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# An Unpublished Image of Trailokya Vijaya from Jethian, Gaya District, Bihar

Jalaj Kumar Tiwari<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. Archaeological Survey of India, Excavation Branch-III, 704, Lok Nayak Bhawan, Frazer Road, Patna – 800001, Bihar (Email: jalajkumartiwari@gmail.com)

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**Abstract:** Trailokya Vijaya is an important tantric deity of the Vajrayana form of Buddhism. The word Trailokya Vijaya made of three words i.e. *tra* (three), *loka* (world) and *vijaya* (conqueror) symbolizing the conqueror of the three worlds. He has terrible appearance and awe inspiring. He shows his superiority over Siva and Parvati who are the popular deities of Brahmanical pantheon. He has been shown as trampling upon the prostrate figure of Siva and Parvati. Images of Trailokya Vijaya are extremely rare in India. Only few image of this deity has been reported from India. Recently noticed image of Trailokya Vijaya from Jethian throws light on the popularity of deity as well as study of tantrism in India.

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**Keywords:** Trailokya Vijaya, Jethian, Gaya, Buddhist, Vajrayana, Siva, Parvati

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## Introduction

Trailokya Vijaya is one of the most ferocious deities in the Vajrayana faith. He is the subduer of the three worlds. He is believed to be conqueror of the evil spirit and also to be the protector of the three worlds (Getty 1978: 115). He is also popular in Java, Japan and Indo-china. The concept of Trailokya Vijaya was probably inspired by Tripurantaka, a form of Lord Siva (Sharma 2004:184). He is another interesting Buddhist deity which indicates on the part of the Buddhists to establish the superiority of their deities over those of the Hindus as the Saivite deities Siva and Parvati are shown being trampled under the feet of Trailokya Vijaya.

One *sadhana* of Sadhanamala (Bhattacharyya 1987: 184-85) provides us picturesque description of Trailokya Vijaya as follows:

“The worshipper should mediate himself as Trailokya Vijaya Bhattaraka of blue colour, four faced and eight armed. His first face displays the sentiments of wrathful passion, the right rage, the left disgust, and the face behind, the sentiments of heroism. He exhibits the *vajrahumkara mudra* with two hands bearing the *ghanta* and the *vajra* against the chest. He carries in his three right hands the *khatvanga*, the goad and the arrow, and in the three left the bow, the noose and the *vajra*. He stands in the *pratyahidha* attitude, tramples up on the head of Mahesvara with his left leg, while the

right presses up on the bosom of Gauri. He wears garments of variegated colours, and many ornaments and garlands assigned to the Buddha. Thus he is mediating” .

Another important text *Sarva-Tathagata- Tattva- Samgraha* probably a work of the sixth- seventh century, describes the origin of the deity Trailokya Vijaya. According to *Trailokya Vijayamaha mandala* of *Sarva-Tathagata- Tattva- Samgraha*(Jha 1993:55-56);once Vajrapani told Mahavairochana, about Siva not accepting the ‘*Dharmma.*’ Vairochana, on hearing him started mediating in the *Mahakarunopaya krodha-samaya vajranama samadhi*, and in the process, from his heart came out a deity, very terrible in appearance, emitting flames from his body, with protruding fangs and holding the goad and the noose in his hands. After taking permission from the sire the deity went to Mahesvara, the lord of the three worlds and ordered him to accept the *triratna* which the later refused. After a brief exchange of dialogues between the two, a fierce battle took place, in which Mahesvara fell upon the ground and became unconscious. After seeing this all the gods approached to Vajrapani Mahakrodharaja Bodhisattva and requested him to bring Siva into consciousness. After hearing their prayer the Bodhisattva Mahakrodharaja ordered the gods to accept the superiority of Sarvatathagata. The gods agreed to do so. Then Bodhisattva freed Siva, who with Uma requested to have a place at his feet, which was duly accepted and the Bodhisattva placed his left leg over Siva and the right one over the breast of Uma. In Indian Buddhist art Trailokya Vijaya images are extremely rare. The images of Trailokya Vijaya has been reported from Nalanda (Sharma 2004:186), Bodh Gaya(Chauley 2002:109 &Jha 1993:122) and a bronze image from Patharghatta (Banerji 1981:93)all in Bihar and Achutrajpur ( Moharana 2001:131) in Orissa.

During my field survey in and around Nalanda district, Bihar, I got an opportunity to inspect a village Jethian (25°55’ 55” N, 85°19’ 16”E) in block Mohra district Gaya, Bihar. It is situated 22km south west from Rajgir. It is a place of great historical and archaeological importance. (Cunningham 1994:139-140) identified it with Yastivan referred by Hiuen- Tsang and *Latthivana* of the Pali literature (Upadhyay 1991:165-166). It was on the ancient route of Rajgir to Gaya.

According to Buddhist texts Buddha stayed at *Supatittha-cetiya* near the pleasure garden of Latthivana (Latthivanuyyana) during his first visit to Rajgriha from Gayasisa after the enlightenment (Malalasekera 1983: 772; Upadhyay 1991: 165). King Bimbisara accorded a warm welcome to Lord Buddha. There Bimbisara visited him with twelve *nahutas* of followers and Uruvela Kassapa dispelled their doubts by declaring his acceptance of the Buddha as his teacher. Then Yastivana is witnessed first meeting of two great men Buddha and Bimbisara and king Bimbisara gifted veluvana of Rajgriha to Lord Buddha (Upadhyay 1991:166). Hiuen Tsang visited this place in seventh century AD and calls it Yastivana and describes it as dense forest of bamboos and describes various stories connected with Buddha (Watters 1961: 772). According to him king Asoka built a stupa here and Buddha had exhibited miracles and preached for seven days to *devas* and men (Watters 1961: 772).



**Figure 1: Trailokya Vijaya Sculpture from Jethian, Gaya, Bihar**

A notable sculpture of Trailokya Vijaya (Fig. 1) has been noticed by me along with other stone sculptures and votive stupas in a modern Buddhist premises near Kendriya Vidyalaya Jethian. Only lower part of the image is survived. The portion above the left thigh of the god is missing. His right foot, left leg and one left hand is remaining and other parts of the body are missing. The deity is shown in *pratyahidha* pose on lotus pedestal trampling up on the prostrate figures of Siva and Parvati. His right foot rests on the head and breast of Gauri and left foot the head of Mahesvara. Both hands of the Gauri below the elbow are broken. Mahesvara holds *svajra* in right hand and trident in the left. The evidence of noose and bow may be seen on left side of main deity which seems to be held by him. Trailokya Vijaya wears anklets and a garland of human heads, six of which are still remnant. It corresponds to the textual description in every respect except garland of human heads instead of Buddha images. It measures 24 cms height, 28 cms width and 12cms depth. It is made of sand stone and on stylistic ground it may be assignable to 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. In this specimen the artist has succeeded considerably in representing the ferocity and destructive action of the god by showing the Brahmanical divinities being pressed under his feet.

## **Conclusion**

The finding of Trailokya Vijaya image from Jethian not only indicates the popularity of *Vajrayana* in the region of Nalanda and Gaya but also indicates that Jethian was developed as a centre of *Vajrayana*. Thus we can safely conclude on the basis of reported images of Trailokya Vijaya, that Magadha region of Bihar was the hub of *Vajrayana* in the fold of Buddhism. Recently discovered image of Trailokya Vijaya also throws light on the religious history of Jethian as well as development and expansion of *Vajrayana* in the region.

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