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https://doi.org/10.15804/aoto202203

IMAGING THE DIVINE.
The Depiction of Gods and Deified Beings in Illustrations of Kalpasūtra Manuscripts from Western India

INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the way divine beings are represented in the miniatures illustrating the Kalpasūtra, one of the most important sources for the Jina legend. This addresses a fundamental question related to works of art with religious connotations, namely the question of how motifs from the subject area of the transcendent or the „divine" can be depicted. The level of transcendence is naturally withdrawn from human experience and thus from verbal and visual means of expression. In order to describe or depict the actually indescribable divine nevertheless, special instruments are required.

One possibility, which is used in the art of many cultures, is the use of metaphors, more precisely of pictorial metaphors, in a religious context. Both the terms „image" and „metaphor" are notoriously ambiguous and have yet to be clearly defined. The question of what an image is has not been adequately answered so far and will not be discussed further here.[1] The discussion of what constitutes a pictorial metaphor also has yet to reach a conclusive and

[1] On this question see Boehm (1994a) and Belting (2011).

generally accepted result. Taking Nelson Goodman's study *Languages of Art*[2] as a starting point, the question of metaphors in images or in individual visual motifs has been discussed from different angles. In the case under study here, the question is how the deification of the founder of a religion conceived as human – the Jina Mahavira – or rather the divine qualities attributed to him can be visualised by means of a pictorial metaphor. The image content – i.e., what the viewer sees – unites form and meaning; while the metaphor outwardly refers to the form, its content is located on the level of meaning. Accordingly, a pictorial metaphor exists when the illustration in its obvious form and the meaning discernible by the viewer – i.e., in the meaning behind the form – are not immediately in accordance with each other. In this sense, regarding the question of how an pictorial metaphor is recognised the argument follows the studies by Boehm[3] and Imdahl;[4] its analytic strategy, on the other hand, is based on the linguistic concept of Lakoff & Johnson, according to which "*the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.*"[5] This approach was described slightly more specifically by Lakoff:

> *"Briefly, we claim that metaphor is conceptual in nature and that a metaphor is a structural mapping from one domain of subject matter (the source domain) to another (the target domain). Metaphors are primarily ways of thinking about something, and as such they can be conventional or novel. Metaphorical language arises when a word for something in the source domain is also used for the corresponding element of the target domain."* [6]

This concept can be transferred to the analysis of images.[7] Due to the difference between the apparent form of certain motifs or pictorial elements and the meaning behind them, it is possible to locate them in a target domain and a source domain. This means that for the depiction of the transcendent or divine, which lies beyond the known forms and possibilities of depiction (target domain), a known and depictable motif from objective reality

[2] Goodman (1968).

[3] Boehm (1994b).

[4] Imdahl (1994).

[5] Lakoff & Johnson (2003: 5).

[6] Lakoff (1986: 294).

[7] Forceville (2002).

(source domain) is used as a substitute. If necessary, this motif can be made recognisable as a metaphorical depiction by an additional reference indicating transcendence, which is mostly done by iconographic elements. The pictorial metaphor differs from the symbol, where instead a sign refers by means of its form (signifier) to the content (signified), by the levels of the source and target domain. Using the image of the Jina in the miniatures of the Kalpasūtra, it can furthermore be shown that the pictorial metaphor, in contrast to the linguistic metaphor, is also transferable to other genres of art and thus applicable on several levels of meaning. In this sense, the essay shows on the one hand the metaphor used to depict the Jina as an omniscient („divine") being and at the same time sheds light on the depicted motifs from an art historical perspective.

For this purpose, several manuscripts from the Berlin collections were re-examined, which had already been published at an earlier point in time, focussing predominantly on their iconographic aspects.[8] Because of the uniformity of the motifs discussed here, which are repeated in numerous Jain manuscripts of the 15th and 16th centuries in an almost identical manner, the results obtained here can be applied to other miniatures and, to a limited extent, to West Indian miniature painting as a whole.

THE 'WESTERN INDIAN STYLE' OF PAINTING

Since Jain miniature painting is one of the seldom discussed areas of South Asian art history, it seems reasonable to provide some basic information on the painting style, the illustrations of the Jain legend handed down in the Kalpasūtra, and finally on the Kalpasūtra itself before discussing the metaphorical content of the images.

The miniatures to the Kalpasūtra belong to a school of painting today usually called the ‚Western Indian Style' or ‚Western Indian School'. Older works instead often use designations such as ‚Jain Style' or ‚Prakrit Style', assigning the respective manuscripts to either a particular religion or language.

The workshops producing these manuscripts were located mostly in Gujarat and Rajasthan. However, the West Indian style of painting spread beyond this region in the 15th century and was also taken up by painting

8) Krüger (2020a).

workshops in the neighbouring territories of Malwa and Merwar, as well as in the Sultanate of Jaunpur further to the east.[9)]

Together with the East Indian painting schools of the Pāla dynasty, where Buddhist manuscripts were produced since the 11th century, the West Indian schools represent the beginning of mediaeval Indian book art. While Buddhist monks were engaged in the East Indian painting schools, the West Indian manuscripts were made by craftsmen who were not Jains themselves and who, in addition to Jain manuscripts, also produced illustrated manuscripts of Hindu works, although in much smaller numbers. The large number of Jain manuscripts can be explained mainly by the endowment system, which grew during this period and focussed increasingly on the donation of precious manuscripts.

The origins of the West Indian schools of painting are obscure. The Tibetan monk Tāranātha, in his 1608 work on the history of Buddhism, claims that the West Indian school of painting goes back to a tradition founded by the artist Śṛṅgadhāra in the 7th century.[10)]

Based on the extant material Jain manuscript painting cannot be traced back further than to 1060 CE when the oldest known manuscript, a palm leaf manuscript of the *Oghaniryukti,* was produced.[11)]

This manuscript is of certain importance for the following considerations, because the gods and goddesses shown in the illustrations are already shown in frontal view and thus refer to the painting style used later for the Jina as an enlightened being.

