

Masilāthavar (the spotless) ; 86. புவனேசநாதர் Bhuvanēsanātha (the lord of the world), 87. காயாரோணர் Kāyārōnar (Siva's name at Negapatam); etc.

As regards the stories concerning Isvara, they are so numerous that we could write volumes of them, if we were to compile them from their books. We have, however, no intention to do so in this genealogy. But we must remark that among those stories there are many relating to kings who ruled in the different countries of India. For these kings had always poets at their courts, who sung their praises and represented their deeds as wonders, in consequence of which many of those kings were deified, under the pretext that they were forms of Isvara himself, who at different times ruled here and there as king and did much good. And inasmuch as especially the ancient kings of சேரமண்டலம் Sēramandala, i. e. the Sēra country (in the south-west of the Peninsula), and பாண்டிமண்டலம் Pāndimandala, i. e. the Pāndia country (in the south-east), and சோழமண்டலம் Chōlamandala, i. e. the Chōla country (north of the latter), built splendid pagodas and tanks, and encouraged the worship of idols in different ways : many of them have been deified with their own names, as forms of Siva, more especially because nearly all of them are said to have died no natural death, but to have entered into a Linga, and that in the presence of many persons ; from which the conclusion was drawn that they were forms of Isvara himself ; wherefore also pagodas were erected in their honour, and called Isvara pagodas. Thus the number of his pagodas has been greatly multiplied : there are in the first place, the 1008 principal pagodas at the spots where he is said to have appeared ; and in the second place, a pagoda has been built in his honour almost in every town and every larger village. The images to be found in these pagodas are the following : 1. the Linga, standing in the innermost part of the pagoda, and being adored daily three times with offerings, meant in honour of Siva and Sakti, i. e. Isvara and his wife. 2. Isvara's image, called அயர் Ayar, the lord, and having the form of a man. This, too, is adored with offerings not only at festivals and fasts, but also on other days. 3. Pārvati's image, called அம்மை Ammai, i. e. lady, and adored in the same manner as Isvara. 4. விக்கிரகேசுவரன் Vighnēsvara 5. சுப்பிரமணியன் Subhramanya with his two wives வள்ளியம்மை Valliamma and Dēvayānai, 6. நந்திகேசுவரன் Nandikēsvara, by which not only a சிஷ்யம் Rishabha, i. e. the bull of Siva, is understood, but also a form of his as man, in which he is said to have revealed many mysteries in this world. He is one of the nearest to Isvara, and receives therefore some adoration. 7. சிதம்பரேசுவரன் Chitambarēsvara, i. e. Isvara himself, represented as dancing, with his wife standing beside him ; 8. சந்திரசேகரன் Chandra-sēkhara, i. e. likewise Isvara, namely the form in which he is carried about at festivals, riding with his wife on an ox. 9. துவாரபாலகர் Dvārapālakas, i. e. door-keepers, and குண்டோதரன் Kundōdara, the bearer of Isvara's umbrella. 10. மகாலட்சுமி Mahālakshmi, Vishnu's wife, a figure

of stone, standing in a separate little temple and enjoying some adoration. 11. தண்டேசுவரனாயனார் Tandēsvaranāyanār, a man-who, by his holy life on earth, obtained a place near Isvara, and is therefore adored with him ; 12. சந்தாமூர்த்தி Sundaramūrtti,* also one of those who, on account of their holy life, have got a place near Isvara. 13. வயிரவன் Bhairava, who is represented by a human form quite naked, and said to be an incarnation of Isvara himself.† 14. சந்திரசூரியர் Chandra-Sūriyer, i. e. the sun and the moon, represented in some pagodas by certain figures and images, and in others by two burning lamps. For, to a certain extent, these heathens worship also the sun and the moon, and make even offerings unto them. On Sunday a good number of them fast in honour of the sun, which fast is called நாயிற்றுக்கிழமைவிரதம் Nāyiddukkirhamāivrata (Sunday-fast) or simply நாயிறு Nāyiru (sun).‡ And so they have also fasts at certain phases of the moon.¶ But the other planets they adore only with a

* Sundarer was, according to the Tamil Plutarch p. 96, 97, an Adisaiva Brahmin, born about 800 A. D. at Tirunavalur in the Carnatic, and educated in the royal family ; but on the day when he was to be married he began the life of an ascetic, visited many Saiva temples and sang their praises, and died 18 years old at Tiruvanji in the Sēra country. He is said to have stayed the floods of the overflowing river Cavry by one of his hymns.

† Bhairava is also often represented with the head of a dog, and the dog, though otherwise regarded as unclean, is his vehicle.

‡ Formerly the sun was more generally worshipped. The celebrated Mantra (form of prayer) Gāyatri, which the Brahmins utter in their daily worship, is addressed to the sun. The meaning of it, by no means known to all Brahmins, is as follows : " We meditate on that excellent light of the divine Sun : may he illuminate our minds." On Sunday fast especially women who wish to get male children, and to be preserved from the misery of becoming widows. Fasting on Sunday is also recommended for sore eyes ; and the Sunday is the best day for taking purgatives.

¶ The moon with her phases is of great importance with the Hindus ; nearly all their feasts and fasts are regulated by the moon.

Regarding the phases of the moon the Padma Purāna gives the following explanation : Daksha, the son-in-law of Brahma, and one of the 9 progenitors of mankind, gave 27 of his daughters to the Moon (in Indian mythology of the masculine gender) to wives, expecting that he would love all equally. But the Moon loved one, called Rōhini, above the others, and dwelled therefore only with her. This the others could not endure ; so they complained of their husband's conduct to their father, who ordered then his son-in-law to dwell with all his wives equally long. But he would not obey ; in consequence of which the mighty Daksha became very angry, and cursed the disobedient son-in-law with the terrible sickness of consumption. Consequently the Moon grew less and less till at last he disappeared altogether. On this all the gods came and asked the mighty Daksha to remove his curse ; but he said he could not revoke it altogether, consented however to mitigate it, if the Moon would dwell equally long with every one of his wives ; and the Moon, promising to do so, was ordered to bathe in the river Sarasvati, by which he would recover strength to grow one fortnight, after which, however, he should again be subject to consumption for the following fortnight. The Moon, therefore, dwells now with all his 27 wives, i. e. 27 constellations, equally long, but does ever since for one fortnight grow, and for another wane.

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skull-garland), and huge pendent snake-earrings (*nāga-śrīvāṅga*), sitting on a tiger skin under a tree or snake-hood canopy, absorbed in profound meditation.

Śiva is the god of the terrible, a flesh-eater, demanding animal, human and blood sacrifices; the lord of the cruel and evil side of things, haunting cemeteries, attended by hosts of *pramāṭha*, sprites and goblins; as well as *śūdra* spirits, ghosts, and ghouls which live in trees and eat flesh; and the *śūdra* or vampires which haunt cemeteries, animate dead bodies and feed on human blood. Among the most hideous members of his entourage is *Kīrtimukha* (*śīma-mukha*, 'renowned-face'), a terrible demon created by Śiva to fight Rāhu* who once opposed him. At the mere sight of Kīrtimukha the terrified Rāhu begged for mercy, and Śiva commanded the monster to desist. Since he had been created to swallow Rāhu, the demon demanded a meal and Śiva bade him eat his own feet. The monster ate his feet, his legs, belly, chest and arms till only the head remained. The grotesque face of Kīrtimukha is used as a talisman among Śaivites, and is frequently found depicted in temple-sculpture, and works of art. Śiva is often accompanied by a voracious black dog which tears the flesh off living bodies and gulps without chewing.

Śiva is usually represented with either one or five faces, and four arms, the two upper hands holding the *damru* (a small hand-drum) and a flame of the consuming fire; the two lower hands are poised in *mudrās* of protection (*bhāya*) and action (*varj*). In some representations he holds a horn, trident, and drum, while with the fourth hand he makes a gesture symbolizing the bestowal of gifts. His whole body is encircled by the blazing *torāṇa*, an arch of flames.

Frequently, Śiva is shown with a third eye in the middle of his forehead. The eye was said to have burst forth to save the world from darkness when his wife Pārvatī once playfully stole behind him and covered his eyes with her hands. His third eye is an organ of destruction with which he reduced to ashes Kāma god of love for daring, while he was in penance, to arouse amorous desires in his wife Pārvatī.

He is also portrayed with a blue neck, caused as a result of his swallowing the poisonous scum at the Churning of the Ocean (*see* nectar). Śiva's *vāhana* or vehicle is the bull *Nandī*, son of Kaśyapa and Surabhī, also called Śālanākā-ṭhana, Nādideha, and Tāṇḍava-tālika, the latter because he provides musical accompaniment when Śiva dances the Tāṇḍava. Among Śiva's weapons* are the *triśūla* or trident; the *pināka* or club; the *ājaḡava* or bow; the *khaṭvāṅga* or club with a skull at the end; and the *pāśa* or noose, for trapping and binding offenders. His celestial abode is Kailāsa, a mountain* in the Himā-lyas. His wives are Pārvatī and other aspects of Śakti, and he is associated with various local female deities such as Minākshī*. His children are Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya.

