CHAPTER VI

RESUME
The foregoing account makes it clear that though the images of Ganesa began to be carved in India during the Kuśāṇa period, the god gained some popularity during the Gupta period. In the succeeding centuries we find his popularity growing more and more. He was regarded as benign, helpful, bestower of success, remover of obstacles and assured worldly well being. The tradition of his being Gaṇapati associated him with Brhaspati and he came to be regarded as the god of learning and intellect. His images continued to be carved in very large number during the early mediaeval period and by the tenth century a popular cult grew around him.

Originally Gaṇeśa was probably a non-Aryan god. After facing strong criticism and initial abhorrence he was admitted to the Brahmanical pantheon. The stories woven around his birth and beheading, particularly the fact of replacing his head by that of an elephant, may be regarded as severance of his earlier connection and admission to a new order. The Vedic name Gaṇapati did not denote Gaṇeśa but Brahmanaspati, the leader of a group of Devas. Similarly the popular name Gaṇeśa did not denote the elephant-headed god but was used for Śiva as indicated by a Kuśāṇa coin depicting the latter god but carrying the Brāhmī legend Gaṇeśa. As time went on these names were associated with our god who, because of his physical traits came to be known by some descriptive names such as Gajamukha, Ekadanta, Lambodara, etc. With the growth of his popularity many more names were given to him and myths and
stories were created by his devotees to bring more and more people to his cult. Many of these myths and stories tried to convey that whatever success the human beings achieve in their undertakings is consequent of the honour paid by his devotees to the god and if he is not worshipped he may withdraw his support causing the failure of their endeavour and undertakings. Such beliefs form the gist of different myths and anecdotes given in various texts like the Purāṇas and Āgamas. Scholars traced the antiquity of his images in his hybrid form, having the body of a human being and the head of an elephant, from elephant headed Ganas of Amaravati, though some of his early images as has already been pointed out above, are a sign to the Kuṣāṇa period, yet his form seem to have been standardized during the Gupta period.

A careful and comparative study of the iconographic texts characterising various types of images of Gaṇeśa leaves little doubt that the earliest of them were either of standing or seated variety and endowed with two arms, the objects held by the hands being a hatchet (paraśū) and a radish (mūlaka); the elephant-head with only one tooth and the pot-belly are the features invariably present in both the early and late texts.¹

The enumeration of various synonyms of his names in the Amarakoṣa (I.1.38)² and his description in the Bṛhatśāmhitā (LVII.58)³ only confirm and corroborate this observation.

As time went on, Gaṇeśa quite in consonance with the images of other deities, a quite better treatment successively, being adorned with more ornaments, having more hands and attributes, having subsidiary figures and depicted in dancing posture as well. His form seem to have attained the most
elaborate form during 10th-12th century A.D. In India where after we find a declined setting in.

In Indonesia, however, he made his first appearance during the 7th-8th century A.D. as we already observed above. Though trade and cultural relation between India and Indonesia had started around 2nd century A.D. and the cultural impact of India became quite dominance during the Gupta period, the tradition of Gaṇeśa worship could not become apart of the cultural and religious impact because Gaṇeśa himself was in a state of emergency as a popular deity in those century in India. The period of 7th-8th century A.D. marked proliferation of his image in his native country and it does not seem to have taken him long to travel across the seas.

In Indonesia, however, the history of lineage of his birth and his heheading were not well-known as a result of which we find that an Indonesian text Smaradahana has transferred the myths of his birth, decapitation got mix up with that of his brother Kārttikeya, though the basis form and the function remained the same in the two countries.

In both the countries he is elephant headed and potbellied and share the common attributes like danta, akṣamāla, paraśu and bowl. Nāgopavita, extra eyes on the forehead, prabavali, etc. are the other common traits. The Indonesian Gaṇeśa, however, different from his Indian counterpart in minutiae.

The remarkable differences between the Gaṇeśa of the two countries are as follow:

1. In India, his image may occupy any part of a shrine such
as a lintel, a sill, a wall starting point of circumbulation path, or the fronton of a temple. On the contrary, in Indonesia, he occupies only the rear part of a Saivite temple.

2. He is frequently depicted along with his Šakti in India, while in Indonesia, this feature is conspicuously absent.

3. The god has a female aspect in India, called Vināyaki, Vighneśvarī, Gaṇeśāni, Ganeśvari, etc. This aspect is, however, absent in Indonesia.

4. In India, he is usually depicted in a group with Navagrahas, Saptamātṛkās, or in attendance of his parents. These features are not available in Indonesia.

5. He is accompanied by accessory figures in India, e.g. the garland bearers, devotees and musicians but this is not so in Indonesia.

6. Most of his images in India are represented along with his vehicle. It is, however, not so in Indonesia but for some exceptions in bronze.

7. The god has a common dancing pose in India but not in Indonesia.

8. In India, the god is represented as having two to sixteen hands, while in Indonesia he has four hands, and very rarely two.

