

KALABHAVAN AT SANTINIKETAN

Dr. Syed Mujtaba Ali

If the Shakespearian sonnets were written by anyone else but Shakespeare he would have certainly received greater credit at the hands of the critic; if Rabindranath had not won his laurels as a poet he would have been remembered as a Vikramaditya who is rightly credited even to-day as the champion of creative thought and aesthetic realisation of his age.

It is hard to conceive of the Kalabhavan at Santiniketan without Rabindranath. Nandalal Bose would have become famous as an artist in any case, but one wonders whether he would have founded a school—in both senses of the word—and secondly whether Tagore would have taken the brush as he did in his old age. This co-operation of the Master Poet and the Master Artist is unique in India—we do not think there are many such examples in the world at large either—and the chief recipient of this fruitful co-operation has been the Kalabhavan at Santiniketan. Through them, it has found its norm.

Except for a few families, Calcutta was the upstart city during the nineteenth century. While there were genuine efforts to find a

spiritual solution of the conflict between a decadent Hinduism and a dazzling Christianity—the religion of the ruler has always its charms—there was absolutely no discrimination practised by the upstairs of Calcutta in accepting the “Art and Architecture” dumped by the English crooks on them. Even to-day one can see in the “artistocratic” homes of Calcutta horrors which are called oil-paintings and in the gardens graveyard-phantoms called Italian Marble. It was perhaps no accident that the Poet’s elder brother translated at the height of this epoch, Moliere’s *Bourgeois gentilhomme* (*Hathah nabob*) depicting the comic action of a parvenu who wanted to play the aristocrat.

The Tagore family was not spared these impacts but luckily it kept its head cool. The *Bourgeois gentilhomme* was a tonic. Besides, the Poet’s elder brother (the same who translated Moliere) Jyotirindranath Tagore was genuinely interested in the Swadeshi movement and the reader of the Poet’s “Reminiscences” will remember how he burnt his fingers in running a Swadeshi Steamer service. It was therefore natural that the clouds over Jorasanko were heavy with a Swadeshi art.



"A Student at Work"

But the Poet had to wait long till the first showers descended. It was a mere drizzle, and as is the case with all first drizzles, it rather increased the heat of the stuffy atmosphere. But Tagore like the proverbial *chataka* was satisfied with a few drops, and sang the welcome song to Raja Ravi-Varma.

Then there was Abanindranath Tagore too, the son of the Poet's cousin. Luckily we have his "Causeries"* in which there is a fairly extensive record, of his tinkering with music and fumblings in Italian Art which will satisfy the curiosity of those who are interested in the collaboration of the Poet Tagore and the Artist Tagore. For our purpose we merely draw the reader's attention to the illustrations of Abanindranath of the Poet's *Valmikir Pratibha* and *Chitrangada*.

And then the Artist found his way and we were blessed with what we call to-day the beginning of the renaissance of Indian painting. Naturally, the Poet's enthusiasm knew no bounds, and indeed, it was from him, who was at that time in the midst of his own most fruitful work, that Abanindranath received the heartiest support. It did not

take long time before younger men vaguely felt the value of Abanindranath's achievement and we find Nandalal Bose and Asit Kumar Haldar—not to speak of others whose later contribution was by no means meagre in building up the Tagore school—join the Master.

The Poet's institution at Santiniketan—a mere school in the beginning—was in the meantime growing up, his fame had spread beyond the seas, and his message of universal brotherhood and international peace had made a deep impression on many a European thinker. On the one hand, the necessity of a centre of Indian learning for Indians themselves—Mrs. Beasant and Malavyaji's contribution had not been adequate—and on the other, the clamourings of Europeans for a fountain where they could drink the message of Indian saints and sages made it almost incumbent on the Poet to enlarge his school into an institution of Indian learning and arts.

I should like to warn my reader here not to jump to the conclusion that Tagore founded a university. Visva-Bharati was no university in the recognised sense of the word. Universities, both in the East and West impart learning which has been stored in their respective countries. It is not their task to create or to be the torch-bearers of a renaissance. Universities feed students, they do not grow food.

In a sense the college department of the Visva-Bharati (so to say the Philosophical Faculty with languages, literatures, history, philosophy, etc.) was resembling the section of a university, although we must hasten to add that *vis-a-vis* the so-called universities of India the task of building up a real Indian seat of learning was by no means an easy one.

*Cf. Abanindranath Tagore as *Reconteur* in *Silpi* Vol. I—No. 9

Be it as it may, the fact that Tagore founded a new seat of learning and became the *Pratishthatacharyya* (Founder-President) of a University did not and could not change the inner make of the Poet. He was more a creative master, less a *savant*. For him the greatness of India was not in the sole possession of *Pandits* of religious tomes and philosophical treatises: India has revealed her inner virility in a simultaneous process in art and architecture, painting and music. The pictorial representation of a Bodhisatva at Ajanta and the dance of a Nataraja in a South Indian bronze were as indispensable to the disciple in this new centre of learning as the studies in the speculations of the *Upanishads* and ethics of the *Pitakas*.

But our art traditions had all but died out, and Abanindranath's activities in Calcutta had to be transplanted into a proper soil. It would have been ideal if Abanindranath could have joined Santiniketan, but it was impossible to transplant a bodhi tree of Abanindranath's maturity.

Undaunted the Poet went ahead. He invited Nandalal Bose, the chief disciple of Abanindranath to open the Fine Arts section at Santiniketan.

Music obviously was the third face of the *Trimurti* but as it is not the subject of our discussion to-day we shall merely mention the fact that had the late lamented Vinkar Sangameshvar Shastri of Pithapuram who used to rise to unprecedented heights while playing before the Poet, been the least interested in founding a Centre of Indian Music* the *trimurti* of Santiniketan would have surpassed the classic example at Elephanta.

* I am thinking of pure music "Tagore Songs" were more than ably represented by the late Danendranath Tagore.



"A Student at Work"

One must admire the courage and spirit of adventure of Nandalal Bose. His task was infinitely harder than that of the Poet. He had to collect and sift all the art traditions of India beginning from the Asokan pillar and ending with the cheap copy work of the Mughal miniatures and Kalighat *pats*, he had to find the best medium of expression which would suit the need of the twentieth century Indian, and, finally, he had to discover the methods of imparting it to a set of students who had collected from all the provinces of India with different and often conflicting tradition and approach. In short, he had to fulfil the function of a Historian of Art, a creative artist and an inspiring and practising *guru*.

What was he to go by? How did the masters of the past teach their students? No one had any clear notion.

But there was one great asset. The Poet was there at his elbow and at his students' elbows too. He was reading out day after day not only his own poems but also the best of Shelley and Keats; he was composing songs, holding seasonal festivals, writing and staging

dramas and what is more precious than all, there was his gigantic personality and his aesthetic approach to life.

Aesthetic approach, yes, that was the key which would open all doors, if the boys can only imbibe this spirit, if they search the true and beautiful with devotion, if they keep their eyes open to the collections of our master-pieces of the golden periods, why, the means of expression, the technique of presentation, in fact the new language was bound to reveal itself.

But it is easy to barricade this approach with life-less curricula, cut and dry methods of copying master-pieces, conjugations and declensions of grammar of aesthetics, in short, everything that is done with great gusto in our art schools all over the country which result in the massacre of the innocents every day.

There Nanadlal Bose was lucky. The Poet himself had relieved his own students of literature from these soul killing drudgeries: there was no reason why Nandalal should go out of his way to import them. Besides, there was one more very cogent reason for adopting the simplest method of art studies: there was no money to buy the paraphernalia of a regular art school which are indispensable for putting into practice methods mentioned above. All that could be supplied to a student of Kalabhavan was a wooden stool of the type zamindari clerks use as table, a wooden board to pin the drawing paper on, an earthen bowl for water—the last-named commodity being rather scarce during the hot months—and an unlimited supply of good wishes and blessings.

On the negative side: no regular classes or lecture, no threat of examinations and

consequently no temptation of degrees and diplomas, no set work to be finished within a given period of time, no regulated course to go through year by year, and, as if all this were not sufficient to make any institution attractive to the worst Bohemian (politer word for “lazy”) student there was the crowning absolution—no attendance! unless, of course, the student felt too bored in his dig, or had quarrelled with Nature and came to the Kalabhavan for a change.

I sometimes wonder how Dr. Stella Kramrisch, who was at that time holding regular lectures on the “History of Art” in the Kalabhavan took it. She, who had gone through the grind of the Vienna University, could not have honoured Nandalal’s institution with the epithet of an “Art School”.

And yet it worked admirably. I am thinking of the first five years or so when as a spectator I saw more of the game. And what an interprovincial atmosphere! Among the very first students were, Dhiren Dev-Barman from Tipperah, Ramen Chakravarty and Mani Gupta from East-Bengal, Benode Mukerji and Satyen Banerje from West-Bengal, Vinayak Masoji from Maharashtra, Shrimati Hutheesing from Gujerat, Virabhadra Rao Chitra from Andhra and P. Hariharan from Malabar and later Ramkinkar and Sudhir Khastgir from West-Bengal and Sukumar Deuskar from Hyderabad (Deccan).^{*} Being artistically inclined, they had brought their provincial dresses with

^{*} Dev-Barman painted a section of the India House in London; Chakravarty was the Principal in charge of the Calcutta Art’s School for several years and is at present ‘Prof. of Art, Central Polytechnic, Delhi’; Gupta and Banerji are on the staff of the Calcutta Art School; Sudhir Khastgir is in charge of the Art section in the Doon School; Chitra is the Editor of “Silpi” and Deputy Director of Industries (Cottage Industry); Hariharan is in charge of the best ceramic factory in India at Travancore; Shrimati Tagore is well-known for her dancing and stage decoration; Deuskar is the artist at Hyderabad; and Masoji, Mukerji and Ramakinkar are on the staff of the Kalabhavan at Santiniketan.

them which alone were sufficient to make a full-fledged costume museum. They had their own notions of the beautiful which often differed violently but which finally made them realise that their provincial approaches were nothing but dialects of one big, central, Indian art language. The able *Guru* Nandalal knew how to encourage the valuable in these peculiarities—I often wonder whether he did not learn from this aesthetic tower of Babel quite a good bit about the art life of the different provinces—and I am not certain that they are not to a considerable extent responsible in making the Kalabhavan the centre of the entire aesthetic activities of India.

They worked hard, for their task was not easy. To begin with, all these young *sadhakas* were interested in literature and appreciated deeply—often better than the literature students themselves—Tagore's poems and songs. Compared to the zenith Tagore's literary expression had reached, Indian painting was still fumbling about in the valley down below. It was no easy task to paint in the style of a Gitanjali or Gardener.

One of the major tragedies in the life of these *sadhakas* was the lack of training among the other students of the Visvabharati to appreciate their effort. Whereas a Benode Mukherji of the Kalabhavan could take part in a discussion on "John Christopher" or appreciate a poem of Pramatha Bishi, the students of literature not only failed to appreciate the efforts of Kalabhavan but did not even rationally *understand* their search for the medium of expression. What the students of literature expected in their paintings was a pictorial presentation of poems: they had not the slightest idea as to how painting differs from poetry. They went to the Kalabhavan

exhibitions with religious zeal but in the language of Omar Khayyam 'came out by the same door as in they went.'

Was it with a view to show the complete independence of painting that the Poet, at this stage, composed a number of poems 'illustrating' some of the paintings of Nandalal Bose and his disciples? It is as if the tables were turned now: in the earlier stages of the renaissance of Indian painting, the artists were illustrating Tagore's poems. The fact that Tagore could be inspired by the paintings of the Kalabhavan brought about self confidence among the young artists and served as an eye-opener to the students of literature who had so far looked upon painting as a handmaid of poetry. We have, however, to add in this connection that except for a few rare exceptions this 'dancing attendance' as it were, produced neither good poetry nor good paintings.

The Poet leaned heavily on the Kalabhavan in more than one way. The stage decoration of all his dramas was naturally in the hands of Nandalal Bose and Kalabhavan. They developed a simple technique which to-day is well-known all over India. This technique has saved us from the bondage of the pseudo-European stage-craft with its costly and vulgar paraphernalia.

And so they flourished—these young students—flourished like wild plants. For one of the chief virtues of Nandalal Bose is that he quickly realises the predilection of every student and allows him to develop in his own way. He is no gardener who mercilessly prunes and cuts to bring about a preconceived geometric pattern. He is more like the Lord of the Vanaspati who knows the value of every plant and aims at the grandeur of a

spontaneous vegetation as against the petty picturesqueness of a Mughal garden.

And then there were Abanindranath Tagore, his brother Gaganendranath and Nandalal Bose's colleague Asit Kumar Haldar who from outside Santiniketan continued to be sources of inspiration and co-operation for these young learners.

And as I have already said, they flourished like wild plants assimilating all the food from all waters and all winds. Nothing was too scared to them and nothing unattainable. Not only were they well-established in our traditional arts, they never ceased looking at all directions for inspiration and instruction. Japanese wash, Chinese brush, Rembrandt's details, Rodin's courage, Epstein's 'crudity', nothing, nothing was dismissed as foreign or too big. Their appetite for the beautiful was amazing and their self-confidence staggering. Sculpture, stucco, terra-cotta, etching, line-engraving, wood-cut became as familiar to us as potato and *patal*. Not only did they sit at the foot of the village lacquer-technician, they went merrily ahead with such crafts as leather-cover for their manuscripts, and the batik *saris* of the 'poor' Santiniketan girl became the object of envy to the 'grandes dames' of Calcutta. As I sit here, separated both by time and space from Kalabhavan, I cannot recollect one single technique or craft the young learners left untouched.

This will make it obvious to anyone who has any knowledge of an art school that the Kalabhavan was far, far more than an art school. I search in vain to find the adequate term in English but as such an institution is unknown in England the word obviously

would be missing. I content myself by going back to an Indian expression, I call it the *Lila-Bhumi* of *Shilpa-sadhana*.

Every serious student of art, every artist in India knows the Kalabhavan—I prefer to call it '*Kalabhuvan*' for it is a world by itself—but how is it that the average Indian does not know anything about the Kalabhavan? There are two reasons for it : first, the average Indian is still a philistine in matters relating to art and secondly, the Kalabhavan has obstinately dismissed all publicity and propaganda as injurious to the healthy growth of art; indeed, it has gone to the length of avoiding the art exhibitions sponsored by the city dwellers of Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi. It is not for me to pass a judgment on this matter but in one way I am happy that the Kalabhavan has preferred to keep its light under the bushel. Had the Kalabhavan allowed itself to be dragged into the whirlpools mentioned above, all the paintings would have found their way into the possession of the rich. As it is to-day, they are the proud possessions of those who knows how to appreciate them and won them, in most cases, with love and respect. The day on which India at large will discover the Kalabhavan, many a poor school-master, humble singer and obscure dancer will be able to show a Kalabhavan piece in his possession.

That day is not far. The personality of Rabindranath, the genius of Nandalal and devotion of the first batch have created a *Trimurti* which shall be discovered soon. The phenomenon of the fifteenth August would be otherwise meaningless. Its consummation lies in discovering our legacy and treasure.

WHITHER ART ?

A . B . Purani

The significance and disposition of Art in general and Modernist art in particular is brilliantly and vividly brought out by A. B. Purani in a series of questions and answers. Impressionism and cubism in defence of modernist seeking to strike and catch the eye of the common man as well as other modernist schools like Pointillism, Fauvism, etc., find full expression in this discourse. The present day art steeped in superficial technicalities and artificial imperfections are weighed against the vision of the ancient art whose expression of perfection and rhythm is through the inner experience about the aspect of the cosmic reality seemingly unreal to the modernist. The whole series of questions and the highly impressionable answers which are being reprinted by courtesy from SRI AUROBINDO MANDIR ANNUAL will be published by us in three instalments.

“Editors”

[The introductory series on the Modernist Art are reproduced in this volume.]

PART ONE :

Q : The question of Modernist art which began in Europe and is now almost all over the world has been a great puzzle to me. So many claims have been advanced about its achievements in the superlative degree that at times I wonder if my aesthetic faculty is really at fault, because I cannot bring myself round to appreciate it.

A : You can include in the field all arts—fine as well as plastic, for, behind all Modernist art is working an identical impulse and motive and the same creative force.

Q : But can you tell me the nature of that art-impulse? I have seen so many modernist works and have been completely mystified. I also confide to you that I was very much surprised the other day to find Tagore's crude paintings being hailed as great master-pieces really great artists and art-critics. Do you

think there ever can be some standard of art-values or will it always remain a field of mere personal likes and dislikes?

A : In spite of the earnest desire and efforts of some leaders there have been unfortunately, up to now, no universal art-values.

Tagore's art should not be taken apart from the general modernist movement. In order to evaluate this art you have to follow its evolution in Europe,—especially in France,—during the last century. Appearances are deceptive, and behind these seemingly crude works there may be genuine seeking for new ways in art-expression.

Q : Art is eminently a field of forms and if you do not take count of the form you might as well drop art altogether. I am interested in the evolution of modernist art if that can make me understand and appreciate

it. With their machine-like designs, patterns and schemes, their two-headed men and human faces with three eyes in two dimensions I am quite unable to find my bearings.

A : Modernist art began with an effort to break with the tradition of art in Europe, firstly because the old ideals and methods had probably exhausted all their possibilities and also because personality of the artist began to claim the right of an individual expression. Besides, such problems of technique present themselves to the artist as had not attracted the attention of old artists.

Q : You do not mean to say that all tradition in art is useless? Tradition at least supplies a wide, impersonal basis of technique based on past experience to the budding artist. It sets a high standard before him.

A : It is also valuable as a discipline and can, if rightly used, become a source of strength. Tradition is like a road that should lead the artist beyond itself, to new discoveries,—but it should not become a bar or a boundary.

Q : What are the aims of the Modernist movement in plastic arts?

A : Its aims are :—(a) Simplicity or rather simplification of the forms of nature.

(b) Reduction of details of forms, therefore, to a secondary place.

(c) To set up special value for colour by trying to arrive at a new plane—a plane of colour of each object.

Q : Who set about achieving these aims? Was it Courbet or Monet?

A : Courbet was a half naturalist, but he gave up the idea of imitation of Nature as the sole aim of art. Monet who followed him stood for Nature, not as she is in studio, but

as she is in open. He introduced the new way of treating light—the strong contrasts of tones and colours. Both of them may be said to have begun the departure. But it was the genius of Cezanne, the great pioneer that ushered in the new era. He effected a complete break with the art tradition of his times. In fact the need for a new departure in plastic arts was being felt since the end of the 18th century. For instance, nobody before these artists would think of painting the “peasants” because the popular idea was that they are “ugly”! These artists showed that nothing is ugly in itself. Art before Cezanne was considered an adornment of civilised life, at best it was a means of evoking purely emotional reaction. Naturalism and a kind of Realism were both tried and their possibilities seem to have been exhausted. Romanticism of Delacroix brought in only a temporary relief.

