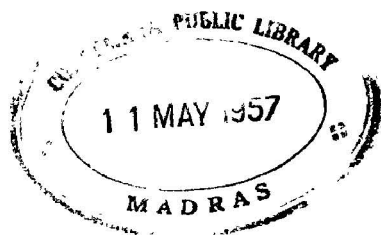


# INDIAN ART IN RELATION TO CULTURE

*by*  
Dr. BHUPENDRANATH DATTA

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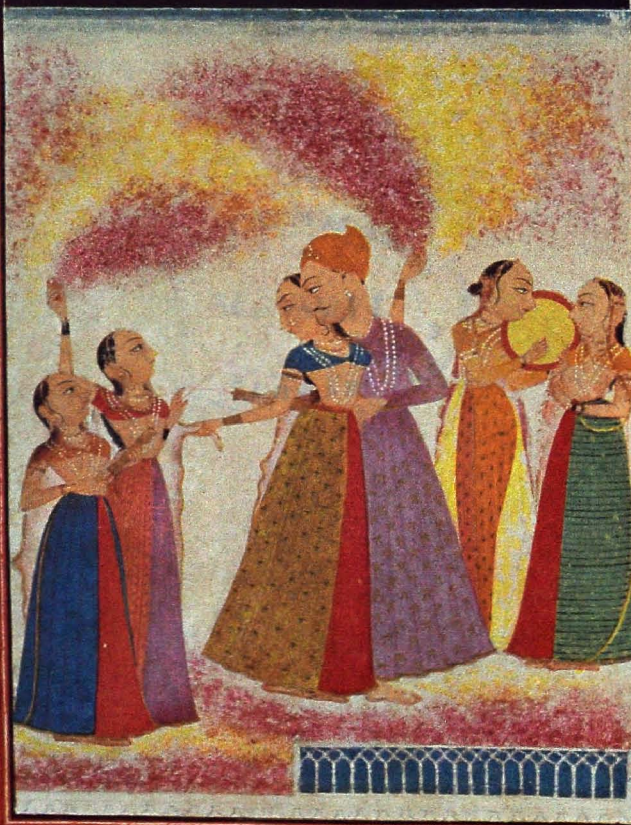


INDIAN  
ART IN  
RELATION  
TO  
CULTURE



11 MAY 1951

॥ अथ काव्यसुखावली ॥ कव्यसुखावली ॥ लोक लाजवदित नगर की रस ता  
 ॥ विराजता ॥ जोई भावै सोई क हंस सहस्रनिकरतन लाजता ॥ धरि धरि जो ब्रति  
 ॥ अथ काव्यसुखावली ॥ कव्यसुखावली ॥ लोक लाजवदित नगर की रस ता  
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## RAGA VASANTA

( Rajput influence, 18th Century )

by Courtesy of Ajit Ghose

# INDIAN ART IN RELATION TO CULTURE

by

**BHUPENDRANATH DATTA**  
A.M. (Brown) ; Dr. Phil. (Hamburg)



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**Bhupendranath Datta**

*by the same Author*

Studies in Indian Social Polity

Dialectics of Hindu Ritualism

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Sri Ajit Ghose for Colour Plate 1 Raga Vasanta and Plate 14 Raga Vilabala, Plate 15 Raga Hindole. Consul General of People's China in Calcutta: Plate 2 Buddha, Grottoes Shrine, Plate 3 Life Story of King Sivi Raja. Aurel Stein: Ancient Khotan, Plate 4 Persian Bodhisattva. Dr. B. M. Barua: Barhut, Plate 5A, Winged Animals, Plate 8A Mihira. Vincent Smith: A History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon, Plate 5B Female Figure (Ajanta), Plate 6 Buddha in Padmashana, Plate 8B A Scythian Soldier, Plate 9 Kuvera. Archaeological Department, Government of India: Plate 7 Buddha in Padmasana, Plate 10 Goddess Durga from Puri, Prof. Stella Kramrisch: The Art of India, published by Phaidon Press, London, Plate 11 Goddess Durga. Art Gallery, Indian Museum, Calcutta: Plate 12 Todi—the pastoral tune, Plate 18 Raga Megha-Mallara. Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy: Rajput Painting, Plate 13 Khambaj or Khamaj, Plate 16 Raga Kakuva, Plate 17 Raga Asavari, Plate 19 Gauda Mallara.

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## INDIAN ART IN RELATION TO CULTURE

In this country where civilization is at low tide of her flow, and culture is only confined amongst the e'lite of the country, the idea that art has nothing to do with the stages of cultural evolution of a given people is extant. To them the idea that "art is for art's sake" has become the *ide'e fixe*; hence they cannot tolerate the idea that art *per se* cannot exist, that art has got a socio-political basis, and it has got correlation with the fate of the culture of a given group of people or a nation.

But a historical observer investigating with the eye of an ethnologist will find out that the art of a people is intimately connected with its ethnic development. The more a given people progresses from its primordial condition and the more it evolves complicated social structure, the more its ethnic relations take the form of a full-grown state, the more the culture advances *pari passu* to a higher level of development. Ethnology and social science bear witnesses to this evolution of a people. The socio-political development of a people can be traced from its art, literature, science, philosophy, politics, social organisation, etc. Hence the history of the culture of a given group of people does not stand alone. It is connected *inter se* with the other aspects of life of that people. The traces of

dialectical contradictions and internal class or social conflicts through which a nation has got to evolve, can also be detected in the aforesaid activities of the people. Hence to detect the relation between art and culture of a people we cannot ignore the dialectical stages through which it has got to pass.

The culture of a given group of people is the product of the creative genius of some persons of the society. It is not universal amongst the masses. The man who with his inventive or creative genius gives out something new to the society is the creator of culture of that people. In Oswald Spengler's word he is the "culture-man" of the society.<sup>1</sup> And when his invention or creation is socialized for the use and benefit of the people in general, then it takes the form of an item of civilization of the people.

For this reason, when we talk of culture of a people, we mean the cultural goods of the same. And when these goods are used by all, then these take the forms of the civilizing processes. In other words, the civilization of a given people is measured by the cultural goods it enjoys and thereby rises in the higher scale of humanity.

Human society is dynamic, it always tries to rise above its present condition. If a given people cannot come out of its adverse environment and evolve into higher stages for the better enjoyment of life, then it becomes stationary, and is relegated to the position of what the sociologists say the



"backward races". Indeed the difference between backward and progressive races lies in this fact. Those who have risen above their original condition of life, and have created environment favourable to their forward advancement, have become the civilized nations of to-day. Those who have not been able to rise above their existing social conditions but are pinned down with primitive *mores*, habits and socio-economic conditions which exert "Himalayan pressure" on their shoulders, making them static in the "struggle of races," are the backward races of to-day.

The anthropologists and sociologists say that a race, i.e., a given group of ethnic people, has got nothing inherent in them which bars their forward march in the world or damns them against rising higher in the scale of humanity. The contour of the skull or the shape of the nose or the colour of the skin has got nothing to do with the inner spirit of the person. It is the imperialists and their henchmen the anthropo-theosophists who speak of "lower" and "higher" races of mankind. But these pseudo-scientists are being found out and relegated to the limbo of the past.

Anthropology and sociology never cater to the imperial demands. Real science is free from race and class-bias. The class-character of pseudo-science is being detected now-a-days. The acid test for an unbiassed science lies in its service to society. It cannot circumscribe itself by catering to the needs of the e'lite class. On this account

anyone talking about the God-ordained "Herrenvoelk" (Master-people) and the people who are destined to perdition, is expressing only his race or class arrogance clothed in pseudo-scientific theosophic or mystic words. Obscurantism is the cloak to hide the true state of things. For this reason, we must be rational and by empiric investigations find out the truth.

Every human race has passed through a prelogical stage when they could not discover the why, how and what for of a thing. Rational Logic is beyond their comprehension; they cannot trace the relation between a cause and its effect as is seen in the case of some South Sea islanders about whom Malinowski spoke. If a married man of that place, he said, is asked why his wife has become *enciente*, he promptly replies that the gust of a wind blew over her while she was asleep in the field or a shower of rain fell over her. The function of sex is unknown to them. They cannot trace the relation between the cause and effect of this function. Similarly those backward races who believe in the deeds of their tribal medicinemen or *shumans* that they can cure a man's disease by putting an amulet on a man's body or can bring a shower of rain by burning incense or by begging of the god of shower, are not inferior types of men or are not created by nature to remain in perdition for ever! Many of the prelogical beliefs of primitive men are still lingering in the religion and social habits of modern highly civilized races. Nay, some of these

beliefs have become the foundation-dogmas of some world-religions professed by the so-called most advanced nations of the world. Yet nobody comes out and tells them to be of inferior type of men !

Cultural evolution of a people has got its stages. Further, the civilization of a people does not evolve always of its own accord. The more the histories of the growth of the present-day nations are traced out, the more we hear of the inter-connections of the cultures of different ethnic groups. The discovery of the Indus Valley civilization has opened a new vista to the eyes of the Indians,—that Indian civilization Minerva-like did not come out ready-made from the head of Mother-India. She was never isolated in her long course of history. Similarly is the case of China. So long it had been thought that China stood isolated from the rest of Asia, and and her civilization was self-evolved. But newer researches are giving the lie to this assumption. The investigators say that from time immemorial culture came to China from the West. These culture contacts have been typified in Chinese mythology as some heroes from outside appearing before them and teaching them the arts of civilization and thus ushering in new stages in the cultural history of China. In other words, the cultural goods of Western and Central-Asian civilizations have been introduced in different ages in China, and these have been described as different epochs of civilization.

Cultural goods are international in their character ; they never remain as the monopoly of a special



people. Culture is acquired by diffusion through various sources. The best example of this process of diffusion and *pari passu* the changes that culture bear are strongly depicted in the arts of Central Asia and China.

Before the first world-war the scientists of the European Universities undertook scientific expeditions for discovery of cultural remains of the long-lost Yuetchi people of Kashgaria who were mostly Buddhists. Amongst the buried towns of the desert and in the rock caves of Chinese-Turkistan ( now Sinkiang ) remains of arts, sculptures and paintings were discovered and brought over to Europe, to be deposited in different museums. The manuscripts discovered here show that they were a people speaking centum group of the Indo-European languages. Prof. Lueders of Berlin called it "Nord-Arish" ( North-Aryan ) and others as "Tocharish". Apart from this, the remains of the fine arts discovered there prove that the culture of this people bears the traces of different sources. Regarding this people Grousset says, "Kashgaria in the early middle ages (third to tenth centuries) was a country in which the language was Indo-European, the religion Buddhism, and the civilization Indo-Iranian". The investigators further say that Buddhist art was introduced to Kashgaria from Bamiyan in North-Afghanistan, which was a centre of Buddhist culture till Arab-Muhammadan invasion in the eighth century A. D. This Buddhist art bears traces of Hellenistic influence. History

says that since the downfall of the Maurya Empire in India, the north-western provinces of the said empire fell in the hands of the Hellenistic kings of Bactria. Naturally, the art and other cultural goods of these regions bear stamp of Hellenistic East. The Graeco-Buddhist art thus developed betrays the imprint of Hellenism in cultural representations of that period. The classical cast of face, the dress, etc. of the statues there do not give us a true anthropological clue to the somatic characteristics of the people of that region in those days, yet the impact of Hellenistic culture on the Indo-Afghan people of that period can be discerned here. This art serves as an index to the cultural condition of the people of the Indo-Bactrian kingdom.

But in the fourth century after Christ, Persia asserted her national independence. With it began the triumphal diffusion of the Persian art of the Sassanid period. It seems its influence was felt in western Afghanistan, for the dress, etc., of the Bamiyan sculptures bear the imprint of the Iranian art of that period. Thus the Buddhist art of Bamiyan began to shed colour. From the Graeco-Buddhist it turned a new leaf to Irano-Buddhist art. But from seventh century onward Islam began to exert its pressure on Persia. The independence of Persia was lost. The prestige of Iranian culture fell low, and Bamiyan culture again turned a new leaf, and turned towards India for inspiration. The art of the Gupta Empire furnished them with new inspirations. These

are clearly discernible in the figures of the sculptural statues discovered there. They seem to be the echoes of the Ajanta paintings. According to the Chinese writer Houei-tchae, this Indian influence was due to the prevalence of Mahayana Buddhism in Afghanistan. From Lama Taranatha we learn that Udayana (Cābul and Swat valley) was a great seat of Tantrika-Buddhism which was a branch of Mahayana. The king and the people were devoted to Mantrayana Cult (Tantricism) of the Mahayana. Further, he says that Mahayana was in the hey-day of her glory and prosperity during the reign of Emperor Dharmapala of Bengal and Magadha. The *Siddhas* were appearing incessantly in society at that time.<sup>3</sup> Hence it would not be a wonder if Indian art of Gupta and post-Gupta epochs made themselves felt in the Buddhist world outside India.

With the inroads of Islam into the north-western borders of India, the Buddhist culture transplanted itself on the eastern part of Kashgaria, and maintained itself till the beginning of the tenth century. In this way, the art of the Yuetchi people got the imprint of Hellenistic, Iranian and Indian influences which though do not testify about their ethnic origin, yet bear witness to the cultural influence which those people was subjected to. On the other hand, the discoveries at Kumatura show that Chinese influence on the Yuetchi art was making itself felt *pari passu* the Iranian influence was declining. The scene of "the Great Renunciation" (Mahaparinirvana) clearly manifests Chinese influence. Again the remains of art

discovered at Shorchuk display strong evidence of Indian art of the Gupta period. On the other hand, the paintings on the rock sanctuaries of Kitil show evidence of Chinese influence. The Chinese art depicted there resembles the art of the Tang period (seventh to eighth centuries A. D.) ; some Buddhist gods portend the extreme gesticulation of the Japanese Fendo ; again, reminiscences of Iranian art are to be seen here and there.

Further, the observers are struck by the strong Indian influence that the Yuetchi art of eastern Kashgaria bears. The descriptions of the Yuetchi given here testify to the point that the art of a given people bears the testimony of its cultural composition. From it we not only glean the ethnic inter-relations but also the religions and class-compositions.

The Yuetchi were an Indo-European people. They existed as a people till the fifteenth century A. D. Then they were engulfed by the Turco-Islamic inundation. The skulls gathered from the ruins at Turfan visited by the German explorers had been brought by them and examined by Prof. Klatsch<sup>4</sup> of Breslau, an anthropological expert. The craniometric studies undertaken by him gave the result that the skulls bear imprint of so-called Caucasian as well as Mongolian races. That means, they were a composite people. The investigator says, the paintings too testify to what is also given out by craniometric examinations. These people had long bent form of noses, red beards, grey eye-iris, though the shape of the eye was of chinese cast ! The

composite character of this people is also shown in the composite form of their culture.

Again, apart from the Buddhistic influence there are other paintings of the same people which show that Manichaeism was also prevalent amongst them. Mani was a Persian who founded a new religion which the students of comparative religion say was a mixture of Zoroastrianism and Christianity. But the paintings discovered in Eastern Turkistan show that in this region in which Buddhism was dominant, Manichaeism took a Buddhist turn<sup>5</sup>. It divided its votaries into two orders like the Buddhists. The laymen (hearers) could marry while the elects like the Buddhist *sramans* remained celibates. Also the Manichaeans like the latter were vegetarians.

The picture that depicted the Manichaeans portrayed their dress and contour of face, which show them to be the same people as the other Yuetchi. Again, pictures showed the habit of life of the adepts or the elects. Thus the Yuetchi art not only showed its composite character, but also its composite culture and the varied influence under which it grew and was nurtured.<sup>6</sup>

Then we turn to China. It has got a very old civilization. The Swedish scholar Siren says<sup>7</sup> : "The beginnings of sculptural art in China may nowadays be carried as far back as 1000 or 2000 years B. C. They are all closely connected in style and significance with the contemporary bronze art." The archaeologists say that the ceramic art of the

Neolithic Period extended from western China to Egypt. All these regions were of one cultural complex.<sup>8</sup>

Then the Han period gave a new orientation to the art of China as great changes took place in the country. The investigators say, though the Chinese art remained true to its soil, yet the various outside influences modified the continuous art of China from time to time. With the introduction of Buddhism in China, Indian influence began to be definitely felt. The art which represented Buddhist motifs clearly testified to it. As early as third century A. D. Buddhist sculptures were ordered to be made by the emperor Hsien Ti. The Buddhist art that was introduced into China did not come directly from India; it percolated through intermediary countries. The historians say that the Buddhist missionaries came from Khotan (Kashgaria) to western China and they might have given new artistic inspiration to the Hsia Age. Thus, according to some historians the Central-Asiatic Buddhist culture was diffused from there to China. The same investigators say that there is no evidence in Chinese sculpture of the fifth century to prove that the Chinese art was influenced directly from India. The influence of South India reached China through the sea route.<sup>9</sup>

An interesting point that shows how the culture of a given group of people influences its art is evinced from the art of China developed during the T'ang period, circa seventh century A. D. In

this age, we find the rock-cut temples of Tun-Huang (450-1100 A. D.) of Yun Kang (409-560 A. D.) and of Lung-Men (500-1100 A. D.), show varieties of plastic and pictorial representations<sup>10</sup>. Here, as Dr. Nag says : Khotanese, Turfanese, Iranian and Indian styles merged in and commingled with tomb paintings (of Shantung and Korea) while stucco-paintings and frescoes on the walls of the rock-cut temples were evidently derived from India ; and even the erotic Tantric cults according to Gruenwedel "deeply influenced the painters of Kucha" (vide Gruenwedel 'Altkutscha').<sup>11</sup>

In connection with this art the question that arises here is the genesis of those bizarre and composite representations. History says that in this period which synchronizes with the rule of Harshavardhana in India and with the travels of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang (629-645) in the same country, the military power of the T'ang emperor extended up to the end of western part of Turkistan. The rulers of Samarkand, Kashmir and Gandhara were his vassals<sup>12</sup>. Nag says : "Syrians, Turks, Persians and Indians flocked to the Chinese capital. Christianity, Buddhism, Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism flourished side by side near about the great T'ang capital of Chang-an, the Rome of Asia".

Thus the cosmopolitan taste and cultural liberalism of the ruling class was reflected in the rock-cut architectural temple of the "Thousand Buddhas".

In this short reference about the art of China it is to be discerned that religious influence has made





BUDDHA : *Indian influence.*  
Grottoes shrine, Western China

*by Courtesy of the Consul General of China.*

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LIFE STORY OF KING SIVI RAJA  
Touenhouang—Grottoes of western China

*by Courtesy of the Consul General of China*

itself felt in Chinese art. Again streams of cultural influences coming into China in different periods of her history, have left their impress on Chinese art as well. Thus culture has percolated into China through the process of different imprints of various cultural streams which though do not bespeak ethnic connections, yet the data of the cultural history of that people can be gleaned from these imprints. Hence, the art of China is an index to the cultural history of China.

