



All Glory To Śrī Rādhāramana!
All Glory To Śrī Guru And Gaurāṅga!

Śālagrāma-śilā

Śāstric Evidence Compiled by
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Offering hundreds of obeisances at his feet,
I dedicate this book to the loving memory of
my beloved father,
the late Śrī Viśvambhara Goswami,
who was my guide, well-wisher, and source of
inspiration. After him, I have been blessed with the
good fortune of daily worshiping his *śālagrāma-śilā*.

Contents

Rādhāramanajī, Self-Manifesting Deity	v
Foreword	vii
Appearance of Śālagrāma and Tulasi	1
Results of Worshipping	
Different Types of Śilās	5
Different Features of Śālagrāma-śilās	8
The Glories of Śālagrāma-śilā	13
Conversation of Śiva and Kārtikeya About Śālagrāma	15
Other Evidences	18
Different Results of Worshipping Many Śilās	19
Dvārakā-śilā	23
Identifying Symbols of Dvārakā-śilās	23
The Glories of Dvārakā-śilā	23
Benefits of Different Types of Dvārakā-śilās	24
Additional Information	26
Marriage of Śālagrāma and Tulasi	29
The Worship of Śālagrāma-śilā	31



Śrī Rādhāramanajī Self-Manifesting Deity

When Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu was touring South India, He spent the four months during the rainy season called Cāturmāsya in Śrī Raṅgam at the house of Vyeṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa, the chief priest of the Raṅganātha Temple. His son, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, was then able to serve the Lord to his heart's content. Being pleased by his devotion, Śrī Caitanya gave him initiation and ordered him to go to Vṛndāvana after the disappearance of his parents. There he should remain with Rūpa and Sanātana doing *bhajana* and writing books.

At the age of thirty, after the death of his parents, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa left for Vṛndāvana. When Lord Caitanya heard that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswami had arrived in Vṛndāvana and had met Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Goswami, He was very pleased. At that time Mahāprabhu had already visited Vṛndāvana. Although Rūpa and Sanātana had gone to visit Him in Purī, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa never received any invitation to go. Understanding his disappointment, Śrī Caitanya sent His personal *āsana* and cloth to him through Rūpa and Sanātana, which can still be seen on special festivals in Rādhāramana Temple.

Later when Gopāla Bhaṭṭa heard of the disappearance of Mahāprabhu, he felt intense separation from the Lord, having associated with Him only in his childhood. One night Lord Caitanya appeared in a dream and told him, "If you want my *darśana*, make a pilgrimage to Nepal." In Nepal, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa visited the river Gaṇḍakī. After taking his bath he filled his water pot and was surprised to see that

Foreword

some *śālagrāma-śilās* had entered it. Emptying his pot, he filled it again, only to find the *śilās* had re-entered his water pot. Again he emptied his pot, and when he filled it for a third time he found that now twelve *śālagrāma-śilās* were there. Thinking this must be the mercy of the Lord, he decided to bring those *śilās* with him to Vṛndāvana.

One day after returning to Vṛndāvana, a wealthy devotee approached Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswami with dresses and ornaments for his Deity. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa told him that as he was only worshiping a *śālagrāma-śilā*, it would be better to give to someone else who was worshiping a Deity and could use them. It happened to be *Nṛsimha-caturdaśī* and thinking deeply on this incident Gopāla Bhaṭṭa remembered how Lord Nṛsimhadeva had manifested from a stone pillar. He then began to pray to the Lord, "O Lord, you are very merciful and fulfill the desires of Your devotees. I wish to serve you in your full form." In ecstasy he read the chapters of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* about Lord Nṛsimhadeva's pastimes, and then took rest. In the morning when he awoke, he found that one of the twelve *śālagrāmas*, the *Dāmodara-śilā*, had manifested as Śrī Rādhāramana. The time of this writing, 1992, is the 450th anniversary of His appearance.

He immediately called Rūpa and Sanātana and all the other devotees. They were all astounded by the beauty of Śrī Rādhāramanajī. They remarked that from the feet to the waist He had the form of Śrī Maḍana-Mohanajī, His chest was like that of Śrī Gopināthajī and He had the moonlike face of Śrī Govindadeva. Then with the blessing of all the Vaiṣṇavas, he began the worship of Śrī Rādhāramanajī.

The present book has been translated mainly from the chapter on *śālagrāma-śilā* of *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* compiled by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswami, the disciple of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Collecting references from various Purāṇas and other Vedic scriptures, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswami has sought to resolve various arguments and doubts in relation with *śālagrāma-śilā*. In this translation we have humbly tried to carefully put before our readers the many evidences gathered by him from different *Purāṇas*.

After the disappearance of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, many devotees have begun the worship (*pūjā*) of *śālagrāma-śilā*. Thus over the years, devotees have been approaching us with numerous questions about both the *śālagrāma-śilā* and *dvārakā-śilā*. One devotee brought a shiny black stone he found in the sea, wishing to know if it could be a *śālagrāma-śilā*. According to the *Gautamīya Tantra*, however, a stone from any place other than the Gaṇḍakī River in Nepal can never be *śālagrāma-śilā*. We replied to another query that one should not make the mistake of thinking that due to its white color the *dvārakā-śilā* can be accepted as the form of Rādhārāṇī.

Due to poor fund of knowledge, it is possible the devotees may make some *āparādha*. Thus in this first attempt at writing in my life, it is my sincere desire to provide the devotees with as much information as possible about *śālagrāma-śilā*.

Before going to the West to preach, Śrīla Prabhupāda was a close friend for several years of Śrī Viśvambhara Goswami, an ācārya in the line of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Goswami. Śrīla Prabhupāda visited the temple of Rādhāramana many times and was impressed with the service of the Deity. Later Śrīla Prabhupāda often commented to his disciples how they should learn from the high standard of Deity worship and Vaiṣṇava etiquette of Rādhāramana Temple.

After reading this book somebody may question that since Lord Hari always resides in the *śālagrāma-śilā*, then what is the necessity to worship the temple Deity? I should simply worship my *śālagrāma-śilā*. In reply we may say that the Deity in the temple attracts the hearts of the devotees, so it is always the duty of the devotees to adore the temple Deity.

I am very much obliged to my wife, Śrīmatī Saroj Goswami, and Śrī Aṣṭaratha Prabhu who gave me full inspiration to do this work. I also wish to offer my heartfelt thanks to Ācārya Gaur Krishna Goswami, Mahānidhi Swami, Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi Dāsa, Dīna Bandhu Dāsa, Keśidamana Dāsa, Shah K. S. Gupta, Prema Rasa Dāsa, Daivī Śakti Devī, Nitya-siddha Līlā Dāsī and Veda Śāstrī Dāsī. They all assisted me with editing, typing, and other valuable services to help to bring this publication to light.

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Appearance of Śālagrāma and Tulasī

We are including the following history of the appearance of Śālagrāma and Tulasī from the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*. Though the description there is quite elaborate, we are presenting it here in brief.

There was once a king named Vṛṣadhvaja who, despite appearing in a dynasty of pious Vaiṣṇava kings, was strictly devoted to Lord Śiva. He had no faith in Lord Viṣṇu or any of the demigods, and even began to criticize the worship of Lord Viṣṇu. Seeing the offensive behavior of Vṛṣadhvaja, Sūryadeva cursed him to lose all his wealth and power. He and two generations of his descendants thus became destitute until the appearance of Dharmadhvaja.

