

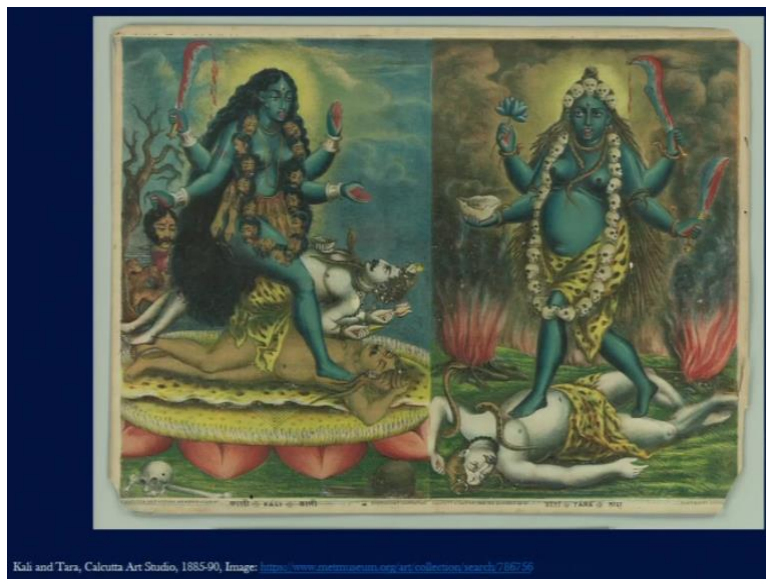
**Indian Art: Materials, Techniques and Artistic Practices**  
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**Lecture – 40**  
**Printing**

Hello everyone. We are continuing our discussion and our lecture for week 8 and we are talking about the European interventions in terms of printmaking and how some of the European interventions and the printing techniques were learned by the indigenous printers and how those knowledge was made available to the audience in the Indian subcontinent.

So, we were already talking about the images, many of these devotional images. And how this kind of broadsheet prints were produced by some of the places like Calcutta Art Studio, but also many of the publishing houses of these printing presses in this Battala area, the Chitpur area and so on in north Calcutta.

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So, this is something we can also see that how certain images what printmaking enables that certain images which can be reproduced as part of this broadsheet prints which can be collected by the devotees as souvenirs and that can be kept in their houses, but also some of the images that can be made as part of the book illustration. So, the same image can be used in different purposes based on how you want to represent them.

So, this is one thing what the printmaking enables. So, this is a feature that cannot be done in painting because when we are talking about painting, we are talking about making a singular piece, we are talking about making an exclusive work which will be hand drawn and then so the opportunities to do reproduction of those images are different from the way how it happens in printmaking.

So that is the reason one can imagine that if there is a particular litho-stone or engraved block that can be a wood block or a metal block or an etched metal plate that is available, so then that same thing can be used in different kinds of occasions. So that can be used for broadsheets, that can be used for book illustration and for making different other kinds of printed material. So, these are some of the flexibilities that the printing technologies allow.

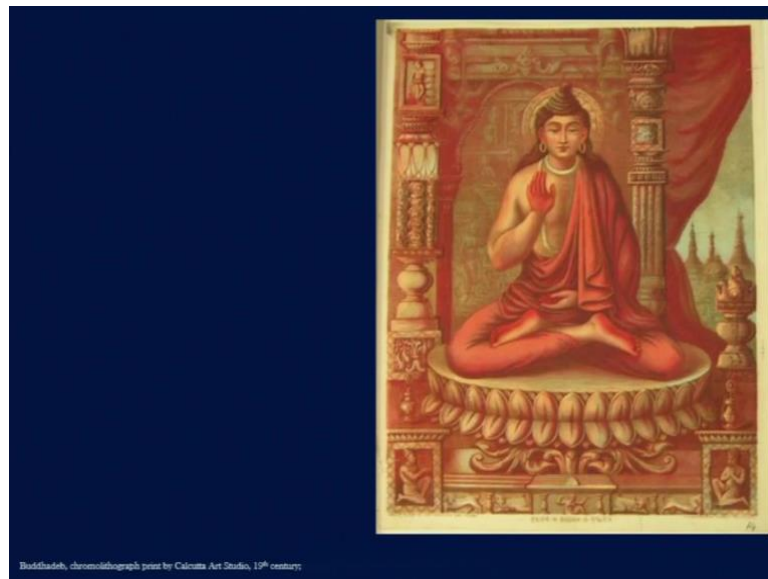
And at the same time, as I have already mentioned this same image with all these details can be reproduced for many times, so the same image can be in the house of many people instead of just being relegated to one privileged person's home. So those are the reasons why we find that the printed material that had transformed the visual culture in the 19th century Indian subcontinent.

