

Chapter – III

Buddhist Images

Composite

The composite hybrid aspects in Indian art and literature have played quite a meaningful role in the Indian religious scene. These tendencies have created paradoxical situations and far reaching effects in the moulding of the religious movements in the country. Sometimes these forms were created to express religious or sectarian rivalries at time sectarian harmony or cult amalgams affording distinctive iconographical features. These tendencies also tended to borrowing of a deity of one sect by the other and even adoring a deity of one faith by the other as its own deity whether conscious or unconsciously. The famous Siva-Lokesvara image of the 10th century from Kesavopur (Barisal), now in the preservation of Asutosh Museum, presents itself as that of Siva but is seen bearing an effigy of two armed dhyani-Buddha over the crest.¹ It has been already indicated that Siva in the medieval age occupied an honorific place in the mahayanic pantheon. This is further indicated by another specimen of a five-faced Avalokitesvara,² who enjoys close affinity with the favourite orthodox god of the Hindus. An image of Buddhist god Troilokyavasamkara, in the Varendra Museum of Rajshahi, usually, maintains the parity of the iconographic description of the god, but in the grab of a Brahmonical Bhairava.³ Adorned with the five miniatures over the crest some Sakti images from Bengal have direct influence of Buddhist iconography.⁴ With the survey of some syncretic images, an increasingly power of mutual support of the back of the idea of oneness in the wide existence of the gods. The fact should be taken for granted as an urgent need for the religious outlook

of the country, not only for the Buddhist but also for all the prevailing cults of the orthodox religion.

Two metal images, originally hailing from Chittagong, now preserved in the personal collection of S.K. Saraswati, dispose peculiar iconographic representations that have no parity with description of any particular deity. One of the two specimens comprising a couple is seated in Vajraparyarikasana posture side by side on the lotus pedestal. Bedecked with jewellery and the mark of the third eye over the forehead. The male divinity is possessed of six hands which the principal ones are exposed in samadhi-mudra on the lap. Among the remaining four, the upper right hand holds akshamala and the lower one is exhibited in ratnasamjuta-varada pose. The opposite pair of left hands have cognisances of a manuscript in the upper hand and a lotus with stalk in the lower. There is a tiny skull like effigy over the head of the god. His female companion is a two handed divinity with lotus and manuscript having the same ratnasamyuta-varada pose. The second image is of a goddess in Vajraparyarikasana and is exposed with identical ornaments, Jatamukuta, third eye and all the weapons of the male figure in his size hands with a slight departure in the lower arm where we find a vase instead of a lotus. Besides the figure carries a miniature of a dhyani-Buddha over the crest. Now all these epigraphic features in both the specimens hardly conform with any particular textual description of a god or a goddess. Some emblems of the male figure viz. akshamala, third eye and the effigy of a skull, corroborate some marks of Siva apart from other emblem, viz. manuscript, ratnasamyukta-Varoda pose and lotus that are common factors in all the above icons. In fact, Siva is to be noted as the Jnandevata and thus in almost all the agamas he is found to be endowed with askhamata, nilotpala and either vyakhyana or varada-mudra. In the present case, the feature of the male figure differs only from the prescribed posture of the hand that is displayed in samadhi-mudra. But identification of the god with some Dakshina-murti of Siva should be improper in spite of his being depicted with the said mudra, because their usage, which is concerned with yoga or dhyana is not unusual for Siva. Apart

