CHAPTER XIII

RELIGION

PART I. RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS

Reference has been made above (p. 22) to the religious ideas of the primitive peoples of Bengal before they came into contact with the Aryans, and of their gradual Aryanisation (p. 26). There is no doubt that the different religious systems—Vedic, Buddhist and Jaina—made their influence felt in Bengal from a very early time, not later than 4th century B.C., though their gradual progress cannot be traced in detail, with any degree of certainty, before the Gupta period. A short sketch of the available information on the different religious systems in Bengal, both before and after it, as given below.

I. BRĀHMAṆICAL RELIGION

The most important evidence of the stronghold of Vedic culture in Bengal is furnished by the large number of land grants of which a list is given in the Appendix at the end of this volume. As many of these record grant of land to the Brāhmaṇas, they contain incidental references to the different Vedic schools to which they belonged and their religious performances for which lands were granted. Thus we find that the Brāhmaṇas of the Rīgvedic, Yajurvedic (Vājasaneyya) and Sāmavedic schools belonging to Bhāradvāja, Bhārgava, Vātsyya, Gautama, Kāṇva, Kāśyapa, Kauṇḍinya and many other gotras, were settled in Bengal and performed Agnihotra and the five Mahāyajñas (great sacrifices). This was rendered possible, to a large extent, by the settlement of the Brāhmaṇas, versed in the four Vedas, all over Bengal, to which specific reference is made in many epigraphic records of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries A.D. A typical instance is furnished by the Nidhanpur CP. (A. 27) which refers to the settlement, in Sylhet, of 205 Brāhmaṇas belonging to various gotras and such Vedic sākhās as Vājasaneyya, Chārakya and Taittirīya of the Yajurveda, Chhandoga of the Sāmaveda and Vāyurychya of the Rīgveda. Villagers also granted lands to prominent Brāhmaṇas for the
enhancement of merits (puṇya) of themselves and their parents. Reference is made in one of these records (A. 36) to settlement of Brāhmaṇas, versed in the four Vedas, even in the remote region of Tippera, the easternmost region of Bengal, “full of dense forest, where tigers and other wild animals roamed at large.” The epigraphic records also refer to the construction of temples for various Brāhmaṇical gods, and permanent endowments were made for defraying expenses of their repair and making provisions for supply of cow’s milk, incense, flowers and lamp etc. and maintenance of Madhuparka, bali, charu, satra etc.

Such references are found in the epigraphic records from the fourth to the end of the twelfth century A.D. Incidentally, many records refer to the great scholarship of the Brāhmaṇas in Bengal to which reference has been made above in Chapter XI on Literature. They prove that there was no lack in Bengal, in the Hindu period, of Brāhmaṇas versed in the study of the different branches of the sacred Brāhmaṇical literature, including the Vedas, Vedāṅgas, Mīmāṃsā etc., and capable of performing Vedic sacrifices. This refutes, in a way, a very popular tradition in Bengal to the effect that a king named Ādiśūra had to import five Brāhmaṇas from Kānyakubja (Kanauj) in order to perform a sacrifice as no one competent to perform it was available in Bengal. Various dates have been assigned to Ādiśūra from the eighth century A.D. downwards, in the various genealogical texts which all belong to the late medieval period. But the more reliable contemporary epigraphic records give quite a different picture.

The Vedic culture made a great headway in Bengal in the eleventh and twelfth centuries under the patronage of the Varman and Sena kings. The inscription of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva (B. 90) refers to hundred villages as the birth-place of Śāvarna gotra Brāhmaṇas versed in the Vedic lore. The Belava CP. of Bhojavaran (B. 88) refers to Brahmins who were attached to the studies of the Vedas and were settled in Uttara-Rāṣṭhā. The same plate refers to the “zeal of the Varman family for the three Vedas which cover the nakedness of men”. The names of various Vedic śākhās like Kauthumi, Āśvalāyana, Kāṇva, and Paippalāda are mentioned in the inscriptions of the Sena kings. Sāmantasena, the founder of the Sena royal family in Bengal (above, p. 219), is called a Brahmacārya, who retired in his old age to a hermitage in forests on the banks of the Ganges “which were full of renowned ascetics and were fragrant with the smoke of
sacrificial butter—where the young deer sucked the breasts of the kind-hearted hermit-wives and the multitude of parrots were familiar with the entire text of the Vedas. Of course, as said above, Brāhmaṇas from outside Bengal were settled in Bengal, but, as will be shown in the next Chapter, many eminent Brāhmaṇas of Bengal were similarly settled in many parts of India outside Bengal.

As happened in other parts of India, Purāṇic forms of Brāhmaṇical religion flourished side by side with the Vedic cults. Though the Vedic religion never ceased to be a living force the Purāṇic gradually became more and more popular, till it almost replaced the latter, so far at least as the general populace was concerned. Though the gods who were worshipped still bore Vedic names, the system of worship was completely transformed, as would be evident from the construction of temples and some of the ceremonials associated with them, mentioned above, such as worship with incense, flowers etc. which were not probably known in the Vedic period.

The epigraphic records leave no doubt that the people of Bengal had a complete knowledge of Purāṇic mythology. Reference may be made to a few culled from the inscriptions found in Bengal.

Indra (Nos. B.2, 8, 18, 24) was the lord of the gods and his consort Paulomi was a model of fidelity. He is also called Purandara who suffered defeat at the hands of the Daitya king Bali. Lakshmi, although restless by nature, is a faithful consort of Hari who was born from the Ocean, is a co-wife of Vasundhara or earth, and often rides on Garuḍa with her lord (B. 2, 8, 18, 20). Vishnu is now transformed into Kṛishṇa with his numerous names Śrīpati, Kshmāpati, Murāri, Janārdana etc., and reference is made to his various exploits described in the epics and the Purāṇas (B. 8, 18, 20, 46, 47). We also find references to Gopāla, the child-god, who, though born of Devaki, was carried to Yaśodā and brought up by her. But this child-god was worshipped as an Avatāra of Vishnu, as he is spoken of as the lord of Lakshmi (B.20). The other Avatāras of Vishnu are also known (B.8,18,88, C.7). The Dwarf (Vāmana) incarnation is mentioned with the story of Bali, as narrated in the Purāṇas, and so are Varāha, Narasiṁha, and Paraśurāma. The incarnation of Kṛishṇa and his amorous alliances with one hundred Gopīs are also mentioned, though at the same time he is called the leading figure (sūtradhāra) of the Mahābhārata (B.88). The Sun-god (driven in the chariot drawn by seven horses) is described as the right eye of Hari and also founder of the royal family of the Pāṇas (B.94). Mention is also
made of the humiliating of the Vindhya by the sage Agastya (C. 2).
The Moon-god Chandra, also called Śītāṁśu, who bears the mark of hare (śabdadhara), is born from the ocean, and Rohiṇī and Kānti (?) are his wives. He is said to have been a descendant of Atri, who was the offspring of Brahmā, and a long line of the descendants of Chandra (up to the historical Varman family) is mentioned in B.88.

Among other Purāṇic myths there are allusions to the pairs, Hutabhuja (Fire) and his consort Svāhā, Dhanapati (Guhyakapati, Kuvera) and Bhadrā, Brahmā (born from the lotus that sprang from the navel of Vishnu) and Sarasvati, etc. Stories of Prithu, Sagara (and other Purāṇic heroes), Bṛihaspati, the preceptor of gods (the model of wisdom), Agastya who drank the ocean, and Parāśurāma (who led a campaign against the Kṣatriyas) are frequently alluded to, and examples of Prithu, Dhanaśījaya, Nala, Yayāti, Ambarīśa, Sagara etc., are held out as models, to inspire the kings of Bengal (A.18, 20-23 ; B.2,8,20,94). The epigraphic records also mention many of the myths connected with Śiva and his consorts Umā and Sarvāṇi (both models of fidelity), and the death of Satī at an early age in the sacrifice of Daksha.

Śiva’s different names such as Sadāśiva, Ardhanārīśvara, Dhūrjaṭi and Mahēśvara were known and we find reference to Kārtikeya and Gaṇeśa, his two sons (B.20 ; C. 1,5)

Images of most of the gods and goddesses mentioned above have also been found in Bengal to which a detailed reference will be made in Part II on Iconography.

II. SECTS OF BRĀHMANICAL RELIGION

The Purāṇic religion is characterised by the growth of a number of sects, each of which showed devotion to a particular god. The two most important of these sects are Vaishnava and Śaiva (including Śāktas).

A. Vaishnavism

The Vaishnavas are special devotees of Vishnu in his various forms or Avatāras (incarnations). The earliest reference to this cult is found in a short record (A.3) of three lines engraved on the back wall of a cave in a hill named Susunia, situated about 12 miles north-west of the town of Bankura. The first two lines of it incised
below a big wheel (chakra) with flaming rib and hub, refer to it as the work of the illustrious Mahārāja Chandravarman, the lord of Pushkaraṇa. The third line is incised to the right of the wheel, but its reading, and consequently also the meaning, is not very clear. It certainly refers to the dedication (of the cave) to Chakravāmin, which literally means the “wielder of the discus”; i.e., Vishnu.

It may be reasonably inferred that the excavated cave, on the wall of which the inscription was incised, was intended to be a temple of Vishnu. King Chandravarman, who dedicated it, probably flourished in the 4th century A.D. (pp. 39-40).

Another inscription (A.5) dated G.E. 128 (=447-8 A.D.) found at Bagram in the Bogra District (N. Bengal), refers to a gift of land for the purpose of making an endowment for defraying the expenses of the “repairs to the temple of Lord Govindavāmin, when damaged or dilapidated, and for the performance of the daily worship with perfumery, incense, lamp and flowers.” There is a large number of similar epigraphic records, which leave no doubt that practically the whole of Bengal, including its remote frontiers in the North and East, was studded with temples in the fifth century A.D. A copper-plate Grant of Dāmodarpur (A.9) refers to endowments for building two temples and store-rooms for gods Kokāmkhasvāmin (and?) one nāmalingam (♀) in Dhōga-grāma in the summit of the Himālaya (Himavachchhikha).

A perpetual endowment was also made in N. Bengal by an inhabitant of Ayodhyā (A. 10) for making repairs of whatever is broken or torn in the ‘shrine of Bhagavān Śvetavarāha-Svāmin in the forest here’ in order to increase the religious merits of his mother and for the continuance of bali, charu, satra, the supply of cow’s milk, incense and flowers, and the maintenance of madhuparka, lamps, etc. This inscription is dated in G.E. 224 (=543 A.D.) and the temple of Varāha-Svāmin may refer to the older temple of the same god mentioned in A. 9, as both are situated in a forest region in Kotivarsha-Vishaya. But these may be different shrines. The existence of a temple of Pradyumnesvara in the Tippera District before the sixth century A.D. is proved by the fact that the lands granted to it are said to form the boundary of a Buddhist monastery in a record dated 507 A.D. (A.14). At a somewhat later date King Jivadhāraṇa, at the request of his powerful feudal chief Lokanātha (above, pp. 79 ff), granted lands for the temple of Lord Ananta-Nārāyaṇa, erected in an almost inaccessible forest-region
in Tippera District. The following paragraph of the record (A. 36) is of great interest on account of the description of the locality, and the thorough knowledge of the Puranic mythology displayed in it:

Lines 21-26. “In the vishaya (district) of Suvvuḍaga, in the forest-region, having no distinction of natural and artificial, having a thick network of bush and creepers, where deer, buffaloes, boars, tigers, serpents, etc. enjoy, according to their will, all pleasures of home-life....I have caused a temple to be made and have had set up therein (an image of) the infinite Lord Ananta-Nārāyaṇa who has shown favour to me. There, for the perpetual maintenance of ashtapushpika, bali, charu, satra, to Bhagavān Ananta-Nārāyaṇa, whose person is adored by the chief gods, the Asuras, the sun, the moon, Kuvera, the Kinnaras, the Vidyādharas, the chief serpent (-gods), the Gandharvas, Varuṇa, the Yakṣas...., and (also for the residence of) Brāhmaṇas versed in the four Vedas, who have a community there, an endowment in this forest-region, having no distinction of natural and artificial, has been granted with full title, for the increase of the merit of my father and mother and myself, by king (Loka) nātha by a copper-plate grant.”

Even though influence of Buddhism steadily grew during the Pāla period, development of Vaishnavism is also proved by epigraphic records. A temple (deva-kula) of the god Nanna-Nārāyaṇa is referred to in a record of Dharmapāla (B.2), while the Garuḍa Pillar Inscription at Bāḍāl (B. 20) shows its continued importance, during the reign of Nārāyaṇapāla.

The early Sena rulers were devoted to the God Sadāśiva, but Lakshmanasena and his successors were devout Vaishnavas. Even Vijayasena, though a Śaiva, built a lofty temple of Pradyumnaśvara—a god described as a composite deity formed by the union of Vishnu and Śiva.

The opening verses of the Chittagong copperplate of Dāmodara-deva (C. 19) dated 1165 Śaka (=1243 A.D.) also make obeisance to both Vishnu and Śiva.

It is evident from the epigraphic records that the tutelary deity of the Vaishnavas was known by various names such as Vishnu, Hari, Govinda-svāmin, Śvetavarāha-svāmin, Nārāyaṇa (with Ananta or Nanna prefixed to it), and Kokāmukha-svāmin. We may reasonably accept the associations of these names with the Vaishnava cult, but there is some doubt about the last. There has been a keen and protracted controversy over the real significance
of this somewhat obscure deity, into which it is not necessary to enter for our present purpose. It will suffice to give a short summary. Dr. R. G. Basak, who originally edited the record (A. 9), referred in this connection to Kokāmukhā, a form of the goddess Durgā, and to the Kokāmukha ārtha, both mentioned in the Mahābhārata. He did not, however, suggest any satisfactory identification of the god Kokāmukha-svāmin. Dr. D. C. Sircar at first held that Kokāmukha was a form of Śiva. This theory was based on the supposed connection of the name “Ādyā Kokāmukha-svāmin”, as given in the Dāmodarpur inscription (A. 9), with the appellations Ādyā and Kokāmukhā used in reference to Durgā, the consort of Śiva, and on the term nāma-liṅga which, according to Dr. Sircar, occurs in the epigraph in the sense of ‘a Liṅga established after someone’s name,’ and points to the god Kokāmukha-svāmin. The land donated in favour of the deity according to the Dāmodarpur Grant was situated on the Himavachchikhara. Dr. Sircar pointed out that the expression Himavachchikhara literally means ‘a peak or summit of the Himalayas’; but he added: “Here however it appears to refer to a territorial unit called a forest in Inscription No. A. 10. The situation of the land granted to the gods suggests that it was not far from Dāmodarpur. There is as yet no proof that the Koṭivarsha district included the hilly region bordering on the northern fringe of Bengal”. Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri threw fresh light on the question by citing verses from chapters 219 and 229 of the Brahma Puraṇa which, in his opinion, “prove beyond doubt that like Śvetavarāha-svāmin, with whom he is associated in the record, Kokāmukha is a form of the Varāha (Boar) incarnation of Vishṇu and that the Kokāmukha ārtha was in the Himalayan region on the northern fringe of Bengal.” He further added:

“In chapter 219 of the Brahma Puraṇa we have a legend about the origin of the place of pilgrimage styled Kokāmukha ārtha. It is unnecessary here to enter into the details of the story. In short it relates how Vishṇu in his Boar form rescued the divine pīṭris who had been engulfed in the waters of the Kokā, a stream that dashed through the Himalayan rocks (śīlār-aḍārī). It may be noted in this connection that according to the same legend, Narakāsura, who sprang from the union of Vishṇu in his Boar form with the goddess Mahti or Chhāyā, and was made lord of the city of Prāgjyotisha by his Divine Father, was born in the Kokā-
mukha tīrtha in the Himalayas. The story apparently points to the proximity of the holy spot in question to Prāggyotisha in Kāmarūpa (Lower Assam and North Bengal to the east of the Karatoiyā). In the Gupta period, the sacred site is known to have fallen within the limits of the Kōṭivarsha vishayā (district) of the Pumdravardhana bhukti (province) in North Bengal. Dr. D. C. Sircar later admitted that “Kokāmukha was a form of the Boar incarnation of Vishṇu and drew the attention of scholars to Chapter 140 of the Varāha Purāṇa styled Kokāmukha-Māhātya-Varṇanā which gives the location of the temple of Kokāmukha in the Himalayas. It is interesting to note that J. C. Ghose had already discussed the whole question on the basis of the two Purāṇas mentioned above and quoted more or less the same verses, but neither Dr. Raychaudhuri nor Dr. D. C. Sircar referred to it.

The reference to the Kokāmukha-svāmī and Śveta-Varāha-svāmī in the Damodarpur copperplate (A. 9) and to the latter alone in A. 10 is of great historical importance. It proves that the cult of the Avatāras of Vishṇu prevailed in Bengal during the Gupta age and there was already a belief in at least two different varieties (Śveta-Varāha and Kokāmukha) of the Varāha form of Vishṇu. The construction of the temples in the Himalayas shows the extent of the Brāhmaṇical religion in Bengal even in that early age.

It is also of interest to note that a nama-liṅga was also probably installed by the side of the statues of the Varāha Avatāras of Vishṇu. Dr. D. C. Sircar, who emends the word as nāma-liṅga, takes it to denote a Liṅga with a particular name (generally of the devotee who is responsible for its construction and establishment). If we accept this interpretation it only proves that there were persons who worshipped both Vishṇu and Śiva—a fact demonstrated by the worship of Pradyumnesvara, mentioned above, who is expressly referred to as the union of Hari and Hara in the self-same body (C. 2).

There is no doubt that all the Avatāras of Vishṇu, Kṛishṇa was the most popular in Bengal, at least from the sixth century A.D. onwards.

“The most important archaeological evidence is supplied by the sculptures at Paharpur, the oldest of which probably belongs to the 6th and 7th centuries A.D., and the latest to the 8th. In the oldest group there are representations of various incidents from the life of Kṛishṇa, such as his uprooting the twin Arjuna trees, killing the demon Keśin etc. Balarāma is also represented and also
the fight of Kṛishṇa and Balarāma with Chānūra and Mushṭika, the wrestlers of Kaṁsa. Incidents of the early life of Kṛishṇa at Gokula are also depicted. There are representations of Vasudeva's carrying the new born Kṛishṇa to Gokula, Kṛishṇa and Balarāma with the cowherd boys, Kṛishṇa's holding up the mount Govardhana, amorous scenes with the Gopīs etc. Special interest attaches to one of these sculpturcd panels in which Kṛishṇa is represented as engaged in amorous activities with a lady. Mr. K. N. Dikshit has taken the latter to be Rādhā, but this may be justly doubted. She is more probably to be identified with Rukmini or Satyabhāmā."

Whatever we might think of this there is no doubt that the Rādhā-Kṛishṇa cult formed the characteristic feature of Bengal Vaishnavaism before, probably long before, the end of the Hindu rule. This is definitely proved by the Gītagovinda of Jayadeva mentioned above (p. 356). As a matter of fact, since then the Rādhā-Kṛishṇa cult must have grown in popularity which reached its climax in the fifteenth century, as is testified to by the poems of Chaṇḍidāsa, and the doctrine of Chaitanya. Its great popularity has continued undiminished till today. It has even been suggested that Rādhā was probably a Bengali innovation. For, though Kṛishṇa's amorous acts with the Gopīs (cow-herd girls) are described in detail in the Bhāgavata- as well as in the Brahma- and Viṣṇu- Purāṇas, Rādhā is not mentioned in them. The origin and antiquity of Rādhā has formed the subject of a keen and protracted controversy, but it is beyond the scope of the present work.