Q : But now in place of ordinary emotions they have brought in what is called “aesthetic emotion” as a necessary reaction to a work of art. It is said that art is essentially made up only of formal elements and that the subject-matter has nothing to do with art. The alphabets of beauty are the point, line, angle, cone, square, curve, mass, volume, position, magnitudes, dimensions and perspective.

A : Do you mean to say aesthetic emotion is something that exists apart from the whole of life—for itself and by itself? Although I grant that form has a great place in art I can't admit form has nothing to do with the content and that from the artistic point of view the greatest master-piece is equal to any well-executed, cleverly painted landscape.

Q : That is to say one must not try to see anything beyond mass, volume, position, colour, arrangements; “sense of composition

is the soul of geometry of beauty". It is said that structure and design are essential to art. These elements are analysable, there is nothing mystical about them. For instance, take the "Transfiguration" by Raphael. A great critic says that the religious background of this painting is not its essential part, it is an overtone, it has nothing to do with the pure "aesthetic emotion". It is the disposition and the colour scheme that give rise to pure aesthetic emotion.

A : Do you mean to say that Raphael while painting the picture kept the masses and colour-scheme before his visions? If art is a means of expressing the vision of the artist, then the content of art has a definite relation to form as well as art. Besides how are you going to isolate the aesthetic emotion from the rest of life? Aesthetics have something to do with beauty, and beauty (as I said in "Question and Answer" III) is not merely formal. If you maintain that the onlooker is not concerned with the vision of the artist but merely with the aesthetic reactions in his own consciousness to a work of art, you entirely miss the purpose of art which is to convey to the onlooker without alteration,—or with as little alteration as possible,—the experience of the artist. Sri Aurobindo rightly says : "All art starts from the sensuous and sensible or takes it as a continual point of reference or at the lowest uses it as a symbol and a fount of images, even when it soars. But equally all art worth the name must go beyond the visible, must reveal, must show something that is hidden and in its total effect not reproduce but create." Formal elements have a place—and an important place in art,—but there are other things also. The efforts of the modernists to reduce creative art to a manipulation of technique completely ignores

the true origin and function of art and is therefore bound to fail.

Q : I was surprised to find that these Modernist European artists who excelled in representing Nature produced such unnatural ugliness.

A : The reason, as I told you, is that naturalism had come to a halt. People began to find that the highest aim of art is neither representation nor successful imitation of Nature, because such art can carry man only where he already is (i.e. on the ordinary physical plane); true art must be revelation of undiscovered harmony and unity. Cezanne refused to copy nature. He was not satisfied even with Impressionism.

Q : What is Impressionism?

A : The whole outlook of European mind in those days—as even now—was strongly influenced by scientific ideas. The stress was on finding out of objective truth of the world—to banish as completely as possible the subjective element from all branches of human culture. Naturalism and Realism were already there, but failed to do the job. The stress in arts was to select from Nature and record. The Impressionist wants to transfer to the canvas the image received by the retina. He wants neither to make any comments, nor draw any conclusions. He thinks that is foreign to the purpose of art. He does not care about composition nor about decoration.

Q : It is rather difficult, I should think

A : It is very unnatural and most uncommon because man cannot completely neutralise the working of his memory and his intellect. The result of this attitude was that they began to see and study the superficial view of objects more accurately than people in the past had done and the result was a

tendency to simplification of forms. They sacrifice line to gain unity of visual impression. There is no precise shape or relationship of parts and the whole. Their main purpose is to create a general impression. For example, they want to represent the entire field of grass,—not the outline or detail of each blade of grass; they would rather paint the crowd and ignore the individual; they would want to convey the atmosphere of winter without its details. Instead of a tree they would like to give the essence of forest-life, instead of man,—masculine strength, and so on. The Impressionist wants to reproduce the impression of the object or its atmosphere—not the object itself. Some critics find that Impressionism lacks structure—their complaint may be said to be that it produces only an atmosphere—no substance.

Q : Did Cezanne have any theory of art?

A : He had problems to solve but no theories. Even if genius accepts theories it is not limited by them. Great artists follow their own genius and vision. They hardly go to absurdities which inevitably follow the logical application of theories. You will be surprised to know that this greatest pioneer among modern artists not only had no theory of his own but was slow and had a very laborious method of work. And still more surprising is the fact that he did not know drawing and was not able to draw the human form. An example of his perseverance, patience and at the same time slowness is afforded by the fact that he took one hundred and fifteen sittings of a friend of his for making his portrait and at last gave it up in despair only remarking that he was “dissatisfied with the shirt-collars”!

Q : Strange! Isn't it? And yet how did he manage to do his work?

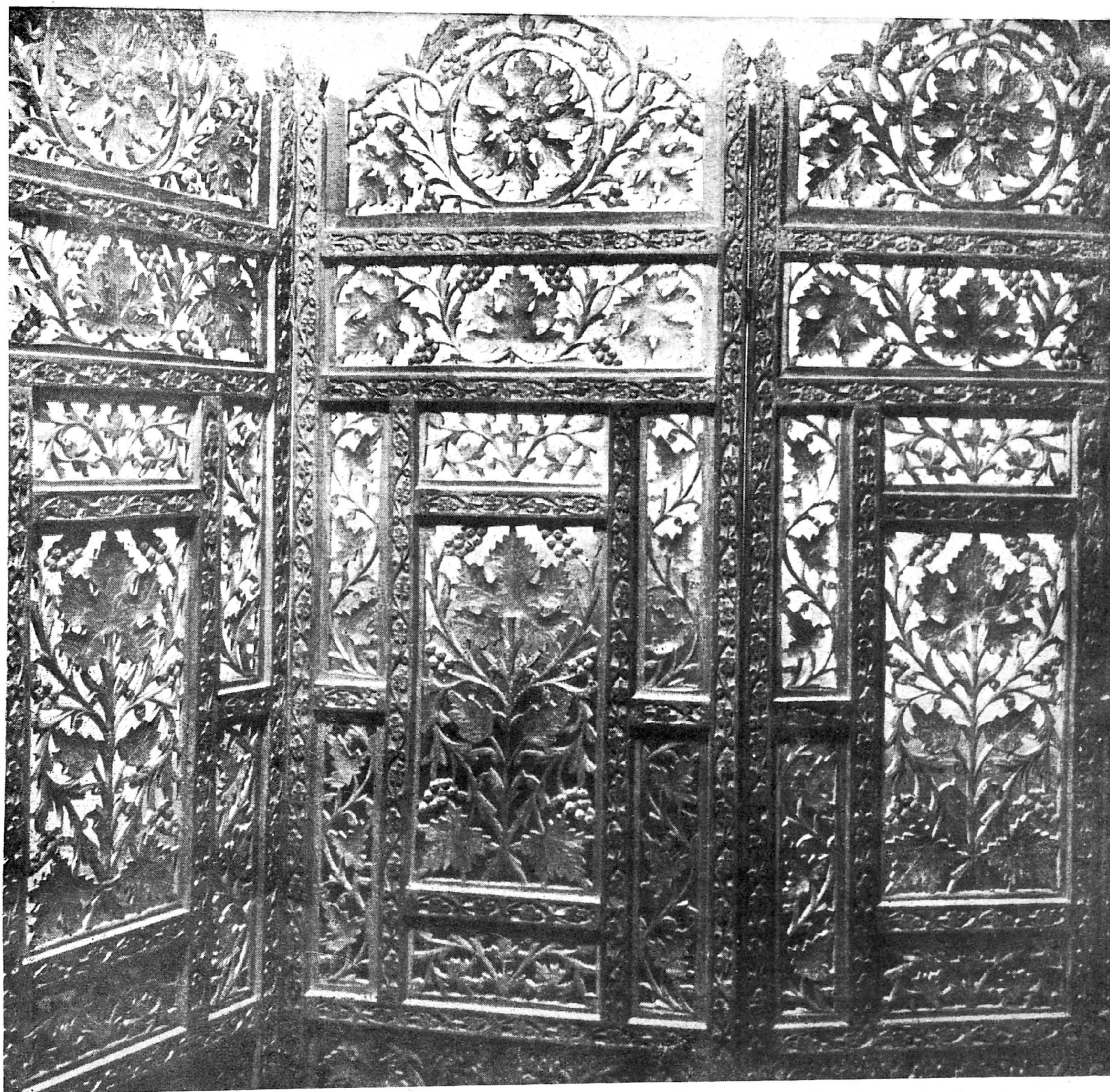
A : All masters work with inspired unconsciousness. Cezanne's mind was seized by the problem of how to render solid volume and materiality of objects and forms. Impressionism did not offer him any solution of this problem and so it could not satisfy him though he accepted their perception of colour-values and of surface under light. He believed that mass, volume and density were not to be ignored in painting. Working at his problem Cezanne found simple geometrical forms in all Nature. “All forms in Nature” he said “can be reduced to the sphere, the cone and the cylinder”. He, thereafter, arranged his landscape in harmony with his sensibility to form and colour. There is strength, simplicity and rhythm of lines and spaces in his work. He attempted to render form by colour—(almost entirely)—ignoring the line. He was keen on conveying the illusive sensation of an object, such as the warmth of colour of a fruit.

Q. If he was so slow, how could he make his living from art?

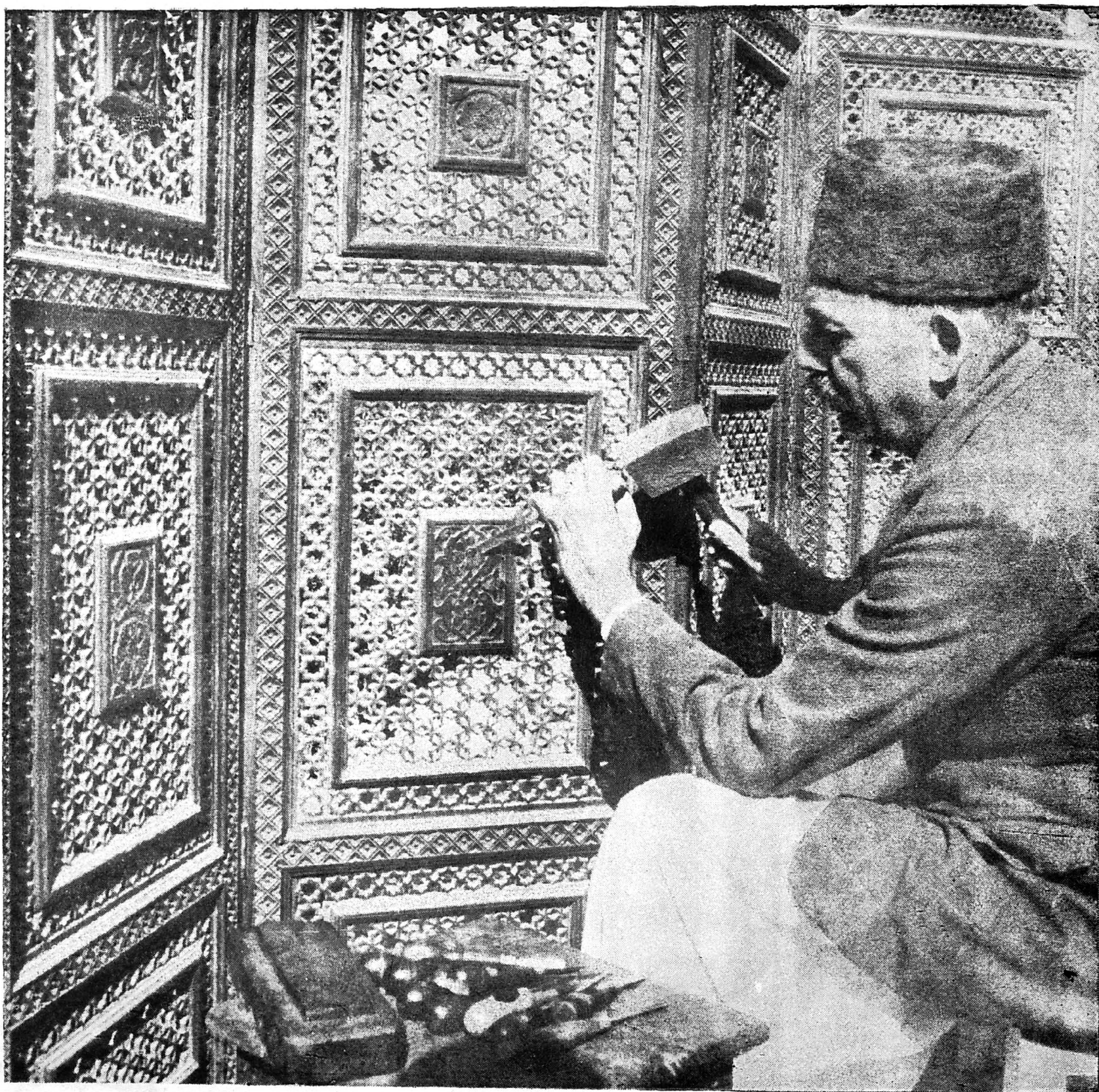
A : Fortunately he had not to depend upon his art for his maintenance; otherwise he would have starved. It was his passion. He did not care even to keep his paintings carefully. At times he left them in the fields where he worked at his problems especially if he found that the painting showed no solution of the problems.

Q : Was he able to solve his problems?

A : He was able to indicate the solutions. But this work might have remained incomplete but for the great geniuses who followed in his wake and were able to show the possibilities of Cezanne's new approach to art. They were : Van Gogh and Gauguin.



"A walnut screen from Kashmir"



"A Kashmir screen with Geometrical Decoration"

WOOD-CARVING IN INDIA AND ABROAD

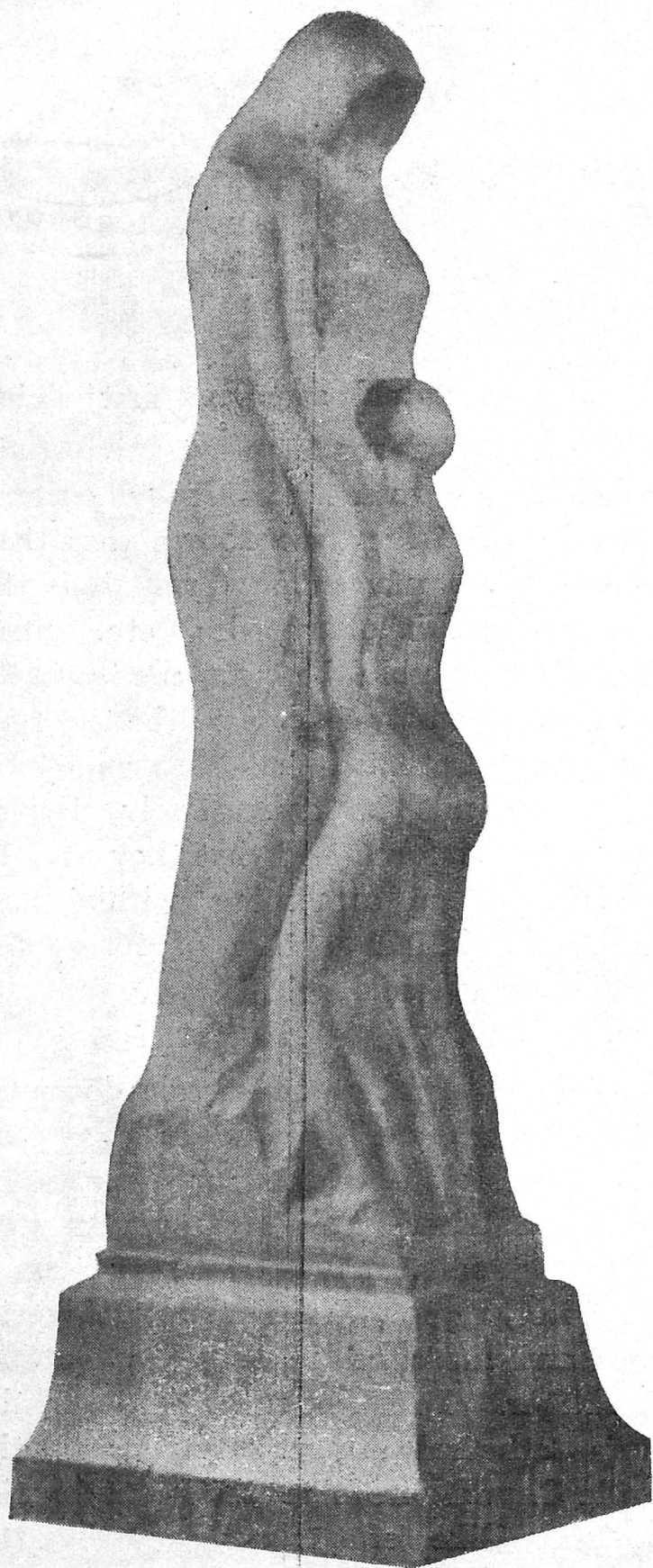
Krishna Chaitanya

Man's creative spirit has fashioned more artistic material out of paint and stone than wood. But from the very beginning of history, his artistic impulse has shown an impatience with paucity of material and the good work has never been suspended due to bottlenecks in raw material. The most intractable stuff has been made to reveal its latent ideal forms under the persuasive touch of the artist's hands. Thus, while its immense granite deposits helped Egypt to produce a monumental sculpture and the quarries in Greece and at Carrara gave tremendous advantages to greek and roman work in marble, the eskimo in his dreary arctic home had still his whale-bone for carving out exquisite miniatures of caribous and polar bears. And in the forested areas of the world, wood has been handled from traditional times with splendid artistic skill. Primitive Maori canoes and the doorways of the huts of alaskan indians display fine decorative work in wood, even to-day.

There are two great traditions in the field of wood-carving: decorative and representational. Both have long histories behind them, though in modern times, the traditions have tended to diverge because of the cleavage between the artist and the handicraftsman in modern society. Decorative work has either been geometric or naturalistic. Modern research has tended to show that the distinction between these two styles is not as

fundamental as would seem at first sight. Ehrenreich, who has made an extensive study of the ornamental geometrical designs current among Brazilian tribes, has shown that they are derived from naturalistic forms like the patterns on the skin of reptiles, etc. Still, the distinction is useful between the imitative style and the geometrical. And the theoretical possibility also exists that the geometrical patterns may not be exhaustively derived from naturalistic forms and that they may be the expression of something within man himself like a musical rhythm of forms felt within the human soul.

