


The synonyms of Krishna have been traced to 1st millennium BCE literature.^[15] In some sub-traditions, Krishna is worshipped as *Svayam Bhagavan*, and this is sometimes referred to as Krishnaism. These sub-traditions arose in the context of the medieval era Bhakti movement.^[16] Krishna-related literature has inspired numerous performance arts such as Bharatnatyam, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Odissi, and Manipuri dance.^{[17][18]} He is a pan-Hindu god, but is particularly revered in some locations such as Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh, the Jagannatha aspect in Odisha, Mayapur in West Bengal,^[19] Dwarka and Junagadh in Gujarat, in the form of Vithoba in Pandharpur, Maharashtra, Nathdwara in Rajasthan,^[20] and Guruvayur in Kerala.^[21] Since the 1960s, the worship of Krishna has also spread to the Western world and to Africa, largely due to the work of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).^[22]

Contents

Death and ascension

Krishna	
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Affiliation	Svayam Bhagavan, Paramatman, Vishnu, Brahman, Dashavatara, Radha Krishna ^[1] ^[2]
Abode	Goloka Vrindavana, Gokula, Dwarka
Weapon	Sudarshana Chakra Kaumodaki
Battles	Kurukshetra War
Texts	<i>Bhagavata Purana, Harivamsa, Vishnu Purana, Mahabharata (Bhagavad Gita), Gita Govinda</i>
Festivals	Krishna Janmashtami, Holi
Personal information	
Born	Mathura, Surasena (present-day Uttar Pradesh, India) ^[3]
Consorts	Radha; Rukmini, Satyabhama and other Ashtabharyas, and 16,000–16,100 other junior queens ^[4] ^[note 1]
Parents	Devaki (mother) and Vasudeva (father),

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	Yashoda (foster mother) and Nanda Baba (foster father)
Siblings	Balarama, Subhadra
Dynasty	Somavansha (Yaduvanshi)

Names and epithets

The name "Krishna" originates from the Sanskrit word *Kṛṣṇa*, which is primarily an adjective meaning "black", "dark", or "dark blue".^[23] The waning moon is called Krishna Paksha, relating to the adjective meaning "darkening".^[23] The name is also interpreted sometimes as "all-attractive".^[24]

As a name of Vishnu, Krishna is listed as the 57th name in the Vishnu Sahasranama. Based on his name, Krishna is often depicted in idols as black- or blue-skinned. Krishna is also known by various other names, epithets, and titles that reflect his many associations and attributes. Among the most common names are *Mohan* "enchanter"; *Govinda* "chief herdsman",^[25] and *Gopala* "Protector of the 'Go'", which means "Soul" or "the cows".^{[26][27]} Some names for Krishna hold regional importance; *Jagannatha*, found in Puri Hindu temple, is a popular incarnation in Odisha state and nearby regions of eastern India^{[28][29][30]}

Iconography

Krishna is represented in the Indian traditions in many ways, but with some common features. His iconography typically depicts him with black, dark, or blue skin, like Vishnu.^[31] However, ancient and medieval reliefs and stone-based arts depict him in the natural color of the material out of which he is formed, both in India and in southeast Asia.^{[32][33]} In some texts, his skin is poetically described as the color of Jambul (*Jamun*, a purple-colored fruit).^[34]

Krishna is often depicted wearing a peacock-feathewreath or crown, and playing the bansuri (Indian flute).^{[35][36]} In this form, he is usually shown standing with one leg bent in front of the other in the Tribhanga posture. He is sometimes accompanied by cows or a calf, which symbolise the divine herdsman *Govinda*. Alternatively, he is shown as a romantic and seductive man with the gopis (milkmaids), often making music or playing pranks.^[37]



Krishna slays Shishupala



Krishna with cows, herdsmen, and Gopis

Alternate icons of Krishna show him as a baby (*Bala Krishna*, the child Krishna), a toddler crawling on his hands and knees, a dancing child, or an innocent-looking child playfully stealing or consuming butter (*Makhan Chor*),^[41] holding *Laddu* in his hand (*Laddu Gopal*)^{[42][43]} or as a cosmic infant sucking his toe while floating on a banyan leaf during the *Pralaya* (the cosmic dissolution) observed by sage *Markandeya*.^[44] Regional variations in the iconography of Krishna are seen in his different forms, such as *Jaganatha* in Odisha, *Vithoba* in Maharashtra,^[45] *Shrinathji* in Rajasthan^[46] and *Guruvayoorappan* in Kerala.^[47]

Guidelines for the preparation of Krishna icons in design and architecture are described in medieval-era Sanskrit texts on Hindu temple arts such as *Vaikhanaśa āgama*, *Vishnu dharmottara*, *Brihat samhita*, and *Āgni Purana*.^[48] Similarly, early medieval-era Tamil texts also contain guidelines for sculpting Krishna and Rukmini. Several statues made according to these guidelines are in the collections of the *Government Museum, Chennai*.^[49]

Historical and literary sources



Krishna is celebrated in the Vaishnava tradition in various stages of his life, such as *Maakhan chor* (butter thief).^[41]

In other icons, he is a part of battlefield scenes of the epic *Mahabharata*. He is shown as a charioteer, notably when he is addressing the Pandava prince *Arjuna* character, symbolically reflecting the events that led to the *Bhagavad Gita*— a scripture of Hinduism. In these popular depictions, Krishna appears in the front as the charioteer, either as a counsel listening to Arjuna, or as the driver of the chariot while Arjuna aims his arrows in the battlefield of *Kurukshetra*.^{[39][40]}



Krishna lifting Govardhana at Bharat Kala Bhavan, recovered from a Muslim graveyard in Varanasi. It is dated to the Gupta Empire era (4th/6th-century CE).^[38]

Mahabharata

The earliest text containing detailed descriptions of Krishna as a personality is the epic *Mahabharata*, which depicts Krishna as an incarnation of *Vishnu*.^[50] Krishna is central to many of the main stories of the epic. The eighteen chapters of the sixth book (*Bhishma Parva*) of the epic that constitute the *Bhagavad Gita* contain the advice of Krishna to *Arjuna* on the battlefield. The *Harivamsa*, a later appendix to the *Mahabharata* contains a detailed version of Krishna's childhood and youth.^[51]

The *Chandogya Upanishad*, estimated to have been composed sometime between the 8th and 6th centuries BCE, has been another source of speculation regarding Krishna in ancient India. The verse (III.xvii.6) mentions Krishna in "*Krishnaya Devakiputraya*" (Sanskrit: कृष्णाय देवकीपुत्राय) as a student of the sage *Ghṛha* of the *Angirasa* family. This phrase, which means "To Krishna the son of *Devaki*", has been mentioned by scholars such as *Max Müller*.^[52] as a potential source of fables and Vedic lore about Krishna in the *Mahabharata* and other ancient literature – only potential, because this verse could have been interpolated into the text,^[52] or the Krishna Devakiputra, could be different from the deity Krishna.^[53] These doubts are supported by the fact that the much later age *Sandilya Bhakti Sūtras*, a treatise on Krishna,^[54] cites later age compilations such as the *Narayana Upanishad* but never cites this verse of the *Chandogya Upanishad*. Other scholars disagree that the Krishna mentioned along with Devika in the ancient Upanishad is unrelated to the later Hindu god of the *Bhagavad Gita* fame. For example, Archer states that the coincidence of the two names appearing together in the same Upanishad verse cannot be dismissed easily.^[55]

Yāska's *Nirukta*, an etymological dictionary published around the 6th century BCE, contains a reference to the Shyamantaka jewel in the possession of *Akrura*, a motif from the well-known Puranic story about Krishna.^[56] *Shatapatha Brahmana* and *Aitareya-Aranyaka* associate Krishna with his *Vishni* origins.^[57]

