Studies in Indian Culture
FOREWORD

In writing about the culture of a people, one has to give importance either to the historical framework and subsume cultural items under a chronological survey or to the items themselves, noting developments as they came, period-wise, under each item. Either approach presupposes a spacious lay-out. If it is the history of a culture, like that of India, which goes back possibly to five thousand years, the presentation is bound to run into several volumes.

It is a matter of prime importance that young people should get to know intimately about the culture of which they are the inheritors, otherwise they will lead a rootless life. Their aims in life are also likely to be superficial since they will not be nourished by the tradition in their own land.

This objective can be fulfilled by prescribing a chronological survey course at the secondary stage and a comprehensive presentation of cultural items at the Junior College or College stage. As extensive ground will have to be covered, the course should be restricted to the survey of one particular phase, the ancient, the medieval or the modern. Since students should know what living Indian culture is like, before they settle down to a study of the ancient or medieval phase, it is important that they should study a course presenting modern Indian cultural items.

Dr. Sreenivasa Murthy and Dr. Suryanath U. Kamath, the joint authors of this book, had to grapple with a prescribed syllabus in writing it. They had to adopt the chronological pattern and crowd infinite riches in a little room.

They are well known for their scholarship and contribution in the field of history and they have done well in spite of these handicaps. Minimum space is given to chronology and maximum to cultural items. The latest research has been taken into account while recounting facts in either category. There is not much scope for stylistic flourishes in a brief survey. But there is clarity and precision in the presentation.
I feel sure that their effort will be appreciated in academic circles and I look forward to reading many more writings from their pens, joint or several.

Brindavan
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PREFAE

Indian culture is a subject of absorbing interest. Its characteristic features, its contents and its very name have a deep significance to every lover of Indian culture. These characteristics of her culture have enabled India to found culture colonies beyond her geographical limits. An humble attempt has been made here to give in outline the story of this culture.

The book contains nine chapters arranged in three parts. Part I outlines the characteristics of Indian culture and traces its development from the earliest times to A.D. 1000, with special emphasis on Indus Valley, Vedic, Buddhistic, Mauryan and Gupta periods. The advent of Islam and the resultant cultural adjustments, the contribution of Vijayanagara for the preservation and spread of Indian culture and religion and the achievements of the Mughuls are detailed in the two chapters of Part II. Part III consists of four chapters. The advent of the West, rise of Indian nationalism, resurgence of India and the cultural trends in modern India are described. The main features of the Indian Constitution, achievements of the Nehru Era and the structure of the modern society are outlined in the Epilogue.

The book is specially written for students offering History in the Pre-University course in Mysore State. The prescribed syllabi being followed for the most part. To provide a connecting link to some topics of the syllabi and to make the account complete, additional information has been added. A stress is laid on the History of Karnataka for obvious reasons.

The book is, in many ways, the child of Padmashri Dr V.K. Gokak. Professor Gokak wanted to introduce a course on Indian culture for Pre-University Students offering History when he was the Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University. He had even appointed a committee to prepare the syllabi and to write a textbook. As members of the committee, we had occasion to meet and discuss with him the planning of the work. The paper, however, could not be introduced then and its introduction now gave us an oppor-
tunity to work on this subject. When we approached Professor Gokak, he agreed to bless our venture with his learned Foreword. We place on record our deep sense of gratitude to Professor Gokak for writing the Foreword which has greatly enhanced the value of the book.

We wish to express our sincere thanks to Shri N. S. Sitaram Sastri for spending much of his time in going through the typescript and offering many constructive suggestions for improving the book; to Shri T. K. Rao, for drawing maps for the book; to Asia Publishing House, Bombay, and to Shri T. Bhaskaran, their Bangalore representative, for undertaking to publish the work and to all those writers whose publications we have made use with great profit. We also thank Shri R. Ramakrishnan, our pupil in M.A. (Previous), History, for preparing the Index.

We hope that the book will be found useful by the serious student for whom it is intended and by the general readers as well.

Bangalore University
June, 1972

H.V. Sreenivasa Murthy
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PART I

ANCIENT INDIA
CHAPTER I

CULTURE AND RELIGION

Introduction

The Sanskrit word for culture is Samskriti, from the root which means to purify, to sublimate, to mould and to perfect. Indian culture is called Bharatiya Samskriti. The word ‘Bharata’ epitomises the essential features of Indian culture. It is derived from the root Bhṛ, meaning to sustain birth, to bear and to fill. It also refers to an ancient tribe, Bharatas, from whom have descended the historical kings such as the Kauravas. The epic, Mahabharata, also takes its name from this word. This implies the antiquity of Indian culture.

Connected with this word ‘Bharata’ is the word Bharathi or Saraswathi, the Goddess of Learning, Wisdom and Fine Arts. This may be taken to indicate the artistic excellence of Indian culture.

Bharata or India took its name from Bharata, son of Dusyanta and Sakuntala, who was the first to establish sovereignty over the land. This signifies the political predominance of India.

Bharata is also the name of a great sage. He is also called Jadbharata. This shows the spiritual side of Indian culture. The sage Bharata is also the author of poems, drama, music, dancing and of sixty-four arts or kālas. Thus the name Bharata for India is highly significant.

Bharata is the hallowed land of the sages and poets. The Rāgvedic mantras are replete with the spirit of patriotism and the love of the motherland. The priests prayed that they may dwell in the happy land of Bharata. In the Yajurveda also the prayer is that in this divine land (Bharata) the seekers of spiritual wisdom be unmolested; the protectors of the kingdom be ever alert in the defence of the frontiers; heroes be born in every house and women also hold a high place in society and make their land in every way free from famines and calamities. The Puranas say that even the gods felt that those who are born in Bharatavarṣa are indeed very fortunate. Hence the name Bharatiya Samskriti for Indian culture appears to be very appropriate.

Indian culture is also called Vaidika, as it found its expression in
the earliest literature of the land, the Vedas. It is called Hindu culture as it flourished in its earliest stages on the eastern side of the river Indus, called Sindhu or Hindu in different languages.\(^1\)

**Meaning of Culture**

Culture is a concept which is difficult to define. There is no single characteristic that marks its essential feature. K. M. Panikkar defines culture as the complex of ideas, conceptions, developed qualities and organised relationships and courtesies that exists generally in a society.\(^2\) To put it differently, culture is a complex of many strands of varying importance and vitality.

Allied with the concept of culture is the concept of civilization. The question naturally arises as to what is the difference between culture and civilization? Differentiating between culture and civilization Humayun Kabir writes: “Civilization is the organisation of life which makes a civil society possible. Such a civil society is the condition for corporate life in which alone individuals can pursue fruitful and creative activity. Culture, on the other hand, is the resultant of such organisation and expresses itself through language and art, through philosophy and religion, through social habits and customs, and through political institutions and economic organisations. They together constitute an expression of life which may be called culture.”\(^3\) Civilization, in other words, is the organisation of the society which ministers to the well-being of the community at large. Therefore, culture presupposes civilization. We cannot think of culture without civilization. Thus culture is the efflorescence of civilization.\(^4\)

**Essential Characteristics of Indian Culture**

Indian culture has a long and continuous history. It extends over 5000 years. India developed a way of life, which she modified and adjusted as and when she came into contact with outside elements. In spirit, however, it was quite in keeping with the indigenous doctrines and ideas. This accounts for the long

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\(^1\) Indian Culture, p. 2.

\(^2\) Essential Features of Indian Culture, pp. 1-2.

\(^3\) The Indian Heritage, pp. 37-38.

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 38.
and continuous period of Indian culture. It is this characteristic of Indian culture that enabled it to withstand many vicissitudes and to continue to mould the life of Indians.

*Spirit of Tolerance.* The most outstanding feature that has made Hindu culture a living force is the tradition of tolerance. Indian culture is primarily and fundamentally religious. The religious note generally permeates all the intellectual and artistic creations of the Hindus. Hinduism believes in Universal toleration and accepts all religions as true. The Hindu mind is all-embracing. This is seen in the word *manavadharma* or *manavasam-skriti* or human culture which the Hindus gave to their culture. Indian culture is comprehensive and suits the needs of everyone, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. It has universal appeal and makes room for all. It has the modesty to admit the propriety of other points of view. This idea has been beautifully developed in the Jaina theory of *Syadvada* or the theory of *may be*. According to this theory no absolute affirmation or denial is possible. As all knowledge is probable and relative the other man’s point of view is as true as ours. In other words, it suggests that one must show restraint in making judgements. This is a very healthy principle. We must know that our judgements are true only partially and can by no means be regarded as true in absolute terms. It may be likened to the story of the seven blind men “trying to make out the form of an elephant by each feeling a different limb. They are convinced that the elephant is like a pillar, or a snake, or a hard substance, or a wall, or a brush with a flexible handle, according as each in turn touches its leg, or trunk, or tusk, or body, or tail.”* It is this understanding and catholicity of outlook that have been largely responsible for the advancement of Indian culture. This attitude has helped to bring together the divergent races with different languages and religious persuasions. And this spirit explains the existence of a common culture from the Himalayas in the North to Cape Camorin in the South.

From the earliest times, India followed a policy of ‘live and let live’. She was not averse to contact with foreign cultures. In fact, it is her contacts with the outside elements that have added to the richness and variety of her culture. Besides the earliest races like the Negritos, Proto-Australoids, Dravidians and Aryans,

*Indian Culture,* pp. 39-40.
who have contributed a good deal to her composite culture, India
saw the advent of many foreign hordes like the Indo-Greeks,
the Scythians or the Sakas, the Pahlavas or the Parthians, the
Kushans, the Huns, the Gujars and others from the second
century B. C. She welcomed them and absorbed their best elements
in her culture. In medieval times, the advent of Islam into
India created many cultural complications. For a time India
stood surprised. But it is to the credit of Indian culture that it
Indianised Islamic culture by absorbing the best elements. Today
there are about sixty million Muslims living in India. It is gratifying
to note that “in spite of the political complications arising out of
the secession of the predominantly Muslim provinces and their
constitution into a separate State, India has successfully upheld
her tradition of religious and social toleration by her unbending
insistence on the secular character of the state and her stern
refusal to convert into Hindustan.”

India also gave shelter to the Jews and the Zoroastrians who
were forced to leave their lands. They still live in India today
quite in harmony with other communities by pursuing their avo-
ciations without any let or hindrance. The same may be said of
the Christians who are seen in Indian society since the second
century A. D. Their numerical strength increased with the politi-
cal domination of India by the European powers.

It is this spirit of accommodation that accounts for the con-
tinuity of Indian culture. As Pratt aptly remarks,7 “the tendency
of Hinduism to absorb its children and the urge felt by its rebell-
ing children to fall back into the family fold has been illustrated
many times in Indian history. The process is going on today.”
This has been the rock-bottom basis of Indian culture. Humayun
Kabir is correct in remarking that “today whatever is Indian,
whether it be an idea, a word, a form of art, a political institution
or social custom, is a blend of many different strains and
elements.”

Geographical factors have contributed much in shaping Indian
culture in this particular way. Bounded as she is by seas on three
sides and mountain ranges in the North, India looks like a ‘pocket’.
Into this ‘pocket’ many ethnic stocks arrived and stayed to attain

6 K. M. Panikkar, op. cit., p. 5.
7 Indian Culture, p. 5
complete development. They participated in the life already obtained in the country and enriched it by adding their special traits.

Its Harmony with Nature. Another outstanding characteristic of Indian culture is its understanding of the nature of man and his relations with other beings in the universe. It lays more emphasis on the value of all created life. Animals, birds, trees, mountains and rivers form a part and parcel of the Hindu way of life. It is, indeed, interesting to note that the gods of the Hindu pantheon are associated with animals. Shiva, who has Nandi or the Bull as his mount (vahana), is regarded as the Lord of animals, Pasupati. Likewise, Vishnu has the Serpent and Garuda; Brahma, the Swan; Indra, the Elephant; Surya, the Horse; Durga, the Lion; Ganesha, the Rat; and Muruga, the Peacock. Among the ten principal incarnations (avatars) of Vishnu, three—Matya (the Fish), Kurma (the Tortoise), and Varaha (the Boar)—are in animal forms, while the fourth, Narasimha, is in a form which is half man and half lion. The Buddha’s former births were also in animal forms. The Hindus have naturally invested the animals with an element of divinity. This association of gods with the animal world is indicative of an healthy attitude towards nature.\(^9\)

The same may be said of mountains and rivers, which have more than an ordinary significance in Indian life. Of the mountains, the Himalayas have contributed greatly in shaping the life of Indians. “It is not only the political life of the people of Hindustan, but the religion, mythology, art and literature of the Hindus that bear the imprint of the great mountain barrier.”\(^10\) The mountains are regarded as the abode of the gods and hence held to be sacred by the Hindus. Many places of pilgrimage like Amarnath, Kedarnath, Badrinath and Kailas are to be found in the mountains. The Gauri Shankar peak is regarded sacred because it was here that Parvathi did penance to get the hand of Shiva. Numerous other hills like the Tirupathi, Srishyla, Annamalai, Sabarimalai, and Arunadri are venerated by the Hindus.

The rivers also are sacred and holy. A dip in the waters of a river is believed to wash off all sins. The river Ganga plays such a significant role in the religious life of the Hindus that it

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\(^10\) K. M. Panikkar, Himalayas in Indian Life, p. 16.
continues to be the wish of every Hindu to have a dip in the holy waters of the Ganga. Politically, the two rivers, Ganga and Yamuna, symbolised imperial suzerainty. It became the sacred duty of a Hindu kingdom to establish its sway over the Gangetic valley. Economically, the Ganga-Yamuna Doab symbolised prosperity. Watered by the two rivers, the Doab was the most fertile region and was rich in resources. The two rivers which symbolised imperial suzerainty and economic prosperity acquired, in course of time, such a symbolic significance that they came to constitute the motifs of art. These motifs are exquisitely carved on the door jambs of the Gupta temples.

Even trees occupy an important place in the religious life of the Hindus, for example Asvatthā or the pipal tree is venerated even today.

In short, Indian culture takes into its fold all nature. It is the harmony of man and nature that is its basic characteristic.

Indian culture is a living one. It represents basic values like synthesis (samanvaya), desire to know the truth (satya-jijñāsa) and non-injury (ahimsa).11 “What India needs is to realise herself, to broaden her spiritual heritage, not to rest upon the foundation already nobly erected by her own saints and scholars, but to continue to build along the same inspiring lines.”12

Pre-Historic Culture

There is close correspondence between racial migrations and the earliest cultures of India, such as the Paleolithic or the Old Stone Age and the Neolithic or the New Stone Age.

Paleolithic Age. The Paleolithic Age has been divided into the Eolithic or the Dawn of the Stone Age and the later Paleolithic. The word “eolithic” has been derived from eos—dawn, and lithos—stone, as a name for the earliest of human industries. The earliest eolithic sites are found in the river valleys where primitive man had established hunting and fishing camps. The eoliths consisted mostly of crude implements, the genuineness of which is doubted.

In the later Paleolithic period, the primitive culture made great advance and the art of pottery was evolved. Primitive man used

11 Indian Culture, p. 59.
12 Hopkins, W., Ethics of India, p. 258.
such crude implements as the coup de pong or hand axe, disk, arrowheads, etc. These have been found in Bellary, parts of Mysore, Kurnool, Hyderabad and Maharashtra. He appears to have invented fire. The wooden comb he used has been found at Guntakal. The Paleolithic age of India may be assigned to c. 35,000 to c. 10,000 B.C. According to scholars there was a long interval between the Old and the New Stone Age.

**Neolithic Age.** The transition from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic era was brought about by a new Malanesian people who occupied the older cities and drove out the primitive races to the forests and mountains. A number of Neolithic sites have been found in India. Stone implements made greater advance during this period. In Bellary, Kuppagal, Kurnool and Hyderabad the caves were occupied by the Neolithic people for several centuries. They used implements like the well-ground Neolithic axe head called ‘Celt’ and the so-called ‘Neolithic pick’. They used baked pottery marked with geometrical designs, wooden combs, needles of bone, baskets, various kinds of adzes, mace heads, scrapers, borers, harpoons, etc. The pottery appears deliberately modern. It consists of various types of bows, cups and huge burial urns. The most remarkable advance is found in the beautiful paintings on the walls of these caves. These pictures show bulls, camels, elephants and other animals being hunted. The colours are so bright that they have retained their freshness to this day. Some religious belief was also associated with the early rock painting. Various amulets, ring stones, etc. show that the power of fertility was worshipped by the people.

**Indus Valley Civilization**

Till the year 1922, the older historians were of the view that India had no written history prior to the seventh century B.C. However, in the same year, R. D. Banerji and Dayaram Sahni explored Harappa, on the banks of the river Ravi, and Mohenjo-daro, on the banks of the river Indus, in Sind. Immediately, the discoveries roused great interest. It became abundantly clear that a new chapter would be added to the history of India and to the record of human civilization.

*Name.* R. D. Banerji thought that the relics unearthed were similar to the Cretan civilization. But Sydney Smith found many
features common with the Sumerian civilization and called it Indo-Sumerian. Further investigations showed that there was very little foreign influence and it was called the Indus Valley Civilization. This name also has now been given up, because the other civilizations of the same area have the right to the name. Therefore, from the first discoveries of Harappa, it was called the Harappa Civilization.

Date. There is no agreement among scholars regarding the chronology of the Indus Valley Civilization. Sir John Marshall found some similarities between Indus and Sumerian cultures and has suggested 3250-2750 B.C. for the Indus culture. But other scholars like Vats maintained that there are four distinct cultures and Harappa appears in its mature form. Therefore, the beginnings of Harappa culture must be taken back to about 5000 B.C. Recently, Wheeler has tried to bring down the date and has placed it between 2500-1500 B.C.

Population. The population of the Indus Valley consisted of all races. They included the Proto-Australoid, the Mediterranean group and the long-headed Alpine race. Therefore, the population was cosmopolitan. However, some scholars think that the ruling people belonged to the Mediterranean race. Some have argued that it was Dravidian civilization and not of the later fair Aryans. Some of the statues show dancing girls of the Negroid race. Therefore, the theory that the Mediterranean race was responsible for this culture is erroneous. As Sir John Marshall says: “It may be, nay, it is more than likely, that this civilization was the offspring not of any one race in particular, but of several, born, perhaps, rather of the soil itself and of the rivers than of the varied breeds of men which they sustained.”

Town Planning. The Harappa civilization is an urban civilization comparable with the civilizations known in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Persia in the third millennium B.C. There was perhaps a vast empire governed from Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. In the matter of actual plan and layout, the two cities are strikingly similar. Both the cities were strongly defended citadels with their scheme of fortifications. There were high rampart walls with high towers. The town planning was marked by a regular system of roads, streets and lanes. The roads ran from east to west and from north to south. They crossed each other at right angles. There were drains on both sides of the roads. They carried sewage into
the Indus river. Where four roads met, there was a police station to control the traffic. Even the narrow lanes were kept neatly.

The lanes were generally crowded with houses which were plain. Mud plastering was widely used inside the houses. Practically no trace of a window was found even in the well-preserved walls. The entrances of the houses were not placed in the main street but in a side alley. There was often provision for a watchman immediately inside the entrance. Usually, the houses consisted of a courtyard and on two or three sides of the courtyard there were rooms of varying sizes, including bath rooms. Bath rooms were generally placed on the street side for the convenient disposal of water. There was an arrangement for waste water to run through a brick channel. Pottery pipes were used in the drainage system. "The whole conception", writes Piggot, "shows a remarkable concern for sanitation and health without parallel in the Orient in the pre-historic past or at the present day." 13

Granary. Outside the citadel at Harappa, towards the north, we find the workmen's quarters of the city. Just behind this, there is a group of twelve granaries. The combined floor space of the granaries was somewhere near 9000 square feet. This closely resembles the Mohenjo-daro granary which was discovered by M. Wheeler in 1951. A little further from the quarters were found orderly rows of circular working floors. Originally, it contained at the centre a massive wooden mortar sunk in the ground in which grain was pounded into flour with long, heavy pestles. The existence of state granaries, the municipal flour mills and the standardised little houses for workmen point to a planned economy.

The Great Bath. The most famous of the excavated buildings within the citadel is undoubtedly the Great Bath. The dimensions of the building housing it are 180 feet by 108 feet. The bathing pool measures 39 feet from north to south and is 23 feet broad and 8 feet deep. It was entered from either side by a flight of steps. Outside the verandah were rows of rooms of varying sizes. In one of the rooms was a large double-lined well from which water for the bath was supplied. On the northern side was a group of eight small bath rooms. Each room contained a brick staircase which led to the upper storey. Here lived the priests, who descended at stated hours to perform the prescribed ablutions. The whole complex related to the religious life of the city or its rulers.

13 S. Piggot, Pre-Historic India, p. 168.
Religion. The Harappa relics give us clues to the nature of the religion administered by the priesthood. The numerous female figurines suggest that the Indus Valley people worshipped the Mother Goddess. Piggot noted a seal which bears a representation of a female form from whose womb a plant issues. This suggests the idea of an Earth Goddess concerned with vegetation. Shiva, the male consort of the Mother Goddess, was also worshipped. On the seals is found a male god, horned and three-faced, in Yogic pose, his legs bent and surrounded by four animals, the elephant, the tiger, the rhinoceros and the buffalo, and by a couple of deer by the throne at his feet. This indicates that the God is the Lord of animals, Pasupathi. They worshipped symbols like linga, and animals like the bull, tiger, elephant, rhinoceros, and crocodile. They made offerings to fire and knew the sanctity of water. The religion was similar to Puranic Hinduism. Most of the sacred images were found in the corners of the rooms, which perhaps indicates that religion was merely a private concern and not dictated by the state.

Social Condition. The worship of the Mother Goddess may indirectly suggest the prevalence of a matriarchal society. The society appears to have consisted of four classes of people, viz. the learned class, warriors, traders and artisans, and labourers. The dress of the people consisted of two pieces of cloth, an upper and a lower garment, either woollen or cotton. The Oriental fondness for ornaments is met with among the Indus people. Women wore a fan-shaped head-dress, bangles, fillet, earrings, girdles and anklets. Necklaces, finger-rings and bracelets were common to both sexes. The use of collyrium, face paint, lip-stick and cosmetics indicate that the women of the Indus civilization were not lagging behind their modern sisters. Wheat, barley, milk and milk products, vegetables, fruits, dates, beef, mutton, pork, poultry and fish constituted the articles of food. They domesticated the Indian humped bull, buffalo, sheep, elephant, pig, camel, dog, goat, ass, and the domestic fowl. Dice playing was a popular pastime.

Economic Condition. The vast civilization had a high standard of life, far superior to the contemporary world civilizations. People lived in spacious houses with all the municipal conveniences. Their dress, food and ornaments were in every way far better than in other countries. That the people were great traders is proved
by the seals, weights and measures. The weights and measures are very accurate. The sexagesimal and the decimal systems were well known at Harappa. The means of communication had also been developed. The chief means of communication was the bullock-cart. Probably boats were used for river traffic.

*Arts and Crafts.* The Indus Valley arts and crafts are not spectacular. They, however, indicate their aesthetic capacity. The antiquities may broadly be divided into two groups: limestone figures of bearded men and terracottas representing female figurines and animals. The outstanding contribution of this civilization to the ancient craftsmanship may be realised from the large number of seals. The intaglio design on the seals include a wide range of animals. The animal frequently represented is an ox-like beast with a single horn, called the unicorn. Another popular representation is the short-horned bull with wrinkled neck and lowered head, twisted slightly towards the spectator. A buffalo with swept back horns is sometimes represented. The Brahmi bull (*zebu*) which occurs fairly abundantly has a prominent hump and heavy dewlap. "The representation of these animals," writes A. Coomarasamy, "especially that of the bull and the elephant is masterly in the extreme; that of the limestone sculptures is aesthetically decadent rather than primitive."¹⁴

A mass of pottery material has been found. It is both plain and decorated. The great bulk of material is wheel turned, but some hand made pottery has also been found. Most of the pottery is of pinkish ware. Occasionally three colours, pink, red and black, and more rarely white and green are used.

*Script.* The writing on the seals shows a degree of evolution. The script is essentially pictographic. The writing is from right to left. But occasionally the boustrophedon practice, as was known in early Greece, of writing from left to right in alternate lines, was employed. The Indus script is unique, instructive and without descendants.

*Indus Civilization and Early Vedic Culture: A Comparison*

The Indus Valley Civilization was quite distinct from, and earlier than, the Vedic culture. The Indus civilization was urban and centred round cities. The early Aryan culture was rural and

¹⁴ *History of Indian and Indonesian Art.*
centred round villages. The Aryans hated cities and their God, Indra, is called Purandhara or destroyer of cities. The Indus Civilization was complex, their people made considerable progress in industrial arts and developed sound economic organisations. The Aryan culture was simple and essentially agricultural. The Aryans disliked trade and probably did not know the sea, whereas the Indus people were great traders and took part in overseas trade. They travelled by sea and established contact with the outside world. The Aryans worshipped the cow, the Indus people, the bull. The Indus people venerated the tiger and elephant, the Aryans venerated the horse, had only little familiarity with the elephant and had no knowledge of the tiger. The Indus people had no knowledge of the horse. The Aryans worshipped the male deities, powers of nature and offered sacrifices (Yajna), while the Indus people worshipped the Mother Goddess, snake, trees and animals. They also worshipped images and symbols like Linga. The Aryans were anti-iconists and the worship of the phallus (Linga) was not popular. The Aryans had no writing, but the Indus people had developed the art of writing. The Aryans were warriors and used long swords and other offensive weapons; the Indus people were lovers of peace and used only defensive weapons. The Aryan society was patriarchal while that of the latter was matriarchal. Both held women in high esteem and had given them an honoured place in their society. Both were meat-eaters and used many metals, but the Indus people had no knowledge of iron.

The Vedic Culture

There has been a great controversy on the origin and the original home of the Aryans. Some scholars have argued that they were foreigners who came to India in the course of race movements and settled in this country. Indian scholars are of the view that the Aryans were an indigenous people inhabiting the Sapta Sindhu Valley.

Literature. The Aryans were the first people of India to leave a literature called the Vedic literature. This consists of the four Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads. Veda means knowledge or jnana. Originally the work called Vedas formed a single body of tradition. Later on, for the convenience of sacrifices, it came to be divided into four samhitas or collections, viz. Rigveda,
Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda. The first three Vedas are called Trayi (the triad of Vedas). The Rigvedic age may be regarded as the early Vedic period and the age of the Brahmanas and Upanishads as the later Vedic period.

The Rigveda samhita is the oldest literary collection in India. It contains 1017 hymns, divided into ten mandalas. These hymns are prayers to different gods to confer on the people the worldly benefits like longevity, wealth and prosperity. The Samaveda consists of 1549 hymns. They are taken mostly from the ninth mandala of the Rigveda for the ritual performances of Soma. Some hymns are also taken from the eighth mandala. Therefore, its contents are similar to the Rigveda. The Yajurveda is mostly in prose and makes use of Rigvedic hymns to explain the sacrifices. It is devoted to the details of the rituals to be followed in the sacrifices and contains the prayers and formulae of the Adhvaryu priest, whose duty it was to arrange the offering and the sacrifices. It is divided into two schools, black (Krishna) Yajurveda and white (Sukla) Yajurveda. It has two recensions, Vajasaneyi and Taittareya. The Atharvaveda has its own peculiarities. In this Veda there are charms and spells against witchcraft and diseases. It also contains highly philosophic poems. There are a few poems of great merit.

Apart from the Vedas proper, certain prose works called Brahmanas have been attached to each Veda as commentaries. They supplement the ritual of the Vedas. For the Rigveda, the commentaries are the Aitareya and the Kaushitaki Brahmanas; for the Samaveda, the Panchavimsha, the Shadvinis, the Jaiminiya and the Chandogya Brahmanas; for the Yajurveda, the Taittareya and the Satapatha Brahmanas; and for the Atharvaveda, the Gopatha Brahmana.

Next to the Brahmanas is a certain class of works to be studied only in forests, called the Aranyakas. The chief among them are the Kaushitaki and the Taittareya attached to the Brahmanas of the same name. They deal mostly with sacrifices and contain philosophic speculations.

Finally, the Aranyakas developed into the Upanishads. The Upanishads are purely philosophical. The word Upanishad means drawing men to God (upat samipa). It may also mean sit-down-near (upa-nishad). There are fourteen Upanishads belonging to various Vedas. Among these, the Chandogya and the Brihadaranyaka are the oldest and represent the tradition from the Aranyakas to the Upanishads. The Upanishads, the holy scripture, display a wonderful
scientific spirit in connection with the spiritual enquiry. “The spacious imagination, the majestic sweep of thought and the almost reckless spirit of exploration with which, urged by the compelling thirst for Truth, the Upanishad teachers and pupils dig into the open secret of the universe, makes this most ancient among the world’s holy books still the most modern and most satisfying.”

They are the earliest literature of a fundamentally religious character.

The next section of the Vedic literature consists of Vedangas which are subsidiary sciences necessary for the study of the Vedas. They are Shiksa (phonetics), Vyakarana (grammar), Chhandas (metre), Nirukti (etymology), Jyotisya (astronomy and astrology) and Kalpa (ritual).

Vedic Polity. The form of government which prevailed in the Vedic period was monarchy. The king was called Rajan and he held power as long as he pleased. But the Vedic king was not far removed from the people. Kingship was elective in character. The power of the king was limited by customs and religion. He could be dethroned if he failed in his duties. In the coronation ceremony, the king had to take certain oaths in the presence of all the people. He also took the oath of obedience to the laws in the open assembly. There was already a tendency for the king to become hereditary.

The Sabha and the Samiti constituted the most popular elements in the Vedic polity. The reference to them as the twin daughters of Prajapati gives a clue to their hoary antiquity.

The Sabha was a unique organ of the Vedic polity. The precise meaning of the Sabha is not known. It was something like a body of elders who advised the king on matters of day-to-day administration. It exercised effective control over the king. It also functioned as a national judicature.

The Samiti was another constitutional organ of the Vedic period. It acted as a healthy check on royal absolutism. It elected the king and exercised control over military and executive affairs. As a national academy, it concerned itself with the well-being of the state.

The religious matters were looked after by the Vidhata, the parent folk assembly. The Sena or the army addressed itself to the task of ensuring peace and order in the state.

14 C. Rajagopalachari, Upanishads, p. viii.
In the early Vedic period, the state was a tribal one. In the later Vedic period, it acquired territorial character. With this, the powers of the king were also increased. There was now no need for the king to depend on the Sabha and the Samiti, which were the source of his power. The result was, the Sabha was converted into a sort of Privy Council of the king, while the Samiti disappeared altogether from the political scene.

Religion. The religious ideas of the Rigvedic period are supposed to be a form of nature worship. The natural forces were invoked by prayer, and each god was identified with a particular aspect of nature.

Associated with this was the performance of sacrifices. Individuals performed sacrifices not for their own sake, but for the sake of the society. The Aryan house-holder had a duty to discharge his debts to his dependants, neighbours, ancestors, teachers, saints and gods. Generally, the religious condition was one of democratic simplicity. In later Vedic periods, the sacrificial system became complicated and elaborate. There was also a popular religion as revealed in the Atharvaveda. It prescribe the use of charms, spells and black magic to invoke the dark powers. Generally, the Vedic people had an optimistic outlook and did not live in fear of the gods. They regarded them as divine beings and friends.

Social Condition. The Vedic society was patriarchal. The property was divided among the sons. However, both men and women had equal political rights. Joint family was a feature of the social system. The father was the head of the house. He was obeyed by all the members of the family. The family, rather than the individual, was the unit of the social system. There were cities, but city life was disliked. The Aryan house-holder preferred to live in villages. In later life, he retired to the forest to lead a life of contemplation and study.

In order to enable an individual to realise the final aim of his existence, four asramas were devised. The four asramas are, Brahmacarya (studentship), Grihastha (house-holder), Vanaprastha (retired life in a forest) and Sanyasa (wandering ascetic). The individual had to pass through all the stages of life in a descending order. The scheme was intended to preserve unity in Indian society.

Closely related to this is the scheme of varnas. Varna means
choice. The organisation of varna implies the choosing of an occupation according to one's own inclinations. Purushasuktra of the Rgveda speaks of four varnas, viz. Brahmana, Ksatriya, Vaisy and Sudra. All those who devoted themselves to learning, sacrifices and worship were called Brahmanas; the ruling oligarchy, the Ksatriyas, those engaged in agriculture and cattle breeding, the Vaisyas; and those that served the first three classes, the Sudras. As the caste system in the early Vedic period was based on occupation, it was not rigid. A change of caste and occupation was permitted. In the later Vedic period, there was a tendency for these classes hardening themselves into the castes which plague Indian society even in our times.

Women enjoyed complete freedom. They were not denied educational opportunities. Some of the Vedic hymns were composed by women. Among them Visvavara, Ghosa, Lopamudra, Apala, Mudgalani, Gargi and Maitreyi are worthy of note. Monogamy was the normal practice, though polygamy was not unknown. Generally, the marriages were arranged by the parents.

Economic Condition. The Vedic people were well dressed. They used cotton, woollen and silken clothes. Ornamentation and decoration were highly prized by all sections of the people. Wheat, beans, milk and milk products, fruits and vegetables constituted the principal part of their diet. They also ate meat and drank soma. The chief games were dice, horse racing and chariot racing. They were also interested in dance music and drama.

The Aryans depended upon agriculture, and pasture was their mainstay. The village lands were divided into arable, forest and pasture lands. The arable land was under private ownership. Agriculture was basic to Vedic economy. They grew paddy, wheat, barley, vegetables and pulses. Cotton and silk were cultivated for cloth. The wearing of garments of silk, cotton and wool was known and the loom is mentioned in the Rgveda. Silver, gold and copper were used, but iron was unknown. Only in later Vedic literature is there a reference to iron, called dark metal. The horse, the bull and the donkey were used for the transporation of goods. There are references to coins of gold, silver and copper. Loans and rates of interest were also well known. They condemned high rates of interest.
The 6th century B.C. constitutes an important epoch in the history of ancient India. This age saw the ‘Light of Asia, that perfect embodiment of knowledge, courage, love and sacrifice.’ The religion that the Buddha preached covered the whole of India. It even crossed the boundaries of India to Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and Cambodia, and then spread to Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia, Korea, China and Japan. Buddhism laid the foundations of Asian unity. It still continues to be a living force.

Life of Buddha. Gautama the Buddha was born in 563 B.C. at Lumbinivana. His father, Suddhodana, was the chief of the Sakyas of Kapilavastu. Gautama lost his mother, Mayadevi, seven days after his birth. He was brought up by his step-mother, Mahaprajapati Gotami. The child was named Siddhartha. Astrologers were brought to cast his horoscope. They found on his body the thirty-two marks of greatness and predicted that the child would be either a great emperor or a great teacher who would renounce the world when he had seen four ominous sights, an old man, a diseased person, a corpse and a monk.

Suddhodana was greatly upset by the predictions of the astrologers. To keep Siddhartha’s mind engrossed in worldly affairs he was married at the age of sixteen to Yasodhara. Thereupon, he lived a life of comfort and luxury befitting a prince. Suddhodana took care to see that those ominous things did not appear before the young prince. But this was of no avail. One day, when Siddhartha went out to visit the pleasure gardens, he saw the first of the four ominous sights. On the subsequent days he saw the other three. His mind was greatly agitated. It was at this time that he heard the news of the birth of a son to him. But he was not happy, and considered the event as a great hindrance. The child thus received the name of Rahula which means hindrance.

Suddhodana was none too happy to see the change in his son. He increased his efforts to keep him away from the thought of renouncing the world. He arranged for the prince’s night-long entertainment. The dancers and singers tried their best to please the prince. But Siddhartha took no pleasure in such entertainments and fell asleep. Seeing the prince sleeping the girls also slept. The prince awoke at midnight and was shocked to see the girls “thus dishevelled and disarrayed, breathing heavily, yawning
and sprawling in unseemly attitudes.” This made him realise the deceptiveness of appearances and the futility of worldly pleasure. He decided to give up the security and comfort of his home to start on a quest for a solution to the sorrow of life. He left the palace at midnight, riding his horse, Kanthaka, and embraced the life of a wandering ascetic.

He travelled across a number of villages in search of a teacher. After studying under various teachers, he realised his own path and attained enlightenment under the bodhi tree in Gaya. He thus became the Buddha and entered upon his career as a preacher.

His earliest disciples were five brahmanas and he preached the first sermon called the Wheel of Law at Sarnath. For forty years more he continued preaching and attracted a number of disciples. In his 80th year he attained Parinirvana at Kusinagara.

Teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha was an ethical teacher and a social reformer rather than a theoretical philosopher. He warned his disciples against any attempt to speculate on the ultimates. His view was that metaphysical speculation was neither profitable nor conducive to the highest good. He held that “philosophy purifies none, peace alone does.”

The Buddha laid emphasis on the ‘four noble truths’, viz. (i) Everything is misery and everything is imperfect; (ii) Desire is the root cause of this misery and this suffering; (iii) To escape from the eternal wheel of the Karma, desire must be curbed, for only then can man find peace; (iv) This desire can be curbed by following the right marga or path. This is the famous eightfold path of (i) Right speech, (ii) Right action, (iii) Right means of livelihood, (iv) Right exertion, (v) Right mindedness, (vi) Right meditation, (vii) Right resolution, and (viii) Right point of view.

This ‘Eightfold Path’ is similar to the ‘Golden Mean’ of Aristotle. The Buddha ruled out completely self-indulgence and self-mortification. The Buddha did not stress the ideas of asceticism to any absurd extent because he himself had to attain enlightenment without subjecting his body to torture. He preached what he practised.

He taught his disciples the five moral rules, which prohibited (a) killing (non-injury), (b) taking what is not given, (c) wrongful indulgence in the passions, (d) speaking untruth, (e) intoxicants. He wanted them to lead a life of moderate comfort and always intent upon achieving their sacred goal. According to him, one
can secure happiness by one's own efforts, ethical and intellectual. 

Spread of Buddhism. After his enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, the Buddha entered upon his career as a preacher. He converted the five brahmanas at Sarnath and thereafter visited Benaras, Pataligrama, Pava, and Kusinagara and converted a large number of people. The religion he preached knew no barriers of caste, creed, or colour. His precepts were simple and he spoke in the language of the common man. As a consequence thereof, Buddhism became a popular religion of the land.

Buddhism found ready patronage from the ruling monarchs of the day. Bimbisara and Ajatasatru patronised Buddhism. Some of the important republics of the time, the Sakyas, the Lichchavis, the Mallas of Pava and Kusinagara were great patrons of the religion of the Buddha. Buddhism was also fortunate to come under the powerful patronage of the greatest kings of Indian history, Asoka, Kaniska and Harsha, who raised its position and helped spread it far and wide. Asoka convened the third Buddhist Council. This Council sent missionaries to Gandhara, Kashmir, Maharastra, Mysore, Vanavasi, Burma and Ceylon. Kaniska strove very much for the spread of Buddhism. During his reign the first Indian Buddhist mission, that of Dharmaratna and Kasyapa, went to China to preach Buddhism. It was due to these missionary activities that some 186 Buddhist monasteries came to be erected and there were nearly 3,700 Indian monks in China by the end of the third century A.D. From the fourth century A.D., Chinese Buddhist pilgrims like Fa-hien and Yuwan Chwang visited India to study Buddhism in the land of its birth. This helped to extend the influence of Indian culture to the Far East and East Asia. Similar patronage was extended to Buddhism by Harsha. He used to convene religious convocations once a year. In such convocations religious discussions used to be held and the superiority of Mahayana Buddhism established. Thus, the efforts of the Buddha and the royal patronage it received, coupled with the missionary activity, made Buddhism not only the popular religion of India but also a religion with a large following in the major part of Asia. We can, therefore, justify the statement that Buddhism laid the foundation of Asian unity.

Its Decline. The causes for the decline of Buddhism are differently interpreted by different scholars. According to some scholars the Brahmanical reaction that set in after the death of Asoka,
the loss of royal patronage and the restoration of the orthodox
religion by Kumarila and Sankaracharya were responsible for the
decline of Buddhism. But we must consider several other factors
for the disappearance of Buddhism as an organised religion.

