



International Journal of Sanskrit Research

अनन्ता

ISSN: 2394-7519

IJSR 2023; 9(5): 23-27

© 2023 IJSR

www.anantaajournal.com

Received: 26-06-2023

Accepted: 30-07-2023

Subir Mondal

Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Sanskrit,
University of Calcutta,
Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Iconographical significance of the deity sarasvatī in Buddhism and Jainism

Subir Mondal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22271/23947519.2023.v9.i5a.2204>

Abstract

The cosmic gods and goddesses are noble beings. They do not enter into a body and go through the same earthly process as human beings do. Sarasvatī is the first river who got status as a *Vedic* goddess. The *Rgveda* calls her best mother, best of rivers, best of goddesses,— अम्बितमे, नदीतमे, देवीतमे सरस्वति । (*Rgveda*, 2.41.16) Sarasvatī is the great goddess of learning and fine arts, is most merciful and bestower of wisdom on her devotees. Sarasvatī is also popular among Buddhist and Jaina traditions. The five types of the deity Sarasvatī in Buddhism are namely,— Mahāsarasvatī, Vajravīṇāsarasvatī, Vajrasarasvatī, Āryasarasvatī, Vajrasārādā. Goddess Mahāsarasvatī, resplendent like the autumn moon, rests on the moon over a white lotus, shows the *varadamudrā* in her right hand, and carries in the left a white lotus with its stem. Vajravīṇāsarasvatī like Mahāsarasvatī is also white in complexion, peaceful and benign in appearance. She carries in her two hands the *vīṇā*, a kind of strained musical instrument. Vajrasarasvatī has a form with three faces and six arms and her hair is brown and rises upwards. Āryasarasvatī appears a maiden of sixteen, is in the prime of youth, has white complexion, and carries in the left hand the stalk of a lotus on which rests the Prajñāpāramitā book. Vajrasārādā rests upon a pure white lotus, and a crescent decorates her crown; she is three eyed and two armed and carries the book in the left hand and the lotus in the right. The oldest Jaina Sarasvatī is considered to be the one unearthed from Kāṅkālī Tīlā at Mathura. Besides the sixteen vidyādevī's, the jainas of both sects admit into their pantheon, one śrutadevī or Sarasvatī approximating very closely the Brāhmanical conception of the same goddess. The sixteen types of Vidyādevī in Jainism are,—Rohiṇī, Prajñāpti, Vajra-śrīkhalā, Vajrāṅkuśa or Kuliśāṅkuśā, Apraticakrā or Jambunadā or Cakreśvarī, Puruṣadattā or Bhārātī, Kālī, Mahākālī, Gaurī, Gāndhārī, Mahājvālā or Sarvāstramahājvālā or Jvālāmālīnī, Mānavī, Vairātyā, Accuptā, Mānasī, Mahāmānasī or Mahāmānavī. The description of this goddess, as in other cases, varies, with the two sects, with the Śvetāmbara, she rides a cow and holds in her hands a conch, rosary, bow and arrow. In order to know the personality of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning and eloquence. We have many information which are generally collected from the sources like the *Vedas*, the Brāhmanas, the myths and the legends of the Epics, *Purāṇas*, Sculptures, Buddhism and Jainism. This goddess has not only worshipped by the *Purāṇic* devotees in India. But she is also said to have secured a predominant place in the Buddhist world, Jainist world and literary sources. So, the characteristics features and iconographical significance of the deity Sarasvatī is very important in Buddhist and Jaina tradition.

Keyword: Sarasvatī, buddhism, jainism, mahāsarasvatī, sādhanamālā, dhyānamantra, prajñāpāramitā book, vidyādevī, svetaṃbara texts, digambara texts

Introduction

The cosmic gods and goddesses are noble beings. They do not enter into a body and go through the same earthly process as human beings do. Sarasvatī is the first river who got status as a *Vedic* goddess. The *Rgveda* calls her best mother, best of rivers, best of goddesses,— अम्बितमे, नदीतमे, देवीतमे सरस्वति । (*Rgveda*, 2.41.16) Sarasvatī is the great goddess of learning and fine arts, is most merciful and bestower of wisdom on her devotees. Devī Sarasvatī is denominated as *Ilā* and *Bhārātī* in the *Rgveda*,—

