

Miscellaneous Scene of Women's in Daily Life: Chandellas Art



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Abstract

The Chandella's dynasty rose to power during the early 10th century A.D., and survived as a powerful independent royal family until the close of the 13th century A.D. Before coming to power, they were feudatories under the imperial Gurjar-Pratihara's. The decline of the Pratihara's gave a golden opportunity to Harsa and Yasoverman to establish their sovereignty over the central India by capturing the important forts of Kalinjara and Chitrakuta. The period of transition and political readjustment which had always intervened between the fall of one imperial power and the raise of another in medieval India had already begun. The recreations and different occupational activities of men and women sculptured in various scenes at Khajuraho throw much light on the teste and development of the society of chandella's period. These scenes reflect the position of women in society, their freedom of movement and action, the absence of purdah system and their varied occupations. We notice in the Khajuraho sculpture that woman always accompanied man on ceremonious or festive occasions. In a scene a couple is going ahead with the man's left hand placed round the neck of the woman and right hand resting on his thigh. Another couple scene seems to be proceeding to a temple with offerings. In this scene woman is holding a plate with both of her hands. Some more couples scene are also seen at santinath and Visvanath temples. They are holding in their hands lotus stalks, lotus flowers on a bird. It is very surprising that a 10th century woman could go along with her husband with her arm around his waist or neck in Alingana pose. The free mixing of men and women in society is further illustrated by a couple absorbed in talking and holding a lotus or playing on the flute.

Keywords: House Gold, Recreation, Music and Dancing Activities, Educational, Armed Women.

Introduction

Armed men are also shown talking with their wives before proceedings on the front. On sorrowful occasions, husband and wife consoled each other. Women weeping and hiding their tears are being consoled by men who are trying to remove their hands from the face.

Sometimes they even embraced the wife or asked her forgiveness with palms joined in Anjali pose. This appeal to their love for women must have been the last recourse of men. The scene of pacifying angry moods and consoling each other are also depicted. The quarrel is suggested by their angry faces with the backs turned at one another and the attempt to pacify is suggested by the arm of the woman placed lovingly on the shoulder or chest of the other. In one scene the child also joins his mother in pacifying the angry father. Sometimes men had to yield to the pride and temper of their wives. In all such cases it was the man who had to pacify his angry wife who stands with a face swollen in an anger or with her back turned towards her husband. In their attempt men put their hands on the shoulders of their angry wife or held her hands in their own.

Aim of the Study

At social gathering men and women both drank together. Several such bacchanalian scenes are depicted at Khajuraho and these are enough to prove the independence and freedom of movement enjoyed by women. Men are shown either sitting or standing with bowls in hands and women with jugs are shown in the act of pouring out the contents of jugs. Sometimes the position is reversed and men holding pots are serving the liquid to women. On difficult problem both women and men used to consult each other and act according to the decision arrived at after consultations. Various couples scene are sown sitting together and taking with joined hand.

Review of the Literature

The review of work gives us an idea about the direction of studies done so far on the subject concerned. Much work has been done on Chandella Art by Alexander Cunningham, E.B. Hawell, Krishan Dena, Vidya Parkash, Devangana Desai and others. The mass scale temple construction suggested a special purpose, beyond the dynasty desire to assert its power and wealth. There are several theories—such as the creation of a religious Centre, but there is no agreement among researchers. The temples of Khajuraho represent the high peak of North Indian Stone architecture. However, the temples are world famous not for their sheer aesthetic beauty but for their exquisite erotic sculptures.

It would not be improper to discuss here the significance of a few more scenes where men or women are trying to divert the attention of the other. A man in a piece in the Jardine museum, Khajuraho is trying to offer a full blown lotus to his wife who stands in front with her hands crossed on her bosom. Two small figures of children have also joined in and are offering something to their mother. The women here does not seem to be angry but is either shocked or sick. In the Shantinath temple a woman who is very ill and seems to be a queen (without crown) with many attendants if lying down while two or three men around her are playing on musical instruments to cure her of her malady. A woman in the Jagdambi temple has put her arms on the man's right hand to stop him from taking a rash step in anger. In another scene the wife is checking her armed husband from going out to was.

Women though held in high esteem and enjoying complete freedom of movement in society were not always free from danger of wicked men having bad intentions. The husband always tried to shield her from bad men and even kept arms for her defence. In a panel now housed in a local museum Khajuraho, a man seems to be running away with his wife to save her from two men who are following the runaway couple perhaps to kidnap the wife.

