A RARE SCULPTURE OF MALLINATH

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The Provincial Museum, Lucknow preserves a unique Jaina sculpture (size 1'-4" x 1'-7½") of black stone. It is a headless statue (No. J. 885) of a Tirthaṅkara sitting in the padmāsana, dhyāna mudrā, (see plate attached). The central part of the seat probably contained a small representation of the cognizance of the Tirthaṅkara, but the lāṅchana is now defaced.

The open palm of the right hand placed in dhyāna mudrā shows a lotus-mark but there is no Śrī-vatsa mark on the chest. However, the developed breasts are so prominent that it is natural to regard this as a female figure. The nineteenth Tirthaṅkara Mallinātha was a princess according to Śvetāmbara Jaina traditions represented in the Nāyādham-makahāo and other texts like the Triṣaṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita of Hemacandra. The Digambara sect does not advocate belief in the liberation (mukti or nirvāṇa) of women. Hence, according to the Digambaras, Mallinātha was a Prince and not a Princess.

According to Śvetāmbara Jaina tradition, all other Tirthaṅkaras except Mallinātha were males. Hence we must identify this sculpture as representing the nineteenth Tirthaṅkara Mallinātha according to the Śvetāmbara traditions.

Almost all the other known sculptures of Mallinātha in Śvetāmbara temples represent the Jina without developed breasts and hence looking like a male. Thus this is a unique sculpture faithfully following the Śvetāmbara Jaina traditions.

The usual cognizance of Mallinātha is the water-jar. The central part of the seat of the Jina shows a very defaced figure of the water-jar (not clearly visible in the photograph). The identification of the Jina is unmistakable. The sculpture is assignable to early mediaeval period.1

1. I am thankful to the Curator, Provincial Museum, Lucknow for a photograph of this sculpture.
भगवान मल्लिनाथनी अप्रतिम शिल्प्रतिमा

A unique sculpture of Mallināth in the Provincial Museum, Lucknow

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Ambikā Devī in ceiling corner of the Rangamaṇḍapa, Vimala-Vasahī, (Ābu), 12th Century

Ambikā (?) on Lion in the ceiling of Lūṇa-Vasahī, (Ābu), 13th Century