

Symbiotic Theories of Buddha Statues

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Abstract

Since the death of Buddha the artists engulfed and drawn the figures of the Lord Buddha, which were made in accordance with theories made mentioned in cannon written after the first Buddhist conference held in Kavalavastu in northern India. Though Lord Buddha did not allow making his statue for the veneration purpose the artists made his figure on seeing instruction in Cannon compiled by his followers especially by Monks. Therefore by the writing of monks who wanted to make statues of Buddha to venerate them and affords of artists the Lord Buddha's images in various forms and styles came into the picture of this geographical earthen world. In writing this monograph we compelled way of both Greek and Indian artist. As far as Buddhas statues concern our consideration concentrated on Mahayana perspective. In that term the Buddha statue was carved during the life time of Buddha. This habit of making Buddha statue was seen in Myanmar Cambodia and Thailand during 13th and 14th centuries. Our observations show four sorts of Buddha statues. They are Buddha statues in standing form, Masters ' figure in seated form, Lord Buddha's statue in lying position and His statue in half standing and half seating form. We discussed those four kinds of statues in both iconographic and Symbiotic Theories. For this research we consult both literary sources, materials from various scholars work and applied internet for materials and also checked our previous collection from which extract material. This research is mainly nomenclature of Buddhism. We stated a possible hypothesis saying that Buddha statues were produced not only in Myanmar and but also in India. We stated the main problem of veneration of Buddha statues in various form and style. Quantitively we employed Buddha statues from Beikthano, Sriksetra, Deccan and Bagan. Of which one each from Deccan, Beikthano, Sriksetra and more from Bagan.

KeyWords: Buddha statues, Symbol

Introduction

Art is product of community. It is expression of their desire. It is also imagination of cave-dwellers as well as function of ancient people and taste of modern people.

Art exposed activities, culture, feelings, emotion and thought of people. As all knowledge comes from experience it can ascertain idea of particular community through their art. But it may connect either with their believes or common interest or individual one. Statue of Buddha is art of social product. Owing to attempts and believes of community and society the images of Lord Buddha in various not only sizes but also form and styles came to present into the spaces of Southeast Asia including and outside them consisting India.

Aims and objectives

Workshop of Buddha statues and schools are flourished in our country (Myanmar) from very early time. Due to that various statues of Lord Buddha appeared in the scenarios'. The main aim of this paper is to ascertain whether those images were produced for veneration in local region or for exporting.

Objective

We visualize Buddha's' statues employed as a kind of decorative material not only in the architectures and on surface of different environments. The main objective of this study is to explore benefits of making various forms and styles of those statues seen with the help of archaeologists and chance finding.

The source and materials

Ancient Myanmar and India were giving priorities for workshop and veneration of Buddha images. Knowing those messages we consult various literatures on Buddhism in different libraries reached. We went thoroughly those works we got from libraries for our understandings in writing and depicting as to the statues. For materials we gave considerable attention from places where these statues were available. For this research we consult both literary sources, materials from various scholars work and applied internet for materials and also checked our previous collection from which extract material. We processed them coherently for facilitation of writing this research paper.

The hypothesis

Statues and figures were carved and painted from primitive time to modern ear. Of which Buddha's statues and figures were have been visible in the environment of Myanmar and India. These statues were employed in decorating the architectures constructed though these architectures were kept empty and blank without any beautification in the very early time. Based on idea of environment and surrounding conditions especially by the time of Asoka in India and in the time of Anawratha Buddha's statues were installed in architectures and made in various forms and styles for veneration. The ruling classes and

population living there worshipped different form and styles of them with various purposes.

Problems

Buddha's statues and figures in various sizes and styles present many parts of the world. In India these statues and figures were are higher quantitatively than other parts of the World. Our chief problem is that why did these statues appeared. The answers are that as India was native place of Buddhism and in other parts especially in Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Japanese, China are for veneration.

Discussion

Before considers the worship of Buddha statues shall we look at how old statues worship is? One is led naturally to suspect in view of the fact that other ancient countries such as Greece, had statues in the 800 B.C. and Egypt had, of course , at a still older date, whether India has, if not greater, similar claims to antiquity of her statues, being universally pronounced as an idolatrous country. According to scholars statue making in India was in the Vedic times. Both Greek and Indian had their divine artists. Tvasta was the divine artist of India while Hephaistus was the divine artist of Greece. In this connection we have to glance the art. Indian art had an earlier history. The art of Asoka is a mature art: in some respects more than the Greek art of the time¹. In this respect Indian art owes to the Buddhist art². So Myanmar art did not later than 2nd century A.D.

