typical characteristic not only in Central India but also in the eastern part of the country, until c. the 9th century (see section 2.5.5). A short description of the images has been recently given by B.K. JAMUAR (1985: 60–61):

- (i) Indra seated on an elephant and attended upon by a figure carrying [an] umbrella (east),
- (ii) Kubera seated with his right leg raised up and holding a bag of money in his left hand (north),
- (iii) Varuna seated on a bird (haṁsa?) and holding a flower in each hand (west), and
- (iv) Yama seated on a buffalo and holding a flower in each hand (south).

2.3.2 Later Phase (c. 751–1000 A.D.)

Although a consolidation of the *dikpāla* theme²⁶⁵ was achieved in most of the regions during this period, variations in the placement and arrangement of the group did occur on and off. These, however, may have been nothing more than variations on a theme which was already more or less widely known at that time. Gradually, the directional guardians had to give up their rather dominant positions on the temple walls. Likewise gradually, the representations became rather stereotyped and manneristic. Both these features, of course, were results of the general developments in the mediaeval Indian

²⁶⁴ DHAKY 1966: 142–145; MEISTER 1991: 170–174. Significantly, there are no *karna* niches on the front (west) side, which seems to be an early feature.

²⁶⁵ S. MARKEL (1995) in his book on another important group of minor gods, the planetary deities, subsumed their development under three main headings: “The formative period”, “Innovations in imagery”, and “Variations on a theme” (*ibid.*: III). According to him, these phases correspond to the 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries, respectively.

Art. The *dikpāla* images of this phase can be traced to some earlier models (Paṭṭadakal, Pāpanātha temple; Cittaṭṭaḍḍaḍḍa, Kālikāmāta temple).

It would be important to ascertain the date of the acceptance of the canonical *aṣṭadikpāla* concept in the different parts of the country. However, the extremely sparse availability of absolute dates makes it very difficult to establish all these datum lines. The degree of regional variation, which can be more easily traced, is also of considerable interest.

One of the newer findings is that the wider acceptance of the fully developed *aṣṭadikpāla* concept in the North-west started with the Harihara temple no. 1 at Osiān. This complete set, the earliest in the region, seems to have been introduced as the result of a close interaction between Western and Central Indian traditions. This contact marks the beginning of a regular *dikpāla* representation in the region. It is, however, noteworthy that the prototypes of deities influenced by the Central Indian modes of representation, were soon discarded and replaced by local versions.

Due to the great number of temples with installed *aṣṭadikpālas* in this period, they can be treated only briefly and may even remain incomplete in some cases. Apart from the general lines of development, some significant prospects for the subsequent period will be included.

2.3.2.1 The Deccan

A unifying trait of most parts of the Deccan (including the related sites of Dharmapuri and Armamalai in northern Tamilnadu) is the representation of *aṣṭadikpālas* on ceiling panels. This was the continuation of an earlier practice, already found in the 6th century Cave 3 at Bādāmi, and continued from the end of the 7th century onwards. Certain characteristics of the relief panels exhibit purely regional concepts that continued at least until the end of the 10th century. Some of the ceiling panels are exquisite works of art.

The concept of depicting *dikpālas* on the temple exterior did not gain wider acceptance in the Deccan. Only a few examples occurred, which were obviously based on the model of the Pāpanātha temple at Paṭṭadakal.

A partly related concept was the placement of the guardians on the *gopura* (part of the western screen wall) of the Kailāsa temple at Ellorā. Although unique during the period under discussion, this form of representation continued in the later Cōla art.²⁶⁶ Further, at Ellorā, *dikpālas* still find their place among the attendant figures on the upper portion of monumental relief panels.

Another rare position of *dikpālas* was near the top of the *vimāna* (temple tower above the sanctum). It is found only in one example in the region under discussion, viz. at Pratakoṭa/A.P. The instalment of *dikpālas* at such an extreme height must have been inspired by the Kumāra Brahmā temple at Ālampur or by other, now extinct shrines, reflecting the same tradition. Another rare representation of the directional guardians is seen on the door lintel frieze at the Nōḷamba capital, Hemāvati/A.P. (Doḍḍeśvara temple).

The depiction of directional guardians at Bikkavolu/A.P. (Goliṅgeśvara temple) represents a different concept, showing only a few of them on the exterior, and not placed in their canonical positions. Agni, Indra and Vāyu appear in a sequence, framed by other deities, on the southern wall of the *vimāna*. At Kelūr near Aihole, an isolated Varuṇa occurs in the western niche of one of the temples.²⁶⁷

At Kukkanūr (Navaliṅga group, older shrine), the uniform group of deities in the exterior niches could not possibly represent

dikpālas, as has been stated by K.V. SOUNDARA RAJAN (1986: 144), since *dikpālas* are always shown with individual features, which is not the case here.

Starting with the prominent tradition of *aṣṭadikpāla* ceilings, several facts have as yet not been noted:

- A number of different modes of layout occur, in which the riding deities (generally in profile) have been arranged (ill. 23).
- There tend to be regional preferences for particular orders as well as for other characteristics of the deities, their arrangement, and the design of the panel. Thus, four-armed *dikpālas* are restricted to the eastern part (Ālampur region), while the presence of female consorts is common in the western part of the Deccan.²⁶⁸
- Generally, the lower portion of each sub-panel forms the border of the whole panel, but there are a few exceptions with the lower sections directed towards the centre (ill. 23 b, i). The lower part of the central panel is in most cases placed in the direction opposite the sanctum, but there are exceptions to this rule as well (e.g. ill. 23 b, h, i).
- The central sub-panel is generally occupied by the god Śiva (in his dancing form Nāṭeśa, mostly four- or eight-armed; Kalyāṇasundara; Umāsahitamūrti; or Somāskandamūrti). The only exceptions are found in the Jaina temples (ill. 23 e, f), and once at Aihole (fig. 130), where Brahmā is represented in the centre. The distribution of panels with Umāsahitamūrti is significantly restricted to the eastern part of the Deccan (ill. 23 c, i).²⁶⁹

The *aṣṭadikpāla* ceilings of the Deccan form good material for an in-depth study. The results could be correlated with other features of temple architecture and may even assist in establishing the chronology of the respective monuments. The example of the often published relief in the Kalleśvara temple, Araḷaguppe/Karnataka (ill. 23 b; fig. 136), which forms the most ornate part of the temple, shows that the *dikpāla* ceiling can be assumed to convey a significant theological meaning. The fact that Nāṭeśa in the majority of cases appears in the centre also supports this assumption. His eight arms obviously allude to the heavenly directions and emphasize Śiva's role as the dancing Lord of the Regions.²⁷⁰ Typologically, the development of the Nāṭeśa-cum-*aṣṭadikpālāḥ* theme evolved from elements, which were already known in the early to mid-8th century shrines at Paṭṭadakal (Mallikārjuna and Pāpanātha) and Aihole (Jyotirliṅga group; see section 2.3.1.1). In the Mallikārjuna temple itself (fig. 326), the main constituents can be found: namely, an eight-armed Nāṭeśa, accompanied by four *dikpālas* (plus Viṣṇu and Brahmā, which is somewhat reminiscent of the early ceiling relief

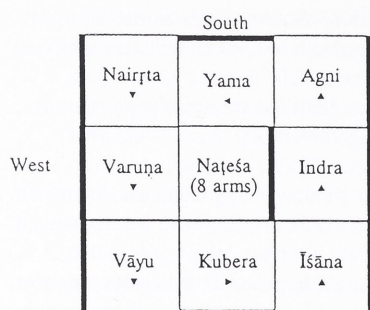
²⁶⁶ J.C. HARLE 1963: 103–138 (Cidambaram) and F. L'HERNAULT 1987: 35, 118, pl. ico. IV (Dārāsūram).

²⁶⁷ Kelūr, Rāmaliṅgeśvara temple group, temple no. 2 (RADCLIFFE 1981: 474, fig. 881). Varuṇa is described as four-armed, holding a noose in the lower (right?) hand and carrying two fly-whisks in the upper hands. He stands on a *makara*, which is unique. The southern and northern niche of the temple both contain an image of a goddess, respectively.

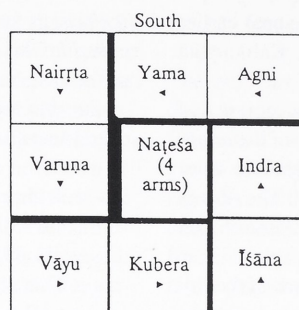
²⁶⁸ An exception being Indra accompanied by his wife at Bhavanāsi Saṅgam (Ālampur region) and at Dharmapuri/T.N.

²⁶⁹ Further specimens with Umāsahitamūrti at the centre exist at Siddhepalli (DAGENS 1984: ph. 853) in the Ālampur region, at Nandi (A.L. COHEN 1989: 180) and Āvanī (*ibid.*: 205, 209) in the Kolar region, and at Dharmapuri (*ibid.*: 233).

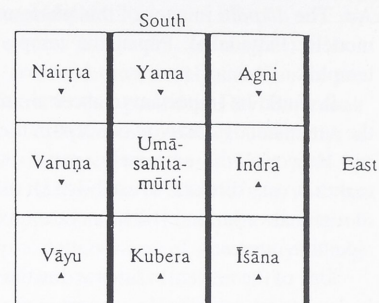
²⁷⁰ Tirumūlar's *Tirumantiram*, stanza 2728 (2774). The text is assigned to the 7th–8th centuries by K.V. ZVELEBIL (1985: 47; cited: 49).



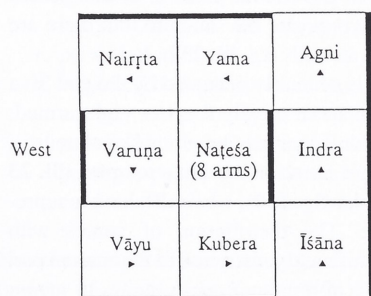
a) Alur, Arkeśvara temple (G); after I.K. SARMA 1992: pl. 70.



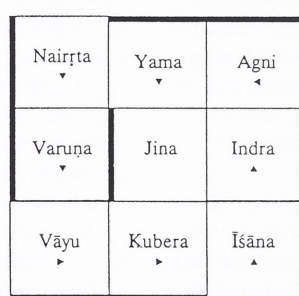
b) Araḷaguppe, Kalleśvara temple (N); after I.K. SARMA 1992: pl. 45.



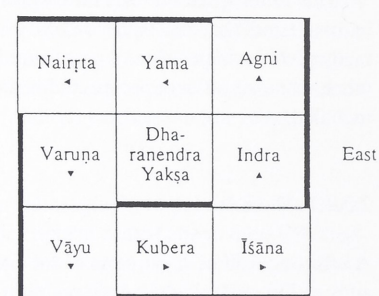
c) Bhavanāsi Saṅgam, Rūpālā Saṅgameśvara temple (R); after B. DAGENS 1984: ph. 805.



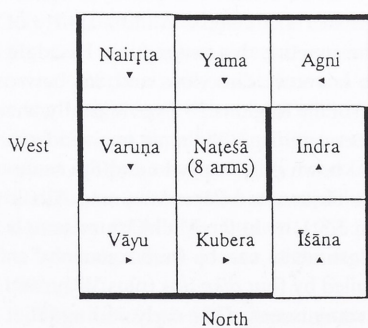
d) Dharmapuri, Mallikārjuna temple (N); after K. KRISHNA MURTHY 1987: pl. XLI.



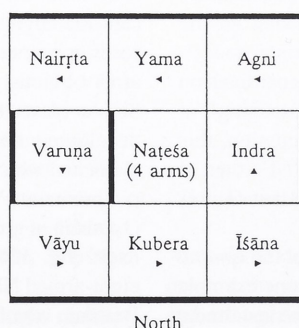
e) Kambadahalli, Śāntinātha basti (G); after I.K. SARMA 1992: pls. 112, 129.



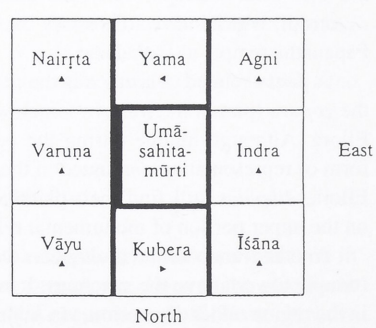
f) Kambadahalli, Ādinātha basti (G); after I.K. SARMA 1992: pls. 121.



g) Narasamaṅgalam, Rāmalingeśvara temple (G); after I.K. SARMA 1992: pl. 56.



h) Papanasanam, group 9 (R); after B. DAGENS 1984: ph. 450.



i) Pratakōṭa, Nāgeśvara temple (R?); after B. DAGENS 1984: ph. 746.

G – Gangā N – Nolamba R – Rāṣṭrakūṭa

III. 23: Ceiling panels of the Deccan region, c. 9th–10th centuries (sketches)

at Bādāmi, Cave 3); and a grid of nine compartments, separated by high ridges, however filled with minor deities.²⁷¹ The association of females as observed in the western part of the Deccan seems to go back to the Huccappayya temple at Aihole (figs. 49–54).

The earliest panel of the period, dating to the third quarter of the 8th century, is located in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kāśīśvanātha (or Kāśīśveśvara) temple²⁷² at Paṭṭadakal (ill. 24; fig. 129). It has been clearly modelled after the Anantaśāyī ceiling in the eastern hall of the Pāpanātha temple at the same site (for the *aṣṭadikpāla* frame see figs. 55–61). Although chronologically, the temples are not very far apart, some significant modifications have been made on the Kāśīśvanātha ceiling: Indra’s and Varuṇa’s compartments are of the same size as those of Yama and Kubera (the latter two being of much larger size on the Pāpanātha ceiling); the two-armed *dikpālas*, with their hands raised in *vandanamudrā* (gesture of salutation), seem to be devoid of their attributes; most of the guardians and their *vāhanas* are rendered in three-quarter profile. However, most of these innovations, as well as the fact that all the *dikpāla* sub-panels are of unequal size and bordered by plain ridges, are not found again in the later temples. Somāskandamūrti at the centre is likewise unique. Umāsaḥitamūrti, however, might be regarded as an iconographically related successor of the theme.

All other panels under discussion date from the 9th–10th centuries.²⁷³ The one at Aihole/Karnataka and those in present-day Andhra Pradesh appear to belong to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty, and those in Karnataka and in northern Tamil Nadu belong stylistically to the art of the Gaṅga and Nōlamba dynasties.²⁷⁴ The temples of this period are generally quite small, *nirandhāra* (without ambulatory), and provided with a square-shaped hall made up of nine bays, with the *aṣṭadikpāla* ceiling over the central bay.

The *dikpālas* are always found in their canonical directions.²⁷⁵ They are shown in profile, and moving in a particular direction. Apart from some rare cases, in which the peripheral gods – or at least some of them (ill. 23 c) – are represented facing the centre (ill. 24), the directional guardians move in a more or less clearly conceived circle around the central deity. In the Ālampur region, there prevails an obvious preference for the arrangement of two groups of three deities, which respectively move in the same direction (mostly on the north-south axis; ill. 23 h).

At Alur/Karnataka, such a grouping occurs on the eastern and western side of the panel (ill. 23 a). At Gokāk/Karnataka, the same layout appears, but the feet of the central Naṭeśa are turned to the east (DHAKY 1996: pl. 650). In the Nāgeśvara temple at Pratakoṭa/A.P. there is a peculiar variant of this type (ill. 23 i), while at Aihole, this concept with two ‘parallel’ sides may have been employed (figs. 130–135), but the western portion of the panel is much too damaged to be sure about this.

The second main type is the “*svastika*” order, with two deities aligned on each of the four sides of the central panel. At Araḷaguppe (ill. 23 b), where the lower sections of the sub-panels are directed towards the centre, there occurs an order that seems to be unique for this period.²⁷⁶ Much more frequent is the variant with the same directions of movement (corresponding to the clockwise circumambulation), but with the lower portions placed on the periphery (ill. 23 e, g)²⁷⁷. There exists only one example in which the deities of the main directions are aligned with those of the following intermediate direction, thus creating the illusion that they are at the point of leaving the panel (ill. 23 f). Finally, at the southernmost site Dharmapuri/Tamil Nadu (ill. 23 d; same order of *dikpālas* in the neighbouring Devī temple), an interesting mixed type is found, showing an alignment of three directional guardians on the eastern side.

The types of borders dividing the panels also reflect regional preferences. The eastern part, the Ālampur region and Dharmapuri, shows a predilection for faceted ridges with a central square portion, which corresponds to the shape of the ends of each segment. In the same region, however, dividing borders are often absent.

Although the **iconography** of the images varies in detail, only a few examples will be described. The north-eastern temple of the so-called Kuntī group at Aihole²⁷⁸ bears the latest specimen of a *dikpāla* ceiling in the “ancient triangle” Bādāmi-Aihole-Paṭṭadakal

²⁷¹ See RADCLIFFE 1981: fig. 856; P. BANERJI 1985: ill. 12 (mirror image). The centre shows a *mīthuna* (in erotic attitude) couple according to BUCHANAN (1985: fig. 531), but Umāsaḥitamūrti according to RADCLIFFE (1981: 464) and TARR (1969: 169). The outer figures are heavenly beings. The ceiling relief is positioned in the antechamber of the *garbhagrha*.

²⁷² DHAKY 1988a: 346–349. The *aṣṭadikpāla* ceiling’s central theme has been erroneously identified as “Gaurī-Śaṅkara” (*ibid.*: 349).

²⁷³ In most cases, the probable dates and the relative chronology are still open to discussion (e.g. DAGENS 1984: 24–28; SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: 185–214).

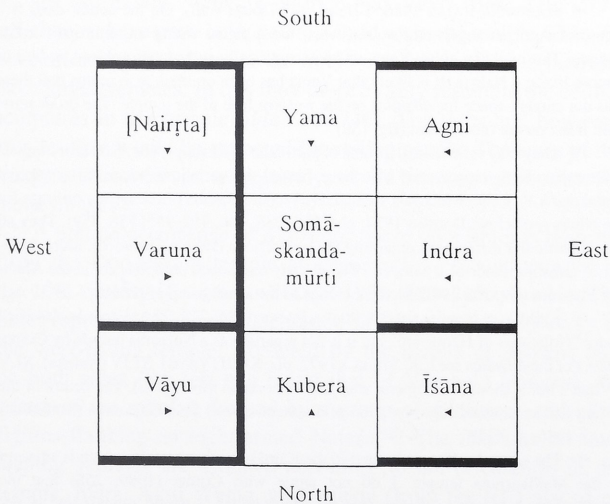
²⁷⁴ Both kingdoms were closely related both politically and artistically. In some cases, there is disagreement about the classification as Gaṅga or Nōlamba. In this connection, only the Kalleśvara at Araḷaguppe needs to be mentioned. COHEN (1989: 153–160) and SOUNDARA RAJAN (1986: 213) regard it as Nōlamba, while SARMA (1992: 88–91) classifies it as Gaṅga.

²⁷⁵ In one instance, a wrong order has been created due to an unqualified reconstruction. The relief is housed at the Ālampur Museum (A.M. GASTON 1982: pl. 31). The two outer slabs would have to be exchanged in order to place the deities in their correct sequence. GASTON classifies the piece in her Period I (c. 550–800 A.D.) because of the presence of a halo. However, this feature continued to be depicted in the region under discussion (see below). As a probable date for the Ālampur piece I would suggest the 9th century.

²⁷⁶ A later ceiling, of the Hoysala period, at Baḷaḡāmve/Karnataka, shows exactly the same order and orientation of deities (H. COUSENS 1926: pl. CXIV).

²⁷⁷ Exactly the same order as at Kambadahalli, Śāntinātha basti (ill. 23 e), is found in the Mailareśvara temple at Pathasivarama near Hemāvati/Karnataka (fig. 137). It is peculiar to find the east-west axis being maintained here by the central Naṭeśa, in spite of the temple’s orientation towards the south. At Hemāvati itself, three loose slabs forming an *aṣṭadikpāla* ceiling have been found. One is kept in the Government Museum Madras (C. SIVARAMAMURTI 1983: fig. 258; detail on fig. 140), and the two others are still at the site (COHEN 1989: pls. 23, 24). The order of sub-panels can be reconstructed as conforming exactly to the other mentioned ones.

²⁷⁸ The north-eastern temple of the Kuntī group at Aihole has been referred to by different numbers. SOUNDARA RAJAN (1986) calls it “no. 3” on pp. 134–135, but in fig. 54 on the following page of the same publication, it is labelled as “no. 1”.



Ill. 24: Paṭṭadakal, Kāśīśvanātha temple, ceiling panel

(figs. 130–135). Only five *dikpālas* are still discernible, seated on their vehicles which are shown in profile (except for the frontally rendered head of Īśāna's bull) and in different ways of movement. The two-armed *dikpālas* hold their left hands in *vandanamudrā* and wield an attribute in the right. Īśāna is four-armed, which is his characteristic form both in North and South India. His upper left arm is hidden by incrustations. The attributes of Indra and Kubera are obscured, while Agni carries a club (?), Yama has another type of staff or club, and in Īśāna's case, only a *triśūla* in the upper right hand is recognizable. The background of the figures is plain, with the exception a dwarfish attendant figure behind Indra's elephant.

The Nōḷamba Kalleśvara temple at Araḷaguppe (Tumkur Dt./Karnataka) undoubtedly contains one of the masterpieces of ceiling sculpture in the Deccan (fig. 136). As is common for the temples in southern Karnataka, the *dikpālas* are accompanied by their consorts. A few peculiarities or inconsistencies of the Kalleśvara panel may point to the fact that it is a relatively early specimen in the Gaṅga-Nōḷamba series:

- The central Naṭeśa (SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: pl. 633) is only four-armed.
- His feet are directed towards the sanctum, which is unusual in southern Karnataka.
- Nairṛta and his *śakti* ride a horse (perhaps meant to represent a donkey - *khara*, cf. section 2.5.4)²⁷⁹.
- Only the panels of Indra and Varuṇa have a background of stylized clouds, and the attributes held by these gods (leaf baskets?) differ from those of the others (buds).
- Only Īśāna and his consort are accompanied by attendant figures, i.e. celestial garland-bearers, musicians and Gaṇeśa. The unique presence of Gaṇeśa (son of Śiva) is indicative of Īśāna's identity with Śiva.
- Indra's elephant is shown with four tusks, as it is also depicted on the 8th century *aṣṭadikpāla* ceiling in the Pāpanātha temple, Paṭṭadakal (fig. 55).

So far, however, the Kalleśvara ceiling relief and sculptures have been regarded as particularly developed versions and therefore belonging to the later Nōḷamba temples. COHEN (1989: 160) suggests the middle or end of the 10th century as probable dates.

Another *aṣṭadikpāla* panel rendered in a particularly charming manner is carved on the ceiling of the Rūpālā Saṅgameśvara temple at Bhavanāsi Saṅgam/A.P., dated c. second quarter of the 9th century (SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: 134; fig. 138; ill. 23 c). Uniquely, all its deities can be viewed correctly from the western side (i.e. the side where the sanctum is located). There are no dividing borders between the figures, as is common in the Ālampur region. As in the former examples, the *dikpālas* hold one hand (always the rear one) in the gesture of salutation (*vandanamudrā*) and an attribute in the other. Prominent attributes appear only in the cases of Yama (staff or club) and Vāyu (standard). All other gods, including the four-armed Īśāna, hold only small objects, which are difficult to identify. In some cases, their hands seem to be empty. Some characteristic details of the Rūpālā Saṅgameśvara panel are the flame-like coiffure of Agni (cf. Pāpanātha, Paṭṭadakal, fig. 56) and the fact that only Indra is shown in the company of his consort, which recurs at Dharmapuri (fig. 267).

An important feature at Bhavanāsi Saṅgam is the presence of *dikpālas* sculpted on the exterior walls of both temples (Rūpālā Saṅgameśvara and Bhujāṅgeśvara) in slightly recessed *kaṇṇa* (corner) niches, without any proper frame.²⁸⁰ The only extant parallel for early *dikpāla* representations on the exterior wall is at Aihole,

temple no. 52 (fig. 139), dated to c. second quarter of the 10th century.²⁸¹ There, the gods are again positioned in the *kaṇṇa* sections, but they appear at the very bottom of the wall, where they are placed without any recess or frame.

The typical four-armed *dikpālas* of the Ālampur region are known in a number of stylistic variations (figs. 141–144).²⁸² They usually hold the upper left hand in *vandanamudrā* and have their torsos turned towards the viewer. A halo (round or oval) is present in most cases. Only some of the vehicles show a sign of movement. It is quite likely that this schematized and obviously very common theme for ceilings persisted for some time. So far, it is impossible to determine the relative chronology of this group of images.

A specific, quite different group of reliefs is formed by those *dikpāla* ceilings which contain a larger number of figures. This group occurs to the south-west of the region discussed so far (e.g. fig. 140). The *dikpāla* images at Hemāvati, Betūr²⁸³, and Pathasivarama (fig. 137) are accompanied by their consorts and surrounded by a large array of figures (particularly at Betūr), which results in a *horror vacui* effect. At Hemāvati, stylized clouds form the background of some of the panels. In these cases, the relatively large size of the vehicles is noteworthy.

The southernmost site, Dharmapuri (Dist. Dharmapuri/T.N.) has two ceiling panels in which the deities are arranged in an identical order. The execution of the reliefs was obviously carried out after the same blueprint. Except for the superior artistic quality in the Mallikārjuna temple (figs. 266–274; ill. 23 d),²⁸⁴ the central image (Umāsahitamūrti in the Kāmākṣyamma) is the only point of difference between the two ceilings. Although the reliefs have some “eastern” features (no consorts except for Indra; separating ridges with a central square portion) and are also related in some ways to certain examples in southern Karnataka, it is quite remarkable that important characteristics such as the proportions and the empty background are more reminiscent of the Aihole piece

²⁷⁹ For a considerable period after Bādāmi, Cave 3, the horse remained a “floating” vehicle in the western Deccan. At Aihole, Huccappayyagudi, it was probably attributed to Agni (fig. 50), here at Araḷaguppe to Nairṛta, and (probably later) at Kam-badahalli (SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: pl. 619) and other sites (e.g. REA 1896: pl. CV, 1) it became Kubera's vehicle.

²⁸⁰ SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: pls. 395, 404, 405; DAGENS 1984: ph. 799. As far as can be judged from the photographs, the sequential order of the deities starts with Indra on the (north)-east. The animal *vāhanas* appear to be smaller and stiffer as compared to the ceiling panels.

²⁸¹ SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: 147, pl. 447 (south wall). On the south-(east) is a figure of Agni; strangely, the south-(west) has a figure riding an anthropomorphic *vāhana*. This could be either Yama on an exceptionally anthropomorphised *mahiṣa* or – more likely – Nairṛta. It is likely that Yama has been omitted, as it seems that there was not enough space for *dikpālas* on the western face of the temple. The order starts with Īśāna on the (north)-east (fig. 139).

²⁸² They may reflect local idioms of particular workshops, but also chronological differences. Both aspects may also have caused the variations occurring at the site Pratakoṭa/A.P., a site, which has yielded five sets of *dikpālas* (three sets on ceilings, for the others see below; DAGENS 1984: phs. 735, 736, 746, 752–755, 758, 759). They all reveal particular differences regarding the proportions (vehicle included), attire, number of arms, presence of a halo, etc. The already mentioned complete set in the Ālampur Museum (GASTON 1982: pl. 31) belongs to the same group of reliefs.

²⁸³ Kalleśvara temple, see SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: 214. The temple is classified under “Nōḷambas of Hemāvati”, but it is not regarded as a Nōḷamba temple by COHEN 1989. For the *dikpālas* see L.K. SHUKLA 1972: pls. XLIII (Yama), XLIV (Nairṛta), XLV (“Vāyu”), but it should be Kubera, who rides a horse in this region). The centre of the ceiling has an unusual representation of a sixteen-armed Śiva-Gajāntaka (SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: pl. 637).

²⁸⁴ The second ceiling is located in the Kāmākṣyamma temple, which is adjacent to the Mallikārjuna temple. I do not agree with COHEN (1989: 258) that the Kāmākṣyamma temple is earlier than the Mallikārjuna. I would suggest that if any significant chronological gap exists at all, the Devī temple should be posterior, as the ceiling relief seems to be a poorer copy of the superb Mallikārjuna panel.

(figs. 130–135). The attributes held in the respective right hands are: Indra – small thunderbolt; Agni – spear or torch; Yama – staff or club; Nairṛta – sword; Varuṇa – noose; Vāyu – flag; Kubera – club; Īśāna – trident and an indistinct object in the lower left. The latter is four-armed as usual.

Armamalai²⁸⁵ in the North Arcot district of Tamilnadu is situated close to the border of Andhra Pradesh, in the Palar river valley. A unique testimony is found in a Jaina temple built in a natural cave, viz. a ceiling painting depicting *dikpālas* in an oblong grid. Unfortunately, very little can be seen on this part of the western ceiling. Only parts of Agni and Yama remain, who, along with their consorts, ride on their vehicles amongst the clouds²⁸⁶ (SARMA 1992: pl. 162). Agni and Yama are shown heading in different directions, which is not a rare feature in comparable ceiling reliefs (cf. ill. 23 a, d, f, i). Judging from the published photographs, it looks as if the two deities were separated by narrow ridges. According to BASKARAN (1975: 29), however, they are separated only by a thick black line. The paintings have been assigned to the 9th/10th centuries (*ibid.*: 30).

Summarizing the facts about *dikpāla* ceiling reliefs, the large variety in some details of the layouts of the panels is the most remarkable fact. The group “Śiva-cum-aṣṭadikpālāḥ” must have formed an important religious concept and was thus given particular attention. The depiction of Jaina subjects in the central panel in the Jaina temples does not contradict this fact.

At least one more concept of the placement of *dikpālas* in the Deccan region is found in the Nāgeśvara temple at Pratakoṭa, Nandikotkur Taluk, Dist. Kurnool/A.P., the ceiling relief of which has already been mentioned. The temple belongs to c. the 9th–10th centuries (DAGENS 1984: 28, 508). On the temple tower, a few courses of mouldings below the *śikhara*, images of four seated *dikpālas* have been found (*ibid.*: pgs. 743, 752–755). On the (north-)east, Indra is depicted, with a narrow portion of a frontal elephant head sculpted as a seat for him (*ibid.*: ph. 752). On the south, Agni, Yama (*ibid.*: pgs. 753, 754, respectively) and Nairṛta (fig. 275) have been placed in their respective positions, a vehicle being discernible only in Nairṛta’s case (the anthropomorphic *nara*). The images resemble the deities on the exterior wall of the temple (*ibid.*: pgs. 750, 751). They wear high crowns, have a small halo behind the head and are of good workmanship, with well-balanced proportions and a serene expression. Their attributes cannot be identified at all.

Finally, in the Nāgeśvara at Pratakoṭa, two more separate images are extant, showing Varuṇa and Vāyu (figs. 276, 277), which must have once belonged to a third set in the temple. They do not conform to the images on the *vimāna*, as they are four-armed and have larger vehicles. In this they more closely resemble the ceiling sculptures in this temple (*ibid.*: ph. 746). The slabs are, however, smaller than would be expected for ceiling panels. The sizes of the images, 64 and 66 cm, respectively, would be more appropriate for niche images.

A unique occurrence of a *dikpāla* frieze on a lintel is reported from the Doḍḍeśvara temple at Hemāvati, c. second quarter of the 10th century (SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: 210–213, pl. 631). The lintel represents the main decoration of the *maṇḍapa* doorway of the west-facing temple. Bordered by the scrolls of *makara* tails on both sides (the left one being that of Varuṇa’s *makara*), the centre of the relief is formed by a group of musicians and other figures flanking an eight-armed Nāṭeśa.²⁸⁷ The *dikpālas* on their leaping vehicles are grouped according to the orientation of the temple, Indra, Agni, Yama, and Nairṛta (from the left) placed on the southern side, and Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, and Īśāna appearing on the northern side of the lintel. All are shown moving towards

the centre. The guardians salute the dancing god with their rear hands and do not carry any prominent attributes. They are not shown in the company of their consorts, which is exceptional in the region.

Another frieze has been preserved at Alur (SARMA 1992: pls. 75–77), one of the sites with ceiling reliefs (ill. 23 a). It is a continuous frieze on three walls of the Nandi *maṇḍapa*, with all the deities moving to the proper right. On the eastern face, the central figure is the god Kārttikeya, the only deity without his female counterpart, and the central god on the south is – appropriately – Yama. On the north, Indra seems to be in the centre, but, strangely, an elephant rider appears on each of the three sides. The animals are all shown in a trot. Those on the east and on the south step on a row of clouds.

The art of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa period at Ellorā has produced a few noteworthy representations of directional guardians. A monumental variety without any early parallels is the frieze of saluting *dikpālas* on the outer (western) face of the *gopura* of the Kailāsa temple,²⁸⁸ dating to approximately the third quarter of the 8th century (fig. 278; ill. 25).²⁸⁹ They are depicted in high relief and are separated by neatly carved pilasters. The guardians are depicted unusually large, but their forms reveal a lack of aesthetic feeling and a rather poor rendering of proportions.²⁹⁰ In the wall segments beneath the riders, other figures – most probably celestial couples – had been sculpted, but little survives of them. The southern side of the western facade is badly eroded. Only parts of the images of Indra (no. 16) and Yama (no. 17) are discernible there. Interestingly, Indra seems to be accompanied by his consort²⁹¹ Space for two more *dikpālas* remains on the south (nos. 18, 19),²⁹² but the carvings are not recognizable any more (HESTON 1982: figs. 1, 2). While Varuṇa (no. 11), Vāyu (no. 10), and Kubera²⁹³ (no. 9; fig. 278) are depicted on the north together with Kārttikeya (no. 8), three gods, Agni, Nairṛta and Īśāna are missing. It seems therefore that the set was left incomplete. Most probably it did not include Īśāna. It appears that Kārttikeya replaces Īśāna, as he occupies the place in the sequence “Varuṇa, Vāyu,

²⁸⁵ S.T. BASKARAN 1975; SARMA 1992: 201. Further references are given by the authors.

²⁸⁶ I do not agree with BASKARAN (1975: 29) that Yama’s consort Dhūmornā is seated in front on the buffalo. It is quite apparent that she sits behind as is common.

²⁸⁷ COHEN (1989: 90), who dates the temple slightly earlier, c. 920–930 A.D., describes the scene (*ibid.*: 74): “to Nāṭeśa’s right, Gaṇeśa dances and Pārvatī watches”. The presence of Gaṇeśa could not be ascertained.

²⁸⁸ The individual panels of the screen-wall with the integrated *gopura* have been numbered by BURGESS (1883: 35–36). These numbers will be referred to here. Regarding the identification, the author is obviously wrong in labelling the deer-rider as Varuṇa (no. 10) and the *makara*-rider as Nairṛti (no. 11).

²⁸⁹ SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: 111–124.

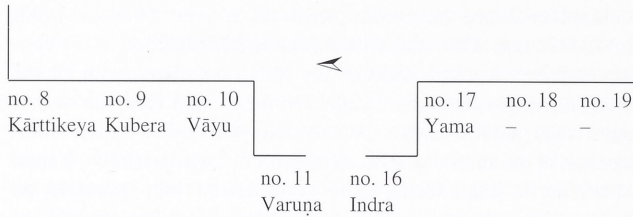
²⁹⁰ This is particularly reflected by the proportions. In the case of Vāyu, the god’s head appears disproportionately large (much larger than Kubera’s and Kārttikeya’s). Kārttikeya rides his peacock in a very clumsy manner. Moreover, since the bird appears to be standing on solid ground it is odd to see the legs of the rider reaching beyond those of his vehicle.

²⁹¹ Although I was not able to detect a female figure, all authors describing this panel have accepted this identification so far (e.g. BURGESS 1883: 36).

²⁹² In SOUNDARA RAJAN’s table (1986: 123), only three *dikpāla* niches have been erroneously admitted on the southern side. The last niche is nowadays hidden behind a modern wall segment that was probably erected to preserve the corner portion from being destroyed (HESTON 1982: fig. 6).

²⁹³ Since the days of BURGESS (1883: 35), this god has been identified as Agni. However, it is quite apparent that only deities representing the “northern spectrum” of the directions have been chosen. The same attitude is reflected on the Śiva-Yogiśvara panel inside the temple (fig. 280), which also faces west. There, on the right side (south), Indra and Yama are shown juxtaposed in the same manner, Agni being superimposed on Nairṛta on the extreme left. On the left side (north), the deities appear to be the same as on the exterior (of course, with Kārttikeya being replaced by Īśāna), but this sequence is exactly opposite that on the *gopura* (from l. to r.): Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, Īśāna.

Kubera" appropriate for Īśāna. The frieze has been regarded as coeval with the other parts of the Kailāsa temple and dated to c. third quarter of the 8th century.



III. 25: Ellorā 16 (Kailāsa temple), *gopura*, exterior, sketch of *dikpāla* niches (numbers after BURGESS 1883)

A stylistic comparison with the contemporaneous ceiling panel of the Kāśīviśvanātha, Paṭṭadakal (fig. 129) proves the rendering of the deities and their vehicles to be much inferior at Ellorā. It is indeed likely that the *dikpālas* as guardians of the *gopura* have been carved earlier than their counterparts on the eastern (inner) side of the same architectural unit (fig. 279). The sculptural treatment of the figures is much better in a third group of *dikpālas*, situated even deeper within the rocky mass, on the main temple, opposite the Nandi *maṇḍapa* (figs. 280–282). The group on the *gopura* exterior is clearly the most stiffly executed and least artistically convincing one. The deities are almost completely frontally represented with their legs held in a manner that would require the vehicles to be shown at least in a three-quarter profile. However, except for Kārttikeya's peacock, which is shown frontally, they are rendered in full profile. The almost frontal head of Vāyu's *mṛga* is only a small attempt to overcome this dichotomy. By portraying the deities frontally, the artists avoided the depiction of a torsion in the lower body of the riders, which had been already achieved – more or less successfully – on the Naṭeśa panel, Ellorā 29²⁹⁴ (fig. 21). A certain variation is seen in the different attitudes of greeting. Kārttikeya is exempt from this attitude, since he belongs to the higher gods. He holds a short lance (r.) and a cock (l.). Among those of the northern *dikpāla* group, only Varuṇa holds an attribute, a flower bud.

It is difficult to decide whether the absence of Īśāna occurred because of his identification with Śiva (as is obvious in Ellorā 29, see above), the temple's main deity. In any case, Kārttikeya, his son, has been portrayed as the general of the army of directional guardians. They are prominently shown as they come to worship the main god, Śiva, and, at the same time, protect the entrance by their monumental presence.

In three other instances at Ellorā 16, the *dikpālas* appear again as witnesses of important mythological events: Durgā Mahiṣāsura-mardini's victory over the buffalo demon (fig. 279); Śiva's meditation (figs. 280–282); and Rāvaṇa's shaking of Mount Kailāsa (SIVARAMAMURTI 1976: fig. 65). The two former cases are the only panels at the site, where all eight guardians are present.

On the Mahiṣāsura-mardini relief (*gopura*, northern side of the entrance, facing north), the sequence of the deities clearly refers to the directions. Five flying couples in the lower row complete the assembly in the upper sphere. Regarding the *dikpālas*, there are (fig. 279)²⁹⁵:

- upper row (from l.): Indra, Agni, Yama, Kubera, Nairṛta, Varuṇa
- lower row (from l.): Īśāna (? two-armed; extreme left), Vāyu (extreme right).

Thus, the guardians of the east and the west are placed in the correct corners (left and right, respectively). The guardians of the south and the north are, interestingly, portrayed as moving towards each other near the central axis of the panel. Only Yama is armed with a club. The small objects held by the others in their lowered hands are not discernible, but noteworthy is the fact that none of them raises his hand in the gesture of salutation. As on the exterior of the *gopura*, the *dikpālas* wear high crowns, a belly band (*udarabandha*), the brāhmaṇical cord (*upavīta*) and the usual ornaments necklace, bracelets and *keyuras*.

In this relief, the sculptors have convincingly portrayed some of the guardians moving to the proper right (Kubera, Nairṛta) in three-quarter profile, along with their vehicles. Of the others, either the vehicle, or the rider, or both are shown in profile.

The Śiva-Yogiśvara²⁹⁶ relief probably represents the apex of the successful inclusion of the directional guardians in a monumental relief panel (figs. 280–282). A dramatic contrast exists between the central, static, eight-armed god and the dynamic element, the *dikpālas*, who are the only attendant figures. In order to emphasize this contrast, the dynamism of the group had to be stressed, in which aspect the sculptors were particularly successful. BONER (1962: 201–202) gives a somewhat poetic description of the directional guardians' function:

The *Dikpālas* surrounding Śiva and the Tree are arrayed in a semi-circle like the dome of Heaven. As embodiments of the eight directions of space they represent the ubiquity of Heaven, and by analogy, the all-pervasiveness of the Spirit. Their movements are aerial, quick and lively, unhampered by weight or other material contingencies.

The panel faces west and it reflects – with a few modifications – the same sequence of directional guardians as on the *gopura*, which lies on the same axis. The *dikpālas* are, from left to right (north to south):

Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, Īśāna, (central figure), Indra, Yama, Agni, Nairṛta.

As on the Naṭeśa panel in Cave 29 (fig. 21), the *dikpālas* do not share the upper sphere with any other godlings. All deities along with their vehicles have been portrayed from different angles, most of them shown frontally or in a dramatic three-quarter profile (Vāyu, Kubera, Īśāna, Indra, Yama). The full profile had been chosen only for some of the peripheral figures. Likewise, the gestures are greatly varied, including the rare folded hand gesture (*añjalimudrā*: Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, Īśāna, Indra, Nairṛta). Īśāna is four-armed as usual. No attributes have been depicted, except for Yama's staff. It is important to note that Īśāna and Indra are shown with their consorts, which may already reflect the convention common in the 9th–10th centuries in the western Deccan.

²⁹⁴ Significantly, on the Kalyāṇasundara panel in the same cave (D.N. VARMA 1988: pgs. 146–148), the legs of some of the *dikpālas* are rendered in the same way as on the Kailāsa *gopura*. They also have been combined with *vāhanas* shown largely in profile (Yama, Indra, Varuṇa). But there, the skilful artists did not allow such a sharp dichotomy.

²⁹⁵ BURGESS (1883: 29) has identified some of the *dikpālas* incorrectly, proceeding in a rather unsystematic way. Once again, he has not recognized Kubera's presence. Further, he has identified Nairṛta as Viṣṇu, and Vāyu as Īśāna, and he was also not aware of the fact that a small rider appears in the lower row on the extreme left.

²⁹⁶ Some authors, as A. BONER (1962: 195–208), refer to it as Jñāna- or Yoga-Dakṣiṇāmūrti. This may be allowed only when using the term in a broader sense (cf. BANERJEE: 470–472), as the image is not facing the south.

The great, extremely deep-cut Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti relief on the southern side of the temple (reference above) contains two groups of figures in the upper sphere, with the one on the right consisting of *dikpālas*. They are placed among dramatic cloud formations. Viewing the group from left to right, an eroded portion creates the impression that the first guardian has been destroyed. This is not the case, however. Vāyu (? vehicle damaged) follows, and behind him Indra. On Indra's right, who is still largely shown in profile, the shapes are extremely difficult to identify. It is impossible to detect any *dikpālas*, which may have been carved in that part of the relief. In any case, the group of eight must have remained incomplete. On the left side of the central divine couple, a group of four seated figures is also depicted as saluting Lord Śiva. Shown bereft of vehicles, it is unlikely that they were conceived as a part of the *dikpāla* group.

At Ellorā, two more occurrences, both fragmentary, point to the popularity of the directional guardians in the region. In the so-called Daśavatāra cave (no. 15) at Ellorā, some of the *dikpālas* frame the Kalyāṇasundara panel on the northern wall (C. BERKSON 1992: 297–299). The group seems to be nearly complete, but the individual gods are difficult to identify. In accordance with their assigned directions, Indra appears on the right, perhaps followed by Agni and Yama, while Varuṇa seems to be on the left, together with Vāyu and Kubera. It is doubtful whether Nairṛta and Īśāna have been included. The excavation of the temple is dated around 750 A.D.²⁹⁷

The southern wall of the Goliṅgeśvara temple at Bikkavolu/A.P., belonging to about the middle of the 9th century, has an interesting but rather unique, incomplete group of *dikpālas* as its central theme. Indra occupies the central position of the *jaṅghā* (fig. 283). His body exhibits a very slight flexion (*ābhaṅga*), while Agni on the left and Vāyu on the right side are seated above their vehicles (SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: 168, pl. 527). The fact that Kārttikeya on the west is flanked by a serpent couple, which belongs to the aquatic sphere, probably reveals an attempt to include directional symbolism, but so far this cannot be confirmed for the mentioned group. While a pot-bellied Agni squats above a goat or sheep, holding the usual rosary (r.) and waterpot (l.),²⁹⁸ Vāyu is seated above his antelope in a graceful but unrealistic manner (fig. 284). He holds a billowing cloth, which is quite unexpected so far in the south (cf. section 2.5.6). The images are not surrounded by any frame. They are carved directly on the wall surface and have an integrated, thin socle portion.

