

-Glory of Lord Ganesh-

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Lord Ganesh, the God, is worshiped by the Hindus, in the form of an idol with an elephant face, human body mounted on a rat. In Hinduism, which is only a way of life based on religious concepts of Sanathana Dharma, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagawad Gita, and various types of Puranas, Lord Ganesh occupies a highly venerated place. From times immemorial He is worshiped by people of all classes, high & low, rich & poor, young & old, men & women of all castes. color, occupations, primarily for favor of removing all obstacles in their progress and for grant of special boons. He is worshipped even by Vaishnavites who are traditionally opposed to worship any form associated with Shiva as Ganesh is. There are also many instances of people of non-Hindu faith believing in the super-natural powers of this 'God' and participating in various celebrations and festivities associated with Ganesh. One of the earliest depiction of Ganesh amongst the Jain community is in Mathura with the figure of an Yakshi Ambika. The two famous Digambara Jain caves in Udaigiri and Khandagiri in Orissa both contain images of Ganesha and some of the earliest Jain literature of 12th Century refer to Ghatodhara (pot-bellied) Vinayaka etc. Temples for Ganesh exist not only all over India but also in other parts of world like China , South East Asia, South America, U.S.A etc.. In India, in each city there will be a number of temples of Ganesh. In the city of Mumbai alone there are about fourteen temples of Ganesh. In fact, in almost all Hindu temples and also in all Hindu religious functions, Lord Ganesh is the first to be invoked and worshiped before commencement of the main events.

From legendary literature, Ganesh is the first son of Lord Shiva and Parvathi , who are symbolically the great forces in Nature to make dynamic changes in the Universe and destroy all types of evils and negative influences on mankind. These are the powers beyond human control. Ganesh is said to have been born to his parents not in the usual biological phenomenon but externally by cosmic influences and reactions. That is why he is known as 'Manasik Putra' son of Cosmic Mind. Several attempts were made by the great Rishis to explain these cosmic influences and reactions in the form of popular stories for the understanding of the common man but basically it signifies that the new born baby 'Ganesh' was an entity endowed with unlimited cosmic powers . He is therefore known also by several other names like Vighneswara, Ganapathi Lambodara etc to highlight the powers attributed to him. Ganesh himself with his two consorts Buddhi (Intelligence) and Siddhi (Achievement) symbolizes 'Wisdom'. The icon of elephant head and riding on a small mouse represents the possibility of heavy responsibilities being capable of intelligently working through the smallest of tools, material or spiritual. It also symbolizes how even small creatures can sustain great strength through wisdom. Legend says he was the first non-stop writer or stenographer for the epic Mahabharatha when the great sage Vyasa dictated the same non-stop.

Several stories of various manifestations or incarnations of Lord Ganesh and his powers, have been described in different Puranas or religious texts. As ordinary man can not easily comprehend a formless God, a non-physical Power, the sages of India developed idolatry form of worship and adoration and created many stories to describe the Power associated with Him... In this context there are several forms of idols of Ganesh, far exceeding those of any other God in Hindu mythology. .In a general way the idol of Ganesh consists mainly of an elephant head with one broken trunk, a huge abdomen with short legs , and his vehicle, a mouse standing nearby. He is adorned with garlands of tender flowers, fruits etc. He is shown generally with two or four hands but sometimes even up to twelve hands with various types of objects in the hands to depict his power, and indicate his favorite articles, for the devotees to concentrate on him depending on the particular aspect of life on which they are interested. He is usually shown holding sweets (Modakas, Ladoos etc.), sugarcane, bunch of corn-ears and also various types of weapons like bow & arrows, wheel, conch, sword, club, hammer, axe, noose, goad etc . Sometimes some special articles like honey, pot of gems, rosaries etc are also shown in his hands. He is also shown in different colors like orange, crimson, golden

yellow, blue, snow white, etc to depict his moods associated with what he has on his hands. Sometimes he is shown with his consorts on his lap and sometimes he himself in a feminine form known as Vinayaki.. One such is seen in a terracotta plaque from Rairh in Rajasthan said to belong to the first century. References to Vinayakis abound in Puranas. Matsya Purana mentions Vinayaki as one of the two hundred celestial mothers created by Lord Shiva to kill a very dangerous demon called Andhaka. Linga Purana mentions Malini as a demoness deity with an elephant head, often considered as the very first Vinayaki, also found amidst sculpture of Causath-Yogini temple in Jabalpur (M.P. India) The various types of idols designed and depicted to project various aspects of life have different names associated with them and some of these are mentioned below with very short descriptions

BALA GANESH: depicted as a child or boy with playful articles around him, sometimes in the lap of his father or mother (Shiva & Parvathi). Crimson color. Plenty of sweets around

NRITHYA GANESH: Shown with hands swaying in a dancing pose, and having divine ornaments on hands and legs. Crimson color, golden hued belly, and holding tusk and other articles.

