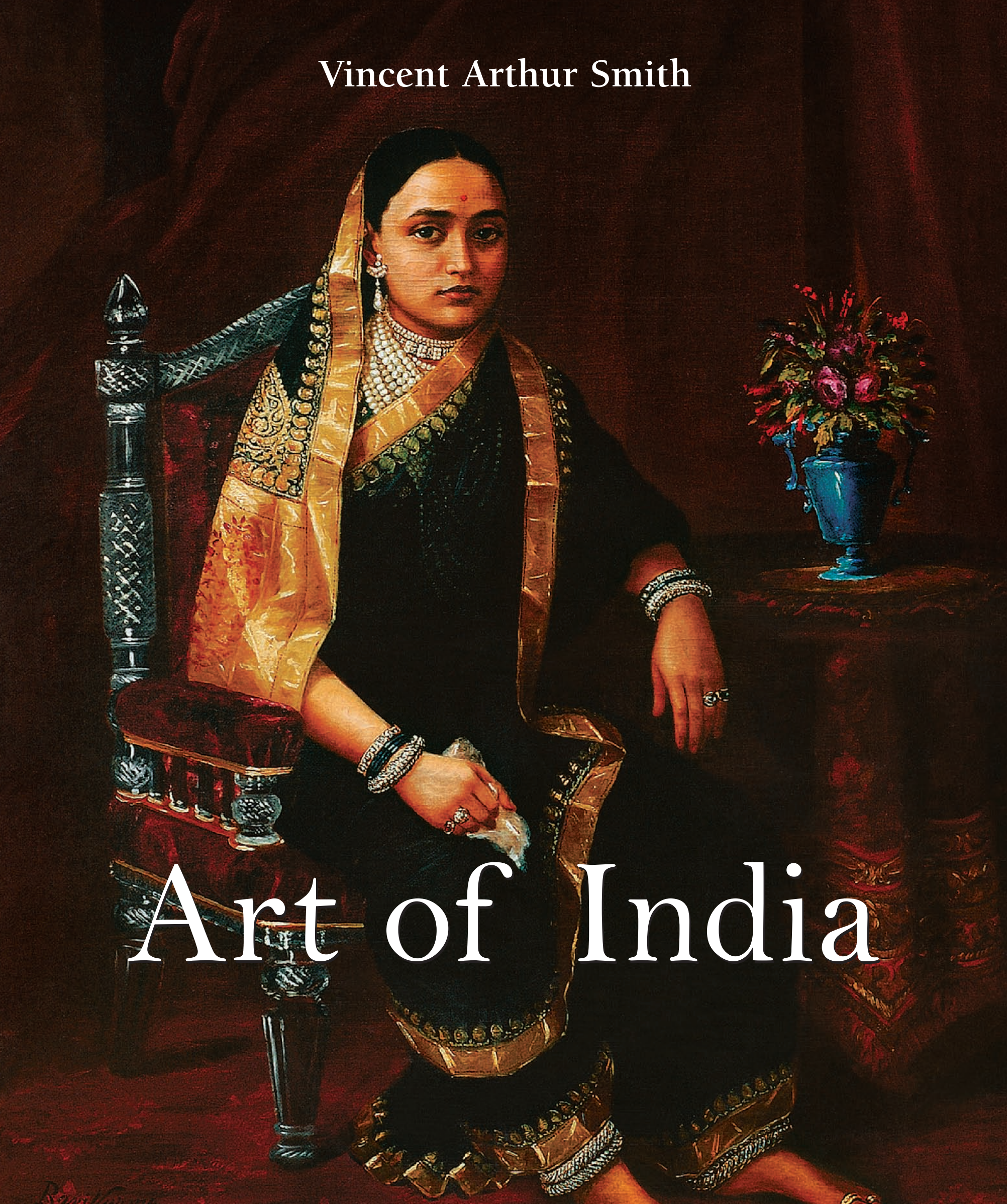
Vincent Arthur Smith



Art of India

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Contents

India and its Art

In discussing Indian studies I am forced to acknowledge considerable diffidence arising from a survey of the huge bulk of material to be dealt with. In the face of this complexity I find myself inclined to rely on evidence that is subjective and therefore more or less unscientific, in which personal experience and interpretation is increasingly stressed. In speaking of India, a country that in its wide extent offers more beauty to the eyes than many others in the world, a descriptive vein may well be excused. India is multiple; neither geographically, ethnologically, nor culturally can it be considered a unity. This being so, I am led to suspect that the India of many writers is more imagination than fact, existing rather in pictorial expression than in reality.

The appeal of the pictorial, rising from a craving for colour and movement, is general among the generations of the present, continually chaffing against narrowed horizons and an experience bounded by economical necessity. There is magic to be found anywhere between Cancer and Capricorn. There the demands of necessity would seem to be more easily fulfilled and life to run more rhythmically, in the train of the tropic alternation of the seasons. There, bread is to be gathered directly from the rich lap of the earth. There, colour fills the day with its wealth, leaping to the eye, like the sudden glow of fruit and flower caught by the sunlight, or of kaleidoscopic crowds in narrow streets. To enter a tropic town is to enter, as in a dream, the life of a dead century.

The movement is not without parallels, and the pictorial and interpretational play a great part in its exposition; there is, indeed, something of the Pre-Raphaelite about it. The materialism of today is to be checked by Indian spirituality. Arts and crafts are to flourish everywhere, centred upon the social organization of the village. India is to arise from the ashes of India. It might be claimed, therefore, that there could be no better time than the present for the publication of a survey of Indian Fine Arts, that the credit and loss of the exchange between the occidental and the oriental may be appraised. Indeed this nationalisation of the subject has been set forth at length by certain authors. It is, however, in contradistinction to the spirit of true criticism and full appreciation. The opposition of Eastern spirituality to Western materialism is a generalisation without support, while the postulation of a metaphysical basis for any art is equally as sterile, and in fact as inconsequential, as the postulation of the existence of eternal, immutable classical standards. Art cannot be localised, at least if the humanities upon which our culture is based have any meaning, and geographical differences should be no bar to appreciation, but rather an added attraction in these days, when for most of us our voyages of discovery do not exceed the bounds of the local time-table. It is, however, unfortunate that in the minds of many people the East has a certain romantic but quite indefinite lure about it, which accentuates the unusual and leads to the substitution of curiosity for appreciation.

Modern painting and sculpture provide a definite line of advance and logical precepts to an extent that almost makes academicians of many of the younger school. This process is directly comparable to that of the modern scientific method; modern art is indeed the result of methodical, aesthetic research. From the painting of Manet to that of Cézanne and the men of today, the story can only be told in terms of intellectual adventure and aesthetic discovery. The effect of the personal vision of the creators of modern art has been a widening of the circle of aesthetic interest and a revaluation of things unknown or unconsidered: Chinese painting and sculpture, Gothic sculpture, archaic Greek sculpture, African sculpture, the harmony of fine carpets, the virility of primitive design, and not least

Maha-Janaka Jataka: Three of the queen's maids respond to the unexpected news that the king plans to renounce his worldly goods and leave their mistress, late 6th century C.E., late Gupta period.
Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave I), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

among these, Indian Art in all its branches. In the face of these riches, once despised and rejected, the dogmas of the past generations with all their complacency, intolerance, and ignorance seem wilful in their restriction and impoverishment of life.

So vital and so well founded is this movement that I would choose, as the theme of a review of Indian Art, aesthetic discovery rather than archaeological discovery, and for support I would rely upon the word of living artists whose creative vision and fellow appreciation provides the basis of a criticism of greater precision than archaeological logic or the ulterior ends and confused categories of evidence of those who would carry the discussion beyond the proper field of art. I cannot believe it is necessary or even desirable to prelude the vision of a work of art with many words. Nor can I accept as sound criticism a discourse which shifts the foundations of a true understanding of art from the visual into the literary or historical or metaphysical. I can but deplore the twisting awry of aesthetic criticism and appreciation to local and temporary ends, whatever the circumstances.

In 1897 Gauguin wrote, *'Ayez toujours devant vous les Persans, les Cambodgiens et un peu d'Égyptiens.'* (Always keep before you the Persians, Cambodians, and Egyptians.) One wonders what he would have written if he had known of the frescoes at Ajanta with their magnificent surety of line and delicately rendered plasticity. The placing of castes of Indian sculpture from the late medieval period on exhibition in the Trocadero in Paris may be taken as the first step towards the Western appreciation of Indian Art.

On 28 February 1910 the following declaration appeared in *The Times* above the signatures of thirteen distinguished artists and critics:

> We the undersigned artists, critics, and students of art... find in the best art of India a lofty and adequate expression of the religious emotion of the people and of their deepest thoughts on the subject of the divine. We recognize in the Buddha type of sacred figure one of the great artistic inspirations of the world. We hold that the existence of a distinct, a potent, and a living tradition of art is a possession of priceless value to the Indian people, and one which they, and all who admire and respect their achievements in this field, ought to guard with the utmost reverence and love. While opposed to the mechanical stereotyping of particular traditional forms, we consider that it is only in organic development from the national art of the past that the path of true progress is to be found. Confident that we here speak for a very large body of qualified European opinion, we wish to assure our brother craftsmen and students in India that the school of national art in that country, which is still showing its vitality and its capacity for the interpretation of Indian life and thought, will never fail to command our admiration and sympathy so long as it remains true to itself. We trust that, while not disdaining to accept whatever can be wholesomely assimilated from foreign sources, it will jealously preserve the individual character which is an outgrowth of the history and physical conditions of the country, as well as of those ancient and profound religious conceptions which are the glory of India and of all the Eastern world.

This declaration was directly caused by a paper read before the Royal Society of Arts by Sir George Birdwood, the chronicler of Indian industrial arts. As a matter of fact, all that was then said had already appeared in print thirty years before, but the moment was not then ripe for the acceptance of the challenge. Birdwood can in no way be accused of lack of sympathy with Indian life or things Indian. A stylistic analysis of the crafts of modern India is illuminating with regard to one's attitude to the country itself, for one is forced to acknowledge the predominance of the Islamic and especially of the Persian culture of the Mughal court. Except in their everyday household form, pottery and metalwork are purely Islamic. Textiles, especially prints and brocades, are very

The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Bodhisattva of compassion), late 6th century C.E., late Gupta period. Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave I), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Vessantara Jataka: Pavilion scene in the Palace of Prince Vessantara and his wife Princess Madri, 5th-6th century C.E., late Gupta period. Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave XVII), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra. (p. 10-11)

largely Persian in design, although the Indian strength of imagination and purity of colour are evident. Certain forms of textiles are, however, purely Indian, the darn-stitch Phulkaris of the northwest and certain tied-and-dyed and warp-dyed forms. Only in jewellery has the Indian tradition been wholly preserved, in the beadwork of the villages as well as in the enamels of Jaipur. Birdwood's love of all this delicate and colourful craftsmanship, and of the complex, changeful life of which it is a part, is expressed in many passages from his pen of very great beauty. The arts of Ancient and Medieval India were outside his field, and his criticism of them is not deeply considered and purely personal.

In his paper before the Royal Society of Arts he stated with regard to a certain Javanese seated Buddha that this 'senseless similitude, by its immemorial fixed pose, is nothing more than an uninspired brazen image, vacuously squinting down its nose to its thumbs, knees, and toes. A boiled suet pudding would serve equally well as a symbol of passionate purity and serenity of soul.' This attack, however, may be considered as being equally directed against the loose verbiage of those critics of Indian art to whom the ideal content of an object is of greater importance than its form, than against Indian art itself.

An earlier statement in the official handbook to the India Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum offers a more definite criticism.

A Representation of the Miracle of Sravasti: to silence the sceptics who did not believe in him, the Buddha miraculously manifests himself into a thousand different forms, 6th century C.E., late Gupta period. Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave II), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

"The monstrous shapes of the Puranic deities are unsuitable for the higher forms of artistic representation: and this is possibly why sculpture and painting are unknown, as fine arts, in India ... How completely their figure-sculpture fails in true art is seen at once when they attempt to produce it on a natural and heroic scale, and it is only because their ivory and stone figures of men and animals are on so minute a scale that they excite admiration." Here it must be noticed the subject under discussion is modern Indian ivory-carving. In his *Handbook of Sculpture*, Professor Westmacott dismissed Indian art in one paragraph, forming his judgement, apparently, from the steel engravings and lithographs of the two or three books that were all that was then accessible.

There is no temptation to dwell at length on the sculpture of Hindustan. It affords no assistance in tracing the history of art, and its debased quality deprives it of all interest as a phase of fine art, the point of view from which it would have to be considered. It must be admitted, however, that the works existing have sufficient character to stamp their nationality, and although they possess no properties that can make them useful for the student, they offer very curious subjects of inquiry to the scholar and archaeologist. The sculptures found in various parts of India, at Ellora,

Gautama Buddha sitting under a pipal tree in the Dharmachakra Parvartana Mudra and the crowned Maitreya seated under the asoka tree, 5th-6th century C.E., late Gupta period. Detail of a fresco above the doorway. Ajanta caves (Cave XVII), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

> Elephanta, and other places, are of a strictly symbolical or mythological character. They usually consist of combinations of human and brute forms, repulsive from their ugliness and outrageous defiance of rule and even possibility.

In the opinion of Dr. Anderson, author of the catalogue of sculpture at the Indian Museum, Calcutta, Indian sculptors 'have never risen ... beyond the most feeble mediocrity', although he acclaims the Orissa temple sculptures as 'extremely pleasing pieces of art'. A more guarded opinion is that of Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke, who while giving Indian art a good place among the arts of the world, would not place it in the first rank, except for its 'eminent suitability to its country and people.'

Such were the opinions current among scholars at the end of the nineteenth century, concerning an art already accepted by artists and acclaimed by its influence upon the work of such men as Rodin, Degas, and Maillol.

The popularization of Indian art has been mainly the work of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy and E. B. Havell. To a certain extent their methods of exposition agree, the vein being interpretational, with a stressing of the literary. For Dr. Coomaraswamy 'all that India can offer to the world proceeds from her philosophy', a state of 'mental concentration' (yoga) on the part of the artist and the enactment of a certain amount of ritual being postulated as the source of the 'spirituality' of Indian art. The weakness of this attitude lies in its interweaving of distinct lines of criticism, form being dressed out in the purely literary with the consequent confusion of aesthetic appreciation with religious and other impulses. It is also historically ill-founded, for the sentiment and philosophy out of which the web is spun are the products of medieval India, as an examination of the texts quoted will show; many of the southern authorities quoted can only be classed as modern. The increasingly hieratic art of medieval and modern India, especially in the south, is doubtless closely knit with this literary tradition. But the literary tradition is not the source of the art, for iconography presupposes icons. The technical formulae of the sastras resulted in a standardization of production in spite of which genius, which knows no bonds, asserted itself. The bronze Nataraja loaned by Lord Ampthill to South Kensington is supreme among a hundred examples of mere hack-work. The bones of the literary formulae too often remain bones; here they are clothed with life, and beauty of form is achieved.

The miracle is a perennial one and world-wide; we marvel at the hand and eye that shaped this wonder. However, it is evident that many such images are not aesthetically worth the metal they are cast in. Their function as objects of worship is an entirely different matter. To insist on the necessity of burdening the mind with a host of symbolical and psychological adjuncts prior to appreciation is to obstruct the vision. Research literary or historical may aid vision, but cannot be substituted for it. Aesthetic vision is, of course, distinct from the practical vision of everyday life. Those who indulge in it are entirely absorbed in apprehending the relation of forms and colour to one another, as they cohere within the object. Intensity and detachment from the merely superficial and additional are essential to it. This rigid detachment may at any moment be broken by interest in all sorts of 'quasi-biological feelings' and irrelevant queries: but then the vision ceases to be critical and becomes merely curious.

A further element is apparent in the recent discussion of Indian art. Aesthetically we are not at all concerned with the sub-continent that is known as India or its peoples, but our curiosity must be strong as to its past and future. The pageantry of Indian history is as glorious as that of any country in the world. Artistically it falls into two main periods, the first of which, ending with the Muslim conquest, is an epic in itself. This period discloses the development of a great art. From the vividly pictorial, strictly popular sculpture of the Early Period, based on a living tradition, increased skill and wider vision lead to the classic art of the Gupta century.

Henceforward it is evident that a literary tradition has come into being which may rightly be designated medieval. The art of the great cave-temples gives place to the art of the temple-cities of Bhubaneswar and Khajuraho, where the literary tradition crystallizes into the iconographical forms of the *sastras*.

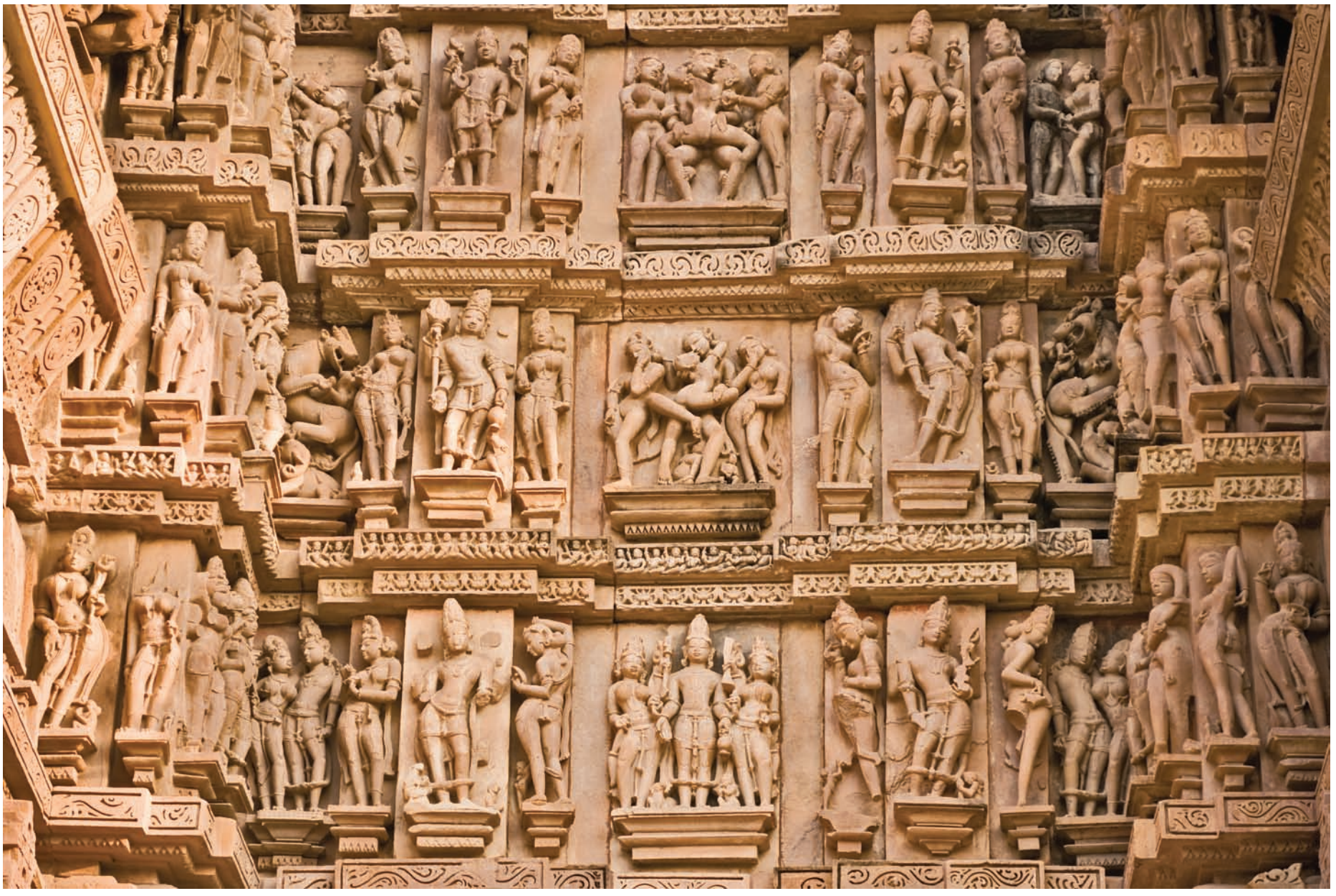
In the south an imposing architecture is found to survive up to the end of the seventeenth century, and the art of casting in bronze produces great works of art, few of which can, however, be dated in the last century. It is necessary to discriminate, and to acknowledge decadence and poor craftsmanship. Having taken its place among the arts of the world, Indian art belongs to the world. The future of art in India is another matter, chiefly concerning educationalists.

Traditions have died and the symbols that embodied them have died with them, but regret for the out-worn creed is ineffectual. New traditions and new symbols are surely in the making. Proteus and Triton have become empty names, but the sea remains. Nothing is lost but a dream, or rather the means of expressing a dream.

Indian religious history must be unfolded against a background of primitive conflict and superstition. The Vedas, in spite of their antiquity, cannot be accepted as the sole source of religious thought in India, or as anything but a critical and highly selective representation of this unvoiced and necessarily formless background. This relationship between Hinduism and the primitive, between the formulated philosophy of the schools and the worship and propitiation born of the vague fears and desires of masses, is present throughout the history of India, both religious and political. The Atharva Veda was not known to the early Buddhist writers but its practices and beliefs cannot be separated from the more altruistic and poetical polytheism of the less popular, more orthodox (but not more ancient) collections. In the same way the powers and manifestations of the *puranas* and epics are not necessarily modern because they do not appear in the Veda; in a sense they are more ancient, being native to the soil. Vedic thaumaturgy and theosophy were never the faith of India. The countless mother goddesses and village guardians of the South lie closer to the real heart of Indian religion, a numberless pantheon, superficially identified with Hinduism but radically distinct and unchanged.

Among these lesser gods that keep their place on the fringes of the orthodox are to be found spirits of the earth and of the mountain; the Four Guardians Gods of the Quarters with

Lingaraj Temple with one hundred and fifty smaller shrines, 11th century C.E., Keshari dynasty/Somavamsi dynasty. Red sandstone. Bhubaneswar, Orissa.



Khajuraho Group of Monuments
(detail of the Vishvanath Temple with amatory sculptures), 1020,
Chandella Dynasty. Sandstone. Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.

Vessavana-Kuvera at their head; Gandharvas, heavenly musicians; Nagas, the snake-people who have their world beneath the waters of streams, but who sometimes are identified with the tree spirits; and Garudas, half men, half birds who are the deadly foes of the Nagas. These diminished godlings must be regarded as the last remnant of a whole host of forgotten powers, once mighty and to be placated, each in its own place. Strange beings of another sphere, they could not wholly be passed over either by Hindu or Buddhist. Vessavana-Kuvera appears on one of the pillars of the Bharhut railing, as does also Sirima Devata (goddess of fortune). The latter also received acknowledgement at the hands of the compilers of the Satapatha Brahmana who were forced to invent a legend to account for her existence. In the Taittiriya Upanishad she is again fitly mentioned in company with the moon and the sun and the earth. At Sanchi, she is to be recognized exactly as she is still represented in painted and gilt marble at Jaipur, seated upon lotus, lustrated by two elephants.

The Maha-samaya Sutta describes a gathering of all the great gods to pay reverence to the Buddha in the Great Forest at Kapilavatthu. Dhatarattha, king of the East, Virulhaka, king of the South, Virupakkha, king of the West, and Kuvera, king of the North arrive with their Yaksha host and all their vassals. The Nagas come from Nabhasa, Vesali, Tacchaka, and Yamuna, among them Eravana. Their enemies, the twice-born Garudas, too, are there and also the Asuras, dwellers in the ocean. Fire, Earth, Air, and Water are present, and the Vedic gods, and lastly the powers of Mara (demon of temptation) who bids creation rejoice at his own defeat at the Buddha's hands.

Another list of the same description, but possibly earlier, is to be found in the Atanatiya. Both lists are, patently, the outcome of a priestly attempt to bring these hundred and one strange spirits and godlings within the sphere of Buddhist teaching, by representing them as gathered in hosts at the Buddha's feet. The group of Yakshas, Yakshinis, and Devatas carved upon the stone pillars of the *stupa* railing at Bharhut fulfil exactly the same function. They are manifestly earth-born and possess something of the delicate beauty of all forest creatures. They seem beneficent enough, but their manifestation here is admittedly chosen to serve Buddhist ends. Like all primitive powers, they are exacting in their demands and when neglected or provoked their anger is implacable and cruel. They are adorned with earthly jewels to represent the treasures they have in their gift, but are to be more closely identified with the trees under which they stand and the forest flowers they hold.

This cult of trees and tree spirits has a long history. In the sculptures of the early period (2nd-1st century B.C.E.) the Buddhas are represented only by symbols, among which are their distinctive trees. Gautama attained enlightenment seated beneath the Asvattha or pipal tree. In the Atharvaveda it is said that the gods of the third heaven are seated under the Asvattha and it may also be the 'tree with fair foliage' of the Rigveda under which Yama and the blessed are said to pass their time. In the Upanishads, the tree spirits have definitely materialized. They, like all things, are subject to rebirth. If the spirit leaves, the tree withers and dies, but the spirit is immortal. In the Jatakas, these tree spirits play a great part, being worshipped with perfumes, flowers, and food. They dwell in many kinds of trees but the banyan seems most popular. The scarlet-flowered silk-cotton tree and the sal tree as well as the pipal retain their sanctity today. The goddess of the sal is worshipped as giver of rain by the Oraons of Chota Nagpur, and in South Mirzapur the Korwas place the shrine of Dharti Mata under its branches. In the Jatakas more than once animal and even human sacrifices are spoken of in connexion with tree worship. Today the slaughter of roosters and goats is added to the more usual offering of flowers and sweetmeats, in extreme cases of propitiation.

The character and functions of these deities correspond closely to those of the mother goddesses of Southern India. Among these are Mariamma, goddess of smallpox, Kaliamma, of beasts and forest demons, Huliamma, a tiger goddess, Ghantalamma, who wears bells, and Mamillamma, she who sits beneath the mango tree.

However, it is usually made plain that these are but different names for the one great goddess. In Hindu hands, this female pantheon appears as the Ashta Sakti or eight female powers. But a more primitive group is that of the Sapta Kannigais or seven virgins, tutelary deities of temple tanks. In Mysore, too, a similar group of seven sister goddesses, vaguely identified with the Shivait mythology is found. However, they and all the mother goddesses are distinguished from the true gods of Hinduism by the fact that they are acknowledged to be local in their influence, warding off or inflicting calamities of various kinds, but strictly limited in their sphere of action. Still more limited are the powers of temple tanks, trees, and groves which periodically are alternately propitiated and exorcised, but are, as a whole, unsubstantial in personality and short lived.

It is against this complex background of creed and culture that Indian philosophy and Indian art, and all things Indian, must be viewed. Here lies philosophy, the origin of the lovely treatment of flower and fruit at the hands of Indian sculptors and painters, and also of the imagination that kindled their vision and gave such dynamic power to their designs.

Indian philosophy begins with Vedic speculations, or rather questionings as to existence and the creation. The unformulated philosophy of the Upanishads sprang from these and from it the pantheistic Vedanta system was evolved. As a foil to this existed from early times the atheistic Sankhya system, upon the reasoning of which Buddhism and Jainism were founded. At the root of everything lies *adrishta* (the unseen), that is, the acceptance of metensomatosis and a cycle of existences (*samsara*) modified only by action (*karma*). At the root is ignorance, *avidya*. From ignorance comes desire, which leads to action, so the wheel revolves within the wheel. The Vedanta doctrine derived from the Upanishads taught the absolute identity of the individual soul with the spirit of the universe 'That is the Eternal in which space is woven and which is inter-woven with it. ... There is no other seer, no other hearer, no other thinker, no other knower ...' 'From this identification of the mortal, limited self with the eternal and universal sum of all things arose the idea of the illusion (*maya*) of the world of sensual experience. Only when the illusion of experience ceases, as in dreamless sleep, can the lesser self reunite with the universal self. This implied duality is in fact itself an illusion. Desire and action are inherent in such an illusion and the consequence is *samsara*. But knowledge disperses the illusion. 'Whoever knows this: 'I am Brahma', becomes the All. Even the gods are not able to prevent him from becoming it, for he becomes their Self.

The Sankhya system is atheistic and dualistic, admitting matter and the individual soul as eternal but essentially different. In the absoluteness of this division lies release. The soul, being removed from all matter, ceases to be conscious, and the bondage to pain (in which pleasure is included) is ended.

Both Buddhism and Jainism presuppose the existence of the Sankhya philosophy. But it is evident that the sixth century B.C., when both Gautama and Vardhamana lived and taught, was a period of extensive mental activity of an extremely sophisticated kind. The Brahmajala Sutta mentions Eternalists, Non-Eternalists, Semi-Eternalists, Fortuitous originists, and Survivalists, and also certain recluses and Brahmans who, as dialecticians, are typified as "eel wrigglers". Buddhism is as much in revolt against this mental complexity as against the ritual complexity of the Brahman priest-craft. With regard to generalities its position is agnostic. The Three Marks of Impermanence, Pain, and Lack of Individuality must be considered as a practical summary of the characteristics of life. Upon these the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths, the essence of Buddhism, is founded: suffering exists; ignorance and desire are its causes; release is possible; the means are the Eight Points of Doctrine – right knowledge, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right living, right endeavour, right mindfulness, and right meditation. Throughout the teaching uncertain, empirical opinion (*ditthi*) is set apart from true wisdom (*panna*). Above all, the cultivation and regulation of the will is stressed in an entirely new way.

Lastly, as against the changing, foundationless illusions of the unregulated personal life in a universe that can only be described in terms of change, the Buddhist doctrine (*dharma*) is held out as being well-founded in time or rather in human experience. It is described as an ancient well-trodden path, a claim that paves the way to the conception of not one Buddha but many Buddhas.

Jain god sculpture decorating the Kandariya Mahadeva Temple,
c. 1050, Chandella Dynasty. Sandstone. Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.

An entrance gate and a section of the railing of the Bharhut Stupa,
3rd-2nd century B.C.E., Maurya dynasty (Ashoka)/Sunga Dynasty.
Red sandstone, railing height: 274.32 cm, pillar height: 216.40 cm.
Indian Museum, Calcutta.

At Bharhut and Sanchi the seven Buddhas of the canon are all found, symbolized by their respective trees.

This doctrine of wise renunciation was preached by Gautama, a prince of the Sakya clan, who renounced his worldly heritage in pursuit of truth. Much of the adverse criticism which Buddhism has been subjected to has been due to a misunderstanding of *nirvana*, the goal of all Indian speculation. Buddhism has had a complex history. Divided into two main sects, that of the Theravada and that of the Mahayana, and changed beyond recognition, it exists no longer in the land of its origin. The Jain faith preached by Vardhamana, a contemporary and therefore rival of Gautama, still persists in India. He, too, was of the Kshattriya caste, and renouncing his birth-right, eventually attained Wisdom, appearing as the leader of the Nirgrantha ascetics. According to Jain tradition, Vardhamana, or Mahavira, as he came to be known, was the twenty-fourth of a series of *jinas* or conquerors of the world. Like Buddhism, the Jain faith opposes the exclusiveness of Hinduism by a claim to universality. Like Buddhism, it is founded upon the teaching and achievement of Right Faith, Right Knowledge, and Right Action. However, unlike Buddhism, asceticism is greatly stressed even to the point of voluntary death by the refusal of nourishment on the part of those who have attained the highest knowledge, the *kevala jñâna*. From an early date two Jain sects have existed, the Digambara, who regard nudity as indispensable to holiness, and the Svetambara or 'white-clothed', who do not. Besides these two bodies of ascetics, the faith is extended to a large body of laity, who are represented in the history of Indian art, by many sculptures dedicated in the Kushan era, and by the magnificent medieval temples at Mount Abu, Girnar, and Satrunjaya. Like the Buddhists, the Jains founded many monasteries. The worship of stupas was also included in their rites.

The cult of the Upanishads and its forest-dwelling adherents is described in the Agganna Sutta:

> They making leaf-huts in woodland spots, meditated therein. Extinct for them the burning coal, vanished the smoke, fallen lies the pestle and mortar; gathering of an evening for the evening meal, they go down into the village and town and royal city, seeking food. When they have gotten food back again in their leaf-huts they meditate.

But from forest life and meditation many sank to a mendicant life on the outskirts of the towns and to being mere repeaters of the sacred books. Such were the Hindus of the Buddha's day.

Modern Hinduism is divided into two main cults, Vaishnavism and Shaivism. From the point of view of Indian art the early period is almost entirely Buddhist, while the Gupta period, and the succeeding medieval period are Hindu, the sculpture of the latter period being radically based upon Hindu iconography.

Rudra, the storm god of the Vedas, is made known by many epithets. He is called Girisa, 'lying on a mountain', Kapardin, 'wearer of tangled locks', and Pasupatih, 'lord of cattle'. When appeased he is known as Sambhu or Samkara, 'the benevolent', and as Shiva, 'the auspicious', but he remains lord of the powers of the universe and is to be feared as well as loved. Yet the element of *bhakti*, of personal adoration and willing self-surrender to the deity, is not wanting in the worship of the Great Lord as unfolded in the later Upanishads.

In a lesser aspect Shiva is 'lord of spirits' (*bhutas*) and his rites are connected with snake worship. In his worship the central object is the phallus. The Shiva linga does not seem to have been known to Patanjali, nor does it appear on the coins of Wema-Kadphises on the reverse of which the god is represented, holding the trident, with the bull, Nandi, in the background. In the Mahabharata, Shiva is represented as dwelling in the Himalaya with his hosts. His vehicle is the bull and his consort is variously known as Uma, Parvati, Durga, and Kali. Having completed the creation, he turned yogi and the phallus became his emblem.

The earliest lingas existing do not pre-date the Kushan period. They are of the kind known as Mukha-lingas with one or more faces at the top of the member. One of the earliest iconographical representations of the god is the Dakshinamurti (Guru-Shiva) in relief on one side of the Vishnu Temple at Deogarh which may be dated in the second half of the fifth century C.E.

The earliest historical records of Vaishnavism are the Besnagar Heliodora inscription and the Ghosundi inscription, both of the second century B.C.E. The former testifies to the erection of a Garuda pillar to Vasudeva, god of gods. Heliodora, who was the son of Diya and a native of Taxila, was ambassador from the Yavana Antialkidas to Bhagabhadra. He calls himself Bhagavata. The Ghosundi inscription witnesses to the erection of a hall of worship to Samkarshana and Vasudeva.

Vishnu is a Vedic deity and although he is represented by but few hymns, his personality is vividly portrayed. He measures all things with his three wide strides, the third passing beyond human discernment to the high places of the deity. This conception of the third step of Vishnu as the highest heaven and goal of all things, had obviously much to do with his elevation as the supreme being. In the Mahabharata this Supreme Being is addressed as Narayana, Vasudeva, and Vishnu.

Later Vishnu found a more intimate place in popular worship by means of his ten incarnations (*avataras*).

The earliest iconographical presentations of the god are two standing, four-armed figures, one on either side of the door-guardians of the Chandragupta Cave at Udayagiri (401 C.E.).

Unlike Buddhism and Jainism, the Hindu sects are not organized into Hindu definite congregations. Whatever the shrine be, one of the magnificent temples of Bhubaneswar or Khajuraho, or a red daubed stone by the roadside, the worship is individual. For certain ceremonial purposes the aid of priests is sought, and all the larger temples have their hosts of attendants. But there is never a congregation worshipping in unison. Architecturally speaking, the Hindu shrine is the dwelling-place of the god, although various pavilions or porches dedicated to the preparation of the offerings or to music and dancing stand before it.

The earliest structural Hindu shrines existing are the flat-roofed Gupta temples, square in plan with a veranda supported by four pillars, the doorway being elaborately carved. At Ajanta the cell in the centre of the back wall of the oblong, many pillared caves, is cut on exactly the same plan, the doorways corresponding very closely. The introduction of the linga shrine at Badami and Ellora eventually altered the plan radically by placing the shrine in the body of the hall as at Elephanta. The great medieval temples consist of high-towered shrines, each with its entrance pavilions.

As portrayed in the Brahmajala Sutta, primitive Buddhism gave no place to aesthetics; music, song, and dance were classed with sorcery and iconography, unprofitable to the wise. Manu and Chanakya also adopted this slighting attitude towards the arts. However, that is of little account, and Bharhut and Sanchi are not less fine because they are not supported by the argumentative analysis of the schoolmen. The art of the Early Period is a spontaneous growth, endued with native virility. Essentially narrative, it is vividly perceptive. The history of Indian art must be written in terms of the action of a literary, metaphysical mode of thought upon this naive, story-telling art, resulting in the formation of an immense and intricate iconography. Around this

Avalokitesvara seated between two tara and two donor figures,
late 10th century or early 11th century C.E. Bronze alloy inlaid with silver and copper, height: 34.5 cm. Private collection, Kashmir.

iconography has grown a still more abstruse, secondary literature, in which the least variation of detail is seized upon to sanction the subdivision and endless multiplication of types of icons.

Images are roughly divided into two classes, the fixed and the movable (*achala* and *chala*). They are likewise roughly described as standing (*sthanaka*), sitting (*asana*) or reclining (*sayana*). Also they may further be described in terms of the nature of the manifestation: as terrible (*ugra*) as is Vishnu in his man-lion incarnation, or pacific (*santa*). The images of Vishnu are further classified according to their natures as Yoga, Bhoga, and Vira, to be worshipped respectively according to the personal desires of the worshipper.

This classification of gods and devotees according to their innate natures refers directly to the classification by natures of the Sankhya philosophy, primeval matter being distinguished by the three properties (*gunas*) of light (*sattva*), mutation (*rajas*), and darkness (*tamas*). It is clear that the needs of the worshipper specify the type of the image worshipped. Complex manifestations, whose many attributes are symbolized by their many hands are considered Tamasic in character, and their worshippers of little understanding. To the wise, images of all kinds are equally superfluous.

Indian aesthetics must be regarded as being of late date, a supplement to aesthetics, the iconographical literature of the medieval period. Much of the Agamas is of great iconographical interest, but these late literary canons have no aesthetic light to shed, although they do indicate something of the religious, hieratical atmosphere which deadened artistic creation in the last period of medieval decadence. Indian aesthetics are based upon the conception of aesthetic value in terms of personal response or reproduction. This value is known as *rasa*, and when it is present the object is said to have rasa and the person to be *rasika* or appreciative. Rasa produces various moods in the rasika varying in kind according to the initial stimulus; from these moods emotions spring. The mechanics of this system is worked out in detail in the Dhanamjaya Dasarupa and the Visvanatha Sahitya Darpana. The whole system is based upon and illustrated by literature, and cannot be applied directly to sculpture and painting.

Mayadevi Birthing the Historical Buddha,
9th-10th century C.E., Pala dynasty, Bihar. Stele and biotite schist, 58.4 x 35.6 x 13.3 cm. Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey.

The Mauryan Period

A short time after the death of Alexander in 323 B.C.E., the throne of Magadha or Bihar, then the premier kingdom of Northern India, was seized by Chandragupta, surnamed the Maurya, known as Sandrokottos to Greek authors. In the course of a victorious reign of twenty-four years this able prince caused his influence to be felt over all India, at least as far south as the river Narmada, and acquired from Seleukos Nikator, first his enemy and then his ally, the valuable provinces lying between the Indus and the Hindu Kush mountains which now constitute the major part of the kingdom of Afghanistan.

Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Bindusara, who, in or about 273 B.C.E., transmitted the imperial sceptre to his son, Ashoka, the third and most renowned sovereign of the Maurya dynasty. For forty-one years (273-232 B.C.E.) Ashoka ruled his immense empire with great power and might, maintaining friendly relations with his neighbours, the Tamil states of the extreme south and also with the island kingdom of Sri Lanka and the more remote Greek monarchies of Macedonia, Epirus, Western Asia, Egypt, and Cyrene.

Early in life the emperor became a religious convert and as the years rolled Ashoka's on his zeal increased. Finally, his energies and riches were devoted almost patronage of entirely to the work of honouring and propagating the teaching of Gautama Buddhism – Buddha. With one exception he abstained from wars of conquest and was thus free to concentrate his attention upon the task to which his life was consecrated.

The imperial palace at Pataliputra, the modern Patna, the capital of Early Chandragupta Maurya is described by Greek and Roman authors as excelling the royal residences of Susa and Ekbatana in splendour. Although no vestige architecture of such a building has survived (with the possible exception of some brick foundations) there is no reason to doubt the statements of the historians. The result of much excavation seems to support the literary evidence that Indian architects before the time of Ashoka built their superstructures chiefly of timber, using sun-dried brick almost exclusively for foundations and plinths. No deficiency in dignity or grandeur was involved in the use of the more perishable material; on the contrary, the employment of timber enables wide spaces to be roofed with ease which could not be spanned with masonry, especially when, as in India, the radiating arch was not ordinarily employed for structural purposes.

Excavations of widely spread sites dating from the Maurya to the Gupta Stone periods, and even later, emphasize the fact that timber and unburnt brick buildings were the standard architectural materials of ancient India, mud being used as it still is, for ordinary, domestic work. However, Ashoka is credited by the literary sources with the use of masonry in the many building activities reported of him. It is on record that during his reign of about forty-one years he replaced the wooden walls and buildings

Lion capital of the pillar erected by King Ashoka at Sarnath
(today the National Emblem of India), c. 250 B.C.E., Maurya dynasty (Ashoka). Polished Chunar sandstone, height: 215 cm.
Archaeological Museum, Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh.

of his capital by more substantial work and caused hundreds of fine edifices in both brick and stone to be erected throughout the empire. So astonishing was his activity as a builder that people in after ages could not believe his constructions to be the work of human agency, and felt constrained to regard them as wrought by familiar spirits forced to obey the behests of the imperial magician. Few sites can, however, be definitely ascribed to the Ashokan or even to the Mauryan period. No building with any pretensions to be considered an example of architecture can be assigned to any earlier period than this, with which the history of Indian architecture as of the other arts begins.

The Mauryan emperors must surely have built palaces, public offices, and Indian temples suitable to the dignity of a powerful empire and proportionate to the wealth of rich provinces, but of such structures not a trace seems to survive. The best explanation of this fact is the hypothesis that the early works of Indian architecture and art were mainly constructed of timber and other perishable materials, ill-fitted to withstand the ravenous tooth of time. Whatever the true explanation of this may be the fact remains that the history of Indian art begins with Ashoka. 'But', as Professor Percy Gardner observes, 'there can be no doubt that Indian art had an earlier history. The art of Ashoka is a mature art: in some respects more mature than the Greek art of the time, though, of course far inferior to it, at least in our eyes.'

We can affirm with certainty that the forms of Ashokan architecture and plastic decoration were descended from wooden prototypes, and may also discern traces of the influence of lost works in metal, ivory, terracotta, and painting. The pictorial character of the ancient Indian reliefs is obvious, and the affinity of much of the decorative work with the jeweller's art is equally plain. The sculpture on a pier of the southern gate at Sanchi was actually executed by the ivory-carvers of the neighbouring town of Vedisa (Bhilsa). We may, moreover, feel some confidence in affirming that the sudden adoption of stone as the material for both architecture and sculpture was in a large measure the result of foreign, perhaps Persian, example. The fuller consideration of the foreign influences affecting Indian art will be more conveniently deferred and made the subject of a separate chapter.

Whatever the foreign elements of ancient Indian art may have been, great weight must be allowed for the personal initiative of Ashoka, a man of marked originality of mind, capable of forming large designs and executing them with imperial thoroughness. The direction taken by Indian art was like the diffusion of Buddhism, determined in its main lines by the will of a resolute and intelligent autocrat.

Like most of the extant works of early Indian art, the Mauryan columns and caves were executed in honour of Buddhism, which became the state religion in the empire of Ashoka and is said to have been introduced during his reign into independent Sri Lanka. Although we know that both Jainism and Brahmanical Hinduism continued to attract multitudes of adherents during the Mauryan period, hardly any material remains of works dedicated to the service of those religions have survived.

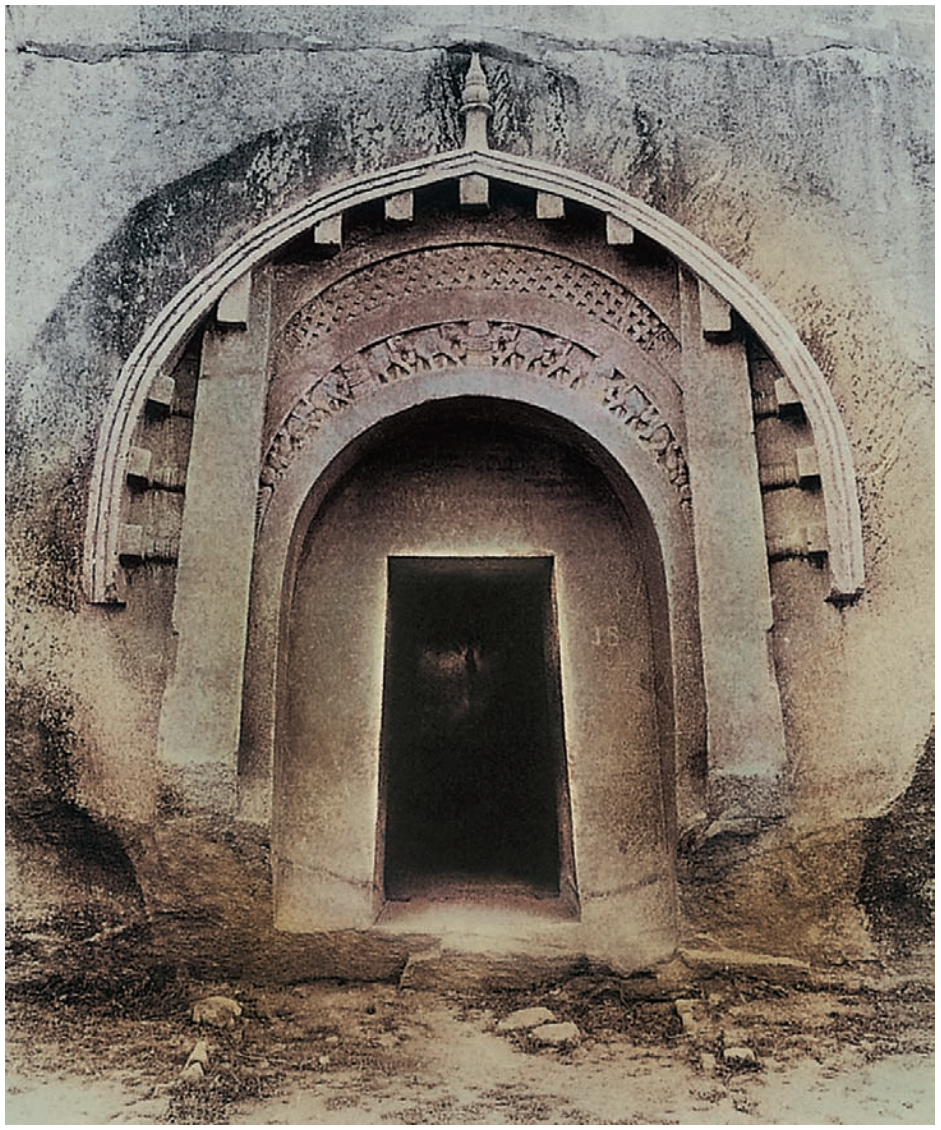
The monuments which can with certainty be dated in Ashoka's reign are not very numerous, but it is not improbable that more may be discovered, and our direct knowledge of the art strictly contemporary with him is derived from his inscriptions, the carving and sculptures on his monolithic columns, certain caves, and a few fragments of pottery excavated at Mauryan level. The inscriptions are worthy of being mentioned among the Fine Arts on account of their beautiful execution, for nearly all are models of careful and accurate stone cutting. The most faultless example is the brief record on the Rummindei Pillar, which is as perfect as on the day it was incised. The craft of the skilled mason and stone-cutter, so closely akin to fine art, reached perfection in the days of Ashoka, as appears from every detail of their work and especially from an examination of the beautifully polished surface of the monoliths and the interiors of the cave-dwellings dedicated by him and his grandson, Dasaratha Maurya (reign 232-224 B.C.E.), in the hills of Bihar.

Isolated pillars, or columns, usually associated with other buildings, and frequently surmounted by a human figure, animal sculpture, or symbol have been erected in India at all times by adherents of all the three leading Indian religions. The oldest are the monolithic pillars of Ashoka, who set up at least thirty of these monuments, of which many survive in a more or less perfect state. Ten of these bear his inscriptions. The Lauriya-Nandangarh monument, in Bihar, inscribed with the first six Pillar Edicts is shown. The shaft of polished sandstone, 10 metres in height, diminishes from a base diameter of 90 centimetres to a diameter of only 57 centimetres at the top proportions which render it the most graceful of all the Ashoka columns. The uninscribed pillar at Bakhira in the Muzaffarpur District, in perfect preservation, and presumably of earlier date, is more massive and consequently less elegant. The fabrication, conveyance, and erection of monoliths of such enormous size, the heaviest weighing about fifty tons, are proofs that the engineers and stone-cutters of Ashoka's age were not inferior in skill and resource to those of any time or country.

The capitals of these pillars provide excellent evidence of the state of the art of sculpture, both in relief and in the round, during the period between the year 250 B.C.E. and the end of the reign of the great emperor in 232 B.C.E.

The capital of each pillar, like the shaft, was monolithic, comprising three principal members, namely, a Persepolitan bell, abacus, and crowning sculpture in the round. The junction between the shaft and the abacus was marked by a necking, the edge of the abacus was decorated with bas-relief designs, and the crowning sculpture was occasionally a sacred symbol, such as a wheel, or more commonly a symbolical animal, or group of animals. The surviving capitals vary widely in detail. The abacus might be either rectangular or circular so as to suit the form of the sculpture above. The edge of the abacus of the beautiful Lauriya-Nandangarh pillar is decorated by a row of flying sacred geese in quite low relief. The abaci of the pillars at Allahabad and Sankisa

The First Sermon, with the Wheel of the Law representing the Buddha,
150-140 B.C.E., Sunga dynasty. Stupa III, south torona, west pillar,
north face. Sandstone. Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh.



and the bull pillar at Rampurva exhibit elegant designs composed of the lotus and palmette or honeysuckle. Whatever the device selected, it is invariably well-executed, and chiselled with that extraordinary precision and accuracy which characterize the workmanship of the Maurya age, and have never been surpassed in Athens or elsewhere.