शुचिर्देवेष्वपिता होत्रा मरुत्सु भारती ।

इला सरस्वती मही वहिः सीदन्तु यज्ञियाः ॥ (*Rgveda*, 1.142.9)

Corresponding Author:

Subir Mondal

Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Sanskrit,
University of Calcutta,
Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Sarasvatī is also popular among Buddhist and Jaina traditions. The five types of the deity Sarasvatī in Buddhism are namely,— Mahāsarasvatī, Vajravīṇāsarasvatī, Vajrasarasvatī, Āryasarasvatī, Vajrasāradā. Goddess Mahāsarasvatī, resplendent like the autumn moon, rests on the moon over a white lotus, shows the *varadamudrā* in her right hand, and carries in the left a white lotus with its stem. Vajravīṇāsarasvatī like Mahāsarasvatī is also white in complexion, peaceful and benign in appearance. She carries in her two hands the *vīṇā*, a kind of stringed musical instrument. Vajrasarasvatī has a form with three faces and six arms and her hair is brown and rises upwards. Āryasarasvatī appears a maiden of sixteen, is in the prime of youth, has white complexion, and carries in the left hand the stalk of a lotus on which rests the Prajñāpāramitā book. Vajrasāradā rests upon a pure white lotus, and a crescent decorates her crown; she is three eyed and two armed and carries the book in the left hand and the lotus in the right. In Jaina tradition sixteen types of Sarasvatī are present with names like Rohiṇī, Prajñapti, Vajra-śṛṅghalā, Vajrāṅkuśa or Kulīśāṅkuśa, Apraticakrā or Jambunadā or Cakreśvarī, Puruṣadattā or Bhāratī, Kālī, Mahākālī, Gaurī, Gāndhārī, Mahājvalā or Sarvāstramahājvalā or Jvalāmālīnī, Mānavī, Vairāṭyā, Acchuptā, Mānasī, Mahāmānasī or Mahāmānavī.

Goddess Sarasvatī in Buddhism

She is known, according to *Sādhnamālā* as Mahāsarasvatī, Vajravīṇāsarasvatī, Vajrasāradā and Āryasarasvatī. She is also known as Āryavajrasarasvatī and Vajrasarasvatī. Both the Hindus and Buddhists called her Vāgīśvarī. Hindu Tantrics conceived goddess Durgā or Caṇḍī as Mahāsarasvatī. She is also called Bhadrakālī. In Jainism, Sarasvatī is also known as Śruta-devī. The Buddhist Sarasvatī may have one face, with two arms, or three faces and six arms. When two-armed, she has four different variations. As her worship is widely prevalent among the Buddhists owing to the belief that like Mañjusrī and Prajñāpāramitā, she confers wisdom, learning intelligent memory etc ^[1]. The five types of deity Sarasvatī in Buddhism are namely,— Mahāsarasvatī, Vajravīṇāsarasvatī, Vajrasarasvatī, Āryasarasvatī and Vajrasāradā.

Mahāsarasvatī

She has white complexion, shows the *varada* pose in the right hand and carries the white lotus in the left hand. The dhyāna describes her form in the following terms of *Sādhnamālā*,—

तेन च भगवती महासरस्वतीं अनुविचिन्त्ययेत् शरदिन्दुकराकारं सितकमलोपरि चन्द्रमण्डलस्थां; दक्षिणक्रेण वरदां वामेन सनालसितसरोजधरां स्मेरमुखीमतिकरुणामयां श्वेत-चन्दन-कुसुम-वसन धरां मुक्ताहारोपशोभितहृदयां नानारत्नालङ्कारवतीं द्वादशवर्षकृतिं मुदितकुचमुकुलदन्तुरोरस्ततीं स्फुरदन्तगभस्तिव्यूहावभासित लोकरयाम्। ततस्तत्पुरतो भगवतीं प्रज्ञादक्षिणतो मेधानि पश्चिमतो मतिं वामतः स्मृतिं त्रताः स्वनायिका-समानवर्णादिकाः सन्मुखावस्थितश्चिन्तनियाः। ततः स्वनाभिग्रदेशे-चन्द्रमण्डले सितमौकारं ध्यात्वा ततो निश्चरन्तीमशेष वामयमालामविच्छिन्न प्रवाहां चिन्त्ययत् मन्त्रमावर्तयेत्। (Sādhnamālā, pt. 162, p. 329)

