

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

CENTRAL
ARCHÆOLOGICAL
LIBRARY

ACCESSION NO. 58883

CALL No. 901.0954/sha

D.G.A. 79

INDIA REDISCOVERED



INDIA REDISCOVERED

GIRIRAJ SHAH

M.A., LL.B.



901.0914
Sho



ABHINAV PUBLICATIONS
NEW DELHI 1975

CENTRAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL
LIBRARY, NIA, DELHI

Acc. No. 28835

Date 22-11-75

Call No. 901.0954

Shah

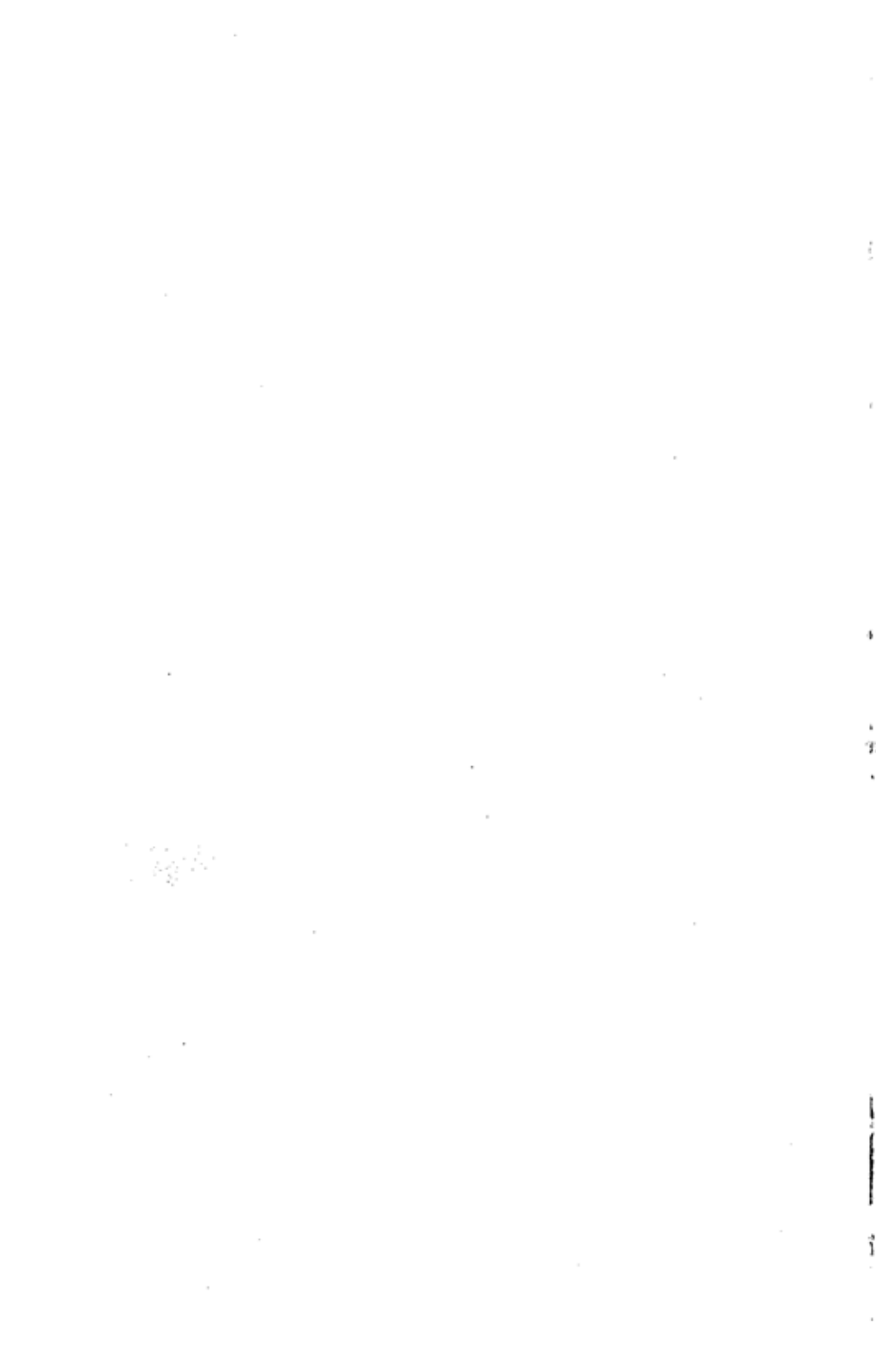
© GIRIRAJ SHAH

First Edition : March 1975

Publisher : Shakti Malik
Abhinav Publications
E 37 Hauz Khas
New Delhi-110016

Printer : Dhawan Printing Works
26-A, Mayapuri Phase I
New Delhi-110027

*Having drawn my inspiration largely from
the writings of my grandfather Sri Badri Shah
Thulgharia, the renowned author of 'Bal
Gangadhar Tilak Smarak Deshik Shastra',
I humbly dedicate this book
to his cherished memory*



Foreword

Giriraj, as I call him, is known to me since his student days and I had the privilege of guiding him from time to time in his career and in his endeavours too. When I came to know that he was angling for writing a book, I was certainly very happy because he was pursuing the great tradition of his learned grandfather who wrote the famed 'Deshik Shastra'.

I have gone through the manuscript and have come to the conclusion that 'India Rediscovered' is a penetrating study of Indian culture and civilization from a deep comparative understanding. With an erudite and intelligent point of view, the author has succeeded in presenting his analysis of religion, literature, arts, politics, etc., from a new standpoint in a systematic approach which reflects an acumen and insight. The material is beautifully organised and presents the author's points of view in a simple but logical progression so that they are easily understood and assimilated. The result is a book which is not only scholarly and instructive but also absorbing and highly readable by all. It should attract and impress anyone who is interested in Indian culture and history. It really interests me most that Giriraj found time to write this masterly book in spite of his busy schedule as a police officer for which he deserves commendation and deep appreciation for his excellent contribution.

I wish him and his book the well-manuscript merited success.

October 1, 1974
Lucknow

H.N. BAHUGUNA
(Chief Minister, U.P.)

Preface

Verily, a man who does not know literature, music and other fine arts is just like a beast without tail and horns. In our own times, the need to know and study the basic outlines of our culture and heritage has become more inviting in view of the fact that western people are now increasingly leaning towards Indian culture and thought. Keeping this in view and realising the need of a book which can give an idea about the basic values of Indian culture in crisp and concise form, I undertook this task which was impossible to be attained without an exhaustive study of the literature on the subject and visit to the actual centres of culture. All this required time, money and opportunity which was amply provided by my father and the godfather—Government.

Having written a book is just like delivering a child and as everyone knows much depends on the after-care. Likewise, after having prepared the MSS, I took it to Sri N.S. Saxena, I.P., the then Inspector General of Police, U.P. who in spite of his heavy preoccupations found time to read the manuscript and advised me to revise it on certain lines, which I did. Later on, Swami Chinmayanandji very kindly edited the revised manuscript and blessed it with success. I am greatly indebted for final touches to Sri R.S. Bhatt, IPS and Sri T.R. Aggarwal who made suitable amendments before it went to the Press.

I am extremely grateful to Shri Hemvati Nandan Bahugunaji, Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh who found time to read the MSS and kindly consented to write the Foreword in spite of his heavy engagements.

I am indeed very grateful to the writers from whose books I have enriched my knowledge and borrowed passages. I have added a carefully prepared bibliography at the end of this work.

I am thankful to Sri Shambhu Prasad Shah for his keen interest in seeing this book through. I am especially indebted to Sri Shakti Malik of Abhinav Publications for undertaking its publication and getting it printed in a short time.

Uttarkashi

GIRIRAJ SHAH

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	<i>vii</i>
PREFACE	<i>viii</i>
I. CONCEPT OF CULTURE	1
Study of history . . . Culture, history and civilisation . . .	
Culture and civilisation . . . What is culture . . . Contributory factors of culture . . . Aim of culture . . . Oriental and occidental culture . . . World culture . . . Dangers to which culture is exposed . . . India and the world	
II. INDIAN CULTURE X-RAYED	12
Contributory factors of Indian culture . . . Values of Indian culture . . . Wind of change	
III. RELIGION : THE KEYNOTE OF INDIAN CULTURE	21
What is religion . . . Hinduism . . . Age of interpretation . . . Reformative movements . . . Islam and India . . . Introduction of Christianity . . . Religious revivalism . . . Islamic resurgence . . . Creation of a religious state in India . . . Religion in the modern world	
IV. LITERATURE : THE MIRROR OF INDIAN CULTURE	37
Vedic literature . . . The epics . . . Puranas : history or myth . . . Secular literature . . . Advent of Pali language and literature . . . Classical Sanskrit literature . . . Growth and advent of vernacular literature . . . Advent of Hindi . . . Introduction of Persian and advent of Urdu . . . Flowering of many branched literature . . . Age of resurgence . . .	

English language and western literature in India . . . Hey,
whither you are

V. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN SOCIETY 57

Growth of social organism in India . . . The dawn of civilisation . . . Vedic society . . . Era of great epics . . . Age of Sutras . . . Age of reforms . . . Society under Mauryas . . . The golden prime of India . . . Breakdown of social order . . . Age of social reconstruction . . . Social awakening . . . The dilemma

VI. ASPECTS OF POLITICAL CULTURE 68

Political science in India . . . Evolution of political institutions in India . . . Aryan migration . . . Age of Imperialism . . . Age of Republics . . . Magadhan ascendancy . . . Age of Arthashastra . . . Imperial Guptas . . . The dark age . . . Despotism . . . The Mughal administration . . . Rise of Marhattas . . . Rise of the Company . . . His Majesty's government over India . . . Dyarchy . . . The Government of India Act, 1935 . . . Independence of India . . . A new India takes shape . . . Indian political scene in retrospect

VII. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN ART 93

Art and religion . . . People's art . . . Early beginnings of Indian art . . . Barhut . . . Mathura school of art . . . Amravati . . . Sanchi . . . Gandhara school of art . . . Gupta art . . . Ajanta . . . Ellora . . . North Indian art . . . Orissa region . . . Gujarat-Rajasthan region . . . Eastern region . . . South Indian art . . . Introduction of Sarcenic art . . . Mughal art and architecture . . . Revival of painting . . . Rajput art . . . Kangra and Basholi art . . . End of glorious epoch . . . Renaissance art . . . Modern art . . . Art from new perspective

VIII. SANGEET OF INDIA 117

Origin and development of music . . . Scope of sangeet . . . Effect of music on human mind . . . Raga and ragini . . . Art and music . . . Gitam or vocal music . . .

Rules to be observed by a singer . . . Theory of gitam . . .
 Schools of music . . . Vadyam or instrumental music . . .
 Nrityam or dancing . . . Art of gesticulation . . . Classical
 schools of dancing . . . Eastern melody and western harmony

IX. GREATER INDIA

139

India and Hellenic world . . . Indian culture in America . . .
 Central Asia . . . China . . . Korea . . . Japan . . . Tibet . . .
 South-eastern countries . . . Malay peninsula and Indian
 archipelago . . . Burma . . . Ceylon . . . The breakdown of
 cultural empire . . . India as spiritual leader of the world

CULTURAL CAUSERIE

148

BIBLIOGRAPHY

149

INDEX

151

I

Concept of Culture

"Do these gentlemen think that they can understand the first word of history as long as they exclude the relations of man to nature, natural science and history", asked Karl Marx and rightly so. History is not mere petty detailing of facts—facts are to history as baggage is to army as Herbert Spencer has rightly held that when 'History begins to study people at work than the kings at war, it ceases to be a record of personalities and becomes the history of great inventions and ideas'. For writing such a history, the historian has to weave a web of details, sequences and interpretations so that the reader may get a complete picture in one concise form of the times he is interested in. This craving for history forms an interesting branch of human knowledge and endeavour which is reflected from the amount of emphasis laid on the study of history.

Study of History

Perhaps the Puranic chroniclers were the first writers of historical literature, who produced sufficient material for human speculation and study. Similarly in ancient Greece and Rome people were required to study history and culture of their own country as well as of neighbouring countries. But scientific interpretation and study of history started with Hegel, who propounded the theory of thesis, synthesis and antithesis. Hegel held that universal history exhibited gradation in the development of that principle whose substantial purport is the consciousness of human freedom. The Hegelian method of history-writing came under much criticism

from Karl Marx who held that hitherto, history has been history of class struggles between the oppressor and the oppressed; but unfortunately Karl Marx completely ignored the fact that history is not political science and economics alone. It is much more than that as Oswald Spengler holds, "Culture is the prime phenomenon of all past and future world history".¹ Spengler has written history in larger context of German culture. The spirit of Goethe's *Faust* pervades the entire epical work. What is remarkable about this school of history-writing is the amount of stress laid on culture, civilisation and national values. We in India who are accustomed to British pattern of history-writing can certainly learn something from the German historicism. As a matter of fact even British historians are taking to German technique of history-writing. The old school of Lord Acton is giving way to Toynbee's school of historical interpretation. Toynbee has blazed a new trail by hitting hard at the false pretensions of many cultures. His crusade against the malignant tendencies of various cultures is indeed a bold approach towards the writing of history but critics have dubbed his interpretations "as a clash of culture is overcome by a primitive brutal one, which in turn undergoes the same fate, is cynical in effect. There is no linear development."² Answering his critics, Toynbee merely rests by saying that he does not believe in dogmatism. Truly dogmatism breeds fanaticism, hence deplorable. As an account of common man's struggles and endeavours for the betterment of his lot history must be freed from the scholarly and philosophical interpretation. Instead it should receive bold, simple and straightforward treatment.

Culture, history and civilisation

These three words occur repeatedly in all the social sciences and humanities but how many of us understand the true import of these words is doubtful. Many of us confuse it as synonyms which they are not. In fact history includes culture and civilisation and any history without any reference to these two aspects is bound to be only a fiction consisting of an account of the loot and plunder of conquering armies. History must take into account the details of reformatory movements, discoveries of science, econo-

1. Page 105, *The Decline of the West* : Oswald Spengler.

2. *The Hindustan Times* : 19 Aug. 1962.

mic advancement, religious reforms, political landmarks and attainments in the field of arts and crafts. Still there is a school of historians which believes that "culture is the vestige of the ruling classes and a superstructure built on the toiling of the subjected people." This narrow outlook towards history is not tenable in the face of contrary facts. Culture is not merely a study of class struggles and dissensions, it is much more than that as Ivar Lissener says : "All that is enduring and artistic has been engendered by the strongest of man's impulses, not by his far more imperious urges for the things of the spirit and thus for the eternal life."¹

Culture and civilisation

A historian is motivated to write history with an urge to lay bare the hidden, strange and baffling features of the past. In this urge he comes across different phases of culture, civilisation and cultural groups. This alone has probably led historians to find some sort of distinction between the words 'culture' and 'civilisation'. Amury de Riencourt writes, "Culture is the pulsating organism endowed with immense flexibility and vitality, in a state of constant irrepressible growth. Civilisation on the other hand is the rigid crystallisation of a peculiar society; it is the unavoidable horizontal traced on history's stairway, the inevitable pause of society whose creativity has been exhausted by its cultural growth and which seeks to digest, duplicate, spread and distribute mechanically the output of its present culture. Culture lays emphasis on the original and the unique, civilisation on the common and general."² Culture deals with the mind and civilisation with the body, thus the former is an achievement of the intellect while the latter is an expression of the physical self. To sum up, civilisation is the disciplining of life so that culture might be efflorescence.

What is culture ?

The word culture has been variously defined by the historians; some have identified it with the customs, tradition and convention, while others have defined it as a code of conduct of social

1. *The Silent Past*, Ivar Lissener.
2. P. XIV, *The Soul of India* : Amury de Riencourt.

behaviour. Etymologically, the word culture has been derived from the Latin word 'agriculture' which means 'to till or cultivate'. Its German equivalent is 'kulture' which is more comprehensive in scope and meaning. Otto Zerek has compared culture with the Herders plant which flourishes best when left to itself, reasoning deforms it. The Sanskrit equivalent for culture is 'sanskriti' which means 'purified or refined'. The word culture has been thus defined by Arnold Keyserling : "The transformation of the uncultivated into the cultivated humanity . . . the concretisation of the possible system of human aspirations." In his famous book 'Discovery of India' Jawaharlal Nehru has defined culture as that which "develops into a rich civilisation flowing out in philosophy, drama, literature, art, science and mathematics. Truly culture is the sum total of the people's endeavours in different fields of life."¹ The word culture has been further interpreted by T.S. Elliot in these words : "By culture then I mean first of all what the anthropologists mean, the way of life of a particular people living together in one place. The culture is visible in their arts, in their social systems, in their habits and customs, and in their religion . . . but things are simply the parts into which culture can be anatomised, as a human body can . . . so culture is more than an assemblage of its arts, customs and beliefs."² In brief culture can be summed up as that which is formed, shaped and moulded according to the inherent tendencies and mental outlooks, subject to time, place and circumstances factor which forms the basis of its entire political, social, religious and economic activities and are expressed in its arts, sciences, literature, industry and crafts, which in turn reflect the rise and fall of that nation as and when it advances and derogates from the path of progress.

Contributory factors of culture

The very nature of culture suggests that it is not something which is suddenly begotten or hatched out but is the sum total of common man's endeavours and struggles and is shaped and moulded by the contributory factors prevalent at that period of history in a country.

1. P. 215, *The Discovery of India* : Jawaharlal Nehru.

2. Page 120, Notes towards the definition of Culture : T.S. Elliot.

In the first place, environment plays considerable role in building the culture of a particular country since soil and heredity have much to do in determining the local characteristics. This point can further be illustrated from distinctness of characteristics found amongst nationals of different countries. For example, Germans are great scientists and philosophers because their land-locked conditions have compelled them to find ways through nothing less than deep thinking and planning; Japanese are industrious and patient because of uncertainty of soil and the suddenness of volcanoes; the geographical location of England as an island was instrumental in its becoming a sea power. The beauty of Naples turned Italians into great artists. Russians and Americans are more industrious than others because their geographical situations so warrant them to be. Besides this, heredity also contributes to the building up of a culture as I have already pointed out.

In the second place, intellectuals or elites who are the direct products of the soil, and their heredity, impart considerable influence in giving a concrete shape to the contemporary culture. The culture of a country is known by the number of intellectuals it has given birth to and the position they have held in the society. According to Hegel, "The great man of the age is one who can put into words the will of his age, tell his age what its will is, and accomplish it. What he does is the heart and essence of his age, he actualises his age." History of the great cultures reveals that great advances in culture have been made by those people who have sufficient wisdom, valour and drive. Had it not been for Cromwell, Bacon, Shakespeare, Queen Victoria and Winston Churchill the history of England would have been otherwise. Modern Germany is the product of Goethe, Kant, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Bismarck. Soviet Russia derives its glory from Peter the Great, Catherine, Leo Tolstoy, Lenin, Maxim Gorky, Chekov, Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev. The lives and deeds of Rama, Krishna, Zarathustra, Louis XIV, Napoleon, George Washington, Lincoln, Gandhi, Nehru and Martin Luther King remind that sometimes a man stands for an age and their names are synonymous with the history and culture of that country as has been aptly pointed out by the poet :

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime

And departing leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time.

Thirdly, family is considered the primary channel for the transmission of the culture. The various *samskaras*, or instincts as they are called, are imbibed in the mind of the infant which develop as he grows. In ancient India family played a significant role in handing over these *samskaras* from generation to generation, because of this institution we can find age-old customs and conventions being observed and maintained.

In the last place, foreign impact plays a significant role in the formation and development of native culture but it is necessary that both the receiver and the imposer should not suffer from lack of reciprocity, otherwise either of the two will disappear. History is full of such instances where due to lack of reciprocity weaker cultures like Mayas, Incas, Parthians, Sakas, Hunas and Romans completely lost their identity. Then there were countries like Japan on the one hand which have always been receptive to the cause of foreign impact may it be from India in the past and West for the present and on the other hand there are countries like those in African continent which have shunned themselves against all foreign influence. This sense of reciprocity has always been evident in the countries of the East and Far East where one can see the trend of modernisation at a faster rate as compared to Africa.

It is necessary that all the contributory factors of culture be prevalent at a given time. It may happen that one or two factors may be wanting or all the factors be prevalent; absence or prevalence of certain factors is bound to have definite impact on the shape and form of the culture.

Aim of culture

The aim of culture is to achieve happiness, but happiness alone is not the last word since happiness at a particular moment can be for an individual to jump on the cool waters of a pool, break a long-standing partnership in a cricket match or see an old friend after a long time. Culture is not concerned with such transitory phases of happiness. It aims at achieving lasting and permanent happiness which can be either human or sub-human. We are con-

cerned only with human happiness since sub-human happiness is beyond the pale of our consideration. Human happiness can be divided into three parts, viz. :

Placid (Satwik) — appeals to intellect and is rationale.

Active (Rajsik) — appeals to intellect and is passionate.

Inert (Tamsik) — appeals to senses and is malignant.

Culture is concerned only with human placid happiness for the achievement of which valour, peace, easily procurable livelihood and freedom are necessary and if there is hunger, want, penury, misery and ignorance the results will be inertness and suffering instead of happiness. The aim of Indian culture is human placid happiness and in my opinion the west aims at achieving human active happiness. This basic difference in the ultimate objects had divided the world into two cultural groups—orient and occident.

Oriental and occidental culture

The western culture which follows and envisages identical values of culture is known as occident and on the other hand oriental culture is represented by those countries which cultivate different cultures but agree on some fundamental aspects of culture. Swami Vivekananda has elucidated this distinction between the two in these words : "The object of Europe is to exterminate all, in order to live themselves. The means of European civilisation is sword; of the Aryas, the division into different varnas (castes). This system of division into different varnas is the stepping stone to civilisation, making one rise higher and higher in proportion to one's learning and culture. In Europe it is always victory to the strong and death to the weak. In the land of Bharata, every social rule is for the protection of the weak."¹ It was probably these and other fundamental differences which led Rudyard Kipling to remark :

East is east and West is west
And never the twain shall meet.

1. *The East and the West* : Swami Vivekananda.

In spite of Kipling's fateful remark, east and west had started meeting and merging long before his observations came, as Prof Northrop observes : "For the first time in history, not merely in war but also in the issues of peace, the east and west are in a single world movement, as occidental and oriental character. The east and west are meeting and merging. The epoch which Kipling so aptly described but about which so falsely prophesied is over. The time has come when we must learn how to combine oriental and occidental values if further tragedy, bitterness and bloodshed are not to ensue."¹ Both are coming closer at different levels of society thus forming harmonious alignment between different cultural groups of the world. We are eagerly looking forward towards that day when artificial barriers will be broken and world culture established through increased assimilation and cultural exchange.

World culture

With the increasing contact between the east and the west the idea of a world culture is gaining ground day by day as a "psychological and intellectual problem. It is an attempt to save mankind from the insane obsession of patriotism, it is race of education to avert another catastrophe."² This concept of "one world" was realised in ancient times through 'digvijaya', 'world empire', 'world conquest' and in our own times 'one Reich'. These concepts were shattered as soon as the might of the arms was broken but on the other hand the Indian ideal of 'Aryabhava' and 'Dhamma Vijaya' proved far more lasting. Similarly, the ideals of christianisation and Islamic brotherhood have proved far more effective than forceful conversion through the might of arms. As a matter of fact harmonious alignment of different cultures and establishment of universal culture is possible only through constructive work and deliverance of the suffering masses from hunger, want and penury. This search was reflected in the League of Nations but unfortunately due to distrust between the signatories and the frailty of human behaviour the League did not last long. The ideal of imperialism was once more on the run and only after five years of war human mind came to realise the futility of war and in

1. Page 4, *The Meeting of the East and West* : Northrop.

2. *The Work Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* : H.G. Wells.

order to avoid further insane obsession gathered under the flag of the United Nations which declared :

“Higher standard of living, self-employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;

“Solution of international economic, social, health and related problems and international cultural and educational cooperation; and

“Universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedom for all without distinction as to race, sex, language and religion.”

(Article 55, U.N. Charter)

The formation and establishment of the United Nations was indeed a bold step towards the establishment of a world culture. Eminent statesmen like Nehru and Kennedy lent considerable support to it. As a result of their untiring zeal for world peace and continued efforts of the various U.N. Secretary-Generals with but a very few exceptions, generally the fighting and warring nations have come to settle disputes through peaceful discussions round the table.

Dangers to which culture is exposed

Culture is exposed to numerous dangers; therefore, more caution is needed to guard it against the forces of internal decay and lack of dynamism than external attack. Whenever any culture loses dynamism it not only becomes decadent and effete but the quality of the people who adhere to such culture also deteriorates and soon they prove themselves unworthy of carrying the burden of the culture any further. While attracting people's attention towards this shortcoming Arnold Toynbee has used objective methods for inviting the attention of the people towards the dangers to which culture is exposed. He has taken a bold approach and launched his crusade even against the so-called high cultural groups. He points out, “When I ask my fellow westerners what the west stands for, and am told as I usually am, that it stands for justice, freedom and humanity . . . I do not consider that west has lived up to them. A catalogue of western atrocities flashes through my mind faster than

the revolution of an unreeling film."¹ In recent years western press has launched vehement crusades against the malignant tendencies which have crept into western society in the name of modernism. The degenerated tastes, vulgar looks, naked appearance, low talks, sexual indulgence, increasing indiscipline, loosening control of parents and growth of fanatic cults have tarred the face of western culture in spite of its scientific and technological advancement. The decline which Oswald Spengler visualised is now looming large over the western horizon. The tragedy has occurred in the west because it did not take notice of the dangers to which culture is exposed.

The topless way is a useless way since it neither enhances aesthetic taste nor reflects any advancement in living standards. It hurts the eye and the soul. The topless and mini are making rapid strides in the fashion-world in spite of the fact that intellectuals are opposed to them. The present culture of the Rocks, Mods and Beatles is just the beginning of that Hippie-culture which has already started showing signs of nadir of setting western culture. This malady can very well be repeated in India if present non-chalant, indulging, restless and sensual attitude is permitted to grow unchecked. Today all the odd things are being aped in India in the name of modernisation. Disbelief in the country's past and throwing ridicule at age-old culture not only hurts national pride but causes internal decay. It has been rightly pointed out by a Japanese poet that—

On the sands of time, all the lamps
Go off. But the lamps kindled by
Courage do not go off, and enlighten
The path of others in days to come.

—Kozai

Tradition is not a burden, and one should never decry it as a vestige of the past. It is something of which we can justly feel proud. In the name of modernism it does not suit India that a son should discard his parents, change wives, ridicule his relatives, go naked and condemn all that our forefathers had so laboriously built. Modernism demands that we should learn western science, arts, crafts, technology, industry, medicine and other branches of human endeavour, in such exchanges. The principle of reciprocity is always to be borne in mind.

1. *The Hindustan Times*, April 23, 1963.

India and the world

The eyes of world are set on India. People look here whenever they expect any thing rationale for the deliverance of the suffering masses. How many of us are aware about this role ? In some quarters west is being sedulously aped while in others it is being decried as decadent and effete. We must always keep in mind the advice of Dr Radhakumud Mukerjia : "Indian thought occupies a distinct place in the evolution of human thought. Indian life has its distinctive part to play in the history of humanity. The world is in need of a living and rejuvenated India." For playing our role successfully it is necessary that we must understand the basic thought-currents and character of Indian culture.

Indian Culture X-Rayed

The loom of the Indian culture is a vast warm country interspersed with big rivers emanating from the Himalayas and reaching up to the southern seas. The cotton of this cloth is composed of highly cultured and semi-civilised people. Its warp is varnashramadharma and its woof the conquest and competition in nature. It is as solid as granite rock and as sublime as "beauty lending charms to beauty". In spite of numerous invasions which have swept past the country, threatening the very basis of culture—'Satyam-Sivam-Sundaram'—it has remained unruffled.

What makes India so accustomed to recapitulate itself and rise to the occasion certainly deserves examination.

Contributory factors of Indian culture

In the first place, environment has played a significant role in the formation and development of Indian culture. Surrounded on the three sides by the girdle of Ratnakar (ocean) the repository of jewels, wearing the diadem of Himalayas, watered by the holy Ganges, Yamuna, Sindhu, Kaveri, Narmada, Krishna and Godavari (suja-lam), laden with fruit gardens of Kashmir, Kulu and Kumaon (suphalam), the breeze flowing from the clove creepers and sandal forests gives it the vintage of being called 'malaya sheetalam'; the green and fertile land of Ganga-Yamuna gives it the ascription of being evergreen (sashya-shyamalam). Such is the glory of India. Nature has bestowed its fullest possible gifts on India and decked the entire landscape with the best of the beauties that nature could

possibly bestow. Though strange yet true, while many countries of the world remain enveloped under thick sheet of snow and fog, suffer from scorching sun, the cities become muddy and slushy due to torrential rains, volcanic eruptions threaten their existence, India enjoys the change of seasons according to the cycle of time. The very loved flowers of gods and goddesses like champakali, maulsri, ketaki, hanskali, bela parijat, chameli and pankaj grow in abundance in India filling the atmosphere with sweet smell and fragrance. In harmony with the beauties of nature is the abundance of flora and fauna. The stateliness of the Gir lion, majesty of the Terai tiger, graciousness of the Mysore elephant, magnificence of the one-horned Assam rhinocero, attractively spotted deer and rare Himalayan musk deer attract the attention of naturalists and hunters from all over the world. Indian birds have been lamented by celebrated poets like Shelley, Wordsworth and Keats. The beauty of the nature becomes more inviting and fascinating in the Himalayas where a visitor is struck with so many points of attraction :

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark the silent stream—
The champak odours sail like
Sweet thoughts on a dream;
The nightingale's complaint
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
O beloved as thou art.

Endowed with such rich gifts of nature the Indian people are bound to be aesthetic, sensitive, sentimental, conscious, congenial and cultured. This is the reason though endowed with one of the militant philosophies of the world 'hatova prapyasi swargam jatwa bhokshyasae mahim' (conquer and rule the world or die in the attempt and achieve heavens), the average Indian tends to believe that 'the conquest of the arms is temporary, while victory gained by the path of dharma is permanent and lasting.' It is this factor which has led Indians to indulge in intense philosophical speculation than prepare for the war as has been aptly pointed out by Matthew Arnold—

The East bowed low before the blast

Impatient, deep, disdain;
She left the legions thunder past,
She plunged in deep thought again.

For an average Indian, philosophy is only a moral imperative which always justifies the ends.

Secondly, intellectuals have exerted considerable influence on the growth and development of culture. Intellectuals are born not merely by an accident of history but are produced by a process which is known as the science of eugenics. In ancient India '*devi-sampadhukapurusha*' or 'men of transcendental virtue' were produced through this process. Plato has also made a reference about this process. The process was so perfect that India never remained devoid of warriors, philosophers, thinkers, writers, poets, artists, musicians and men versed in other arts and sciences. The men so produced kept the torch of our culture burning and successfully handed it over to posterity for carrying it further. The working of this principle can be seen from the life and deeds of Rama, Krishna, Arjuna, Buddha, Ashoka, Harsha, Sankaracharya, Kabir, Nanak, Shivaji, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Tilak and Gandhi.

If the intellectuals can make a culture they can also mar it by their feuds and dissensions. Indian history provides numerous instances where a perverted and irrational intellectual has proved more dangerous than an enemy carrying out false propaganda or waging war on the front.

In the third place comes the principle of reciprocity. Like all other civilisations of the world the Indian civilisation is also of complex origin, deriving its source from various linguistic groups which inhabited this country or were introduced in this country subsequently. These linguistic groups who came to India were of the idea that they were going to a vast warm and barren country but when they reached India they were taken by surprise and were soon so much swayed by the greatness of India that they lost their identity and ultimately got absorbed in the Aryan way of life. But the invaders from the Arab world were firmly rooted in their culture and civilisation and were inspired by a proselytising zeal. This enabled them to make definite impact on the Indian culture and give new values to it. However, the most significant event in the history of Indian culture was yet to come

till the Britishers settled which marked the impact of a forceful and dynamic society on a static society which was at that time pointing to the nadir of setting energy. The outcome of this impact has been summed up by Percival Spear in these words : "Neither Mughal, Marhatta or the Company was the real victor of the struggle it was the pervasive spirit of the West."¹ The pendulum had swung on to the other side, striking a note of national awakening.

Values of Indian culture

Often it is asked what India stands for ? This question can be answered by pointing towards the values of Indian culture which reflect the principle of unity in diversity. Some of the basic values envisaged by Indian culture are as follows :

Belief in Dharma Every Indian irrespective of caste and creed believes in the law of dharma. Dharma does not mean any creed or cult but a way of life which conforms with the principles of decent cultural behaviour. Dharma enjoins that every man be free from the feeling of enmity, should be friendly and full of compassion, must not nourish the selfish ideas of 'me' and 'mine' and must strive to be equanimous in pain and pleasure (Gita, II.B). Years later these ideals were put by Ashoka before his people with a new meaning—"anything contrary to dharma is considered adharmā—the very negation of dharma. Therefore, there is no gift such as the gift of dharma, acquaintance in dharma, or kinship in dharma." This principle of dharma is woven in the basic thought-currents of the Indian culture.

Belief in one God Indians believe in one God who is All-powerful, Infinite and All-pervading. The various names and functions ascribed to Him are nothing but different expressions of one Truth. "Truth is one though sages call it differently." To a foreigner who sees numerous temples of various gods and goddesses, scattered all over India, worshipped by different people, the entire country seems to be a veritable zoo of different faiths, beliefs and religions each distinct and different from the other. He is never able to reconcile that all faiths irrespective of their beliefs are but aspects of the one dharma—Hinduism. A foreigner is not aware of

1. P. 273, *A Modern History of India* : Percival Spear.

the fact that whatever an Indian does, irrespective of his position in life, submits it to the feet of the Lord considering that all acts done by the soul, intellect, body, expression, senses, intuition and mind are but further expression of God's omnipotence and omnipresence. Believing in secularism we deny all heresies as absurdities.

Nirvana or redemption from the cycle of death and birth Every Indian considers that this birth is just a stepping stone for final redemption from the cycle of death and birth because actions of the present birth have definite impact and bearing on the future. This search of Indian mind has been thus explained by the poet—

Long to the watcher is the night
To the weary wanderer along the road
Long is the torment of the chain of death and birth,
Who does not see truth's light.

This search for nirvana is often interpreted to mean that one should clad himself in saffron, renounce the world and meditate day and night. This is contrary to facts. Gita says that one can attain moksha even by doing his own karma, it further explains that 'if a brahmin can attain svarga by following the path of righteousness, a kshatriya can attain by laying his life for the defence of the country.'

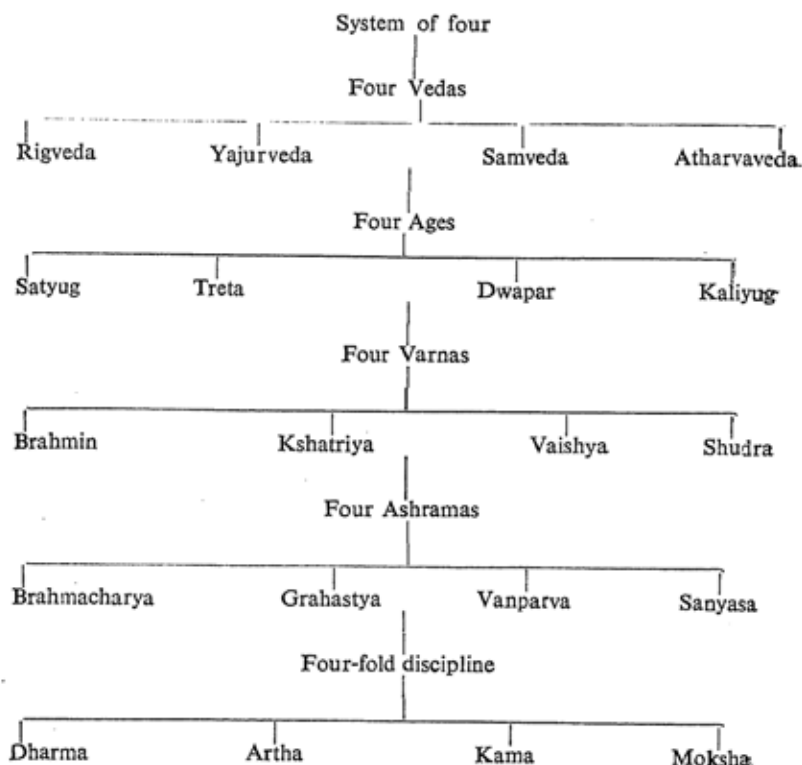
Varnashramadharma Every Indian believes that "every mental and physical blow that is given to the same by which, as it were, fire is struck from it and which in its own power and knowledge is discovered, is karma, this word being used in its widest sense thus we all are doing karma at the same time."¹ A karmayogi takes life as it comes without speculating about the results which can be achieved by doing a particular karma. One should do his duty and leave the results with the God. It may be asked what is karma? Karma is that action which is just, equitable, universal and for the good of all, anything not conforming with it is 'ku-karma' or ignoble action.