Now we come to India. Recent discoveries of palæolithic art of India in Khairmur Hills in the Central Provinces (M.P.) have brought out new facts regarding the forgotten past. The archaeologists have compared these sketch-paintings on stone with similar drawings of Africa and Spain. These bespeak of a common ethnic tie<sup>13</sup>. This palaeolithic art is a crude expression of hunting scenes of a very primitive people. A recent investigator evaluates it to be no earlier than 500 B. C.<sup>11</sup> But it certainly testifies to the art of a primitive folk. The spiritual urge within the man has expressed itself in these crude drawings. From the stand-point of somatic anthropology these are of no use; yet from ethnological viewpoint it is regarded as a step forward in the stages of cultural evolution of man. Hence, a chapter of the cultural history of man is to be read in these primitive imperfect representations.

Then we come to the archaeological discoveries of Indus Valley civilization. The archaeologists have determined its date to be of Chalcolithic Period

which is an intermediate stage between Neolithic and Iron Ages. In this age, iron remained unknown, bronze and copper are used instead. In this stage of civilization of Indus Valley, there were well-laid good drainage system, planned towns and houses. There were material prosperity and international commerce.<sup>15</sup>

From the Old Stone Age culture of Central Provinces to the Bronze Age of Indus Valley people, what a gigantic stride has been made in the culture of the Indian people! From Khairmur to Mahenjo-daro and Harappa is a far cry; yet in these archaeological specimens we read the cultural history of man in India. Regarding this culture, Childe says: "By the end of the IVth millenium the material culture of Abydos, Ur, or Mahenjo-daro would stand comparison with that of Periclean Athens, or with any mediaeval town<sup>16</sup>." This utterance is a great confession on the part of an occidental investigator regarding the cultural capacity of the prehistoric man of India. The race has not changed, because, the paleolithic man has been suspected as belonging to the Mediterranean racial variety of mankind or Brown race<sup>17</sup>, the anthropological investigators of Mahenjo-daro and Harappa have identified the skulls of the same race in Indus Valley remains as well<sup>18</sup>, and the investigators of present-day Indians call them also as belonging to the Mediterranean race<sup>19</sup>. Thus it appears that the main racial strain remains the same all through the Indian history, though other

racial elements viz., the Armenoid one, are extant in present-day India, and their skulls have also been discovered amongst the finds of Indus Valley civilization<sup>20</sup>.

Regarding the other cultural goods of Indus Valley civilization, Sir John Marshall has acknowledged that much of them are to be found in the Vedic civilization. This brings us to the unsolved problem of the relation of Indus Valley civilization with that of the Vedic people. Sir John Marshall has said that the Indus Valley people were of different ethnic stock from the Vedic one. But there are others who identify the two as of one ethnic stock. The present writer<sup>21</sup> has said elsewhere that the funeral system of the Indus Valley people as understood by Marshall was identical with the Vedic *prayogas* of funeral ceremonies. He holds that the presence of the Indo-Aryan of the Vedas is not negatived in the Indus Valley finds. The anthropological finds cannot deny their presence there. At Harappa their presence is clearly discernible. Again Academician Struve<sup>22</sup>, the Soviet-Russian ethnologist, expressed the view that *Harrish* (people speaking Sanskrit or Aryan of pre-historic Asia Minor) had been one of the components of this civilization. On the other hand, lately the Checkoslovakian archaeologist Hrozný has said that the *Hurrish* (not *Harrish*) people were a non-Indo-European people, though he affirmed the presence of other Indo-European elements apart from the Vedic one, in the Indus Valley.<sup>23</sup>

Further, the Indian archaeological investigator

Sri vats says, "As pointed out above, the paintings can hardly fail to recall to mind the parallelism with some of the rites, ritual and beliefs contained in hymns 14, 16 and 18 of Xth Mandala of the Rigveda. Nevertheless the similarity of belief as far as it goes is very striking"<sup>14</sup>. As regards the religion of the Indus Valley people, from the reports of Marshall we see that all the ingredients of modern popular "Hinduism" are to be found there. Again, Swami Sankarananda says that the religious symbols noticed by Marshall have direct connection with the Vedic deities and rites, and represent the Vedic deities viz., Sun, Fire, Soma and Aditi. The fact of identity of the both peoples are not generally acknowledged. Yet, we find that Rigvedic period was in Chalcolithic Age when Iron was unknown and both the peoples occupied the same sites as their habitat. Further, the present-day Indians of the same locality bear the same kind of skull-forms on their shoulders as are discovered at Mahenjodaro and Harappa. Hence, anthropologically there has been no break in the continuity of population of India though with the progress of civilization ethnic condition and cultural goods have changed. The cultural goods are the vehicles of civilization, their changes make the advancement of a people possible. There cannot be any progress unless there is a change. It is natural that with the advancement of the civilization of the ancient Indians their cultural goods have changed likewise. Here it must be pointed out that the Swastika

representing mystic symbol of religion has been discovered at Mahenjo-daro and is extant in popular Hinduism as well. The artistic representation of Hindu religious mysticism as depicted in the Swastika has constantly followed the trails of Hindu cultural history. This symbol has undergone various vicissitudes in the history of India and has been discovered in the archaeological finds of ancient Caucasus as well as Crete, Mexico and other countries. The discovery of its complete history will add a chapter to the cultural history of man. Thus Indus valley civilization and its arts speak about the culture and the civilization of the Indians in Chalcolithic period. It gives testimony of the spiritual capacity of the man in India of that age.

The Indian arts critic Dr. Coomaraswamy speaking about Indus valley arts has said: "These 'Indus valley' terracottas may be dated roughly in the second or third millenium B. C....of these figures, 1 and 3 are highly characteristic of Sumerian types, 5, 7, 11 are not uncommon in Sumerian examples, 6, 11, 13, are typically Indian, 8 is neither Mesopotamian nor Indian, and the remainders call for no special comment."<sup>25</sup>

As the terracotta finds throw some light on ethnology and culture of a country in question, the above finds testify that the "Indus valley culture" contains typical representation of Indian ethnology and culture in some of the terracottas unearthed. If any one is puzzled over the



"Sumerian"\* types he must not forget what is already said above that in Neolithic and Chalcolithic Ages, one cultural complex bound the vast stretch of oriental regions extending from western China to Egypt.

Then the same critic speaking about a terracotta from Peshawar and related types assign the date to some part of the second millenium B. C.<sup>25A</sup> About this Peshawar specimen the critic says, "Thus to sum up, there is a markedly Indian character about the whole figure and there need be no hesitation in crediting its Indian provenance. Technically and stylistically there are relationships equally with various European neolithic, ancient Mesopotamian and other Indus valley and later but still pre-Mauryan Indian types"<sup>25B</sup>. Further, he says that with the 'Peshawar' specimen....were received two fragmentary figures, also in red terracotta and in the same style. One ( figure 3 ) has got the following marks, "a turban worn, also the Chamavira" ( it is a jewelled chain, a characteristic Indian ornament to be found in Besnagor and Bharhut stupa ).

So far, there is a continuity of Indian cultural peculiarities. Such a thing as *Indian* is in the making since the Chalcolithic Age. Then the learned critic speaks about the "Pre-Mauryan terracottas". The date of the finds he tentatively fixes to be from 1000 to 300 B.C. He delineates the group of the finds thus : "Turbans, as a rule of moderate size are worn, always with the knot or crest on the left

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\* According to Hrozný, "Sumerian" is not Dravidian. It is Central Asiatic. P. 84

side, a rule that holds good even in the Kusana period, whenever the crest is laterally placed".

Further he said, "This type is one that occurs in Indian arts elsewhere, in small reliefs from various sites all certainly pre-Mauryan. One of these is the well-known gold leaf plaque found in a burial mound at Lauriah Nandangarh". Its date has been assigned as eighth century B.C. (Cambridge History of India I. 616). Similar gold plaques were found at Piprahwa (Peppe and Smith, in J.R.S.A. 1898).

Coming down to the post-Mauryan age, the critic says, "The general facies presented by the terracottas is much changed when we come to the Sunga period (circa 175-73 B.C.). The nude Goddess is no longer met with. Completely moulded plaques replace the modelled figure.....The most characteristic type is a feminine divinity, fully clothed in a tunic and dhoti. The turbans are large"<sup>260</sup>. As regards the nude goddess the critic ask, whom then does the Indian nude goddess represent? We know that a nude and steatopygous type occurs throughout the most ancient world from central Europe in neolithic times to the Ganges valley. The general significance has been admirably summarized by Glotz<sup>23</sup> for the Ægean as follows: "She is the great mother. It is she who makes all nature bring forth"<sup>25D</sup>. Thus from the age of Indus valley civilization to Sunga period there is continuity of cultural representations changing dialectically according to materialistic conditions.

Now, let us delve in the neighbouring country of Iran. The German archaeologist Herzfeld speaking

about the prehistoric period says ; "The unity of Asia although rarely achieved in its political history, is a real factor in the history of its civilization. And even Europe will offer more and more as only a sub-continent of Asia".<sup>26</sup> Regarding the significant archaeological finds in Iran the explorer says, "Swastika remains unknown to Sumer, Akkad, Babylon or Assyria. At Persepolis the system was still variable".<sup>27</sup> But we have seen that Swastika is found in Indus valley Civilization. Those who cry hoarse that Indus valley civilization was a part of the cultures of Elam and Sumer can note this significant absence.

As regards the much-talked stamp seals that are discovered in Indus valley the learned archaeologist says, "Cross, sun-wheel or eye-stigma of Cain, marking him as the property of God are used already on Neolithic and Chalcolithic button for marking property. This was the origin of the stamp-seal, sphragis....every man of property, owned a seal".<sup>28</sup>

Thus so far we have found that Central Asia, Western Asia and North India formed one Cultural complex since the New Stone Age. Again, Hubert Schmidt describes the third culture of Anau, "to be the brilliant epoch of the Copper Age in Transcaspia". In Sistan ( classical Sakastana ) remains of Chalcolithic Age are found. The early culture of Elam and Iran was neolithic according to Herzfeld. The period may be estimated to be around 4000 B.C.<sup>29</sup> Then comes the Chalcolithic Age i.e. age the of bronze

and copper. The Indus valley civilization evinces the trace of that age. The 'Rigveda betrays the traces of that age in its composition. That the regions west of India was in the Chalcolithic Age when Indus valley civilization evolved is attested by the fact as Herzfeld pointed out, that "The oldest ceramics from Anau I are handmade, and painted. It seems that at the middle Chalcolithic period painted pottery prevailed everywhere in and around Iran".<sup>30</sup> It is also attested by the potteries discovered in Indus valley civilization.

Here it must be pointed out that those who finding some similarities between some Indus valley finds and those of Sumer fix the date of the former, do not take into calculation the cultural ages of Anau and Iran. They ignore the abovementioned cultural complex and the stages through which this region of Eurasia had to pass through.

Here, we beg to state that Wigmore, the American legal historian, has been surprised in finding<sup>30A</sup> common names for the law-givers of three ancient countries viz., Manu of India, Minos of Crete and Menes of Egypt. Again, the Biblical story of the Flood is also mentioned in Avestic and Vedic literatures. It is apparent that a common cultural complex of Neolithic and Chalcolithic Ages are accountable for these similarities.

Finally, Marshall has acknowledged that "All the materials of a religious nature recovered at Mahenjodaro and Harappa appear to be characteristically Indian".<sup>31</sup> Again the Indologist A. B. Keith has said,

"That civilization no doubt whatever its impulse, is largely Indian in character and nature."<sup>32</sup> In the footnote he says, "Perhaps we find here the origin of Phallicism ; Hopkins ( *Epic Mythology*, p. 222 ) pointed out the lack of evidence of it among the wild tribes". Further, Mr. H. C. Beck in his book on Harappa excavations in chapter fifteen has advanced eight items of proofs, that "there was no very close connection between the Indus civilization and the other foreign civilizations." Again he says, "The Indus civilization may be taken to be more a product of India, an indigenous and independent growth, than as an offshoot of the Mesopotamian civilization."<sup>32A</sup> From all these we glean that anthropologically there is a continuity of the people of India from the old age to to-day. The people are the same, culturally there is a continuity from Chalcolithic Age to post-Mauryan Age. There is an indigenous production of Indian culture. It has gone through various vicissitudes and in the arts of those periods we decipher the cultural history of the Indians. Each archaeological find adds a new chapter to the Indian cultural history. Recently, presiding over the Archaeology and Anthropology section of the Indian Science Congress held at Lucknow (January 4, '52) Sri M. S. Vats talking about ware culture has said that considerable headway has been made in bridging the hiatus between the proto-historic Harappa and the early historic cultures of the North as a result of the exploration of the dried up river valley of Sarasvati and Drishadvati revealing four inter-locking ceramic

and habitational cultures. Thus "Indus valley civilization" is not a case of exotic culture, as it is pretended to be. Again, quite recently as reported in the papers, that according to the Indian archaeologist, in the Narbada valley ( Central India ) weapons belonging to the "Stone Age" and painted potteries belonging to the "Shalliwahn Age" have been excavated near Maheshwar on the bank of the Narbada river. According to Dr. Sankalia, who is leading the Narbada valley expeditions, the potteries are like those found in Mahenjo-daro ( "Hindusthan Standard" 10-2-53 ). Thus the hiatus is getting shorter day by day.

Passing over the still debatable problem regarding the relationship between the so-called Indus valley people and the Vedic one, we come to the historical period of the people of India.

To-day we would not talk about the Vedic days as pre-historic if Mahenjo-daro period be regarded as anterior to it. From the Vedic days to present-day India, there is a continuity in the stages which are gradually being identified by the labours of various investigators. We do not know anything about the arts of Vedic India. Nothing has been handed down to us as historical reminiscences. We find the Rig-Vedic people to be in Chalcolithic period of civilization. Iron was unknown, copper, bronze and wooden utensils were used. Arrow heads were made out of polished stones ( Rv. 9. 112. 2 ) and the horns of deers ( 9. 75. 11 ). Axes used to be made of stones ( 10. 101. 10 ). Yet in the same book we hear of buildings with a thousand

doors and pillars ( 2. 41. 51. 5. 62. 6 ). We hear of golden coins ( 4. 37. 4 ), we hear of king sitting on elephant back surrounded by his courtiers ( 4. 4. 1. ) and hierarchical state organisations viz. Sabha ( 8. 4. 9. ), above it Samiti ( 9. 92. 2 ). We hear of a king as overlord over several other kings ( 8. 5. 38 ), we hear of rich men ( 5. 34. 8 ), merchants ( 10. 60. 6 ) sea voyages ( 1. 116. 3 ). We hear of golden ornaments ( 9. 6 ; 8. 46. 33 ), we hear of some primary astronomical observations ( 10. 85. 13 ; 1. 25. 8 ; 1. 84. 15 ). We hear of private property and peasants having their own plots of land ( 1. 110. 5 ).<sup>33</sup>

All these bespeak that though the Rigvedic period in its material side was in Chalcolithic Age, yet it was not a primitive society. Kingship, private property have evolved ; taxation system had developed ( 10. 173. 6. ) and monogamy was the general rule ; marriage was exogamous and it is still the rule. Thus, this society has evolved out of primitive tribal system and entered the ancient capitalist phase of civilization. It cannot be called a primitive society as described by many Orientalists. The cultural goods of this age testify civilizing processes that were going on in this age. The art, as was developed in that age was the index of its ethnic culture.

Then, in the later Vedic age, we hear of Aswamedha sacrifice. A part of the ceremony of this horse sacrifice was to adorn the mane and the legs of the sacrificial horse with pearls.<sup>34</sup> Surely, pearls could not be fished out in North-India, and it had to be brought either from Ceylon or from the Persian Gulf,



This points out the trade relation between North India and those regions in the Vedic age. Incidentally, this art of decking the horse with pearls, and the sacrifice itself give us the clue to the economic and political *mores* of that age. At the same time the usages connected with the Aswamedha sacrifice reverberate the custom of bygone undivided Indo-European days.<sup>35</sup>

At present we are not yet in possession of the fine art sculpture of post-Vedic age till we come to the days of the imperial Mauryas. The artistic remains of this interim period have not come to light as yet except some terracottas presumed to be of pre-Mauryan origin. Yet, archæological excavations coming out are bridging the gulf between the so-called "Indus valley civilization" and the Mauryan age. We have already spoken about the finding of the Indian archaeologists. Again, R. K. Mukherjee says, "a Vedic fire alter is traced in a hollow cave, hemispherical in shape, and with an opening like a chimney at the centre, discovered at Cannanore in Malabar. Certain rock-cut tombs discovered near Tellichery in Malabar are also believed to be of the Vedic Age. Vedic burial mounds are also unearthed at Lauriya Nandangarh.\* We may next mention the walls and fortifications of the old city of Rajagriha and remains of houses, which were all built of rude and rough cyclopean masonry, rare examples of such structures of durable material in that age.

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\* Keith doubts it. Vide his "The Religions and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads",

The next type of buildings of which remains are extant for the period is what is called the Stupa, literally 'some thing raised', a mound<sup>36</sup>. Again, further proofs of Chalcolithic Age are being discovered in the interior of India. Dr. A. Banerjee-Sastri has brought to light the remains of a very ancient civilization in the Gangetic valley which discloses the ruins of a city of Chalcolithic Age ( Third millenium B. C. ) at Buxar. The excavations have brought to light two types of terracottas, the crude one showing affinity with Sumer and Sindh, and subtle type to be compared with the Sumerian Eridu and the *Ægean*".<sup>37</sup>

That Indus valley civilization did not stand alone in India is testified by archæologist E. Mackay, who says, "Imports to the Indus valley from other parts of India make it clear that the people of the Indus valley cities traded with, if they did not control much of the country. For instance, stag's horns were brought from Kashmir, semiprecious amazon stone came from the latter place or from the far-off Nilgiri hills ; jadeite, as Sir Edwin Pascoe suggests, points to communications with Central Asia, and gold to Southern India. Mysore supplied a beautiful green stone of which a cup was found at Mahenjo-daro ; and lapis-lazuli and perhaps a lead ore containing silver were brought from the further regions of Afghanistan".<sup>38</sup>

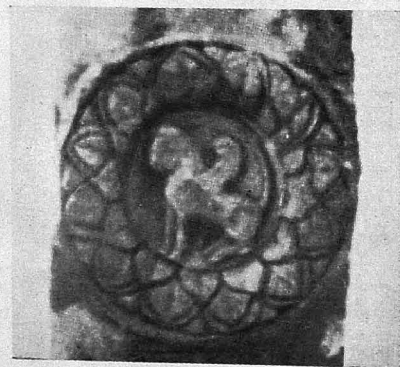
From these researches we find that the "Indus valley civilization" was autochthonous to the soil of India and was a part of the civilization of the Indian people

11 MAY 1957

MADRAS



PERSIAN BODHISATTVA  
( Dandan-Uiliq, Khotan )



WINGED ANIMALS  
*Assyrian influence*  
( Barhut )

5A



FEMALE FIGURE  
( Ajanta )

5B

of the Chalcolithic Age. Regarding the dates of the various antiquities that are being excavated in different parts of India, Dr. Coomaraswamy says, "a part of the remains at Mahenjodaro probably dates between 1000 and 400. B. C., and on the other hand, the minor antiquities from various Indian sites, as Basarh, Taxila ( Bhir mound ), Pataliputra and South Indian prehistoric sites go back at least to the fifth century B. C".<sup>39</sup> Thus the two supposed stages of Indian culture overlap each other. As regards the similarity of ancient Indian art with the outside world, the same authority says, "The Indo-Sumerian and Indo-Iranian background naturally prepares us for the recognition of many common elements in early Indian and Western Asiatic art. And in fact great variety of motifs are found at Maurya, Sunga and early Andhra art, and thus antedating the age of Hellenistic parallels in Sumerian, Hittite, Assyrian, Mykenian, Cretan, Trojan, Lykian, Pheonician, Achaemenid and Scythian culture..... . These and others, such as fret, spiral, valuts, labyrinth, and swastika have survived in folk-art and are widely distributed in India and Ceylon."<sup>40</sup>

Again, the same learned investigator says, "India in centuries and perhaps milleniums B. C. was an integral part of 'Ancient East' that extended from the Mediterranean to the Ganges valley. In this ancient world there prevailed a common type of culture, which may well have had a continuous history extending upwards from the stone age. Some of its most widely distributed decorative, or more

accurately speaking, symbolic motifs such as the spiral and swastika, with certain phases of its mythology, such as the culture of Sun and Fire, may go back to that remote past; more sophisticated motifs and technical discoveries may have originated in any part of the area, a majority perhaps in Southern Mesopotamia, others in India or in Egypt".<sup>41</sup> Here we recall the object pointed out by Mackay that the statue of a male discovered at Mahenjodaro has a shaved upper lip but a bearded chin.<sup>42</sup> This bespeaks the trace of Chalcolithic culture of Western Asia. From these recent researches and excavations subsequent to unearthing of Indus valley cities, we can clearly discern that there had been an extension of Chalcolithic civilization in the interior of India, and that the cities of Indus valley were not isolated and strange examples. Also, these excavations clearly demonstrate that the art of stone and brick masonry was continuing from the Chalcolithic Age down to Mauryan Age. Only in this latter age the dialectics wrought a new development in the Mauryan art and architecture. The Mauryan art was neither exotic nor a sudden evolution on the Indian soil. It had its basis on the Indian tradition.