The worshippers should think himself as goddess Mahāsarasvatī, who is resplendent like the autumn moon, rests on the moon over the white lotus, shows the *varadamudrā* in her right hand and carries in the left the white

lotus with its stem. She has a smiling countenance, is extremely compassionate, wears garments decorated with the pearl-necklace, and she is decked in many ornaments, she appears a maiden of twelve years, and her bosom is uneven with half-developed breasts like flower-buds; she illumines the three worlds with the immeasurable light that radiates from her body. This is the general appearance of Sarasvatī, and all the other varieties, unless otherwise stated are identical in appearance with the one just described. The distinctive feature of this goddess Mahāsarasvatī is that she shows like the ordinary Tārā's the *varadamudrā* in the right hand and carries the lotus in the left, and is surrounded by four deities identical in form with her. Prajñā is in front of her, Medhā to her right, Smṛti to her left and Mati in the west. These four divinities may also accompany other varieties of Sarasvatī. As the sādhana is silent about the particular āsana, she may be representation in any attitude, sitting or standing ^[2].

Vajravīṇāsarasvatī

The dhyāna describes her form in the following terms of *Sādhnamālā*,—

सप्तमस्य द्वितीयष्टमस्तमस्य चतुर्थकम्।
प्रथमस्य चतुर्थेन भूषितं अत् सविन्दुकम् ॥
तदुभवां सरस्वतीं वीणा-वादन-तत्पराम्।
चन्द्रावदतनिर्भाषां सर्वालङ्कारभूषिताम् ॥ (Sādhnamālā, pt. 165, p. 335)

Vajravīṇāsarasvatī like Mahāsarasvatī is also white in complexion, peaceful and benign in appearance. She is also two armed, but the distinguishing feature in her case is that she carries in her two hands the *vīṇā*, a kind of stringed musical instrument, and plays upon it. She may also be represented as accompanied by the four divinities as in the previous case ^[3].

Vajrasarasvatī

The dhyāna describes her form in the following terms of *Sādhnamālā*,—

तस्मात् रक्तमहाद्युतिं भगवतीं सम्भुसनालङ्कृताम्।
प्रत्यलीढ पदस्थितां त्रिवदनां षड्वाहुभिर्भूषिताम् ॥
सर्व्ये निलमुखां विभर्ति च करे पद्मासिकत्रिंश वै।
वामे शुक्लमुखां च पात्रसहितां सद्रत्नचक्रं तथा ॥
हृत्पद्मस्थितचन्द्रमध्यनिहितं तम्यश्च दोर्भास्वर्म्।
नानाज्ञानतमपहैश्च किरणैरापुर्यमाणं जगत् ॥ (Sādhnamālā, pt. 161, p. 327)

भगवतीं वज्रसरस्वतीं त्रिमुखां षड्भुजां सर्वालङ्कारां त्रिनयनां निलसितदक्षिण वममुखीं पद्माखना कर्चिधरा-दक्षिणकरां कपालरत्न-चक्रधारिवामकरां प्रत्यालिदपदां कुमारीं नवयौवनवतीं नानालङ्कारधरां हृदयाधिष्ठित-चिन्ह वीजेन परार्थां करनोस्तुकां आत्मानं विभाव्य। (Sādhnamālā, pt. 163, p. 331)

The name Vajrasarasvatī is given to this goddess in order to distinguish her form the other four varieties of Sarasvatī, with four different names given in the sādhanas. It has already been said that Sarasvatī has a form with three faces and six arms. In all other respects her form is identical with that of Mahāsarasvatī. The difference here is that her hair is brown

¹ Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, The Indian Buddhist Iconography, p. 349

² ibid, p. 350

³ ibid, pp. 350-351

and rises upwards, and she stands in the pratyālidha attitude on the red lotus. Three sādhanas in the *Sādhanamālā* are assigned to her worship, and according to these, she is red in colour, with the right and left faces of blue and white colour respectively. She carries in her three right hands the lotus on which is the Prajñāpāramitā book, the sword and the kartī, and in the three left the kapāla of Brahmā, the jewel and the cakra. Instead of the book on lotus and Brahmakapāla she may also holds the lotus and the kapāla only.