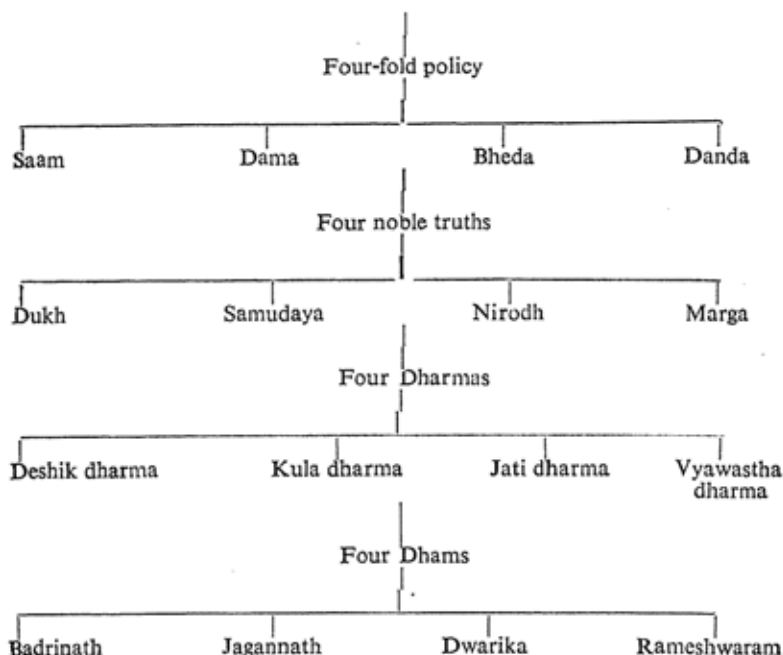
1. P. 50, *Swami Vivekananda and His Works* : Mayawati Prakashan.

Aryabhava The vedic sage pointed out that a true yogi is one who sees like soul in all human beings. 'All Indians are equal irrespective of their birth.'

Four-fold discipline The world is considered the karma kshetra where every human being performs one or the other action every moment, keeping in mind the principles of dharma, artha, kama and moksha which call for the observance of righteous path, honest living, balanced sex and redemption from the cycle of death and birth. This system has been described by B.G. Tilak as 'best in spiritual science, in actual action, and in unselfish meditative life'.

System of four While scanning through the pages of Indian literature and philosophy I have been attracted by the following four-fold system which seems so well planned.





The list is not exhaustive by any means. It merely illustrates the point.

Unity in diversity No other country of the world has witnessed growth and functioning of so many castes, creeds and faiths at one and the same time of history and what is more interesting is the fact that in spite of so many diversities there is the underlying current of unity.

There are numerous other values of culture which form the backbone of Indian culture and civilisation but today some Indians are decrying them and threatening to shake them off since a wind of change is sweeping past the world.

Wind of change

Change is the law of nature. What was yesterday is not today and what is today will not be tomorrow but there are certain things which require to be protected from the swirling currents of change because a country is known and identified by its culture and when-

ever any country had neglected its cultural values it has subsequently disappeared from the page of history like the great Mayas, Incas, Parthians, Sakas and Hunas about whom nothing is known today and on the other hand are cultural groups like Aryans, Greeks and Jews who always held fast to their values of culture, consequently they are recognised not only as living cultures but as forerunners of highly cultured groups. We are Indians and our culture is recognised as Indian culture because we have inherited certain values of culture. We earnestly pursue and enrich them by timely addition and alteration. These values make us distinct from the Chinese, Greeks, Arabians and the rest of the world. Today some of us have started decrying Indian culture as old and outdated without realising the rich cultural background which India has inherited. While opting for winds of change we must keep in mind the advice tendered by Indonesian scholar Takadir Alisjahabama : "If we look at the traditional values of Asia from the point of view and realise that the problems of the modern world must be solved by the methods of face them with the eyes, heart and ideas of modern man, all traditional values must be re-examined with the modern mentality in the context of our time. Which of them should be preserved ? How can they be preserved in modern era ? In transforming these values into modern life, it is we, modern men with modern standards, who have to decide about their worth, we cannot automatically accept everything that tradition holds sacred. For us—intellectuals of present-day Asia, the primary task is not the maintenance of the heritage of our ancestors, but the building of a viable life for ourselves together with other nations of the world."¹ The learned observation of the Indonesian scholar deserves serious consideration since it concerns so many of us in this part of the world. India can certainly play a significant part since it has been forerunner of Asian culture and civilisation. We cannot afford to be mere silent spectator of the events that are taking place in the Arab world, Soviet Russia and the Chinese mainland.

Today the world is passing through fantastic and sweeping changes brought in by the discoveries of science and technology. We in India are being ruined by misdirected pulls. Some leaders ask us to seal India against Communists while others assure us that

only they can deliver us from the present miseries. In some quarters west is being worshipped as the symbol of advancement while in others decried as very base and mean. Both the attitudes are extremes and what I wonder is that nobody has come forward with the plea that let us steer our own way taking whatsoever suits our purpose. We should forget once for all that some magic formula formulated by the Communists or Mao Tse-tung will redeem us from our miseries and give us entirely new values of culture. Our redemption lies through the path suggested by our ancient sages and interpreted by modern leaders in the context of our requirements. The much sought change will automatically come.

Religion : The Keynote of Indian Culture

In the scheme of culture the place of religion is pivotal particularly in the case of India where history has been so intricately woven with mythology but still there are writers according to whom religion and culture are contradictory terms. Agreeing with Croce, Matthew Arnold held that religion can be substituted by culture forgetting that "the place of religion must be considered in the scheme of culture as a complete satisfaction of highly derived needs . . . in its dogmatics it supplies with strong cohesive forces. It grows of every culture . . . The cultural call for religion is highly derived and indirect but is finally rooted in the way in which the primary needs of man are satisfied in culture."¹ Culture and religion are so much interdependent on one another that religious reformation or decay may coincide with the cultural efflorescence or degeneration. History is full of such instances where culture has advanced or derogated from the path of progress due to religious revival or degradation. Like a great redeemer religion has instilled new life in the dead bones of culture. Probably, considering this, Arnold Toynbee has predicted a new role for religion : "Religion is likely to be the plane on which this coming centrepetal counter movement will first declare itself; and this probability offers us a further hint for the revision of our traditional western methods of studying history as a whole should be to relegate economic and political history to a subordinate plane and give religious history

1. *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* : Vols 3 & 4—Culture : Brokishaw Malinowsky.

the primacy, for religion, after all, is the serious business of human race."¹ Even in modern scientific age religion continues to satisfy uneasy questionings of searching mind and diverts it towards the real and ultimate. Today when world is sitting over an atomic volcano and the integrity of human mind is doubtful the need for religion has become more inviting and urgent. In this context it may be asked : what is religion ?

What is religion ?

Religion is often interpreted to mean a given set of rules and regulations which stands for certain dogmatic ideas which are assiduously followed by a devoted set of people. This interpretation is the very negation of religion since religion is not any truth which denies anything contrary to that which it preaches. Islam and Christianity have laid such exclusive claims but Hinduism has not. The Indian sages who meditated on the problems of life declared that "Truth is one though sages put it differently". To this catholicity of thought we can ascribe the prevalence of numerous castes, creeds and cults. In India the emphasis has been not on any 'ism' or 'faith' but on dharma. The law of Dharma proclaimed : 'Let noble thoughts come to us from all sides.' These noble thoughts were to ennoble and embellish our life in this and the other world. Whatever the Vedas say is dharma. In Srimadbhagvad purana, Sri Krishna says : "I myself am Dharma in the form of a bull whose four legs are dedication, purity (outer and inner), compassion and truth." The dharma ideal is eternal and all pervading. The word dharma was added before every action in order to give it much required moral force and religious sanctity, for example—

Varnashramadharma—Regulated the constitution and functioning of society according to the principles of varna and dharma.

Kula and jati dharma—The daily life of a Hindu is guided by the principles of daily usage towards his family and clan.

Achardharma—The code of conduct governing the day-to-day life is called Achardharma which is regulated by the principles laid down in Acharsamhita.

Vyawasthadharma—The administration and regulation of society forms an important branch of dharma ideal.

1. P. 24, *Civilisation on Trial* : Arnold Toynbee.

Deshikdharma—Dedication of self, heart, body and soul for the country was called for from all inhabitants of the land.

The amount of emphasis that has been laid on the dharma ideal can be further proved from Gita where Lord Krishna says : "Death for the sake of one's dharma is graceful than the acceptance of alien religion, however high it may be." He assured Arjuna in the midst of Mahabharata battle-field : "I take birth for the cause of upholding dharma and protect what is just and equitable and destruction of what is helly and false." The prevalence of incarnation theory can be ascribed to this factor alone and that is why divine hand is seen behind every reformatory work in India.

Those who do not know the dharma ideal often confuse the outer forms of Hinduism as Indian concept of religion and hastily conclude : "Compared to the crisp outline of Koranic law the niceties of dharma are fog."¹ The comparison is completely outstripped of reality.

Hinduism

He who believes in the law of dharma and accordingly conducts his life is a Hindu. The word Hindu owes its origin to the word Sindhu meaning the inhabitants of Sindhu, thus the addition of the word Hindu before dharma is mere repetition of that principle by which kula, jati, vyawastha and naimittika were added before the word dharma. Gandhiji defined Hinduism as 'relentless pursuit after truth' and in this searce for truth Hinduism is guided by the principle : "Though the paths may vary and differ, whether straight or zigzag yet they meet in one place, like the rivers which ultimately fall in the ocean."² This broad outlook helped Hinduism to accept every creed or cult which had at one time broken steps with Hinduism but when the storms of persecution swept over India they ran for shelter under the capacious bosom of Hinduism which has been thus characterised by C.E.M. Joad : "Hinduism developed from the very first a wide tolerance, Hindus do not proselytise, they do not lay exclusive claims to salvation, and they do not believe that God will be pleased by wholesome slaughter of those of his creatures whose beliefs are mistaken. As a result, Hinduism

1. *A Short History of India and Pakistan* : Perciveal Spear.

2. *Mahimastotra*.

has been less degraded than the most religions by the anomaly of creed wars." The passage of Hinduism has been calm, cool and calculated. The freedom of thought and speculation kept Hinduism open for interpretation whenever it was needed.

Age of interpretation

If freedom of thought and speculation opened new vistas of knowledge it also shadowed the beauty of Vedas by sophistry and blasphemy. The leaders of lower castes rose in revolt against the so-called brahmanic interpretation thereby creating a ferment of intellectual awakening in protest. This freedom of thought ultimately led to the writing of Upanishads and development of four sects, viz., Saivism, Bhagvatism, Jainism and Buddhism.

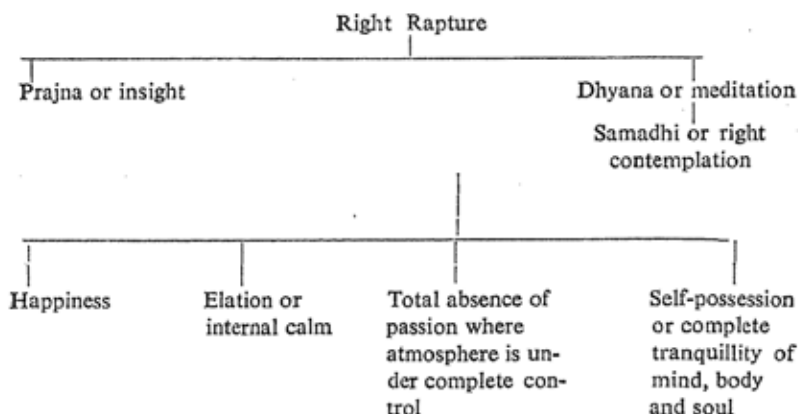
Saivism is recognised as the most ancient form of worship, traces of which have been found in the finds of Harappa and Mohenjodaro. The earliest form of Saivism was nature worship. Later on this nature worship developed into Shakti Puja which called for observance of numerous Tantric rites. Tantrism called for harnessing hidden powers of nature by uplifting mind, soul and body. The principal deity of Saivism—Lord Shiva—was later accepted as part of the Trinity by the Puranic writers.

Too much mystification of Saivism led to the growth of Bhagvatism which emphasized complete surrender of the self before the God. It required no heart burning or soul racking. The devotee was required to visualise the God in various forms of a friend, teacher, parent and even wife (madhureya) and then surrender himself completely. This helped it to catch the popular appeal.

Jainism and Buddhism rose to prominence in an age when major Upanishads were being compiled and contemporary atmosphere was charged with intellectual awakening and religious ferment. The mind of the people was ready to strike against the existing disorder and confusion. The leaders of this revolt were Mahavir and Gautama. Legendary accounts narrate that Mahavir was twenty-third Tirthankar in the line of Jain Munis but it is only after his appearance that Jainism made any significant headway. Propounding the philosophy of non-violence he laid emphasis on austere discipline and rigorous code of conduct. He declared that henceforth no life be sacrificed for any ritual and called for intense self-mortification as surest means of salvation. The rigours of

rigid discipline, complications of non-violence and trials of self-mortification made Jainism less attractive than Bhagvatism and Buddhism.

The rise of Buddhism was momentous. The light of knowledge which broke upon the Sakya Muni under the Bodhi tree was to lift the lot of millions of suffering people. Gautama, now transformed into Buddha, decided to share this knowledge with his fellow countrymen. He delivered his first lecture 'Dhammachakrapavattanasutta' at Sarnath. He explained, "There are two extremes which the monks who have given up the world are advised to avoid : the first being the things given up to pleasures and lusts because it is profitless, ignoble and painful." He propounded the theory of four noble truths, wherein, he explained, there is dukha (suffering), it has a cause (samudaya), it can be suppressed (nirodh) and there is a way to remove it (marga). He formulated eight-fold path for the deliverance of self, viz., right aspiration, right mode of livelihood, right-mindedness, right speech, right conduct, right effort, right meditation and right rapture. Right rapture has been thus explained—



The path of Buddha was simple and straightforward and it was the unique privilege of a king named Ashoka to tread this path and spread the message in far-flung lands and thereby become Dhammashoka by relentless pursuit. This task was carried further by Kanishka who was responsible for the birth of Mahayana form of Buddhism.

Thus Saivism, Bhagvatism, Jainism and Buddhism became great stimulators of Indian religion and thought and ultimately led to the launching of reformatory movements from time to time.

Reformatory movements

The repetitive occurrence of reformatory movements illustrates the point that human mind has never remained contented with outmoded modes of conduct and patterns of behaviour. Each generation has always been receptive to the cause of change. In order to replace extravagant customs, beliefs and traditions society works out a system of self-examination and purification as can be amply illustrated from the pages of Indian history.

While the country was experiencing the onslaughts of Islam, the mind of the people was occupied with numerous heresies and superstitions. There was all-out ignorance and darkness. At that time came the great deliverer—Jagadguru Sankaracharya—who dispelled the gloom of misery and ignorance by the light of knowledge and restored the faith of the people in the Sanatana Dharma by propounding the theory of Advaita. The work started by him was carried further by such eminent reformers as Ballabhacharya, Ramanuja, Nimbaraka, Madhav, Kabir, Chaitanya, Guru Nanak, Sant Gyaneshwar and Tukaram. The most dynamic figure amongst them was Kabir. He preferred to convey his message in the language of the people and no intricate philosophy was woven in it. The feuds and dissensions existing between the Hindus and Mussulmans were futile to him since both were like the 'pots of same clay'. He paved the way for closer cooperation and understanding between the two, the result of which was the emergence of sufism and Din Ilahi.

Islam and India

Setting apart the political implications of Islamic introduction over India we come across definite evidence of cultural exchange between the two about which Dr Kalikinkar Dutta has rightly observed: "In the wake of Muslim invasion definite religious and social ideas which differed fundamentally from those of Hinduism, entered into their country and the perfect absorption of the invaders by the original people could not be possible; thus through

long association, the growth of the numbers converted and the influence of certain liberal movements in India, the Hindu-Muslim communities came to imbibe each other's thoughts and customs. And beneath the ruffled surface of storm and stress, there flowed a genial current of mutual harmony and toleration in different spheres of life."¹ The cult of satyapis and sufism reflected this understanding and cooperation between the two communities. The impact of Islamic culture was two-fold on Indian culture—firstly, the proselytising zeal of Islam strengthened conservatism in orthodox circles, lending indirect support to the rigours of caste, and secondly liberalism of Islam found its way inside Hindu philosophy and thought.

Islam and Hinduism came closer to each other when Mughals ascended the throne of Delhi. They kept religion and politics at a safe distance never allowing one to meddle with the other, thereby ensuring complete religious harmony and political freedom. This policy received greatest impetus from Akbar who inherited the liberal background of Babar, Humayun and his mother Hamida Begum. Gifted with these qualities of head and heart, he came in touch with the Sufi saints who motivated him to bring the two communities closer by calling a religious congregation which may work for establishing religious accord between the two communities—the result was Din Ilahi. Compounded out of various elements freely taken from Islam, Hinduism and Christianity, Din Ilahi represented the very best in all religions. In fact Din Ilahi was the culmination of that process which was started by early reformers at the beginning of Islamic introduction. Din Ilahi has been criticised by some historians : "Monument of Akbar's folly not his wisdom, the scheme was the outcome of ridiculous vanity, a monstrous growth of unrestrained autocracy."² The criticism is more remarkable for the scintillating phrases used than any substantial purport of history. Din Ilahi was the grand synthesis of that which can be considered best in all faiths since—

Heresy to the heretics, and religion to the orthodox,
But the dust of the rose petal belongs to the perfume seller.

The religious tolerance continued as long as the king emperors

1. P. 401, *The Advanced History of India* : R.C. Majumdar and others.
2. Vincent Smith.

sitting over the throne of Delhi kept themselves above Mullas and Maulvis and followed the policy of natural justice. This policy received serious setback when Dara Sikoh was defeated at the hands of Aurangzeb. Blinded by bigotry, Aurangzeb allowed himself to be fooled by the Imams and driven by fanatic impulses he committed the folly of striking at the most sensitive point of Hindusim, i.e., religion. The whole nation rose in revolt from Sikhs in the Punjab to the Marhattas in the South. The pendulum had swung on the other side. At a time when the country was in utter desolation due to internal wars and feuds the tragic action of the emperor gave the last nail in the coffin.

Introduction of Christianity

Many scholars have suggested that the introduction of Christianity dates back to those days when Jesus Christ visited India in pursuit of spiritual education. The authenticity of this statement is doubted however, whatever be the facts it certainly goes to show that Christianity had certainly some spiritual background in India. This is further supported by the fact that when Pope Paul visited India, he is reported to have remarked when asked about the purpose of his visit to India: "My visit will be pilgrimage to India." The word 'pilgrimage' is very significant in the light of spiritual background of Jesus Christ.

Leaving aside the conjectural conclusions the definite traces of Christianity are found as far back as when early traders started touching the shores of India. These traders were often accompanied by the missionaries who came to India in the hope that they were going to a vast, barren, dark, uncultivated and uncivilized land where they will kindle the light of knowledge, civilise the people and redeem the vast multitudes of people from misery and ignorance. To their amazement when they landed in India they found the very best in culture and civilisation which they had never conceived even in their wildest dreams. The stories narrated by them about the glory of Indian culture were never believed by the high priests of Vatican in the first instance but later on they were compelled to believe. Orientation courses were started for those missionaries who left for India. These early missionaries penetrated in the interior parts of the country where people were comparatively less educated. Having studied the weaker points of

the locals they gathered people round the village fire or chaupal by offering them gifts, and then told them about the frivolity of various rites and superstitions imposed by Hinduism. They tried to convince them that Hinduism was responsible for their misery. Poor and less educated were much impressed by their oratory and charitable gifts. Amongst such enthusiastic lot of missionaries, the most famous was Robert Nobili. He landed in Madurai in 1606 and dedicated himself to the task of Christian conversion heart and soul. He explained that basically Hinduism and Christianity were one and the same but whatever differences existed between the two were only due to the narrow outlook of Hinduism. Surprisingly, these methods of early Jesuit missionaries were not appreciated by the high priests of Vatican who held that India was the land of snakes and sadhus. They always dreamt of full scale conversion of India—a dream which proved illusory and ultimately Christianity also fell in the great pit of Hinduism. The entire episode has been so beautifully summed up by Amury de Riencourt in these words : “The boundless richness of the Hindu faith, its universal appeal, its tolerance, the profundity of Hindu philosophy and its enduring roots among the Indian people all this made India a poor soil for the sowing unless it could emulate Islam’s democratic appeal.”¹

The introduction of Christianity led to the growth of Hindu revivalist movement.

Religious revivalism

The first century under the British rule reads of the odd and significant : the odd was the introduction of British hegemony over India and significant was “the Indian mind started to be creative again and broke into those endeavours which resulted into splendid achievements . . . nevertheless the work of the pioneers did help the Indians of the time to liberate their mind from much of the ‘unreason and untruth’ that were current in the name of religion and culture.”² Aurobindo saw in this awakening the message of a new dawn. The early harbingers of this dawn were Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Maharshi Debendranath Tagore. They

1. Page 194, *The Soul of India*—Amury de Riencourt.

2. *The Hindustan Times* : July 29, 1969.

founded Brahmo Samaj which spearheaded the process of religious reinterpretation and intellectual awakening. The Samaj stood for bringing out the fundamental virtues of Indian culture for the benefit of the Indian people and foreign enthusiasts as well. The Samaj opposed the inroads of Christianity. The founding father of the Samaj, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, is said to have remarked when told about Christian conversion : "Wait, I will put a stop to it." And he did put a stop to it. Samaj did what orthodox Hinduisim was powerless to do. It provided halfway house between Hinduism and Christianity so that men could worship without idolatry, superstitions and sacrifices. The writings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy created a ferment of intellectual reasoning. The articles appearing in the pages of 'Tattvabodhinipatrika' dispelled the gloom of misery and ignorance. The scope of the Samaj was further expanded when Rishi Raj Narayan Basu opened the 'Jatiya Mela' and organised some of the best seminars of the nineteenth century. A few years later the Samaj was given a new dimension by Keshav Chandra Sen when he founded in collaboration with Mahadev Govind Chandra Ranade the Prarthna Samaj. It ventilated grievances against the Samaj and slightly modified the ideology.

When the people of Bengal were experiencing the revolutionary ideas of Samaj, there arose in the fastness of Gujarat a saint leader who rose above petty differences of caste and creed by virtue of his wisdom and reformatory outlook. Like a Norse God he loomed large over the horizon of Northern India. His immaculate personality had the unique privilege of attracting some of the foremost socio-religious reformers like Lala Lajpat Rai, Hansraj and Swami Sradhanand. To teeming multitudes of his followers he came to be known as Swami Dayanand. He also wrote a book 'Satyarth Prakash' or the 'Light of Truth'. Some critics have charged him for raising the slogan of back to Vedas. This is not true, since he did not want to put the clock back, instead he wanted to remind about the machinery by which the clock works. In the true manner of a progressive reformer he denied the pantheon of gods and goddesses and ridiculed various superstitions which were prevailing in the name of religion. The Samaj became the centre of reformatory activity by opening the floodgates of Hinduism for the lowly and subdued.

The immediate outcome of these reformatory movements was

the growth of the Theosophic movement. Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky founded the Theosophic Society of India for the meeting and merging of different religions. To a great extent it resembled Din Ilahi, hence it has often been described as old wine in a new bottle. Eminent reformers like Mrs Annie Besant made society the mission of their life. Besant held Hinduism in high esteem and very well advised, "Based on knowledge it need not fear any advance in knowledge; profound in spirituality, the depths of the spirit find in it deeps answering into deep, it has nothing to dread, everything to hope, from growth in intellect, from increasing sway of reason."¹

When these important events of vital import were taking place in India, a man of modest means was attracting crowds in the suburbs of Calcutta who was respectfully addressed by his followers as Swami Ramkrishna 'Paramhansa'. Swamiji did not reveal any new secret, instead narrated what he experienced in daily life. The sparks coming from the anvil of his mind set fire to existing mis-beliefs and heresies. A young man named Narendra was attracted by Swamiji and subsequently by constant striving and hard work he became Swami Vivekananda—now a completely transformed man. He was a unique blend of eastern religion and western thought. He extensively travelled inside and outside India and wherever he went he left the listeners spell-bound by his wisdom and magical eloquence. He called upon his people to 'rise, awake and acquire' and reminded them that 'Hindu religion does not consist in struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma, but in realising not in believing, but in being and becoming'. The cryptic sayings and references used by Swamiji elaborated what he preached. His work of reformation was swift and its results widespread.

So abounding was the influence exercised by these early reformers that the Karma ideal came under so much controversy that it led Surendranath Bannerjea to remark 'scratch a Hindu and you will find him conservative'. The opinions were divided : leaders like Aurobindo and Tilak held that Indians should take recourse to active action theory and on the other hand Mahatma Gandhi and Gokhale held that non-violent action policy should be pursued. This

1. *In Defence of Hinduism* : Annie Besant.

basic difference of opinion divided the course of Indian political movement into two distinctive currents.

Amongst the greatest reformers of our own time was Mahatma Gandhi who held that religion was rudder to the ship of life. He could not tolerate any violence in the name of religion and considered the same as the very negation of it. He was never tired of calling himself a Hindu because "Hinduism is the most tolerant of all religions known to me, being an exclusive religion, it enables the followers of that faith not merely to respect all other religions but it also enables to admire and assimilate whatever may be good in other faiths."

The launching of Hindu revivalist movements led Muslims to look into the degradations of Islam and work out means for Islamic resurgence.

Islamic resurgence

The collapse of Mughal empire proved ruinous for the Mussulmans of India but the mutiny of 1857 gave the last nail in the coffin. The failure of the mutiny killed all hopes of Islamic revivalism and ultimately led them to lead a life of complete isolation. The best pastime for them was to sit round the village fire and talk of the heydays which they once had. They cursed the cycle of time which brought their ultimate ruin. The overall effect of this attitude proved disastrous for them and brought in its wake hunger, penury, ignorance, misery, terror, backwardness and illiteracy. Their suffering and torment has been thus described by Cunningham : "While Bengalis, Hindus, Madrasis, and Marhattas inspired by the arts and sciences of Europe were experiencing an intellectual and moral renaissance, the Muslims all over India were falling into a state of material indigence and intellectual decay."

For a long time Mussulmans fanatically attached themselves with medieval habits of thought and work. This dangerous spell was broken by Sir Syed Ahmed who gave the clarion call of spiritual awakening and intellectual uprising. He asked the Muslims of India to emulate the example of Hindus who were ushering in an era of great creative activity. He held the scales for mutual understanding between the two communities since 'both were like the two eyes'. He implored them to go hand in hand for the liberation of mother India from the foreign clutches. To him western impact

was like that tonic which if taken in proportionate measure enhances the health of the user and excessive use adversely affects it. With these ideals set in his mind he laid the foundation of Aligarh Muslim University which was to imbibe such qualities of head and heart which were to prepare the Mussulmans of India for Islamic resurgence and political awakening. In these far-sighted aims and ambitions he was ably assisted by Dr Nazir Ahmed, Munshi Karamat Ali Khan, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk and poet Hali.

The religious awakening brought in its wake socio-economic and political reforms. The age-old beliefs were given reinterpretation and in this task of reformation some Muslim leaders decided to make a common front along with the Hindus while others decided to steer their own way and ultimately founded the Muslim League. Sir Agha Khan, Ali brothers (Saukat and Mohammed) and Sakimulla laid stress on the fact that Islam had no secrets to hide since it was a revealed religion providing equal rights and status for all except those who are unjust or profess blasphemy. In order to make Quran available for the educated masses and foreigners, Sir Amir Ali made an English rendering of Quran.

While these important events were taking place in the spiritual world, an event of far-reaching consequence happened in the western world—the Caliph of Baghdad stood amongst the defeated. Since Caliph was the spiritual leader of the Mussulmans, it was concluded that Islam was in danger of extinction and on this pretext Mussulmans launched Khilafat movement. Gandhiji decided to join hands with them since 'such opportunity of uniting Hindus and Mussulmans will not arise in hundred years'. The pious expectations of Gandhiji proved futile since Khilafat movement soon took communal turn and race riots touched a new watermark giving a religious and cultural movement political and communal swing.

Liberal minded Muslim leaders tried to avert the drift of Islamic movement from a cultural and religious movement to a political movement and Sir Iqbal implored : "The community needs overhauling of its present mentality in order that it may again become capable of feeling the urge of fresh desires and ideals. The Indian Muslim has long ceased to live in the full glow and colour of life, and consequently is in danger of an unmanly compromise with forces he has been made to think he cannot vanquish in open conflict." He unceasingly wrote for the breaking of old fetters but unfortunately his disciple Mr Jinnah changed the course of Islamic

movement from religious revivalism to formation of a religious state within India.

Creation of a religious state in India

It is disputed as to how the idea of creating a religious state within India originated. It has been held by one section that 'a new ideology was evolved, that India was the holy land of Hindus, that the Hindus were a nation in their own right in which Muslims, Christians and Parsis had no place, and that the political goal of the Hindus was Hindu Raj'. On the other hand "the determination to establish a separate Muslim state came not . . . from some Muslim divine . . . but from a thoroughly westernized, English educated attorney at law with a clean shaven face and razor sharp mind."¹ Jinnah very well knew that the mind of Mussulmans was more receptive to the cause of religion, therefore, the same can very well be fanned for establishing a Muslim state within India in which he saw the visions of his future statesmanship. The Britishers were aware about the ambitious mind of Jinnah and they did everything within their power to encourage the idea of a separate Muslim state within India and ultimately the policy of divide and rule succeeded in establishing two independent states within India, i.e., India and Pakistan. India declared itself a Republic with secularism and non-alignment as its ideal. Pakistan declared itself an Islamic state and joined military pacts. The crux of Pakistan's policy became 'every Hindu must hate a Muslim and every Muslim should hate all that is Hindu'.² It is really painful to see India and Pakistan poles apart in work, deed and thought.

With so many religious wars won and lost it is to be examined whether we can do without religion as some of us often want us to believe.

Religion in the modern world

Today religion is considered by many of us as a fading phenomenon. The most vehement criticism has come from the Communists who have condemned it as 'the vestige of the past', 'the sob of the oppressed people', 'the last refuge of the scoundrel', the

1. *Portrait of Myself*: Madame Bourke White.

2. M.C. Chagla : U.N. Speech.

opium of the poor' and 'aspect of spiritual oppression'. Chinese Communists have gone one step further by declaring that 'since it is the aim of religion to promote the spiritual development of the individuals, obviously in the Communist state in which the interests of the individuals are subordinated to those of the state, all religious beliefs must be discouraged.' His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet has narrated an interesting conversation between him and Mao Tse-tung when the former visited China. In between the conversation, Mao Tse-tung is reported to have remarked : "But of course religion is poison; it has two great defects. It undermines the race, and secondly it retards the progress of the country. Tibet and Mongolia have been poisoned by it."¹ As such Communists hold that religion must go bag and baggage with its myth, superstition, priestcraft, exploitation and ignorance.

When we analyse the basic principles underlying Communism and religion we find that both stand for the same ideals but the means for achieving these ends are different. As a matter of fact Communism is the latest religion which mankind has evolved. In fact Communism has come forward in recent years with more democratic ideals than religion. Religion demands dedication of mind, body and soul towards the lord who is the cause of creation and Communism expects devotion of work, deed and thought towards the party and ideology. The God of religion is the Supreme Being and all-pervasive, whereas, the leader of Communism is mortal and transitory.

Another threat to religion has come from science. Although science and technology have nothing to do with religion yet the men who guide the course of science hold that science must supersede religion since the cup of religious misery and ignorance is now full. It is argued that the foundations of modern age must be laid on the material supplied by science and technology but we forget in our enthusiasm that "there is no natural science without a precedent religion... even aesthetic sense has religion; modern mechanics exactly reproduces the contemplativeness of faith."² Science without religion is all rudder but no ship. Scientific philosophers like Julian Huxley and Bertrand Russell have laid stress on religion as a complementary force of science and it has been rightly suggested by Morely : "The task for the science is the creation of a

1. *My Land and My People* : H.H. The Dalai Lama of Tibet.
2. *The Decline of the West* (Vol I) : Oswald Spengler.

religion for the mankind." And such a religion can be established, in the words of William Jones, 'if science of religions is applied'. Religion has to depend on science for facts of personal experimentation. What is required is the mixing and mingling of religious values of toleration, sanity, humanitarianism and morality with scientific methods of experimentation, observation and analysis. Where such sense of balance is wanting we can rhyme with the poet—

Science appears but what in truth she is
Not as our glory and as our absolute boast
But as prop to our infirmity.

This infirmity of science has become more apparent with the increase in the destructive power of scientific armaments and particularly in view of the fact that man has not reached that stage of decency where he can be trusted for control of his temptations for grabbing more power.

It may be asked what is the science of religion? To me it appears that the science of religion can be summed up in the following words :

- (i) Belief in the living consciousness of the eternal and universal will.
- (ii) Realisation of the feeling that this body and soul require upliftment.
- (iii) A broad outlook towards fellow religions.
- (iv) An aptitude for helping those who cannot help themselves.

The aforementioned points are merely reinterpretation of the ideals of Dharma from scientific standpoint and aim at establishment of science of religion.

Literature : The Mirror of Indian Culture

Indian literature has always held the mirror to the society which in turn has reflected the systematic progression of Indian culture. In the growth and development of culture, literature has played definite role by its universal applicability and originality of thought which stamped the ideal of 'Satyam Sivam Sundaram'. The earliest pieces of literature that mankind knows are Vedas which reflect this ideal, 'Truth is beauty, beauty is truth all that ye need to know'.

Vedic literature

Vedas have been divided by scholars into Shruti and Smriti. Shruti is considered the divine revelation of knowledge in the manner Quran was revealed to Gabriel and Ten Commandments to Moses. The Vedic sage saw the visions of divine beauty and thus expressed himself—

The radiant dawns have risen up for glory in their
 White splendour like the waves of water
 She maketh paths all easy, fair to travel and rich hath
 Shown herself benign and friendly
 We see that thou art good : far shines thy lustre
 Thy beams, thy splendours have flown up to heaven.
 Decking thouself thou makest thou bossom bare shining
 In majesty, thou goddess morning.

Shruti is further subdivided into Brahmanas and Samhitas. Samhitas consist of a collection of mantras composed in praise of some deity. The rules laying the significance of a particular mantra are called Brahmana. This classification of mantras leads to the gradation of Vedas into four major parts, viz., a Veda in which mantras relating to a ritual called hotri are performed by a priest called Hotrin is known as Rigveda; secondly a Veda in which mantras are recited by a priest called Adharyu is known as Yajurveda; in the third place comes Samveda where mantras create divine atmosphere by their recitation; lastly Atharvaveda consists of a collection of mantras composed in praise of numerous gods and goddesses. Some scholars include Upanishads as fifth Veda but as a matter of fact they are mere commentaries on the import of Vedas.

