Jainism, the ancient Indian religion has got a rich and vast connectivity with Orissa. It has exerted tremendous influence over this land for centuries together as has been reflected in art, literature and various concepts, ethical codes, rituals and philosophy. Even Lord Jagannath, the supreme deity is conceived as a Jina by some ardent admirers of Jaina Tradition.

Jainism was surely very much established in Kalinga (the ancient Orissa) by the age of the Nandas or 4th century B.C.\(^1\) According to the Hathigumpha Inscription of Kharavela, (dated to 2nd half of 1st century B.C.)\(^2\) he brought back from Magadha to Kalinga the image of Kalinga Jina, which had been taken away by a Nanda king.\(^3\)

Kharavela was a devout Jaina and a patron of Jainism.\(^4\) The above reference to the representation of Kalinga Jina which must have been an object of worship, may also indicate the popularity of Jainism in Kalinga.

Architecturally viewed, the sculptures depicted in the caves of Khandagiri and Udayagiri Hills, constructed by Emperor Kharavela mainly for the Jaina Arhats (saints) are certainly the superb Jaina monuments that Orissa still possesses with pride. The artistic endeavour did not end with Kharavela. It continued upto 12th - 13th century A.D. with a gap of few hundred years. It sounds strange, but it is true that these rock-cut cave art portrayals of the figures about twenty Tirthankaras. It is quite a rare phenomenon in the history of Jaina Art. Apart from this site, a large number of Jaina images have been identified in different parts of Orissa, i.e. Puri, Keonjhar, Bhadrak, Balangir, Nawpara and Koraput districts. etc.

The Tirthankaras occupy the most exalted position in Jaina worship. Tirthankara image has become the rucluse point for visualising the invocatory forms. The Orissa State Museum displays fourteen Tirthankara images. They include six Risabhanath images, two Mahavira images, two Parsvanath images, and the image of Ajitanath, Santinath, Chandranath and Padmaprabha (each numbering one).

**Risabhanath**

The most notable image of Risabhanath is the one that has been discovered from Podasingdi of Keonjhar district. Here the Adi-Jina i.e. the first Tirthankara is seen to be in meditation pose (Yogasana). The image is carved out of a solid piece of chlorite stone and measures 2.6" x 1.11" in size. On the pedestal are two lotus flowers on either side of a standing bull worshipped by devotees with folded hands. The image has an oval halo (Prabhamandala) with two flying gandharvas on either side with garlands in their
hands. The unique feature of this image is that it has an inscription engraved on the right side of it. Written in Kutila script of 8th century A.D, it consists of 15 letters which read Risabha Bhattaraka. With the passage of time these letters have become invisible. The stone on which the figure is composed provides an impression of transparent upper garments. Hairs of the Tirthankaras are generally fashioned into the rolls of Jata. But in this case they are designed in curled knots. The composition of curled hair with long ears and half-closed eyes presents a beautiful meditative facial expression.

Another image of Risabhanath has been collected from the same place. Here the Adi-Jina stands in kayatsarga posture on a double petalled lotus pedestal supported by spirited lions. Representation of chaurei-bearers, bull, kevala tree, trilinear umbrella, flying apsaras are carved in the usual place. So far the period of the image is concerned, it is presumed to be made in 9th century A.D.

In the image acquired from Keonjhar, Risabhanath has seated on a double petalled lotus pedestal in yogasana posture. His pedestal contains bull, the conventional emblem and devotees in Anjalimudra amidst heap of offerings. Among other attributes one can safely recognize the chaurei-bearers, trilinear umbrella, kevala tree, plain eliptical holo, divya-vadya, flying apsaras with garlands. The hairs of the Tirthankara are arranged in Jata of which few strands fall on the shoulders. The image represents the Bhanja Art of the 10th-11th century A.D.

An image of Risabhanath, standing in kayatsarga pose has been recovered from Brahmesvarapatna, near by Bhubaneswar. Alongwith all other characteristic features it contains eight planets. It has been assigned to 11th century A.D. Superbly built this image has got a beautiful contour with a very lucid and smiling face.

Another image of Risabhanath has been collected from Khajuriapara village of Puri district. The distinguishing feature of this image is its profuse sculptural ornamentation around the head instead of the traditional halo. The image stands in kayotsarga posture, alongwith his cognizance bull and other marks and eight planets. The date of this image has been assigned to 10th century A.D.

The image of Adi Jina brought from Charampa of the present Bhadrak district draws spontaneous attention of the visitors. It is depicted as standing in kayotsarga pose on a lotus pedestal flanked by Bharata and Bahubali, the two chaurei - bearers. The mark of cognizance, the bull is found below the pedestal. On the two vertical sides of the image eight planets have been carved in sitting posture with their conventional attributes in hands. This fine image measures about 5'2" x 2'3".

Besides this image, three beautiful Jaina images have been brought to Orissa State Museum for display from this place. They include the images of Ajitanath, Santinath and Mahavir.

**Ajitanath**

Ajitanath, the second Tirthankara of Jaina Pantheon has been carved in the Yogasana or Padmasana posture. He sits on a lotus pedestal. It measures 3'8" x 2'7" in size. Sitting image of Ajitanath is rarely found in other parts of country. Ajitanath is usually found in Khadgasana or Kayotsarga pose.

