

# JAINA-RŪPA-MANDANA

Volume I

जैन - रूप - मण्डन

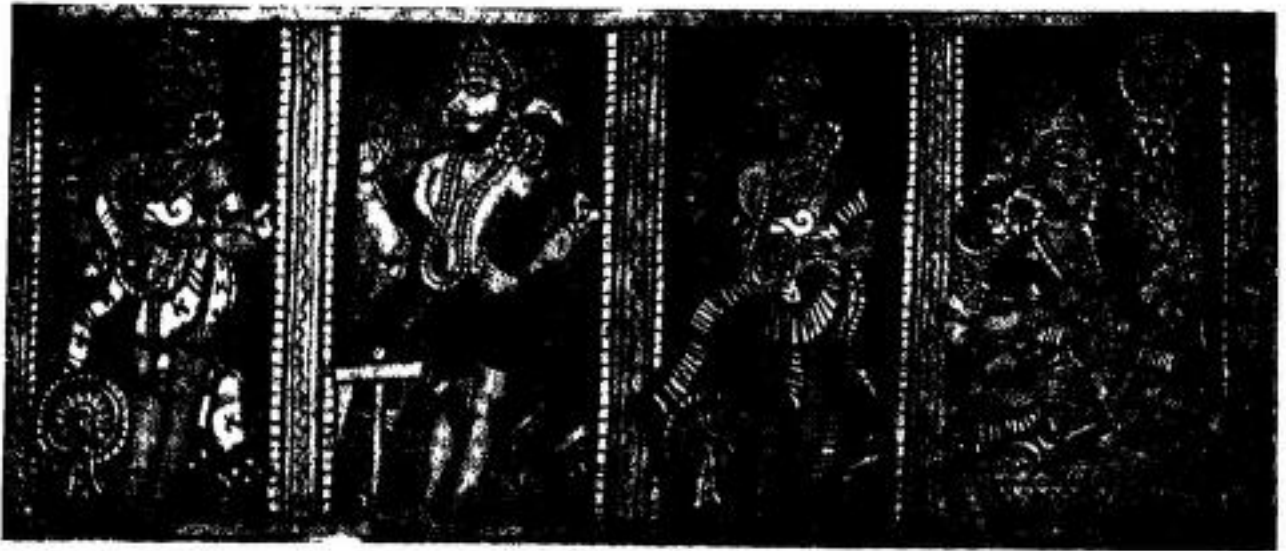
भाग १

(Jaina Iconography)

UMAKANT P. SHAH

*M.A. Ph.D., Dip. Museology*

Ex-Editor, Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Art  
Ex-Deputy Director, Oriental Institute Baroda



Vasudeva

Baladeva

Prati-Vasudeva

Cakravartin

abhinav publications

NEW DELHI

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# Iconography of 24 Tirthankaras

### 1. FIRST TIRTHANKARA: RṢABHANĀTHA

The first Jaina Tirthankara Rṣabhanātha (or Vṛṣabhanātha) is variously invoked as Ādinātha, Ādīvara, Yugādideva, Nābheya (son of Nābhi), and so on. He was the son of Nābhi and Marudevi ruling from the city of Ayodhya. Nābhirāja was the last of the Kulakaras according to the Śvetāmbaras, whereas Rṣabha, the son of Nābhi (also a Kulakara) was the last Kulakara according to the Digambaras. Rṣabhanātha is further addressed as Prathama-rāja (First King), Prathama-bhikṣuka (First Anchorite) and the Prathama or Ādi-nātha (First Lord or Tirthankara).<sup>1</sup>

Golden in complexion, Rṣabha descended upon this earth from the Sarvārthasiddhi vimāna (heaven) of Jaina cosmography and was born in the Uttarāśādhā nakṣatra, according to both the sects. The Āvaśyaka Nirṣukti offers two explanations of his name: He was so called because he had the mark of a bull (*vṛṣabha*) on his thigh (*urā*). Or, because the bull was the first amongst the (fourteen—Śve., or sixteen—Dig.) dreams seen by his mother (at the time of his descent from heaven), he was called Vṛṣabha.<sup>2</sup>

Digambara writers generally say that the name of every Tirthankara was given by Indra at the end of the birth-bath ceremony. In his Ādipurāna, Jinasena offers various explanations. Being the best and the greatest of all in the universe he was called Vṛṣabha, or because he showered the nectar of Dharma or because his mother had seen a bull amongst the (sixteen) auspicious dreams and so on.<sup>3</sup> The bull also became his cognizance according to both the sects.

According to the Ādipurāna of Jinasena, Yaśasvatī and Sunandā were the two queens of Rṣabha, according to the Harivaṃśa they were Sunandā and Nandā, while according to Śvetāmbara writers they were Sunandā and Sumaṅgalā. Bāhubali, a son and Sundarī, a daughter, were born to his wife Sunandā while the other queen gave birth to Bharata and a daughter named Brāhmī. In all one hundred sons were born.

Rṣabhadeva first taught people how to kindle fire as also various arts, including the seventy-two arts for females and the sixty-four arts for males. He taught dramaturgy to his son Bharata, as also the various methods of warfare and instructed his two daughters Brāhmī and Sundarī in writing (scripts) and arithmetic respectively. Rṣabha invented town-planning and divided his people into three classes of Kṣātriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, on the basis of their professions. Indra built the city of Vinitā for Rṣabhadeva.

Having enjoyed kingship for an extraordinary number of years, Rṣabha renounced the world at the request of Laukāntika gods. Ravisena and other Digambara authors say that after seeing the dance of Nilāñjanā Rṣabha's mind turned away from worldly pleasures. It is said Indra had sent the dancer for this very purpose and when, in the midst of dance, Nilāñjanā suddenly disappeared, Rṣabha thought of the evanescence of all worldly objects.

Two fragments of a frieze from Mathura, assignable to Śunga age, now preserved in the museum at Lucknow (nos. J.354+609) seem to represent the scene of the dance of Nilāñjanā and Rṣabha meditating after turning a monk (*Fig. 18*). Under a pavilion, a female is dancing in front of a royal personage. The standing figures on the right appear to be Laukāntika gods while the naked figure (half preserved and

According to the Tiloyapaṇṇatti, they were known as Kunthū and Dharaṇā respectively.

The Śāsanadevatās of the tīrtha of Śīṭalanātha were Brahma yakṣa and Aśokā yakṣi according to the Śvetāmbara belief and Brahma yakṣa and Mānavī yakṣi according to the Digambara sect. The Tiloyapaṇṇatti however says that they were Brahmeśvara and Jvālāmālinī. Śīṭala obtained nirvāṇa on Mt. Sammata.

Golden yellow in complexion, Śīṭalanātha had Śrī-vṛkṣa as his cognizance according to Digambara texts (except the Tiloyapaṇṇatti which gives the svastika as his *lāñchana*): the Śvetāmbara writers prescribe *śrī-vatsa* mark as his cognizance.

In the Archaeological Museum, Gwalior, is a sculpture of a Jina sitting in padmāsana upon a seat with an inscription on it dated in samvat 1552 (?). In the centre of the seat is the tree symbol. The figure, with the head lost, is placed on a pedestal of another image. The pedestal is a simhāsana with two lions, the dharmacakra in the centre and a yakṣa and a yakṣi figure at the right and left ends respectively. At the lowermost end of this simhāsana, below the dharmacakra, is a small figure of the cognizance which looks like a lion. So this simhāsana belonged to another Jina figure, whereas the Jina with the tree symbol is of course Śīṭalanātha.

Tiwari refers to an image of Śīṭala from Tripuri, M.P., preserved in the Indian Museum. It is a partly mutilated piece with the lower portion constituting the pedestal and part of the top portions broken and lost. The cognizance of the Jina is therefore not known and it is difficult to identify the Tīrthaṅkara represented by the sculpture.<sup>138</sup> However it is a good specimen of art of Tripuri of the mediaeval age.

According to Jinaprabha sūtrī, Śīṭalanātha was worshipped in a shrine in the Prayāga-tīrtha (Allahabad).<sup>139</sup> The Jainas of Vidisha today regard Vidisha as the old Bhaddilapura, the birth place of Śīṭala and have a shrine dedicated to this Jina.

In the Khandagiri caves at Orissa, Śīṭalanātha is shown sitting in Cave 8 and standing in Cave 9.<sup>140</sup>

In the National Museum, New Delhi, no. 48.4/46 is a metal image of Śīṭala sitting on a lion-throne. Between the lions is depicted the *śrī-vatsa* which is his cognizance. The simhāsana is flanked by yakṣa Brahma and yakṣi Aśokā. On the pedestal are depicted the nine planets, the dharmacakra flanked by two deer and a seated devotee at each extreme. The inscription on the back of the image is dated samvat 1542.

In the Bhaṇḍāra Basti, Śravaṇa Belagoḷa, we have a standing figure of Śīṭala with the Brahma yakṣa and Mānavī yakṣi by his sides. We also have a figure of this Jina in the Mūḍabidri set of Tīrthaṅkaras and one figure in the Veṇḍur set. P. Gururaja Bhatt has published a white stone sculpture of Śīṭala standing from Kallu-Basti, Mudabidure.<sup>141</sup> He has also noticed images of Śīṭala in Eda-Bala-Basti and Ammanavara-Basti at Karkala-Hiriyangadi.

In the Śāntinātha temple, Kumbharia, an inscription on an image of Śīṭalanātha shows that the image was installed in samvat 1138. Of an image of Śīṭala in the Pārśvanātha temple, Kumbharia, only the inscribed pedestal is preserved which shows that the image was installed in samvat 1161. In cell 16 of the same temple there was installed an image of Śīṭala whose pedestal alone dated samvat 1259 is preserved. Inscription on the pedestal of an image of Śīṭala in cell 37, Vimāla Vasahi, Abu, shows that the image was installed in samvat 1245. In cell no. 593/4 at Śatruṅjaya is a *Panca-tīrthī* image of Śīṭala installed in samvat 1517 (inscription no. 227, Kanchanasagara suri, *op. cit.*).

At Chandrāvati, Zālrāpaṭaṇa, Rājasthān, there is a famous old shrine of Śīṭalanātha erected in the tenth century.

## 11. ELEVENTH TĪRTHAṅKARA: ŚREYĀMSANĀTHA

Śreyāmsanātha was the son of Viṣṇurāja and Viṣṇudevī (acc. to Hemacandra, but Veṇḍudevī acc. to Tiloyapaṇṇatti) or Nandā (acc. to Uttarapurāṇa and other Digambara sources), king and queen of the city of Simhapura. Golden in appearance, Śreyāmsa was born in the Śravaṇa nakṣatra, having descended from the Acyuta or Puṣpottara Vimāna.<sup>142</sup>

Hemacandra's two explanations of the name are far-fetched as almost all others for different Jinas are. He has somehow tried to connect Śreyāmsa with *śreyas* (spiritual good or merit).<sup>143</sup>

The Jina obtained kevalajñāna while meditating under a Tumbura tree (Uttarapurāṇa) or Palāśa tree (Tiloyapaṇṇatti). According to Hemacandra it was the Aśoka tree. T.N. Ramachandran's Table gives Tānduka as the Caitya tree. The Samavāyānga sūtra reads it as Tinduga.

The cognizance of Śreyāmsa is Rhinoceros (*khadgī, gaṇḍaḥ*) according to both the sects. Ramachandran has noted three different traditions about this Jina's cognizance: (1) Rhinoceros, (2) Deer, (3) Garuḍa. The last two alternatives seem to have been based on some Kānṇada traditions.

