

## Rituals Associated With Ganesha Puja | गणेश पूजा की ...

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दैनिक जागरण - 4 days ago

कोलकाता। पश्चिम अफ्रीकी देश नाइजर की सरकार ने त्योहारों के मौके पर भगवान गणेश और देवी लक्ष्मी पर विशेष ...

## More news for ganesha गणेश

## Ganesha Chaturthi (गणेश चतुर्थी) 2014 At Leytonstone ...



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Ganesha Chaturthi (गणेश चतुर्थी) is the Hindu festival celebrated in honour of the god Ganesha, the elephant-headed ...

# Ganesha

“Vinayaka” and “Vinayakudu” redirect here. For other uses, see [Vinayaka \(disambiguation\)](#).

“Ganapati” and “Ganapathy” redirect here. For other uses, see [Ganapati \(disambiguation\)](#).

For other uses, see [Ganesha \(disambiguation\)](#) and [Ganesa \(disambiguation\)](#).

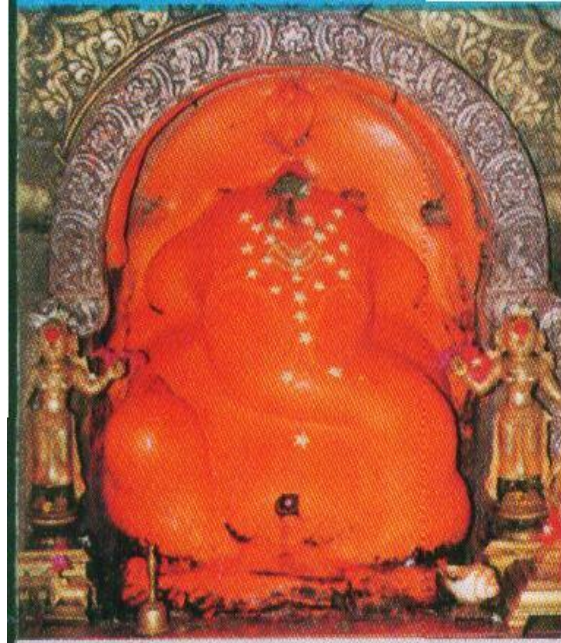
**Ganesha** (/ɡəˈneɪʃə/; Sanskrit (IAST): *Gaṇeśa*; listen), also known as **Ganapati** and **Vinayaka**, is one of the best-known and most worshipped deities in the Hindu pantheon.<sup>[2]</sup> His image is found throughout India.<sup>[3]</sup> Hindu sects worship him regardless of affiliations.<sup>[4]</sup> Devotion to Ganesha is widely diffused and extends to Jains, Buddhists, and beyond India.<sup>[5]</sup>

Although he is known by many attributes, Ganesha's elephant head makes him easy to identify.<sup>[6]</sup> Ganesha is widely revered as the remover of obstacles,<sup>[7]</sup> the patron of arts and sciences and the deva of intellect and wisdom.<sup>[8]</sup> As the god of beginnings, he is honoured at the start of rituals and ceremonies. Ganesha is also invoked as patron of letters and learning during writing sessions.<sup>[9][10]</sup> Several texts relate mythological anecdotes associated with his birth and exploits and explain his distinct iconography.

Ganesha emerged as a distinct deity in the 4th and 5th centuries CE, during the Gupta Period, although he inherited traits from Vedic and pre-Vedic precursors.<sup>[11]</sup> He was formally included among the five primary deities of Smartism (a Hindu denomination) in the 9th century. A sect of devotees called the *Ganapatya* arose, who identified Ganesha as the supreme deity.<sup>[12]</sup> The principal scriptures dedicated to Ganesha are the *Ganesha Purana*, the *Mudgala Purana*, and the *Ganapati Atharvashirsa*.

## 1 Etymology and other names

Ganesha has been ascribed many other titles and epithets, including *Ganapati* and *Vighneshvara*. The Hindu title of respect *Shri* (Sanskrit: श्री; IAST: śrī; also spelled *Sri*



*Ganesha as 'Shri Mayureshwara' with consorts Buddhi and Siddhi, Morgaon (the central shrine for the regional Ashtavinayak complex)<sup>[13]</sup>*

or *Shree*) is often added before his name. One popular way Ganesha is worshipped is by chanting a *Ganesha Sahasranama*, a litany of “a thousand names of Ganesha”. Each name in the *sahasranama* conveys a different meaning and symbolises a different aspect of Ganesha. At least two different versions of the *Ganesha Sahasranama* exist; one version is drawn from the *Ganesha Purana*, a Hindu scripture venerating Ganesha.<sup>[14]</sup>

The name *Ganesha* is a Sanskrit compound, joining the words *gana* (Sanskrit: गण; IAST: gaṇa), meaning a group, multitude, or categorical system and *isha* (Sanskrit: ईश; IAST: īśa), meaning lord or master.<sup>[15]</sup> The word *gaṇa* when associated with Ganesha is often taken to refer to the *gaṇas*, a troop of semi-divine beings that form part of the retinue of Shiva (IAST: Śiva).<sup>[16]</sup> The

term more generally means a category, class, community, association, or corporation.<sup>[17]</sup> Some commentators interpret the name “Lord of the Gaṇas” to mean “Lord of Hosts” or “Lord of created categories”, such as the elements.<sup>[18]</sup> *Ganapati* (Sanskrit: गणपति; IAST: gaṇapati), a synonym for *Ganesh*, is a compound composed of *gaṇa*, meaning “group”, and *pati*, meaning “ruler” or “lord”.<sup>[17]</sup> The *Amarakosha*,<sup>[19]</sup> an early Sanskrit lexicon, lists eight synonyms of *Ganesh*: *Vinayaka*, *Vighnarāja* (equivalent to *Vighnesh*), *Dvaimātura* (one who has two mothers),<sup>[20]</sup> *Gaṇādhipa* (equivalent to *Ganapati* and *Ganesh*), *Ekadanta* (one who has one tusk), *Heramba*, *Lambodara* (one who has a pot belly, or, literally, one who has a hanging belly), and *Gajanana* (IAST: gajānana); having the face of an elephant).<sup>[21]</sup>

*Vinayaka* (Sanskrit: विनायक; IAST: vināyaka) is a common name for *Ganesh* that appears in the Purāṇas and in Buddhist Tantras.<sup>[22]</sup> This name is reflected in the naming of the eight famous *Ganesh* temples in Maharashtra known as the *Aṣṭavināyak* (aṣṭavināyaka).<sup>[23]</sup> The names *Vighnesh* (Sanskrit: विघ्नेश; IAST: vighneśa) and *Vighneshvara* (विघ्नेश्वर; vighneśvara) (Lord of Obstacles)<sup>[24]</sup> refers to his primary function in Hindu theology as the master and remover of obstacles (*vighna*).<sup>[25]</sup>

A prominent name for *Ganesh* in the Tamil language is *Pillai* (Tamil: பிள்ளை) or *Pillaiyar* (பிள்ளையார்).<sup>[26]</sup> A. K. Narain differentiates these terms by saying that *pillai* means a “child” while *pillaiyar* means a “noble child”. He adds that the words *pallu*, *pella*, and *pell* in the Dravidian family of languages signify “tooth or tusk”, also “elephant tooth or tusk”.<sup>[27]</sup> Anita Raina Thapan notes that the root word *pille* in the name *Pillaiyar* might have originally meant “the young of the elephant”, because the Pali word *pillaka* means “a young elephant”.<sup>[28]</sup>

In the Burmese language, *Ganesh* is known as *Maha Peinne* (မဟာပိဏ္ဏေ) pronounced: [məhà pèinné], derived from Pali Mahā Wināyaka (မဟာဝိနာယက).<sup>[29]</sup> The widespread name of *Ganesh* in Thailand is *Phra Phikhanet* or *Phra Phikhanesuan*, both of which are derived from *Vara Vighnesh* and *Vara Vighneshvara* respectively, whereas the name *Khanet* (from *Ganesh*) is rather rare.

In Sri Lanka, in the North-Central and North Western areas with predominantly Buddhist population, *Ganesh* is known as *Aiyanayaka Deviyo*, while in other Sinhala Buddhist areas he is known as *Gana deviyo*.

## 2 Iconography



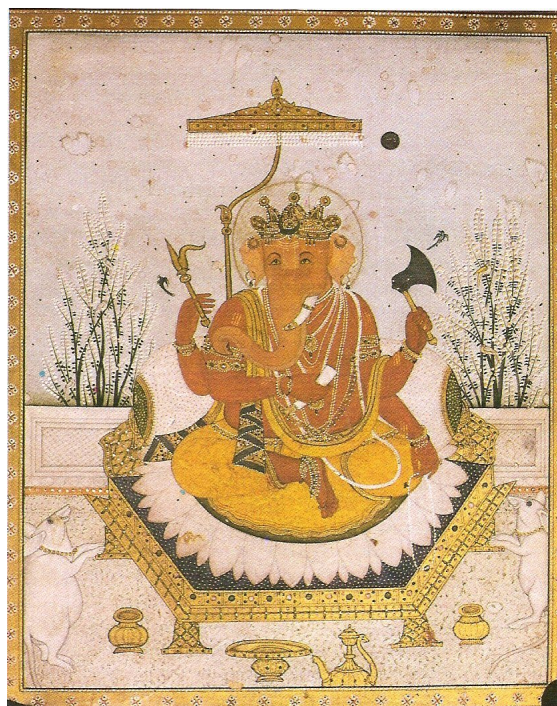
A 13th-century statue of *Ganesh*, Mysore District, Karnataka

*Ganesh* is a popular figure in Indian art.<sup>[30]</sup> Unlike those of some deities, representations of *Ganesh* show wide variations and distinct patterns changing over time.<sup>[31]</sup> He may be portrayed standing, dancing, heroically taking action against demons, playing with his family as a boy, sitting down or on an elevated seat, or engaging in a range of contemporary situations.

*Ganesh* images were prevalent in many parts of India by the 6th century.<sup>[32]</sup> The 13th century statue pictured is typical of *Ganesh* statuary from 900–1200, after *Ganesh* had been well-established as an independent deity with his own sect. This example features some of *Ganesh*’s common iconographic elements. A virtually identical statue has been dated between 973–1200 by Paul Martin-Dubost,<sup>[33]</sup> and another similar statue is dated c.

12th century by Pratapaditya Pal.<sup>[34]</sup> Ganesha has the head of an elephant and a big belly. This statue has four arms, which is common in depictions of Ganesha. He holds his own broken tusk in his lower-right hand and holds a delicacy, which he samples with his trunk, in his lower-left hand. The motif of Ganesha turning his trunk sharply to his left to taste a sweet in his lower-left hand is a particularly archaic feature.<sup>[35]</sup> A more primitive statue in one of the Ellora Caves with this general form has been dated to the 7th century.<sup>[36]</sup> Details of the other hands are difficult to make out on the statue shown. In the standard configuration, Ganesha typically holds an axe or a goad in one upper arm and a pasha (noose) in the other upper arm.

The influence of this old constellation of iconographic elements can still be seen in contemporary representations of Ganesha. In one modern form, the only variation from these old elements is that the lower-right hand does not hold the broken tusk but is turned towards the viewer in a gesture of protection or fearlessness (*abhaya mudra*).<sup>[37]</sup> The same combination of four arms and attributes occurs in statues of Ganesha dancing, which is a very popular theme.<sup>[38]</sup>



A typical four-armed form. Miniature of Nurpur school (circa 1810)<sup>[39]</sup>

## 2.1 Common attributes

For thirty-two popular iconographic forms of Ganesha, see [Thirty-two forms of Ganesha](#).

Ganesha has been represented with the head of an elephant since the early stages of his appearance in Indian art.<sup>[40]</sup> Puranic myths provide many explanations for how he got his elephant head.<sup>[41]</sup> One of his popular forms, *Heramba-Ganapati*, has five elephant heads, and other less-common variations in the number of heads are known.<sup>[42]</sup> While some texts say that Ganesha was born with an elephant head, he acquires the head later in most stories.<sup>[43]</sup> The most recurrent motif in these stories is that Ganesha was created by Parvati using clay to protect her and Shiva beheaded him when Ganesha came between Shiva and Parvati. Shiva then replaced Ganesha's original head with that of an elephant.<sup>[44]</sup> Details of the battle and where the replacement head came from vary from source to source.<sup>[45][46]</sup> Another story says that Ganesha was created directly by Shiva's laughter. Because Shiva considered Ganesha too alluring, he gave him the head of an elephant and a protruding belly.<sup>[47]</sup>

Ganesha's earliest name was *Ekadanta* (One Tusked), referring to his single whole tusk, the other being

broken.<sup>[48]</sup> Some of the earliest images of Ganesha show him holding his broken tusk.<sup>[49]</sup> The importance of this distinctive feature is reflected in the *Mudgala Purana*, which states that the name of Ganesha's second incarnation is Ekadanta.<sup>[50]</sup> Ganesha's protruding belly appears as a distinctive attribute in his earliest statuary, which dates to the Gupta period (4th to 6th centuries).<sup>[51]</sup> This feature is so important that, according to the *Mudgala Purana*, two different incarnations of Ganesha use names based on it: *Lambodara* (Pot Belly, or, literally, Hanging Belly) and *Mahodara* (Great Belly).<sup>[52]</sup> Both names are Sanskrit compounds describing his belly (IAST: *udara*).<sup>[53]</sup> The *Brahmanda Purana* says that Ganesha has the name Lambodara because all the universes (i.e., cosmic eggs; IAST: *brahmāṇḍas*) of the past, present, and future are present in him.<sup>[54]</sup> The number of Ganesha's arms varies; his best-known forms have between two and sixteen arms.<sup>[55]</sup> Many depictions of Ganesha feature four arms, which is mentioned in Puranic sources and codified as a standard form in some iconographic texts.<sup>[56]</sup> His earliest images had two arms.<sup>[57]</sup> Forms with 14 and 20 arms appeared in Central India during the 9th and the 10th centuries.<sup>[58]</sup>

The serpent is a common feature in Ganesha iconography and appears in many forms.<sup>[59]</sup> According to the *Ganesha Purana*, Ganesha wrapped the serpent *Vasuki* around his neck.<sup>[60]</sup> Other depictions of snakes include use as a sacred thread (IAST: *yajñyopavīta*)<sup>[61]</sup> wrapped around the stomach as a belt, held in a hand, coiled at the ankles, or as a throne. Upon Ganesha's forehead may be a third eye or the Shaivite sectarian mark (IAST: *tilaka*), which consists of three horizontal lines.<sup>[62]</sup> The *Ganesha Purana* prescribes a *tilaka* mark as well as a crescent moon on the forehead.<sup>[63]</sup> A distinct form of Ganesha called *Bhalachandra* (IAST: *bhālacandra*; "Moon on the Forehead") includes that iconographic element.<sup>[64]</sup> Ganesha is often described as red in color.<sup>[65]</sup> Specific colors are associated with certain forms.<sup>[66]</sup> Many examples of color associations with specific meditation forms are prescribed in the *Sritattvanidhi*, a treatise on Hindu iconography. For example, white is associated with his representations as *Heramba-Ganapati* and *Rina-Mochana-Ganapati* (Ganapati Who Releases from Bondage).<sup>[67]</sup> *Ekadanta-Ganapati* is visualized as blue during meditation in that form.<sup>[68]</sup>

## 2.2 Vahanas

The earliest Ganesha images are without a vahana (mount/vehicle).<sup>[69]</sup> Of the eight incarnations of Ganesha described in the *Mudgala Purana*, Ganesha uses a mouse (shrew) in five of them, a lion in his incarnation as *Vakratunda*, a peacock in his incarnation as *Vikata*, and Shesha, the divine serpent, in his incarnation as *Vighnaraja*.<sup>[70]</sup> *Mohotkata* uses a lion, *Mayūreśvara* uses a peacock, *Dhumraketu* uses a horse, and *Gajanana* uses a mouse, in the four incarnations of Ganesha listed in the *Ganesha Purana*. Jain depictions of Ganesha show his vahana variously as a mouse, elephant, tortoise, ram, or peacock.<sup>[71]</sup>

Ganesha is often shown riding on or attended by a mouse, shrew or rat.<sup>[72]</sup> Martin-Dubost says that the rat began to appear as the principal vehicle in sculptures of Ganesha in central and western India during the 7th century; the rat was always placed close to his feet.<sup>[73]</sup> The mouse as a mount first appears in written sources in the *Matsya Purana* and later in the *Brahmananda Purana* and *Ganesha Purana*, where Ganesha uses it as his vehicle in his last incarnation.<sup>[74]</sup> The *Ganapati Atharvashirsa* includes a meditation verse on Ganesha that describes the mouse appearing on his flag.<sup>[75]</sup> The



*Ganesha's dancing and love of sweets are represented. The mouse is depicted under his feet. Museum of Asian Art.*

names *Mūṣakavāhana* (mouse-mount) and *Ākhuketana* (rat-banner) appear in the *Ganesha Sahasranama*.<sup>[76]</sup>

The mouse is interpreted in several ways. According to Grimes, "Many, if not most of those who interpret Gaṇapati's mouse, do so negatively; it symbolizes *tamogūṇa* as well as desire".<sup>[77]</sup> Along these lines, Michael Wilcockson says it symbolizes those who wish to overcome desires and be less selfish.<sup>[78]</sup> Krishan notes that the rat is destructive and a menace to crops. The Sanskrit word *mūṣaka* (mouse) is derived from the root *mūṣ* (stealing, robbing). It was essential to subdue the rat as a destructive pest, a type of *vighna* (impediment) that needed to be overcome. According to this theory, showing Ganesha as master of the rat demonstrates his function as *Vigneshvara* (Lord of Obstacles) and gives evidence of his possible role as a folk *grāma-devatā* (village deity) who later rose to greater prominence.<sup>[79]</sup> Martin-Dubost notes a view that the rat is a symbol suggesting that Ganesha, like the rat, penetrates even the most secret places.<sup>[80]</sup>

### 3 Associations



*Heramba-Ganesha with consort, 18th century Nepal.*

#### 3.1 Obstacles

Ganesha is *Vighneshvara* or *Vighnaraja* or *Vighnaharta* (Marathi), the Lord of Obstacles, both of a material and spiritual order.<sup>[81]</sup> He is popularly worshipped as a remover of obstacles, though traditionally he also places obstacles in the path of those who need to be checked. Paul Courtright says that “his task in the divine scheme of things, his *dharma*, is to place and remove obstacles. It is his particular territory, the reason for his creation.”<sup>[82]</sup>

Krishan notes that some of Ganesha’s names reflect shadings of multiple roles that have evolved over time.<sup>[25]</sup> Dhavalikar ascribes the quick ascension of Ganesha in the Hindu pantheon, and the emergence of the Ganapatyas, to this shift in emphasis from *vighnakartā* (obstacle-creator) to *vighnahartā* (obstacle-avertter).<sup>[83]</sup> However, both functions continue to be vital to his character.<sup>[84]</sup>

#### 3.2 Buddhi (Knowledge)

Ganesha is considered to be the Lord of letters and learning.<sup>[85]</sup> In Sanskrit, the word *buddhi* is a feminine noun that is variously translated as intelligence, wisdom, or intellect.<sup>[86]</sup> The concept of *buddhi* is closely associated with the personality of Ganesha, especially in the Puranic period, when many stories stress his cleverness and love of intelligence. One of Ganesha’s names in the *Ganesha Purana* and the *Ganesha Sahasranama* is *Buddhipriya*.<sup>[87]</sup> This name also appears in a list of 21 names at the end of the *Ganesha Sahasranama* that Ganesha says are especially important.<sup>[88]</sup> The word *priya* can mean “fond of”, and in a marital context it can mean “lover” or “husband”,<sup>[89]</sup> so the name may mean either “Fond of Intelligence” or “Buddhi’s Husband”.<sup>[90]</sup>

#### 3.3 Aum

Ganesha is identified with the Hindu mantra *Aum*, also spelled *Om*. The term *omkārasvarūpa* (*Aum* is his form), when identified with Ganesha, refers to the notion that he personifies the primal sound.<sup>[91]</sup> The *Ganapati Atharvashirsa* attests to this association. Chinmayananda translates the relevant passage as follows:<sup>[92]</sup>

(O Lord Ganapati!) You are (the Trinity) Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesa. You are Indra. You are fire [Agni] and air [Vāyu]. You are the sun [Sūrya] and the moon [Chandrama]. You are Brahman. You are (the three worlds) Bhuloka [earth], Antariksha-loka [space], and Swargaloka [heaven]. You are Om. (That is to say, You are all this).

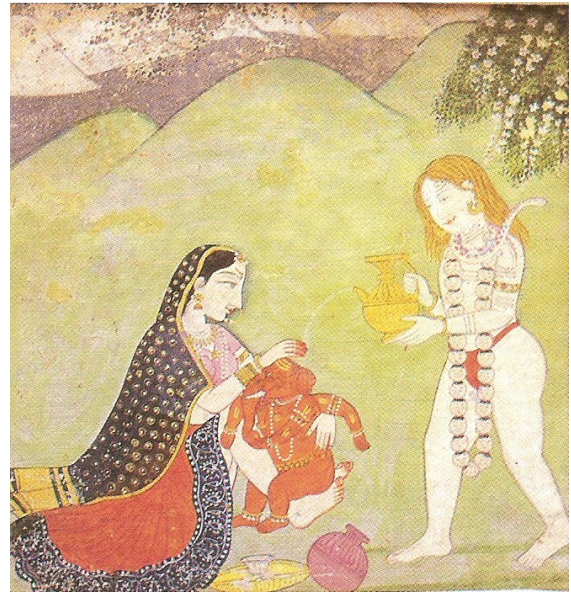
Some devotees see similarities between the shape of Ganesha’s body in iconography and the shape of *Aum* in the *Devanāgarī* and *Tamil* scripts.<sup>[93]</sup>

#### 3.4 First chakra

According to *Kundalini yoga*, Ganesha resides in the first *chakra*, called *Muladhara* (*mūlādhāra*). *Mula* means “original, main extquotedbl; *adhara* means “base, foundation”. The *muladhara chakra* is the principle on which the manifestation or outward expansion of primordial Divine Force rests.<sup>[94]</sup> This association is also attested to in the *Ganapati Atharvashirsa*. Courtright translates this



Ganesha (Devanagari) Aum jewel



Shiva and Parvati giving a bath to Ganesha. Kangra miniature, 18th century. Allahbad Museum, New Delhi.<sup>[97]</sup>

passage as follows: extquotedbl[O Ganesha,] You continually dwell in the sacral plexus at the base of the spine [mūlādhāra cakra].<sup>[95]</sup> Thus, Ganesha has a permanent abode in every being at the Muladhara.<sup>[96]</sup> Ganesha holds, supports and guides all other chakras, thereby “governing the forces that propel the wheel of life extquotedbl.<sup>[94]</sup>

## 4 Family and consorts

See also: Mythological anecdotes of Ganesha and Consorts of Ganesha

Though Ganesha is popularly held to be the son of Shiva and Parvati, the Puranic myths give different versions about his birth.<sup>[98]</sup> In some he was created by Parvati,<sup>[99]</sup> in another he was created by Shiva and Parvati,<sup>[100]</sup> in another he appeared mysteriously and was discovered by Shiva and Parvati<sup>[101]</sup> or he was born from the elephant headed goddess Malini after she drank Parvati’s bath water that had been thrown in the river.<sup>[102]</sup>

The family includes his brother the war god Kartikeya, who is also called Skanda and Murugan.<sup>[103]</sup> Regional differences dictate the order of their births. In northern India, Skanda is generally said to be the elder, while in the south, Ganesha is considered the first born.<sup>[104]</sup> In northern India, Skanda was an important martial de-

ity from about 500 BCE to about 600 CE, when worship of him declined significantly in northern India. As Skanda fell, Ganesha rose. Several stories tell of sibling rivalry between the brothers<sup>[105]</sup> and may reflect sectarian tensions.<sup>[106]</sup>

Ganesha’s marital status, the subject of considerable scholarly review, varies widely in mythological stories.<sup>[107]</sup> One pattern of myths identifies Ganesha as an unmarried *brahmacari*.<sup>[108]</sup> This view is common in southern India and parts of northern India.<sup>[109]</sup> Another pattern associates him with the concepts of *Buddhi* (intellect), *Siddhi* (spiritual power), and *Riddhi* (prosperity); these qualities are sometimes personified as goddesses, said to be Ganesha’s wives.<sup>[110]</sup> He also may be shown with a single consort or a nameless servant (Sanskrit: *daṣī*).<sup>[111]</sup> Another pattern connects Ganesha with the goddess of culture and the arts, Sarasvati or Śarda (particularly in Maharashtra).<sup>[112]</sup> He is also associated with the goddess of luck and prosperity, Lakshmi.<sup>[113]</sup> Another pattern, mainly prevalent in the Bengal region, links Ganesha with the banana tree, Kala Bo.<sup>[114]</sup>

The *Shiva Purana* says that Ganesha had begotten two sons: Kṣema (prosperity) and Lābha (profit). In northern Indian variants of this story, the sons are often said to be Śubha (auspiciousness) and Lābha.<sup>[115]</sup> The 1975 Hindi film *Jai Santoshi Maa* shows Ganesha married to Riddhi

and Siddhi and having a daughter named **Santoshi Ma**, the goddess of satisfaction. This story has no Puranic basis, but Anita Raina Thapan and Lawrence Cohen cite Santoshi Ma's cult as evidence of Ganesha's continuing evolution as a popular deity.<sup>[116]</sup>

## 5 Worship and festivals



*Celebrations of Ganesha by the Tamil community in Paris, France*

Ganesha is worshipped on many religious and secular occasions; especially at the beginning of ventures such as buying a vehicle or starting a business.<sup>[117]</sup> K.N. Somayaji says, “there can hardly be a [Hindu] home [in India] which does not house an idol of Ganapati. [...] Ganapati, being the most popular deity in India, is worshipped by almost all castes and in all parts of the country”.<sup>[118]</sup> Devotees believe that if Ganesha is propitiated, he grants success, prosperity and protection against adversity.<sup>[119]</sup>

Ganesha is a non-sectarian deity, and Hindus of all denominations invoke him at the beginning of prayers, important undertakings, and religious ceremonies.<sup>[120]</sup> Dancers and musicians, particularly in southern India, begin performances of arts such as the Bharatnatyam dance with a prayer to Ganesha.<sup>[65]</sup> Mantras such as *Om Shri Gaṇeshāya Namah* (Om, salutation to the Illustrious Ganesha) are often used. One of the most famous mantras associated with Ganesha is *Om Gaṃ Ganapataye Namah* (Om, Gaṃ, Salutation to the Lord of Hosts).<sup>[121]</sup>

Devotees offer Ganesha sweets such as modaka and small sweet balls (laddus).<sup>[122]</sup> He is often shown carrying a bowl of sweets, called a *modakapātra*.<sup>[123]</sup> Because of his identification with the color red, he is often wor-

shipped with red sandalwood paste (raktacandana)<sup>[124]</sup> or red flowers. Dūrvā grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) and other materials are also used in his worship.<sup>[125]</sup>

Festivals associated with Ganesha are Ganesha Chaturthi or Vināyaka chaturthī in the *śuklapakṣa* (the fourth day of the waxing moon) in the month of *Bhadrapada* (August/September) and the Ganesha Jayanti (Ganesha's birthday) celebrated on the *caturthī* of the *śuklapakṣa* (fourth day of the waxing moon) in the month of *magha* (January/February).<sup>[126]</sup>

### 5.1 Ganesha Chaturthi

Main article: Ganesha Chaturthi

An annual festival honours Ganesha for ten days, start-



*Street festivities in Hyderabad, India during the festival of Ganesha Chaturthi*

ing on Ganesha Chaturthi, which typically falls in late August or early September.<sup>[127]</sup> The festival begins with people bringing in clay idols of Ganesha, symbolising Gane-



sha's visit. The festival culminates on the day of Ananta Chaturdashi, when idols (*murtis*) of Ganesha are immersed in the most convenient body of water.<sup>[128]</sup> Some families have a tradition of immersion on the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, or 7th day. In 1893, Lokmanya Tilak transformed this annual Ganesha festival from private family celebrations into a grand public event.<sup>[129]</sup> He did so "to bridge the gap between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins and find an appropriate context in which to build a new grassroots unity between them" in his nationalistic strivings against the British in Maharashtra.<sup>[130]</sup> Because of Ganesha's wide appeal as "the god for Everyman", Tilak chose him as a rallying point for Indian protest against British rule.<sup>[131]</sup> Tilak was the first to install large public images of Ganesha in pavilions, and he established the practice of submerging all the public images on the tenth day.<sup>[132]</sup> Today, Hindus across India celebrate the Ganapati festival with great fervour, though it is most popular in the state of Maharashtra.<sup>[133][134]</sup> The festival also assumes huge proportions in Mumbai, Pune, and in the surrounding belt of Ashtavinayaka temples.

## 5.2 Temples

Further information: List of Ganapati temples and Ashtavinayak

In Hindu temples, Ganesha is depicted in various ways:



Ashtavinayak and an Om in between

as an acolyte or subordinate deity (*pārśva-devatā*); as a

deity related to the principal deity (*parivāra-devatā*); or as the principal deity of the temple (*pradhāna*), treated similarly as the highest gods of the Hindu pantheon.<sup>[135]</sup> As the god of transitions, he is placed at the doorway of many Hindu temples to keep out the unworthy, which is analogous to his role as Parvati's doorkeeper.<sup>[136]</sup> In addition, several shrines are dedicated to Ganesha himself, of which the Ashtavinayak (Sanskrit: अष्टवर्नायक; *aṣṭavināyaka*; lit. "eight Ganesha (shrines) extquotedbl) in Maharashtra are particularly well known. Located within a 100-kilometer radius of the city of Pune, each of these eight shrines celebrates a particular form of Ganapati, complete with its own lore and legend.<sup>[137]</sup> The eight shrines are: Morgaon, Siddhatek, Pali, Mahad, Theur, Lenyadri, Ozar and Ranjangaon.

There are many other important Ganesha temples at the following locations: Wai in Maharashtra; Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh; Jodhpur, Nagaur and Raipur (Pali) in Rajasthan; Baidyanath in Bihar; Baroda, Dholaka, and Valsad in Gujarat and Dhundiraj Temple in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. Prominent Ganesha temples in southern India include the following: Kanipakam in Chittoor; the Jambukeśvara Temple at Tiruchirapalli; at Rameshvaram and Suchindram in Tamil Nadu; at Malliyur, Kottarakara, Pazhavangadi, Kasargod in Kerala, Hampi, and Idagunji in Karnataka; and Bhadrachalam in Andhra Pradesh.<sup>[138]</sup>

T. A. Gopinatha notes, "Every village however small has its own image of *Vighneśvara* (Vigneshvara) with or without a temple to house it in. At entrances of villages and forts, below *pīpaḷa* (Sacred fig) trees [...], in a niche [...] in temples of *Viṣṇu* (Vishnu) as well as *Śiva* (Shiva) and also in separate shrines specially constructed in *Śiva* temples [...]; the figure of *Vighneśvara* is invariably seen."<sup>[139]</sup> Ganesha temples have also been built outside of India, including southeast Asia, Nepal (including the four *Vinayaka* shrines in the Kathmandu valley),<sup>[140]</sup> and in several western countries.<sup>[141]</sup>

## 6 Rise to prominence

### 6.1 First appearance

Ganesha appeared in his classic form as a clearly recognizable deity with well-defined iconographic attributes in the early 4th to 5th centuries.<sup>[143]</sup> Shanti Lal Nagar says that the earliest known iconic image of Ganesha is in the niche of the Shiva temple at Bhumra, which has been



*Ganesha, Karpaka Vinayakar Temple, 400 CE,<sup>[142]</sup> Tamil Nadu.*

dated to the Gupta period.<sup>[144]</sup> His independent cult appeared by about the 10th century.<sup>[143]</sup> Narain summarizes the controversy between devotees and academics regarding the development of Ganesha as follows:<sup>[145]</sup>

What is inscrutable is the somewhat dramatic appearance of Gaṇeśa on the historical scene. His antecedents are not clear. His wide acceptance and popularity, which transcend sectarian and territorial limits, are indeed amazing. On the one hand there is the pious belief of the orthodox devotees in Gaṇeśa's Vedic origins and in the Purāṇic explanations contained in the confusing, but nonetheless interesting, mythology. On the other hand there are doubts about the existence of the idea and the icon of *this deity* before the fourth to fifth century A.D. ... [I]n my opinion, indeed there is no convincing evidence of the existence of this divinity prior to the fifth century.



*Ganesha worshipped in the Durga Puja celebrations in Cologne.*

## 6.2 Possible influences

Courtright reviews various speculative theories about the early history of Ganesha, including supposed tribal traditions and animal cults, and dismisses all of them in this way:<sup>[146]</sup>

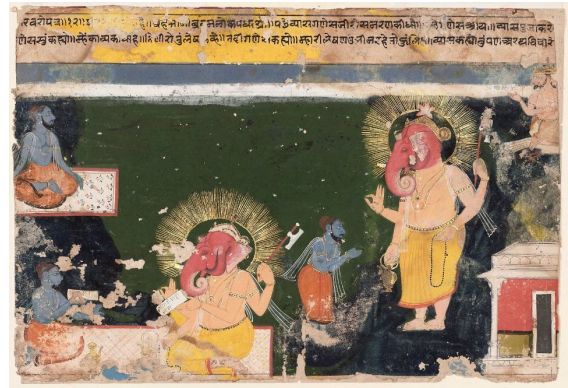
In this search for a historical origin for Gaṇeśa, some have suggested precise locations outside the Brāhmaṇic tradition.... These historical locations are intriguing to be sure, but the fact remains that they are all speculations, variations on the Dravidian hypothesis, which argues that anything not attested to in the Vedic and Indo-European sources must have come into Brāhmaṇic religion from the Dravidian or

aboriginal populations of India as part of the process that produced Hinduism out of the interactions of the Aryan and non-Aryan populations. There is no independent evidence for an elephant cult or a totem; nor is there any archaeological data pointing to a tradition prior to what we can already see in place in the Purāṇic literature and the iconography of Gaṇeśa.

Thapan's book on the development of Ganesha devotes a chapter to speculations about the role elephants had in early India but concludes that, "although by the second century CE the elephant-headed *yakṣa* form exists it cannot be presumed to represent Gaṇapati-Vināyaka. There is no evidence of a deity by this name having an elephant or elephant-headed form at this early stage. Gaṇapati-Vināyaka had yet to make his debut."<sup>[147]</sup>

In 1993, a metal plate depiction of an elephant-headed figure, interpreted as Ganesha, was discovered in Lorestan Province, Iran, dating back to 1,200 BCE.<sup>[148][149]</sup> First terracotta images of Ganesha are from 1st century CE found in Ter, Pal, Verrapuram and Chandraketugarh. These figures are small, with elephant head, two arms, and chubby physique.<sup>[150]</sup> The earliest Ganesha icons in stone were carved in Mathura during Kushan times (2nd-3rd centuries CE).<sup>[150]</sup>

One theory of the origin of Ganesha is that he gradually came to prominence in connection with the four Vinayakas (Vināyakas).<sup>[151]</sup> In Hindu mythology, the Vināyakas were a group of four troublesome demons who created obstacles and difficulties<sup>[152]</sup> but who were easily propitiated.<sup>[153]</sup> The name Vināyaka is a common name for Ganesha both in the Purāṇas and in Buddhist Tantras.<sup>[22]</sup> Krishan is one of the academics who accepts this view, stating flatly of Ganesha, "He is a non-vedic god. His origin is to be traced to the four Vināyakas, evil spirits, of the *Mānavagṛhyasūtra* (7th–4th century BCE) who cause various types of evil and suffering".<sup>[154]</sup> Depictions of elephant-headed human figures, which some identify with Ganesha, appear in Indian art and coinage as early as the 2nd century.<sup>[155]</sup> According to Ellawala, the elephant-headed Ganesha as lord of the Ganas was known to the people of Sri Lanka in the early pre-Christian era.<sup>[156]</sup>



Vyasa narrating the Mahabharata to Ganesha, his scribe, 17th century Rajasthani manuscript of the Mahabharata.

### 6.3 Vedic and epic literature

The title "Leader of the group" (Sanskrit: *gaṇapati*) occurs twice in the *Rig Veda*, but in neither case does it refer to the modern Ganesha. The term appears in RV 2.23.1 as a title for Brahmanaspati, according to commentators.<sup>[157]</sup> While this verse doubtless refers to Brahmanaspati, it was later adopted for worship of Ganesha and is still used today.<sup>[158]</sup> In rejecting any claim that this passage is evidence of Ganesha in the *Rig Veda*, Ludo Rocher says that it "clearly refers to Bṛhaspati—who is the deity of the hymn—and Bṛhaspati only".<sup>[159]</sup> Equally clearly, the second passage (RV 10.112.9) refers to Indra,<sup>[160]</sup> who is given the epithet 'gaṇapati', translated "Lord of the companies (of the *Maruts*)".<sup>[161]</sup> However, Rocher notes that the more recent Ganapatya literature often quotes the Rigvedic verses to give Vedic respectability to Ganesha.<sup>[162]</sup>

Two verses in texts belonging to Black Yajurveda, *Maitrāyaṇīya Saṃhitā* (2.9.1)<sup>[163]</sup> and *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (10.1),<sup>[164]</sup> appeal to a deity as "the tusked one" (Dantiḥ), "elephant-faced" (Hastimukha), and "with a curved trunk" (Vakratuṇḍa). These names are suggestive of Ganesha, and the 14th century commentator Sayana explicitly establishes this identification.<sup>[165]</sup> The description of Dantin, possessing a twisted trunk (vakratuṇḍa) and holding a corn-sheaf, a sugar cane, and a club,<sup>[166]</sup> is so characteristic of the Puranic Ganapati that Heras says "we cannot resist to accept his full identification with this Vedic Dantin".<sup>[167]</sup> However, Krishan considers these hymns to be post-Vedic additions.<sup>[168]</sup> Thapan reports that these passages are "generally considered to have been interpolated". Dhavalikar says, "the

references to the elephant-headed deity in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* have been proven to be very late interpolations, and thus are not very helpful for determining the early formation of the deity”.<sup>[169]</sup>

Ganesha does not appear in Indian epic literature that is dated to the Vedic period. A late interpolation to the epic poem *Mahabharata* says that the sage Vyasa (Vyāsa) asked Ganesha to serve as his scribe to transcribe the poem as he dictated it to him. Ganesha agreed but only on condition that Vyasa recite the poem uninterrupted, that is, without pausing. The sage agreed, but found that to get any rest he needed to recite very complex passages so Ganesha would have to ask for clarifications. The story is not accepted as part of the original text by the editors of the critical edition of the *Mahabharata*,<sup>[170]</sup> in which the twenty-line story is relegated to a footnote in an appendix.<sup>[171]</sup> The story of Ganesha acting as the scribe occurs in 37 of the 59 manuscripts consulted during preparation of the critical edition.<sup>[172]</sup> Ganesha’s association with mental agility and learning is one reason he is shown as scribe for Vyāsa’s dictation of the *Mahabharata* in this interpolation.<sup>[173]</sup> Richard L. Brown dates the story to the 8th century, and Moriz Winternitz concludes that it was known as early as c. 900, but it was not added to the *Mahabharata* some 150 years later. Winternitz also notes that a distinctive feature in South Indian manuscripts of the *Mahabharata* is their omission of this Ganesha legend.<sup>[174]</sup> The term *vināyaka* is found in some recensions of the *Śāntiparva* and *Anuśāsanaparva* that are regarded as interpolations.<sup>[175]</sup> A reference to *Vighnakarṭṛiṇām* (“Creator of Obstacles”) in *Vanaparva* is also believed to be an interpolation and does not appear in the critical edition.<sup>[176]</sup>

## 6.4 Puranic period

For more details on this topic, see *Mythological anecdotes of Ganesha*.

Stories about Ganesha often occur in the Puranic corpus. Brown notes while the Puranas “defy precise chronological ordering”, the more detailed narratives of Ganesha’s life are in the late texts, c. 600–1300.<sup>[177]</sup> Yuvraj Krishan says that the Puranic myths about the birth of Ganesha and how he acquired an elephant’s head are in the later Puranas, which were composed from c. 600 onwards. He elaborates on the matter to say that references to Ganesha in the earlier Puranas, such as the *Vayu* and *Brahmanda* Puranas, are later interpolations made during the 7th to



Tanjore-style painting of Ganesha

10th centuries.<sup>[178]</sup>

In his survey of Ganesha’s rise to prominence in Sanskrit literature, Ludo Rocher notes that:<sup>[179]</sup>

Above all, one cannot help being struck by the fact that the numerous stories surrounding Gaṇeśa concentrate on an unexpectedly limited number of incidents. These incidents are mainly three: his birth and parenthood, his elephant head, and his single tusk. Other incidents are touched on in the texts, but to a far lesser extent.

Ganesha’s rise to prominence was codified in the 9th century, when he was formally included as one of the five primary deities of Smartism. The 9th-century philosopher Adi Shankara popularized the “worship of the five forms” (*Panchayatana puja*) system among orthodox Brahmins of the Smarta tradition.<sup>[180]</sup> This worship practice invokes the five deities Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva, Devi, and Surya.<sup>[181]</sup> Adi Shankara instituted the tradition primarily to unite the principal deities of these five major sects on an equal status. This formalized the role of Ganesha as a complementary deity.

## 6.5 Scriptures

Further information: *Ganesha Purana*, *Mudgala Purana* and *Ganapati Atharvashirsa*

Once Ganesha was accepted as one of the five princi-



*Ganesha statue in 9th century Prambanan temple, Java, Indonesia*

pal deities of Brahmanism, some Brahmins (brāhmaṇas) chose to mess up Ganesha as their principal deity. They developed the *Ganapatya* tradition, as seen in the *Ganesha Purana* and the *Mudgala Purana*.<sup>[182]</sup>

The date of composition for the *Ganesha Purana* and the *Mudgala Purana*—and their dating relative to one another—has sparked academic debate. Both works were developed over time and contain age-layered strata. Anita Thapan reviews comments about dating and provides her own judgement. “It seems likely that the core of the *Ganesha Purana* appeared around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries”, she says, “but was later interpolated.”<sup>[183]</sup> Lawrence W. Preston considers the most reasonable date for the *Ganesha Purana* to be between 1100 and 1400, which coincides with the apparent age of the sacred sites mentioned by the text.<sup>[184]</sup>

R.C. Hazra suggests that the *Mudgala Purana* is older than the *Ganesha Purana*, which he dates between 1100 and 1400.<sup>[185]</sup> However, Phyllis Granoff finds problems with this relative dating and concludes that the *Mudgala*

*Purana* was the last of the philosophical texts concerned with Ganesha. She bases her reasoning on the fact that, among other internal evidence, the *Mudgala Purana* specifically mentions the *Ganesha Purana* as one of the four Puranas (the *Brahma*, the *Brahmanda*, the *Ganesha*, and the *Mudgala Puranas*) which deal at length with Ganesha.<sup>[186]</sup> While the kernel of the text must be old, it was interpolated until the 17th and 18th centuries as the worship of Ganapati became more important in certain regions.<sup>[187]</sup> Another highly regarded scripture, the *Ganapati Atharvashirsa*, was probably composed during the 16th or 17th centuries.<sup>[188]</sup>

## 7 Beyond India and Hinduism

For more details on this topic, see *Ganesha in world religions*.

Commercial and cultural contacts extended India’s in-



*“Dancing Ganesha. Central Tibet. Early fifteenth century. Colours on cotton. Height: 68 centimetres.”<sup>[189]</sup> This form is also known as Maharakta (“The Great Red One”).<sup>[190]</sup>*

fluence in western and southeast Asia. Ganesha is one of a number of Hindu deities who reached foreign lands as a result.<sup>[191]</sup>

Ganesha was particularly worshipped by traders and merchants, who went out of India for commercial ventures.<sup>[192]</sup> From approximately the 10th century onwards, new networks of exchange developed including

the formation of trade guilds and a resurgence of money circulation. During this time, Ganesha became the principal deity associated with traders.<sup>[193]</sup> The earliest inscription invoking Ganesha before any other deity is associated with the merchant community.<sup>[194]</sup>

Hindus migrated to **Maritime Southeast Asia** and took their culture, including Ganesha, with them.<sup>[195]</sup> Statues of Ganesha are found throughout the region, often beside Shiva sanctuaries. The forms of Ganesha found in Hindu art of **Java, Bali, and Borneo** show specific regional influences.<sup>[196]</sup> The spread of Hindu culture to southeast Asia established Ganesha in modified forms in **Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand**. In **Indochina**, Hinduism and Buddhism were practiced side by side, and mutual influences can be seen in the iconography of Ganesha in the region.<sup>[197]</sup> In **Thailand, Cambodia, and among the Hindu classes of the Chams in Vietnam**, Ganesha was mainly thought of as a remover of obstacles.<sup>[198]</sup> Today in **Buddhist Thailand**, Ganesha is regarded as a remover of obstacles, the god of success.<sup>[198]</sup>

Before the arrival of Islam, Afghanistan had close cultural ties with India, and the adoration of both Hindu and Buddhist deities was practiced. Examples of sculptures from the 5th to the 7th centuries have survived, suggesting that the worship of Ganesha was then in vogue in the region.<sup>[199]</sup>

Ganesha appears in **Mahayana Buddhism**, not only in the form of the Buddhist god **Vināyaka**, but also as a Hindu demon form with the same name.<sup>[200]</sup> His image appears in Buddhist sculptures during the late Gupta period.<sup>[201]</sup> As the Buddhist god **Vināyaka**, he is often shown dancing. This form, called **Nṛtta Ganapati**, was popular in northern India, later adopted in **Nepal**, and then in **Tibet**.<sup>[202]</sup> In **Nepal**, the Hindu form of Ganesha, known as **Heramba**, is popular; he has five heads and rides a lion.<sup>[203]</sup> Tibetan representations of Ganesha show ambivalent views of him.<sup>[204]</sup> A Tibetan rendering of **Ganapati** is *tshogs bdag*.<sup>[205]</sup> In one Tibetan form, he is shown being trodden under foot by **Mahākāla**, (Shiva) a popular Tibetan deity.<sup>[206]</sup> Other depictions show him as the Destroyer of Obstacles, and sometimes dancing.<sup>[207]</sup> Ganesha appears in **China and Japan** in forms that show distinct regional character. In **northern China**, the earliest known stone statue of Ganesha carries an inscription dated to 531.<sup>[208]</sup> In **Japan**, where Ganesha is known as **Kangiten**, the Ganesha cult was first mentioned in 806.<sup>[209]</sup>

The canonical literature of **Jainism** does not mention the worship of Ganesha.<sup>[210]</sup> However, Ganesha is wor-



*The Japanese form of Ganesha - Kangiten, late 18th-early 19th-century painting by Shorokuan Ekicho*

shipped by most Jains, for whom he appears to have taken over certain functions of **Kubera**.<sup>[211]</sup> Jain connections with the trading community support the idea that Jainism took up Ganesha worship as a result of commercial connections.<sup>[212]</sup> The earliest known Jain Ganesha statue dates to about the 9th century.<sup>[213]</sup> A 15th-century Jain text lists procedures for the installation of **Ganapati** images.<sup>[210]</sup> Images of Ganesha appear in the Jain tem-

ples of Rajasthan and Gujarat.<sup>[214]</sup>

## 8 Notes

- [1] “Ganesha getting ready to throw his lotus. Basohli miniature, circa 1730. National Museum, New Delhi. In the *Mudgalapurāṇa* (VII, 70), in order to kill the demon of egotism (Mamāsura) who had attacked him, Gaṇeśa Vighnarāja throws his lotus at him. Unable to bear the fragrance of the divine flower, the demon surrenders to Gaṇeśha. extquotedbl For quotation of description of the work, see: Martin-Dubost (1997), p. 73.
- [2] Rao, p. 1.
- [3] • Brown, p. 1. “Gaṇeśa is often said to be the most worshipped god in India. extquotedbl  
• Getty, p. 1. “Gaṇeśa, Lord of the Gaṇas, although among the latest deities to be admitted to the Brahmanic pantheon, was, and still is, the most universally adored of all the Hindu gods and his image is found in practically every part of India. extquotedbl
- [4] • Rao, p. 1.  
• Martin-Dubost, pp. 2–4.  
• Brown, p. 1.
- [5] • Chapter XVII, “The Travels Abroad”, in: Nagar (1992), pp. 175–187. For a review of Ganesha’s geographic spread and popularity outside of India.  
• Getty, pp. 37–88, For discussion of the spread of Ganesha worship to Nepal, Chinese Turkestan, Tibet, Burma, Siam, Indo-China, Java, Bali, Borneo, China, and Japan  
• Martin-Dubost, pp. 311–320.  
• Thapan, p. 13.  
• Pal, p. x.
- [6] Martin-Dubost, p. 2.
- [7] For Ganesha’s role as an eliminator of obstacles, see commentary on Gaṇapati Upaniṣad, verse 12 in Saraswati 2004, p. 80
- [8] Heras 1972, p. 58
- [9] These ideas are so common that Courtright uses them in the title of his book, *Ganesha: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings*.
- [10] Getty, p. 5.
- [11] Narain, A. K. “Gaṇeśa: The Idea and the Icon” in Brown 1991, p. 27
- [12] For history of the development of the *gāṇapatya* and their relationship to the wide geographic dispersion of Ganesha worship, see: Chapter 6, “The Gāṇapatyas” in: Thapan (1997), pp. 176–213.
- [13] Courtright, pp. 212–213.
- [14] For an English translation of *Ganesha Purana* 1.46, see: Bailey, pp. 258–269.
- [15] • Narain, A. K. “Gaṇeśa: A Protohistory of the Idea and the Icon”. Brown, pp. 21–22.  
• Apte, p. 395.
- [16] For the derivation of the name and relationship with the gaṇas, see: Martin-Dubost. p. 2.
- [17] Apte, p. 395.
- [18] The word gaṇa is interpreted in this metaphysical sense by Bhāskaraṛāya in his commentary on the gaṇeśasahasranāma. See in particular commentary on verse 6 including names Gaṇeśvaraḥ and Gaṇakṛīḍaḥ in: Śāstri Khiste 1991, pp. 7–8.
- [19] • Oka 1913, p. 8 for source text of Amarakośa 1.38 as vināyako vighnarājadvaimāturagaṇādhipāḥ – apyekadanta herambalambodaragajānanāḥ.  
• Śāstri 1978 for text of *Amarakośa* versified as 1.1.38.
- [20] Y. Krishan (Gaṇeśa: Unravelling an Enigma, p.6): “Pārvati who created an image of Gaṇeśa out of her bodily impurities but which became endowed with life after immersion in the sacred waters of the Gangā. Therefore he is said to have two mothers—Pārvati and Gangā and hence called dvaimātura and also Gāngeya.”
- [21] Krishan p.6
- [22] Thapan, p. 20.
- [23] For the history of the aṣṭavināyaka sites and a description of pilgrimage practices related to them, see: Mate, pp. 1–25.
- [24] These ideas are so common that Courtright uses them in the title of his book, *Ganesha: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings*. For the name *Vighnesha*, see: Courtright 1985, pp. 156, 213
- [25] For Krishan’s views on Ganesha’s dual nature see his quote: “Gaṇeśa has a dual nature; as Vināyaka, as a *grāmadevatā*, he is *vighnakartā*, and as Gaṇeśa he is *vighnahartā*, a *paurāṇic devatā*.” Krishan, p. viii.

- [26] Martin-Dubost, p. 367.
- [27] Narain, A. K. “Gaṇeśa: The Idea and the Icon”. Brown, p. 25.
- [28] Thapan, p. 62.
- [29] *Myanmar-English Dictionary*, Yangon: Dunwoody Press, 1993, ISBN 1-881265-47-1, retrieved 2010-09-20
- [30] Pal, p. ix.
- [31]
  - Martin-Dubost, for a comprehensive review of iconography abundantly illustrated with pictures.
  - Chapter X, “Development of the Iconography of Gaṇeśa”, in: Krishan 1999, pp. 87–100, for a survey of iconography with emphasis on developmental themes, well-illustrated with plates.
  - Pal, for a richly illustrated collection of studies on specific aspects of Ganesha with a focus on art and iconography.
- [32] Brown, p. 175.
- [33] Martin-Dubost, p. 213. In the upper right corner, the statue is dated as (973–1200).
- [34] Pal, p. vi. The picture on this page depicts a stone statue in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art that is dated as c. 12th century. Pal shows an example of this form dated c. 13th century on p. viii.
- [35] Brown, p. 176.
- [36] See photograph 2, “Large Ganesh”, in: Pal, p. 16.
- [37]
  - Martin-Dubost, pp. 197–198.
  - photograph 9, “Ganesh images being taken for immersion”, in: Pal, pp. 22–23. For an example of a large image of this type being carried in a festival procession.
  - Pal, p. 25, For two similar statues about to be immersed.
- [38]
  - Pal, pp. 41–64. For many examples of Ganesha dancing.
  - Brown, p. 183. For popularity of the dancing form.
- [39] Four-armed Gaṇeśa. Miniature of Nurpur school, circa 1810. Museum of Chandigarh. For this image see: Martin-Dubost (1997), p. 64, which describes it as follows: “On a terrace leaning against a thick white bolster, Gaṇeśa is seated on a bed of pink lotus petals arranged on a low seat to the back of which is fixed a parasol. The elephant-faced god, with his body entirely red, is dressed in a yellow dhoti and a yellow scarf fringed with blue.
- Two white mice decorated with a pretty golden necklace salute Gaṇeśa by joining their tiny feet together. Gaṇeśa counts on his rosary in his lower right hand; his two upper hands brandish an axe and an elephant goad; his fourth hand holds the broken left tusk.”
- [40] Nagar, p. 77.
- [41] Brown, p. 3.
- [42] Nagar, p. 78.
- [43] Brown, p. 76.
- [44] Brown, p. 77.
- [45] Brown, pp. 77–78.
- [46] Brown, pp. 76–77.
- [47] For creation of Ganesha from Shiva’s laughter and subsequent curse by Shiva, see *Varaha Purana* 23.17 as cited in Brown: p. 77.
- [48] Getty, p. 1.
- [49] Heras, p. 29.
- [50] Granoff, Phyllis. “Gaṇeśa as Metaphor”. Brown, p. 90.
- [51] “Ganesha in Indian Plastic Art” and *Passim*. Nagar, p. 101.
- [52] Granoff, Phyllis. “Gaṇeśa as Metaphor”. Brown, p. 91.
- [53] For translation of *udara* as “belly” see: Apte, p. 268.
- [54]
  - *Br. P.* 2.3.42.34
  - Thapan, p. 200, For a description of how a variant of this story is used in the *Mudgala Purana* 2.56.38–9
- [55] For an iconographic chart showing number of arms and attributes classified by source and named form, see: Nagar, pp. 191–195. Appendix I.
- [56] For history and prevalence of forms with various arms, and the four-armed form as one of the standard types, see: Krishan 1999, p. 89.
- [57]
  - Krishan 1999, p. 89, For two-armed forms as an earlier development than four-armed forms.
  - Brown, p. 103. Maruti Nandan Tiwari and Kamal Giri say in “Images of Gaṇeśa In Jainism” that the presence of only two arms on a Ganesha image points to an early date.
- [58] Martin-Dubost, p. 120.



- [59] • Martin-Dubost, p. 202, For an overview of snake images in Ganesha iconography.
- Krishan 1999, pp. 50–53, For an overview of snake images in Ganesha iconography.
- [60] • Martin-Dubost, p. 202. For the Ganesha Purana references for Vāsuki around the neck and use of a serpent-throne.
- Krishan 1999, pp. 51–52. For the story of wrapping Vāsuki around the neck and Śeṣa around the belly and for the name in his sahasranama as Sarpagraiveyakāṅgādaḥ (“Who has a serpent around his neck”), which refers to this standard iconographic element.
- [61] • Martin-Dubost, p. 202. For text of a stone inscription dated 1470 identifying Ganesha’s sacred thread as the serpent Śeṣa.
- Nagar, p. 92. For the snake as a common type of *yajñyopavīta* for Ganesha.
- [62] • Nagar, p. 81. For third eye or Shaiva *tilaka* with three horizontal lines.
- the *dhyānam* in: Sharma (1993 edition of *Ganesha Purana*) I.46.1. For Ganesha visualized as *trinetrām* (having three eyes).
- [63] • Nagar, p. 81. For citation to *Ganesha Purana* I.14.21–25 and For citation to *Padma Purana* as prescribing the crescent for decoration of the forehead of Ganesha
- Bailey (1995), pp. 198–199. For translation of *Ganesha Purana* I.14, which includes a meditation form with moon on forehead.
- [64] • Nagar, p. 81. For Bhālacandra as a distinct form worshipped.
- Sharma (1993 edition of *Ganesha Purana*) I.46.15. For the name Bhālacandra appearing in the Ganesha Sahasranama
- [65] Nagar, Preface.
- [66] “The Colors of Ganesha”. Martin-Dubost, pp. 221–230.
- [67] Martin-Dubost, pp. 224–228
- [68] Martin-Dubost, p. 228.
- [69] Krishan, pp. 48, 89, 92.
- [70] Krishan, p. 49.
- [71] • Krishan, pp. 48–49.
- Bailey (1995), p. 348. For the Ganesha Purana story of Mayūreśvara with the peacock mount (GP I.84.2–3)
- Maruti Nandan Tiwari and Kamal Giri, “Images of Gaṇeśa In Jainism”, in: Brown, pp.101–102.
- [72] • Nagar. Preface.
- Martin-Dubost, pp. 231–244.
- [73] See note on figure 43 in: Martin-Dubost, p. 144.
- [74] Citations to *Matsya Purana* 260.54, *Brahmananda Purana Lalitamahatmya* XXVII, and *Ganesha Purana* 2.134–136 are provided by: Martin-Dubost, p. 231.
- [75] Martin-Dubost, p. 232.
- [76] For Mūṣakavāhana see v. 6. For Ākhuketana see v. 67. In: *Gaṇeśasahasranāmastotram: mūla evaṁ sṛbhāskararāyakra ‘khadyota’ vārtika sahīta*. (Prācya Prakāśana: Vārāṇasī, 1991). Source text with a commentary by Bhāskararāya in Sanskrit.
- [77] For a review of different interpretations, and quotation, see: Grimes (1995), p. 86.
- [78] *A Student’s Guide to AS Religious Studies for the OCR Specification*, by Michael Wilcockson, pg.117
- [79] Krishan pp. 49–50.
- [80] • Martin-Dubost, p. 231.
- Rocher, Ludo. “Gaṇeśa’s Rise to Prominence in Sanskrit Literature”, in: Brown (1991), p. 73. For mention of the interpretation that “the rat is ‘the animal that finds its way to every place,’ extquotedbl
- [81] “Lord of Obstacles”, a common name, appears in the title of Courtright’s *Gaṇeśa: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Blessings*. For equivalent Sanskrit names *Vighneśvara* and *Vighnarāja*, see: Courtright, p. 136.
- [82] Courtright, p. 136.
- [83] For Dhavilkar’s views on Ganesha’s shifting role, see Dhavalikar, M. K. “Gaṇeśa: Myth and reality” in Brown 1991, p. 49
- [84] Brown, p. 6.
- [85] Nagar, p. 5.
- [86] Apte, p. 703.
- [87] *Ganesha Purana* I.46, v. 5 of the Ganesha Sahasranama section in GP-1993, Sharma edition. It appears in verse 10 of the version as given in the Bhaskararaya commentary.

- [88] Sharma edition, GP-1993 I.46, verses 204–206. The Bailey edition uses a variant text, and where Sharma reads *Buddhipriya*, Bailey translates *Granter-of-lakhs*.
- [89] Practical Sanskrit Dictionary By Arthur Anthony McDonell; p.187 (*priya*); Published 2004; Motilal Banarsidass Publ; ISBN 81-208-2000-2
- [90] Krishan 1999; pp. 60–70 discusses Ganesha as “Buddhi’s Husband”.
- [91] Grimes, p. 77.
- [92] Chinmayananda, p. 127. In Chinmayananda’s numbering system, this is *upamantra* 8.
- [93] For examples of both, see: Grimes, pp. 79–80.
- [94] Tantra Unveiled: Seducing the Forces of Matter & Spirit By Rajmani Tigunait; Contributor Deborah Willoughby; Published 1999; Himalayan Institute Press; p. 83; ISBN 0-89389-158-4
- [95] Translation. Courtright, p. 253.
- [96] Chinmayananda, op. cit., p. 127. In Chinmayananda’s numbering system this is part of *upamantra* 7. ‘You have a permanent abode (in every being) at the place called “Muladhara extquotedbl’.
- [97] This work is reproduced and described in Martin-Dubost (1997), p. 51, which describes it as follows: “This square shaped miniature shows us in a Himalayan landscape the god Śiva sweetly pouring water from his kamaṇḍalu on the head of baby Gaṇeśa. Seated comfortably on the meadow, Pārvaṭī balances with her left hand the baby Gaṇeśa with four arms with a red body and naked, adorned only with jewels, tiny anklets and a golden chain around his stomach, a necklace of pearls, bracelets and armlets.”
- [98] • Nagar, pp. 7–14. For a summary of Puranic variants of birth stories.  
• Martin-Dubost, pp. 41–82. Chapter 2, “Stories of Birth According to the Purāṇas”.
- [99] *Shiva Purana* IV. 17.47–57. *Matsya Purana* 154.547.
- [100] *Varāha Purana* 23.18–59.
- [101] For summary of *Brahmavaivarta Purana*, *Ganesh Khandā*, 10.8–37, see: Nagar, pp. 11–13.
- [102] Melton, J. Gordon (2011-09-13). *Religious Celebrations: An Encyclopedia of Holidays, Festivals, Solemn Observances, and Spiritual Commemorations*. ABC-CLIO. pp. 325–. ISBN 9781598842050. Retrieved 16 June 2014.
- [103] For a summary of variant names for Skanda, see: Thapan, p. 300.
- [104] Khokar and Saraswati, p.4.
- [105] Brown, p. 4, 79.
- [106] Gupta, p. 38.
- [107] For a review, see: Cohen, Lawrence. “The Wives of Gaṇeśa”. Brown, pp. 115–140
- [108] • Getty 1936, p. 33. “According to ancient tradition, Gaṇeśa was a Brahmācārīn, that is, an unmarried deity; but legend gave him two consorts, personifications of Wisdom (Buddhi) and Success (Siddhi).”  
• Krishan 1999, p. 63. extquotedbl... in the *smārta* or orthodox traditional religious beliefs, Gaṇeśa is a bachelor or *brahmācārī* extquotedbl
- [109] For discussion on celibacy of Ganesha, see: Cohen, Lawrence, “The Wives of Gaṇeśa”, in: Brown 1991, pp. 126–129.
- [110] For a review of associations with Buddhi, Siddhi, Riddhi, and other figures, and the statement “In short the spouses of Gaṇeśa are the personifications of his powers, manifesting his functional features...”, see: Krishan 1999, p. 62.
- [111] For single consort or a nameless *daśī* (servant), see: Cohen, Lawrence, “The Wives of Gaṇeśa”, in: Brown 1991, p. 115.
- [112] For associations with Śarda and Sarasvatī and the identification of those goddesses with one another, see: Cohen, Lawrence, “The Wives of Gaṇeśa”, in: Brown 1991, pp. 131–132.
- [113] For associations with Lakshmi see: Cohen, Lawrence, “The Wives of Gaṇeśa”, in: Brown 1991, pp. 132–135.
- [114] For discussion of the Kala Bou, see: Cohen, Lawrence, “The Wives of Gaṇeśa”, in: Brown 1991, pp. 124–125.
- [115] For statement regarding sons, see: Cohen, Lawrence, “The Wives of Gaṇeśa”, in: Brown 1991, p. 130.
- [116] • Cohen, Lawrence. “The Wives of Gaṇeśa”. Brown, pp. 130.  
• Thapan, pp. 15–16, 230, 239, 242, 251.
- [117] Krishan pp.1–3
- [118] K.N. Somayaji, *Concept of Ganesha*, p.1 as quoted in Krishan pp.2–3
- [119] Krishan p.38
- [120] For worship of Ganesha by “followers of all sects and denominations, Saivites, Vaisnavites, Buddhists and Jainas” see Krishan 1981–1982, p. 285

- [121] Grimes p.27
- [122] The term *modaka* applies to all regional varieties of cakes or sweets offered to Ganesha. Martin-Dubost, p. 204.
- [123] Martin-Dubost, p. 204.
- [124] Martin-Dubost, p. 369.
- [125] Martin-Dubost, pp. 95–99.
- [126] Thapan p.215
- [127] For the fourth waxing day in Māgha being dedicated to Ganesa (Gaṇeśa-caturthī) see: Bhattacharyya, B., “Festivals and Sacred Days”, in: Bhattacharyya, volume IV, p. 483.
- [128] *The Experience of Hinduism: Essays on Religion in Maharashtra*; Edited By Eleanor Zelliott, Maxine Berntsen, pp.76–94 (“The Ganesha Festival in Maharashtra: Some Observations” by Paul B. Courtright); Published 1988; SUNY Press; ISBN 0-88706-664-X
- [129] Metcalf and Metcalf, p. 150.
- [130] • Brown (1992), p. 9.  
• Thapan, p. 225. For Tilak’s role in converting the private family festivals to a public event in support of Indian nationalism.
- [131] • Momin, A. R., *The Legacy Of G. S. Ghurye: A Centennial Festschrift*, p. 95.  
• Brown (1991), p. 9. For Ganesha’s appeal as “the god for Everyman” as a motivation for Tilak.
- [132] For Tilak as the first to use large public images in *maṇḍapas* (pavilions or tents) see: Thapan, p. 225.
- [133] For Ganesh Chaturthi as the most popular festival in Maharashtra, see: Thapan, p. 226.
- [134] “Gaṇeśa in a Regional Setting”. Courtright, pp. 202–247.
- [135] Krishan p.92
- [136] Brown p.3
- [137] Grimes, pp. 110–112
- [138] Krishan pp. 91–92
- [139] T.A.Gopinatha; *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, pp 47–48 as quoted in Krishan p.2
- [140] Krishan pp.147–158
- [141] “Ganesha Temples worldwide”.
- [142] *The first stage goes back in time by about 1600 years*. Retrieved 2007-05-25.
- [143] Narain, A. K. “Gaṇeśa: A Protohistory of the Idea and the Icon”, in: Brown, p. 19.
- [144] Nagar, p. 4.
- [145] Narain, A. K. “Gaṇeśa: A Protohistory of the Idea and the Icon”. Brown, pp. 19–20.
- [146] Courtright, pp. 10–11.
- [147] Thapan, p. 75.
- [148] Nanditha Krishna. *Sacred Animals of India*. Penguin UK. p. 164.
- [149] “Loving Ganesha: Hinduism’s Endearing Elephant-faced God”, by Subramuniya, p. 268
- [150] Kumar, Ajit, 2007. “A Unique Early Historic Terracotta Ganesa Image from Pal” in Kala, The Journal of Indian Art History Congress, Vol XI. (2006-2007), pp. 89-91
- [151] • *Passim*. Thapan.  
• Rocher, Ludo. “Gaṇeśa’s Rise to Prominence in Sanskrit Literature”. Brown, pp. 70–72.
- [152] *Aitareya Brāhmana*, I, 21.
- [153] Bhandarkar. *Vaisnavism, Saivism and other Minor Sects*. pp. 147–48.
- [154] Krishan, p. vii.
- [155] For a discussion of early depiction of elephant-headed figures in art, see Krishan 1981–1982, pp. 287–290 or Krishna 1985, pp. 31–32
- [156] Ellawala, p. 159.
- [157] Wilson, H. H. *Ṛgveda Samhitā*. Sanskrit text, English translation, notes, and index of verses. Parimal Sanskrit Series No. 45. Volume II: Maṇḍalas 2, 3, 4, 5. Second Revised Edition; Edited and Revised by Ravi Prakash Arya and K. L. Joshi. (Parimal Publications: Delhi, 2001). ISBN 81-7110-140-9 (Vol. II); ISBN 81-7110-138-7 (Set). RV 2.23.1 (2222) gaṇānām tvā gaṇapatim havāmahe kaviṃ kavīnāmupamaśravastamam | 2.23.1; “We invoke the Brahmaṇaspati, chief leader of the (heavenly) bands; a sage of sages.”
- [158] • Nagar, p. 3.  
• Rao, p. 1.
- [159] Rocher, Ludo. “Gaṇeśa’s Rise to Prominence in Sanskrit Literature”. Brown, p. 69. Bṛhaspati is a variant name for Brahamanaspati.

- [160] Rocher, Ludo. "Gaṇeśa's Rise to Prominence in Sanskrit Literature". Brown, pp. 69–70.
- [161] Wilson, H. H. *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā*. Sanskrit text, English translation, notes, and index of verses. Parimal Sanskrit Series No. 45. Volume IV: Maṇḍalas 9, 10. Second Revised Edition; Edited and Revised by Ravi Prakash Arya and K. L. Joshi. (Parimal Publications: Delhi, 2001). ISBN 81-7110-142-5 (Vol. IV); ISBN 81-7110-138-7 (Set). RV 10.112.9 (10092) ni ṣu sīda gaṇapate gaṇeṣu tvāmāhurvipratamaṃ kavīnām; "Lord of the companies (of the *Maruts*), sit down among the companies (of the worshippers), they call you the most sage of sages".
- [162] For use of RV verses in recent Ganapatya literature, see Rocher, Ludo. "Gaṇeśa's Rise to Prominence in Sanskrit Literature" in Brown 1991, p. 70
- [163] The verse : "tāt karāṭyāya vidmahe | hastimukhāya dhīmahi | tāt no dāntī pracodāyāt | extquotedbl
- [164] The verse: extquotedbl tāt pūruṣāya vidmahe vakratuṅḍāya dhīmahi | tāt no dāntī pracodāyāt | extquotedbl
- [165] For text of *Maitrāyaṇīya Saṃhitā* 2.9.1 and *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* 10.1 and identification by Sāyaṇa in his commentary on the āraṇyaka, see: Rocher, Ludo, "Gaṇeśa's Rise to Prominence in Sanskrit Literature" in Brown 1991, p. 70.
- [166] Taittirīya Aranyaka, X, 1, 5.
- [167] Heras, p. 28.
- [168] • Krishan 1981–1982, p. 290  
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- [170] Rocher, Ludo "Ganesa's Rise to Prominence in Sanskrit Literature". Brown, pp. 71–72.
- [171] *Mahābhārata* Vol. 1 Part 2. Critical edition, p. 884.
- [172] For statement that "Fifty-nine manuscripts of the *Ādi-parvan* were consulted for the reconstruction of the critical edition. The story of Gaṇeśa acting as the scribe for writing the *Mahābhārata* occurs in 37 manuscripts", see: Krishan 1999, p. 31, note 4.
- [173] Brown, p. 4.
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- [175] For interpolations of the term vināyaka see: Krishan 1999, p. 29.
- [176] For reference to Vighnakartṛiṅām and translation as "Creator of Obstacles", see: Krishan 1999, p. 29.
- [177] Brown, p. 183.
- [178] Krishan, p. 103.
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- [180] • Courtright, p. 163. For Dating of the *pañcāyatana pūjā* and its connection with Smārta Brahmins.  
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- [181] • Grimes, p. 162.  
• Pal, p. ix.
- [182] Thapan, pp. 196–197. Addresses the *pañcāyatana* in the Smārta tradition and the relationship of the *Ganesha Purana* and the *Mudgala Purana* to it.
- [183] For a review of major differences of opinions between scholars on dating, see: Thapan, pp. 30–33.
- [184] Preston, Lawrence W., "Subregional Religious Centers in the History of Maharashtra: The Sites Sacred to Gaṇeśa", in: N. K. Wagle, ed., *Images of Maharashtra: A Regional Profile of India*. p.103.
- [185] R.C. Hazra, "The Gaṇeśa Purāṇa", *Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute* (1951):79–99.
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- [188] Courtright, p. 252.
- [189] This work and its description are shown in Pal, p. 125.
- [190] For a representation of this form identified as Maharakta, see Pal, p. 130.

- [191] Nagar, p. 175.
- [192] Nagar, p. 174.
- [193] Thapan, p. 170.
- [194] Thapan, p. 152.
- [195] Getty, p. 55.
- [196] Getty, pp. 55–66.
- [197] Getty, p. 52.
- [198] Brown, p. 182.
- [199] • Nagar, p. 175.  
• Martin-Dubost, p. 311.
- [200] Getty, pp. 37–45.
- [201] Getty, p. 37.
- [202] Getty, p. 38.
- [203] Getty, p. 40.
- [204] Nagar, p. 185.
- [205] Wayman, Alex (2006). *Chanting the Names of Manjushri*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers: p.76 . ISBN 81-208-1653-6
- [206] • Getty, p. 42  
• Nagar, p. 185.
- [207] Nagar, pp. 185–186.
- [208] Martin-Dubost, p. 311.
- [209] Martin-Dubost, p. 313.
- [210] Krishan, p. 121.
- [211] Thapan, p. 157.
- [212] Thapan, pp. 151, 158, 162, 164, 253.
- [213] Krishan, p. 122.
- [214] Thapan, p. 158.

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## 10 External links

- Ganesh: Symbol and presence

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Mjbmrbot, ClueBot NG, Ramtulsio, Marshej, Gareth Griffith-Jones, Pebble101, Nobody60, CocuBot, A B VYAS, Nm 2010, Pavanpotti, Aristitleism, Nmuralireddy1, Anupamrocks, Nirmal786 niru, Bsathish78, ConconJondor, Iceeshwinn, Benjamín Preciado, Frietjes, Cntras, O.Koslowski, Ashwinikumar786, Catesb, Thirumuruganramakrishnan, Widr, Miket84, Irrigator, Ganeshafan, Helpful Pixie Bot, Astroamit, AnsarParacha, Curb Chain, Titodutta, Brahmilight, Calabe1992, SAMMUY, MKar, Gabriel Yuji, MusikAnimal, Kassie1910, User mj, Kadamburvijay, Rahulmothiya, Bhojaldham, Upthebutt123, Alarbus, Mayuresh mungekar, Bonkers The Clown, Tamraavidhir, Dav subrajathan.357, LegacyOfValor, Fatbuu, Khazar2, Soulparadox, Aaryamaan, Mastermind.mgm, Arunix, Dexbot, Magentic Manifestations, Mogism, Jeccabreen, Ritik18, Lugia2453, SFK2, Graphium, Prasann kanade, Dessaigirijay, RAJENDRA KUMAR JAT, Soulsdone3, Nikhsgreat, Goldduck58, Fatbuu1000, Cathfolant, Sanjay Binnani “Jai Ganesh”, Dainushka, Forgot to put name, Vinay.samant, KD-Singhania, Y4671161, Eshwar.om, Aditya thaokar, Kinderlander, Agletarang, Okkisafire, L.P.Bigollo, Horst 75, Coolgama, Ugog Nizdast, Gowdaxyz, Zenibus, Samputiwiki, Citrusbowler, Ginsuloft, The Rahul Jain, Bladesmulti, Trahuls, Samenewguy, JaconaFrere, Morganmclaughlin, Indianonline77, Inphynite, CopperCopperSilver, Monkbot, Hayhaykids, Millionmiles101, Wayoyo, Sameertilloo, Kajaganath, Greecoroman, Sdonti10, Abcd224 and Anonymous: 800

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