Vedas have been further subdivided into up-Vedas. Ayurveda is regarded as further extension of Rigveda although it deals with such sophisticated subjects like anatomy, therapeutics, surgery and chemistry. Dhanurveda further elaborated Yajurveda by incorporating latest developments in war strategy. The basic ideologies of Atharvaveda were given reinterpretation in Tantraveda. As the scope of human speculation increased and more knowledge was added through scientific reasoning and intuitive realisation the content and scope of the Vedas increased. This advancement of knowledge brought in its wake Smritis which have often been referred to as Vedangas or offshoots of Vedas. In the beginning Smritis were committed to memory but when their core and content increased they were codified and reduced into writing. The technique of recitation and correct pronunciation was called kalpa (rituals). The rituals were either srauta or smarta. Srauta kalpa dealt with the performance of rituals meant for pleasing various gods and goddesses, on the other hand smarta kalpa dealt with the performance of various rituals concerning samskaras. The rituals were subjected to rigorous principles of grammar (vyakarana). Vedas were further expounded in Nirukti (exposition). Chhanda laid down the basic principles for the writing and composition of poetry. Lastly, Jyotish (astrology) guided the Vedic seer in determining the auspicious moment for performing various kalpas. Thus by virtue of their manifold functions, the six Vedangas were called the six senses of body, i.e., head, mouth, nose, feet, eyes and ears.

Another branch of Smriti literature was known as Dhamma-shastras which have been described by the noted French scholar Renou as 'tradition par excellence'. These treatises form the backbone of Hindu jurisprudence and other social sciences. Dhamma-shastras have laid much emphasis on the organisation and functioning of varnashramadharma. The prominent writers were Manu, Yajnavalkya, Parashar, Vyasa, Vashistha, Gautam, Atri, Katyayan and Brihaspati. The Dhammashastra literature forms the bulk of secular literature and was mainly responsible for building up social sciences and political thinking.

Vedas form the very basis of Indian literature, nay the culture itself. As most ancient documents of wisdom they have been described by Prof Paul Thieme : "Vedas are noble documents not only of value and pride to India, but to the entire humanity because in them we see man attempting to lift himself above the earthly existence."¹

The next landmark in the history of Indian literature was the writing of epics.

The Epics

If the house of Indian literature has been constructed on the foundations of Vedic literature the structure has been raised on the material supplied by the two epics—Ramayana and Mahabharata, the impact of which has been profound and far reaching on Indian culture. The principal heroes and heroines of these two epics are not merely characters of an epic but are the gods and goddesses who descended on this earth for the destruction of helly and false and upkeep of dharma.

Ramayana The story behind the writing of Ramayana, as it runs round, narrates that the inspiration for the writing of Ramayana dawned on Balmiki when he witnessed the tragic sight of a dove being killed by the arrow of a hunter. He exclaimed in deep sorrow :

Shame to you, O hunter ! you have killed mercilessly
One of the doves while engaged in copulous love.

1. *The Hindustan Times* : Jan. 7, 1964.

This sudden outburst of emotion marked the dawn of a poetic genius. He wielded it for immortalising the deeds of Rama and thus came into being the brightest jewel of Indian literature—the Ramayana. This story was written and rewritten in various forms by different writers but the greatest writer poet appeared in the sixteenth century who came to be known as Goswami Tulsidas. Tulsidas weaved such an excellent web of characterisation that his heroes and heroines came to be recognized as gods and goddesses who come before us in different forms. The character of Rama pervades the entire epic with divine and transcendental qualities signifying the very best in Indian culture; similarly the highest qualities of Indian womanhood have been stamped on Sita. Jules Michalet has paid the following glowing tribute to this epic: "Whoever has done or willed too much let him drink from his deep cup a long draught of life and youth . . . everything is narrow in West. Greece is so small that I am stifled in it. Judea is so dry that I pant in it, let me glance at the lofty Asia and the profound East for a while. There I have my immense poem as vast as the Indian ocean, blessed and adored by the sun a book of divine harmony, where nothing jars."¹ Ramayana answers the uneasy questionings of wavering mind in simplest terms.

Mahabharata Posterity owes a great debt of gratitude to Ved Vyasa because 'India would not have been what it has been and will be, but for the master'. He has woven in his epical work such an excellent web of characterisation, situation, treatment, theology, ethics, politics, diplomacy and war craft that the reader never loses interest in the epical work and gets whatever he wants. The real significance of Mahabharata lies in the fact that in the midst of most tense moments the crest jewel of Indian literature was propounded. Lord Krishna preached Arjuna the law of karma in the face of seeming failure and asked him to dedicate mind, body and soul to pure action.

The writing of epics inspired glorification of many other lesser known heroes of ancient history and legend. This formed the basis for Puranic literature.

Puranas—history or myth

The content, origin and writing of Puranas is a matter of dispute,

1. P. 67, *In Defence of Hinduism* : Annie Besant.

some historians are of the view that they were written at different periods of history and their content was moulded and shaped from time to time. Some historians have described them as hypothetical, fictional and mythical and according to another theory Puranas were written for the Shudras who were less educated and intellectually underdeveloped. Matsya Puranas says that the task of simplifying Vedas was given by Brahma to Ved Vyasa who presented them in the form of Puranas. Whatever may be the reasons for the writing of Puranas, taken collectively, they may be described, in the words of A.P. Pusalkar, "as a popular encyclopaedia of ancient and medieval Hinduism, religious, philosophical, historical, personal, social and political."¹

Srimadbhagvadpurana gives a list of eighteen puranas amongst which prominent are Brahmapurana, Kurmapurana, Padmapurana, Shivpurana, Vishnupurana, Nardiyapurana, Markandeyapurana, Agnipurana, Bhavishyatpurana, Vamanpurana, Matsyapurana, Garudpurana and Brihadpurana. Writing about Bhagvadpurana Aurobindo observes: "The Bhagvad philosophy of sweetness and joy in which God is approached through the heart and not so much by the intellect has made the dry bones of religion in India instinct with life, and its followers are shining examples of God permeated men, living perhaps in comparative poverty or obscurity seemingly mad or idiotic, but shedding divine light or benevolence."²

As scope for human speculation increased, new Puranas were developed and the content of the existing ones was expanded by further commentary and subsequent interpretation.

Secular literature

Some critics of Indian literature contend that Indian literature has nothing except religion and philosophy but such criticism only shows lack of information because it is very well known that Smriti literature forms the bulk of secular writing. Now it is known for certain that Indian books on astrology and astronomy are most ancient and authentic. The other prominent secular works are Natyashastra of Bharata, Kamsutra of Vatsayana,

1. P. 95, *Indian Inheritance*, Vol I : Bhavan's Book University.

2. *Ibid.*

Arthashastra of Kautilya, Ashtadhyayi of Panini, Yogadarshan of Patanjali, Rasayanshastra of Nagarjuna and Charak's treatise on medicine. Several lesser known works of physics, chemistry, medicine, engineering, arts and crafts are also available. Varahmihira's treatise on the theory of mathematics and geometry is widely acclaimed.

This ideal of secular writing was carried further by Pali and Prakrit writers.

Advent of Pali language and literature

With the passage of time, Sanskrit tended to become over-ornate and gradually lost its simplicity in the rigidities of grammar and subsequently it ceased to be a language of the masses. This accounted for the rise of Pali language and literature. While this transformation was taking place, there appeared two prominent leaders Mahavir and Buddha who preferred to communicate with the masses in Pali. Their preachings were collected and later reduced into writing in Jatakas. History and myth was skilfully mixed and mingled in their texture. With the passage of time the volume of Buddha's teachings considerably increased. His disciples divided it into three baskets or pitakas, viz. :

Vinaya Pitaka—Deals with the rules and regulations of the Buddhist priesthood.

Sutta Pitaka—The anecdotes and aphorisms narrated by Buddha have been collected in it.

Abhidhamma Pitaka—Deals with the philosophical aspects of Buddhism.

The finest piece of Buddhist literature is 'Milindapanha' which records the religious discourse between the Greek king Menander and Buddhist philosopher Nagasen. The two epical works Dipvamsa and Mahavamsa are considered as significant as Ramayana and Mahabharata in Sanskrit literature. The rock edicts of Ashoka are another fine example of Pali language. 'Lalit-Vistara' and 'Mahavastu' are considered the finest pieces of Pali literature and the greatest writers Nagarjuna and Asvaghosa.

It is not only in Buddhist literature that we find the beginnings of Pali and Prakrit literature but in Jainism too its growth

and development was reflected. To write or copy a book is considered a pious act in Jainism. In early stages of its formation, the bulk of Jain literature was crammed up and the last man to do so was Bhadra Bahu and after his death, his disciple Sthulbhadra called a conference at Pataliputra for codifying the whole body of literature. After long and protracted deliberations, the whole body of literature was divided into twelve Asangas, twelve up-Asangas, ten Prakiranas, six chheda shastras and six mool shastras. Jain literature laid emphasis on rigid code of conduct, stern discipline and rigorous moral outlook. The Jain muni is expected to devote his life for non-violence and help to those who are in need of it. Like Buddhism, Jainism also found itself divided into two camps on the question of interpreting Mahavir's teachings, while Svetambar Jains agreed to abide by the decisions of the Pataliputra conference, Digambar Jains refused to accept the authority of Asangas and developed their own Vedas, up-Vedas and Dhammashastras.

With the passage of time Pali literature lost its appeal and what came after it is considered the very best in the whole body of world literature—the classical Sanskrit.

Classical Sanskrit literature

The writing of Ashtadhyayi by Panini and the addition of an erudite commentary by Patanjali marked the beginnings of classical Sanskrit language and literature. The old concepts of literature were altogether revolutionised. In the wake of widespread cultural renaissance the very basis of literature was so changed that it supplemented the process of reformation. This changed outlook is reflected in the writings of Asvaghosa. He wrote 'Saundarika' and 'Buddhacharita'. The latter has gone down in the history of Sanskrit literature as an all-time masterpiece. Edwin Arnold has described it as an immortal song of India. It also signalled the writing of dramas, a technique which later assumed considerable importance. Bhasa appeared on the literary horizon after Asvaghosa and wrote 'Svapnavasavdutta' and 'Charudutta'. The dramas of Bhasa are filled with excellent characterisation, thrilling suspense and superb treatment of the plot. This style was further developed by Shudraka who gave a new deal to the low and subdued characters like villains and thieves. His 'Mrichhakatika' presents fascinating study of contemporary life and culture. These and other early

writings set the stage for the emergence of classical writers who dazzled the course of Sanskrit literature with excellent productions which became great masterpieces of literature.

The stage having been set, then appeared the master performer who imparted such lustre to the whole body of literature that today he is undisputedly recognised Kavi-Kul-Guru and the greatest dramatist the world has ever produced. Kalidas wrote four poetical works—'Rtusamhar', 'Meghdoot', 'Kumarsambhava' and 'Raghuvamsa' which take the reader to a world of 'fantastical imagination where he moves and enjoys the beauties of nature and roams the heights of Himalayas, moves with the swaying clouds and enjoys the divine music of the celestial maids. Thus if the poetry of Kalidas weaves a web of dreamy world, his dramas provide excellent study of human nature and worldly ways. Kalidas is master of both. He wrote three dramas entitled 'Malvikagnimitra', 'Vikramourvasi' and 'Abhigyanashakuntalam'. Judged from the standard of plot construction, characterisation, figures of speech, theme, dialogues, setting, execution and detail the dramas of Kalidas are unsurpassable by anything of their kind and if anyone comes nearer to him it is only Shakespeare. Goethe has rightly paid the following glowing tribute to Kalidas :

Wouldest thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole name
combine

I name thee, O Shakuntala, and all at once is said.

When Kalidas laid his pen the best in Sanskrit literature had already been said and achieved. After him Visakhdutta and Bharvi appeared. Their names are associated with the golden prime of India. Bharvi wrote 'Kiratarjuniya' and 'Devichandraguptam'. The dramas of Visakhdutta provide us with an insight into the diplomatic aspects and contemporary statecraft. Short story writing made its advent with 'Brihadkatha' by Gunadhyayi and 'Panchtantra' by Vishnusharman. Panchtantra is replete with numerous stories of practical wisdom. These stories have been translated into various languages of the world and are read with reverence for the wisdom of India.

The decline and fall of political power makes definite impact on the writing of classical literature but fortunately for us the traditional cultural consciousness did not disappear, instead it continued

to prosper in one or the other form. When Harshavardhana sat over the throne of northern India he took to the patronage of art and literature. As a matter of fact, in the best tradition of Indian kings he himself was a gifted writer. He wrote 'Naganand', 'Ratnavali' and 'Priyadarshika'. He patronised Bana who wrote 'Kadambari' and 'Harshacharita'. He was the first writer to use prose and subsequently Dandin followed him and wrote 'Daskumarcharita'. But the finest piece of prose literature was written by Subandhu, entitled 'Vasavdutta'. It is a fine example of Sanskrit prose. Although prose writing was making big headway yet poetry was not altogether forgotten. Bhrtrihari wrote 'Vairagya-Sringar Satakas' in rhetoric device. Kumardas wrote 'Sishupalbadh' and Bhavbhuti produced three masterpieces of Sanskrit literature, viz., 'Malti-madhav', 'Uttaramcharit' and 'Mahavircharit'. The excellent balance between comedy and tragedy, pathos with humour and sentiment with expression renders Bhavbhuti's dramas unique both in treatment and style.

As a result of political upheavals, contemporary literature was also affected due to which it tended to become over-ornate and artificial. The natural spontaneity, forceful appeal and smooth flow of genius was not there. However, in spite of this all-out darkness there were moments when a bright ray of hope appeared on the horizon, and one such moment was the appearance of Kalhan, in Kashmir. He wrote 'Rajtarangini' or the 'River of Kings'. Another work of similar nature was 'Gaudvaho' written by Vakpatiraj Munja. Rajshekhar was another significant writer. At the close of classical age, appeared the writings of Somdev and Jaidev, the former wrote 'Kathasaritsagar' and the latter wrote 'Git Govind' which have gone down in Indian history and culture as immortal storehouse and saga of the Bhakti movement.

Unfortunately, after such brilliant display of genius, Sanskrit lost its originality in favour of incoherent subtleties of grammar and rhetorics. But before that, if Sanskrit literature had achieved olympian heights of philosophy, it had also dealt with exceptional dexterity the material aspects of life. The simplicity of diction and originality of thought was maintained whether it was intricate handling of scientific subjects or treatment of tragedy in a comedy. If on the one hand it was able to evolve the grammar of Panini and Patanjali it also came forward with the simplified grammar of Dwarasrayi and Kantantra. As a matter of fact Sanskrit became

the media of secular uprising, thereby lifting the lot of the people from the abyss of orthodoxy and superstition.

With the introduction of Islamic culture a new language and literature had been introduced to replace Sanskrit which had gradually lost its hold. However it did not disappear altogether and surprisingly survived the Muslim rule for six centuries and died in the very first year of British rule. In spite of ups and downs Sanskrit continues to occupy an important place in the history of world literature and today when there is an increased search for new values, Sanskrit is again being probed with new expectations and aspirations.

Growth and advent of vernacular literature

The transition from Sanskrit to vernacular was not achieved merely by a stroke of pen, instead, it was worked out in the manner Pali and Prakrit were evolved out of classical Sanskrit. The first languages to break away from Sanskrit were Tamil and Telugu. The switchover took place under the patronage of Pandava kings who secured the same with the help of Sangam writers. The most enterprising work of the Sangam writers was the compilation of an encyclopaedia which included considerable material on man, matter, ideals, arts, sciences, logic and philosophy. These works were titled 'Petthuaueppith' (ten collections), 'Ettuthkai' (eight collections) and 'Pandineukilkanabhee' (eighteen lyrical poems). It is remarkable that the encyclopaedists of South India preceded the modern encyclopaedists by centuries. Srinivas Shastri has rightly paid this tribute to the Sangam writers: "The Sangam writers were concrete, alive with the play of thought and these poems present a vivid picture of material civilisation. Apart from the intrinsic poetical, they are also an inexhaustible source book of early social history of the Tamil land."¹ As literature developed new concepts and ideologies were added to it.

The ever alert and imaginative mind of the writer had found new vistas of knowledge and the inquisitive mind of the readers was being supplied with new thought-currents. Under the patronage of Sangam writers, if Sanskrit was progressing satisfactorily, the Tamil literature 'emerged as a dawn in the literary history of South

1. *Indian Inheritance* : Bhavan's Book University.

India'. In this dawn, the most illustrious personality to appear on the horizon was Krishnadevraya.

With the writing of two epical works 'Silpapadikaram' and 'Manimekhlay' Tamil literature achieved a new apex. They have been compared with Ramayana and Mahabharata. Both the works abound in tales of foreign voyages and possess the sublimity of a work of art. Tamil literature received fresh impetus from the Nayanmars and Alvars who composed highly devotional songs which echo intense devotion and deep wisdom :

Should men live one hundred years as the Vedas say,
 One half will be wasted in sleep; the fifty remaining
 Will be likewise wasted
 In childhood, boyhood, sensuality, hunger, disease
and old age;
 O dweller in Sriranga temple ! I desire birth no more.
 —Tondardipodi (Tr by J.S.M. Hooper)

In this glorious tradition, Tiruvallur was the most acclaimed poet.

Advent of Hindi

The next language to break away from Sanskrit was Hindi which made rapid strides and soon assumed important place in the realm of literature. The earlier writer was Jagnayak. He wrote the war song of northern India—'Alhakhand'. Chandrabardai followed him with the writing of Prithvirajraso. Although Hindi literature made its advent with prose writing yet it was poetry which made the mark. As earliest heralds of poetry writing, Amir Khusrau and Vidyapati developed Dingal form of poetry writing which prominently displayed the exotic love sports of Radha-Krishna in most sonorous terms. The bhakta visualised his earthly yearnings in the love play of gods and goddesses. Kabir liberated poetry from this mannerism and installed it as a harbinger of new spiritual and intellectual awakening.

Early Bengali literature was given shape and form by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu whose devotional songs became very popular. However it was Kirtivas who gave firm footing to Bengali literature by his erudite translation of Ramayana and Mahabharata. The important contributors to Bengali literature were Chandidas, Vidyapati,

Thakur, Maladhar Basu and Srikar Nandi. It is significant that the Mussulman rulers of Bengal like Nusrat Shah, Paragal Khan, Chuti Ram, Giasuddin and Sultan Hussain Shah made earnest endeavours for the advancement of Bengali language and literature.

It is interesting to note that every form of literature made its appearance with devotional theme except Hindi which entered the literary field with a war song. Marathi literature made its advent with the devotional writings of Sant Gyaneswar, Namdev, Tukaram and Eknath. No cause was more dearer to these early reformers than the upliftment of the people's lot. They sought to awaken the masses against the gloom of misery and ignorance by intense devotion to the Supreme Being. They spoke in the language of the people and no intricate philosophy was involved in it. This trend was universal as can be seen from the writings of Harihar and Bukka in Gujarat, Guru Nanak in Punjab, Mirabai in Mewar and Madhav and Ballabhacharya in South. An age of intellectual ferment had broken when the mind of the people was being rocked with new discoveries of knowledge.

Introduction of Persian and advent of Urdu

The introduction of Islam brought in its wake the Persian language and literature in India which necessitated the Indians to learn the court language and in turn Muslims took to the learning of Sanskrit. The result of this mutual exchange was the advent of Hindi and Urdu. As a result of this mixing and mingling the age-old tenets of Hinduism and Islam were put in the melting pot and the net outcome was the advent of Sufism. The principal writers of this school were Amir Khusrau, Al-Beruni, Nazmuddin Hasan, Shams Shiraz Arif and Nizamuddin Aulia who 'was given the spiritual empire of India' in the words of Saikh Faridi. They made definite impact on the Bhakti movement which ultimately contributed to the flowering of many branched literature.

Flowering of many branched literature

While the country was receiving foreign culture, efforts for growth and development of indigenous culture were already in hand. In this movement for reformation, vernaculars played definite role. Each language had developed its own grammar and

metrics but Sanskrit was still accepted as mother of all languages and one language freely drew from the other. A writer of Hindi was as much appreciated in South India as a Rajasthani poet in Bengal. This broad outlook of the times helped in the flowering of many branched literature.

Hindi was now well set for the brilliant display of genius under Surdas and Tulsidas who revolutionised the entire Hindi writing and helped it in ushering in an era of immense poetic writing and literary profusion. Undeterred by his blindness, while Surdas excelled in describing the childhood sports of Lord Krishna and joyous events of Krishna's life in a manner as if the entire drama was being enacted before his very naked eyes, Tulsidas immortalised the legend of Rama and made available the wisdom of Vedas and scriptures in simplest terms.

Muslim writers also took to Hindi writing as can be seen from the writings of Malik Modammed Jayasi who wrote 'Padmawat' and Raskhan composed lyrics in praise of Lord Krishna. Abdul Rahim Khankhanah was a great patron of literature and himself a good writer.

After a brief spell of Bhakti, mannerism developed in Hindi literature and pen began to be wielded again for eulogising the exploits of patron king or for describing sexual aspect of life through exuberant use of figures of speech. The woes and torments of women's love held particular charm for the poet and the description often far exceeded limits of decency. Drawing their inspiration largely from the writings of Jaidev and Vidyapati they took the core and left the essence. The prominent writers of this style were Sunder, Keshav and Senapati but it was Behari who made the mark. He lived in the court of Jaipur kings. One critic has pertinently observed :

The lyrics of Behari are like the arrows of hunter
They look small but make deep wounds !

The muses of mannerism gradually lost hold of the poets' mind and as the political atmosphere changed the subcontinent seemed all set for the impending gloom. At that crucial period of history appeared Tripathi brothers who lifted the soul of literature from the stifling atmosphere of the courts and forged it as a means of national liberation. Bhushan was the most prominent amongst the new

writers and his voice called with inspiring fidelity 'the hour of doom for the Yavanas has struck'. He eulogised the work and deeds of Chhatrasal and Shivaji. The other writers who followed him were Ali Muhib Khan, Dev Dutta, Padmakar, Guru Govind Singh, Maharaj Bishwanath Singh and Girdhardas.

In Bengal, the works of Krishnadas Kaviraj, Brindabandas and Jayanand were being widely read and propagated. The Bhakti movement was given the shape of a cult and credo and Chaitanya philosophy was being followed by multitudes of people. Although Narhari Chakravarti and Trilochandas made Chaitanya philosophy highly readable for the masses but in spite of this the majority of literature was of translatory nature. The prominent translators were Mansa Devi, Chandi Devi, Kasiram Das and Mukundram Chakravarti. The principal writers of the time were occupied with the task of making the wisdom of Vedas available for the benefit of the people.

In Maharashtra Sant Tukaram's 'abhangas' stimulated devotional writing. The other prominent saint poets were Moropant, Eknath. Dasopant, Vaman and Ramdas. In Gujarat, the earliest saint poet was Arwa who is recognised as the starting point of modern Gujarati literature. He was followed by Ballabh, Mukund, Shivdas and Vishwanath. They gave birth to Garba school of writing. In south India, saint Purandardas and Tyagraja had become the household names and the devotional songs sung by them were reduced to writing. In harmony with the spirit of the times, Guru Govind Singh not only kindled the flame of national awakening but offered his people the Bible of Sikh religion and faith 'Granth Sahib' and 'Vichitra Natak'.

In the flowering of many branched literature the place of Persian is distinct. The Mughal kings were men of letters, therefore judicious exchange of cultural values took place as a result of which values of one literature were introduced into another. The prominent architects of this cultural exchange were Abul Fazal, Moola Daood, Badaoni, Abdul Rahim Khankhanah, Faizi, Nizamuddin, Birbal, Gang and Mulla-do-Pyaza. It is significant that Dara Sikoh took to the study of Sanskrit and translated as many as sixty-six Upanishads from Sanskrit into Persian. At this period of history while Persian was making significant progress Urdu was still in the formative stages. The only writers we know were Nuri Azampur, Saikh Sadi and Chandra Bhan. As a matter of fact the credit

for patronising Urdu goes to the Sultans of the South. Sultan Mohammed Kutub Shah was himself a gifted poet and other prominent writers were Ibra Nisati, Mohammed Nusrat, Sham Hashim and Wali of Aurangabad. They are accepted as fathers of modern Urdu.

As the years rolled by, literature showed signs of falling standards, increasing degeneration, lack of originality and dearth of dynamic spirit. Like their medieval predecessors, poets took to porno, showing increased interest in the love sports of Nayakas and Nayikas. The sensual earthiness occupied the mind of readers so much that they did not hesitate in describing the details of copulation. Instead of becoming the symbol of regeneration the pen began to forge the gutters for self-destruction. Now, nowhere one could find the illustrious genius of Tulsidas and Surdas. Not only literature but the whole body of culture was heading towards downfall. At such a critical moment of Indian history came the western impact which infused new life in the literature of India and led it towards new horizon. The mind of the people was lifted from the abyss of inactivity and set on the path of regeneration.

Age of resurgence

The introduction of western language and literature opened the eyes of Indians towards fantastic political, social, economic, scientific and technological discoveries that were taking place in the western world. The writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Shakespeare, Locke, Hobbes, Schopenhauer, Mill, Dante, Nietzsche and Karl Marx opened new vistas of knowledge for Indian readers and inspired them to search their own literature. Not only the spirit of western scientific experimentation and reasoning began to be applied to Indian literature but it also came to be realised that the deliverance of Indian mind does not merely lie in intense devotionism but in grasping the ideals of patriotism, nationalism and secularism which had long been forgotten. These inroads of western literature were decried by some and those who pursued study of foreign language and literature were denounced as outcasts. However, it was only newly westernised educated Indians who came forward with the plea of faith in the past, belief in the present and hope for the future. A new wave of resurgence had started sweeping the Indian mind.

Missionaries were pioneers in introducing western language and literature in India. They brought the printing machine too. The early pioneers were Marshman, Hallhead, Antony and Dr Ward. The existence of numerous superstitions and heresies provided sufficient material to the missionaries for decrying Hinduism as variegated zoo of castes and creeds. The Christian superiority was to be impressed on the Indian mind by undermining Hinduism. This inspired the Hindus to fathom the depths of Indian culture and present the very best about their religion and culture. In this direction, pioneering work was done by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Maharshi Debendranath Tagore. They emitted intellectual fire through their writings in the magazines of Brahmo Samaj. Sarat Chandra and Bankim added further fuel to the fire. They rung the curtain against various social evils and dedicated themselves for removing all that was corroding the mind of the people. If Sarat laid his finger on the evils of the society, Bankim signalled their end. Like Rousseau's writings, Bankim's too became the gospel truth for the revolutionaries. The greatest achievement of Bengali literature was Rabindranath Tagore who gave new lustre to the whole body of Bengali literature. These early writers were followed by Hemchandra, Biharlal, Chakravarti, Kamini Roy and Satyendranath Dutt.

In the field of Hindi literature the growth and development of prose style was a remarkable discovery. This transition from poetry to prose was achieved by Sadasukhlal, Insha Allah Khan, Lallu Lal, Sadal Mishra, Raja Shiv Sagar and Debkinandan Khatri. In the early stages of development the prose style was very poor but as time passed it ushered in an era of self-perpetuating progression. Raja Harish Chandra was the first significant writer who gave Hindi the status of a literary language by his creative writings. He was bold and sarcastic in his remarks particularly while pinpointing evils that prevailed in Hinduism. This bold approach was carried further by Balkrishna Bhatt and Pratap Narain Mishra. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi gave Hindi shape and form. He opened new vistas of knowledge for the budding writers and sharpened their pen by his erudite editing of the 'Saraswati' magazine. Another pillar of early Hindi literature was Babu Shyam Sundar Das who laid the foundation of Nagari Pracharini Sabha and edited a voluminous Hindi dictionary. Hindi was given academic literature by the Mishra Bandhus. What followed after the early writings can easily be termed as an age of creative writings when writers like Jagannathdas Ratnakar,

Munshi Premchand, Jai Shankar, Maithili Saran Gupta, Ayodhya Singh Harioudh, Nirala, Dinkar, Bachchan, Sumitranandan Pant and Mahadevi Verma appeared on the Hindi stage and revealed the soul of India.

Urdu found its place inside the royal Mughal courts at the tail end of Mughal empire when the grandeur and majesty of the Durbar had disappeared. In the court of Mohammed Shah Rangila, intellectualism had no place, instead muses of mannerism received high priority. The prominent writers of this school were Darda, Sauza, Sauda and Mir Taki but the master performer appeared during the reign of Bahadur Shah Zafar who himself was a gifted writer of Urdu. He was Ghalib. The pathetic plight of the emperor has never been made more appealing than in his own words :

Unfortunate is Zafar ! who could not find
Two yards of land for his burial.

Ghalib wielded his pen with remarkable dexterity for describing the charms of youth, torments of love, royal splendour and nature's beauty. Another writer to write unceasingly was Zauq. It fell to the lot of Nawabs of Rampur and Lucknow to patronise Urdu after the fall of Mughal empire. In the courtly atmosphere, poetry lost its touch with the masses and thus lost popular appeal. It was only after the appearance of Azad and Hali that Urdu became media of mass uprising. The development of prose style in Urdu was very late. The earliest writers being Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Hali and Maulvi. What ensued after their writings was definitely the dawn of a new literature, the chief instigators of which were Abdul Halim, Ratannath, Hafiz Jullundari, Josh Malihabadi and Akbar Allahabadi. In this renaissance movement the most influential figure was that of Iqbal. In the book of modern Urdu literature he forms a chapter in himself. He freed Urdu literature from medieval stigma and installed it as a dynamic language and literature.

While northern Indian literature was passing through resurgent waves, south Indian literature remained moribund and effete except few displays of genius here and there. This dangerous spell was broken in Maharashtra by B.G. Tilak who edited 'Maratha' and 'Kesari', the twin Marathi language newspapers which emitted such intellectual fire and brimstone that set ablaze age-old superstitions and British imperialism. So abounding was this impact that after

him a barrage of nascent literature flowed from the pen of Krishna Kalholkar, Achuta Rao Kalholkar, Mama Warerkar and many other writers.

The foundations of modern Gujarati literature were laid by Forbes. He also founded Gujarati Vernacular Society. In his pioneering works, he was actively assisted by Namdev Shankar. It was only due to their efforts that new vistas of knowledge began to be opened in Gujarat. A few years later K.M. Munshi began to give Gujarati literature shape and form. In the extreme south, the growth and development of nascent literature was very slow. For a long time, to an average south Indian reader, things beyond God's omnipotence were chimerical and transitory. Here again, as elsewhere, the dangerous spell was broken by the missionary writers who were subsequently followed by eminent scholars like Swaminath Shastri, Rajju Aiyar, C. Rajagopalachari, Srinivas Aiyangar, Srinivas Shastri and C.P. Brown. They launched vehement crusade against existing dogmas, misbeliefs and superstitions, thereby opening the age of intuitive realisation and scientific experimentation in the land of make-believe. In our own times, this search has become more explicit in the writings of Subramaniam Bharati.

As has already been said the emergence of resurgent literature was an immediate outcome of English language and western literature. It will, therefore, not be out of place to examine its introduction and the impact it made on Indian literature.

English language and Western literature in India

From political victory of this subcontinent sprang up the idea of cultural conquest through the introduction of English language and literature. The winners of political chicanery speculated upon the idea that even if British empire will end with the passage of time the cultural empire will continue. With this end in view, the East India Company decided to appoint a committee to examine the state of education in India and suggest constructive proposals for the introduction of English language and European education in India. The commission was headed by Lord Macaulay. Driven by an impulse to lay the foundations of English culture in India, he summarily rejected the claims of native languages in these words : "I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read trans-

lations of the most celebrated Sanskrit and Arabic works . . . I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of good European library was worth the whole of native literature of India and Arabia." With one stroke of pen, all existing claims of Sanskrit, Persian, Hindi, Urdu and other vernaculars were flouted and in their place English language and literature was imposed with the intention of producing such Indians who may be Indians by birth but Englishmen in work, deed and thought. To some extent, the expectations of the drafters of the report proved true but to the embarrassment of British rulers majority of the English educated began to wield this new medium for the liberation of Indian mind. The startling accounts of French revolution, gradual shift from monarchy to rule of law in Britain, Italian struggle for unification, German advance of arms and rise of Japan as Asian power inspired them to look into their own degradations. Thus the language which was to corrupt the mind of the people began to be mended as an instrument for national regeneration. To the embarrassment of the Britishers, the English educated became the leaders of freedom struggle. Thus the impact of English language and literature was double-faced : on the one hand foreign rulers were able to impose their language and literature; on the other hand Indians fully assimilated foreign language and literature and ultimately utilised it as an instrument for their deliverance from the clutches of foreign rule. It is significant that if intellectuals like Rabindranath Tagore, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Torudutt, Lala Hardayal, Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru and S. Radhakrishnan became bright luminaries of English literary world they were at the same time in the forefront of the Indian freedom struggle.

Today we are facing a dilemma : either to prolong the continuance of English language as a national language of India or divorce it straightaway as a foreign language. In my opinion both the outlooks are extremes since we cannot indefinitely bank on English because at one or the other time we will have to find an alternative. English may be permitted to continue as long as Hindi or any other language does not make itself suitable for assuming national role. In this case we will have to patronise a particular language so that it can shape and mould itself accordingly. We cannot suddenly decide that well from such and such date English will cease to be used.

Hey, whither you are

Close examination of the passage of Indian literature reveals that in harmony with the cultural efflorescence or decay literature also either rose on the high pedestal or fell to the depths of degeneration. In our own time, this process has been thus described by Firaq Gorakhpuri : "But the purblind fanatics of Hindi giving the Hindi literature a dangerously wrong momentum and direction killed or nearly killed with one stone all chances and opportunities of the would-be writers of Hindi, properly learning Urdu or English, thus creating a cultural deadlock or a cultural paralysis of more than one third of the Indian population. What should have been a new Indian renaissance thus degenerated into vulgarity." This criticism may be unpalatable to some Hindi fanatics, who wasted the beauty of a dynamic language in futile exercises of scholasticism and visionary ideas but it is true that the so-called advocates of modern literature have played havoc with the words and ideas. The matter has been allowed to be lost in vague philosophy, incoherent subtleties of language, incomprehensible words and meaningless dialogues.

This rigid attitude can be seen not only in Hindi but in other vernaculars also and what is worse is their dogmatic attitude towards one another in general and Hindi in particular. Their obstinacy to continue English and not to permit any other language has killed all chances of building a national language and on the other hand are Hindi fanatics who instead of developing Hindi want to thrust it on others. What is to be done in such circumstances ? The language claiming to become national language should create such literature which may be considered unsurpassable by anything of its kind and at the same time it should be receptive to the cause of vernaculars. The study of various vernaculars may be encouraged along with the claimant national language. It is creditable that some Hindi magazines are doing excellent work in this respect.

The role of a national language can be compared with the holy Ganges which not only embraces everything but purifies it also. Modern literature has yet to play this role of stripping itself of unhealthy contents and sinking them low on the bed.

Growth and Development of Indian Society

There is no unanimity of opinion amongst the sociologists about the process by which society moved from one stage to another except the accounts of ancient scriptures which give fantastic account of the advent and growth of society. Some sociologists believe that evolution of society took place with the cyclical movement of time. The theory is fatalistic, leaving everything to fate. Hob House has put forward his theory in these words : "Society is progressively advancing towards such desirable ends, as efficiency, freedom and mutuality of service, and in which each serves and participates."¹ This theory has been thus criticised by Malinowsky : "The theory of evolutionary anthropology was based primarily on the concept of survival since this allowed the student to reconstruct past stages from present-day conditions, the concept of survival, however, implies that a cultural arrangement can outlive its function . . . evolutionary enquiry should therefore be preceded by a functional analysis of culture."² Modern sociologists like MacIver believe that the growth and development of society depends on various factors like communal customs, differential communal institutions, sex associations, kinship, co-residence, matrimonial status and socio-religious interests. Robert Lowe calls these factors 'unifying agencies'. In order to ensure successful functioning of these factors it is necessary that there should be proper

1. P. 622, *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*—Vols 1 and 2.

2. *Ibid.*

administration, sound economy, educational environment and sense of social awareness.

