

**Impact
Factor
3.025**

ISSN 2349-638x

Refereed And Indexed Journal

**AAYUSHI
INTERNATIONAL
INTERDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH JOURNAL
(AIIRJ)**

UGC Approved Monthly Journal

VOL-IV

ISSUE-IX

Sept.

2017

Address

• Vikram Nagar, Boudhi Chouk, Latur.
• Tq. Latur, Dis. Latur 413512 (MS.)
• (+91) 9922455749, (+91) 8999250451

Email

• aiirjpramod@gmail.com
• aayushijournal@gmail.com

Website

• www.aiirjournal.com

CHIEF EDITOR – PRAMOD PRAKASHRAO TANDALE

The Hindu Iconography

Sudhir Sharma

Assistant Professor

Department of Fine Arts

D.A.V.College of Education, Abohar

Iconography is pictorial material relating to or illustrating a subject. It's a traditional or conventional images or symbols associated with a subject and especially a religious or legendary subject. Hinduism has adopted several iconic symbols, forming part of Hindu iconography, that are imbued with spiritual meaning based on either the scriptures or cultural traditions. Iconography means depiction on images through different artistic style. In Indian sculptural art, images are the symbolic representations of divinity whose origin and end is expressed through the religious and spiritual beliefs. Indian iconography inherits various attributes and variety which requires a careful and systematic study. Iconography is concerned with historical art form that deals with the representation, identification, description and interpretation of the content or subject of images. The simple and rudimentary type of figures developed into complex forms in the later period. Additional attributes were developed and the earlier ones frequently discarded or modified. Sometimes earlier iconographic concepts change so frequently that the original was difficult to recognize.

Om (pronounced Aum)

'Om' is a Hindu symbol that stands for the entire Universe, the ultimate reality (Brahman). This symbol is actually a mantra that is pronounced from the core of your soul and represents Lord Brahma, the creator of the Universe.

It is prefixed and sometimes suffixed to all Vedic mantras and prayers. Aum is often said to represent God in the three aspects of Brahman (A), Vishnu (U) and Shiva (M). As the Divine primordial vibration, it represents the one ultimate reality, underlying and encompassing all of nature and all of existence. The written syllable called omkara serves as a deeply significant and distinctly recognizable symbol for Hindu dharma. The pronunciation of Aum moves through all possible human linguistic vowel sounds and is different from the pronunciation of Om. Both are often symbolically equated, although they are sonically distinct.

Khanda

Khanda is a Sikh religious symbol and its meaning is related to power and purity. The Khanda has a crossed kirpan in it that represents political power. The double edged sword repents belief in a single god. Trident The trident is a Greco-Roman symbol of power as it used to be held by Poseidon, the god of Oceans. In Hinduism, it is seen as the symbol of Lord Shiva. In Christianity, the trident stands for the Devil and is called a 'fork'.

Swastika

The Swastika is a Hindu symbol of peace and prosperity. All home entrances and the 'Kalash' that stands for Goddess Lakshmi is adorned with this symbol.

Swastika is a symbol connoting general auspiciousness. It may represent purity of soul, truth, and stability or, alternatively, Surya, the sun.^[1] Its rotation in four directions has been used to represent many ideas, but primarily describes the four directions, the four Vedas and their harmonious whole. Its use in Hinduism dates back to ancient times.

Tilak

The tilaka (or tilak) is a mark worn on the forehead or other parts of the body as a sign of spiritual devotion. Hindus may wear a tilaka regularly or especially on religious occasions. The shape of the tilaka is often an indicator of devotion to a certain deity. For example, a 'U' shape tilaka usually denotes devotion to Vishnu, while Shiva devotees often wear it in the form of three horizontal lines. It may be made of saffron, vermilion, turmeric, clay or simply ash.

Vibhuti

Vibhuti is the holy ash obtained from sacred puja rites involving fire. Also a variant called Bhasma used as Vibhuti is prepared from the purified ashes of cow dung. Ash as the product of fire is considered intrinsically pure. It is used on the forehead, normally as three horizontal lines representing Shiva. Some Hindus meld both the three horizontal vibhuti lines of Shiva and the 'U' shape tilaka of Vishnu in an amalgam marker signifying Hari-Hara (Vishnu-Shiva). In addition, sacred ash signifies that the body's origin is from dust and ash and to dust and ash it shall return. The ash is a marker of impermanence. Everything in the interim is but an illusion (maya). Vibhuti, when applied to the forehead, also symbolizes the willingness to destroy negative thoughts and qualities (jealousy, envy, anger, greed, etc.), as these negative qualities, if not destroyed, will bring all kinds of pains in life.

Rudraksha

Rudraksha are seeds of the rudraksha tree that, in Hinduism, represent the tears of Lord Shiva (also known as, Rudra). They are often threaded into a necklace and used as a rosary to accompany prayer and meditation.