The replacement of palm leaves with paper as an image carrier caused fundamental changes in West Indian miniature painting. While illustrations in palm-leaf manuscripts were limited to small pictorial areas between the columns of text, painting now began to spread out over larger areas, allowing the depiction of more complex scenes. The style of the miniatures is already fully developed in the oldest extant manuscripts. It is characterised by a hard drawing as well as pointed and angular forms, which were created by an edgy line management. Instead of a staggered spatial arrangement, the means of choice are two-dimensional juxtaposition and superimposition.

The colour spectrum is still very limited in the 11th and 12th centuries, but is quickly expanded. Since the 13th century, a monochrome red background

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9) Krüger (2020: 71).

10) Götz (1934: 7f.); Chandra (1949: 16ff.)

11) Doshi (1985: 33, Fig. 3).

is predominant, which is expanded in the 15th century by blue areas and becomes a monochrome blue background by the 16th century.

Jain book painting of the 15th and 16th centuries is characterised by formulaic repetitions and a constant recurrence of the same motifs. This formulaic nature, where the same motifs are always repeated in a very similar manner, considerably limits the range of variation in motifs and image content when viewed superficially, but at the same time, when examining certain image motifs, it allows for a cautious application of the results obtained to other manuscripts as well.

THE KALPASŪTRA

Since the 14th century, illustrated manuscripts on the Kalpasūtra were produced in western India. Palm leaf was initially used as the material, but around 1400 this material was replaced by paper. The introduction of paper meant, besides changes in the method of painting, above all an increase in production. Between 1400 and 1550, countless manuscripts were produced, with the majority of illustrated manuscripts containing the Kalpasūtra; illustrated manuscripts of the Uttarādhyayanasūtra and the Kālakācāryakathā were produced in smaller numbers.

The Kalpasūtra is part of the Śvetāmbara canon and contains the Jinacaritra, one of the oldest versions of the Jina legend.[12]

The text was written during the first centuries CE and thus almost a millennium after the time Jainism presumably emerged. The learned monk Bhadrabāhu is named as the author, but this is impossible to prove based on historical sources. The Kalpasūtra consists of the parts Jinacarita (Jina legend), Sthavirāvali (list of Mahāvīra's successors) and Paryuṣanākalpa or Sādhusamācārī (regulations of the monks during the rainy season).

The Jinacarita of the Kalpasūtra begins with the Mahāvīra legend; it relates the life path of the last Jina centred around five events of his life deemed particularly auspicious, namely conception, birth, escape from the world,

[12] The oldest transmitted version of the Jina legend is part of the chapter *Bhāvanāḥ* (Skt. 'developments') of the *Ācārāṅgasūtra*; it served as the model for the Jinacarita (Skt. ‚Life of the Jina') in the Kalpasūtra,. Furthermore individual episodes of the life of Mahāvīra are scattered over different texts in the canon and in post-canonical commentaries.

attainment of omniscience, and salvation. Following the same scheme, the life stories of Pārśva and Ariṣṭanemi are then narrated. Their legends are followed by list of their predecessors, giving only the name and the time intervals of their respective appearances. It concludes with the Ṛṣabha legend; this is again narrated in greater detail and its content follows the model of the Mahāvīra legend.

All three parts of the Kalpasūtra, including the accompanying commentaries, are recited by the monks at the Paryuṣaṇā festival, with the miniatures presented to the lay community to explain the text.[13] The miniature painting is primarily devoted to illustrating the Jina legend, but some manuscripts also contain illustrations of the legends about Mahāvīra's disciples and successors, as well as about the monastic regulations.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE KALPASŪTRA

Miniatures essentially serve to illustrate the text they accompany. A peculiarity of the Kalpasūtra manuscripts, however, is that many of the motifs depicted have no clear connection to the text. The illustration cycle therefore tells a story slightly different from the text; on the one hand important episodes are missing and, on the other hand, events not mentioned have been added. For the Jina legend, this means that in addition to the written version, there was probably another way of telling the story, which was only spread orally among the lay followers and which ultimately formed the basis for the choice of motifs in the illuminated manuscripts. Apart from scenes representing the Jina legend as handed down in the Kalpasūtra, alongside it, episodes from Hemacandra's twelfth-century History of the World can be found. In this work, among other things, the lives of all twenty-four Tīrthaṃkaras are described in great detail, including stories taking place prior to birth, which enjoyed great popularity among the Śvetāmbaras in the Middle Ages.

Overall, however, the miniatures were not so much illustrations as adornments of the manuscripts, which determined the value of the endowment and thus the amount of religious merit attained by the donor. In addition, the illustrated manuscripts also fulfilled a ritual function by being displayed before the congregation during the recitation of the Kalpasūtra during the Paryuṣaṇā festival. Looking at the miniatures during the recitation must be

[13] Cort (2001: 151).

understood as a beneficial action, because for the believer the figures depicted on the miniatures are the protagonists of a sacred action, the presentation of which brings him closer to salvation. This explains the sumptuous decoration of all dramatis personae, which are depicted in ritually adorned form like cult images, and to whom similar veneration is paid on this occasion as to the Jina itself. The showing of images often served for religious instruction in the Jain tradition; the description of one such scene is contained in the Jain narrative Kuvalayamālā, written around 778.[14] The miniatures of the Kalpasūtra manuscripts are narrative and often follow a completing narrative style – i.e., a sequence of actions that a person undergoes is depicted around the person not in a sequence of images but through pictorial elements that stand for the individual sequences. Often, however, the narrative component is reduced considerably, and all that remains of the depiction is its generic content, which is then used in the painting with different meanings in different texts.