As a measure of self defence women also kept arms. A man in the local museum piece is trying to put his left hand on the woman's breasts, holding her hand in his right hand; with her right hand the woman is aiming a pointed dagger at his man. We also get the scenes of cruelty towards women as well, though they are few in number. A man in a panel is pulling his wife holding her plait in his right hand. The woman seems to be resisting and an onlooker is looking sadly to this quarrel between the husband and wife. In the Kandriya mahadev temple two men are holding the left and right arms of a woman who stands with joint palms pressing them to leave her. Sometimes in anger rash husband went so far as to attempt killing their wives with broad sword or spear. Although husbands are shown treating their wives cruelly yet no scenes on the contrary have been found. This shows that in spite of all the freedom of movement and wielding influence over the husbands, the latter in the end had an upper hand over their wives.

In a scene depicted in Parsvanath temple, a woman is shown putting Payal in her Ankle. An

assistant is also shown in this scene. The looking glass is inseparable from the toilette. When ever a woman wants to apply cosmetics thing she needs the help of a mirror. Besides its use for the application of cosmetics, mirror is very frequently used for setting right the position of head Jewellery, for making plait of the hair, for admiring their personal beauty by looking into it. Another scene presents a woman putting collyrii to her eyes with a Salaka while a boy attendant is standing by with the toilette set in his hands. In one of the scene shows a woman, standing on her right leg with her front towards the audience applying the Lac dye or Alta to the sole and edge of her left foot.

Household Scene

Besides the care of husband the most important duty of a woman was to look after her house and children. In some of the sculpture in the temples at Khajuraho women is seen holding empty pitchers or Kalasa as if going to the river, tank or well or well for fetching water. Coming to the scenes of mother and child, we see that the mother¹ is lying down with her baby, resting her heads on her palm. She is preparing to suckle the baby who is looking fondly at her. Other scenes depicting the mother sitting on a cushion with the child playing beside her or the mother is standing with the baby in her arms who has put his small hand on the mother's breast. Founding mothers are depicted in the act of kissing the baby looking proudly in front or looking fondly at the baby². The mother sometime held a small bunch of mangoes hanging by a stalk as a toy or playing for their children.

Mothers are sometimes shown with two children, one in the arms and the other standing beside her and trying to climb up in the mother's arms or clinging to her legs. The bigger child often helped the smaller one climbing up to his mother's arms. In a temple a mother seems to be holding one of her twin children in her arms and helping the other in climbing up her waist. Sometimes fond children are shown holding the Chunri or the hara of the mother or asking for the eatables that the mother has in a bowl or a pot in her hands.

In a few scenes the mother's are shown engaged in teaching the child how to move on the knees or explaining something written on painted on the wall. Mothers are also engaged in playing with the child having a ball in the hand which the child is ready to catch no sooner than it is thrown at him. In one scene the bold mother is standing with a dagger in her left hand. She is looking at the opposite direction from her baby girl who is standing at her left. The mother seems to be guarding her daughter from some danger ahead.

There is no evidence whatsoever at Khajuraho of the practice of Purdah in the 10th and 11th centuries two stones now placed in the local museum seem to prove that the practice of Sati was prevalent.

Recreation Scene of Women

One of the most interesting and common pastimes of women at Khajuraho seems to have been taming of birds and animals³. In a figure in the local

museum, a woman is standing in easy posture with her right hand resting on her thigh, on her left palm she is holding a bird and is looking affectionately at it. A woman shown in the Viswanath temple, she is holding chunri with her right hand and on the back of wrist of her left hand sits a parrot with its wing clipped off that so that it may not fly away. A small bird perhaps a Sarika, is sitting on the back of the palm of a woman depicted inside the Jagdambi temple. A bird is held in the left hand of a woman, who is looking fondly at it with her right hand held in the pose of offering to the bird. Another woman is holding mangoes by their stalks, in her right hand while on the wrist of her left hand is sitting a parrot. In Vaman temple, a woman is shown holding the broken image of a bird in the left hand. A woman in a small temple on the base of the Lakshman temple is shown holding an owl in her left hand. Monkey, is seems another pet animal of the woman depicted at Khajuraho. In the viswanath temple, a woman is holding a boy and Down below a small monkey is sitting at her right foot. Another woman depicted in the same temple, a parrot seems to sit on her left wrist.

Ball games were also popular among the women of Khajuraho. It is clear from the scene having ball in the walls of the temples. A woman depicted in the temple is shown in a beautiful pose with her back towards the audience. Her right hand has a ball and she seems to be in the act of drooping the ball below. Similar scenes are also depicted in the Jagdambi and Kandriya mahadev temples. But along with the lady a small child is usually shown there sitting below her feet, as if ready to catch the ball.

