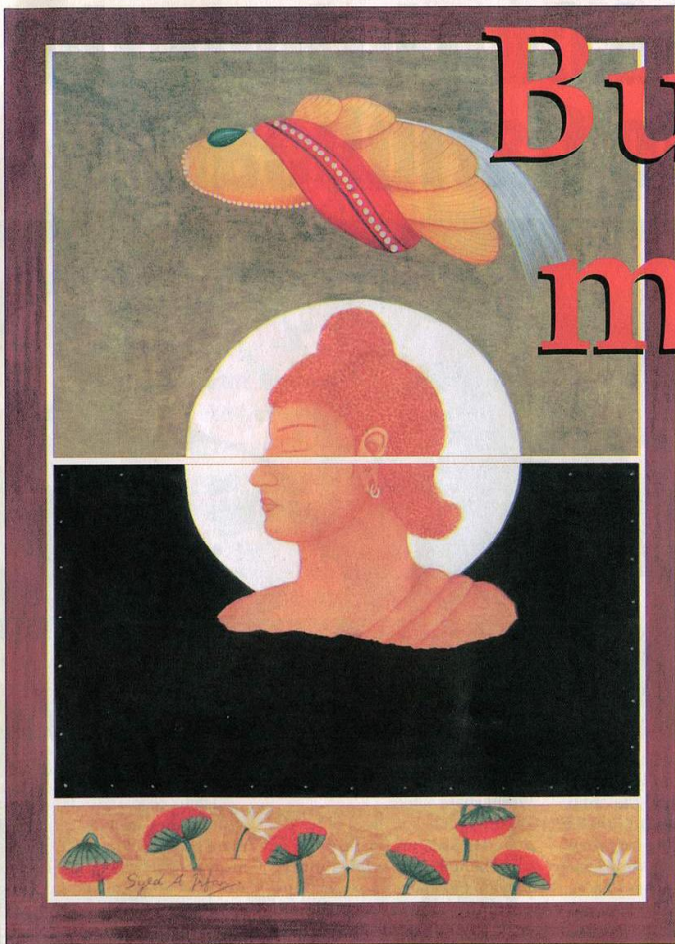


Buddha in miniature



Nadeem Zuberi

Buddha's teachings were purely ethical his magnetic personality became hallowed in the course of centuries and an object of reverence. Buddha himself was represented by symbols; his birth by a lotus, his attainment of enlightenment by the bo tree; his first sermon by the

wheel, and his death by the stupa. Buddha was created, both standing and seated. The seated figure especially becomes so popular that it spread far and wide. And Syed Abdul Irfan also uses this posture of Buddha in his recent miniature 'Buddha' series of paintings exhibited at Citi Art Gallery.

Instead of portraying the traditional male



figures of Buddhas sit on massive curtained thrones, not in the rigid pose of yoga, but somewhat nonchalantly, with their feet crossed at the ankles. While their hands form the characteristic Buddhist mudras, their long supple and be-jewelled arms and flexible fingers seem to act with weariness and their almond eyed faces gaze forth with sleepy languid expressions, lacking in mystical concentration, Irfan some what glamorize his paintings by adding different characters and objects such as flowers, garden, female figure along side Buddha in bright colours.

The Buddha is painted in a unique new way and so are the niches in which he is set. In any case, the paintings are more eventful and picturesque. He has worked some what away from the traditions and forms implanted in the region of Buddha. He has tried a new concept of visualizing Buddha in the modern world. He reproduced a natural Buddha imagery, in which a religious and an artistic composition are drawn from varied cultures

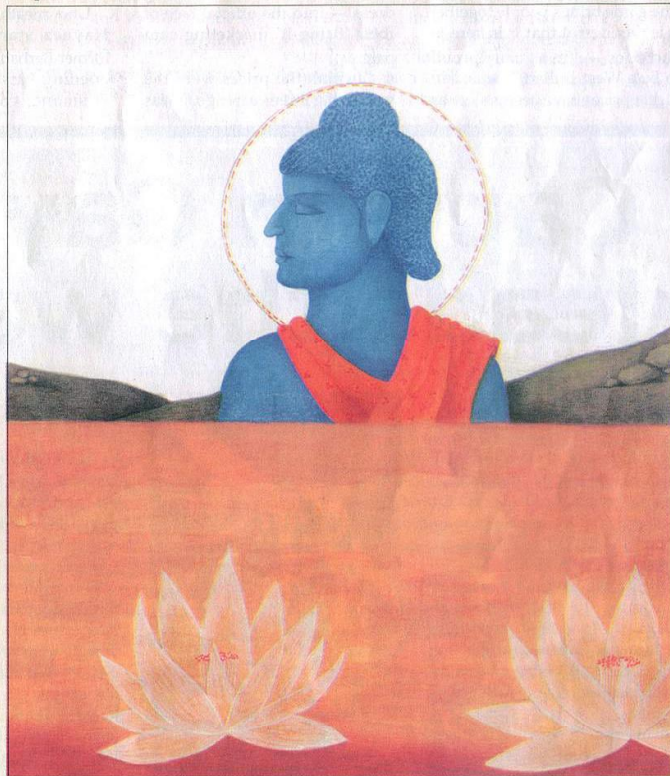
ear-rings.

The style of the robe of Buddha is somewhat different too. The cloak, which covers all but the right shoulder is often bared in change in some of the paintings the right shoulder is half bare or both the shoulders are bare.

He is a self taught artist work in water colour medium in miniature, Islamic calligraphy and pen & ink sketching.

Commenting on his work Irfan said, "For me Art is emotions of life it's just not simply the blends of colours but I observe reflection of my life in each of my painting, and I strongly feel it as part of my life".

Irfan has been exhibiting his works since 2003 with uniqueness of themes and different style of execution. He has created serene and spiritual miniatures in pen and ink and water colour. He uses transparent washes of water colour capturing the light and shades through it. The viewers can get the glimpses of the dramatic transformation of Buddha in most



that have been bonded to Buddha especially Indian touch. The iconography is purely Indian, for example the seated Buddha is mostly cross-legged in the established Indian manner.

New generations accustomed to think of the Buddha as a monk, and unable to picture him possessing long hair or wearing a turban, but all of this can be seen in Irfan's paintings. The youngsters have a conclusion about Buddha's personality otherwise.

But Buddha is never depicted with a shaved head, as the other Buddhist monks are; his short hair is clothed either in waves or in taut curls over his whole head and he wear heavy

of the paintings in vibrant colours dominantly by green, red, ochre and brown.

He has also achieved awards in appreciation of his works, Special Prize in Sadequain Award Exhibition in 2006, Best Performance Award in PTV in 2007 and First Prize in All Degree College Art Exhibition in 2001. He has many group and solo exhibition to his credit at home and abroad in Dubai and India. His works are on permanent display at many national and international buildings in London, at Golf Club, Dubai, in Efroze Chemicals Industries Pvt. Ltd. Karachi and in Pakistan embassy in Delhi, India.