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# THE MIRROR OF INDIAN ART

Essays in Memory of Shri Krishna Deva

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KALĀDARPANA: THE MIRROR OF INDIAN ART

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## Bharata Muni: A Symbol of Renunciation and Aparigraha in Jainism

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In the present paper we propose to discuss the concept and iconographic features of Bharata on the basis of Jaina Art and Literature. Bharata, first of the twelfth *Chakravartin*, was the elder son of first Jina Rishabhanātha. He was accorded an exalted position in both the sects of the Jainas and his name was included in the list of sixty-three *Śalākāpurushas* (Great Men) of the Jaina Pantheon since the early centuries of the Christian era.<sup>1</sup> He became *Chakravartin* succeeding his father and ruled from Vīnītā. The story of the life of Bharata and fight with his brother Bāhubalī is dealt at length in a number of Śvetāmbara and Digambara Jaina works of early medieval times.<sup>2</sup> However, in sculptural renderings Bāhubalī was more popular than Bharata, for the simple reason that Bāhubalī decided to renounce the world at the moment of his final victory over Bharata. Bharata was shown in sculptures only from the tenth century AD onwards. However, the renderings of Bharata was more popular at Digambara Jaina sites. Deogarh (Lalitpur, U.P.), a prolific Digambara Jaina site, has yielded five sculptures of Bharata, which is the highest number of images of Bharata ever produced at one site and which also suggest the venerated position of Bharata at the site. At Śvetāmbara Jaina sites Bharata is represented mainly in the narrative panels, exhibiting the scene of fierce fight between Bharata and Bāhubalī. Such instances are known from the Śvetāmbara Jaina sites at Kumbhāriyā (Śāntinātha Temple—eleventh century AD) and Śatruñjaya in Gujarat and Mt. Ābu (Vimala Vasahī—twelfth century AD) in Rajasthan. Hitherto, very few separate sculptures of Bharata *muni* are known from the Śvetāmbara Jaina sites, one such example is found from Śatruñjaya (Bhavnagar, Gujarat) wherein Bharata *muni* stands clad in *dhotī* with a disc weapon (*chakra*-insignia of *Chakravartin*) carved on pedestal. All the figures of Bharata *muni* radiant with spiritual grace stress the spirit of absolute renunciation and austerity.

The Jaina tradition has always attached a special significance to the act of austerity, renunciation and non-possession (*aparigraha*). It is for this reason that Bharata was held in

