

AN IVORY CASKET FROM  
SOUTHERN INDIA

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R E P R I N T F R O M

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Newton, Mass., Arthur Michael Collection: Illustrations of the Devadāruvana Mahātmya. Ivory Panels, Originally a Casket

# AN IVORY CASKET FROM SOUTHERN INDIA

BY ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

THE group of ivory panels described below is in the collection of Professor Arthur Michael, of Newton, Massachusetts. The four panels and decorative borders now remounted in a plush frame measuring over all  $10 \times 14\frac{3}{4}$  inches, shown on the accompanying plate, were originally parts of a casket. If we refer to the panels as now arranged as numbers one to four, counting from top to bottom, we may say that they formed the two long sides (nos. 3, 4), one end (no. 1) and the top (no. 2) of the original casket, of which only the other end panel and some parts of the borders and base are now missing. Our intention will be to explain the representations on the panels, as far as possible by reference to the corresponding texts. The panels themselves are of admirable workmanship, and unsurpassed by any other examples of South Indian ivory carving that have yet been published.

Bone and ivory boxes of this kind, and others of circular form, are well known from Ceylon and Southern India, and range in date from the seventeenth century, or possibly earlier, to the present day.<sup>1</sup> The Brahmanical theme of the present example, and the characteristic forms of the horned and bird-headed "lions" in the borders, show that it must be of South Indian origin. The admirable workmanship and the richness of the design, without any of that excessive relief and elaboration that are to be seen in more recent productions, suggest a dating not later than the earlier part of the seventeenth century; the architectural forms to be seen at the two ends of the first panel and in some of the other panels are those of the Nāyaka period (1600 onwards) in Madura.<sup>2</sup> The voluptuous forms which are so appropriate to the theme remind us of a long inheritance, of which the evidences are extant in the fact that some of the sculpture at Sāñici (first century B. C.) was executed by "the ivory workers of Vidisā,"<sup>3</sup> in the wonderful Indian ivory lately found at Pompeii,<sup>4</sup> in the equally marvelous and luxurious ivories of Gupta date that have been found in Afghanistan,<sup>5</sup> and in many literary references to the uses of ivory in India.<sup>6</sup> The actual style of our ivory is ultimately Cālukyan; it may be compared to the best productions of the Tanjore school,

1. For Indian and Sinhalese ivories see my *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, Campden, 1908, Ch. x and pls. xxxv-xi; *Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, Edinburgh, 1913, Ch. 7; H. Goetz, "Geschnitzte Elfenbeinbüchsen aus Südindien," *Jahrb. As. Kunst*, 1925; Sir G. Watt, *Indian Art at Delhi*, 1904, pp. 172-93 (esp. 185-86); Vincent Smith, *History of Indian Art*, 1911, pp. 370-72; my *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 1927, p. 136; K. de B. Codrington, "Western Influences in India and Ceylon; a Group of Sinhalese Ivories," *Burlington Magazine*, lxx, 1931; W. Born, "Some Eastern Objects from the Hapsburg Collection," *Burlington Magazine*, lxxix, 1936 and "More Eastern Objects Formerly in the Hapsburg Collection," *ibid.*, lxxv, 1939; V. Slomann, "Elfenbeinreliefs auf zwei Singhalesischen Schreinen des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Pantheon*, x, 1937 and xi, 1938 (incidentally, these boxes ought not to be called "shrines"); Ajit Ghose, "Some Old Indian Ivories," *Rupam*, xxxii, 1927; H. Cousins, "Excavations at Brāhmaṇābād-Mansura, Sind," *Arch. Surv. India, Ann. Rep.*, 1908-1909 (ivory fragments, parts of furniture, pp. 85, 86); B. Thurston, *On the Ivory Carving Industry of South India*, Madras, 1901; G. G. Dutt, *Monograph on Ivory Carving in*

*Bengal*, Calcutta, 1901; T. P. Ellis, *Monograph on Ivory Carving in the Punjab*, Lahore, 1900; and others mentioned in subsequent notes.