All that can be said as pointed out by Coomaraswamy is, that there was a distinction between a folk art and a court art in the Asokan Age.<sup>43</sup> As regards the Asokan caves, the same investigator says, "The forms are evidently those of contemporary structural buildings in indigeneous style".<sup>44</sup>

From this evaluation of Indian art from the time

of authentic history we find that the Maurya art as known to the world had a class character in its bearing. As it is the fashion to trace the authentic period of Indian history from the Mauryan Age, we see that in this age, the gorgeous palace of Chandragupta provided with golden goblets and decorated with birds as described by the Macedonian ambassador Megasthenes, bespeaks not only the grandeur of the Mauryan emperor but also is an index of the culture of the epoch. Surely, the workmanship and the decorative art displayed there did not spring up to life all on a sudden, it must be taken as a continuity of the culture that is mentioned in the Rigveda and as discovered in the Indus valley. The gorgeous palace of Chandragupta had its precursors in the thousand-doored and thousand-pillared palaces mentioned several times in the above-mentioned Veda.

It is the former imperialist propaganda that made us blind to the fact that the history of India had a continuity and the accidental Macedonian invasion did not suddenly bring into life the blooming culture of the Mauryan epoch. The spirit of the Magadhan empire that boldly marched out to meet the foreign invader had a cultural basis that was rooted in the soil of the country.

Again, lots of terracottas and small figurines of stone with peculiar head dresses, a full-sized statue of a female figure in green stone discovered in the same era give testimony of the Mauryan art<sup>45</sup>. The ethnologist can study the ethnic peculiarities in the dresses of the figurines, and the sensuous facial



appearance of the female statue gives her a Slavic look. She can be taken as a type of East European woman. There is no mistake about it. And that type is not yet dead in India. One can see it amongst the present-day population. The life-like portrayal of these figures speak highly of the technique of the artists of the Mauryan epoch. Surely, they were working at it for a long time and they have brought out in details the ethnic peculiarities of the Indians of their days in stones. The art of that epoch testified the culture of the time which is an expression of the inner urge of the man.

Further, the four-headed lion statue and the so-called bell-shaped capital of the Asokan pillar are said by E. B. Havell to have indigeneous origin. Here we must remember that the lion is still not a stranger in India. The bell-shaped capital is really a lotus-shaped one according to the above-mentioned art critic. The lotus had been a symbol from the time of the Rig-veda<sup>46</sup>. Again during the reign of the Sungas we get a glimpse of the cultural conditions of India in stone. The Bharhut Gateways which are said to be constructed in 150 B. C. give us a picture of the social condition of the country of that time. The carved stone, gives us the story of the culture of the Indians of those days<sup>47</sup>. In those stone representations we find the cave dwelling of the matted-haired ascetics, drinking shops and taverns, slaughter houses, cooking shops, harlots, garlandweavers, washermen, astrologers, cloth merchants, goldworkers and jewellers, king and

other royal personages, some holy men, Brahmans, bankers, merchants, traders, funeral grounds, wrestling and gymnastic feats, elephant riders, cavalrymen, charioteers, foot-soldiers, sailors, bricklayers, needleworkers, barbers, shampooers, hunters, fletchers, trappers, etc. Thus on stone we get a glimpse of the Indian life extended from the time of the Buddha to the Sunga period. The stories of the Jatakas are depicted on the stone. Modern criticism says that much of the Jataka stories were post-Buddha accretions. Hence, pictures of life prevalent at the time of the composition found place in the Jatakas. For this reason it can be seen that the sculptures of the Sunga period bear testimony to the cultural life of India of the time. In this stone evidence we find that the Indian life in essence was not much different in those days from to-day. The thing noteworthy is that the Rigveda informed us of the sea-voyage of the Vedic people and this stone sculpture informed us about the sailors. This testifies that there was foreign trade in the Vedic and pre-Sungan days. This gives lie to the fantastic claims of the Brahman priesthood that "sea voyage is forbidden in Kaliyuga". As Sungan rule fell within "Kaliyuga", this stone evidence drives a nail in the coffin of the pretensions of the priesthood of Hinduism. Thus, the art of this era is a witness to the cultural genius of the Hindus of the day.

During the Sunga rule in the north, arose Kharavela, the king of Kalinga in the south, who boasted

of being the descendant of Rajarshi Vasu of Chedi (Kasu of Rigveda?)<sup>17A</sup> and flourished in the first half of the second century B.C. He boasted in the Hathigumpha inscription which he ordered to be inscribed in the aforementioned cave at Bhubaneswar in Orissa, that he conquered the whole of India from the Pandya country to the N.W. Provinces (Uttarpatha) when the Sunga dynasty was ruling in Magadha. He said, (he) makes the king of Magadha Bahasatimita low at his feet. And (he) sets up (the image of) the Jina of Kalinga which had been taken away by King Nanda" (L. 12). Then (he) builds excellent towers with carved interiors and creates a settlement of a hundred masons, giving them exemption from land revenue (L. 13). It was by this Jaina conqueror who aptly may be called the Constantine of Jainism that the Jaina scriptures the *Angas* were compiled (*Upadayati*) and the lost or scattered Jaina texts were restored. (L. 16). He caused the learned Jainas from all parts of India to assemble in a conference (*Sangha yonam*) in order to restore the texts.

This inscription throws a flood-light not only on the political field but also on the socio-religious affairs of the time. The important thing in this inscription that draws our attention is that it refers to the Jina image of Kalinga. It clearly demonstrates that the erection of image of religious leaders and honouring the said images had begun as early as fourth century B.C. The Nanda or the Nanda family ruled in Magadha before Alexander's invasion,

and the last of the Nandas was his contemporary. Hence, Idol-worship was known in India at the time of the Macedonian invasion. Strangely, we find in Kautilya's Arthashastra reference about temple (BK. V. Ch. II. 244), but no reference is made regarding the temple's inside though some deities are named. It seems the heretical i.e. the non-Vedic sects like the Jainas and the Buddhists that grew up in the country resorted to image worship. As they discarded the Vedic sacrifices (Jagnas) they invented something else instead. The common unsophisticated human mind wants some rites and ceremonies to busy itself. The inner urges for devotional acts cannot be satisfied by philosophy or dry dialectical discussions. Hence, in place of elaborate Vedic rites and sacrifices as well as Brahmanical ceremonies, the dissenting sects began to set up images of their religious leaders and began to satisfy their emotional urges by adoring their preceptors in the shape of images. It is manifest in the Buddhist text Cullavagga. It is significant that while Kautilya speaking about temples also said, "The king shall dismiss a priest who, when ordered, refuses to teach the Vedas to an outcaste person or to officiate in a sacrificial performance (apparently) undertaken by an outcaste person (Ayajva)".<sup>49</sup> Does it signify that to the brahmanical sect i.e. the greater portion of the Hindus who were adhering to the old Vedicism, adoration of the images or worship of their religious preceptors was not yet in vogue ?

Anyway, we get this much information from this

inscription that a sect of the Indians had begun to satisfy their devotional urges by setting up the images of their preceptors. Here it is evident that art expressed in stone images began to become a cultural good of the Indians of the period. This single information throws further historical information that the well-planned, well-chiselled comfortable caves called *Udayagiri* and *Khandagiri* built in rocks near Bhubanesvar was the product of the Jains. It was in one of these caves called *Hathigumpha* (cave of elephant) that the inscription was incised. The architectural genius required in hewing comfortable rooms with narrow aqueducts at the bases of the ceilings for the flowing out of the rain-water, the stone made reservoir with staircase inside, etc, bespeak of the engineering skill and the civilized life that the Indians used to live in that period. The caves were intended for the ascetics, yet the amount of pain taken to make comfortable habitation possible shows the standard of civilization of that period. What a contrast from the *Khairmur Hill* sketches to these Hill caves. Surely, the Indian Cultureman had advanced far in engineering skill and technique in these days.

A few centuries later, in the reign of the *Sata-vahanas* we find the Buddhist monks dwelling in the rock cut caves at *Nasik* (Deccan). The Brahmanical kings were donating villages for the subsistence of these monks. Here we must remember, that these cave-dwellings that are to be found all over India were not the dens for unlettered barbarous

peoples to dwell in, nor were the monks primitive troglodytes who knew not the art of house-making. Previously, we have seen that the Jatakas spoke about the matted-haired ascetics dwelling in caves. It is manifest that the ascetics and recluses of various religious denominations used to resort to this kind of dwelling. And there must be a meaning for this.

It is well-known that the mountaineers of the North-West Frontier of India (now West Pakistan) dwell in caves. These serve them as shelters from the tribal bloodfeud as well as from the weather. The rockcut caves are cool in summer and warm in winter. It is not improbable that the art of cave-dwelling was an ancient Indo-Aryan custom handed down from remote antiquity. But at the hands of the latter-day Hindus, it received a religious benediction and was elevated to the scientific stage of engineering skill. This proves the evolution of the mind of the Indo-Aryan and his cultural level from the the troglodyte stage to hermit's life in a cool and well chiselled, well plastered, well arranged cave. This architectural art was again an index of the Indian culture of the Period.

Later, in the third century A. D. in the Sanchi Stupa we find that the votive inscriptions give us lots of information regarding the cultural conditions of the country. The records of the Sanchi Stupa which is a Buddhist architecture expressing the piety of the Buddhist laymen, bear testimony of the religious urges of the believers. In these

records we find that the influential members of the village committees (Panch), the agricultural population of Malwa, were the adherents of Buddhism. Also we find recorded here that as early as the third century B.C. the system of having a committee of trustees in charge of a temple (Bodhagothi-Baudhagosthi F 25, 26) existed in India. It is a remarkable instance of the organizational capacity of the Hindus even in such an early age. Again we find the record of the collective gift of the *Vedisaka damitakara* i.e., workers of ivory of Vedisa. Thus, here we find the mention probably of the guild of ivory-workers.

Further, from the list of the donors, we get the idea about social hierarchy. Again, from this list we get the news that the merchants and traders were the mainstay of Buddhism. Also we find that from as early an age, beginning from third century B.C., the class of professional writers had evolved (Rajalipikara F 49 ; Lekhaka B.C. 48). Again, we find evidences of the Pauranik worship of Saivism and Vaishnavism as early as third and second centuries B. C. or much earlier time according to Buehler.<sup>51</sup>

Thus the Sanchi Stupas not only testify the architectural skill but also the cultural condition of the people of the time. Again, the Stupas and the Chaityas are the lineal descendants of the mounds or tombs used to be erected over the buried bones and ashes of the deceased of the Vedic period. The Prayogas of the Vedic literature testify to it (vide

Satapatha Brahmana 13.8 and Asvalayana Grihya Sutras 41-5). In this way, the architectural art built by the piety of the Buddhists not only stands as a witness to the cultural capacity of the Indians of the period, but also gives an evidence of the continuation of Indian art and culture.

Regarding Buddhist art, Dr. Coomaraswamy says : "It is in the southern primitives at Amaravati and Anuradhapura rather in the semi-Roman figures of the North-West that we can best observe the development of an art that is distinctly Indian. This is the main stream : and it is these types from which the suave and gracious forms of Gupta sculpture derive, and these in turn become the models of all Buddhist art in China. In India proper, they grow more and more *mouvemente*, more dramatic and vigorous, in the classic art of Ellora and Elephanta, Mamallapuram and Ceylon, and form the basis of the immense developments of Colonial Buddhist and Hindu art in Java and Cambodia Gupta and classic painting as preserved at Ajanta."<sup>32</sup>

Thus the origin of classical Indian art is to be traced from the interior of India itself rather than from outside. This we are seeing from the days of so-called Indus Valley civilization. Again, all the artistic peculiarities of the classical age are reflected in the literature of the day. Thus says, Coomaraswamy : "The tender humanism and the profound nature sympathies which are so conspicuous in the painting of Ajanta and the sculpture of Mamallapuram are recognizable equally in the work of poets



Asvaghosa and Arya Shura and dramatists like Kalidasa".<sup>53</sup> Here art is reflected in the literature of the day.

Looking more minutely we find that the early Buddhist art was more puritanical. Hinayana cult does not admit any image worship or the glorification of worldly beauty (Cullavagga VI 3. 2.). Monastic tendency was dominant in it. Hence we find the undecorated caves, simple forms of the Stupas and undecorated railings, etc. and no luxurious human figure or decoration. As Coomaraswamy says, "The arts were looked upon as physical luxuries and loveliness as a snare".<sup>54</sup> This Hinayana characteristic is to be traced in the Jaina and certain phases of Brahmanical thought contemporaneous with Hinayana as well. Hence we do not find luxurious human figures in Jaina art save and except decorative art.

The strange thing in the early Buddhist art as pointed out by Coomaraswamy is that nowhere the figure of the Buddha—the Master is represented. It is due to the fact as pointed out by him, that "It will be realized at once that the absence of the Buddha figure from the world of living men....it is a true artistic rendering of the Master's guarded silence respecting the after-death state of those who have attained Nirvana. In the omission of the figure of the Buddha, the early Buddhist art is truly Buddhist : for the rest, it is an art about Buddhism, rather than Buddhist art."<sup>55</sup>

Then was ushered in the age of Bhakti Cult

11 MAY 1957

CHENNAI



BUDDHA IN PADMASANA  
*Indian type*  
Berlin Museum



BUDDHA IN PADMASANA : *Gandhara influence*  
(Copy-right of the Department of Archaeology, Government of India)

in India. The Vaishnavas and the Mahayana-Buddhists vied with each other in adoring the Purushottama of their cults.

As a result we see the cultural representations of Avalokitesvara and Maitreya evolved out of Brahmanical Indra and Brahma.<sup>56</sup>

Here, Coomaraswamy, brings the question of seated Buddha ( Padmasana ) in Gandhara art. He says : "The seated Buddha, on *a priori* grounds, can only be of Indian origin",<sup>57</sup> and it explodes the myth about the Greek origin of the images of the Buddha. Here, it must be pointed out that the Indian influence in Gandhara is not solely represented by Buddhist art as is shown by the discovery of a Shiva image at Charsadda. It is in N. W. Frontier Province, now West Pakistan. It bears the Indianized Gandhara style of art of the third century A. D. (A.S.I.A.R, 1914-15). The same is the case with a four-armed female figure discovered from the Mohmand country (vide Smith, 2, fig. 78).

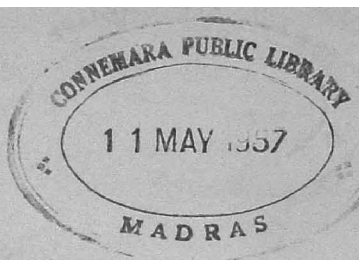
Now, we turn to the period which has been christened by the late archaeologist R. D. Banerjee as, "The Scythian period of Indian history"<sup>58</sup>. The cultural importance of this era is gradually being appreciated by the research scholars. The Scythians, an Indo-European-speaking people, were foreigners<sup>59</sup> at first, but at the end were completely merged in the Indian population and have left their impress in art, law, custom, costume, etc. Here, it should be pointed out that the Scythians were not homogeneous in composition. The so-called Scythians of India were

a conglomerate people. The Tochari (Yuch-chi), the Parthian (Pahlava) were assimilated in Scythian people (vide Delabois : "History of Parthia"). The greatest of this foreign horde that ruled over North Western and Northern India, was Kanishka the great (71 A. D.), who gave to India the Saka era first used by the Scythian Kshatras of Ujjain<sup>60</sup>. During this period bloomed forth the great art of North-Western India known as the *Gandhara art*.

So long, there had been much misconceptions regarding the art of Gandhara school. The imperialist propaganda saw the hand and brain of the Hellenistic artists from far away Near East. But a recent investigator says, "It is beyond dispute that the ideas in the art very often originate from native art, as we know from former stages at Bharhut and Sanchi. In Gandhara the idea often was given a Hellenistic appearance, but there are also several examples in which not only the idea, but design and working out as well of a certain religious scene were simply copied from ancient national art."<sup>61</sup> Then the investigator says, "We can therefore take for granted that the influence from India on Gandhara has been considerably greater than was generally assumed uptill now".<sup>62</sup>

Thus the Gandhara art inspite of its exotic influence had an Indian basis. But the composite character of its pattern manifests in the composite character of its art. If Hellenistic influence is shown in some specimens, Indian type is strongly depicted in others.

Coming down to Kushana Art at Mathura, we find



MIHIRA  
The Sun-god of Uttarapatha

8A



A Scythian Soldier  
from Mathura

8B





KUVERA  
*Gandhara influence*  
(Lahore Museum)

that the Buddha image originated at least half a century, if not a whole century, earlier at Mathura than at Gandhara. That the Buddha image is not inspired by the Greek images of the Greek gods is attested by Havell and Coomaraswamy who saw the need of the Indian mind for it<sup>63</sup>. We have said above that the image-worship was started by the Jainas and that then copied by the Buddhists to satisfy their spiritual exercises. According to Coomaraswamy, the Mathura Art is the direct development of the older Indian art of Bharhut and Besnagar<sup>64</sup>.

