ABSTRACT

The Indian Jain religion that prescribes a path of non-violence towards all living beings and its philosophy and practice emphasize the necessity of self-effort to move the soul towards divine consciousness and liberation. The Jain icons in a Jain temple are arranged in a hierarchical order. The chief among them is the mula-nayaka like Rishabhanatha or Parsvanatha, who is surrounded by other Jains. The portrayal of 24 Tirthankaras is called Chaturvimsati. The Tirthankaras generally have a triangular mole symbol on their chest, a triple umbrella above their heads and a symbol on the parasol. Jain Yakshas are also called Sasana-devatas or demigods who are devotees of Tirthankaras. According to Jain belief, Indra appoints one Yaksha and one Yakshini to serve as attendants for 24 Tirthankara.

Keywords: Jain Temple Icons, Indian Jain Art, Jain Iconography, Jain Trithankar

INTRODUCTION

Jainism as an Indian religion that prescribes a path of non-violence towards all living beings and its philosophy and practice emphasize the necessity of self-effort to move the soul towards divine consciousness and liberation, the Jain religion in general and the iconography and monument architecture in particular. In Jain temple the icons are arranged in a hierarchical order. The chief among them is the mula-nayaka like Rishabhanatha or Parsvanatha, who is surrounded by other Jains. The portrayal of 24 Tirthankaras is called Chaturvimsati. To a superficial observer, the image of a Jina and Buddha look alike. But there are important differences. The Tirthankaras generally have a triangular mole symbol on their chest, a triple umbrella above their heads and a lanchana or symbol on the parasol. Jain Yakshas are also called Sasana-devatas or demigods who are devotees of Tirthankaras.
According to Jain belief, Indra appoints one Yaksha and one Yakshini to serve as attendants for each Tirthankara.

Indian Jain Iconography

The Indian Culture the Jainism indeed has been one of its main streams, but somehow it could not receive adequate attention earlier, despite the fact that it has contributed immensely to the development and enrichment of Indian culture, literature and art. The contribution of Jainas towards art and architecture was especially important in view of the magnificent visual artistic creations, particularly in the forms of Jaina images, temples and paintings, spread all over the country and covering a time span in continuity from the earliest through the modern times. The Jainaiiconography with its profuse variety, changes, innovations and accompaniments has never been monotonous. The only enigmatic and so far unanswered question is that what could have been the reasons that Jainism (and thereby Jaina art) like Buddhism did not spread beyond Indian subcontinent while Jaina traders and business community were frequently visiting foreign countries. Was it that there were no missionary activities in this context? Further the reference to the visit of Jaina monks is also not known. The situation in 20th century however has changed completely.

The religion and art in Indian context go hand in hand and virtually the religious thought and concept find visual expressions in different forms of art like architecture, sculpture, icon, painting and also fine arts and performing arts. These all in Jaina context are the vehicles of the principal ideas of spirituality, non-violence, absolute renunciation and austerity. It may be pointed out at the outset that it was only with the Jainas that they did never compromise with their basic tenets, which find best expressions in the images of the Jains or Tirthankaras and Gommatesvara Bahubali. Before taking up the evolution of Jaina sculptures and their iconography in north and south India, it is also essential to have a background of Jaina pantheon also on the basis of which various Jaina icons were evolved which developed further in reference to time and space.

The Salakapurusas (worthy persons), 63 in number, is Great Souls and their lives are invariably referred to in Svetambara Carit texts and Digambara Puranas. Their list includes the 24 Jains, 12 Cakravartins (whose wheels are moving), 9 Baladevas (god of strength), 9 Vasudevas (father of Krishna), and 9 Prativasudevas. It may be noted here that only the names and some of the general features of the deities were finalized by the fifth century AD, while their detailed iconographic features were finalized between the 8th and 13th century AD.