2. Jouveau-Dubreuil, *Archéologie du sud de l'Inde*, Paris, 1914, pp. 66, 67; W. Norman Brown, *A Pillared Hall from a Temple at Madura*, Philadelphia, 1940, pp. 11, 13.

3. Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sāñici*, Calcutta [1940], vol. 1, 95, 117, 121, 131, 153, 179, 259, 297.

4. A. Maury, "Statuette éburnée di arte indiana a Pompei," *Le arti*, 1, 1938-39.

5. J. Hackin, *Mém. de la délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan*, ix, *Recherches archéologiques à Begram*, Paris, 1939; and "The 1939 Dig at Begram—II" in *Asia*, November 1940.

6. See my *Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, p. 175; additional references include *Digha Nikāya*, ii, 291 (ivory turning), *Mahāvamsa*, xxxvii, 100 (King Jetthatisa described as skilled in the arts of ivory), and *Bṛhat Saṃhitā*, ii, Ch. 32 (wooden beds to be inlaid with ivory; the different qualities of ivory). Of the last-mentioned work I know only the translation by N. C. Iyer, in the *Aryan Miscellany, Samhita Series*, Madura, 1884.

or may have been made in Madura or in Mysore, or still more probably in Travancore, where the traditions of Indian art have been better preserved than anywhere else and where many fine and relatively early examples of Indian ivory work can still be found.

Our chief concern will be with the iconography. The theme is that of Śiva's dance in the Devadāruvana, alluded to in the *Tiruvāṇṇam* where Śiva is apostrophized as the "Supernal Dancer, who to Patañjali gave grace."<sup>7</sup> The many versions of the myth vary in detail, and taken collectively contain the explanation of a large part of the South Indian Śaiva iconography. Here we shall summarize from the various sources,<sup>8</sup> and mainly from the *Linga Purāna* and *Darpadalanam*, so much of the myth as is necessary for an explanation of the representations before us.

The abode of Śiva and his consort Pārvatī—the divine essence and divine nature—is on the summit of Mount Kailāsa; He is seated there with Her upon their common throne, or common vehicle the Bull Nandi, as may be seen in the central compartment of our second panel; this is an *Umāmaheśvara-mūrti* of the usual type, in which Śiva holds the axe (*paraśu*) and deer (*mrga*) in His upper hands, while the two normal hands are both in the pose of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*).<sup>9</sup> The slopes of Mount Kailāsa, i.e. the Himālayas, the "Abode of Snow," are clothed by the Deodar Forest (*Devadāruvana*), which is the home of many families of Rishis, Brahmanical ascetics who are worshippers of Śiva but are wholly occupied in the performance of sacrificial rites.<sup>10</sup>

As Pārvatī is watching these earnest seekers for salvation, She pities them, and turning to Śiva asks Him how it is that these devotees have for so long been unable to obtain release and to find Him. He replies that it is because they are not yet at peace, but still affective by love and wrath; they cannot cross over the sea of life to reach the farther shore so long as they can love and hate; whereas those who have freed themselves from passion and desire, even if they do not practice arduous rites, can attain to that imperishable state of real being.<sup>11</sup> So saying, Śiva descends from the Bull on which He has been seated and assumes the form of a nude mendicant, that of the *Bhikṣāṇa-mūrti*; and thus as a youth of extraordinary and incomparable beauty enters the Devadāruvana and passes through the Rishi settlements as any other religious mendicant might. There the wives and daughters of the Rishis are so overcome by His beauty, greater than that of the God of Love himself, that they lose all sense of shame, and letting their garments slip from their waists, follow and crowd about the lovely youth, singing and dancing and swooning for love. This is the subject of our third panel, where we see Śiva in His mendicant transformation in the center and the infatuated women on either side of, i.e. round about, Him. The mendicant deity

7. G. U. Pope, *The Tiruvāṇṇam*, Oxford, 1900, p. 16.

8. For these sources see G. U. Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. lxii-lxviii; R. Schmidt, "Kṣemendra's Darpadalanam," *Zeitschr. der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, LXIX, 1915, 45-51; W. Jahn, "Die Legende vom Devadāruvana," *ibid.*, pp. 529-57 and LXX, 1916, 301-320; P. Deussen, "Über das Devadāruvanam," *ibid.*, LXXI, 1917; F. D. K. Bosch, "Het Lingga-Heiligdom van Dinaja," *Tijdschr. v. h. K. Bataviaasch Genootschap v. Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, LXIV, Weltevreden, 1924; T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, 1916, 325-26 and 295-30. Some have seen a reference to the Devadāruvana myth in *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, IV.5.5.6.