Āryasarasvatī

Āryasarasvatī is another variation of Sarasvatī, and is also designated Vajrasarasvatī, which seems to be the common name of Sarasvatī of the Vajrayāna. She appears a maiden of sixteen, is in the prime of youth, has white complexion, and carries in the left hand the stalk of a lotus on which rests the Prajñāpāramitā book. The dhyāna is silent about the symbol carried in the right hand, which may or may not remain empty. The āsana also is not mentioned which shows that she may be represented in any attitude ^[4].

Vajrasārādā

The dhyāna describes her form in the following terms of *Sādhanamālā*,—

शुभ्राम्बुजोपरि लसत्तनुमदधानाम् ।
नेत्रत्रयम् मुकुटसंस्थितमर्धचन्द्रम् ॥
वामेन पुस्तकं धराम्बुजमन्ये हस्ते ।
पश्चात् स्वदेहसमतामनयत् प्रयत्नत् ॥
ततस्तु ध्यानखिन्नो असन् जपेन्मन्त्रम् समाहितः ।
गुर्वदिशः वशालब्धं शुचिसा चारतां गतः ॥
हान्तरान्तं समायुक्तं सान्तमिश्र- शोभितम् ।
इन्द्रार्धं विन्दुना अक्रन्तं लिपिं इष्टा जपेत्सुरम् ॥ (*Sādhanamālā*, pt. 166, p. 337)

According to the dhyāna in the *Sādhanamālā* she rests upon a pure white lotus, and a crescent decorates her crown; she is three eyed and two armed and carries the book in the left hand and the lotus in the right. She may, however be accompanied by the four attendants, Prajñā and others. As the sādhana is silent about the āsana, she may have any attitude. Vajrasārādā here sits in bhadraśana, as do her companions. All the figures in the group are mutilated, but at least one among them carries the Utpala and the book, in the right and left hands respectively ^[5]. The śatoguṇā of Mahālakṣmī has manifested in the form of Mahāsarasvatī. She is of white complexion and has four hands. In them she shows a rosary (*akṣamālā*), a goad (aṅkuśa), a lyre (*vīṇā*) and a book (*pustaka*). She is named variously by the great goddess Mahālakṣmī. Thus she is known as Mahāvidyā, Mahāvāṇī, Bhārati, Vāk, Sarasvatī, Āryā, Brāhmī, Kāmadhenu, Vedagarbhā, Dhīśvarī etc. As Mahāsarasvatī, she is described as the most beautiful of all beauties and exceedingly good-looking. In the Vaikṛtikarahasya, she is described as an eight armed goddess holding an arrow, a spear, a disc, a conch, a bell, a ploughshare (*lāṅgala*) and a bow, named karmuka ^[6].

Goddess Sarasvatī in Jainism

The oldest Jaina Sarasvatī is considered to be the one

unearthed from Kānkālī Ṭilā at Mathura. They are sixteen in number. In no other Indian religion are the goddesses of knowledge so numerous. Besides the sixteen vidyādevī's, the jainas of both sects admit into their pantheon, one śruta-devī or Sarasvatī approximating very closely the Brāhmanical conception of the same goddess. Her name as śruta-devī meaning 'Goddess of Śruti' originally refers to the *Vedas* or revealed literature preserved through hearing. There is some hidden meaning behind this name. The description of śruta-devī as afforded by the Jaina books makes it on a par with Brahmāṇī's (wife of Brahmā) description.

Sarasvatī or Śruta-devī

The goddess, as viewed by the Śvetāmbaras rides a swan, has four hands bearing a lotus or varada book and rosary. The Digambara texts seem to give the vehicle of a peacock to Sarasvatī. Śruta-devī, the main goddess of learning, seems to be identical with the consort of Brahmā, a dikpāla, as described in this book. The attributes of a lotus, book and rosary are common. The vehicle of swan is also characteristic of Brahmā. The substitute of peacock for swan, as made by the Digambara sect, agrees with the conception of Sarasvatī, who is also the river goddess in Brāhmanism ^[7]. The sixteen types of Vidyādevī in Jainism are,—Rohiṇī, Prajñapti, Vajra-śṛṅkhalā, Vajrāṅkuśa or Kuliśāṅkuśā, Apraticakrā or Jambunadā or Cakreśvarī, Puruṣadattā or Bhārati, Kālī, Mahākālī, Gaurī, Gāndhārī, Mahājvālā or Sarvāstramahājvālā or Jvālāmālinī, Mānavī, Vairātyā, Acchuptā, Mānasī, Mahāmānasī or Mahāmānavī.