The figures do not bear any individual traits and are to be understood as a kind of ideal image of man. Almost always the depicted people are shown in three-quarter profile. Occasionally, certain groups of people are characterised by special attributes, such as the king by a full beard or the Brahmins by white hair and beards. Gods are usually identifiable by having four arms, but otherwise do not differ from humans. The depiction of human and divine beings often makes use of the same or at least quite similar pictorial formulas, which can be shown particularly well by the depiction of the royal court in the palace of Mahāvīra's parents (Fig. 1) in comparison with the heavenly retinue of the god-king Śakra (Fig. 2). The painting style of the human and the divine king differ in only a few details.

In both cases the ruler, be it the one over the earthly village of Kuṇḍagrāma, or the one over the Saudharma heaven, occupies the left half of the picture, while the members of his court are reduced in size and arranged one above the other on the opposite half of the picture. The two rulers and their courtiers are robed in the same manner and wear identical jewellery. Only the number of arms and the attributes held in their hands distinguish Śakra from the king, with the divine retinue consisting of two-armed figures that on their own are not recognisable as gods. The god-king carries a scepter *(vajra)* and an elephant hook *(aṅkuśa)* while the human king holds a sword as a symbol of his rule and, unlike the god-king, is shown bearded.

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[14] Zin & Schlingloff (2007: 13f.)

In this way, the medieval painters established a figurative connection between the king in the human world and the king of the gods, which cannot be derived directly from the Kalpasūtra, but which clarifies Jainism's own conception of the world of the gods. According to this, the world of the gods is a kind of reflection of the world of humans;[15] this also includes life at court.[16] The use of a pictorial metaphor in this case is very obvious. The familiar and thus depictable scenery of earthly royalty (source domain) is transferred to the transcendent world of the gods (target domain). The many arms and the attributes of Śakra are to be classified as references to transcendence, allowing the viewer to clearly identify the image as metaphorical, while all other picture elements, including the human bodies of the gods, point to the earthly world. At the same time, a revers interpretation of the metaphorical content of the image can be supported theologically. By equating the royal assembly in the book painting with that of the prince of the gods, reference is also made to the ancient Indian concept of the king as deva, who in this function represents the gods in the world of men. This form of god-kingdom is based, among other things, on the idea that the ruler as a superhuman being was originally created from divine particles.[17]

The image of a royal court, like many motifs in West Indian miniatures, is not limited to this one episode. The motif of a king accompanied by his retinue rather developed in the West Indian miniature painting of the 15/16th century into a pictorial formula with the fixed meaning ‚royal court' or ‚courtly life.[18]

In the depiction of people, a distinction is otherwise only made between males and females and between monks and laymen; monks and nuns are distinguished from the laymen by a white robe, in the case of the nuns with a suggested veil. In miniatures for the Kalpasūtra, the persons depicted are

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[15] Schubring (1978: 243).

[16] This is demonstrated by the captions frequently placed beside the miniatures; they probably served as instruction for the painter. The illustration of the king with his retinue is called *'rājasabhā'*('entourage of the king'), while Śakra's court is called *‚iṃdrasabhā'* (Skt. 'entourage of [the king of the gods] Indra') in a comparable manuscript (see Krüger 2020a: 169).

[17] Literary references to this concept can be found in ancient Indian legal texts as well as in the Indian epics (Gonda 1969: 24f.).

[18] Krüger (2020a: 169f.)

dressed almost identically and wear the same jewellery, consisting of a crown, several necklaces, and ear and upper arm jewellery.

Fixed pictorial formulas were used to locate the scenery either in the open air or inside a building. For example, a splendidly decorated canopy, occasionally supplemented by architectural elements, stands for a scene inside a building, while rock formations, trees, or a narrow horizon at the upper edge of the picture suggest an outdoor location of the event. However, the artists were not always sufficiently familiar with this symbolism, and so occasionally the depiction of a horizon line also occurs within a building. Individual pictorial elements, such as bodies of water or parts of a room's furnishings, through which the location of a scene can be more closely determined, are inserted into the picture in the form of pictograms.

JINA AND JINA IMAGE

The Mahāvīra legend can be roughly divided into two sections. The first section describes the events leading up to the attainment of omniscience („enlightenment") of Jina Mahāvīra, while the second section describes Mahāvīra's further life and work until his salvation. The attainment of all-encompassing knowledge is thus the decisive key moment that transforms Mahāvīra into a person with superhuman qualities. This event marks the turning point in Mahāvīra's life path. In this way, he is transformed from someone seeking salvation to a being who knows the path to salvation, is able to walk it himself and, furthermore, can point others in the direction of salvation as a spiritual teacher.

Over a long period of time, Mahāvīra was transformed from the founder of a teaching tradition to a divine being. While early literature still portrayed him as human searching and finding a path to salvation of his own accord, by the Indian Middle Ages at the latest he became part of the world order, which envisages a sequence of twenty-four Jinas in ascending and descending cycles of each world age. Thus, in this tradition, Mahāvīra is no longer the idealised founder or reformer of a doctrine of salvation, but the final promulgator of an eternal law, and in this way fulfils his predetermined function in the mechanically repeating course of time.

The process of deification of a teacher originally conceived or remembered as human does not stand alone, but is part of a change that took place in the religious traditions of ancient India in a period from about 500 BCE to 500

CE. Two divergent dynamics can be observed in ancient Indian religions during this period: the manifestation of certain Brahmanic gods in human form and the deification of the supposed or actual founding figures of the ascetic reform movements later called Buddhism and Jainism.[19] This process took place in a mutual intertwining on the literary as well as on the level of art and materiality. The formation of the Jina image and the Jain cult image is a result of this development.[20]

The moment the deification of Jina is based on in the first place is the attainment of omniscience. The deified Jina holds the highest position in the Jain pantheon – even above the gods. The omniscience of the mythical Jina for him becomes omnipotence and turns him into a god among the gods (*devādideva*) and the spiritual ruler over the three worlds (*triloka*). Since according to Jain understanding the course of the world follows a fixed order with which even divine beings cannot interfere, omniscience is the greatest possible form of divine power.

