



The Chandella Hari-Hara in the British Museum

Devangana Desai

The Oriental gallery of the British Museum, London, displays a Chandella image 5'7" x 3' (1.70 x .92 m) of Hari-Hara¹ (OA 1872 7-1, 75) [Pls. 20.1 and 20.2]. It is of buff sandstone and similar in style to the Hari-Hara displayed in the Khajuraho Archaeological Museum, Accession No. 558² [Pl. 20.3]. The latter is 3.2 1/2" x 2' (.98 x .61 m) and smaller than the one in the British Museum. Even so, both the images reveal tremendous similarities in their style, ornamentation, and iconography, though because of its larger size, the British Museum image has more number of subsidiary and attending figures on its *parikara* frame.

The article examines in its first part the Chandella features and style of the Hari-Hara image in the British Museum juxtaposing it with the Khajuraho Museum image of Hari-Hara. Comparing their stylistic features with those of the other sculptures of Khajuraho, such as the excavated images of the Satdhara mound, assignable to pre-Lakshmaṇa or pre-AD 954, it tries to date these Hari-Hara images. It distinguishes the Kanauj stylistic features from those of Khajuraho. In the second part, the article discusses the source of the British Museum image, which is originally from the collection of General Charles Hindoo Stuart. The question arises: could Charles Stuart or his assistants have visited Khajuraho before 1828, the year of his death? If so, the article has relevance to the early "rediscovery" of Khajuraho, much before Captain T.S. Burt's visit to this site in 1838, said to be the first visit by a British officer.

I

ICONOGRAPHY

In carving the image of Hari-Hara, the conjoint form of Viṣṇu and Śiva, having one body, the left half representing Viṣṇu (Hari) and the right half Śiva (Hara), sculptors have made a clear line of demarcation between the two halves, vertically dividing the body, on the left side showing Viṣṇu and on the right Śiva. The distinction is marked in the treatment of the headdress, ornaments, *āyudhas*, *vāhanas* and attendant figures on both the sides.³ Hari-Hara represents the "biunity" of Śiva and Viṣṇu.⁴

Let us closely examine the two Hari-Hara images: the one in the British Museum and the other in the Khajuraho Museum. They stand in *samabhaṅga*, equipoised posture. The headdresses of both the gods are very clearly demarcated. Śiva wears a *jaṭā mukuṭa* with a crescent, while Viṣṇu wears a *kirīṭa mukuṭa*. In both the images, Śiva on the right side wears a bone earring (*asthi-kunḍala*), and Viṣṇu on the left side wears a jewelled earring or *makara-kunḍala*. The haloes of both the images are carved with similar designs. The British Museum image being larger has an extra circle in the nimbus.

Both the images are four-armed and represent Śiva holding an *akṣhamālā* in his lower hand while making a *chin-mudrā* or teaching gesture. Śiva carries a *triśūla* in the upper hand. There is a slight difference in the design of the *triśūla* held by both the images, but both designs are seen in Khajuraho's art. The upper left hand of the image, i.e., the hand of Viṣṇu, holds a *chakra* (discus), and his lower hand carries a *śaṅkha* (conch). The object held in the lower right hand of the Hari-Hara in the Khajuraho Museum is broken. But two other images of Hari-Hara *in situ* in the Viśvanātha Temple of Khajuraho preserve a *śaṅkha* in their lower left hand.⁵

The Khajuraho Museum Hari-Hara image does not have *śrīvatsa* mark on the chest, (may be it is rubbed off, as the image showed a crack in its early photographs by ASI), whereas the British Museum image has a *śrīvatsa* mark as in case of other Khajuraho images. Pṛithvī, the Earth goddess, sits in *añjali-mudrā* below the feet of the god, attended by Nāga figures, in both the images.