9. More often one of the normal hands is in the "generosity" pose (*varada mudrā*).

10. For a representation of Mount Kailāsa, with Śiva and Pārvatī enthroned above and Rishis seeking towards Him on the lower slopes, see my *Catalogue of the Indian Collections, Boston*, v, *Rajput Painting*, pl. LVIII.

11. It is affirmed already in *Rgveda*, VIII.70.3 that God (here Indra) cannot be reached by works or sacrifices only. But neither the earlier nor the later Indian pronouncements of this kind are to be taken to be wholesale condemnations of the sacrificial and ritualistic practices themselves. What is meant, as we know from countless explicit texts, is that the fulfilment of the ritual and exoteric law without understanding and devotion can secure advantage in this world only; whereas the sacrifice performed with understanding and devotion, or even understood without performance, leads to the sacrificer's highest good both here and hereafter. It would indeed, as Kṛṣṇa says (*Bhagavad Gītā*, v.1 ff.) be absurd to think of renunciation and action, ritual and practice, as really opposed to one another and as having different fruits—"he who is duly established in one obtains the fruits of both." The Rishis of our myth were not in this sense "duly established" in their ritual and ascetic performance; they knew not Śiva because they had not escaped from nor overcome themselves or their senses.

is nude, and represented as walking; He holds the hour-glass drum (*ḍamaru*) in His upper right and the trident (*trisūla*) in his upper left hand,<sup>12</sup> while the normal right hand holds a flower to which the deer is reaching up, and the normal left holds a mendicant's skull-cup (*kapāla*).<sup>13</sup> He is accompanied by a pair of dwarf sprites (*bhūta*), members of His train (*gaṇa*); one of these is blowing a conch trumpet (*śankha*), the other carries a tray of food. These *daīmones* are the Vedic Maruts and the "Breaths" or energies by and in which the immanent deity operates in living beings; in legitimate relation to their chief it is their function to support Him in every way, notably with their music and by supplying Him with the food with which He must be nourished when He passes over from being to becoming. Thus the iconography follows closely the prescriptions of the Āgamas and Śilpa-sāstras, and is the same as that of the many extant free-standing bronze or stone Bhikṣāṭana images.

The Rishis are infuriated by the behavior of their women, and pour out curses on the mendicant, who vanishes from them so that "they knew him not." The Rishis' whole scheme of life has been upset; they resort to Brahma, the Grandsire, and ask his advice. He tells them that it was the highest deity, "the *liṅga*-bearer, though He bears no *liṅga*,"<sup>14</sup> that has appeared to them in an assumed likeness. They might have entertained an angel unawares, but actually failed in the basic duty of hospitality due to any guest, whether welcome or unwelcome, and whatever his conduct. Now their only resource is humbly to resort to Śiva Himself; they are to worship the Śiva-*liṅgam*, and to realize that it is not by asceticism, rites, or mere learning, but only by Śiva's own Grace that He can be reached. When they have followed the Grandsire's advice for a year, Śiva appears amongst them once more in the form of a nude ascetic, holding fire-brands in His hands and singing and dancing; they honor Him, and ask His pardon for whatever they have done in deed, thought, or word against Him ignorantly. They abandon their asceticism and pray Śiva to appear to them in the form in which they had formerly known Him; He resumes accordingly His own, three-eyed form and gives them "the divine eye" by which they may see Him.

The mention of Śiva's dancing above must not be overlooked, for this dancing on His part is not a mere incident, but a cosmic epiphany and bound up with the whole doctrine of Śiva's form as Naṭarāja, to which we have already alluded above in mentioning Patañjali; and we must speak of this development, if only because three of Śiva's *Nṛtta-mārtis* or Dancing Images are found on our panels. Before proceeding to Patañjali, it may be asked whether the mendicant form in which Śiva for the second time entered the Dāruvana was not essentially the same as of the Rishis themselves, and in this case whether the figures of dancing Rishis which are often met with in groups of sculptures representing our myth

12. It must be presumed that these divine attributes were not seen by the Rishis and their wives, since it is explicit that Śiva was not recognized.