The image of Indra is found within an ornate niche, the most prominent parts of which are a *kīrttimukha* ("face of glory") on top and the tails of two inward-facing *makaras* with riders. The standing deity with a rather small, unspectacular crown has broad shoulders and holds a thunderbolt (*vajra*) in his right hand, in front of the centre of his body. The left hand rests in *kaṭihasta*. Indra is separated from a small elephant below by a narrow socle.

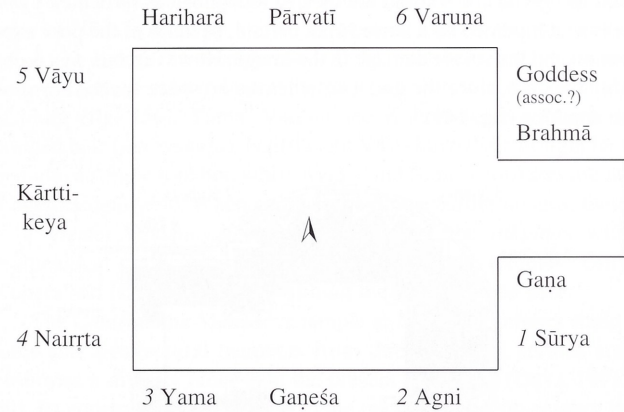
The Bikkavolu images were either inspired by an unknown source, or they represent an independent concept. If they had been conceived as a separate group, Agni, Indra and Vāyu were perhaps chosen to represent deities of the Vedic period.

2.3.2.2 Central and Northern India

Judging from what has come down to us, it seems that the complete *aṣṭadikpāla* scheme was introduced slightly later in Central India (Indor, District Guna) than in Western India (Cittauḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā temple; Osiāñ, HH-1). The complete destruction of the important site Kanauj, however, may have effaced formerly exist-

ing, metropolitan beginnings of the theme. Evidence is particularly scarce in the northern part of the region.

There are two highlights of *dikpāla* representations in Central India: the first one is the uniquely conceived, innovative Śiva temple at Indor (District Guna/M.P.) with the earliest extant complete set; the second one is the Caturbhujā temple at Gwālior, which is important because it is securely dated to A.D. 875. The artistic quality is much higher in the former case. Thus it seems that, parallel to the Western Indian development, the prototype at Indor exhibits a subtle inspiration, which was lost during the subsequent depictions of the theme. This decline can be clearly observed in the Caturbhujā temple.



III. 26: Dāṅg, Śiva temple, plan

The development of the later period should start with the small Śiva temple at Dāṅg (District Bind/M.P.), not only because of certain archaic structural features and its sculptural decoration, but also, because the *dikpāla* set is still in an incomplete stage. The temple has been assigned to the late 8th century by TRIVEDI,²⁹⁹ however it should be dated somewhat earlier, perhaps just after the middle of the 8th century.³⁰⁰

The temple shares its incomplete *dikpāla* representation with the two temples at Amrol (particularly, the Dānebābā, ill. 15) and the Piplādmātā temple at Pīpāḍ (ill. 20). Like these temples, it also includes Sūrya in a *kaṇṇa* position on the eastern side. The composition of deities in the *kaṇṇa* niches differs in all three cases. At Dāṅg, apart from Sūrya (1, fig. 145), Harihara and an unidentifiable goddess on the (north-)east³⁰¹ (fig. 151) seem to be – uniquely – combined with the *dikpālas*. The five directional guardians are Agni (2, fig. 146), Yama (3, fig. 147), Nairṛta (4, fig. 148), Varuṇa (6, fig.

²⁹⁷ There is an inscription of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Dantidurga in the *maṇḍapa* in front of the cave (SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: 111), referring to a donation made to the temple. Although the possibility remains that it predates the middle of the century, the shrine is treated under the heading "Later Kāṇṇa style, c. A.D. 750–880". This classification is also regarded as appropriate here.

²⁹⁸ See M. RAMA RAO 1964: 8, figure no. 7. The author does not recognize the deity as Agni. Its counterpart Vāyu (no. 9) has been identified with Agni instead.

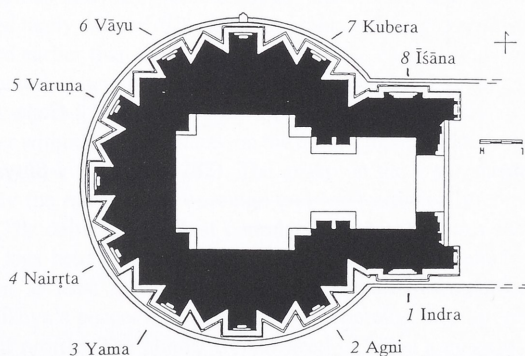
²⁹⁹ TRIVEDI 1990: 79. The author is the only one who described the temple so far (*ibid.*: 75–89). VIENNOT 1976 and EITA 1991 do not include it.

³⁰⁰ The proposed date is only based on the relative chronology of the temples at Naresar and Amrol.

³⁰¹ The upper part of the image is damaged, and its lower part is concealed by a cloth. The figure has a pronounced halo, a large coiffure and appears to hold a mirror near its face on its left side. Although there is no comparable evidence known to us, it may be hypothesized that the deity is associated with lunar symbolism. It could be a personification of moonlight (*candrimā*).

150), and Vāyu (5, fig. 149). Their most common headdress is the demonic *ūrdhvaśeṣa*, the only exceptions being a “hair-crown” (*jaṭāmukuta*) for Agni and a topknot for Vāyu, who stands in the rigid *samapāda* posture. The artistic quality of the images is rather poor, with the legs more or less cylindrical and stiff, and the vehicles rather crudely rendered, except for Varuṇa’s goose (fig. 150) which has a very lifelike shape.³⁰² The bird (cock?) perched in front of Yama needs particular mention. Similar birds characterize the Yama images on the Harihara temple no. 1 at Osiān (fig. 190) and on the Śiva temple at Indor (fig. 154). Both temples probably date from the middle or the third quarter of the 8th century, and this is also the likely date for the Ḍāṅg temple.

As typical Central Indian vehicles, the quadruped for Nairṛta and the goose for Varuṇa are clearly recognizable. Whether Vāyu was accompanied by a horse is not certain, because of the poor execution and the severe damage to the image. However, this was probably the case, since the god’s scarf leaves no space for the horns of an antelope (fig. 149).



III. 27: Indor, Śiva Temple, plan (after MEISTER 1982: fig. A).

After Ḍāṅg, which appears to be a relatively late example of a hybrid, formative *dikpāla* set, the Śiva temple at Indor (District Guna/M.P.) presents an impressive picture of the progress made in *dikpāla* representation in the latter part of the 8th century.³⁰³ The sanctum rests on two circular plinths and rises in an intricate geometrical form with nine *bhadra* (projecting wall) portions alternating with ten right-angled piers (ill. 27). *Kapilī* walls enclose a *mukhamanḍapa* which leads to the square sanctum. Six of the nine *bhadra* niches contain *dikpālas*. The circular shape would have allowed for a more satisfactory spatial order the directional guardians. However, this was not carried out, and the cardinal directions are, as usual, occupied by the members of the main god’s family (*parivāra*). Indra and Īśāna are installed in the wider *kapilī* niches. In this aspect the temple follows the earlier model of the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple (ill. 14), where two *dikpālas* have been placed in the *kapilī* sections. The standing *dikpāla* images at Indor (figs. 152–159) are characterized by softly modelled bodies, squarish faces, and a generally relaxed, almost graceful, individually varying posture. It is quite remarkable that their build seems to have been consciously varied, probably in accordance with the character of each deity. Thus, Vāyu (fig. 157) is shown particularly slender, which conforms well with his fast-moving nature. At Indor, all the three typical Central Indian vehicles can be found: a four-legged creature for Nairṛta³⁰⁴ (fig. 155; corresponding to Yama’s, both more closely resembling a bear than a buffalo), a goose for Varuṇa (fig. 156) and a horse for Vāyu (fig. 157). All the other deities have

vehicles which were also common at Osiān during the same phase. Regarding the attributes, the noose in Nairṛta’s left hand (quite distinct from Varuṇa’s noose), the round fruit in Varuṇa’s right hand and a similar fruit (?) in Kubera’s right hand in front of his chest are noteworthy. These objects have been added to the ones already known from Osiān. Īśāna’s attributes differ from the Osiān scheme: they are, from the lower right, the boon-bestowing gesture (*varada*), rosary (?), trident³⁰⁵ and waterpot. The fine set of individually rendered deities is stylistically closely related to the *dikpāla* images of the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple at Amrol (see below).

Two loose images from Koṭa in the neighbouring Shivpuri district, one of Yama (fig. 160)³⁰⁶ and one probably of Īśāna,³⁰⁷ are also close parallels. The rendering of these latter figures is even more subtle and refined, and it could be surmised that they are roughly contemporaneous with the Indor set.

A loose relief of Varuṇa squatting on a lotus above a large goose (fig. 316)³⁰⁸ is closely related to the Indor images.³⁰⁹ The only differences between this and the Indor *dikpālas* lie in the boldly executed features, the even broader face and the seated posture of the former. A 6th century date as given by some authors is much too early. It may at best be slightly posterior to Indor, which could be justified, among other arguments, by the rule “first seated, later standing”.³¹⁰

Indor represents the apex of early *dikpāla* depiction in Central India, not only concerning the artistic quality, but also regarding the occurrence of the three indigenous vehicles: quadruped for Nairṛta, goose for Varuṇa and horse for Vāyu. A few decades later, some of these vehicles were replaced by others, which were also in vogue in Western and Southern India. Thus, the goose was replaced by the *makara*, and the horse by the common antelope.³¹¹ Nairṛta’s four-

³⁰² Another, smaller image of Varuṇa with a bird is found in a secondary position above the door (TRIVEDI 1990: pl. 204, centre). In this case, the bird is shown with a thin neck and a long tail, resembling a peacock.

³⁰³ MEISTER 1982a; TRIVEDI 1990: 95–100; DEVA 1991: 17–19. TRIVEDI suggests a date of about A.D. 800, while DEVA favours the third quarter of the 8th century.

³⁰⁴ The lack of comparable examples led K. BRUHN (1960: 190–191) to identify the Nairṛta image as Yama.

³⁰⁵ We have observed that in Western India, the trident is generally carried on Īśāna’s right, while in Central India, it is placed on his left side. At Osiān, HH-1, is an exception with the trident on the left side (fig. 195), thus further corroborating the other Central Indian features of this *dikpāla* set.

³⁰⁶ A peculiar feature here is the object held in the deity’s right hand. A *cakra* (wheel) is the most probable identification, as it is perfectly round. The other possibility, a noose, was not a typical characteristic for Yama in the period under discussion. A *cakra*, however, would be absolutely singular. The staff held on the left side is not an unusual feature.

³⁰⁷ The sculpture was published as “Śiva” in the Annual Rept. of Archaeological Dept. of the Gwalior State, 1923–24, pl. III b. It is presently housed in the Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior, acc. no. 62. The image has an extremely slender body – similar to the Indor Vāyu (fig. 157) – and also closely resembles the Indor Īśāna (fig. 159). Some of the differing details are the absence of a waterpot (here *kaṭihasta*) and the front right hand feeding the bull. A well-known figure of a dancing Indrāṇī (same museum, no. 65; BHATTACHARYYA 1991: pl. 55) belongs to the same site. Unfortunately, it is not known to which temple the images of Īśāna (?), Yama, and Indrāṇī once belonged.

³⁰⁸ The figure was first published and identified as Varuṇa by VAN KOOL 1985: fig. 10.

³⁰⁹ Its coiffure can be best compared with the Indor Kubera (fig. 156), while the attributes and the manner in which they are held is exactly like the Indor Varuṇa (fig. 158). The costume and ornaments appear to be somewhat poorer, as the *keyuras* and the sash are absent.

³¹⁰ This seems to be true for Central India. The *dikpālas* on the Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple at Amrol are seated, and their successors on the Dānebābā temple at the same site are shown partly seated and partly standing.

³¹¹ A reminiscence of the horse remains in the form of a donkey as Vāyu’s *vāhana* on the north-western subsidiary shrine of the Lakṣmaṇa temple at Khajuraho (TRIPATHI 1965–66: 120).

legged vehicle, however, continued until after 900 A.D.³¹² At the same time, the association of Kubera with his anthropomorphic vehicle gradually disappeared, so that none of the guardians had possessed a human-shaped vehicle for quite some time. During the 9th century, Kubera was often shown with a pot below instead of a vehicle, or even without any associated object at all, except for his attribute.

The temple site Baṭeśarā in District Morena/M.P. is an important landmark in the development of the *dikpāla* theme. Unfortunately, the images of the nearly 40 structures could not be fully evaluated for the present study.³¹³ The main temple, variously called Bhūteśvara Mahādeva or Baṭeśvara Mahādeva and assigned to the late 8th century A.D.,³¹⁴ shows the rare feature of four-armed *dikpālas*. Like the earlier four-armed directional guardians at Cit-tauḍgaḍh, Kumbhaśyāma temple, it is apparent that they are not direct predecessors of the four-armed *dikpāla* representations that started in the 9th–10th centuries. Thus, Agni (DEVA 1991: pl. 39) does not as yet carry a sacrificial ladle, which becomes a common feature from the 9th–10th centuries onwards.³¹⁵ Likewise, Kubera's pot, held in his rear left hand at Baṭeśarā (TRIVEDI 1990: 38), does not belong to the later set of attributes as known from Khajuraho.³¹⁶ His vehicle still has a human form (*nara*). Vāyu's vehicle, however, has changed from a horse to an antelope (*ibid.*: 43).

One of the neighbouring shrines of the Baṭeśvara Mahādeva temple, which has been referred to as no. 4,³¹⁷ has an unusual configuration of deities. In the north(-western) *kaṛṇa* niche, Varuṇa stands along with his vehicle, while Kubera on the north(-east) is characterized by his new emblem in this region, the pot (fig. 161). In the (north-)eastern *kaṛṇa* niche, however, an Ekapāda Śiva appears (DEVA 1991: pl. 46) instead of Īśāna. Another nearby shrine, referred to as no. 3 (*ibid.*: pl. 44), shows Nairṛta on the (south-)west and Vāyu on the (north-)west, thereby following the placement on the Śiva temple at Ḍāṅg (ill. 26). It is also important to note that on temple no. 7 at Baṭeśarā, the *kaṛṇa* niches frame scenes from Kṛṣṇa's life (*ibid.*: pl. 48). Therefore, even without studying the Baṭeśarā evidence more closely, it can be said that, as far as the *dikpāla* images are concerned, an experimental attitude seems to have prevailed at this site. Since the lower parts of the temples are generally sparsely decorated (with the exception of the almost inaccessible Baṭeśvara Mahādeva), it is very difficult to fit them into a relative chronology. Their inception might have been even earlier, around A.D. 775, as suggested by DEVA. This would make them coeval with the much more ornate Indor temple.³¹⁸ Although they may actually be more or less coeval, it is difficult to measure the more "provincial" or simpler conceived group of temples at Naresar, Amrol, Ḍāṅg and Baṭeśarā on the same scale as the "imperial", intricately conceived Telī-kā-mandir at Gwālior and the Śiva temple at Indor.

The well-preserved Sūrya temple at Umri, District Tikamgaḍh, and the Śiva temple at Keldhar, District Shivrpurī, are good examples of the stage of development reached at the beginning of the 9th century in Madhya Pradesh. The west-oriented Śiva temple at Keldhar,³¹⁹ which has been dated to the early 9th century, reveals a few exceptional and informative features of the directional guardians. The *dikpālas* are shown two-armed and standing, with the exception of Indra, who rides his elephant (TRIVEDI 1990: pl. 101), Kubera, who is depicted seated without a vehicle (*ibid.*: pl. 100), and Īśāna, who still appears in his four-armed form. Some details can be compared with the Indor *dikpālas* (the bird at Yama's feet; the sword and noose in the hands of Nairṛta), but others signify a departure from the Indor model (Indra is seen riding; Kubera is seated without a vehicle; Agni holds a ladle in his right hand; Nairṛta has a boar as

his vehicle; and Īśāna carries a serpent as an additional attribute in his hands). The figures are well-modelled with clear, partly exaggerated features.

Another one of the Central Indian Sūrya temples of the 9th century is found at Umri. This structure has been assigned to c. second quarter of the 9th century by DEVA. The two-armed *dikpālas* appear in their usual positions and are – with the exception of Īśāna who is shown standing – seated with the right leg pendent (figs. 162–169). The sculptures share their bold, sensuous shapes with the Keldhar images. At Umri, however, the figures are much more uniformly rendered. The only peculiarities³²⁰ are the absence of Agni's vehicle (fig. 163; the lower part seems to be filled by "smoke"), the re-introduction of the anthropomorphic vehicle for Kubera (fig. 168) and the fact that Īśāna is only two-armed (fig. 169). The two-armed form of Īśāna is likewise known in Western India in the 9th century. As at Indor, the headdresses of the guardians vary to some degree. Indra wears a cylindrical crown, which resembles Varuṇa's at Indor (fig. 156). Yama, Varuṇa and Kubera wear a crown of braided hair (*jaṭāmukūṭa*). Nairṛta and Vāyu have their straight hair tied into a simple topknot, while Agni's and Īśāna's coiffures are no longer recognizable. When compared with the earlier images, there is a greater tendency towards representing the *dikpālas* with brāhmaṇical cords, which is also seen on other temples. Only Kubera and Īśāna can be seen without the sacred thread here.

The Caturmukha Mahādeva temple at Nacnā "combines sculptures and architectural members from three different periods and enshrines a divinity older than the present structure" (DEVA 1991: 69). Its construction is assigned to the middle of the 9th century or slightly later.³²¹ The extant *dikpālas* on this temple, Agni and Kubera (TRIVEDI 1990: pls. 128, 129), reflect an advanced type since they are four-armed. Agni's attributes are, starting from the lower right: rosary, flower, sacrificial ladle and waterpot. In Kubera's case, the objects are difficult to make out. His lower left hand holds a large *nakulaka* (purse), and he probably holds a club in his upper right hand. An image of Varuṇa housed in the Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Varanasi (fig. 170), may have once formed part of the set. It has similar flying garland-bearers at the top and attendant figures below. The deity is four-armed and exhibits a serene expression, with the

³¹² TRIPATHI (1965–66: 115) lists two types of quadrupeds, a bull-like animal and a dog, as Nairṛta's vehicles at Khajuraho. The third variant is a reclining human figure.

³¹³ One reason for the lack of inclusion is the fact that it is very difficult to take photographs of the images of the main temple, because of the narrow space between the outer wall and the wall of the ambulatory. Another unfortunate fact that should be mentioned here is the liberal destruction of the heads of the images, which must have occurred in relatively recent years (cf. VIENNOT 1976: ph. 85 with TRIVEDI 1990: pls. 38 and 39).

³¹⁴ TRIVEDI 1990: 79–82; DEVA 1991: 19–22. The latter prefers a date of c. 775 A.D.

³¹⁵ The Caturmukha Mahādeva at Nacnā (District Panna/M.P.) has the earliest known example (DEVA 1991: pl. 39) in which a large ladle is one of Agni's four attributes. The construction of the temple has been tentatively dated to c. 850 A.D., but the image is probably later (see below). Admittedly, at Khajuraho, the association of a *sruk* is not without exceptions (TRIPATHI 1965–66: 109). An early occurrence of the sacrificial ladle carried by a two-armed Agni is attested to at Keldhar (see below).

³¹⁶ TRIPATHI 1965–66: 122. One exception is his no. 13, but here, the vessel is held in the front left hand.

³¹⁷ "No. 4" is the designation used in the plate section (DEVA 1991: pls. 45, 46), but it has been omitted in the text (*ibid.*: 23).

³¹⁸ VIENNOT (1976: 247) in her typological study actually assigned the Baṭeśvara Mahādeva temple ("no. 1") at Baṭeśarā ("Bateśvar") to the same period as the Śiva temple at Indor.

³¹⁹ TRIVEDI 1990: 112–115. The temple is not included in VIENNOT 1976 and DEVA 1991.

³²⁰ Unfortunately, no information concerning the vehicles of Varuṇa and Vāyu at Keldhar could be obtained. Thus, they cannot be compared to those at Umri.

³²¹ DEVA 1991: 151; TRIVEDI 1990: 129.

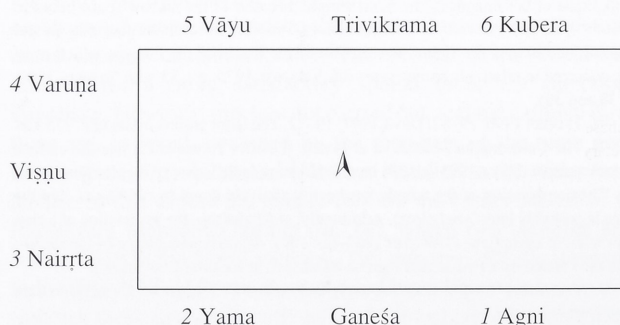
eyebrows slightly raised, however. Varuṇa wears a *jaṭāmukuta* (hair-crown), a necklace, bracelets, anklets, a sacred thread, a leaf-garland (*vanamālā*) and elaborate ornaments adorn his lower garment. A miniature *makara* head and a kneeling attendant flank the deity on the lower right and left, respectively. Behind them, two attendants stand on each side. The lower right hand is held in the boon-bestowing gesture (*varadamudrā*), and the upper right holds a large noose which is rather clumsily represented in two parts. The upper left holds a large lotus bud and the lower right a waterpot. The rather superficial treatment of the ornaments along with the slightly angular, schematic shaping of the extremities suggest a date most likely near the end of the 9th or the beginning of the 10th century. These *dikpāla* images stand on a low socle, and those still found on the temple walls appear to have been loosely inserted into the niches. It could be that the *dikpālas* postdate the temple by a few decades.

An important, dated landmark in the latter half of the 9th century is the rock-cut Caturbhujā temple at Gwālior (ill. 28)³²², situated half-way up to the rock fort. The date of the foundation inscription is 875 A.D. It has already been briefly mentioned that no space was available to accommodate Indra and Īśāna on the east (entrance) side. An certain crudeness characterizes this temple.

This structure is very crude in its sculptural and architectural embellishment, perhaps due to the poor quality of the local stone (DEVA 1991: 55).

Thus, the details are mostly blurred (figs. 171–176). There are some conspicuous peculiarities of the regularly positioned deities: Agni's vehicle seems to be either anthropomorphic or missing (fig. 171), Nairṛta's four-legged vehicle resembles a lion (fig. 173), Varuṇa's head is encircled by a cloth resembling Vāyu's typical attribute (fig. 174), and Kubera is shown without any vehicle or pot in substitution (fig. 176). Of the specifically Central Indian vehicles, only Nairṛta's quadruped is still present, though not as the "boar version". Again, the guardians have been portrayed with a sacred thread, with relatively sparse ornaments and with individually varied coiffures and postures. The *dikpālas* of the Caturbhujā temple conform to the characteristics of the directional guardians subsumed by TRIVEDI (1990: 43) for his third phase of Central Indian Pratihāra temples (c. 850–950 A.D.):

... in the temples of the third phase they are invariably shown two-armed standing with or without their vehicles.



III. 28: Gwālior, Caturbhujā temple, plan sketch of sanctum

Apart from the evidence, which has been preserved *in situ*, there are a few sites which have yielded loose sculptures. A particularly prolific site is Siron Khurd, District Lalitpur/U.P., from which a collection of *dikpālas* of different phases (9th to 11th centuries) is

preserved in the Jhansi Museum.³²³ The published images conform to the features described above. Some other fine specimens of loose *dikpāla* sculptures are the fragment of an Indra image of fine workmanship from Baḍoh, District Vidisha,³²⁴ and an image of Varuṇa from Kārītālāi (DEVA 1988: pl. 322), District Jabalpur (both in M.P.).

Two loose and completely dispersed, slightly oblong stone reliefs of Varuṇa and Īśāna (figs. 177, 178) must have once belonged to a *dikpāla* set in Mathurā/U.P. or its vicinity. Both deities are seated in the same posture (*dakṣiṇāpralambapāda*), however, with little space below the right leg. Their ornaments are modest, except for the large round earrings which they share (Īśāna: only right ear). Large leaves emerge sideways from behind their heads (Īśāna: only on the right side). Their hands show graceful gestures and their facial expression is benign. Varuṇa holds a noose in his right hand and sits on a goose (fig. 177). Īśāna has a trident in his left hand and holds a rosary in his lower right. A rather small bull crouches below. The set should be dated to the late 8th or early 9th century. An "early" feature seems to be the presence of the goose, but the two-armed form of Īśāna is a "later" feature. Varuṇa's demonic coiffure (*ūrdhvaśeṣa*) also points to the 9th century. The deities are both bordered by a simple frame which is slightly dented above Īśāna's head.

From the impressive rock-cut temple complex at Masrur,³²⁵ District Kangra/Himachal Pradesh, a few loose sculptures remain from what must have been a complete *dikpāla* set. One fragment shows a slightly obese figure of Agni, wearing a diadem, with flames behind his head.³²⁶ While the standing image of Agni is two-armed, Varuṇa seated on *makara* was probably four-armed.³²⁷ His sitting posture and the position of the *makara* bears comparison with the image of Varuṇa at Umri (fig. 166). It is likely that both images are more or less coeval, although the date "c. A.D. 800" has been assigned to Masrur by DEVA (1991: 118). The pot-bellied figure, probably of Kubera, is depicted seated on a lotus-throne with addorsed lions underneath (V.C. OHRI 1991: pl. 3.18). The arrangement with the lions is quite unique, but a parallel can be seen in the Kubera image at Umri (fig. 168), where this pot-bellied deity sits in a similar manner on a high lotus socle.

A rare instance of a late but somewhat rudimentary or rather 'reduced' group of *dikpālas* occurs at Gyaraspur, District Vidisha, M.P. The Jaina Mālādevī temple of c. 850–900 A.D. features in its protruding *kaṇa* niches on the *maṇḍapa*'s north side Indra, seated (l.), and Kubera, standing (r.; K. BRUHN 2000: 312; figs. 9, 10). BRUHN observes that Indra's right, pendent foot is resting on a pot which may form a reference to Kubera's pots – two small jars are depicted with the latter.

³²² TRIVEDI 1990: 135–143; DEVA 1991: 54–56. The plan in the latter publication (fig. 27) is obviously simplified, while TRIVEDI's plan (fig. 28) reveals that the temple is irregularly shaped.

³²³ S.D. TRIVEDI 1983: figs. 52–55, 61, 65–66.

³²⁴ The apparently two-armed deity has a fine oval halo with a border of lotus-petals. Indra wears an intricately shaped crown and exhibits sharply cut features. It is housed in the Central Archaeological Museum, Gwalior, and can be dated to the 9th–10th centuries.

³²⁵ DEVA 1991: 116–118.

³²⁶ In the publication by D.K. CHAKRABARTI/S.J. HASAN (1984: pl. 12) the sculpture has been tentatively identified as a *yakṣa*. The bulging eyes may point to this identification. However, we do not know if the grotesque features were part of the concept of Agni in that particular region.

³²⁷ DEVA 1991: pl. 269; CHAKRABARTI/HASAN 1984: pl. 11. The dignified portrait of Varuṇa shows a diadem, heavy earrings, two necklaces, and anklets. He has a round halo behind the head. The god is seated on a boldly carved, voluminous *makara*. Unfortunately, the panel has been severely damaged. A relief of Indra seated on his elephant, probably four-armed, has also been found.

A very fine example of *dikpāla* representation, the Barwāsāgar lintel frieze, marks the latest phase of the period under survey (fig. 179). The rather well-preserved Jarāi-kā-maṭh temple of about A.D. 900 or a slightly later date³²⁸ is located in the Jhansi district of Uttar Pradesh. There are two *dikpāla* sets on the temple: one is the overdoor frieze, where the deities are arranged in their correct sequence from left to right. Regarding the number of hands, their attributes and vehicles, the *dikpālas* of the frieze largely conform to their counterparts in the niches.³²⁹ All are shown two-armed. On the frieze, the guardians are seated in *dakṣiṇāpralambapāda*. Their vehicles are (from left to right): elephant, goat or sheep, buffalo, quadruped (jackal?), *makara*, antelope, ram, bull. Their attributes are also those commonly shown in the latter part of the period, with the exception of an additional cup (? or bird?) in Yama's right hand. The free hands are held in *cinmudrā* (thumb and index finger touching) in front of the breast. Two tiny attendant figures are discernible in the background of the panel. On the (proper) left behind Varuṇa is a personage squatting on a fish, and on the (proper) left behind Kubera, a wine-waiter stands on a lotus socle. The niche figures are all shown in a standing posture.

The Barwāsāgar frieze can be compared with two other friezes of standing *dikpālas* which are no longer *in situ*. The first one from Baḍoḥ belongs to the Gwalior Museum collection (fig. 180). Since the deities here are four-armed, it is likely that it postdates the former frieze. The Baḍoḥ frieze is severely damaged. It is bordered on both sides by a female figure turned inwards. The *dikpālas* are shown standing in identical flexed postures, with their vehicle or emblem on the proper right. However, all the figures have haloes behind their heads, unlike those at Barwāsāgar. The attributes have been completely destroyed, with the exception of a severed head (lower left) and a shield (rear left) in Nairṛta's hands, and the jars in the lower left hands of Agni, Kubera and Īśāna. The vehicles largely correspond to those at Barwāsāgar, except in the case of Kubera. He has a single pot by his side with a tiny figure peeping inside or clasping it. A third, fragmented panel should be mentioned here. It is a well-known piece from the Heeramanek Collection.³³⁰ This partially preserved frieze represents the figural sequence only from Nairṛta to Kubera and was obviously an overdoor decoration. The large seated Śiva figure was probably intended to represent Īśāna, who would be missing otherwise. The guardians are all two-armed, except for the Śiva-Īśāna figure, which is four-armed. The occurring combination of Western Indian and Central Indian traits confirms a probable origin of this panel in the Kota region, Rajasthan, as suggested by MASON (1993: 236–237). The vehicles correspond to those of the Baḍoḥ panel, including the quadruped for Nairṛta and the pot for Kubera. A significant feature is the fact that Vāyu holds a standard instead of the cloth, as would have normally been expected in Central India. The standing postures with the feet placed wide apart is also “western” as is the fact that the trident is held in the rear right hand. The panel with the predominantly two-armed *dikpālas* has been assigned to the second half of the 9th century by the authors.

In Central India, the general introduction of four-armed *dikpālas* does not seem to have taken place before c. A.D. 950. An important development in the 10th century is the elimination of niche frames for the sculptures (e.g. at Nohta, DEVA 1995: pl. 200). A remarkable case of a hybrid *dikpāla* image is encountered at Sesai, District Shivpuri/M.P., on the Sūrya temple of about the second quarter of the 10th century. A deity occupying the usual position of Vāyu, the north(-west), exhibits traits of both Varuṇa and Vāyu (fig. 181).³³¹ A rather stylized representation of the billowing cloth encircles the head of the deity. In this it differs from the Western Indian tradition, where the scarf generally does not rise that high

(e.g. fig. 210). The vehicle of this “Vāyu” figure, however, is a *makara*. The development towards a cloth-bearing Varuṇa was already indicated at Umri (fig. 166) and at Gwālior, Caturbhuja temple (fig. 174). Thus, this hybrid form seems to have gradually developed. Along with the absolutely stereotyped postures at Sesai, this case of a hybrid deity may be regarded as an indication of an increasing lifelessness³³² in the old system of two-armed *dikpālas*, which finally led to their substitution by newly conceived four-armed directional guardians from the latter part of the 10th century onwards.

An interesting counterpart of the Sesai Vāyu is a loose image characterised by the noose as Varuṇa, but combined with a galloping antelope, from Uttar Pradesh.³³³ The presence of this second example of hybrid representation leads one to surmise that during a particular phase in North-Central India, the vehicles of Varuṇa and Vāyu may have been interchanged.

In Central India, a possible *terminus ad quem* for the introduction of four-armed *dikpālas* is provided by the Lakṣmaṇa temple at Khajuraho, which combines two-armed³³⁴ and four-armed guardians. The date of this temple is c. 950 A.D.

2.3.2.3 Western India

Shortly after 750 A.D., the *dikpāla* theme seems to have reached a state of consolidation in the region. Only one temple of this period at Osiān (Sūrya temple no. 2) has an incomplete group of *dikpālas*. All other later temples with elaborate sculptural decoration contain the directional guardians. There was also very little variation in the position of the *dikpālas*. At Osiān, the most prolific site, two temples (Pīpālādevī; Viṣṇu temple no. 2) show an unusual placement of these deities, but on the whole, their order remained stable in the following period.

The available evidence at Osiān³³⁵ is indeed invaluable for *dikpāla* studies. Here, a local gradual development can be traced with all its interdependences, innovations and probable relapses. The only regrettable fact is the complete lack of an absolute date for any of the temples.

³²⁸ TRIVEDI 1990: 168–175; DEVA 1991: 56–60. The former author dates the temple to the middle of the 10th century, at the very end of the Pratihāra period in Central India.

³²⁹ The niche figures are not in a good state of preservation. A significantly different representation occurs in Vāyu's case. The deity holds an inflated cloth (*vāyupūrita-vastra*) with both hands in the frieze, but in the niche has a standard in his left hand. The transition from the cloth to the standard also takes place in Western India, in the 9th–10th centuries. For the niche figure of Kubera see TRIVEDI 1990: pl. 191.

³³⁰ It is presently kept in the Los Angeles County Museum, Museum Associates Purchase M.74.5.6. The measurements are 73x99 cm. In the top register, the nine planetary deities are depicted.

³³¹ This has been overlooked by TRIVEDI (1990: 163, pl. 181).

³³² In fact, the representation of *dikpālas* at Sesai is completely stereotyped and uninspired.

³³³ K. DEVA/S.D. TRIVEDI 1996: cat. 100, fig. 84 (10th century; Allahabad Museum, acc. no. 1385).

³³⁴ The *sāndhāra* type Lakṣmaṇa temple has sets on its sanctum exterior and on its four subsidiary temples, but not on its outer walls. L.K. TRIPATHI (1965–66: 104, n. 2) observes: “Images of Indra and Īśāna, both on the SE and NW shrines, and those of Yama, Nirṛti and Agni on the NE shrine are two-armed.”

³³⁵ The common designations for the temples will be abbreviated as follows: Harihara temple = HH; Mahāvīra temple = MT; Pīpālādevī temple = PD; Sūrya temple = ST; Sūrya-Viṣṇu temple = SV; Śiva temple = ŚT; Viṣṇu temple = VT. Recent publications on the temples are HANDA 1984; MEISTER 1991: 140–146, 174–209, 263–265; TRIPATHI 1971–84; and WESSELS-MEVISSSEN 1994 (*dikpālas*). BHANDARKAR 1912 gave the first detailed account of these temples; for a concordance of these and later labels see WESSELS-MEVISSSEN 1994: table 1. A few temples at Osiān are without *dikpālas*: the Satya-Nārāyana temple, the now “missing” temple and ŚT-2.

Table XIII – Sculptural typology of *dikpālas* at Osiān

Osiān (c. 751–900 A.D.)		HH-2, 3 – Harihara nos. 2, 3; M – Mahāvīra; PD – Pīpalādevī; ST-2 – Sūrya no. 2; ŚT-1 – Śiva no. 2; SV – Sūrya-Viṣṇu; VT-1, 2 – Viṣṇu nos. 1, 2	
Dikpāla	Attributes	Vehicle	Particular Characteristics
Indra	<i>vajra</i> (bolt) r.**; PD: <i>vajra</i> l.**	elephant	cylindrical crown; M: diadem
Agni	<i>akṣamālā</i> (rosary) r., <i>kamaṇḍalu</i> (waterpot) or flask l.	goat	<i>jaṭāmukha</i> (hair crown), flames behind head and shoulders, <i>vastropavīta</i> (broad sacred cord); M: diadem; M, ŚT-1: no <i>upavīta</i> ; VT-1: simple <i>upavīta</i>
Yama	<i>daṇḍa</i> (staff) r.**; PD: <i>daṇḍa</i> l.**	buffalo	crown; VT-1, PD (?): <i>ūrdhvakeśa</i> (hair standing on end)
Nairṛta	<i>khaḍga</i> (sword) r.**; flower? l.	anthropomorph	<i>ūrdhvakeśa</i> ; ST-2: crown
Varuṇa	<i>pāśa</i> (noose) r.**	<i>makara</i> (aquatic animal); HH-2, SV: no vehicle; VT-1: pot instead of a vehicle	crown; PD: <i>jaṭāmukha</i> ; ST-2: awkward position of the left arm, which is wrapped in a sash; VT-2: platform above vehicle
Vāyu	billowing cloth in both hands; VT-2: additional two banners in front hands	deer	crown
Kubera	cup r.*, purse l.; PD: lotus l.	anthropomorph; ST-2, ŚT-1, VT-1: no vehicle; VT-2: <i>meṣa</i> (ram)	curly hairstyle, often with diadem; HH-2, ST-2: only diadem; VT-1: <i>ūrdhvakeśa</i> ; HH-2, HH-3, PD, SV: platform above vehicle
Īśāna	(clockwise from below r.): <i>padma</i> (lotus)*, <i>triśūla</i> (trident), <i>sarpa</i> (serpent)**; PD: only two arms (<i>triśūla</i> r.**)	bull; M: anthropomorphic vehicle	<i>jaṭāmukha</i>

* Mostly indistinct.

** The other hand rests on the hip or thigh, generally holding a loop of the sash. Nairṛta in two cases shows a particular gesture (*kaṭakāmudrā*?) in front of the chest (HH-2, VT-2).

Vāyu and Kubera of the Mahāvīra temple could not be included. On VT-2, Yama, Nairṛta, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, and Īśāna are four-armed. All the *dikpālas* of the temple are in a bad state of preservation, so that their attributes and specific features could not be evaluated, except in a few cases. On PD, the head-dresses of the *dikpālas* are difficult to classify.

It is also extremely difficult to establish a relative chronology, since most of the temples seem to be chronologically very close to each other.³³⁶ Thus, the temples HH-2, ST-2, MT³³⁷, VT-1, and ŚT-1 have been assigned to approximately 750-775 A.D., the two latter ones with a tendency towards the end of this time period (ŚT-1 probably even later). The last quarter of the 8th century is the period suggested for the HH-3 and the SV. The Pīpalādevī temple has been assumed to date from the first quarter of the 9th century, and the VT-2 in the third quarter of the 9th century. This chronology postulated by MEISTER (1991) is not contradicted by the results of an analysis of *dikpāla* images at the site. Among the *dikpālas*, clusters of close similarity indicate that the same concept for a particular deity has been applied to a number of – most probably coeval – temples.

One of the earlier temples, ST-2, still lacks a complete group of directional guardians. It shows Nairṛta (fig. 196) and Varuṇa (fig. 197) in relatively wide niches in their usual positions (south-)west and (north-)west, respectively, on either side of the entrance. A

seated Kubera on the south(-west) (fig. 198) cannot be regarded as a *dikpāla*. The isolated depiction of Nairṛta and Varuṇa may have been due to a change in the concept of the temple which was probably originally planned without *dikpālas*. This temple also seems to have been the last one without *pratiratha* niches.

³³⁶ A relative chronology in the form of a proposed sequence of temples has been postulated by TRIPATHI (1971-84: 299), out of which only temples with *dikpālas* have been chosen here: HH-1, HH-2, HH-3, SV, VT-1, ST-1, ST-2, MT, VT-2, PD. ŚT-1 is not included in the list. TRIPATHI's sequence is not convincing in some respects, particularly in the chronological placement of ST-1 and ST-2 after HH-1-3.

³³⁷ A chronological hint is given in an inscription of 956/57 A.D. on the Mahāvīra temple (MEISTER 1991: 184). In the text, the ruler Vatsarāja (mentioned in the contemporary records of A.D. 778 and A.D. 783) is referred to. However, it is not specifically expressed that the MT was founded by Vatsarāja. The dates known to us have, therefore, generally been regarded as a *terminus ante quem*. The MT is an exception, since only here, the *dikpālas* are situated on the outer wall of the *sādhāra* complex. As their placement does not include the *maṇḍapa*, Vāyu and Kubera are, strangely, accommodated inside the *gudhamāṇḍapa*.

The *dikpālas* Nairṛta and Varuṇa clearly postdate those of HH-1, as the following characteristics indicate:

- They are shown standing and not seated. This alone would, of course, not suffice, as Candra (fig. 185) and Vāyu (fig. 187) on the relatively early ST-1 are also standing in corresponding niches on the facade of the temple.
- In their proportions (as well as the relationship in size between the guardians and their vehicles), their dress and their crowns, they resemble the *dikpālas* of HH-2 (e.g. fig. 207), which is a complete set.
- The most striking argument, however, is that the unusual, distinct “Central Indian” vehicles, a jackal or other quadruped for Nairṛta, and a goose for Varuṇa, which occur on ST-1 and HH-1, have already been replaced by the more common vehicles, a human being and *makara*, respectively, as known from the Kālikāmāta temple at Cittaūḍgaḍh.³³⁸

The replacement of most of the “Central Indian” vehicles after the formative phase at Osiān is an indubitable fact. Only the anthropomorphic vehicle of Kubera, which also appears to have come from Central India (fig. 92), continued for some time. A special formula seems to have been invented to distinguish it from Nairṛta’s vehicle, i.e. a platform was inserted between the god and the carrier underneath (figs. 200, 211).³³⁹ For some reason, this formula fell into disuse, and Kubera remained without a vehicle on a few temples at Osiān (figs. 201, 219). Later, on VT-2 (fig. 202) and other temples outside Osiān, the anthropomorphic *nara* was replaced by the ram (*meṣa*). It is noteworthy that the *garbhahitti* set of the Kālikāmāta temple, which could be regarded as model for the “old order”³⁴⁰ in Western India, does not include Kubera but Soma instead. Thus, an original model of a *dikpāla* Kubera may not have existed in this region. It seems likely, however, that Kubera had received special worship in the preceding period. A cult image of Kubera is known from Osiān (fig. 199), which was probably once worshipped along with two other deities, Gaṇeśa and Lakṣmī. The cup attribute in Kubera’s right hand is also a regular feature of the *dikpāla* Kubera at Osiān (see table XIII). In Central India, this attribute occurs less frequently.

Apart from Kubera’s vehicle, the images of the directional guardians do not vary to a great extent, but differ mainly in minor details. As far as the spatial arrangement is concerned, two exceptions are noteworthy: the Pīpalādevī temple, where four *dikpālas* (from south to north: Nairṛta, Varuṇa, Kubera, Vāyu; figs. 203, 204) have been depicted on the western side; and the Viṣṇu temple no. 2, where the order starts with Indra on the (north-)east (see cover) instead of the (south-)east. While the first case is unique and can only be explained by the need to accommodate those additional guardians, for whom no place was available on the front (northern) part of the temple, the second case has a few parallels outside Osiān (e.g. Khīḍarpurā, MEISTER 1991: pls. 548, 549). Here, a different arrangement of *dikpālas* starting on the east wall with the northern niche, might have been regarded as conceptually more consistent.

With regard to the uniformity in the rendering of the *aṣṭadikpālas* at Osiān, it can be observed that some clusters of close relationship exist. The first conspicuous fact is, of course, the affinity between HH-1 and HH-2, where the iconographic programme had been identically reproduced, i.e. copied on the latter (ill. 22). On HH-2, however, the rendering of the figures was quite different.³⁴¹ The change of vehicles in some cases has already been mentioned. Another important difference is the transition from the seated or riding (in Vāyu’s case) position to the standing posture, which in the following phase was only abandoned on VT-2 (fig. 202).³⁴² After

the transition from HH-1 to HH-2, the affinity of the *dikpāla* images on the different temples was in some cases very close. Some of the guardians must have been regarded as models, but even in such cases, the whole set was not copied. The positioning of the deities in the majority of the sets and the composition of all the sets were very similar, however with some minor variations in the rendering of the deities.

Some of the images with a particularly close affinity are:

- Indra: MT and VT-1; HH-3 and SV;
- Agni: HH-2 (fig. 206) and SV;
- Yama: HH-2 (fig. 207), HH-3 (BHATTACHARYYA 1991: pl. 49) and SV;³⁴³
- Nairṛta: MT (MEISTER 1991: pl. 416) and ŚT-1 (fig. 216);
- Varuṇa: HH-2 (fig. 209) and SV (fig. 221).

These exceptionally close affinities in the representation of certain deities suggest that the respective temples are largely coeval.

An analysis of the particular standing postures reveals that a mixture of “Central Indian” and “Western Indian” postures seems to have occurred soon after the supposed relapse of HH-2 to the Kālikāmāta model. The *dikpāla* set of HH-2 (figs. 205–212) – with the exceptions of Nairṛta (fig. 208), Varuṇa (fig. 209)³⁴⁴, and Kubera (fig. 211) – reproduces the scheme with the free leg pointing to the nearest corner. In contrast to the Kālikāmāta model, at Osiān, variations in the leg positions were relatively frequent. It is, however, quite obvious that the temples with a more or less consistent depiction of the free leg pointing to the nearest corner are concentrated in Western India (at Osiān: HH-2, HH-3, SV, PD). A typical “Central Indian” *atibhaṅga* posture, a strong flexion of the body with parallel legs and feet, can be found, e.g. in the figures of Agni (fig. 206) and Nairṛta (fig. 208) on ŚT-1.

