ICONOGRAPHY OF MAHIŚĀSURAMARDINI: A STUDY

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Abstract

Iconography is a medium which tells as the truth of religious dogmas with meaningful existence. On the other way iconography acts as ‘vidya’ of principles and the significance of contemporary of the people in an apparent from there are many branches of study in which the icon such as the ‘asanas’, ‘mudras’, ‘bhanigimas’, varnas etc-delineate some special features of it. The genre of the term we can see the greek word ‘eikon’ means a figure representing a deity. With the above meaning this word has a close parallel in indian tems as ‘arca’, ‘bera’, vigraha connected with ‘tanu or rupa’. This branch can attach itself with the human beliefs,religious and psychological emotioon of common life as reflected in indian context.

Keywords: Asana, Mudra, Bhangimas, Durga, Mahalaxmi, Mahiśāsuramardini.

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1. Introduction

Indian iconography has chiefly been catalogued by historians. It has not been extensively subjected to the analytical scrutiny that is essential to its use as a source of knowledge about our historical past. The present dissertation is therefore a study of the images of Mahiśāsuramardini’s as an index of socio religious change at the micro and macro levels. As per the traditional beliefs there are four goals of life on earth and each human being should aspire to achieve that. Everyone should aim for Dharma or righteous living; Artha or wealth acquired through the pursuit of a profession; Kama or human love; and finally Moksha or spiritual salvation. The holistic view is reflected as well as in the artistic production of India. Although a Hindu temple is dedicated to the glory of deity and is aimed at helping the devote towards Moksha, its wall might justifiable context. That we may best understand the many sensuous and apparently secular themes that decorate the walls of Indian temples and sculptural content.

Śakti, the cradle of the phenomenal existence of beings, plays a vital role not only in India but also in the whole world. She is the source of cosmic evolution and the controller of all forces and potentialities of nature. She is the immediate cause of the perceptible world and all the beings are in her domain. As such, to know her in the entirety is to know her reality. To add more, Śaktism is the worship of Śakti or the female principle, the primary factor in the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. The term Śakti represents divinity in general and stands for the energizing power of some divinity in particular. Being feminine in gender she has long been associated with the various male deities as their energy but in Śaktism the energy of each God becomes personified as his consort, and thus, if a god is separated from his consort or Śakti, it is powerless and inert.
2. Research Method

In the general features of the iconography of the goddess, it has been told that many people worship her in various forms. “when she is worshipped as an year old baby, she is known by the name of sandhya, if she is conceived to be two years old she is called sarasvati; if of seven years age sambhami, if of nine years age, Durga or Bala; of ten years of age Gauri, of thirteen, Mahalaksmi; and of sixteen, lalita. Sometimes she is named in recognition to one or other of her heroic achievements; for instance, she is called Mahisasuramardini in consequence of her having destroyd the demon Mahisasura”. Thus, she becomes the beholder of many names after getting a massive successof a particular age or after accomplishment of a particular deed. The goddess in various forums is responsible for slaughtering of many demons who were the cause of the sordidness and steaminess for other Gods. Thus, this heroic deeds help her to differ herself with various attributes, postures and chariots while battling with the ‘asuras’. According to puranic accounts the goddess Mahiśāsuramardini emerged out of the combined energies of Brahma, Visnu, siva and other gods for the sake of sauing the gods from the wrath of Mahisasura in many critical situaltious she is describsd as adi Sakti or para-Sakti, yet she takes various forms. This load to various iconographical features to this goddess. The first sculpture of Mahiśāsuramardinī to be unearthed was from Bhita and it belonged to Gupta period (ASIJAR 1911-12: 86). The other hands are broken. With the front left hand the goddess holds the right hind leg of the animal and pins down the head of the buffalo with her right leg.

The Mahiśāsuramardinī figures during historical period are depicted variously ranging from two to thirty- two arms. The two, four and six handed specimens are wide- spread and continue till recent times. Between 11th and 13th centuries most diverse types of Mahiśāsuramardinī compositions were carved. One may notice some kind of development in the compositions of early-medieval times, which are featured in terms of different counts of hands, anthropomorphic form to the buffalo demon and addition of the lion as mount of the goddess. In the light of this brief historical account the select goddess of Dulmi would be discussed.

Iconography of Mahisasurmardini as Delineated in various Texts:-

The puranas, Agamas and also the other texts described the iconographic features of the goddess Mahisasurmardini as recorded below with varied references.

