



TODI RAGINI

INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN ART



BY

ANANDA COOMARASWAMY

EDITED BY

MULK RAJ ANAND

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

ABOUT twenty years ago, when I was working under the guidance of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy on a book on Indian aesthetics, I happened to come across his little *Introduction to Indian Art*, published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. I felt that it was the best little summary of India's artistic achievements, and most suitable as a text-book for students.

Only, it was flawed by the omission of any mention of Muhammadan Architecture and Moghul Painting. I drew Dr. Coomaraswamy's attention to this fact. He deplored the prejudices which had crept into his approach to Indian art problems at an earlier period. At that very time, I think, he was writing an essay on Moghul painting by way of preface to one of the catalogues of the Boston Museum collections of Indian Art.

I expressed the hope that he would one day revise the small book published from Adyar, but he excused himself on the plea of lack of time and suggested that I should do this if I was very keen, as also that I might translate *Zimmer's Kunstform und Yoga im Indischen Kultbild*, which had just then come out and which he thought very highly of.

A little while ago, I suggested to the Theosophical Publishing House that this *Introduction to Indian Art* be reprinted in a new edition, which I would willingly revise according to Dr. Coomaraswamy's behests. They readily agreed to this proposal.

Now, the book is being issued, almost exactly as it was originally written by Dr. Coomaraswamy, except for some additional sections. Three of these have been culled from

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Dr. Coomaraswamy's inimitable writings, namely, Indo-Sumerian, Dravidian and Aryan, and Moghul Painting; while three essays have been written in by me, variously on Architecture under Mussalman Rule, Sikh Painting and Modern Painting.

Although it is likely that I have not been able to approximate to anything like the depth and certitude of the original author, I have tried to see that the new material does not jar on the reader's sensibility quite as much as the absence of the additional chapters in a re-issue of this book would have done.

As all the original illustrations were impossible to obtain, I have substituted different ones here and there, keeping Dr. Coomaraswamy's intentions in mind as faithfully as I could.

The layout and format of the book have also been changed, at my instance, to make the book more accessible to the uninitiated reader.

I still believe that it is the best and most handy little book on Indian Art, and excellently suited to the needs of the new generations of young people who must inherit the tradition so ably described by the great pioneer critic of Indian Art, for whom one can wish no other monument than that he should be read.

I wish to record my gratitude to Dr. H. Goetz for incidental advice. Also, I want to thank Mr. Gobhai and Miss D. Sahiar for the pen and ink drawings of the various sculptures and paintings, the reproduction of which in monochrome would have raised the price of the book beyond the pocket of the bulk of our youths with their very modest buying power.

M. R. A.

25, Cuffe Parade

Bombay, 1956.

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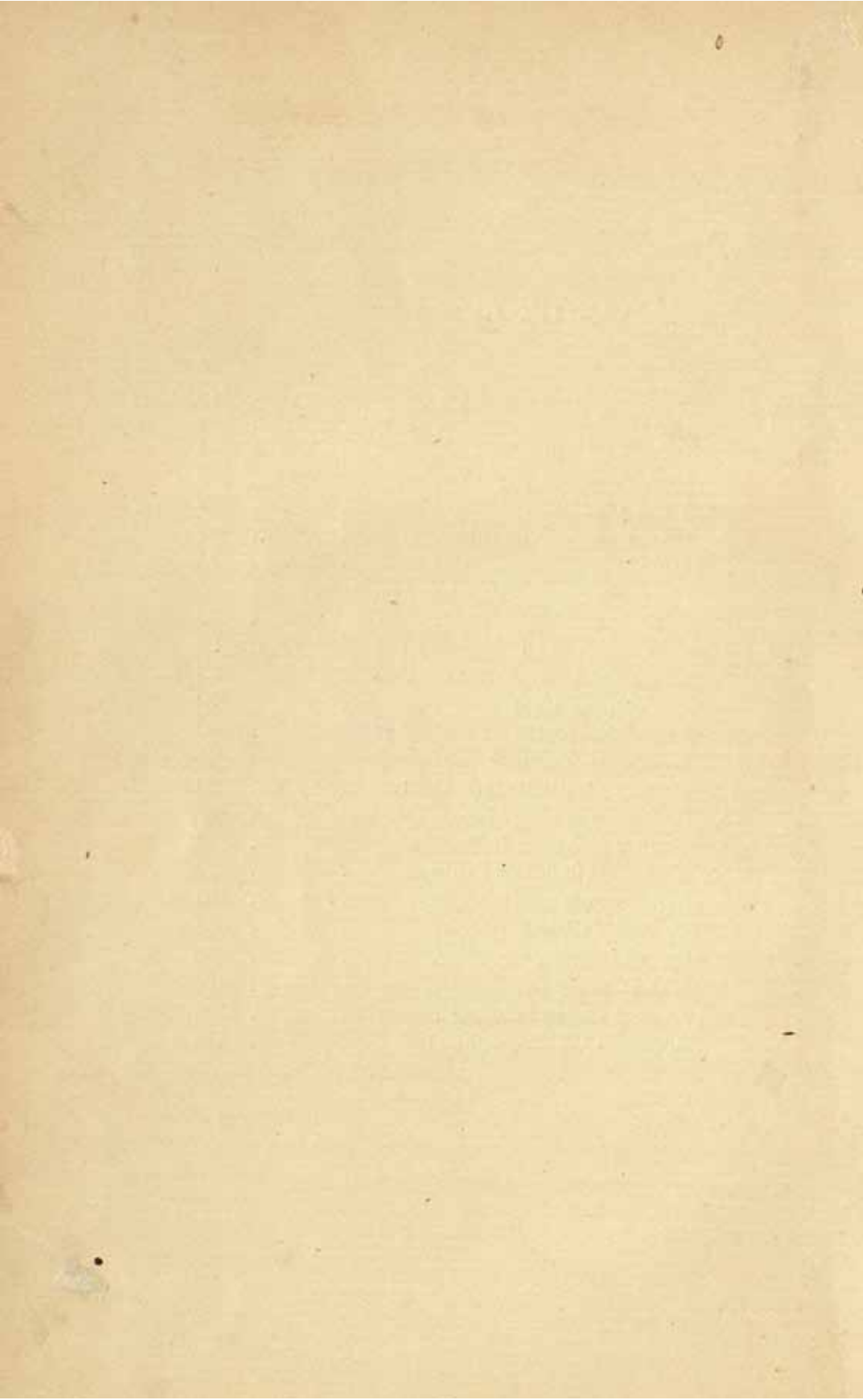
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INDO-SUMERIAN

IT has long been known that seals of a type unique in India have been found in the Indus valley. Quite recently excavations of two sites, Harappa in the Punjab, and Mohenjodaro in Sind, have revealed the existence of extensive city sites, with remains of brick buildings by no means of a primitive character, and the abundance of minor antiquities indicates a period of transition from the stone to the copper age. These remains are under those of the Kusana period, but are not far from the surface; the existence of still lower strata suggests that the Indus valley culture must have had a long previous history in the same area and that it may be regarded as indigenous.

"The more we learn of the copper age," says Rostovtzeff, "the more important it is shown to be."

This epoch created brilliant centres of cultural life all over the world,

specially in the Orient. To the centres already known, Elam, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, we can now add Turkistan and North Caucasus and, finally, the Indus valley. It may be remarked, too, that the further we go back in history, the nearer we come to a common cultural type; the further we advance, the greater the differentiation.



Fig. 1. Dancer: Mohenjodaro



Fig. 2. Bearded Man;
Mohenjodaro

The Chalcolithic culture was everywhere characterized by matriarchy and a cult of the productive powers of nature and of a mother-goddess; and by a great developing of the arts of design. We must now realize that an early culture of this kind once extended from the Mediterranean to the Ganges valley and that the whole of the Ancient East has behind it this common inheritance.

The antiquities found in the Indus valley, other than brick buildings and the limited amount of masonry, include limestone figures of bearded men, and terracottas representing female figures and animals, the latter including a rhinoceros, now extinct in the Indus valley. No anthropomorphic figures, other than the terracottas, have been found; but a blue faience tablet, with pictographic characters at the back, has in front the representations of a cross-legged figure, with kneeling worshippers right and left, and a Naga behind, a remarkable anticipation of familiar types in later Buddhist art of the historical period. Painted pottery analogous to the prehistoric pottery of Baluchistan is abundant; it may be remarked that in Baluchistan there survives an isolated Dravidian language, Brahui, which had long been regarded as a possible island connecting Dravidian India with the West. Other remains include beads and other ornaments of chalk, carnelian, etc., ring stones or maces; faience bangles; hematite pestles; polished gold jewellery; coins; abundant neolithic implements; and, above all, seals. Iron is lacking, and the horse was unknown.

The seals are of ivory, or blue or white faience, square in form, and with a perforated base at the back for suspension. They bear a great variety of designs, including bulls, both with and without humps, elephants, tigers and representations of a "Pippal" tree (*Ficus religiosa*), with two horned monsters affronted attached to the stem. Further, the seals bear numerous characters of a pictographic script which it has not yet been possible to decipher. The representation of these various animals, especially that of the bull and elephant, is masterly in the extreme; that of the limestone sculpture is aesthetically decadent, rather than primitive.

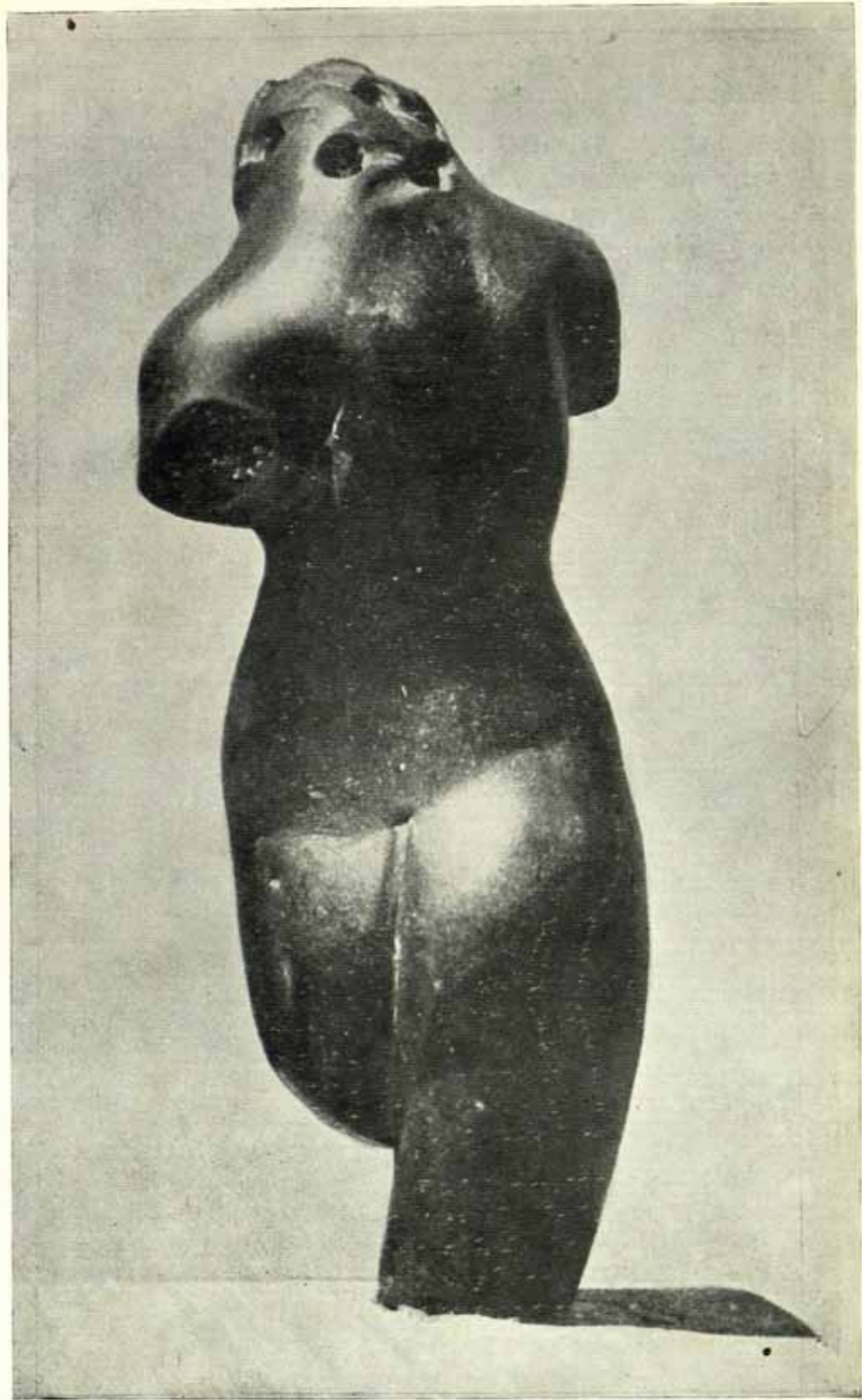
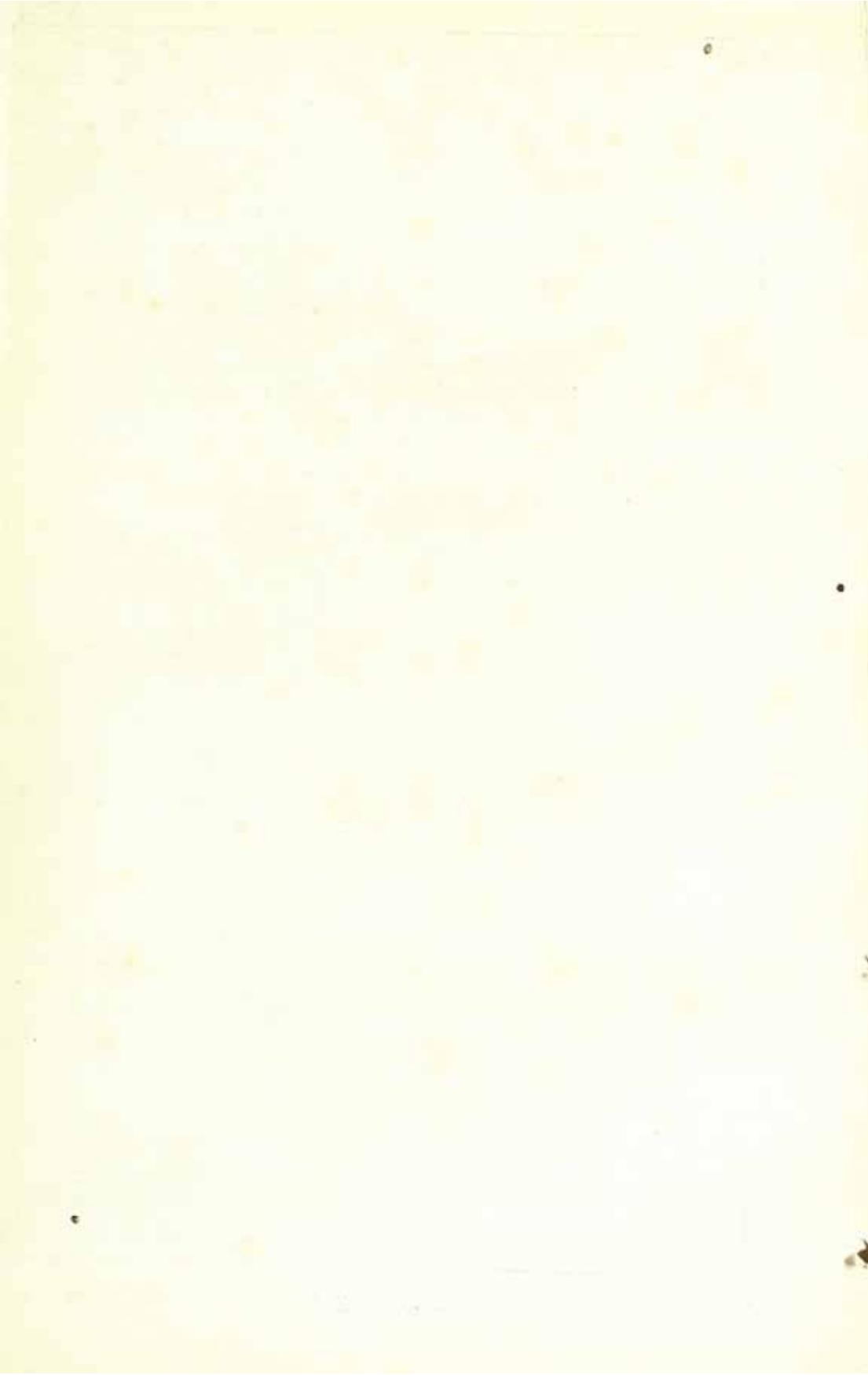


FIG. 3. *Harappa Torso*



It has been shown that these antiquities bear a general resemblance to those found on Sumerian sites in Mesopotamia, especially



Fig. 4. Seal with Bull : Mohenjodaro

Kish and Susa, dated from the 5th to the 3rd millenniums B.C., resemblance amounts to identity in the case of an early Sumerian glazed steatite seal from Kish, alike in respect of the script and the bull. The miniature funeral potteries of both areas are almost indistinguishable, it may be noted, too, that the oblong, short-legged terracotta sarcophages of prehistoric South Indian sites are of the Mesopotamian type. Carnelian beads found at Kish are decorated with white lines on a red ground, obtained from local calcination of the surface ; this technique, unknown west of Mesopotamia, is so common in India, though at a later date, as to suggest a probable Indian origin. Some Indian boat designs are of a Mesopotamian character, the coracle in particular, while the presence of conch at Susa and of teak and

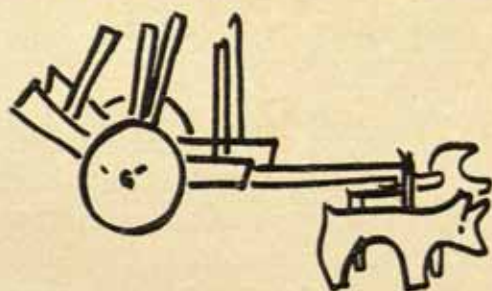


Fig. 5. Terracotta : Mohenjodaro

Indian Cedar in Babylon are evidence of a seaborne trade, as early as the 8th century B.C., nor is there much reason to doubt that it had begun earlier.

While the remains alluded to above, found in the Sind valley, certainly go back to the 3rd or 4th millennium B.C., it is supposed that a complete hiatus divides this early period from later times. A part of the remains at Mohenjodaro probably dates between 1000 and 400 B.C. and on the other hand the minor antiquities of various Indian sites as at Basarh, Taxilla (Bhir mound), Pataliputra and South Indian pre-historic sites, go back at least to the 5th century B.C.

The study of Indo-Sumerian antiques is still in its infancy, and it is too early to draw far-reaching conclusions, but it is at least probable "that the civilization of which we have now obtained this first glimpse was developed in the Indus valley itself and was as distinctive of that region as the civilization of the Pharoahs was distinctive of the Nile"; and if the Sumerians, as is generally supposed, represent the intrusive element in Mesopotamia, "then a possibility is clearly suggested of India proving ultimately to be the cradle of their civilization, which in its turn lay at the root of Babylonian, Assyrian, and western Asiatic culture generally."

DRAVIDIANS AND ARYANS

CERTAINLY before the 2nd millennium B.C., the Dravidians, whether of western origin, or, as seems quite probable, of direct neolithic descent on Indian soil, had come to form the bulk of a population thinly scattered throughout India. These Dravidians should be the Dasas of Dasyus with whom the conquering Aryans waged their wars, their *puras* or towns are mentioned in the Vedas, and they are described as *anasah* or noseless, a clear indication of their racial type.

Among the elements of Dravidian origin are probably the cults of the phallus and of mother-goddesses Nagas, Yakshas and other nature spirits, and many of the arts. Indeed, if we recognize in the Dravidians a southern race and in the Aryans a northern, it may well be argued that the victory of kingly over tribal organizations, the gradual reception, into orthodox religion, of the phallus cult and mother-goddesses, and the shift from abstract symbolism to anthropomorphic iconography, in the period of theistic and *bhakti* development, mark a final victory of the conquered over the conquerors. In particular, the popular Dravidian element must have played the major part in all that concerns the development and office of image-worship, that is, of *puja* as distinct from *yajna*,

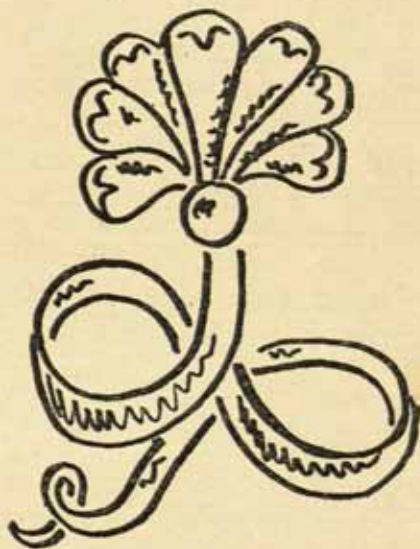


Fig. 6. Naga : Dravidian

To the Dravidians are probably due the forms of architecture based on bamboo construction, the architecture of the Toda has been cited as a prototype, or at any rate a near analogue, of the early barrel-vaulted *chaitya*-hall and the horse-shoe architecture. Curved roofs, common in India, are rare in the rest of the world. The stone slab construction of many early temples is likewise of Dravidian origin. Early maritime trade and all that has to do with fishing must be Dravidian. The chank or conch industry is a case in point, the use of chank bangles, and of the conch as a trumpet in ritual and war must have been borrowed from Dravidian sources before the epic period.

VEDIC ORIGINS

EARLY Vedic religion, the religion of the Aryans in Northern India, consisted in the worship of the personified powers of Nature, in particular of Agni, Indra, Surya, Varuna, Vishnu, Rudra, Yama. These and other powers and beings were anthropomorphically conceived, and are described as wearing garments, carrying weapons, and driving in chariots, they were worshipped with hymns and sacrifices, that they might bless and protect their worshippers. Magical incantations were employed to the same ends. The spirit of the ancestors were likewise invoked and served with offerings. The ritual grew in complication, and came to lie almost entirely in the hands of expert priests (Brahmans), amongst whom the sacred texts were handed down, orally, in pupillary succession. There is no evidence, and little probability, that images of any of the deities were made, whether sculptured or painted.¹

There existed also aboriginal, Dravidian, cults of various popular divinities, such as the Yakshas, Nagas, and other nature-spirits not yet received into the Brahmanical pantheon; of a primitive deity, afterwards identified with Shiva, whose followers are referred to in the Rig Veda as worshippers of the Phallus-god (Sishna-deva); and of the Earth and other female deities. The industrial arts were mainly in the hands of the Non-Aryan communities. It is possible that rude images were employed in the popular cults. Wood and brick were used for building. Iron, copper, silver, gold and lead were known. Many of the decorative motifs, with Iranian affinities, which survive in folk art to the present day, must already have been in use. The caste system existed only in embryo.

¹ The golden *purusha*, which formed a part of the altar of sacrifice, and the effigy *kritya* of the magic rites, were probably symbols, and not in any sense representations. Mr. B. C. Bhattacharya, however, has summarized the evidence for the use of images in the Vedic period and presents an almost unanswerable case. —*Indian Images*, Calcutta, 1921.

PRE-MAURYAN SCULPTURE

THE early development of Indian sculpture and painting, like that of the drama, appears to have been connected with ancestor cults and hero-worship. The Chitra-Lakshana, an early Silpa Sastra,



now known only in its Tibetan translation, is chiefly devoted to a prescription of the proper manner in which a Chakravartin should be represented: the canon it set 'for kings and other beings' (the gods). So far as the lakshana of the Chakravartin is concerned, the Sastra probably dates back to pre-Buddhist times. In any case, the apotheosis of kings and the erection of funerary statues seem to have been characteristic of Indian civilization from the age of the earliest surviving monuments onwards. The oldest Indian sculpture so far known appears to be the well-known 'Parkham Statue' of the Mathura Museum (Fig. 9) which bears, according to recent readings, an inscription referring to Kunika Ajatasatru, of the Saisunaga dynasty, who died in 618 B.C. Closely related to this image is the female figure, perhaps a Yakshi, from Besnagar, now in the Calcutta Museum. Two statues found at Patna bear the names of other Saisunaga emperors, Udayin and Nanda Vardhana, both of the fifth century B.C. The female cauri-bearer lately found at Didarganj, and now in the Patna Museum, may be equally early.

Fig. 7. Yakshi Besnagar
With the same series may be associated the archaic five-legged bull in the Calcutta Museum.



FIG. 8. *Parkham Statue*

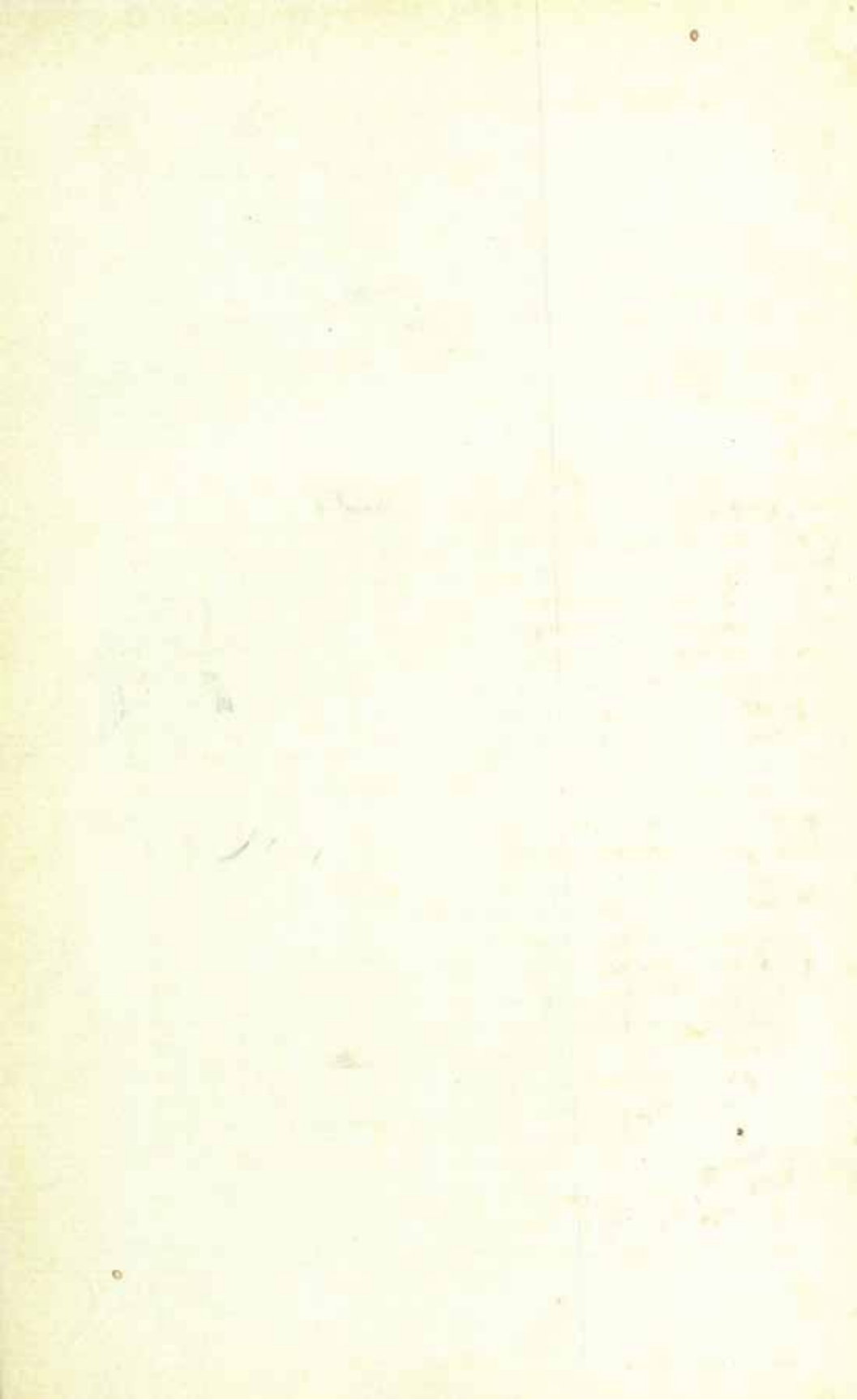




Fig. 9. Cauri-Bearer

The group of figures above referred to, while implying a long anterior development in wood of other impermanent materials, represents the genuinely primitive aspect of Indian art. The sense of this early art is not imaginative, but powerfully material. These human figures, over life-size, resting their immense weight firmly on the earth, are immediate and affirmative expressions of physical energy. Life is accepted without question or analysis; the solid flesh is not idealized. Neither philosophic introspection nor passionate devotion have yet affected art: there is no trace of romanticism or refinement. At the same time, this pre-Mauryan Indian art is not, like early Egyptian art, complete within itself, bounded by its material and representative achievement and of altogether mortal essence: it is not yet spiritual rather than unspiritual.

Mr. Jayaswal's researches in the field of pre-Mauryan art have pointed the way to the most fruitful and the least explored sources of the origins of Indian art: this early sculpture in an absolutely pure mode, springing directly from the earth it

stands upon, alone supplies the key to subsequent developments. Here, for example, lies the explanation of the almost complete submergence of Hellenistic formulae in the unified national schools of the Gupta age: we can follow from the seventh century B.C., to the sixth or seventh century A.D., and thence on, a continuous tradition; and we realize that this clear current flowed too powerfully and too immediately from native sources to have been seriously deflected by the foreign formulae which it adopted and moulded to its own ends.

