

Triloknāth.—By J. PH. VOGEL, ESQ.

[Read 8th January, 1902.]

In the course of a summer-tour in the Kāngra District I had the opportunity of making some notes, which may help to elucidate the connection between the Bodhisattva Avalokiteçvara and the brahmanical god Çiva.

An endeavour has been made to explain the former as the Buddhist counterpart of the Hindū deity Brahmā, chiefly on account of iconographical observations.¹ This connection however seems *à priori* highly improbable, considering the place occupied by these deities in the Pantheon of both Religions. The Bodhisattva in its origin the vague creation of monastic contemplation—in order to obtain so prominent a place in the Mahāyāna system, must have assumed the shape and attributes of the much-honoured and beloved Çiva, not of Brahmā, himself merely the personification of an abstract conception, who by his passiveness never appealed to the popular imagination. The close relation between Avalokiteçvara and Çiva has lately been vindicated by M. A. Foucher.² The following facts connected with the name of Triloknāth will, I believe, corroborate the same view.

One of the most famous *tīrthas* of the Western Himālayas is Triloknāth, situated on the left bank of the Candrabhāga river, some thirty-two miles below the junction of its constituents, Candra and Bhāga. Though geographically belonging to Patan, which is the name of the lower part of Lāhul, the place has been included in the territory of Cambā. Its inaccessibility, no doubt, enhances greatly the merit resulting from a pilgrimage. Moorcroft³ when passing through Lāhul on his way to Bukhāra met “two half-starved Hindu fakirs: one of them had come from Chapra, the other from Ougein: both were going on a pilgrimage to Triloknāth.”⁴

¹ L. A. Waddell in J.R.A.S., 1894, p. 57 *sqq.*

² Etude sur l'iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde Paris, 1900, p. 172 *sq.*

³ Travels, I, p. 193 *sq.*

⁴ Kāngra Gazetteer, Part III, p. 18. It is therefore strange to find that only three pages further on in the same volume the word *Triloknāth* is said to indicate

Since the construction of the Central Asian trade road the number of pilgrims must have considerably increased. When travelling in Kullū one often meets *sādhus*, who after visiting the hot springs of Maṇikarn in the Pārbatī valley, cross the Rotang-pass and wander down “the wild and willowed shore” of Bhāga and Candrabhāga in order to reach the celebrated *tīrtha*. When I visited the place on the 17th August it happened that the annual *melā* was just going on. So I had a good opportunity of satisfying myself that the deity of this place is equally honoured by the Buddhists of Lāhul, Ladākh and Basāhir as by the Hindūs of Cambā, Kullū and other parts. The variety of type and dress displayed by the numerous pilgrims would be highly interesting to the ethnologist. Though their devoutness is of at somewhat peculiar sort, manifesting itself chiefly in dancing and drinking, the question rises: Who is the *devatā*, who attracts people so different in race and religion to his remote and inaccessible shrine?

It has already been stated by the Rev. Mr. Heyde, late of the Moravian Mission at Kyelang, that the Triloknāth of the Candrabhāga valley is no other than the Bodhisattva Avalokiteçvara.

An inspection of his image fully confirmed this statement. The position of the legs (*mahārāja-līlā*) at once suggests a Bodhisattva, though it is noticeable that not the right but the left leg is hanging down. The six arms have the following *mudrās* and *lakṣaṇas*: R. upper *abhaya*, R. middle *akṣamālā*, R. lower *vara*, L. upper *triçūla*, L. middle (resting in lap) *sarpa*, L. lower *maṅgalakalāça*. The number of arms, their position and attributes seem rather exceptional, if compared with the Nepalese miniatures, discussed so ably by M. Foucher. The absence of the *padma* especially would almost raise a doubt as to its identity with Avalokiteçvara. But from the same author it appears that the number of arms is anything but fixed and that six-armed images of Avalokita are not unknown.¹ Moreover, there is the *varamudrā*, a main characteristic of this Bodhisattva, whilst the snake also occurs among the attributes of one of M. Foucher's miniatures (Pl. IV, 6). To remove all doubt it will only be necessary to state that the image of Triloknāth in its *mukūṭa* shows a cross-legged figure: the Dhyāni-buddha Amitābha. The image is of white marble, a material, which I did not find used anywhere else in the Kullū sub-division,