The topmost sculpture in the round was most often one or other of four animals namely, the elephant, the horse, the bull, and the lion. All these animals, except the horse, are actually found on the round on extant capitals, and it is recorded that a horse once crowned the pillar at Rummindei, the Lumbini garden. On the sides of the abacus of the Sarnath capital all the four creatures are carved in bas-relief.

The elephant of the Sankisa capital is well modelled, but unhappily has been badly mutilated. The two pillars at Rampurva bear respectively the bull and lion.

The magnificent Sarnath capital discovered in 1905, unquestionably the best extant specimen of Ashokan sculpture, was executed late in the reign between 242 and 232 B.C.E. The column was erected to mark the spot where Gautama Buddha first 'turned the wheel of law', or in plain English, publicly preached his doctrine. The symbolism of the figures, whether in the round or in relief, refers to the commemoration of that event. The four lions standing back to back on the abacus once supported a stone wheel, 83 centimetres in diameter, of which only fragments remain.

Arch-shaped façade of Lomas Rishi cave, mid-3rd century B.C.E., Maurya dynasty (Ashoka). Rock-cut architecture. Barabar Hills, Bihar.

It would be difficult to find in any country an example of ancient animal sculpture superior or even equal to this beautiful work of art, which successfully combines realistic modelling with idealistic dignity, and is finished in every detail with perfect accuracy. The bas-reliefs on the abacus are as good in their way as the noble lions in the round. The design, while obviously reminiscent of Assyrian and Persian prototypes, is modified by Indian sentiment, the bas-reliefs being purely Indian. The conjecture of Sir John Marshall (1876-1958), former Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), that the composition may be the work of an Asiatic Greek is not supported by the style of the relief figures. The ability of an Asiatic Greek to represent Indian animals so well may be doubted.

The only rival to the artistic supremacy of the Sarnath capital is the replica which once crowned the detached pillar at Sanchi engraved with a copy of the Sarnath edict denouncing schism. The Sanchi capital is decidedly inferior to that at Sarnath, but it is possible that both works may proceed from the hands of a single artist. A century or so later, when an inferior sculptor attempted to model similar lions on the pillars of the southern gateway at Sanchi, he failed utterly, and his failure supports the theory that the Sarnath capital must have been wrought by a foreigner. Certainly no later sculpture in India attained such high excellence.

The perfection of the Sanchi and Sarnath lions on the edict-pillars must have been the result of much progressive effort. The uninscribed pillar at Bakhira seems to be one of the earlier experiments of Ashoka's artists. The clumsy proportions of the shaft contrast unfavourably with the graceful design of the Lauriya-Nandangarh column, which bears a copy of the Pillar Edicts, and may be dated in 242 or 241 B.C.E., while the seated lion on the summit is by no means equal to the animals on the edict-pillars of Sarnath and Sanchi erected between 242 and 232 B.C.E. I am disposed to think that the Bakhira column was set up soon after 257 B.C.E., the date of the earliest Rock Edicts. It must also be noted that at Rampurva there are two pillars only one of which is inscribed. In the Sahasram inscription it is clearly stated that edicts are to be inscribed on rocks, or on pillars wherever a stone pillar is standing, which suggests that some of these pillars may considerably antedate Ashoka's reign, although their technique is obviously one with the inscriptions and caves, and they are clearly 'Mauryan'.

Ashokan pillar with single lion capital. Such pillars were erected by King Ashoka and Buddhist teachings were engraved on them,
3rd century B.C.E., Maurya dynasty (Ashoka). Polished Chunar sandstone, height: 12 m. Vaishali, Bihar.

Stupa III of Sanchi, 150-140 B.C.E., Sunga dynasty. Sandstone, stupa: diameter at the plinth: 15 m, height: 8.1 m. Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh.

The Early Period

Architecture

After the death of Ashoka the empire broke to pieces, but his descendants continued to rule the home provinces for about half a century, at the end of which they were superseded by the Sunga kings who governed parts of Northern India until the beginning of the first century B.C.E. However, the style of architecture, decoration, and sculpture which perhaps first assumed a permanent form under the patronage of Ashoka continued in use up to about the close of the first century of the Common era, forming a distinct and definite period in the history of Indian art.

Although Buddhism at this period, approximately extending from 273 B.C.E. to 100 C.E., was by no means the only religion in India, it enjoyed a dominant position as the result of the great Buddhist emperor's propaganda, and the monuments remaining, therefore, are almost all Buddhist, though few are as early as the reign of Ashoka. The huge mass of solid brick masonry known as the great stupa of Sanchi, later encased with stone, may belong to his reign, as well as several other similar structures, but most of the buildings that now survive are of a later date.

The ancient civil buildings having all perished utterly, except the tangle of superimposed foundations that is all that the spade lays bare at most of the early sites, the story of Indian architecture must therefore be reconstructed from the somewhat one-sided evidence of the temples and shrines, and the bas-reliefs that adorn them. The most characteristic early architectural compositions were stupas, with their appurtenant railings and gateways, monasteries, and churches, the 'ifaziiya-halls' of James Fergusson. The monasteries and churches include both rock-cut and structural examples. Isolated pillars also were frequently set up.

Stupas or '*topes*', the dagabas of Sri Lanka, solid cupolas of brick or stone masonry, were constructed either for the safe custody of relics hidden in a pagaba, or chamber near the base, or to mark a spot associated with an event sacred in Buddhist or Jain legend. Until the early twentieth century, the stupa was universally believed to be peculiarly Buddhist, but it is now a matter of common knowledge that the ancient Jains built stupas identical in form and accessories with those of the rival religion. However, no specimen of a Jain stupa is standing, and our attention may be confined to the Buddhist series. The earliest stupas were of unburnt bricks like the Bharhut stupa. The great stupa at Sanchi was originally of this type, a casing of roughly trimmed masonry and a ramp forming an upper procession-path being added later.

As time went on, the originally hemispherical dome of this stupa as it appeared before restoration was raised on a high drum or tier of drums, and so by a series of gradual amplifications the ancient model was transformed first into a lofty tower after Kanishka's stupa at Peshawar, described by Hiuen Tsiang, and ultimately into the Chinese pagoda.

The most ancient stupas were very plain. They were usually surrounded by a stone railing, sometimes square in plan, but more often circular, marking off a procession path for the use of worshippers and serving as a defence against evil spirits. The earliest examples of such railings, at Sanchi, are unadorned copies of wooden post-and-rail fences. The bars of the railing were usually lenticular in section, inserted in the posts as shown in the diagram. At Besnagar another form of ancient railing has been unearthed, consisting of oblong slabs held by grooved uprights.

Bharhut and Sanchi represent two sequent stages in the development of the stupa of the Early (post-Mauryan) Period. They and their appurtenances had become more ornate. Sculpture was freely applied to every member of the railing to the posts, rails, and coping. Late in the second century of the Common era at Amaravati the railing was transformed into a screen covered with stone pictures in comparatively low relief but with the richest effect. The openings giving access to the processionpath inside the railing were dignified by the creation of lofty gateways (*torana*) copied from wooden models, and covered with a profusion of sculpture. The best examples of such gateways are those at Sanchi.

The origin of the stupa lies in primitive burial ceremonies for they are primarily tombs like the 'iron age' cairns of the south and such tumuli as those excavated by Dr. Theodor Bloch near Nandangarh in the Champaran District. Originally mounds of earth, the earliest stupas existing are of unbaked brick, hemispherical in shape. Although their first object was the enshrinement of sacred relics, in later times they acquired a symbolical value and many cenotaphs were built, the dedication of miniature stupas of stone or clay being customary at the great shrines. This idea of the symbolic value of stupas and the merit of stupa-building, on the part of the faithful, apart from the relics they might or might not contain, is to be found at the root of the legendary accounts of Ashoka's ten-thousand stupas. Fa Xian says that in monasteries it was customary to raise stupas to Mudgalaputra, Sariputra, and Ananda, as well as in honour of the Abhidharma, Vinaya, and Sutra, such stupas in fact being regarded as altars. The word *chaitya* is indeed often used where a stupa is intended, in the sense of a shrine or holy place. So Anathapindika builds Sariputra's chaitya which was four stories high, decreasing in size, and which contained a relic vase, and was surmounted by a roof and many umbrellas.

In the Dulva, too, it is laid down that a Bhikshu's body (Buddhist monk's body) is to be covered with grass and leaves and a chaitya raised over it. In a still more remote sense, the converted but disconsolate Queen Sivali raised stupas at the places where her ascetic husband had argued with her and finally convinced her. In medieval times the stupa with its pyramid of sheltering umbrellas is dwarfed in importance by the sculpture that adorns it. At Ajanta and Ellora and everywhere, in miniature at Bodh-Gaya, it is really nothing but a domed shrine, the tier of umbrellas being fused together into a spire.

Stupas, not to speak of miniature votive models, varied greatly in size. The very ancient specimen at Piprahwa on the Nepalese frontier, which may possibly be earlier than Ashoka, has a diameter of 35.36 metres at ground level, and stands only about 6.7 metres high. The diameter of the great Sanchi monument at the plinth is 46.17 metres, the height about 235 metres and the stone railing is a massive structure 31 metres high. Several monuments in Northern India, some of which were ascribed to Ashoka, are recorded to have attained a height of from 61 to 122 metres; and to this day the summit of the Jetavanarama Dagoba in Sri Lanka towers 76.5 metres above the level of the ground. The larger monuments afforded infinite scope to the decorative artist.

The Great Stupa of Sanchi, 3rd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty. Sandstone, stupa: diameter at the plinth: 37 m, height: 16.5 m, stone railing: 30.8 m. Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh.

On the Bharhut bas-reliefs two types of buildings are to be found. The first is domed and round in plan. The second is barrel-roofed and sometimes three stories high. This second type is the origin of the barrel-roofed chaitya-caves where the details of the octagonal pillars, the balcony railings and the arched doorways and windows are faithfully portrayed. At Sanchi the same types appear and also at Amaravati and Mathura. Shrines are shown in three instances and are all of one type. At Bharhut the Shrine of the Headdress Relic is circular in plan, closed in by a low railing but otherwise open on all sides. It has the usual ogee doorway, the arch of which is ornamented, above its beam-heads, with little rosettes. The semicircular part of the opening is filled in with the usual framework which served as a weather screen. The roof is dome-shaped and has a pointed finial. It is divided into two by a narrow clerestory opening which comes between the dome and the curved eave. In the centre on a stone platform technically known as a 'throne' (*asana*) is a cushion bearing the sacred relic. The throne is ornamented with pendent garlands and is marked with the impressions of the right hands of devotees, a custom still common in India.

The first scene of the conversion of Kasyapa (ancient sage) of Uruvilva on the middle of the inner side of the left-hand pillar of the East gateway at Sanchi shows another shrine of this type. This is the Shrine of the Black Snake which the Buddha eventually caught in his begging-bowl. Here the dome is broken by eight windows and is surrounded by a balcony railing.

The famous shrine which Ashoka built around the bodhi tree appears at Bharhut, Sanchi, Mathura, and Amaravati. At Bharhut it is sculptured on the Prasenajit pillar and seems to consist of a barrel-roofed colonnade, circular in plan entirely surrounding the tree. The upper story is provided with many windows and a balcony railing. At Sanchi this same building is accurately reproduced on the front of the left pillar, and again on the outside of the lower architrave, of the East gateway, where it is the centre of a huge host of pilgrims. At Mathura it also appears on an architrave of Kushan date and again in a slightly amplified form at Amaravati. Here other buildings have arisen around it and to one side is a gateway (*torana*). These gateways were apparently used everywhere, for secular purposes as well as ecclesiastical, for on the middle architrave of the East gateway at Sanchi, one appears as the entrance to a town through which a procession is passing beneath crowded windows and balconies.

A survey of such scenes where buildings of two and three stories abound accords with the colourful descriptions of the splendours of such towns of ancient India as Vaisali or Pataliputra. Buildings of seven stories in height are even spoken of (Satta, Bhumaka, Pasadd). Among the most famous of these piles was the Kutagara-Vihara at Vaisali, which Buddhaghosa describes as a storied building raised on pillars with a pinnacle, and like the chariot of the gods.

Civil architecture is described in the Jatakas on almost as lavish a scale. The large houses had wide gateways leading into an inner courtyard with rooms opening into it on ground level. There were granaries and store-rooms and a treasury, but the flat roof, as at all times in the East, played a great part in the life of the house, at least during the day, being probably roofed-in to form an open-sided, airy pavilion.

Plaster (*chunam*) was used everywhere to adorn these buildings, and as a base for painting. Yaksha figures were painted as door-guardians and certain decorative motives are also mentioned: wreath-work, five-ribbon work, dragon's teeth work, and creeper-work.

As has been said, nothing of these splendours has come down to us in any of the various sites that have been excavated. It is

Western Gateway (torana) of the Great Stupa. The pillar capitals depict four yaksha-like figures standing back-to-back with upraised hands supporting the architraves, 70 B.C.E., Satavahana dynasty. Sandstone, gateway height: 10.36 m, pillar height: 4.27 m. Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh.

obvious, however, that the greater part of these structures was of wood and therefore perishable, as, indeed, layers of ashes testify in many places. It is noticeable that the pillars of the upper stories of the buildings depicted on the bas-reliefs are octagonal, usually without capital or base. The pillars on the ground floor are octagonal also but have heavy bells surmounted by animal capitals or brackets, which suggests that the lower pillars were possibly of stone. On the right jamb of the East gateway at Sanchi are represented six superimposed stories, said by Grünwedel to represent the six *deva-lokas*. The pillars of these structures are grouped in pairs, the lowest of each having bell-capitals, the upper being plain and leading up to the barrel-roof. There is a considerable difference between the proportions of the upper and lower pillars, which again suggests a difference in material.

Although monastic institutions in India were not confined to the Buddhists, the Buddhist Sangha (community) attained a height of power and a detail of organization to which the Jain and Brahmanical communities never aspired; and in consequence, the buildings dedicated to the use of the Order were frequently designed on a scale of the utmost magnificence. The central and all important building of the early monasteries seems to have been the Sabha or hall of meeting of the community. Gateways, store-houses, kitchens, and well-houses are mentioned, but the actual cells of the monks were apparently a group of separate buildings. These, it seems, were built by the brethren themselves, among whom were many skilled architects. In the Jatakas it is said, however, that only the senior brethren had their own chambers, while the juniors slept in the hall. Later the Buddha ordained that novices should be lodged with their supervisors for three days and then sent to their own place. The forest-dweller's leafy hut is often portrayed in the early sculpture and many of the lesser dwellings of the monastery were probably of this type. The meeting hall or service hall must have been a common type of building in ancient India, for the Buddhist Sangha was by no means an innovation and can be directly compared to the hundred and one political and social corporations of the time. Every village, profession, and craft was organised into guilds which had their appointed places of meeting.

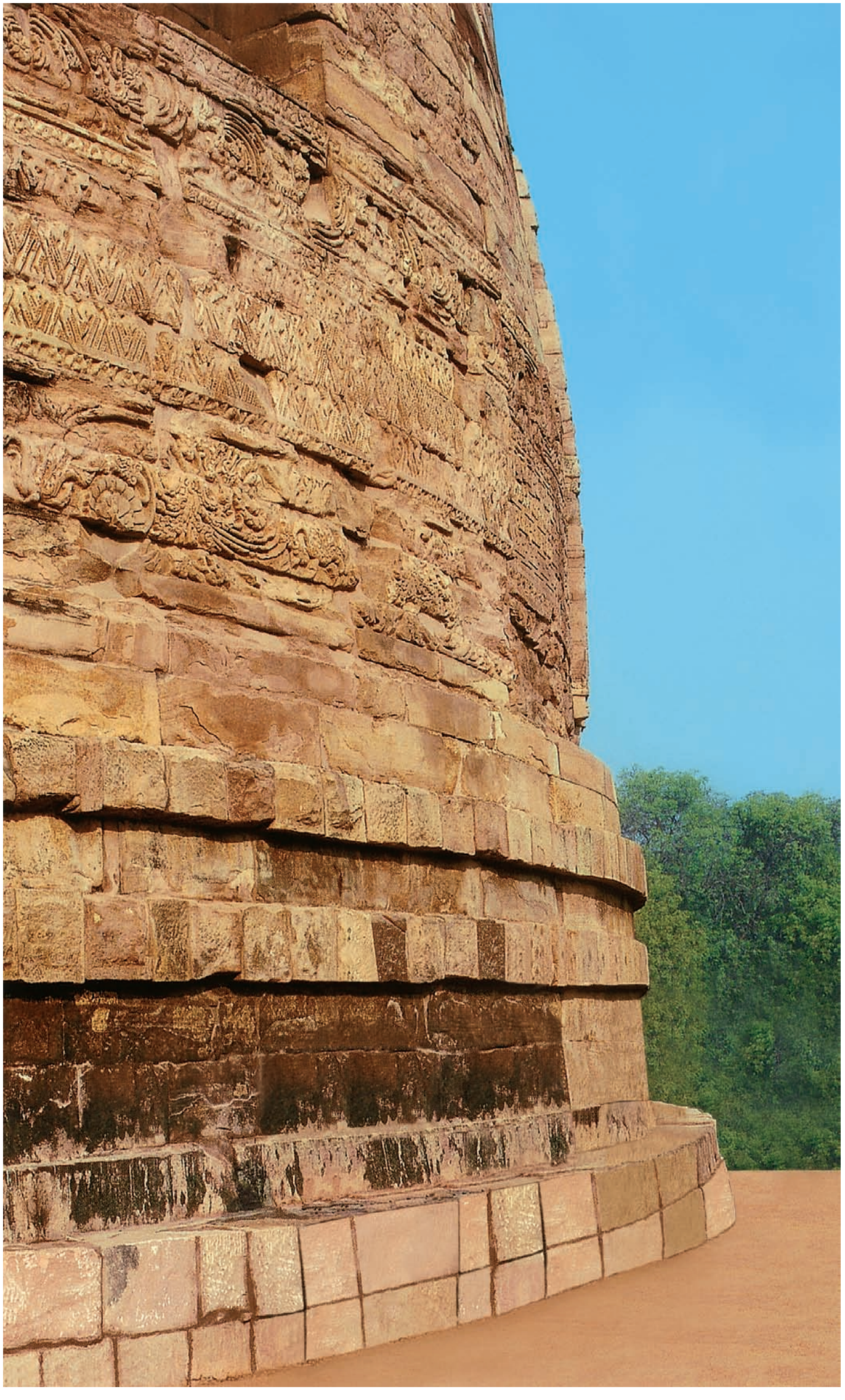
The mote hall of the Licchavis (Santhagara) must have been a building of the same kind as the Assembly-hall of the Buddhists.

Before the period of the rock-cut halls and cells like those at Bhaja and of later Bedsa, in Gandhara (area around Peshawar, in the east of the Khyber Pass) and in medieval India generally, the monasteries took a quadrangular form, the cells being built so that they faced inwards on the four sides of a courtyard.

When such a quadrangle became multiple, through the addition of chapels, stupas, refectories, halls, churches, storehouses, and other buildings, the greater monasteries covered an enormous area, and offered to the architect, sculptor, and painter endless opportunities for the display of art in every form. Although no very early monastery has survived in a condition at all complete, the ground-plans of many such establishments have been clearly traced, and in Gandhara considerable remains of superstructures crowded with statuary have been disclosed. Recorded descriptions and extant remains amply attest the splendour of the more important monasteries, each of which was a centre of secular as well as of religious education, and also a school of art in which men were trained in all the crafts needed for the adornment of the holy places.

Something of this great school of art is preserved for us in the great rock-cut halls and dwelling-caves of Western India. Here, at Bhaja, Kondane, Pitalkhora, Bedsa, Ajanta, Nasik, Karli, and Kanheri, have been hewn out of the very heart of the rock full-scale reproductions of the ancient assembly-halls in all the detail of

Dhamekh Stupa. This stupa is said to mark the spot where Buddha gave his first sermons to his five disciples after attaining enlightenment. The narrative sculptures show different events from Buddha's life,
249 B.C.E./500 C.E., Maurya dynasty (Ashoka)/late Gupta period.
Solid cylinder of bricks and stone, stupa: diameter: 28 m, height 43.6 m.
Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh.



their wooden construction. In general plan they correspond with the barrel-roofed buildings of the early sculpture. They are apsidal with side aisles on either hand and are lit by the great horseshoe window at one end. A survey of this series of caves lays bare a stylistic advance from purely wooden imitation to definitely lithic forms. At Bhaja the plain octagonal pillars rake inwards considerably; the screen that closed the lower part of the great window was actually of timber mortised into the rock as are the carefully inset roof beams. There is no decoration except bands of railing-pattern and tiers of miniature 'chatty a windows', derived from the piled-up stories of the wooden originals. These details apply to the caves at Kondane, Pitalkhora and to the earliest at Ajanta (Cave X). Later the wooden screen is reproduced in stone and bell-capitals and bases, and tiered-up abaci with heavy animal upper-capitals appear, while at Nasik, Karli, and Kanheri sculpture is freely used. This sculpture is all obviously post-Sanchi. At Karli and Kanheri highly decorated railings of the Amaravati kind are found and also guardian figures which closely correspond to the middle phase of Kushan sculpture, found at Mathura. The epigraphical evidence coincides with the artistic evidence, dating the last of these early caves (Karli and Kanheri) in the second century C.E. The façade of Bhaja is so exactly like the bas-relief representations of the wooden original at Bharhut and Bodh Gaya that the earliest of the series may be accepted as second century B.C.E.

The Lomas Rishi Cave in the Barabar hills belongs to a group of small rock-cut cells some of which were dedicated in the reigns of Ashoka and Dasaratha, his grandson. Like the other caves its interior walls have received the fine polish which is so typical of Mauryan work. The original work seems to have been

The Jetavanaramaya stupa, located in the ruins of Jetavana Monastery, 3rd-4th century C.E., Anuradhapura period. One of the largest brick structures in the world (93.3 million baked bricks), height: 122 m, volume: 233,000 m^3. Anuradhapura.

Symbols of the Buddha's first sermon, with centred triple wheel, aniconic representation of the historic Buddha, 2nd century B.C.E., Kushan period, Ancient Gandhara (modern Pakistan/Afghanistan). Grey schist, 23.2 x 19.7 x 4.4 cm. Private collection.

discontinued owing to a flaw in the rock. The façade must have been a later addition, for it is akin to the work at Bharhut. It, however, offers a good example of the close imitation of wooden construction.

Sculpture

The art of the times dealt with in this chapter is characterized by frank naturalism. It is thoroughly human, a mirror of the social and religious life of ancient India, apparently a much pleasanter and merrier life than that of the India of later ages, when the Brahmans had reasserted their superiority and imposed their ideas upon art and upon every branch of Hindu civilization. The early sculptures, while full of the creatures of gay fancy, are free from the gloom and horror of the conceptions of the medieval artists. The Buddhism with which nearly all of them are concerned was, as already observed, the popular creed of men and women living a natural life in the world, seeking happiness, and able to enjoy themselves.

There has, also, been a tendency to apply certain literary standards, which are in essence medieval, to the work of the Early Period, and in fact, to all Indian art, wholesale. The various members, mouldings, and motives which dealt with in the Silpa Sastras cannot be found outside the buildings of the medieval period. With regard to the passages dealing with the sculpture the

The Buddha's first sermon, 2nd century B.C.E., Satavahana dynasty. Steatite, height: 39.5 cm. Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh.

The footprints of the Buddha (Buddhapada) from the Great Stupa at Amaravati, 1st century B.C.E., Satavahana period, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh. Limestone panel, 67.5 x 46.25 x 15 cm. British Museum, London.

same thing applies. The Sastras are in fact technical memoranda based on a literary tradition, which may be taken to have crystalised out from the great literary activity of the Gupta period. Their import is very great with regard to the iconography of medieval and modern India. They can only be applied with great circumspection to the earlier art, the inspiration of which is oral and living.

The study of the existing monuments of Ashoka, scanty as they are, leaves one with a clear impression of a definite and distinct school of sculpture, with great stylistic and architectonic qualities and certain characteristics which distinguish it from the sculpture of the Early Period and from all other periods of Indian art. Firstly, finely stylized as these works are they are essentially naturalistic. Secondly, columns, capitals, and caves all have a highly finished, polished surface which is unique and unmistakable. Certain sculptures, however, exist which possess this distinguishing finish and yet as sculptures are to be classed with the work of Bharhut and Sanchi. These may be treated as a link between the two schools. Anyhow the Mauryan period, which is historically exact, provides a lower limit for the dating of the work of the Early Period. Among these sculptures, which are mostly of colossal size, is a mutilated standing statue of a male, perhaps representing the Yaksha demigod Kuvera, god of wealth, found at Parkham in the Mathura District, and now in the Mathura Museum. The material is polished grey sandstone similar to that used for the Ashoka pillars. The height, including pedestal, is two and a half metres, and the breadth across the shoulders is 79 centimetres. The excessively massive body, which possesses considerable grandeur, is clothed in a waistcloth (*dhoti*) held around the loins by means of a flat girdle tied in a knot in front. A second flat girdle is bound round the chest. The ornaments are a necklace and a torque from which four tassels hang down on the back. Some praise may be given to the treatment of the drapery.

This is probably the earliest example of 'early' sculpture as distinct from the Mauryan. In treatment and detail it is clearly a forerunner of the sculpture of Bharhut and has nothing in common with the art of the Mauryan capitals. Several other colossal sculptures, which do not possess the distinctive Mauryan polish, emphasize this development.

An uninscribed statue of a female, two metres in height, found near Besnagar adjoining Bhilsa in the Gwalior State, Central India, a locality associated by tradition with Ashoka, is to be classed among these on account of the style and costume.

The figure wears the heavy headdress as found at Bharhut and Sanchi and also the linked belt of beaded strands and the double breast chain. The finely pleated waistcloth is held at the hips by a belt with a looped clasp and its folds are treated in fashion that is reminiscent of the Sanchi bracket-figures rather than the Bharhut *devatas*. The modelling is naturalistic, but the sculpture has suffered severely from violence and exposure.

There is a second colossal female at Besnagar, two metres high, locally known as the Telin or 'oil woman', which has been described by Cunningham. He also mentions the existence in his time of a polished sandstone elephant and rider.

In 1873, Cunningham discovered at Bharhut, about midway between Allahabad and Jabalpur, the remains of a Buddhist stupa, surrounded by a stone railing adorned with sculptures of surprising richness and interest. The stupa had then been almost wholly carried off by greedy villagers in search of bricks, who treated the sculptures with equal ruthlessness, and were prevented from destroying them only by the great weight of the stones. During the following three years, Cunningham and his assistant uncovered the ruins and saved a large number of the sculptured stones by sending them to Calcutta, where they now form one of the chief treasures of the Indian Museum. Everything left on the site was taken away by the country people and converted to base uses.

The railing, constructed after the usual pattern, in a highly developed form, was extremely massive, the pillars being 2.15 metres in height, and each of the coping stones about the same in length. The sculptures of the coping were devoted mainly to the representation of incidents in the Jatakas, or tales of the previous births of the Buddha. The carvings on the rails, pillars, and gateways were exceedingly varied in subject and treatment of Buddhist legends. The structure must have been very much like Sanchi. The composite pillar of the gateway, made up of four clustered columns crowned by a modified Persepolitan capital,

Mahayan Chaitya-Griha Cave Temple, 5th-6th century C.E., late Gupta period. Rock-cut hall. Ajanta caves (Cave XXVI), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

is worthy of special notice. An inscription records that the Eastern gateway with the adjoining masonry was erected during the rule of the Sunga dynasty (c. 185-73 B.C.E.), but it is not possible to determine the date of the monument with greater precision. The execution of work so costly and elaborate must have extended over many years. Certain masons' marks in the Kharoshthi character of the northwestern frontier suggest that perhaps foreign artists were called in to teach and assist local talent. The railing exhibits a great mass of sculptures of a high order of excellence. The subjects and style are described by Cunningham as follows:

> The subjects represented in the Bharhut sculptures are both numerous and varied, and many of them are of the highest interest and importance for the study of Indian style. Thus we have more than a score of illustrations of the legendary Jatakas, some half-dozen illustrations of historical scenes connected with the life of Buddha, which are quite invaluable for the history of Buddhism. Their value is chiefly due to the inscribed labels that are attached to many of them, and which make their identification absolutely certain. Amongst the historical scenes the most interesting are the processions of the Rajas Ajatasatru and Prasenajita on their visits to Buddha; the former on his elephant, the latter in his chariot, exactly as they are described in the Buddhist chronicles.

Another invaluable sculpture is the representation of the famous Jetavana monastery at Sravasti with its mango tree and temples, and the rich banker Anathapindika in the foreground emptying a cartful of gold pieces to pave the surface of the garden.

Of large figures there are upwards of thirty alto-rilievo statues of Yakshas and Yakshinis (Yakshis), Devatas, and Nagarajas, one half of which are inscribed with their names. We thus see that the guardianship of the north gate was entrusted to

Ajanta caves, 5th-6th century C.E., late Gupta period.
Rock-cut. Ajanta caves (Caves XXIII-XXVII), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Great horseshoe window, 6th century C.E., late Gupta period.
Rock-cut. Ajanta caves (Cave I), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Kuvera, King of the Yakshas, agreeably to the teaching of the Buddhist and Brahmanical cosmogonies. And similarly we find that the other gates were confided to Devas and the Nagas.

The representations of animals and trees are also very numerous, and some of them are particularly spirited and characteristic. Of other objects there are boats, horse-chariots, and bullock-carts, besides several kinds of musical instruments, and a great variety of flags, standards, and other symbols of royalty.

About one half of the full medallions of the rail-bars and the whole of the half-medallions of the pillars are filled with flowered ornaments of singular beauty and delicacy of execution.

The medallions on the railbars and the half-medallions on the pillars are filled with a wonderful variety of bas-relief subjects. The comic monkey scenes display a lively sense of humour, freedom of fancy, and clever drawing. They must, of course, like all the early bas-reliefs, be judged as pictures drawn on stone, rather than as sculpture. The rollicking humour and liberty of fancy unchecked by rigid canons, while alien to the transcendental philosophy and ascetic ideals of the Brahmans, are thoroughly in accordance with the spirit of Buddhism, which, as a practical religion, does not stress the spiritual to the extinction of human and animal happiness. Everything seems to indicate that India was a much happier land in the days when Buddhism flourished than it has ever been since. The first medallion selected for illustration is a very funny picture of a tooth being extracted from a man's jaw by an elephant pulling a gigantic forceps. The stories alluded to are presumably of the Jataka class. The spontaneity of the work vouches for the popularity of the tradition, stories that must have been on every child's lips.

Another medallion shows a characteristic and well-preserved specimen of the bas-reliefs on the coping. The artists who could design and execute such pictures in hard sandstone had no small skill.

Sections of the enclosure railing (vedika) and a standard pillar (stambha) at the eastern gate of the great Bharhut stupa, 3rd-4th century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Red sandstone, railing height: 200 cm, pillar height: 216.41 cm. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal. (p. 46)

Naga king Chakavaka, early 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Alto-rilievo statue of a railing pillar, red sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal. (p. 47)

Havell observes that the technique is that of the wood-carver. The Chulakoka sculpture is especially interesting as the earliest extant example of the woman-and-tree motif. One of the best statues is that of the Yakshi Sudarsana which exhibits a good knowledge of the human form and marked skill in the modelling of the hips in a difficult position.

The large alto-relievo images of minor deities on the pillars vary much in execution.

The remaining relief details illustrate various fantastical hybrid creatures, winged lions and oxen, a centaur, a horse-headed female or *kinnara*, and a frieze of the fish-tailed monsters common at Mathura and in Gandhara. These are human-bodied and appear to be half-naga, half-makara. These strange beasts have a debatable origin. The Naga or snake godling is usually represented in India with his snake-hood, but in the Jatakas appears to be able to cast off this stigma and is then only to be known by his red eyes. These lesser divinities are by birth Indian and native in the earliest

Chakavaka Miga Jataka (previous birth of the Buddha):
Once the Buddha was born as a Royal Deer. During the course of a big famine the people started killing deer. A large flock of one thousand deer was divided into two separate groups of which one was led by Lakshana and the other by Kala. Lakshana in the story is associated with Siddhartha and Kala with Devadatta, early 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Carved medallion of a railing pillar, red sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal.

Vase (Purnaghata or Mangalakalasa) with overflowing lilies, lotus buds and blooming lotuses. Four swans are perched on the pericarp of the overblown flowers, symbolising life and abundance, early 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Carved medallion of a cross bar, red sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal.

folklore and sculpture. The makara, too, whose scrolled tail is used so magnificently to form the volutes of the architraves of toranas at Bharhut, Sanchi, and Mathura, is also well founded traditionally. These with the kinnaris or half-bird musicians and the horse-headed kinnaras may be classed together as *gandharvas,* or lesser heavenly beings. They are as types paralleled with several other motives of early Indian art in the sculpture of West Asia, Assyria, and Persia. The bell and frieze design of the Bharhut copestone and its upper pyramid and lotus band are among these, and also, the bell capital surmounted by animal groups. Whatever the distant sources of these motives may be, their treatment at Bharhut, Bodh Gaya, and Sanchi, is wholly Indian. As has been said many of them spring directly from the soil.

The Bharhut sculptures, having escaped the destructive zeal of Islamic iconoclasts by reason of their situation in an out-of-the-way region, lay safely hidden under a thick veil of jungle until, when the establishment of general peace and the spread of cultivation stimulated the local rustics to construct substantial houses from the spoils of the old monuments for which they cared nothing. The extensive group of early Buddhist buildings at and near Sanchi in the Bhopal State similarly evaded demolition because it lay out of the path of the armies of Islam. Although the monuments of Sanchi have not suffered as much as those of Bharhut from the ravages of the village builder, they have not wholly escaped injury. During the first half of the nineteenth century much damage was done by the ill-advised curiosity of amateur archaeologists. Now, however, the authorities concerned are fully alive to their responsibility, and everything possible is being done to conserve the local memorials of India's ancient greatness. Sanchi today is a triumph of archaeological restoration.

The importance of Sanchi in the history of Indian art rests chiefly upon the four wonderful gateways forming the entrances to the

Procession of the Raja Prasenajita in his chariot on his visit to Buddha, late 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Relief of a railing pillar, red sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal. (p. 50)

Humorous scene: A giant yaksha, calm in the spirit of a Bodhisattva is being tortured by monkeys who are using a large clipper to remove the hair from the yaksha's nostrils. The elephant is being driven by beating, piercing by a goad, and by making noise through trumpet and drum, early 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Carved medallion of a cross bar, red sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal. (p. 51)

Jetavana Monastery at Sravasti with its mango trees and temples, and the rich banker, Anathapindika emptying a cartful of gold pieces to pave the surface of the garden, early 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Carved medallion of a railing pillar, red sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal.

Jataka scenes with animal and fruit decoration, early 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Bas-relief of the coping, red sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal.

Railing pillar from the original shrine enclosure at Bodhgaya, Bihar. The upper roundels depict stories from the previous lives of the Buddha (Hamsa Jataka), early 1st century C.E., Kushan period, Bodhgaya, Bihar. Sandstone, 116 x 37 cm. Given by Surgeon-Maj. F. A. Turton, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

procession path between the stupa and the surrounding railing. A key to the chronology of the site is provided by the Ashoka column which stands to the right of the South gateway. The Mauryan level is marked by a floor of pounded earth and clay. Three other levels or floors appear over it, the top-most being lime-plastered. Above all is the pavement of large slabs contemporary with the stupa railing. This is a perfectly plain copy of a wooden post and rail fence and may be dated in the latter half of the second century B.C.E., since there is 122 centimetres between the upper pavement and the Mauryan level, which could hardly have accumulated in less than a century.

The four gateways, which are additions to the original railing, fall artistically in to pairs, the East and West gates, showing a slight development in modelling and the use of light and shade. A little more than fifty years may have elapsed between their execution, the end of the first century B.C.E. being accepted as a general date for all four. The Southern gateway was prostrate when visited by Captain Fell in 1819. The Western gate collapsed between 1860 and 1880, but the Northern and Eastern gates have never fallen. All have undergone thorough repairs during recent years under the able direction of Sir John Marshall, the former Director-General of Archaeology in India. Sanchi has taken on a new lease of life and beauty in his hands, the more important remains of this huge site being carefully and exactly restored and preserved. The Sanchi gateways, or toranas, stand 10.36 metres high, and are all substantially alike, while differing much in detail:

> Two massive square pillars, one on either side, 14 feet (4.3 metres) high, forming as it were the gate-posts, support an ornamental superstructure of three slightly arched stone beams or architraves placed horizontally, one above the other, with spaces between them. The topmost beam of each gate was surmounted by the sacred wheel flanked by attendants and the trisula emblem.

Dancing Peacock with full plumage. Two peahens gently approach from either side licking the claws of their dancing companion in appreciation, early 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Carved medallion of a cross bar, red sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal.

> The faces, back and front, of the beams and pillars are crowded with panels of sculpture in bas-relief representing scenes in the life of Buddha, domestic and silvan scenes, processions, sieges, adoration of trees and topes, and groups of ordinary and extraordinary animals, among which are winged bulls and lions of a Persepolitan type and horned animals with human faces.

All critics are agreed that the gateways were built in pairs and that the southern gateway is one of the earliest of the four. The capitals of its gateposts are formed by four lions seated back to back, 'indifferently carved', and of the same type as those on Ashoka's inscribed pillar already noticed. The marked decline in skill demonstrated by the contrast between the lions on the gatepost and those on the inscribed pillar is surprising considering the shortness of the interval of time, about a century, between the two compositions, or rather the essential difference between the Mauryan and the ancient Indian school. The difference is most easily verified by comparing the treatment of the lions' paws on the gatepost capital and of the same members on the capital of the inscribed pillar, or the similar Sarnath pillar. The paws of the early Ashokan sculptures are correctly modelled with four large front claws and one small hind claw, the muscles also being realistically reproduced. In the later work five large claws, all in front, are given to the paws, and the muscles are indicated by some straight channels running up and down in a purely abstract manner.

The capitals of the gateposts of the northern gateway exhibit four elephants standing back to back, and carrying riders. Those of the eastern gateway are similar. On the capitals of the latest gateway, the western, four hideous dwarfs, clumsily sculptured, take the place of the elephants or lions.

All the Sanchi sculptures, like the Ajanta paintings, deal with Buddhist subjects if a composition seems in our eyes to be purely secular, that is only because we do not understand its meaning. Genre pictures, whether in paint or bas-relief, do not exist in the ancient art of India. The main object of the artist was to illustrate his Bible, and if, perchance, the illustration could be made into a pretty picture, so much the better; but anyhow, the sacred story must be told.

In addition to his desire to tell edifying stories in a manner readily intelligible to the eyes of the faithful, the old artist clearly was dominated by the feeling that he was bound to impress on all beholders the lesson that the dead Teacher, the last and greatest of the long line of Buddhas, had won and continually received the willing homage of the whole creation – of men, women, and children, of the host of heaven, the water-sprites, and the demons – nay, even of the monsters of romance and the dumb animals. And so, in all the ancient Buddhist art, whether at Sanchi or elsewhere, weird winged figures hovering in the air, snake-headed or fish-tailed monsters emerging from their caverns or haunting the deep, offer their silent homage to the Lord of all, and the monkeys bow down in adoration before the Master who had turned the wheel of the Law and set it rolling through the world. The early artists did not dare to portray his bodily form, which had forever vanished, being content to attest his spiritual presence by silent symbols the footprints, the empty chair, and so forth. But, whether the Master was imaged or symbolized, the notion of his adoration by all creation was continually present in the minds of the artists and influenced their selection of decorative motives. Although concerned in the main with thoughts of religion and worship they were not unmindful of beauty, which they often succeeded in attaining in no small degree.

In the early works, like those of Sanchi and Bharhut, the absence of images of Buddha has the advantage of saving the stone pictures from the formal symmetrical arrangements grouped round the central figure which often weary by their monotonous iteration in Gandhara and at Amaravati.

In general way, the style of the Sanchi reliefs resembles that of those at Bharhut, compensation may be found in the elegant bracket figures, practically statues in the round, which are a specially pleasing feature of Sanchi art. A good example is a form

Humorous scene: Monkeys playing with an elephant who has been tied with a rope. It is quite likely that the elephant is a bodhisattva who begrudgingly bears the torture caused by the monkeys who are known for mischief, early 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Carved medallion of a cross bar, red sandstone.
Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal.

of the woman-and-tree motif. The beautiful decorative details of the pillar are worthy of careful study. No nation has surpassed the Indians in the variety and delicacy of the floral designs enriching their sculptures and pictures.

The reliefs of the West and East gates may be taken as being typical of the Sanchi reliefs. At the bottom of the inside of the left pillar of the East Gate stands the Yaksha guardian of the door in princely dress. His fellow stands opposite gateway - him on the other pillar. They are comparable with the Bharhut Yakshas, but the treatment of figure and ornament is considerably more rhythmic. The tree in the background is a Bignonia and the devata holds one of its blossoms in his right hand. The upper panel of the relief represents the Buddha's victory over the black snake and the conversion of Kasyapa at Uruvilva. The snake and the flames of the conflict and the astonished Brahmans, some of whom are attempting to fetch water, are all shown, but the figure of the triumphant Buddha is left to the imagination. Below this scene the story of the conversion of Kasyapa is continued and the incident of Buddha and the Brahman sacrifice is shown. Wood is being split and the preparations made, but the fire springs up and dies at the Buddha's command. On the front of the same pillar the final incident of the Buddha walking on the waters is told and the sequent visit to Rajagriha, King Bimbisara being depicted as arriving at the gate of the city in his two-horsed chariot. In the top panels of the pillars is the bodhi tree Shrine already discussed.

Surveying the work of the Early Period (second century B.C.E.-early first century C.E.) one recognizes certain distinctive common elements: the absence of the Buddha figure; its replacement by certain simple symbols; and the popular quality of the work, the living oral tradition of which is indicated by the predominance of Jataka scenes even over the scriptural; the naive technique which treats each story as a pictorial entity contained in a single panel or medallion, the figures of the protagonist being repeated twice and three times according to the demand of the drama to be unfolded.

Chanda Yakshi wearing several ornaments such as a flat necklace and a Stanahara - a stringed necklace. The arm is raised up bending the branch of a blossomed tree the stem of which is held in the grip of the left leg, early 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Carved corner pillar, red sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal. (p. 58)

At Sanchi, while the method of exposition and the bulk of the decorative motives are the same as at Bharhut, the canonical is very definitely to the fore, and the technique has advanced considerably. At Mathura and many other sites in India sculptures have been found which belong to the Early Period. With regard to these it is advisable to take Bharhut and Sanchi as types of sub-periods and so arrive at the classification Early Period I and Early Period II.

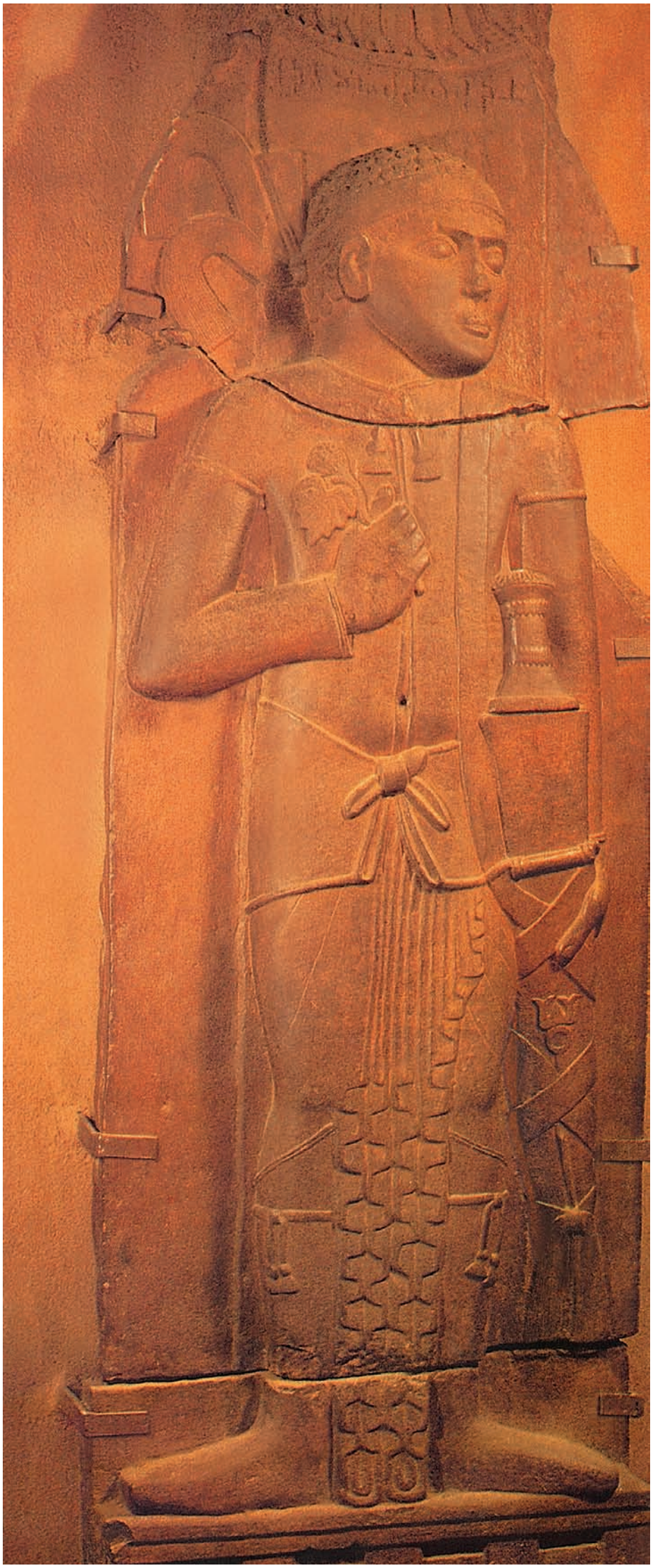
From Mathura come some reliefs. These fragments are respectively 31 centimetres and 40 centimetres in height. The turbans and jewellery and the general treatment of form and features are distinctly of the Bharhut kind. Another relief is also of this period and is interesting because of its garland-bearers and its three-tiered stupa.

The sculpture in the most ancient cave-temples of Western India, at Bhaja and Bedsa (Poona District), Pitalkhora (Khandesh District), and Kondane (Kolaba District), offers little of aesthetic interest. The small five-celled hermitage at Bhaja is perhaps the oldest. The cornice is supported by male figures used as carytids, wearing waistcloths, large turbans, and much jewellery. The statues of the armed door-keepers are similarly clothed. They must be compared to Sanchi rather than to Bharhut. The 'horses and elephants bearing men and women of bold execution' of the Bedsa capitals are likewise post-Bharhut. The sculpture at Karli, Kanheri, and Nasik is all later than Sanchi and must be compared to Kushan types among which close similitudes are to be found.

The sandstone hills known as Khandagiri, Udayagiri, and Nilagiri, situated in in the Puri District, Orissa, a few miles from the Bhubaneswar temples, are honeycombed with Jain caves of various dates, probably covering a considerable period. The local worship appears to have been devoted chiefly to the Tirthankara Parsvanath. The elaborate, but ugly and semibarbaric sculptures in the Rani Gumpha, or Queen's Cave, are interpreted as representing a procession in honour of Parsvanath. This work is unskilled rather than primitive and is probably post-Sanchi.

Rider carrying a royal standard with Garuda, figure of man and bird, on top (Garudadhvaja), early 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Relief of a railing pillar, red sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal. (p. 59)

Surya, the sun god: Warrior with a sword and a flower with leaf, early 2nd century B.C.E., Sunga dynasty, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh. Relief of a railing pillar, red sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta, West Bengal.



The Kushan, Later Satavahna, and Ikshvaku Periods

Mathura

Mathura is the chief find-spot of Kushan sculpture and, since it is linked directly to Bharhut and Sanchi by many works from its studios which clearly belong to the Early Period of Indian sculpture, it is advisable to discuss the Kushan sculpture of this site by itself, apart from Gandharan art and questions of foreign influence.

The chronology of the Kushan dynasty is still unsettled, and decisive proof is lacking of any one of the many rival theories on the subject. Six sovereigns of the dynasty are of importance for the history of India and of Indian art. The first two are most conveniently cited as Kadphises I (reign 45 to 50 C.E.) and II (reign 50 to 85 C.E.). The next four kings, Kanishka, Vasishka, Huvishka, and Vasudeva I, certainly reigned in that order for a century in round numbers. As a working hypothesis, I revert to Professor Oldenberg's old theory, and assume that Kanishka came to the throne in 78 C.E. Thus the first and second centuries after Christ are approximately filled by the rule of the leading kings of the dynasty.

In the early centuries of the Common era Mathura on the Jumna, a city of immemorial antiquity, and prosperous to this day in spite of many disasters, was sacred in the eyes of the adherents of all the three indigenous Indian religions Jainism, Buddhism, and Brahmanical Hinduism. The abundant supply of excellent red sandstone at Rupbas and other quarries in the neighbourhood favoured the development of an active school of sculptors, whose workshops supplied all parts of Northern India with idols, much as Jaipur does now. The craftsmen, of course, were prepared to supply whatever was wanted by their patrons of any religion. The character of the local stone is so distinct that the products of the Mathura studios are easily recognized wherever they may be found. Wealthy worshippers did not hesitate to undertake the cost of transporting heavy, even colossal, statues for hundreds of miles.

Sarnath, like Mathura, was holy ground to the Jains as well as the Buddhists, and is connected with Mathura and declared a Kushan site of importance by finds of fine sculptures of red Mathura sandstone inscribed in the Kushan era. Its richly adorned buildings, crowded with sculpture, were involved in common ruin by the violence of the fierce hosts of Islam at the close of the twelfth century. The Brahmanical Hindus lavished their devotion on the neighbouring city of Varanasi, and shared the misfortunes of their rivals. The sculptors of Sarnath ordinarily used the excellent pale sandstone from the quarries of Chunar in the Mirzapur District, which had supplied the blocks for Ashoka's pillars. But, as already observed, wealthy donors sometimes preferred to import red sandstone images from Mathura. During the last few years much progress has been made in unearthing the buried treasures of Sarnath, but much more remains to be found. Several statues of Bodhisattvas, executed in the round on a large scale, are almost identical with the Mathura

A gateway bracket decorated with a yakshi holding a branch (repeated on the opposite side). The figure wears courtly jewellery, including an elaborate belt and sash that secure a diaphanous skirt. This bracket belonged to a ceremonial gateway (torona) marking an entrance to a shrine, most probably a Buddhist stupa, 2nd century, Kushan period, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. Mottled red sandstone, 51 x 22 x 23 cm. Purchased from Imre Schwaiger in 1927, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

specimens and one of these is dated in the third year of the reign of Kanishka, which may be regarded provisionally as equivalent to 80 C.E. The Kushan age of such works is thus definitely determined. Halos, when present, are plain, not highly decorated as in the Gupta period.