SIMHA GANESH: Shown as lion faced elephant with one trunk; White in color; Holding wish yielding creeper, or a *veena* (a musical instrument), a lotus, a sword, and a pot of gems, and posed in boon giving gesture.

URDHVA (or UDVA) GANESH: In golden color, holding green colored goddess, blue flowers and usual favorite articles including a bow and arrows. Sometimes six hands are shown.

EKAKSHARA GANESH: Red in color, with a crescent moon in the crown; three-eyed, seated in *Padmasana* pose wearing serpent ornaments and hands holding usual articles and showing granting of boons desired by the devotees.

TRIAKSHRA (TRYAKSHA) GANESH: Also known as 'OM' Ganapathi Shown as sitting in the midst of 'OM' (A U M), the symbolic origin of Creation, Golden faced elephant with a sweet in his trunk. Different poses with usual articles are available.

DWIMUKHA GANESH: Two faced deity but only four hands, bluish green or turmeric yellow, red silk garments, crown with gems and with usual tools in hands in a mood as harbinger of prosperity.

TRIMUKHA GANESH: Three faced deity shining like a *Palasa* flower, red complexion, seated on golden lotus, left hand in a protective and right hand in a reward giving poses. Among others holds a pot of nectar and a rosary.

YOGA GANESH: As a great Yogi, in blissful meditation with yogic girdle and a staff (*Yogadanda*), color of morning Sun; blue garments; holding prayer beads, sugarcane and a noose

VARA GANESH: Vermilion (*Kumkum*) complexion, three eyes, crescent moon, dish of honey and pot of jewels in hands, with a greenly clad goddess holding a lotus and a flag seated in his lap.

DHUNDHI GANESH: As in city of Kashi in India, *Sindhu* color, prayer beads, pot of gems, a tusk, and an axe in his hands.

KSHIPRA PRASADA GANESH: Crimson in color, three eyed; Highly ornamented, seated on a throne of *Kusha* grass, holds a club, a sprig of *Kalpavriksha* tree, a dancing lotus along with other usual articles, ,

RUNAMOCHANA GANESH: Said to release humanity from bondage; white crystal like body clad in red silk garments, holding rose apple and tusk in hands.

DURGA GANESH: Huge body, golden and crimson complexions, yellow and red garments depicting the great power of destroying evil like goddess Durga. Eight hands carrying all tools of power.

HARIDRA GANESH: Turmeric yellow color with yellow garments; Three hands holding usual objects and fourth giving refuge to devotees

EKADANTHA GANESH: Single tusk, blue-black color, huge abdomen with axe and other usual articles in his hands and around

SHRISHTI GANESH: Posing as the Creator of Universe, red complexion riding on a huge mouse holding rope, noose, tusk, and mango

UDDANDA GANESH: Crimson in color; As punisher of evils, with greenly clad goddess on the lap; ten hands, holding all the usual sweets, fruits, weapons and also special articles like gems, gada(mace), pomegranate, red lily etc.

SANKATAHARA (or SANKASHTA) GANESH: As remover of sorrows, complexioned as the rising Sun, represented in a celebrate form but sometimes seated on a red lotus with greenly clad goddess on his lap; and holding specially blue flowers and *payasam* (milk boiled and sweetened with added ingredients like nuts) in addition to his usual favorite articles

TARUNA GANESH: Crimson colored and shining with brilliant youthfulness; six hands full of usual articles and specially rice cake and guava fruit.

BHAKTA GANESH: White colored ; Devotional mood; Coconut, Jaggery, and mangoes in hand.

VEERA GANESH: Twelve handed, armed with all weapons of power including *nagapasha* (Serpent noose), a spear, plough, and an axe.