Puranas

Only purana can take as lock to the age of ancient times apart from the ‘vedas’ The purama is also a part of indionvliterature. That is why in many of the works of the vedic literatre, the puramas is even called as the fifth veda. Moreover, the puraenas are processing force of literature, for this reason only there are many stories which grown up with various bgendr, imaginal, religious stories sricited different persous of various tastes ina broader sense, it is noless tosay that puranas keep pace with the socio-religious beliefs of people. Accrading to very old definition contained in the famous lexicon Amarakasa, a purama is comprised of five characteristies such as sarga (crreation), pratisarga (re-crreation), vamisa (genealogy), mamvantana (cosmic cycles) and vamisanucari (accounts of royal dynadities). Amongthes five characteristies of puranas, the first three deal with the early religionmndmuhotology and the other two with the traditional history. So while reading the five characteristies of pramad or more precisely the study of purama can help as to know the his tory of the development of rites and customs with a very enriched materials along with the in a booder sense and accounts of the royal dynasties during the centuries.

Agni purama

Agni purama described Durga Mahisasurmardini as the name of candika who has been depicted as bearing twenty arms. The right arms are carried with a heveanly trident, a sound, a spear, a cakra, an arrow, noose a club, ayudha, abhaya, damru (drum)and spike and on there maining left hand she holds a naga pasa (saake-nose), a khetaka, an once, a mouse, a bow a ball a banner, a gada(mace), a mirar and a mudgara. The Agni purama represent the buffalo with its detrunvate heed and the blood coated ‘asira’ with his bloody eyes is emerging out from this head with wrath and anger, bragging the sword in the air and vomining blood which dripping down around his breast like gartand. The godder, with standing position, haning been resting her right foot on the lion and left on the shoulder of twisted neck demon whose arm has been pounced upon by her divine lion biting him condika has been presented with three eyes, fully armed and squeezing the emeny of god. The
process of her worship is a kind of mystic digaram. She has been devoted with navapadma i.e. the
vimaide of nine lotus flowers at the beginning, center, the eastern and other of the same for of the
representaion of the goddess, with nine ‘talvas’ in turn.  

The eighteen armed goddess having a trident, cakra, sword, conch, arrow, open, vajra, mach and a
dart in her right hand and the left hand is decorated with tarjani - mudre damaw, miron, bonner,
club, noose, bow, human-head and a shield. The ten armed goddess could be a sword, a trident, a
cobra, an arrow and a spearin her right hands and in her lefthand a shield, a bow a snake nose a,
good and an axe. This purana also depicts that the goddess, driving her chariot lion, holds the
trident grimly into the chest of the buffalo demon.

Bhabisyapura
We can find eighteen and sixteen armed goddess Mahisasuramardini in Bhausiya purana. The
portrayalofof the eighteen armed goddess sixth jullay grown bosom, studded with all armaments and
nurished with blessings. She has a skull, ashide, a bel, tarjani - mudra, a bow, a flag, a damau, a
noose, and mirror in her left hand and a sakti, a club, a trident, a vajra, a conch, am ankusa, a
cakra, a salaka nd arrow in the right hand the victory mongers and the Dager become her
devotee. The absence of the salaka and arrow have been found when she is presented with sixteen
hands and in this from she looks terrible sometimes appears with in fair and yellow like complexion
and often as syama she stands on the buffalo and is funnished with weapons to attack
the demon.

Devi Bhagavata purana
In this purana as see the beautiful appeaunce of the goddess having eighteenarms and is
arnamented with all kind of jewels. She holds different types of avapons and a lion as her chariot. A
the appearance of fourteen armed goddess would decorated with a trident, cakra, conch, arrow,
spear, vajra, staff and a patra, axe, bell, pot bow, rosay and a shield in the left hands.

Kalikapura
Kalika purama desrciles Mahisasur madini with a head dress of matted hair and a crescent on the
top eulogied her decoration. Three beautiful eyes, fill moon like face, shining gold complexion
make her juvenile appearecewell bui she is bedecked with all arraments .she has grown up with
perfectwomanly features .staaing is trbhanga pasture the goddes, Mahisasuramardini has ten arms,
bearing the sign of lotus stems .A sword a cakra, sharp arrows ,a sakti and a trident wase
positionedin her right hands and a bell, an oxe, a khetkaka, abow and a noose wree is her heft hands
she was at a waw with severed head Mahisasur mardini in a truffalo form Mahisasur or Asura,with
a sword in his hend has been discovered himself as a human form from the severed necked buffalo
The trident of the goddess should be sticked on the ckest of the Mahisasura who may be bound
witj naga passa withwood cloating body .The goddess hold the blood sooked Asura with her left
hand alon with her lion chariri .The goddess reposed her right foot over the bock of the lion while
her toc of the left foot pacdd over Mahisasura upraisinghy.