In some ways, we can also see this kind of printed material, both the Battala prints and later on these chromolithographs they also marked the end of the Kalighat paintings because if we think about the Kalighat paintings, those are the ones which are singularly produced, even though the similar kind of themes were made by the same artists in multiple times, but the effort it takes and also the amount of details and everything those will go in making the painted images as opposed to the printed images those made the difference.

And also the economic factors, the printed images were much more cheaply available than the painted ones and that is how we see a slow decline of the Kalighat images. So, we can think about it how these different aspects of printing it is not just the printed image and its visual presence that we see here, but there are different aspects of these printed images that we have in terms of its circulation, its distribution, its dissemination and its reproducibility.

So, these are the different factors of these printed images which compel us to consider these images differently from the painted images and how that also made a difference in terms of the way we perceive the history of 19th century visual culture in the Indian subcontinent.

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So, this is another image that we have from the Calcutta Art Studio and as I have mentioned this Calcutta Art Studio, the presses in Battala, the Chitpur and the other parts in Calcutta we find that different kinds of thematics were addressed. So, it is not just one religion that will be addressed, but there are many different religious figures and they would be addressed as part of this printing endeavours.

And similarly, we can also think about the Tugra lithographs in in Delhi and in Lahore or the printed books in Lucknow and Delhi, which also have different set of clientele. Now, in this image that we see here that is called Buddhadeb and it is written here at the bottom of this image, so this image is also something that is made in the chromolithograph technique in which we see the figure of lord Buddha is represented at the centre stage.

So, there is this elaborate architectural setting and then there is this lotus which is constructed here and that also is a marker of his divinity. And then what we see how he sits here on the lotus and with this one, the right arm raised, and this right palm raised in the gesture of abhaya mudra or the gesture of reassurance. And what we see here is Buddha is shown here as this young yogic figure and with the matted locks.

And then of course at the top of his head we see this this topknot which is also a marker of his spiritual presence. Now, we certainly see that this differs from the iconographical conventions of early Buddhist images, however certain things we can still see that how those are being continued. And one of the key points will be the red robe which one can see that how this

monastic robe, this red robe, which is certainly part of Buddhist training and the Buddhist monastic practices is there in Buddha's body as well.

And then this red robe also sets the tone for the entire image that it is not just there in the robe of Buddha, but also in his palm, in his feet and then like also this red seems to have permeated in the other parts of the architecture as well. So, that is how this flavour of the red robe, sort of it almost gives a sense of how his teaching is spread across and this colour red is also something that goes with his teaching and it sort of encompasses the entire environment, and in this case the entire image.

And that is how like the greatness of Buddha is sort of established. Now, if we also see here are some of the architectural details that we have here and here is this particular way in which there is a pillar. So, if we think about some of the Buddhist images that we have studied so far, in the sculptures or in the paintings we do not really see a pillar which is awkwardly placed behind the main deities like Buddha and the other figures.

So, here there is a pillar and this pillar certainly does not really look like this one and then these two pillars are perhaps not in the same similar depth. So, what is going on in this case? So, what we find here is this particular convention of placing a pillar right beside the figure is something that comes from the European portraits. And if the figure, the figure who is the main attraction of the image is placed at the centre stage and then there is a pillar.