Painting seems to have been one of the most favourite hobbies of the women of chandella's time⁴. There are many scenes depicting women engaged in this art. Such type of scene are depicted in most of the temples of Khajuraho. A woman is shown painting on a wall, with her back towards the audience. She stands in a beautiful dance pose with her right hand painting overhead. In another scene depicted in Vaman temple. The hand of a woman is seen painting on the wall where the bare branches of a tree are visible which have perhaps been painted by her. A woman having colour-pot in the left hand is shown painting on the wall over the head. In the Vishwanath temple a woman is shown having painting board and brush holding between the fingers of her right hand, and another woman is busy painting on a board.

Music and Dancing Activities of Women

A lot of scenes related to the activities of music and dance of women depicted in the Khajuraho, prove that women of this period were free to choose the particular art in which they were most interested and society put no bar on their natural inclination⁵. In the scene depicted on the left outside wall of the Vishwanath temple, a woman is shown standing in a thoughtful mood with the flute held between the fingers of both the right and left hands. In another scene a woman is standing with her legs crossed, She is facing the audience and is going to put a flute, held in both the hands, to her lips to blow it and produce the enchanting notes. In a temple a woman is

playing on a flute held between her two hands. Another woman is shown holding a flute which she is blowing with her mouth. Besides the flute, women played on certain stringed instruments, such as the vina and Ektara. In a scene a woman has a stringed instrument in both her hands⁶. In another scene in the Vaman temple a woman is having a long staff, probably an ekatara in both her hands. Women are also shown in numerous beautiful dance poses also. A woman depicted on the small temple on the left front of Lakshman temple is shown standing with her back to the audience, but she has a dextrously twisted the upper half of her body that above her waist the body is clearly facing the audience. The intricacy of Indian dances makes us believe in the dexterity of her dance pose. Similarly a woman is shown standing with her back to the audience though her face is turned towards them. Another woman stands in the tribhanga pose with the fingers of her hands interviewed at her back. A third woman holds her folded right foot with her right hand while her face is turned above her bent left hand's elbow also points above.

Educational Scene

In Khajuraho art, women are also depicted having book, paper or pencil which shows the female education of this period. In Viswanath temple a woman is depicted with a scroll of paper is sitting face to face with a man, who seems to be explaining something to her. In another scene a woman is shown with a book. It seems that she is studying with guru. Women are also depicted holding letters and smiling sweetly, becoming thoughtful falling into melancholy, hiding the tears beading the eyes or gesturing as if trying to follow the contents of the letters. Women are also depicted as writing the letter. A woman is depicted as standing with her right hand placed between her breasts and a scroll of paper in her left hand⁷. With a letter in the left hand and a pencil in the right hand, a woman is shown writing a letter. Another woman is shown with a scroll of paper in the right hand and a pencil in the left hand and holding the pencil at her lips while she seems to be thinking of what to write.

Armed Women

Armed women are also depicted on the walls of Khajurahi temples. It seems that they are having these weapons for self defence or hunting purpose. In these types of scenes a lady is depicted having a long road at the end of which three pointed leaf shaped sharp knives are attached. In another scene one woman is depicted with Parsu and other has a bow and a number of arrows kept in the quiver tied at the back of her left shoulder. In one scene a woman⁸. Is shown holding a small knife and stands in a pose as if ready to attack. In the back outside of the same temple a woman is depicted having a big sword by its handle in her left hand resting at her waist and her right hand is on top of the sword. In a temple an armed man and woman both are standing⁹. From the above discussion we can easily conclude that in this period women were having arms for their safety and for hunting. They would have also taken part in wars.

Conclusion

Chandellas dynasty rose to power during the early 10th century A.D. and survived as a powerful Independent royal family until the close of the 13th century A.D. the contribution of the Chandella's rulers in the field of art and architecture are highly significant. They are traditionally reputed as a great builders and enthusiastic patrons of art and architecture, which is confirmed by the magnificent group of temples at Khajuraho. Women in the form of Devi or Shakti is depicted in Khajuraho temples in various forms such as Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga, Ambika, Tripura, Parvati, Maheshwari, Chamunda, Varahi and Kumari etc. The goddess Varuni, Narasimhi Kali, Sadyojatta, Mansa, Ganga-Yamuna Mahakali, Manomani and Aparjita are also depicted here. The icon of Jaina yakshi Chakresvari, Ambika and goddess Padmavati are also recovered from Khajuraho. The image of Buddhist goddess Tara is found from Mahoba.

References

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6. *Left outside wall Laksman Temple, Right outside wall viswanath temple, Khajuraho.*
7. Eleanor Cunnigham, 2016, *A Catalogue of Desire: the Erotic Sculptures of the Khajuraho Temples*, Page 26-30.
8. *Left outside wall Duladeo temple Khajuraho.*
9. *Left outside wall Duladeo temple Khajuraho.*