In the light of about theories we can proceed to examine the growth and development of Indian society.

Growth of social organism in India

The growth and development of Indian society has been the result of a perfect system of social momentum. It liberally carried out the formula of many branched growth and functioning. Puranas narrate interesting stories about the growth of Indian society from one stage to another. In Manusmriti we get the exact idea about the Indian sociological evolution. Varnavyawastha is at the root of Indian society. The transition has been from varna to kula and kula to jati. Jati has been the core and essence of society. The ancient social thinker who meditated upon the problems of life struck upon the idea of kula; each member of a kula traced his origin from some ancient sage who was considered the progenitor of the clan. Each clan was given a gotra and the members of a gotra were bound by the rules of gotrachar. A number of gotras composed a jati. Jati symbolised the will and power of the society. The members of a jati had common rules regarding propriety, impropriety, marriage, funeral rituals, customs and other ceremonies. These principles were further elaborated by the rules of varnashramadharma. The functions of each jati were divided according to the intellectual capacity, physical fitness, economic drive and serviceability to the society. The members of one jati were differentiated from others by the nature of work they adopted. This concept has been thus elaborated by lawgiver Manu—

“He transcendental, in order to protect his creation assigned distinct duties to those born of mouth, arms, thighs and feet.

“Teaching and pursuing vedic studies, offering sacrifices and guiding those who wished to sacrifice gifts, these were assigned by him to the Brahmins.

“Protection of the people, gifts, sacrifice, study of the Vedas, non-attachment from the objects of the senses, these were ascribed to the Kshatriyas.

“The Shudras were assigned only one duty—service of other castes without the feeling of being subordinated.”

—Manusmriti, I, 87-91

The varnashramadharma was further supplemented by the system of ashramadharma. The average life span was calculated as hundred years and divided into four equal parts. In the first twenty-five years complete celibacy was to be observed (brahmacharya). A celibate was expected to study the scriptures and perfect various arts and sciences. After twenty-five years' celibacy a man was permitted to enter grahastashrama and enjoy all the earthly pleasures of marriage. In the third place, after enjoying worldly life a grahasta was expected to devote himself for social service and prepare himself for the next stage—sanyasa which called for renouncement of the world for the liberation of soul, mind and body. Thus each individual was to pursue the principles of dharma, artha, kama and moksha. A life of all artha (earning) but no dharma was considered as futile as any life of all kama (sex) and no moksha.

The social stratification was complete and scientific. It liberally carried out the principle of heterogeneity. As long as people reposed their faith in the varnashramadharma there was complete peace but as soon as the faith of the people was shaken, society began to degenerate; fear and grief became rampant, chaos widespread and disorder reigned supreme. Alarmed by these developments, the social reformers kept on introducing changes from time to time.

The growth and systematic progression of Indian society and the changes introduced thereafter have been examined in the subsequent pages.

The dawn of civilisation

Historical investigation reveals that the earliest settlers were those who settled on the banks of the Indus and the Ganges. They were perhaps the first members of a civilised society and their civilisation has been identified as Indus Valley civilisation. Life was quite orderly and disciplined in these early city states.

Due to ravages of time, these city states were destroyed and in due course of time their place was taken by more progressive Vedic civilisation.

Vedic society

The definite traces of Indian society go as far back as Vedic age, which has been subdivided into two stages, i.e., early Vedic age

and later Vedic age. In early Vedic age, religious and cultural ideas were taking shape. Life was calm and composed. People of different classes dedicated themselves to various arts, crafts and vocations assigned to them; but with the society becoming more and more complex, social stratification began to show signs of further complications. The relations between different communities became interlocked. The ancient rule of endogamy clashed with the existing practice of polyandry. The status of an issue born out of a marriage between a Brahmin and a Shudra presented varied and vexed problems. By now Brahmins had started becoming more status conscious and their example was emulated by more ambitious Kshatriyas. Lust for power proved far more attractive than loyalty towards the laid down principles. This unrest became more manifest in the subsequent years.

Era of great epics

After the close of Vedic age, race for power had become almost maddening. Power was sought by the Brahmins, Kshatriyas wanted to wield it, Vaishyas competed for it and even peace-loving Shudras envied it. This race for arms and power became extrovert when Parashuram threatened to free the land of Bharata from the clutches of Kshatriyas and on the other hand Kshatriyas challenged the so-called superiority of Brahmins under the aegis of Vishwamitra. The most remarkable feature of this age was the revolt of Shudras against Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Rama had to dissuade a Shudra from making study of scriptures and practise penance. Likewise, Dronacharya discouraged Eklavya from learning the art of war. The Brahmins and Kshatriyas were very prompt in curbing all attempts of holding power by other communities. This struggle for power is fully reflected in the Mahabharata and the shift of emphasis can very well be seen from the following passage—

“Truth, charity, forgiveness, good conduct; gentleness, austerity, and mercy, where these are seen, O king of serpents he is called Brahmana.

“If these marks exist in a Shudra and not twice born, the Shudra is not a Shudra, nor the Brahmana a Brahmana.”

—Mahabharata-II, Vanaparva,
CLXXX, 21 & 25

The marked difference between the attitudes of lawgiver Manu and the writer of Mahabharata shows the shift of emphasis. The whole concept had undergone considerable brain-washing. It came to be realised that the varna of a man was to be determined not by the proximity of birth but by the nature of work. It came to be realised that a man born in a Brahmin family is not to be necessarily recognised as a twice born unless his mental attributes are such. This new concept was thus propounded in *Srimadbhagvadgita*: "The duties of a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra are divided according to their nature of work and nature born qualities of peace, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, uprightness, knowledge, direct intuition, love for God and self-respect are the nature born qualities of Brahmin; of the Kshatriyas are bravery, energy, dexterity, fortitude and not fleeing in battle; protection of cows, agriculture, merchandise, business, industry and giving of gifts are the nature born qualities of Vaishyas; and the natural qualities of Shudras are consciousness in menial service, sacrifice and tolerance."¹

The increasing social imbalance precipitated political unrest which ultimately led to the epical wars of Ramayana and Mahabharata. Whatever may be the political implications of these wars but the net outcome was the emergence of the divine song '*Srimadbhagvadgita*' which propounded the theory of action in the face of seeming failure.

Age of Sutras

The age of Sutras was dominated by the writers of Dhammasastras. They further elucidated the process of social reformation and renovation. The ancient customs and traditions were given further reinterpretation. This shift of emphasis created many reactions—the growth of heterogeneous sects which relieved contemporary society of many evils was certainly one. What ensued after it was the age of reform.

Age of reforms

Sixth century B.C. was an age of intellectual ferment, religious upheaval and socio-political reforms. The leaders of this awakening

1. *Srimadbhagvadgita*, Chapter VIII, 41-45.

were Gautama and Mahavir. By showing the fire of knowledge to the dynamite of social unrest they set fire to existing heresies, social disorder, misinterpretation and dogmatism. The unfounded house of Brahmin superiority was set ablaze. In the wake of these upheavals a new social order took birth during the reign of Mauryas.

Society under Mauryas

The political confusion which followed since and after Alexander's invasion was set right by a boy of remarkable pluck and drive named Chandragupta Maurya. In his efforts, he was ably assisted by Kautilya. They found chaos and established order. It was Kautilya who gave to the society the idea of 'Aryabhava'. Megasthenes has explained this idea as imperial notion of common citizenship and universal brotherhood. Arrain writes that 'all Indians are free and none of them is slave'.

Classification of castes continued to exist and the highest ones were known as Brahmanas and Sramanas, the latter were probably Buddhists. Strabo points out that they enjoyed highest respect from all other castes. The next caste was known as Kshatriyas who enjoyed complete peace and order as long as there was peace and order but in case of war they had to bear the brunt. The agriculturists formed the bulk of the society as Megasthenes writes : "There is a vocation by the rules of the caste, that they are pursuing peacefully within the sight of contending armies." There is a long passage in Abhidhammakosha Vyakhya which describes contemporary social framework in these words : "The philosophers while destroying the opinion of their adversaries must carefully respect the opinion and principles of logic which are useful to all just as kings while destroying the soldiers of their enemies respect the field labourer who is the common help of both the enemies." The common people including artisans, cultivators and traders were exempt from military service and lived in villages, seldom going to town.

It is remarkable that the edicts of Ashoka do not make any reference about the caste system or any other form of social stratification and even if there is any indication about the caste they do not mention Vaishyas and Shudras. But what we gather from other sources, it is learnt that the Shudras had accumulated considerable

money from trade and industry. They lavishly spent it on the construction of temples, rest houses, lakes, gardens and other charitable objects. The head of the trade community was considered amongst the seven jewels of the state. Living by the toil of their hands, Shudras had also made considerable advance and their position was safe and secure in the society. Chandalas, amongst the Shudras, have been referred as lowest by the Pali texts. The relations between different castes have been thus explained by Majjhimnikaya: "A fool should he come into one of the low castes chandalas, nishads, vanas, rathkaras and pakkusas, and he is born to a life of vagrancy, want and penury, scarcely getting food and drink for his stomach or clothes to his back. A wise man should he become a human being after a lapse of long time, he comes into one of the high stocks kshatriyas, brahmanas and gahapatis; he is reborn to a life of affluence, riches and wealth with abundance of gold and silver coins, and with abounding substance and possession." This shift of emphasis had definite impact on the rules of exogamy and endogamy. Although society was patriarchal yet ladies were respected inside the house and outside in the society.

Maurya society was an affluent society. Although Kshatriyas had considerably increased their power, Brahmanas still continued to occupy important places. When Ashoka decided to shed the coat of arms in preference to 'Dhamma' the prestige and power of Kshatriyas received a serious setback and ultimately Brahmanas wrested power from the Kshatriyas under the leadership of Pushyamitra Sunga. Inexperienced in running the government as the Brahmins were, they failed to maintain law and order and could not defend the borders. Soon they found the work beyond their capacity and ultimately the royal diadem slipped from their hands and fell into the lap of Kushanas who were knocking at the doors of India at that time of history.

As long as political fortunes continued to shift from one hand to another, society remained under constant confusion and misrule to which order was restored only by the imperial Guptas.

The golden prime of India

The imperial Guptas provided that sense of security which was necessary for the growth and maintenance of a healthy society.

The tents had been struck and the great caravan of society was once more on the move towards safety, security and prosperity. For three privileged centuries, Indian society enjoyed complete peace and order and witnessed what is described by the historians as the golden prime of India.

Towards the close of sixth century, the clouds of war had started gathering over the Indian horizon and finally they burst when Hunas invaded India. The Huna invaders were barbarians of the worst type who ravaged to the ground whatever fell in their way. Fortunately enough, they came like hurricanes and disappeared likewise but left in their wake complete disorder and confusion.

Breakdown of social order

The whole nation had sunk to lowest ebb and to make the situation worse came the lancers from the Arab world simply to loot and plunder but emboldened by their successes decided to settle down in India. This added further confusion to the existing chaos. The Indian people tightened the rigours of caste in order to prevent any corrupting influence of Islam but on the other hand Islam was quick enough in taking advantage of the situation by taking the lowly and subdued under the wings of Islam. Alarmed by the large scale conversions to Islam Hindu leaders took to reformation which ultimately led to the task of social reconstruction.

Age of social reconstruction

Sankaracharya inaugurated the age of social reconstruction by decrying the narrow outlook of contemporary society and called upon the social reformers to shed their differences and dedicate themselves heart and soul for rebuilding the Indian society and improving the lot of suffering masses. So astounding was the impact of his call that leaders from every nook and corner of India took to the task of reformation which ultimately paved the way to the establishment of a new society. In this new society Kabir had a distinguished place. He called upon the people—

Nobody asks the caste or creed
He who has faith in god is god's.

This call sounded death-knell for the orthodox and narrow minded priests. He held that there was hardly any difference between the Hindus and Mussulmans and even if there was any it was only due to the narrow outlook of Imams and Pandits. Cementing the ground between the two communities he paved the way for their meeting and merging. Even marriage relations between the two communities had become common. This social exchange between the two became more closer during the reign of the Mughals.

Society enjoyed complete peace and order according to the principles of natural justice as long as Pandits and Ulemas were not permitted to interfere with the imperial policy. For three centuries there was complete peace and order but then came the fanatic Aurangzeb who disrupted the entire fabric. His policies sowed the seeds of dissension and distrust between the two communities. Taking advantage of the existing discord, foreigners were able to settle themselves and impose their culture because "Indian culture in particular and society in general had become almost moribund, decadent and effete. But on the whole it seemed that a period dawned marked by the anarchy which gave European adventure its chance, increasing torpor of its creative spirit in religion, art, science and philosophy and intellectual knowledge had long been dead or petrified into a mere scholastic pedanticism, all pointing to the torpor of setting energy." Truly 'India was conquered in a fit of unconsciousness'.

Social awakening

Rising from deep slumber, Indians suddenly rose in revolt in 1857 but unfortunately by then it was too late. After the failure of mutiny, educated Indians began to realise that what was needed was "waning and dying of old forms to make way for new, but if we will that it should be so, a greater and more perfect creation ... our failure is a preparation for success. Our mights carry in them the secret of a greater dawn."¹ The dawn started with the launching of reformatory movements, the forerunner of this dawn was Brahmo Samaj. The Samaj stood for loosening the rigours of caste so that others could feel the pulse of Hindu society. These ideals of the Samaj were incorporated in the philosophy of Arya Samaj which.

1. *Indian Culture Through the Ages* : Mohanlal Vidyarthi.

opened the gates of Hinduism for all irrespective of their birth and background. Dayanand Saraswati explained that there was one God who could be easily realised by all faithful irrespective of their birth. Thus the impact of western education and society instilled a new life in the dead and extinct bones of society.

A new wave of awakening had arisen in the mind of Indians and the same was being fanned by the illustrious leaders of society like Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi broke the barriers of caste which were held taut round the neck of Hinduism. Some critics have misinterpreted the message of Gandhiji as an effort to bring down the higher ups. As a matter of fact what he intended was to lift the poor and lowly and bring them on par with the higher ups so that there may not be any 'oppressor' and the 'oppressed'. Those who misinterpreted his message have done much damage to the society without realising that "the breakdown of a huge and long-standing social organisation may well lead to a complete disruption of social life, resulting in incohesion, mass suffering and development of abnormalities in individual behaviour, unless some other social structure, more suited to the times and genius of the people, takes its place."¹ The result of such unrestrained and foolish fiddling with the ancient order has been "we drift, not knowing whither we are flowing. The younger generation has no standards left, nothing to divert thinking or control their action."² This dangerous situation has arisen because we never gave any thought to the idea of providing some lasting structure to the society which may be more suited to the modern age; instead all these years we were busy in striking at the roots of an institution which withstood the test of time. We never bothered to remember that all brilliant periods in history have been where we have functioned with natural division of labour since this "gives a man", in the words of Lord Meston, "whatever his station, a society in which he can be at home even when he is amongst the strangers, for the poor man, it seems as a club, as a trade union, and a mutual benevolent society all rolled into one . . . and in the moral sphere that everyman lives content with that place which destiny has allotted to him, uncomplainingly does his best."

1. *The Culture of India* : C.C. Dutt.

2. P. 243, *The Discovery of India* : Jawaharlal Nehru.

The dilemma

The dilemma before us is that how we can provide permanent and lasting edifice to the contemporary society. The present state of society is far from satisfactory since it does not provide a man his respectful place according to his status and work, certainty of employment and social security. For many of us life loses its meaning before we are introduced into it and this alone can be counted as one of the reasons for high rate of suicide. The social harmony has become completely disrupted. An analysis of police cases shows that 75% of them are caused due to caste or communal background. How has this happened? Who is responsible for it? These are some of the pertinent questions which may rack sociologist's mind. In my opinion, the cause of the present malady can be found in our own destructive activities against the ancient social order. The course of a purely social and reformatory movement was unwittingly changed into a communal movement.

In order to rebuild our society, we should build it from a new standpoint and make it more suited to the genius of the people and the spirit of the times. This can be done by reconsidering the ancient system of varnashramadharma which appears and reappears before us in many forms. Indian society does not require any 'patterns of society' or some foreign 'ism'. Indian society requires that institution which has been sanctioned by tradition, backed by history and practised by the people. The new society must assure the position of a member not by the proximity of birth but by the nature of work he takes up for his profession, vocation and livelihood.

Aspects of Political Culture

Culture is built, shaped, moulded and formed through individual efforts but for its proper growth and development, protection and encouragement by the established government of the country is necessary and where such encouragement is lacking "there is no place for industry . . . no arts, no letters, no society and what is worse of all, continued fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."¹ None of us would like to see such a state of affairs. In the formative stages of society such state of affairs existed but as society advanced men of wisdom and political farsight struck at the idea of organising such an institution which may in course of time provide internal peace and external security. This institution came to be recognised as 'government' irrespective of the form it may assume. This variation in form was alone responsible for the rise and fall of culture at a particular period of history.

In order to achieve maximum benefit from the existing form of government, human mind has always speculated upon the idea of formulating that form of government which may provide the same to its subjects in minimum time. This search led to the development of a separate subject of study which is known as political science.

Political Science in India

It has been pointed out by some writers that "another funda-

1. Hobbes.

mental feature of Indian traditional culture has been its neglect of what might be called the science of society, and more specially the art of government."¹ On the contrary, study and writing of political science has always formed an important branch of Indian literature. The earliest book on the subject was probably Aitareya Brahmana which makes a reference about as many as eight forms of government, viz., Samrajya, bhojya, swarajya, parmeshidhirajya, maharajya, adhipalayanani, samanpasiyat and sevasomasarshya. The idea of kingship was predominant in those days as Brihaspati says: "Anarchy becomes rampant if there is no king to rule over the land and exercise authority over the head of the people." Manu, the lawgiver, who gave India the divine theory of kings wrote an interesting treatise on the subject entitled "Manusmriti". Besides these, there are numerous other books which deal in part or in whole about the science of government, the most prominent being Ramayana and Mahabharata which make extensive references to the ancient science of polity. The ideal of kingship has been best portrayed in the character of Rama. According to the writer of Sukranitisar 'there is said to be Arthashastra in which instruction about the conduct of the kings and the like is given without coming in conflict with the Shruti and Smriti and in which the acquisition of the wealth is taught with great skill'. This science was further elaborated in Kamandikiya Nitisara, Parasar Smriti and Yajnavalkya Smriti. These texts dealt with the idea of kingship, powers to be entrusted to him, organisation of different organs of society and functions of different officials. The finest treatise on the subject was written by Kautilya. Some writers have criticised his Arthashastra for promoting 'Machiavellian tactics' but such criticism 'is more remarkable for the scintillating phrases used than any substantial purport of history'.

It is interesting to note that the theme of two Sanskrit dramas 'Devichandraguptam' and 'Mudrarakshasa' written by Vishnugupta is entirely statecraft and diplomacy. Equally great work on the subject is 'Panchtantra' written by Vishnusharma, wherein, the art of administering the people and organising the affairs of state has been skilfully explained through numerous stories which have been woven most dexterously. Dandin's 'Daskumarcharita' is another significant book on the subject. The theories propounded

1. P. 48, *A Short History of India and Pakistan*: Percival Spear.

by ancient books have been best analysed by Badri Shah Thulgharia in his book entitled 'Deshik-Shastra'. The learned writer has divided ancient forms of government into ten heads, namely, brahma, arsha, prajapatya, deva, asura, yaksa, raksasa, paisach, and danava. The first five forms of government have been designated as human and practicable while the latter five have been characterised as sub-human and hence impracticable. The sense of patriotism warranted that the highest form of parrajya or foreign rule was worst when compared with the worst form of swarajya. The basic philosophies propounded by ancient books on polity can be summarised thus—

- (a) Maintenance and preservation of law and order.
- (b) Inculcating a sense of mutual confidence between the ruler and the ruled.
- (c) To lay down the explicit principles of policy and ensure their execution.
- (d) The ruler must be strong enough to ensure internal peace and external security.
- (e) Ensuring universal contentment so as to ensure faith in the established government.

In the light of the above principles on ancient polity propounded by them we proceed to examine the impact made by them on the course of Indian history.

Evolution of political institutions in India

According to B.G. Gokhale "the fundamental evolution was from a tribal nation to a geographical state, which in turn evolved into an imperial state". The formative stages were kula, gotra, jati and varna. A number of identical clans were united under one pivotal unit which was to 'repress by the threat and use of force any violation of the rights of personal freedom and property; to enforce the practice of the peoples on traditional customs and usages and to take serious view of the dharma'.¹ A faint semblance of these early states can be seen in the organisation and

1. P. 6, *The Indian Inheritance*, Vol III : Bhavan's Book University.

functioning of tribal states of Assam, Madhya Pradesh and South India. One political state was linked with another more out of political necessity than any other substantial purport. Some of these early states made rapid strides and subsequently developed into independent city states of larger kingdoms, traces of which can be found in the early civilisations of Mohenjodaro, Harappa and Lothal. Although we lack epigraphic record on the score, however archaeological excavations throw sufficient light on the matter.

Definite signs of an organised form of government can be traced only after the Aryans had settled over the Gangetic plains.

Aryan migration

The coming of the Aryans signalled the end of one era and the beginning of another in which new concepts and ideologies had started occupying the mind of the people and significantly the principle of heterogeneity became dominant in the functioning of the government. Family became the centre of all activity. A number of families constituted a grama which was headed by gramani. A nucleus of gramas was called vis and it was headed by vispati. Janpad was constituted out of a composition of one or more vis. The head of a janpad was known as gopa. The gopa organised his kingdom with the help of a purohit and council of ministers which was responsible to the sabha for all activities of the government. Each janpad continued to live in peace and harmony for considerable time but as society advanced the ambition of kings swelled which ultimately led them to take up arms against one another. More ambition meant more administrative complications and officialdom. The new officers were senapati, bhagduga, satpati and samgrahati. The ideal of kingship had also received a new interpretation. The king came to be recognised as God dwelling on earth and due to this divine lineage transcendental qualities began to be ascribed to him. In the words of Brihaspati, the aspiring kings should heed the following questions: 'Whatever dharma we see in the world is only due to the king. When the king tries to escape from the morality he cannot restore peace and tranquillity . . . if the king will cease to look after the welfare of the public there will be chaos in the world and in a moment the world will be ruined . . . therefore, the gods have created the king

as the protector of the public.' The holding of royal sceptre and mitre was no ordinary job since it required courage, fortitude, devotion, dedication, selfless service and administrative acumen. Yajnavalkya laid down following qualities for a king: 'The king must be great, courageous, philanthropist, reverent, keeper of aged, compassionate, patient, of noble lineage, truthful, divine, precise, intellectual, religious minded, not of desolute habits, learned, brave, firm and resolute. He must be shrewd in the concealment of wealth, conversant in metaphysics, politics, economics and vedas.' A king with so many qualities is bound never to fail and even if there was any dereliction of duty the representative house of the people designated 'Sabha' took firm stand. This alarming sense of alertness guaranteed the rights of the people and consequently ensured political stability.

The cornerstone of Aryan democracy was the village. Rise of monarchy hardly affected its systematic functioning. Gramani, the village headman, was the source of all power. All levers of village administration were in his hands. The village administration was neatly woven with the vis and janpad. The entire system of ancient administration has been thus described by Sri Aurobindo: "The noble people living in the villages, mostly on agriculture, formed in the total a single, religious, social, military and political body governing itself in its assembly, samiti, under the leadership of the king, as yet without any other separation of functions or class divisions of labour." The system of varnashramadharma was observed along with the principles of dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Empires rose and fell, wars were won and lost, invaders came and went away but the majority of the villages remained unaffected. India has lived and died in the villages but in the cities it has been bartered and sold. If we want to make India secure against internal decay and external attack, we must start from the villages.

The peace and prosperity of the janpads did not last long and soon it was followed by an age of imperialism.

Age of Imperialism

The ideals which were gathering sails during the later vedic age gained momentum during epical period. The king had increased his power considerably and had started assuming the proud

titles of 'Rajadhiraja' and 'Maharajadhiraja'. Their exploits began to be eulogised by the court poets in high flown metaphorical language. The best and most amazing is the account about the god king Rama. The victory of Rama over Ravana was of divine over helly and false. The ideal of kingship has been best portrayed in the character of Rama as divine, moderate, energetic, forceful, youthful, flamboyant, patient, compassionate, reformer, firm, devoted, determined, of noble lineage, farsighted, truthful, philanthropist, courageous and full of humility towards the humble and aged. Another god king was Krishna—a scion of Yodheya tribe. What he preached at the battlefield of Mahabharata has become the gospel truth of millions of people and electrifies the mind of the reader with such practical wisdom as 'do your duty and leave the results unto me'.

The war of Mahabharata was the culmination of that process which had started with the war of ten kings, it also signalled the end of imperialistic wars and inaugurated an epoch of democratic rule.

Age of Republics

What happened after the war of Mahabharata is known only in piecemeal. The historians have identified it as the age of Sutras. During this period, the great empires were a fading phenomenon and their place was being taken by republican states out of which sixteen rose into prominence, viz., Kasi, Kosala, Magadha, Kuru, Anga, Avanti, Gandhar, Vajji, Vaisali, Vamsa, Matsya and Kam-buja. Jatakas make numerous references about their functioning. The members met in a place called Santhagara. The people's representatives were elected in open assembly. The elected representatives selected a gopa who subsequently became king and ruled the country with the help of a council of ministers. The administration of justice was the concern of an independent branch which was headed by the king himself as the highest court of appeal. A citizen was recognized not by the bundle of rights he held but the onus of duties he owed. The salient features of these ancient republics have been thus described by Thompson : "The genius of the people for the corporate action expressed itself in a variety of self-governing institutions with highly developed constitution, rules of procedure, and machinery of administration which challenge comparison with

modern parliamentary institutions. Reading of the election rules of these bodies, the division of villages and districts into electoral units, their rules of debate and standing orders for the conduct of the business and maintenance of order in debate, and their committee system, one might wonder whether many standing orders of the House of Commons and of the London County Council are not derived from the regulations of the ancient local bodies, ecclesiastical councils and village assemblies of India."¹ It is equally remarkable that Mahavir and Buddha came from these republics. Out of these numerous janpads Magadha was making rapid strides. Alarmed by these imperialistic developments, Buddha advised : 'As long as the republican states and institutions maintain their purity and vigour they will remain immune from invincible arms of all powerful Magadhan ascendancy.' The arms of Magadha had become unchallengeable !

Magadhan ascendancy

Emboldened with each success, the arms of Magadha crossed frontier after frontier and soon began to swallow the weaker links in the contemporary polity. Political scene was changing with altering pace. King Udayana carried his arms far and wide and after conquering Vatsa he secured his position by entering into matrimonial alliance with the kingdom. King Prasenjit of Kosala who was able to carry his arms even to South India settled his problems with the kingdom of Magadha by entering into matrimonial alliance and thus 'the rising power of Kosala was soon frustrated by another power that arose in the fastness of Bihar'. The hero of these early Magadhan exploits was Bimbsar. He sat over the throne of Magadha in c. 545 B.C. His rise to power has been thus characterised : "Partly by diplomacy and partly by war, Bimbsar expanded the Magadhan domination in all directions and landed Magadha in that career of conquest and aggrandisement which ended only when Ashoka sheathed his sword after the conquest of Kalinga."² Bimbsar was murdered by his own son Ajatsatru who was a military adventurer of the worst type. With ridiculous monstrosity he overturned one state after another. While annexing territories, he hardly paid any attention to the reorganisation of

1. P. 153, *The Legacy of India* : Thompson and Garret.

2. P. 74, *The Early History of India* : N.N. Ghose.

the states. Consequently, the entire empire fell after him like a house of cards and thus ended one crowded page in the history of India leaving in its trail the story of human caprice and intransigence.

Nandas remained on the political horizon of India for nine generations. They were peaceful kings and in spite of the fact that foreign invasion was looming large over the horizon of India they hardly did anything to stop it. This dull lull was broken by a boy of remarkable pluck named Chandragupta Maurya who was ably assisted and counselled by a brahmin named Chanakya who is also known as Kautilya. He organised Maurya empire on the basis of the principles enunciated in his scholarly treatise entitled *Arthashastra*.

Age of Arthashastra

The government of India under the Mauryas was absolute monarchy in the political and legal sense of the term, nevertheless, autocracy in India was much more limited than the so-called democracies of the west. Prompt dispatch of business, accessibility to the subjects and quick administration of justice were treated as paramount virtues. *Arthashastra* emphasised 'whatever pleases himself the king shall not consider as good'. The king was assisted by a strong and balanced cabinet called *mantriparishad*. *Mantrin* was head of the cabinet and he was assisted by *mukhas*, *purushas*, *yutas* and *lipikars*. Greek writers have made reference of numerous officers called *agronomoi*, *astynomoi* (city commissioners) and military officers. Other sources make mention about *mahapatra*, *yukta*, *purohit*, *yuvraja* and *senapati*. The officials worked according to the wishes of the people. The king administered justice as the fountain of justice with judicious approach. *Rajjukas* and *mahamatras* assisted him. The criminal law laid emphasis on punitive and retributive punishment. Severity of punitive punishment was relaxed by Ashoka when 'granting three days grace to the men who have already been sentenced and judged'. The administration of justice aimed at helping the poor and the afflicted. The royal exchequer maintained large number of poor, artisans, brahmins, *sramanas*, philosophers and herdsmen. The idea behind Mauryan administration was that 'he who is tied up in administration will not rise up; but one should advance and march on'. The king

treated his people like a nurse who takes care of the child entrusted to her. The king held such generous ideas : "All men are my children and on behalf of my own children I desire that they may be provided with complete welfare and happiness both in this world and the next, the same I desire for all my men." These paternal ideas were repeatedly emphasised in other rock edicts. The king was available to the public at all hours of the day and for this purpose *prativedikas* were appointed. With such benign principles of policy, the Maurya king was more representative of his people than any modern assembly can boast of.

Particular emphasis was laid on the proper realisation of revenue from various sources since the very functioning of the government depended on it. The major portion of revenue was realised from a tax called *bhaga* and *bali*, *bhaga* was the king's share of the soil and *bali* has been explained as extra impost levied on special tracts. *Samhatri* and *samdhatri* were two highly placed revenue officials of revenue department. Taxes were also imposed for import, export and trading of goods. Then there were various residential taxes. Cases of default were met with fines and punishment.

The basic principles governing the Maurya administration can be thus summarised :

- (i) To settle the fundamental principles on which the king wanted his government to be based.
- (ii) The subjects of public utility were directly put under the imperial concern.
- (iii) Public morality was guided by the king.
- (iv) Officers were appointed to supervise and regulate the administration.
- (v) The king was to make periodical tours.

These paternal ideals were vigorously pursued and practised but as soon as the mantle of strong government fell from the Mauryan empire after the death of Ashoka the entire fabric broke loose. Pushyamitra Sung murdered Dasrath and ascended the throne himself. The military coup did not last long and soon Yu-Tshi nomads from central India defeated the local kings and established Kushan rule over India. In the line of Kushan rulers, the greatest was Kanishka, who tried to emulate the example of Ashoka and thus left unmistakable imprint of his personality over Indian history

and culture.

Order was restored to existing political confusion by the Guptas.

Imperial Guptas

The prosperity and stability of a government depends on the ideals which the government of the time chooses and in this respect the Gupta administration was based on the benign principles of ancient Indian political science and generous fundamental principles of policy like insurance against foreign invasion, curb internal disorder, strengthen internal economy and promote moral, religious, spiritual and cultural standards so that social security and clean administration could be secured.

The Gupta kings were imperialists in the true sense of the word. Their imperialistic ventures sounded death-knell for the weaker links in Indian polity as Dr Jayaswal points out : "Samudragupta, like Alexander, killed the free spirit of the country. He destroyed the Malavas and Yodheyas, who were nursery of freedom and others of their class." This contention of the learned historian has been refuted by another historian who holds that the end of these republican states came through their own intransigence. However, there is no denying the fact that the Guptas gave the last nail in the coffin. The Gupta kings have often been compared with the dignified and exalted position of the God kings like Indra, Kubera, Yama, Varuna and Agni. They have been equalled with the presiding deities of the four quarters. The king has been considered the incomprehensible being—a god dwelling on earth who is the cause of creation and destruction. He was a mortal only in the sense that he had descended on earth for performing worldly duties. The contemporary works eulogise the king as 'Prithviballabh' which means 'possesses inner soul provided by the inclination or acquaintance of debts and obligations, and is occupied with the welfare of all mankind'. The Chinese travellers have observed about Gupta kings : "The Gupta kings are doughty fighters and lovers of art and the king normally held all levers and handles which worked the government machinery in their hand." The Gupta rulers were guided by the idea 'that a good king should be careful in winning popularity amongst his subjects by respecting their wishes and promoting their welfare'.

The king was assisted by a council of ministers, because 'single

wheel could not move'. The important ministers were mantrin (confidential advisor) and aksapatalidhikrita (minister incharge of records). The other two important officials were mahabaladhikrita (the inspector general of police) and mahadandanayaka or chief justice. These ministers and high officials were assisted by departmental amatyas and sachivas. In all matters of general interest, decision was taken by the minister concerned in consultation with the king or by the departmental heads after having ensured public opinion. The important heads of departments were pratiharas, mahapratiharas, mahapradhan, sarbhadhikaran, danda pasakas and rahasi niyuktas. Purohit still occupied his dignity and he was helped by vinayasthitisthapak (administrator of moral standards). The king continued to be the highest court of appeal and judicial method still included trial by ordeal.

The Gupta empire was divided into several provinces, semi-independent territories and dependent territories. In the Damodargupta plate, the head of the state has been referred as uparika maharaja, gopta, bhogic and bhogpati. These terms have been defined in Lalitvistara as 'an officer, on whose shoulders the burden of protecting and promoting public welfare rests'. Sometimes rajputra was appointed governor of a province and in some semi-independent territories the local king was given the charter to rule the locals on behalf of the king emperor. The subordinate kings were required to pay annuity for showing their continued allegiance and in cases of default the defaulters were severely punished. The functioning of the provinces, semi-independent and autonomous territories was watched by king's envoys called duttukas. They reported each and every development to the king. The regional rulers were assisted by a team of officers selected in consultation with the king. In Vaishali Seal these officials have been described as baladhikaran (local commander), dandapashadhikaran (chief of police), ranbhandarik (chancellor of military exchequer), mahadandanayaka (chief justice), vinayasthitisthapak (minister of law and order), bhatasvapati (commander of infantry and cavalry), mahapilupati (incharge of elephants) and sadhunik (judicial officer). To this exhaustive list the Mallasurule Pillar inscription adds the following, i.e., kartakratik (head of executive), bhogpatik (officer incharge of division), dadayukta (treasury officer), arunasthanak (superintendent of silk factories), hiranyasamudayik (currency officer), yodrik (collector of taxes), agraharak (superintendent of

provincial office) and chodyoranik (the inspector general of police). Besides these heads of departments there were scores of other officials who assisted in the functioning of the government. Such a judicious conglomeration of democracy and autocracy made Gupta administration efficient and dynamic.

The provinces and viceroyalties were further subdivided into districts, towns and villages. The head of the district administration was called vishayapati who was ably assisted by draugic (city magistrate), mahamatra (inspector of administration), ashtakuladhikarnik (incharge of eight kulas), gramik (village headman), agraharik (incharge of settlement), dhrubhadhikrita (incharge of treasury), talvatak (village accountant), utkhetayik (collector of taxes) and kushtapal (keeper of records). The headquarters of the district and other minor towns within the district were administered by an official named purpal. Every town had an adhikaran (city municipality) which was headed by nagarshresthi (chairman) and ayukta (executive officer). Such a homogeneous arrangement of officials was bound to ensure efficient administration.