³³⁸ See fig. 107 for Varuṇa. The composition of the panel is strikingly similar. However, a few differences also occur, the major one being the position of Varuṇa’s proper left hand and the absence of an attribute in this hand at Osiān. Nairṛta at Cittaūḍgaḍh (fig. 118) also has many similar characteristics.

³³⁹ This device is restricted to the temples (HH-2, HH-3, SV), where a pedestal has been employed to reduce the height of the niches. Thus, the size of the niche could be adjusted to the proportions of the image. Significantly, on PD, both the *dikpālas* in *pratiratha* niches are mounted on pedestals (figs. 203, 204). This creates a visual hierarchy among them and relates them to the vertical axis, which is already emphasized by the pilaster-like form of the *pratirathas*. Actually, their irregular sequence (from south to north: Nairṛta, Varuṇa, Kubera, Vāyu) may have been determined by the fact that for Varuṇa and Kubera, a socle with integrated vehicle is most appropriate. This “tier system” was used in an almost extreme form on the *devakulikās* of HH-1 and HH-2 (MEISTER 1991: pls. 368, 398).

³⁴⁰ Should it turn out that the dating of the Kālikāmāta and Kumbhaśyāma temples at Cittaūḍgaḍh is not as early as what has recently been assigned (see above), they could very well belong to the first phase of architectural activity at Osiān. The directional guardians of the Cittaūḍgaḍh temples would then have to be regarded as expressions of an experimental stage in the development of a local idiom of *dikpāla* representation. The close resemblance between the image of Varuṇa of the Kālikāmāta temple (fig. 107) and that of the Harihara temple no. 3 at Osiān (fig. 223) could indicate a similar date of the two.

³⁴¹ This fact is also reflected by MEISTER’s (1991: 182) statement: “Harihara temple no. 2 and the Mahāvira temple, with which it is closely related, represent new guild conventions at Osiān, yet considerable respect has been shown for previous production at this site.”

³⁴² Cf. also HANDA 1984: pl. 106 (Agni) and MEISTER 1991: pl. 588, 589 (south and north wall, respectively). The hierarchy in size between the small *kaṇa* and *pratiratha* images and the much larger *bhadra* image is remarkable.

³⁴³ The raised head of the buffalo is the particular *tertium comparationes*. It is interesting to note that the buffalo of HH-2 is the only one rendered realistically. The heads of both the other specimens are stylized, and the position of their tails is also identical.

³⁴⁴ Nairṛta and Varuṇa are located in very narrow niches on the side of the entrance (west), thus leaving very little space on the sides.

It is rather peculiar that both Kubera (**fig. 201**) and Vāyu (**fig. 218**) are sometimes shown in the same stiff, clumsy posture, in spite of their varied characters.³⁴⁵ The *samapāda* (feet together) or a related, clumsy posture for Vāyu is also found at Ābānerī (B. SAHAI: **fig. 8**), Dāṅg (**fig. 149**), and Pāhārpur (**fig. 236**). Kubera generally retained his obese features and stocky proportions. This is emphasized by a posture in which the legs are held slightly apart (*e.g.* **fig. 233**).

Another feature shows that at Osiān, individual solutions were employed for particular conditions. This is the unusual and varied rendering of *dikpālas* in extremely narrow niches on the facade, which occur on a number of temples (HH-2, SV, VT-1, VT-2). In some of these cases, particularly Nairṛta and Varuṇa in HH-2 (**figs. 208, 209**), the *dikpālas* in the narrow niches resemble *dvārapālas*, *i.e.* door guardians,³⁴⁶ since their bodies are turned towards the door, the free leg pointing in the same direction. Here, on HH-2, Varuṇa is shown without any vehicle and Nairṛta's sword is – uniquely – resting on the ground. Another interesting example is provided by the SV, where both Nairṛta and Varuṇa (**fig. 221**) stand in identical postures, with the left leg bent and crossed behind the right one. Once again, Varuṇa does not have a vehicle. On VT-1, Varuṇa (**fig. 222**) is – uniquely – shown standing on a spilling pot instead of a vehicle. Thus, it appears that in the cases, where *dikpālas* had to be accommodated in narrow niches, the sculptors created new, imaginative concepts in the representation of the directional guardians.

In summing up the evidence from Osiān, it can be stated that the group of temples probably dating to a phase soon after 750 A.D. (namely HH-2, HH-3, SV), contain very similar, standing *dikpālas*. The deities are generally shown standing in clear-cut postures (particularly on HH-2, **figs. 205–212**) with the free leg turned towards the nearest corner. A second group of temples comprises MT, ŚT-1, and VT-1. On these temples (*e.g.* ŚT-1, **figs. 213–220**), the poses of some of the figures have become rather exaggerated (**fig. 220**) and ungainly (**figs. 201, 218**). A tendency towards an ill-conceived and awkward twisting of the body can be noticed on PD (**figs. 203, 204**, cf. VIENNOT 1976: ph. 236). A later concept appears on VT-2, where the *dikpālas* are shown seated on relatively large vehicles (MEISTER 1991: pls. 588, 589). Here, the niches, which had become narrower in the course of this period, are again wider.

Apart from Osiān, a few exquisite examples of *dikpāla* sculptures are known from the Harṣatmātā temple at Ābānerī, *viz.* Agni (**fig. 224**), Indra (**fig. 225**), and Vāyu³⁴⁷. The vast ruins of a once imposing temple, probably of Vaiṣṇava³⁴⁸ or Śāktā affiliation, contain only a few surviving specimens of *dikpālas*, most probably belonging to two different sets of directional guardians. The first quarter of the 9th century has been proposed as an estimated date³⁴⁹ for the *sāndhāra* temple (with ambulatory), which was probably once a *pañcāyatana* complex (consisting of five shrines; F. REITZ 1994). Its sculptures are not stylistically related to those at Osiān nor to any of the temple sites discussed above, but represent a distinct idiom.

It is very likely that two *dikpāla* sets embellished the *garbhābhitti* (sanctum exterior) and the outer wall of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* (ambulatory), respectively, here, as is the case at Paṭṭadakal (Pāpanātha temple) and Cittaūḍgaḍh (Kumbhaśyāma temple). The type of the niche, which is preserved in all three cases, provides an important distinguishing feature. REITZ (1993) has proposed a plausible classification and functional analysis of the niche types. The sculpture of Indra (**fig. 224**), which is now in a secondary place (REITZ 1993: Abb. 2), most probably belonged to the *gūḍha-maṇḍapa* exterior.³⁵⁰ The niches with the two other surviving

images of Vāyu and Agni (**fig. 225**) closely resemble each other. Since the latter is still in situ, there is no doubt that both guardians originally belonged to the *garbhābhitti*.

Judging from the few extant sculptures, it appears that both sets of *dikpālas* are characterized by rather stiff postures, a feature that does not recur in any other set in this region or in Central India. The immovable, monumental appearance of the deities, in fact, recalls the images at Ālampur. At the same time, it is clear that the deeply undercut figures at Ābānerī with their exquisite proportioning and modelling are much more evolved than their counterparts at Ālampur. The presence of attendant figures is similar to the Kālikāmātā temple at Cittaūḍgaḍh, but the lavish decoration (“*horror vacui*”) characterizing this temple is not reflected at Ābānerī. An interesting detail can be observed on the image of Agni (**fig. 225**), namely, the separate socle for the goat vehicle behind the god.

Besides the Kumbhaśyāma at Cittaūḍgaḍh and the Harṣatmātā at Ābānerī, a third, well-preserved temple with two sets of directional guardians can be found at Kheḍ in district Barmer. The *sāndhāra* (with ambulatory) concept of the Raṅchoḍjī temple, which has been assigned to the middle of the 9th century, follows the tradition of a few other temples in Western India.³⁵¹ At Kheḍ, it can be observed that the rendering of the *dikpālas* is quite similar in the different sets. Obviously there was no intention of creating any particular distinction between the two sets. The deities of the *garbhagrha* (sanctum) set (**figs. 226–233**) stand in lifelike, slightly stiff postures in relatively narrow niches. Their bodies are well-proportioned, with broad faces, and they wear rather heavy ornaments. The vehicles are comparatively small. The figures of Agni and Kubera are conspicuously obese. This is interesting with regard to the symmetrical placement of both deities on the south(-east) and north(-east). Other noteworthy characteristics are the short flames rendered in high relief behind Agni (**fig. 227**), a pointed attribute (flower?) in Nairṛta's left hand (**fig. 229**), the flag attribute of Vāyu (**fig. 231**; note also the flower in the right hand), which seems to have become a common feature in the 9th century, the long, thin purse of Kubera, held in his right hand (**fig. 232**; a cup? in the left), and the newly introduced pot in the lower left hand of Īśāna (**fig. 233**). It is a peculiar fact that the vehicles of the *dikpālas* at Kheḍ belong to the “mainstream” tradition at Osiān, even including the anthropomorphic *nara* for Kubera, while the broad faces and the

³⁴⁵ In the case of Kubera, this feature is understandable, since he is characteristically obese and hence clumsy. In the case of the wind god Vāyu, the only explanation is the fact that the *samapāda* posture matches the symmetrically draped cloth, for which earlier models might have been known. Both guardians exhibit the same clumsy posture on VT-1 (MEISTER 1991: pl. 342).

³⁴⁶ In WESSELS-MEVISSSEN (1994: 603–604), a few more cases of *dikpālas* with a secondary function as *dvārapālas* (door guardians) have been described.

³⁴⁷ For Vāyu see B. SAHAI 1975: **fig. 8**. The present whereabouts of this image could not be ascertained.

³⁴⁸ C.P. ATHERTON 1995: 207 *sqq.* A doubtful point in her argument is the liberal identification of a common Viṣṇu (Vāsudeva) sculpture as Aniruddha (*ibid.*: pl. 25), without any real iconographical justification (*ibid.*: 209: “His iconography is quite close to Vāsudeva's”).

³⁴⁹ MEISTER 1991: 237.

³⁵⁰ This has been expressed by REITZ (1993: 208–209): “Jedoch existiert eine Bildnische mit Indra [...], der man die gleiche Funktion an der Umgangsmauer wie bei besagten Tempeln in Chittor [Cittaūḍgaḍh] und Osian zuweisen kann”. ATHERTON (1995: 203–204) also assumes such an original position of directional guardians, but fails to note the different niche frame for Indra: “With other ambulatory structures, [...] these corner piers are customarily provided with niches containing directional guardian (*dikpāla*) figures on their central offsets. Unfortunately, no guardian images survive that would serve as candidates for these corner positions”. MEISTER (1991: 236) speaks of the “image of Indra, that now replaces the pilaster south of the antarāla”, but continues to assign it tentatively to another, no longer extant shrine.

³⁵¹ MEISTER 1991: 254–258.

large bodies in relaxed, gracefully curved, awe-inspiring stances more vividly recall the Cittaūḍgaḍh images.³⁵²

These features appear to be less marked among the images of the outer set on the *mūlaprāsāda* (MEISTER 1991: pls. 572, 573). They more closely resemble the fine *dikpāla* set of the Kāmeśvara temple at Auwā in the Pali district of Rajasthan (*ibid.*: pls. 477, 478). Here, the bodies are also slightly less imposing, and the gracefully flowing contours have their own charm. The deities, as at Ābānerī, are surrounded by worshippers and attending figures. They are all two-armed like those of the Pīpalādevī temple at Osiān. Some other features, such as the slightly limp posture (*ibid.*: 211), are reminiscent of this presumably contemporaneous temple (c. A.D. 800–825).

The development of the *dikpāla* representation seems to have reached a point of stagnation during the 9th century in Western India. The *dikpāla* sets on most of the temples³⁵³ of this phase in Western India are generally two-armed (in some cases including Īśāna as well³⁵⁴) and standing in relaxed postures, often with the free leg turned towards the nearest corner. The end of the 9th century witnessed the creation of some better shaped images of perfect proportions, with delicate surface treatment and standing in a complete equipoise.³⁵⁵ Here, both tendencies, the bold, statuesque appearance and the slightly limp, flowing form have been perfectly blended. The result is a very subtle rendering of a divine personage. In a variant form of the depiction, the deities appear seated on relatively large vehicles as at Bhuṇḍānā (*ibid.*: pls. 557, 558) and at Osiān, Viṣṇu temple no. 2 (fig. 202). Most of the members of the latter set are four-armed.

On some temples, irregularities in the placement of the directional guardians can be observed. In some cases, however, it cannot be ruled out that these are not caused by subsequent disturbance. The Śiva temple at Khīḍarpurā follows the same pattern as the Viṣṇu temple no. 2 at Osiān with the set starting from the (north)-east. In these cases, the sequence of deities has not been changed – only their placement varies. In other cases, however, the canonical sequence of *dikpālas* has been disturbed. Thus, Varuṇa has taken Vāyu's place and vice versa³⁵⁶ on the Nakṣimātā temple at Bhavānīpur (*ibid.*: 242). On the same temple, Indra and Īśāna are found on the eastern side of the edifice, in niches carved on pilasters supporting the roof of the *mukhamaṇḍapa* (porticus). This appears to be a logical arrangement, since the pilasters have left no space for niches on the *maṇḍovara* (exterior wall) itself.³⁵⁷

Two disorderly sequences are found on the temple no. 1 of the *satī* ground at Cittaūḍgaḍh and on the Jaleśvara temple at Māṇḍalgaḍh. On the former, the deities are Īśāna, Yama, Nairṛta, Varuṇa, Vāyu, and Agni, enumerated clockwise from the north(-west) to the south(-west), the western wall remaining devoid of directional guardians. In order to explain this aberration, MEISTER (1991: 301) has proposed the theory that the temple was originally planned with an entrance on the east instead of the west. That would mean that these parts of the building had to be completed before assembling them *in situ*. However, the positions of Īśāna and Agni cannot be explained in this way.

At Māṇḍalgaḍh, it is quite probable that the temple had been rebuilt around the year 1560 A.D. (*ibid.*: 304–305). The sequence, starting from the (south)-east, is: Kubera, *dikpāla* with ram? (*ibid.*: 306, it is stated that Agni has been shifted to the exterior of the porticus, *kapilī*), Yama, Nairṛta, Vāyu, a *dikpāla* without a vehicle, Indra, and Īśāna.

After the period under survey, two important developments occurred. The first one is the general introduction of four arms for the *dikpāla* images in the 10th century.³⁵⁸ The second development

is the increase in the number of guardians to ten. This inclusion of Brahmā and Ananta, guardians of the zenith and the nadir, respectively, however, seems to have been restricted to Western India. Due to a lack of documentation, only two examples can be mentioned here: Ghāṇerāv³⁵⁹ and Kāleśvarī-nī-nāl³⁶⁰, both belonging stylistically to the 10th century.

The stagnation in the *dikpāla* representation in the late 9th and early 10th centuries seems to have been followed by an innovative development of the late 10th century. However, antecedents for the new concepts may be traced to the earlier period. For the present it should suffice to recall that four-armed *dikpālas* – other than Īśāna – had been introduced at Cittaūḍgaḍh (Kālikāmātā: Agni; Kumbhaśyāma: *garbhagrha* set), Osiān (Viṣṇu temple no. 2: all except Indra and Agni), and at Baṭesarā in Central India.

2.3.2.4 Eastern India

Evidence of the canonical *dikpāla* images appears relatively late in Eastern India (Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and the adjacent areas of northern Andhra Pradesh). Some early traces, Muṇḍeśvarī, Nālandā and Dev Baruṇārak in Bihar and Bhubaneswar (Paraśurāmeśvara temple) in Orissa, have already been discussed. None of these early depictions seem to have had any direct descendants.³⁶¹

³⁵² These features, however, are not rare among the *dikpāla* images of the 9th century in Western India (cf. the set at Goth-Māṅglod, c. 825–850 A.D., MEISTER 1991: pls. 564, 565).

³⁵³ Examples of Western Indian 9th century temples exist at Khīḍarpurā (MEISTER 1991: pls. 548, 549), Bhavānīpur (*ibid.*: pl. 554), Bhuṇḍānā (*ibid.*: pls. 557, 558), Goth-Māṅglod (*ibid.*: pls. 564, 565), Cittaūḍgaḍh (*satī* ground, no. 1: *ibid.*: pl. 684; Kṣemaṅkari: pl. 686), Māṇḍalgaḍh (*ibid.*: pl. 691), (triple shrine: *ibid.*: pls. 695–697; west group, no. 1: *ibid.*: pl. 730), and Candrabhāgā (*ibid.*: pl. 727).

³⁵⁴ These cases are the Pīpalādevī temple at Osiān, the Kāmeśvara temple at Auwā (see above) and the Nakṣimātā temple at Bhavānīpur (MEISTER 1991: 243).

³⁵⁵ E.g. a loose sculpture of Vāyu, now in the Brooklyn Museum, acc. no. 86.183.3, measurements: 111.7x43.5 cm, published in D. MASON 1993: cat. no. 8.

³⁵⁶ Interestingly, this is not a unique case. It occurs in Central India at Dāṅg and Baṭesarā as well (already cited in WESSELS-MEVISSEN 1994: 604). Nairṛta and Vāyu are both assembled on the western wall at Baṭesarā (*ibid.*), Māṇḍalgaḍh (see below) and also on the Pīpalādevī temple at Osiān, where Varuṇa and Kubera appear in *pratiratha* positions (figs. 203, 204). A hybrid form of Varuṇa and Vāyu is attested at Sesai, where the deity with a floating garment on the north(-west) has a *makara* vehicle (fig. 181).

³⁵⁷ On a rock-cut temple with a similar ground plan, the Caturbhuja at Gwālor, no provision was made for the directional guardians on the east side. Although they could have been accommodated on the *mukhamaṇḍapa* pillars, both Īśāna and Indra were omitted (see below).

³⁵⁸ An important *terminus post quem* for the general introduction of four-armed *dikpālas* in Western and North-Central India is provided by the Ambikāmātā temple at Jagat, District Udaipur, dated A.D. 961. Two of its three sets consist of two-armed guardians (*prāsāda*, *praṇālamaṇḍapa*), but one set already shows four-armed deities (*praveśamaṇḍapa*). The most important study of four-armed *dikpālas* has been made by L. K. TRIPATHI (1965–66).

³⁵⁹ The Mahāvīra temple at Ghāṇerāv in District Pali, Rajasthan, dated to about the middle of the 10th century, is a north-facing *sāṇdhāra* complex. DHAKY (1968: 328–330) reports that the additional *dikpālas* Brahmā and Ananta are represented on the northern side, “on wall pilasters in the Mukhamaṇḍapa that stand in the immediate vicinity of the karnas of the Gūḍhamaṇḍapa”.

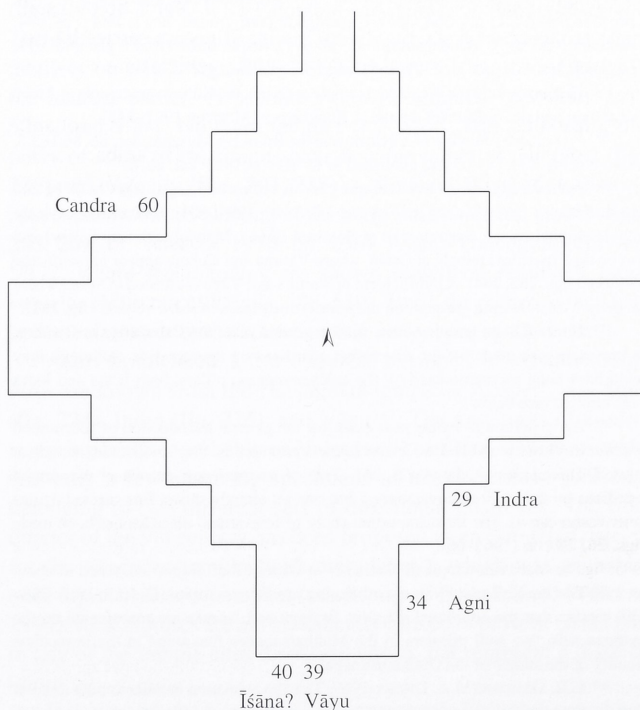
³⁶⁰ H. R. GAUDANI/M. A. DHAKY 1969. The site is located in Sabarkantha district/Gujarat. Some of the images of the original temple have been affixed to the present day structure. An image which can be plausibly identified as Ananta is illustrated on fig. 5. The deity has been provided with a cobra-hood and an unidentifiable vehicle. An image of Brahmā has not been preserved.

³⁶¹ All the sites mentioned have very distinct modes of representation: at Muṇḍeśvarī, the Manu Lokapāla group has been depicted on cornerstones, and a niche set including Daṇḍapāṇi occurs also here; at Dev Baruṇārak, a free-standing pillar shows the four *lokapālas* on its four sides; and on the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, a wall frieze exhibits a – probably incomplete – *dikpāla* set plus Daṇḍapāṇi. The basement frieze of the Stone temple no. 2 at Nālandā, however, may be compared in some respects with the evidence from Pāhārpur (to be discussed), since both have an incomplete set. All the deities at the earlier sites were depicted seated, with or without a vehicle.

While all eight *dikpālas* were depicted together on a frieze in the 9th century at Gaur (?; **fig. 240**), the group of directional guardians was incompletely represented on separate panels on the late 8th century Buddhist structure at Pāhārpur, Bangladesh (**figs. 234–237**). In both cases, the guardians are shown standing. In Orissa and the adjoining areas of Andhra Pradesh, an increasing number of – generally incomplete – *dikpāla* representations are known from about 750 A.D. onwards. It is difficult to precisely ascertain when the complete sets emerged on the walls of the temples, but most probably not before the 10th century. There are some signs of a Central Indian influence in Orissa, but this was not very dominant. Apart from the standing form of *dikpālas*, a riding variant appeared already at the beginning of the 9th century, at Bārambā and Mukhaliṅgam, which may represent a South Indian (Deccani) influence.

One of the important characteristics of *dikpālas* in Eastern India is the fact that they were generally two-armed (except for Īśāna).³⁶² Some additional attributes, *i.e.*, the noose for Yama and the elephant goad for Vāyu,³⁶³ remain restricted to the region of Orissa. Generally, however, all these results of the survey should be treated with caution, since there are only relatively few records distributed over a vast part of the country. This adherence to the more traditional two-armed form, especially in Orissa, is another indication that the eastern part did not follow the developmental trends in Western and Central India.

The so-called Somapura Vihāra at Pāhārpur (District Rajshahi, Bangladesh; **ill. 29**) has provided an extremely important evidence regarding the representation of directional guardians in North-east-



Ill. 29: Pāhārpur, Somapura Vihāra, plan sketch (panel numbers after DIKSHIT)

ern India in the late 8th century.³⁶⁴ In fact, some of their features point to an earlier source.³⁶⁵ The images of Indra (no. 29; **fig. 234**), Agni (no. 34; **fig. 235**), and Vāyu (no. 39; **fig. 236**) belong to a series of 63 surviving stone panels on the basement of the cruciform central structure at the Buddhist site. Images of Īśāna? (no. 40) and

Soma/Candra (no. 60; **fig. 237**) may have been associated with this group, but that cannot be conclusively proven. The *dikpāla* function of these deities is rather doubtful, since the relief panels are not placed in the “canonical” directions. Moreover, the set seems to have remained incomplete. The image of Candra on the (north-)west slightly differs from the others, since it is made of different material, black basalt.

There is a doubtful image of Īśāna (DIKSHIT 1938: pl. XXXIa)³⁶⁶ next to the Vāyu image. He stands without his vehicle. Among the securely identifiable *dikpālas*, only Indra is accompanied by his vehicle (**fig. 234**). He has an ornamented halo and holds a fruit in each hand. His smiling face with the horizontal eye on the forehead, his pearl necklace, *udarabandha* (“belly band”) and chain girdle have all been delicately modelled. The large elephant behind him leaves no space for any attendants. Agni (**fig. 235**) has boldly incised flames behind his body, starting at hip level. He is pot-bellied, wears a broad necklace and a *vastropavīta* (broad brāhmaṇical cord) like Candra, and holds rosary (r.) and waterpot (l.). It is a general feature of Eastern Indian Agni images that the left hand does not extend below the elbow. Agni is shown without a vehicle. He was probably originally flanked by two attendants.

The image of Vāyu (**fig. 236**), which had been earlier identified as Yama,³⁶⁷ has clear-cut symmetrical features and wears individually conceived ornaments. Like Agni and Soma, he stands in *samapāda* (feet together). The flowing *vastra* is beautifully draped over his head. Its lower ends almost touch the two attendants, male and female, who likewise hold pieces of cloth.³⁶⁸ His hair is done in a neat *ūrdhvakeśa* (demonic hairstyle) coiffure. The “cloth type” of Vāyu must have been popular in this region, since two fine terracotta plaques of seated Wind Gods with a flowing scarf above the head have been found. On one of the pieces, also from Pāhārpur, a tiny antelope is visible beside the god (**fig. 239**). The other example from Mahāsthān, Bogra district/Bangladesh (T.N. RAMACHANDRAN 1936–37: pl. XVIc), corresponds to the Pāhārpur plaque in many details. It has a similar, square shape, and the arms of Vāyu are also not positioned in a symmetrical manner, the left hand being held much lower than the right one. Only the antelope is missing. Keeping the three described Vāyu images in mind, it is significant to note that these are the only known representations of the Wind God holding a billowing cloth in Eastern India.

³⁶² Only a few exceptions have come up, such as the image of Indra at Madan Kāmdēv/Assam, assigned to the 11th century (M. DUTTA 1990: pl. 96), and the image of Agni at Kāmākhya/Assam (BHATTACHARJEE 1978: pl. 120) of about the same date. Both deities are four-armed.

³⁶³ This has not been recognized by T.E. DONALDSON (1987: 1146) in his general description of Orissan *dikpāla* images, perhaps due to the often damaged state of the sculptures.

³⁶⁴ DIKSHIT 1938 (on the history see p. 5); DEVA 1991: 403–404.

³⁶⁵ The fact that Indra holds only fruits but no thunderbolt is reminiscent of the impressive Indra image from Gayā of c. 7th century (SAHAI 1975: fig. 2; PAUL 1985: 133, n. 75) who holds a fruit in exactly the same manner in his extended right hand. In the latter case, the god is seated on an elephant throne in *dakṣiṇāpralambapāda* (right leg pendent).

³⁶⁶ With the trident held on the proper left side and the serpent earring on the right, the image resembles the Īśāna images at Caurāsi and Gaṇeśwarpur/Orissa (DONALDSON 1985: figs. 708, 726). Differences are the absence of the vehicle at Pāhārpur, and the differing positions of the right hand (gesture of bestowal of boons at Pāhārpur, rosary held at medium height in Orissa).

³⁶⁷ G. BHATTACHARYA (1987: 64; cf. also 1997: 780) comments on this and refers to M.T. DE MALLMANN (1963: 133, n. 5) as the first scholar to arrive at the correct identification. Nowadays, with more studies on iconography, in this case particularly TANABE (1990), such a mistake is prevented.

³⁶⁸ Although the upper portion resembles a noose, the two lower ends show that they are different versions of an inflated cloth.

In the case of Pāhārpur, the group of *dikpālas* seems to have remained incomplete, and some of the images are irregularly placed. The positioning of Indra and Agni was correct (ill. 29), however. Moreover, on the south-east, two terracotta images of a seated Agni can be seen above the stone sculptures.³⁶⁹ Among the *dikpālas*, Agni has been most frequently portrayed in the later art of Bihar and Bengal (e.g. B.CH. CHHABRA 1935: pl. VII, 5–7).

A complete stone panel, probably from Gaur/Bihar, showing a *dikpāla* frieze (fig. 240) is a rare piece of evidence from the 9th century (G. BHATTACHARYA 1987: 3). They are all shown standing in a slightly flexed posture, accompanied by Gaṇeśa on their right, two-armed, and mostly holding only one attribute. Their tiny vehicles appear in the register below them, which is quite unusual (from l.: elephant, goat, buffalo, reclining man, *makara*, gazelle, ram, -damaged-). The attributes are as follows: Indra – damaged/indistinct (r.); Agni – rosary (r.), sacrificial spoon (l.); Yama – skull-topped staff (*khaṭvāṅga*, r.); Nairṛta – sword (r.); Varuṇa – noose (r.); Vāyu – standard (l.); Kubera – probably club (r.) and purse (*nakulaka*, l.); Īśāna – rosary (r.), trident (l.).

The Bihar panel cannot be more precisely dated. Some aspects, such as the individually rendered crowns and body proportions, recall those of the *dikpāla* set at Kheḍ, Rajasthan (figs. 226–233), of about the middle of the 9th century. In this set as well, Vāyu holds the standard, which had not yet become a common feature in Central India. Further, the elongated money bag, draped around Kubera's shoulders like a scarf at Kheḍ (fig. 232), could be related to the elongated object in Kubera's right hand on the Bihar panel, which is too small to be convincingly identified as a club. The trident held in Īśāna's proper left hand also points to a Central Indian influence.

Further east, the evidence becomes even more scarce. A 10th century example of Varuṇa is a stone sculpture at Hajo/Assam (DUTTA 1990: pl. 46). The deity is seated in *padmāsana* (lotus posture) on a frontally facing *makara*, holding a serpent noose (*nāgapāśa*) in the left hand and a damaged object (conch?) in the right hand.

Benisāgar or Benusāgar, in Singhbhum district/Bihar, and situated close to the border to Orissa, has yielded a good number of sculptures. One such is an interesting image of the staff-bearing deity Daṇḍapāṇi with an obliquely held stick, of about the 7th century A.D. (ASHER 1980: pl. 103). Three loose *dikpāla* images of a set belonging to the 9th or 10th century have been described by DONALDSON (1985: 246; fig. 598 [Agni]; fig. 599 [Kubera]). Their bodies appear extremely stout and flabby. In fact, Agni's vehicle on his left also reflects this obesity. Agni has elongated earlobes and a beard, and holds a rosary (r.) and a waterpot (l.) at elbow level.³⁷⁰ Both Agni and Kubera wear an *upavīta*. Kubera is uniquely represented with four inverted pots surrounding him, in the corners. Streams of precious objects, most probably coins, discharge from the two lower pots as well as from the purse held in his left hand. The presence of several vessels containing treasures (*nidhipātra*) and the omission of a vehicle already correspond to the Orissan type of Kubera. Vāyu holds his standard and is accompanied by an antelope at Benisāgar.³⁷¹ Whether the “standard-bearing type” of Vāyu had always been common in Orissa and its northern borderlands – as in the Deccan – cannot be inconclusively ascertained, due to the paucity of extant images. It is, however, a fact that no image of the “cloth type” has come to light in this region at all.

In Orissa and at the related sites of Mukhaliṅgam, Nārāyaṇapuram and Gallāvalli in north-eastern Andhra Pradesh, the instalment of directional guardians in the corner niches of the temples can be traced back to the 10th century, most probably starting in the early

decades of that century.³⁷² A few earlier depictions, which are not yet “canonical”, are listed below:

- Bhubaneswar, Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara temple, c. 750 A.D.:³⁷³ Agni and Varuṇa flank the door of the sanctum; Agni (proper right jamb; DONALDSON 1985: fig. 125) holds a rosary (r.) and a waterpot (? l.), while Varuṇa (proper left jamb; *ibid.*: fig. 126) holds a noose (r.). Both deities wear the sacred thread (*upavīta*) and are provided with a halo. The upper part of Agni's body is – as usual – encircled by flames. The gods, who are both seated without a vehicle, probably did not serve as directional guardians here.³⁷⁴
- Mukhaliṅgam (District Srikakulam, A.P.), Madhukēśvara temple, c. first quarter of the 9th century:³⁷⁵ On the northern wall of the *jagamohana* is a richly adorned figure of Indra (DONALDSON 1985: fig. 333), standing in front of his elephant. He wears a broad crown and holds the thunderbolt (*vajra*) in his right hand, the left resting on the large knot of his sash. A noteworthy feature is the *upavīta* made up of three rows of pearls. Indra obviously does not serve as a *dikpāla* in this context as well.
- Bārambā (District Cuttack), Siṃhanātha temple, probably c. 850–75 A.D.:³⁷⁶ Agni can be found in the south-(eastern) corner niche of the *jagamohana* (fig. 241), and Yama is depicted in an ornamental frame (*gavākṣa*, in Orissa: *vajra-mastaka*) also on the south, but on the temple tower (*gaṇḍi*; fig. 242). Both deities are realistically portrayed as riding their vehicles moving to the proper left. Agni holds a rosary (r.) and a waterpot (l.), supported in his hand. Yama holds a staff (r.) and a noose (l.).³⁷⁷ The same attributes are carried by two attendants on both sides of Yama. The vehicles are shown in motion.
- Mukhaliṅgam: loose, fragmented frieze of *dikpālas*, probably roughly coeval with the riding *dikpālas* at Bārambā, viz. 9th century (GRAVELY/SIVARAMAMURTI 1939: pl. XVI, top).³⁷⁸ Four gods of an incompletely preserved set are extant, riding to the proper right: Yama, Nairṛta, Varuṇa, Vāyu. Their attributes are respectively: noose (r.), skull-topped staff (*khaṭvāṅga*, l.); ? (r.), sword (l.); noose (r.), fruit? (l.); standard (r.), elephant goad? (l.). The most significant detail is a donkey as Nairṛta's vehicle. A model for such a four-legged

³⁶⁹ Gerd Mevissen 1997, personal communication.

³⁷⁰ This appears to be a typical Eastern Indian characteristic, where the vase is supported by the hand held at elbow level. This distinctive feature of supporting the water vessel can already be observed in the early 7th century, viz. at Muṇḍeśvari/Bihar (figs. 36, 38), and on the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, Bhubaneswar (e.g. DONALDSON 1985: fig. 79).

³⁷¹ The image has been published by K.C. PANIGRAHI 1956: fig. III. A stout antelope stands on the proper left of the god, who holds the broken portion of his attribute on the same side.

³⁷² The authors P. ACHARYA (1953) and H.C. DAS (1974), who have specifically dealt with *dikpālas* in Orissa, did not yet have sufficient data to be able to trace the origins. DONALDSON (1987: 1141–1143) was the first one to describe the outlines of the early development of *dikpālas* in this region. The partly unsettled chronology of Orissan temples is clearly reflected in the various works by the authors DONALDSON (1985–87), MITRA (1991) and W. SMITH (1994). DONALDSON (1985: 274, 282) and SMITH (1994: 135) differ in their dates for the Vārāhi temple at Caurāsi and the Pañcapāṇḍava temple at Gaṇeśwarpur that contain the earliest extant oriented *dikpālas*, by more than 50 years. As the latter author's view is based on an in-depth study of a particular temple (Muktesvara temple, Bhubaneswar) related to some of the temples under discussion, his assignment has been accepted here (c. 970 A.D. for Gaṇeśwarpur, c. 985 for Caurāsi). DONALDSON (*ibid.*) places Caurāsi in the first quarter of the 10th century, Gaṇeśwarpur in the second. HARLE (1986: 164) still adhered to the earlier opinions, assigning the Caurāsi temple to the 9th century.

vehicle could only have come from Central India. The other vehicles are the traditional ones.

- Mukhalingam, Someśvara temple, c. 900 A.D.:³⁷⁹ an isolated image of Agni as *lalāṭabimba* (crest figure) above an Ardhanārīśvara panel, *jaṅghā* (wall-frieze), (south-)east (MITRA 1991: pl. 945). Agni is bearded, stands in the rigid *samapāda* posture, wears a simple necklace and a long sacred thread, and holds a rosary (r.) and a waterpot (l.) slightly above elbow level. He is flanked by attendants but has no vehicle. The corresponding parts of the temple (*lalāṭabimbās* of the niches) do not contain any *dikpālas*.
- Charda (District Bolangir), Kapileśvara temple, c. early 10th century:³⁸⁰ a loose relief fragment of a four-armed Agni image (DONALDSON 1985: fig. 496). This is a rare example of a four-armed *dikpāla* – other than Īśāna – in Orissa. Another unique feature is the extended right arm holding the waterpot.³⁸¹ This feature points to an influence from another region, most likely Central India, where four-armed *dikpāla* sets were produced from the latter part of the 9th century onwards (e.g. at Nacnā, see above). The garland-like loops below the girdle also point to such an affiliation. A significant aspect about this “import” is that it was not copied or reproduced in Orissa afterwards. The corner niches of the temple are now empty, but it is very likely that the Agni image was once placed in such a niche, probably forming part of a *dikpāla* set.
- Nārāyaṇapuram (District Vizianagaram³⁸², A.P.), Nilakāṇṭheśvara temple, around 900 A.D.:³⁸³ frieze of *dikpālas* on the doorjambs of the sanctum door (MITRA 1987: figs. 19–21), starting from below, (proper) right. As was common with the other groups of deities, the directional guardians also occupy oblong panels on the outer doorframe, bordered by decorative strips. As the relief panels, which are in a poor state of preservation, show the earliest extant complete *dikpāla* group, MITRA’s (1987: 202–203) description shall be cited here at full length:

Starting from the bottom niche of the southern jamb are:

- (i) two-armed Indra with a thunderbolt in his left hand, a high *mukuta*, a halo behind the head and the dangling ends of the scarf, seated in *pariṇkāśana* with his *vāhana* elephant below the seat;
- (ii) pot-bellied two-armed Agni with flames around his head and shoulders and a water-pot (*kamaṇḍalu*) in his left hand [, seated] in *pariṇkāśana* with his ram below;
- (iii) pot-bellied fierce-looking³⁸⁴ two-armed Yama holding a *daṇḍa* with his right hand, seated in *mahārājājalilā*, with a humped bull below;
- (iv) fierce-looking Nirṛti (lower portion broken, the animal *vāhana* partly preserved) with a sword [r.];
- (v) Varuṇa (partly preserved, on the top of the northern jamb) with a *pāśa*;
- (vi) two-armed Vāyu bearing the staff of a banner in his left hand, [seated] in *mahārājājalilā*, with his mount deer below;
- (vii) pot-bellied two-armed Kubera with a halo behind the head [, seated] in *mahārājājalilā* (*vāhana* damaged) and
- (viii) two-armed Īśāna holding a trident in his left hand [, seated] in *mahārājājalilā*, with his bull below.

The noteworthy details of this early assembly of *dikpālas* are the bull vehicle for Yama and an animal vehicle for Nairṛta. The latter could be compared with the donkey of the Mukhalingam frieze mentioned above. The author failed to mention the attribute in Kubera’s right hand, which seems to be a club, and the usual rosary in Agni’s right hand. There were probably other additional attributes, which have since been obliterated. Another important feature is the two-armed form of Īśāna, which was common in the 9th century (and until c. 950 A.D.) in Central India, of which a few examples exist in Orissan art.

In the vicinity of Mukhalingam and Nārāyaṇapuram, another *dikpāla*-bearing temple has only recently been uncovered: the Kāmeśvara at Gallāvalli (District Vizianagaram), which has been variously assigned to the 9th or the 11th century.³⁸⁵ After evaluating all the available evidence, I have come to the conclusion that this temple should be assigned to c. first half or middle of the 10th century, taking into account the close resemblance of its sculptural

³⁷⁹ MITRA 1991: caption of plate 894.

³⁷⁴ They may have been employed to convey a fire-water (on a more subtle level: sun-and-moon) symbolism, or probably exemplify the roles of the respective planetary deities above them: Sūrya in the case of Agni, and Rāhu in the case of Varuṇa. The former two are both connected with the positive, non-destructive aspect of fire, the latter two may be regarded as potentially dangerous.

³⁷⁵ MITRA 1991: 430. Dates assigned by other authors vary between the second half of the 8th century and the middle of the 9th century.

³⁷⁶ The dates for this temple also differ considerably. We refer to the recent date of SMITH (1994: 135). The figure of Yama on the lower central part of the tower can be seen on pl. 903 in MITRA 1991.

³⁷⁷ These attributes are typical for Yama in Orissa, but do not occur anywhere else. DONALDSON (1987: 1145) is unsure about the noose and describes it as a rosary in the god’s left hand. However, what he regards as a rosary must be the end of the noose.

³⁷⁸ The authors propose a tentative 10th century date. However, a few details differ from the Bārambā representations. Since Yama is depicted at both sites, a comparison reveals that the buffalo’s head and horns are much bigger and differently shaped at Mukhalingam. The god here also seems to have an *ugra* (demonic) face and wears *ūrdhvakeśa* (hair standing on end) unlike his counterpart at Bārambā. His staff is a *khaṭvāṅga* (skull-topped staff), and his legs are held in a less angular position. In both cases, the noose is – unusually – held in the right hand of the deities, although in Orissa, the noose is generally shown in the proper left hand. Nairṛta’s sword is also shown on the left side, which does not occur anywhere else. Thus, the published photography of the frieze may be a mirror image of the original.

³⁷⁹ This date has been assigned by SMITH (1994: 135), whom I prefer to follow in the cases of the temples discussed by him.

³⁸⁰ SMITH 1994: 135; cf. also to his discussion of the temple pp. 111–112.

³⁸¹ As has been stated earlier, the feature of Agni’s left arm not extending below the level of the elbow is a general sign of Eastern Indian images. It already occurs in the earlier art of Bhubaneswar, e.g. on a narrative frieze of the Śatruṅheśvara temple (DONALDSON 1987: fig. 3637).

³⁸² LINDA (1990: 232), in her account of the temples at this site, locates it in the śrīkaṭakulam district. This may represent an older district division.

³⁸³ Both MITRA (1987) and LINDA (1990) independently date the group of temples to the end of the 9th century or early 10th century. The latter author’s main argument is the similarity with the Someśvara temple at Mukhalingam, which is also assigned by SMITH (1994: 135) to c. 900.

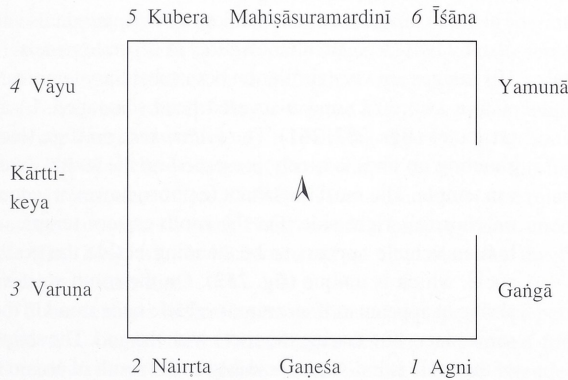
³⁸⁴ This expression of MITRA apparently includes the *ūrdhvakeśa* coiffure.

³⁸⁵ In the first publication by KRISHNA KUMARI (1985–86: 58; the site is referred to as “Galiavalli”) the temple was placed in the 11th century on the basis of several common features with the Someśvara at Mukhalingam. Later, iconometric studies were undertaken, which, although based on the same iconometrical chart (JAYA SREE 1988–89: 57; J. VIJAYA LAKSHMI/M. KRISHNA KUMARI 1991: 117), led the authors to different conclusions and chronological assignments. JAYA SREE (1988–89: 58) believed that the iconometric system of the Gallāvalli images more closely resembles that of the Madhukeśvara at Mukhalingam and therefore proposed the first half of the 9th century as the probable date. In the monograph on the temple, VIJAYA LAKSHMI and KRISHNA KUMARI (1991: 116) saw the closest affinity between the Bhimeśvara at Mukhalingam and the temple under discussion. They proposed the first half of the 11th century as its date. They have made no reference at all to JAYA SREE’s article. Both the latter publications should not have relied exclusively on iconometry for assigning a date to the Kāmeśvara temple.

images with the Nīlakaṇṭheśvara at Nārāyaṇapuram and the Someśvara at Mukhalingam.³⁸⁶

However, it should be noted that the placement of directional guardians is quite irregular, and that both Indra and Yama are absent here (III. 30). A general characteristic of the Gallāvalli figures is a fresh, innovative attitude towards the concept of *dikpālas*. Every single panel has been carefully conceived, and except for a certain flabbiness in their bodies, these figures and the other details could almost surpass their counterparts on the well-known Rājarañi temple at Bhubaneswar.³⁸⁷

The temple consists only of a tower (*deul*) with rather simple base mouldings (VIJAYA LAKSHMI/KRISHNA KUMARI 1991: pl. 3a) above a plinth. It faces east. The *dikpālas* are found on the southern, western, and northern walls, while the corresponding niches on the east enclose the river goddesses Gaṅgā on the (south-)east and Yamunā on the (north-)east. The river deities also flank the sanctum doors on the related temples Nīlakaṇṭheśvara at Nārāyaṇapuram and Someśvara at Mukhalingam. It is therefore apparent that the tradition of the large-size river goddesses, presumably existing on earlier temples, was maintained, while room was made for the *dikpāla* figures only in the six remaining niches.