The immediate evidence offered for the new interpretations of what were formerly regarded as works of Mauryan date is palaeographical, and still to some extent a matter of controversy, but the conclusions are amply supported by the internal aesthetic evidence, which clearly demands an earlier dating of the primitive sculptures. It would be, indeed, surprising if the most powerful and original elements of this art, destined to remain prepotent for a millennium and a half, had not already found expression in the age of the great spiritual crisis. No lesser material force than this, no less complete and pure acceptance of physical existence could have been a sure foundation for the Great Enlightenment—a term used here to designate, not merely the Maha Sambodhi of the Buddha, but awakening of the race from innocence to consciousness, implied in the passage from Vedic to Vedantic thought.

THE GREAT ENLIGHTENMENT

BY the eighth century B.C., philosophical speculation had advanced, the doctrines of karma and samsara had come to be generally accepted; and, by contrast with the merely temporary advantage of rebirth in a heaven, salvation (moksha, nirvana) from the conditions of mortality, was recognized as the highest good. This salvation or spiritual freedom could only be attained with the immediate experience of spiritual truth, not through the Vedic ritual, nor by works. The meaning of life was only to be found in the knowledge of the Self, in the identification of all that is known with the knowing subject. This was a revelation that determined the whole subsequent development of Indian civilization, alike in content and form. As such, it finds its first and purest expression in the Upanishads and, later, in Buddhism and Jainism and other individual systems. Historically, it is of Kshatriya rather than of Brahman origin. Its expression in the Upanishads, afterwards formulated as the Vedanta, however, was early accepted by the Brahmans as the consummation and goal of the Vedic tradition, and constitutes the spiritual background for the whole subsequent development of the monotheistic faiths and of the Hindu social order. Buddhism and Jainism, developing on parallel lines, although in formal opposition to Hindu systems, long survived as heterodox persuasions—the former in Southern India until the seventh century, and in Bengal until the end of the twelfth, the latter to the present day.

It will be convenient here to summarize the formulation of truth according to the leading systems of the Enlightenment :

Upanishads : Identity of the individual consciousness (not the empirical ego) with the unknowable Supreme Self or *Brahman* which is 'not so', the innermost principle of the Universe ;

unreality of the latter as extended in time and space, and consequently merely relative ; truth of doctrines of creation, transmigration, etc.

Buddhism : Association of existence with suffering ; impermanence and causal origination of all phenomena, non-existence of any ego.

Samkhya : Illusory association of plurality of knowing subjects (*Purusha*) with Nature, actual and potential (*Prakriti*) ; the three factors, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, of the objective world.

Jainism : Soul (*Jiva*) and non-soul (*ajiva*) linked by karma.

Sannyasa (asceticism), *Tapas* (penance) and *Yoga* (concentration of thought) are favoured by all these systems in so far as they accommodate themselves to the concept of causality, as practical 'means' tending to realization.

None of these systems, in their origin, implied a cult of personal divinities, still less did they require a use of images. Even the *Yoga* mentions the Lord (*Ishvara*) only as one among other suitable objects of meditation. For another reason it was impossible that immediate effects of the Enlightenment should have been recognized in art ; the mode of life at first associated with the conception of spiritual freedom is ascetic ; and the explicit and implicit tendency of all the philosophic systems at this time is to regard the arts (which had never yet been thought of as media for the expression of spiritual ideas) exclusively in their sensual aspect as means of enjoyment and as the *Markandeya Purana* later expresses it. " Nothing should be done by a Brahman for the sake of enjoyment." Chanakya classes musicians and actors with courtesans ; *Manu* forbids the householder to dance or sing, and reckons architects and actors amongst unworthy men who should not be invited to sacrifices. In early Buddhist literature the painter is compared to the purveyor of aphrodisiacs ; the Buddha even condemns the presentation of the Dhamma in an attractive literary form. And, in fact, the actual themes of artistic representation in this age cannot have been such as to invite the approval of those whose faces were turned away from the world. Only at a much later period was there a conscious expression of spiritual ideas through plastic art, and only later still a distinction drawn between the sympathetic value and the spiritual content even of literary works.

EARLY BUDDHIST ART—MAURYA, SUNGA
AND EARLY ANDHRA

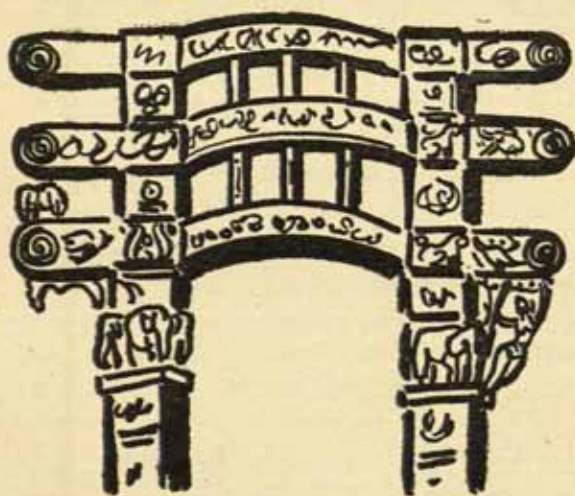


Fig. 10. Sanchi Gateway

ART of the Mauryan period may be said to exhibit three main phases, (1) the continuation of the pre-Mauryan tradition, now applied in some instances to the representation of Vedic deities. The most striking illustration of this development is afforded by the sculptured reliefs of Surya and Indra in the veranda of the ancient *vihara* at Bhaja, (2) the court art of Asoka typically seen in the monolithic columns (figure 11) on which are inscribed his famous Edicts, and in which foreign (Iranian) elements predominate, and (3) the beginnings of brick and stone architecture, as in the case of the original stupa at Sanchi, the small monolithic rail at Sanchi, and the Lomas Rishi 'cave,' in the Barabar hills near Bodh Gaya,

with its ornamented facade, reproducing the forms of wooden structure.

The beginnings of Buddhist art appear to be associated with the memorial monuments (*chaitya*), erected on the sites of the Four Great Events of the Buddha's life, and in other places. Funeral mounds (*stupas*) were, indeed, already erected over the divided remains immediately after the cremation of the Buddha's body; and he himself, before his death, is recorded to have spoken of "four places which an Aryan worshipper should visit with religious emotion". Each of the Great Events and sites was represented by a symbol; and these symbols, taken collectively, relate in a kind of pictorial shorthand, the whole story of the Buddha's life. Most of them occur abundantly on the punch-marked coins of the fourth and fifth centuries B. C., a few appear for the first time at Barhut and Sanchi, and the majority survive in Indian Buddhist art to the end side by side with the later developments. In the following table are given the sites, significant events, and symbols:

<i>Place</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Symbol</i>
Kapilavastu	Conception (Nativity, Going forth)	Elephant, Lotus, Bull Gate, Horse.
Bodh Gaya	Great Enlightenment	Bodhi tree with rail.
Sarnath	First Preaching	Wheel, often with deer.
Kusinagara	Final Nirvana (Death)	<i>Stupa.</i>

To the Sunga period (185-80 B.C.) must be assigned (approximately in chronological order), the sculptured railings and gateway at Barhut, the stone casing, ground balustrade and plain railing at Sanchi, the sculptured railings at Bodh Gaya, certain fragments at Mathura, the earliest sculptures at Amaravati, and also the chaitya-halls or churches

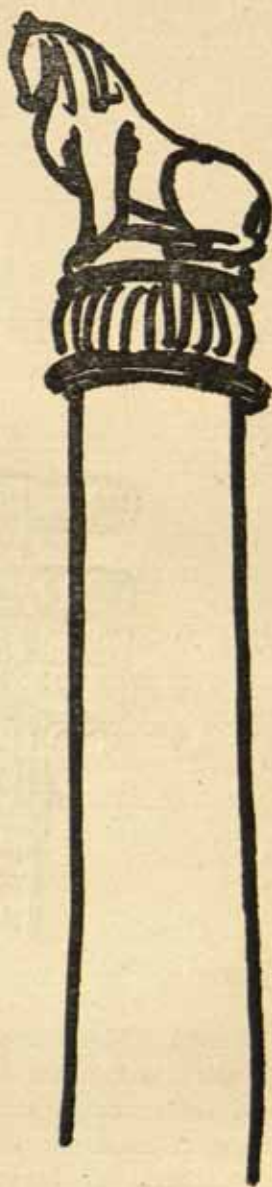
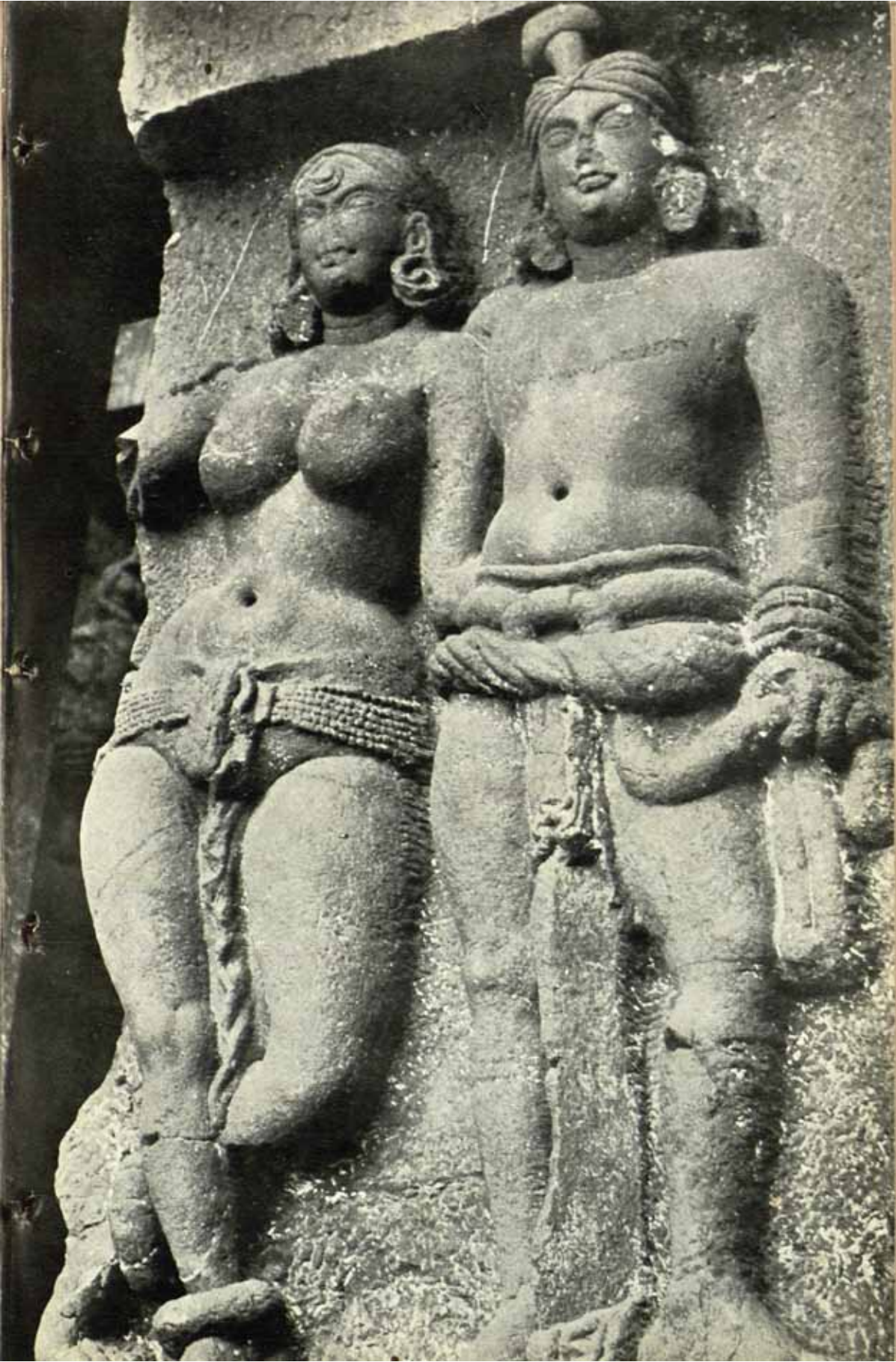


Fig. 11. Asoka Pillar



at Guntupalle, Bhaja, Kondane, Pitalkhora, Ajanta (Cave X), Bedsa, Ajanta (cave IX) and the early Jain caves at Udayagiri in Orissa. Taken collectively the total amount of relief sculpture at these sites is very considerable. Sculpture in the round is hardly represented.

Except at Barhut, however, the greater part of the sculpture seems to be secular or decorative, rather than definitely religious, particularly so in the case of the Jain caves in Orissa (where, however, there occur representations of Surya and of Maya Devi or Gaja Laksmi), but this may be due to our inability to recognize the subject matter. / At Barhut the most important Buddhist sculptures are the numerous medallions illustrating Jataka stories, each with an identifying inscription; reliefs illustrating historical episodes of the Buddha's life; and pillars bearing in relief the figures of guardian *yakshas* and *yakshis*, *naga* kings and *devatas*—the nature spirits of popular cults embraced by Buddhist mythology and regarded as defenders of the faith. The Jataka reliefs are excellent pieces of condensed story telling, the representation of trees and landscape full of interest and decorative beauty, the animals and human figures well understood and placed, whether singly or in groups. / The Sunga sculptures at Sanchi, on the other hand, are mainly decorative. That of the early caves, though always in relief, is exceedingly massive in character, and very clearly related to pre-Mauryan art.

It has been remarked of Mauryan and Sunga art by Sir John Marshall that the sculptor was still bound by the law of frontality (i.e. considering the composition from only one point of view), and that "the 'memory picture' had not yet given place to direct observation of nature". The first remark is obviously true as a fact of technical procedure; the second involves a certain misinterpretation of Indian aesthetic psychology, and deserves a longer discussion. The memory picture—or rather, a synthetic image based on past experience—is from first to last the essential foundation of Indian art; we cannot recognize here any such innate striving towards realism as that which becomes apparent soon after the primitive developments, in Greek and Christian art. / The Indian method is always one of visualization—unconscious in primitive, systematized in the mature art. Indian art is always a language employing symbols, valid only by tradition and convention. The symbol may be little more than a geometrical design, as in the case of the lotus rosettes denoting miraculous birth, or anthropomorphic as in the later Nativities, where Maya Devi is represented as a woman either with or without the infant Bodhisattva.

In both cases equally, there is definite and comprehensible statement, but the form of statement is always that of the art language of the day (we may illustrate this by pointing out that perspective representation is a part of the art language of our own times, while it does not by itself make modern art superior to ancient art), and this language is never one of 'direct observation of nature'. It is true that a tendency to realism is evident in the Gandhara sculptures, but there it is of Western origin, and it does not prevail in Indian or Chinese art which preserves the formulae alone, and not the intention of Graeco-Buddhist



Fig 13. Indra Bhaja

sculpture. On the other hand, we do recognize in Indian art of certain periods, and miss at other times, a certain virtuous and moving, indeed, an essential quality which is often spoken of as truth to Nature; the development of this truth we describe as progress, the loss of it as decadence, but it must not be confused with the assimilation of the symbol to natural appearance, which by itself is a technical and not an aesthetic progress. The point to be made is that this truth is not the result of observation (of models) but of feeling (empathy, *emfühling*, *sadharana* with reference to the artist in the first instance, rather than the critic). If we are impressed by the truth of a movement in sculpture or painting, this means not that the craftsman has *observed* the movement (however familiar he may be with it in daily life), but that at the time of the conception and execution of his work he has felt the corresponding tensions in his own flesh. 'Awkwardness,' then, of primitive art, is that of undeveloped consciousness (self-awareness), progress, the evidence of increasing consciousness, and decadence of apathy. It is in this way that a nation's art reveals the various stages of its spiritual history. Technical perfection, on the other hand, is a matter of knowledge and skill rather than of vitality: aesthetically neither good nor bad, it need not and often does not coincide with the perfection of art.

The splendid gateways of the Sanchi *stupa* were erected under the patronage of Andhra kings, probably between 70 and 50 B.C. Their surfaces are covered with reliefs illustrating historical scenes from the Buddha's life, a few Jataka stories, and with representations of guardian *yakshas* and *yakshis* (some in relief, some in the round), animals, Buddhist symbols, and decorative designs. An exquisite terracotta plaque from Bhita, probably from an ivory die, is identical in style with the reliefs of the Sanchi gateways. The Sanchi reliefs present a very detailed and animated picture of Indian life, invaluable to the student of culture, even apart from their value as art. The sculptors—technically carvers in wood and ivory, though working now in stone—are far more skilful and experienced than heretofore, that is to say, their knowledge and facility are greater, the cutting of the reliefs is deeper, the composition more sophisticated, the sense of perspective and depth much more convincing. But the spiritual quality of the art remains unchanged. Even when the theme is altogether Buddhist, the art remains innocent, untroubled, and even sensuous, and neither intellectual nor idealistic. Medieval Buddhist art is often the work of Buddhist monks; but early Buddhist art is the

art of the people, used for the glorification of religion, telling the story of Buddhism in the clearest and simplest possible way, and never attempting the embodiment of spiritual ideals in terms of form, when the theme is less precisely Buddhist—as in the representations of *yakshas* and *yakshis* at Barhut and Sanchi, and on the railing pillars of the Jain *stupa* at Mathura (also of the first century B.C.), the inherent sensuousness, and even sensuality of the art, becomes more obvious still, an interpretation of spiritual love as a manifestation or symbol, and of the whole physical world as a theophany, belongs to a much later phase of thought, and we cannot be surprised that Buddhist monks were warned to turn away their eyes from 'conversation' pictures, which must have been love scenes of the sort we find amongst the paintings of Ajanta and in later Hindu sculpture. Only in the devoted gesture of worshipping figures, kneeling before the *bodhi*-trees or empty thrones, is there any trace of spiritual passion.

No Buddha image appears in early Buddhist art; and even in the historical scenes the Buddha's presence is indicated not by a human representation, but by the formal symbols already mentioned, together with a few others, particularly the footprints (*paduka*) or umbrella (*chattra*). In the Barhut 'Descent from the Tusita heaven,' for example, we see only the threefold ladder, with one footprint at the top, another at the bottom. In the elaborate scene of the 'Going Forth' at Sanchi, Siddhartha's presence is indicated, at five successive stages of the outward journey, only by the honorific parasol borne beside the riderless horse; remaining in the forest, his presence is indicated by foot prints; attaining Enlightenment by the railed Tree of Wisdom. The Nativity is illustrated by the lotus, bull or elephant, and in another way (also at Barhut) by the seated figure of Maya Devi, with the two elephants pouring water from inverted jars—a picture of the bathing of the new born child, in which the child is not seen. On the other hand, in Jataka representations, the sculptors are perfectly well able, and do not hesitate, to represent the Bodhisattva in human shape where the story requires it. The explanation of the absence of the human Buddha figures from the historical scenes appears to lie, not in any inability to represent the Master in an appropriate manner, but in the existence of an already familiar method of indicating the Great Events of the Buddha's life by means of symbols. The sculptors of Barhut and Sanchi had large spaces to cover; they fill their story by the method of continuous narration (the representation of successive scenes in which the same actors appear again and again), with abundant

detail and perfect logic—but only, as it were, by filling in the spaces between the already well-known symbols. And as regards the separate image, it is evident that the apotheosis of the Buddha had not yet, at least in orthodox circles, proceeded so far as to necessitate the use of an icon.



Fig. 14. Makara

DEVELOPMENT OF DEVOTIONAL THEISM

THE development which we have so far followed in Buddhism and Buddhist art is a special phase of the contemporary evolution of Indian thought and religion as a whole. The apparent predominance of Buddhist art is mainly due to special circumstances of patronage and consequent abundant production in certain centres, and not to any real submergence of the Brahmanical tradition. To take a concrete case, which really covers the whole ground ('since what is not to be found in the *Mahabharata* is not to be found in India'), the development of the Epics must have been continuous from the days of their existence in ballad form (1000 to 500 B.C.) to that of their final recension about the fourth century A.D. The first expansion of the *Mahabharata*, for example, in which Siva and Vishnu, side by side with Brahma, are already regarded as the supreme gods, Hindu temples, as well as Buddhist stupas, are mentioned and the *Bhagavad-Gita* appears, belongs to the three centuries between the Mauryan and Kusan periods; the final stage, with its complete statement of Hindu *dharma* and social organization, belongs to the Kusan and early Gupta periods. In the same way, the law books, particularly Manu and the technical literature such as the *Bharatiya Natya Sastra*, imply development long preceding the final recensions. And in just the same way the appearance of Hindu sculpture and architecture in the Kusan and early Gupta period, even in the absence of all other evidence, would prove a lengthy previous development. The sum of Indian culture in the Gupta period, already essentially Hindu rather than Buddhist, is so rich, so fully organized, and so conscious, that we can hardly fail to regard the preceding half millennium as the period of highest creative activity in the whole development of Hindu civilization—an activity to be regarded as the formal and material embodiment of the Great Enlightenment.

We observe, meanwhile, the gradual emergence of Siva and Vishnu as the supreme powers, followed by the recognition of aboriginal and local deities, including the goddesses, as aspects of one Overlord (*Isvara*), the ultimate object of all devotion. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* we find, in the words of Krishna: 'Abandoning all duties, come unto Me,' and of devotees who worship other gods, says Krishna, 'they also worship Me'. The fundamental characteristic of the embodiment, determination or interpretation of the spiritual impulse, is, in fact, to be recognized in the rise of the theistic cults, with their doctrine and practice of devotion (*bhakti*), and here lay the immediate necessity, determining the development of a religious art.

This is not the place in which to trace in any detail the beginning of the theistic cults. It needs only be remarked that in the time of the Buddha the most honoured name is that of Brahma, and in Buddhist literature the Brahmanical pantheon is represented almost exclusively by Brahma and Indra, while the latter appears no less frequently in Jaina literature and art. Brahma and Indra are the only deities represented in the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhara, and the forms of certain of the Bodhisattvas appear to be derived from these Indian prototypes. Neither of these gods is the object of any widespread cult in later times: there we find only the great gods Siva and Vishnu, and the goddess Devi, in their innumerable forms and manifestations. Surya is the only one of the old Vedic deities who remains an exalted power, with an extended cult and iconography.

The germs of almost all later forms of Hindu thought are to be traced in the Upanishads, which have been interpreted by each school in its own way; and, just as the process of formulation and definition of Hindu systems was going on, side by side with the doctrinal development and sectarian subdivision of Buddhism, so is it clear that Hindu art was developing under similar conditions. Monuments were erected in honour of particular deities; an example of this is afforded by the inscribed pillar at Besnagar erected by Heliodora in the second century B.C., where Vasudeva is described as the God of Gods. It is evident that the religion of the Bhagavatas was by this time fully established, but that just as in Buddhism the deities were first represented by symbols (here the Garudadhvaja) rather than by images. We gather, however, from Patanjali, commentator on Panini in second century B.C., that images of Siva, Skanda and Visakha were already exhibited and sold. We have already spoken of the early Vedic reference to linga worshippers; and we may well suppose that

phallic symbols, particularly the erect pillar, were made use of as cult objects at an early date. The lingam was now adopted into orthodox faith and has remained to this day the general *avyakta* symbol of Siva. The stone lingam discovered by the late T. A. Gopinatha Rao at Gudimallam, a five foot monolith consisting of the lingam proper and an anthropomorphic image, is not only the earliest known (first or second century B.C.) image of a Hindu deity and thus of the highest historical interest, but a sculpture of amazing force and extraordinary technical accomplishment (Fig. 15). The figure of the deity stands upright in high relief against the under side of the erect phallus, his feet supported by a crouching *yaksha* or *rakshasa*; he wears a thin muslin dhoti clearly revealing the form beneath, and heavy jewels including earrings, necklace, bracelets, and anklets. There is no sacred thread. The hair is interbraided with strands of flowers, and wound about the head like a turban. The eyes slant rather upwards, and the cheek bones are high—a Dravidian rather than an Aryan type. The material is a reddish igneous rock, the surface highly polished. The deity is twoarmed, holding in one hand a ram, in the other a water-pot and an axe (*parasu*) whence the lingam is known as the Parasuramesvara lingam. It will be seen at once that this is a work in the immediate tradition of older Indian art, pre-Mauryan and Barhut; the drapery recalls that of the figure of Kunika Ajatasatru (Fig. 8), the *yaksha vahamam* is almost identical with the *yaksha* of the Barhut Kuvera pediment. The head dress and jewellery too are reminiscent of Barhut. But this is a more fully developed art; there is greater muscular tension and consequently a more evident activity, while the facial expression latent in early sculpture is now intentional.



Fig. 15. Sivalingam :
Gudimallam

An early *mukhalingam* from Bhitia, now in the Lucknow Museum, bears an inscription in characters assignable to the first century B.C. The top of the pillar is shaped as the head and shoulders of a male, holding a vase in his left hand, while the right is raised in *abhaya hasta*. Below this bust are represented on the shaft of the lingam four heads in low relief.

The sense of devotion to a personal god is a general tendency, by no means exclusively Hindu, but affecting equally the forms of Buddhist belief, and to a less extent the Jain. A veritable transformation of Buddhism had been taking place in the Mauryan, Sunga and early Andhra periods. Whereas in primitive Buddhism the Buddha was a man who had attained enlightenment and who after death was no longer subject to the conditions of existence, he came to be regarded in the Mahayana as the embodiment or incarnation of a principle. He comes, in fact, to be regarded as a god, and with what passionate devotion he is adored may be judged from the worshipping figures of the Amaravati reliefs. Not only is the Buddha thus deified, but a pantheon of Buddhist deities arises, over and above the already well-known Buddhist forms of the Hindu Brahma and Indra, and the Yakshas and Nagas who are admitted to the cult of Buddhism at an early period as protectors and assistants. These new Buddhist gods include the previous human Buddhas, the Dhyani Buddhas of the Four Quarters, (later so prominent in Chinese Buddhism), their spiritual sons, the Bodhisattvas (of whom Maitreya alone was known to the Hinayana), and, ultimately, the feminine divinities (Taras) associated with the latter and as saviouresses ranking with them. Additional to these are the many deified spells and mantrams; and the deities already mentioned are multiplied indefinitely by the recognition of an infinite variety of forms, peaceful and militant.

Thus we are prepared for the development of the succeeding centuries, when Indian genius, impelled by the necessity of service of the devotional cults, created an iconography adequate to the portrayal of all those spiritual and physical powers and forces which are deified in the Hindu and Buddhist pantheons.

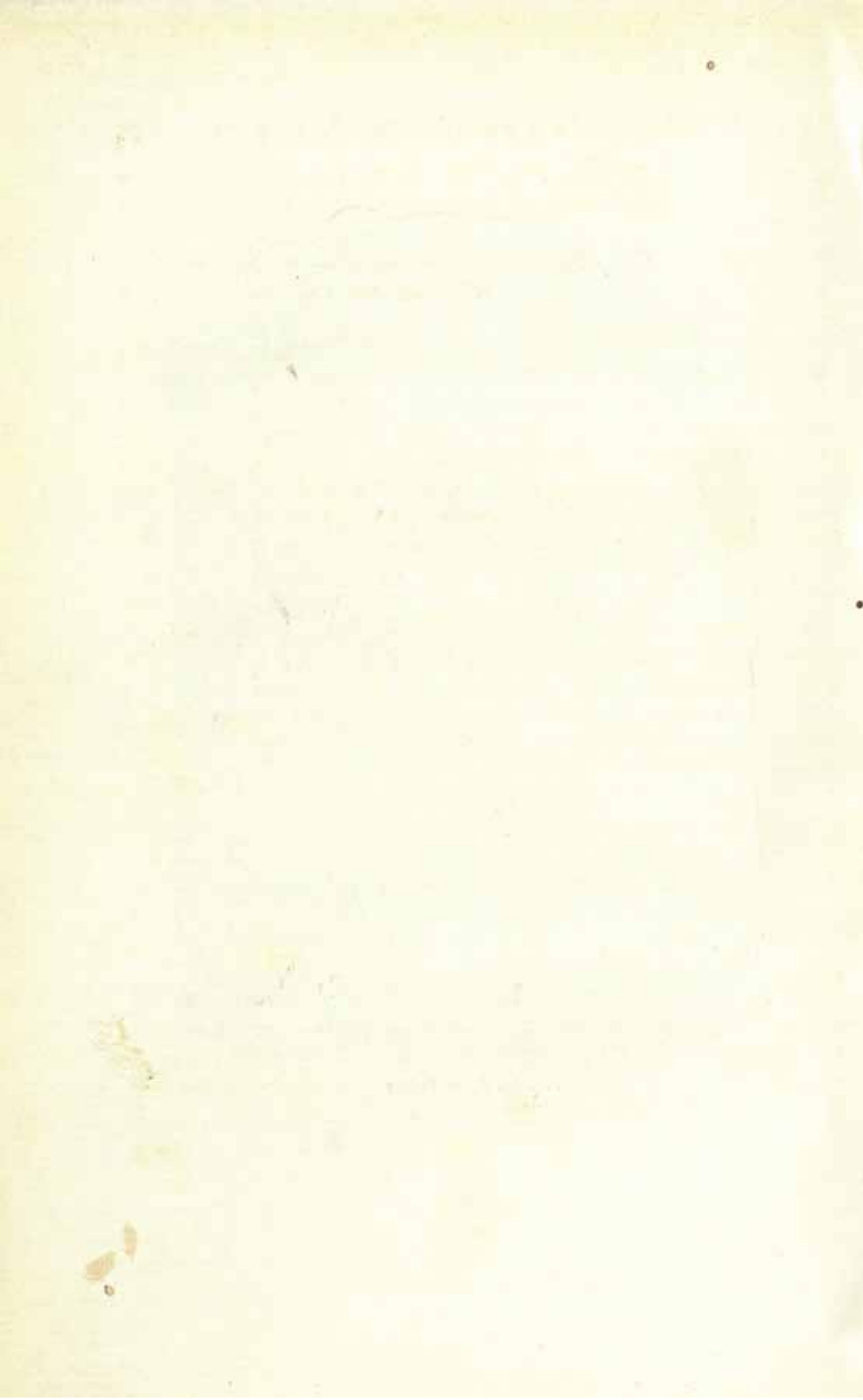
KUSAN AND LATER ANDHRA PERIOD

BEFORE describing the actual art of the Kusan and later Andhra periods in India proper, we must consider the great production of Buddhist sculpture associated with the monument and monasteries of Taxila, and of the Gandhara provinces of the North West Frontier. These sculptures date for the most part between A.D. 50 and 300; in even the earliest the type is already fixed. The themes without exception are Indian Buddhist. The Buddha figure occurs abundantly both as the central figure of historical compositions and in separate seated and standing images: the ancient symbolic formulae are very rarely seen. Forms and composition of Western (provincial Hellenistic) origin are everywhere conspicuous in Gandhara art, side by side with other elements of Indian origin. The quality of the art is effeminate and sensual, its intension realistic. It appears to be the work of craftsmen of foreign origin or descent, familiar with late Greek models, adapting their stock motifs to the requirements of Buddhist patrons, the Indo-Scythian and Kusan kings of the North West: there is nothing to suggest that Indian artists from the plains had any part in it. On the contrary, Gandhara art exerted a considerable influence on the contemporary school at Mathura, and to a less degree elsewhere in India proper, even extending to the South. But we must not misunderstand the nature of this influence. The genius of Hellenistic art is foreign to Indian psychology. Western art at all times tends to representation, Indian to symbolism; the influence of Gandhara, hardly recognizable after A.D. 300, constitutes an episode and not a stage in a continuous development.