Dharmadhvaja and his wife very devotedly worshiped Lakṣmīdevī to gain her favor and thus a plenary portion of Lakṣmī entered his wife's womb. On Kārtika Pūrṇima at a time marked with every auspicious sign, the wife of Dharmadhvaja, Mādhavī, gave birth to a very beautiful daughter. She was decorated with all fortunate signs and grew to be an exquisitely beautiful young girl never aging beyond sixteen years. Her beauty stole the mind and heart of everyone, and being impossible to compare her with anyone else, she became known as Tulasī (matchless).

Leaving home, Tulasī went to Badrī-vaṇ where she performed severe penances with a desire in her mind that Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself become her husband. Pleased with her austerities, Brahmājī appeared before her and asked what

boon she desired. Tulasī explained to him, “In my previous birth, I was a *gopī* named Tulasī. By my wonderful good fortune, I was able to become the very dearly beloved maid-servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. One day in the *rāsa-maṇḍala*, Rādhārāṇī angrily cursed me to be born on the earth in human society. Thus leaving my divine body, I have taken my birth on the earth in this present form. Now I desire the boon of attaining Lord Nārāyaṇa as my husband.”

Lord Brahmā replied, “There was one cowherd boy named Sudāma who also received Rādhārāṇī’s curse to be born on the earth. By that curse he has been born in the family of demons and is now famous on the earth as Śaṅkhacūḍa. He has done extreme penances to attain certain boons and to get you as his wife. Thus in this life he will become your husband for some time. Later by the influence of *līla* you will curse Lord Nārāyaṇa, but accepting your curse, Lord Nārāyaṇa will then become your husband. Lord Viṣṇu will love you more dearly than His own life, and without your presence all *pūjā* will be fruitless. By my boon, becoming the presiding deity of all the trees, you will freely enjoy unlimited happiness in the constant association of Lord Viṣṇu.”

Śaṅkhacūḍa, receiving his desired benedictions along with an all-auspicious protective shield (*kavāca*) from Lord Brahmā, came to Badrī-van where he met Tulasī. As they were conversing with each other, Lord Brahmā appeared on the spot and said, “Śaṅkhacūḍa, please accept this young maiden as your wife.” Turning to Tulasī he told her, “After the death of Śaṅkhacūḍa, you will obtain Lord Viṣṇu as your husband.”

The other boon that Śaṅkhacūḍa received from Lord Brahmā was that as long as the chastity of his wife was not violated, no one would be able to kill him. Thus becoming very arrogant, he began to terrorize all the demigods and human beings. Severely afflicted by his attacks, the demigods approached Lord Śiva and begged him to protect them. Then Lord Śaṅkara went there and personally began to fight with Śaṅkhacūḍa.

Meanwhile, Lord Viṣṇu made a plan to destroy the chastity of Tulasī. While Lord Śiva and Śaṅkhacūḍa were ferociously fighting, Lord Hari in the form of a *brāhmaṇa* arrived on the battlefield. He said to Śaṅkhacūḍa, “Please give your *kavāca* in charity to me, a *brāhmaṇa*.” Then Śaṅkhacūḍa immediately gave Him the *kavāca* in charity. That same Lord Hari, disguising Himself as Śaṅkhacūḍa then went to see Tulasī. Deceiving her in this way, He began to enjoy with her as if He were her husband and thus broke her chastity.

The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* goes on for great length to point out that there was certainly no fault on Lord Viṣṇu’s part. He wanted to maintain the benediction given by His devotee Lord Brahmā to Śaṅkhacūḍa, and at the same time He wanted to protect the demigods and devotees. For this purpose He created this particular pastime with the appearance of improper behaviour. But since Tulasī is the plenary part of Lakṣmīdevī, she is actually the wife of Lord Viṣṇu.

At that very moment Śaṅkarajī killed Śaṅkhacūḍa on the battlefield. When Tulasī understood all that had happened, she said, “By deceiving me, You have broken my

chastity, and killed my husband. You're absolutely stone-hearted! Thus I curse You to remain on earth as a stone!"

Lord Hari said, "For many years you underwent very difficult penances to achieve Me. At the same time, Śaṅkha-cūḍa has also done severe penances to get you. By the result of his austerity, he enjoyed you as his wife and has now gone to Goloka. Now you will get the fruit of your penances. Leaving this mortal body and taking a divine form, you will always remain with Me. Your present body shall turn into the river Gaṇḍakī, and from your hair will grow many trees famous as Tulasī. To fulfill your curse, I will become a stone (*śālagrāma-śilā*) and will always live on the banks of the Gaṇḍakī River. The millions of worms who live in that place will adorn those stones with the sign of My *cakra* by carving them with their sharp teeth." After this Lord Viṣṇu began to dwell perpetually in the waters of the Gaṇḍakī River in the form of stones.

The Results of Worshiping Different Types of Śilās

The *Gautamiya Tantra* states that the worshipable stones known as *śālagrāma-śilās* are only found in the Gaṇḍakī River in Nepal. According to the *Skanda Purāna*, these *śālagrāma-śilās* appear in various colors, shapes, and markings. Their color may be either black, blue, yellow, whitish, blood-red, or tawny colored. Their shape may be either smooth, rough, uneven, very plump, or frog-shaped. They may be without markings, marked with one *cakra*, many *cakras*, large *cakras*, broken *cakras*, a *cakra* in the middle of a circle, or with one *cakra* attached to another. Some *śālagrāma-śilās* exhibit a large mouth and others a down-turned mouth.

The *Skanda Purāna* also enumerates the good and bad results derived from venerating different types of *śālagrāma-śilās*. Worshiping a smooth *śilā* brings *mantra-siddhi* (perfection in the chanting of one's given *mantra*). Black *śilās* bestow fame, yellow *śilās* give sons, whitish *śilās* destroy one's sins, blue *śilās* increase wealth, and blood-red *śilās* bring diseases. Rough *śilās* create anxiety, uneven *śilās* give poverty, and fat *śilās* decrease one's life span. *Śilās* devoid of markings yield no results. If one mistakenly adores a *śilā* with the following qualities he will certainly get suffering: tawny colored, uneven, broken, with one *cakra*, too many *cakras*, large *cakras*, a circled *cakra*, a broken *cakra*, a *cakra* attached to another, with a large mouth, or with the mouth turned down.

The *Agni Purāṇa* mentions several types of *śālagrāma-śilās* whose worship brings unhappiness and never happiness. These include a *śilā* with a mouth like that of a snake, a broken *śilā*, one with *cakras* facing each other, with a circled *cakra*, a *śilā* with a protruding navel, a tawny-colored *śilā* known as *Nṛsimha*, a *śilā* with many lines inside the circle, and a *śilā* unidentifiable due to its confusing markings.

The *Agni Purāṇa* further describes many *śālagrāma-śilās* who award beneficial results to those who attentively worship Them. These benevolent *śilās* include those that are perfectly smooth, jet black in color, round like a pearl, natural (not made by hand), or with an evenly shaped *cakra*. The *Varāha-śilā*, the *Ananta-śilā*, the *śilā* with a deeply indented navel, the tiny *Vāsudeva-śilā* that has an evenly formed mouth, *śilās* shaped like *āmalakī* fruits, or those shaped like the palm of the hand (arched above and convex below) all give perfection. A devotee of the Supreme Lord should carefully adore his favorite *śālagrāma-śilā*. He will thus be blessed both in this world and the next.

As for the *śālagrāma-śilās* that bring misfortune and sadness, as mentioned above, one should understand that this is only for worshipers impelled by material desires. But for one free from material desires there is no harm to worship these *śilās*. Thus in the *Brahma Purāṇa* the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu states that any *śilā* from the place of *śālagrāmas* can never be inauspicious though cracked, chipped, split in two though still in one piece, or even broken asunder. Lord Śiva also confirms in the *Skanda Purāṇa* that even if a *śilā* is cracked, split, or broken it will have no harmful effect if it

is worshiped with attention and love by a devotee. It further states there that the Supreme Lord Hari, along with His divine consort, Lakṣmī, live in the *śālagrāma-śilā* that has either only the mark of a *cakra*, a *cakra* along with the mark of a footprint, or only a mark resembling a flower garland.