In *Ashṭādhyāyī*, authored by the ancient grammarian *Pāṇini* (probably belonged to the 5th or 6th century BCE), *Vāsudeva*, son of Vasudeva, and *Arjuna*, as recipients of worship, are referred to together in the *samoutra*.^{[58][59][60]}

Megasthenes, a *Greek ethnographer* and an ambassador of *Seleucus I* to the court of *Chandragupta Maurya* towards the end of 4th century BCE, made reference to *Herakles* in his famous work *Indica*. This text is now lost to history, but was quoted in secondary literature by later Greeks such as *Arrian*, *Diodorus*, and *Strabo*.^[61] According to these texts, Megasthenes mentioned that the *Souraseni* tribe of India, who worshipped *Herakles*, had two major cities named *Methora* and *Kleisobora*, and a navigable river named the *Jobares*. According to *Edwin Bryant*, a professor of Indian religions known for his publications on Krishna, "there is little doubt that the *Souraseni* refers to the *Shurasenas*, a branch of the *Yadu* dynasty to which Krishna belonged".^[61] The word *Herakles*, states Bryant, is likely a Greek phonetic equivalent of *Hari-Krishna*, as is *Methora* of *Mathura*, *Kleisobora* of *Krishnapura*, and the *Jobares* of *Jamuna*. Later, when *Alexander the Great* launched his campaign in the northwest *Indian subcontinent*, his associates recalled that the soldiers of *Porus* were carrying an image of *Herakles*.^[61]



Bala Krishna dancing, 14th century CE Chola sculpture, Tamil Nadu, in the Honolulu Academy of Arts

The Buddhist *Pali canon* and the *Ghata-Jātaka* (No. 454) polemically mention the devotees of *Vāsudeva* and *Baladeva*. These texts have many peculiarities and may be a garbled and confused version of the Krishna legends.^[62] The texts of *Jainism* mention these tales as well, also with many peculiarities and different versions, in their legends about *Tirthankaras*. This inclusion of Krishna-related legends in ancient Buddhist and Jaina literature suggests that Krishna theology was existent and important in the religious landscape observed by non-Hindu traditions of ancient India.^{[63][64]}

The ancient Sanskrit grammarian *Patanjali* in his *Mahabhashya* makes several references to Krishna and his associates found in later Indian texts. In his commentary on *Pāṇini*'s verse 3.1.26, he also uses the word *Kamsavadha* or the "killing of Kamsa", an important part of the legends surrounding Krishna.^{[65][66]}

Coins



Krishna as *Vasudeva* on a coin of *Agathocles* of *Bactria*, c. 180 BCE^[67]

Around 180 BCE the *Indo-Greek* king *Agathocles* issued some coinage bearing images of deities that are now interpreted as being related to *Vaisnava* imagery in *India*.^{[68][69]} The deities displayed on the coins appear to be *Vishnu*'s avatars *Balarama-Sankarshana* with attributes consisting of the *Gada* mace and the plow, and *Vasudeva-Krishna* with attributes of the *Shankha* (conch) and the *Sudarshana Chakra* wheel.^{[70][68]} According to *Bopearachchi*, the headdress on top of the deity is actually a misrepresentation of a shaft with a half-moon parasol on top (*chattra*).^[68]

Inscriptions

A pillar with a *Brahmi script* inscription was discovered by colonial era archaeologists in the central Indian state of *Madhya Pradesh*. Using modern techniques, it has been dated to between 125 and 100 BCE, and traced to an Indo-Greek who served as an ambassador of the Greek king *Antialcidas* to a regional Indian king.^{[68][71]} Named after the Indo-Greek, it is now known as the *Heliodorus pillar*. Its inscription is a dedication to "*Vasudeva*", another name for Krishna in the Indian tradition. Scholars consider the "*Vasudeva*" to be referring to a deity, because the inscription states that it was constructed by "the *Bhagavata* *Heliodorus*" and that it is a "*Garuda*

pillar" (both are Vishnu-Krishna-related terms). Additionally, the inscription includes a Krishna-related verse from chapter 11.7 of the *Mahabharata* stating that the path to immortality and heaven is to correctly live a life of three virtues: self-temperance (*damah*), generosity (*cagah* or *tyaga*), and vigilance (*apramadah*).^{[71][73][74]}

The Heliodorus inscription is not an isolated evidence. Three Hathibada inscriptions and one Ghosundi inscription, all located in the state of Rajasthan and dated by modern methodology to the 1st century BCE, mention Samkarsana and Vasudeva, also mention that the structure was built for their worship. These four inscriptions are notable for being some of the oldest-known Sanskrit inscriptions.^[75]

A Mora stone slab found at the Mathura-Vrindavan archaeological site in Uttar Pradesh, held now in the Mathura Museum, has a Brahmi inscription. It is dated to the 1st century CE and lists five Vrishni heroes: Balarama, Krishna, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, and Samba.^{[76][77][78]} Another terracotta plaque from the same site shows an infant being carried by an adult over his head, similar to the legend about Krishna's birth.^[76]

Many Puranas tell Krishna's life story or some highlights from it. Two Puranas, the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Vishnu Purana*, contain the most elaborate telling of Krishna's story,^[79] but the life stories of Krishna in these and other texts vary, and contain significant inconsistencies.^{[80][81]} The *Bhagavata Purana* consists of twelve books subdivided into 332 chapters, with a cumulative total of between 16,000 and 18,000 verses depending on the version.^{[82][83]} The tenth book of the text, which contains about 4,000 verses (~25%) and is dedicated to legends about Krishna, has been the most popular and widely studied part of this text.^{[84][85]}



Heliodorus Pillar in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, erected about 120 BCE. The inscription states that Heliodorus is a *Bhagvatenā*, and a couplet in the inscription closely paraphrases a Sanskrit verse from the *Mahabharata*.^{[71][72]}

Life and legends



Vasudeva carrying the newborn Krishna to Nand's house in Gokul via the river Yamuna

This summary is a mythological account, based on literary details from the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivamsa*, the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Vishnu Purana*. The scenes from the narrative are set in ancient India, mostly in the present states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat. The legends about Krishna's life are called *Krishna charitas* (IAST: *Kṛṣṇacaritas*).^[86]

Birth

In *Krishna Charitas*, Krishna is born to Devaki and her husband, King Vasudeva of the Yadava clan in Nathdwara.^[87] Devaki's brother is a tyrant named Kamsa. At Devaki's wedding, according to Puranic legends, Kamsa is told by fortune tellers that a child of Devaki would kill him. Kamsa arranges to kill all of Devaki's children. When Krishna is born, Vasudeva secretly carries the infant Krishna away across the Yamuna and exchanges him. When Kamsa tries to kill the newborn, the exchanged baby appears as the Hindu goddess Durga, warning him that his death has arrived in his kingdom, and then disappears, according to the legends in the Puranas. Krishna grows up with Nanda Baba and his wife Yasoda near modern-day Mathura.^{[88][89][90]} Two of Krishna's siblings also survive, namely Balarama and Subhadra, according to these legends.^[91] The day of birth of Krishna is celebrated as Krishna

Janmashtami.

Childhood and youth



Krishna playing flute (15th-century artwork).



Nanda and Yashoda pushing baby Krishna on a swing



Rasa Lila painting.