Rohiṇī

The description of this goddess, as in other cases, varies, with the two sects, with the Śvetāmbara, she rides a cow and holds in her hands a conch, rosary, bow and arrow. She is four-handed. With the other sect, she appears bearing the attributes of an urn, conch, lotus and fruits. From the texts of the Śvetāmbaras, it appears that she specially presides over the art of music. Her other names 'Ajitavalā'. The Digambaras believe that by her worship, the devotee attains right inside.

Prajñapti

In her Śvetāmbara aspect, she rides on a peacock and hold a lotus and a Śakti. She is six-handed. According to one text of the same school, she holds varada, śakti, citrus and śakti again. Digambara image should be represented as bearing a sword and a disc. Thus we find she has borrowed the vehicle of peacock from Yakṣa Trimukha, Prajñapti's husband. The peacock symbol with lotus should be Vidyādevī's characteristic. She known as 'Duhitārī'. The name might have been derived either from Prajñapti, meaning 'intellect' or Prajñā, meaning 'Sarasvatī' ^[8].

Vajra-śṛṅkhalā

Two forms of this goddess are known to the Śvetāmbara scripture. In one form she is seated on a lotus and carries a chain and club. In another form, she is also seated on a lotus but has four hands adorned with varadamudrā, chain, lotus and chain again. Her mounts is 'Haṃsa'. The Digambara text mentions only a chain for the deity. According to the Digambara text used, she grants to her worshippers good boons and habits.

⁴ ibid., pp. 351-352

⁵ ibid., p. 351

⁶ Balram Srivastava, Iconography of Śakti, A Study Based on Śrītatvanidhi, p. 12

⁷ B.C. Bhattacharya, The Jaina Iconography, pp. 122-123

⁸ ibid., pp. 124-125

Vajrāṅkuṣā or Kuliśāṅkuṣā

She has two forms according to Śvetāmbara texts, In one, she rides an elephant and bears as symbols a sword, vajra, shield and spear. In another, she is riding an elephant in varadamudrā, vajra, citrus and goad. She is also known as 'Manovegā', 'Manogupti' and 'Śyāmā'. The Digambaras represent the deity as driving in an aerial car and holding in her hands a goad and a lute. The symbol of an elephant, the name Vajrāṅkuṣā meaning 'one adorned with vajra' and goad leads us to suppose some mysterious connection between this Vidyādevī and Indra. Her lute, as given by the Digambaras, is only a symbol of Sarasvatī.

Apraticakrā or Jambunadā or Cakreśvarī

According to the Śvetāmbara books, she rides a Garuḍa and all her four hands are armed with dishes. She is called Jambunadā by the Digambaras, who represent her as riding a peacock and bearing a sword and a spear. She also sixteen-handed. Peacock and spear are in this form the common characteristics ^[9].

Puruṣadattā or Bhārati

In Śvetāmbara literature, she is differently described. In one aspect, she holds a sword and shield, in another she rides on a buffalo and carries in her four palms varada, sword, and shield. The Digambara text makes her ride a peacock and hold as symbols vajra and a lotus.

Kālī

The Digambara image of this Vidyādevī should ride a deer and should be furnished in its hands with the symbols of a staff and sword. There are two Śvetāmbara forms to be marked. She is seated on a lotus and holds either in two hands a club and varada or in four hands rosary, club, vajra and abhaya. Her others name 'Śāntā'. This is strongly suggested by the common characteristic symbol of a deer as vehicle ^[10].

Mahākālī

The Śvetāmbaras have two descriptions for the goddess. According to one, she rides on a man and holds a rosary, fruit, bell and varadamudrā. According to another, she equally rides a man but holds a rosary, vajra, abhayamudrā and bell. The Digambara form of Mahākālī is to be represented as standing on a corpse and bearing in her hands a bow, sword, fruit and weapon. The symbols of sword, bell, rosary etc. are sufficiently tantric in character, the corpse at the feet of the goddess being a true mark of Kālī. She also known as 'Ajitā' and 'Suratārakā'. The Digambara book states that the goddess grants religious trance to her worshippers.

