

THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE: AJANTA AND ITS FRESCO**NIVEDITA CHOUBEY**

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ABSTRACT Among Indians, the love of colour and design is so deeply ingrained that from the earliest times they created paintings and drawings even during the periods of history for which we have no direct evidence. Indian sculpture is famous in all over world. Ajanta is a great example of Indian iconography. Painting is one of the most delicate forms of art giving expression to human thoughts and feelings through the media of line and colour. Many thousands of years before the dawn of history, when man was only a cave dweller, he painted his rock shelters to satisfy his aesthetic sensitivity and creative urge.

Key words: creative urge, sensitivity, rock shelters

Introduction

Painting is one of the most delicate forms of art giving expression to human thoughts and feelings through the media of line and colour. Many thousands of years before the dawn of history, when man was only a cave dweller, he painted his rock shelters to satisfy his aesthetic sensitivity and creative urge.

Among Indians, the love of colour and design is so deeply ingrained that from the earliest times they created paintings and drawings even during the periods of history for which we have no direct evidence. Indian sculpture is famous in all over world. Ajanta is a great example of Indian iconography.

I have visited Ajanta & here I found that it is a marvelous sculpture done by human beings. Ajanta lyrics in stone have gained international renown & redesignated as "World heritage site." Ajanta caves, excavated between the 2nd

century BC. and 6th century AD. are renowned for Buddhist paintings. Comprise Buddhist monasteries and Jain faiths. While Ajanta represents the most perfect example of Indian wall paintings. Ajanta is famous for its great architecture and Aurangabad is famous for its great historical places we can find many more historical places near Ajanta like Ellora which is a great example of Indian architecture which described by me besides Ajanta. The Ajanta Caves Geography and Architecture The Buddhist rock-hewn Ajanta Caves, are only about 59 kilometers from Jalgaon and from Aurangabad 104 kilometers (from Ellora 100 kilometers).

At the end of the 17th century, Buddhism began to decline in the land of its origin and its shrines fell into desolation and ruin. For a thousand years, Ajanta lay buried in the jungle-

clad slopes of the western mountain range, until in 1819 it was discovered accidentally.

The isolated scrap of horse shoe shaped rock rising over a ravine to a steep height of 76.20metre (250 ft.) made an ideal site for the monastic sanctuary. Limited in space, the caves had to be more compact than those of Ellora. Most of them were of an earlier date, the oldest belonging to pre Christian times. The architectural and sculptural values in these rock temples are surpassed by the addition of third art form, painting (fresco), which, more than all else, has given Ajanta its world fame.

Having seen these cave temples the visitor will perhaps wonder at the profusion of secular themes and motifs on the walls. He may be bewildered by the uninhibited vivacity of the female figures, the famous "Ajanta type" with well curved forms, elongated eyes, attractive mien and ample adornment. The fact was that the artist-monks and their associates painted side by side and with equal zest the physical beauty of women and the spritual beauty of the Boddhisattva.

There the thirty caves, some of them unfinished and negligible. Sixteen contain mural paintings, but the best work is to be found in caves 1, 2, 16, 17, and 19. The best sculptures are in caves 1, 4, 17, 19, 24, and 26. The numbering of the caves has been done in consecutive order and has no relation to their chronological sequence. it starts at the western extremity of the rock, near the entrance. The present entrance does not seem to have been the original approach to the excavations.

Five of the caves, 9, 10, 19, 26, and 29, are chaitya halls. The others are vihars. As for antiquity the oldest (second century B.C. to second century A.D.), the creation of the Hinayan system, are Chaityas Caves 9 and 10, and viharas 8, 12, 13, and 30. The others, excavated after a long interval, belong to the fifth and sixth centuries and make the Mahayana series. In olden times, each cave had flights of steps which led to the picturesque stream flowing deep down through a narrow gorge. with the collapse of cave front most of these steps have been destroyed. Caves 1, 2, 16, and 17 are fitted with spotlights, available for use on payment. There use is essential.

The technique employed by the painters in the ancient India has been described in contemporary works on Aesthetics. First, a rough plaster of clay, cow-dung and rice-husks were laid upon the selected rock surface and thoroughly pressed in. It made a layer about one and half centimeter in thickness. On this a coat of fine lime was spread in order to attain a smooth surface. The outlines were drawn with brush and then colour was applied. The pigments used were of the simplest kind of materials such as yellow earth, red ocher, green rock crushed into burnt dust brick, lamp black and copper oxide. A second was then applied. Through this the outlines were dimly visible. Other brushes were used to fill in colour until the picture, in the language of ancient Aesthetics, "bloomed". Finally, plastic relief was attained by shading with darker lines and toning down the highlights.

The central theme on the walls comes under two heads-narrative scenes from the Buddha's life and illustrations of Jataka fables. Within this framework of spirituality an entire pageant of contemporary life has been vividly covered. Depicted on these walls is the portraiture not only of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, but of a wide range of human types in different

attitudes, under the stress of varied emotions and drawn from every social level.

The paintings on the ceiling, unlike those on the walls, are mainly decorative patterns. They include geometric designs, floral and ornamental motifs, flying figures of celestial beings, animals, birds, plants. The grouping in panels or compartments, with adequate variation in colour schemes.



Conclusion

Caves of Ajanta defines the hard life of Buddhist monks, a very artistic place to visit; it gives us knowledge of how those artist monks used to live, and also how they are committed to their religion.

The Ajanta paintings, or more likely the general style they come from influenced painting in Tibet and Shrilanka.

The rediscovery of ancient Indian paintings at Ajanta provided Indian artists examples from ancient India to follow. Nandlal Bose experimented with techniques to follow the ancient style which allowed him to develop his

unique style. Abindranath Tagore also used the Ajanta paintings for inspiration

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