In the first place, the original Buddhism or Hinayana was a
mere monastic sect and not a mass movement. Therefore, it
continued to flourish down to the first century A.D. Secondly,
the schism that took place within the fold of Buddhism caused
its own downfall. Now Buddhism came to be divided into sects,
Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) and Mahayana (Greater Vehicle).
The Mahayana form received official recognition during the reign
of Kaniska. With the rise of the Mahayana sect, Buddhism be-
came an international religion which in turn destroyed its national
spirit. Thirdly, Mahayana Buddhism initiated Saiva and Sakta
religions and developed many curious forms of Tantric worship.
This development lowered the morality of the people. Fourthly,
its rejection of the individual soul and the supreme soul failed to
impress the masses. Fifthly, the rise of the popular Hinduism and
the inclusion of Buddha in the Hindu Pantheon, where he came
to be regarded as one of the avatars of Vishnu, proved dis-
astrous for Buddhism. Sixthly, the uncompromising attitude of
the Buddhists to the redemption of man who lived a married life
also caused the decline of Buddhism. Finally, the introduction
of Islam into India gave a death blow to Indian Buddhism. Since
Buddhism lacked popular support it could not offer strong resist-
ance to Islam as was done by Brahmanism.

Although Buddhism declined and ceased to exist as a popular
religion of the land, its ethical principles continue to mould our
policies, political and cultural, even today.

Jainism

Jaina works speak of twenty-four Tirthankaras, each of whom
preached the doctrine of his own period. The last of them was
Mahavira. His predecessor was Parsva who died 250 years before
him. Therefore, some sort of Jaina system had existed when
Mahavira entered the scene.

Life of Mahavira. Mahavira was born in the year 559 B.C. He
belonged to the family of the Ikshvakus. He was the son of Trisala
and Siddharta, a chieftain of Vaisali. He was brought up in a
royal atmosphere. He married Yasoda at the normal age and led the life of a house-holder. After the birth of a daughter, Anojja, he thought of renouncing the world. He was, however, dissuaded by his parents. At the age of thirty-two, after the death of his parents, and with the permission of his brother, he renounced the world and undertook great penance. He attained kevalajñana and passed away at Majjimapava.

Teachings. Jainism, like Buddhism, is a moral code. Mahavira, like the Buddha, stressed that the world is full of misery and the object of Jainism was to free people from this miserable existence. By leading a disciplined life one can attain the desired end. For this Jainism insisted upon right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct as the precious principles of life. Right conduct includes five vows, viz. non-injury, not to speak falsehood, not to steal, a life of celibacy and chastity. Ethically, Jainism is insistent on Ahimsa. Mahavira attributed life both to animate and inanimate beings. It has been understood to comprehend Ahimsa in thought, word and deed. Mahavira ridiculed the pride of caste and taught the practice of chastity—sexual and moral. He advocated the practice of severe asceticism to attain Nirvana.

Spread of Jainism. After the death of Mahavira, his teachings were carried on by several classes of Angadharas. Chandragupta Maurya, Asoka and his grandson, Samprati, are all described as great patrons of Jainism. After the Mauryas, Jainism spread to west and south India. In the first century A.D. the cleavage between the Swetambara and Digambara sects became wider. But Jainism does not appear to have suffered much from this schism. Under the Sakas and Ksatraps, Mathura and Western India had Jaina monasteries. The Jainas were equally powerful under the Rajput kings. In the eleventh century, the great Jaina author, Hemachandra, was the minister of Kumarapala. The officers of Kumarapala were responsible for the construction of Jaina temples at Mount Abu. He also promulgated Anadhidharma according to which no living thing could be slaughtered. Even after the Muslim conquest the Jaina monks were honoured by the Mughals. Akbar was a disciple of Haragovinda Suri and gave many concessions to the Jains. Jahangir and Shahjahan also issued firmans for the protection of Jaina temples. King Kharavela of Kalinga was a great patron of Jainism. In south India the Satavahanas and their subordinates gave many grants to the Jaina monks. Many
Karnataka powers like the Gangas, Chalukyas, Rastrakutas, Hoysalas, etc. patronised Jainism. "More conservative and less given to proselytising than Buddhism", writes K. A. Nilakanta Sastry, "Jainism has survived to the present day owing to the excellence of its organisation and the steady support it has commanded from the laity."^17

Contribution of Buddhism and Jainism to Indian Culture

The Buddha and Mahavira were born in ruling republican communities. The religions they preached were therefore democratic in character. They did not make any distinction on the basis of caste, creed or colour and admitted everyone into the fold. Though they cannot be credited with the founding of a casteless society, they succeeded in establishing the footing of equality among men. Hitherto the attainment of salvation had been the monopoly of the privileged castes. They broke this monopoly and threw open the doors of heaven even to the lowest of the low. This may be taken as a significant contribution of these religions to Indian culture.

The contribution of Jainism and Buddhism to the development of Indian ethical thought is indeed very great. Early Indian ethics dealt only with the traditional morality of virtues and duties. Buddhism preached the ethic of compassion. According to Buddha one must endure eumity and forgive evil. "By non-anger", says the Buddha, "let anger be overcome; let evil be overcome with good; let the avaricious man be overcome with gifts; let the liar be overcome with truth; through non-enmity enmity comes to rest." "By exalting compassionate love to be the fundamental principle of morality he breathed into Indian ethics a new breath of life."^18

The language of culture hitherto had been Sanskrit and the texts of the Brahmanical religion were in Sanskrit. Contrary to this, the two teachers preached their doctrines in the language of the common man so that they could become their property. Buddhist texts came to be written in Pali. This helped the development of Pali language and literature. Mahavira preached his tenets in Ardhamagadi, a form of Prakrit. This helped the development of Ardhamagadi dialect. The Jainas established Dravida Sangha

^18 A. Schweitzer, Indian Thought and its Development, p. 121.
at Mathura, and gave a powerful stimulus to the growth of Tamil literature. Likewise, Kannada literature counts significant contributions from Jaina authors. Some of the earliest works in Kannada have been contributed by the Jainas. To put it differently, Buddha and Mahavira laid the foundation for the growth of vernacular literature.

Another special characteristic of the new religions was the establishment of monasteries. These monasteries were great centres of learning where religious texts were taught. In course of time, secular subjects came to be included in the curriculum of study. Moreover, they realised the importance of the common man and began to instruct students of all religions in the ‘three R’s’. In doing so, Buddhism laid the foundation of popular or elementary education in India.

The greatest contribution of Buddhism to Indian culture lay in the realms of Indian art and architecture. The history of Indian art begins from the Buddhist period. The Buddhist monasteries were not only great centres of learning but also flourishing centres of artistic activity. The religious fervour goaded the Buddhist monks to cut halls in the living rocks. These rock-cut halls consist of both Vihara and Chaitya halls. The Viharas were halls in which the monks lived, while the Chaityas were the Buddhist temples which housed the Chaityas or stupas. The walls of these halls provided sufficient space for the artists to display their architectural skills. The cutting of the rocks is masterly and the sculpture has been remarkably well executed. Among some of the best monuments of the Buddhist times mention may be made of the stupas at Sanchi and Bharhut, and the Chaitya hall at Karle. According to some art critics, the Hindu temple originated from the Buddhist Chaitya hall, but this is, however, doubted by some scholars. In any case, by initiating this movement, Buddhism inaugurated the brightest chapter in the history of Indian art.
CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN CULTURE
(FROM 600 B.C. TO 1000 A.D.)

Rise of Magadha

The progress of Indian culture after the Vedic period was facilitated by the establishment of three empires at Magadha. The credit for establishing the first historical empire must go to two illustrious rulers of the Haryanka dynasty, Bimbisara and his son, Ajatasatru. The political condition of India on the eve of the establishment of Magadhan imperialism was one of disintegrated states which were in a state of perpetual hostility. There were as many as sixteen states (called the Mahajanapadas), big and small, who were constantly at war with one another. It was left to Bimbisara and Ajatasatru to take full advantage of the situation and to launch Magadha on her career of conquest and glory. These rulers, by means of matrimonial alliances and war, integrated the many disintegrated states and brought into being the first empire in Indian history. The Magadhan empire now came to be reckoned as the centre of political activity. It continued to be so for a couple of centuries. Its capital, Pataliputra, became the mistress of India. She enjoyed this honour till the decline of the Gupta dynasty. “The process of integration was thus complete in Northern India.”

Bimbisara established a sound system of administration which became a model to later rulers. Brahmanical culture, with its scheme of varnashramadharma, took deep root in the soil inspite of the popularity of Buddhism and Jainism. Agriculture, which was the basis of the Indian economy, was encouraged by the ruling monarchs. The industrial life was controlled by the guilds. Benaras, Rajagriha, Sravasti, Champa, Kausambi and Saketa were important towns. Taxila acquired prominence as an important centre of learning. The University of Taxila was a famous centre for advanced studies in medicine. All the three religions, Brahmanical, Jaina and Buddhist, flourished during the period. A level of progress was maintained in artistic activity. The
remains unearthed at Rajgir (Rajagriha) in recent excavations support the conclusion.

The Nandas

The exit of the Bimbisara dynasty saw the coming into power of a line of rulers known as the Nandas. The Nandas occupied the stage of Indian history for about two generations. The founder of the Nanda dynasty was Mahapadmananda. He was a man of low origin. To retrieve his own honour and position, he dedicated himself to the task of destroying his opponents who were united to crush him. He subdued the famous Ksatriya families of Iksvakus, Maithilas, Kasis, Haihayas Kalingas, Asmakas, Kurus, Panchalas, Surasenas and others. Kuntala was also included in his empire. By these victories, he brought into being an empire based on a solid foundation. If the foundation for the political unification of India was laid by Bimbisara and Ajatasatru, it was Mahapadmananda who built the superstructure, while the edifice was built by the Mauryas.

The last king of the Nanda dynasty was Dhanananda. He was very avaricious and extremely cruel. He imposed heavy taxes on his people. This measure naturally created a lot of discontent among the people. There were signs of revolt throughout the empire. Time was opportune for any one to intervene to end the rule of the Nandas. A popular hero, Chandragupta by name, was not slow in taking advantage of the situation. With the help of Kautilya, he overthrew the Nanda dynasty, seized the throne and founded the Mauryan dynasty in about 325 B.C.

Under the Nandas the political unification of India reached another milestone. The remarkable progress that was made in the field of administration has elicited admiration from the classical historians.

Foreign Invasions

Iranians. While attempts were being made to found an empire in eastern India, the north-western part of the country was comparatively free for the foreigners to seek their political fortune. The first to come were Iranians. Their ruler, Cyrus (558-530 B.C.), by conquering Gandhara, renewed the old contact which India had
with the Iranians. However, it was Darius I (522-486 B.C.) who established Persian domination over a part of India. He extended his authority over the Sind and the Punjab. These territories were constituted into the twentieth satrapy of Persia. Darius I was succeeded by Xerxes, who invaded Greece with the help of Indian infantry and cavalry. He was defeated in the battle of Plataea. This marked the beginning of the end of Persian domination. What little influence remained was soon obliterated when Alexander the Great defeated Darius III in the battle of Arbela (330 B.C.). With this defeat, the Indian province was freed from the control of Persia.

The effects of Persian rule in India, though not far reaching, are by no means negligible. It is generally agreed that there were ties of friendship between India and Iran as early as the Rigvedic period. The renewed contact paved the way for commercial intercourse between India and Iran. The prevalence of the Kharoshthi script in North-Western India down to the third century A.D. may be due to this contact.¹

Macedonian Invasion. After conquering Persia, Alexander invaded India, probably with the intention of conquering the lost Persian satrapy in India. The invitation which Ambi, the king of Taxila, extended to Alexander, must have also prompted him to invade India. The mutual jealousies that existed among the Indian rulers suited his purpose. Alexander set foot on Indian soil in 326 B.C.

The most important war that Alexander fought in India was against Porus, the enemy of Ambi. He finally defeated Porus, but reinstated him in his kingdom and added some more territories to it. He then advanced eastwards and defeated the Glanchukayanas. Later he crossed the river Ravi and took the capital of Kathas by storm. Alexander continued his march to the Beas overcoming all opposition. But his progress was brought to a halt by a mutiny in his army. His appeal to the army to continue the march did not produce any result. At last he yielded to retreat after erecting twelve altars of stone. On his way back, he attacked the Sibus. Then he attacked the Malavas and Kshudrakas and defeated them in what was actually a most decisive battle. In this battle, Alexander received a deep wound in his chest from which he did

¹ R. Sathianathaier, History of India, Vol. I, p. 79.
not recover. In the spring of 324 B.C., he reached Babylon and died in the following year.

*Its Effects.* The effects of Alexander’s invasion on Indian civilization have been overestimated. Plutarch says that “through Alexander Asia was civilized and Homer was known there.” According to Masson-Oursel, “the eight years of the Macedonian occupation opened an era of several centuries during which Hellenism was to be a factor not only of civilization but of government on the western confines of the Indian world. Direct contact was established between the Mediterranean civilizations and those of the Punjab and Central Asia.”

These statements appear to be far from the truth. As has been shown by V. A. Smith, “the Indian expedition of Alexander may be said to have lasted for three years, from May 327, when he crossed the Hindukush, to May 324 B.C., when he entered Susa.” He stayed for hardly nineteen months. It is difficult to argue that, during this short period, his invasion influenced Indian culture. India obtained very little benefit from the expedition, for the expedition was not a political success. It left hardly any impress on the literature, life or government of the Indian people.

We cannot however deny the indirect effects of his invasion. The conquest of petty states and their consequent annexation to the satrapies he established paved the way for the political unification of India. The warlike tribes of the North-West who were subdued by Alexander were left weakened. The result was the triumph of Chandragupta Maurya and the smooth expansion of the Mauryan empire. Secondly, the invasion opened up communications with the West which facilitated India’s overseas commerce with the West:

*The Age of the Mauryas*

*Significance of the Mauryan Age.* The significance of the Mauryan age lies in the fact that it saw the fulfillment of political unification. Secondly, the historian of the Mauryan epoch is not confronted with a paucity of sources. We have copious sources, literary and archaeological, for the reconstruction of the history of the period. Thirdly, in the history of Indian political thought, the age is made memorable by the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya. Fourthly, the beginnings of Indian art can be traced from this period. Not only did stone

*Banerjee, G. N., Hellenism in Ancient India, p. 13.*
replace wood as the medium of artistic activity, but the engineering
skill of the Mauryan craftsmen reached the summit of perfection
and glory. Above all, the age produced two great personalities,
Chandragupta and Asoka, who built up a huge empire, unifying
the innumerable fragments of a distracted country.

Chandragupta. The founder of the Mauryan dynasty was
Chandragupta. He was a man of humble origin but belonged to
a noble lineage. He was lucky to find in Kautilya a master
statesman who aided him in all political adventures. Chandragupta
began his career of conquest by freeing the Punjab from the
rule of the foreigners. He then besieged Magadha and van-
quished the last Nanda King, Dhanananda. After this, he is said
to have subdued the whole of India. This has been confirmed
by a Greek historian. The last war that Chandragupta fought
was with Seleukos. The Mauryan ruler routed the Greek ruler
and received from his Greek adversary the territories of Arachosia
(Kandahar), Peropanisidae (Kabul), together with portions of Aria
(Herat) and Gedrosia (Baluchistan). Seleukos also sent Mega-
thenes as his ambassador to the court of Chandragupta.

Chandragupta thus freed the country from the foreign yoke and
internal tyranny. He established a sound system of administration
and maintained law and order in the country with a stern hand. In
fine, as a subduer of a vast territory, as a liberaor of the country
from the yoke of servitude, as a strong and capable administrator,
Chandragupta occupies a significant place in Indian history.

Asoka. Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Bindusara.
Bindusara was succeeded by his son Asoka. Asoka’s reign consti-
tutes an important epoch in the history of India. He is one of the
greatest figures in the history of the world. H. G. Wells regards
him as the ‘greatest of kings’. He was the first ruler to conceive
of a welfare state. He approached problems, national and inter-
national, with a broad mind and won the esteem of his coun-
trymen as well as others. “By his thoughts and actions Asoka
ushered in a new era with stress on non-violence and conquest
through love.” These actions entitle him to the epithet ‘great’.

Asoka has left a unique record of his work in the form of ‘edicts’.
There are fourteen rock edicts and seven pillar edicts in addition to
minor rock and pillar edicts. But his name appears only in two
edicts—the Maski and Gujarra edicts. In other edicts he is either
referred to as ‘Devanampiya’ or ‘Priyadarsi’.
The only political event of great importance that took place during his reign is the conquest of Kalinga. In this war more than 1,50,000 were made prisoners, 1,00,000 killed, and many times that number injured. The death and suffering caused by this war brought about a complete moral transformation in his mind and he decided to give up war altogether. This was the first and the last war that Asoka fought. Thereafter he devoted his life to achieve peace. He, however, annexed Kalinga to his empire and Tosali, the capital of Kalinga, became the seat of a new viceroyalty.

Asoka remained inactive for almost three years after the Kalinga war. Thereafter he began preaching the principles of practical morality, popularly known as ‘Asokan Dharma’. He travelled from place to place displaying great energy, visiting the sacred places, giving gifts to Brahmanas and Sramanas, holding discussions on Dharma and issuing instructions regarding morality. Throughout the Jambudvipa he caused wells to be dug, medical aid to be provided to men and animals, medical plants to be grown and the slaughter of animals at the festivals to be regulated. He denounced ceremonies as profitless. He appealed for kindliness and consideration towards family members, teachers, Brahmanas and Sramanas. Further he inculcated among his people the virtues of mercy towards all living beings, truthfulness, purity of thought, honesty, gentleness, gratitude, self-restraint, non-injury to animal life, etc. He ordered the planting of trees on the roadsides for the convenience of travellers.

In administration, Asoka applied the doctrine of ‘natal debt’ to the relation of the king and the subjects and of the king and his officers. He considered his subjects as his own children and did everything for their material and spiritual progress. Similarly, he advised his officers to look after the people in the same way as a nurse looks after children. He appointed Dharmamahamatras (censors of public morals) to preach and enforce Dharma. He prohibited the castration and branding of animals on certain special days. He built hospitals for animals as well as the people all over his empire. Though he did not continue the old practice of annual release of prisoners, granted three days reprieve to those condemned to death. Asoka went a step further than Buddha in enriching Indian ethical thought and practice.

Asoka’s contribution to the development of Indian art is equally
remarkable. The pillars which proclaim the principles of morality are at the same time outstanding works of art. Each of the pillars has been hewn out of a single rock and hence they are called monolithic. The pillars have no base, but contain shafts and capitals. In the earlier pillars, the capital is crowned by a single animal. But in their final evolution, as seen at Sanchi and Sarnath, the capital consists of four animals seated back to back, carrying a Dharmachakra. These animals have been carved in a masterly way. It is noteworthy that the Asokan capital has become the national insignia of the Indian Republic.

Asoka also caused a number of stupas to be built and caves to be cut. Yuan Chwang, a seventh century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, records that Asoka built as many as 84,000 stupas. The Sanchi stupa and the rock-cut halls at Barabar and Nagarjuni hills testify to the architectonic skill of Indian sculptors.

Thus Asoka, 'the angel of peace', the 'Precursor of Panchasheela', occupies a unique place in Indian history. He was the first preacher of universal morality and religion. He was a great nation builder, a unifier of mankind, a remarkable social and religious reformer and a profound philosopher and saint.

After Asoka, the Mauryan empire began to show signs of decline. The successors of Asoka were weak and incompetent and did not have the strength to bear the weight of the extensive empire. In about 180 B.C. the empire fell like a house of cards.

_India from 2nd Century B.C. to 4th Century A.D._

_The Sungas_. The Mauryan empire was split into two parts. In the east, according to Puranic accounts, the Sungas and the Kanvas succeeded to a branch of the Mauryas. In the west, according to Jaina tradition and the Greek accounts, independent republics came to be established. The political geography of India about 180 B.C. was a mosaic; in the north-west were Indo-Bactrian and Indo-Parthian kingdoms; in central and eastern India, the Sunga and the Kanka empires, in Kalinga, the kingdom of Khara-vela and in South India, the Satavahana empire.

The loss of political unity and consequent concentration of political power in the hands of more than one ruling family did not in any way affect the development of Indian culture. The Sungas, and the Kanka dynasty founded by the Brahmanas, naturally stood for
the revival of Brahmanical culture. The Sungas revived the old Vedic sacrifices such, as the *Avamedha*, and re-established the social institutions on their traditional foundations. A change is noticed in the artistic tradition as well. They encouraged folk art, the art of the common man, as against the sophisticated art of the Mauryas. The magnificent sculptures on the railings at Bharhut and on the gateways at Sanchi support this conclusion. To quote H. C. Roychoudhury, "the rule of the emperors of the house of Pushyamitra marks an important epoch in the history of India in general and central India in particular." The loss of political unity did not lead to any decadence of culture. The period witnessed the rise of the Bhagavata religion based on the teachings of Sri Krishna as embodied in the *Bhagavadgita*. There was an outburst of artistic activity as evidenced from the stupas of Bharhut and Sanchi, the two celebrated masterpieces of the period. Sanskrit literature received royal patronage and Patanjali, the grammarian, is said to have lived in the court of Pushyamitra.

*The Foreign Powers.* Though the Sungas arrested the progress of the Bactrian Greeks in eastern and central India, the Bactrian Greeks established their strongholds in north-western India. They even overran Saketa and Madhyamika according to the *Mahabharata* of Patanjali. There was some lull in their military activity after the death of Demetrius. His successor, Menander, embraced Buddhism and followed a pacifist policy. After Menander, the Greek kingdom began to show signs of decline and collapsed in 30 B.C. The Bactrian rule was followed by the Saka-Pahlavas and the Kushanas. They in succession founded their powers and met with the same fate as the Bactrian Greeks. The vestiges of these foreign powers were amalgamated in the Gupta empire.

*Indianisation of the Foreigners.* The period of foreign rule is not devoid of interest to students of Indian history. One singular fact that is worthy of mention is that they were not inimical to Indian culture. The superior culture of India appealed to them and they were rapidly Indianised. They embraced Indian religions—Buddhism, Saivism or Vaisnavism—assumed Indian names, adopted Indian customs and manners and became, as it were, "the sons of the soil." There was progress in every department of Indian culture, religion, literature and art. This progress caused an efflorescence of Indian culture under the Imperial Guptas.

The coins, sculptural representations and proper names of many
foreign rulers indicate their complete and thorough Indianisation. This development shook the very foundations of the Brahmanical caste system. The rise of many new castes and sub-castes is the result of this tendency. Ultimately, the social policy came to be broad-based and the Indianisation of these foreigners was rendered smooth. The tenor of life continued to be simple and unsophisticated. The custom of sati which the Sakas brought with them was encouraged in India. It was confined to the Ksatriya caste. Trousers and big overcoats worn by Kushana kings were perhaps imitated by the Indians. Indian women took to the Greek and Saka blouses, jackets and frocks. But this practice was not widespread.1

Religion. The foreign rulers adopted the religious ideals and ideologies of the Indians. A notable instance is that of Menander, whose name occurs frequently in the Buddhist tradition. According to Milindapanha (Questions of Milinda) he was converted by the Buddhist saint Nagasena. In the second century B. C. Meridarkh Theodorus, a Greek officer, “enshrined the relics of the Bhagavan Buddha in the ancient country of Udayana.” A second Meridarkh and his wife were responsible for the erection of the stupa at Taxila in honour of his parents.4 The Sakas followed the example of the Greeks. The votive offerings of many Saka monarchs in connection with Chaitya halls as are found in the north-western and northern parts of the country support this statement. A Saka prince, Ushavadata, donated to the maintenance of Hindu gods and bestowed a cave on the Buddhist Sangha. He is said to have married off eight Brahmaana maidens. Kaniska, the great Kushana ruler, extended his patronage to Buddhism. He not only convened the Fourth Buddhist Council, but also patronised Buddhist scholars and Buddhist art and sent missionaries outside India to spread Buddhism. It was through his efforts that Buddhism became an international religion.

Likewise, some foreign rulers adopted either Saivism or Vaishnavism. A Greek envoy named Heliodorus became a Bhagavata (a devotee of Vishnu) and erected a Garuda pillar at Besnagar. Vasudeva, the last Kushana ruler, also was a follower of Vaishnavism. Bhagavatism found many adherents among the foreign rulers. Some of them embraced Saivism. That Kadphises II followed

1 The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. II, pp. 573-74.
Saivism is evident from his epithet, Maheswara, and the figures of Nandi and Siva on the reverse of his coins. The Indian names of some foreign rulers like Ghataka, Rudradaman, Siva Ghosa and Sivadatta show that they followed Saivism.

A high level of economic activity was maintained during this period. Agriculture was the mainstay of both the people and the state. That the state took an active interest in this respect becomes evident from the irrigation facility that Rudradaman provided by reconstructing the Sudarsana lake. Industry and trade were organised by the guilds, which played a vital role in the economic activity of the state. Trade with the western world was on the increase. Some of the port towns like Broach, Kalyana, etc. were bustling with this export trade. The wealth of the country increased the people's love of city life and their attachment to the material world.

Language and Literature. Kharoshthi and Brahmi were employed for the inscriptions. But Sanskrit was gaining ground slowly. The great grammarian, Patanjali, the author of Mahabhasya, was a contemporary of Pushyamitra. Of other Sanskrit works of the period mention may be made of S vapnavasavadatta by Bhasa, the Dharmasastras of Manu and Yajnavalkya, and the Natyasstra of Bharata. Kaniska was a great patron of literature. In his court flourished Asvaghosa, the author of Buddhacarita, Sundarananda Kavya and Sariputra-Prakarana and Charaka, the author of Charakasamhita, a work on medicine. Nagarjuna, the expounder of the Mahayana philosophy, belongs to this period. The Ginnar rock inscription of Rudradaman, composed in Sanskrit, is a classic.

The only important Pali work composed during this period was Milindapanha, a work in philosophy.

Art and Architecture. Buddhist art reached the highest stage of development during this age. Some of the finest Buddhist monuments, the Stupas of Bharhut and Sanchi, belong to the Sunga period. The Kushanas patronised the Gandhara school of sculpture.

The Bharhut Stupa. The village of Bharhut is about 100 miles east of Sanchi. It was selected for its strategic position as it was situated on the ancient route leading from the ancient kingdom of Vatsa to Chedi. The original Stupa was built of bricks on a stone foundation. Only a portion of the stupa had survived when Cunningham discovered it in 1873. The Stupa was surrounded by a massive railing consisting of pillars and gateways. There must have been four gateways of monumental size. Out of them, only the eastern
gateway has been restored completely. According to Fergusson, the Bharhut rail is the most interesting monument in India from an historical point of view. It is especially important for the study of Indian culture, because it shows the degree of technical development that the fine arts in India had reached before India came in contact with the Greco-Roman art of Gandhara, before the Indian artistic ideal was perfected, and before Indian artistic philosophy had been differentiated from that of classical Europe.

The railings and the gateways are elaborately carved with religious and secular scenes and decorative motifs comprising floral designs, trees and animals. The sculptured scenes relate mostly to the Jataka stories. The representation of these stories is simple and direct. The animal representation includes both the fabulous and the natural. Of the natural animals, there are the lion, elephant, horse, wild-boar, bull, deer, wolf, monkey, cat, dog, sheep, hare, squirrel, crocodile, bird, snake, insect, etc. "Some animals," writes Fergusson, "such as elephants, deer and monkeys are better represented at Bharhut than any sculpture known in any part of the world; so are some trees, and the architectural details are cut with an elegance and precision that are very admirable. For an honest purpose...there is probably nothing much better to be found elsewhere."  

The Sanchi Stupa. Sanchi is about six miles south-west of Bhilsa in Madhya Pradesh. The original stupa was built by Asoka. But in the course of a century the stupa was further elaborated. The importance of the stupa rests chiefly upon its four monumental gateways (toranas) of magnificent appearance. The gateways have been profusely carved, while the railings have been left severely plain. As in Bharhut, the sculptural representation includes secular and religious scenes and decorative motifs. The religious representations are based mostly on the Jataka stories. The secular scenes, in addition to representing a royal procession, depict the contemporary life of India in its varied aspects. "The rich and artistic life at the court of the busy and exciting life of the city, the homely and modest country life, and the varied luxuriance of the jungle, have all been treated faithfully and exhaustively." The representation of animals also follows the Bharhut tradition. "The Sanchi reliefs present a very detailed and animated picture of Indian life, invaluable to every student of culture, even apart from their value

as art.”¹ In short, “the wonderful decorative sense of the artists with their simple and easy story telling diction, graphic in content as well as in representation, remains unequalled in early Indian art.”²

The Gandhara School. Gandhara, situated on the north-western borders of India, was the meeting place of three cultures, Indian, Greek and Iranian. This resulted in the development of a hybrid school, popularly known as the Gandhara school. The school is also called Greco-Buddhist. The subject that was dealt with by this school was essentially Indian, but the artists who worked at this ideal were foreign craftsmen. The most prominent representation of this school is the image of the Buddha. But the sculpture cannot in any way stand comparison with the sculptures of Bharhut or Sanchi. From the artistic point of view many sculptures do not deserve the attention of a serious student of art. But considering its importance from iconographic and other aspects, it would certainly find a place of distinction in the history of Asiatic art.³ As V. A. Smith admirably puts it, “considered as pictures of human life, they present as in a mirror a vivid image of almost every phase of the life of North India, lay and clerical, during several centuries. The artists cause to pass before our eyes landscapes, towns, domestic interiors, streets, fields, trees and animals, with unlimited realistic detail. As the material objects of the civilization of the times—furniture, vehicles, arms, tools and the rest, are depicted as they were used by the ancients, and numberless illustrations of the manners and the customs of the times bring clearly before our imagination the way in which those ancients passed their days...no subject of human interest was regarded as material unsuitable for the sculptor’s chisel.”⁴

The Gupta Age: Its Cultural Contributions

Ancient Indian history enters upon a new epoch with the foundation of the Gupta dynasty in the early part of the fourth century A. D. As L. D. Barnett observes: “The Gupta age is in the annals of Classical India almost what the Periclean age was in the history of Greece.” The age witnessed the rise of a ‘strong feeling of nationalism, the establishment and consolidation of the

¹ A. Coomaraswamy, Introduction to Indian Art, p. 17.
² Cambridge History of India, Vol. I., p. 690.
³ A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon, pp. 56-57.
empire, a sound administrative set up to maintain it, a splendid output in the field of literature, the revival of religious movements and an unparalleled outburst of artistic activity. The age was a great period of expansion of Indian culture in the Far East. Taken altogether, the abundance and quality of cultural achievements under the Guptas justify the appellation ‘Golden age of Indian history’ applied to it.

**Political History.** Chandragupta I was the first powerful sovereign of the Gupta dynasty. He extended the prestige and power of his family to a considerable extent by establishing a matrimonial alliance with the Lichhavis. It was, however, his worthy son and successor, Samudragupta, who, by his Dignijaya and Dharmasijaya, built the noble structure. His Allahabad Pillar inscription, composed by Harisena, records that after his accession to the throne he led a series of expeditions. In his Aryavarta expedition he defeated many rulers and annexed their territories. Then he led an expedition to Dakshinapatha, defeated twelve rulers but reinstated them in their former positions. The frontier rulers and the republican states voluntarily accepted his supremacy. Thus he became the master of a vast territory. In commemoration of his achievements, he performed the Asvamedha sacrifice and issued the Asvamedha type of coins. His successor, Chandragupta II, Vikramaditya, put an end to the last vestiges of foreign rule in India by defeating the Sakas and assuming the title of Sakati. By this victory, the Guptas gained an outlet to the Arabian sea. The first half of the reign of Kumara-gupta saw the same brilliance of Chandragupta II. But the second half of his reign began to show signs of decline. Torn by internal uprisings and the Hun inroads, the Gupta dynasty declined rapidly. The noble efforts made by some Gupta rulers like Skandagupta only delayed the downfall, but could not avert it. In the early sixth century A. D., the Gupta dynasty came to an end.

**Administration.** The Guptas established a constitutional type of monarchy. They were benevolent and were respected by their subjects. Hereditary succession to the throne was the normal practice, though sometimes the ruling monarchs nominated their successors. The mantriparishad and or prime minister assisted the king in the administration and presided over the deliberations of the council. There was an hierarchy of officials who constituted the central secretariat.
The provincial administration was modelled after the central government. In the provinces under direct administration, the king appointed his relatives as governors. The feudal states enjoyed complete autonomy in their internal administration.

Taxation was light. The punishments were none too severe. As Fa-hien says: "The people are happy and prosperous without registration or official restrictions...Those who want to go, may go; those who want to stop, may stop. The king in his administration uses no corporal punishments; criminals are merely fined according to the gravity of their offences. Even for a second attempt at rebellion, the punishment is only the loss of the right hand." In short, the Gupta administration was mild and efficient.

Social and Economic Conditions. Inscriptions and foreign accounts reveal the high prosperity enjoyed by the people of this age. Fa-hien found the Gupta empire a welcome contrast to other countries. He says: "No one kills anything, nor drinks wine; only outcastes are subjugated. No dealing in cattle, pigs, fowls; no butcher shops or wine shops are permitted in the market places, and everywhere men of learning are highly honoured." Sacrifices had fallen into disuse and were practised only by the lower classes. People led an honest and pure life. Women cherished a high ideal of womanhood.

The system of taxation encouraged internal and foreign trade. Trade was organised by the guilds. The Kula, Sreni, and Gana represented the various grades of guild organisation. The guild gave bonus, leave, pensions, provident fund, etc. to its workers. A minimum wage level was fixed to maintain a comfortable standard of life. In case of accidents, the dependants of the workers were taken care of by the guilds. Foreign trade with Egypt, Rome and Persia flourished during the period.

Religion. The Gupta age witnessed the rise of theistic systems and the Darsanas in a systematised form. Buddhism underwent a complete transformation and adopted some of the practices of Saivism and Saktism. Buddhism was almost identified with the orthodox systems. The Buddha was included in the Hindu pantheon and came to be regarded as one of the avatars of Vishnu.

Among the theistic religions, Saivism had many forms. The Gupta inscriptions mention the school of the Pasupatas founded by Lakulesvara. It emphasised the grace of God for the attainment of salvation. Corresponding to this was the Bhagavatism which became very popular during this period. Many Gupta kings were
ardent Vaishnavas and called themselves Paramabhagavatas. Devi
worship or Saktism was also predominant. The worship of the many
forms of the Mother Goddess also prevailed. The Tantras and
Agamas developed a distinct philosophy called Saktisistadoleta.

Literature. The Gupta age has been called the classical age of
Sanskrit literature. It has been compared to the Augustan age in
Roman history and the Elizabethan and Stuart periods in British
history. This age was particularly conducive to an efflorescence of
Sanskrit literature.

The greatest literary luminary of this period was undoubtedly
Kalidasa. He is counted among the outstanding literary giants
of all times. He is said to have written three kavyas—Meghasandesa,
Raghuvamsa and Kumarasambhava—and three dramas—Malavika-
gunimitra, Vikramorvasiya and Sakuntala. His plays have been trans-
lated into all the major languages of the world. They are really
important links in the chain of India's intellectual, mental
and literary development. It is no wonder therefore that in
1958 the U. S. S. R. honoured Kalidasa by issuing a special
commemorative stamp. Visakhadatta, the author of Devichandra-
guptam and Munaraksasa, was another great dramatist. Dinnaga
wrote Kundamala.

There were many works on technical literature such as astronomy,
mathematics, medicine, and other sciences. Varahamihira was
a great writer on astronomy. He wrote Panchasiddhanta, Brihatasamhita
and also astrological works like Brihajjataka, Laghujjataka, etc. His
Brihatasamhita is a veritable encyclopaedia of the arts and sciences.
But he did not found a school of his own. "Had he been followed
by a succession of students and disciples, India would certainly
not have lagged behind the West in her contribution to progress
in different branches of science during the medieval age and
in modern times." Another great writer was Aryabhatta, the
author of Aryabhatiya. This work is "reckoned as the greatest
contribution of India to science in the ancient world." It was
he who first discovered that the earth rotates on its axis and
then moves round the sun. He also discovered the decimal system
of notation which revolutionised the world of mathematics. The
great strides which the Gupta epoch made in technical sciences
can be gathered from the Iron Pillar at Mehrauli.

Fine Arts. In the domain of art, also, the age of the Guptas made
tremendous progress. The kings and nobles liberally patronised
art. The Gupta art is known for its sensitiveness, universalism and beauty. The notable qualities of the Gupta art are beautifully summed up by A. Coomaraswamy thus: "The Gupta art is the flower of our established tradition, a polished and perfected medium like the Sanskrit language, for the establishment of thought and feeling....Its character is self-possessed, urbane, at once exuberant and formal....Philosophy and faith possess a common language in this art, that is at once abstract and sensuous, reserved and passionate."

This period gave us the first Hindu temple. The temple at Deogarh is a 'little artistic masterpiece'. Its main attraction is the doorway which has been exquisitely carved. Another significant contribution of the Gupta temple architecture to Indian architecture is the addition of a new number known as the Sikhara. It made its appearance in the year 473 A.D.

Sculpture. In the field of sculpture, the Gupta age made remarkable progress. The sculptors illustrated the stories of the Bhagavata, Harivamsa and Vishnu Purana on the walls of the temple. The Deogarh has revealed the full story of Krishna's early life as described in the Vishnu Purana. The gigantic image of Varaha is the great monument to the genius of the Gupta sculptors. The figure of Ananta resting on the cosmic serpent is beautifully carved. The Ardhanarishvara which has been executed with a masterly skill is a triumph of the Gupta plastic art. The images of the Buddha found at Sarnath and other places are known for their serenity of expression. The Iron Pillar at Mehrauli is an outstanding example of the Gupta craftsmanship. Its total height, inclusive of the capital, is 23 feet and 8 inches. P. Brown considers this pillar as "a remarkable tribute to the genius and manipulative dexterity of the Indian workers." To this V. A. Smith adds: "It is not many years since the production of such a pillar would have been an impossibility in the largest foundries of the world, and even now there are comparatively few where a similar mass of metal could be turned out."

Painting. The paintings of the Gupta period are well and truly represented in the celebrated Ajanta frescos. Many of the paintings have disappeared, but what little remains now is sufficient to indicate the classical restraint, a highly developed taste and

9 Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu, p. 50.
deep aesthetic feeling. Some of the Jataka stories are illustrated in a masterly fashion. The scenes like the ‘Mother and the Child before the Buddha’ and the ‘Toilet’ in Cave xviii, the great Bodhisatva (Padmapani) in Cave i and the paintings on the ceilings of the Caves ii and xxiii are of great merit. The Ajanta spirit pervades the paintings at Bagh in Malwa.

Thus the keynote of Gupta art is elegance and simplicity of expression. It “represents the norms of metaphysical rather than corporeal human beauty. The humanistic note of the Gupta art is embodied in the popular aphorism ‘Beauty is never intended for sin.’ The norm that the beautiful is the true and the good dominates life, manners and art in the Gupta age.”

In fine, the Guptas brought the whole of India under one government, and Sanskrit became the lingua franca. This in turn helped the development of various departments of Indian culture. The prosperous economic condition added much lustre to this culture. Therefore, the Gupta age is not an age of renaissance, but an age of efflorescence. It is indeed the golden age in Indian history.

South India

South India is not mentioned in early Vedic literature, but a reference occurs in the Aitareya Brahmana. The Puranic legends of Agasthya, Parasurama and Raina indicate the gradual extension of Aryan culture to South India. However, the progressive expansion of the Aryan culture to South India begins only from the Mauryan period. The Sangam literature provides ample clues to the Aryanisation of South India.