The legends of Krishna's childhood and youth describe him as a cow herder, a mischievous boy whose pranks earns him the nickname a *Makhan Chor* (butter thief), and a protector who steals the hearts of the people in both Gokul and Vrindavana. The texts state, for example, that Krishna lifts the Govardhana hill to protect the inhabitants of Vrindavana from devastating rains and floods.^[92]

Other legends describe him as an enchanter and playful lover of the gopis (milkmaids) of Vrindavana, especially Radha. These metaphor-filled love stories are known as the *Rasa lila* and were romanticised in the poetry of Jayadeva, author of the Gita Govinda. They are also central to the development of the Krishna bhakti traditions worshipping Radha Krishna.^[93]

Krishna's childhood illustrates the Hindu concept of *lila*, playing for fun and enjoyment and not for sport or gain. His interaction with the gopis at the rasa dance or Rasa-lila is an example. Krishna plays his flute and the gopis come immediately, from whatever they were doing, to the banks of the Yamuna River, and join him in singing and dancing. Even those who could not physically be there join him through meditation. He is the spiritual essence and the love-eternal in existence, the gopis metaphorically represent the *prakṛti* matter and the impermanent body^{[94]:256}

This *lila* is a constant theme in the legends of Krishna's childhood and youth. Even when he is battling with a serpent to protect others, he is described in Hindu texts as if he were playing a game.^{[94]:255} This quality of playfulness in Krishna is celebrated during festivals as *Rasa-lila* and Janmashtami, where Hindus in some regions such as Maharashtra playfully mimic his legends, such as by making human gymnastic pyramids to break open *handis* (clay pots) hung high in the air to "steal" butter or buttermilk, spilling it all over the group!^{[94]:253-261}

Adulthood



Krishna with his consorts Rukmini and Satyabhama and his mount Garuda, Tamil Nadu, India, late 12th–13th century^[95]

Krishna legends then describe his return to Mathura. He overthrows and kills the tyrant king, *his uncle* Kamsa after quelling several assassination attempts by Kamsa. He reinstates Kamsa's father, Ugrasena, as the king of the Yadavas and becomes a leading prince at the court.^[96] In one version of the Krishna story, as narrated by Shanta Rao, Krishna after Kamsa's death leads the Yadavas to the newly built city of Dwaraka. Thereafter Pandavas rise. Krishna befriends Arjuna and the other Pandava princes of the Kuru kingdom. Krishna plays a key role in the *Mahabharata*.^[97]

The Bhagavata Purana describes eight wives of Krishna that appear in sequence as (Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Kalindi, Mitravinda, Nagnajiti (also called Satya), Bhadra, and Lakshmana (also called Madra).^[98] According to Dennis Hudson, this is a metaphor where each of the eight wives signifies a different aspect of him.^[99] According to George Williams, Vaishnava texts mention all Gopis as wives of Krishna, but this is spiritual symbolism of devotional relationship and Krishna's complete loving devotion to each and everyone devoted to him.^[100] His wife is sometimes called Rohini, Radha, Rukmini, Svaminiji or others.^[101] In Krishna-related Hindu traditions, he is most commonly seen with Radha. All of his wives and his lover Radha are considered in the Hindu tradition to be the avatars of the goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu.^{[102][5]} Gopis are considered as Radha's many forms and manifestations.^[5]

Kurukshetra War and *Bhagavad Gita*



Krishna tells the Gita to Arjuna.



Bronze Chariot with Lord Krishna and Arjuna during the Kurukshetra war.

According to the epic poem *Mahabharata*, Krishna becomes Arjuna's charioteer for the Kurukshetra War, but on the condition that he personally will not raise any weapon. Upon arrival at the battlefield, and seeing that the enemies are his family, his grandfather, and his cousins and loved ones, Arjuna is moved and says his heart will not allow him to fight and kill others. He would rather renounce the kingdom and put down his Gandiv (Arjuna's bow). Krishna then advises him about the nature of life, ethics, and morality when

one is faced with a war between good and evil, the impermanence of matter, the permanence of the soul and the good, duties and responsibilities, the nature of true peace and bliss and the different types of yoga to reach this state of bliss and inner liberation. This conversation between Krishna and Arjuna is presented as a discourse called the Bhagavad Gita^{[103][104][105]}

Death and ascension

It is stated in the Indian texts that the legendary Kurukshetra War leads to the death of all the hundred sons of Gandhari. After Duryodhana's death, Krishna visits Gandhari to offer his condolences when Gandhari and Drutarashtra visited Kurukshetra, as stated in Stree Parva. Feeling that Krishna deliberately did not put an end to the war, in a fit of rage and sorrow Gandhari said, 'Thou were indifferent to the Kurus and the Pandavas whilst they slew each other, therefore, O Govinda, thou shalt be the slayer of thy own kinsmen !' According to the *Mahabharata*, a fight breaks out at a festival among the Yadavas, who end up killing each other. Mistaking the sleeping Krishna for a deer, a hunter named Jara shoots an arrow that fatally injures him. Krishna forgives *Jara* and dies.^{[106][107][108]} The pilgrimage (*tirtha*) site of Bhalka in Gujarat marks the location where Krishna is believed to have died.

It is also known as *Dehotsarga*, states Diana L. Eck, a term that literally means the place where Krishna "gave up his body".^[107] The *Bhagavata Purana* in Book 11, chapter 31 states that after his death, Krishna returned to his transcendent abode directly because of his yogic concentration. Waiting gods such as Brahma and Indra were unable to trace the path Krishna took to leave his human incarnation and return to his abode.^{[109][110]}

Versions and interpretations

There are numerous versions of Krishna's life story, of which three are most studied: the *Harivamsa*, the *Bhagavata Purana*, and the *Vishnu Purana*.^[111] They share the basic storyline but vary significantly in their specifics, details, and styles.^[112] The most original composition, the *Harivamsa* is told in a realistic style that describes Krishna's life as a poor herder but weaves in poetic and allusive fantasy. It ends on a triumphal note, not with the death of Krishna.^[113] Differing in some details, the fifth book of the *Vishnu Purana* moves away from *Harivamsa* realism and embeds Krishna in mystical terms and eulogies.^[114] The *Vishnu Purana* manuscripts exist in many versions.^[115]

The tenth and eleventh books of the *Bhagavata Purana* are widely considered to be a poetic masterpiece, full of imagination and metaphors, with no relation to the realism of pastoral life found in the *Harivamsa*. Krishna's life is presented as a cosmic play (*lila*), where his youth is set as a princely life with his foster father Nanda portrayed as a king.^[116] Krishna's life is closer to that of a human being in *Harivamsa*, but is a symbolic universe in the *Bhagavata Purana*, where Krishna is within the universe and beyond it, as well as the universe itself, always.^[117] The *Bhagavata Purana* manuscripts also exist in many versions, in numerous Indian languages.^{[118][84]}

Proposed datings

The date of Krishna's birth is celebrated every year as Janmashtami.^[119]



The hunter Jara about to shoot arrow towards Krishna

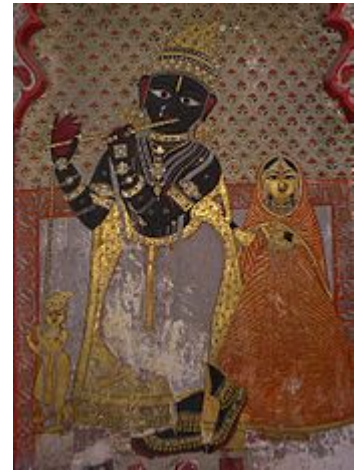


After the Pandavas complete their exile, they ask Kuru brothers to let them return to their kingdom according to the terms of exile. The Kurus refuse. As war discussion begins on both sides, Sanjaya meets with Pandavas and Krishna (pictured above) in an effort to avoid war. This meeting is covered in Sanjaya-yana book of Udyoga Parva.