We must pause, however, to consider at greater length the origin of the Buddha image. It has been argued from the Gandhara Buddhas of the Apollo type that the Buddha image is of Greek origin and first came into being at Gandhara. There do not exist either in



FIG. 16. *Katra Buddha*



Gandhara or in India proper, Buddha images known to be earlier than the first century A.D. In both areas they appear simultaneously, in Hellenistic types at Gandhara, and in the tradition of ancient Indian art at Mathura. It is agreed that the earliest Gandhara figures are 'already stereotyped' and that Buddha figures must have been made as early as the first century B.C. Were then these prototypes of Hellenistic or of Indian origin? We shall tabulate the arguments for either view and leave the question undecided.

For the Greek origin:

- (1) It is admitted that Buddhist figures in Gandhara are adaptation of Western types. A certain amount of originality, or rather novelty, is proved by the occurrence of such types as those of the realistic emaciated Buddhas, which have no part even in later Indian Buddhist art. Early Indian religious art, on the other hand, makes use of primal symbols without anthropomorphic icons.
- (2) The admitted fact that formulae of Hellenistic art are adapted to a greater or less extent in India proper, and can be recognized in Indian art for several centuries. Moreover, such phenomena are not altogether new: Western (Iranian rather than Greek) motifs are already to be recognized in Early Buddhist art, and are conspicuous in the court art of Asoka, and in decorative motifs.
- (3) As no Indian Buddha figure older than the Gandhara sculptures is certainly known, it is at least possible that the first Buddha images were made in Gandhara and formed the models of later Indian Buddhist art. (The apocryphal legends in Buddhist literature cannot be accepted as evidence that images of the Buddha were made already in the fifth century B.C.)

For the Indian origin:

- (1) The purely Indian attitudes of the Gandhara figures, the use of the lotus seat, often awkwardly represented, the characteristically realistic transformation of the *usnisa* (which appears already in Indian art at Bodh Gaya) would seem to imply the existence of purely Indian prototypes.
- (2) Bodhisattva and Buddha figures of the first century A.D. do actually occur at Mathura, in a style quite distinct from that of Gandhara, and plainly developed from earlier Indian art, also, a little later, at Nurpur Khas in Sind.

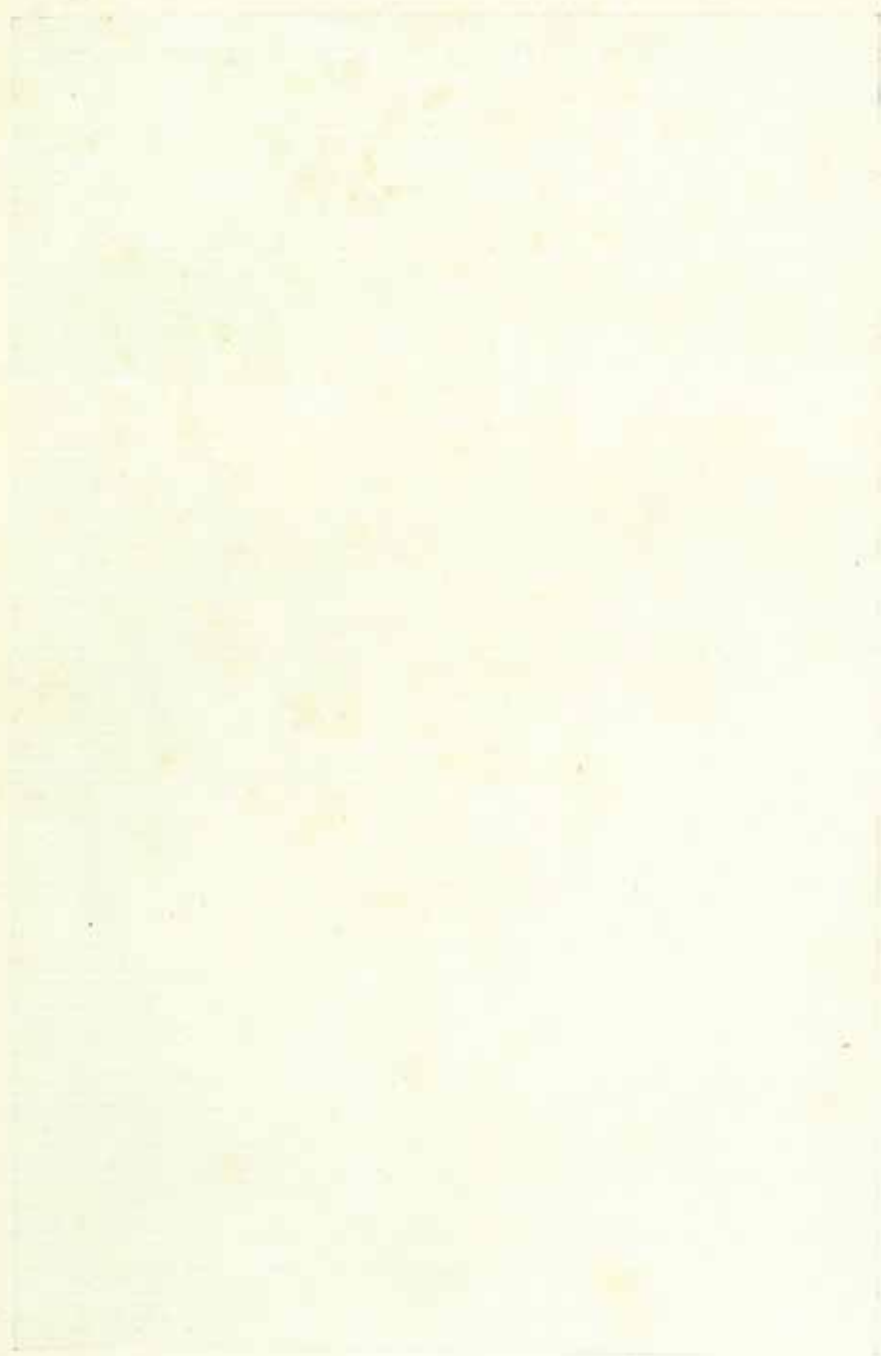
- (3) Negative evidence holds good as much in one sense as the other, particularly in a period of still uncertain chronology.
- (4) The *yogi* seated beneath a tree, in *padmasana* gazing upon the end of his nose', in profound meditation was then, as now, a familiar spectacle. Once the need of an image had been felt (and we have recognized the sources of such a need in the general development of Indian religious experience), the choice of the meditating or teaching *yogi* figure must have been inevitable. What other form could have been appropriately set beneath the *bodhi* tree, which had hitherto stood alone as the sign of the Great Enlightenment? It is certain that no Western prototype of a seated figure with crossed legs and hands in *dhyana* or *bhumi-sparsa mudra* can be cited or imagined.
- (5) Regarded simply as works of art, there is no suggestion of primitive inspiration in Gandhara sculpture. In other cycles of art, creative energy finds immediate expression in powerful and simple forms. Are we to consider Gandhara, a case unique in the history of art?

It will be seen from these considerations that it may be regarded both as *a priori* likely and as historically possible, that the Buddha image, wherever found, is based on Indian prototypes; just as the images of Bodhisattvas and those of Hindu deities are derived in direct descent from Indian sources.

The most important remains of Buddhist sculpture of the Kusan period are those of Mathura, Amaravati and Ceylon. The former, now for the most part of the Mathura Museum, include the oldest Buddha figure so designated in an inscription. As this seated Buddha, from Anyor, is headless, we have reproduced (Fig. 16) the inscribed Kutra Bodhisattva, the pose and general appearance of which are identical with those of the Anyor Buddha. It will be observed that the right hand is raised in *abhaya mudra*, the left hand rests on the thigh, the elbow being raised: this position of the left arm scarcely recurs in Indian art, but survives or reappears in a characteristic seated pose of Javanese actors. Another Buddha, of the same school and period, the robe in this case covering both shoulders, is in Ma hura Museum. It will be remarked that these images are far more energetic



FIG. 17. *Kanishka: Mathura*



than those of the Gandhara school, and belong to the old tradition of Barhut and pre-Mauryan sculpture.

Very remarkable are the Bacchanalian groups of Mathura, perhaps representing Kuvera, and in any case connected with Yaksha cults absorbed into popular Buddhism. Figures of *Yaksas* and *Nagas*, both in the round and as reliefs on railing pillars are commonly found. The Naga cult seems to have flourished at Mathura, and it is noteworthy that the later images of Balarama are identical with, and no doubt derived from these Naga types.

Mathura has also yielded a number of inscribed funerary statues of Kusan Kings (Kaniska Fig. 17); these show no signs of Hellenistic influences, though the costume, like that of the Kusan Kings on the coins, a coat with long skirts and high boots, is rather central Asian (Yueh Chi) than Indian.



Fig. 18. Kuvera : Mathura

Buddhist sculptures of the Mathura school have been found at Sarnath and Saheth Meheth (Sravasti), the latter a part of a

Bodhisattva figure, with an inscription, probably older than the Anyor Buddha, and before Kaniska. The standing Bodisattva in the Calcutta



Fig. 19. Mother and Child: Mathura

Museum is a massive and realistic figure of the old Indian type. The Buddhist sculpture of Peshawar and Taxila in the time of Kaniska, in the inscribed 'Kaniska casket' with seated Buddha figures, is altogether in the Graeco-Buddhist or Indo-Hellenistic style of the North West. We have not described these works in detail, as they fall without the central tradition and direct evolution of Indian art.

A Jain stupa has been excavated at Mathura, and has yielded many railing pillars decorated with nude Yaksis associated with trees, the woman and tree motif which recur so constantly in Indian art from the Barhut period onwards. A 'tablet of homage' with a relief of a Jain stupa shows that the Jain monuments were identical in form with the Buddhist.

Coins of the period are interesting, both for their improved technique and for the variety of subjects represented. Two-armed figures of Siva have already appeared on the coins of the Parthian Gondophares and the Great Yueh Chi, those of Kaniska show the deity sometimes with two, sometimes with four arms. The Kaniska coins bear representations of a varied assemblage of Zoroastrian, Greek, Mithraic and Indian deities: Buddha is represented standing in a costume of Greek aspect, and seated in Indian fashion. Remains of Hindu sculptures of the Mathura school will no doubt be recognized when the sculptures are studied in greater detail from this point of view. A three-headed Kusan sculpture, for example, in the Mathura Museum still awaits identification. The oldest known Brahmanical temple, of the first century B.C. or A.D. and adorned with Saiva reliefs, exists at Ramnagar in the Bareilly district. The oldest Sanskrit inscription occurs on the sacrificial posts of Isapur.

Contemporary with the Kusan sculpture of Northern India is the Buddhist art of the later Andhra dynasty of the Deccan, best known by the remains of the magnificent stupa of Amaravati. The original *caitya* dates from about 200 B.C. and some reliefs are of the first or second century B.C., the casing slabs and the great railing and also the few Buddha figures date from the latter part of the second century A.D., or at any rate not later than A.D. 250. The railing is the most elaborate known of its kind, about six hundred feet in circumference, it stood some thirteen or fourteen feet, above the pavement level. As usual, it consisted of pillars connected by crossbars, standing on a plinth. Each upright was decorated with full and half lotus rosettes, infinitely varied in treatment, and with reliefs in the intervening spaces. Each crossbar bore another full lotus rosette on each side.



Fig. 20. Yakshi : Mathura

The coping and plinth were elaborately ornamented, the former with a long undulating garland carried by men, the latter with boys and animals. The casing slabs for the most part represent scenes from the life of Buddha treated in accordance with the old tradition in which the Buddha figure is omitted. It is estimated that a total surface of nearly seventeen thousand square feet was covered with sculptured reliefs: it is very possible that these were originally covered with a thin coat of fine plaster, and painted.

The sculpture is very vigorous and full of movement, sometimes passionately devotional, sometimes humorous, always voluptuous and decorative. The whole is a masterpiece of pure design, charming in every detail.

On the other hand, the Buddha figure is still intensely ascetic and severe, representing pure thought rather than design; sculpture in the round is not yet perfectly absorbed by, or attuned to, the rhythm of the social order but has a slower tempo and more restricted scope. The Amaravati and Sinhalese Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the second and third century A.D. are unsurpassed as pure sculpture; but it is only in the Gupta period that sculpture in the round, the cult figure, is perfectly assimilated to the ensemble of the

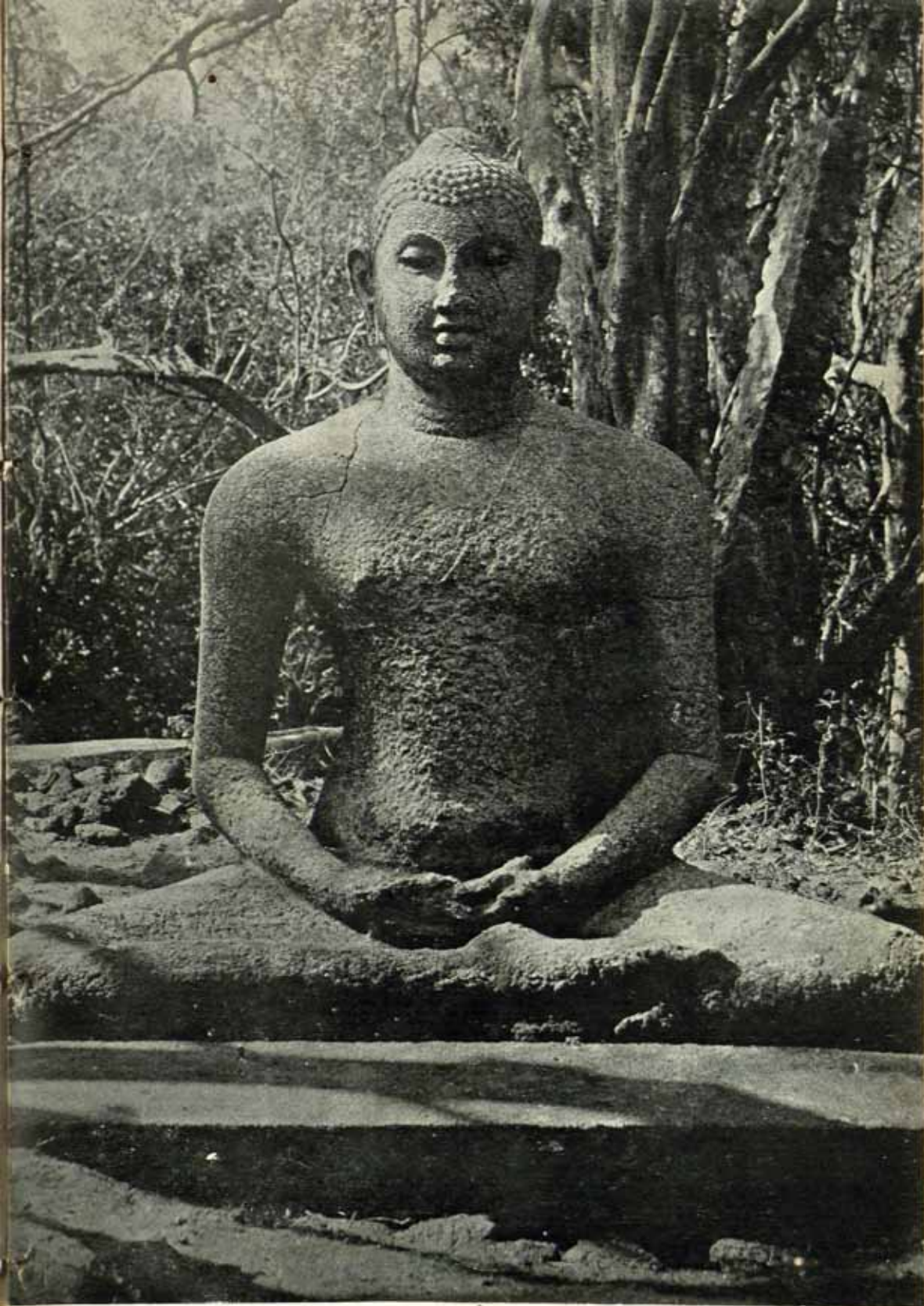
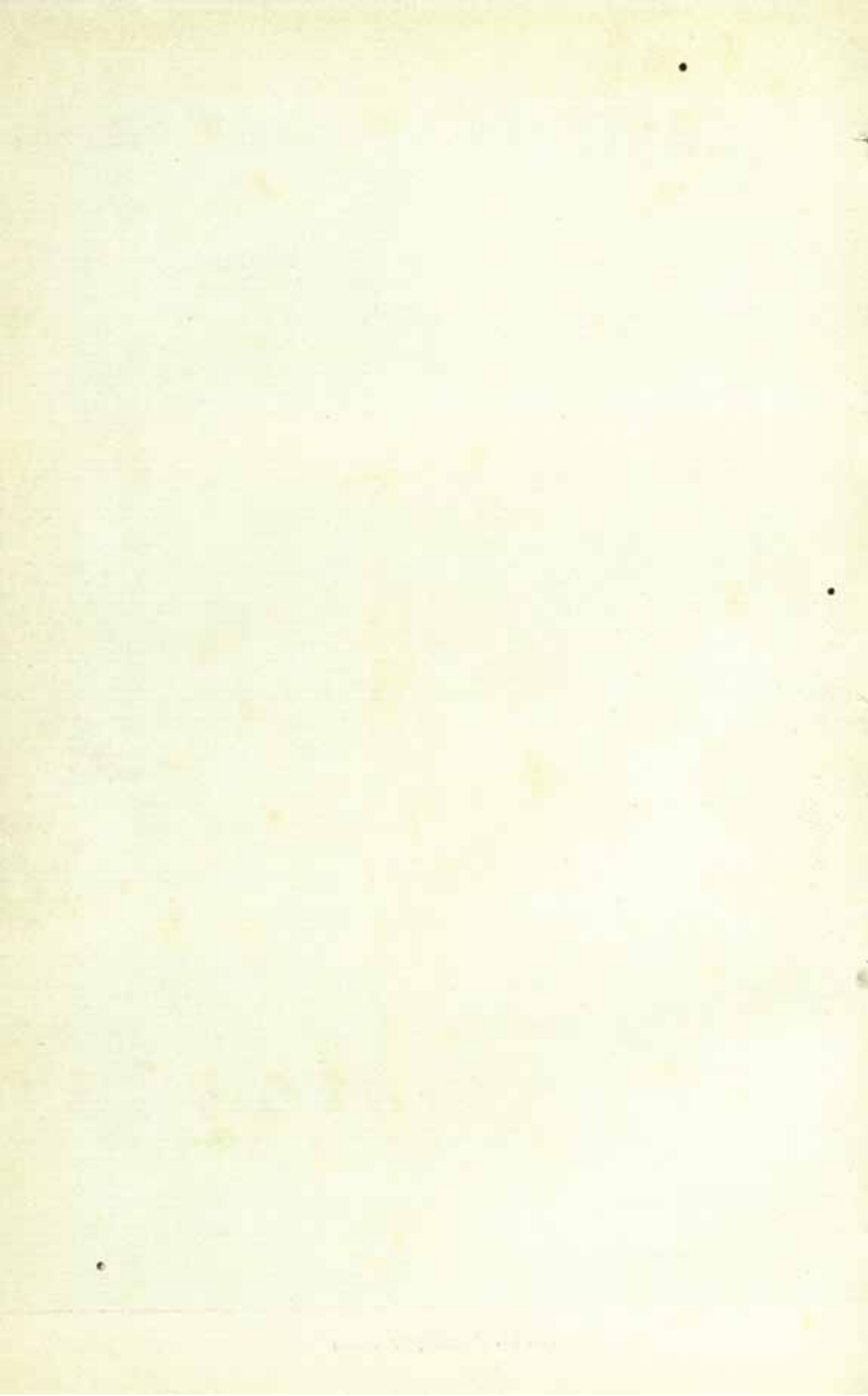


FIG. 21. *Anuradhapura Buddha*



architecture and reliefs, and shares their decorative qualities. We may put it that before the third century each image is an individual achievement, and iconography is not yet rigidly defined. It is only in the first century A.D. that deities are represented with four arms, and many-headed and many-armed forms are still later: about the second or third century the old Buddhist representation of Nativity (Maya Devi with the elephants) is being taken over into Hindu (Pauranic) iconography as Gaja Laksmi, while the development of Ganesa from Jambala (the mongoose of the latter becoming the rat of former) may be still later. The compilation of the earlier *Silpa Sastras* may be dated in a general way as late Kusan or early Gupta, the *dhyana mantrams* of personal worship becoming the *sadhanas* of the imager's handbooks thereafter, image making becomes a craft inseparable from architecture and all other crafts.

The earliest of the innumerable references to painting in Indian literature, occurring in the Epics and early Buddhist texts, bespeak a highly developed art: paintings on cloth, on wooden panels, and on walls, and the painted halls of royal palaces are mentioned. To Buddhist monks the representation of the human figure was forbidden, and only that of wreaths and creepers permitted. How soon this rule was neglected may be seen not only from the literature, but also in the paintings of cave temples, Nos. IX and X at Ajanta, ranging from 100 B.C. to 200 A.D. Here and there are representations of Jataka scenes, and of seated and standing Buddhas. The fine example of a standing King or Yaksa reproduced by Professor S. Taki in the 'Kokka' No. 355, closely parallels the sculptures of Barhut and Sanci, and the early work of the Mathura school. Like the sculpture, the painting is static and enormously dignified rather than elegant or facile. Technically it is far advanced, the face and figure being shown in three quarter profile with thorough understanding of the problems involved, the draughtsmanship is able and unhesitating but quite without the bravura and the



Fig. 22. A Prince: Mathura

sweetness of Ajanta painting of the Gupta period. The Buddha figures in the same caves are not likely to be earlier than the second century A.D. The poorly preserved and much restored frescoes of the Jogimara cave in the Ramgarh hill (Orissa) are probably of the first century B.C. possibly somewhat earlier: seated and standing figures and caitya halls and decorative work with makaras and other marine monsters are represented, but the whole is too badly effaced to admit exact identification.



THE GUPTA PERIOD

THE Gupta period is the golden age of India, the age of maturity when Bharatavarsha attained the fruit of her birth. Political power and abundant wealth inevitably provided the physical medium for that unique mastery of life which marks the culmination of Indian civilization. The combination of brilliant intellectual and spiritual development with the utmost sensuousness of experience and expression more than justify the Indian tradition of the court of Vikramaditya. Close relations with the West by way of Bactria in the North and the Roman trade in the South have now been broken. India's foreign relations are now, and for a thousand years to follow, with the Far East by way of Central Asia, and with further India and Indonesia by sea. It is under Indian influence that the Unity of Asia came into being.



Fig. 23. Bodhisattava : Ajanta

India herself is now for the first time spiritually and intellectually one, the normal rhythm of life is established in and by the Epics, and a fundamental unity of experience and character transcends all political, racial, linguistic and sectarian distinctions. Vedic ritualism, a survival from a remote past, and primitive Buddhism, correctly interpreted by medieval Hindu thought as a kind of heresy or treason against the social order, are no longer state religions. Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism and Mahayana Buddhism, the religions of devotion to Vishnu, Shiva, Devi, Buddha or Bodhisattva, are patronized impartially. Images and temples appropriate to each of these persuasions of

Hinduism appear in profusion, and determine the leading forms of all later imagery and architecture. Iconography and the theory of music and dancing are classified. In the art of the Gupta period all earlier tendencies converge: an identical quality appears not only in art of diverse sectarian application, but in the art of every province, from the Himalayas to Ceylon. We no longer meet with primitive qualities or *naivete* in Indian art—its character is self-possessed, urban, at once exuberant and formal. All foreign influences have been absorbed and Indianized. There is no divergence of feeling between doctrine and expression—it has come to be understood that the forms and experiences of finite life are revelations of the infinite; in this age, we can truly say that the five senses are the chief inlets of the soul. Philosophy and faith possess a common language in this art that is at once abstract and sensuous, reserved and passionate.

Buddhism is now completely fused with the national life; the Buddha figure, still extraneous at Amaravati, has become an integral part of architecture. The paintings of Ajanta reflect the same abundant, exquisite, sophisticated and brilliant life that forms the theme of Bana's *Kadambari*. This was an age which could afford to permit to itself the fullest possible enjoyment of life, by right of innate virtue. In this connection it is worthwhile to remark that now for the first and only time in Indian history, we meet with a practice of the arts as a personal achievement, side by side with the vocational and hieratic production. Individual men of letters the 'nine gems of Vikramaditya's court,' who are not by immediate profession religious teachers attain to fame; painting is an accomplishment of kings and queens (potrait painting is a common device of the classical drama); and there are indications here, and in the erotic literature, that secular painting was regarded, like music and poetry, as a source of the experience of *rasa*.¹ Samudragupta's musical skill is commemorated in

¹ The *Uttara Rama Charita* of Bhavabhuti, l. 39, speaks of the queen receiving a latent impression (*bhavana*) by looking at the pictures. Vatsyayana's *Kama Sutra*, a compilation of older material, perhaps made in the early Gupta period, mentions painting as one of the sixty-four arts belonging to an elegant education. Yasodhara's later commentary enumerates the Six limbs (*Shad-anga*) of painting as follows:

Rupa-bheda, distinction of forms (i.e., knowledge of the *lakshanas* of persons to be represented).

Pramanam, proportion (i.e., knowledge of the canons of proportion, *talamana*).

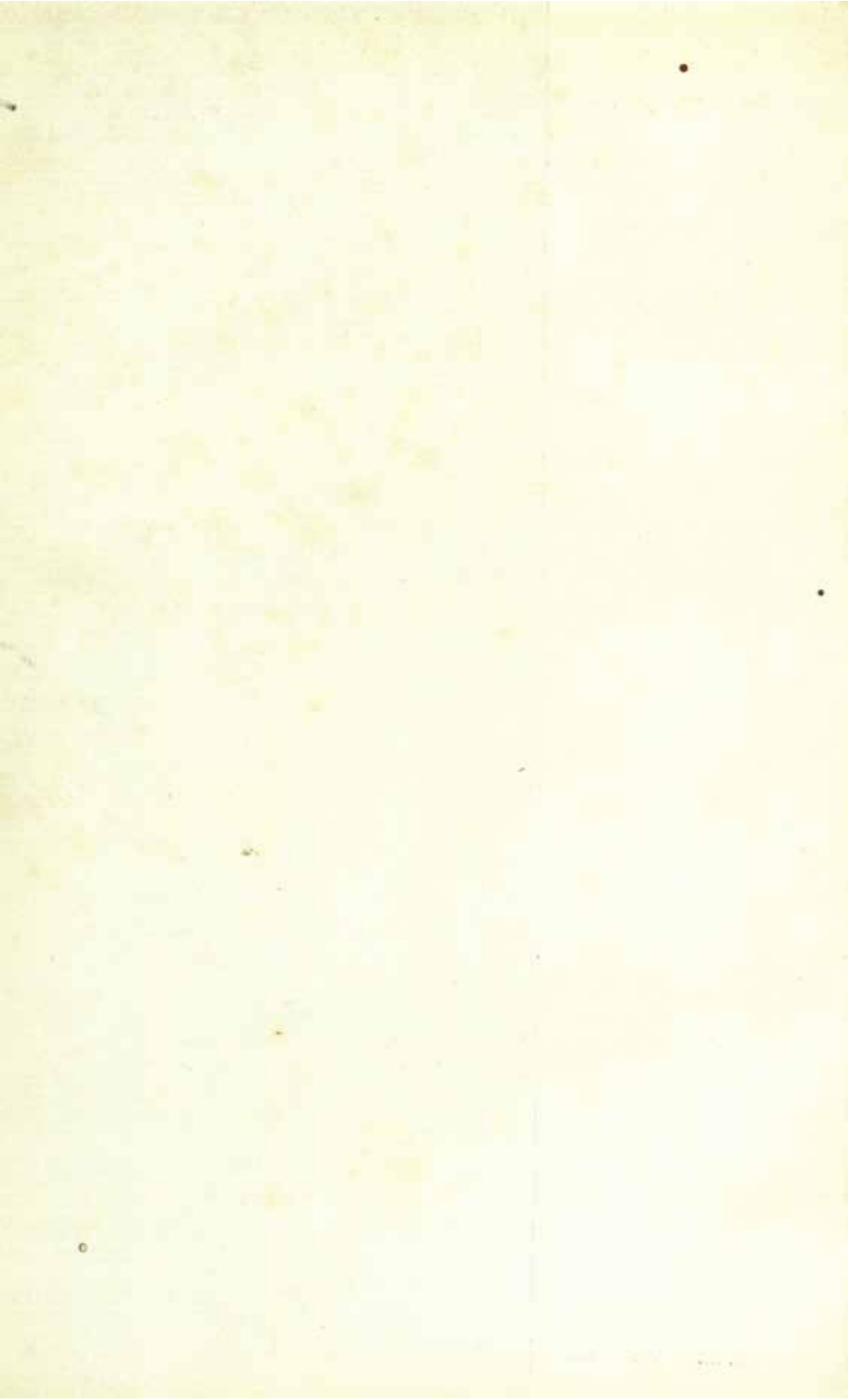
Bhava, mood, technically the rise of emotion in a mind previously at rest, here the corresponding quality in a work of art.