13. The skull-cup is, strictly speaking, Brahmā's (see Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-305). Brahmā having claimed to have created the Universe solely by his own power, Śiva is said to have cut off the fifth head by which His own supremacy had been denied; Brahmā survives the temporary death with only four heads and acknowledges Śiva's supremacy. The decapitation, however, involves what is technically the sin of Brāhman-slaying (*brahmahatyā*), a sin that is necessarily incurred by every creative divinity in one way or another (e.g. by Indra when he slays Ahi-Ṛtra-Viśvarūpa), and this sin attaches to Śiva's form as Bhairava. Brahmā appoints for Śiva the penance of begging, using as a begging bowl the skull-cup made from the head that was cut off. This part of the legend explains the Bhikṣāṭana form in which Śiva enters the Devadāruvana as a mendicant. In

the meantime we are told that the sin of *brahmahatyā* in feminine form followed Śiva closely until at last he reached Vārāṇasī (Benares); and it would seem to be not implausible that it is really this sin rather than Bhadrakālī, as suggested above, that stands so close to the dancing Śiva in two of our representations.

14. One of the main motives in the whole myth is to explain the cosmic significance of the Śiva-*liṅgam* as a form of the *axis mundi* and to inculcate the worship of the *liṅgam* as supreme support of contemplation. We cannot enter into this subject here (see more fully F. D. K. Bosch, *loc. cit.*, where the fiery essence and royal significance of the *liṅgam* are specially discussed), except to remark that a conception of deity as a binuity of polar aspects, on the one hand virile and on the other impotent (i.e. *in actu et in potentia*, being and non-being, etc.), is often explicitly stated in the *Āgveda*, notably in VII.101.3: "He shapes His likeness as He will, now is He sterile, now progenitive."

are representations of Śiva Himself, or of Rishis dancing with Him; either interpretation would accord with the Indian ways of thinking.

Now as to Patañjali, otherwise Ādi-śeṣa, the World-serpent, and literally "Original Residue," i.e. what is "left-over" when abstraction is made of all manifested existences,<sup>15</sup> we learn from the Koyil Purāṇam version of our myth<sup>16</sup> that Viṣṇu<sup>17</sup> and Ādi-śeṣa, who have been witnesses of Śiva's dance in the Dāruvana, are left alone together when Śiva returns to the summit of Mount Kailāsa, and that Ādi-śeṣa in particular is overcome with the longing to behold the dance again. In this version of the story, Śiva's dance is one of triumph over the evil powers that have been embodied and sent against Him by the curses and incantations of the angry Rishis, and it is this aspect of Śiva's dance that is depicted in the right-hand compartment of our second panel. Here His form is plainly still that of the nude mendicant, but He is now eight-armed, the two upper arms holding the axe and the deer (as in the central compartment of the same panel), while the two normal hands are in the characteristic pose that we are familiar with in the four-armed *Naṭarāja-mūrtis*, of which there are many excellent examples in this country and also in Toronto.

The last of the evil forces projected by the Rishis against Śiva was a black dwarf, who is the personification of ignorance (*aviṣṭai*, *avidyā*), darkness (*iruḷ=tamas*), dirt (*malam*)<sup>18</sup> and dust (*ānavam*):<sup>19</sup> in the Sanskrit iconographies the dwarf is known as the *apasmāra-puruṣa*, the "inhibitor of recollection" or "principle of confusion." It is this earthy principle personified as a dwarf, and holding a shield and sword, that we see writhing prostrate beneath the weight of Śiva's foot in the *nṛtta-mūrti* in the right-hand compartment of our second panel, and in the same position in other *Naṭarāja* images. It is to the foot thus planted on that *pulvis*, in quo formatur vestigium (*pedis*)<sup>20</sup> that the weary Wayfarer, still involved in the causal nexus, resorts, while it is the lifted foot that ultimately sets him free.<sup>21</sup>

15. We cannot undertake a demonstration here that Śeṣa = Ananta = Ātman, Brahman. In Vaiṣṇava iconography, Śeṣa is Viṣṇu's raft and couch when he lies floating on the sea of universal possibility; for this well-known iconography see Rao, *op. cit.*, I, 90 ff.

