

Brain International School

Subject: Painting(049)

Class: 11

Month: October

CH-6 The Buddhist Jain and Hindu Art.

Q.1 How is the Lion Capital important to us? Explain its characteristics.

Ans. The Lion Capital of Ashoka is one of the most iconic symbols of Indian heritage and an important historical and cultural artifact. It was originally erected by Emperor Ashoka in 250 BCE at Sarnath, near Varanasi, and it is closely associated with the spread of Buddhism and the principles of Dharma (moral law) during Ashoka's reign. Today, the Lion Capital is the national emblem of India, symbolizing India's sovereignty, strength, and unity.

Importance of the Lion Capital:

1. **National Emblem:**
The Lion Capital is the official national emblem of India. It symbolizes the ideals of truth, power, and courage, and reflects the country's values of unity in diversity. It is seen on official documents, coins, and government institutions.
2. **Historical Significance:**
The Lion Capital reflects ancient Indian art, architecture, and philosophy. It is an important symbol of the Mauryan Empire, which, under Ashoka, was one of the most significant empires in Indian history. The Lion Capital's origins are tied to Ashoka's role in promoting moral governance and the propagation of Buddhist ideals.
3. **Buddhist Connection:**
The Lion Capital was originally placed atop the Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath, where Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment. This connection to the Dharma Chakra (wheel of Dharma) in the emblem links it to Buddhism and the idea of moral governance, which was central to Ashoka's rule after his conversion to Buddhism.

Characteristics of the Lion Capital:

The Lion Capital is a masterpiece of Mauryan art and has several distinct characteristics that make it one of the most important cultural symbols of India.

1. **The Four Lions:**

The Lion Capital is dominated by four majestic lions, each standing on a circular base. The lions are sculpted in a realistic, powerful posture, with their bodies arranged in a way that they seem to stand in a circular formation, facing north, east, south, and west. This arrangement signifies the universality of Ashoka's rule and his dedication to protecting Dharma in all directions.

The four lions are often seen as a symbol of power, courage, and royalty, as well as protection and authority. The fact that they are all positioned back-to-back, however, also implies a sense of unity in diversity, as each lion represents different facets of India and its many cultures.

2. The Wheel (Dharma Chakra):

Below the lions, the capital features a wheel, the Dharma Chakra, which is an important symbol in Buddhism and represents moral law. This wheel has 24 spokes, which are said to represent the 24 hours of the day and signify that Dharma is an ongoing, eternal process.

The Dharma Chakra also symbolizes righteousness, justice, and equity, with its circular form representing the continuity of time and the infinite nature of truth.

Q.2 What are the specifications of the Maurya sculpture ? explain any one of them.

Ans. The Mauryan sculpture refers to the artistic works produced during the Mauryan Empire (c. 322–185 BCE), one of the most significant periods in ancient Indian history. Under the rule of Chandragupta Maurya, Bindusara, and Ashoka, Mauryan art saw great advancements, particularly in sculpture. The sculptures from this period are characterized by their realism, precision, and strong connection to Buddhist and Jain religious traditions, as well as the political ambitions of the Mauryan rulers.

1. **Naturalism and Realism:** Mauryan sculptures displayed a high degree of realism and a focus on naturalistic representation. Artists worked meticulously to depict the human and animal forms with great accuracy and detail.
2. **Use of Sandstone:** Polished sandstone was the primary medium for Mauryan sculptures, known for its smooth texture and ability to hold fine details. This sandstone, especially from the Chunar region, was highly valued and used in sculptures and architectural monuments.
3. **Political and Religious Significance:** Many of the sculptures had both religious and political meanings, reflecting the Buddhist, Jain, and royal patronage of the Mauryan period. The sculptures often served as propaganda tools for the ruler's ideologies and also as symbols of piety and power.
4. **Iconic Monuments and Pillars:** Ashoka's pillars (e.g., the Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath) are the most famous examples of Mauryan sculpture, which feature lion capitals, chhatris, and columns inscribed with edicts. These pillars were not only political statements but also symbols of the ruler's authority and moral governance.

CH-7 The Art of Ajanta caves

Q.1 Describe the painting “Padmapani Bodhisattva”?

Ans. Padmapani Bodhisattva is often seen as an embodiment of compassion and benevolence, central virtues in Mahayana Buddhism. The painting, with its serene and peaceful demeanor, reminds the followers of Buddhism of the ideal qualities of the Bodhisattva—compassion, wisdom, and the readiness to help others attain enlightenment.

The Padmapani Bodhisattva painting is a masterpiece of Buddhist art, not just for its beauty but also for its ability to convey deep spiritual messages. It showcases the height of Indian art in the Gupta period, which was a golden age for Indian culture and artistic expression. The detailed modeling of the figure, the use of color, and the elegant rendering of the Bodhisattva's robes exemplify the advanced artistic techniques of the time.

Q.2 What is Mara Vijay? Describe the compositional arrangement of this relief.

Ans The Mara Vijay relief, as seen in Ajanta Cave 26, is a highly symbolic and intricately composed sculpture that captures the spiritual conflict between the Buddha and Mara. The composition is arranged to highlight both the divine serenity of the Buddha and the chaotic, threatening presence of Mara and his forces.

1. **The Buddha's Central Figure:** The Buddha is depicted in a seated meditative posture (the Dhyanasana position), with his right hand touching the earth in the Bhumisparsha mudra (gesture of calling the earth to witness), symbolizing the moment when he achieved enlightenment under the Bodhi tree.

The Buddha sits with serenity and calmness, embodying spiritual triumph and inner peace. His expression is tranquil and composed, showing that he is unaffected by Mara's efforts to disturb him.

2. **Mara's Representation:** Mara is portrayed as a demon-like figure, often shown riding a chariot pulled by elephants or horses, representing his power and influence over worldly distractions. Mara's face typically appears angry, menacing, and in a state of frustration, as he is unable to disrupt the Buddha's meditation.

In the relief, Mara may be accompanied by his army, including demonic figures, who serve to represent the forces of temptation and delusion. These figures often seem to attack or approach the Buddha, but are ultimately rejected by the Buddha's spiritual strength.

3. **The Attendants of Mara:**

Mara's daughters (often personifications of desire and temptation) are depicted in the relief as beautiful figures who attempt to seduce or distract the Buddha from his path of enlightenment. They are often shown as elegant, sensuous women, embodying the allure of worldly pleasures and distractions.