Some *ācāryas* say that the best *śālagrāma-śilā* is the smooth blackish one and that the blood-red *śilā* is the worst. But in the absence of the best type of *śālagrāma-śilā* one may worship an inferior one.

Different Features of Śālagrāma-śilās

In the *Brahma Purāṇa* Lord Nārāyaṇa says, “O Brahmā, I eternally reside in the form of *śālagrāma-śilā*. Hear from Me the different names of all these *śilās* according to the various *cakras* marking them.” The *Vāsudeva-śilā* is white in color, very attractive looking, and has two equal-sized *cakras* on the front, but off-center. The *Saṅkarṣaṇa-śilā* is red-colored, with two *cakras* combined in one section, a fat front portion, and is very beautiful to see. That yellow *śilā* with small *cakras* and a very large mouth with numerous small holes within is known as *Pradyumna*. The *Aniruddha-śilā* steals the mind with His blue color and naturally round shape. He has three lines in front of His mouth and a lotus mark on His back. The *Keśava-śilā* is square-shaped and gives great fortune. A black *śilā* with a *cakra* in His raised navel is called *Nārāyaṇa*. The *Hari-śilā* fulfills all desires, grants *mokṣa* (liberation), and especially gives wealth to the faithful worshiper. He has a long line and a mouth opening upward and placed right of center. The *Parameṣṭhi-śilā*, is colored red with marks of both a lotus and a *cakra*. The *Viṣṇu-śilā* is most attractive, but it will create problems if non-celibates do His *pūjā*. Black and shaped like a bael fruit, He has two big *cakras* with a large mouth on His back.

In another place it is described that the *Nṛsimhadeva-śilā* with three spots on it and the *Kapila-śilā* with five spots both have two wide *cakras*. Only a brahmacārī and no one else should do Their *pūjā* or they will suffer all kinds of

problems. Thus one must remain celibate while worshiping Them. Those *Nṛsimha* or *Kapila-śilās* that have two large *cakras*, brownish color, and a lotus-shaped line above the mouth, along with various uneven *cakras* give liberation and victory in battle. In the *Kārtika Māhātmya* of the *Padma Purāṇa* it states that a *śālagrāma-śilā* that contains the above mentioned signs, a large mouth, and many lines like the filaments of saffron is called *Nṛsimhadeva*.

In the *Brahma Purāṇa* it describes the *Varāha-śilā* as sapphire-blue, large sized with three lines, two unequal *cakras*, two signs of *śakti*, and pleasing to see. According to the *Padma Purāṇa* the *Varāha-śilā* is naturally hog-shaped with uneven *cakras*, many lines, and awards His worshiper with material enjoyment and liberation. Giving the same blessings as *Varāha*, the *Matsya-śilā* is described in the *Brahma Purāṇa* as long, bronze or golden in color, and adorned with three dots. There it also describes the *śālagrāma-śilā* named *Kūrma* as round with an arched back, green in color, and marked with the sign of the *Kaustubha* jewel. The *Padma Purāṇa* says the *Kūrma-śilā* is naturally turtle-shaped and marked with a *cakra*.

The *Hayagrīva-śilā* has a mark shaped like an elephant goad, a line near one *cakra*, many other *cakras*, and His back is the color of a blue rain cloud. Another scripture describes the *Hayagrīva-śilā* as bluish, with the sign of elephant goad, five lines, and many spots. The *Padma Purāṇa* states that the *Hayagrīva-śilā* has a long line in the shape of a horse’s mouth and His worship gives one knowledge. Elsewhere it says His mouth is like a horse’s mouth, there is the sign of a lotus, and on top of the *śilā* the sign of a lotus seed garland.

The *Brahma Purāṇa* gives descriptions of the following *śilās*. The *śilā* named **Vaikuṅṭha** looks jewel-like in color, has one *cakra*, a three-cornered flag, and beautiful lotus-shaped lines above His mouth. The **Śrīdhara-śilā** is black and shaped like a kadamba flower, has five lines, and the marks of a flower garland. A small beautiful *śilā* with a *cakra* on the top and the bottom and that fulfills all desires, is known as **Vāmana**. A second type of **Vāmana-śilā** is round-shaped, smaller than a marble, blue in color, and adorned with spots. The **Sudarśana-śilā** is black, very shiny, marked with a *cakra* and club on His left side, and lines on His right. The *Padma Purāṇa* says He has many lines in the form of a *cakra* and He satisfies the aspirations of His worshipers.

In the *Kārtika Māhātmya* of *Padma Purāṇa* it describes three types of **Dāmodara-śilās**. One is plump in shape, the color of black-green *dūrvā* grass, with a *cakra* in the middle portion, a small mouth, and a yellow line. The second has *cakras* on its top and bottom, a small mouth, with a long line in the middle. His worship always gives happiness. The third is plump, with a narrow mouth, and two *cakras* on the middle portion. The *śilā* called **Ananta** has a variety of colors, the sign of a snake's body, along with many other signs. He is also described as decorated with many different signs and numerous *cakras*. Like most *śilās*, **Ananta** fulfills all desires.

The *Brahma Purāṇa* gives further descriptions. The **Puruṣottama-śilā** has many mouths on the upper portion and awards material enjoyment and *mokṣa*. The **Yogeśvara-śilā** has a *cakra* on its top and worshiping Him removes the sin of killing a *brāhmaṇa*. A poor man will become wealthy by offering *Tulasī* leaves to the reddish **Padmanābha-śilā**

marked with the signs of a lotus and an umbrella. The **Hiraṇyagarbha-śilā** is moon-shaped, gives off many rays, and has many golden lines on His crystal white surface. By adoring the half-moon shaped **Hṛṣīkeśa-śilā** one attains the heavenly planets and fulfillment of all desires. A **Lakṣmī-Nṛsimha-śilā** is black, with two equal *cakras* on His left side, and some dots on the surface. This *śilā* gives both pleasure and *muktī* (liberation) to His worshiper. A very shiny dark blue *śilā* with two *cakras* on His left side and one line on His right is known as **Trivikrama**. Decorated with the marks of a forest garland on His left side, the **Kṛṣṇa-śilā** bestows grains, wealth, and happiness.

The *Gautamīya Tantra* states that after many, many births the fortunate person who receives a special **Kṛṣṇa-śilā** that is decorated with a cow's hoof print will never take birth again. It also describes the **Caturmukhi-śilā** with two *cakras* placed between four lines.

The *Kārtika Māhātmya* of *Padma Purāṇa* continues its descriptions with the *śilā* with a row of many small lines called **Viṣṇu Pañjara**. The **Śeṣa-śilā** has coils like a snake. The **Garuḍa-śilā** has the sign of a lotus between two lines and one long line below. The **Janārdana-śilā** has four *cakras*. Awarding both material pleasure and liberation, the **Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa-śilā** has four *cakras*, a small mouth, and a flower garland decorating its middle portion.

All the *śilās* mentioned above give auspicious results, but those that are very small are even more auspicious. Elsewhere in the *Padma Purāṇa*, the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu explains to Lord Brahmā that the smaller the *śilā* is, the more auspicious results it gives. Such a *śilā* should certainly

be worshiped by the devotee to attain perfection in religion, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation. He declares, "O Brahmā, in that *śilā* small like an āmalakī fruit or even much smaller, I eternally remain along with My divine consort, Śrīmatī Lakṣmīdevī."

