

STYLE AND COMPOSITION IN THE INDRA SABHĀ AND THE JAGANNĀTHA SABHĀ CAVES AT ELLORĀ

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At the northern extremity of the Ellorā ridge, where it curves to face the south, are clustered all of the Jaina caves of the site except for one, the "Choṭā Kailāsa," a free-standing, rock-cut temple excavated, evidently somewhat later, in imitation of the renowned brahmanical monument, the nearby Kailāsanātha temple. (This temple is in an isolated position on the west-facing ridge between the Dumar Leṇā Cave and the northern spur.) These caves have been described by Fergusson and Burgess¹ and, more recently, by K. R. Srinivasan². There is also a small monograph on the subject by José Pereira which provides a helpful re-numbering of the cave-complexes, with plans, to which we shall refer for locational identification³. Rather than attempt an exhaustive study of the group here, I shall confine to a narrow aspect, and for coherence, I shall look only at the two major excavations, the caves-complexes called the Indra Sabhā and the Jagannātha Sabhā, numbered by Fergusson and Burgess, Caves 32 and 33-34, respectively.

Before beginning a stylistic analysis, however, a brief survey of the historical setting in which these caves originated may be in order⁴. Although the several inscriptions⁵ give only names of carvers and identifications of images, it seems fairly certain that we can ascribe them to the reign of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperor Amoghavarṣa I. The son of the skillful warrior and powerful Rāṣṭrakūṭa ruler, Govinda III, Amoghavarṣa is better known for peaceful pursuits. He was a boy of about 15 when he came to the throne in A. D. 814. His cousin, Karkka, son and successor of the brother Indra, whom Govinda had made viceroy of Gujarat, acted as regent during the young king's minority. During the early years of the reign, which lasted until A. D. 877, therefore, the records come primarily from the Gujarat branch. In the later years, they are most numerous in Kanarese country or Karṇātadeśa proper. Amoghavarṣa began to rule in A. D. 818, only to face a rebellion of feudatories, joined by the Eastern Cālukya army of Vijayāditya II, which was, for a time, successful⁶. The regent, Karkka II, however, managed to quell the revolt and to reinstate his cousin sometime before A. D. 821⁷. With the help of a great general, Baṅkeya, the king was able to hold his empire together for the rest of his reign, in spite of conflicts with the Gujarat branch after the death of Karkka II in c. A. D. 830 and threats from the Gurjara-Pratīhāra ruler, Bhoja I⁸. He founded the royal capital of Mānyakheṭa (or else shifted the seat of governance at the already existing township), where he held a court which must have been impressive, both materially and intellectually⁹. He was a special patron of Jainism, and a series of celebrated Digambara and Yāpanīya authors, who had begun to become prominent during the time of Govinda III, experienced the enthusiastic support and participation of the king, and produced significant

developments in Jainism¹⁰. Jinasena, who had written the part of the *Ādipurāṇa*, describes himself in the *Pārśvābhudaya* as the *paramaguru* or chief preceptor, of Amoghavarṣa I. The Yāpanīya pontiff Pālyakirti Śākaṭāyana wrote his Sanskrit grammar with a commentary having a title *Amoghavṛtti*, so named after the emperor. He also composed the *Strīmukti-prakarāṇa*, defending the salvation of woman against the Digambara doctrinal position which denies it. The Digambara Jaina copies of the *Praśnottararatnamālīkā* informs us that it was composed by the king himself, "after he had abdicated the throne in consequence of the growth of the ascetic spirit in him"¹¹. We know from his own Sañjān plates (A. D. 871) that he did abdicate, not once, but several times, temporarily, to lead the life of an ascetic¹².

This period is described by A. D. Pusalkar as "the most flourishing period in the history of Jainism in the Deccan." He goes on to say: "That the fortunes of Jainism were unaffected by the revival of Hinduism has been ascribed to the state patronage, and the influence of the pious Jaina saints.As king makers they secured royal patronage for generations. By winning over generals, feudal lords and provincial governors, their success at provincial centres was assured under the aegis of these officials. By securing popular support, they had among their followers the most important section of the middle class, the Vīra Banajigas and the commercial class, whose financial help went a long way in the cause of Jainism. It enabled them to construct magnificent Jinālayas and images"¹³. With this array of potential patrons, it would be risky for us to speculate that the Jaina caves at Ellorā had direct royal sponsorship. It might be tempting to identify the devotee who appears so frequently here under an umbrella as the devout king himself; but in the absence of inscriptions, this would be a highly questionable identification. We must conclude that the piety and encouragement of Amoghavarṣa I was only one of a number of favourable factors contributing to the climate that produced these impressive monuments.

The most frequently expressed comment on the aesthetic quality of these cave-temples calls attention to their richness and both the lavishness and the skillfulness of the carved decorative detail. This characteristic has been considered both their glory and their weakness. We shall attempt to consider, not so much its value in absolute terms, as its relationship to what went before and its effectiveness in expressing the tastes of its patrons; but most of all, we shall consider the way that this skill and these tastes have contributed to the creation of an integrated, unified, overall design.

Pillars

As Walter Spink has pointed out, although cave excavation normally progressed from the façade toward the rear of the cave, work on detail of the less essential parts might continue after the shrine, in the rear, was complete¹⁴. Figs. 3 and 4,

which show the unfinished base of a façade pillar in the lower cave on the western side of the Indra Sabhā (J-10 in Pereira), demonstrate such a case. They also serve to illustrate the method of carving the crisp, sharp decorative elements, from simple, geometrical layout to complex surface patterns. As we scan the variety of compositions and of patterns employed in the Indra Sabhā and Jagannātha Sabhā cave-complexes, we begin to get some sense of the fascination which the carvers must have felt with the possibilities of their task. They were working close by the source of their formal inspiration, the Laṅkeśvara cave-temple, which is a part of the Cave 16 complex that includes the monolithic Kailāsa temple of Śiva; but the spirit that informed them arose from a different society. The rapid and experimental development of style at Cave 16 now settled into a period of refinement and elaboration of established models.

The pillars of the Kailāsa temple (Plate 5) have architectural prototypes that differ from those of the Laṅkeśvara cave (Plate 6), whose carvers, working at a time when the carvers of the monolith were finished with the *maṇḍapa*¹⁵, seem to have closer ties to the local cave tradition. The *āmalaka*-shaped cushion-capital (*ghaṭa*), not used at the Kailāsa, is used here in two of the three major pillar types, and it is these three types which form the basis for variation in the pillars of the Jaina caves (cf. Plates 6 and 7).

The style of the Laṅkeśvara temple, of both its figural sculpture and its architectural detail, may be described as "mature." The sculptural figures, with their bold, flowing curves and freedom of movement, have a sensuous ripeness, different, expressively, from the youthful vitality and exuberance of their neighbours on the Kailāsa temple. The massive well-shaped pillars are in fine harmony with that change in tone.

In Fergusson and Burgess, *Cave Temples of India*, p. 458, it is remarked that the proportions of the pillars in the Laṅkeśvara cave ("hardly more than three diameters in height") "are more appropriate for rock-cut architecture than almost any other in India, and in strange contrast with quasi-wooden posts that deformed the architecture of Mahavallipur about a century earlier." I shall return to this remark later on, but for the moment, it may be assumed that the attitude expressed in it is one that the Laṅkeśvara designers must have shared. Weight, a quality of stone, is emphasized in every part of this majestic excavation. And, although the richness of decorative detail could be no greater than that of the Kailāsa pillars, it is far less restrained in its application, for the pillars vary more in form, and a composite type, combining a plain, square base with a fluted, cylindrical upper part, resting on an elaborate, deeply cut *pūrṇaghāṭa*, is favoured. The proportional relation of upper, decorated parts to lower, plain parts is roughly 1.75 / 1.25, about half of the square, lower section being composed of the base mouldings.

One of the other two types has 16-sided upper section and square base, proportioned

1/1. Under a banded roll-bracket, the upper half is divided into three sections, consisting of the capital (1), a band of decorative carving $3/4$, and a plain 16-sided cylinder ($1/2$); and the square lower half is also divided into three sections, but in reverse order : a rich band of carving at the top ($1/2$), a plain central section ($3/4$), and a base of mouldings (1).

