



An Analytical Study of Buddhist Art and Jain Art

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Abstract

Background: Buddhist and Jain artworks are rich manifestations of spiritual and cultural meaning. Buddhist art includes portrayals of Gautama Buddha, *Bodhisattvas*, narrative scenes, mandalas, and Buddhist-related things such as stupas and temple architecture. Buddhist art originated in the northern Indian subcontinent and changed as Buddhism expanded throughout diverse regions, influencing and being inspired by local creative traditions.

Objective: The objective of this paper is to explore both Buddhist and Jain artworks that have a lengthy history of creation and evolution, reaching back to the Maurya and Kushan eras highlighting the art forms that contain spiritual significance, serving as visual representations of Buddhist and Jain theories and beliefs.

Methodology: Library-based historical and textual analysis approach as well as has been applied to carryout this research research and visual analysis of the art work and architectural features have been used for data collection to study the evolution and significance of Buddhist and Jain artworks.

Result: Buddhist art have been found evolved from early Buddha's sculptures to include Bodhisattvas reflecting Buddha's biography, His teachings and the Buddhist philosophy where as Jain art has been found marked by simplicity, serenity and beauty depicting Tirthankaras like Mahavira and Parshvanatha, reflecting Jain philosophy. Both art forms visually represent their respective beliefs and teachings and philosophy.

Conclusion: Buddhist art and Jain art have a long history reaching back to Mouryan and Kusan dynasty. Buddhist art began with devotional sculptures of Buddha and events from his life, but gradually expanded to include depictions of *Bodhisattvas* and other figures as prominent subjects. Jain art, on the other hand, is distinguished by its simplicity, elegance, and emphasis on symmetry and proportion, reflecting Jain philosophy and values.

Keywords: Buddhism, Jainism, Symbol, Religion, Art

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Introduction

In the early Buddhist art, Buddha is shown in the form of some symbols, especially stupas, instead of human figures. It is said that Buddha's body relics were divided into eight parts and stupas were built on each part, out of which 7 stupas were built by Kshatriyas and the eighth by Brahmins of Vethdeep. The elements in the birth of Buddha, that is, he was a symbol of both the ideals of Yogi and Chakravarti. Along with stupas, the worship of Buddha was symbolic. It was done through symbols such as lotus feet, empty throne, Triratna, anointing of the newborn by pouring water from a pot by two elephants after Maya Devi gave birth, etc. The importance of stupas was considered to be the strongest because these stupas were built on the remains of Gautam Buddha's bones, due to which it was the strongest centre of faith for the followers of Buddhism and culture.

Gradually, after Gautam Buddha, Buddhism and its culture started getting divided on the ideological level and after some time, this rift started increasing in various Buddhist Councils and Buddhism got divided into *Theravada* and *Mahayana* branches. This division in Buddhism arose from different interpretations of the thoughts of Gautam Buddha, in which a big reason was the depiction of Gautam Buddha in human form. *Theravada* were strong supporters of accepting his existence in the form of symbols only; but *Mahayana* wanted to worship him in human form through idols. Therefore, about 400 years after the death of Buddha, the question arose as to how to make the idol of Gautam Buddha, because in 400 years he was worshipped in the form of symbols only and he was present in everyone's mind in this form.

Pratima means replica, which means similar shape. The word Pratima is actually used for those idols which are related to some religion or philosophy. Idol is generally the shape of a worldly human or creature, whereas the word Pratima is used for gods, goddesses, Gautams or deceased ancestors etc. There are certain rules and regulations for the making of a statue, as a result the artist is not completely free to make a statue and at the same time the expression of the artist's inner art is also not completely possible in it. So now this question is natural that after 400 years of *Mahaparinirvana* of Buddha, what symbols should be used and what characteristics should be expressed in the construction of the statue of Buddha, because the symbols were alive which we were seeing in the form of Triratna, lotus feet, empty throne and stupa; in which for human symbols, only lotus feet was such a symbol that brought the human concept alive. Therefore, before the statue of Buddha, *Mahayanis* imagined *Bodhisattvas*. Bodhisattva is one who wishes to attain Bodhi; the life of a seeker who attains the state of Bodhisattva is very noble, great and wide. The last wish of Bodhisattva is that the virtuous world that I have earned by practicing the true path, should be used to end the sufferings of the creatures of the whole world. Thus, after Buddha was accepted as a divine being, the path to make his idols was paved. But earlier symbols were incorporated in the idols of these *Bodhisattvas* so that *Bodhisattvas* could be easily associated with Buddha. In the third year of Kanishtha's reign, *Mahakshatrapa Kharapallan* of Varanasi installed an umbrella-*yashti* along with the Bodhisattva idol. If we connect the installation of umbrella-*yashti* with the idol of Bodhisattva with the umbrella-*yashti* installed on the stupa, then it can be said that this was an initial effort, through which the form of Bodhisattva was first identified with a part of the Buddha symbol stupa, so that the belief could be strengthened that *Bodhisattvas* are an integral part of Buddhism. After this, a debate starts among art connoisseurs as to where the Buddhist idols were made first, in Mathura or Gandhara.