Markandeyapura
The goddess here havingeighteen arms with the weapons like risory, one, gada, arrow, vajra, totus,
bow, kundika, danda, sakti, sword, shied, canch, bell, vase or honey, pasa and carra. The totus
plays the role of altar on which the goddess seats with smily face, as Mahalakami the killer of
Mahisasura.

Matsya purana
The image of katyan goddess should be portrayed a haning tenarmsd holding the same weapons as
it could bseeeninthevhemd of Brahma,Visnu and siva. She has been depicted as matted hair on her
head and crasent she has three eyes and her face recognizes that of the moor with its radience like
the atasi flower and mesmerizing eyes and a lofty arramental presence with five teeth and grous up
breast ; standing with her body cowsed in three dimensions. The godfess’s both hands are armed
with the same elements as described by the previous puranas and thedeadly bloody image of
Mahisasura I also akin with the other purana and thisparticular purana also has the same
resemblanceco of the lion chariot below the goddess’s joot .Even the posi lion of the foot and toe of
the godeeses on theback of the lion and the other on the body of Mahisasura is very close to other
depiction. This fea ture of the goddess suro unded by other prayin ‘ devas’ is welcomed fr all
kind of depiction of the goddess.
Vamana purana
The interpretation of Devi -Mahatmya of the Markandeya purana is deeply found in vamanapurana. This prana describes Mahisasur mardini as katanani because her creative process was held in the katayana as hram. This goddess is the beholder of eighteen limbs and three ardent eyes. Her body has a radiance of thousands sums. She is arayed with the weapons like trident, disc, conch, dart, iron rod, bow, quiver, arrow, thunder bolt, mace, raary, water pot, sword, shield, botte-axe and other attributer.

Varaha purana
The trio-force vision of visnu, shiva and brahma is the source of the production of the goddess as clear is varaha purana. Unlike the purana here the discusion of the goddess is dark in complexion like blue lotus and has black curly hair. She got a beautiful nose with a party forca and a charming face. This kind of bodily decorums where all might with equal proportions in her as the definition of the fowing of fire was giving by Tvasta. Most of all the goddess in her eight hands carrias sonka, cakra, gada, padma, khadga, ghamta, dhanu and bana.

Visnudharmottara purana
Here in visnusharmaottarab purana candika is mentiond as Mahishāsuramardini. The appearance of goddess has bee painet in a very beautiful way, having gold complexion and a body of verdant youth and charming with fierce too attitude. She has been seated on the back of a lion with twenty hands in each night hands there was the sula, uadga, sankha, cakra, bana, sankti, vajra, abhaya, damw, ankusa, dhanus, andin the left hand we can notice the nagapasa, ketaka, parasu, ankusa, damur, ghamta, dhuaja, gada, a mirrorand a mudgara. In the case of asura, the real Asura is cut from the buffalo headed Asura and the real Asura emerged oil from this decapiated part. At this condition there brooshed around his hair, brows and he also vomits blood. He was attacked by the lion, the chariot of the goddess and the goddess stricks her trisula into his neck. The asura carries asword and a shild but the goddess bounds down his with the haga pasa.

Agamas
Agamas is the verbal account which is spoken by lord siva and for this reason thisaccount is called Thnlric tentsv. the tens gotorythte dignity of Agamastra whilelord siva gained the realizalion of parvati and a divine support from vasedeva (Agatain bsvauaktrebyah getam cha Girja srutau).

Anisumadbhedagama
The portrayed the goddess Durga in Anisumadhedagama with having four arms, ther eyes and dark complexion. She wears pitambara (yellow) suited to her potnt fealures and also edecked wtih all ornamentals and worshipped with a karanda mukuta. AbhayaMudra and cakra one the manifestat ion of he right hands and a conch and kalaka mudra for the lefr hands.