16. See G. U. Pope, *loc. cit.*

17. In the Koyil Purāṇam version of the story, Pārvatī remains on Mount Kailāsa and Śiva is accompanied in the Dāruvana by Viṣṇu in the feminine form of Mohini, by whom the Rishis are bewildered and seduced, just as are their wives by Śiva Himself. This association of Śiva and Viṣṇu, as of persons of opposite sex, is by no means so strange as it may at first appear. We have its equivalent already in the Vedas in the *mixta persona* of Mitrāvaruṇa, which is actually that of a syzygy of conjoint principles, respectively male and female, so that when these persons are considered apart we can say that "Mitra inseminates Varuṇa." And this is at the same time a syzygy of Sacerdotum (*brahma*) and Regnum (*ṛṣatra*); a doctrine that underlies the whole Indian (and traditional) theory of government, in which the Regnum is always feminine and subordinated to the Sacerdotum. Now in the present case it is precisely Śiva that represents the spiritual and Viṣṇu the royal power in *divinitis*, and it is therefore quite in order that the latter should play the part of wife to the former. We are familiar with two types of dual images, the one known as Ardhanaṛiśvara (see Rao, *loc. cit.*, pp. 321-33), and the other Hari-Hara (*ibid.*, pp. 333-35). Of these the former represents the *mixta persona* of Śiva and Pārvatī, the latter the *mixta persona* of Śiva (Hara) and Viṣṇu (Hari), and we now see that these two representations are really equivalent to one another and both equally expressive of the indivisibility of essence and nature in *divinitis*.

18. Sanskrit *malāpakaśana*, *malā-suddhi* = Greek *ká-*

*thapis*.

19. *Ānavam* (from Sanskrit *anu*) is literally "the atomic," or "infinitesimal," and hence in the present context "dust," cf. Sanskrit *anu-renu*, "cosmic dust" (MW). Dust (*renu*, *rajas*, etc.) in the Sanskrit sources is the material cause, as spirit is the formal cause, of all becoming; and just as in Eccl. 12: 7, at death "shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." That in our iconography the dust is literally "laid" reminds us both that the paths of the Gods are "dustless" and of the metaphor in *Jātaka*, VI.252, where by the teaching of the Law (*dhamma*), the "dust is laid" (*rajo-hato*) on the pilgrim's way.

20. St. Bonaventura, cited in Bissen, *L'exemplarisme divin de Saint Bonaventura*, 1929, pp. 70, 71; cf. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I.178 and 184, *padam* . . . *ārañjitam*, "footprint traced in the dust." On the *vestigium pedis* and the search for reality by a following up of its tracks, which forms the basis of the Indian adoration of the Lord's footprints, see my *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, note 146, and remarks on *mārga* in the *New Indian Antiquary*, II, 1939, 576, note 2. Plato uses the simile of "tracking" (*ἵχνη*) in the same way.

21. This explanation of the "values" of the two feet is taken from the *Cidambara Mummaṇi Kōvai*. We have already seen that the left foot planted in the dust is for the Wayfarer's guidance; and it is clear that the raised right foot is the one that gives final release, because as we know from the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, X.5.2.13 that while, for so long as we still live in the body, both feet of God are planted in the heart, but that when we die He separates these feet, that is to say raises one of them, in order to depart (*padāv . . . āhidyokṛmāti*, see *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, IV, 1939, pp. 164, 165); if, then, we have by following in