The Sangam Age. The Sangha or Sangam was a literary academy. According to Tamil tradition there were three sangams from mythological times. Historically, only the third Sangam is accepted as having existed in the early centuries of the Christian era. Of the Sangam literature some 30,000 lines of poetry have survived. These are included in eight anthologies called Ettutogai. Another collection called Pattup attu or (Ten Idyls) also belongs to this period. But the two great Tamil epics, Shilappadikaram and Manimekalai, are now placed in a period much later than the Sangam age.

The Sangam literature throws welcome light on various aspects of the cultural history of the period. Monarchy was the prevalent form of government. But the king was not absolute, as he had to
work in consultation with the representative institutions like the Sabha. He promoted agriculture, regulated trade and took prompt action to safeguard the interests of the people.

Brahmanical religion was popular. They worshipped Vishnu, Balarama, Krishna, Shiva and Muruga. The people of the Tamil country were familiar with the caste system. There was a mixture of castes and races, particularly in cities. The dress of the people consisted of only two pieces of cloth. Women occupied an important place in society. We have references to women poets. Both men and women wore ornaments of gold. The chief articles of food comprised grain, fish, meat, vegetables, milk and milk-products. They used spirituous liquors, betel leaf and nuts. They either buried or cremated the dead. Thus there was social harmony and general contentment in the society of the Sangam period.

The Chalukyas of Badami

The rule of the Chalukyas of Badami constitutes a brilliant epoch in the history of Karnataka in particular and of India in general. It was the third dynasty to be established in Karnataka history, the other two being the Satavahanas and the Kadambas of Banavasi. The Chalukyas established their name and fame throughout India. If the identification of Ajanta paintings in Cave 1 is correct, their fame had spread as far as Persia. They ruled the country bearing in mind the welfare and happiness of the people. Architecture reached its high watermark under them, and the monuments that stand to this day at Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal speak eloquently of the glory and the grandeur of the Chalukyas.

The Chalukyas began their political career as the feudatories of the Kadambas and later established their kingdom with Badami or Vatapi as their capital. It was Pulakesin I (547-567 A.D.) who established the independent rule of the Chalukyas. But the greatest ruler of this dynasty was Pulakesin II (608-642 A.D.). By virtue of his extensive conquests he became the most powerful ruler in South India. He defeated the Alupas, the Gangas, the Lataas, the Malvas, the Gurjaras, Harshavardhana and Mahendravarma I Pallava. In the end he was defeated by Narasimhavarman I Pallava and lost his life on the battlefield. For a time the Chalukya rule
was kept in abeyance. Vikramaditya I (655-680 A. D.) tried his best to restore the fallen prestige of the Chalukya family. It was, however, left to Vikramaditya II (733-743 A. D.) to revive their glory. He defeated Nandivarman Pallavamalla and once again established the mastery of the Chalukyas in the Deccan and South India. Kirtivarman II was the last great king of the Chalukyas. He was defeated by Dantidurga, the founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty, in 753 A. D. As Dantidurga had no son, his uncle Krishna succeeded to the throne. He finally put an end to the western Chalukya dynasty.

In administration, the Chalukyas followed the traditions that prevailed in north and south India. A noteworthy feature is the association of women of the royal family with the administration. They were appointed viceroy.

The observations of Yuan Chwang make it very clear that “in the sphere of religion, the people of Maharashtra combined orthodoxy with heterodoxy.” He noticed the existence of the Buddhist viharas and the stupas built by Asoka. This shows that Buddhism prevailed in Karnataka. Jainism entered Karnataka even before Buddhism. It counted among its followers nobles and high officials of the state. Inscriptions of the Chalukyas attest to the flourishing state of Jainism. The members of the royal family were the followers of the Saiva or Vaishnava way of life as their titles like Paramamahesvara and Paramabhadradri show. The principle of religious toleration adopted by the Chalukyan kings ensured religious harmony among the existing creeds. This in turn gave tremendous impetus to the construction of Brahmanical and Jaina temples.

Fine Art. The Chalukya monarchs were liberal patrons of art, architecture and sculpture. They evolved and developed a new style of architecture known as the Chalukya style, distinct from the Gupta style. Attractive specimens of the architecture and sculptures of outstanding beauty stand to this day to proclaim the outburst of artistic endeavour among the people. The early experiments in the temple buildings are first met with at Aihole, which alone contains some seventy temples. Then the main building activity centred round the two other important towns of the Chalukyas, Badami and Pattadakal, both in the neighbourhood of Aihole.

Of the Aihole group of temples, three are noteworthy. They are the Ladh Khan, Durga and Huchchimalli temples. The Ladh Khan temple has certain characteristics of rock-cut halls. It has
a low flat roofed mantapā, 50 feet wide, enclosed by walls on three sides. It has a porch on the east side. The temple impresses the visitor very much. Built on the model of the Buddhist Chaitya hall, the Durga temple has an antarala mantapā. It has a sikhara over the Garbhagriha which has fallen. The Huchchimalligudi temples seem to be the earliest of the Aihole group and contain a sikhara of the Nagara style. The next milestone in Chalukyan architecture is seen in the celebrated temple of Virupaksha at Pattadakal. It has many features in common with the temple of Kailasanatha at Kanchi. The main building is 120 feet long. The interest of the architect in ornamental details is best seen in the mouldings, pilasters, brackets, cornices and perforated windows. The exterior body of the temple consists of niches in which are placed life-size statues. The temple has a square sikhara. "The Virupaksha temple," writes P. Brown, "is one of those buildings of the past in which the spirit still lingers of the men who conceived it and wrought it with their hands."11 At Badami there are four rock-cut halls belonging to the early Chalukya period. Of these, three are Brahmanical and among them the most noteworthy is the rock-cut hall that enshrines the image of Vishnu in a sleeping pose.

Cave 1 at Ajanta is assigned to the Chalukya period. Among the remarkable scenes mention may be made of 'Temptation of the Buddha' and 'Persian Embassy'.

The Pallavas of Kanchi

The Pallavas of Kanchi, of the Simhavishnu line, played an important part in the history of South India. They began their career as the feudatories of the Satavahanas and, when that dynasty declined, they became the masters of the southwestern parts of the Satavahana dynasty. The first ruler of this line was Simhavishnu. He expanded his power by defeating the Cholas, Pandyas and Kalabhras. He was succeeded by his son, Mahendravarman I. He was a many-sided genius. He initiated the movement of rock-cut architecture in South India. He excavated mantapas and built temples without using 'brick, metal or mortar.' He was the author of Mattasilasa. He also encouraged painting and assumed the title Chettakarappuli (tiger among

painters). He was defeated by Pulakesin II and lost to him the northern part of his kingdom. Narasimhavarman I, his successor, was a great warrior. He defeated Pulakesin II in three successive battles, occupied Vatapi, the Chalukya capital, and assumed the title Vatapikonda. He was a great patron of art and architecture. The glory that is Mahabalipuram owes much to him. The next important ruler was Narasimhavarman II (Rajasimha). He is said to have sent an embassy to China. He built the Shore temple and Kailasanatha temple at Mahabalipuram and Kanchi, respectively. The last ruler of the dynasty was Aparajita. He was killed by his Chola feudatory, Aditya I, who freed the Cholas from their vassalage.

Culture. The Pallavas contributed much to the development of Indian culture. In their political and social institutions, the Pallavas followed their erstwhile masters, the Satavahanas. In the sphere of religion, the period witnessed the birth of the Bhakti movement led by the Saiva and Vaishnava saints, called respectively the Nayansars and the Alwars. They encouraged Sanskrit literature and learning. Bharavi, the author of Kiratarjuniya, lived in the court of Simhavishnu. Among other writers mention may be made of Dandin and Mahendravarman. Kanchi, the capital of the Pallavas, was a noted centre of Sanskrit learning. The Kanchi Ghatika (university) attracted students from all parts of India. Above all, the Pallavas laid the foundations of the Dravidian style of architecture. The Rathas and the Mantapas at Mahabalipuram and the Kailasanatha and Vaikuntaperumal temples at Kanchi are acclaimed as the best monuments of the Pallavas. Of the sculptures, the bas-relief depicting the Descent of the Ganga at Mahabalipuram is worthy of notice.

The Cholas

The Cholas were one among three traditional Tamil powers, the other two being the Pandyas and the Cheras. The Cholas had their capital at Urayur during the time of Karikala Chola. The Chola power was eclipsed after the death of Karikala. They emerged from obscurity in the ninth century A.D. when Vijayalaya wrested Tanjore from the Pandya chieftain and made it his capital. This line of the Cholas is known as the Cholas of Tanjore or Cholas of the Vijayalaya line.
Aditya I, son and successor of Vijayalaya, established the nascent imperialism of the Cholas by killing Aparajita Pallava and establishing his mastery over the Pallava kingdom. The next ruler was Parantaka I. His reign is important in the administrative history of South India. He established the autonomous local institutions in the Tamil country. Rajaraja was the greatest ruler of this dynasty. His reign bestowed on the country a period of unbroken prosperity. He established an extensive empire which bordered on Konkan and Coorg in the west, Ceylon in the south and Orissa in the north. He also conquered the Maldives islands. He was a great administrator. For his unique achievements, he is called 'Rajaraja the Great.' His son, Rajendra I, was a worthy son of a worthy father. He ‘continued his father’s career of conquest with added vigour and achieved even more conspicuous success.’ He directed his arms towards North India and defeated the kings of Lata, Orissa, Musunidesa and Bengal. The victorious Chola army brought the sacred waters of the Ganga river to consecrate the new capital built in memory of this expedition. Rajendra also conquered Ceylon and Srivijaya. The next important ruler was Kulottunga I. He made some additions to the Chola empire. After his death the dismemberment of the Chola empire began and it was replaced by the Pandyas.

Culture. That the Cholas perfected the administrative machinery becomes evident from the existence of an official Olainayakam or the chief secretary. They established a Byzantine type of monarchy and displayed royal pomp and majesty. They are particularly remembered for the decentralisation of village administration. The village had its own assembly called Sabha, which was completely autonomous. The system of electing the members to these assemblies has been described in great detail in the Uttaramerur inscriptions of Parantaka I. According to the inscription, the village Uttaramerur was divided into thirty wards and from each ward a candidate was elected. The candidates had to possess certain qualifications. The qualifications were the possession of a quarter veli of land (about 1½ acres), proficiency in at least one Veda and the commentaries on it, and ages between 35 and 70 years. All those who had served in the assembly and had rendered proper accounts were eligible to contest the elections. Those who failed to submit proper accounts and those who had committed grave sins and their relatives and friends were disqualified.
On election day, every voter was given a ballot paper on which he wrote the name of the candidate he preferred. After the ballot papers had been collected, ward by ward, they were put into a sealed box. After the completion of voting, the seals of the ballot box were opened and a child was called upon to pick out one ballot paper from the box. In this way thirty members were elected by lot, and out of them twelve formed the Annual Committee, another twelve the Garden Committee and the remaining six formed the Tank Committee. The committees held office for 360 days in a year. In the remaining five days accounts were audited and fresh elections were held for the new year.

The Sabha was a democratic assembly. It possessed complete authority over the village lands and was left free in the internal management of the village. It collected the land revenue due to the central government. It acted as a trustee for public charities. It maintained communication and irrigation works. It controlled primary education and administered justice as well. They ensured for the people entrusted to their care a prosperous and peaceful life. Hence the remark of K. A. Nilakanta Sastri that “between an able bureaucracy and the active local assemblies, which in various ways fostered a live sense of citizenship, there was attained a high standard of efficiency and purity, perhaps the highest ever attained by a Hindu state.”

Social Condition. The society was organised on the basis of castes. There were also numerous sub-castes like the Chettis, the Kammals, the Ratnakaras, etc. Besides these, there were the Valangai (right hand) and the Edangai (left hand) castes. There was no harmony among them. Their constant quarrels “often threatened the streets of Madras with blood in the days of the East India Company.” There was some improvement in the position of women. The queens were associated with the administration. Child marriages prevailed among the higher castes and the practice of sati was not common.

Economic Condition. The strong and efficient system of administration brought in its train a prosperous economic condition. The overseas trade carried on by the trading corporations like the Manigramams added to the wealth of the country. Agriculture prospered due to the measures adopted by the monarchs. The demands of the king on the subjects were few and far between. The Chola temples

11 The Cholas, p. 514.
played an important role in the economic activity of the day. They acted as bankers, trustees, and employers, and in many ways they furthered economic progress. The state of the economy is also reflected in the literary and artistic activities of the period.

Religion. Srivaishnavism and Saivism were popular during the Chola period. Srivaishnavism however became popular due to the untiring efforts of Sri Ramanujacharya, the exponent of Vishisthadvaita philosophy. From the seventh century A.D. there had been a revival of Vaishnavism in the Tamil country by the Alwars. The earlier Alwars wrote the Prabandhams in Tamil summarising the philosophy of the Vedas. The work was continued by the later Alwars like Namunalvar and their works constitute what is called the Dravidaveda or the Tamil Veda.

The Alwars taught that salvation could be attained even by the uninitiated. This consisted in an effort at uplifting those who must necessarily have been outside the circle of those admissible to divine grace. They insisted on the need for inner purity and personal experience and disseminated spiritual knowledge to all without distinction of caste or social status.13 According to them, every man is the son of God and can attain salvation by seeking God and responding to His love. Man's only responsibility in life is to respond to the love of God. It is this element and teaching by these saints that gave them the ultimate ascendancy among the people. The result was that God became the centre of the town and the village. The Alwars came to be regarded as the missionaries of God. After the Alwars came the Acharyas who championed the intense religious experience of the Alwars. But their teachings could capture the imagination of the multitudes only during the time of Ramanuja, the chief among the Acharyas.

Ramanuja was born in 1017 A.D. His parents were Keshavacharya and Kantimati. In his boyhood, Ramanuja studied under an Advaitic teacher, Yadavaprakasha, at Kanchi. But soon a difference of opinion arose between the teacher and the pupil and Ramanuja gave up studies. Thereafter he sought instructions from many teachers like Sreeshylapurna and Gosthipurna, who taught him the inner meaning of the Ramayana and the sacred Gayatri mantra. Though forbidden to teach the sacred lore to all, Ramanuja disobeyed his teacher and announced to all the secrets of the mantra. He said that if he personally went to hell for disobeying

13 S. K. Iyengar, The Contribution of South India to Indian Culture, p. 268
his teacher and if all the people went to heaven by knowing the secrets of the mantra, he would not mind it.

Ramanuja undertook a tour to organise worship in the temples. He began to write commentaries upon the Vedantasutras, the Gita and the Upanishads. Meanwhile, it is said, a Chola king insisted that Siva should be accepted as the supreme God and persecuted the Vaishnavas. Therefore, Ramanuja left the Chola country and coming by way of Nilagiri, Marale and Saligrama, met king Bittideva (Vishnuvardhana Hoysala) at Tonnur. He converted the king to Srivaishnavism. Ramanuja discovered an image of Nara-yana on the Melkote hill and set up a temple there. These facts are, however, disputed. Ramanuja stayed in Mysore for about twenty years and returned to Srirangam after the death of Kulottunga I. He passed away in his 120th year.

The essence of the teachings of this school was devotion to one deity. It refused to recognise as objects of worship deities other than those it favoured. The greatest feature of this religion was its solicitude for the lower classes. As a religion of redemption, it removed barriers of caste and taught universal brotherhood.

Corresponding to this was the movement led by the Saiva saints. The Saiva tradition puts their number at sixty-three, which includes a pariah and a woman. The Saiva saints include Nandan, Appar, Jnanasambandar, Sundaramurti, etc. They laid emphasis on Bhakti and opened the doors of heaven even to the humblest.

These two popular movements of the Chola times revitalised Hinduism.

Literature. It was the literature in the language of the people, Tamil, that has made the Chola period a memorable one. The Bhakti movement gave an added impetus to the religious literature of the period. The outstanding work in this class is the Periyapuranam by Sekkilar. Sivakasindamani, a secular work, of Tirukkadevar, influenced Kamba Ramayana. Kalingattuparani by Jayangondar was composed during the time of Kulottunga I. Of the grammatical treatises, Virot- soliyam by Budhamitra and Nannur by Pavanandi need to be mentioned. Amitasagara wrote Tapparungalam and Tapparungalakkarkikai on Tamil poetics. Venkata Madhava wrote Rigarthadipika, a commentary on the Rigveda in Sanskrit. As K. A. Nilakanta Sastri says, “in literature, as in most other spheres, the age of the imperial Cholas constitutes the most creative epoch of South Indian history.”

Art and Architecture. In the sphere of art and architecture, the Cholas closely followed the tradition established by the Pallavas. In fact the productions of the Pallavas ‘provided the foundations of the Dravidian style’, but reached a high degree of perfection during the time of the Cholas.

The Chola temples of pre-Rajaraja days conform to the Pallava style. But the first attempt at the development of the Pallava style is seen at the Brihadesvara temple at Tanjore. A notable feature of this temple is the imposing vimana or sikhara over the garbhagriha. It measures about 200 feet in height. The ceilings of the temple are profusely painted. The temple of Shiva at Gangaikondacholapuram built in 1030 A.D. by Rajendra I is of the same style. It has a smaller vimana of 160 feet in height. ‘An important feature of this structure is its assembly hall (mahamantapa), a low structure, 175 feet by 75 feet, containing over 150 pillars of relatively ordinary design. In this many columned hall, we see the beginnings of the ‘thousand pillared hall’ for which the great Dravidian temples of the later period are celebrated.’

But it was in the domain of figure sculptures and metal casting that the art of the Cholas found its finest expression. One of the notable examples of this class is the image of Nataraja which has justly won the highest praise from all over the world.

To sum up: ‘In local government, in art, religion and letters, the Tamil country reached heights of excellence never reached again in the succeeding ages; in all these spheres, as in that of foreign trade and maritime activity, the Chola period marked the culmination of movements that began in an earlier age under the Pallavas.’

India from the Fall of the Guptas to 1000 A.D.

After the fall of the Gupta dynasty, the history of India melts into brilliant biographies. The Pusyabhutis, the Gurjar Pratiharas and the Palas held the historical stage. Harsha belonged to the Pusyabhuti dynasty. He was a great patron of Buddhism. The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, Yuan Chwang, visited India during his reign. After Harsha’s death, the dynasty came to an abrupt end.

Then rose to power the Gurjar Pratiharas, a Rajput dynasty. This dynasty produced illustrious rulers like Vatsaraja, Nagabhatta II, Bhoja and Mahipala. But they had to carry on an incessant
war with the Palas of Bengal and the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta. The tripartite struggle, as this contest for supremacy is called, weakened all the three powers in the end and helped the Muslims to establish their foothold on Indian soil.

The rise of numerous sub-castes was the characteristic feature of the Hindu society of the period. A new caste, the Kayasthas, came into existence. The Brahmanas secluded themselves to preserve the purity of caste. There were two movements, orthodox or conservative and democratic, that were going on side by side to purge the society of its ills. The conservative section wanted strict adherence to the rules of varnasramadharma and the democratic stood for liberalising caste rules. The attitude of the conservative section led to the enslavement of women. Sati and child marriage were becoming popular, while re-marriage of women was discouraged. Indian society was at the cross roads on the eve of the Muslim conquest.

The people had their share of luxury and happiness. The cities grew in number and were humming with activity. Guilds continued to play a vital role in the economic sphere. Foreign trade maintained steady progress and the Arabs were already becoming intermediaries in India's trade with the outside world.

The literary works of the period give us a detailed description of the religious life. Various sects and philosophic schools were very active in the religious controversies. Buddhist universities like Nalanda and the ashramas like Divakaramitra taught all the systems of Indian philosophy. Buddhism was in a decaying condition in spite of the patronage extended to it by Harsha. There were Jainas of the Digambara, the Svetambara and other schools. Jainism received great patronage from Rajput kings like Kumarapala, Govinda Chandra, etc. Jaina ministers constructed the beautiful marble temples at Mount Abu. Orthodox Hinduism was being revived by the Purvamimamsa and Vedanta schools.

Shankaracharya. In Indian cultural history, the post-Harsha period may be called the age of Shankara. The way for Shankara had been prepared by the Mahayana Buddhists and their opponents and Kumarila.

Shankara was born at Kaladi in the present Kerala state. His parents Shivaguru and Aryamba were Nambudari brahmans. In his fifth year he lost his father. He showed extraordinary genius by mastering all the Sutras by his seventh year. Then he became
a sanyasi. From the age of eight to sixteen he studied under Govinda Bhagavatpada, a disciple of Gaudapada. He went to Benaras and wrote commentaries on *Vedantasastra*. He travelled throughout India meeting opponents, putting down evil religious customs and preaching a universal philosophy of salvation by *jnana*. But he reconciled the path of *karma* and *bhakti* with that of *jnana* (knowledge), so that every faith and religion could be accommodated in the philosophy of *AdvaIta*. Ethics, morality, duty to society and due discharge of duties without reference to fruits or *phala* were equally emphasised by him. Therefore, *sanyasa* did not mean an escape from life’s responsibilities, but detached service to humanity.

As a social reformer, Shaukara abolished many evil customs and sublimated others so that they became an integral part of modern Hinduism. He is therefore called the *Shanmatha Sthapanacharya* (establisher of the six main religions), such as Saivism, Vaishnavism and the Surya, Ganesha, Kumara and Shakti or Devi worship. Even towards Buddhism and Jainism, he had a large heart. Though he condemned the absurdities in Buddhism, he honoured the Buddha as a great yogi.

In literature, the tradition of Kalidasa was continued by Bana, the great master of prose and the author of *Harshacharita, Kadamba* and *Chandisataka*. He lived in the court of Harsha. Mayura wrote *Suryasataka*. Harsha was an author of no mean repute. He wrote *Vagananda, Ratnavali*, and *Priyadarshika*. Bana was followed by Bhavabhuti, the author of *Mahaviracharita, Uttararamacharita* and *Malati Madhava*. Rajashekhar lived in the court of the Pratiharas. He wrote *Balaramayana, Balabharata, Kavyamimansa* and *Bhuvanakosha*. Thus Sanskrit literature was assiduously cultivated.

Such were the conditions in India on the eve of the Muslim conquest. There was no political unity or cohesion in the country. The Kshatriya rulers had forgotten their *Dharma* and had become mere seekers of self-enjoyment and glory. There was no dearth of valour. But it was dissipated in the internal struggle. The Hindu society fell on the defence at the very approach of Islam. The Hindu religion which always gave a lead under such circumstances stood surprised. It is into this India that Mohammad of Ghazni set foot in 1000 A. D., the year which is rightly regarded as a ‘fateful year’ in Indian history. It marks the end of ancient India and the beginning of the medieval period.
PART II

MEDIEVAL INDIA
CHAPTER III

ADVENT OF ISLAM

Introduction

The era of Islamic ascendency between 1001 to 1707 has been called the Medieval Period in Indian History. Large parts of India came under the rule of Islam. It was a period of stagnation culturally, when contrasted with the achievements of the Classical Age.

During the Classical Age, the genius of the Indian people had reached its highest water-mark. The Golden Age of the Guptas had seen the blooming of Indian culture. In the field of philosophy, science, literature, fine arts and overseas activities, the period has been marked by memorable achievements. This Classical Age was soon followed by a period of stagnation called ‘Medievalism’ by historians. Islam alone was not responsible for this stagnation. This stalemate in art and other activities had begun before the advent of Islam in certain areas.

India as a single unit gave way to geographical zones, and the Sanskrit language to various regional languages. Local alphabets slowly replaced the Devanagari script. The coming of Islam and large scale religious conversions shocked the Hindu society. Eager to consolidate its religion and traditional way of life, the Hindu society became more and more conservative. The old Chaturvarnas (four vocational groups) were sub-divided into innumerable castes and sub-castes. Caste regulations became rigid. Thus society became static, losing its dynamic character. Literature, art and sculpture became purely religious, imitative and conventional. The sciences were grossly neglected.

In the field of religion, authority was held infallible. There was little opportunity for creative thinking. The Bhakti movement raised a ray of hope in this otherwise drab atmosphere. There was a great religious awakening as a result of the activities of mystic saints, which brought about dynamic political movements. Safeguarding the freedom of the people was the goal of these movements.
The mystic cult of Islam, Sufism, influenced by Hindu mysticism, became popular in India. Influenced by the teachings of Islam, saints like Kabir tried to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity. Islam’s influence was felt in the fine arts and literature.

Political History

Islam Enters India. Islam was founded by Mohammed the Prophet (570-632) in Arabia. His successors, the Caliphs, had created a large Islamic empire, comprising parts of Asia, Africa and Europe. In 712, the sword of Islam reached India, and Sind was occupied. But the Arab rule in India did not last long. It was almost 200 years later that serious attempts were made to establish Islamic rule in India. The Turks coming from Afghanistan were the early conquerors. Mohamed of Ghazni invaded India seventeen times. His chief aim was to plunder India’s wealth. He had no intention of founding an empire in this country.

In 1001, he took Raja Jaipal of Lahore captive and in 1009 captured Kanauj, the then Imperial Capital of India. In 1027, the temple of Somanath in Gujarat (one of the twelve Jyotirlingas) was looted and destroyed by him. He made the Punjab a province of his empire. His campaigns were so disastrous that the Hindus cherished “the most inveterate hatred of all Muslims,” says Alberuni, a traveller who had accompanied his army. But the weak successors of Ghazni could not hold on to their Indian possessions for long.

The real founder of Muslim power in India was Mohammad Ghori, again a Turk from Afghanistan. North India was ruled by the Rajputs in those days but the Rajput rulers were in eternal rivalry. This Sultan of Ghor conducted regular campaigns into India for 30 years. He captured Delhi in 1193 by defeating the Chauhan ruler, Prithviraj. Jayachand Rathod was defeated the next year and Kanauj was taken.

He left his trusted slave Kutbuddin Aibek at Delhi, and this commander reduced parts of Central India like Gwalior and Kalanjar. Anhilwara in Gujarat also fell into his hands. Bengal and Bihar were taken.

When Ghori died in 1206, his general in Delhi became free, and founded the Delhi Sultanate.

The Delhi Sultanate. Kutbuddin (1206-10) ruled as a sovereign
for four years. In this period Islamic rule came to be firmly established in Delhi. After his death a weak relation of his, Aram, ruled for a year, and made way to Ittamish. Ittamish (1211-36) consolidated the Delhi Sultanate by bringing a large part of India under his control. For ten years after him various relations of Ittamish, including his daughter Raziya, ruled from Delhi, but it was a period of wars of succession.

In 1256 Balban, a Turkish slave of Ittamish, ascended the throne. He was the father-in-law of Nasiruddin (1246-56), a son of Ittamish and ruler of Delhi. He rid the empire of rebel chiefs, unruly nobles and restive tribes, and raised the prestige of the Sultanate. Persian ceremonial and etiquette were introduced in his court. During his twenty-two-year rule (1256-87), he raised a disciplined army and established a sound administrative machinery. Four years after his death, the rule of the “slave” dynasty ended, and the Khaljis came to power.

Jalaluddin Khalji ascended the throne in 1290, after killing Kauqbad, grandson of Balban. The Mongols, who invaded India in 1292, were repulsed by him. In 1296, his nephew and son-in-law, Alauddin, became the Sultan (1296-1316). He successfully repulsed the Mongols, who invaded India more than once, and took strong measures to protect the North-West frontiers. He captured Gujarat, Rantanbore, Mewar and Malwa. By 1305 the whole of North India was subjected to his rule. He also sent repeated expeditions to the South and subdued the Yadavas of Devagiri, the Kakatiyas of Warangal, the Hoysalas of Dvarasamudra and the Pandyas of Madurai. The Muslim power was triumphant from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. The whole of India now recognised the paramountcy of Delhi.

The thirty-year-long rule of the Khaljis was ended, and for almost a hundred years the Tughluqs ruled from Delhi, beginning with Ghiasuddin (1320). His successor, Mohammed, was a scholar and great general. During his long reign of twenty-six years (1325-1351) he established order in his vast empire, though the Deccan and Bengal had slipped out of the Sultanate’s control. His reign was full of many costly experiments and visionary pursuits. His successor Firoz Shah (1351-1388) was an efficient ruler. He tried to bring order and prosperity in his empire, which was smaller than that of his predecessors. The rule of the Tughluqs continued till 1413. But Timur, the Mongol, invaded India and sacked
Delhi in 1398. The Delhi Sultanate was weakened as a result of this, and many independent Muslim kingdoms came into being.

The Tughluqs were followed by the Sayyids and four Sultans of the dynasty ruled between 1414 and 1451. The authority of Delhi was limited to an area of a few districts around the capital. The weakness of the kings and rivalry among the nobles resulted in the ascendance of the Lodi family in 1451. Bahol Lodi (1451-1489) suppressed unruly jagirdars and recaptured Jaunpur. He tried to restore the prestige of the Delhi Sultanate. His successor Sikandar continued his father's work. Ibrahim (1517-1526) lost the sympathy of his nobles by his tactless, high-handed action against them. They invited Babar, the Mughul, who defeated Ibrahim at Panipat in 1526. The Delhi Sultanate thus ended. The rule of the Mughuls began.

During this period, in addition to the Delhi Sultanate, many independent Muslim kingdoms were founded in India.

In the South, the Bahamanis started ruling from Gulbarga (1347), and later their capital was shifted to Bidar. A small Muslim kingdom came into existence at Madurai during the fourteenth century, though it had a very short tenure. In Bengal, an independent ruler raised his head in the days of the successors of Balban, and this kingdom continued for two centuries, till 1533. The confusion caused by the invasion of Timur gave an opportunity for the Sharqis of Jaunpur to free themselves from Delhi. Bahol Lodi later put an end to this line. Similar Muslim kingdoms emerged in Malwa (1401-1531), in Gujarat (1401-1572), and in Khandesh (by the end of the fourteenth century). A Shahi kingdom was founded in Kashmir by an usurper, Sahamara, setting aside the Hindu royal family in 1339. This new dynasty continued till the middle of the sixteenth century.

Many of these kingdoms outlived the Delhi Sultanate, to be destroyed later by the Mughuls. Only the Madurai kingdom (Maabar of Muslim writers) was annihilated by the Vijayanagara empire.

Thus major parts of India came under the rule of Islam. This rule of Islam brought about many cultural and social changes in the country.

Medieval Life and Culture

Medieval Society. Before the Medieval Period, the political unity of
the whole country was the cherished ideal of Indian rulers. The Mauryas had striven to unite India under their rule. The Guptas ruled over North India, and entered into diplomatic and matrimonial alliances with Southern rulers like the Vakatakas and the Kadambas. The concept of bringing the whole earth under a single umbrella (Ekacchatradhipathy) and performing the horse sacrifice (Ashvamedha) in symbolic achievement of this goal were common in ancient India.

But after Harsha there followed a “struggle for the empire”. This struggle weakened the Indian princes. Regionalism became the order of the day. The disciplined and better equipped armies of the foreigners could therefore easily defeat the rulers in India.

The decaying social system of the Hindus was also responsible for the defeat of the Indian rulers. Hindu society had lost the vigour and vitality of the Classical Period.

The greatest asset of Hinduism is the freedom enjoyed by its followers. Every Hindu is free to worship any deity and adhere to any form of worship. This freedom helped many religious sects to flourish side by side in India. Alberuni was deeply impressed by the tolerance of the Hindus. But with the loss of the vigour and vitality of the Classical Age, Hinduism degenerated. This freedom to some extent weakened the society. Hinduism became a jumble of innumerable faiths and superstitions. Numberless sects and subsects came into being. Each sect became exclusive.

Society had already been divided into multitudinous castes. Anuloma (a high-caste man marrying a low-caste woman) and Pratiloma (a low-caste man marrying a high-caste woman) marriages caused the emergence of many new castes during the ancient period, in addition to the four broad existing Varnas. Later people of the same profession were grouped into a single caste. Thus the castes of potters, barbers, carpenters, etc. emerged. Linguistic, regional and sectarian differences also increased the multiplicity of castes. If the Marathi-speaking cobbler belonged to one caste, the Kannada-speaking member of the same profession formed another distinct caste.

To check the onslaughts of foreigners (Mlecchas) on the society, caste regulations were tightened. Inter-dining and inter-marrying with members of other castes were forbidden. Admission of non-Hindus into the Hindu fold was never countenanced. Caste rules were so framed that no loophole was left for any intrusion by
outsiders. Each caste became a rigid barrier safeguarding the 'realm' of Hinduism. Thus caste rigidity served a purpose.

But these rigid caste regulations weakened the society in the long run. Breaking of caste regulations resulted in excommunication of the offender. Alberuni narrates the plight of the captured Hindu soldiers who had escaped from the Muslim camp. They could not regain their caste. They were condemned for having contacted the Mlecchas. As a part of this attitude of keeping away from foreigners, sea voyage was also banned. Overseas activities of the Classical Period stopped, and colonies in the East became sadly neglected.

Villages also continued as self-sufficient units. Muslim rulers generally neglected the villages. Thus villages also became exclusive and insular.

The medieval society thus suffered from the tendency to exclusiveness. Regions, castes and villages tended to segregate themselves. Social unity was lost. This trend, which had begun much earlier than the advent of Islam, was hastened by the Muslim invasions.

The position of women in this conservative society was miserable. To prevent grown-up girls from being abducted by Muslims, child marriage became popular. The difficulty of finding a match in the same caste for a girl at the proper age also encouraged this practice. Contacts with Islam also brought purdha (veil) into wider use in Hindu society. Women started wearing veils. This custom, adopted as a protective measure, caused the social and intellectual stagnation of women. Sati came to be practised more strictly than before to prevent abduction of young widows.

These social changes were so articulate that even a foreign visitor, Alberuni, says that the ancestors of the Hindus were "not so narrow-minded as the present generation."

These steps had been taken to protect and conserve the Hindu society. But variety, which had been a prominent feature of Hindu life, gave way to irreconcilable diversity.

Medieval Culture. In the field of literature, science and the fine arts, the period saw a further decline. Sanskrit literature deteriorated in quality. But literature in regional languages developed and local scripts were evolved. In architecture, the impact of Islam was clearly felt with the development of the Indo-Saracenic style.

Literature. Great writers like Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Bana and others had enriched Sanskrit literature, and the literary value of
the works of the Classical Age was high. The poets of the age dealt with popular secular topics.

But the literary works of the Medieval Period were in the main religious, imitative, artificial and pedantic. Writers were eager to display their technical skill, diction and scholarship. The genius of the earlier age appeared to have dried up and originality lost. Except for Jayadeva (*Grestagovinda*) and Shri Harsha (*Naishadhacharita*), both of the twelfth century, there was no poet of merit during the age, comparable with the host of Classical writers. "The creative period, however, had long been a matter of the past, there being little intrinsic merit, though the production is immense and almost every branch of literature is represented. There is no originality."¹

Religious topics were popular. Themes were drawn more and more from the epics and the Puranas. Kshemendra’s *Bharatha Manjari* or *Ramayana Manjari*, Bhoja’s *Ramayana Champu* and Abhinava Kalidasa’s *Bhagavatha Champu* can be quoted here as examples. Production of purely religious and scholastic works was also evidenced by the writing of various anthologies and commentaries. Claudeswara’s *Smiritrutnakara* and Harinatha’s *Smritisara* are a few such books. *Bhamati* by Vachaspathi was a commentary on Advaita Vedanta. Sayana and Madhava wrote commentaries on the *Vedas*. Vedanta Desika interpreted *Visishtadvaita Vedanta* of Ramanuja. Of the vast amount of religious works of the period, *Bhagavata Purana* was an outstanding one. Doyi wrote *Pavanadoota* in imitation of Kalidasa’s *Meghadoota*. Such instances are many. Dhanadaraja wrote *Shatakas* (*Vairagyashtaka* and *Shringarashataka*) in imitation of Bhartrihari.

Madhava Bhatta’s *Raghave Pandaviya*, a *kavya* which tries to narrate the story of Rama and Krishna simultaneously, or Vidya Madhava’s *Parvathi Rukminiya*, a similar work, are illustrations of poets trying to demonstrate their scholarship. These works are artificial rather than really poetic.

All literary works were mechanical reproductions of earlier models. "Works seem to be produced only for the learned; there is no contact with the masses."² Islam in no way influenced Sanskrit literature. But scholars turned more and more towards religious themes as their religion was in peril.

¹ *History and Culture of the Indian People*, vol. 1, p. 464.
² Ibid.
Except in Tamil, there was no substantial literature in regional languages during the ancient period. But the Medieval period saw a remarkable activity in vernacular literature. The rise of the Bhakti cult gave further impetus to regional languages. Alphabets of vernacular languages were also fully evolved during the period. Growth of regionalism is clearly evidenced by the growth of regional literature.

An independent Marathi literature was evolved following the writings of Jnanadeva (Jnanesvari), Ramdas (Dasabodh) and compositions of saints like Nivritti, Namadev and Tukaram. Writings of Sufi propagandists like Kutuban and Jayasi gave a fillip to Hindi literature. Kabir, Surdas and Tulsidas enriched Hindi literature. In Kannada, Veerashaivas like Basava and Haribhara, Jain writers like Janna and Ratnakara and Brahmin poets like Kumara Vyasa and Purandara enriched the literature. Nanneyya’s Ramayana gave impetus to writing in Telugu. Srinatha lived in the fifteenth century. The ‘Augustan Age’ of Telugu literature was witnessed during the sixteenth century under the patronage of Vijayanagara rulers. Vigorous activity in other regional languages like Bengali and Assamese was also seen. The originality and creativity of the Indian mind was better reflected in the literary production in these regional languages than in Sanskrit during the period. But much of the literary work was in verse, and prose writing was not common. The themes were generally religious.

In the field of science, no great scientists or mathematicians comparable to Aryabhatta, Varahamihira and Brahma Gupta (all of the Classical Age) were to be found during the Medieval Period. Bhaskaracharya, who lived during the twelfth century, was the only great mathematician of Medieval India. Similarly, Chakrapani Datta was the last great creative scholar in the field of medicine. His works Ayurveda Deepika and Bhanumati (of the eleventh century) caused him to be ranked with Charaka and Sushruta. There was not much experimentation in the field of medicine. Popularisation of Unani, the Muslim medical system, must have caused a lot of confusion in the minds of Ayurvedic scholars.

The physical sciences were totally neglected during the Medieval Period. Old technical knowledge continued without innovations. The plough, weavers’ implements or blacksmithy were never sought to be improved.

Fine Arts. Sharngadeva of the thirteenth century wrote Sangeeta-
ratnakara, giving a clear picture of Indian achievement in the field. Music entered a new phase with the advent of Islam. Balban and Raziya were great patrons of music. Amir Khusrau was not only a musician, but also an authority on the music of his time. He has described in detail the contemporary singers and various instruments in his writings. He was responsible for combining many Persian and Indian melodies. Some scholars feel that he invented the sitar by combining the Indian varna and Persian tambura. Anyhow, the sitar is the product of the genius of the Indo-Muslim musicians. Similarly the Indian varidonga was modified to evolve the tabla. In the court of Jaipur the Khayal, a style of Hindustani music, developed. The Gwalior school was evolved under the patronage of Raja Mansingh of Gwalior, who wrote Manakutukal, is a work on music. Mansingh revived the Dhrupad style of Hindustani music and Baiju was a great singer at his court. Qawwali, Thumri and Gazal became popular in India due to the efforts of Muslim singers.

In the South, Karnataka music was evolved in Vijayanagara. Vidyaranya is believed to be the originator of this school. Rama Amatya and Purandara Dasa helped its development. Even this southern school was influenced by Islam. Ragas like Kalyani and Durbar with Persian influence were popularised by the Dasas.

Dancing as an art degenerated in North India as it was required to cater to the taste of the urban rich. In the South, especially in Vijayanagara, the classical dance flourished.

Islam did not encourage the art of painting as the Quran is opposed to pictorial representation of the human anatomy. Islam felt that paintings might also encourage idolatry. Painting did not receive much encouragement from the Delhi Sultans. But the Mughuls did patronise it.

In the Deccan the artistic genius of the people came to an end by the eighth century, say the art critics. If the paintings at Ajanta of the classical period are of high artistic value, those at Ellora, of later centuries, are of lower quality.