The third type of pillar (the Brahmakānta of the Dravidian tradition) in the Lañkeśvara cave is a simple, square shaft on a moulded, square plinth, with a double band of carving taking up its upper third quarter, above which it slopes into a neck (*laśuna*) over which rises a square cushion-capital, *ghaṭa*; on each face, above the carved band, is a central *candraśālā* motif. This last type is not only the least ornately carved, but it is also the simplest, most unified in form. It is the one chosen to back the various high-relief images of Śiva which line the outer aisle, or gallery, on the south side.

Each of these three types of pillars found in the Lañkeśvara temple has its counterpart in the main hall, or upper storey, of the Indra Sabhā temple (Cave 32, (Plate 7). The first noticeable difference is a change in scale : the pillars of the Indra Sabhā, though still massive, are taller and slimmer in proportion, with wider intercolumniation. In type number one, the upper fluted cylinder, including the capital, is taller in proportion, relating to the central *pūrṇaghata* section as 1 to $2/3$ (rather than 1 to $3/4$, as at Lañkeśvara) and to the lower section, including plinth, as 9 to 8 (as opposed to the ratio of 4 to 5). This increase in the height of the upper heavily ornate parts over the plain base, shifts the centre of balance lower, but also, a subtle change in the shape of the capital creates a counter dynamic. The neck section, below the cushion, is extended into a higher, more sharply receding funnel, and the cushion itself is no longer vertically symmetrical, but has a wider upper section, sloping down to the horizontal band, which divides the Lañkeśvara cushion cave appears to exert pressure to flatten the capital, that of the Indra Sabhā is buoyed up by the upward thrust of the pillar which springs to meet it. The greater constriction of the neck and of the abacus also creates a sharper profile for the upper section, which produces a more pronounced contrast between it and the bulky lower part. Aside from these rather significant changes in proportion, the pillar follows its prototype in detail to a remarkable degree. Although the transitional funnel-section is not so extended, another example of this type in the cave attached to the southwest corner of the Indra Sabhā main hall¹⁶ (Plate 8) exhibits a neck-constriction exaggerated to the point of a mannerism, indicating the probability that this cave, from which one may gain access through a passage to the Jagannātha Sabhā cave on the West, is slightly later than the Indra Sabhā maṇḍapa.

The second type of pillar retains the basic design of its prototype, a 16-sided upper part, including capital and banded shaft, and a heavy square base with a decorated band at its top. The proportions are, however, even more noticeably

transformed (Plate 9). Since these pillars are placed on top of the low wall dividing the *maṇḍapa* proper from the veranda, their lower part, including this plinth, is higher, but, not counting the base in either case, the upper, 16-sided part is somewhat taller in proportion here. The difference in effect, however, is much more dramatic than that would indicate. Visually, this is a relatively slender shaft, with a small neck and broad mushroom-capital arising from a massive square base, whereas that at Laṅkeśvara was a squat, polygonal mass atop an equal, square mass. The difference, of course, lies mainly in the relation of width to height. Also, however, we have here, again, the extended funnel connecting the much more constricted neck with the domed mushroom-capital in place of the flattened *āmalaka* resting almost directly on the broad shaft. On another example of this type in the southwest corner cave (J - 20), the square lower section has been brought into much greater harmony with the polygonal shaft above (Plate 10); the neck is still constricted, with a rising funnel above it, but the capital has reverted to the flattened, symmetrical form of the Laṅkeśvara prototype.

The third major type, the Brahmakānta pillar (Plate 11) is, again, the most unified in design, being entirely square from base to capital and lacking the abrupt transitions to heavy relief decoration. The overall proportions are slightly slimmer, but the chief development is a refinement in the decorative detail. The plain, undecorated, lower section has been reduced to a bit less than one-third of the shaft's height; a vertical panel containing a figure has been added above it; and the areas on either side of that, as well as the one above the horizontal band of carving (the *candraśālā* having been eliminated) are filled with fine fluting, in continuation of that on the neck and capital.

A fourth pillar type in the main hall of the Indra Sabhā temple (Plate 12) is actually a variation on type one. The capital and shoulder are the same, but the *pūrṇaghāṭa* has been reduced considerably, and the pillar has a curiously unfinished appearance as a consequence of its tall, plain, square shaft below the *pūrṇaghāṭa*. The discrepancy between the two parts, cylindrical and square, of the composite column is perhaps most conspicuous in this design.

Proceeding to the ground floor of the Jagannātha Sabhā Cave-temple (Plate 13), we find the three major pillar types again represented. The Brahmakānta pillar is used here on the outer *kakṣāsana* of the verandah, and it is fundamentally of the same design as its counterpart in the Indra Sabhā *maṇḍapa*. Developments that can be noted are a more lively treatment of the *gaṇas* in the swag-garland band and of the *Yakṣīs* occupying the vertical panels (Plates 14 and 15), a thickening of the capital, and a tighter constriction of the neck.

The type one pillar is quite similar to that in the southwest cave noted above, but its *pūrṇaghāṭa* has lost its lower garland, its base-section is somewhat taller, and its capital has been flattened.

The third type is a novelty, combining the characteristics of our original type two with the variation on type one; for, in place of the upper band of floral decoration on the square base-section, we find the reduced *pūrṇaghata*. Again, the capital has reverted to a flattened symmetrical form, and the upper band of carving is “choking” the neck, so that the graceful proportions of the shaft and capital of this form in the Indra Sabhā *maṇḍapa* has been lost.

Finally, we may consider the pillars of the *maṇḍapa*/(upper storey) of the Jagannātha Sabhā cave (Plate 16). The two pillar types here demonstrate the final evolution of the Indra Sabhā type one design. One, which lines the side aisles, is a further simplification of the variation referred to above as the fourth type. The tall, square, lower shaft is perfectly plain, and it is topped by a similar, fluted mushroom-capital and cylindrical upper shaft. Here, however, the *pūrṇaghata* has been even further reduced, so that it appears only as wings of foliage arising from the corners of the square lower shaft. The capital has a less organic relationship to the shaft and the mushroom-cap is of the straight-sided flat disk variety; the roll-bracket is heavier than in the earlier versions.

The prominent central pillars are, in a sense, simplified also; for they are cylindrical and fluted at both base and capital. But the central band, derived from the *pūrṇaghata* form, is so strikingly distinctive as to create a rather startling effect. The cylindrical continuity of the shaft is broken by this part, which protrudes from the outer circumference and is broader at its base than its top, with sharp square corners, producing the appearance of a collar consisting of a pyramidal-section. The vase-shape has been eliminated, and the “ears” of foliage, stemming from overlapping curved planes, end in complete circles. This geometric rendering of the *pūrṇaghata* motif is executed with crisp, plastically assured carving of the rich detail. The mushroom capital is flat and straight-sided, and, whereas the central collar thrusts out from the column, this crowning part is considerably smaller in circumference than those of the earlier pillars. The long, funnel-shaped transition from neck to cushion-capital is retained, echoing the flare of the “collar,” in reverse, and thus adding another element of schematic unity.

Referring again to the quotation from Fergusson and Burgess, we may take a critical view of the premise that there is a single proportion appropriate to rock-cut architecture. The formal origin of stone architecture in wooden prototypes is still reflected in many of the details of these caves. (See, for example, the underside of the cornices in Plate 17.) It is apparent, however, that they are far removed from those sources. Rock-cut architecture is free of the structural demands of its material, and, whereas this freedom may be a distinct advantage expressively for the sculptor as at the Kailāsa temple, where he achieves a sense of limitless movement in his unrestrained spaces, it may become an architectural disadvantage. It is felt to be a weakness if the designer, lacking the discipline that those structural demands impose, loses touch with his instinctive sense of appropriate proportion

in relation to his material. The slender, elegantly proportioned pillars of *Māmallapuram* ("quasi wooden posts") deny the heaviness of the stone roof they appear to support. It happens, then, that the development of rock-cut architecture away from its wooden prototypes first produces a gain in authority, as the massive stone asserts its own character. In cave excavation, however, the gain has a precarious hold. No new structural demands impose their own discipline, and the temptation toward capricious experimentation becomes irresistible once all of the technical challenges have been met.

Returning, then, to the pillars of the Jaina caves at Ellora, we may note that the carvers have exercised their freedom as sculptors, rather than builders, to create a fantasy of quasi-architectural forms. They have outdone each other in invention and variety, and they have even produced extremely delicate post-like pillarettes to flank the shrine doorways. While they play with form and decorative detail, they are not as restrained as the figure-sculptors are by the iconographic canons relating to sacred symbolism. When the *pūrṇaghaṭa* theme of their major pillar-type is transformed into a flaring collar that oversteps the width established by the capital and seems to cling to its place on the shaft only by virtue of the taper which supports it, we see it as an obtrusive weight with which the pillar has been burdened. There is an abstract unity of design in the clever opposition of upward and downward tapers, but it is contrived, and we are inclined to reflect such unity as inorganic. As so often happens in the evolution of creative activity, fascination with novelty and inventiveness, although not detrimental to technical excellence, has trivialized the formal tradition upon which it is based.