According to Guy Beck, "most scholars of Hinduism and Indian history accept the historicity of Krishna - that he was a real male person, whether human or divine, who lived on Indian soil by at least 1000 BCE and interacted with many other historical persons within the cycles of the epic and puranic histories." Yet, Beck also notes that there is an "enormous number of contradictions and discrepancies surrounding the chronology of Krishna's life as depicted in the Sanskrit canon."^[120]

Lanvanya Vemsani states that Krishna can be inferred to have lived between 3227 BCE - 3102 BCE from the Puranas.^[121] A number of scholars, such as A. K. Bansal, B. V. Raman places Krishna's birth year as 3228 BCE.^{[122][123]} A paper presented in a conference in 2004 by a group of archaeologists, religious scholars and astronomers from Somnath Trust of Gujarat, which was organised at Prabhas Patan, the supposed location of the where Krishna spent his last moments, fixes the death of Sri Krishna on 18 February 3102 BC at the age of 125 years and 7 months.^[note 2]

In contrast, according to mythologies in the Jain tradition, Krishna was a cousin of Neminatha, the 22nd Tirthankara of the Jains.^[130] Neminatha is believed in the Jain tradition to have been born 84,000 years before the 9th-century BCE Parshvanatha.^[131]



14th-century fresco of Krishna in Udaipur, Rajasthan

Philosophy and theology



As told in the Krishna Story; out of 16,108 wives, the Ashtabharya (eight brides) [of Krishna] appear in the story in this sequence: 1) Rukmini, 2) Satyabhama, 3) Jambavati, 4) Kalindi, 5) Mitravinda, 6) Satya or Nagnajiti, 7) Bhadra, and 8) Lakshmana... - D. Dennis Hudson.

A wide range of theological and philosophical ideas are presented through Krishna in Hindu texts. Ramanuja, a Hindu theologian whose works were influential in Bhakti movement,^[132] presented him in terms of qualified monism (Vishishtadvaita).^[133] Madhvacharya, a Hindu philosopher whose works led to the founding of Haridasa sect of Vaishnavism,^[134] presented Krishna in the framework of dualism (Dvaita).^[135] Jiva Goswami, a saint from Gaudiya Vaishnava school,^[136] described Krishna theology in terms of Bhakti yoga and Achintya Bheda Abheda.^[137] Krishna theology is presented in a pure monism (advaita, called shuddhadvaita) framework by Vallabha Acharya, who was the founder of Pushti sect of vaishnavism.^{[138][139]} Madhusudana Sarasvati, an India philosopher,^[140] presented Krishna theology in nondualism-monism framework (Advaita Vedanta), while Adi Shankara, who is credited for unifying and establishing the main currents of thought in Hinduism,^{[141][142][143]} mentioned Krishna in his early eighth-century discussions on Panchayatana puja.^[144]

The *Bhagavata Purana*, a popular text on Krishna considered to be like a scripture in Assam, synthesizes an Advaita, Samkhya, and Yoga framework for Krishna but one that proceeds through loving devotion to Krishna.^{[145][146][147]} Bryant describes the synthesis of ideas in *Bhagavata Purana* as,

The philosophy of the *Bhagavata* is a mixture of Vedanta terminology, Samkhyan metaphysics and devotionalized Yoga praxis. (...) The tenth book promotes Krishna as the highest absolute personal aspect of godhead – the personality behind the term Ishvara and the ultimate aspect of Brahman.

— Edwin Bryant, *Krishna: A Sourcebook*^[1]

While Sheridan and Pintchman both affirm Bryant's view, the latter adds that the Vedantic view emphasized in the Bhagavata is non-dualist with a difference. In conventional nondual Vedanta all reality is an interconnected and one, the Bhagavata posits that the reality is interconnected and plural.^{[148][149]}

Across the various theologies and philosophies, the common theme presents Krishna as the essence and symbol of divine love, with human life and love as a reflection of the divine. The longing and love-filled legends of Krishna and the gopis, his playful pranks as a baby,^[150] as well as his later dialogues with other characters, are philosophically treated as metaphors for the human longing for the divine and for meaning, and the play between the universals and the human soul.^{[151][152][153]} Krishna's *lila* is a theology of love-play. According to John Koller, "love is presented not simply as a means to salvation, it is the highest life". Human love is God's love.^[154]

Other texts that include Krishna such as the *Bhagavad Gita* have attracted numerous *bhasya* (commentaries) in the Hindu traditions.^[155] Though only a part of the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, it has functioned as an independent spiritual guide. It allegorically raises through Krishna and Arjuna the ethical and moral dilemmas of human life, then presents a spectrum of answers, weighing in on the ideological questions on human freedoms, choices, and responsibilities towards self and towards others.^{[155][156]} This Krishna dialogue has attracted numerous interpretations, from being a metaphor of inner human struggle teaching non-violence, to being a metaphor of outer human struggle teaching a rejection of quietism to persecution.^{[155][157][156]}

Influence

Vaishnavism

The worship of Krishna is part of Vaishnavism, a major tradition within Hinduism. Krishna is considered a full avatar of Vishnu, or one with Vishnu himself.^[158] However, the exact relationship between Krishna and Vishnu is complex and diverse,^[159] with Krishna sometimes considered an independent deity and supreme.^[160] Vaishnavas accept many incarnations of Vishnu, but Krishna is particularly important. Their theologies are generally centered either on Vishnu or an avatar such as Krishna as supreme. The terms Krishnaism and Vishnuism have sometimes been used to distinguish the two, the former implying that Krishna is the transcendent Supreme Being.^[161]

All Vaishnava traditions recognise Krishna as the eighth avatar of Vishnu; others identify Krishna with Vishnu, while traditions such as Gaudiya Vaishnavism,^{[162][163]} Vallabha Sampradaya and the Nimbarka Sampradaya regard Krishna as the *Svayam Bhagavan*, the original form of Lord or the same as the concept of Brahman in Hinduism.^{[2][164][165][166][167]} Gitagovinda of Jayadeva considers Krishna to be the supreme lord while the ten incarnations are his forms. Swaminarayan, the founder of the Swaminarayan Sampraday, also worshipped Krishna as God himself. "Greater Krishnaism" corresponds to the second and dominant phase of Vaishnavism, revolving around the cults of the Vasudeva, Krishna, and Gopala of the late Vedic period.^[168] Today the faith has a significant following outside of India as well.^[169]

Early traditions

The deity Krishna-Vasudeva (*kṛṣṇa vāsudeva* "Krishna, the son of Vasudeva") is historically one of the earliest forms of worship in Krishnaism and Vaishnavism.^{[15][56]} It is believed to be a significant tradition of the early history of Krishna religion in antiquity.^[170] Thereafter, there was an amalgamation of various similar traditions. These include ancient Bhagavatism, the cult of Gopala, of "Krishna Govinda" (cow-finding Krishna), of Balakrishna (baby Krishna) and of "Krishna Gopivallabha" (Krishna the lover).^{[171][172]} According to Andre Couture, the Harivamsa contributed to the synthesis of various characters as aspects of Krishna.^[173]

Bhakti tradition



Krishna has been a major part of the Bhakti movement

The use of the term bhakti, meaning devotion, is not confined to any one deity. However, Krishna is an important and popular focus of the devotionism tradition within Hinduism, particularly among the Vaishnava sects.^{[162][174]} Devotees of Krishna subscribe to the concept of lila, meaning 'divine play', as the central principle of the universe. It is a form of bhakti yoga, one of three types of yoga discussed by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita^{[163][175][176]}

Indian subcontinent

The bhakti movements devoted to Krishna became prominent in southern India in the 7th to 9th centuries CE. The earliest works included those of the Alvar saints of the Tamil country.^[177] A major collection of their works is the Divya Prabandham. The Alvar Andal's popular collection of songs Tiruppavai, in which she conceives of herself as a gopi, is the most famous of the oldest works in this genre.^{[178][179][180]}

The movement originated in South India during the 7th CE, spreading northwards from Tamil Nadu through Karnataka and Maharashtra; by the 15th century, it was established in Bengal and northern India.^[181] Early Bhakti pioneers include Nimbarka (12th or 13th century CE),^[182] but most emerged later, including Vallabhacharya (15th century CE) and (Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. They started their own schools, namely Nimbarka Sampradaya, Vallabha Sampradaya, and Gaudiya Vaishnavism, with Krishna as the supreme god.