So, the pillar sort of marks the space for something that would come at the corner and this is what it comes in the corner and there is this drawn curtain and then through the drawn curtain we see part of the landscape. This is also another well-established trope of European portraiture, something that we see in the 18th century and 19th century oil painting portraits made by the European artist and later on of course by the indigenous artists in India as well.

So, this is something that we see as I have already mentioned that there are these ways in which we have the different conventions coming together. So, in one hand we have some of the iconographic features and the significance of the red colour which come from the Buddhist history, but then we also see that there are certain kinds of these architectural details which adds to the complexity of this image.

And which show the people who were involved in composing the entire picture were not just looking into the Buddhist sources, but they were also looking into the European sources, especially very specifically the European oil painting portraits and that is the reason there is this pillar and then there is this drawn curtain through which we see there is a landscape behind it. And it is also the landscape the way it has been seen here it is almost like that is the only open space that we see in the entire scene.

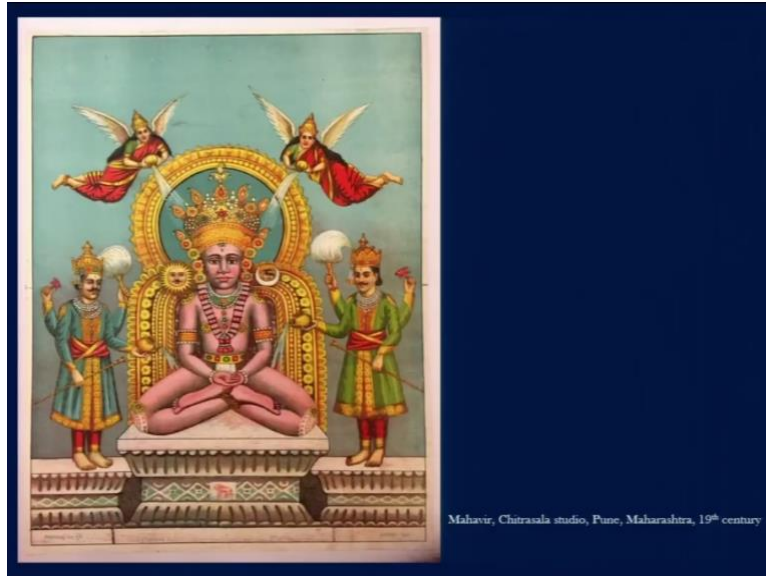
It is almost how we are completely engrossed in the scene in the interior but still when there is a visual space is needed, the breathing space is needed and that is the reason this curtain is very strategically drawn and then the viewers eyes can gaze into the landscape in distance. Now, if you see the landscape in distance, there are a set of pagodas, the Buddhist pagodas that we have here.

And looking at the structure, they do not really resemble the ones we have in eastern India as well as central India and other parts, but they strikingly resemble the one that we see in Southeast Asia, so that can be in Myanmar in Thailand and Cambodia and so on. So since Calcutta was also a place from where there were people who would be traveling back and forth to Rangoon and other parts of Southeast Asia.

So, it can also be believed that if this kind of images were produced as souvenirs and they have a very specific Southeast Asian reference it might also be targeting to the devotees or the other travellers from Southeast Asia or someone who will be traveling to Southeast Asia. So, these are the kind of different cultural indicators that we find them to be present in this image here.

So, that is the reason as I have already mentioned that these kinds of printed images they do not just represent one kind of knowledge, but there are many different layers in which these images can be read and for them being made into prints they also compel us to think about what all different uses these images might have had.

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Then moving on from Calcutta, the other studio which was also equally influential or perhaps or it also had a great outreach that was Chitrasala studio in Pune. And here we also see it was around the same time in the mid to late 19th century where there was a very different kind of image making practice. So, if we compare what was happening in Calcutta and then what was happening in Pune, we find that the kind of images, the kind of modulation and anatomy and everything those were strikingly different.