The Kalpa-Sutra, a Jaina Canonical text, describes the lives of four Tirthankaras in detail that is Rsabhanatha (first Jina), Aristanemi (22nd Jina), Parsvanatha and Mahavira. Whereas the lives of the remaining 20 Jains are given in a brief format. This portion (Jinacaritra-Lives of Jains) of the above text seems to have been added and edited in about 4th century AD

These deities are, however, assigned a position subordinate to the Jains and other liberated souls (siddhas) who are called devadhidevas (Lords of Gods) by Hemacandra in 12th century AD. Next in order to the Jains (arhats) and siddhas are the Jaina ascetic souls called acaryas (leaders of groups of monks), upadhyayyas (readers who teach sacred texts and hence shown with manuscript) and sadhus (monks in general shown with ogho or rajoharana or mukhapattika and tarpani-wooden water vessel). These five constitute the Panca-parameshtins (five chief divinities).

In Jainsim the 24 Jains along with certain other souls including 12 Cakravartinsi or world conquerors - Bharata, Sagara, Maghva, Sanatkumara, Santi, Kunthu, Ara (last three being Jains), Subhuma, Padma, Harisena, Jaisena, Brahmadatta, Nine Vasudevas - Triprsta, Dviprsta, Svayambhu, Purusottama,
Purusasimha, PurusaPundarika, Datta, Narayana or Lakshmana, Krsna Nine Baladevas - Acala, Vijaya, Bhadra, Suprabha, Sudarsana, Anand, Nandan, Padma or Rama, Balarama constitute a list of 54 Salakapurusas (Great Souls) and Nine Prati-Vasudevas (enemies of Vasudevas) - Asvagriva, Taraka, Merak, Nisumbha, Madhukaitabha, Bal, Prahlada. Ravana, Jarasandha are added subsequently making the total of 63. The other figures such as 9 Naradas, 11 Rudras, 24 Kamadevas (gods of love), Ganesa, Saptamatraks, 64 yoginis show Brahmanical influence. Bahubali, the son of the first Jina, Rsabhanatha is said to be the first of the Kamadevas.

The north India (north of the Vindhyan Mountains) in the development of Jaina art and iconography is of much more significance than what has been brought out. According to the Jaina tradition, all the 24 Jains of present avasarpini aeon were born in this region and it was here that they spent their active lives. Perhaps this was the reason that most of the Jaina deities gained sculptural representations first in the region. The earliest Jina images with their characteristic iconographic features such as flowing hair-locks of Rsabhanatha, seven-hooded snake canopy of Parsvanatha, srivatsa, as taprahiyars, cognizances and yaksa-yaksi pairs also make their first appearance in this region.

However, the characteristic usnisa (three dimensional oval at the top of the head of the Buddha) and the srivatsa are generally absent in the Jina images of south India. The figures of the Jaina Mahavidyas, the complete sets of 24 Yaksis, Jivantasvamin Mahavira and Jaina tutelary couples (or parents of Jains) etc. are also conspicuous by their absence in south India. This absence requires proper investigation.

The first Svetambara Jaina image, known from Akota (Gujarat), was also carved in the Gupta period. The Gupta sculptures show a wonderful synthesis between the external form and the inner meaning with the result that the figures touch the height of spirituality. The number of Jaina sculptures, as compared to Kusana period, sharply declined in Gupta period but the area of Jaina artistic activity widened extensively covering almost the entire country. The history of Jainism continued nonstop in the post-Gupta period. The Jaina art and literature thrived most energetically between the 10th and the 15th century AD The period saw the building of a very large number of Jaina temples with beautiful sculptural carvings. During the period the new forms and iconographic features (excepting that of the Jains) of various deities were formulated and gradually the number of arms and thereby the attributes increased to make the most of the manifestations more as the specimens of codified texts. The parikara (surrounding) of Jain images also developed with the figural depictions of Navgrahas, Sarasvati, Laksmi and diminutive Jain figures. Besides, the usual as tapratiharyas and the yaksa-yaksi figures were also carved. The angular shape and flexion along with additions and enhancement were other distinct features of medieval Jaina sculptures.
Gujarat and Rajasthan were the strongholds of the Svetambara sect while the remainders yielded by other regions are affiliated mainly to the Digambara and the Yapaniya sects. The tradition of carving 24 devakulikas with the figures of 24 Jains therein was popular mainly at the SvetambaraJaina sites. The DigambaraJina images show much more variety in iconographic details than the Svetambara images, wherein the figures of Navagrahahas, Bahubali, Balarama and Krsna (with Neminatha), yaksayakshi, and few other goddesses, like Laksmi and Sarasvati, are carved in the parikara. At the Svetambara sites the mention of the names of the Jains in the pedestal inscription was chosen to providing them with their respective cognizances which are usually found in the examples of Digambara Jina images.