“the Hindu Trinity” and explained as “the three lords of the world.” The Hindu Trinity occupies a larger place in the imagination of the West than in the religious belief of India. Sanskrit *Trilokanātha* of course can only mean “Lord of the three worlds.”

¹ Foucher, l.c., p., 97 sqq. Cf. Waddell, l.c., pp. 58 and 79 No. 12.

though miniature images of painted marble are occasionally met with in Lāhul.

It is a curious circumstance, that the abode of the Bodhisattva is a regular *ṣikhara* temple of moderate size, said to be founded by the Pāṇḍavas! This tradition it has in common with every ancient shrine in the District. It simply indicates the antiquity of the building and the fact that its origin is unknown. Of one shrine, which is supposed to be older than the others, not the foundation, but the restoration is attributed to the Dharmarāja and his brothers. It is that of yvālāmukhī.

As to the Triloknāth temple the sanctum is combined with a plain oblong structure, covered by a wooden sloping roof with gilt pinnacles. A similar combination is regularly found with Viṣṇu temples in the Kullū valley.

In that part of Lāhul which is known as Patan the transition between Lāmāism and Hindūism is gradual, but this is by no means the case on the Kullū side. Here the mid-Himālayan range marks a very distinct boundary between the two religions. Any one who has crossed the Rotang-pass must have been struck by the contrast in climate, scenery and population, between the Candra and the Upper Biās valley.

It has been asserted and seems generally accepted by the European inhabitants that Buddhism was once prevalent in Kullū. Captain Harcourt in his in many respects valuable book¹ on the sub-division, which for some years was committed to his charge, is of the same opinion. The arguments, on which his conviction is based, are the frequent occurrence of the Buddhistical wheel on temples besides the effigies of Buddhistical animals, birds and snakes, and the ceremony of "the swinging rope." As to the first I may remark that locally the ornament referred to is mostly explained as representing the sun and moon, and shows more resemblance to a conventional *padma* than anything else. But even if it were meant to be the *cakra* it should be borne in mind, that the wheel is by no means a purely Buddhistic emblem.² As to the curious ceremony of a man sliding down a rope stretched from the top of a precipice, it is practised at Nirmand on the Satlaj.³ But this place though for political purposes included in Kullū does not belong to the valley geographically. It was witnessed, Captain Harcourt says, by one of Major Montgomerie's pandits in Potala fort outside

¹ Kooloo, Lahoul and Spiti (London, 1871), p. 205 sq.

² Grünwedel. *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien* (Berlin, 1900), p. 6.

³ Harcourt, l.c., p. 318 sqq.

Lhasa, but this alone is no reason for styling it Buddhistic. At the utmost it might be called lāmāistic, and in that case we ought probably to look upon it as a part of the aboriginal worship, certainly not as an ingredient of the "thin varnish of Mahāyāna Buddhism."¹ For in other non-Buddhist tracts of the Himālaya the ceremony of the swinging rope appears to exist. Moorcroft² found it practised at Srīnagar, the capital of Garwāl.

The most plausible explanation I can offer is, that it is a survival of human sacrifices, the prevalence of which in former times in Kullū and Lāhul is indicated by popular tradition.³ But in this peculiar case the victim instead of being actually killed, had to undergo a risk that endangered his life. An offering was thus made to the deity who might decline or accept the sacrifice according to her divine pleasure. In 1856 the latter happened, *i.e.*, the man was killed and since then the practice has been prohibited. I am given to understand, however, that the ceremony still takes place, but on such a small scale that the man's life is not imperilled. If my hypothesis be true, it offers a curious instance of the tenacity of religious customs, which are still preserved after having entirely lost their original significance.