The wooden arcades and mosaic doorways in the *madrassahs* of Fez in Morocco are typical of the delightful geometrical tradition of Muslim Africa. This style occurs with exquisite variations over a great stretch of territory, i.e., Egypt, Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria, Morocco and the zones north of Lake Chad and the Niger. In Europe, the portals of the Beauvais Cathedral and the reredos in the Abbeville Church are fine instances of the delicate lace like effects achieved by the French Gothic tradition. Fine illustrations of the sensuous intuition of decorative possibilities latent in stylised natural forms like foliage and clouds, which characterises the Far Eastern tradition, are provided by the decorative carvings in the Nikko shrine in Japan and in Chinese temples,



"Allegoric Group"

Indian tradition knows both the geometric and naturalistic styles. The former characterises the wood-work of balconies and windows in the Punjab and Kashmir. The

gabled houses and doorways of the South also display fine decorative handling of geometrical patterns. Wooden railings are also extensively used in the South though they seem to be going out of fashion. In the recently built public offices of Trivandrum, an attempt has been made to revive an adapted form of the gabled construction, but decorative work in wood does not seem to figure in this scheme and we have to go to the old palaces and manor houses for quality in decorative wood-work. A more naturalistic style characterises the decorative work in the walnut furniture of Kashmir in which the patterns of leaf, tendril, blossom and bud appear frequently. The demand from foreign troops stationed in India during the war gave a considerable stimulus to this handicraft but it is to be feared that this boom has affected the quality of work.

Before we pass on to the achievements in the representational tradition, we have to understand the limitations which are intrinsic to this medium. The chisel cannot cut across the grain of the wood with as much ease as along it. This makes it difficult to secure uniformity of modelling. Again, owing to this difficulty created by the grain, statues in wood have a tendency to exaggerate the height of figures and to lessen their transverse dimensions. Abrupt projections are not easy to carve due to the brittleness of wood. All these circumstances place difficulties in the way of the achievement of realism and create a bias in favour of stylised effects. Thus we see that even in the case of the Benin, Ogowe, Dahomey and other African tribes, with whom representational wood-carving is traditional, there is a distinct tendency to stylisation, wooden fetishes conventionalising the figures of human beings or antelopes almost

beyond recognition. This is not to say, however, that realism has ever been abandoned in this field. Cognisance of the limitations of the medium has been greater in modern art than in the art of previous epochs and therefore the realistic tradition has as great a past as the stylised. Thus the realistic perfection achieved by the workers in the early dynastic period of Egypt is something amazing. The famous wooden figure of an Egyptian overseer of slaves now in the Cairo museum, the figure of a woman in the Leyden museum and the portrait statues of Sesostris I, wearing the crowns of upper and lower Egypt in the New York museum, all attest to the supreme realism which can be achieved even in this difficult medium. More mature in psychological treatment are the Chinese statues in painted wood of the Sung Period, like the figures of Kwanyin, the Goddess of Mercy, in the Boston museum. These have a grave and serene beauty which also marks the Japanese tradition, as exemplified in the archaic wooden figure of Maitreya Bodhisattva in the little nunnery of Chuguji, an exquisite record of devotion, timeless and universal in its appeal, at once remote from the world and full of compassion for men. Representative of the European tradition are the graceful and lively painted statues given to the world by the cathedral builders of France, Germany and the Netherlands during the middle ages, the German boxwood statuettes of a later period and the Madonnas and Saints, carved with intensity of feeling and lively sense of personality by the artists of Spain, of whom Alonso Cano was the most famous.

The magnificent tradition of stone-carving in this country has overshadowed the achievements in wood. But both the north and



"Dejection"

south have their distinct traditions of representational wood-carving. A favourite type of the latter is the Goddess Pattini, a manifestation of Parvati, which goes back to the



"Durga"

eleventh century. Dr. J. H. Cousins has brought to light several exquisite specimens of carved Hindu deities from the palaces and temples of Travancore. The Dwarapalakas and Durgas of this collection are exquisitely carved. These finely poised figures display minute ornamentation, whose designs are suggested by gold and silver jewellery.

Modern wood-carving is associated, in the west, with a few artists, of whom the most important are Jens Lund, Jean Tirefort,

Charles Wheeler and Eugene Borga. Among these, Jens Lund's Self-portrait, belongs to the tradition of the experiments of the *art nouveau* of France towards the close of the nineteenth century. These experiments were in the main untrue to material, in the sense that they sought to make wood-carving convey the impression of metal or modelled clay. Nevertheless, the self-portrait of this Danish artist is a marvellous achievement recording as it does with great faithfulness the complex disposition of the facial muscles, the pads of flesh under the eyes and the furrowed forehead. More appreciative of the natural direction and momentum of wood-carving technique are Jean Tirefort's 'Albigensian Woman Resting' and Wheeler's 'Mother and Child' carved in limewood. Tirefort's work is intermediate in its realism between Lund's and Wheeler's. The face of the old woman has great realism but the musculature of the face is not studied with the painstaking accuracy of Lund's work. The contours are still more simplified in Wheeler's work, although here again anatomy is naturalistic and not stylised. But in Borga's remarkable 'Madonna' the natural lines of cleavage of wood, the smooth curvatures possible when cutting along the grain and the clean straight incisions which the chisel makes in resistant tissue are the very factors that have been exploited by a rare artistic intuition in the achievement of a reduced simplicity of contour unsurpassed in its artistry and suggestiveness.

So far as we can see, a modern tradition, distinct from the traditional art with its decorative and religious motives, and more overtly expressionist, has yet to develop in this country. Low relief work from the south like Tanikachalam's *Abhisarika** strikes a

* Published in Silpi Vol. I No. 4.

modern note in the reduced simplicity of their lines but they are not intended to be anything more than decorative work. Almost the only worker in the field who is modern in spirit is Dhan Raj Bhagat,** whose experiments deserve notice as they may very well pave the way for a revival of representational wood-carving in India.

We reproduce here photographs of two of Bhagat's works: *Dejection* and *Allegoric Group*. The first belongs to the period of initial experiments. Hence the solicitude for anatomical realism even when the main object is the communication of a mood. The *Allegoric Group* is more mature, both in its technique and its psychology. Its technical excellence lies in the fact that the chisel has been guided by the suggestions given by the grain, with the nature of the medium, has been achieved. Its superb psychological quality emerges from the manner in which a perfect symbol has been found for a transcendental meaning. Ripples and waves in the ocean of Being: this has been an ideal metaphor in Indian thought for rendering the fundamental unity below the apparent dichotomy of individual and absolute existence. The fine adequacy of the metaphor consists in the fact that the wave and the ocean, though distinct from one level of perception, forms one basic identity. Bhagat's composition acquires the quality of this metaphor in the unity which lies at the base of its rhythmic organisation and its subtle coalescence of forms. It excels the metaphor in the anthropomorphism of the smaller figure, the anthropomorphic suggestion of the main contour of the other form and in the final mastertouch which has left the visage of the supporting a hollowed out emptiness. The human soul, the personal

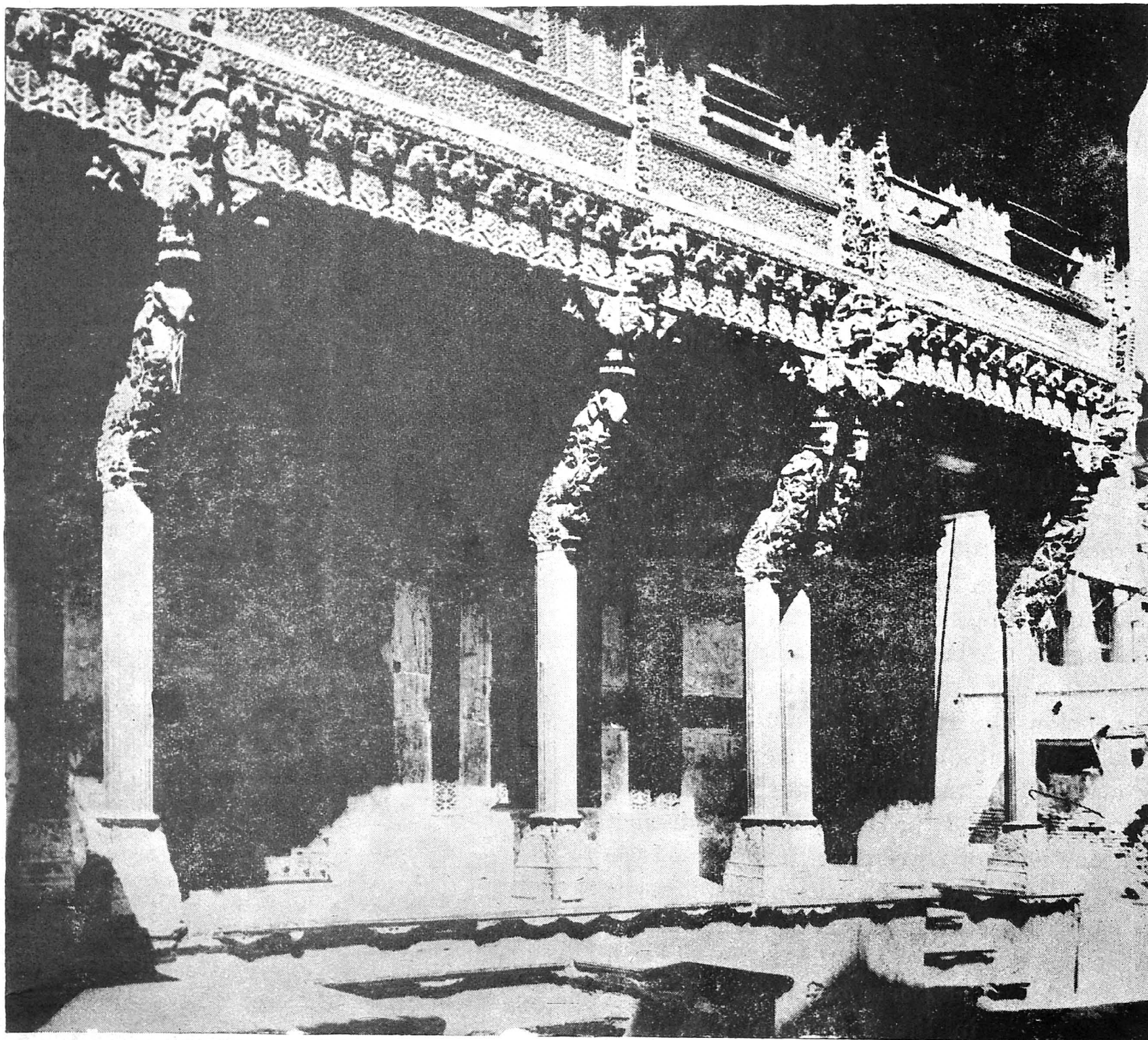
** Two pieces of his work appeared in Silpi Vol. I No. 12.



"Dwarapalaka"

deity-conceived as feminine because Shakti or manifested energy is feminine in Hindu thought and the formless Absolute are all here. While thought recognises the basic unity in this hierarchy of ideas, compelling rhythms transcribe the unity on the plane of the symbol.

The competence of this artist holds very great promises for the future of wood-carving in India.



"Carved facade of a 19th century Ahmedabad House"

Courtesy :--Archaeological Survey of India

SCHOOLS AND THEIR DESIGN

R. Furneaux Loran

This article has been reproduced for its excellent presentation of the natural and beautiful environment under which the children grew up in the Pre-Victorian era and the urgent need for properly designed temples of learning to-day. Aesthetic environment and methods of improving Visual arts will be an innovation in our Educational System. The views of our readers in this matter of re-orientation of our long forgotten Visual arts are invited.

“Editors”

In the whole field of design there is, perhaps, no class of building so suitable for study as the school. The house, at any rate to-day, is too much the victim and the outward expression of surrounding economic factors and of temporary fads, too liable therefore to suffer revolutionary change and so too seldom the expression of a continuing culture, the church, on the other hand, is too deeply sunk in its traditions to provide us with such an expression; and the industrial building too exclusively the product of the last hundred years. The school building, in the widest sense, is however, an almost perfect laboratory specimen of the action and interaction of tradition and progress, of compromise between ideals and realities—a perfect example, in short, of the truism that architecture is an expression of the age in which it is built, and a perfect example of national achievement in design.

The whole history of education in this country, at least in one respect, like the Kingdom of God—in that it contains many mansions. Our national life, through the generations, with its varying philosophies, religion, regimes and philanthropies, its im-

pulses and growths, has produced—under the one head of Education—a very extraordinary assortment of buildings. . . . convent or monastery school, ancient university, public school and country town grammar school, dame’s school, board school, church school, private school, rectory study and crofter’s cottage, the technical and art schools, the primary and secondary schools of to-day, and the modern universities of the provincial cities. Not all these are good through and through but it is their wonderful variety that is impressive. Think for a moment of, say, Oxford and St. Andrew’s universities, of the colleges founded by the Guilds or by the City Companies, of Dotheboys Hall, of Dartington and Eton, of Stonyhurst and of the school in the next street . . . one can praise here and damn there, but it is all an astonishing outward expression of national character.

Above all, despite their variety these buildings, so manifold in outward form, have one tremendous thing in common. If we look at the greatness of our national life through the centuries, of our great contribution to Western Civilization and at our great men: we must ask ourselves whether there is

not some one outstanding thing to which we owe so much. Where like the deepest roots of so much that is great? Surely in the childhood of those who brought about greatness: in the humblest schools, the colleges and the universities. Is there then some common factor which these educational buildings—so various in form—do nevertheless share together? I think the answer is to be found in the rather old-fashioned but very simple word—"beauty." In current jargon one speaks of "the psychological effect of environment on the adolescent"—which means, perhaps, that it is a good thing for a child's surroundings to be beautiful—a rather ancient discovery, although capable of many interpretations.

Looking back down the vistas of time we may find, here and there, some great man achieving his destiny through the need to escape from ugliness or squalor . . . but far more often we find, various though their circumstances may have been, that those who have achieved most have in childhood, been surrounded by a positive beauty which, on their own admission, has had upon them an enduring effect. It was a beauty which took many, many forms. The Scottish academy of the early nineteenth century was, no doubt, a plain enough affair, but to get his book-learning Carlyle would walk his seven miles a day through the green hills of Annan, and their loveliness remained with him. Shakespeare knew the flowers of the Warwickshire lanes as Bacon and Newton knew the cloistered lawns by the Cam; Tennyson dreamt his first dreams on the lonely Lincolnshire shore and then amidst the browns and golds of the chapel at Trinity; Shelley loved of the elms of Stoke Poges and Byron looked down from the Hill upon a Middlesex of sequestered woods and water-meadows; Newman as a

Roman Cardinal remembered with tears the quiet contentment of Orrel.

Until well into the nineteenth century every child, even the poorest, did possess this heritage of a beautiful environment. For some this beauty lay in the lawns and buildings of the greatest schools and the universities, or in their country homes. For others, for all those were to remain illiterate, it lay close at hand—in nature. For, until well into the nineteenth century, no child or man, however poor, was ever far from beauty. It was to be found in the churches, and the streets, in costumes and in the commonest objects. And those compact townships and tiny hamlets of the Middle Ages and of the Georgian *era* were so closely surrounded by the fields and woods that no one was ever cut off, as millions now are, from rural solitude. To suppose that such beauties were not, in some way, felt and enjoyed until Wordsworth had made them fashionable is just one of those pieces of current nonsense that a glance into any poet from Piers Plowman onwards must instantly dispel.

It is this tradition of beauty that we, in the second half of the twentieth century, have to give back to our children. For between ourselves and this great tradition there lies a barrier—the tragic barrier of Victorian industrialism. It is the worst of ironies that the *era* of ugliness and meanness, that *era* when the black towns of the north came into being, was also an *era* of school building. We have behind us now the dual tradition: the tradition that was killed in the 19th century, the tradition of beauty; and this other tradition of ugliness—with schools of such unredeemed hideousness and unparalleled inefficiency, that

if a sane man had to choose between a childhood spent in such surroundings or the contented illiteracy of the medieval craftsman, he would not hesitate for a moment.

For a generation, it is true, we have fully recognized the material ugliness of the nineteenth century and the material beauty of earlier times, but not yet have we fully faced the spiritual consequences of our nineteenth century tragedy and its twentieth century aftermath. Spiritually and culturally our civilization has collapsed. Our regard for the things of the spirit has gone. The love of beautiful things, the *instinctive* appreciation of beauty and, above all, the desire to make beautiful things have, so far as millions are concerned, been wiped out. Their place has been taken by . . . Woolworths, Gaumont, the Daily Express, an inordinate interest in aeronautics and the internal combustion engine and by the suburban sprawl. There has been in the last hundred and fifty years, a complete breakdown of the visual arts, and Society can be made sane again only by restoring to it a proper regard and instinctive feeling for beauty. This restoration of the visual arts can take place in only one way—slowly but surely over a long period, a period perhaps of some generations; for it can be done only by giving back to children in their surroundings that heritage of beauty which, long ago was theirs without question. And the enjoyment and understanding of the beauty with which we surround them will come about also in only one way—by giving them once again the means to make beauty for themselves, with their own hands and with their own brains.

It is this philosophy—though it has been stated in many different ways—that must form the basis for modern school design. The

immediate technical problems of the designer, considerable though they may be, are his own—planning, heating construction, lighting, etc.—are outside the scope of this essay; but the proper relationship of modern school design to the past and to the future, and its function in solving the crucial social problem of our time, are both—to the writer's mind, overwhelming and clear.

Space order, light and sunshine—the plan must provide all these. Clarity of proportion, lightness of structure, flexibility and transparency; clear, clean colours, paintings and flowers and gardens . . . these are all attributes of beauty which are not denied to us by the economies which may surround us for the next few decades; indeed, they may, with intelligence, be derived directly from new materials and from new technical processes.

For the school designer, therefore, and for those concerned, with school buildings and their equipment, the programme for the next fifty years is, in a sense, straightforward. In everything surrounding the child there must reside the opportunity for aesthetic joy of some kind, and what is provided must include the space and the means for creative activities of many kinds . . . from gardening and cooking, through the whole range of crafts, to classical drama and music.

It is fair to say that a start has been made. There are, at the moment, no contemporary schools—only the pre-war examples. But in the best of these—more especially perhaps in the Cambridgeshire Village Colleges—the philosophy which has been outlined above did find a tentative expression in bricks and mortar. There was beauty of line and proportion and colour, there was intelligent

planning and—for both adults and children—there was much scope for activity of a creative sort, activity of hand and brain.

In a broad sense we have to pick up the threads of a tradition which was killed a century ago; in a narrower sense we have to go forward from the very best that was done

seven years ago. The need is very urgent—urgent because there are children without schools, and even more urgent because the survival of our society depends, in the long run, upon the survival of our spiritual and aesthetic value. Those concerned with design are ready with their proposals. . . . Let it not be said that they were frustrated unto death.