The Glories of Śālagrāma-śilā

It is written in the *Gautamiya Tantra* that merely by touching a *śālagrāma-śilā* one becomes freed from the sins of millions of births, so what to speak of worshiping Him! By *śālagrāma-pūjā* one gains the association of Lord Hari.

The *Māgha-māhātmya* of the *Padma Purāṇa* describes the glories of *śālagrāma-śilā* in the many verses that follow. By worshiping Lord Hari in the *śālagrāma-śilās* decorated with *cakras*, one constantly gains the merit of performing a thousand Rājasūya sacrifices. Even a person attached to the formless Brahman mentioned in the *Vedānta* will develop attachment for the Lord's devotees if he adores a *śālagrāma-śilā*. As the rubbing of two wooden sticks brings out the dormant fire within, so too by constant worship of *śālagrāma-śilā* Lord Viṣṇu will manifest. Even sinful people with no qualification for performing pious activities will not see the abode of Yamarāja (the lord of death) if they worship the *śālagrāma-śilā*.

Worshiping *śālagrāma-śilā* is more satisfying to Lord Nārāyaṇa than the worship of His Deity form along with Lakṣmījī in the temple. By adoring Lord Hari in the *cakra* of a *śālagrāma-śilā* one receives the same benefit as performing the *agnihotra* sacrifice and giving the whole world with all its oceans in charity. The lowest of men covered by lust, anger, and greed will attain the highest abode of the Supreme Lord Hari by worshiping *śālagrāma-śilā*. One who adores the *śālagrāma-śilā* as Govinda will never fall from the heavenly planets up to the end of the universe.

Even without serving holy places, giving in charity, doing sacrifices, or studying the scriptures, persons who simply worship a *śālagrāma-śilā* will still achieve *muktī*. By worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a *śālagrāma-śilā*, even a sinful person becomes free from the fear of residence in the lowest hell and being reborn as an insect or animal. If, however, a *brāhmaṇa* who is properly initiated and learned in prescribed mantras does the *pūjā* of *śālagrāma-śilā*, he will attain Lord Hari's transcendental abode without a doubt. In Kali-yuga, if a devotee with a surrendered and loving mood offers a bath, flowers, lamps, food, prayers, and *kīrtana* with sweet music for the transcendental pleasure of his *śālagrāma-śilā*, he will eternally enjoy sublime spiritual happiness in the association of the Supreme Lord Hari.

Merely by worshipping one *śālagrāma-śilā*, a person gets the same benefit as seeing or adoring thousands of *śiva-liṅgas*. Wherever Lord Keśava dwells as *śālagrāma-śilā*, all the gods, demons, *yakṣas*, and fourteen *bhuvanas* (worlds) are also present there. A *śraddhā* ceremony done in front of *śālagrāma-śilā* will satisfy many generations of forefathers and grant them residence in *deva-loka* for hundreds of days of Brahmā (*kalpas*).

The area within a radius of twenty-four miles from where a *śālagrāma-śilā* is worshiped is counted as a holy place (*tīrtha*). The fruits of *japa*, charity, sacrifices, or any other religious activities done in that area will be multiplied millions of times. If someone dies within a radius of two miles of a *śālagrāma-śilā*, though a lowborn man from a sinful place, he will go straight to Vaikuṅṭha. Giving a *śālagrāma-śilā* is the best form of charity, equal to the result of

donating the entire earth together with its forests, mountains, and all.

Conversation of Śiva and Kārtikeya Regarding Śālagrāma-śilā

In the *Kārtika Māhātmya* of the *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* Lord Śiva tells his son Kārtikeya, "Know that the entire three worlds along with their moving and non-moving beings, always live with me in *śālagrāma-śilā*."

One who sees, bathes, worships, or offers obeisances to the *śālagrāma-śilā* will receive the same piety as doing millions of sacrifices and giving millions of cows in charity. Even if a person full of lusty desires or without any *bhakti-bhāva* worships a *śālagrāma-śilā*, he will still receive the mercy of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

One who simply remembers, worships, meditates upon, does *kīrtana* before, or pays obeisances to *śālagrāma-śilā*, will become free from all sins, even the sins of killing millions of people. As deer flee upon seeing a lion in the jungle, so all types of sins run away from one who sees a *śālagrāma-śilā*. As the rising sun dispels darkness, so too the *śālagrāma-śilā* removes all sins from the devotee who simply offers Him obeisances.

Even if a person lusty or angry by nature worships *śālagrāma-śilā* with devotion, or even carelessly, he will get liberation. Those who speak *hari-kathā* in front of *śālagrāma-śilā* need not fear Yamarāja or repeated birth and death. In Kali-yuga one who devotedly worships *śālagrāma-*

śilā with prayers, *kīrtana*, and musical instruments, will live eternally in Hari-dhāma.

Lord Śiva further declares that my devotees who offer obeisances to the *śālagrāma-śilā* even negligently become fearless. Those who adore me while making a distinction between myself (Śiva) and Lord Hari will become free from this offense by offering obeisances to *śālagrāma-śilā*. Those who think themselves as my devotees, but who are proud and do not offer obeisances to my Lord Vāsudeva, are actually sinful and not my devotees. O my son, I always reside in the *śālagrāma-śilā*. Being pleased with my devotion the Lord has given me a residence in His personal abode.

The fruit of worshiping me with hundreds of millions of lotus flowers will be multiplied millions of times if one offers the same worship to *śālagrāma-śilā*. I do not accept the worship or prayers of one who neglects the *pūjā* of *śālagrāma-śilā*. The result of one who adores me in front of a *śālagrāma-śilā* will last for seventy-one *yugas*. O son, one who never worships a *śālagrāma-śilā* is not considered a devotee of Viṣṇu. Even if someone worships hundreds of *śiva-liṅgas*, he will still not receive any benefit from it.

Items like foodstuffs, leaves, flowers, fruits, and water unofferable to me due to any impurity will become purified by touching them to *śālagrāma-śilā*. One who calls himself my devotee but is not attracted to Lord Hari will suffer in hell for the life span of fourteen Indras. Though devoid of knowledge of the absolute truth, a person who even once worships a *śālagrāma-śilā* will obtain *mokṣa*. The *darśana* and worship of millions of *śiva-liṅgas* will give the same benefit as the worship of one *śālagrāma-śilā*. O son, those

who desire my affection should regularly worship the *śālagrāma-śilā* with devotion. Wherever Lord Keśava dwells as *śālagrāma-śilā*, all the gods, demons, *yakṣas*, and the fourteen *bhuvanas* are also present there.

The forefathers of one who performs *piṇḍa-dāna* even once in front of a *śālagrāma-śilā* will enjoy boundless satisfaction. O son, although the fruits of pious activities may be calculated, the profit of worshiping *śālagrāma-śilā* is unlimited. Those who donate a *śālagrāma-śilā* to a *brāhmaṇa* devotee of Lord Viṣṇu will receive the gains of performing many sacrifices.

Without having accumulated pious activities, it is very difficult to find a *śālagrāma-śilā* in this world, especially in the age of Kali-yuga. Those who adore *śālagrāma-śilā* in their home are fortunate and their lives are meaningful.

When one worships a *śālagrāma-śilā* with controlled senses and in a devotional mood, each flower offered is equal to the performance of an *aśvamedha* sacrifice. Indeed, whether at an auspicious or inauspicious time, either with or even without devotion, if a *śālagrāma-śilā* is worshiped He will bestow great piety upon the worshiper. Anyone, whether he is filled with enmity, greed, pride, duplicity, or sadness will become purified by seeing a *śālagrāma-śilā*. Merely by touching a *śālagrāma-śilā* even a wicked person who is dishonest and addicted to bad habits becomes purified instantly.