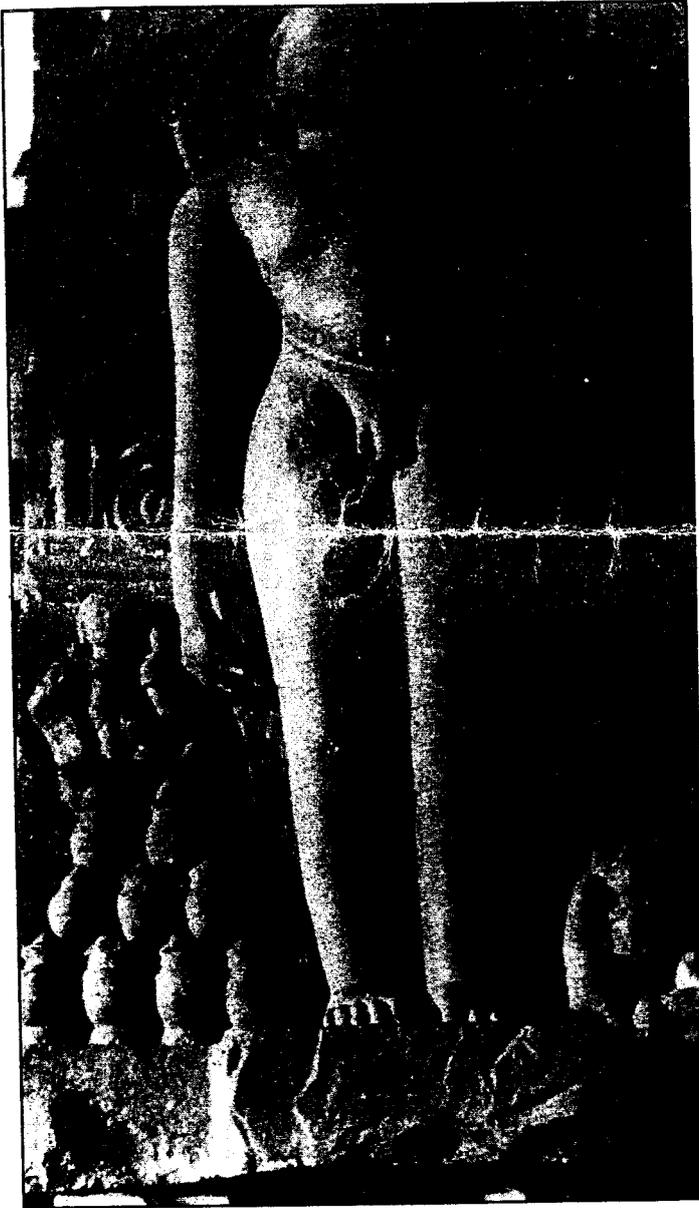
veneration only when he decided to renounce all the material possessions (*Chakravarti-pada*) and took the path of austerity (*muni dharma*). He also obtained omniscience (*Kevala-jñāna*) after rigorous austerities. Like all the Tirthaṅkaras and other Great Men Bharata also performed *tapas* in the *Kāyotsarga-mudrā* (standing in the attitude of dismissing the body with both the hands reaching upto the knees). As *Chakravartin* Bharata possessed *navanidhis* (nine treasures) and fourteen *ratnas* (jewels). The nine treasures represented in art as nine vases topped by the figure of Kubera have the following appellations: Kāla, Mahākāla, Naissarpya, Pāṇḍuka, Padma, Māṇava, Piṅga, Śaṅkha and Sarvaratṇa.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the fourteen jewels comprised the *Chakra*, *Chhatra* (umbrella), *Asi* (sword), *Daṇḍa* (staff), *Maṇi* (gem), *Charma* (skin), *Kākiṇī* (cowrie), *Senāpati* (general), *Grihapati* (steward), Elephant, Horse, *Strī* (women), *Purohita* (priest) and Engineer (or Carpenter),<sup>4</sup> which are represented in art with the figures of Bharata. The Jaina works explicitly mention that Bharata as *Chakravartin* attained lordship over mankind and always shone with these fourteen jewels and nine treasures. The concept and the names of *navanidhi* and fourteen jewels mostly concur with what we get in *Vaidik-Purāṇic* tradition. Thus these distinctly refer to assimilation.

After his *digvijaya* Bharata asked his ninety-eight brothers to treat him as *Chakravartin*, who on the advice of Rishabhanātha renounced the world and turned ascetic. Similar request was advanced to Bāhubalī, the second son of Rishabhanātha, who, however, refused to accept the supremacy of Bharata. Consequently, a fierce fight broke out between Bharata and Bāhubalī. This battle culminated in duel in which Bāhubalī emerged as the Victor. At the moment of his final triumph the point of futility of worldly possession came to the mind of Bāhubalī, who at once renounced the world and performed *tapas* and consequently obtained omniscience. As a result Bharata became unchallenged supreme ruler (*Chakravartin*).

On the other hand, one day when Bharata was looking in the mirror, the idea of futility of worldly possessions and lust for sensuous pleasure dawned in his mind and he too at once decided to quit the world in quest of *Kevala-jñāna*. When *Indra* (*Śakra*) came to know this, he paid oblations to Bharata who, like the Tirthaṅkaras and other Great ones, plucked out all his hair in five handfuls and performed *tapas* and attained omniscience. It is clearly stated in the *Mahāpurāṇa* (9th century AD) that Bharata prior to renunciation was worshipped only by rulers of his country but after renunciation and attaining omniscience he attained Lordship over three worlds and was worshipped even by Indras.<sup>5</sup>

In sculptural art Bharata is always represented as standing in *kāyotsarga-mudrā* and absorbed in *tapas* and meditation as *muni*. As he renounced all the material possessions before retiring to the forest for *tapas*, he is shown in sculptures without any royal insignia and ornaments on his person. The figures of nine treasures and fourteen jewels, possessed by Bharata as *Chakravartin* but renounced at the time of renunciation, are also depicted on the pedestal and in the *parikara*. The image of Bharata *muni* can be distinguished from that of the Tirthaṅkaras mainly on account of the rendering of *navanidhis* and fourteen *ratnas*.