In architecture, the mark of Islam was clearly felt. In the North the construction of Hindu temples and other such major buildings practically stopped due to Islamic rule. Only in the South, the activity continued. Beautiful Hindu monuments were built in Central India and Orissa during the early centuries of the Medieval Period. In the extreme South, the Hoysala and Vijayanagara
styles were evolved in succession.

The Muslims, by grafting the Indian and Persian ideas, evolved a new style of architecture called Indo-Saracenic. In these new structures the severe simplicity of Islamic buildings was toned down. Restraint was put on the profuse ornamentation of the Hindus. The general design and craftsmanship continued to be Indian in these buildings. But the plain walls, domes and spacious interiors were all Muslim.

"Concrete had been little used in India and mortar scarcely ever" says Marshall. It is the Muslims who popularised the use of mortar in Indian buildings. The Muslim buildings were marked by their breadth and spaciousness. They used pointed and squinch arches. (Arches were known in India, but were not so profusely used before the advent of Islam.) Domes, minars and minarets were also introduced. Profuse decoration of buildings with images and figures was not popular with the Muslims. But they replaced Hindu floral designs with geometrical patterns and calligraphic carvings. Glazed tiles and coloured stone blocks were also used to decorate the interior walls and floor.

The Kutub-ul-Islam Mosque built by Qutbuddin and the Qutb Minar are the two earliest constructions. Alai Darwaza and Jamat Khana Masjid are the buildings of the Khaljis. Mausoleums of Tughluq rulers like Ghiyasuddin and Firuz Shah are other notable works. In addition to these constructions at Delhi, there were some in Bengal, Jaunpur, Gujarat and Gulbarga. The Indo-Saracenic style further developed in the times of the Mughuls and the Shahis of the South as of Bijapur.

Impact of Islam. To sum up, Islam was indirectly responsible for making Hindu society caste-ridden and exclusive. The Hindu woman was veiled, and Sati was made more strict. Child marriage became more popular.

The Sufis started writing in Hindi. Hindi literature thus developed. Urdu as a hybrid of Hindi and Persian also grew. Arabic words crept into this new language. Indian music was also highly influenced by Islam. New schools like Khayal developed in Hindustani music due to the influence of Persian music. New instruments like tabla and sitar were evolved.

In architecture, the Indo-Saracenic style with spacious interiors, massive domes, arches and minars appeared.

Sufism was highly influenced by the mysticism of the Hindus.
And the monotheistic ideas of Islam influenced Hindu society, and especially some of the leaders of the Bhakti movement like Kabir.

The Bhakti Movement

Though the Medieval Period has been called an age of cultural barrenness or stagnation, the rise of the Bhakti cult was a unique development of the period. That the Hindu society had not completely lost its vigour and vitality was made clear by the rise of this movement which helped to meet the problems raised by the religious crisis.

Bhakti (intense devotion) is one of the three paths to attaining salvation according to Hindu belief. The other two courses are Jnana (Knowledge) and Karma (Action). Bhakti has been considered the simplest means to salvation for the common folk.

Leaders of the Bhakti movement were mystic saints. They restated the ancient truth in simple and popular terms. They emphasised the Oneness of God. To Him, all were equal. He resided in everybody's heart, and one need not go in search of Him elsewhere. The majority of these mystic saints were Vaishnavites. They taught universality of love. To these saints “Bhakti meant single-minded, uninterrupted and extreme devotion to God without any ultimate motive, growing gradually into an intense love. This love was akin to the love of a man for his dear and near ones.”

South India was the cradle of this movement. The Nayanars (Saivas) and Alvars (Vaishnavas) of Tamil Nadu popularised the path of Bhakti by their devotional songs. Due to the popularisation of Vaishnavism by two great religious teachers from the South, the Bhakti movement became strong. The two saints were Ramanuja and Madhwa.

Ramanuja (1017-1137) was born in Tamil Nadu. He propagated Visishtadwaita (qualified monism) in the South. Madhwa (1238-1317) was born in Mysore State. He taught Dwaita (dualism). Followers of these schools were responsible for initiating many leaders of the Bhakti movement. Propagation of Veerashaivism, a zealous Saiva cult, by Basava, a minister of the King of Kalyana during the twelfth century, is a notable development in the field of religious awakening of the South. His followers like Allama and Akka

2 Ibid., vi, p. 548.
Mahadevi composed many *Vachanas* upholding devotion to Shiva and a life of morality.

Ramananda (1300-1410) is believed to be the founder of the medieval *Bhakti* movement in the North. Born at Allahabad, Ramananda studied Ramanuja philosophy at Varanasi. He propagated Rama *Bhakti* by using Hindi instead of Sanskrit. "There is only one God Who is the origin of all," Ramananda taught. He opposed caste distinctions, and among his chief disciples there was Raidas, a cobbler. The religious renaissance of medieval India was begun by him.

Ramananda was the preceptor of Kabir, Jnanadeva and Raidas. (Raidas in turn was the preceptor of Meera.) "Ramananda occupies a unique place in the history of religion in Medieval India... he was mainly instrumental in ushering in a new epoch of medieval mysticism."

Jnanadeva or Jnaneshwar is believed to have been initiated to Vishnu *Bhakti* by Ramananda. His sister Mukta Bai and friend Namadev were the great saints of Maharashtra, who were devotees of Vithala or Vithoba of Pandharpur. (Vithoba is a Marathi form of Vishnu manifestation.) Vithal *Bhakti* gave rise to the *Varkari* cult in Maharashtra. The Varkaris did not recognise the differences of caste and sex. There were female saints like Mukta Bai and Sakhu Bai. Gora was a potter and Chokhamela, an untouchable. But the Varkaris held them in high esteem. Tukaram and Samartha Ramdas were two later saints of Maharashtra, contemporaries of Shivaji. The social atmosphere for the founding of Haidavi Swaraj of Shivaji is believed to have been created by the activities of these saints in Maharashtra.

Purandara Dasa and Kanakadasa were Vaishnava saints of the sixteenth century from Karnataka. They lived in the glorious days of the Vijayanagara empire. They were the disciples of the Madhwa ascetic Vyasaethertha. The *Bhakti* movement in Karnataka was essentially a Madhwa movement. The sixteenth century saw a renaissance of Veerashaivism under the patronage of Vijayanagara.

After Ramananda, Kabir was a great leader of the *Bhakti* movement from the North. Of unknown parentage, Kabir (c. 1398-1494) was brought up by a Muslim couple who were weavers by profession. A devotee of Rama, Kabir refused to acknowledge

the distinctions based on religion and caste. "Mecca has verily become Kashi and Rama has become Rahim," Kabir says in one of his devotional songs.

To him religion without Bhakti was no religion, and all rituals and disciplines are meaningless if they are not accompanied by the real remembering of God. Differences between Hindu and Muslim are artificial as there was "neither Turk nor Hindu in the beginning," he argued. Followers of Kabir later founded Kabir Panth, to which Hindus and Muslims alike owed allegiance.

Dadi Dayal (1514-1606) was a follower of Kabir and a saint from Ahmedabad. He continued Kabir's work and founded Brahma Sampradaya. "The illusion of Allah and Rama has been dispelled from my mind...I see no difference between a Hindu and a Turk" says one of his poems.

Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikhism, was also influenced by the Bhakti movement and the non-sectarian attitudes of these saints. "There is one God in the world and no other," Nanak taught. He is supposed to have acknowledged Kabir as his spiritual guide.

Chaitanya or Gauranga Prabhu (1485-1533) was a saint from Bengal who popularised Vishnu Bhakti. He introduced sankirtan or service through song. He told all persons, irrespective of caste and creed, that they were competent to worship God. Among his followers were Muslims and untouchables. So great was his impact on Bengal that many later literary works in Bengali have Chaitanya as their central theme.

Tulsidas, Surdas and Mira are three other great leaders of the movement who by their writings enriched Hindi literature.

Mira (1547-1614) belonged to the royal family of Jodhpur. She was married to a prince of Mewar. But from her fifth year she had been nurturing the notion that her husband was Giridhar Gopal. "Giridhar Gopal alone is mine, and none else," sings Mira in one of her kirtans in her devotion to Krishna. Raidas, a cobbler, was her preacher.

A contemporary of Mira was Tulsidas (1532-1623), a saint-poet from Benares. He belonged to the order of Ramananda. This devotee of Rama was a universalist and loved all humanity. "There is one God, Rama, creator of heaven and earth and redeemer of humanity," Tulsidas said. His great Hindi epic Ramcharita Manasa has been described as "the one Bible of a hundred
million people.” To all Hindi-speaking people, rich and poor alike, this work has a universal appeal.

Sur Das (1483-1585), “the blind bard of Agra,” was a disciple of Vallabhadarya, a religious teacher from the South who lived in the North. Sur was a devotee of Krishna, and his Sursagar is a great work in praise of Krishna. Surdas is ranked with Tulsidas for his literary merit.

Saukaradeva of Assam, Panthanan of Kerala and Lalladevi (a devotee of Shiva) of Kashmir were the other saints from the far-flung provinces of India.

The contribution of these religious leaders to Hindu society was great. They carried on an incessant campaign against excessive polytheism, and stressed the unity of God. They highlighted the debasing effects of rituals and ceremonies being given undue prominence. They condemned superstitions. They attacked notions of caste differences and preached universal brotherhood. This attitude helped to raise the status of low-caste people. They gave fillip to the development of vernacular literatures as they taught and composed poems in those languages. Saints like Kabir, Nanak, Dadu, Chaitanya and Lalladevi tried to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity.

In the words of K. M. Panikkar, when “a country is enslaved and its spirit weakened, it finds solace in a doctrine of other-worldliness…. The Bhakti cult became the new Gospel of the fifteenth century—a religion of escape and essentially of worldly pessimism.”

What the saints taught was not remembered by their followers for long. A sect or an order was created in the name of a saint. His followers were later split into a number of sub-sects. New cults and their various linguistic branches added to the number of already existing castes and sub-castes in the course of time.

Sufism. A parallel in Islam to the Bhakti movement is Sufism. It is the mystic cult of Islam. The name is derived from the word “saaf” meaning pure and clean. Though Sufism originated in Arabia it spread to India, and was influenced by Hindu mysticism. The Sufis “led ascetic lives and laid emphasis on the practices of self-discipline and preparing the human for the intuitive knowledge of God.”

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*A Survey of Indian History, p. 183.*
*History and Culture of the Indian People, vi, p. 551.*
Sufism was a cult of intense devotion to God. Love of God was its passion. Song and dance were its forms of worship. Submerging the self in God was its ideal.

The Sufis had arrived in India as early as the eleventh century. Shaik Ismail and Dataganj Baksh, both of Lahore, were the two earliest Sufi saints. Auliya was a great saint who lived in Delhi, and Amir Khusru was his follower. By their simple life and popular expression, the Sufi saints gathered around them a number of followers. They condemned formalism and preached a religion of sincerity.

Sufi writers wrote in Hindi and Urdu to propagate their religion. Their themes were secular love stories and their style was popular. Kutuban wrote *Mrigavati* (1501) and Malik Mohamed Jayasi narrated the story of Padmini of Chitore in his work *Padmavat* (1520). Sheik Usman composed *Chitravali* in 1630. They enriched Hindi literature like the Hindu saints did. The History and Culture of the Indian People points out the following similarities between the Bhakti movement and Sufism: (1) physical exercises like restraining of breath; (2) service and submission to *pir* or guru; (3) recitation of sacred words; (4) tolerance towards other religions; and (5) belief in union with the supreme being through love and *Bhakti*.  

The contribution of Sufism to Muslim society was considerable. Islam had failed to win over converts from among the Hindus as the followers of Islam had come to India with sword in hand. But the Sufis preached Islam and won over many converts. But the orthodox Muslims disliked Sufism.

Like Hindu saints, Sufi writers enriched Hindi and Urdu literature. Many Sufis influenced the *Bhakti* movement. Lalla Devi had a Sufi preceptor.

*Contribution of Vijayanagara*

*Political History.* Islam spread its arms to South India during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Alauddin Khalji made serious attempts to enslave South India by sending his general Malik Kafoor.

Kafoor overthrew the kingdoms of Devagiri, Warangal, Dvarasamudra and Madurai. This devastating campaign, which plun-

dered cities, ransacked temples, smashed idols and undertook large-
scale conversions, was a matter of shock to South India. Attempts
of Hoysala Vira Ballala III to restore freedom in the South did
not succeed. His death in 1343 in a fight against the Madurai
Sultan practically ended the Hoysala empire. On the ruins of the
destroyed South Indian Hindu states was founded the empire of
Vijayanagara. It originated in 1336 on the banks of the Tunga-
bdra, largely through the efforts of two energetic Hindu youths,
Harihara and Bukka.

There has been a controversy over the origin of these young men.
Some hold that they were commanders in the service of the Kaka-
tiyas of Warangal. The Muslim armies of Delhi took them captive,
converted them to Islam and sent them back as governors to the
southern country. They revolted and founded the new empire
after deserting their new religion, says one version. But the gen-
erally accepted view is that they were generals of the Hoysalas put
in charge of the northern parts of the Hoysala kingdom. With the
waning of the Hoysala power, they founded a new and independent
kingdom. They resisted Islam and saved the South from its on-
slaughts.

Vidyaranya, a Saiva ascetic, and later a pontiff of the Sringeri
monastery, is believed to have helped them in the founding of the
new kingdom.

The early rulers of Vijayanagara belonged to the Sangama
dynasty, named after the father of Harihara and Bukka. Harihara
did not rule for long, and in his last years, Bukka was a joint
ruler. In 1347 was founded the rule of the Bahmani dynasty
of Gulbarga, a permanent rival of Vijayanagara. But Vijayanagara
succeeded in preventing the Bahmani rulers from crossing the
Tungabhadra. The Sultanate of Madurai, founded in 1334, was
destroyed and its territory was brought under the new kingdom.
This was accomplished in the days of Bukka, by his son Kampana.

Harihara II (1377-1404) assumed imperial titles. On his
orders Madhavacharya (identified by many scholars as Vidy-
aranya) and his brother Sayana, the two ministers, began the
colossal work of compiling the Vedic texts and writing comment-
taries on the Vedas. Many other Sanskrit anthologies were also
compiled by these savants by engaging hundreds of scholars. This
task was a signal service to the Hindu society, as it helped the
preservation of Hindu culture.
Devaraya II (1422-46) was a great ruler of this dynasty. He severely punished the Bahmani Sultan, whose armies had been continuously harassing the Hindu Empire. The frightened Sultan transferred his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar, further north. The Emperor organised a fleet, and exacted tribute from Ceylon and Pegu. His rule witnessed a cultural upsurge. There were writers in Sanskrit (the Emperor himself was one), Kannada and Telugu in his days. Veerasaiva Renaissance was witnessed during his rule. The last rulers of the Sangama dynasty were weak and inefficient. When the Empire was facing crisis due to invasions from the north and east, Saluva Narasimha, a strong commander, usurped the throne. By winning many victories against the enemies of the kingdom, he restored the prestige of the empire. Narasimha (1485-90) was also a Sanskrit scholar.

Soon after the death of Narasimha, there was a second usurpation by Narasa Nayaka, who founded the Tuluva Dynasty. His second son, Krishnadevaraya (1509-29), is the greatest among the Vijayanagara emperors. The Bahmani Sultan was reduced to the position of a puppet, and the five Shahi kingdoms of Bidar, Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golconda and Berar were emerging in Central India. Krishnadevaraya defeated the Bijapur ruler and captured Raichur fort from him. He even invaded and camped in his enemy’s capital. He forced Barid Shah of Bidar to release the imprisoned Bahmani Sultan and had him crowned. The Hindu Emperor assumed the title “Establisher of Muslim Kingdom” after this achievement. But the Sultan’s rule did not last for long, and the five Shahis continued.

Krishnadevaraya was a great patron of learning and the fine arts. In his court lived the great Telugu poets who were compared to eight diggajas or elephants supporting the earth. Among them were Peddana, Tenali Ramakrishna and Dhurjati. The emperor himself was a writer in Sankrit and Telugu. He constructed the Krishnaswamy and the Vithalaswamy temples in the capital. Krishnadeva was a devotee of Vyasateertha, the Madhwa ascetic. Purandara and Kanaka, the Vaishnava saints, were his contemporaries.

Successors of Krishnadevaraya were not as efficient as he was. In the days of Sadashiva (1542-67) power was usurped by Aliya Ramaraya, a son-in-law of Krishnadevaraya. This administrator was a shrewd politician and an able commander. He extended the Empire’s frontiers upto the Krishna river. But the united force of
the four Shahis gave a death blow to the Empire in 1565 in a battle at Rakkasa Tangadi (also called the Battle of Talikota) on the banks of the Krishna. The imperial capital, deserted by the Emperor, was plundered and ransacked.

The Empire continued for another three quarters of a century in the South, ruled by members of the Aravidu family of Ramaraya who had died in 1565. Penukonda, Chandragiri and Vellore were their capitals in succession. Mir Jumla, a Golconda commander, captured Vellore in 1646. The last Emperor, Sri Ranga III, became an “Emperor without an Empire.”

By then, five subordinates of the Empire, namely, the Nayakas of Tanjore, Madurai, Jinji, and Keladi, and the Wadiyars of Mysore had founded independent kingdoms.

In 1646, Vijayanagara ended. By then, Shivaji had started his career in the North. The task of protecting Hindu Dharma had been taken up by the Maratha hero.

Vijayanagara’s Service to Hinduism. The Empire helped the protection and conservation of Hindu culture in the South. The large and ancient temples in the South could not have been protected but for Vijayanagara. In addition to protecting these temples, Vijayanagara was also responsible for adding new towers and vast Kalyana Mantapas to the existing temples. All these temples were richly endowed by the Empire.

By arranging for the editing and compiling of the Vedic texts, Vijayanagara helped the conservation of Hindu religious tradition. Volumes of commentaries on the Vedas were written. Many anthologies connected with Hindu tradition were compiled by the scholarly brothers, Madhava and Sayana. Parashara Madhaviya and Kala-Madhava are works of Madhava on Dharmasastras. The former is a commentary on Parashara Smriti. Sarvadarshanasangraha by the same author is a famous critical review of Indian philosophical systems.

The Empire extended patronage to all religious schools. There were famous Jaina scholars and writers patronised by the Empire. Amidst the Hampi ruins are some Jaina basadis of the days of the Empire. The two Gomata statues in South Kanara, at Karkala and Venur, were erected in the days of Vijayanagara. The Sangamas were Saivas, and patronised the Sringeri monastery. The Tuluvas were Srivaishnavas (followers of Ramanuja). Irrespective of their personal religion, the emperors donated lands for service in the centres of worship of various religions. Devaraya II
was a great patron of Veerasaivism. He also constructed a mosque for the Muslims in the capital. Krishnadevaraya, himself a Srivaishnava, was a devotee of the Madhva saint, Vyasateertha. Portuguese visitors, among whom there were Catholic priests, praise the tolerant attitude of the Emperors.

_Synthesis of South Indian Culture_. All Indian religious schools flourished in the Empire. Together with Sanskrit, literature in all South Indian languages flourished. Telugu literature saw its ‘Augustan Age’. Great Kannada poets like Kumara Vyasa, Chamarasa and Ratnakara Varni lived in the days of the Empire.

The Emperors, in addition to the construction of new temples like Vithalaswamy, Krishnaswamy and Hajara Ramaswamy in the capital, added new towers and _Kalyana Mantapas_ to many existing temples. The towers of the Virupaksha temple and the large _Kalyana Mantapa_ are also additions made by Krishnadeva. Commanders and subordinate rulers of the Empire likewise constructed beautiful temples at Tadapatri, Lepakshi and Bhatkal.

Vijayanagara architecture borrowed ideas from the existing schools of architecture in South India. Certain features of Chola and Pandya monuments of Tamil Nadu, and certain others of the Chalukya and the Hoysala buildings were incorporated in the new imperial style. The style thus represented a synthesis of earlier architectural schools of the South. In painting, the Empire followed the Tanjore school.

Dance had its hey-day in Vijayanagara, and dancing girls had a prominent part in the Vijayanagara court. All major temples in the empire were endowed with services of the dancing girls. Foreign visitors, like Abdur Razzak, describe in glowing terms the skill of the dancing girls of Vijayanagara.

_Sangitasara_ of Vidyaranya is the first work on Karnatak or _Dakshinadi_ music. Rama Amatya, a minister of the Empire, developed the school further. Purandara Dasa was a great exponent of the school. The school was further developed in the days of the succeeding kingdoms like Tanjore and Mysore.

Vijayanagara was responsible for all-round progress in the field of religion and the fine arts. The peace and prosperity fostered by the Empire helped to further cultural activities. The Empire also extended generous patronage to all these pursuits.

Rightly, the Empire has been regarded as representing the “synthesis of South Indian culture.”
“Vijayanagara was essentially a military state. Its organisation reflected the primary purpose of maintaining a successful resistance against the Muslims. And yet it was also a centre of a Hindu revival, of the rejuvenation of Sanskrit and the vernacular languages, the proclaimed successor of the orthodox doctrine of Hindu Empire.”

Medieval Indian Architecture

As Central and South India were undisturbed by the Muslim invasion during the early centuries of the medieval period, distinct schools of architecture developed in Central India, Orissa and Karnataka. In Karnataka the Chalukyan and Hoysala schools flourished. Later, under Vijayanagara, a distinct style in temple building developed in South India.

The Nagara style found its expression in Orissa, in Eastern India and in Khajuraho in Central India, with some regional variations. In Orissa, the activity centered round three important towns, Bhuvaneswar, Puri, and Konarak. Of these Bhuvaneswar alone accounts for hundreds of temples. The earliest and the best in the group is the temple of Mukteswara, which Fergusson called “the gem of Orissan art.” The next stage in the development of the style is seen at Rajarani, which is specially noted for its erotic sculpture. Perhaps the most majestic of the Indian temples is the Lingaraj temple. This represents the Orissan type at its full maturity. The Lingaraj is known for its majestic proportion, extraordinary means of construction, and elegant carvings. The temple of Jagannatha at Puri is modelled after the Lingaraj, but it is inferior to it “in design and detail.” For a vigorous style one has to turn to the Sun temple at Konarak, popularly known as the ‘Black Pagoda’. Built on a high basement, the temple, now in deserted fragments, is majestic in appearance. The outstanding feature of this temple are its gigantic wheels, which have been executed in an orderly and balanced way. Thus the Nagara style assumed new dimensions and grandeur in the Orissa group of temples.

Another important centre of the Indo-Aryan style is at Khajuraho, Central India. Here are some 20 temples belonging to three religions, Shaiva, Vaishnava and Jaina. Each group includes one

*Panikkar, K. M., A Survey of Indian History, p. 174.*
prominent temple and the rest are subsidiary. The temple of Kandariya Mahadeva, in the Shaiva Group, "is the largest and the most representative of Khajuraho temples." It has a magnificent shikhara which gives the appearance of "ant hills." Of the prominent temples belonging to the other groups, mention may be made of the Vishnu temple and the temple of Parsvanatha.

The Hoysala School. The Hoysalas were a small dynasty from the point of view of Indian history. Their rule extended over parts of the present Mysore state and Tamil Nadu. But they are conspicuous by their contribution to the field of sculpture and architecture.

The Hoysalas were initially subordinates of the Chalukyas of Kalyana. The Chalukyas of Badami had been overthrown by the Rashtrakutas (757-973), but after the latter's rule of more than two centuries, a Chalukya family regained the throne. They are known as the later Chalukyas or the Chalukyas of Kalyana. The Hoysalas of Dvarasamudra (modern Halebid) were feudatories of these Chalukyas. With the waning of Chalukyan power, the Hoysalas became free.

But even before they got their freedom, the Hoysalas had started building their temples. The later Chalukyan style of construction is slightly distinct from that of the Chalukyas of Badami. But there are certain similarities between the later Chalukyan and Hoysala styles. Some scholars have grouped these two styles under the name Chalukyan, and some others have regarded the Hoysala style as a branch of the former. But the style of the Hoysalas, no doubt, is distinctive.

The two styles have certain common features. The columns are lathe turned; the doorway of the temple is profusely carved; and the pierced stone windows, sparingly used by the Chalukyas, but profusely by the Hoysalas.

In addition to these common features, the Hoysala structures have certain other features. Firstly, the ground plan of the Hoysalas is star-shaped or stellar. Though the Doddabasappa temple of Dambal (Dharwar District) of the Chalukyan style has a star-shaped garbhagriha, it is of a slightly later date than some of the Hoysala temples of Belur and Talakadu. Moreover the stellate plan is not an essential part of the Chalukyan temples, as it is of the Hoysala temples.

The Hoysala temples are of the pethika (casket) type, standing
on an elevated plinth or jagati, more than five feet in height, and more than six feet in breadth. It serves as pradakshina patha (perambulatory path) around the temple. Its shape is in conformity with the stellar plan of the temple.

Conforming to the star-shaped plan, the walls and shikhara of the temple also mount in a stellar shape; this has made the walls zigzag, providing for the play of light and shade on the sculptures on them. These walls are also divided into two zones, upper and lower, for the display of sculptured motifs.

The domical ceiling or Bhuvaneswari above narakanga or the central hall is another feature of these temples.

A notable aspect of Hoysala architecture is the use of a close-grained stone, chloritic schist, a type of soapstone, yielding to rich and minutely detailed decorative carving. The Hoysala temples are renowned for their exuberant sculpture work. The doorway is so richly carved with floral designs and idols that the sculptor appears to have been extravagant in his efforts. Above the jagati, there are decorative friezes in the walls. The lowest band has a row of elephants, as if moving in a procession. Above that is a band of cavalry men. The third band from below has floral designs. Above this is a frieze of mythical scenes, narrating the story of Ramayana and Bhagawatha. There are two other bands, of makara and geese above this. These form the lower zone of the wall.

The upper zone of the wall has beautiful figures, four or five feet high, of gods and goddesses and dancing girls. A richly carved makara torana or floral design surmounts the figures. These temples have short shikhara, all in the Dravida style.

The lathed pillars, square at the bottom, take the shape of vases, kalashas and bells. They are finely polished. Above the capital, there are sloping brackets, containing beautifully carved figures of salabhanjikas or madanikais. “Their high finish rivals that of the figures” in the outer walls. Of all the Hoysala sculptures these bracket figures are the finest.

There are nearly a hundred Hoysala monuments. Of these, the Chennakeshava temple is among the earliest, constructed by King Vishnuvardhana. The next important temple is of Hoysaleswara at Halebid, a “gem of architecture,” surpassing anything in gothic art,” in the words of Fergusson. Percy Brown has called the Halebid temple the “supreme climax of Indian architecture.” “A very typical and complete example of the style” (K. A. N. Sastri) is
the temple at Somanathpur. This triple (trikutachala) shrine has three cellas. The entrance on the east leads to the central cela. To the right and left of the central cela, are a cela each, giving the temple the shape of a cross. The three cellas have shikharas above them.

These temples are so richly carved that not a single square inch of space appears to have been left plain in the walls. Dasoja and his son Chavana were the chief shilpis of the Belur temple. A shilpi is both an architect and a sculptor. Kedaroja carved the rich door-
way of Hoysaleswara temple. Kalidasi, Baichoja and Mallitamma were other shilpis of the period. They have signed their creations.

The Hoysala rule was a period of rich and varied cultural activity. Eminent Kannada and Sanskrit poets flourished in their courts. The figures in their temples give us an idea not only of their artistic attainment, but also of the popularity of dance and music. The dancing figures indicate their proficiency in the art. They are accompanied by players of virdangam, reena, flute, drum, cymbals, a stringed scraper and a variety of other instruments. No specimen of their paintings remains. But their skill in bronze work is illustrated by a lone tripod (stand), richly engraved, in the Belur temple.

The Hoysalas provided a bright chapter to the history of Indian art.

**Vijayanagara Style.** Vijayanagara represented the synthesis of South Indian culture. This synthesis is well represented in its archi-
tecture.

The Vijayanagara temples borrowed many features of the con-
structions of the previous dynasties like the Cholas, Pandyas, Chaluk-
yas and Hoysalas. The elevated plinth of the Chalukya-Hoysala structures (the Hoysala plinth or jagati is wider than the temple proper) was taken up by Vijayanagara architects. The Chalukyas had the outer walls of their temples crowned by small gopura mantapas or turret-like niches (erected on the roofs) as witnessed in the Itagi Mahadeva temple. These gopuras are also found in the Vijayanagara style.

In the extreme south, the temples were also centres of social
activity. Vast halls or mantapas are found in the Chola or Pandya
temples. The southern temples have pyramidal gopuras above the
entrance. This expanse and grandeur of the southern temples
influenced the Vijayanagara architects.

Built within a strong enclosure, the Vijayanagara temple has
a gateway crowned by a gopura. The gateway is of granite or hard stone. Vijayanagara shilpis used hard granite as the medium of their art to add strength and durability to their structures. Vijayanagar was a military state, founded to resist Muslim onslaughts. This hard granite represented the Empire's character. Soapstone was discarded. But the super-structure, gopura, was a brick-wood-stucco construction. The gopura, ascends like the Chola gopura. On the talas of the gopura are life-size brick and stucco figures, both of men and gods. At the top, there is a shala shikhara, resembling a barrel made to rest on its side. The gopura is strengthened by wooden beams.

A new resurgence of the Hindu mind appears to have taken place, and the temples erected during this period certainly constitute the most eloquent testimonies of this upheaval. The static spell which seems to have spread over South Indian architecture was lifted, and fresh inspiration is noticed not only in additions of new complements to the temple scheme, but also in a far greater enrichment of every element and feature.\(^\text{9}\)

The major temples of Hampi have Kalyana Mantapas attached to them. Krishnadevaraya added a large Kalyana Mantopa to the already existing Virupaksha temple. Adding such Kalyana or Vasantha Mantapas (large pillared open halls) and gopuras at the entrance to all the existing temples was the practice of the Vijayaganara emperors. Almost every South Indian temple has a Raya gopura, tower added by the Vijayanagara Rayas (emperors).

Vijayanagara style is represented by the Hazara Ramaswamy temple, the Krishnaswamy temple and the Vithala temple, all in the capital.

To the left of the central shrine of the Ramaswamy temple, there is a shrine for the female deity, following the Amman shrine of the Cholas. These shrines have small Dravida Vimanars. The temple has a navaranga, a Kalyana Mantapa and an enclosure. The stone enclosure has rows and rows of relief carvings, of elephants, cavalry, infantry and dancing girls. The temple at Kalahasti also has a similar enclosure of the Vijayanagara period.

Kalyana Mantapas or Vasantha Mantapas display special features of Vijayanagara style. Standing on a rectangular or polygonal plinth, they are found either in front of the shrine or in a corner of the enclosure. The moulded plinth is four or five feet in height. There

\(^{9}\) *History and Culture of the Indian People*, vi, p. 729.
are narrow flights of steps on four sides, and the free sides of the steps are guarded by makaras or elephants. These pavilions have ornate pillars. "In fact, the varied and complicated treatment of pillars was perhaps the most striking feature of the Vijayanagara style."\(^{10}\) Hewn out of large blocks of stone, of a cross-section of 30 to 40 square feet each in their original shape, these pillars support the heavy structure. These blocks are hollowed on the sides, and the shaft becomes the central core. To it is attached on one side a charging horse or hippocyph, standing on its hind legs with its front legs lifted. This motif has been borrowed from the Southern Pandya temples. But the form found its perfection in Vijayanagara. They rear up to a height of nine feet and are executed in an emphatic style. They have been called creatures of "hardened steel." The other sides of the column have a variety of carvings, especially of divinities.

Another type of pillar consists of a cluster of miniature pillars surrounding the thick central shaft. These miniature pillars give the whole column the shape of a building. In some columns, these miniature pillars give out musical notes when struck. This device is adopted even in the Bhairadevi Mantapa of distant Mudabidire in South Kanara. Figures of gods are also engraved in high relief on these columns.

The ceiling of the mantapa is severely plain. Pendants of flat lotus surrounded by rows of parrots are found here and there to relieve this plainness. The ceiling was kept plain perhaps for painting. The ceilings of the Kalyana Mantapa in the Virupaksha temple and of the Lepakshi temples are painted.

These mantapas have broad projecting eaves or chajja with a double curve, a feature found in the Chalukyan temples of Itagi or Chaudadanapura.

Atop these mantapas, on the edges (or sides) are rows of turret-like niches (devakoshas) of brick and mortar. They housed deities, but are now empty.

These mantapas are open pavilions and have no walls. In addition to those of Hampi, the Vijayanagara structures are found at places like Lepakshi, Tadapatri, Kumbakonam and Srirangam. Some secular buildings in the capital, Kamala Mahal and the Elephants' Stable, have the clear impress of Muslim architecture. These brick and mortar works have the arch and dome. But orna-

\(^{10}\) K. A. Nilakanta Sastry, *A History of South India*, p. 432.
mental designs in Kamala Mahal are purely Indian.

"Under Vijayanagara, South Indian art attained a certain fullness and freedom of rich expression in keeping with the general consciousness of the great task of the Empire, namely, the preservation and development of all that remained of Hinduism against the onslaughts of Islam."  

The sculpture of Vijayanagara, in granite, is simple and modest. The profuse ornamentation of the Hoysalas is no longer there nor the soapstone medium. Simplicity and serenity of the ancient Karnataka art reappears in the Vijayanagara period. The beautiful stone chariot in the enclosure of the Vithala temple and the monolithic Narasimha statue are the best examples of Vijayanagara sculpture. The bronze sculpture of the period, represented by the life-size statues of Krishnadevaraya and his consorts, and of Venkata II at Tirupathi testify to the continuance of Chola bronze art.

Painting also flourished in the Empire. The Portuguese visitor, Paes, gives a description of the painted walls of the palace. The ceilings of Kalyana Mantapa at Virupaksha temple have paintings depicting Dasavatara, Girija Kalyana, and other religious motifs. Lepakshi temple ceilings are rich in Shaiva paintings. According to art critics, painting in Vijayanagara follows the Tanjore traditions.

\[11 \text{Ibid., p. 482.}\]
CHAPTER IV

THE MUGHUL AGE

Introduction

The rule of the Mughuls began in India in 1526, and their supremacy continued till 1707, the year of Aurangzeb’s death. Except during the Afghan interregnum (1540-55), the Mughul rule was a period of Imperial expansion. By annihilating the various Muslim Shahi kingdoms and by suppressing down the Rajputs, the Mughul emperors strove to establish a national monarchy in India. Major parts of the country came under their rule. Aurangzeb carried the victorious Mughul banner to the south by destroying both the Shahi kingdoms of Golconda and Bijapur. But disintegrating tendencies soon set in. The empire slowly collapsed due to Hindu revival movements and the revolts of Mughul Subahdars and Governors.

Political History

Babar captured Delhi in 1526 after defeating Ibrahim Lodi. The next year he had to face the confederacy of Indian rulers led by Rana Sangrama Singh (Rana Sanga) of Mewar. The confederacy was defeated at Khanva in 1527. This was followed by Babar’s victories against Mewar (1527) and Chanderi (1528) and against the Afghans led by Mahmud Lodi (1529).

Humayun (1530-40 and 1555-56) had to face formidable enemies like the Afghans, the Rajputs, the Sultan of Gujarat and his own rebellious younger brothers. Still, Humayun won some early victories. He advanced southwards by capturing the Kalinjar fort. He also defeated the Afghans at Jaumpur. He vanquished Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and forced him to flee to the island of Diu.

But Humayun was the most unfortunate among the Mughul rulers. He loved learning and an easy life. An Afghan leader, Sher Shah Sur, drove him out of his capital, and became the ruler of Delhi in 1540.

Of the fifteen-year rule of the Afghans, the first five years are
memorable in Medieval Indian history. The period is marked by the rule of Sher Shah. He was a fine administrator, and his brilliant ideas were later emulated by Akbar. His administrative setup, army organisation, land revenue system and currency were unique. He was tolerant towards the Hindus.

**Akbar the Great.** Hunayun regained the throne in 1555, but was not destined to adorn it for long. He died in 1556 and was succeeded by his son Akbar. Akbar (1556-1605) was only thirteen years old when he ascended the throne. But this young prince had a guardian, Bairam Khan, his uncle. Soon after ascending the throne, Akbar had to face Himu, a minister of the Surs, who had captured Agra and Delhi. At the Second Battle of Panipat, 1556, Himu was killed and the Afghan-Mughul contest for supremacy in India came to an end. The Surs were weakened, and all the successors of Sher Shah were killed by 1566.

"An intrepid soldier, a benevolent and wise ruler, a man of enlightened ideas, a sound judge of character, Akbar occupies a unique position in the history of India." Though placed in hostile circumstances and challenging situations, Akbar succeeded in expanding his empire over a major part of India. By conquest and by diplomacy, he established Mughul paramountcy over a large part of the land from the Himalayas in the north to Narmada in the South. Gwalior, Ajmer, Jaunpur and Malwa were added to his empire between 1558 and 1561. Gondwana was taken in 1564.

Towards the Rajputs, Akbar followed a far-sighted and conciliatory policy. He tried to win them over to the cause of the Mughul empire. In 1562, Akbar befriended the Rajput ruler of Amber (Jaipur) and married a princess of that family. This example was followed by the rulers of Bikaner and Jaisalmer in 1570. In 1579, Rantabhore and Kelinar also surrendered. But the Sisodiyas of Chitore, successors of Rana Sangrama Singh, did not yield to Akbar. Rana Uday Singh, his son, Pratap, and grandson, Amar Singh successfully resisted Akbar. Till the end, Akbar could not subjugate the Sisodiyas of Chitore, though he had defeated Pratap at Haldighat.

The Shahi kingdom of Bengal was destroyed in 1564, and so was the Sultanate of Gujarat in 1569. In 1592, Orissa became part of the Empire. Kabul (1581), Kashmir (1586), Sind (1591).

1 Advanced History of India, p. 460.
and Baluchistan (1595) came under Akbar’s rule. Though he had defeated the Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar twice, he could not annex the territory. Nevertheless, large parts of India came under Akbar’s control. He restored peace and order in his vast dominions by establishing a sound system of administration.

The administration founded by Akbar was martial in nature. Every officer in civil service was also a military officer. The sovereign was autocratic with unlimited powers.

Though there was a cabinet at the centre, the advice of the ministers was not binding on the Emperor. Akbar had divided the Empire into twelve provinces or Subahs and over each one of them, there was a Subahdar. The Subah was further divided into Sarkars, and a Sarkar into Paraganas. The Paragana consisted of several villages. Every Paragana had an Amalguzar or revenue collector. Every officer of the State was also a Mansabdar or holder of a rank in the army. These officers were to maintain a specified number of fighting men and supply the contingent to the Emperor when ordered. For the maintenance of the army and for the officers’ own maintenance, a salary or jagir was granted. There were more than thirty ranks in this hierarchy, beginning with a command of 10 and ranging up to 5,000 or more. These offices were not hereditary.

Following the example of Sher Shah, Akbar reorganised the land revenue system. Land in the Empire was surveyed and measured. It was classified into four groups, according to the fertility of each piece. Only cultivable land was subjected to levy, and one-third of the gross produce was collected as revenue. The cultivators paid revenue direct to the State officials.

Thus, Akbar established a centralised and systematic administration. It was efficient and just. He also brought about currency reform.

Religious Policy. Akbar was firmly convinced that without the consent of the Hindus, who formed a formidable majority, his rule could not last long. He won over the Rajputs, and brought them into Mughul service. Man Singh was one of his trusted generals and Todar Mull a skilled administrator in Imperial service. In 1563, collection of pilgrim tax in places like Mathura was abolished, and in 1564, he suspended the collection of Jizia, the poll tax levied by Muslim rulers on their non-Muslim subjects.

Akbar was a broad-minded ruler, quite in contrast with the
earlier sultans of Delhi, who were often fanatic. In 1575, Akbar came into contact with Sheikh Mubarak, a scholar, and the latter's two sons, Faizi and Abul Fazl. This brought about a change in Akbar's religious views. In addition, he was influenced by Sufisn and his Hindu wives.

