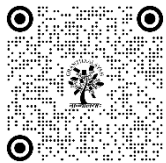


A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE SCULPTURAL ART OF MADAN KAMDEV: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v4.i2.2023.5239](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v4.i2.2023.5239)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

The origins of Indian art may be traced back to the first cave paintings discovered at Bhimbetka, Madhya Pradesh. Indian art has evolved from crude wall paintings to intricate stone carved sculptures, all of which have tremendous aesthetic value. It is just a representation of thoughts and beliefs that are deeply ingrained in the human psyche. Early cultures created their art using numerous symbols and themes that reflected their beliefs and customs. Art was valued more intrinsically. Sculptural motifs and designs were designed solely to embellish the art components seen on the walls of temples and palaces. However, these complex themes were associated with a strong socio-cultural mindset.

Keywords: Sculpture, Temple, Art

1. INTRODUCTION

The Madan Kamdev temple complex is located in north Guwahati, Assam, India. The area is rich in artistic designs, which have a high intrinsic value. The temple structure dates back to the Pala dynasty, which followed the Salastambhas' hegemony in Kamarupa. As a result, the building date has been dated to the post-9th century CE. The region has the remnants of a pancaratha-style temple. (Dubash, 1979) The temple complex also has a smaller collection of temples dedicated to the deity Siva. (Figure 1) The enormous number of lesser Shiva temples adhere to the larger temple's design.

As of today, archaeologists have unearthed two great temples, one of which is completely destroyed. Only the temple's plinths have remained. The sculpture panels were gathered and placed in a local museum. The sculptures discovered were mostly sexual in character. Madan Kamdev is an important source for in-depth research about sensuality, architecture, and art, among other things. However, the creative style present within the temple complex is unique in nature.



Figure 1- The Pancarata style temple of Madan Kamdev

2. DISCUSSION

The Madan Kamdev complex is rich in angasikhara motifs that were employed as patterns. Angasikhara, also known as small temples, are common in the area. They are at least three feet tall and depict the temple's sikhara. Two different panels have been discovered with the theme of five angasikharas arranged horizontally. (Figure 2) This might have been the top portion of the temple's doors. This pattern is ubiquitous, suggesting that the sikhara section of the temple may have been embellished with these angasikharas. The five angasikharas used in a single panel would indicate that there was a chance there were four additional temples nearby. As two big temples have been uncovered thus far, the themes indicate the possibility of three additional significant temples in the area. There is also the potential of a reference to the pancatirtha, as evidenced by the Odishan art discovered in the Jagannath temple. In fact, the pancatirtha notion is well-known in Odishan tradition, implying a cultural impact on Madan Kamdev's painting. (Saraswati, 1975)



Figure 2- The *angasikhara* motif

The Madan Kamdev temple complex has been recognized as a significant artistic site. Not only does it reflect a great depth of sexual art and themes, but it may also have been a thriving hub of human contact throughout the Pala period of Kamarupa history. The existence of several temples demonstrates the richness and diversity of civilization that may have

existed during Kamarupa's early history. From an artistic standpoint, the temple site is an excellent example of how Kamarupa art was a melting pot of many creative aspects from all over the world.

The Madan Kamdev temple complex has more than just a temple at its center. It has been seen as a canvas on which diverse types of sculptural art thrive. The sculptures' themes represent the traditional beliefs of numerous sectarian factions that evolved in early Kamarupa. Nature's items, such as trees, leaves, and flowers, have always held a special place in Indian art. (Chandra, 1996) This is also visible in the case of Madan Kamdev. These had resulted in the emergence of themes and symbols with great esoteric importance. As symbols connected to works of art, motifs such as purna kumbha, kalpavriksha, and astapadma (Figure 3) were used. The majority of the sculptural designs applied to religious buildings throughout the early historical period used natural elements. The plants and animals were the primary sources of fascination that enhanced the artwork. Nature took on a unique role in Indian art with the emergence of numerous religious and sectarian themes. Early Kamarupa art was also generous enough to include symbolic elements relating to nature.



Figure 3- The astapadma motif

Kamarupa's artistic evolution has occurred through a variety of avenues and resources. Sectarian aspects from the Buddhist and Jain traditions have made their way into Kamarupa's mainstream art. (Choudhury, 1998) This is also visible in the Surya Pahar ruins in Goalpara. The Kamarupa kingdom was not a unified artistic entity. It represented a much broader heritage that included both foreign and native aspects. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that Kamarupa art evolved in a way comparable to Gandhara and Mathura art. It is not incorrect to say that Kamarupa art evolved over centuries, with cultural aspects from all throughout the valley blending together to become Kamrupi art.

3. CONCLUSION

Madan Kamdev's paintings had a significant impact on the surrounding communities. Later temples at Pingaleswar and Dirgheswari have similar artistic elements. This indicates that Madan Kamdev's work made a significant contribution to the art of Kamarupa in general.

Since its inception, early Assamese art history has evolved through many periods. First and foremost, the continuity of floral themes and designs from many geographical places to Kamarupa demonstrates that art has migrated significantly throughout time. They had blended indigenous materials, resulting in a more diversified type of art in early Kamarupa.

Second, Kamarupa sculptural sculpture was a blend of sectarian components that flourished in early Brahmaputra valley civilization. Various patterns and symbols discovered today may be traced back to cults such as Shaivism and

Buddhism. For example, the astapadma pattern is inspired by both Brahmanical and Buddhist ideas on continuity and change. The pattern incorporates both the Buddhist teaching of the eightfold path of Dhamma and the Brahmanical faith's belief in the cyclic concept of time. As a result, each symbol or theme had a set of beliefs and features that led to its adoption into temples and structures.

Lastly, nature's components have been studied since ancient times. Early cultures were always eager to discover nature's mysteries and the bounty that she held inside her. One example is the kalpavriksha pattern, which has its origins fully in Puranic culture. The tree has several attributes that humans were unable to get. This motif was nothing more than a reflection of people's fantasies about the treasures that nature had hidden inside her. Nonetheless, these themes became prominent artistic icons in the early temples.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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