A finely executed bas-relief, which once decorated a doorway and exhibits artistic lotus and vine patterns, besides a picture of an elephant worshipping a stupa, is quite in the Mathura style, and may be assigned with some confidence to the first century of the Common era. The style of the Sarnath works is so closely related to that of Mathura that illustrations may be dispensed with.

As at Bharhut and Sanchi the earlier sculptures at Mathura are derived from stupas. Many of them are pre-Kushan and may be directly compared to Bharhut and Sanchi as belonging to the early period. The Lonasobhika votive-tablet was may be taken as illustrating the Mathura stupas, of which none have escaped the hand of the iconoclast. It must be referred to Kushan times, however, being distinguished from the latest work of the Early School (Sanchi) by its three superimposed tiers, the form of its corner pillars, and the stylized representation of the octagonal railing pillars, as well as by the freer treatment of the flying spirit-host.

This 'tablet of homage', with a relief sculpture of a Jain stupa (7.8 metres high, 55.24 centimetres wide), now in the Mathura Museum, was found embedded in a wall near the Holi gate, but is said to have come from a field near the village of Maholi. It was dedicated by a certain courtesan named Lonasobhika to the Arahat Vardhamana or Mahavira, and gives a good picture of an ancient Jain stupa, which was constructed and decorated on exactly the same lines as the Buddhist edifices of a similar kind. In this case the building depicted stood on a high plinth, and was approached by nine steps, leading to a torana gateway of the Sanchi type, with a garland hanging from it. The stupa was surrounded by a plain railing, and two similar railings were carried round the drum. The posturing females are unmistakably nude. The side columns are of the so-called Persepolitan type and bear the Wheel and Lion.

Not only are certain of the Mathura sculptures definitely comparable to Bharhut and Sanchi, but it is evident that the tradition was never broken, Kushan sculpture springing directly from the older school. As has been said, most of these sculptures had as their function the adornment of Jain or Buddhist stupas and consist chiefly of railing pillars and medallions. Many of the ancient motives are preserved such as the bull and the fish-elephant (*makara*). The bracket figure is a development of the woman-and-tree motif used for the same structural purpose as at Sanchi. Here the rendering is a little more schematic and architectural but much of the bold sinuous freedom of the East Gateway nymphs is preserved. The work of this period shows an increasing schematic and patterned quality, well illustrated in the knotted foliage. This delicate abstract treatment of foliage, suggesting the half unfurled leaves of the vine, was afterwards used with great effect in the doorways of Gupta shrines.

The excavations at Mathura have yielded numerous specimens of pillars of stone railings associated with stupas, both Jain and Buddhist. Most of the Buddhist ones were found on the site of Huvishka's monastery (reign 140 to 183 C.E.) in the Old Jail or Jamalpur mound, now entirely removed. The Jain specimens came from the Kankali mound, which included the remains of an early stupa and two temples. The pillars have high-relief statuettes, usually of females, on the front, and other panelled scenes one above the other, or floral patterns on the back.

On a Jain railing pillar is carved a Yakshi in the conventional pose. Her beaded belt, heavy ear-rings and anklets are interesting and typical of the period. The sword she holds is of the ancient Indian kind which was still in use in Mughal and Maharatta days. Such rather immodest females adorning many of the pillars were supposed by Cunningham to be dancing-girls, an opinion certainly erroneous. They appear rather, as argued by Dr. Vogel, to belong to the Yakshi class, like the similar figures of the Bharhut railing. Some of the figures seem to be naked, but in others the apparent nudity is merely an artistic convention, the female drapery being treated schematically by flowing incised lines. This treatment of drapery persists throughout Indian art, and is radically different from the deeply undercut naturalistic drapery of certain Gandharan work.

The Yakshi on drawf in the Mathura Museum represents a variant of the common woman-and-tree motif. The female stands on a prostrate dwarf, a male Yaksha. The pose, as in many other cases, is easy and graceful. A sculpture in Calcutta shows two females together, under a tree. A pillar in the Mathura Museum presents a half-back view of a female. The unusual attitudes of two female sculptures also shown in the Mathura Museum are treated much more skilfully, the first being obviously a dancing pose with right arm bent and the second with right leg bent. The male figure, seemingly of a soldier, is quite exceptional and effectively designed. A well-executed sculpture in the Indian Museum represents a youth riding a conventional lion.

There is a dearth of photographs of the magnificent sculptures in the Mathura Museum and an illustrated catalogue is urgently needed. A seated Bodhisattva in the Mathura Museum, bearing a dedicatory inscription, 'for the welfare and happiness of all beings', is of special interest as exhibiting the saint seated in the traditional yogi attitude, which became general subsequently, with his right shoulder bare, and the right hand raised in Abhaya Mudra. The drapery is excessively formal in its folds, though the modelling of the figure is very suavely accomplished. The two flying spirits are early examples of a motive common in the sculpture and painting of later periods. The formal portrayal of their scarves and the knotted waistclothes of the other two attendant figures is typical of Kushan work. The *ushnisha* or skull-protuberance is simply represented in a unique manner which must be accepted as the primitive form of this divine sign of Buddhahood, afterwards influenced by Gandharan forms. The figure is called a Bodhisattva in the inscription, although he is seated underneath the bodhi tree and wears the orthodox costume of the Buddha. The tree is the pipal (*ficus religiosa*), the proper tree of Gautama.

This sculpture closely corresponds to the Anyor Buddha in the Mathura Museum, and is typical of the middle Kushan period to which the bulk of Mathura sculpture belongs.

Section of an architrave from a gateway (torona), decorated with a man holding a fly-whisk, a griffin and a lion; probably part of a Buddhist veneration scene, 2nd century, Kushan period, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. Buff coloured sandstone with traces of a former coating of hematite, 27.3 x 76.8 x 10.2 cm. Purchased from Imre Schwaiger in 1926, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

The standing Buddha of the Mathura school found at Sarnath, mentioned above, is the earliest dated Buddha-figure, being inscribed in the Kushan third year. It may be compared to a Bodhisattva in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. In the Sarnath sculpture the ushnisha seems to have been inset in the head by means of a tenon or mortice. It is interesting to note how naively this divine excrescence is treated by the sculptors who first dared to portray the Buddha in stone; quite different is the sophisticated attempt at disguisement of the Greco-Buddhist tradition. The treatment of drapery and jewellery in these Kushan Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is purely Indian. However, a distinct type of Buddha-figure is to be found at Mathura, which approaches the Gandharan image in its treatment of the clothing and its drapery. Most of these figures appear to belong to the later reigns of the dynasty. They have a certain clumsiness about them that suggests foreign influence.

Among the Mathura sculptures of the Kushan period is a rather anomalous group which is usually considered to be the result of foreign influence. The technique of these sculptures is one with that of the purely Indian sculptures already discussed. The treatment of the figure is easy and naturalistic, although somewhat heavy and lacking in rhythm when compared to Bharhut and Sanchi. The drapery is somewhat markedly less stylistic than that of the early Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The foliage backgrounds are

Lady with mirror, 2nd century, Kushan period.
Spotted red sandstone, height: 108 cm. Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.

Woman with pot and grapes, 2nd century, Kushan period.
Red sandstone, height: 132 cm. Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.

also absolutely according to the Indian tradition. However, the subjects of this group of sculptures do not seem to be either Jain or Buddhist.

The much discussed group, usually described as 'Herakles and the Nemean Lion', was discovered by Cunningham serving a lowly purpose as the side of a cattle-trough and is now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. It is 74 centimetres high. The hero grasps the beast with his left arm and presumably threatened it with a club in the missing left hand. He is nude, except for a skin hung behind his back, and fastened by the paws round the neck. The lion, with stylized mane, is typically Indian, like the lions supporting Kushan thrones. The naturalistic, full modelling of the figure has been considered to be the result of Greek reminiscences.

The Herakles-and-Lion motif is of great antiquity, going back to Assyrian art, which represented Gistubar, the 'Assyrian Hercules', clubbing and strangling a lion in the same way. This Indian version is usually dubbed Hellenistic with an airy indication of Western Asia as the source of the foreign influence.

A certain group of sculptures from Mathura or its neighbourhood, all dealing with strong drink and intoxication, which may be classed together as 'Bacchanalian', have excited much interest and discussion, in spite of which their interpretation is still far from clear. The supposed Greek character of these sculptures, when first discovered, was much exaggerated by the early commentators. As with the Herakles and most examples of Western influence in Indian art this 'Greek character' is difficult to define.

The block discovered in 1836 by Colonel Stacy at Mathura and is now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, was at first supposed to represent Silenus, and so became known as the 'Stacy Silenus'. But everybody now acknowledges that the subject is Indian, whether the sculptor was influenced by the Silenus model or not. The stone is 1.1 metres high, 91 centimetres broad, and 40 centimetres thick, with a circular basin on the top 40 centimetres in diameter and 20 centimetres in depth, seemingly intended to serve as the socket for a column. Both this block and its replica, to be described presently, were carved on back as well as front, and were evidently designed to be viewed from both directions. Apparently they were the bases of columns, which stood at an entrance, or entrances. But the difference of dimensions suggests that the two blocks may have belonged to distinct buildings.

The front group comprises four persons in two pairs, each consisting of a man and woman standing under an Ashoka tree in flower. The stout man on the right has his left arm round the waist of his female companion, who holds his right hand in hers, thus giving him the support rendered necessary by his intoxicated condition, due to the liquor, pots of which stand on the ground. The couple on the left stand facing, in attitudes apparently indifferent, but their countenances have been destroyed, so that their expression is lost. Traces of chaplets may be discerned on the heads of all.

The reeling man wears nothing except a pair of short swim shorts, and a scarf or cloak hanging behind his back and fastened round his neck by a knot. The slighter and perfectly sober man on the left is decently dressed in long drawers extending to his ankles, and a close-fitting tunic reaching below his knees. Both of the women are clad in a short tunic coming down a little below the waist, and possibly also in a long skirt. Each holds a piece of loose drapery, worn as a scarf, across her legs. The woman on the left has it thrown over her left arm in the fashion adopted by some of the Gandhara Bodhisattvas. Both women are adorned with heavy Indian anklets, armlets, and collars.

The reverse group, much mutilated, comprises five figures, of whom the principal is a fat elderly man sitting on a stone seat with his left leg tucked up, and so drunk that he has to be supported on his left side by a man and a boy, and on his right by a woman dressed like the females in the front group. The drunkard does not

wear drawers like the merry fellow in that composition, but has a waistcloth loosely fastened. In style both reliefs are similar, the modelling being life-like, and the action clearly expressed. The companion block of nearly the same dimensions, but somewhat larger, was discovered many years later by late F. S. Growse at Pali Khera, a suburb of modern Mathura included within the limits of the ancient city. The reverse group, exhibiting the effects of deep potations, being almost identical with the reverse of the Stacy block, need not be further described. The front group, however, differs from its companion. Five figures under an Ashoka tree again appear. The principal is a fat man, seemingly nude, seated with his left leg tucked up, on a low heap of stones laid in courses, in the conventional manner usually used to indicate mountain heights. He is drinking from a noggin, apparently of wood, which a male attendant is ready to replenish. The proceedings are watched by another man, a woman, and a small boy.

Two other Bacchanalian groups, found among the sculptures in the Mathura Museum by Dr. Vogel and described by him, throw welcome light upon the date and meaning of the earlier discoveries described above. One of these groups, 35 centimetres high represents a corpulent, coarse-looking man, apparently nude, squatted, and holding in his right hand a cup, which a female attendant is about to fill from a jar. His left hand grasps a long object, presumed to be a money-bag. This last attribute and the physique of the obese drinker permit little doubt that the personage represented is Kuvera, the god of riches, whose podgy form has become familiar from the many images collected of late years in connexion with Buddhist monasteries from the Punjab to Sri Lanka. This sculpture, however, is medieval and closely corresponds to another of reddish sandstone, probably of Mathura workmanship, found at Osian, Rajputana (currently Rajasthan). Kuvera (also called Vaisravana and Jambhala) was king of the Yaksha demigods or sprites, and forms of his effigy are closely related to certain images from Gandhara. Vogel probably is right in associating all the Bacchanalian sculptures of Mathura with Yaksha worship.

Fredric Salmon Growse also published a mutilated statue, 94 centimetres high, lying at Kukargrama in the Mathura District a singularly graceful figure of a Naga youth with a canopy of seven cobra heads, holding his right hand above his head, while his left grasps a cup similar in shape to that seen on the Pali Khera block, but apparently without the curved handle. A garland of wild flowers is twined round his body, and he wears a high headdress of a pattern commonly found in Kushan sculptures. The worship of the Nagas, the spirits of the waters, was much favoured by the ancient inhabitants of the Mathura region in Kushan times. This drinking Naga is related to another fine life-size statue of a Naga water-sprite from Chhargaon, near Mathura, now in the Mathura Museum, the approximate date of which is fixed by an inscription on the back, recorded in the fortieth year during the reign of Huvishka. According to the chronology provisionally adopted in this work, the statue, which is 1.5 metres high, may be ascribed to the year 117 or 118 C.E. The modelling is good. The arrangement of the waistcloth in a twisted roll is typically Kushan. The broken left hand probably held a cup.

Besides the Kushan Buddhas or Bodhisattvas and the Nagas, various Kushan canonical scenes are found in bas-relief. A common representation is the visite of Indra to Buddha in the Indrasila cave. The mountainous locality is conventionally indicated by 'rock-work' and its desolateness by birds and beasts looking out from their lairs. A tablet with relief sculpture represents a three-tiered Jain stupa with trees on either side of it and pairs of harpies (*suparnas*) and centaurs (*kinnaras*) bringing offerings and garlands. These 'offering-bearer' scenes are very common and, of course, are also to be found at Bharhut and Sanchi. At Mathura and in Gandhara they develop into processions and pageants as shown in the archway spandrels. The figure-sculpture here is excellent, the garland-bearers of the middle band being portrayed with a fine rhythmic effect. The floral-bands are very simply treated and are typical of a common style of Kushan decoration.

It is to be noticed that just as there are fewer jataka scenes at Sanchi than at Bharhut, there appear to be still fewer at Kushan Mathura.

Surya with sword, late 1st century C.E., Kushan period.
Buff sandstone, height: 48 cm. Mathura Museum, Uttar Pradesh. (Top left)

Yaksha with cup and fruit, 3rd century C.E., late Kushan period.
Spotted red sandstone, height: 68.5 cm.
Mathura Museum, Uttar Pradesh. (Top right)

Buddha making the gesture of fearlessness (abhaya mudra),
2nd-1st century B.C.E., Kushan period, Katra, Uttar Pradesh. Red sandstone of Sikri, height: 69 cm. Mathura Museum, Uttar Pradesh. (Bottom left)

Buddha making the gesture of fearlessness (abhaya mudra), c. 100 B.C.E., Kushan period, Katra, Uttar Pradesh. Mottled sandstone, height: 35.9 cm.
Mathura Museum, Uttar Pradesh. (Bottom right)

Nagaraja, a snake-king, lord of the underworld, 167 C.E.,
Kushan period, Chhargaon, Uttar Pradesh.
Sandstone, height: 152.4 cm. Mathura Museum, Uttar Pradesh.

Buddha Sakyamuni standing, first half of 2nd century B.C.E.,
Kushan period. Red sandstone, height: 172 cm.
Private collection, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.

The canon is fast crystallizing into a literary form, to the exclusion of the ancient popular parables. The jatakas, which are to be recognized at Ajanta, are on the whole of a different class, most of them being definitely literary.

Amaravati

The sculptures from the stupa of Amaravati and its surrounding railing or screen of marble may claim the distinction of being the most accessible specimens of early Indian art. No visitor to the British Museum, however indifferent to Indian curiosities, can help seeing the spoils of the stupa and railing displayed on the walls of the grand staircase.

The small town of Amaravati on the south bank of the Krishna (Kistna) river, in the Guntur District, Madras, represents a more important ancient city called Dharanikota, a place of considerable note from at least 200 B.C.E.

A richly decorated stupa, known to have been in good repair and still venerated in the twelfth century, continued to exist to the south of the town up to the close of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was utterly destroyed by a greedy local landholder, eager to obtain cheap building material and convinced that marble slabs, plain or carved, formed excellent food for a lime-kiln. Two centuries ago Colonel Mackenzie visited the place and had drawings made of numerous slabs, now no longer in existence. Various archaeological explorers have salved remnants of the sculptures, which are now mostly housed in either the British Museum or the Central Museum, Madras. Our knowledge of the extraordinary richness of the decoration of the stupa and its railing is derived from the poor remnants thus rescued and Colonel

Great Miracle of Sravasti, c. 100 C.E., early Kushan period,
Ancient Gandhara (modern Pakistan/Afghanistan).
Grey schist, 23.8 x 29.2 cm. Andrew R. and Martha Holden Jennings Fund, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland Ohio.

Mackenzie's drawings, which have been published fully by James Fergusson and James Burgess.

The stupa in its earliest form was of high antiquity, dating, as inscriptions prove, from about 200 B.C.E. But the great mass of the sculpture is much later, and belongs to the Kushan period. The authority of the Kushan kings, however, did not extend as far south as Amaravati, which was then within the dominions of the powerful Andhra dynasty of the Deccan. By the help of two inscriptions mentioning Andhra kings, the construction of the great railing may be assigned to the half-century between 150 and 200 C.E. The highly ornate slabs which cased the stupa itself may be a little later. We are almost certainly safe in saying that all the sculptures of the railing and casing fall within the hundred years between 150 and 250 C.E. Originally it was believed that there used to be two railings, and all the printed descriptions give details of an 'outer' and an 'inner' railing. But Burgess later stated that he and everybody else were mistaken, the fact being that no more than one railing, the so-called 'outer' one, ever existed. The slabs supposed to have belonged to an 'inner' railing really formed a casing applied to the body of the stupa. However, two types of sculpture clearly belonging to two different periods are distinguishable. In the first the Buddha figure is not found: in the second it is. The latter is stylistically also very much easier and richer. The bulk of the sculptures belong to this second period.

The railing, by far the most magnificent known example of such structures, was 58 metres in diameter, about 183 metres in circumference, and stood about 4.5 metres high above the pavement. It was constructed of upright slabs connected by three cross-bars between each pair of uprights, which stood upon a plinth and supported a coping about 84 centimetres in height.

A fragment from a statue of Buddha, 3rd century C.E., Ikshvaku dynasty. Limestone, height: 33 cm. Nagarjunakonda, Andrah Pradesh.

Winged lion, the capital of a pillar (stambha) associated with a shrine,
late 1st century-early 2nd century C.E., Kushan period, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.
Carved sandstone, 88 x 105 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Seated Buddha displaying 'inner breath' (prana) beneath the articulated folds of the monastic robes, early 3rd century C.E., Kushan period, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. Pink mottled sandstone, height: 68.5 cm. Purchased with the assistance of the Art Fund, the Antony Gardner Memorial Fund, and a private donor, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

On the outer face each upright was adorned with a full disk in the centre and a half-disk at top and bottom, minor sculptures filling the interspaces. Similar but ever-varying disks decorated the cross-bars, and the coping was ornamented with a long wavy flower-roll carried by men, numerous figures being inserted in the open spaces. The plinth exhibited a frieze of animals and boys, often in comic or ludicrous attitudes. The decorations on the inner face were even more elaborate; the coping presenting a continued series of bas-reliefs, and the central disks being filled with delicate sculptures, treating every topic of Buddhist legend. Thus every part of the structure, with a surface of about 1,561 square metres, was covered with sculptured reliefs.

The slabs forming the casing of the lower part of the stupa, 59.5 metres in diameter, were carved more richly even than the inner face of the railing, if that is possible. Apparently there were twelve in each quadrant, the principal object depicted on each slab being a highly decorated stupa with its railing, the rest of the surface being covered with an infinite variety of figures. Study of the slab with the representation of the Amaravati stupa, reproducing the best preserved of such slabs, will dispense with the necessity for detailed description, and at the same time give a good notion of what the appearance of the Amaravati stupa must have been in the days of its glory. When fresh and perfect the structure must have produced an effect unrivalled in the world.

Buddhas painted on hexagonal pillars revealing stylistic influences of the Indo-Greek art of the Gandhara School, transported from northwest India, 5th century C.E., late Gupta period. Detail of a fresco.
Ajanta caves (Cave X), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

However much severe taste may condemn the characteristic Indian lavishness of decoration which scorned to leave a bit of plain surface, the vast expanse of sculpture in white marble gleaming in the brilliant sunshine cannot have failed to exhibit a scene of unequalled splendour.

While abstaining from minute description of the Amaravati Stupa slab, which serves as a synopsis of the sculptures generally, I may invite the attention of the reader to a few points. In the relief picture the sculptured decoration is carried high up the dome, but the extant slabs seem to have been attached only to the lower part of the Amaravati stupa. It is possible that higher bands of decoration may have existed and been wholly destroyed. The railing in the relief has four cross-bars, and not only three as in the real monument. The 'moon-stone' at the entrance agrees in form, though not in design, with the Sri Lankan examples. The lions and some of the architectural forms are survivals of the Assyrio-Persian patterns of the Ashokan age. The meaning of the five stelae or pilasters on the face of the stupa is not known. The worshippers in the central scene adoring the chair occupied only by an object which may be the sacred headdress relic, might have appeared in a Sanchi or Bharhut relief, where images of Buddha are unknown; but here, at the top of the picture, we also find Buddha seated in the conventional yogi attitude. The frieze at the top of the slab contains nearly fifty figures, and the general effect, like that of nearly all the reliefs, is excessively elaborate. But the skill of the artist in design and drawing, and his technical powers of execution, are beyond dispute.

The infinite variety of the patterns used in the medallions and bars may be realized by study either of actual examples or of the relief pictures. A basal medallion from Amaravati is an excellent and well-preserved example of a charming decorative design based on the lotus-flower motive. The beauty and delicacy of the floral devices in the border and plinth deserve special notice and admiration. They will repay minute examination with a magnifying glass.

The treatment of floral and animal decorative motives has been illustrated above on a small scale. A few separate images have been found at Amaravati. Two large marble statues, 193 centimetres in height. The opaque drapery is treated in a formalized style, quite different from the smooth transparent robes of the Gupta period, to be discussed in the next chapter, but to a certain extent resembling Gandhara work and the Mathura figures discussed above. These images may date from the third or fourth century, or even later; they closely correspond to the Buddhas painted on the columns in Cave X, Ajanta.

Fergusson's opinion that the sculptures of the Amaravati school mark 'the culmination of the art of sculpture in India', which was generally accepted until recently by English writers, including myself, does not now command such ready assent. I will not presume to say which work marks the 'culminating point', but it is certainly safe to affirm that the pre-eminence claimed for the Amaravati reliefs may be effectively challenged by compositions of later date, at least in some respects. All critics, however, can agree with Havell that the marbles of Amaravati offer 'delightful studies of animal life, combined with extremely beautiful conventionalized ornament', and that 'the most varied and difficult movements of the human figure are drawn and modelled with great freedom and skill'. The obvious overcrowding of the compositions unfortunately is a defect common in Indian art. Historically, the sculptures are interesting as an academic development of the style of Sanchi and Bharhut. Havell may be right in believing that originally the effect of the Amaravati marbles was heightened by colour, and in holding that technically they should be regarded as 'painted rilievos' rather than as true sculpture. But whether they were painted or not, they must have formed, when perfect, one of the most splendid exhibitions of artistic skill known in the history of the world.

The Gupta Period

The displacement of the Arsacid by the Sassanian dynasty of Persia III 226 C.E., the approximately simultaneous downfall of the Andhra kings who had ruled the Deccan for four and a half centuries, and the disappearance of the Kushan or Indo-Scythian sovereigns of Northern India about the same time, unquestionably must have resulted in violent political and social disturbances on Indian soil during the third century. But hardly any record, archaeological or literary, has survived of that stormy interlude.

The rise of the Imperial Gupta dynasty in 320 C.E., with its capital at Pataliputra (Patna), the ancient seat of empire, marks the beginning of a new epoch. Under a succession of able and long-lived monarchs the Gupta dominions rapidly increased, until in the first quarter of the fifth century they comprised in modern terms Central and Western Bengal, Bihar, the United Provinces of Agra and Awadh, part of the Central Provinces, and the whole of Malwa and Gujarat, with the peninsula of Swashtra or Kathiawar. We know from the contemporary testimony of the Chinese pilgrim Faxian that the compact empire thus formed was then well governed by Chandragupta II, surnamed Vikramaditya.

During the last quarter of the fifth century the Gupta empire was shattered by the inrush of swarms of fierce Huns and allied nomad tribes from Central Asia. The short-lived Hun power was broken in India by a decisive victory gained by native princes about 528 C.E., but a long time elapsed before new political combinations of any stability could be formed. In the seventh century a great king named Harsha (590-647 C.E.) conquered India north of the Narmada, while the Deccan submitted to his able contemporary Pulakesin II Chalukya, and the far south was governed by a powerful Pallava king. The Chalukya fell before the Pallava in 642, and five or six years later, Harsha died childless, leaving the empire which he had won a prey to anarchy.

During the seventh and eighth centuries the foreign settlers had become Hinduized, tribes developing into castes. When the ninth century opens we find a new distribution of power among kingdoms mostly governed by so-called Rajputs, in many cases the descendants of chieftains belonging to the foreign tribes of Hunas, Gurjaras, and the like. The Huna or Hun invasions with the subsequent readjustments mark the division between the history of Ancient and that of Medieval India.

All students of Indian literature now recognize the fact that during the reigns of Chandragupta II and his next two successors, from about 375 to 490 C.E., every branch of Hindu literature, science, and art was vigorously cultivated under the stimulus of liberal royal patronage; and there is general agreement that Kalidasa, the greatest of Indian poets, graced the Gupta court and produced his masterpieces in the later years of the fifth century. The plastic and pictorial arts shared in the good fortune

Yamuna, the personification of the river Yamanu (Jamna), is represented riding on a tortoise (kuma) and is attended by two handmaidens - one supporting her umbrella. Together with Ganga, these two river goddesses flank a temple doorway, cleansing those who enter from the material world to the palace of the gods, c. 900 C.E., Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty, Madhya Pradesh. Buff sandstone relief, 51.5 x 33.5 x 10 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

of literature and science. In painting we have the frescoes of Ajanta and Bagh, and also those of Sigiriya in Sri Lanka. In coinage a marked improvement took place during the reigns of the earlier Gupta kings.

Until quite recently the merits of Gupta sculpture were not generally or freely organized. Owing to the destruction wrought by iconoclast Muslim armies and kings who overran and held in strength almost every part of the Gupta empire, few remains of the period exist above ground, except in out-of-the-way localities, and our present knowledge of Gupta art is largely the result of excavation. Sarnath, especially, has proved to be a rich treasure-house of Gupta, as well as of Kushan and earlier art. The ravages of the Huns did not wholly stop the practice of the arts of civilization, and one of the surprises of recent exploration has been the discovery of many large Buddhist monasteries at Sarnath and other places in Hindustan dating from the fifth and sixth centuries. The sculpture of the period is mainly Buddhist and Hindu, the Jain works being few and of little artistic interest.

Except certain coins of high artistic quality, as judged by an Indian standard, no work of art yet discovered can be referred to the reign of Samudragupta (335-375 C.E.), the victorious general, and accomplished poet and musician, who has recorded his achievements on Ashoka's pillar at Allahabad. The earliest known Gupta remains date from the beginning of the fifth century.

In the fifth century were built the earliest stone buildings that have survived. They are chiefly tiny shrines situated in out-of-the-way places. Cunningham treated those little edifices as examples of the 'Gupta style'. A characteristic example exists at Tigowa in the Jabalpur District, Central Provinces. These small shrines are really the prototypes of much of the architecture of the great cave temples at Ajanta and Ellora. All the known examples are Brahmanical. At Udayagiri caves are to be found cut in the rock on exactly the above plan. At Ajanta the Buddhist rock-cut Vihara, which was originally nothing but a

Early anthropomorphic Shiva linga from the Parasuramesvara Temple. He is holding a spear, a club, and a slain deer, suggesting an identification with Kirata, the divine hunter, and with Shiva Lakulisa, 'Lord with the Club', c. 1st century B.C.E., Santavahana period. Stone, height: 125 cm. Gudimallam, Andrah Pradesh.

Sadashiva. The supreme expression of Shiva's divine form, each face expressing a contrasting mood or sentiment. On the left is Shiva as the fearsome form of his aghora aspect, opposite are the soft features of his feminine nature, Vamadeva-Parvati, and in the centre is the divinely calm and meditative Shiva as the supreme yogi Mahadeva, c. 550 C.E., Early Chalukya dynasty. Rock-cut relief, 610 m. Elephanta, Maharashtra.

large pillared hall with cells for dwelling purposes leading into it on the three inner sides, was converted to litual purposes by cutting a shrine exactly corresponding to the Gupta structural shrines in the back wall. The doorways, with their pilasters and river goddesses are reproduced in detail, proving the near relation of Ajanta architecture to the Gupta. Some of these shrines actually stand free, having a circumambulation passage cut around them. In the Saiva caves at Ellora and Elephanta the shrine is pushed forward into the body of the hall directly in front of the main entrance. These Linga shrines have doorways and door guardians on all four sides. The river goddesses of the true Gupta shrines are placed on the level of the lintel on either side of the door. Ganga stands on her makara and Yamuna on her tortoise. At Udayagiri, on the doorway of the Chandragupta Cave excavated in 401-402 C.E., the goddesses are represented without their vehicles. Here and elsewhere they stand beneath trees usually in the woman-and-tree posture. It seems that originally they were tree spirits, like the Yakshis at Bharhut, and only became river-deities later.

In the Ajanta frescoes it is evident that the palace and town architecture was entirely of wood, beautifully carved and painted.

Although in the matter of style no distinctions based on the religious destination of particular images can be drawn, it will be convenient to finish. The description of selected Brahmanical stone sculptures before proceeding to the discussion of the Jain and Buddhist works and the metal castings.

The Indian Museum, Calcutta, possesses a remarkable group of Shiva and Parvati from Kosam in the Allahabad District, bearing an inscription dated 458-459 C.E. The consorts stand side by side, each with the right hand raised and the open palm turned to the front. The headdress of the goddess is described as a most elaborate construction, which recalls that 'of some Dutch women, and consists of a huge, transverse, comb-like ornament projecting beyond the side of the head, and terminating on both sides in large wheel-like ornaments, from the centre of which depends a large tassel. There are huge ear-ornaments and very massive bangles.'

A temple at Deogarh, in the Lalitpur subdivision of the Jhansi District, U.P., is adorned with sculptures of exceptionally good quality in panels inserted in the plinth and walls, which may date from the first half of the sixth century. That region probably escaped the Hun troubles owing to its remote situation. A panel on the eastern façade, representing Shiva in the garb of an ascetic (*mahayogi*) attended by another yogi and various heavenly beings hovering in the air, may claim a place among the best efforts of Indian sculpture. The principal image is so beautifully modelled and so tastefully posed that we almost forget the inartistic excrescence of the extra pair of arms. The flying figures are admirably designed so as to give the appearance of aerial flight. The modelling of the feet and hands deserves particular notice, and the decorative carvings are in good taste. The close-fitting garments of all the figures and the wigs of some of the attendants are characteristic of the period.

Another panel from the south façade of the same temple is equally good. The subject is Vishnu as the Eternal, reclining on the serpent Ananta, the symbol of eternity, with the other gods watching from above. The principal image is beautifully posed, and the extra arms most dexterously arranged. The wig-like dressing of the hair is very prominent in this fine group.

The little-known ruins at Rajgir, the ancient capital of Magadha, include a relief of a female, facing front, which is of the Gupta age. The sculptures at Nachna-Kuthara in Ajaigarh State are very fine, especially the doorways of the two shrines. Cunningham describes them as 'being much superior to all medieval sculptures,

Vishnu Anantasayin: a specific posture where Vishnu is shown reclining on the snake Ananta on an ocean of milk. The relief sculpture is in the Dashavatara Vishnu Temple, c. 425 C.E., Gupta period. Sandstone relief on the south wall. Deogarh, Uttar Pradesh.

both in ease and gracefulness of their attitudes, as well as in real beauty of the forms'.

Several ancient sites in the southwestern part of the Allahabad District have yielded to slight excavation many remarkable Buddhist sculptures in stone, proved by dated inscriptions to be assignable to the reigns of Chandragupta II, his son Kumaragupta I, and his grandson Skandagupta in the fifth century.

The vigorous, and at the same time refined, sculpture adorning the ruins of a Gupta temple at Garhwa, 40 kilometres southwest of Allahabad is giving back and side views of one pillar. The panels on the front are arranged according to the ancient Indian fashion, and the style is related to the art of Sanchi and Bharhut much more closely than to medieval art. There is no trace whatever of Gandharan influence. The figures are well drawn, and modelled on purely naturalistic principles.

The beautiful ornament on the side is described by Cunningham as consisting of 'the undulating stem of a creeper, with large curling and intertwining leaves, and small human figures, both male and female, climbing up the stem, or sitting on the leaves in various attitudes. The whole scroll is deeply sunk and very clearly and carefully carved; and ... is one of the most pleasing and graceful specimens of Indian architectural ornament.'

The commendation is fully justified; nothing better can be found in the earlier work at Mathura, and the Garhwa design would do credit to an Italian fifteenth-century artist.

Among the numerous excellent sculptures of Gupta age, disclosed by recent excavations at Sarnath, the most pleasing, perhaps, is the seated Buddha in white sandstone, 167.64 centimetres in height.

The deer-park at Sarnath having been the place where the Wheel of the Law was first turned, or, in other words, the doctrine of the Buddhist way of salvation was first publicly preached by Gautama Buddha, his effigy is naturally represented with the fingers in the position (*mudra*) associated by canonical rule with the act commemorated. The wheel symbolizing the Law and the five adoring disciples to whom it was first preached are depicted on the pedestal. The woman with a child on the left probably is intended for the pious donor of the image. The beautifully decorated halo characteristic of the period is in marked contrast with the severely plain halos of the Kushan age. The style, marked by refined restraint, is absolutely free from all extravagance or monstrosity. Allowance being made for the Hindu canon prohibiting the display of muscular detail, the modelling must be allowed to display high artistic skill. The angels hovering above may be compared with the similar figures at Deogarh. The close-fitting smooth robe is one of the most distinctive marks of the style, which is singularly original and absolutely independent of the Gandhara school. The composition is so pictorial that it might have been designed after the model of a painted fresco.

An excellently inscribed standing Buddha of the fifth century in the Mathura Museum, height 219.71 centimetres, while clearly related to the Sarnath seated image in several respects, differs widely in the treatment of the drapery, which at Mathura shows a reminiscence of Hellenistic forms. The skill with which the body is shown through the transparent garments is characteristic of the best Gupta sculpture.

The unique copper colossus of Buddha, about 223 centimetres high, now in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, U.K., is, perhaps, more closely akin to the Sarnath than to the Mathura image, the robes being almost smooth, with the folds marked very faintly. The transparency of the garments is clearly marked. The statue was excavated by certain railway engineers in 1862 from the hall of a ruined monastery situated between the modern mart and the railway station at Sultanganj, on the Ganges, in the Bhagalpur District, Bengal. One of the discoverers brought it home, and some years

later presented it to the Birmingham Museum. The image was found lying on the ground, having been wrenched from its massive granite pedestal; but was practically perfect, except that the left foot was broken off above the ankle. The earliest possible date is indicated by the discovery in an adjoining stupa of a coin of the last Western Satrap of Surashtra, accompanied by one of his conquerors, Chandragupta II, Vikramaditya, who annexed his dominions about 390 C.E. The statue, therefore, may be dated early fifth century.

According to Rajendralala Mitra, the material is 'very pure copper', cast of the in two distinct layers, the inner of which was moulded on an earthy, cinder-like, composed of a mixture of sand, clay, charcoal, and paddy (rice) husks. The segments of this inner layer were held together by much corroded iron bands, originally two centimetres thick. The outer layer of copper seems to have been cast over the inner one, presumably by the cire perdue process. It was made in several sections, one of which consisted of the face and connected parts down to the breast.

Lumps of copper ore found close by indicate that the smelting and casting were done on the spot. The hand of another large copper statue was picked up, and three small Buddhas of the same metal were discovered. One, nearly destroyed by rust, was seated, the three others were standing, with halos broken and detached. A large Bihar image of carboniferous shale was found near by: this image is also in the Birmingham Museum.

Sections of an enclosure railing with relief of a female figure, 5th century C.E., Gupta period, Uttar or Madhya Pradesh. Railing, red sandstone, 48.3 x 47 x 16.5 cm. Purchase Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

An elegantly modelled head of an upper-class woman, wearing a faceted head ornament (tikka), large elliptical ear-plugs (kundala) with inset pendant pearls, and a continuous eyebrow ('like a bow'), 5th century C.E., Gupta period, probably Uttar Pradesh. Architectural relief panel, terracotta, 26.7 x 18 x 13 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London. (p. 86)

Buddha setting the wheel of law in motion (dharmachakra mudra),
5th century C.E., Gupta period. Sandstone, height: 160 cm. Sarnath.

Standing Buddha, 5th century C.E., Gupta period, Jamalpur.
Sandstone, height: 112 cm. Mathura Museum, Uttar Pradesh.

The Medieval Period in the North of India

Architecture: Cave-Temples and Temples

While the most characteristic and distinctive sculptures of Gupta age occur in Northern India, the rock-cut shrines and monasteries of the Deccan are adorned with numerous sculptures more or less closely related to those of the north. These as a whole are later and must be considered as intermediate between the Gupta work and the later medieval. At Ajanta, interest having been concentrated chiefly on the paintings, the accounts of the sculptures are meagre and detailed photographs are scarce.

The numerous sculptures in Cave XXVI include a gigantic recumbent Dying Buddha, seven metres in length, bearing a general resemblance to the fifth-century image at Kasia in the Gorakhpur District, U.P. The most notable sculpture on the walls is the large and crowded composition representing the Temptation of Buddha, which Dr. Burgess describes as 'beautiful', adding that 'several of the faces are beautifully cut'. The subject is also treated at Ajanta in fresco and at Borobudur, Java, in sculpture. The fantastically dressed hair, characteristic of the period, worn by several of the figures in the Ajanta sculpture should be noted. The elephants are well drawn, as usual.

In Cave I, supposed to be the latest of the completed excavations, a great quantity of rich sculpture exists, dealing chiefly with incidents in the lives of Buddha. A scene depicting the chase of the wild bull is praised as being 'spiritedly carved'.

The sculptures in the Bagh caves, Gwalior State, until recently known only through drawings prepared for Dr. Burgess, have since been officially photographed. The best images, representing Buddha, or possibly a Bodhisattva, with two attendants, are the southwestern group in the Gosain's Cave, No. II. The style connects them with the Gupta rather than the medieval period, and especially with the sculptures in Cave IX, Ajanta. They may have been executed in the latter half of the sixth century. The pose is easy and the modelling good.

The late Buddhist caves at Aurangabad in the Nizam's dominions, not far from Ellora, are supposed to date from the 'seventh century of our era, and perhaps towards the end of it'. Whatever their exact date may be, the sculptures are related more closely to those of the Gupta age than to the Tantric works of the medieval period.

The principal cave, No. III, contains many columns most elaborately decorated with figure sculpture as well as complex patterns. On certain of these columns a sixteen-sided portion is

> carved with sixteen scenes which may be an anticipation of Cruikshank or John Adam, for they seem intended to picture the 'Drunkard's Progress'. The number of figures varies from two to four in each. Two persons are represented sitting together, apparently drinking in the most friendly way, then staggering along, then dancing with their backs to each other, then quarrelling; one is being dragged along helpless between two men, and so on in successive panels.

It is a pity that no reproductions of these lively stone pictures have been published. The subjects recall the much earlier 'Bacchanalian'

Parinirvana: the final nirvana, when Buddha, upon death, attained complete awakening (bodhi), end of 6th cenury C.E., Gupta period. Rock-cut relief of left wall, length: 707 cm. Ajanta caves (Cave XXVI), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

sculptures of Mathura, and suggest speculations concerning certain varieties of Buddhism in practice.

In the same cave an architrave bears on the front a long frieze of fourteen scenes of the Jataka kind in relief, including an impalement, a battle in a forest, and other incidents, the meaning of which is not known. The drawing in Dr. Burgess's volume is on such a small scale that it is impossible to judge fairly the quality of the art, but, so far as can be seen, the action is vigorously depicted.

Certain groups of kneeling worshippers in the same excavation are extremely curious. The mode of hair-dressing has quite an Egyptian appearance. At Ajanta much of the sculpture is reminiscent of the Gupta fifth-century temples. In the later caves the work is definitely medieval, being based on the iconography of the time. It is almost entirely hieratic. It is distinguished from the earlier work, also, by its richly crowded design. The bands of masks ('face of fame', *kirtti-mukha*), the grotesque animals with foliated tails, and many motives based on jewellery designs, distinguish it from the Gupta. For the purpose of illustration it will suffice to reproduce a few select specimens from the shrines at Badami, Ellora, and Elephanta, with two sculptures from temples of later date. The cave sculptures of interest range in date from the sixth to the eighth century.

The works of art are shared by all the three indigenous Indian religions Brahmanical Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. The Buddhist and Brahmanical works are both numerous and very much alike in spirit and style. The spirit of the new art will be most easily understood from study of the Brahmanical sculptures, to which the few illustrations for which there is space will be restricted. In those days Buddhism was a dying faith, slowly perishing by absorption into the enveloping mass of Hinduism. The Brahmanical works of art exceed the Buddhist, not only in number but in merit. For Havell and Coomaraswamy the compositions in the cave temples are 'examples of the finest period of Hindu sculpture, from about the sixth to the eighth century, when orthodox Hinduism had triumphed over Buddhism'; but most European observers experience difficulty in appreciating the artistic qualities of those compositions. Roger Fry is more appreciative than many writers:

> The free and picturesque composition from Ellora representing Ravana under the mountain of Kailasa, complicated though it is, is held together by the dramatic beauty of movement of the figures of Shiva and Parvati. The same dramatic vitality is apparent in the struggle between Narasinha and Hiranya-Kasipu, also from Ellora. Indeed, all the Ellora sculptures here reproduced appeal to the European eye by a relatively greater observance of the laws of co-ordination, and by an evidence of dramatic force which indicates that Indian art did not always convey its meaning in a strange tongue.

To be judged fairly the sculptures should be seen in the mass and among their solemn surroundings. While fully conscious of the difficulties inherent in the attempt to illustrate the colossal and fantastic creations of the cave sculptors within the limits of an ordinary page, I have tried to select fairly a small number of examples generally recognized as among the best.

The cave temples at Badami in the Bijapur District, Bombay, exhibit among other decorations long sculptured story-telling friezes, extremely curious, but so clumsily executed as hardly to deserve the name of works of art. They date from the closing years of the sixth century. From an artistic point of view the bracket figures of a god and goddess on the top of a pilaster are by far the best things at Badami.

There are four cave temples, all linga shrines, at Badami, all cut on the same plan and at more or less the same time. As has been said, at Ajanta many of the shrines inset in the back wall of the so-called Viharas are simply reproductions of the flat-roofed, structural Gupta shrines of the fifth century, with doorway and four-pillared verandah accurately reproduced. At Badami the shrine is cut in the same position but is simplified into a plain cell without verandah. At Ellora this cell was cut away from the rock by means of a circumambulation passage. The stylobate of Cave I is carved with a distinctive frieze of dancing dwarfs, which also appears at the base of sculptured panels and in the other caves. The sculpture of Caves II and III is Vaishnava, and contains magnificent sculptures of the Man-Lion and Boar incarnations, and a fine Bhogasanamurti. Cave III contains an inscription of the Chalukyan king, Mangalesvara, dated in 578 C.E. Cave IV is Jain.

Two figures with drum, late 6th century C.E.
Sandstone. Ellora caves (Cave XV), Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

The iconographical nature of the subjects chosen by the cave sculptors is well exemplified by the Bhairava and Kali group in the *Dasavatara*, or 'Ten Incarnations' temple at Ellora, dating from about 700 C.E., described by Burgess as follows:

> Beginning on the north side with the Saiva sculptures the first from the door is Bhairava or Mahadeva in his terrible form; and a more vivid picture of the terrific a very diseased imagination only could embody. The gigantic figure lounges forward holding up his elephant-hide, with necklace of skulls (*mundmald*) depending below his loins; round him a cobra is knotted, his open mouth showing large teeth, while with his *trisula* (trident) he has transfixed one victim, who, writhing on its prongs, seems to supplicate pity from the pitiless; while he holds another by the heels with one of his left hands, raising the *damru* (small drum) as if to rattle it in joy, while he catches the blood with which to quench his demon thirst. To add to the elements of horror, Kali, gaunt and grim, stretches her skeleton length below, with huge mouth, bushy hair, and sunken eyeballs, having a crooked knife in her right hand, and reaching out the other with a bowl, as if eager to share in the gore of its victim; behind her head is the owl, the symbol of destruction, or a vampire, as fit witness of the scene. On the right, in front of the skeleton, is Parvati; and higher up, near the feet of the victim Ratnasura, is a grinning face drawing out its tongue. Altogether the group is a picture of the devilish; the very armlets Bhairava wears are ogre faces.

A subject rarely represented in sculpture, the rescue by the god Shiva of Markandeya from the clutches of the messenger of Yama, god of death, appears twice at Ellora, and is treated with less grimness than the Bhairava group. The earlier composition in the Dasavatara Cave is more vigorous than that at the Kailasa, half a century or more later in date. The sculptures in the Lankesvara section of the Kailasa temple are comended as having been 'executed with great care and minute detail'. The best known, and perhaps the most meritorious, is that exhibiting Shiva performing the Tandava dance, a work remarkable for the good modelling of the principal image, and the scrupulous exactitude of the carving. The river goddess from this cave is especially fine. A good Vishnu sculpture is at Ellora. The god is imagined as striding through the seven regions of the universe in three steps, and is here shown as taking the third step.

The famous caves on the island of Elephanta in Bombay Harbour are Shiva at usually supposed to date from the eighth century. The colossal sculptures are most imposing and effective when viewed in the recesses of the caverns.

The first of the two specimens selected is the favourite subject of the marriage of Shiva with Parvati; and the second is the representation of Shiva as the Great Ascetic, which may be compared with the far finer Gupta treatment of the same subject. The most imposing of the Elephanta sculptures is the gigantic *Trimurti* or Trinity, which is the first thing discerned as the eyes become accustomed to the gloom, on approaching the cave through the present main entrance. The original main entrance is to one side and leads direct to the square linga shrine.

The chronology of these caves must be deduced from the following facts:

I. The likeness of the Ajanta shrines to the Gupta fifth century shrines, taking into consideration their plan, the sculptured doorways, and the Vakataka epigraphy.

II. The Visvakarma Cave at Ellora is linked with Ajanta by the style of its sculptured stupa. The seated Buddha on it is in the style of

Shiva as Bhairava slaying the demon Andhaka, the demon of blindness, ignorance and darkness, c. 550 C.E., Early Chalukya dynasty. Rock-cut relief, height: 350 cm. Elephanta cave, Maharashtra.

certain later sculptural additions at Ajanta such as the bas-relief Temptation of the Buddha in Cave XXVI. It is also linked with Badami by the little frieze of dancing dwarfs in the bas-relief pavilions on either side of the chaitya window. It may be dated in the second half of the sixth century. The sculpture of the Buddhist caves at Ellora corresponds most exactly with the Ajanta frescoes in style, especially the doorway of Cave VI.

III. At Ellora two other styles of sculpture exist, which may be respectively typified by the dynamic Brahmanical sculptures of the Dasavatara Cave and the later Kailasa sculptures. The Kailasa is accepted as having been excavated in the second half of the eighth century. The caves at Ellora would seem to belong to the earlier half of the same century.

Throughout India, except Buddhist remains, there is hardly anything standing which can be dated earlier than 450 C.E. No early examples of civil architecture exist. After the date named Buddhist structures become scarce. The styles of Indian architecture in the medieval period, therefore, must be deduced from Brahmanical and Jain temples, or from the buildings represented in the Ajanta frescoes.

It is now admitted that the variety of styles which may be distinguished depends not on differences of creed, but on date and, to a certain degree, on locality. At Khajuraho, for instance, Jain and Brahmanical temples are built in the same style.

All authors who treat of Indian architecture notice, and are embarrassed by the fact, that each style when it first comes to our knowledge is full-grown and complete. The earliest specimens betray no signs of tentative effort, and in no case is it possible to trace the progressive evolution of a given style from rude beginnings. The extensive destruction of ancient monuments, especially those built of brick, no doubt supplies a partial, though not adequate, explanation. I am convinced that the more fundamental explanation is to be found in the assumption that all the Indian styles are derived from prototypes constructed in timber, bamboos, and other perishable materials. We have seen how easily the stupa railings can be accounted for in this way, and by the extension of the theory an adequate reason for the non-existence of the missing links in the chain of architectural evolution is supplied. In the essay previously cited, William Simpson has quoted from the Satapatha Brahmana a long description of an early Brahmanical temple as constructed some five or six or seven hundred years before the Common era. That temple consisted simply of two sheds, which were 'merely formed of posts and beams, covered with reeds and mats, and could only be described as belonging to the "thatch period" in architecture'. From such an edifice to the temples of Mount Abu and Thanjavur the distance is great, but there seems to be little reason to doubt that the intervening stages were worked out for the most part by experiments with evanescent materials. Brick, the intermediate stage between the 'thatch period' and the 'stone period', offers such a ready prey to the spoiler that it may be reckoned as only 'semi-permanent' material. Whatever be the validity of this theory, we must take the styles ready-made as we find them, and briefly consider their several peculiarities, so far as may be necessary for the intelligent appreciation of the ancillary fine arts, which form the main subject of this work.

In an ordinary Hindu temple the essential part is the rectangular cell or shrine containing the image or symbol of the god, and such a plain cell constitutes the simplest form of temple. The small shrines of the Gupta period have already been described. In the medieval period dignity was gained by the addition of a high roof or steeple, and by prefixing a porch, or nave with or without side-aisles, transepts, and subsidiary steeples, until an architectural composition of extreme complexity was evolved. Another type, built frequently by Jains and occasionally by Brahmanists, is a modification of the

Mahabodhi Temple, 250 B.C.E./5th-6th century C.E.,
Maurya dynasty (Ashoka)/late Gupta period. Brick. Bodh Gaya, Bihar.

monastery, the monks' cells round the quadrangle being replaced by niches enshrining images. The modifications of both groundplan and superstructure are, indeed, endless. All forms offer abundant opportunity for artistic decoration.

In the crowd of varieties two leading styles of temple architecture – the Northern or Indo-Aryan of Fergusson, and the Southern or Dravidian – may be readily distinguished. The term Dravidian is free from objection, Dravida being the ancient name of peninsular India. The two styles may more simply be denominated Northern and Southern.

The Aryavarta, or Northern style, examples of which to the south of the Narmada are rare, is characterized by the bulging steeple with curvilinear vertical ribs, placed over the sanctuary, and frequently reproduced on other parts of the building. Miniature repetitions of the form are often used with good effect as decorations of the steeples themselves. In spite of theories as to the bamboo origins of the curvilinear spire, its form is obviously inherent in the Indian corbelling methods of building. It appears to have been evolved first of all in brick as in the Great Temple at Bodh-Gaya.

The best early examples are found at Bhubaneswar in the Puri District, Orissa, where the temples, numbering several hundreds, illustrate the history of the style from the ninth or tenth to the thirteenth century. The earliest specimens have steeples comparatively low and squat, but pleasing to an eye which has become accustomed to the design. The porch is a walled chamber with a low, massive roof, and internal pillars are wholly wanting. The combination of vertical and horizontal lines is skilfully arranged so as to give dignity to buildings of moderate height. This early astylar form of temple is best illustrated by the Mukteshvara shrine, which can be called 'the gem of Orissan art'.

A second, and later, variety of the style is adequately represented by the Great Temple, which has a high steeple tower, with sides vertical for the most part, and curving only near the top. The roof of the porch has considerable elevation, and in many details the design differs from that of the earlier variety. Sculptures of remarkable merit are introduced in panels on the basement and elsewhere.

The third, or 'decorated', variety of the Bhubaneswar style, in which columns become prominent, dates from the twelfth or thirteenth century. The most charming example is the Rajarani temple.

The most renowned achievement of the vigorous Orissan school of architects is the temple of the Sun, a UNESCO World Heritage Site at Konark on the coast, known to sailors as the Black Pagoda, in order to distinguish it from the White Pagoda, or temple of Jagannath at Puri. The remains of the main steeple, never completed, which had been overwhelmed long ago by the drifting sand, have been lately exposed by excavation. The porch, which stands practically perfect, is covered by a beautifully designed pyramidal roof, justly praised by Fergusson, and described by the Workmans in as the most perfectly proportioned structure which they had seen in the course of years of study devoted to Indian temples. The temple, when in better condition than it now is, was admired enthusiastically by Abul Fazl, the minister and historian of Akbar in the sixteenth century. It is said to have been built by King Narasimha, who reigned between 1240 and 1280 C.E., a time when high-class work was not often produced. Considering its exceptional excellence, it is strangely late in date.

The Bhubaneswar group of temples stands first in importance among the examples of the Aryavarta style by reason of the immense number of buildings, usually in fairly good condition, and their variety, which marks the stages in the history of the style for at least three centuries. The group next in importance, situated at

Parasuramesvara Temple, 7th century B.C.E.
Stone, height: 13 m. Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

Khajuraho in Chhatarpur, M.P., although far inferior in both numbers and variety, includes some admirable buildings designed on a grand scale and richly adorned with sculpture. The temples, in more or less satisfactory preservation, numbering between twenty and thirty, were all erected by order of the Chandel kings around 1000 C.E. They are executed in a fine sandstone, which offers great facilities to the sculptor. Several of the domes, constructed in the Indian manner with horizontal overlapping courses of stone, are remarkable achievements, the largest being 6.7 metres in diameter. The cusps hanging from the centre of some of the domes are beautiful, although, of course, not so elaborately carved as the similar works executed slightly later and in more manageable marble at Mount Abu. The Temple of Visvanath gives a good notion of one of the best of the Khajuraho temples. The steeple is nearly 30 metres high.

A beautiful variation of the Aryavarta or Indo-Aryan style, found in Gujarat, is characterized by a free use of columns carved with style all imaginable richness, strut brackets, and exquisite marble ceilings with cusped pendants, at least equal to the best Tudor work of the kind. By an unfortunate error Fergusson described this Western or Gujarati style as the 'Jain style'. In reality it has no concern with any special kind of religion, and is Jain merely because Jains were numerous and wealthy in Western India in the late medieval period as they are still. When power passed into Muslim hands the so-called Jain style, that is to say the local style, was applied with the necessary modifications to the needs of Islamic worship.

Two temples at Mount Abu, built wholly of white marble, are famous as unsurpassed models of this wonderful style. The earlier, dedicated to Adinath, was built by a minister or governor named Vimala in 1031 C.E.; the later was consecrated by Tejpal two centuries afterwards, in 1230 C.E. Notwithstanding the considerable difference in age both temples are very similar in style. The ceiling in Vimala Saha's temple and some of the columns in the upper hall of Tejpal's temple are excellent examples of the style. It is needless to comment on the beauty and delicacy of the carving and the richness of the design in both cases.

It would be easy to fill many pages with more or less similar specimens of work in the medieval style. I am tempted, however, to mention a charming temple at Osian in the Jodhpur District of Rajasthan, brought to notice by D. R. Bandarkar, and treated in a much simpler fashion an example of the originals of the huge piles at Khajuraho and Mount Abu, probably dating from the ninth century. Osian possesses no less than twelve large ancient temples, some Jain and some Hindu, and all, apparently, dating from the eighth and ninth centuries.

Northern India is full of examples of the style, ancient, medieval, and modern, mostly in stone, but occasionally in brick. The oldest brick specimen in preservation sufficiently good to allow of the recognition of the style is that at Bhitargaon in the Kanpur District, which is probably of the fifth century. With it must be classed the great temple at Bodh Gaya. Another well-preserved ancient brick temple, referred doubtfully to the eighth century, stands at Konch in Jalaun. There are many fine brick temples in the Central Provinces, the finest of which is at Sirpur. These temples have massively carved stone doorposts, lintels, and pillars. The beautifully decorated burnt-brick stupa at Mirpur Khas (now in Pakistan) must also be mentioned as belonging to the first half of the medieval period. The art of these sites is the forerunner of the art of Khajuraho and Bhubaneswar. There is reason to believe (as already observed) that the transition from wooden to stone architecture was made through brick, and that the scarcity of old brick buildings is due to the facility with which the material could be utilized for other constructions. The decorations of brick buildings were carried out in terracotta, and carved as well as moulded bricks were used. Such bricks of good design are often seen built into later structures. The art of carving brick appears to be extinct.

The late medieval Bengal variety, showing signs of Islamic influence is characterized by the use of the bent cornice, obviously copied from the bamboo eaves of an ordinary Bengal hut, and by a peculiar arrangement of the curvilinear steeples; one lofty steeple placed over the centre being surrounded by four, eight, or sixteen smaller towers of the same form. Fergusson has described the

Konark Sun Temple, 8th century, Ganga dynasty.
Stone, form of the chariot of Surya (Arka), the sun god, Konark, Orissa.

temple at KantaNagar in Dinajpur District (now in Bangladesh), finished in 1722, and decorated with applied terracottas of slight artistic merit. This variety of the Aryavarta style is peculiar to Bengal. The only example recorded outside that province is one at Bihar, built to the order of a Bengali immigrant.

In the modern temples of Northern India the tendency is to reduce the curvature of the steeple, and to make the form approximate to that of an English slender spire. The effect is sometimes pleasing, but lacking in the massive dignity of the best designs at Bhubaneswar and Khajuraho. The contemptible sculptured and painted decorations of the modern buildings testify plainly to the general lack of artistic feeling.

Numerous recent buildings, sacred and secular, combine the Islamic dome with the Bengali cornice, omitting the steeple. Such buildings are erected freely by Hindus for purely Hindu purposes, as, for instance, the elegant mausoleum built at Varanasi to the memory of the saint, Swami Bhaskaranand, which looks like a Muslim building. The peculiar styles of architecture prevalent in the Himalayan kingdoms. Kashmir and Nepal demand brief notice.

The Kashmir style proper is restricted to the Valley, although a modification of it is found in the Salt Range region of the Punjab. The temples in this style, varying in date from about 750 to 1200 C.E., are all of small size, but in some cases the dignity of magnitude is attained by the addition of a walled quadrangle of imposing dimensions.

The best known example is the temple of Martanda or Martand a local name of Vishnu as the sun god which was erected about the middle of the eighth century by Lalitaditya (724-760 C.E.), the most powerful sovereign of Kashmir. This building, although the largest of its kind, is of modest dimensions, being a rectangle measuring 18 metres long by 11 metres wide. The width of the façade, however, is increased to 18 metres by the addition of wings, and the walled enclosure measures internally 67 by 43 metres. The colonnade lining the wall is composed of eighty-four pillars, with intervening niches surmounted by the trefoil arches and triangular pediments or gables characteristic of the style. The cell, or chapel, which occupied the centre of each face of the enclosure, originally reached a height of about nine metres. All the roofs have disappeared completely, so that it is uncertain whether they were of wood or stone.

Two peculiarities of Kashmir architecture the trefoil arch and the quasi-Doric columns have given rise to much discussion. The trefoil arch recurs in certain temples at Malot, Katas, and other places in the Salt Range, which was subject to the crown of Kashmir in the seventh century; and when employed structurally, appears to be derived from the similar form frequently used as a canopy to a statue.

The columns of the Kashmir temples are usually described as Indo-Doric on the assumption that their design is derived ultimately from Greek models. Tavenor Perry has thrown doubt upon this assumption because the Kashmir columns have sixteen flutes and are associated with very unclassical gables and trefoil arches. As usual in India, the stages of the evolution of the Kashmir style cannot be traced in detail. It is possible that the Salt Range temples alluded to, and others at Gop, Sutrapada, and Kadwar in Kathiawar, which resemble the Kashmir buildings in certain respects, may be older than those in the Valley, but no clear evidence on the subject is available.

The small valley of Nepal proper is said to contain more than two thousand temples. Most of them are designed in a style differing but slightly from the familiar Chinese pattern, in which the roof is the main element, the walls being mere screens set between pillars. An excellent illustration of this style is afforded by a temple built at Bhatgaon in 1703.

Certain temples and tombs of Jain priests in South Kanara on the Konkan coast, in a style obviously derived from wooden originals, possess a surprising and unexplained resemblance to the buildings in distant Nepal.

Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, c. 1050, Chandella dynasty.
Stone, height: 31 m. Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.

Sculpture: Medieval and Modern Objects

The spirit of medieval sculpture is chiefly expressed in Brahmanical and Buddhist works, which alike exalt the ascetic ideal and reflect the teachings of Puranic and Tantric literature. The ascetic Buddha no longer appears as the sympathetic human teacher moving about ideal. Among his disciples and instructing them in the Good Law. His image is now generally made to conform to the ideal of the passionless yogi, as described in the Bhagavad-Gita:

> Who fixed in faith on Me,
> Dotes upon none, scorns none; rejoices not,
> And grieves not, letting good or evil hap
> Light when it will, and when it will depart,
> That man I love! Who, unto friend and foe
> Keeping an equal heart, with equal mind
> Bears shame and glory; with an equal peace
> Takes heat and cold, pleasure and pain; abides
> Quit of desires, hears praise or calumny
> In passionless restraint, unmoved by each;
> Linked by no ties to earth, steadfast in Me,
> That man I love!

The representation of passionless restraint, however true to Hindu nature, affords a strictly limited field for the exercise of the sculptor's powers, and there is necessarily much monotony in the images, whether of Buddha or other personages, which are devoted to the expression of the ascetic ideal.

Another dominant note in medieval sculpture is struck by the endeavour of the artists to express violent superhuman emotion or demoniac passion, as represented by the whirling dances of Shiva, the strivings of Marichi, the struggling of Ravana beneath his mountain load, and many other iconographical compositions. Multitudes of sculptures are simply the formal images of innumerable gods and goddesses, adorned with all the attributes and accessories prescribed by various scriptures.

The sculpture of the early Indian schools makes an appeal far more universal than that of medieval times, which demands from the spectator a certain amount of recondite knowledge of the ideas underlying the later mythology. Its enthusiastic admirers never weary of extolling its 'idealism', and of glorying in the fact that it is so peculiarly and exclusively Hindu as to be often unintelligible to the ordinary well-educated critic.

The Brahmanical (including later Buddhist) art has continue to evolve since the seventh century. No clear continuous line of demarcation can be drawn between medieval and modern sculpture, although, unfortunately, modern work of any considerable degree of excellence is very rare. This chapter, therefore, deals with both medieval and modern art as being essentially one.

The first part of the medieval period is illustrated by the great cave-temples of Ajanta, Badami, and Ellora. Apart from the great shrines of Rajasthan, Khajuraho, and Mount Abu, late medieval sculpture falls into two main territorial divisions, namely, 1) Bihar, both North and South, with certain adjoining districts of Bengal and the Agra Provinces, which collectively formed the dominions of the Pala dynasty for more than four centuries from about 775 to 1193 C.E., the date of the Islamic conquest; and 2) Orissa, on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, which never was included in the Pala realm.

The Pala kings having been devout Buddhists to the last, Buddhism continued to be the dominant religion in their territories long after it had become either extinct or moribund in most parts of India; and the Buddhist monasteries of Bihar, especially the wealthy foundation at Nalanda (modern Bargaon), were crowded with thousands of monks, who cultivated with success the arts required for the decoration of the sacred buildings. In consequence, a large proportion of the sculpture in

Modhera Sun Temple (detail of the Sabha Mandap: hall for religious gatherings and conferences), 1026, Solanki dynasty (King Bhimdev). Stone, Modhera, Gujarat.

Buddha Sakyamuni decorated with four scenes of his life, end of 11th century, Pala dynasty, Bihar. Grey chlorite, 104.1 x 50.8 x 17.8 cm.
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, San Francisco.

Bihar and the neighbouring regions is Buddhist. The later Buddhism, as we have occasion to remark more than once, was of the *Mahayana* or 'Great Vehicle' kind, delighting in the use of images, and closely related to Hinduism. The Brahmanical faiths, of course, never died out, and their votaries contributed their share to the art production.

During the first half of the seventh century, when the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang recorded his invaluable notes, the Buddhists of Orissa outnumbered the Brahmanical Hindus, but notwithstanding that fact, Buddhist sculpture is rare in the province, and the extant specimens, often of a high class, are mainly Brahmanical. From the point of view of the historian of art, as already observed, religious distinctions in the medieval period are unimportant, sculptors making use of the style of their own age and country, irrespective of the creed to the service of which their works were dedicated. In Bihar, the Muslim onslaught at the close of the twelfth century overthrew Buddhism suddenly, and scattered all over India those few monks who survived the indiscriminate massacres committed by the iconoclast armies of Islam. The rich monasteries of Sarnath near Varanasi soon shared the fate of the communities in Bihar, and layers of ashes in the ruins testify to this day the violence of the conquerors. Hindu art of all kinds, Buddhist included, was practically stamped out in the northeastern provinces by the Muslim conquest. It lingered, however, in Orissa longer than in Bihar, and some of the best Orissan work dates from the thirteenth century. The conquest of Orissa was not completed until Akbar's time in the sixteenth century, but it may be said that from the fourteenth century the history of art in all the northeastern provinces is concerned only with Muslim forms.

Practically all the history of Hindu sculpture in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa closes with the thirteenth century.

The innumerable ancient sites in Magadha or South Bihar and the neighbouring districts are full of well-executed images, mostly dating from the times of Pala rule, between the eighth and twelfth centuries. The destruction due to Islamic hatred of images has been less complete than in the upper provinces. Medieval Buddhism in its Tantric forms approximated so closely to the Brahmanical Hinduism that even a skilled observer may sometimes hesitate to decide as to the religion for the service of which the image was destined the Buddhist Tara, for instance, is not easily distinguishable from the Hindu Lakshmi. Although the style of the sculptures is always dominated by the formalism of ritual prescription, artists of exceptional ability and skill could make their

powers more or less clearly apparent, and so raise compositions mainly conventional to the rank of works of art.

One of the best and most characteristic examples of Bihar sculpture is the large group of the sun god and his attendants now in the Indian Gallery of the Victoria and Albert Museum, which stands 167 centimetres high, and is in nearly perfect preservation. The god is represented standing in a lotus-shaped chariot drawn by seven horses, and driven by the legless Aruna, the Dawn. The artist has concentrated his attention on the effigy of the god, reducing the chariot, horses, and charioteer to the position of minor accessories, in such a way that a casual spectator might fail to perceive their significance. The body of the principal figure is carefully modelled with considerable regard to realism, and the same commendation may be bestowed on the two female attendants with fly-whisks. The decorative framework is skillfully treated, and the whole composition produces an imposing and very pleasing effect. The mechanical execution of the carving is perfect, and the design is more restrained than that of much Hindu sculpture of the same period. The material is a black carboniferous shale, or clay slate, well adapted to the sculptor's purpose, and the twelfth century may be assigned as an approximate date. The Rajmahal Hills, where this remarkable work was excavated, lie to the south of Munger, and, although outside the limits of Bihar, were doubtless subject to the Pala rulers of that province.

One more illustration of the medieval art of Bihar may suffice a beautifully modelled and exquisitely finished seated Buddha in black stone found near Rajgir. The standing figures are the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani. The seated goddesses are the two forms of Tara, the Green and the White. The composition as a whole is a compendium of the symbolism of Mahayanist Buddhism. As a work of art its interest lies chiefly in the careful modelling of the principal figure. The script of the inscription, the usual 'Buddhist creed', indicates that the work is approximately contemporary with the Rajmahal sun god.

The medieval sculptures of Orissa are chiefly associated with the Brahmanical temples of three localities - Bhubaneswar, Konark, and Puri - all in the Puri District from perhaps the ninth century to the thirteenth. The peculiarities of the architecture have already been noticed. The oldest sculptures, usually in sandstone, are at Bhubaneswar; the best statues, mostly in chlorite, are at Konark.

The temples and shrines at Bhubaneswar, said to be five or six hundred in number, are usually richly decorated, and so offer a

Surya holding a flowering lotus in both hands. The sun god travels through the sky on a chariot drawn by seven horses, seen on the base of the sculpture. At his feet is his charioteer Aruna, and his consort, and he is attended by the personifications of earth and air. Celestial archers drive off the hosts of the night (personifications of the stars) and bring the light of day, early 10th century, Pala dynasty, Bihar. Black Basalt (carboniferous shale), 142 x 86 x 9 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

wide field for selection, limited to some extent by the fact that many of the sculptures are grossly obscene, constituting, it is said, a complete set of illustrations of the Sanskrit Kama Sutra, or erotic treatises.

The unfinished temple at Konark, dedicated to the sun, and erected between 1240 and 1280 C.E., was designed to simulate a gigantic solar car drawn by horses. Eight great wheels, each almost three metres in diameter, accordingly are carved above the plinth, and remarkable statues of seven horses stand outside. The wheels are carved with wonderful patience and admirable skill.

The Spoke Wheel of Law (detail of the Konark Sun Temple), 13th century, Ganga dynasty. Sandstone. Konark, Orissa.

Two of the detached colossal horses are the best preserved. Another, placed outside the southern façade, is described by Havell as 'one of the grandest examples of Indian sculpture extant'. Havell's judgement of these works is as follows:

> Here, Indian sculptors have shown that they can express with as much fire and passion as the greatest European art the pride of victory and the glory of triumphant warfare; for not even the Homeric grandeur of the Elgin marbles surpasses the magnificent movement and modelling of this Indian Achilles, and the superbly monumental horse in its massive

Portrait of King Narasimha (1238-1264), the architect of the Sun Temple at Konark, Orissa, receiving spiritual instruction from his chief priest, who is seated to the right. The figures are treated hierarchically, with the priest represented in a larger scale to define the correct guru-pupil relationship, mid-13th century, Ganga dynasty, Konark, Orissa. Black Basalt (carboniferous shale), 78.5 x 43 x 23 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Statue of a war horse trampling on a man (extension part of the Konark Sun Temple), 13th century, Ganga dynasty. Sandstone. Konark, Orissa.

Two Elephant Sculptures (extension part of the Konark Sun Temple), 13th century, Ganga dynasty. Sandstone. Konark, Orissa.

> strength and vigour is not unworthy of comparison with Verrocchio's famous masterpiece at Venice.

The elephant colossi are also finely executed. One renders with mastery the character of the creature.

The explorations carried out under Sir John Marshall's direction revealed many finely executed chlorite statues in addition to those previously known. The image of Vishnu standing, equipped with all his canonical attributes, and attended by earthly and heavenly worshippers, may be fairly credited with no small degree of beauty, notwithstanding the hieratic style and the four arms. The flying figures are good, and the carving is perfect.

Modern Orissan art practically ceases with Konark. Medieval sculpture, consequently, is scarce in the territories strongly held by the Islamic powers. The more considerable remains are to be found only in regions lying remote from the track of the Muslim armies, such as Khajuraho in Chhatarpur, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, and the more inaccessible parts of Rajasthan.

The group of medieval temples at Khajuraho, erected during the tenth and eleventh centuries by the kings of the Chandel dynasty, is the largest and most important in Upper India. At minor sites we find the same lack of individual works of artistic distinction and, as a rule, the same absence of detailed record. The temples of Mount Abu in Rajasthan undoubtedly exhibit masses of sculptured decoration of the most marvellous richness and delicacy, but there does not seem to be anything deserving of isolation from the mass for study as a separate work of art.

The Tower of Victory, over 36.5 metres in height, at Chittoor in Rajasthan, built in the fifteenth century to commemorate the military successes of a local chieftain, is covered from top to bottom, inside and out, with an infinite multitude of images, representing, so far as may be, all the denizens of the Hindu pantheon, with their names attached, and constituting an 'illustrated dictionary of Hindu mythology'. Besides the effigies of the more ordinary deities, there are images representing the seasons, rivers, and weapons. Whenever this series of sculptures shall be reproduced it will be invaluable as a key to Brahmanical iconography, but is not likely to contribute much to the history of art. The better class of art in Rajasthan dates from an earlier period, ending with the twelfth century.

If the description recorded by Mr. Garrick, Sir Alexander Cunningham's assistant, can be depended on, certain relief sculptures at the Mokalji temple on the famous rock of Chittoor posses high merit as works of art. The temple, originally erected in the eleventh century, was reconstructed in the fifteenth century during the reign of Mokalji (1428-1438 C.E.). The pillars bearing the reliefs evidently belong to the earlier building. The bas-reliefs, sixteen in number, are carved on octagonal bands of the eastern pair of pillars supporting the principal chamber of the temple, eight scenes on each pillar. The first scene on the southern column of the pair depicts five human figures, of which two are large and three small; one of the former represents a woman carrying a water jar on her head, and a man standing before her with hands joined in an attitude of adoration. The minor figures are much broken. This sculpture, along with the others of this set, is remarkable for the elaborate detail and technical excellence of its workmanship, the woman's hair being most minutely delineated. The third carving is very well modelled and proportioned, and depicts two standing figures, male and female. The fifth scene is filled with vigorous action, and consists of a musical festival; six male figures play six musical instruments. The sixth and last figure of this interesting group is seen full to the front, blowing a flute (*murali* or *banst*) in a very animated position as if he were dancing.

On the northern column of the seventh scene is in all probability the most interesting of the whole series, and in its half a dozen figures gives us both a duel and an execution. The upper pair of men fight with shields and sabres, and their armour, accoutrements, even the knobs and bosses on their shields, are most carefully delineated, and show that the manufacture of these articles has altered as little during the last nine centuries as that of the musical instruments figured elsewhere. The lower portion of this comprehensive and instructive scene shows a pair of kneeling figures bound hand and foot, while an executioner holds his knife to the neck of the male figure to our left; but the female with him may possibly be a mere witness, though it is pretty clear from the general distribution of action in this trio that she awaits her turn for immolation.

Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva (Trimurti) with their retinues, late 9th - early 10th century C.E., Rajasthan. Honey-coloured sandstone, 73.6 x 91.4x 29.7 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

Religious dancer and Naga figure serving as a relief decor for the Konark Sun Temple (detail)*,* 13th century, Ganga dynasty. Sandstone. Konark, Orissa.

The pillars of Mokalji Temple with the Vijay Stambha (Tower of Victory) in the background. The ornate carved stone tower built to celebrate an ancient victory, 1449, constructed by Rajput king Rana Kumbha of Mewa. Sandstone. Chittaugarh, Rajasthan.

Painting: The Early Schools (Ajanta Caves)

Few, very few, people realize that the art of painting in India and Sri Lanka has a long history, illustrated by extant examples ranging over a period exceeding two thousand years, and that during the so-called Dark Ages the Indian and Sri Lankan painters attained a degree of proficiency not matched in Europe before the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Nevertheless, such are the facts. In this chapter and the next following the history of the art in India, so far as its practice was dominated by Hindu ideas, will be traced from the earliest times of which there is record until the present day; but, unfortunately, the incompleteness of the record compels the historian to leave many gaps in his narrative. The widest of those gaps lies between the close of the Ajanta series in the seventh and the introduction of the Indo-Persian style by Akbar in the sixteenth century. During that long period of more than nine hundred years hardly anything definite is known concerning the productions of Indian painters. The ancient literature of India contains many references to evidence, pictorial art, the earliest, perhaps, being those in books of the Pali Buddhist canon dating from some three or four centuries before the Common era. Several passages in those books tell of pleasure houses belonging to the kings of Magadha and Kosala in northern India as being adorned with painted figures and decorative patterns, presumably similar to the earliest known frescoes in Orissa and at Ajanta. Painted halls are also mentioned in the Ramayana and allusions to portraits are frequent in the dramas of Kalidasa and his successors from the fifth to the eighth century after Christ. The testimony of native writers is confirmed by that of the Chinese pilgrims in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, who notice several examples of celebrated Buddhist pictures; and by Taranath, the Tibetan historian of Buddhism, who, when writing at the beginning of the seventeenth century, ascribes the most ancient pictures to the gods, and declares that they were so marvellous as to bewilder beholders by their realism.

The literary evidence thus summarily indicated would alone amply prove the early and continuous practice of the painter's art in India; but it is unnecessary to labour the proof from books, because evidence of a more satisfactory kind is furnished by the considerable surviving remains of ancient painting from the second century B.C.E.; which, even in their present fragmentary and mutilated state, enable the modern critic to appraise the style of the early Indian artists, and to recognize the just claim of the art of India to take high rank among the ancient schools of painting. We will now proceed to give in this chapter an account of the extant remains of Indian painting from the second century B.C.E. to the middle of the seventh century.

The oldest Indian pictures are found in the Jogimara Cave of the Ramgarh Hill to the south of the Mirzapur District of Uttar Pradesh. These pictures, apparently executed in the customary Indian method of fresco, which will be explained presently, are divided into concentric circles by bands of red and yellow, sometimes enriched with a geometrical design, these circles seemingly being again subdivided into panels. The early date of the paintings, which are fairly well preserved, is attested by inscriptions, evidently contemporary, and by the style, which recalls that of the sculptures at Sanchi and Bharhut. They probably date from the second century B.C.E., and cannot well be later than the first century B.C.E. The nudity of the principal figures suggests a connexion with the Jain rather than the Buddhist religion, if the cave and paintings had any religious significance, which is doubtful. As regards technique, the designs are painted usually in red, but occasionally in black, on a white ground. The outlines of the human and animal figures are drawn in black. Clothing is white with red outlines, hair is black, and eyes are white. Yellow appears in the dividing bands only, and blue does not seem to occur.

A kneeling sadhu (ascetic) worshipping, represented with the typical hair and beard of sadhus still seen in India today, 4th-6th century C.E. Fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave IX), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

The story of the art of painting in India is continued by the celebrated frescoes of the Ajanta caves in the west, ranging in date from about 50 C.E. or earlier, to about the sixth century, a period of some six or seven centuries, and constituting the most important mass of ancient painting extant in the world, Pompeii only excepted. The caves, twenty-nine in number, are 'excavated in the face of an almost perpendicular scarp of rock about 26 metres high, sweeping round in a curve of fully a semicircle, and forming the north or outer side of a wild and lonely glen, down which comes a small stream'. This glen or ravine, a scene of great natural beauty and perfect seclusion, admirably adapted for a monastic retreat, is situated about 5.6 kilometres southwest from Phardapur, a small town in the Hyderabad state, standing at the foot of a pass across the Indhyadri Hills, which divide the table-land of the Deccan from the Khandesh District in the Tapti valley, and six and a half kilometres west northwest. from the town of Ajanta, not far from the battlefield of Assaye.

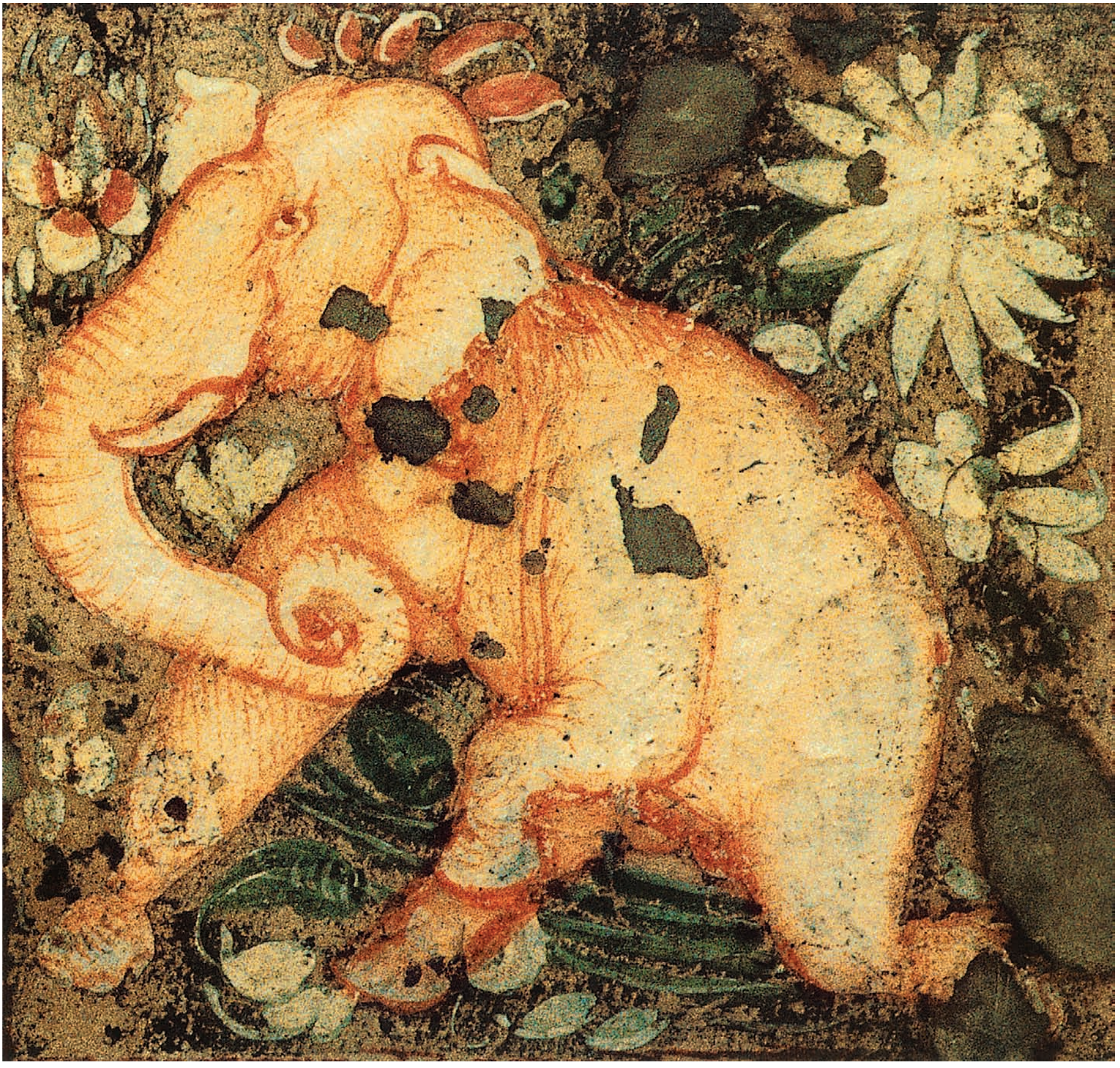
The caves extend for a distance of about 548 metres from east to west round the concave wall of amygdaloid trap which hems in the stream on its north or left side, and vary in elevation from about 10.5 to 30 metres above the level of the torrent. The numbers by which authors have agreed to designate them begin at the east end. Four of the excavations, Nos. IX, X, XIX, and XXVI, are churches (the so-called chattyas), the rest being monastic residences, the *viharas* of English writers. Some have never been completed. The principal works are elaborate architectural compositions, executed in the solid rock, the nature of which is very inadequately expressed by the term 'caves'.

In 1879 paintings to a greater or lesser extent remained in sixteen caves, Nos. I, II, IV, VI, VII, IX, X, XI, XV, XVI, XIX, XX, XXII, XXVI. The most important fragments were then to be seen in nine caves, Nos. I, II, IX, X, XI, XVI, XVII, XIX, and XXI, those in Cave XVII being the most extensive. The most ancient excavations, Nos. VIII, XII, and XIII, have no paintings. No. XIII, perhaps the earliest of all, has polished walls, and may date from 200 B.C.E. Six of the caves, Nos. VIII, IX, X, XI (with some sculpture possibly later), XII, and XIII are concerned with the early Hinayana form of Buddhism, and may be considered to cover a period of about three and a half centuries from 200 B.C.E. to 150 C.E. All the others were dedicated to the Mahayana forms of worship. Nos. VI and VII may be assigned to the century between 450 and 550 C.E. The rest, namely Nos. XIV to XX, XXI-XXIX, and I-V seem to have been excavated between 500 C.E., several having been left incomplete. No. I was held by Fergusson to be the latest of the completed works.

The paintings are not necessarily of exactly the same age as the caves which they adorn. The most ancient unquestionably are certain works in Caves IX and X, partially overlaid by later pictures. These earliest paintings are so closely related to the Sanchi sculptures that they may be referred to approximately the same age, about the beginning of the Common era, or earlier. They may, perhaps, be credited to the patronage of the powerful Andhra kings of the Deccan, who, even if not themselves Buddhists, certainly put no obstacle in the way of Buddhist worship. So far as appears, no paintings were executed for centuries afterwards.

The bulk of the paintings unquestionably must be assigned to the time of the great Chalukya kings (550-642 C.E.) and of the earlier Vakataka kings of Berar. A Vakataka inscription exists in Cave XVI. It is unlikely that any can have been executed later than the second date named, when Pulakesin II was dethroned and presumably killed by the Pallava king of the South. The resulting political conditions must have been unfavourable for the execution of costly works of art dedicated to the service of Buddhism, the Pallava kings having been, as a rule, ardent

The interior of the main hall of Cave II, showing five of the twelve massive pillars decorated with elaborate carvings. The painted ceiling consists of a large number of symmetrically arranged panels (floral decorations in blue) surrounding the large square centrepiece, about 600 C.E. Ceiling panel. Ajanta caves (Cave II), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.



worshippers of Shiva. The related paintings at Bagh in Malwa may be dated at some time in the sixth century, or the first half of the seventh. A close relation exists between the frescoes and certain sculptural additions at Ajanta such as the Temptation scene in Cave XXVI as well as with the earliest work at Ellora which is also Buddhist.

The Ajanta paintings first became known to Europeans in 1819, but failed to attract much attention until 1843, when Fergusson, the historian of architecture, published a description of them and persuaded the Directors of the East India Company to sanction the preparation of copies at the public expense. Publicity has been fatal to the originals, as evidenced by stories of the Nizam's subordinate officials cutting out heads to present to visitors; and, shameful to say, Bird, a Bombay archaeologist, was guilty of the same crime with the intention of benefiting the Museum at Bombay. Of course, all the fragments of plaster thus abstracted crumbled to dust and were lost irretrievably. Much injury also has been done by smoke from the fires of Hindu ascetics camping in the caves, by the folly of irresponsible scribblers of various nationalities, and by the unchecked action of bats, birds, and nest-building insects. In 1903-1904 wire screens were fixed up in all the more important caves, and a good deal of cleaning was done. In 1908, the Department submitted a scheme for further conservation to the Government of the Nizam. Since then the caves have been amply protected and a curator appointed. Exact copies have also been made of the frescoes by means of tracing and photography and the frescoes themselves have been finely preserved.

Many of the paintings referred to in this chapter, have since 1879 disappeared.

The Ajanta pictures may be correctly termed frescoes, although the process used is not exactly the same as any practised in Europe.

This beautiful light-footed elephant painted in one of the ceiling panels has been chosen as the official logo of India's Department of Tourism, the first half of the 6th century C.E. Detail of ceiling panel. Ajanta caves (Cave I), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

A comic scene of two gnomes at play, the first half of the 6th century C.E. Detail of ceiling panel. Ajanta caves (Cave I), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

'The Indian practice of wall-painting at Ajanta, as elsewhere', Mr. Griffiths observes, 'is in fact a combination of tempera with fresco. The hydraulic nature of Indian lime, or *chunam*, makes it possible to keep a surface moist for a longer time than in Europe, and the Indian practice of trowelling the work unknown in Europe produced a closer and more intimate liaison between the colour and the lime, and a more durable and damp-resisting face than the open texture of European fresco. The art has been practised all over India since the time of the Ajanta frescoes, and to this day houses, mosques, and temples are thus decorated. The modern method is first to spread a ground of coarse mortar (*chunam*) of the thickness of from one to two and a half centimetres on the Avail. This is allowed to stand for a day. If on the next day the ground is too dry, it is moistened, and then tapped all over with the edge of a small piece of wood of triangular section, to roughen it and give it a tooth. Then, with a coarse brush a thin coating of fine white plaster (*chunam*) is applied, and the work is allowed to stand till the next day, being moistened all the time. If the painting is to be highly finished, the ground is carefully smoothed with a small flat iron trowel about the size of a dessert spoon, which produces a surface on which the design is first sketched, or transferred by pouncing from a perforated drawing on paper, and then painted.

The outline is usually put in first in brown or black; local colour is filled in with flat washes, on which the details are painted.

The colours are ground with rice or linseed-water with a little coarse molasses (*gur*), and water only is used in painting. Then, when the painting is completed, it is again rubbed over with the same small trowel. It is considered absolutely necessary that the work should be kept damp from beginning to finish, so that the plaster is not allowed to set until the completion of the picture. When once the smoothly trowelled surface is dry, it bears a distinct sheen or gloss and the colours withstand washing.

Between the methods of modern India and that employed at Ajanta, the only difference is that instead of a first coat of mortar, a mixture of clay, cow dung, and pulverized trap rock was first applied to the walls and thoroughly pressed into its sic surface, when the small cavities and air-holes peculiar to volcanic rock and the rough chisel marks left by the excavators served as keys. In some instances, especially in the ceilings, rice husks were used.

This first layer which, according to our modern notions, promises no great permanence was laid to a thickness varying from a one-fourth to two centimetres, and on it an egg-shell coat of fine white plaster was spread. This skin of plaster, in fact, overlaid everything mouldings, columns, carven ornaments, and figure sculptures, but, in the case of carved details, without the intervention of the coat of earthen rough-cast; and, from what remains, it is clear that the whole of each cave was thus plaster-coated and painted. The texture of the volcanic rock, which is at once hard, open, impervious to damp, and yet full of air holes, is especially suitable for this treatment. Great pains were taken with the statues of Buddha; one in the small chamber to the right of the first floor of Cave VI is covered with a layer of the finest plaster one-fourth of a centimetrest thick, so painted and polished that the face has the smoothness and sheen of porcelain.

It will be seen that a parallel to the technique of the Ajanta paintings is scarcely to be found in the Italian frescoes. But it is evident from specimens of the Egyptian work in the British Museum that loam or clay mixed with chopped straw formed the substratum over which, as at Ajanta, a layer of fine plaster was laid to receive the final painting.

Detail of the painted ceiling in the rear aisle show a great variety of floral motifs and geese. The geometric designs of three-dimensional effect on the sides are similar to decorative patterns used in ancient Greek art, about 600 C.E. Ceiling panel.
Ajanta caves (Cave II), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

It may not be impertinent again to point out the exceeding simplicity of the Indian and Egyptian methods, which have ensured a durability denied to more recent attempts executed with all the aids of modern chemical science.'

The foregoing description of the technique of the Ajanta paintings, based upon Griffiths's patient study for thirteen years on the spot, may be accepted with confidence as authoritative, although Havell may be right in adding that the pictures were sometimes touched up in tempera after the surface had dried. Italian workers in true fresco (*fresco buono*) often permit themselves the same liberty.

But it will be well to supplement Mr. Griffiths account by the recent observations of Mrs. Herringham, also an expert artist, who writes:

> The technique adopted, with perhaps some few exceptions, is a bold red line-drawing on the white plaster. Sometimes nothing else is left. This drawing gives all the essentials with force or delicacy as may be required, and with knowledge and intention. Next comes a thinnish terra-verde monochrome showing some of the red through it; then the local colour; then a strengthening of the outlines with blacks and browns giving great decision, but also a certain flatness; last, a little shading if necessary. There is not much definite light and shade modelling, but there is great definition given by the use of contrasting local colour and of emphatic blacks and whites.

Mr. Griffiths, it will be observed, does not mention the first outline in red. The nature of fresco painting in any of its forms implies the use of a limited range of pigments capable of resisting the decomposing action of lime, and consequently composed of natural earths. At Ajanta and Bagh (now most likely in Pakistan) the colours most freely used are white, red, and brown in various shades, a dull green, and blue. The white is opaque, mainly composed of sulphate of lime; the reds and browns derive their tints solely from compounds of iron; the green is a silicate, similar to the mineral now known as terre verte; and the blue is ultramarine, which was obtained in ancient times by grinding calcined lapis-lazuli, a costly semi-precious mineral usually imported from either Iran or the Badakshan province of Afghanistan. All the other pigments are to be found locally. The long panels of the ceilings in Cave II, dating from about 600 C.E., offer well-preserved examples of charming floral decorations in blue.

The subjects of the pictures, as distinguished from the purely decorative devices, are almost exclusively Buddhist. They include, of course, numerous figures of Buddha and representations of sacred objects and symbols. The more complex compositions for the most part deal with either the incidents of the life of Gautama Buddha or those related in the Jataka stories, which narrates the events of his former births. In at least two cases the Jataka story is indicated beyond dispute by a painted label, but the fragmentary condition of the pictures renders difficult the identification of most of the scenes. There is, however, no difficulty in recognizing in Cave X the tale of the six-tusked elephant, and a few other legends may be identified with more or less certainty. Miscellaneous edifying Buddhist subjects, not taken from the Jataka collection, include the Litany of Avalokiteshvara and consecutive scenes from the life of the Buddha; the Wheel of Life, formerly miscalled the Zodiac.

The high achievement of the Ajanta artists in decorative design executed with masterly skill is most freely exhibited in the

Four ganas (celestial beings) floating amongst the clouds bring offerings of flowers to the Buddha. The rendering of their bodies resembles the plump cherubs depicted in Renaissance art in Europe, about 600 C.E. Detail of the main shrine ceiling.
Ajanta caves (Cave II), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

ceiling panels of Cave I, painted in the first half of the seventh century. Mr. Griffiths, who took so much pleasure in copying the designs, describes their variety as infinite, carried into the smallest details, so that repetition is very rare; fancy is given full play, and the simplest objects of nature, being pressed into the artist's service, are converted into pleasing and effective ornament. He observes:

> The smaller panels are ornamented with designs as varied and graceful as they are fanciful. Some with grotesque little figures, rich in humour and quaintly dressed in Persian turbans, coats, and striped stockings; gambolling amid fruits and flowers; dancing, drinking, or playing upon instruments; or chattering together; some with animals combined with the lotus, drawn with remarkable fidelity and action: as the elephant, humped bull, and the monkey; parrots, geese, and conventional birds singly and in pairs, with foliated crests, and tails convoluted like heraldic lambrequins, showing the upper and under surface of the ornament. Some contain the large pink lotus, full-bloom, half-bloom, and in bud, as well as the smaller red and white; some with the mango (*Mangifera indica*), custard apple (*Anona squamosa*); a round fruit which may be the bel (*Aegle marmelos*) or the lime (*Citrus aurantifolia*); another that looks like the brinjal or aubergine (*Solanum melongena*), and many others.

The ornament in these panels is painted alternately on a black and red ground. The ground colour was first laid all over the panel, and then the ornament painted solidly upon this in white. It was further developed by thin transparent colours over the white.

Cave II presents some very good work. The circular panels are very fine, the figures in the spandrils being particularly good and full of movement. These circular panels have a distant resemblance to the carved moonstones of Sri Lanka. The long ceiling panels are admirable.

In the sixth-century Cave XVII, the charming floral designs combined with human figures on the panels of the pillars are closely related to the slightly earlier sculptured work on the Garhwa pillars in northern India. The *kirttimukha* grinning faces are common throughout medieval Indian art. As chaste decoration it would be difficult to surpass the frets. The pair of lovers in a spandril of the central panel of the ceiling of Cave I is admirably drawn, and although forming only a subordinate member of a decorative design, is worthy of reproduction as a cabinet picture.

We now proceed to describe, so far as space permits, characteristic examples of the larger pictures on the walls of the caves in chronological order. But the pictures being too large to admit of intelligible reproduction as complete compositions, except on a scale far beyond the dimensions of this book, the illustrations will be confined to extracts from the paintings, which are generally overcrowded and lacking in the unity derived from skilled comp sition.

The earliest works, as already stated, are certain paintings in Caves IX and X, closely related to the Sanchi sculptures. In Cave X the remains of early paintings are more extensive. I am disposed to think that the figures of Buddha painted on the pillars of Cave X are the next in date, and should be assigned to the fifth century, but they might be later. The nimbus and draperies recall early Christian art and the sculptures of Gandhara.

The whole interior of Cave XVI was once covered with paintings of high merit, but many of them had been destroyed. The scene

known as the 'Dying Princess', reproduced by Griffiths in 1874 was deservedly praised by him in glowing language, endorsed by Burgess and Fergusson, which merits quotation:

> A lady of rank sits on a couch leaning her left arm on the pillow, and an attendant behind holds her up. A girl in the background places her hand on her breast and looks towards the lady. Another with a sash across her breast wields the *pankha* [fan], and an old man in a white cap looks in at the door, while another sits beside a pillar. In the foreground sit two women. In another apartment are two figures; one with a Persian cap has a water-vessel (*kalasd*) and a cup in the mouth of it; the other wants something from him. To the right two *kanchukinis* [female servants] sit in a separate compartment. … For pathos and sentiment and the unmistakable way of telling its story this picture, I consider, cannot be surpassed in the history of art. The Florentine could have put better drawing, and the Venetian better colour, but neither could have thrown greater expression into it. The dying woman, with drooping head, half-closed eyes, and languid limbs, reclines on a bed, the like of which may be found in any native house of the present day. She is tenderly supported by a female attendant; whilst another with eager gaze is looking into her face, and

The ceiling outside the antechamber of the main shrine. Geometric patterns are a prominent feature of all the ceiling decorations in this cave, about 600 C.E. Outside ceiling panel.
Ajanta caves (Cave II), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

> holding the sick woman's arm as if in the act of feeling her pulse. The expression on her face is one of deep anxiety as she seems to realize how soon life will be extinct in the one she loves. Another female behind is in attendance with a pankha, whilst two men on the left are looking on with the expression of profound grief depicted in their faces. Below are seated on the floor other relations, who appear to have given up all hope and to have begun their days of mourning, for one woman has buried her face in her hand and apparently is weeping bitterly.

Other figures wearing the Persian cap appear in a second painting in the same cave, and may be compared with the representation of the so-called Persian embassy and connected minor pictures in Cave I.

Cave XVII, which is little later in date than Cave XVI, whatever may be the case now, could show more painting than any of the others, may fairly be considered the most interesting of the series. No less than sixty-one distinct scenes are described in Burgess's notes. The two largest pictures are so excessively crowded with figures and so deficient in unity of composition that they cannot be presented satisfactorily except on an enormous scale.

The representation in the left end of the verandah of the Buddhist Wheel of Life, commonly miscalled the Zodiac, is interesting rather as an illustration of popular Buddhist teaching in the sixth century than as a work of art. Similar pictures are still frequently exhibited in Tibetan monasteries and used by the Lamas for purposes of instruction. The dimensions of the Ajanta painting, now a mere fragment, are 2.6 metres by 1.5 metres. The huge painting was supposed to represent the legend of the landing of King Vijaya in Sri Lanka and his coronation as described in the Pali chronicles, but is actually a faithful rendering of the Simhala Avadana. Another painting gives the story of Sibi Raja, already mentioned.

Among the later caves, the Chattya or church (Cave XIX) which is elaborately carved throughout and has its porch and whole front covered with beautiful sculpture, was considered by Fergusson to be 'one of the most perfect specimens of Buddhist art in India'. The paintings include many effigies of Buddha, and some exquisite panels on the roof of the front aisle, as well as rich floriated patterns on the roofs of the side aisles.

We now pass to Caves I and II, No. I being probably the latest of the completed works.

The individual figures are remarkable for clever drawing, the artist having apparently gone out of his way to invent specially difficult poses. A woman prostrating herself, and snake-hooded Nagas, or water-sprites, are good examples of such tours de force. The woman standing, with her left leg bent up, is capital, the feet being as well drawn as the hands; and the woman in the swing is pleasing and life-like.

The elegant decorative designs of Cave I have already been described. The numerous large wall-pictures include the Temptation of Buddha, a subject also effectively treated in sculpture in Cave XXVI, not far removed in date. In this cave is also the so-called Persian embassy scene. The identification is based (a) upon the pointed caps which are considered to be Persian; (b) upon the statement of an Arab historian that an embassy was sent by Pulakesin II to the Persian court in 626 C.E.