Śiva is said to have 1008 names or epithets, of which the best known are cited here: Ādinātha, 'first lord'; Ardhanārīśvara, 'Androgynous* lord'; Astāṅga, 'black-limbed'; Babhrū, 'brown' (also used for Kṛishṇa); Bāleśvara, 'bull-lord'; Bhairava, 'terrible'; Bhairom, modern variant of Bhairava; Bhava, 'existence'; Bhūteśvara, 'demon-lord'; Chandra-chūḍā, 'moon-

crested'; Chandraś-khara, 'moon-crested'; Dhūrjati, 'mat-haired'; Ekam-baresvara, 'one-garmented lord' i.e. nude; Gaḡasamhāra, 'elephant-destroyer', slayer of the elephant demon; Gaḡgādāra, 'Ganges-bearer'; Gṛishheśvara, 'rubbing lord' i.e. lord of the genital act; Gūriśa, 'mountain-lord'; Hara, 'seizer'; Hāṭakesvara, ruler of the Hāṭaka people; Hiranya-rotas, 'having golden semen'; Isāna, 'ruler' of the north-east direction; Jambūakesvara, 'lord of Jambū' i.e. India; Jatā-ghāra, 'mat-haired'; Kāla, 'black' or 'time'; Kāla-samhāra, 'time-slayer'; Kapāla-mālin, 'skull-garlanded'; Kāpāleśvara, 'skull-lord'; Kapardin, wearing the kaparda, a braid or knot of hair; Kedār or Kedār-nāth, 'mountain-lord'; Kṛitti-vāsas, 'skin-clad'; Krodha, 'wrathful'; Mahādeva, 'great-lord'; Mahā-kāla, 'great-time' i.e. dissolver of Time; Mahāyogi, 'great-ascetic'; Mahēśa, 'great-lord'; Mahēśvara, 'great-lord'; Mṛityunjaya, 'death-destroyer'; Nandīśa (*see* Rāvaṇa, Naṭa-rāj), 'dance-king'; Naṭeśa, 'dance-lord'; Nīla-kanṭha (*see* poison), Pañch-ānana, 'five-faced'; Paśu-pati, 'animal-lord'; Prapitāmahēśvara, 'great-grandfather-god'; Sadā-śiva, 'eternal-Śiva'; Sambhu, 'benign'; Samhāra, 'destruction'; Saṅkara, 'beneficent'; Śarva, 'slaying with the śaru, 'arrow'; Śri-kanṭha, a respectful variation of Nīla-kanṭha; Sthāṇu, 'immoveable'; Śūla-bhṛit, 'Śūla-endowed'; Śūla-pāni, 'Śūla-holding'; Śvāśva, 'whose horse is a dog'; Tāmra-chūḍā, 'red-crested'; Tribhuvaneśvara, 'three-worlds lord'; Trilochana, 'three-eyed'; Tripurāntaka, 'triple-world ender' i.e. destroyer of earth, heaven and hell; Ugra-deva, 'merce-god'; Vajreśvara, 'thunderbolt lord'; Viśva-nātha, 'universal-lord'; Viśveśvara, 'universal deity'; Vaidya-nātha, 'physician-lord'; Virūpāksha, having 'ill-formed eyes'; Viśālāksha, 'large-eyed'; Yogeśvara, 'lord of Yoga'.

Books

See under Mythology.

ŚIVĀJĪ (1627-1680) founder of the last of the great Hindu empires, that of the Marāṭhas*. He was Mahārāshtra's greatest leader and the paragon of Indian patriots, for he wrenched from the clutches of the Moghul Emperor Aurungzeb a large mass of territory which became the nucleus of the greatest purely Hindu confederacy that ever existed. Śivāji inherited none of his loyalty from his father, *Shāhji* (or Shāhji Bhonsle), a military officer who served the Muslims and shifted his allegiance from Ahmadnagar to Bijāpur, from Delhi to Golkondā. It was Shāhji's conquests for his Muslim masters that slowly deprived the last Vijayanagar emperor of his territorial possessions, and ultimately led to the downfall of that mighty Hindu state.