SAKTI GANESH: With a complexion of a setting Sun, posing as a destroyer of fear, embracing tightly the greenly clad goddess holds his favorite articles in his hands

DWIJA GANESH: Color of the white moon with a face of a dignified elephant; Holds a book, rosary, staff, and *Kamandalam* (water bowl) in hands

SIDDHI GANESH: Golden color radiating with wealth and prosperity and usual articles on hand.

UCCHISTA GANESH: Blue in color, holding a blue lotus, pomegranate fruit, *Veena* (musical instrument), and a rosary, posing a protective mood

VIGHNA GANESH: Golden color; Adorns conch, *darbha* grass, and a dagger in addition to his usual articles; Well ornamented; powerfully posed to remove all obstacles and with twelve hands full of weapons along with other usual articles.

KSHIPRA GANESH: Glowing brilliantly like *bandhooka* flower and holding a pot of jewels and other usual articles.

HERAMBA GANESH: Snow white complexioned, two hands in a gesture of protection, riding a lion, having five elephant faces and eight hands with the usual articles

LAKSHMI GANESH: Snow white complexioned; Has a parrot in one hand, a sword, nectar, and usual articles in other hands ; Lotus bearing maidens serving Him on the sides; Engrossed in the trumpet sound of the elephant to indicate protection to the devotees.

MAHA GANESH (or MAHAGANAPATHI): Face of Divine elephant, crescent on the head, red in complexion, three eyed, embracing his consort with a lotus in her hand, and holding his other favorite articles.

VIJAYA GANESH: Crimson color, posed as a successful warrior after destroying all evil obstacles..

The above thirty two popular names and descriptions of Ganeshas are said to be found in some *Slokas*, (meditation verses) in the book *Tatwanidhi* composed by Maharaja Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodiar of Karnataka. Some of these names also occur in some legendary religious scriptures known as *Puranas*., In addition, there are also a few other names described in the same as incarnations of Ganesha, or special names given by Gods to indicate his power of killing various demons (*Asuras*) , that is symbolically , to his powers of destroying all evils and obstacles that confronted humanity . Some of these other names are given below.

MAHOTKATA: Said to have been born in *Krita Yuga* period of evolution, with ten hands , lion mounted, with dazzling brilliance, and killed two demons named Narantaka and Devantaka who were harassing both men and gods

MAYURESH: Said to have been born in *Treta Yuga* period of evolution, with six hands, riding on a peacock, and said to have killed s demon named Sindhu

GAJANANA: Said to have been born in *Dwapara Yuga* period of evolution, with four hands, crimson coloured, mounted on a mouse, and killed a demon named Sindur, There is also a story that he subdued Lobhasura born out of a fear in the celestial treasurer, Kubera, when his lustful eyes fell on goddess Parvathi

DHOOMRAKETU: Said to have been born in *Kali Yuga* period of evolution with only two hand, mounted on a horse, smoke colored, and killed a number of demons, that is prevented a number of obstacles and evils confronted by devotees and upheld *Dharma* (righteousness) which was fast decaying in this period.

GANAPATHI (or GANESH): A name given by visiting gods to the brilliant son of Parvathi on the auspicious occasion of his birth to indicate that the new born baby was indeed the true Lord of *Ganas* (Tamas, Rajas, & Satwa), the different states of human mind, This the most commonly used name by all devotees.

VINAYAKA: One of the names given by the gods at the time of his birth

SOORPAKARNA: Another of the several names given by the gods at the auspicious time of his birth

LAMBODARA: Said to have been born to kill a demon named Krodhasura (the evil of anger) who came into existence out of a disappointment of Lord Shiva when he could not satisfy his own passion on seeing Mohini, a seductive form of Vishnu to delude the demons

VAKRATUNDA: Riding a lion , said to have subdued a demon named Matasura (the evil of Rivalry) who is born out of carelessness of Indra , the chief of *Devtas*, and who conquered all gods including Siva himself.

EKADANTA: Said to have subdued a demon called Madasura who got a boon from Shakti to rule all the worlds and who wiped out all virtues and righteousness during his rule; Here 'Eka' stands for cosmic Maya and 'Danta' for Truth thus Ekadanta represents Supreme Truth revealing Maya in the Universe.