A Kirtimukha (a lion-headed demon from Hindu mythology) carved on a pillar, the first half of the 6th century C.E.
Carved stone pillar. Ajanta caves (Cave I), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

The 'Dying Princess'. The forlorn Princess Janapadakalyani pines for her husband, Nanda, who has left her to become an ascetic. In the top right corner two palace maids are shown discussing the sad condition of the queen, 5th-6th century C.E. Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave XVI), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra. (p. 130-131)

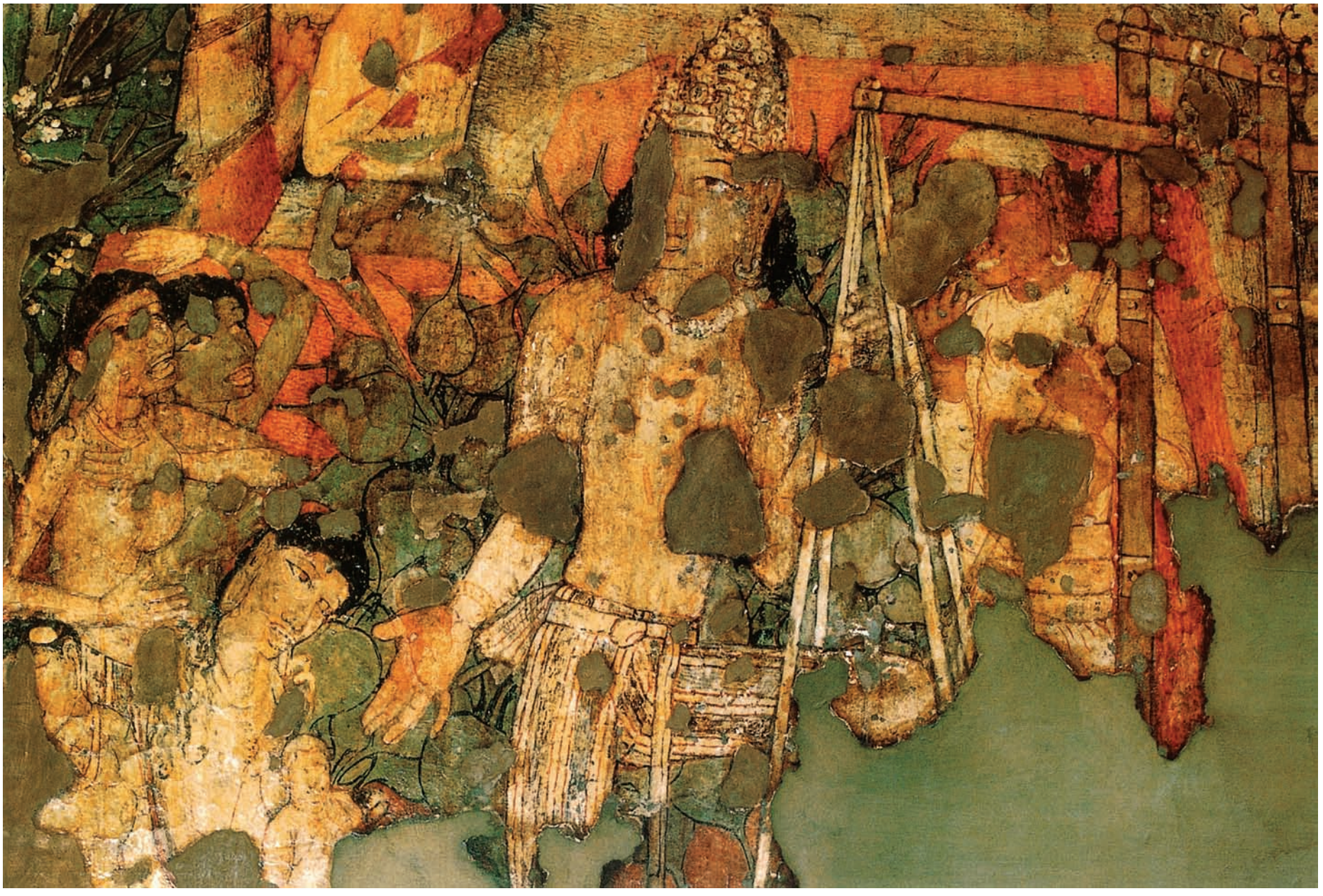
Four smaller pictures placed symmetrically at the corners of the central square of the principal design of the roof, and all replicas of one subject, with variations, evidently have some connexion with the other 'Persian' pictures, which measures 4.5 by 1.9 metres. Fergusson, developing the Persian myth, assumed that the principal personages depicted must be II (reign 590 to 628) and his famous Christian consort, Shirin (? - 628 C.E.), but this attractive hypothesis cannot be said to be proved.

The foregoing descriptions and illustrations will enable the reader to form a judgement concerning the aesthetic value of the Ajanta paintings, and I trust that nobody will be found to agree with the opinion expressed in Sir George Watt's book that they 'can hardly be classed among the fine arts'. The pictures and decorative designs in the caves, when compared with Egyptian, Chinese, or other ancient paintings, which did not profess to show the relief effect of modern pictures, are fairly entitled to high rank as works of fine art. In judging them the critic should remember that the wall-paintings were executed on an enormous scale, some being more than six metres in diameter, and that they were intended to be looked at in the mass from a distance, and not in minute detail. Small reproductions on a page a few centimetres long cannot possibly give a just idea of the effects aimed at by the artists. Moreover, those artists were much concerned to tell sacred stories, and make their pictures serve for the edification of devout worshippers as instructive illustrations of the Buddhist Bible; whereas all the religious sentiment in the spectator on which they relied for sympathetic understanding is wanting in the modern European critic. Yet, in spite of the disadvantages inherent in small-scale reproductions and criticism by judges out of touch with the spirit of the artists, the paintings stand the unfair test wonderfully well, and excite respectful admiration as the production of painters capable of deep emotion, full of sympathy with the nature of men, women, children, animals, and plants, and endowed with masterly powers of execution. The considered verdict of Griffiths, the artist who spent thirteen years in the close, loving study of the paintings, may be accepted as a sound general criticism, not attempting to distinguish periods and styles:

> In spite of its obvious limitations, I find the work so accomplished in execution, so consistent in convention, so vivacious and varied in design, and full of such evident delight in beautiful form and colour, that I cannot help ranking it with some of the early art which the world has agreed to praise in Italy. … The Ajanta workmanship is admirable; long subtle curves are drawn with great precision in a line of unvarying thickness with one sweep of the brush; the touch is often bold and vigorous, the handling broad, and in some cases the impasto is as solid as in the best Pompeian work. … The draperies, too, are thoroughly understood, and though the folds may be somewhat conventionally drawn, they express most thoroughly the peculiarities of the Oriental treatment of unsewn cloth. … For the purposes of art-education no better examples could be placed before an Indian art-student than those to be found in the caves of Ajanta. Here we have art with life in it, human faces full of expression, limbs drawn with grace and action, flowers which bloom, birds which soar, and beasts that spring, or fight, or patiently carry burdens; all are taken from Nature's book growing after her pattern, and in this respect differing entirely from Islamic art, which is

Scene of the story of Simhala Avadana (the rich merchant and son of King Simhakesri): The chambers of the King Simhakesri's harem present a gruesome sight as the ogresses from the island Tamradvipa attack the women and the king to drink their blood, 6th century C.E. Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave XVII), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Scene of the Simhala Avadana story: A great and powerful army assembled under Simhala's command heads towards the island of the ogresses. Simhala – now his father's successor – is seated on a white elephant and about to defeat and take revenge on the bloodthirsty monsters. The island was thereupon renamed Simhakalpa (today Sri Lanka), 6th century C.E. Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave XVII), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.



Sibi Jataka: The just and noble Bodhisattva King Sibi stands next to a balance. The gentle expression on his face is poignant as he prepares to sacrifice himself, the first half of the 7th century C.E. Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave I), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Sibi Jataka: After having carried the future Buddha in her womb for ten months, Queen Maya gave birth while standing under a sal tree. She is depicted holding a branch from the tree above her head. According to the traditional account of the birth of Gautama (the Buddha) in 567 B.C.E., the infant Buddha emerged from his mother's right side, about 600 C.E. Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave II), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

> unreal, unnatural, and therefore incapable of development.

Whatever be the value of the incidental criticism on Islamic art – a subject to be discussed in due course – Griffiths's hearty appreciation of the Ajanta frescoes is, in my judgement, just and well deserved.

In support of his comparison with the performance of the early Italians, he aptly cites the fragment of a fresco with heads of nuns, "A Group of Poor Clares" by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, executed in the fourteenth century, and now in the Sienese Room of the National Gallery in London, as being 'singularly like the Ajanta work in colour, execution, and treatment; the forms being drawn with a delicate brown outline, and the flesh-tints and drapery flatly put in with very little modelling. The obvious comparison with ancient Italian art was also made by Fergusson, who considered the Ajanta paintings to be better than anything in Europe before the time of Orcagna in the fourteenth, or even Fiesole (Fra Angelico) in the fifteenth century. Similarly, Havell, another trained artist, who selects the charming Mother and Child in Cave XVII as the most attractive specimen of Ajanta art, finds in the frescoes the same intense love of nature and spiritual devotion as are evident in the sculptures of Borobodur, and compares the 'exquisite sentiment of the picture selected with the wonderful Madonnas of Giovanni Bellini'.

Sibi Jataka: The miraculous birth of the Buddha. Queen Maya had a dream where a white elephant went around her couch three times, struck her on the right side and entered her womb. In this section of the painting the Queen, with her husband King Suddhodana, is shown telling the court astrologer Asita about her dream. Asita says that the dream signifies that the Queen will have a male child who will either become Ruler of the World or will renounce his courtly life to become a great ascetic who will show the Righteous Path to the people, about 600 C.E. Fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave II), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

The Buddha came before his wife Yashodhara and their son Rahula. Yashodhara has implored the child to ask the Buddha for his rightful inheritance, being born the son of a prince, but he says he has only his begging bowl to offer. Because of his spiritual importance, the Buddha is depicted here as a much larger figure, towering over Yashodhara and Rahula (both in detail on p. 139), 6th century C.E. Fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave XVII), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra. (p. 138)

Detail of the mother and child: Yashodhara and her son Rahula, 6th century C.E. Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave XVII), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra. (p. 139)

Buddha in the teaching posture. He is shown seated on a lotus flower and surrounded by attendants and worshippers, 5th-6th century C.E., Gupta period. Fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave VI), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

A Bacchanalian scene, painted on the ceiling, representing foreigners from northwest India, about 600 C.E. Fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave I), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Fergusson was of opinion that while the art of Ajanta resembled that of China in flatness and want of shadow, he had never seen 'anything in China approaching its perfection'. In his time so little was known in England about Chinese art that this sentiment might have passed muster, but forty years later, Fergusson's dictum could not be accepted in the light of 'fuller knowledge' when set against it the deliberate judgement of Laurence Binyon, a learned connoisseur in the art of the Far East.

> What is lacking in the Ajanta paintings, what is so signally manifest in Chinese painting throughout its history, is that powerful creative instinct and aesthetic perception which make for synthetic unity in art, that sense of controlling rhythm and balance which inspires all fine design.

The expert criticisms above quoted all agree in being general in their terms. Lady Herringham, in the too brief article already cited more than once, carried the aesthetic valuation of the paintings farther by distinguishing various periods and styles. She held that the frescoes 'fall into about six distinct groups, representing various schools and periods rather than the steady development of one school'. Going a little into detail, the critic proceeds:

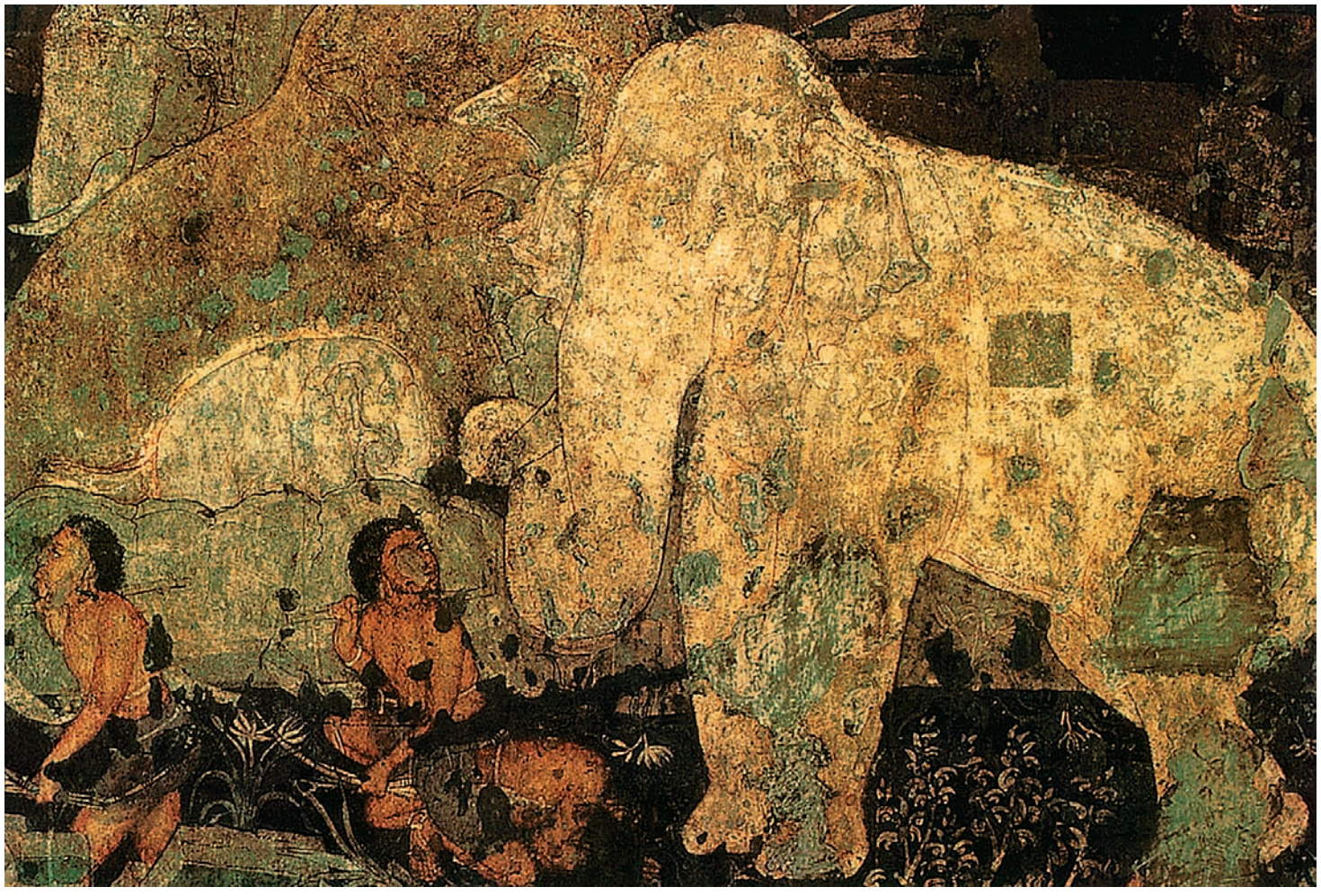
> I have already alluded to several styles and classes of painting in Caves I and IX, XVI and XVII. There are, besides, later developments of the narrative style of Cave XVII, which we find in Caves I and II. These are (1) a more emphatic and stylistic manner, with more formalism in the drawing, more action and less tenderness; (2) a more popular, lively, and forcible dramatic narrative, with more incidents and less idealism.

In Cave II are three more distinct styles: on both the side walls of a secondary shrine we find four or five elaborately posed, nearly nude life-size figures. These are sinuous in outline, quite Cimabuesque in proportion, attitude and general feeling; the arrangement suggests bas-relief. The late date of this cave indicates the period of the painting. In a similar shrine on the opposite side are corresponding decorations, and the figures on the main west wall might, but for the type, be an assemblage of Chinese sages; they are drawn with a magnificent bravura. There is not much colour left, but the somewhat calligraphic drawing in forcible blacks and reddish browns is so freely executed that one scarcely regrets the destruction which has laid bare such vital work. On a separate part of this west wall there is a subject of men and white geese in a water lily pool, which, though closely linked to the earlier definitely Indian types of painting, suggests the freedom and at the same time the perfect balance of the very best Chinese period. The colour scheme is very beautiful brilliant white, deep purple-brown, a vivid but rich malachite-green, with touches of a clear red.

Further, in Cave XVII there are three paintings by one hand very different from all the rest. They are (1) a hunt of lions and black buck; (2) a hunt of elephants; and (3) an elephant salaaming in a king's court the companion picture to No. 2. These pictures are composed in a light and shade scheme which can scarcely be paralleled in Italy before the seventeenth century. They are nearly monochrome (warm and cool greys understood), except that the foliage and grass are dull green. The whole posing and grouping is curiously natural and modern, the drawing easy, light and sketchy, and the painting suggestively laid in with solid brush strokes in the flesh not unlike some examples of modern French painting. The animals horses, elephants, dogs, and black buck are extremely well drawn.

Devotees bringing offerings. This mural is greatly appreciated by European visitors who find these figures similar to the early Madonnas of Christian art, about 600 C.E. Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave II), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Rows of seated Buddha figures in different postures,
about 600 C.E. Detail of a fresco.
Ajanta caves (Cave II), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra. (p. 144-145)



Development of criticism on the lines indicated by Lady Herringham would require a bulky monograph based on detailed notes taken on the spot by a competent expert. It is impossible to work out the differences of the supposed schools merely from the fragmentary published reproductions.

The vigorous school of art which produced the Ajanta frescoes did not confine its operations to the caves at that place. Several similar excavations near Bagh, a village or decayed small town in Madhya Bharat, situated on an ancient road connecting Gujarat with Malwa, exhibit traces of a set of works resembling in general style the Ajanta paintings, and at one time of almost equal importance. Unfortunately, the crumbling of the rock, and absolute neglect, combined with the effects of the smoke from campfires, have left hardly anything of compositions which once covered hundreds of square metres.

The paintings appear to have rivalled those of Ajanta in variety of design, vigorous execution, and decorative quality, life being treated in both places with equal gaiety and hardly a trace of asceticism. Our surprise at finding such scenes depicted on the walls of a Buddhist monastery may be lessened when we consider the nature of many of the sculptures at Mathura and in the Aurangabad caves; but we do not know quite enough about the real nature of the later popular Buddhism in India to understand fully the significance of such frivolous sculptures and paintings.

Shaddanta Jataka: The hunter kneels in reverence before the kind Bodhisattva Shaddanta, the elephant king, who is removing his tusks and handing them over, 6th century C.E. Detail of a fresco.
Ajanta caves (Cave XVII), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Shaddanta Jataka: A hunter and a monkey sitting under a palasa tree. On one branch of the tree the artist has painted a row of ants. This minute attention to detail reflects the painters' interest in representing all the creatures of this world in the Ajanta caves, 6th century C.E.
Detail of a fresco. Ajanta caves (Cave XVII), near Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

The Medieval Period in the South of India

Architecture

If the Dravidian or Southern style of architecture is sharply distinguished from the Northern by the fact that its tower or spire is straight-lined and pyramidal in form, divided into stories by horizontal bands, and surmounted by either a barrel-roof or a dome derived directly from the ancient wooden architecture. The central shrine originally stood alone, but in later times it was enclosed in an immense walled court, usually including numerous subsidiary temples, tanks, and sculptured halls or cloisters. The quadrangle is entered by lofty gateways (*gopuram*), which in later temples overtop the central shrine, and so spoil the effect of the architectural composition. But the great temple of Thanjavur, its smaller replica at Gangaikondapuram, and some of the earlier temples at Kanchipuram are designed on correct principles, with the central mass dominating the composition. Sometimes there are several quadrangles, one within the other.

The history of the style begins in the seventh century with the Dharmaraja Ratha, the earliest of the rock-cut rathas at Mahabalipuram, thirty-five miles south of Madras, commonly known as the Seven Pagodas, which were excavated in the reigns of the Pallava kings of the South during the seventh century. Some of the others are crowned by domes.

The next stage in the development of the style is marked by the structural temples at Kanchipuram, the former Pallava capital and have been described in detail by Alexander Rea. *Kanchl* – six temples of the Pallava period exist in or close to the town. Inscriptions prove that the two principal edifices, the Kailash and the Vaikuntha-Perumal, were erected by the sons of King Rajasimha, great-grandson of Narasimha-varman. The Mukteshvara temple of about the same date, say 700 to 750 C.E., with a domical roof, is a typical example.

Further development was effected under the patronage of the powerful Chola kings, Rajaraja and his son Rajendra (985 to 1035), the builders respectively of the Great Temple at Thanjavur and its fellow at Gangaikonda-puram in the Trichinopoly District. At this period the shrine was designed on huge proportions, towering above the subsidiary gateways and pavilions.

The gigantic South Indian temples, with vast quadrangular enclosures and lofty gopurams overtopping the central shrine, extend in date from the sixteenth century to the present day. Fergusson speaks of upwards of thirty great Dravidian temples, or groups of temples, any one of which must have cost as much to build as an English cathedral some a great deal more. Several such edifices, at Rameswaram, Tirunelveli, Madurai, and other places, are described in his book. The buildings at Madurai are of special interest because they can be dated closely, having been erected by Thirumalai Nayak, a local chieftain, who reigned from 1623 to 1659.

Brihadisvara Temple, 11th century, constructed by Raja Raja Chola. Granite, height: 66 m. Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

Sacred Temple water tank of Koviloor is used for the annual floating festival (teppotsava) when a portable icon is displayed on a floating pontoon and drawn around the tank, c. 11th century, Pandya dynasty, near Karaikudi. Laterite. Tinnevelly, Tamil Nadu. (p. 150)

Sculptures of divine and royal beings (detail of a relief on the east end of the façade of the Hoysalesvara Temple), 12th century, Hoysala dynasty. Sandstone, six friezes, length: 200 m. Halebidu, Karnataka. (p. 151)

The Madurai temple is a typical example. The corridors or cloisters connected with such temples are of wonderfully large dimensions those of Rameswaram, for instance, aggregating nearly 1,219 metres in length and are filled with weird, fantastic sculpture. Perhaps the most marvellous of all Dravidian temples is the well-known rock-cut Kailasa temple at Ellora, excavated from a hill-side by a Rashtrakuta king in the eighth century. In style the Kailasa is a development of the Pallava shrines, but its sculpture is finer than anything produced in the South. At Badami and Pattadakal in the Bijapur District are other shrines of the same type; these are all structural.

The immense ruins of the city of Vijayanagar, dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, surrounding Hampi village in the Bellary District, Madras, present numerous examples of a special local variety of Dravidian architecture. The royal palaces and apartments here show signs of Islamic influence. The temples are purely southern Indian in style with high gateways and many-pillared pavilions.

The style intermediate in both locality and character between the Northern and Southern styles that which received from Fergusson the inappropriate name Chalukyan. It is true that the Chalukya clan supplied one of the leading royal families of the Deccan from the middle of the sixth to the middle of the eighth century, and again from 973 C.E. to the Islamic conquest, but the typical examples of the style are the work of Hoysala, not Chalukya kings; and, if a dynastic designation be given, the style should be named Hoysala rather than Chalukya. Territorial designations are, however, preferable to dynastic, and if it be practicable to modify Fergusson's established nomenclature, the style may be better described either as that of the Deccan, or that of Mysore, in which province the finest specimens occur, at Halebid, the ancient capital, Belur, and many other localities less known to fame. This style, whatever name be bestowed upon it, is characterized by a richly carved case or plinth, supporting the temple, which is polygonal, star-shaped in plan, and roofed by a low pyramidal tower, surmounted by a vase-like ornament. The temple of Vishnu in the village of Nuggehalli, in the Tiptur Taluk, Mysore from an unpublished photograph, gives a good notion of this extraordinarily ornate style. The stellate plan appears clearly in the view of the Somnathpur temple. The Belur temple is known to have been erected in 1117 C.E. by a Hoy sola king named Bettiga, converted from Jainism to faith in Vishnu. The more magnificent temples at Halebid, the Hoysalesvara and Kedaresvara, are somewhat later in date, and necessarily must have been under construction for many years. Not long ago the disintegrating action of the roots of a banyan tree unfortunately reduced the Kedaresvara to a heap of ruins.

A small portion of the sculptures on the eastern end of the Hoysalesvara temple, give a faint notion of 'one of the most marvellous exhibitions of human labour to be found even in the patient East'. The architectural framework, it will be observed, is used mainly as a background for the display of an infinity of superb decoration, which leaves no space uncovered and gives the eye no rest.

'The building', Fergusson writes, 'stands on a terrace ranging from 154 to 182 metres in height, and paved with large slabs. On this stands a frieze of elephants, following all the sinuosities of the plan and extending to some 216 metres in length, and containing not less than two thousand elephants, most of them with riders and trappings, sculptured as only an Oriental can represent the wisest of brutes. Above these is a frieze of sardulas, or conventional lions – the emblems of the Hoysala Ballalas who built the temple.

Pancha Pandava Rathas (Five chariots of Pandava) with elephant (detail), 7th-8th century C.E., Pallava dynasty. Rock. Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram), Tamil Nadu.

Then comes a scroll of infinite beauty and variety of design; over this a frieze of horsemen and another scroll; over which is a bas-relief of scenes from the Ramayana, representing the conquest of Sri Lanka and all the varied incidents of that epic. This, like the other, is about 213 metres long (the frieze of the Parthenon is less than 167 metres).

Then some celestial beasts and celestial birds, and all along the east front a frieze of groups from human life, and then a cornice, with a rail, divided into panels, each containing two figures. Over this are windows of pierced slabs, like those of Belur, though not so rich or varied.

The Hoysalesvara and several other buildings of its class are twin temples consisting of two distinct shrines set side by side and joined together. The beautiful building at Somnathpur is a triple temple. A special feature of interest in these Mysore temples is the record of the names of the Kanarese artists, who executed individual statues. At Belur there are twelve such signatures, and at the Hoysalesvara, fourteen, all different. Eight signatures on the Somnathpur temple have been noted, among them that of Mallitamma, who executed forty images.

Certain temples near the Tungabhadra River situated in the western part of the Bellary District, Madras, wedged in between Mysore territory on the south and the Hyderabad State on the north, form the subject of an excellent monograph by Alexander Rea, entitled Chalukyan Architecture. The title is so far justified that the buildings were erected to the order of Chalukya kings in the twelfth century. But the style is a modification of the Dravidian or Southern, not of the Deccan or Mysore style called Chalukyan by Fergusson. The plans are rectangular, not star-shaped, and the towers are distinctly Dravidian in design. The buildings, as Rea correctly observes, 'exhibit a preponderance of Dravidian forms. They might best be described as an embodiment of Chalukyan details engrafted on a Dravidian building.' Although the statues, individually regarded, are not of high merit, and present much of the grotesqueness of commonplace Hindu sculpture, the ornament, considered as a whole, is superb. It is impossible, we are assured, to describe the exquisite finish of the greenstone or hornblende pillars, or to exaggerate the marvellous intricacy and artistic finish of the decoration in even the minutest details. The ornament is generally completely undercut, and is sometimes attached to the solid masonry by the most slender of stalks, producing the effect of an incrustation of foliage on the wall. Both the intricate geometrical patterns of the ceilings and the foliated work covering every other part of the building exhibit the greatest possible exuberance of varied forms boldly designed and executed with consummate mastery of technical details. No chased work in gold or silver could possibly be finer, and the patterns to this day are copied by goldsmiths, who take casts and moulds from them, although unable to reproduce the sharpness and finish of the originals.

Opinions may differ as to the propriety of employing such jewellers' work as architectural decoration, but concerning the beauty of the result and the high standard of executive skill no two opinions are possible. The annexed plan of a ceiling in the Surya-narayanaswami temple at Magala may suffice to give some notion of the exquisite carving characteristic of the Bellary variety of the Dravidian style, as favoured by Chalukya Kings.

Salabhanjika bracket figure, first half of the 12th century, Hoysala dynasty, Karnataka. Grey chloritic schist, 87.6 x 41.5 x 19.1 cm. Purchase of the Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund, The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

Arjuna's Penance or *Descent of the Ganges* (detail), 7th-8th century C.E., Pallava dynasty. Bas-relief monolith, whole bas-relief: 13 x 29 m. Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram), Tamil Nadu. (p. 156-157)

Sculpture and Bronzes

The arts of sculpture and decorative carving in stone continued to be practised in India to the south of the Narmada under the patronage of many dynasties throughout the medieval period, and even to this day are cultivated with considerable success whenever encouragement on an adequate scale is offered. But, excepting certain Chola statuary of the eleventh century, which is pre-eminently excellent, the Southern figure sculpture does not often attain high quality. In quantity it is enormous, the gigantic temples and halls characteristic of the Dravidian kingdoms being commonly overloaded with sculptured ornament on every member. Mythological subjects from the Puranas and Tantras are the favourites, and the tendency is to treat the conceptions of a luxuriant mythology with exuberant fancy. The result too often is merely grotesque, and very few of the individual images can claim to be beautiful. The sculpture of the South is really the successor of the medieval art of the North. The figure-sculpture is purely iconographical, and executed exactly according to the literary canon.

During the seventh century, the kings of the Pallava dynasty of Kanchipuram succeeded in making themselves the dominant power in southern India, overshadowing the ancient Chola, Chera, and Pandya dynasties of the Tamil region, and, for a time, obscuring the glory of the powerful Chalukya sovereigns of the Deccan. The Pallava king named Mahendra-varman I (600-625), a great builder, is responsible for many rock-cut temples in the northern districts of Tamil Nadu. The earliest *rathas*, or monolithic shrines, at Mahabalipuram, or the Seven Pagodas, also probably should be ascribed to his reign. His son, Narasimha-varman I, surnamed Mahamalla, the most mighty prince of his line, gave his name to Mahabalipuram, and constructed or rather caused to be excavated, some of the rathas at that place. The family taste for architecture survived in the descendants of Narasimha-varman, the so-called 'Shore Temple' at Mahabalipuram and the early structural temples at Kanchipuram being ascribed partly to his great-grandson, Rajasimha, and partly to Rajasimha's sons.

The most notable remains of Pallava art are those dating from the seventh and eighth centuries at Mahabalipuram, which include, besides the well-known rathas, numerous less familar monuments, comprising temples, statues in the round, and gigantic sculptures in relief carved on the face of the rocks.

The great bas-relief at Mahabalipuram covers a sheet of rock 29 metres in length and 13 metres in breadth. Around a central figure, now missing, all creation, heavenly and earthly are gathered in worship. Before the great deity even the animals do penance, while seers and lesser gods and the spirits of the air unite in adoration. This gigantic sculpture was erroneously identified as representing Arjuna's Penance, after the story in the Mahabharata.

The Cholas, who succeeded the Pallavas as the paramount power in the South, may be said to have filled the principal places in the Tamil countries with their edifices, religious and secular, all richly sculptured. Rajaraja the Great (985-1018), the most famous king of a capable dynasty, extended his power over nearly the whole of the Madras Presidency, Sri Lanka, and a large part of Mysore, while his navy ranged as far as the Laccadive and Maldive islands. A king so powerful and wealthy naturally spent freely on building, and the world owes to him the temple at Thanjavur, his capital, the best designed of all the great South Indian temples.

In the year 1336, two Hindu brothers established a principality with its capital at Vijayanagar on the Tungabhadra river, which

Narasimha (detail of a monumental relief), 12th century, Hoysala dynasty. Stone carvings, Halibidu, Karnataka.

Chariot (Ratha) at Vitthala Temple. Temple chariots were often mobile reproductions of a temple, 15th century, Vijayanagar dynasty. Stone, Hampi, Karnataka. (p. 160)

Vitthala Temple lion (yali) pillar, 15th century, Vijayanagar dynasty. Sandstone, Hampi, Karnataka. (p. 161)

rapidly developed into an empire comprising all Southern India beyond the Kistna. The state attained the height of its prosperity early in the sixteenth century during the reign of Krishna Deva Raya, the contemporary of Henry VIII of England, who stoutly maintained the Hindu cause against the Muslim Sultans of the Deccan until 1565, when he was utterly defeated by the combined forces of the Islamic princes, and his capital taken. The victors devoted their energies for five months to the deliberate destruction of the city.

The actual site of the city covers an area of nine square miles, but the fortifications and outposts include a space far larger. In the days of its greatness the capital was filled with magnificent granite edifices erected by forced labour, and adorned in the most lavish manner with every form of decoration agreeable to the taste of a semi-barbaric court. The extant detailed accounts of the glories of Vijayanagar in the sixteenth century recall the familar stories of the Aztec capital as it was seen by its Spanish conquerors, the administration of both courts combining unbridled luxury with ferocious cruelty.

The semi-barbarism of the court is reflected in the forms of art. The giant monolithic man-lion (Narasimha) statue, 6.7 metres high, and the huge god Hanuman, although wrought with exquisite finish, are hideous inartistic monsters; and the sculpture generally, however perfect in mechanical execution, is lacking in beauty and refinement.

One of the most notable of the ruins is the temple of Vishnu under the name Vitthalaswami, begun early in the sixteenth century. The great hall in front of the shrine rests on a richly sculptured basement, and its roof is supported by huge masses of granite, four and a half metres high, each consisting of a central pillar surrounded by detached shafts, figures mounted on demons, and other ornament, all cut from a single block of stone. These are surmounted by an elaborate and equally massive cornice; and the whole is carved with a boldness and expression of power nowhere surpassed in the buildings of its class, showing the extreme limit in florid magnificence to which the style advanced. This beautiful building has been grievously injured by the destroyers of the city.

Several of the carved pillars have been attacked with such fury that they are hardly more than shapeless blocks of stone, and a large portion of the centre has been destroyed utterly.

The best examples of the Vijayanagar style are to be found, perhaps, not at the capital, but at Tadpatri (Tarpatri), Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh, in gateways erected during the sixteenth century by a prince subordinate to the kings of Vijayanagar. Fergusson, who devoted two full-page plates to the illustration of the Tadpatri greenstone sculptures, judged them to be ‘on the whole, perhaps, in better taste than anything else in this style’.

The Margasahayar temple at Kanchipuram to the west of Vellore, is believed to have been erected late in the fifteenth century, while the district was included in the dominions of Vijayanagar. One of the columns offers a good example of the *yali*, or conventional rampant lion, an effective, bold form of decoration very fashionable and characteristic of the country in both South India and Sri Lanka during medieval times. The lion, about 167 centimetres in height, is designed and executed with spirit.

The statue of a goddess on the entrance of the temple of Venkata-ramana-swami at the famous fortress of Gingee in the Villuparum District, probably built during the time of the

Gopuram (gate tower) of the Mysore Palace (detail), 1912.
Mysore, Karnataka.

Shiva Nataraja performing the wild tandava dance,
emblematic of Shiva's dual role as creator and destroyer of the universe,
1100-1200, Chola dynasty, Tinnevelly (?), Tamil Nadu. Bronze, cast by the cire perdue process, height: 81 cm. Bequeathed in 1935 by Lord Ampthill, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

The effigy of the woman holding a doll-like baby, from the Great Temple at Madurai, is welcome as introducing a rare touch of human sentiment, but is far inferior to the treatment of a similar subject at Puri. The blotchy appearance of the photograph is due to the whitewash or paint with which the statue has been smeared. The sculptures from the Rameswaram temple are somewhat later, dating from the close of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century. The image of the female carrying a male deity on her back is characteristically grotesque. It too has been smudged with paint or white-wash. The modelling of the woman is not destitute of merit.

The capabilities of modern sculptors in the South are best proved by the decorations of the new palace in the town of Mysore, executed to the order of H.H. the Maharaja and described and illustrated by Alexander Rea. Skill is not confined to the members of any one caste, and the Maharaja was willing to employ capable men from any district. The material used is sometimes soapstone and sometimes stone of considerable hardness. The soapstone is employed in fairly large masses, a clever figure of Vishnu, for instance, being 61 centimetres in height. The drapery of that figure looks as if it had been imitated from photographs of Gandhara work. The style throughout is frankly eclectic and imitative, and it is obvious that the artists have studied models of various periods and schools. One decorative motive is admittedly borrowed from a picture by Ravi Varma, and the more direct influence of modern European art can be clearly traced. A relief representing the marriage of Rukmini looks as if it had been suggested by study of photographs of the Borobudur bas-reliefs. Some of the female figures are very pretty. Artistically, the best things are certain decorative soapstone panels wrought with floral and other designs, thoroughly Indian in character and of first-rate quality.

Many images cast in copper by the cire perdue process exist and also a few castings in brass. In modern times casting in brass has been carried on in Mysore and Western India, and not in the South. The better specimens of these castings seem to range in date from the twelfth to the eighteenth century. The modern work is usually on a small scale and of very poor craftsmanship.

Exceptional interest attaches to the brass images, which are certified by inscriptions on the shoulders to be portraits, apparently contemporary, of Krishna Raya, the famous king of Vijayanagar in the early years of the sixteenth century, and two of his queens. They stand inside a temple on the sacred hill of Tirumala or Upper Tirupati, and were photographed by a high-caste Hindu, no European or Islamic being permitted to enter any temple on the hill. The town of Tirupati is famous for the skill of its workers in brass. The images, although formal in design, are defective in expression.

Numerous figures of Shiva Nataraja exist, some of which have been illustrated in the works of Coomaraswamy and Havell. The figure lent by Lord Ampthill to the Victoria and Albert Museum, which was shown at the India Section of the Festival of Empire in 1911, is perhaps the finest of all.

The best of these images, such as the Nataraja, described above, are directly comparable with Pallava and Chola sculpture, and are probably pre-eleventh century. It is very difficult to date the later works. As a whole, the scale of the castings is very much reduced. The jewellery and costume is also over-emphasized, the waistcloths of the goddesses being shown round the legs and not merely indicated by tooling on the legs. Many of the large, early figures are fitted with rings at the base for transport in proces sions.

The later figures, for the most part on a small scale and much tooled, are probably to be associated with Thanjavur.

The image of Parvati, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is not very dissimilar in style from the Polonnaruwa bronzes, and may, perhaps, date from about the same period, the twelfth century. It is well modelled; the hands are specially good.

Foreign Influences: The Early and Medieval Periods

The isolation of India, so apparent on the map, has never been absolute. Her inhabitants from the most remote ages have always been exposed to the action of foreign ideas conveyed by one or all of three ways by sea, through the passes of the northeastern frontier, or through the more open passes of the northwest. The only foreign art which could influence India from the northeast being that of China, which certainly produced no considerable effect on Indian art prior to the Islamic conquest, the ingress of foreign artistic ideas through the northeastern passes may be left out of account.

Long before the dawn of history, traders from distant lands had brought their wares to the ports of India, and in all probability introduced the alphabet and art of writing. But in those ancient days the sea, although open to the passage of adventurous merchants, was not the bond of union between distant lands which it has become in these latter times for a great naval power, and the influence exercised upon the art of the interior by small bodies of traders at the ports must have been comparatively trifling. The constant invasions and immigrations from the continent of Asia through the northwestern passes had more effect; and one prehistoric immigration, or series of immigrations, which brought the Vedic Aryans, ultimately settled the future of all India for all time by laying the foundations of the complex, exclusive, religious, and social system known as Hinduism. When history opens in the sixth century B.C.E., Northern India, at all events, was already largely Hinduized, and in the third century, when the earliest extant monuments came into existence, the Hindu system stood firmly established. In attempting to estimate the nature and extent of foreign influence on Indian art, as conveyed by sea and through the northwestern passes, we must assume the existence of Hinduism as an accomplished fact, and acknowledge that nothing positive is known about Hindu art before the age of Ashoka. Early in his days the dominant foreign influence may be designated Persian, traceable clearly in his monolithic columns, in the pillars of structural buildings, and in architectural decoration. Capitals, crowned by recumbent bulls or other animals, are found at Bharhut, Sanchi and elsewhere, in the Gandhara reliefs, and at Eran in Central India, even as late as the fifth century of the Common era, but these do not very exactly correspond with the true Achaemenian type. The capitals of the monolithic columns, likewise with their seated and standing animals, although distinctly reminiscent of Persia, differ widely from Persian models, and are artistically far superior to anything produced in Achaemenian times. Sir John Marshall, as already observed, can hardly be right in ascribing the beautiful design and execution of the Sarnath capital and its fellows to Asiatic Greeks in the service of Ashoka.

We are thus led to consider the second foreign element in the most ancient schools of Indian art, that is to say, the Greek element, expressed in Asiatic Hellenistic forms. In Ashoka's age the chief schools of Greek sculpture were in Asia Minor at Pergamum, Ephesus, and other places, not in Greece, and the Hellenistic forms of Greek art had become largely modified by Asiatic and African traditions, reaching back to the ancient days of Assyria and Egypt. It is consequently difficult to disentangle the distinctively Greek element in early Indian art. The acanthus leaves, palmettos, centaurs, tritons, and the rest, all common factors in Hellenistic art, are as much Asiatic as Greek. The art of the Ashokan monoliths is essentially foreign, with nothing Indian except details, and the fundamentally alien character of its style is proved by the feebleness of later attempts to copy it. I think that the brilliant work typified by the

Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, 2nd-3rd century C.E., Ancient Gandhara (modern Pakistan/Afghanistan). Schist, 84 x 28 cm. Musée Guimet (Musée national des arts asiatiques), Paris.

Sarnath capital may have been designed in its main lines by foreign artists acting under the orders of Ashoka, while all the details were left to the taste of the Indian workmen, much in the same way as long afterwards the Qutb Minar was designed by a Islamic architect and built by Hindu masons, under the orders of the Sultan Altamsh.

Our knowledge of the fine art of Ashoka's reign (273-232 B.C.E.) is restricted to the monolithic columns almost exclusively. The other sculptures of the Early Period probably are all, or nearly all, of later date. They present a great contrast, being essentially Indian, with nothing foreign except details, and they presuppose the existence of a long previous evolution of native art probably embodied in impermanent materials, and consequently not represented by actual remains.

Are we to regard these sculptures, and especially the reliefs of Bharhut, Sanchi, and Bodh Gaya, as purely Indian in origin and inspiration, or as clever adaptations of foreign models? The sudden apparition simultaneously of stone architecture, stone sculpture, and stone inscriptions during the reign of Ashoka, when considered in connexion with the intimate relations known to have existed between the Maurya empire and the Hellenistic kingdoms of Asia, Africa, and Europe, raises a reasonable presumption that the novelties thus introduced into the ancient framework of Indian civilization must have been suggested from outside. That presumption is strengthened by the foreign style of the monolithic columns, which undoubtedly were a novelty brought into being by the command of an enlightened despot in close touch with the outer world. It must be remembered, however, that Early Indian architecture was essentially wooden. No sudden transition can be traced dating from Ashoka's age. The small, square Gupta shrines are the earliest stone structures in India proper.

Although I do not now feel justified in expressing as confidently as I once did in theory of the Alexandrian origin of Indian bas-relief sculpture in stone. I am still disposed to believe that such reliefs would never have been executed if works essentially similar had not previously existed in the Hellenistic countries, and especially at Alexandria. The Indian reliefs certainly are not modelled on those of Persia, which are utterly distinct in character; and it seems unlikely that the Indians should have suddenly invented the full-blown art of stone bas-relief out of their own heads without any foreign suggestion. The Alexandrian reliefs were available as indications how stone reliefs should be executed, and the clever Indian artists and craftsmen, once they had seized on the main idea, would have had no difficulty in transmuting it into purely Indian forms, just as the Hindu playwright, mentioned by Weber, transformed the Midsummer Night's Dream into a piece thoroughly Indian in character, showing no trace of its English source. Complicated relief pictures, like those of Bharhut and Sanchi, placed in exposed positions, could not have been satisfactorily executed in wood or ivory; but the trained wood and ivory carvers, who existed in India from time immemorial, could easily have applied their skill to making stone pictures as soon as the novel material had become the fashion. Carvers in wood and stone often are the same people and use tools substantially identical. The truth seems to be that the Indians illustrated the Jatakas with Indian scenes just as the Alexandrians illustrated pastoral poems with Greek scenes, and that the Indians got from abroad the idea of so doing. But the theory must be admitted to be incapable of decisive proof, although to my mind it appears to be highly probable. The subject-matter and treatment of the post-Ashokan reliefs are certainly on the whole Indian, and such obviously foreign details as they exhibit are accessory rather than integral.

M. Foucher, however, may be right when he discerns in the Sanchi sculptures more indications of Hellenistic influence in certain examples of bold foreshortening, in clever presentations of the three-quarter face figure, and in the harmonious balancing

This Bodhisattva Maitreya is inspired by the deep commitment to anatomical correctness and physical beauty found in Greco-Roman sculpture, 2nd-3rd century C.E., Kushan period, Ancient Gandhara (modern Pakistan/Afghanistan). Grey schist, 161.2 x 57.1 x 24.1 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

of groups. It is, indeed, inconceivable that the Indian sculptors of Ashoka's time should have failed to learn something from the Greek art if it was accessible to them. The exact channel of this foreign influence is not historically or geographically clear. And its extent is debatable if it existed at all. A great deal must be allowed for natural, purely native development, when discussing such improvement of skill as is visible in the East and West gates of Sanchi when compared with the North and South. But whatever was borrowed the Indian craftsmen made their own, so that their work as a whole is unmistakably Indian in character and original in substance.

I proceed to discuss in some detail certain motives of ancient Indian sculpture which seem to be of foreign origin, and in some cases lend support to the theory of specially Alexandrian influence.

The first to be considered is that which may be conveniently designated the woman-and-tree motif. The form which may be regarded as normal represents a woman standing under a vine or other tree, with her legs crossed, the left arm twined round a stem, and the right hand raised to her sculpture, head. Many variations, however, occur. Occasionally, the left hand is raised above the head, as in an example of a 'Yakshi on dwarf' (Mathura Museum), in which also the right arm is not twined round a stem. Sometimes the legs are not crossed. The woman, in some cases, is more or less clothed, but frequently, and especially at Mathura, is unmistakably and aggressively naked. Very often, but not always, she stands on a dwarf, animal, or monster.

The earliest Indian example known to me is the Bharhut draped figure of the Yakshi Chanda, who is represented in what I call the normal manner. That may be dated about 200 B.C.E. The pose is in exact keeping with her character as a primitive godling. The lady also appears on the Sanchi gateways, and in Gandharan art over and over again with many variations. I cannot find her at Amaravati, but at Mathura she is specially characteristic of the local art, both Jain and Buddhist, and is often represented with lascivious suggestiveness in a manner to which the Mathura school was too much inclined. Slightly modified she becomes Maya, the mother of Buddha, in the Nativity scene. The latest example that I can quote is a Brahmanical sculpture of the period at Vijayanagar Tadpatri in the Anantapur District, dating from the sixteenth century. Thus, it is established that in Indian sculpture the motive had a history of more than 1,700 years.

In Greek art it occurs in the fourth century B.C.E., a century or two before its first appearance in India at Bharhut. The Hellenistic artists transported the motive to Egypt, where, by reason of contact with native Egyptian sensual notions, its treatment acquired a lascivious tinge, agreeing strangely with the Mathura presentation, the nude figure, however, in Egypt being often male instead of female. Josef Strzygowski gives the name of Copto-Alexandrian to the mixed art produced by the intermingling of Hellenic and Coptic ideas. The art of Gandhara does not share with that of Mathura the reproach of lasciviousness. It deserves credit, as Alfred A. Foucher points out, for its 'irreprochable tenue' in dealing with the relations of the sexes.

The most striking illustration of the close resemblance between the Madurai presentation of the woman-and-tree motif and the Copto-Alexandrian form is found in an unexpected place, the cathedral of Aachen or Aix-la-Chapelle in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Six remarkable ivory panels on the sides of the cathedral pulpit have been examined in a special disquisition by Strzygowski, who has proved to my satisfaction that the Aachen ivories are of Egyptian origin, and should be considered as examples of the Copto-Alexandrian school. They may have reached their resting-place by way of either Ravenna and Milan or Marseilles.

Two figures, one on the right and one on the left of the pulpit, identical save in certain minor details, are known conventionally as 'Bacchus'. Each represents a nude young man facing, standing with the right leg straight and the left leg crossed over it. The body is supported by the left arm, which is twined round the stem of a vine overtopping and surrounding the youth with its foliage.

Buddha and Vajrapani, 1st century C.E. Schist, height: 39 cm.
Ancient Gandhara (modern Pakistan/Afghanistan).

His right hand is raised to the crown of his head. The pose is precisely the same as that of the woman-and-tree motif in Indian art, and the resemblance between the Mathura and Aachen figures is so close that, in my judgement, it cannot be accidental (see illus. on p. 62). Both must have a common origin, which should be sought in Syria or Asia Minor, from which Egyptian Hellenistic art drew its inspiration. The motive was variously treated in Egypt, and, at least in one case, a woman takes the place of the youth. There is no difficulty in believing in the transference of Alexandrian ideas to India either before or after the Common era. From Ashoka's time for several centuries intercourse between the ports of Egypt and India was continuous. The cupids, birds, and beasts interspersed in the foliage of the Aachen ivory are also often found in India. Compare, for instance, the Garhwa pillar and various Mathura sculptures.

The female figure in the woman-and-tree design used to be described as a 'dancing-girl'. But, whether nude or clothed, she is never represented as not dancing, and Vogel certainly appears to be right in maintaining that she should be interpreted, not as a dancing-girl, but as a *yakshi*, or female sprite. The yakshas and yakshis played in ancient popular Indian Buddhism a prominent part comparable with that played by the *nats* in modern Burmese Buddhism.

Other motives must be discussed more briefly. At Amaravati and in Gandhara a favourite subject is the departure of Gautama Buddha as Prince Siddhartha from Kapilavastu on horseback. Generally the horse is shown in profile, but occasionally is represented as emerging from a gateway, and facing the spectator, foreshortened. This latter form of the design especially seems to be connected with the rider motif as seen in the Barberini ivory diptych in the Louvre, of the first half of the sixth century, and in one of the Aachen panels, the origin of both being traced back by Strzygowski to the Egyptian representations of Horus triumphing over the powers of evil represented by a crocodile.

The Indian sculptures usually show earth spirits, or yakshas, male or female, holding up the horse's hoofs. As Grünwedel and Strzygowski point out, the sculptures illustrate the Buddhist legend that the earth goddess displayed half her form while she spoke to the departing hero, and also are a reminiscence or translation of the Greek motive of Gaia rising from the ground, familiar to Hellenic art from the fourth century B.C.E. Similar earth spirits are seen in the Barberini diptych. The rider motif is used on the uprights of the Sanchi gateways, and there is a large Kushan Horse and rider in the Mathura Museum.