In this research paper of mine, I will not say anything on this point but I will mention one thing which is of utmost importance and it is told by Mr. Fuchs, Grenbedle, Smith and Tarn that since no ideal picture of Buddha's form and body was available, the artists made the first statue of Buddha in the form of Greek god Apollo. Round face, luxurious smile, hair style with curved lines etc. are Indian subjects but are non-Indian. Now if we see, it is true that under *Mahaparinirvana Sutta*, when Anand asks

Tathagata that "how will the last rites be done", then Buddha gave permission to build a stupa on his remains like Chakravarti kings and since the physical description of Buddha is not available anywhere, it was a very difficult question as to how to make the statues of Buddha and how these statues can easily get recognition among the Buddhists. In the Kushan period, the work of making idols started by combining Buddha's personality and some earlier symbols and Buddha idols were made in both *Sthanak* and *Asana Mudras*. The ideal of the idols made in *Sthanak* Mudra were the earlier prevalent Yaksha idols and for the idol in *Asana Mudra*, the ideal of Yogi was kept in front and the ideal of Buddha idol characteristics must have been accepted on the basis of 32 characteristics of great men, in which Urna between the eyebrows, *Pralambakarnapaash*, *Ajanabahu*, *Vishalvaksha* etc. were prominent. Statues believe that in the idols of Buddha, there is a *Ushnisha* on his head which is a symbol of discipline and some scholars call it tied hair. But the question is whether we have been able to explain till date what was the relevance of this *Ushnisha* or tied hair and why it has been shown in all forms with uniformity in the idols of Buddha from the beginning to the end. So, in this context, I believe that "the upper part of the head of the Buddha is a replica of the stupa and it has always been shown as the head of the Buddha. If the picture of the stupa of Sanchi and Dhamekh is carefully observed, then is the head of the Buddha visible in this part and then if the statues of Buddha of Mathura and Gandhara are observed, then it is clear that this entire part of the stupa has been lifted and placed on the head, which we cannot see separately from the Buddha and if we imagine both of them together (Stupa and Buddha Statue), then we do not understand the difference between them. Now if the statues of *Bodhisatva Maitreya* and *Avalokiteshwara* are compared with the statues of Buddha, we find that the hair on Maitreya's head clearly appears to be tied hair, but till date we have only been speculating on seeing the statue of Buddha that these are hair, whereas it appears to be the stupa, the main symbol of Buddhist faith. In an artwork of Gandhara art, Buddha is shown meditating and, in the sculpture, there are subordinate *Yakshas* and *Yakshinis* in various postures all around him. Right above the statue, the *Shalabhanjikas* are planting a banyan tree on the head of the Buddha statue, which is a symbol associated with Buddha's attainment of enlightenment.

Therefore, here Buddha is being established with symbols only, so how is it possible that before the statue of Buddha was made a big symbol, the stupa, the biggest symbol of Buddhism, did not find a place in the construction of Buddhist statues. Therefore, my opinion is that the figure installed on the upper part of the head in Buddhist statues is a Buddhist stupa. If we look at the statue of *Tathagata's Mahaparinirvana* in conjunction with the early statues of Buddhist art, one similarity becomes clear, that is the stupa of the head. Even at the age of 80 years, the head is exactly the same as in the statues of the time of *Dharmachakrapravartan*. This leads to the conclusion that the *Ushnisha* is not related to the hairstyle. If we look at the Borobudur Buddhist Temple of Java carefully, we can easily understand that the top part of the temple and the head part of the installed idol give us a clear message that they all represent the sacred symbol of Buddhism, the stupa.

After all the above discussions, our opinion is that the symbols that we find on the top part of the idol were adorned on the head part of the Buddhist sculpture due to the sanctity of the stupa so that the Buddhist followers do not have any dilemma in accepting this human figure as the human figure of Gautam Buddha and if the *Theravada* branch of Buddhism also wants to adopt it, then they get all those symbols of Buddha which were a part of Buddhist art and culture from the beginning. This subject opens the doors to many new dimensions and discussions on which historians need to think. The earliest historical sculpture found in India is of the Mauryan period of the 4th-3rd century B.C. Its bold and colossal style was clearly inspired by foreign elements from Achaemenid Persia. The great Buddhist emperor erected monolithic pillars of sandstone. These pillars, 30 to 40 feet high, had bulls, lions and elephants on top and Buddhist teachings of morality, humanity and purity were inscribed on the pillars. Emperor Ashoka wanted his subjects to follow these teachings.