Akbar founded a prayer hall called Ibadat Khana in his favourite city, Fatehpur Sikri. Here he presided over religious discussions in which Suti, Hindu, Jain, Zoroastrian and Christian scholars participated. The discussions were held in a free atmosphere, and Akbar enjoyed listening to them. Later, he founded a new religion called Din Ilahi which borrowed ideas from these religions. The new religion had few followers. Akbar, believing in tolerance, never forced his religion upon anybody. In fact, Akbar wanted to establish a national monarchy, based on a national religion. K. M. Panikkar says that Akbar's founding of a new religion being a "departure from Islamic tradition is a matter of considerable importance".

Shivaji, in his letter to Aurangzeb praised Akbar for adopting "the admirable policy of perfect harmony in relation to all the various sects".

Akbar had a majestic and commanding personality. He was "in face and stature fit for the dignity of King," says the Jesuit priest, Monseirrate. He possessed great determination and courage. It was these qualities which helped him to build a vast empire. He was also an able army commander. His personality was noble, though it was stained by certain ignoble acts. His unprovoked aggression on Gondwana, ruled by a just and able queen (Durgavathi), his deceitful action in capturing Kashmir, and his order for sacking Chitore are dark spots in his otherwise noble personality. But Akbar generally avoided cruelty and bloodshed.

Akbar was a great lover of the arts and literature. Though unlettered, he enjoyed the company of scholars and poets. Abul Fazl, Faizi, Birbal, Harinath, Ganj and Badauni were among the many scholars and poets in his court. There were also noted musicians. Tansen was the most prominent among them. According to Abul Fazl, Akbar had a hundred noted painters under his patronage and a majority of them were Hindus. Of the beautiful buildings constructed by Akbar, Jahangir Mahal at Agra and many constructions in Fatehpur Sikri are the foremost. The buildings in this new city were decorated by paintings.
“Akbar’s reign witnessed the transformation of the Mughuls from military invaders to a stable Indian dynasty.” Some scholars have compared him with great Indian rulers like Asoka.

Akbar’s son Jahangir (1605-27) was a lover of luxury. But the expansion of the Mughul dominions was continued by him. The Rana of Mewar, Amar Singh, was made to accept Mughul suzerainty. Prince Khurram captured Ahmednagar in 1616. Kangra was annexed in 1620. Jahangir granted permission to the British to have their factory at Surat after the appointment of Ambassador Sir Thomas Roe at his court. Jahangir was responsible for the execution of Arjundev, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs.

Shah Jahan (Prince Khurram), (1628-58) had to face the revolt of the Bundelas and Mughul Subahdars in the Deccan, soon after his coming to the throne. He ousted the turbulent Portuguese from Hugli in 1632. The Nizam Shahi of Ahmednagar was destroyed and the Qutb Shahi of Golconda and the Adil Shahi of Bijapur were forced to accept Mughul suzerainty. The Mughul power extended right up to the river Tungabhadra in the South.

Shah Jahan was a great builder, and many magnificent buildings in Delhi and Agra stand to his credit. The Taj Mahal is the most famous among them. He also had the famous Peacock Throne made. Italian visitor Manucci has described the throne as looking like “a table adorned with all sorts of precious stones and flowers, in enamel and gold.”

Aurangzeb (1658-1707) imprisoned his father Shah Jahan and ascended the throne. During his long rule, the empire further expanded. But his reign also witnessed the “beginning of the end” of the empire. His conservative religious views and shortsighted policies caused many revolts, mainly of the Hindus against the empire.

Aurangzeb expanded the Mughul dominions in North-East India by defeating the Ahoms of Assam in 1662. One of his notable achievements was the destruction of the Southern Shahis of Bijapur (1686) and Golconda (1687) after prolonged campaigns.

Aurangzeb was an able administrator. He personally supervised all details of administrative policy. Free from the vices of his age, he followed the tenets of the Sunni sect strictly. Puritanical in temperament, he abolished music in his court. Being a dutiful sovereign, he felt that he should make his subjects lead a life of morality. He banned the drinking of liquor in public.
He forced prostitutes to marry or leave their towns. It never struck this zealous propagator of Islam that it was dangerous for the empire to hurt the religious feelings of the Hindus. He had the Sikh Guru, Teg Bahadur, executed. He reimposed Fizia on non-Muslims in 1679. Many a Hindu temple was also destroyed on the Emperor's orders. These fanatical acts caused revolts in his vast empire. The empire lost its national character and became a theocracy.

The Jats of Mathura revolted in 1669. Though their leader Gokla was killed, they rebelled again in 1685. Their revolt continued even after the Emperor's death. The Sikhs under Guru Govind Singh also mutinied. They were organised into a militant sect by this tenth Guru. The Satnamis of the Patiala-Alwar region declared war against the Empire in 1672, and they could only be suppressed after a prolonged engagement. After the death of Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur, the Emperor tried to merge the principality completely with the Empire. The Rathods of Marwar revolted against this move under their leader Durgadas. The Sisodiyas of Mewar also joined them. This revolt could not be suppressed by Aurangzeb.

The most serious threat to the empire came from the Marathas. Shivaji had founded the Haidari Swaraj in the South. After his death, his son, Sambhaji, continued to challenge the Mughul power. Aurangzeb had to leave his capital and camp in the Deccan from 1681 till his death. This prolonged engagement, "the Deccan Ulcer" drained the resources and strength of the empire. After Aurangzeb's death in the Deccan, the Empire lost its power and expanse.

The Mughul empire had grown too big to be administered by a single individual or from a single centre. The Mughul emperors were autocrats, having all the powers concentrated in their own hands. This was more true of Aurangzeb who had little confidence in his subordinates. The officers and generals of the empire had turned care-free, luxury-loving and corrupt. No Emperor was far-sighted like Akbar to understand that they had to win over the Hindus. Aurangzeb's short-sighted policies resulted in complete alienation of the sympathies of Hindus. "Aurangzeb died after rousing against him the Marathas in the South, the Sikhs in the North and after alienating the strongest support of the Mughul State—the Rajputs."

* K. M. Panikkar, A Survey of Indian History, p. 204.
A war of succession followed Aurangzeb’s death, and after Bahadur Shah’s (1707-12) death, there was another war of succession. These civil wars helped the Subahdars and enemies of the Empire to assert themselves. Eleven kings ruled at Delhi between 1707 and 1806. In fact they presided over the process of disintegration of the vast empire.

**Cultural Activity**

The Mughul empire had a centralised administration. The division of the Empire into subahs, sarkars and paraganas, initiated by Akbar, was continued. The number of Subahs increased with the expansion of the Empire. The central government was run by the Vakil or the chief minister, Vazir or the finance minister, the Bakshi or the paymaster and the keeper of registers of men in imperial service, and other such ministers. These ministers were controlled by the Emperor and each one of them was directly responsible to the Emperor. The Subahdar at the province too had similar ministers to assist him.

The civil service was military in character and each official was also a holder of military rank. Land revenue was the main source of royal income. Agriculture was the main productive activity in the country. Cotton textile weaving and carpentry were two major industries. Foreign trade received a fillip with the advent of Europeans from the sixteenth century. The Mughuls, like earlier rulers, neglected the villages.

**Literature.** The Mughul period was the “Augustan Age” of Hindustani literature. The Bhakti movement, the Sufi activity and patronage of rulers like Akbar were mainly responsible for this development. The leaders of the Bhakti movement, Surdas and Tulsidas, were great writers, belonging to the Krishna and Rama cults respectively. Nanda Das, Vithalanath and Ras Khan were other important poets connected with the Krishna cult. Keshavdas from Bundelkhand and Chintamani Tripathi from the Kanpur region were prominent contemporary writers in Hindi. Birbal, Mansingh, Harinath, Ganj and Abdur Rahim were writers attached to the court of Akbar. The last named was also a writer in Persian, the other writers of his time in the language being Badauni, Abul Fazl and Sarhindi.

Many Indian works were translated into Persian during the
period. Akbar caused the translation of the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Panchatantra* into Persian. Prince Dara (Shah Jahan's son) translated the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Literary activity in Sanskrit also continued, though devoid of royal patronage.

Abul Fazl, Badauni, Abdul Hamid, Khafi Khan, Bhimsen Saksena and Ferishta were the noted historians and chroniclers of the period.

In Bengal, many Bengali works, having the life of Chaitanya as their theme, came to be written during the period. Brindavandas, Jayananda, Trilochanadas and Narahari were all writers in Bengali for whose works Chaitanya was the hero. They lived during the sixteenth century.

Ramdas and Tukaram were the great Marathi writers of the age. Writing in Punjabi developed after Guru Angad Deva had evolved the Gurumukhi script. Later, Sikh Gurus wrote poems and hymns in Punjabi.

**Music.** Hindustani music witnessed its hey-day in the reign of the Mughuls. The process of blending of Persian and Hindu music had already been achieved, and under the Mughuls, a new style bloomed. Akbar paid much attention to music and was "the patron of all who practised this enchanting art", says Abul Fazl. Tansen was a great musician in the court of Akbar. He belonged to the Gwalior school of Hindustani music. He played a prominent part in classifying the melodies by his intensive study of the science. He reduced the 'talas' to twelve and invented the *rabab*, a musical instrument. His disciples were divided into two groups, the "Rababiyars", who played on this new instrument, and "Binkars", those who played on the *veena*. *Dhrupad* was transformed into *Khayal* in the court of the Mughuls. Pandarika Vithala, a scholar from the Mysore State, lived in the court of Akbar and wrote many scientific works on music such as *Ragamala* and *Ragamanjari*. Leaders of the Bhakti movement like Meera and Surdas have also played a prominent part in popularising classical music. Shah Jahan himself was a great singer.

Damodar Misra's *Sangitaropana*, Ahobala's *Sangitaparijatha* and Bhavabhata's *Anupavila* and *Anuparatnakara* were noted works on music, all of the seventeenth century. The last writer was in the Bikaner court.

**Architecture.** Mughul architecture was an amalgam of influences
of Persia, Byzantium and India. Babar had recruited architects from Constantinople. The real synthesis of Muslim and Hindu features began in Mughul architecture in the days of Akbar. This style has been called “Hindu-Mohammedan” by Vincent Smith.

The high Persian dome is the most prominent feature of Mughul architecture. Its minarets are taller than those of earlier periods, at times even taller than the height of the central dome and the frontal arch. The prominent gate is in the form of a huge semi-dome, sunk in the wall. The palaces have large pillared halls. Their decorations are sumptuous, delicate and rich in contrast with pre-Mughul buildings. Unlike in the Persian buildings, marble and hard stone are used by the Mughuls. Jaina and Hindu ideas were profusely used, and also consciously.

Sher Shah had prepared the way for Akbar, “not only in government, but also in culture and art”. The great Afghan’s mausoleum at Sasaram, Bihar, standing on a high plinth at the centre of a lake, is designed like a temple with its Muslim arches and dome.

 Fatehpur Sikri was a new city conjured up and constructed by Akbar. Its Buland Darwaza or high gate, which is more than 130 feet tall, has Jaina cupolas. The Diwan-i-khas is distinctly Hindu in plan, comparable with the temples at Mount Abu. But the earlier buildings of Akbar, the great mosque in the new city are Persian, a copy of the great Juma at Isafahan in Persia. The Panch Mahal, a five-storeyed building in the City, appears to be planned like a Buddhist vihara.

The tomb of Humayun at Delhi, though looks like Persian in structure with dome and arches, is Hindu in its ground plan. It stands on a 22-feet-high basement with arches. The domed central hall has four octagonal towers in the corners.

Red stone was the popular medium of Akbar’s buildings.

Of the buildings of Jahangir, the mausoleum of Nur Jahan’s father near Lahore is the first Mughul building completely built in white marble. The inlay decoration, called pietra dura, also makes its first appearance in this building. The mausoleum of Akbar and Sikandara near Agra is compared to Panch Mahal, as it resembles a Buddhist vihara.

In the days of Shah Jahan, the great builder, “Mughul architecture reached its culminating point”. His style imbibed a new wave of Persian inspiration. But in the use of white marble and
decorations in hard, coloured stones such as jasper, agate and onyx, the buildings were unequalled even in Persia.

Of his numerous buildings, the Juma Masjid, the Diwan-i-am and the Diwan-i-khas, all in Delhi, and the Taj Mahal and the Moti Masjid at Agra are the most prominent.

The Taj Mahal is the most magnificent of the Mughul buildings. Father Manrique testifies that Verroneo, an Italian, had prepared a plan for the building. But one is not sure whether the plan had been accepted. In its design Persian principles dominate the Indian or the European. But nothing, like it is found in Persia. But its ground plan, like the tomb of Humayun, has a central chamber surrounded by four-domed chambers at the four corners. The tomb proper is a 186, feet square. Havell feels that it follows the “Pancharatna” temple plan to be found in the stupa shrines of Ajanta. The central dome is slightly bulbous. Its arches are Persian. The tomb stands on a wide basement, 22 feet high and more than 300 feet square. On the four corners of the basement stand cylindrical minarets.

The Taj stands on the bank of the Jamuna in a rich park. Built in dazzling Rajputana white marble, its interior is decorated with inlaid coloured stones. These lavish decorations have been called “jewellery on a bigger scale”. This is one of the most magnificent buildings of the world, having a place of pride in India’s heritage in art. “No building in India has been so often drawn or photographed as this”, says Fergusson.

The art critics have also praised the elegance of the Moti Masjid. Of the magnificent buildings in Delhi, the Diwan-i-khas has been called “firdaus” or “heaven on earth”.

Aurangzeb was responsible for the construction of some buildings like the Moti Masjid of Delhi and the Badshahi Masjid of Lahore. But a deterioration in Mughul style had already begun and these buildings stand as a clear testimony to this.

The rule of the Mughuls is made memorable by these great monuments. Will Durant has said that “that Hindus built like giants and Mughuls ended like jewellers”. The Mughuls had continued and culminated the process of amalgamation in art, begun by the Delhi Sultans in the earlier period.

Many of the Mughul buildings stand at the centre of beautiful gardens. The Mughuls were great lovers of gardens and Jahangir has a special place among the Mughuls in his love for this pastime.
He was responsible for some rich gardens in Kashmir and one at Udaipur.

In the South, in the Shahi kingdoms of the Deccan, there developed an independent style of Hindu-Muslim architecture. Of these, the buildings of Bijapur built by the Adil Shahs are the most famous. Ibrahim Rauza, the mausoleum of Ibrahim II (1579-1628), has been called the “last word in decorative magnificence”. The dome in this building, unlike the Northern hemispherical ones, becomes a bubble. The Northern domes are “false” (as they are closed at the base, having a saucer-like cover as in the Taj) whereas the Southern ones are open. These Southern domes emerge from lotus petals. In its interior decoration, Ibrahim Rauza competes with some of the finest Mughul buildings.

The other memorable building of Bijapur is Gol Gumbaz with its unique “whispering gallery”. This giant mausoleum of Mohammed Adil Shah (1627-56) has the biggest dome in India (124 feet in diameter) emerging from long lotus petals. The minars at the four corners of the dome are octagonal and seven-storeyed. The Gol Gumbaz is one of the architectural wonders of the world.

Painting. “Painting in the Mughul period represented a happy mingling of extra-Indian as well as Indian elements”.

Humayun had brought two noted painters from Persia, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad. By absorbing the Indian and Persian styles, a new school was evolved, and later, the influence of the Hindu style on the new style became more and more evident. Referring to the painters in the court of Akbar, Abul Fazi says, “More than a hundred painters have become famous masters of the art”, and of the Hindu artists, he adds, “their pictures surpass our conception of things”.

Humayun ordered the preparation of an illustrated copy of Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, a Persian work, and as many as fifty artists worked for preparing it in twelve volumes till 1575. One of the famous artists in Akbar’s court, Daswanth, studied under Abdus Samad. Basawan, another contemporary artist, was renowned for his background of portraits.

Akbar had the walls of the Fathepur Sikri buildings adorned with paintings, and these art pieces were “Persian in technique on the whole, but much modified by Indian, Chinese and European influence”, according to Vincent Smith. Aga Riza from Herat and his son, Abul Hassan, were two noted artists in Jahangir’s court.
Among the Hindu artists, Bishan Das, Manohar and Govardhan were the most famous. “But the real spirit of the new art died with Jahangir”. Shah Jahan was more interested in architecture, and Aurangzeb was too bigoted to patronise art. The latter had the paintings in Asar Mahal at Bijapur and in Akbar’s tomb covered with whitewash.

Calligraphy developed during the Mughul Age, and it survives in the form of many religious manuscripts and decorative engravings in the Muslim buildings.

This was the period when Rajput style in art also developed. Jaipur and Kangra are the most prominent schools in this style. Rajput art is notable for its variety and freedom in expression. These schools fully bloomed during the eighteenth century. Though influenced by the Mughul style, Hindu traditions predominated in these schools. Giving expression to ragas or musical modes was a favourite pastime with the painters of the Rajput school.

Shivaji and the Marathas

Islam’s sway in India had created a reaction in the Hindu population. There were few broad-minded Muslim rulers. Even if a ruler was tolerant, the commanders and officials followed a bigoted policy.

After the fall of the Vijayanagara Empire, the Deccan was subjected to the rule of the five Shahis. Their constant wars and rivalries together with the high-handed activities of their officials had made the life of the people in general miserable. Shivaji was the creation of an age when the Hindus eagerly awaited the coming of a saviour, an “avatar”.

Shivaji was the son of Shahji, a commander in the service of Adil Shah of Bijapur. His religious-minded mother, Jija Bai, had convinced her young son of the need for revolt against their Muslim masters in order to save the Hindu religion. Fired with enthusiasm and love for his religion, Shivaji organised a band of young ‘mawlas’ or hillmen from the Sahyadri ranges. With their help, he captured Torana, a fort belonging to Adil Shah, in 1646. At this time, Shivaji was a lad of sixteen.

Shivaji had perfected guerilla tactics. He captured fort after fort from Bijapur. Adil Shah sent one of his able commanders, Afzal Khan, against this young rebel. But Shivaji defeated the
Khan and dispersed the Bijapur army. The Sultan imprisoned his own commander Shahji, Shivaji’s father, with the hope of bringing the young rebel to his knees. But all such tactics proved futile. Finally Bijapur came to an understanding with Shivaji, having found him a formidable enemy.

Next, Shivaji started encroaching upon the Mughul dominions. He drove back Shayista Khan, the Mughul commander, in 1663. He sacked Surat, a Mughul port, in 1664 and looted enormous wealth from this rich trading centre. A second army was sent by Aurangzeb to the South under Raja Jaya Singh (in 1665) who forced Shivaji to come to terms with the Mughuls. Shivaji surrendered a number of forts to the Mughuls. He agreed to accept a mansab or generalship under the Mughuls and accompanied Jaya Singh on a visit to the Imperial court. He was imprisoned by Aurangzeb at Agra.

But Shivaji escaped from his confinement and, on returning home, regained the forts he had lost to the Mughuls. In 1674, Shivaji crowned himself Chatrapathi in his newly built capital, Rajgad. In 1677, Shivaji led a campaign to the extreme South and secured footholds like Vellore and Jinji. Shivaji’s kingdom extended over Western Maharashtra and Northern Mysore, upto the river Tungabhadra.

Shivaji was a courageous conqueror. Like many conquerors, he was a great administrator also. Though an autocrat, he had entrusted his administration to eight ministers, “Ashtapradhanas”. A majority of the ministers also held military offices. The provinces were looked after by his viceroys.

Shivaji had inspired his followers by the ideal of Haindavi Swaraj or self rule for the Hindus. He had his own flag, the Jari Pataka or the saffron-coloured banner with gold brocade borders. Saffron has been the religious flag of the Hindus, flown at temple tops. Shivaji honoured Hindu saints like Randas and Tukaram. He called himself the “Protector of Cows and Brahmins”, following the Hindu tradition. He made grants for services of temples. Rajya Vyavahara Kosha, a lexicon of Sanskrit equivalents to Persian technical terms, connected with administration was compiled according on his orders. He wrote a strongly-worded letter to Aurangzeb in protest against his reimposition of jizia on the Hindus. But Shivaji was not a religious bigot. There is no instance of his having harassed Muslims just because they were Muslims. Even Khafi Khan,
Aurangzeb’s historian, praises Shivaji for his fair treatment of women and children captured from the camp of the Mughuls. In a siege, if he secured a copy of the holy Koran, he treated the book with respect and handed over the copy to a Muslim, the same historian has said. Among the saints whom he constantly met, there were some Muslim pir’s. Shivaji thus upheld the Hindu traditions.

Organising the illiterate hilly tribe of Mawlas into a powerful and disciplined army was the singular achievement of Shivaji. He paid his soldiers regularly. To the family of a fallen soldier, he paid handsome compensation. He enforced strict discipline in his army. Taking women in the army camps was forbidden. He never permitted his soldiers to misbehave during campaigns.

Shivaji was a unique personality, both as a man and as a king. He has a place of his own in the history of India. A man of character, Shivaji was free from the prevalent vices of his day. To him “Dharma” was not a political slogan only, for he strictly adhered to its tenets. Even under adverse circumstances, he did not lose heart. He held his followers together by the sheer strength of his noble and magnetic personality.

After the death of Shivaji (1680), his eldest son, Sambhaji (1680-89) succeeded him. The Mughul Emperor, Aurangzeb, came to the South and camped there to rid the Empire of the Maratha menace. He had Sambhaji taken captive and killed. Sambhaji’s brother Rajaram (1689-1700) was crowned Chatrapathi. Aurangzeb cast a wide net to capture Rajaram, but in vain. A wife of Sambhaji and his son, Shivaji II (Sahu) were also held captives in the Mughul camp. The Marathas continued their fight against the Mughuls. Even after the death of Rajaram in 1700, they persisted in their resistance. Tara Bai, Rajaram’s wife, continued the struggle. Aurangzeb was continuously harassed by the guerilla bands of the Marathas. Worn out by this long fight, the Emperor died in 1707 in the South.

All these efforts of the mighty Emperor to crush the Marathas had proved in vain. At the time of Aurangzeb’s death, they had come to dominate Northern Deccan and Central India.

After Aurangzeb’s death, Sahu was released by the Mughuls. He was crowned Chatrapathi. But this prince, who had lived long in the Mughul camp, was easy-going. He entrusted the administration to the Peshwa or Prime Minister. During the first half of the
eighteenth century, the Peshwas, Balaji Rao and their successors expanded the Maratha power enormously. The Marathas became a formidable power. Their arms stretched in the South to the Kingdom of Mysore, and in the North, to Delhi. They tried to fill the vacuum created by the weakening of the Mughul power. This brought the Marathas into conflict with the Afghan invader Abdali who defeated them in 1761 at Panipat. Though the Maratha power suffered a set back after this Third Battle of Panipat, they recovered under Peshwa Madhava Rao (1761-72). The Marathas later collided with the British who came to dominate the Indian political scene. The British found no difficulty in tackling an Empire that had taken the shape of a confederacy. The Maratha generals like Sindhe (of Gwalior), Holkar (Indore), Gaekwad (Baroda) and Bhonsle (Nagpur) had carved out sovereign states for themselves paying nominal allegiance to the Peshwa whose power was waning.

The Sikhs

Another power that had arisen against the Islamic rule was that of the Sikhs. Initially, the Sikhs were not opposed to Islamic rule. Guru Nanak (1469-1538) has founded this simple creed of moral living. In fact, Nanak wanted to unite the Hindus and Muslims by his teachings. But, of the ten Gurus of the Sikhs, Arjundev (1581-1606), the sixth, and Teg Bahadur (1665-75), the ninth, had been killed by the Mughuls. Enmity between the Mughuls and the Sikhs thus began. The tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, transformed the Sikhs into a militant clan by initiating them to the Khalsa (Pure). Every Sikh (disciple) was expected to wear Kesh (that is, grow long hair), Kirpan (a dagger), Kankan (an iron bangle) and Kangwa (a comb to dress his long hair) and to dress himself in Kaccha (shorts), known as the five ‘K’s’. This made him a soldier.

This militant religion challenged the Mughul rule in the Punjab. Two sons of Gobind Singh were killed in wars against Aurangzeb. Two others were buried alive by the Mughuls. The blood of the martyrs invigorated the Sikhs. Gobind Singh was killed in 1708. The Sikhs found a new leader in Banda Bahadur. He too was captured and executed by the Mughuls in 1716. But a number of small Sikh states emerged in the Punjab after the weakening of the Mughul power.
By the end of nineteenth century there appeared a strong leader among the Sikhs, Ranjit Singh. Born in 1780, Ranjit began his career at an early age in 1792. He succeeded in welding the various Sikh states into a single united kingdom.

The Sikh power proved to be formidable in North-West India during the first half of the nineteenth century. Seeds of the Sikh power had been sown in the days of the Mughul Empire. The Mughul Emperors' high-handedness had provoked this revivalist religious movement.

Sikhism is a prominent religion of India. The Khalsa initiated by Guru Gobind, still continues. Guru Granth Sahib is their holy book. The Sikhs constitute a sizable section of the martial races of India.
Part III

MODERN INDIA
CHAPTER V

ADVENT OF THE WEST

Introduction

The Mughul power was waning in strength. The large empire was tottering. The Mughul subahdars were striving to be free. In Bengal, an independent Nawab was raising his head. A similar effort was witnessed in Oudh. In the South, the Nizam and his subordinate, the Nawab of Arcot, were likewise trying to assert themselves. The Sikhs, the Jats, the Bundelas and the Marathas had established their own independent states, big and small. Mysore was emerging as a strong power in the South.

It was at this critical time that the Europeans came to India. They came to trade, but stayed to conquer.

The Europeans had superior fire-arms. They had disciplined armies. Their military techniques too were superior. They were, therefore, tempted to turn this strange situation, created by the petty jealousies and quarrels of the Indian rulers, to their advantage.

"The British conquest of India was neither sudden nor accidental. The East India Company acquired experience and knowledge of the political, social and economic conditions of India for a period of 150 years before they decided to compete for primacy."

With the advent and ascendancy of the West in India the Medieval Period in Indian History ended and the Modern Period began. The year of Aurangzeb's death, 1707, is generally taken to mark the end of the Medieval period.

In fact the Europeans had arrived in India much earlier. They had already entrenched themselves on Indian soil before the death of Aurangzeb. With the weakening of the Mughul empire, the power of the Europeans in India slowly increased, and soon they dominated the Indian political scene.

It was the Orient which had hitherto led the world culturally. Ideas and institutions born in Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China had swayed the world for long. But with the end of the

fifteenth century, the cultural supremacy of the Orient came to an end, and was followed by the ascendancy of the Occident. Slowly, the European and his culture came to dominate the world.

Entry of Europeans

There had been a flourishing trade between the East and the West, the Orient and the Occident for long. Spices, silks, cotton textiles and jewellery from Asia were in great demand in Europe. Much of this trade was carried on land routes, Constantinople being an important junction for this East-West movement.

In 1453, Constantinople fell to the Seljuk Turks, a people who were hostile towards the Europeans. Europe’s trade with the East now came to a standstill. Still, Europe was eager to have the Oriental goods, especially spices like pepper. In 1492, Columbus, in his effort to reach India through a western route, discovered the American Continent. In 1498, Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese, reached the West Coast of India after encircling the African Continent. A new sea route to India was thus discovered and the Portuguese started to trade with the East. Soon, other European powers also competed with the Portuguese in their trade. The Dutch from Holland, the English and the French were the other important contenders for this Eastern trade. These Europeans founded their trade marts (factories) in India, secured certain footholds on the Indian coast, and tried to have some sort of extra-territorial sovereign control over these footholds.

“When the Moghul empire was still powerful, neither the English nor the Hollanders nor the French could do any more than carry on their trade; but when the central authority weakened and some of the provinces became the scene of civil wars, the factories, which had concealed their political ambitions, were in a position to stand forth and influence events in an effective manner.”

*The Portuguese. The Portuguese were the first European power to reach India by sea. Vasco da Gama had first visited Calicut in 1498. Alfonso Albuquerque, a Portuguese commander, laid the foundation of Portuguese power in India by capturing Goa on the West Coast in 1510. The Portuguese eclipsed the Arabs in Indian trade, and secured the monopoly of supplying Persian

1 K. M. Panikkar, *A Survey of Indian History*, p. 231.
horses to India. The rich trade with the then flourishing Vijayanagara Empire made Goa a great commercial centre. With the help of their strong navy, the Portuguese came to dominate Indian waters. Their superior fire-arms, guns and artillery, enabled them to collect tribute from the coastal rulers.

In addition to Goa, places like Chaul, Diu and Daman (in Gujarat), Bassein and Bombay (in Maharashtra) San Thome (in Tamil Nadu) and Hugli (in Bengal) became their other Indian settlements. They extended their sway over Ceylon too. But with the advent of the Dutch, they lost their prominence, as the Dutch occupied Ceylon in 1654 and competed with them in Indian trade. The Mughul Emperor Shah Jahan ousted them from Hugli in 1632. With the fall of the city of Vijayanagara in 1565, Goa, too, lost much of its importance. Bombay was handed over to the British, and Bassein was captured by the Marathas in 1739. Only Goa, Diu and Daman remained under their control after 1739, and from these places they were driven out by the Government of Free India in 1961.

Effects of Portuguese Activity. The Portuguese were responsible for providing a world market for Indian goods on a large scale. Spices like pepper and Indian cotton fabrics were taken to Europe on a larger scale than ever before. They also introduced many European products into India.

They brought the Roman Catholic religion into India. Missionaries like St. Francis Xavier did pioneering work in popularising the religion among Indians. K. M. Panikkar has pointed out that India has a big Catholic population, next only to the Philippines in the East, and this was due largely to the Portuguese. Catholics have played their own role in the cultural life of India.

Many western vegetables and fruits, such as papaya, pineapple, cashew nut, tomato and potato were introduced into India by the Portuguese. Advanced methods in agriculture and stock-raising were also popularised due to their efforts. Many Portuguese words have crept into Indian languages.

The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1687 by England weakened the Portuguese naval power. (Portugal was subject to the Spanish Emperor between 1680 and 1740.) The competition of the Dutch and the British in India further weakened them. Their religious intolerance and clandestine trade practices also went against them in India.
The Dutch. The Dutch came to India after the founding of the United East India Company in the Netherlands in 1602. At Masulipatam (1605), Pulicat (1610), Nagapatam (1658) and Balasore (1658) on the East Coast and Surat (1616) and Cochin (1616) on the West Coast they had their important factories. They had also founded factories at Patna.

Initially, the Dutch were the chief rivals of the Portuguese and the traditional rivalry between Spain and Holland (Netherlands) had given a special edge to this jealousy. They captured Ceylon from the Portuguese, and also some of the Portuguese settlements in India. But, later, their rivalry with the English became more acute.

But the Dutch could not compete with the English for long. The three Anglo-Dutch Wars, fought in Europe during the second half of the seventeenth century, weakened the Dutch. In the words of P. E. Roberts, “the Dutch power in India was largely jeopardised on European battlefields.” After 1674, the relations of the Dutch with England became more friendly, and in 1688, a Dutch prince came to rule over England.

The Dutch concentrated more and more on trade with the East Indies and Ceylon, and they gave up the Indian market. After their defeat at the hands of Clive at Bidara in 1759, they gave up all hopes of trading or ruling in India.

The impact of the Dutch on Indian life and culture was not of much significance. But they continued to hold Ceylon till the end of the eighteenth century.

The French. The first French factory to be founded in India was at Surat in 1668 due to the efforts of the French East India Company founded in 1661. French settlements were later established at Pondicherry (1673) and Chandranagore (1690-92). The rivalry of the Dutch, supported by the British, was the chief hurdle for the French trade in India initially. But the French made much headway in India during the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Factories were founded at Mahe (near Tellichery), Yan- nam, Masulipatam, Calicut and Karikal between 1720 and 1739. They befriended the rulers of Tanjore and Hyderabad.

After the appointment of an ambitious Governor, Dupleix, in 1742, the French had to fight long wars with the English in India, in which the English finally came out victorious. The traditional rivalry between France and England in Europe, and the nearness
of Madras and Pondicherry, the British and French settlements respectively on the East Coast, were the chief reasons for these wars. Dupleix's active interest in the local politics of India, like the succession wars in Hyderabad and Arcot, further worsened the situation.

Dupleix initially came out victorious in his war against the English (the second Carnatic War) and secured a lot of political power for the French in South India. Nominees of Dupleix came to the thrones at Arcot and Hyderabad. But the arrival of superior English commanders like Clive on the scene foiled his plans in the long run and the French lost all their gains. The French Company was a mere Government concern, and the internal troubles of France during the revolutionary era (after 1789) and during the early half of the nineteenth century made the French in India helpless. England had emerged stronger as a naval power and France could not compete with England.

Thus after the Seven-Year War (1756-63) between the English and the French all over the world, the French were weakened, and their power in India too waned. Except for a few settlements, namely Chandranagore, Yannam, Karikal, Mahe and Pondicherry, the French had no political power in India. "After this the French in India only continued to intrigue and never played an effective part."  

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**Early Years of British Activity**

The circumnavigation of the globe in 1580 by Sir Francis Drake, a British seaman, and the British victory over the Spanish Armada in 1587 made the British a strong naval power. It was the strength of their navy that helped them to have an upper hand in India against other European powers.

The British East India Company received its Charter from Queen Elizabeth in 1600, and Emperor Jahangir issued a firman to the Company in 1613 to establish a permanent factory at Surat. This became the chief settlement of the Company in India. Later, by the efforts of Sir Thomas Roe, the British secured permission from the Mughul Emperor to found factories at Agra, Ahmedabad and Broach. The Portuguese king made over the island of Bombay to Charles II, the king of England, as dowry, and this place was

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secured by the Company in 1668. By 1687 Bombay superseded Surat and became the chief settlement of the British in India.

Factories had also been established by the British on the East Coast at Masulipatam (1611), Amargaoon (1626), Balasore (1633), Madras (1639) and Hugli (1651). In 1658, all settlements on the East Coast were made subject to Fort St. George (Madras).

During the early part of the seventeenth century, the Company's trade did not make much headway. But the thirty years that followed the Restoration (in 1660, when, after a long civil war, monarchy was restored in England) formed a period of expansion and prosperity. A trading company slowly changed itself into an ambitious power, eager to acquire political strength in India.

The raids by Shivaji on Surat in 1664 and 1674 made the Company aware of its military weakness. The weakening of the Mughul control over Bengal and the consequent trouble the Company's factory at Hugli had to face further convinced the British of the perils involved in their being militarily weak in India. Aungier, the Company's Governor at Bombay, had written to his masters: “The times now require you to manage your general commerce with sword in your hands.”

In 1690, the Company took possession of a marshy village called Sutanuti from the Mughuls in Bengal. They fortified the village in 1696. In 1698, the zamindari rights of Sutanuti and two neighbouring villages, Kalikata and Govindpur, were secured by them. This became the settlement of Fort William, and a President (Governor), having control over all the factories in Bengal, was appointed in 1700. He had a Council to assist him. Thus, the modern city of Calcutta grew, with a flourishing trade and, by 1735, to a population of one lakh.

The Mughul Emperor, Furrukhisiyar, was cured of a painful disease by an English doctor accompanying the British Embassy to his court. The Emperor in return granted a firman to the British in 1716-17, by which the Company obtained many privileges. The Company was allowed to trade free of duty in Bengal, at Surat and Madras, after paying a specified amount annually to the Empire. It also secured the right of minting at Bombay its own coins which were to have currency in the Mughul empire too. British historian Orme has called this firman granted by Furrukhisiyar the “Magna Charta of the Company.”

The trade of the British on the West Coast had initially suffered
due to the quarrels between the Portuguese and the Marathas. The Siddis of Janjira and Kanhoji Angre, a Maratha naval captain, also ravaged the West Coast. The British had to fortify Bombay in 1720. They concluded a treaty with the Peshwa in 1739, and with his assistance defeated the successors of Angre between 1755 and 1757. By 1744, Bombay came to have a population of 70,000.

By the first half of the eighteenth century, the Company carried on a flourishing trade. Its imports and exports doubled during the period. The Company also started paying an increased dividend, from 5 to 8 per cent, and at times even 10 per cent.

**The British and Carnatic Wars.** The naval supremacy of Britain had already resulted in the virtual annihilation of the Dutch and the Portuguese in India. In the Carnatic, as already seen, the political situation encouraged the British to meddle in local affairs, and there they came into open and severe conflict with the French.

Though the French led by Dupleix had lost to the British during the First Carnatic War (1746-48), during the Second Carnatic War (1749-54) they initially gained by successfully interfering with the succession issues of Hyderabad and Arcot. But, at a later stage, the English took active interest in the affairs of the Carnatic, and Robert Clive captured Arcot and beheaded Chanda Sahib, the nominee supported by the French to the seat of the Nawab. This weakened the French position in the South, and the prestige and power of the British increased at the cost of the French. The true claimant to the throne of Arcot, Muhammad Ali, was crowned as the Nawab with the help of the British. The British thus "had realised their strength in warfare against the indisciplined forces of the country's powers. They had also discovered a method by which political power could be exercised through puppet monarchs."  

The French efforts to regain power in the South during the Third Carnatic War (1758-63) did not meet with success. The French, therefore, had to confine themselves to their few settlements in the South. The British power in the South remained undisturbed.

**In Bengal.** Meanwhile, the English had made major political gains in Bengal. They had further fortified their factory at Calcutta to face the French danger. This additional fortification of the city and the mounting of guns on the rampart walls aroused the suspicion of the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-daulah. The British had also allied themselves with certain rival claimants to the throne of

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Bengal before Siraj had ascended to the throne. The interference of the British in the political affairs of Arcot only strengthened the suspicion of the Nawab.

The Nawab ordered the British to demolish the additional fortifications of Calcutta, which had been raised without his prior permission. As the British failed to obey his order, he captured the British factory at Kassim Bazaar and forced the British at Fort William (Calcutta) to surrender. But the appearance of Robert Clive (from Madras) on the scene eased the British position. Clive captured Calcutta in January 1757 after bribing the Nawab’s captain who defended the city. The Nawab signed a treaty with the British, conceding their right to fortify Calcutta.

Having found the Nawab weak, and his generals and ministers corrupt, Clive proceeded to dislodge the Nawab. He entered into a secret understanding with Mir Jafar, the Nawab’s captain, and proceeded to capture Murshidabad, the Nawab’s capital.

A battle was fought at Plassey on 23 June 1757, when Siraj-ud-daulah was easily defeated. The fight had been a “rout rather than a battle” (in the words of Roberts). “The battle of Plassey was hardly more than a mere skirmish, but its result was more important than that of many of the greatest battles of the world. It paved the way for the British conquest of the whole of India.”

The British made Mir Jafar the Nawab of Bengal, and the new Nawab ceded zamindari rights over the 24-Paraganas to the Company. The next year, Clive was appointed Governor of Bengal.

Though Mir Jafar was a free Nawab like his predecessor, the British virtually controlled him. He attempted to free himself from the clutches of the British, and sought the help of the Dutch at Chinsura. The Dutch army that came from Java to help the Nawab was defeated by Clive at Bidara in 1759. After this, the British won over Mir Kasim, son-in-law of the Nawab, and with his help, dethroned Mir Jafar in 1760. Mir Kasim was crowned Nawab. But even his relations with the British did not remain cordial for long. With the help of the Mughul Emperor and the Nawab of Oudh, he faced the British at Buxar in 1764, hoping to dislodge them from Bengal. But the British came out victorious. Mir Kasim was substituted by old Mir Jafar as the Nawab of Bengal and more political privileges were extracted from him for the Company. When Mir Jafar died in 1765, his son

*Advanced History of India, p. 665.*
was allowed to succeed him, after he had agreed to recognise
the Company's supremacy in the administrative affairs of Bengal.
The Nawab now remained a mere figurehead and a puppet of
the Company.

In 1765, the Company secured from the Mughul Emperor the
Dwaini, or the right of collecting revenue, in the Bengal Subah
(which included Bengal, Bihar and Orissa). "By this act, the East
India Company became in effect a sov-reign power on the mainland
of India." 8

Expansion of British Power

The stratagem adopted by the British in the Carnatic, proved a
great success in Bengal too. Their factory at Calcutta had grown
into a fort, and slowly into a province. By defeating the major
powers like the Marathas, the rulers of Mysore, and the Sikhs, and
by forcing the other weak rulers into submission, the British came
to have paramountcy over India.

Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of India (1774-85)
fought the First Anglo-Maratha War (1778-82) and the Second
Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84). The Peshwa and Sindhe became
allies of the British as a result of the former, and the prestige of
the English increased as a result of their victories in the latter.

Lord Cornwallis (1786-93) strengthened the Company's hold
over the Nawab of Oudh by signing a new agreement. He humiliated
Tippu Sultan by defeating him during the Third Anglo-
Mysore War (1790-92).

Lord Wellesley (1798-1805), by introducing the peculiar 'Sub-
sidiary System,' forced the Nizam, the Peshwa and the ruler of
Tanjore to accept some sort of suzerainty of the Company. The
princes, to escape harassment by neighbouring states, had to
enter into an alliance with the British, and agree to the British
army being stationed in their territory at their cost. By this
Subsidiary System the British imposed their authority on these states.

By defeating and killing Tippu Sultan in 1799 in the Fourth
Anglo-Mysore War, Wellesley had acquired Mysore State, Malabar
and Canara Districts for the Company.

Mysore was, however, handed over to the royal family, which
recognised the Company's paramountcy.

K. M. Nair, A Survey of Indian History, p. 246.
He also forced Sindhe and Holkar, two Maratha chieftains, to join the Subsidiary System after defeating them in the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-4). He acquired the territory of the Nawab of Arcot in 1801 by pensioning off the claimant to the throne. By making the Peshwa a subordinate, the British shattered the prestige of the Maratha Confederacy and established the Company’s ‘legal’ superiority over the Confederacy. Wellesley also forced Sindhe to renounce his claims over the Mughul emperor whose guardian the Maratha chief had been for some time. Wellesley was responsible for linking the British territories in Madras with those in Bengal. His administration saw an enormous expansion of the Company’s possessions in India.

Lord Hastings (1813-23) ended the Maratha power for ever by defeating Peshwa Baji Rao II (who had renounced his alliance with the British and asserted his independence) in 1818 and acquired all Maratha possessions. By his diplomatic negotiations, he made the Rajput powers of Udaipur, Bundi, Pratapgarh, Banswara, Dungarpur, Jaisalmer and Sirohi accept the British paramountcy. Rulers of Malwa and Bundelkhand and the Nawab of Bhopal also entered into defensive and subordinate alliance.

“Clive sowed the seeds of British power in India, Warren Hastings preserved it against hostile forces; Wellesley reared it; Lord Hastings reaped the harvest.”

Later, the Punjab was annexed to British India by Dalhousie (1848-56) after defeating the Sikhs during the Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848-49). The Sikh power founded by Ranjit Singh thus came to an end. Lord Dalhousie brought more territories under the direct control of the Company by enforcing the high-handed “Doctrine of Lapse.” Adoption of an heir by a Hindu ruler in case of no male issue, was not accepted by the Company, and the territories of such rulers were annexed in accordance to this doctrine. States like Satara (1848), Udaipur (1852), Jhansi (1853) and Nagpur (1854) were among the principalities thus acquired by the Company. Oudh was taken over on the pretext of misgovernment in 1856.

By adopting every means possible, such as superior military technique, modern fire-arms, bribery and what not, the British came to have supremacy over India. From the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and from Sind to Burma, the power of the British East

7 *Advanced History of India*, p. 727.
India Company was supreme. In the course of a hundred years after the Battle of Plassey (1757), till the annexation of Oudh in 1856, this great political feat was achieved. Never before had India come under the rule of a single power.

**Uprising of 1857**

As the British power was expanding and was being consolidated, there were numerous uprisings against the British in various parts of India. There had been a revolt of the Sanyasis of Bengal soon after Clive had established the Company’s rule there. A rising had been witnessed in Bareilly in 1816. At Barasat in Bengal, there had been Ferazee disturbances in 1831. The Moplahs of Malabar revolted against the British in the 1850’s. The Santhal insurrection took place in 1855-56. In Mysore, there were uprisings in Kittur in 1824 and in Coorg in 1837-38. These were but a few instances of the numerous violent outbursts caused by dissatisfaction and hostility towards the British rule in India.

But the biggest uprising against this alien rule was witnessed in 1857 when almost one-third of India rose in armed revolt against the British.

Authors like V. D. Savarkar have called the 1857 movement the First National War of Independence. Many British writers have dubbed the movement as a mere ‘Mutiny of the Sepoys’, the mercenary Indian soldiers in the British army. Scholars like R. C. Majumdar have disagreed with the view that the movement was a national war as the participants were not “inspired by a sense of patriotism.” British historians like Grant Duff, Kaye and Mallesan have agreed that it was an organised campaign to drive away the British from India. Whatever the causes which had inspired the participants, there cannot be any doubt that they had the common goal of delivering India from the control of the foreigners. In the words of Panikkar, “the decisive test of a national movement is whether its objective is the achievement of the country’s freedom. On that question there could be no doubt.”

**Causes**

**Political.** The expansion of the British dominion dispossessed many princes of their kingdoms. This was resented both by the princely
rulers and their subjects. People who were newly subjected to the British resented the new administration which tried to replace many age-old customs, rules and institutions. The conservative always suspects and resents the radical and new, whatever it may be. The application of the Doctrine of Lapse by Dalhousie produced grave discontent among the annexed states and a sense of alarm among other ruling princes. "The fall of the old and renowned royal houses like those of the Peshwa, Bhonsle, Avadh, Jhansi, Punjab and Satara, and the precarious existence of the rest...gave a rude shock to the sentiments of the people," says R. C. Majumdar. Those who had served the expropriated princes as soldiers or servants, lost their means of livelihood and held the British rule responsible for the calamity that had befallen them.

Nana Sahib Peshwa, whose pension had been discontinued (as he was the adopted son of Baji Rao II), the Rani of Jhansi, whose adopted son was not allowed to succeed to the throne, Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur (in Bihar), whose jagir had been confiscated by the Board of Revenue and Emperor Bahadur Shah of Delhi, who had been forced to vacate his traditional palace, became leaders of the movement.

Administrative. People found it difficult to adjust themselves to the new administrative system, which radically differed from the old. The changes and experiments in land revenue collection brought misery and ruin to both landlords and cultivators. Cultivators found the burden of excessive land rent unbearable. Landowners were reduced to the position of mere revenue farmers, having been deprived of their former privileged position as administrators or judicial officials. Zamindars feared eviction for non-payment of revenue.

The newly-founded rule of law, which treated all citizens equal before law, hurt the old privileged classes in society. Due to the complicated procedures, the weaker sections in society could not benefit much by this rule of law. The language of administration was not intelligible to the people in general. The English Law was not understood by the common man. The officials were not accessible to the people and the administrative machinery operated mechanically. The new administration could neither invoke love nor become popular as a result.

Indians had been excluded from higher administrative posts. Even in salaries, there prevailed discrimination between the whites
and the Indians. The British officials behaved arrogantly towards their Indian subordinates and the general public.

Economic. The Indian traders lost much because of the high-handed behaviour of the Company. The Company secured monopoly over the sale and purchase of many goods.

High rates of revenue impoverished Indian agriculture. India’s age-old handicrafts were ruined in competition with machine-made goods from England. India was reduced to a colony producing raw materials and was thus economically exploited. The general standard of living fell steeply. The population of Bengal registered a steady fall.

The expropriated landlords and princes dropped much of their paraphernalia. Many a retainer lost his job. Grave economic distress and social unrest followed. The Inam Commission appointed by Dalhousie led to the confiscation of 20,000 Inams in the Deccan alone. A large section of the people had been hard hit by the economic policies of the British.

Religious. Both the Hindus and the Muslims of India disliked the new Christian rulers, and looked upon them with suspicion. The rapid spread of Western education, the insults heaped on Hindus by the British who looked upon them as idolators and the activities of the Christian missionaries, all created mistrust in the minds of the people.

The missionaries started coming to British India from 1813. They tried to convert people by fair and, at times, unfair methods. The Bible became a subject of compulsory study at schools.

The social legislation for prevention of Sati (1829), widow remarriage (1856) and removal of religious disabilities (1850) were all interpreted as moves to interfere with Indian society and tradition.

The Wahabi sect inflamed anti-British feelings among the Muslims.

Military. The mercenary sepoy in the British army did not remain friendly to the British. His being forced to cross the ocean (during the Persian Gulf Expedition, etc.) was disliked by him. His prolonged engagement in distant lands like Burma was also resented. His salary was low. There had been revolts in various divisions of the army because of discontent over promotion, food and salary. The Bengal Division was never known to be loyal. A part of the low salary collected by the sepoy went to gratify the officials.

The missionary activity in the army wounded the religious sus-
ceptibilities of soldiers. The new cartridges introduced for the Enfield guns in January 1857 had been greased with the fat of cow and pig. Soldiers had to bite the cartridge open for use. This was considered a deliberate effort to convert the sepoys to Christianity.

**Break out.** On January 25, 1857, the troops at Dum Dum (near Calcutta) openly expressed their unwillingness to use the greased cartridges. On March 29, an European army officer was killed at Barrackpur by a soldier, and the other sepoys did not come to the rescue of the officer. Soldiers at Meerut refused to use cartridges, and 85 of them were court-martialled and sentenced. On May 10, the cavalry and infantry together rose in revolt and broke open prisons to release their jailed colleagues. They burnt the houses of officers and killed every European at sight. *Maro Phirangiko* (kill the European) was their popular slogan.

The insurgents marched on Delhi from Meerut. They captured the ancient capital and declared Bahadur Shah Emperor of India. The loss of Delhi was a serious blow to the prestige of the British Government. Before any effort could be made to capture Delhi, fresh insurrections broke out in the first week of June in the upper Gangetic plain and Central India. Nasirabad in Rajputana, Bareilly in Rohilkhand, Kanpur, Lucknow and Benares in the Gangetic plain, Jhansi in Bundelkhand, and Jagdishpur and Arrah in Bihar, were all up in arms against the British. European officials were killed and the government offices (termed *saitani deftars* or Satan’s offices) were burnt. At Kanpur, under Nanasaheb’s direction, the sepoys took the small British garrison captive. At Lucknow, Sir Henry Lawrence and his contingent were encircled from July till November. Delhi, Kanpur and Lucknow were the main centres of insurgency. At Allahabad, General Wheeler was forced to surrender on June 29. South of the Narmada was rather quiet, excepting the mutiny of the Indian regiment at Kolhapur, and the revolt of Babasaheb, the Prince of Nargund and Bheema Rao (a former official in British service) at Koppal.

The Punjab and Bombay remained calm. Gwalior, Kashmir and Hyderabad, too, remained loyal to the British.

Soon the British rose to the occasion. Attempts to occupy Delhi began in June itself, but the whole city could be recovered only on September 14. The city was sacked, innocent people were butchered, Bahadur Shah was arrested and his sons and grandsons,
who had surrendered, were mercilessly shot in the streets by the
British army.

Lucknow was captured on March 21 (1858) and Bareilly in May. Meanwhile, in Central India, Tatia Topey, a lieutenant of Nanasaheb with 20,000 Gwalior men, crossed the Jamuna, and
joined the followers of Nanasaheb and Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi. This
large army of revolutionaries was defeated at Kalpi on May 22 by
the British. The defeated sepoys marched on Gwalior. Rani
Lakshmi Bai, called "the best and the bravest military leader of the
rebels" by General Hugh Rose, died fighting on June 17th. Tatia
Topey was captured in April, 1858.

Lord Canning proclaimed peace in 1858 and arranged for the
trial of those who were really guilty. The revolt failed, but only
after it had given a rude shock to the British regime in India.

Causes of Failure. The equipment of the insurgents was poor. They
used the muzzle-loader guns, whereas the British used the newly
invented breach-loaders.

The English could fully make use of the means of communica-
tion like telegraph and postal system. The sepoys never understood
the significance of these. This made possible quicker delivery of
messages and better co-ordination in the British army.

Many Indian princes like Sindhe, the Nizam and Gulab Singh
of Kashmir remained loyal to the British and helped them. The
Sikhs and Gurkhas too loyally co-operated with the foreign govern-
ment in suppressing the revolt.

The disorder and confusion that followed the revolt made the
masses lose their sympathy for the insurgents. Loot and arson were
resorted to by anti-social elements, and there was no law and order
in many a freed territory.

The insurgents had no able army leaders. Generals like Tatia
and Lakshmi Bai were rare, whereas the English had trained
and experienced commanders like Neil, Lawrence, Outram and
Havelock, to mention only a few. Moreover, the revolutionaries
had no leader capable of co-ordinating their movements and
commanding their loyalty.

Effects. "The mutiny became a dividing line of Indian history,
not only because the Crown assumed direct sovereignty and respon-
sibility for the Government of India, but because from the Indian
point of view the ancient regime died with it."

The first important result of the movement was that the govern-
ance of India was assumed by the British Crown, despite protests from the East India Company. The British Parliament passed the Act for a better Government for India on August 2, 1858. The administration of India was to be looked after by a Secretary of State assisted by fifteen members. The Governor-General became the Viceroy of India to represent the Crown.

An important Proclamation by Queen Victoria was made at the public Durbar held on November 1, 1858 by Lord Canning, the Governor-General, by which all treaties and engagements of the Company with the Indian people and princes were confirmed. The Queen promised to pay regard to the rights, usages and customs of the Indian people. She proclaimed a policy of justice, benevolence and religious tolerance. The British Government was not for interfering with the religious beliefs and the forms of worship of the Indians. The Queen also promised that the Government did not intend territorial expansion through “encroachment on those of others.” Services of the Empire were declared to be open to all without discrimination and on the basis of qualification.

This Proclamation of 1858 has been termed the ‘Magna Charta of the Indian people.’

Despite this, mutual distrust and hatred between the rulers and the ruled continued. Patriotic people, eager to oust the aliens, continued to agitate secretly, and gave rise to extremism in Indian politics.

The proclamation cleared the ground for a national democratic movement. People no longer thought of founding the Moghul Empire at Delhi or the Maratha Empire at Poona, but thought of freeing themselves for self-rule.

The British also became conscious about not wounding the religious feelings of the Indians. Open support to the Christian missionaries was stopped, and the missionary movement lost much of its edge.

By ending the rule of the Company, the 1857 movement opened a new chapter in Indian history. An era of reform and peaceful agitation for concessions began after 1857.
CHAPTER VI

LEGACY OF BRITISH RULE

Introduction

"The most notable achievement of British rule was unification of India", says K. M. Panikkar. The British, for the first time in the history of India, succeeded in bringing India under a single rule. There were provinces or presidencies such as Bombay, Madras and Bengal, ruled by the British directly. Each province was looked after by a Governor. In addition to these provinces, there were nearly 600 princely states. One-third of Indian territory was administered by these Indian Princes. These Princes had accepted the British as the sovereign authority. In the internal administration of their states, the Princes enjoyed autonomy. The British generally stationed a European Resident at the courts of each one of these Princes. The Resident guided and advised the Princes in administrative matters. Some of the princely states comprised of only a few villages, but some others like Mysore, Hyderabad or Kashmir were bigger in size than some small British provinces of later creation like Sind or Assam. The size of these states, thus varied.

This political unity helped to establish peace. The internecine wars and struggles amongst the Princes became a thing of the past. The rule of law founded by the British brought peace and order to India. Peace is a pre-requisite factor for prosperity. Prosperity encourages cultural activity.

The British by encouraging Western education in modern sciences and liberal arts, helped creating a new intellectual class of like-minded people all over India. By improving transport and communication, they linked the four corners of the country. New sciences and technology introduced by them helped India to modernise her industries. The new urban middle class, that emerged as a result of Western education and industrialisation, imbibed Western liberal and political ideas. The writing of Indian history and renaissance in vernacular literature were the other phenomena of the period. They helped the Indians to become aware of their past glory. The activities of Christian missionaries had their own
positive and negative roles in this process. By their positive action of popularising education and studying vernaculars scientifically, the missionaries helped the trends of modernism. They helped the development of modern vernacular literature. By attacking the Hindu society and institutions, they played a negative role but helped the emergence of revival movements like the Arya Samaj or Ramakrishna Mission.

The political unity and the improved means of transport and communication knit the Indian people together. Added to these were the consciousness of the past glory and Western political ideals. They all together helped the rise of Indian nationalism. By taking to new sciences and technology and adopting modern means of transport, communication and production India was fast modernised.

Religious and cultural traditions of India had always considered this country as a single nation. The Vishnu Purana refers to India as a single country “Bharata”. Common holy places like Kashi or Rameshwar and common scriptures like the Vedas had made the Indians feel as a single community of people. But the idea of modern political nationalism was the legacy of the British rule, one of the main aspects of modernism.

The English were instrumental in bringing modernism to India, as this country was subject to their rule. Other Asian countries too were modernised almost during the same period, due to the Europeans. A country like Japan, though not subjected to any Western country, was nevertheless influenced by Western civilisation, and modernised itself during the same period when India was undergoing the process.

Spread of English Education

Christian missionaries who had started their activities in India, also started English schools. As English learning was the key to secure jobs under the British Government, many Indians studied it.

Protestant missionaries had founded English schools in Madras, Tanjore and a few other places in the Madras Presidency before the end of the eighteenth century. A permanent annual grant for three schools in the Presidency had been sanctioned by the Company in 1787. William Carey, a missionary, who came to Calcutta
in 1793, played an important role in the spread of English education in Bengal. The missionaries had founded English schools in Mangalore, Belgaum, Dharwar, Bellary and Mysore of the present Mysore State in the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century.

The Government and other private agencies also did not lag behind in their contribution to the spread of education. A school was founded at Bhavanipur, Calcutta, in 1800, and at Chinsura in 1818. A native Education Society was founded in Bombay in 1815 and they had opened three schools in the Presidency.

The British Parliament had urged the Company to set aside an amount of rupees one lakh annually to encourage literature and learning in India. The Government was eager to secure English knowing servants to man its administrative machinery. Employing Indians for clerical jobs in the administration was economical for the Company. The salary paid to an Indian was much lower than that paid to a European.

Liberal Indian leaders like Raja Rammohan Roy took great interest in English education. With the help of a missionary, David Hare, he founded many schools and also the Hindu College at Calcutta. In 1823, a Committee of Public Instruction was appointed in Bengal and steps were also taken to establish a Sanskrit College at Calcutta. Raja Rammohan Roy opposed this idea of founding a Sanskrit College as he felt that imparting of only traditional learning would keep the country in darkness. "As the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy with useful sciences", Rammohan urged in his petition submitted to Lord Amherst, the Governor-General.

The Committee of Public Instructions, which came to have Lord Macaulay, a famous scholar-statesman, as its President in 1834, decided to promote English education only, and English Schools increased in number. The Council of Education which had replaced the Committee of Public Instructions, had under it 28 schools in 1843, and their number rose to 151 in 1855 in Bengal alone.

Higher education too spread keeping pace with school education. In 1817, the Hindu College of Calcutta was founded, and

1 Advanced History of India, p. 968.
the next year, at Serampore (a town in Bengal) the Baptist Mission College came into being. English education was introduced in an already existing college of Delhi in 1828. In the Bombay Presidency, the Poona Sanskrit College was founded in 1811, and English teaching was later introduced in the College. (Even now the Institution survives with the name Deccan College.) The Bombay Native Education Society’s High School (Bombay) later became the Elphinstone College. In Madras the Christian College was started in 1837 and the Jesuits founded a college at Nagapattanam in 1846. Bareilly had a college in 1850 and the Central High School of Bangalore became a College in 1864.

Though these early colleges were teaching only arts subjects, science teaching too was soon introduced. Medical colleges were founded in Calcutta (1834), Bombay (1843) and Madras (1851). Chairs of Botany and Chemistry were started at the Bombay Elphinstone College in 1855 and Lord Dalhousie (1848-56) founded an Engineering College at Roorkee.

Universities were founded at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857, the year of the Mutiny. The Punjab University was established at Lahore in 1882, and the Allahabad University in 1887. India had 27 colleges in 1857 and their number increased to 72 in 1882. To promote higher learning and research in science, the Indian Institute of Science was founded in Bangalore in 1911.

The impact of this new learning was phenomenal. The spread of English education and Western sciences created a new class of intellectuals in India. English replaced Sanskrit as the language of the intelligentsia. The floodgates of Western culture were opened to the Indians, and they were now aware of the liberal political thought of the West and also the modern scientific and technological progress. The influence of English literature helped the literary renaissance of Indian languages. Secular subjects now attracted writers more than religious subjects. (The cult of Rama and Krishna were more popular with the medieval poets.) Social novels and short stories also came to be written. Michael Madhusudhan Dutta wrote the first modern epic in Bengali, following the English Romantic writers, in 1861. Bankim Chandra Chatterji in Bengali, Subramanya Bharathi in Tamil and Savarkar in Marathi wrote patriotic poems, indicating the national awakening that was evident in the four corners of the country.
Christian missionaries, in order to spread the gospel among Indians, studied Indian languages and compiled scientific dictionaries. They also introduced printing and tried to perfect the types for Indian alphabets and produced vernacular newspapers. Thus the new knowledge spread rapidly, and India’s march towards modernisation was hastened.

**Industrialisation**

Industrially, India was in no way inferior to any European country during the Middle Ages. India has been considered as the “Workshop of the World”, especially supplying the finest cotton textiles to the West but India’s industries were labour-oriented, and production was of handicraft type.

The eighteenth century witnessed Industrial Revolution in England. Machines fast displaced human labour, and large factories, engaging big machines, came into existence in England. Machine-made goods were cheaper, and England produced consumer goods much in excess of her needs. These products of British factories ruined the Indian handicraft industries, as the British flooded Indian markets with their own cheap products. With the disappearance of the Indian industries due to British competition, raw materials grown in India had no local demand. The English purchased these raw materials grown in India to feed their own factories and the newly-laid railways facilitated their transport to Indian harbours for export.

Later, the transport charges of taking Indian raw materials to England and bringing ready-made goods back to India were found to be exorbitant. The British industrialists, to avoid this burden, thought of starting modern industries in India as labour was cheap.

The first spinning mill was founded at Calcutta in 1818. Bombay saw the erection of a textile mill in 1854 and by 1861, there were 13 cotton mills in India. The first jute spinning mill was commissioned at Rishta in Bengal in 1855 and during the 1860’s more mills were founded. Coal-mines started operating in Bihar during the same period. The tanning industry flourished in Madras. India had 56 cotton mills in 1879 and 144 in 1895. The number of jute mills rose to 20 by 1882. There were 56 coal mines in 1880, and their number increased to 123 by 1895.
The impact of modern industries on Indian life was tremendous. Industrial centres like Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Kanpur and Ahmedabad grew to be major cities. A new urban labour class emerged and many villagers who had lost their jobs due to the ruining of handicrafts now flocked to the cities. Thus the villages got linked with towns and cities. This link was further strengthened by the fact that the villages supplied raw materials to the new factories and that the villages had been connected with the cities by railways and roads. The age-old isolation of the self-sufficient Indian villages thus ended. The village now entered the mainstream of Indian life, strengthening India’s new nationalism.

The industrial centres also became the nucleus of various socialist movements that were witnessed in India during the twentieth century.

Transport and Communication

The laying of railway lines, constructing long grand trunk roads and introducing steam navigation for inland transport were all achievements of the British rule in India.

Lord William Bentinck (Governor-General, 1828-35) conceived the idea of constructing new trunk roads connecting Calcutta, the capital of the British, with the upper provinces. He was also responsible for introducing steam navigation in Indian rivers. Later, Lord Dalhousie organised the Public Works Department in 1854-55 and under its auspices many highways and canals were initiated. The grand trunk road connecting Calcutta and Peshawar was planned by him. Dalhousie was also responsible for initiating the laying of railways in India. In 1855, a 37-mile railway line between Bombay and Kalyan was opened. The same year work on the 121-mile Calcutta-Ranigunj line began and the 65-mile Madras-Arcot line was completed in 1856.

The 1857 uprising convinced the British of the need for having better transport and communication facilities. The Famine Commission Report of 1880 urged the laying of more railway lines. By 1900, India had a network of 25,000 miles of railway lines connecting every nook and corner of the country.

Dalhousie was also responsible for laying the long telegraphic line between Calcutta and Agra, a distance of 800 miles, in 1854.
Later, the line was extended to Peshawar. By 1857, all the important presidency centres were linked with Calcutta telegraphically.

The British had also improved the existing postal system in India and modern roads and railways had helped the toning up of the postal service. Dalhousie reformed the postal system also. A uniform half-anna rate was fixed for letters. The charges varied from place to place earlier, depending upon the distance a letter had to travel. (Formerly, the rate from Bombay to Calcutta was one rupee). Stamps came to substitute cash payment by Dalhousie's reforms.

The improved means of transport and communication helped the unification of the country. Administration became more efficient and centralised than before. The law and order situation also improved, as riots could be curbed more quickly by moving troops quickly than before and the authorities could have better contacts with the remote centres. The village life and economy underwent a radical change, as the villages were linked to towns and cities. Agricultural products became more marketable. The railways helped minimising many a social evil like caste segregation and untouchability.

Administration of Justice

The impact of British rule was felt more in the sphere of administration and law. Justice came to be administered according to uniform law. Administration of justice became impersonal with the result that the British founded the "Rule of Law" in India.

During the Hindu and Muslim periods, various sections of the people had their customary rights. Hindu rulers, who administered justice, were subject to certain traditional obligations and customary limitations. A Brahmin and low-caste man were not treated alike before law. The punishment for a particular offence differed according to the offender's caste. The caste of the offender also influenced the judgment, the punishment being harsh if the person offended belonged to a higher caste. The penalty was mild in case the offended was of low birth.

During the Muslim period, Hindus were discriminated against Muslims, and Muslims enjoyed a privileged position. There was no permanent arrangement during the earlier periods, by which a subject could express his grievance against the ruler.
Revenue and judicial administration were closely allied in India. With the securing of Diwani in 1765, the rendering of justice also became a responsibility of the Company together with the collection of revenue. In 1772, each district came to have two courts, the Faujdar Adalat for criminal cases, and Diwani Adalat for civil cases. Two separate "Sadr" courts or courts of appeal were also founded at Calcutta.

Lord Cornwallis introduced many radical changes in judicial administration. By the Cornwallis Code of 1793, every District had a collector. But he was divested of judicial powers. A District Magistrate was also appointed to try civil and criminal cases. (Both these officers were Europeans.) Separation of judiciary and executive was thus achieved. A Munsiff was appointed at the taluk level to try civil cases. All Government officials were "made amenable to the courts" for all their acts in official capacity by this Code. The ordinary citizen was thus protected from any possible official oppression.

Later, Lord Bentinck appointed a District Magistrate, and freed the District Judge of his criminal jurisdiction. Indian Deputy Magistrates were appointed by him to hear criminal cases at the District level. (He had also appointed Indian Deputy Collectors.) The Deputy Magistrate later came to look after a sub-division, comprising some talukas in a District. The Munsiff at the taluk level also continued. Thus a well-knit judicial machinery was instituted to assure justice though minor changes were introduced from time to time. The Charter Act of 1853 also made provision for founding High Courts in the provinces. The Indian High Courts Act was passed in 1853, and High Courts were accordingly established in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta in 1861, and in Allahabad in 1866. These were provincial courts of appeal. The Governor-General and his Council were the highest court of appeal in India. The Privy Council in England was the final court of appeal.

Initially, the religious laws of Hindus and Muslims were used in civil cases. British subjects in India were tried according to the English Law and the Supreme Courts, founded at Calcutta (1784), Madras (1801) and Bombay (1826). All crimes, such as theft, murder, etc. were treated as offences against the State. Five different bodies of statute laws were in force in British India, making judicial administration a complicated job. The Charter
Act of 1833, therefore, provided for the consolidation and codification of Indian laws. A Law Commission was accordingly appointed in 1834. Lord Macaulay, a leading member of the Commission prepared the draft of the Indian Penal Code. Afterwards, the Commission was abolished.

The Charter Act of 1853 appointed a second Law Commission. The Act also called for the uniform civil and criminal procedure code for all the courts of India. The Indian High Courts Act was also passed. The Code of Civil Procedure was promulgated in 1859. Macaulay’s Penal Code was revised and passed in 1860. The Criminal Procedure Code was promulgated in 1861.

Thus the ‘Rule of Law’ was a unique gift of the British to India. Justice was better assured than before as a result of the peace established in the country. All sections of the people were promised protection under this new order.

*Administrative Organisation*

To the British must go the credit of establishing a modern administrative machinery in India. “The British Government tried to impose the same high standard of administrative efficiency in India which had been evolved in their own country, and the enlightened liberal humanistic spirit of the West did not fail to make its influence felt in India”.*

Efficient government was also necessary in the interest of the rulers. Without an efficient governmental machinery, law and order could not be maintained. Revenue collection also became difficult as agricultural and other productive activities could not be pursued. The Company was particular about its revenues from India. Therefore it was serious about maintaining peace and order in its newly acquired dominions. Thus India was highly benefited by Pax Britannica and an orderly administration.

With the acquisition of Bengal, administration of the province was organised by the Company on the lines of the old system with slight changes. The Nawab continued to rule over the region, but the Company collected the revenue. This dual government was later abolished by Warren Hastings in 1772. He appointed District Collectors to supervise revenue collection. Various experiments in administration were tried for the next 20 years after this. Still, the

District Collector continued to be the pivot of administration.

In the meanwhile, discussions were going on in England over the problems of Indian dominions. Should a private trading Company be allowed to enjoy sovereign rights over vast territories? Should there not be any supervision of the British Parliament over the Company in matters of administering these overseas dominions?

As the Company had faced some losses, it asked for a loan from the British Government. This difficulty of the Company was taken advantage of by the British Government, and it passed an Act in 1773 to regulate India's administration.

Regulating Act, 1773. By the Regulating Act of 1773, the rights of the shareholders and directors of the East India Company were highly restricted. The Parliament of England secured supervisory powers over the Company. Parliament appointed a Secretary of State for India to whom all administrative affairs of India were subjected. The Secretary of State was answerable to Parliament for all his acts and decisions.

Thus the arbitrary authority of the Company over the administration of India was curbed. Parliamentary control was introduced in principle.

Indian administration was vested in a Governor-General and a Council of four members. Warren Hastings was the first Governor-General of India. The Governor-General and his Council had supervisory authority over the other two Presidencies of India, viz. Madras and Bombay. These two Presidencies had Governors, but in Bengal, the Governor-General himself was to function as the Governor.

Pitt's India Act, 1784. William Pitt, Prime Minister of Britain, brought about further changes in India's administration by an Act of 1784. The Act founded a Board of Control in England headed by the Secretary of State for India and five members of the Privy Council. This Board of six directed the administrative affairs of India. Its authority was superior to that of the Directors of the Company.

In India, the strength of the Governor-General's Council was reduced to three. The Governor-General was allowed to act against his Council's decision in certain special cases. The authority of the Central Government at Calcutta over subordinate Presidencies was strengthened.

The Charter Acts. The Charter granted by the Crown to the East India Company was for a specified period. This Charter was to be renewed by Parliament periodically.
While the Charter was renewed for another 20 years by the Charter Act of 1793, the authority of the Governor-General over the Presidencies was further enlarged. The Charter Act of 1813 declared that the British Crown had "undoubted sovereignty" over the Indian possessions of the Company. The monopoly of trading in India, enjoyed by the Company was abolished by this Act.

The Charter Act of 1833 went one step further. It ordered the Company to suspend all its commercial activities. The Company became a purely administrative body, controlled by the Government of England. The Act of 1833 vested all legislative powers connected with the subordinate Presidencies in the Governor-General and his Council only. Superintendence, direction and control over the subordinate Presidencies came under the jurisdiction of the Central Government. Thus the authority of the Governor-General over the subordinate Presidencies was further enhanced, and centralisation of administration was facilitated. A Law Member was added to the Governor-General's Council.

A wave of liberalism was sweeping England during this period. The poor and the down-trodden were receiving sympathetic treatment by the various laws that were passed in England. Autocratic rule and uncontrolled authority was not looked with favour. The British people were also becoming aware of the problems and conditions of the Indian subjects. This was the cause for making the Company an administrative body, shorn of its business interest by the Act of 1833.

Appointment of officials for India by the Company was also stopped. Relations and nominees of the Directors coming to India as officials many a time had neither the qualification nor the capacity for the post to which they were appointed. These officials were interested in furthering their own personal gains. They were generally corrupt and were eager to amass wealth through illegal means.

The Charter Act of 1853 introduced the system of open recruitment to Indian services by competitive examinations. A Law Commission was appointed in London to codify Indian Laws. The Governor-General's Council, which had four members (with the addition of a Law Member in 1833) was both an executive and legislative body. By the Act of 1853, it was enlarged, for legislative purpose, with the addition of six legislative members. The original four continued as the executive also.
Of the six new members, four were nominees of the four Presidencies (Bengal, Madras, Bombay and North-West Provinces, the last one being newly created in 1836). The rest were judges of the Supreme Court of India. A nucleus of the future Indian legislature was thus created.

The 1858 Act. The 1857 uprising resulted in the assumption of sovereignty of India by the Crown by the passage of the Act of Better Government for India.

The Secretary of State for India was made a Member of the British Cabinet. He was to be assisted by a Council of 15 Members. The Secretary of State was responsible to the British Parliament for the Indian affairs. The Government of India was to be run, as before, by the Governor-General and his Council according to the directions of the Secretary of State.

Council Acts. But from the point of view of development of Indian legislative bodies, important steps were taken by the Indian Councils Act of 1861. A fifth ordinary non-official Member was added to the Executive Council of the Governor-General. For legislative purposes "not less than six nor more than twelve" additional Members were to be added to the Executive. Not less than half of these legislative Members was to be non-officials. The powers of the Legislative Council were restricted by various regulations. Still its expansion was a major step towards "government by discussion". Three Indians were appointed as its Members in 1862.

Lord Canning introduced the "Portfolio System" in his Executive Council, by which each member was put in charge of specific departments.

The 1861 Act restored the legislative powers of the Presidencies. Legislative members were added to the Governor's Executive Councils in Bombay and Madras. Such Legislative Councils were also created in Bengal (1862), North-Western Provinces (modern Uttar Pradesh, 1886) and the Punjab (1898) according to the provisions of the same Act.

By the Indian Councils Act of 1892, the number of additional legislative members was increased in the Central and Provincial Councils. There could be 16 additional members at the Centre. In the major Presidencies of Bombay, Madras and Bengal, this number was 20, and 15 for the United Provinces (former North-Western Provinces). Indians took their seats in these Councils also.
Financial Administration. The system of budgeting was introduced in the Central Government in 1860 and revenue came to be apportioned accordingly. In financial matters all issues were decided by the Central Government alone initially. After 1870 some amount of decentralisation was introduced. Post, railways and some such items of revenue were retained by the Centre, and land revenue, forests, etc. were transferred to the Provinces.

Uniform currency, substituting nearly one thousand different types of coins that were in circulation in India, was introduced by the British. In 1818 the silver coin, a rupee of 180 grains, was issued. In 1835 its shape was changed (like the modern rupee coin), but its weight remained the same. The new rupee was made the sole legal tender all over the country.

Civil Service. The Indian Civil Service was first founded by Cornwallis. Initially, relations and favourites of the Directors of the Company were appointed to the service. They were trained for two years in England. But the Charter Act of 1853 introduced the principle of competitive examination for recruitment. Both European and Indian subjects were declared to be fit for the examination in 1858. But few Indians could appear for the examination and qualify themselves for the civil service. This was due to certain strange regulations introduced from time to time. (The first Indian to qualify himself for entry into civil service was Satyendranath Tagore in 1863.) In 1879 it was decided that at least one-sixth of the total recruits to civil service must be Indians. Examinations for recruitment were initially held only in England. Later a resolution was passed by the House of Commons to hold the examinations simultaneously in England and India.

By subjecting the recruits to rigorous training, the British made the civil service efficient. They tried to bring into India, the same standard of efficiency as prevalent in their own country. Modern and scientific methods were introduced. The railway, the posts and telegraphs, roads and other modern amenities were fully utilised to increase administrative efficiency. The slow-moving and corrupt administration of the previous age was dispensed with. "This process had no doubt begun even before the assumption of the Government of India by the Crown, but there were no appreciable effects and notable transformations until the latter part of the nineteenth century".  

The new Government was humane. It provided for famine relief and labour legislation. It helped the exploitation of India's natural resources like mines, forests and rivers. Irrigation works were also undertaken. The fear of revolt and the mercantile interests of the home country also guided the British in all these matters.
CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS

"The century in which we are living", writes K. K. Dutta, "is a wonderfully stirring epoch in the annals of human civilisation. In India, it has been marked by the unfolding of the genius of her people in manifold petals and a remarkable transformation of their social life by purging of accumulated ills and anomalies through varied significant changes".¹ But such a development did not take place all of a sudden. The social reform movement began in the 19th century itself to solve the pressing problems of accumulated ills in Indian society. They were, however, hastened in the twentieth century.

India’s contact with the West produced various results not foreseen by the advocates of Western and Christian cultures. It helped the infiltration of new ideas into India. Further, the introduction of Western education and the spread of education in the country, brought the Indians into closer contact with the liberal ideas and liberal socio-political institutions of the West. This gave the needed stimulus to the process of social renovation. The social revolution was brought about by the introduction of rapid means of communication, like railways, telegraph, postal system, etc. This broke down the caste barriers to a great extent. People now began to ponder over the antiquated traditions which they were following. They felt that the time had come to modernise their social institutions. But it needed an organised movement to reform the age-old institutions. The very religious organisations that inspired nationalism in the country led the crusades against the prevailing social ills and made the renovation of the Indian society possible.

The Brahma Samaj. Among the modern reform movements an important place must be given to the Brahma Samaj. The founder and the moving spirit behind Brahma Samaj was Raja Rammohan Roy, the father of modern Indian Renaissance. He was probably born in 1774 in an orthodox and well-to-do Brahmana family at Radhanagar, a village in the Burdwan district of West Bengal. He had liberal education and gained a mastery over Sanskrit, Persian

¹ Renaissance, Nationalism and Social Changes in Modern India, p. 104.
and Arabic. To understand Christian scriptures, he studied English and was acquainted with Hebrew and Greek. Earlier in life he made a deep study of Hindu and Islamic laws, literature, and philosophy, which prepared him wonderfully well for the role of the first prophet of progressive reform in our religion and society, during the first quarter of the 19th century.²

Rammohan realised the futility of worshipping the images of Gods. In defence of his rational views he published a Persian work *Tulsat-Ul-Muwahhidin* or “A Gift to Deists”. In this work, he questioned the usefulness of worshipping images and proclaimed the unity of the Godhead. In 1815, he founded the Atmiya Sabha to preach the monotheistic religion. In 1816, he established the Vedanta College for the ‘propagation and defence of the Hindu Unitarianism’. Rammohan did not rest content with this. His idea was to establish an institution based on Upanishadic ideals. This led to the foundation, on August 20, 1828, of the Brahma Sabha, or the ‘One God Society’. In spite of the opposition from the orthodox section of the Hindu community, the Samaj became a very popular institution.

Rammohan Roy was a rationalist and stood for the abolition of child marriage and *sati*. He was the first to champion the cause of women. He advocated widow marriage, divorce and civil marriages and education of women, which also formed the main planks of the Brahma Samaj movement. He favoured the abolition of *sati* ‘quietly and unobservedly’, but was not for stopping it altogether. He however supported Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor-General of India, when he took the initiative to abolish *sati* in 1829. He championed the cause of women to inherit the property of their parents. He attacked the existing caste barriers and favoured intercaste marriages. He based his arguments on the basis of the sacred scriptures of the Hindus and proved beyond doubt that many of these practices were not sanctioned by law. Though a conservative section revolted against his progressive ideas, he was successful to an extent in rousing the public opinion against many inhuman practices. Rammohan died in 1833 at Bristol. He fought to the last days of his life vindicating the rights of the Indian people.

*Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore*. At the time of Rammohan Roy’s death the Samaj was fighting for its life. Dwaraka Nath Tagore

and Vidyabagish ‘kept the lamp burning’. A new life was infused to the Brahma Samaj when Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, son of Dwaraka Nath Tagore was initiated to the church in 1843. Born in 1817, Devendra Nath was drawn towards the ideas of Rammohan in 1838. He established the Tattvabodhini Sabha or ‘Truth Teaching Society’. When the mantle of Brahma Samaj fell on him, he proclaimed the ‘Vedas and Vedantism’ as the basis of the Samaj. The Samaj now entered on useful activity. It attracted many young men notable among whom was Keshab Chandra Sen. But when Devendra Nath gave prominence to the Doctrine of ‘infallibility of the Vedas’, a section of the members resented. This led to a split of the party. Keshab came out from the parent body and formed a new organisation called ‘The Brahma Samaj of India’. The party led by Devendra Nath came to be called Adi Brahma Samaj. Soon after the split, Devendra Nath retired from active participation in the work of the Adi Samaj and handed it over to Rajnarayan Bose. Devendra Nath laid the foundation of the Santiniketan Ashram which later became world famous under his illustrious son, Rabindra Nath Tagore.

*Keshab Chandra Sen*. Born in 1838, he joined the Samaj in 1857. He became a wholetime missionary four years later and became the *Acharya* in 1862. His was a dynamic personality. He wanted to broaden the movement so that it could embrace the whole country. He visited Madras and Bombay and toured the North-western Provinces, spreading the message of the Brahma Samaj. By his ceaseless activity and oratorial ability he was able to popularise the movement throughout India. Soon Brahma Samaj associations came to be established in Bombay in 1867 under the inspiration of Ranade and Bhandarkar. In Madras, Veda Samaj, later came to be called Brahma Samaj, was organised. By 1866 some 54 samajas were organised in many parts of India.

With the split in the Brahma Samaj, Keshab founded the Brahma Samaj of India in 1866. He abstained himself from politics and concentrated more on social reforms like intercaste marriage, widow remarriage, female education, removal of *purdah* for women, etc. He denounced intemperance, polygamy, caste distinctions and other social abuses. He was largely responsible for the passing of the Native Marriage Act in 1872 fixing the minimum age for the bridegroom and the bride at 18 and 14 respectively. Keshab played an important part in raising the marriageable age for girls.
Hence the passing of the Act was a personal triumph to him. But contrary to his own public position, he married his daughter at a very young age to the Maharaja of Cooch Behar. Also the marriage was performed as per the orthodox Hindu custom. This was resented by the younger men of his Samaj. The Brahma Samaj was split for a second time. The followers who deserted Keshab established the Sadharana Brahma Samaj in 1878. Six years later Keshab Chandra Sen passed away.

The three bodies the Adi Brahma Samaj, The Brahma Samaj of India and the Sadharana Brahma Samaj exist even at present, but the first two bodies are in a moribund condition.\(^3\)

*The Prarthana Samaj*. This was founded by Ranade under the inspiration of Keshab Chandra Sen. Ranade forcefully argued against making distinctions between man and man, as all are the children of God. He warned people that they should always be on their guard and must not forget that ‘the work of regeneration was one of self-effort and could not be done by substitution’. The Prarthana Samaj, like the Brahma Samaj, attacked the restrictions and inequalities of the caste system and other social abuses.

*Dayananda Saraswati*. Dayananda, the founder of the Arya Samaj, was one among those who was inspired by the Brahma Samaj movement. He was born in 1824 in an orthodox Brahmana family in Gujarat. At the age of 14, he went to a temple with his father to worship and keep vigil on the Sivaratri Day. While he was keeping the vigil, he found a mouse eating the offerings made to Siva. He now thought that if the deity could not protect himself, he could not be Siva. He therefore broke the fast and the vigil. Traditional religion did not any longer appeal to him. He left his house and embraced the life of an ascetic, when his parents wanted to marry him. He studied under Swami Birajananda and after the completion of studies, he entered upon his career as a preacher.

Dayananda began his puritan movement with the cry of ‘Back to the Vedas’. The *Vedas* were considered as the real source of inspiration for national regeneration. He wrote commentaries on the *Vedas* engaged in controversies and condemned the rigidity of the caste system. In his polemic work, *Satyarth Prakash*, he has severely criticised Christianity and Islam. He was a great exponent of the method of bringing about reforms in society on the basis of the Hindu sacred works. He led a crusade against the caste system.

But he stood for the revival of the ancient Vedic society based on the fourfold division of the society. He refused to accept caste based on birth. He severely criticised the numerous subdivisions of the Hindu society. According to the Arya Samaj ‘men, animals and birds are the three jatis’, and caste ‘should be determined according to the qualifications’, of males and females. Dayananda stood for the prohibition of child marriage and polygamy. He was in favour of girls marrying at the age 16 and boys at the age of 25. He raised his voice against the practice of untouchability. He pleaded for the eradication of this practice. In fact ‘The Arya Samaj has invested lakhs of Untouchables with the sacred thread and thus made them honourable members of the Hindu society.’

Arya Samaj also reclaimed Hindus lost to Islam or Christianity by a purificatory ceremony called Suddhi. The Suddhi movement ‘was looked upon by the Arya Samaj as a potent instrument for effecting that religious, social, and political unity of India which came to be cherished as its great ideal by the Arya Samaj.’ Swami Dayananda founded the Arya Samaj at Bombay in 1875 and at Lahore in 1877. He cleared “a straight path that was meant to lead the Hindus to a simple and rational life of devotion to God and service of Man”.

Theosophical Society. The theosophical movements had been founded by Madame H. P. Blavatsky, a Russian and Colonel H. S. Olcott, an American. Originally it was coined from two Greek words Theos, God, and Sophia, wisdom. Theosophy means Brahmavidya in Sanskrit. It aimed at a synthesis of all religions. The theosophy movement in India gained momentum with the arrival of Annie Besant. She had already established her reputation in Britain. She had been a fighter for Irish freedom and women’s right in England. On arrival in India, she chose Benaras and Adyar (Madras) as the centres of the movement. By her remarkable and dynamic personality and genius for organisation she roused Indians to the greatness of their heritage. She adopted India as her motherland and worked for the moral and social regeneration of India. Though she concentrated more on politics, she did not neglect social reform. She advocated reform in education and fine arts.

Ramakrishna Mission. A more significant movement was led by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his disciple, Swami Vivekananda.

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4 Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. IV, p. 635.
5 History and Culture of the Indian People, p. 111.
Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya, who later came to be known as Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was born in 1836 at Kamarpurkar, a small village in West Bengal in a humble Brahmana family. He had his elementary education at a village school. He evinced no interest in studies and spent his time in the company of ascetics who happened to visit his village. He lost his father at the age of seven and thereafter he grew intensely religious. He used to fall into trances even at the age of six. He moved to Calcutta at the age of seventeen. In 1856, he became the priest of the Kali temple at Dakshineswar. He yearned to talk to and share his joys and sorrows with the Goddess. He lost himself whenever he was in deep prayer. Some people took him for a mad man. He was relieved of his duty as a priest. He returned to his village at the age of 24, and married Sharada Devi, a girl of five years. Soon he returned to Dakshineswar and continued his ascetic exercises. He practised Islam and Christianity. Sharada Devi came to Dakshineswar and lived there practising the love of God. He went on a pilgrimage and visited holy places like Benaras, Prayag, Brindavan, etc. Now his fame and name spread in all directions. He gave regular religious discourses in a simple language through parables. He preached that God is one and he can be realised by any one irrespective of caste, creed or colour. In doing so he established the equality of man. He laid more emphasis of leading a pure life and dedication of one's life to the service of the people. Sri Ramakrishna died in 1886 at Cossipore. Before his death he had entrusted the responsibility of tending his disciples to his illustrious pupil Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda. Narendranath Dutta, popularly known as Swami Vivekananda, was born in a Kayastha family in Calcutta, in 1863. He was strong in physique and was an adept in wrestling, boxing, racing, riding and swimming. He was unconventional in his manners, but had a religious bent of mind. He spent long hours in meditating before the images of Gods. He had English education and took his degree from Calcutta University. He was well-read. A chance visit to Dakshineswar brought him into close contact with Sri Ramakrishna. When he saw Narendra, Sri Ramakrishna said, “Ah, you came so late... you are the incarnation of Narayana, born on earth to remove the miseries of mankind”. Narendra soon realised the holiness in the master and the subse-
quent visits established intimacy between the two.

Sri Ramakrishna fell ill. He was removed to Calcutta and thence to Cossipore. Here his disciples gathered to serve him. This led to the growth of the brotherhood. Sri Ramakrishna passed away transferring his spiritual powers to Narendra.

Narendra now set up a monastery at Bavanagar near Cossipore. People began to flock to the monastery. In 1887 the formal inauguration of the Ramakrishna order took place and Narendra assumed the new name of Vivekananda. He undertook the pilgrimage of North, West and South India and was struck with the prevalent poverty in India. He thought of receiving help from the West in exchange for Indian spirituality. He visited America twice; first in 1893 and then in 1899. In 1893, he attended the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago and by presenting Hinduism and Hindu culture in its true perspective to the Westerners, he not only became a world figure but also ‘raised the prestige of India and Hinduism very high’. He also visited London and Paris. Again he visited America in 1899. During this visit he organised the Vedanta Society of New York on a permanent basis. He was invited to participate in the Congress of the History of Religions at Paris where he defended Hinduism. After his European tour he returned to India in 1900.

He shifted the monastery to Belur in 1899 and laid down rules for the guidance of monks. His success in the world conference brought him spontaneous veneration and respect from his countrymen. After he returned from his second strenuous tour, his health broke down. He went to Benaras for change where he founded the Ramakrishna Mission Home Service. The Swami passed away in 1902 leaving countless Indians as orphans.

Swami Vivekananda was not only a great religious leader and an inspirer of nationalism, but was also a great social reformer. He added a section for social service to the monastery he established. For this purpose he instituted a new organisation called Ramakrishna Mission in 1897. The Mission did yeoman service in the famine relief work in Murshidabad and other places in 1897 and for the plague relief in Calcutta in 1898. He denounced the existing caste system and advocated the founding of caste based on the ‘Quality of head and heart and not on mere accidental birth’. He was equally sore about the low status accorded to women in society. He opined, ‘That country and that nation which do not
respect women have never become great nor will ever be in future. The principal reason why your race is so much degraded is that you have no respect for these living images of Sakti. If you do not rise the women, who are the living embodiment of the Divine Mother, do not think that you have any other way to rise’’. He was struck with the poverty of the masses and the oppression by the rich. He observed, ‘‘I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes for the downfall....They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them’’. And again ‘so long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.’ Thus the Swami made the privileged classes to realise the duty they owe to the masses. In all these social reforms the Swami advocated caution and introduction of changes in slow degrees, lest it might yield place to revolution.

Thus the Swami, hailed by the West as the ‘Cyclonic Monk of India’, and by his own countrymen as the ‘Patriot Saint of India’, ‘the Lion of Vedanta’ has left a deep impress on the social history of India. The Mission he founded in the name of his master, Sri Ramakrishna Mission, has been doing tremendous work in uplifting the weaker sections of the society.

Nationalism and Social Changes. The rise of Indian nationalism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century accelerated social changes in all important spheres. Nationalism knows no caste, creed, colour or sex. The wave of nationalism that swept over the country welded India into one unit. It brought about unity among the people speaking different languages, people forgot their status in society and joined together for a common purpose. The purpose was to drive out the British and free the Motherland from the yoke of servitude. The common platform provided by the Indian National Congress brought the different sections of the community closer to one another. All these went a long way in diminishing class consciousness, a predominant feature of the Indian society, which discriminated man against man.

Social changes during this period centred round women and the depressed classes. The progress of the struggle for independence gave equal opportunities to both men and women. The Indian

7 Quoted from Dutta, p. 104.
National Congress made room for women to play their part. Leaders like Sarojini Naidu cast their lot with men in the freedom struggle. Much of the concentration was fixed on the education of women. The All India Social Conference and the All India Women's Conference have done significant service. The Indian National Congress gave great stimulus to women's education by according recognition to the position of women in all respects.

Indian Nationalism removed the social barriers to a great extent. The Indian National Congress declared as its goal the establishment of a democratic state. The conception of a democratic state presupposes social equality as well as the avowed object of the Indians was to fight against imperialism to secure the freedom for the country. People belonging to different castes and creeds joined together to achieve this sacred object. Thus common national consciousness prevailed over caste obligations and prejudices thereby weakening caste consciousness.8

Another sphere in which nationalism effected social change was the removal of untouchability. Of the total Hindu population nearly a fifth were regarded as untouchables and they practically remained outside the pale of Hindu society. Some well-meaning caste Hindus sympathised with the lot of the untouchables and the leaders of the social reform movements led a crusade against this social evil. But all these failed to root out this heinous practice. Even the Indian National Congress excluded this problem in the first thirty-two years of its existence, though it did not approve the practice. The problem began to engage the attention of the leaders of the Congress only when the Muslim League began agitation for a separate electorate. The League also questioned the numerical strength of the Hindus which had kept a large section of people outside its society. By now, the Depressed Classes had realised their potential value as a political factor and they were not prepared to yield unless they gained substantial concessions from the Hindus.9 All these made the national leaders focus their attention on this important problem. Since then, it became an important programme of the Indian National movement. In its thirty-second session, held at Calcutta, December 1917, the Indian National Congress took this problem for consideration and passed the following resolution: “This Congress urges upon the people of

8 Dutta *op. cit.*, p. 126.
9 *History and Culture of the Indian People*, *op. cit.*, p. 1001.
India the necessity, justice, and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom upon the Depressed Classes.” In 1920, the Congress at its Nagpur session passed a resolution ‘stating that the removal of untouchability was necessary for the attainment of freedom’. The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress in its Delhi meeting, in 1929, appointed an Anti-Untouchability Sub-Committee for the amelioration of the disabilities of the Depressed Classes. The Committee had the following programme of work: (1) getting temples, schools and wells, freely opened to untouchables, and (2) instructing them in sanitary living.10 “Suggestions were invited and made for effectively carrying on anti-untouchability propaganda in various spheres and a sub-committee was appointed to execute the programme laid down.”11 Thus nationalism has helped bring about this social change.

Social Philosophy of Gandhiji

Social reform was dear to the heart of Gandhiji. The ‘Epic Fast’ he undertook at Yerawada prison in September, 1932, enabled him to concentrate more on this neglected field. In the Harijan dated January 25, 1942, he declared: “I have always held that a parliametary programme at all times is the nation’s activity. The most important and permanent work is done outside.” His view was that the individual must do more work so that the State would do less. He declared himself against participating in the government of free India as there was much to do ‘outside the official world.’ This was the philosophy of Gandhiji. For social reform, he depended more on voluntary organisation with dedicated and active members.”12

Gandhiji denounced the caste system, the purdah, untouchability and other social abuses. One can notice a subtle change in the position he held in the twenties as compared to his views in the thirties. Caste system hindered all social progress. But Gandhiji had favoured the varnasramadharma and had not supported inter-dining and inter-marriage. In Young India of October 6, 1921, he wrote: “Hinduism does most emphatically discourage inter-dining and inter-marriage between divisions. . . . Prohibition against inter-

10 Dutta, op. cit., p. 129.
11 Report on the Anti-Untouchability Committee, ibid., p. 130.
marriage and inter-dining is essential for the rapid evolution of the soul.” He considered “the four divisions alone to be fundamental, natural and essential.” He held, “innumerable sub-castes are sometimes a convenience, often a hindrance. The sooner there is fusion the better.” He reversed this position some eleven years later. He said, “Restrictions on inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriage is no part of Hindu religion. It crept into Hinduism when perhaps it was in its decline, and was then probably meant to be a temporary protection against the disintegration of Hindu society. Today these two prohibitions are weakening Hindu society.”

In the Hindu Standard on January 5, 1946, he declared: “I therefore tell on boys and girls who want to marry that they cannot be married at Sewagram Ashram unless one of the parties is a Harijan. He did not approve of the ‘artificial caste barriers’.” He even refused to attend a marriage unless it was an inter-caste marriage. He advised guardians, who were hard pressed by economic wants, to solve their problem of their daughters’ marriage by extending the field of choice.

Gandhiji was equally forceful in his attack on the purdah. He began his attack on this practice during his Champaran Mission (Bihar) in 1917. He said, “It is not my desire that our women should adopt the Western mode of living; but we must realise what harm this pernicious system does to their health and in how many ways they are deprived of the privilege of helping their husbands.” In Darbhanga, he dwelt on the same theme and said: “Chastity is not a hot-house growth. It cannot be superimposed. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of purdah.... What we are doing to our women recoils upon our heads.... It partly accounts for our own weakness, indecision, narrowness and helplessness. Let us tear off the purdah with one mighty effort.” The call which Gandhiji gave did not go in vain. Some orthodox men and women and the All India Women’s Conference took the lead in this matter. By organising demonstrations and meetings, they were successful in educating the masses. The purdah has almost disappeared.

Gandhiji was equally forceful in his attack on child marriage. He strongly favoured raising the age of consent not merely to 14

11 Louis Fischer, op. cit., p. 36.
12 Ibid, p. 86.
13 Dutta, op. cit., p. 123.
14 Young India, 3-2-1927.
but even to 16. He felt the need for enlisting the support of the public to the age of consent.

The upliftment of the untouchables was dear to the heart of Gandhiji. Initially, he does not appear to have supported wholeheartedly the idea of untouchables entering the temples of the Hindus. He once said: "How is it possible that the *Antyajjas* (Untouchables) should have the right to enter all existing temples? As long as the law of caste and *Ashram* has the chief place in the Hindu religion, to say that every Hindu can enter every temple is a thing that is not possible today." But that he soon changed his opinion becomes evident from his following statements.

After he returned from South Africa, in 1915, Gandhiji toured South India and felt miserable when he saw the plight of the untouchables. At Mayavaram he made a speech, in the course of which he said: "In so far as I have been able to study Hinduism outside India, I have felt that it is no part of Hinduism to have in its fold a mass of people whom I would call untouchables." He founded a *Satyagraha Ashram* at Kochrab, near Ahmedabad, and admitted Sri Thakkar Bapa and his family, belonging to the Depressed Classes into the *Ashram*. This instance brings into bold relief the broad mindedness of Gandhiji. From now onwards the amelioration of the conditions suffered by the untouchables became a mission of his life. In his presidential speech at the Supressed Classes Conference, April 1921, held at Ahmedabad, he said: "I regard untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism.... Untouchability must be extinct in this very year. Two of the strongest desires that keep me in flesh and bone are the emancipation of the untouchables and the protection of the cow. When these two desires are fulfilled, there is Swaraj, and therein lies my moksha."  

The untouchability for Gandhi was a 'deeply religious and moral issue.' In 1927, he appealed to the caste Hindus in the following soul-stirring words: ‘Untouchability poisons Hinduism’ and this poison must be destroyed, if Hinduism is to survive.

Presiding over the Belgaum session of the Indian National Congress, 1924, he observed: ‘Untouchability is another hindrance to Swaraj. Its removal is just as essential for Swaraj as the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity.'

18 *Young India*, 27-4-1921.
Gandhiji undertook the ‘Epic Fast’ in Yerawada prison against the Macdonald Award reserving seats for Harijans. He said, the fast ‘is aimed at a statutory separate electorate, in any shape or form, for Depressed Classes. Immediately that threat is removed ‘once for all, my fast will end.’ With this fast, Gandhiji intended to sting Hindu conscience into right religious action. He regarded ‘the Hindu-Harijan division is politically disastrous and religiously suicidal. Gandhi could not countenance the widening of the Hindu-Harijan gulf.’

The fast did produce its desired effects. The caste Hindus became more liberal in their views. Many temples like the famous Kalighat temple of Calcutta, and the temple of Rama of Benaras, ‘citadel of Hindu orthodoxy’, were thrown open to untouchables. The gulf that had been created between the caste Hindus and the Harijans began to be bridged slowly.

Thus by his speeches and writings in Young India and Harijan, Gandhiji led a ceaseless crusade against the sins of untouchability and succeeded to a great extent in his mission to banish untouchability. As Louis Fischer admirably puts it: “The conservative traditionalist and the radical iconoclast merged in Gandhi into a tantalising unpredictable mixture. The Mahatma’s successful assault on untouchability produced the most revolutionary change in Hinduism’s millennial existence.”

In summary: The socio-religious reform movements, the rise of Indian nationalism and the utterances of Gandhi were successful in rousing the conscience of Indians and making them realise the futility of the antiquated beliefs and practices. Such beliefs and practices that are with us for ages die hard and cannot be eliminated in a day. But the attempts that were made during the period under review not only shook the very foundations of orthodoxy but have successfully laid the foundations of an era of liberalism.

19 Life of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 58.
20 Ibid., p. 85.
CHAPTER VIII

RESURGENCE OF INDIA

Introduction

The second half of the nineteenth century was in many ways an age of criticism. During this period an effort was made to free the people from the shackles of vested authority in society, in religion, in literature and in arts. The educated class, who took a prominent part in this, soon realised that India could not progress without the ideas and institutions being subjected to critical examination. The need of the hour was to instil in the minds of the people common aims and aspirations and a common political ideology. Such an attempt needed enlightened individuals who could disseminate the progressive ideas of the minority among the majority. Fortunately for India, there were socio-religious organisations and leaders who could play an effective role in making the people realise the dangers in store for them. These efforts led to the rise of nationalism and the resurgence of India.

Rise of Indian Nationalism

"The growth of nationalism as an integral force", writes K. M. Panikkar, "was a product of the nineteenth century".¹ The Indian Mutiny of 1857 has been hailed as the first national movement against the foreign power and for the time being it achieved communal unity. But how far the mutiny was actually motivated by a national spirit, in a political sense, has been disputed. The impact of the West on India had various results not foreseen by the advocates of Western culture. The rise of nationalism from about 1831 was partly due to the liberal policies followed by the British Government and the growth of many ideas and activities. More than all, the political consciousness of the Indians was roused by various religious and social elements.

¹ The Determining Periods of Indian History, p. 48.
with the progressive political thought contained in the works of Milton, Burke, Mill, Macaulay, and Herbert Spencer to mention only a few. The great achievements of revolutions in modern Europe and the success of nationalism and democracy elsewhere in the West instilled the minds of the Indians ‘the life giving conceptions of liberty, nationality and self government’. They soon found that their political life lacked liberty and freedom which were the hallmarks of Western political life. “The Englandreturned Indian found it difficult to feel at home and be happy in the slavish atmosphere prevalent in the country and became disgusted and discontented and this discontentment proved infectious”.

Another factor that contributed to the growth of Indian nationalism was religious reform movements which had for their object “the importation of social urge among the Hindus connected directly by the interpretations to old texts”. From about 1830 the impact of Western ideas was strongly felt in Bengal. In 1831, Raja Rammohan Roy had attempted at the emancipation of Indian society from the arbitrary social regulations. He advocated social reforms like widow remarriage, abolition of sati and education for women. He wrote a number of works inspired by Western models. The Brahma Samaj movement succeeded in attacking the old social and religious basis and showing that they could be built anew on a different basis and different principles. As Buck observes: “Protestantism had come with full blast in the religious sphere and later on the social sphere; and with Protestantism against old foundations of society came the new democratic movement, basing itself on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity and demanding the fullest assertion for the hitherto submerged individual in every sphere of life”.

In the Punjab, Swamy Dayananda Saraswati, ‘styled as the Reforming Luther of Hinduism’, began a puritan movement, the Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj was not an international, but staunchly a national organisation. It was uncompromising in its attack on the West. Thus more than any other religious body, it was the fighting spirit of Dayananda Saraswati that roused national consciousness. As Max Muller remarks, ‘In spite of the fact that the movement weakened during the second and the third decades of the twentieth century, the Arya Samaj was one of the most progressive

and dynamic forces vitally active in the earlier stages of the Indian National Resurgence, in building up the new political order”.

Another movement which caught the imagination of the educated was the Theosophical Movement. Its main object was to revive the ancient wisdom of the East. It also aimed at a synthesis of all world religions, and the most dynamic leader of this movement was Annie Besant. Theosophists established the branches of their Society throughout the world and India was brought into contact with the new religions and social forces. Besant considered that religion is indistinguishable from politics. Some of her statements were: “Religion, in the spiritual essence, is one and indivisible, and the various religions are merely intellectual representations of the basic truth”. “Patriotism has been one of the fine flowers of religion”. The theosophical movement was introduced in the British parliament, Besant and others championed the cause of the Indians in England and made Members of Parliament conscious of India. Thus the theosophical movement roused Indians to the greatness of their heritage and stimulated national awakening.

A more significant movement was that of Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. This was a thoroughly indigenous movement due to the personality of a simple and almost illiterate saint, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. He taught the philosophy of the Upanishads in universal language and laid particular emphasis on social service. He wanted to protect the country from the materialism of the West. He never advocated violent change, but gradual economic and social upliftment of the people leading to spiritual reform. He actually stimulated many local socio-religious organisations and movements like Arya Samaj, Radhaswami Satsang, Bharata Dharma, etc. which played a remarkable role in bringing about national awakening.

Paramahamsa’s disciple Swami Vivekananda, was a forceful personality. By his mastery of Eastern and Western philosophy, he showed that Hinduism was capable of adjusting itself to the latest scientific thought of the modern world. He did not preach a sectarian creed but universal Hinduism based on Vedanta. He was mainly responsible for creating ‘a sense of community among the Hindus’. “This new Shankaracharya may well be claimed to be a unifier of Hindu ideology”.\(^{3}\) He visited America and Europe, established Vedanta centres in America and England, and made

\(^{3}\) K. M. Panikkar, op. cit., p. 53.
the Western world aware of India. He advocated a liberal form of Hinduism and uplift of the masses. Though a sanyasi, the Swami was a patriot to the core. He was not unmindful of the sufferings of his Motherland. Rightly called ‘the father of Hindu nationalism’, the Swami roused national consciousness of his countrymen by his forceful call, ‘Arise, awake, stop not till the goal is reached’. “In his numerous speeches and writings Swami Vivekananda impressed upon his countrymen as well as upon some foreigners the capacity of India’s inborn spiritual genius, her rich cultural heritage and taught them self-confidence and trust, and thus immensely stimulated nationalism.”

Prarthana Samaj founded by Ranade at Bombay and the Servants of India Society furthered the moral and political advancement of the country.

There was a corresponding literary revival starting with Bengali literature. Writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Devendra Nath Tagore, Michael Madhusudan Dutta and R. C. Dutta brought about a renaissance in Bengali literature. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee whom Shri Arobindo calls ‘a seer and a nation-builder’ and one of the ‘Makers of Modern India’, revealed in his work the ‘inward spirit in Indian life and thought’. His illustrious work, Ananda Math gave the Anthem ‘Bande Mataram’, the ‘Mantra’ of an awakened nationalism. This Mantra stimulated nationalism to a great extent. Other regional languages of India began to imitate Bengali literature. The result was the birth of the national ferment throughout the country.

Yet another factor ‘which in some ways was even more important as it provided both a strong framework and an inspiring vision was the recovery of India’s History’. This happened in the nineteenth century. Nothing was known of the happenings before the Muslim conquest, till James Mill wrote on the history of India. A misconception prevailed in the minds of many British administrators that India was a country fit to be conquered and ruled by foreigners. “The researches of many zealous antiquarians, Indian as well as European, revealed the majesty and glory of India’s old civilization which served to inspire generations of people in this land”. A number of European scholars like Jones, Prinsep, Wilson, Colebrooke, Rosen, Roth, Burnouf, Schelegal,

1 Dutta, Renaissance, Nationalism and Social Changes in Modern India, p. 7.
2 K. M. Panikkar, op. cit., p. 54.
Propp, Max Muller and others “revealed to herself less than to
the Western world the majesty and wealth of Sanskrit language...
and the historical as well as the literary value of the great body...
of Hindu literature which is the key to India’s civilization”. The
lead given by European scholars was well continued by some Indian
scholars like Raja Rammohan Roy, Radhakrishna Dev, Rajendra Lal
Mitra, Viswanath Narayan Mandlik, Mani Shankar Tarashankar,
Bhai Daji, Bhagwan Lal Indraji, M. G. Ranade, B. G. Tilak,
R. G. Bhandarkar, K. T. Telang, Manamohan Chakravarti,
Haraprasad Shastri and some others. By painstaking research they
rediscovered and reinterpreted the past history of India. “It showed
the Hindus as a people who not only had very deep root in history,
but had built up empires and carried the message of civilization far
and wide, had navigated the seas and travelled across deserts, influ-
enced people and communities as far distant as Java and Mongolia”. The
glorious heritage of the past infused in the minds of the Indians
a sense of pride and a desire to become the leaders among nations
once again. This helped the growth of nationalism.

The improved means of transport and communication like rail-
ways, post and telegraph linked the four corners of the country.
The seclusion of villages and various regions had ended. Physical
and administrative unity was achieved due to British rule.

The idea of nationalism was originated and nursed first in Bengal
and it assumed an all-India character with the foundation of the
Indian National Congress.

* Foundation of the Indian National Congress

The last quarter of the nineteenth century is memorable in the
annals of modern India. The period witnessed the birth of the
sentiment of nationality. This soon found powerful expression in
the foundation of the Indian National Congress ‘which became a
potent factor in the evolution on India’s destiny’.

The political consciousness of Indians had no doubt been raised
by various religions and social elements. But an organised effort
had to be laboriously built up by constitutional agitation. The
various constitutional measures which the government adopted did
not satisfy the Indian leaders. It injected, on the other hand, racia-

* Chirol, India, p. 80.
* K. M. Panikkar, op. cit., p. 55.
Ripon succeeded Lytton as the Viceroy of India in 1880. He was a well-wisher of India. During his Viceroyalty, Ilbert, a law member, prepared a Bill providing for the trial of Englishmen by Indian Magistrates and Judges. The Englishmen led a violent agitation against this measure and forced the government ultimately to yield. Though the Bill was not withdrawn, the scope of the Bill was changed beyond recognition. The episode left 'a rankling raise of humiliation in the mind of India', and made them realise 'the value of combination and organisation in political struggle'.

Another event which heightened the need for an organisation was the agitation against the Civil Service Rules. In 1877, the maximum age limit for Indian Civil Services Examination was reduced from twenty-one to nineteen years. Indians saw in this measure a deliberate act of the British Government 'to blast the prospects of Indian candidates for the Indian Civil Service'. A meeting was organised by the Indian Association, Calcutta, to protest against this measure. The Civil Service agitation was launched by Surendranath Banerjee 'to evoke all-India sentiments'. He toured the whole country, addressing meetings and bringing home to the people the inherent dangers of the measure. He has himself summed up the significance of the agitation thus: "The agitation was the means for the raising of maximum limit of age for the open competitive examination and the holding of simultaneous examinations were among the ends; but the underlying conception, and the true aim and purpose of the Civil Service agitation was the awakening of a spirit of unity and solidarity among the people of India".

The repressive policy adopted by Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy of India, the involvement of India in the Wanton Afghan War, the expansion of the army out of Russian fear, and the gagging of the Vernacular Press increased the Indian national discontent. These events led to the birth of the National Conference under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjee in 1883. Two years later the National Conference yielded place to the Indian National Congress.

* A Nation in the Making, p. 44.
Indian National Congress. As Pattabhi Sitaramaiah observes: "It is shrouded in mystery as to who originated this idea of an All-India Congress. Apart from the Great Durbar of 1877 or the international exhibition in Calcutta, which...are supposed to have furnished the model for the great national assemblage, it is also said that that idea was conceived in a meeting of seventeen men after the Theosophical Convention held at Madras in December 1884." The part played by Allan Octavian Hume, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service and a great sympathiser of India, in the founding of the Indian National Congress cannot be overlooked. He thought that if the discontent prevailing among the educated Indians was not channelised properly it may lead to disastrous consequences. As he put it: "A safety valve for the escape of great and growing forces, generated by our own action, was urgently needed, and no more efficacious safety valve than our Congress Movement could possibly be devised". He addressed an open letter, in 1883, to the graduates of the Calcutta University appealing to them to form an association 'for the mental, moral, social and political regeneration of the people of India'. This resulted in the formation of the Indian National Union in 1884. Lord Dufferin, the then Viceroy of India, had also felt the necessity for an organisation which could criticise and correct the Government. When A. O. Hume approached him to extend support for his proposal to organise the Indian National Congress, Lord Dufferin blessed his effort. The Indian National Union decided in March 1885 to hold a National Union Conference at Poona in December with the 'objects of enabling national workers to know each other and to discuss and decide the political programme for the ensuing year'. The outbreak of cholera at Poona necessitated the change of venue. The first session of the Indian National Congress was held at Bombay on December 27, 1885 under the presidentship of W. C. Banerjee. Thus various factors contributed to the genesis of the Indian National Congress.

"With the formation of the Indian National Congress a new era was inaugurated in the history of India, for it was under the auspices of that body and on that memorable date, that India formally entered on a struggle which grew keener and keener every year, until in the ripeness of time, it developed into a great movement for the attainment of Swaraj or full responsible government

within the British commonwealth of nations”.

The Congress held its sessions every year and passed resolutions focussing the attention of the Government to the needs of the hour. The leadership of the Congress was moderate in its demands with a view to forestall any serious opposition from the administration. In fact, in his presidential address W. C. Banerjee said that the Congress wanted a parliamentary system which was in no way incompatible with the loyalty of the British Government. There was no hatred of the Britishers.

**Early Leaders**

The first phase of the Congress movement centred round leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai. In order to understand the development of nationalism in its proper perspective, it is necessary to study the lives and contribution of these leaders, who dedicated their lives for the cause of the Motherland.

1. Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917)

Regarded affectionately as the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai dedicated sixty-one years of his life—forty years before the foundation of the Congress and twenty-one years after—for the service of the nation. As C. Y. Chintamani points out: “For 61 long years, in England and in India, by day and by night, in circumstances favourable and adverse, in the face of discouragements which would have broken the heart of a smaller man, Dadabhai Naoroji served the Motherland with undeviating purpose, with complete selflessness and with vitality of faith which put to shame most young men…”

Dadabhai was a Moderate. He admired Western culture and regarded that British connection would do good to the country. To bring the Britishers into closer contact with India, he founded the London Indian Society and a little later the East India Association. The branches of the East India Association were established in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and other places.

Dadabhai presided over the sessions of the Indian National Cong-

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10 R. G. Pradhan; *India’s Struggle for Swaraj*.

11 *Indian Politics since the Mutiny*, p. 36.
ress thrice, i.e. in 1886, 1893, and 1906. He was respected by both the Moderates and the Extremists in the Congress. By 1906 Dadabhai had lost faith in the British sense of justice and had become bitter against the government. In his presidential address at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906, he declared, "We do not ask for favours. We want only justice. Instead of going into further divisions or details of our rights as British citizens, the whole matter can be comprised in one word—self-government or Swaraj, like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies". Hence-forward Swaraj became the battle cry of the Indian patriots in the following years. It was again under his presidentship that the Congress in 1906 adopted three radical items of action, viz. boycott movement, swadeshi, and national education.

Dadabhai was the first political leader in India to point out how Great Britain drained India of her wealth. In his famous book Poverty and Un-British Rule in India, he showed that the average income of the Indians did not exceed Rs. 20 per year.

Dadabhai's name stands first in the list of Indian patriots who struggled for the freedom of the country. He has left behind him a noble example of a dedicated life which is worthy of emulation.

2. Sir Pherozesah Mehta (1845-1915)

Among the Parsi leaders who contributed much for the freedom of the country, Pherozesah Mehta comes next to Dadabhai Naoroji. After taking his Master's degree, he went to England to qualify for the Bar. While in England, he came into contact with Dadabhai Naoroji and attended the meetings of the two Indian Associations in England. After his return, he devoted his life and time for the upliftment of the Indians. He welcomed the British rule and thought that their administration was good in the interest of Indians. He advocated that education must be free from the primary level upwards. It was due to his relentless efforts that Bombay City came to have its own Corporation. He was the Mayor of Bombay Corporation in 1884, 1885, 1905 and 1911.

He became President of the Congress in 1890, held at Calcutta. He took active part in the Bombay Presidency Association, founded in 1884, and was its President till his death. He was the nominated member of the Bombay Council in 1886 and in its meetings he pointed out forcefully the defects of the Government policies. He was a friend of the ryots and fought with the government on their
behalf. He started an English daily, the Bombay Chronicle. This paper played a significant role in the freedom struggle.

3. Surendra Nath Banerjea

Surendra Nath Banerjea was born in 1848. He took his B. A. degree from Calcutta University and was the first Indian to qualify for the I. C. S. at the age of 23. He was appointed Assistant Magistrate of Sylhet in 1871, but was removed from service in 1873. He went to England and took the Barrister’s degree. After his return, he joined the Metropolitan Institute as English Professor. In 1882, he started his own school, which later became the Rippon College, Calcutta, and looked after its administration while continuing in the City College which he had later joined.

To involve students in active politics and to bring the people under one banner for political agitation, he founded the Students’ Association. He toured all over India on behalf of this association. Later, he started the Indian Association at Calcutta to protect the political interests of Indians. In 1883, he founded the National Conference which yielded place to the Indian National Congress in 1885. He presided over the Allahabad session of the Congress in 1902.

Surendra Nath Banerjea was a great patriot who could not tolerate the misrule of the British. Yet he did not advocate the use of violence. When the age for appearing for the Civil Service examination was reduced from 21 to 19 years, he had condemned the action of the government fearlessly. He toured the whole country to rouse public opinion against this measure. Again when Curzon proposed partition of Bengal in 1905, he began the ‘Vanga-bhanga’ agitation and refused to co-operate with the government till the proposal was withdrawn, which the government did in 1911.

In 1879 he bought Bengali, a weekly, and became its editor. In course of time it was converted into a daily. In 1883, he became a Member of the Bengal Legislative Council and continued to be its Member for eight years. The British Government honoured him with Knighthood in 1921 and he became a Minister in the Bengal Government. At the time of the Congress split, Surendra Nath supported the Moderates and presided over the session of the Moderate Congress held at Bombay in 1918. Surendra Nath did not believe in violence and kept himself aloof from the Non-cooperation Movement started by Gandhiji in 1920-21.
Surendra Nath Banerjea was one of the two original founders of the Indian National Congress. He is also regarded as the Father of Indian Unrest. He spent fifty years of his life in the service of the Motherland. He was one of the Makers of Modern India. It is rightly said, "he was to India, what Demosthenes was to Greece and Cicero was to Italy".

4. Gopala Krishna Gokhale

Gokhale was born in 1866 in the Ratnagiri District of the present Maharashtra in a poor family. He took the B. A. degree in his eighteenth year and became a High School teacher. Later he became a life-member of the Deccan Education Society and worked in the Fergusson College for twenty years on a monthly salary of Rs. 75. At the time of his joining, the financial position of the college was none too good. During holidays, Gokhale went round the Deccan, collected funds and placed the college on a secure basis. Naturally, he came to dominate the institution, but he never misused his position. He even refused to become Principal of the college when the vacancy arose in spite of pressures from different quarters.

Gokhale soon came under the influence of M. G. Ranade and became the secretary of the Poona Sarvajanika Sabha. He also began writing in the English columns of Sudharak, a social service paper. His popularity was increasing day by day and he was placed in charge of the Provincial Conference of the Bombay Presidency. Two years later he became the Secretary of the Indian National Congress. Soon differences arose in the Sabha, and a new body called the Deccan Sabha was started in 1896.

After his retirement from the college, Gokhale devoted his life to the service of the people. He became a member of the Bombay Legislative Council in 1899 and in 1902 he succeeded Pherozeshah Mehta as Member, Imperial Legislative Council. The role he played in the Imperial Legislative Council earned him the appreciation of many British administrators as well as the distinction of C. I. E., in 1903. He founded the Servants of India Society in 1905 to train young men to take part in public life. In the same year he presided over the Benaras session of the Indian National Congress. His name was recommended for conferment of the Knight of Commandership of the Indian Empire, by Lord Hard-

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12 Quoted from National Development, etc., p. 473.
enge, the Viceroy of India, but Gokhale declined to accept the honour.