9. As he has more hands in India, consequently he holds more attributes, while in Indonesia, he possesses four common attributes, viz. danta, aksamālā, paraśu and bowl. Some other attributes like the aṅkuśa, pāśa, mūlaka, etc. which are common to Indian Gaṇeśa, are
hardly ever used by Indonesian Gaṇeśa.

10. In India the bowl is filled with modakas, but in Indonesia it is usually empty.

11. Some images of Indian Gaṇeśa wear loincloth of lion-skin, but this feature is conspicuously absent in Indonesia.

12. The free end of the hem or folds of a loincloth are commonly depicted in Indian Gaṇeśa but absent in Indonesian Gaṇeśa.

13. Sometimes his crown is embellished with a kīrttimukha in India, but in Indonesia it is usually ardhacandrakapāla.

14. Indian Gaṇeśa has earpendsants, but Indonesian Gaṇeśa is completely devoid of them, in exception of very few examples from East Java.

When compared with their Indian counterparts, some components of the Indonesian images of Gaṇeśa appear as typical, as mentioned below.

1. Gaṇeśa in Indonesia is generally depicted as seated with the soles of his feet touching each other while both the legs remain horizontally bent. This sitting posture is absent in India with the exception of two images coming from Peddamudiyam (Andhra Pradesh) and Varanasi respectively.

2. The standing pose of Indonesian Gaṇeśa is typically treated with both the legs of the god disposed closely and planted stiffly. This standing pose does not occur in the Indian sculpture.

3. The knot of his nāgopavīta which is placed at his left shoulder occurs only in the Indonesian sculptures, while in Indian ones the nāgopavīta is knotted on the belly of
the gcd.

4. The knot of his sash which is well-treated at either side of his hips is also typical to the Indonesian Gaṇeṣa.

5. The lower hem of the loin cloth of the god reach his ankles in the Indonesian sculptures but in India it generally remains slightly higher.

A unique image hailing from Tulung Agung, East Java (Pl. XXXVIIIa & XXXIX.a) and belonging to the early phase shows Gaṇeṣa with a protective gear, probably depicting him as a commander ready to lead his army to war. This is an example of Gaṇeṣa assuming the role of Kārttikeya, quite consonance with the depiction of Gaṇeṣa as is depicted in the Smaradahana.

From Bali we have the comparable but much later example of one image showing him as holding a keris (a kind of weapon used for warfare in ancient time (Pl. XL).

The evolution and development of Gaṇeṣa images is characterized by chronological and geographical peculiarities in both the countries. As a result of which we see some interesting local and regional variations. Eastern Javanese images of Gaṇeṣa show him with skull ornaments and frequently holding two bowls in his normal hands respectively. These are the typical feature of the Siṃhasāri period in Eastern Java but their Balinese counterpart are marked by the peculiar feature of showing the god wearing the crown of lotus petals.

Our study of Gaṇeṣa images of the two countries reveals not only the root and inspiration but also the sources and the different schools of art in India. As for example, (1) a bronze image from Indonesia preserved in National Museum
Jakarta (Acc. no. 8434/c.42) must have been influenced by Southern school of India (particularly Tamil Nadu), especially when we take into account the sitting pose of the image; (2) two bronze image from Central Java (DAI. Pls. 23 & 77) must have come from Eastern School as indicated by the typical throne and the back slab of the images; (3) the wearing of a sash of Indonesian images (e.g. APS. Pl. 100) which is treated as flaring at either side of the hips, can be traceable to the images from southern India (Pl. XVIII). We have, however, noted above that though the basic form and nature of the deity is the same in the two countries, yet the Indonesian artists were not slaves of tradition and convention and made innovations to create interesting examples now and then.

Images of Gaṇeśa continued to be created in India in stone, metals, wood and other media like terracotta, and the worship of the god is still a living tradition in the country. In Indonesia, Java in particular the tradition of creating the images of Gaṇeśa in stone and bronze came to an end in the 15th century A.D., but the tradition of his worship has survived in Bali in the form of line drawings at the time of performance of the ceremonies called rsigana and nangluk-merana. Rsigana is performed after natural disasters like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions etc., as it is believed that such happenings are the result of some disorder and something undesirable going on in the country. Nangluk-merana is performed twice a year in order to protect the crops from the pests.

It is hoped that some other researchers will take up the comparative study of the other deities also which will corroborate and/or modify the results obtained in our study.
Notes and References

1. DHI, p. 357.
2. Vināyaka-Vighnārāja-Dvaimātura-Gaṇāḍhipāḥ
   Apyekadanta-Heramba-Lambodara-Gajānanāḥ
3. Pramathāḍhipo gajamukhaḥ pralambajāṭharah kutharadhārī syāt
   Ekaviśāṇo bibhran-mūlakakandaḥ suniladala kandam