That the art of the Scythian period was an innovation and died out after the cessation of the Scythian rule is not borne out by the latest investigations. There has been a continuity of culture and its tradition. Thus says Leeuw, "After Vasudeva I, all cultural life does not suddenly break off and begin again quite as suddenly with the arrival of the Guptas".<sup>65</sup> Further he says, "Part of these uninterrupted cultural life consists of the unbroken sequence in art".<sup>66</sup> Regarding Gupta art, Coomaraswamy says, "The Gupta Art is unified and national. Plasticity in the style is derived from that of Mathura in the Kushana period".<sup>67</sup>

From a close scrutiny of the trend of Indian culture and art, it is clear that the culture of the Scythian period was not an interlude in the midst of the Indian cultural current. Of course, dialectically the Indian culture always has to pass through various contradictions in the forms of diffusion of foreign influences, but it has invariably overcome these contradictions and arrived at synthesis. Hence, the



culture of the Scythian period of Indian History cannot be taken as flourishing with the coming of the non-Indo-Aryans to India and existing for sometime and finally passing away without leaving any trace after the disappearance of the same influence. We must remember the annotation of the great Mimamsaka scholar Kumarila, that those *Mleccha* usages which are not contrary to the Vedas can be accepted.<sup>68</sup> It means that foreign usages have been imbedded in India in her mediaeval days and these are accepted as parts of orthodox society.

Again, as regards this stage of contradiction our archaeological investigator says, "In order to denominate this stage of transition, we have called it the post-Kushana period. We might also have called it the Pre-Gupta period, the post-Kushana period consequently forms the missing link between the flourishing periods of Kushanas and Guptas".<sup>69</sup> Then he says, "The whole period, as far as we can judge from various cultural aspects, language, script, sculpture, and religion is strongly built on the Kushana period and forms a logical continuation of it while there is not a single indication as to a hiatus between both periods".<sup>70</sup> Thus we find that a synthesis has been reached which ushered in the succeeding Vakataka-Gupta period.

The next epoch sees the rejuvenation of India, and her history turns on a new leaf. We see now the beginning of orthodox Hindu, i. e., Brahmanical art. Regarding it, Coomaraswamy says, "The beginnings of the Hindu art also go back to the second or third

century B.C., but apart from a few coins, little or nothing has been preserved of earlier date than the third or fourth century A. D. (The epigraphic records do not bear any evidence of any Brahmanical temple before the Vakataka-Bharasiva period). But its origins are recognizable in the Harappa culture of the third millennium B. C. Mahenjo-Daro Harappa".<sup>71</sup> From this epoch we find not only the religion of the Indians turning on a new leaf, but the art and architecture also taking a new turn. From the inscriptions of the Bharasivas and Vakataka kings of Central India (Navanaga and Vindhyaśakti rajas of Vishnupurana) we find during the rules of these two dynasties Saiva temples rearing their heads all over the country. In the Chamak copper plate inscription of Maharaja Pravarasena II of the Vakataka dynasty,<sup>72</sup> we find it inscribed, that "At the command of the most devout worship of ( the god ) Mahesvara, the Maharaja of the Vakatakes....Rudrasena (I) who was an excessively devout devotee of ( the god ) Swami Mahabhairava, who was the daughter's son of the illustrious Bhavanaga, the Maharaja of the Bharasivas, whose royal line owed its origin to the great satisfaction of ( the God ) Siva, ( caused ) by ( their ) carrying a linga of Siva placed as a load upon ( their ) shoulders, ( and ) who were besprinkled on their forehead with pure water of the ( river ) Bhagirathi that had been obtained by ( their ) valour ( and ) who performed ablution after the celebration of ten Asvamedha sacrifices.....the illustrious

Pravarasena (I) who celebrated the Agnishtoma, Astoryama, Ukthya, Shodasin, Atiratra, Vajapeya, Vrihaspatisava, and Sadyakra sacrifices and four Asvamedha sacrifices, (and) was of the Vishnuvridha Gotra....this village named Charmanika....given to one thousand Brahmans of various Gotras and Charanas”.

In this inscription we get the news of the new age in a nutshell. Buddhism is receding and grants are being made to the Brahmans instead of the Bhikshus as is seen in the Satavahana grants. Shaivism is rearing its head by getting royal patronage, Vedic ceremonialism and ritualism are being restored. Again, the grant tells us that India had also entered on a new socio-economic phase—the age of Feudalism. It says, “Now we grant the fixed usage, such as befits this ( village ) of a village which belongs to a community of Chaturvedins namely, it is not to pay taxes, it is not to be entered by the regular troops or by the umbrella-bearers : it does not carry with it ( the rights of ) cows and bulls in succession ( these were the technical fiscal terms of these days ) or to the abundance of flowers and milk, or to the pasturage, hides, and charcoal, or to the mines for the purchase of salt in a moist state ; it is entirely free from ( all obligation of ) forced labour : it carries with it hidden treasures and deposits, and the *Klripta* and *Upaklripta*. ....”

Thus this inscription of a grant ushers us not only to a new era of orthodox Brahmanism but also gives us news about feudal levies and economic usages.

We have now entered on a new phase of Hindu culture. From this time on we find the Hindus of the Brahmanical sect also building temples to their favourite Pauranik gods, we find image worship fully installed in the Brahmanical mind. The introduction of the gods from the Pauranik legends, the building of the temples dedicated to these Pauranik gods, give a new turn to the Indian art. The Indian art began to give expression to the various Pauranik legends. Gods with several arms and faces, gods and goddesses in different postures typifying the mystic interpretations of Pauranik Brahmanism began to be created. From this age on we begin to find new expression of social mind and thought in art. The cultural goods embodied in this new expression of the Indian art no longer typified the Jataka stories which had their bases on the reality of the Indian life, but idealistic realizations of the Brahmanical legends and mysteries began to be expressed through the new phase of Indian art. It entered on a stage of what would be called ideational.<sup>73</sup>

Later on, during the reign of the imperial Guptas,<sup>74</sup> we find temples dedicated to Vishnu being built in larger numbers than the others. In this period we find that cow had become an object of veneration as we find in the Sanchi stone inscription of Chandragupta II ( A. D. 412-13 )<sup>75</sup> which records the dedication of a grant of dinars for the feeding of five Bhikshus and a lamp to be burnt in the Jewel-house ( Ratnagriha ). It orders : "whoever shall interfere with this arrangement he shall become

invested with ( the guilt of ) the slaughter of a cow or of a Brahman”.

Here, we get some more information regarding the cultural trend of the Indian potentate. An orthodox Brahmanical ruler is giving grant to the Buddhist temple. This shows that there was no cultural conflict between the adherents of the sects. Again, the use of the coin dinar recalls to mind the Roman *Dinarius*. It shows that a brisk trade was going on between the Roman world and India. It also reminds us of the wailing of Pliny who lived in the first century of the Christian Era, that the Roman ladies had become so luxurious that they won't wear anything save the Indian silk, and the Indian merchants insisted on being paid in gold species. In this way, a million of gold species were being drained away every year from the Roman world by the Indian merchants. Thus the overflow of the Roman coin made itself felt in India, and the Indian gold coin was also named after the Roman coin. This is a further proof that the talk about isolation of India from the outside world was a lie. India always kept cultural relations with the outside world, and the exchange of cultural goods was going on all the time of her history.

Again, in this inscription we hear for the first time that the slaughter of a cow is a sin. This is a new dogma in the Brahmanical religion. Surely, Indian culture had entered a new phase.

In another Gupta grant called the Indar inscription<sup>76</sup> of Skandagupta ( Gupta era 146 ), we got the name

of a feudatory as well as the information about a Sun-temple. The grant records : "The gift of a Brahman's endowment of the ( temple ) Sun, is the perpetual property of the guild of oilmen ( Tailika srenya )." Here we get another name of a guild of traders, which has been converted to-day into a hereditary caste. It further says that this image of the divine Sun "has been established ( in a temple ) by the Kshatriyas....merchants of the town of Indrapura". This records that the Kshatriya class was not non-existent in that period, and a Kshatriya could be a merchant as well. This record drives another nail in the coffin of the priestly assertions expressed in the Puranas and the Smritis.

Again, in the Mandasora stone inscription<sup>77</sup> Kumargupta and Bandhuvarman ( 493 and 529 Malava years ), we find it recorded that a number of silk weavers migrated from the Lata-vishaya i. e., Central or South Guzerat and settled in the city of Dasapura whose governor was Bandhuvarman. It thus says, "From the district of Lata, there came men renowned in the world for skill ( in their ) craft ( of silk weaving )....Here the houses....with arbours in them, are beautiful....So assembling together, they settled in ( this ) city. Some of them ( became ) excessively well acquainted with the science of archery, others, devoting themselves to hundreds of excellent achievements, ( became ) acquainted with wonderful tales....Some excelled in their own business ( of silk-weaving ) ; and by others, possessed of high aims, the science of astrology was mastered, and even

to-day others of them, valorous in battle, effect by force the destruction of ( their ) enemies. ( And so ) the guild shines gloriously all around." Here, we get the news about the art of weaving silk-cloth which got international reputation. Thus it testifies to the justification of Pliny's wailings.

We get information that an original group of silk-weavers differentiated itself into three distinct professions. And according to the usages of latter days, this band of weavers taking different ways of living must have developed into Brahman ( astrologer ), Kshatriya ( archer ) and Vaishya ( silk-weaver ). This list of social news gives us a glimpse of the cultural life in the orthodox Brahmanical Gupta Era. This inscription and the aforesaid one, emphatically demonstrate that caste-system was not hereditary even in those days.

Again, the Eranstone Pillar inscription<sup>78</sup> of Buddha-gupta ( A. D. 484-85 ) records the erection of the column called a *Dhwaja-Stambha* or the flag-staff of the God Vishnu. Similarly, we hear in history of the erection of a flag-staff of God Vishnu by one "Paramabhagavato Heliodoro".<sup>79</sup> He was apparently a Hellenistic person from the kingdom of Bactria in the North. These monuments testify not only to the cultural intercourse of India in Feudal days but also to the new events in the cultural history of India. Also we hear of a Greek from the North ( Utarahaso Javana) named Indragnidatta, the son of Dhammadeva the Javana dedicating a Stupa to the Buddha.<sup>80</sup>

India has now entered on the full-fledged

socio-economic stage of Feudalism. Social hierarchy based on economic inequalities was the order of the day. Religious hierarchies both on the terrestrial and the spiritual worlds were patterned after the mundane example. In Mahayana as well as in Pauranik Brahmanism, we find spiritual hierarchy of the deities worshipped. In Mahayana there was a hierarchy beginning from a Bhikshu to the great Buddha himself. Buddhist Iconography testifies in painting and sculpture the cultural pattern of this Mahayanic hierarchy. Similarly, in Brahmanism we find no longer the bizarre condition of the Vedic gods, but a centralized organization of the divinities. There is the Trimurti—Brahma, Siva and Vishnu above all. Indra is no longer a henotheistic god, but simply the office-master in Heaven of the divine hierarchy. His court is also patterned after the terrestrial court of an Indian potentate of the same age. At Ellora rock-cut temples the court of Indra is pictured in stone, but he is not the same Soma-drinking, pot-bellied, yellow-bearded Indra riding on his horse *Hari*. Socio-economic condition of the time had reacted in the mentality of the thinking people, and had shaped the ideology of the same. Hence the cultural patterns of the age are reflected in art as well. Religion has been expressed in art. It depicts the same spiritual experience, as Coomaraswamy says,—an intuition of reality and of identity.<sup>81</sup> It was the state of Hindu art of the time.

Then comes the degeneration of the Indo-Aryan mind. Dialectics was working its way. Out of the



crucible of time, new tribes and peoples were coming at the top and arrogating to themselves as the descendants of ancient historical dynasties and founding principalities of their own. It was the uprise of the lowly. Class-struggle proceeded in this line. With the end of this *Daemmarung* period, we find that the sects of the *Saivas* and the *Vaishnavas* hitherto despised and regarded as unorthodox, reigning supreme in the domains of religion and the States. The lot of the common people had been a sorry one due to devastating internecine wars. Priestcraft was tightening its hold on the laity. At this time we find Mahayana had given off a branch called *Mantrayana* i.e. Buddhhist-Tantricism which introduced alchemy in India. The Brahmanical priestcraft reacted to it as well. Miracle-mongering and open defiance of conservative social customs became the order of the day with the religious adepts of 'Tantricism'. Those qualifications took the place of religion. Religion, society, political life were all in the downward path of decadence. The literature of the period attest to it. The "Mahachinacharatantra" a Brahmanical text says, that the sage Vasistha on going to China got shocked in seeing the wine-bibbing, half-drunken Lord Buddha, an incarnation of Vishnu, in company with women of the same sort. The Lord Buddha perceiving it, said with a smile that it was the custom of the country, and he should go back to *Bharata* and preach the idea of *Chinachara* i.e. a religious custom that throws away all the conventions about morality,

purity and cleanliness of orthodoxy. A fitting epilogue of the decadent age.

It is no wonder that in this decadent period like elsewhere in the world, the exploited and oppressed people should take refuge in mysticism. As a result, we get a luxurious and varied art depicting the mystic and mysterious forces of the gods and the goddesses. This resulted in producing the mystic dance of Shiva in the image of dancing Nataraja, the destroying force of God in five-faced Shiva. The dance of Nataraja represents the cosmic activity of Shiva.

In the same way, we find the other sects depicted their gods and goddesses in mystic expression in literature and in art. Hence we get the power of God expressed in goddess Sakti riding on a lion, the same power of God extending over traditional ten corners of the world in ten armed goddess *Durga* riding on a lion, killing the anti-god Asura—a demon. The Sanskrit literature of the closing days of the Hindu period bears witness to this degeneracy. The thunder-roarer Indra is no more on the spiritual horizon, the theory of Upanishadic *Atman* is in the back-ground. Instead, we now get crass superstitions and priestly conjuring, the hideous *Vamachara* and erotic love-lyric. All these are depicted in art.

Hideous idols of the Tantric Buddhists such as, Hebajra, animal-gods depicting various emotions, the ten Mahavidyas portraying different moods of Sakti, lyric-love of Krishna in Vrindavana. ( see the plaques

discovered amongst the ruins of Somapuri-Vihara—modern Paharpur ) came in vogue.

In this way, the religious thought of the age was represented in the cultural goods as art of the new religion. Again, during the feudal period Buddhism in the form of Mahayana, was making a near approach to the popular Hinduism known as Pauranik Brahmanism. This approach so approximated each other that Mahayana was lost in present-day popular Hinduism. This approach of two cultures had its reflection in art, Dr. Coomaraswamy says,<sup>23</sup> "The Buddha as supreme person ( Purusottama ) of incalculable but not infinite age, whose enlightenment dates from the beginning of the world, is thus from the standpoint of Ontology and Psychology as well as by verbal correspondences ( Lokapita, Svayambhu, Prajananatha ) virtually identified with Brahma Prajapati who is the father of the world. The virtual identification of the Buddha with Brahma has also its equivalents in iconographic representation".

From this period on till the destruction of the Hindu rule in North India, we got a luxurious art representing the cultural patterns of the time. Here it must be said, that if the Pauranik art of Brahmanism and of Mahanaya was ideational in representing the mysteries of religion, non-orthodox art of Sun-worship, orthodox Buddhism, etc., had their realistic side as well.

It is said ( Vabisya Purana ) that Sun-worship was brought by Samba a son of legendary Sri Krishna from Balhika ( Balkh ) to India. At that time

Bactra ( Balkh ) was known to be the land of the Sakas ( Scythians ). So, he brought some *Maga-Brahmans* with him. The image of the god Sun and its priests who are now-a-days known as Sakadwipi or Sagala-dwipi Brahmans are depicted in their true national costume. The image of the Sun god with this priest that is preserved at the museum of the Varendra Research Society in Rajshahi ( Bengal ) shows conical-shaped cap ( kulah ) on his head, a tight-fitting coat and trousers with high boots up to the knees on his body. His priest is wearing the same costume as well. Surely, it is an un-Indian and Central-Asian dress that a Hindu god has worn on his body. The very type of high-boots that are depicted in sculpture are still being worn in Turkestan.

This sculptured statue that is being discovered in different parts of the country shows a beacon-light of the cultural history of India. This life-like representation of the Central-Asian ethnic type of a Hindu god, bespeaks not only about the cultural infiltration from outside, but also draws commendation for the artistic genius of the Indian sculptor. Similarly, side by side in the museum a statue of Vishnu carved in stone has been presented. In the eye of an anthropologist, the face of the latter is typically Bengali-like though both have been discovered from the same region. Hence, we must acknowledge that these artistic representations are more realistic in their delineation than anything else. These statues prove the keen scientific observations of the artist

in portraying the anthropological types represented in these two forms. It is an index of the culture of the people of that time,

Another evidence of foreign Sun-worship is to be found in the ruined Sun-temple at Konarak in Orissa. It is a piece of architecture that is much praised by the foreign and Indian art critics. It is regarded as built sometime between eleventh and thirteenth century A.D.<sup>84</sup> But some regard it as being built in still later period. As regards its structure, I. Ferguson says, "I do not exaggerate when I say that it is for its size, the most richly ornamented externally at least in the whole world"<sup>85</sup>. Again, the modern critic of Indian art, Havell says, "Had it by chance been labelled 'Roman' or 'Greek' this magnificent work of art would now be the pride of some great metropolitan museum in Europe or America"<sup>86</sup>. The interesting thing is that the Sun-god is depicted as wearing a conical headdress. It may be a modification of Persian Kulah. Again, the gods labelled Navagrahas also the god Narayana have the same fashioned headdress. The thing noticeable here is that the Sun-god has been Hinduized in some of his characteristics. He is two-handed in one image as well as four handed in another image. The Brahmanical sacred-thread is shown on his body. But, unlike the other gods of the Hindu Pantheon, he is wearing a pair of shoes on his feet. Again, some armed warriors are standing around him. The strange thing is, that the African Ziraffe is sculptured in the body of the temple which is built

in the form of a Chariot. It shows connection of the royal court of Orissa with the western coast of the Indian ocean. This connection reminds us of the existence of Indian colony in East Africa, the remnants of which still exist there along with architectural ruins\*. It also was narrated by a German as well as an Indian traveller to the writer. But the descendants of the Indian colonists like those of the Phillipines have forgotten their Indian origin. Again, some statues both males and females are seen as wearing skirts. Again, the presence of obscene statues that are to be found therein common with some other temples of the province, may be due to the prevalence of Tantricism as according to Lama Taranatha, Odivisa (Orissa) was a centre of Buddhist Tantricism<sup>87</sup>. The art-critic Prof. N. Basu says that the sculpture without drawing inspiration from the lives of common householder, peasant and working man, has only portrayed king, soldier, dancing-girl and hunting scene. Thus, only court-life is depicted here. In this wise, class-character of the art is discernible here.

Taking all these informations together we find that the temple of Konarak was built at the time when Buddhist influence was waning, Brahmanism was in ascendancy, and Islam was hammering its way in North-India. Indeed, the partial demolition of the temple is regarded as due to the vandalism of the Moslem invaders.

