

A RARE SCULPTURE OF MALLINATH

DR. UMAKANT PREMANAND SHAH, M.A., Ph.D.

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 *lāñchana* is now defaced.

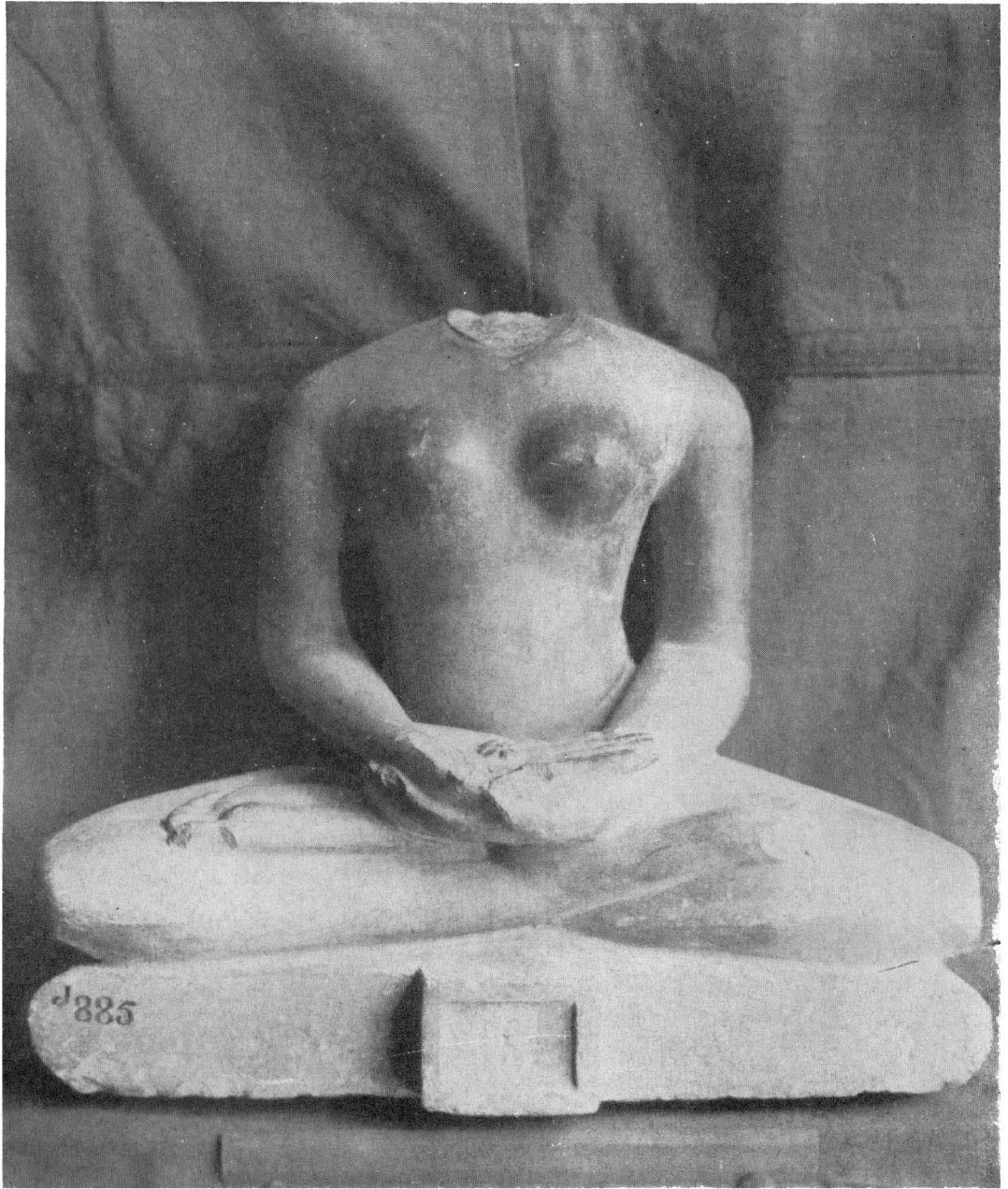
The open palm of the right hand placed in *dhyāna mudrā* shows a lotus-mark but there is no *Śrī-vatsa* mark on the chest. However, the developed breasts are so prominent that it is natural to regard this as a female figure. The nineteenth Tirthaṅkara Mallinātha was a princess according to Śvetāmbara Jaina traditions represented in the *Nāyādham-makahāo* and other texts like the *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacarita* 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 शिल्पप्रतिमा

A unique sculpture of Mallināth in the Provincial Museum, Lucknow

लखनौ प्रोविन्शियल म्युजियमना सौजन्यार्थी]

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अम्बिका देवी, विमल-वसहीमांना रंगमंडपनी एक छतनी कीतरणी, देलवाडा, (बारमी सदी)

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

तसवीर : श्री० आर० भारद्वाज]



सिंहारूढ अम्बिका (?), लूण-वसहीनी एक छतनी कोतरणी, देलवाडा, तेरमी सदी

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

तसवीर : श्री० जगन महेता]