The most ancient religions of the world had statue worship as forming their principal creed. In Egypt, China, Syria, Babylonia and Greece, statues were used in the most ancient periods. As late as the period of the 5th dynasty in Egypt, the image of the Sun-god Ra was made and worshipped as has been proved by the exploration of the Sun-temples at Abusir. "Somewhere about the time of the 2nd dynasty, the Egyptians began systematically to represent their gods by images of a human form"³.The polytheistic conception of God by itself suggests in any religion the prevalence of image

¹ Grunwedel,A,(1972) *Buddhist Art in India*,Delhi,S.Chand & Co.,1972,*Introduction*

² Aloka Prashen,Dr,(2003)"Speech in the Memorial day of Professor Bhattiprolu Sri Lakshmi Hanumantha Rao" Hyderabad,2003

³ Hastings, *Encyclopedia, of Religion and Ethics*,Vol.7,p.132

worship. The ancient world religions are, as a rule polytheistic in character, though of course, the higher conception of Monotheism was not only known but grew side by side. The religion of Assyria attaching sanctity and belief to many gods knew of their images which were installed in the temple. Idolatry and statue-worship form a very striking feature of Babylonian religious system. The Sumerians, the earliest inhabitants of Mesopotamia migrated from central Asia had gods in anthropomorphic form⁴. It was 15th century B.C in that time statues of goddess Ishta was carried with great pomp and ceremony from Mesopotamia to Egypt and venerated⁵. Even image-worship was adopted once by the Israelites in the land of ancient Palestine. They carved also statue of Jahweh up to 8th century B.C⁶. It found an antiquity of images in China dated back to about 12 00 years B.C. The Emperor Wu Yik (1198-1194B.C) is credited with having made the first images or idols. The Mycenaeanes of the Aegean in the island of Greece were image-worshippers. It was 900 B.C when the Mycenaean of Aegean laid the foundation of an extensive worship of images. But it was 6th century they went beyond it towards the ideal. However in fact there was an age of image –worship throughout the world. This culture of statue -worship profoundly developed in India.

With our predecessor’s knowledge Buddha statue was introduced by Alexander the Great when he had stayed in India. Alexander’s Theory inspires that Buddha statue was originated in Gandhara. India knowledge message us Buddha statue was made by the order of king Udayana by which it was Kashmir origin⁷. The Chinese knowledge gave information us that it was king Prasenjit of India who led to emerge Buddha statue⁸. Alexander’s Theory stated the material used in Buddha statue was neither paint nor wood but it was by stone while both Udayana and Prasenjit mentioned media of Buddha statue in their times were by Sandal –wood. Rakhine oral history has been kept on saying that Mahamuni statue in stone was consecrated by the Buddha himself in his life time.

“on the Buddha image,” has referred the vattanguliraja Jataka, (Myanmar) which mentions that the image of the Buddha was made during His life time by Prasenjit. But

⁴ Hastings, *Encyclopedia, of Religion and Ethics*, Vol.7, p.117

⁵ Hastings, *Encyclopedia, of Religion and Ethics*, Vol.7, p.118

⁶ Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, p.300

⁷ A.K.Coomaraswamy, (1972) *The origin of Buddha image*, Delhi, 1972, Figs-6-12

⁸ H.A.Giles, (1966) *The Travels of Fa-Hein* (Tr) Cambridge, 1923, reprinted London, 1966, pp.30-31

this Jataka said that it was perhaps begun in the 13th or 14th century and was popular only in Myanmar, Thailand and Cambodia.

It is not difficult to conclude that Buddha's statue was began to make during the life time of the Buddha which was supported by Theories of Kings, Udyana and Prasanti. Gandhara and Mathura theories pointed out 2nd century B.C –A.D was date of Buddha statue. Hence his statues were installed in religious monuments when Mahayana and Vjrayana Buddhism in which statue worshipped was allowed, flourished. Moreover, Buddha statue in Rakhine of western Myanmar appeared in Dhanwaddy period, which were discovered in Vishnu rarely, copiously in Hanlin, Sriksetra and Maimaw, which have been installed every monuments in Bagan.