On the other hand, the fine detail and the sharp, precise carving technique in the slender, fluted pillars flanking the shrine entrances and in the foliage motif, *kalāśa* and figural adornments of the large pillars, as well as in the settings and attendant figures of the wall relief-panels, could hardly be surpassed for its elegant, even radiant, effect. In the scale of aesthetic values subscribed to by the patrons of this work, which we must assume is reflected here, refined sensitive elegance, craftsmanship, and attention to detail rank high.

Ambikā and Sarvānubhūti

The complementary figures of the Yakṣī Ambikā and the Yakṣa Sarvānubhūti appear as guardians throughout the Indra Sabhā and Jagannātha Sabhā cave complexes. For their sculptural prototypes we may look to the figures of Durgā and Kubera in the Brahmanical caves. Ambikā, mounted on a lion, sits under a mango tree, with one leg folded and the other hanging down, its foot resting on a lotus-pedestal, and a child on her knee or at her side. Sarvānubhūti sits on an elephant, also with one foot up and one down, and he sits under a banyan tree. He holds in his hands the money-bag or purse, and a fruit. As guardians, they typically occupy positions either at the entrance to the cave, facing each other at opposite

ends of the front aisle or verandah (*vīthikā*), or flanking the shrine entrance, Ambikā invariably on the right as one faces the shrine.

The qualities of sensuous luxury and mature assurance that typify these figures are perhaps most fully expressed in the pair that occupies east and west ends of the *vīthikā* fronting the main hall of the Indra Sabhā cave, upper (Plates 18 & 19). The carvers have composed the two niches in exactly the same way, with the animal heads on the right side, facing the Sabhā cave, there is another pair that in some ways is very similar to our first pair but with other variations (Plates 22 & 23). Rather than being flattened and emphasizing the wall, these figures occupy deep niches. Instead of resting on the floor, level with the observer, they are raised on a plinth, and the stage-like effect is heightened by rich *makara-toraṇas* framing the trees. The figures, themselves, are attenuated, and all of the detail is deeply under-cut, so that a dramatic play of light and dark is effected. The animals turn their heads to face the observer as in the other verandah, but the elephant's head is on the left and the lion's on the right, with the folded legs of Ambikā and Sarvānubhūti resting on them, forming a mirror-image composition. Since this puts both animal heads on the south, or entrance side, and their position is far forward in the niche, they catch the full light from the outside. Comparing the result with that of the J-12 example, where the animals face into the cave, we are struck with the almost aggressive liveliness of this solution.

Going back to the upper story of the Indra Sabhā cave, it will be seen that, in the southeast and the southwest corners, parallel double small caves form vestibule-entrances into side caves, or "wings" of the main hall (numbered 19 and 20 in Pereira). Following our comparison of facing Ambikā and Sarvānubhūti images, we run into a problem of interpretation. As we face the shrine in Cave J-20, we find an impressive figure of Sarvānubhūti at the left, or south end of the verandah (Plate 24), as expected. Similarly we find Ambikā on our right as we face the shrine in cave J-19 (Plate 25). In neither case, however, is it possible for the image to confront its counterpart, since at the other end of the verandah is the entrance. But there is an Ambikā image in the vestibule of Cave J-20 (Plate 26) and a Sarvānubhūti image in the vestibule of Cave J-19 (Plate 27), the first in the smaller of the two rooms that form the vestibule, the second in the larger. In both cases they face goddesses who probably represent Cakreśvarī-Yakṣī. Although the parallel is not perfect, it would appear that some consideration has been given to completing the pairs. The carving of the vestibule figure, however, was done by an artist who thought of making his design compatible with that of the goddess on the opposite wall rather than with the other guardian. The Sarvānubhūti image in Cave J-20 is of the same composition as the one in the verandah of the main hall : elephant head on the right, facing the observer, with the folded leg resting on it. The style, too, is very similar, although the ball-shaped tree, the slimmer figure, and the presence of a *makara-toraṇa* are more reminiscent of the verandah

figure of the lower Jagannātha Sabhā cave. In attempting to see the Ambikā of the vestibule (20-A) as his counter-part, we find an unconvincing correspondence. Not only is the figure of a different type and the *makara-toraṇa* of a different design, but the folded leg of Ambikā is on the same side as that of Sarvānubhūti (the right), whereas the animal head is on the opposite side to his. They form neither a complementary balance nor a mirror-image. It is tempting to pair this Sarvānubhūti with the Ambikā in Cave J-19, since the composition there is complementary, but the elaborate *makara-toraṇa* and greater complexity, in general, deny this relationship, so we need not try to justify their locations. The parallel between the Cave J-19 Ambikā and the Sarvānubhūti of 19-A is even more impossible. We must come to the conclusion, then, that the symbolism of the facing guardians was referred to but not pursued.

When Ambikā and Sarvānubhūti flank the entrance to the shrine, a symmetrical composition would logically be called for, and this, indeed, seems to be the rule. The most imposing such pair is in the cave (J-11) on the west side of the Indra Sabhā courtyard, at ground level, in the north corner (Plates 28 & 29). Here, the animals are in profile, facing in toward the shrine entrance, and the Yakṣa and Yakṣī fold the leg that rests on the animal's back. These figures have the voluptuous quality of the first pair of facing figures that we considered, but their proportions are more delicately refined and the sharp, precise carving of the rich detail, in the jewelry, the curls of Ambikā and of her lion, and in the background panels containing *makara*-heads and *gandharvas* and *apsarasas* which replace the trees, illustrates the high level of technical mastery that has been achieved by this workshop. The effect is one of great elegance, not as vital as the Laṅkeśvara figures, nor as warmly sensuous as those on the Indra Sabhā verandah, but possessed of an air of aristocratic loveliness.

Immediately south of the last one, in the cave numbered J-10, the figures that flank the shrine entrance are very similar to those in the neighbouring cave although their setting is more complex and less formal (Plates 30 and 31). Each is accompanied by a standing Jina and three small niches containing seated Jinas. Although the Ambikā figure is badly damaged, the figure-style is the same as that in Cave J-11, including a twist to the left in the hip region, and it seems likely that the position of the lion's head and the folded leg were the same.

Above Cave J-11 in a mid-level of the western side of the Indra Sabhā courtyard (Cave J-14), the figures which flank the shrine entrance are different in style and composition, but they retain the symmetricality (Plates 32 and 33). They sit within shallow, rectangular niches, and the trees over their heads are converted into rectangular slabs. Their figures are stocky and lack the suave elegance of those in Cave J-11, but they sit with firm assurance. The animal heads are on the outside, rather than the inside, and are turned to face the observer. That of the elephant broadly overlaps the niche-frame and both share the rather primitive

bulkiness of their riders. Sarvānubhūti and Ambikā rest their folded legs on the animal heads.

In Cave 34 (J-26), southwest of the Jagannātha Sabhā complex, the flanking figures of Ambikā and Sarvānubhūti (Plates 34 and 35) have the same composition—animal heads on the outside and facing the observer, folded legs above the animal heads—as those just described in Cave J-14. Since they are separated from the shrine entrance by pilasters, however, and are surmounted by nearly ball-shaped trees, and, what is more, possess a somewhat stiffened version of the slimmer figure-type, they remind us most of the pair at the end of the verandah in the lower cave of Jagannātha Sabhā, which are arranged in an identical composition. Thus we come to a solution that serves as well for either the facing or the flanking position.