Apart from the cult image, Jain art has no motif that immediately symbolises the omniscience of the Jinas.[21] This deficiency is probably explained by the meagre description of this actually so important moment, for which the Jina legend only mentions the point in time. According to this, Mahāvīra attained omniscience (*kevalajñāna*) in the thirteenth year of his flight from the world and thus became a perfect being (*arhat*) and thus a Jina:

> […] *tae ṇaṃ samaṇe bhagavaṃ mahāvīre arahā jāe jiṇe kevalī savvannū savva-darisī* […].[22]

[19] These questions are currently being investigated as part of a sub-project of the CRC *Metaphors of Religion. Religious Meaning-Making in Language Use* at the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum. It will examine how the transcendent nature of the Jina's body is constructed, how it is compared to that of the Buddha, and how – in turn – Viṣṇu's human corporeality is represented. In this way, the project seeks to understand the concepts that structure the metaphors that both express and constitute emanations of the divine. This essay was written in the context of this research.

[20] On the process of deification and the function of the Jain cult image in this process see Krüger (2020b).

[21] This moment is comparable to the enlightenment of the Buddha. However, Buddhist art has different and distinctive motifs both for depicting the founder's enlightenment and for his first sermon.

[22] […] thus the venerable ascetic Mahāvīra became an *arhat*, a *jina*, a *kevalin*, knowing [and] seeing everything[…] Kalpasūtra § 121.

In Jain book painting, this event is alternatively symbolised by the first sermon of the Jina, which, according to legend, took place in a building erected by the gods called *samavasaraṇa* (‚meeting'). The symbolic equation of omniscience with the image of the preaching Jina can be derived from an older tradition of the Mahāvīra legend in the Ācārāṅgasūtra, where the proclamation of the doctrine immediately follows the omniscience of the Tīrthaṃkara, and is probably explained from an art-historical point of view by the difficulty of pictorially representing the moment of attaining all-encompassing knowledge. Since the Jina legend does not describe any symbolic circumstances accompanying the attainment of omniscience, and Jain art does not make use of the form of expression of symbolic hand postures (*mudrā*) customary in Buddhist sculpture, the artists were forced to choose a motif as a substitute, which roughly coincides in time with the omniscience of the Jina and, moreover, possesses sufficient symbolic power.

Images of the preaching Jina in a *samavasaraṇa* structure are included in almost every illustrated Kalpasūtra manuscript. The Jina is usually enclosed by three circular, concentric, and crenelated walls with entrances facing the four cardinal directions (Fig. 3). Outside the structure are usually four rhombus-shaped lotus ponds, in the vicinity of which various animals reside. These are ‚hostile' species – i.e., predators and their prey, which, however, peacefully rest side by side during the sermon of the Tīrthaṃkara.

It is particularly noteworthy that the Jina is now shown here in frontal view rather than in three-quarter profile like the other *dramatis personae*. The miniatures that usually precede the world renunciation and Mahāvīra's ordination in the illustration cycles show the Jina in three-quarter profile (Fig. 4) and do not distinguish him in his physical appearance from the king of the gods Śakra (Fig. 5), who attends the event. From the moment of omniscience, however, the Jina is no longer depicted in miniature painting in the same way as other people. As an omniscient being, he is no longer a simple human, but he has passed the threshold to salvation. The Kalpasūtra notes that he has now become an *arhat*, and thus for the faithful he has gone from being an ascetic striving for salvation to a person worthy of veneration; as such, he had to be recognisable in the paintings. Omniscience transformed the ascetic into a Jina. Through this event, the Jina was increasingly elevated and eventually deified by the faithful by the Middle Ages. This significant transformation apparently had to be depicted also in painting – and here the artists again made use of a pictorial metaphor by depicting the formerly human ascetic now in the form of a cult figure that was to be venerated. For this purpose,

they transferred the cult image of Jain altars, which was made according to fixed specifications, including all secondary figures and decorative elements, into miniature painting. In the manuscripts, an image of the respective Jina marks the beginning of the related biographical chapter of the illustration cycles (Fig. 6). Maybe this is a continuation of an older tradition of West Indian book illumination. Until the 12th century, the pictorial themes of the palm-leaf manuscripts were limited to the depiction of various deities, who were probably meant to be guardian spirits of the manuscripts, as well as to partly coloured diagrams that served a similar purpose. It is remarkable that these deities are always depicted frontally and thus anticipate the way the Jinas were later represented. Whether the artists could only depict a being thought of as divine in the form of a lifeless cult image, or whether they did not want to pursue other approaches under the influence of Islamic art, cannot be clarified on the basis of the available sources. For the depiction of Jina preaching in the *samavasarana* and the following motifs, the design of the Jina image that followed iconometric guidelines, was removed from the altar situation and, as a single figure, takes the place of the omniscient and, in the later course of the plot, the redeemed Jina.