III. 30: Gallāvalli, Kāmeśvara temple, plan sketch

The members of this nearly canonical *dikpāla* set require a detailed description:

- 1 **Agni (fig. 243)** on the south(-east) stands in a hieratic pose, with his legs apart. His hair is tied in *jaṭāmukūṭa* (hair-crown). He is bearded and without earrings. His arms are bent at elbow level and carry a large, round rosary (r.) and a pot (l.). Agni's lower garment is particularly long. Like the other *dikpālas*, he wears a necklace, a long chain *upavīta* (sacred thread), *keyuras* (upper arm bracelets) and a girdle. Flames encircle his head and shoulders. On the proper right side, they extend further down and seem to be issuing from the goat vehicle standing below. As an unusual feature, two fire altars flank the god's head. An attendant on the proper left side holds a lance (later an attribute of Agni in Orissa) in his right hand.
- 2 **Nairṛta (fig. 244)**, on the south(-west), wielding a sword in his right and carrying a severed head in his left hand, represents a type which we have not yet come across here. Like the following members of the set, his lower garment is short, and he wears a crown (probably the "basket" type *karaṇḍamukūṭa*). Fangs can be seen protruding from his mouth. Above, flanking the god, is a pair of rosettes, which also sometimes occurs on the panels at Nārāyaṇapuram (LINDA 1990: pls. 26, 27, 29). On Nairṛta's proper right side, a stout warrior holds a

dagger or short sword pointing downwards in front of his body. His hair is standing on end (*ārdhvakeśa*) and he wears the usual ornaments, including bangles. The deity stands on a prostrate man-vehicle, with the unique attributes of a sword and a shield. Unlike most other representations of this anthropomorphic vehicle, he does not support his head with his hand.

- 3 **Varuṇa (fig. 245)** on the (south-)west also has a few unusual features. Like all the guardians except for Agni, he stands in a relaxed stance. His right hand holds a ribbed vessel at elbow level, the left hand rests on the hip and holds a noose, the loop of which appears besides Varuṇa's head. A female attendant holding something indistinct (also a noose?) stands on the proper right, beside of the open mouth of a *makara*. The god's element, water, is represented by wavy incised lines on the plinth below. The vessel attribute may also point to the same, aquatic symbolism.
- 4 **Vāyu (fig. 246)**, on the (north-)west, holds two attributes, which typically occur in Orissa. His left hand holds a mighty standard, while his right wields an elephant goad. A faint allusion to his sphere, wind, is made by the fluttering end of his sash. On his proper right stands an animal-headed attendant, leaning on a mace and probably holding a fly-whisk in his left hand. The figure could represent the personified vehicle of the god, but the horns are rather short for an antelope.
- 5 **Kubera (fig. 247)** is depicted on the north(-west).³⁸⁸ He has a particularly obese body, which is further exaggerated by his stance. Like Varuṇa, he holds a ribbed vessel in his right hand. He wears the customary ornaments, but an uncommon feature is the mighty club in his left hand. Another unusual feature is a small tree on the proper right side, which extends below Kubera's arm. It seems to have a carved face, which would be unusual, and obviously represents *kalpavṛkṣa*, the wish-fulfilling tree. The *kalpavṛkṣa* motive also appears on the Rājarañi temple (DONALDSON 1985: 315), but the mode of depiction is completely unique here. A pot-bellied dwarf, holding a cup like Kubera, squats below the tree.
- 6 **Īśāna (fig. 248)** on the north(-east) is shown two-armed as the others. His right hand is extended in *cinmudrā* (thumb and index finger touching) in the direction of his bull vehicle. The trident in his left hand has a particularly long handle and is supported by a dwarfish figure. Two rosettes flank the head of the deity.

³⁸⁶ The basic concepts of the images of Kārttikeya and Mahiṣāsūramardini are exactly the same: cf. VIJAYA LAKSHMI/KRISHNA KUMARI 1991: pl. 8 with LINDA 1990: pl. 25 and DONALDSON 1987: pl. 3033 for Kārttikeya; cf. VIJAYA LAKSHMI/KRISHNA KUMARI 1991: pl. 9 with LINDA 1990: pl. 28 and DONALDSON 1987: pl. 3196 for Mahiṣāsūramardini. Moreover, a set of planetary deities (*navagrahas*) with an unusual enthroned figure of Ketu with folded hands (*añjali*) is shared by the Kāmeśvara (VIJAYA LAKSHMI/KRISHNA KUMARI 1991: pl. 12) and the Someśvara (DONALDSON 1986: fig. 2601). It is quite obvious that the same workshop which constructed the Someśvara temple at Mukhalingam was also responsible for the erection of several other shrines in a region extending at least as far south as the vicinity of Vizianagaram (Dibbeśvara temple at Sarapalli, DONALDSON 1985: figs. 619–627).

³⁸⁷ This impressive *dikpāla* set of about 1030 A.D. has been illustrated in DONALDSON 1985: figs. 821–828. There are quite a few common traits between the Gallāvalli and Rājarañi *dikpālas*, but it seems impossible to judge from their features only, which was the earlier set. The Gallāvalli set is certainly not a poor copy of the Rājarañi set. I am inclined to believe that in the latter the concept of the former one was improved upon, by omitting some of its too many details. Obvious differences are: the four-armed form of Īśāna and the much shorter *upavītas* (sacred threads) of the *dikpālas* on the Rājarañi temple. Later images of the directional guardians in Orissa are always seated.

³⁸⁸ In the mentioned publications, Kubera has been wrongly identified as Īśāna and vice versa (e.g. VIJAYA LAKSHMI/KRISHNA KUMARI 1991: 65).

It is difficult to say why the placement of *dikpālas* is so unusual at Gallāvalli. It could be an irregularity which often occurs in early, experimental sets. The distribution of *dikpālas* at Gallāvalli, however, recalls their positioning on the Svarga Brahmā temple at Ālampur (ill. 11). The directional guardians occupy the corresponding *karṇa* (corner) niches there, but some of those present at Ālampur are missing at Gallāvalli: Indra, Yama, Soma, and Sūrya.³⁸⁹ The basis for this resemblance, however, could be the supposed starting point of the set: at both the early *dikpāla* sites of Caurāsi and Gaṇeśwarpur (to be discussed), there are sets starting with Indra on the (north)-east. All guardians except for Agni would be placed in their appropriate positions, provided, this order had been employed at Gallāvalli. With the east wall not included in the *dikpāla* concept, the set should have started with Yama on the south(-east). Such a starting point might have been avoided, because of Yama's inauspicious nature.

There are two more temples with early standing *dikpāla* images in Orissa: the Vārāhī temple at Caurāsi (District Puri), and the Vaiṣṇava Pañcapāṇḍava complex at Gaṇeśwarpur (District Cuttack), which have been regarded by DONALDSON (1987: 1142) as the earliest evidence for the placement of the *dikpālas* in their canonically assigned directions. In the latter case, the *dikpālas* are preserved only in the *karṇa* niches of two subsidiary shrines (south-eastern and south-western) of a *pañcāyatana* complex, both of which have their doors on the northern side. The only other surviving subsidiary temple (north-west) shows scenes from the life of Kṛṣṇa in the respective niches. At Caurāsi, the directional guardians are installed on the *jaḡamohana*. The recently assigned dates are c. 970 A.D. for Gaṇeśwarpur and c. 985 A.D. for Caurāsi.³⁹⁰ It is quite difficult to place the extant *dikpālas* in a relative chronology, as the partly corroded figures in the rather small niches (heights of about 26 cm) can hardly be compared to the larger, more elaborate panels at Gallāvalli.

The female counterparts of the *dikpālas*, installed in the neighbouring niches, respectively (DONALDSON 1985: figs. 704–709), have an early occurrence at Caurāsi.³⁹¹ A rare feature at this site which DONALDSON observed (*ibid.*: 1145) is that Nairṛta is not yet accompanied by the prostrate human vehicle, which becomes common later in Orissa, but by a dancing figure. A corresponding dancing figure also appears on the Rājarāñī temple at Bhubaneswar (*ibid.*: fig. 824).

The order in which the *dikpālas* were shown is of considerable significance. At Caurāsi and on the south-eastern shrine at Gaṇeśwarpur, the sequence starts with Indra on the (north)-east.³⁹² However, DONALDSON (*ibid.*: 1142) failed to notice the fact that the south-western temple bears a set which is arranged in the usual way, with Indra situated on the (south)-east. Further, there are a few significant variations in the rendering of the *dikpālas* on the south-eastern and south-western shrines at Gaṇeśwarpur. The images will therefore be discussed – deity-wise – in detail. Their typical standing posture is with a slight flexion (*ābhaṅga*):

Indra The figures of Indra (figs. 249, 257) resemble each other largely. In both cases, there is no trace of a thunderbolt in the damaged right hand. Perhaps some other object was held by the god. His left hand rests on the hip (*kaṭihasta*). The rendering of the elephant vehicle is significantly different. On the south-eastern temple, the animal seems to be seated on Indra's right side (perhaps shown partly anthropomorphic), while on the south-western shrine, only the forepart of the striding animal has been portrayed, held by a rope on the god's left side.

Agni

Both versions of the fire-god (figs. 250, 258) must have shown him carrying the typical attributes rosary and waterpot (not preserved on the south-western shrine). A striking difference is the hieratic posture on the south-western shrine, which is reminiscent of Gallāvalli (fig. 243). In this case, and probably also in the other version, fires seem to have been depicted floating above as at Gallāvalli. The vehicle and an attendant must have accompanied Agni on the south-western shrine. Both are apparently absent on the south-eastern temple.

Yama

In the depiction of Yama, there are also obvious differences (figs. 251, 259, 260). The god occurs once on the south-eastern temple, with a stout, obese figure, and twice on the south-western shrine, where he is shown with an ideal body: on a recessed panel in the *bhadra* position (projecting wall portion) above the cornice (fig. 259), and in the regular position on the south(-west) (fig. 260). His attributes are generally a staff (r.) and a noose (l.), but in the latter image, the right arm is extended in the direction of the vehicle and does not hold an attribute. The vehicle is absent on the south-eastern temple and in the upper version on the south-western shrine. The latter image is directly flanked by two attendants and also by two large attendant figures in separate panels.

Nairṛta

His images are very similar on both subsidiary temples – with a sword (r.) and a severed head (damaged, l.) as attributes (figs. 252, 261). The *ūrdhvakeśa* coiffure (hair standing on end) is nicely preserved on the south-western temple. The most important features, however, occur on Nairṛta's right side. On the south-eastern temple, a human vehicle appears to be standing beside the god's socle, which is unique (fig. 252). On the south-western shrine, it appears as if an animal vehicle once stood in the same place, but sharing the socle with the god. The shape of the socle is indistinct, possibly as the result of erosion. The images of Varuṇa (figs. 253, 262) also closely resemble each other. The right arm is extended towards a small *makara* in the (proper) right corner, and the left hand, resting on the hip, holds the rope of the circular noose. The position and attribute of the left hand correspond with the counterpart at Gallāvalli (fig. 245). Varuṇa wears a conical crown and large round earrings like most of the other *dikpālas*.

Varuṇa

Vāyu

The images of Vāyu (figs. 254, 263) also exhibit very similar features, except for the position of the left arm, which is held lower on the south-eastern shrine. The

³⁸⁹ Soma and Sūrya, who are associated with the *dikpāla* group at Ālampur, appear flanking the door, which is embellished by an *aṣṭadikpāla* set, at Nārāyaṇapuram, Nilakaṇṭheśvara temple, in the vicinity of Gallāvalli (see above). Thus, some kind of association of these deities also occurs there.

³⁹⁰ SMITH 1994: 135; DONALDSON's date is first quarter of the 10th century for Caurāsi (1985: 274) and second quarter of the 10th century for Gaṇeśwarpur (*ibid.*: 282), thus differing not only in the dates but also in the chronological sequence of the temples.

³⁹¹ The female forms generally carry the same attributes. As an interesting detail, the trident is held on different sides in the case of Īśāna and his consort. He holds it in his left, while she has it on her right. There may be some gender-specific symbolism behind this. A comparable sculpture, probably Nairṛti, the female counterpart of Nairṛta, is known from Khiching (near Benisāgar, Bihar; DONALDSON 1985: fig. 587). The context and date of this figure are uncertain, however.

³⁹² In this connection, it should be noted that the Indra image of the Viṣṇupāda temple at Gayā/Bihar (cf. note 483), is presently worshipped in a shrine in the north-eastern corner of the compound.

attributes elephant goad (r.) and standard (l.) correspond to those at Gallāvalli (fig. 246). The figures in the lower portion is quite indistinct. On the south-eastern shrine at least, there seems to be an attendant and a vehicle flanking the god.

Kubera The stance and the positions of the arms are the same in both cases (figs. 255, 264). His right hand holds a club, the left arm is broken. The shapes below are again indistinct. It is probable that an attendant stood on the (proper) right side and that the forepart of a leaping ram was depicted on the god's left.

Īśāna The two-armed Īśāna images (figs. 256, 265) also do not exhibit any significant differences. His right hand is raised to the elbow level and probably held a rosary. His left hand holds a long-handled trident (top damaged), the lower end of which is supported by a dwarfish attendant. This detail is also present at Gallāvalli (fig. 248). The bull vehicle appears to the right of the god. A characteristic feature at Gaṇeśwarpur is the serpent earring in Īśāna's right ear.

The variation in the images depicting the same deities at Gaṇeśwarpur as well as a varying placement of the gods may be considered as indicative of an early stage of *dikpāla* representation. The theme was handled in an individual manner and not according to a stereotyped concept. Regarding the later Orissan convention of showing Nairṛta's vehicle as a reclining figure (e.g. DONALDSON 1985: fig. 824), the evidence at Gaṇeśwarpur shows that this had not yet been introduced here. Gallāvalli has a unique version related to the later concept, showing Nairṛta with a human figure under his feet (fig. 244), who is characterized as a warrior like the figure standing besides him.

Some features indicating a significant correspondence between Gallāvalli, Caurāsi and Gaṇeśwarpur (i.e. the two-armed form of Īśāna, always with an attendant dwarf on the left; the extended left hand of Varuṇa bearing a noose; Vāyu carrying two attributes) are not continued in the 11th century Rājaraṇī temple. Here, in the case of Varuṇa, the hand remains higher, and Īśāna is four-armed and without a dwarf attendant. Although the evidence is somewhat meagre, it is quite likely that the three sites with early *dikpāla* sets on the *jaṅghā* (wall frieze) portion share a tradition of *dikpāla* representation, which was inspired by the Central Indian art of the late 9th/early 10th centuries. As the lively imagery at Gallāvalli shows, some other, probably indigenous, elements were employed to render the theme in an almost epic manner, elements that are missing in the somewhat lifeless *dikpāla* sculptures of that period in Central India. Both traits, 'borrowed' and indigenous, of the Orissan region were ingeniously perfected on the 11th century Rājaraṇī temple at Bhubaneswar.

2.3.2.5 Southern India

There are only a few pieces of evidence in the modern state of Tamilnadu from the period under discussion, which witnesses the earliest occurrence of directional guardians in the extreme south of the subcontinent. Although the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñcīpuram was constructed prior to 750 A.D., it will be considered as a supposed direct predecessor of temples with *dikpāla* representations in the south in this section. The absence of any securely identifiable complete set of four or eight directional guardians before 1000 A.D. makes it doubtful that the group as a whole was known at this stage

at all. The Dharmapuri and Armamalai ceiling panels, which have been discussed above, are situated quite far to the south (northern Tamilnadu), but they form a stray evidence, following the Deccani tradition. However, the *aṣṭadikpālas* were a standard programme of most of the southern temples at least from the 11th century onwards. The most impressive example for this full-fledged stage of *dikpāla* representation, the great Rājaraṇī temple at Tañjāvūr (c. 995–1010 A.D.)³⁹³, was begun at the very end of the period under discussion. It will be briefly included here, as well as its immediate successor, the Rājendraśaivāra at Gaṅgaikōṇḍacōlapuram.

On the other hand, the few early *dikpāla* images from the south may have been just a faint echo of the tradition of their representation in the Deccan, and there are good reasons to assume that somewhat different concepts about heavenly guardians might have prevailed in the region.

The Pallava Kailāsanātha or Rājasimheśvara temple, a well known architectural gem of about the first quarter of the 8th century,³⁹⁴ according to R. NAGASWAMY (1969: 13) has representations of the 32 *padadevatās*, including *dikpālas*, of a *vāstupuruṣa-maṇḍala* (foundation diagram) portrayed on reliefs in the outer *prākāra*, which contains a sequence of 58 *devakulikās* (miniature temples for "related" deities).³⁹⁵ Out of the four deities Agni³⁹⁶, Yama³⁹⁷, Soma and Īśāna, which he identifies, the probable Soma³⁹⁸ (fig. 285) and Īśāna³⁹⁹ (fig. 286) images are illustrated here. The presence of a halo in the former case points to a probable identification as Candra.⁴⁰⁰ However, the Moon God was not necessarily meant to function as a *dikpāla*, and he is found on the northern side of other early southern temples also.⁴⁰¹ The personage on the north-east (fig. 286), seated and leaning on a mighty club placed on the ground upside-down, exceptionally without a female partner, could be Īśāna, but there is no parallel evidence for such a form of the god. In any case, the hypothetical installation of a complete group of directional guardians in the *prākāra* of the Kailāsanātha temple remains doubtful.

A conscious differentiation of the directions in the same temple becomes apparent in the choice of the images adorning the lower

³⁹³ P. PICHARD *et al.* 1994: 9.

³⁹⁴ For a description see K.R. SRINIVASAN 1983: 59–64. An early account of the temple has been made by A. REA 1909: 18–42.

³⁹⁵ REA (1909: 29–35) counted only 55 cells. He did not count three of them, because he regarded them as structurally incomplete.

³⁹⁶ Between cell 3 and the south-east corner recess, according to REA (1909: 30). It is very likely that the figure's hair appears in the form of flames (as detected by Dr. R. Nagaswamy, personal comm.). Adjoining this relief on the right, very close to the south-eastern corner, there is an image of Gaṇeśa (not numbered by REA). Thus, Agni does not exactly occupy the corner position.

³⁹⁷ NAGASWAMY 1969: 22, between cells 12 and 13. No such deity or divine couple, which should be located between Trivikrama (REA's cell 11) and the *amṛtaman-thana* scene (between cells 11 and 12) is described by REA (1909: 31). REA suggests that Yama is represented among other figures on a panel in cell 10. The presence of Yama on the outer wall (south) of the slightly later Mukteśvara temple at the same site has been postulated by L'HERNAULT (1978: plan V). It is likewise doubtful, and no other probable *dikpāla* can be identified there. In this connection, it may be significant to note that Yama appears in the list of *parivāradevatās* (surrounding "related" deities) at Tirupparaiturai of c. 885 A.D. (THIAGARAJAN 1989: 240), which does not include any other member of the *dikpāla* group.

³⁹⁸ NAGASWAMY 1969: 24. REA (1909: 34) describes the haloed image as located between cells 43 and 44.

³⁹⁹ NAGASWAMY: *ibid.* According to REA's list, the image is located between cell 52 and the north-east corner.

⁴⁰⁰ D. THIAGARAJAN (1989: 172; cf. pl. 28) comments: "Although he may be Candra [,] attributes associate him equally with Sūrya in the Pallava period II".

⁴⁰¹ E.g. on the third *tala* of the Dharmarājaraṭha at Māmallapuram, c. mid-7th century (SRINIVASAN 1983: 40); likewise on the Pāṇḍya Veṅṅuvaṅkōvil at Kaḷugumalai, second *tala*, *grhapiṇḍi* of c. 800 A.D. (THIAGARAJAN 1989: 222–223).

parts of the shafts of the pillars flanking the oblong shrines in the south and north walls and of the *gopura* tower on the west (now closed) of the *prākāra*. Thus, five-hooded *nāgas* (serpent kings) with hands in *añjalimudrā* are restricted to the western *gopura* tower (HARLE 1963: pls. 11, 12). Their presence alludes to the aquatic character of the western region, which is perceived in Buddhism and Hinduism alike.

A third instance of a possible reference to the *dikpāla* complex is the depiction of heavenly riders ascending above a Viṇādhara Śiva with attendants (REA's cell 46, north; **fig. 287**). Both riders are accompanied by their consorts, seated behind them as usual. The couples sit close to each other and are shown in profile. The animals are – doubtless – bulls, so that both riders can be subsumed under the “Īśāna type”. One of the possible meanings could be the concept that the heavenly guardians are all identical with Śiva, a concept, which is also expressed in the *garbhagrha* set of the Kumbhaśyāma temple at Cittaūdgaḍh. A frieze on the upper portion of the rear wall in the shrine of the Airāvateśvara temple at Kāñcīpuram (REA 1909: pl. CXVI) is reminiscent of the ascending riders of the Kailāsanātha temple. Here also, riding couples appear on bulls. There are altogether six of them, three proceeding to the left and three to the right.

Another interesting instance of heavenly riders, which, like the latter example, exhibits a remarkable degree of symmetry, occurs on a Jaina panel at Kaḷugumalai (DE LIPPE 1978: pl. 194). The well-known rock-cut temple Veṭṭuvañkōvil is the earliest major stone monument in the extreme south (formerly Tirunelveli dist.).⁴⁰² It has been assigned to c. 800 A.D. (SOUNDARA RAJAN 1983: 83). Above an unobtrusive Jina figure seated on a lion throne, the usual three-tiered parasol and two rows of creepers are depicted. The upper row consists of dancers, musicians and mythical sages. It is flanked on both sides by a flying male figure which seem to represent Sūrya and Candra. Above this section, the upper space is exclusively filled by riders, which may be understood as heavenly guardians, plus two standing attendants. The central figure is shown frontally, seated on a huge elephant and attended by two standing males. On both sides of this central group, four riders, arranged in two tiers, proceed towards the centre. Their vehicles are: lion (upper row, inner figures), serpent (l.) and bird (r.; upper row, outer figures), *yāli* (mythical creature; lower row, inner figures), horse (lower row, outer figures). All the riders have one arm raised. It looks as if some of them are holding banners. The central elephant rider could be Indra. However, in South India, the god Kārttikeya has been represented seated on an elephant, generally on the rear side of a temple, from about the middle of the 7th century onwards (L'HERNAULT 1978: 141–142).⁴⁰³ Although Indra was traditionally worshipped in the region, early depictions of this deity are, strangely, wanting⁴⁰⁴. Thus, the Jaina relief at Kaḷugumalai appears to depict a group of four or eight divine warriors or guardians led by Kārttikeya as a general of armies.⁴⁰⁵ The vehicles of the riders, however, have nothing in common with the usual *dikpāla* vehicles. They might have been chosen arbitrarily, but they might also represent a set of directional animals which was common in the region.

There remains a faint possibility that among the numerous sculptures on the superstructure of the Veṭṭuvañkōvil (e.g. SOUNDARA RAJAN 1983: pls. 51–52), some might have functioned as directional guardians. One of the sculptures has been identified as a probable image of Indra by P.Z. PATTABIRAMIN (1975: pl. CLXVI, fig. 1). It is located on the first *tala*, south(-east), beside a female figure on the corner. However, there is no particular reason to suggest that the figure should be identified as Indra. On the first *tala* adjacent to the corner figures, there are altogether six un-

specified male images, two each on the south, west, and north. The eastern side is devoid of any sculptures.

On the Nāgeśvarasvāmī temple at Kumbakōnam (Tanjavur dist.), assigned to about 886 A.D. (DHAKY 1983: 161), a group of eight *dikpālas* on the second *tala* of the superstructure has been noticed by T.V. MAHALINGAM (1937: 33–34), but it is quite apparent that the rather large figures consist of stucco and are not original. For the sake of completeness, the author's description is quoted here:

In between the corner figures carrying the cornice and the pilasters is a four-armed image [on each of the four sides]. The images which are now painted are of stone [?] and wear necklaces, *udarabandha*, *vaḷayas*, *kaikaṇas*, *kaṭisūtra* etc. While their upper pair of arms hold iconographic cognizances, the lower pair are in the *abhaya* and *kaṭyavalaṃbita*, the only exception being the first image on the southern side whose lower left arm holds a *vajra*. Coming in a clockwise direction the attributes seen in the upper arms of each of the images are as follows: a bud and an indistinct object [Yama?], sword and shield [Nairṛta?], *śakti* and noose (?) [Varuṇa?], an indistinct object and noose [Vāyu?], sword and shield [Kubera?], *paraśu* and *mrga* [Īśāna?]. [...] The projected part [*śukanāsa*] of the *vimāna* is carried by an image at the southern and northern sides, each with four hands, the upper right of the one in the South holding a *vajra* and, that of the North holding a *pāśa*. The image on the South has flames around his head. On either side of the projection in the East is a carving [?], standing with four hands and ornamented with necklaces, *yajñopavīta* etc.; the carving in the southern side has two heads [406] with flames over them and hence may be Agni [.] while the details of the corresponding northern image could not be studied. These two images [...] make the set of the *dikpālas* complete.

The *jaṅghā* images of the same *vimāna*, where an isolated image of Agni appears on the north(-west), have been interpreted in an epic context (D.T. SANFORD 1994: 50; fig. 12). The impressive standing figure was first identified by S.K. GOVINDASWAMI (1935). The sole characteristic feature that indicates his identity as the Fire God is the erect flame-like coiffure.⁴⁰⁷ In this connection, the early occurrence of this motif in the Pāpanātha temple, Paṭṭadakal (**fig. 56**), is called to mind. The Ceylonese text *Mañjuśrībhaṣita-Vāstuvīdyāśāstra* 2.65a also describes this form of Agni (“*śikhājvālaṃ*”).

⁴⁰² According to the newly introduced district divisions, Kaḷugumalai is now situated in the Chidambaranar district (Map of Tamilnadu, Government of India, Copy-right 1994).

⁴⁰³ The well-known elephant rider on the eastern (rear) face of the Arjuna *ratha* at Māmallapuram (Chengalpattu dist.) represents most probably Kārttikeya (L'HERNAULT 1978: 141). For an illustration see K.R. SRINIVASAN 1983: pl. 4, c. mid-7th century. The strongest argument for such an identification lies in the fact that the elephant rider wears a conical crown with a broad base which is typical for Kārttikeya. Although HUNTINGTON's (1981: 63) identification of the same figure as Aiyānār-śāstā is quite ingenious, it must be kept in mind that it is not supported by any other early iconographic evidence. Moreover, HUNTINGTON was not aware of L'HERNAULT's study. All other depictions of frontally shown elephant-riders appear to be modelled after the image on the Arjuna *ratha*. The absence of any attribute is similarly only reported from the example at Koḍumbālūr, Mūvarkōvil, dated c. 880 A.D. (L'HERNAULT 1978: ph. 127). Later images of elephant-riders are equipped with Kārttikeya's attributes.

⁴⁰⁴ HUNTINGTON (1981: 61) mentions the *Śilappadikāram*, traditionally assigned to the 2nd-3rd centuries A.D., as referring to shrines and a festival of Indra. For a probable South Indian image of Indra, standing without vehicle, of the 9th century, see below (THIAGARAJAN 1989: pl. 105g).

⁴⁰⁵ An association of Kārttikeya with the *dikpālas* has been reported from Añkor Vāt/Cambodia, 12th century (K. BHATTACHARYA 1961: 139–141); cf. also Ellorā 16 (Kailāsa; **fig. 278**).

⁴⁰⁶ The two-headed form of Agni is certainly later. The Agni images on the Cidambaram *gopuras* (late 12th century and later) are probably the earliest ones of this type (e.g. HARLE 1963: 108–109; pl. 143).

⁴⁰⁷ It is likely that the rather straight strands of flame-like hair indicate Agni's peaceful nature. A mandorla of expansive, flickering flames is in South Indian art restricted to ferocious deities (e.g. B. LEGRAND 1987: ph. 81, Bhairava at Kilaiyūr, late 9th century).

Before discussing a group of loose, seated images from different sites, a rather enigmatic group of nine standing images from Tirukkaḍaiyūr (Dist. Tanjavur), Amṛtaghaṭeśvara temple, will be introduced (THIAGARAJAN 1989: pls. 105a–h; 281–283). They doubtlessly form a group and have been assigned to the “late middle of the 9th century”. The images all have a backplate, which is in most cases rounded at the top. The figures stand in a hieratic posture, generally with the left hand in *kaṭihasta*. They are clearly differentiated by their crowns or coiffures and their attributes. An original directional arrangement may be assumed, as the figures are nowadays distributed in the eastern, southern, and northern *prākāra* of the temple. For the two Aśvins however, a directional guardianship is very unlikely. Without trying to force the figures into a preconceived scheme, it is suggested here that there may have been a directional arrangement with Sūrya (*ibid.*: pl. 105a) probably on the east and Soma (⁴⁰⁸ *ibid.*: pl. 105h) on the north as at Ālampur, Svarga Brahmā temple (ill. 11). Indra⁴⁰⁹ seems to be a member of the group, wearing a cylindrical crown and holding a small thunderbolt (*ibid.*: pl. 105d), further Yama with his staff (*ibid.*: pl. 105g), and probably Nairṛta wielding a sword (*ibid.*: pl. 105c). Two other figures are, according to THIAGARAJAN, both provided with a lotus bud (l.) and a trident (r.). However, in one case (*ibid.*: pls. 105f), the trident is particularly large and long-handled and the alleged lotus bud, which is very large and ribbed, certainly represents something else. It could be Vāyu’s banner, because a fluttering element appears in the background. The second image (*ibid.*: pls. 105e) has a different type of trident or lance with short side-prongs and holds a narrow bud in his left hand. With this symbol of light and the relatively long vertical strands of hair, the deity may be Agni. THIAGARAJAN (*ibid.*: 282–283) identifies the set as the sun god Sūrya with his entourage on the basis of textual evidence, which is not wholly convincing. It is, however, very difficult to come to a final assessment. The hieratic standing posture and the combination of *kaṭihasta* (hand resting on the hip) and one attribute is similarly found on a number of loose images, which are not very attractive, show little variation, and are difficult to date (fig. 288). These figures with their immovable posture appear to be guardians. The set considered above could also be assumed to have functioned as guardians.⁴¹⁰ Moreover, some members of the Tirukkaḍaiyūr set are bearded and probably have fangs. Thus, it is possible that it expresses an otherwise unrecorded tradition of directional guardians, which now probably remains incomplete. The Aśvins could have served as attendants of Sūrya and may have been placed at his sides.

Another important category bearing evidence for the development before the end of the 10th century is a group of loose images from different sites, which are at least close predecessors of those *dikpālas*, which are known from the slightly later set in the Tañjāvūr Rājarājeśvara temple (figs. 294, 295). The deity is in this category shown seated on a lotus or bench-like throne, generally without a vehicle (figs. 289–293). Attributes are sometimes added, but may also remain absent. The height generally varies between 70 and 110 cm. As most of these images depict Agni, it remains doubtful whether they were originally conceived as part of a complete group of directional guardians.

The National Museum in New Delhi houses an impressive example of this group (figs. 289, 290). Much like the image on the *jaṅghā* (wall frieze) of the Nāgeśvarasvāmī temple (D.T. SANFORD 1994: fig. 12), flames rise straight above his head to form his coiffure. The National Museum piece, however, shows a ribbon and a small portion of hair (?) inserted below this zone. In both cases, the face is youthful, beardless and has a serene expression. The loose sculpture wears finely executed ornaments. A significant feature is

the short *upavīta*, which only reaches as far down as the *udara-bandha* (“belly band”). The deity sits in *vāmapralambapāda* (left leg pendent) and keeps the right hand in a peculiar variant of *abhaya mudrā* (bestowal of protection) with bent fingers. The left hand rests on the left thigh. The bench-like throne is very simple and does not have a finished surface. The side-view shows that the back of the sculpture remains completely unfinished. A parallel, which seems to be chronologically close (first half of the 10th century)⁴¹¹, exists on the Sundareśvara temple at Mēlappaḷuvūr (Tiruchchirappalli dist.). The deity is again Agni (LEGRAND 1987: ph. 99), who sits on a similar throne with the right leg pendent. This image shows a number of rare features: The backslab has an ornamentation of small fires on its border; the deity is bearded; he carries the same attributes as are known from sites further north, rosary (r.) and waterpot (l.). The broad flames of the coiffure have been symmetrically arranged. As another conspicuous feature, Agni wears two chains of *rudrākṣa* seeds cross-wise around his upper arms. The loose image is located on the south-east side of the temple, facing west. While this could be an important information, it is, unfortunately, impossible to decide whether it was originally located there, as BALASUBRAHMANYAM (1963: 27) states: “The temple has undergone repairs more than once, and its ancient architectural features cannot be inferred from the present state of this structure”.

Finally, a high-quality set of Agni and Vāyu from Tirunelveli (Tirunelveli dist.) shall be discussed (figs. 291–293). The images should be assigned to the 9th–10th centuries. Significantly, apart from the posture and size, every effort has been made to individualize the images, which may reflect the intention to express the different natures of the Fire and Wind Gods. Their physiognomies are clearly distinct. As with the National Museum Agni, parts of the original stone block remain, but only in patches, around the lower portions of the arms. It seems that there was some fear of instability, if the image were completely released from the stone. The faces are oval and the countenance serene. Agni has slightly roundish eyes (fig. 291). He wears the usual flames on his head, which are accurately shown terminating at his round halo. He wears all the ornaments, including anklets. He is somewhat more obese than Vāyu. His right hand holds a rosary with bent fingers. A peculiar profiled peg connecting hand and breast seems to be designed specifically to stabilize the hand. The left hand is closed and rests on the thigh. The throne consists of a double lotus. Like Vāyu, Agni is seated in *dakṣiṇāpralambapāda* (right leg pendent).

The image of Vāyu (fig. 293) had not yet been identified correctly. The long, slightly sloping object in his right hand may at first glance resemble a sword or axe,⁴¹² but the undulating streamer issuing from it shows that it is a flag. Vāyu wears an elaborate, high crown. Some other pieces of ornaments as in Agni’s case have been devoted attention. Thus, the heavy necklace, the *upavīta* (sacred thread) and the belt-buckle resembling a flower are particularly elaborated. His throne is bench-like. A graceful lion figure reclines beside Vāyu’s foot. It is difficult to decide whether the lion was con-

⁴⁰⁸ THIAGARAJAN is not sure about her identification of this image as Candra, as the deity does not have a halo like the supposed Sūrya image. The bud attribute is quite similar in both cases.

⁴⁰⁹ THIAGARAJAN (*ibid.*: 282–283) identifies the figure with *daṇḍa* (staff) as Indra, since she regards the staff as one of the attributes of Indra. This is, however, not true.

⁴¹⁰ A function as *vāstupada-devatās*, as assumed by NAGASWAMY for some of the gods in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñcīpuram (see above), is also probable here.

⁴¹¹ B. LEGRAND 1987: 21.

⁴¹² R. RUSSEK (1986: Abb. 120) erroneously identifies the deity as Paraśurāma. The indicated height of 156 cm is also not correct.

ceived as Vāyu's vehicle. The fact that his counterpart Agni has no vehicle indicates that this had not been a regular part of the concept. Therefore, it could represent an allusion to a lion throne.

In the absence of any other *dikpāla* sculptures, which might have formed part of a larger set, the Tirunelveli pair remains an isolated evidence of partly unknown significance.

The great royal Rājārāṣvara temple at Tañjāvūr, built shortly after 1000 A.D., demonstrates what these icons may have been meant for, if they had been conceived as directional guardians. The temple preserves a unique arrangement of three-storied subsidiary *dikpāla* temples with octagonal *śikhara*s (crowning members), which are integrated into the *prākāra* wall of the temple complex.⁴¹³ The shrines of the guardians of the four main directions are located within the cloisters on the respective sides (for Indra see below), and those of the guardians of the intermediate directions are situated directly in the corners. The *devakulikās* (miniature temples for "related" deities) all survive with their *śikhara*s, mostly showing an image of the deity⁴¹⁴ and figures of vehicles at *grīvā* ("neck") level (figs. 297–300).⁴¹⁵ Out of the *dikpāla* icons which were installed in them at ground level, only those of Agni (fig. 294), Varuṇa (fig. 295) and Īśāna (fig. 296) are extant *in situ*. An exception has been made in the case of Indra. His shrine is built into the northern side of the inner east *gopura* tower, i.e. on its northern side. The southern side has a corresponding structure, in which an image of a Nāgarāja (serpent king) has been enshrined in the cella at ground level. Images of both deities⁴¹⁶ appear on what corresponds to the third storey of the *devakulikās* (PICHARD 1994: ph. 352).⁴¹⁷ The southern shrine has been, most probably erroneously, generally assigned to Sūrya, as an inscription records the installation of a Sūrya image in the eastern *gopura* tower.⁴¹⁸ In the structurally related, later temple at Gaṅgaikōṇḍālapuram, a similar shrine seems to have existed only in the southern portion of the ruined *gopura* tower (PICHARD *et al.* 1994: ph. 339).

The small *grīvā* reliefs facing the four cardinal directions (figs. 297–300) show the *dikpālas* either in a seated or standing posture and generally carrying one attribute. In the case of Agni, it can be seen that the god is depicted on the *śikhara* as standing, while he is portrayed as seated inside (fig. 294). The characteristics of the *dikpāla* images at Tañjāvūr are largely the same as those of the loose images discussed before: the large sculptures are seated with sparse attributes, a throne, no vehicle, and an individual treatment of details.

It is worthwhile comparing the image of Agni (fig. 294) to those of the same deity described earlier. Points of similarity are largely restricted to the Mēlappaḷuvūr Agni (LEGRAND 1987: ph. 99), which also belongs to the Cōla dynasty. The Tañjāvūr Agni is clearly recognizable as having developed from the earlier image. He is portrayed bearded, with flame-hair, thick lips and obese, holding a water vessel in the right hand from below (in a manner typically occurring in Eastern India). The left hand is damaged. Agni squats with both legs close to the trunk, perhaps held in their position by a *yogapaṭṭa*, on a high lotus throne. The most important detail, which particularly betrays his dependence on his counterpart at Mēlappaḷuvūr, is the pointed arch (top portion lost), which has a very similar border of small fires. At Mēlappaḷuvūr, the pointed backplate is still solid.

Probably, the two other images of Agni (figs. 289–292), which exhibit his youthful, beardless form, may belong to a different local idiom or dynastic affiliation (perhaps Pāṇḍya)⁴¹⁹. Unfortunately, they cannot be used for establishing a relative chronology.

At Tañjāvūr, Īśāna (fig. 296) and Varuṇa (fig. 295) both are seated in *dakṣiṇāpralambapāda* (right leg pendent). Some of the

major characteristics are the very high *jaṭāmukūṭa* (crown of braided hair) for Īśāna and the simple, low coiffure for Varuṇa. Both deities have long hair falling on their shoulders. Īśāna's four arms are all broken. His trunk is slightly bent to the left, which may point to the fact that he originally carried a bulky object in his front arms (*vinā?*). He exhibits a beautiful broad smile.

To enumerate in short the characteristics of all the *dikpālas* at Tañjāvūr: Indra has a hatchet (*ṭaṅka*) or thunderbolt, the vehicle is not shown; Agni holds a waterpot on the right and probably originally a rosary, his vehicle being a goat; Yama carries a staff, vehicle: buffalo; Nairṛta is not depicted, anthropomorphic vehicle (fig. 297); Varuṇa holds a noose on the right, vehicle: *makara* (fig. 298); Vāyu has a flag in his right hand, vehicle: antelope (fig. 299); the haloed Soma seems to hold two lotus buds in his hands, vehicle: lion (fig. 300);⁴²⁰ the attributes of the four-armed Īśāna image cannot be detected (arms broken), vehicle: most probably the bull.

The largely lost cloister of the Rājēndracōḷīśvara temple at Gaṅgaikōṇḍālapuram (Tiruchchirappalli dist.), which followed the Rājārāṣvara temple after a period of about 20 years in the 11th century, is assumed to have contained *dikpāla* shrines after the Tañjāvūr model (PICHARD *et al.* 1994: fig. 40). The extant remains provide a good basis for such a hypothesis (*ibid.*: phs. 363–365). A new and most probably unique feature of the temple is, however, the presence of *dikpāla* figures on the first upper storey of the *vimāna* (main temple). The images in most cases are not easy to recognize, as the contours are very soft (*ibid.*, starting from Agni and proceeding clockwise: phs. 113, 117, 122⁴²¹, 129⁴²², 131⁴²³, 135, 138). The figures are executed in a rough, unrefined manner. The *dikpālas* are two-armed, except for Īśāna, who is four-armed. Indra is missing. The deities are generally shown in the correct direction, starting

⁴¹³ For a recently drawn, exact plan see PICHARD *et al.* 1994: pl. 4. Regarding the *dikpāla* temples, "There is also a reference to these eight shrines in an inscription dated in the third year of Rājendra I. From this inscription we get to know that for seven of the eight *Dikpāla* shrines, *kalaśas* (finials) were gifted, and from the decipherable portions of the inscription, we are able to glean the other names, such as Nairutti, Agni, Yama, and Varuṇa" (VENKATARAMAN 1985: 111–112).

⁴¹⁴ In the case of Nairṛta, this is missing (fig. 297).

⁴¹⁵ For the *śikhara*s pertaining to Agni, Indra and Īśāna see PICHARD *et al.* 1994: phs. 359–362 (in the order: south – Yama; south-east – Agni; north-east: Īśāna). For Indra see below.

⁴¹⁶ The image of Indra is recognizable by its attribute hatchet (*ṭaṅka*; HARLE 1963: 23) or thunderbolt (*vajra*). As on the *grīvās* of the *devakulikās*, both gods are without any vehicle.

⁴¹⁷ Ending in *kūḍu* arches at the lowest *hāra* level, the integrated shrines are much higher than their counterparts in the *prākāra* wall. The third storey is relatively high and has been used to accommodate images of the enshrined deities shown in bold relief (PICHARD *et al.* 1994: ph. 352). The portion which corresponds to the *grīvā* level of the free-standing *śikhara*s once more shows a figure (probably the same) in relief. In the lower centre of the *kūḍu* above, a third image appears on each side (later stucco).

⁴¹⁸ VENKATARAMAN 1985: 112; HARLE 1963: 23. The latter author has already noticed the discrepancy between the expected Sūrya image and the surviving Nāgarāja image: "A contemporary inscription in the *gopura* records the installation of an image of Sūrya, but no aureole is shown here and Sūrya is usually represented with *padma*, not a *nilotpala*, in each hand".

⁴¹⁹ This assumption is based on SANFORD's (1994: 58) ascription of the Nāgeśvarasvāmī temple at Kumbakōṇam to the Pāṇḍya king Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha.

⁴²⁰ K.R. SRINIVASAN 1983: 240 erroneously mentions a mongoose as Soma's vehicle.

⁴²¹ Strangely, no object is to be seen in Nairṛta's hands.

⁴²² It is much more probable that this figure represents Varuṇa, as it is two-armed and not four-armed like the figure proposed in the publication (*ibid.*: ph. 125). The small bulbous object in its right hand resembles the noose of the large image at Tañjāvūr (fig. 295).

⁴²³ This figure, which seems to carry a flag, is a better candidate for Vāyu than the image proposed in the publication (*ibid.*: ph. 129). In any case, the identification as Vīrabhadra is erroneous, as the attribute is apparently not a sword.

with Agni on the (south-)eastern corner. Agni is the only seated one. The image clearly betrays the Tañjāvūr model. The deities, variously set in *karna*, *salilāntara* or *pratibhadra* positions, alternate with somewhat similarly portrayed but four-armed *rudra* figures and other deities.

Subsequently, standing or seated images of *dikpālas* appear on *gopuras*,⁴²⁴ but they are also found on various levels of the *vimānas*. On the latter, they are sometimes portrayed as riding their vehicles. Thus, at Gaṅgaikōṇḍacōlapuram, the *vimāna* contains riding *dikpālas* at the corners in the uppermost storey which is crowded with sculptures. They have been assigned to the 17th century (PICHARD *et al.* 1994: ph. 202 [4th fake-storey]).

A few parallels from Southeast Asia⁴²⁵ bear testimony to the popularity that the early seated images once enjoyed. In the case of a probable Nairṛta from Central Java of the 9th–10th centuries (FONTEIN 1990: cat. 8), parallels are quite striking. The god wears similar ornaments and *karaṇḍamukuṭa* (basket-like crown) and sits cross-legged on a low throne. Two ribbons, which are fastened to the girdle, fall down over the edge of the throne and embellish the plain seat. The face is serene and slightly smiling. He holds a curved sword in the right and a horizontally placed shield in the left hand. The backplate is pointed like that of the Mēlappaḷuvūr Agni, but its shape resembles that of a stylized lotus petal (*i.e.* squarish). The latter sculpture also has two sashes falling over the throne, however at the sides. In conclusion, the Nairṛta image from Java adds to the very sparse evidence, which may point to the fact that complete sets of *aṣṭadikpālas* existed in South India in the 9th–10th centuries. The question remains, whether separate vehicles were provided for them as at Tañjāvūr and probably once at Gaṅgaikōṇḍacōlapuram. In this context, it is significant to note that the Ceylonese text *MVŚ*, which describes the flame-haired, one-headed form of Agni (see above), does not refer to the *dikpālas*' vehicles.

In summing up the evidence, it should be mentioned that there is a remarkable absence of riding *dikpālas*, which were so popular in the Deccan. The South Indian *dikpāla* images are generally shown as seated or standing and only much later appear riding their respective vehicles.⁴²⁶ It could be regarded as another evidence for a separate development in the depiction of directional guardians that on the introduction of the theme and subsequently, Soma occurred instead of Kubera⁴²⁷ as guardian of the north. This was, however, not the case on the Deccani ceiling panels of the 8th through 10th centuries.

It should be noted further, that in the Rājarājeśvara temple at Tañjāvūr, the layout of *dikpāla* subshrines represents an ideal order, with the guardians positioned in their respective directions in an accurate manner. It seems as if this order was modified only reluctantly later on.

