

COMPOSITE IMAGES

Composite images are the ones that indicate the characteristics of more than one deity. It takes several forms. Some times it represents two sexes, male and female, in one figure or form. However, it should be kept in mind, that, composite image does not, always, mean the fusion of two sexes, but in some case it may have fusion of homosexes, also.

Composite images indicate nothing but the mental attitude in religion. The evidences, literary as well as archaeological are there which are quite explicit on the point that animosity and rivalry often did exist between the followers of the different sects, and this is occasionally reflected in Icons also. The representation of Shiva in the form of Sarabhesa punishing Nrsimha, indicates clearly the presence of the sectarian rivalry and bitterness.¹ Some evidences are also found which represent rapproachment, reconciliation and unity between the different sects.² Those are, the figures of Hari-Hara, Hari-Hara-Pitamaha, Krishna-Karttikeya, Surya-Narayana etc. This liberal view and

religious spirit of reconciliation and rapprochement between the divergent sects, and their growth are explained in the Upanishads, Smriti-Sastras and Gita. It is beautifully expressed there, that the one eternally existing principle and be called in various ways. Different gods are nothing but, the different forms of Supreme Soul. Shiva is Vishnu, Vishnu is Shiva, Shiva is Brahma. Such pronouncement are found in the Vamana Purana³ and also in the Linga Purana.⁴ All Gods are one. This philosophy led to produce the system of Panchayatana Puja, representing the five principal deities of the Hindu cult as the objects of worship in the form of aniconic emblems.⁵

The composite images were carved from the early centuries and a number of images have been found in the various parts of the country. In the region under study, various composite images, some of them are rare, have been discovered. Those are as follows:

(1) ARDHANARISVARA

Inseparable identity of Parvati with Shiva is best represented in the Ardhanarisvara form, in which both of them are shown in one body, the left half being that of Parvati and the right half that of Shiva.

According to the Myth narrated in the Shiva Purana, Brahma first begot a male beings known as Prajapatis, and asked them to create other beings. They were unable to carry out the task and so Brahma on feeling uneasy at the process of creation, prayed to Mahesvara. The later appeared before him in the composite form of a male and female. Seeing this composite form of Shiva

(Ardhanarisvar), Brahma prayed to give a female-half to proceed with the work of creation. The request of Brahma was granted, and thence the work of creation went on very well.⁶ This form of Shiva could also be interpreted that it symbolizes the syncretic ideology as it apparently emphasizes the union of the principal cult deities of Shaivism and Shaktism.

An iconographic features of Ardhanarisvar are given in the Amshumadbhedagama, the Kamikagama, the Suprabhedagama, the Shilparatna and Karanagama and a few other texts.⁷ As the name indicates, the image of this form should be half man and half woman. The left half of the image should represent Parvati with all her feminine characteristics while the right half should represent Shiva in Masculine appearance. The limbs, clothes, ornaments and the attributes of the image should be in accordance with those of Parvati and Shiva on the left and right sides respectively.

The Bruhatsamhita⁸ simply states that the lord Shiva may be represented as having Parvati for his left half. The Vishnu-dharmottara Purana⁹ refers to the composite form of Shiva as Gaurisvara, and represented as the fusion of prakriti and purusha. The deity should have one face, two eyes and should wear all the usual ornaments. The deity should have four hands carrying a Rosary and a Trident in the right hands and a Mirror and Lotus in the left ones. While, according to the Matsya Purana.¹⁰ The deity should carry a Trident and Kapala in right

hands and a Mirror and Lotus in the left hands. The Linga Purana¹¹ states differently, accordingly, the Ardhanarisvara form is the composite aspect of Linga and Yoni, representing Shiva and Parvati respectively, and these two create the world. The Aparajitapruccha¹² and the Rupavatara¹³ have laid down that the right half of the deity should depict the attributes of Shiva and carry Trident and Aksamala in hands, while the left half should depict the attributes of Parvati and carry Kamandalu and mirror in hands.