MAHODARA: Riding a mouse, said to have subdued a demon called Mohasura (Delusion) who got the boon of fearlessness and invincibility from Sun deity and conquered all the worlds

VIKATA: Riding on a pea-cock said to have subdued a demon called Kamasura (Lust) an embodiment of lust born out of seeds of Lord Vishnu. Thus He brought about salvation to *Devas* on their meditating on 'OM' at a place called Mayuresa Kshetra

VIGHNARAJA: Riding on the celestial serpent Sesha, said to have subdued and killed a demon called Mamasura who conquered all worlds and who is said to have been born out of *Mama*, the 'I- Ego' , of Parvati when one day she was found to be laughing and joking in a relaxed mood exhibiting egoism in the company of her friends.

DHUMRAVARNA: Said to have subdued a demon called Aham or Abhimanasura who is born out of the pride and ego of Sun god, on his power to control all the activities in the world.

Temples of Ganesh in India and other countries in Asia

Although there are so many incarnations, and different forms of Ganesh idols, it is hard to find specific temples for specific forms of Ganesh, and wherever he is worshiped most of the names are usually uttered in his praise and for invoking his blessings. In India , particularly in the South almost every Hindu house finds Ganesh in the house either as a picture post on the wall or in specific *puja* place or even as decorative piece in the drawing room etc . Almost every town has one or more Ganesh temples of different statures, depending on the traditions attached to them and attracting a variety of devotees. However the very prominent temples are situated in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. The Asta Vinayaka temples around Pune, in Maharashtra have attained considerable significance as a group with interesting legendary stories attached to each one of them. They are:

1. Mayureswar of Moregaon, on the banks of river Karha, constructed during Moghul period riding on a peacock said to have killed the demon Sindhu in response to various pleas from the *Devthas*
2. Siddhi Vinayak at Siddhhatek on the banks of river Bhima built by Queen Ahalyabai during Peswa's regime. He is said have come to the aid of Mahavishnu when he was engaged in a fierce battle with demons Madhu and Kaitabha.
3. Ballaleshwar of Pali located at about 110 Km from Pune. He is said to have helped an young lad who was highly devoted to Ganapathi.
4. Varad Vinayaka (bestower of boons) of Mahad between Pune and Khapoli built around 1690 during Maratha regime. In commemoration of a legend related to Rukmangada

5. Chintamani of Theur on the banks of river Mula-Mutha . Earlier temple renovated by Madhav Rao Peshwa. The legend relates to Kapila Muni and the Chintamani gem he obtained from Shiva

6. Girijatmaj of Lenyadri Parvat carved in mountainous cave about 230 Km from Mumbai and is supposed to be a manifestation of the God as an infant child

7. Vighneswar of Ozar also is almost near Lenyadri; and is supposed to have slain the demon Vignaasura

8. Mahaganapathi of Ranjangaon about 50 Km from Pune, built in 9th or 10th Century. In the basement of the main

temple a smaller idol exists with twenty hands and ten trunks and believed to be the very original one .He is said to have come to the aid of Shiva himself in destroying the demon Tripurasara.

In Tamil Nadu there are temples of Ganesh almost in every town but three most famous are given below:

1. Vatapi Ganapathi said to have been brought by Pallava kings during their conquest of Badami formerly known as Vatapi. And installed in the temple of Tevara Shivasthanam in the town of Tiruchankatankudu near Tanjavur.

2. Sweta Vinayaka, white coloured, said to have been formed by the foam of Ksheera Samudram (Milky ocean) installed in Tiruvalanchezil Shiva temple near Kumbakonam

3. Ucchi Pillayar at the rock-fort- Malaikottai, near Thiruchirapalli and associated with the stories from Ramayana. Also at the bottom of the hill there is Manikka Vinayakar temple equally famous.

In Andhra Pradesh there are many installations of Ganesh in almost all towns but one of recent times situated on the main road in Visakhapatnam, came to be known as Sampath Vinayaka and has been attracting lots of crowds in view of a legend that one thousand cocoanuts were broken by the Indian Navy in propiation of the God on the sinking of a Pakistani submarine in the Bay of Bengal, off the coast of Visakhapatnam. He is known for a ritualistic *Abhishekam* and granting boons to devotees.

Beyond the Indian frontiers, a few images of Lord Ganesh are found in Afghanistan. Some of them are suggestive of Gupta period of Indian history, because of sculpture styles similar to that available in Saranath, like close fitting coronet on the head, tight fitting necklet close to the neck, the *yagnopavith* of the god as a snake, the under garments as a short dhoti with designs of lions head, lotus buds, and in standing position indicating strong muscles of hands and legs etc. In Nepal a large number of images are found near Zimpi-tandu, Shanku, Thanket etc. One image dated 1695 in Khatmandu shows a rat under each foot and one has sixteen hands suggesting probably Heramba was the most popular form. A few images are found near the main gates of Buddhist temples in Tibet as guardians against demons and evil spirits. In Tibet some female forms of Ganesh are seen similar to Ganeshini in the 64-yogin temple at Bheraghat of Madhya Pradesh in India.. In Chinese Turkistan, near Khotan, Bezalik, and Thanket a number of bronze tablets and painted panels of Ganesh have been found, mostly in the classic Indian style but some with special characteristic art of the country like the trunk of the elephant face looking like a snout of a wild boar. In Mongolia where Mahakala, the only manifestation of Shiva, is the presiding God according to Buddhism, he is naturally accompanied by the dancing form of Ganesh, mounted on a rat, holding Chintamani jewel, an axe, a trident, and a

bowl of sweets. In Sri Lanka a fine image of Ganesh is sculptured on a pillar in a Shiva temple at Polonnaruva, and also an independent temple exists in Katargama about 150 miles from Colombo and where traditionally Christians and Muslims also worship the God. In Mynmar (Burma), a land of Mahayana

Buddhism, a number of images have been found dating to 5th or 6th centuries A.D. probably with the beginning of commercial activities by the Hindu traders from India. In Thailand, a clan known as Mons are devout Hindus and so several popular idols of Ganesh are found in that country. In the Hindu temple at Bangkok, Malasia an interesting bronze statue of Ganesh with legs superimposed, wearing a *Naga Yagnopavitha*, a serpentine sacred thread over the left shoulder, a manuscript on left hand, and a broken tusk on the right hand to signify his power of knowledge, and his capacity as a scribe of the great epic Mahabharata. In Cambodia also a number of Ganesh idols can be seen. One temple at Prasat Bak (10th Century) is wholly dedicated to Ganesh. In Cambodia Ganesh is known as 'Prah Kenes'. Some of the characteristic features of the idols in Cambodia are that they are not pot-bellied, the trunk is almost straight curled at the end, sometimes sitting with cross legged with *Naga Yagnopavita*. However in some later models of eighth Century Ganesh is shown wearing ornamented crown "Karand-Mukuta" or sometimes even with a conical head gear as per local fashions. A rare form of four-headed Ganesh is also found, similar to the four Ganesha images carved on the top of a column in Ghatiyala (Rajasthan). In the towns of Ponagar and Mison of Champa there are evidences to show Ganesh temples were built in 7th and 8th Centuries A.D In Java no separate temples seem to exist for Ganesh but his images are found in many Shiva temples. A stone statue found in Dieng is supposed to be the oldest in Java, another found in Chandi Banon is now supposed to be in Jakarta Museum. Some images as at Bara have skull ornaments because of his association with Siva as Bhairava wearing *Kapala Mala*, garland of skulls. This is dated 1239 A.D. Borneo statues are found with fan shaped ears, and almost straight trunks. One at Kotei is believed to be of 5th Century and probably the oldest. In China there is a fresco in a rock-cut cave at Tanhaung and another a stone image at Kung-hsien with inscriptional evidence of tracing it to 531 A.D., the earliest dated image so far. He is referred as 'Spirit king of elephants' Although Chinese and Japanese recognized two types of Ganesh, a single form of conventional Vinayaka type, and a double form known as 'Kangiten' type, the latter forms are worshiped by a cult started by Kukai (774-834 A.D.) of Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism. But it is not found commonly, and perhaps worshipped only secretly, because of a ban by the then emperor Chen Tsung in 1017. In Japan the most popular form is the dual form embracing a tall female figure Kangi in a robe. This form of Ganesh worship is said to have been introduced by a Buddhist monk named Kolso Daishi. In Japan there are also quite a number of temples of Ganesha with the usual ornaments and tools as in India. But in Kutuzen-cho form there are three heads, three eyes in each, seated on a mountain and popularly known as King of elephants.