2.4 Concepts of *dikpāla* Representation

In order to describe and understand the various modes of representation of the directional guardians, the major concepts of spatial arrangement will be discussed and analyzed. Directional guardians have been represented either as a complete group (*e.g.* Osiāñ, Harihara temple 1, *ill.* 22) or as an incomplete group, the latter cases being often difficult to explain. In a few cases of incomplete groups, one may speak of a partly substituted or an arbitrarily "filled-up" group,⁴²⁸ comprising members other than the canonical set of directional guardians. As substituting deity, most often Sūrya has been employed (Satyavolu, *ill.* 13; Amrol, Dānebābā temple, *ill.* 15; Dāñg, *ill.* 26), but rarely also Soma/Candra (Osiāñ, Sūrya temple 1,

ill. 21). A singular case with additional deities occurs on several temples at Ālampur, where both Sūrya and Candra have been integrated into the already complete set of eight *dikpālas* (*e.g.* *ill.* 11). Another unique case of substitution is found at Cittaūḍgaḍh (Kumbhaśyāma temple, *ill.* 18), where five members of the *dikpāla* group have been obviously replaced by an "Īśāna type" image. The – generally earlier – group of four directional guardians appears in most cases as a complete set, but even here, in a few cases, a substitution of some of its members can be observed (Bādāmi 3, *maṇḍapa*, *figs.* 15–18; Ālampur, Kumāra Brahmā, *śikhara*, see section 2.2.1).

The variable appearance of the *dikpāla* group is difficult to explain. Its main reasons must lie in the somewhat intricate development that led to the representation of the complete group, but probably also in the often variable theoretical concepts of directional guardians or *lokapālas* (see section 1). There may have been also aesthetic reasons, arising from particular concepts and principles in art. Thus, particular conceptual types in art by their very character have the tendency to either promote the completeness of the group (horizontal panels; friezes), while others (vertical panels) for a long time preserve the situation of a partially represented, at best filled-up group of directional guardians. However, there are exceptions also: early ceiling panels may have escaped the structurally immanent demand of completeness of the group by substitution of one of its members (*figs.* 15–18, Kārttikeya replaces Yama), while on a probably more narrative panel a nearly complete group appeared surprisingly early (*fig.* 21). The general rule expressed above, however, still remains valid.

The main difference has been recognized between group and single representation. The latter term refers to the individually conceived *dikpāla* image and not to an isolated sculpture which does not pertain to a *dikpāla* scheme. In a few cases, however, this cannot be clarified (*e.g.* Bikkavolu, see section 2.3.2.1). In group representations, the degree of uniformity is understandably higher. In single representations, the images are much more apt to function as guardian of a particular quarter, however within certain structural limits. In the case of friezes, a directional orientation was only achieved for friezes which are laterally arranged on particular architectural elements.

A chronologically early incomplete set should be regarded as primarily incomplete or "incipient", while an incomplete set occur-

⁴²⁴ A plan of the distribution of deities on the four Cidambaram *gopuras* has been prepared by L'HERNAULT 1987: pl. ico. V. For the Dārāsūram *gopura* see *ibid.*: pl. ico. IV, and for the Tiruvanaikka *gopura* see *ibid.*: fig. 5. On each of the six *gopuras*, the complete group of *dikpālas* had been originally installed, only at Tiruvanaikka "Yajñamūrti" is reported to substitute Agni. It is significant that the correct sequence of *dikpālas* and their general orientation has always been observed, but no fixed rule appears to have determined their placement on the structure.

⁴²⁵ From the 13th century, there is evidence from Caṇḍi Singhasāri, East Java (VAN LOHUIZEN-DE LEEUW 1955: pls. 1–6). Here, it is an important feature that figures of vehicles have been integrated in the throne or socle. The most interesting sculpture is that of a probable guardian of the nadir, Ananta, on a large tortoise vehicle.

⁴²⁶ *E.g.* G.J.R. MEVISSSEN 1994: pl. 4 (Dārāsūram, 12th century, set with Soma as guardian of the north).

⁴²⁷ In the *MVŚ*, which has already been referred to, an image of Soma is described on the north instead of Kubera in 2.78 (however, Kubera is mentioned in 2.100 a). Kubera replaced Soma probably from the second half of the 12th century onwards. MEVISSSEN (1994: 419, n. 13) has shown that at Dārāsūram, both sets with Soma and with Kubera as guardian of the north occur.

⁴²⁸ In no case it can be decided whether an intentional substitution of a particular *dikpāla* took place or whether the group had been arbitrarily filled up by another deity, as the rest is not complete or has not been completely preserved. Apart from the substituting deities Sūrya and Soma/Candra in the Manu Lokapāla group (to be discussed), no case of regular substitution occurs.

ring posterior to the introduction of the theme in the respective region should be regarded as a secondary incomplete, reduced group. The latter sometimes serve as a visual reference to the theme.⁴²⁹ In every case, however, it should be considered whether the deities of an incomplete set were intentionally chosen and what may have been the criteria.

An interesting case, which almost forms a category of its own, is the group of “Manu Lokapālas” (see section 2.4.1.3) which consists of Indra, Agni, Yama, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, Sūrya and Soma/Candra, with the order differing. It represents a constant, but incomplete (or partly substituted) set of *dikpālas*. Its popularity seems to cease with the introduction of the canonical *dikpāla* group in almost all the known contexts in the 10th century.

2.4.1 Group Representation

In group representation, a great variety of concepts can be observed. The largest category are the vertical reliefs, which – to some degree – all have a narrative aspect. Horizontally placed reliefs generally lack a narrative aspect, as they were not primarily conceived for contemplation. The horizontal reliefs have a more diagrammatic, *maṇḍala*-like character, and consequently, the *dikpāla* set is generally shown complete and arranged in a somewhat uniform way. The little known foundation tablets also belong to the category of horizontal reliefs. They represent the ritual, symbolic aspect in its purest form, as they are hidden below the temple structure.

The category of friezes consists of horizontal alignments of directional guardians, which are not directly placed in any wider context, narrative or other. They are either arranged on one plane or form the decoration of an architectural element (*e.g.* pillar or *pīṭha* – platform for offerings). Friezes are designed to portray the totality of a particular group. Unfortunately, only few *dikpāla* friezes pre-date the 9th century, when the group had been firmly established in art. However, alignments of four directional guardians seem to have existed already in the Kuṣāṇa period (see section 2.1.4). The order of deities generally follows the directional sequence, starting with Indra for the eastern direction.

Friezes which are positioned above or around a doorway will be treated separately.

2.4.1.1 Vertical Panels

When attempting to portray a spatial arrangement of deities on a flat surface, it is clear that only a certain section of the directional order will be visible. At the same time, the surface itself will be “oriented” in the true sense of the word. This is what takes place on the early monumental panels at Elephanta, where Indra and Varuṇa flank the central deity in accordance with their respective regions (see section 2.2.1). Panels containing other *dikpālas* in the same cave do not completely follow these rules, but they reveal a fact, which is a very important one: Indra and Varuṇa at Elephanta are not meant to represent the totality of the directional guardians, but only a particular, relevant section of the group.

The same intention of an absolute placement of *dikpālas* is found on very few representations outside Elephanta (*e.g.* Ellorā 16, **figs. 280–282**). It is somewhat surprising that this conceptual type did not become more popular.

There are three other forms of incorporation of the directional guardians on – mostly narrative – relief panels: as a bunch or troop, more or less aligned, and as a proper frieze. The central themes

of the reliefs are generally Naṭeśa, Śiva Kalyāṇasundara/Vaivāhikamūrti, Anantaśayana Viṣṇu or Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu. However, there seems to be hardly any context where members of the *dikpāla* group are absolutely essential, except perhaps for the Viśvarūpa theme. A theme, which has been apt for *dikpāla* representation only during a very early phase, is the Churning of the ocean (Pawāyā *toraṇa*, **fig. 9**; Bādāmi 3⁴³⁰). In this context, the group consists of four regents at the most. From a rather late period (10th–11th centuries), a Mahāvīra panel from Palma/Bengal uniquely includes the *aṣṭadikpālas* lined up vertically on both sides of the central figure, riding their vehicles (G.J.R. MEVISSEN 1998).

Some other themes, *e.g.* Maḥiṣāsuramardinī (**fig. 279**) and Yogīśvara (**figs. 280–282**), incorporated *dikpālas* in the 8th century, but no visual tradition seems to have existed before or after this. A similar case is that of a fine relief of a reclining mother breast-feeding her child (“*kṛṣṇa-janma*”) including lively depicted riding Guardians in the upper register in two groups, showing them aligned from left to right, comes from Hīṅglājgaḍh, c. 10th–11th centuries⁴³¹. In some cases, the *dikpālas* appear among other celestials, often some of the main gods, but there are also a number of exceptions.

Characteristics of the inclusion in the four most common themes will be briefly mentioned before discussing them separately. With Naṭeśa, *dikpālas* are often combined, but not in a compulsory way. The group is already nearly complete on the early Naṭeśa panel at Ellorā 29, c. late 6th century (**fig. 21**). The combination of Naṭeśa with the directional guardians was shifted to the ceilings in the Deccan from the 8th century onwards (see below), but vertical panels of this theme were again carved in Eastern India in the 10th century and later. Regarding the theme of the wedding of Śiva and Pārvatī (Śiva Vaivāhikamūrti), it is remarkable to find that for a long time, Nairṛta and Īśāna remained excluded. In the 8th century, Sūrya and Soma/Candra completed the group to form the Manu Lokapālas, while the piece from Etah, 10th century, includes the *aṣṭadikpālas* and thus demonstrates that the depiction of the Manu Lokapālas probably formed only an intermediate stage in the development. The guardians appear on icons with Anantaśayana Viṣṇu in a few instances in the period under discussion, mostly showing them seated in a line, while one example includes a peculiar battle scene. Finally, there is the incorporation of directional guardians into representations of Viśvarūpa. Here, the *dikpālas* are often difficult to trace and to identify. In early examples, the group was probably never shown completely. A complete set of *aṣṭadikpālas* in this context developed in the 8th–9th centuries.

This brief outlook reveals the remarkable fact that the “relationship” of the *dikpāla* group with a particular theme has been variously conceived by the artists.

⁴²⁹ Such references are found on panels representing holy places. One example is a so-called *prayāgapaṭṭa* (N.P. JOSHI 1991: plate), where in the upper right corner, Agni is depicted seated, and just below, Vāyu with his inflated cloth is seated next to an unidentifiable deity. A few other *dikpālas* might be recognized in the unspecified figures in the upper right corner, but in any case, the group must have remained incomplete. The piece is assigned to the 9th–10th centuries. On a stele from Tewar near Tripuri/M.P., c. 11th–12th centuries, only the *dikpālas* Indra and Agni are shown riding their vehicles on the left side of the second lowest tier (V.S. PATHAK/S.K. SULLEREY 1991: pl. 17).

⁴³⁰ BANERJI 1928: pl. XXIII c; the relief shows the battle between *devas* and *asuras* after the process of churning.

⁴³¹ GUPTA 1979: pl. 22/1; Central Museum Indore, acc. no. 157. The Guardians are almost three-dimensionally conceived and shown in profile. The *dikpālas* sit in a riding position, with their legs touching the ground, as their vehicles are only squatting.

From an early period onwards, the depiction of the dance of Śiva included a representation of directional guardians, though the association was not an inseparable one. On the earliest panel with *dikpālas*, located in the western annex of Elephanta 1 (fig. 20), only two of them are shown, directly flanking the dancer. On the proper left is Indra, and on the proper right there is a goat or ram rider, either Kubera or Agni. The placement should be viewed in the context of two other panels in the same cave (Ardhanārīśvara and Gaṅgādharamūrti, see section 2.2.1), where Indra and Varuṇa act as “cosmic coordinates”. In this case, however, the choice of these particular *dikpālas* is difficult to understand. One may speculate that the mythical place of the enactment of the dance is located in the north-eastern direction, which Indra and Kubera represent, rather than on the south-west, where this panel has been carved in the cave temple. Interestingly, the Naṭeśa relief at Ellorā, Cave 21 (fig. 22), likewise includes Indra and – most probably – Kubera as the only *dikpālas*. The third one of the early Naṭeśas is extant at Ellorā, Cave 14.⁴³² Typologically, it ranges after the other two, as the group of four *dikpālas* on the proper right of Naṭeśa seems to be complete.

Another Naṭeśa panel which probably dates before 600 A.D. is located in Cave 29 at Ellorā (fig. 21). Here, the unique situation arises that eight deities (seven of them riding a vehicle) appear on the upper level, along with an additional figure holding a staff, probably Daṇḍapāṇi. Īśāna is the only member of the *aṣṭadikpālas* which is missing. It is a noteworthy fact that the *dikpālas* are not arranged in a sequence relating to their spatial order. At Ellorā 29, the intention to show the totality of cosmic guardians is clearly expressed.

There is no extant sculpture of the Dancing God and the directional guardians from the 7th century. In the 8th century, such images appeared on temple ceilings in the Deccan. This is an important step, demonstrating that a conscious effort was made to find an adequate aesthetic expression and arrangement for a cosmic theme.

In the 10th century, the theme was taken up on an even grander scale in Bengal. The first one of these relief panels comes from Śaṅkarabandha/Bangladesh and is housed at the Dacca Museum.⁴³³ The *aṣṭadikpālas* are placed singly above the aureole of the ten-armed Śiva in the shape of an arch, riding their vehicles. The vehicles are the usual ones, but Kubera has an anthropomorphic vehicle, and Varuṇa is – remarkably – portrayed on a goose. The second piece is kept in the Karachi Museum.⁴³⁴ Naṭeśa is twelve-armed in this case and again dances on his bull. The shapes are somewhat clumsy in this case. Śiva’s limbs are much more angular and appear less elegant. The *aṣṭadikpālas* flank the god in two vertical rows and are again provided with separate socles. On the proper right side, starting from the top, there are Indra, Nairṛta, Varuṇa and Kubera, while on the proper left Yama stands at the top (even higher than Indra), followed by Agni, Īśāna and Vāyu. On the first panel, the regents are portrayed in motion, while on the second, they are statically conceived. The only difference in the vehicles lies in Varuṇa’s four-legged *makara*. Vāyu in both cases holds a billowing scarf. The second panel belongs to c. 10th–11th centuries.

Evaluating all available facts, it becomes apparent that there was a tendency in the Deccan and later also in Eastern India to make the cosmic dimension of Naṭeśa’s dance visible. It still has to be individually clarified whether there was a more narrative or a more symbolic aspect behind this concept, i.e. whether it was intended to show that the *dikpālas* were present to witness his dance, as a cosmic frame denoting the space of the whole universe, or to illustrate the fact that His arms are the directions and that Śiva embodies the *aṣṭadikpālas* in himself.

The complete group of directional guardians was somewhat reluctantly included in this theme. The starting point is about the same in time and space, but already markedly different in quality and content. The important early panel at Ellorā 29⁴³⁵ includes Yama, Vāyu, Agni and Kubera on its proper right, while Indra and Varuṇa appear juxtaposed on the proper left. Viṣṇu, several celestial couples and one unidentifiable ascetic in the proper left corner complete the animated scenery in the upper sphere. As on the Naṭeśa panel, the placement of the regents does not follow their spatial arrangement in any way. The most conspicuous fact, which is the absence of both Nairṛta and Īśāna, has been pointed out above. In the light of the later development, this is not accidental. Although the absence of both deities can be explained in some way or the other (negative impact in the case of Nairṛta, identity with Śiva in the case of Īśāna), the later concept including the Manu Lokapālas is clearly foreshadowed.

The rich production of the 8th to 10th centuries in North India, when featuring more than just one or two “referential” *dikpālas* (see below), seems to be unanimous in including the group here referred to as Manu Lokapālas (Indra, Agni, Yama, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, Sūrya and Soma). Four complex panels from the Mathurā region and from Kanauj belong to this type⁴³⁶ (figs. 301–305). The popularity of the Manu Lokapālas appears to be restricted to the central and eastern parts of Northern India. However, Nairṛta and Īśāna are also not included in the *lokapāla* group on the Kalyāṇasundara panel in Cave 15 at Ellorā.⁴³⁷ As on the earlier panel at Ellorā 29, the regents are divided in two groups (one on each side), but here, they alone dominate the celestial region.

This domination can also be observed on four loose panels of about the 8th through 10th centuries from North-Central India. All panels have the common feature that the sphere of clouds has been indicated, on which or above which the guardians appear. On what can be regarded as one of the most impressive Vaiṣṇavikamūrti reliefs, the Kanauj panel (fig. 301), the narrow, undulating band of clouds of the deep-cut relief leaves two somewhat cave-like hollow spaces in which Śiva and Pārvatī stand. There is much space above, which the lively conceived *lokapālas* dominate, along with Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya. On typological grounds, this may be identified as the earliest of the four reliefs from Kanauj. Sūrya and Soma/Candra are portrayed standing at the sides, just below the level of stylized clouds.

The reliefs from Kāmān (figs. 302, 303), Mānasīgaṅgā (fig. 304), and Mathurā (fig. 305) all portray the divine couple in front of clouds, which consists of four superimposed layers in both the latter cases. As the *lokapāla* group has been restricted to the section above the clouds, they appear somewhat crowded in the allotted space. Regarding the emphasis on the central wedding couple, however, this spatial division is more satisfying than that of the Kanauj version. A hypothetical typological-chronological sequence is proposed here, in which Kāmān comes after Kanauj, as the *lokapālas*

⁴³² SIVARAMAMURTI 1974: 173, fig. 10.

⁴³³ SIVARAMAMURTI 1974: fig. 171. Naṭeśa wields a sword in his rear right hand, which is a very rare feature.

⁴³⁴ GASTON 1982: pl. 38.

⁴³⁵ VARMA 1988: pps. 144–148.

⁴³⁶ In an important article, M.M. MUKHOPADHYAY 1967–68 has discussed four of the reliefs treated below: Kanauj (pl. I, fig. 1); Mathurā (pl. II, fig. 3); Kāmān (pl. II, fig. 9, not mentioned in the text); Etah (pl. III, fig. 5). Regarding the identification of *dikpālas*, we disagree with the author in a few cases.

⁴³⁷ BERKSON 1992: 298–99.

are still loosely spread in the upper sphere and less rigidly aligned than on the two remaining panels. Sūrya and Soma still appear standing at the sides, but they have been elevated to the space above the clouds. On the Mānasīgaṅgā relief, the direction of movement of the central group of six riding *lokapālas* has been standardized, with Sūrya and Soma squatting on lotus socles at the sides. On the Mathurā relief, the vehicles have been finally discarded. All of them are depicted squatting, but still, Sūrya's place is on the proper right and Soma's place on the proper left of the panel. The identification of figures in the upper spheres is as follows (from l. to r.):

1 Kanauj	top row: Varuṇa (goose), Yama (buffalo), Indra (elephant), Gaṇeśa; lower row: Kārttikeya (peacock), Vāyu (horse), Kubera (<i>nara</i>), Agni.
2 Kāmān	upper left corner: Varuṇa (goose); row above the clouds: Sūrya, Kubera (<i>nara</i>), Yama (buffalo), Vāyu, Indra (elephant), Soma or Agni. ⁴³⁸
3 Mānasīgaṅgā	Sūrya, Indra (elephant), Agni (goat), Vāyu (deer), Varuṇa (<i>makara</i>), Kubera (ram?), Yama (buffalo), Soma.
4 Mathurā	Sūrya?, ?, ?, ?, Vāyu, Soma? (severely damaged).

The panels from Kanauj and Mānasīgaṅgā, most probably also that from Mathurā, reveal a significant arrangement of the Manu Lokapālas in a pair system (by juxtaposition) also followed on the Muṇḍeśvarī cornerstones and on friezes of the group: Indra is paired with Agni, Yama is paired with Kubera, Varuṇa is paired with Vāyu (cf. **ill. 31**). Sūrya and Soma correspond to each other by their posture and symmetric placement on the panels. A peculiar substitution occurs on the Kanauj panel (**fig. 301**), *i.e.* the inclusion of Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa rather than Sūrya and Soma⁴³⁹ in the upper section; the latter have been placed – in positions corresponding to the former – in the lower section.

An important indication of the iconographic development of the 9th-10th centuries is found at Bargaon, Nālandā/Bihar.⁴⁴⁰ On a basically similar Vaivāhikamūrti relief, the Manu Lokapālas are aligned, seated in a row above a separating cornice. Their sequence is more consistent, as Sūrya and Soma have been juxtaposed (from the viewer's left): Sūrya, Soma, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Agni, Indra, Yama, Kubera. The clear separation from the space below and the consistent order both recall the fact that Manu Lokapāla friezes are particularly popular in Bihar (see below; **ill. 31**).

The latest piece from the region is the elaborate panel from Etah/U.P., c. 10th century (**fig. 306**), which contains a multitude of attending figures. Here finally, the usual *aṣṭadīkṣpālas* make their appearance, though one of them, Kubera, is not integrated in the frieze. The *dīkṣpālas* are aligned on the second to the top row of the six horizontal tiers behind the divine couple. Their sequence has to be read from the centre, where the figures of Śiva and Pārvatī interrupt the line. Thus, Indra on his elephant is the first one from the centre on the proper right, followed by Agni on his goat, Yama on his buffalo, and Nairṛta on a stout animal resembling a bull. On the proper left side, Varuṇa on *makara* is the first one near the centre. To the proper left comes probably Īśāna on his bull, and behind the lateral pillar Vāyu, recognizable by his inflated shawl, who rides probably a horse. Thus, only Kubera is missing. He is depicted seated without a vehicle, on the uppermost tier, on the proper right side. By portraying him outside the row of riders, the provision of a vehicle for the god was avoided. The absence of a vehicle for Kubera is less surprising than the fact that the *dīkṣpālas* were not shown lined up correctly. All riders are moving to the proper left. The preference for the *aṣṭadīkṣpālas* on this stylistically relatively late piece is re-

markable.⁴⁴¹ It marks a departure from the convention of depicting the Manu Lokapālas and proves that their connection with the theme was not regarded as inseparable.

Besides the mentioned panels, there are several panels of Vaivāhikamūrti executed on a somewhat smaller scale, which seem to only visually refer to the world guardians. For a type which was popular in the Gwālior region in the 8th-9th centuries, the Baṭesarā image⁴⁴² is taken as an exemplary piece. With Pārvatī on the left, Śiva on the right and Brahmā in the centre below, the relief follows the most common layout. Similarly also, the fire consists of an anthropomorphic Agni, but only his isolated head occurs, which is turned upside-down. A few attendant figures appear, two of them below. Two high lotus plants form the lateral frame. Just above the space between the two bodies, Sūrya floats in the air seated on a lotus socle. On the left, an elephant rider wielding an elephant goad proceeds towards the centre, and on the right, a figure is shown squatting in profile and floating on a small socle like Sūrya, perhaps Varuṇa on *makara*. It also faces the centre. The three figures on the upper level may form a reduced or abbreviated reference to the cosmic guardians, who witness the wedding ceremony. It remains however mysterious, why there are so few indications of the identity of the two lateral figures.

A partly similar panel labelled "U.P., 9th century"⁴⁴³ clearly shows Indra as an elephant rider in the upper left corner. In this case, the only other *dīkṣpāla* seems to be Vāyu, who is depicted standing below Indra.

The third version of an abbreviated sign of cosmic presence appears on a remarkable panel which portrays Śiva and Pārvatī inside a ritual shed or wedding hall.⁴⁴⁴ Above the flat roof surmounted by an *āmalaka* (ribbed topping element) there is a semi-circular, slightly undulating line, which is surmounted by five figures with their lower bodies hidden behind. They are (from left to right): Indra, Agni, Vāyu, Sūrya, and Soma. This variant dates from the 10th century.

⁴³⁸ The figure holding a waterpot in the left hand could be theoretically Agni, but the standing posture corresponding to Sūrya's makes it much more likely that Soma is represented. Thus, Agni is present only in the form of the anthropomorphic fire in the centre below. In the case of the Kanauj relief, Agni, strangely without a vehicle, is portrayed both in the upper sphere as well as a partly anthropomorphic fire. The Kāmān relief has borrowed from the Kanauj relief the position of Varuṇa in the upper left corner (adding a female figure with a pot, a river deity?) and the position and concept of Indra riding his elephant to the left side.

⁴³⁹ The subsequent development as well as the early occurrence of Manu Lokapālas at Muṇḍeśvarī (**figs. 36–41**) shows that Sūrya and Soma, but not Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa were employed to make the set complete. The peculiar arrangement at Kanauj must have been chosen for aesthetic reasons, *i.e.* a visual parallelism of Kārttikeya and Varuṇa (both on bird vehicles) on the left side and Gaṇeśa and Agni (both without vehicles but on separate socles) on the right side.

⁴⁴⁰ BHATTACHARYA 1987: fig. 5; from the modern Sūrya temple at Bargaon, c. 10th century.

⁴⁴¹ Two reliefs from Bengal apparently perpetuate this new convention (BHATTASALI 1929: pl. XLVII, Śaṅkarbandha; pl. XLVIII, Hili). In both cases, the *aṣṭadīkṣpālas* occupy one of the upper registers and can be read from the left. They are depicted standing, holding their attributes. The panels are closely related and date from the 10th-11th centuries.

⁴⁴² DEVA 1991: pl. 47, Baṭesarā Mahādeva temple complex, temple no. 6, *garbhagrha* interior.

⁴⁴³ P. PAL 1988: no. 33, Los Angeles County Museum, acc. no. 82.231, height: 62.2 cm.

⁴⁴⁴ The panel is part of the Russek Collection, no. 826 I BIP. I am grateful to Dr. G. Bhattacharya for kindly drawing my attention to this piece. A very similar panel is illustrated in E. HAUSWEDELL 1961: Abb. 36.

The theme of Viṣṇu reclining in his yogic sleep has much less frequently been combined with directional guardians. The few extant cases are nevertheless quite instructive regarding the treatment of the *dikpāla* group in different contexts.

It is significant to observe that this theme incorporated some of the *dikpālas* or proto-*dikpālas* at a very early stage: at Deogaḍh, Indra, Varuṇa and Vāyu appear above Viṣṇu, along with Brahmā and Śiva/Īśāna?⁴⁴⁵

Varuṇa and Vāyu are found among the members of an incomplete group on the 8th-9th century-panel from Baran.⁴⁴⁶ It is one of the rare cases in which the *dikpālas*, here only five, are shown engaged in a fight, which is depicted in the upper tier of the panel. The *dikpālas* come riding from the left, while the foot soldiers occupy the right half of the panel. The former are (from the left): ? (damaged), Vāyu on a deer, Indra without a vehicle (lower portion hidden behind Viṣṇu's *cakra*), Varuṇa on *makara* and Yama on the buffalo. The latter three wield their attributes in the right hand, while Vāyu holds only his inflated cloth, which can hardly serve as a weapon. It remains unknown, which criteria led to the choice of these particular *dikpālas*.⁴⁴⁷ The dynamic movement of the group creates the impression that they come rushing to defend the sleeping Viṣṇu.

The next panel from Baroli has been assigned to the second quarter of the 10th century.⁴⁴⁸ Like the former piece, it belongs to eastern Rajasthan, and it shows a remarkable continuity in its layout. In this case, the upper tier is separated from the lower part by a plain ridge. It is filled by a *daśāvatāra* set on the left side, which occupies more than half of the length, and a row of seven seated *dikpālas* on the right side. A very rare case of misplanning may have led to the fact that there was no space left on the right to accommodate Īśāna. Most likely, a small figure just below the upper tier, squeezed in between the leaf capital on the right and an attendant figure, represents this "missing" guardian. He holds a trident in his left hand.⁴⁴⁹ The seven deities above are clearly characterized as (from the left) Indra, Agni, Yama, Nairṛta, Varuṇa, Vāyu, and Kubera. They hold their common, mostly prominently rendered attributes in the right hand and in the left they all appear to carry a waterpot.

A panel of Viṣṇu Anantaśayana now kept in the Museum für Indische Kunst Berlin (fig. 327), which can be, on the basis of its characteristics shared with the Baran and Baroli panels, respectively, typologically placed between both these, likewise includes an *aṣṭadikpāla* group. A closely related piece at Dhamnār, Dist. Mandasor, U.P. (MEISTER 1991: pl. 724), makes it probable that the Berlin piece originates from western Madhya Pradesh or southeastern Rajasthan (Kota region). As for the Dhamnār Anantaśayana, a date of c. mid-9th century is suggested. The Berlin piece shows a seated *dikpāla* group aligned in its upper register, on the left side, again with a somewhat displaced Īśāna, who – in all probability – had been the first in the row (now completely destroyed), followed by Indra, Agni, Yama, Nairṛta, Varuṇa, Vāyu, and Kubera.

The above evidence shows that the *aṣṭadikpāla* set makes its appearance in the context of the Reclining Viṣṇu during c. 9th century,⁴⁵⁰ although visual references to the group occurred earlier in this context. It may be noted that Īśāna is in two cases irregularly placed.

Viṣṇu Viśvarūpa

The connection of the *dikpālas* with Viṣṇu in his multiple, cosmic form is irregular and difficult to understand. In the evolved

Viśvarūpa icon, it seems that one or more members of the group of directional guardians (but probably not always in this capacity) have always been incorporated in the divine assembly. The works of T.S. MAXWELL (particularly his 1988 monograph) provide clues to the development of the theme which have been helpful in the present context.

From the so-called Classical Phase of Viśvarūpa representation (*ibid.*: 113–143), the Gupta Period, there is a fragmented Viśvarūpa image from Bhaṅkari, Dist. Aligaḍh/U.P., which includes a partly visible figure of Agni in its lower right portion (*ibid.*: pls. 49, 52, 54). The identification of a figure, resembling the Buddha, as Agni is indicated by the flame nimbus and, particularly, by the similarity with a late Kuṣāṇa Agni image from the Mathura district (fig. 7). Above Agni, there is a personage which holds a rod with a bulbous top in the right hand. It could be Yama (*ibid.*: pl. 52) who later becomes one of the most frequently included members of the *dikpāla* group in this context.

Another early Viśvarūpa image from Vārāṇasī,⁴⁵¹ dated to the 4th century, preserves a fragmented figure of Vāyu. Only the head, encircled by a scarf, is still extant below. Vāyu belongs to the second vertical row on the left side of the central portion, which consists of superimposed forms of Viṣṇu. Significantly, the Wind God appears in generally similar positions on at least two later pieces.

One of these later reliefs is an elaborate Viśvarūpa icon, located *in situ* at Viśrāmaghāt, Śāmalājī. According to SCHASTOK (1985: pl. XX, fig. 34), it should be dated to c. 535–40 A.D. MAXWELL (1988: 148) has attempted to identify all the figures contained in its large nimbus. He recognizes two members of the *dikpāla* group: Varuṇa (*P*, second figure from the upper central one on the left) and Agni (*Q*, symmetrically placed on the right side). The identification of the latter figure as Agni remains doubtful, as there are hardly any flames visible. In the case of the supposed Varuṇa, who carries a short noose or loop in his right hand, doubts also arise, as he is provided with a serpent hood. The figure below the probable Varuṇa is perhaps Yama or Nairṛta (*L*), and beneath this is certainly Vāyu (*H*) with his inflated cloth. The probable Yama or Nairṛta holds a long object in his right hand,⁴⁵² which can be interpreted as a mace, sword or a skull-topped staff (*khaṭvāṅga*). He seems to wear his hair in *ūrdhvakeśa* fashion. There is some probability that two more *lokapālas*, Indra (*M*) and Kubera (*K*), are represented inside the populated nimbus and together with Sūrya and Candra/Soma, who flank the uppermost figure, form the Manu

⁴⁴⁵ Cf. section 2.1.3. It cannot be completely clarified in which capacity the gods Indra, Varuṇa, Śiva, and Vāyu were portrayed. VAN KOOIJ (1985: 698) argues that they represent different classes of deities.

⁴⁴⁶ R. PARIMOO 1983: fig. 29. It is presently housed at the Archaeological Museum Kota.

⁴⁴⁷ Neither the usual sequence of *dikpālas* can be recognized, nor is there any formation of pairs as is generally the case with Manu Lokapālas (see *iii. 31*). The choice may have been made on the basis of aesthetic criteria.

⁴⁴⁸ MASON 1993: 266–67, no. 72. Another illustration is published in PARIMOO 1983: fig. 27.

⁴⁴⁹ If the identification of the two-armed figure as Īśāna is correct, another possible reason for its shifting could be considered. There may have been a conflict between the Central Indian custom of portraying Īśāna's trident on the proper left side of the god and the required uniformity of the upper group of *dikpālas*, which all hold their prominent attributes in their right hands.

⁴⁵⁰ Later sculptures, when including the directional guardians, have an *aṣṭadikpāla* set, e.g. PARIMOO 1983: fig. 30, above, right side.

⁴⁵¹ T.K. BISWAS/B. JHA 1985: 41; pl. X, 16.

⁴⁵² In his drawing, MAXWELL (1988: 148) has misinterpreted the sword as the figure's raised arm, ending in a fist. This mistake becomes obvious when comparing different photographs of the sculpture.

Lokapālas.⁴⁵³ However, this is impossible to prove. The selection of directional guardians for the Viśvarūpa images often differs, and there is no parallel for the depiction of Manu Lokapālas in this context. In this case, after discarding all the doubtful identifications, there remains only Vāyu, who is securely identifiable on the basis of his distinctive attribute.

A piece of the 7th-8th centuries from Deogaḍh/U.P (MAXWELL 1988: pl. 63) shows a significant step towards the inclusion of the vehicles. Interestingly, this sculpture abounds with the depiction of animals, particularly cows. MAXWELL (*ibid.*: 234) has identified three *dikpālas* in the upper part of the panel (D, E, F), seated astride their vehicles. Indra, Agni and Yama can be recognized. Agni, on the right side, is somewhat doubtful, as the god usually does not carry a rod-shaped attribute. Below the probable Agni, a human head appears above what looks like the head of a horned animal. This figure, which is not referred to by MAXWELL, may represent another *dikpāla*.

Among the figures from the 8th-9th centuries in India, an average number of about five *dikpālas* is included. They are often depicted on both sides of the central Viṣṇu. In some cases, one side is preferred. Although at about the same time, the earliest extant Viśvarūpa image with a full set of directional guardians occurs (figs. 309, 310), the selection of *dikpālas* still had not become standardized.

A fragment of c. 8th century (MAXWELL 1988: pl. 65) shows the group of eleven *rudras*, above which (from the left) Yama and Indra ride their vehicles. These gods hold their usual attributes in the right hand. They are sensuously portrayed. As an informative detail, Yama's reins are shown leading through the nostrils of the buffalo. Much space has been provided for the *dikpāla* figures. One can only speculate whether Varuṇa and Kubera had completed the group. Both Kubera and Varuṇa are very rare members of the Viśvarūpa assemblage. However, in Nepal there is a well-preserved instance of a *caturlokapāla* group (four members) on the Viśvarūpa stele from Changu Nārāyaṇa, c. 8th-9th centuries (DEVA 1984: pls. 27–29). On the left side, beside Viṣṇu's sword, four gods are arranged in two tiers, who are recognizable by their distinctive attributes. Their coiffures are also partly varying. Above left is Yama with his rod, to the right Indra with his thunderbolt, below left is Varuṇa with a stem-handled noose, and below right Kubera is characterized by a bag. The Changu Nārāyaṇa Viśvarūpa impressively demonstrates that a reference to the various components of the cosmos was intended. This representation of the cosmic elements is further completed by the depiction of the four *diggaṇas* (directional elephants) in the lower part of the panel.

One of the most important pieces of the later phase is a well-preserved Viśvarūpa from Kanauj (MAXWELL 1988: pl. 69)⁴⁵⁴. There are two riders to be identified as *dikpālas*, in this case placed in the lower part of the populated nimbus. Vāyu has taken his "traditional" place on the lower left side, with Yama or Nairṛta below him (their vehicles resemble each other in this period).

The next 8th century panel, the Stuttgart piece, also originates from Central India (fig. 307–308). Here, the upper portion (left side) depicts the family of Śiva, while the right side showed probably five of the *dikpālas*. The latter all seem to be riding their vehicles. At the very top, MAXWELL (1994: 103) identifies Indra on his elephant followed by Agni on his goat, the latter being almost completely damaged. Below Indra is certainly Yama on his buffalo, wielding the usual *khaṭvāṅga* staff in his left hand. MAXWELL believes that this deity is Virūpākṣa on a camel. A stylized, somewhat caricature-like rendering of the buffalo was, however, common in Rajasthan at this time. There is a good example at Osiān, Harihara temple no. 3.⁴⁵⁵

To the right of Yama is a figure riding a smaller animal, who holds a damaged attribute, most probably a sword. It must be Nairṛta, who, in the Central Indian fashion, rides a quadruped. Below, between Yama and Nairṛta, a squatting personage is portrayed, holding a flattish cup at shoulder level. This is undoubtedly Kubera, who most probably also carries a money bag and rides a vehicle, ram or *nara* (damaged).

Typologically, the Stuttgart Viśvarūpa is likened to the Tumain piece (figs. 309, 310), which it most probably chronologically precedes. The stele from Tumain is significant for its inclusion of a full group of *aṣṭadikpālas*, depicted with only one small irregularity: Īśāna is replaced by or shown in the form of Śiva with his family. Śiva, Pārvatī and Gaṇeśa are seated on the top left, while Kārttikeya is depicted slightly below. They are provided with a solid socle, which probably symbolizes the Kailāsa mountain. On the right side of the central Brahmā, a procession of *dikpālas* is shown moving towards the centre. They are (from top to bottom): Indra on the elephant Airāvata, Agni on a goat, Yama on a buffalo, Nairṛta on a quadruped, Varuṇa on a goose, Vāyu on horse?, and Kubera on an anthropomorphic figure. The arrangement is characterized by a peculiar asymmetry, as no counterpart for the *dikpāla* group appears on the other side. Perhaps it was this asymmetry which prevented this visual concept from becoming a standard type.

There are three more Viśvarūpa images which appear to be later than this one. Two images from Kanauj date c. 9th century (MAXWELL 1988: pls. 66, 68). They resemble each other closely, but even here, regarding the *dikpālas*, certain differences are apparent. The regents' position in the upper portion is, however, identical. Both reliefs belong to the type of Viśvarūpa icons with Indra and Yama on the right side, like the two pieces just described. Two of the other pieces discussed above show Indra and Yama on the left side (MAXWELL 1988: pls. 63, 65). On the two later Viśvarūpa reliefs from Kanauj, not all of the *dikpālas* are provided with vehicles, and the representation is not always clear. Kanauj no. 1 (*ibid.*: pl. 66)⁴⁵⁶ includes, from left to right: Sūrya or Vāyu on a horse, Soma? with waterpot? (l.) and rosary (r.), – central figures –, Indra with the thunderbolt, seated above an elephant, Agni with pot (l.) and rosary (r.) and characterized by a beard, Yama or Nairṛta standing with staff or sword. Kanauj no. 2 has, in the same order: Kubera on an anthropomorphic figure, Agni on a ram, again characterized by a beard, – central figures –, Indra squatting on an elephant, Yama on a buffalo, wielding a skull-topped staff (*khaṭvāṅga*), and Nairṛta with shield (l.) and sword (r.). The latter is the only one who is depicted frontally.

Thus, on both pieces, Indra and – most probably – Nairṛta appear on the right side, while the programme of the left side varies. The inclusion of Soma (and perhaps Sūrya) in one case is unique and may have been inspired by the Śiva Vaivāhikamūrti panels.

The last piece of interest is the c. 10th century Viśvarūpa from Suhāniā, kept at the Archaeological Museum, Gwalior (MAXWELL 1990: fig. 44). Here, the hosts of gods have been neatly arranged in

⁴⁵³ The probable Indra (*M*) wears a high crown like Sūrya, and he may hold a thunderbolt (rather indistinct) in his right hand. He is pot-bellied. The probable Kubera (*K*) is also obese. He is shown with loose hair crowned by a topknot. He holds a fruit in his right hand and a bag or bottle in his left hand.

⁴⁵⁴ A good illustration of this piece has been published by A. GOSWAMI 1956: pl. 16.

⁴⁵⁵ BHATTACHARYYA 1991: pl. 49. The buffalo is highly stylized, with an S-shaped tail. Its long, slim neck is raised. The horns are very short and curved. Yet, when comparing the animal with its counterparts at Osiān, there remains no doubt that a buffalo was intended to be shown here.

⁴⁵⁶ I am grateful to Prof. Dr. T.S. Maxwell for kindly providing me with colour photographs of the reliefs Kanauj nos. 1 and 2.

three tiers. A unique order has been chosen for the *aṣṭadikpālas*, who occupy the middle tier. Two seated figures, which belong to the group of twelve *āḍityas* above, frame the group on the left and on the right side. The *dikpālas* are (from left to right): Varuṇa on a goose, Vāyu on an antelope?, Kubera on an anthropomorphic figure, Īśāna on a bull, – central figure –, Indra on the elephant, Agni on a goat, Yama on a buffalo and Nairṛta on the usual unidentifiable quadruped.⁴⁵⁷ All the *dikpālas* are shown moving towards the centre. The group starts with Indra as the first one on the right side and ends with Īśāna, who is the first one near the centre on the left side. The guardians are apparently shown approaching the centre from the stations of an imaginary circumambulatory circle (*pradakṣiṇāpatha*).⁴⁵⁸ In this way, Śiva/Īśāna's place close to the centre is also maintained. The Suhānī Viśvarūpa is the only one of all the panels discussed so far, which presents a consistent arrangement of *aṣṭadikpālas*.

Summing up the evidence, it can be stated that until the 10th century, the liberty of the artist with regard to the *dikpāla* representation must have been remarkable. The impression arises that a picture puzzle was created, without, however, leaving the path of tradition established by earlier sculptures. The period of new, experimental creations continued until the 10th century (Suhānī Viśvarūpa), when an aesthetic concept was developed which convincingly accommodated the complete group. The actual introduction of the complete *aṣṭadikpāla* set in the Viśvarūpa theme, however, is marked by the Tumain stele (c. 8th-9th centuries).

2.4.1.2 Horizontal Panels

The main characteristic of the horizontal panels was, of course, the fact that the directional guardians could be portrayed adequately, i.e. positioned in their respective region. At the same time, there was less possibility for variation, and the application of different aesthetic concepts remained significantly limited.

The category of horizontal panels has two sub-groups, the first one, however, being almost completely unknown. These are the designs applied on foundation bricks or slabs, which represent a cosmic diagram (e.g. fig. 1, see section 2.1.2). As such diagrams were hidden below the structure, the design did not need to be elaborate. However, more elaborate designs may also have been employed. Theoretically, a mirror-image of a ceiling panel could have served as a foundation stone.

The ceiling panels depicting *dikpālas* are more or less confined to the Deccan region. As they are mostly preserved and perceived *in situ*, they have been discussed at length in the sections dealing with this region (2.2.1, 2.3.1.1, 2.3.2.1). The general line of development, which can be inferred from the extant remains, will be sketched below.

Ceiling Panels

The known starting point of this tradition are the ceilings of Cave temple 3 at Bādāmi, dated A.D. 578. As has been described earlier (section 2.2.1), sets of four *lokapālas* (figs. 13, 15–18) are found here side by side with an early set of eight directional guardians (fig. 10).

It may be hypothesized that new phases in the development of the *aṣṭadikpāla* theme on ceiling panels were marked by panels, which to a certain extent incorporated a narrative or dramatic aspect. The intention to incorporate such an aspect could have promoted the experimental search for new aesthetic concepts.

No predecessors are known for the first stage in the development of *aṣṭadikpāla* ceilings, the *caturlokapāla* panels at Bādāmi (ill. 1, figs. 13–18). It is a remarkable fact that, although an incomplete set of *aṣṭadikpālas* occurred in the same cave temple (fig. 10), *caturlokapāla* groups still decorated the ceiling panels at Bādāmi, Nāgaraḷ, and Mahākūṭa (ills. 6–8; figs. 46–48) more than a century later. It could be hypothesized that the concept of the set of eight was not developed enough to be employed or developed further by the later sculptors of Bādāmi and that both this early set and the later *caturlokapāla* set at Bādāmi, Jambuliṅgeśvara temple, contain a dramatic element, which indicates a fresh impetus. Regarding the proto-*aṣṭadikpāla* set (fig. 10), there are a few striking facts which suggest an underlying narrative or dramatic aspect: when compared with the similarly constructed Brahmā medallion (fig. 13), it becomes obvious that the central Viṣṇu is exceptionally accompanied by an attendant couple and is allotted more space than the central Brahmā in his panel; all surrounding figures are arranged in such a way that they can be perceived without turning the head – with the exception of Yama, who is turned at a right angle –, and those, which are shown in motion, are heading towards the centre. This differs considerably from the Brahmā panel, where the bottom portions of all peripheral figures point towards the outer frame and the movement is basically circular. With its centred, dramatic impact and the individually conceived layout of the relief which extols Viṣṇu, it did not serve as a model for the time being. It seems that in the 8th century, one of the earliest *aṣṭadikpāla* reliefs with an angular layout takes up this concept – perhaps consciously – again (ill. 8), significantly portraying Anantaśayana Viṣṇu in its centre.