Thus, by making a close observation of the archi-

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\* Vide F. Von Luschan ; "Rassen, Sprachen und Voelker,"

tectural contents of the temple, we find that they bear testimony to cultural cross-currents of the period in epitomized form in stone. The cultural trends of the period are depicted in art.

Another important piece of architecture is to be found in Balaji Tirupati temple at Chittoor in South-India. It was probably founded by the Pallava Kings of Kanchipuram ( 830 A. D. ). The Saluva Narasimghadeva and Krishnadeva Raya of Vijayanagara have embellished it further. Anyway, it is supposed to be free from foreign influence. But the *replica* built in Kharagpur in West-Bengal by the working-class men of the railway workshop, with the help of the masons from the original temple locality, betrays the traces of foreign influence. The outer walls of the temple depict scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Yet, high Kulah caps of Persian dervishes, coats and trousers, Greek cast of face are sculptured in the wall-statues. Surely, these are not modern innovations. This portraiture betrays the infiltration of foreign art influence even in a purely Hindu period of the South. Here we must remember that the Vijayanagara emperors while they fought all the way through in their history against the Mohammedan potentates of the Deccan, yet bore the title *Suratran* ( Sultan ) as a part of their imperial dignity. South-Indian art was not immune from foreign infiltration since the time when the South had a brisk trade connection with the Roman world in the early parts of the Christian era. Again, Indian representations in sculpture and

mural paintings depict the evolution of Indian costume from the days of the Buddha down to the fifteenth century A. D. These art evidences betray the foreign cultural infiltration as well as indigenous evolution of Indian costume. In this matter the dynamism of the Indian mind is manifest<sup>38</sup>.

But here it must be noted that our present-day art critics and archaeologists have followed the wake of the Occidental investigators of the foreign imperial epoch, in their interpretation of the sculptured representations of men and women. They deduced ethnological conclusion by examining some statues without reference to the literature of the time. Thus, they interpreted ancient and mediaeval people of India, men and women as keeping their torsos uncovered. Even they conjectured that in the South they went without covering with the exception of hiding the pubic region. But by examining a naked statue, one cannot arrive at such an ethnological conclusion. A statue depicts the expression of the limbs, hence they are kept bare. If a critic investigates the ancient marble statues of Greece and Rome, he will find the same characteristics depicted in them.<sup>39</sup> Aphrodite of Melos is shown with a nude bust. Again, the following statues of ancient days betray the following characteristic : (1) Nude statues are shown in the "Farnese Bull" ; (2) The sculptured "Laocoon Group" shows nude figures ; (3) The statue of Maroyns is a nude one ; (4) The statue of Appollo Sauroctonos is a nude one ; (5) The marble Faun, after Praxiteles is a nude one ; (6) The



Eros of Centocelle is a nude figured statue ; (7) The Hermos of Praxiletes is a nude figure. Even in the Christian period we find the sculptured statues delineated as nude, viz ; (8) The Ludonise 'Ares' is a nude one ; (9) "The Praying boy" is a naked one ; (10) In the five Tanaras Statuettes, there are some with nude bust ; (11) Again, the statue of Demosthenes is delineated with the upper part being half-naked.<sup>99</sup>

In the matter of nudity of European classical statues, the Indian art-critic Khandalavala says : "It may be remembered by students of Greek art that the statue of the Cridian Approdite by Praxiletes used to make young men amorous when they beheld it."<sup>91A</sup>

As regards the dress of prehistoric Mediterranean people, Cotteril says, "In 'Minoan' and 'Mycenean' civilization,.....the men when at war generally wore nothing at all and at other times often only a sort of bathing drawers garment and footgear curiously like our 'putties'. Their hair was often built up into a high coiffure with long pig-tails and in many paintings they have extraordinarily slender waist. The women had strangely modern looking costumes—heavy deeply flounced, embroidered skirts and ( when the bust was not nude ) puff sleeved jackets or blouses ( often very décolletees ) The hair was elaborately coiled and curled."

Regarding classical period we have already spoken about women statues. Generally they wore an Indian Alkhalla-like ( smock-frock ? ) garment covering the whole body. As regards men they wore a

*Himation* ( like Indian shirt miscalled "Punjabee" ) to cover the upper part of the body. Above it the Romans wore a toga over the shoulders. But no covering is discernible on the legs of both Grecian and Roman statues. Will we by borrowing the argument of the ultra-critical Indian interpreters, that as the statues of given country faithfully depict the likeness of the prevalent costume of the people say, that the classical people of the Mediterranean side of Europe used to go naked in the lower parts of their body? Will we argue that as modern European costume is a borrowed one from the Near East from the time of the Crusades, and as the Crusaders introduced it in Europe, the classical and the mediaeval Europeans used to go naked even in northern climes ?<sup>92</sup>

The evolution of the costume of a historical people is to be enquired into from the given ethnological epoch of the region. As we have seen that Central and Western Asia including India had a common cultural complex from Neolithic period, we must try to find out the source of the costume of the people inhabiting that region from the aforesaid period. Of course we can trace it from Chalcolithic Age only.

Coming to India in this matter, we find that there are similarities in the costume of the ancient Indian and those of the Mediterranean world of Chalcolithic period. The thing noticeable is that the southern belt of Asia did not evolve leg coverings in the form of trousers till the late historical period. We do not find trousers mentioned in the Vedas. The Rig-Veda composed of religious songs gives a scanty

report of dress and costume worn in that time. It speaks of dress as *Vasas* (Av. 8, 2, 16 ; RV, 10, 102, 2) woven from lamb wool ( Vajasaneyasanhita 19.80 ), This dress used to be coloured and called "*Pesas*" ( RV. 1. 92.4 ). The god Agni's dress was of gold ; we take it as of golden colour or gold embroidered one. The Usha showing her garment ( coloured ) like a *dansense*. All these mean that the Rig Vedic people like the ancient peoples of other countries used to wear bright coloured clothes.

Again, in the dialogue between Pururavas and the nymph Urvasi (RV. X. 95. 6) Pururavas says, that as he was attached to her, his other wives did not come to her being dressed. These mentionings betray the existence of some sort of bright coloured dress to have been worn by the Vedic ladies. Further, a discussion has arisen regarding the interpretation of the costume of Indrasena<sup>93</sup>, the wife of the rishi Mudgala whose cows were stolen. Indrasena, acting as the charioteer of her husband rescued the stolen cows.

The hymn describes that while the chariot was running, the *Vasas* of Indrasena was flapping in the air ( RV. X. 102. 2 ). The question has arisen as to which portion of the dress was flapping, the cloth which was worn round the body or the covering on the body, when she acted as a charioteer in a fight. She must have worn her clothes in a tight fitting-manner. Hence outer garment covering her body must have been flowing in the air. Here, it must be said that nowhere the sense in the Rig-Veda is clear that the woman of that epoch wore only a

piece of cloth nowadays called *Sari* around her body. In the North-Indian extreme climate it is impossible to remain barebodied, Naturally, the torso along with the lower part must have been covered in Vedic days. A litany of Kakshivant addresses to goddess Usha to uncover her bosom before the god Sun (RV. 1. 123. 10). This presupposes that some kind of bodice or upper garment used to cover the bust of the Vedic women. It cannot be said that only a piece of cloth or drapery called *Sari* was enough to stand the weather in ancient days, as it is not enough in modern time. We have already mentioned tunic, dhoti (or sari of modern nomenclature,) and a turban on the head as female accoutrement of the Sunga Age.

As regards the dress of men we are again in the dark. A piece of garment used to be called *Atka*<sup>94</sup> (RV. 5. 55. 6). It is the same as "Adhka" in old Bactrian language. Sayana annotates it as armour. In the above passage it is called as of gold. It might have been a long coat or an *alkhalla*-like robe. It seems that it used to be woven (RV. 1. 122. 2). Again, it seems that a sort of night-shirt (*Samulya*) used to be worn (RV. X. 85. 29; AV. 14. 1. 25). Referring to Atharva Veda we find that the direct piece of cloth worn round the loin was called *vasas* (AV. 8. 2, 16). Over it was worn an enveloping garment (*Paridhan*. AV. 8, 2.16). It was also called *Adhivasa* (AV. 8. 2. 16). The inner wrap was called *Nivi* (RV. 8. 2. 16; AV. 14, 2, 50). Of course there was the *ushnisa* (RV. 5, 57, 6), and

golden tiara ( RV. 5, 58, 11 ) in the case of the aristocrats. The nightdress or shirt was called *Samulya* ( AV. 14, 5, 25 ). It is defined as a woollen shirt in pt. Lcxx and is identical with *Samula* as defined by the commentator, Apastamba reads it *Amulya*. But Buehler takes the text to be of 300 B.C. and hence of Mauryan Age.

As regards foot cover, we do not get any clue about it in the Vedas. But the latter-day texts speak of one soled and double soled sandal-like shoes ( Jatakas ). Also they mention of *Upanaha* ( shoes ) and *upanada-gudapada* i.e., highbooted persons ( Hitopadesha ). All these accoutrements are depicted in the sculptures. The people wore clothes as befitting their climate. This description of clothes puts a nail on the coffin of the theory of the northern origin of the Indo-Aryans. In the same period we do not find tailor-made coat and trousers in Persia and in Mesopotamia. The terracottas discovered in the Indus valley betray the same fashion of dress. In the marriage of Surya in the Atharva-Veda ( 8, 1, 36 ) we find that in the well-flowered ( *Sukinasuka* ), all-formed, well-wheeled bridal-car ( vahatu ) fitted with gold cushioned ( Pras-tarana ) vehicle did she ( Usha ) mount in her way to her husband's house. Elsewhere, the list speaks of bridal garment and bridal dress given to her by the gods ( 14, 2, 41 ).

All these Vedic descriptions will make us realize that the theory of the ultra-critics is untenable. The latter-day Gobhila Grihya Sutras speak of four kinds

of Indian clothing. Again, it will seem strange to-day that the Vedic literature speaks of women wearing turbans,

But in the latter period of Panini (circa 400 B.C.) we find him mentioning "*Bahiryoga*" (outer garment) and "*Upasambyam*" (lower garment) (1. 1, 36). This is the same kind of priestly dress as we find in the Rigveda. Again, he speaks of "*Brihatika*" an upper garment or mantle (v. iv. 6). It seems he hints of some sort of mantle here.

Still later, in the period following the wake of Alexander's invasion we find the Greek writers mentioning the tribal chiefs of western Punjab. Speaking about the chiefs of the Kshudrakas (oxydrakai) and Mallas (Malloi) Q. Curtius Rufus has left us the following account: "In the meantime one hundred ambassadors came to the king from the two nations. Their robes were of linen and embroidered with inwrought gold and purple" (Ch. vii)<sup>95</sup>. Perhaps this robe is the prototype of god Varuna's "Golden Atka",

From the evidences of the Vedic and post-Vedic literatures it is discernible that there was a class-character in the matter of dress. It is clear from the testimonies that the god Varuna of the Rig Veda and the latterday chiefs, contemporaneous with Alexander, used to wear costly robes, while the common people wore clothes like that of to-day.

Here it is to be noted that the testimony of Megasthenes who as quoted by Strabe says: "Their robes are worked in gold, and ornamented with

precious stones and they wore also flowered garments made of the finest muslin<sup>96</sup>. This is discernible in Mahenjo-daro statue which substantiates our contention expressed above. The Kshatriyas as described by him used to wear a long robe or coat, while the Brahmans and the Sramans used to wear loin-cloth (dhuti) and a covering cloth on the upper part of the body (*Uttariya* or *dopatha*). According to *Vatsayana*, the common people wore the two pieces of apparels in the same fashion (vide *Kamasutras*). The apparels described as worn by Charudatta in *Mricchakatika* drama were of the same sort. That *vastra* (loin-cloth) and *uttariya* cloth covering the upper part are persisting in India as the common man's general dress is evinced from the Mahenjo-daro and the Rig Veda down to to-day. But in the sculptures and paintings we see a 'Kurta' i.e, a shirt-like upper dress or coat being used by men though we do not find its mention in the literature, But from the post-Mauryan epoch the sculptures, the paintings and the coins give us definite informations about costumes, We find ladies wearing coats, skirts, bodices, The men wearing short trousers, tunics, coats, high boots, etc.<sup>97</sup> Surely some of these are infiltrations of the dress of the Scythian, Kushan and other Central-Asian people coming from colder regions. That the present-day gentleman's suit of *choga*, *chapkan* and *pyjama* are of Scythian importation cannot be denied.<sup>98</sup> Since then, this fashion of costume has been imbedded in the *mores* of the Indo-Aryans.



GODDESS DURGA FROM PURI

With eight arms, Chanchuli on the bust and skirt below  
(Copy-right of the Department of Archaeology, Government of India)





### GODDESS DURGA

Chinese and Persian influences on Indian Art ( Rajasthani, 18th Century )

But strangely this innovation in fashion is not mentioned in the Brahmanical Sanskrit literature in general. The priesthood as the conservers of antique usages, have not let their vision go beyond the habits and customs of Chalcolithic Age. Hence in the priestly literature not much can be gleaned regarding the cultural evolutions.

It seems this mentality has influenced priestly literature and art. Hence the sculptures do not depict the new fashion in every case, though we get informations about the changes of fashion from some sculptures. This silence has led our ultra-critics to interpret the Indians including even the kings and members of the aristocratic class as going in loin-cloths only. If the semi-nude India-made statues and busts of women be interpreted as showing the old Indians to be scantily dressed, then what would be the answer to the nude and semi-nude statues of ancient and mediaeval Europe ? The art exhibition of U.S.S.R. shown in Calcutta in the summer of 1952, exhibited a complete naked picture of a young woman of sixteenth century, sitting on a chair with only a piece of cloth on the lap to cover the pubic region. Will we then come to the conclusion that the Russian ladies of that era used to go naked in that rigorous cold climate ? Again, what interpretation is given to the statues of the art collections at Louvre, Kensington Museum and the nude statue of Achilles in Hydepark, as well as to the nude and suggestive statue of Aplo in twentieth century Athens ?

There is no gainsaying that the mediaeval Indian artists exhibited bare bodies for some purposes. There was not a realistic art in every case. On the other hand, the portrayal of costumes old or new is to be traced from the non-priestly sculptures and paintings. As regards information from the literature, we find that Kautilya suggests not to reprove women with the expressions : "Thou half-naked thou naked (*nagne vinagne*) (sloka 155). This implies that women used to be clothed well. Again, the post-Maurya poet *Bhasa* speaks of Veil (*abagunthan*) and of scarf (*odna*) in his dramas. Again, some of the secular texts and lexicons have left for us some words the import of which cannot be mistaken viz., *Canchuka* which is shaped like a bodice. It is a jacket or a coat. It is also called "*Sannaha*".<sup>99</sup> It is used for a soldier's mail-coat as well as a coat of quilted cotton. Its diminutive is *Canchulika* which is a cloth bodice. Its modern name is *Canchali* which is still being used by the Indian women. Regarding woman's outfit we find the following : A *Sari* to cover the body, a *canchuli* to cover the breasts, and according to R. L. Mitra, "Over it is worn a thin, light jacket reaching to the waist with sleeves to the elbows. This is called *Angia* ; Hindi Kurta....this will appear to be a corruption of the Sanskrit *Angika*. It is possible that the name of male Jacket *Angarakha* of the present-day is a modification of the same word"<sup>100</sup>. Besides, over all these, a scarf (*Uttaria* or *Odna*) to cover the upper part of the body and a pair of slippers (*Paduka*) to cover the feet in the case of

aristocratic women was in vogue. Of course, in ancient time a turban protected the head. In mediaeval time some sort of cap replaced it ( Vide Kumara Devi's picture in coin ). Again, in some places, skirts (Ghagra) used to be worn by some women. To-day, among some of the people of the western part and of the Himalayan Region, skirt is the universal habit. It seems that in the upper Gangetic valley, petty-coat used to be worn beneath the Sari<sup>101</sup> ; it is still in use in Assam. It seems they call it *Mekhala*. This is more or less the dress of Indian women even of today.

Further news about women's habits we cull out from the great poet Kalidasa. In the drama "Sakuntala", while living at the hermitage, Sakuntala is described as wearing a piece of bark to cover the upper part of the body ( Act. I ). Again, she is asked to wear two pieces of cloths before her departure for her husband's home ( Act no. 4 ). She in the court is described as wearing a veil (Act. 5). But in the oilpainting of Sakuntala made by the king, there is no description of clothes. The picture of her bust up to the girdle is given. (Act no. 6). The king says that he has forgotten to paint the dress by mistake. It is a half-painted picture.

Again, in "Malavikagnimitram", the bare body of Malavika is painted. Natural beauty of the body is delineated, hence no dress is put in it, (Act no. 2). In the same drama also taking of Veil by Malavika signified marriage (Act no. 5).

Further, in "Vikramorvasi" the covering of bosom

by clothes is mentioned ( Act no. I ). Again, the king says, "What is the use of bragging about dress" (*Paricchada*) (Act no.4). Moreover, white silken breast covering is mentioned (Act no. 4).

In "Pushpabanavilasam" the *uttariya* (upper garment) covering the bosom is mentioned (4).

In "Ritusamharam" is described that women have covered their bosom with stays or bodices (*kurpas*) and the bust is covered with red silken cloth (8).

All these references give the lie that the old Indian women used to go with bare bodies because this is delineated in some of the mediaeval statues.

Finally, we come to "North Cloud" of *Meghdutam* where the bereaved *Jaksha* describes his lady love. "She is of slender body, fair, the edge of her well-set teeth are sharp, lips all full, the waist is slender, her eyes are like that of frightened gazelle, the navel is deep, the hips are heavy, hence she walks slowly, and full bosom" (21).

Here an ideal beauty is described, and this description has become a classical one. Again in the epic poem 'Kumarasambhavam', Act I, Kalidasa described every limb of the youthful *Uma*, the daughter of Himalaya in a poetic language. Yet, he did not mention clothes, though he spoke of bark-clothes elsewhere. Here again, no garments are delineated, because the poet has described the beauty of the bare limbs. Further, in *Mahabharata* it is narrated that all clothes (*Paricchada*) of *Draupadi* were kept with the king of *Pulinda* during the wandering of the *Pandavas* into the forests (*Banaparva*).