Another knotty problem is the influence of the Pāñcharātra system on Bengal Vaishnavaism. The following observations of Dr. P. C. Bagchi seem to be very reasonable, though it has met with severe criticism from many quarters.

"The Bhāgavatism, whatever connection it might have had with Pāñcharātra at the beginning, was completely different from it in the Gupta period. The vṛyūha-vāda which was the central idea in the Pāñcharātra is absent from the Bhāgavatism of the Guptas which appears as a syncretism of various Vaishnavaite beliefs which had come to stay in the country. Viṣṇu of Vedic Brāhmanism, Nārāyaṇa of the Pāñcharātras, Kṛishṇa-Vāsudeva of the Sātvants, Gopāla of a pastoral people, etc., all had been put in the melting pot from which originated the Bhāgavatism of the Gupta period. It is this Vaishnavaism which had found its way to Bengal in the Gupta period and had been firmly established in the Pāla period."
According to Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri Vyūhāvāda disappeared with the rise of worship of Avatāras.11 But Dr. Bagchi differed from this view. In his opinion the “ideological basis of the vyūha-vāda is completely different from that of the avatāra-vāda, and the growth of the latter had nothing to do with the disappearance of the former. The Pāñcharātra, with its vyūha-vāda, did not merge into the Bhāgavatism, but lived long as a distinct form of religion. Even the Gauḍīya VaishnAvas did not confuse vyūha-vāda with the avatārāvāda (Cf. Chaitanya-Charitāmrīta, Adi, Ch. 5).”12

Dr. D. C. Sircar opposes the view that Bhāgavatism was completely different from Pāñcharātra in the Gupta period and that the latter had nothing to do with avatārāvāda. He points out that the “Padma Tantra, one of the 108 canonical Vaishnava Tantras or Saṁhitās which is earlier than 800 A.D., uses the word bhāgavata and pāñcharātrika as synonymous and that the 39 vishavas (vyūhas) mentioned in a much earlier work, Ahirbudhnyā Saṁhitā, include all the well-known Avatāras. The ‘Vyūha-vādins were very much influenced by the avatāra-vāda. This, however, does not signify that the vyūha-vāda completely died out as a philosophic doctrine.”13

It has been claimed that VaishnAvism in Bengal probably made a contribution to the systematisation of the theory of Avatāra. The grounds for this claim have been stated as follows:

“It is true that some of the Avatāras like Varāha, Vāmana, etc., are mentioned in the inscriptions of the Gupta period. It is also true that in the Mahābhārata and in some of the Purāṇas a number of Avatāras is mentioned, but an attempt at systematisation is first met with in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa where there are three lists of Avatāras of twenty-two, twenty-three and sixteen, respectively. In the inscriptions of the Pāla period we come across names of several Avatāras like Varāha, Narasiṁha, Vāmana and Parāśurāma. But it is Jayadeva, of the court of LakshmanaSenā, who gives a list of ten Avatāras: Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasiṁha, Vāmana, Parāśurāma, Rāma, Balarāma, Buddha, and Kalkin. This has since been the standard list of Avatāras and has been widely accepted.”14

But the one serious flaw in this argument is the fact, ignored by the writers, that the Varāha Purāṇa and Agni Purāṇa give the same list of ten Avatāras, and it is difficult to decide whether Jayadeva copied from them or the case was just the reverse. For though the dates of these two Purāṇas are not known with certainty, they are generally believed to be earlier.
The Harivaṁśa also gives a list of ten Āvatāras, but they are not in accordance with the established tradition of ten Āvatāras, though the commentator Nilakaṇṭha makes an attempt to bring the two in agreement. Thus the Harivaṁśa, after enumerating, Vishnu's incarnations as (1) Lotus, (2) Boar, (3) Narasimha, (4) Dattātreya, (5) Jamadagni, (6) Rāma, and (7) Krishna, refers to the last as the ninth incarnation. On this Nilakaṇṭha comments that though not specifically mentioned, two other Āvatāras, namely those of Fish and Tortoise, are to be taken for granted. Then the Harivaṁśa mentioned Vedavyāsa as the tenth incarnation of Vishnu and mentions Kalki as a future incarnation. The next verse says, “After the expiration of the tenth incarnation He (Lord) will send Yājñavalkya before Him and then engage in discussion with the followers of Buddhism.” On this the commentator Nilakaṇṭha remarks: “This indicates the Āvatāra of the Lord as the sage Buddha before Kalki.”

It is evident from the above that the traditional list of the ten Āvatāras, as we find in the Gītagovinda, had been evolved some time between the dates of Harivaṁśa and Nilakaṇṭha's commentary. In any case, the description of the ten Āvatāras by Jayadeva has obtained celebrity all over India, and the evolution of the final form of the ten Āvatāras, which is an important landmark in the history of Vaishnavism, must have been current in Bengal before the end of the twelfth century A.D.

B. Śaivism

Śaivism in its fully developed form, including the cults of Rudra, Śiva, and the phallus (ordinary and more developed mukhāṅga form), and the Purānic mythology about them were probably evolved in the Gupta period. As mentioned above (p. 511) the Damodarpur CP. (A.9) probably refers to the installation of a linga in the Himalayan region. Saivism also enjoyed the patronage of King Vainyagupta in the sixth, and Śaśānaka and Bhaskaravarman in the 7th century. A record of the Pāla period (B.1) refers to the installation of a four-faced image of Mahādeva in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Dharmapāla at Bodh-Gaya. The stone-slab containing the inscription has the images of Vishnu, Sūrya and probably Śrī in three compartments. If we remember that it was installed in Bodh-Gaya during the reign of the Buddhist Emperor
Dharmapāla, it offers an interesting evidence of the catholicity of religious ideas in Bengal in those days. The same conclusion follows from the Bādāl Pillar Inscription (B.20) to which reference has been made above (pp 304-5). It gives a long description of an orthodox Brāhmaṇa family of hereditary ministers of the Buddhist Pāla kings, and we are told that the Pāla king personally attended their sacrificial ceremonies many times and accepted, with bowed head, the holy sacrificial water sprinkled on it. Another record (B.18) refers to the construction of a temple by Nārāyaṇapāla with an image of god Śiva set up therein, and the endowment of lands for its maintenance and daily worship. This temple evidently belonged to the Pāśupata Sect, as īṣāchāryas are mentioned immediately after. The Pāśupatas formed an old and very important sect of the Śaivas, and the existence of this sect in Bengal is vouched for by the above record. But it is perhaps not safe to conclude from it that Śaivism in Bengal was solely of the Pāśupata Sect. The canonical texts of the Pāśupatas—the eighteen Āgamas and eight Yāmalas—declare that Bengal was outside the area which formed the centre of Śiva-Siddhānta, and though the people of Gauḍa are admitted, i.e., not excluded as unfit, the gurus of the country are regarded as inferior to those of the Āryāvarta proper (to the west of Magadha).

As has been mentioned above, the early Sena rulers were followers of Śaivism, and though the later rulers of the dynasty were Vaishṇavas their royal seal was engraved with the image of Sadaśiva.

It is difficult to say how far Śaktism prevailed in Bengal before the end of the Hindu rule. It has been suggested by R. P. Chanda that Śaktism originated in the countries of the outer Aryan belt such as Bengal, North Bihar and Gujarāt. He even quoted a verse of unknown origin which says that the Śakti cult was revealed in Gauḍa. This view is not, however, accepted by many scholars. Dr. P. C. Bagchi observers: "There is no difficulty in admitting that there were mountain goddesses like Vindhyavāsini, vegetation deities like Śākambhari, etc., but these did not give rise to Śaktism. The basis of Śaktism was a well-established system of philosophy like the Sāṁkhya in which Prakṛti and Purusha play the same role as that of the Śakti and Śiva. Once this philosophy was accepted, the affiliation of various local or tribal goddesses to Prakṛti became a matter of course." Dr. Bagchi traces the origin of Śakti cult directly from
the Śaiva canon. He supports this view by the following passage which occurs at the beginning of Brahma-Yāmala:

“The supreme energy of the ultimate being, the Śiva, assumed the form of desire (ichchhā). The bindu was energised by this desire and from it pure spiritual knowledge emanated. Sadāśiva represents this knowledge in its plenitude and from him the creation starts.”

Another Śaiva canonical text, the Jayadratha-yāmala “gives the details of the Śādhanā of a large number of aspects of Kālī like Īśānakāli, Rakshākāli, Vīryakāli, Prajñākāli, Saptārṇākāli, etc. Chakreśvarī, Ghoratārā, Yoginīchakra, etc. also occur in the same text which originated in Mid-India.

“It seems probable that these orthodox traditions of Śāktism were prevalent in Bengal in the later Gupta and Pāla periods. These traditions were largely elaborated in the innumerable Tantras that were written in subsequent times, and Bengal had a large share in it. None of these Tantras, however, seems to be older than the twelfth century. There are no definite traces of Śāktism in the inscriptions of the Pālas and Senas.”

C. Minor religious Sects

A fair idea of the various gods and goddesses, worshipped in ancient Bengal, may be formed from the actual images, found within its geographical limits, which may be assigned to the period before 1200 A.D. In addition to the Śaiva deities like Kārtikeya, Gaṇeśa, and forms of Durgā, we find images of Indra, Agni, Kuvera, Bṛhaspati, Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Mātṛikās, from the sixth century A.D. onwards. It is a moot point to decide whether any religious cult had developed around any of them. A passage in the Rājatarāgini (IV. 422) testifies to the existence of a temple of Kārtikeya in Puṇḍravardhana in the eighth century A.D., wherein his worship was marked by dance accompanied by vocal and instrumental music.

There is also abundant evidence that worship of the Sūrya (Sun) prevailed in Bengal. This god is not the same as the Vedic deity of that name who occupied a prominent place in the Vedic pantheon and gave rise to the Saura Sect, a school in the south which came into existence for the exclusive worship of the Sun,
identified with Brahman. But the Sun-worship prevalent in North India from the early centuries of the Christian era was imported by the Magas of Šakadvīpa who were special Sun-worshippers. These Magas or the Magi (old Persian priests) of ancient Persia who, according to the tradition recorded in an inscription, dated Šaka 1059 (1137-38 A.D.) found at Govindapur in the Gaya District, were brought into India by Śamba, the son of Kṛishṇa. This tradition is supported by the injunction laid in the Br̥ihat-saṁhitā (60,19) of Varāhamihira (6th century A.D.) that “the installation and consecration of the images and temples of the Sun should be caused to be made by the Magas, and generally those who worship a certain deity according to their special ritual should be made to perform the ceremony concerning that deity. Alberuni also says that the Persian priests or Magians existed in India and were called Magas.”

Reference to the worship of the Sun and temples erected for the deity is found in inscriptions of the fifth century A.D. found in U. P. Three generations of kings preceding Harshavardhana (7th cent. A.D.) were devotees of the Sun-god. A characteristic feature of the idol of the Sun, as described by Varāhamihira, is that his feet and legs should be enclosed or covered up to the knees, and the images of the Sun, discovered in Bengal and elsewhere, have boots reaching up to the knees. This also supports the theory of importation of the cult from outside.

The oldest Sūrya image in Bengal, found at Niyāmatpur (Rajshahi District), shows distinct traces of Kushān features. Many images of the Gupta and later periods have come to light in different parts of Bengal. The popularity and importance of the Sun-worship in Bengal down to the end of Hindu rule is indicated by the opening verse in the Copper-plates of Viśvarūpasena and Keśavasena (C. 14, 15, 16) in praise of the Sun-god. Perhaps this popularity was partly the cause as well as effect of the deeprooted belief recorded on the pedestal of a Sūrya image from Bairhatta (Dinajpur Dt.) that the god was the healer of all diseases (saṁasta-rogaṁ hattā). It may be noted that in spite of its foreign origin, the solar cult was thoroughly assimilated with the Brāhmanical religion, and this was no doubt facilitated by the fact that the Sun was one of the most prominent gods in the Šrīveda-Saṁhitā.

It may be noted that images of Revanta, reputed to be the son of the Sun-god, have also been found in Bengal.
III. JAINISM

The last two of the twenty-four Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras, Pārśva and Mahāvīra, are associated with Champā and Pareshnath Hill. As both the localities are situated just outside the border of Bengal, it is natural to expect the influence of Jainism in Bengal from an early period. Curiously enough, an incident in the life of Mahāvīra, recorded in early canonical literature of the Jainas, gives a somewhat different idea. For we are told that Mahāvīra and his followers at first were ill-treated by the people of West Bengal. But, as mentioned above (pp 25-7), the same Jaina scriptures prove that Jainism gradually established its influence in Bengal.

Similarly, while the sacred canons of both the Buddhist and the Jainas give lists of sixteen great States in North India at the time of Buddha and Mahāvīra, those of the former include only Aṅga, while those of the latter (in the Bhagavatī Sutra) adds Vaṅga and Ladha, among the eastern States, showing that the Jainas were more familiar with Bengal than the Buddhists in the early period of their history.

The earliest epigraphical evidence of the prevalence of Jainism in Bengal is a copper-plate (A. 12) discovered within the ruins of the famous temple at Pāharpur. It records an endowment by a Brāhmaṇa and his wife for the maintenance of requisites of the worship of Arhats such as sandal, incense, flowers, lamps, etc. and the construction of a resting place at the Vihaṇa of Vaṭa-Gohaṇi which was presided over by the disciples and the disciples of disciples of the Nirgrantha preceptor (Nirgrantha-nāṭh-Achārya) Guhanandin belonging to the Pāṇḍita-stūpa Section (nikāya) of Bāṇaras. It may be added here that Jainism was known as Nirgrantha in the earlier days.

The inscription presents several points of interest. The name Vaṭa-Gohaṇi is still preserved in the name of the present village Gaḷbhīṭā where the ruins of the big temple have been unearthed. It would appear that the Jaina Vihaṇa was founded long before the date of the record, namely 479 A.D., as we have reference to three generations of achāryas. It is also interesting to note that they were affiliated to a Jaina school with headquarters at Vārāṇasi. Lastly, the endowment of a Jaina Vihaṇa by a Brāhmaṇa and his wife is a further illustration of the religious catholicity of which we get so much evidence.
That Jainism continued to flourish in Bengal is proved by the account of Hiuen Tsang who travelled in Bengal about 150 years after the date of this record. This Chinese pilgrim makes a statement of the relative strength of the different religious sects in Bengal, and as this is the only source of information for such comparative estimate, his account may be quoted in full.

Referring to Puṇḍravardhana or North Bengal, he says:

“There were twenty Buddhist Monasteries and above 3000 Brethren by whom the ‘Great and Little Vehicles’ were followed; the Deva-Temples were 100 in number, and the followers of the various sects lived pell-mell, the Digambara Nirgranthas being very numerous.”

Regarding Samataṭa or East Bengal he observes:

“It had more than 30 Buddhist Monasteries and above 2000 Brethren, all adherents of the Sthavira School. There were 100 Deva Temples, the various sects live pell-mell and the Digambara Nirgranthas were very numerous.”

It has been suggested that the preponderance of the Nirgranthas (Jainas) was partly due to the fact that the Ājīvikas were merged with them. Dr. P. C. Bagchi observes:

“The Ājīvika sect, as is well known, was an important religious organisation of early times. It had many points of similarity in matters of doctrine with the Nirgranthas. Aśoka attaches great importance to them by mentioning them along with the Nirgranthas in Pillar Edict VII, and also by dedicating caves to them in the Barabar Hills. In the Divyāvadāna (xxviii) the names of the Ājīvikas and Nirgranthas alternate in an indiscriminate way. It is, therefore, not impossible that the Ājīvika sect had, by the time of Hiuen Tsang, merged into the community of the Nirgranthas who were then numerous in Bengal. In any case, there is no evidence to prove the separate existence of the Ājīvikas in Bengal.”

For reasons not known to us, the importance of the Nirgranthas steadily declined in Bengal, and we find no reference to them in the numerus inscriptions of Pāla and Sena periods. But their existence is proved by Jaina images which may be referred to the Pāla period. This will be discussed in detail in the section on iconography.

Reference may be made to a tradition recorded in the Vṛihat-Kathākosha of Harisena, composed in 931 A.D., to the effect that the Jaina guru of the Maurya Emperor Chandragupta, namely Bhadrabāhu, was the son of a Brāhmaṇa of Dvakoṭa in the Puṇḍravardhana
While this story possesses little historical value, it perhaps indicates that North Bengal was an important centre of Jainism even in the 10th century A.D. Incidentally it may be mentioned that Devakoṭa may be the original name of the more famous town Devikoṭa in N. Bengal mentioned in the Muslim Chronicles.

IV. BUDDHISM

It is difficult to decide when Buddhism was first introduced in Bengal. According to the tradition in Divyāvadāna mentioned above (p. 26) in connection with the Nirgranthas, Buddhism must have been already established in N. Bengal at the time of Aśoka. This is supported by the very reasonable assumption that it formed a part of his empire. It is hardly possible that Aśoka sent missionaries to preach Buddhism not only all over India and even in distant foreign lands, but neglected the adjacent region of Bengal, even if it did not form a part of his empire. Another evidence is supplied by the fact that while the Pali Vinaya-piṭaka fixes Kajaṅgala as the eastern limit of Āryāvarta beyond which ordination was not sanctioned, the Sanskrit Vinaya text, which is generally believed to have preserved traditions of pre-Aśokan age, extends the limit to the kingdom of Puṇḍravarśana (N. Bengal). The probability, therefore, is that Buddhism was introduced into North Bengal, if not the other parts of the Province, before the time of Aśoka. This view is in full accordance with the testimony of two Votive inscriptions on the railing of the Buddhist Stūpa at Sāñchi of about second century B.C. recording the gifts of two inhabitants of Puṇṇavadhana which undoubtedly stands for Puṇḍravarśana.

That Buddhism continued to prosper in the whole of Bengal during the early centuries of the Christian era is proved by an inscription at Nāgarjunikōṭa which may be dated in the 2nd or 3rd century A.D. It gives a long list of countries—Kāśmīr, Gandhāra Chīna, etc.—and the Isle of Tamba paṇa (Ceylon), along with Vaṅga, as the countries converted by the fraternities (of monks of Tamba paṇa). The purport of the record is not quite clear, but it certainly proves that Vaṅga was reckoned to be one of the important centres of Buddhism.

The first definite evidence of the prosperity of Buddhism in Bengal is furnished by the accounts of Fa-hien who visited India in the first decade of the fifth century A.D. Unfortunately, the only place in
Bengal visited by him was Tamralipti, and he describes Buddhism to be in a flourishing state in this sea-port of South Bengal. There were twenty-two monasteries with resident monks and Fa-hien stayed there two years, writing out his sūtras, and drawing pictures of images.²⁸

The Gunaighar (Tippera Dt.) Grant of Vainyagupta (A. 13), dated 507-8 A.D., refers to the Buddhist Avaivartika Sangha of the Mahāyāna Sect, a monastery, called Āśrama-Vihāra, dedicated to Ārya Avalokiteśvara, and two other Buddhist Vihāras in the same locality, one of which was called Rāja-Vihāra or royal Vihāra. It shows that Buddhism was firmly established even in the remote eastern frontier of Bengal before the sixth century A.D.