The use of a long undulating stem, band, garland, or roll to break up a long frieze into sections was familiar to Indian sculptors from early days. As seen on the Bharhut coping, the device used is a lotus

Romaka jataka scene: Frieze fragment shows a bulky garland with Indian decoration, carried by men, c. 1st century C.E., pre-Kushan period, provenance unknown. Frieze, red sandstone, length: 92.5 cm. Mathura Museum, Uttar Pradesh.

stem with jack fruits attached. The stem is not carried by anybody. This design seems to be purely Indian.

But the later forms of the motive must be compared to the garland carried by amorini, erotes, or cupids, which was constantly used in the later Hellenistic and Greco-Roman art. In Gandhara an imbricated roll, quite in the Greco-Roman fashion, carried by boys, equivalent to cupids or erotes is substituted for the Indian lotus stem. At Mathura and Sarnath we find a smooth roll carried by men, not boys, and at Amaravati a bulky tinsel roll with Indian decoration, also carried by men.

The hippocamps, tritons, centaurs, and other weird creatures, which were borrowed from Western art, occur, as we have seen in Chapter II, at Bodh Gaya and other places in the sculptures of the Early Period. It does not much matter whether we call them Hellenistic or Western Asiatic. Forms more or less similar recur at Mathura and Amaravati and in Gandhara. The strongly-marked muscles of some of the Gandhara figures and the snake-tailed monsters suggest the notion that the sculptors of the northwest felt the influence of the vigorous Pergamene school. The Atlantes of Jamal Garhi especially seem to be reminiscent of Pergamum; from the Buddhist point of view they may be regarded as Yakshas. I consider them as Western Asiatic Hellenistic forms. Atlantes occur in later Hindu art in the form of dwarfs, usually four-armed.

Gana, a minor deity, is typically represented as an obese dwarf and often characterized as Shiva's mischievous helper, 8th century C.E., Licchavi period, probably Deo Patan, Nepal. Sandstone. Given by Mary and Douglas Barrett, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Certain architectural details represented in ancient sculptures, in addition to the well-known Corinthian and Ionic capitals, may be mentioned as being common to Indian and Western Asiatic Hellenistic art. The fluted spiral column, frequently met with on the sarcophagi of Asia Minor and in later Roman work, does not seem to occur at Amaravati or in Gandhara, but is found at Mathura in sculptures which are difficult to date, but which seem to be post-Kushan. Subsequently it was freely used in the cave-temples of Western India. The scallop shell of 'shell-niche' canopy, often seen on Asiatic sarcophagi and in Egyptian art, occurs in India, so far as I am aware, only in the details of the Corinthian capitals at Jamal Garhi. Strzygowski holds that the form probably originated in Mesopotamia, and that it was ultimately developed into the characteristic Islamic *mihrab*. But that suggestion seems to be of doubtful validity. The rectangular incised panel frequently found on pilasters in Gandhara reliefs is specially characteristic of the Roman architecture of Palmyra (105-273 C.E.). Much of the Gandhara art resembles that of Palmyra and Baalbec more closely than that of any other specific locality. The buildings at Baalbec date from the second century. It is, of course, unnecessary to point out in detail the numerous echoes of Greek art in the Gandhara sculptures. I have confined myself to noticing certain points of particular interest.

The introduction of the vine into Indian bas-reliefs used to be considered as in itself evidence of copying from Hellenistic models.

But that view is not tenable. The vine is still largely grown in India proper, and until the Afghan conquest was freely cultivated in Kafiristan (the Hindu Kush region of modern day Pakistan and Afghanistan). Sir George Watt believes that the plant is indigenous on the lower Himalayan ranges, and is even inclined to think that its cultivation may have been diffused into Europe from that region. However that may be, it is certain that Indian artists had ample opportunities of studying the forms of vine-growth at first hand, and were under no necessity to seek foreign models.

In certain cases, however, Indian sculptors chose to treat the vine motive after the European or West Asiatic manner. The best example of such treatment is the well-known frieze from the Upper Monastery at Nathu La, which is almost a replica of a similar work at Palmyra, executed in the third century C.E. The design consists of a vine stem knotted into five circles forming small panels, the first of which, to the left, contains leaves only; the second is occupied by a boy or 'genius' plucking grapes; the third exhibits a boy playing with a goat; the fourth displays a crudely executed goat nibbling the vine; and the fifth represents another boy plucking grapes. Mathura sculpture is treating the vine after the Indian manner, and is admirably executed.

The motive consisting of a vine or other conventionalized plant springing from a vase is common to Egyptian and ancient Indian art. Strzygowski gives three Egyptian examples in the essay cited above. The motive is found everywhere at Bharhut, Sanchi, and Amaravati, and is the basis of the later vase-and-foliage capital.

The Indian treatment of indigenous animals in both sculpture and painting is as original and artistic as that of plant motives. Sir George Watt writes:

> You have only to look at the plants and animals employed in the most ancient designs to feel the strong Indian current of thought there conventionalized, which must have involved centuries of evolution. The treatment of the elephant, monkey, and serpent is Indian, and in no way Greek. No Greeks (as few Englishmen today) could give the life touches of those animals seen on all the oldest sculptures and frescoes.

Those observations are perfectly true, and in all discussions of the foreign elements in Indian art we must remember that in certain respects Indian artists were not only free from obligation to the Greeks, but actually superior to them. The illustrations in this work bear abundant testimony to the Indian power of delineating indigenous living forms, both vegetable and animal. The Gandhara treatment of the elephant is inferior to that of the same subject by the artists of the interior, who were more familiar with that wonderful beast, which is not easy to model or draw well.

The general result of examination of the foreign influences upon Indian pre-Islamic art, whether sculpture, painting, or architecture, is to support the opinions of those who maintain the substantial originality of Indian art. It may be true that the general use of stone for architecture and sculpture was suggested by foreign example, and that the notion of making story-telling pictures in stone came from Alexandria; but, even if both those hypotheses be accepted, the substantial originality of the Indian works is not materially affected. The principal forms of Indian architecture, so far as appears, were developed in India, and it is impossible to connect them with Western forms. They have, as Gustave Le Bon observes, a character of 'frappante originalité'. The actually proved borrowings by India are confined to details, such as Persepolitan columns and capitals, and a multitude of decorative elements, some of which continued in use for many centuries.

The readiness of India to assimilate suitable foreign material is shown by her proved willingness to borrow freely from Persia in ancient times and again after the Islamic conquest.

Whatever influence Greece had exercised on Indian art was practically exhausted by 400 C.E. After that date the traces of Hellenistic ideas are too trifling to be worth mentioning. The medieval Brahmanical and Buddhist schools have nothing in common with Greek art, and the strange artistic forms introduced by the Islamic conquerors at the beginning of the thirteenth century were equally alien to Hellenic feeling. From the fifth century the art of India, whether Hindu or Muslim, must stand or fall on its own merits, without reference to Hellenic standards. The medieval Hindu revival and the advance of Islam, in large part synchronous, both involved a revolt against Hellenic ideas and a reversion to ancient Asiatic modes a 'renaissance aux depens des influences helleniques'.

Siddhartha's birth, 7th century C.E. Marble tablet. Lumbini site.

The Islamic Period

The Indo-Islamic Styles of Architecture

The Islamic conquest in 712 C.E. of Sindh, which at that time was regarded as distinct from India (now Sindh is a part of Pakistan), did not seriously affect India proper, and the occupation of Kabul in 870 C.E. was equally without appreciable influence on Hindu polity, which continued its isolated course unchanged by external forces, developing on the political side the Rajput kingdoms, and on the aesthetic side the Brahmanical art already described. India did not feel the impact of Muslim ideas until the beginning of the eleventh century, when the repeated fierce raids of Mahmud of Ghazni compelled her to take notice of the new force which had arisen. Before his death in 1030 C.E. the Punjab had become a province of the Islamic Sultanate of Ghazni. But, until the closing years of the twelfth century, Islam made no further progress in India. The early Arab conquerors of Sind seem to have left nothing but ruined Hindu temples behind them, nor are there tangible traces of the rule of the Ghaznivide rulers of the Punjab.

The history of Indo-Islamic art begins with the year 1200 C.E. Between 1193 and 1236 C.E. Muhammad of Ghor, Qutb-ud-din Aibak, and Sultan Altamsh had compelled all northern India, including Bengal, to submit, more or less completely, to the Muslim government established at Delhi. The earliest Islamic monuments in India date from the reigns of the three princes named; the principal works of that time being the mosque at Ajmer, the Qutb mosque and minor at Delhi, the gateway of the chief mosque at Budaun (1223 C.E.), and the tomb of the Sultan Altamsh at Delhi.

Ordinarily a large open quadrangle is the principal feature of an Indian mosque. The covered portions of the more considerable buildings usually consist of an aisle or aisles (*liwan*) at the western side, with cloisters round the enclosing walls, and often include huge gateways with many chambers, and sundry minor structures. The roofs are invariably domed in some fashion or other, and pointed arches are a prominent feature.

The almost universal presence of domes and arches, usually of the pointed kind, in Islamic buildings is due to the fact that Muslim architecture is based on the style practised at Baghdad in the time of the great Abbasid Khalifs (Caliphs), of whom Harun al-Rashid (786-809) is the best known. From Baghdad the style spread rapidly throughout the Muslim world, and became to such a degree universal that it is hardly possible to imagine a mosque of brick or stone without domes and arches.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, when Qutb-ud-din undertook to build mosques and tombs at Delhi and Ajmer, domes and pointed arches were recognized to be essential. But the conquerors were obliged to employ Hindu masons, unaccustomed to turning true radiating arches and domes, and ordinarily used only to make the semblance of such by means of the horizontal corbelled construction familiar to them, with which the Muslim architects had to be content. The cloisters were easily made up from the materials of overthrown Hindu temples, and retained a manifest Hindu character without objection.

Qutb Minar, 1192-1368, Sultanate period (Delhi).
Red and buff sandstone, tower: diameter at the base: 14.32 m,
at the top 2.75 m, height: 72.5 m. Mehrauli, Delhi.

The Alai Darwaza (Alai Gate) is the main gateway of the southern side of the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque. Next to it is Imam Zamin's Tomb, 1311, Sultanate period (Delhi). Façade: red sandstone, inlay: white marble. Mehrauli, Delhi.

Ibrahim Rouza (Tomb of Ibrahim Adil Shah II, 1556-1627), 1626,
Deccani sultanates period, Adil Shahi dynasty. Rock. Bijapur, Karnataka.

At the Qutb mosque of Delhi the glory of the building is the screen of eleven pointed arches, eight smaller and three larger, Muslim in form, but Hindu in construction. The faces of these structures are decorated with a lacework of intricate and delicate carving, considered by Fergusson to be 'the most exquisite specimen of its class known to exist anywhere'. It bears some resemblance to the decorations of the Sassanian palace of Mashita and those of certain parts of Santa Sophia at Constantinople. The similar screen at Ajmer, built between 1200 and 1235 C.E., consists of seven arches, the central one being 6.75 metres wide. 'Each arch is surrounded by three lines of writing, the outer in the Kufic and the other two in Arabic characters, and divided from each other by bands of Arabesque ornament boldly and clearly cut and still as sharp as when first chiselled. In the centre the screen rises to a height of 17 metres. The illustration shows clearly the Hindu mode of construction, and the peculiar low conical dome appearing within.

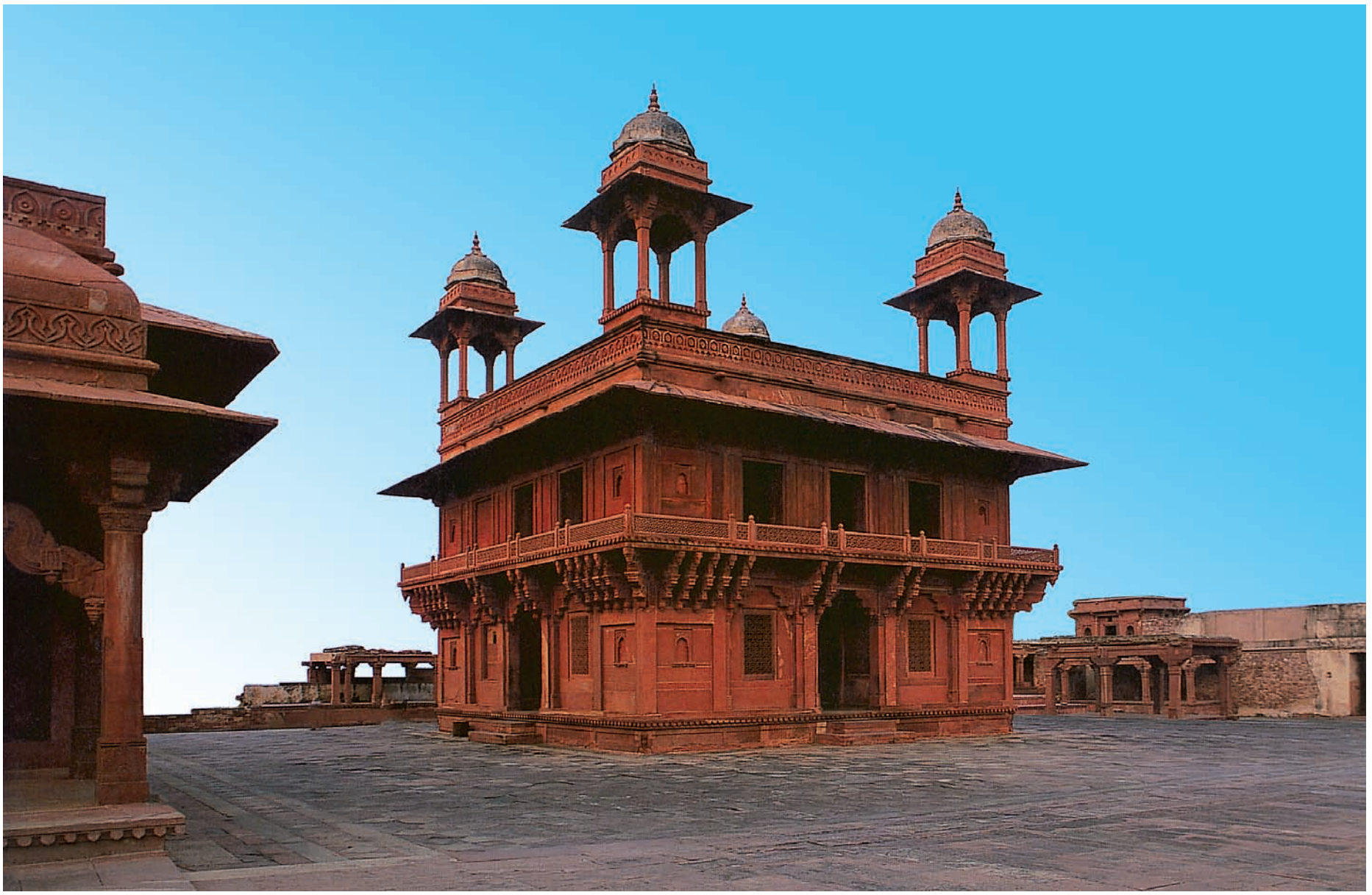
The mosque colloquially known as 'the Qutb' is commonly believed to be named after the Sultan Qutb-ud-din Aibak (1205-1210), and it is true that it was completed in its original form in the year 1198 C.E. by him while he was still Viceroy of Delhi and the Indian territory under the Sultan of Ghazni. But the building is really named after a famous saint, Qutb-ud-din of Ush near Baghdad, who lies buried near, and is popularly remembered as Qutb Sahi.

Muslim usage requires that the faithful should be summoned to prayer at the stated times by a loud call uttered by an official known as *muazzin*. In order to facilitate his duty many mosques, although by no means all, were furnished with a minaret, or two minarets, from which the summons could be proclaimed. Sometimes the minarets were attached to the mosque, sometimes they were detached. The Qutb Minar at Delhi, originally about 76 metres high, and even now not much less, is the most remarkable example of the detached minaret in existence. Like the adjoining mosque, it derives its familiar name from the saint, not the prince. It is, however, some thirty years or more later in date than the mosque, having been erected about 1232 C.E. by the Sultan Altamsh when he made large additions to the mosque. The details of the building are due to its Hindu sculptors.

The magnifcient gateway erected in 1310 C.E. by the Sultan Alauddin Khilji on the south side of the enlarged Qutb Mosque marks an advance in Indo-Islamic architecture. Here the true arches with keystones were no longer constrained to execute the designs of their foreign masters by the structurally inferior Hindu methods. The building consists of a rectangular chamber surmounted by a low-spreading dome. The ornament is composed mainly of geometrical designs and artistic Arabic inscriptions, but sundry details show influence of Hindu tradition.

The Kings or Sultans of the Tughlak dynasty of Delhi in the fourteenth century introduced a new style of architecture marked by massiveness and extreme simplicity, qualities which have suggested a comparison with the early Norman work in England. The most characteristic example of this severe style is the tomb of Ghiyath al-din Tughlak, who was killed by a carefully devised 'accident' in 1324. No trace of Hindu tradition is evident. The style is more or less unique.

At the close of the fourteenth century many provinces broke away from the suzerainty of the Sultans of Delhi, and set up as independent kingdoms. Among such mushroom states one of the most notable was that known as the Sharki, or Eastern Sultanate, with its capital at Jaunpur, forty miles from Varanasi. Its independence lasted until 1476. During its short period of glory the local sovereigns occupied themselves by destroying Hindu temples and replacing them by mosques designed on a grand scale, and in a distinctive style. The handsomest of the Jaunpur mosques is the Atala, completed in 1408. The gateways and great halls are thoroughly Muslim, with radiating arches and true domes, but in the cloisters and interior galleries, where there was



Diwan-i-Khas (Hall of Private Audience), c. 1571,
Mughal dynasty (Akbar). Red sandstone. Fatehpur Sikri, Uttar Pradesh.

Gol Gumbaz (Mausoleum of Sultan Mohammed Adil Shah, 1611-1655), c. 1650, Deccani sultanates period, Adil Shahi dynasty. Square chamber: 50 m on each side, dome diameter: 37.92 m. Bijapur, Karnataka.

no need to roof large spaces, square pillars, often borrowed from Hindu temples, are used, and the construction is Hindu. The style, while it has much of the massiveness of the Tughlak buildings at Delhi, is less severe and more attractive, a curious hybrid of Muslim and Hindu.

Under the patronage of its independent kings, Bengal developed an Islamic style of its own. An important characteristic of the style is the curvilinear cornice copied from bamboo structures. The buildings at Mandu, the capital of the kingdom of Malwa, which was independent from 1401 to 1531, are purely Muslim in style, closely related to those of the Sultans of Delhi. They are distinguished from the later Mughal buildings by the absence of groining and by the spreading domes.

Unquestionably, the most beautiful of the provincial styles of Muslim architecture in Northern and Western India is that of Gujarat. By good fortune it has been studied more carefully than any other Indian style, all the chief examples having been elaborately described and illustrated by Burgess and his staff in three quarto volumes, fully furnished with plans, sections, elevations, and photographs. The style is that of the late medieval Hindu and Jain temples with such modifications as were necessary for the purposes of Muslim worship, and is characterized by all the richness of ornament distinctive of the temples of Gujarat and southern Rajasthan, a strange contrast to the stern simplicity of the Tughlak buildings contemporary with the earlier examples. Hindu construction, too, is freely used, but the indispensable domes and pointed arches are introduced.

The tomb of Abu Turab, about a century later than Mahafiz Khan's mosque, although still preserving the Ahmadabad character, is constructed with arches throughout, and is completely free from Hindu pillars. The perforated screens which formerly connected the internal columns have disappeared.

The buildings designed in the distinctive Ahmadabad style have no specially Persian features, and are thus sharply distinguished from the styles which we are about to notice. But two exceptional edifices at Ahmadabad, the mosque and tomb of Nawab Sardar Khan, built about 1680, are quite Persian in style. The mosque is very elegant.

The Bahmani Sultanate of the Deccan, established in 1347 by a successful revolt against the authority of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlak of Delhi, on a broke up into five states at the close of the fifteenth century. The rulers of all those kingdoms encouraged architecture, and, consequently, ancient buildings of greater or less importance exist at all the local capitals. The Deccan buildings, except a few of the earliest, are free from Hindu forms and constructions, and are related to the Mughal Indo-Persian style. But each kingdom had fashions of its own.

By far the most important of the Deccan styles is that of Bijapur. The buildings in it date between the years 1557 and 1686. The most ornate is the comparatively small tomb of Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1579-1626).

The stately tomb of Muhammad Adil Shah (1636-1660) is covered with a dome the second largest in the world, 'a wonder of constructive skill', balanced internally by an ingenious arrangement of pendentives, fully explained by Fergusson, and with an internal height of 54.25 metres.

> The external ordonnance of this building is as beautiful as that of the interior. At each angle stands an octagonal tower eight storeys high, simple and bold in its proportions, and crowned by a dome of great elegance. The lower part of the building is plain and solid, pierced only with such openings as are requisite to admit light and air; at the height of 83 feet (25.3 metres) a cornice

> projects to the extent of 12 feet (3.6 metres) from the wall, or nearly twice as much as the boldest European architect ever attempted. Above this an open gallery gives lightness and finish to the whole, each face being further relieved by two minarets.

The name of the architect of this wonderful structure, commonly known as the Gol Gumbaz, or Circular Dome, does not seem to be recorded. Foreigners, Asiatic or European, were frequently employed by the Indo-Islamic sovereigns, and the Bijapur style is thought to show the influence of Ottoman architects. An expert critic truly observes that 'under Mohammedan influence the dome-builders of India attained a mastery over this form unknown to and seemingly unappreciated by the builders of the Western world'.

We now pass on to the Indo-Persian styles of the North, the only forms of Sur style: Islamic architecture in India familiar to the world in general. The short-lived and unstable Sur dynasty (1540-1555), of which Sher Shah was the most distinguished member, had such a hard fight for existence that it could not have been expected to pay much attention to architecture. The style may be described as intermediate between the austerity of the Tughlak buildings and the feminine grace of Shah Jahan's masterpiece.

Babur, the versatile founder of the Mughal dynasty, was an active builder during his brief and stormy Indian reign of five years (1526-1531). Holding a poor opinion of all Indian products, he summoned from Constantinople pupils of the celebrated architect Sinan, an Albanian officer on the staff of the Janissaries, who had planned hundreds of important buildings in the Ottoman empire. Out of the numerous edifices erected by these foreigners to Babur's order at Agra, Delhi, Kabul, and other places, only two are now visible, namely, the large mosque in the Kabul Bagh, Panipat, built after the great victory of 1526, and the Jami Masjid at Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh, bearing the same date (933 A.H.). Although the Indian buildings are much more Persian than Ottoman in style, there is some reason for thinking that the grandeur of the proportions of the existing monuments in northern India and Bijapur may be partly due to the teaching of the school of Sinan.

The buildings of Babur and Humayun, Babur's accomplished son and successor, are purely foreign in decoration. Humayun's son Akbar (1542-1605) had a strong liking for Hindu ways, which inspired him to revert to Hindu styles of decoration, and many of the buildings erected during his long reign (1556-1605) are more Hindu than Muslim. A conspicuous instance of such reversion is afforded by the well-known palace in the Agra Fort, commonly called the Jahangiri Mahal, which really dates from Akbar's time and might have been built for a Hindu raja. The other buildings of Akbar in the Fort were demolished by Shah Jahan.

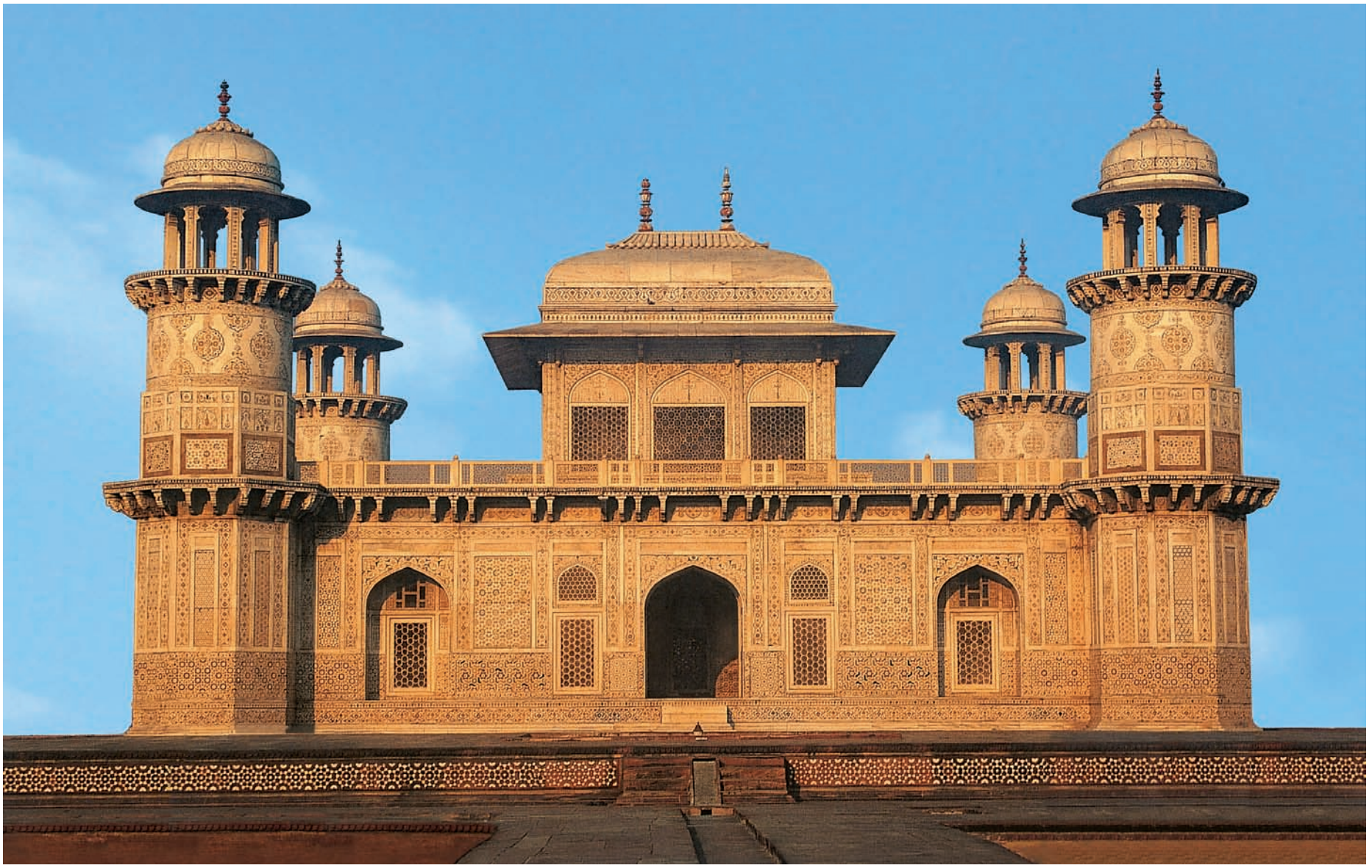
The splendid mausoleum of Humayun, near Delhi, erected early in Akbar's reign, while distinctly Persian in style, is differentiated by the free use of white marble, a material little employed in Persia, and by the abstinence from coloured tile decoration so much favoured by the architects of that country. The building is of special interest as being to some extent the model of the inimitable 'Taj'. The dome is built entirely of white marble, the rest of the masonry being in red sandstone, with inlaid ornaments of white marble. The four corner cupolas and the narrow-necked dome now make their first appearance in India.

Space fails to enumerate even in the most summary fashion the architectural marvels of Akbar's palace-city of Fatehpur Sikri, begun in 1569, finished fifteen years later, and practically abandoned after its founder's death in 1605.

Humayun Mausoleum, 1556, Mughal dynasty (Humayun).
Red sandstone. Delhi.

Badshahi Mosque, 1671-1673, Mughal dynasty (Aurangzeb).
Façade: red sandstone, inlay: white marble. Lahore, Punjab.

Akbar Mausoleum, 1600-1613, Mughal dynasty (Akbar/Jahangir).
Façade: red sandstone, inlay: white marble, size of grounds: 690 m^2.
Sikandra, Agra, Uttar Pradesh.



Itimad-ud-Daulah Mausoleum, 1622-1628, Mughal dynasty (Jahangir).
White marble, semi-precious stone decorations and pietra dura inlay.
Agra, Uttar Pradesh.

The magnificent mausoleum of Akbar at Sikandra near Agra, in which Jahangir personally had an undefined share, is exceptional. The building, completed in 1612 (1021 A.H.), is said by one Muslim writer to have been under construction for twenty years, having been begun, according to custom, by the sovereign whose remains were to find their resting-place within it. But the inscriptions and the Memoirs of Jahangir seem to prove that it was wholly erected under his orders between 1605 and 1612. It is composed of five square terraces, diminishing as they ascend, and the only edifice of the period at all resembling it is Akbar's five-storied pavilion, or Panch Mahal, at Fatehpur Sikri. In all oriental houses and palaces the roof plays a part of great importance in daily life. From the earliest times it was used as an additional room, being covered by awnings and screened in. These hangings, which were beautifully dyed and embroidered, are indispensible in Mughal architectural planning, being hung from pillar to pillar or supported on finely worked staffs. The design of Akbar's and Itmad-ud-daula's tombs is a translation into stone of a tent-pavilion on the open roof, altogether in keeping with the Mughal conception of garden-tombs.

Passing by other notable buildings of Jahangir's reign at Lahore (now a part of Pakistan) and elsewhere, we come to the reign of his son Shah Jahan (1627-1658), during which the Indo-Persian style, by universal consent, attained supreme beauty in the Taj Mahal (1632-1653), the Moti Masjid, or Pearl Mosque at Agra (1646-1653), and the palace at Delhi, begun in 1638.

The style is essentially Persian, but with an undefinable difference of expression, and sharply distinguished from the fashions of Isfahan as well as those of Constantinople by the lavish use of white marble, carved and fretted, and supplemented by sumptuous decoration in pietra dura inlay and other enrichments. Coloured tiles were rarely used. Open-work tracery of incomparable beauty is a marked feature, and spacious grandeur of design is successfully combined with feminine elegance. It is, indeed, impossible to exaggerate descriptions of the magnificence of the Delhi palace, nor is there any need to insist on the unearthly loveliness of the Taj, the noblest monument ever erected to man or woman:

> Not architecture as all others are,
> But the proud passion of an Emperor's love,
> Wrought into living stone, which gleams and soars
> With body of beauty shrining soul and thought.

The chaste simplicity of the Moti Masjid commands admiration equally ungrudging. 'Verily' says the inscription on its walls, 'it is an exalted palace of Paradise made of a single resplendent pearl because, since the beginning of the population of this world, no mosque pure and entirely of marble has appeared as its equal, nor since the creation of the universe, any place of worship, wholly bright and polished has come to view to rival it.' That testimony is true. After many years there is nothing which I remember more distinctly or with greater pleasure than the pearly colonnades of this unequalled mosque.

The immense enclosed complex of buildings and gardens familiarly designated as 'the Taj', comprises the central mausoleum, the mosque on the west, a corresponding edifice (*jawab*) on the east, intended as a place of assembly buildings for the congregation of the mosque and the persons invited to the annual commemoration services; huge gateways with many chambers, massive enclosing walls, and various minor structures, some of which have been ruined.

The purpose of all was to honour the memory of Shah Jahan's well-beloved wife, the Empress Arjumand Banu Begum, whose title Mumtaz Mahal ('The Chosen One of the Palace') has been corrupted into Taj. The villas and tombs of the great nobles and many other buildings, few of which remain, once crowded the approaches and surrounding space.

The Empress died in childbirth, on 17 June 1631, while in camp at Burhanpur in the Deccan, where her remains rested for six months.

They were then conveyed to Agra, and the wondrous tomb destined to give her immortal fame was begun early in 1632 C.E., corresponding to the fifth year of Shah Jahan's reign. When the plans had been settled to the Emperor's satisfaction work was pushed on with eagerness, some 20,000 men being employed daily. On 6 February 1643, the annual funeral ceremony was celebrated by the bereaved husband at the new mausoleum which was then regarded as complete. But the construction of the subsidiary buildings continued for many years longer. The latest inscription, one on the entrance gateway, was set up in 1647 C.E. (1057 A.H.). We know, however, from Tavernier, who witnessed both the commencement and completion of the buildings, that operations did not cease finally until 1653, nearly twenty-two years after they had begun. The general superintendence was entrusted to Mukramat Khan and Mir Abdul Karim.

Shah Jahan planned for himself a mausoleum of equal magnificence to be erected on the opposite side of the river and united with the Taj by a marble bridge, but his family troubles prevented the realization of this gigantic conception, and so he sleeps beside the 'Lady of the Taj'. 'They were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in their death they were not divided.'

The long and unhappy reign of Aurangzeb Alamgir (1659-1707) was marked by a rapid decline in art, including architecture. The emperor was more eager to throw down Hindu temples than to construct great edifices of and after his own. Some few buildings of his time, however, are not without merit; wards, for instance, the tall minarets of the mosque which he caused to be erected at Varanasi on the site of the holiest temple are graceful objects well known to all travellers in India. The principal mosque at Lahore (1674), almost a copy of the great mosque at Delhi, but inferior to that noble building, is described by Fergusson as being 'the latest specimen of the Mughal architectural style'.

In many places modern architects have affected a graceful compromise between the Hindu and Islamic styles by combining Persian domes with Bengali bent cornices and Hindu or half-Hindu columns. Excellent examples of this pretty though feeble style, as used for both civil and religious buildings, are to be seen at Mathura and in hundreds of other localities. It is quite impossible to tell merely from inspection of the architecture whether a building is intended for Muslim or Hindu use. The modern part of the ancient shrine of Sayyid Salar in northern Awadh is a good example of the style in its more Islamic form.

Thus the story of Indo-Islamic architecture ends, as it began, with the subjection of foreign innovations to the irresistible pressure of native taste and methods.

The Taj Mahal, 1638-1648, Mughal dynasty (Shah Jahan). White marble, jasper, jade, crystal, turquoise, lapis lazuli, sapphire, carnelian etc. Agra, Uttar Pradesh.

The Indo-Islamic Decorative and Minor Arts

Coins, Gems, and Seals

Islamic decorative art presents a similarly uniform character as Islamic architecture by reason chiefly of the Koranic prohibition of images, which, although not universally respected, was observed in all ages and countries sufficiently to impose narrow limits on the field open to the creative artist. The orthodox decorator has found himself in practice constrained to restrict his invention to the dexterous use of calligraphy, geometrical patterns, and floral decoration. However varied in detail the application of those elements may be, the effect is necessarily flat and somewhat monotonous.

It is a common error to suppose that the ancient Semitic prohibition of images, repeated in the Koran, invariably prevented Islamic artists from representing the forms of living creatures, real or imaginary. As a figure types matter of fact, the prohibition, although respected as a rule, has been disregarded frequently in almost every Islamic country from the earliest ages of Islam to the present day, and especially in those countries, like Persia, where the Shia sect prevails. The introduction of figure types in many ancient Islamic coinages was due to the business necessity of maintaining for a time the forms of currency to which people had become accustomed. For example, when the Sassanian dynasty of Persia fell in the seventh century the newly appointed Arab governors continued to issue coins in the familiar national form with the king's head, distinguished from the native issues merely by the insertion of Arabic legends in minute characters. In India Muhammad of Ghor was obliged to accept a similar compromise and even to issue coins bearing the image of a Hindu goddess.

In most Islamic kingdoms such numismatic compromises with idolatry were only temporary, and the die-cutters of the Muslim sovereigns ordinarily obliged to content themselves with calligraphic devices, on which much skill was lavished. The coins issued by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlak of Delhi (1324-1351), who has been called 'the prince of moneyers', are exceptionally brilliant examples of calligraphic art.

Ornate façade of the Akbar Mausoleum, 1600-1613,
Mughal dynasty (Akbar/Jahangir). Façade: red sandstone,
inlay: coloured marble, Sikandra, Agra, Uttar Pradesh.

Akbar, notwithstanding his scant respect for orthodoxy, submitted as a rule to Koranic restrictions in the types of his coinage, which exhibits many varieties of artistic ornamental writing. A rupee struck at Agra, is a highly elaborated specimen. On three occasions only did he permit himself the luxury of figure types, and the pieces struck on those three occasions are medals rather than ordinary current coins. A falcon commemorates the capture of Asirgarh, the strong fortress commanding the road to the Deccan. The Brahmini goose appears on an Agra coin. Both birds are well designed and surrounded by pretty floral scrolls. A curious piece, exhibiting the figures of a crowned archer and a veiled lady, is a memorial of the submission in 1013 A.H. (1604-1605 C.E.) of the King of Bijapur, who gave his daughter in marriage to Prince Daniyal, Akbar's youngest son.

Jahangir, although officially a better Muslim than his father, was less orthodox in his coinage. He alone of all the Islamic sovereigns of India dared to put his own portrait on coins intended for circulation. He habitually disregarded the Prophet's prohibition of strong drink, and was not ashamed to show himself on the coinage holding a goblet of wine. He also indulged in the issuing a coinage, both gold and silver, on which the months were indicated by pictorial symbols of the zodiacal signs, instead of by words or numbers. The figure of Virgo is a Europeanized angel. The great bulk, however, of Jahangir's coinage is perfectly orthodox in form. His five-mohur piece is an excellent example of first-class calligraphy. Many of the coins of the later Mughal emperors are well executed, but the specimens given are enough to illustrate the general character of calligraphic dies.

Islamic gems and seals with artistic devices other than calligraphic are necessarily extremely scarce. King, after referring to the rarity of cameos in purely Oriental style, mentions one conspicuous Islamic specimen:

> The most remarkable example of all in the Oriental class' he writes, although of modern

Head ornament. The style of this piece has developed out of earlier Mughal jewellery but the style of the flower pendants and the facetting of the stones are the result of European influence. The indigenous tradition would polish the stones en cabochon, first half of 19th century, Calcutta, West Bengal. Diamonds, rubies and emeralds set into silver and gold; red and green beads and seed pearls, length of side pendants: 23 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

> origin, came to my knowledge among the Webb gems, the subject being the feat performed by Shah Jahan in cleaving as under a lion which was mauling a courtier. The inscription consists of two parts [namely], 'The portrait of the Second Sahib-Qiran, Shah Jahan the victorious emperor, and the artist's signature 'Made by Kan Atem' [sic, the reading is impossible]. The gem probably must be dated early in his reign, for it shows Shah Jahan with a moustache but no beard. He wears a long double row of big pearls round his neck, and, as a pendant, a great convex gem, perhaps the Kohinoor.

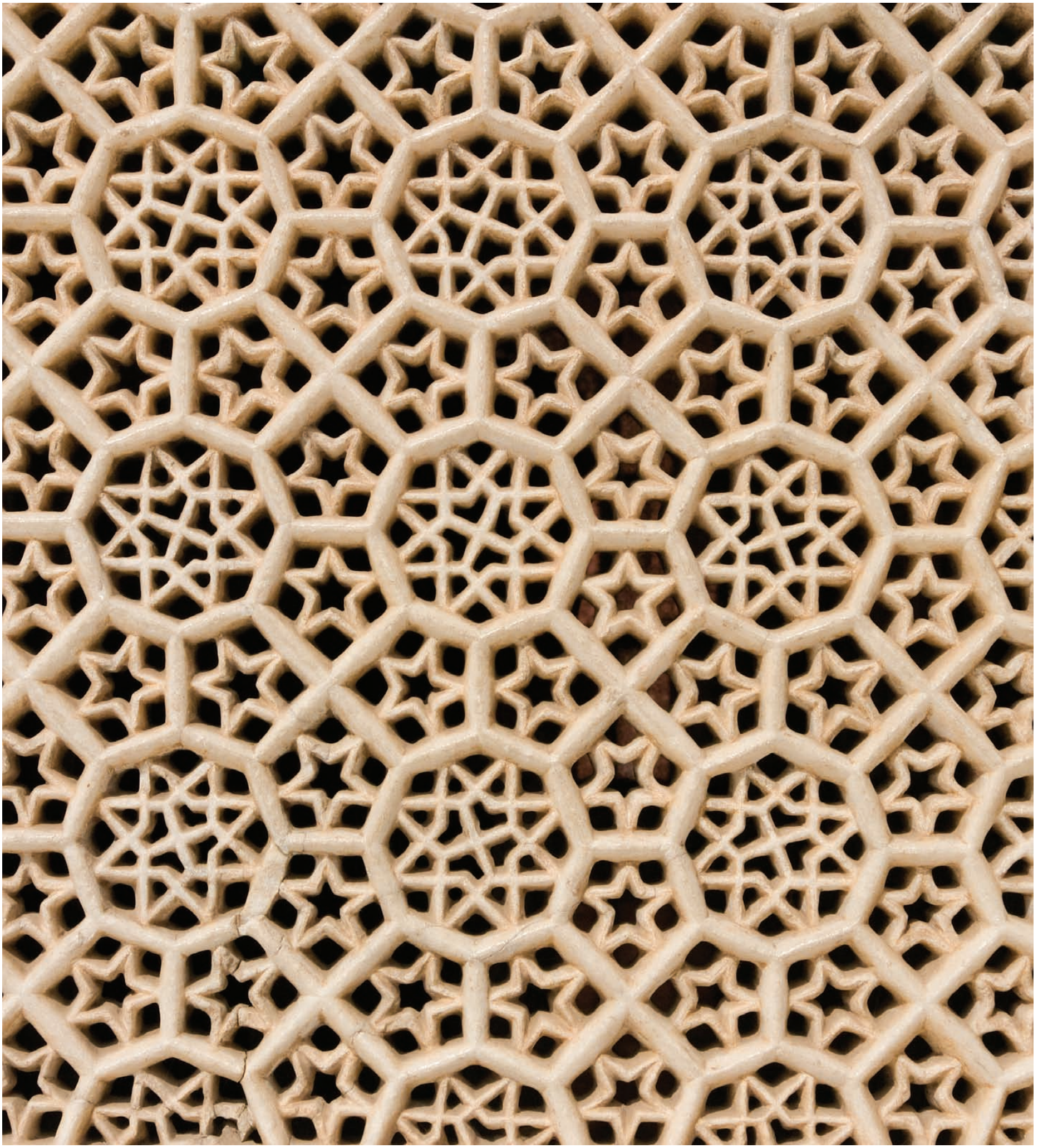
The actual feat commemorated here was performed by Shah Jahan, as Prince Khurram, when he rescued Anup Rai from the jaws of a tiger.

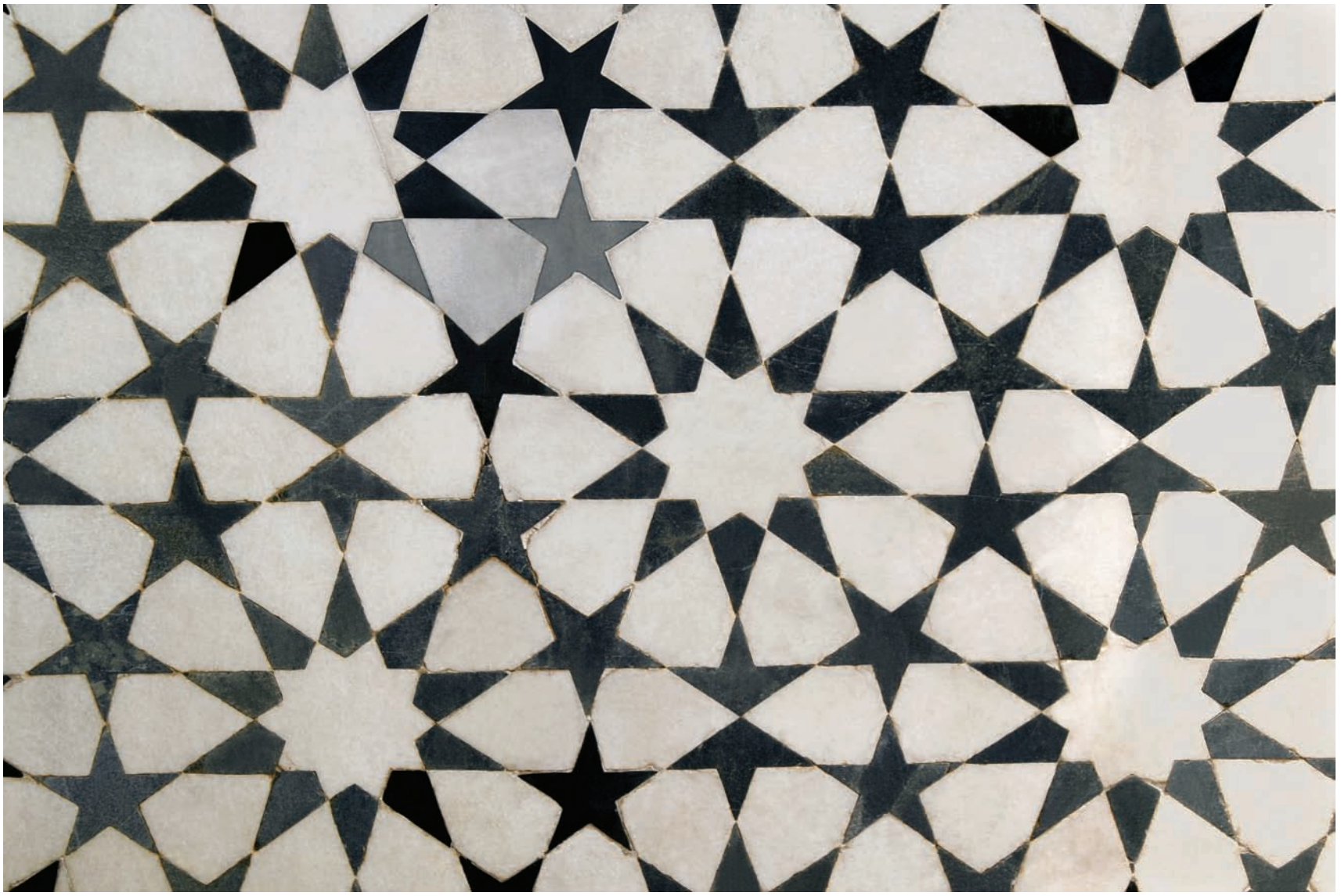
Another notable Indo-Islamic artistic gem which has come to my notice is the beautiful sardonyx cameo of the Mughal period, bought by Sir John Marshall and now in the Lahore Museum, which is 12 centimetres broad and 8 centimetres high. It represents two elephants with riders, locking their tusks and trunks together apparently in combat.

Calligraphy and Decorative Reliefs

The Arabic alphabet in its various forms, as used for writing both the Arabic and Persian languages, is so well adapted for decorative purposes, that almost every Islamic building of importance is freely adorned with texts from the Koran or other inscriptions arranged decoratively to form part of the architectural design, and often signed as the work of famous calligraphists. A good early Indian example of such calligraphic decoration is afforded by the great arch of the Ajmer mosque,

A signed and dated miniature Qur'an, with enamelled box, used as an amulet, 1555 (Qur'an)/18th century (box). Box: silver, green and blue enamel, miniature Qur'an: On paper, cut into octagonal leaves, each 44 x 46 mm, 379 folios each with 14 lines of ghubari script, within a circle of 32 mm diameter, letter kaf notably elongated in the style of kufic, in black ink, approximately 5 lines to the centimetre, with the letter alif 1 mm in height. Mughal India.





where the outer line of writing is in the angular Kufic script, while the other lines are in a more rounded Arabic character. Later examples from Indo-Islamic buildings of all styles and ages might be multiplied inde initely.

Islamic figure sculpture in the round has, as we have seen, slight artistic decoration. But Islamic decorative sculpture in bas-relief applied to architecture may fairly claim on its merits to take at least equal rank with first-rate Italian work of the kind.

The best Indian specimens, with which alone we are concerned at present, could not be surpassed as pure decoration. Among all the many varieties of Islamic decorative designs none are more agreeable than the best of those carved in relief on the Mughal buildings, from the time of Akbar to that of Shah Jahan. The work of Akbar's time being more naturalistic, is more interesting than that of the later period, which is formally conventional, with a tendency to monotony.

The choicest Italian work does not surpass, if it equals, the superb carving on the white marble cenotaph of Akbar, which occupies the centre of the top-most story of his mausoleum at Sikandra.

The two oblong sides and the top are adorned with the ninety-nine titles of the Creator in alto-relievo, set in delicate Arabic tracery. The words Allahu Akbar jalla jalalahu are inscribed on the head and foot,

Jali (window grating) made of hand-carved marble in Fatehpur Sikri (view from outside), 1571, Mughal dynasty (Akbar). White marble, Fatehpur Sikri, Agra, Uttar Pradesh.

Ornate façade of the Akbar Mausoleum (detail), 1600-1613, Mughal dynasty (Akbar/Jahangir). Black and white marble inlay, Sikandra, Agra, Uttar Pradesh.

set in panels surrounded by most beautiful and delicate floral ornamentation. The carving, which is most exquisitely done, is in very low relief, and savours of Chinese workmanship. Amongst other flowers and plants portrayed one recognizes the lily, the almond, and the dahlia, all of which are found carved or painted upon Akbar's palace at Fatehpur-Sikri. In the left hand corner of each of the panels, cloud-forms carved after a most distinctive Chinese type are noticeable. Similar cloud-forms are met with upon the dado panels in the Turkish Sultanah's house at Fatehpur-Sikri, and it is generally supposed that they were executed by Chinese workmen.

But forms of a like kind so often appear in Persian art that it is unnecessary to assume the employment of Chinese craftsmen by Akbar.

Small butterflies and insects flitting from flower to flower are carved upon the panels. Upon the top of the cenotaph a *qalamdan* or pen-box is sculptured, signifying that the tomb is a man's, in distinction from a woman's, which is generally provided with the *takhti* or slate.

Shah Jahan's architects relied on inlay rather than relief sculpture for decoration; but at the Taj dados are very effectively adorned by conventional flowers cut on red sandstone in low relief.

Lattices

Pierced stone screens or lattices used as windows (*jalis*) were not unknown to Hindu architects, and were especially favoured by the builders of the highly decorated temples in the Mysore, Deccan, or Chalukyan style. At Pattadakal and in the Kailasa at Ellora beautiful lattices are to be found. At Belur there are twenty-eight such windows, all different. Some of these are pierced with merely conventional patterns, generally star-shaped, with bands of foliage between; others are interspersed with figures and mythological subjects.