Lavanya-yojanam, infusion of saltiness (*lavanya*, in a human being means beauty, charm, grace, allure, here the like quality in painting).

Sadrisya, likeness (perhaps with reference to portraiture).



FIG. 24. *Buddha: Mathura*



gold coins where he is represented as playing the vina. The great excellence of the Gupta coinage must be attributed to the cultivated taste of the kings. But these personal achievements should scarcely be regarded, like those of a modern genius, as aberrations from life or the exploitation of a personality; they are the ornaments and pinnacles of the structure of the race, perfectly in harmony with all its architecture.

Earlier Indian art is, so to speak, a product of Nature, rather than of artifice, and characterized by naturalism and simplicity. Gupta art is the flower of an established tradition, a polished and perfected medium like the Sanskrit language, for the statement of thought and feeling; and having thus become an ordered language with a grammar and vocabulary of its own, its forms are by hypothesis conventioned ('agreed upon') and ideal—its truth of utterance does not depend upon, though it may include, a visual resemblance to natural forms.

We shall now refer to the most important surviving monuments of the period. At Bhitargaon there exists an ancient brick temple, square in plan with a high tower, probably of the sixth century; it is decorated with carved brickwork and brilliant terracotta panels of Shaiva themes. There are cave temples at Udayagiri near Besnagar in Bhopal, one of which bears an inscription, dated equivalent to A.D. 401. Here the principal sculptures are the great relief facades representing the raising of Earth from the waters by Vishnu as Varaha, a Pauranic subject, and the representation of river goddesses, common in Gupta art, in the Chandragupta cave. A large relief at Pathari, also in Bhopal, represents the nativity of Krishna. The temple of Deograh, Jhansi District, (sixth century) has relief panels of Vaishnava subjects, including the Birth of Brahma, and the salvation of the Kings of Elephants, a theme that recur much later in Rajput painting. Fragmentary sculptures of the fourth century at Mandor near Jodhpur show scenes from the Krishna *enfances*, including the raising of Mt. Govardhana. The Calcutta Museum has a fine Shiva and Parvati group from Kosam near Allahabad, dated equivalent to A.D. 458-9. There is a three-headed Vishnu of the fifth or sixth century in the Boston Museum, and a four-headed copper or

Varnika-bhanga, distribution of pigments (*i.e.*, knowledge of the colours proper to each subject).

Yasodhara adds, "These arts avail to awaken passion in others and for pastime."

bronze image of Brahma, of early Gupta date, from Mirpur Khas, in the Museum at Karachi.

The dancing Shiva type appears in the decoration of the Durga temple at Aihole. This temple, of fifth century date, is remarkable for its apsidal plan; it is like a structural Buddhist church, with a Hindu shrine in place of the stupa. Two old Buddhist churches, with apsidal plan and barrel roof respectively at Ter (the ancient Tagara, in Hyderabad) and Chezarla (Krishna district) have been converted to Vaishnava and Shaiva uses and so preserved. A series of ancient temples at Aihole, Lad Khan and Durga temples, fifth century, Meguit and Huccimalli Gudi temples, sixth century, and others of the same period with fine Vaishnava reliefs as ceiling panels are closely related to the excavated architectural forms of the neighbouring Badami caves. The latter include Cave 1, a Shaiva temple with a Tandava sculptured relief, Caves II and III which are Vaishnava temples, and a Jaina cave, No. IV, with relief sculptures of the Jinas; the first three of the sixth century, the latter of the seventh. Caves XVI, XVII and XIX at Ajanta date from the close of the fifth century, cave XXVI from about A.D. 600. Cave XIX has a very



Fig. 25. Standing Girl Ajanta

richly sculptured facade, with many Buddha figures. Related to this is the Visvakarma Buddhist cave at Ellora, of the sixth or early seventh century, where, as at Ajanta, the front of the stupa is occupied by an immense Buddha, in this case seated, with two attendants. At Sarnath, the Dhamekh stupa and a richly carved lintel with Jataka subjects illustrate the wealth of architectural remains, while the site has also yielded many well-preserved Buddha figures. The Buddhist temple at Buddha Gaya, founded by Asoka, dates in the main from the sixth century, with restorations up to the twelfth, and modern restorations. A Bodhisattva torso from Sanchi in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, is amongst the finest surviving examples of the late Kusan or early Gupta art. The great standing Buddha (fig. 24) at Mathura (fifth century) is even more impressive; the beautifully decorated *siraschakra* is typical of the Gupta style, and contrasts with the plainer types of the Kusan period. Many fine Buddhist bronzes have been founded at Buddhapad in the Bezwada district; a seated Buddha of similar character from Badulla is now in the Colombo Museum and a standing image said to have been found in Burma is now in the Boston Museum. The finest of the stone sculpture of Anuradhapura already referred to (fig. 21) are probably of late Kusan and many others are of early Gupta age. Of other Buddhist sculptures the most important are the Buddha and Bodhisattva figures from Mathura (standing Buddha fig. 24) Sanchi, and Sarnath (amongst others the well-known torso in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London), the colossal copper statue of Buddha from Sultanganj, now in the Birmingham Museum, dating about A.D. 460 and weighing over a ton, the seated Buddha of Mankuwar, dated equivalent to A.D. 446-8, with webbed hands, and the Kangra brass Buddha of the sixth century inlaid with silver and copper, now in the Lahore Museum. Remains of the Gupta period will no doubt be found at Nalanda as the excavation proceeds. The seals and gold coins of the Guptas are masterpieces of design, the coins superior to those of any other phase of Indian art. There is a small gold standing image of Buddha, of the Gupta age, in the British Museum. We must not omit a reference to the well-known Iron Pillar of Delhi, erected about A.D. 415 by Kumara Gupta I.

The frescoes of Ajanta preserve an infinitely precious record of the golden age of Indian painting. The greater part, excepting those in Caves IX and X, already referred to, are to be dated between A.D. 550 and 642, those in Cave I being latest, and contemporaneous

with the related paintings at Bagh in Malwa. This is the picture of a halcyon age, where renunciation and enjoyment are perfectly attuned, in an art at once of utmost intimacy and reserve. Every gesture springs in godlike fashion directly from the natural disposition of the mind; this is not the self-betrayal of innocence, but utterance in



Fig. 26. Girl on Swing Ajanta

terms of a supreme courtesy, the language of gesture had already its lexicons, the analysis of feeling had been made in learned treatises. All this is comparable only with the virtue still to be recognized in Indian and Indonesian dancing and music, where learned form is the natural medium of expression of the deepest feeling. It is of no importance that we know nothing of the painters' names; all India was richly painted in these days, and the art is the art of a race, and not of any individual. The subjects treated by Ajanta painters are those characteristic of Buddhist art at all times, scenes from the life of Buddha, and Jatakas. The following are amongst the most important compositions:

Cave I: Mara Dharsana. Great Bodhisattva, 'Indra and Sachi', ceiling with love scenes, and 'Persian Embassy', (really a Bacchanalian Panchika).

Cave II: Great Miracle at Sravasti, Kshantivadin Jataka, Indra-loka scenes, decorated ceiling.

Cave XVI: Buddha triad, Great Renunciation, Dying Princess. A fragment from this cave is in the Boston Museum.

Cave XVII: Seven Buddhas. Wheel of Causation, Mahahamsa, Matrposhaka, Saddanta, Sibi (with inscription), and Visvantara Jatakas, Apsarases, decorated ceiling. Contemporary with some of the Ajanta paintings are the similar (fifth century) frescoes in a rock pocket at the Sigiriya fortress in Ceylon, representing Apsarases (the lower part of the body in each case is concealed by clouds indicating that celestial beings are intended in the likeness of princesses accompanied by maid-servants carrying trays of flowers). Jain paintings, evidently of great importance and beauty, have been recently discovered at Sittanavasal near Pudukottai and assigned by M. Jouveau-Dubreuil to the time of Mahendravarman I (600-25).

EARLY MEDIEVAL

THE period following the Gupta and covering the transition from ancient to medieval India, is one of even more abundant and elaborate production. The themes to be represented are more varied, in accordance with the full development of the mythology and cosmology, Hindu, Buddhist and Jain. A technique had now been evolved and well established, fully made adequate not only to the presentation of the various Pauranic legends but to express the multifarious concepts of a



Fig. 27. Shiva and Parvati

very intricate theology. The imager had at his command not only craft traditions, but formulae (*sadhanas, dhyana mantrams, etc.*), proper

to all the diverse aspects and manifestations of the One Supreme Power who takes the forms imagined by his worshippers and appropriate to their needs.

Early mediaeval sculpture has great dramatic force, and freer movement than in the Gupta period. The national taste (the broad shoulders and the lion waist of the hero, the heroine's heavy breasts, and so forth) is fully conscious and determines the character of works of which the details are ritually prescribed; there is a tendency to an increasing elegance and slenderness of form. The types of mediaeval architecture seem to spring into being suddenly because the earlier development through wooden prototypes has inevitably been lost. Everywhere too there must have been painted walls, external and internal, of which no trace could be preserved. Were it possible to put back the hands of the clock and re-visit ancient India, it is perhaps to the eighth century that we should turn, choosing for our pilgrimage a moment when temple building and sculpture were in the fullest tide of their activity, and but little of the work of former centuries had yet been destroyed. As it is, the monuments of the eighth century, particularly those of Elura, Elephanta and Mahabalipuram, are better known to modern students than any others, and some not without reason, have regarded this period as representing the zenith of Indian art.

At Elura, the most renowned monument is the Kailasa. This great shrine is not an interior excavation, like the earlier cave temple, but a model of a structural temple, cut from the living rock and standing free from it though sunk as it were in the sloping side of the hill from which it has been excavated. Here the type of South Indian (Dravidian) architecture, with the flat roofs, enormous curved caves, and domed *vimana* or *shikhara* is fully developed. The main temple and most of its chapels are Shiva. The best-known relief (Fig. 27) represents Shiva and Parvati upon Mt. Kailasa, Ravana below attempting to shake the mass from within, and Shiva steadying it with the pressure of his foot—a magnificent dramatization of the forces of strain and resistance at work in the earth's crust (we must not forget that Indian mythology is as much a natural philosophy as an art). On the north wall of the excavation is a shrine devoted to the three river goddesses with colossal reliefs of Ganga, Sarasvati and Yamuna. A powerful relief occupies an angle of the outer wall and represents Shiva destroying the triple city of the Asuras; a relief in the Lankeshvara section, perhaps a century later, represents a six-armed dancing Shiva. Traces

of painting can be seen on the roof of the main temple, which must be dated about A.D. 775 The Dasa Avatara cave, on the same hill



Fig. 28. Trimurti

slope, may be dated about 700; it contains some important and powerful reliefs, of which perhaps the finest represents the death of Hiranyakashipu, where Vishnu appears in man-lion form, emerging from a pillar to lay a fatal hand upon the shoulder of the impious king who had denied his omnipresence.

The excavated Shaiva temples at Elephanta, near Bombay, preserve, besides many other sculptures of great importance, the well-known colossal 'Trimurti' (Maheshvara murti); a relief representing the marriage of Shiva and Parvati; and a four-headed statue of Sadashiva, in the round.

In the South, the most famous monuments of Pallava art consist of excavated shrines; imitated structural temples (*rathas*) cut in the living rock and known as the Seven Pagodas; the great relief composition known as Arjuna's Penance; and the slightly later structural 'Shore Temple,' all at Mahabalipuram, a little south of Madras. Structural temples (Kailasana and Vaikunta Perumal) of the seventh century are to be found at Kanchipuram (Conjeevaram).

The monuments at Mahabalipuram are assigned to Narasimhavarman I (*circa* 625-650: those of his predecessor Mahendravarman I (600-625) are all 'caves'. The earlier excavated shrines include the two in which are found the representations of Shri Krishna raising Mt. Govardhana, and the great Durga - Mahishasura and Vishnu Anantashayana compositions, the latter illustrated in Fig. 30; the later group consists



Fig. 29. Bhuvaneshvar Girl

of the seven pseudo-structural temples (Seven Pagodas) in a pure Dravidian style, some preserving the design of ancient Buddhist Viharas, and one with a curved roof preserving the form of bamboo architecture as it may still be seen in Eastern India. The structural 'Shore Temple' belongs to the time of Rajasimhavarman or is, at any rate, not later than the ninth century.

In Orissa, mainly at Bhuvaneshvar, Puri and Konarak, the continuous development of the Northern style of architecture, with sloping sided *shikhara* crowned by an *amalaka*, may be followed from the flat or nearly flat roofed Parasurameshvara temple of the seventh or eighth century onwards. Similar to the Parasurameshvara temple is the great Papanatle temple at Pattakadal, and a little earlier is Hucchimalligudi temple at Aihole in the west.

In the north, in the Kangra and Kulu valleys respectively, are found the rock-cut temples of Masrur, and the structural temples of Baijnath and Bajaura.

The famous and picturesque Sun temple at Martand in Kashmir, with its pointed arches, belongs to the very different local Kashmir school (A.D. 600-1100), and preserves a Western (classical) appearance.

Isolated sculptures of early mediaeval date are comparatively few or little known. The school of Mathura seems to have produced nothing after the sixth century. Of the Buddhist remains at Nalanda, Sarnath, and other Magadha and Orissa sites, some must be older than A.D. 900, but little has been done towards their accurate classification. Buddhist bronzes from Ceylon (the well-known Avalokiteshvara and Jambhala in the Boston Museum) are undoubtedly of the eighth century, and in the style of the Elura reliefs. The best illustration of the sculpture, however, is found in the reliefs at Elura and Elephanta already mentioned, and in the composition called Arjuna's Penance at Mahabalipuram. This covers a vertical rock surface about 96 ft. by 43 ft. in area, divided into two parts by a cleft. The key to the meaning of the composition is to be found in the shrine and yogi worshipper on the left of the cleft. Two interpretations have been offered. According to that implied in the popular name "Arjuna's Penance," the emaciated yogi is Arjuna, who thus propitiated Shiva in the Himalayas, in order to obtain the boon of the use of the miraculous arms of Indra. Shiva appeared in the form of a hunter, engaged Arjuna in combat (the Kiratarjuniya) and after overcoming him bestowed on him the weapons of Indra. According to another

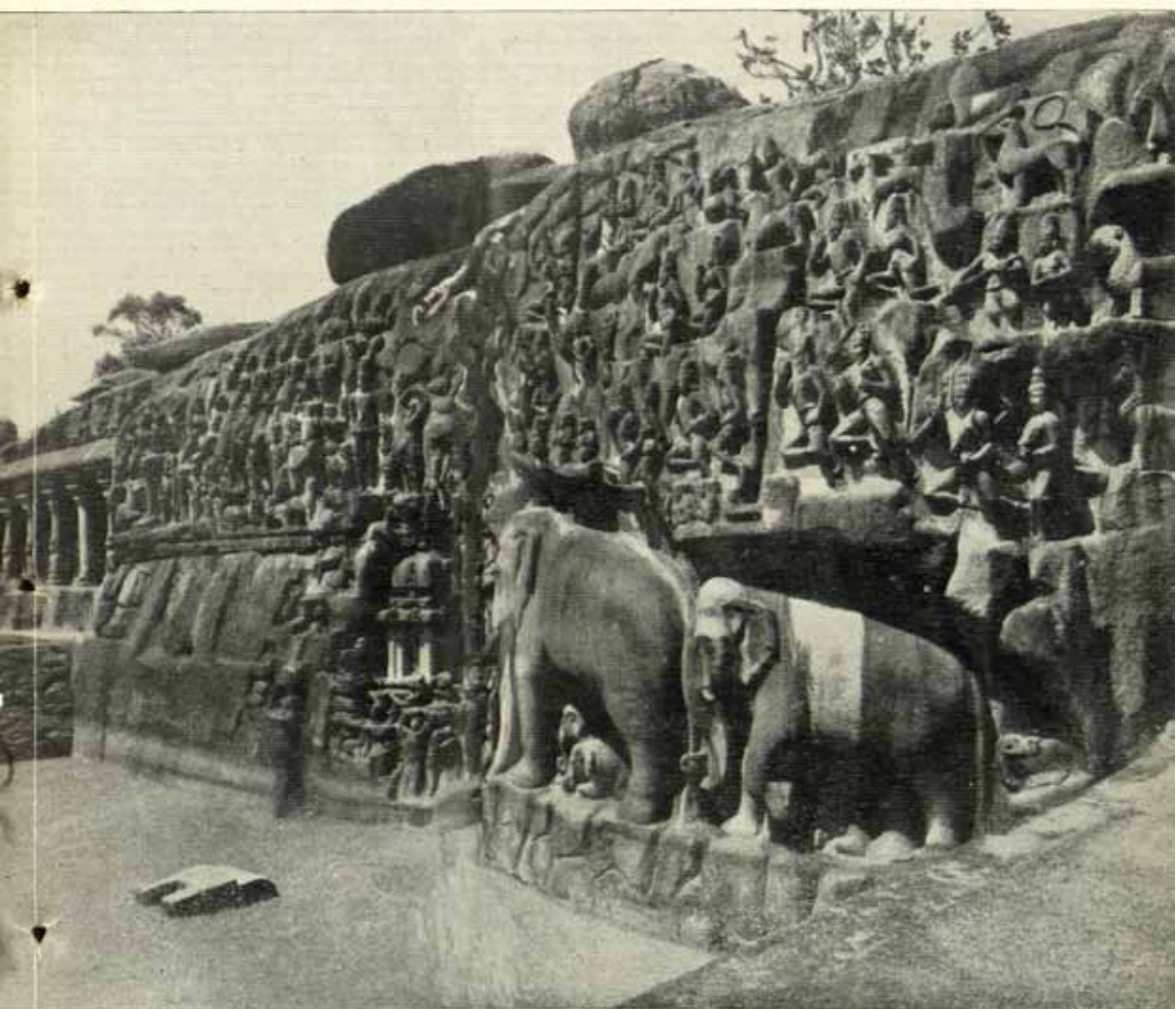
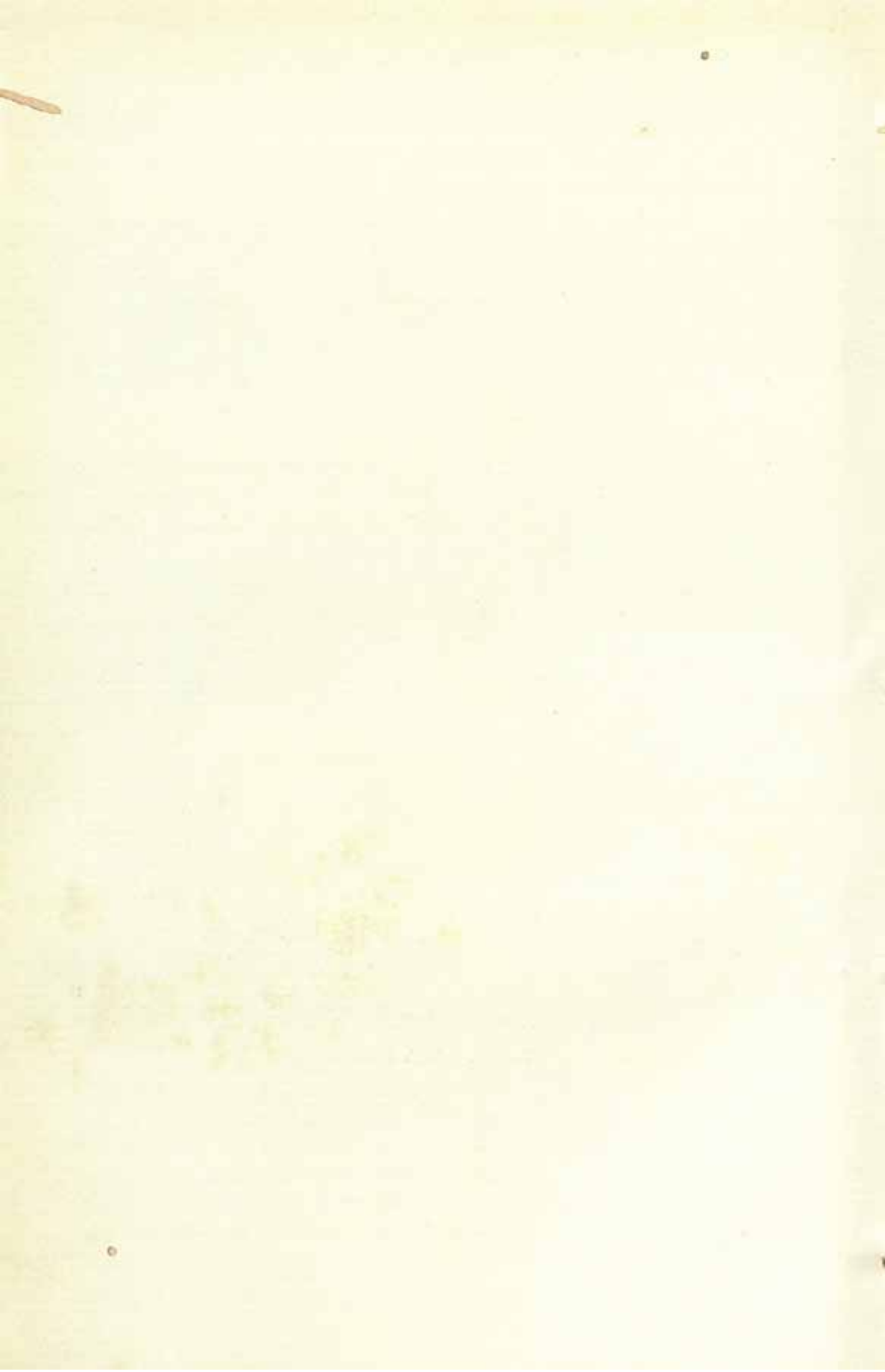


FIG. 30. *Arjuna's Penance*



interpretation, the whole composition represents the descent of Ganga, in which case the yogi must be identified as Bhagiratha; the *naga* figures occupying the cleft are cited in support of this suggestion; but it is hardly possible that water should ever have actually flowed from above, as the advocates of this theory have supposed. In any case, we have before us a magnificent representation of a cosmic event, acclaimed by all orders of beings approaching the scene on either side. The effect is most impressive, and must have been more so when the reservoir below was filled with water. The representations of elephants, deer and other animals are masterpieces of sympathetic interpretation, and with these figures must be grouped the remarkable 'Monkey Family' which occurs as an isolated sculpture, some distance to the north.



Fig. 31. Monkey Family

MEDIAEVAL SCULPTURE

THE course of Indian temple building and sculpture continues uninterruptedly until the end of the twelfth century in Northern, Western and Central India, to the end of the thirteenth century in Orissa and Ceylon, and up to the present day in Southern India. The



Fig. 32. Lovers: Konarak

crest of the wave which rose to its highest in the Gupta period and advanced serenely during the two succeeding centuries is now breaking into foam. We see an increasing complication, heightened emphasis, and a superb technical accomplishment and patience that are apt to

over-reach their end, as, for example, in any of the Hoysala (Chalukya) temples of the Deccan, where, it may be noted, many figures are signed by the Kanarese artists, a thing practically unknown in earlier periods, when the artist's name is only mentioned when he himself is the donor. The lavish use of decorative detail, going hand in hand with an attenuation of the actual elements of design, and of the figure, take the place of the essential riches of the Gupta period, the erotic sculptures of Konarak are not one half so voluptuous as the Gupta Buddhas or even the reliefs at Elephanta and Mahabalipuram. But it is only by reference to what is past that we can speak in this fashion ;

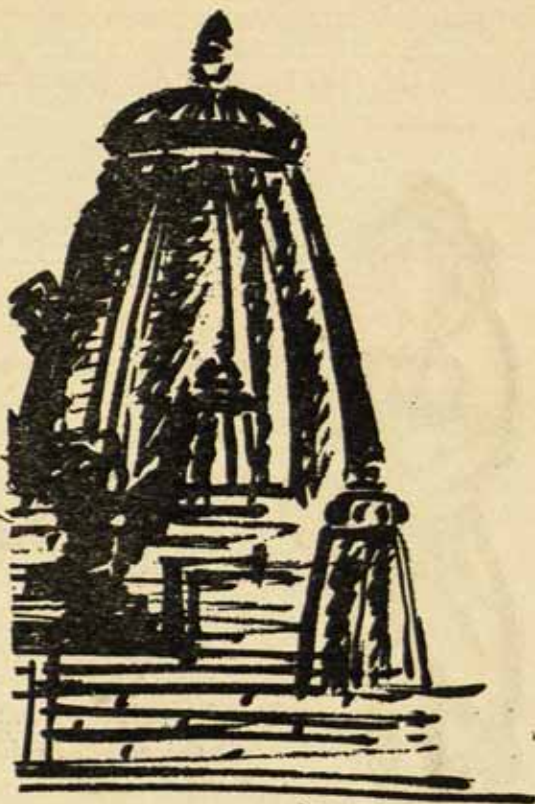


Fig. 33. Lingaraja Temple : Bhubaneshvar

if we accept, as we should accept, the medieval buildings and sculptures in and for themselves and wholly in relation to their own environment we cannot fail to recognize their charm and infinite variety, the marvellous skill which uses stone like metal, and covers whole ceiling with wreaths of dancers (Fig. 37), or with frozen lace.

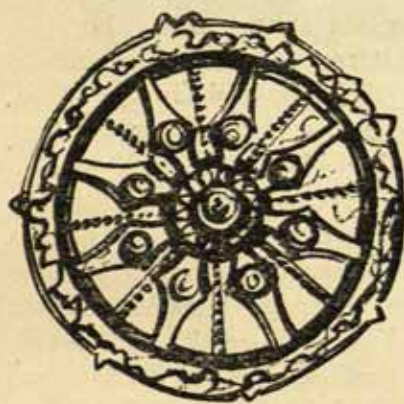


Fig. 34. Rath Wheel; Konarak

The great Lingaraja temple in Orissa has been called the finest example of a purely Hindu temple

in India ; it dates from the ninth or tenth century, with later additions. The great tower is imposing beyond words and the sculptured detail full of beauty. The somewhat similar Jagannatha ('Juggernaut') temple at Puri, dating from the later part of the eleventh century, has a world-wide celebrity through the annual car festival. The Black



Fig. 36. Khajuraho

Pagoda at Konarak, nineteen miles north-east of Puri, is assigned to the middle of the thirteenth century, and now forms one of the most magnificent ruins in India. The temple was dedicated to the sun, and closely connected with the cults of Vishnu. The main temple is in the form of a car (*Ratha* or *vimana*) borne on immense wheels drawn by horses. Much of the sculpture may be described as a detailed illustration of the *Kama Shastra*. This rich external decoration reflects the life of the world and energizing power of the sun ; within as in the majority of Hindu temples, all is plain. Of the external decoration of the later Hindu temples generally we may say that there is represented, offered and dedicated to the deity, all the forms of life and all the activities that constitute the universe through which he manifests, and by which he is known to us ; and in such a dedication, essential to the religious life, the exclusion of any aspect of life, even on ground of human convenience, would amount to denial of God.

Next in interest to the Orissan temples are those of Khajuraho and Gwalior, Jaina, Vaishnava and Shaiva, ranging from the tenth to the eleventh century. The Kandarya Mahadeva temple at Khajuraho is a most imposing pile : the external aspect very clearly reflects the interior construction, which rises step by step and terminates in the immense *Shikhara*, which is gracefully supported by smaller replicas of itself on its sloping sides. Here, too, there are remarkable erotic sculptures, and more beautiful than those of Konarak. At Gwalior the Chaturbhuj temple dates from the ninth century, the Sas Bahu and Telika Mandir temples from the tenth or eleventh. The latter has no *shikhara*, but has a barrel-vaulted roof with *chaitya* windows at each end.