In the Deccan, particularly in Maharashtra, saint poets of the Varkari sect such as Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Janabai, Eknath, and Tukaram promoted the worship of Vithoba,^[45] a local form of Krishna, from the beginning of the 13th century until the late 18th century.^[13] In southern India, Purandara Dasa and Kanakadasa of Karnataka composed songs devoted to the Krishna image of Udupi. Rupa Goswami of Gaudiya Vaishnavism has compiled a comprehensive summary of bhakti called Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu.^[174]

In South India, the acharyas of the Sri Sampradaya have written reverentially about Krishna in most of their works, including the Thiruppavai by Andal^[183] and Gopala Vimshati by Vedanta Desika.^[184]

Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala states have many major Krishna temples, and Janmashtami is one of the widely celebrated festivals in South India.^[185]

Outside Asia

By 1965 the *Krishna-bhakti* movement had spread outside India after Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (as instructed by his guru, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura) traveled from his homeland in West Bengal to New York City. A year later in 1966, after gaining many followers, he was able to form the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), popularly known as the Hare Krishna movement. The purpose of this movement was to write about Krishna in English and to share the Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy with people in the Western world by spreading the teachings of the saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. In the biographies of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the mantra he received when he was given diksha or initiation in Gaya was the six-word verse of the Kali-Santarana Upanishad namely "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare; Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare". In Gaudiya tradition, it is the *maha-mantra*, or great mantra, about Krishna bhakti.^{[186][187]} Its chanting was known *ashari-nama sankirtana*.^[188]



Krishna (left) with Radha at Bhaktivedanta Manor, Watford, England



An ISKCON temple in Luçay-le-Mâle, France

The *maha-mantra* gained the attention of George Harrison and John Lennon of The Beatles fame,^[189] and Harrison produced a 1969 recording of the mantra by devotees from the London Radha Krishna Temple.^[190] Titled "Hare Krishna Mantra", the song reached the top twenty on the UK music charts and was also successful in West Germany and Czechoslovakia.^{[189][191]} The mantra of the Upanishad thus helped bring Bhaktivedanta and ISKCON ideas about Krishna into the West.^[189] ISKCON has built many Krishna temples in the West, as well as other locations such as South Africa.^[192]

Southeast Asia



Krishna lifts "Govardhan" mountain, a 7th-century artwork from a Da Nang, Vietnam, archaeological site^{[193][194]}

Krishna is found in southeast Asian history and art, but to a far less extent than Shiva, Durga, Nandi, Agastya, and Buddha. In temples (*candi*) of the archaeological sites in hilly volcanic Java, Indonesia, temple reliefs do not portray his pastoral life or his role as the erotic lover, nor do the historic Javanese Hindu texts.^[195] Rather, either his childhood or the life as a king and Arjuna's companion have been more favored. The most elaborate temple arts of Krishna are found in a series of *Krsnayana* reliefs in the Prambanan Hindu temple complex near Yogyakarta. These are dated to the 9th century CE.^{[195][196][197]} Krishna remained a part of the Javanese cultural and theological fabric through the 14th century, as evidenced by the 14th-century Penataran reliefs along with those of the Hindu god Rama in east Java, before Islam replaced Buddhism and Hinduism on the island.^[198]

The medieval era arts of Vietnam and Cambodia feature Krishna. The earliest surviving sculptures and reliefs are from the 6th and 7th century, and these include Vaishnavism iconography.^[193] According to John Guy, the curator and director of southeast Asian arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Krishna Govardhana art from 6th/7th-century Vietnam at Danang, and 7th-century Cambodia at Phnom Da cave in Angkor Borei, are some of the most sophisticated of this era.^[193]

Krishna iconography has also been found in Thailand, along with those of Surya and Vishnu. For example, a large number of sculptures and icons have been found in the Si Thep and Klangnai sites in the Phetchabun region of northern Thailand. These are dated to about the 7th and 8th century, from both the Funan and Zhenla periods archaeological sites.^[199]

Performance arts



The Krishna legends in the *Bhagavata Purana* have inspired many performance arts repertoire, such as Kathak, Kuchipudi (left) and Odissi.^{[18][16]} The *Rasa Lila* where Krishna plays with the gopis in Manipuri dance style (right).

Indian dance and music theatre traces its origins and techniques to the ancient Sama Veda and Natyasastra texts.^{[200][201]} The stories enacted and the numerous choreographic themes are inspired by the mythologies and legends in Hindu texts, including Krishna-related literature such as Harivamsa and Bhagavata Purana.^[202]

The Krishna stories have played a key role in the history of Indian theatre, music, and dance, particularly through the tradition of Rasaleela. These are dramatic enactments of Krishna's childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. One common scene involves Krishna playing flute in *rasa leela*, only to be heard by certain gopis (cowheard maidens), which is theologically supposed to represent divine call only heard by certain enlightened beings.^[203] Some of the text's legends have inspired secondary theatre literature such as the eroticism in Gita Govinda.^[204]

Krishna-related literature such as the Bhagavata Purana accords a metaphysical significance to the performances and treats them as religious ritual, infusing daily life with spiritual meaning, thus representing a good, honest, happy life. Similarly, Krishna-inspired performances aim to cleanse the hearts of faithful actors and listeners. Singing, dancing, and performance of any part of *Krishna Lila* is an act of remembering the dharma in the text, as a form of *para bhakti* (supreme devotion). To remember Krishna at any time and in any art, asserts the text, is to worship the good and the divine.^[205]

Classical dance styles such as Kathak, Odissi, Manipuri, Kuchipudi and Bharatnatyam in particular are known for their Krishna-related performances.^[206] Krisnattam (Krishnattam) traces its origins to Krishna legends, and is linked to another major classical Indian dance form called Kathakali.^[207] Bryant summarizes the influence of Krishna stories in the Bhagavata Purana as, "[it] has inspired more derivative literature, poetry, drama, dance, theatre and art than any other text in the history of Sanskrit literature, with the possible exception of the Ramayana."^[17]

Other Religions



Radha-Krishna

Jainism

The Jainism tradition lists 63 Śalākāpuruṣa or notable figures which, amongst others, includes the twenty-four Tirthankaras (spiritual teachers) and nine sets of triads. One of these triads is Krishna as the Vasudeva, Balarama as the Baladeva, and Jarasandha as the Prati-Vasudeva. In each age of the Jain cyclic time is born a Vasudeva with an elder brother termed the Baladeva. Between the triads, Baladeva upholds the principle of non-violence, a central idea of Jainism. The villain is the Prati-vasudeva, who attempts to destroy the world. To save the world, Vasudeva-Krishna has to forsake the non-violence principle and kill the Prati-Vasudeva.^[208]

The stories of these triads can be found in the Harivamsa Purana (8th century CE)

of Jinasena (not be confused with its namesake, the addendum to Mahābhārata) and the Trishashti-shalakupurusha-charita of Hemachandra.^{[209][210]}

The story of Krishna's life in the Puranas of Jainism follows the same general outline as those in the Hindu texts, but in details they are very different: they include Jain Tirthankaras as characters in the story, and generally are polemically critical of Krishna, unlike the versions found in the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata Purana and the Vishnu Purana.^[211] For example, Krishna loses battles in the Jain versions, and his gopis and his clan of Yadavas die in a fire created by an ascetic named Dvaipayana. Similarly, after dying from the hunter Jara's arrow, the Jain texts state Krishna goes to the third hell in Jain cosmology, while his brother is said to go to the sixth heaven.^[212]