From the detailed accounts of the Chinese pilgrims we may form a fairly good idea of the condition of Buddhism in the 7th century A.D. Hiuien Tsang visited Bengal about 637 A.D. His general description of Buddhism in Puṇḍravardhana and Samataṭa has been quoted above (p. 520). To this may be added the following details about “a magnificent Buddhist establishment” situated about 3 miles to the west of the capital of Puṇḍravardhana: “In this monastery which had spacious halls and tall storeyed chambers, were above 700 Brethren, all Mahāyānists; it had also many distinguished monks from “East India.” . . . . Near it was an Aśoka tope (stūpa). . . . and not far from it was a temple with an image of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara which gave supernatural exhibitions and was consulted by people from far and near.”²⁹

Near the capital of Samataṭa also there was an Aśoka tope. In a monastery near it there was a dark-blue jade image of the Buddha, eight feet high, exercising marvellous powers.³⁰

Sheng-che, to whom reference has been made above (p. 78), visited India in the second half of the 7th century A.D., and has left a valuable account of the state of Buddhism in Samataṭa. “The king of the country at this time was Rājabhaṭā, who was a fervent worshipper of the triratna and played the part of a great Upāsaka. He used to make every day hundred thousand statues of Buddha with earth, and read hundred thousand ślokas of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra. He also used to take out processions in honour of Buddha, with an image of Avalokiteśvara at the front, and make pious gifts. In the city there were more than 4000 monks and nuns in his time.”³¹ As noted above (p. 78), the king probably belonged to the Buddhist Khaḍga dynasty; otherwise we have to recognise another Buddhist ruling family in Samataṭa.
As regards Tāmralipti Huien Tsang says that there were above ten Buddhist monasteries and more than a thousand Brethren. Here, too, there was an Aśoka tope.

Karṇasuvarna, whose location is now definitely settled (p. 7), was also a flourishing centre of Buddhism. Hiuen Tsang gives the following account:

"There were more than ten Buddhist monasteries, and above 2000 Brethren who were all adherents of the Sammatiya School; there were 50 Deva-Temples and the followers of the various religions were very numerous. There were also three Buddhist monasteries in which in accordance with the teaching of Devadatta milk-products were not taken as food. Beside the capital was the Lo-to-wei (or mo)-chih Monastery, a magnificent and famous establishment, the resort of illustrious Brethren. It had been erected by a king of the country, before the country was converted to Buddhism, to honour a Buddhist sramana from South India who had defeated in public discussion a boasting disputant of another system, also from South India."33

Another famous Chinese pilgrim, I-ting, who visited Tāmralipti in A.D. 673, has left a detailed description of the rites practised by the priests in a Buddhist monastery.34 He stayed there for some time, learnt Sanskrit and translated at least one Sanskrit text into Chinese.34 Another Chinese pilgrim, Ta Ch’eng-teng, whom I-ting met at Tāmralipti, stayed there for 12 years, acquired an extensive knowledge of Sanskrit Buddhist texts, and on his return to China explained the Nidānasūtra of Ullāna. Another Chinese pilgrim, Tao-lin, stayed for three years in Tāmralipti, learnt Sanskrit, and was initiated to the Sarvāstivāda school.35

The Chinese accounts leave no doubt that Tāmralipti was an important centre of Buddhist studies, at least from the time of Fa-hien up to the end of the seventh century A.D., and Buddhism was in a flourishing condition all over Bengal in the seventh century A.D., if not from an earlier period.

The establishment of the Buddhist Pāla dynasty in Bengal about the middle of the eighth century A.D. may not, therefore, be a mere fortuitous event but was probably facilitated by the growing dominance of Buddhism in this region. In any case, the long period of Pāla rule, for nearly four centuries, saw the heyday of Buddhism, not only in Bengal, but probably also over a large part of Eastern India.
Bengal played an important role in the International sphere of Buddhism. In particular, it was Bengal which moulded the entire framework of Buddhism in Tibet to which reference will be made in Chapter XIV. Bengal also played an important role in the propagation of Buddhism in Java and adjacent regions.

The Śailendra Emperors had intimate relations with the Pāla Emperors of Bengal. As early as 782 A.D., we find Kumāraghosha, an inhabitant of Bengal, as the royal preceptor (guru) of the Śailendra kings who were followers of Mahāyāna Buddhism. An inscription (B. 9) on a copper-plate found at Nālandā, in Bihar, dated about the middle of the ninth century A.D., records that the illustrious Balaputra-deva, king of Suvarṇadvipa and son of Samarāgravīra, built a monastery at Nālandā, and at his request the Pāla Emperor Devapāla granted five villages for defraying the expenses of the monastery.38

The Buddhist Universities of Nālandā and Vikramaśīla, though situated outside the geographical limits of Bengal, had close associations with Bengal because they were situated in territories which formed an integral part of the Pāla kingdom, and several eminent sons of Bengal like Śīlabhadra and Dipaṅkara were heads of these great educational-cum-religious establishments. In Bengal proper the flourishing state of Buddhism is indicated by the establishment of a large number of famous monasteries and temples. Reference has been made above (pp 110-11) to the patronage of Buddhism by Dharmapāla and foundation of some of these monasteries by him. Detailed account of the most famous among them, the Somapura Vihāra will be given in Chapter XV.

Among other monasteries may be mentioned the Traikūṭaka, Devikotā, Pañcita, Sannagara, Phullahari, Paṭṭikeraka, Vikramapūrī and Jagaddala. The Traikūṭaka-vihāra was the place where Haribhadra composed his famous commentary on the Abhisamayālaṅkāra under the patronage of Dharmapāla.37 It was situated probably somewhere in West Bengal as there is mention of a Traikūṭaka Devālaya being unearthed in the Rāḍhā country.38 Devikotā was in North Bengal, and the Pañcita-vihāra in Chittagong.39 Phullahari and its hermitage are frequently referred to as a place where several famous Buddhist Āchāryas lived, and Sanskrit texts were translated into Tibetan in collaboration with Tibetan scholars.40 It was situated in western Magadha, probably some-where near Monghyr. Sannagara in Eastern India is mentioned as an important
seat of Buddhist learning, and a Buddhist scholar named Vanaratna, who was responsible for a large number of Tibetan translations, hailed from that place. The site of Paṭṭikera has already been discussed above (supra p. 278). Vikramapuri was Vikramapura in Dacca and flourished mostly under the patronage of the Chandras and Senas. The Jagaddala Mahāvihāra, according to the Rāmcharita (III. 7), was in Varendri. A number of scholars, famous in Tibet, like Vibhūtichandra, Dānaśīla, Mokshākaragupta and Śubhākara-gupta, belonged to this monastery, and there is evidence of Tibetan translations of Sanskrit texts being actually prepared at Jagaddala. The presiding Buddhist deity at Jagaddala was Avalokiteśvara.

“These are only the famous institutions of the period whose names have been preserved in literature, but throughout eastern Magadha and Bengal, which had attained a sort of cultural and political unity, there were many other smaller institutions whose names have been lost.”

The reference in the Rāmcharita (III, 7) to the Jagaddala Mahāvihāra in Varendra, “whose great glory was still more increased (or pronounced) by (the presence of) the great (heads of monasteries) and the (images of) Tārā (the Buddhist goddess)” indicates that the Buddhist monastic establishments flourished till almost the end of the Pāla rule.

The royal patronage has always been an important factor in the growth of religious sects into importance, and Bengal enjoyed it to the full during the period between 750 and 1150 A.D. Not only the Pālas but even minor ruling dynasties during the period were followers of Buddhism.

“Reference may be made in particular to Kāntideva and the Chandra kings (v. supra pp. 130, 199 ff). The Tibetan sources tell us that Tantric Buddhism flourished in Vaṅgāla under the Chandras, and that king Gopcichandra, who is associated by tradition with a particular form of mysticism, belonged to this dynasty. The famous Buddhist scholar of Vikramapura, Atiśa Dīpaṅkara, is said to have been born in the royal house of that place. It is, therefore, not improbable that he was related to the Chandras.”

The Senas, who succeeded the Pālas, were followers of orthodox Brāhmaṇical religion and this was undoubtedly an important factor in the decline of Buddhism in Bengal which had been its last refuge in India.

But apart from this factor, the decline and final disappearance
of Buddhism from Bengal was due to a large extent to the change in the character of Buddhist religion to which we may now turn.

The transformation of Mahāyāna into the mystic forms generally referred to as Vajrayāna and Tantrayāna, more specifically, Sahajayāna and Kālachakrayāna, and the leaders of this movement, known as the Siddhāchāryas—traditionally eighty-four in number—have been referred to above (p. 378) and an account has been given of their literature.

The rise of this mysticism is associated with Bengal “which played a great role in its dissemination throughout India. Although it is difficult to discuss the chronology of the Siddhas here, we have strong reasons to believe that they lived some time between the 10th and 12th centuries. From the number of works attributed to them, it appears that the principal amongst the Siddhas were Saraha, Nāgārjuna, Tilopa, Nāro-pāda, Advayavajra and Kāhṇu-pāda. Writings of Lui-pāda, Śābara, Bhusuku, Kukkuri, etc., also have been preserved. According to some Buddhist tradition Saraha was born in the city of Rājīśi in Eastern India, and was a contemporary of king Ratnapāla. He was initiated to Tantric Buddhism by a king of Orissa, and later succeeded to a chair at Nālandā. Nāgārjuna is said to have been the disciple of Saraha and is sometimes supposed to be identical with Nāgabodhi. These two, however, appear to be two distinct personages. The two met at Puṇḍra-vardhana, and it was there that Nāgārjuna formed a part of his mystic career. Nāgārjuna was initiated to Buddhist mysticism and alchemy at Nālandā by Saraha and his assistants. One of his disciples, Nāgahava, became a professor at Nālandā. Tillo-pāda was a Brahmin of Chittagong, associated with the Paṃjita-vihāra of that place, and a contemporary of king Mahāpāla. Nāro-pāda belonged to Varendra, was a disciple of the famous logician of that country, Jetāri, and a contemporary of king Nayarāśa (c. 1038-54 A.D.). The great Atīśa Dipaṇkara also flourished in this period. Nāro-pāda at first was at Phullahari and then at Vikramasīla monastery. Many of the other Siddha writers belonged to Bengal.

“The Siddhas deviated from the orthodox Mahāyāna tradition by adopting, as the vehicle of expression, two popular literary forms, namely, the apabhramśa and the vernacular. The apabhramśa, which was a more artificial form, does not seem to have had a long popularity and was soon given up in favour of the vernacular.”


The collection of their writings in Bengali—the Charyā-charya-Viniśchaya—and the names of the more important among them, have been referred to above (pp. 392-4).

The Siddhas also wrote other works in both Apabhraṃśa and Sanskrit. “From the Tibetan collection of Tanjur (Bstan-'gyur) we get the names of fifty-three works composed by them either in apabhraṃśa or in the vernacular of Bengal, works which are now mostly lost in original but preserved in Tibetan translation. Amongst these fifty-three works the late Mahāmahopādhyāya Haraprasad Śastri discovered and published two, the Dohā-koshas of Saraḥa and Krishṇa. As the MSS. were very corrupt, the texts remained unintelligible for a long time till Dr. Shahidullah came forward to settle their reading with the help of Tibetan translations in his Les Chanits Mystiques de Kanhu et Saraḥa.”

Better MSS. of these two texts, a MS. of the Dohā-kosha of Tillopāda, fragments of two other Dohā-koshas of Saraha, and fragments of other similar works were discovered by Dr. P. C. Bagchi and published by him.

Dr. Bagchi has, on the basis of this literature, made an attempt to expound the doctrines of this school which has left its marks on various schools of later times.

Dr. Bagchi’s views may be summed up as follows:

“Though it is at present difficult to explain all the details of this mysticism, it is possible to determine its characteristic features with the help of the texts now available. Its general trend was esoteric as nobody except a qualified guru or preceptor was allowed to initiate the disciple into its mysteries. This is why even in modern times the few followers of this school in Nepal call themselves gubhāju or gurubhāju, i.e., the followers or worshippers of the guru, and thus distinguish themselves from the followers of the Brāhmanical faith who are called devabhāju or the worshippers of devas. The literature of the Sahajayāna is full of such statements as “the truth that is free from duality is taught by the guru”, “there is nothing unattainable for the man whom the guru favours”, “the truth is clearly revealed through the instruction of the guru”, etc.

These clearly testify to the exalted position which the preceptor enjoyed in this mystic school. But there is a warning to him, too, when the Siddha Sarahapāda says: “You should not initiate disciples as long as you do not know yourself. If you do that, you
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will act like the blind man who while leading another blind man both fell into the well.”

Though the guru was given that exalted position, it was no easy task for him to lead the disciple to this goal. He had to find out the special aptitude of the disciple and suggest to him the path most suitable for him. In his analysis of the spiritual aptitudes of various disciples he seems to have arrived at a novel classification called kula. Kula was the special spiritual aptitude of the disciple. There are five such kulas, technically called Ḍombi, Naṭi, Rajakī, Chaṇḍāli and Brāhmaṇī. The nature of these kulas is determined by the five skandhas or the essence of the five basic elements (mahābhūtas) constituting the material existence of the being. The five kulas are conceived as the five aspects of the praṭīnā which is the same as the psychic energy (śakti) in these texts. The śakti assumes five different forms according to the predominance of each of the five skandhas or constituents, and the best course for the sādhaka is to follow up his special śakti during his spiritual march. In the technical language of the school it is said that the five classes of sādhakas should practise their sādhanā in the company of the five praṭīnās or śaktis called Ḍombi, Naṭi, Rajakī, Chaṇḍāli and Brāhmaṇī. The first task of the guru was to find out to which of these five classes a particular disciple belonged and which of the five energies was dominant in him. That particular energy was to be evoked in the disciple and he was to be initiated to perform his sādhanā by cultivating that energy.

Now the question arises what was that sādhanā to which the guru had to initiate his disciple. This sādhanā involved the practice of a new system of yoga which seems to have developed in the hands of the Siddhas. It believed in the existence of thirty-two nāḍīs or nerve-channels within the body and supposed that the śakti flowed up into the topmost station within the head called “the place of great bliss” or mahāsukhasthāna. Various names were given to these nerve-channels such as lalaṅā, rasanā, avadhiṅī, pravāñā, krishṇā, krishnaraṁpiṅī, sāmānyā, pāvaki, sumanā and kāminī. Of these the first three, lalaṅā, rasanā and avadhiṅī, were the most important and combined in themselves at particular stations the currents supplied by the rest. The avadhūti is the middlemost channel and corresponds to the sushumnā of the Brāhmaṇical Tantras. According to this system also there were a number of stations compared either to lotuses or to wheels within the-
body, and the śakti in its upward march had to pass through them.

The topmost station was imagined to be a lotus having either sixty-four or thousand petals. These stations were sometimes compared to places of pilgrimage like Udāiyāna, Jālandhara, Pūrṇagiri and Kāmarūpa.

The state of sahaja which is the goal is a state of great blissfulness. It is a state which is without beginning and without end, and which is free from duality. When this state is attained, the objective world disappears from view, and the aggregates, elements, sense organs and senses all merge into it. The sādhaka then finds himself to be the sole reality, one with the universe and one with the Buddha—the being who is ever free. Everything else dwindles into nonentity (śūnya).

These are some of the main characteristics of the later Buddhist mysticism and they can be traced in the old literature of Bengal, not only in the Charyā-padas, but also in the early Vaishnava literature, the Sahajiyā literature, and the literature of the Nāthas and Bāuls of Bengal.”

“The fusion of Śaktism with this type of Buddhist mysticism gave rise to new schools of Śaktism on the one hand, and certain forms of popular religion on the other, both of which have survived till our times.

“The Kaula school which identified itself with Brāhmaṇical Śaktism could not be ousted in spite of the vehement attacks of its orthodox critics, as its great strength lay in the acceptance of the Varṇāśrama. The other movements which did not accept the Varṇāśrama and in which Buddhist mysticism survived, were the Nāthism, Avadhūta, Sahajiyā, Baul etc. It is at present impossible to trace the history of the rise of these movements, and it is probable that they were indistinguishable from each other in the transitional stage. They gradually developed their distinctive character, and the transition seems to have been over by the 13th century. The followers of Nāthism, in course of time, lost their monastic character and were affiliated to the Hindu society as a separate caste.

“Nāthism originated from the religion of the Siddhāchāryas, as its reputed founder Matsyendranātha seems to have been the same as Siddha Lui-pāda. The great teachers of this religion are called Nāthas, and the most famous amongst them were Gorakshanātha, Mīnanātha, Chaurāṅgīnātha etc. Mīnanātha was probably the same
as Matsyendra, of whom Goraksha was the disciple. Their teachings exercised such a considerable influence, particularly in Northern and Eastern Bengal, that their miraculous tales became the subject of popular songs in Bengali which are of great importance for the early history of Bengali literature.\textsuperscript{63}

"The Avadhūtas, who were all sannyāsins, also drew their inspiration from the teachings of the Siddhas. Advayavajra, we know, was known as Avadhūti-pāda.\textsuperscript{64} The very name of the sect indicates that it followed the Buddhist method of Yoga in which an exact knowledge of the nāḍīs called Avadhūti is essential.

"The Sahajiyā was well established in Bengal before the time of Chaitanya, and its progress could not be checked by the protagonists of the Chaitanya movement, although they tried their best to do so. On the other hand, it was the-Chaitanya movement which, in course of time, became deeply influenced by the Sahajiyā. The oldest reference to Sahajiyā is found in an inscription of the 13th century, the Maināmati Plate, which speaks of "a superior officer of the royal groom" (?) as practising the Sahajadharma in Paṭṭikeraka in Tippera (-Sahajadharmanu karmasu).\textsuperscript{65} Chanḍīdāsa was the earliest Bengali writer on Sahajiyā, and lived most probably in the 14th century A.D. The writings of Chanḍīdāsa have come down to us in a much altered form, and the Krishna-kirtana, which has probably been preserved in its original form, contains very little of the inner doctrines of the Sahajiyā. We have, unfortunately, no other early texts of Sahajiyā, but it is possible to trace in the altered songs of Chanḍīdāsa and his Krishna-kirtana some of the fundamental doctrines of the Buddhist Sahajayāna. Although Rādhā is the Śakti and Krishṇa, the Supreme Reality, the Haṭhayoga is not dispensed with, and the much discussed Rajākī of Chanḍīdāsa reminds us of one of the five kulas spoken of in the Vajrayāna. The later writings of the Sahajiyās also attach great importance to the inner nāḍīs, the various chakras of the stations, and the lotus with thousand petals. They do not lose sight of the fact that Krishṇa is the Supreme Reality, and Rādhā, only the Śakti that makes him attainable.

As only fragments of the literature of the Bauls have been made accessible, it is not possible to say to what extent they have preserved the ancient traditions of the Buddhist Sahajayāna. From the few songs already collected, it appears that they have preserved that tradition more faithfully than the Sahajiyās, as they have not allowed themselves to be influenced by Vaishnavism. Rādhā and Krishṇa
have no meaning to them, but the nādīs, the chakras, the kāktil etc., are regarded by them as of the greatest importance. The Sahaja bliss is the ultimate goal with all of them.”