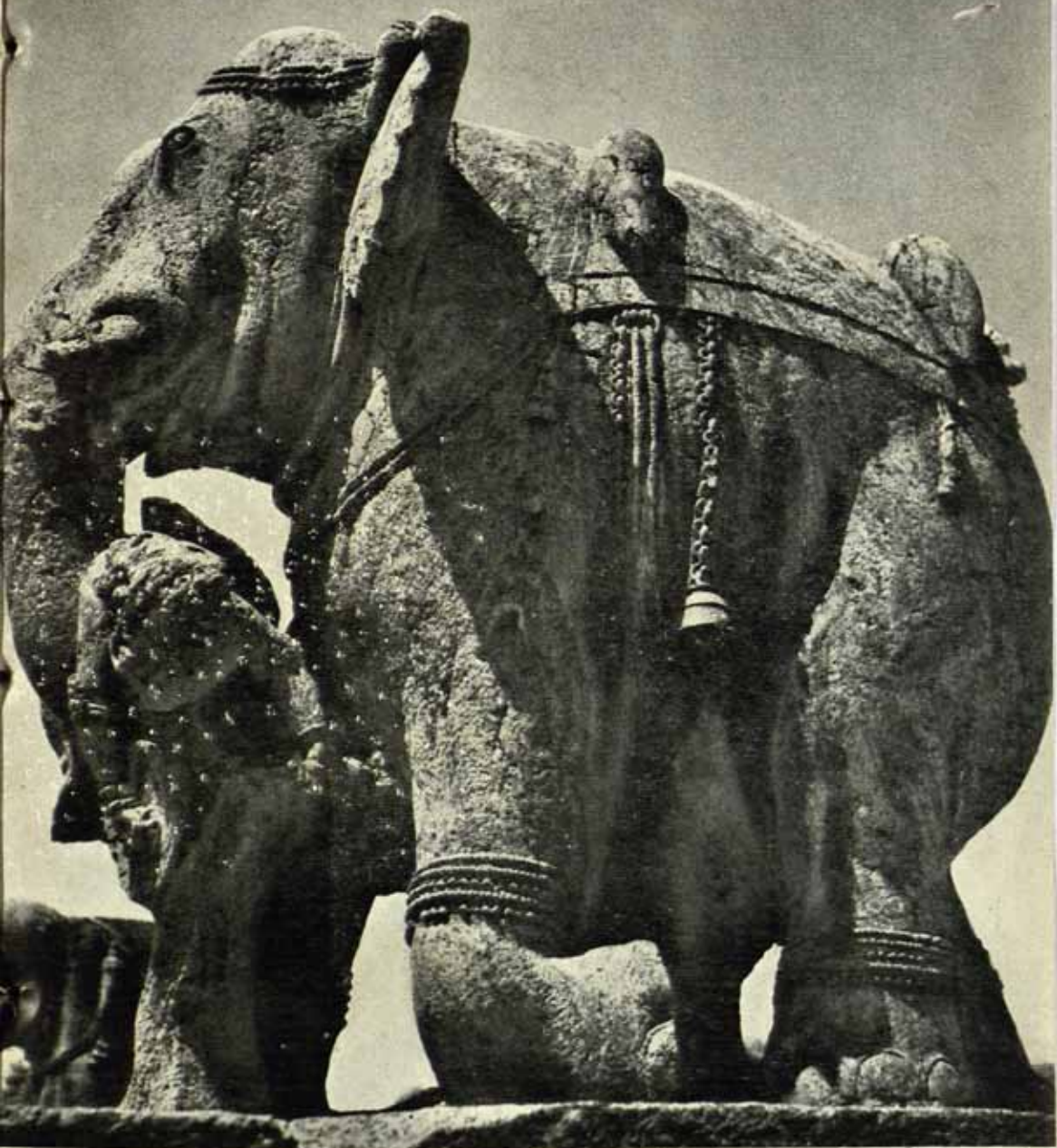
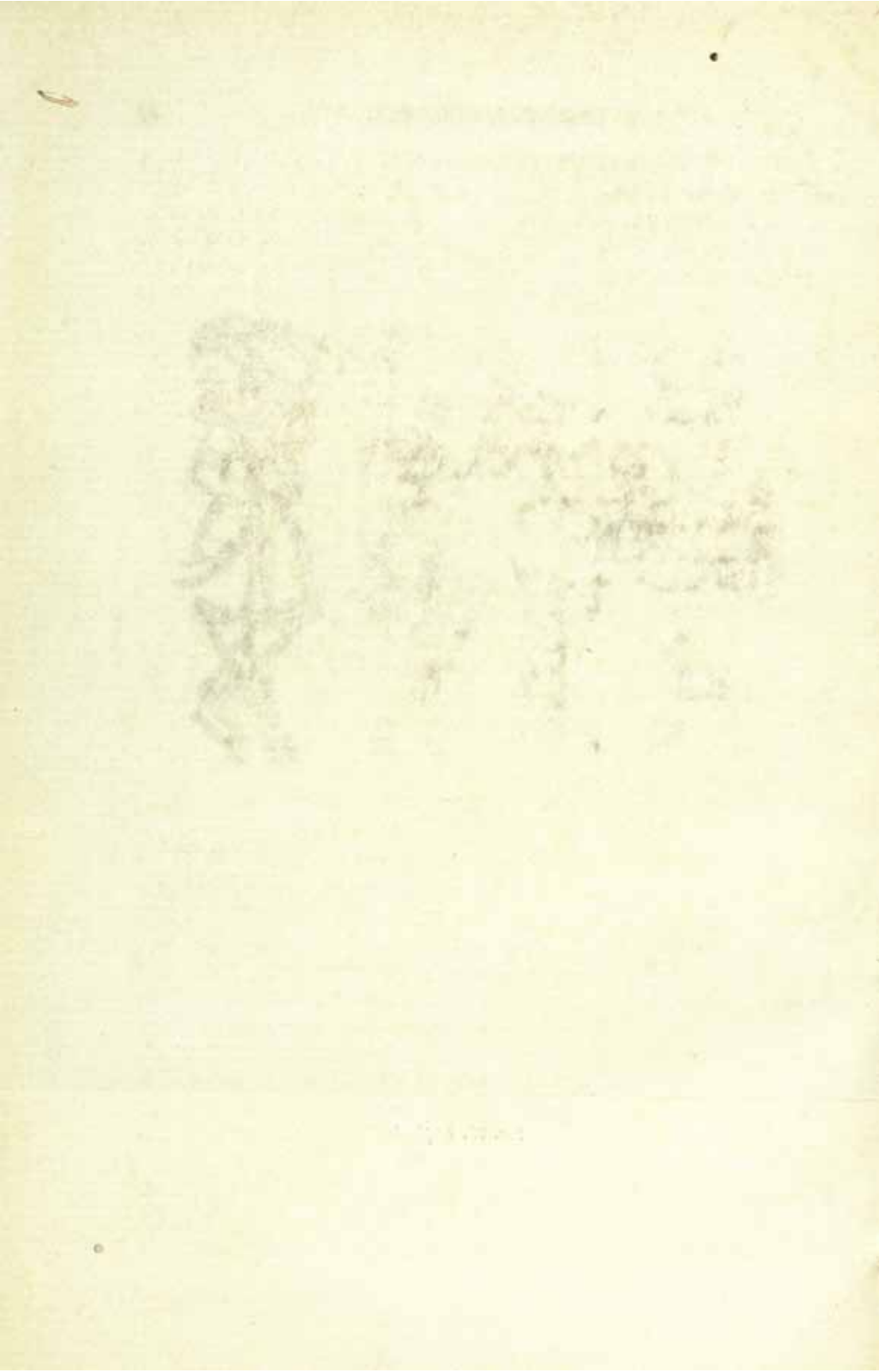


FIG. 35. *Elephant*



One of the most famous of all Indian buildings is the Shaiva temple at Somnath, which was destroyed by Mahamud of Ghazni about 1025 and rebuilt by Kumarapala in 1168. Perhaps the most remarkable medieval temple groups of Western India, however, are those of the Jains, at Mt. Abu, Girnar, and Palitana. All three sites are sacred hills,



Fig. 37. Relief: Tejpal Temple: Mt. Abu

where an aggregate of temples forms a city of the gods, not used by men. Those of Mt. Abu are justly famed for the delicacy and intricacy of their decorative sculpture: they are built entirely of white marble, transported from a distance of twenty or thirty miles and carried up a hill four thousand feet in height. The most notable temples are those built by Vimala in 1031 and by Tejapala in 1230. Tejapala's temple is even more elaborate; a detail from a domed ceiling, a band of dancers, is reproduced in Fig. 37. The Girnar site sacred to Neminath is a city of temples built on the ledge of a cliff some six hundred feet below the summit of the hill, mostly erected or restored in the fifteenth century. It will be observed, too, that at Ahmedabad, and elsewhere in Gujarat, there are many beautiful mosques, built by craftsmen of the Jain tradition and hardly differing from Jain work save in the omission of all sculptured figures.



Fig. 38. Relief: Tejpal Temple: Mt. Abu

The architecture of the Hoysalas has already been referred to. The style can best be seen in the Dharwar district. The Shaiva temple at Ittagi, the Someshwar and Trikuteshvara temples at Gadag, and a group of old temples at Lakkundi nearby are the oldest. In Mysore



Fig. 39. Belur

proper the most remarkable temples are found at Belur (about 1117) and Halebid, where temple building was stopped by the Mussalmans about 1310. The Hoysaleswara temple at Halebid is one of the most richly ornamented in all India; almost the entire field of Indian mythology is illustrated and the decorative motifs are superimposed in frieze upon frieze. It is incomplete, as work was stopped by the Mussalman invasion in 1311.

There scarcely exist intact remains of any of the Buddhist monasteries and temples erected at Sarnath, Nalanda, and elsewhere in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa during the mid-medieval period, but on the other hand the Buddhist and Hindu sculptures of the Pala dynasty (740-1197) are abundant and well preserved. The Calcutta Museum has a large series, and others may be seen at Ranchi, Sarnath, and in



Fig. 40. Nalanda

the larger European and American museums. Usually in a fine black slate, they are executed with great precision of detail and smoothness of surface, but without deep feeling. The usual subjects recur: in Buddhist art, scenes from the life of the Buddha (the Eight Great Miracles is a favourite subject), and representations of Bodhisattvas, Taras, and other divinities; in Hindu art, a wide range of Shaiva and Vaishnava images. The metal figures on the whole are superior to those in stone: those in the Bengal Sahitya Parishad collection in Calcutta, and those from Rangpur (partly in the Calcutta Museum) are of exceptional beauty, and so, too, a number of smaller Hindu bronzes, now in the Boston Museum, and the small Buddhist bronzes which have lately been found at Nalanda. The names of Dhiman and his son Bitpalo are mentioned as those of famous master founders of Varendra in the eighth and ninth centuries.



Fig. 41. Sarnath

SOUTHERN INDIA 10-18TH CENTURY

IN southern India the most important of the earlier medieval temples is the great Shaiva Shrine at Tanjore, an imposing and consistently planned building, with a high pyramidal tower rising over the main shrine; it was in process of construction by Rajaraja Deva about the end of the tenth century. Remains of the other Dravidian temples earlier than the middle of the fourteenth century are very few. By the middle of the thirteenth century, however, the style is fully evolved: its leading characteristics include the great gateway (Gopuram), pillared halls (*Kalyana mandapam*), the re-curved cornices, elaborate monolithic columns and column brackets of rearing horses or monsters (*yali* or lion), and the great processional corridors. Most of the South Indian shrines, from 1350 to 1750, consist of an accumulation of erections about a small and inconspicuous central shrine of greater antiquity, the enormous gateways rising high above everything else, and giving their distinctive character to the great cathedral cities. Parts of the temple at Chidambaram, one of the most sacred of all southern shrines, and dedicated to Nataraja are as old as the tenth or eleventh century, the *Nrtya Sabha*, or Dancing Hall of thirty-six pillars about eight feet high, being the oldest and most beautiful element. The Parvati temple is of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, the great gates still later. There is an early (fourteenth century) *mandapam* in the great temple at Vellur; the greater part of the temples at Srirangam, Tadpatri, Kumbakonam, Rameshvaram, etc., belong to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The ruins at Humpi must be specially mentioned. Humpi, or Vijayanagar, was founded in 1336, attained its zenith under Krishna Deva Raya (1509-1530) and was sacked and destroyed in 1565. Krishna Deva Raya, to whom the beauty of the city was mainly due, was a veteran soldier and a polished gentleman and a patron of literature;

with his two queens, he is worthily commemorated in the beautiful brass figures of the Srinivasa Perumal temple, Tirumalai, Tirupati. To him, and to his queens, is due the most splendid building in the city, the Vithala temple, the finest building of its kind in southern



Fig. 42. Dancing Figures: Chidambaram

India, and in the words of Fergusson, marking the extreme limit in florid magnificence to which the (Dravidian) style advanced. The Kadallaikallu temple (Ganesha), on the other hand, has plain stone walls and a flat roof line, which lend a peculiar dignity to the pillared *mandapam* before it. There is also an important group of Jain temples and several remarkable monolithic Brahmanical sculptures (Narasimha, Ganesha).

The great temple of Sundareshvara and Minakshi at Madura is to modern travellers the best known of the Dravidian temples; it is mainly due to Tirumalai Nayak (1623-1659). The most remarkable buildings are the Vasantha Mandapam (Tirumalai choultry) and the hall of a thousand columns (really nine hundred and eighty-five, the place of fifteen columns being occupied by the Sabhapathi Shrine); the pillars of both are extremely elaborate, many having life-sized figures forming part of their mass. The choultry took twelve years to build from 1623 to 1635.

It should be remarked that in the Madras Presidency and in Travancore the learned tradition of temple building has been preserved

to the present day. The craft traditions are carefully handed down by the Kammalars, or superior craftsmen, who claim an equality with



Fig. 43. Dancing Figures: Humpi

Brahmans; these Kammalars and their conferers, the Navandanno of Ceylon, largely of South Indian origin, still possess and make use of



Fig. 44. Monkeys: Humpi

Sanskrit manuscripts of the *Silpa Shastras* or vernacular equivalents. There are interesting Hindu temples of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Polonnaruva in Ceylon,

We have still to refer to the great southern school of bronze (actually copper or, more rarely, brass) founding. The roots of this tradition go back to Buddhist art in the South (Amaravati, Bezwada, Ceylon, etc). The earliest reference to the installation of Brahmanical metal images, however, seems to be that of Tanjore temples, inscriptions referring to figures of Shaiva saints set up by Rajaraja Deva (about 1014). Figures of the deity himself must have been made before this. But though dancing figures of Shiva are found in the Durga temple at Aihole in the Gupta period and a little later at Elephanta, etc., we do not find amongst the stone sculptures any exact prototype or equivalent of the Natarajas and other typical metal images, and it is to be inferred that the Dravidian school of founding, so far as Shaiva and Vaishnava images are concerned, developed contemporaneously with the theology which they reflect, *i.e.*, about the ninth or tenth century. With the possible exception of the Belur Nataraja, of which the date is read by some as equivalent to A.D. 910 (more likely, 1511), the oldest known southern bronzes appear to be those from the Shiva



Devalas of Polonnaruva, Fig. 45. Parakrama Bahu: Polonnaruva, Ceylon now in the Colombo Museum, in Boston, Paris and London, etc.

These can only be dated by a sense of style: many relatively modern examples are of excellent workmanship. There are probably others older and perhaps finer still in the temples or buried.

The majority of southern bronzes, as might be expected, are Shaiva. The Nataraja type in particular is very well known (Fig. 47). Significance of this *nrtta murti* has been often explained: it represents the cosmic activity (Panchakrtya, 'Five Actions') of Shiva, the drum in the right hand indicating creation, the fire in the



Fig. 46. Seated Buddha: Polonnaruva, Ceylon

left, involution and the dance continuance—a magnificent conception of the Absolute in action (*vyakta*, 'manifested'), complementary to the *avyakta* (unmanifested), symbol of the lingam, which forms the *dhruva* (immovable) icon in most Shaiva temples. Other forms of Shiva commonly met with in metal images are the Bhikshanda Murtis, Dakshina Murtis, and the various Uma, Parvati or Shiva Kami. Of the Shaiva saints, Manikka Vaccagar (Fig. 49), Sundara Murti Swami (Fig. 48), Appar Swami and Tirugnana Sambandha Swami are represented by cult images, often of considerable importance, the finest examples being those in the Colombo Museum. Vaishnava images are rather less frequent, but some fine examples are known (one in the Boston Museum); the forms include Vishnu and Lakshmi, Rama groups and dancing and other forms of the young Krishna, and of the saints, Hanuman, Garuda, the Twelve Alvars, and Meikanda Deva. There is also an image of Surya in the Colombo Museum.

Of Dravidian painting, the only old example to which I can refer is the fine eight-armed Nataraja fresco of the Shiva temple at



Fig. 47. Nataraja

Ettamanur in North Travancore; but no systematic search for paintings has been made in the older parts and on the more neglected surfaces of Travancore and other southern temples. More modern



Fig. 48. Sundara Murthi Swami: Ceylon

wall paintings, though crude in execution, are, however, evidently survivals of an old tradition! Some of these are executed on glass.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century portraits of Tanjore represent in the main an offshoot of Moghul art.



Fig. 49. Manikka Vaccagar: Ceylon

ARCHITECTURE UNDER MUSSALMAN RULE

THERE is a vast variety of buildings and monuments which came to be constructed in India through the patronage of Pathan, Moghul and other Muhammadan rulers. These cannot be designated Muslim architecture strictly, because they were primarily the work of the hereditary indigenous craftsmen of India, and such alien artisans as came with the invaders, rather than the work only of Muslim builders. Therefore, it is best to deal with this phase of building as a development of Indian architecture under Muslim influence. In this way, we shall keep clear of the two extreme views which are prevalent among historians of Indian art: one, we shall not over-emphasize the role of each new religion which arose in India by dubbing the work produced under its impetus by a sectarian title; and, two, we shall not emphasize the continuity of Indian developments without some awareness of the fact that the central tradition was constantly reshaped by each new faith.

That the Indian builders had achieved great skill by the time the Muhammadans came to India is evident from the tribute paid by the conqueror Mahmud of Ghazni to their genius after his sack of Mathura. "There are here," he wrote to a friend, "a thousand edifices, as firm as the faith of the faithful, nor is it likely that this city has attained its present condition but at the expense of many millions of dinars, nor could such another be constructed under a period of two centuries." And among the thousands of captives that Mahmud took away, there were certainly many craftsmen who helped to build the famous marble and granite mosque, called 'Celestial Bride', with which he celebrated his victories.

There is evidence of the synthesis between the ancient Indian and Muhammadan techniques in such a motif as the so-called Arab or Saracenic pointed arch. If one looks at the niche in the walls of

a Buddhist or ancient Indian sanctuary and imagines what it would look like when the image under it has been removed, one can see the same kind of arch as the Mihrab. Of course, many influences mingle to produce each style, and we do not know which came first. Similarly, the attempt to interpret the dome as an Arab invention, shaped after the water-melon, so abundant in Arabia, is invidious, because the pointed dome had already occurred in the Buddhist, the Hindu, the Egyptian, the Babylonian and other styles. Again, the stalactite pendentive, which is ascribed to the Arabs, was probably a collection of miniature Mihrab niches, taken from the use of semi-cylindrical tiles, set in mortar, in place of brick cornice or arches that supported the domes. As these features began to enter Indian architecture more frequently after the Muhammadan invasions, they may, however, be described as a unique contribution of the Mussalmans to the native tradition, with which they synthesized.

The Pathan kings, who followed one another in quick succession on the throne of Delhi and North-Eastern and Central India, as well as in the Deccan, were inveterate builders, because they wanted to

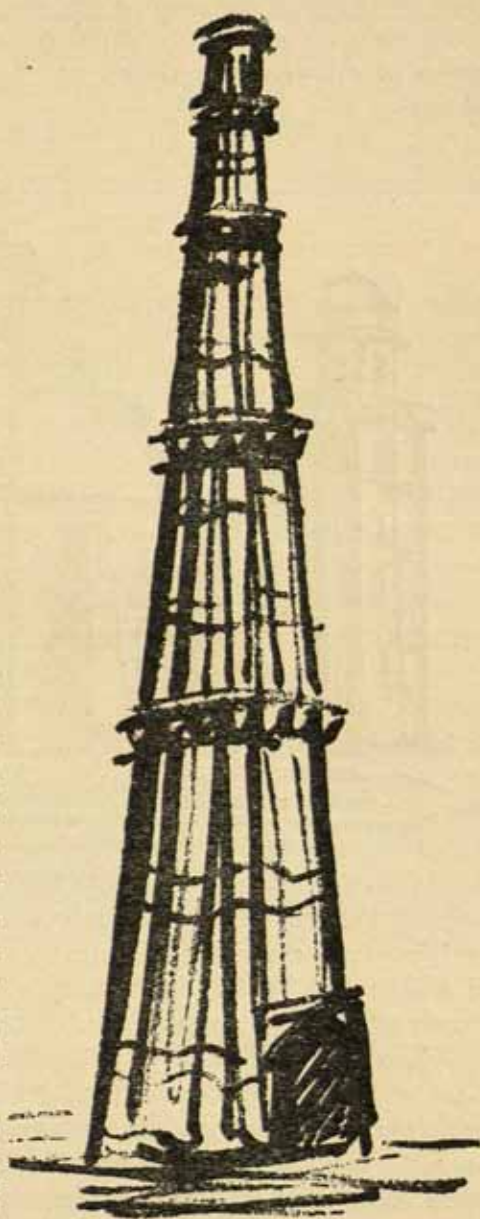


Fig. 51. Kutub Minar

display their power by erecting splendid victory towers, impregnable forts, and luxurious palaces, holy places as well as mausoleums to make themselves immortal after death. So a great many monuments came to be under their reigns both at Delhi and the Provincial capitals of Ajmer, Jaunpur, Gujerat, Malwa, Bengal, Gulbarga, Bijapur and Sind.

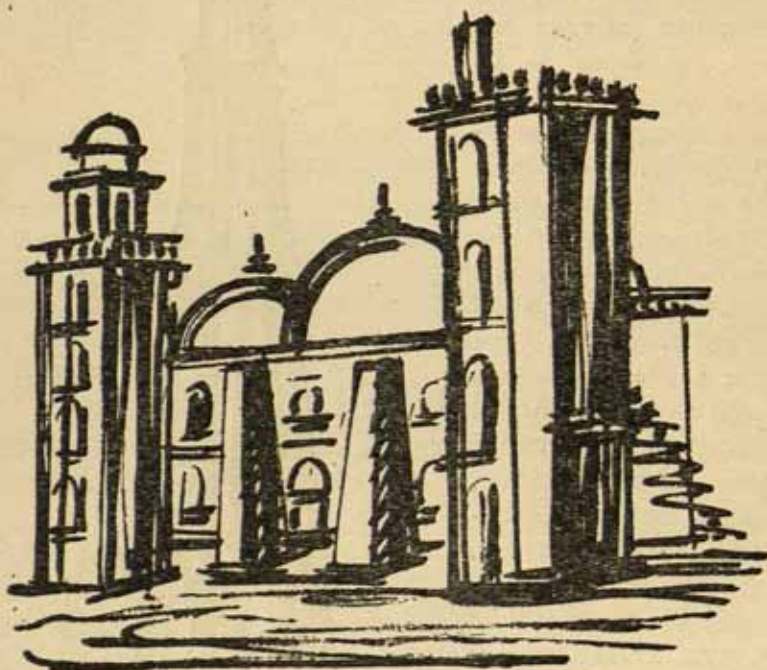


Fig. 52. Mosque of Alif-Khan at Dhulka

At first, the Pathans seemed to find in the colonnaded courts of the Jain temples ready made mosques by removing the structure in the middle and by erecting a new wall on the west, adorned with mihrabs which pointed the way to Mecca.

Later, they began to erect screens of arches in front of the Jain pillars and to have them carved by Indian artisans in a rich and intricate style with mixed natural and religious motives. There are two early mosques, one at Delhi and another at Ajmer, which are mainly built out of old Jain and Hindu temples.

The next monument in this hierarchy is the Kutub Minar, a giant minaret, 242 feet in height and 48 feet 4 inches in diameter. Its main column is punctuated by four projecting balconies, the first

at 97 feet, the second at 148 feet, the third at 188 feet and the fourth at 214 feet from the base. The beautiful tower obviously displays great engineering skill and is instinct with the ambition of its builder, Kutub-ud-Din, to touch the stars.

The Altumash, near the Kutub, is smaller in perspective, but a fine example of Indian work under Muslim orders. It is the oldest known mausoleum in India.

In the same vicinity the Pathan king, Ala-ud-Din Khilji, had a structure built, which shows that by now Indian craftsmen had mastered the alien styles of decoration brought by the Muslims, for the decorative pendentives in this building introduce a fresh style of ornamentation on the older simple Pathan styles.

The rugged simplicity of the Pathans reasserted itself, after the death of Ala-ud-Din, in the fortress called Tuglakabad, founded by the stern warrior, Tuglak Shah, in 1321. The tomb of Tuglak, completed after his death, also expresses the new stern simplicity.

The Lodi tombs are even more emphatically hard and bare than the Tuglak mausoleum.

Sher Shah's tomb is the last of the series of Pathan burial places. It is rather more elaborate than the Tuglak or Lodi memorials, but is still rugged, simple and solid.

The basic plan of a Pathan tomb consists of an octagonal apartment, roughly 50 feet in diameter, surrounded by a verandah of the same form, each face being ornamented by three arches of the stilted style and supported by double square columns. Clearly derived from the Jains, it has changed completely, so that the style bears no recognizable similarity to its prototype.

The mosques of the Pathans were as simple as their tombs. Towards the time of Sher Shah there is visible a love of detail, evidencing a richer imagination. But as compared to the latter, more ornamental, mosques, the contours of the Kala Musjid in Delhi, for instance, remain hard. The buildings of the Pathans are the index of the rough and ready culture which they brought.

The ruggedness of Pathan architecture was mellowed in the Muslim provincial kingdoms through the more intimate contact which the Sultans established with the local traditions. To the arched domes and radiating vaults of the mosques of the North there were added in the little kingdoms, cloisters that surrounded the courts; while the galleries of the interior were elaborated with short square

pillars, bracket capitals, horizontal archways and roofs of flat slabs in the manner of the Hindu and Jain temples.

The old mosque at Jaunpur is distinguished by a number of carved pillars, which were obviously taken from a temple. The Jumma Musjid in the same city, commenced by Shah Ibrahim in 1419 and finished under Hussain about fifty years later is, however, an attempt at absorbing Middle Eastern and Egyptian influences. The Lal Darwaza mosque, and the lovely Atala Musjid, owe much more to the Indian styles, both Hindu and Buddhist. Sita Ki Rasoi was a Jain temple near Jaunpur which was converted into a mosque by Ibrahim Shah in 1406.

In Gujerat, especially in Ahmedabad, the synthesis of Hindu and Muslim traditions is at its most perfect.

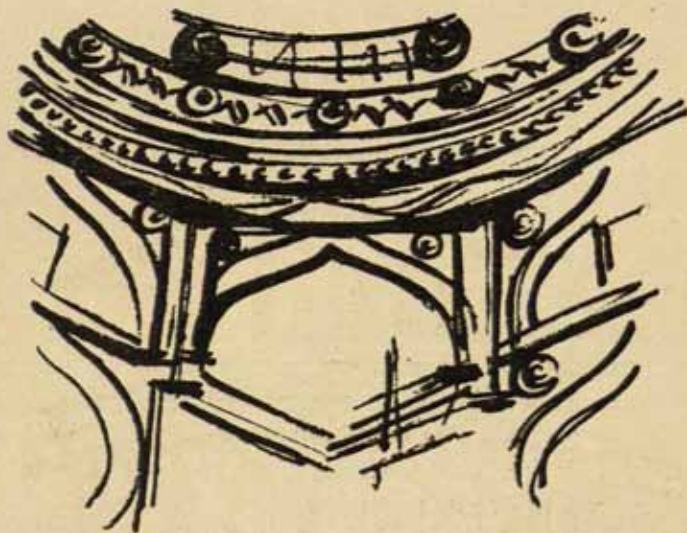


Fig. 53. Entrance Porch of a Mosque

Ahmed, the second king of the Muhammadan dynasty, which overpowered Western India, renamed Kurnavati as Ahmedabad and began to adorn it with splendid buildings. The most beautiful of these is the Jumma Musjid, perhaps one of the most beautiful mosques in the East. It covers an area of 20,000 square feet, being 382 feet by 258 feet, with 260 pillars, supporting 15 domes, arranged so that the middle three are larger and higher than the others. A comparison of this with the temple built by Khumborana about 160 miles away from Ahmedabad shows how near Hindu and Muslim traditions came in feeling.

Then there are certain mausoleums and smaller mosques in Ahmedabad, similar in character to the Jumma Musjid and inspired by a peculiar mastery which is not visible elsewhere in Indian Muhammadan architecture. Most of the Muhammadan buildings in Ahmedabad are, in style and detail, counterparts of the temple at Chandravati and Abu, witnessing to a flowering of the native sensibility with a new love for decoration which came from the Caliphate tradition.

In the city of Mandu, founded on the site of Dhar, the capital of a Hindu kingdom in Central India, was built a great mosque by Hoshang, the second king of the Ghori dynasty who ruled from 1405 to 1432. The techniques of Hindu, Jain and Muslim styles are again mixed here, but there is superimposed on the whole a heroic sense of building, significant of the power of the Sultan. As in the architecture

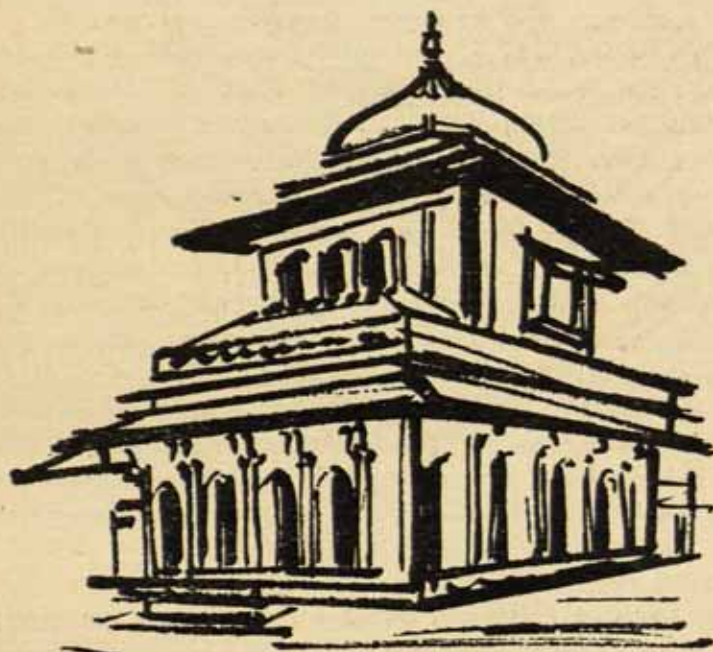


Fig. 54. At Fatehpur Sikri: Birbal Ki Beti Ka Mahal

of Gujerat and Malwa, so in that of Gaur, the old capital of Muslims in Bengal, the main cue came from local style. For instance, the use of brick and the curvilinear form of roof derived from the use of the elastic bamboo, is clearly visible, specially in the mosque of Kudam-ul-Rassul. The views of foliage and low relief, which was the

familiar style of decoration on the facades of temples in Bengal, reappears in the golden and the Bara Darwaza mosque in Gaur.