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Mother

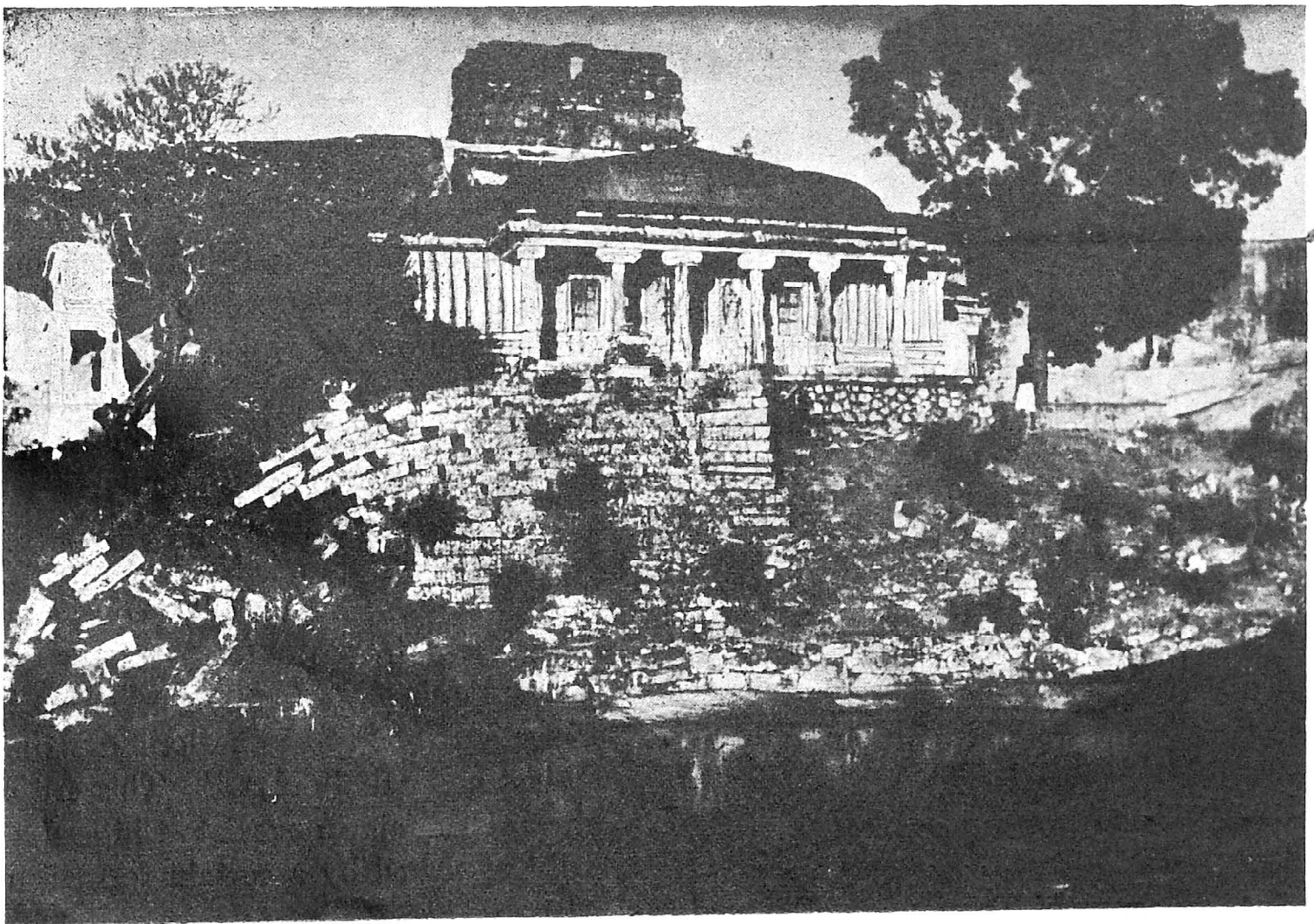
Sudhir Khastgir

THE CHITARAL ROCK-CUT TEMPLE

K. P. Padmanabhan Thampy

Of great antiquity and historical importance is the Chitalar Rock Shrine situated five miles to the north of Kuzhithura, a tiny and unpretentious village on the Trivandrum-

certain historical circumstances which had their origin outside the State. Jainism which made its appearance in Malabar during the days of Asoka has left its stamp on the



A general view of Chitalar rock-cut temple

Nagerkoil road, in South Travancore. Chitalar was in days of yore a place of pilgrimage most sacred to the Jains. Jain groups had their habitat in Travancore in early times, but disappeared consequent on

temple architecture of Kerala. The temple at Chitalar which was originally a Jain Shrine was, in the year 1250 A.D. converted into a Hindu Temple and an image of Goddess *Sri Bhagavathi* was installed there. To-day



Mahavira and Padmavati

the Jain tradition associated with Chitalar has been entirely forgotten by the people who regard the Shrine as a genuine Hindu Temple. A number of old epigraphs in the Tinnevely District go to show that Jainism was once prevalent in South Travancore and the adjoining districts and that some of the well-known Jain teachers and devotees hailed from Chitalar, a place which was then famous as 'Thirucharanam' and the seat of a thriving Jain Monastery.

The Sree Bhagavathi Temple at Chitalar, is built at the foot of a huge rock. The cave facing the west is formed by a beetling mass of rock leaning on another big rock. The rock itself comprises the rear side of the Shrine, the other three sides being enclosed by massive masonry walls. The ruins of the original Jain Temple perched on the summit

of the Chitalar rock attract both pilgrims and tourists. The ruins which are most imposing evoke sacred and austere memories. The Jain Shrine at Chitalar which has been ascribed to the early 9th century, illustrates that the creative genius of Jains asserted itself in architecture.

EXQUISITE STONE IMAGES

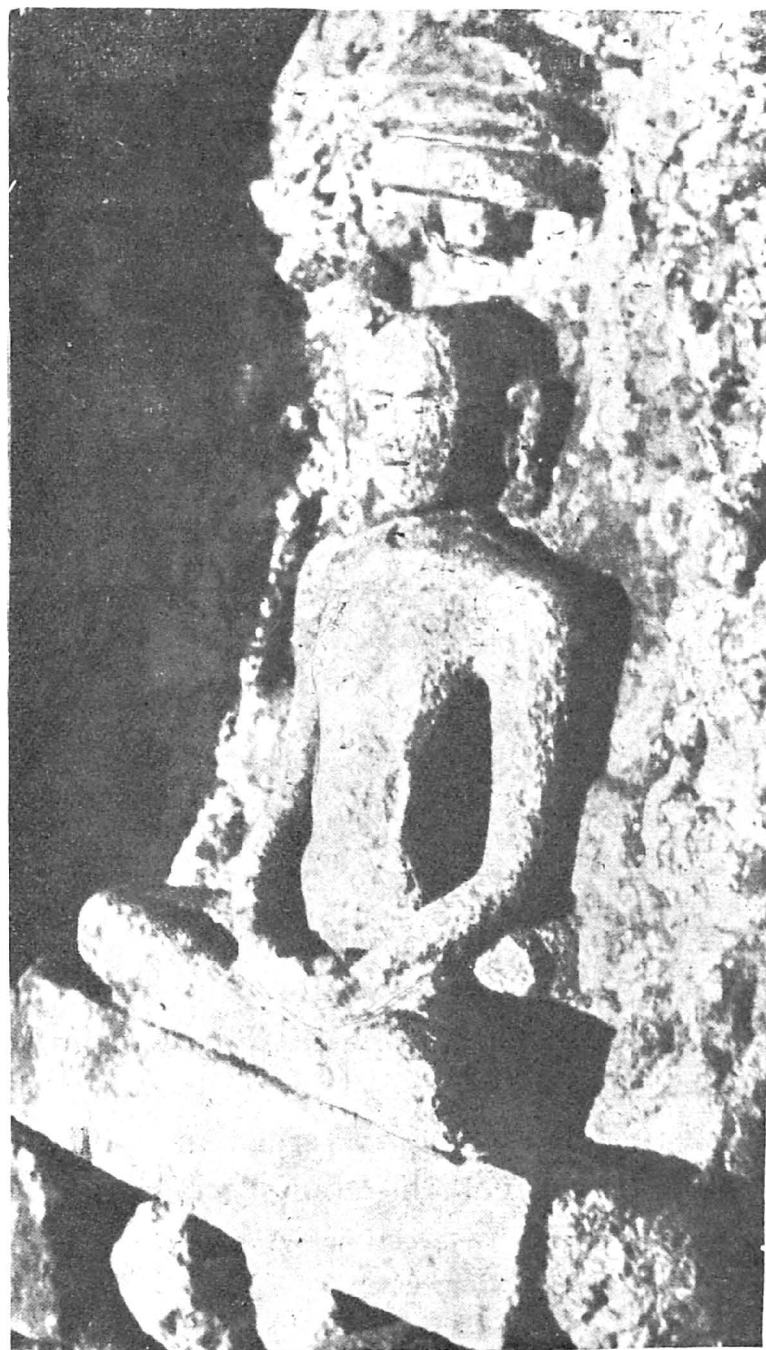
The Chitalar rock is a sacred relic of the past. On the northern side of this huge overhanging rock have been sculptured many exquisite images which are avowedly Jainistic in origin, demeanour and department. The distinguishing feature of these granite images are bald heads, clean shaven faces, a tier of three umbrellas over the head and the absence of holy thread and garments. These characteristic indications prove that the images are of Jain *Theerthankaras*, as deified heroes. The images are master-pieces of the sculpter's art. In between some of the images are found valuable inscriptions in *Vattezethu*, an old script which was once popular in Kerala. Some of the finest images of Jain Saints are noticed on the upper half of the rock facing the west. E. B. Havell, considers that though the Jain sculpture is "very noble as an art," "Jain figure sculpture seems to lack the feeling and imagination of the best Buddhist and Hindu Art." This criticism is applicable to Jain images at Chitalar, which are distinguished by a certain formalism, and rigidity.

Only the "fixed, immutable pose of the aesthetic absorbed in contemplation," has been made the subject of sculpture in stone in the Jain Shrine at Chitalar. The figures are treated conventionally, the shoulders being broad, arms hanging straight down to the lap

and the waists narrow. The images symbolise the complete spiritual abstractness of *Yatis* absorbed and motionless during penance. The full contemplative expression on the face of the images, proclaim the genius of the sculptors. Here and there are seen well-executed and lovely images of Goddess Sri Bhagavathi and attendants which must have been of a later origin and carved at the time of the construction of the Shrine dedicated to the Goddess. There are over thirty Jain images sculptured on the face of the huge Chitalar rock. All these images which are in a sitting posture appear to be replicas in different sizes of the principal images of Jain *Theerthankaras*, inside the central and southern compartments of the rock-cut hall of the Shrine. The two large images in the rock-cut hall seated on elevated stone plinths are of the famous Jain *Theerthankaras* Parasunatha and Mahavira. The Hindus, however, regard these images as those of Maha Vishnu. To the left of these exquisite images is seen the graceful figure of Padmavati Devi.

HISTORIC INSCRIPTIONS

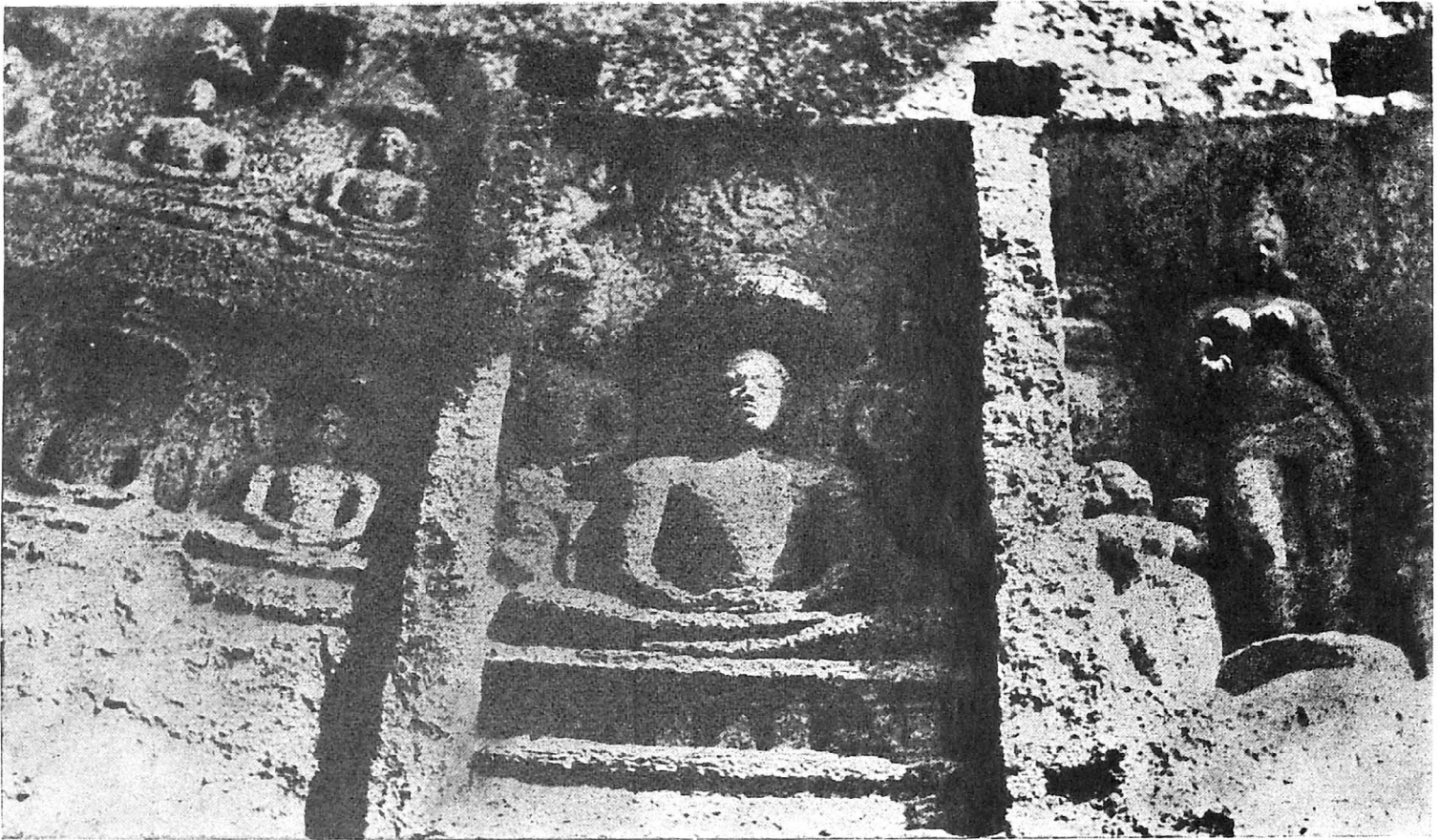
Chitalar is famous for its inscriptions on huge rocks. Some lengthy inscriptions of great historical and cultural importance in the old script *Vattezethu* are witnessed here. They threw much light on the religious and cultural history of the State. Some relics of exquisite mural paintings are also noticed in the Chitalar Shrine which is nearly eleven centuries old. The fragments of murals reveal that they were conceived and executed in a highly conventional style. Their nobility of expression and perfection of line recall to the mind of the *Connoisseur* some of the finest frescoes of Ajanta.



Jain Theerthankar in meditation

AN IDEAL BEAUTY SPOT

A beautiful rock spring, the waters of which form a pretty pool, shoots up in front of the Sri Bhagavathi Shrine. A magnificent panorama stretches before the sight-seer who ascends the Chitalar rock and surveys the charming landscape around. At a distance, he sees the jagged out-line of the mountains enveloped in mist. Gleaming pale green lakes and fields, winding rivers and irrigation canals, clusters of pretty villages nestling



A view of the face of the masive rock at chitaral on which are sculptured Jain images

amidst dense cocoanut and palmyrah plantations, and the tall spires of Churches and lofty Gopurams of temples rising up here and there amidst a landscape of arcadian jollity and exuberance greet the tourist's vision at this

delightful spot. A beauty spot where historic, religious and picturesque elements combine to afford many charms to the pilgrims and the tourists, Chitaral is an ideal place for a quiet holiday.

MUSIC OF THE POST-THYAGARAJA PERIOD

Prof. P. Sambamurthi

(Head of the Department of Indian Music University of Madras.)

The period of Thyagaraja (1767-1847) is the brightest epoch in the History of Karnatic music. South India witnessed a wealth of musical genius at that time. Brilliant composers, musicologists and musicians adorned that period. Every branch of musical repertoire got enriched. Beautiful compositions belonging to the spheres of art music, sacred music and dance music were composed. Telugu dance dramas with splendid poetry in them were written during the period. Art dance figured prominently in the performance of dance dramas. The South Indian opera had its birth at that time. High standard in performance (vocal and instrumental) were reached. Vidwans specialised in ragas of their choice and were able to give alapanas in them for hours and in a few instances for some days. Some specialised in the *ghanam* style, some in the *nayam* style and some in *pallavis*. Many States and Zamindaries patronised music and musicians. Noted singers, instrumentalists and persons noted for musical scholarship adorned the courts of Princes, Zamindars, and Nobles. The whole atmosphere from Bobbili in the North to Tanjore and Travancore in the South was pulsating with musical life. Unlike modern times where one could listen to top ranking musicians only in the sangita sabhas and on payment of money, one could hear eminent musicians at that time either in courts or

temples or in the houses of senior vidwans. Admission was free to such performances. In such concerts, musicians were invited to occupy the front rows and not the moneyed people as is the case now in the Gana sabas. The appreciative encomiums from these musicians drew the best from the performers. Interesting and thought provoking *pallavis* were sung on such occasions. Major forms and minor forms alike inclusive of rare forms like Kukkuta sabdam Kaustubham received their due share of attention at the hands of composers. The advent of the Violin is another noteworthy event of this period.

As in literature, we also find in music a period of decadence following a period of great activity and output. During the period of decadence people had just time to study, digest and assimilate the precious and prolific output of the luminaries of the period that had gone by. A comparative study of the musical maps of the different periods of India's musical history will reveal that the map of the period of Thyagaraja is characterised by quality, quantity and versatility. After the period of decadence we find the art once again coming to its own. The Himalayan heights reached during the golden age served as a fresh stimulus towards higher creative effort.

The losses and gains in the music of the post-Thyagaraja period may now be briefly

referred to. Taken as a whole, the gains may be said to outweigh the losses.

LOSSES

There were no composers of gītās in the post-Thyagaraja period; nor were attempts made during this period to compose in rare forms like the sapta taleswaram and paucha taleswaram. No addition were made to forms of rhythmical interest like sapta tala gita and dhruva rupaka tala gita. Nor do we come across any distinctive style of musical writing. The number of musicians to specialise in particular ragas dwindled down. Kritis with sangatis reflecting the latent ideas in the sahitya became less and less. In some of the Kritis of this period, we find *sangatis* simply being piled up without any meaning.

The tendency to sing the sahityas of earlier composers in ragas and tunes of later periods or set them in new tunes and sing them is on the ascendency. This is not at all an innovation in the right direction. Such acts amount to historical perversions. In most cases it should be possible to get at or find the original tunes by careful investigation and research. Many of the songs composed in recent times contain either faulty prosody or suffer from poor music and mediocre ideas. Some of them are merely showy. Plagiarism in tunes and piracy of ideas are seen now and then. To the tune of the famous Kṛiti in Kalyani "Nidu Charana Pankajamule" we find a number of later sahityas set and sung. The tendency to sing well-known national songs in more tunes than one is not at all to be welcomed. Since the tunes have as much contributed to their dignity as their sahitya, the necessity of adhering in each case to the original tune or to a widely accepted later tune needs hardly any emphasis.