The Bādāmi Jambuliṅgeśvara panel (fig. 46) contains a unique dramatic element. Again, there is an aspect of centripetal movement, but in this case there are two dramatic scenes, which cannot be perceived from the same position. In the corners of the frame of a fish-spoked wheel, *dikpālas* are depicted riding towards their counterpart, the guardian of the opposite direction. It cannot be decided whether there is a symbolic meaning other than the usual parade of *dikpālas*, who rush towards the centre (the enshrined deity) to pay their reverence. One would not expect the *dikpālas* to fight among themselves,⁴⁵⁹ but the scenic arrangement seems to imply this. The ceiling panel of the Jambuliṅgeśvara temple probably precedes or at least marks the occurrence of two other *caturlokapāla* panels, at Nāgaraḷ (fig. 47) and at Mahākūṭa (fig. 48), all of c. late 7th century, where a rectangular grid of nine compartments has been employed for the first time. The ancestry of the two latter reliefs, however, lies in the two Brahmā panels at Bādāmi 3 (figs. 13–18). While in all of these types of grids it would have been possible to depict eight *dikpālas*, this was not done. The basically circular movement of the regents was also retained.

The first half of the 8th century was obviously an experimental phase, which finally led to the rectangular *aṣṭadikpāla* grids of the

⁴⁵⁷ MAXWELL (1990: 136) did not recognize the deities as *aṣṭadikpālas*, but suggested to identify them as *aṣṭamātrikās* (eight mother goddesses).

⁴⁵⁸ The arrangement is identical with the order of *aṣṭadikpālas* on the Hemāvati lintel frieze (SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: pl. 631), and it is almost identical, but for the inversion of Agni and Yama, with their arrangement on the Śiva Yogīśvara panel at Ellorā 16 (figs. 280–282). In all these cases, the quite successful attempt has been made to project a three-dimensional configuration into the two-dimensional picture. A similar, but much less satisfactory attempt is recognizable on the Śiva Vaivāhikamūrti relief from Etah (fig. 306). In this case, the group on the right side is not shown heading towards the centre like the group on the left side. The sequence of the former group also does not reflect the intention to portray a basically circular arrangement of *dikpālas*.

⁴⁵⁹ If such an impression is intended, there could be an allusion to powerful kings fighting for supremacy in the world.

later phase (c. 751 A.D.–1000 A.D.). Three different starting-points can be discerned. The first panel, which definitely has some narrative, dramatic elements, is the eight-armed Nāṭeśa Śiva accompanied by Pārvaṭī, his bull, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and the four *lokapālas*⁴⁶⁰ in the Mallikārjuna temple at Paṭṭadakal (fig. 326).⁴⁶¹ The appearance of the directional guardians is very modest in this case. Because of their small size, they are perhaps hardly perceivable from below. Yet, this relief represents the most important predecessor of the very popular Nāṭeśa-cum-*aṣṭadikpāla* ceilings in the Deccan which were widely distributed in the 9th-10th centuries. Its date may be as early as c. 710 A.D. (see section 2.3.1.1).

The second innovative representation of the first half of the 8th century is carved on the vertical portions of beams supporting the ceiling in the Huccappayya temple at Aihole (ill. 7; figs. 49–54). This unique arrangement does not belong to the category of horizontal panels, but it is regarded as a three-dimensional frieze. Unfortunately, it is not known which deity was depicted on the central ceiling. BUCHANAN (1985: 391) regards Brahmā as the most probable candidate for this position, which would have meant a “conservative” combination of the directional guardians with Brahmā.

The third example of the experimental stage is perhaps the earliest ceiling panel depicting the common *aṣṭadikpāla* group. It is located in the eastern *maṇḍapa* of the Pāpānātha temple, Paṭṭadakal (ill. 8; figs. 55–61). The uneven size of the outer sub-panels may express the intention to emphasize the guardians of the four cardinal directions. The combination of Anantaśayana with the *dikpālas* has a parallel in the above-mentioned 8th century panel from Baran, Rajasthan.⁴⁶² Its origin lies in the ancient concept of Viṣṇu abiding at the centre of the cosmos. What is highly noteworthy, however, is the fact that in the Pāpānātha temple, with the exception of Vāyu, all of the *dikpālas* are shown moving towards the centre or the central axis (ill. 10). This feature is surely reminiscent of the Viṣṇu ceiling of Bādāmi 3. The Pāpānātha panel is closely followed in time by the *aṣṭadikpāla* ceiling in the Kāśīviśvanātha temple (ill. 24; fig. 129), both panels dating c. shortly before and after the middle of the 8th century, respectively. Here, the centre is formed by a Somaskanda group, which is a rare motif in this context.

In the following period, the evenly spaced grid of nine compartments was firmly established. Although some variation concerning the central motif occurred, the most common theme was the eight-armed Nāṭeśa (see ill. 23). Even in the latter case, considerable variation was expressed in a number of details of the individual rendering, and it would not be correct to speak of a completely stereotyped representation of the *aṣṭadikpāla* theme. A rare example of the incorporation of a dramatic element in the later period is found at Bhavanāsi Saṅgam, Rūpālā Saṅgameśvara temple, c. second quarter of the 9th century (fig. 138). It could well stand at the beginning of the specific tradition of the Ālampur region, which is characterized by the absence of separating ridges (e.g. figs. 141–144). However, in the absence of any reliable dates for the north-eastern group of ceiling panels, it is impossible to establish a chronological sequence. The Bhavanāsi Saṅgam panel is unique for the fact that all figures can be viewed from one side. There are no separating ridges, but the figures are nevertheless confined to a particular, limited space. Indra and Varuṇa are both rendered bigger than the other *dikpālas*. The scene impressively shows how the directional guardians rush towards the divine couple, Śiva and Pārvaṭī, seated on a lotus throne in the centre, to pay their reverence. The panel has been designed in such a way that all of them, except for Indra and Varuṇa, are heading towards the centre. Indra and Varuṇa move in accordance with the circumambulatory (*pradakṣiṇā*) order, which is generally followed on ceiling panels. The well-

conceived relief at Bhavanāsi Saṅgam is the latest of the particularly inventive ceiling panels of the Deccan. It can be regarded as the true perfection of a centripetal order as it was basically already intended on the Viṣṇu panel at Bādāmi, Cave 3 (ill. 10). Here, however, the extolled deity was Śiva, who in the meantime had become the deity most often associated with the *aṣṭadikpāla* group.

An interesting later example (Bhubaneswar, Pāpānāśini temple, c. 11th century)⁴⁶³ shows two of the *dikpālas*, Agni and Vāyu, joining Śiva in his dance. They appear at his sides, imitating his dance posture. This partial representation of the group can be regarded as a reference to the complete set, or it probably portrays Agni and Vāyu in their capacity as rulers over particular elements, viz. fire and air.

2.4.1.3 Friezes

The friezes generally represent the *dikpālas* in a formal alignment. Although a procession or a linear battle formation could be a rewarding motif, a narrative context can be assumed in very few cases. Nevertheless, the occurring variety is quite surprising, indicating that fancy and invention was employed also in this category. Most of the pieces to be discussed are loose relief panels. Among the cases in which the original position is known, a placement near the door occurs particularly often. Only in two cases, a position on the wall other than the doorframe is reported. Friezes in the door area are treated once more separately, as are also group representations in adjacent niches and three-dimensionally arranged friezes.

Unlike the categories discussed so far, that of the friezes is quite diverse, which is not surprising when considering the large chronological span, almost one millenium, and the vast space of their distribution, the modern Indian state. The number of roughly 20 extant friezes is rather small however, so that a further subdivision would hardly yield more satisfactory results. Regarding the introduction of the *aṣṭadikpāla* theme, the friezes sometimes provide important information, particularly, when they come from regions where other conceptual types of *dikpālas* are rare (Dakṣiṇa Kosala; Bihar).

The basic facts about the friezes are already revealing. The heyday of the *aṣṭadikpāla* friezes occurred in the 8th-9th centuries. Only few examples survive from an earlier date. Basic differences exist regarding the sequence, the rendering of the figures (standing, seated, with vehicle/symbol), and the fact whether there is a separating device between the members of the group. The friezes can be divided in two groups: firstly, showing a sequence of deities referring to the directions they preside over, and those with a different, “illogical” sequence. This criterium is of no value with respect to the Manu Lokapālas (see below; ill. 31), as the directional assignment is unknown in this case. The rules determining their sequence are only partly understandable. Apart from the frequently occurring Manu Lokapāla set, a few other groups with substituted members are known, e.g. at Bādāmi, *maṇḍapa* of Cave 3 (ill. 1, figs. 15–18) and at Ellorā 16 (ill. 25, fig. 278), where, in both cases, Kārttikeya has replaced one member of the respective group. A characteriza-

⁴⁶⁰ The attending divine personages number eight, which corresponds to the number of Śiva’s arms. Later, the same numeric parallelism generally exists between Nāṭeśa’s arms and the *aṣṭadikpālas*.

⁴⁶¹ See also BANERJĪ 1985: ill. 12 (mirror-image).

⁴⁶² PARIMOO 1983: fig. 29. There, only a selection of *dikpālas* is shown, engaged in a battle.

⁴⁶³ SIVARAMAMURTI 1974: fig. 167, most probably a ceiling panel.

FRIEZES OF MANU LOKAPĀLAS (sequential, aligned)								
Chechar, frieze (DILIP KUMAR 1986: pl. VIII, 3)	(K	Y	(A	I	(V	Vā	(So?	Sū?)
Viṣṇupāda temple, Gayā, frieze, H: 23 cm, W: 51 cm (SAHAI 1970: plate)	(A	I	Y	V	K	–	–	–
Old temple, Lāmbā/Rajasthan, frieze (MEISTER 1991: pl. 393c)	G	I	(Vā	V)	(Y	K)	–	–
Mathurā, Govt. Museum Mathura, no. 31.2110, frieze H: 11.5 cm (S.D. TRIVEDI 1987: pl. 1)	Sū?	(A	I	Vā	–	–	–	–
Southern Bihar, Museum für Indische Kunst Berlin, frieze (fig. 311)	(Sū	So)	(Vā	V)	(A	I)	(K	Y)
Bihar, State Archaeological Museum Patna, frieze (fig. 312)	(Sū	So)	(Vā	V)	(A	I)	(Y	K)
Southern Bihar, State Archaeological Museum Patna, no. Arch. 11265, frieze (BHATTACHARYA 1993: fig. 3)	(Sū	So)	(Vā	V)	A	–	–	–
Gueri, Bodhgaya Site Museum (fig. 313)	–	–	(Vā	V)	(A	I)	(K	Y)
MANU LOKAPĀLAS ON VAIVĀHIKAMŪRTI RELIEFS (sequential, not strictly aligned)								
Modern Sūrya temple, Bargaon, (BHATTACHARYA 1987: fig. 5)	(Sū	So)	(V	Vā	(A	I)	(Y	K)
Kanauj (fig. 301)	Sū	(V	Vā	(Y	K)	(I	A)	So
Mānasigaṅgā/Mathurā (fig. 304)	Sū	(I	A)	(Vā	V)	(K	Y)	So
A Agni	K Kubera	V Varuṇa	()	recurring pairs of deities				
G Gaṇeśa	So Soma	Vā Vāyu	–	not extant				
I Indra	Sū Sūrya	Y Yama						

III. 31: Representations of Manu Lokapālas (8th through 10th centuries)

tion of the friezes in their chronological order will now touch all important aspects of this conceptual type.

Even when the group of Kuṣāṇa panels showing four stereotype figures could be finally proven to represent the *caturlokapālas* (see section 2.1.4), there seems to be no direct link with the later friezes at all. On later depictions, the directional guardians have always been differentiated.

From the 7th century, when the earliest *aṣṭadikpāla* sets were conceived, two friezes survive. At Bhubaneswar, Paraśurāmeśvara temple (fig. 42–44), belonging to the earlier part of the century, the original number of guardians seems to have been eight. It included Daṇḍapāṇi, who is probably a guardian of the site. Two of the deities are provided with vehicles, while in the case of Daṇḍapāṇi, no vehicle has ever been shown. The figures are placed in individual niches, which are separated by pilasters and crowned by *udgamas* in shallow relief. They are depicted seated in different postures. Although there is no sign for a continuation of the particular concept of the *dikpālas* on the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, the door decoration at Nārāyaṇapuram, early 10th century, is in some aspects reminiscent of it. The second frieze, of the latter part of the 7th century or somewhat later, is the sole evidence for *dikpāla* representation in its region, viz. Dakṣiṇa Kosala (M.P.). The door decoration at Palārī (fig. 89) accommodates a complete set of *aṣṭadikpālas*, though not all of them are aligned in a row. The guardians are seated on vehicles, thrones, or a combination of both. The distinctly individual rendering of the gods, besides their irregular sequence, are the most significant aspects of this set. Now, the 8th and 9th centuries witness a large production of *dikpāla* friezes. Although

one could assume that the remarkable number of panels of this phase would be the consequence of the introduction of *aṣṭadikpālas* in a wider area, this cannot be the only reason. About half of the number of panels depict the already mentioned, partly substituted group of Manu Lokapālas (Sūrya, Candra, Indra, Agni, Yama, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera). Thus, it seems that both versions were vying with each other for importance. It must be recalled in this place that the Manu Lokapālas occurred only once in a directional arrangement, at Muṇḍeśvarī Hill (ill. 2, figs. 36–41), which is also the earliest known example for the depiction of this group, c. early 7th century. On the level of directional symbolism, they were not competing for dominance with the usual *dikpālas*, except probably for Muṇḍeśvarī itself (see section 2.2.3). The Manu Lokapālas were quite dominant in the category of friezes, at least in the region of their occurrence, i.e. North India. Unfortunately, only one of the Manu Lokapāla reliefs is preserved *in situ* (Lāmbā/Rajasthan)⁴⁶⁴, and there is no indication whether they had ever occupied a place above the door.

The most striking feature about the Manu Lokapālas is the fact that they are arranged in a binary manner, i.e. particular pairs of deities recur. However, the sequence of pairs as well as the order within a particular pair may change. This binary system might go back to an earlier directional arrangement, but there is only one indication for it, the – now loose and incomplete – Muṇḍeśvarī Hill

⁴⁶⁴ MEISTER 1991: pl. 393c. The panel belongs to a series of reliefs carved on lintels in the *raṅgamaṇḍapa* (*ibid.*: pl. 393a–f). The themes are not linked in any way. Interestingly, Agni is shown separately, on a Liṅgodbhavamūrti panel, standing in *ābhaṅga* posture in a mandorla of flames (*ibid.*: pl. 393a, third figure from the right).

set (ill. 2, figs. 36–41). The pair Sūrya and Candra is in some cases arranged symmetrically on the extreme left and right sides of the rest of the group. This is so far only known from a few Śiva Vaivāhikamūrti and Viṣṇu Anantaśayana panels (ill. 31).

Among the Manu Lokapāla reliefs, further variations occur: in some cases they are depicted without vehicles (e.g. figs. 311, 312), and in other cases they are portrayed as seated on their vehicles (Chechar, Gayā; cf. ill. 31). The variants at Lāmbā and Mathurā seem to be comparatively rare. The former piece also shows the Lokapālas seated on their vehicles (except for Kubera, who is shown without), but there is some dynamism in the group, which creates the impression of vigorous movement. On the latter piece, only the first figure on the left is seated on horseback, while the others are standing without vehicles, which is quite rare. The frieze is apparently incomplete. It may have belonged to a narrative panel. The Manu Lokapāla group was perhaps still depicted in later times, which is indicated by its presence on a *viṣṇupaṭṭa*, dating to c. 11th century.⁴⁶⁵

Apart from the representations of Manu Lokapālas and the *dikpāla* reliefs in the vicinity of doorways (see below), there are only two more cases of about the 9th century A.D. Both have been mentioned in the systematic part of this study. Besides Bikkavolu (see below), there is another case in Andhra Pradesh, viz. Mukhal-īṅgam. It is a loose, fragmented frieze⁴⁶⁶ showing Yama, Nairṛta, Varuṇa and Vāyu riding in procession on their prominent vehicles.

All of the remaining reliefs of the 8th to 10th centuries are part of or once were part of doorways, or are friezes on other architectural members. In summing up the evidence gathered so far, the most striking point is the absence of any uniformity in the mode of representation of *dikpālas* on friezes, except for some of the Manu Lokapāla reliefs (figs. 311, 312, and “Southern Bihar”, Patna Museum, cf. ill. 31), which are geographically and chronologically closely related.

Group Representation in Adjacent jaṅghā Niches

The case of the Paraśurāmeśvara temple at Bhubaneswar (ill. 3; fig. 42–44) has been discussed at length, representing an important early occurrence of *dikpālas*. The directional guardians nowadays appear in adjoining *jaṅghā* (frieze of images on the wall) niches in two groups of three which are separated by a window. Originally, before the insertion of the window, which has violated the sequence, there may have been eight members aligned in a row.

In the case of Bikkavolu/Andhra Pradesh, the depiction of Agni, Indra (fig. 283) and Vāyu (fig. 284) could be viewed as a partial representation of the *dikpāla* group. The images are found juxtaposed on the southern wall of the Goliṅgeśvara temple of c. 9th century. With the absence of other *dikpāla* representations in this region, the concept could be interpreted as a faint reflection of earlier *dikpāla* sets on walls as occurring at Ālampur. It is remarkable that here, a visual distinction is expressed by portraying Indra as the largest member and in the central position.

Doors

The earliest known door decoration is the also otherwise remarkable gathering of eight *dikpālas* at the sides and above the door of the Siddheśvara temple, Palārī/M.P. (fig. 89). As has been described above (see section 2.3.1.2), the group appears divided in two batches of three on both sides of the lintel, with the remaining two *dikpālas* directly flanking the door opening slightly below. Regarding the date, there are two suggestions, “c. 675–85 A.D.” and “8th

century”. A completely unusual concept prevails in the representation of the *dikpālas*. Strangely, the group did not occur afterwards in the region of Dakṣiṇa Kosala. Most of the deities are turned towards the door opening. It can be noted that the closer they are placed near the door, the stronger is their turn towards the door. In this consistent concept, the two outer guardians are rendered frontally. This fact can be interpreted in the way that the *aṣṭadikpālas* were employed as guardians of the door, towards which they rushed from different directions, though their arrangement is not systematical according to the usual sequential rendering of the directions.

Before discussing the North Indian examples, the only two South Indian occurrences shall be mentioned. They differ completely. The 8th century *gopura*-like entrance structure of the Kailāsa temple (Ellorā 16, ill. 25, fig. 278) has a large frieze of *dikpālas*, most probably not the canonical group, which can be regarded as door guardians, quite in line with the Palārī group. Those which are extant, are all turned towards the door opening, riding their vehicles. The *dikpālas* are probably led by the god of war Kārttikeya as their general, who alone is depicted frontally. Their order is not systematic, as far as it can be perceived now.

At Hemavati, Doḍḍeśvara temple, an *aṣṭadikpāla*-cum-Naṭeśa frieze embellishes the door lintel. Here also, the directional guardians ride their prominent vehicles. The scenery seems to be rather joyful than martial. SIVARAMAMURTI (1974: fig. 67) in his description expresses the idea that the *dikpālas* are depicted dancing like the central Naṭeśa. As has been briefly mentioned above, it is a remarkable achievement that a particular order has been established here, rendering the *dikpālas* as coming from both sides, from the stations of an imaginary circumambulatory path (*pradak-ṣiṇāpātha*). This order can be regarded as an important development in the period under discussion. The Doḍḍeśvara temple approximately dates to the second quarter of the 10th century.

Belonging to the Orissan style but located in northern Andhra Pradesh, Nārāyaṇapuram has a unique example for the extensive decoration of doorjambs with *dikpālas*.⁴⁶⁷ In continuation of the 7th century *dikpālas* with vehicles at Bhubaneswar, Paraśurāmeśvara temple (fig. 42), particularly the representation of Varuṇa, the gods are rendered separately in squarish compartments, with small vehicles underneath what seems to be the throne. One of the apparent modifications of the early 10th century temple at Nārāyaṇapuram are the haloes behind the heads. The sequence of *dikpālas* starts with Indra below on the left jamb (third *śākhā*) and continues on the right jamb with Varuṇa, the alignment proceeding from top to bottom here. This is a rare example for a vertically arranged *dikpāla* frieze in the period under discussion.

The remaining friezes from North India uniformly render the *aṣṭadikpālas* in their “proper” order from left to right, starting with Indra as the guardian of the east. However, the individual features of the panels are still remarkable. The two impressive friezes of standing deities from Gaur? (fig. 240) and Baḍoh (fig. 180), which both measure more than two metres in length, are assumed to have served as overdoor decorations of 9th or 10th century temples. The former panel starts with Gaṇeśa on the left side and has pilasters as separating elements between the deities. This visual concept creates a certain uniformity in the set-up, which is somewhat balanced by rendering the *dikpālas* in a distinctly individualized manner. Thus,

⁴⁶⁵ C. BAUTZE-PICRON 1994: fig. 11. The eight Lokapālas appear in the lowest tier. They are all squatting in different postures, without vehicles. In a few cases, their identification is difficult. It may be a contaminated version.

⁴⁶⁶ GRAVELY/SIVARAMAMURTI 1939: pl. XVI, above, probably a mirror-image.

⁴⁶⁷ MITRA 1987: figs. 19–21, eastern door of the *mukhaśālā* (vestibule).

the attributes are held either in the left or in the right hand or in both, and the physical proportions also vary. The vehicles are only represented in miniature size and placed below, in a recess of the moulding.

The *aṣṭadīkṣpāla* frieze from Baḍoh (fig. 180) is perhaps the latest one in this category, dating to the late 9th or early 10th century. The deities are all four-armed, but survive only in a severely damaged state. They are standing in an extremely flexed posture (*atibhaṅga*) and are all provided with a large halo. Of the four hands, the lower left always holds a *kamaṇḍalu*, and the lower right is held in *varadamudrā*. On both sides of the frieze, a female figure is shown, who is also provided with a halo and turned towards the group. A thin band of floral motives in relief below the ridge forms the floor level for the *dīkṣpālas*.

In the two cases to be finally discussed, the association with the door is clear. The earlier relief of the two is a fragmented part of what must have been the upper end of the right doorjamb with the adjacent portion of the overdoor to the left.⁴⁶⁸ Below a row of seated planetary deities (*navagrahas*), there is a tier with standing *dīkṣpālas*, out of which (from the left) only Nairṛta, Varuṇa and Vāyu are preserved, further a larger seated figure, and, once more in the same smaller size, a standing, damaged figure of Kubera. The two-armed directional guardians hold their basically rod-like attributes in the right hand, while the left rests on the hip. They stand in an extremely flexed posture (*atibhaṅga*) like their counterparts, but the feet are kept apart, which is typical for the Western region (*i.e.* Rajasthan). It is assumed that the large four-armed, seated figure of Śiva (upper arms damaged) represents Īśāna. Such an inversion of Kubera and Īśāna becomes likely when taking into account the fact that no space remained at the right end of the panel, where Īśāna could have been depicted. With only three deities missing on the left side (Indra, Agni, and Yama), it is quite obvious that the alignment of *dīkṣpālas* could not have extended completely over the door opening. Probably, another group of minor deities, a *daśāvātāra* group or the like, had once completed this tier of the door decoration on the left side. Perhaps a larger deity in the centre separated the two groups.

The last relief, which is one of the latest (*c.* 900 A.D.) friezes under discussion, is extant *in situ* at Barwāsāgar/M.P., on a temple now called Jarāi-kā-maṭh (fig. 179). The figures are deeply cut and again follow the usual sequence starting with Indra on the left. It is remarkable that this order has been maintained, although the prominent vehicles of the two groups of four *dīkṣpālas* both face the centre which is formed by two jackal-faced goddesses. The sitting posture of the two-armed *dīkṣpāla* is *dakṣiṇāpralambapāda* (right leg pendent). A remarkable degree of individual, non-uniform treatment, however, gives the group a lively expression. Attention has also been paid to details, *e.g.* two tiny figures in shallow relief on the background in an almost narrative manner accentuate the function of particular gods, *viz.* Varuṇa and Kubera (see section 2.3.2.2). The Barwāsāgar frieze is located on the second tier of the overdoor decoration of the sanctum door. Just above the frieze, the beams for the ceiling of a now lost porticus were originally attached (cf. TRIVEDI 1990: fig. 37).

In summing up the evidence on door decoration, the great variation occurring in this category has to be noted. In a few cases, the impression arises that links for the continuation of a particular concept are now missing (Bhubaneswar – Nārāyaṇapuram; Palārī – Barwāsāgar), but often, the treatment of the *dīkṣpāla* theme seems to be imbued by innovative freshness. Only in a few cases, the *aṣṭadīkṣpālas* might have had a secondary function as door guardians (Palārī; Ellorā 16). Significantly, these cases are the earliest ones.

Three-dimensional Friezes

This conceptual category did not become popular in the period under discussion. The diverse members of this formal group once more tell of a conceptual innovation, which was not necessarily followed by consolidation. For an ideal positioning of *dīkṣpālas* in their respective domains, the depiction on multi-faceted or round architectural members would be ideal. Consequently, such octagonal or circular arrangements of *aṣṭadīkṣpālas* occur in later periods.⁴⁶⁹

The first case is unique for its arrangement of *dīkṣpālas* on the beams of a ceiling bay (figs. 49–54). This peculiar concept in the 8th century Huccappayya temple at Aihoḷe at the same time seems to stand at the very beginning of *aṣṭadīkṣpāla* representations on ceilings. During the subsequent development of ceiling panels, the *dīkṣpālas* were included in these, their panels being of the same format as the central panel (*e.g.* fig. 137).

The second case is somewhat unclear, as the particular deities in the procession can hardly be identified. The frieze covers the beams of the Nandīmaṇḍapa on the south, east and north sides⁴⁷⁰ at Alur/Karnataka. In date, it could be assigned to the 10th century. A continuous line of gods (mostly accompanied by their consorts) ride their prominent vehicles over cloud formations. All are shown heading towards the left. It is not clear whether in some cases, the same *dīkṣpālas* are once more depicted in the frieze. Thus, there are three elephant riders. However, other gods completed the alignment. One of the outsiders is Kārtikeya, who rides his peacock near the centre of the eastern side. An obvious sign for the intended directional symbolism is Yama's mighty buffalo, dominating the centre of the southern side.

The octagonal portion of a *c.* 10th century offering platform (*balipīṭha*) is decorated by *aṣṭadīkṣpālas* at Kambadahalli/Karnataka.⁴⁷¹ The *balipīṭha* has been regarded as coeval with a group of Jaina shrines and is structurally quite elaborate. From bottom to top, it consists of an *upāna* and square, octagonal, circular, and lotus-shaped segments. The octagonal section is decorated by shallow reliefs of *dīkṣpālas*, riding their large-sized vehicles along with their consorts to the left. The movement thus conforms to the *pradakṣiṇā* concept. The figures lift their hands in the gesture of salutation. They appear to be bereft of individual attributes. The squarish relief panels are bordered on both sides by vertical decorated bands, the design of which always seem to match with the adjacent band.

The last member of this category, a free-standing pillar at Dev Baruṇārak/Bihar, *c.* 8th century,⁴⁷² referred to as *dhvajastambha* (flagpole) by the author, also has both square and octagonal sections. The octagonal portion starts at medium height. It is decorated

⁴⁶⁸ MASON 1993: cat. no. 58, Heeramanek Collection, height: 73 cm, breadth: 99 cm, probably Kota region/Rajasthan.

⁴⁶⁹ Three *balipīṭha*-like socles are preserved from *c.* 12th century, two of them in the State Museum Hyderabad and one in the Prince of Wales Museum Bombay, no. S.4 (*Catalogue* 1988: no. 120). The top of the cylinder is decorated by a lotus and *rāṣṭi* signs in a circular arrangement. The cylindrical part (octagonal at the bottom and round at the top) is carved with *aṣṭadīkṣpālas* riding to the left along with their consorts. Below Varuṇa, the charioteer Aruṇa and the seven horses of Sūrya are carved in shallow relief, on the level of the square base-slab. Thus, the most prominent part of its content is solar symbolism. Another example, the circular arrangement of seated metal images of the *dīkṣpālas* above the base of a *dhvajastambha* at Achchankovil, has been illustrated by R.P. GOSWAMI (1979: pl. 7).

⁴⁷⁰ I.K. SARMA 1992: pls. 75–77.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*: 155; pl. 118.

⁴⁷² ASHER 1980: pl. 125. Unfortunately, the rear side of the pillar has, to our knowledge, not been published.

– most probably – with *aṣṭagrahas* (eight planetary deities). The upper part of the pillar shaft is again square. The relief panels on the four sides are bordered by ridges. As far as can be judged from the photograph, they contain representations of *lokapālas* seated on rather large vehicles or thrones. The pillar design may bear a cosmic symbolism, in which the positions of the guardians correspond to heaven or to the peaks of Mount Meru.

2.4.2 Single Representation

The conceptual type of single representation is a category which contains a high degree of internal variation. The greatest diversity concerns the choice and placement of the represented deities. Other variations occur with respect to the frames of the panels, which are often sunken into niches, and, of course, the concept and layout of the panels.

Naturally, one would expect the *dikpālas* to be positioned in accordance with their respective regions. Yet, this was, strictly speaking, never the case with the images on temple walls.⁴⁷³ Although the ideal positioning was more or less achieved, compromises on the basis of certain architectural and theological rules were always made. The hierarchical order of deities must have been the reason for the fact that *dikpālas* were generally not permitted in the *bhadra* (central offset) position on the wall.

In this category, three sub-types will be formed: *jaṅghā* (wall frieze) images, *śikhara* (temple tower) images, and sculptures in-the-round. There are also representations on other architectural elements, the exact positioning of which is not clear in some cases (*e.g.* Muṇḍeśvarī, see section 2.2.3).

The *jaṅghā* images are doubtlessly the largest and most varied category. In the chronological part of this study, these representations have been discussed at length, so that a general summary of the results will suffice here. The second category, *śikhara* images, are a very interesting group, starting quite early, but only few images of this type belong to the period under discussion. The category of separate, individual (loose) icons, which were kept in the temple's *prākāra* or in particular shrines, are restricted to the extreme south. The relatively few remains of this group have been treated in section 2.3.2.5 on South India.

2.4.2.1 *Jaṅghā* (Wall Frieze) Images

It is an established fact that, unless the assigned dates of some of the early temples in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan would have to be modified, the Kālikāmātā temple at Cittauḍgaḍh and some of the temples at Ālampur (Bāla Brahmā, Svarga Brahmā) must be regarded as the earliest extant shrines with *dikpālas*. They all belong to the latter part of the 7th century. As has been noted above (see section 2.3.1.3), there may have been some kind of interaction between the two sites, and a notable common feature is the positioning of Soma on the north. However, there are basic differences in the representation of the deities. While at Cittauḍgaḍh, the basic concept and layout of the individual panels (standing deity with small vehicle at its side) remained the same for centuries to come, the concept of the *dikpālas* at Ālampur⁴⁷⁴ as well as their positioning in wall niches did not occur later in the Deccan.

The temples of Cittauḍgaḍh and Ālampur may have had some predecessors, which are now lost, but still, the evidence preserved at both sites is uniquely important. The most remarkable aspect of both these early sites with regard to the *dikpālas* is the fact that the

sets play an important aesthetic role on the temple exterior. Interestingly, there were other lines of development without such a visual domination, particularly that of Osiān.⁴⁷⁵ Even the early occurrence of incomplete sets at Pīpād, Dāṅg, Amrol (Rāmeśvara temple) and Osiān (Sūrya temples 1 and 2) may be interpreted as a reluctance to let the *dikpālas* dominate the temple walls.

During the early development of the *aṣṭadikpāla* theme on walls, a large variety of individual concepts was created. Some special cases may be mentioned at first:

- The *dikpāla* sets on polygonal temples (Muṇḍeśvarī; Indor), and
- those *dikpāla* images which are integrated in continuous wall friezes (Nālandā, Temple no. 2; Gwālīor, Telī-kā-mandir; Pāhārpur).

Both categories provide valuable information on the position of the *dikpālas* among the hierarchy of gods as well as on the rules of their directional positioning. The earliest example, the octagonal Muṇḍeśvarī temple (ill. 2; cf. fig. 35), unfortunately does not survive intact. It can be only hypothesized that the *dikpālas* once occupied the lateral niches on the four oblique sides of the temple. That implies that a certain compromise with regard to the ideal directions had been made here as usual, although the temple would have provided the possibility of a correct placement.

The Śiva temple at Indor, *c.* latter part of the 8th century, is eleven-sided, two *kapilī* (walls of the vestibule) niches adding to nine *bhadra* portions, which have been arranged in the round. Here also, it can be demonstrated that the “correct” arrangement of *dikpālas* has not been given priority, as the wall portions in the cardinal directions have been allotted to the usual *parivāra* (family members of the main god) Gaṇeśa, Skanda, and Pārvatī. The directional guardians have been distributed in the two *kapilī* niches and six of the nine *bhadra* portions. Thus, concerning their individual orientation, the same compromises have been made as on rectangular structures.

Like the polygonal temples, the continuous wall friezes, including figures other than *dikpālas*, belong to a relatively early stage in the depiction of directional guardians. In all three cases, Nālandā, Stone temple no. 2 (see section 2.3.3), Gwālīor, Telī-kā-mandir (ill. 16), and Pāhārpur, Somapura Vihāra (ill. 29), the set of *aṣṭadikpālas* is not complete. Chronologically, Nālandā belongs to the 7th century, Gwālīor to the 8th century, and Pāhārpur can be assigned to the late 8th century. In the first two cases, the wall friezes are completely preserved. Thus, it is clear that some of the *dikpālas* have been actually missing. At Pāhārpur, the northern portion of the wall frieze has been completely destroyed. Judging from the irregular distribution of the remaining guardians, it seems quite likely that the group was originally incomplete. In a final assessment, it must be stated that although the conditions would have allowed a correct directional arrangement of *dikpālas* in continuous wall friezes, their placement was obviously haphazard.

⁴⁷³ The ideal order would be: Indra stationed in the east, Agni stationed in the south-east, and so on. This was the arrangement on ceiling panels, on foundation bricks, and on three-dimensionally arranged friezes.

⁴⁷⁴ Viewing the Ālampur images in a wider geographical context, however, they show a tendency which seems to be typical for the southern part of India, *viz.* to portray the *dikpālas* without any vehicle when they were not conceived as riders.

⁴⁷⁵ On the Harihara temples nos. 1 and 2 (ill. 22), the introduction of *pratiratha* (intermediate) niches has led to the loss of dominance of the *dikpālas* in their *karna* niches.

The most frequent depiction of *dikpālas* on temples is the positioning of the guardians in *karṇa* niches, i.e. next to a corner. On east-oriented temples, the sequence generally starts with Indra on the southern (proper right) side of the entrance. This was already the case on the earliest, just mentioned temples at Cittaūḍgaḍh and Ālampur.⁴⁷⁶ Regarding the *karṇa* position, it may be assumed that the *dikpālas* were employed to protect the corners, which are traditionally regarded as vulnerable points. It is also probable that they were intended to protect the walls from the sides, which seems likely in view of the “doorkeeper (*dvārapāla*) pose”⁴⁷⁷ of the *dikpālas* on a large number of temples in Western India (Rajasthan).

The first exception to be mentioned is the inclusion of the *kapilī* (walls of the vestibule) niches in the placement of *dikpālas*. Such cases occur in the 8th century, both in Madhya Pradesh and in Rajasthan. At Amrol,⁴⁷⁸ Rāmeśvara temple (ill. 14), and Osiāñ, Sūrya temple no. 1 (ill. 21), some of the members of early, incomplete sets have been placed on the *kapilī* wall in a non-systematic manner, while at Indor, the *kapilī* niches seem to have been consciously chosen for the most prominent *dikpālas* of a complete set, i.e. Īśāna and Indra (ill. 27). It is an established fact that the *dikpāla* representation in *kapilī* niches was only an intermediate stage in the development and was never taken up again after the 8th century.

A completely unique case is the early 9th century Pīpalādevī temple at Osiāñ. It is the only case of *dikpālas* placed in *pratiratha* (intermediate) positions. This placement occurs only on the western wall. There, the two *dikpālas* which should have been accommodated on the north, have been depicted in the *pratiratha* niches, adding to the usual *dikpālas* of the western side. Moreover, an inversion of Vāyu and Kubera has taken place (see section 2.3.2.3).

The second substantial exception is a shift in the positions of the directional guardians. Such a set, starting with Indra on the (north-)east, occurs at Pīpāḍ (ill. 20), at Osiāñ, Viṣṇu temple no. 2 (MEISTER 1991: 265), at Caurāsi, and at Gaṇeśwarpur, south-eastern subsidiary shrine of the Pañcapāṇḍava temple (for both Orissan sites see section 2.3.2.4). At Khīḍarpurā (*ibid.*: 241), such an order is also implied, with Īśāna surviving on the north(-east) and Yama on the south(-east). This positioning may have been the result of particular considerations, e.g. reserving the eastern wall for the first two members of the set, but this concept did not become popular.

In some cases of incomplete sets, it is impossible to decide about the originally intended order (e.g. Amrol, Rāmeśvara Mahādeva, ill. 14; Pīpāḍ, ill. 20; Gallāvalli, ill. 30), while in some other cases of incomplete sets, there remains no doubt about the underlying concept (e.g. Gwālior, Caturbhujā temple, ill. 28).

Regarding the parts of the temple, where single representations of one or more sets of *dikpālas* occur, a number of different concepts can be distinguished:

- 1 Only one set, on the *garbhagrha* (central shrine) exterior of a *nirandhāra* (without ambulatory) temple;
- 2 only one set, on the *garbhagrha* exterior of a *sāndhāra* (with ambulatory) temple;
- 3 only one set, on the *maṇḍapa* (pillared hall) exterior of a *sāndhāra* temple;
- 4 two sets, one respectively on the *garbhagrha* and *maṇḍapa* exteriors of a *sāndhāra* temple;
- 5 only one set, on the *maṇḍapa* exterior of a *nirandhāra* temple;
- 6 only one set, on the exterior of the central structure of a *pañcāyatana* (consisting of five sanctums) complex;

7 several sets (theoretically up to four) on the exteriors of the subsidiary temples of a *pañcāyatana* complex, adding to at least one set on the exterior of the central structure of the complex.

Concept no. 1 is the most frequent one, as it refers to the prevailing temple type in the northern part of India during the period under discussion. The only example for Concept no. 2 is the late 7th century Kālikāmātā temple at Cittaūḍgaḍh (ill. 17). The slightly later temple at the site, the Kumbhaśyāma (ills. 18, 19), significantly belongs to Concept no. 4. The third concept is best illustrated at Ālampur, where all temples except for the Kumāra Brahmā and the Tāraka Brahmā seem to have been provided with *dikpāla* sets on the *maṇḍapa* (hall), but not on the *garbhagrha* (sanctum). A very special variant of Concept no. 3 occurs on the Pāpanātha temple at Paṭṭadakal (ill. 9). Here, the four directional guardians, along with Varāha and Brahmā, “guard” the *bhadrāvalokanas* (false porticoes) on both sides. Their placement is partly irregular, with Indra positioned on the west.

The occurrence of two sets on different architectural elements of a *sāndhāra* temple (4) is reported only from Rajasthan: Cittaūḍgaḍh, Kumbhaśyāma temple (ills. 18, 19); Ābānerī, and Khed (see section 2.3.2.3). On the earliest of the three temples, the Kumbhaśyāma (c. early 8th century), the two sets differ substantially. The set on the outer wall seems to be quite regular, whereas the *garbhagrha* set uniquely includes a number of nearly identical deities (“Īśāna type”). At Khed, the images of the two sets are very much alike (figs. 226–233).

The rare Concept no. 5 is well illustrated at Satyavolu, Rāmalīngeśvara temple (ill. 13). The *dikpāla* set must have remained incomplete, as the (north-)eastern one of the available eight niches is occupied by a Sūrya image. At Caurāsi/Orissa, the same mode of representation occurs for a complete *aṣṭadikpāla* set, which starts with Indra on the (north-)east (see section 2.3.2.4). Concept no. 6 appears on the relatively early *pañcāyatana* temples at Osiāñ, Harihara nos. 1 and 2, c. middle of the 8th century.

Concept no. 7 was probably employed at Gaṇeśwarpur/Orissa (see section 2.3.2.4). The south-eastern and south-western subsidiary temples each have a complete set of *aṣṭadikpālas* (figs. 249–265). However, there is a difference in the distribution of *dikpālas*, as the set of the south-eastern temple shows the exceptional order starting with Indra on the (north-)east. The north-western subsidiary shrine exhibits Kṛṣṇalīlā scenes instead of the *dikpāla* theme. The central shrine of the *pañcāyatana* complex survives only with empty niches and it is known whether they once contained *dikpālas* as well. The Gaṇeśwarpur example of the late 10th century once more demonstrates that the multiple occurrence of basically similar *dikpāla* sets in a temple in the course of time seems to

⁴⁷⁶ However, Ālampur also provides the only known example for a positioning of *dikpālas* in the centre of a wall (Yama on the south, and Soma/Candra on the north), thereby changing the order of those in the corner positions. Taking the Svarga Brahmā as an example (ill. 11), it becomes obvious that out of the eight usual *dikpālas*, five of them (Nairṛta, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, Īśāna) occupy positions they would have had when the sequence had started with Indra on the (north-)east. However, Indra is placed on the (south-)east and Sūrya, as an associated deity, holds the (north-)eastern position.

⁴⁷⁷ Cf. the posture of *dvārapālas* at Osiāñ, Sūrya temple no. 1 (MEISTER 1991, pls. 312, 314), which is typical. The pivot leg is positioned next to the door which he protects, and the free leg is on the other side. The same posture is generally shown by *dikpālas* in Rajasthan, with the free leg pointing towards the nearest corner.

⁴⁷⁸ The second 8th century temple at Amrol, the ruined Dānebābā, probably had also *kapilī* walls, but it cannot be decided any more whether any *dikpāla* image was positioned there (ill. 15).

have increased. On the Khajuraho temples, not discussed here, concept no. 6 became the usual temple decor. When multiple sets occur on earlier temples, they generally belong to different modes of representation.⁴⁷⁹

Finally, another case will be mentioned which cannot be classified in one of the above sub-categories. At Bārambā/Orissa, only Agni and Yama have been included in the lavish temple decor (see section 2.3.2.4). They are not depicted on the same portion of the temple. Agni is situated on the hall (*jagamohana*) and Yama on the tower (*gaṇḍī*) of this east-facing *nirandhāra* temple. As both deities appear in the correct positions, one cannot deny their *dikpāla* role. This is a very peculiar case of an intentional selection of two *dikpālas* from a phase (c. 9th century) in which complete sets had not yet been introduced on Orissan temples.

2.4.2.2 Śikhara (Temple Tower) Images

Dikpāla images on *śikharas* are a rare, little noticed type. It is quite probable that some still extant cases have not yet been uncovered. The rareness of this type raises doubts whether there was any continuity at all or whether some of its representations had been independently conceived. It is quite likely that a certain continuity existed, considering among other reasons that the placement of *dikpālas* “above” was an apt representation for this group of heavenly guardians. It should also be noted that out of five known occurrences, four probably represented the *caturlokapāla* group (four guardians of the cardinal directions). This may be regarded as an early trait. The choice of the group of four regents may also have been determined by the structure of the tower itself, which generally provides only space in its central portions, orientated towards the cardinal directions. A development, which occurred after the period under survey is the positioning of *aṣṭadikpālas* near the corners in the upper storeys of South Indian *vimānas* (e.g. at Gaṅgaikōṇḍacōlapuram, later addition, PICHARD *et al.* 1994: 89; ph. 202), where they are distributed in the same way as on wall representations.

The five examples belong to five successive centuries, starting with Bhūmarā in the 6th century. Bhūmarā/M.P. is indeed a key site. The Śiva temple has yielded the earliest evidence for the single representation of directional guardians. With only the images of the *dikpālas* Yama and Kubera surviving (figs. 25, 26), the concept was probably restricted to the four guardians of the cardinal directions. However, the portrayal of the group may have been incomplete. Associated with this group was a guardian figure, which has been here referred to as Daṇḍapāni (see section 2.5.10; fig. 28). The placement of the fine panels framed by elaborate *gavākṣas* (“cow’s eye” arches) on the superstructure can be safely assumed, but it cannot be decided from the extant remains, where exactly the *gavākṣas* had once been fixed. Apart from the *garbhagrha* (sanctum) roof, the *maṇḍapa* (pillared hall) roof may also be considered as a probable location (DEVA 1988: 41), albeit a less likely one.

When dating the Bhūmarā temple to c. 520–530 A.D., the Kumāra Brahmā temple at Ālampur postdates it by about hundred years. As on the former temple, the *dikpāla* set on its *śikhara* only consists of Yama and Kubera (figs. 23, 24), but here, the evidence is completely preserved, with Nāṭeśa and probably Pārvatī occupying the corresponding niches on the east and on the west, respectively (BUCHANAN 1985: 122). Yama and Kubera have been installed in the correct directions. Yama appears seated on his buffalo, while Kubera is seated without any vehicle or symbol below. At Ālampur, the relief panels are framed by trefoil arches.