The small female figure standing to Siva's left, and to be seen again with another dancing Siva in the fourth panel, may be that of Bhadrakālī, a form or emanation of Pārvatī corresponding to Siva's form as Vīrabhadra.<sup>22</sup> The *ṛtta-mūrti* of the fourth panel, just referred to, is that form of Siva's dance that is called *Lalōṭa-tīlaka*<sup>23</sup> or "Brow-ornament," its characteristic being that the right leg is raised vertically<sup>24</sup> as if to apply the *tīlaka* to the forehead; ordinarily, of course, the hand is used for this purpose. The number of arms in figures of this class varies from four to sixteen; here there are ten. Bhadrakālī stands on Siva's proper right. The smaller and male figure on Siva's left, playing the drum, is four-armed, the two upper hands holding the axe and the deer, and thus in effect a miniature image of Siva himself; it is actually that of the apostle Nandikeśvara, also known as Adhikāra-nandi.<sup>25</sup> This saint is a legitimate son and incarnation of Siva, and therefore like Him; the divine filiation was acknowledged by Pārvatī, who smelt of his head while streams of milk poured from her breast.<sup>26</sup> In a theriomorphic and perhaps original form, Nandikeśvara is Nandi, the "Beatifier," Siva's bull and vehicle, seen in the middle compartment of the second panel.<sup>27</sup>

Of the three other persons represented in the fourth panel, Viṣṇu on Siva's proper right and Brahmā on His left are easily recognizable. Viṣṇu is four-armed, the upper hands holding the winged discus and winged conch, while with the normal hands he is playing on an hour-glass drum (*ḍhaḥka*) with a drum-stick (*bāṇa*). Brahmā is four-handed; the attributes held in the upper and lower left hands are not certainly identifiable; the right hand is in the "generosity" pose (*varada mudrā*); and as is often the case in reliefs, only three of the four heads are visible. The eight-armed dancing female figure on the right, whose upper right hand is raised and holding a bell (*ghaṇṭā*), is a form of Pārvatī, that is to say of the divine Nature (*prakṛti*), whose dancing reflects that of the divine Essence or Person (*puruṣa*), and it is evident that the whole composition corresponds to the description in the *Tiru-Aruḷ-Payan*, 1x.3, "The dance of Nature proceeds at one side, that of Gnosis (*ñāna* = Sanskrit *jñāna*) on the other."<sup>28</sup> In all these compositions the background of verdure is no doubt a reference to the Deodar Forest in which the dances are manifested.

I am not able to give an equally precise account of the iconography of the dance represented in the first and smallest (side) panel. Siva is four-armed, the upper arms holding ap-

His steps earned the right to answer "in Him" to the question asked in the *Praśna Upaniṣad*, vi.2, "In whom shall I be going forth when I go hence?" (i.e. "in myself," this mortal self, or "in Him," the immortal), it will be with Him that we take this last step. We mention these points in order to remind the student that the Indian (or any traditional) iconography is always precise and never fanciful, and that it can be trusted, if we try to understand it.

22. Rao, *loc. cit.*, II, 183, 186, 227. But see also note 13.

23. Rao, *loc. cit.*, II, 264-66 and pls. LXIV-LXV.

24. Known as the *opṣika* or "scorpion" pose, because it is like the raised tail of a scorpion, a resemblance quite apparent in our carving.

25. Rao, *loc. cit.*, II, 455-60 and pls. CXXXI, CXXXII.

26. For the acknowledgement of legitimate sonship by smelling the head see my "Sunkiss" in *Journ. Am. Or. Soc.*, LX, 1940, 64 and note 39. It is a commonplace of Indian poetry and, I believe, a natural fact, that a mother's milk flows at the sight of a long-lost son, even if adult. In the present case Nandikeśvara's head is anointed by the milk. More often divine filiation is attested or effected by an actual drinking of the milk by the king, hero, or saint who is or is made a "true son of God": for the cases of Hercules and Juno, and St. Bernard and the Virgin Mary, see my

"The Virgin Suckling St. Bernard" in the *ART BULLETIN*, XIX, 1937, 317-18 and "La voie lactée" in *Études traditionnelles*, XLIII, 1938, 175-76; for that of the Pharaohs and Isis: Moret, "Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique," *Ann. du Musée Guimet*, xv, 1902, 64, 65, 222, figs. 10, 62, and *The Nile and Egyptian Civilization*, 1927, p. 102.