The images of Ardhanarisvara are found in a large number. It indeed requires very careful and experienced handling of an artist to combine two completely different figures into one body and maintain the spirit of unity. In a number of examples, the sculptor had shown his unique skill and masterly treatment in their preparation.

Few images of Ardhanarisvara are found in the area under study, however, those are not following the textual prescriptions.

I Type (Varada+Aksamala, Trident, Mirror and Kalash).

An image representing this type is found in the Chandraprabhuji temple, Ayad. More or less it confirms the attributes prescribed by the Aparajitapruccha and Rupavatara.

II Type (Bijora, Trident, Mirror and Lotus)

A representation illustrated in figure 1, is the image of Ardhanarisvara, preserved on the second storey of the Vijayastamba

at Chittor Fort. The name 'Ardhanarisvara' is found inscribed below the image. It is a seated image in Ardhaparyanka asana. It is interesting to note that the bull is depicted on the left side i.e. on Parvati side, below the asana. This image partly tallys with the attributes laid down by the Matsya Purana.

III Type ((indistinct), Trident, (indistinct) and Kati Hasta))

One image of this type standing in Samabhanga pose and with bull vehicle is found in the Kumbhashyam temple, Chittor Fort. This figure is illustrated in figure.2.

(2) HARIHARA

At the close of the formative period of Brahmanism, the Vaishnavism and Shaivism, were the two main cults, which were evolved and expanded. Therefore, the earliest synthesis of religions that we come across is between these two cults, and reflected in the composition of their respective Godheads.¹⁴ Harihara form of Vishnu, is the outcome of religious harmony between, the two sects viz. Vaisnavism and Shaivism.

The Vamana Purana¹⁵ and the Linga Purana¹⁶ state that Shiva is Vishnu and Vishnu is Shiva. Perhaps such conciliatory aspect with reference to the two major cults, led to create the composite form of Shiva and Vishnu i.e. Harihara. The Mahabharata refers to the composite form, Harirudra.¹⁷ It is interesting to

note here that some scholars refer to Harihara as a form of Vishnu,¹⁸ some as a form of Shiva.¹⁹ Rao,²⁰ states that the Harihara form is created by substituting Vishnu in the place of Devi or Parvati in the Ardhanarisvar aspect of Shiva. The later opinion seems more perfect in view of the Iconography of these two aspects or forms.

Iconography of Harihara is described in the various texts on Iconography and religion. The Vishnudharmottara Purana²¹ furnishes, the information regarding the Harihara form. Accordingly the right half of the Harihara image should be Shiva and the left Vishnu. He should carry a Trident in one right hand, the other held in the Varada Mudra, while Lotus and a discus should be shown in the left hands. And added that, the bull should be shown on the right of the figure of Harihara and the Garuda on the left. The Matsya Purana,²² however, gives detailed description of this composite form who is referred to as Shiva-Narayana, and mentions several varieties on the basis of the attributes held in the hands of the Vishnu half.

Rao,²³ concludes that in the figure of Harihara or Haryardhamurti, the description of the right half of the Shiva portion is exactly identical with the description given under Ardhanarisvara. On the authority of several Sanskrit texts, he mentions that on the left side of Harihara, there should be two arms, of which one should be carrying Disc, Conch or Mace and

the other held in the Kataka pose near thigh. On the head, in Vishnu half, there should be a Kirita-mukuta set with precious stones and makara-kundala of excellent workmanship. It is also stated that the right half should be terrific and the left half pacific. On the Shiva side of the forehead, the third eye of Shiva should be half visible and behind the head of Harihara, there should be a halo. Moreover the deity should be shown standing in the Samabhanga pose. To the left of the Harihara there should be placed figure of Garuda and to the right, that of Nandi.