The prime problem in this paper is why Buddha statues were installed in Monuments in India and monuments in Myanmar as well as residences of the Buddhists. The possible answer is having symbiotic relation between Buddha's statue in different Mudra and Asana and those who worships them. In this scene main theory relates with different Mudra and Asana.

The principal aim of this paper is to annotate Asana and Mudra in Myanmar context particularly. Therefore it is greatly importance to classify and theorize meaning and definition of terms embedded in Mudra and Asana. According to our knowledge 45 Mudra and Asana in Buddha statue of Myanmar are identified which exists symbiotic connection in both Buddhist outside and Buddhist in Myanmar. Our survey method exposes date of the early Buddhist statue, which would not be later than eleven century A.D.

Symbiotic relation in Mudra and Asana of Buddha's statues exists with worshippers of them. Historically the position of the hands in the Mudra of concentration derived in accordance with the tradition, from the attitude which the historical Buddha assumed when he devoted himself to final meditation under the bodhi tree. This is the attitude he was found in when the demon armies of Mara attacked him. He was to alter it only when he called the earth to witness, at the moment of his triumph over the demons. Consequently, in the Gandharan School the position symbolize specially the supreme meditation of the historical Buddha, but also the Buddhist qualities of tranquility,

impassivity, and superiority⁹. According to a variant of this legend, the Buddha as liberator of the Naga¹⁰ is symbolized by *Dhayanamudra* or by the *uttrabodhimudra*¹¹.

Asanas literary means 'sitting 'or the object to sit upon', but as understood in the Yoga literature it signifies a variety of modes of sitting partly with the help of which abstract meditation is performed by a devotee. Iconographically, the *Asana* refers to the particular positions assumed by the statue in its sculptural representation. *Asanas* are, in fact, physical postures of the legs and feet just *mudras* are postures of the hands and fingers. *Asana* is in accordance with Hinduism the third requirement of the Yogi. *Asanas* mean 'seating postures'. As a bed is not sleep, as cutlery or food is not appetite, so *Asana* is not Yoga. The exercise prescribed under the *Asanas* help keep the body-machine and the fine nerve-mechanism, subtler than a computer, in a proper working condition. *Asanas* have also been prescribed to control bodily ailments and mental obsessions and passions. In Hinduism words like Samyamana, Narka, Yama-Loka are synonymous with Hell. Apart from which there are Candra-Loka, the Deva-Loka or Pitr-Loka.

Buddha statues found in urban cities such as Vesali in Western Myanmar, Vishnu in Upper Myanmar, Tagaung and Mainmaw in Upper Myanmar, Sriksetra in Lower Myanmar were proto-type of India though species were discovered rarely. These statues came to these places probably by trade which indicates the fact that relation between Myanmar and India in the heyday of money economy was not unlinked.

Veneration of Buddha statues was most probably cult of Mahayana Buddhist who might be Myanmar, Tibeto-Myanmar descendant. In this sense those who were in Vesali, Vishnu, Sriksetra and Maimaw might be either Myanmar or mixed Myanmar. Therefore we ponder that those Myanmar who used to come to cities of Myanmar with Nancho were well known the geography of those cities, of them some remained in those ancient urban cities and also those Nancho returned to their native land after plundering urban cities in ancient Myanmar.

⁹ Mus Paul, (1935) *Barabudur*, Geuthner, Paris, 1935, p. 586

¹⁰ Getty Alice, (1928) *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1914 and 2nd edn, 1928, p. 39

¹¹ Waddell L.A., (1958) *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism; with its cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and its relation to Indian Buddhism*, 2nd edn, Cambridge, Heffer, 1934, Reprinted, 1958, pp. 22-23

The Padmasana- It is a kind of squatting posture in which the heels of both the legs are drawn to touch the upper thigh joints. In this position the toes of the feet should be held by two hands placed cross-wise at the back.

1. Adapalinkasana (Virasana) –one knee raised and the foot locked in the bend of the other. These sorts of statues have been venerating aims at to avoid enormity, to be peace and prosperity.

2. The Yogasana- A cross-legged position in which the hands should be laid on the lap. It signifies serenity. The concepts of veneration of such asana statue are in getting stability in the mind and for meditation to attain tranquility.

3. Dhyanasana (padumasana) Meditative pose, with legs closely locked and soles of both feet are visible. It signifies meditation and introspection. Such pose of statues is worshipped for peace and prosperity and to fulfill whatever benefits they aimed.