With an army made up largely of peasants, farmers and fishermen, Shāhji's son Śivāji built up his empire. Marāṭha warriors had already acquired the arts of warfare under Muslim princes, and had grown in ability, wealth and power in the service of the Muhammadan kings of the Deccan. The strategy of guerilla warfare, in particular, they picked up from the greatest master of this art, Malik 'Ambar, the Abyssinian minister to the Sultān of Ahmadnagar.

For some time Śivāji's fortunes alternated between victories and reverses.

the present *Kali yuga* or Age of Darkness, when Vishnu will appear riding on a white horse.

These are the ten traditional avatāras, but the devout *Bhāgavata Purāna* enumerates twenty-two, and other legends add to them still more, since his incarnations are innumerable like the rivulets flowing from an inexhaustible lake. The *rishis*, *manus*, gods, *prajāpatis*, were all fragments of Vishnu, among them Nārada, Kapila, Dattātreyā, Vyāsa, Dhanvantari, and kings like Rishabha father of Bharata, and Prithu.

Vishnu is represented with a dark complexion; his four hands hold a padma (lotus), a gadā (mace), a śaṅkha (conch), and a chakra (discus) which, when he destroys the enemy returns to his grasp. He also has a bow called the *śārṅga*, a conch called the *pañchajanya*, a sword called the *manāka*. He is frequently depicted wearing the holy *kaustubha* jewel around his neck. On his breast is a peculiar star-shaped mark, the sign of his immortality, called *śrīvatsa*, 'transcending the years', and from this mark grows a tuft of curly hairs. Vishnu's *vāhana* or vehicle is the eagle Garuda. His celestial dwelling is the glorious city of Vaikunṭha where he rules with his wife Lakshmi.

Like the other great gods of Hindu mythology, Vishnu was given many titles of which the chief are as follows: Ananta-śayana, 'reposing on Ananta'; Bhakta-dāsa, 'his devotee's slave'; Chatur-bhuja, 'four-armed'; Gadādhara, 'club-bearer'; Hari, 'tawny'; Hrishikeśa, 'erect-haired' (a town near Hardwār is dedicated to him); Jala-śāyin, 'water-reposing'; Janārdana, 'men-afflicting'; Kaiṭabha-jit, 'Kaiṭabha-vanquisher'; Keśava, 'the hairy'; or 'the radiant'; Kīrtin, 'diadem-wearing' (also applied to Indra); Madhu-sūdāna, 'destroyer of Madhu'; Mukunda, 'deliverer'; Nārāyaṇa* 'moving on the waters'; Padma-nābha, 'lotus-navelled'; Pañchāyudha, 'five-weaponed'; Pāṇḍu-rāga, 'white-coloured' (although Vishnu is frequently depicted dark); Perumā, known as such in parts of south India; Pītāmbara, clothed in yellow garments'; Puṇḍarikāksha, 'lotus-eyed'; Rāṅga-nātha, 'Lord of Haes' or 'Lord of Arenas'; Śārṅgin, 'carrying the bow *śārṅga*'; Śrīdhara, 'prosperity-bearer'; Śrīnivāsa, 'splendour-raimented'; Tri-vikrama, 'three-striding'; Uru-gāya, 'wide-going'; Uru-krama, 'wide-strider'; Varada-rāja, 'boon-granting king'; Vasudeva, 'Beneficent Lord'; Veṅkaṭachala, 'moving upon the hills'; Veṅkaṭanātha, 'Hill Lord'; Veṅkaṭeśvara, 'Hill God'; Viṭhobā (or Viṭthobā), the title under which Vishnu is worshipped in Paṇḍharpur on the Bhīma river, especially by Marāṭhas; Viṭthal, the Kanarese form of Viṭhobā; Viśvaksena, 'general who is turned in all directions'; Viśvarūpa, 'of many forms; omnipresent'.

Books

- I. Gupta, S. K. *The Legends of Vishnu*, 1931.
- II. Rodríguez, E. A. *Religion of Vishnu: The Ten Avatars*, 1849.
(See also under Vaishnavism.)

VIŚVAKARMA (*viśva-karman*, 'all-accomplishing'), is referred to in the *Rig-veda* as the personification of the all-creative power, and the architect of the universe, sometimes identified with Prajāpati. Some hymns describe

him as offering up the whole universe in a sacrifice and finally sacrificing himself.

He is represented as the artisan of the gods and artificer of their weapons. He brought to perfection the science of *sthāpatya*, or architecture, and was the master of all the arts, of handicrafts, of carpentry, the maker of celestial chariots and fashioner of divine ornaments. He was the one who moulded the image of Jagannātha and shaped the island of Lankā (Ceylon). His son, the monkey architect Nala, constructed Rāma's bridge to enable Rāma to cross from India to Ceylon.

According to the Purāṇas, Viśvakarman, through union with the divine nymph Ghṛitāchī became the progenitor of many mixed castes. He was the father of Samjñā, wife of the sun-god Sūrya*, and in order to protect her from being consumed by the fiery effulgence of her husband, he trimmed the sun's orb and made various weapons from the portions cut off.

The name of Viśvakarman is in many myths linked with that of **Tvasṭri**, a deity of ancient Aryan origin, once worshipped in north-east Persia and Khorasan. Tvasṭri is likewise the divine artisan, the ideal artist, and 'shaper' of things, all form being made by him, celestial and terrestrial, human and divine, animals, plants and inanimate things. It is Tvasṭri who shapes man and woman, even from the seminal germ in the mother's womb. He is the Hindu Vulcan; at his forge he sharpens the axe of the priest-god Brihaspati, and moulds the vajra or thunderbolt of Indra and the weapons of the other celestial rulers. He it was who made the infernal assembly hall of Yama and the heaven of Varuṇa. He had a three-headed son named *Viśvarūpa* ('all-forms') who was slain by Indra. For this Tvasṭri cursed Indra, but he pronounced the curse wrongly and the dread words hurtled back to him and struck him down instead. His daughter Saranyū married Vivasvat (see Sūrya). The name Tvasṭri is also borne by one of the divine Ādityas, by one of the Rudras, and by a prince descended from Bharata.

Both Viśvakarman and Tvasṭri are associated with **Ribhu**, 'skilful', a name once also applied to Indra, Agni, the Ādityas and other gods. In the Purāṇas Ribhu is the son of Brahmā, and one of the Kumāras. The *Vishnu Purāna*, composed by the sage Nārāyaṇa, was first communicated by Brahmā to Ribhu. Ribhu had a famous pupil, *Nidāgha*, son of the sage Pulastya, to whom he gave 'deep instruction in the true and immortal wisdom'. Ribhu had three sons, known as the Ribhava, namely, Ribhukshan, Vibhu and Vāja. In some myths they are the sons of Viśvakarman, in others of Tvasṭri and Saranyū. Originally mortals, the Ribhus obtained the boon of immortality and were given a dwelling in the solar sphere, where they help to support the sky. In the *Rig-veda* they are referred to as skilled workmen and are often described as elf-like. They fashioned the steeds of Indra and the chariots of the Āsvins, and made their parents young again.

Viśvakarman (and also Brahmā) is known as Vidhātṛi, 'Creator'; Kāru, 'workman'; Takshaka, 'carver'; Sudhanvan, 'having a good bow'. Viśvarūpa is also known as Triśiras, 'three-headed'.

Books

(See under Mythology.)

The recitation of secret *mantras* can arouse the twenty-four *nādis* (pulses) that cause sexual desire. Similarly certain *mudrās* or fixed positions of the fingers of the man can excite the woman. Certain forms of *yoga*, including breathing techniques and physical culture have an aphrodisiac effect on both men and women. An important part is played in *vājīkaraṇa* by perfumes, which include not only the pleasantly aromatic scents made from flowers, but offensive animal smells used in combination, that have a powerfully stimulating effect on the sexual centres. Apart from these there are many secret recipes employed as aids to stimulation and erethism, such as anointing the body with a salve of certain herbs, the application of collyrium, especially prepared in a human skull, to the rims of the eyelids. The use of amulets is widespread although their confection can often be a difficult process e.g. the eye of a peacock sealed at an auspicious moment in a golden armband worn on the right arm or wrist; or the stone of a certain fruit gathered in certain circumstances and eaten on the thirteenth day of the dark half of a particular month; spices and herbs gathered from distant places, mixed with honey and applied to the phallus before union helps to satisfy the partner.

Vātsyāyana gives several fanciful nostrums. If a person takes the garlands from a corpse, mixes them with the powdered bones of a certain bird and applies the concoction to the girl's forehead and his own feet, she will desire him immoderately. The man should smear his body with the powdered bones of a she-vulture which has died a natural death, not in captivity. The man should sprinkle over his head certain powdered ingredients mixed with the excreta of a red-faced monkey.