So, this is an image of Mahavir who is one of the 24 tirthankaras in the Jain pantheon. And here what we see Mahavir is shown enshrined in this image, where he sits on this high pedestal and then there is a throne behind him and he is also shown as bejewelled and then there are two divine attendants that we find them to be on either side of Mahavira. And then on the top there are two figures who are like angel like figures who are also showering this holy water.

At the same time, also it is a marker of the divine presence of a deity, so this is something that is happening in the entire image. And the part of the throne also sort of transforms into this highly ornamented architectural halo, so that is also a marker of his divine presence here. Now, if we think about it that how this image is produced, so we certainly see there is a tendency towards the modulation.

There is a tendency towards observation of the people around us and then implementing that into the figures that we have here, but at the same time there is also something that goes much beyond and that would be some of the conventions of dressing and then also how certain divine figures are perceived. So, for example in the Maharashtrian context and in the Deccani context,

we see this particular way of wearing sari that is also present in these divine figures, these flying figures, on the top.

However, for the apsaras or for the divine figures from the Indian context, we do not really see them with wings. So, the use of wings, something we also find in the Mysore paintings and so on, so this incorporation of the wings is something that we find that to be very much related to the European intervention. So, here we see that there are some of those local customs and then also how there is a marrying of the local custom to the European conventions of image making that is taking place.

But also at the same time we find that how these images also have this very regional specificity that marks them differently from the ones those are perhaps produced in the Calcutta Art Studio. And sometimes that happens also because of what kind of city we are talking about. So, if we are talking about the cities like Calcutta, Bombay or Madras, so there are the colonial art schools which are present.

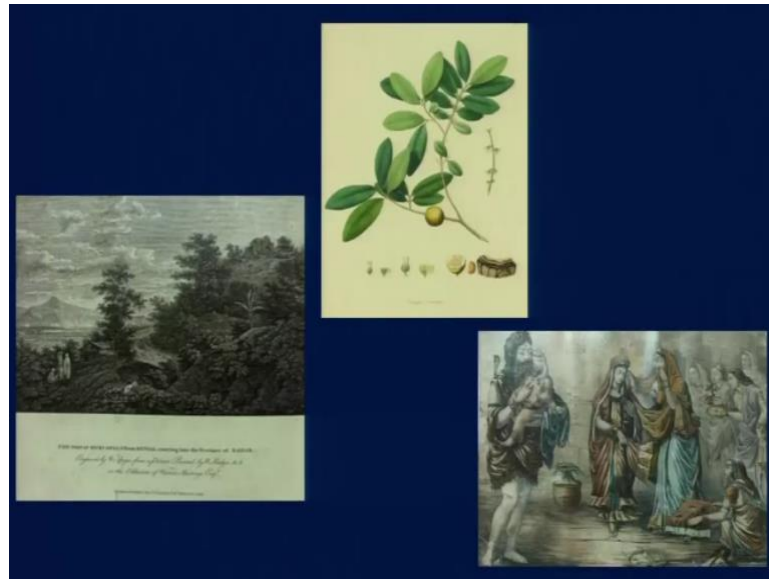
And that is the reason they have access to the anatomical studies, perhaps the replicas of the Greco-Roman marble sculptures and Neo-Gothic architecture, the classical architecture and some of the customs and conventions of making the European portraiture and that is the reason the elements and the colour scheme, so the visual elements and the colour scheme those will be present in the prints, which are there in Calcutta, in Bombay and so on, those will operate very differently in a city like Pune.

So, Pune would have a different clientele and then like the aesthetics in Pune have developed very differently from what we see that is under the direct influence of the British art education in Calcutta or in Bombay. So, these are some of the things we can also think about how the localization of this European printing techniques were taking place. So, localization in terms of; there are already some of the established visual conventions.

