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AJANTA AN ARTISTIC APPRECIATION

Dr. Kashinath D. W.

Guest Lecture,

Department of Studies in Visual Art Gulbarga University, Kalburgi.

ABSTRACT

The artefacts of the Ajanta Caves have had a profound effect on the definition of Indian artistic identity and the modern art movement in India. India has a great art tradition found in its literature and archaeological remains for centuries. In the latter, Ajanta occupies a unique place in the history of world art as the leading art centre of ancient India. Although well-known as a rich repository of mural painting, it has architecture and craftsmanship that rarely matches any other art centre in the country.

KEYWORDS: Ajanta, Art of Ajanta, Painting of Ajanta.

INTRODUCTION

It's hard to imagine what any of the many centuries-old caves would have looked like. In the first century BCE, only a few caves were completed or under construction. Later, by the end of the 5th century AD, the Mahayana caves were completed for a total of 28 different excavations, lining the entire U-shaped bend of the river, carved on a rocky high face with steps leading down the river. Only a few of them were actually occupied and that was only for a short time. At that time, however, the brightly painted entrances must have stood against the basalt and greenery in which they were located. In the fall of the Wakataka Empire, the caves became dangerous because of the surrounding area. Gradually, the paint went away and the dirt settled; after the eighth century, they were mostly forgotten and grown. With the rediscovery and excavation of the British, the caves reopened and they are as they are today; a steady process of aging began. The caves, which were protected and protected from people and elements, were largely protected. Now open again, again in contact with the light, the pictures began to fade and the statues collapsed. Attempts to preserve the artwork were often wasted; In the late 19th century, painters applied a layer of low-quality varnish, turning the paintings yellow. Pieces of paintings and sculptures were cut out and placed as souvenirs. As James Ferguson wrote in 1880, "all Buddhist caves were originally adorned with paintings, but in nine out of ten cases have been destroyed as a result of the effects of this environment or the undue damage done by ignorant men."

The art of Ajanta is inspired by the early Buddhist monks who came to West India under the patronage of Ashoka (273-36 BC) against the backdrop of the spread of Buddhism. Dharmariksia is a different name from many cultural envoys who went to different parts of India and Ceylon to preach the Dhamma, as it also seems to have been responsible for initiating new architectural activities in the Deccan. Propagation of Dhamma मानले It is believed that he started his work from Surparka (modern Sopara, District Thane), a prosperous port city and place of Ashoka's edicts. The vertical rocks of the Sahyadri's Amgadaloidal Trap with horizontal beds must have been considered ideal for the excavation of Buddhist



monks' monasteries and prayer halls. It is probable that the inspiration for such an experiment may have come from the early Ashoka caves attempted in the quartzogranitic rock of the Erbar and Nagarjuni hills in the Gaya district of southern Bihar. These early caves, excavated by Ashoka and his grandson Dashrath, seem to have created a new style of carving, in a more permanent medium of rock, a monastery center for monks to meditate quietly and for religious studies. Such caves are undoubtedly in the tradition of the ancient Indian practice mentioned in the Swetasvatara Upanishad in which a sadhu is described to be used for quiet meditation. Sahyadri suitable for establishment of Sahagadrama (Vihar) and Chaitya-Griha, evidence suggests that rock-cut structures came into existence in western India a few decades after the advent of the (Greek) Dharmarika.

These early excavations were protected by merchant-princes who lived and prospered at Pratishthan (known as Paithan in the capital Aurangabad) during the gentle reign of the Satvahana kings. Although these rulers claimed Brahmanism, they were also tolerant of Buddhism. During his reign the country was prosperous, prosperous and peaceful. Trade and commerce brought huge wealth to the country and to the Mediterranean world. The initial stage of rock-cut activity was the Hinayana faith because other schools Mahayana-did not exist at the time. Excavations of this period can be traced back to two centuries before and after the Christian era.

Construction of Ajanta:

Excavations for the first group of caves began in the first or second century. The contemporary number of caves is not chronological, but only starts from the eastern end and works counter clockwise; through this system, the major caves excavated at that time were numbered 9, 10 and 12. They were excavated by Theravada or Hinayana Buddhists and in certain periods of Buddhist history; There were no pictures of the Buddha carved or engraved on the walls, and no representation of the Bodhisattvas. There are some paintings on the walls that have survived from this time, but they are blurred and difficult to distinguish; Many of them have been painted. Buddhas were instead represented by symbols, for example the wheel of religion or the pattern of flowers.