There live in the ambience of Deogarh and other Jaina sites, the Tirthaṅkaras, their *śāsanadevatās* and others in inanimate stone who have outlived their human creators. As noted earlier Deogarh has yielded five sculptures of Bharata.<sup>6</sup> The sculptures of Bharata at Deogarh, measuring approximately 3.4' x 1.8' are datable between the tenth and the eleventh century AD. The figures, fashioned in the buff-coloured sandstone, exhibit Bharata as sky-clad and as standing in the *kāyotsarga-mudrā* with his arms reaching down to the knees. Of the five figures three are enshrined in Temple 2. One figure is also preserved in the modern enclosure wall of Temple 12 on the north. The last figure is preserved in the neighbouring Sahu Jaina Museum. All the figures are marked with the Śrīvatsa in the centre of the chest. The hair of Bharata, in all the cases, is arranged in curls with a protuberance (*ushnīsha*) at the top. The modelling of the sculptures is good and they have hardly any sign of stiffness.



The limbs of these figures are in fine proportion. The faces are small and serene. The halfshut eyes suggest deep meditation and inward look. We shall now discuss the features of all the images of Bharata *muni* individually.

The first figure of Bharata, measuring 3.4' x 1.8' is preserved in the neighbouring Sahu Jain Museum (Pl. 22.1). On the sculptural and iconographic grounds this image originally appears to have been enshrined in the Temple 12 and is assignable to the tenth century AD. As usual Bharata here stands in the *kāyotsarga-mudrā* on a *triratha* pedestal with an aureole decorated with lotus petals. Bharata is shown with dangling hair locks, which at once remind us of his father Rishabhanātha (first Jina), who according to the Jaina tradition, was the only Tirthānkara to have hair locks falling on the shoulders because at the request of Indra he plucked out only four handfuls of hair instead of five handfuls and left the remaining hair hanging over shoulders.

Above the head of Bharata is carved somewhat mutilated,<sup>7</sup> single parasol (instead of triple) since, he was merely a *kevalin* and not a Jina. But at a later stage when Bharata was

**Left:**

Pl. 22.1. Bharata, Sāhū Jain Museum, Deogarh

**Right:**

Pl. 22.2. Bharata, enclosure wall of Temple No. 12, Deogarh



**Left:**  
Pl. 22.3. Bharata, Temple No. 2, Deogarh

**Right:**  
Pl. 22.4. Bharata, Temple No. 2, Deogarh

elevated to equal almost the Jinas he like the Jina images was provided with triple parasol (*trichhatra*). At the right of Bharata are carved nine vases, arranged in three rows, symbolic of *navanidhis*. The vases are topped by a seated figure of two-armed Kubera, lord of *nidhis* (wealth), holding a fruit and a purse respectively in his right and left hands.

Further up are carved the jewels namely, the sword, the staff, the umbrella, the *chakra* and the cowrie. On left flank there appear three male figures sitting in *lalitāsana* and holding respectively a plough, a *vajra* and the *abhaya-mudrā*. These figures may be identified with the *grihapati*, the *senāpati* and the priest (or the carpenter?). The figures of horse (with a man holding its rein), elephant and the woman (sitting with her hand kept near the face) are also depicted on the left side. Thus apparently eleven of the fourteen jewels have also been carved in the present image.

