

CHAPTER -6

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Jainism is an important religion which having followers of more than two million and above. Its contribution to the Indian heritage is more significant, enjoyed real patronage, and it has produced worthy monks and laymen of whom the society can be proud. The Jain contributors to the Indian art and architecture, to the preservation, enrichment of Indian literature and to the cultivation of languages.

Jainism has all along installed a religious zeal among its votaries, the concrete expression of which seen all over the country in works of art and architecture, sculpture, caves and temples. Jaina literature is not only religious but also embraces many secular branches of learning including mathematics and astronomy.

Throughout the age of history art has remained a motivating force for the people. Religion plays an important role in its development. Manuscripts and Miniatures preserved in the Jaina bhaṇḍāras supply ample source material for the study of the origin of the religion. The Jainas are among the oldest religion with theology, philosophy, religio-socio-rituals, literary traditions, etc. The social history of the community, therefore, can be described on the basis of contemporary Jain texts, their languages, script gives an identification mark in the Jaina religion a perfect systematic manner elaborating all the values.

Western Indian parts of today's India held a distinguishable place in artistic achievements in ancient and medieval India. It particularly excelled in the art of painting. All great masterpieces of ancient Indian painting come from the Northern Deccan and the Western border of Malwa which almost touches Gujarat and extend upto Jaunpur. The level of high artistic achievements appears to have been maintained during the succeeding period of the Sultanate rule in Gujarat. The Gujarāti school of architecture shows remarkable achievements in the reign of Mahmud Begada (1459-1511 A.D.) and in the days of Akbar 'Gujarāti' became an epithet of distinction among painters and artisians.

From 12 to late 16th centuries the Jaina style artist devised for the first time in India a characteristic and consistent vocabulary of pictorial language suitable to small format of miniature paintings. An indigenous school of India Miniature painting emerged in Gujarat under the patronage of Jaina religion and concretized in the form of illustrated pages in the canonical texts. The small format and the typology of linguistic vocabulary restricted its growth of the style. However, within

the framework, the Jaina style artist managed to execute wonderful highly creative pictographic configuration. Each of such configurations represents a character of an episode and also signifies the crucial aspect of that episode. That is how, the Jaina artist evolved the synoptic visual narrative format.

The Jain art also represents through monuments and sculptures. The Jain temple architecture displays a well defined tendency towards the multiplication of objects of veneration, roof elements and image chambers. Mythological and cosmological themes have also provided motives for composite temple constructions. The Jina is present in all realms, from the cosmic to the public to the domestic. The simple perfected form of the Jina has a purity and an austerity that reflect the ideas of Jainism and remain consistent, regardless of the context in which the figure is installed or envisioned, thus transcending the vicissitudes of time and space within the world. Jain seems to have been the originators of some of the major icons of the developments in Indian religious art. Archaeological and epigraphical evidence suggests that it was the Ardhamāhāyāna sect of the Jains at Mathura who first developed and popularized the anthropomorphic image of the liberated being.

The innovation and creativity that have exerted lasting influence on the art and devotional practice of the other religious groups with whom the Jains coexisted. In the manifold deities and imagery that surround the icons of the Jinas, the Jains adopted architectural forms, and imagery that were popular throughout society. Adaptability, the remarkable capacity and the strict doctrine regulations of the faith have been salient features of Jainism throughout its long history. The Jinas remain pure and eternal a powerful unifying presence of the beings whose teachings lead to faithful liberation.

Coming to the aesthetic significance of the Jain art, the colours which were used by the Jain painters were of natural pigments and the artificial pigments. Red ink was also used to indicate the end of the chapters and drawing border lines, circles and straight lines. The technical process of the treatment of the human figure and landscape representation of animals gives an important place in the Indian art. The widespread use of the gold and blue at the expense of the traditional red ground resulted in a dramatic shift in the colour harmonies of Jain painting.

After sixteenth centuries, the Jain painting was in danger of the manuscripts were borrowed from contemporary sources, borders were more elaborated, other paintings adopted indigenous regional styles, eroding the strict hieratic conventions of the Western Indian style. In the seventeenth century and later shows the passive influence of the Mughal court style, which was effectively disseminated as a natural consequence

of Mughal hegemony. The result often termed Popular or Provincial Mughal painting, effectively bridged the late medieval world of the Western Indian Jain tradition and the modernist tendencies of the Mughal style. Before the end of the sixteenth century Jain artists had shifted from the use of the three-quarter profile and protruding eye to the use of full profile. This and other subtle changes in the description of costume and architectural detail all point to the impact of the Mughal style on Jain painting.

To sum up, the Western Indian school held a dominant position in Indian painting from the eleventh through the early sixteenth centuries. By the seventeenth century new forces then came to play in the form of the Mughal tradition, which altered the course of Indian painting dramatically. The studios serving the Jain communities of Western India contributed to produce illustrated manuscripts in an accomplished routine manner.

The conservation and preservation work carried at the L.D. Institute of Indology, L.D. Museum and N.C. Mehta Gallery. The Institute has a long history since its inception in 1957. The L.D. Institute of Indology preserved the collection by using the natural indigenous techniques, which are the product of sweets flag and black cumin. L.D. Indology has joined NMM(National Mission for Manuscripts) in 2003. The National Mission for Manuscripts was established in February 2003, by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India. A unique project in its programme and mandate, the Mission seeks to unearth and preserve the vast manuscript wealth of India. India possesses an estimate of five million manuscripts, probably the largest collection in the world. These cover a variety of themes, textures and aesthetics, scripts, languages, calligraphies, illuminations and illustrations. Together, they constitute the 'memory' of India's history, heritage and thought. These manuscripts lie scattered across the country and beyond, in numerous institutions as well as private collections, often unattended and undocumented. The National Mission for Manuscripts aims to locate, document, preserve and render these accessible—to connect India's past with its future, its memory with its aspirations.

The L.D. Institute, Ahmedabad has been collaborating with Mission as an MRC since September 2003. It has so far documented 64,740 manuscripts available in the different Jain Bhandaras of Gujarat state and catalogued electronic data of the database. It has covered 11 institutes covering 12 districts during the survey and has held public programs in the print and electronic media for sensitizing the people on the preservations of manuscripts.

The MCC has established a conservation laboratory with basic infrastructures. It has so far taken preventive care of 4,925 manuscripts

and given curative conservation treatment to 60 manuscripts on paper, 56 on copper alloy and 4 on textiles, which are badly damaged.

In the L.D. Museum, since after receiving grant from the Ministry of Culture for the development of Museum and N.C. Mehta Gallery, a combined laboratory was set up in the basement of the Museum. Since then, there has been more than 100 miniatures paintings and other artifacts of stone, metal, patas and Vijnaptipatras. The concept of preservation and conservation lies in the Indian Institute and preserving of tangible heritage through indigenous and modern methods and techniques.