Famous Ashokan pillars have been found at Lauria Nandangarh, Sanchi, Sarnath and vaishali Bihar. The most remarkable of these is the polished monolithic capital found at Sarnath, which is now the emblem of the Government of India. It shows four roaring lions facing the four cardinal directions and with their backs to each other. The circular capital is decorated with four Dharmachakras between which an elephant, a bull, a horse and a lion are carved in succession with great skill. The base of the capital is bell-shaped with a lotus with Dharmachakra, possibly symbolizing the victory of truth over human force. The figures are well-sculpted, realistic and distinctive, besides exuding power and dignity, which throws light on the aristocratic and international character of Mauryan art. A close look at the capital will be of great use to the accomplished student of art. The four lions above it are carved in a very figurative and conventional style. This becomes clear by looking at the mane of the lion which is depicted as a tuft of hair in the shape of flames, which is not natural but in a conventional style. The upper lip of the lions is depicted by three engraved lines, which are again figurative and in a conventional style.

We must remember that it was Ashoka who introduced the extensive use of stone for sculptures and monuments while the past tradition was to work with stone and clay. On closer inspection of the animals on the capitals, it is evident that they are not static or rigid. They have been depicted in a very natural and lifelike manner, having been observed in nature with great care. The bull-shaped capital from Rampurva, Bihar, also belongs to the third century B.C. and is an interesting study because it is a mixture of Persian and Indian elements. The lotus capital is completely figural. The beautiful ornamentation on the capitals includes rosette, palmetto and acanthus-like ornaments, none of which are Indian. But the supreme element of the bull capital is the bull itself, which is a great example of Indian sculpture. In this, the bull with a hump has been given a very fine shape. Its soft flesh, well-shaped legs, sensitive nostrils and alert ears have been carved beautifully.

The finest examples of the Mauryan art of human sculpting are the huge statues of the deities of fertility and prosperity, the Yaksha and the Yakshi. The Yakshi of the Patna Museum is an impressive example of the third-second century B.C. which must have been carved by a talented sculptor. The figure is huge and bold in its structure, wearing very heavy ornamentation and a heavy antariya. The Indian ideal of female beauty is beautifully depicted through the full breasts, slender waist and wide hips of this figure. Indian sculptors preferred to create their beautiful creations in poetic or visual metaphors rather than in clear observation. The beauty of this statue is enhanced by the distinctive glossy polish of this period.

Another impressive example of Mauryan art in the third century BC is a beautiful male torso statue found from Lohanipur. The realistic carving of the figure gives it a wonderful vigour. This figure may have been that of a Jain Tirthankara or a savior of the Digambara sect.

Scholars have presented special studies on Jain sculpture. Dr. Hiralal Jain, in his famous book "Contribution of Jainism to Indian Culture", has briefly thrown light on this subject and said that the statues found in Mohenjodaro and Harappa during excavations in the Indus Valley have changed the history of Indian sculpture, and its tradition has been proved to be thousands of years before the said period. Since the script of the writings found on the coins of the Indus Valley is still unknown, nothing can be said with certainty about the culture there. However, as far as comparative study can be done on the basis of statue-making, shape and expression, a great similarity is found between the headless nude statue of Lohanipur and the headless nude statue found from Harappa, and on the basis of the northeastern tradition, the statue of Harappa is proved to be completely different from the Vedic and Buddhist sculpture system and completely in accordance with the Jain system. It is proved from the Hathigumpha inscription of the Kalinga King Kharvel of the 2nd century BC that during the reign of the Nanda dynasty i.e. 4th-5th century BC, Jina idols were installed. One such Jina idol was kidnapped

from Kalinga by Nandaraj, and Kharvel brought it back after two-three centuries. Many Jina idols of the Kushan period have been found from the excavation of Kankali mound of Mathura, which are preserved in the museum of Mathura. An ancient headless Jina idol is preserved in the Patna Museum, which was found from Lohanipur. Due to the shiny polish on this idol, it is assumed to be of the Maurya period.