There are already some of these cultural backgrounds, all these things were there already and then how this advent of the printing technologies how they have enhanced that. So, the advent of this printing technology they have not really diminished the local aesthetic choices or these conventions or iconography or certain specific regional details in these figures, but they have perhaps made them much more layered and complex.

So, these are some of the things that we find that those things happened because of this engagement into this new technology and that is the reason we find that how in the 18th and mostly in the 19th century a very different mode of image making had emerged at the same time have also advanced in the Indian subcontinent which will be very different from the kind of images that we see in the earlier time period.

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So to sum up the things, sum up the basic or the essential parts of what all we need to understand or what all we need to remember in terms of understanding the advent of European printmaking in the Indian subcontinent, the first stage I would say how there are of course we need to remember there are certain technical differences of what all printmaking techniques we are talking about that would be relief, that would be intaglio, planography and so on.

And each of this printmaking technique would contribute to the image making in a very different way and that is the reason what happens is that the image, the end result, the printed image; one image would be very different from the other even though all of them are printed images. So, those things if we keep them in mind and what all things are possible in relief, what is possible in planography or lithography, what all is possible in etching or in engraving.

So those things make our understanding of these printing technologies or the history of printmaking in the Indian subcontinent much more comprehensive. Now, with that if we come back to what are the uses of printing and printmaking that had been there in the Indian subcontinent, so as I have mentioned that some of the early users of printing had been there by



the Portuguese missionaries and then of course the Danish missionaries and Dutch missionaries, then later on of course the British missionaries and colonial officials.

So, in those cases, we see that how the printed book in terms of Bible and printed material was there for disseminating knowledge that was there, but at the same time printed images were also equally important that can be for documentation, that can also be for having a folio of like different views of the architectural sites, that can also be something about like the customs and the caste groups and different communities in the Indian subcontinent, either for documentation or for categorization or for anthropological or artistic purposes.

So, these are the different kinds of uses that we find. And on the left side of the screen, we have this one image and we have already discussed about this particular place which was identified as Sicri gully which is between Bihar and Bengal and how this particular aesthetic convention was established and it was not just there in print, it was also there in sketching and drawing and in painting.

But since printed images were widely circulated that is the reason to popularize this particular aesthetic convention, I would say that the printed images played a very important role. And what are those aesthetic conventions? So for example, we have spoken about that to show the wilderness in the Indian subcontinent, something that is unruly, something that is not civilized enough.

And then we also have this low horizon line which gives a lot of space for the sky to show the vast expanse and then there are those clouds, which are sort of like looming over the landscape. So, these are some of these aesthetic tropes that we have spoken about and how those aesthetic tropes have contributed to the knowledge about India to the people in Western Europe. Now, the other thing that the printing had also contributed immensely to is the botanical to build up knowledge repository of botany in the Indian subcontinent, botany and zoology likewise.

And the thing is so here we have one of the images and in this one we have how people like William Roxburgh and others they would do the surveys and either they would draw or they would travel with the people who would painstakingly draw the images of the plants and fruits and different parts of it and all of them will be then made into the print later on and eventually be published from London or from these important cities.

So, in this case what happens is that in some parts we see the dissection of the flowers, dissection of the parts of the plants and everything those will be there which would contribute to the scientific study of these botanical specimens, but also in some places we have also seen how there are those images which are not really just a representation of plant, but it is also like the lifecycle of the entire plant that is represented in this one image.

So, in one hand there is this tremendous tendency towards establishing these images as something like eyewitness or something as evidential and then on the other hand we also see that how there are layers of agenda, imagination and of course aspirations those are also combined into these images. And from there, we have also looked into how the indigenous printers and artists they have taken up this printmaking skill.

And implemented that to depict some of the regional stories or the stories narratives or visuals which are much more prominent or much more significant for the people in the Indian subcontinent, so that is how we see that in various different ways starting from making a knowledge repository to making an impact in the public culture and everything, printing in the 18th and 19th century which came as part of this European interventions in the Indian subcontinent had a big role to play. Thank you.