As regards men's costume, the Brahmanical literature is silent about it. From the sculptural representations we glean *dhoti* for common persons and labourers. The Chaddar or Uttariya to cover the upper part of the body has been universal. These two habits are still used. For full dress the tunic-like *chapkan* as represented in the dress of the archers at Sanchi, was the costume of the aristocracy and men of position. Again, we meet sculptured representations of long flowing jamas (Shirts ?) for men of lesser dignities. Besides, there were the trousers (*Payajama*), which was surely a newer innovation of the Mediaeval Age. It was held round the waist by a string with a chain and girdle (*Nivibandha*) over it. Then to finish the outfit, *Upanaha* (Shoes) to cover the feet or *paduka* (Slippers) for common men and turban on the head were used. As regards *Jama* R. L. Mitra says, "As it is still now seen it is thoroughly Indian and of ancient days. The Parsis accepted it from the Hindus about twelve hundred years ago, and have since preserved it as their national dress....the Moslems in Akbar's time adopted it as a court dress. The pattern preserved in Rajput sculptures figured by Tod, and on the horseman in Bhubanesvara Temple, is perhaps the nearest approach to ancient habits".<sup>102</sup> Referring to Sanskrit literature, we read in the Mahabharata, which is the oldest epic according to some, that king Jayadratha clothed in ample dress (*vipula Paricchada*) befitting a king, was going through the forest for marriage, when he saw Draupadi and abducted her (Vanaparva). But during the battle

of Kurukshetra, king Judishthira is described as taking his bath in the early morning in the tent. After the bath, the servants put on him a cloth around the loins and put ornaments on the arms and neck. A tiara was put on his head. Then he ascended the throne and gave audience (Karnaparva). In this description no garment on the upper part of the body is to be traced. From these contradictory statements, we surmise, that Judishthira as the ideal king of the Priesthood, was made to forego the newer innovation in dress in this description. Conservative and priestly injunction of wearing unsewn cloth was fitted to this description.

But in the later epic Ramayana it is narrated, that when the prince Bharata went to Bharadvaja's Ashrama with an army to bring back Rama from the forest, he after putting off his dress outside the hermitage, entered it by wearing two pieces of *Kshauma* (silken) dhoti and chaddar (Ayodha, 199 Ch.). Again, this description accommodates the priestly injunction of wearing unsewn clothes in a sacred place. Thus, the Chalcolithic custom is grafted in the Feudal Age. But Bana in his "Harshacharita" describes his patron emperor Harsha, a non-orthodox ruler to be wearing occasionally a long coat or an overall of some sort.

That enough proofs have been produced, that the ancient Indian aristocrats used to wear a costly robe in the form of a coat, convince us that long coat reaching down to the ankle that is occasionally worn in Rajputana and elsewhere even today, is the lineal

descendant of Rig-Vedic Atka.

Further from the Rig-Veda down to the epics, we read of the armours put on the body during battle. It is strange that the ancient Indians wore armour *cap a pie*, and there are descriptions about it, while the Brahmanical texts have neglected to mention the costume of the day. Kautilya<sup>103</sup> mentions six kinds of armoured coats: (1) *Lohajalika*—the commentator explains it as a coat of armour made so as to cover the whole body together with the head and arms; (2) *Patta*—a coat of iron without cover for the arms; (3) *Kavacha*—a coat of iron made of detached pieces to cover the head, the trunk and the arms; (4) *Sutrika*—cover only for the hips and the waist; (5) *Kanchuka*—a coat extending as far as the knee-joints; (6) *Varavaha*—a coat extending down to the heels. Besides, there were coverings for the head (*sirastrana*), cover for the neck (*Kanthatran*), *Kurpasa* (cover for the trunk), *nagodarika* (gloves). Again, the Mahabharata mentions cover for the fingers of an archer (*Angulitran*). It is to be remembered that Kautilya's text was written as a political guide book of the Mauryan emperors (Vide Kamandaka). It is no wonder that the Greek writers accompanying Alexander described king Porus wearing armours from head to foot, when he came from the battle field to meet the conqueror.

On these accounts, it can be argued that when long and short armoured coats are mentioned, surely there have been visualized objects as percepts for the conception of these ironed body-covers. For this



reason, the presence of sewn coats from the very beginning cannot be ruled out. The Rig-Veda speaks of needles (Suchi). Hence, tailor-made or sewn garment for the upper part of the body or for the covering of the whole body must have existed from the Vedic days. Ghurye admits that "it is not denied that tailored garment for the upper part of the male body was known before the Gupta period and even from the Vedic times".<sup>104</sup> Of course it may be regarded that the wearing of trousers was an innovation of the northern invaders. We have already said that trousers had been unknown in the sub-tropical and tropical parts of Asia, hence it cannot be a wonder that it had been unknown in Vedic and post-Vedic India. Trousers were unknown in Achaemenid Persia, The Persians borrowed it from the northern Medes.<sup>105</sup> The Arabs of the Abbasid period borrowed it from the Persians.<sup>106</sup> Still it is not universal in south Arabia.

Hence, we can safely say that the fashion of trousers coming into use is an innovation in India during contact with northern foreigners.<sup>107</sup> Here, it is to be remembered that Herodotus said long before Alexander, that the Pactyika people (the Paktha of Rig-Veda) were ethnologically similar to the Indians in the matter of costume, etc. The Tathagush (Sattagyidian) a Pactyika tribe, is depicted in Achaemenid basrelief along with tribute-paying people coming to Xerxes as with covered body.<sup>108</sup> Of course they were a mountaineer people. From this information we may surmise the possible Indian

costume of North India of the day.

As regards female dress we have ample evidences from literature that the body was well-covered. These are reflected in Ajanta frescoes. The Jaina and Buddhist nuns were strictly enjoined to wear bodice when going to villages. This is also reflected in the frescoes as well. The poet Rajasekhara tells us that in the tenth century, the ladies of Madhyadesa (modern U. P.) were wearing skirts (Ghaghra) and scarfs on their bodies.<sup>109</sup> This information is also reflected in the frescoes.

Even tight drawers and shorts worn by women in Mediaeval Ages are evinced in Ajanta frescoes and in Somapuri Vihara (modern Paharpur) terracottas. The ancient and mediaeval Indian writers have emphasised clothing as an index of morality. Hemchandra, the Jaina scholar and preacher of the twelfth century, praised the women of Anahilapataka for their modesty of dress which properly covered all the parts of their body.<sup>110</sup> The commentator of Hemchandra's work says, that "the beauty of high born ladies is greatly enhanced by their covering all their limbs properly."<sup>111</sup>

Finally, we come to extreme South India. Here, the same class-character exists in the matter of costume. The torsos of the sculptures are shown to be naked even of those of the aristocrats. But the question again comes about the mood which is depicted in the statues. The European travellers report that shirt-like garments were used in Vijayanagara empire.

If the statues of the emperor Krisnadeva Raya and his queens are shown to be naked above the waist it should not be interpreted as the general run of things. If the king is wearing only a short loin cloth he is also wearing a tiaralike head dress, the shape of which is un-Indianlike and he is depicted with folded hands. It seems, he along with his queens are in devotional attitude. The attitude depicted in this statue reminds us of the attitude portrayed in the oil painting of Sri Chaitanya-deva, where king Prataparudradeva of Orissa was depicted as lying flat on the ground with folded hands, wearing only a loin cloth but with a turban on his head. The turban clearly denoted his rank. The king was in a state of devotion. The Vijayanagara statue simply tells us that the king was not in his regalia (The sculpture was made according to priestly notion of devotion). On the other hand, a Portuguese traveller describes emperor Devaraya II of Vijayanagara giving audience during the *Vijaya Dasami* festival as wearing a long coat of satin-like stuff which reaches down his ankles.<sup>112</sup> Surely, his successor knew the use of dress.

Thus we see that there has been a dynamism in the matter of Indian costume, and according to Ghurye<sup>113</sup> it has undergone greater changes than in Europe during approximately the same period. The changes in fashion are noticed in literature and these are reflected in art.

As regards the evolution of Bengal costume we

glean the following facts: In the Mediaeval Age in the sixth century, the coin of king Jayanaga shows him attired in the costume of the Gupta kings. Later on, in the twelfth century A. D. Jayadeva the poet-musician at the court of Lakshmansena, describes *Radha* attired in a bodice (*Kurpas*) on the upper part of her body, and in lower part with a skirt (*Nichola*) fastened with a girdle (*Rasana*, *Mekhala*). Again, the poet mentions *Chola* (5, 12) as the garment to cover the bosom. The term *Dukula* (12.4) is used for the same purpose.

Further, about the same time when in the eleventh to twelfth century, the legislator Jimutavahana wrote his law-treatise *Dayabhaga*, he, while dealing with the division of property, said that the dresses that are attached to the limbs of the body (*Vastra angayojyam*) meant costumes (*Panctiparicchada*) according to rank or class. According to him, these dresses cannot be partitioned equally. Further, in support of his legal opinion, Jimutavahana quoted some mediaeval legislators with the same import. This means that during the Hindu period, some dresses according to rank used to be worn on the body, though no text has delineated it. Then we come to "*Manasa Mangala*" text of blind Haridatta who is said to have composed his poem just after the Turkish conquest of Bengal. He mentions the goddess Padma as wearing Kanchali to cover her bosom and another Kanchali to cover the waist<sup>114</sup>. Perhaps he meant *Mekhala* by the last piece of

dress.

Then we come to Narayanadeva, another poet of Manasa-Mangala, who flourished after the Turkish invasion between thirteenth to fourteenth century. While describing the marriage of Behula, the poet depicts the wedding dress. She wore a Sari woven with various pictures. Her coiffure was of Bengal Behara fashion. She covered her bosom with a Kanchali which contained the pictures of all the incarnations of Vishnu woven on it. Again, when Behula went to Heaven to revive her dead husband, she danced before the gods attired in the following fashion; She wore ten jewelled rings in ten fingers, golden ornaments on the arms, collyrium was put in the eyes, trousers, (*Ijar*) on the legs, and a loin cloth (*dhara*) over it i.e. a skirt, and a bodice covering the bosom (*Canchali*) with pictures woven on it, golden ankle rings (*Nupur*) on the feet and a tiara on her head. While she danced her *Abharana* (here skirt) whirled round like a swarm of blue-coloured bees (*Bhramara*). Hence the skirt was of blue colour.

Here, we get the description of the accoutrements of a female dancer of the Mediaeval period that we find depicted in the sculptures and in the paintings. The mentioning of trousers should not be taken bespeaking Turkish-Moslem influence. We have traced it from the Mediaeval Age.

Further, we hear that the merchant prince Chandra-dhar, who went to Dakshina-Patan, the land of the *Rakshashas*, to trade by exchanging goods, presented

Chandraketu the king of the place with the following apparels of Jute (Pat), in order to deceive the king who according to the merchant was a barbarian. Kabai of Jute which must be the *Quba* (Arabic), an upper garment of the Moslem, waist-band of the same material, trousers (Ijar) of jute, cloth of jute and eight yards (Gaz) of coarse silk (Khunyi) to bind on the head. Also twelve yards of sari of hemp (san) for the queen.

Here we trace non-Indian "Quba" being worn and the trousers have got the Persian name of "Ijar". Surely, non-Indian influence is to be traced in this accoutrements.

In the fifteenth century we hear from Vijay Gupta (vide *Manasa Mangala*), that men used to wear a cloth around the loins, a piece of cloth bound around the head, and another piece to cover the body. Then we come to the poem "Chandi" of Mukundaram Kabikankan, who composed the book in the sixteenth century when Mansingha was the governor of Bengal, Behar and Orissa as is mentioned in the text. The poet describes the goddess Abhaya wearing Canchali on the bust. Then he describes the dressing of Lohana, the elderly wife of the merchant Dhanapati. She wore six and a half yard Sari by doubling it over her body and tightened her breasts with a piece of cloth. This fashion we have noticed in Kalidasa. Then she wore a canchali over it. Thus she doubly wrapped her bosom.

As regards men we get the following news. The wily Bharudatta while visiting Kalketu, borrowed

the Sari of his wife and thus appeared to clothe himself with a dhoti with long frontal pleat as fitting a respectable person. Thus it is clear that the poor men used to wear a short loin-cloth which did not hang down to the ankles. Besides a turban also used to be worn on the head. A tiara also went to be worn by richmen, like Lakhindar. Then high boots used to be worn occasionally as at the order of Dhanapati, the merchant, while sailing towards Singhala (Ceylon) the sailors wearing *Mojja* ( high boots ) leaped down on the shore to collect the cowries. But we have found the use of high boots in mediaeval period. Only the Perso-Indian name is used here instead of old Sanskrit term. On the other hand, in reading Jayananda's *Chaitanya-Mangala*, written in the same period we find that Chaitanyadeva prophesied that in Kaliyugo the Brahmans by keeping long beards and wearing *Mojja* will read Persian. This alludes to the fact, that the people of Bengal were borrowing the dresses of the Turkish rulers. Still later in the period after the battle of Plassey, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, a poet named Jayanarain in his highly sanskritized Bengalee poetical text called "*Harilila*", has mentioned the Sanskrit term "*Kurpas*" as a part of woman's dress<sup>11b</sup>. As regards men's costume, we find the paintings portray habits that are apparently a mixture of original Indian and Mughal habits. The dress of the Mughal court was a mixture of both kinds of costumes, Abul Fazl refers to it (vide "*Ain-i-Akbari*"). This clearly demonstrates that the impact of the culture of

the Moslem rulers, produced a change in the habits of the Indian aristocracy of the time. In this way, the original costumes adopted by the Indian notables were modified in Mohammedan period under new names viz. ; Ijar ( trousers ) chapkan, achkan ( long robes ), choga ( overcoat ). The court and aristocratic fashion of dress is depicted in the paintings of the time. But these habits are changing fast and giving place to European costumes or modifications of them. To the young men of to-day the old costumes of their ancestors have become objects of fun and curiosity just as the costumes of the Longobards preserved in painting at Turin, became the objects of curious sight-seeing of their Italianized Christian descendants.

A hundred years ago, the costume of the Mughal period was lingering on. The official costume of men was trousers, chapkan and choga on the body, shaamla ( round hat-like head-dress made of shawl ) on the head, a folded shawl or cotton uttariya placed crosswise across the shoulders and European fashioned shoes on the feet ; while for the men of lesser rank a small corniced turban of white cloth bound around the head and called, "munshi-turban" ; a short coat-like garment called "banian" covering the upper part of the body, an uttariya hanging down the shoulders foldwise, and European-fashioned shoes on the feet or Indian slippers of Cuttuck or Banaras, furnished the outfit for business work. This had been universal both in North and Western India. As for women, sari to cover the whole body, bodice



to cover the bust and an *uttariya* to cover the body when going out had been the costume in upper Gangetic valley since pre-Gupta period ( vide Kumar-devi's dress in the coin of Chandra Gupta I ). It is still persisting.

As regards Bengal, we find that in the Mughal period the aristocratic ladies used to wear *ghagra*, *canchali*, *odna* like the ladies of upper Gangetic valley ( vide "Kshitish Vamsabali of Krishnagar Raj ) on ceremonial occasions. But in still later period the middle class women of West Bengal contented themselves with a sari, and an *uttariya* to cover the body on social occasions. The girls and young married girls used to wear a woollen jacket in winter, while<sup>116</sup> in East Bengal the old widow used to wear only a piece of *than* (white dhoti) and an *uttariya* called "namavali" stamped with the names of the wearer's god covering the whole body. On the other hand, the young women used to wear sari and *canchali* and an *uttariya* over the shoulders completed their dress. At the same time the Mohammedan women wore *canchali* on the bust<sup>117</sup>.

In the nineteenth century, as European fashion began to influence Indian costume, men's and women's dress underwent modifications. The women began to wear "Victorian style" of jackets, etc ; men in governmental posts and in liberal professions, took to European-fashioned trousers, vests and coats. The mediaeval turban completely disappeared long ago. It was displaced by the shawl made *Shaamla* amongst the lawyer class in

the nineteenth century which again in its turn has disappeared.

To-day all over India, a change in costume is going on. The impact of new culture is combining the old with the outside influence. The women are sticking to sari, but the internal apparels are imitations of the Occident. The young boys are wearing shirts and shorts, while the girls are wearing frocks and shorts with high-heeled shoes or sandals at the feet. On the other side, the official dress of the grown up persons are either the old chapkan and trousers or the European "citizen dress". A national dress is yet in the womb of evolution.

In our short survey we have traced the evolution of Indian costume from the Chalcolithic Age. From historical period we have noticed that for men there have been two sets of costumes. The ancient one which is persisting still to-day is the common and home dress of the people. It is the dhoti, uttariya and a jama on the upper part of the body.

In the sixth century A.D. we find Banabhatta describing the following apparels for men and women in *Harshacharitam* (Life of the emperor Harsha) :

A young woman coming out of a rishi's ashrama on horseback, was wearing a fine-textured white long coat (*Canchuka*) reaching down to the feet (*Aprapadin*). A green coloured net was reaching down her face from the head. Her internal garment was a coloured one. She was wearing shorts (*Chandatak*) (ch. I).

*Ardhoruk* and *Chandatak* are the terms used for shorts (Sankara's note to ch. 1).

Further, *Varavan* which is the same as *Canchuka* i.e. a coat or a costume for the upper part of the body is mentioned (ch. I).

A messenger coming from the court wearing a coat or a shirt reaching down the thighs is mentioned (ch. II).

Again *Uttaravasa* i.e. upper garment (ch. IV) as well *adhonavi Adharavasa* i.e. lower garment is mentioned (ch. II).

Harsha gifted his royal dress (*Raj Parivarha*) to a Brahman.

Further, *Usnisa* (turban) and *Sirastran* i.e. helmet or head-cover are mentioned (ch. V).

Again *Urastran* or *Uraschada* i.e. brest-cover is mentioned (ch. V).

The king had a man in charge of his wardrobe (*Parivarha*) who was called *Vastrakarmantika* (ch. VI).

A messenger had his body covered with *Patavasa* (Costume of some kind of cloth ?) (ch. VI).

The grass-cutters of the villages were wearing tattered shirts (ch. VI).

Some one was wearing tight shorts extending from the waist to the thighs (*Jateepattika*) (ch. VII).

The Princes were wearing white costume (*Paricchada*) (ch. VII). Also *kurpas* which is the same as *Cancholaka* for men is mentioned (ch. VII).

Again the annotator Sankara gives the synonyms for leg-cover as *Pinga*, *Janghika*, *Janghala*. It seems, these are the terms for trousers ; while *Satula* is the same as *Ardha-Janghika* i.e. half-pants (?) (ch. VII).

It is also called *Ardha-Janghala* (Note to ch. VII).

Further, we find foot-cover is called *Padatran Padavandha*, *Padakataka* (ch. VII).

Lastly, the author speaks of some subordinate kings wearing *Chinese Cholaka* (Chinese coats ?) (ch. VII). As regards the ladies, various kinds of coloured cloths for wear are mentioned (ch. II).

The ladies of the palace were wearing scarfs (*Uttariya*) (ch. IV), and veil (*abagunthana*) (ch. IV).

Again women expert in painting on leaves and on cloths are mentioned (ch. IV).

It is to be noticed that the common terms for men's and women's coats and bodices are: Kurpas, Canchuka, Cancholaka. Kalidasa has used the word "Kurpas" for women's stays, while Cancholaka is the present-day "Canchali" of the women.

Here we must not forget that in the sixth century, some Arab traveller described the king of Sindh as wearing baggy trousers; while Ibn Hauqal and Istakhri in the tenth century spoke of the Arab colonists of Mansura (Sindh) wearing Indian tunic and trousers. Besides, Al-Beruni, in the early part of the eleventh century, spoke of the high-placed Indians wearing baggy trousers. Further Abul Fazl speaks of Indian tunic that was current in his time.