A minar, a polygon of twelve sides, 84 feet high is probably a converted Jaya Stambha, a Hindu pillar of victory. This was built by Phiroze Shah who reigned from 1302 to 1315 A.D.

In the Southern kingdoms of the Muslims also a great many monuments came to be built.

The large mosque at Gulbarga, erected by the Muslim Bhamani dynasty between 1347 A.D. and 1435 A.D. is a unique piece of architecture. For, of all the mosques in India, this one is wholly covered over, the light being admitted through the side walls which are pierced with great arches. There is a calm grandeur about this building.

The fort of Bidar and the tombs of the Bhamani Sultans are heroic and resplendent, and built entirely out of local materials.

During the Adil Shahi dynasty which reigned from 1501 to 1660 in Bijapur, a tremendous effort in building was made. Notable among the constructions in Bijapur is the Jumma Musjid, created out of Hindu remains but never completely finished, because its main gateway had not been finished when the dynasty was overthrown. The tomb of Ali Adil Shah, begun by him, might have been an unrivalled sepulchre if completed. Ibrahim Adil Shah, Ali's descendant, saw to it that his own tomb was finished in his life time. The whole Koran is engraved on its walls and the skill of south Indian craftsmen is ably enlisted in its construction and ornamentation.

There is very little difference between the styles which matured under the Pathan kings and the Sultans who ruled in the various parts of India and the later style which was perfected in the hands of the Moghuls, except that the Moghul architecture is more elaborate and the synthesis of the Hindu and Muhammadan elements is complete.

The tomb of Humayun, for instance, is almost a final development of the style which had begun with the Kutub group of buildings and passed through the rough Lodi monuments and Sher Shah's mausoleum. The Persian artisans whom Humayun brought to India added frescoes of their own.

If Humayun's tomb is still slightly eclectic, the genius of Akbar, the Great Moghul, absorbed the foreign and indigenous elements completely. In the capital, which Akbar planned in Fatehpur Sikri, a dream like that of Kubla Khan's palace is realized. The first building

on this site was the Khas Mahal, a square block measuring about 260 feet square, occupying a space as big as the Red Palace in the fort at Agra. Its predominant feature was the Diwan-i-Khas, the throne room, a square building with a throne, supported by a richly carved pillar and a five storeyed open pavilion with equally fine pillars, long colonnades and connecting walls. The next group are the three small pavilions built for the Emperor's three favourite wives, variously called Birbal ki Beti ka Mahal, Miriam's house, and the palace of Roomi

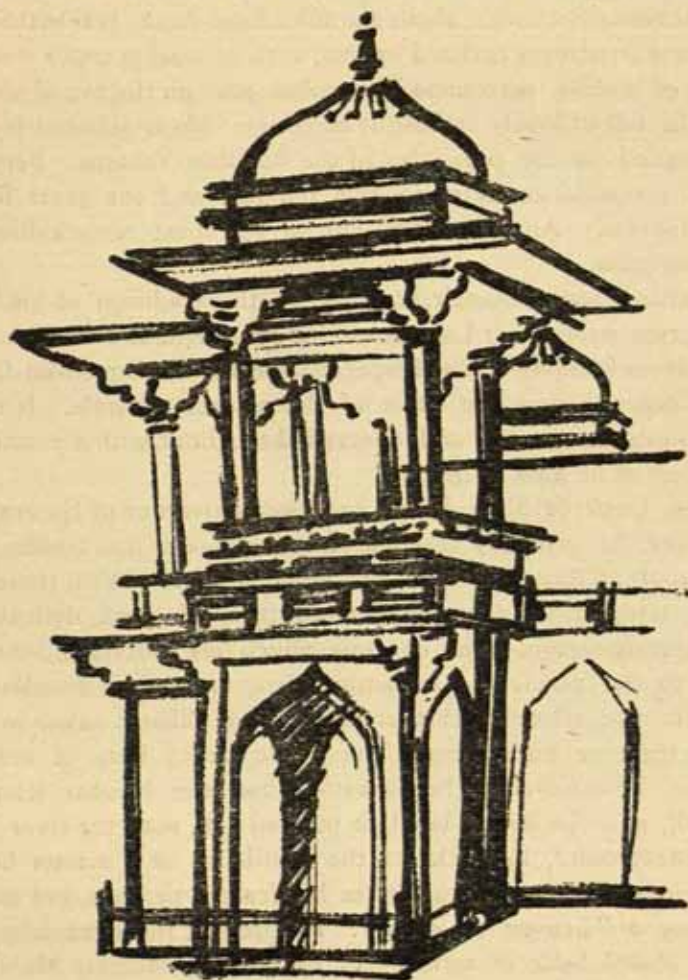


Fig. 55. At Fatehpur Sikri

Sultana, some of the loveliest palaces anywhere. The most beautiful building in Fatehpur Sikri, however, is the mosque, crowned by three

domes, and with the tombs of Akbar's patron saint, Salim Chisti, and of the noble, Islam Khan. The tomb of Chisti is in white marble and rather sentimental, but the tomb of Islam Khan is sober and displays fine taste. But the magnificent southern gateway overshadows the whole mosque, with its semi-dome into which the actual portal is fixed, a convention characteristic of the architecture of this period. There is not much left of the fort Akbar built at Allahabad, but it is said that it had a lovely pavilion of forty pillars. The Emperor started building his own tomb at Secundra, about six miles from Agra. It is perhaps one of the finest structures realized by him, with its marble trellis work and cloisters of marble, surrounded by colonnades on the raised platform with walls full of lovely arabesque traceries. Many scholars feel that it is designed on the principles of the Buddhist Viharas. Fergusson traced a resemblance between this building and the great Rath at Mahabalipuram. Anyhow, it is one of the most remarkable mausoleums in India.

Akbar's son, Jehangir, carried on the tradition of his father, building two mosques at Lahore and his own tomb at Shahdara. The most glorious building of this Emperor's reign is the Etmad-ud-Dola at Agra, which achieves the acme of the mausoleum style. It is built entirely in white marble and covered throughout with a mosaic, one of the finest of its kind in India.

The Emperor Shah Jehan had been Governor of Gujerat, and while there, he probably assimilated much love of fine building from the gems of architecture built by Sultan Ahmed. With those early impulses mingled an elegance derived from his own delicate and sensuous imagination. The contrast which his individual sensibility brought to the heroic red sandstone structures of his grandfather is obvious in the white marble court of Shah Jehan's palace at Agra, with its feminine dimensions. The whole outlay here of the great halls, the Diwan-i-Am, the Diwan-i-Khas, the Naubat Khana or music hall, and the Rang Mahal, or painted hall, with the river Jumna in the background, bespeaks of the sensibility of a master builder. He emptied the treasury to realize his dreams, perhaps, but made of this palace a "heaven on earth". He brought the same delicacy to the Taj Mahal built in memory of his consort, Mumtaz Mahal. In the words of Fergusson, "It is the combination of so many beauties, and the perfect manner in which each is subordinated to the other that makes up a whole, which the world cannot match and which never fails to impress even those who are most indifferent to the

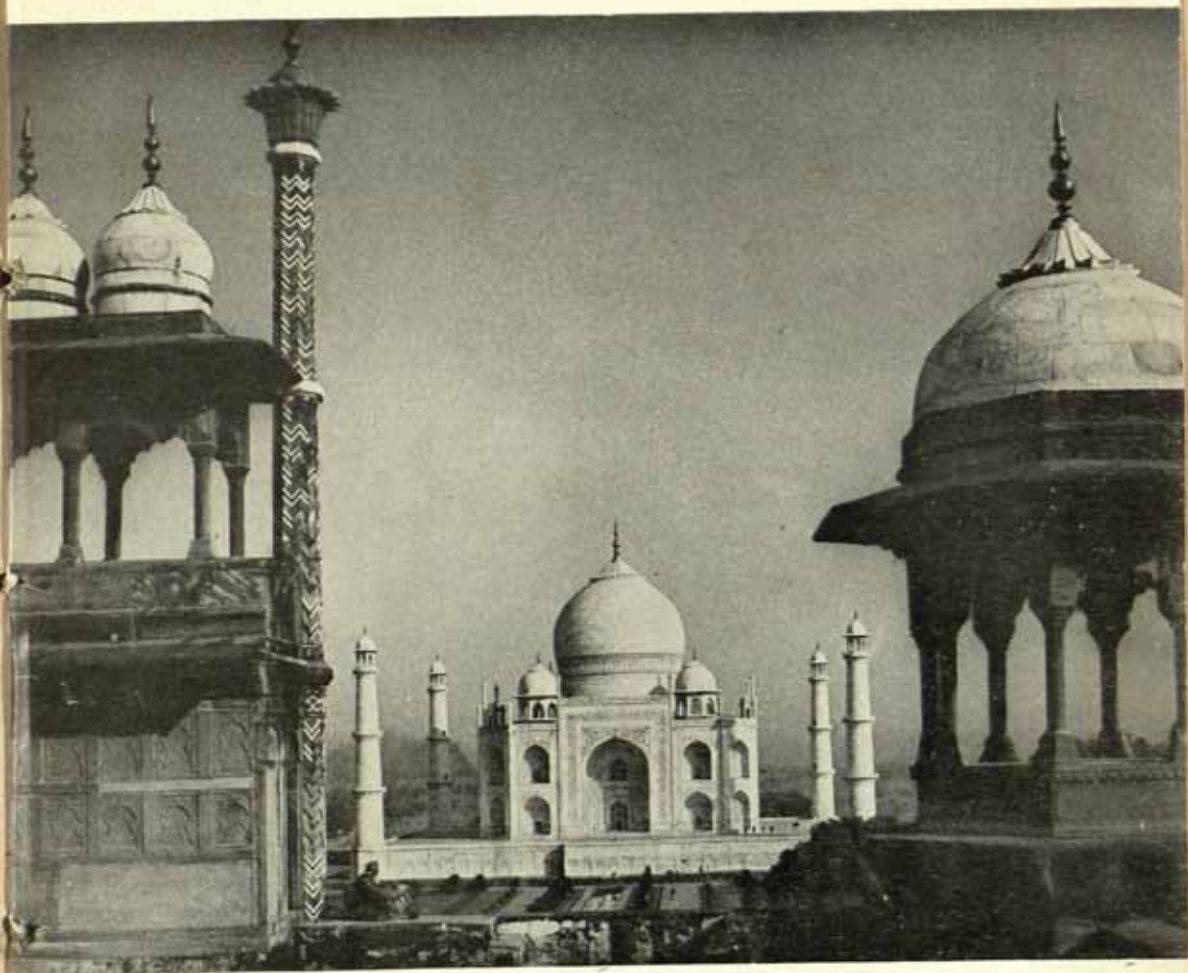
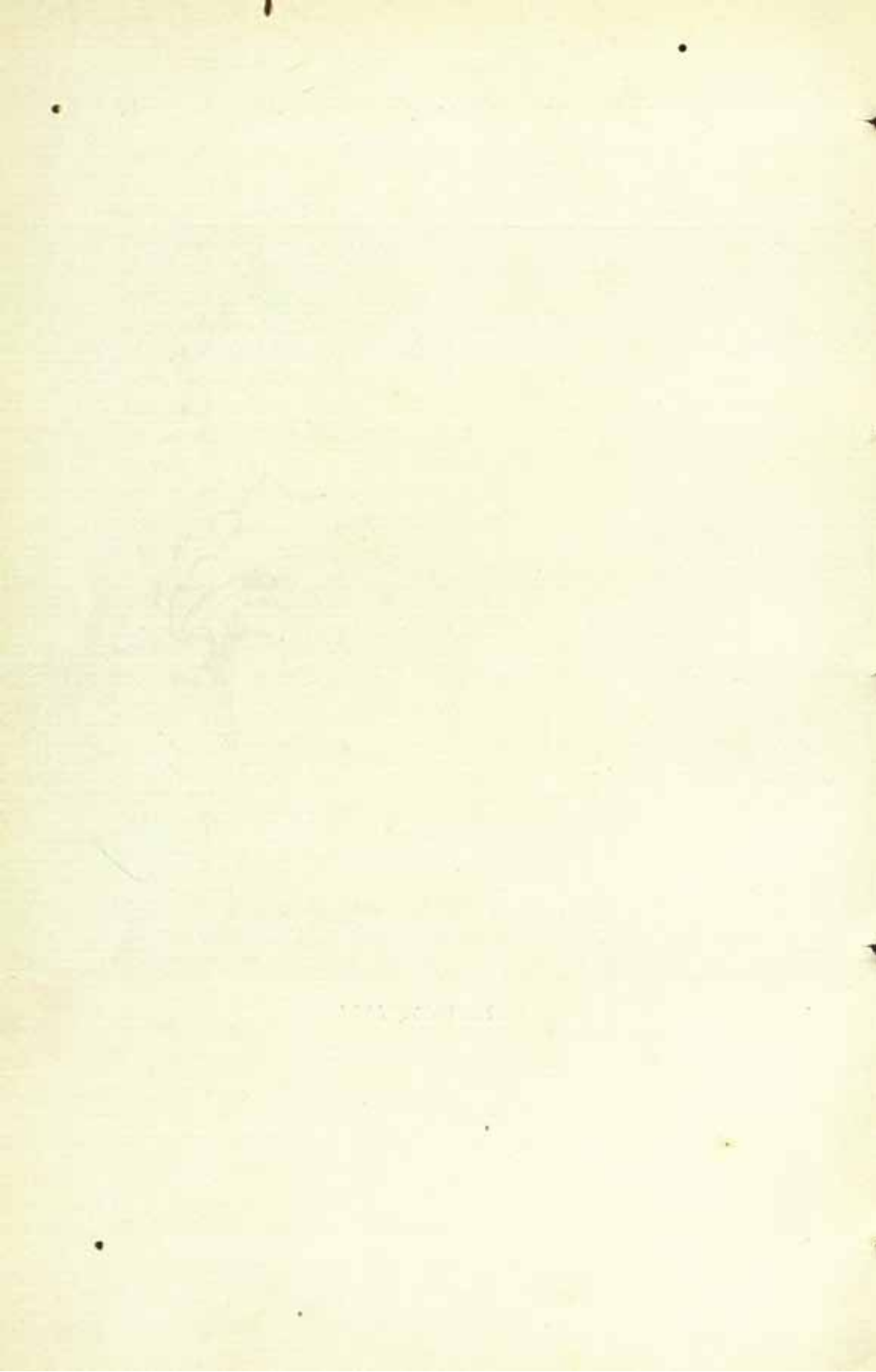


FIG. 50. *Taj Mahal*



effects produced by architectural objects in general." Later critics have begun to see a sentimental strain in the construction, built avowedly on a concept which makes of death almost a nostalgic aspiration to the onlooker. And yet it remains a challenge to the poetic imagination.

The Moti Musjid in Agra is another gracious dream construction typical of the elegant Shah Jehan, and the Jumma Musjid at Delhi, very like the Moti Musjid at Agra, in plan, though larger and with two minarettes, which were absent at Agra, outshines all other buildings in Delhi, its onion dome standing out in a strange magnificence.

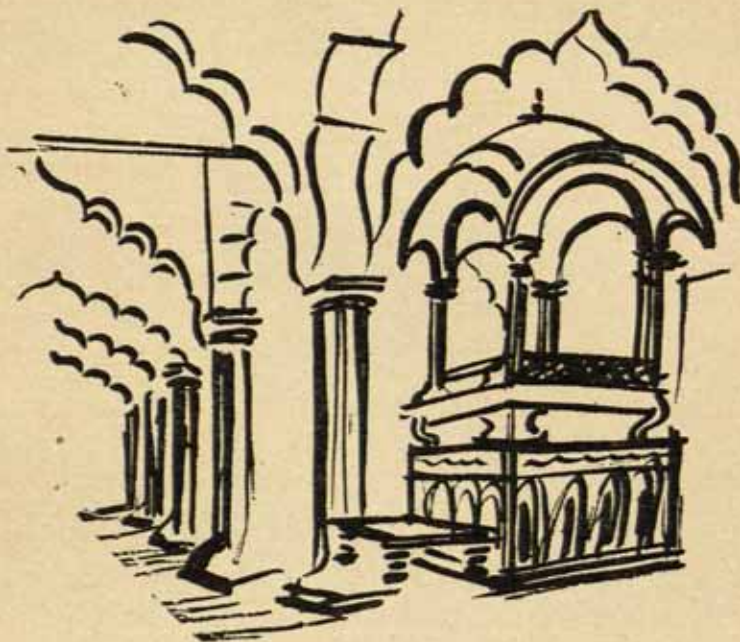
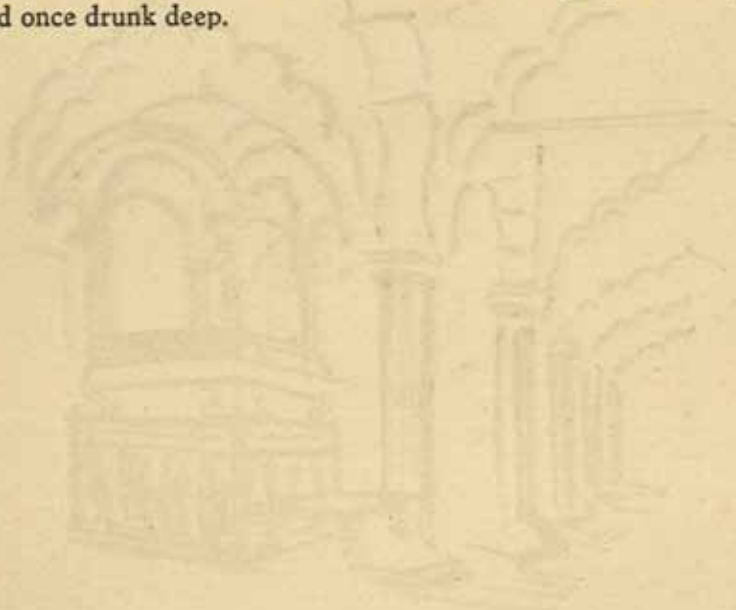


Fig. 56. Diwan-i-Khas

The Red Fort at Delhi, also a replica of the fort at Agra, unfolds through each noble door vista upon vista of Shah Jehan's sensibility, compensating us for all the ruin that was to follow, in the wake of political disruption created by his son and successor Aurangzeb.

For, though Aurangzeb did try to build in spite of his constant campaigning, he was a puritan and brought the touch of death to everything he undertook.

From now on the buildings ordered by the members of the Moghul dynasty, as well as the other princes, are all in a minor key. In their own right they are unforgettable structures, as, for instance, the Imam Baras built by the Nawabs of Oudh in Lucknow. But the decadence is obvious from the tomb of Safdar Jung, the founder of the Lucknow dynasty, situated near Humayun's tomb in Delhi and overshadowed by the former's nobility. Equally decadent is the tomb of Nawab of Junagadh in Gujerat, a late example of Moghul architecture. The interesting wooden mosque, Shah Hamdan, in Srinagar, and some of the small tombs in Lahore, still show vitality, but clearly they are significant of the decline of the Muhammadan tradition. And, soon, only the lion and the lizard were to keep tryst where Jamshed had once drunk deep.



FURTHER INDIA AND INDONESIA



Fig. 57. Head of Buddha: Angkor Wat

THE aborigines of Southern Indo-China and the Indonesian islands belonged to the Negrito type, which extends from Madagascar to Formosa, the Philippines and New Zealand. At the beginning of the Christian era, northern races of Yunan and Tibet were moving southwards and establishing themselves in the Irrawady, Menam and Mekong valleys; at the same time Indian influences were beginning to be felt. About the fourth and fifth centuries rulers of South Indian origin were in power in Cambodia, Campa, Sumatra and Java. With the exception of Burma, the prevailing religion was Brahmanical (Shaiva); there were also original ancestor cults reinforced and modified by Indian ideas. Hinayana Buddhism reached Sumatra in the fifth and Java in the sixth century, and appeared in Cambodia still later. The period of Buddhist expansion extended from about A.D. 400 to 800.



Fig. 58. Female Dancer, Musee de Tourane, Hanoi

The 'Primitive' and 'Cubic' architecture of this period (Prapatom in Siam, numerous scattered sites in Cambodia, the Mison group in Campa, the Dierig Plateau groups in Java) is markedly Indian in character and purest in form; the finest sculpture, too, though but

little is known, dates from the same time. The term 'Cubic' alludes to a characteristic aspect of the architecture, recognizable alike in Cambodia, Campa and Java. There are analogies with the brick temples of the Gupta period and the early Pallava architecture of southern India.

There followed a 'Classical' period in which the various kingdoms attained to the height of their power and magnificence, and to which belonged the most splendid monuments. Towards the end of this period, the various languages and literatures took shape. Mahayana Buddhism became increasingly prominent, intimately associated and bound up with Shaivism, as in Nepal. Vaishnava forms of Hinduism also appeared more conspicuously. At the same time the apotheosis of kings, and the cult of divine royalty, became more and more prominent as a result of which, particularly in Cambodia and Java, we find many posthumous statues of kings made in the form of the deity whom they worshipped, and now indistinguishable from the statues of actual deities. The limiting dates are naturally not quite the same in all the kingdoms, but broadly speaking extend from A.D. 750 or 800 to A.D. 1100 or 1200. The great monuments include the Schwedagon and Ananda pagodas of Pagan in Burma (late eleventh century); Angkor Thom with the palace and Bayon temple (ninth century) and Angkor Wat (twelfth century), in Cambodia; the Dong Duong group in Campa (ninth century); Candi Kalasan (A.D. 778); Mendut, Borobodur (late ninth century) and Candi Zoro Jongrang group at Prambanam (about A.D. 900) in Java. The architecture is at once luxurious and refined, with all its surfaces very richly decorated. Specially to be mentioned are the gallery reliefs of Jatakas and other Buddhist subjects at Borobodur (Fig. 61); the Angkor Thom palace terrace with the frieze of elephants and *garuda* caryatides, and, in the same city, the great Bayon temple with its towers with four faces (representing a *mukha-lingam*) and gallery relief; the Angkor Wat, with its reliefs of dancers and long gallery reliefs of Brahmanical mythological and epic subjects (Fig. 57); the Ananda temple at Pagan, with its Buddhist reliefs and glazed tiles illustrating *jatakas*.

Following upon these four or five centuries of power and splendour, came a gradual political disintegration and aesthetic decadence. This was the consequence, in part, of the exhaustion of energetic and natural resources, and, in part, of invasions during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Northern races (Lao-Thai, etc.)

were pushed by the Mongols further northwards into Indo-China, the Mongols themselves captured Pagan, the Siamese possessed themselves of Western Cambodia and, finally, of almost the whole kingdom; the Annamities pushed southwards the Cams (whose civilization perished



Fig. 59. Ganesha from Java

in toto before the eighteenth century); the Mussalmans possessed Malacca and made themselves masters of Sumatra and finally of Java. Cambodia, under Siamese domination, became a Hinayana Buddhist country; Burma has remained essentially Buddhist throughout; Bali alone preserves a mixture of Hinduism and Buddhism.

The earlier part of the period of decay is by no means, however, without important and beautiful monuments. Amongst these may be mentioned the Sajjanalaya-Sukhodya group in Siam, and all the Siamese Buddhist sculpture of the Ayuthia period; monuments at Binh Dinh, the Cam capital from 1100 onwards; Candi Jago (1280) and sculptures of Singosari (1220-1292) and of Majapahit

1294 to 15th century) with its Ramayana reliefs in *wayang* style



Fig. 60. Sudat Vat, Siam

leading to the still surviving Hindu art of Bali. No great monuments

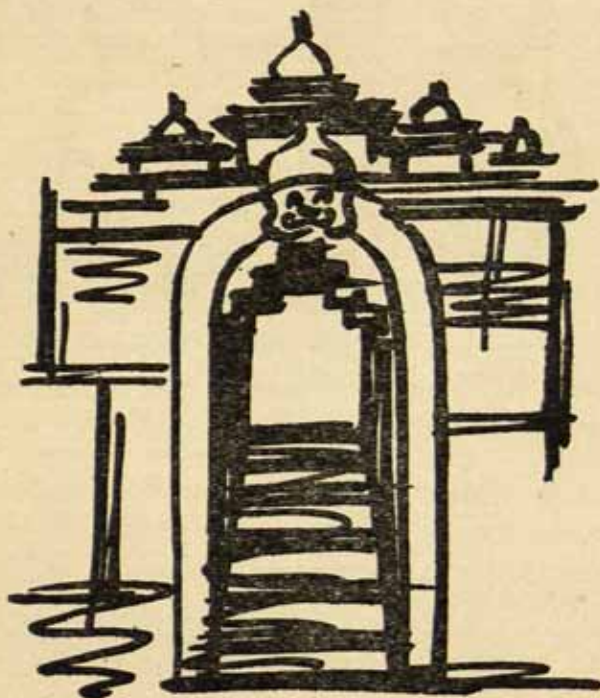


Fig. 61. Gateway of Borobudur

date, in any case, from later than the fourteenth century. Apart from the ancient monuments, it is primarily in the theatre (music and classical dances of Burma, Siam, Cambodia and, above all, Java) that the splendour and spiritual power of the old Indo-Chinese and Indonesian cultures can now be best understood. For the rest, just as in Ceylon, the ancient artistic traditions are only to be recognized and recovered in the form of the folk arts.

MEDIAEVAL BUDDHIST PAINTING

THE continuity of Indian Painting from the seventh to the sixteenth century is to be inferred from literary references and from the internal evidences of later works. A limited number of actual documents has, however, survived, fairly representing the Buddhist and, as we shall see, later also the Jain tradition. Of Indian Buddhist manuscripts, we have two from Bengal, on palm leaf (Cambridge MSS. Add. 1464 and

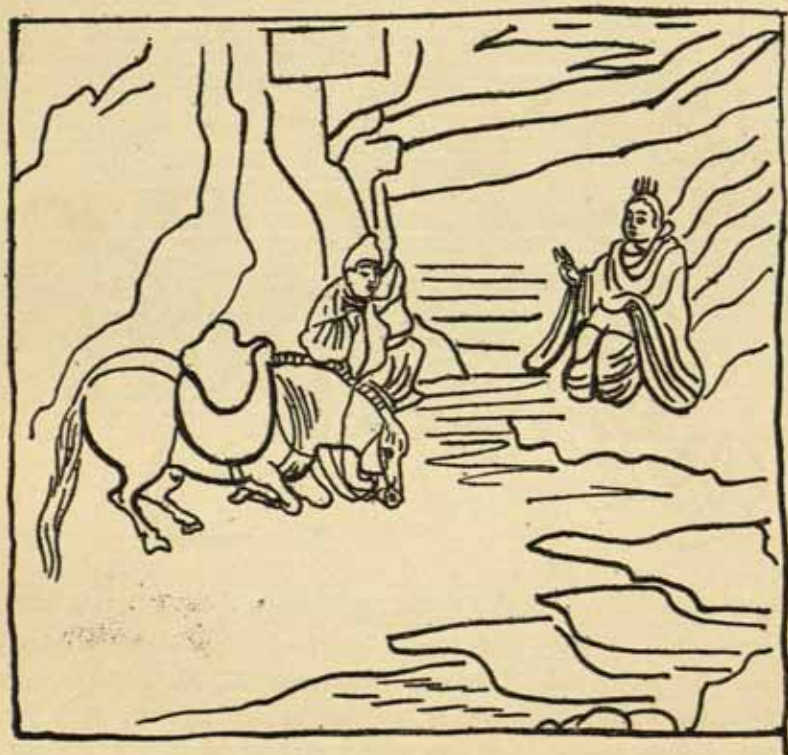


Fig. 62. Painting on silk from Tun Huang, China, 9th-10th cent. A.D.