I have digressed on this subject, because during a stay of nearly two months in Kullū, I did not meet with any real traces of Buddhism, such as topes, images, inscriptions or even popular traditions. There is one exception only, which is of special interest for my present subject, *viz.*, an image of Avalokita, known as Triloknāth, at Kalāt on the Biās.

In three places in the Kullū valley there are hot springs: at Manikarn on the Pārbatī, a tributary of the Biās, at Basisht opposite Manāli and at Kalāt, halfway between this place and Katrain. In each of these spots the phenomenon has been connected with popular worship. Manikarn is the chief *tīrtha* of Kullū, now a centre of *Viṣṇu bhakti*, though originally as appears from the *Māhātmya* belonging to Çivaism. Basisht has received its name from the *Rṣi Vasiṣṭha*, the Saint being worshipped as the guru of Rāma, who has a stone *ḡikhara* in the same place. At Kalāt there is a plain village-temple, dedicated to Kapila Muni. When Vasiṣṭha was carrying the precious water from Manikarn to the place, which was destined to bear his name, he passed Kapila, who ceasing his *tapas* for a moment snatched from him a few drops and thus gave its origin to the hot spring at Kalāt.

The image of Kapila Muni is made of *aṣṭadhātu*. This circumstance deserves notice, because nearly all metal images, which I found

¹ Waddell : Lamaism, p. 30.

² Travels, I, p. 17.

³ Harcourt, l.c., p. 325. Kāngra Gazetteer, Part III, p. 17.

in Kullū, belong to Viṣṇu-worship, and for this reason, are of a comparatively recent date, both having been introduced in the seventeenth century under patronage of the Kullū Rājās. The shrine of Kapila contained some more images of the same material: Rām Candar, Sītā Caturbhuj, Rādhā and Hanūman.

But besides, there was a small image-slab, much effaced and apparently, of considerable age. It showed a six-armed figure, but its attributes were unrecognisable. Only the *vara-mudrā* of the lower right hand was plainly visible, while in one of the left hands there was something like a staff, which might have been either a trident or a snake. The *āsana* was exactly like that of the Avalokitas of Lāhul. Moreover, there was a second figure in *dhyāna-mudrā* on the head. The *pūjārīs* had never noticed the latter and when it was pointed out to them, they declared it to be Lakṣmī! The image itself, however, they knew by the name of Triloknāth and admitted that it represented the same deity as that worshipped in Lāhul. It seems highly probable, that Avalokita was originally the main object of worship at Kalāt and was superseded by the Brahmanical Muni, who still grants him a subordinate place in his shrine. The material of the image in any case tends to show that it was not imported but belongs to the spot.

The same curious mixture of Hindūism and Lāmāism as is found at Triloknāth in the Candrabhāga valley, is met with in Rawālsar, the famous *tīrtha* of Mandi, the hill-State stretching along the middle course of the Biās. Here in an absolutely Hindū country we find Padmasambhava,¹ the founder of Buddhism in Tibet, worshipped not only by Lāmās who have their own *Gan-pa* here, but equally by Brāhmanas, who call him *Rṣi Lomaça* and even possess a *Māhātmya*, in which the local legend is given in its Brāhmanic version. But for my present subject it is of more interest, that in Mandi Town we meet again with the name Triloknāth, but here to indicate—Çiva. The preponderance of Çivaism in Mandi is the more striking, when entering the State from the Kullū side, where Viṣṇuism, though by no means the popular worship—has been made the State-religion by its Rulers of the seventeenth century. In Mandi Çiva is worshipped under his well-known symbol, the *linga*, but besides the images of *Çiva Pañcavakra* or *Pañcānana* are remarkably numerous. It is worthy of notice, that the five faces of this deity are not placed in one row as is mostly the case with polycephalic statues but in such a way, that the fourth face is on the reverse side of the slab which is otherwise quite plain and the fifth on the top of the image-slab. Thus when seen in front only

¹ Not *Padma Pani* as given in the Gazetteer, Part III, p. 18.

three faces are visible. I may also note that according to a local *purohita* the five faces of Mahādeva indicate the five *Dhyānas*.