Surya's

Surya's seven horses represent the seven chakras or spiritual centers in our body. Scientifically, they also represent the seven colors of the visible spectrum of light – VIBGYOR

Sri Chakra Yantra

Sri Chakra Yantra of Tripura Sundari (commonly referred to as Sri Yantra) is a mandala formed by nine interlocking triangles. Four of these triangles are oriented upright, representing Shiva or the Masculine. Five of these triangles are inverted triangles representing Shakti, or the Feminine. Together, the nine triangles form a web symbolic of the entire cosmos, a womb symbolic of creation, and together express Advaita Vedanta or non-duality. All other yantras are derivatives of this supreme yantra.

Shiva Ling

The Shiva Lingam represents the divine being Shiva, and is used as a symbol of the power of fertility and strength. Shivalinga (Sivalinga) is the most important and a popular symbolic representation of Lord Shiva (Siva) in Hinduism. It represents God Himself in His all the three aspects – Creator, Sustainer or Protector and Destroyer (Dissolutor).

The Lotus

The Lotus is associated with the creation theology as well as the gods Vishnu, Brahma, and Lakshmi.

The Veena

The musical instrument Veena is associated with the Hindu goddess Saraswati and the sage Narada. It represents arts and learning.

Conch/Shankha

A Hindu pundit (priest) blowing the conch during puja. The conch shell is a major Hindu article of prayer, used as a trumpeting announcement of all sorts. The God of Preservation, Vishnu, is said to hold a special conch, Panchajanya, that represents life as it has come out of life-giving waters. In the story of Dhruva the divine conch plays a special part. The warriors of ancient India would blow conch shells to announce battle, such as is famously represented in the beginning of the war of Kurukshetra in the Mahabharata, a famous Hindu epic. The conch shell is also a deep part of Hindu symbolic and religious tradition. Today most Hindus use the conch as a part of their religious practices, blowing it during worship at specific points, accompanied by ceremonial bells. Shankha also symbolizes the sound that created the universe and stands for knowledge.

Chakra

The Chakra or disc-like weapon of Vishnu is often found mounted on the top of Vaishnava temples or incorporated into architectural designs. Images depicting Vishnu's four-armed Narayana form almost always include the Chakra in one of his hands. It is a general symbol for protection. Chakra is also known to symbolize the need to follow dharma and to condemn adharma.

Multiple heads and arms

In Indian dance, the idea of multiple arms is often shown by several dancers standing behind each other with their arms in different positions. An array of Hindu, Buddhist, and some Jain deities are often depicted with multiple heads, arms, and other body parts, creating what one author refers to as a "multiplicity convention" in religious iconography. Such multiple body parts represent the divine omnipresence and immanence (ability to be in many places at once and simultaneously exist in all places at once), and thereby the ability to influence many things at once. The specific meanings attributed to the multiple body parts of an image are symbolic, not literal in context. In such depictions, the visual effect of an array of multiple arms is to create a kinetic energy showing that ability.

Vāhana

Vāhana or vehicle, sometimes called a mount, is an animal or mythical entity closely associated with a particular deity in Hindu theology. Sometimes the deity is iconographically depicted riding and/or mounted on the vahana; other times, the vahana is depicted at the deity's side or symbolically represented as a divine attribute.

Several Symbols

Several symbols (animals, flora, instruments, weapons, or even color) in Hindu iconography are associated with particular devas, and vice versa. In certain cases the deities themselves are personifications of natural forces, for instance Agni (fire), Vayu (wind), Surya (Sun) and Prithvi (Earth). In other instances, the associations arise from specific incidents or characteristics related in Hindu theology. The iconography serve to identify the particular deity in their pictorial or sculptural representations. The symbolism also often links the deities with a particular natural or human attribute, or profession.

It is important to understand the symbolism, in order to appreciate the allegorical references in not only Hindu scriptures (for instance, Puranic tales), but also in both ancient and modern secular works of authors from the Indian subcontinent. The art and science of designing temples includes the study of sculpture and the ornamentation of religious significance as described in sacred texts (shilpa shastra aagamas). In Ancient India twelve years of theoretical and practical training used to be given to the student by an able experienced teacher.

References

1. Karel Werner, A Popular Dictionary of Hinduism 147-48 (Curzon Press 1994)
2. Harshananda, Swami, *Principal Symbols of World Religions*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai, - 600 004
3. Harshananda, Swami, *Principal Symbols of World Religions*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai, - 600 004
4. Rao, T. A. Gopinatha (1998). *Elements of Hindu Iconography* (in 4 Parts), New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
5. <http://www.thehindu.com/br/2004/06/08/stories/2004060800291500.htm>.