6Bdharasana-sitting with both legs pendant. This is also called palilayakaasna. This sorts of statues were in vogue in Dhanyawady in western Myanmar and Bagan. The concepts of believing such statues are to stabilize in mind, to be free from anxiety, complexity, danger and also to be healthy.

8Rajalisana- royal ease with the right knee raised and left leg folded loosely. The concepts of venerating this posture statue are to be king, to be powerful and also to be influential person.

The virasana-The mode of sitting in which one leg will have to be placed on the knee of another and the other leg will remain on the ground.

The Svastikasana- The erect posture of squatting in which the digits of feet are placed at both the pits of the leg and thighs.

Mudras have been given much importance in the Buddhist art. Mudras are certain positions of the hands and finger assumed by the Buddha. Mudras have the peculiar positions of the hands and fingers in the Buddha's statue.

Abaya mudra Abaya means not fear, i.e protection. In this mudra one can find a slightly bent right arm raised to the breast level with all fingers extended and the palm showing outward.

Alinga mudra, attitude of embrace.

Anjali mudra- salutation, with both arms stretched upward above the head.
 Bhumiparasa mudra-witness or earth touching attitude, which is fact calling upon the Earth to bear witness when Mara came to attack the Buddha immediately after the Enlightenment. The right arm is pendant over the right knee with the palm turned inward and all fingers touching the Padamasana.



Plate 3.
 Bronze Buddha image (from U Thein Lwin, 2003)

The Paryatikasana- A particular kind of posture to be practiced sitting on the hands.
 Apart from veneration of seated statues it worshipped the Buddha statues in standing form, which is known as Banga style. There are four sorts of standing Buddha statues carved by the artists.

1. Thama Banga or Thamapadha standing Buddha
2. Ahbhanga
3. Tribangha and
4. Ahtibhanga

Thama Banga Buddha statue has been venerating for peacefulness, dignity, complexity, for the success of pray, desire, luck and prosperity.

Ahbhanga Buddha statue has been worshipping for pleasure, love and affection, prosperity and also to avoid animosity.

Tribangha Buddha statue has been venerating for receiving love and affection, pitiness, for extraordinary knowledge, prosperity, tranquility and auspiciousness.

Ahtibhanga Buddha statue has been worshipping for victory in war, braveness, lack of disturbance of enemies, driving away evil.



Buddha statue, Sriketra



Head less Buddha statue, Sriketra

Sriksetra locates in Lower Myanmar known as popularly a place on the bank of Ayawaddy at Pye in Present day Bago district was famous for hybrid of both Hinduism and Buddhism. In this place one can see how previous beautified its environment by Buddhist monuments and embellishing those monuments installing Buddha images in various forms and style. The Buddha statues were exhibited by stones material, wooden material and also by terracotta, which show how the people employed their labor in the production of these sorts of Buddha statues demanded.

Plate 192



a



b



c

NAGAYÓN STANDING BUDDHAS. ENLIGHTENMENT RELIEFS.

Plate 192



a



b



c

NAGAYŌN STANDING BUDDHAS. ENLIGHTENMENT RELIEFS.



Bagan

Findings

Buddha's statues in this study are seen came from both national and foreign, which indicates these statues got rooms without obstacle both in Myanmar and ancient India. It proves different people venerated different image expecting in accumulating their aims and objectives. On seeing different Bagan and mudra one can estimate people's desire and artists' consideration in making these various kinds of image and materials available. The forms and styles of images found prove vulgarities of artists and sculptors. The

productive and veneration of environment portray generosity ruling classes who did not prevent from producing them. Out of our findings the statues in posture of half-standing and half-sitting like a legislator making trial in the court is outstanding.

Conclusion

Buddha's statue is product of artist. Technique of making was though started earlier in Greece and very early in Egypt, which it perhaps formulated in India after Alexandra's the Great's invasion of India which was after 4th century BC. But the date of making Buddha's statue was introduced not earlier than 2th century AD in Myanmar. However production of Buddha's statue was is practice of Mahayana sect. This sect glorified in various concepts, theories and notion on worship of Buddha's statue. As considerations of this sect attended high Buddha's statues came into embody and venerated them by the Buddhist in various aims and objectives. In connection with veneration of Master's statues it is visible in diverse literature presented for the endeavor of Mahayanist sect. Nevertheless, we observe four sorts of Buddha's statues in the form of art. Believing different interest Buddhist install and have been worshiping the different postures of Buddha's statues.

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