Gaurī

She of the Śvetāmbara type rides on a alligator and bears four hands equipped with varada, club, rosary and water-lily. She also known as 'Mānasī' and 'Aśokā'. In Digambara form, Gaurī has an alligator as her vehicle and holds lotus as her symbol. Some of her symbols, such as lotus, varada, are identical with those of this Vidyādevī. The alligator and some of the symbols such as water-lily and urn indicate her connection with the goddess Gaṅgā of Brāhmaṇism ^[11].

Gāndhārī

The Śvetāmbara Gāndhārī is to be represented either as seated

on a lotus and holding a staff and vajra or varada, staff, abhaya and vajra. Digambara goddess rides a tortoise and holds a disc and sword. She also known as 'Caṇḍā'. The Yakṣiṇī Gāndhārī of the Digambaras rides a crocodile but the Vidyādevī Gāndhārī rides a tortoise.

Mahājvālā or Sarvāstramahājvālā or Jvālāmālīnī

The text called the Ācāradinakarā of the Śvetāmbaras describes this goddess as riding a cat but mentions no attributes. The Nirvāṇakārikā another text of the same sect describes her as riding a boar and holding many weapons without description. She also known as 'Jvālāmālīnī' and 'Bhṛkuṭī'. Images of Digambara type should ride a buffalo and bear such weapons as a bow, shield, sword and disc.

Mānavī

According to one text, she has blue colour and sits on a blue lotus and a twig. According to another of the same Śvetāmbara school, she seats on a lotus and is four-handed showing varada, rosary and a bough of a tree. Her mounts is Snake. She also known as 'Aśokā'. The Digambara text also describes her as of blue colour and as riding a boar and bearing a trident.

Vairāṭyā

The Śvetāmbara text represents the goddess as riding on a snake and carrying in her hands a sword, shield and snake. The Digambaras Vidyādevī rides a lion and has a snake symbol. Her vehicle and symbol in both the instances consist of snakes ^[12].

Acchuptā

She is called in the Śvetāmbara literature Acchuptā and described as riding a horse and holding a bow, sword, shield and arrow. Acchuptā as represented by the Digambaras equally rides a horse and holds the symbol of a sword.

Mānasī

Mānasī of Śvetāmbara conception has two types in iconography. According to one, she rides a swan and bears the attributes of varada and vajra. According to another, she sits on a lion and has four hands carrying varadamudrā, vajra, rosary and again vajra. The Digambara Mānasī seats herself on a snake vehicle. She also known as 'Kandarpā'. Her mounts is lion. The Buddhist deity of learning called Vāgīśvarī, who has a famous temple in Benaras rides on a lion. She rides a tiger, in the case the Digambara Vidyādevī rides a snake.

Mahāmānasī or Mahāmānavī

The Śvetāmbaras describe the sixteenth Vidyādevī as riding on a lion and bearing, in her four hands varada, sword, kamaṇḍalu and lance. The Digambara representation of the goddess sits on a swan and holds a rosary, varadamudrā, goad and garland. As noticed before, her symbols of book, kamaṇḍalu and lotus befit more a Vidyādevī than a Yakṣiṇī. Her other names 'Nirvāsī'. The Digambara conception of Mahāmānasī either as a Yakṣiṇī or Vidyādevī has symbols such as peacock, swan, rosary, which fit in with the characteristic of the goddess of learning ^[13].

⁹ ibid., pp. 125-126

¹⁰ ibid., pp. 126-127

¹¹ ibid., pp. 127-128

¹² ibid., pp. 129-130

¹³ ibid., pp. 131-132

Conclusion

In order to know the personality of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning and eloquence. We have many information which are generally collected from the sources like the *Vedas*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the myths and the legends of the *Epics*, *Purāṇas*, *Sculptures*, *Buddhism* and *Jainism*. Sarasvatī is one of the trinity of the *Ṛgvedic* goddesses— Sarasvatī, Ilā and Bhārātī. She is the protean goddess of the *Vedic* pantheon and is the very basis of Hindu thought and culture. These of course throw an enlightened ideas on the transformation of the *Vedic* river Sarasvatī into a goddess of learning, speech and music. This goddess has not only worshipped by the *Purāṇic* devotees in India. But she is also said to have secured a predominant place in the Buddhist world, Jainist world and literary sources. Even she appears to manifest herself as the bestowed of knowledge and symbol of purity. It is however, emphasized that in *Purāṇic*, Buddhist and Jaina iconography, she is found to be represented in several forms with different variety in emblems, vehicles as well as attributes. It remains not only a mere literary theory, but has also taken iconographical forms with different colours. She is found two-armed, six-armed, eight-armed or multi-armed. The texts of the three principal religious of ancient India are however, which include manuscript, lotus of different colours, rosary, lute, water-vessel etc. She is generally associated with various carrying animals as vehicles like swan, peacock, lion, ram etc. So, the characteristics features and iconographical significance of the deity Sarasvatī is very important in Buddhist and Jaina tradition.