from such identification, there is reason to believe that all these images had surely imbibed some mahayanic ideas of the time. In support of this view, the second sculpture bearing one effigy of a dhyani-Buddha leaves little room for doubt. We have already mentioned that this sculpture of the goddess resembles, somewhat, the male god, barring a vase being held in her lower left hand. So the goddess may be believed to be the female counterpart of the male deity. It is no wonder that the figure of the male god displays a compromise between the images of Siva and that of a Mahayana deity. The manuscript of the male god is to be found in constant association with Manjusri, the Buddhist god of wisdom. Besides, Manjughosha, who seems to be identified with Siva in the Tantrasara is also a particular form of Manjusri in the Mahayanic pantheon. Manjughosha is depicted with sword and manuscript enjoyed in the dhyana-sloka of Tantrasara. The Samadhi-mudra and akshamala found in the sculpture may be elucidated on the basis of two readings of the dhyana-sloka occurring in two different manuscripts of the Tantrasara. The term arikapant in one of them agrees with the samadhi-mudra and akshamala in other, corroborates the iconographic representation of rosary in one of the two hands of the deity. The Manjughosha aspect of Siva is also a Jnanadevata as we learn from the Bhairava Tantra that the god bestows wealth, prosperity and intellect on his ardent devotee. Siva Manjughosha derives certain elements from Mahayanic Manjughosha which is also aspect of Manjusri. It is curious enough to note that the Vijamantras of the one aspect of Manjusri and those of Manjughosha-Siva of the Hindu Tantras are very akin. In the Sadhanamala, one sadhana of Manjusri constitutes the Vijamantras of the god, viz. Arapachara and it is interesting to note that the Vijamantra of Manjughosha Siva is Aravachala. In addition to this, the description of Manjusri in the present case the male figure characterises a synthesis of both Dakshina-murti of Siva and the Buddhist divinity Manjusri of the two Buddhist female divinities, the figure by the side of the male god is but a simplified form of the other goddess, who because of her attributes even being independent, is claimed to be the Sakti of the male god. But her

identification with Prajna Paramita, the Sakti of Manjusri does not arise because of the above deity does not display the dharma-chakra-pravarthana-mudra which is the main feature of Prajna-Paramita. In the Sadhanamala we have a Sadhana in Arya Aryasapasati where the deity carries a manuscript on a lotus, but the dhyana is silent on the attribute of the right hand. Though Sarasvati is the Sakti of Siva, her dhyana is not wanting in the Tantrasara where she occupies a place on the lap of Rudradeva. Conspicuous among her emblems depicted in the same treatise are akshamala, Jnanmudra, nectar, vase manuscript and the third eye. In the present case the goddess possesses at least three attributes and the third eye and in third form she is easily recognisable to be the Sakti of Siva. But though she is a Tantric exponent of the goddess Sarasvati her accommodation beside the Buddhist god Manjusri is more convincing as in the Mahayamic pantheon, alteration of Sarasvati to the consort of Manjusri is also available. Besides the specimen under our review looks more Buddhist an account of the effigy of dhyani-Buddha over her head. But her sadhana does not recognise some of her iconographic features found in the image. So this goddess just like her land in the figure of the male god develops or syncretic form by assimilating different attributes of both Buddhist and Brahmonical Sarasvati who is regarded to be the consort of both Manjusri and Siva. The other female figure by the side of the male figure is but the simplified form of the above goddess who is generally, a Sarasvati. These syncretic images from Chittagong through a flood of light on the chief trend of assimilative force in the history of religion in medieval Bengal, when votaries of one pantheon most, unscrupulously used to borrow the elements of icons belonging to other sects.

A five specimen of syncretic form of Vishnu showing some characteristics of Bodhisattva-Manjusri is present among the sculpturing acquired by the Rajshahi Museum. The four armed standing figure bedecked with Vanamala carries his usual emblems Sankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma. But a through survey of the iconographic features represents the description of an image of Bodhisattva-Manjusri. The head

occupied by a miniature of dhyani Bhuddha, Amitabha, but the pedestal is engraved with a six armed figure in the posture of war dance. The principal figure being accompanied by four male figures in the place of the mythical bird Goruda, Lakshmi and Sarasvati carries weapon, which are two indistinct to be recognised as usual attributes of Vishnu viz. Sankha, Chakra, Gada, Padma. In the lower right hand there is a lump like object looking more like sweet mate than a lotus bud. An object having uniform width is horizontally placed over a lotus stalk held the upper left hand. The object can be recognised as mace. Rather it may be a book in accompaniment of flaming pearl placed on the lotuses. The upper right hand carried a wheel over a lotus and the left lower hand holds, a conch. Out of four attendant figures, two beside the principal figure can't be recognised as Ayudhapurbus has because such Audhapurushar are invariably found to carry a lotus stack headed with discuss and conch. But they in the present case are devoid of such symbols. Moreover the smaller figures by the side of these Aydhapurushas remain still unidentified. The six armed dancing figure on the pedestal probably signifies a class of gana, demi god or Bhuta, if we take the distum of the Tantrasara. "Bhutapretadibhih Kayryyad pitha Sanamanbarth". The Vanamala round the neck of the deity is not only common for Vishnu. Sometimes Bodhisattva images are seem wearing such garland. Description of the image seems to represent him more akin to a type of Manjusri than that of Vishnu. The growing popularity of Manjusri in both orthodox and heterodox institutions became a well known fact from medieval time onwards. Regarding his attendant figures in the present instances, we can safely comment that god is hardly found in the company of the female attendants. In Indian painting and sculptures, Manjusri appears in his two principal forms one being in a fighting attitude with ignorance and the other being in a 'peace loving dispenser in knowledge'. In the last named form the wheel of law and the conch are usual emblems. Out of the twenty-four varieties of the god described in Trikanda-sisha, two are recognised a Ashtarachakravan (i.e. holder of wheel of eight spoker) and Sthirachakra (stable wheeled). So the above specimen