Though Buddhism disappeared from India as a separate religious sect we may trace its influence in Medieval Bengal through the above religious sects. MM. H. P. Śastri held the view that the cult of Dharma worship which formed a strong religious current in Western and Southern Bengal in Medieval Age was the last relic of Buddhism in India. At one time this view found general acceptance, but both Dr. S. K. Chatterji and Dr. Sukumar Sen have demonstrated the fallacy of this theory. Dr. Sen has also sought to prove that the cult of Dharma worship is really the remnant of one of the most primitive forms of religious practice in Bengal, which is still very popular in the form of Chaḍak Pūjā and Gājan ceremony in honour of Śiva at the end of the Bengali year.

The following observation of Dr. P. C. Bagchi seems to be very apposite:

“Buddhism, which was once a great religion, could not have survived only in some debased forms of popular cults like the Dharmāṭhākur pūjā. It transformed itself into those living forces which inspired and guided the religious and literary life in Bengal for centuries even after the disappearance of its distinctive features.”

VIII General Review.

In conclusion a few general observations may be made on the state of religion in ancient Bengal.

In the first place, we find all the important religious sects, prevailing side by side, enjoying popular favour and royal patronage. The relative importance of the prominent religious sects like Vaishnavism, Śaivism, Buddhism and Jainism must have varied at different times, and perhaps it was due, to some extent, to royal patronage; it is not reasonable to take it always—an index of popularity.

As mentioned above, the Khaḍgas, the Chandras, and the Pālas, and individual rulers like Kāntideva and Raṇavaṅkamalla were followers of Buddhism. Vainyagupta, Śaṇkha, Lokanātha, Dommapāla and the early Sena rulers like Vijayasena and Vallālasena were Śaivas. The Varmans, the later Sena kings and the Deva family.
were Vaishāpavas. No royal Jaina family is known, nor even any individual ruler of that faith. Yet, as noted above (p. 520), according to Hsiian Tsang the Jainas were very numerous in the 7th century A.D.

But in spite of the existence of different sects, instances of catholicity and tolerant spirit in religion formed a characteristic feature. “This is proved by references in contemporary epigraphs whose value cannot be ignored. The catholic attitude of the Buddhist Pāla kings has already been referred to above. Dharmapāla and Vigrāhāpāla III are given credit in official records (B.50) for maintaining the orthodox social order of castes; Nārāyaṇapāla himself built and endowed a temple of Śiva, and not only attended sacrificial ceremonies of his Brāhmaṇa ministers, but also reverently put the sacrificial water on his head; Chitramatikā, the chief queen of Madanapāla, regarded it as meritorious to hear the recital of Mahābhārata. (B.66). Similarly Prabhāvatī, the queen of Deva-khaḍga, set up an image of Chanḍī. On the other hand, the Śaiva king Vainyagupta endowed a Buddhist monastery, while a Brāhmaṇa and his wife made pious gift of land to a Jainā vihāra (A.12,14,33-4).

While these instances show respect and reverence for others’ creed, certain facts indicate even a more intimate association between different religious sects. Thus the Buddhist Dhanadatta married a devout Śaiva princess, and takes credit for his knowledge of the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas. Their son Kāntideva, although a Buddhist, adopts a royal seal which seems to combine the religious emblems of his parents, viz., the lion and snake.60

Still more interesting are the cases in which a king openly declares his devotion to more than one religious faith. Thus Vaidyadeva styles himself both Parama-māheśvara and Parama-vatśṣaya, and Dhananapāla, although a Parama-māheśvara, pays his respect to Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa.61 The copper-plate grants of Viśvarūpasena and Keśvasena (C. 14-16) are perhaps the most instructive on this point. The royal seal attached to the plates bears the representation of Sadāśiva, and is actually called Sadāśiva-mudrā in the body of the inscriptions; they open with adorations to Nārāyaṇa, followed by an invocation addressed to Śūrya; and finally the kings themselves are given the title Parama-saura. It seems the kings not only professed the two great faiths followed by their forefathers, but added a new one. These two Hindu kings of Bengal seem to typify the true spirit of the age. For even to-day the same spirit characterises the religious life of Bengal, where every orthodox Hindu
performs the worship of Nārāyaṇa, Lakṣmī, Śiva, Durgā, Kārtika, Sūrya and other gods and goddesses with equal zeal and veneration. Although some families are labelled Vaishṇava and others Śākta, they have faith in, and reverence for, all the gods.

While both Vaishṇavism and Śaivism derived their strength and inspiration from the magnificent temples and the great community of Brāhmaṇas distinguished for their religious zeal, learning, and scholarship, the main strongholds of the Buddhists were the numerous vihāras or monasteries. Hiuen Tsang records that there were seventy Buddhist vihāras, accommodating eight thousand monks, and no less than 300 Deva temples in Bengal proper. So far as we can judge from archaeological evidence and the accounts of Tibetan writers, the number of vihāras, monks, and temples increased in subsequent times. We can easily visualise ancient Bengal studded with temples and vihāras, the name and fame of some of which had spread far beyond the frontiers of India. Bengal was then the home of a body of learned Brāhmaṇas and Buddhist bhikshus (monks) whose livelihood was made easy and secure by private or royal charity, and who dedicated their lives to the highest ideals laid down for them in the holy scriptures. The most notable evidence in this respect is furnished by the detailed account of a monastery at Tāmrālipti by I-tsing, who himself lived there for some time. In view of the general moral lapse in later phases of both Buddhist and Brāhmaṇical religions, we should take note of the high moral standard of monastic life recorded by an eye-witness. That the Brāhmaṇas were also inspired by an equally high ideal is abundantly proved by the works of Bhavadeva Bhāṭṭa, Halāyudha and Vallālasena to which reference has already been made (supra Ch. xi).

Further, we must emphasise the intense religiosity which characterised the people at large. This is proved by the nature, scope and volume of the extensive religious literature, both in Sanskrit and Vernacular (Chap. xi), which grew up during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. As already noted above, we have to trace to this formative period the beginnings of many of those folk religions which exercised considerable influence over the mass of people in Bengal during the mediaeval period.

In conclusion, reference must be made to one aspect of the religious life in ancient Bengal to which sufficient attention has not been paid so far. As noted above, it was dominated by the Śahajiyā cult towards the end of the Hindu rule. Though there was much
in it that has been condemned from our modern point of view, not
perhaps unjustly, there was something in its doctrine which deserves
praise, even admiration. This may be illustrated by a few scattered
statements in the *Dohākosha* of Saroyavajra (Saroruha) such as the
following: (1) “Whether sacrificial fires bring out salvation, no
one knows, but the smoke produced by them certainly troubles the
eye.” (2) “A set of people pretending to be devotees of God
besmear their body with ashes, wear matted hair, burn lamps and sit
within the room, all the while twinkling their eyes, in Yogic
posture, and ring the bell, to delude the people.” (3) “The *kshapana-kas*
(Buddhist and Jaina mendicants) do not know the truth, but
delude the people by going naked, and inflicting self-torture, uproot-
ing their own hair etc. If nudity brings salvation then jackals and
dogs would be the first to get it; if salvation comes to one who lives
by gleaning grains (*uñchhita-bhojanena*) then the horse and elephant
have prior claims to it.” (4) “Ascetics wearing pink clothes (*geruḍa*)
enumerate crores of disciples and live on their earnings by deceiving
them.” (5) They say the Brāhmaṇas were born from the mouth
of the Brahmā, but what then? Now the Brāhmaṇas are born
exactly as a man of any other caste, then wherein lies the superi-
ority of the Brāhmaṇas? If you argue that the Brāhmaṇas
become superior by virtue of their *Saṁskāras* (rites and ceremonials),
I would say let the Chaṇḍālas have those *Saṁskāras* and become
Brāhmaṇa. If you say that knowledge of the Veda makes one a
Brāhmaṇa, let the Chaṇḍālas read the Vedas. As a matter of fact
they do read them, for the Grammar, which they read, contains
Vedic words.” (6) “Veda is neither infallible nor divine.”

These and similar statements give evidence of a rational spirit
and freedom of thought, triumphing over age-long beliefs and tradit-
ions, which is truly remarkable. Such ideas in India have been
generally associated with *Śūfism* in Medieval Age and Christianity
and Western education in the nineteenth century. It is to be
remembered, however, that the *Dohākosha* is earlier in date than all
these, and that the tradition of this type of free thought, unre-
strained by canons or traditions, was continued by the Bāuls in
Bengal throughout the Medieval Age. It would not, therefore, be
illogical to take the view that the old *Sahajiyā* doctrine was one of
the contributing factors to the Renaissance in Bengal in the nine-
teenth century. The laxity of orthodox views among the Bengalis,
as compared with the Hindus of other parts of India, may also
be traced to this source. This, of course, requires further elucidation and research.

It is indeed somewhat strange that the freedom of thought displayed, by the Sahajiyās was found compatible with an implicit faith in the guru. It is this element which explains the gradual moral degradation of the sect, but the other element, namely the rationality and freedom of thought, perhaps did not altogether disappear, and left its legacy to posterity.
PART II.

ICONOGRAPHY

I. Introduction

The origin and antiquity of image-worship in India is a very controversial subject and cannot be discussed here in detail. It would suffice to state briefly the generally accepted views on the subject. R. P. Chanda held that “the excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro have brought to light ample evidence to show that the worship of images of human and superhuman beings in Yoga postures, both seated and standing, prevailed in the Indus Valley in the Chalcolithic period.”

But it has been argued that “whether these and such others appearing on a few more seals of this type can be regarded as definite representations of cult objects cannot be determined with certainty so long as we are unable to unravel the mystery of the script and language of the highly cultured people of the Indus Valley. Similarly, many of the numerous terracotta figurines, unearthed there in course of excavations and tentatively described by Mackay as images of household gods, are very difficult of correct interpretation at the present state of our knowledge.”

The next important question is whether the Aryans of the Vedic period worshipped images. Max Müller positively answered it in the negative, and observed: “The religion of the Vedas knows no idols. The worship of idols in India is a secondary formation, a later degradation of the more primitive worship of ideal gods.”

Most Vedic scholars accepted this view, but a few, both Indian and European, argued that the “images played a very prominent part in the religious practice of the early Vedic Aryans.” One of them, however, held that “there was no idol worship, but that images were used as concrete representations of gods whose real form and existence were conceived as different.”

There is, however, hardly any doubt that Brähmanical cult gods like Śiva and Vishnu, objects of Bhakti (love and devotion to a personal god), came to be inconically represented in the first and second centuries B.C. It is also very likely that various peoples in India, before they came into contact with the Aryans, were
acustomed to worship the images of the gods whom they held in veneration. These folk-gods have left their trace in popular primitive cults partly modified by Aryan influence.

We may, therefore, easily presume that the followers of Brähma-ñical religions in Bengal were accustomed to image worship from almost the very beginning of their contact with the Aryan immigrants. It is, therefore, a matter of surprise that no images of gods, so far discovered in Bengal, belong to a period earlier than the Christian era. This may be partly due to the fact that early images were usually made of clay or wood which perished within a few centuries, and images of stone or metal, which have survived the ravages of time and man, were not generally introduced till some time had elapsed after the evolution of the idea of worship of images. The images of the Gupta period in Bengal are also very few. It is not till the Pāla period that we come across the images in large number, made mostly of stone, occasionally also of bronze or octo-alloy, sometimes gold-plated, and, very rarely, of precious metals like silver. The stone used generally belonged to the hornblende schist variety usually quarried from the Rajmahal hills. Along with these images, excavations at various sites in Bengal have brought to light numerous terracotta plaques illustrating religious and mythological themes.

The divine images belong to various religious sects and may best be studied under the following heads : Vaishnava, Śaiva, minor Brähmanical sects, Jaina, and Buddhist.

II. Images of Vishnu Cult.

The common form of Vishnu is four-handed, representing one or other of the twenty-four Vyūhas described in the fully developed Pāñcharātra theology (p 513.) These twenty-four forms are four-handed, and are differentiated by the varying order in which the four hands hold the usual attributes, viz., śāṅkha (conch-shell), Chakra (wheel or discus), gada (mace), and padma (lotus). Sometimes the attributes are represented as figures (Chakrapurusha, Śaṅkhapurusha, Gadā-deva), and usually two female figures (Lakshmi and Sarasvati) are placed on the two sides of the lower part of the body.

The earliest Vishnu image is that from Hankrail (Maida Dt.) which probably belongs to the Kushāna period i.e., the first or
second century A.D. It is of uncouth appearance, with two hands broken, the other two holding lotus bud and conch-shell. Another Vishnu image of uncouth (at least unusual) appearance, made of reddish sandstone, was found at Sanchra (now in the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta) has been assigned to the seventh century, but may be much earlier. Among other Vishnu images, significant from iconographic point of view or on account of artistic excellence, may be mentioned the following.

1. Greyish-black stone image of Vishnu (6'4'' in height) found near Lakshmankāthi (Bakarganj Dt.)

"The image is in a perfect state of preservation. Garuḍa, the vehicle of Vishnu, kneels on one leg, with folded hands, on a lotus pedestal. Vishnu sits on his outstretched wings with right leg pendant. The god has the Chakra in the normal right hand, which he holds not by a handle as in the images ordinarily met with, but by the rim. The Chakra-purusha is depicted in miniature in the centre of the Discus, as if turning round and round. The normal left hand holds within its palm the miniature representation of a female with a mace in her right hand,—evidently Gadā-devī. The attributes of the remaining two hands are also unique. The right hand holds the stalk of a lotus on which sits the goddess Kamālā with crossed legs, granting boons with her open right hand and holding a lotus in her left. Two elephants stand on two lotuses on her either side and pour water over her head from pitchers held by their trunks. The left hand of the god similarly holds the stalk of a lotus on which sits the goddess Sarasvati playing on her Veṇā. The Veṇā, in the hands of the image of Sarasvati accompanying Vishnu in the images ordinarily met with, has a straight shape. But here the Veṇā is a boat-shaped instrument; exactly like that held by Samudra-Gupta, as depicted on his coins of the Lyrist type. On the crown of the god is depicted a four-armed male figure sitting with crossed legs. The two normal hands are placed on the lap in the Dhyānamudrā, one over the other. The other two hands hold indistinct objects. Two Vidyādhrs appear on either side of the crown of the god."

2. The black basalt image, from Chaitanpur (Burdwan) and now in the Indian Museum, possesses some uncommon features. Gadā and Chakra are represented, respectively, by a female (Gadā-devī, holding a mace, and a male (Chakrapurusha) holding the rim of a wheel, with two lower hands of Vishnu placed on their heads. The
other two hands of the god have the usual conch-shell and lotus head. He wears a loin cloth, and has a curious string of amulets instead of the usual necklace and garlands. This has been classified as 'abhichārika-sthānam' image of Vishṇu.

3. The Baghaura image, is referred to as Nārāyaṇa in the inscription engraved on its pedestal (R. 37), but the arrangement of the attributes in its four hands follow the order appropriate to Trivikrama Vishṇu. This shows that the theoretical classification in the sacred texts was not always followed in practice.

4. The standing stone image of Vishṇu of the Trivikrama order found at Surohor (Dinajpur Dt.) is unique in some respects. The figure stands under a canopy of seven serpent hoods, the Gadā and Chakra (in two of the four hands) are placed on full-blown lotus flowers, two male figures stand on the two sides, holding, respectively, chakra and śaṅkha on a blue lotus (māloipala), and most important of all are two miniature figures—one like an Amitābha just above the central snake-hood and a six-handed dancing Śiva carved in the middle of the pedestal. Some have taken the miniature figure on the top as Brahmā and regard the image as a Trīmūrti (Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva), while others trace Mahāyāna influence in the placing of attributes on lotus flowers.

5. The standing bronze figure of Vishṇu (of Trivikrama order), found at Rangpur, has the figure of Vasumati, in place of the usual Pushti or Sarasvatī on its proper left.

6. Deora (Bogra Dt.) image of Vishṇu is seated in lalitāsana on the back of the Garuḍa, though he is usually shown as seated astride on his Vāhana.

7. The Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa relief at Basta, about four miles to the south-west of Dacca.

8. A large image of Vishṇu Lokesvara under the canopy of seven-hooded snake at Sardāṅgā (Dt. Burdwan).

"The god Nārāyaṇa is seated on a lotus with the right leg pendant. He has four hands holding, clockwise, śaṅkha, padma, gadā and chakra. The normal left hand which holds the chakra also encircles the body of Lakshmi.

"The goddess Lakshmi is sitting on the left thigh of Vishṇu. Her right hand is placed round the neck of her lord. With the left hand, she holds a lotus by its stalk. Her right leg is folded over the thigh of Vishṇu. The left leg is pendant. The kneeling Garuḍa is depicted below as if supporting the lotus seat on which
the pair is sitting. Garuḍa has four hands. The normal two are folded in the usual aṁjali pose. The other two support the pendant legs of the god and goddess.”

Three other images of this type were found at Bansihari and Marail (Malda Dt.) and Eshnail (Dinajpore Dt.). These images have a striking resemblance with those of Śiva-Pārvatī or Umā-Maheśvara.

In addition to the images of Viṣṇu, there are images of his Avatāras (incarnations). In the images of the Varāha avatāra, usually the head alone is that of a boar, the rest being a human figure. In the image found at Silimpur (Bogra Dt.) perhaps belonging to 10th century A.D., the boar-head is shown like a conch-shell placed sideways on the neck of the deity, and the earth-goddess is placed on the left shoulder of the god, which is very unusual.

The Narasiṁha image shows the head of the demon placed on its left thigh, while the rest of its body seems to hang on the nails of the deity. Sometimes the main figure has six hands, “its front pair of hands thrust into the entrails of the demon, the middle pair taking hold of its head and legs, and the back pair shown in two poses abhaya and tarjānt.”

The image of the Vāmana (Dwarf) incarnation is shown “with one foot raised heavenwards, above which is seated Brahmā; just to the proper left of its right leg planted firmly on the lotus pedestal is carved the scene of the grant by the demon king Bali to the Dwarf God, and on the pedestal below are placed the worshipping couple.” A separate sculpture of the Dwarf incarnation having four arms accompanied by Śrī and Pushṭi on either side, found at Purapārā, is a rare specimen of great interest.

A Rāma-Lakṣmana plaque of the early Medieval period was found in Kartikpur (24 Parganas) and is now in the Asutosh Museum.

The image of Balarāma is almost a replica of the ordinary image of Viṣṇu with the substitution of a plough for the lotus. The images have an umbrella or snake-hood over the head. In two cases the deity holds a bowl, a club and a plough in three hands, the fourth resting on his thigh. It is a peculiarity of all the icons of Balarāma that, as prescribed in the texts, the ornament of the right ear differs from that of the left.

Though Garuḍa is usually represented with Viṣṇu on his back, separate images are also found serving as capitals of pillars,
specially in front of Vaishnava temples. A fine specimen with the face and limbs of a man, belonging to the tenth century A.D., is preserved in the Rajshahi Museum.

Though Lakshmi and Sarasvatī (Śrī and Pushṭi) are usually represented as attendants of Viṣṇu, there are independent images of them, and as a temple of Sarasvatī is referred to in an inscription, she, and perhaps also Lakshmi, were worshipped as cult images. The Gaja-Lakṣmī image—the goddess in the act of being bathed by two elephants—is a well-known motif of Indian art from very early times, and there are independent figures of this type. “An eleventh century bronze figure discovered in, Bogra, and now in the Rajshahi Museum, is a very good representative specimen of the four-handed variety of this icon. The goddess stands in graceful tribhujga pose holding in three of her hands, mātulūṅga, aṅkuśa and jhāṃpl (a peculiar kind of basket generally placed in the hands of the clay images of Lakṣmī, annually worshipped during autumn in Bengal), while the fourth is broken. She is attended on either side by two chowry-bearing female attendants standing in the same pose. A beautiful lotus aureole decorates the head of the goddess who is being bathed by two elephants with upturned pitchers. The modelling of the whole piece is very artistic. The Rajshahi Museum has also a very beautiful bronze figure of two-handed Lakṣmī without the aureole and the elephants.”