Cave 12 is a monastery or monastery. Its layout is quite simple: a rectangle with small rooms in which the monks lived. There is an abundance of some sculpture around the door, but otherwise it is quite insignificant, especially compared to the Mahayana Vihara present on the site. It may have been built later than the other two Hinayana caves. Caves 9 and 10 are Chaityagriha or Chaitya caves. This meant it was just a worship hall. Many of the schemes at Chaitya in Ajanta and Ellora are very similar, with a hallway with columns with a semi-circular end with a stupa, carved into a large and semi-circular rock. These caves are significant for a number of reasons. Buddhist monks still visit regularly and worship among them; they hold inscriptions and some paintings from the time of their construction; And many centuries later, artists working in the Mahayana tradition painted many of their interiors and carved beautiful facades for these caves. This painting and carving was probably done at the same time as other Mahayana caves are being excavated and worked on and the art is in the same style.

An inscription in Cave 10 states that it was a gift from King Vasithaputra and that the alphabet used to make the inscriptions can be used to make some guesses along with knowledge, from similar places, we know that most of the monks at this stage lived a little more humbly, and probably established and lived in a more perishable structure in the vicinity. The stupa will be worshiped as a reflection or inclusion in the Buddha or part of his teachings and will be the subject of meditation.

Considering the artistry of Ajanta, the influence of Hinayana caves would not have been on the paintings and sculptures of the lesser Mahayana period. Here, again, the historical sources are thin. Much work has been done to find out exactly who built the caves; which dynasties ruled and what was happening in this part of South India at that time. This is a particularly interesting question because of the many caves left in various stages of completion; Some of the caves were left at least after excavation, some were completed except for the decorations, and some remained before they were completed. Scholars have relatively little concrete evidence from which such information can be gathered: many caves have inscriptions, but they only mention names that are not mentioned in any other history.

The general consensus, however, is that it was completed in the 5th or 6th century, at the time of the decline of the Wakataka Empire, of which little is known. Some have linked it to Daskumarcharita, a novel written about more than a century later that contains some historical facts. Professor Walter Spink, who has studied the caves for more than 50 years and represents perhaps the deepest knowledge of them, has combined complete and accurate chronology with evidence, including inscriptions and some details of the construction of the caves using slavery. The construction of caves and the collapse of the Wakataka Empire, according to him, all modern caves were excavated, carved and painted in a relatively short period from 462 to 481 CE, which belonged to the kingdom of the last great king of Wakataka, King Harishen, who died from 460 to 477.

The caves were excavated as a result of the protection of members of the Wakataka court and members of the feudal states that controlled the region. During construction, the area around Ajanta was the center of conflict between the two feudal states of Wakatak: Rishikas and Asmak. Upendragupta, who is referred to as the benefactor for the caves 17 to 20, was the king of the Rishikas and ruled the region around Ajanta until around 472 when he was defeated by the Assamese. This was followed by a period of conflict in which the area was controlled and work in the caves was halted. By 475, the state of Asmaka controlled the Ajanta region and brought enough stability to keep the works going, saving for those directly sponsored by the Rishikas, such as caves 17 to 20 as direct protectors, although one of the caves 26, a large and spacious chaitya, says The construction of the cave was supported by the monk Buddhahadra, who is "connected in friendship."

The sudden and unexpected death of Harishena in 477 marked the beginning of the decline of the Wakataka Empire. His son became king, but he was not a strong leader, and feudal kingdoms began to grow in power. This newly discovered political instability halted excavations at Ajanta, resulting in an increase in the number of unfinished excavations at Ajanta. Asmak, in particular, rose to power and led a revolt that eventually overthrew the Wakatak in 530. With this final step, the stability of the Wakataka Empire changed at a time when walking on the streets was unsafe. The monks who lived in the monasteries abandoned them, the pilgrims no longer came to visit the Chaitya, and the caves gradually lost consciousness. For several hundred years they were still known and spoken; In the 8th century, the Chinese traveller Huen Tsang wrote about Ajanta. After him, the knowledge of the caves seems to have almost completely disappeared and they were grown hiding grass and bushes.