The Gupta kings made proper arrangements for the realisation of revenue. The major source of revenue was a tax called udranga (land tax). The lesser known taxes were dravigikas, uparika, bhukti, dhyana, hiranyaka, adya, vaistitic and dasparadh. The realisation of the taxes was meticulously ensured.

The result of such well-organised administration was that the period under the Guptas has won the proud title of the golden prime of India. As long as the Gupta kings held the levers of government in their hands the empire remained well under control but no sooner did the strings loosen, than the administration crumbled and ultimately broke down when the Hunas launched their vehement attacks. What ensued afterwards is described as dark age.

The dark age

The rise and fall of Vardhan and Chaulukya empires proved only a short affair in the history of ancient India. No sooner did the mantle of Vardhan empire fall from the northern Indian political scene, than the minor ambitious kings began to plunge themselves into annexationist wars against one another. There was all-round confusion and social conditions had become chaotic. Military

adventurism of the worst type became ideal pastime which brought in limelight meteoric characters like Yasovarman, Lalitaditya, Pratihara Bhoja, Devpal of Bengal, Amoghvarsha and Karna amongst the Rashtrakutas, Parmar Bhoja, Gahadvala Govindchandra, Chaulukya Vikramaditya, Jaisimha Siddharaja, Rajendra and Rajaraja Chola and Prithviraj Chauhan. Like flashes of lightning, their exploits were short-lived. These kings were engaged in relentless wars against one another, when the country needed unity most. They failed to muster enough courage to join their hands together for the common purpose of defending India and what distresses most at this distance of time is the fact that whenever any king tried to do so he was left alone. During such confusing period of history came the lancers from the Arab world who found complete disorder in this vast and varied subcontinent. The invaders came to loot but settled as lords because of the disunity of local rulers about whom it has been rightly pointed out by Dr R.C. Majumdar that "posterity holds these kings who presided over the destinies of the people then responsible for the great betrayal which subjected this country to foreign domination and imposition of foreign culture, from the effects of which it has never been, nor will ever be, able to recover."¹

According to Medhatithi and Visvarupa the ideals of Kamandikiya Nitisara had been forgotten. The neglect of the principles of political science, as enumerated in ancient texts, proved ruinous for the kings since it made them go astray. The purohit became a bard instead of an advisor and even small chieftains were being eulogised as the ruler of the earth, heaven and master of the sea. In fact, there were smaller kingdoms at that time of history than the modern districts of a state. In many cases the amatyas were able to carve out a separate state for themselves thus reducing these principalities to further smaller units. There was no peace and order and people never knew under whose rule they would live tomorrow. The mind of the people was haunted by constant fear and grief and to add more distress to the misery of the people, the turning of the economic screw proved ruinous. All these combined to plunge India into slavery, loot, plunder, maladministration and despotic monarchy.

1. *Advanced History of India* : R.C. Majumdar.

Despotic monarchy

The Muslim government in India was a theocracy in the true sense of the word—the king being Pope and Caesar combined. The authority of the Sultan was subservient to the tenets of Quran which laid down : “The king is the shadow of God on earth to whose refuse we are to fly when oppressed by injury from the unforeseen occurrence of life.” Since the sultans of Delhi owed allegiance to the Caliph of Baghdad, the priestly class was bound to occupy an important place and consequently ulemas held considerable sway over the affairs of state. Except Allauddin Khilji none of the sultans had enough courage to defy the injunctions of ulemas who had a definite say on the order of succession to the royal throne which was invariably limited to the ramparts of the royal family but still much depended on the say of nobles and ulemas.

The sultan was completely autocratic and whimsical in his decisions. He was always surrounded by a band of nobles, who in the words of a modern authority were ‘nothing more than a mere agglomeration of disintegrating atoms’. This small gathering was called majlis-i-khalwat. The sultan received the nobles in a place called bar-i-khas. Some of the prominent members of the council of ministers were taken from among these nobles. The prominent members were known as diwan-i-risala (department of appeals), diwan-i-arz (military department), diwan-i-insha (correspondence department), diwan-i-quaza-amamlik (department of justice, intelligence and posts), diwan-i-amir-kohi (department of agriculture) and diwan-i-kherat (department of public charity). The work of these ministers was supervised by wazir-i-azam or prime minister. He was assisted by quazi-ul-quazat or the chief secretary. The muf-tis helped in the administration of justice and interpreted various rules, customs, traditions and laws of the land. Kotwal was the custodian of law and order. Thus the administration of the sultans was well organised.

For efficient administration the empire was subdivided into subas and provinces. Suba was administered by a subedar who enjoyed full autonomy except for his share of allegiance and provincial share of tax. The sultan exercised full control over the provincial chiefs and all cases of revolt were firmly nipped. However, the provincial subedars never lost any opportunity in asserting their independence.

Various taxes were realised for running and maintaining the government. The major head of expenditure was army. The system of collecting taxes was absolutely harsh and defaulters were hanged, butchered or murdered in cold blood. Hindus were forced to pay a tax called *jaziya*, regular payment of which ensured unwelcome presence of Muslim tax collector.

In spite of numerous levers of administration which gave sultanate administration obvious advantages, it suffered from various defects : in the first place the whole structure was frail and loose; secondly it was harsh where it should have been lenient and liberal where it should have been harsh; in the third place, the sultan had no direct relations with his people; fourthly, the sultan lived in a dream-land where his courtiers made him to grope in the dark. Consequently, the real issues of the country suffered as a result of which the sultan lost the valuable support and sympathy of his people; and lastly the end of the sultans was precipitated with the mounting invasions on the northern frontiers of India. Mughals knocked the sultans out of power and finally settled on the throne of Delhi but before this their reign was preceded by a bright interlude provided by the Afghan ruler Sher Shah Suri. Although the government of Suri was a short affair but the principles of polity which he chalked out remained basically unchanged even during Mughal rule. Welfare of his people was paramount virtue with Sher Shah and for efficient administration he divided his empire into numerous administrative units like *subas* and *mansabs*. The authority of the provincial government was controlled through representatives of the central government. In fact he established a strong central government with federal features of a modern state. Having organised his government on the benign principles of Islamic philosophy and Hindu polity he set to achieve the noble project which was hovering in his mind. He launched a massive programme for the building of roads, digging wells, opening rest houses, organising post offices, realising revenue and ensuring security of the people.

Unfortunately, the reign of Sher Shah did not last long and soon the mantle fell in the hands of the Mughals.

The Mughal administration

The king emperor who inaugurated the Mughal era was amongst

those few kings who carve out their own place in contemporary history and the years of rule under them are known as an age in itself. Gifted with the rare qualities of head and heart, he resembled in great measure Ashoka the Great. He was more representative of his people in work, deed and thought than many of the modern assemblies can boast of. He welcomed all faithful advice, irrespective of the quarter from which it came. Although Islamic influence was dominant in the organisation of the government, Hindu principles of polity were also freely borrowed. The king appointed a council of ministers to assist and advise on the functioning of the government and then there were nobles and kings who in the words of J.N. Sircar "prevented India from having one of the safeguards of public liberty and checks on royal autocracy, namely, an independent hereditary peerage, whose position and wealth did not depend on the kings' favour in every generation, and who could, therefore, afford to be bold in their criticism of the royal caprice and their opposition to the royal tyranny."

There were numerous departments of public utility which were placed under a head of department. The royal exchequer was under an officer named diwan, the administration of justice was the concern of quazi-ul-mulk, the royal household was taken care of by diwan-i-khas, daroga-i-topkhana headed the artillery section of the army, infantry was commanded by an officer named mir-i-atish, the lord of privy seal was known as mir-mal, auditor general was called mustafi and quartermaster general was known as mir-manzil. The provincial administration was run through subedars and in order to ensure control over them royal garrisons were located at various places. The emperor himself undertook periodical tours.

The Mughal administration of justice is almost legendary for its benevolent dispensation. The emperor himself was the highest court of appeal. Although the king was guided by Islamic principles of justice, he never neglected the customs of the land, tradition, principles of natural justice and circumstances of the case. Jahangir's justice is well known. Maulvis, muftis, qazis and pandits assisted in the administration of justice and in cases of inheritance and succession there were distinct laws for the Hindus and Mussulmans. Unfortunately, Aurangzeb introduced 'Fateh-i-Alamgiri' which speaks of nothing but monstrous bigotry and religious antipathy of his mind. While Aurangzeb was introducing his fanatical ideas, sharp reactions had already started all over the country which

ultimately led to the rise of Marhattas.

The rise of Marhattas

The pendulum had swung on to the other side, signalling the end of the Mughal rule over India and the beginning of Hindu revivalist movement which turned into sharp reactionary militarism. Shivaji in the south and Guru Govind Singh in Punjab rose in revolt and began to strike at the roots of the Mughal empire. Each success emboldened and inspired them to launch fresh campaigns to annex more territory out of the tottering Mughal empire and increasing capture of territory created new problems of administration and realisation of taxes.

After having consolidated his gains, Shivaji set to organise his empire under the guidance of Swami Ramdas. He divided his empire into many provinces which were called mandala or bhukti. The king was assisted by a council of ministers which was called ashtapradhan. It was headed by a prime minister called peshwa. The prominent ministers were amatya (finance minister), mantrin (keeper of records), samant (foreign), senapati (defence), pandirao (royal chaplain), dandnayak (home minister) and nyayadhyaksha (minister of law and order). These ministers were assisted by various heads of departments and other minor officials.

After Shivaji, the line of Marhatta kings became very weak. The regional governors became independent except for ceremonial allegiance towards the king and the peshwa. The houses of Scindia, Holkar, Bhonsle and Gaikwad were founded in this manner. The Marhatta government mainly depended on the tribute paid by these chieftains and realisation of taxes called chauth and bhagduga, about which J.N. Sircar writes : "The payment of chauth merely saved a place from the unwelcome presence of Marhatta soldiers and underlings, but did not impose upon Shivaji any corresponding obligation to guard the district from invasion or internal disorder." Such loose and frail system of income subsequently became one of the causes for the breakdown of Marhatta empire. Another factor was the loose and vague organisation of mandala. The Marhatta kingdom broke down more out of internal weakness and decay than external attack.

Thus the years of Indian rulers' failure were years of success for the Britishers who came to trade but settled as masters.

The rise of the Company

The rise and fall of the Company from a purely business concern to an imperialistic administrative machinery and its subsequent surrender to the British government forms an interesting episode in the annals of modern Indian history. Continued successes, fresh annexations, diplomatic moves and foxing political tricks brought innumerable gains for the Company and ultimately in its wake the mastery of the subcontinent. The Company pursued the policy of divide and rule and after having settled themselves over major portion of India, applied the doctrine of lapse for swallowing the weaker links. After having acquired political supremacy over the country they settled to organise the government. The first attempt towards this end was the passing of Regulating Act of India, 1773. The Act provided for the appointment of Governor-General and a council of ministers to aid and advise him. Provision for a supreme court of appeal was also made. Besides these major introductions, numerous other minor changes were made in the administrative machinery. The Act suffered from the very outset from some serious defects as a critic points out: "It had neither given the state a definite control over his councils, nor the Calcutta Presidency a definite control over the Madras and Bombay." Some of the defects of this Act were removed by the Pitts India Act of 1784. The new changes were the introduction of a secretary of state, the chancellor of exchequer and board of control. The board of control consisted of four members and it had access to all the documents. The members of the board were selected by the king. The number of the members of Governor-General's council was minimised and the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras were placed under the control of Calcutta Presidency. The Pitts India Act was a significant landmark in Indian history.

The directors of the Company were too quick in effecting the changes without realising that India was a conservative country. The Company administration made a grave mistake by hastening the process of administrative reforms and that too without caring for the traditional values, cultural background and ancient Indian political institutions. Western culture, institutions and language were imposed on the natives. It gave rise to sharp reaction and revolt of 1857 about which Jawaharlal Nehru has rightly observed: "Though the revolt had directly affected only certain parts of the

country, it had shaken up the whole of India, and, particularly, the British administration. The government set about reorganising their entire system; the British Crown, that is, the Parliament took over the country from the East India Company. The Indian army, which had begun to revolt by its mutiny, was organised afresh. The techniques of British rule, which had already been well established, were now clarified, and confirmed and deliberately acted upon. Essentially these were : the creation and protection of vested interests bound up with the British rule; a policy of balancing and counterpoise of different elements, and the encouragement of fissiparous tendencies and division amongst them."¹ The immediate outcome of the mutiny was the establishment of British government over India in place of the Company rule.

His Majesty's government over India

The British rule was imperialist in the true sense of the word since all levers of government were held by the British rulers sitting miles away. Some of my readers may ask if British rule over India was imperialist what was Muslim rule over India ? I may point out that the Mussulmans came to India in the manner Sakas, Hunas, Parthians and Kushanas had done—they came, saw, mixed, mingled and ultimately settled in India forgetting everything. On the other hand, quite unlike them, were Britishers who came to trade, conquered, ruled and left. The fact remains that the country was ruled from England and by the Act of 1858 British sovereignty was extended over India making secretary of state responsible for the administration of India through a Governor-General. He was to be assisted by a council of fifteen ministers. The Governor-General enjoyed extensive legislative and executive powers. A council of five members worked as an advisory body; by an amendment in 1861 this number was raised to not less than six and not more than twelve. The central government was divided into provinces which were ruled by a governor and each province was further subdivided into divisions, districts, subdivisions, tehsils, patts and villages. There was different hierarchy for each unit. The entire government of India was woven in one net and for the first time real sense of political unity was infused. The most

1. P. 328, *The Discovery of India* : Jawaharlal Nehru.

significant feature of the new administration was the opening of representative assemblies, at different levels of administration and area. These early institutions trained Indians to administer themselves and find solutions of their local problems. They thus became nurseries of democracy.

The introduction of western institutions accelerated the pace of political consciousness in India. Although Indians asked only for limited participation in the beginning, but with the change in political environment the demand was also changed to that for self-government. The first political party was the Indian National Congress which was founded in 1885. The early leaders of the Congress stood for limited government within the framework of British rule but with the introduction of extremists like Tilak into its ranks the demand for self-government changed into demand for swarajya. It was Tilak who gave the clarion call : 'Swarajya is my birthright'. He stood in complete opposition to liberal leaders like Ranade and Gokhale and this led to the division of Congress into liberals and extremists. However, the existing differences were patched up in 1916 when a young man named Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi joined Congress. He stood for full and complete swarajya but the means for achieving the same were to be non-violent. When the war broke out, Gandhi decided to cooperate with the Britishers in the hope that after the conclusion of war the Britishers would reward India by giving some form of self-government but his expectations proved puerile. Instead, the Britishers committed the atrocities of Jallianwala Bagh and offered dyarchy. There were sharp reactions.

Dyarchy

Aggrieved by the attitude of the British government, Gandhi decided to join hands with the Mussulmans who were launching Khilafat movement. Probably in order to pacify Gandhi, the British government came out with the announcement : 'I implore this House to show that the parliament is receptive to the cause of self-government and only seeks opportunity of completing it by the demonstrable realisation of the successes of its stages . . . here is a country desirous of achieving nationality . . . let us pass this bill and start it on the road which we ourselves have travelled'. It is noteworthy that the new Act was to give only demonstrable

realisation of self-government. It was a fraud to deceive the people of India.

The new Act provided more autonomy to the provinces and the system of bicameral legislature was introduced at the centre to be elected and filled by communal franchise which was to sow seeds of dissension and provide protection to the vested interests. The reception accorded to the dyarchy was mixed : the liberal leaders like Motilal Nehru and Annie Besant decided to welcome the measure as an important landmark in the constitutional history of India but on the other hand was Mahatma Gandhi who rejected it outright. Thus, dyarchy failed because 'it was born under an unlucky star'.

The years between the rejection of dyarchy and passing of the Act of 1935 were marked with intense political activity. Political bargaining and campaigning went on. The non-cooperation movement of Mahatma Gandhi was in full swing. The Simon Commission proved hardly any bait. The year 1930 witnessed intense political activity when the famous Dandi march took place. The people of India were behind him and in some places the movement took revolutionary turn in spite of Gandhi's specific instructions not to do so. Alarmed by these developments, the British government decided to call a Round Table Conference in London. The conference did not melt the ice. In 1935 British government came forward with a more democratic measure which proved an important landmark in the constitutional history of India.

The Government of India Act, 1935

The Government of India Act was launched with much acclaim. "The Times" of London wrote in such enthusiastic strain : "A great constructive measure, the greatest indeed that a British government has taken in hand in this century, has passed the enactment." The striking features of the new Act were the separation of India from Burma and complete shift from the Act of 1919. The new Act laid for the federation of different states, however, this federation could not be enforced and in its place provincial autonomy was put into practice. The position and powers of the Governor-General were defined in the light of fresh developments. His main function was defence, external affairs, ecclesiastical matters and tribal affairs. His subsidiary function was the running

of domestic affairs with the help of the council of ministers. The Governor-General with his council was responsible to the legislature.

For a long time, Congress waited and watched but ultimately it decided to join hands with the government. It took part in the elections and won sweeping victory. Congress ministries were established all over India. In the words of Reginald Coupland : "All in all, the agrarian legislation of the Congress ministries, boldly conceived and swiftly carried through, was a notable achievement." Unfortunately, the Congress ministries did not last long because against the wishes of Congress and public the British government dragged India in the cauldron of war. Congress resigned from the government and plunged itself into a new wave of nationalist movement.

World events of great import were moving with lightning speed, and as the fortunes in war shifted Congress decided to launch one of the massive campaigns for the independence of India. Mahatma Gandhi gave the clarion call of 'Quit India'. Alarmed by these developments, when war was at its peak, the British government put all Congress leaders in jail but soon they were released in order to facilitate the work of the Cripps Mission. The Mission met scores of people from different walks of life and later on consulted the government. After due deliberations it came forward with certain proposals which were dismissed by Gandhi as 'post-dated cheque on a bankrupt bank'. World events were moving with alarming celerity and by 1945 Britain was no more a first rate power; instead America and Soviet Russia had come in limelight. Both of them were against any form of imperialism. The Indian troops were also revolting; the Indian National Army was knocking on the eastern frontier of India and soon they were joined by the ratters of Bombay dockyard. Thus the control of the Britishers was loosening over India and at home in England, the place of the Conservatives was taken by the Liberals. Due to these and other compelling circumstances, Britain was forced to grant independence to India on 15 August 1947.

Independence of India

The Independence of India was not a peaceful transfer of power

from one hand to another, instead it witnessed one of the bloodiest communal wars in the history of mankind, not because Indian people did not want to live in peace but because the Britishers had deliberately engineered it. The undecided status of Kashmir, the unsettled affiliation of five hundred princely states and the creation of East Pakistan in the heart of India was knowingly worked and planned in order to balkanise India. The present differences between Pakistan and India are not an offshoot of any political or geographical differences but of deep-rooted seeds of dissension and discord sown by the Britishers so that the two communities may never live in peace. In spite of British political chicanery, Sardar Patel was able to control the situation and give a new shape to the Indian republic under the able leadership of Nehru, who became the first Prime Minister of India.

A new India takes shape

Independent India was not suddenly begotten or hatched out. It won freedom through a long and arduous struggle and moreover independence itself was not the ultimate solution to our troubles because serious problems confronted us : communal frenzy rose high, refugees were pouring in thousands, princely states were seeking every opportunity to carve out their own independence status, the fate of Kashmir hung in balance, and above all the man of the hour, leader of the people and father of the nation had crossed into eternity. Pt. Nehru and Sardar Patel faced the challenge gallantly and solved one problem after another. While these problems were being tackled, the Government of India was busy in working out a Constitution through a Constituent Assembly and on 26 January 1950 India declared itself a sovereign democratic republic and adopted a Constitution. The preamble of the Constitution reads—

“We the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign democratic republic and to secure to all its citizens

“Justice, social, economic and political,

“Liberty of thought, expression, belief of faith and worship,

“Equality of status and of opportunity,

and to promote amongst them all

"Fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation."

The Constitution provided for unitary state with subsidiary federal features rather than a federal state with subsidiary unitary features. The republic is headed by a President who appoints Prime Minister and with his advice selects a council of ministers. The Prime Minister with his council of ministers is responsible to Parliament for all executive actions, and above all is a supreme judiciary which guards the rights of the people. The other salient features of the Constitution are provincial autonomy, state representative assemblies, free elections and the directive principles of state policy.

Man has never lived without wishing to tinker with the constitution which it adopted itself. This is more true in case of Indian Constitution which has been amended many times and more amendments are on their way. In this respect, we can learn something from America which has happily lived with the constitution which was adopted some 150 years ago. Giving toilet paper treatment to the constitution smacks of political uncertainty.

Indian political scene is witnessing various pulls, each drawing it towards the respective hemisphere of influence, thereby creating a political deadlock, social disorder and imbalance.

Indian political scene in retrospect

Today, as in the past, India is divided into various political and vested groups. To an outsider, the mantle of political unification and one constitution seems only a political cover over internal dissensions and differences. Reading of Telengana movement or Naxalite movement one begins to doubt if Indians are at all united in their aims and objectives. The parties representing the feelings of the masses seem to voice the wishes of foreign governments. What is surprising is that even the representatives of the people reflect vested interests with an eye on power. Democracy is flouted in parliament through cat calls, jeering, thumping of desks and mutual vituperation—in complete disregard to the sense of decency and public interest. The crux of democracy is not that you achieve your end but is how you achieve it. Freedom is not what you choose to do but is the duty that you ought to do for others.

the Indian religion and philosophy that it is difficult to appreciate it fully unless one has some knowledge of the ideas which govern the Indian mind . . . for in Indian art there is always a religious urge, a looking beyond, such as probably inspired the builders of the great cathedrals of Europe."¹ This religious urge, search for the eternal beauty and will for redemption from the cycle of death and birth is amply illustrated in the wall frescoes, panels, sculptures and paintings of various temples, caves, stupas and palaces.

According to Pitirim Sorokin, "Art for a Hindu is life as it is interpreted by religion and philosophy. Art for art's sake is consequently unknown. Instead a symbolism was created to express various qualities of the superhuman soul and superhuman figures." The finest specimens of this symbolism are lotus motifs, elephant, bull, horse, ten incarnations (dasavatar), Sun, Moon and Swastik. It is here that the spiritual and secular have been mixed and mingled. The artist took particular interest in the portrayal of natural objects along with the gods and goddesses.

The message of the scriptures has been best conveyed through the rippling and bubbling mudras and symbolical representations. They leave unmistakable imprint on the mind of the viewer. The technique employed by the ancient artists has been thus explained by Alain Davieieu : "The artist must prepare a geometrical design in accordance with the symbolic proportions required for the image he wants to represent. He must concentrate his vision and his thought on the magic diagram or yantras, till he perceives through the geometrical outlines the form he is to sculpture. This concentration of the artist is one of the highest and completest form of concentration."²

Not only religious impulses have found expression in Indian art but contemporary life and society has also found sufficient representation through it. In fact Indian art has essentially been people's art.

People's art

Art in India has never been an ivory tower for the few privileged, instead it has been an instructional media for the masses. It has always held out its hand for the deliverance of the toiling and

1. Page 375, *The Modern Review* : May 1964.

2. P. 134, *Interrelations of Culture* : U.N.E.S.C.O.

suffering people. The poor people living almost in seclusion have found appropriate representation with the kings in the courts, queens in palanquins, charming dancers in attractive poses, warriors in their coat of arms, musicians with their instruments, and even birds, flowers and animals have been painted. Nothing has escaped the vision of the artist. Abounding was his faith in the dignity of common man and whatever he touched was immortalised. The Indian artist pictured his objects as they appeared before him. Nothing was missed. The artist held the mirror up to the society and nature.

With the above background of Indian art we proceed to examine its passage from early beginnings to modern art.

Early beginnings of Indian art

It has been pointed out by some art critics that before the Maurya period the history of Indian art has been an empty showcase and philosophically blank page. The fallacy of this statement is proved by contrary evidence as revealed from the excavations of Harappa and Mohenjodaro. The richly ornamented seals and other objects go to show that a high sense of art prevailed at that time of history. The art of these city-states further developed in the subsequent civilisations of Lothal, Kausambi and Gangetic plains. The finds of Kausambi are the best and it was here that use of stone had started. One can find samples of these pieces of early art in the Allahabad Museum.

The definite traces of Indian art can be found since the time of Ashoka. His monuments have been divided by the artists into four parts, viz., pillars, caves, stupas and palaces. Ashokan pillars are considered the best vehicles of a brilliant display of art. Each pillar consists of four parts, the base, shaft, capital and crowning head. The whole column rises upward and on top is a bell-shaped lotus over which some symbolic animal figure has been placed. As a matter of fact the abacussed crowning head represents figures related to the life of Gautama Buddha. The majesty of the Sarnath lion, sturdiness of Rampurwa bull, sensitivity of the fleeing deers, stateliness of the horse and symbolic message of the wheel of law represent the deep understanding of the contemporary culture and philosophy. These objects of art bear excellent polish and Sir John Marshall has rightly described them as

"masterpieces in point of both style and technique, the finest carving indeed, that India has produced, and unsurpassed by anything of their kind in the ancient world."

The lesser known works of Maurya period were caves and stupas. There are also ruins of a palace near Patna. Historians have tried to identify it as Chandragupta Maurya's palace. Ashoka is credited with the building of 84000 stupas in different parts of the country but now very little remains to be seen. The Mauryan stupas were large hemispherical domes in the centre of which relics of Buddha were placed on a small casket. The stupa was crowned with a wooden or stone umbrella. A clockwise circumambulation was provided for the purpose of pradakshina. Some of these stupas were modified by later rulers. Ashoka's grandson Dasrath caused to be excavated some caves near Gaya for the benefit of Ajivikas. This splendid outburst of art paved way for the emergence of numerous localised schools or centres of art out of which the following rose into prominence, traces of which can be found even today.

Barhut

The Nagod state in central India was once a rich centre of art. The finest example is Barhut stupa with its beautiful arches, finely carved railings and the panel depicting gods and goddesses along with the birds, animals and numerous other objects. Here Buddha has not been sculptured in human form, instead he has been represented through various symbols.

The fragmented evidence available from Barhut goes to show that it was the earliest school of Hindu art.

Mathura school of art

The Mathura school of art came into being during the reign of Kushan rulers. Some art critics are of the view that Greek artists had definite influence on the growth and development of Mathura school of art and they were probably the first to introduce the Buddha figure in Indian art but this theory has been repudiated by Dr Radhakamal Mukerjee by producing contrary evidence to the effect that the Greek sculptors carved out clean-shaven Buddhas with delicate constitution, whereas Indian artists produced Buddha images with beard and moustaches and they are packed with stiff-

ness and solidity which is closely associated with the Indian art. However, the influence of Hellenic art is visible in the figures of Yaksha and Yakshinis which reflect the joyous attitude contemporary artists took towards life. Some of the rare specimens of these early artistic creations are available in the Mathura Museum.

Amravati

A remarkable school of art flourished on the banks of Krishna river in Andhra Pradesh which is now known to the artists as Amravati. It was a Buddhist settlement. The only but finest find from this place is a large slab bearing the replica of a large stupa, in the centre of the frieze Buddha appears to receive worship from his disciples and on the right side Naga king is offering his respects along with his wife. The floating moment has been conceived with great precision and skill and the mixture of supernatural with the spiritual is excellent. The artist has shown exceptional understanding of his subject.

Sanchi

In the scheme of ancient art schools the name of Sanchi is foremost. The original stupa of Sanchi was executed by Ashoka but with the passage of time numerous additions and alterations were introduced. The existing gates and railings are certainly later additions. The entire site presents a sight of florid beauty and grandeur which has been described by A.L. Bhasam in these words : "All the men and women represented here are human beings, acting as men and women have acted in all times and the success or failure of representations may consequently be judged by the same rules as are applicable to the sculptures of any other place or country. Notwithstanding this, the mode of treatment is original and local and it is difficult to assign it to any exact position in comparison with the arts of modern world."¹ The four gates of Sanchi stand as lasting testament to the four noble truths propounded by Gautama Buddha. The marvellous execution, lovely representations, exquisite ornamentation and fine carvings show the depth of understanding and vastness of the conception.

1. *The Wonder That Was India* : A.L. Bhasam.

The outer representations show remarkable balance with the inner atmosphere of the stupa. It is here that the spiritual and secular have been skilfully mixed and mingled.

Prof Grunwedel and other foreign art critics want us to believe that Sanchi and other ancient art schools were influenced by Hellenic art. It can be conceded that these schools had some influence of Greek art but to assert that they were executed under the supervision of Greek artists is a fallacy completely devoid of reality. In the words of famed art critic E.B. Havell : "Simple, direct naturalism, of the Barhut and Sanchi sculptures is here beginning to give place to a very pronounced style of an academic character, but wholly different to the style of Gandhara, or Graeco Roman types." Intellectual awakening inspired by Nagarjuna and Asvaghosa was the driving force behind these artistic creations. At a time when art was helping in the secular uprising, the Hellenic impact proved of far-reaching consequence and ultimately gave rise to Gandhara school of art.

Gandhara school of art

The impact of Greek culture gave rise to new thought-currents in Indian life and culture. In the beginning, this impact was confined to outskirts of India but with the ascendancy of Kushan rulers it began to spread in other parts of India also. After studying the local techniques, the Greek artists introduced the subtlety of Hellenic art into the local art and thus gave rise to a new school of art which came to be known as Gandhara school of art. The new school gave plastic rendering to Buddha figures and a new personality was created through intricate execution of the details of body, transparent robe, long hairs, curls, meditating eyes, compact lips and long hands. The robust Aryan-like features were balanced with Greek beauty and charm. The beauty of Buddha's face, his compassionate glance, his swaying hands in the midst of worldly misery and the immaculate personality has never been brought out more exquisitely than by the Greek artists. The beauty of human form was balanced with the dignity of soul.

The Hellenic influence was not limited to Buddha sculpture alone, the Hindu mythology also received a new deal from the Gandhara school of artists which ultimately accounted for the immense artistic activity during the period of Guptas. Gupta art

occupies an important place in Indian art and architecture.

Gupta art

Gupta art, like Gupta literature, derives its classicism from contemporary social and cultural ideal which combines discipline with enjoyment, renunciation with obligation and wisdom with beauty. The abstract and symbolic have been mixed with the divine and classical. The attitude of the times and creative spirit of the people found sufficient representation in Gupta art and literature and the new urge expressed itself in the making of Buddha and Brahmanical figures which show skilful handling of the diaphanous robe, exquisite ornamentation of lotus prabhamandala and express manifestation of the inner feeling. Now the artists had taken to the sculpture of earthly objects also like the body of women where the rhythmic movement of feminine body was displayed with the prominence of hips, flowing breasts and slender waist, all balanced. In fact, the artist showed great variety of interest in the contemporary life and culture. It was during this period of history that some of the finest pieces of art were produced, the most representative being the Dhammachakrapavattanasutta or the 'turning of the wheel of law'. The divine figure sheds such soothing effect that the more we watch it the more we feel bathed in its beauty. Another remarkable figure is of standing Buddha from Mathura, wrapped in diaphanous robe it casts compassionate glance towards the suffering masses. These and other figures of Buddha show remarkable understanding of Buddha's life.

Hindu mythology was immortalised by the Gupta artists by producing Brahmanical gods and goddesses. The Vishnu sculptures of Aihole are known for their charm, poise and vigour. The relief depicting the Gajendramoksha is filled with the tense effect of the incident. At Ellora, the rescue of Prahlada has been shown with great skill and the artist has succeeded exceedingly well in depicting the fury and majesty of the gods against the shrinking acceptance of death by the demon king Hiranyakashyap. At Udaigiri the monolithic rock-cut relief shows remarkable silence before creation. In the same cave there is a huge sculpture showing Vishnu resting on the Shesnag. The huge figure of Shesnag from Gwalior is another achievement of this time. Besides gods and goddesses, mortal beings were also immortalised by the Gupta artists, the

most famous being the figure of a dancing lady. Thus the Gupta artists showed remarkable understanding of divine and human form and displayed it at its best.

In the field of architecture the remains of Gupta period are few, but nevertheless significant. The Damekh stupa at Sarnath, Bhitargaon temple at Kanpur, Deogarh temple at Gwalior and Katara Keshav Dev temple at Mathura are monuments of Gupta period. They consist of solid brick structure which are thin but strong and bear hardly any decorative motifs or inlay work on them. Each building is crowned with a hemispherical *sikhara*.

Iconography made definite appearance with the ascendancy of Gupta kings. The technique of metal casting was excellent as can be seen from the Sultanganj Buddha figure. It is $7\frac{1}{2}$ ft high and has been cast in one piece and bears excellent polish. The charming personality of Buddha has been brought out with rare beauty and grace. Another example of excellent metal craftsmanship is the 'Chandra' pillar standing near Qutub Minar. The pillar has defied all hazards of nature and time. The new developments in metallurgy had definite impact on the improvement of numismatics. The Gupta coins are evenly shaped and finely carved out. They bear unmistakable mark of Greek influence.

The collapse of the Gupta empire signalled the end of a glorious period of art but by now art had made so much impact on the contemporary life and culture that independent schools of art were flourishing at different places out of which Ajanta and Ellora acquired a high standard of perfection.

Ajanta

The group of twenty-nine caves near Aurangabad once formed a flourishing school of art. Here the artist has shown considerable depth of human understanding and fine appreciation of the beauties of nature. The Ajanta artists were patronised by the Vakatakas, Rashtrakutas and Chaulukyas. The period of execution ranged from 400 A.D. to 640 A.D. Some art critics have described them as frescoes but according to Dr R.C. Majumdar the process of these paintings was : "Firstly the ground was prepared by clay, cowdung and pulverized trap rock, then a coating of white plaster was applied and thus now the ground being prepared, it was carefully smoothed and moistened. When surface was thus made ready, the

design was first sketched, what came out of it was a finest piece of painting."¹ The technique of painting has been thus described by Griffith : "The Ajanta workmanship is admirable; long subtle curves are drawn with great precision in a line of unvarying thickness with one sweep of brush; the touch is often bold and vigorous, the handling broad and in some cases the impasto is as solid as in the best pompian work . . . for the purpose of art education no better examples can be placed before an Indian art student than those to be found in Ajanta. Here we have art with life in it, human faces full of expression, limbs drawn with grace and action, flowers which bloom, birds which soar, and beasts that spring, fight or patiently carry burdens, all are drawn from the book of nature."

The subjects selected show great variety of selection from the contemporary life, society and culture, as Prof A.L. Bhasam writes : "Here even more vividly than Sanchi, we see the whole of ancient India in panorama. Here are princes in palaces, ladies in heavens, coolies with loads, beggars, peasants, ascetics together with many beasts and flowers of ancient India, in fact the life of the times perpetuated on the dim walls of caves by loving hands of many craftsmen."² The Ajanta artist has shown remarkable understanding of Buddha's life, deeds and anecdotes. The most famous painting is Padma Pani in which Buddha has been depicted with a lotus in his hand and glancing downwards. The painting known as 'Dying Princess' is filled with the freshness of the moment. Another remarkable piece is 'Mother and Child'. In one of the paintings, Yashodhara is giving Rahul in alms to Buddha, the tenseness of the moment has been well portrayed. There is a painting showing reception of a Persian ambassador in the court of an Indian king. Thus contemporary life has been fully and adequately painted on the walls of Ajanta.

The Ajanta artist has shown remarkable depth of knowledge about the use of colours and handling of the brush. The green, blue, pink and azure have been skilfully mixed with the red, yellow, velvet and crimson and what is remarkable is that they have been used to convey symbolic philosophy. All this makes them unsurpassable by anything of their kind.

Some historians like Vincent Smith have tried to find some

1. *Advanced History of India* : R.C. Majumdar.