The origin of his symbolism and his name can be traced to the Jaina texts. The Jina's mother saw an elephant in several dreams. An elephant in India is always connected with kingly power. After his birth all his father's enemies were conquered (Jita), hence his name 'the invincible
one. The Svetambara author Hemachandra interprets his name as not conquered by excrement of the bowels. The Digambara authoritative book explains the word 'Ajita as not conquered by sin or by all heretics. Thus, all the facts and ideas primarily connected with the life and teachings of this Jina converge to one point - 'invincibility' 'conquest'.

Santinath

The Santinath image of this group is also carved on a lotus pedestal displaying Yogamudra. The pedestal is supported by lions. His emblem, the deer is carved below the pedestal along with a number of kneeling devotees and heap of offerings. Born in Hastinapura, Santinath, the sixteenth Tirthankara occupies a very high place in the Jaina history of pontiffs. He not only revived Jainism which was in tottering condition, but also consolidated the faith so that it never disappeared again. Another extraordinary fact about him is that he was the first Tirthankara to become a Chakravarti or the Emperor of the whole of India. The last Tirthankara image of this group is of Mahavira. He stands in Kayotsarga pose on a lotus throne supported by spirited lions.

All these sculptures are provided with kevala tree, chauri-bearers, elliptical halo, flying apsaras holding garlands, trilinear umbrella, lion throne and heavenly music. From iconographic and artistic consideration these images can be safely placed in the 8th-9th centuries. A peculiar feature of these four Jaina images brought from Charampa is that a number of out marks are found on their body. These cut marks are certainly deviation from the other school of Jaina art, if these are purposefully done by the artist. The images remind the believer of the faith of the condition through which a Tirthankara passed to attain salvation and that affords him a strong incentive to follow the noble examples of Tirthankaras in life. All these sculptures are carved in chlorite stone.

Two remarkable images of Parsvanath, one of the greatest Tirthankaras of Jainism have been displayed in Orissa State Museum. In chronological order he happens to be the twenty-third Tirthankara.

One of them, has been brought from the village Vaidakhia of Keonjhar district. It is a unique image surrounded by four other Tirthankaras, each having two attendants in their either sides. All the images including the central one have been carved in Kayotsarga pose, while the central stele has the snake canopy over its head - the other four images have only kevala tree over them. The upper two images stands on lotus pedestal. The two images on either side of the main image stand on the same level. The central image is bigger than the four other standing images. This image shows the keen sense of proportion of the artist. The attendants and dancing apsaras of the four other Tirthankaras have been carved in miniature forms. The sculptor has also kept balance while carving the body of the Tirthankaras, the size of the bodies of the other Tirthankaras being less than half of the main image. Under the pedestal, figures of devotees singing with musical instruments in their hands, some Jaina monks and the lotus flower, the lion have been flawlessly depicted.

According to Dr. R.P. Mohapatra, the famous archaeologist, this image belongs to the 11th century.

The find spot of the other Parsvanath image is Sisupalgarh. From the artistic point of view it has been assigned to 9th century A.D. Besides the snake canopy, the entire image has been attached with snake's body, which is a remarkable feature of this image.

An image of Chandraprabha or Chandranath, the eighth Tirthankara has been collected from Jeypur of Koraput district. The
image is carved in a Padmasana pose. Considering the artistic finish and the iconographic peculiarities, the image can be placed in 8th century A.D. The image is flanked by two dancing apsaras. It is a peculiar thing to be observed that there are two standing elephants above the head of both the apsaras.

A four armed female figure sitting in Padmasana is seen under the pedestal. She is flanked by two lions on either side. She is most probably Bhrukuti (Jvalamalini), the Sasanadevi associated Chandraprabha. She is one among the five most popular Yaksinis, the other four being Chakresvari, Ambika, Padmavati and Siddhayika.

The display of Jaina Pantheon includes Padmaprabha, the 6th Tirthankara. The find-spot of this image is not known. Its style says that it belongs to twelfth century A.D. It is carved in Kayotsarga posture, flanked by two attendants. The cognizance of the Tirthankara is red lotus. He is seen standing over a lotus pedestal, and below the pedestal there is a lotus too. The prabhamandala has been carved with floral designs.

An image of Mahavira, the twenty-fourth Tirthankara, belonging to the tenth century A.D. has also been displayed. The image is carved in sitting yogasana mudra flanked by two attendants. Like other images, it shows apsaras with garlands and devotees offering their worship. But a noticeable feature of this image is that it does not have a kevala tree. Here, again, the prabhamandala is not circular. Florally designed it is three petalled. Below the pedestal, there is a beautiful flower-vase alongwith the emblem-lion.

According to Jainism, a soul completely released from the bondage is a soul in state of siddha hood or godhood. In this state soul is free and it enjoys four infinites : Infinite knowledge, infinite perception, infinite power and infinite bliss. The released soul is a conqueror - a Jaina.

A released soul possesses all the attributes of god. If we interpret god as the manifestation of the highest values, highest virtues and highest morals then such released souls are Jaina gods.

The images of seven Tirthankaras starting from Risabhanath to Mahavira, displayed in Orissa State Museum look absolutely independent of all emotions and passions. Needless to say that these images epitomize self-realization and state of supreme bliss.

References:
2. Sampupa - Bulletin of Museum and Archaeology in U.P., Nos. 47-48
11. Ibid.

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