The Agni Purana²⁴ refers to the Hari-Shankara form, and states that he should carry Trident and Spear in right hands and Mace and Disc in left ones. It is further added that Gauri and Lakshmi should be depicted on either side.

The Aparajitapruccha²⁵ and the Rupavatara²⁶ refer to the composite form as Krishna-Shankara, carrying Aksamala, Trident, Disc and Conch in hands. The Rupavatara further states that twenty four forms of this composite image are also possible with a interchange in four attributes. The Rupamandana²⁷ has laid down that Harihara should carry Varada Mudra, Trident, Disc and Lotus in his hands.

The images representing various types of Harihara aspect are found in a large number in the area under study.

I A Type (Varada+Aksamala, Trident, Disc and Conch)

An image representing this type and standing in Dvibhanga pose is found in the Kumbhashyam temple, Chittor Fort. No vehicle is shown in this image. Almost identical image of this type but with (only) bull vehicle is found in the Kukadeswar temple, Chittor Fort. Another interesting image of this type with two vehicles viz. bull and Garuda, is found in the courtyard of the Ambaji temple, Jagat. One more image representing this type is under worship in the late mediæval temple at Chhota-Bedala, about 9 Kms away from Udaipur (Fig.3). It is a standing image in Samabhanga pose. The most of the composite images described in this group, are confirming the description given in the Aparajitaprucca and Rupavatara. However, minor changes are observed there.

I B Type (Bijora, Trident, Disc & Conch)

A beautiful image of this type illustrated in figure.4, is found on the second storey of the Vijayastambha at Chittor Fort. It is a seated image in Ardhaparyanka asana. A bull is depicted on Shiva half, while Garuda on Vishnu half, as a vehicle to the respective deities. The name Harihara-Murti is found inscribed below the image.

I C Type (Pravachana Mudra, Trident, Disc and Conch)

One image of this type standing in Dvibhanga pose and with bull vehicle is found in the Annapurana Mata Ka Kund, Chittor Fort.

II A Type (Varada Mudra, Trident, Lotus and Conch)

Two images representing this type and seated in Ardhaparyanka asana, are found in the Surya temple, Ranakpur. Garuda vehicle is also found in both the images. One more image of this type, but without any vehicle is found in the Charbhuj temple, Udaisagar.

II B Type (Bijora, Trident, Lotus and Conch)

An image of this type standing in Dvibhanga pose and without vehicle is found in the Mira-Ka-Mandir, Eklingji.

III A Type (Mace, Aksamala, Damaru and Disc)

One sculpture representing this type is found in the Mira-Ka-Mandir, Eklingji. It is a standing image in Dvibhanga pose and with a bull vehicle.

III B Type (Aksamala, Damaru, Mace and Disc)

An image of this type is preserved in the Mira-Ka-Mandir, Eklingji. It is a standing image and without vehicle.

(3) MISCELLANEOUS COMPOSITE IMAGES

Few images representing composite forms evolved on the fusion of various deities like Krishna, Karttikeya, Indra, Varuna, Brahma, Surya, Chandra etc., are also found in the area under study. However, no textual injunction in some cases is known to us. An attempt is made to identify such images on the attributes seen in the figures.

(i) HARIHARAPITAMAHA

This form is a fused form of three Gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. According to the scholars, Hariharapitamaha is the same as Dattatreya, who is noted as the minor Avatara of Vishnu.²⁸ The Bhagvata Purana and the Markandeya Purana also refer to Dattatreya as one of the minor incarnations of Vishnu.²⁹

The Aparajitapruccha,³⁰ the Rupavatara³¹ and the Rupaman-dana³² have referred to the composite image sharing the attributes of three Godheads viz. Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu in one figure. Accordingly, he should carry Aksamala, Trident, Mace, Disc, Khatvanga and Kamandalu in his six hands. The should have four faces.