Vimalasuri is attributed to be the author of the Jain version of the Harivamsa Purana, but no manuscripts have been found that confirm this. It is likely that later Jain scholars, probably Jinasena of the 8th century, wrote a complete version of Krishna legends in the Jain tradition and credited it to the ancient Vimalasuri.^[213] Partial and older versions of the Krishna story are available in Jain literature, such as in the Antagata Dasao of the Svetambara Agama tradition.^[213]

In other Jain texts, Krishna is stated to be a cousin of the twenty-second Tirthankara, Neminatha. The Jain texts state that Naminatha taught Krishna all the wisdom that he later gave to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. According to Jeffery D. Long, a professor of religion known for his publications on Jainism, this connection between Krishna and Neminatha has been a historic reason for Jains to accept, read, and cite the *Bhagavad Gita* as a spiritually important text, celebrate Krishna-related festivals, and intermingle with Hindus as spiritual cousins.^[214]

Buddhism

The story of Krishna occurs in the Jataka tales in Buddhism.^[215] The *Vidhurapandita Jataka* mentions *Madhura* (Sanskrit: Mathura), the *Ghata Jataka* mentions Kamsa, Devagabbha (Sk: Devaki), Upasagara or Vasudeva, Govaddhana (Sk: Govardhana), Baladeva (Balarama), and Kanha or Kesava (Sk: Krishna, Keshava).^{[216][217]}

Like the Jaina versions of the Krishna legends, the Buddhist versions such as one in *Ghata Jataka* follow the general outline of the story^[218] but are different from the Hindu versions as well.^{[216][63]} For example, the Buddhist legend describes Devagabbha (Devaki) to have been isolated in a palace built upon a pole, after she is born, so no future husband could reach her. Krishna's father similarly is described as a powerful king, but who meets up with Devagabbha anyway, and to whom Kamsa gives away his sister Devagabbha in marriage. The siblings of Krishna are not killed by Kamsa, though he tries. In the Buddhist version of the legend, all of Krishna's siblings grow to maturity.^[219]

Krishna and his siblings' capital becomes Dvaravati. The Arjuna and Krishna interaction is missing in the Jataka version. A new legend is included, wherein Krishna laments in uncontrollable sorrow when his son dies, and a Ghatapandita feigns madness to teach Krishna a lesson.^[220] The Jataka tale also includes an internecine destruction among his siblings after they all get drunk. Krishna also dies in the Buddhist legend by the hand of a hunter named Jara, but while he is traveling to a frontier city. Mistaking Krishna for a pig, Jara throws a spear that fatally pierces his feet, causing Krishna great pain and then his death.^[219]

At the end of this *Ghata-Jataka* discourse, the Buddhist text declares that Sariputta, one of the revered disciples of the Buddha in the Buddhist tradition, was incarnated as Krishna in his previous life to learn lessons on grief from the Buddha in his prior rebirth:

Then he [Master] declared the Truths, and identified the Birth: 'At that time, Ananda was Rohineyya, Sariputta was Vasudeva [Krishna], the followers of the Buddha were the other persons, and I myself was Ghatapandita."

— Jataka Tale No. 454, Translator: W. H. D. Rouse^[221]

While the Buddhist Jataka texts co-opt Krishna-Vasudeva and make him a student of the Buddha in his previous life,^[221] the Hindu texts co-opt the Buddha and make him an avatar of Vishnu.^{[222][223]} The 'divine boy' Krishna as an embodiment of wisdom and endearing prankster forms a part of the pantheon of gods in Japanese Buddhism.^[224]

Other

Krishna is mentioned as *Krishna Avtar* in the Chaubis Avtar, a composition in Dasam Granth traditionally and historically attributed to Guru Gobind Singh.^[225]

Bahá'ís believe that Krishna was a "Manifestation of God", or one in a line of prophets who have revealed the Word of God progressively for a gradually maturing humanity. In this way, Krishna shares an exalted station with Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Muhammad, Jesus, the Báb, and the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh.^{[226][227]}



Depiction of Krishna playing the flute in a temple constructed in 752CE on the order of Emperor Shomu, Todai-ji Temple, Great Buddha Hall in Nara, Japan

Ahmadiyya, a 20th century Islamic movement, consider Krishna as one of their ancient prophets.^{[228][229][230]} Ghulam Ahmad stated that he was himself a prophet in the likeness of prophets such as Krishna, Jesus, and Muhammad,^[231] who had come to earth as a latterday reviver of religion and morality.

Krishna worship or reverence has been adopted by several new religious movements since the 19th century, and he is sometimes a member of an eclectic pantheon in occult texts, along with Greek, Buddhist, biblical, and even historical figures.^[232] For instance, Édouard Schuré, an influential figure in perennial philosophy and occult movements, considered Krishna a *Great Initiate*, while Theosophists regard Krishna as an incarnation of Maitreya (one of the Masters of the Ancient Wisdom), the most important spiritual teacher for humanity along with Buddha.^{[233][234]}

Krishna was canonised by Aleister Crowley and is recognised as a saint of Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica in the Gnostic Mass of Ordo Templi Orientis.^{[235][236]}



Infant Krishna with Mother Yashoda

See also

- Radha Krishna
- Bhagavan
- Guruvayurappan
- Dashavatara
- Hinduism in Russia
- Prem Mandir Vrindavan
- Radha
- Vithoba
- Shrinathji

Notes

- The regional texts vary in the identity of Krishna's wife (consort), some presenting it as Rukmini, some as Radha, some as Svaminiji, some adding *all* *gopis*, and some identifying all to be different aspects or manifestation of Devi Lakshmi.^{[4][5]}
- Scholars such as Ludo Rocher and Hazra state that the Puranas are not a reliable source for Indian history because the content therein about kings, various peoples, sages, and kingdoms is highly inconsistent across the manuscripts. They state that these stories are probably based in part on real events, in part chagiography, and in part embellished by expansive imagination.^{[124][125]} Dimmitt and van Buitenen state that it is difficult to ascertain when, where, why and by whom the Puranas were written, and they grew by "numerous accretions in successive historical eras" where people added or changed the text at random.^[126] Their reliability has also suffered from the way surviving manuscripts were copied over the centuries.^{[127][128]} The liberties in the transmission of Puranas were normal and those who copied older manuscripts replaced words or added new content.^{[129][128]}

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Krishna

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English

Alternative forms

- Kṛṣṇa

Etymology

From Sanskrit कृष्ण (*kṛṣṇá*).

Pronunciation

- IPA^(key): /ˈkɹɪʃnə/

Proper noun

Krishna

1. (*Hinduism*) A deity worshiped across many traditions of Hinduism. Krishna is often depicted as a young cowherd boy with a dark or blue complexion playing a flute (as in the Bhagavata Purana) or a youthful prince giving philosophical direction and guidance (as in the Bhagavad Gita) He is the divine speaker of the Bhagavad Gita and the eighth avatar of Vishnu.
2. A river in southern India.
3. A district in South Indian state of Andhra Pradesh
4. A *male given name* and a surname used in India.

Derived terms

- Krishnaism

Translations

avatar
river
name

Further reading

-  **Krishna** on Wikipedia.

Anagrams

- Harkins, rankish
-

Portuguese

Proper noun

Krishna*m*

1. (*Hinduism*) Krishna (a supreme Hindu deity)

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कृष्ण

See also: क्षण

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Hindi

Etymology

From Sanskrit कृष्ण (*kṛṣṇa*). Doublet of कान्हा (*kānhā*).