1688), one with painted wooden covers and both with miniatures representing Buddhist divinities and scenes from the life of the Buddha. Quite similar in style are the better known Nepalese MSS. usually texts of the Astasshasriks Prajnaparamita. One at Cambridge (MSS. Add. 1643), one formerly in Calcutta (MS. A 15, contents now missing), and another in the Vredenberg collection, Calcutta, dated A.D. 1090, the two first containing respectively eighty-five and thirty-seven miniatures: both are of the early eleventh century. A similar text, dated about A.D. 1136 is now in the Boston Museum; there are eighteen miniatures in the text, and the wooden covers are intact, painted with divinities and scenes from the life of the Buddha, in

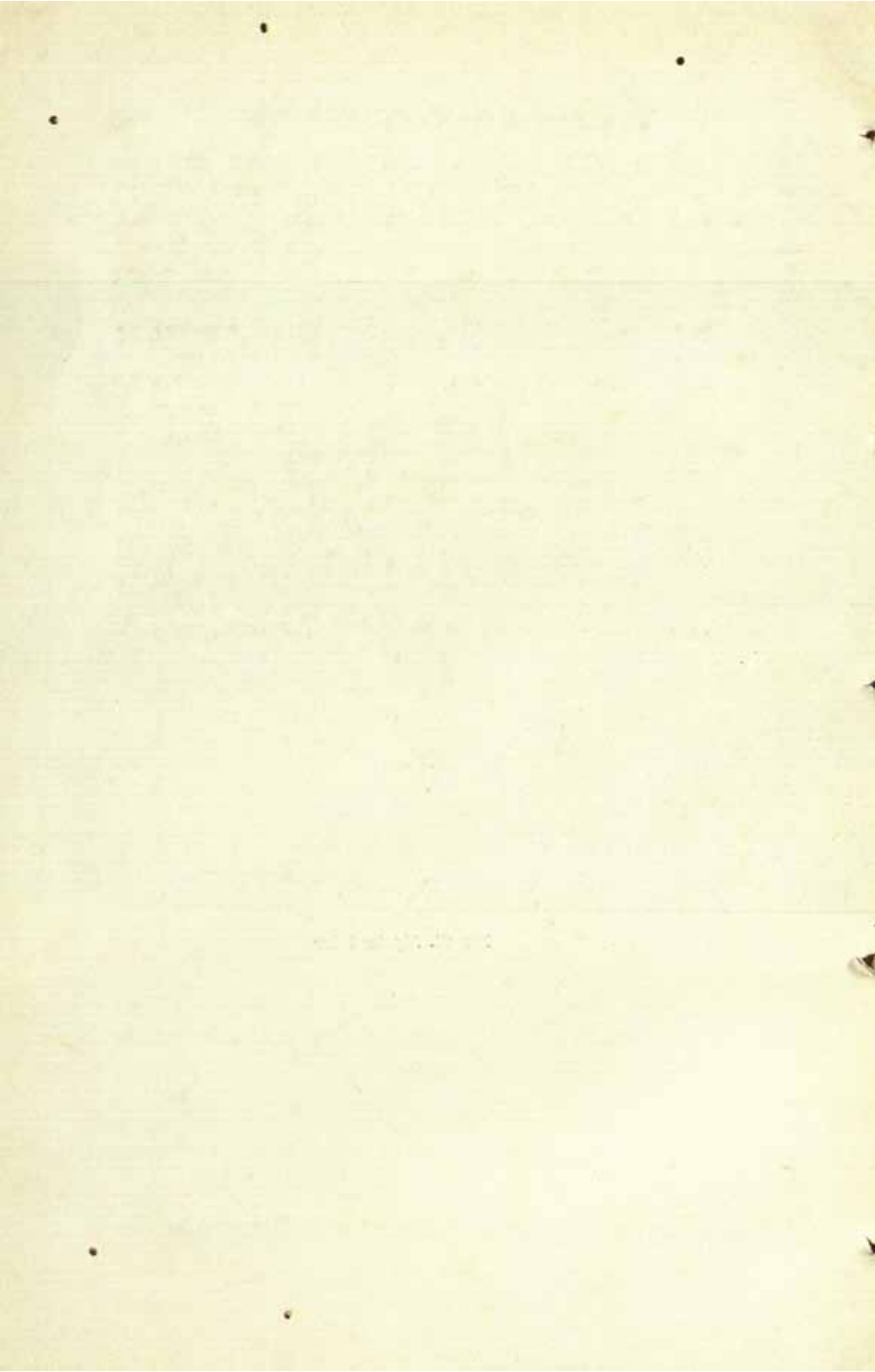


Fig. 63. Palace Scene. Wall Painting Pagan, Burma about 18th cent. A.D.

particular, the Nativity and Mara Dharsana, also a group of seven previous Buddhas and Maitreya. Professor A. N. Tagore owns a slightly later example of which the covers are painted with Jataka scenes. All these are MSS. on palm leaf; the miniatures are not (as in Persian manuscripts) originally and decoratively associated with



FIG. 64. Nepalese Frieze



the script, but occupy spaces (*alekkya-sthana*) left by the scribe to be filled by the painter. Besides these manuscripts there are some undoubtedly ancient (tenth century) ? Nepalese or, at any rate, Indian paintings of Bodhisattvas found at Tun Huang in Western China and the same site has yielded what is probably the oldest surviving Tibetan Buddhist Banner.

Taking these Buddhist paintings collectively we must observe first that they obviously represent a continuation of the older tradition. The composition (arrangement of the figures) and iconography remain unchanged. The scene, however, is much more crowded, and colour is stronger and more formal. The art is essentially ecclesiastical in quality, much less emotional and more purely decorative than before. The glowing colour and accomplished drawing lend to all these manuscript illustrations a high aesthetic interest, and their rarity a great historical value. The tradition of manuscript illustration and temple banner painting has survived in Nepal and Tibet up to the present day; many works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are of high merit. The later manuscripts are usually written on thick black paper.



Fig. 65. Nyaung-gyin Nat Taung-ngu Míngaung Nat, Burma

In Ceylon, remains of frescoes illustrating Jatakas were discovered on the walls of the Maha Demala Saya at Polonnaruva (I can hardly say 'are preserved', as they have been left exposed to sun and rain for many years); these cannot be later than the thirteenth century. A smaller composition at Hindagala near Kandy, has been regarded as of seventh century date, but seems to me much later (twelfth to fourteenth century). Rock paintings at the Ridi Vihara may be old. As might be expected, the mediaeval Sinhalese paintings

are intermediate in character between those of the Sigiriya period and the formal decorative art of the eighteenth century still preserved on the walls of many viharas restored by Kitti Sri, notably at Degaldoruwa near Kandy. There are also illustrated Sinhalese Buddhist manuscripts of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A tradition of Buddhist painting has also flourished in Burma, Siam and Cambodia, and survives to the present day in Burma and Siam. A highly sensuous and beautiful school of Buddhist and Hindu painting, on walls, on cloth and in manuscripts was flourishing in Bali in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and still survives.

JAIN PAINTING

THE tradition of Jain Painting is recovered in manuscripts of the thirteenth and subsequent centuries. The text most frequently illustrated is the *Kalpa Sutra* of Bhadrabahu, containing the lives of the Jinas, most of the spaces being devoted to Mahavira. There are also illustrated cosmologies and cosmological diagrams; and appended to the *Kalpa Sutra* there is usually to be found the edifying tale of Kalikacharya. The oldest illustrated manuscript is on palm leaf, and dated equivalent to A.D. 1237. It is preserved in the Patan *Bhandarrom*. Several illustrated *Kalpa Sutas* of the fifteenth century are known (British Museum, India Office, Berlin, Boston and Nahar collection,



Fig. 66. Nativity of Mahavira. Illustration of a palm leaf manuscript of *Kalpa Sutra*

Calcutta). The pictures take the form of square panels of the full height of the page, occupying spaces left for the purpose; only in very rare cases is the whole page used. The proper subject to be represented is often indicated by the marginal legend, sometimes by a diagrammatic marginal sketch, the former doubtless due to the scribe, the latter to the artist taking note of his instructions. The same subjects are repeated in the various manuscripts almost without



Fig. 67. Jinedatta Suri and his disciples

variation; it is very evident that both in composition and style the pictures belong to an ancient and faithfully preserved tradition. In some manuscripts the prevailing ground colour is red, in others there is a ground of gold leaf which is left uncoloured to represent flesh tints, elsewhere yellow. In examples of this kind of painting representing the Tonsure of Mahavira, the ground colour is red; Mahavira is seated beneath his tree, in rocky landscape attended by the four-armed Indra, who receives the royal robes and gives the monastic robes in return. Heavy clouds (in Indian culture, an auspicious sight) hang low on the high horizon, as in early Rajput paintings; and, as in Sinhalese Buddhist art, the vacant space is occupied by a lotus rosette. This is an art of fine and nervous draughtsmanship, calligraphic, facile and restless, intellectual rather than emotional. The colouring is strong, but less essential than the drawing, the composition formal and traditionally fixed, with an abundance of circumstantial detail, giving a valuable picture of mediaeval manners. The drawing of the figure is peculiar; angular forms are very characteristic, the nose is sharply pointed, the corners of the eyes extended as in Indian poetry, to meet the ears, and the further

eye in *profile perdu*, project beyond the facial outline. Mediaeval Indian art has nothing finer to show than the Jain paintings; only the early Rajput pictures of *ragas* and *raginis* are of equal aesthetic rank.

MOGHUL PAINTING

MOGHUL painting—the older designation “Indo-Persian” still survives in sale catalogues—is the painting practised and developed at the Moghul courts under Akbar and his successors, and covers a period from the middle of the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century; with nineteenth century and modern survivals in the ivory miniatures of Delhi, which are collected by every tourist but are of no importance in the history of art. The paintings are of two kinds: the first, in which the Persian factor is strongest, consisting of illustrations in manuscripts, the second consisting typically of portraits mounted as album (*murraqa*) pages, usually in combination with

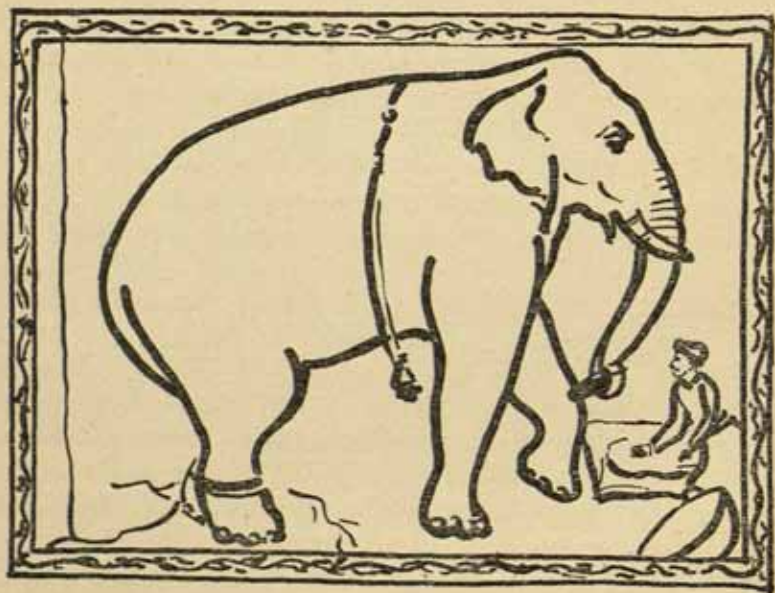


Fig. 68. Jehangir's Royal Elephant, 17th cent.

specimens of calligraphy and decorated borders. Both applications are unlike those of typically Hindu painting where manuscript illustration is of a quite different character, and in any case very unusual, and other paintings, even when consecutive and of album size, are not bound together but merely kept in order and tied up in cloth. There are also Moghul wall paintings but these are rare and usually badly preserved. The true character of the style is apparent chiefly in the portraiture and in the representation of historical events, typically durbar scenes; when the inferior works and copies have been eliminated (which is very necessary) what remains provide a complete iconography of nearly all the figures prominent in the history of Northern India during more than a century and a half. Further, a considerable number of Moghul paintings, both on manuscripts and on separate leaves, are signed; and in addition to this many are mentioned by name elsewhere, particularly in the *Memoirs of Jehangir*, where particular paintings are referred to, some of which are still in existence.

There is no real evidence of a school of Muhammadan painting in India before the time of Akbar. The few literary references only show that certain Muhammadan rulers, particularly Ala-ud-Din Firuz Shah in the fourteenth century, employed indigenous painters, as they did architects; Firuz Shah held it "right among monarchs to have painted chambers to gratify their eyes in retirement" but "prohibited the painting of portraits as contrary to the law, and directed that garden scenes should be painted instead."

The early Moghul school is represented by some paintings dating from the third quarter of the sixteenth century. Amongst these some of the most notable are a 'portrait' of Sultan Ala-ud-Din Firuz Shah (1351-1388) and his secretary Khwaja Hasan, in the British Museum, etc.

More important was the great series of paintings made to illustrate the *Hamza Nama*, represented by two examples in the Boston Collections, etc. This was the real beginning of a distinctively Moghul school, and this beginning is connected with Akbar and with his father Humayun. The latter, when in exile at the court of Shah Tahmasp, (in 1544) had become acquainted with two Persian artists, Mir Sayyid Ali and Khwaja Abdu-s-Samad. In 1550 Humayun was able to establish himself in Kabul and summoned these two artists from Tabriz and engaged the former to produce a large illustrated copy of the *Hamza Nama* to contain in all 2400 pictures. These were painted

in cotton and of large size. The work was continued for Akbar, other painters collaborating. According to the *Ma'athirul' Umara* :

"Akbar . . . was very fond of the story of Amir Hamza, which contained 360 tales. So much so that in the female apartments he used to recite them like a story-teller. He had the wonderful incidents of that story illustrated from beginning to end of the book and set up in twelve volumes. Each volume contained one hundred folios, and each folio was a cubit (zira) long. Each folio contained two pictures and at the front of each picture there was a description delightfully written by Khwaja Ata Uilah Munshi or Qazwin. Fifty painters of Bihzad-like pencil were engaged, at first under the superintendence of the Nadirul-mulk, Humayunshai Sayyid Ali Judai of Tabriz, and afterwards under the superintendence of Khwaja Abdu-s-Samad of Shiraz. No one has seen another such gem nor was there anything equal-to it in the establishment of any king. At present the book is in the Imperial Library."

Amongst the fifty collaborators here referred to were probably Indian and other Persian artists. The work has a markedly but not purely Persian character: the costume, architecture and treatment of foliage are all to a certain extent, and to that extent, quite definitely Indian. European influences, too, are recognizable. All these elements may be associated on one and the same page: this represents the Moghul style in the making. As remarked by Gluck :

"The fact that all these elements are recognizable in one and the same picture in an association not quite unified, shows that our pictures belong to an initial stage of true Moghul art, in which the Persian factor which came in with Humayun still predominates, but in which the native Indian factor later brought in by Akbar is already apparent; and where an independent court life has become vigorous enough to borrow and incorporate foreign formulæ of even more distant origin without being subservient to them."

Once firmly established on the throne, that is to say, after 1570, Akbar was able to devote more time and energy to cultural pursuits. More than one passage in the *Ain-i-Akbari* refers to his patronage and appreciation of painting.

"From his earliest youth, he has shown a great predilection for this art, and gives it every encouragement as he looks upon it as a means both of study and amusement."

His own recorded words have often been quoted :

" There are many that hate painting ; but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God, for a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, one after another must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and is thus forced to think of God, the giver of life, and will thus increase in knowledge."

The author Abul Fazl further remarks ;

" Bigotted followers of the letter of the law are hostile to the art of painting ; but their eyes now see the truth."

It may be observed here that the Muhammadan objection to the representation of living beings in art is not based upon a Qu'ranic injunction, but on a later tradition (*Hadith*) ; and that while this " tradition ", is regarded as binding by strict Sunnis (and this explains Aurangzeb's aversion to the arts), it is generally ignored by the Shiates, who predominated in Persia and of whom Akbar may be said to have represented the most latitudinarian type.



Fig. 69. Ragini ; Hamvira

Abul Fazl further devotes a whole chapter to the work of the painters employed by Akbar. More than a hundred in number, they were accommodated in a special building in the new capital at Fatehpur Sikri during the period of occupation (1570-1585). All the work done was inspected by the Emperor weekly and, according to his view of its merits, rewards were given or salaries increased. The master painters in charge were the two Persian artists, Mir Sayyid Ali and Khwaja Abdu-s-Samad, already referred to. It was here, no doubt, that all the later pages of the great *Hamza Nama* volume were completed. Not only these, but other paintings, very definitely illustrate an Indian architecture of the Fatehpur Sikri type, and costumes



Fig. 70. A Pair of Cranes, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

and manners such as were current at the Moghul court in the later part of the sixteenth century. Amongst other court painters named there were many Hindus; perhaps three quarters of the known names of Moghul painters represents Hindus. This fact, like all others connected with the arts as practised at the Moghul courts, reflects the personal influence and policy of the Emperor, not without reason. Abul Fazl says with regard to Fatehpur Sikri: "His Majesty dresses the work of his mind and heart in the garments of stone and clay." We have, apart from their work, two lists of Akbar's

painters. One, *Waqiat-i-Baburi* mentioning nineteen Hindu and three Muhammadan painters, the other in *A'in-i-Akbari*, mentioning thirteen Hindus and four Muhammadans. While all these Hindu painters acquired and practised the characteristic Moghul style developed at Fatehpur Sikri, they necessarily carried over into Moghul art many stylistic features which are recognizably Indian. The Indian character of Moghul painting is further emphasized by the fact that the costumes and environment represented became increasingly Indian, again as a result of Akbar's policy of favouring Rajput courtiers and his marriage with Rajput princesses (of whom one became the mother of Jehangir). A remark of Abul Fazl shows that not only were indigenous artists thus employed, but that their work was even more highly appreciated than that of Persian artists:

" Their pictures surpass our conception of things ; few indeed in the whole world are found equal to them."

It is not quite clear whether this refers to indigenous Indian painting (Rajput, etc.) as it existed apart from the Moghul school or, as is more likely, to the work of the Hindu painters at the Moghul court. In any case, as observed by Gluck, the passage must be regarded as referring to the "freis Lebendigkeit", (actuality, vitality) with which the landscape elements are treated, for this feature, which in Indian paintings contrasts so markedly with the decorative formality of Persian painting, must have been quite noticeable to anyone accustomed to Persian book illustrations of the period. It must not be forgotten that Persian art at this time was already in a late and almost decadent stage, exquisite, indeed, but hardly significant (as it had been two centuries earlier), while Indian painting, as we know contemporary Rajput works, at this time exhibited much of the vigour and naivete characteristics of primitives.

But while these Indian elements are clearly recognizable, and their emphasis in Moghul art is easily explained, Moghul painting remains a distinct creation, and cannot be described as dependent on contemporary Indian painting. This is apparent both in technique, style and characteristic themes. Indian painting has been largely an art of wall painting, where large brushes were used to cover large areas with colour. Although extremely delicate, miniatures on paper existed already as illustrations to Gujarati manuscripts dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the earliest Rajput miniatures are likewise painted on paper. Akbar found it necessary to make

special provision for the manufacture of fine paper and pigments and Abul Fazl remarks that the mixture of colours was especially improved.

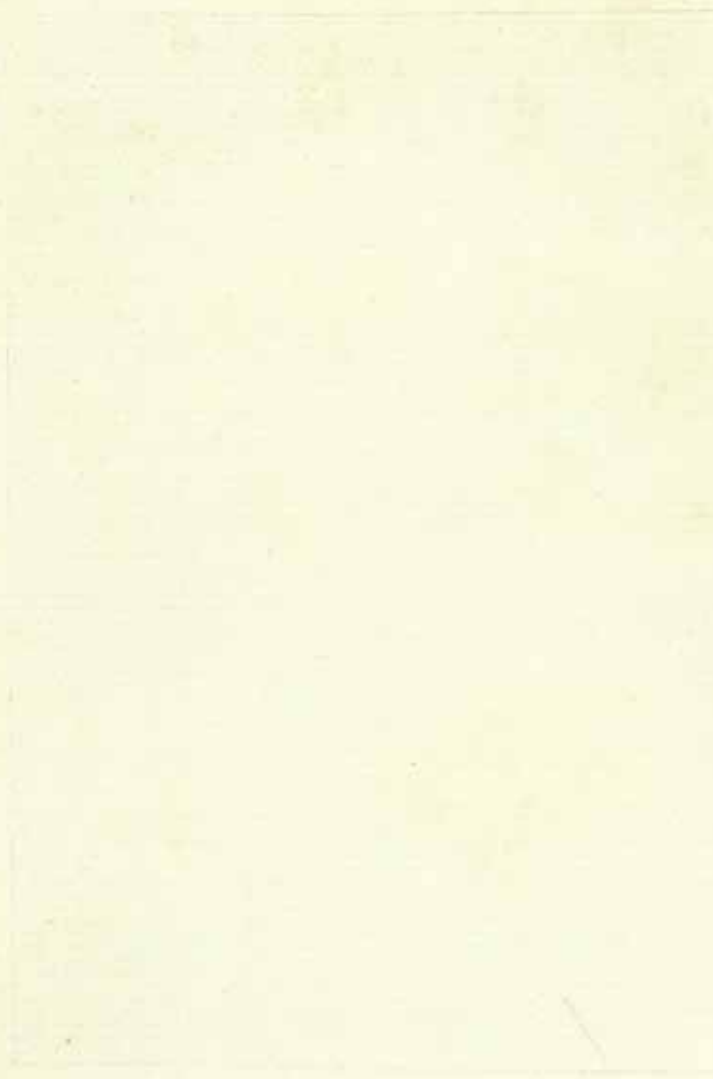
We find actually in Moghul paintings a greater variety of colours, and more delicate shades of colour than can be seen in Rajput works. The technique of the portrait style, too, is developed, as a result of the primary interest felt in individual character, and in actual appearances, in a direction which brings it nearer to European art of the Renaissance period than any other works made in India at any time. The drawing is here based on observation, and an effect of visual reality is given by means of shading. The outline closely follows the observed forms and is never either diagrammatic, as in early Rajput, or flowing as in later Rajput works. Portraits of individual animals observed with the same minute interest are equally characteristic, and the details of architecture, costume, and embroidery are rendered with the same careful accuracy. The Moghul style is so definite that, even when it is used in the illustration of purely Hindu works such as the *Rasikapriya*, it cannot be confused with the Rajput; it is only in the eighteenth century in the Central Provinces and Oudh that there developed a mixed style the examples of which cannot be easily classified as Moghul or Rajput.

Much of the earlier Moghul painting is an art of book illustration closely related to that of Persia: amongst the most important works of this kind are a *Waqiat-i-Baburi* (British Museum MS. 3714), containing the signatures of twenty-two artists, and a *Fables of Bidpai* (*Kalila va Dimnah*, British Museum MS. 1857) written for Jehangir in 1610 and containing the signatures of Aqa Raza, his son Abu'l Hasan, Bishandas, and others almost equally well known. But not only were manuscripts thus prepared and illustrated for inclusion in Akbar's magnificent library: Akbar also had made and illustrated Persian versions of such Hindu classics as the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, and *Yogavasishta Ramayana*. The illustrations to these works are in a purely Moghul, or, as it may fairly be called at this time, Indo-Persian manner. The cases of the *Rasikapriya*, written in Nagari characters, but illustrated in a Moghul style (although adhering to strictly Hindu subject-matter) is unique.

But the themes of classical Persian literature had begun to lose their interest. As Prince Daniyal is reported to have said, "The love story of Farhad and Shirin has grown old: if we read at all, let it be what we have ourselves seen and heard." This interest in the



FIG. 71. Audience with Emperor Jehangir



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contemporary world is characteristic of Moghul culture. It is well exemplified for example in Jehangir's *Memoirs*, and it fully accounts for the themes of Moghul painting as a developed style, where we meet almost exclusively with subjects of historical or curious interest, portraits, durbar scenes, and pictures of rare or beautiful animals.

Undoubtedly, Moghul painting reached its finest development in the reign of Jehangir (1606-1628). Already as a Prince, this Emperor had had his own painters, and these, together with many of those who had worked for Akbar, remained in his service. Many individual painters and paintings are mentioned in the *Memoirs* and a number of these are represented in the Collection. Here, too, the royal patron lays claim to connoisseurship as follows :

"My liking for painting and my practice in judging it have arrived at such a point that when any work is brought before me, either of deceased artists or those of the present day, without the names being told me, I say on the spur of the moment that it is the work of such and such a man. And if there be a picture containing many portraits, and each face be the work of different master, I can discover which face is the work of each of them. If any other person has put in the eye and eyebrow of a face, I can perceive whose work the original face is, and who has painted the eye and eyebrows."

Elsewhere, Jehangir refers to a picture gallery in a garden :

"... adorned with pictures by master hands. In the most honoured positions were the likenesses of Humayun and of my father opposite to my own, and that of my brother Shah Abbas. After them were the likenesses of Mirza Kamaran, Mirza Muhammad Hakim, Shah Murad, and Sultan Daniyal. On the second storey [row ?] were the likenesses of the amirs and special servants. On walls of the outer hall the stages of the road to Kashmir were recorded in the order in which I had come to them."

This was in A.D. 1620.

Jehangir regarded as his best artists (1) Abu'l Hasan, who was the son of Aqa Raza, and received the title of Nadirau-z-zaman, "wonder of the age", (2) Ustad Mansur, who received the title of Nadir-ul-Asr, and in the art of drawing was "unique in his generation," and (3) Bishandas, "who (is) unequalled in his age for taking likenesses". All of these are represented in the Boston Museum Collections. One of the finest pictures is the Durbar of Jehangir, containing many identified portraits; the signature, unfortunately, is confined to the

words " *Amal-i-kamtirin Khanazadan* ", " work of the humble house-born ". This title of " houseborn " was conferred on certain persons, born and brought up in the royal service, and amongst others on Abu'l-Hasan, who may have been one of those who collaborated in painting the *darbar* scene in question.

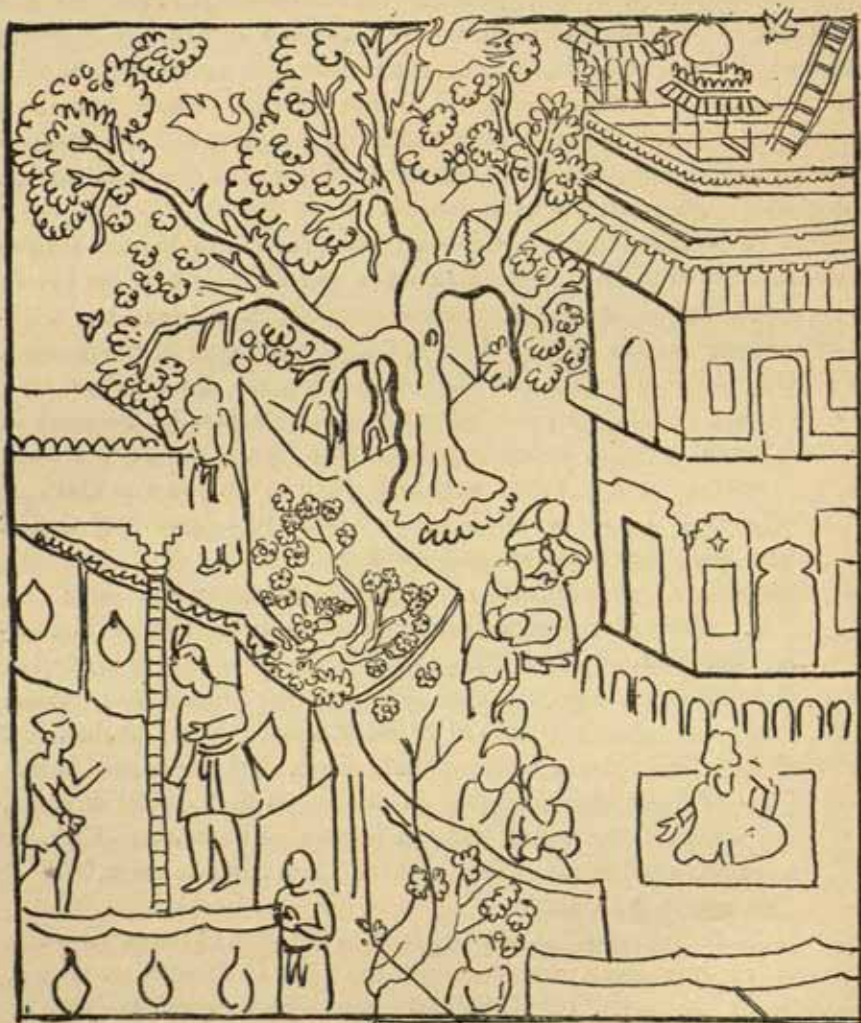


Fig. 72. Detail from an illustration to the *Hamza Nama*

It would appear that Jehangir by his patronage of Aqa Raza and others, really encouraged in his youth a more definitely Persian phase of Moghul art than that represented by Akbar's own artists. The

most important example of this earlier Persian phase of the Jehangir school is in the British Museum MS. Add. 18579, a lavishly illustrated *Kalila va Dimnah*, completed in 1610; and from this volume, it would appear that the work of these more or less Persian artists was not completely absorbed and assimilated to the Moghul style before that date.

Some reference must be made to the European influence apparent in Moghul painting. Not only is this influence apparent from time to time in actual paintings of the time of Akbar and Jehangir, especially in the landscape backgrounds, but we find also copies and adaptations of European paintings and engravings in fair number. Some European influences had already affected Persian painting to a small degree, but there can be no doubt that the European elements in Moghul art are to be traced directly to the influence of pictures and engravings brought by the Jesuits, and by other travellers such as Sir Thomas Roe, and presented by them to Akbar and Jehangir. Akbar is known to have obtained a number of European objects from Goa in 1578, including, among others, an organ. Later, he received a Jesuit mission at Fatehpur Sikri, and received a picture of the Madonna, which he hung in a place of honour: a representation of the Virgin will be observed in a place of honour at the durbar of Jahangir. In 1580 he received a copy of Plantyn's Royal Polyglot Bible, in which there are many engravings by Flemish artists of the school of Quentin Matsys (1466-1531). An album of copies of European pictures, made by Kesava Das, was completed in 1588.

Jehangir displayed an even greater interest in European paintings and obtained numerous examples, both religious and secular from the Jesuits, from Sir Thomas Roe (the English Ambassador) and from the Portuguese traders. Many of the European pictures were copies in miniature size. The nimbus, by which, in the greater part of Moghul art, royal persons are distinguished, does not appear in the earlier examples; and though in Hindu and Buddhist art the nimbus had been in use much earlier, in Moghul painting, it is probably of European and Christian origin. In the reign of Shah Jehan, we hear less of European originals, but it is clear that the new Emperor continued to be interested in Western works; European influence begins to be evident not merely in the copying of examples but in the increased use of shadow and of linear perspective. When, after the reign of Aurangzeb, Indian painting again flourished at the Moghul courts, these influences have been more completely absorbed, and appear both in

the mixed Moghul and Rajput style of Delhi and Oudh, and more rarely and sporadically in the Rajput painting of the hills. Towards the close of the eighteenth century, contact with European influences became more intimate, European painters came to India and Indian painting tended more and more to become a merely "stagnant reflection" of that of the West, a tendency emphasized in the nineteenth century by the establishment of European "schools of art".

Moghul painting under Shah Jehan is already overripe; the attenuation of the style is especially apparent in the album of Dara Shikoh (India Office, London) completed in 1641-1642.