Worship of *śālagrāma-śilā* brings the same result as devoutly giving sixty-four *tolas* (about 750 grams) of sesame seeds daily in charity. My dear son, by offering leaves, flowers fruits, roots, water, grass, and rice to the *śālagrāma-*

śilā, one receives a boon as great as Mount Sumeru. Even if someone adores a *śālagrāma-śilā* without proper method, *mudras*, or *mantras*, he will still get the full result according to the *śāstras*.

Other Evidences

In other places it is written that those people who travel with their *śālagrāma-śilā* on their shoulder are considered to be carrying everything that is movable or immovable in the three worlds. Even if one has killed a *brāhmaṇa* or similar gross sinful acts, his reactions will be instantly burnt to ashes by worshiping *śālagrāma-śilā*. To adore a *śālagrāma-śilā*, it is even unnecessary to know *japa*, prayers, *mantras*, meditation, or other methods of worship.

The area within a radius of twenty-four miles from where a *śālagrāma-śilā* is worshiped is counted as a holy place (*tīrtha*). The fruits of *japa*, charity, sacrifices, or any other religious activities done in that area will be multiplied millions of times. A *śraddhā* ceremony done in front of *śālagrāma-śilā* will satisfy many generations of forefathers and grant them residence in *deva-loka* for hundreds of *kalpas*. If someone dies within a radius of two miles around a *śālagrāma-śilā*, though a lowborn man from a sinful place, he will go straight to Vaikuṅṭha.

The *Padma Purāṇa* says giving a *śālagrāma-śilā*, is the best form of charity, being equal to the result of donating the entire earth together with its forests, mountains, and all. The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* describes the glories of keeping a *śālagrāma-śilā* with the auspicious mark of a *cakra* in one's house. The forefathers, devotees, Gaṅgā and other holy

rivers, Puṣkara and other holy places, *asvamedha* and other holy sacrifices, and all holy mountains become present there.

The *Kārtika Māhātmya* chapter of the *Padma Purāṇa* states that for those who worship Śrī Hari in the *śālagrāma-śilā*, Śrī Hari will remove their sins and give them the intelligence by which they may obtain liberation. By worship of *śālagrāma-śilā* in Mathurā during the Kārtika month, Lord Hari grants *mokṣa*. For those who worship *śālagrāma-śilā* on behalf of their forefathers, Lord Hari protects those forefathers and their families and delivers them to his own spiritual abode.

The *Yajñadhvaja* chapter of the *Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa* states that wherever Lord Keśava in the form of *śālagrāma-śilā* remains, demons, ghosts, and other such beings will be unable to cause any disturbance. Wherever there is a *śālagrāma-śilā*, that place is considered a holy place for doing austerity because Lord Madhusudhana remains there. And if one worships twelve or a hundred *śālagrāma-śilās* he will reap even more benefit.

Different Results of Worshiping Many Śilās

The *Māgha Māhātmya* chapter of the *Padma Purāṇa* describes the results of worshiping more than one *śālagrāma-śilā*. O Vaiśya, the piety accrued by one who worships twelve *śālagrāma-śilās* according to the proper rules and regulations for one day only is the same as received by worshiping twelve crore of *śiva-liṅgas* with golden lotuses. One who worships one hundred *śālagrāma-śilās* with devotion lives in Hari-dhāma and will take birth on earth as an emperor of emperors.

The *Kārtika Māhātmya* of *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* describes the piety of a Vaiṣṇava who worships twelve *śālagrāma-śilās* for only one day. It is the same as worshiping a thousand crore of *śiva-liṅgas* on the bank of the Gaṅgā and living in Kāśī (Vārāṇasī) for eight *yugas*. And if a Vaiṣṇavas worships more than twelve *śālagrāma-śilās*, then even Lord Brahmā and other gods are unable to describe the fruit he will receive.

Sale and Purchase of Śālagrāma-śilās Prohibited

The *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* warns that no one should buy or sell *śālagrāma-śilās*. One who puts a price on a *śālagrāma-śilā*, sells a *śālagrāma-śilā*, gives his opinion on its value, or examines one with a view to estimate its sale value, all such people will live in hell until the time of universal destruction.

Śālagrāma-śilās Require No Installation

The *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* also says that *śālagrāma-śilās* do not require installation. When one begins the worship of *śālagrāma-śilā*, however, he should start with elaborate *pūjā* using all articles. The worship of *śālagrāma-śilā* is the best form of worship, better than the worship of the sun.

The *Māgha Māhātmya* chapter of *Padma Purāṇa* states that those who adore Lord Hari either in the Deity, the sun, the water, the earth, or the heart, they all will go to Hari-dhāma. If they do not feel spiritually fulfilled in such worship, and if they desire liberation, then they should worship Lord Hari in the *śālagrāma-śilā*. O Vaiśya, the form of Lord

Hari as the *śālagrāma-śilā* gives piety, removes sinful reactions, and grants liberation.

The *Kārtika Māhātmya* of *Padma Purāṇa* declares: O Prince, Lord Śrī Viṣṇu may be worshiped in the form of a Deity made from eight kinds of material like stone, wood, metal, mud, written word, earth, jewels, and in the mind. But you should know that worship of *śālagrāma-śilā* is worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself since Jagad-guru Śrī Vāsudeva exists eternally in the *śālagrāma-śilā*. The *Kārtika Māhātmya* chapter of *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* states that Lord Hari may not always remain within the Deity of gold, jewels, or stone, but He always exists in the *śālagrāma-śilā*.

The *śālagrāma-śilā* in the form of Lord Nṛsiṃha is unlimitedly merciful. Taking the Tulasī leaves offered to His lotus feet frees one from the reactions of all kinds of sins, including theft, drinking alcohol, killing a *brāhmaṇa*, or having sex with the wife of one's guru. As it is impossible to count the waves of the ocean, similarly one is unable to fully describe the importance of worshiping *śālagrāma-śilā*.

Daily Worship of Śālagrāma-śilā

The *Padma Purāṇa* warns that one who eats before worshiping *śālagrāma-śilā* becomes a worm in the stool of a dog-eater for one millennium (a complete cycle of four *yugas*). The *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* says that one who has no faith in the adoration of *śālagrāma-śilā* will have his body smashed to bits by being thrown from the top of high mountains.

The *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* recommends that everyone, whether he be a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *sūdra*, or woman, should take initiation and worship the Lord in the form of

the *śālagrāma-śilā*. In a conversation between Brahmā and Nārada in the *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa*, it is stated that a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, and *vaiśya* have a right to worship the *śālagrāma-śilā*. Even a *śūdra* who is filled with devotion to Lord Hari also has a right to worship the *śālagrāma-śilā*. Lacking devotion however, even a *brāhmaṇa* has no right to worship *śālagrāma-śilā*. Elsewhere the *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* confirms that women, *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *śūdras* and anyone else who worships a *śālagrāma-śilā* will obtain the mercy of the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu.

Some people say that women and *śūdras* cannot worship *śālagrāma-śilā*, but great sages explain that the following references refer only to those who are devoid of Viṣṇu-bhakti. Purified or unpurified only a *brāhmaṇa* has a right to My worship. The touch of a woman or *śūdra* gives me pain like the striking of a thunderbolt. If a *śūdra* chants *praṇava* (*omkāra*), worships *śālagrāma-śilā*, or enjoys with a *brāhmaṇī*, he becomes a dog-eater.

Thus it is the duty of the Vaiṣṇavas to worship the *śālagrāma-śilā* with heartfelt love and devotion. It is also recommended to worship a *dvārakā-śilā* along with a *śālagrāma-śilā*.