THE JAIN CULT IMAGE

The Jain cult image is significant for the West Indian manuscripts of the Jains in that it was transferred into miniature painting and introduces the image series of almost every illustrated manuscript produced in Western India during the 15th and 16th centuries. In manuscripts of the Kalpasūtra, this Jina is always identified as the twenty-fourth Jina Mahāvīra, with whose biography the text begins. However, the illustration of a Jina also forms the beginning of the series of miniatures in the illustration of other texts, for example in manuscripts of the Uttarādhyayanasūtra[23] and the Kālakācāryakathā.[24] In almost all known manuscripts of the 15th century, the illustration of the Jina follows a fixed specification with regard to the figurative inventory, and its composition, and thus shows in a special way the formulaic nature of medieval book illumination of western India. In the illustrations of older

[23] Brown (1941: 5, Figs. 1 & 3)

[24] Nawab (1958: Pl. V, Fig. 16)

manuscripts, the secondary figures are occasionally missing, and the decorative accessories are depicted only in a very reduced form.[25] The formation of the Jina image already took place at a much earlier point in time.[26]

The oldest images of the Jina were placed on stone votive tablets (*āyāgapaṭa*) in the region of Mathura in northern India around the turn of time and can be explained with some certainty as a kind of ‚memorial stone'. At this time, however, it was not yet the Jina Mahāvīra or any of his predecessors who were commemorated, but rather the eternal Jain doctrine of salvation. These first pictogrammatic images were followed, about a century later, by the first fully sculptural cult images, which showed the Jina in a standing meditation posture or seated while preaching. In addition to larger sculptural temple images in stone, transportable bronze figures were created; they represent the Jina in an almost identical manner (Fig. 7). Unlike in Buddhist art, where the image of the Buddha is preceded by an aniconic phase devoid of any anthropomorphic image of the Buddha, a purely symbolic mode of representation of the Jina is not known. What is particularly noteworthy, however, is that at the moment of its creation, the Jina image is practically fully developed. Apart from minor stylistic changes, the cult image does not undergo any significant further development, but instead retained its initial form which obviously was perfectly suited to all needs. Thus, in the cult image, the Jina presents himself to the believer not as a human individual, religious founder, or saint, but as a kind of divine being who visualises the doctrine. This doctrine is understood as the world order and enables its worship. Changes in the Jain rite led to an expansion of the motifs shown on the cult image from about the 5th century. This expansion was completed by the 12th century and has not been significantly evolved since. The Jina in these fully developed cult images is accompanied by a largely fixed ensemble consisting of fly whisk and garland bearers as well as musicians and elephants. In combination with the lion throne, the parasol, and the nimbus of the Tīrthaṃkara, these figures symbolise the ‚eight great miracles' (*aṣṭamahāprātihāryas*, hereafter abbreviated: *prātihāryas* ‚miracles') that occur at the moment of a Jina's enlightenment and which, like the *parikara*, were also adopted from figurative art into miniature painting. Specifically, the miracles are an Aśoka tree (*aśoka-vṛkṣa*), a heavenly drum-

[25] See, for example, a palm leaf manuscript from the late 12th century, illustrated in Doshi (1984: 36, fig. 7).

[26] On the development of the Jina image Krüger (2022).

ming (*deva-dundubhi*), a shower of flowers (*puṣpa-varṣa*), a triple umbrella of honour (*tri-chattra/chattra traya*), two fly whisks (*cāmara*), the lion throne (*siṃhāsana*), celestial music (*divya-dhvani*), and the nimbus (*bhāmaṇḍala*). Not all these pictorial elements are equally prominent in miniatures, since the late 14th- and 15th-century bronze cult images which served the painters as models for their works, the decorative and figural inventory was depicted in a highly stylised manner, making iconographic elements almost indistinguishable. The artists, who were only partly familiar with Jain iconography, used other figures, modified elements or simply omitted them wherever their templates seemed unclear. This resulted in new motifs, one of them being the two lotus buds next to the head of the Jina. They appear only in miniature painting and seem to be vaguely reminiscent of the symbolism of one of the eight wonders, either the nimbus or the Aśoka tree. The concept of the eight wonders, however, is in itself much older than the images on cult images and miniatures of the Middle Ages. The term *aṣṭa-(mahā)-prātihārya* is not yet known in the Śvetāmbara canon,[27] yet the eight symbols are included in the enumerations of the supernatural qualities of a Jina *(atiśaya)*.

THE CULT IMAGE AS A METAPHOR OF THE DIVINE

The iconographic additions which refer to the omniscience of Jina or his dominion over the cosmos are symbolically arranged around the Jina image; they are not integrated into his physical appearance to identify him as a supernatural being. The image of the Jina himself remains untouched despite these additions. This mode of depiction, therefore, can also be characterised as a pictorial metaphor; the ascetic is transformed into the omniscient saviour and ultimately the ruler of the universe through the supplementary depiction of symbols. None of these pictorial elements by itself suggests the supernatural event of omniscience. Instead, some of the motifs can be interpreted as signs of ancient Indian kingship, such as the lion throne, the parasol, or the fly whisk, which was originally not carried by a servant but was another royal attribute. In ancient India, the ruler carried a white umbrella as a sign of royal dignity, the umbrella symbolising the shape of the universe. In this sense, the Jina's triple umbrella refers to his (spiritual) dominion over the three worlds of Jain cosmology: the underworld, the middle world as the

[27] Shah (1975: 60)

home of humans, and the heavenly worlds of the gods. The umbrella pole is occasionally interpreted as the *axis mundi*,[28] thus the ruler depicted under the parasol can be interpreted as the mediator between heaven and earth.[29] In their entirety, the eight miracles represent the omniscience of Jina. Several of these pictorial motifs are taken from the symbolism of ancient Indian royalty (source domain); however, they define the ascetic on the throne not within their original symbolic sphere, as a king, but rather apply the signs on a metaphorical level to characterise him as a religious redeemer (target domain). The mapping thus employs a royal or, in a broader sense, political symbolism to depict a religious fact.

The transfer of the cult image into painting constitutes a further stage of metaphor mapping. Here, in order to distinguish the omniscient and thus venerable Jina from his formerly human state, recourse is made to the already existing artistic image. In miniature painting, the now deified Jina is depicted in the form of a work of art (source domain) in order to symbolise the otherwise non-representable divine quality of the redeemer (target domain).