Under Aurangzeb, painting, together with the other arts, must have fallen into disrepute. As remarked above, and as observed by Bernier, the (Moghul) arts flourished only under royal patronage; and while, under Akbar and Jehangir, a magnificent result was achieved, it needed but a few years of Aurangzeb's puritanical and destructive energy (his hatred of music is well known) to complete a decline of which the seeds had already been sown. Already under Shah Jehan, court patronage had not sufficed to give adequate support to all the painters, whose numbers had greatly increased under Jehangir, and so there developed a class of bazaar painters, only intermittently employed by the grandees. Although some pictures of officials of Aurangzeb's time exist, a few paintings dealing with his campaigns in the Deccan, and a rather larger number of late portraits representing him as a very old man, it cannot be supposed that Aurangzeb himself supported or encouraged any painters, and the greater part of the work done in his reign must have been commissioned by others, officials or common people. We know of one family of painters, ancestors of Mola Ram, who fled with their patron Suleiman Shikoh to the Garhwal hills and there ultimately acquired a purely local technique, more Rajput than Moghul. Many must have migrated to other courts, for example, to Hyderabad, where a local Daccani school flourished for some time, and perhaps also to Rajputana and the Punjab.

On the other hand, in the early part of the eighteenth century, we meet with a surprising revival of Moghul painting, both in quality and quantity: Aurangzeb's sons and immediate successors inherited none of his austerity and were only too addicted to luxury. But this love of luxury included an appreciation of the arts. Even of Nadir Shah, who sacked Delhi in 1739, there exist numerous portraits which are not without merit. The collections include a spirited equestrian

portrait of Allahvardi Khan, who ruled Bengal in practical independence. It would appear, too, from several fine portraits of Muhammad Shah that accomplished painters had been summoned to work in Delhi: one magnificent example in pure and brilliant colour is essentially Rajput in character, and some others in which the Rajput are less conspicuous. A very mixed character is, in fact, apparent, both as regards the style and the subject-matter of late Moghul paintings, and there exist many examples which cannot be easily classified. This mixed style persisted during the later part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century in works produced in Lucknow and Patna, those from the latter place being well represented in the Boston Collections by a number of pleasing floral designs. Occasional portraits of Europeans are met with. The Moghul style, properly so-called, survived during the nineteenth century in the well-known ivory miniatures of Delhi, all of which may be described as painstaking but lifeless imitations of older portrait miniatures and architectural scenes; the technique is essentially European, and practically all of these miniatures must have been produced, as is the case at the present day, for European buyers. Nothing of importance is later than Muhammad Shah (died 1748), and hardly anything of supreme excellence later than about 1640.

Reference has been made to the Deccani school, but the influence of Moghul court art extended even further southward to Mysore and Tanjore, where painters from the north settled in the eighteenth century. The Mysore school flourished most in the first half of the nineteenth century under Raja Krishnaraja Wodeyar, who died in 1868. There is a definite tradition of northern origin in the case of Tanjore artists, who entered the service of Raja Sarabhoji towards the close of the eighteenth century and some of their descendants are still at work. In all probability, other Moghul painters found their way to the Maratha Court at Poona in the west, where it is known that Rajput painters also worked.

RAJPUT PAINTING

RAJPUT Painting—the Painting of Rajasthan and the Panjab Himalayas under Rajput patronage, constitutes the only considerable body of Hindu painting extant. Wall paintings of the seventeenth century are found at Bikanir, Palitana, Udaipur, paintings of almost life size at Jaipur and probably wall paintings at other places in Rajputana. Most of the work, however, is executed on paper and is of comparatively small size. The known paintings cover a period extending roughly from the middle of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the



Fig. 73. Rajput Painting: Basohli School, Krishna and Radha, XVIII Cen. A.D.

nineteenth, about three hundred years; the tradition is now almost extinct.

The themes are mainly Pauranic, epic, lyrical (Krishna legends and Nayakas), and musical: there is also some portraiture. Illustrated books are almost unknown: but well-known stories (e.g., Nala and Damayanti, the *Devi Mahatmaya of the Markandeya Purana*) etc., are illustrated by a series of drawings, sometimes with inscribed texts. The paintings fall into two groups geographically, Rajasthani and Pahari; the Pahari paintings again into two groups, the earlier Jammu type and the later (eighteenth century) Kangra School, developed mainly under the patronage of Raja Samsara Chand.

The greatest interest attaches to the sixteenth and early seventeenth century Rajasthani paintings, which are almost invariably sets of pictures illustrating *Ragmalas*, poems describing the thirty-six or sometimes more, musical modes, the *ragas* and *raginis* (Fig. 75). The paintings, like the poems which they illustrate, represent situations of which the emotional colouring corresponds to the feeling or burden of the musical mode. The time of day or night, time of year and state of the weather appropriate



Fig. 74. Radha Bathing: Garhwal Painting, C. 1738
Victoria and Albert Museum

to the mode, are also indicated in the paintings. The compositions for particular modes are generally constant, the Bhairavi is always represented by a group of women worshipping at a Siva shrine,

Asavari by a female snake charmer. Todi by a woman with a vina, to the sound of which the wild deer are attracted, Desakhya by an acrobatic performance and so forth. The poem for the Madha-Madhavi Ragini refers to the pleasant rumbling of the thunder in the monsoon clouds, presaging rain, exciting the peacocks, and in like manner, the princess who longs to rest again in her absent husband's arms. Illustrations in the same style to Baramasa poems are much rarer. The constancy of the compositions, as well as the character of art, make it evident that we are recovering here, just as in the case of the illustrations to the Jain manuscripts, the formulae of an old and well established tradition. Amongst such formulae may be cited as examples, the manner of representing clouds, rain and lightning, the representation of hills as conical eminences usually built up of smaller elements, covered with flowers and grasses, and the manner of differentiating between day and night by a variation of the background without change in the illumination. A first glance at these paintings will suffice to convince the observer that they belong and could only belong to a pure Indian tradition: they are totally unlike Persian art of any period.

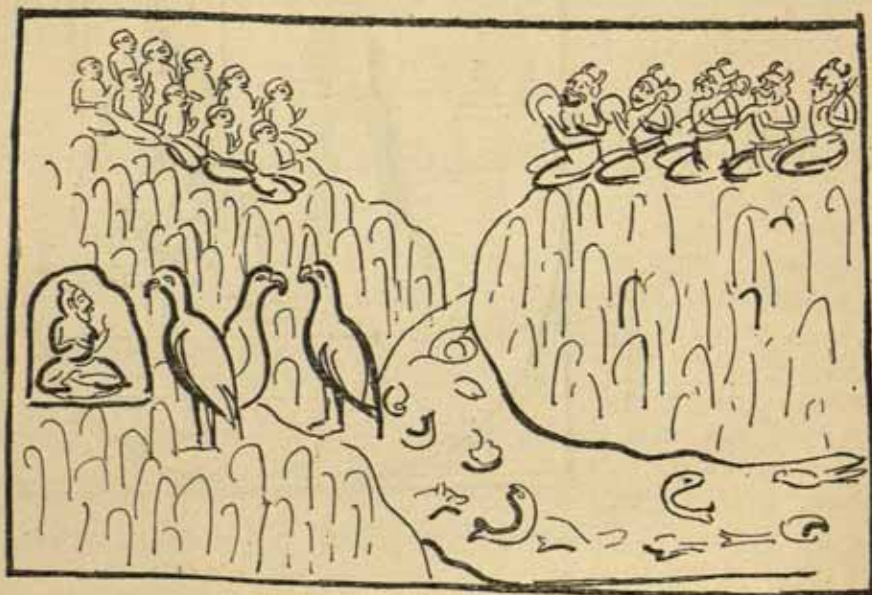


Fig. 76. Chamba Painting: Sampati relating the story of his early life to the Monkeys



Fig. 77. Baramasa Painting: Vaishakha

The most remarkable quality is one of glowing colour only to be compared with enamel, though the painting has actually a dead matte surface: pure reds, yellows and also pinks, greens and browns, are relieved by pure whites and velvet blacks. Gold, the use of which is probably foreign to indigenous tradition, does not occur until later in the history of Rajput painting. There are large masses of plain colour, against which the buildings, trees and figures stand out with great substantiality: this colour by itself establishes the planes and

forms. The composition is architectural, not as in Jain painting, calligraphic. The drawing has magnificent bravura but is less essential than the colour. Just as in the contemporary literary vernaculars, where words are reduced to bare roots, so in these tertiary Prakrits of pictorial art, the drawing is not explicit but entirely allusive; that is to say, it is made up of elements which have no unequivocal and unmistakable significance taken alone but when associated in phrases lend themselves to a very vigorous expression. In later Rajput art, the importance and continuity of the outline are restored, with loss of force, but with greater sweetness and realism. What we may call the fragmentary style of the early Rajput drawing has survived, however, on the circular playing cards of Bikanir to the present day.

The paintings of the Jammu district, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, very often have their inscriptions in the Takri character peculiar to the Dograhills. The best known examples are the large *Ramayana* pictures in the Boston and New York Museums, in size and composition very suggestive of wall paintings. The colouring is only less vivid than that of the early Rajasthani pictures: in the example illustrated the colour of the ground, extending almost to the top of the picture, is a strong red, the fortress of Lanka is golden. The other subjects met with are *ragas* and *raginis* (often different from those of Rajasthan), mythological and rhetorical subjects and portraits. Chamba paintings must be grouped with those of Jammu, though many Kangra paintings are to be found in the Chamba collections. All the Pahari schools are closely interrelated.

The Kangra school is a term used with reference to the work done in the whole Kangra valley and adjacent Panjab plains and includes also the branch represented by Mola Ram of Garhwal. It includes an early group of comparatively few examples (Fig. 74) of very sensitive and highly emotional work, with soft powdery colour, and a later and larger group of brush drawings and pictures of the school of Raja Samsara Chand (late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries). Kangra painting is widely different from that of Rajasthan and Jammu. Krishna subjects predominate (the whole of the *Prem Sagar* may be said to be fully represented): the Eight Nayakas, usually after the text of the *Rasikapriya* of Kesava Das are a favourite theme, and other rhetorical subjects illustrating the stages of Sringara may be found; romances such as Nala and Damayanti and the *Hamir Hath* are treated in detail, there are some naturalistic drawings of

flowers and fruits and some portraits, but no Ragmalas. This is essentially an art of outline and exceedingly exquisite as such. The colour, it is true, is tender and charming (particularly in examples like the well-known 'Hour of Cowdust', Boston.), but the drawing alone gives everything essential. The physical type is long eyed rather than large eyed, and the forms are willowy and slender. The outline is continuous and made with long strokes of the brush as at Ajanta; compared with the early Rajasthani paintings, the Kangra drawing may be described as a highly inflected language. Kangra draughtsmanship, indeed, becomes increasingly realistic and explicit and it is evident that the artists have to a considerable extent studied from nature, and if they have evolved a formula it is rather their own than directly inherited. Moghul influences are occasionally to be recognised, particularly in the representation of night scenes, in which dramatic effects of firelight or torchlight are sometimes presented, a method quite foreign to the pure Indian tradition. One can hardly exaggerate the charm of the Kangra paintings, and this charm depends equally on the subjects, emotional and lyrical and the dainty and accomplished expressions.

An artist of the name of Mola Ram, descended from Rajput painters, originally working at the Moghul court in the time of Shah Jehan, produced many works in the Kangra *qalm*, in Garhwal, flourishing from about 1760 to 1833. He must have visited Kangra. Some of his works are signed.

SIKH PAINTING

THE Rajasthani and Pahari areas are divided by the Panjab plains, from Delhi to Lahore; and during the Moghul period this area contributed little to art, for all the energies of the Moghul impulse were directed to the glorification of the court, and the life of this court had little to do with the life of the people. There is no evidence that any special school of painting flourished in ancient Mathura, except in the fact that like Jaipur, it is still one of the chief

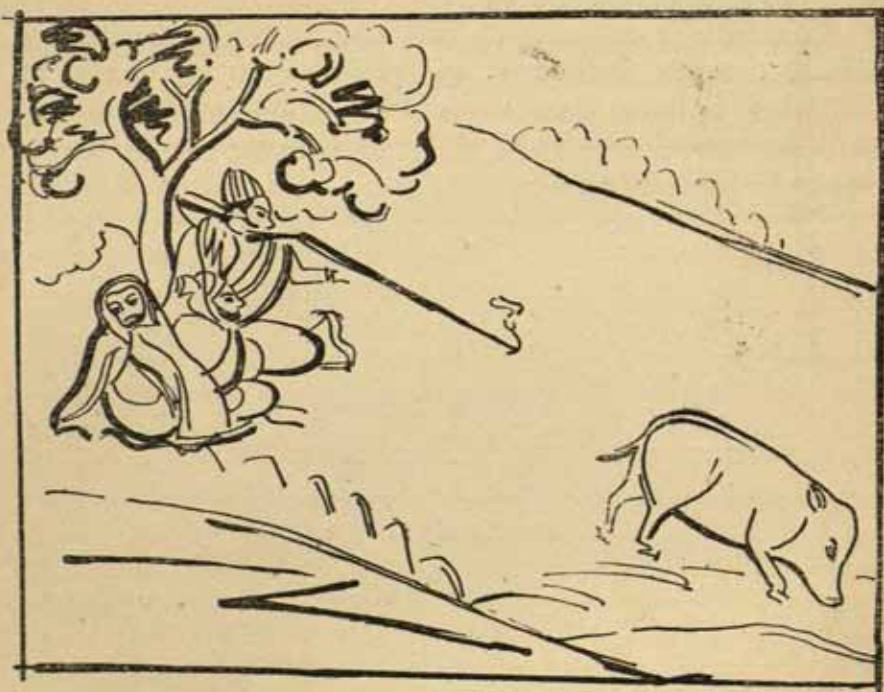


Fig. 78. Boar Hunt at Night

centres where are produced the well-known *sanjhas* or paper stencils, used for making pavement pictures in coloured powders, on the occasion of the Dussehra festival.

But towards the middle of the 18th century, the Sikh power began to be consolidated in the district of Amritsar and Jalandhar, and to be established in some parts of the hills in the early part of the 19th, and there exists a corresponding group of paintings, ranging from A.D. 1750 to 1850, which may be described as of the Sikh school. A majority of these are portraits or portrait groups. A fine example expressive of the true Sikh dignity is produced (Fig. 79). Many of the Kangra Sikh paintings are to be recognised by



Fig. 79. Portrait of Dhyani Singh, 1884

the fact that in them the faces of young men are unshaven, a peculiarity that never appears in Pahari art executed for Hindu patrons; an example of this Kangra Sikh style of the early 19th century is reproduced by Mr. Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*. The Sikh art is also to be recognised in various rather crude 'portraits' of the Gurus, which are still produced in Amritsar, and better, in some half-obliterated fragments of wall paintings, about a century old, within the precincts of the Golden Temple at Amritsar. Most likely the Sikhs gave occasional patronage also to similar work in Kashmir, where I have found little trace of any older or purer tradition. It may be mentioned also that some copies of the 'Granth Sahib' or Sikh scriptures are magnificent examples of austere calligraphy; and I have seen one fairly illustrated, said to have been prepared in Kashmir. On the whole we may say of Sikh painting that while a few very distinguished examples are to be found, the greater part, compared with what has gone before, whether Rajput or Moghul, is on the decline.

MODERN INDIAN PAINTING

AT the end of the last century, the major indigenous movements of Indian Art, such as the Moghul and the Rajput had petered out through the impact of European naturalistic art, which was coming into the country. The various folk and bazaar styles still continued, but even these were affected, to some extent, by the foreign invasion. In the Schools of Art, attached to the various Universities of India, Greek and Roman models were being copied by the students, according to the curriculum of education which the British had introduced. About the end of the 19th century, however, the movement for national awareness was also beginning to take shape. And, in the wake of this, the most important liberal elements in this country were forced to do a certain amount of heartsearching.

It was at this juncture, that an English Art teacher, Mr. E. B. Havell, and his colleague, Abanindranath Tagore, self-consciously put themselves against the idea of copying the Greek and Roman models, and such other imitative efforts as were in vogue in the Calcutta School. Mr. Havell was a theosophist by inclination and had a deep reverence for India's past; and Abanindranath was sympathetic to the Brahmo faith, which was a kind of synthesis between the ancient religion of India with modern European developments, then current in the middle class society of Bengal. The emphasis of both these teachers was, therefore, mainly on recapturing the great spiritual past of India.

In conformity with this ideal, they not only struggled to have the curriculum of Art Schools revised, but began to research in the ancient Indian traditions of the Arts.

It was in this atmosphere that some of the painters of India went to Ajanta to copy frescoes in the cave temples for a volume sponsored by Lady Heringham, an enlightened English patron of the arts.

The very discovery of such marvels as the Ajanta paintings was, at that time, an event of momentous importance. It reinforced India's pride in the past, and the living quality of the pictures immediately set up standards of accomplishments which naturally overwhelmed the moderns.

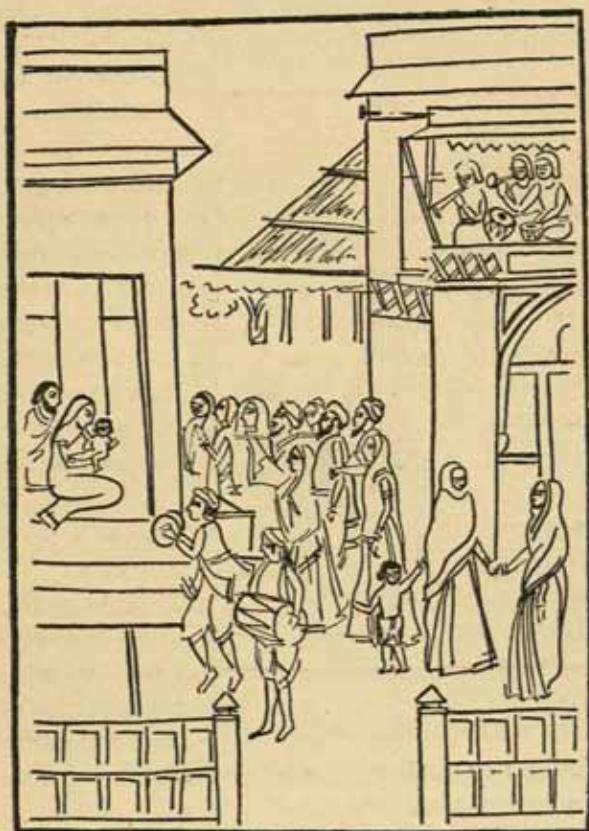


Fig. 80. Birth of Krishna : Painting by Abanindranath Tagore

There is no one who can gainsay the importance of this return to the past, in so far as it rehabilitated India's pride and helped the general awakening to the beautiful cultural heritage of our country. But the actual result of the copying of Ajanta frescoes, by the most talented pupils of Havell and Abanindranath Tagore was, in spite of many excellences, disastrous.

The movement which began in the wake of Lady Heringham's portfolios has been called a renaissance. It would be more adequate to call it a revival. And, in this context, it may be compared to the

Pre-Raphaelite movement initiated by Holman Hunt, D. G. Rossetti, Millais and others. It is true that there was no manifesto published by the Indian painters, as there was one by the Pre-Raphaelites, announcing the new movement. But the whole atmosphere of both the movements was similar in the romantic-escapist mentality of the chief actors, who were out, consciously, to *revive* the vigour of an earlier art period.



Fig. 81. Composition: Painting by K. K. Hebbar

borrow wholesale the ideology, as well as the formal expression of that ideology, for a new period.

There is no doubt about the high idealism and the technical virtuosity of Abanindranath Tagore, his brother Gagendranath Tagore, and most of their pupils, the most distinguished among whom is Nand Lal Bose.

Unfortunately, however, the pupils of Havell and Abanindranath were guilty of borrowing, wholesale, the spiritual doctrines of the Fourth Century A. D. Gupta Empire and the later Mediaeval Hindu periods, and they began to execute self-conscious imitations of the chief motives, particularly in the later Ajanta caves, for their pictures. It was a tragedy that the frescoes which our artists concentrated upon were in certain caves which in themselves mark the decline of the

Now, we have no wish to denigrate any effort to imbibe influences from past art. In fact, there is no artist who can overlook tradition, and most original creative talents seek vitality wherever they can find it in the impulses of history. Even the most iconoclastic of the moderns, Picasso, owes so much of the beauty of his line to the classical art of Europe. But it is one thing to seek inspiration in a musical line, or in some other form of national rhythmic expression, and another thing to

Ajanta Art, the last spell of a tradition that had probably taken five or six hundred years to work itself out. For the realism and the intensity of the figures in the earlier periods had already become conventionalised in the later caves. Our moderns, however, elongated the eye-brows, the fingernails and the almond eyes of the later Ajanta caves in their own paintings and enfeebled human beauty further by using soft colours, which were diluted with water-soaked towels after they had been laid on to paper.

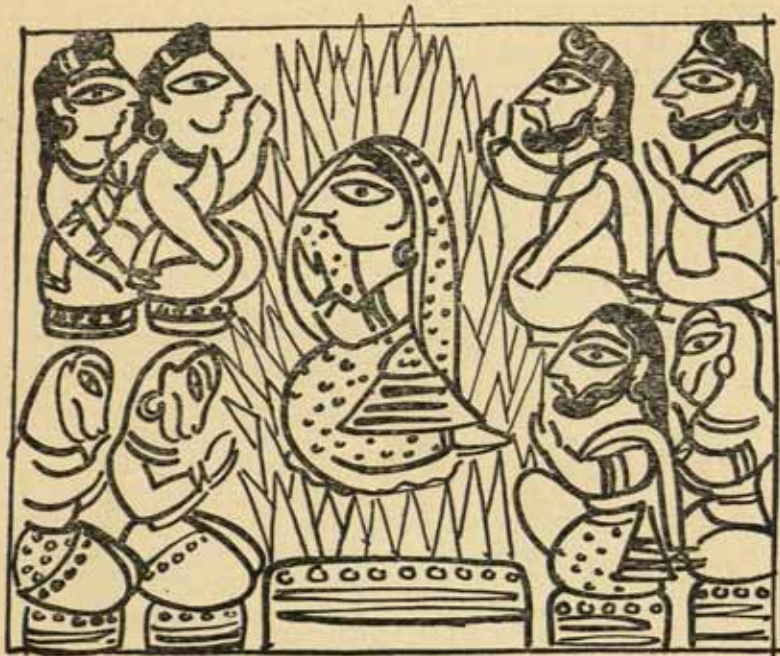


Fig. 82. Sita on a Fire: Painting by Jamini Roy

As the pupils of Havell and Abanindranath, who imbibed the Ajanta tradition themselves became teachers in the Art Schools of the various provinces of India, they brought up two generations of students blindly to believe in the lifeless, over-sentimentalised and 'spiritual' figures of their paintings, as the models of progress. And as the British contempt for India's culture became intenser, this so-called 'national' art of India, which was mainly revivalist, pitted itself against Europe as a 'spiritual' art against the 'materialist' naturalism of the West. The alien rulers of the country did not offer too many opportunities for artists to acquaint themselves with what was happening during the last three decades in Europe, and our

artists grew up in solitary isolation, hugging to themselves the illusions of India's mighty past, making romantic gestures to prove how deep and profound were the symbols of Hindu religion and how deep the impulses behind Indian art, without ever looking at the formal aspects of the gigantic Indian tradition in painting and sculpture.

The consequences of this revivalism, helped by the pioneer critics, have been tragic in the extreme though, perhaps, the tragedy has an air of inevitability about it. The whole field of art discussion is confused by the emphasis on a so-called 'Indian' style. The chauvinist nationalism of the politicians was translated into the realm of art and became a defence of the most obscurantist doctrines. The insistence on form as one of the artists' main preoccupations was considered a debased European creed, and significance was sought in story telling and a spiritual symbology of the most abstruse kind, in which few of the artists actually believed, except decoratively.



Fig. 83. Resting: Painting by Amrita Sher Gil

Undoubtedly, there has been a revolution in the last few years against such orthodox sentimentalism. Curiously, it was in Bengal itself, where the first revivalist attempts were inaugurated, that Jamini Roy attempted to synthesise his gift for colour and line with

the realities of village life. It was the Calcutta group of younger contemporaries, Rathin Moitra, Pradosh Das Gupta and Gopal Ghose etc., who began to question the premises of the older generation. In the north, Amrita Sher Gil, a young painter of mixed Indian and Hungarian origin, who died at the early age of 29, synthesised through her genius, a modern colour sense with a deep, almost harrowing sensitiveness to the sadness of India's people. A parallel development was witnessed in Western India, where the younger painters were emancipating themselves from the naturalistic teaching of Professor Gladstone Solomon and groping towards a genuinely individual search for content and form. Hebber, Chauda, Hussain, Rawal and quite a few younger artists have experimented successfully in the synthesis of



Fig. 84. Girl Singing: Painting by George Keyt

Indian and European techniques in Bombay. Gujral, Kaushik, Kulkarni, Sanyal, Bhagat, Mago and Kanwal Krishna approach their problems in a similar manner in the north. Sreenivasalu and some young south Indians have gone back for energy to the folk impulses. Similarly, in Ceylon, the younger artists are converging towards a vision, which should be concrete in its sense of reality and imaginative in the creative sense, and the work of George Keyt stands out as, perhaps, the most challenging synthesis of the impulses of Asia and Europe.

In spite of the tentative efforts of these artists, the confusion of the various schools is worse confounded by the reaction against modern art, of the older artists and their patrons, and by the weakness of the contemporaries in assimilating the lessons of their Eurasian inheritance. The difficulties which they face are enormous, because research in the styles of the past ages, from the point of view of the formal values implicit in them, is still in its infancy, and because knowledge of modern world art is not yet available to the young and impecunious painters of our country, devoid of good museums and art galleries. All the work that is being achieved is in the nature of heroic gestures, still balked by lack of analysis by the artists of their position in the time in which they live, though there is also a deep awareness that the future of a strong humanist tradition of the arts may lie in Asia.

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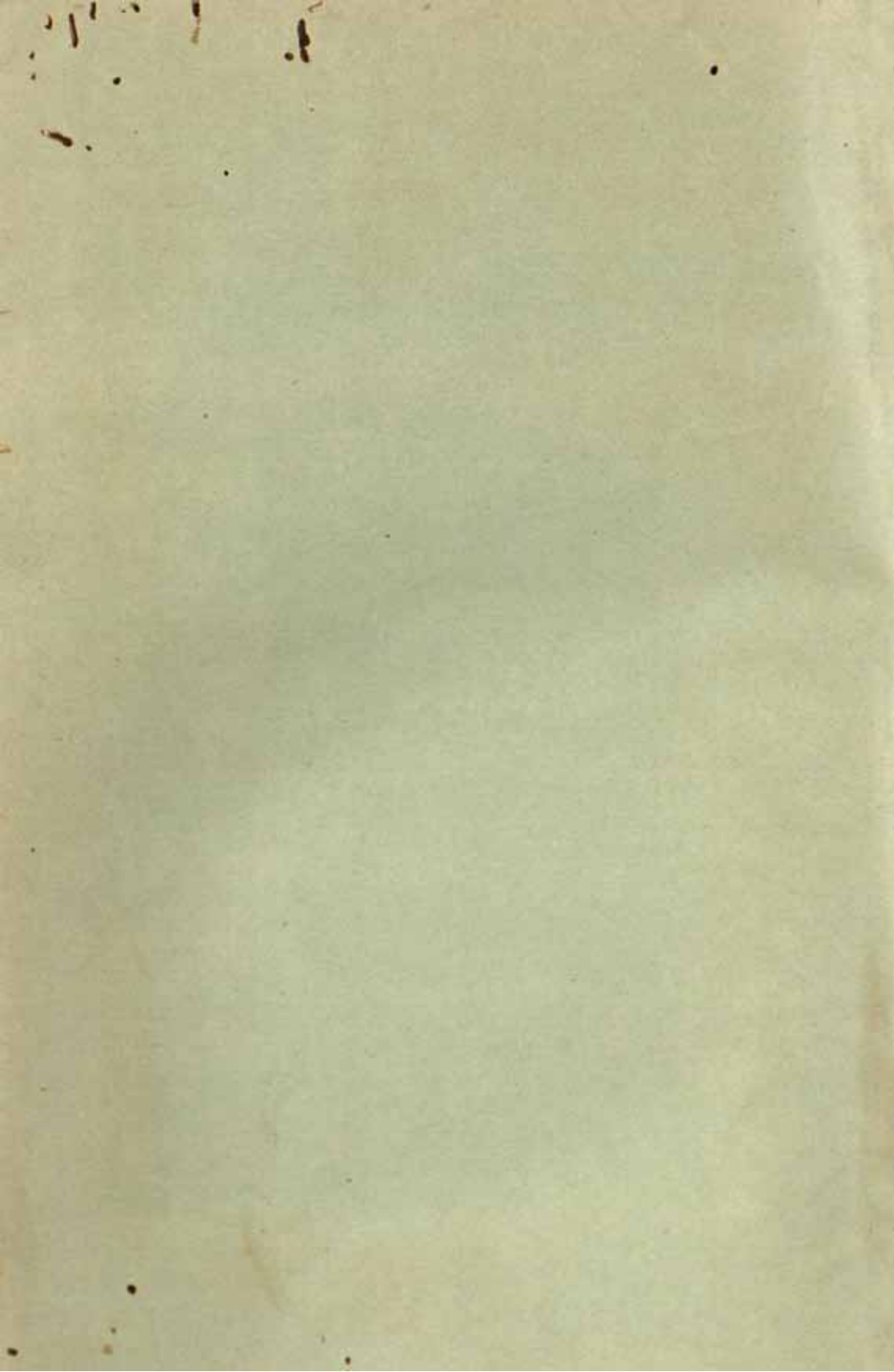
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