The second image (3.5' x 1.4'), embedded in the modern enclosure wall of Temple 12 in north, bears also an inscription dated Samvat 1095 (= AD 1038) (Pl. 22.2). Bharata as usual stands in the *kāyotsarga-mudrā* on a simple pedestal, which exhibits some of the fourteen jewels, such as, the sword (upside down), the *chakra*, the *kākinī* (cowrie ?), the horse (with a man holding its rein), and the woman.<sup>8</sup> At right extremity are carved nine vases surmounted by a two-armed figure of Kubera, showing the *abhaya-mudrā* and a purse in his hands. On the two flanks of Bharata, there appear four tiny figures of the Jinas, standing in the *kāyotsarga-mudrā*. Close to the feet of Bharata, there sit two worshippers with their hands folded in supplication. This reminds the above noted reference of *Mahāpurāṇa* stating that after renunciation and austerity Bharata attained lordship over three worlds. Bharata is flanked by two male attendants, standing and bearing a flywhisk, kept on the shoulder, in

one hand while the other hand is resting on the thigh. In the present instance *trichhatra* is carved over the head of Bharata with prostrate figure beating a drum and two flying *mālādharas* flanking the parasol. Behind the head is a plain nimbus (*Mahāpurusha-lakshana*). It may be noted that the *chāmaradharas*, flying *mālādharas*, *trichhatra*, *bhāmaṇḍala*, and *dundhubi-vādaka*, the constituent members of the *ashtaprātihāryas*.<sup>9</sup> were indispensable features of the Tirthankara images and their association with Bharata at once suggests that Bharata was given an exalted position at Deogarh, which was almost equal to the Tirthankaras. The presence of diminutive Jina figures, and worshippers further reinforces the same idea. These features are present also in other figures of Bharata from Deogarh. It may be underlined that the above recurring features of the Tirthankara images were introduced in the Bharata images in the eleventh century AD.

It may, however, be observed here, in passing that at Deogarh the *ashtaprātihāryas* and the tiny Jina and *upāsaka* figures were associated with Bāhubalī images also.<sup>10</sup>

In two other examples, preserved in Temple 2 and datable to the eleventh century AD, Bharata has been portrayed in the group with Tirthankara and Bāhubalī figures, known as *Tritīrthī* images. This further reinforces our view that the artists of Deogarh took the liberty of putting Bharata at par with the Tirthankaras, the *devādhidevas* as called by Hemachandra. In case of one figure of Temple 2, the simple pedestal contains a *dharmachakra*<sup>11</sup> flanked by the horse and the elephant. At left there are carved three vases,<sup>12</sup> surmounted by the sword, *vajra*<sup>13</sup> and *chakra*. Thus only five of the fourteen jewels are shown here. Other figure of Temple 2 exhibits identical features as noticed in case of the above figure.<sup>14</sup> However, in the present instance all the nine vases are carved. Over the head of Bharata is carved *chhatra-trayī* topped by figure beating a drum and flanked by two flying *mālādharas*.

The fifth and the last image (2.3' x 1.3') installed in Temple 2, is assignable to the eleventh century AD (Pl. 22.4). On the other face of this image is portrayed the figure of Bāhubalī, standing in the *kāyotsarga-mudrā*. Thus this image is very important since it represents the two brothers Bharata and Bāhubalī in one image, who symbolize the highest point of renunciation and austerity in Jainism. Bharata here stands on a carpet hanging from the pedestal and bearing a two-armed male figure with one of his hands being in the *abhaya-mudrā*. The figure may represent either *senāpati* or *grihapati*. The centre of the pedestal is occupied by the *dharmachakra* flanked by the figures of horse and elephant. Close to the feet of Bharata, there sits on the left, a female figure with her hand kept near the chin. The figure is of woman, who was one of the fourteen jewels. On the right flank of Bharata there appear the *chakra*, cowrie, *vajra* and sword. Thus in all eight jewels have been carved in the present sculpture. At right extremity are depicted nine vases, arranged in three rows and topped by a two-armed figure of Kubera, who holds a purse in his surviving left hand. Over the head of Bharata is a triple parasol superimposed by a figure beating a drum and joined by two hovering *mālādharas-vidyādharas*.<sup>15</sup>