The sixteen Mahavidyas were accorded the most favored position after the Jains in Western India while in other parts of the country the most favored position after the Jains in Western India while in other parts of the country the yaksasyakshi occupied that position. Of the sixteen Mahavidyas, Rohini, Vajrankusa, Vajrasrnkhala, Apraticakra, Acchupta and Vairotya were the most popular ones.

The Jainas developed their pantheon by assimilating (Absorbing) and transforming different Brahmanical legendary characters and deities in Jaina creed which could distinctly be gleaned (Extract information from various sources.) through their vast literature as well as surviving visual imagery. Vimala Vasahi and Luna vasahi (c. 1150-1230 AD) exhibit some of very interesting renderings of Krsnalila and other Vaisnava themes which include Kaliya-damana, Krsna playing iholii with kanaka-srngakosa (as mentioned in Harsacarita) with gopas and gopikas, the episode of Bali and Vamana, samudramanthana and vivid carvings pertaining to Krsnajanma and balalilas. The figures of saptamatrikas, finding no mention in Jaina works, were also carved in some of the examples known from Mathura, Gyaraspur, Vimalavasahi and Khandagiri.

The instances of erotic figures in Jaina context, datable between 10th and 12th centuries AD are also known from Deogarh, Santinatha temple at Nadlai (Pali, Rajasthan), Ajitanatha temple at Taranga (Mahesana, Gujarat) and Neminatha temple at Kumbharia (Gujarat). The presence of erotic figures at Jaina sites is gross violation of the Jaina tradition, which does not even conceive of any Jaina god along with his Sakti in alingana pose. Such figures hence were carved due to the Tantric influence in Jainism during the early medieval times (c. 9th to 11th centuries AD). The Jaina Harivamsa Purana (AD 783, 29.1-10) makes the point more clearly by referring to the construction of a Jina temple by a sresthi-Kamadatta, who for the general attraction of people also caused installation of the figures of Kamadeva and Rati in the temple. It also alludes to the worship of Rati and Kamadeva along with the Jina images. It may also be noted here that the Tantric influence was accepted in Jainism with certain...
restraints. Open eroticism (excitement) was never so pronounced in Jaina literature and sculptural manifestations as was the case with Brahmanical and Buddhist religions, which is evident from the examples carved on the temples of Khajuraho, Modhera, Konark, Bhubaneswar and many other places. The erotic figures from Jaina temples as compared to Brahmanical ones are neither so large in number nor so obscene in manifestations.

CONCLUSION

In India apart from different cultural trends, religious thought and philosophy and art, Jainism indeed has been one of its main streams, but it could not receive adequate attention earlier, despite the fact that it has contributed immensely to the development and enrichment of Indian culture, literature and art. The contribution of Jinas towards art and architecture was especially important in view of the magnificent artistic iconography creations, particularly in the forms of images, paintings and iconography, spread all over the country and covering a time span in continuity from the earliest through the present times. The Jainaliconography with its profuse variety, changes, innovations and accompaniments has never been monotonous. The most prolific Jaina Iconography sites of north India were Mathura, Deogarh, Chandpur, Chanderi, Khajuraho, Bilhari, Gwalior, Khandagiri (Orissa), Akota, Delvada (Vimalavasahi, Luna-vasahi, Kharatara-vasahi), Kumbharia, Taranga, Jalore, Ranakpur, Girnar, Satrunjaya and many more.

REFERENCES

4. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0f/India%2C_uttar_pradesh%2C_jina_rishabh
anatha%2C_800-900.JPG
5. https://www.google.co.in/search?q=rishabhanatha&source=lnms&tbnid=8yraouW29IC1hM:&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiOycG8pc7UAhVENY8KHSMuDYcQ_AUIBygC&biw=1366&bih=640#tbm=isch&q=yaksa-yakshi+in+jain+&imgrc=1Xo61lcsEVao1M: