

# Aniconic and iconic art in south asian art

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Image No. 1 is a seal with Yogi from the Indus valley from the 2600 BCE period, an engraving on Steatite. Image No. 2 is a Buddhist monastic site of Mes Aynak that is thought to have been constructed between the 1st and the 7th centuries CE in Logar Province near Kabul, Afghanistan. This art form is a representation of capitals vs. province which is referred to as the Kusanas; in the context of this paper, it represents a group of art forms that are an illustration of iconic vs. aniconic art forms. Image No. 3 is a 2nd - 3rd century CE. Frieze with animals from Amaravati, which is a representation of Satavahanas and Satraps. Image No. 4 is a sculpture known as the Bodhisattva of Ajanta from south-central India belonging to the 5th century CE, which is a possible representation of the Guptas' golden age. This art form is an illustration of dynasty vs. region as it is brought out by local vs. foreign traditions.

Image No. 5 is an illustration of a large temple known as Ambh Sharif that is located on a salt range in West Punjab, Pakistan that was built in the 10th century AD. The building representation of the emphasis placed on dynasty vs. the importance of regional traditions. It is also a clear representation of fluidity of iconography between water cosmology, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam. Image No. 6 is a folio from the Kalpastura & Kalakacharya-katha of northern India possibly from Delhi with the catalogue No. 1475. This art form represents religion, its influences on trade and conquest and its role as a pan-Asian connector. It illustrates the fluidity of architectural iconography among Hinduism, Jainism and Islam. Image No. 7 is a folio from the Harivamsa catalogue No. 1595 called Fatehpur Sikri or Agra of India. It

belongs to art of the Mughals, Rajputs and Deccani rulers' period. In the context of this paper, this art form is a primary source of information regarding continuities and innovations of Islam in South Asia (Dhār and NMI 183). It is also a representation of the comparison between dynasties vs. regional traditions, fluidity of iconography among Hinduism and Islam, and fluidity among the religious and secular realms. Image No. 8 is a piece of art that is described as Karkhana 89 of natural pigments on Wasli Ca. 2003, and it features on the contemporary trends section.

Aniconism is the religious belief or practice that avoids or bans depiction of deities in art or other artistic expressions. Aniconism in south Asian art is witnessed after Islamic religious influences permeated this region, which was eventually incorporated into art and architectural styles of the period. Islam played a significant influence in promoting the development of aniconic art in South Asian art. Iconic in South Asian art is characterized by Buddhist art that directly and explicitly depicts and portrays Buddha in various forms through painting, sculptures and architectural expressions. Aniconism is exemplified in image No. 6 that illustrates the integration of Islam, Hinduism and Jainism in art as a result of the congruence of Islam with other South Asian religions (Dhar and NMI 160). Iconism in the context of this paper is represented by image No. 4 which illustrates Bodhisattva of Ajanta from south-central India. Water cosmology played a critical role of creating harmony in the representative art forms during a period that was characterized by religious integration. This integration required the development of artistic expression techniques or approaches that that accounted for all the involved religions. Thus, water cosmology was applied

to express both iconistic and aniconistic art forms to the satisfaction of all the religious factions involved.

#### Work Cited

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