A beautiful rare figure of this form is illustrated in figure 5. This figure is found on the second story of the Vijayastambha at Chittor Fort. It is a seated image in Ardhaparyanka asana, and the name 'Hariharapitamaha' is found inscribed below the image. The central deity of this composite image is having beard, possibly it represents Brahma. More two faces on either sides of Brahma are also depicted. The deity, shown in this figure has six hands carrying Varada@Book, Disc, Trident, broken Ladle (?), Conch and Kalash respectively. Three vehicles, bull, swan and Garuda are depicted near the foot of the deity. The bull is shown on right hand side of the deity, and Trident is also found depicted in one of the right hands, which indicate that the face depicted to the right of Brahma is of Shiva. The Garuda is depicted on left hand side of the deity and Conch is

also found depicted in one of the left hands, which also indicate that the face depicted to the left of Brahma is of Vishnu.

(ii) CHANDRAKAPITAMAHA OR

YAGNAPITAMAHA

The Aparajitapruccha³³ and the Rupavatara³⁴ refer to the composite form 'Chandrakapitamaha'. Accordingly this form displays all the Iconographic characteristics of Brahma, Surya and Chandra, and he bears Kamandalu, Lotus, Lotus, Lotus, Lotus and Aksamala in his six hands.

An unique composite image with three faces, illustrated in figure 6, is found on the third storey of the Vijayastambha at Chittor Fort. The name 'Yagnapitamaha' is found inscribed below the image. The deity is shown with six hands carrying Varada+ Aksamala, Lotus stalk, Suryakanti, Suryakanti, Lotus stalk and Kamandalu. He has put on Kirita mukuta on hand. He is seen seated in Padmasana. It is interesting to note that the running horse is depicted on pedestal of the image. By seeing attributes placed in the hands, and the vehicle, it seems that, here, artist has tried to create composite image of the form evolved due to the fusion of three Gods namely, Surya, Chandra and Brahma. The central body of the image is seen with the armour, which indicates it being of Surya. Interestingly the Iconography of Yagnapitamaha and Chandrakapitamaha seem to be identical and it requires further study.

(iii) SURYA-SHIVA (?)

A beautiful image representing the composite form of Surya and Shiva, from Nagada, is illustrated in figure 7. It is known to us that sometimes Vishnu is joined with Surya in the place of Shiva, and forms a composite image known as Suryanarayana. However, the composite image wherein Surya and Shiva fused together, is something rare. Fortunately, the image illustrated in figure 7, is found during the work, wherein Surya is joined with Shiva in the place of Vishnu and assumes a new form of Surya-Shiva (?). Here two sects viz. Saura and Shaiva unite.

In the image illustrated in figure 6, the deity has put on armour on chest and boots in legs. He holds lotuses in his lower two hands, while Trident and Khatvanga in his upper right and left hand respectively. It is a seated image in Padmasana. No vehicle is seen.

(iv) HARIHARAHIRANYAGARBHA OR

SURYA-HARIHARAPITAMAHA

This composite form, which displays all the Iconographic characteristics of Surya, Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma, has been described by the various texts like the Aparajitaprucca³⁵ and the Devatamurti Parakarma,³⁶ Accordingly, this form should have four faces and eight hands, with Surya as principal deity. He holds two Lotuses, Khatvanga, Trident, Rosary, Kamandalu, Conch and Disc in his hands.

An image named as Viranchimurtih, is found on the third storey of the Vijayastambha, Chittor Fort. It is represented in figure 2 of the chapter on Brahma.

In this image the diety is shown with three faces with Brahma as the principal deity. He has six hands, those of, first two hands are lost. And remaining hands carrying Trident, Disc, Kamandalu and Suryakanti. Hansa is shown as a vehicle to the deity. However, this image does not tally with the description given in the texts. But his each attributes represents various deities viz. Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma and Surya.

In fact this image has been already described in the chapter on Brahma. Eventhough, to note one additional aspect on this image, it is noted here also.

(v) VISHNU-VIRANCHI (?)