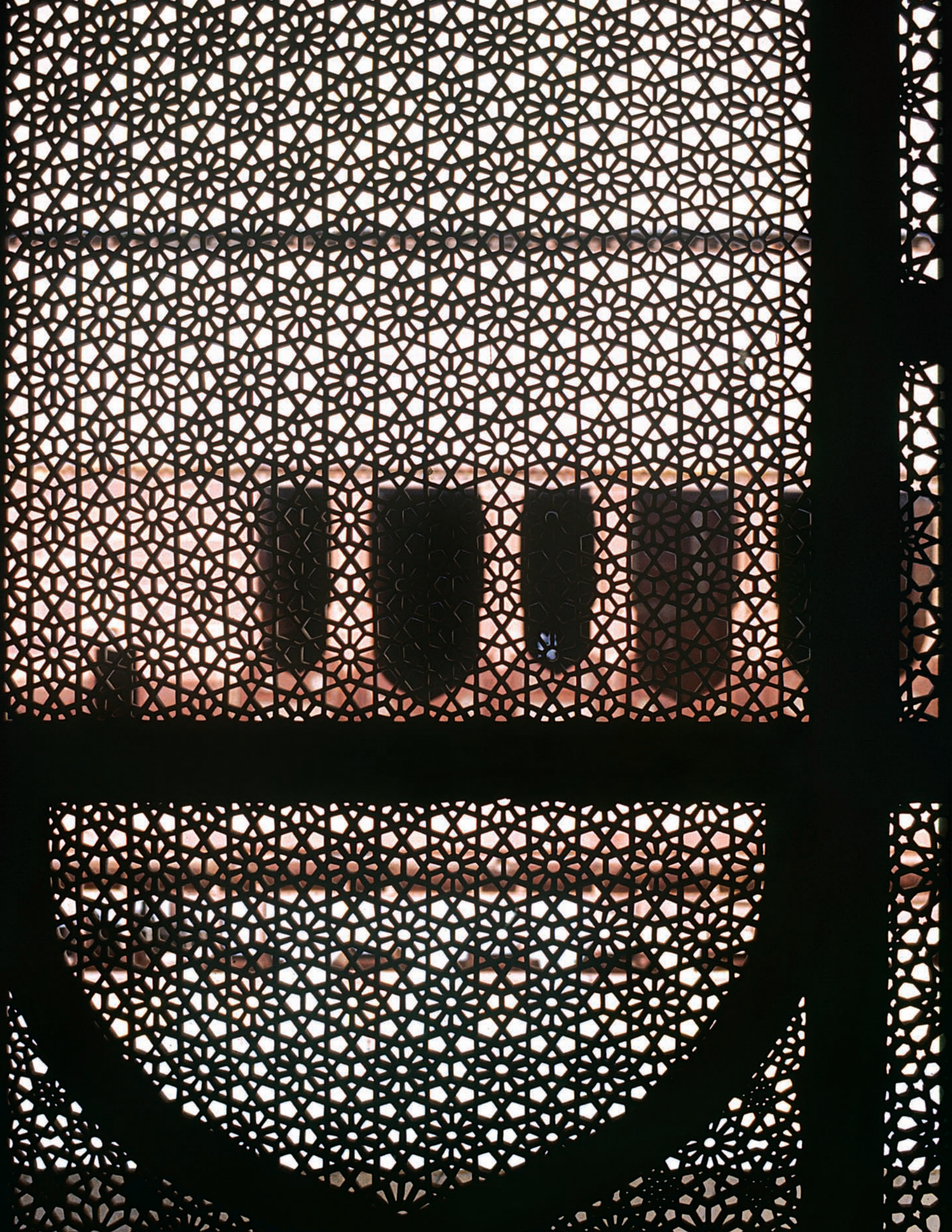
But the Islamic architects, who were more restricted than the Hindus in their liberty of decoration, developed the art of designing and executing stone lattices to a degree of perfection unknown to other schools. Endless variations of geometrical patterns, generally pleasing, although wearisome when examined in large numbers, are the most characteristic forms of Islamic lattice-work, which is seen at its best in the Gujarat (Ahmadabad) and Mughal buildings. The designs both in Gujarat and the earlier Mughal work have been often influenced by Hindu tradition. The Muslim artists used the lattice, not only for windows, but also for the panels of doors and for screens or railings round tombs with excellent effect.

The most beautiful traceries at Ahmadabad are to be seen in ten nearly semicircular windows of Sidi Sayyad's mosque built about 1500 C.E., which may be fairly described as the most artistic stone lattice-work to be found anywhere in the world. I give two examples one with geometrical patterns, and the other with the tree motive of Hindu origin, which should be compared with the modern carving in the Mysore Palace.

'It would be difficult', Fergusson observes, 'to excel the skill with which the vegetable forms are conventionalized just to the extent required for the purpose. The equal spacing also of the subject by the three ordinary trees and four palms takes it out of the category of direct imitation of nature, and renders it sufficiently structural for its situation; but perhaps the greatest skill is shown in the even manner in which the pattern is spread over the whole surface. There are some exquisite specimens of tracery in precious marbles at Agra and Delhi, but none quite equal to this.

The examples of well-designed and well-executed open-work tracery, Mughal, chiefly in marble, at Agra and Delhi are so numerous that it is difficult to select typical specimens. But it is impossible to do better than to illustrate the style of Akbar's time

Jali of hand-carved marble in Fatehpur Sikri (view from inside), 1571, Mughal dynasty (Akbar). White marble, Fatehpur Sikri, Agra, Uttar Pradesh.



Ornate façade of the Itmad-ud-Daula Mausoleum, 1622-1628, Mughal dynasty (Jahangir). White marble, semi-precious stone decorations and pietra dura inlay, Agra, Uttar Pradesh.

from the tomb of Salim Chishti at Fatehpur-Sikri, built 1571 C.E. The well-known railing round the cenotaph in the Taj may be taken as an unsurpassed example of the art in Shah Jahan's time. The lines of the repeating pattern in this case are more like Italian renaissance than Asiatic work. According to Sir John Marshall this is the only case in which Italian influence can be discerned in the decorations of the Taj. However, it suggests a textile design translated into relief in stone, and considered as such is purely eastern.

Inlay and Mosaic

The device for breaking the monotony of a wide wall surface by inserting broad bands of white marble, as employed in the fourteenth century on the tomb of Tughlak Shah, and a few years earlier on Alauddin's gateway, was commonly used in the Islamic art of Central Asia, Syria, and Egypt, and was freely adopted for Christian buildings in Italy. In Akbar's time this early severe form of decoration was supplemented by mosaics made up after the Roman and Byzantine fashion from small tesserae, which were combined in Persian geometrical patterns. The great mosque at Fatehpur-Sikri offers many examples. Sometimes the effect was enhanced by the insertion of little bits of blue or green enamel.

A great innovation was effected by the introduction of the form of inlay known technically by the Italian name of pietra dura, which is composed of hard precious or semi-precious stones, such as onyx, jasper, and carnelian cut into thin slices and neatly bedded in sockets prepared in the marble. This process, of which the best comparatively small specimens are to be seen at Florence, is capable of producing charming decorative effects when executed by capable workmen. In India, where expense was disregarded, it was applied to buildings on an enormous scale. The bold floral mosaics made of marble or red sandstone which appear on the south gateway of Akbar's tomb (1605-1612) are nearly equivalent in effect to pietra dura work, but are not identical with it. The Mughal kings evidently loved flowers, which are admirably treated in all forms of art patronized by them. The motifs, are borrowed from Persian art. Nowhere else are the assimilating, transforming powers of the Indian genius more evident, both in the colour and the perfect freedom of the lines.

The earliest Indian example of true pietra dura is a domed pavilion in the small Jagmandir palace, at Udaipur in Rajasthan, built in or about 1623 for Prince Khurram, afterwards the Emperor Shah Jahan, while he was an exile from his father's court. The process is very extensively employed on the approximately contemporary mausoleum of Itmad-ud-daula near Agra, erected by his daughter Nur Jahan after her father's death in 1621 C.E. The general effect of the pietra dura decoration is well shown represents one of the white marble turrets at the corners of the tomb. The older style of marble mosaic is seen in the lower panels. Shah Jahan's (1627-1658) wholly abandoned mosaic in favour of pietra dura, which probably he learned to admire while residing in the Jagmandir palace at Udaipur before his accession. The decoration is applied so lavishly in the Taj and the palaces of Agra and Delhi that volumes might be filled with reproductions of the designs, which are familiar to most people from modern copies. One plate will be enough to show their character. They are remarkable for their restraint and good taste, and are superior to the similar work in the Delhi palace.

The Florentine pietra dura inlay, a revival of the ancient Roman opus sectile, first appears in the Fabbrica Ducale built by Ferdinand I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, in 1558. The earliest certain Indian examples being considerably later in date and identical in technique, a strong presumption arises that the art must have been introduced into India from Italy. There is no doubt that the Mughal sovereigns freely entertained artists from Europe as well as from most parts of Asia. The presumption is not rebutted by the obvious fact that the designs of the Mughal work are essentially Asiatic, and in the main Persian, because the ordinary Indian practice is to transpose foreign importations, so to speak, into an

Indian key. Persian designs were readily assimilated, but in the seventeenth century nobody in India cared much for outlandish European forms, or wanted to have them. If Sir John Marshall was correctly informed when he wrote that 'pietra dura work in a rougher and earlier stage than was hitherto known' had been discovered in the ruins of the Khalji mausoleum at Mandu in Central India, the presumption of Italian origin would no longer hold good, because Mahmud Khalji, in whose honour the mausoleum seems to have been erected, died in 1475. But the details given in an earlier report suggest that the remains found were those of marble mosaic, not of pietra dura inlay.

The decline and fall of the Mughal empire during the eighteenth century involved the rapid decay of the arts which had ministered to the splendour of the imperial court. Among other arts that of producing pietra dura inlay had been almost forgotten until about 1830, when Dr. Murray, Inspector-General of Hospitals, induced the craftsmen to revive it for commercial purposes. Since that time it has been practised sufficiently to provide a constant supply of pretty trifles for European tourists and visitors, but nobody dreams of decorating a building in the fashion which appealed to Shah Jahan the Magnificent. The plaques and other inlaid objects now made at Agra are too familiar to need illustration. A selection of first-class specimens is figured in Indian Art at Delhi.

Mother-of-pearl inlay occurs at Salim Chishti's tomb, Fatehpur Sikri, and elsewhere. Glass mosaics are to be seen in several Shish Mahals, or mosaics, 'glass chambers', at Udaipur, Amber, Agra, Lahore, and other places. Those in the ceiling of the Shish Mahal, Lahore, are said to be particularly well done. But such meretricious bedizenment certainly is not fine art, and need not be further discussed.

Tiles

The practice of decorating wall surfaces with coloured enamelled bricks or tiles was of very ancient date in Persia, and derived ultimately from Babylonia. But the style of those friezes is not imitated in any extant Indian work. The Indo-Islamic enamelled or glazed tiles were copied from a much later development of the art in Persia, where the ancient technique apparently was never wholly forgotten. This later Persian work shows traces of Chinese influence.

Coloured tiles had become known in India at an earlier date, certainly in the first quarter of the fourteenth and possibly in the thirteenth century, but the Timurid tradition of the Mughal emperors made them still more fashionable. The Indian work, although sometimes very good, is not admitted by experts to equal the best Persian in either the beauty of the colours or the brilliancy of the enamel.

Two of the mosques at Gaur in West Bengal, the Tantipara and Lotan (Lattari), erected between 1475 and 1480 C.E., are decorated with true encaustic tiles. Those of the Lotan mosque are the best preserved. A collection of earlier glazed tiles from Gaur in the Victoria and Albert Museum is described as having 'a marked Hindu character, quite distinct from the blue, and diapered, and banded tiles which are distinctive of Islamic manufacture elsewhere in India, before the florid designs of the Mogul period came into vogue.' It is possible that the art, however introduced originally, may have been known to the Hindus of Bengal in an imperfect form before the Islamic conquest.

The palace of Raja Man Singh at Gwalior, built at the beginning of the sixteenth century, was as once profusely decorated with glazed tiles of various colours', as noticed by Babur, who recorded in his Memoirs: 'The outside of the walls they have inlaid with green painted tiles. All around they have inlaid the walls with figures of plantain trees made of painted tiles.'

We now pass on to the more highly developed and artistic use of glazed tiles after the Persian manner on the walls and domes of Mughal buildings. Most of the Mughal tiling is of the kind called Varanasi or Chini, composed of pieces cut out from a painted sheet

Arches in the in the Great Mosque Jama Masjid, 1571, Mughal dynasty (Akbar). Red sandstone with white marble and green and blue enamel inlay, Fatehpur Sikri, Agra, Uttar Pradesh.

Sheesh Mahal (Hall of Mirrors): the ceiling in the Winter Palace of Fort Amber is inlaid with minute mirror work (detail)*,* 1592, Mughal dynasty (Akbar). Mirrors and white marble. Near Jaipur, Rajasthan. (p. 206-207)

and laid as mosaic. The larger part dates from the seventeenth century, with a range of colours considerably more extensive than that employed on the early Punjab tiles already noticed. Such Varanasi tile casing, sparingly employed on the tombs of Sher Shah and Humayun, came largely into favour in the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan (1605-1658), and continued to be used in Aurangzeb's time. The art is now extinct.

The most remarkable series of tile pictures in the world is the huge band on the walls of the Lahore Fort, extending from the Elephant Gate to the northeastern tower of Jahangir's quadrangle for a length of 454 metres, with a height of 15.5 metres. Nearly the whole of this enormous surface is faced with painted tiles representing elephant fights, a game of polo, and other scenes.

The most beautiful example of Varanasi tilework on a large scale is universally recognized to be the mosque built in 1634 at Lahore by the governor, Wazir Khan. The building is a well-designed domed structure with four handsome minarets, constructed of small thin bricks. The exterior is panelled, the panels and minarets being veneered with Varanasi tilework of great brilliancy, still in fairly good preservation.

Passing by several interesting buildings exhibiting more or less decoration in coloured tiles, we come next to the tomb near Agra known as the Chini ka Rauza. The building, a large octagonal domed tomb of uncertain date, supposed to have been built early in the reign of Aurangzeb, in memory of Afzal Khan, a poet who died in 1639, was originally covered on the outside from top to bottom with mosaic in Varanasi tiling of various colours, worked up into numerous patterns so as to form one unbroken flat surface. It is now much dilapidated.

Sir John Marshall describes as follows a third type of Indian tile decoration:

> A third kind of tiles is found on buildings of the eighteenth century, such as the mosque of Muhammad Amin at Lahore (beginning eighteenth century) and the mosque of Zakariya Khan near Lahore. The founder of the latter was a viceroy of the Punjab from 1717 to 1738 C.E. The tiles of this class are square. They form, consequently, not a tile-mosaic as the two earlier types, in which each separate piece has its own shape and colour, but are similar to the tiles known in Europe, from where presumably they were introduced into India. The colours are faint as compared to those of the Varanasi tiles, pale green, blue and yellow being the most prominent. In one case, the tomb of Sharun-nissa, known as the cypress tomb (*Sarwali maqbara*), not far from Begampura near Lahore, we find, besides Varanasi work on the lower part of the walls, square blue and white tiles of a type well known in the west of Europe. This building also would seem to belong to the eighteenth century.

The modern tilework of Sind and Multan is described in various books dealing with the industrial arts. The oldest Sind tiles on the Dabgir mosque and Mirza Jani Beg's mosque at Thatta, dating from about 1509 C.E., exhibit only two colours, a deep rich blue and a pale turquoise blue, on a white ground, and so resemble the early Multan tiles. Multan used to be reckoned as in Sind, not in the Punjab, as it is now.

Wall tile designed like a mihrab with inscriptions from the Koran. The lamp in the niche is an allusion to Sura 24:35, "The Light", 13th century, Mongol dynasty, Kashan, Isfahan. Fritware, moulded and lustre-painted overglaze decoration, opaque glaze, colour highlights, 62 x 45.5 cm. Loaned by the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1993. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

The Indo-Islamic Styles of Painting

Gujarati Painting

The study of Indian painting has been greatly advanced by the work of Goetz, Mehta, and Percy Brown. However, a great deal remains to be done, before an acceptable classification of the various schools is arrived at. Coomaraswamy was among the first investigators of Indian painting. It is therefore only right to outline his pioneer views at the head of this chapter. To him, above all else, Indian miniature painting is divided into two, the foreign Islamic school which rose under Persian tuition during the reigns of the Mughal emperors, and in contradistinction, an ancient, indigenous, wholly Indian school, which he designates 'Rajput', and treats of as persisting 'in Rajasthan and the Himalayas ... up to the end of the eighteenth century, comparatively little affected by the Persian and European influences which enter so largely into the art of the Mughal Court. Rajput painting has none of the characteristics of a new art. It is, on the contrary, related to the classic art of Ajanta, as the Hindu language and literature are related to the older Prakrits and to Sanskrit. The Rajput paintings, indeed, show a remarkable combination of folk idioms with ancient hieratic design.' Mughal art, on the other hand, is a purely miniature art, unrelated to the ancient Indian frescoes. It is courtly not popular, secular not religious, material not spiritual.

Several objections may be made to this radical division. For one thing, it is perfectly evident that both schools share a common technique, seemingly derived from Persian painting. Furthermore, a closer study shows it also to be a 'courtly' art, associated with the capitals of various ruling dynasties. It is also evident that on the one hand, the Hindu Krishna and Ragmala subjects of the 'Rajput' schools are often embodied in purely 'Mughal' renderings, although they are of course commoner in Hindu Jaipur and Garwhal than in Delhi; on the other hand, it is equally evident that magnificent examples of 'Rajput' portraiture exist, fulfilling the same demand as 'Mughal' portraiture. Lastly, Goetz' study of costume and, still more conclusively, various dated examples of 'Rajput' paintings, prove without a shadow of doubt that the bulk of 'Rajput' painting is posterior to, rather than contemporary with the great 'Mughal' work of the court artists of Akbar and Jahangir.

These are mostly illustrations to Jain palm-leaf manuscripts, and the school has therefore become generally known as 'Jain'. This is unfortunate for the art was not confined to religious subjects. It appears likely that many purely secular examples exist, such as is the manuscript of Vasanta Vilasa described and illustrated by Mehta. This was written during the reign of Ahmad Shah Qutb-ud-din of Gujarat in 1451 C.E.; only two older examples of the school are known. The manuscript in question is written on a long roll of prepared cotton, 10.8 metres long and just over 23 centimetres wide. The colours are laid on flat and there is a preponderance of red and yellow, the background being yellow. Features are usually rendered half-face, but occasionally side-face, the long almond-shaped eye of the Indian canon of beauty being greatly exaggerated. Trees are portrayed formally as lozenges containing branch and foliage; this treatment is usual in Indian art but is not found in the frescoes at Ajanta and Ellora, where foliage, blossom, and fruit are luxuriously reproduced. Here, except in the case of banana trees and mangoes, the treatment is strictly formal in a rather slovenly way; only here and there does any attempt at design lighten the arid convention. The figure-drawing is weak, but fortunately the costume with its detail of jewellery and floating scarf and waistcloth is faithfully and delightfully set down. On the whole one is impressed by the candour of this naive art, the purpose of which is frankly book-illustration, as indeed was the primary purpose of the masters whose work still glows on the dark walls of Ajanta and Ellora.

Indian costume as shown in these paintings is proven conservative. The men wear the waistcloth (*dhoti*), long or short, with a scarf for

Page from a Manuscript of the Harivamsha: The Arrival of Nanda and His Family in Vrindavan, 1586-1590, Mughal dynasty (Akbar), Gujarat, Patan.
Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 40.8 x 30 cm.
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

the shoulders. Jewelled head-dresses of various kinds are worn, but more commonly the hair was dressed with flowers. The paijama and the women's veil do not appear. It is evident that the costume of fifteenth-century Gujarat must be treated of as being akin to that of Ajanta, not of Delhi and Agra. The subsequent change speaks clearly of a far deeper penetration of Mughal influence than has hitherto been allowed for.

Since all these fifteenth-century paintings seem to belong to Gujarat, 'Gujarati' would be a preferable title to 'Jain'. As a local school they are the School, closely comparable with the few examples of medieval Nepalese paintings in existence.

Mughal Painting

The history of Mughal painting begins with the name of Mir Sayyid Ali. In the year 1525 Babur set out upon the conquest of India, a land, however, of which he did not conceive highly. Five years later he was dead. In 1546 Humayun, his son, was deprived of his empire by the Afghan, Sher Shah, and until his final victory in 1555 existed as a landless refugee. One year of this period was spent at the Safavid court at Tabriz, where Shah Tahmasp now ruled. Bihzad was dead, but the work of a young painter, Sayyid Ali, was already attracting attention. His father, Mansur of Badakshan, who was also a painter, was a contemporary of Bihzad's. Another painter of growing reputation also attracted the notice of the exiled emperor; this was Abdul Samad.

In 1550 both these artists joined Humayun's court at Kabul. It was here that Mir Sayyid Ali was commissioned to supervise the illustration of the romance of Amir Hamzah (Dastan-e-Amir Hamza) in twelve volumes of a hundred folios each. Sixty of these illustrations painted in tempera colours on prepared cotton cloth are in Vienna, and twenty-five of them in the Indian Gallery

The captured King Gardabhilla is brought to Kalaka:
illustrated folio of a manuscript of the Shriviravakyanumatam Version of the Shrikalakacaryakatha (The Story of the Monk Kalaka). Jain miniature painting in the Western Indian style, 1453, Muzaffarid dynasty, Gujarat, Patan. Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 11.1 x 28.1 cm.
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

Kalaka forgives the vainglorious Sagaracandra:
illustrated folio of a manuscript of the Shriviravakyanumatam Version of the Shrikalakacaryakatha (The Story of the Monk Kalaka). Jain miniature painting in the Western Indian style, 1453, Muzaffarid dynasty, Gujarat, Patan. Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 11.1 x 28.1 cm.
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum. They must probably be attributed to the artists of the imperial court working under Mir Sayyid Ali, rather than to that painter himself. After Humayun's death Mir Sayyid Ali continued to work at the court of Akbar, and also performed the pilgrimage to Mecca.

The style of these early Mughal paintings is, of course, largely Safavid, but it is evident that modification and developments have already taken place. It is said that Bihzad added skill in portraiture to the art of painting; portraiture is further developed in Mughal painting. Also a greater use is made of relief and the range of colours is larger and more striking. There is something, too, about the use of flower and foliage that is un-Persian and wholly Indian. A certain simplicity and breadth of design dominates the wealth of detail; the microscopic rendering of costume and accoutrements, textile hangings and architectural details is doubly delightful in so much as it is never obtrusive.

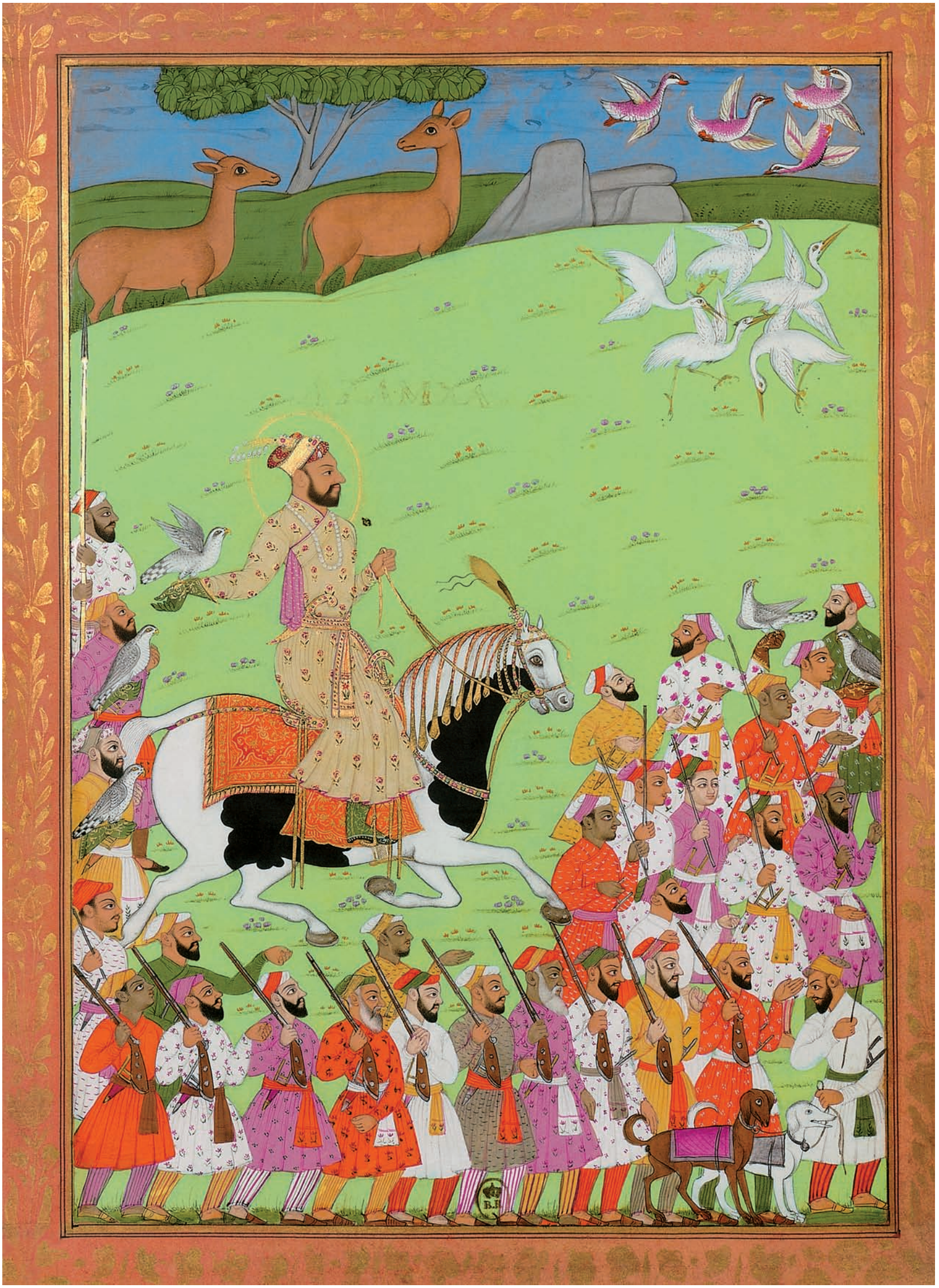
Such paintings on prepared fabric are common in India. It appears that paper itself was rare, or at any rate that large sheets were hard to obtain.

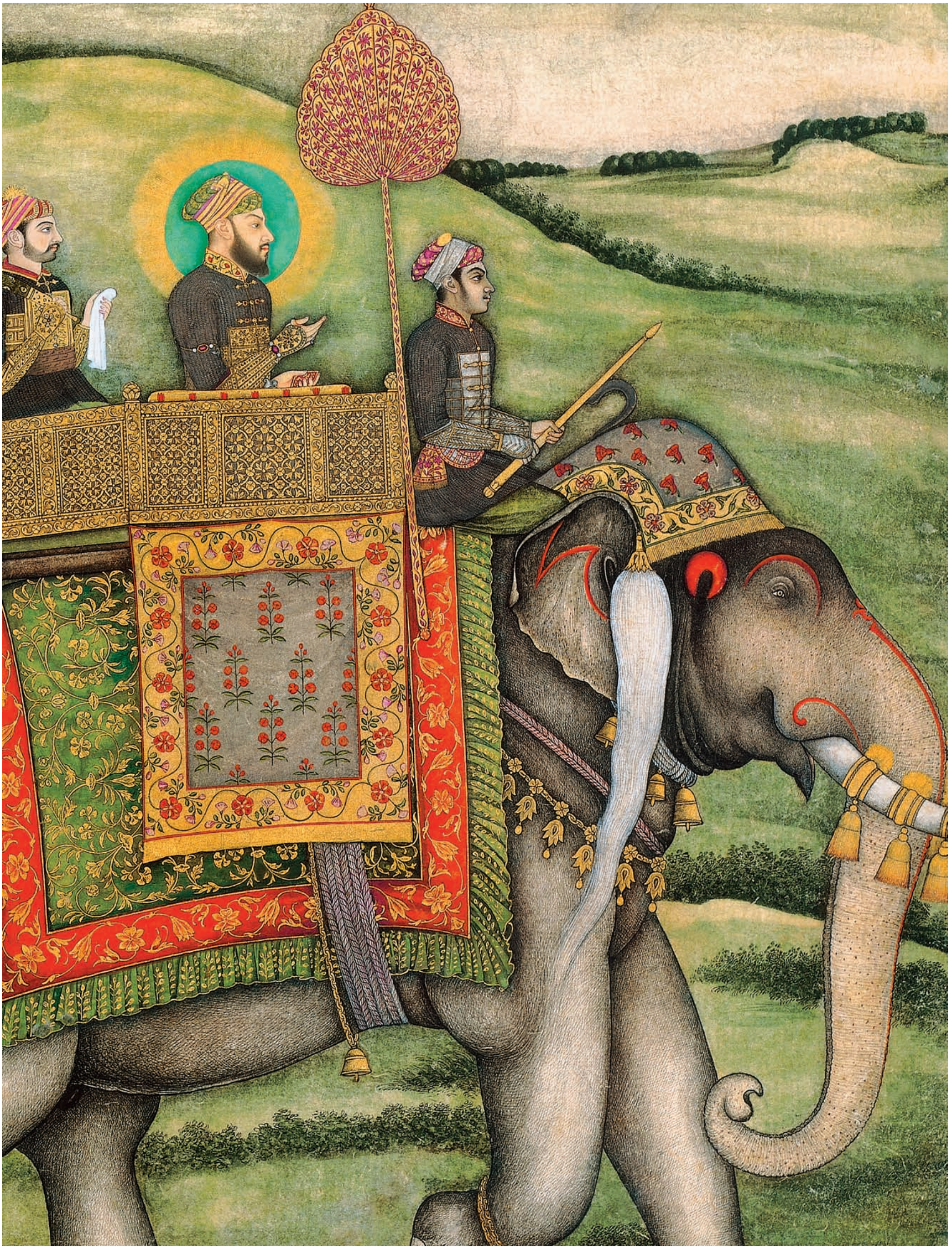
Summing up the technique and quality of early Mughal painting, it may be said that it was an offshoot of the Safavid school, the handiwork of artists trained in the school of Bihzad. However, as has been said, the local character of the detail as shown in the portrayal of the Indian countryside and of its flowers and foliage is proof of complete acclimatization, promising vigorous development.

Akbar succeeded to the insecure throne of his father when still a boy with this distinction: that whereas Babur and Humayun were rulers in a foreign land, he was native born. The culture of his court did not merely reflect at a distance the splendour of Bukhara and Samarkand. The building of Fatehpur Sikri in 1569 heralded a new era of Indian rule. And after the architects, masons, and sculptors had done their

Attributed to Miskin, *Zaal pleads with the Simurgh to save his son Rustam: illustration of the Shahnameh ("Book of Kings") by the Persian poet Firdousi (940-1020 C.E.),* c. 1595-1605, Mughal dynasty (Jahangir). Gouache and gold, 27 x 18 cm; folio 40.3 x 27.3 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. (p. 214)

Attributed to an artist of Golconde, *Azam Shah (1653-1707). From the illuminated manuscript the History of India from Tamerlane (1336-1405) to Aurangzeb (1618-1707),* 1678-1686, Mughal dynasty (Aurangzeb). Gouache, gold and silver, 31.5 x 22 cm; paper folio 37 x 26.5 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. (p. 215)





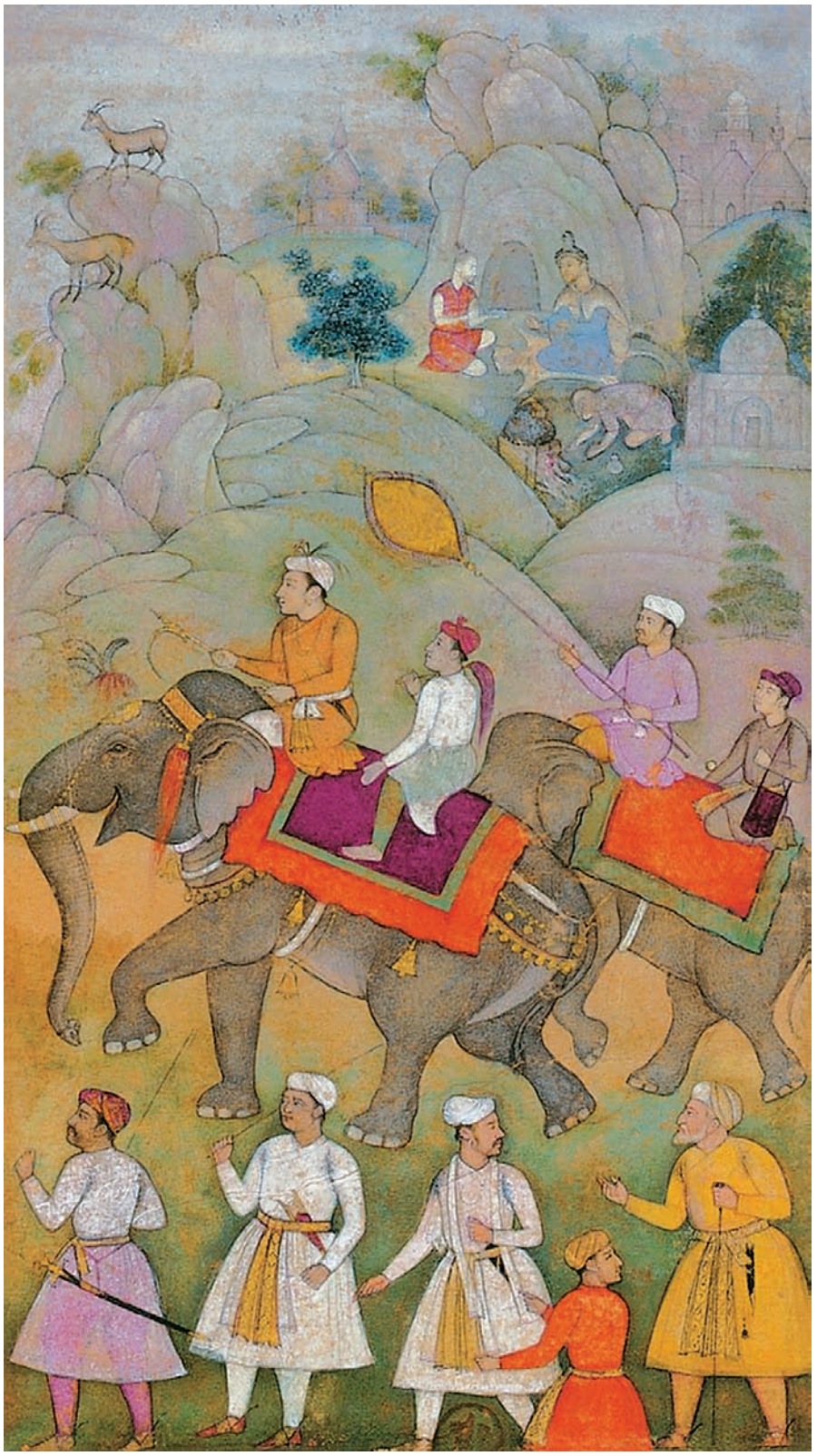
work, painters were called in to decorate the walls of the public halls and private apartments. It has been said that Mughal miniature-painting are little wall-paintings, a statement which tends to be confusing, since neither branch of Mughal painting has anything in common with the ancient Indian schools of painting of Ajanta and Gujarat, except certain inclinations to bright colouring and fine line-drawing which seem temperamentally inherent in Indian artists.

In Persia and India, as in China, calligraphy was regarded as a fine art worthy of the most serious study, and masters of it enjoyed fame throughout Asia like that of great painters in Europe. They were careful to sign and date their works, which were eagerly collected by connoisseurs. Abul Fazl gives a list of calligraphic experts, among whom in Akbar's time the most eminent was Muhammad Husain of Kashmir, who survived the emperor for six years. Many of the albums in the London collections containing 'miniatures' include hundreds of specimens of beautiful writing in various styles and of different periods, which often seem to have been more valued than the drawings and paintings associated with them. Abul Fazl enumerates eight calligraphical systems as current during the sixteenth century in Iran (Persia), Turan (Turkistan), India, and Turkey, distinguished one from the other by differences in the relative proportion of straight and curved lines, ranging from the Kufic with five-sixths of straight lines to the Nastalik, Akbar's favourite script, with nothing but curved strokes. The forms of the Arabic alphabet used for writing Persian, although not distinctly reminiscent of pictorial hieroglyphs, as the Chinese characters are, lend themselves readily to artistic treatment, and even Europeans may understand to some extent the high technical skill of the masters of the calligraphic art, and admire the beauty of their productions. But full enjoyment and appreciation are possible only to persons familiar with the character from infancy and sensitive to all the associated ideas.

M. Huart sums up the close relations between calligraphy and Asiatic painting in the phrase: *'En Orient la miniature n'est que la servante de la calligraphic.'* (In the Orient, miniatures are only a servant to calligraphy.) The phrase, however, is not applicable to the ancient Hindu schools of painting, which, except in so far as they may have

Bahadur Shah I (1643-1712) (?) on an elephant (detail of a page from an unknown manuscript), 17th century, Mughal dynasty. Gouache, gold and silver; red ink frame with golden lines; sandy golden margin, 29.6 x 24 cm; folio 45 x 32 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Niccolò Manucci, *Page from a Manuscript of the Tutinama ("Tales of a Parrot"). Episode from the tale of 'The Lynx and the Lion',* 1580, Mughal dynasty (Akbar), Gujarat, Patan. Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 31.9 x 22.9 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.



Akbar goes hunting, c. 1610-1620, Mughal dynasty (Jahangir).
Gouache, gold and silver; red frame with golden garland;
margin with bouquets of red flowers, 18.6 x 10.4 cm; folio 29.6 x 20 cm.
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

been influenced by Chinese and Persian ideas, were independent of the scribe's art. None of the many varieties of the square Brahmi or Sanskrit script ever tempted the calligraphist to regard his manuscript as a picture, nor did anybody dream of collecting specimens of writing in that script merely for the sake of their beauty.

The rapidity with which the teaching of Abdul Samad and his Islamic colleagues was assimilated and then modified by scores of Hindu artists of various castes is in itself sufficient proof that the foreign teachers must have found trained indigenous scholars with whom to work. Men accustomed to draw and paint could easily learn new methods and a foreign style, but not even the despotic power of Akbar would have been able to create a numerous school of Hindu artists out of nothing.

This inference, inevitable from a general survey of the facts, is established with certainty by the positive testimony of Abul Fazl that Daswanth, who disputed with Basawan the first place among the Hindu painters of Akbar's court, had 'devoted his whole life to the art, and used, from love to his profession, to draw and paint figures even on walls'. Abul Fazl goes on to say that the work of Basawan is so excellent that many connoisseurs preferred him to Daswanth.

The Koran, following the Semitic principle formulated in the Mosaic Second Commandment, absolutely forbids Muslims to make likenesses of anything in heaven or on earth; and the prohibition has been and is strictly obeyed, with rare exceptions, in all countries and at all times, so far as the decoration of mosques and other buildings devoted to religious purposes is concerned. In book illustrations, however, such liberty is commonly assumed. The Mughal emperors of India looked to Iran for the graces of civilization, and it was natural that Akbar should desire to add the charms of Persian pictorial art to the amenities of his court. Regarding himself as Head of the Church and pontiff of a new religion, he cared little about the Prophet, and at a private party was heard by his Boswell to observe:

'There are many that hate painting, but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God; for a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in

Abd al-Rahim, *Calligraphic album page (Nasta'liq script),* 1606-1607,
Mughal dynasty (Jahangir), Lahore, Punjab (present-day Pakistan).
Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 34 x 22.2 cm.
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

devising its limbs one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and is thus forced to think of God, the Giver of life, and will thus increase in knowledge.'

He found no difficulty in gratifying his taste. Liberal pay and abundant honour drew crowds of artists, both foreigners and Indians, Muslims and Hindus, to his magnificent court, where the more distinguished were enrolled as *mansabdars*, or members of the official nobility, and assigned ample salaries.

> Imperial libraries of large extent were formed at Agra, Delhi, and other places stored with all that was best in Asiatic literature, both originals and Persian translations, the volumes being enshrined in the richest bindings, and adorned with miniatures regardless of expense. According to the Spanish priest, Father Sebastian Manrique, who was at Agra in 1641, the imperial library at

that city contained 24,000 volumes, valued at an astounding sum.

The libraries thus formed were maintained and increased by Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb (1605-1707); and even the weak successors of the last great mogul were not indifferent to the delights of choice books and dainty pictures. But the political convulsions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries destroyed the imperial libraries, with most of the similar collections formed by subordinate potentates like the Rohilla chief and the Nawab-Wazir of Awadh. Fragments of these wonderful accumulations are now scattered over the world in private and public collections, and although constituting but a small fraction of the great mass once in existence, supply ample material for the history of Indo-Persian calligraphy and the sister art of the miniaturist. Many of these paintings have had adventurous histories.

The illustration of manuscripts was only one form of Indo-Persian art, and that, as Blochet truly observes, was not always the most

Kichaka, Commander-in-Chief of King Virata, and Draupadi, disguised as the maidservant Sairandhri: Page from a manuscript of the Mahabharata, 1670, Adil Shahi dynasty, Karnataka.
Opaque watercolour, ink, and gold leaf on paper, 19.8 x 48.3 cm.
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

successful. The highest achievements of the Indian draughtsmen and colourists were often attained in separate pictures of varying sizes, which were frequently bound in albums, like that given by Dara Shikoh to his beloved wife. The British Museum collection includes many such albums, some of which, such as Hafiz Rahmat's volume, constitute historical portrait galleries of the deepest interest. The fashion set by the court of Delhi and followed by all the feudatory courts and many individual nobles, was passed on to the wealthy English 'Nabobs' in the latter part of the eighteenth century, who gladly seized opportunities of procuring specimens and bringing them home.

During the nineteenth century the taste for the work of the school was lost by both Europeans and Indians, and very few persons seemed to care what happened to the pictures, which were then procurable for nominal sums. According to Badaoni, Akbar's hostile critic, the courtiers' taste for illuminated books had been stimulated in his time by a certain amount of compulsion, and it was natural that, during the 'great anarchy' of the Maratha period, when the influence of the Delhi court sank to nothing, the amount of liberal patronage by the minor native courts should diminish. Nevertheless, even during those stormy times much meritorious portrait work was produced, and some good portraiture was executed as late as the nineteenth century.

When François Bernier was writing to Jean-Baptiste Colbert the founder of the *Compagnie française pour le commerce des Indes orientales,* in 1669, early in the reign of Aurangzeb, who had the Puritan dislike for art, the position of artists had become much less favourable than that enjoyed by them in the days of Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan. The observant French physician, a thoroughly trustworthy witness, described as follows the relations between artists and their patrons, or rather taskmasters, as seen by him:

> Can it excite wonder that under these circumstances [of general misery] the arts do not flourish here as they would do under better government, or as they nourish in our happier France? No artist can be expected to give his mind to his calling in the midst of a people

Page from a manuscript of the Ramayana: Rama and Lakshmana Meet (Mysore variant of South Indian Style), 1600, Mughal dynasty (Akbar), Gujarat, Patan. Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 27.6 x 16.5 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

Durbar (audience) of Shah Jahan (1592-1666) in Lahore (present-day Pakistan) where he receives Aurangzeb (1618-1707) (detail), c. 1670, Mughal dynasty (Aurangzeb). Gouache and gold, 31.2 x 23.4 cm; folio 42 x 25 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. (p. 222-223)

Kanha, *page from the Salim Album. Portrait of Kishn Das Tunwar,* 1590, Mughal dynasty (Akbar), Patan, Gujarat. Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 23.8 x 15.1 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

> who are either wretchedly poor, or who, if rich, assume an appearance of poverty, and who regard not the beauty and excellence, but the cheapness of an article; a people whose grandees pay for a work of art considerably under its value, and according to their own caprice, and who do not hesitate to punish an importunate artist or tradesman with the korrah, that long and terrible whip hanging at every Omrah's [nobleman's] gate. Is it not enough to damp the ardour of any artist when he feels that he can never hope to attain to any distinction? … The arts in the Indies would long ago have lost their beauty and delicacy if the monarch and principal Omrahs did not keep in their pay a number of artists who work in their houses, teach the children, and are stimulated to exertion by the hope of reward and the fear of the korrah.

Excepting the modern Delhi miniatures on ivory, the frescoes, the early paintings on cotton, and a few pictures on vellum, the Indo-Persian paintings are all executed on paper. I do not know any Indian examples of painting on silk in the Chinese manner. The Indo-Persian, like other Asiatic artists, conceived every object as being bounded by firm lines, and consequently, his first step was the drawing of an outline. For the illustration of ordinary Persian books, according to Blochet, the outline drawn directly on the page in red or black chalk was filled in with colours at once. For more costly and elaborate volumes the process was more complicated, the illustrations being executed upon a separate sheet subsequently applied to the blank space left in the manuscript. That sheet was first covered with a layer of very fine plaster, mixed in a solution of gum arabic. The outline was then drawn upon the perfectly smooth surface thus obtained, and opaque body-colours, mixed with water, were laid on in successive layers, just as in oil painting, but with the difference that mistakes could not be rectified. Jewels and ornaments were indicated by needle prickings in sheets of gold-leaf, or even by the insertion of pearls or diamond chips. The work was all done by the Indian artists with fine squirrel-hair brushes,

the most delicate strokes being executed with a brush of a single hair, an instrument requiring the utmost correctness of eye and steadiness of hand. The collections in London contain many examples of unfinished drawings and paintings, which, if examined critically by experts, would reveal fully the Indian methods of work, and show how far they agreed with or differed from the Persian methods described by M. Blochet. It must be pointed out that portraits often exist in duplicate and triplicate.

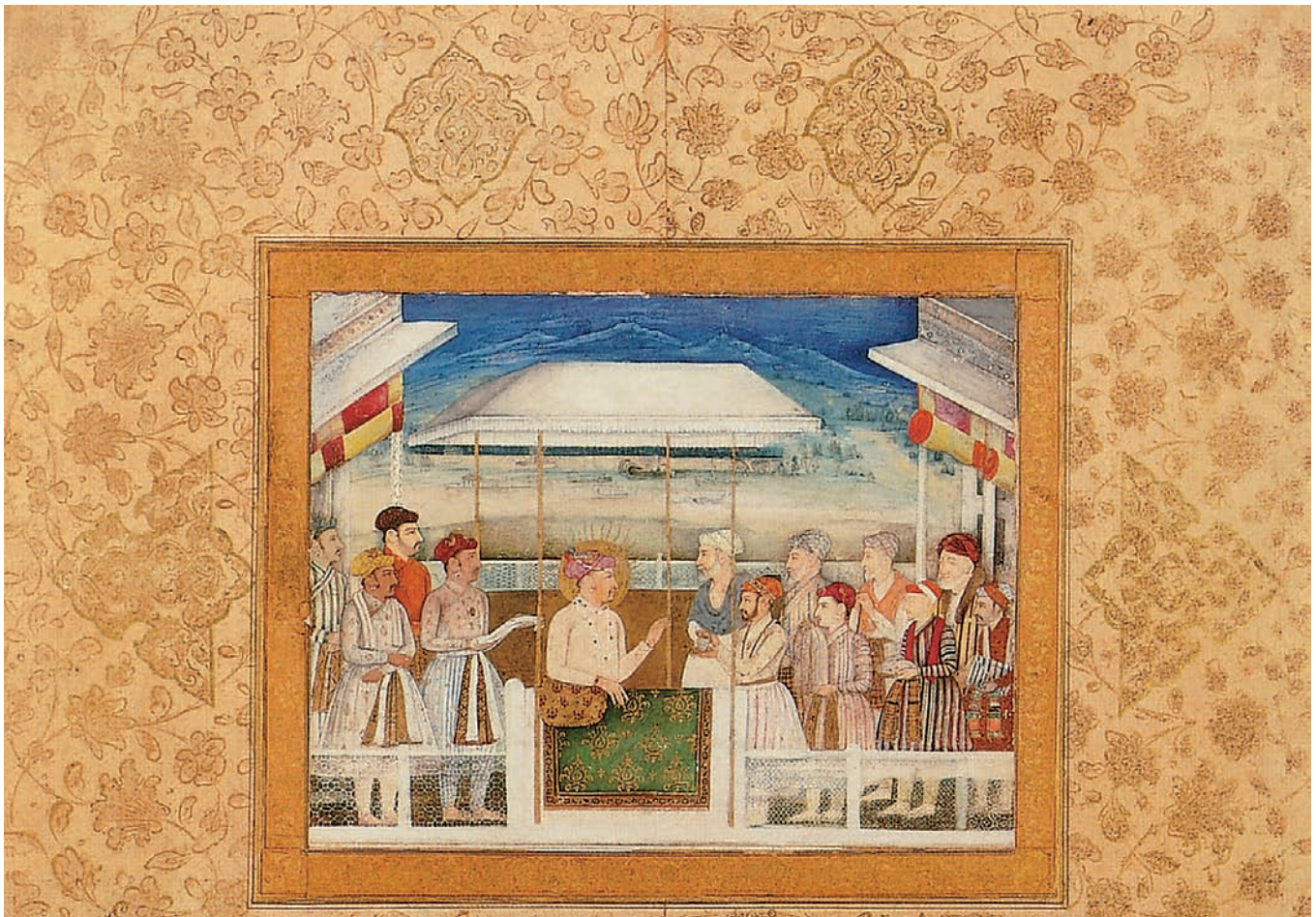
The blue was ordinarily obtained from powdered lapis lazuli, imported from Badakshan, but indigo blues appear in early book illustrations of Hindu subjects. The reds used were cinnabar, vermilion, or cochineal. The yellow was chrome, and other colours were made up by mixing these. Gold was freely used in the form of gold-leaf, and also as a wash of which the Indians had the secret. The Persians applied an admirably transparent varnish made of sandarac and linseed-oil, mixed as a paste and dissolved in either petroleum or highly rectified spirits of wine. Probably the Indians used all the Persian appliances with some additions and modifications, but the ascertainment of full details would require special expert study and hardly repay the trouble.