2. *The Wonder That Was India* : A.L. Bhasam.

foreign influence in them : 'Ajanta school of art was derived directly from Persian and ultimately from Greece.' But the fallacy and absurdity of this theory has been pinpointed by E.B. Havell : "Indian art was inspired by Indian nature, Indian philosophy and religious teaching, and no one."

Ellora

Ellora caves preserve some of the finest specimens of early art and architecture. They were executed after the Dravidian style under the patronage of Rashtrakutas. An entire hillside was first demarcated and separated from the whole range of mountains and then a temple was hewn out of it. It has exquisitely carved out *sikhara*. The mammoth temple, though in ruins, still bears remarkable imprint of the brilliant past and surpasses anything of its kind in detail and magnificence. The sculptures inside the temple are finest specimens of ancient art. In one of the huge rock-cut sculptures the plight of Ravana has been shown with great dramatic force. The whole relief shows complete command of the matter and grasp of the situation. The sinking fear in the face of calamity has been shown with great balance and understanding. Equally remarkable are *Dasavtar* sculptures. The monolithic sculpture shows various cosmic events out of which *Narsinhavtar* is the finest.

At the same time art schools were flourishing at *Mamallapuram* and *Elephanta*. The *Elephanta* caves are situated near Bombay and are approachable by sea through ferry. The finest piece of sculpture is *Trinity* which represents the ideal of Creation, Protection and Destruction as described in Hindu mythology. At *Mamallapuram* one finds finest specimens of rock-cut architecture and sculpture. The *rath-shaped* temples have been cut out of one solid rock. They are seven in number, five for the *Pandavas* and two after the builders who caused their execution. In one of the rock sculptures the descent of Ganges has been shown with intricate details. Huge relief of an elephant is equally remarkable for its massiveness and equilibrium of proportions.

After these scattered schools of art had disappeared from the contemporary scene, Indian art made its emergence in the form of distinctive art styles of North, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Eastern and South Indian art.

North Indian art

Leaving aside minor artistic creations, the best and finest specimens of north Indian art can be traced from the finds of Khajuraho. Khajuraho is situated some sixty miles south-east of Harbalpur near Jhansi. The majestic temples spread over a large area reveal that before their execution certain ladders of development must have undergone. Some historians suggest that Mahoba school of art was in the background of Khajuraho. While Mahoba disappeared due to Muslim atrocities, Khajuraho remained safe due to the farsightedness of its builder Kirtivarman Chandella.

The prominent pieces of Khajuraho art and architecture are the Lakshman and Kundariya Mahadev temple. The lesser known temples are Vishwanath, Parsvanath, Ganpati, Jagdamba and Chitragupta temples. These temples have been executed in the Nagara style. The shikharas of these temples rise higher and higher as if forming steps towards the heaven. Seen from a distance the temples look higher than they actually are. But the most remarkable feature of the Khajuraho temples is their sculpture which supplements the architecture and breaks the monotony of the viewer with ravishing elegance, rippling beauty and earthly sensuousness. The contemporary life of the times has been depicted in far exceeding manner than any literary work could do. It is strange, yet true, that where we expect the figure of a god or goddess, we find the sculpture of a couple engaged in most copulous scene of love. This feature of Khajuraho has been thus described by Dr H. Goetz : "The Chandella rulers, believing themselves to have become living gods, neglected their administrative duties in favour of sexual pleasures and rituals while the real power slipped into the Kashmiri hands."¹ These god-kings followed tantric cults and saw redemption in sexual mysticism. Whatever may be the background of these paintings, as objects of art and architecture they are superb.

In the art history of north India, Khajuraho forms a chapter in itself of which Kashmir, Nepal and other regions form only paragraphs. The representative piece of Kashmir art is Martand temple and other finds of Avantipura. Here the architect has made considerable use of brick and wood. In Nepal the temple architec-

1. *Careers and Courses* : H. Goetz.

ture has some distinct pattern of its own, particularly the use of pagoda style. In Nepal, the Buddha sculptures and icons form an important part of its artistic creations. At the same time, the art schools of Dhar, Mandu, Gwalior and Saurashtra were also flourishing. Gwalior is known for its Sas-Bahu temple. Few miles ahead of Gwalior is Mt. Abu where Indian art has expressed itself with prosaic profundity and classical vividness. The famous Dilwara temples were built under the patronage of Tejpal and Wastupal. The walls and pillars of this temple have been carved out with exquisite inlay work, beautiful creepers, flowers and other intricate designs. Another centre of art was Dhar and Mandu. As a matter of fact, the Parmar kings were 'great builders of cities, lakes and temples'.

Orissa region

The state of Orissa abounds in rich and varied remains of ancient art and architecture. The world famous Konarak temple was executed during this period of artistic activity. The art critics have made a legend out of it and subjected it to praise, ridicule and appreciation. The inner atmosphere of the temple is in complete contrast with the outer representations on the walls and panels. The outer representations are considered representative of the sexual and tantric cults that were prevailing at that time in contemporary society. It has been suggested by some historians that these representations have been carved out on the outer walls to drive out evil eyes. Leaving aside these conflicting theories, we find Konarak temple as the finest example of craftsmanship and execution. Most attractive piece is the huge wheel depicting the movement of Sun chariot. Another significant piece of art from Orissa is Bhuvaneshwar temple which attracts the attention of viewer due to its florid dimensions. Mukteshwar temple has been described by Mohan Ganguly as 'a dream in sandstone'. It seems that the artist bestowed best of his care and skill in order to make it the finest example of Orissan architecture.

Puri temple is a centre of pilgrimage. It presents ravishing elegance and spectacular charm. The towering sanctuaries and huge audience halls are gorgeous and majestic.

Gujarat-Rajasthan region

Gujarat has scanty remains of ancient art because most of them were destroyed by the Muslim invaders. The temple of Somnath bears testimony to the fact. The tragic fate which Gujarat met was not shared by Rajasthan because it was able to withstand most of the attacks and in many cases repulsed them. Consequently its historic monuments escaped disaster from the hands of infidels and today stand as lasting testimony to the bravery of Rajasthan and their artistic impulse. The thousand pillar temple at Jodhpur, Sri Jagannath temple of Udaipur and Eklingraj temple bear testimony to the fact. Besides these, the Rajput kings built numerous temples, cities, forts, lakes and other places of historic importance like the Vijay stambha of Ranthambore. Likewise, the Jain temples of Girnar and Satrunjaya are excellent representatives of medieval art and architecture. They have excellent ornamentation work.

Eastern region

Bihar and Bengal have very few remains of ancient art and architecture. The Muslim invaders either ravaged them to the ground or turned them into mosques, remains of which can be seen even today. The only significant monument of the medieval art in Bihar is Gaya temple which rises high like a pyramid with symmetrical balance and repose. The whole temple is studded with beautiful sculptures and other decorative motifs.

Only few art remains of Pala kings were available in Bengal.

South Indian art

The art and architecture of South India was set in the brilliant background of Ellora, Badami and Mamallapuram. Taking inspiration from the traditional values of ancient Indian art it developed its own definite and distinct features. The gopuram and sky scraping sikharas are pyramidal, ornamented and depicted with beautiful sculptures. The incidents from mythology have been depicted with rare charm and poise. The temples are either Vaishnavite or Saivite but in a Vaishnavite temple Saivite features and representations can be found and vice versa.

The definite beginnings of south Indian art can be found from

the period of Pallavas. The Pallava temples of Kanchi, Sri Rangam and Tiruvallur are famous for their gorgeousness, beauty and brilliant sculptures. The temples cover a large area and comprise in themselves a small township. The glorious tradition of Pallavas was followed by the illustrious Cholas. The Saiva temples of Tanjore bear testimony to their conception and execution. The huge sikhara rises to immense height and on top is covered by a dome. It is remarkable that the entire temple has been decorated with shaped circles and Vaishnavite illustrations, about which Fergusson writes : "It is only an instance of the extreme tolerance that prevailed at the age at which it was erected before these religions became antagonistic."

Hoysela rulers gave birth to a rich school of art in Mysore but before the advent of this school the huge monolithic rock-cut figure of Gomteshwar had already been executed under the patronage of Chamunda Roy. The monolithic sculpture has been hewn out of one solid rock and in spite of its dimensions it has not lost its sense of proportion and eye for detail. The magnificent figure of the Gomata can be seen for miles and begins to enthrall the mind of viewer with intense delight and devotion. Hoysela art is studded with star-shaped decoration and rises heavenwards, the finest example being Helebid or Dwarsamudra. It has been decorated with beautiful sculptures, patterns, designs, animals, birds and scenes from contemporary life and culture. The vividness of life has become more explicit and poignant than anywhere else. Another fine example of Hoysela art is Chidambaram temple which illustrates many of the intricate poses of Natya Shastra. Here Lord Ganesh is shown dancing, Laxmi is lost in the ecstasy of a mudra, Shiva is dancing Tandava and his consort Parvati is dancing Lashya. Art has become here the media of secular uprising and the life of the times is perpetuated on the halls, walls and colonades.

With the building of Madurai and Rameshwaram temples, the art of south India achieved a new apex. Here everything has been brought out with excellent perfection. The long corridors providing pradikshana mandap are an excellent example of architectural perfection. The architect and sculptor have joined hands in bringing out the very best. Another remarkable page was added in the history of south Indian art by the artists of Vajaynagar who in the words of Longhurst 'produced one of the most perfect specimens of

Hindu temple architecture'. The Vitthal and Hazara temples present evidence of a glorious past.

The finest specimen of south Indian art, nay the Indian art itself, is the Nataraja icon. It represents the very synthesis of Indian culture. It bears Monalisa smile, Apollo-like stiffness, Leonardo's detail, Venus-like beauty, Herculean prowess, Raphael's finish of art and Michaelangelo's understanding of human form—all combined into one. The icon conveys various meanings through different representations, viz., little drum expresses the ideal of God holding the cause of the world, the deer on the other side is mind, the skin of tiger represents the egoism that Nataraja slew, Ganga descending over the head represents wisdom, the foot trampling Muyuluga is suppression of illusion and other foot raised upward leaves behind Maya, right hand indicates peace and left hand brings justice, truth and teaching.

What we gather from the comparative study of south Indian and north Indian art can be thus summed up : the south Indian artist has shown love for massiveness and gorgeousness while his north Indian counterpart has preferred comparative simplicity. In the south the artist has amply illustrated scenes from mythology through the media of sculpture and painting while the north Indian artist has mixed religious with the secular; the style of gopuram is purely south Indian. And lastly, while the north Indian art was greatly influenced by Sarcenic influences, the south Indian art has been rigidly indigenous.

Introduction of Sarcenic art

The advent of Mussulmans marked the beginning of a new school of art which decried representation of human form and ridiculed over-ornamentation. In place of these, it patronised Gothic simplicity and Persian sense of spaciousness. The salient features of this school have been thus summarised by Sir John Marshall : "Indo-Islamic is not merely a local variety of Islamic art, nor is merely a modified form of Hindu art. Broadly speaking, Indo-Islamic architecture derives its character from both sources, though not in equal degree." The Sultan rulers invited some Turkish artists who conversed and studied local art and then gave rise to a new school of art which laid emphasis on open courts encompassed by chambers and colonades and encouraged decorative

inlay work. The finest example of this new work was Qutub Minar which has been disputed by some historians as a Hindu monument. Leaving aside conjectural conclusions there are definite marks of Turkish influence on it.

There are very few remains bearing Turkish or Sarcenic influence, except those which are available at Ajmer, amongst which the most famous is adhai-din-ka-jhopra. Jaunpur was another rich centre of art. The Shirque rulers of Jaunpur were great lovers of art and architecture. They patronised the building of Atala Masjid, Tomb of Hussain Shah, Addina mosque and Sona mosque. As a matter of fact the core and essence of these buildings remained Hindu because most of them were constructed merely by remodeling Hindu temples. In later years of Islamic rule the scene of Indo-Islamic art shifted to Dhar, Mandu and Bengal. The Addina Masjid of Bengal is well known for its magnitude and beauty, the lesser known being chota and bara masjid. The building of Jami Masjid in Gujarat marked the beginning of a new concept in art since it 'combined all the beauty and finish of the native art with a certain magnificence which is deficient in their own works'. Some of the famous Hindu monuments at Dhar and Mandu witnessed their gradual transformation into Islamic buildings. However, some new buildings were also constructed, the most famous being Jehaj Mahal, Hindola Mahal and Jami Masjid.

The increasing fusion of Hindu and Sarcenic art became more evident in south India where the Sultans constructed numerous cities, forts, palaces, tombs and mosques; most prominent being Char Minar, Jama-i-Masjid, Sona Masjid, fort of Golkunda, Bidar and Daultabad. Golgumbad is the finest specimen of south Indian sultanate art and architecture.

The fusion between the two communities 'developed to an unprecedented degree' during the age of Mughals.

Mughal art and architecture

Before the advent of Mughals a bright interlude was provided by Sher Shah Suri whose political career was cut short due to political uncertainty of the times but even then he left unmistakable marks of his greatness in different fields of culture. His mausoleum at Sahasram stands on a rocky crevice in the midst of a large tank and is considered a fine specimen of design and conception. Sher

Shah Suri did not live long to patronise the construction of more buildings but fortunately the king emperors who came after him were greatest builders and patrons of art, history has ever known.

The founding father of Mughal empire was Babar. He was a great lover of nature and himself a good painter. He invited some Iranian artists who introduced inlay work, decorated halls, ornamentation, mosaic work, rectangular domes and exquisite motifs in place of heavily sculptured panels and walls. Babar's son Humayun could not patronise building of any monument, however his wife Haji Begum constructed a tomb near Delhi which attracted numerous visitors. Then came the master builder Akbar who built the 'Dream City' of Fatehpur Sikri. It stands as a testament to the grandeur and majesty of Mughal kings. The Buland Darwaza, Jodha Bai's palace, Panch Mahal and other monuments testify the vastness of his conception and extent of the munificence of his patronage. He also started building of a monument at Sikandara which he could not live to complete and the same was completed by his son Jahangir who was hardly a lover of architecture but incidentally his wife Nur Jahan cultivated the familiar love of a Mughal lady for architecture. She caused to be constructed a tomb over the grave of her father which is now known as Itmaduddaula's tomb. Built in white marble, it reflects the simplicity of conception on the one hand, and the rich ornamentation reflects the wealth of a Mughal lady on the other.

Mughal art and architecture achieved its height of perfection with the ascendancy of Shah Jahan who built numerous buildings but out of which Taj Mahal stands not only as an epitome to the love and affection which the royal couple had but a poetry in sandstone. The forts at Agra and Delhi are unsurpassable by anything of their kind. A couplet inscribed at Diwan-e-Khas aptly describes the majesty and beauty of the architecture in these words—

If there is any heaven on the face of earth
It is here, it is here and it rests here.

Unfortunately, after the death of Shah Jahan, everything pointed towards the torpor of setting creative spirit. Aurangzeb was a poor judge of art and architecture and he considered it a sheer wastage of human energy. Driven by religious antipathy, he set

to destroy Hindu monuments. However, surprisingly, he caused to be constructed Bibi-ka-Maqbara at Aurangabad which resembles Taj to a great extent. The most salient feature of his reign was that the Mughal ladies continued to patronise building of monuments to which Roshanara Gardens bear testimony.

While Mughal art and architecture was passing through an age of immense creative activity, Hindu art had fallen into oblivion and ultimately taken refuge in the courts of Rajasthan. The ruling kings of these states patronised the building of numerous monuments of great artistic beauty. Islamic influence is explicitly evident in these monuments since the use of sculpture had almost disappeared and old splendour and gorgeousness were no more to be seen. Some specimens of this architecture can be found at Brindaban, near Mathura where Rajput rulers extended their support to the building of temples.

Some art critics have not failed to notice the hand of European artists and architects in the buildings of Mughals but I may point out here that there is no doubt they bear unmistakable foreign influence but to ascribe the entire work to the genius of the west is wholly unfounded and such theories are propounded more out of mischief than any substantial purport of history.

Revival of painting

What transpired in the realm of painting after the Ajanta and Bagh is little known. The artists probably took refuge in the temples of south India and devoted themselves towards the development of religious art. Mughals revived painting. Babar was himself a good painter. He painted birds, flowers and animals. His son Humayun brought from Iran Mir Sayyed Ali and Abdus Samad who not only introduced a new form of painting in India but instilled in the mind of young Akbar intense love for art about which Abul Fazal writes : "Prominent amongst the artists were Abdus Samad, Mir Sayyed Ali, Basawan, Sanwaldas, Faruq Beg, Kesu, Mukund and Jagannath Das. The objects portrayed show great variety of selection made from nature, life, society and culture. The colour scheme is exquisitely balanced and sufficient use has been made of the blue, red, green and white along with the yellow, pink and velvet." It was during Jahangir's reign that painting made real progress. Captain Hawkins and Sir Thomas Roe have paid glowing tribute

to his discerning sense for painting. The prominent artists patronised by him were Farooq, Ustad Mansoor, Bishen Das, Aqua Raza, Keshav, Mohammed Nadir, Madhav, Tulsi and Manohar. The Mughal artists brought out the beauties of nature, grace of feminine body and royal splendour with rare skill and deftness inside the transparent veil, the swing and swaying movement of feminine body have been brought out with great precision and detail. "Unfortunately, after Jahangir", as Percy Brown writes, "the soul of Mughal painting also departed, its outward form remained for a time but its real spirit died with Jahangir." Mughal painting died after Jahangir because it tended to become over-ornate, unduly ornamented, unnatural and had lost spontaneity of free expression. Shah Jahan did not have that much love for painting as he had for architecture. However, painting continued to flourish under the patronage of artists like Faquirullah, Chintamani, Anup Chitra and Mir Hashim. They laid emphasis on heavy decor, over-ornamentation, excessive display of gold and silver and portrayal of royal splendour. The result was that the natural genius of the artist was subordinated to that of royal whim and caprice.

For a short while, art of painting received a fresh deal from Dara Shikoh who was himself a gifted artist but unfortunately he lost his throne to a more arrogant contender, who was in no way interested in fine arts and aesthetics. The only painting he commissioned was that of the condition of his son while in jail. Dreading his fits of rage, most of the artists fled his court and settled in the distant Himalayan kingdoms where in peaceful environment and local protection they developed new schools of art.

Rajput art

Dr Coomaraswamy unearthed the age-old paintings from various places, identified and catalogued them and named them as 'Rajput art'. The Rajasthan painter was a peculiar blend of Mughal, classical and local art. The artist selected his subjects from the contemporary life and depicted them as he saw. The beauty of the feminine body held particular charm for him which was dexterously depicted in Nayaka-Nayika paintings. Bright colours were used for bringing out serene, calm, tender pose, beauteous face, glittering eyes, bursting breasts and captivating appearance. The artist showed an inborn flair for portraying half open breasts, bulging hips, slender

waist and inviting eyes. If the artist was alive towards the worldly aspects of life and culture, he was also aware about the mythological incidents from the pages of Git Govind, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Padmavat, Barahmasa, Bhagvadpurana and other scriptures. Besides these, the raga and ragini paintings also formed an important branch of contemporary painting.

It is remarkable that if the artist painted the courtly love scenes he did not forget to portray as a chronicler and religious teacher common man's endeavours for the betterment of his lot. The prominent centres of art were Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Bundi, Bikaner, Marwar, Kota and Kishengarh. Kishengarh is known for miniature paintings. These art centres continued to flourish as long as there was royal patronage but with the breakdown of princely states the artists gradually disappeared into oblivion.

Kangra and Basholi art

The Himalayan kingdoms of Kangra and Basholi gave rise to two distinct schools of art which are now recognised by the art critics as independent schools of art. Now Garhwal school of painting has also come to be recognised.

The Kangra school of art was patronised by Raja Sansar Chand, who, in the words of Moorcraft, "is so fond of drawing and has many artists in his employ. He has a large collection of pictures, but the greater part represents the feats of Krishna and Balaram, the adventures of Arjuna and subjects from Mahabharata." The Kangra artists kept particular eye for decency in the midst of exotic representations. The prominent art centres of this school were Nurpur, Arki, Nalagarh and Mandi.

The earliest patron of Basholi art was Sangrampal of Jammu who invited artists for executing certain paintings and thus a new school of art was born. This school was later on patronised by Raja Medini Pal. The Basholi painters preferred the use of bright colours like red, green, blue and yellow. The portrayal of Nayaka and Nayika concept and Git Govind formed important aspect of contemporary painting. Basholi Nayakas and Nayikas have broad and sturdy smile, inviting eyes, slightly descending forehead and rosy cheeks. The love and sports of Radha-Krishna have been immortalised through the media of painting. Often some people confuse Kangra art with Basholi. For distinguishing one from the

other, the viewer has to take into consideration the colour scheme, drawing of body lines and treatment of the eyes and nose.

Mukundilal has brought in limelight the art schools of Garhwal and Kumaon and now Th. Shoorbir Singh is doing commendable work by releasing prints of original paintings. The prominent artist of Garhwal school was Maula Ram.

The rise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Punjab signalled the end of Himalayan kingdoms but at the same time it marked the beginning of a new school of art in Punjab since the thrown-out artists were re-employed and commissioned for fresh tasks. These artists decorated the Golden Temple and other places of historic interest with excellent paintings. A good collection of the paintings commissioned by Maharaja Ranjit Singh are with a private collector in Pakistan and Maharaja of Patiala.

End of glorious epoch

The collapse of Mughal power, breakdown of Marhatta supremacy, disappearance of Rajput chiefs and end of Sikh power proved ruinous for the history of India. For quite some time fate of the country hung in the balance. As soon as the political shape of the country was settled the western impact was brought in to infuse new life in Indian society and culture. In this respect, from the viewpoint of art, the most remarkable incident was the founding of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. The next landmark was the passing of Ancient Monuments Preservation Act. In order to implement the spirit of these measures the Archaeological Survey of India was founded. Besides maintaining and preserving ancient monuments it undertook the task to excavate ancient ruins so that civilisations covered under sand dunes may be unearthed. Now Indology had come to be recognised as an important subject for study. This new quest for knowledge proved eye opener and revealing. Things were again active and the brush and chisel were once more on the work. This was the beginning of renaissance.

After the fashion of Great Mughals, the Britishers set themselves to lay the foundations of a new capital and numerous other townships. This called for large scale construction work. The finest examples of British architecture are in Delhi. They are Italian in conception and Indian in execution. The eastern colonades, facades and domes have been skilfully mixed with Gothic pillars,

open corridors and archaic stiffness. Hindu sculptures and Muslim ornamentation were discarded in favour of Gothic simplicity. This trend of art was followed by the princes of various states in their own capitals and thus ultimately a new architecture was born.

Renaissance art

Early European travellers and writers observed that Indian mind was not suited for the purpose of art; probably they were never aware about the rich artistic creations India possessed. World came to know about the rich treasures of Indian art through the endeavours of Havell, Marshall, Fergusson, Cunningham, Percy Brown and Sister Nivedita. They attracted worldwide attention towards India and inspired Indians to fathom the depths of Indian art which was so vivid and varied. Inspired by these early efforts, men like Abanindranath, A.K. Coomaraswamy, Raja Ravi Verma, Prof Ganguly, Rabindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose set to revitalise Indian art. Prof Ganguly and Havell edited an art magazine and it was through their efforts that artists like Yamini Roy, Asit Kumar Haldar, K.M. Majumdar, Nandalal Bose and Pramod Kumar Chattopadhyaya came into being and were able to add a luminous page in the art history of India.

The renaissance artists showed great interest in the people around them and made great variety of selection from contemporary life. They unceasingly painted whatever suited their mind. Although religious subjects were still being painted but now contemporary life and nature occupied increasing interest of the artist. It was Raja Ravi Verma who successfully utilised oil painting for glorifying scenes from scriptures. The use of colours became more symbolic and emphatic. Introduction of plaster of paris, alabaster, china clay and concrete revolutionised sculpture and now the artist began to give shape to his inner feelings instead of gods and goddesses.

So overwhelming was the reception accorded by the public to the art of painting that art schools began to be established in different parts of India. What was formerly considered a profession of a few people now came to be recognised as a hobby of high society. The artists who passed out from these schools now began to paint the beauty of nature, setting sun, silvery moonlit night, womanly grace, masculine prowess, mythological scenes and human efforts for the

betterment of his lot. The artist did not merely rest with these subjects. He soon began to paint the mystery of the night, rainy season, sweeping storms, Himalayan beauty and other aspects of modern life. The artist did not forget to search his subject amongst the lowly and the suppressed. The new artists were D.P. Roy Choudhry, Amrita Shergil, Hebbar, Madanlal Nagarkar, Shreedhar Mahapatra, B.L. Shah, Bendre and Ramkinkar. These artists introduced some new trends in art which ultimately gave rise to modern art.

Modern art

Many of the artists who served the renaissance period so well ultimately chose to wield their brush and chisel for introducing the abstract and unrealistic in the art, which has been called modern art and is known to art critics as fauvism, futurism, abstractionism, cubism, expressionism, realism and impressionism. In modern art long subtle curves are drawn with one sweep of brush or through the use of various colours. Very often colours are spread over a vast canvas and then some confusing designs and patterns are drawn which are said to reflect the inner feelings and traits of mind but what these abstract forms are intended to convey is anybody's guess. It has been rightly pointed out by A.S. Raman : "Abstract art is nothing but a contradiction in terms." This contradiction is often vulgar and vulgarity as you know has been defined by John Ruskin as 'a sort of death'. Vulgarity is produced through lack of imagination, insolence, ignorance and incompetence. In fact modernism in art has been inconsequential because it has killed or nearly killed all chances of what would have been a bright renaissance. It has been rightly pointed out by Elizabeth Todd : "Abstraction by Indian artists has been inconsequential, they are mostly the works of painters and sculptors who have neither intuition or intellect. They flirt with the modern technique or that—because they are determined to emancipate themselves from the cramping impact of academic curriculum—the question of their liberation does not arise, because they have never subjected themselves to the rigours of technical discipline."¹ Modernism in art reflects an effort on the part of artist to escape

1. Page 233, *The Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vol 1 and 2.

from the realities of life.

We have to check this escapism because modern Indian art has to fulfil a new obligation.

Art from new perspective

Art must retrieve the masses from the excessive obsession of foreign influence and it must hold the mirror up to the society for reflecting the development of its faculties and must fulfil the dictum 'Satyam Sivam Sundaram', that is, the true, the good and the beautiful.

Sangeet of India

The nature around us is itself vivid presentation of music in the form of twittering birds, fluttering butterflies, rustling leaves, rippling pools, budding flowers, twinkling stars, silvery moonlit night, swiftly winding rivers, gushing springs and resounding caves; all sing and dance in harmony with the beauties of nature. Music shows us the eternal, moving, striving and wandering will. Its impact is always profound and appealing. If it can lull a child to sleep it can also excite jealousy and anger on the other hand. It can generate the feelings of renunciation, sacrifice, love, kindness, sympathy, understanding, cooperation and coexistence, while at the same time it can also incite feelings of hatred and patriotism during the war. Thus the study and practice of music has always been regarded as a stimulant for mind.

Origin and development of music

The origin and development of music is lost in the fanciful accounts of ancient literature, legend and folklore and it was handed over by father to son and mother to daughter, in which religion certainly played the role of a driving force behind this transformation. The four vedas are considered the finest specimen of divine sangeet. Sangeet means 'gitam vadyam nrityam trayam sangita muchyete', i.e., vocal, instrumental and dancing comprise music and one is inseparable from the other. This unique fusion between the three is best symbolised in the figure of goddess Saraswati who is considered the source of all learning and aesthetics. According to

tradition, Lord Shiva danced the cosmic dance Tandava in the night of creation and his consort Parvati danced Lashya in the morning of recreation. Thus religious and secular have been adroitly mixed and mingled.

The first treatise on music was Natya Shastra written by sage Bharata. The very first chapter narrates the incident which led to the writing of this book. It is stated that Indra approached Brahma and asked the great creator for suggesting some simplified veda which may be accessible to women and shudras. Brahma entrusted this task to Bharata who in turn wrote Natya Shastra and on the basis of it presented a dance drama before the select audience of gods and goddesses. Natya Shastra made available the intricacies of vedas for the benefit of lesser educated people who were not able to grasp the philosophy of vedas. Thus music became a popular vehicle for educating the people and an instrument which could be wielded for mass upsurge.

Music was taken by gods and goddesses, prominent among them being Narada, Tumburu, Urvashi, Rambha and Menaka. The celestial race of Vidyadharas and Gandharvas took to it as part of their profession. Lord Krishna is considered the very symbol of music. It is interesting to note that Arjuna worked as a dance teacher for quite some time. When Amrapalli invited Gautama Buddha, the latter had no hitch in accepting her invitation. The profession was never looked down upon. Mauryas utilised music for educating the public and Ashoka made particular use of music as a popular vehicle for the propagation of dharma ideal. Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta described him as 'a gifted musician who could put to shame even Tumburu and Narada'. The literary accounts of the period are also helpful in tracing the place which music occupied. The writings of Kalidas, Bhasa and Bharvi are full of such excellent compositions that their melody still lingers on.

The political uncertainty badly affected the systematic progression of music and other aesthetics. The divine had become passionate and human inert. The natural flow of artists' genius had become subservient to princely whims. Then came the Mussulmans who brought to India their own concepts of music and also gave rise to liberalism in Indian music which expressed itself in the form of devotionism. This intense devotionism was fully reflected in the *Git Govind* of Jaidev who typified the love story of Radha-Krishna in an array of melodic tunes. Amir Khusrau gave

definite shape and form to these new trends by laying the foundations of Hindustani school of music. Another important event was the formulation of bhajans. The devotee was to concentrate on any figure or form and when by internal commotion the image was formed the devotee burst forth his thoughts in the form of a song called bhajan. It was a new form of music which penetrated every house irrespective of caste and creed and reformers found a new media for mass appeal in it. Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, Mirabai, Tulsidas, Gyaneshwar, Surdas and Tukaram took to it and made it an instrument for the spiritual awakening of India.

Mughals were great lovers of music. Noted musicians like Haridas, Tansen and Baiju Bawara lived during their reign about whom numerous legends have gone round narrating their fantastic feats. After the death of Tansen, his disciples divided themselves into vinakars (those who played vina) and rababiyars (those who played rabab) and thus gave rise to two schools of music. During the reign of Jahangir, Damodar Mishra flourished who wrote a treatise on music entitled 'Sangeet Darpana'. This book is considered a landmark in the annals of music because it is a work of great historical research and original thinking. The famous musicians of this age were Janardan, Jagannath and Dirang Khan. Incidentally, Aurangzeb is associated with the neglect of music as well, about which H.A. Popley writes : "A story is told how the court musicians, desiring to draw the king's attention, came past his balcony carrying a gaily dressed corpse upon a pier and chanting mournful songs. Upon the emperor enquiring what the matter was, they told him that the music had died from neglect and they were taking its corpse to the burial ground. He replied at once : 'Very well, make the grave deep, so that neither voice nor echo may issue from it'.¹ Fortunately, the voice of music continued to echo from the princely courts of Jaipur, Gwalior, Indore, Bhopal, Baroda, Travancore, Mysore and Nawab of Rampur. Tulaji of Travancore wrote 'Sangeet Sarmritam'. This unique work brings out the salient features of Indian classical music and records the gradual development of music from one stage to another. Raja Pratap Singh of Jaipur invited a musical conference, the deliberations of which were recorded in a beautiful book entitled 'Sangeet Sar'. Raja Perumal Maharaj of Travancore gave protection and shelter

1. *Music of India*, H.A. Popley.

to some of the famous musicians of the time. To these early efforts was added the pioneering research work done by Sir William Jones, Capt Day and Capt Williard. They laid bare the hidden aspects of Indian music before the western world. The other prominent musicians who delved in the secrets of Indian music were Krishnanand Vyas and Srinivas who respectively wrote 'Sangeet Kalpadrum' and 'Ragtattva Bodh'. Another significant work of considerable merit was 'Nagmat-i-Asaphi'.

Eighteenth century was dominated by Tyagraja in the far south. He inherited the rich background of Pundarika Vithal and Somnath who laid the foundation of Carnatic music. He also drew inspiration from Ramamatya and Pandit Vekunthmukhi. Thus drawing his inspiration from the past he formed a bridge between the old and the new. He brought music from the courts to the masses. His contemporaries were Shyam Shastri and Muttuswami Dikshiteshwar. The contribution of Tyagraja has been thus described by V. Krishnamurti : "Truly saint Tyagraja represents the very synthesis of culture and religion as expressed by the devotional and divine music and as such, his genius and inspiration are bound to live as long as music lives, ennobling humanity to higher values."¹ In fact the classical spirit of Indian music was being maintained in the far south. If north India was receptive to the cause of foreign impact, south India was protecting what tradition had bequeathed. This helped India to step into modern India without breaking its bonds with the past.

The growth and development of modern music is attributed to the writing of 'Universal History of Music' by Raja Surendranath Tagore. This creative book pointed towards new vistas for the development of music. Many associations and institutions cropped up for the development of music. In this task of revival Vishnu Narain Bhatkhande was playing a significant role. He met every renowned musician of his time and later on converted his researches into five volumes. It is considered a bible for the musicians. He also founded Indian Academy of Music and Marris School of Music. Another remarkable figure in this field of activity was Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. If Bhatkhande unearthed the treasures of Indian music, Paluskar placed it before the public in true shape and form. He himself was a gifted musician and is credited with the

1. *Bhavan's Journal*, Jan. 10, 1969—V. Krishnamurti.

opening of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya at Lahore and Bombay.

Rabindranath Tagore added a new page in modern Indian music by introducing folk music along with the classical, which is now popularly known as Rabindra Sangeet. His contribution has been thus summarised by O. Goswami: "Tagore rightly felt that the traditional Indian music had reacted strongly against its virtuosity, created many tunes drawing freely from the classical and popular sources, modifying them on a semi-classical pattern."¹ Through the platform of Shantiniketan he introduced music in high families. Due to Tagore's efforts the old attitude of disregard for the musicians and dancers completely changed and now they occupied a respectable place in society.

In the field of dancing, pioneering work was done by Anna Pavalova which will always be remembered as something unsurpassable. She organised a dancing troupe with the help of Udai Shankar and rendered some of the mythological events in dance-drama sequences. This task was carried further by Madame Simkie. Encouraged by these developments, Rukmani Devi uplifted the Bharatnatyam from the temples and brought it before the masses. She founded a dancing school at Adyar which is still running well. Thus when Indian dancing was well set in India it was carried to foreign countries by Ram Gopal and La Meri. Kathak school of dancing was brought to light by Ragini Devi and Gopinath. Menka Devi brought to light the rich and artistic traits of Kathak dance. Manipuri dance was brought to light by Rabindranath Tagore.

Due to these early efforts, the art of singing and dancing came to be recognised as a respectable profession along with the instrumental music. The development of ballet troupes facilitated the portrayal of mythological scenes and new social concepts as well. Thus music became a media of education and entertainment of the masses. The introduction of gramophone, radio and cinema further revolutionised its mass appeal and in our own times television has definitely come to play a significant role.

Having analysed the growth and development of music, we now proceed to examine the basic principles of sangeet.

Scope of sangeet

The scope of sangeet is comprehensive in the true sense of the word. Scientific treatment of Indian music enabled musicians to

1. *The Story of Indian Music* : O. Goswami.

compose different compositions for given hour, day and season of the year. They also represented different stages in human emotion and commotion. This varied representation has been thus classified—

- Svaradhyaya* — deals with the different notes.
- Ragadhyaya* — deals with the different melody forms.
- Taladhyaya* — deals with the rhythm and timing.
- Hastadhyaya* — deals with the playing of instruments.
- Nrityadhyaya* — deals with the art of dancing.
- Bhavadhyaya* — deals with the gesticulation and acting.
- Arthadhyaya* — deals with the interpretation and significance of different notes.

This scientific classification of music gives rise to various sentiments in the mind of viewer and listener which itself forms an independent branch of Indian music.