Dvārakā-Śilā

Worshiping Śālagrāma-śilā with Dvārakā-śilā

The *Brahma Purāṇa* states that wherever *śālagrāma-śilā* and *dvārakā-śilā* sit together, there certainly *muktī* also resides. In the conversation between Brahmā and Nārada in the *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* Brahmā says, “O Muniśvāra! Wherever *dvārakā-śilā* sits in front of the *śālagrāma-śilā* every class of opulence goes on increasing unlimitedly.” In another place it says that one who daily worships *dvārakā-śilā* along with twelve *śālagrāma-śilā* will be honored even in Vaikuṅṭha-dhāma.

Identifying Symbols of Dvārakā-śilās

The *Prahlāda Saṁhitā* states that a *dvārakā-śilā* with one *cakra* is known as Sudarśana, a *śilā* with two *cakras* is Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, and one with three *cakras* is Trivikrama. The *śilā* marked with four *cakras* is Janārdana, with five *cakras* is Vāsudeva, with six *cakras* is Pradyumna, and with seven *cakras* is Baladeva. The one that has eight *cakras* is called Puruṣottama, with nine *cakras* Navavyūha, with ten *cakras* Daśmūrti, and with eleven *cakras* Aniruddha. That *dvārakā-śilā* with twelve *cakras* is Dvādaśātmaka, and one with more than twelve *cakras* is known as Ananta.

The Glories of Dvārakā-śilā

The *Varāha Purāṇa* says that whoever touches a *śilā* with the mark of a Viṣṇu-cakra will become free of all sins. The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* declares that simply the *darśana* of Sudarśana and other *dvārakā-śilās* fulfills all desires. The *Skanda Purāṇa* declares that without a doubt if a very sinful man worships a *dvārakā-śilā* with devotion, or even without, he becomes free from all sinful reactions. According to the *Dvārakā Māhātmya*, a *śilā* marked with *cakras* coming from Dvārakā is also called *cakra-tīrtha*. Even if this *śilā* is worshiped by a sinful person from a degraded country, the worshiper still becomes liberated.

Benefits of Different Types of Dvārakā-śilās

The *Kapila-pañcarātra* explains the benefits of worshipping different types of *dvārakā-śilās*. That charming *śilā* known as Sudarśana, which has one *cakra* on it, gives one liberation. The Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa *dvārakā-śilā* with two *cakras* gives opulence and liberation, and an Acyuta-*śilā* with three *cakras* gives one respect equal to Lord Indra. The *śilā* known as Caturbhuja with four *cakras* brings religion, economic development, enjoyment, and liberation. A Vāsudeva-*śilā*, which has five *cakras*, will remove the fear of birth and death, and a Pradyumna-*śilā* with six *cakras* will give one beauty and wealth. The one called Balabhadra-*śilā* with seven *cakras* gives fame and a continuation of one's dynasty, while a Puruṣottama-*śilā* with eight *cakras* gives all types of benedictions. With nine *cakras*, a Nṛsimhadeva *dvārakā-śilā*

gives the highest benefits, and a Daśāvatāra *dvārakā-śilā* with ten *cakras* gives kingship. An Aniruddha-*śilā*, which has eleven *cakras*, gives fame and lordship, and the one known as Dvādaśātmaka-*śilā* with twelve *cakras* gives liberation and happiness.

The *Kapila-pañcarātra* also describes the bad results derived from worshipping certain types of *dvārakā-śilās*. A black *dvārakā-śilā* gives death, a smoke colored one gives constant fear, a multi-colored one gives bad health, and a blue colored *śilā* takes away one's wealth. That *dvārakā-śilā* that has a hole passing through it brings poverty, a pale one gives terrible distress, and a broken *śilā* brings separation from the wife. The white *śilā* gives sons, grandsons, wealth, power, and all types of happiness, so this type of *śilā* should be adored.

The *Prahlāda-saṁhitā* also says that a black *śilā* causes death, reddish gives constant fear, multi-colored brings disease, yellow or smoke-colored gives poverty, and a broken one causes death to the wife. *Śilās* with a hole, uneven *cakras*, triangular in shape, or half-moon shaped should never be worshiped. Garga and Gālava Ṛṣis have stated that a *śilā* with uniform *cakras* brings happiness, a twelve-*cakra śilā* is very auspicious, and round and square *śilās* give happiness. But worshipping *śilās* that are broken, triangular, having holes, with uneven *cakras*, or half-moon shaped is fruitless.

Additional Information

From Other Sections of Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa

The *Gautamiya Tantra* says devotees should take the *caranāmṛta* mixed with Tulasī leaves from the *śālagrāma-śilā* in their hand and sip it, sprinkling the balance on their heads. If somebody refuses this *caranāmṛta* it is as if he has killed a *brāhmaṇa*. The *Padma Purāṇa* explains that all those holy rivers awarding *mokṣa*, such as the Gaṅgā, Godāvarī, and others, reside in the *caranāmṛta* of *śālagrāma-śilā*. In the *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* it is written that if one bathes daily in *śālagrāma-śilā's caranāmṛta*, though remaining at home, it is equal to bathing daily in the Gaṅgā. By bathing with the *caranāmṛta* of both *śālagrāma-śilā* and *dvārakā-śilā*, one is freed from all sins, even the killing of a *brāhmaṇa*. The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* warns that religion will flee from those devotees who do not sprinkle their heads three times a day with the *caranāmṛta* from *śālagrāma-śilā*.

The *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* says a devotee who makes the mark of a *swastika* in front of the *śālagrāma-śilā*, especially if done in the Kārtika month, purifies up to seven generations of his family. There it also says that one who keeps *gopī-candana*, Tulasī, a conch, and a *dvārakā-śilā* together with a *śālagrāma-śilā* in his house will have no fear of sin.

In the *Sammohana Tantra* it is written that *śālagrāma-śilā* should not be placed on the earth or ground and worshiped. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* mentions that in the worship of *śālagrāma-śilā* it is unnecessary to call the Lord

for worship or request Him to return to His abode upon completion.

The *Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāṇa* warns that if one worships a *śālagrāma-śilā* and doesn't offer Tulasī leaves, then his house is considered equal to a cremation ground. There Śrī Nārada Muni says it's impossible to explain the importance of Tulasī leaves in the worship of *śālagrāma-śilā*, as Tulasī is the most beloved consort of Hari in the form of *śālagrāma-śilā*.

The *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* says that the fingers of a devotee who regularly picks Tulasī leaves for the worship of *śālagrāma-śilā* are fortunate. It also states that one who adores *śālagrāma-śilā* with Tulasī leaves will become free from all types of offenses to Lord Keśava.

The *Bṛhad Viṣṇu Purāṇa* glorifies the water containing Tulasī leaves that is seen by Lord Keśava, especially the *caranāmṛta* of the *śālagrāma-śilā*. It is always more purifying than the water of all the holy places and hundreds of sacrifices. Thus one who takes this water will be purified of all sin.

The *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* explains that for one who daily takes the *caranāmṛta* of *śālagrāma-śilā* there is no necessity for taking *pañca-gavya* nor visiting thousands of holy places. If someone drinks *caranāmṛta* with devotion, he will not experience the misery of staying in a mother's womb again and his suffering in hell will be destroyed. He is protected from all his sinful reactions and becomes fixed on the path of liberation.

In the *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* Lord Śiva tells Pārvatī that one who takes the *caranāmṛta* of *śālagrāma-śilā* destroys all sinful reactions at their roots, even the killing of a *brāhmaṇa*.

Elsewhere the *Skanda Purāna* states that by taking the remnants of foodstuffs offered to *śālagrāma-śilā*, one will get the result of performing many sacrifices.