The practice of beginning a picture by laying down a firmly drawn outline led to a curious division of labour, the outline often being drawn by one man and the painting done by another. Sometimes four artists collaborated in one work. It is not clear how such a complicated arrangement was worked. The method, whether only two artists or four collaborated, necessarily tended to reduce their art to the level of a skilled mechanical craft; and, as a matter of fact, the mechanical nature of much of the fine Indo-Persian work is its greatest defect.

The early Indo-Persian book illustrations are wrought in excessively brilliant colours, chiefly red, yellow, and blue. As has been said they are avowed imitations or, rather, developments of Persian work.

In Persia, at the close of the fifteenth century, the character of Timurid art began to change, passing into the more delicate and

Portrait of a Mughal Lady, c. 1630, Mughal dynasty (Shah Jahan), Patan, Gujarat. Opaque watercolour on paper, 33.2 x 21 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.



sentimental style of the character in the sixteenth century. During the seventeenth century the refined Safavid style, with its lowered scale of colour, became familiar in India, where further local modifications were effected under the influence of Hindu tradition. The Indian artists 'had a truer feeling for colour and more sober tonality' than their Persian teachers, according to Blochet, who is disposed to think that the Indians sometimes carried the policy of softening colour to an undue extreme. They were wonderfully successful in their grisaille drawings of a single colour, frequently a pale sepia, with delicate gradations of tint, very pleasing to my eye. At the same time they developed a mastery over individual characteristic portraiture never equalled, I think, by the Persians. The best Indian work dates from the first half of the seventeenth century, but good portraits are to be found executed as late as the early years of the nineteenth century.

During Akbar's reign (1556-1605) and a portion of Jahangir's (1605-1627) the standing portrait figures are usually represented in profile in a formal, conventional manner, with the right hand holding up a flower or jewel, and the feet placed one in front of the other. Gradually this stiff formalism was dropped, and men and women were drawn in natural attitudes. The more ancient Indo-Persian works, like their Persian models, follow unreservedly a style marked by the total lack of roundness, depth of tone, and

Bahadur Singh (?), *The Voyage of Zulaikha, painted in the Kashmir style* (detail), c. 1760, Mughal dynasty (Alamgir II/Shah Alam II), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. Gouache and gold, 30 x 22 cm; folio 45 x 32 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

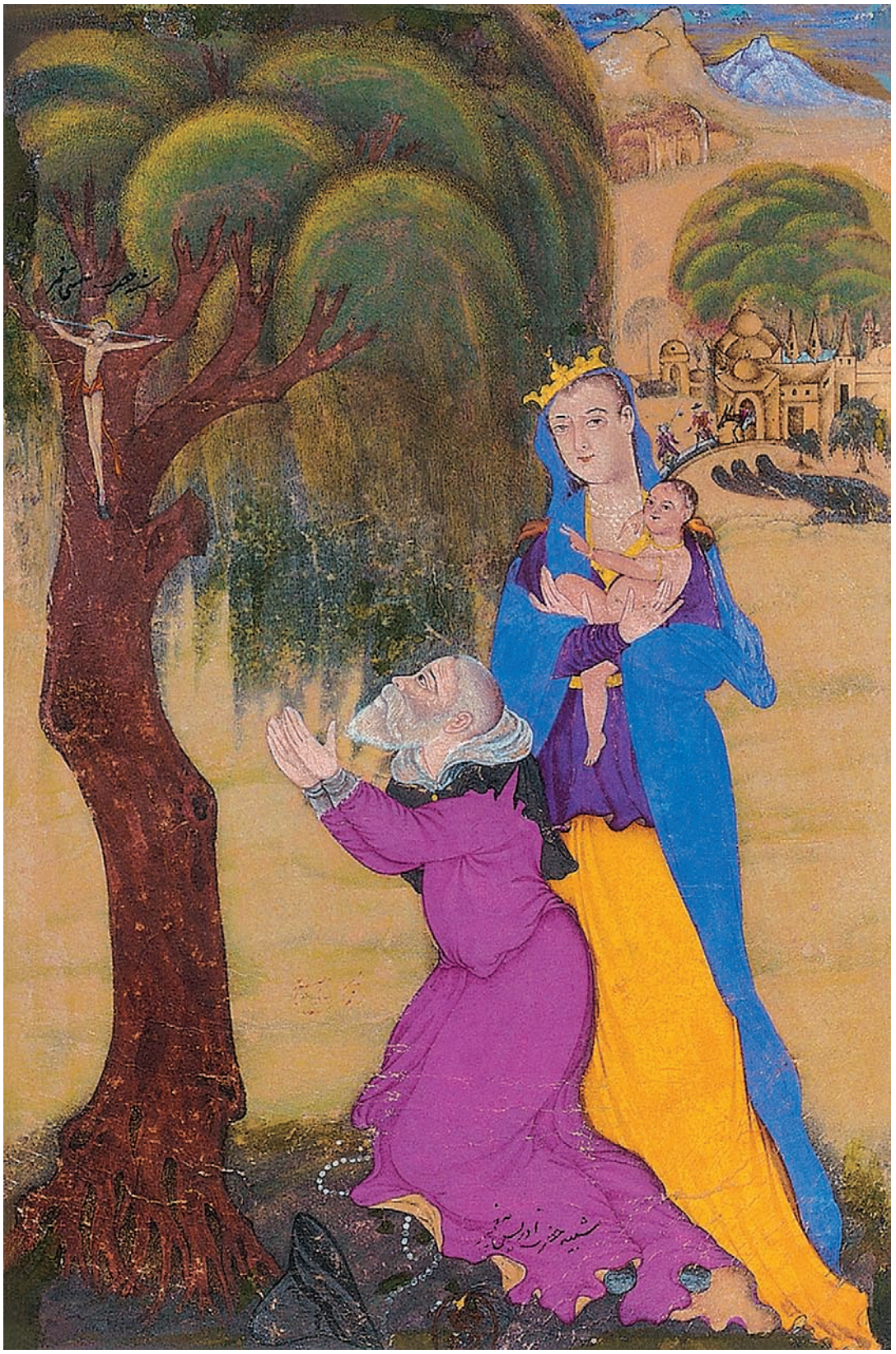
Emperor Jahangir (1605-1627) Receives Members of His Court, c. 1790-1810, Mughal dynasty (Akbar Shah II?, Delhi), Patan, Gujarat. Opaque watercolour on paper, 27.8 x 33.5. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

aerial perspective, every object being represented as absolutely flat. During the later years of Jahangir's reign and subsequently, this flat style was modified by the Indian artists, who frequently introduced slight line shading with admirable effect, so contriving to give their figures a sufficient degree of roundness with wonderfully few strokes. The change adds much to the attractiveness of seventeenth-century Indian work in European eyes, and was due to foreign influence. But chiaroscuro was imported to the detriment of colouring and line drawing. Delicacy and subtlety are bought at the cost of strength and vitality. Highly developed skill in portraiture seems to have swamped the sense of design and decoration. Foreign influence is also particularly noticeable in the treatment of clouds and foliage: such influence is often of a late eighteenth-century kind.

This improvement, if it may be so called, was the result of European influence which certainly became a potent factor in Persian and Indian art at that time. Most of the albums show it plainly. Biblical subjects were frequently treated by the artists, and were specially favoured by the royal family, who used them for palace decorations at both Fatehpur-Sikri and Lahore. Many other biblical subjects will be found in the collections, and it must be confessed that the pictures are not usually equal to those devoted to topics more congenial to the artists. Many of the attempts to

Courtly Scene in Europe, 1600, Mughal dynasty (Akbar), Patan, Gujarat. Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 33.5 x 20.8 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

The Prophet Idris (Enoch), c. 1600-1620, Mughal dynasty (Akbar). Gouache and gold, 19.5 x 12.5 cm; folio 45 x 32 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



combine the methods of the West with those of the East are decided failures, as similar attempts in China have failed, but some few attain a high level of executive excellence.

The origin of such influence is not far to seek. The Persian kings admired European art, and deliberately sought to introduce its methods into their country. To this day the painters and illuminators of Isfahan, the earlier, and Tehran, the later, capital of Iran, cherish as their ideal the ambition to 'paint like Raphael', and pride themselves on their descent from certain of the students sent long ago to Rome who survived to return to the home of their fathers.

The Indo-Persian or Mughal school of drawing and painting having lived in considerable vigour from about 1570 to 1820 or 1830 a period, roughly speaking, of two centuries and a half and not being quite dead until the twentieth century, naturally produced an enormous output. The extant works, notwithstanding all the mishaps to which Indian art has been exposed, still can be numbered by thousands. Almost at the very beginning of the operations of the school, about the year 1590, when Abul Fazl, the minister of Akbar, wrote his memorable description of his sovereign's administration, a hundred artists were reckoned to be masters of their craft, while tolerable practitioners were past counting. During the reigns of Akbar's son and grandson, in the first half of the seventeenth century, when the new form of art grafted upon the stock of ancient Indian tradition attained its highest development, the number of proficients must have increased. Although the long-continued political and social agony which accompanied the decline and fall of the Mughal empire necessarily limited the opportunities for the practice of art and diminished its rewards, art did not die; a synthesis between Hindu tradition and Persian technique produced a new variety of Indian pictorial art possessing high merits. It is plain, therefore, that even when the eighteenth-century mythological painting is placed on one side for separate treatment, the mass of material to be dealt with by the historian is enormous, and that it is not possible within reasonable limits to do more than select a small number of typical examples.

Many, perhaps most, of the extant Indo-Persian compositions are anonymous, but hundreds are signed, and it would not be difficult to compile a list of names of from one hundred to two hundred artists. Perhaps the most fruitful general observation arising from such perusal of nominal lists is the predominance of Hindu names. In Abul Faz's catalogue of seventeen artists, only four are Muslim, while thirteen are Hindu.

Basawan is represented by Plate XXI of the Razmnamah, illustrating the story of the raja who married the daughter of the King of Frogs. The lady, divesting herself of her fine clothes, returned to the water and resumed her froggy form, whereupon the angry husband proceeded to kill all the frogs he could find, until the lady was restored to him. The prevailing colour is green in various shades. The birds, frogs, trees, and flowers are drawn and painted with the utmost delicacy, but the general effect is marred by the intrusion of blocks of manuscript. The perspective convention is the same as that of the ancient bas-reliefs. If the spectator imagines that all the persons and trees are on hinges and can be raised to their feet, they will then all fall into their proper relative positions. The artist saw with his mind's eye all the figures standing up, but in order to paint them, conceived them all to be laid down on one side. The subject seems to be regarded and viewed from above, all the parts being equally bathed in light, which is not represented as coming from any particular direction. Consequently, there are no shadows, and there is hardly any shading. Strong sunlight is indicated by a wash of gold behind the big tree. The drawing is by Basawan, the colouring by Bhawani.

Scene of Combat Between One Soldier on a Charging Elephant and Another on a Rearing Horse, 1750-1760, Asaf Jah dynasty (Nizam), Hyderabad state (presently part of Gujarat). Opaque watercolour on paper, 32.1 x 24.4 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

The Indo-Persian artists excelled in the delineation of animals, both quadrupeds and birds, and a delightful album might be composed of their pictures of animal life. The celebrated artist Ustad Mansur, who enjoyed the special favour of Jahangir, and was honoured by him with a title of nobility, began his career in Akbar's reign. The Waqiat-i-Baburi contains a series of eight exquisite little miniatures from his brush. Mansur, however, excelled as an animal and bird painter. His work is further represented in the India section of the Victoria and Albert Museum by Nos. 21, 22, and 23 of the Wantage Bequest, paintings of a pheasant, a turkey-cock, and a blue-throated barbet. Havell has reproduced successfully a beautiful white crane by Mansur in the Calcutta Art Gallery.

In Dara Shikoh's album only three pictures are dated (folios 25, 26, 21 b), the dates being A.H. 1014 (1605-1606 C.E.); A.H. 1018 (609-610 C.E.); and A.H. 1043 (1633-1634 C.E.). The first of those years was that in which the sceptre passed from the hands of Akbar to those of Jahangir; the third falls in the reign of Shah Jahan. Six of the paintings (folio 19b, 33b, 35b, and 45b) seem to include portraits of Jahangir (Prince Salim) in his youth and early manhood. The collection, as a whole, therefore, may be ascribed to the time of Jahangir and the earlier part of Shah Jahan's reign, or in other words, to the first forty years of the seventeenth century.

The only signed composition is that on Folio 21b, dated 1633-1634, which bears the name of Muhammad Khan. The picture is characteristic

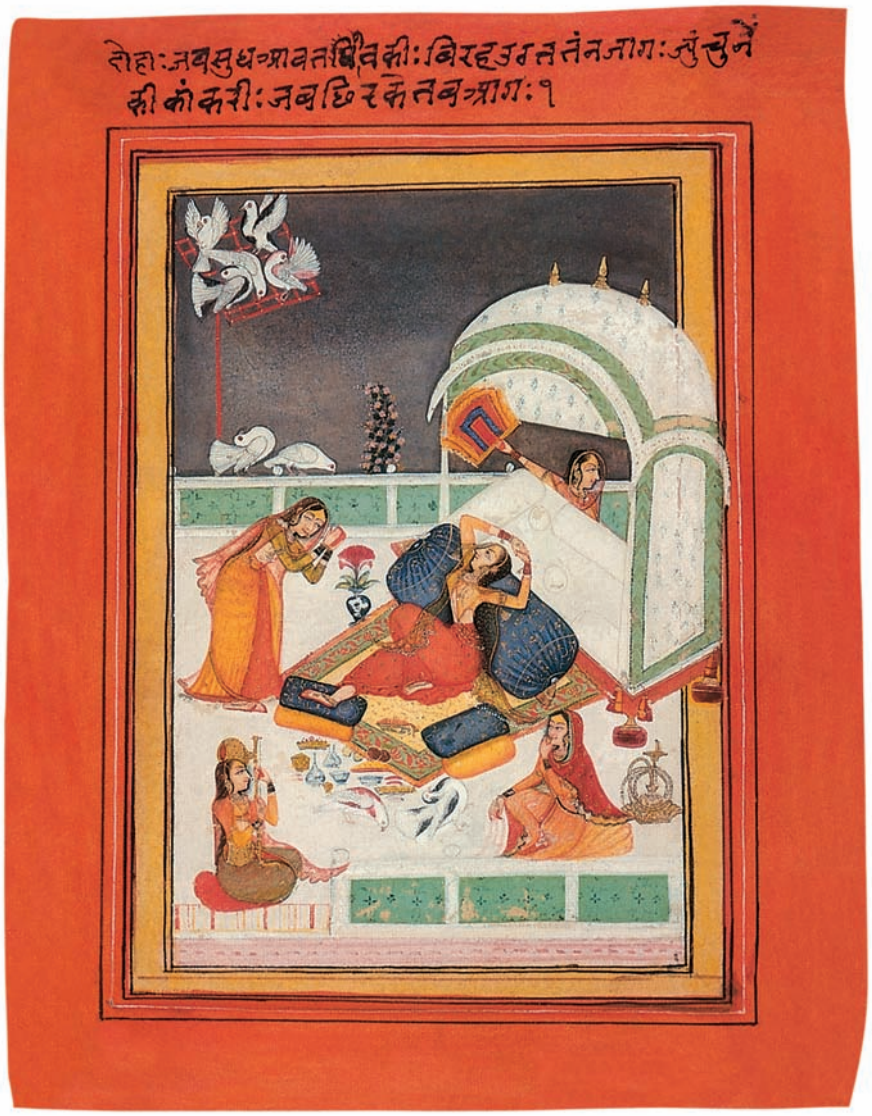
A Woman Visiting a Yogini and her Companions at Night, 1800,
Mughal dynasty (Shah Alam II/Akbar Shah II), Patan, Gujarat.
Opaque watercolour on paper, 24.6 x 16.7 cm.
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

of Jahangir's bibulous court. It represents a young man clad in a bright yellow robe and large green turban, kneeling before a vase of flowers and a golden dish containing four earthenware jars, and engaged in pouring red wine from a jewelled goglet into a cup held in his left hand. No shading is used.

The birds in this album, exquisitely drawn and coloured, are worthy of Mansur and may possibly be from his brush. I admire particularly the picture on Folio 8 of a long-legged, brown bird standing by the side of a pool fringed with grass, flowers, and bamboos in tolerably good perspective. The blue sky, unfortunately, is rather crude. Another remarkable bird study is that on Folio 10 representing admirably a wild duck standing by the side of a pool at the foot of a hillock. The sunlight on the face of the hillock is boldly indicated by a wash of gold, with surprisingly fine effect.

The works of the Indo-Persian draughtsmen and painters furnish a gallery of historical portraits, lifelike and perfectly authentic, which enable the historian to realize the personal appearance of all the Mughal emperors and of almost every public man of note in India for more than two centuries. It may be doubted if any other country in the world possesses a better series of portraits of the men who made history. Pictures of this class are so numerous, and so many of such excellence, that it is difficult to make a representative selection.

Two Women with Fireworks, 1770-1800, Gaj Singh/Surat Singh, Bikaner, Rajasthan. Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 21 x 8.7 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.



All critics, presumably, would admit that Indo-Persian art attained its highest achievements during the reign of the magnificent Shah Jahan (1627-1658 C.E.), when the land enjoyed comparative peace, and a luxurious court offered liberal encouragement to all artists capable of ministering to its pleasure. The fierce scenes of bloodshed in which the earlier artists delighted were replaced by pageants of peaceful courtly splendour, the old aggressive colouring was toned down or dispensed with, and a general refinement of style and execution was cultivated. In the portraits of men and favourite animals a little shading executed by a few delicate strokes was dexterously introduced, sufficient to suggest solidity and roundness, and yet managed with such reserve that the Asiatic reliance on the power of line was not interfered with. The compositions of this period comprise a variety of subjects and are the work of many artists.

Perfectly drawn elephants are numerous. Indian artists, whether sculptors or painters, rarely failed to produce good representations of the huge quadruped, the nature of which they understood thoroughly. Volume LXVII in the Johnson Collection of Warren Hastings's banker Richard Johnson is specially devoted to elephants, several of which are admirable. One of the best is that on Folio 7,

Page from a Rasikapriya Series: The Pining Radha, 1660, Raj Singh I, Mewar, Rajasthan. Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 23.2 x 19.5 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

A Heroine, Longing for Her Lover, Feeling the Pangs of Separation, Gazes at Mating Pigeons, 1770-1780, Ajit Singh/British rule, Bundi, Rajasthan. Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 34.4 x 26.5 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

by Nadir-uz-zaman (Abu al-Hasan). Another fine picture is that on Folio 15. The main subject is a magnificent elephant standing in a palace courtyard, with other elephants and a bullock as accessories. The drawing is grisaille in a brownish sepia tint, no other colour being used, except that the golden ornaments of the elephant are yellow.

The many charming pictures treating of miscellaneous subjects including illustrations of popular stories, offer a wide field for description and selection, far too large to be treated exhaustively.

A favourite subject was the story of Baz Bahadur, king of Malwa, and his lady-love, Princess Rupmati, who are represented in several pictures as riding together by torchlight. Other romances frequently illustrated are the tales of Laila and Majnun, Khusrau and Shirin, and Kamrup and Kamta.

Havell has rightly drawn attention to the skill with which the Indian artists treated the contrast between the pitchy darkness of night and the flare of artificial light. Several pictures are extant which exhibit this contrast in scenes of hunting by night, flaming torches being used to dazzle and hypnotize the deer. The same motive, which also attracted Rembrandt, inspires the pictures representing a lady standing on a balcony watching the effect of fireworks over the dark waters of the Jumna. Sometimes she is shown in the act of discharging a squib herself. Other compositions exhibiting people grouped round a campfire aim at like effects. Many artists took great delight in depicting holy men and ascetics of all sorts, Muslim and Hindu, singly or in groups. Two of the most exquisite works dealing with this class of subject, and no doubt executed in the reign of Shah Jahan, are the companion pictures.

Most of the albums contain examples of gorgeous court scenes elaborated with infinite patience and minuteness of detail, harmoniously coloured, and often enriched with gold. It would be next to impossible to reproduce the most splendid of these pictures in colours with success, and I think it better not to make the attempt. The composition being the weak point in these works, photographs do them an injustice.

Passing on to the reigns of Aurangzeb (1658-1707) and his decadent sucessors during the eighteenth century, we find the artists still numerous and specimens of their work abundant. Although Aurangzeb was too zealous a puritan to care for art himself, the fashion set by his predecessors had not died out, and princes and nobles still kept court painters. Portraiture continued to be practised with great success, although the execution rarely attains the perfection of the first half of the seventeenth century. The art of this period and subsequent periods can only be justly treated of as the product of artists who gained a living at minor courts, Hindu or Muslim, and whose style and choice of subjects are modified by the local demand. Certain of these local styles, spoken of collectively as 'Rajput', are distinct, but much of the later work remains true to the decadent Mughal tradition.

Rajput Painting

To Dr. Coomaraswamy must be given the credit of the primary study and classification of non- Mughal Indian paintings. He begins his survey with a quotation from Abul Fazl who says of the Hindu painters at the Mughal court that 'their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few, indeed, in the world are equal to them' As has been said, his classification is based upon a dual conception of two schools of Indian painting, Mughal and Rajput, which are 'utterly diverse' in temper, the Rajput school dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and therefore preceding the Mughal school. He acknowledges that in latter days the schools tended to converge and blend, but at all times the subject-matter was different. With regard to his early dating of Rajput painting, he supports his views by a direct comparison with Ajanta and Sigiriya. The well-known 'Death of Bishma' is therefore 'unmistakably … reminiscent of the great Buddhist Parinirvanas. It is evident that much of his argument is based on the subject matter. Rajput painting is Hindu, popular, spiritual. Mughal painting is Islamic – courtly, material. The primary fact that is overlooked is that the technique of the two schools is identical, and Persian in origin.

Dr. Coomaraswamy's classification of Rajput painting is a geographical one, which invites chronological inexactitude. There is a Rajasthani (low-land) school and a Pahari (Himalayan) school. Though these subdivisions are absolutely acceptable in themselves, it must be acknowledged that there are numerous local schools and certain period differences to be distinguished. Roughly speaking, the Kangra paintings with their flowing line and westernized drawing of foliage and landscape are typical of the Pahari schools, while the Jaipur paintings with their concentration on jewellery treated in relief and formal drapery are typical of the Rajasthani schools. Both of these lesser schools show Mughal, if not foreign influence, especially with regard to their architectural settings. Certain Rajasthani paintings, however, exist which are clearly earlier than the eighteenth and nineteenth century Kangra and Jaipur work. Most of these are Ragini subjects, but their technique and the details of costume and architecture will not allow of them being dated pre-seventeenth century.

These Rajput paintings seem to have been the work of the court painters of the petty Rajput courts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As with the parent Mughal school, portraits are plentiful, especially of the Jaipur, Bijapur, and Hyderabad schools, and a survey of them would provide accurate chronological data. Nineteenth century work is plentiful, being chiefly of the copyist order. The colouring tends to be crude and the drawing slovenly. Moreover, certain painters are still at work, turning out the old subjects usually on old paper to the great confusion of students.

Shiva Manifestating Himself within a Linga of Flames, Worshipped by Brahma and Vishnu, c. 1825-1850, Takht Singh/British rule, Jodhpur, Rajasthan. Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, 46 x 40.6 cm. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

Indian Paintings of the Twentieth Century

At the Delhi Exhibition of 1902-1903 many examples were shown of the oil-paintings and water-colours produced in considerable quantities of late years by students trained in European methods, chiefly at the Government Schools of Art in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and Lahore. In Sir George Watt's book, Percy Brown, late Principal of the Calcutta School of Art, criticized the Delhi exhibits as follows:

> Until its introduction from Europe, there was no oil painting of any kind practised throughout the country, but the number of pictures executed in the medium shown in the Exhibition reveals the fact that oil picture painting as a branch of study, as well as a means of livelihood, is being taken up seriously by a rapidly increasing class. Some of the work displayed in the Eastern Hall of the Exhibition was remarkably good; in the life studies the modelling and feeling of living flesh being well reproduced, and one or two landscapes showed an atmosphere and a consideration for composition which is worthy of remark. Much, however, of the work shown was of a very ordinary character, the drawing being decidedly defective, and the technique and colouring in most cases crude.

The most prominent representative of the Europeanized school of Indian artists was the late Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906) of Travancore, a connexion of the Maharaja of that State. His works, which are extremely numerous, achieved wide popularity, and have been freely vulgarized by oleographs and other cheap modes of reproduction. The Raja practised both portrait and landscape painting, and four of the portraits in the Banqueting Hall, Madras, are from his brush. He was assisted by his relative, Raja Raja Varma (1863-1918), and other members of his family. He had received instruction from Theodore Jensen and other European artists who visited Southern India, as well as from Alagri Naidu, a native of Madurai who was patronized by Swati Tirumal, Maharaja of Travancore from 1829 to 1847 and was considered in his day to be the best painter in India after the European fashion. Ravi Varma had a formidable rival in Ramaswamy Naidu, a member of the clan of Nayaks at Madurai, who was considered to excel in portrait painting.

Stimulated by the active encouragement of the royal family of Travancore, the Gaekwad of Baroda, and other wealthy patrons, Ravi Varma turned his attention to the illustration of the Hindu legends and epics.

In his own country his works in that kind are regarded as master-pieces and adequate expressions of Indian feeling. At the hands of recent critics in Europe they have met with a different reception.

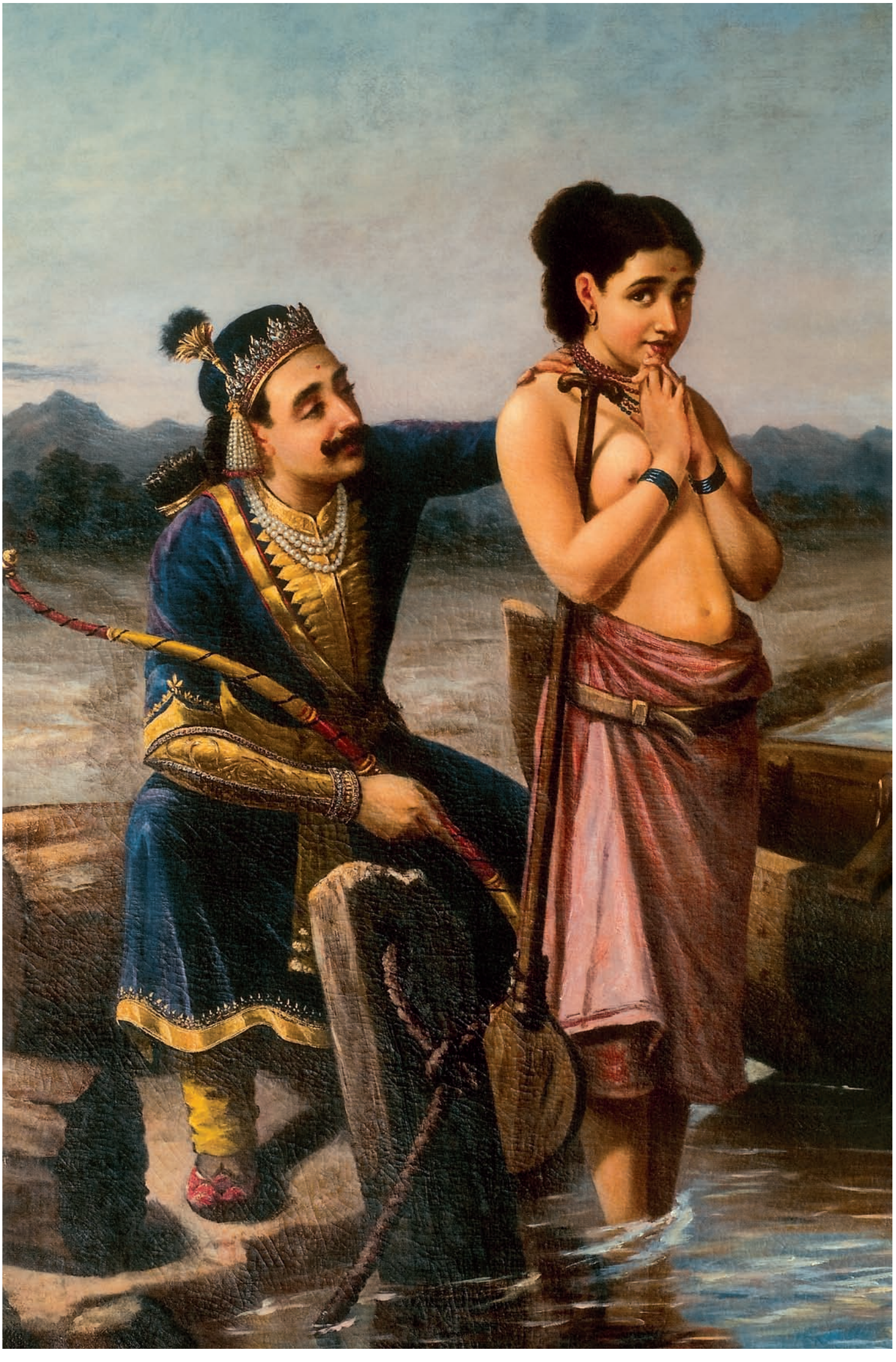
'The art', writes Havell, 'which truly reflects the fictitious culture of Indian universities and the teaching of Anglo-Indian art schools, is exhibited in the paintings of Ravi Varma, who is the fashionable painter of modern India for those Indians who do not ignore Indian art altogether. Certain it is that his pictures invariably manifest a most painful lack of the poetic faculty in illustrating the most imaginative Indian poetry and allegory; and this cardinal sin is not to be atoned for by any kind of technical skill in the execution.'

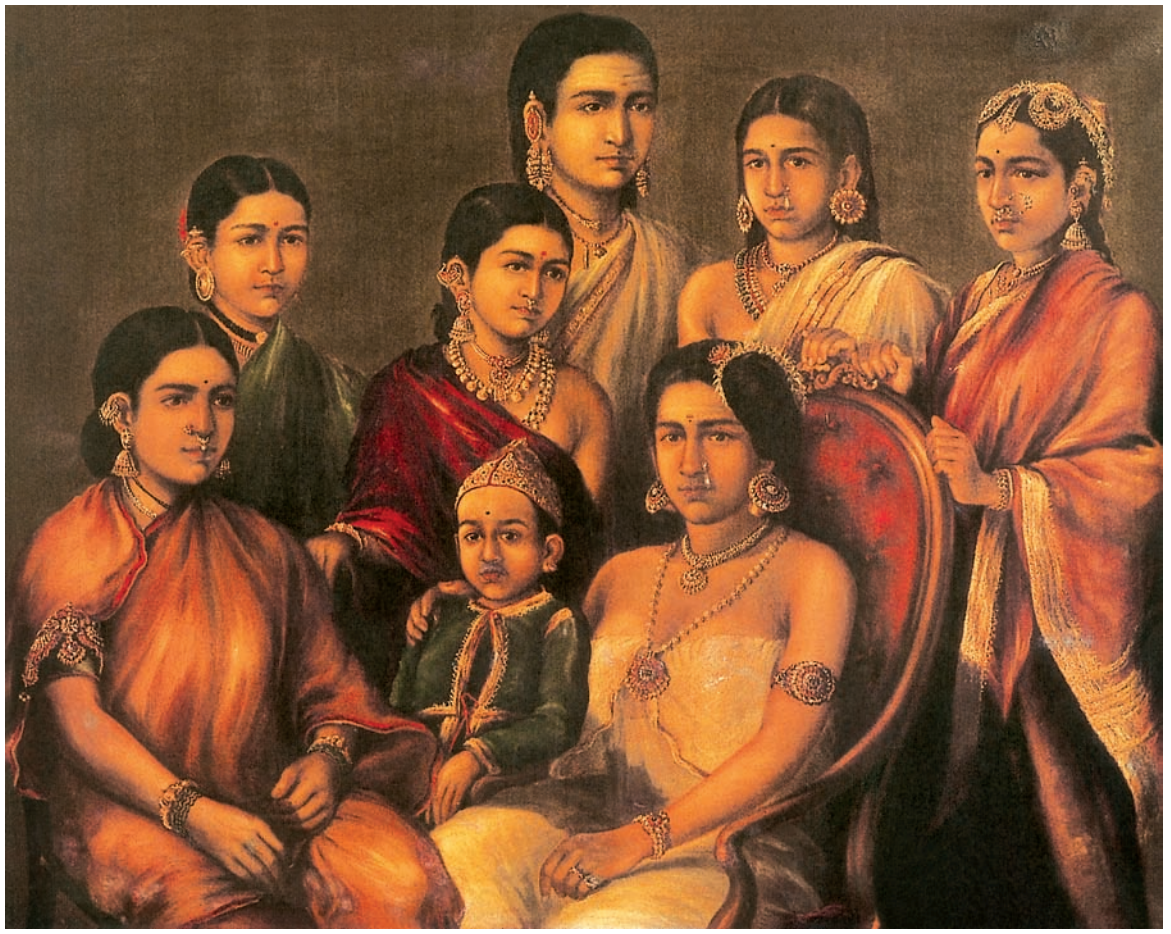
Coomaraswamy, a fellow mystic, is still more severe, and declares that 'theatrical conceptions, want of imagination, and lack of

Raja Ravi Varma, *Maharani Chimnabai II (1872-1958),* 1889,
Modern period. Oil on canvas, 167.64 x 106.68 cm.
Maharaja Fatesingh Museum, Laxmi Vilas Palace, Vadodara, Gujarat.

Raja Ravi Varma, *Yashoda Ornamenting Bala Krishna (Divine Child Krishna),*
Modern period. Oil on canvas, 88.9 x 68.58 cm. Private collection. (p. 240)

Raja Ravi Varma, *Shantanu and Matsyagandha (Satyavati),* 1890,
Modern period. Oil on canvas, 154.94 x 111.76 cm.
Sri Chitra Art Gallery, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. (p. 241)





Indian feeling in the treatment of sacred and epic Indian subjects are Ravi Varma's fatal faults. His pictures are such as any European student could paint, after perusal of the necessary literature and a superficial study of Indian life.'

In a later publication the same author gives his opinion with greater brevity and somewhat less severity to the effect that 'the late Raja Ravi-varma was the best known of these painters in a purely European style, but neither he nor any other workers of the pseudo-European school attained to excellence. His work at the best reached a second-rate standard.'

Probably this last quoted judgement is not far wrong.

'The work of the modern school of Indian painters in Calcutta', Coomaraswamy writes, 'is a phase of the National reawakening. Whereas the ambition of the nineteenth-century reformers had been to make India like England, that of the later workers has been to bring back or create a state of society in which the ideals expressed and implied in Indian culture shall be more nearly realized.

This new movement on the art side has been enthusiastically supported by E. B. Havell, who felt keenly the futility of training Bengali students on purely foreign methods, alien to their nature, and sought to turn their attention to the productions of the Indo-Persian and eighteenth-century Hindu schools as being more expressive of Indian ideals. With some difficulty Havell persuaded the authorities to let him have his way, and replace a collection of poor European works by a choice selection of Indian paintings. He found in Abanindro Nath Tagore (who later went on to become Vice-Principal of the School of Art) a willing coadjutor, and a painter of considerable power. Havell recognized in his colleague a real artist 'who has come to pick up the broken threads of Indian pictorial tradition', and credited him with 'giving us a true interpretation of Indian spirituality, and an insight into that higher world, the fairy land of Eastern poetry and romance, which Eastern thought has suggested.'

The critic proceeds to say that 'if neither Mr. Tagore nor his pupils have yet altogether attained to the splendid technique of the old Indian painters, they have certainly revived the spirit of Indian art, and besides, as every true artist will, invested their work with a

Ramaswamy Naidu, *Women and Child in Traditional Costumes,*
c. 1850, Modern period. Oil on canvas, 104.14 x 134.62 cm.
Sri Chitra Art Gallery, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

charm distinctively their own. For their work is an indication of that happy blending of Eastern and Western thought, from the full realization of which humanity has so much to gain.

These rather large claims are founded on a series of small works described in the Studio as 'watercolour drawings', and very far indeed from having 'attained to the splendid technique of the old Indian painters', which they do not attempt to rival. The more sober criticism of Dr. Coomaraswamy is more closely in accordance with the facts.

'The subjects chosen by the Calcutta painters', he observes, 'are taken from Indian history, romance, and epic, and from the mythology and religious literature and legends, as well as from the life of the people around them. Their significance lies in their distinctive 'Indianness'. They are, however, by no means free from European and Japanese influence. The work is full of refinement and subtlety in colour, and of a deep love of all things Indian; but, contrasted with the Ajanta and Mughal and Rajput paintings which have in part inspired it, it is frequently lacking in strength. The work should be considered as a promise rather than a fulfilment. So regarded, it has very great significance for the future of Indian Art.'

Roger Fry holds a poor opinion of the work of the modern artists. 'Such pictures as that of 'The Siddhas of the Upper Air',' he observes, 'show that, however anxiously these artists strive to adopt the formulae of their ancestors, the spirit that comes to expression is that of the American magazine illustrator. Nothing, indeed, could provide a stronger proof of the profound corruption which contact with European ideas has created in Oriental taste than these well-intentioned but regrettable drawings.'

The leader of the school, Mr. Abanindro Nath Tagore, began as a painter in oils, after the European fashion, but soon abandoned the oils medium, and devoted himself to the 'water-colour drawings'.

All well-wishers to India will join in the hope that the promise shown by this new Bengali school may lead to something more important than the works hitherto produced. Probably all critics will agree that nothing of high worth can be created by men who merely seek to imitate foreign models. If modern India is to evolve a new art of her own it must have its roots in the Indian past and appeal to Indian sentiment.

Raja Ravi Varma, *Paravur Kayal (Lake),* 1897, Modern period.
Oil on canvas, 43.18 x 58.42 cm. Sri Chitra Art Gallery,
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

Raja Ravi Varma, *Reclining Nayar Lady,* 1902, Modern period.
Oil on canvas, 73.66 x 104.14 cm. Private collection. (p. 244-245)

Timeline

0 100 200 300 400 500

Early large centralized kingdoms and empires, c. 322 B.C.E.-500 C.E.

NORTH

Kushan empire, 2nd century B.C.E.-3rd century C.E.

Gupta empire controls most of the north, c. 321-500 C.E.

SOUTH/DECCAN

Satavahana and Ikshvaku dynasties, 2nd century B.C.E.-4th century C.E.

Vakataka dynasty, mid-3rd-late 5th century C.E.

Anuradhapura period, Sri Lanka,

1000 1100 1200 1300

NORTH

Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty, c. 730-1027

Centralization of rule in north under Sultanate;

Independent Kashmiri kingdoms, 6th-14th century

Pala and Sena dynasties, Bengal and Bihar, c. 700-1200

Contest among Gahadavalas, Kalachuris, Yadavas, Rajputs, Paramaras of Malwa, Chandellas, Solankis, and Chalukyas for control of northern and central regions, 10th-12th century

Afghan dynasties in northwest expand across north into Punjab and the central plains, 10th-13th century

Ganga dynasty, present day Orissa, 11th-15th century

CENTRAL AND DECCAN

Contest among Gahadavalas, Kalachuris, Yadavas, Rajputs, Paramaras of Malwa, Chandellas, Solankis, and Chalukyas for control of northern and central regions, 10th-12th centuries

Hoysala dynasty, southern Deccan, 1022-1346

SOUTH

Pandya dynasty, ?-1350, absorbed by Cholas in 920

Chola dynasty, c. 860-1279, in present-day Tamil Nadu

1600 1650 1700 1750 1800

NORTH

Independent Rajpur kingdoms in present-day Rajasthan Hills, 14th-19th century

Mughal dynasty, 1526-1858

CENTRAL AND DECCAN

Mughal dynasty, late 17th century-1858

SOUTH

Nayakas, Wodeyars, Gowdas, Rayas, 1556-19th century

600 700 800 900 1000

Independent Kashmiri kingdoms, 6th-14th century
Harsha dynasty, 7th century
Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty, c. 730-1027
Pala dynasty, c. 700-1200
Kalachuri dynasty, 520-600
Rashtrakuta dynasty, south and central regions, c. 750-973
Early Chalukya dynasty, central and Deccan, c. 475-800
Chandella dynasty, c. 950-1250
Solanki dynasty, c. 900-1250
Afghan dynasties, 10th-13th century

CENTRAL AND DECCAN

Early Chalukya dynasty, c. 475-800
Western/Later Chalukya dynasty, 10th-12th century
Rashtrakuta dynasty, c. 750-973

c. 3rd century B.C.E.-11th century C.E.
Pandya dynasty, ?-1350, absorbed by Cholas in 920
Pallava dynasty, ?-740
Chola dynasty, c. 860-1279

1400 1500 1600

Sultanate Period 13th-16th century
continuance of regional states at periphery, from 1206 onward
Mogul Dynasties, 1526-1858
Independent Rajput kingdoms in present-day Rajasthan and Punjab Hills, 14th-19th century
Surya dynasty, present day Orissa, 15th-16th century
Bahmanid dynasty, northern Deccan, 1347-1528
Deccani sultanates, c. 1490-17th century
Vijayanagar dynasty, 1336-1565
Nayaka dynasties 1565

1850 1900 1950 2000

INDIA

Independent, 1947-present
Princely states under British rule, 19th century-1947
Nizams of Hyderabad, 1724-1948
Princely states under British rule, 19th century-1947
Princely states under British rule, 19th century-1947

Glossary

A

Anno Hegirae (A.H.)
The Islamic calendar starts with A.H., which is the abbrevation for the Latin Anno Hegirae (Hijri year). The year 1 A.H. (622 C.E.) when Mohammed and his adherents migrated from Mecca to Medina.

Arjuna
A hero (Pandava) of the Hindu epic Mahabharatha.

Avadana
A genre of Buddhist literature which depicts stories of the heroes from the past in relation to the events of Buddhas life.

Avalokiteshvara
The bodhisattva who represents compassion and who is most held in high esteem in mainstream Mahayana Buddhism.

B

Bhagavad Gita
A part of the Mahabharata consisting a conversation between Krishna and Arjuna about release from the cycle of rebirth, human duties and the devotion to God.

Bodhi Tree
Sacred Fig Tree under which Siddhartha sat when he attained enlightment (bodhi).

Bodhisattva
In Buddhism, one who delays achieving enlightenment in order to release the suffering of others and help them to achieve salvation.

Brahma
In later Hinduism, Brahma is the god of creation. Along with Shiva and Vishnu, he is a member of the Trimurti.

D

Dasavatara
The ten avatars (incarnations) of Vishnu.

Devadatta
Buddhist monk and cousin of Siddhartha Gautama; known for having created a schism in the monastic community (sangha) which was eventually remedied when followers returned to the Buddha.

Deva loka
The plane of existence where gods and devas reside.

Devata
A deity which has a certain spiritual duty which corresponds to a human activity.

Dharmachakra
The 'Wheel of Law' which symbolises dharma, the doctrine of Buddha, and is one of the Ashtamangala symbols, a sacred series of eight auspicious signs detailing the path to enlightenment.

G

Gandharvas
Male nature spirits with celestial musical skills. They play as the counterpart of the Apsaras' music for the higher deities.

Ganga
The river goddess of the sacred Ganges, puryifing the worshippers from their sins and facilitating the attainment of liberation from the cycle of life and death.

Garuda
an eagel-like mythical creature and the vehicle (vahana) of Vishnu.

Gautama Buddha
Siddhartha Gautama (c. 563- 483 B.C.E.) from ancient India is the founder of Buddhism. He became the 'enlightened one', the 'Gautama Buddha'.

H

Harivamsha
The dynastic history of Hari (Vishnu)', is a book written in Sanskrit, which gives an important overview of the Hindu history from the beginning of the 1st century B.C.E. on.

J

Jainism
An ancient religion in East India founded by Mahavira, the sage Vardhamana (599-527 B.C.E.) in the 6th century B.C.E. Jains focus on non-violence and an ascetic lifestyle.

Jataka
A huge body of folkloric tales telling the of the previous births of Gautama Buddha.

K

Kinnara
A mythical figure in Buddhism and Hinduism. It appears as a lover, celestial musician, half-human and half-horse (India) or half-bird (Southeast Asia).

Kirtimukha
A Hindu demon face which often appears on lintels above temple entrances, where it serves a protective function.

Krishna
The Dark One' is an avatar of Vishnu, born to kill the evil demon Kansa. He is personified as god-child, a prankster, a model lover and a divine hero.

Kuvera
The Lord of Prosperity and the king of the yakshas. He is often portrayed as corpulent man with jewels, a money-pot and a club.

L

Lakshmana
A Hindu deity. As the loyal brother of Rama, he symbolizes the ideal of sacrifice in the Ramayana, when he leaves his young wife behind in the palace and chooses to accompany his brother in spiritual exile.

Lotus
A symbol of original purity.

M

Mahabharata
The Great Tale of Bharata's Descendents' is, along with the Ramayana, the most important Sanskrit epic. It recounts the apocalyptic war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas for kingship and contains the Bhagavad-Gita.

Maitreya
The bodhisattva who, like Buddha, will return to Earth in the distant future to guide man to salvation when the principles of Dharma have been forgotten.

Mara
A demon who trys to tempt and to distract Buddha from achieving his goal of enlightment.

Mudra
A symbolic gesture in Buddhism. It is used in various depictions of Buddha and in practice to evoke particular ideas during Buddhist meditation or ritual.

N

Nagaraja
Three principal snakes (nagas) are called 'raja' (king): Anantha represents kindness and is a devotee of Vishnu; Takshak, represents danger, and Vasuki, who represents protection, is always carried around Shiva's neck.

Narasimha
Half-man, half-lion, Narasimha is one of the aspects of Vishnu called the 'Great Protector'.

Nataraja
Shiva Nataraja is an image of the god performing the cosmic dance that destroys the world and prepares Brahma's new creation.

Nirvana
Final stage of life for Buddhists, where they attain liberation from the material world and the infinite cycle of rebirth, and become aware of Absolute reality.

P

Panchanana
It is an avatar of Shiva in which he is represented with five faces all turned in one different direction. Each head offers a different aspect of the God.

Pandava
The five Sons of Pandu (Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva) who fought a great battle against their cousins the Kauravas, as described in the Mahabharata.

Parinirvana
Ultimate nirvana of Gautama Buddha.

Puranas
Sacred Hindu texts which take the form of myths and describe the history of the universe; the doctrine of the cosmic ages; the genealogies of kings and the methods of worshipping the gods.

R

Ragmala
A manuscript, illustrating the various Indian melodical modes, Ragas with mythical tales.

Ramayana
Along with the Mahabharata, one of the greatest Indian Sanskrit epics. It recounts Rama's exile to the forest and his successful efforts to rescue his faithful wife Sita from the demon Ravana.

Rasikapriya
A book which deals with love in all its varied aspects. The Lover is Krishna and the beloved is Radha.

Ratha
A monolithic vehicle shrine, symbolising the wood chariots, on which the temple deities were driven through the streets during the chariot festival.

S

Sadhu
A Hindu ascetic or holy man.

Salabhanjika
A female sculpture with idealised feminine features, standing near a sala tree and bending a branch, which symbolises the fertilisation ritual called 'dohada'.

Sangha
A Buddhist monastic community.

Sastras
A Sanskrit term which denotes a general set of beliefs or specialized practices, or a scripture outlining basic tenets of a philosophy.

Satapatha Brahmana
The 'Brahmana of one-hundred paths'. The prose texts describe the Vedic ritual with the mudras.

Shahnameh
The 'Book of Kings', recounting in verses the historical and mythical past of (Greater) Iran.

Shaivism
One of the four major sects of Hinduism. The worshippers of Shiva, are called 'Shaivas'.

Shakyamuni
Refers to Siddhartha Gautama as the 'sage of the Shakyas'.

Shiva Linga
The Linga is an aniconic or iconic phallus sculpture (Shiva Linga) of the Hindu deity Shiva. It stands for the energy of the universe and is used for worship in temples.

Simurgh
A persian mythical flying creature.

Stupa
A reliquary mound-like structure housing the remains of a Buddha or a saint.

T

Tara
Considered a boddhisattva of compassion and action in Buddhism. She is the female conterpart of Avalokiteshvara.

Trimurti
The 'three cosmic forms' which are personified by Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer.

U

Umbrella
The 'chattra', symbolizes the dome of the sky above the mountain and stands for wisdom and compassion.

Upanishads
Texts that contain philosophical and mythical speculations on the Hindu religion.

Ushnisha
An oval object on the head of a Buddha which serves as a symbol of his enlightenment.

V

Vaishnavism
A Hindu sect. Its adherents (Vaishnavas) worship Vishnu or his incarnations, such as Rama or Krishna.

Vajrapani
A bodhisattva of Mahayana Buddhism. His symbol is a 'thunderbolt' or 'diamond' (vajra) which represents the manifestation of the power of the Buddha.

Vase
The 'vase of inexhaustible treasures' as a Buddhist symbol of spiritual wealth and is a vessel from which one can remove as much as one's wants and the vase stay perpetually full.

Vedas
Four of the oldest Hindu scriptures (Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva) which are considered to be composed of sacred knowledge, and regarded as authoritative by all Hindus.

Vedic Brahmanism
The religion of the Vedic period (2nd-6th century B.C.E.). The mantra portion of the four Vedas explains how to perform Vedic ritual sacrifices.

Vessavana-Kuvera
In Theravada Buddhist mythology Vessavana-Kuvera is the leader of the 'Four Heavenly Kings', the guardians of the cardinal directions of the world.

Vihara
A Buddhist monastery or a living quarter for monks during the rainy season.

Vishnu
The preserver of the world and one of the principal Hindu gods in the trimurti. The garuda is his mount and the discus and the conch shell are his symbols.

Y

Yaksha/Yakshi
Male/female earth spirits and attendants of Kuvera. These mythical figures are represented in Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism.

Yali
A lion in Hindu mythology often depicted with a makara on the pillars of South Indian Hindu temples to protect the entrance.

Yama
A mythical figure of the Vedas. He is the Lord of the Death, because he was the first to die and see the celestial places, he became the Lord of the dead.

Yashoda
In the Puranic scripts of Hinduism Yashoda was the wife of Nanda. The Bhagavata Purana recounts that she is the foster mother of Krishna.

Yashodhara
The princess and wife of Prince Siddharta (later Gautama Buddha) who later became a Buddhist nun and reached Arhat (enlightment)

Z

Zaal
A great Persian warrior in a legend of the Shahnameh.

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