Again from a perusal of the ancient and modern texts we discern that a court or a casual dress existed from time immemorial. There was an official dress for functional purpose. This clears to us the import of the saying of Jimutavahana—"Pāṇtiparicchada"

i. e. dress according to place or rank or stand in life. Thus there has been an economic basis leading to class-character of Indian costume old or new.

In a subtropical climate it is not hygienic or possible to clothe oneself in a tight-fitting costume. The environmental necessity of an ethnic group determines its food and raiment. Thus the most comfortable costumes for men and women are the ones that are used all the time at home. But with the growth of culture, official functions demanded casual dress. Hence, we see the both are depicted in the sculptures and in the texts.

It is to be said that if the Brahmanist only shows the ideational phase of Indian art, the Buddhist art evinces to be more realistic. It portrays the actual people and their habits as well. In this matter, class-character of the Indian art is clearly discernible. Buddhism seeking equality in religion does not forget the people. Its mainstay had been the people, hence it has described their life in books and in stone, though in Tantric period, the art of the Tantric-Buddhists was purely ideational in the matter of depicting their gods and goddesses.

As a result, we get the life-like pictures of the people of the period during Buddhist time. From the painting and sculpture of the feudal age of India<sup>118</sup>, we can detect the ethnic peculiarities of the people of the time, the racial characteristics as depicted in the painting. Further, in Ajanta we get the masterpieces of Indian art of painting. They get commendation not only for the artistic skill but also for the somatic

types they have sketched. An anthropologist can identify the types of men given with particular facial characteristics sketched in these mural paintings, in the present-day Indians. One cannot make any mistake in the picture depicting the Persian in the supposed court of Pulakesin II, the upper class of men, the men of lower orders, their habits, etc. All are typically sketched there. Even, as the anthropologist Von Eickstedt says, the ideal Indian beauty is painted there with its typical characteristics. What a stride from the wall-painting sketches of Khairmur Ranges to Ajanta-painting. The Arya-cultureman had progressed long in the cultural road to arrive at this stage.

It is said that the perfection of the classical Greek art found expression in the art of Phidias, as depicted in the friezes of Parthenon during the age of Pericles. But it is also said that the Greek art was an idealized one. The classical form of face and head contours were copied from the selected types of men who were used as models. These were the ideal types. We do not know whether the Indian sculptors made such selections for the models of their types. Coomaraswamy says that they never would resort to models but look in their texts<sup>119A</sup>. R. L. Mitra opines in the same way. But this much can be said, that life-like portraits of men and women of present-day India can be seen in the painting of Ajanta. Here the Indian painter has given more realistic picture of his fellow-countrymen in colour and brush and has shown his skill in those life-like re-

presentations. Hence his creative genius demands commendation of a higher order.

Thus the art of Ajanta expressed in paint and brush gives another testimony to the cultural level of the period. Also, it shows the correlation between the two. Further, the Indian literature testifies to the cultural level of India when we read in the Pauranik *Harivamsa* and in the drama *Ratnavali* written by King Sriharsha, that the ladies of the palace used to draw pictures in paint and brush. Of course these were the qualifications of the aristocratic ladies. But it seems, that inspite of all vicissitudes of the later Indian civilization, the art of drawing picture by the ladies did not die out even in Moslem period of later days. We read in Jayananda's *Chaitanya Mangal* written in Bengalee, that during the sojourn of Neemai Pandit (latter-day Chaitanyadeva) in East Bengal, his wife Laksmidevi drawing a picture of her husband with a chalk, wrapped it in a yellow cloth and venerated it. This was the accomplishment of a lady of the poor middle class of the fifteenth century. Even to-day, drawing *Alpana* sketches on hard board is resorted to by the ladies of Bengal. It is of course a sort of a folk-drawing.

Art, as has been already said, has got a direct correlation with culture. The higher the fine arts of a people or a nation the higher is its cultural level. Also, the art has got its class-characters. We must find out what class of people the art is representing, which interest of the society it is recording, the psychology of which class it is bearing in its por-

trayal. *Bharata Natyam* containing the rules about histrionic art is another example of it. It depicts the Gupta Age culture in its fulness. Then we come in detail to music.

Music is a part of fine art and history of Indian music is an old one. It arose out of spiritual necessity of the Vedic sacrifices. The Rig-Vedic psalms used to be chanted in tune at the time of sacrifice. This gave rise to the text called Sama Veda. But Swami Prajnanananda is definite that seven tones were extant in the Vedic age as also in Indus valley civilization. It is said that originally it consisted of three tones<sup>119B</sup>. Later on, the *Pratisakhya* of Sama-Veda, *Pushpasutra* has said that five, six and seven tones were used in Sama songs. The Sama chanters used to sit around the sacrificial pit and chant the Rig-Vedic litanies in different tunes, their women-folk clapping their hands used to dance around the pit<sup>120</sup>. This is said to be the origin of the Indo-Aryan music system.

But this description presupposes the question that some tunes were known to the Indo-Aryans previous to the Vedic ritual chants. From this news we can glean the fact that some sort of musical notes were known to the Chalcolithic Indians. Further, we get the information that this early music was confined amongst the coterie of the priesthood who were a part of the upper classes of Indo-Aryan society. Thus Indian music on its religious side had a class-character from the beginning.

The melodies of the Indian songs originated in differ-

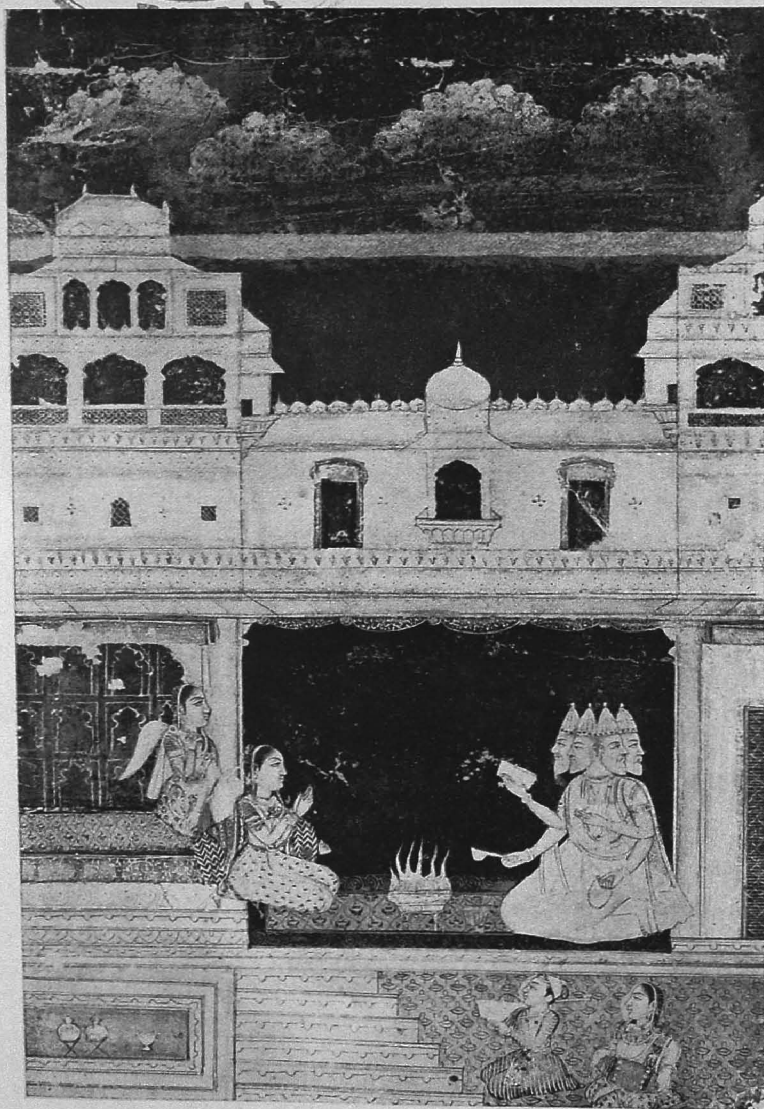


ent parts of the country, from which they derived their names. All these originated before the rise of the celebrated Bharata, the author of "Natyasastram". In the literature on music it is mentioned that there were two kinds of melodies : *Marga-raga* (Arya music) and *Deshi-raga* (folk tune). Thus Indian music had its class-character from the beginning. In the course of time, folk or regional tunes were assimilated in the Marga tunes. Thus the village melodies were given aristocracy by being "aryanized" by the upper class of musical system. The musical system propounded in the time of Bharata and others through music and drama is the Marga system<sup>121</sup>. In fact, Bharata of *Natyasastra* expounded eighteen Jatis or Jatiragas which were known as the Gandharva or Marga music. From the Jatiragas evolved the Gramaragas. After Bharata, regional tunes were gradually absorbed in the classical type of music. This period can be said as the age of change and assimilation, because many of the aboriginal and rural tunes or melodies were scientifically arranged and were systematized with the help of restricted grammatical rules of classical music and they were known as the *Deshiragas* having the characteristics and nature of the time-honoured Marga music. It is the classical musical system of the heyday of Hindu culture that existed in the time of Vakataka-Gupta period. So long it had been independent of foreign influence.

Then came the Turkish invasion. North India was engulfed by it. The dialectics of Historical



TODI, THE PASTORAL TUNE  
( *Turkish influence* )  
Rajasthani painting ( Jaipur ), 18th Century.



KHAMBAJ OR KHAMAJ  
*Persian influence*

Materialism wrought a great change in the Indian society. In the time of the Khiliji emperors (1296-1315 A.D.<sup>122</sup>), the celebrated poet Ameer Khasrau introduced Persian tunes (Mokam) in the Indian system. Perhaps long before it, a melody called "Turkish Todi" had been introduced in the Indo-Aryan musical system. Similarly, another foreign melody named "Khamaich" has been engrafted in the Hindu period. This tune is now-a-days known as 'Khambaj' or 'Khamaj'. In Sharangdeva's *Sangita-Ratnakara* (13th century A.D.) we find also three foreign non-Indian tunes like Turushka-Todi, Turushka-Gauda and Saka. These Turkish and Saka i.e. Scythian tunes were undoubtedly absorbed into the category of Indian classical music. Besides these, the modern Indian tunes like Sarfarda, Sajagiri, Zilaph, Iman (Iyaman) etc. are also of Persian import.

The ancient music masters have given honourable position to these melodies in their system. Here, we recall the saying of Jaimini and the annotation of Kumarila, that those usages that are not contradictory to the Veda can be accepted.

Then came the Mughal emperor Akbar. He wanted to form a homogeneous Indian nationality composed of his subjects of different religions. He tried to fuse the Hindu and Islamic cultures into a new Indian culture. As he evolved a new religion, he also evolved a new system of court dress, etiquette, as well as a court music. This resulted in his introducing new Persian melodies in the existing Indo-Aryan musical system. It is recorded in the book *Ragamanjari*

that he introduced fifteen kinds of different Persian melodies in the existing Indian music<sup>123</sup>. In Lochana's *Ragatarangini* we find also the insertion of the Persian tune Iman. Since that time, the "Arya" or classical music was rent asunder. The South, not being much influenced by the Islamic culture preserved the old system, while the North shed a new colouring. Thus, a little variation arose between both the Schools. The Northern school of music has got a long vibrational intonation which sounds like the weird wailing of a man in the ears of an Occidental hearer. This intonation is to be heard in Persian as well as in Greco-Turkish music of Smyrna. This is also to be heard in the Gypsy songs of Europe. Is it not the wailing of a suppressed and exploited people coming out of their hearts? Persia has lost everything of her time-honoured historical culture by the Arab conquest. It is no wonder that the pangs of that tragedy will come out through her music and mysticism ("Shahnama" is a witness to this tragic memory). The same is the case with Byzantinian Greeks. That the tragedy of a people's life is expressed in its song is manifest in the American Negro music popularly known as "Coon" Song. Thus the musical system reformed in the Mughal period has become the classical Indian music of to-day. Of course, European notations are being introduced in some of the present-day songs. Our accepted National Anthem "Jana Gana Mana" composed by the poet Tagore bears witness to it.

Thus dialectics of Historical Materialism as manifest in Music, has worked all the way through the Indian history from the days of Sama Chants. We have also seen that the variation in Indian culture is also reflected in music.

That music has also got its class-character has been manifest in the ancient folk-songs and in the present-day music, which besides the present classical system, contains other types of Bengali music viz., *baul*, *bhatiyali*, etc. which are extant amongst the begging mendicants, boat men and so forth.

Again, it has been said before that there cannot be any such thing as "Art for art's sake". If the Mediaeval Art of Europe represented the artistic-culture of the period, it also represented the clerical influence of the time as Sorokin says,<sup>1,3</sup> "The former (Mediaeval Art) is of profound humility; the veritable spirit of Christianity itself." Thus the art was for the use of the church. On this account we will not wonder if there be any class-character, as art must bear this stamp. Sri. M. N. Dutt says, "Though painting has now become a secular subject and is studied by many people without any purity of mind, yet it is a natural gift of mankind as might be observed in the mural decorations of the nomads and the aborigines turning down into tattooing of the face, body and even of the teeth. But high uplifting ideas, ennobling thought to attend—to reach the Divinity was infused into the arts by the Monks and the Vikshus. Even among the Assyrians and Egyptians the sculptors were the officers of the temple and belonged to

the sacerdotal bodies"<sup>126</sup>. Thus art is not free from class-character. Again, he says, "out of the great veneration and love for the master the monks attempted to represent the ideas, the daily life of great men in the form of statues and paintings, to appeal to the mass in the most effective way and to rouse up their veneration and intense love for masters, so that the monks become afterwards sculptors and painters". Thus it is evident that art is for somebody's sake, there is some interest behind it.

Finally, we reiterate that art is an index of a people's culture and its capacity to rise in the higher scale of civilization. Sri M. N. Dutt again says, "A nation in its highest stage of development will attempt to represent the idea in some solid form and the more there are successful statues or ikons in a nation, the higher the culture of the people is judged of."<sup>128</sup>

A word is to be said here regarding the art of India in the Muhammedan period of Indian history. It is true that a new cultural trend percolated into India through the Turkish invasion. But there are enough testimonies ranging from Gaur to Ahmedabad, that the Moslem art in India is an Indian one. Truly, Havell has said that it is an adaptation of the Hindu-Buddhist architectural pattern to the Islamic needs. Hence, some innovations have been made to suit the Islamic religious injunctions. Yet, on the whole it is a continuity of the Indian art. An example of the persistence of old native art in Islam is to be found in Shia-Moslem art. The archaeologist Herzfeld

says, "The Sassanism fire temple survives under a changed purpose. The great sanctuaries of the Shilte Imams in Iraq and Iran, reproduce faithfully, though in modernized shapes, the Sassanian fire-temples"<sup>129</sup>.

Again, "Taj is a wonder, Taj is a dream" says the enchanted spectator. Yet the system of erecting five domes i.e. four smaller domes on the four corners and a big central dome in the middle is the Muhammedan adaptation of the Indian *Pancharatna* system of architecture that is to be traced from emperor Shershah's tomb at Sasaram to the Taj at Agra. Here is its final culmination. Here, we must point out that the type of dome built on Indo-Moslem mosque and mausoleum is not to be found in other Islamic countries. Indo-Moslem art is typically Indian. The infiltration of foreign tendencies have enriched the Indian art. It has made itself felt in the painting and architecture of the Hindus during the Moslem period in North India. The Hindus had reacted to the new tendency as well.

Now, a word about painting during the Muhammedan period in North India which falls within the Mediaeval period of Indian history. By this time, Ellora and Ajanta have become a forgotten past. New stock of men with no tradition behind them have come to the forefront of the history of India. Historical events are being enacted by them with no reference to the past. The only tradition they have come to imbibe is the belief in the epic stories. Hence the source of all inspiration is the Puranas and the Epics.



It is no wonder that we see the Pauranik stories represented in the brick plaques in the ruins of Somapuri Vihara ( modern Paharpur ) and in stone on the walls of South-Indian temples.

During this Mediaeval period and before the rise of the style of painting known as "Rajput painting," we get the Pala school of Bengal. The remnants of this style is to be traced in the palm leaf manuscripts of Buddhist texts preserved in Cambridge University Library ( Mss. 1464, 1688 )<sup>130</sup>. These two texts are of eleventh century A.D. These paintings depict Buddhist divinities or scenes from the life of the Buddha. The characteristic of these painting portraits is the sharp nose. This cannot be said as the common characteristic of the people of North-Eastern India. Probably it depicts upper-class types. Coomaraswamy says that, "The work is that of accomplished craftsmen".<sup>131</sup>

Next we come to the paintings of North-Eastern India during the Moslem rule. The paintings connected with the Vaishnava movement of Sri Chaitanya show life-like portraits of the men of the time. A painting of Sri Chaitanya sitting on the banks of *Narendra-sarovar* at Puri and listening to the reading of Bhagavata, depicts the life-like picture of the persons concerned. This painting is said to have been executed by the order of King Prataparudradeva of Orissa. The posture of sitting, the mode of dress and the faces of men sketched there, testify that the tradition of Ajanta was yet existing. There is no mistake of Rohilla-like picture of Thakur

11 MAY 1957

ADRAS

हाटालकावालावला



RAGA VILABALA  
(Rajasthani, 18th Century)

by Courtesy of Ajit Ghose

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MADRAS



RAGA HINDOLE

(Rajasthan and Mughal influences, 17th Century)

by Courtesy of Arit Ghose

Haridas who was said to have been of Pathan extraction, and Bengalee features of Chaitanya and his companions. Again, Chaitanya and Nityananda sitting on their knees as befitting the etiquette of a Hindu Court ( Vide Vyasa Smriti which enjoins that one shall always sit in *Virasana* style ), the king beturbaned lying flat on the grounds in a devotional attitude, all bespeak this piece to be a painting of the aristocratic class.\* It is clear from this painting that was drawn at the royal court of Orissa, that the tradition of craftsmanship and technique of Ajanta was not yet lost in independant part of India.

Then comes an era of style of painting called *Rajput painting* in North-India. According to Coomaraswamy, the style extends from Western India to the East where it is more distantly related to the painting of the Bengalee book-covers. It is a portraiture of standardized formulae for forms, hence according to Coomaraswamy it "often produces an effect of convincing reality". The Rajput paintings illustrate different stories from the Hindi literature. Dr. Coomaraswamy says, "Rajput painting is essentially an aristocratic folk art, appealing to all class alike, static, lyrical, and inconceivable apart from life it reflects"<sup>183</sup>. As it illustrates mediaeval life of the Hindus of Northern India. hence, it ought to be called North-Indian Hindu painting.

The Kangra school of this style echoes more na-

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\* It is a pity that it has missed the searching eyes of Dr. Coomaraswamy when the facsimiles of it have been printed in different Bengalee books.

turalistic scenes than mediaeval conventions. Dr. Coomaraswamy says, "The narrative and erotic themes provide, incidentally precious picture of intimate daily life at a Rajput Court".<sup>133</sup>

Taking the Rajput or North-Indian Hindu style in *toto* it cannot be said to be a folk art. It is a class art depicting life of the upper classes.