So far, in all our examples, it is Ambikā's left leg (that on our right as we face her) that is folded, whether she is in a facing or flanking position and whether the lion's head is on the right or left. At the shrine door in the main hall of the Jagannātha Sabhā cave (Plate 36), however, we find her with her right leg folded¹⁷. Sarvānubhūti, on the left (Plate 37) is in a symmetrical pose, or mirror-image, in respect to the folded leg and animal-head, but he, too, is somewhat unusual. His right leg (on our left), rather than extending to rest the foot on a pedestal like Ambikā's, is pulled up vertically so that the foot rests on the elephant's back. This pose is similar to that of the *gaṇas* or of Padmanidhi images and is also shared by the anomalous Sarvānubhūti in Cave-19A. Perhaps it is not necessary, or possible, to find an explanation for these variations, but it may be noted that these figures, certainly assured and sophisticated in their rendering, not suggestive of clumsy or tentative experimentation, are not, strictly speaking, flanking the shrine entrance. That is, they are placed in set-back sections of wall on either side of standing Jina images, which do flank the entrance. Ambikā and Sarvānubhūti are not in niches but, with their trees and surrounding attendants, occupy space in the room. Ambikā, particularly, is part of a freely-flowing spatial composition, which merges with that of the Tīrthaṅkara. It may, after all, have been the decision of an inventive artist to change the pose so that the thrust of the folded leg emphasizes this relationship.

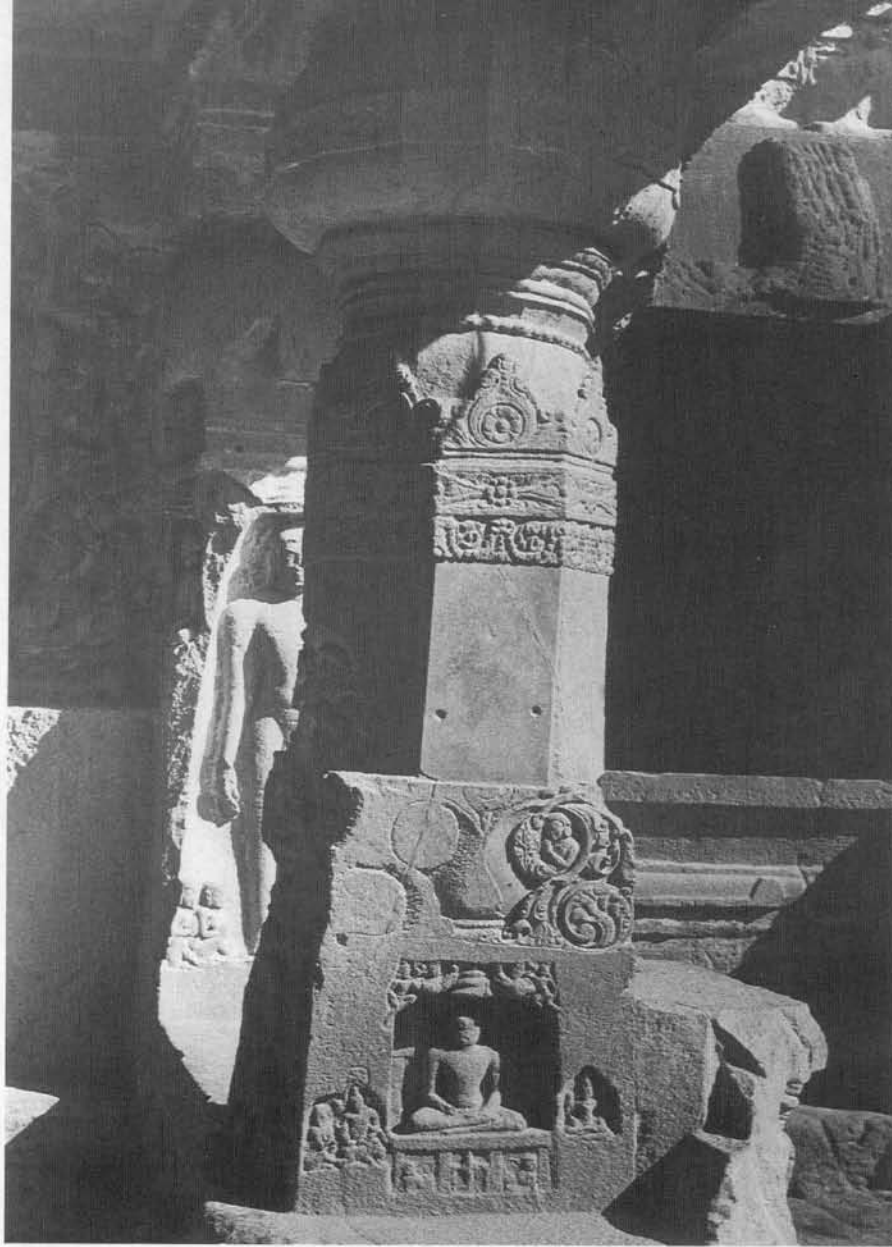
It remains to note three examples in which the principle of a symmetrical composition for flanking a shrine entrance has been ignored. All three are minor caves in the Indra Sabhā complex and may represent early experiments or later imitations of the works already considered. In the small cave outside of the screen wall, on the East (J-6, Plates. 38,39), the animal heads are on the inside, toward the shrine entrance and are therefore symmetrically arranged, although the elephant is in profile and the lion turns to face the observer. The folded legs of Sarvānubhūti and Ambikā, however, are both on the right side. The style, and even the attitude of the animals, most closely resemble that of the facing figures in the cave on the



1. Ellorā, Indra Sabhā, Jain Cave 32, General view. [Photo : Doris Chatham, (III, 44)].

2. Ellorā, Jagannātha Sabhā, Jain Cave 33, General view. [Photo : Doris Chatham, (IV, 19)].





3. Indra Sabhā J-10, (Cave on West Side of Court, Lower Level). [Photo : Doris Chatham, (III, 43)].

4. Indra Sabhā J-10, Lower Cave on the Western Side of the Court, façade pillar-base. [Photo : Doris Chatham, (IV, 22)].





5. Ellorā, Kailāsa Temple (Cave 16), South porch pillar (SE Corner).
[Photo : Doris Chatham, (XXII, 26)].

6. Ellorā, Lañkeśvara cave shrine, Cave 16, maṇḍapa pillars.
(Courtesy and kindness, American Institute of Indian Studies, Varanasi).





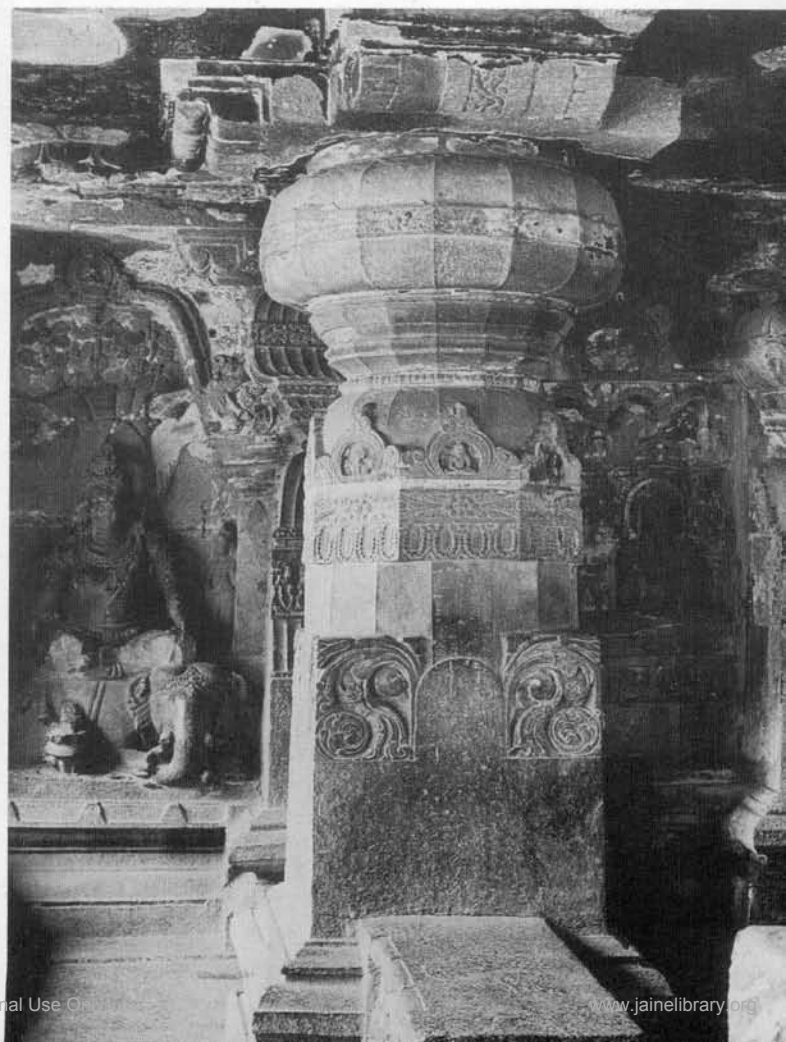
7. Ellorā, Indra Sabhā J-18, Upper floor.
(Courtesy A.I.I.S., Varanasi.)