“Separate images of Sarasvatī found in Bengal are usually four-armed, playing on a harp with the natural hands, while the back right and left hands carry akṣhamālā and pustaka (book), respectively. Curiously enough, the vāhana of the goddess carved on the pedestal is in some cases a swan, her usual mount in other parts of India, but in others, a frisking ram. The explanation of the second vehicle is perhaps afforded by mythological story in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (xii. 7.1.3 and 14; xii. 7.2.3 and 7) closely associating rams and ewes with Sarasvatī. The Čhātingrām (Bogra) image of Sarasvatī in the collection of Rajshahi Museum is the finest specimen so far known.”

Reference may be made to some unique Vaishnava images which cannot be easily identified.

1. A unique image of the composite gods Brahmā-Viṣṇu found in North Bengal and now in the Indian Museum. Of the four faces of Brahmā only three are shown, his attributes srūk, srūva,
śākṣamālā and kamaṇḍalu being present in the four hands. Viṣṇu's attendant goddesses, Śrī and Pushṭi, as also the āyudha-purushas—Śaṅkha and Chakra—clumsily executed with their respective emblems on the head, stand on two sides of the central figure, who is also decorated by the vanamālā. On the pedestal are depicted the respective mounts of the gods—goose in the centre and the Garuḍa on the right.⁷⁹ This composite sculpture is reminiscent of the Dattātreya or Hari-Hara Pitāmaha reliefs of both Northern and Southern India, materially differing from them, however, by the omission of some features of Hara in it.”⁸⁰

2. A unique figure of a deity with twenty hands, with two pot-bellied figures seated on two sides is in the Rajshahi Museum. Some of the objects distinguished in the right and left hands are gada, aṅkūśa, khaḍga, mudgara, śūla, kara, lotus mark, etc. (r) and chakra, kheṭaka, dhanu, tarjana, pāsa and śaṅkha (1). The central deity is decorated with vanamālā and other usual ornaments.⁸¹

Some regard it as a figure of Viśvarūpa, a variety of Viṣṇu image, but it shows differences in many respects from the textual description.

3. Two figures closely resembling each other were found in North Bengal, standing on a double-petalled lotus, and holding a long sugar-cane bow and the tip of an arrow in his two hands. In one case there are two female figures on his two sides, and in the other case were a female figure carrying a water pot and a male with a quiver full of arrows. The figure has been identified by some as Kāmadeva and the two female attendants as his consorts Rati and Trīshā. The second image has a couchant rat just below the pedestal and has been identified as a Śaiva deity. A similar figure found at Deopārā is now in the Rajshahi Museum.⁸²

III. Śaiva Images

The four-armed Viṣṇu images and phallic symbols of Śiva have been found in Bengal in larger number than any other iconic representation, and may thus be regarded as the most popular objects of worship. Even today in Bengal, as in the rest of India, the phallic emblem of Śiva is the most popular deity among the Hindus. The Bengal specimens, either in the past or in the present, however, do not depict any realistic feature of phallus as we find in other regions down to the Gupta period. Side by side with
the ordinary Śiva-liṅga, we find many mukhaliṅgas, i.e., with one or
four faces engraved on them (ekamukha or chaturmukha liṅga).
The stone liṅga of Unakoṭi (Tripura State) has four well-carved
human busts (shown up to the waist) engraved on the four sides
of its pāja-bhāga. A number of sand-stone liṅgas with four
seated Śaktis on its four sides (c. 9th century A.D.) have been
discovered in North Bengal. A bronze chaturmukha liṅga of
c. 10th or 11th century A.D. brought from Murshidabad district to the
Asutosh Museum, Calcutta, is of great interest from iconographic
point of view. The arghya and nāla bear wavy incisions indicating
the water passing from the top along the surface of the four
busts on the liṅga. One of these, with a severe face, perhaps depicts
the Virūpāksha or the extremely terrific aspect of Śiva.

The anthropomorphic figures of Śiva, though fewer in number,
show a large number of varieties. One of the oldest images is
that of Jayanagar (24 Parganas) of about 7th century A.D. The
basement relics of the main mound of Pahārpur contain several
representations of Śiva Chandraśekhara with two hands. They
hold the usual attributes of Śiva images, namely, triśūla (trident)
rosary, and vase, have the third eye, the ārdhaliṅga and jaṭā-mukuṭa.

To the same period belongs a metal image of Śiva found at
Manir Tat (24 Parganas), standing erect on a lotus placed over a
pedestal, and distinguished by ārdha-liṅga and jaṭā-mukuṭa which
bears a crescent moon. Behind the head is an oval, decorated
aureole on a lintel supported by two struts. A triśūla (over which is
probably placed the left hand of the god) stands on the pedestal
which has the figure of a bull on one side, just below the triśūla.
The image is regarded as the ‘Hara’ aspect of Śiva described in the
'Hayabhirsha Pañcharātra'.

A more elaborately carved Śiva image has been found at Ganesh-
pur (Rajshahi Dt.). “It is a four-handed specimen with its front
hands broken, its back right and left hands carrying a lotus flower
with long petals and a būla or khaṭvāṅga with its upper part
broken. It stands in tribhāṅga pose on a viśva-padmā placed on
the central section of a saptaratha pedestal, attended by a couple of
male and female figures on either side (the male figures carry
kapāla and būla in their hands, while the female ones carry chowries;
the male figure on the proper right is fierce-looking). On the
left corner of the pedestal are shown five figures in a row with
their hands in aṅjali pose, perhaps the donors of the image.
The whole relief is tastefully carved and is one of the finest specimens of such icons of the late mediaeval period. Along with these sculptures may be noticed the four-armed standing Śiva, still being worshipped as Virūpāksha at Kāśipur near Barisal, which has been identified as Nilakanṭha by N. K. Bhattasali on the basis of Śāradātilaka-tantra. The image, though without the five heads enjoined by the text, closely follows it with regard to its attributes, which are rosary, triśūla, khaṭvāṅga and kapāla. The additional features noticeable in the sculpture are: the umbrella in place of kirtimukha, Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya on the top right and left sections of the prabhāvalī, the lotus-carrying figures of Gaṅgā and Pārvatī, recognisable as such from their respective vāhanas (a dolphin and a lion) on the proper right and left of the central figure, below whom is shown his mount Nandi.”

The unique bronze image of Śiva with a Dhyānī-Buddha-like figure at the top centre of the stela, now in the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta University, is another early type of this deity of outstanding importance.

There are quite a large number of images of Naṭarāja Śiva, dancing on the back of his mounts. One class of them, with ten hands, closely follow the descriptions given in the Matsya Purāṇa (ch, 269. vv. 4-11). Khadga, śakti, daṇḍa and triśūla are held in the right, and kheṭaka, kapāla, nāga and khaṭvāṅga in the left hand; the ninth holds a rosary and the tenth is in the Varada pose (mudrā). Another class with twelve hands holds a vīṇā across the breast with one pair of hands, while another pair marks time—thus showing the god engaged in music and dancing. The Sankarabandhā (Dacca Dt.) image of the first class depicts not only Gaṅgā and Gauri on their respective mounts on the two sides of the central figure, but also a number of nāgas, nāginīs and gaṇas—some of them dancing in an ecstatic pose—on the pedestal. Even the Bull, on which Śiva is represented as dancing, looks up towards the god and dances with two legs raised. A highly favourable background is created for the tāṇḍava dance of Śiva, who is referred to in one of these sculptures as Nārāyana.

The image of Sadāśiva is found on the seals of the copper-plates of the Sēna kings. Independent figures of this god, following closely the description given in the Utta-ra-Kāmilakāgama and the Garuda Purāṇa are found in large number. According to these two texts the five-faced and ten-handed god should be seated in the vaddha-
padmāsanā pose showing in his right hands, abhaya and varada-mudrās, dīkṣā, trīśūla, and khaṭvāṅga, and in his left ones, sarpa, akṣamālā, dāmaru, nilotpala, and vijapura; and he should be accompanied by Manonmāni. The sculpture in the collection of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, bearing the inscription No. B. 62, is a fine representative one of this type and closely follows the above description, especially with regard to the arrangement of the attributes in its ten hands. There is no Manonmāni by its side, but on the central section of the pañcharatha pedestal are gracefully carved two male attendants of Śiva, carrying śūlas in their left hands, the left one being that of a pot-bellied corpulent figure. On the extreme right corner is shown Nandī looking upwards, and on the corresponding corner on the other side is the donor couple. The sculpture is a finely carved specimen of the Pāla period. This close agreement of the plastic representations with South Indian texts, as well as their main association with the Senas who hailed from Kṛṣṇadā country in South India, has led some scholars to suggest that the Senas brought the cult of Sadāśiva from the south where it was much in vogue. But there is no doubt that the cult belongs to Āgamānta Śaivism and was of North Indian origin.

The next type of composite Śiva icons which are common in Bengal and other parts of Eastern India is the Āliṅgana or Umā-Maheśvara-mūrti. The extreme frequency of such images in this province as well as in Eastern India in general can be explained if we remember that these are the regions where Tantric cult originated and developed to a great extent. One of the three-fold vows undertaken by Tantric worshippers of Tripurasundarī is to concentrate the mind on the Devī as sitting on the lap of Śiva in the mahāpadma-sana (Saundarya-laharī, v. 40 ff, ), and it is no wonder that initiates into the Śakti cult will have requisitioned these images as aids to concentration of mind (dhyāna-yogasya sāṁsiddhāi). A North Bengal sculpture of the late mediaeval period (c. 12th century A.D.), now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta is one of the typical specimens belonging to this group. The goddess, with a mirror in her left hand and her right hand placed on the right shoulder of her consort, is seated in the sukhasana pose on the left thigh of Śiva. The latter closely embraces the Devī with front left hand, his front right one holding a nilotpala is placed in jñāna-mudrā against his breast, while his back right and left hands carry respectively a rosary and a trident. The deities are seated on a mahāpadma on
a navartha pedestal along which the right leg of Śiva hangs down, and their respective mounts, with a dancing female between them, and the donor, are carved between the top and bottom layers of the pedestal. Such reliefs, with slight variations in sitting postures of the central figures, in the number of accessory figures on the stela, or in the nature of the attributes in the hands of Śiva, are to be found in the collection of the different museums of Bengal.

In the above types of Śiva images, the bodies of Śiva and Śakti are shown separate, though in a very close embrace. But there is another variety where both are merged into one body, the right half being male and the left female. This is the Arddhanārīśvara form of Śiva which is comparatively rare in Bengal. The Purāṇā image, now in the Rajshahi Museum, is fully in the round. It has two arms, and the Śivaite characteristic of the ārdhva-liṅga. The left half of the image bears all the features peculiar to Umā, and the right half, the traits of her consort. It is a fine piece of sculpture and can be included among the best specimens of the late Pāla sculptures of Bengal. There are a few stories explaining this variety of Śaiva icon, but there is no doubt that all these are after-thoughts explaining, by way of mythology, one of the interesting old Indian concepts regarding the primeval cause at the root of the whole creation.80

A few specimens of the Vaivāhika or Kalyāṇa-sundara type of Śiva which was long regarded as specially South Indian in character, have been found in Bengal. The Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parishat (Calcutta) sculpture is the most elaborate of all the known Bengal specimens. Here Śiva stands erect facing front with Pārvatī before him, and is surrounded by a number of spirits and deities. The Navagrahas are shown in two groups, on each side of Śiva’s head, and there are several other deities, sages, and spirits carved on either side of the central figures.

All the above types represent the placid (śānta) aspect of Śiva. A few specimens of his terrific (ugra) aspect have also been found in Bengal. An Aghora Rudra image in the Dacca Museum has been described as follows:

“The god is standing in the aṭṭha posture with his legs planted on nude human and demoniacal figures, on a pedestal composed of nine skulls each, arranged pyramidally in groups of three. To the right and left of this pedestal a jackal and a vulture are shown feasting on carrion. The bull, carved between the legs of the deity,
is looking up towards him. The eight hands of the god hold *qamaru, šūla* (piercing the breast of one of the prostrate figures), *śara* (being drawn from the quiver at his back), *khaḍga, khetaka, dhanu, kapāla* and *ghanṭā*. Two attendants holding *karti* and *kapāla* in their hands are shown, one on either side of the deity, the fierce look of whose face has been heightened by the teeth protruding from the lips parted in a weird smile. Though the whole image seems to have ‘curious unfinished look about it,’ still it is an admirable piece of sculpture belonging to c. 11th century A.D.”91

The miniature Vaṭuka-Bhairaba image in the Dacca Museum “depicts the god with a flabby belly and a long skull-garland. Flames issue out of its head, ‘the eyes are round and rolling, and the lips are parted in a horrible smile.’ Of the four hands, the front right is broken, the back right holds a sword, the back left a *khatvāṅga* or *šūla*, and the front left a *kapāla*.”92 The four-armed image of Bhairava discovered in the Dinajpur District (now in P. C. Nahar collection) stands in the *pratyāliga* posture on a severed human head.93

A detached image of Śiva’s *Vāhana*, the Nandi (Bull), has been found at Rangamati (Murshidabad Dt).93a. It has been assigned to the seventh century A.D.

The images of Gaṇapati or Gaṇeṣa are very familiar and found in large number all over Bengal, though there is no evidence that the Gaṇapatya sect ever prevailed in Bengal. The reason probably is that, according to popular belief Gaṇeṣa is the god who removes obstacle (*vighnahara*) and bestows success (*siddhidātā*). The god with elephant’s head is shown in various postures—seated, standing and dancing—and his mount, the mouse, is seldom absent. A typical seated Gaṇeṣa image has been described as follows:

“It is a four-armed grey sandstone image, and a rosary, a small radish with plenty of leaves, *tribuła*, and the end of a snake coiled round its body like a sacred thread are placed in its four hands. On the pedestal is a crude linear representation of a mouse, his peculiar mount, and the third eye of the deity is suggested by the lozenge-shaped mark on the middle of his forehead.”94

An image of the god of about 11th century A.D., now in the Indian Museum, shows him dancing on the back of the “rat, accompanied by two figures, one on each side, who are dancing as well as playing on musical instruments. Of the six hands of the
god, the right ones hold the tusk, axe, and rosary, while the left ones bear assurance pose (palm defaced), blue lotus and a pot of sweetmeat into which the trunk of the god is placed. Just in the top centre of the pointed stela hangs a bunch of mangoes with leaves attached to the stalk. This fine sculpture does considerable credit to the artist who so successfully treated this grotesque theme with such balance and sense of proportion.”

“There is one unique five-faced and ten-handed image of Gañēśa Seated on a roaring lion, dug up from among the ruins of Rāmpāl and now being worshipped at a Vaishnava monastery at Munshiganj, which was perhaps the icon of such sectary.” It has been suggested that the image was set up by an inhabitant of South India, as South Indian texts specifically refer to five faces of Gañēśa.

Curiously enough, though, as stated above, there were temples of Kārtikeya, single stone images of the god are very rare in Bengal. But one image, found in N. Bengal and now in the Indian Museum, is of interest not only from the point of view of iconography but also as a fine specimen of artistic excellence. “The god sits in the mahārāja-līlā or sukhāsana pose (an unusual one; cf. the abnormal pose in some Garuḍāsana Vishnū figures) on the back of his vāhana peacock—the Śikhī Paravāṇi—standing with its outspread wings and plumes on a double-petalled lotus on a saptaratha pedestal. Two female figures with chowries (possibly his two consorts Devasena and Valli) stand in graceful pose on his two sides. The back right hand holds his characteristic emblem, the śakti (spear), and the front right one, a vijapūraka; the pedestal and the stela are tastefully decorated with ornamental carvings usual in sculptures of the period. “The graceful attitude and feeling of calm repose, as well as the dreamy eye, mark it out as a remarkable specimen among the products of the Bengal school of art; it is assignable on grounds of style to the 12th century A.D.”

The cult of Śakti or Devī arose out of the conception of Universal Mother. ‘She is specifically the energy of Śiva though sometimes regarded as the product of the combined energy of all the gods whose main function was to deliver the gods from the danger caused by the demons.’ The Śakti worship was very popular in Bengal and naturally we have numerous images of many ‘varieties’. Like Śiva, she has a placid as well as a terrific aspect.

Reference has been made above (p. 78) to the inscribed Deulbāḍī (Tippera) bronze or octo-alloy image of Sarvāṇi of the 7th century.
A.D. “It is an eight-armed deity, standing in samapāda-sthānaka pose on the back of a lion couchant on a double lotus and a triratha pedestal, accompanied by two chowry-bearing female figures; the hands carry conch-shell, arrow, sword, discus, shield, trident, bell and bow. The image, though described as Sarvāṇī in the inscription (Sarvāṇī is the feminine form of Sarva, one of the eight names given to Rudra in the Atharva Veda), closely follows the description of the goddess with such names as Bhadra-Durgā, Bhadra-Kālī, Ambikā, Kshemaṅkari and Vedagarbhā, given in the Śāradātilaka-tantra—a work compiled much later than the period of the image.99 A four-handed stone image of the goddess, found at Mangalbāri (Dinajpur), stands erect on a pedestal on which is carved the figure of a lion with one of its paws raised. Her front hands are broken, but the back right and left hands carry a trīkūla and an aṅkusa, respectively. The simplicity of the whole composition and the elegance of its carving mark it out as one of the fine specimens of the early Pāla art...

“The commonest variety of the standing four-armed Devī images in Bengal, however, is that which has been described as Chaṇḍi by some writers, and as Gaurī-Pārvatī by others. This variety is characterised by the erect pose of the central figure, the presence of an iguana on the pedestal, and such attributes as liṅgam with rosary on the upper right, a tridanḍī or a trident on the upper left, boon or pomegranate on the lower right, and vase on the lower left hands. Such images have not only been discovered from various parts of Bengal, but also from the distant region of Java, showing the widely diffused cult of this goddess which probably migrated there from Bengal.100 The large stone figure of the Devī from Mandoil (Rajshahi) is a good specimen. Kārtikeya, with two lions beneath him, and Gaṇapati, with two antelopes, are on the right and left of central figure. There are plantain trees on either side, and the miniature figures of the Navagrahas and of the donors. The iguana is missing in this relief. The sculpture is in the best tradition of the Bengal school and can be dated in the 11th century A.D.101 The unique Dacca stone image of Chaṇḍi with an inscription dated in the year 3 of the reign of Lakṣmanaśenasena (No. C.10), has couchant lion for her vehicle, and holds vara, aṅkusa, padma and kamaṇḍahu in the four hands. Like Gaja-Lakṣmi, the goddess is being bathed as it were by two elephants with their trunks holding upturned pitchers, carved on the top part of the pointed stela. No iconographic
text is known which describes such an image, denominated Chaṇḍī in the inscription. Bhattachali tentatively identifies it as Bhuvanesvarī on the basis of certain texts in the Śāradātilaka-tantra (Ch. 8).\textsuperscript{103}

There are a few seated images of Devī with four or more hands. An image, found at Bogra and now in the Indian Museum, is seated on the back of the lion and holds in her four hands a fruit (pomegranate), sword, shield and water-vessel, and she is tastefully decorated with a āṭā-mukula, hāra, keyūra, and other ornaments. A four-armed goddess from Nowgong (Rajshahi), seated in an identical manner, and holding in her hands vara, padma, triśūla and bhṛṅgāra, is flanked by miniature figures of Kārtikeya and Gaṇeśa on either side. A six-handed Devī image, similarly seated, with her right hands showing vara, akshamālā and padma and her left hands, abhaya, bhṛṅgāra and śūla, is still being worshipped at Shekhāti (Jessore) as Bhuvanesvarī.\textsuperscript{103} A twenty-armed image of the goddess, seated in an identical manner on a double-petalled lotus placed on the back of her mount, and bearing such attributes and poses as a fruit (pomegranate), boon, protection, discus, sword, pestle, arrow etc. in the right and conch-shell, water-vessel, bows, trident, mirror etc., in the left hands, with a miniature līṅga on her head among the jaṭās, may be tentatively identified as Mahālakshmi, the supreme goddess.\textsuperscript{104} This unique relief, which is now lost, was discovered at Simla (Rajshahi) and may be dated in the 10th century A.D.