That the method of depicting the Jina in miniature painting was guided by figurative art is evident not least in the precise implementation of the iconometric specifications – i.e., the specified shape and dimensions of the body. The Jina image is not a lifelike portrait of the mythical religious founder based on descriptions in Jain literature, but an ideal depiction of the human body. Accordingly, the design does not follow the natural specifications of anatomy, but creates, without modeling musculature or bone structure, an image of spiritual beauty, shaped according to fixed measurements and proportions (Fig. 8). In this sense, the Jain cult image always maintains the same form, not showing the characteristics of a particular Jina, but instead highlighting the perfection and completion inherent in each of them. There are no signs of individuality or character traits that might interfere with the impression of perfection. Therefore, the image of all the Jinas shown in the illustration cycles is completely identical in terms of body.

It is striking that the painters did not limit the representation to the body contours of the Jina image, but incorporated the jewellery used during rituals. The nature of the jewellery and especially the shape of the crown are strikingly similar to decoration that has adorned cult images of the image-

[28] Coomaraswamy (1938: 18f.)

[29] Owen (2012: 61)

worshipping *(mūrtipūjāka)* Śvetāmbara communities since the Middle Ages as part of the worship ceremony.[30] The fact that the cult image was transferred to narrative art in this way at all may be due to the fact that it was the sole image of Jina for a very long time.[31] Unlike in Buddhism, for example, where narrative reliefs were introduced at an early stage and the Buddha was shown as a human being involved in particular activities, Jain art was limited to the depiction of the Jina on cult or devotional images.

The frontal mode of depicting those figures of the Jina legend, to whom divine qualities were attributed, is also found in another place. One of the fourteen dream images that the mother of the future Jina looks at after conception is the goddess Śrī. Unlike the Jain god-king Śakra and his divine court, this goddess, who was also worshipped by the Jains, is depicted in the same frontal view as the Jina. Images of Śrī are already included on painted wooden book covers dating to the 12th to 14th centuries,[32] although the frontal view is apparently not yet binding here. In addition, the pictogrammatic character of the dream images is not yet fully developed at this point in time, which makes the illustrations appear less uniform.

The frontality in the depiction of the goddess Śrī allows us to draw certain conclusions about the Jain perception of the world of the gods and the different position of individual deities. In religious practice, deities predominantly are the concern of the laity. For the ascetic order, gods had little significance and received no veneration, as they did not provide assistance on the path to omniscience and salvation. Nevertheless, gods and divine beings of the Jain pantheon are an important part of cosmology and are often mentioned in religious literature. In this sense, a distinction must be made between the inhabitants of the various levels of the universe described in cosmological literature, who in communal ritual practice at times serve as models for the laity but are scarcely represented in art, and those deities who receive direct worship and are invoked for help by the laity; the latter are predominantly

[30] Cort (2010: 170f.)

[31] The connection between the miniatures and the medieval Jain cult images was first addressed by Hüttemann (1913: 73). However, the bronzes of the St. Petersburg collection available to him at the time were only partly suitable as objects of comparison, since they, provided with a strongly simplified form of the ornamental pediment, belonged to the early stage of development of this type and the figurative image program was only partly developed. He did not mention any metaphorical content of the motif.

[32] See for example Nawab (1959: Col.-Pl. 7).

borrowed from the Brahman pantheon or have their origins in folk religion. The goddess Śrī was invoked by Jain lay people for wealth and prosperity. This made her a figure worthy of veneration for the makers of the miniatures, who depicted her in the form of a cult image similar to that of the Jina.[33] The style of painting also follows that of the Jina image and reproduces the form and proportions of his body. The corporeality of the goddess is not discussed in Jain literature. The Jina legend praises her beauty, with the description clearly referring to her human form.[34]

The power of those Jain gods, on the other hand, who are described in cosmological literature as inhabitants of the heavens, is limited to their respective domains. They submit to the Jinas and serve them in the attainment of all-encompassing knowledge. They know the order of the world and the karmic law and always intervene when these two forces collide, but are themselves equally subject to both. The gods are not born; rather, their body is a manifestation into which those souls enter who are given rebirth into a divine existence. Unlike the Brahmanical gods, the souls of the Jain gods are manifested in this body only for a certain duration. In this respect, these deities have a purely theological significance and have never been the focus of worship by lay communities. Nevertheless, they are also frequently mentioned in the early canonical texts, but here they are mostly the cause of disturbances that harm the monks and of attempts to dissuade them from the right path.[35] This is probably the reason why they are depicted in the illustration cycles in human form and why in their painting style and the placement in three-quarter profile resemble humans rather than the deified Jinas. The viewer rather watches their actions, while he should always face a venerable figure in immediate frontality.

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[33] Images of deities depicted in an identical manner are also found in fabric painting, where the deity placed in the centre of a yantra (e. g. Andhare & Bhojak 2015: 95) is shown like the Jina (e. g. Andhare & Bhojak 2015: 49) in strict frontality, while the numerous accompanying figures are always shown in three-quarter profile.

[34] Kalpasūtra § 36.

[35] Schubring (1978: 92f.) cites some examples from the canonical literature of the Śvetāmbara. This attitude was apparently still strongly influenced by the confrontation of the early ascetic movement with Brahmanism, whose teachings the Jainas opposed and whose gods were reinterpreted as disturbing or even harmful for world renunciation and asceticism, since the ascetic seeks to attain salvation through his own strength and effort and without divine help.

An exception is the god Hariṇaigameṣin, who belongs to the Jain pantheon as a demigod and is always shown in profile or side view in the illustration cycles of the Kalpasūtra (Fig. 9); apart from the illustrations in these manuscripts there are no images of this deity. The miniatures invariably show a hurriedly striding, two-armed figure with human body and the head of an antelope; his garb and adornment resemble those of the other *dramatis personae.* This image of Hariṇaigameṣin may be an invention of the painters, since none of the Jain texts contains a detailed description. The figure of Hariṇaigameṣin was adapted from Brahmanical mythology,[36] and goes back to a deity named Nejameṣa, who is mentioned in the Gṛhasūtras and who was invoked to secure the birth of sons.[37] He was depicted for the first time on an architrave from Kaṇkālī-ṭīlā (Mathurā) dated to the 1st century, it shows a goat-headed figure accompanied by several women and children.[38] The inscription placed below was unfortunately damaged in recent decades; it refers to the figure with the goat head as *bhagavā nemeso* ('[the] venerable Nemeso').[39] Several goat-headed figures with children, probably Yakṣas, appear in the art of Mathurā;[40] they were related to childbirth[41] or were responsible for the safety and health of the newborn. How exactly the deity Nejameṣa of the Gṛhasūtras and the goat-headed Nemeso by the Middle Ages had become the antelope-headed Hariṇaigameṣin of the Jain pantheon, remains unclear. Probably Nejameṣa or Naigameṣin were included into a Vaiṣṇava context at a later point in time, when his name was also expanded to include "Hari".[42] The painters of the mediaeval manuscripts probably depicted him with the head of an antelope because they mistakenly read the first part of his name as *hariṇa* (Skt. 'antelope').[43]

[36] Schubring (1978: 242).

[37] Shah (1952–53: 23).

[38] See Quintanilla (2007: 229f. und Figs. 291ff).

[39] Smith (1901: 25f.; Plate XVIII).

[40] Shah (1952–53: Figs. 2 & 3).

[41] Bhattacharya (1974: 133f.).

[42] The connection of Nejameṣa, who was invoked for the birth of sons, with the god Viṣṇu is obvious, for the latter was already considered the protector of the male seed in the Ṛgveda (Oberlies 2012: 163); he also prepared the female womb for conception (Oberlies 2012: 180), and granted a good birth (Oberlies 2012: 163).

[43] Jacobi (1884: 227 [footnote]).

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE JINA

Finally, two motifs of miniature painting shall be presented which take up the metaphorical image of a Jain cult image instead of the Jina. Both motifs take place in the Jina legend before he attains omniscience, but take up the moment directly.

Both gods and humans are among the acting figures in the Jina legend. However, the depiction of divine beings becomes a problem when they interact with humans. In the literary tradition, such interaction between humans and gods can be easily described, even if the communication takes place on a spiritual level in the form of dreams, omens or intuitions. The Jina legend also contains such episodes, for example in the form of the auspicious dreams of Jina's mother, which, however, will not be discussed here any further.[44)]

Another case of an interaction between gods and humans occurs at the consecration of the future Jina; it is not described in detail in the Kalpasūtra, yet it is part of almost all picture series of the Jina legend (Fig. 10). In the Kalpasūtra it is only mentioned that the ceremony was performed by the gods before moving on to a description of the birth celebration at the court of Mahāvīra's parents. In the cosmological literature the event is described in more detail.[45)]

Headed by Śakra, all the gods of the heavens and the underworlds gathered on Mount Meru, where the newborn Jina had already been brought. Śakra paid his respects to the future Jina by creating four white bulls, from whose horns streams of water poured out, and with that he performed the ritual dousing. Afterwards, Śakra ascended his throne and took the Tīrthaṃkara on his knee, while the other gods poured water on the future Jina. The idea of the Jina consecration may have been inspired by the motif of the Buddha's first bath, but takes its form from the ancient Indian royal consecration *(rājasūya).* The pictorial motif of the consecration ceremony in the manuscripts, on the other hand, is derived from the ritual dousing of Śrī Lakṣmī. The depiction of this event in Jain manuscript painting of the 15th and 16th centuries follows a fixed iconography, although the painters probably added decorative elements to the obligatory pictorial program as they saw fit. The centre of the picture is dominated by the figure of the seated king of the gods, who carries

44) On the representation of the 14 dream images see Krüger (2020a: 140–156).

45) Jambūdvīpaprajñapti (148–156).

the newborn Jina on his knees.[46] Both are facing the viewer and are flanked by two gods with water jugs and a pair of white bulls arranged above them on a slant. The king of the gods and the Jina are depicted here in identical fashion and differ only in size. Since the consecration ceremony is a ritual performed by the faithful in a similar manner by dousing images with water, it probably made sense for the artists to base the depiction of both figures on the Jain cult image. In this way, both are clearly distinguished from the deities who actually perform the dousing ceremony. Through the connection with the actual ritual, which the believers perform by means of cult images, the image metaphor becomes clear here in a particularly vivid way.

A second motif showing the Jina turned frontally to the viewer is the disturbance of his asceticism (Fig. 11). This event immediately precedes the attainment of omniscience in the narrative.

The disturbances experienced by the Jinas are among those episodes not described in the Kalpasūtra itself; nevertheless, they are quite frequently illustrated in the corresponding manuscripts. In the Kalpasūtra, it is reported that Mahāvīra lived for twelve years as a wandering mendicant monk before finally attaining all-encompassing knowledge *(kevalajñāna)* in the thirteenth year of his wanderings. During these years, Mahāvīra was subjected to several attacks. In the miniature painting, the attacks are symbolised by their respective perpetrators, both humans and animals. The predatory cats on either side of the standing Jina in the lower left half of the picture represent a series of attacks instigated by the jealous god Saṅgamaka, who himself was incapable of redemption; he belonged to Śakra's retinue, but did not want to acknowledge the Jina's imperturbability. To prove his point, he created, among other things, a tiger, which attacked Jina while he was immersed in meditation; however, the beast was not able to harm him.[47] The two people flanking the Jina on both sides, each piercing his ears with a stick, represent the final attack on Mahāvīra, after which he finally attained omniscience. The story the illustration refers to is that of a cowherd who, in search of his lost cows, encountered the meditating Jina. The latter, however, was so

[46] Hüttemann (1913: 67) and Kirfel (1928: xiv) mistakenly interpreted this motif as the mother of the Jina holding the young prince on her lap; this error probably occured because the Kalpasūtra does not contain any precise information about this episode and male and female figures are hardly distinguishable in miniature paintings of the 15th and 16th centuries.