The British Museum image, being larger by more than two feet, has more number of attending figures. Śiva's side has figures of Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya. The two-armed Gaṇeśa is shown seated and carved almost identically in both the images. On Viṣṇu's side are placed *avatāras*, Kalki on horse, Buddha standing in *tribhaṅga*, Rāma carrying a bow and an arrow, Vāmana with his umbrella, seated Balarāma, seated Paraśurāma, seated Narasiṃha, and Matsya and Kūrma in animal form.⁶ Bhu-Varāha is shown near the nimbus.

TEXTUAL TRADITION

Several *Śilpa* texts and *Purāṇas* describe Hari-Hara and the attributes or emblems associated with the image. The *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa* mentions *varada*, *triśūla*, *chakra* and lotus as attributes in hands, and placing of Nandī on Śiva's side and Garuḍa on Viṣṇu's side. Though Nandī is represented, Garuḍa is not seen in the Hari-Hara figures under discussion. The image is certainly not also according to the Śaiva text *Isānaśiva-gurudevapaddhati*, which mentions under "Hari-Hara lakṣhaṇam" *abhaya* and *ṭaṅka* (chisel) for Śiva's hands and lotus and conch for Viṣṇu's hands.⁷ The *Rūpa-Manḍana* (IV, 30-31) describes the Hari-Hara image with the attributes: *varada*, *triśūla*, *chakra*, and lotus. However, it is not a lotus but a *śaṅkha* which is held by the Hari-Hara image in the British Museum. S.P. Basu points out that both the Hari-Hara images are carved according to the textual tradition of the *Aparājitapṛichchhā*, a western Indian text of twelfth century AD, which mentions *varada*, *triśūla*, *chakra* and *śaṅkha* as attributes of this composite form of Śiva and Viṣṇu. This text names this composite image "Kṛishṇa-Śaṅkara". So Basu calls these images Kṛishṇa-Śaṅkara.⁸

In Nepal also there is a temple of Hari-Śaṅkara at Patan. A sixteenth century image from this temple is illustrated by Krishna Deva.⁹ In Cambodia, the worship of Hari-Hara was prevalent from sixth to tenth century AD. M.A. Dhaky tells us that Hari-Hara is variously referred to in the Cambodian inscriptions as Śaṅkara-Achyuta, Hara-Achyuta, Hari-Śaṅkara, Viṣṇu-Īśa, and Hara-Īśvara.¹⁰ In the early ninth century, one of the towns near Angkor Wat was named Hariharālaya, "mansion of Lord Hari-Hara".

We may retain the name Hari-Hara for the composite form of Viṣṇu and Śiva, rather than call him Kṛishṇa-Śaṅkara. We may point out that not only *Aparājitapṛichchhā*, but also the *Matsya Purāṇa* (chapter 260) mentions Śiva-Nārāyaṇa image with *varada*, *triśūla*, *chakra* and *śaṅkha*. The twelfth century text *Mānasollasa*, composed by the Chālukya King Someśvara,

mentions *varada*, *triśūla*, *chakra* and *śaṅkha* as attributes and uses the name “Hari-Hara” for this composite form.¹¹

STYLE

The *chakras* of both the Hari-Hara images are depicted with their tassels or ribbons held in the Khajuraho style (Pls. 20.2, 20.4), and differ from the Kanauj images carved in the Pratihāra style (Pl. 20.5). In the latter, the tassel is shown going outward, away from the fingers holding the *chakra*, while at Khajuraho, the tassel turns towards the fingers. A thin line of a fold of *dhotī* on the thigh is visible in the Hari-Hara of the British Museum, similar to that seen on the Vishṇu images of Khajuraho. The physiognomy and the body proportions are similar in both the Hari-Hara images under discussion.

Stylized banana plants flank the images, associating the deity with penance. There is a great similarity in the layout of the images and carving of certain details such as *chin-mudrā* cum *akshamālā*. The banana plants flanking the Hari-Hara figures are similar to those depicted along with the colossal tenth century Pārvatī image of the Khajuraho Museum (No. 984 A-B-C). It is to be noted that Pārvatī is shown with similar *chin-mudrā* while holding an *akshamālā*. In fact, the layout of the Pārvatī image (Pl. 20.6) in the Khajuraho Museum and that of Hari-Hara of the British Museum have a striking similarity suggesting closeness in their dates, though Hari-Hara could be earlier.