An image, wherein the attributes of Vishnu and Brahma unitedly exhibited,, is found in the Main temple at Eklingji. The deity holds Mace, Ladle, Book and Conch in his four hands. It is a seated image in Ardhaparyanka asana. No vehicle is seen. No text has come forward to support this form.

(vi) VARUNA-SHRIDHAR (?)

Eventhough no text has referred to composite form of Varuna-Shridhar, such form had been evolved by the artist of this area. One image standing in Samabhanga pose and with Garuda vehicle, is found in the Mira-Ka-Mandir, Chittor Fort. Wherein the deity

helds Varada Mudra, Noose, Mace and Conch in his hands. As Shridhar form of Vishnu holds Mace and Conch in his last two hands, this image, perhaps, is the fusion of two deities Varuna and Shridhar.

(vii) VARUNA-KRISHNA

One more image, which represents composite form, is found on the Torana placed in the outer compound of the Madavaji temple, Madavaji. It is seated image in Ardhaparyanka asana and with Garuda vehicle. The deity carries Conch, Mace, Noose and Disc. Except one article viz. noose, the remaining attributes indicate it being Krishna form of Vishnu. Hence, this image depicts the composite form of Varuna and Krishna.

(viii) VARUNA-NRSIMHA (?)

An image illustrated in figure 8, represents a deity with Disc (?), Noose, Mace and Conch. In this illustration, three articles viz. Disc, Mace and Conch represent Nrsimha form of Vishnu (Caturvimshatimurtis) and one article i.e. Noose, displays the character of Varuna. Probably, this image represents the composite form of Varuna-Nrsimha (?). This illustration is found on the Mira-Ka-Mandir, Chittor Fort.

R E F E R E N C E S

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also see Banerjea, J.N., DHI, p.486.
- 2 Banerjea, J.N., DHI p.540.
- 3 Rao, T.A.Q., EHI, II/I p.332.
- 4 Linga Purana, II/17/12 & 19.
- 5 DHI, pp.541-42.
- 6 EHI, II/I pp.321-2; also see Tewari, S.P., 'Hindu Iconogra-
phy', New Delhi, 1979, p.45.
- 7 EHI, II/I pp.323-24.
- 8 Bruhatsamhita 58/43.
- 9 Vishnudharmottara Purana, III/55/1-6.
- 10 Matsya Purana, 260/3-4.
- 11 Linga Purana, I/99/6-11.
- 12 Aparajitapruccha, 213/27-30.
- 13 Rupavatara, 6/27-30.
- 14 Desai Kalpana, 'Iconography of Vishnu', p.51.
15. Vamana Purana, see EHI, II/I p.332.
- 16 Linga Purana, II/17/12 & 19.
- 17 Mahabharata, III/40/57, also see Desai Kalpana, op.cit.p.51.
- 18 Desai Kalpana, op.cit. p.51, also see Tiwari S.P.,
op.cit. p.74.
- 19 EHI, II/I, p.332; also see Bhattacharya, B.C., Indian
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- 20 EHI, II/I p.332-33.
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- 22 Matsya Purana, 260/21-27.
- 23 EHI, II/I, p.333-34.
- 24 Agni Purana, 49/25-26.
- 25 Aparajitapruccha, 213/28-29.
- 26 Rupavatara, 6/33-34.
- 27 Rupamandana, 4/30-31.
- 28 EHI, I/I p.255, also see DHI, p.50.
- 29 Bhagavata Purana, I/3/11, also see DHI, p.50.
- 30 Aparajitapruccha, 213/30-33.
- 31 Rupavatara, 6/42-43.
- 32 Rupamandana, 4/32-33.
- 33 Aparajitapruccha, 213/35-36.
- 34 Rupavatara, 6/47-48.
- 35 Aparajitapruccha, 213/32-34.
- 36 Devatamurtiprakarana VI/44-46.