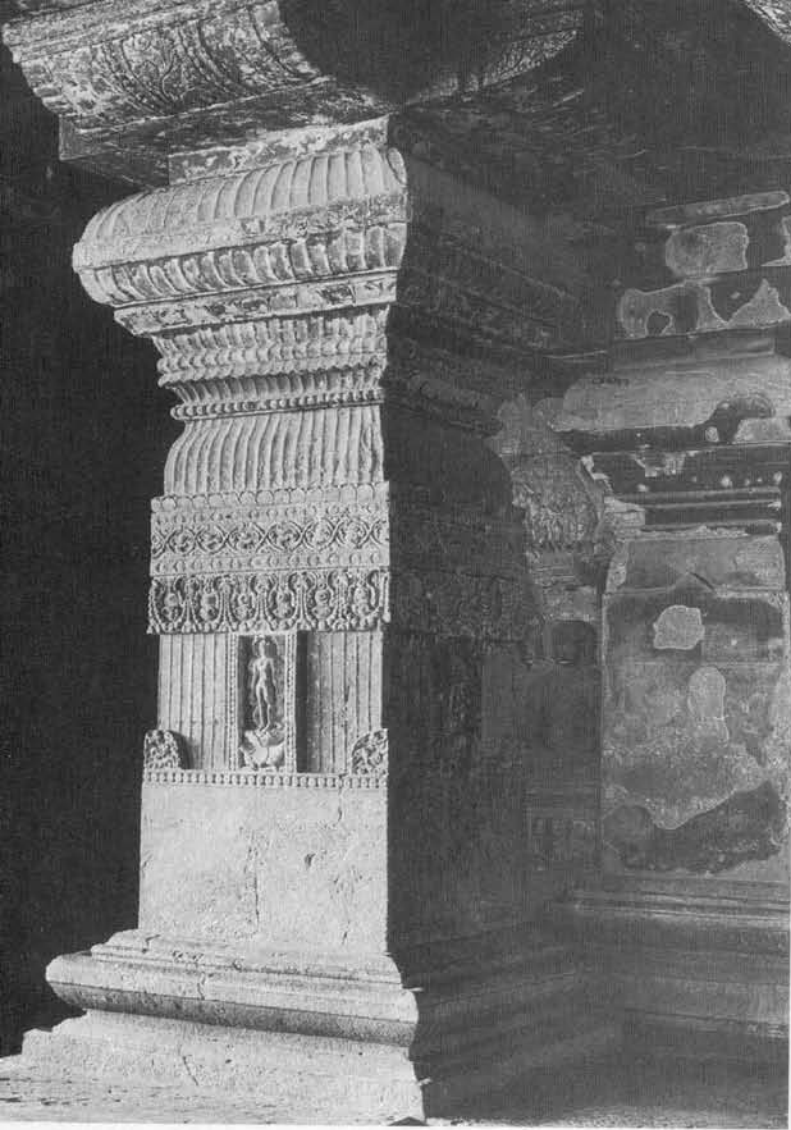
8. Indra Sabhā J-20. (Courtesy A.I.I.S., Varanasi.)



9. Indra Sabhā Main Hall (Upper storey), Verandah p
(between Verandah and Hall.)
[Photo : Doris Chatham, (V-9)].



10. Indra Sabhā J-20, (Cave on West Side of Court, upper
Level), Pillar between Hall and Verandah. (Courtesy
A.I.I.S.)



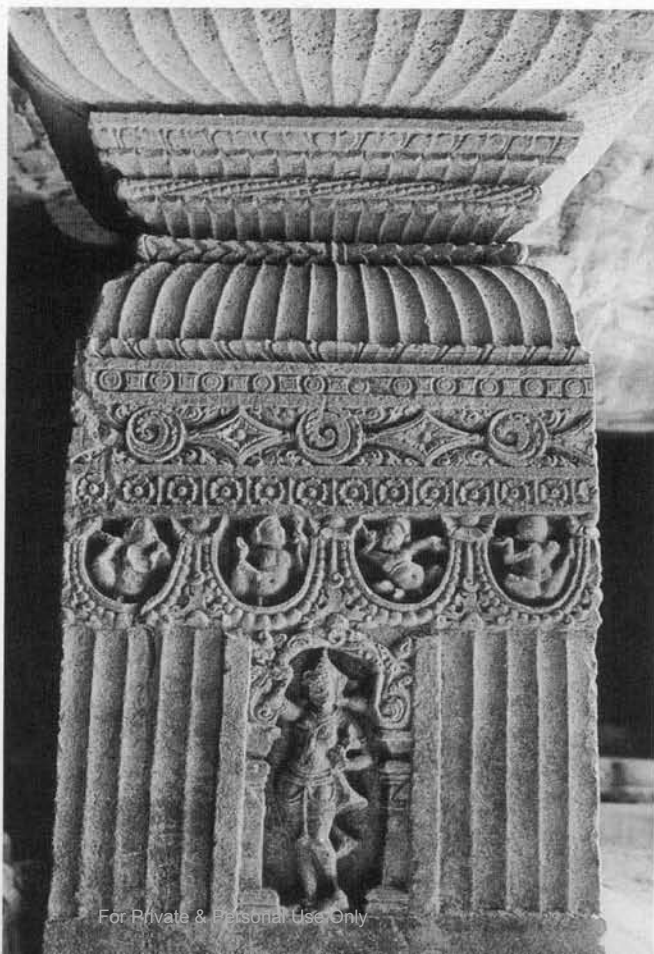
11. Indra Sabhā Main Hall (upper floor), Interior
Brahmakānta pillar. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



12. Indra Sabhā Main Hall, Interior pillar,
East Side. [Photo : Doris Chatham, (V-12)].



13. Jagannātha Sabhā Ground floor. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



14. Jagannātha Sabhā ground floor,
Detail of Verandah pillar.
[Photo : Doris Chatham, (V-19).]



15. Jagannātha Sabhā Ground floor, Detail of Verandah pillar.
[Photo : Doris Chatham, (V-20)].



16. Jagannātha Sabhā, J-21, Upper Hall,
(Courtesy A.I.I.S.)

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17. Indra Sabhā, Upper Storey, underside of the cornices. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.).

18. Indra Sabhā, J-18, Upper Storey, Verandah of the Main Hall (West end) Yakṣa Sarvānubhūti. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



19. Indra Sabhā, Upper Storey, Verandah of the Main Hall (East end), Yakṣi Ambikā. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)





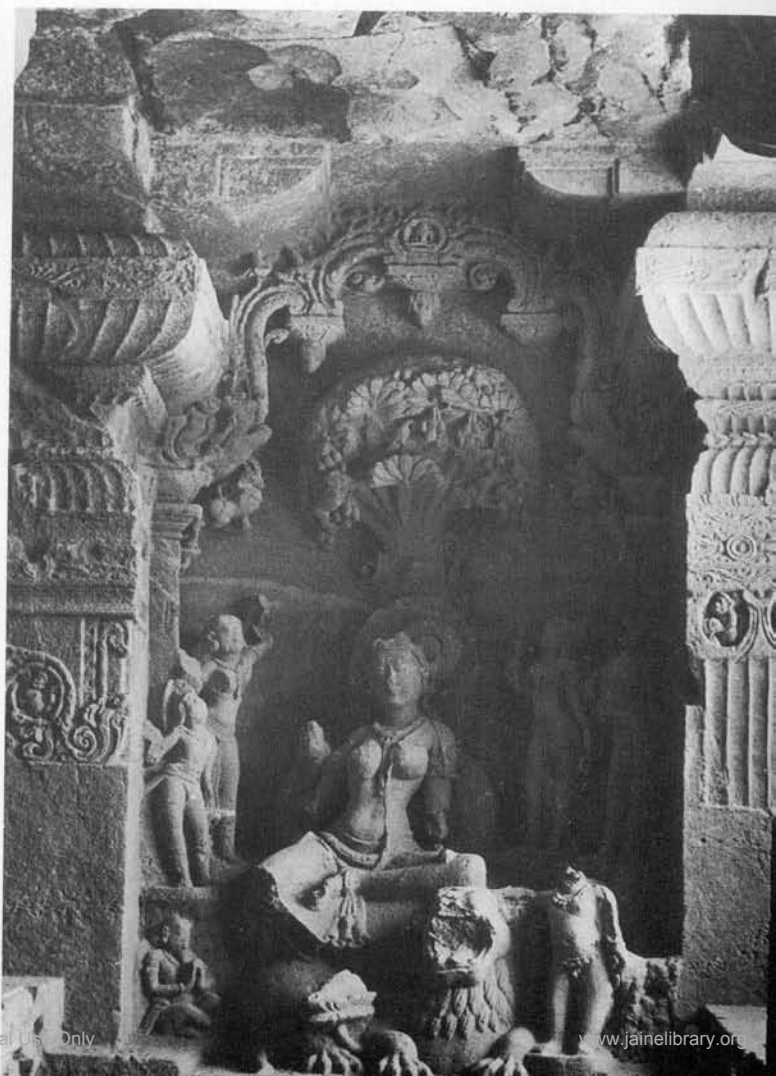
20. Indra Sabhā J-12 (Cave in NE Corner of Court, Lower Level), North wall, Sarvānubhūti. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