In both the Hari-Hara images, the pilasters of the frame are flat as in the tenth century Khajuraho Temples such as the Lakshmaṇa (AD 954) and Viśvanātha (AD 999) and not rounded as in images of the eleventh century temples such as the Chitragupta, and the Kandariyā. The pilasters of Hari-Hara images have depiction of the *ardharatna* design, which is found on some of the early Khajuraho sculptures, for instance, Umā-Maheśvara found from Śivasāgar lake, marked “Sevaṁ Sāgara”, No. 492 in the Jardine Museum.

DATE

Stylistically, Hari-Hara of the British Museum is assignable to about 940, to the period slightly earlier than the building of the Lakshmaṇa Temple, and Hari-Hara of the Khajuraho Museum seems to be still slightly earlier. We examine below the following features:

1. Hair curls: Both the figures have their hair curls similar to the Durgā of the Satdhara mound (Pl. 20.7). This is an earlier feature almost discontinued in the Lakshmaṇa Temple (c. 954). So both the Hari-Hara images under discussion are pre-954.
2. Ornaments: The neck ornaments of Khajuraho Museum Hari-Hara are again similar to Durgā of Satdhara, assignable to about AD 925. The British Museum image has a *hāra* with the design similar to the *hāra* of Vāmana of Satdhara, and an additional *mālā* similar to the Khajuraho Museum Hari-Hara. Both figures wear similar thick single *kaḍās* in hands. The waist band and their hangings are almost identical, and closely similar in design to that worn by the colossal Pārvatī in the Khajuraho Museum.
3. Attributes: The *triśūla* of the British Museum image has similarity with that carried by Durgā on the northern *vedībandha* of the Lakshmaṇa Temple; whereas the *triśūla* of the Khajuraho Museum image shows an earlier design bearing similarity with the Umā-Maheśvara and Durgā images of Satdhara.
4. *Parikara* frame: The floral design and *ardharatna* on the pilaster of the British Museum image are similar to those carved on the *parikara* frame (fragment of Pārvatī image) in pale buff stone (No. 629 in the Reserved Collection of the Khajuraho Museum). The Hari-Hara of the Khajuraho Museum does not have this floral design, but it has a triangular design of *ardharatna*, similar to Vishṇu No. 117 of the Khajuraho Museum.

We may ask which are the other tenth century Chandella sites, besides Khajuraho, which could have had a huge temple to shelter such a large image as that of Hari-Hara of the British Museum? There are some medieval temple sites in Jhansi area, bearing inscriptions, e.g. Mau, which were accessible to antiquarians. Alexander Cunningham gives a list of sites with Chandella inscriptions.¹² But in the tenth century, Khajuraho is the principal site with buff sandstone sculptures. Mahoba has mainly granite temples. Makarbai nearby has a twelfth century triple-shrined Chandella structure. So far I have not seen the tenth century Chandella sculptures in Kalanjar, though post-Gupta and the eleventh-thirteenth century Chandella material can be seen on the site.

Apart from Kalanjar, Ajaygadh, Mahoba, Deogadh, Mau and Gadhva, other sites are not well known. The names Madanpur, Bagrari are hardly known. Dudahi was a contemporaneous site under another branch of the Chandella family. But its style of art is different in some respects from that of Khajuraho and Deogadh. From Siron Khurd (ancient Siyodani) near Lalitpur, a Pratihāra period inscription (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I) as well as a large number of sculptures (now in the State Archaeology Museum, Jhansi) are found. But their style is different from the Hari-Hara images under discussion.