seems to be of a Sthirachakra type. As regards the dhyani-Buddha Amitava over the head of the deity, it may be stated that though asshobhya is generally the spiritual father of Manjusri, Amitava is not entirely uncommon. the inscription on the pedestal is so broken in some parts that the reading is not possible to be restored. The image at the first glance resemblance that of Vishnu and we are opt to name the deity Manjusri-Vishnu.

A such mutilated Lokesvara image from Ghiyasabad (Murshidabad) now preserved in the Indian Museum. It is a striking example of Vaishnavite influence over the Buddhist sculptures. It is standing figure in Sampadasthanka pose under the snake hooded canopy. The deity possesses twelve hands in which the following emblems are recognisable : Goruda, a rat, a ploughshare, a conch shell in the left hand, a manuscript a bull and a cup in the right hands. All these attributes rest on the doubled petalled lotuses. The god is usually decorated and a long garland of vanamala round the neck hangs upto the knee. Two of the hands on both sides of the main figure touch the standing attendant figures in the same mode as we find in many sculpture of Vishnu who place their hands on the accompanying Ayudhapurushas place their hand on their hands on their accompanying Auudhapurushas. But the image seems to be of Lokesvara in view of another similar specimen now preserved in the collection of Rajshahi Museum, where the pretasuchinuvha, the invariable attendant of Lokesvara is present be declared with Vanamala, it too, looks more Vishnuite than its Buddhist appearance. Out of his twelve hands, some are endowed with conch-shell alongwith other Vaishnavite attributes. Even accompaniment of Goruda comes in favour of the god to be an image of Vishnu. The top of the Prabhavali in both the sculpture is broken. So we are not sure as to whether the convey any effigy of Amitava or other dhyani-Buddha inter change of some iconographic features provides little room for doubt that reciprocal unification of both the gods was concluded in more advanced stattuette of Vishnu-Lokanatha from Sonarang Dacca, which endowed with twelve hands and stands on a full blown lotus resting on bhadrapitha. A small figure of dhyani

Buddha Amitabha over serpent hooded canopy. Just behind the deity tempts us to recognise him as belonging to Lokanatha class. Attending figures on either side of the main figure stand in tribhanga pose being endowed with Kaliharta-mudra. Their headdress is embellished with a chakra in a peculiar manner symbolising Buddhist wheel of law. The main god is declined with all kinds of paraphernalia viz, crown, earring, tarque, armlets and bracelets and thus the general features of the image owed much to those of Vishnu image. The uppermost right hand rests on the support of a full blown lotus in the manner displaying varanda pose. The corresponding left one is broken.