The unique composite sculpture discovered at Kāgajipāra, among the ruins of ancient Vikrampur, depicts a stone līṅga, out of which emerges the half length figure of a four-armed goddess, with her front hands in the dhyāna-mudrā, and the back right and left hands holding a rosary and a manuscript, respectively. The goddess has been identified as the Mahāmāyā or Tripura-Bhairavi.\textsuperscript{105}

All the different varieties of the Durgā images so far described belong to her placid or saumya aspect; but the goddess, like her consort Śiva, had her terrific or ugra form. A good many images depicting the latter have been discovered. Mythologically, the most important among such icons is the Mahishamardini type which, with certain elaborations, came to be the accepted iconic model of the composite clay image in the annual autumnal Durgā worship in Bengal. A very interesting stone sculpture depicting the ten-armed goddess slaying the demon in the above manner was discovered at Dulmi in the district of Manbhum, and is now in the Indian Museum,
Calcutta. The goddess is shown in pratyālīḍha pose with her right and left legs planted firmly on the lion and buffalo, respectively. She carries in her ten hands triśūla (piercing the neck of the demon), kheṭakā, ṭaṅka, śara, khaḍga, dhanu, parāśu, ankusā, nāgapatśa and sūchimudrā. There are two chowry-bearing male figures on her either side and the whole composition is shown as if it were enshrined in a rekha deul with āmalaka and kalasa on the top. The black-stone ten-armed image of Mahishamardini discovered at Sakta (Dacca), with a pedestal inscription describing it as ‘Śrī-Māsika-Chaṇḍi’ in characters of the 12th century A.D., is similar in its composition to the above relief, differing only in minor details. The relief of Nava-Durgā from Porsha (Dinajpur) represents an extremely rare type consisting of nine figures of Mahishamardini, one represented as the central piece, with eight other miniatures grouped round it—five in the top part of the stela, two on either side, and one on the middle face of the saptaratha pedestal—all in the usual manner. The central figure is eighteen-armed, while the rest are endowed with sixteen arms; the head and the trident-bearing right hand of the former are broken away; the remaining right hands have elephant-goad, thunderbolt, chisel, stick, mace, discus, arrow and sword, while the left ones hold the tarjanī- mudrā, the tuft of hair of the demon, shield, bow, flag, kettledrum, mirror, bell and nāgapatśa. The whole composition corresponds fairly well to the description of the goddess Nava-Durgā given in the Bhavisya Purāṇa. The central figure is named Ugrachandi, the surrounding ones being Rudrachandi, Prachandi, Chanḍogrā, Chanḍanāyikā, Chanḍā, Chanḍjavati, Chanḍarūpā, and Atichandi. The whole composition, in spite of the multiplicity of the hands and the vigorous action of the figures, shows a dignified balance. An interesting group of Śakti icons consists of Maṭrīkā images. The Maṭrīkās are usually seven in number, and they really represent the personified energy of several of the well-known Brāhmaṇical deities. Their names are Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Indrāṇī, Vaishnavī, Vārahī and Chāmuṇḍī. Their worship is very old, and their images, flanked on either side by the figures of Viṣṇudēva and Ganesa, and generally carved in a row on a single slab of stone, are found all over India. Several such composite reliefs have been discovered in Bengal. One of the Maṭrīkās, viz. Chāmuṇḍā, seems to have been very popular, for several images, typifying some of her various forms such as Rūpavidyā, Siddha-yogeśvarī and
Danturā, have been found in different parts of Bengal. The Dacca Museum specimen, originally found among the ruins of Rāmpāl, is one of the best preserved images of this class. The goddess dances on a gaja holding in her six right hands boon, knife, kettle-drum, one end of elephant skin, arrow and sword, while of the corresponding ones on the left, the small finger of the front one is raised to the lips, the rest carrying bow, the other end of the elephant skin, skull, corpse and trident. These twelve-armed standing or dancing images of Chāmuṇḍā may represent her Siddha-yogēśvarī aspect as mentioned in the Agni Purāṇa. An image of the two-handed Chāmuṇḍā sitting on her haunches, originally hailing from Aṭṭahāsa (Burdwan), one of the fifty-one Śakti-piṭhas in India, represents the Danturā aspect of this goddess. The terrible figure, with its bare canine teeth, rounded eyes, ghastly smile, emaciated body, lean and pendulous breasts, sunken belly, and peculiar sitting posture, portrays in a remarkable manner the weird and the uncanny. Two stone sculptures in the Rajshahi Museum represent two other varieties of seated Chāmuṇḍā: one seated on an ass is described as ‘pisitāsanā’ (piśitāsanā) in the pedestal inscription, while the other seated on a corpse underneath a tree is labelled ‘Charchikā’.

A ten-handed image of Chāmuṇḍā, found in Betna, a part of the Harirampur village in Dinajpur District, probably represents the Rupavidya form. “The emaciated goddess sits in ĥalitāsanā on what is evidently a corpse. She has ten hands, of which eight exhibit the usual weapons, and attributes, such as kapāla, corpse, āmaru (rattle), āsi, kheṭaka, ṣula fingers touching the lips, ghaṇṭā (bell), etc. But what makes the image so interesting is a severed human bust seen in the background, held by its two hands in the two uppermost hands of the goddess, exactly in the manner of the gajacharmma (elephant’s skin), that we find so frequently in such images.”

The most interesting sculpture at Betna is, however, the image of a female figure in pratyālītāha pose fighting with a host of pot-bellied Asuras, and with a prancing lion between her feet. Evidently the whole theme is an aspect of Chaṇḍīkā fighting with the demons. The theme, quite different from the commonly-found representations of Mahishasura-vadha (slaying of the Buffalo Demon), is wonderfully vigorous and dramatic. The goddess is fighting with the demons with the various weapons held in some of
her thirty-two hands. The main pair holds a śaṅkha (conch), the blowing of which gives the signal for the fight. A second pair thrusts a triśūla (trident) into the belly of a demon, while another pair above the goddess’s head hurls something, perhaps a mushala (pebble). The other hands exhibit various other weapons and attributes, such as varada mudrā, sarpa (snake), čamaru, šakti, kartṛi (dagger), tarjanī (pointing finger), dhanush (bow), vāṇa (arrow), asi, kheṭaka, chakra, śūla, pāśa (noose), upala (lotus), daṇḍa, paraśu (axe), gadā, ghaṇṭā, abhaya, vajra (thunderbolt), darpana (mirror), etc. In spite of the rather large number of additional arms the image is wonderfully organic, a point which signifies concentrated energy before which the demons are already seen to be retreating. A female figure on the proper right holds an umbrella over the head of the goddess, while on the top are shown representations of various other gods, such as Brahmā, Vishṇu, Śiva, Sūryya, Gaṇeśa etc. Of the fighting attendants of the goddess, two are seen in the present sculpture, one at the top and the other on the pedestal, which also shows, besides lotus rosettes, the donor and his wife, as well as the representation of a bearded and emaciated male figure seated in dhyāna posture.

The execution of the sculpture is masterful in the extreme. The artist has put remarkable life and reality into the whole theme. The prancing lion, the pratvālīḍha (fighting) pose, the various weapons—held not merely as qualifying attributes but being actually used as weapons of war—, beautifully portray an actual fight going on between the goddess and the demons, who, unable to bear the combined and concentrated energy of the goddess, slowly retreat before her onslaught.¹¹²

The VSP. Museum possesses a unique rectangular stone slab in the shape of a miniature shrine, having carved in its centre a four-armed standing figure of Brahmāṇi, flanked by a swan below her left hand and a lion below her right. This sculpture was found at Devagrām (Nadia).¹¹³ This, the several Vārāhī images, and one Indrāṇi in the collection of the Rajshahi Museum are the only separate sculptures of the Mātrikās, other than the varieties of Chāmunḍā noticed above, so far discovered in Bengal.

IV. Images of Sūrya

Next to images of Vishṇu, those of Sūrya are the most numerous in Bengal. As in the case of Vishṇu, the earliest images of
Sūrya, namely those in two reliefs from Kumārpur and Niyāmatpur (Rajshahi Dt.), show distinct traces of Kushāṇa features.\textsuperscript{114} The chief iconographic details are the chariot of seven horses drawing the deity, clad in long tunic and low head-dress, standing between attendants, with the legs either inserted in pedestal or covered by high boots, and holding lotuses with stalks in two hands. The chief attendants are Daṇḍī and Piṅgala to whom were later, during the Gupta period, added two arrow-shooting goddesses, Uśhā and Pratyūshā, standing on two sides of the charioteer Aruṇa, and there were still more attendants in the Pāla period, namely Mahāvaiḍūrya and the two queens, namely Saṅgā and Chhāyā. The Kushāṇa tunic disappeared during the Gupta period, and an image found at Deora shows scanty dress with upper part of the body left bare and a circular halo at the back of the head. A long sword is fastened with a slanting strap on the left side below the waist.

A stone figure of Sūrya found at Koṭālipāḍā and now in the Sāhitya Parishad, Calcutta, which has been referred to the eleventh century A.D., represents the fully developed type of Sūrya. The attendant figures stand by the side of the main figure, with the figures of Uśhā and Pratyūṣhā placed just above their heads, the legs of all of them being heavily booted like that of the deity. A swan is depicted below the charioteer Aruṇa, and the sacred thread of Sūrya is replaced by a Vanamalā and a cord tied in the middle of the chest into knots like a chhanavira. The god and his principal attendants stand on lotus flowers issuing from agnikuaṇḍas on the saptaratha pedestal—Uśhā and Pratyūṣhā being carved along with three kneeling devotees. An image from Mahendra (Dinajpur Dt.) shows the unique feature of the god having six hands, and it is also remarkable from artistic point of view.\textsuperscript{115}

A twelfth century image from Manda (Rajshahi Dt.) with ten hands and three heads—the flanking ones of terrific type—has been taken to be Mārtaṇḍa-Bhairava, a combination of Sūrya and Bhairava, described in the Śāradātilaka-tantra (paṭala. xiv).

Seated images of Sūrya are very rare. One with an inscription, describing the deity as “the remover of all diseases”, was found at Qasba (Ekdala) in Dinajpur Dt. Images of Revanta, the son of Sūrya, are also found in Bengal. According to iconographic texts he is to be represented as a hunter on horse-back attended by followers. The Ghatnagar (Dinajpur) image presents him in a very
interesting manner. The booted deity is represented as riding horse, “with a lash in the right hand and the reins of the horse in his left, with an attendant holding an umbrella over his head, but he is shown here in the midst of two robbers, one ready to attack him from the front, the other on a tree-top from behind. The pedestal shows a woman standing, a devotee, and a man with a sword and shield about to assault a woman cutting a fish with a fish-knife, and just above the horse’s head on the right corner of the partially broken stela is a dwelling house with a couple within it.”

Another image depicts him seated on horse-back with a bowl in his right hand followed by dogs, musicians, and other male and female attendants.

The images of Navagrahas, intimately associated with Sūrya, are usually carved in a row either on a slab of stone or on an architectural piece like lintels of door. A long rectangular slab found at Kanakdighi (24 Parganas) contains a fine representation of the whole group. Separate representations of some of these deities are very rare.

V. Images of Miscellaneous Brāhmaṇical Deities

There are a large number of deities in Bengal who may, be regarded as folk-gods, originally worshipped by primitive peoples but gradually finding a place in the orthodox pantheons of the Hindus. Some of these, whose icons are still objects of popular worship, are Manasā, Śītalā, Shashṭhi, etc. The general type of the stone image of Manasā has been thus described:

“The deity is seated on a lotus in the lalitāsana pose, with hoods of seven snakes spread over her head, her left hand holding the eighth one (mythologically, eight nāgas are associated with the goddess). Her right hand in the varada pose holds a fruit, and she is attended on either side by a seated emaciated figure and a crowned male person.” A beautiful bronze figure of Manasā, probably belonging to the Pāla period, is now in the Indian Museum. “It shows the goddess seated under the usual snake-hoods in the lalitāsana pose, with a child on her left lap and her right hand holding a long leafy branch.”

Hārītī, the goddess symbolising the diseases of small-pox and measles, may be regarded as the prototype of modern Śītalā. A four-armed stone figure, ‘with a child in her two front hands clasped
on her lap, and a fish and a bowl placed on her back right and left hands,’ has been tentatively identified by N. K. Bhattasali with the goddess Ḥārīti. Another, still being worshipped, has been found in the Sundarbans. But the identification is doubtful.

A mutilated image, identified as Shashti, has (or rather had) four hands all of which are broken. ‘Her upper right hand holding a leafy branch is partially preserved; a cat looking upwards, on which the dangling right leg of the goddess is made to rest, is carved by the side of the bhadra-ghaṭa on the pedestal.’

A few images of the river-goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā have been found, but they are usually represented as decorative motifs on the door jambs of temples. They are recognised by their respective vāhanas, makara and the tortoise. Both have attendants, one of whom holds an umbrella over the head of the goddess.

‘Numerous reliefs depicting a goddess lying on a bed with a male child lying by her side, attended to by females and with the miniature figures of Śiva-liṅga, Kārtikeya, Gaṇeśa, and the Navagrahas, have been discovered in Bengal and other parts of Eastern India. Various suggestions have been made with regard to the identity of the Mother and Child represented in them. According to N. K. Bhattasali they represent the Sadyojāta aspect of Śiva. But this identification has been justly challenged, and in the absence of any better or more acceptable one, it is better to stick to the view of Alexander Cunningham that these reliefs represent the scene of Kṛishṇa’s nativity.’

Vedic gods like Indra, Agni, Yama and Varuṇa, degraded later as Dikpālas or guardians of the quarters, are also represented by images, mostly in bas-reliefs. Indra, for example, is recognised by his mount, elephant, and the third eye placed horizontally on his forehead, two of his chief characteristics mentioned in ancient texts. Agni is also easily recognised by the Kamaṇḍalu and akshamālā held in his two hands, with flames of fire in the background. A stone sculpture holding a pāśa in his hands, and a male and female attendant, holding noose, standing on either side, may be identified as Varuṇa or Yama. Images of another Dikpāla, Kuvera, have been found at Pāhārpur.

‘The god is seated in lalitāsana on a settee below which a kaṅkha and a padma (two of the ashtanidhis of Kuvera) are shown. The god holds a long purse in his left hand and its right one is broken.
Two female chowry-bearers stand on either side of him, and there are the usual flying Vidyādhāras.”

A figure of Varuṇa found at Dhuoirol (Rajshahi Dt.) is a beautiful specimen of Bengal art of the 11th century A.D. “The tastefully decorated god sits in lalitāsana on a lotus seat on a triratha pedestal on which his much mutilated mount (makara) is discernible. He holds a snake (really a noose in the shape of a snake—nāgapāśa) in his right hand, and his left hand, now broken, must have held a water-pot”.125

A figure of Yama showing danta and tarjanī in his two hands, and standing astride, with his vāhana buffalo in relief on the pedestal, is in the Rajshahi Museum.

VI. Jaina Images

The predominance of Jainism at one time in Bengal is hardly in keeping with the very small number of images representing that religion. The twenty-four Tirthankaras are all generally shown as naked and standing erect with two hands hanging on two sides—in more or less the same manner—and can be distinguished only by their lāńchhanas on the body or pedestal. One of the rare exceptions is the seated, and in many respects the unique, image of Rishabhanātha discovered at Surohor (Dinajpur Dt.) belonging approximately to the tenth century A.D. The richly decorated sculpture is shaped in the form of a miniature temple.

“The image shows a marvellously well-executed piece of sculpture in magnificent preservation. The Jina (Tirthankara, or Arhat) is seated cross-legged (vajraparyanka) on a siṁhāsana, carried on a pańcharatha pedestal, which is divided into two sections, the upper occupied by a wheel flanked by two lions, while the lower has a bull (the distinctive lāńchhana, or identifying mark, of this Jina) and a kneeling worshipper. The two hands of the Jina are placed on the soles of his feet in dhyāna mudrā. He is completely nude. Urṇā (mole covered with hair, between the eye-brows), ushnīsha (knob of matted hair), and the wheel marks on his palms and the soles of his feet, are among the auspicious marks (mahāpurusha-lakṣhaṇa). Behind the head is the prabhāmanḍala borne on the top of the back of the throne. On either side is seen a male attendant, with a flywhisk, in slight tribhāngā. Above, on each side, is seen a vidyādha couple in the clouds carrying garlands. An umbrella
covers the head of the Jina, on both sides of which are to be seen pairs of hands, sounding cymbals and showering flowers on his head. What make the image peculiarly interesting are the figures of the twenty-three other Jinas arranged in rows of niches, the uppermost ones ending in an āmalaka and finials, exactly as in the skiharas of the Nāgara (North Indian) temples. Each of these figures shows the hands in dhyāna pose and has the head canopied by an umbrella. Each has his distinctive lāńchhana marked on the pedestal. These symbols tally closely with the list given by Hemachandra in his Abhidhāna-Chintāmani except in a case.\textsuperscript{126}

Several other images of Rishabhanātha including the elegant figure at Mandoil (Rajshahi Dt.) and those of Ādīnātha, Nemūnātha, Śāntinātha, Pārśvanātha, and several other Jinas have been found in Bengal. A seated image of Pārśvanātha, found at Deulbhāra (Bankura Dt.), and probably of the tenth century A.D., is now in the Indian Museum. The deity is shown seated in the usual Yoga posture, with the seven hoods of a snake spread over his head, and his characteristic lāńchhana beneath the lotus seat; the chowry-bearing figures on either side are present, but no other Jinas are represented by his side. An image of the same deity standing in the kāyotsarga posture with his usual characteristics and attendants having the miniature figures of twenty-three other Jinas seated in rows of two each, eleven on its right and twelve on its left, is now at Kāntābenī (24-Parganas). The execution of the image is good and its date is probably 11th century A.D.\textsuperscript{126a}

The VSP. Museum, Calcutta, contains a rare specimen of Jina Śāntinātha standing in usual pose between two chowry-bearing attendants. On the back slab are carved the navagrahas, five on one side and four on the other, and the pedestal shows his lāńchhana, an antelope. The sculpture which originally hailed from Ujānī (Burdwan) is a heavy one and can be roughly dated in the 12th century A.D.\textsuperscript{126b}

A Jaina image has been found at Khatra (Bankura Dt.).\textsuperscript{126c}
VII. Buddhist Images

I. INTRODUCTION.

In order to understand properly the iconography of Buddhism, it is necessary to have some idea of the hierarchy of the Buddhist gods and goddesses. It is a well-known fact that Gautama Buddha, the founder of the religion, had left positive instructions to his disciples not to make, far less worship, his images, and, as a matter of fact, for a few centuries after his death, Gautama Buddha was represented in the sculptures, not by any human figure but by symbols such as a throne under a tree, a pair of feet, etc. Later, his images were made, and this innovation is attributed by some scholars to the Bactrian Greeks of Gandhāra who were familiar with the representation of their gods and goddesses by human figures. The idea of making images of Buddha was gradually introduced all over India.