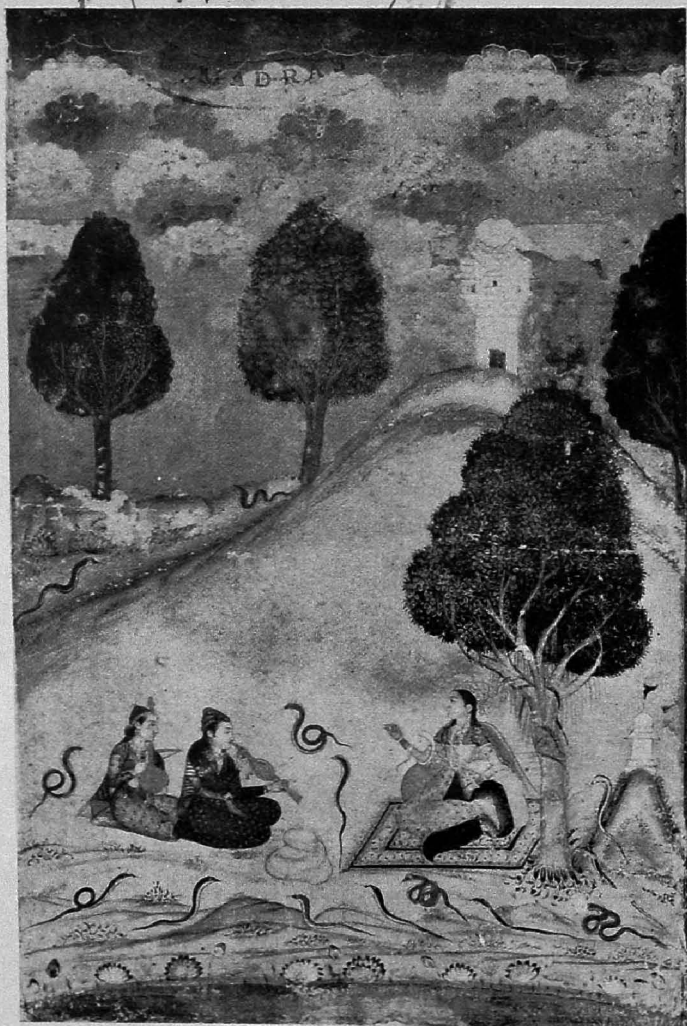
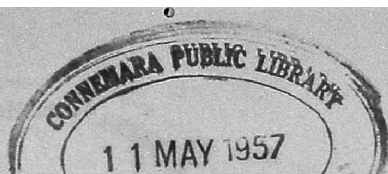
As regards the contemporary Mughal art it is a misnomer to call it "Mughal" as Dr. Coomaraswamy says, that, more than half of the names of the painters were Hindus. It centres around personal interests and chronicles. Hence, it is a class art reflecting the deeds of the rulers. According to Coomaraswamy, it is academic, dramatic, objective and eclectic. Mughal painting takes the motifs from the hunting scenes and lives of the Mughal rulers. In this sense it is modern according to Coomaraswamy as Rajput painting is Mediaeval. Of course there is foreign influence in this school as Coomaraswamy again says, "the Mughal portrait style was created from Indian, Persian and European elements". Then the critic in a footnote says, that there has been an influence of Rajput elements present in true Mughal painting. These Indian elements are apparent in Hindu themes in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, in adaptation of Hindu costume at the courts of Akbar and Jahangir, the fusion of themes and style in the eighteenth century, and the fact that more than half of the Moghu' painters were native Hindus.<sup>133</sup>

Thus the so-called Moghul painting is a good illustra-



RAGA KAKUBHA  
(Rajasthani with slight Mughal influence, 18th Century)





RAGA ASAVARI  
(Rajasthani, early 17th Century)

tion of our contention that the culture of a given period is reflected in the art of the time. What we see depicted in the Mughal portraiture can be gleaned from the writing of Akbar's minister Abul Fazl ( vide "Akbar Namah", "Ain-i-Akbari" ). As said before Akbar wanted to fuse his Hindu and Muhammedan subjects into a homogeneous nationality. Hence, he mixed up the food, costume, music and fine arts of both into one organic nationality. We see this fusion in different aspects of art. The ruling class of the time miscalled "Mughal" was a collection of various kinds of peoples; we see its manifestation in culture as reflected in art. Historical dialectical materialism was bringing a synthesis which but for the reaction under Aurangzeb would have achieved an Indian nationality long ago.

Thus we have traced the stages of Indian culture in connection with its art from the Chalcolithic Age down to modern times. We have also seen that the archaeologists speak of a continuity of culture and institutions from the Indus valley civilization to the latter-day Hindu life. We have also seen that if the Indus valley civilization bespeaks the material culture of the Chalcolithic i.e. Copper and Bronze Age, the Rig-Veda unfolds to us the spiritual and social side of the same Age. The Rig-Veda speaks against the phallic-worshippers, and Totemism can not be traced in that culture. But these are supposed to have been present in the Indus valley civilization<sup>134</sup>. Again, some latter-day Indian investigators suspect



the presence of horse<sup>135</sup> in Indus valley like that in Vedic India by examining a terracotta specimen. Of course, we must not forget that the Rig-Vedic religion which was after all a cult of magic, was the culture of the ruling class of the Vedic society. It was the religion of the élite only.

Yet, when so much *furor* is made of the Indus valley civilization and of its non-Vedic character by the Occidental savants, still they admit the Indian nature of this culture. Thus says, V. G. Childe : "Nevertheless the forgotten civilization must have made undefinable contributions to the cultural tradition we inherit through Mesopotamia. Moreover, the technical traditions of Bronze Age craftsmen persist locally till to-day. Fashions of dress, established in the Indian cities, are still observed in contemporary India. Hindu rituals and deities have roots in the cults depicted in the pre-historic art. So classical Hindu science too, and through it Occidental science may be indebted to the pre-historic to an unexpected degree. From this standpoint the Bronze Age civilization of India has not utterly perished, for its work continueth far beyond our knowing"<sup>136</sup>. Here it must be noted that the Indus valley technical traditions still exist in India which is also attested by Mackey. \*

Further we must add that the Rig-Veda betrays the traces of Stone Age as well, as the implements were

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\*Marshall did not find the Aryas in Indus valley, because he could not find the "Aryans" (in European sense) there. Yet Prof. Julian Huxley says that they have never preached Racism.

of stone and utensils were of wood. As the Vedic Literature was translated and interpreted by the Orientalists at the period when the sciences of archæology and anthropology were in their infancy, the proper appraisal in consonance with the modern knowledge of those sciences is lacking as yet. The Orientalists in their *furor* for 'Aryanism'<sup>137</sup> which to some became "Indo-Germanism" and still later "Germanism", have missed this point in their evaluation. They have missed or omitted the fact that the Rig-Veda speaks of black-coloured (*Krishna* V, 31. 11 ; VIII. 19. 36 ; IX. 5. 24 ) and black-brown coloured (*Syaba* V. 81. 82 ; VIII. 37. 38 ; X. 65. 12 ) persons. Also a rishi prays for a child with golden ears from the gods ( 1. 122. 14 ). Again, Atharva Veda speaks of black hair on the head ( VI. 137 ). It also speaks of golden-coloured man. Thus it is evident that there were persons in Rig-Vedic India with different racial strains. They were a people with black to brunette colour of the body. They were not a homogeneous racial people. Lately, the modern German anthropologist Von Eickstedt<sup>138</sup> speaks of the ancestors of the Vedic people as Proto-Mediterranean group which was found settled on the ridge of the Hindukush before the last Ice Age. Again, the German archaeologist Herzfeld<sup>139</sup> speaks of the Indo-European speaking Vedic Aryas, Iranians ( Ayras ) and the Scythians as coming from Central Asia. According to him, the valley between the Amu Daria and Syr Daria hides the remains of a very ancient civilization of prehistoric period. It is according to

him the Avestic *Aryano vaijo* ( the home of the Aryas). Further the Russian anthropologist Deniker<sup>140</sup> has named the tall, long-skulled, brown-skinned people of North India and Afghanistan as "Indo-Afghan" race, and the English anthropologist Haddon<sup>140A</sup> has named this place as the area of their characterization. Again, this Indo-Afghan race speaking Sanskritic language is christened as "Indo-Aryan" by the Indologists as also by H. Risley, the anthropological investigator of British Indian Government. Of course it is a cultural designation. Thus we are led to the conclusion that the land of *Sapta Sindhava* ( seven rivers of the Indus ) called in Avestic Literature as "Hapta-Hindhava" had been the habitat of the Aryan-speaking people of the Veda since the latter part of the Pleistocene ( Ice Age ) epoch.

Hence there is no need of separating the "forgotten" Indus valley civilization people from the ancestors of the people now dwelling in that region. We do not see any necessity of bringing the Herren-volk Nordics from Sweden or the Baltic region all the way to India to destroy the supposed blooming commercial civilization of Mahenjo-daro and Harappa.\* We must be clear in our mind that the Vedic Arya and the North-European "Aryan" are not the identical concepts and bio types.

One word *a propos* the recent appraisal of Childe, that the Hindu religious institutions and rites still betray their Chalcolithic trace as is seen in the injunc-

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\* Such are the crass stupidities that have been propagated by the British imperialists ! Vide Piggot, "Prehistoric India".

tion of the Scriptures that the priest and the laymen should wear unsewn clothes during worship. Also the utensils used in worship must be made of stone, copper, bronze and conch-shell.

Thus the traces of Stone and Chalcolithic Ages still persist amongst the rites that evolved out of Vedicism. That is another proof of Chalcolithic character of Vedic civilization.

Next the Iron Age is evolved. The archaeologists say that iron was first smelted in Asia Minor about 1500 B. C. We have no trace of iron-working in India previous to this era. The white Yajurveda speaks of black *ayas* i. e. iron. This age ushered in lots of innovations in religious rites and in society. This is evinced from the fact that at the time of the Buddha the Veda was a forgotten literature. Much of the literature of Brahmanical priesthood is post-Buddha composition. Even it is asserted that all the religious writings of Brahmanical priesthood except the four Vedas are post-Mauryan composition.<sup>141</sup>

Speaking about the Iron Age culture, Childe says that the area of this civilization extended from the Atlantic to the Ganges. It was more popular. He also says, "How and when iron-working spread to India and China is still unknown".<sup>142</sup> But we have said already that the white Yajurveda (*Vajasaneya*) speaks of iron when it enjoins that one should shave his head with an iron razor (63,1.2) on the other hand the older Black Yajurveda (*Taittiriya Samhita*) speaks of shaving the head with copper razor (1,25).

The impact of this Iron Age culture was tremendous

in Indian history. It gave a new orientation to Indian life. This new life brought the philosophy of the Upanishad and relegated the sacrificial magic cult of the Veda to dim antiquity. From theosophy, the culture gave rise to rationalism and we got the rationalistic school of Sankhya and the dissenting sects. It brought India to the subsequent stages of culture the vista of which we have already seen. Nay, in this age, India gave rise to the civilization of Asia.\*

Now, with the independence of India we are on the threshold of a new era. But the bizarre tendencies manifest in the present-day art betrays the impact of the foreign cultural influence under which India was subjected for nearly a century. Thus the present-day Indian art bears a correlation *paripassu* her modern culture engendered during her "Babylonian captivity". To-day, the cultural goods that are diffusing into India through various agencies are making impact on the old system. But as India has come out of the cimmerian darkness which blinded her perspective to her own former cultural history, she is sure to wean herself away from the influence of foreign imperialistic interpretation of Indian culture. A scientific appraisal of the past as the beacon light of the future is the desideratum to-day.

The thing needed to-day is the formation of Indian School of art based on the reality of the life of the people that is fast changing. It cannot be said that

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\* This opinion was personally communicated by the late Prof. Le Coq of Berlin University to the present-writer in 1920.

the school founded by Abanindranath Tagore has become the National School of Indian art. The dialectical changes of the time are to be envisaged in paint, brush and chisel by the Indian artists of to-day. A devotion to the dead past and the dying culture in the name of "continuity" and "speciality" is not the desideratum. As Caudwell says, "Art is the product of society, as the pearl is the product of the oyster, and to stand outside art is to stand inside society. The criticism of art differs from pure enjoyment or creation in that it contains a sociological component, a sound sociology would enable the art critic to employ criteria drawn from those fields without falling into eclecticism or confusing art with psychology or politics....Historical Materialism is therefore the basis of this study".<sup>143</sup>

It is imperative that Indian art should wean away from ideational stage formed in the name of ancient spirituality as well as mediaeval mysticism which is the by-product of foreign subjugation, and look into the socio-economic changes that through the forces of Historical Materialism are rapidly taking place. Long ago Swami Vivekananda dreamt of an Indian Proletarian culture which envisaged a classless and casteless society.

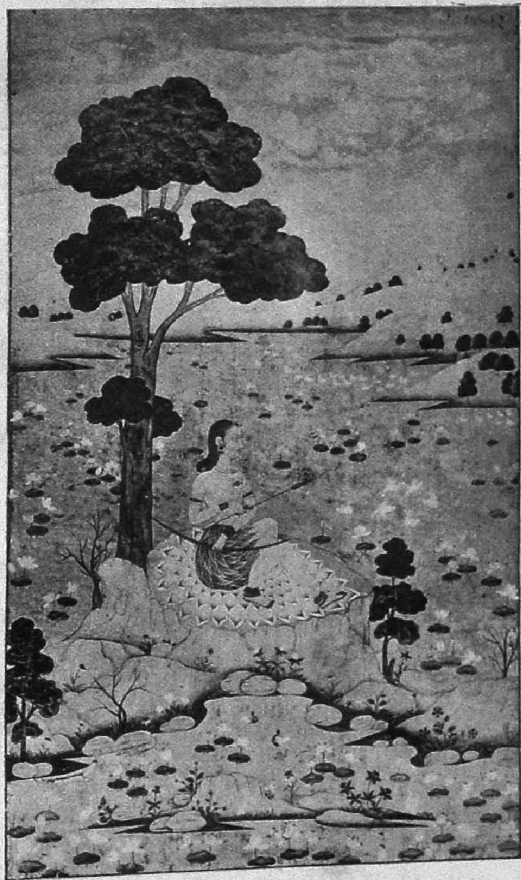
Again, the father of the Indian nation, Mahatma Gandhi said, that if the Hindus want to survive then they must transform themselves into a casteless and classless society. Some of the present-day political leaders of different shades are also talking in the same strain. They talk of the "Socialist

pattern" of society as the ideal of the national State. Again, socio-economic changes are rapidly taking place under a democratic constitution. Hence, to talk about the continuity of Indian spiritual values and the culture evolved out of them is the swan-song of a moribund culture that is fast dying. The Chalcolithic techniques as spoken of by the archaeologists are neither spiritual nor national. We have also seen that through foreign contacts there has been a diffusion of foreign cultural goods in Indian art. A closer scrutiny will discover this influence in pure thought and in poetry as well. Even it is suspected that current religions have been affected by it.

Recently, some foreign modes of art have made their appearance in modern Indian painting. We find abstract art in forms of *cubism*, *futurism* in the paintings of some of the Indian artists. But this "abstract art" as said by Caudwell is bourgeois freedom from old convention, leading to symbolism and is named as a *surrealist* technique, does not portray the inner working of Indian mind during its "Babylonian captivity" nor leads it out of its cimmerian darkness. Indeed, symbolism, according to Rimbaud, the greatest of the symbolic poets is a "disorder of the mind"<sup>144</sup>.

Thus, the appearance of symbolic aberrations are escapes of the enslaved Indian bourgeois mind from old conventions. These do not beacon to new direction in Indian mind.

It is repeatedly said by various art critics from



RAGA MEGHA-MALLARA  
(Rajasthani, 18th Century)





GAUDA-MALLARA  
( Rajasthani, middle or late 16th Century )

Ruskin ( Vide "On War" ) to Caudwell that art is a product of struggle. Caudwell says, "It is not a neurotic conflict because it is a social problem and is solved by the artist for society"<sup>145</sup>. Working on this formula, we see that during each phase of internal struggle in India, there have been innovations in Indian art. We have seen that contradictions have come in art, but a synthesis has been also arrived at. But this synthesis has worked for the dominating classes. This has been demonstrated in the gorgeous buildings and temples in the Hindu mediaeval India, and also during Muhammedan period. Further, the Rajput and Mughal arts bear testimonies to it. The grandeur of Indian art is nothing but a reflex depictment of the power of the ruling classes of India, ancient and mediaeval. The trouble is that in India like elsewhere in old days, cultural goods were not within the reach of the broad masses. They were for the consumption of the élite only. Hence we see class-character in Indian culture in all its phases. But in democratic India, the cultural goods must be for the use of everybody. Culture and its products must be socialized. That is the desideratum. Next in turn of history comes the British regime, we cannot say that in this conflict between what is Indian and what is foreign synthesis has been achieved or the nascent Indian bourgeoisie has impressed its presence in Indian art. From foreign influence in Ravi Varma, Sashi kumar Hesh, to nationalistic school of Abanindranath Tagore, to cubism, etc, there had been a swinging of the pendulum from ultra-modern-

ism to the dead past. The dying of the feudal order, the struggle of the rising bourgeoisie are not conceived in present-day Indian art.

To-day, there is absolutely a new situation with the freedom of India. Indian society is in *travail*. Indian socio-economic condition is being attempted to be put on democratic basis. Out of the contradictions that are manifesting in every field of life, a synthesis is sure to be achieved. This is the lesson of the long-drawn Indian history. The rehabilitation of a *Varnasrama* ideal is out of the question. On the other hand, as said before, many are sighing for a casteless and classless society. Moreover, India is not immune from the rapid changes that the world is passing through. The nineteenth century ideologies and their concurrent institutions are not satisfying the aspirations of young India. The new India that is in the making, shall not become a *replica* of nineteenth century Western Europe. The new culture that India is evolving will reject it definitely. There is no mistake about it. To-day, the world is weaning away from individualism to Socialization of the cultural goods. To-day, "socialization of culture", "social welfare" and "service to man" are the ideals of the advanced thinkers of the world. In India, the leaders are talking of "casteless and classless society" of the future. These are also being put into practice in some places. Hence, the future school of Indian art must be based on realistic social life that is unfolding itself with the advancement of civilization. Truly, Caudwell has said, "The social ego is built up not

of ideal stuff but of the real concrete emotions and aspirations that a man experiences from living in a real, concrete society."

On this account, the real and concrete Indian society that is fast changing, awaits the paint and brush and chisel of the Indian artists. The depiction of social culture that is growing is the thing that is needed in the new Indian school which lies yet in the womb of history. Dialectics is sure to work out the desired synthesis of New India. As a people is moulded by its environment hence given a favourable *milieu* and a proper chance to grow, the Indian genius will assert itself. India has always produced culture-man. This is the lesson of Indian history. Thus, in a favourable condition, the new Indian culture that is in the making will be reflected in the Indian art of the future.

FINIS



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101. Vide the sculptured figures preserved at Sarnath Museum.
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