The democratisation of music has its own good and evil features. Music is now more widely diffused and the listening public has no doubt considerably swelled in number. But there is the appalling deterioration in public taste and this has had its serious repercussions on the performer. Pallavis of an illusory character are sometimes heard in present day concerts. In such instances the undercurrent rhythm of the pallavi is clear enough, but we find the singer paradoxically enough reckoning the tala after a different sub-rhythm. Although synchronisation is noticed at the conclusion of each avarta, rhythm of the reckoning and the rhythmical structure of the pallavi are at cross roads. The reference is patent enough! The reckoning by the hand should, as a rule be in conformity to the rhythmical structure and make up of the pallavi.

In dance concerts also, we see generally standards going down. The programme is being diluted with items of light dance. We find hymns being substituted for the pada varna. The abolition of dance performances in temples has resulted in the virtual disappearance of art dance and sacred dance from temples. Formerly even the men in the street had an opportunity of witnessing these dances, but now he has no opportunity of witnessing them. It is too much to expect him to pay for dance concerts and attend them in sangita sabhas. We glibly talk of the privileges of the common man but we do not pause to think, that by our own acts we are removing certain privileges which he has been enjoying for centuries. Sacred dances like *Bhujanga lalita nrittam*, *Ganapati nrittam*, etc., have all become a thing of the past. With the loss of interest in temple rituals, we have already allowed to die the recital of

prescribed pans, talas, instruments and dances in the nava sandhis, just as the rendering of alapanas of rare ragas like Narayanagaula and the rendering of longer Kritis of classical composers have become a thing of the past; so also the witnessing of rare dances like Simhanatanam and dances depicting all the latent bhavas of classical padas have become a thing of the past. In the programme of Music Conferences, one searches in vain for concerts of instrumental music and particularly the Veena, our national instrument. This is a matter for serious regret.

GAINS

On the positive side, we find that the Kritis which attained perfection at the hands of the Musical Trinity attracted the attention of many composers of the post-Thyagaraja period. Kritis came to be composed in profusion. About half the time of a modern concert is taken up with the rendering of kritis and rightly so. Kritis with brilliant chitta svaras, svara sahityas, solkattu svaras and madhyamakala sahityas have been composed. Subbaraya Sastri and Mysore Sadasiva Rao have to their credit brilliant examples of svara sahityas. The svarakshara beauty continued to exercise the intelligent attention of many composers. Of the new ragas in which Kritis came to be composed in the post-Thyagaraja period, mention may be made of Kuthuhalam, Katana Kutuhalam, Panchamam, Mallikavasantam, Vijayanagari, Hamsagiri, Seshanada, Lokaranjani, and Hamsanarayani. In the first four ragas we have Kritis respectively by Manambuchavadi Venkatasubbayyar, Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer, Tachur Singaracharlu, and Pallavi Seshayyar. In the remaining five ragas, Tiruvottiur Thyagayyar has composed Kritis.

Many tana varnas, pada varnas, ragamalika varnas, (Navaragamalika varna, Dina ragamalika varna, Ghanaraga malika varna), ragamalikas and tillanas were composed during the post-Thyagaraja period. The monumental composition 72 Melaragamalika of Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer was composed in 1883. This composition stands as one of the world's longest musical compositions. To sing it completely once will take more than two hours. The same composer has composed a splendid tillana "Gaurinayaka" in Kanada raga, Simhanandana tala. This time measure is longest of the 108 talas and has 128 aksharakalas for an avarta.

Muvvahr Sabhapati Iyer, the brilliant composer of Telugu padas lived during the post-Thyagaraja period. In point of excellence his compositions may be said to be almost the equal of Kshetrappa's. This composer was popularly known as "Chinna Thyagaraja" (Minor Thyagaraja).

The "Javali" had its birth during this period. Dharmapuri Subbarayar, Pattabhiramayya and Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar have left behind them beautiful javalis in Telugu.

The post-Thyagaraja period also witnessed a number of Tamil composers. Gopalakrishna Bharathi (a junior contemporary of Thyagaraja), Kavikunjara Bharati, Ananta Bharati, Ramaswami Sivan, Nilakanta Sivan, Mazhavai Chidambara Bharati, Vaidisvarankovil Subbarama Iyer, Achuta Dasar, Vedanayakam Pillai and Ramalingaswamy are some of the prominent names. (The contemporary composers in Tamil are many and are not referred to in this short article.)

In the direction of dance forms we find many sabdas, kaustubhas and padavarnas

composed. The names of Cheyyur Chengalvaraya Sastri, Pallavi Seshayyar, Mysore Sadasiva Rao and Kundrakkudi Krishna Iyer deserve mention in this connection.

The art of *Kalakshepam* reached its high water-mark during this period. Tanjore Krishna Bhagavatar was the pioneer in this direction. Nirupanas (simple story songs useful for *Kalakshepam*) in attractive tunes were composed. Muvvalur Sabhapati Iyer and Sarabha Sastrigal have composed beautiful nirupanams in Telugu and Tamil respectively.

Duplicate sahityas for some famous Kritis and other compositions were composed. As examples may be mentioned

1. "Sri Valli senapate" by Subbarama Dikshitar for Thyagaraja's "Sripate" (Nagasvara vali raga).
2. "Pannagadrissa" for Swati Tirunals Ragamalika "Pannagendra Sayana".

In Telugu version "Pannagadrissa" we find that in each section the name of the raga is skilfully interwoven with the sahitya. Sahityas have been composed even for the chitta svaras. In the original Sanskrit version, the raga name is not found in the sahitya.

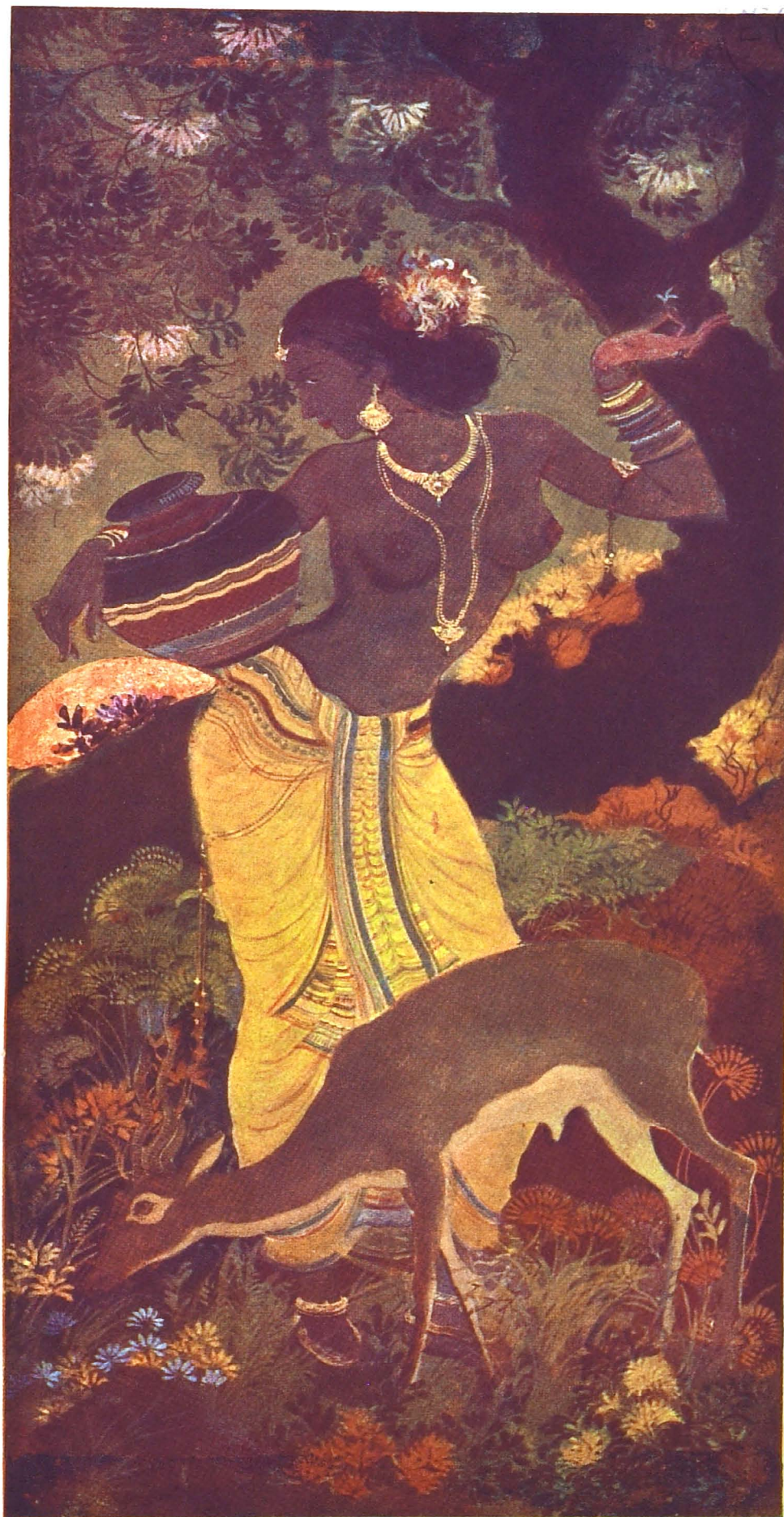
National songs were also composed in plenty during this period. The outstanding name in this direction is that of Subrahmanya Bharati.

In the sphere of instrumental music, there has been a tremendous development in the post-Thyagaraja period. Many specialised in replaying of Violin. Instruments like the Gotuvadyam, Balasarasvati (Mayuri and Taus), Svarabat, Sarinda, Ghatam, Dolak and Moursing were elevated to the status of

concert instruments. Orchestras playing classical music and popular music have sprung up. Instrumental forms like overtures, marches, and variations on a theme, in South Indian ragas have been composed. New instruments useful from the concert point of view or educational point of view like Balakokil, Subra Vina, Jaleetromonium and Grahabheda Pradarsini have been invented.

The art of printing that came in as a boon during the post-Thyagaraja period was fully availed of. Anthologies containing the texts of songs selected from different composers began to be published. Musical compositions in notation also came to be published. Tachur Singaracharlu was the pioneer in this direction. Ably assisted by his brother, Chinna Singaracharlu began the series of musical publications in Telugu in 1873. Mr. A. M. Chinnaswami Mudaliar, published his monumental work "Oriental Music in European notation" in 1892. This book made musicians of the west wake up to the beauties of Indian melodies. The Tamil opera Nandanar Charitram of Gopalakrishna Bharati was published on the 11th November 1861. The publication of rare musical compositions composed during the time of Thyagaraja and before him, made a large number of people alive to the beauties of our great musical heritage. Sanskrit works on musicology from Bharata's *Natya Sastra* (4th century B.C.) down to Govindacharya's *Sangraha Chudamani* (18th century) as also Tamil and Telugu works on musicology were published. Compositions like the *Sivashtapadi* and *Ramashtapadi* written after the manner of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*, and books on science and history of Music were also published.

Music conferences have been convened since the year 1912. The introduction of music in



"VASANTHIKA"

D. P. NARAYANA RAO

the educational curriculum has made the systematic study of music, possible in Universities. Research is being actively carried on in some places. Music journals containing scholarly articles are now being published. Agencies for the spread of musical knowledge have fast multiplied. The radio, the film, and the gramophone have made a larger number of people music-minded. They incidentally provide employment to a number of artists. The number of sangita sabhas have increased. The advent of microphone has enabled even feeble-voiced people reach large audiences. Demonstrations of music by large groups of students are now an annual feature in many places.

Dance concerts of the present day are more interesting to witness. Much progress has been made in the direction of dress, costume,

make-up, lighting, and stage presentation. The advantages of spot light, better instrumental and vocal accompaniment and the microphone were denied to the artists of the previous generation. Printed musical programmes in concerts of both music and dance have helped people to intelligently follow and appreciate the performances.

Off and on, contemporary composers of their own accord and not prompted by the stimulus of mundane profit or recognition carry on experiments in exploring fresh avenues of musical expression.

The institution of musical endowments, festivals in honour of great composers, and the springing up of a large number of music schools are other welcome features of the music of the post-Thyagaraja period.

CRAFT DESIGN

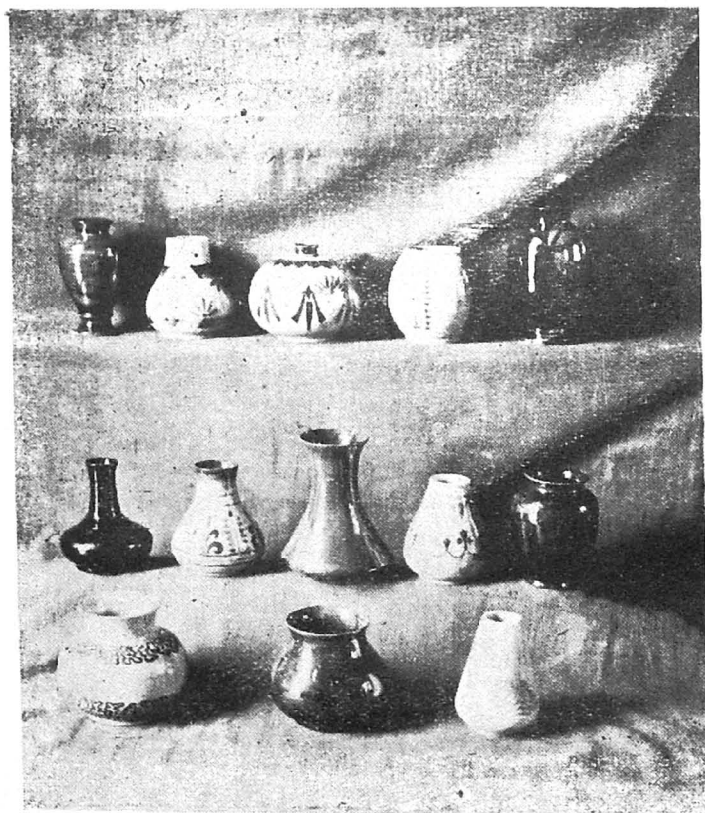
V. R. Chitra



Decorated and glazed pottery

The most powerful of all weapons for industrial revolution is *Design*. The most effective application for industrial expansion of a *Nation* is through design. That is why more and more of the present day industrialists are realising the importance of good design. Countries that are depending on their export trade are devoting good amount of their thought in bringing very effective methods into operation without loss of time. Recently after the second world-war a survey of British Industrial Design was taken up and a Council was formed under the presidentship of no less a man than the Rt. Hon. Sir Stafford Cripps,*

the President of the Board of Trade. The general object of this Council was "to promote by all practicable means the improvement of design in the products of British Industry." The first specific of its mandate involving direct negotiations with industry presents an example of the kind of semi-official development work, which should prove of inestimable value to their national life. The project of setting up *Design Centres*, on a co-operative basis, supported by contributions from firms in each industry with the help of grant, from the exchequer has a historic precedent.



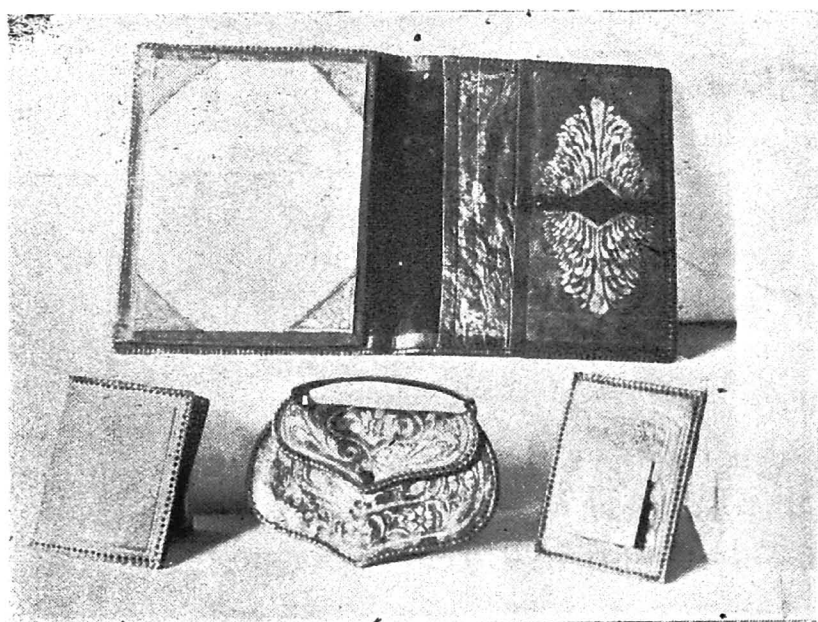
Decorated semi-porcelain flower vases

Why should we not tackle this problem on similar lines to institute, if not an all India Council, atleast a Provincial Council? We are changing rapidly and we must see our Industrial Designers come up to the modern standard as the public have already changed their outlook towards advancement.

If you compare the present day ornaments and clothing of the average middle-class women not only in the cities but in ordinary towns as well, with those of a decade ago, we can easily notice that a great advance has been made in industrial design of our textiles, ornaments and foot-wear as well as in the

*Now the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

average level of house-keeping. That is why more and more of our industrialists are realising the importance of good design. They know now that it gives them a new power to expand their markets. Purchasers are becoming more discriminating especially in textiles both hand-loom and mill-made, and want to buy those which are new and attractive. So, the hand-loom weaver has now to change his pattern and design more often than what he was doing a decade ago. Here comes the difficulty. The weaver is not a designer nor can he afford to pay an artist to give him some designs, whereas the Mill-owner can employ artist designer and change his patterns and designs quite often; so the hand-loom weaver has no other means but to copy the mill products with a greater disadvantage than benefit. The same difficulty applies to all small scale industrialists and handicraftsmen and hence the State alone should come to their rescue for a well-planned and comprehensive scheme of training. And like examinations for the industrial and other technicians, examinations for the designers are also essential to assess their competitive designing capacity.



Decorated and hand tooled ladies bags, etc.



Decorated and hand tooled leather boxes

Good design needs more than the avoidance of fallacies, a creative instinct with a sound knowledge of the characteristics of the material he applies for his industry as well as the cultural background of the people for whom it is designed. In the days of Krishnadeva Raya and Akbar, a Craftsman Designer working against the back-ground of cultured, aristocrat society could evolve an individual style and had his market to accept it. There is indeed no substitute for the leadership of the creative individual, in our own or any age. In those days the craftsman designer worked for a single and relatively homogeneous group or caste—a relatively small number of *Rajahs*, *Nabobs* and gentlemen who had the money to patronise and buy. But to-day, the manufacturer of arcraft or a machine product and its designer are confronted by the rich variety of our tradition and varied tastes of different provinces. Never was demand more widely effective than in a society like ours to-day—never did so many different social and economic groups constitute a market for the designer and his products.