Again about hundred years later, c. 730 A.D., the Huccappayya temple at Aihole was designed with an incompletely preserved *aṣṭadikpāla* set in its interior (figs. 49–54) and at least one of the four *lokapālas* placed in an arched frame at the upper end of the *madhyalatā* (central vertical band) of the *śikhara*. Unfortunately, the image of Varuṇa observed by BOLON (1988: 309) on the western side was never documented. No trace remains of any probable counterparts in the other directions.

The 9th century example at Bārambā/Orissa has been already mentioned above, as its counterpart is positioned in a *jaṅghā* (wall frieze) niche. Here the image of Yama riding his buffalo and accompanied by attendants holding his attributes (fig. 242) appears on the lower part of the *śikhara*, framed by a *gavākṣa* arch. This arch forms the topmost part of a pediment of the central image of the southern side of the *garbhagrha* (sanctum) wall, which has been extended into the second storey (*bhūmi*) of the *śikhara*.

The last example of this category is formed by a set of images in-the-round, which have been placed at *grīvā* (“neck”) level on a Southern style temple tower (*vimāna*). In this case, the morphological link with the aforementioned depictions is less than with the following category (see below). The evidence appears to be absolutely unique. On the *vimāna* of the Nāgeśvara temple at Pratakoṭa/A.P., which belongs to c. 9th–10th centuries (see section 2.3.2.1), a few courses of mouldings below the *śikhara*, individual images in-the-round of four seated *dikpālas* are extant. Indra occurs on the (north-)east, with a narrow portion of a frontal elephant head sculpted as a seat. On the south, Agni, Yama and Nairṛta are placed in the correct positions, an – anthropomorphic – vehicle being discernible only in Nairṛta’s case (fig. 275). Both the sparse indication of vehicles and the plasticity of the images may point to South Indian relations (cf. the following section).

2.4.2.3 Individual Icons

In section 2.3.2.5 on South Indian *dikpālas*, this type has been discussed at length. It never, at least as far as the evidence goes, includes a vehicle. In the case of seated images, no complete set is known. In the case of the standing images, however, a group of nine separate images from the 9th century Amṛtaghaṭeśvara temple at Tirukkaḍaiyūr/Tamilnadu could be regarded as a *dikpāla* set with a few substituted members. In this case, a directional arrangement in the *prākāra* seems to be partly preserved.

It may be hypothesized that early, incomplete sets of *aṣṭadikpālas* were individually enshrined, as attested by the later evidence of the Rājaraṇeśvara temple at Tañjāvūr of the early 11th century, where chapels for the *dikpālas* were provided in the proper directions. The absence of vehicles which has been observed in South India, could have been compensated by the presence of the respective vehicles at *grīvā* level as it occurs at Tañjāvūr. However, there is no evidence whatsoever of separate *dikpāla* shrines before the time of the Rājaraṇeśvara temple, which already postdates the period under discussion.

⁴⁷⁹ An additional group representation occurs at Barwāsāgar (see section 2.3.2.2), and at Lāmbā (see section 2.3.1.3), where friezes add to the depiction of *dikpālas* in wall niches. At Aihole, Huccappayya temple, a frieze on beams in the interior is combined with at least one *dikpāla* image on the tower (*śikhara*). Another good example is the Pāpanātha temple, Paṭṭadakal, where sets of four and eight *dikpālas* are found on the exterior and interior (ceiling), respectively (ills. 8, 9).

2.5 Iconography of the *dikpālas*

It has become apparent in the course of the foregoing chapters that the iconographic determining factors, of which attributes and vehicles are the most important ones, were subjected to a certain variation. While the variations sometimes appear to be individually conceived, general lines of development as well as substantial regional variations can be deduced from the available data.

The analysed images generally belong to the mode of single representation (see section 2.4.2), as in the case of group representation the individual rendering of the deities is often less pronounced. An unusual lack of individual characteristics occurs on the Śiva panel at Ellorā 16 (figs. 280–282), where the *dikpālas* do not carry any attributes. This is also the case on ceiling panels. The crowded scenes and the small size of the deities often make an evaluation very difficult in the case of group representation. The reason behind the less individualized treatment may lie in the absolute subordination of the gods to the centrally depicted main deity, implying lesser importance.

In the morphological analysis of the *dikpālas*, non-serial contexts should be excluded. Generally, however, it becomes apparent that the visual concept of a particular deity does not change with the particular context. A good example is the god Kubera, who must have been popular outside of *dikpāla* contexts. The formula “seated without vehicle”, which is often applied in these cases, has sometimes entered *dikpāla* contexts.⁴⁸⁰

For the tables, a selection of *dikpāla* images has been made. The most significant, “key” samples have been chosen, particularly including early evidence. They are generally taken from the same sets, if possible, so that the iconographic traits of the complete sets can be easily viewed together and compared with those of other sites. The last column “Company” has been omitted, for want of space, in the case of Agni. This aspect has been only considered in the discussion.

2.5.1 Indra (table XIV, see p. 96)

As with many of the *dikpālas*, the King of the gods, possesses one particular, largely indispensable attribute, his thunderbolt (*vajra*).⁴⁸¹ The thunderbolt appeared already in earlier, pre-*dikpāla* images of Indra (see section 2.1.5). Apparently, an Eastern Indian tradition omitted the *vajra* (e.g. fig. 234). However, images with *vajra* likewise occur in this region at about the same time (fig. 311, 3rd figure from the right, *vajra* broken off). As with the main attributes of most of the other *dikpālas*,⁴⁸² the *vajra* is generally carried in the right hand, but sometimes held in the left hand of the god.

Among the other attributes found with single representations of Indra, roundish fruits occur at Pāhārpur (fig. 234) and Gayā,⁴⁸³ here in substitution of the *vajra*, and probably at Ālampur (fig. 64). The fruit as an attribute has not been mentioned in the early texts (tables IX–XI). As another variant, which exceptionally occurs in the earlier period, Indra carries a large elephant goad in his left hand on the ceiling relief at Paṭṭadakal, Pāpanātha temple (fig. 55). It is not clear, whether he also wields his *vajra* here. The goad (*aṅkuśa*) has been mentioned along with the *vajra* and the lotus in the *VdhP* (3.50.4).

No alternative exists for Indra’s vehicle, the elephant, which bears the individual name Airāvata and was often included in the sculptural and other representations. Among the examples selected for table XIV, it is missing in the Muṇḍeśvarī image (fig. 39), which belongs to a Manu Lokapāla group however, and in the South

Indian image from Tirukkaḍaiyūr (D. THIAGARAJAN 1989: pl. 105d). The omission is not surprising in the latter case, as the vehicles of the *dikpālas* were not yet introduced in the extreme south in the period under discussion.

Among the various postures assumed by Indra, the riding posture has been chosen significantly often, but not in the majority of cases. At Pīpād (M.W. MEISTER 1991: pl. 326), this concept is particularly remarkable, as no other deity rides its vehicle there (figs. 124–128). The motivation to show Indra on the back of Airāvata may have been to present an impressive picture of the mighty king of gods, who is so closely associated with his vehicle resembling a rain cloud. In the frontal rendering, the visual unity with his vehicle is particularly appealing (fig. 64). It is difficult to decide whether the similar concept on the much later Cidambaram *gopuras* (S.R. BALASUBRAHMANYAM 1979: pl. 11) has developed from the earlier images.

Indra’s headdress, the broad cylindrical crown (*kirīṭa mukuṭa*), occurs significantly often. It obviously represents a continuation of an early – Kuṣāṇa – tradition (P. PAL 1979: figs. 1, 10, 14), to which the oblique third eye on the forehead of the god (*ibid.*; cf. fig. 70) also belongs. However, both characteristics were not always shown together in one image.

As with the other directional guardians, no regular entourage other than the vehicle occurs in the case of Indra. The attendants found at Indor (fig. 152) must have been included because of the large size of the *kapilī* (exterior wall of the vestibule) niche. They are, in this case, male and female, while two male attendants are depicted as Īśāna’s entourage on the same temple and placed in the corresponding, spacious niche (fig. 159).

2.5.2 Agni (table XV, see p. 97)

In the case of the Fire God Agni, the survival of a visual concept dating from the Kuṣāṇa period is particularly obvious (cf. section 2.1.5).⁴⁸⁴ It includes the attributes rosary and waterpot as well as the stiff, hieratic posture of the deity who is encircled by flames⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁰ G. BHATTACHARYA (1996) discusses Kubera in his recurring association with Lakṣmī and Gaṇeśa. A similar squatting posture, which emphasizes the big belly, and the absence of a vehicle (cf. fig. 199) occur in early sculptures, in which Kubera does not yet play the role of the Guardian of the north (figs. 124, 182, 198), but sometimes also in later images, where the other members of the *dikpāla* group are provided with vehicles (fig. 306, top row left image; TRIVEDI 1990: pl. 100, Kubera at Keldhar/Madhya Pradesh).

⁴⁸¹ For a classification of *vajra* shapes see A. BANERJI (1981: figs. 1–6; 1993: figs. XV–XXI). However, the study does not reveal any particular lines of typological development. Regarding the *vajras* in images of the *dikpāla* Indra, these are often damaged, and the remaining ones show considerable, almost individual differences.

⁴⁸² Among the cases in which each *dikpāla* clearly has one main attribute, Nairṛta stands out, for he always carries his attribute, the sword, in the right hand. Here, it may be understood that the sword was a common weapon, which had to be wielded in the right hand. Interpreting this evidence, all other weapons (e.g. noose, club) must have been regarded as purely symbolic devices, so that the necessity of showing them in the right hand was not felt.

⁴⁸³ This c. 7th century-relief comes from an unknown context (B. SAHAI 1975: fig. 2). It depicts Indra seated in *dakṣiṇāpralambapāda* (with the right leg pendent) on a throne, which is supported by two elephants, and carrying a fruit in his right hand, which is held in the wish-bestowing gesture.

⁴⁸⁴ The concept of the image most probably can be traced back to “the early tradition of two-armed Yaksha statues” (R.C. AGRAWALA 1965: 151), which is supported by the recent discovery of a huge “*yakṣa*” Agni from Bhāṇa Kalan (SRINIVASAN 1990: figs. 3A and B).

⁴⁸⁵ Flames emerging from the body are not restricted to the god Agni, but occasionally appear with other deities as well. A rare image of Kārttikeya with flames behind his head has been published by R.C. AGRAWALA 1968: fig.1.

Table XIV – Iconographic Chart of Indra

Site	Attributes	Vehicle	Posture	Headdress	Company
Ālampur, Bāla Brahmā (fig. 64)	<i>vajra</i> (bolt) r. flower or fruit l.	elephant	riding (shown frontally)	cylindrical crown	–
Ālampur, Svarga Brahmā (fig. 70)	<i>vajra</i> r. rosary? l.	elephant	<i>samapāda</i> (feet together)	conical crown	–
Amrol, Dānebābā (fig. 96)	<i>vajra</i> l.	elephant	seated in <i>vāma- pralambapāda</i> (left leg pendent) on the vehicle	cylindrical crown	–
Bādāmi, Cave 3, <i>maṇḍapa</i> (fig. 15)	<i>vajra</i> r.	elephant	riding (shown in profile)	conical crown	two male attendants
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kumbhaśyāma, exterior (fig. 115)	<i>vajra</i> r.	elephant	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	cylindrical crown	–
Indor (fig. 152)	<i>vajra</i> r.	elephant	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	?	flanked by a male r. and a female l. attendant
Muṇḍeśvarī, cornerstone (fig. 39)	<i>vajra</i> l.	–	squatting	cylindrical crown	–
Osiān, HH-1 (fig. 188)	<i>vajra</i> r.	elephant	seated on the vehicle, right leg held by <i>yogapatta</i> , left hand on left knee	cylindrical crown	–
Osiān, HH-2 (fig. 205)	<i>vajra</i> r.	elephant	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	– damaged –	–
Pāhārpur (fig. 234)	a fruit in each hand?	elephant	<i>samapāda</i> (feet together)	cylindrical crown	–
Pipāḍ (MEISTER 1991: pl. 326)	<i>vajra</i> r. (? indistinct)	elephant	riding (shown in profile)	– damaged –	female consort sits behind the god
Tirukkaḍaiyūr (THIAGARAJAN 1989: pl. 105d)	<i>vajra</i> r.	–	<i>samapāda</i>	slightly conical crown	–
Umri (fig. 162)	<i>vajra</i> r.	elephant	squatting on the vehicle, left hand on left knee	cylindrical crown	–

(figs. 7, 8). A popular Vedic concept, however, according to which Agni has three powers, three bodies and three tongues (e.g. RV III.20.2), may have been reflected in a unique piece of about the 8th century, in which Agni actually appears three-headed (K. DEVA/ S.D. TRIVEDI 1996: fig. 73). It belongs to a non-serial context. The peculiar shape of the image with a tenon at the underside and the missing vehicle make it improbable that it was part of a *dikpāla* set. A two-headed form of Agni (e.g. HARLE 1963: pl. 143) became popular in South India after the 10th century and has therefore not been included here.

Agni's right hand holding the rosary is generally raised, while his left hand carrying the waterpot is held in a lower, extended position. It has already been noted that the exceptional feature of holding the left hand supporting the pot at shoulder level is clearly concentrated in Eastern India.⁴⁸⁶ Interestingly, among the consulted texts (tables X–XI), this concept of Agni appears to be only secondary to the concept of the deity carrying a spear (*śakti*) or, in one case, a trident (*triśūla*). As far as we know, the trident does not appear in art. The spear occurs in later (10th–11th centuries) images in Orissa,⁴⁸⁷ and it also represents Agni as a pictogram on foundation stones (e.g. fig. 1). A standard occurs floating behind the god at Ālampur (figs. 65, 71, 84), and a similar one is held by the deity at Cittauḍgaḍh, Kālikamātā (fig. 104), which might be regarded as symbolizing a smoke standard (*dhūmacihna*). This peculiar characteristic has been mentioned in connection with Agni's chariot in the *VdhP* (3.56.2). A somewhat different, unidentifiable elongated object is carried by the god in the Kumb-

haśyāma temple at Cittauḍgaḍh (fig. 116), and a floating arrow characterizes Agni at Satyavolu (fig. 88). For the unique occurrence of bow and arrow, one literary prescription of these attributes is known from a Jaina context.⁴⁸⁸ Except for the images from the extreme south (figs. 289, 291), the waterpot is never missing, while the rosary has been at least once substituted by another attribute which looks like a fruit (fig. 104). It may be regarded as a sign of impoverishment in the representation, when Agni appears with only one attribute, a lotus (?), in a c. 10th century image from an unknown context (fig. 315).

Among the examples chosen for table XV, there is no alternative for the goat vehicle, which is rarely absent. The unique combination with a horse occurs in an early representation at Aihole (fig. 50). This vehicle (*haya* – horse) has been actually mentioned

⁴⁸⁶ The sites are: Muṇḍeśvarī (fig. 38; ASHER 1980: pl. 53), Pāhārpur (fig. 235), Benisāgar (DONALDSON 1985: fig. 598), Gallavalli (fig. 243), Mukhalingam (DONALDSON 1985: fig. 611).

⁴⁸⁷ E.g. an image from Bhubaneswar of the 11th century, which shows a two-armed Agni seated on his vehicle, holding a rosary in the right and a spear with a massive handle in his left (*Catalogue London* 1982: cat. no. 94).

⁴⁸⁸ R.P. GOSWAMI (1979: 288) in this connection refers to the 15th century Jaina text *Ācāradīnakara* by Vardhamānasūri, although he is not aware of the existence of an image of Agni with the attributes bow and arrow. As the Rāmaliṅgeśvara temple at Satyavolu has no Jaina affiliation and its probable date is much earlier, this solitary reference cannot be linked to that particular image. Perhaps, both pieces of evidence point to a common pool of ideas which were rarely and unsystematically expressed in the art media.

Table XV – Iconographic Chart of Agni

Site	Attributes	Vehicle	Posture	Headdress	Peculiarities
Ālampur, Bāla Brahmā (fig. 65)	rosary r. waterpot l. floating standard l.	–	<i>samapāda</i> (feet together)	flaming hair with ribbon	halo of flames behind the whole body, including the head; moustache
Ālampur, Svarga Brahmā (fig. 71)	rosary r. waterpot l. floating standard l.	–	<i>samapāda</i>	flaming hair with diadem	halo of flames behind the whole body, including the head; moustache
Amrol, Dānebābā (fig. 97)	rosary (? damaged) r. waterpot l.	goat	seated on the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i> (right leg pendent), with <i>yogapaṭṭa</i>	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i> (hair crown)	nimbus of flames arising from the shoulders; goatee – head damaged –
Amrol, Rāmeś- vara Mahādeva (fig. 90)	rosary r. waterpot l.	goat	seated on the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i> , with <i>yogapaṭṭa</i>	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	separate flames arising from head and shoulders; goatee – head damaged –
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā (fig. 104)	fruit? lower r. fan upper r. standard upper l. waterpot lower l.	goat	<i>samapāda</i>	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	double-layered nimbus of flames arising from the shoulders; goatee, moustache
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kumbhaśyāma, exterior (fig. 116)	oblong object l.	goat	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	small flames? goatee, moustache
Ḍāṅg (fig. 146)	rosary? r. waterpot (? damaged) l.	goat	<i>samapāda</i>	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	separate flames arising from head and shoulders; – head damaged –
Gallāvalli (fig. 243)	rosary r. waterpot l.	goat	<i>samapāda</i>	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	flames arising from the arms, shoulders, and from the goat; two separate fires above; beard
Indor (fig. 153)	rosary r. waterpot l.	goat	<i>samapāda</i>	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	separate flames arising from head and shoulders; goatee
Muṇḍeśvarī, cornerstone (fig. 38)	rosary r. waterpot l.	–	squatting	simple hairstyle	flames arising from head and shoulders
Muṇḍeśvarī, niche figure (fig. 34)	rosary r. waterpot l.	–	seated in <i>vāmapralambapāda</i> (left leg pendent) on a low throne	simple hairstyle	halo of flames behind the whole body
Osiān, HH-1 (fig. 189)	rosary r. waterpot l.	goat	seated on the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i> , with <i>yogapaṭṭa</i>	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	halo of flames behind the whole body; goatee – head damaged –
Osiān, HH-2 (fig. 206)	rosary r. waterpot l.	goat	flexed posture	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	flames arising from head and shoulders
Pāhārpur (fig. 235)	rosary r. waterpot l.	goat	<i>samapāda</i>	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	flames behind the whole body, starting above the hip
Satyavolu (fig. 88)	rosary (? damaged) r. floating arrow r. pitcher standing at the bottom r. flaming bow l.	–	<i>samapāda</i> , with diadem	flaming hair with diadem	separate flames arising from the whole body and from the bow; moustache?
Umri (fig. 163)	rosary r. waterpot l.	–	seated on a lotus in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i>	– damaged –	faintly incised flames arising from head and shoulders – head damaged –

in the South Indian text *Khilādhikāra* (15.16), which may point to a little known, distinct tradition.

A vehicle is missing at Ālampur and Satyavolu in the south, at Muṇḍeśvarī, and, surprisingly, in a later image at Umri, where Agni thrones on a lotus (fig. 163). In two cases, an anthropomorphic variant of the vehicle appears: at Lachchāgir⁴⁸⁹ and at Nāradaḥṇḍa⁴⁹⁰ (both in U.P.). Both are loose images and probably do not represent Agni in his capacity as a *dikpāla*. The much mutilated image of monumental size from Sārṇāth/U.P. (fig. 314) could bear a similar date as the one from Lachchāgir, c. late 7th century. It forms another

⁴⁸⁹ The line drawing of the image published by R.C. AGRAWALA (1965: fig. 2) must have been prepared on the basis of the photograph in the first publication (S.C. KALA 1954: pl. VI). However, something seems to be concealed by the shadow in the background, probably the goat vehicle. The image has been assigned a date around 700 A.D. If my identification of the attendant figure in the Lachchāgir image as an anthropomorphic vehicle is correct, it resembles the well-known “Geddes panel” in the Cleveland Museum, assigned to c. 9th–10th centuries, on which a theriomorphic goat and two goat-headed humans occur side by side (J.Ph. VOGEL 1933: pl. I).

⁴⁹⁰ VOGEL 1933: pl. 2a. The goat-headed (damaged), pot-bellied attendant, probably holding the same attributes as the god, stands on the proper right of Agni. As on the Lachchāgir image, a human attendant is depicted on the opposite side. Both cases of anthropomorphic goat vehicles have been noted by P.K. AGRAWALA (1989–91: 7–8).

rare example for the absence of Agni's vehicle. Because of its large size, which is not suitable for a niche image, it can also hardly be regarded as a directional guardian. The two depicted birds, peacock (r.) and cock (l.), are positioned behind the two personages flanking Agni (probably representing his two sons)⁴⁹¹ and are thus related to them. The right arm of the god, which is only partly preserved, hangs down, which is a rare feature.

The usual attributes of Agni, rosary and waterpot, give the deity the appearance of a Brahmin priest. Some of the other common features, which stress this aspect, are the *jaṭāmukuta* (crown of braided hair), the beard and the stiff, hieratic posture, which evokes an awe-inspiring presence of the god. Among the standing images, the hieratic *samapāda* posture clearly prevails. The headdress *jaṭāmukuta* typically occurs in the north, while in South India, the hair is always shown in the form of flames (figs. 56, 65, 71, 88, 268, 289, 291, 294). The earliest mention of "shining hair" (*śociṣkeśa*-) is already in RV I.45.6. A later, Ceylonese text *Mañjuśrībhāṣita-Vāstuvīdyāśāstra* 2.65a also describes this form of Agni (*śikhā-jvālaṃ*).

As most of Agni's features were determined to a considerable degree by tradition, the artistic freedom was restricted to a few details of the representation. The flames behind the deity which are rarely missing, provided a good opportunity for individual variation. This explains the surprising range of non-schematic versions for the flames, which sometimes assume the form of a halo, but often vary in shape and size. The flames have a visual counterpart in the frequently occurring goatee, an effect, which is obviously intended. On the other hand, however, Agni's beard, which may also be substituted by a moustache, is a sign of his priesthood and his role as a mediator between the humans and the gods. This aspect dates back to the Vedic times.

A feature which points to the ascetic aspect of Agni is the *yoga-paṭṭa*, a ribbon used for keeping the legs in a fixed position during meditation. It is depicted in the images at Amrol, Dānebābā temple (fig. 97), and Osiān, HH-1 (fig. 189), which can both be dated c. middle of the 8th century.

2.5.3 Yama (table XVI, see p. 99)

The main determinants, attribute and vehicle, of Yama's images show extremely little variation. In most cases, a few individual details in the rendering betray the wish to create a powerful, individually conceived image of the mighty God of Death. One of the earliest images, dating not much later than the middle of the 7th century, has an unusually intricate layout. In this image from the Bāla Brahmā temple at Ālampur (fig. 66), Yama's record-keeper - Citragupta as well as two palms are depicted in the background, which lend the panel a partly narrative aspect. The depiction of Citragupta is locally restricted to the neighbouring sites Ālampur and Kuḍaveli⁴⁹² (figs. 66, 72, 80, 85). These images are chronologically not far apart.

No alternative occurs to Yama's staff or sceptre, which is only rarely supplemented by other attributes. The staff is mostly carried in his right hand, while the mode of holding it in the left is largely restricted to the early phase in Central India (figs. 9, lower row; 41), with stray cases at Osiān, HH-1 (fig. 190), and Bhubaneswar (fig. 42). The staff is typically, but not always, topped by a human head, which was, after about 750 A.D., substituted by a skull. Unfortunately, the respective portion rarely survives.

An additional attribute, the noose, is mentioned in some of the early texts, viz. *MtP* and *HayPa* (see tables X-XI). It may have been

understood as a device to seize the souls of the departing persons. Interestingly, the noose occurs only in Orissa, mostly as an additional attribute (figs. 242, 251), but in a singular case also as the only attribute (fig. 260).⁴⁹³ Sword and shield, mentioned together in the *VdhP* (*ibid.*), have not been portrayed in art.

Yama's awe-inspiring vehicle is the water buffalo, which always accompanies him in *aṣṭadīkpāla* representations. The mighty dark-coloured buffalo represents Yama's qualities to such a degree⁴⁹⁴ that it can be regarded as an indispensable part of his image. Only in one case, at Indor (fig. 154), the identification of the associated animal as a buffalo is doubtful, but the shape of the vehicle is only roughly executed. It has a bear-like appearance and resembles Nairṛta's vehicle on the same temple (fig. 155).

Yama's posture varies. He is found seated in various positions and also riding his vehicle. However, no image is known to us in which he stands in the hieratic posture *samapāda*, a fact, which is quite remarkable.

A considerable variation occurs in the headdress of the god. The cylindrical crown, which appears on relatively early images (figs. 25, 66, 72), causes a certain resemblance with Indra. In the first example, Yama is portrayed as throning in the "European fashion" with legs kept apart and pendent, which illustrates his royal character. A large nimbus has been added. In North and Central India, the demonic hairstyle *ūrdhvaśeṣa* (hair standing on end) has been mostly chosen for Yama, in order to emphasize his fierce nature.

As a last point to be discussed, there appears another locally and temporally restricted element in the image: a little bird perched at the feet of Yama, which occurs at two Central Indian sites, Dāṅg and Indor, and one Western Indian site, Osiān (figs. 147, 154, 190). All these temples date to about 750 A.D. A similar bird is found perching on Yama's attribute, the lotus, on an image at Cittaṭṭaḍḍaḥ (fig. 105),⁴⁹⁵ and as the only attribute of the god at Bhavānīpur (C.P. ATHERTON 1997: pl. 111). At least in the former two cases, the bird-motif is clearly connected with an episode mentioned in *MtP* 11.11-17, in which Sūrya gives his son Yama a cock (*kṛkavāku*) for removing the pus from his foot, which was injured as a result of a punishment by his mother.

2.5.4 Nairṛta (table XVII, see p. 100)

The name of the fierce guardian of the south-west refers to a female deity mentioned in early texts, i.e. Nirṛti, the ancient goddess of destruction and decay. However, the *dīkpāla* called variously Nirṛti or Nairṛta always appears as a male in art as well as in the corre-

⁴⁹¹ P.K. AGRAWALA 1994: ill. 83.

⁴⁹² At Kuḍaveli (fig. 85), the small male figure floating in the background on a separate socle strangely holds a flywhisk in his right hand. The object in his left hand cannot be identified. At Ālampur, Citragupta carries a pen (figs. 66, 72) or a manuscript (fig. 80).

⁴⁹³ The reason for the substitution of the staff by the noose may probably lie in a convergence of the concepts of Yama and Varuṇa at the same temple (fig. 262). However, another nearby representation of Yama only holds the staff (fig. 259).

⁴⁹⁴ Cf. L. VAN DEN BOSCH 1982: 45-48. The author refers to the dangerous aspect of buffaloes, which still adheres to domesticated animals, and explains it as follows: "tame buffaloes often have wild blood, because wild bulls frequently mate with tame cows."

⁴⁹⁵ Similarly, a skull cup surmounted by a bird is held in Yama's left hand in a loose image of about the 9th century, also from Rajasthan (*Catalogue London* 1982: cat. no. 93).

Table XVI – Iconographic Chart of Yama

Site	Attributes	Vehicle	Posture	Headdress	Company
Ālampur, Bāla Brahmā (fig. 66)	staff r.	buffalo	riding	cylindrical crown	male attendant (Citragupta) in the background l.
Ālampur, Svarga Brahmā (fig. 72)	staff r.	buffalo	squatting on the vehicle	cylindrical crown	male attendant (Citragupta) in the background l.
Ālampur, Viśva Brahmā (fig. 80)	staff l.	buffalo	squatting on the vehicle	slightly conical crown	male attendant (Citragupta) in the background r.
Amrol, Rāmeśvara Mahādeva (fig. 91)	staff l.	buffalo	squatting on the vehicle	– damaged –	–
Bhūmarā (fig. 25)	fruit? r. staff l.	–	seated in the “European fashion” on a tilted throne	cylindrical crown	two female attendants (flywhisk-bearers)
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā (fig. 105)	staff r. lotus with bird l.	buffalo	flexed posture	ūrdhvakeśa (hair standing on end)	–
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kumbhaś-yāma, exterior (fig. 120)	staff r.	buffalo	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	conical crown	–
Ḍāṅg (fig. 147)	staff r.	buffalo	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	ūrdhvakeśa	perching bird r.
Indor (fig. 154)	staff r.	buffalo (? unusual appearance)	slightly flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	simple hairstyle with skull diadem	pecking bird r.
Muṇḍeśvarī, cornerstone (fig. 41)	fruit? r. staff l.	–	squatting	ūrdhvakeśa	–
Osiān, HH-1 (fig. 190)	staff l.	buffalo	squatting on the vehicle	ūrdhvakeśa	perching bird, centre
Osiān, HH-2 (fig. 207)	staff r.	buffalo	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	diadem	–
Satyavolu (DIVAKARAN 1971: fig. 43)	staff r.	buffalo	riding	slightly conical crown	female figure in the background l. right side damaged
Umri (fig. 164)	staff r.	buffalo	seated on the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i> (right leg pendent)	ūrdhvakeśa	–

sponding texts.⁴⁹⁶ In the male version, he is known as the king of *rākṣasas*, a particular class of demons. Rarely, the guardian of the south-west has been referred to as the god Virūpākṣa, with Nirṛti as his consort (VdhP 3.57.1-3). This demonstrates a lingering ambiguity in Nairṛta’s identity with regard to his relationship with the goddess Nirṛti. Among the images of Nairṛta, the greatest degree of variation concerns the vehicle. This association with different vehicles is also expressed in the texts (tables X–XI).

The indispensable weapon of Nairṛta is the sword, which is ubiquitous, and which is most frequently⁴⁹⁷ mentioned in the texts. The sword is always held in the right hand, which tells of a “realistic” conception of a common weapon. The defensive shield is, however, generally absent. Only two images of those chosen for table XVII depict the deity with more than one attribute. Those outstanding images belong to Indor (fig. 155) and Gallāvalli (fig. 244). In the first case, a noose⁴⁹⁸ appears in the left hand, while in the second case, a severed human head is carried by the god, as at Gaṇeśwarpur in the same region (figs. 252, 261). The noose is reminiscent of the iron bonds of the goddess Nirṛti (ŚB VII.2.1.10), who also holds a noose according to VdhP 3.57.3. It never gained any popularity as Nairṛta’s attribute. The severed head, however, which clearly testifies to the fierce nature of the deity, was introduced in Orissa as well as in Northern and Central India during the following period.⁴⁹⁹

The image at Osiān, Harihara temple 2, is unusual insofar as Nairṛta leans on the sword which rests on the ground. The left hand is also held in an exceptional position and gesture in front of the

breast. However, the visual concept of the *dikpālas* in the narrow niches of the west-oriented temples at Osiān must have been regarded as particularly apt for variation.⁵⁰⁰

Nairṛta’s vehicles mostly appear in human shapes, but animal vehicles likewise occur. Strangely, in the latter case, it is sometimes not clear if the *same* animal was intended to be portrayed, or whether a certain degree of variation occurred among the theriomorphic category. The anthropomorphic vehicle is generally depicted as a simple male figure in various attitudes, adoration (fig. 106, 118), reclining (fig. 196), or appearing in a curious “four-legged” posture (figs. 203, 216). It is uniquely represented as an armed warrior at Gallāvalli (fig. 244); however, this variant form of

⁴⁹⁶ Even in the context of directional guardianship, the feminine gender is implied in a few texts (table VI: MŚS, last column – intermediate directions; table XI: *Yogayātrā*).

⁴⁹⁷ When the guardian of the south-west is called Virūpākṣa, his concept seems to be somewhat different, as he is once described carrying a staff (*daṇḍa*; VdhP 3.57.1–2).

⁴⁹⁸ It should be noted that in this case, the noose only consists of a loop and has no knot as in the case of the associated, neighbouring Varuṇa (fig. 156).

⁴⁹⁹ E.g. an image from Suhāniā/M.P., c. 11th century, published in *ADGSAR* 1937–38: pl. Xb. The deity carries a shield in his upper left hand.

⁵⁰⁰ Another case of a unique concept of a *dikpāla* in such a position is the image of Varuṇa on the Viṣṇu temple 1 at Osiān (fig. 222). Here, the god is portrayed as standing on a pitcher.

Table XVII – Iconographic Chart of Nairṛta

Site	Attributes	Vehicle	Posture	Headdress	Company
Ālampur, Svarga Brahmā (fig. 73)	sword r.	human skeleton	riding (shown frontally)	open curls of hair or cap	–
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā (fig. 106)	sword r.	anthropomorph	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	large, helmet- like crown	female attendant
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kumbhaśyāma, exterior (fig. 118)	sword r.	anthropomorph	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	crown (later added)	–
Ḍāṅg (fig. 148)	sword r.	unspecified four- legged animal	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	ūrdhvakeśa (hair standing on end)	–
Gallāvalli (fig. 244)	sword r. severed head l.	warrior (corpse)	samapāda (feet together)	conical crown	standing warrior r.
Indor (fig. 155)	sword r. noose l.	unspecified four- legged animal	flexed posture	ūrdhvakeśa	–
Osiāñ, HH-1 (fig. 191)	sword r.	unspecified four- legged animal	seated on the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i> (right leg pendent)	ūrdhvakeśa	–
Osiāñ, HH-2 (fig. 208)	sword r.	man (corpse?)	standing, right leg flexed, left hand in front of breast	ūrdhvakeśa	–
Umri (fig. 165)	sword r.	boar	seated on the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i>	simple hairstyle (damaged)	–

an anthropomorphic vehicle is not unusual in Orissa.⁵⁰¹ The singular version of an emaciated man or skeleton is found at the rather early – late 7th century – site Ālampur (figs. 73, 83).

The male figure should be regarded as the anthropomorphic *nara*,⁵⁰² a creature, which has been mentioned in a number of texts (table X). It clearly has a supernatural, demonic aspect, which is probably alluded to in art by the way the male figure is sometimes peeping towards the onlooker from behind. However, it can be regarded as a corpse (*śava*)⁵⁰³ in those cases where it is shown reclining as at Gallāvalli (fig. 244). Nairṛta's vehicle is explicitly described as a corpse in the South Indian text *Uttarakāmikāgama* (cited after GOSWAMI 1979: 129), which does not belong to the category of early texts considered here. A reclining corpse would actually not be suitable as an active carrier of Nairṛta. This is probably the reason why it was rarely depicted. However, it is possible that the anthropomorphic vehicle has to be regarded as a corpse (*śava*) or ghost (*preta*) “in action” in some cases, and these are a befitting companion for the frightening god of destruction and decay. At Ālampur (see above, figs. 73, 83), the emaciated body of the standing figure carrying Nairṛta may point in this direction.

The theriomorphic category of vehicles is largely restricted to Central India and early Osiāñ (figs. 148, 155, 191). Here, in the 8th century sculptures, it is generally difficult to identify the animal, while in the 9th century, Nairṛta's companion is clearly a boar (fig. 165).⁵⁰⁴ The specimens classified in table XVII as “unspecified four-legged animal” resemble a dog, a jackal, a bear or even a lion. For the bear (*rkṣa*), there is literary evidence in the *Hayaśirṣapañcarātra* (table XI). The lion appears with a seated image from Haryana,⁵⁰⁵ the doubtful image of Nairṛta at Cittauḍgaḍh, Kumbhaśyāma temple (fig. 113) and in a much later, south Indian instance at Tirupati/A.P. (K.V. RAMAN 1985: pl. 234, first of the group on the right side). The somewhat related animal tiger is referred to only in South Indian texts.⁵⁰⁶ In the Indian mainstream tradition, the dog is an emblem which belongs to the sphere of fierce deities. However, the association of a dog or jackal with Nairṛta occurs only at Osiāñ, Harihara temple 1 (fig. 191). In *AgP* 96.28, the

donkey (*khara*) is mentioned as Nairṛta's vehicle. This variant of the theriomorphic vehicle seems to have an isolated occurrence at Araḷaguppe in South India (fig. 136).

The stances of Nairṛta vary in such a way that no particular rule seems to have been followed. Regarding the headdress, a predilection for open, upraised curls (*ūrdhvakeśa*) can be observed in North India. This coiffure characterizes the deity as demonic and potentially dangerous. The facial features normally do not follow this characterization, with one exception at Keldhar in Central India, where Nairṛta has a grotesque face with bulging eyes and a beard (R.D. TRIVEDI 1990: pl. 103). Massive helmet-like crowns are sometimes worn by Nairṛta and the doubtful image at Cittauḍgaḍh (figs. 106, 113). In South India, the deity has been portrayed with the usual conical crown (e.g. SOUNDARA RAJAN 1986: pl. 447, left side).

No particularly noteworthy companion can be reported of Nairṛta, except for the standing warrior at Gallāvalli, which almost duplicates the vehicle of the deity (fig. 244). Like the latter, he wears the *ūrdhvakeśa* coiffure.

⁵⁰¹ Regarding early images of the fierce goddess Cāmuṇḍā, the peculiar characterization of the vehicle has been described by DONALDSON (1991: 123): “A dagger is often worn at the hip, while the coiffure is frequently dishevelled to suggest that the corpse is a warrior or *asura* (demon).”

⁵⁰² This translation of the term, which also denotes simply “man”, is contained in standard dictionaries. E. RAVEN (1988) has discussed in detail the role of the *naras* as servants of the *dīpāla* Kubera (cf. below).

⁵⁰³ On the *śava-vāhana* as the “corpse-vehicle” of the goddess, see T.E. DONALDSON (1991).

⁵⁰⁴ Other examples occur at Keldhar (TRIVEDI 1990: pl. 103) and Markhera (communicated by Prof. Dr. A.J. Gail), both assigned to the early and to the late 9th century, respectively.

⁵⁰⁵ C. SINGH (1996: fig. 4). This image, seated on a lotus above a reclining lion, holds sword (r.) and noose (l.), with its noose as well as some other aspects bearing some similarity with the standing image at Indore (fig. 155), the vehicle of which may as well be a lion.

⁵⁰⁶ The expression *śārdūla* occurring in the *Khilādhikāra* (15.24) and the *Kriyādhikāra* (5.146), however, has a variable meaning including tiger, panther, leopard, and the fabulous creature Śarabha.

Table XVIII – Iconographic Chart of Varuṇa

Site	Attributes	Vehicle	Posture	Headdress	Company
Ālampur, Bāla Brahmā (fig. 67)	noose r. conch l.	– (feet together)	<i>samapāda</i> (hair crown)	<i>jaṭāmukūṭa</i> –	–
Ālampur, Svarga Brahmā (fig. 73)	noose r. conch? l.	–	<i>samapāda</i>	conical crown	–
Bādāmi, Cave 3, <i>maṇḍapa</i> (fig. 17)	noose r. floating trident r. bowl with gems? l.	<i>makara</i> (mythical aquatic animal)	seated on the vehicle	conical crown	–
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā (fig. 107)	noose? r. lotus l.	<i>makara</i>	flexed posture	– damaged –	–
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kumbhaśyāma, exterior (fig. 119)	noose? r.	<i>makara</i>	flexed posture, left hand extended towards the vehicle	conical crown	–
Ḍāṅg (fig. 150)	noose r.	goose	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	<i>ūrdhvakeśa</i> (hair standing on end)	–
Gallāvalli (fig. 245)	waterpot? r. noose l.	<i>makara</i>	<i>samapāda</i>	conical crown	female figure in the background r.
Indor (fig. 156)	fruit r. noose l.	goose	flexed posture	cylindrical crown	–
Osiān, HH-1 (fig. 192)	noose r. fruit? l.	goose	seated on the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i> (right leg pendent)	<i>jaṭāmukūṭa</i>	–
Osiān, HH-2 (fig. 209)	noose r.	<i>makara</i>	slightly flexed posture, left hand resting on the hip	cylindrical crown	–
Umri (fig. 166)	noose (? damaged) r.	<i>makara</i>	seated above the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i>	<i>ūrdhvakeśa</i>	–

2.5.5 Varuṇa (table XVIII)

Varuṇa, the God of the Waters, like Indra carries his ancient Vedic attribute, in this case the noose (*pāśa*). With a rare, early exception, which supplies him with a lotus (fig. 12), this is his unmistakable sign.

The noose was the god’s instrument to bind sinners. In AV IV.16.6, Varuṇa’s nooses are described as an intricate system of slings: “seven by seven, [they] stand triply relaxed, shining.” In later texts, the noose has often been characterized as consisting of serpents (*nāgapāśa*), but in art, this feature only rarely occurs.⁵⁰⁷ Some peculiarities in the representation of the noose should be mentioned here. An early ceiling panel from the region of present-day Karnataka (M. BUSSAGLI/C. SIVARAMAMURTI n.d.: fig. 216) interestingly shows the noose floating in the background behind Varuṇa’s right arm. In the right hand, he carries a bunch of jewels. That is probably because the ocean has been regarded as a source of jewels. The god’s left hand is empty. In another instance in the same region, there seems to be a trident floating behind Varuṇa’s right arm, but it is rather faintly incised (fig. 17). The trident would be unique as an attribute, recalling the ancient Greek and Roman deity (Poseidon/Neptune) presiding over the ocean.

A general distinction can be made regarding the shape of the noose. Either, the noose has been conceived as a stiff, staff-like object with a handle or as a rather realistically conceived lasso, which, however, with its upward extension counteracts gravity. One completely realistic portrayal of the noose comes from the Rājaraṣeśvara temple, Tañjāvūr (fig. 295). Here, it is not puffed up as usual. In the 8th century in Central India, the mode of representation was also realistic, in that the loop portion of the noose started

just above the hand of the god (e.g. figs. 156, 316). The stiff version (“staff type”) typically occurs in Rajasthan. Early examples exist from the late 7th/early 8th centuries at Cittauḍgaḍh (figs. 107, 119) and Bīṭhū (MEISTER 1982: fig. 8). Further, it occurs at Osiān (figs. 197, 203, 222), Khed (fig. 230), Jhalawar Museum (fig. 317) and at Markhera/M.P.⁵⁰⁸ A singular, very early example is depicted on the lintel from Pawāyā in Central India, c. 400 A.D. (fig. 9). The “staff type” is not a homogeneous one. There are still – almost individual – differences concerning the “handle” and the upper part of the attribute, which sometimes takes the shape of a carpet-beater.

Apart from the noose, there are a few objects which clearly underlay regional predilections. At Bādāmi (fig. 17) and on the loose panel from Karnataka, probably jewels are being carried by Varuṇa, while he holds a conch in the left hand on the Ālampur panels (figs. 67, 74). In Central India (figs. 156, 316) and at Osiān (fig. 192), a globular fruit is the complementary item, at least in the 8th century images. This fruit obviously attracts the attention of the goose vehicle.

The waterpot as an attribute is not regionally restricted, occurring at Gallāvalli (fig. 245) and in the image at the Jhalawar Museum (fig. 317). A vessel filled with jewels (*ratnapātra*) is actually

⁵⁰⁷ On two Eastern Indian reliefs, Varuṇa holds a serpent (fig. 240; BHAT-TACHARYA 1993: fig. 3, fourth from the left). An image in the Orissa State Museum from Biramacandrapur-śāsana, c. 14-15th centuries, shows the noose represented by a snake, wound like a rope (DONALDSON 1987: fig. 3042). The image is remarkable for the rare goose vehicle and has so far been wrongly identified as Kārttikeya. For “*nāgapāśa*” and related terms see the linguistic study by M.B. EMENEAU (1960).

⁵⁰⁸ Communicated by Prof. Dr. A.J. Gail; the date is c. 9th century.

described among the four attributes for Varuṇa mentioned in the *VdhP* (III.52.5; **table X**). The club (*gadā*) however, which twice occurs in the texts, and which was used as a weapon in combination with the noose, is not found in art.

Only recently, it has been recognized that Varuṇa's vehicle in art is not always the mythical aquatic creature *makara*, but that the deity has also been portrayed with a goose, *haṃsa* (VAN KOOU 1985). The goose has been mentioned as the vehicle in the *VdhP* (III.52.1), the *BrS* (58.57), and in the *Nāṭ* (III.64). It is a remarkable fact that this probably earliest injunction was applied in art in Central India (**figs. 99, 150, 156, 192, 316**) and in the Mathurā region (**fig. 177**), at the related Western Indian site Osiān (**fig. 192**), at Dev Baruṇārak in Eastern India (ASHER 1980: pl. 125) and at Bhubaneswar in Orissa (**fig. 42**). This convention, which is already traceable in a pre-*dikpāla* context at Deogaḍh in the 6th century (**fig. 3**),⁵⁰⁹ in some of the mentioned regions seems to have ceased in the 9th century. A much later (c. 14–15th centuries) Orissan image raises the question about an actual survival of the early convention.⁵¹⁰ All other images generally have the *makara* as a vehicle. A unique support for Varuṇa exists at Osiān, Viṣṇu temple 1 (**fig. 222**). There, the god stands with his feet on a spilling jar, which could be regarded as a symbol of the ocean.⁵¹¹ Exceptionally, at Osiān (**figs. 209, 221**), Varuṇa appears without any vehicle. As in the just mentioned instance of the jar, the niche is particularly narrow. At Ālampur, the god likewise stands without a vehicle (**figs. 67, 74**), but in this case, some other deities also lack their carriers. In an early (late-7th century) frieze at Palārī (**fig. 89**), Varuṇa rides an aquatic creature (*jalebha* – “water-elephant”) consisting of the forepart of an elephant and the hindquarters of a *makara*. Another early, 6th-century piece from the ruined Jeṭhānī temple at Tālā in the same region, Dakṣiṇa Kosala, shows a unique version of Varuṇa with two *makaras* in front of the god's breast, with their jaws open.⁵¹²

The postures of Varuṇa vary. No particular tendency can be recognized.