27. The bull is a very common type on the Indus Valley seals and on the earliest Indian coins, and may always have been a symbol of Siva, though many other deities and heroes can be and are referred to as "bulls." The bull emblem on the coins of the city of Puskalavati in the second century is almost certainly a symbol of Siva. The bull emblem remained in use under the Yāvanas and Śakas, only the Kuṣānas in the first century A.D. representing the deity in human form (either two or four-armed, and one or three-headed) accompanied by the bull (*Cambridge History of India*, I, 557). Apparently the earliest reference to a Nandi in human form attendant on Siva is that of the *Taittirīya Aranyaka*, x.1.6.

28. Thus the total representation is that of the Trinity and their common Nature. The *Skanda Purāna* account of the manifestation in the Devadūrvana enjoins the worship not of Siva alone, but of the Trinity, Siva, Brahmā, and Viṣṇu (*Haṭakeśvara Mahātmya*, 68).



parently identical attributes (perhaps two lotuses) which I cannot recognize; under the lifted foot is a small, large-eyed animal, possibly a Nandi. A form of Pārvatī holding the trident (*trisūla*) in one hand stands on Siva's proper right.

There remains the representation of a feminine divinity seated on the Gander (*hamsa*),<sup>29</sup> two-armed, and holding the trident in her right hand. The trident connects her with Siva, but in all other respects the figure would naturally be identified with Sarasvatī-Vāc, the "Muse" and consort of Brahmā (Bṛhaspati, Vācaspati), who is the person of the Sacerdotum (*brahma*) in *divinis*. But Siva Himself, from the point of view of the present iconography being the supreme deity and therefore Himself the Sacerdotum in which the Regnum (*ḷṣatra*) is inherent *eminenter*, and so at the same time superior to, and the origin of, the distinct persons of Brahmā the Priest and Viṣṇu the King. It is from this point of view a perfectly legitimate application of the ordinary iconography that makes of Sarasvatī-Vāc, His feminine potentiality; and for Her, who as the Muse is the patroness of all music, to be invoked in connection with the dance in which He manifests the universe that is really a production of both conjoint principles, those of the divine Essence and divine Nature.<sup>30</sup>

Briefer reference may be made to the framework. In the second panel each of the representations is placed in a niche or canopy, consisting of two pillars surmounted by the usual *makara toraṇa* or "crocodile arch," the two halves of which spring from the mouths of *makaras* seen in profile, while the apex is crowned by the well-known *kāla-makara* mask of which the significance is ultimately solar.<sup>31</sup> At the right end of this second panel there will be seen a rearing horned lion or *yāli* of the kind so often forming an integral part of the pillars of the South Indian temples; it is likely that there were originally numerous pieces of the same kind, which have now been lost. Some of the monsters enclosed by the windings of the vegetative framings are horned lions of the same sort; others with beaks are more properly to be described as bird-headed lions.<sup>32</sup> Immediately below the lowest of the vegetative frames is a part of the lotus-petal moulding<sup>33</sup> (of which the Greek "egg and dart" is an analogue) which formed the pedestal of the original casket.

#### MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

29. Essentially the symbol of the spirit and light, and a form of the sun-bird. Equally in Sanskrit and Greek, words (*bhan*, *bhā*, *φῆμι*, *φῶω*) meaning to speak and to shine, are etymologically related, and semantically convergent in the common values of such words as "clarify," "declare," "show," "illustrate," and "enlighten," which can be used with reference to any kind of "demonstration" whether verbal or visual. It is from this point of view that the Gander is the proper vehicle of both persons of the syzygy Brahmā-Vāc.

30. It is, indeed, expressly stated in the *Linga Purāṇa*, 1.28.34, 35, that the Rishis in the Dāruvana find it "difficult to distinguish Siva from Brahmā and the other Gods" until He, who is the God of Gods, reveals Himself in His own specifically three-eyed form. For the *Linga Purāṇa*, Siva is "the highest *ātman*" and "God of Gods."

31. For some discussion of and references to this form see the ART BULLETIN, XXII, 52-55.

32. Cf. in my *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, fig. 15.

33. Cf. *ibid.*, figs. 12-14.