We can say that among the tenth century Chandella sites, Khajuraho occupies a prominent place, where the Lakshmaṇa, Ghantai and the Pārśvanātha Temples are important monuments of mid tenth century, and the recently excavated Satdhara mound sculptures are pre-950.¹³

PLACE OF HARI-HARA IN KHAJURAHO' S PANTHEON

Khajuraho reveals a lot of evidence of syncretism in its religious art. Notably, the temples of Viṣṇu and Śiva stand near each other. Hari-Hara is well represented in the iconic scheme of the Khajuraho temples of tenth-eleventh century. Illustrating the syncretism of the two prominent gods Hari (Viṣṇu) and Hara (Śiva), the image is seen at Khajuraho in both the Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha or Lakshmaṇa) and the Śiva (Viśvanātha and Kandariyā Mahādeva) Temples.

Lakshmaṇa Temple: It is seen on the southern superstructure niche of the temple, paired with Ardhanārīśvara (Śiva and Pārvaṭī in conjoint form) on the northern niche. It is again represented in south *bhadra* of the south-west subsidiary shrine, dedicated to Sūrya. The artist has paired it with Ardhanārīśvara on the north cardinal niche of the north-west shrine.

Viśvanātha Temple: There are at least two images of Hari-Hara in this temple, one on its northern *kapiṭī* (juncture of sanctum and *mahā-maṇḍapa*) portion of the superstructure and the other also on the superstructure. Notably, both these images have *varada-cum-akshamālā*, *triśūla*, *chakra* and *śaiṅkha*, the tradition seen in both the images of the British Museum and Khajuraho Museum.

Kandariyā Mahādeva Temple: In this temple, Hari-Hara is seen in the interior in the *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* niche, and is paired with Ardhanārīśvara. Unfortunately, all the hands of the Hari-Hara image are mutilated.

Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho: There are ten Chandella Hari-Hara images in the Khajuraho Museum: The important one, as we have mentioned earlier, is No. 558 (Pl. 20.3), which has great similarity with the British Museum Hari-Hara. There are other nine images in varied states of preservation in the Khajuraho Museum (Jardine and Reserved collection: Nos. 556, 1184, 1189, 1193, 1198, 1201, 2005 and 2454, 2926 (a fragment of an image – head with *jaṭā* and crescent moon). Of these, the image No. 1193 has *akshamālā* with *chin-mudrā*, as seen in the British Museum image and No. 558 of the Khajuraho Museum.

An earlier image of Hari-Hara, No. 3316, is recently found from police custody, and is sheltered in the open air Jardine Museum (Pl. 20.8). Stylistically, it has Pratihāra features, including an oval halo. As in case of the Kanauj images, the tassel of the *chakra* is going outward, unlike the depiction of the *chakra* in Khajuraho images. Its stone is yellowish buff.

ARCHITECTURAL PLACEMENT

The juncture wall is a preferred placement of Hari-Hara images, and it would generally be paired with Ardhanārīśvara, Śiva combined with Pārvatī, in place of Vishṇu, on his left side. But so far no big Ardhanārīśvara image is found at Khajuraho. However, Ardhanārīśvara occupies a central part of *lalāṭabimba* of two door lintels at Khajuraho.

It is very likely that Hari-Hara image of the British Museum was the principal icon of a temple, for it is quite a large image – larger than the Vaikuṅṭha image (4 feet high) of the Lakshmaṇa Temple. A question arises: in which temple it could have been installed. The western group has a nineteenth century temple built by the Chhatarpur Maharaja Pratapsingh, adjacent to the Viśvanātha Temple. It had in its precincts an eleventh century Hari-Hara Hiranyagarbha image, now in the Jardine Museum. One wonders whether originally, there could be a Chandella temple of Hari-Hara in the place of the nineteenth century Pratāpeśvara Temple. Or the Hari-Hara temple could be situated outside the main western group, somewhere near the Satdhara complex in northern zone of Khajuraho, where the Archaeological Survey of India excavated pre-Lakshmaṇa Temple sculptures in 1980s.¹⁴

II

THE SOURCE OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM IMAGE

How did the Chandella Hari-Hara image come to the British Museum? The image came along with the sculptures that John Bridge purchased in an auction of Charles Stuart Collection in London in 1830, after Stuart's death in 1828.¹⁵

Notably, General Charles Stuart, known as Hindoo Stuart, of the East India Company, who served from 1777 to 1828, had assembled many sculptures from central India such as Hari-Hara, Vishṇu, the Mother with divine child, and others, and maintained a "museum" in his house at Chowranghee in Kolkata.¹⁶ His collection also included images from Bihar and Orissa. E. Moor in his *The Hindu Pantheon* illustrates a Śiva-*liṅga* from the collection of Colonel Stuart (Fig. 3, pl. 83) in 1810.