[47] Verclas (1978: 217ff. [Cūrṇi text], 256ff. [Retelling of the story]).

deeply absorbed in meditation that he did not respond to the shepherd's questions. Annoyed by this, the shepherd drilled thorns or stalks into the Jina's ears. The latter, having finished his meditation, wandered to the city of Pāva, where a merchant noticed the injury, and a physician eventually removed the thorns. The pain suffered during the removal of the thorns wiped out Mahāvīra's remaining karma and led him directly to omniscience.[48)] Although the story only refers to one attacker inserting thorns into the ears of the Tīrthaṃkara, the miniature always depicts two people. Presumably this doubling was done with regard to pictorial symmetry, but one of the two figures may also represent the physician who saw to the removal of the thorns.

In this motif, too, the artists drew on the Jain cult image. However, when depicting the mortifications, these are images of the standing Jina. Cult images of this kind were made in stone and bronze from an early point in time and probably preceded the images in the round of the sitting Jina. Images of standing Jinas were first produced in Mathurā since the 1st/2nd century and are mostly part of stone stelae showing four different Jinas.[49)] In the early Jain art of Mathurā, the standing Jina in ascetic posture (*kāyotsarga*) was apparently the antithesis of the seated meditating Jina. Unlike the image of the seated Jina which is a cult image depicting the moment of omniscience and thus the doctrinal tradition, the standing Jina symbolises the ascetic practice of Jainism. It is therefore obvious that this type of image, as it was transferred into painting, stands for the practice of asceticism. When the Jina legend is illustrated, only the Jina himself is depicted in this posture, while in other manuscripts the motif was also used to depict monks who practiced particularly strict asceticism. The artists adopted the particular proportions of the figurative art with special care; this is obvious from the uniform shape of the face, but above all from the particularly long arms and broad shoulders, which have been faithfully represented in the painted Jinas, too. Sculptures of this type, made of stone or metal, have enjoyed particular popularity until recent times (Fig. 12).

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48) Verclas (1978: 93f.; 268f.).

49) Ghosh (1974: Plate 18).

CONCLUSION

The deification of the Jina in miniature painting led to the necessity to make the divine qualities visible. The moment when Mahāvīra was no longer a prince in his parents' palace or a wandering mendicant had to be emphasised by a special mode of depiction, highlighting the Jina as a being worthy of worship. The examples presented showed how this was achieved by transferring the Jain cult image as a motif into narrative miniature painting. This method of depiction, however, is not a simple transfer of a type of image but a pictorial metaphor that emphasises the divine qualities of the Jina.

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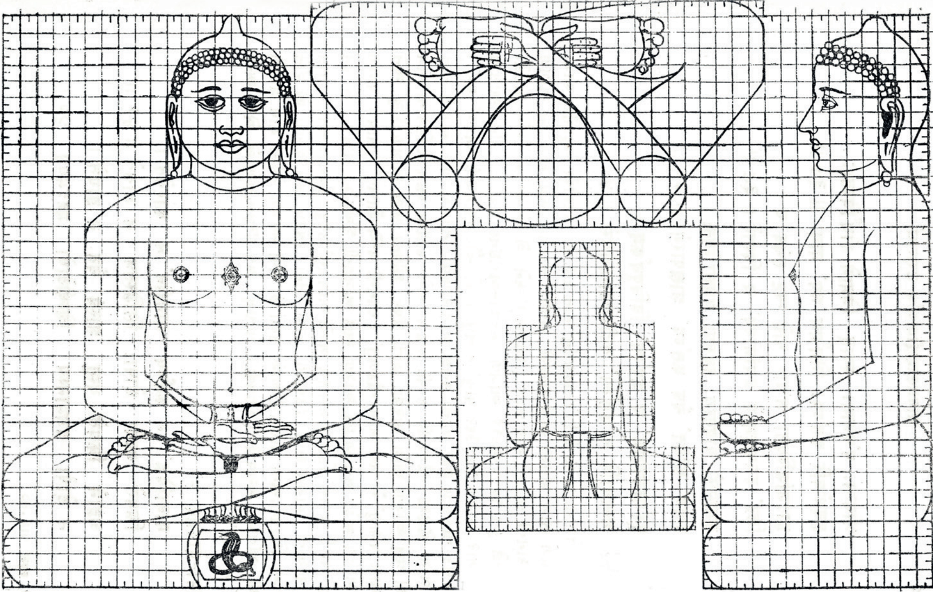

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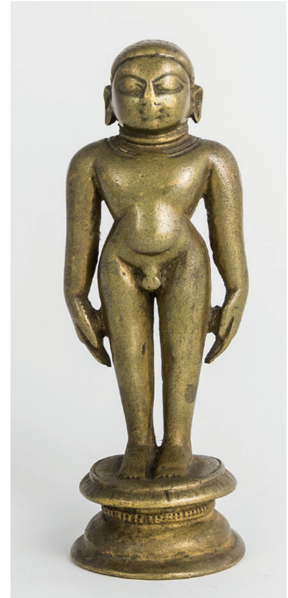

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