Pronunciation

- IPA^(key): /krɪʃ.nɑː/, /krɪʃn/, /krɪ.ʃən/

Proper noun

कृष्ण • (kr̥ṣṇ) ‎ṁ (*Urdu spelling* کرشن)

- (*Hinduism*) Krishna, eighth avatar of Vishnu

Synonyms: कान्हा (*kānhā*), किशन (*kiśan*), माखन-चोर (*mākhan-cor*)

- A male given name, equivalent to English Krishna
- Krishna (a river in India)

Adjective

कृष्ण • (kr̥ṣṇ) (Urdu spelling کرشن)

1. (uncommon) black

Synonym: काला (kālā)

Sanskrit

Alternative forms

Alternative scripts

Etymology

From Proto-Indo-Aryan **kṛ̥ṣnás*, from Proto-Indo-Iranian **kṛ̥ṣnás*, from Proto-Indo-European **kṛ̥ṣnós* (“black”). Cognate with Old Church Slavonic чрънъ (črŭnŭ, “black”), Old Prussian *kirsnan* (“black”).

Pronunciation

- (*Vedic*) IPA^(key): /kr̥ṣ̌.ɳe/
- (*Classical*) IPA^(key): /'kr̥ṣ̌.ɳe/
- (*Vedic*) IPA^(key): /kr̥ṣ̌.ɳé/
- (*Classical*) IPA^(key): /'kr̥ṣ̌.ɳe/

Adjective

कृष्ण • (kr̥ṣṇā)

- black, dark, dark-blue
- wicked, evil

Declension

Masculine a-stem declension of कृष्ण			
	Singular	Dual	Plural
Nominative	<u>कृष्णः</u> (kr̥ṣṇaḥ)	<u>कृष्णौ</u> (kr̥ṣṇau)	<u>कृष्णाः</u> (kr̥ṣṇāḥ)
Vocative	<u>कृष्ण</u> (kr̥ṣṇa)	<u>कृष्णौ</u> (kr̥ṣṇau)	<u>कृष्णाः</u> (kr̥ṣṇāḥ)
Accusative	<u>कृष्णम्</u> (kr̥ṣṇam)	<u>कृष्णौ</u> (kr̥ṣṇau)	<u>कृष्णान्</u> (kr̥ṣṇān)
Instrumental	<u>कृष्णेन</u> (kr̥ṣṇena)	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> (kr̥ṣṇābhyām)	<u>कृष्णैः</u> (kr̥ṣṇaiḥ)
Dative	<u>कृष्णाय</u> (kr̥ṣṇāya)	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> (kr̥ṣṇābhyām)	<u>कृष्णेभ्यः</u> (kr̥ṣṇebhyaḥ)
Ablative	<u>कृष्णात्</u> (kr̥ṣṇāt)	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> (kr̥ṣṇābhyām)	<u>कृष्णेभ्यः</u> (kr̥ṣṇebhyaḥ)
Genitive	<u>कृष्णस्य</u> (kr̥ṣṇasya)	<u>कृष्णयोः</u> (kr̥ṣṇayoh)	<u>कृष्णानाम्</u> (kr̥ṣṇānām)
Locative	<u>कृष्णे</u> (kr̥ṣṇe)	<u>कृष्णयोः</u> (kr̥ṣṇayoh)	<u>कृष्णेषु</u> (kr̥ṣṇeṣu)
Feminine ā-stem declension of कृष्ण			
	Singular	Dual	Plural

Nominative	कृष्णा (kr̥ṣṇā)	कृष्णे (kr̥ṣṇe)	कृष्णाः (kr̥ṣṇāḥ)
Vocative	कृष्णे (kr̥ṣṇe)	कृष्णे (kr̥ṣṇe)	कृष्णाः (kr̥ṣṇāḥ)
Accusative	कृष्णाम् (kr̥ṣṇām)	कृष्णे (kr̥ṣṇe)	कृष्णाः (kr̥ṣṇāḥ)
Instrumental	कृष्णया (kr̥ṣṇayā)	कृष्णाभ्याम् (kr̥ṣṇābhyām)	कृष्णाभिः (kr̥ṣṇābhiḥ)
Dative	कृष्णायै (kr̥ṣṇāyai)	कृष्णाभ्याम् (kr̥ṣṇābhyām)	कृष्णाभ्यः (kr̥ṣṇābhyaḥ)
Ablative	कृष्णायाः (kr̥ṣṇāyāḥ)	कृष्णाभ्याम् (kr̥ṣṇābhyām)	कृष्णाभ्यः (kr̥ṣṇābhyaḥ)
Genitive	कृष्णायाः (kr̥ṣṇāyāḥ)	कृष्णयोः (kr̥ṣṇayoh)	कृष्णानाम् (kr̥ṣṇānām)
Locative	कृष्णायाम् (kr̥ṣṇāyām)	कृष्णयोः (kr̥ṣṇayoh)	कृष्णासु (kr̥ṣṇāsu)

Neuter a-stem declension of कृष्ण

	Singular	Dual	Plural
Nominative	कृष्णम् (kr̥ṣṇam)	कृष्णे (kr̥ṣṇe)	कृष्णानि (kr̥ṣṇāni)
Vocative	कृष्ण (kr̥ṣṇa)	कृष्णे (kr̥ṣṇe)	कृष्णानि (kr̥ṣṇāni)
Accusative	कृष्णम् (kr̥ṣṇam)	कृष्णे (kr̥ṣṇe)	कृष्णानि (kr̥ṣṇāni)
Instrumental	कृष्णेन (kr̥ṣṇena)	कृष्णाभ्याम् (kr̥ṣṇābhyām)	कृष्णैः (kr̥ṣṇaiḥ)
Dative	कृष्णाय (kr̥ṣṇāya)	कृष्णाभ्याम् (kr̥ṣṇābhyām)	कृष्णेभ्यः (kr̥ṣṇebhyaḥ)
Ablative	कृष्णात् (kr̥ṣṇāt)	कृष्णाभ्याम् (kr̥ṣṇābhyām)	कृष्णेभ्यः (kr̥ṣṇebhyaḥ)
Genitive	कृष्णस्य (kr̥ṣṇasya)	कृष्णयोः (kr̥ṣṇayoh)	कृष्णानाम् (kr̥ṣṇānām)
Locative	कृष्णे (kr̥ṣṇe)	कृष्णयोः (kr̥ṣṇayoh)	कृष्णेषु (kr̥ṣṇeṣu)

Antonyms

- श्वेत (śvetá)
- शुक्ल (śuklá)
- रोहित (róhita)
- अरुण (áruṇa)

Noun

कृष्ण • (kr̥ṣṇá) *m*

1. black (the colour) or dark-blue(which is often confounded with black by the Hinduṣ)

Declension

Masculine a-stem declension of कृष्ण (kr̥ṣṇá)			
	Singular	Dual	Plural
Nominative	कृष्णः kr̥ṣṇāḥ	कृष्णौ kr̥ṣṇau	कृष्णाः / कृष्णासः ¹ kr̥ṣṇāḥ / kr̥ṣṇāsaḥ ¹
Vocative	कृष्ण kr̥ṣṇa	कृष्णौ kr̥ṣṇau	कृष्णाः / कृष्णासः ¹ kr̥ṣṇāḥ / kr̥ṣṇāsaḥ ¹