From Other Sources

Elsewhere it is written that one should not worship two *dvārakā-śilās* along with two *śālagrāma-śilās* in the house. If any householder will do so then he will become filled with anxiety.

In Śrīla Rūpa Goswami's *Śrī Laghu-Bhāgavatāmṛta* the following account is given from the *Padma Purāna*. Seeing the wonderfully attractive form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lakṣmīdevī became very greedy to attain Him. Thus she began to practice severe austerities for this purpose. Lord Kṛṣṇa became curious to know the reason for her penance. Lakṣmīdevī told Him that she wanted to gain His intimate association as a *gopī* in Vṛndāvana. Lord Kṛṣṇa told her that it's impossible to fulfill her prayer as she does not have the intense love and devotion found in the *gopīs* of Vraja. Hearing this, Lakṣmīdevī then prayed to always remain on Lord Kṛṣṇa's chest like a golden sacred thread. Lord Kṛṣṇa accepted her request, and so on some *śālagrāma-śilās* a line like a golden sacred thread is visible.

Marriage of Śālagrāma and Tulasī

Śrī Vasiṣṭhaji said that what I have heard in ancient times from Lord Brahmā about the marriage of Tulasī, I will now describe according to what is written in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*. First one should plant Tulasī either in the house or the forest, and after three years one may perform her marriage. The auspicious times when one may perform the marriage of Śālagrāma and Tulasī are described as follows. When the sun is moving in the north, Jupiter and Venus are rising, in the month of Kārtika, from the Ekādaśī to the full moon in the month of Māgha, and when constellations that are auspicious for marriage appear, especially the full moon day.

First one should arrange a place for sacrifice (*yajña-kuṇḍa*) under a canopy (*maṇḍapa*). Then after performing *śānti-vidhāna*, one should install sixteen goddesses, and do the *śraddhā* ceremony for his female maternal ancestors. One should call four *brāhmaṇas* learned in the *Veda*, and appoint one to be the Brahmā, one to be the *ācārya*, one to be the *ṛṣi*, and one to be the priest. One should establish an auspicious waterpot (*maṅgala-ghat*) under that *maṇḍapa* according to the Vaiṣṇava rituals. Then one should establish an attractive *śālagrāma-śilā* (Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa). After that one should perform home sacrifice (*grha-yajña*), worship the sixteen goddesses, and do the *śraddhā* ceremony.

When it is dusk one should install a golden Deity of Nārāyaṇa and a silver *mūrti* of Tulasī according to one's means. With *vāsa-śanta mantra* two cloths should be tied

together, with *yadāvandhā mantra* the marriage bracelets (*kaṅgana*) should be tied on the wrists, and with *ko' dāt mantra* the marriage should be consecrated. Then the host along with the *ācārya*, *ṛṣi*, and others should make nine offerings in the *yajña-kunḍa*. After these marriage rites have been done, the wise gurudeva should offer sacrifice according to the Vaiṣṇava rituals chanting, “*Om namo bhagavate keśavāya namaḥ svahā.*”

The host with his wife, friends, and relatives should then do *parikramā* of Tulasī four times with *śālagrāma-śilā*. Everyone should then recite the following prayers in front of the *yajña-kunḍa*: *śatkumbha-sūkta*, *pāvamānī-sūkta*, *śāktikādhyāya*, *nava-sūkta*, *jīva-sūkta*, and *vaiṣṇava-saṁhitā*. After this the ladies should blow conch and other similar instruments, sing auspicious songs, and recite *maṅgalācaraṇa*. Following this the final sacrifice should be done (*pūrnāhūti*) and then *abhiṣeka*. An ox is to be given to the Brahmā, a cow, cloth, and bed to the *ācārya*, and cloth to the *ṛṣi*. *Dakṣinā* should be given to all.

In this way installing Tulasī Devī one should begin her regular worship along with Lord Viṣṇu. Whoever sees the marriage of Tulasī Devī will have all of the accumulated sins of his life removed. Whoever with devotion plants Tulasī, collects her leaves, or installs her along with Viṣṇu will achieve liberation, the abode of the Lord, all varieties of enjoyment, and will enjoy along with Śrī Hari.

Worship of Śālagrāma-śilā

There is absolutely no difference between the worship of an installed Deity and a *śālagrāma-śilā*. Mostly in the temples where the Deity is large and heavy or made out of wood, *śālagrāma-śilā* is considered the representation of the Deity. In such cases the main worship is often offered through the *śālagrāma-śilā*.

As earlier mentioned, Lord Hari constantly abides in *śālagrāma-śilā*. Therefore we should always remember that *śālagrāma-śilā* should never be ignored or disregarded. Due respect and love must be spontaneously extended to it. Whatever treatment is given to the Deity, the same treatment should be allotted to *śālagrāma-śilā*; it deserves the same respect and reverence.

Śālagrāma-śilā must be duly worshipped with all the sobriety and serenity and in accordance with the same systematic rules and regulations as the Deity. If *śālagrāma-śilā* is worshipped at home, however, the worship may not need to be of an exceedingly high standard. In such case it is not very essential that the *śālagrāma-śilās* be worshipped too elaborately with many outward appellations, decorations, and detailed descriptive decorum. It should be conducted piously but plainly. God demands faith, love, and simple sincerity, which springs from the innermost heart of the devotee. All the external formalities are not required, as no sophisticated show is necessary.

If a devotee has many *śālagrāma-śilās*, then bathing, *tulasī*, sandalwood, flower offering—all these should be

conducted separately, and individual attention to each *śilā* should be given in the worship. Nevertheless, *ārati* may be performed to all the *śilās* simultaneously. It is plainly mentioned in the scriptures that *śālagrāma-śilā*'s worship must be conducted in accordance with *Puruṣa-sūkta*. In case those mantras are available, then *śālagrāma-śilā* must be adored on the basis of these.

If the devotee wants to decorate *śālagrāma-śilā* with beautiful ornaments, he can do it with the purest intention. But it should be noted that one should never make an offering of rice to *śālagrāma-śilā*.

During the period of menstruation, ladies are forbidden to worship.

For Bhagavān Sri Krishna, Sri Vishnu, the *śālagrāma-śilā*, etc., the mantras and modes of worship have been described differently in various scriptures. Suppose someone cannot recall the mantras pertaining to the worship or he is unable to pronounce them accurately, then the initiated Vaiṣṇava can perform the worship by reciting the ten or eighteen syllable mantra.

In the worship of *śālagrāma-śilā*, inviting or invoking Godhead is strictly forbidden, for God constantly resides and abides as an ever-present entity embodied in the *śilā*. The following are the procedures for offering worship:

(A) First thing to do is to wake the Lord.

(B) After the Lord has risen, chant *idam puṣpāñjali samarpayāmi* and offer flowers at the lotus feet of the Lord.

The further procedures of worshipping *śālagrāma-śilā* are wide and varied. They fall into many types. But where

our *pūjā* at home is concerned, offering five¹ or sixteen items should be adopted as follows.

(1) *Āsana*:

*om sarvāntaryamiṇe deva sarva-bijam idam tataḥ
ātmasyaḥ param śuddham āsanam kalpayāmi aham*

O God, you are quite familiar with each and every being's innermost thoughts, as well as the innermost being. You know every being's actual self, therefore I present before You an excellent pure *āsana*.

While offering *āsana*, chant: *idam āsanam samarpayāmi*.

(2) *Svāgata*:

*yasya darśanam icchanti deva brahṇa-harādayaḥ
kṛpayā devadeveṣa mad agre sannidhau bhava
tasya te parameṣāna svāgatam svāgatam prabho*

Even gods like Brahmā, Śiva, etc. are longing and pining for Your *darśana*. O Devadeveṣa, You are the focus and concurrence of everyone's worship. Please have pity on me and come before my poor self.