While the Vishṇu image (OA 18727-1,41) of the British Museum (Pl. 20.5) from Stuart-Bridge collection has stylistic affinities with Pratihāra figures of tenth century from Kanauj, Hari-Hara reveals, as seen by us, a close stylistic similarity with the Hari-Hara image of the Khajuraho Museum, No. 558 (Pl. 20.3), and has distinct Chandella features. Needless to say, General Stuart had acquired all his collection, before 1828.

REFERENCES TO KHAJURAHU OR CHANDELLAS PRIOR TO 1838, BEFORE CAPTAIN BURT'S VISIT

This would raise a question whether Stuart himself or his assistants visited Khajuraho, as the provenance of Hari-Hara indicates, and if so, this visit would be prior to Captain T.S. Burt's visit in 1838.¹⁷ It is no doubt true that Burt was the first to report vividly on Khajuraho Temples, but visits by the British army personnel and others before 1838 cannot be ruled out. We may point out that on third February 1813, William Price presented a paper at the Asiatic Society of Bengal on the subject of a Sanskrit inscription found at Mau near Khajuraho, which for the first time drew attention of historians to the royal family of the Chandella dynasty.¹⁸ The fact that Khajuraho (Kajrow) could find a place on the map prepared by the

military surveyor Cornet James Franklin as early as 1818¹⁹ suggests that antiquarians knew the existence of such a site with temple ruins. It is interesting to note that Captain W.R. Pogson of the Bengal Army wrote a book called *History of the Boondelas*, which was published in 1828. He must have visited Bundelkhand region much before 1828. He gives drawings of the two Chandella forts at Kalanjara and Ajaygadh. He puts Kujra (Khajuraho) on the map along with Rajnugar (Rajnagar), Rajgurh (Rajgadh), Uijeegarh (Ajaygadh) and Kalinjar.

The stage was certainly set for a person like General Charles Stuart to get interested in the region. It is not farfetched to suggest that Stuart's visit to Khajuraho Temples could be made possible when he was posted as the head of the Saugor (Sagar) Field Force in 1819-1822.²⁰ What is significant is that in 1838 Captain Burt himself first heard of the wonders of Khajuraho (Khajrao) from one of his palanquin bearers on his return trip from Eran to Saugor (Sagar).²¹ So there was a definite route from Sagar to Khajuraho that palanquin bearers knew. Palanquin was the main mode of transport, apart from horse riding in the early eighteenth and nineteenth century.

We learn that on 10th March, 1824 General Charles Stewart presented inscribed stone slabs from Kalanjar, Ajaygadh and Mahoba in Bundelkhand to the Asiatic Society, Bengal.²² This indicates that Stuart was definitely collecting things in Bundelkhand. From Sagar he could have visited temple sites in Central India.

Which are other possible Chandella sculptures from the Stuart collection? The well known *apsarās* in the Indian Museum, originally received as gifts by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, cannot be attributed to Captain Markham Kittoe, as Rajendralala Mitra had earlier noted, but seem to be gifts of General Charles Stuart, as I have discussed in my article, "Who Brought the Khajuraho Apsarās to the Asiatic Society?"²³ It is significant to know that earlier these *apsarā* figures were classified by the Indian Museum under Bhubaneswar in Orissa. It was Krishna Deva who for the first time clarified in 1959 that the *apsarās* "which were erroneously believed to have come from Bhubaneswar, but which from the identity of style, material, dimensions and inscribed graffiti, may now definitely be ascribed to the Lakshmaṇa Temple at Khajuraho".²⁴