Temples of Ganesh in other continents (Europe. Africa, Australia. Americas)

Most of the temples in these continents seem to be of recent origin though some rare idols are known to exist in South America. The historical aspects as to how these temples have come up are interesting because of changing social structures of immigrants together with formation of Hindu groups in the different countries and resources involved in the construction of separate temples for Ganesh or installation of Ganesh idols in other temples.

(Further information under collection . Readers supplying any information will be gratefully acknowledged by the author: e-mail address ACSEKHAR@AOL.COM Tel: 513 -533 -9758)

Some popular *Slokas* on Ganesh

*Om Vakrathundaya Vidmahe,
Eka Dathaya Dhimahi
Thanno Danti Prachodayat*

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| <p>1. Suklambaradharam Vishnum Sasivarnam Chaturbhujam
color and
Prasanna vadanam Dhyayet Sarva Vighnopa Santhaye
thee for</p> | <p>Dressed in white, O Lord, (of) moonlight
four hands, with cheerful face, I worship
peace and removal of all obstacles</p> |
| <p>2. Agajanana Padmarkam Gajanana Maharnisam
you have
AnekaDantham Bhaktanam Ekadantham Upasmahe
worship thee</p> | <p>Seated on Lotus, with an elephant face,
many devotees, O singlr tusked Lord, I</p> |
| <p>3. Lambodara Namastubhyam Sathatham Modakapriya
sweets,Let me
Nirvighnyam Kurumedeva Sarvakaleshu Sarvada
hindrance</p> | <p>O potbellied Lord, lover of Modak
worship thee at all times without any</p> |
| <p>4. Viswarupa Swarupaya Namaste Brahmacharine
protector
Bhaktapriyaya Devaya Namasthubhyam Vinayaka</p> | <p>O symbol of Brahma's Universe , and
of devotees, I worship thee O Vinayaka</p> |
| <p>5. Namasthe Brahmarupaya Vishnurupayathe Namaha
form
Namasthe Rudrarupaya Karirupayathe Namaha</p> | <p>I worship thee who is also another
of Vishnu Brahma and Siva</p> |

Short Puja Namavali of Gnesha

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| <p>1. Om Sumukhaya Namaha
Namaha</p> | <p>9. OmDhumaketave Namaha</p> | <p>17. Om Mushakavahanaya</p> |
| <p>2 Om Ekadanthaya Namaha
Namaha</p> | <p>10.Om Gaqndhakshaya Namaha</p> | <p>18. Om Modakahasthaya</p> |
| <p>3 Om Kapilaya Namaha
Namaha</p> | <p>11. Om Phalachandraya Namaha</p> | <p>19. Om Chamarakarnaya</p> |
| <p>4 Om Gajakarnaya Namaha
Namaha</p> | <p>12. Om Gajananaya Namaha</p> | <p>20. Om Vilambithasuthraya</p> |
| <p>5. Om Lambodaraya Namaha
Namaha.</p> | <p>13. OmVakratundaya Namaha</p> | <p>21. Om Vamanarupaya</p> |
| <p>6 Om Vikataya Namaha
Namaha</p> | <p>14. Om Surpakarnaya Namaha</p> | <p>22. Om Iswaraputhraya</p> |
| <p>7 Om Vighnarajaya Namaha
Varasiddhivinayakaya Namaha</p> | <p>15. Om Herambhaya Namaha</p> | <p>23. Om</p> |
| <p>8 Om Ganadhipathaye Namaha
Namaha</p> | <p>16. Om Scandagrajaya Namaha</p> | <p>24.Om Brahmanishtaya</p> |

Iti Sri Vighneswara Namavali Samapthaha Om Thatsath

Some popular Bhajan Songs

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| <p>1. Ganesha Saranam Saranam Ganesha
Sareesha Saranam Saranam Sareesha</p> | <p>Bageesha Saranam Saranam Bageesha
Ganesha Saranam Saranam ganesha</p> |
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- 2 .Jai Ganesha Jai Ganesha Jai Ganesha Pahimam
Jai Ganesha Jai Ganesha Jai Ganesha Rakshamam
- 3 Gowri Nandana Gajanan Girija Nndana Niranjana
Parvati Nandana Shubanana Pahi Pranomam Pahi Prasanamam
Gowri Nandana gajanana Girija Nadana Niranjan

The following is a poem invoking Vinayaki (female Ganesha) in a book text called Kumara dating back to 6th century

Prostrations to the Goddess VINAYAKI
Who is an elephant above the neck
And below is an youthful female
Salutations to Sakti-Ganapati who
Is vermilion, the color of the horizon
When the sun is about to set, her
Corpulent belly hangs out enticingly
Her breasts bend her waist with their
Weight and she sports ten splendid
Arms holding weapons.

Ashtothara Sathanamavali

(108 names of Ganesha for special Puja: Say 'OM' before and 'Namaha' at the end of every name)

Om Gajananaya Namaha	Om Chamikaraprabhaya Namaha	Om Vighathakarine Namaha
Om Ganadakshaya Namaha	Om Sarvaya Namaha	Om Vishwagdrushe Namaha
Om Vighnarajaya Namaha	Om Sarvopanyas aya Namaha	Om Viswarakshakruthe Namaha
Om Vinayakaya Namaha	Om Sarvakartre Namaha	Om Kalyanagurave Namaha
Om Dvaimatura Namaha	Om Sarvanethraya Namaha	Om Unmathaveshaya Namaha
Om Dwimukhaya	Om Sarvasiddhipradaya Namaha	Om Varajite namaha
Om Pramukhaya Namaha	Om Sarvasiddhaye Namaha	Om Samasthajagadharaya
Om Sumukhaya Namaha	Om Panchahasthaya Namaha	Namaha
Om Kruthine Namaha	Om Parvatinandanaya Namaha	Om Saraiswaryapradhaya Namaha
Om Supradeepaya Namaha	Om Prabhaye Namaha	Om Akranthachitachitra Namaha
Om Sukhnidhiye Namaha	Om Kumaragurave Namaha	Om Sri Vighneswaraya Namaha
Om Suradakshaya Namaha	Om Akshbhyaya Namaha	
Om Surarighnaya Namaha	Om Kunjarasurabhaya Namaha	
Om Mahaganapathaye Namaha	Om Pramodaya Namaha	
Om Manyaya Namaha	Om Modakapriyaya Namaha	
Om Om Mahakalaya Namaha	Om Kanthimathe Namaha	

Om Mahabalaya Namaha Om Herambhaya Namaha Om Lambajatharaya Namaha Om Harsvagreevaya Namaha Om Mahodaraya Namaha Om Mahothkataya Namaha Om Mahaviraya Namaha Om Manthrine Namaha Om Mangalaswarupaya Namaha Om Pramadaya Namaha Om Pradhamaaya Namaha Om Pragnaya Namaha Om Vighnakartre Namaha Om Vighnyahanthre Namaha Om Viswanethraya Namaha Om Viratpathaye Namaha Om Sripathaye Namaha Om Vakpathaye Namaha Om Srungarine Namaha Om Asrithvatsalaye Namaha Om Sivapriyaya Namaha Om Seegrakarine Namaha Om Saswathaya Namaha Om Bhavaya Namaha Om Bhalothithaya Namaha Om Bhavathmajaya Namaha Om Puranapurushaya Namaha Om Pushne Namaha Om Pushkarotshipthaya Namaha Om Agraganyaya Namaha Om Agrpujyaya Namaha Om Agragamine Namaha Om Nethrakruthe Namaha	Om Dhruthimathe Namaha Om Kamine Namaha Om Kapithaphalapriyaya Namaha Om Brahmacharine Namaha Om Brahmarupine Namaha Om Brahmavidyavibhute Namaha Om Jishnave Namaha Om Vishnupriyaya Namaha Om Bhaktajivithaya Namaha Om Jithamanmadhaya Namaha Om Eiswaryakaranaya Namaha Om Jayase Namaha Om Yaksharakinarasevithaya Namaha Om Gangasuthaya Namaha Om Ganadhisaya Om gambhiraninadhaya Namaha Om Vatave Namaha Om Abhishtavaradaya Namaha Om Jothishe namaha Om Bhaktanidhaye Namaha Om Bhavagamyaya Namaha Om Mangalaoradhaya Namaha Om Avyaktaya Namaha Om Apakruthaparakramaya Namaha Om Satyadharmaya Namaha Om Sakhai Namaha Om Sarasambunidhaya Namaha Om Mahesaya namaha Om Divyanganaya Namaha Om Manikinginemekha Namaha Om Samasthadevatha Namaha Om Sahishnavemurdha Namaha Om Satathothithaya Namaha	
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Vinayaki, the Female Ganesha

BY SATISH PUROHIT
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Source: Free Press Journal

The earliest evidence of a female Ganesha or Vinayaki is a weathered terracotta plaque from Rairh in Rajasthan, which is said to date back to the first century.