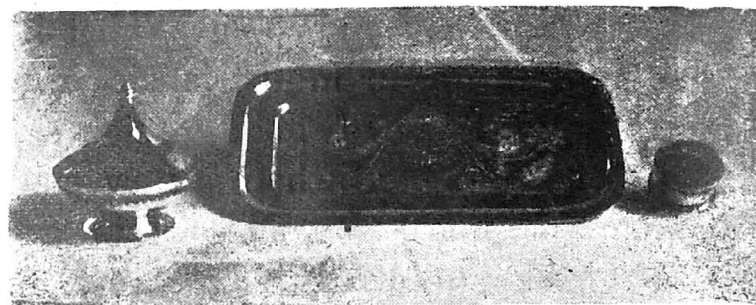
It is true that a complex, highly mechanised industrial system sets the designer a more complicated problem, and itself has more complexities to face in training, placing and

using him rightly, than in former days when the social pattern was simpler. The designer to-day may act less as an independent individual but he is as indispensable as ever.

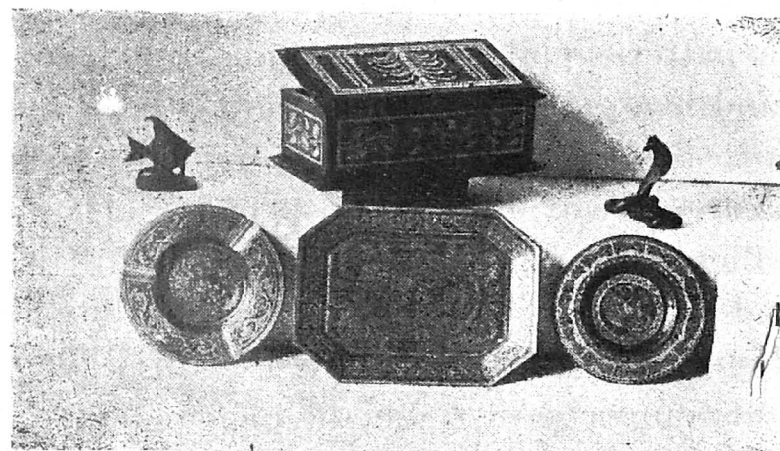
Designing for handicrafts is a very highly technical and intricate branch of fine art. The designer should have the faculty to imagine before passing it on to the artisan for execution as to how it would look after it was finished and how it would be appropriate when put in its proper place for use. He should also, in the very outset, realise all technical difficulties that would crop up while working the design and help to solve the difficulties of the craftsman by giving him necessary drawings of joinery, etc.

To make a successful designer in any handicraft or industry it is very essential to know the complete process of its manufacture; otherwise the design would be weak, ill-balanced and curious to look at.

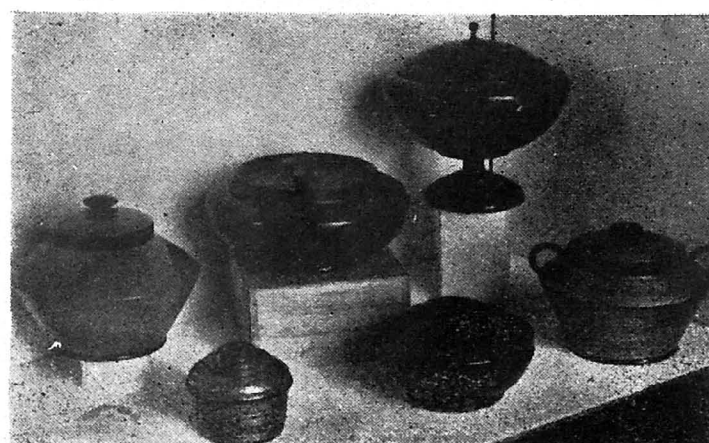
A furniture designer should have a good knowledge in joinery, strength of various timbers and their characteristics, nature and purpose of its construction and various methods of timber polishing and finishing. Similarly a designer of metal work, jewellery, etc., should know the characteristics of various metals and solders used for soldering them and possess a sound knowledge in their manufacturing processes. A designer who is good at least in one particular craft would be able to pick up the manufacturing process of any other craft even by observing a different craftsman at work, and that is how many designers have picked up the process of manufacturing most of the handicrafts for which they designed. Any craftsman would be delighted to execute an intricate or difficult



Copper and enamelled articles



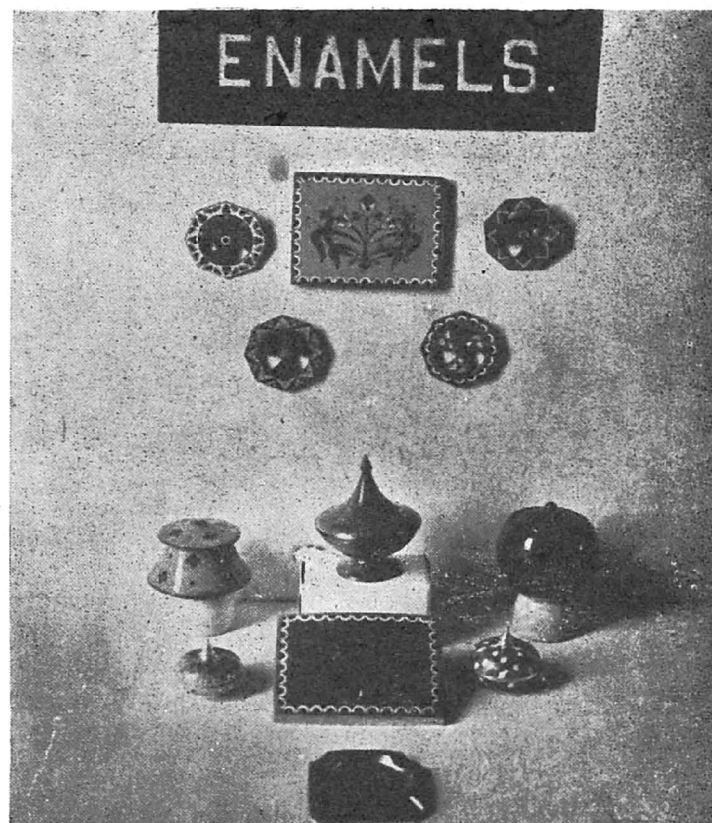
Bidri-ware for daily use



Turned-wood and lacquered barinas

design drawn by a person who is also conversant with the work. In recent times a few artists have produced standard designs for furniture, for leather work, for textile printing, etc., by producing designs which are beautiful only on drawing paper but full of technical defects. In such cases the craftsman-artisan will have very poor opinion about the designer and will not have confidence in the work.

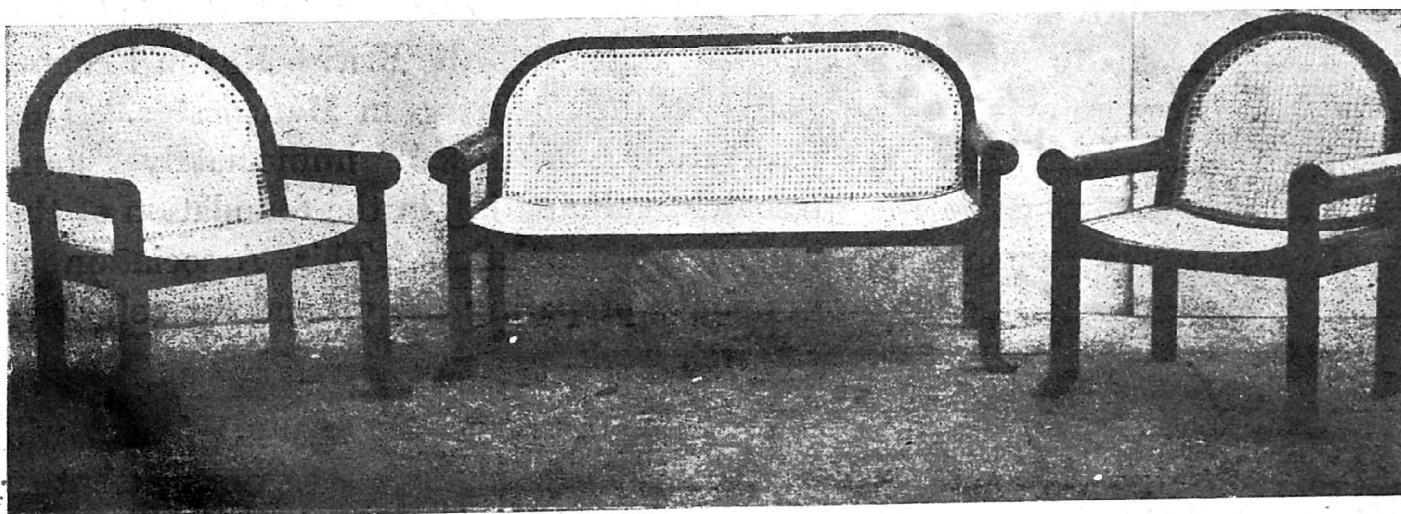
Furniture designing was a new feature in Madras till recently. There was no definite style and the public were entirely depending on a few European firms dealing in cabinet making and there was no such thing as local taste; whatever the *Dorais* used in their bungalows were copied out by the elite of Madras. Mr. W. S. Hadaway, a fairly good cabinet maker—in his capacity as the Superintendent of local School of Arts and Crafts converted the school into a cabinet workshop to cater to the European officers. He copied all old styles of European furniture and till about 1934 there used to be a great demand for second-hand furniture of some retired officer, and thus auctioneers of Madras were busy selling those pieces of furniture under the name of Wedgewood, Chippendale, Jacobean, etc. It was a great task to create public taste and make the citizens of Madras realise that



Silver and enamelled trinkets

even in furniture and interior decoration there should be originality and individuality.

Though it was an uphill task, the School of Arts and Crafts, Madras, did some service in introducing a new taste in this direction and all the specimens illustrated in this article were all designed by the author while he was Superintendent of Crafts, in the School of Arts and Crafts and were all executed by the students and staff of the school.



A Verandah suite.

RAYON: "THE MAN MADE SILK"

Paul West

*A*mong various synthetic products that have revolutionized certain age old industries Rayon takes the first place. Collective research has enabled the scientist to emulate the silk-worm and produce a fine thread out of raw cellulose from the same source. Here is a very interesting article on Rayon and how Britain has progressed in this industry between the two World Wars.

We shall be publishing, articles on some of these synthetic products; as they are expected to play, in future a very important part in the industrial progress of a nation.

"Editors"

The Chinese call rayon "man-made silk", thus emphasising the essential distinction between natural and artificial silk. Rayon is a product of the laboratory, through research. In the laboratories scientists make use of artificial means, endeavouring to produce results identical in principle with those produced by the silk-worm without the slightest sign of difficulty: the spinning of a fine thread out of raw cellulose, which the little creature extracts from plants.

It is not so easy for men; they have to fell trees and put the wood through a long and complicated chemical process until the microscopic spinnerettes obtained finally yield an almost invisible thread. Few women think of the vast amount of intellectual investigation involved in the research which lies behind the stockings they wear, which is a "combined operation" in the best sense of the word.

FIRST RESEARCH CENTRE

It may be said that Rayon research on a collective basis started in Britain since world war II. It is not that rayon research had previously been neglected in Britain; on

the contrary, great progress, had been made chiefly in the laboratories of a few individual firms. Other british textile industries had begun collective research only in the fields of woollen, cotton and linen fibre.

It was not until November 1946, that the rayon industry set up its research centre, the British Rayon Research Association. Traditionally, of course, industrial pioneering in Britain has always sprung mainly from individualism, and the rayon industry which was no exception to the tradition developed along individualistic lines between world wars I and II. It co-ordinated itself at last in 1943, and set up the British Rayon Federation, with headquarters in Manchester. This Federation organised immediately joint research, culminating in the foundation of the Research Association. This Association is now busy preparing the ground for collective research work.

All users of rayon, especially women, will admit that there is scope for improvement in rayon products. Rayon research workers, themselves, do not by any means claim to have

found a perfect substitute for natural silk, for they have not yet succeeded in coaxing the silk-worm to give up the secret of "laboratory", although, scientists are now able to produce rayon fibres, the properties of which surpass those of natural silk in many respects. The invention of *nylon* is the latest sensational example of the possibilities of rayon research.

NEW TYPE OF FIBRE

At present the british rayon industry in making experiments with various new types of fibre, which one day may lead to the manufacture of fabrics of unprecedented beauty, softness, durability and warmth. Research workers are trying to find new raw materials to make fibres from—for example, by making casein fibre out of milk and alginate rayon out of algae. It is also their constant aim to improve established rayon production processes, such as viscose, acetate and cuprammonium, particularly by combining these products with each other and with natural fibres such as wool and cotton.

The field of activity before rayon research thus appears to be very wide—indeed, almost limitless. The extension of markets is another objective. Formerly the clothing industry used to be the chief party interested in fibre research development; but a growing market has been discovered in the furniture industry, and now rayon research has stimulated an interest in fibre developments additionally on the part of other industries also.

Another problem awaiting an ideal solution is that of construction of special looms to weave rayon yarn. The object is to emancipate rayon production from the machine processes used for natural silk; an object which british research successes have attained already to a large extent in the field of dyeing,

where special dye-stuffs and machines are now used for acetate silk. This development has spread also to fabric printing, where special dyes, machines and processes also have been introduced. However british research workers are not resting on their laurels, but are constantly seeking further improvements in dyeing and printing processes.

FIVE FOLD INCREASE

This progress has benefited the overseas market considerably since the end of world war II. The value of british rayon exports is now some five times greater than before world war II. For the first seven months of 1947, it totalled £16,400,000, as against £3,200,000 for the corresponding period of 1938. British production of rayon yarns and staple fibres during July of this year amounted to 18,200,000 lbs., as against a monthly average of 14,510,000 lbs. for 1939. The July figures also show that the rayon industry has made a healthy recovery from the reverse it suffered after the coal crisis in February 1947 (production 12,800,000 lbs.).

It is noteworthy that this extension of british rayon production has been attained in spite of the fact that 10,000 fewer workers are employed in it than before world war II. In mid-1939 the silk and rayon industries employed a total of 72,200 workers; the present figure is only 62,000. In other words, modernisation has raised the british rayon industry's production above its pre-war level.

The major british rayon concerns have put forward ambitious modernisation plans. This emphasises to a remarkable degree the urgency and responsibility of rayon research work. The foundation of the British Rayon Research Association shows that the industry is setting about its task in the right way.

EXHIBITIONS

MUSEUMS AND EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions to educate the public, and as a means for the improvement of trade and commerce have come to stay. In recent times, there have been many exhibitions. But they have perhaps not risen to the extent, one would wish, in fulfilling the real objects for which exhibitions are intended, inspite of the fact that none of these lacked in the collection of products of all kinds of manufacture.

An extract from the proceedings of the Government of India in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, dated as early as March 1883 is reprinted. It gives a very clear idea of the very many points that may be usefully adopted even in modern times. Many of the suggestions contained in it can even now be put to practical advantage.

“Editors”

[No. 239 Ex :—Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India in the Department of Revenue & Agriculture, dated 14th March 1883].

Collections for International and Provincial Exhibitions have, for many years, been the subject of numerous requisitions to Provincial and Local authorities. After having been made, often with much difficulty, expense, and trouble, and consigned to the promoters of the Exhibition for which they were required, they have at its close been sold, given away, or otherwise disposed of. On each new occasion collections have been renewed.

2. In order to avoid, as far as possible, the constant repetition of demands which are known to give much troublesome work to all those officials who are concerned in fulfilling them, the Government of India is desirous of obtaining the co-operation of Local Governments and administrations in establishing, with the aid of the Agricultural Departments and Museum authorities, some system under which collections of Indian exhibits can be formed when required for Exhibitions at the expense of the least time and trouble, and in the most economical manner.

3. Beyond the executive object suggested in the above paragraphs, the Government of India is anxious that collections of exhibits should be made to fulfil more thoroughly than hitherto the important purposes for which they were made. These may be arranged under the following heads :—

- (a) The promotion of trade in the commercial PRODUCTS of India, either in India itself or in Foreign countries.
- (b) The improvement of ordinary manufactures.
- (c) The promotion of trade in art manufactures.

4. For the fulfilment of the first object it seems in the first place desirable that a permanent sample collection of the commercial products of each Province should be formed and continuously maintained at some place within the Province.

5. In the second place, that one or more complete sample collections of the commercial products of all Provinces should be formed at the Presidency towns

which form the principal trading ports in India. In this arrangement the Government of India has reason to anticipate the concurrence of the Governments of Madras and Bombay. A collection is now being formed for the Amsterdam Exhibition, which will be returned to Calcutta and, with such additions as may be contributed in connection with the Calcutta Exhibition, will be permanently retained at the Museum in that City.

6. In the third place, a full description of the uses to which each product can be put must be supplied. It has been for want of such a description that many exhibitions have failed to be of any material service to the promotion of Indian trade. The Agricultural Department of each Province can in this matter be of much service, by maintaining such continued enquiry and investigation as will succeed in providing the full information that is required with regard to each product. Measures are therefore now being taken in connection with the Amsterdam and Calcutta Exhibitions, to prepare in this office a descriptive dictionary of Indian Commercial products, which will, when ready, be circulated for amplification and completion by the Agricultural Department of each Province.

7. It is necessary that some means should be taken at each Exhibition of ascertaining the best way in which Indian products can be pushed into further notice in the commercial world. The success which attended the efforts made in this direction at the Melbourne Exhibition is a sufficient proof of the value of such action. In the case of countries more advanced than India, such enquiries and investigations are needed at Exhibitions are usually effected by private exhibitors who are interested in the promotion of a particular branch of commerce or trade; but for India even private exhibits are seldom accompanied by private exhibitors, and the duty of bringing a knowledge of the value of Indian products or manufactures before the commercial public initially devolves upon Government Officials. The best method of effecting the object under consideration must, however, be separately considered in accordance with the varying circumstances of each Exhibition.

8. Turning now to Indian Manufactures, it is desirable to divide them into two classes, *viz.*, ordinary manufactures and art-manufactures.

Improvements in ordinary manufactures will, as a rule, be effected by commercial enterprise without

official aid or encouragement. But at the time of an Exhibition some assistance can be given by collecting samples of foreign manufactures, by providing information as to the method employed in manufacturing them, and by subsequently conveying such information to the native manufacturers of this country. This last duty, so far as Exhibitions in India are concerned, is essentially the duty of an Agricultural Department.

9. For the promotion of trade in ordinary manufacture in connection with Exhibitions, it is necessary to adopt the same measures as are suggested with reference to products *viz.* (1) to maintain at each Provincial Museum a sample collection of Provincial manufactures; (2) to maintain a sample collection of ALL manufactures in India at each Presidency Town; (3) to draw up and publish in this office a descriptive account of each manufacture in explanation of the sample collection; (4) to make enquiries at each Exhibition as to the best method of promoting trade in each manufacture.

