

Spring 2024 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
Echoes of the Past, Visions of the Future
Sponsored by the *Society for Asian Art*

Navayana: New Buddhist Art and Architecture in India

Padma D. Maitland, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco
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Ashoka (c. 304 – 232 BCE): Third Mauryan Emperor of Magadha known for his turn towards Buddhism and the extensive architectural legacy of his reign.

Bhadant Anand Kauslayayan (1905–1988): Buddhist monk, Hindi author, and traveler. Led a second conversion to Buddhism following Ambedkar's passing and helped establish several Buddhist centers in Mumbai and Nagpur.

Chaityabhumi: Site of B.R. Ambedkar's cremation following his passing on 6 December 1956. Now considered a pilgrimage site visited by hundreds of thousands each year to commemorate Ambedkar and his legacy on a day known as "Mahaparinirvan Din," or Mahaparinirvana Day.

Deekshabhoomi, (Dikshabhumi, दिक्षाभूमी): Site of the Ambedkar led conversion in Nagpur, India, on 14 October 1956, lit. "conversion ground."

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956): Hand of the Indian constitution, lawyer, social activist, author, and "lifelong champion of social justice and civil rights for the 'untouchable' Dalit caste" (<https://globalcenters.columbia.edu/content/mumbai-bhimrao-ramji-ambedkar>). The conversion he led in 1956 helped establish a new branch of Buddhism known as Navayana Buddhism.

Dalit: Lit 'oppressed, broken, crushed, downtrodden'; a moniker or designation reclaimed to refer to those members of society who have historically been marginalized or oppressed due to caste and traditional perceptions of them as the "lowest caste" or outside the Hindi caste system.

Dalit Panthers: Founded in 1972 by a group of poets and activists in Mumbai, including Raja Dhale, Namdeo Dhasal, and J.V. Pawar, to fight pervasive casteism inspired by Black Panther Party

Dr. Ambedkar Memorial Park, Lucknow (opened 14 April 2008)

Kumari Mayawati (b. 1956): former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh,

Nagpur: City at the geographic center of India, site of the Ambedkar led conversion in 1956

Navayana (नवयान): Literally "New Vehicle" refers to a new path in Buddhism established following the conversion Ambedkar led in 1956. It is grounded in principles of social justice and equality as part of a broader. Also known as Ambedkarian Buddhism or Dalit Buddhist Movement

Pillars of Ashoka: Monolithic stone pillars erected across much of the Indian subcontinent inscribed with edicts.

The Buddha and His Dhamma: Written by Dr. Ambedkar and published posthumously in 1957

Vikrante Bhise (b. 1984): Contemporary artist based in Mumbai

References and suggested readings:

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