References

1. Apte, Vaman Shivram. The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary. Delhi: MLBD. (rev. and enl. ed.; 4th rev. and enl. ed. 1965); c1995.
2. Bakshi, Dwijendranath. Hindu Divinities in Japanese Buddhist Pantheon (A Comparative Study). Calcutta (now Kolkata): A Benten Pub; c1979. (1st ed.).
3. Bandyopadhyay, Amalkumar. *Paurāṇikā* (Viśvakoṣa Hindudharma). Calcutta (now Kolkata): Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd; c1988. (2nd ed.; 1st ed. 1979).
4. Bandyopadhyay, Haricharan. Baṅgīya Śabdakoṣa. Comp. and ed. Vol. 2. Calcutta (now Kolkata): Sahitya Akademi; c2008. (7th rpt. of rev. rpt. of 2nd ed. 1978).
5. Bangla Biswakosha. Pt. 4. Ed. Khan Bahadur Abdul Hakim. Dhaka: Muktaadhara; c1976. (1st ed.).
6. Basu, Ratna. Methodology and Sanskritic Researches. Kolkata: School of Vedic Studies (RBU); c2012. (rev. ed.; 1st ed. 1998).
7. Bhāratakoṣa. Pt. 5. Calcutta (now Kolkata): Bangiya Sahitya Parisat; c1973. (1st ed.).
8. Bhattacharya BC. The Jaina Iconography. Delhi/Varanasi/Patna: MLBD; c1974. (2nd rev. ed.; 1st ed. 1939).
9. Bhattacharya, Hangsanarayan. Hindudera Devadevī: Udbhoba O Kramavikāśa. Pt. 3. Kolkata: Farma KLM Pvt. Ltd; c2015. (3rd rpt. of 2nd rpt. 2007; 1st pub. 1980).
10. Bhattacharya, Narendranath. The Indian Mother Goddess. New Delhi (now Delhi): Manohar; c1977. (2nd ed.; 1st ed. 1970).
11. Bhattacharyya, Benoytosh. The Indian Buddhist Iconography. Calcutta (now Kolkata): Farma KLM; c1968. (rpt. of 2nd ed. 1958).
12. Biswas, Arun kumar. Sarasvatī-Sāradār Anudhyāne. Kolkata: Ananda Pub; c1994. (1st ed.).

13. Chakrabarti, Chintaharan. Tantras: Studies on their Religion and Literature. Calcutta (now Kolkata): Punthi Pustak; c1999. (rpt.; 1st pub. 1963).
14. Dowson, John. A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History and Literature. New Delhi (now Delhi): Rupa Paperback; c1982. (1st pub.).
15. Encyclopaedia of Hinduism. Vol. 38 and 39. Ed. Nagendra Kumar Singh. New Delhi (now Delhi): Anmol Pub; c2000. (1st pub.).
16. Hangsanarayan, Swami. Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Mysore: Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama; c1982. (2nd ed.).
17. Monier-Williams, Monier. A Sanskrit-English Dictionary. Delhi: MLBD; c1963. (rpt. of 1st ed. Oxford University Press 1899).
18. Mother Goddess and Other Goddesses. Ed. V. Subramaniam. New Delhi (now Delhi): Ajanta Pub; c1993. (1st ed.).
19. Rao, Gopinatha. Elements of Hindu Iconography. Vol. 1. Pt. 2. Varanasi/ Delhi: Indological Book House; c1971. (2nd ed.).
20. Saha, Amarendranath. Devadevī Swarūp: Mūrtipūjā O Vāhanarahasya. Kolkata: Pustak Bipani, 2001. (1st pub.).
21. Singh, R.S. Hindu Iconography in Tantrayāna Buddhism. New Delhi (now Delhi): Ramanand Vidya Bhawan; c1993.
22. Vidyabhusan, Amulyacharan. Sarasvatī. Calcutta (now Kolkata): Sahityalok; c1980.