It is a figure of a corpulent human female body with an elephant head. References to Vinayakis also abound in the puranas. The Matsya Purana mentions Vinayaki as one of the two hundred 'celestial mothers' created by Mahadev, or Shiva to consume the blood of the fiery demon Andhaka. Linga Purana also mentions the deity. Malini, a demoness, who has an elephant head, drinks Paravati's bath water and is

honored by Shiva.

Malini, with her elephant-head and a human female's body is often said to be the first Vinayaki. Vinayaki is further seen depicted amidst the sculpture of Causath-Yogini temple in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. She stands regally, while Ganapati is shown supporting her right foot. Sri Kumara a text dating back to the sixth century invokes Vinayaki in the following words:

*Prostrations to the Goddess Vinayaki,
who is an elephant above the neck
and below is a youthful female.
Salutations to Sakti- Ganapati who
is vermilion, the color of the horizon
when the sun is about to set, her
corpulent belly hangs out enticingly,
her breasts bend her waist with their
weight and she sports ten splendid
arms holding weapons.*

Ganesh Worship in Japan

BY SATISH PUROHIT

Source: Free Press Journal

Scholars commonly date the presence of Ganesha in Japan with the age of Kukai (774- 834), the founder of the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism. The centrality of the worship of Ganesha or Vinayaka or Kangiten, as he is popularly called in Japan, is a distinguishing feature of this cult. The doctrines, rituals and beliefs of the sect have a number of parallels with the cult of Ganpatyas, to which belonged saints like Gajanan Maharaj of Shegao, Maharashtra.

China, the land through which the Elephant-headed divinity entered Japan has Ganesha Sculptures dating back to the fourth century, which surprisingly predates any depiction of Ganesh in India. Both the lands recognize Ganesha as having converted to Buddhism.

Ganesha's most popular form in Japan is the dual-Vinayaka or the Embracing Kangi. Two tall figures, elephant headed but human bodied, male and female, stand in embrace. The female wears a jeweled crown, a patched monks robe and a red surplice.

Her tusks and trunk are short. Her eyes are narrowed. Her body is whitish. The male neither wears a monk's robe nor a crown, though he may have a black cloth over his shoulders. His body is reddish brown. His trunk is long. His eyes are wide open. His countenance is not compassionate, but loving. His head rests on the female's shoulder. The feet of the female may rest atop the male.

Also called the Deva of bliss, Ganapati is invoked both for enlightenment and for worldly gains - more for the latter than the former. Katigen - Vinayaka is offered "bliss - buns" (made from curds, honey and parched flour), radishes, wine, and fresh fruits. The offerings are later partaken in the same spirit as Hindus take prasad. Whosoever fulfills the rituals of the dual Kangiten is believed to attain success in all worldly endeavors. The King Vinayaka mantra is as follows:

Noba binoyokkyasha Kashitchibokyasha taniyata on noyokka noyokka binoyokka tarayokka haritarayokka

shokyakashitchi shokyashita(senji kyara) sowaka'

Vishnu's boon to Ganesha

By Sunil Vaidyanathan

Source: Free Press Journal

O excellent God! O dearest one! May your puja be performed before that of any other god. Since he is the Lord (Isha) of all the ganas (Shiva's dwarf companions) he is known as Ganesha. Since he his stomach (Udara) is elongated (Lamba) he is known as Lambodara.

Ever since Prshurama broke off his tusk in a fierce duel he is left with just one (Ek) tusk (Danta) and so is named Ek Danta.

He is also called by various other names the most prominent among these being , Heramba, Vinayaka, Siddhi Vinayaka, Gajavakra and Guharaja. By Vishnu's decree, it was decided that Ganesh would be the god, who would be worshipped before any undertaking or before performing any ritual. According to the Brahma-vaivatra Purana/ Ganesh Khanda, Shiva and Paravati married their son Khanda, Shiva and Parvati married their son Kartikeya to the Goddess Shashti, also known as Devasena and Ganesh was married to Pushti. :