

Epigraphic Evidences of Narasingha Avatara of Jayadeva's Geeta Govinda

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The illustration of **Dasavatara Tattwa** in **Geeta Govinda** by Poet Shree Jayadeva is an epoch-making creation. The ten incarnation of **Lord Vishnu** has world wide acclamations.

Our **Oddisi** dance and music is enriched in this theme of **Dasa Avatara**. Among this ten incarnation **Narasingha Avatara** is a significant contribution of Kabi Shri Jayadeva. The description of **Narasingha** incarnation is found widely starting from stone, bronze, inscriptions, **Pattachitra** and also in palmleaf painting.

The **Narasingha Avatara** or the Man-lion form of *Vishnu*, in which *Hari* destroyed the infidel king *Hiranyakasipu*, who threatened his own son *Prahalada* with death because of his devotion to *Hari*, *Hiranyakasipu* had been given a boon of invulnerability by day or night by god, man or beast, inside or outside his palace, and to overcome it the god appears at twilight as a man-

lion form (*Narasingha Avatara*) inside a pillar and reaches out to destroy the king. The literary and epigraphic sources throw considerable light on this *Narasingha Avatara of Vishnu*.



The earliest epigraphic evidence on *Narasingha Avatara* is found from the *Sripura Stone Inscription*¹ of *Mahasivagupta Balarjuna* of *Panduvamsis* of 8th century A.D. The inscription begins with an invocation to *Purusottama*. Then the next three verses are elevated to the praise of *Narasingha Avatara* of *Vishnu*. The inscription describes that “*Narasingha* protect you, who looking with eagerness at his own nails, for the enemy *Hiranyakasipu* who had not been secured for being torn with these (claws) happened to see him hiding through

fear in the cavern-like cavity in the interior of the deep hollow of those (nails) with a laugh (at his foolishness in taking shelter in the place where he could easily crushed out) joy at finding him out he

spilt the demon at once with the point of the other claw and threw him away with wrath like dirt that had collected there.

The Gaya Inscription² which belongs to about the 7th decade of 9th century A.D. begins with an invocation to *Purushottama* and then immediately proceeds to describe and praise him “who conquers as *Jagatinatha* who appears as *Narasingha*, spreading his mane who has destructed by his nails the kings of the demon, that glorious *Lokai Kanatha*, *Jagannatha* and *Lokai Kanatha* are general epithet, which may be used for any god. However the fact remains that this inscription constitutes a close connection between *Narasingha* and *Purushottama Jagannatha*.

An indentity between the names *Purushottama* and *Narasingha* may have been intended by an inscription in *Khajuraho*³ dated 953 A.D., who coins a new word *Purushasimha*, here *Vasudeva* is addressed as the who incarnates in the form of boar and *Purushasimha*, *Purusha* may of course be used here in the form of man and *Simha* is lion or literary means man-lion incarnation.

The *Harsolm* copper plate⁴ grants of the *Paramara* king *Siyuka* open with in invocation of god *Vishnu* in his *Narasingha* incarnation.

The *Ajmer* stone inscription of the king *Vigraharaja* of the *Chauhan* dynasty⁵ refer the ten incarnation or *Dasa Avatara* like (1) *Kurma*, (2) *Mina*, (3) *Varaha*, (4) *Nrusingha*, (5) *Vamana*, (6) *Jamadagnya (Parasurama)*, (7) *Dasayanta Krit or (Dasarathi- Rama)*, (8) *Krushna*, (9) *Buddha* and (10) *Kalki*. It also states that how Lord *Vishnu* in his *Narasingha Avatara* killed the demon king *Hiranyakasipu*.

The *Chatesvara* Temple inscription of *Anangabhima* compares *Chodagangadeva* with

the *Narasingha* incarnation of the god *Vishnu*.

The *Yewar* stones⁶ inscription written in old *Kararese* language refers how the God *Vishnu* in his *Narasingha Avatara* torn the chest of the demon king *Hiranyakasipu*.

The *Narasingha* stone inscription⁷ of king *Vijala Deva* engraved on a black stone has been attached on the western wall of the *Jagamohana* of the temple of *Nrusimhanath*. The epigraph begins with an invocation to god *Narasimha* then it states that *Vijalacleva*, son of *Vatsa Rajadeva* having his residence in the town of *Patna* built this temple of *Vivala Nirasimhanatha Svami*, on the *Gandhamardana* hill for being blessed with a son through propitiation of the God. He also presented a necklace of precious stones along with 100 cows to the God.

References :

1. EI, Vol XI-184-202ff
2. Ibid-Vol XXXV-p247ff.
3. Ibid-Vol-1-p124
4. Ibid-Vol-IV
5. Ibid-Vol-XXIX-pp180-182ff.
6. Ibid-Vol-XII
7. IHQ-Vol-V-p345.

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