If Charles Stuart had acquired the image of Hari-Hara as well as the *apsarā* bracket sculptures from Khajuraho, it would indicate that he or his assistants visited Khajuraho prior to Captain T.S. Burt's visit in 1838.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

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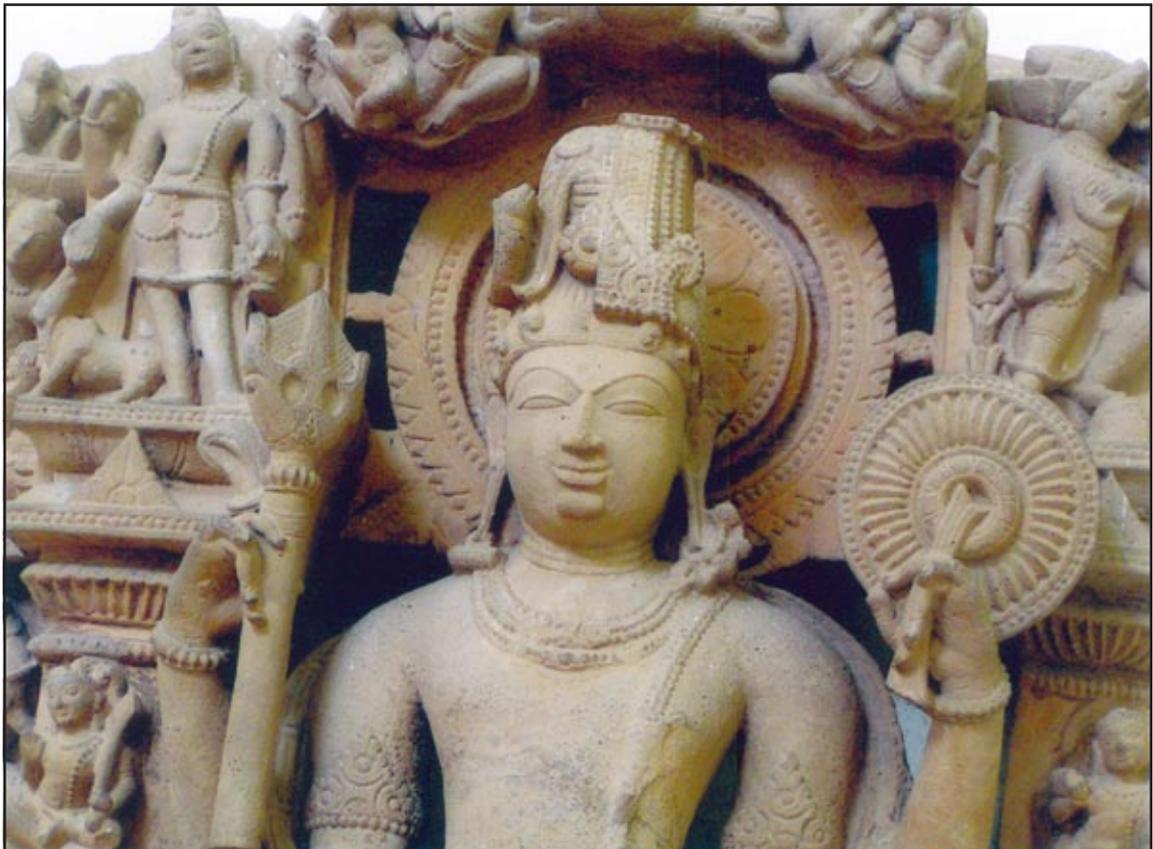
Pl. 20.1. The Chandella Hari-Hara, British Museum, London



Pl. 20.2. The Chandella Hari-Hara, British Museum, side view



Pl. 20.3. Hari-Hara, Acc. No. 558, Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho



Pl. 20.4. Hari-Hara, Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho, close-up



Pl. 20.5. Vishnu, Pratihāra style, British Museum



Pl. 20.6. Pārvatī, Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho



Pl. 20.8. Hari-Hara, Pratihāra style, Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho



Pl. 20.7. Durgā, excavated from Satdhara mound, Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho