

Sculptural art of Bihar

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ABSTRACT

Stone sculptures occupy an important place in the history of plastic arts of India. Bihar is one of the most important Indian states, which has yielded various types of Stone Sculptures beginning at least as far back as 3rd Century B.C down to end of the Pāla period.

The history of Sculptural art of India won't be complete without the study of Bihar sculptures. In the historical period, it was the Mauryan rulers who got carved sculptures in stone for the first time. The Asokan pillars were surmounted with anim figures which were magnificent and vigorous in physic. The human figures were also magnificent. The most important example is undoubtedly the famous Chauri-bearer from Didarganj. This life size figure is quite charming, enchanting and bewitching. The anatomical treatment of her body is superb. The sculpture has a lustrous mirror like superb shining polish of the Mauryan Period.

After the Mauryas, the Śungas succeeded the throne of Magadha. It was during their reign period, the railing of Bodh Gaya was carved. They are undoubtedly one of the best specimens of Śunga railing art. The Śālabhanjikā figure from Rajendra Nagar is the best example of the monolithic art of Śunga period of Bihar. This figure, made of monolith sandstone, is depicted on both sides and presents somewhat standing view of her face. She is depicted in her full youthful posture in quite a graceful manner.

In the Kushana period also certain sculptures were carved in Bihar. Though we are not certain whether the Kushana ruled over Bihar or Not. One of the best examples of this period is the trio from devangarh in Nawada District, there Vasudeva, Balrama and Eknamsa are shown standing on a separate pedestal for the first time in the history of Indian art.

The "Gupta Art" in stone reflects a marked refinement in the grace and charm and liveliness of a female image. The most remarkable features of the art of Gupta period is the depiction of the lower garment (or even upper garment) in an attractive manner which is diaphanous or transparent character, but at the same it maintains the decency of the body represents. The depiction of transparency of cloth has been achieved by the artist in such a refined manner, which is indeed worth to be appreciated. Secondly, the ornamentation of the image is also quite simple but very attractive ornaments are there and it is not elaborate, nevertheless it adds charm and grace to the image. The face is not broader but is oval in shape with delicate touch imparting greater charm and grace of the figure. The adornment of hair on the head in a most attractive manner and with a clear representation of hair arrange nicely further adds beauty to the image. The entire body presentation is quite captivating and attractive. It presents a deliberate look. The rhythm of the body is quite perceptible in a delicate and refined manner by providing a lifelike appearance to the image. The depiction of eyes is quite captivating which is in keeping with the life like representation and this further adds grace and charm to the image. It may also be pointed out here that the nose of the figure is quite sharp and the upper lip generally is thin, but the lower lip is depicted thicker but it maintains the beauty of the face of the images. Further, it is to be mentioned here that the stele of the image

where ever it exists is quite simple and is never decorative – generally a cable molding type incision of lines or lines showing floral petals around the border of the steel is depicted. Secondly, the stele in shape is almost oval which is simple without having any decorative motif, miniature figure or designs over it, but at the same time it maintains the charm and grace of the image. The female image from Sakarigali Rajmahal is the best example of this period.

The female figure inside the door jamb is shown feeding a parrot in a most delicate charming and artistic manner. The figure as a whole is very beautiful, artistically and delicately designed and chiseled inside the door jamb and is standing in a most artistic manner which is very graceful and quite charming and attractive.

We have a few specimens of art in stone of the Pāla period, which are not doubt top ranking and outstanding Pieces. Among them a group of three Buddhist stone sculpture from village Vishnupur in Gaya Distt. deserve special mention. These images are of (1) Lord Buddha (2) Boddhisattva Avalokitesvra and of (3) Materiya – the future Buddha. These images are full of life and vigour and produce a sense of feeling and sentiment all that is the characteristics of a human being.

Keywords: Sculptural art, Bihar sculptures, plastic arts , Gupta Art