Effect of music on human mind

Spinoza says about the effect of music on human mind : "Music is good to the melancholy, bad to mourners, and indifferent to the dead." Certainly music makes definite impact on human mind. In Indian music, the different bhavas or sentiments are excited through different ragas and raginis. Sangeet Darpana throws sufficient light on this subject, and provides a long list of sentiments which can be excited or produced by music, the prominent being, namely—

- Rati* — pleasure, amusement, love and sensual passion.
- Hasa* — laughter, merriment and ridicule.
- Shoka* — sorrow and grief.
- Krodha* — anger and wrath.
- Utsah* — effort, determination and firmness.
- Bhaya* — fear, alarm and terror.
- Jugupsa* — censure, dislike and disgust.
- Vismaya* — wonder, surprise and admiration.
- Shama* — tranquillity, absence of passion, restraint and calmness.

When a particular bhava is excited, it gives rise to a particular rasa—a rasa is expressed through different syllables. The vowel

ga is used for exciting fear, disgust and pity, dha and pa are used for expression of love and humour. The impact made by these words is so penetrating that at times the listener loses his self and is completely lost in the embryo of sentiments. This concept of bhava has been further elaborated in the raga and ragini concept.

Raga and ragini

The Indian music visualises different sentiments in various human forms and they are identified as various ragas and raginis. This concept has been thus explained in Sangeet Darpana : "A raga is spoken by a learned man as that which is embellished with the colour of musical notes, has its separate tune and import, and is pleasing to the mind." This concept has been bound with the stringencies of strict technicalities. The whole ideology has been thus analysed by Fox Strangways : "Raga from a root ranga 'to be dyed to glow' means 'colour'; thence colour of mind, i.e., emotion. Its European analogue will therefore be whatever gives colour to a piece of music, and since this may be according to the circumstances, melody, harmony, counterpoint, or instrumentation, but most of all harmony, we have no real equivalent for a word which applies technically only to melody. Raga is connected with rakti 'affection' . . . raga in north Indian and ragam in south Indian . . . its definition is rather long . . . an arbitrary series of notes characterised as far as possible as individuals, by proximity to our remoteness from the note which marks the testiture, by a special order in which they are usually taken, by the frequency or the reverse with which they occur, by grace or the absence of it, and by relation to a tonic usually reinforced by a drone."¹

Raga and ragini forms derive their origin from different sources. Some ragas have been named after a race, e.g., Malsri after the Malavas, Saveri after the Maukhri, Gujari after the Gujaras, Pulinda after the Pulindas and Bhairvi after the Bharous. Some ragas have been named after gods, goddesses, birds, animals and even trees. Nagdwani raga has been named after snakes. Raga bihag derives its name from a bird named bihag. Raga pilu has been named after a tree. Some ragas and raginis have been named after composers like Amir Khusrau, Hussain Sharqui of

1. P. 107, *The Music of Hindustan* : Fox Strangways.

Jaunpur, Mian Tansen and Mira Bai. The idea behind the naming of ragas and raginis has been thus analysed by O. Goswami : "Thus we find that the Indian music is not vibrating with strains of melodies from a single people. Here is a symphony, into which, through long centuries, diverse notes, diverse strains and contradictory reasons and practices have entered in, combined, clashed and recombined to harmonise into one remarkable cohesion and homogeneity by the philosophy of find unity in diversity."¹ With the passage of time, the number of ragas increased and gradually various diminutive forms also began to be included within the original forms. These newly developed ragas came to be recognised as *puta* ragas. Nowadays, following broad-based division of ragas is accepted—

Male raga The male ragas express the sentiments of masculine traits like courage, valour, anger, drive and wonder. The male melodies have been divided into six forms and are intended to be sung in six different seasons of the year. Bhairvi is sung in summer, Megha in rainy season, Pancham in autumn, Narnarayan in early winter, Sri in winter and Basant in spring. Each raga indicates the different qualities of the changing season and invokes upon the deity of that season to bestow its fullest boons on the people. For invoking the deity, the discipline of time, season of the year and concentration of body, soul and mind has to be maintained, in the absence of which results can be adverse.

Female ragini The ragini inspires the sentiments of feminine quality like love, sorrow, emotion, laughter and compassion. Some music writers deny the existence of any ragini forms but Narada gives a list of some thirty-six ragini forms.

Neuter or puta raga These ragas are considered an outcome of the fusion between the above two ragas. They express the sentiments of love, passion, terror, fear, disgust and peace.

The concept of raga and ragini is based on the three notes called *graha*, *amsa* and *nyasa*; *graha* is beginning note, *amsa* predominant and *nyasa* is ending note. These days musicians use only *amsa* and call it *vadi*. In playing these notes the element of timing

1. *The Story of Indian Music* : O. Goswami.

is most essential. The twenty-four hours of a day have been divided into eight watches. Much importance was given to this element of timing which is proved from a story in Abhduta Ramayana. The story relates that Narada used to consider himself a gifted musician. In order to kill the false pride of Narada, Lord Vishnu once took him to a house where numerous men and women were lying disabled and infirm. Lord Vishnu asked Narada to go and ask the reason for their misery. Narada went disguised as a Brahmin and asked the desired question. They told him that they were raga and ragini forms and the misery had descended on them due to Narada who was fiddling with the music forms. When asked how they can be cured, they informed that they could be cured only by a gifted musician who can play the correct raga and ragini at correct time and season of the year. Narada fled on his heels and later Vishnu played all the ragas and raginis correctly thus giving a new lease of life to them.

These raga and ragini forms have been illustrated through paintings and sculptures and thus art and music have worked as complementary to each other in India.

Art and music

Music has been illustrated by the pictorial artists. "By a long tradition", observes D.C. Ganguly, "Indian music is happily related to and linked with Indian pictorial art and the designs and compositions sought the aid of visual artist to demonstrate and interpret the fundamental characteristics of each melody by visible diagrams and dramatic picturisation of the emotional significance of each of the melody types (ragas and raginis) . . . According to the doctrine of Indian music, it is believed that each raga or ragini has its peculiar psychic form, corresponding to its sonal body over which the former presides as the nymph deity or devta, the presiding deity of that particular melody."¹ The pictorial representation of the raga was to fit into the description of the song. Such poetic representations can be seen in the sculptures of Khajuraho, Chidambaram, Mughal, Rajput and Himalayan paintings. In fact the dancing frieze of Nataraja is the very synthesis of music and art.

Each raga has been differently portrayed according to the effect

1. *Bhavan's Journal* (Annual), Aug. 6, 1961.

that raga created. The Basant raga has been created with a man standing under a mango grove with golden hue. He is gaily dressed in yellow garments and is loved and desired by pretty women who have been painted all around him in most glamorous clothes. Bhairvi ragini has been portrayed in the form of Parvati worshipping Lord Shiva. The raga Malkaus has been depicted in a picture where lovers have been shown engaged in most copulous love. The Kukubha ragini has been shown in the form of a nude woman. Her eyes show the forlorn look of a sensuous lover and her cheeks show the red glow of a fresh kiss. The voice of the cuckoo pains and agitates her heart. Pancham raga has been illustrated by painting a couple engaged in most amorous acts of love-making. The lovers have been decked in red clothes. Megha raga is the melody of rainy season when clouds bring torrential rain and the whole atmosphere is filled with clouds, lightning and rain. The artist has taken great care in depicting all this. The whole phenomenon has been thus described by Percy Brown : "A work of art in which the tune, the song, the picture, the colours, the season, the hour and the virtues are seen blended together as to produce a composite production to which the west can furnish no parallel."¹

In the light of the above background we proceed to examine the theories and schools of gitam, vadyam and nrityam separately.

Gitam or vocal music

Gitam or vocal music can be defined as outer expression of inner feelings. In vocal music, the various traits of human mind are expressed in contrasting sentiments of humour and wit, fear and terror, affection and hatred, attachment and renunciation, love and hatred, joy and sorrow, selfishness and devoted service and finally hope and disappointment. These sentiments are expressed in melodies of different tunes, rhythm and harmony. The combination of these is known as a musical composition. Melodious voice and an aptitude for music are fundamental requirement for it, however Bharata lists the following requirements for a good singer—

Sravak — The voice should be neither cracking nor fluctuating.

1. P. 67, *Music of India* : H.A. Popley.

Susvara — The tonal element must be good.

Madhura — It should be melodious.

Svaradhaneravan — A well composed musical voice should be able to render not only one note but several notes harmoniously related with the basic note.

Trisihemoshobhi — The three saptaks (octaves), which are known as madhya and tara, originate from the chest, throat and heart.

Rules to be observed by a singer Ancient musicians have laid down exhaustive rules for singing as Sarangdeva says : "He should never sing pressing his teeth, should not shout while singing, he should not raise his voice high or low while singing or lower his chin unnecessarily. A good singer must possess audible and melodious voice, be able to express various raga and ragini forms distinctly, should know where to begin and where to end, distinguish between various types of alaps, use gamakas easily, keep the voice under control, know the talas well, can compose the ragas all by himself and use innumerable rhythm. The singer's voice should not shake and he should be able to sing even in lower octaves and must be able to hold listeners spell-bound by the sonority of his voice. Besides these, for proper singing, he should observe the following rules—

Sukumar — The voice should be graceful and dignified.

Purna — It should contain proper gamakas of necessary notes.

Prasanna — The meaning should be clear and discernible.

Vyakta — It should be fully expressive.

Vikrishta — The use of high pitched notes be avoided.

Madhura — The voice should be sweet and melodious.

Lavanya — The grace, charm, beauty and appeal of a work of art should be in it. Lavanya has been compared with the lustre of the moon.

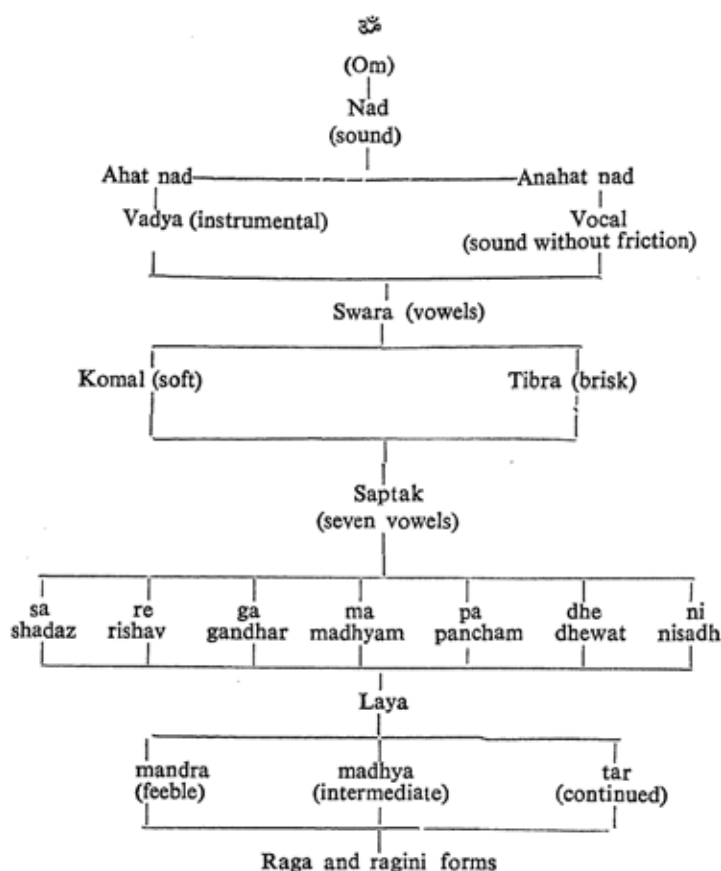
Slakhna — There must be clarity of expression between the upper and lower notes.

Surukta — It should combine the melody of bina and human voice.

Sama — Varnas should be properly set to rhythm.

Keeping in mind the principles of singing, we can proceed to examine the theory of gitam, i.e., vocal music.

Theory of gitam The theory of Indian music centres round the acoustic quality of the word 'Om'. This one word of Sanskrit is considered the very synthesis of art, religion, science and music, nay the cosmos itself. Ancient texts have dwelt at length on the meaning and interpretation of this one word, the symbology of which is a matter of great philosophical and academic interest. From the point of gitam it can be thus illustrated—



The above diagram can be thus explained : the sound is created either by friction or by the vocal chords. The sound created by friction is called ahat nad or instrumental music and the sound created by vocal chords is known as anahat nad or vocal music.

The sound can be either brisk, medium or soft. Each sound has seven vowels which represent various sounds produced by animals or birds, viz., peacock cries in shadaz (sa), cow produces rishav (re), goat bleats in gandhar (ga), the heron sounds in madhyam (ma), the cuckoo sings in pancham (pa); horses neigh in dhawat (dhe) and elephants scream in nisadh (ni). These saptaks are pronounced in feeble, intermediate or continued swaras. Particular mode of rendering produced the desired effect, whereby raga and ragini forms were created through dedicated concentration. The mode of rendering differs from place to place which has given rise to different schools of music or the gharanas as they are popularly called.

Schools of music There are scores of gharanas in Indian music out of which two are prominent, namely, Hindustani school of music and Carnatic school of music. It is only the mode of rendering a particular song which differs, the basic tenets of music remain the same. Sayan and Vidyaranya gave shape and form to Carnatic school of music and sant Purandardas enlarged its scope. Ramamatya determined the course of Carnatic music through varied compositions. Some musicians introduced their own raga and ragini forms. Amongst them Venkatmukhi was prominent who introduced sarab, jandi, alankaram, geetam and varnam which made raga and ragini forms identifiable as janaka (generic) and janya (generated). The janaka ragas are seventy-two in number and comprise all the saptaks. When we compare them with their north Indian counterparts we find definite distinctions between the two. The names of various ragas and raginis also differ, e.g., raga malkaus is known as raga hindolam, bageshwari as raga sri and tilak kamod as natia. The distinction between the two schools of music has been thus brought out by O. Goswami: "When one goes beyond the superficial difference, one finds that in Hindustani music the traces of an eclectic civilisation are visible and in Carnatic music the mask of Dravidian culture is writ large. Hindustani music is an ideal synthesis of Aryan institution and Muslim cultivation and Carnatic music is a mixture of Aryan motif with Dravidian practice."¹ Here again, as elsewhere, we find that in spite of outer differences there is underlying unity.

1. *The Story of Indian Music* : O. Goswami.

Vadyam or instrumental music

Instrumental music is as much necessary for gitam and nrityam as figures of speech are for any piece of writing. The ancient texts hold that 'the song has for its soul the sound which on the other hand is sustained by the instrument'. Instrumental music provides excellent rhythmic accompaniment for the vocal chords and if any instrument fails to produce such sound it is called 'suskamvadyam'. In Indian music tambura is considered proper instrument for controlling the pitch of the music and providing effective background for any dance-drama sequence. It provides that stability which is furnished in the west by harmony. Writing about this quality of tambura, A.K. Coomaraswamy points out : "The tambura must not be regarded as a sole instrument, nor an object of solo interest like any other accomplishments, its sound is rather the ambient—in which the song lives and moves and has its being."¹

The theory of instrumental music rests on the concept that every friction creates sound but music is concerned only with melodious sounds and when a number of melodious sounds are struck together it is called swara (vowel). These vowels can be either rapid, sluggish, intermediary or in brisk scale. The element of timing is necessary for the rhythmic movement of swaras which is done through hand, hence called tala. The popular instruments for this purpose are pakhawaz, mridang and tabla. These instruments enhance the quality of music by their perfect cohesion with the vocal music and dancing. The player makes ample use of paranas, gamakas and toras for enhancing the beauty of vadyam. To create rhythm with astonishing ease is called tora. In order to express different sentiments like mid, murchana, jama and ghasit are employed. Proper instruments for this purpose are sitar, sarangi and vina. The use of sam, bol, theka, abriti and similar other methods make the appeal of music more effective. Their use is as necessary as the use of grammar in a piece of writing.

Harmony Harmony means the synchronisation of two or more notes. This synchronisation of notes is achieved through the sounding of concordant notes. This concept of harmony has been thus explained by Swami Sankaranand : "As in all arts, in music, there

1. *The Dance of Shiva* : A.K. Coomaraswamy.

is a sharp distinction between substance and form. The substance of music consists of tones. The form to which these tones are attached is controlled by two different principles both of which are equally indispensable for mutual effect—the principles of rhythm and harmony. Musical rhythm in its simplest form arises from the production of a tone or small group of tones at regular intervals of time. Harmony arises from the fixing of tone of certain pitch; on the principle of rhythm they are qualitative and the rhythm and harmony together form the melodic form which consists of a succession of notes which are rhythmically and harmonically arranged.”¹ The beauty of harmonic music is that of tilth and culture; of melodic music that of briony and gossamer.

Musical instruments The first intuition to play on any instrument came from the day when man learned that nature around us is itself vivid manifestation of music in the form of deep echoing caves, rustling trees and twittering birds. This inspired human mind to invent instruments which can be played either by blowing with mouth or struck by hands. As musicians gained experience new instruments were added to the old and finally we have four types of ancient instruments—

Tantrigad (stringed instruments)—vina, kinnari, jaya, hastika and sarangi.

Sushir (wind instruments)—flute, horn, murli and sringa.

Ghan (metal instruments)—kartal, jayagnant, mazir, zhamtal and pataghosh.

Anaddha (instruments of percussion)—damru, tambura, dholak and mridang.

The above list is not exhaustive by any means because with the passage of time many more instruments were added to it. Most of the early instruments are still in use in spite of the fact that Mussulmans and Europeans introduced many of their instruments. Tambura and vina are still considered the best accompaniment for rhythm and harmony. In north India, vina has seven strings and can be played either by fingers or with the help of plectrum. In the south, it has normally five strings. A vina can be either Nardiya or Shardiya.

1. *Prehistoric Indus Valley Civilisation* : Swami Sankaranand.

The existing classification of instruments is as follows—

Stringed instruments—vina, sitar, rabab, dilruba, sarangi, sarod, esraj, chikara, mayuri etc.

Wind instruments—sringa, sankh, bansuri, algosa, nagsuram, pongi, kume, turhi, shahnai and nafri.

Instruments of percussion—mridang, tabla, pakhawaz, bheri, nakhare, naubat, dhol, dholki, damru, tambura, cymbals and tamburin.

Western instruments—harmonium, piano, violin, guitar, piccolo, clarinet, drum, trumpet, electric guitar etc.

Instrumental music today Today instrumental music occupies an important place in the realm of entertainment. As a matter of fact instrumentalists have acquired international recognition for India and today discs of Indian music and sitar have won world acclaim and famous instrumentalists like Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan are household names.

Nrityam or dancing

Nritya has been defined by Rukmani Devi in these terms : "It is the history of the soul of India and, therefore, expression both of the manifest and the unmanifest. It is the spirit of both eternity and time. It is the spirit of both man and woman. It is the purush and prakriti, and expression of the evolution of the movement, a truly creative force that has come down to us from ages. This embodiment of sound and rhythm which creates a poetry of spiritual expression is called dance or nritya."¹ The nritya has been best represented in the nritya of Shiva and Parvati. Shiva dances Tandava and sends through inert matter pulsating waves of awakening sound and Parvati dances Lashya in the morning of recreation appearing as a glory and sustained manifold phenomenon. All artistic forms emanate from these two forms of dancing.

Dancing is considered in India the sacrifice of self before the principal deity of the temple. The dancer loses his or her self and finds it manifested in the eternal spirit. In south India there was a clan known as devdasis who dedicated their entire life to the service of god. This role played by the temples has been thus described by Mohan Khokar : "The temple has thus played a vital

role in the evolution and development of every form of Indian classical dance. But there are other ways, too, in which the temple has made a contribution to the art. The countless sculptures we have of dance poses were all originally made to adorn temples, and though the bulk of the poses represented are probably imaginary, there are temples, such as those at Chidambaram, Tanjore, Kanchipuram, Bhuvaneshwar and Konarak, which carry carvings based on recognised dancing techniques." The dancing friezes provide excellent illustrations for the students of art and dancing.

The art of dancing requires that the aspirants should conform to some rigorous standards.

Qualities of a dancer Every aspirant of dancing must have a flair for hard work and should be ready to undergo rigorous training and practice. He or she should be young, lovely, self-confident, charming, agreeable and dexterous, well versed in moving eye-balls, able to follow the instruments, richly decked with ornaments, of medium height, neither stout nor thin and balanced in muscles, hands and legs. In addition to these a danseuse is required to be neither tall nor short, broad and balanced at the hips, slender in waist and should have prominent breasts. The beauty of the face is to be confirmed by the intellect of the mind.

Gifted with the above qualities of head and heart an artist is required to attain a high degree of perfection in the art of gesticulation.

Art of gesticulation

Dancing is a combination of gesticulation (bhava) and timing (tala), the latter enhances the quality of dance by the rhythmic movement of different organs. The word tala is interpreted to mean and convey the sense 'Tandava' and 'Lashya', the first letters of these words make ta+la. Bhava expresses the sentiments of the song. Thus the actor has two-fold duty, i.e., in the first place he has to explain the important points of a song by proper motions of his body and in the second place to express sentiments. The sentiments are expressed through face, eyes, hands and legs. The eighth chapter of the Natya Shastra explains thirteen poses of head, thirty-six kinds of glances, nine movements of eye-balls, nine functions of eyelids, seven of eyebrows, seven kinds of move-

ments of nose, six expressions of cheeks, six movements of lips, four types of mukhaja and in the ninth chapter twenty-four single-handed poses, twenty-seven nritya hastas, various poses of chest, belly, sides, waist, thigh, knees, calves and feet have been explained. Thus every part of the body is intended to convey some meaning. According to Narada the body of a dancer carries out the following functions : 'By his or her body he or she indicates the general import of a song, with his or her eyes he or she expresses the feelings and sentiments and with his or her feet he or she keeps the tal or rhythm.' In fact the art of gesticulation forms a bridge between the viewer and the performer.

This method of gesticulation differs from place to place and accordingly there is distinctness in one form of dancing from the other.

Classical schools of dancing There are numerous forms of Indian dancing out of which only four are recognised as classical dance forms. These are Bharatnatyam, Kathakali, Manipuri and Kathak. All the schools conform to the standards of angika (gesture through body and limb), bachika (speech), sattvika (moods and feelings) and aharya (costumes and adornments).

Bharatnatyam It is recognised as most ancient form of dancing about which Vasanti Rammaiah writes : "Bharatnatyam is an eternal, classical and universal art. It is synchronisation of bhava (emotion), raga (melody) and rhythm (tala). It is the artistic co-ordination of gestures of the hands, the expression of the face and the postures of the body. And all the movements have to be synchronised with raga and tala. For generations, the Bharatnatyam style has been preserved in its pristine glory and improved in its presentation by successive lines of Bhagavad melas (guild of brahmanas), Narravanaras (of the devdasi community) and exponents of the temples of south India."¹ Bharatnatyam is a solo dance conveniently taken by female dancers but in modern times male dancers like Ram Gopal and Udai Shankar have also taken to it. It is neither nritya meaning pure or nritya (expressive). While the danseuse dances, vidwan keeps timing by clapping, often mridang and majira are also played in accompaniment. The

1. Page 37, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, Dec. 1, 1963.

sentiments are expressed through footwork or facial expressions which are always satvika. Primarily, Bharatnatyam provides Lashya form of dancing but Tandava too is danced.

Kathakali In the wonderful surroundings of Kerala State the most ancient form of dancing still survives and is known as Kathakali. The artists all gay and happy recreate a world of mythological events where gods and demons, men and women, come and play their distinctive roles. The narratives are told through the use of artificial masks which are worn by the artists or they paint their faces in order to give a set of expression thus heightening the emotional aspects of the character. The famous Kathakali exponent Krishna Kutty says about it : "Through the variations of make-up, we show the different types of characters—pachcha (green), kathi (knife), thadi (beard), kari (black) and minku (smooth). Pachcha is the green make-up used for satvik or divine persons, good kings and virtuous people. In kathi there is a red patch representing rajasik personages who are influenced by evil desires. Thadi means beard, and is used again in three colours : white suggesting the monkey characters, the black depicting hunters, and the red colour depicting the demons."¹ Kathakali dance begins with the rhythmic movement of the eyes, subsequently followed by the movement of the whole body. The dance sequence begins with the sringar rasa and ends up with abhaya or shanta rasa. Throughout the dance sequence the drummer keeps timing by beating the drum.

In our own times Kathakali school of dancing has received a new deal from poet Vellathol. The Kerala Kala Mandalam bears testimony to the pioneering work done by him.

Kathak In Kathak dance, while the dancer dances, the instrumentalist keeps time. The movements are almost breath-taking. This form of dance was danced in the royal courts and with the end of princely states the dancing girls turned into bizarre nautch girls, hence it came to be looked down upon but due to the efforts of Achhan Maharaj and Sambhu Maharaj it was recognised as an established form of dance.

Manipuri In the lovely surroundings of Manipur an ancient form

1. Page 37, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, Dec. 1, 1963.

of dancing lives and continues to prosper. It is said that Lord Krishna danced Bhangi dance about which Rita Devi says : "To witness the bhangi parang—that most orthodox and traditional of Manipuri dances, which have been handed down from one generation to another in its pristine purity—is to see Manipuri nritta in its truest and most complete form, to change, corrupt or curtail even one of the movements of which is considered a great sin against the gods themselves."¹ The entire dance sequence is well known for its vitality and costumes. It is of two kinds, namely, La haroba and Ras. La haroba is danced in the open courtyard and young boys and girls take part in it. It is contemplated that in the sport, merriment, love, affection and humour of the dancers divine soul has entered. In ras form of dancing bhavas or sentiments dominate.

The love story of Radha-Krishna forms part of these dance sequences in which the dancers fall in a cordon round Krishna and express various sentiments through gesticulation and words. A famous dance critic has described this dance form as 'lyricism incarnate, expressing itself in florid expressions of sentiments'.

Besides the aforementioned classical schools of dancing, numerous other dance forms flourish, most prominent being the ras-lila of Mathura, bhangra of Punjab, santhal and kathal of central India, kutchipudi of Andhra, chow of Seraikela, kathputli of Marwar, jhora of Kumaon, garba of Gujarat, sadir of south India, bhagavad mela of Tamilnad, mohiniattam of Kerala, orissi of Orissa and yakshagan of Mysore. These dance forms reflect the local custom, tradition, culture and their merriment.

Having examined in brief the basic principles of Indian sangeet we proceed to examine it in the modern context when the west is making rapid inroads into Indian culture.

Eastern melody and western harmony

In western music appropriate songs are composed for different occasions as against the Indian system where emphasis is on the exposition of different tunes according to the hours of the day. The principal sentiments expressed in the western music are various tones which are firm and sturdy note, the rousy note, the

1. Page 103, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, Nov. 24, 1963.

melancholy note, the calm or peaceful note and the solemn or inspiring note. The western musician lays emphasis on the production of a certain note but the eastern musician rapidly moves from one note to another thus forming a continuous relation between the different notes. This failure on the part of western musicians prevented them from acquiring that magical and psychological appeal which is inherent in Indian music.

Greek philosopher Plato considered words, harmonica and rhythm an inseparable part of a song. He held : "For the whole life of man stands in need of harmony and rhythm and the decisive importance of education in poetry and music; rhythm and harmony sink deep into the recess of the soul and take the strongest hold there, bringing that grace of body and mind which is only to be found in one who is brought up in the right way."¹ This grace of body and mind was reflected in the life and deeds of great musicians like Mozart, Bach, Heinrich, Beethoven, Gustav, Mehler, Debussy, Bartok, Kodley, Elgar, Stravinsky and Schubert who found in music the truest and the most congenial form of self-expression.

Like the Indian music and art the finest compositions of western music are those which have religious appeal behind them. This characteristic of Indian and western music has been thus characterised by Rabindranath Tagore : "In our country the singing of the song is all important and in the song itself lies all our difficulty; in the west on the contrary the voice production is the chief concern and with the voice they achieve the impossible. Here in India, the real audience only listens to the singing. European music looks towards diversity and we look for unity. In our music, variegated tanas flow as if from the sound sprouts, the one is not the echo of the other but each possesses its own individuality yet mingling and converging together to make the whole . . . harmony expresses in tone the magnificent dance drama of the diverse manifestations of nature. But in the centre of it there runs a melody, in the background of rhythm and time on which the dance, there, fulfils its round. Our music, on the contrary, tries to catch this central melody; the nature of the western people is to progress in step with the eternally changing diversity, and our habit is to listen quietly but intently to the music and calm ourselves. European music does not spring from the life of the people as it has its

1. P. 88, *The Republic of Plato* : Francis Macdonald.

source outside . . . our music thus passes beyond pleasure and pain. It quietly opens the gate of a pleasure garden and invites the infinite among the crowd . . . western music is explosive, it excites . . . there is no scope in it for reaching the heart of the audience whereas the Indian music has all the qualities that dart in the heart truer than cupid's arrow."¹

Indian music breaks the limitations of mind and opens a fountain of peace, happiness and satisfaction; on the other hand is western music which excites and leads to action. The subtle distinction between the two has been thus brought out by Yehudi Menuhin : "An Indian listener is, therefore, like a person who can appreciate twenty different shades of blue, and different shades of red, the westerner is accustomed to an enormous painting with yellow, green, red and every other colour which completely dazzle him and carry him away . . . Indian music requires more concentrated meditation, a more retrospective element. It requires an audience to forget about time and material achievements and clearing of mind. This is an attitude of mind difficult for a westerner." In spite of these basic differences of attitude and treatment, today both are merging together into a harmonious whole, particularly through cinema, TV and radio which have come to occupy an important place in modern society and have become mass media of cultural renovation.

1. P. 249, *The Story of Indian Music* : O. Goswami.

Greater India

Such claims as Manu lays may seem superfluous to some of my readers but there were days when people of different countries took their lessons from India. It is not definitely known when the process of Indianisation started but our accounts go back to those days when great epic wars were being fought. Kathasaritsagar mentions numerous accounts of early maritime adventures. These early voyagers were certainly men of great determination and courage. They were often motivated by religious awakening and cultural advancement. They offered this message to the people of China, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Ceylon, Burma, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Tibet, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Malaysia, Central Asia and South America. Looking at the culture of these countries an awareness grows upon us that what we see in these countries is but further extension of Indian culture. The extension of Indian culture was a protracted process in which Hellenic, Egyptian, Chinese and Roman elements were adroitly mixed and mingled.

The ideals which Indian culture intended to spread in these countries can be thus summed up : an awareness towards the unity of life, a love for ultimate and real in preference to immediate and particular and belief in toleration, cooperation and peace. In the subsequent paragraphs we will examine the spread of these ideals in different countries of the world.

India and Hellenic world

Before Alexander's invasion all accounts of Indo-Hellenic ex-

change are curious mixture of reportage, myth and travellers' tales. Since and after the invasion we are on somewhat firmer ground and decidedly know the extent and volume of exchange between the two cultural groups. Although after Alexander's invasion 'India plunged into deep thought' but even then there is evidence of definite meeting and merging of the two. Hellenic impact made itself expressed in science, medicine, astronomy, philosophy, coinage and military science. Panini makes reference to the versatility of the Yavanas in the field of astrology and astronomy. On the other hand India also made impact on the Hellenic culture as Persian sources narrate that Sassanid king Shapur I 'caused to be included amongst the holy books secular works on medicine, astronomy and metaphysics found in India and Greece'. Plato speaks of Indian philosophy in high terms. He was very much impressed with Indian literature and culture. As a matter of fact, India and Greece were the pivot round which orient and occident revolved as has been rightly pointed out by Humayun Kabir : "Greece once stood for balance, order, system, rationalism, and self-expression and ushered a new era of sweetness and light in the world. India, once the symbol of continuity, comprehensiveness, toleration, understanding and compassion, began the great age of spiritual awakening of the east."

Unfortunately, with the passage of time bad days descended on India and Greece and consequently they faded into insignificance but in spite of political deterioration cultural stream continued to flow, and let us hope it will again fill the mind of people with fresh and invigorating thought-currents.

Indian culture in America

The pioneering research carried out by Bhikshu Chamanlal in this far-flung land has unearthed some hidden pages from ancient Indian colonisation activities. He has pointed out that the prevalence of Maya architecture, existence of Sati figures in Peru, Guatemala and Bolivia and sculptural finds of the fine figures of Shiva, Ganesh, Hanuman, Kurmavtar and Vishnu speak of nothing but Indian background. Prof Ram Mua writes : "The human types are like those of India. Their perfection in design, the irreproachable technique of the reliefs, the sumptuous head-dress, the ostentatious buildings on high ground. the system of construction, all speak of

India and orient.”¹ The researches in anthropometry reveal definite racial mixing up between the two.

Central Asia

In the sand-enveloped countries of central Asia the archaeologists have unearthed a rich storehouse of ancient civilisation which bears definite marks of Indian culture and civilisation. Although physical appearance of the area has so much changed with the passage of time that it is very difficult to connect the history of the area but thanks to the pioneering work carried out by Sir Auriel Stien, the mysteries of the past have become facts of history and culture. The Buddhist monastery, Saiva temples, lecture halls and evenly planned houses present the sight of some ancient town. Soviet archaeologist Khmelinsky rightly points out : “The people of Soviet central Asia now remember the age-old ties that bound them with the people of the greater India, ties which live on in numerous forms of people’s architecture, music and everyday life. They remember that their ancient national culture not only drew upon the treasure-house of Indian art, but in turn enriched it with the forms of their own monumental architecture, with the methods and techniques of miniature painting and poetry.”²

The brilliant episodes from the lives of Buddha adorn the caves of Bamyán and Habak, the ruins of Ktuch, Kázil, Turfan and Khotan which go to show the vastness and magnitude of Indian culture and religion. The monolithic sculptures of Shansi and Yuan Kang reflect the broad attitude of the times.

China

Chinese culture has been moulded and shaped by three factors, viz., Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Buddhism supplied the metaphysical foundations of Chinese culture. Traditional accounts narrate that the impact of Buddhism started from 65 A.D. when Chinese emperor of Han dynasty invited the Indian scholars Kashyap Matang and Dharmaraksha. He also sent a cultural mission to India with the intention of collecting ancient Indian scriptures and classical texts. He was so much impressed by the

1. *The Hindu America* : Diwan Chamanlal.
2. *The Hindustan Times* : April 29, 1962.

wisdom of Indian scholars that he became their disciple by taking to Buddhism. So far-reaching and abounding was the impact of Indian culture and religion that by the close of fourth century Buddhism was declared the official religion of China. Eighth century A.D. was dominated by Kumarjeev who translated many Indian texts into Chinese. He also founded many monasteries which became seats of learning. Fa-hian was amongst his disciples. In 431 A.D. Gunavarman landed in China at the invitation of Sang-Tan-vi. Jotvanbihar was founded after his name. He propagated Sat-dharmapundarika and founded the order of Buddhist nuns. These works were carried further by Gunabhadra, Dharmajalasaya, Ratnamali and Bodhinutshi. It was during this period of history that saint Buddhidharma reached China. He became a great stirring force in Chinese history and culture. According to I-tsing, "Kashyap Matang and Dharmaraksha preached good tiding in eastern capital Lo, the fame of Parmartha reached even to southern seas (Nanking) and the venerable Kumarjeev supplied the virtuous pattern to the foreign land." From China this virtuous pattern travelled to foreign lands as Prof Nilkantha Shastri points out : "From China, again, the traction plough travelled to the East Indian archipelago, occupation of which is shared with the type from India. Generally speaking, the line of demarcation between the two fields of cultural influence extends, though with many interpretations, from east-central Tibet southward through Indo-Chinese peninsula, thence swinging off in a south-easterly direction into Indonesia, Formosa, the Philippines and North Borneo remain on the Chinese side, while Sumatra, Java and nearer neighbours fall within the Indian sphere."¹

China has spurned our friendly postures towards her. All the glorious traditions of the past and traditional ties have been flung into complete disregard. I hope some day wiser counsels will prevail in China and they will realise that understanding with India is writ large on the face of history.