The Jina was followed by a band of 77 gaṇadhara with Kunthū as their leader according to the Uttarapurāṇa, but Dharma according to Tiloyapaṇṇatti, Gostubha according to Samavāyānga sūtra and Kaśyapa according to others. Dharaṇā (Dig.) or Cāraṇā (TP) or Dhāriṇī (Śve.) was the head of the order of āryikās of this Jina. Śreyāmsa obtained nirvāṇa on Mt. Sammata.

Īṣvara and Gaurī are his yakṣa and yakṣiṇī respectively according to the Digambara traditions (except the Tiloyapaṇṇatti which gives Kumāra and Mahākālī) while the Śvetāmbaras invoke them as Yakṣeṭ and Mānavī.

Triptṣṭha, the first Vāsudeva and Vijaya, the first Baladeva, of Jaina Purāṇas, lived in this age. According to Jinaprabha sūri, Tirthas (places of pilgrimage) of Śreyāmsa existed on the Vindhya-giri and Malaya-giri.

A. Bannerji has noticed an image of Śreyāmsa in *kāyotsarga mudrā* at Pakbira (Purulia), W. Bengal.<sup>144</sup> There is an image of Śreyāmsa in the Indore Museum, M.P.

Sculptures of Śreyāmsa are found in caves 8 and 9 at Khandagiri, Orissa.<sup>145</sup>

B.C. Bhattacharya writes, "At Sarnath, in Benares, the traditional place of the Jina, there is a Jaina temple dedicated to this patriarch. An old image of the same Jina may be seen in the Brahmanical sculpture shed attached to the Museum." According to him the image is no. C.62 in the Museum.<sup>146</sup> In the Nagpur Museum is a sculpture from Cedi area, Madhya Pradesh, assignable to c. 10th-11th cent. A.D., which has on the pedestal a figure of the cognizance looking like a rhinoceros. It has been published as representing Śreyāmsa in the second edition of B.C. Bhattacharya's *Jaina Iconography* (plate XVI).

In the Provincial Museum, Lucknow, no. J.856 is a *Pañca-tīrthī* sculpture of this Jina from Sahet-Mahet (ancient Śrāvastī), district Gonda, U.P. Below the dharmacakra in the centre of the simhāsana is the figure of rhinoceros, the cognizance of Śreyāmsanātha. It may be noted that the Jina has hair-locks on his shoulders which is unwarranted.

No. 8 in the Shivpuri Museum, M.P. is a sculpture of Śreyāmsa standing on a simhāsana in the centre of which in a niche is a small figure of an *ācārya* with his right hand in the *vyākhyāna mudrā*. He is sitting in *padmāsana* and the figure could also represent the Jina giving the sermon. Below the seat of this figure is the dharmacakra below which at the lowermost end of the pedestal is the figure of the cognizance of Śreyāmsa. The sculpture came from Narwar, M.P.

In the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, is a *Pañcatīrthī* brass image of Śreyāmsa dated samvat 1525 according to an inscription on its back. In Cell no. 11, Pārśvanātha temple, Kumbharia, is the pedestal of a sculpture of this Jina. Inscription on the pedestal shows that the image of Śreyāmsa was installed in samvat 1202.<sup>147</sup> Muni Viśālāvijaya (*op. cit.*, p. 56) refers to an image of Śreyāmsa installed in samvat 1138, in the Śāntinātha temple, Kumbharia.

A *Pañca-tīrthī* brass image installed in samvat 1569 is in worship in the Kharatara vasahi temple at Śatruḅjaya (Kaṇhanasāgara sūri, *op. cit.*, inscr. no. 433).

Sculptures of Śreyāmsa are also found in the sets of 24 Tirthaṅkaras at Śravana Belagola, Venur and Mudabidri. In each case the Jina is accompanied by his yakṣa and yakṣiṇī.

## 12. TWELFTH TIRTHAṅKARA: VĀSUPŪJYA

King Vasupūjya and queen Jayā (Śve.) or Vijayā (Dig.) had a prince named Vāsupūjya who became the twelfth Jina. Reddish in complexion, Vāsupūjya was born in the Śatabhiṣa nakṣatra, having descended