While offering *svāgata*, chant: *susvāgatam, susvāgatam*.

1. The five items are: *gandha, puṣpa, dhūpa, dīpa, and naivedya*. In any case, *tulasī* is required.

(3) Pādya:

*om yad bhakti-leśa samparkāt paramānanda samplavaḥ
tasya te caraṇopānte pādyaṁ suddhāya kalpaye*

Merely the slightest performance of His worship makes the heart flow with ever-increasing bliss. O my God, I am offering *pādya* to Your same intrinsic and inherent, purest form.

While offering *pādya*, chant: *idam pādyaṁ samarpayāmi*.

(4) Arghya:

*tāpa-traya haraṁ divyaṁ paramānanda lakṣaṇam
tāpa-traya vimokṣāya tavārghya kalpayāmy aham*

O God, Your *arghya* subdues all suffering caused by threefold tribulations. It is divine and the form of ever-existing bliss. Therefore, in order to be relieved from the threefold tribulations, I am piously presenting *arghya* to You.

While offering *arghya*, chant: *idam arghyaṁ samarpayāmi*.

(5) Ācamana:

*devānām api devāya devānām devatātmane
ācāmaṁ kalpayāmi isam sudhāyāḥ śruti hetave*

O God, You are the God of all the gods and goddesses, worthy of worship where all the spokes of worship meet and converge. Let alone others, You Yourself manifest as Godhead amidst all the gods. You are the source of all nectar, as such just for the sake of a trickling of nectar from

You, I am offering *ācamana* as a sign of my surrender and self-dedication.

While offering *ācamana*, chant: *idam ācamaniyam samarpayāmi*.

(6) Madhuparka:

*sarva kalmaṣarhīnāya paripurna sudhātmakam
madhuparkam idam deva kalpayāmi prasīda me*

O Lord, You are absolutely and inherently free from all sins, and You are full of all nectar. I am presenting this *madhuparka* to You. Please be merciful and accept it.

While offering *madhuparka*, chant: *idam madhuparka samarpayāmi*.

(7) Punarācamana:

*acchaṣṭo 'pyaśucir vapi yasya smarāna mātrataḥ
suddhīnāpnoti tasmai te punar ācamaniyakam*

You are the very being by whose remembrance even the most degraded and fallen become pious and holy. For Your sake I am again offering *ācamana*.

While offering *punarācamana*, chant: *idam punarācamaniyam samarpayāmi*.

(8) Snāna:

*kāverī narmadā venī tuṅgabhadrā sarasvatī
gaṅgā ca yamunā caiva nābhyaḥ snānārthamāhdatam
gṛhāṇatvaṁ ramākānta snānāya śraddhayā jalam*

O Lord! I have brought these waters from the Kāverī, Narmadā, Venī, Tungbhadra, Sarasvatī, Gangā, and

Yamunā for the purpose of bathing. Please accept it for bathing with faith.

While offering *snāna*, chant: *idam snānīyaṁ samarpayāmi*.

(9) Vastra:

*māyā-citrapaṭācchanna nija guhyorutejase
nirāvaraṇa vijñāna vāsaste kalpamāmy aham*

You have manifested a supermundane form as well as a form veiled by the screen of *māyā*. In reality You are self-effulgent and omniscience personified. I am making a present of this dress at Your lotus feet. Please accept it.

While offering *vastra*, chant: *idam vastram samarpayāmi*.

(10) Upavita:

*yajñopavītaṁ paramaṁ pavitra prajāpater yat sahaṁ purastāt
āyusyamagram ca pratimuñca subhraṁ yajñopavītaṁ balamastu tejaḥ*

The sacred thread is the highest in holiness and an object of utmost sanctity. Lord Brahmā was the first to wear it. It is the purest form of excellence—white in color and the bringer of long life and strength. I am putting this new sacred thread on You. Please accept it.

While offering *upavita*, chant: *idam upavitam samarpayāmi*.

(11) Ābhuśana:

*svabhāva sundarāṅgāya nānāśaktyāñjayāya te
bhūṣanāni vicitrāni kalpayāmi surārcita*

O Lord, each and every limb of Your body is innately charming and inherently fascinating. You Yourself are the very source of all the powers and potencies in the universe. For Your sake, I am presenting this opulent ornament.

While offering *ābhuśana*, chant: *idam ābhuśanam samarpayāmi*.

(12) Gandha:

*paramānanda saurabhya paripuṇḍigantaram
grhāṇa paramaṁ gandhaṁ kṛpayā parameśvara*

O my Lord, the aroma and fine fragrance of this *gandha* scents the whole cosmos and creation. The sweet smell spreads through the different directions of the universe, scenting all nooks and crooks of the cosmos.

While offering *gandha*, chant: *idam gandham samarpayāmi*.

(13) Tulasī:

*tulasīṁ hema-rūpāṁ ca ratna-rūpāṁ ca mañjarīṁ
bhavamokṣa pradāṁ tubhyam arpayāmi hari-priyāṁ*

Bright and shining like gold, brilliantly sparkling like pearls, the *tulasī-mañjarī* always appears in the form of Bhagavān Hari's beloved, who is capable of delivering us from the bondage of *māyā* oriented world. Such an offering is being made at Your feet.

While offering *tulasī*, chant: *idam tulasīm samarpayāmi*.

(14) Puspa:

*tūrīyaṁ guṇa-sampannaṁ nānā-guṇa-manoharam
ānanda saurabhaṁ puṣpaṁ grhyatām idam uttamam*

Puspa possesses transcendental qualities. These various qualities enchant the mind. The flower's fragrance bestow joy and bliss. I am offering this excellent fragrant flower. Please accept it.

While offering *puspa*, chant: *idam puspam samarpayāmi*.

(15) Dhupa:

*vanaspati rasotpanno gandhadyo gandha uttamah
āghreyah sarva-devānām dhūpo 'yam pratigrhyatām*

Drawn from the essence of fragrant herbs and flowers, emitting a divine aroma—one which is worthy to be inhaled by all the gods and goddesses. I am offering this *dhupa* to You. Please accept it.

While offering *dhūpa*, chant: *idam dhūpam samarpayāmi*.

(16) Dīpa:

*suprakāśo mahātejāh sarvatastimirāpahah
sabāhyābhyantara jyotir dipo 'yam pratigrhyatām*

Fully illuminated by the flooding light that at once dispels and drives away darkness from all directions, inwardly as well as outwardly, this illuminating luminary lamp is being solemnly presented to You. Please accept it.

While offering *dīpa*, chant: *idam dīpam samarpayāmi*.

(17) Naivedya:

*satpātrasiddham suhaviṣṭam vividhāneka bhakṣanam
nivedayāmi deveṣa sānugāya grhāṇa tat*

O Lord, these pious preparations, cooked in sacred utensils and made out of a variety of ingredients and edibles—this excellent offering is being made to You. Accompanied by my associates, I am offering these excellent items to You. Please accept my service.

While offering *naivedya*, chant: *idam naivedyam samarpayāmi*.

A devotee must conduct worship with the fullest fervor of emotions and innermost intentions, or fine feelings of the heart. All discipline, decency, and decorum must be maintained during worship. After completing the worship, one should offer obeisances to the Lord.

Incidentally it is mentioned in the sacred book *Harībhakti-vilāsa* (15/530) that the mantra:

*om yajñeśvarāya yajñasabhavāya
yajñapataye govindāya namo namaḥ*

covers the entire worship right from *pādya* down to *dīpa*.