21. Indra Sabhā J-12 (Cave in NE Corner of Court, Lower Level), South wall, Ambikā.



22. Jagannātha Sabhā J-24, West end of the Verandah, Sarvānubhūti
[Photo : Doris Chatham, (V, 22)].



23. Jagannātha Sabhā, East end of the Verandah, Ambikā.
[Photo : Doris Chatham, (V, 23)].



24. Indra Sabhā J-20 (Cave in West Side of Court, Upper Level), South end of the wall, Sarvānubhūti. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



25. Indra Sabhā J-19 (Cave in East Side of Court, Upper Level), South end, Ambikā. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



26. Indra Sabhā J-20A (Vestibule passage from J-18 to J-20), West Side, Ambikā. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



27. Indra Sabhā J-17A (Vestibule between J-18 & J-20), West wall, Sarvānubhūti. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



28. Indra Sabhā J-11 (Cave in West Side of Court, Lower Level, North Corner), Sarvānubhūti (to left of shrine)
(Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



29. Indra Sabhā J-11 (Cave in West Side of Court, Lower Level, North Corner), Ambikā (To right of shrine)
(Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



30. Indra Sabhā J-10 (Cave on West Side of Court, Lower Level, South of "hero stone") Sarvānubhūti (Left of the shrine). (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



31. Indra Sabhā J-10 (Cave on West Side of Court, Lower Level, South of "hero stone") Ambikā (South of the shrine) (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



32. Indra Sabhā J-14 (Cave on West Side of Court, Middle Level), Sarvānubhūti. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)

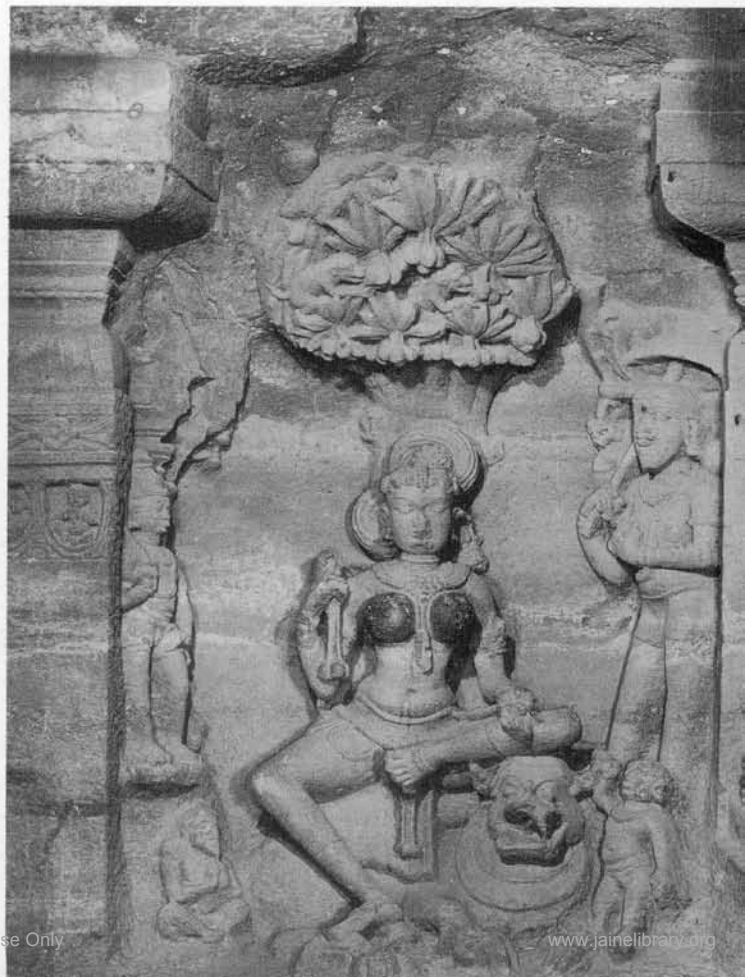


33. Indra Sabhā J-14 (Cave on West Side of Court, Middle Level), Ambikā. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



34. Jagannātha Sabhā complex, Jaina cave 34 J-26, (South-West of Jag. proper), Sarvānubhūti
(Courtesy A.I.I.S.)

35. Jagannātha Sabhā Complex, Cave 34 J-26, (South-West of Jag. proper), Ambikā. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)





36. Jagannātha Sabhā Main Hall, Ambikā, to the right of shrine. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



37. Jagannātha Sabhā Sarvānubhūti, to the left of the shrine. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



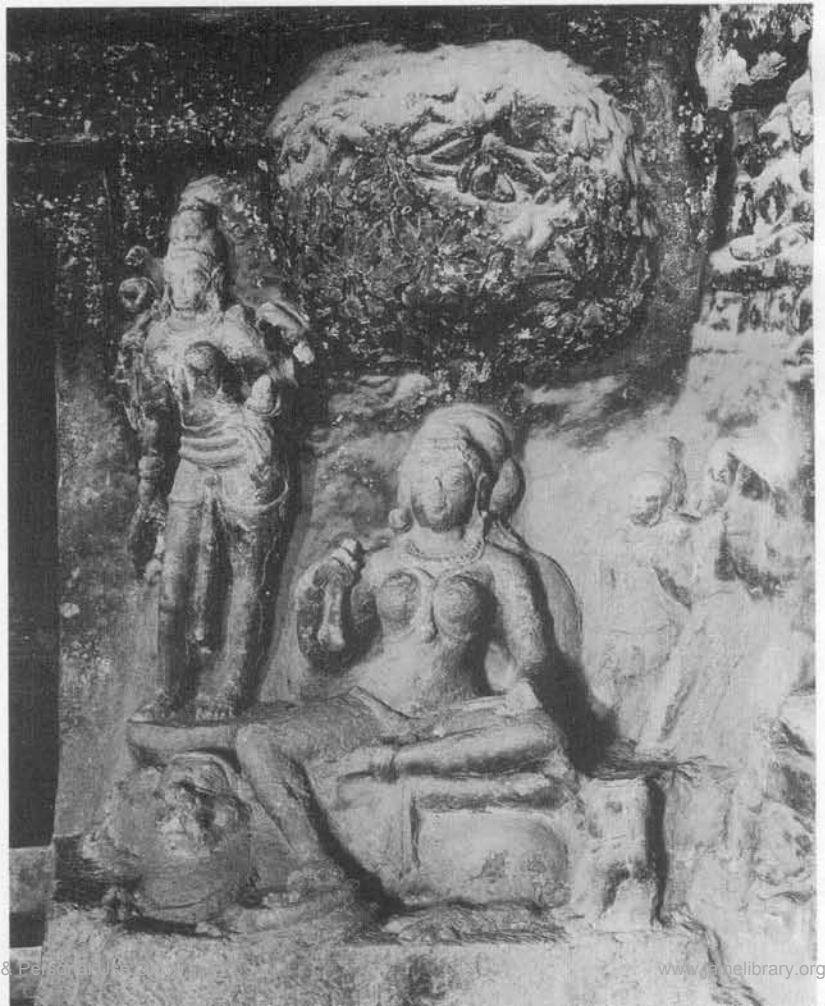
38. Indra Sabhā J-6 (Cave on East Side [South of outside of] Court), Sarvānubhūti (on left of the shrine.) (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



39. Indra Sabhā J-6 (Cave on East Side [South of outside of] Court). (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



40. Indra Sabhā J-13 (Cave inside, Lower Level, West end)
Sarvānubhūti. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