Thus reciprocal dolending of Buddhist and Vaishnava concept was remarkable phenomenon in the history of the Pala Bengal, so many Vishnu-Lokesvara image from the country are valuable testimonies. Like these composite Lokesvara images from Ghiyasabad and Sonarang, another discovery of some Vishnu images comprising striking similarity with the aforesaid images reveals the same tune of harmony in the religious growth of medieval Bengal. A well prescribed fine specimen comes from a small village Sardanga, lying at a distance at 12 miles from one town of Burdwan. From its stylistic appearance and execution the image is unique by itself. The deity stands in a Samapadasthanaka pose under the canopy of nine hooded serpents god are a conch-shell and a lotus in the principal left and right hands respectively while in the eight corresponding lotuses. The remaining lower hands on the left and right sides rest on the head of two chowry bearers standing in tri-bhanga pose over lotus pedestals. Just by the rites of these attendant figures, here remains other two miniatures of four handed Vishnu-Lokesvara of which one is made to on both the sides of the stela and the canopy of the nine-serpent hoods, there are other two figures standing on double petalled lotuses. They are two handed variety of Vishnu-Lokesvara images recognisable from their lotus symbols held in respective left and right hands. The central figure is reached with all the para-phernalia of Vishnu viz. mukuta crown on the head, kundalas in the years (earrings), hara (necklace) round the neck, Yajnvita (sacred

thread) udumbara (girdle), keyuras (armlets) and balayers (bracelets). Above all the deity puts on a loin-cloth and a long gurland of Vanamala or Vaijayantimala hanging up to the knees. Mutilated portion of the pedestal bearing an inscription of votive character not reliable for its seriously broken condition : Dharmadana era (mc)... iyam pratima "that is sufficient for determining the date in the 11 century A.D.6 From the stand point of its execution and mode of arrangement in group of similar deities we can't but remember the manner of Arapachana-Manjuri in which the principal figure should be executed amidst the host of similar deities.

Other Vishnu-Lokesvara image from Sardanga is almost identical with the former excepting that the figure in the present case, stands, under the canopy of seven serpent hoods and just on either side of the deity, there are two standing figures at Sankhapurusha and chakrapurusha in the place of chowry bearers in the above sculptures. This image is also inscribed in the above sculptures. This image is also inscribed in the proto-Bengali character of the 11th Century but the content of the inscriptions has not yet been deciphered. Two other archaeological sites near Sardanga are Sancha and Deuliya where among a good number of unearthed sculptural remains a large Vishnu-Lokesvara image (Sancha) is worthy notice. The image is sadly mutilated standing in Samapadasthanaka pose on a lotus pedestal. Instead of Prabhavali, the canopy of seven serpent hoods behind the head of the god is seen. Trace of twelve hands is only discernible by the emblems viz. lotuses which are held by their long stalks in the left and right hands respectively. The god has the usual characteristics of loin cloth, Vanamala or Vaijayantimala. The deviation noted in the characteristic of this image from those of the previous ones, lies in the placement of Audhopurushas as well as of Sankha and Chakra Purushas. Besides, two fat and squatting figures occupy the spaces of the miniatures of Vishnu-Lokesvara on either side of the main god.¹⁷

The union between Siva and Lokesvara was not by any means insoluble as the discovery of so many syncretic Vishnu-Lokesvaras bears importance of the new

development in the religious sphere of **medieval** Bengal. We know that Vishnu from the 11th century onward attained great popularity as a major cult divinity this is provided further by the discovery of a large number of Vishnu images belonging to the Varman and Sena period. Buddhism, on the otherhand was receding to the background, under the circumstances it is quite natural that on the synthesis of Vishnu and Lokesvara traits new development of composite images drew quick attention of the people.

Chapter – III

B. Ugra-Murtis:

The following tabulation proves a glimpse of the various Brahmonical deities remaining in attendance of being trampled upon by the Buddhist gods and goddesses as described in various Buddhist text :

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| 1. | <u>Aparajita</u> | <u>Ganesa</u> |
| 2. | Parnasvari | <u>Ganesa</u> |
| 3. | Vighnantaka | <u>Ganesa</u> |
| 4. | Hari-Hari-Hari Vahnadbhava <u>Lokesvara</u> | <u>Vishnu</u> |
| 5. | Vajrajvalanalarka | <u>Vishnu</u> |
| 6. | Vaj <u>Rahumkara</u> | Siva |
| 7. | Kala-Chakra | Siva and Ananga |
| 8. | Prasanna <u>Tara</u> | Brahma |
| 9. | <u>Hevajra</u> | Brahma, <u>Vishnu</u> , Siva, Mrityu |
| 10. | Dasabhuja | Brahma, <u>Vishnu</u> , Siva, Mrityu |
| 12. | Ubhayavara-hanana | Brahma, <u>Vishnu</u> , Siva, Mrityu |
| 13. | Vajra Varahi | Siva and Kalaratri |
| 14. | Samhara | Siva and Kalaratri |
| 15. | Trailokyavijaya | Siva and Parvati. |

The genesis of this two-armed Aparajita is found one of the two earth goddesses as depicted on the pedestal of some fifth-sixth century images of Buddha in

the bhumisparsa-mudra, mainly from Sarnath. In one depiction she is rushing forth with her extended right palm in capetadanabhinaya and the left palm showing tarjani. She turned into the Vajrayana goddess around eight century A.D. The image preserved in the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta, is one of Aparajita of this period. In this image the two-armed goddess besides showing with her palm, the capetadanabhinaya and tarjani, is trampling upon Ganapati. In the late eighth century two-armed image from Pachar Hill, now in the Patna Museum, these iconographical features of the goddess are shown and also is shown and also is shown the umbrella-bearer.

An image of Aparajita with broken tenon, preserved in the Akshyaya Kumar Maitreya Museum, University of North Bengal. The image (33 c.m. high, 32 c.m. wide, 12.5 c.m. thick) made of blackish grey stone hails from English Bazar, Malda and is datable to C. Tenth Century A.D. The deity is dressed in a sati (folds marked groups of double incised lines) decorated with incised flowers and fastened by a girdle of two strings (one beaded) from which hang down three strings (the central one chain-shaped) ending in a floral pattern and the flanking two, cable-shaped, ending in bell-shaped buds) and semicircular strings (one plain and the other beaded) and wears anklets of two strings (one plain and the other beaded).

The deity stands in the alidha posture right foot placed on the pedestal and left foot on the proboscis of the pot-bellied four armed Ganesa (lying on his back), wearing a shawl cloth, anklets, bangles, armlets, a tiara and jatamukuta. His lower right palm with raised tarjani holds a plain rosary. In his upper right is Parasu and in the upper left a radish; the lower left palm is broken. The proboscis is turned towards his left.

Marichi laid by the Lamas of Tibet about the time of Sun-rise which shows her connection with the Sun. She too like the Hindu Sun god has chariot. Her chariot is drawn by seven pigs while that of the Sun is drawn by seven horses. Again the charioteer of the Sun is Aruna, who has no legs but that of Marichi is either a goddess with no legs or Rahu – only the head without a body.

Heruka – is one of the most popular deities of the Buddhist pantheon and a regular Tantra. The Heruka Tantra, is devoted to his worship. Heruka is worshipped singly as well as Yab-Yun. When he is in Yab-Yun he is generally known as Hevajra and in this form he is popular in Tibet.

Ucchusma Jambhala – is identical in form with the one emanation of Aksobhya. Ucchusma stands in the Pratyaldha attitude with his left leg stretched forward on the forehead of Kuvera, while the right tramples upon his two legs. He is terrible to behold, with protruding belly, bare bangs and the snakes for ornaments. He holds the kapala full of blood against his chest in the right hand and looks eagerly at it with three eyes. The left hand as usual holds the mongoose.

Ucchusma Jambhala is rarely represented and his images are not known except the one at Sarnath already described under the emancipation Aksobhaya. This unique image shows all the characteristic features of the god as obtained from the Sadhana. The figure shows his consort Vasudhara in the left, but the effigy of neither Aksobhaya nor Ratnasambhava can be seen on his head. Jambhala is not known either Tibet or China.

Hari Hari Vahana Lokesvara lower most is the snake on it is the lion, over the lion is Garuda, Narayana rides Garuda, and on his shoulder sits Lokesvara. The Garuda has two hands in the Anjali-mudra. Narayana has four hands, of which the first pair is engaged in forming the Anjali against the chest; while the second pair has the Chakra in the right hand and the Gada in the left. Lokesvara sits in Majraparyavika and his six arms. the right hands show the rosary the Chakra and the Varoda pose, while the three left carry the Trideni the noose and Utpala. Hevajra-mandala of the Nispannavogavali, Heruka is the principal deity, thus showing that there is only a very thin line of demarcation between the two Heruka and Hevajra.

References and Notes

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