10. Under the last head it may be noticed that enquiries should be carried further than in the case of products. In the case of manufactures it is necessary to ascertain what sizes, shape, substance, method of packing & etc., are best suited to markets abroad, or in other parts of India. An example of the results of this class of enquiry may be given in the circumstance that manufactures of India, heretofore refused in Australia, have, in consequence of the alteration of the width of certain looms, or the construction of certain packing-boxes, now been accepted. Continuous enquiry of this character can, it is thought, be maintained by the Agricultural Departments, so long as there is reason to believe that commercial investigations have not covered the whole ground. It is also recommended that a special enquiry into these matters should be made the duty of some official or officials at the time of an Exhibition, whether held under the executive control of the Government of India or of the Local Government.

In dealing with art manufactures measures will have to be taken of a still more extended character. The objects in this case include (1) the encouragement of good design and workmanship, (2) the prevention of degradation, (3) the extension of the market abroad.

11. These questions have, during the past years, received the earnest consideration of the Government of India in consultation with various authorities,

official and non-official whose opinion in this matter has been considered valuable. The proposal which, so far, finds most favour is that the promotion of India art-manufacture should receive is strongest and primary encouragement from local exertion and patronage. It is found that almost every Indian manufacture is confined to a single locality or small area. It is suggested therefore that at each place of art-manufacture a local Museum or collection should be established under the management of such local officials or native gentlemen as are willing to form themselves into a committee for that purpose, and whose duty it would be to make such arrangements as they might consider suitable for the promotion of the local art namely, by establishing industrial schools, giving prizes for good work, distributing patterns or models & etc. This system has, it is understood, already been partially introduced in the Bengal Presidency by the establishment of local committees in connection with the Economic Museum at Calcutta.

12. The Government of India hopes that by the organisation of local committees the sympathies of native gentlemen of position may be enlisted, and their interest excited on behalf of an art which is now sometimes too hastily neglected in favour of European importations. The importance of this co-operation can scarcely be exaggerated. The renaissance of Indian art ought to be attendant on the progress and prosperity of the country, and no such renaissance can be vital or permanent unless it enlists the sympathy of the people themselves. There can, however, be no reasonable doubt that the upper classes of the native community would gladly follow the example of the Government and cherish all that is best in indigenous art.

13. The organisation and maintenance of the system should be made one of the duties of the Agricultural Department of the Province, the officer of which will be able to arrange in personal communication with district officers, the requisite arrangements for the establishment of Local Committees, and for their communication with any Central Committee that may be formed under the scheme proposed in the ensuing paragraphs.

14. A Provincial Committee, at the same time, would, in each Province, be formed in connection with the Provincial School of Art, if there be one, and the

Provincial Museum, whose object it would be to secure the best samples of art-manufactures from each Local Committee, and to provide the Local Committees with such advice or information as they may be able to give in connection with the art manufacture concerned in each case. The officer in charge of the Department of Agriculture would be *Ex-officio* President of the Committee, and the Principal of the School of Art its Secretary.

15. In order to effect the above object it seems desirable that Provincial Committees should take considerable pains to obtain or select the best samples produced at each place of manufacture. Such samples would be classified as 'approved samples', and would be registered in a list *Under a Recognised Serial Number* in the local collection. Duplicates of 'approved samples' and bearing the same numbers would be ordered for and kept in the Provincial Museum.

16. The Presidency Committee will then select from the Provincial lists of 'approved samples' such specimens as it desires to deposit in the Presidency Museum. It is thought that the occurrence of an Exhibition will provide an useful occasion for making new additions to the collections, as an opportunity will then be afforded of bringing together officers from each Presidency and Province who are specially interested in, and officially connected with, the formation of collections. Every sample brought into the Presidency collection must bear the same number as the corresponding sample in the Provincial collection.

17. The next step is to obtain the co-operation of foreign museums. It is chiefly at this point at which the assistance of the Imperial Government may at present be of service. It has already been ascertained that, the authorities of several continental museums are desirous of co-operating in some arrangement of the kind, and will subscribe largely to obtain duplicates of "approved samples" selected by the Presidency Committees. Collections will thus, it is hoped, be formed at the principal museums in Europe of specimens of Indian art-manufacture bearing the same recognised numbers as those deposited in the Indian Museums, whether Local or Provincial.

A link will thus be formed between the place of manufacture and the foreign markets.

18. In order to facilitate communication with foreign countries, as well as to excite investigation and increase knowledge of the subject in this country itself, it is intended to publish an Annual Journal, to which contribution from each Provincial Committee will be invited. The journal will contain information regarding each art and manufacture in India, as well as descriptive lists of the sample exhibits at the Central Museums. It will also invite suggestions as to the manner in which Indian art may be made most serviceable for European requirements. Many persons in Great Britain and Europe are much interested in the extension of Indian art in this direction, and are in a position to give valuable advice on the subject. Moreover, many Oriental forms and designs are believed to be in the possession of foreign collectors which can probably be obtained for utilisation as models, etc., in this country.

19. It will be understood, as already explained, that the collections at the Presidency towns, as well as in Europe, will consist of duplicate of approved samples in the Provincial and Local Museums. It is not necessary and will probably not be desirable, that the Presidency and European collections should contain duplicate of ALL the samples in the Provincial Museum, or, again, that the Provincial Museum should contain duplicates of ALL the samples in the local collection. But it is proposed that whatever sample, model or photograph is sent to a Presidency or European Museum, should have its duplicate in the Provincial and Local Museums under a recognised number. It is only in this way that a certain means of communicating a demand from abroad can be maintained.

20. It will be seen from the foregoing remarks that Museums will be called upon to fulfil a new function,—that of trade museums, or, to put it in the simplest form, sample-rooms, where the best examples of Indian craftsmanship can be seen. At present many of the crafts of India owing to the want of any recognised system of communication or advertisement, are left in comparative obscurity. The scheme of native industrial trade affords little opportunity to the tourist or the visitor of learning the speciality of a town or district, and it not unfrequently happens that officials themselves reside for years in a district without suspecting the existence of most interesting art-manufactures. The utilisation of Museums now proposed would not only

prevent this state of things, by giving due publicity to local manufactures, but it would also serve the valuable end of preserving a series of examples which would be a register of progress and improvement, as well as a *Repertorie* of traditional forms and designs.

21. A further object in view is the permanent check to degradation of design and workmanship which will be afforded by the persistent exclusion of debased samples from the museum collections. That a temporary and fashionable rush for any class of Indian art-wares leads to its rapid degradation, inducing speculators to employ inferior workmen and undersell the better craftsmen and to an eventual cessation of demand on account of its degradation, are well-known facts. The plan now proposed tends to maintain demand and hinder decline by preserving a good standard and preventing an undue lowering of price.

22. The Government of India proposes that, as in the case of products, advantage should be taken of the Calcutta Exhibition to bring a first comprehensive collection of approved samples of Indian art-manufactures, which will form the basis of the Presidency collection of duplicates in the Bengal Presidency. The opportunity will be then afforded of consulting both officials and non-officials who may be interested in the subject, and who may be present in Calcutta, as to the best course which can be taken for the purpose of carrying into effect the objects proposed in this resolution. A special Committee will be formed for this purpose. The Government of India will, therefore, be glad if the Local Government can allow some officials to be present, who may represent its views on this occasion. It is proposed that meetings should be held in Calcutta for this purpose towards the end of December. It will be very advantageous that each Province should be represented, by one or two officials competent to give good advice and to offer co-operation in these matters.

* * *

AN EXHIBITION OF SERIGRAPH OR SILK
SCREEN PRINTS GIVEN BY THE MADRAS
GOVERNMENT MUSEUM AND THE UNITED
STATES INFORMATION SERVICE; HELD AT
MADRAS BETWEEN NOVEMBER 23rd &
DECEMBER 7th 1947.

Under the auspices of the Madras Government Museum in co-operation with the United States Information



Across the Fields

Service, the above exhibition was held at the New block of the Madras Museum in Pantheon Road, Egmore, Madras. This was declared open by Mr. D. P. Roy Chowdhury of the Government School of Arts and Crafts, and Mrs. Mona Hensman presided on the occasion. The exhibits consisted of fifty prints executed by about nineteen American artists by a special process—Serigraph. It was the first occasion when the public of Madras had the opportunity to see such prints, processed by this new method.

The Serigraph or Silk-Screen print had been popular in America for the past one decade or more and has considerably developed as a creative medium and its exponents have succeeded in improving the quality of this new type of graphic art.

The Process of Serigraph is officially stated as follows :—

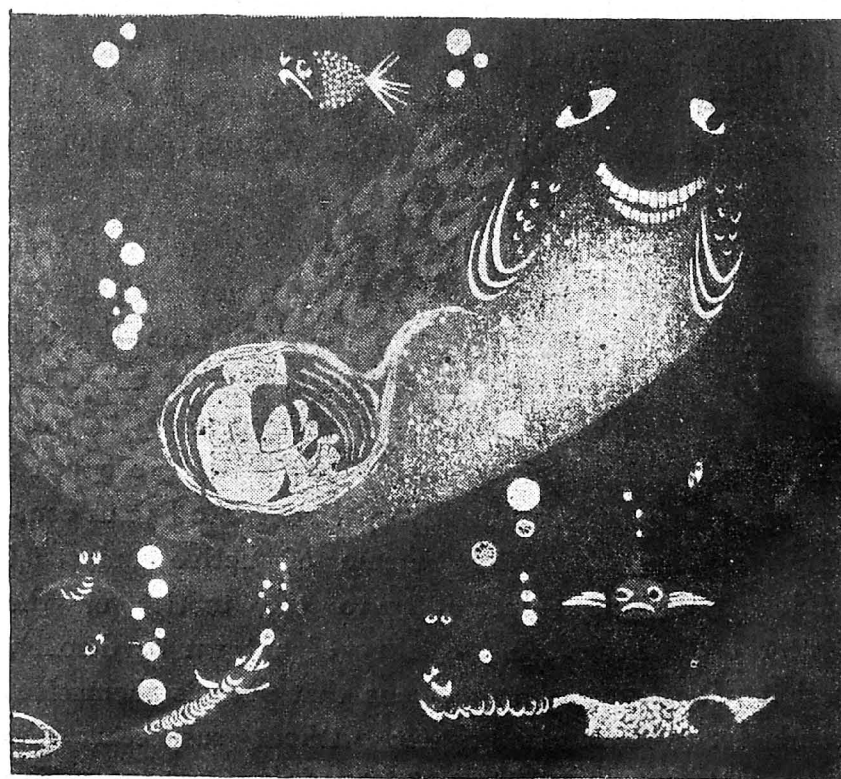
“The SERIGRAPH is made by what is essentially a stencil process. Although there are several variations, the most common method is to draw the design on a piece of “silk” with a material called “tusche” (i.e. lithographic ink). The “silk” is then stretched on a frame hinged to a piece of board. The whole piece of “silk” is then covered with a water soluble glue which does not stick to the tusche. The material is then wiped with benzine, which does not affect the glue but washes away the tusche, leaving the design in stencil form. The “silk” is then covered with a special paint of the desired color which is worked through the fine

mesh with a rubber instrument called a “squeegee” to a paper which has been placed beneath the frame. After the required number of prints have been made, the glue is dissolved in water and another stencil for a new color is prepared in the same manner. This process can be repeated indefinitely, although the usual number of colors rarely exceeds ten.

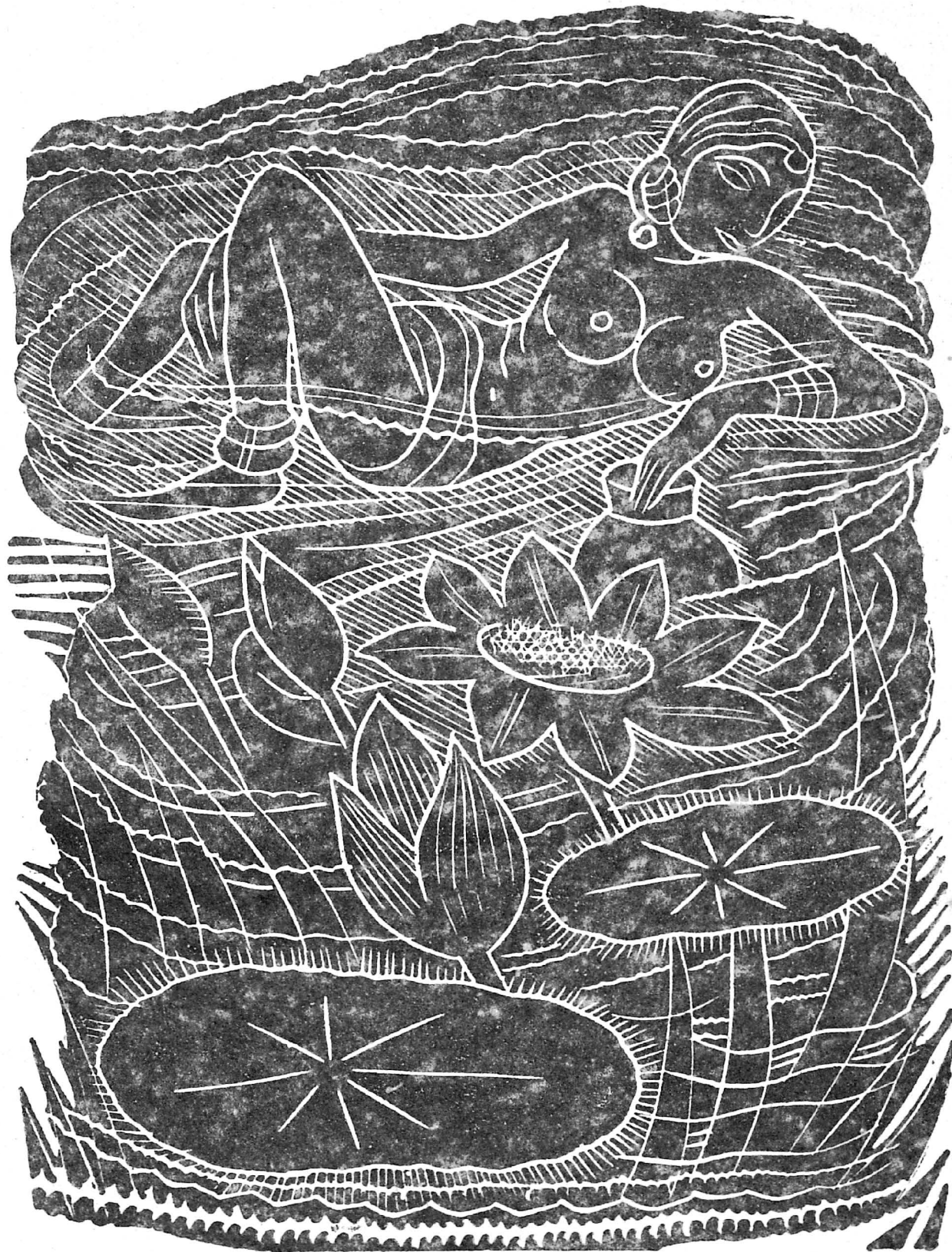
Many of the most successful SERIGRAPHS are composed in large areas of flat color—much as a coloured wood-block is designed. Interest can be heightened by variations in texture achieved by using different types of “silk” or thickness of paint.”

The artists, whose works are represented, are from the various parts of the U.S.A. and Mexico; among whom are Mary Van Blarcom, a member of the Board of Trustees of the National Serigraph Society, New York, Edward Landon, the editor of the “Serigraph Quarterly” and Marion Cunningham, whose pictures adorn the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the City Art museum of St. Louis and other famous art galleries in the U.S.A. and many others.

As Mr. D. P. Roy Chowdhury has mentioned in his address the underlying process is identical with that of a print produced by etching on a copper plate or a wood-cut. In both these types of graphic art, our country had produced very fine specimens. But Serigraph



Jonat and Whale



‘LOTUS POND’

(Lino-Cut)

L. M. Sen, A.R.C.A.

process of printing offers yet another field in artistic development, and to our budding artists, who are attempting to resuscitate the ancient Indian art of line this new process promises a good future. The delicate shades that can be brought out of this process is essentially Indian in outlook and is sure to enthuse our younger generation of artists. Further, the prints made by this process bears a close resemblance to Japanese colour-prints, though it lacks the subtlety of the latter. However, the scope and the unlimited compass of our art are sure to lure very many of our artists to the Serigraph process of creating newer pieces of art.

To illustrate the results of this new process, a few of the exhibits are reproduced in this issue. Though much of their color scheme is lost in the halftone reproductions, yet it is possible to form an idea of these prints. In the

piece entitled "Jonat and the Whale" by Chet La More, the rich crimson tone is brilliant and very attractive. Doris Meltzer's "Blue Carribean" just resembles a fine Japanese colour-print, with soft color scheme and pleasing gradation. "Leave Taking" by Marion Cunningham is yet another picture with a color scheme which, though a striking contrast, blends exceedingly well. Especially the right effect with the full moon and the rising rocket (perhaps to the moon) is well brought out. Robert Gwathmey had drawn a fine picture of the negroes returning home after a day's hard labour at the fields in the picture entitled "Across the Fields".

The exhibition though a small one, is educative and is sure to induce very many of the artists of our place to take to Serigraph process—a novelty which is sure to find proper appreciation and patronage here and abroad.

BOOK REVIEWS

BRITISH NEWSPAPERS & THEIR CONTROLLERS

By Viscount Cramrose. Published by Cassell and Company, Ltd., London. Price 8sh. 6d. net.

We hear so much to-day about the tendency to monopolistic chains in newspapers and the menace it is proving to independent, honest journalism and free expression of opinion. The evil is not confined to Britain and the United States, but is fast spreading to other countries also. Many deplore its prevalence and spread, particularly the journalists, who are the actual workers in the promotion of newspapers. Whether this tendency will ensure that newspapers remain the organs of public opinion and the presentors of accurate and impartial news on matters of national and international importance or not and whether it will lead to a regimentation of public opinion in a subtler way than even the strictest official censorship can and reduce newspapers into purely commercial concerns, are questions on which much is being said by controversialists on both sides now. So menacing is this development of monopolistic trends stated to have become to the existence of an independent and free press, which is the bulwark of a free democracy, and to the impartial presentation of news, that recently a Royal Commission has been appointed by the British Government "with the object of furthering the free expression of opinion through the press and the greatest possible accuracy in the presentation of news, to enquire into the control, management and ownership of the newspaper and periodical press and news agencies including the financial structure and the monopolistic tendencies in control, and to make recommendations thereon". A Committee—not a Government sponsored one, but set up jointly by some magazines like *FORTUNE* and *TIME* on the one hand and the University of Chicago, who are owners of the *ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA* on the other—was

appointed in the United States previously to enquire into the condition of the press in that country, and its recommendations, which are mostly in the form of opinions and judgments, served to influence and add grist to the demand adumbrated for the enquiry into the British press also, culminating in the appointment of the Royal Commission referred to. The demand in England emanated mostly from Labour quarters and it does not appear that the Conservative Party is as keen on the enquiry as Labour.

A FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE

Naturally an issue so fundamental as that of monopolistic tendencies in newspaper management and their repercussions on the freedom of the press is a disputatious proposition capable of stimulating strong reactions among advocates of rival view-points. The criterion indicative of monopoly is the purchase or establishment of a number of newspapers and journals by one or two individuals, who utilise their proprietorial position to influence the character of the news published in their columns, the mode of their presentation and the editorial opinions expressed therein. The proof of the pudding is in its eating and in so far as there is active proprietorial interference in the editing and presentation of news, it must be considered a dangerous characteristic, which ultimately would lead to a situation in which the newspaper or newspapers concerned would cease to be reflectors of public opinion but become the mouthpieces of capitalistic monopolists in the industry of manufacturing opinion and of profit-grabbing proprietors resorting to dubious and questionable methods to bolster up circulations. On the other hand, there is the other view-point that it represents an indispensable development in the direction of strengthening the financial foundations of newspapers and imparting to them the essential life-breath in the shape

of ample financial backing and sound business management, and, therefore, cannot be stigmatised as something inherently vicious. It may be agreed that much depends on the manner in which newspaper proprietors utilise their opportunities as controllers of organs of news and public opinion. Do they misuse and abuse those opportunities and transform themselves into the menaces they are depicted to be to the free expression of opinion and independent and impartial presentation of news, or do they utilise them to set tottering papers soundly on their legs and increase their field and scope of usefulness and service as the media for presenting news and views in an impartial manner, and without interfering with free expression of editorial points of view on national and international problems?

THE BRITISH PRESS

In the book under review, "British Newspapers and their Controllers", the author, Viscount Cramrose, himself a prominent figure in the newspaper circles in Great Britain, as part-proprietor with Lord Kemsley of the Allied Newspapers, discusses the questions posed above. He furnishes full accounts of the ownership and control of every morning, evening and Sunday newspaper in Britain. To that extent, though not to that extent only, the book renders a valuable and important service and permits an impartial reader to arrive at a dispassionate judgment on the basis of indisputable facts. The brief history of the starting, development and present state of affairs of the various national newspapers like the TIMES, THE NEWS CHRONICLE, THE DAILY MAIL, THE DAILY GRAPHIC, THE DAILY HERALD, THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, and others, and the vicissitudes of ownership and management through which some of them passed in their career, facilitates the drawing of some conclusions on the main subject of controversy—viz., the evolution of the monopolistic tendencies and the repercussions of the establishment of newspaper "chains".

So far as Lord Cramrose is concerned, his examination of the problem has made him arrive at the conclusion, "based on nearly fifty years of life in Fleet Street", that "so far as actual ownership, combination and control are concerned, I have investigated exhaustively and found none of the mystery or indirect ownership so widely alleged by those who agitate for a (Royal) Commission. And I would add that the information

was all on the surface and required no digging or Sherlock Holmes procedure."

Lord Cramrose evidently does not believe that there is any justification for the suggestion that the growth of newspaper chains has attained such proportions in the United Kingdom as to prove an incalculable and manifest menace to the independence of the newspapers or to the impartial and accurate presentation of news. Lord Northcliffe and Lord Beaverbrooke had certainly entered into some business deals in the newspaper line even as Lord Kemsley did, and have either started or acquired a number of papers and journals during their careers in Fleet Street. For example, Northcliffe at some time or other bought the TIMES, EVENING NEWS, and SUNDAY DISPATCH and acquired as Kingsley Martin, Editor of the NEWS STATESMAN, says in his recently published book, "The Press the Public Wants," some seventy newspapers ranging from the TIMES to HOME CHAT and COMIC CUTS. But so far as the three papers referred to above are concerned, "each of them was in a parlous state at the time he purchased them and each was changed into a successful newspaper by his professional ability and skill Whatever opinion one may have of his (Northcliffe's) conduct of that journal (THE TIMES), from a political point of view, it could not have continued to exist if he, or somebody like him, had not become its controller."

IS THERE NO MONOPOLY?

Lord Cramrose is thus more or less definite in his view that there is no monopoly in the newspaper industry in England, and, by implication, he seems to consider that such loss of independence as proprietorial interference with expression of opinion, wherever it has been exercised, has resulted in the price that newspapers have to pay for sound and efficient management and the risks, financial and otherwise, which proprietors are prepared to take in coming to the rescue of certain weak newspapers. Circulations, according to him, are built up not by the personalities of the editors or other journalists associated with the papers, not even by very great expenditure of money and huge investment of funds, but by knowledge and experience of newspaper management. The latter part of the statement is not altogether devoid of basis; but it is the over-estimation of the importance of "efficient" management that has been responsible more than anything else for the vice of commercialisation that besets newspapers

and journals in all countries and the accentuating subordination of editorial independence to managerial demands. It is undeniable that newspapers depend for their success on sound management, but it is equally undeniable that success in a number of cases is also attributable to the reputation a paper acquires for sound and independent opinions and impartial presentation of news by competent editors. Nor does Lord Cramrose concur with the complaint that the emergence of "newspapers chains" has served to squeeze out of existence independent newspapers by the exercise of "high pressure" methods. "I took a major part in the formation of the largest chain, then known as Allied Newspapers, which is now Kemsley newspapers," he says. "In the formation of the Allied Group and of the others, I know of no instance of a newspaper being squeezed out of publication." A characteristic of modern life is larger units in every sphere of life and it is only a reflection of this tendency that is found in the newspaper industry as well, and larger units mean economy in production, economy in management and capacity to withstand competition from rivals. The whole argument tends to indicate that the prevalent capitalistic economy should find its echo in the production and management of newspapers as well, that what is right with other things cannot be wrong in the case of newspapers.

FREE PRESS. LIFE BREATH OF DEMOCRACY IS RECONCILIATION POSSIBLE?

On the other hand it is an indisputable proposition that a free press, which automatically ensures free discussion, is the life-breath of democracy and that it should be as little handicapped in its functioning by restrictions, whether Governmental or proprietorial, and should not display an undue preference to commercialism. This is the thesis of Mr. Kingsley Martin's book, "The Press the Public Wants", which takes a view diametrically opposed to that of Lord Cramrose. This demand for an uncommercialised, unchained, free press is based on the argument, as Mr. Martin says, "that truth can only be discovered by open enquiry, that Governments abuse power unless they are subject to control by public opinion, and that intelligent public opinion can only be formed on the basis of honest information." The premises will have to be overwhelmingly granted; but the question is in how many cases of newspapers can this criterion of press freedom be reconciled with successful business management and how to divorce the interdependence

between the two? To get over this difficulty, Mr. Martin advocates public ownership of newspapers. "It is part of my thesis," he writes, "that journalism should be a profession and newspapers not commercial institutions, but public concerns." The one lacuna in this otherwise theoretically perfect argument is, what will be the nature of the public corporation that can be substituted for private management and how can newspapers, which represent clear-cut party view-points, function under an aegis of public ownership? If Mr. Kingsley Martin's idea is that instead of one individual a number of shareholders of a Joint Stock Company should control a paper or a number of papers, his proposition becomes intelligible to some extent. But then the question is if a corporation like this can be an effective guarantee against commercialisation, so long as the shareholders do not completely shed the profit motive. And even if a public company may manifestly own and manage a paper, the residuary control may still rest in one shareholder or a group of them, who hold the majority of the shares.

IS RECONCILIATION POSSIBLE?

I have strayed to some extent, from my subject matter, which is to present a review of Viscount Gramrose's book. It is difficult to assert after going through it, which, as I have already said, is extremely useful from the standpoint of the information it conveys about the newspaper structure of Britain, whether he has established his case that there is no monopolistic tendency and that there is nothing particularly dubious or questionable about the control of the various journals in the country, even after conceding that the proprietors have come into their proprietorship by open and honest methods and are contributing considerably to the successful and efficient functioning of the papers. The point at issue, however, is not how Lord Northcliffe, or Lord Rothermere or others acquired their proprietorship but what effect concentration of newspaper power in the hands of a few individuals has or will have on the working of these papers as reflectors or guides of public opinion. Honest and correct presentation of news and comments requires not only efficient managers but an efficient, qualified and honest body of journalists, trained for their jobs and well paid for their work, though it is also true that no newspaper which is just carrying on a precarious hand-to-mouth existence can afford to discharge this responsibility with any measure of success. Lord Gramrose

thinks that "the appointment of a Royal Commission with its present terms of reference is superfluous and unnecessary." "The grounds for the appointment of a Commission at all were more than flimsy" he writes, "resting mainly on suggestions of a nebulous character made in the heat of political debate and by the National Union of Journalists." Others will differ from him in his premises as well as his deductions and feel that there is an indubitable menace to the ideal of the freedom of the press in chains and commercialisation of papers, that has grown recently, is growing and must be checked. For, when all is said and done, it will be denying human nature if it is sought to be asserted that even the most altruistic and public-spirited newspaper proprietor will permit his paper to be utilised for the expression or propagation of views or news which he personally dislikes and that he will always place public interest above personal gain or profit. This inherent incongruity assumes a relatively larger shape when the number of newspapers a single proprietor controls becomes larger and develops into a chain. The problem is a difficult one, but it has to be tackled; and if the Royal Commission appointed by the British Government can devise a formula whereby press freedom essential for a democratic regime can be reconciled with freedom from proprietorial intrusions into the editorial sphere, which cannot be dissociated from the tendency of the same proprietor acquiring control over a number of papers, it will have rendered a great public service.

C. V. H. RAO.

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PAINTINGS BY SUDHIR R. KHASTGIR (portfolio of twelve reproductions) Sole Agent & Publisher—'Kitabistan', Allahabad. Price Rs. 5.

Readers of "SILPI" are quite familiar with the name of Sudhir R. Khastgir, as articles regarding and by this talented artist have appeared in the previous issues. Mr. Khastgir had his art training at Santiniketan under such able masters like Sjt. Nandalal Bose and is now the head of the Doon School of Arts, Dehra Dun. This gifted artist wields the brush as successfully as he wields the chisel—for he is both an artist and sculptor. These master-pieces are note-worthy on account of their originality, for his lines are bold with still bolder colour schemes. He is one of those rebels in modern Indian art, whose attempts in the newer techniques have proved quite successful. To a casual

observer, some of Khastgir's pictures may seem to lack 'prettiness' but on closer study, it is quite possible to feel the intensity and loftiness of vision, that his creations breathe.

In the portfolio now published, there are reproductions of eleven of his paintings, together with four line sketches. One of his earliest works—the 'Whet stone' is a piece very boldly drawn, depicting an old emaciated craftsman taking a look of his knife, which served him well in his earlier days. Equally symbolic are some of the other reproductions like "Grief" "Storm" "Midnight offering" and others. His water colour painting "Mother" is very suggestive in brilliant tones. The portrait of Sjt. Rabindranath Tagore in splashing colours reveal the capacity of Khastgir in giving an air of idealistic sentimentalism to his portrait studies. The last three plates, are fine pen and ink sketches and one charcoal sketch depicting the village maid. All these reveal the unique method of approach that Khastgir possesses in portraying even common subjects. The portfolio that Khastgir possesses portray even common subjects. The portfolio opens with an introduction by Mr. R. L. Mehta wherein he had discussed the unique technique of Mr. Khastgir.

To all those who are interested in the modern school of Indian Painting, we have no hesitation in recommending this finely got-up art portfolio of one of India's gifted artists. It is moderately priced and within reach of all lovers of art.

"Teeyennes".

* * * *

THE ART OF E. H. BREWSTER AND ACHASH! BREWSTER, By M. S. Randhawa, I.C.S., Kitabistan, Allahabad, Page 18. 17 plates. Price Rs. 2-4-0.

Earl H. Brewster and his wife Achash are two well-known artists who are "by birth Americans and world citizens by conviction." After exhibiting their paintings in England, France and Italy and winning international reputation they came to India and settled down at Kalimat, Almora, in the Kumaun Himalayas. Artists of admirable achievement, these great friends of India have painted many striking studies of the Himalayas, Sri Buddha, Sri Krishna and other Hindu themes, all of which are outstanding for their deep religious feeling and artistic excellence. Some of these deserve to be hailed as master-pieces both as expressions of the higher dynamism and skilled accomplishment, and as a vehicle of communication from the depths of feeling and heights of illumination.

In this attractively got-up and profusely illustrated brochure, Mr. Randhawa, who is a friend and admirer of the Brewsters, has given a succinct and sparkling account of their art which has found expression in their highly spiritual studies devoted to the wisdom and culture of India. A reliable and ably written introductory study which has the quality of highly entertaining narrative, Mr. Randhawa's book is a notable and valuable addition to the literature on art. An intimate and true interpretation of the art of the Brewsters, written in a lucid and forceful style, this work, which provides fascinating reading deserves to be studied by all those who value the higher and deeper things of life. Clarity of thought and expression, rare insight into, and understanding of the subject matter, are the paramount qualities of this work which presents something new, invigorating and inspiring, in biography, interpretation and art-criticism.

K. P. P. TAMPY.

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT (1946-47) of the Council of Industrial Design, Tilbury House, Petty France, London. S.W.1. Price sh. 1.

The first annual report of the Council of Industrial Design, London with some of its excellent brochures

was reviewed by us in June, 1947. The main purpose of the Council 'to promote by all practicable means the improvement of Design in products of British industry' is explained in greater detail in this report and it must be said to the credit of the council that within the short period from 1944 when it was first set up, it has contributed to a remarkable degree to the improvement of industrial design.

A full and comprehensive write up about the recently held 'British can make it' exhibition is a feature of this report. The splendid work that has been possible of accomplishment of Design in practical use in industries so soon after the recent world war is clearly seen in this. The many constructive suggestions for the means and methods of improving Marks, Symbols, and Stamps through the appointment of special expert committees is another feature of the report. The report also contains a complete list of all the pamphlets issued by the council. It may be said from this that the many ideas published through these reports can also be of practical importance to our country and the Departments of Industries and Commerce in the several provinces may well be profited.

"T.N.S."

NOTES ON PLATES

“AT THE WELL” *Patna School Tri-colour Frontispiece*

ARTIST UNKNOWN

Among the modern schools of Indian painting which followed the great school that flourished during the Mughal period from about 1760 A.D., the Rajput school is one of the important off-shoots. During the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, a peculiarly characteristic style of painting was practised in the United Provinces, which manifested some of the attractive qualities of the old school mixed unfortunately with certain inferior European influence. A few families of this school of painters settled down in Patna, where they developed a distinct style of painting which is described as “hard and unfeeling, yet of certain merit”. These painters received patronage from the early European merchants, who encouraged them to produce miniature pictures in a semi-European manner. “Many of them have survived and indicate a curiously composite style, illustrative of the state of the art in the early days of John Company”. This school became the *Patna Kalm* and flourished in Bihar and Bengal in the nineteenth century.

“At the Well” is one of the good specimens of this school of painting. The scene represents the village-women drawing water at the public well—a place which is considerably important in the rustic life—as a centre for gossip and mirth. In the picture, a woman is seen actually drawing water, while another is perhaps watering the small plants. Two other women, probably milk maids, are shown as leaving the spot—having evidently diluted the good curd with water before offering it for sale. This is apparent from the series of earthen pots they carry on their heads which is quite characteristic of milk maids.

As mentioned above, though the colour scheme is not very superb one can see the retention of very many of the finer qualities of the Mughal school of painting. The background is heavily coloured with the result that the foreground had to be still deeper in colour to give the depth that the picture needs; certain foreign influences like the strict adherence to anatomical features, can be easily seen, showing the tendency of this particular school to accede to the orders of their European patrons.

* * *

“MOTHER” *halftone*

By SUDHIR KHAISTGIR

“Mother” by Sudhir Khastgir is a very bold line drawing in the style of Kalighat *pat* painting. This particular style was practiced by rural artists in drawing some set-subjects of mythology, birds and animals, sitting under a tree in *melas* or festivals. Before paper was introduced these rural artists, were painting on earthen pots, wooden articles and bamboo baskets covered with some plaster. Till very recently, i.e. in the first quarter of this century these *pat* painting was done near Kali temple at Kalighat, Jaganathaswami temple at Bhuvaneswar and various other pilgrim centers during the festival time. For an anna or two were sold each of such drawings drawn on a double foolscap sheet of paper. The painter used his own colour and brush made by himself. In the renaissance movement there was a hunt for old things and Kalighat *pat* was one among several such renovation work, and there was a craze for these *pats* old and new. The very best work of this school of painters was in the collection of Abanindranath Tagore and next comes Ajit Gosh’s collection.

Of late *pat* style painting has become a fashion among some artists mostly in Calcutta and one or two of them

adopted this style in and out of place with or without any effect. The only artist who had absorbed all these styles and technique and could use any one of such styles singly or in good combination is Nandalal Bose. But luckily Nandalal never encouraged these fads among his students hence it is pleasing when any of his students produced works in any of these styles.

Sudhir Khastgir's "Mother" is a good drawing with full of life especially the mother's tender expression.

* * *

"VASANTHIKA"

Tri-colour

By D. P. NARAYANA RAO.

The theme of this painting entitled 'Vasanthika' is the personification of the divinity which represents the *Vasantha* or the spring season. This is a gay season succeeding the dreary cold winter and poets and artists from time immemorial have striven to portray this gay "Samhara" the great poet Kalidasa describes this season :—

"Now, dearest, lend a heedful ear
And listen while I sing
Delights to every maiden dear,
The charms of early spring
When the earth is dotted with the heaps
Of corn, when heron-scream
Is rare but sweet, when passion leaps
And paints a livelier dream."

This gay season is well portrayed in the painting with rich and variegated colours. The entire ground is covered with a multi-coloured array of flowers and leaves and the silhouetted tree is laden with new foliage and flowers, disseminating a golden hue against the rising

sun. The dainty personification of the season as a lovely maiden probably going to her morning bath with a pot nestled in her right arm and a sweet smelling flower in her other hand is quite appropriate. The bleakness of the foreground is relieved by a nicely drawn fawn grazing merrily on the newly grown grass. The composition of the picture is quite harmonious and pleasing it appropriately signifies the grandeur of the spring season.

The artist D. P. Narayana Rao was a student of the Madras School of Arts and Crafts and has executed some very fine pieces of painting in water colours. Though he is an avowed devotee of the modern school of painting, his colour composition and technique is a pleasing blending of the Bombay and Bengal types of the modern school, with a certain amount of realism in his pictures.

* * *

"LOTUS POND" *Lino-cut*

By L. M. SEN, A.R.C.A.

We have been regularly publishing in every issue one or two lino or wood-cuts specially printed on hand-made paper from the original blocks. There are very few artists who have taken to this graphic art hence we are publishing different subjects by the same artist.

We hope we may get more and more artists into this field to present our readers more variety.

Lotus Pond is a lino-cut by Mr. L. M. Sen whose work we have been publishing in *Silpi* very often. Mr. Sen is a past master in graphic art and in the present lino-cut he excels in rendering very fine and delicate lines and a well balanced composition.