41. Indra Sabhā J-13 (Cave inside, Lower Level,
West end), Ambikā. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



42. Indra Sabhā (Cave at foot of stairs, East end, Inside), Sarvānubhūti. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



43. Indra Sabhā J-17 (Cave at foot of stairs, inside, East end), Ambikā. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



44. Homage to Gautama. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



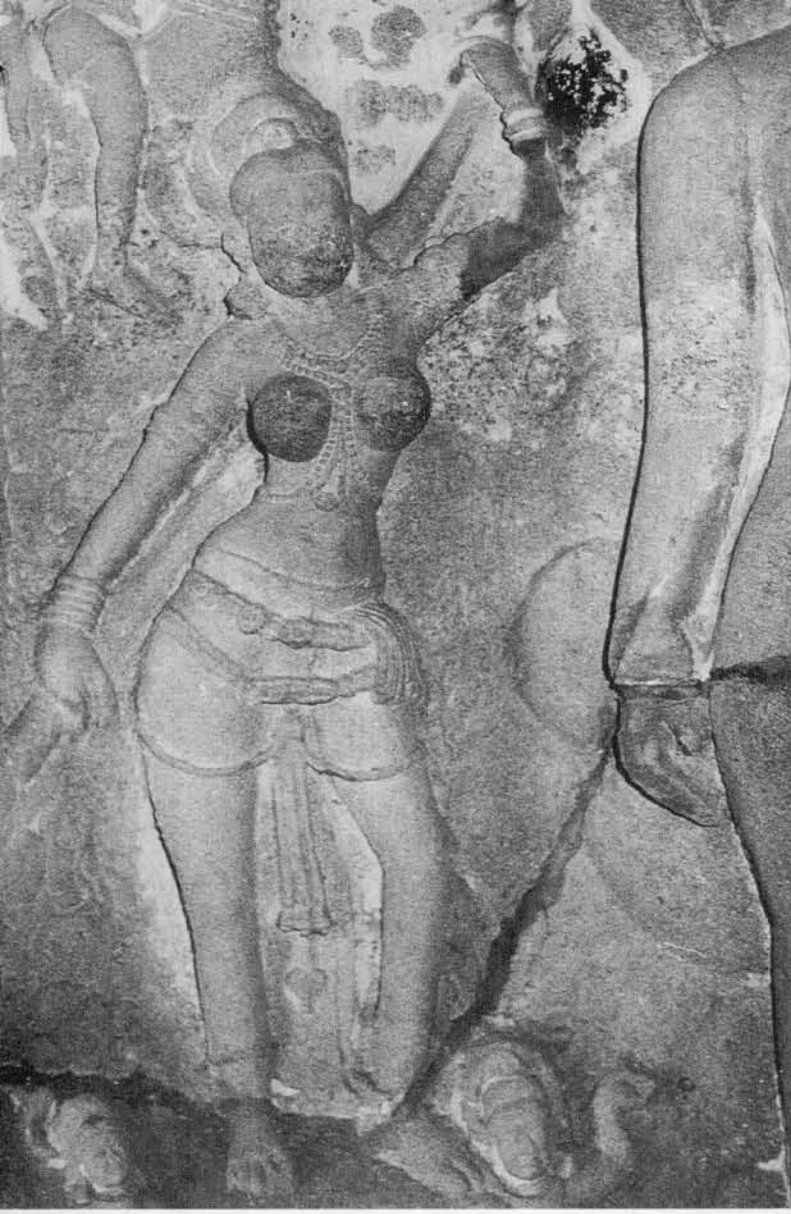
45. Ellorā, Kailāsa Temple (Cave 16) West entrance to Maṇḍapa-door jamb, Gaṅgā. [Photo : Doris Chatham, (II, 21)].



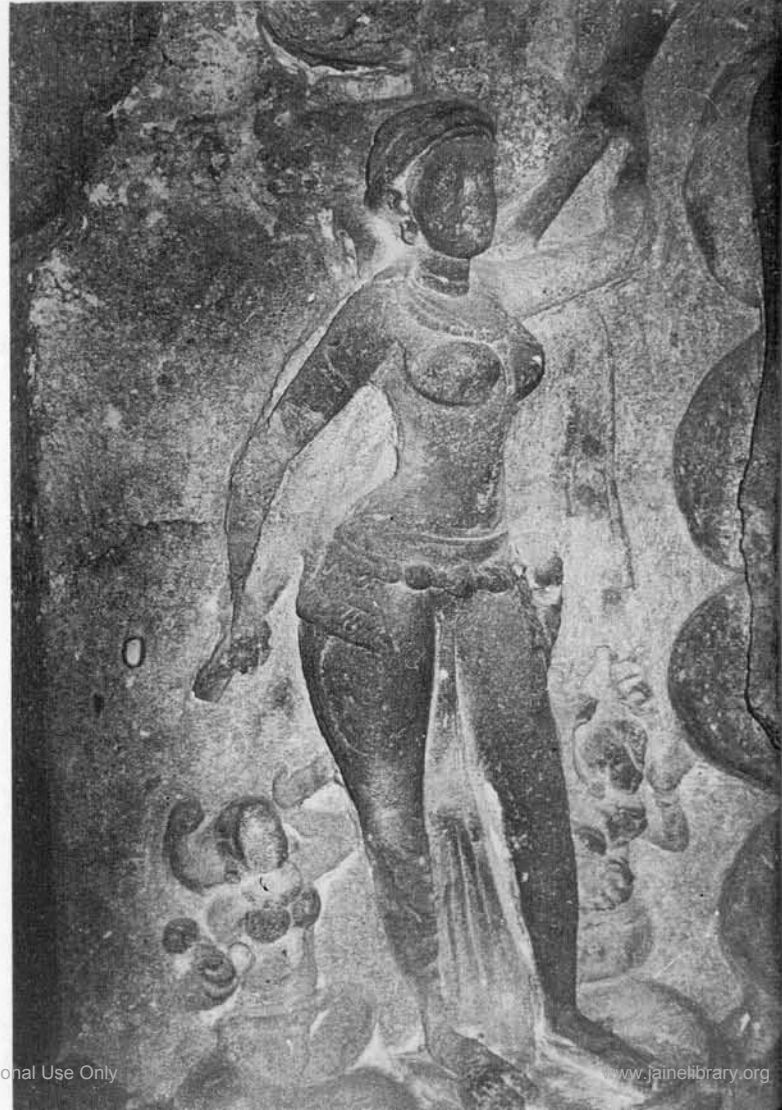
46. Kailāsa Temple. Mother-Goddess cave, South wall excavation, goddess, right pillar. [Photo : Dor Chatham, (XIV, 5)].



47. Indra Sabhā, J-18, Main Hall, Upper storey, Door in SW Corner (leading to J-20), Dvārapālikā. (Courtesy A.I.I.S.)



48. Indra Sabhā J-10, Cave on West Side of Court, Lower Level, South of South wall, Pārśvanātha panel.
[Photo : Doris Chatham, (XI, 33)].



49. Indra Sabhā Main Hall Upper Level, North wall, left of shrine. Detail of Pārśvanātha panel.
[Photo : Doris Chatham (III. 26)].

east side of the courtyard (J-12), which are symmetrical, or mirror-images, but here, Sarvānubhūti folds the wrong leg. In Cave J-13, which is inside the lower level of the Indra Sabhā excavation, on the west end, there is the same lack of symmetry in the matter of the folded leg (Plates 40 & 41) but the organization, as a whole, is much more effective and the animal heads both face the observer, on the inside, toward the shrine door. The striking similarity of style and posture to that of the figures directly above, on the verandah, suggests that this is an adaptation of that example to the position of flanking figures.

Last of all, we consider the cave on the east end of the lower level, inside the Indra Sabhā cave (J-17), and therefore directly below the verandah Ambikā at the foot of the stairs. Here is not an adaptation but an imitation. The figures are composed and posed in an identical way, except that the elephant's head is in three-quarter view rather than facing the observer, and the natural bearing of the figures and animals has been lost. An attempt at symmetry has been made in the wedge-shaped trees, but the fact that the cave itself is not a symmetrical design is reflected in the casual disposition of the parts. The same lack of symmetry prevails in the excavation of the other two anomalous examples, J-6 and J-13.

THE JAINA AESTHETIC :

Some indication of how what appears to be the taste of the patrons is perhaps related to the symbolism with which religious art is primarily concerned may be found in a comparison of cave-temples of the different sects represented here at Ellorā, and closely related chronologically.