Korea

From China, Buddhism made eastern headway. Legendary accounts narrate that in 376 A.D. a Chinese monk reached Ku-Gur-yo from the Chinese mainland. He carried with him some

1. Page 7, *South Indian Influences in the Far East* : K.A. Nilkantha Shastri.

Buddhist literature and Buddha images which he propagated inside Korea through his extensive travels and also established monasteries at numerous places. Some years later Mos Mow followed him. He was accorded rousing reception by the Korean people. The king of Korea extended him royal patronage. The great Korean people were so intensely moved by the message of Buddha that they decided to carry it in neighbouring countries and thus the newly converted became active carriers of Indian religion and culture. The compassionate gospel of Buddha broke all barriers and ultimately drew the people of Asia under one fold.

Japan

Japan received the message of Buddha from the Korean people. The Japanese missionaries penetrated inside Japan and made available the message of Buddha for the benefit of the people. In this work of propagation remarkable work was done by the Buddhist nuns who penetrated inside Japanese houses and convinced ladies of the house that their miseries can be put an end to only through the teachings of Buddha. As a result of these early missionary activities, Japanese emperor So Toku became a Buddhist convert and Japanese people also wholeheartedly took to Buddhism.

Tibet

Cultural contact between Tibet and India was established centuries ago but since and after Ashoka's period we are on somewhat firmer ground. From the time of Strong Sten Gampo we have definite evidence of the influences which one exerted on the other. He sent a cultural mission to India for collecting Buddhist literature and Buddha icons. The books carried by the mission were translated into Tibetan. Another landmark in the history of Indo-Tibetan relations was the appointment of Padmasambhava as head priest of Lhasa monastery. As a matter of fact the institution traces its origin to him. He introduced the revolving disc which Tibetan Lamas always carry with them and play it round and round chanting 'Om manipadmeaham' which according to Charles Sherring means : 'Welcome O lotus embedded jewel welcome'.

Thervada school of Buddhism made rapid strides in Tibet and during the reign of Pala kings, numerous Tibetan scholars came to

study at the Universities of Nalanda and Jagdalpur. The famous Buddhist philosopher Taranath has made numerous references about close contacts between India and Tibet during the reign of Pala kings. India was therefore a constant source of inspiration for the people of Tibet.

Today Tibet forms part of China and in a calculated manner the culture of Tibet is being gradually destroyed but let us hope Tibet will survive the brunt and sooner or later win its rightful place in the comity of nations.

South-eastern countries

The spirit of maritime adventures and an urge to carry the flag of Indian culture led the early Indian pioneers to seek new adventures in their voyages. This ultimately brought them on the shores of south Indian seas. Flag followed the trade. The accounts of these early voyages have been preserved in Kathasaritsagar and other Sanskrit texts. Thus through continued struggle and relentless effort these colonies were turned into integral part of Greater India. Through long association, various aspects of Indian culture found their way in these far-flung lands. Indian was mixed with the local and thus a new pattern came into being about which Prof Nilkantha Shastri writes : "The Indianisation of the southern and south-eastern parts of Indo-China must be looked upon as a specific penetration, proceeding by slow imperceptible stages just like the similar movement that preceded it in the Deccan. Whether these missionaries of Indian civilisation came by land by way of Burma, or by sea (possibly after crossing the Isthmus of Kra), their culture prevailed wherever they went. Sanskrit became the official language of the Khmers and the Chams; Hindu beliefs, from vedic sacrifices down to sectarian beliefs, particularly Saivism, were adopted by them; and with Brahmanism came also Buddhism."¹

Malay peninsula and Indian archipelago

The Malay peninsula and Indian archipelago witnessed the rise and fall of two Hindu empires. The first empire was founded by Shailendra dynasty which ruled in the eighth century A.D. It held

1. *South Indian Influences in the Far East* : K.A. Nilkantha Shastri.

considerable sway over the neighbouring territories about which Arab traders have made numerous references. They styled themselves in the manner of Indian king as 'Maharajadhiraja'. They had a powerful navy at their command. The Shailendra kings patronised Mahayana form of Buddhism and established close cultural contacts with the Pala kings of Bengal. Shailendra king Balaputradeva sent an emissary to the court of Devapala of Bengal with the request to allot some land in Bengal for the construction of a monastery. Devapala readily acceded to the request.

Shailendra kings were great builders of temples and other monuments, the finest example being the Borobuder stupa which amply speaks of the munificence and magnificence of its builders. The stupa is situated on a hill top and consists of nine successive terraces, each receding from beneath, and the whole crowned with a bell-shaped dome at the centre of the topmost terrace. The beautiful sculptures which adorn the stupas are one of the finest examples of Javanese art and architecture. Another fine example of early Javanese art and architecture is Angkor Vat about which Amury de Riencourt writes : "Art flourished in Kambuja as never before, centred round a capital city known to all Asia as Angkor the magnificent . . . Chinese envoys could hardly believe their eyes when they gazed at the splendid temples of Angkor Vat, a sublime world of art that was inspired by India but shaped by the genius of the Khmer people. When emperor Jayavarman VII built, Indian civilisation provided the religion and philosophy, the artistic forms and technique, with which Angkor was built, but the spirit embodied in the carved stone, the enigmatic 'Angkor smile' of the great Cambodian face which dominates the great gate conveys mutely the genius of the Khmers."¹

Shailendra rulers continued to exercise their sway over neighbouring islands till Cholas destroyed their navy. The downfall of the Shailendras was followed by the rise of Sri Vijaya empire which continued to flourish till Mussulmans got hold of power.

Burma

The relations between India and Burma are firmly embedded in the history, culture, tradition and religious background of both

1. P. 161, *The Soul of India* : Amury de Riencourt.

the countries. Traditional accounts narrate that Soma and Uttara were sent to Burma by the third Buddhist council as cultural emissaries of India. They were given rousing reception wherever they went. Prome became the centre of Buddhist activities and both Mahayana and Thervada schools found suitable atmosphere in Burma. Pali language and literature helped towards the establishment of Burmese language and literature. The principal Burmese scriptures Dharmashashtras and Dhammathats were modelled after the Indian scriptures.

Indian art was carried to Burma by the Mons who settled in the low lands of Thaton. They were great builders. In the eleventh century they shifted their capital to Pegu where some excellent pieces of Indo-Burmese art have been found which bear unmistakable imprint of Indian art. The greatest amongst the Mon kings was Anorata who established his capital in Pagan. He was a great builder of temples and other monuments. The Dasavtar temple in Pagan stands as a testimony to his greatness.

In modern times king Mindan caused to be constructed a beautiful park in 1871. The three Pitakas have been inscribed here on marble slabs.

Ceylon

The relations between the two countries form subject of many interesting tales and stories. According to Ceylonese texts Dipvamsa and Mahavamsa an Indian prince named Vijay Simha landed in Ceylon and after some minor resistance he was able to wrest power and thus the island came to be named after him as Simhaldvipa. One of the Ajanta paintings record this event, thus supplementing the narrative of history. Another important event in the history of Ceylon was the arrival of Prince Mahendra and Princess Sanghmitra with a Bodhi tree sapling and ever since India and Ceylon have been communicating with each other in different fields of culture at various levels.

The breakdown of cultural empire

With the passage of time the bonds of cultural contacts loosened between India and other countries for various reasons, the most prominent being the political degradation in India. The mother

culture was unable to feed the various branches and ultimately the threads holding the bonds of communication broke down. Today India finds itself aloof from the comity of nations which was once hers but still old cultural resemblances hold them united on identical issues which may turn them once again in one net if a little more efforts are made and thus India can play a new role in the comity of nations.

India as spiritual leader of the world

In order to fulfil the prophecy of Manu, "We must go out", according to Swami Vivekananda, "we must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. There is no alternative. We must do or die." This cannot be done if we keep ourselves tied with medieval habits of thought and behaviour. We must change our outlook according to the needs of time and circumstances. We can certainly take to science with an eye set on morality and religion; as a matter of fact, we can give to the west the science of religion and take in turn scientific outlook. The world is in need of such a science of religion. Western world looks towards India for rationale and sincere advice whenever it feels oppressed by the devastating advances of modern science. But how many of us are aware of this role and keep in mind that before educating others, we must cultivate self-culture and make ourselves fully bloomed flowers of Indian culture, which we are not. We are drifting not knowing whither. This dangerous drift must be checked through reorientation of the whole fabric of society and educational machinery because these are the primary channels for the transmission of culture. However, it is heartening to note that an earnest effort is being made by some individuals in this respect, traces of which can be found in the west. The spread of yoga, metaphysics and music is making great headway in the west. West has now come to realise that 'every wisdom comes from the Ganges and it is due to this fact that the sea of western culture dries up progressively nowadays, the oriental mountain ranges are looming increasingly on our horizon'.



Cultural Causerie

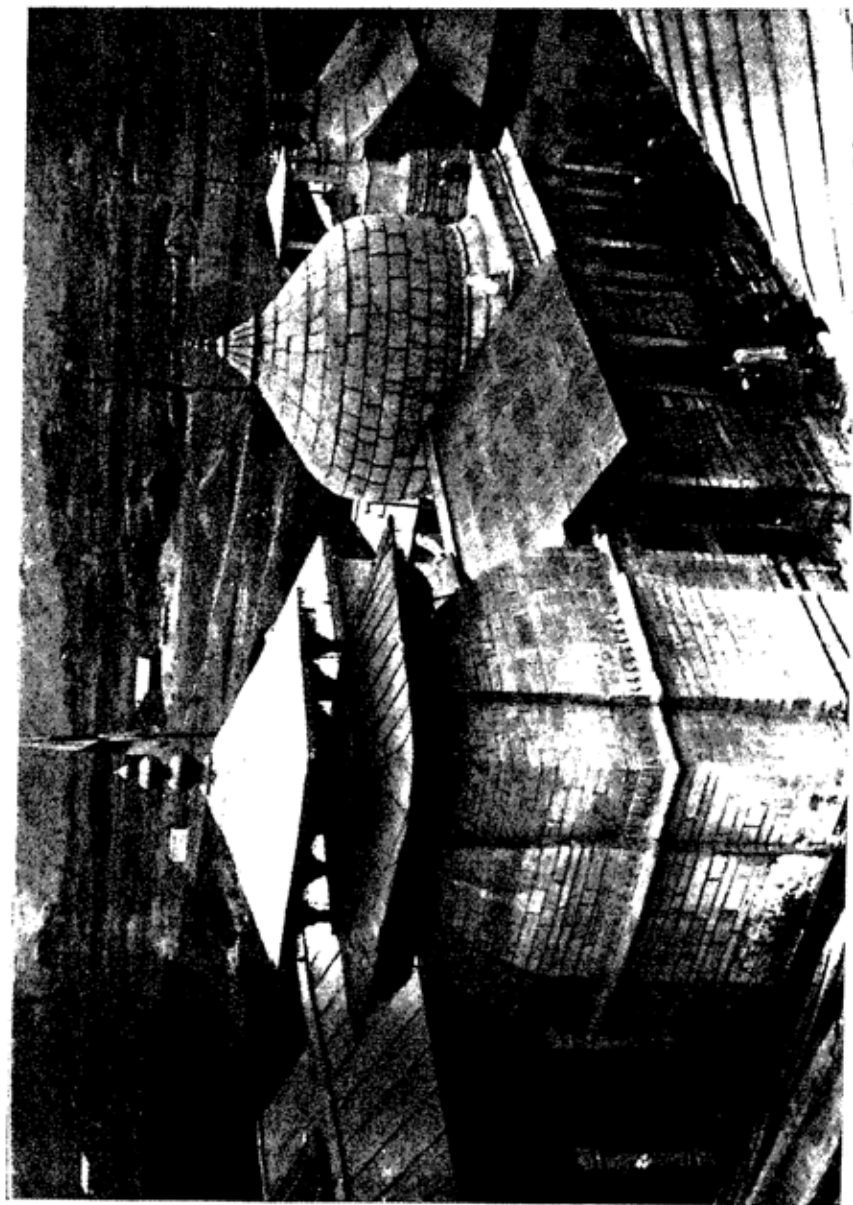
A country without cultural heritage is just like a tree without roots. A man is known by the family he belongs to, likewise a country's heritage gives it the rightful place in the comity of nations. In view of this, for the following reasons, it is necessary to study the history and culture of one's own country: to awaken consciousness towards one's cultural heritage; to inspire confidence in the minds of Indians about the greatness of their past so that they may draw inspiration; to infuse a spirit of healthy socio-economic life so that gifts of equality, fraternity and freedom become easily available; to remind the people of India about their role in building up the world culture; to project correct image of India before the foreigners; and lastly to lay guidelines for the future generation in the absence of which posterity will hold us responsible for the great betrayal.

All those men, who are engaged in the task of national reconstruction, should first get themselves acquainted with the culture of India and fully understand the values of Indian culture before imparting them to others. Like the missionaries of Ashoka they should dedicate themselves to the great task heart and soul.

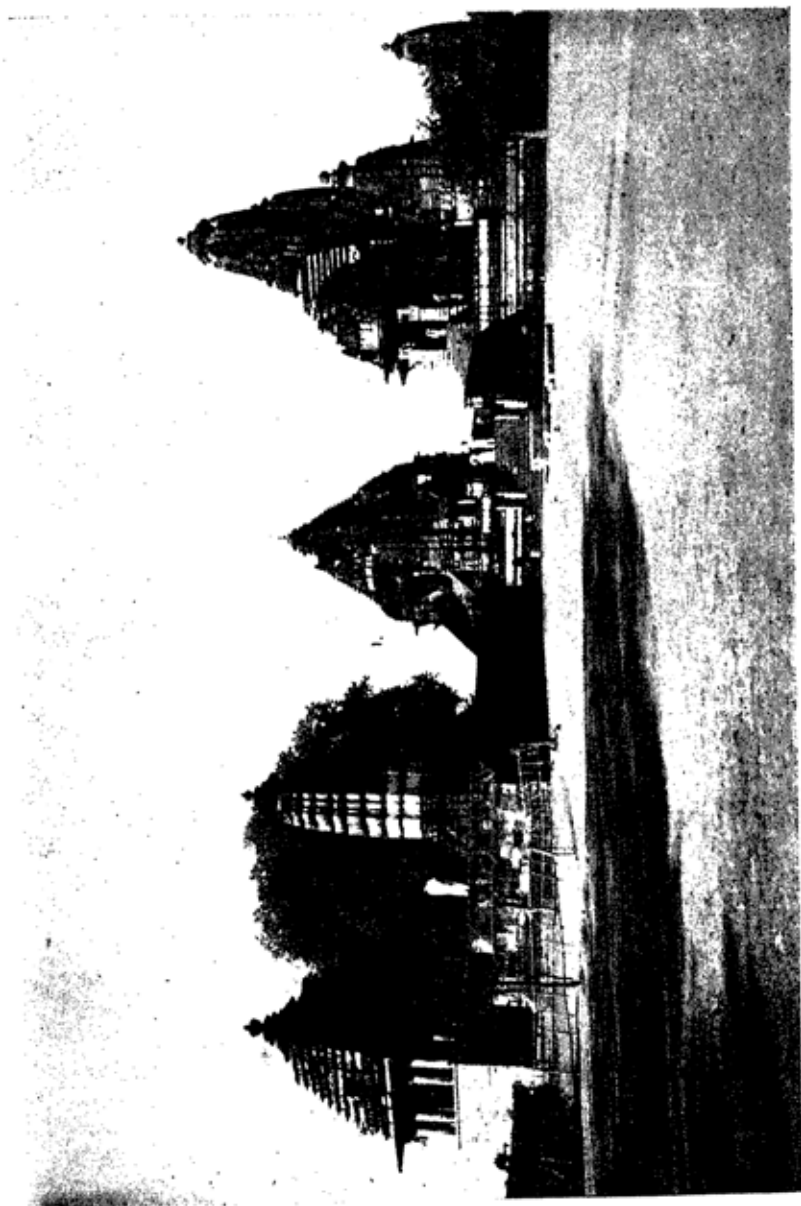
Culture is a continuous process for the betterment of human lot. It is created and recreated through our own efforts. Now we have to recreate it in the light of recent political, scientific and cultural developments—developments of vital import to the world and the coming generation.



Nataraja, Tamil Nadu



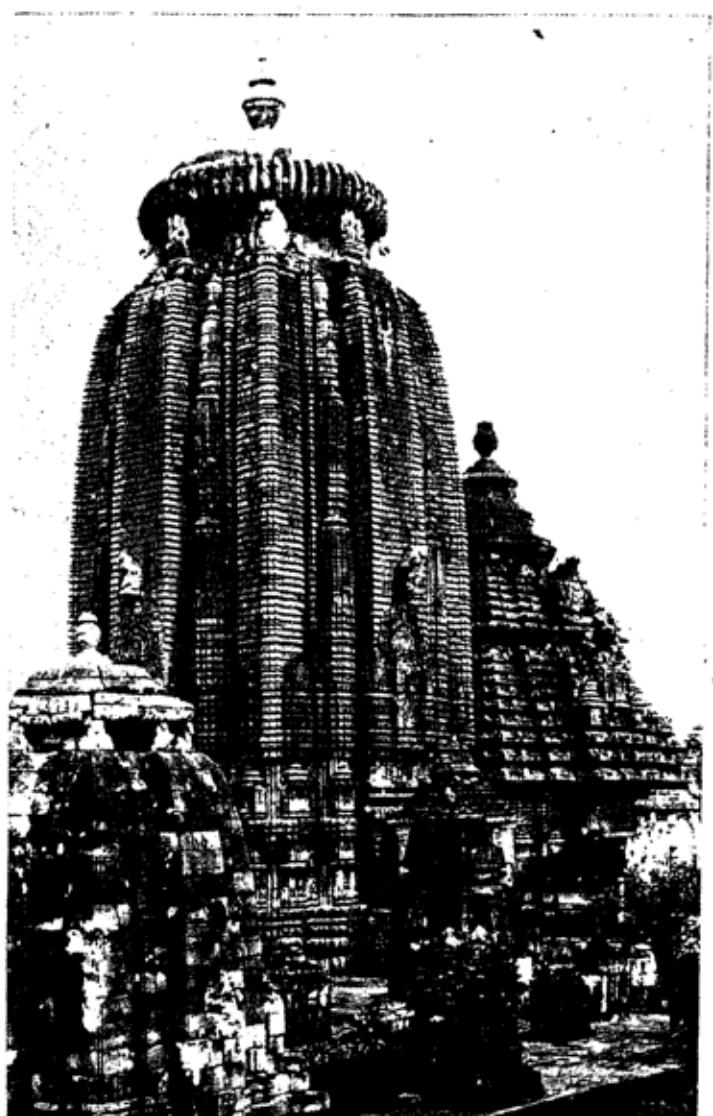
Badrinath Temple, U.P.



Temples of Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh



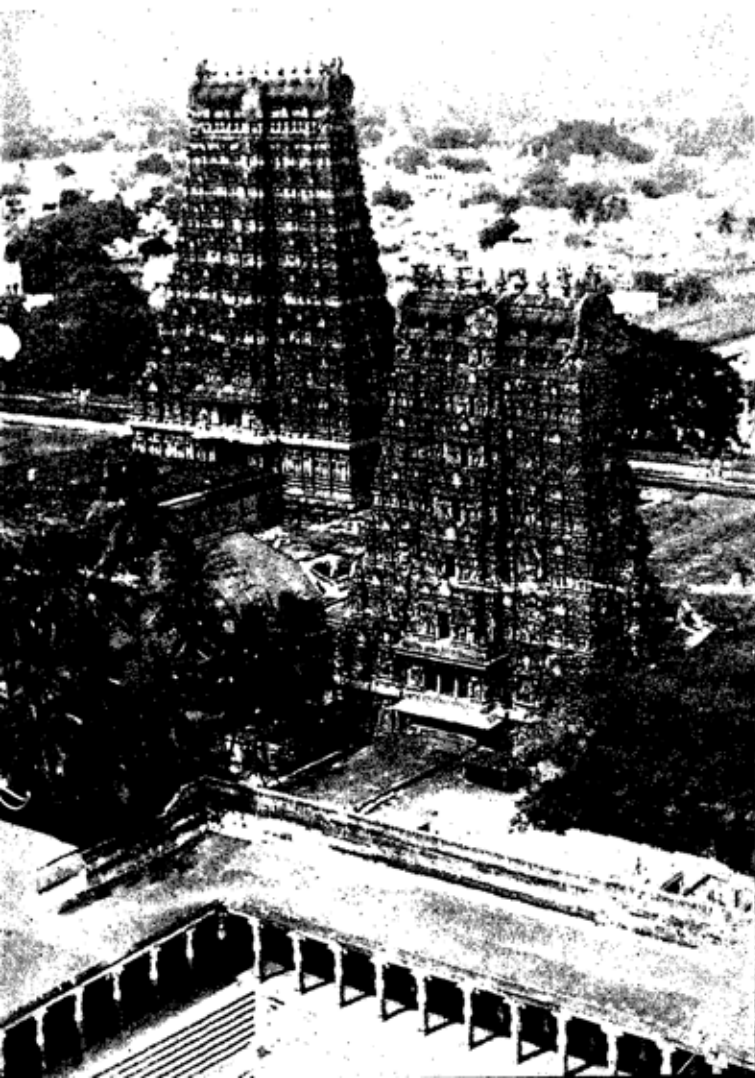
Nandaghat



Lingaraja Temple,
Bhubaneswar
(Orissa)



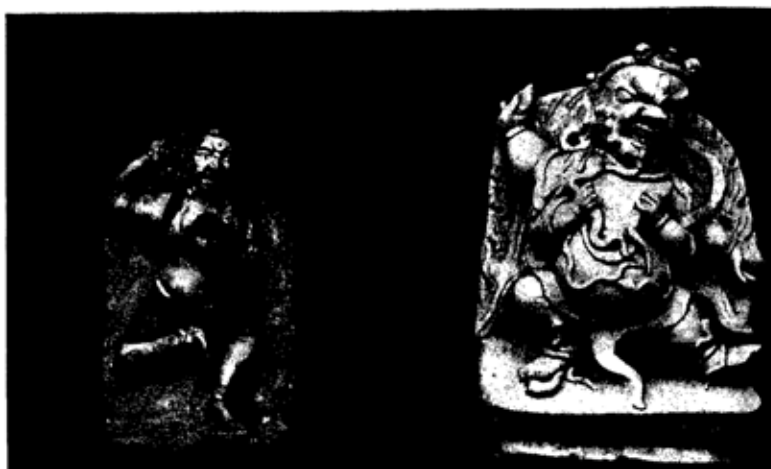
Nanda Devi and
Eastern Trisuli



Meenakshi
Temple,
Madurai,
Tamil Nadu



Panchachuli



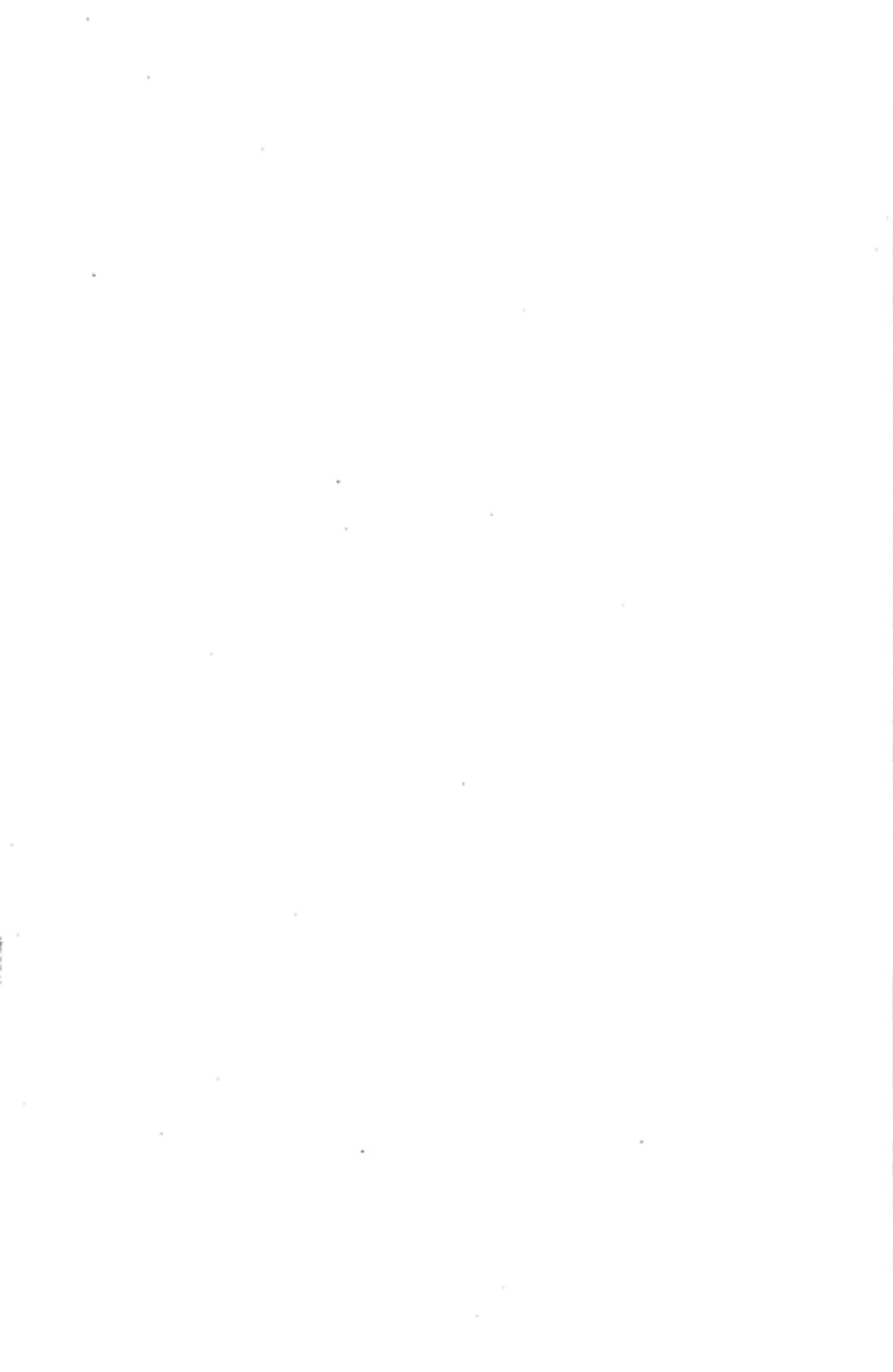
Tantric Gods, Tibet



Haragauri, Khajuraho, M.P.



Haragauri, Jageshwar, U.P.



Bibliography

Books

- Advanced History of India—*R.C. Majumdar*
Agony and Ecstasy—*Irving Stones*
A Modern History of India—*Percival Spear*
A Short History of India and Pakistan—*Percival Spear*
Civilisation on Trial—*Arnold Toynbee*
Decline of the West—Vol I & II—*Oswald Spengler*
Discovery of India—*Jawaharlal Nehru*
Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences—Vol I, II, III, IV
German Kulture—*Otto Zerek*
Gita Rahasya—Vol I & II—*B.G. Tilak*
Indian Inheritance—Vol I & II—*Bhavan's Book University*
India Wins Freedom—*Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*
Indian Culture Through the Ages—*Mohanlal Vidyarthi*
Indian Music—*D.P. Mukherjea*
In Defence of Hinduism—*Annie Besant*
Interrelations of Culture—*U.N.E.S.C.O.*
Music of India—*A. Popley*
My Land and My People—*H.H. The Dalai Lama of Tibet*
Natya Shastra—*Sage Bharata*
Portrait of Myself—*Madame Bourke White*
Sangit of India—*Atiya Begum*
Srimadbhagvadgita—*Tr. by Gita Press, Gorakhpur*
Studies in History and Politics—*Mathur and Bhandari*
Swami Vivekananda and His Works—*Mayawati Prakashan*
The Soul of India—*Amury de Riencourt*
The Silent Past—*Ivar Lissener*
The Concept of Culture—*T.S. Elliot*
The Meeting of the East and West—*Northrop*

- The Work Wealth and Happiness of Mankind—*H.G. Wells*
The Culture of India—*C.C. Dutt*
The Legacy of India—*Thompson and Garret*
The Story of Indian Music—*O. Goswami*
The Music of Hindustan—*Fox Strangways*
The Dance of Shiva—*A.K. Coomaraswamy*
The Republic of Plato—*Francis Macdonald*
The Hindu America—*Diwan Chamanlal*
The Speculative Philosophers—*Will Durant*
The Story of Philosophy—*Will Durant*
The East and West—*Swami Vivekananda*
The South Indian Influences in the Far East—*K.A. Nilkantha Shastri*
Western Tibet and the Borderland—*Charles Sherring*
What is History—*E.H. Carr*
Wonder That Was India—*A.L. Bhasam*

Magazines and Periodicals

- Bhavan's Journal
Encounter
Imprint
Life
Modern Review
National Herald
Northern Bazar Patrika
Reader's Digest
Saraswati
Span : U.S.I.S.
Sunday Standard
The Hindustan Times
The Illustrated Weekly of India
The Indian Express
The Times of India

Index

- Age of Arthashastra, 75-77
- Age of Imperialism, 72-73
- Age of Republics, 73-74
- Ajanta art, 100-102
- Amravati art, 97
- Ancient schools of art, 96-113
 - Ajanta, 100-102
 - Amravati, 97
 - Barhut, 96
 - Basholi, 112-113
 - Eastern region, 105
 - Ellora, 102
 - Gandhara, 98-99
 - Garhwal, 113
 - Gujarat-Rajasthan region, 105
 - Gupta, 99-100
 - Kangra, 112-113
 - Mathura, 96-97
 - Mughal, 108-111
 - North Indian, 103-104
 - Orissa, 104
 - Rajput, 111-112
 - Sanchi, 97-98
 - Sarcenic, 107-108
 - South Indian, 105-107
- Aryan society, 71-72
- Arya Samaj, 30, 65
- Barhut art, 96
- Basholi art, 112-113
- Bhagvatism, 24, 26
- Bhakti movement, 45, 48, 49, 50
- Brahmo Samaj, 30, 65
- British rule, 86-87, 88-89
- Buddhism, 24, 25, 26
- Carnatic school of music, 129
- Christianity, 28-29
- Communism, 34, 35
- Culture
 - aims, 6-7
 - contributory factors, 4-6
 - dangers to which exposed, 9-10
 - definition, 3-4
 - Indian, 12-20
 - occidental, 7-8
 - oriental, 7-8
 - political, 68-92
 - world, 8-9
- Dancing (nrityam), 132-136
- Dancing, classical schools of, 134-136
 - Bharatnatyam, 134-135
 - Kathakali, 135
 - Kathak, 135
 - Manipuri, 135-136
- Dark age, 79-80
- Despotic monarchy, 81-82
- Din Ilahi, 26, 27
- Dyarchy, 87-88
- Eastern region art, 105
- East India Company administration, 85-86
- Ellora art, 102
- English literature, 54-55
- Gandhara art, 98-99
- Garhwal art, 113
- Gujarat art, 105
- Gupta art, 99-100
- Hindi literature, 47-48, 49, 52

- Hinduism, 22-26, 29-32
 age of interpretation, 24
 Bhagvatism, 24, 26
 Buddhism, 24, 25, 26
 Jainism, 24-25, 26
 reformative movements, 26
 revivalism, 29-32
 Saivism, 24, 26
- Hindustani school of music, 129
- Imperial Guptas' rule, 77-79
- India
 and Islam, 26-28, 32-34
 and the world, 11
 ancient schools of art, 96-113
 creation of a religious state, 34
 cultural empire, 139-146
 culture, 12-20
 dancing, 132-136
 dark age, 79-80
 despotic monarchy, 81-82
 dyarchy, 87-88
 literature, 37-56
 political culture, 68-92
 post-independence, 90-92
 religion, 21-34
 sangeet (music), 117-132
 spiritual leader of the world, 147
- Indian art, 93-116
 ancient schools of art, 96-113
 art and religion, 93-94
 early beginnings, 95-96
 end of glorious epoch, 113-114
 modern art, 115-116
 people's art, 94-95
 renaissance art, 114-115
- Indian culture
 contributory factors, 12-15
 role of literature, 37-56
 role of religion, 21-34
 spread of, in foreign countries, 139-146
 values, 15-18
 wind of change, 18-20
- Indian society, 57-67
 age of reforms, 61-62
 age of social reconstruction, 64-65
 age of sutras, 61
 dawn of civilization, 59
 era of great epics, 60-61
 growth and development, 58-59
 social awakening, 65-66
 under Mauryas, 62-64
 vedic society, 59-60
- Instrumental music (vadyam), 130-132
- Islam, 26-28
- Islamic resurgence, 32-34
- Jainism, 24-25, 26
- Kangra art, 112-113
- Khilafat movement, 33
- Literature, 37-56
 age of epics, 39-41
 age of resurgence, 51-54
 classical Sanskrit, 43-45
 English, 54-55
 Hindi, 47-48, 49, 52
 Pali, 42-43
 secular, 41-43
 vedic, 37-39
 vernacular, 46-54
- Magadhan ascendancy, 74-75
- Mahabharata*, 40
- Many-branched literature, 48-54
- Marhatta rule, 84
- Mathura art, 96-97
- Modern art, 115-116
- Mughal art, 108-111
- Mughal rule, 82-83
- North Indian art, 103-104
- Occidental culture, 7-8
- Oriental culture, 7-8
- Orissa art, 104
- Pali literature, 42-43
- Persian literature, 48-50
- Political culture, 68-92
 after independence, 90-92
 age of Arthashastra, 75-77
 age of Imperialism, 72-73
 age of republics, 73-74
 Aryan migration, 71-72
 British rule, 86-87, 88-89
 dark age, 79-80
 despotic monarchy, 81-82
 dyarchy, 87-88
 Imperial Guptas, 77-79
 Magadhan ascendancy, 74-75

- Marhatta rule, 84
- Mughal rule, 82-83
- political institutions, evolution of, 70-71
- political science, 68-70
- rule of East India Company, 85-86
- Post-independence era, 90-92
- Prarthna Samaj, 30
- Puranas*, 40-41
- Raga and ragini, 123-125
- Rajasthan art, 105
- Rajput art, 111-112
- Ramayana*, 39-40
- Religion, 21-36
 - Christianity, 28-29
 - definition, 22
 - Hinduism, 22-26, 29-32
 - Islam, 26-28, 32-34
 - place in modern world, 34-36
- Renaissance art, 114-115
- Saivism, 24, 26
- Sanchi art, 97-98
- Sangeet of India, 117-138
 - art and music, 125-126
 - classical schools of dancing, 134-136
 - eastern melody and western harmony, 136-138
 - effect of music on human mind, 122-123
 - gitam (vocal music), 126-129
 - nrityam (dancing), 132-136
 - origin and development, 117-121
 - raga and ragini, 123-125
 - schools of music, 129
 - scope, 121-122
 - vadyam (instrumental music), 130-132
- Sanskrit literature, 43-45
- Sarcenic art, 107-108
- Satyapis (cult), 27
- Secular literature, 41-42
- Social awakening, 65-66
- South Indian art, 105-107
- Sufism (cult), 26, 27, 28
- Tamil literature, 46-47
- Urdu literature, 48, 50, 51, 53
- Vedic literature, 37-39
- Vedic society, 59-60
- Vernacular literature, 46-54
- Vocal music (gitam), 126-129
- World culture, 8-9



22-
22/12/70

Subscribed & signed by
The Director of the Department of Education

Central Archaeological Library,
NEW DELHI.

58883

Call No. 901.0954/Sha

Author—Giriraj Shah

Title—India Red's covered

Borrower No.

Date of Issue

Date of Return

BK Th...

22-2-76

22-2-76

"A book that is shut is but a block"

CENTRAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
GOVT. OF INDIA
Department of Archaeology
NEW DELHI

Please help us to keep the book
clean and moving.