In the absence of results from these methods one could always have recourse to *apādravya* or artificial aids (see *olisboi*).

Books

See under *Kāmasāstra*.

VISHṆU, one of the major gods of the Hindu pantheon. In the Rīg-vedic period Vishṇu was a deity of secondary importance, associated with Indra in his struggle against the powers of evil. The derivation of his name from the root *viśh*, to pervade, is comparatively late. He is partly Dravidian in origin, and Przyluski expresses the view that his name is Dravidian and that he bears many marks of indigenoussness. In the Brāhmanas, Vishṇu is spoken of as the luckiest (*śreṣṭhā*) of the gods. One legend, also in the Brāhmanas, relates that the gods grew so jealous of his good fortune that they sent ants to gnaw the bowstring as he leaned upon his bended bow; the string snapped, the bow sprang back and severed his head from his body. His head was later restored.

Vishṇu gradually grew in importance, and by the time of the *Mahābhārata* he emerges as a god of paramount importance and the second god of the Hindu triad, being regarded as the Preserver, just as Brahmā is the Creator, and Śiva the Destroyer. To the Vaishṇavites he is the greatest of all the gods. In the Purānas he is frequently referred to as *Nārāyaṇa*, the ever-present and all-pervading spirit, associated with the primeval waters, who is represented as reclining on a lotus or upon the coils of the serpent Śeṣha, floating

on the waters. From Vishṇu's toe flows the sacred Ganges, and from his navel sprouts a lotus, bearing upon its petals the god Brahmā. A legend in the *Mahābhārata* adds that Śiva sprang from Vishṇu's forehead, Vishṇu is the most humble of the great deities of the Hindu pantheon, as the story of the test conducted by the sage Bhrigu* demonstrated.

An important legend linked from earliest times with Vishṇu concerns the 'three great strides' with which he is said to have stepped over the universe. First mentioned in the *Rīg-veda* these three strides were the subject of much speculation among the early commentators. Some held that Vishṇu, the all-pervading, covered the earth, atmosphere and sky; or that the three steps were the spheres of fire, lightning and the sun; others opined that they were the positions of the sun at rising, zenith and setting. This myth was embodied in the famous *avatāra* legend in which Vishṇu appears as Vāmana the dwarf, to dispossess the daitya (aboriginal) king Bali.

Vishṇu was later assigned the function of redeemer, and all the indigenous saviour-myths were absorbed into a cycle of legend surrounding his name. In most of these myths he appears in order to vanquish evil, which is usually embodied in the person of a godless king or a demon of formidable power, such as Hiranyāksha or the asuras Madhu, Kaiṭabha, and others. A probable reason underlying this common theme is that it gave the policy of Aryan aggrandizement the semblance of a crusade, and mitigated the ruthless subjugation of 'native' heroes.

Vishṇu appeared on earth in several forms, each time as a saviour of mankind or as a destroyer of some evil. These incarnations on the earthly scene are known as his *avatāra*, 'descents', and the best known and usually accepted *avatāras* are ten in number, as follows:

- (1) *Matsya* or fish, in which form he appeared in order to save Vaivasvata, the seventh Manu, from the Deluge.
- (2) *Kūrma*, or tortoise, the form assumed by him during the Churning of the Ocean to obtain the elixir of immortality.
- (3) *Varāha*, or boar, the guise assumed during his struggle with the demon Hiranyāksha.
- (4) *Narasimha*, or the man-lion, in which form he overcame the tyrant Hiranyakaśipu.
- (5) *Vāmana*, the dwarf, who overcame the daitya (demon) king Bali.
- (6) *Parasurāma*, or Rāma of the Axe, who delivered the brāhmins from the tyranny of the kshattriyas.
- (7) *Rāma*, the incarnation in which he slew Rāvaṇa, a powerful native king. Such was the extent of this enterprise that one of the world's great epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, was written around the theme. In his crusade Rāma received all his assistance from indigenous peoples.
- (8) *Krishna*, the most important of all the *avatāras* of Vishṇu.
- (9) *Buddha*, a perverse incarnation of the god, who assumed this form to found the false religion of Buddhism in order to lead wicked men and demons to reject the Vedas, deny the gods, and abjure caste, and so effect their own damnation.
- (10) *Kalki*, the last incarnation of Vishṇu that is yet to come at the end of