Kushan Period Jain Idols

We get abundant material for the study of ancient Jain idols in the 47 idols collected in the Mathura Museum. All the idols of Tirthankara are found in two types - one standing, which is called Kayotsarg or Khadgasana and the other sitting in Padmasana. All the idols are naked and in a meditative posture, with the nose pointed towards the tip. Those symbols like bull etc. which differentiate between various Tirthankaras are not found on these, which are found in the statues of later period. Stone-made Jain statues of Gupta period. This era starts from the fourth century of Christ. 37 statues of this era have been introduced in the catalogue of the Mathura Museum. The following characteristics of this era can be known from it. The general characteristics of the Tirthankara idols are the same which had developed in the Kushan period, but some special features are now visible in their entourage. The ushniya (head portion) of the Pratimaas is found to be more beautiful and curlier. Special decoration is seen in the prabhaval. In this regard, the statue of Neminath of Vaibhar mountain of Rajgir is worth attention, in the middle of whose throne is a man holding the Dharmachakra on his back and figures of conches are found on both his sides. Many Jain statues have been found from many places like the fort near Gwalior, Besnagar, Budhi Chanderi and Devgarh. There is abundant material for the study of Jain sculpture of Gupta and post-Gupta period in the statues of Devgarh. The decoration of the Bhamandal and the beauty and expressions of the side gatekeepers are in accordance with the art of the Gupta period. A metal statue of Parshvanath is in the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay. The statue is in the Kayotsarga posture, and its right hand and snake-hood are broken, but the curves of the body of the idol are clearly visible from the feet to the top on the back. Its shape bears a lot of resemblance to the headless statue of Lohanipur mentioned above and the headless statue of red stone of Harappa. Scholars are of the opinion that this statue must be of the Mauryan period, and it cannot be from this side more than 100 BC. The second metal statue is of Adinath Tirthankara, which was found from a place called Chaisa in Ara in Bihar, and is preserved in the Patna Museum. It is also in the Khadgasana posture and bears a resemblance to the above-mentioned statue of Parshvanath in form. From around the 14th century, brass statues of Jains are also found to be in vogue. At some places, huge, heavy, solid statues of brass are installed. According to the inscription, the brass idol of Adinath situated in Pittalhar temple of Abu weighs 108 maunds and was installed in 1525 AD. Statues of Bahubali, the Bahubali idol of Badami, is 7.5 feet high, built in the 7th century. The second idol is engraved on the southern wall of Indra Sabha in the Jain stone temple named Chhota Kailash in Ellora. The construction period of this cave is considered to be the 8th century. The third idol is in Shantinath temple of Devgarh (862 AD), the specialty of which is that apart from Vaami, Kukkut snake and creepers, crawling creatures like scorpions, lizards etc. have also been engraved on the idol and a couple of gods has also been shown relieving these troublesome creatures. But the biggest and most famous idol of these is the one situated on *Vindhyagiri* of *Shravanabelagola* under Mysore state, which is 56 feet 6 inches high and is visible from a distance on that mountain. The balance of her body parts, the calm and happy expression on her face, the wrappings of the Valmiki and Madhavi creepers, are of such beauty that they cannot be compared anywhere else.

Conclusion

The postures of Lord Buddha can be described with special attention and based knowledge. The postures of Lord Buddha are important to reveal his meditation and dialogue with his disciples. Here are some major currencies:

1. *Meditation Mudra*: In this mudra, Lord Buddha keeps his hands in his lap and remains engaged in meditation. This posture symbolizes his meditation and peace. In this posture, Lord Buddha is seen sitting in meditation with his fingers folded. This posture reveals focus and concentration.
2. *Bhumisparsha Mudra*: In this posture Lord Buddha is seen sitting with his right hand touching the ground. This posture means 'touching the ground' through which he realized the earth and marks the beginning of his path to bodhima.
3. *Abhaya Mudra*: In this mudra Lord Buddha is seen in the form of giving blessings. This mudra means 'do not be afraid' or 'fearlessness'.
4. *Dharmachakra Pravartana Mudra*: In this mudra, Lord Buddha activates the Dharmachakra with the finger of his right hand. This mudra is done at the time of their first conversation.
5. *Vitarka Mudra*: In this mudra, Lord Buddha joins his fingers and thumb to indicate the initiation of Dharmachakra. This posture represents the teachings of *Dharma*.

Through these mudras, Lord Buddha presented his teachings in the form of dialogues and gave guidance to his disciples.

While Statue postures in Jainism to express meditation and spirituality. Several postures can be seen in Jain sculptures, which are as follows:

Dhyana Mudra: In this posture the idol is sitting in meditation with its eyes closed, which represents meditation and spirituality.

Abhaya Mudra: In this posture the idol appears as giving blessings, giving the message of fearlessness and protection to the devotees.

Jnana Mudra: In this posture the fingers of the idol are usually placed in its lap, which represents knowledge and teachings.

Varada Mudra: In this posture the idol appears as giving blessings, conveying boons and blessings to the devotees.

These postures reveal meditation, spirituality, peace and blessings in Jain sculptures and convey the message to the devotees to lead them on the spiritual path.

Following this statue, two other huge stone statues, 41 feet 6 inches high, were installed in Karkal in 1432 AD and 35 feet high in Venur in 1604 AD. Gradually, this type of statue of Bahubali has spread in North India as well. Recently, statues of Bahubali have been installed in many Jain temples. Among them, the statues of Bahubali in Firozabad, Hastinapur, Ara, Udaipur etc. is famous.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

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