<i>Accusative</i>	कृष्णम् kṛṣṇám	कृष्णौ kṛṣṇau	कृष्णान् kṛṣṇān
<i>Instrumental</i>	कृष्णेन kṛṣṇéna	कृष्णाभ्याम् kṛṣṇābhyām	कृष्णैः / कृष्णेभिः ¹ kṛṣṇaiḥ / kṛṣṇébhiḥ ¹
<i>Dative</i>	कृष्णाय kṛṣṇāya	कृष्णाभ्याम् kṛṣṇābhyām	कृष्णेभ्यः kṛṣṇébhyah
<i>Ablative</i>	कृष्णात् kṛṣṇāt	कृष्णाभ्याम् kṛṣṇābhyām	कृष्णेभ्यः kṛṣṇébhyah
<i>Genitive</i>	कृष्णस्य kṛṣṇásya	कृष्णयोः kṛṣṇáyoh	कृष्णानाम् kṛṣṇānām
<i>Locative</i>	कृष्णे kṛṣṇé	कृष्णयोः kṛṣṇáyoh	कृष्णेषु kṛṣṇéṣu
<i>Notes</i>	■ ¹ Vedic		

Noun

कृष्ण • (kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇá) *m*

1. waning period of the lunar phase from full moon to new moon
2. the fourth or कलियुग (*kali-yuga*)
3. the antelope
4. a kind of animal feeding on carrion
5. the Indian cuckoo
6. a crow
7. *Carissa carandas*
8. a kind of venomous insect
9. a kind of perfume
10. blackness, darkness
11. the black part of the eye
12. the black spots in the moon
13. a kind of demon or spirit of darkness
14. black pepper
15. black *Aquilaria* (syn. *Agallochum*)
16. iron
17. lead
18. antimony
19. blue vitriol

Declension

Masculine a-stem declension of कृष्ण (kṛṣṇa)			
	Singular	Dual	Plural
<i>Nominative</i>	कृष्णः kṛṣṇaḥ	कृष्णौ kṛṣṇau	कृष्णाः / कृष्णासः ¹ kṛṣṇāḥ / kṛṣṇāsaḥ ¹
<i>Vocative</i>	कृष्ण kṛṣṇa	कृष्णौ kṛṣṇau	कृष्णाः / कृष्णासः ¹ kṛṣṇāḥ / kṛṣṇāsaḥ ¹
<i>Accusative</i>	कृष्णम् kṛṣṇam	कृष्णौ kṛṣṇau	कृष्णान् kṛṣṇān

	<u>kr̥ṣṇam</u>	<u>kr̥ṣṇau</u>	<u>kr̥ṣṇān</u>
<i>Instrumental</i>	<u>कृष्णेन</u> kr̥ṣṇena	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> kr̥ṣṇābhyām	<u>कृष्णैः / कृष्णेभिः</u> ¹ kr̥ṣṇaiḥ / kr̥ṣṇebhiḥ ¹
<i>Dative</i>	<u>कृष्णाय</u> kr̥ṣṇāya	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> kr̥ṣṇābhyām	<u>कृष्णेभ्यः</u> kr̥ṣṇebhyaḥ
<i>Ablative</i>	<u>कृष्णात्</u> kr̥ṣṇāt	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> kr̥ṣṇābhyām	<u>कृष्णेभ्यः</u> kr̥ṣṇebhyaḥ
<i>Genitive</i>	<u>कृष्णस्य</u> kr̥ṣṇasya	<u>कृष्णयोः</u> kr̥ṣṇayoh	<u>कृष्णानाम्</u> kr̥ṣṇānām
<i>Locative</i>	<u>कृष्णे</u> kr̥ṣṇe	<u>कृष्णयोः</u> kr̥ṣṇayoh	<u>कृष्णेषु</u> kr̥ṣṇeṣu
<i>Notes</i>	■ ¹ Vedic		

Masculine a-stem declension of कृष्ण (kr̥ṣṇá)			
	Singular	Dual	Plural
<i>Nominative</i>	<u>कृष्णः</u> kr̥ṣṇáh	<u>कृष्णौ</u> kr̥ṣṇau	<u>कृष्णाः / कृष्णासः</u> ¹ kr̥ṣṇāḥ / kr̥ṣṇāsaḥ ¹
<i>Vocative</i>	<u>कृष्ण</u> kr̥ṣṇa	<u>कृष्णौ</u> kr̥ṣṇau	<u>कृष्णाः / कृष्णासः</u> ¹ kr̥ṣṇāḥ / kr̥ṣṇāsaḥ ¹
<i>Accusative</i>	<u>कृष्णम्</u> kr̥ṣṇám	<u>कृष्णौ</u> kr̥ṣṇau	<u>कृष्णान्</u> kr̥ṣṇān
<i>Instrumental</i>	<u>कृष्णेन</u> kr̥ṣṇéna	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> kr̥ṣṇābhyām	<u>कृष्णैः / कृष्णेभिः</u> ¹ kr̥ṣṇaiḥ / kr̥ṣṇebhiḥ ¹
<i>Dative</i>	<u>कृष्णाय</u> kr̥ṣṇāya	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> kr̥ṣṇābhyām	<u>कृष्णेभ्यः</u> kr̥ṣṇebhyaḥ
<i>Ablative</i>	<u>कृष्णात्</u> kr̥ṣṇāt	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> kr̥ṣṇābhyām	<u>कृष्णेभ्यः</u> kr̥ṣṇebhyaḥ
<i>Genitive</i>	<u>कृष्णस्य</u> kr̥ṣṇásya	<u>कृष्णयोः</u> kr̥ṣṇáyoh	<u>कृष्णानाम्</u> kr̥ṣṇānām
<i>Locative</i>	<u>कृष्णे</u> kr̥ṣṇé	<u>कृष्णयोः</u> kr̥ṣṇáyoh	<u>कृष्णेषु</u> kr̥ṣṇéṣu
<i>Notes</i>	■ ¹ Vedic		

Proper noun

कृष्ण • (kr̥ṣṇá) *m*

1. Krishna, name of a celebrated Avatar of the god Vishnu.

Declension

Masculine a-stem declension of कृष्ण (kr̥ṣṇá)			
	Singular	Dual	Plural
<i>Nominative</i>	<u>कृष्णः</u>	<u>कृष्णौ</u>	<u>कृष्णाः / कृष्णासः</u> ¹

	kr̥ṣṇáh	kr̥ṣṇaú	kr̥ṣṇáh / kr̥ṣṇásah ¹
<i>Vocative</i>	<u>कृष्ण</u> kr̥ṣṇa	<u>कृष्णौ</u> kr̥ṣṇau	<u>कृष्णाः</u> / <u>कृष्णासः</u> ¹ kr̥ṣṇāḥ / kr̥ṣṇāsah ¹
<i>Accusative</i>	<u>कृष्णम्</u> kr̥ṣṇám	<u>कृष्णौ</u> kr̥ṣṇau	<u>कृष्णान्</u> kr̥ṣṇān
<i>Instrumental</i>	<u>कृष्णेन</u> kr̥ṣṇéna	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> kr̥ṣṇābhyām	<u>कृष्णैः</u> / <u>कृष्णेभिः</u> ¹ kr̥ṣṇaiḥ / kr̥ṣṇébhiḥ ¹
<i>Dative</i>	<u>कृष्णाय</u> kr̥ṣṇāya	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> kr̥ṣṇābhyām	<u>कृष्णेभ्यः</u> kr̥ṣṇébhyah
<i>Ablative</i>	<u>कृष्णात्</u> kr̥ṣṇāt	<u>कृष्णाभ्याम्</u> kr̥ṣṇābhyām	<u>कृष्णेभ्यः</u> kr̥ṣṇébhyah
<i>Genitive</i>	<u>कृष्णस्य</u> kr̥ṣṇásya	<u>कृष्णयोः</u> kr̥ṣṇáyoh	<u>कृष्णानाम्</u> kr̥ṣṇānām
<i>Locative</i>	<u>कृष्णे</u> kr̥ṣṇé	<u>कृष्णयोः</u> kr̥ṣṇáyoh	<u>कृष्णेषु</u> kr̥ṣṇéṣu
<i>Notes</i>	■ ¹ Vedic		

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