Artistic of Ajanta:

Painting and carving in these caves should be extremely difficult, due to the filtering of dim light through the entrance and the interruptions that occur each rainy season. In addition, monks will go to vihar caves as soon as possible, as there is evidence that they live there even in unfinished caves; their daily lives are likely to have some effect on the work of the artists. The caves are most likely illuminated by white cloth sheets that reflect the sunlight outside, which is present for a relatively small part of the day due to the specific geography of the surrounding area. The painters will first flatten the walls, leaving them slightly rougher so that more stickiness can occur. A thin layer of plaster will then be applied, consisting of powdered brick, fine dust, and fiber and rice husk. This will be smoothed out and uniform background painting will be applied. Finally, the designs on the background will be removed and then they will be painted. The pigments used will be made from surrounding products, such as cinnamon for red.

The painting itself changes, of course, from cave to cave. Only a handful of caves have paintings that are worth a look. In particular, Caves 1, 2, 16, and 17, in all the monasteries, have excellent protective sections on the walls, roof, and in some cases the veranda. Basically, the paintings in these caves completely cover the interior walls and ceiling, and for caves 2 and 17 they remain almost completely intact. The ceilings are mainly painted in an ornamental manner, a tile-like style that sometimes gives way to large, floral circles. Many tiles have some kind of geometric or floral motif. In some caves their color composition appears black and white, with a dark background; On closer inspection, one can distinguish between brown and other dark colors in addition to black and red and

blue accents. Other caves are more clearly colored and are considered lighter, with white and red and light sapphires forming the background of floral motifs.

The paintings on the columns, when they were there, often continue in the same style as the patterns and colors on the roofs. Human figures, which are very rarely seen on the roof, appear with increased frequency on the columns, but they are basically solitary. A good example of this is the octagonal pillar of Theravada Cave 10, which was repainted with human figures: Buddha, Bodhisattva and Jataka, or scenes from the Buddha's past life.

The largest and most detailed paintings are on the wide flat walls of the monastery. They, like the pillars, take Buddha, Bodhisattva and Jataka as the main subjects and subjects. Artists in the 19th century, due to the frequent use of varnish, tried to preserve the paintings but in the end the situation worsened. Some caves also have blackening on the top of the walls, the result of oil lamps used by monks while living in the cave. Above it are large sections of the picture that have been or have been in contact with bees, bats, and elements, and closed as a souvenir by early visitors. Yet behind all this damage one can draw pictures of deep, earthy yellow and red, and bright (albeit lighter) blues and greens. The scenes depicted range from large, over-living human figures to large groups of people, buildings and mountains and lakes and forests. The structures expand and wrap around the corners; Yashodhara Dalmiya calls it a "synthetic wrapper round quality that enchants pictures that seem to thrive in the eyes of the audience".

An important aspect of paintings, especially from a modernist point of view, is their treatment of realism. On the one hand, the artists clearly had the potential for realism: perspective and shading are used in various aspects of the scene, and individual figures are often in a realistic style. However, there are also some places where abstraction is used. The figures are exaggerated and the proportions distorted to enhance their emotions and movements. The buildings are flat and often have roofs supported by pillars on either side of the occupants. Despite the use of the approach in some places, "there is generally no attempt to create a recessionary effect;" Large groups of people, for example, collapse on top of each other. In some cases, abstraction becomes symbolic. An example of this is that sometimes the figures appear to be vertical on squares and bricks that are somewhat out of place and highly geometric; It represents the Himalayan mountains. The effect of moving from realism to abstraction defines the style of painting in many ways, and is important for modernist painters, art historians, and art critics in their Ajanta discussions.

CONCLUSION:

There are more critics, more important factors influencing Ajanta, but those discussed so far have the basis and basis for further discourse. The artwork of the Ajanta Caves was intertwined with the foundations of Indian modernity and the quest to define 'Indian' art. How or why were considered influential arise from person to person, from school of thought to school of thought. Some saw Ajanta's art work as an in-depth example of early realism, some saw it as a beautiful testament to the spirituality that pervaded India's entire history, and some saw simple magnificence in the figures depicted.

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