Purvakananagama
We find the goddess wearing a karanda -mukata ,haning two arms, two eyes and a sinilingface is purvakarananagama. Here the goddess is ornamented with all jeweleries and she ha twogarments to put on with perfectly shaped womanly features in syama complexion. This description of the goddess we can see some differences i.e., the goddess are hold on ankusaand the left hands holding nothing and freely brus adise.often she holds a lotus flowers with her right hands and the left hands are in the same poster the description don’t stop here at goes on to many other descriptions like the goddess used to mark her for head with tila come her eyes an rite and many decrating her hair kiritamukuta with a help. Shaped moon is worn by the goddess and others eans bledgeeked with jewels .She could have eight four arms having a still a khadga, an arrow, and a cokera and on the other’s hands a pasha a kethaka and a conch. The poster of the left hand of the goddess is raised in varadamudra. the portrait of four armed goddess should must hold a trident sword, slide and a noise. Owing such beautiful appearance she stemds over the head of Mahisa.

Sprabhedagama
The suprabhedaga helps the artist to draw a picture of the goddess by giving options of four and eight arms at the artist takes four armed to goddess to crete his out then artist must put sanka, a cakra, ca dhamels, a khadga, besides a stila and a pasa on the hands of the goddess. Here we can finge blach completion durga with charming face and the lion as her chariot. She seats on it in podmasoma. She has been decorated with allormandednts and also at she reots her feets on the head of Mahisa.
testimony of the iconographic features of the goddess, but the silpas as astra and others literay texts which are referred below are leave imprint for descriling the features of the goddess respecitively.

**Mayadipika**
The goddesshere reppresented as katayayani who is adored by three ‘deus’ her features asdes cribe by thetext are of having ten arms ,she wears jata mukuta which is the symbol of cressent moon in her head and she has three eyes the representation of the goded as katayayani should have a bautiful face which remind the full moon with the atasi flowered complexion .she has been portrayed beautifully with peerless beauty and stainless youthful body with shining eye,and bright lips. That is left rmused to increas the charm of the goddess in tribhaniga posture when the demon Mohisasusa is being killed by the goddess.but the similarity with other texts com be noticed in the fact of use of hands with weapons .Here also the image shows that the goddess should have a atrisula ,a khadqa ,acaurabana and sakti in left hands.and in the right hands there should have khtaka,full vessel a pasa and en ankush the bell or with veriation a parasu and a camara .mahisa is tied with naga pasha which saparted his body with his head and blood is drifting out of his head . the effing of Mahisa a should be done like that of his emerging out from the body of buffalo with slide and sword in his hand with an enraged mood .the goddess bores her trienton thebodyofthe asura by holding his hair.

**Pratima Vijnana**
The ten armed goddess katayayani rules the universe as shows in this account. Both in here right and left arms she carries a sula ,a sword ,a vajra,a cakra and arrow a bow,a khetana,a pasa ,a bell end an ankush .even both are feel are busy with taking position once or the right on the body of Mahisasura and the other rests over the invisible lota she holds tightly tha hair of the slerved head Mahisasura and blood streesming out of this decapited part . Mahisasura is also attached by the lion the chariot of the Goddess.

3. **Results and Analysis**

We can find the similar iconic features of the goddess Mahisasurmardini as prescribed by puranas and other texts. Only the description of the arms and poses varies differently the most accepted number of her arms is eight and ten. We can also find the goddess with four or six arms even with twelve or more arms. The number of the arms differs unequally .even the last edited depiccton of the goddess is with four arms .the depends verily on the iconography from of Mahisasura rather than on the numbers of arms. 1st mode, Mahisasura deals with a hybrid from that is to say help part of his body is human and head represents that of a buffalo 2nd mode Mahisasura emitted himself from a severed head buffaloand 3rd mode the demon with completely amimal form or theriomorphic form.

4. **Conclusion**

The early evidences of Mahişāsuramardini offer the divinity with two, four, or six arms exclusively, killing the demon, at some point drawn by its zoomorphic type, ardhanishkranta type or complete anthromorphic type, by thrusting a trident or lance into its body, squeezing its head with and lifting its rear half by getting its tail .The development of the iconographic portrayal of Mahişāsuramardini in association of Mahisasura and the lion greatly enriched the sculptural tradition of Bengal.
References:
2. Ibid
6 Banerjee,R.D;(1933)Eastern Indian School of mediaeval sculpture,p.114
10. Saraswati ,S.K .(1957),Survey of Indian Sculpture ,p.2