But the Buddhists did not stop with the image of Gautama Buddha alone. With the growth of Mahāyāna system there developed a complex idea of a multiplicity of gods and goddesses and their divine or semi-divine associates who were all represented by icons.

The philosophical concept behind this motely group may be explained as follows:

“Ādi Buddha and Ādi Prajñā may, for all practical purposes, be taken as the Universal Father and the Universal Mother of the Buddhist hierarchy of gods. Ādi Prajñā is also sometimes called Prajñā-Pāramitā,—the Saving Wisdom. The position of the pair is akin to Purusha and Prakṛiti or Śiva and Śakti of the Brāhmaṇical conception.

“Five Dhyānī Buddhhas (i.e., Buddhas deep in eternal meditation) are conceived to have emanated from the pair. They take no part in the affairs of the world, but are passive and in deep meditation. For purposes of creation they have each an active counterpart called Bodhisattva. These Bodhisattvas, in successive ages, uphold the creation and then retire and merge again into their original sources. The Bodhisattvas exert their influence over the universe in successive ages through the most exalted of human beings called Mānushi Buddhhas or Buddhas incarnate. They are a sort of human agent
to the Bodhisattvas. The following table will explain the relations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dhyāṇī Buddhas</th>
<th>Corresponding Bodhisattvas</th>
<th>Corresponding Mānushī Buddhas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vairochana</td>
<td>Samanta-bhadra</td>
<td>Krakuchandra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akshobhya</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
<td>Kanakamuni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratna-sambhava</td>
<td>Ratnapāṇi</td>
<td>Kāśyapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amitābha</td>
<td>Avalokiteśvara</td>
<td>Gautama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amogha-siddhi</td>
<td>Viśvapāṇi</td>
<td>Maitreya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three Ages have already passed and the present is the 4th world, being the creation of Avalokiteśvara. The Mānushī Buddha of this Age is Gautama Buddha, the Śākya muni. Five thousand years after the nirvāṇa of Gautama Buddha, Viśvapāṇi Bodhisattva will create the 5th World and Maitreya will appear as the Mānushī Buddha. ²³⁷

The most favourite of the above deities is Avalokiteśvara, also known as Avalokita, Lokēśvara—the keen-seeing one, the Lord of Mercy. Later, some new Bodhisattvas were added, the most important of whom was Mañjuśrī, whose consort was Sarasvatī, obviously a replica or counterpart of the Brāhmaṇical goddess.

There are numerous goddesses, the most important of whom—the Tārās—are as much emanations from the Dhyāṇī-Buddhas as the male Bodhisattvas are, and therefore hold equal rank with them. In iconographic representations of these goddesses a small image of the parent Dhyāṇī-Buddha is portrayed on the tiara over their head. Some scholars regard the Tārās as the Śaktis of the Dhyāṇī-Buddhas from whom they originated. But a more reasonable view regards them as the Śaktis of the Bodhisattvas originating from the same Dhyāṇī-Buddha. In other words, the emanation from a Dhyāṇī-Buddha divides itself into the male and female energies.

In addition to this aristocratic family of gods and goddesses, there are (1) tutelary deities or protectors of devotees such as Jambhala, Hevajra, Heruka, (2) defenders of the faith such as
Kuvera, Yama, etc., of terrible appearance, and (3) the host of Piśāchas, Bhairavas, Dākinīs, etc.

The oldest and one of the best images of Buddha is the one found at Bharail (Rajshahi Dt.) and may be dated in the first half of the 5th century A.D. It is a typical Gupta sculpture of the Sārnāth School both from stylistic and iconographic point of view and will be discussed in chapter XV.

A very different type of the Pāla period is illustrated by the richly decorated image of a seated Buddha, now worshipped as Siva at Śivvāṭi (Khulna Dt.). It has been described as follows:

"It is in the bhū-sparśa pose (thus typifying the Enlightenment scene), with the three other Great Miracles, viz., the birth, preaching of the first sermon, and mahāparinirvāṇa, and the four added ones of Buddha's taming of Nālāgiri at Rājagriha, the descent of the Master from the Trayastriṃśa Heaven at Śāṅkāsyā, his performance of the miracles at Śrāvastī, and the monkeys offering honey to him at Vaisāli, carved on the prabhāvalī of the principal figure in the centre of the composition. Although many images of this type have been found in Bihar, this is the only specimen discovered so far in Bengal."128

Another seated Buddha image, of the same but very much simpler type, of the post-Gupta period is represented by the figure at Ujani (Faridpur Dt.).129

Quite a large number of Buddhist images, representing the Mahāyāna pantheon and Sahajiyā cult and belonging to the Pāla and early Sena period, have been found in Bengal. Reference has been made above (p. 526) to the philosophical concept behind them.

The images of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, both standing and seated, and belonging to different varieties such as Khasarpaṇa, Sugatissandarśana, Shaṅkasharī, etc. have been found in Bengal. One of the best is the image of Khasarpaṇa of the 11th century A.D. found at Mahākāli near Rāmpāl (Dacca Dt.) which has been described as follows:

"The god is seated in lalitāsana, underneath a trefoil arch on a double-petalled lotus carved on a saptaratha pedestal, on which are shown various accessory figures like Sūchimukha, the donor couple, some of the upachāras and ratnas, a female figure dancing to the tune of musical instruments played by others, etc. The tastefully decorated central figure, holding a full-blossomed lotus flower by its stalk in its left hand (its right hand is
broken), looks down with compassionate eyes (cf. the epithets parama-karuna and avalokita). The usual attendants of the lord, viz., Sudhanakumāra and Tārā on the right, and Hayagriva and Bhṛikuṭī on the left, are artistically placed on subsidiary lotuses by his side, while on the top section of the prabhāvalī are carved the images of the Pañcha-Tathāgatas, each shown in his characteristic pose enshrined in miniature temples, and other accessories. The artist had poured his whole soul into his work and turned out one of the noblest objects of religious art in Bengal.

A gold-plated bronze figure of Mañjuśrī was found near the ruins of Mahāsthān (ancient Puṇḍravardhana.) “The figure is fully in the round, and is depicted standing in a dvibhāṅga pose. A figure of the Dhyāni-Buddha Akshobhya, the spiritual father of Mañjuśrī, is placed among the clusters of jata on its head. Of its arms, the right fore-arm is broken, and the left is shown in the vyākhyaṇa or the vitarka pose, one quite suitable for a god of wisdom, the Buddhist counter-part of Brahmā. The upper part of the body is only covered by a scarf worn in the upavīṣṭa fashion, the lower half being clad in a dhoti fastened to the waist by means of a two-stringed girdle. The sacred thread, the ūrṇā, the distended ear-lobes, the trivalī marks on the front neck etc. are all present in the cast bronze figure. It is undoubtedly one of the finest pieces of bronze icons discovered in Northern and Eastern India.”

Images of female deities associated with Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna—Tārā (of different varieties), Mārici, Prajñāpāramitā, Parnaśavari, Chunḍā, Ĥārtti, etc. have been found in Bengal.

“Of the several varieties of Tārā, emanations of different Dhyāni-Buddhas, well represented in the local museums, mention may be made of Khadiravanti-Tārā, Vajra-Tārā and Bhṛikuṭī-Tārā, respective emanations of Amoghasiddhi, Ratnasambhava and Amitābha. Khadiravanti, known also as Śyāma-Tārā on account of her green colour, is one of the commonest varieties of such images. She may be depicted seated or standing, holding a blue lotus in her hand, and usually accompanied by Aśokakāntā (Mārichi) and Ekajaṭā. An elaborately carved image of this variety of Tārā, datable in the 12th century A.D., has been found at Sompāra.

“She sits with the right leg pendant. The right hand is in the Varada Mudrā, the left holds a half-blown blue lotus in the Vitarka
Mudrā. The right leg rests on a lotus springing from the stem of the main lotus throne on which the goddess is seated. Beneath this throne, at the base, is represented Vajrasattva sitting with legs locked, a Vajra in the right hand and a Bell in the left. On the right of the goddess is represented in miniature, the goddess Aṣokakāntā (Mārīchī) with an Aṣoka leaf in her left hand, the right hand being in the Abhaya Mudrā. The Aṣoka leaf, however, looks like the feather of a peacock and the goddess represented may in reality be Mahāmāyūrī and not Aṣokakāntā. To the left of the goddess sits a rather corpulent female deity (Ekajaṭā) with a knife in the right hand and skull-cup in the left. Miniature figures of eight Tārās are given one above the other in two rows of four and four on the right and the left sides of the goddess. They all hold lotuses with the left hands; the right hands in the Abhaya Mudrā are placed between the breasts. All these goddesses have companions, altogether ten in number; of them only the 3rd on the right side is a female; the rest are all males. The first two goddesses on the right side have respectively a lion and an elephant as Vāhana. A Kṛittimukha is represented at the top.”

An image of four-headed Vajra-Tārā found at Baragram (Bir-bhum Dt.) is a fine specimen of sculpture. Goddess Mārīchī, an emanation of Dhyānī Buddha Vairochana, is “usually depicted with three faces, the left one being that of a sow, eight hands holding vajra, ankuśa, śara, aṣoka leaf, sūchī, dhana and pāśa (the other hand being in the tarjanī pose), with the figure of her spiritual father in her head-dress, and riding in pratyāśīṭha pose on a chariot drawn by seven pigs, driven by the charioteer Rāhu. She is also generally accompanied by four other subsidiary goddesses, viz., Varttālī, Vedālī, Varālī and Varāhāmukhī. Her Brāhmaṇical counterpart, though in male aspect, is Sūrya.” The details of the Dacca Museum specimen, hailing from Ujāni (Faridpur Dt.) and datable in the 11th or 12th century A.D., correspond to most of those noticed above. Icons of Prajñāpāramitā, typifying the spirit of divine wisdom, are rarely found in Bengal. Very often this goddess is painted in bright and variegated colours on the covers of the Prajñāpāramitā manuscripts locally procured. She is shown seated in padmāsana in deep tranquility of wisdom, both of her hands placed against her breast, the right in the vyākhyaṇa, and the left in the jñāna-mudrā holding the book Asṣā-sāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā.”
“A partially preserved metal image of Vajra-Tārā (Tārā of the yellow colour) in the Dacca museum, originally hailing from Mājvāḍī (Faridpur Dt.) is of unique importance, for, so far as it is preserved, it closely resembles the metal image of the same deity in the shape of an eight-petalled lotus flower, enclosing within its petals the goddess with the figures of the eight attendants carved on the insides of the petals, originally found at Chaṇḍīpur (Bhāgalpur Dt.) and now in the Indian Museum.”

Among other Buddhist deities whose images have been found in Bengal mention may be made of the following:

1. Hevajra, though evolved during the latest phase of Buddhism, is held in high esteem in Tibet. A very good image with his ṭakti has been found at Murshidabad. “The deity has eight heads, and sixteen hands, which hold skull-caps containing different animals and deities. Miniature dancing figures are carved round the central pair and beneath them are a number of corpses.”

2. There are numerous images of Jambhala, the Buddhist counterpart of Brahmancial Kuvera, the god of riches and the king of Yaksha. The god is easily recognised by his pot-belly and squat dwarfish features, the up-turned coin-jars below the leg hanging down the seat, and the left hand pressing the neck of a mongoose vomiting jewels.

3. The image of Heruka is very rare; one has been found at Šubhapur (Dt. Tippera). “The god is represented in the dancing attitude. He stands on the left leg, bent in the dancing attitude. The right leg is raised to the thigh of the left leg. The god is grinning horribly and wears a garland of 17 skulls. The right hand is upraised as if to hurl the vajra, which, however, is broken away and lost. The left hand carries the khaṭvāṅga with the banner, to the flowing ends of which two small bells are tied. The image of the Dhyān Buddha Akshobhya appears on the blazing tiara.”

4. An image found in Vikrampur (Dacca Dt.) has been “identified as that of Mahāpratisarā, one of the five protection goddesses (Paṭīcharakṣā). She has three faces, all of them of pleasant expression. The neck has a slight bend to the left. She carries in her four right hands—1. Sword. 2. Arrow. 3. Trident. 4. Discus. In the four left hands, she carries,—1. Thunderbolt. 2. Bow. 3. Lasso, with a ring tied to the end, held in the Tarjani Mudrā between the breasts. 4. Hatchet. The legs are not locked, the right one being placed over the left. The sole of her left foot is not
The Sādhanā from the Sādhanamālā agrees closely with the image described above.

5. The distinctive characteristic of goddess Parṇāsavārī is that she wears only an apron of leaves. She was most probably evolved from a goddess of the primitive tribe, still known as Savara in Eastern India. Her image is very rare. Two images, closely resembling each other, were found in two neighbouring villages in the Dacca District. The following is the description of one of them.

"The goddess has six hands; in the three right hands she holds Thunder-bolt, Arrow and Hatchet, and in two of the three left hands she holds a small Branch with leaves and a Bow; but the third hand has only the Tarjant Mudrā and no Lasso. The girdle of leaves restraining the dress of tiger skin is prominently depicted.

"The following additional features may be noticed. The goddess is slightly big-bellied, as required by the Sādhanā; she is treading upon the heads of two prostrate male figures placed upon a lotus seat with heads in the opposite directions and having circular scales or small-pox marks all over their bodies. These undoubtedly personify the diseases and epidemics which the goddess is required to trample down under her feet.

"The god Gaṇḍéṣa is represented prostrate at the bottom with a shield and a sword in hand, evidently vanquished after a fight with the goddess....

"The Brāhmaṇical god Hayagrīva is depicted to the right of the goddess in a threatening attitude, while Śītalā, the Brāhmaṇical goddess of epidemics, with a broomstick in the right hand and the winnowing basket (kulya) in the left, is departing to the left on the back of her vehicle, the donkey. The prostrate figure of Gaṇḍéṣa at the bottom, the flight of Śītalā and the threatening attitude of Hayagrīva appear to indicate the suppression of the worship of these Brāhmaṇical deities of diseases by the introduction of that of Parṇāsavārī. The five Dhyāni Buddhas are represented at the top with Amogha-siddhi in the middle. The goddess is worshipped as Jīyas Thākurāṇī at the village of Naynanda, P.S. Tangibadi, Dt. Dacca."

Apart from the stone or metal images of deities actually discovered, coloured paintings of some of them, now lost, are found in Buddhist manuscripts. Some of them are designated as follows:—

1. Chandradvīpe Bhagavati Tārā
2. Paṭṭikere Chundavara-bhavane Chundā
3. Harikeladeśe Śīla Lokanātha
4. Samataṭe Jayatūnga Lokanātha
5. Samataṭe Buddhārdhi Tārā

Evidently these were some of the images in Bengal which, for some reason or other, attained celebrity all over Bengal, particularly among the Buddhists.
APPENDIX I

MEANING OF THE TECHNICAL TERMS

[For a full discussion of iconographic terminologies cf. Rao-Icon. and Banerjea-Icon. Ch. vii].

Ābhanga—a standing pose with a slight bend in the figure.

Abhaya-mudrā—The different poses of the hands of the deities indicating different ideas or attitude of mind are technically known as mudrās. The more important of these mudrās are:

1. Abhaya (assurance)—in which the hand, with fingers raised upwards, is turned to front.

2. Bhūsparā (touching the earth)—in which the left hand rests on the lap with palm outward, and the right touches the seat below. (For the significance of this mudrā, cf. Banerjea-Icon. 286).

3. Dharmachakra—in which Buddha's hands are depicted as preaching the law. It is a combination of jñāna- and vyākhyāna-mudrās, the left hand being in the former and the right in the latter poses (For full significance, cf. Banerjea-Icon. 279).

4. Dhyāna (meditation)—in which the palm of the right hand is put in that of the left hand, and both are placed together on the crossed legs of the seated image.

5. Jñāna (knowledge)—in which 'the tips of the middle finger and of the thumb are joined together and held near the heart, with the palm of the hand turned towards the heart' (Rao).

6. Sūchā—in which the index-finger is stretched out, the other fingers being bent, and the hand is usually held down.

7. Varada (confering boon)—in which the hand is held down with palm outwards.

8. Vyākhyāna (discourse) or Vyākhyāna (explanation)—in which 'the tips of the thumb and the fore-finger are made to touch each other. The palm of the hand is made to face the front' (Rao).

Aśrama—rosary.
Āḍīḍha—a mode of standing, in which the right knee is thrown to front and the leg retracted, while the left leg is firmly planted behind, in a slanting position.

Aṅgada—Armlet.

Aṅkuśa—Elephant-goad.

Apsmāra-puruṣa—the evil demon trampled on by Śiva especially in his Naṭarāja aspect; the demon’s other name is Mūyaḷaka.

Arghya—the pūṭha or the circular base into which the Śiva-liṅga is inserted.

Atibhaṅga—an emphasised form of tribhaṅga, the sweep of the curve being considerably enhanced.

Bhadraghaṭa—auspicious pitcher.

Bṛṅgāra—narrow-necked water-pot with a spout.

Bhūsparā—See under Abhaya-mudrā.

Chakra—discus held by Vishṇu and sometimes by divinities associated with him.

Chhannaṃśa—Kind of jewelled disc worn in front of the breast; it is kept in position by two chains or pearl strings placed crosswise on the torso.

Ḍamaru—a kettle-drum sounded by moving it in the hand.

Daṇḍa—a staff or cudgel.

Dhanu—bow.

Dhyāna-mudrā—See Abhaya.

Dvibhaṅga—a standing pose in which the body has one bend in the middle.

Gadā—mace, club.

Gaṇa—An impish attendant of Śiva.

Ghanṭā—bell.

Hāra—necklace.

Jaṭā—matted locks of hair.

Jaṭā-mukūṭa—a sort of crown made up by arranging the matted locks of hair in a particular manner.

Jāna-mudrā—See Abhaya.

Kamandalu—a water-pot of a peculiar shape, with a handle and a spout.

Kapāla—upper part of the skull shown as a cup in the hands of deities of terrific aspect.

Karatāla—clapping of the hands marking time with music.

Kartṛi—a short chopper, a big knife.

Kāyotsarga—a standing pose usually shown in Jina images, in
which the hands hang down straight along the two sides of the stiffly erect body.

Keyūra—an armlet, an ornament of the upper-arm.

Khaḍga—a sword.

Khaṭvāṅga—‘a curious sort of club, made up of the bone of the fore-arm or the leg, to the end of which a human skull is attached through its foramen’ (Rao).

Kīriṭa—jewelled head-gear.

Kīṟṇamukuta—a conical crown.

Kīṟṇimukha—the grinning lion-face shown usually on the top centre of the stela.

Kuṇjaḷa—ear-ring

Lalitāsana—a sitting posture, in which one leg, usually the left leg, is tucked up on the seat, while the right one dangles down along it.

Lāṅghana—cognisance, mark.

Mahārāja-līḷā—a sitting posture, also known as Sukhāsana, where one leg (generally the left one) rests on the seat, while the right knee is raised upwards on the seat and the right arm rests on the raised knee.

Māṅgluṅga—a citron.

Mudgara—a pestle.

Mudrā—hand-pose (see Abhaya).

Nāga—snake, also a peculiar hybrid figure made up of human and serpentine forms.

Nāgarāṣṭra—a snake in its real shape used as a noose.

Nāginī—female snake.

Nāla—the projecting part of the base of Śiva-liṅga for draining the water poured on its top.

Navaratha—a type of pedestal with nine facets.

Nilotpala—blue lotus.

Pāda—lotus.

Padmāsana—(1) lotus seat; (2) a sitting posture in which the two legs are kept crossed so that the feet are brought to rest on the thighs’ (Rao).

Pāraśu—a battle-axe.

Paṇḍhartha—a type of pedestal with five facets.

Paṇḍapichchikā—the feathers of a peacock’s tail tied in a bunch.

Paśa—a noose.
Prabhāvalī—the stela or background of an image.
Pratyāḷīḍha—standing pose, just the reverse of āḷīḍha (see āḷīḍha).
Pūjābhāga—the top section of the līṅga which is shown out of its base.
Ratna—jewel.
Śakti—(1) consort; (2) a spear.
Samapāda-sthānaka—a standing posture, in which the body, without any bend in it, faces front.
Śāṅkha—(1) a conch-shell; (2) one of the nidhis or treasures of Kuvera-Vaiśravana.
Saptaratha—a type of pedestal with seven facets.
Śara—an arrow.
Śarpa—a snake.
Śīraschakra—the halo or nimbus behind the head of an image.
Sruk—sacrificial ladle for taking out clarified butter from the pot.
Śūchī—needle.
Śūchī-mudrā—see Abhaya.
Sruva—a sacrificial ladle for pouring clarified butter on the fire.
Sukhāsana—a comfortable sitting posture, same as mahārāja-līlā (see Mahārāja-līlā).
Ṭaṅka—a stone-mason's chisel.
Śūla—trident.
Tarjanī—(1) index-finger; (2) a kind of hand-pose, in which the index-finger of the upraised hand is stretched out upwards, while the other fingers are bent.
Tribhāṅga—a standing pose with two bends in the body.
Tridanta—a wooden staff with three prong-like projections.
Triratha—a type of pedestal with three facets.
Trisūla—trident.
Upachāra—offerings necessary in worshiping a deity.
Upavīṭṭa (fashion)—running across the chest from above the left shoulder below the right arm-pit, as the sacred thread is usually worn.
Urṇā—the hairy mole between the two eye-brows, usually shown on the heads of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
Vaijayantī—a long flower garland usually shown on Viśṇu images.
Vāśākha-sthānaka—standing on the back of the bull.
Vajra—thunder-bolt.
Vanamālā—a long flower-garland usually shown on Vishṇu figures.

Varada-mudrā—see Abhaya.

Vijapura—a citron.

Vīṇā—a stringed musical instrument of the type of lyre.

Vīrāsana—a sitting posture in which the left foot rests upon the right thigh and the left thigh on the right foot.

Viśvapadma—a double-petalled lotus, the upper set of petals usually pointing upwards and the lower set drooping down.

Vitarka-mudrā—See Abhaya.

Vyākhyāna-mudrā—See Abhaya.

Yajñopavīta—sacred thread worn by Brahmins.
APPENDIX II

THE UPAPURĀNAS

Shortly after the Gupta period a new class of religious texts came into prominence. They are known as Upapurāṇas and regarded as mere supplements (khila) to the principal Purāṇas. Like the latter, their traditional number is also eighteen, though there are considerable divergences in the lists of their names given in the different Purāṇas, and there are also Upapurāṇas outside the list. They are valuable sources of history inasmuch as they reflect the great transformation that took place in the Brāhmanical religions as portrayed in the orthodox eighteen Purāṇas. Generally speaking, the majority of these Upapurāṇas have been placed approximately between 650 and 800 A.D., though some were perhaps composed at an earlier, and many at a later date.

The genesis of these Upapurāṇas has been explained as follows:

The Smārta adherents of the worshippers of Brahmā, the Pañcharātras, the Pāṣupatas and the Bhāgavata system first began to use the Purāṇas for controlling the masses, who had been seriously influenced by these and other systems of religion, by establishing the varṇāśrama-dharma and the authority of the Vedas among them. Thus arose the traditional group of eighteen Purāṇas. After this grouping had been complete, there came into prominence many sub-systems which arose from the main systems of religion, mentioned above, either directly or by identifying the local deities with one or other of the prominent deities of the main systems. In addition to these, there were also other independent systems, viz., Saura, Śākta, etc., which began to hold the field and enter into rivalry with the systems already established in the country. These sub-systems and independent systems also had their Smārta adherents who interpolated chapters in the Purāṇas of the already established group, and, in some cases, wrote new and independent Purānic works styled ‘Purāṇa’ in order to propagate their own ideas. Thus, with the progress of time, the number of the Purāṇas was further increased with fresh additions. But as the followers of the famous group of the ‘eighteen’ Purāṇas believed deeply that there could be no ‘Purāṇa’ beyond the famous ‘eighteen,’ they were unwilling to assign these new Purānic works to a status equal to
that of the famous Purāṇas. On the other hand, these new Purānic works had become too well-known and popular to be ignored totally.\textsuperscript{141a}

Thus came into prominence the Upapurāṇas, though many of these were called Purāṇa. For example, Narasiṃha-, Sāmba-, Devī-Purāṇa etc., call themselves ‘Purāṇa’ and not ‘Upapurāṇa’, and even the Matsya Purāṇa mentions Nandi-purāṇa and not Nandi-upapurāṇa.

Bengali origin has been claimed for some of these Upapurāṇas by Dr. R. C. Hazra. The most important among these are the \textit{Bṛhad-dharma} Purāṇa and \textit{Brahma-Vaivarta} Purāṇa to which a detailed reference has been made above (pp. 416 ff.). Among others, the following deserve special mention:

1. The \textit{Kriyāyogasāra}. It has been regarded as a Khaṇḍa of the \textit{Padma} Purāṇa but is really a distinct and independent work. It begins like other independent Purānic works and styles itself ‘Upapurāṇa’ in its concluding verse. It is a Bhāgavata document on the praise of Viṣṇu worship. The date of this work is not later than the eleventh century A.D.\textsuperscript{142}

2. The \textit{Śiva} Purāṇa composed not later than the twelfth century A.D.\textsuperscript{143}

3. The \textit{Mahābhāgavata} Purāṇa which calls itself Purāṇa as well as Mahāpurāṇa, but never Upapurāṇa, is included among the eighteen ‘Mahat Purāṇas’ by the \textit{Bṛhad-dharma} Purāṇa. Its date cannot be later than the twelfth century A.D. It is a Śākta work showing Śaiva tendency.\textsuperscript{144}

4. The \textit{Devi-Bhāgavata} which, according to Hazra, was composed by a Śmārta Śākta Brāhmaṇa of Bengal who migrated to Banaras, was compiled in the eleventh or twelfth century A.D.\textsuperscript{145}

5. \textit{Devi-Purāṇa}, one of the most important of the Śākta Upapurāṇas, parts of which go back to the sixth century A.D., assumed its present form before 12th century A.D., for Ballālasena refers to it, though he rejects it on account of its connection with the Pashanīs (Tantrics).\textsuperscript{146}

There are also some \textit{Upapurāṇas} which, according to Hazra, were \textit{probably} written in Bengal.

1. The \textit{Bṛihannāradiya} Purāṇa, a Vaishnava work, composed between 750 and 900 A.D., was written by one who migrated from the land about the Narmadā or Vārānāsi to the eastern part of Orissa or the western part of Bengal.\textsuperscript{147}
2. The Áṅgirasa Upapurāṇa was “written earlier than 1000 A.D., most probably in Western Bengal or Orissa”.¹⁴⁸

3. The Laghu-Bhāgavata Purāṇa, a Vaishnava work, must have been written in Western Bengal or Orissa not later than 1000 A.D., but most probably not before 800 A.D.¹⁴⁹

4. The earlier Kālikā Purāṇa was most probably composed in Bengal sometime during the seventh century A.D.¹⁵⁰

5. The spurious Agni Purāṇa (now available in print) was written most probably in Western Bengal during the ninth century A.D.¹⁵¹
Footnotes

2 Ep. Ind., XV., p. 311.
3 Sel. Ins. (1st. Edn.) 329, f.n. 3; IC vol v, 432 ff.
6 Sel. Ins. (2nd Ed.) p. 337, f.n. 4.
7 IHQ, XXI p. 56; IC, XII, p. 115.
8 JASB, N. S., Vol. XXVI, pp. 241-2
9 HB. 401. This view is held in ‘Sarasvati-Sculpture, Ch. v. pp. 43 ff.
10 For a full discussion cf. Bimanbehari Majumdar, Kṛṣṇa in History and Legend, ch. v.
11 HB. 402-3. Mr. R. P. Chanda held the view that Pāṇḍarātra developed in the outlying provinces of which Bengal is one, for it was a kind of Tantra and contains un-Vedic elements (Indo-Aryan Races pp. 99 ff). Dr. P. C. Bagchi disagrees with it (HB. 403 f.n. 1).
12 Early History of the Vaishṇava Sect, 2nd Edn. p. 176
13 HB. 402, f.n. 4.
14 JASBL, IX (1943), p. 232. In a very recent discussion of the origin of the Pāṇḍarātra system Dr. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya holds the view that it “maintained the theory of incarnation or avatāras” (Evolution of Hindu Sects (1969) p. 62.
15 HB. 403.
16 Harivaniśa, Ch. 41.
17 For a detailed discussion, cf. R. C. Hazra, Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs, pp. 84 ff. He thinks that the list of ten Avatāras did not find general acceptance before 800 A.D. (p. 88).
18 For an account of the Pāṇḍupatāsa, cf. Bhandarkar, Vaishnavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Sects., Part II, Chapters v, vi, vii. For a more recent discussion of the subject cf. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., pp. 120-49. According to the latter the Pāṇḍupatāsa was undoubtedly the most important one in the early centuries of the Christian Era (ibid, p. 120). “A new sub-spect of the Pāṇḍupatas came into existence about the early years of the second century A.D. under a teacher named Lakuli” (p. 123), A mutilated image of Lakuli or Lakulīsa has been found at Rangamati (Murshidabad Dt.) Ind. Arch. 1960-61, p. 70. Pl. LXXI-A.
20 Indo-Aryan Races, pp. 122 ff.
21 HB. p. 406, f.n. 3.
22 Tantras, p. 102.
23 Ibid, 112 ff. HB. 407.
According to the Devī Purāṇa, composed about the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eight century A.D. (NIA, V. 22 ff), the Devī was worshipped in her different forms, after the manner of the Left-hand Śaktas (vamaśiṣṭaṇga) in different places in Rādhā, Varendra, Kamarupa Kāmākhya, Bhôttadeśa, etc. (39.14-15; 42.9).
Bhandarkar, op. cit, Ch. xvi. Section 116.
Watters, II. p. 184.
Ibid, p. 187
HB p. 411, f.n. 3. For a more detailed discussion on this point, cf. IC. III, pp. 527-8.
IC. III, p. 525.
Fa-hien, p. 100.
Watters, II, pp. 184-5. The Vihāra was identified by Cunningham with ‘Vihāra or Bhāsu Vihāra’ four miles to the west of Mahāsthāna in the district of Bogra (Archaeological Survey Report, xv. pp. 104-117).
Ibid, 187.
Chavannes, Religieux Eminents, p. 128.
Watters II, p. 191. The Lo-to-mo-chih is the Chinese translation of Raktamṛittikā; the ruins of this old monastery have recently been excavated (cf. S.R. Das, Rājābāṣṭāṅgā, 1962, (published by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta).
P. C. Bagchi, Le Canon Bouddhique en Chine, II. 539.
Chavannes, op. cit p. 94.
R. C. Majumdar, Hindu Colonies in the Far East, p. 35.
RC. 15; Sumpa, op. cit. xciv.
Sumpa, op. cit. ixvi.
Ibid. ixii. Cordier-Cat. II. p. 27.
Sumpa, op. cit. xviii; Cordier-Cat. II. 102, 162.
Cordier-Cat. I. 78, 79. 121, 226, 303; II. 105, 116, 126.
Sumpa op. cit. II. xviii.
It was not in Rāmāvati, as H. P. Častra held (RC. XXXI)
Cordier-Cat. I. 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 33, 40, 49, 50, 122, 142, 293, 302, 365; II. 78, 85, 227.
HB. 417-18
Sumpa.
Ibid I. xvn; II. xviii.
HB. 418.
Cultural Heritage of India. I. p. 310.
Ibid, p. 311.
Cultural Heritage of India, I, pp. 311-13.
Kaula-jñāna-nirṇaya, pp. 8 ff.
H. P. Častra, Advayavejra-Samgraha, p. vi.
IHQ. IX. 282 ff.
HB. 422-25.
B. C. Law Volume, I, pp. 75 ff.
Ibid. 669 ff.
HB. 425.
See p. 130.
IHQ. X 321.
I-tsing. pp. 62-64. After describing how the monks lived "their just life, avoiding worldly affairs, and free from the faults of destroying lives", I-tsing refers to the strictness of procedure observed when the monks and nuns met. The nuns walked together in a company of two, but to a layman's house they went in a company of four. A minor teacher sent a small quantity of rice to a tenant's wife through a boy. It was brought to the notice of the Assembly, and the teacher, being ashamed, retired from monastery for ever. A Bhikshu named Rāhulamitra never "spoke with women face to face, except when his mother or sister came to him, whom he saw outside his room."

HB. 426-8

See pp. 378 ff., 527 ff.

Bauddha-gām Dohā (in Bengali) by H. P. Śāstrī, p. 87.


Chips from a German Workshop, Vol. 1, p. 38.

For this statement and the general view of S.V. Venkateswara, cf. his prolonged controversy with Macdonell in JRAS, 1916, 1917, 1918, summarised by J. N. Banerjea (op. cit., pp. 44 ff.).

Ind. Arch. 1956-7, p. 73, Plate LXXXV. A.

Bhatt-Cat., pp. 86-7

Ind. Arch, 1960-61, p. 70, Pl. LXXXI. C.


JASB, 1932, p. 177.

HB. 436.

HB. 437.


Ram-fight and ram-sacrifice take place even now on the occasion of the Sarasvati Pujā (Bhatt-Cat., pp. 188-90).

HB., 440.

ASI., 1934-5, pp. 79-80.

HB., 438.

ASI., 1934-5, p. 79; Rāpam, No. 40, p. 117. fig. 38.

EISMS, III. Pl. li (b) and (d)

JASB., N.S. XXVIII (1932) p. 189. One such image in the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta. Ind. Arch. 1960-61, Pl. LXXXI. E.

JISOA., IX, 147-8.

Paharpur, pp. 39, 49, 50.

Saraswati-Sculpture. p. 32.


JASB., N.S., XXIX, pp. 171 ff.

Tantras, 102. The two views can be reconciled by suggesting that the particular Śaḍāśiva cult, prevalent in Bengal from the Sena period,
was derived from the southernised version of the original cult of Northern India.

90 Kālikā Purāṇa, Ch. 45. Rao—Icon, II (1), 321-22.
91. HB., 447. Bhatt-Cat., pp. 118-20, Pl. xlvii (a).
92 Bhatt-Cat., pp. 133-4, Pl. lxxi (a).
93 HB. 446. EISMS., p. 110, Pl. lv (c).
94 Ind. Arch., 1960-61, pp. 70, Pl. lxxxi B.
95 HB., 448.
96 Ibid. For a mutilated image of dancing Ganesha cf. Ind. Arch., 1960-61, Pl. lxxviii. F.
97 Cf. HB. pp. 448-9 for arguments in favour of as well as against this view.
98 Ibid.

109 p. 456. RT. IV, v, 422,
108 HB., 449; ASI, 1934-5, p. 79, Pl. xxiv (d).
109 Bhatt.-Cat. pp. 203-5, Pl. lxx.
110 JGIS., 1937, pp. 122-4, 137-44, Pl. xii-xv.
111 EISMS., 116, Pl. lvii (a).
112 HB. 450-51; Bhatt.-Cat., pp. 202-3, Pl. lxix.
113 EISMS., p. 123, Pl. lvii (a).
116 For Dulmi Image cf. ASI., 1928-9, Pl. liv (a); for Sāktā Image, cf. Bhatt-Cat., Pl. lxvi.
118 VRS.-Rep., 1936-38, pp. 24-26, fig. 2.
119 Bhatt.-Cat. 207-13, Pl. lxxi (b). For the twelve-armed seated and dancing specimens in the Rajshahi Museum, cf. VRS-Rep. 1936-38, pp. 27-28, fig. 4. Reference may be made in this connection to the Jemokandi figure of the four-armed dancing Cāmuṇḍā in VSP. Museum, Calcutta.
120 VSP.-Cat. 84, Pl. xx. A few other Danturā images are known, most of them being in the collection of the Rajshahi Museum.
121 JASB., N.S. XXVIII (1932), p. 194, Pl. 9, fig. 3.
122 Ibid.
123 VSP.-Cat., pp. 84-5, Pl. xix.
124 For the dates, cf. Sarasvati-Sculpture, Ch. xv, pp. 11-2.
125 JASB., N.S. XXVIII (1932), p. 191, Pl. 8, fig. 3.
126 VRS.-Rep., 1927-8, p. 1, fig. 2.
127 Appendices to the VRS.-Rep., 1928-9 p. 6, fig. 5.
128 HB. 460.
129 Ibid.
130 HB. 461; Bhatt.-Cat., p. 63, Pl. xxv.
131 HB. 461, f.n., 3.
132 HB. 461.
133 Bhatt-Cat., pp. 134-42, Pl. liii (b); HB. 462.
134 HB. 463.
135 Ibid.
137 VSP.-Cat., pp. 47-8, Pl. x.
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128 Ibid., 1960-61, p. 70.

127 Bhatt.-Cat., pp. 16, 18, 19.

128 *HB.* 461.

129 Bhatt.-Cat., pp. 30-31, Pl. viii.

130 *HB.* 468; Bhatt.-Cat., pp. 27-8, Pl. vii (a).

131 *HB.* 466.

132 *HB.* 472.

133 Bhatt.-Cat., pp. 56-7, Pl. xxi.

134a *Ind. Arch.* 1960-61, Pl. lxxviii. A.

134 *HB.* 472.

135 Ibid.

136 *HB.* 473.

137 *HB.* 471-2.

138 Bhatt.-Cat., p. 37.

139 Ibid, p. 61.

140 Ibid, pp. 60-61.

141 *HB.* pp. 475-9.

142a Hazra, Upapurana, 1. p. 23

142 Ibid, pp. 267-279

143 Ibid, p. 341, fn. 187

144 Ibid, *Vol. II,* pp. 259-83


146 Ibid, pp. 35-194

147 Ibid, I. pp. 344-5


149 Ibid, pp. 239-41.

150 Ibid, pK. 239-41

151 Ibid, p. 209