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The lists of the 63 *śalākāpurushas* or *Mahāpurushas* (Great souls) include 24 Tirthankaras, 12 *Chakravartins*, 9 *Baladevas*, 9 *Vāsudevas* and 9 *Pratīvāsudevas* (enemies of *Vāsudevas*). The perfect souls and also the souls striving towards perfection are called Great souls (*Śalākāpurushas*) by the Jainas. The earliest lists occur in the following works: *Samavāyāṅga sūtra* (sūtra 132, 158, 207), *Kalpa sūtra* (sūtra 17) and *Paumachariya* (5.145-57).
2. *Trishashtīśalākāpurushacharita* of Hemachandra (c. mid twelfth century AD), Vol. I; *Ādiśvaracharitra*, ed., B. Bhattacharya, Gaekwads Oriental Series - No. LI (Baroda, 1931), pp.161-378. *Mahāpurāṇa(Ādīpurāṇa)* of Jinasena (c. ninth century AD), Vol. I, Pt. II, ed., Pt. Pannalal Jain, Jñānapīṭha Mūrtidevi Jaina Granthamālā, Sanskrit Grantha No. 9 (Varanasi, 1951), pp. 222-513.

3. कालाख्यश्च महाकालो नैस्सपर्यः पाण्डुकाह्वावया ।  
पदूमाणवपिड्माञ्ज सर्वरत्नपदादिकाः ॥  
निघयो नव तस्यासन प्रतीतैरिति नामाभिः ।  
चैर्यं गृहवार्तायां निश्चिन्तोऽभून्निधीश्वरः ॥

*Mahāpurāṇa*, Vol.I, Pt. II, 37.73-74.

4. रत्नानि ह्यितयान्यस्य जीवाजीवविमागतः ।  
क्षमात्राणैश्वर्यं सम्भोगसाधनानि चतुर्दश ॥  
चक्रातपत्रदण्डासिमणयश्चर्म काकिणी ।  
चमूगृहपतीमाश्वयोषितक्षपुरोघसः ॥

*Mahāpurāṇa*, Vol. I, Pt. II, 37.83-84.

and also see, *Trishasṭīśalākāpurusha-charita*-1.4.708-712

5. *Mahāpurāṇa*, Vol.I, Pt. II, 47.396.
6. For details see – Klaus Brhun, *The Jina images of Deogarh* (Leiden, 1969), pp. 98-111; M.N.P. Tiwari, *Elements of Jaina Iconography* (Varanasi, 1983), pp. 105-109; M.N.P. Tiwari and S.S. Sinha, *Jaina Kaiā Tīrtha : Deogarh* (Varanasi, 2002), pp. 109-112.
7. The rendering of single parasol, instead of triple parasol as usual with the Tīrthaṅkaras, reminds us of the fact that Bharata is *kevalī* but not Jina.
8. The two-armed woman sits in *lalitāsana* and holds the *abhaya-mudrā* and a water-vessel in her hands.
9. The list of *aṣṭapratihāryas* (eight chief attendant attributes) includes: Aśoka tree, flying *mālādharas*, *divya-dhvani* (divine music), flywhisk bearing attendant (*chāmara*), *simhāsana* (lion-throne), heavenly drum-beating (*Deva-dundhubhī*), halo (*bhāmaṇḍala*) and *Trichhatra*; see, *Harivamśa Purāṇa* 3.31-38, *Pratishṭhā-sārasaṅgraha*, 5. 82-83.
10. However, in one instance (Temple 11) the figures of *Yaksha-Yakshī* pair are also carved with *Bāhubalī*. For detail consult, Maruti Nandan Prasad Tiwari, 'A Note on Some *Bāhubalī* Images from North India'. *East and West*, Vol. 23, Nos. 3-4 (Sept.-Dec. 1973), pp. 352-53.
11. The rendering of the *dharmachakra* in the centre of the pedestal, bearing further testimony to the influence of the Tīrthaṅkara images, is suggestive of the renunciation of Bharata and consequent attainment of omniscience.
12. Instead of nine vases, suggestive of *navanidhis*, only three vases are carved here. However, the figure of Kubera is also conspicuous by its absence.
13. However, the *vajra* is not mentioned in the conventional list of the fourteen jewels.
14. The pedestal contains a *dharmachakra* flanked by elephant and horse figures. Further up are carved the sword, the *chakra* and the *vajra*.
15. All the images of Bharata *muni* earlier kept in Temple 2 have been shifted to local Jaina Dharmashala temple and museum and are unfortunately tampered with.