The images of *Śiva Pañcavaktra* without exception are ten-armed in accordance with the number of faces. The attributes and *mudrās* are rather divergent and not always easy to identify. The following belong to three different images in Mandi Town:—

I	R. upper	<i>Khaḍga</i>	L. upper	<i>triṣūla</i>
	„ 2D	<i>sarpa</i>	„ 2D	<i>gadā</i>
	„ 3D	<i>ayukṣa</i>	„ 3D	<i>ghaṅṭā</i> or <i>kalāṣa</i>
	„ 4TH	<i>vara</i>	„ 4TH	broken
	„ 5TH	broken	„ 5TH	<i>Śakti</i> (viz., <i>Pārvatī</i>)
II	R upper	<i>triṣūla</i>	L. upper	<i>cakra</i>
	„ 2D	empty	„ 2D	<i>ḍamaru</i>
	„ 3D	<i>ṣankha</i>	„ 3D	<i>vādāna</i>
	„ 4TH	<i>akṣamālā</i>	„ 4TH	<i>kalāṣa</i> (and <i>Śakti</i>)
	„ 5TH	?	„ 5TH	<i>sarpa</i>
III	R upper	<i>tricūla</i>	L upper	<i>ḍamaru</i>
	„ 2D	<i>abhaya</i>	„ 2D	<i>cakra</i>
	„ 3D	<i>dīpa</i> (?)	„ 3D	<i>sarpa</i>
	„ 4TH	<i>akṣamālā</i>	„ 4TH	„
	„ 5TH	<i>vādāna</i>	„ 5TH	<i>kalāṣa</i> (and <i>Śakti</i>).

As a rule the *devatā* is represented seated on its *vāhana* the bull *Nandi*, while *Pārvatī*'s *vāhana* the lion is standing behind it, the head turned in the opposite direction.

It will not escape notice that the attributes of *Śiva Pañcavaktra* are partly the same as those of *Triloknāth-Avalokiteśvara*. Snake trident and vessel are common to all images. Also the rosary which may be conjectured to have occupied the fifth right hand of the first described image. Even the *vara* and *abhayamudrās* occur though not regularly. The occurrence of the rosary and vessel as attributes of *Śiva* considerably weakens one of the chief arguments in favour of the connection between *Brahmā* and *Avalokita*, viz., the similarity of their attributes. I have only to add that in one of the oldest temples of Mandi situated on the right bank of the *Biās* *Śiva Pañcavaktra* is worshipped under no other name than *Triloknāth*.

Now travelling down the *Biās*-valley into *Kāngra* proper, again the name *Triloknāth* is met to designate a village (also called *Trilokpūr*) and *tīrtha*, about two miles east from *Kotla*. This shrine "is not a building, but a naturally formed cave. Water charged with mineral matter, dropping from the roof, has at the far end of the cave produced two large stalactites and stalagmites, which meeting midway now form

two pillars. The roof and floor of the rest of the building are covered with masses of stalactite and stalagmite."¹ Besides these numberless *svayambhū lingas* there is in the centre of the cave, as chief object of worship, a *linga* of white marble, which is *pañcavaktra* and thus forms a link between the *linga* and the image just described.

The substance of the present paper may be briefly stated thus: that in the Candrabhāga valley and also on the southern side of the mid-Himālayan range on the upper Biās Triloknāth is the name by which the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is indicated, while along the lower course of the Biās river the same name is assigned to Śiva, represented either as a *linga* or as a five-faced statue, which in its attributes shows a marked resemblance to some of Avalokita's images.

¹ C. J. Rodgers. Revised List of Objects of Archaeological interest in the Punjab (Lahore, 1891), p. 43.