Throughout his public life, Gokhale had to face rough weather. He was a moderate who believed in relieving the miseries of the people without violence. He once said, "Well, even if it were possible for me to defeat the government today I would not do so". He felt that the moral authority of government in this country was of superlative importance to stability. Very often he was mistrusted and criticised by his own countrymen. His approach to the Minto-Morley reforms, the Indian Press Act, the South African problem, etc. led to controversies. For a long time, the political sky in India was overcast for him. But Gokhale stood his ground and 'never fell below his own standard. He always aimed high and he was never satisfied until he had done the best, the very best that was open to him'. These qualities of his head and heart appealed to Gandhiji most and he regarded Gokhale as his 'political Guru'. In fact Gokhale christened Gandhiji into Indian Politics.

Patriotism to Gokhale meant "devotion to Motherland so profound and so passionate that its very thought thrills and its actual touch lifts one out of oneself". To V. H. Rutherford, Gokhale was "a diplomatist to his finger-tips, who knew how to play on the national lyre without offending the official ear". Tilak described him as, "the diamond of India, the jewel of Maharashtra and the prince of workers". To Gandhiji "Gokhale was as the Ganges—it invited one to its bosom".

5. Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920)

Tilak is one of the Makers of Modern India. He played a most remarkable part in India's struggle for Swaraj. He was a great educationist and founded the New English School at Poona for giving cheap education. For some time he was a professor and taught Mathematics and Sanskrit. But he did not derive any satisfaction in the educational field. He wanted the whole country to progress and for this purpose he dedicated himself.

Tilak was a born fighter. He possessed intelligence and will power in abundance. He brought to bear upon every task that he undertook, an iron will and resolution that nothing could break. There

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14 V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, op. cit., p. 127.
was no means he would not employ to accomplish the task to which he put his hands, to achieve the end upon which he was bent. He came into prominence in 1891 as a powerful champion of Hindu orthodoxy. He appealed to the Hindu sentiment by organising Ganapathi and Shivaji festivals. He was a powerful writer and through his journal, Kesari, he attempted to awaken his countrymen to a sense of the great worth of their ancient culture. But he did not hate the West or its civilisation. He appealed to Indians not to be carried away by the dazzling superficialities of the Western civilization, but to assimilate those qualities of the West which had made India and other countries great and powerful. He said that those who did not have pride in the past, could feel no hope for the future. Hitherto the national movement was led by the intelligentsia, but Tilak made it a mass movement.

Tilak was an outspoken exponent of the Extremist School of thought in Indian Politics. He questioned the British sense of justice and had no faith in the constitutional methods for the achievement of the political advancement of India. He believed that independence would come to India only when her people were strong enough to snatch it from the British. The first target of his attack was the Age of Consent Bill. In 1896, when there was a plague epidemic in Poona, the British soldiers forcibly evacuated houses and committed many excesses. Tilak vehemently attacked the action of the Government and two British officers, Rand and Lt. Ayerst were murdered by two young patriots. Tilak was prosecuted and imprisoned for 18 months. This increased all the more his popularity and he came to exercise a powerful influence upon the political developments in India.

During the days of the partition of Bengal, Tilak carried on a vehement propaganda against the measure. He now declared that complete independence must be the final goal of the Congress. He said, “Swaraj is my birthright and I will have it”. This slogan became the goal of the Congress from 1906. At the Surat Congress, in 1907 he clashed with the Moderates led by Gokhale and was expelled from the Congress. He, however, continued the agitation outside the Congress. Outrages were rampant in Maharashtra. Tilak was prosecuted for bringing the government into contempt by his speeches and writings and was sentenced to transportation to Mandalay Jail, in Burma, in 1908.

11 C. Y. Chintamani, op. cit., p. 182.
During his stay in Mandalay prison Tilak wrote *Gita Rahasya* in Marathi. He was released from prison 4½ years later as a consequence of the agitation carried by scholars like Max Muller in England. He went to Britain to propagate his ideal of Swaraj. Englishmen came to regard him as the very incarnation of the hopes and aspirations of the Indians. By 1920 his health began to fail and he died in August of the same year.

Rightly called the Father of Indian Unrest, Tilak taught the Indians how to fight and suffer for the rights and liberties of their country. His suffering and sacrifice in the cause of the Motherland constitute a brilliant chapter in Modern Indian history. He was called "The Uncrowned king of Maharashtra and Later of India during the Home Rule days". His countrymen reverentially called him Lokamanya. "In the encircling gloom, he appeared with a torch in his hand".

6. *Lala Lajpat Rai*

Lajpat Rai, like Tilak, belonged to the Extremists School of Thought. He made tremendous sacrifices for the cause of the Motherland. He was a great orator and a powerful writer. He joined the Congress in 1888. He went to England along with Gokhale in 1905 to place before the British people the Indian point of view. His stay in England convinced him that the Indians have to rely on their own strength for their political advancement.

In 1907 troubles broke out in the Punjab. They were largely agrarian in origin. The local government increased the land revenue and the irrigation rate. There was strong resentment against these measures. Lajpat Rai championed the cause of the agriculturists and criticised the government measures. He also held the government responsible for the prevailing discontent in the Punjab. He was deported, but was released six months later. During the period of the First World War, he remained in exile in the U. S. A., where he wrote his famous book *Young India*.

Lajpat Rai presided over the special session of the Congress in 1920. Three years later he was elected to the Legislative Assembly and became the Deputy Leader of the Swaraj Party. He left the Swaraj Party and later founded the Nationalist Party along with M. M. Malaiya. When the Simon Commission visited India he organised protest meetings and personally led a protest procession. He was severely beaten by the police and died within a fortnight.
Lajpat Rai was a leader of the Arya Samaj in the Punjab. He was a Hindu Nationalist. But this did not prevent him in supporting the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. He was, however, not prepared to sacrifice the interests of the Hindus for the sake of unity with the Muslims. He was also an educationist and played a remarkable role in founding the D. A. V. College at Lahore. He founded and edited three important papers, viz. the Punjabee, the Bandemataram, and the People. For his undaunted courage and fearlessness, he was called ‘Sher-i-Punjab’, i.e. the Lion of the Punjab.15

Muslim Politics. The Muslims in the nineteenth century completely withheld themselves from politics. Soon they found that it was a profound mistake to boycott Western education and give up power to the Hindus. Therefore, Sir Syed Ahmed and Aga Khan urged the Muslims to take to Western education and enter politics to protect their own interests. The Muslim College at Aligarh was established and educated Muslims became conscious of International movements. In 1913, the All-India Muslim League adopted, as its ideal, self-government as suitable to India. They also agitated for communal representation in any Legislative reforms introduced by the British Government.

**Constitutional and Administrative Changes**

After the Crown took over the Indian Administration, five Council Acts were passed to improve Indian administration. But the Indians continued to agitate ceaselessly, for constitutional and administrative changes and on every occasion repression followed reforms. Indian discontent had reached a new high when the partition of Bengal was announced. This resulted in ‘the birth of a new spirit in the people, the spirit of manliness and self-reliance and willingness to sacrifice to win national freedom’. There was great unrest and turmoil in the country. The Congress was split into two parties—the Moderates and the Extremists. Those who believed that national freedom cannot be won by peaceful and constitutional methods formed secret societies and took to violence to realise their object. ‘For the first time in her history, the cry of ‘Bande Mataram’ was raised as symbolising patriotism, national unity and determination of the

people to free the Motherland from all humiliation and oppression at the hands of alien rulers". Events were moving fast and in order to stem the tide of extremism and revolution, the British Government devised the policy of rallying the Moderates and the Muslims and initiated reforms of the Councils, popularly known as Minto-Morley Reforms.\(^{17}\)

**Minto-Morley Reforms.** In England, the India House carried on propaganda for the political reforms in India with the help of the Members of Parliament. At last Morley, the Secretary of State, was compelled to appoint a reforms committee. In 1909, the Minto-Morley reforms were put into effect. There was some attempt at popular representation in the provincial and local Legislatures. The reforms carried out the policy of rallying round the Muslims by creating class electorates and by giving them weightage. The Moderates led by Gokhale supported the reforms. But the Extremists remained dissatisfied.

The reforms did not aim at establishment of a parliamentary system in India. Secondly, it introduced for the first time communal venom into the body politic of India through communal electorates. This increased the Hindu-Muslim antagonism. It was feared that the government was setting at nought the attempts of Hindu-Muslim unity by their ‘divide and rule’ policy. A new generation which had absorbed Western ideas of democracy and parliamentary government could not rest satisfied. Meanwhile, the international situation was threatening the British Empire and the government was forced to take severe action to suppress terrorism. Terrorism had increased in Bengal and murder of British officers became very common. Therefore, in 1910, the Press Act suppressed the liberty of newspapers. This measure was met with disapproval and the national movement became widespread throughout the land. A general rising was planned in 1915.

Before the planned rising could take place, the First World War broke out. In spite of her protests, India was involved in war and as a concession, the British laid down, in 1917, their policy as a progressive introduction of Responsible Government under the auspices of the British Empire. Indian troops were sent to Europe and the Near East. The enormous war expenditure had to be shouldered by India. The government passed the Defence of India Act providing for summary trial without appeal and many Indians

\(^{17}\) G. N. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
were interned. The Congress in 1915, while emphasising the loyalty of Indians, demanded a substantial measure of reform towards self-government within the British Empire.

On April 23, 1916, Tilak started the Home Rule League to demand colonial self-government to India. The movement gained popularity in western India. The Lucknow Congress in 1916 protested against the arbitrary use of the Defence of India Act. The Muslim League led by the Ali Brothers made a pact with the Congress, which approved of a pact for communal settlement. For the first time since 1907, there was a Union of Hindus and Muslims as well as the Moderate and Extremist wings of the Congress. They demanded self-government for India at an early date and asserted that India should no longer be a dependency but an equal partner in the Empire.

Reforms of 1919. The Government had pushed on with the work of reforms. The Montagu-Chelmsford report was published in 1918. The reforms of 1919 introduced dyarchy in the provinces which gave a small measure of autonomy to the provinces. But law and order were in the hands of Governors and the nominated ministers. The ‘Transferred Subjects’ were given to popular ministers and any of these subjects could be taken over by the Governor. Even this measure of freedom did not exist in the centre. The Viceroy’s Executive Committee was responsible to the Secretary of State and British Parliament. The Act established a Chamber of Princes bringing all the Princes into a Consultative Committee for the first time. A provision was made for the revision of the Reforms in ten years’ time. Britain accepted in principle the Parliamentary form of Government and the Cabinet system as suitable to India, but separate electorates were retained.

The Moderates welcomed the Act as a great advance on the Act of 1909. But Annie Besant declared that it was an unworthy offer. Meanwhile, the war had ended with the armistice on November 11. The Congress demanded at Delhi that India should be regarded as one of the progressive nations to whom the principle of self determination should be applied and that repressive laws should be replaced and full responsible government granted at an early date. But Tilak remained dissatisfied. He said, “The Montagu Report is a beautiful, very skilful and statesman-like document. We asked for eight annas of self-government; that Report gives us one anna of responsible government and says that it is better
than eight annas of self-government”

The year 1919 is of lasting importance in the history of modern India. The year saw “the entry of Mahatma Gandhi in the public life of the country and his rising to an all-India leadership, so to speak overnight; and the initiation of the people to mass Satyagraha for the redress of wrongs and grievances”.

Second Phase: the Gandhi Era

Gandhiji, called reverentially as the Mahatma and the Father of the Nation, played a conspicuous part in the history of India’s freedom struggle. He assumed the leadership of the freedom movement in 1920 and guided and controlled the movement till the country shook off the yoke of servitude in 1947. This period is fittingly described as the Gandhian Era in Indian Politics.

Gandhiji was born on October 2, 1869 at Porbandar in Kathiawad (Gujarat). His father was a Dewan at Porbandar and Rajkot. He went to England in 1887 to qualify for the Bar. In 1890 he returned to India and started his practice at Rajkot and then moved to Bombay. In 1893 he went to South Africa to render legal assistance to Indian business firms. There he was struck by the policy of racial discrimination followed by the South African Government against the Indians and he resolved to settle there. He carried the struggle for twenty years by offering Satyagraha and by undergoing continuous suffering and sacrifice and was able to secure for them a tolerable position in that country. This was the formative career in his political life.

In 1914, Gandhiji returned to India from South Africa. Gokhale invited him to join the Servants of India Society. Gandhiji refused and preferred to chalk out his own path. In fact, it was Gokhale who persuaded Gandhiji to return to India and again it was he who initiated Gandhiji to Indian Politics. Gandhiji had full faith in the British sense of justice and wanted his countrymen to help the government unconditionally. But by 1918 he came to realise that their rule was Satanic.

The Act of 1919 did not fulfil the political aspirations of the Indians. The Congress in its Amritsar session in 1919, declared the reforms ‘as inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing’, but favoured the working of reforms in a spirit of co-operation, at the instance of Gandhiji. Certain events occurred in the course of nine
months which forced Gandhiji to launch a non-cooperation movement which included the boycott of the reformed councils.

Rowlatt Act. In 1917, the government of India appointed a committee with Justice Rowlatt as its Chairman to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India. The committee recommended to invest the government with exceptional powers permanently to deal with the situation. The Bills popularly known as Rowlatt Bills, were passed in 1919 at the teeth of Indian opposition. Soon Gandhiji issued a manifesto asking the people to observe a hartal on April 6, 1919. Disturbances broke out in Delhi and the Punjab and Gandhiji was arrested and was released later.

The news of the arrest of Gandhiji deepened the agitation in the Punjab and other places. The two popular leaders of the Punjab, Dr. Kichlu and Dr. Satyapal, were deported. This infuriated the people greatly. They took out a protest procession at Amritsar against the repressive measures of the government. The police fired at the procession and some people lost their lives. This infuriated the mob who committed numerous acts of violence. The civil authorities requested the military authorities to take charge of the city.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. On April 13th, the people of Amritsar assembled at Jallianwala Bagh to protest against the police excesses. General Dyer and the other authorities did not take measures to prevent the holding of the meeting. On the other hand, General Dyer reached the place soon after the meeting had begun with armoured cars and troops. Without giving a warning to the people to disperse, he ordered the troops to fire till the entire ammunition was exhausted. According to the government estimate 379 persons were killed and 1137 wounded by the firing.

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre raised the indignation of the Indians. Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood as a protest and Sankaran Nair resigned his membership of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Both the Hindus and Muslims condemned the act as unjust and inexcusable. Gandhiji decided to launch his Non-Cooperation Movement.

Khilafat Movement. The Muslims of India regarded the Sultan of Turkey as their religious leader or Khalifa. After the First World War it was rumoured that the Allies were working on the division
of the Turkish Empire, much against the assurance of the British Government to Indian Muslims. This led to the Khilafat Movement. Gandhiji wanted to utilise this opportunity to bring about Hindu-Muslim Unity. He presided over the All-India Khilafat conference held at Delhi in 1919 and he identified himself with the movement. The Khilafat Committee in turn accepted his programme of non-cooperation.

**Non-Cooperation Movement.** A special session of the Congress held at Calcutta and another at Nagpur in 1920 decided to start the Non-Cooperation Movement. With the acceptance of his programme of action by the Congress, Gandhiji became the undisputed leader of the Congress and guided the destinies of this great organisation from then on for twenty-seven long years. For the first time, under the leadership of Gandhiji, the Indian National Congress as a body was embarking on the policy of direct action against the Government. This was indeed a great revolutionary step.\(^8\)

Gandhiji undertook an extensive tour throughout the country to canvass public opinion in favour of his programme. His speeches made a deep impression in the minds of the people and they wholeheartedly supported the movement.

The actual programme of the Non-Cooperation Movement consisted mainly of 'triple boycott'; boycott of educational institutions, of law courts and the newly reformed council. The Movement soon captured the imagination of the people. Boycott of all foreign goods, schools and colleges, titles and official functions became the order of the day. Many leaders like C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lajpat Rai, Vallabhbhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad gave up their lucrative practice to join the movement. Many Muslim leaders like the Ali Brothers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and others also joined the movement. The Congress set up national educational institutions like the Kashi Vidyapith, Benaras Vidyapith, Gujarat Vidyapith, Bihar Vidyapith, Bengal National University, National College of Lahore, Jamia Millia of Delhi and the National Muslim University of Aligarh. Gandhiji gave up the medal of *Kaisar-i-Hind* which was awarded to him for great help during the First World War. His great example was followed by others. Lord Reading became the Viceroy of India. He wanted to come to terms with Gandhiji before the visit of the Prince of Wales. He held negotiations with Gandhiji, but it did not lead

\(^8\) *National Movement, etc.*, p. 132.
to an understanding. The British Government took violent measures to crush the Movement. Gandhiji reaffirmed the non-violent nature of the Movement and made the Congress a true representative of the people.

The Prince of Wales arrived in Bombay in November 1921. The Government averred that he visited India as the heir to the throne and his visit had no political purpose. Gandhiji declared a day of hartal on the day of the Prince’s arrival. Everywhere there were hartals. The Government resorted to violent suppression. About 25,000 persons were arrested throughout the country. All the Congress leaders, except Gandhiji, were arrested. The Congress replied by a programme of mass civil disobedience and Bardoli was chosen for the national revolt against the Government.

In U. P. at a place called Chauri Chaura, Congress volunteers attacked a police station and set it on fire. Gandhiji felt that the principle of non-violence had not yet been learnt and suspended the movement. Many Congress leaders including Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, C. R. Das, and Jawaharlal Nehru criticised Gandhiji for suspending the movement. The government arrested Gandhiji and sentenced him to six years’ imprisonment, but released him in February 1924 on medical grounds.

After the arrest of Gandhiji, important developments took place in the programme of the movement for Swaraj. C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru, father of Jawaharlal Nehru, formed the Swaraj Party. In fact C. R. Das, at the Gaya Congress, resigned the Congress Presidentship to organise the Swaraj Party. The new party was for entering the Council to obstruct the work of the Government through legislatures. Outside the legislatures, they were to support the programme of Gandhiji. The party after some constructive work in the legislatures came to an end in 1926.

In 1927, the Government appointed an All-White Simon Commission to report on the working of dyarchy. The All-White composition of the the Commission was ‘taken to be an insult to the dignity and self-respect of India.' It was boycotted throughout India. However, the Commission completed its work and submitted its report in 1930.

The Nehru Report. Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, taunted Indians by saying that they “were unable to frame a constitution by themselves, acceptable to all.” The Congress
accepted the challenge, and in an All-Parties Conference held at Delhi in 1928, a committee was appointed with Motilal Nehru as its Chairman, to draft a constitution for India. The Committee drafted the Constitution which was later ratified at the All-Parties Conference held at Lucknow. The draft Constitution declared India to be a secular state with no state religion. It made provision for joint electorates, reserving seats for Muslims where they were in minority and non-Muslims in the North-Western Frontier Province. It recommended Dominion Status for India. “The Report was, however, too progressive to be accepted by Britain.”

The Congress in its Calcutta session declared Dominion Status to be the goal of India. The declaration of Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, on the granting of Dominion Status to India, did not satisfy the Congress leaders. Therefore, in its Lahore session (1930), held under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress adopted Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence to be the goal of India. It was decided to observe January 26 as the Independence Day every year.

The Dandi March. Thus the second struggle with the Government began. A Civil Disobedience programme was also launched. Gandhiji began his famous Dandi March from Sabarmati Ashram in 1930 to break the Salt Laws. Salt Tax imposed by the Government fell on people heavily. The Government had also declared that the preparation of salt from sea water was a legal offence. Hence Gandhiji wanted to break the Salt Law. Soon violence broke out in different parts of the country. The Government as usual, resorted to violent repression. Jawaharlal Nehru and some other important leaders were arrested. Gandhiji was also arrested and sent to Yerawada jail. All the existing jails were filled with Satyagrahis and new ones had to be constructed. The All-India Congress Committee and auxiliaries were declared unlawful. The bulk of the Muslim population did not participate in the agitation.

In August 1930, attempts were made to bring out a meeting between Gandhiji and Irwin, but the differences between the two could not be narrowed down. In 1931, they met and signed a Pact, called the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The Pact brought about the release of prisoners and restoration of confiscated properties. The Salt Tax and the ban on the Congress were lifted.

Round Table Conference. The Simon Commission Report recommended the calling of a Round Table Conference to discuss cons-
stitutional changes for India. The Congress boycotted the Conference. Gandhiji took part in the Second Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Congress in 1931 following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. He opposed separate electorates for the Depressed Classes and accused the Government of trying to split up the Indian society.

The year 1932 witnessed a bitter struggle. The Congress organisation was banned, 'its offices were raided, official papers seized and funds frozen'. Members of the Congress Working Committee and Gandhiji were arrested. Numerous Ordinances were issued. In spite of all these measures popular opposition was widespread for over six months. The Government, however, insisted upon separate electorates in the future constitution of India. Therefore, Gandhiji undertook his Epic Fast in the Yerawada jail in 1932. Within five days, the Government was compelled to sign the Poona Pact. The Pact recognised the fact that Harijans were a part of the Hindu community, but reserved seats for them in the general electorate. The Congress did not participate in the Third Round Table Conference. In 1933, the British Government published the White Paper indicating the lines on which the new constitution for India was to be shaped. Elections were held to the Central Assembly in 1934. The Congress participated in the elections and won a large number of seats.

The Act of 1935. This Act conferred provincial autonomy and envisaged the establishment of a federation of British provinces and Indian States. Dyarchy which had been established in the provinces was now introduced at the centre. The Dominion Status was not explicitly defined. But it was explained that by gradual usage and convention, India might acquire the same freedom as other dominions. The scheme was rejected by the Congress wholesale, by the Princes who would not give up their sovereignty and by the Muslim League. But the Congress decided to fight the elections.

In 1936-37, the Congress obtained a majority of seats in seven British Provinces and formed popular ministries. In Bengal, Punjab, Assam, N. W. F. Province and Sind non-Congress ministries supported by the Muslim League were formed. Non-Congress Muslim supported ministries roused communal outbreaks in the country. The Muslim League condemned the Congress as a purely Hindu body and in 1940 committed itself to Pakistan.
With the outbreak of the World War II, the British Government dragged India into the conflict without even consulting the popular ministries, in protest against which the Congress ministries resigned after two years' of useful administration. In 1940, Lord Linlithgow made an offer that after the War Indians would be allowed to frame their own constitution. The Congress rejected the whole conception of Dominion Status.

The War took a bad turn for the Allies in the middle of 1940. The Congress offered help once again to the Government. Gandhiji declared that 'we do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin.' The Working Committee of the Congress which met at Poona in July 1940 offered to "throw its full weight into the efforts for the effective organisation of defence of the country and whole-hearted cooperation in men and money". In reply to this the Government made the August Offer of 1940 declaring that after the War the Indians would be allowed to frame their own constitution and "in the absence of an agreement with the Muslims, no power could be transferred to the Indians."

Individual Satyagraha. The Congress rejected the offer, made Gandhiji the Dictator and declared that it was the fundamental right of every citizen to declare openly against the war. Gandhiji launched the Individual Satyagraha and Vinoba Bhave was chosen the first Individual Satyagrahi. "Gandhiji invented this novel form of Satyagraha to give the minimum form of offence to authorities and yet to keep the torch of nationalism burning."

Meanwhile, the Japanese had occupied Burma and were on the borders of India. The Congress decided to suspend the Individual Satyagraha to concentrate on organising effective defence. It was at this time that the British Government sent Sir Stafford Cripps to negotiate with the Congress.

The Cripps Mission. Cripps, a Member of the War Cabinet in England, arrived in India in 1942, with a fresh instalment of proposals. He, however, asserted that a change of constitution could not be made in the midst of the War and that a Cabinet form of Government with full powers would mean the dictatorship of the Congress majority and contrary to the British pledges. What the Congress demanded was not any constitutional changes, but a National Government with the position of Viceroy analogous to the King of England. It was clear from the negotiations that the British Government was opposed to an immediate conversion of the
executive council into a responsible cabinet.

There was universal disappointment at the failure of the Cripps Mission. Gandhiji was not impressed by the Cripps’ Proposal. He is reported to have told Cripps: “Why did you come if this is what you have to offer? If this is your entire proposal to India, I would advise you to take the next plane home.” Jinnah was equally sure that the British Plan did not concede Pakistan and the right of self-determination for the Muslims and accused the Congress of attempting to short circuit the whole issue in the name of united India.

Quit India Movement. In 1942, the Congress inaugurated the Quit India Movement. Gandhiji declared: “Do or die. I cannot wait any longer for Indian freedom. I cannot wait until Mr. Jinnah is converted. If I wait any longer God will punish me. This is the last struggle of my life.”

The Government was prepared and immediately arrested Gandhiji and other leaders. It declared all the Congress bodies unlawful. The Press was prohibited from publishing any news of mass movement. Anti-Congress organisations were encouraged everywhere. There were firings and lathi charges throughout the country and by the end of 1942, 940 persons were killed and about 60,000 were imprisoned.

As early as in September 1942, Gandhiji wrote to the Viceroy condemning the attempt to attribute outbreak of violence to the Congress. In February 1943, he undertook another fast in the midst of nation-wide anxiety and emerged successfully.

On October 9, 1943, Lord Wavell became the Viceroy and in November he summoned a conference of all the Governors to discuss the War and food situation. He made it very clear that his first task was to win the war and refused to release the leaders responsible for the Satyagraha resolution. Gandhiji refused to withdraw the resolution without consulting his colleagues in the Congress. Gandhiji was released in May 1944. The decision to release him was influenced by the penetration of I. N. A. and their occupation of a small territory of Manipur and Aishevpur which accounted for 10,000 square miles.

The British attitude towards India underwent a sudden change because of the approach of the General Election in England. In June 1945, Wavell broadcast a plan for an All-India Cabinet where the Hindus and Muslims held equal seats. The Government retained
the War portfolio as they were responsible for the Defence of India. The Plan broke down because of the insistence of Jinnah to recognise the Muslim League as the representative of the Muslims.

I. N. A. Trial. The Government released prominent leaders of the Congress like Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel, which brought life to the drooping spirit of the people. Another factor that was responsible for infusing enthusiasm among the people was the trial of I. N. A. prisoners. Some army men like Shah Nawaz, Dhillon and Sehgal had left the Indian army during the war years and joined the Indian National Army of Subhas Chandra Bose formed for the purpose of freeing the country. They were tried by a court martial, found guilty and awarded the death sentence. Jawaharlal Nehru donned the robes of a lawyer after a lapse of thirty years to defend them with a galaxy of brilliant lawyers led by Bhulabhai Desai, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. M. R. Jayakar. The Government, however, could not execute the sentence for fear of public resentment. They were set free. This was a triumph for the Congress and its prestige reached a new high.

In the British General Elections of 1945 the Labour Party came to power. At the instance of the new Government, Lord Wavell declared that the object of the British Government was to introduce self-government as early as possible. In India, the Congress contested and won the elections and formed ministries in seven provinces. On March 15, 1946, Mr. Attlee, the Prime Minister of England, made the historic statement in the House of Commons in which he admitted the right of Indians to self determination and their right to frame the constitution.

The Cabinet Mission. On the same day, the British Government announced to send to India a Cabinet Mission to solve the Indian political deadlock. It arrived on March 23rd, 1946. The Mission failed to narrow down the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League. Nevertheless, it submitted its proposals in May 1946. It recommended a united India consisting of both British India and Indian States which was entrusted with Foreign affairs, Defence and Communications and vested the residuary powers in the provinces. It envisaged the setting up of a Constitution-making body to frame the new constitution for India.

The Meirat session of the Congress passed a resolution calling for a Constituent Assembly and declared India as an Independent Sovereign Republic. Regarding the Indian States, the Congress
condemned the activities of the Political Department and disapproved of any nominations by the Princes to the Constituent Assembly. Thus the Meerat Congress was a memorable one. In 1857, the first shots of revolt were fired in Meerat and in 1947 India was proclaimed Independent. Meerat saw the beginning and the end of the Viceroys.

The Cabinet Mission had also proposed the formation of an Interim Government. Jawaharlal Nehru was invited on August 24, 1946 to form the Government. The Congress accepted the offer and formed the Government on September 2, 1946. But the Muslim League rejected the offer initially, but joined the Government on October 25, 1946.

Early in July 1946, the Muslim League after rejecting the Cabinet proposals resorted to direct action. They fanned communal frenzy in the country and after joining the Government they encouraged obstructionism. Jinnah declared that the League would not budge an inch from its demand for Pakistan. The communal riots raged supremely throughout the country. Many Hindus lost their lives and their property was destroyed. The League tried its best to bring chaos in the country. Jawaharlal Nehru called it 'jungle politics'.

Mr. Attlee declared in the House of Commons on February 20, 1947, that the British Government would leave India by June 1948 even if the Congress and the Muslim League did not arrive at an understanding. Lord Mountbatten became the last Viceroy of India in March, 1947. Soon after his arrival in India, he met the leaders of the Congress and the League and came to the conclusion that the partition of India on the principle of self-determination would be in the interest of the country. On this basis, he proposed his famous June 3rd plan. The Congress and the League had perforce to agree.

Once the major parties agreed, Mountbatten began rapidly carrying out the complicated process of partition. Gandhiji was opposed to the partition of the country to the last. The Punjab and Bengal which were Hindu majority districts decided to remain in the Indian Union. The North Western Frontier Province, Sind, Baluchistan, and the Muslim majority districts of Bengal, the Punjab and Sylhet District in Assam decided to join Pakistan. On August 15, 1947, Pakistan was separated and India became

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independent. The British Empire came to an end. On January 30, 1948, Gandhiji was murdered and an era thus ended.

Gandhi has carved for himself a deep niche in the temple of Modern India. He was a class by himself. He gave everything for the Motherland. He was wedded to truth and non-violence and was not prepared to discard them even at the moment of greatest provocation. He believed in the British sense of justice and expected them to behave as such. When they failed, he did not fail them. He was not even agreeable to wrest independence from the British at a great crisis in their own history. The Satyagraha, Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movements and Individual Civil Disobedience are his novel schemes. So are his fasts. By great sufferings and sacrifices, he brought independence to us. His ideal was to establish Ramrajya replacing the British Government. Though Gandhiji is dead, his ideals continue to live with us. The only fitting memorial we can raise to this great man is to carve his ideals in our hearts.
CHAPTER IX

EPILOGUE

India became free on August 15, 1947. Free India, after separation of Pakistan, had nine former British Provinces, viz., East Punjab, United Provinces, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Madras, Bombay and Central Provinces and more than five hundred Princely States. Sind, North-West Province, West Punjab, East Bengal, the Sylhet District of Assam, and some Princely States went to Pakistan.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was the first Home Minister of Free India, secured integration of the Princely States into the Indian Union in a skilful way. The French and Portuguese settlements in India also came to be included in the Indian Union. The latter were forced to vacate their possessions after a brief military action in 1961.

As early as December 1946, Indian leaders had busied themselves with framing a constitution for Free India. The Constituent Assembly met on December 6, 1946 and continued in session for three years to frame the Constitution. The new Constitution came into force on January 26, 1950 and India became a democratic republic.

The Constitution lays down parliamentary democracy for the country. It envisages a federal set-up for India, which is a union of States. The Head of State is the President, but the Prime Minister is the de facto head of administration. The Indian President is similar in powers to the British Crown.

The Central Legislature is bi-cameral, with the Rajya Sabha or the House of States elected by the State Legislatures and the Loka Sabha or the House of People which is elected by universal adult franchise. The Rajya Sabha has no power to initiate money bills. The Executive is the Cabinet, headed by the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the Loka Sabha. The Cabinet Members must be Members of the Parliament.

The President is elected by the members of the Central Legislature and State Legislatures. The Vice-President is elected by Parliament.
India has a Supreme Court, which is the final Court of appeal. Its Judges are appointed by the President.

The States in the Indian Union at present are of two types: firstly, the States modelled on the former British Provinces, ruled by a Governor with a legislature, which in many States is bicameral; secondly, the Centrally administered territories, looked after by a Lieutenant Governor and a legislature. If Maharashtra or Mysore or Madhya Pradesh fall in the first category, Goa, Delhi, Pondicherry, etc. fall in the second.

The Constitution has guaranteed various fundamental rights to every citizen like the freedom of speech, of expression, of peaceful assembly, of conscience and worship. All citizens are equal before law. Untouchability has been abolished.

India is a declared secular State. It continues to be a member of the Commonwealth of Nations comprising of former imperial possessions of Britain though it does not owe allegiance to the British Crown. This is an extra-constitutional arrangement.

* * *

Leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who became the first Prime Minister of free India and later of the Indian Republic, shaped the destinies of free India. Son of Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal was born on November 14, 1889. He studied at Harrow and Cambridge in England and qualified himself to the Bar (1912). This young barrister was drawn to the freedom struggle after his return from England. After the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 1919, the whole family of the Nehrus actively participated in the movement. The personality of Mahatma Gandhi highly influenced Jawaharlal.

Nehru presided over the Lahore Congress Session in 1930. As a freedom fighter he had to suffer long years of imprisonment. Nehru had been greatly influenced by socialist thought. He was a member of the Congress Socialist Party, founded by leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan, M. R. Masani and Ashok Mehta. But Nehru was not enamoured of the Communist philosophy which wants to bring about social changes by revolution and bloodshed. He was a great believer in democratic methods. The Congress party, under his guidance, resolved to establish a socialistic pattern of society through democratic means, at its annual session held in
Avadi in 1954.

Nehru was a modern thinker, eager to adapt the country to modern scientific developments. His anxiety to eradicate poverty and harness the untapped resources of India has been well expressed in his contemplation of the five-year plans. Gigantic irrigation projects to supply water to the dry lands and power to industries enjoyed a special place in the dreams of Nehru. He called the various irrigation schemes like Bhakra-Nangal, Hirakud and Nagar-Junasagar as modern centres of pilgrimage.

In international affairs, Nehru was responsible for India assuming a special role. He was opposed to the country’s alignment with any power bloc and he gave shape to the policy of non-alignment and dynamic neutrality. A number of nations like Indonesia, U. A. R. and Yugoslavia tried to follow the lead given by Nehru in world affairs. In opposing imperialism and colonialism, in fighting against the policy of apartheid and in founding peace, the non-aligned nations have played a prominent part, and Nehru’s role in all these activities was not at all insignificant. Under his leadership India championed the cause of the backward and enslaved Afro-Asian nations.

For almost 20 years, till his death in 1964, Nehru strove tirelessly to implement his schemes to build a prosperous India, free from fear and free from want.

* * *

The modern Indian society represents the dream or ideal for the realisation of which socio-religious reformers have led ceaseless crusades. But it is no Utopia. Nevertheless, the rigidities of the past which separated man from man, have failed to carry conviction in our modern society. This desirable change has been brought about by various factors. Destruction of village autarky, creation of private property in land, steady industrialisation, development of modern cities, spread of the network of railways and roads and above all, hotels, restaurants, theatres and cinemas and games have succeeded to a large extent in loosening the age-old taboos and restrictions. Further, the spread of education, contact with liberal world forces and creative literature have acted as catalysts in narrowing down the caste feelings and in the removal of untouchability. Article 15 of our Constitution provides that the
'State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them'. Again, according to Article 17, "Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law".

Free India has also realised that "The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink together, dwarfed or godlike, bond or free". The State and the society have fully recognised the position of women in all respects. The intellectual awakening among women has been made possible by the providing of equal opportunities for them in the field of education, by establishing colleges for women and by co-education. The Girls' Guide Movement has been looking after the physical training of women. The system of purdah has vanished in thin air. Child marriages have become a thing of the past and the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 declared "Property of Hindu female to be her absolute Property". The Act also contains general rules of succession in the case of female Hindus. Further the Hindu Marriage Validating Act passed in 1949 has put an end to the inter-caste barriers in the field of marriage. The Hindu Marriage Act of March 1955 is a significant social measure. The Act has "provided for inter-caste marriages, registration of Hindu Marriages, divorces and payment of maintenance allowance by both husband and wife and made bigamy punishable". Women, therefore, are no more discriminated against men and it may be recalled here that India is the second country in Asia and in the world to have a woman, Indira Gandhi, as Prime Minister.

The modern society has shed its antiquated social practices. But the new economic forces have divided the society into capitalistic and proletariat classes. They have often disturbed social peace and harmony. The ideal of a socialistic pattern of society which is the goal of our government might put an end to these disruptive tendencies. More disturbing than the above is the schisms based on languages. This threatens even the unity of the country. The past history serves as a lesson to us in this respect. We have passed through the 'cross-roads' and we would do well to take the straight path.
India has been the one country which has always sought Universal peace and brotherhood. This character is embedded in our culture which has added lustre to it. It knows no geographical limits and in course of time the seeds of this culture were carried to distant parts of the world where they grew into mighty trees bearing luscious fruit. In this great expansion of culture, both Hinduism and Buddhism have played important roles. There is much truth in the statement that Buddhism laid the foundations of Asian unity. First, during the reign of Asoka and later during the reign of Kanishka, the great Kushana ruler, Buddhist missionaries were sent to different parts of the world. They established their footholds in countries like Kambhuja (Cambodia), Burma, Thailand, Tibet, Ceylon and China. In course of time, Buddhism became the popular religion in the region and it continues to be so, except in China, even to the present day. Side by side with Buddhism, Hinduism found its way to Champa, Nepal and other countries in the Far East.

The spread of religion gave rise to the establishment of Indian cultural empire in the region. Indian culture influenced the polity, society, literature, art and architecture. Arthasastra of Kautilya and other works on Niti certainly influenced the administration. The Hindu varna (Caste) system had its own impact there. The impact of Sanskrit literature is particularly apparent in Java and Bali Islands (Indonesia) where it was at its greatest. In Java the old language and script are called Kavi and the vast literature in old Javanese was derived from India. Java and Bali have no Vedas nor the full Gayatri, but all the rest of Sanskrit literature is represented. In daily worship the people, though Muhammadan, follow the Indian customs, like putting the sacred ashes on their foreheads. Both Bali and Java have adopted the shadow or puppet plays of South India. Bharatanatyam is still studied according to the Natyasastra of Bharata. Even the Muslim Sultans of these regions maintain court dancers, some of whom have become world figures. According to the Census Report for the year 1930, there were 90 per cent Hindus among the Balinese population.

Indian art and literature served as the model for the artistic activity in the region. In architecture, Central Java is distinguished for one of the most wonderful monuments in the world. The famous Barabudur or Brihad Buddha and several other magnificent temples follow the Indian style. Barabudur which follows the Srishakra
plan was originally a Shaiva temple, later adapted to Mahayana Buddhism. Similarly, the Parbana temple, though smaller, is entirely Hindu. The temple contains the sculptures from Ramayana. The famous temples in Angkor Vat and Angkor Tham at Kambhuja (Cambodia) exhibit Indian influences. The same is true of the temples in Burma and elsewhere in the region. Worship of Shiva, in the form of Linga, and of Ganesha, Krishna, Naga, etc. was common to them as is proved by the discovery of these images. Ganesha especially enjoys wide popularity. His images have been found in Afghanistan, Chinese Turkestan, Tibet, China, Japan, Mongolia and in the South-East Asian countries.

Indian culture influenced the culture not only of Asia, but also of Europe. It spread as far as America where the Maya civilization shows Indian influences. According to scholars, Christianity was also influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism. The Arabs freely borrowed Hindu scientific notions. The so called “Arabic figures” are originally Hindu.

India dominated the culture of the world till about the twelfth century A.D. Yet she lost much of her hold with the loss of her political independence. But the freedom movement she led to liberate the country from the British rule once again served as a lesson and source of inspiration to other countries in Asia and Africa who had also lost their independence. The ideal of Ahimsa which Gandhiji adopted also influenced the ethical outlook of the world. The late Dr. Martin Luther King, the great Negro leader of America, adopted the same ideals of Ahimsa and Satyagraha to solve the racial problems in his country.

We have thus inherited a glorious tradition and we are proud to be worthy of this rich legacy.
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