The Jaina aesthetic would appear to relate more closely to the Buddhist than to the Brahmanical, a reflection, perhaps, of the more detached, contemplative character of these two sects, as contrasted to the more active Hinduism. It might, by some, be considered a more intellectual, or at least cerebral, approach; but, in another sense it is more sensual. More use is made of repetition, as in the rows of Tirthaṅkara images, which, like the repeated Buddhas, set up a hypnotic rhythm, a kind of visual *mantra* or aid to concentration. The method of communication is to use an element of purely visual stimulation to the senses directly relating to the spiritual experience, in contrast to the more indirect, literary method of story-telling art, by which the devotee is invited to share in a dramatic scene of action, and in which the gods seem to share more vividly the vicissitudes of mundane life. An important function of ritual is, precisely, to *transcend* mundane experience, and it is this function which is served by the less dramatic, less active, more iconic imagery employed here. Some later observers attribute the repetition to a dearth of creative imagination¹⁸. Such a criticism reveals a lack of understanding of the nature of creativity in art. "Imagination," the making of images, neither begins nor ends with the invention of new or varied subjects. If it did, then the attribution of responsibility for the quality of works of art to the authors of

pedantic texts would not be the error which it is. On the other hand, the choice of symbolic *vocabulary*, which can be analyzed separately from effectiveness through a simple identification of subject, is more than likely the province of the patron, and will therefore reflect the ideas and ideals of his religious sect, even when the same sculptors are employed who previously carved in a different idiom.

The two themes represented again and again, in virtually identical form, in the Jaina cave-temples are those of "Home to Bahubali" (Plate 44) and "Pārśvanātha's Temptation." The stories on which they are based have all of the elements of drama : demons in many forms, fury, and conflict. The visualization, however, remains true to the quietism of its surroundings. Pārśvanātha's unswerving absorption in his meditation and the miraculous stillness of Bāhubali, standing in the forest, are themes belong to *śānta rasa*, tranquillity transcending action and drama.

Another characteristic often noted in the Jaina iconography is the lack of individuality, or distinguishing characteristics possessed by the Tirthaṅkaras and their attendant *Yakṣas* and *Yakṣīs*, which often makes it difficult to be certain about an identification. Again, the explanation lies in the deliberate choice of a non-dramatic expression of spirituality. In the visual arts, where verbal expression is precluded, individuality is most effectively expressed by dramatic action. Icons, therefore, are less inclined to be so distinguished than narrative presentations of the gods involved in events. A concept of the Absolute, necessarily generalized, is at odds with the specific demands of individualization.

We have seen in tracing the evolution of pillar design, how closely related are the Indra Sabhā and Jagannātha Sabhā caves to the Laṅkeśvara and, deductively, the likelihood that the same sculptors, or their successors in the same workshop, were responsible for the development. We have only to contrast the sculptural representations of Śiva on the verandah-pillars of the Laṅkeśvara temple with those of Pārśvanātha and Gomateśvara just described (leaving aside the iconic images of the Hindu gods and the Jinas in both cases, which lack a basis in narrative symbolism) to see what a difference the informing spirit makes. These Śiva figures on the pillars, and the well-known relief-panel at the east end of the verandah depicting Śiva performing the Tāṇḍava dance, are as full of tension and lively action as the Jaina figures are detached and motionless. Nevertheless, when we consider the style of the figure sculpture, we are struck in both cases with the fact that it is in harmony with the richness and elegance, the sensuous, physical appeal of the architectural detail. A sequence of female standing figures, from the Kailāsa temple to the Mother-Goddess Shrine to the Jaina Caves, represented in plates 45 through 49, illustrates both the stylistic continuity and the tendency toward abstraction, or schematization, that we saw in the pillar development. Linear elegance becomes more an end in itself, but its character is derived from the earlier examples.

James Burgess criticized the architecture of these caves rather harshly. "The two principal Jaina Caves," he wrote, "are very extensive works, superior both in extent and elaboration to any of the Brahmanical caves, excepting of course the Kailāsa, and the Viśvakarmā... Though two storeys in height and extremely rich in decoration.... [they] are entirely deficient in that purpose-like architectural expression which characterized the works of the two earlier religions.... the plan is compressed, and all their arrangements seem to result more from accident than to have arisen from any well-conceived design, so that they lose half the effect that might have been produced with far less elaboration of detail"¹⁹.

Certainly, the effect of a less elaborate but more strictly ordered design would have been different, although we might question the implication that the design of the Kailāsa temple is a paragon of logical planning, but, like the Kailāsa, these cave-temples are a product more of the sculptural than the architectural imagination. If their arrangements seem more accidental than "well-conceived," it may be that the carvers and their patrons valued richness of detail more than grand spatial effects and that *their* vision was fully realized through their conceptions.

REFERENCES :

1. James Fergusson and James Burgess, *The Cave Temples of India*, London 1880, Oriental Books reprint, New Delhi 1969, pp. 495-502. See also James Burgess, *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, Vol. V, New Delhi 1883.
2. K. R. Srinivasan, "Chapter 18: The Deccan," in *Jaina Art and Architecture* (ed. A. Ghosh,) Vol. I, New Delhi 1974, pp. 188-194.
3. Josè Pereira, *Monolithic Jinas, The Iconography of the Jain Temples of Ellora*, Motilal Banarsidass, Varanasi 1977.
4. The following is a condensed (and slightly revised) version of my summary of the reign of Amoghavarṣa I, which appeared in my Ph. D. dissertation, *Stylistic Sources and Relationships of the Kailāsa Temple at Ellora*, University of California, Berkeley 1977.
5. See Fergusson and Burgess, *The Caves Temples.*, and Pereira, *Monolithic Jinas*.
6. Navsari grant of Indra III, *Epigraphia Indica*, IX, p. 39.
7. I. e., the date of the Surat plates of Karkkarāja, which first mention the event. (*Epigraphia Indica*, IX, p. 39.)
8. See the Begumra grant of Dhruva II (A. D. 867), I.A., XII, pp. 179 ff. and A.S. Altekar, *Age of Imperial Kanauj*, pp. 8-11. (R. C. Majumdar, Gen. Ed.), *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. IV, Bombay 1955, 1964.
9. The Kardā grant, at the end of Rāṣṭrakūṭa power (A. D. 972-973), recalls the glory of

the king who made this city named *Śrī-Mānyakheta*, which surpasses the city of Indra, this lake, a palace of great workmanship, (and) a harem. *I.A.*, XII, p. 268. Inscriptions of his own time speak of his coverage the whole surface of the earth "with his thousands of courtesans....." *I.A.*, XII, pp. 219-220; *E.I.*, VI, p. 106.

10. Cf. Fleet, "Dynasties of the Kanarese Districts of the Bombay Presidency," *B. G.* Vol. I, part ii., Bombay 1896.
11. R. G. Bhandarkar, "Early History of the Dekkan," *B. G.* Vol. I, part ii, p. 201. He is also given credit, in a number of places, for being the author of the earliest Kanarese work on poetics, the *Kavirājamārga*.
12. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 235 ff. In that grant, also, we are told that he cut off a finger and presented it to Mahā-lakṣmī to prevent a calamity to his people.
13. *The History and Culture of Indian People*, Vol. IV, *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, pp. 288-289, and A.S. Altekar, *Rāshtrakūṭas and Their Times*, Oriental Book Agency, second revised edition, Poona 1967, p.272.
14. See for example his discussion of the development of Cave 4, Ajantā, in the article, "Ajantā and Ghatotkacha: A Preliminary Analysis," *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. VI, 1966, p.151.
15. In the conclusions to my dissertation, I have estimated that the Laṅkeśvara Cave was excavated c. A. D. 770-772, while only the plinth of the Kailāsa temple remained to be completed.
16. "J-20" on the plan of the Indra Sabhā upper storey, p. 112 in Pereira, *Monolithic Jina*.
17. This also occurs in Cave J-25, in a facing figure that appears to be by the same artist.
18. See Pereira, p. 39: "Of the Tirthankara and Arhat, the former—either because of the sculptors' obsession with this theme, or their inertia or poverty of ideas—is overwhelmingly the main subject of Jina sculpture....".

The implication here that the ideas of the *sculptors*, or their "obsessions," determine the subjects they depict also stems from a misunderstanding of the role of the craftsman in religious art of the periods with which we deal.

19. James Burgess, *Report on the Ellora Cave Temples and the Brahmanical and Jaina Caves in Western India*, *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, V, 1883, Reprint, Varanasi 1970, p. 44.