There is also no general predilection for a special headdress of Varuṇa. Such different characteristics as the demonic hairstyle *ūrdhvakeśa* and the royal cylindrical crown have even been chosen on temples, which are not far apart geographically as well as chronologically (Dāṅg and Indor, **figs. 150–156**).

2.5.6 Vāyu (table XIX, see p. 103)

In the case of the Wind God Vāyu, some interesting observations on different iconographic conventions can be made. Most remarkable is the fact that an early convention in the portrayal of Vāyu (**fig. 318**), with the billowing cloth or garment in his hands, has survived side by side with another concept, at first clearly South Indian, which assigns the flag or standard to this deity. In an often cited description of Vāyu contained in the *VdhP* (3.58.3), the god is described with a gaping mouth and dishevelled hair. The inflated cloth or garment, which he holds with his two hands, is here referred to as *vāyu-āpūritavastra* (3.58.1–2). The Wind God Oado, portrayed as running with a billowing cloth floating behind and with open mouth and hair, frequently occurs on Kuṣāṇa coins (e.g. TANABE 1990: **figs. 4, 5, 17**). As demonstrated by TANABE, this image has been originally created on the basis of mainly Hellenistic models. He has also shown that a simplified representation of the cloth forming an arch above the deity must be a later Kuṣāṇa development (*ibid.*: 62; **fig. 19**). In the above-mentioned c. 2nd–3rd century-Gandhara relief, in which the Wind God has a somewhat dynamic,

but not running posture (**fig. 318**), the realistically conceived billowing cloth is still reminiscent of the Greek prototype.

When it comes to the representation of the *dikpāla* Vāyu, the arch-like, not the three-dimensional, version of the cloth has generally been chosen. With rare exceptions,⁵¹³ it is so much stylized that wind as a natural phenomenon remains an abstract idea. The running movement and the dishevelled hair, which once supported the impression of wind, has been abandoned in later art. Even in the conception of Vāyu riding his vehicle, where movement could have been indicated (**figs. 193, 320**), the representation was strictly stylized and therefore rather stiff. A rather realistic treatment of the billowing cloth can be found in the early 6th century image at Deogaḍh (**fig. 3**, extreme right), which is a pre-*dikpāla* context (see section 2.1.3). Although Vāyu is shown in a flying attitude here, both the cloth and the neatly arranged open hair remain completely unaffected by the breeze.

As a general rule, it can be stated that the “cloth type” of Vāyu is North Indian and the “flag type” South Indian,⁵¹⁴ however including Orissa. The second type was later introduced in North India, where it seems to have gradually superseded the former. This process probably started in the late 9th century. The “cloth type”, however, survived. One of its latest examples has been sculpted on the legs of the Yajña Varāha at Khajuraho, c. middle of the 10th century (D. DESAI 1996: 69). On the other hand, two cases of occurrence of the “cloth type” can be observed in Southern India. The earlier one at Ālampur is particularly important, as it represents a rare combination of the cloth and the flag (**figs. 68, 75**).⁵¹⁵ The second occurrence of the “cloth type” in the south is found at Bikkavolu in north-eastern Andhra Pradesh (**fig. 284**).

⁵⁰⁹ A loose image of a seated Varuṇa from Madhya Pradesh (**fig. 316**) has been assigned to the 6th century by VAN KOOU (1985: **fig. 10**). The representation is so closely related to the one at Indor (**fig. 156**) that it cannot be regarded as chronologically far apart from the latter. In the loose image, the deity holds a similar noose in the left hand, and the right also has a fruit, which attracts the attention of the goose. Both images are carved in relatively low relief. The face is particularly flatish in the loose image, but, along with the simple, somewhat clumsy shapes, this feature seems to belong to the “rustic”, provincial character of the image, which could belong to the 8th century as well.

⁵¹⁰ The image of Varuṇa on *haṃsa* from Birarmacandrapur-śāśana is kept in the Orissa State Museum, c. 14–15th centuries (DONALDSON 1987: **fig. 3042**).

⁵¹¹ The horizontally placed jar could refer to the celestial ocean with which Varuṇa is associated in *RV* 5.85.3 (Cf. G. V. VAJRACHARYA 1999: 55–56).

⁵¹² L.S. NIGAM 2000: pl. 21; see p. 52. Varuṇa wears a kind of turban and a broad, ornate necklace. In the largely damaged panel he is accompanied by a female figure and a male figure in *anjali* (worshipping gesture). L.S. RAO (2000) in the same volume regards a singular large-sized standing multi-faced figure as a form of Varuṇa in his capacity as a lord of magic (L.S. NIGAM 2000: pls. 33–38), which is, for want of any parallel evidence, not very likely.

⁵¹³ A somewhat more realistic rendering of the inflated cloth – in a lower position – has prevailed in present-day Rajasthan: e.g. at Cittaūdgadh (**fig. 106**), at Osiān, Harihara temples 1 and 2 (**figs. 193, 210**) and at Ābānerī (B. SAHAI 1975: **fig. 8**). In another rare exception, Vāyu is shown seated on a leaping antelope, the cloth billowing naturally in the wind. This lively image belongs to the Manu Lokapāla frieze at Lāmbā/Rajasthan, of about the middle of the 8th century (DHAKY 1966: **fig. 4**).

⁵¹⁴ Here, Palārī in southern Madhya Pradesh (Dakṣiṇa Kosala), forms an exception. The late 7th century-frieze of *dikpālas* includes the flag type of Vāyu (**fig. 89**, extreme left).

⁵¹⁵ It seems as if the artist has consciously blended the two traditions. Aesthetically, the combination of both attributes in two hands looks awkward and is hardly satisfactory. After Ālampur, which belongs to the late 7th century, a similar phenomenon of about the middle of the 9th century (Osiān, Viṣṇu temple 2) most probably marked the beginning of the introduction of the flag in North India. An interesting contemporaneous case of intermingling both attributes can be seen in the same region, e.g. in the Jhalawar Museum image (**fig. 319**). Here, the cloth, floating behind the head as is usual in the region, is wound round a staff held in the god's left hand, as if alluding to the flag.

Table XIX – Iconographic Chart of Vāyu

Site	Attributes	Vehicle	Posture	Headdress	Company
Ālampur, Bāla Brahmā (fig. 68)	inflated cloth held in both hands <i>plus</i> flag l.	–	<i>samapāda</i> (feet together)	slightly conical crown	–
Ālampur, Svarga Brahmā (fig. 75)	inflated cloth held in both hands <i>plus</i> flag r.	–	<i>samapāda</i>	slightly conical crown	
Amrol, Dānebābā (fig. 93)	inflated cloth held in both hands	horse?	seated in <i>vāma-pralambapāda</i> (left leg pendent)	– damaged –	–
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā (fig. 108)	inflated cloth held in both hands	antelope	flexed posture, left hand on the left thigh	– damaged –	small worshipper r.
Ḍāṅg (fig. 149)	inflated cloth held in both hands	horse (damaged)	<i>samapāda</i>	central hairknot	–
Gallāvalli (fig. 246)	goat r. flag l.	anthropomorphic vehicle? (head of a goat?)	slightly flexed	conical crown	–
Indor (fig. 157)	inflated cloth held in both hands	horse	flexed posture	<i>ūrdhvakeśa</i> (hair standing on end)	
Osiān, HH-1 (fig. 193)	inflated cloth held in both hands	antelope, which resembles a horse	riding	<i>ūrdhvakeśa</i>	–
Osiān, HH-2 (fig. 210)	inflated cloth held in both hands	antelope	flexed posture	conical crown	–
Pāhārpur (fig. 236)	inflated cloth held in both hands	–	<i>samapāda</i>	<i>ūrdhvakeśa</i>	male l. and female r. attendants holding scarves
Tirunelveli (fig. 293)	flag r.	lion	seated on a throne in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i> (right leg pendent)	conical crown	–
Umri (fig. 167)	inflated cloth held in both hands	antelope	seated on the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i>	– damaged –	–

The stylized billowing cloth in the course of time seems to have been misinterpreted by those who created the images. In one case of c. 9th century, the arched object above Vāyu looks completely solid and obviously represents a serpent (in the process of sloughing?; TRIVEDI 1983: fig. 62).

While the billowing cloth “*vāyu-āpūritavastra*” is described only in the *VdhP* (see above), *dhvaja* (standard) or *patāka* (flag) is the common attribute for Vāyu in the surveyed texts. In one instance, in the *MtP*, an elephant goad is also mentioned (table X). In the period under discussion, it was only employed in Orissan art, viz. at Gallāvalli and Gaṇeśwarpur (figs. 246, 254, 263), combined with the flag. A variant, a staff-and-cloth combination, which recalls the flag, can be observed on the Jhalawar Museum image (fig. 319).

Regarding Vāyu’s vehicle, a horse was common in Central India during the 8th century. This has not been noted before, although K. BHATTACHARYA (1961: 142) has made some observations on this aspect.⁵¹⁶ All other regions associated the Wind God with the antelope, which is also regularly mentioned in the texts. However, in two cases in Rajasthan, where Vāyu is depicted riding his antelope (figs. 193, 320), the shape of the antelope is reminiscent of a horse. As the first example belongs to the Harihara temple 1 at Osiān, which was obviously largely inspired by Central Indian models, it seems plausible that the visual model of a horse had to be adapted to the local tradition, which prescribed an antelope vehicle. The antelope appears earlier in Western India, e.g. at Cittauḍgaḍh (fig. 108). The only surprising deviation in the vehicle occurs at Sesai in the early 10th century, where the associated *makara* points to the peculiar fact that Vāyu must have been confused with Varuṇa

(fig. 181). Another singular version is known from Tirunelveli in the extreme south, in which case Vāyu has a reclining lion (fig. 293).

Vāyu’s posture and headdress have not been subjected to a particular, wide-spread conception. There is also no regular companion to be observed. Only in one case, at Pāhārpur (fig. 236), a pair of attendants is present, who similarly hold pieces of cloth. Their attributes resembling nooses must have contributed to the earlier misinterpretation of the central deity as Yama.⁵¹⁷

2.5.7 Kubera (table XX, see p. 104)

Kubera, the Lord of Riches, has sometimes been replaced by Soma as the guardian of the north (see below). The great number of images of this apparently very popular deity, which not necessarily always portray him in his capacity as a *dikpāla*, provides a good basis for a study of the aesthetic concept of Kubera.

The iconic appearance of this deity with its numerous variations is rather difficult to comprehend. His different vehicles and supports or, alternatively, the absence of these devices, make Kubera the *dikpāla* with the greatest variation. Concerning the attributes, there is one main type prevalent in North India. Besides, a few other,

⁵¹⁶ He observes that on the Añkor Vāt temple/Cambodia (first half of the 12th century), Vāyu appears with a horse, but he is unable to cite any parallel case from India.

⁵¹⁷ The Pāhārpur Vāyu has been correctly identified by DE MALLMANN (1963: 133, n. 5) and BHATTACHARYA (1987: 64, and ns. 9, 10), who both refer to the earlier misinterpretation as Yama.

Table XX – Iconographic Chart of Kubera

Site	Attributes	Vehicle or Emblem	Posture	Headdress	Company
Ālampur, Bāla Brahmā (fig. 69)	club r. sack l.	–	seated on a throne (?) in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i> (right leg pendent)	large curly coiffure	–
Ālampur, Svarga Brahmā (fig. 76)	club r. sack l.	–	seated on a throne in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i>	slightly conical crown	–
Ālampur, Viśva Brahmā (fig. 81)	club (? damaged) r. – left side damaged –	–	seated on a throne in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i>	slightly conical crown	–
Amrol, Dānebābā (fig. 92)	purse l.	anthropomorphic vehicle? (head of a goat?)	slightly flexed, right hand resting on belly (damaged)	curly hairstyle (damaged)	–
Bādāmi, Cave 3, <i>maṇḍapa</i> (fig. 18)	cup l.	goat or ram	riding	curly hairstyle with diadem	female r. and male l. flying in erotic attitudes
Bhūmarā (figs. 26, 27)	lotus bud r.	three large vessels besides and beneath the god	seated in the “European fashion” on a tilted throne	curly hairstyle with diadem	–
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kumbhaśyāma, exterior (fig. 121)	club r.	?	slightly flexed, left hand on the left thigh	conical crown	–
Gallāvalli (fig. 247)	small vessel r. club l. (upside down)	tree with face?	slightly flexed	conical crown	cup-bearing dwarf
Indor (fig. 158)	fruit or cup? r. purse l.	anthropomorph	flexed posture	simple hairstyle	–
Muṇḍeśvarī (fig. 40)	small vessel r. purse l.	–	squatting	simple hairstyle	–
Osiān, HH-1 (fig. 194)	cup (? damaged) r. purse l.	anthropomorph	seated on the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i>	curly hairstyle	–
Osiān, HH-2 (fig. 211)	cup r. long purse l.	anthropomorph	slightly flexed	large diadem	–
Umri (fig. 168)	fruit or cup? r. purse l.	anthropomorph	seated on the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i>	<i>ūrdhvaśeṣa</i> (hair standing on end)	–

completely different concepts occur in the north. The situation in South India is less complex than in North India, with one type clearly dominating there.

In the “Northern” type, Kubera is conceived as holding a cup in his right hand and a purse in his left (e.g. figs. 40, 199, 321). The shapes of the cup and purse vary, presumably in accordance with local predilections, and the cup is sometimes held on the left. This “drinking type” of Kubera is always depicted seated. In a closely related type, the cup has been replaced by a fruit (F.M. ASHER 1980: pl. 187). It is difficult to decide whether this is a parallel or a derived type, which might have developed due to a misinterpretation of the – often very small – cup. In the “Southern” type, Kubera is simply provided with a club (e.g. fig. 63). However, this seemingly clear situation is somewhat obscured by the fact that, in a few cases, the club is held together with the purse in the north (e.g. figs. 2, 182, 240)⁵¹⁸ as well as in the south (figs. 69, 76). In this connection it is important to note that the studied texts unanimously mention the club as Kubera’s attribute (tables X–XI). Further, there are a few images of Kubera which show a rare attribute or a rare combination of attributes, e.g. only one lotus (fig. 26), or the cup and the club (fig. 247). In a singular image at Naresar in Central India, Kubera is portrayed holding a lotus bud in his right and a club (damaged) in his left (fig. 322).⁵¹⁹ Uniquely, a warrior with a similar club represents the vehicle of the god. He is flanked by dwarves carrying the two main treasures of Kubera, i.e. the conch (*śaṅkha*, r.) and the lotus (*padma*, l.).

In the “Northern” type, one particular feature indicates that an old concept was consciously retained for several centuries. The small figure of a wine-waitress⁵²⁰ which appears by the side of the

cup can be traced at least from the well-known 2nd century Pali Khera bowl support (HUNTINGTON 1985: ill. 8.39). It continued until the Kubera image in the *dikpāla* frieze at Barwāsāgar, c. 900 A.D. (fig. 179). The female figure clearly fits into the concept according to which Kubera represents the enjoyment of rather worldly pleasures.

The more frequently southern “club type” also occurs at Cittauḍgaḍh and Auwā (C.P. ATHERTON 1997: pl. 56). On the exterior of the Kumbhaśyāma temple, the god carries a mighty club in his right hand as his only attribute (fig. 121). With a few other features suggesting southern connections at Cittauḍgaḍh (see section 2.3.1.3), some kind of influence or inspiration from the south may be assumed here. Finally, there are a few attributes which appear in the texts but play no role in art (tables X–XI), viz. the spear and the conch, in addition to the club, respectively.

Regarding the vehicle, there are again basically northern and southern tendencies. In the north, the mythical anthropomorphic being “nara” has usually been chosen, while in the south, the ram

⁵¹⁸ See R.N. MISRA 1981: figs. 8 (first figure from the right), 67. The attributes are not distributed in a uniform way. In two cases (fig. 2 and the former above), a big club is held in the left arm with a purse in that hand. In the second case (the latter above), a smaller club is held in the right and the purse in the left hand. These Kuṣāṇa images, of course, predate the *dikpāla* tradition.

⁵¹⁹ The image is contained in the western *bhadra* niche of temple no. 17 (TRIVEDI 1990: 51–53). The head portion has been badly damaged recently, as can be inferred from the illustration of the still complete sculpture in TRIVEDI’s book (*ibid.*: pl. 7).

⁵²⁰ The female figure has been tentatively identified as the wine-goddess Vārūṇī by G. BHATTACHARYA (1996: fig. 6).

(*meṣa*) generally appears as the carrier of the god. The ram was later, *c.* during the second half of the 9th century, introduced in the north as well, *e.g.* in the Barwāsāgar frieze of *c.* 900 A.D. (fig. 179), and at Osiān (fig. 202). Actually, the vehicle *nara* is shared by Nairṛta and Kubera (cf. tables X–XI), which are both characterized by a chthonic and an – at least potentially – fierce aspect. It is therefore significant to observe that the representation of Nairṛta's and Kubera's vehicles converges in some cases. Thus, at Kheḍ, Kubera's man-vehicle (fig. 232) is shown crouching and peeping from behind much in the same manner as Nairṛta's anthropomorphic vehicle appears at Osiān (*e.g.* fig. 216). At Umri (fig. 168), it is shown reclining, which is usual in Orissan art⁵²¹ and there it is also found accompanying Nairṛta (see above). In these cases of convergence, Nairṛta's vehicle is clearly differentiated from Kubera's.

There is also a number of images, in which, quite peculiarly, a vehicle has been omitted. Apart from Ālampur (figs. 69, 76, 81), where vehicles are missing for a number of other *dikpālas*, too, this is particularly striking in a few cases at Osiān (figs. 201, 219), where vehicles are otherwise present with hardly any exception. The platform separating the human vehicle from the god above at the same site is likewise noteworthy (*e.g.* fig. 211). Another variant shows Kubera instead of a vehicle associated with one or more pots symbolizing his treasures (*e.g.* fig. 321). The 6th century image at Bhūmarā (fig. 26) is the earliest of this kind from a *dikpāla*-context. Later examples also occur in North-Central India, even in cases where the *dikpālas* are aligned in a frieze and all the others are accompanied by a vehicle (fig. 180, 3rd figure from the right).⁵²²

Another rather rare feature, the elephant as a carrier of Kubera, has a north-western distribution.⁵²³ Its date of introduction is *c.* second half of the 10th century. It does not appear on the temples under survey.

The seated posture can be regarded as particularly characteristic of Kubera. Thus, Kubera is sometimes shown seated, even when the other *dikpālas* appear standing, as at Ālampur (figs. 69, 76, 81). Where this case occurs at Osiān (figs. 182, 198) and Pīpāḍ (fig. 124), however, the Kubera images are probably not portrayed as directional guardians, as they are not positioned on the north. This mainly applies to the early phase of *dikpāla* representation. Later, Kubera is also depicted in similar stances as the other *dikpālas*, but generally not in the rigid *samapāda* posture.⁵²⁴

Kubera's headdress is noteworthy, since the curly hairstyle clearly dominates (*e.g.* fig. 194). Even in the south, where generally the rather undifferentiated high crown had been in use, images of Kubera with an elegant, curly coiffure are known (*e.g.* fig. 18, 69).⁵²⁵ These are apparently restricted to the early phase. Other types of headdress, including the demonic hairstyle, also occur in the north.

Regarding Kubera's company, particular mention must be made of a flying couple with erotic gestures, which flanks the god on both sides in the *maṇḍapa* at Bādāmi, Cave 3 (fig. 18). Except for the above-mentioned figure of a wine-waitress, which generally does not occur on panels of the *dikpāla* Kubera,⁵²⁶ no regular entourage appears.

2.5.8 Soma (table XXI, see p. 106)

There are only three securely identifiable cases in the period under discussion, in which the Moon God Soma (in other contexts generally called Candra) is represented as the sole regent of the north, *viz.*

at Bīṭhū (MEISTER 1982: fig. 10), Cittaūḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā temple (fig. 109) and Tañjāvūr, Rājārājeśvara temple (fig. 300), probably also at Bādāmi, Cave 3 (figs. 10, 13), and Kāñcīpuram, Kailāsanātha temple (fig. 285). The loose terracotta image, inscriptionally referred to as "Soma" (fig. 45), may either depict him as *dikpāla* or Soma as a member of the related group of Manu Lokapālas, which he belongs to as a regular member (see section 2.4.1.3). At Ālampur, Soma appears twice as a kind of additional guardian of the North (figs. 77, 82). At Osiān, the Moon God occupies a position on the proper left side of the main deity and is therefore generally located in the south (WESSELS-MEVISSSEN 1994: 608). Here and at a few other sites, representations of the Moon God also appear in association with the *dikpālas* (figs. 94 – doubtful –, 185), but the relation-ship is sometimes not very clear (figs. 103, 237).

The iconic appearance of the deity does not seem to be affected by its varying function. The god is generally characterized by a crescent behind or above his head in North India, while in South India, he has a round halo like the Sun God Sūrya. At Ālampur, both characteristics are combined by integrating the crescent into the halo (figs. 77, 82). In the image of the Sūrya temple 1 at Osiān (fig. 185) and in the loose terracotta image (fig. 45), the crescent is absent, while at Cittaūḍgaḍh, the god has been simply distinguished from the other deities by a large halo as it is common in the south (fig. 109).

Regarding the attributes, a significant similarity between Agni and Soma exists. Both deities generally carry the waterpot (*kamaṇḍalu*) in the right hand and the rosary (*akṣamālā*) in the left. When this configuration is combined with the crown of braided hair (*jaṭāmukuṭa*), it clearly describes the deity as an ascetic or priest. Both with Soma and Agni, the right hand is sometimes shown supporting the waterpot from below (figs. 36, 77). The vessel seems to be absent only in the case of the Viśva Brahmā temple at Osiān, where the right hand of the damaged sculpture is resting on the hip in *kaṭihasta* (fig. 82).

Soma is often portrayed without any symbolic animal, but in a few cases, different vehicles appear. Chronologically, these start with Cave 3 at Bādāmi (578 A.D.; figs. 10, 13), where the guardian of the north is associated with the lion. However, it cannot be conclusively proven in this case, whether the deity is actually to be called Soma. At Cittaūḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā temple, the sole occurrence of a small animal resembling a dog or fox can be observed (fig. 109), while on the Harihara temple 1 at Osiān a unique arrangement of two geese carries the seat of the god (D. HANDA 1984: pl. 100). A single goose, which occurs on a loose sculpture from Pengore in the same region,⁵²⁷ is probably also depicted on

⁵²¹ For the representation of the *śava-vāhana* (corpse-vehicle), cf. T.E. DONALDSON 1991, specifically fig. 15.

⁵²² *E.g.* at Benisāgar (T.E. DONALDSON 1985: fig. 599). Here, the standing deity is flanked above and below by four inverted pots, with different substances issuing from the lower ones. Interestingly, the god holds a floral attribute like his counterpart at Bhūmarā (fig. 26).

⁵²³ A. KUTAR (1983: 367–370) has collected some pieces of evidence from 10th/11th century-temple sites in Rajasthan, where the elephant is Kubera's exclusive vehicle: Ahar, Mirā Bāi temple; Iswal, Viṣṇu temple; Tusa, Sūrya temple; Jagat, Ambikā temple; Kiradu.

⁵²⁴ A singular example for the *samapāda* posture exists at Gwālior, Caturbhujā temple (fig. 176).

⁵²⁵ The curls are rather small. Sometimes, the impression of a wig or even a helmet arises.

⁵²⁶ A rare exception occurs in the Barwāsāgar frieze of *c.* 900 A.D. (fig. 179).

⁵²⁷ See R.C. AGRAWALA 1977: fig. 6; unfortunately, it is not known, which are the associated deities on the temple.

Table XXI – Iconographic Chart of Soma/Candra

Site of Soma/Candra (as <i>Dikpāla</i> , Associated deity or Manu Lokapāla)	Attributes	Vehicle	Posture	Headdress	Company
Ālampur, Svarga Brahmā (fig. 77) A	rosary (? damaged) r.	–	<i>samapāda</i> (feet together)	conical crown	–
Ālampur, Viśva Brahmā (fig. 82) A	rosary r. waterpot l.	–	<i>samapāda</i>	conical crown	–
Bīṭhū (MEISTER 1982: fig. 10) D	– damaged/indistinct –	– damaged/indistinct –	<i>samapāda</i>	– damaged/indistinct –	two attendants (indistinct)
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā (fig. 109) D	rosary r. waterpot l.	dog or fox?	<i>samapāda</i>	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i> (hair crown)	two kneeling worshippers
Gwālīor, Telī- kā-mandir (fig. 103) A?	rosary? r. waterpot? l. (both hands damaged)	–	<i>samapāda</i>	conical crown?	–
Muṇḍeśvarī, cornerstone (fig. 36) M	rosary r. waterpot l.	–	squatting coiffure	cap-like	–
Osiān, HH-1 (HANDA 1984: pl. 100) A	rosary? r. waterpot? l. (both hands damaged)	two addorsed geese below a moon seat	squatting	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	–
Osiān, HH-2 (HANDA 1984: pl. 101) A	rosary r. waterpot l.	lion or goose?	flexed posture	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	–
Osiān, HH-3 (HANDA 1984: pl. 102) A	rosary r. waterpot l.	–	flexed posture	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	–
Osiān, ST-1 (fig. 185) A	rosary r. waterpot l.	deer or gazelle	<i>samapāda</i>	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	–
Osiān, SV (unpublished) A	rosary r. waterpot l.	–	standing with crossed legs	– damaged –	–
Pāhārpur (fig. 237) A?	rosary r. waterpot l.	–	<i>samapāda</i>	<i>jaṭāmukuṭa</i>	–
“Uttar Pradesh” (fig. 45) M? D?	rosary r. waterpot l.	–	seated with crossed feet	hairknot and open curls	–

Harihara temple 2 at Osiān (*ibid.*: pl. 101), but this is doubtful.⁵²⁸ Uniquely, a rather tiny antelope or gazelle is depicted behind Soma on Sūrya temple 1 at Osiān (fig. 185). In the case of the north(-eastern) image of the Dānebābā temple at Amrol, which may represent Soma as an additional guardian of the north (fig. 94), the squatting quadruped below the seated deity is impossible to define. The attributes of the god, who is characterized by a *yogapaṭṭa* (yogic band), are both damaged, but they could well have been waterpot and rosary.

Soma's posture is mostly the hieratic *samapāda*, which lends the deity the aspects of dignity and stability. In two cases, at Bīṭhū and at Cittauḍgaḍh (fig. 109), a symmetrical configuration has been created by the lateral placement of two attendant figures. The headdress often consists of a hair crown, but the conical ornamented crown also occurs in a few cases. Exceptionally, an individual coiffure has been chosen for Soma (fig. 36).

2.5.9 Īśāna (table XXII, see p. 107)

Relatively few complete images exist of Īśāna, who has been represented as largely identical with the god Śiva.⁵²⁹ Due to this visual identity, loose images cannot always be safely identified as a *dikpāla*. Īśāna's main attribute is his trident (*triśūla*). Interestingly, an east-west distinction appears in Northern India, with the trident being carried on the (proper) right side of the god in the west and on the left side in the east. This distinction also applies to other images of Śiva. It is further noteworthy that in an absolutely unique instance, images of the Īśāna type replace some of the

other *dikpālas* on the sanctum of the Kumbhaśyāma temple at -Cittauḍgaḍh, Rajasthan (ill. 18, figs. 111, 112). An explanation for this exceptional representation could lie in a probably existing theological concept, according to which all the directional guardians are basically identical with the high god Śiva. In this connection, it is informative that the theological predecessor of Śiva, Rudra, is known as *disām pati* (e.g. TS IV.5.2 a), Lord of the Directions.

Īśāna is mostly four-armed and thus recognizable as a form of Śiva. This, however, has not been the case in Orissa. The four-armed form of Īśāna is referred to in some of the early texts (tables X, XI), and Īśāna as the only four-armed god among the regents has been described in the *HayaPa* (28.12–13).

Unfortunately, at the early (late-7th century) site of Ālampur, no complete image of Īśāna survives. It is only clear that the Svarga Brahmā image is four-armed (fig. 78) unlike the rest of the group. On the ceiling of the Pāpanātha temple at Paṭṭadakal, Īśāna has been likewise distinguished from the other *dikpālas* by his four arms (fig. 61). Some other relatively early images, at Aihole (fig. 54) and

⁵²⁸ What KALIA (1982: 129, fn. 62) takes for a goose on the proper left side of the god may be actually a shrub. On the proper right side, there is an object which has been interpreted as a small lion by HANDA (1984: 140). Because of the rough, indistinct shapes it is impossible to come to a final decision in this case.

⁵²⁹ H. MEINHARD (1928: 26) has worked on Īśāna and his relationship with Śiva. He states that Īśāna, as a directional guardian, bears close resemblance with the latter. In other contexts, Īśāna would be rather *verbläuft*, i.e. without any particular characteristics.

Table XXII – Iconographic Chart of Īśāna

Site	Attributes	Vehicle	Posture	Headdress	Company
Ālampur, Svarga Brahmā (fig. 78)	handled object lower r. <i>triśūla</i> (trident) upper r. serpent (? damaged) upper l.	–	<i>samapāda</i> (feet together), lower left hand on the left thigh	conical crown	–
Amrol, Rāmeś- vara Mahādeva (TRIVEDI 1990: pl. 26)	<i>triśūla</i> l. (damaged) r.	bull	seated on the vehicle in <i>vāmapralambapāda</i> (left leg pendent)	<i>jaṭāmukūṭa</i> (hair crown)	–
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kālikāmātā (fig. 110)	lotus bud lower r. <i>triśūla</i> upper r. serpent upper l.	bull	slightly flexed, lower left hand on the left thigh	<i>jaṭāmukūṭa</i>	worshipper, person feeding the bull
Cittauḍgaḍh, Kumbhaśyāma, interior (MEISTER 1991: pl. 670)	lotus bud lower r. <i>triśūla</i> upper r. serpent upper l.	bull	slightly flexed, lower left hand on the left thigh	<i>jaṭāmukūṭa</i>	–
Gallāvalli (fig. 248)	<i>triśūla</i> l.	bull	very slightly flexed, right hand extended towards bull (<i>cinmudrā</i>)	<i>jaṭāmukūṭa</i>	dwarf suppor- ting the trident
Indor (fig. 159)	rosary upper r. <i>triśūla</i> upper l. waterpot lower l.	bull	slightly flexed, lower right hand extended downwards in the wishfulfilling gesture	<i>jaṭāmukūṭa</i>	two male attendants
Osiān, HH-1 (fig. 195)	rosary lower r. serpent upper r. <i>triśūla</i> upper l. fruit lower l.	bull	seated on the vehicle in <i>dakṣiṇāpralambapāda</i> (right leg pendent)	<i>jaṭāmukūṭa</i>	–
Osiān, HH-2 (fig. 212)	lotus bud lower r. <i>triśūla</i> upper r. serpent upper l.	bull	flexed posture, lower left hand on the left thigh	<i>jaṭāmukūṭa</i>	–
Umri (fig. 169)	<i>triśūla</i> (? damaged) r.	bull	slightly flexed, left hand on the left hip	– damaged –	–

Amrol, Rāmeśvara Mahādeva temple (TRIVEDI 1990: pl. 26), however, show the deity as two-armed.⁵³⁰ Because of the absence of the trident, the north(-eastern) image of the Dānebābā temple most probably does not depict Īśāna but Soma (fig. 94). Another Central Indian two-armed example of Īśāna is found at Umri (fig. 169), c. second quarter of the 9th century.

In the four-armed type, both the trident and the serpent are generally held in the upper hands of Īśāna. The trident appears on the –proper – right in the west and in the south, while in Central and Eastern India it is carried on the left side. As a local variant, which is roughly restricted to the region of modern Rajasthan, Īśāna holds a lotus flower in front of or beside his chest (figs. 110, 111, 112, 122, 212, 220 (?), 233; D. MASON 1993: cat. 58). This is mostly held in the right hand, while in one image of the “Īśāna type” at –Cittauḍgaḍh it is carried on the left side (fig. 112). An image of the same series additionally holds a rosary in the same hand (fig. 111).

A Central Indian image from Indor probably depicts Īśāna with a waterpot in his lower left hand (fig. 159). However, the scarcity of representations of this guardian of the north-east makes it impossible to tell whether this was the usual custom in the region.

Regarding Īśāna’s posture, no particular position seems to have been preferred. The rigid *samapāda* as it occurs at Ālampur (fig. 78) seems to have been rather rare. Both the vehicle and the headdress of Īśāna generally correspond to the usual signs of the god Śiva, viz. bull and *jaṭāmukūṭa*, respectively.

No recurring companion can be observed.

2.5.10 Daṇḍapāṇi

A male deity holding a staff horizontally in both hands over his knees occurs in association with the early *dikpālas* at Bhūmarā (fig. 28), Muṇḍeśvarī (fig. 35), and Bhubaneswar, Paraśurāmeśvara temple (fig. 42, right). It has been tentatively identified as “Daṇḍapāṇi”.⁵³¹ An association between Daṇḍapāṇi and the directional guardians existed in the 6th-7th centuries,⁵³² but was lost later on. It is not clear whether Daṇḍapāṇi or Daṇḍanāyaka, as he may have been alternatively called, was allotted any particular direction, although in the *Vāmanapurāṇa* (32.22–23),

⁵³⁰ Later two-armed images come from Mathurā (fig. 178), Auwā (M.W. MEISTER 1991: pl. 478), the Pīpalādevī temple at Osiān (A. KALIA 1982: 140) and Umri (fig. 169). Examples for the two-armed Orissan Īśāna images are at Gallāvalli (fig. 248) and Gaṇeśwarpur (figs. 256, 265).

⁵³¹ After I had considered such an identification some years ago, this name was also proposed in a Museum catalogue (K. DEVA/S.D. TRIVEDI 1996: 50–51). Another designation, or rather classification, suggested recently is “*siddhapuruṣa*” (V.S. PATHAK/S.K. SULLEREY 1991: 51).

⁵³² The association appears to be the closest at Bhubaneswar, where the god sits directly besides Yama, i.e. on his proper left (fig. 42). At Bhūmarā, the image (fig. 28) is larger than those of the extant other *dikpālas* Yama and Kubera (figs. 25–27). At Muṇḍeśvarī, the image of Daṇḍapāṇi (fig. 35) most probably belongs to the series of which only a seated Agni remains (ASHER 1980: pl. 53).

“Daṇḍanāyaka” is mentioned for the south⁵³³ in a directional scheme. The remaining – all incomplete – *dikpāla* sets which include Daṇḍapāṇi, unfortunately do not contain any clue to a particular directional positioning of this deity.

The identification of the so far unnamed deity as Daṇḍapāṇi or Daṇḍanāyaka could be made on the basis of the mythology connected with the ancient city of Vārāṇasī. A strong tradition links this god to the well-known pilgrimage centre.⁵³⁴ On a number of reliefs with schematic representations of this site (see below, nos. 12, 13), Daṇḍapāṇi is included, often in a position close to the centre. This remained, however, unnoticed by the authors. Nowadays, at Vārāṇasī, the deity is worshipped merely in the shape of a staff (M.A. SHERRING 1868: pp. 62–63). The small temple housing it was once located probably west or south (D.L. ECK 1982: 2; 121) of the original Viśvanātha temple which forms the spiritual and geographical centre of Vārāṇasī.

In order to strengthen the connection between the staff-bearing deity and the name Daṇḍapāṇi, all known examples for its depiction will be enumerated here, including later images as well. The list of images will precede the iconographic description of Daṇḍapāṇi:

- 1 Bhūmarā, loose image with *gavākṣa* frame, c. 520–530 A.D. (fig. 28).
- 2 Muṇḍeśvarī, loose image, c. early 7th century (fig. 35).
- 3 Bhubaneswar, Paraśurāmeśvara temple, southern wall of *maṇḍapa*, small niche image, c. early 7th century (fig. 42, right).
- 4 Unknown findspot (North India), Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Varanasi, loose image, c. 6th century (fig. 323).
- 5 North India, National Museum, New Delhi, acc. no. 67.106, loose image, c. 6th–7th centuries, R.C. AGRAWALA 1970: fig. 1.
- 6 Benisāgar (Benusāgar)/Bihar, Patna Museum, acc. no. 61, loose image, c. 7th century, ASHER 1980: pl. 103.
- 7 Vārāṇasī, Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Varanasi, acc. no. 18, loose image with *gavākṣa* frame, c. 6th–7th centuries, T.K. BISWAS/B. JHA 1985: pl. XXXVIII, fig. 92; cf. K. DEVA 1991: pl. 182 (here dated to the 8th century, which may be too late).
- 8 Mau near Robertsganj/Mirzapur dt. (U.P.), Allahabad Museum, acc. no. 905, small niche image on architectural fragment, c. 6th–7th, centuries, K. DEVA/S.D. TRIVEDI 1996: fig. 156 (here dated 5th century, which may be too early).
- 9 Bhubaneswar, Mukteśvara temple, south wall, figure in front of lattice window, c. 970 A.D., W. SMITH 1994.
- 10 Siron Khurd/U.P., loose headless image inscribed on the pedestal, c. 10th century, S.D. TRIVEDI 1983: fig. 76.
- 11 Hinglājgaḍh/M.P., framed image on architectural fragment, c. 10th century (fig. 324).
- 12 Baijnāth, Kangra/Himachal Pradesh, Śiva temple, composite deity consisting of Śiva, Viṣṇu, and Daṇḍapāṇi, c. 13th century (?), V.S. OHRI 1991: pl. 3.41 (fig. 325).
- 13 Baḍoh-Pathārī/M.P., Archaeological Museum, Gwalior, acc. no. 285, “*Vārāṇasī-śilāpaṭṭa*” including Daṇḍapāṇi, c. 11th century, N.P. JOSHI 1991a: pl. 1 and 1992: pl. 46.
- 14 Unknown findspot, Rani Mahal collection, Jhansi, acc. no. 139.97, “*Vārāṇasī-śilāpaṭṭa*” including Daṇḍapāṇi, c. 11th–12th centuries, N.P. JOSHI 1991a: pl. 2 and 1992: pl. 47.
- 15 Unknown findspot, State Museum, Lucknow, acc. no. H. 198, relief slab showing deities including Daṇḍapāṇi, c. 11th–12th centuries, N.P. JOSHI 1992: pl. 48.

- 16 Kālānjara (fort)/U.P., relief slab (“*Vaikunṭhapāṭṭa*”) showing deities including Daṇḍapāṇi, *in situ*, no. KF 238, c. 11th–12th centuries, N.P. JOSHI 1992: pl. 49; cf. S.K. SULLEREY 1993: pl. XIII.
- 17 Tewar near Tripuri/M.P., relief slab showing deities including Daṇḍapāṇi and probably Indra and Agni, *in situ*, c. 13th century, V.S. PATHAK/S.K. SULLEREY 1991: pl. 17.
- 18 Pāṭan/Nepal, Viśveśvara temple, niche image, south(-west), A.D. 1627, A. GAIL 1984: pl. XXXIV, 4.
- 19 Pāṭan/Nepal, Archaeological Garden, Lalitpur, loose image, c. 17th century, *Catalogue* Essen 1959: no. 32.
- 20 Deo Pāṭan/Nepal, image on a temple tower (*śikhara*), probably 17th century, A.W. MACDONALD/A.V. STAHL 1979: ill. 45.
- 21 Vārāṇasī, Kedāreśvara temple, late (16th century or later?), figure in niche inside the temple, squatting (communicated by Dr. Falk Reitz).

A number of miniature shrines in the Allahabad Museum, dated c. 10th century, exhibit an image of the typical squatting Daṇḍapāṇi above the door.⁵³⁵ It has been hypothesized that these miniature temples “generally enshrining Śivaliṅga, [...] seem to be memorial monuments of funerary character” (K. DEVA/S.D. TRIVEDI 1996: 51).

Daṇḍapāṇi, as far as we know, does not possess any vehicle.⁵³⁶ He is always shown seated. All early images, which are linked with *dikpāla* sets (figs. 28, 35, 42), as well as the Benisāgar image (no. 6) sit on a low throne with lathe-turned feet. In the latter case, the staff is held in an oblique manner. As all other details, including the position of the hands on the staff, conform to the general characteristics of Daṇḍapāṇi, the image has been mentioned here. Perhaps a seated figure, which is conceptually associated with the directional guardians in the upper portion of the Naṭeśa panel at Ellorā 29 (fig. 21, extreme right), also depicts Daṇḍapāṇi.

Apart from the – generally – horizontally placed staff, a regular feature of most of the Daṇḍapāṇi images is a peculiar hairdo. However, this has not been always portrayed in a uniform manner. Either the hair hangs down in the form of short, big curls or strands (nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 21), or it is given the shape of a curly wig (resembling that of a judge, nos. 1, 6). Sometimes the hair forms a small knot on top, which also occurs in a larger version (no. 4, 20). Rarely, the deity wears a crown, *i.e.* a short cylindrical crown at Benisāgar (no. 6) and Baijnāth (no. 12, fig. 325), the latter of which represents a syncretistic icon. A crown of braided hair, *jaṭāmukuṭa*, occurs in one of the Nepal images (no. 19) and at Hinglājgaḍh (no. 11, fig. 324). An explanation for the conspicuous treatment of the hair

⁵³³ E.W. HOPKINS (1915: 112) refers to epic passages in which “Daṇḍapāṇi” serves as a name of Yama and Antaka. Theoretically, the variant form Daṇḍanāyaka could also refer to Yama, particularly, as the deity is positioned in the south here. However, there seems to be no example for such a reference in the dictionary (MONIER-WILLIAMS). On the other hand, the extant *dikpāla* sets at Bhūmarā (figs. 25–28) and Bhubaneswar (fig. 42) show that Yama and Daṇḍapāṇi appear side by side. Daṇḍapāṇi as a guardian of Vārāṇasī (see below) clearly has a fierce aspect, as he is closely associated with Kālā Bhairava (D.L. ECK 1982: 198–201). This aspect befits the southern/south-western direction.

⁵³⁴ D.L. ECK 1982: 198–201. According to *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* 32.162 of the *Skandapurāṇa*, the guardian deity Daṇḍapāṇi is said to be stationed to the south of Viśveśvara, the form of Śiva who is the main god of the city.

⁵³⁵ K. DEVA/S.D. TRIVEDI 1996: figs. 157, 323.

⁵³⁶ At the feet of image no. 7 something is seen protruding, which faintly resembles an animal head. However, even by a personal examination of the piece, this could not be verified.

may lie in the concept of the god, which has been regarded as identical with Harikeśa Yakṣa, whose name points to a particular (“yellowish”) type of hair (ECK 1982: 200).

Each one of the following features is shared by several images:

- pot-belly: nos. 4, 5, 7, 9;
- *yogapaṭṭa*: nos. 10, 18, 19, 20;
- halo: nos. 4, 6; in some cases not clearly discernible;
- cross-belt over the breast: nos. 1, 2, 7?;
- crossed legs: nos. 13, 18, 19, 20.

Daṇḍapāṇi has often been portrayed with bulging eyes, and sometimes also as bearded. Thus, some of the recurring features point to his grotesque nature. His image is not likened to that of the common *yakṣa* type, which is depicted standing, but it may be regarded as related to the image of Kubera, the *yakṣa* king, who is similarly shown squatting and pot-bellied (cf. R.N. MISRA 1981: ill. 7).

Apart from the known function of Daṇḍapāṇi as a guardian of the site at Vārāṇasī, its image contains some elements of static stability, which have been enhanced during the later iconographic development by the introduction of the – horizontal – *yogapaṭṭa* and the cross-legged sitting posture.

His grip on the staff has been portrayed in different manners. Mostly, both the hands hold it either from below or from above, but there are exceptions. This shows that attention has been given to the way in which the staff was held. Besides, there is at least one instance of an obliquely held staff (no. 6). The horizontal or nearly horizontal position of the staff may have signalled that the entry of negative forces to that particular site was prohibited.

Conceptually, Daṇḍapāṇi, as a guardian of a particular direction or of the site itself, seems to have lost its association with the *dikpālas* shortly after the introduction of vehicles for the latter. At Bhubaneswar (**fig. 42**), different modes of support occur, including Varuṇa as seated on a throne with his vehicle underneath, Yama (centre) as seated on his buffalo and Daṇḍapāṇi as seated on a throne.

Although the mythological and some of the iconographic aspects (absence of crown, grotesque features) of Daṇḍapāṇi make him a minor deity, his fusion with Śiva and Viṣṇu at Baijnāth (no. 12, **fig. 325**) probably testifies to his close relationship with the higher gods. Regarding his original function, it can be hypothesized that Daṇḍapāṇi or Daṇḍanāyaka was once a guardian of the south or the south-west in a configuration of minor deities encircling Viśvanātha, *i.e.* Śiva as Lord of the Universe, ultimately forming a part of this universal deity.